

## **Rainforest Triptych**

### **1. Heartwood**

**The black at the heart of the sassafras,  
prized by those who respect what they destroy,  
(as the best hangmen or woodworkers do)  
is an infection. The best selling heartwood  
has green and white torsades that writhe and whorl  
through the black. The bacterium  
that makes the letter opener or paperweight  
such a pretty souvenir needs the living tree.**

**So does the Macleay's swallowtail;  
its black, green, white dance alive  
around and through the sassafras.  
Respect is sometimes cheap as a galliard.**

**Where the heartwood's butterfly colours lie  
the gallery is clean as stainless steel.  
The corpse has been carved with clarity  
and ticketed. The germs survive.**

## **2. Trunk**

**The bootsole skids down across the fallen trunk,  
negating nature. Khaki, yellow, grey combined  
to make the moss's singular green, now slashed  
where the whole spectrum's been absorbed.**

**What changes? Temperature, angle,  
most of all the way the bark interacts  
with what it feeds as it decays.**

**Here, where cloud can seem more solid than rocks  
and water can grow faster than insects,  
here the very concept of paradox  
is turned on its head. Two thousand generations  
have known the rainforest both commands  
and enables respect. Here what lives  
because of the bark is a soft chain of life.**

### **3. The Iconography of Protest**

**Dolerite is not easy to love. Dermasol  
does not lend itself either  
to eros or charity. Rain storms  
that shatter the air only obscure  
the picturesque. There has never been  
a Wilderness Society can-rattler  
dressed as a cumulonimbus  
or a lerp. What is easy  
is to confuse the aesthetic  
with the political.**

**The Dombrovskis photo of Rock Island Bend  
turned nature into a weapon  
for self-defence. Of course art changes  
the world, but what matters more than a poster  
on a stylish wall is the dialectic  
of blood and water, stone and wind.**