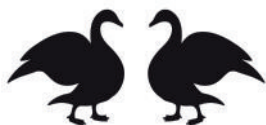


ANNE WHITEHOUSE

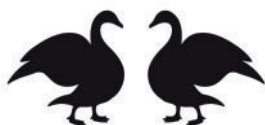
BLESSING IV



Perennial blossoms
in spring—
so delicate,
ethereal,
emerged from
chthonic earth
briefly,
once more,
to delight.

ANNE WHITEHOUSE

BLESSING XXIV



The redwood trees stand
like sentinels on the lonely coast,
the tips of their lofty spires lost in fog,
shaggy trunks and fragrant needles
dripping in the rain that swells
Redwood Creek as it tumbles
from Mt. Tamalpais to the sea.

"Saving these woods from axe & saw,
from money-changers and water-changers
is the most notable service to God & man
I've heard of since my forest wanderings began,"
wrote John Muir in gratitude to William Kent
after Kent bought the land to preserve it
in Muir's name with his blessing.
"If we lost all the money we have
and saved these trees, it would be
worthwhile," vowed Kent to his wife.

Such a racket echoed through Muir Woods
the day we saw that one salmon
struggling upstream, flapping half out of water.
The sound of it drowned out everything else.
All our lives we'd heard of its grueling
uphill journey at the end of life
yet until that day we'd never seen one
fighting the swift shallow current,
striking through the surface in great blows.
We waited on the bridge and watched it go
out of sight up the rocky-bottomed creek.