

MAINE FLOOR

Garlands of ground pine decorate the aisles,
 matching the Christmas zeal of city merchants
 before Halloween. Puffs of minuscule spores
 send seasonal smoke signals to customers
 milling around upper and lower levels
 of the woodland mall as new entries are tunneled.
 Fungi set up umbrella tables loaded with snacks.
 Vivid hyperbole seduces consumers browsing
 last year's litter and today's largess.
 Wild blueberries and cranberries flash neon ads
 for the long-awaited autumn rummage sale.

Ants of every persuasion
 are the most numerous shoppers, beetles
 the most selective, squirrels the hastiest.
 But it's the bargain-hunting black bear,
 indiscriminate grasping rude
 who makes me abandon my squatting rights
 of having spied the best wares first.