

Wild Women Walking

By Sue Mitchell

We don't do peaks, they said
We walk
Without gear or guile
We've had too many uphill struggles, you see
We need light relief from reality.

And so they began
On the flat
Following the path
Stepping in other people's tracks
Until they began to feel
That this relief was too like
What they were walking away from:
They needed to explore the road less travelled by.

A whole discovery ensued
Of boots
Of socks
Of maps
The pull of the magnetic north
The taste of the running burn
The immeasurable pleasure of sun on water on rock
The call of the cuckoo
And the flight of the geese.

They began
Unconsciously
Without gear or guile
To walk upwards
With quickening breath
Their hearts pounding in their heads
Stopping
To look at what fell away from them:
Hindsight is a beautiful thing.

The decisions came differently
Made more by flights of fancy
A release from the difficulties
Contained in rooms
Answers were plucked out of thin air
Coloured by the heady scent of brilliant yellow gorse
And the way clouds flash across the sun:
The utter stillness
Of skye and hill in loch.
For they had become
More than mere mortals
They had become
Wild women walking.