

Life-Stained Boots

Breathless sunlight darted through sleeping trees,
Gave their curious shadows length.
Boots, marred by dirt from
A different time when
They pressed against stone and mud and
Half-smashed grass, marched from nylon walls.

We chased the sunrise until the path curved
And curved and curved, slipping through the tallest trees,
Overlooking swelling valleys where
Hoofed feet ambled and whiskered mouths ate

Onward we marched, passing through thick bark and thin leaf,
Surrounded by sunlit particles that I once
Believed were a billion unusual worlds filled
With a million strange people.

Prodding from above, around, underfoot,
Was the sharp musk of pine
On a path with no end and no beginning,
That was waiting for feet to find it and follow
The imprints of the intrepid that once treaded

With their own life-stained boots.
Or maybe their feet were bare
Because they wanted to feel the breathing earth
Even though she cuts and stabs and prickles.

Green soon became grey and breath became
Empty. There was nothing but rocks
And wind and me and you and the sound
Of those rocks cart-wheeling forever
Once we kicked them loose.

Up it went, higher than you or
Me or clouds or birds or things
Born of the hand of man and each step
Was a mistake that was defiantly
Made again, each breath a laugh,
On a path with no end and no beginning.