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## Traveling without Reservation

Dixie Partridge

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## Traveling without Reservation

On a backroad, the only vacancy,  
 as last light evaporated  
 from tops of trees,  
 we paused to look and listen  
 anxiously about, to know the land a little  
 before we slept.

Forest birds had taken cover  
 in the tented places, long needles and bark floors  
 padding the silence.

From the ground, darkness came on,  
 stirrings of night animals  
 sure of their way  
 reaching us—imagined or real.

We fled to ourselves, places taut  
 and pulsing, sleep a scant coverlet  
 for senses that longed for release . . .  
 to touch home.

Morning would bring a wet yellow light  
 through the green.

It would be the world again.

But for now, we would think of words  
 unspoken in our ritual living—

*hair moss    bloodroot*

*lichen    heartwood.*

Underground rivers and caverns  
 would become the archives  
 of being. For this night,  
 we would dream and breathe  
 in another history.

—Dixie Partridge