

Imagine

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You've been
climbing
like the breeze,
kicking up leaves
with your brogans
along the
mountainous
trail. A traveler
on the edge
of twilight, you
surmount
a rock to rest.

As the mist, Earth's
bedsheet, covers
the trees,
you imagine what
lingers when
the sun sets:
carnal echoes—
the longings of
baboons, warthogs,
cranes, dung beetles,
hares, moles,
toads, boas—
timeless odes
to the flesh,
to the feathers,
to the fur,
to the bodies of desire.

Now you can't
stop thinking about
last year, near these
same trees,
the first time
with him,
how scared you were,
how self-conscious
you felt in your
tent. Be gentle,
you said. Of course,
he said. Of course.
And he meant it.

Gone were

your clothes
and his, his
fingers lapping
at your neck,
down your back,
lips on lips—
and you both
sang to the taut
strings of
your bodies,
to the dark,
to the opus of
your breathing.

 You loved him,
but last year
was a long
time ago.

 You stand up
from the rock.
The music
of twilight
crescendos as
you continue
to climb, and
eventually
you return to
your tent,
where you know
he won't be,
since he found
a new love
in another tent
you can only
imagine.