

AWAKE IN THE WOODS OF SLEEP
BY MATTHEW KELSEY

By day's thick cyclical root-ruin, the moss
patents a patience, slowly winds around
throats of bark. By night it abides. I grow

restless guarding a gored forest, its border
my border, an interchangeable cover of cloud
and of a roof of ravens. The end of my mind

is a clutch of worm over mulch. A stern
permafrost. Switchback of a sudden wind
you are not prepared for. And still,

every stinging thing lies dangerously
cool on the floor. I am your fool by birth,
your undone son, and need to be so

for reasons still unclear. You are the glottal stop
of all I call maternal, tongue like a lid
slid tight, trunk cut right. I keep you

a secret from myself. I devote myself
to a wall, and to a trellis on the wall, and to
the still-stunned bloom, forgiving it.