

## wilderness restoration in process: stay on the path

do you notice the small ferns nestled  
beneath charred birch,  
fresh reeds that sway in  
churning streams  
once choked with toxins,  
frog songs untethered at night  
echoing against stars,  
spreading canopy of mother firs and  
a protecting brew of decay and life  
hidden under fallen pine boughs?

the trailhead signage recounts story of  
roots weakened by upstream indifference,  
clearcut hills sliding into blandness,  
nests empty of songs,  
off road trails littered with cast off  
joy rides and mud-caked impressions  
scorched into earth.

place soft steps on the path,  
soak in the landscape with your eyes,  
open and close of butterfly wings,  
rise and fall of air through the day,  
trees conversing in their own tongue  
what it is to love  
after destruction,  
then  
(if i invite you)  
soak me in with your eyes  
lie gently on my earth  
my lips butterflies  
breaking through the canopy.

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