

## Mountain Writing Competition 2021

### Poetry 3<sup>rd</sup> prize

# Balquhiddar Glen

By Laurence Morris

*Laurence Morris works in academic libraries and likes high hills and good books.*

Landscape lines emerge from night  
but no morning wakes to assuage  
the shifting braes of Balquhiddar  
or the shade of Rob Roy MacGregor,  
funereal mist and long-frozen ground  
disguising the faded slab which lurks  
low in the lee of the roofless kirk  
where an epitaph can read as threat,  
one baleful eye still fixed on the foe  
as the other stalks all within the glen.

Later, on the airless ridge above,  
as frosted light turns back to fire  
I lean my back into a flow of stone  
and draw the hillside close around  
in the calm before the long descent,  
no cloud or sound in this moment,  
just a rare freedom from the imprint  
of all who walked this way before,  
and then, erupting from a corrie,  
the rising bellow of a single stag.