

Shinrin-yoku

When hope feels like a hollow log, carved from rain and rot,
a cavernous tunnel, hiding horrors, I gather
star-shaped leaves and spiked spheres of sweetgum. I gather
sticky pinecones and softened apples. I gather
my breath drawn deep from my belly. I gather
my wits and my whimsy. And I stuff
that dark, damp cavity like a Thanksgiving turkey.
I leave it to bake in the murky forest, through sleet and snowfall
and critters scampering, scavenging, burrowing.
And when again I visit, I'm buoyed
by the smattering of fungi springing
from the decay, tiny white earlobes listening
to the questions rising
from my footsteps.

*Shinrin-yoku is the Japanese practice of "forest bathing" to promote physical and mental wellbeing.