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In the Pygmy Forest Off Highway 72

Charles Rafferty

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In the Pygmy Forest Off Highway 72

by Charles Rafferty

It is easy to believe in omniscience,
in the pleasure of knowing how far
I have to go. With any rise in elevation
a hundred acres can break into view,
revealing the racks of buck
or the hat of another man
walking down a fire trail. It is easy
to understand how a forest can be dwarfed
by strong wind, recurrent fire,
or the generally poor condition of the soil,
though acres exist even in those pines,
hunched and stunted to survive it all,
where the trees obscure my sight—
forcing me to whistle to warn off poachers,
as I push through thickets of laurel and rose,
to see where an ended path will lead.

