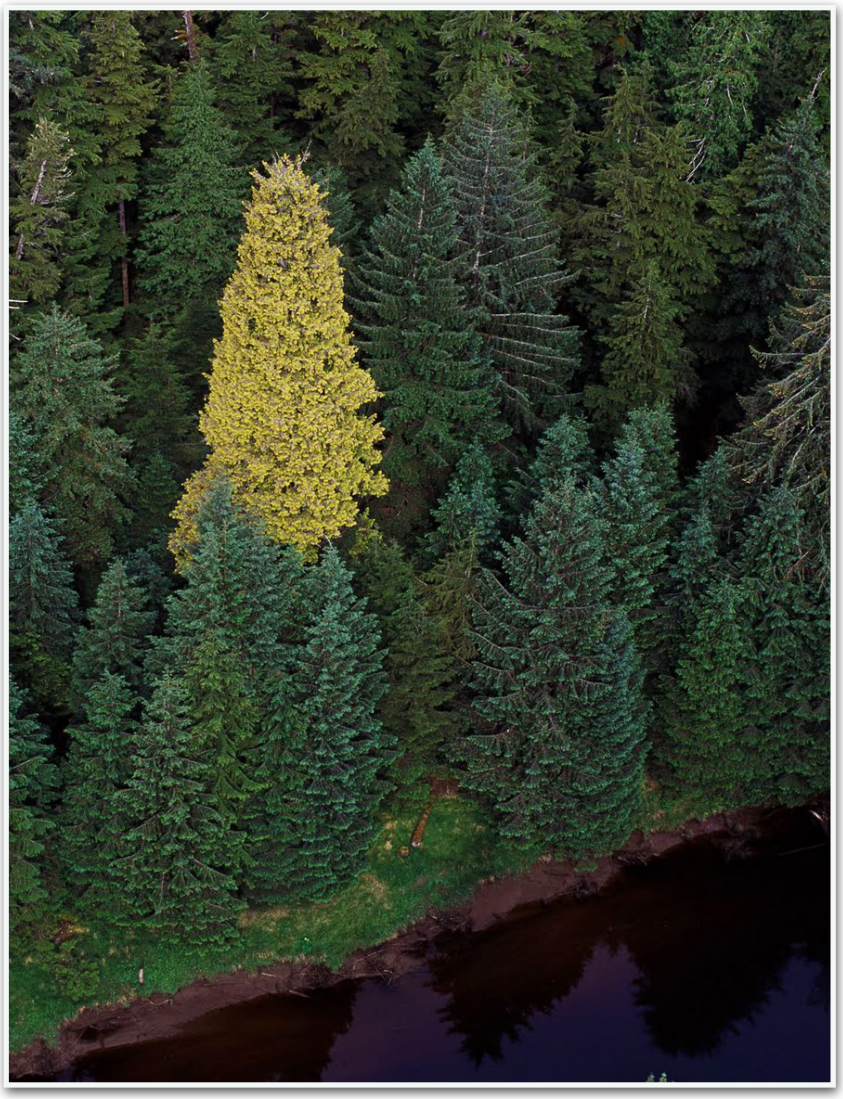

Most of this activity occurs unseen, but on some level it can be felt. The atmosphere in an old-growth coastal rainforest borders on the amniotic; still and close, sound moves differently in here, and the air moves hardly at all. Because of the forest's proximity to the coast, the sea and many of its inhabitants are a strong presence within the forest itself. Thriving on the instability of high-latitude ocean weather and its attendant smorgasbord of nutrients, the entire ecosystem comprises a hydroponic matrix in which behaviors and boundaries we take for granted are crossed and, in some cases, reversed. Depending on tides and rainfall, salmon and trout, returning from their transoceanic odysseys to their home rivers, can be found stranded in the branches of trees while ancient murrelets, an elusive seabird that "flies" underwater, will nest beneath their roots. Ten stories above the forest floor, their close relatives, the marbled murrelets, launch their own subaquatic feeding missions from moss-covered nesting platforms

that may be centuries old. Reaching speeds of 100 miles an hour, they hurtle to and fro-forest to sea and back again-like bumblebees on speed. Moving at one one-hundredth that velocity, ocean-fed bears—some of them as white as a bald eagle's head—swim from island to island where they cruise the high-tide lines, their footprints overlapping with those of deer, otter, marten, and wolf. Meanwhile, seals will pursue saltwater fish deep into the forest, hauling out to rest themselves next to a tree that might have been a bear's den the previous winter. In here, the patient observer will find that trees are fed by salmon, eagles can swim, and killer whales will heave themselves into the graveled shallows and stare you in the eye.

—*The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness, and Greed*, Valiant, John. New York, Norton, 2005