

## **Why You Go Hillwalking**

By Ellie Danak

Because you are a mountain-baby, born  
with pebbles in your mouth, the future  
carved on your limestone bones, the strings  
of your DNA thrown, all wrong, two buzzards  
in your eyes wheeling and dipping into clouds.

Because you think in landscape, drink  
the peat's bitter smell as you labour further up  
towards thickening silence, the heart thumping  
in your ears. When you clutch a map – its creases  
swell like river-veins, then shrink under the heel

of your palm. Because your body remembers  
the sudden blossom of blisters, gales slapping  
your face and hill-flanks the colour of old blood.  
And you collect strange gifts from glens licked flat  
by glaciers: scraps of sky, scrapes of deer-prayer.

Because they follow you home, those soft-peaked  
shadows, and loom on your doorstep. You hear  
their breathing in your sleep. Their whispers  
muffle your dreams.