

Mountain Memories

Have you ever confronted a lightning storm
on a mountain top—where either it,
or you, does not belong?
The rain stalks us from the other side
as we climb, unknowing—
until that spot where even
the evergreens concede
to rock and we can see the clouds
around the bend, hear the first thunderclap.
A little further and there is no doubt
about retreat, as another rumble
tumbles its way among the boulders.
Still the fog dancing on the boundary-line
between earth and sky holds me, mesmerized,
a few moments longer than is truly prudent.

“Steve, let’s go!” my companion
breaks the spell.

After the first half hour
slipping our way down I tell her I don’t
think I can get any wetter. Twenty
minutes later, however, I know better.
When we reach the bottom
there should still be another hour
of daylight, but the last bit of trail
is just a slightly lighter streak
 through the gloom,
 and the woods—
to the car, and home.

This did not happen to me today.
But I did walk through Brooklyn,
while the raingear which had been fine
in the early drizzle could not keep
a deluge from squishing
through my shoes or fusing pantleg to flesh,
as I remembered an afternoon
I will never forget,
and what it is like
to find the last bit of trail
 to the car,
 and home—
where I may linger with the fog
dancing on the boundary-line
between teacup and sky.