Eve of Earth Day

Storm has rinsed the sky blue, just a few white clouds this morning. Down the creek trail, stenciled festival signs point the way from meadow with its cedar-bark tepees into the maze of canyon. Tomorrow, school kids will learn about the abandoned gold mine from Forty-niner days – hard labor with pick and candle flame, ever deeper into earth. Will they run their fingers along rough-hewn walls that still exude a tactile charge of the close dark, the fever for gold? I’ve felt the pull of those adits, shafts, and tunnels – wood-beams rotting with time. Bad air. Leach of metallic remnants, neurotoxins. Die-off of bullfrog tadpoles. Silence on the ponds. Let the young learn their lessons well. This morning has done its laundry, rinsed its sky. I’ll walk under a canter of clouds.

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