

How I Left

by Lou Beckerman

It was on foot, by degrees
easing my way, step-by-step
aware of the altered soil
under my soles and shifting sands
between my toes

Seasons slowed as
warmth swelled then fell to frost
I crossed rivers and gave thanks
for both banks, adding my story
to ancient stony ways
and waterways
as I followed the migrating swans
the wildebeest and the bees

Living one timeless minute
and then another
Leaving one brief moment
and arriving directly
in the next
This is how I left

A little beyond half-way, maybe,
in a blink of nothingness between breaths
a tipping point, a moment
when
the weight of loss became a lightness of hope
when uprooting became a planting
brokenness a mending
dreaming became believing
the concealing a revealing
leaving a receiving

Cloth-bleached and skin-browned
the girl became full-grown
And though all that lies behind the eyes
never blurs but remains exact,
I journeyed gently
and by the time I arrived
was ready to not look back

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I walk over hot coals
I am burned though
the glow within is greater
and my retreat
from you - untrue lover
soon fades to a sense
of having left
something valueless
on the number 7 bus