

Terry Tierney
terrytierney@gmail.com

Why Trees Stay Outside

Why do trees stay outside?
my son asks in the rearview mirror,
his car seat centered behind me.
He worries about the soaking rain,
the trees getting wet.

I could tell him the old fable:
the night the redwoods came to dinner
and grew too tall to leave.
Or I could tell him the truth,

how the trees are inside now.
We live in their house,
their roots clasped in rings around us
like praying hands. They watch,

wondering why we neglect
the pain of mowed grass,
the desperation of doe and fawn
sprinting for shelter, the cold stars
peering through boughs of live oak,
the promise of blooming moss.

I might echo his teachers,
say we are one with nature,
the trees and rocks love us.
They want to be left outside,
the easy answer he expects.

We climb a ridge as the rain clears,
sifting soot from the air.
Across the bay the Farallon Islands
punch through the fog like knuckles.