

The Old Forest

There is a forest near my house that could fit the whole world beneath its branches. Mapmakers say it isn't even five miles wide, or five miles deep, but I, who know the forest's paths, say otherwise. It's an old forest, and old forests have little regard for human ideas, for measurements and miles. It stretches on as far as it wants to, and one can walk through it and never reach its end, as perhaps there is no end— just trees going on forever. People get lost in there sometimes, if they don't know the way; and once the way is lost, most can never find it again. My neighbors, who know little of the forest and understand less, wonder if a bear got those who disappeared, or if they were kidnapped, for how could someone get lost for so long in a forest not even twenty-five miles square. But I, who know the forest's paths, know that the lost still wander among the great trees, along paths that never end, through days that never pass. It's an old forest, and old forests have little regard for human ideas, for hours and days and the people who measure them.