

Life etched in birch bark

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They come, they keep coming

their feet shuffling up

the dirt road in their tevas,

in their sneakers,

pilgrims circling the Ka'bah

their feet have the cadence

of a meditation

like suppliants

following the way of the cross,

monks walking meditation

They stand, monoliths

of polished wood

glimmering with refinement

against the dirt road

allies of the great trees

witnesses of the ancestors

from whence they came

twenty four comrades

aside each one

burnishing a bow

in their t-shirts
and sweatpants
a golden yellow swoosh
matching
their overhanging locks
against the moss
against the stones
curly bright green locks
against the passage
where they come carrying
their dogs
children on their backs
little men, dashing
through the woods
one shows me
a pocketful of acorns
another sits beside me
pulling my skirt
whooshing away mosquitos
as he sits close
remembering.

The crickets sharpen

and rise to meet the moan
of the strings
the unraveling of a
timeless code of life
etched in birch bark
overtones, undertones
weave the footsteps
of the seekers
into one piece

Toward the end

I swear,

there were

twenty four basses

but what I heard

were horns

I lived to see it

to witness

the humble bass

trumpeting

a glory

drawing into themselves

accepting, into their chambers

the thunderous air traffic
the mutterings of motorcycles
casually disturbing
the psalm
All at once,
in the wailing song
of the roots,
the chanting crickets,
an exaltation of horns

My hands touch
the face of the earth
in one astonished recognition
of skin to skin contact
my fingers
gently stroking
the orange pine needles
like the forehead
of a young child
at rest.