

~ Poems by Carl Little ~

Mansell Mountain Breakdown

"The descent beckons/as the ascent beckoned."

—William Carlos Williams

*It grows dark. A birch
has fallen on a bridge.
Black mushrooms look like
dark chocolate. Leaves in
autumn shades litter the trail.
A great spruce, undone
by wind, shows its roots—
a dark cave you peer into
hoping something peers back:
the last cougar, the missing
Southwest Harbor man.*

*You move on alone,
the trail pulling upward.
Newly laid log stairs
gleam in the gloom.
Blue skies have darkened;
so has the world.
Come out, come out
wherever you are, you call
to create company
in this final stretch*

*over ledge, past overlook,
the descent beckoning.
You watch your step
after a half slip,
sing "sailing hardships
through broken harbors"
as if courting a hippie chick
in the thick of dark woods,
light blue blazes
leading you on*

*to brook and Long Pond,
the breach, the car,
turning on headlights
heading home, hoping
the man will be found
in time for Christmas
unharmed, unharmed.*

Winter Walk

*Blazing December sun
throws the man's shadow off
Beech Hill ridge*

*onto trees a hundred yards away,
onto porches passed,
head crossing distant windows,*

*living rooms lit by last light.
Telephone wires skip-to-my-lou
in bitter blasts. Walking*

*backwards from McCue's
to keep chill off face,
past glorious snow fields,*

*the world hunkered down,
his Giacometti shadow
stalking orchard and yard,*

*immaterial and twisted
like the figure who casts it
blinking tears of little consequence.*