

## Cascade Falls

We meet at the highest point  
of the trail, on an overlook  
half-way between where the stream  
first stumbles over its cliff-top  
and the gorge below. Strangers  
until this moment, she is surprised  
to find a New York poet here,  
in this western portion of Virginia,  
I a med student in her final year.  
"You're not supposed to have time  
for climbing waterfalls," I tell her.  
"No," she replies with a laugh, "but  
it's too beautiful today. I hope  
this spot inspires a new poem."

And there is inspiration, something  
a writer's eye might see. But how  
can I ever put it into words?  
I decide to show her instead: "Look  
at the shadow on the rock face,  
cast by the sun shining through  
the falling liquid, dancing, constantly  
changing its shape, edges mottled,  
stronger at the top, tapered  
further down. I believe  
that if you made a video  
of just this, no water, no sound  
to give a hint of where you are,  
showed it to a hundred people,  
not one would be able to identify  
what they were watching."

And I walk away, knowing that probably  
I will never see her again, feel a touch  
of melancholy, because (I tell myself)  
some images are simply  
beyond the reach of poetry.

Steve Bloom  
October 2007