

Walking Out in All Weather

Sky darkens but you detour from
the familiar—a route so level you can read
while you walk if that seems a better reach
toward some new solace.

Wordsworth first after all these years,
then Stafford, for old friendly lines
with their *something different being true*.
It's as though secreted between stanzas will be
a passageway you missed, and you should take it.

The detour path thick with green
winds until you lose direction,
end at a leafless, misshapen tree.
Here you sit against the trunk
wondering if insects killed it and will be carried home
in seams and cuffs.
Somewhere in this small volume,
Stories and Storms, you remember how
shadows once dull turned into many hues.

Now from an overgrown side lane: the bright,
bright bounce of light off an old Datsun
mirror as you start again, sun cracking thick cloud
for only an instant, and wind starting up,
forcing you to lower your head, lean forward,
eyes watering.

And instead of turning home
you stick it out into rising dust
for another mile, as though to postpone
for the length of this struggle
some darker thing from moving forward.

—Dixie Partridge