

Visiting the Falls

1)

There are 21 along the “Falls Trail”
in Ricketts Glenn State Park, PA,
big enough that someone bothered
to give them names. I pay
my respects this morning,
on a seven-mile hike,
starting at the Northeast corner,
walking down through Glen Leigh
to the Southernmost cascade
(“Murray Reynolds”), returning
up the Eastern fork of the gorge
past the towering “Ganoga” (at 94 feet)
and then, finally, back along
the “Highland Trail”
to the place where I began.

On my descent I have to turn
around, as I pass each one of the cascades,
look back, stop for a while
in order to take in the experience.

On beginning my ascent,
however, I realize that each
will now confront me face-on.

Still, I choose to stop anyway.
The body does, after all, need
a bit more rest on an uphill climb.

2)

In a pleasant spot along a relative trickle
that passes beneath the Highland Trail
I find a fallen log
just the right height
to perch upon
as I eat my lunch.
I notice a place where the water stumbles
over a rocky outcrop, plunging five or six inches,
decide that this is high enough
to proclaim it “Steve Bloom Falls.”

Perhaps the name will stick,
I decide,
if I put it in a poem.

3)

Two mornings later I visit
(for the first time in my life)
the place called “Niagara,”
where the falling water dwarfs
all those I speak about above
by so many orders of magnitude.

The ones in charge haven't
done badly. The most obvious
of the tourist schlock
has been kept at a distance.
Still, there are parking lots
and paved walkways
virtually up to the water's edge
to accommodate the throngs.

And I remember fondly
my walk in the woods
48 hours before,
in particular the waterfall
small enough to be worthy
of bearing my name.

Steve Bloom
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