

## **Landscape Speaks of Poets**

by Claire Askew

*A response to "Landscape and I" by Norman MacCaig*

The thing is, climb it.  
The thing is, know the lark and hawk  
are portents on the tongues of trees.  
The thing is, plant yourself in me  
in all the ways you can:  
plunge in – the loch will tell  
a tale of me while skinning you alive.

This is the thing. The thing is  
what the crab and foxcub say  
when you're not listening.  
The thing is you are tiny,  
flitting like a moth across  
the eyelid of my ancient night.  
My rock and blood and claw and spite –

that is the thing you're digging for,  
sunk to the wrist in clart and sweat,  
your fingers brittle-white as chalk.  
The thing is, climb the mountain.  
Come and stand at my front door  
and see the thing I truly am.  
Then we'll talk.