

# ORION

MAGAZINE

## POETRY

### The Web

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Published in the March/April 2007 issue of *Orion* magazine

Is it possible there is a certain  
kind of beauty as large as the trees  
that survive the five-hundred-year fire  
the fifty-year flood, trees we can't  
comprehend even standing  
beside them with outstretched arms  
to gauge their span,  
a certain kind of beauty  
so strong, so deeply concealed  
in relationship—black truffle  
to red-backed vole to spotted owl  
to Douglas fir, bats and gnats,  
beetles and moss, flying squirrel  
and the high-rise of a snag,  
each needing and feeding the other—  
a conversation so quiet  
the human world can vanish into it.  
A beauty moves in such a place  
like snowmelt sieving through  
the fungal mats that underlie and  
interlace the giant firs, tunneling  
under streams where cutthroat fry  
live a meter deep in gravel,  
fluming downstream over rocks  
that have a hold on place  
lasting longer than most nations,  
sluicing under deadfall spanners  
that rise and float to let floodwaters pass,  
a beauty that fills the space of the forest  
with music that can erupt as  
varied thrush or warbler, calypso

orchid or stream violet, forest  
a conversation not an argument,  
a beauty gathering such clarity and force  
it breaks the mind's fearful hold on its  
little moment steeping it *in a more dense*  
*intelligibility, within which centuries*  
*and distances answer each other*  
*and speak at last with one and the same voice.*

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Header photographs by Jason Houston

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