

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 the upper and lower levels
of the woodland mall. Some tunnel new entries.
Fungi set up umbrella tables loaded with snacks.
Vivid hyperbole seduces consumers browsing
last year's picked-over litter. Wild blueberries
and cranberries flash their own neon ads
for the long-awaited autumn rummage sale.

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

--Glenna Holloway