

## Walking and other poems

Gigi Marks

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# Walking

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*Gigi Marks*

An older grove of maple, beech,  
the stream that runs through it,  
the shiny pockets of moss that disappear  
in the hazy new undergrowth, clouds  
tucked among the opening of branches  
where the canopy has not closed yet  
with leaves; still there is green everywhere,  
even before leaves, before May has come.  
One gray trunk after another, and all the wood  
that holds up a tree is dead, while a thin skin  
tells us what is alive, what runs up  
from the ground and fills with sun. There is,  
also, a fine network of spring bloomers  
on the ground, and while the stream trips  
the water into waterfalls over rocks  
all those flowers shake and shiver, petals  
pale and dark only here a moment longer.

# The Wake Robin

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*Gigi Marks*

To find the smell of green bud and red flower,  
the low-hanging stink that doesn't leave those inches  
near the ground, you couldn't stand above and look:  
you'd need to be near enough to also find the smell  
of leaves that haven't turned to dust and mould yet  
but are as much like dirt as dirt is in the way it settles  
on the skin of your lips and tastes like dirt.

You would need to be sister of the ant who nimbly,  
always ready, climbs inside the flower, or child of the spider  
who has set a web from leaf to petal, who looks like nothing  
at all until you are eye-level and you are there.

# Cloud

*Gigi Marks*

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Hundreds of black flies  
heated in the sun  
become quick and make  
a hum and then turn back  
and forth in the air,  
make a cloud around you,  
with a single one caught  
in the feathers of your  
eyelashes, blink, blink,  
it stays there until you  
rub it off and the flying  
of the others stays with you,  
walks you home, eye closed.

# Unseen

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*Gigi Marks*

There's the mirror on the lake  
that reflects the great fringe of the forest  
and single overhanging trees, the sky  
unbroken by clouds, then a cloud swinging by,  
then several geese that take the waterway  
as theirs to sail over and on. I see the mirror  
that doesn't see me, as if I were lost in the trees,  
as if I were caged in places far away when  
I am here and close, so near and close.

# Altogether

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*Gigi Marks*

six or seven ants moving over a bare patch of ground,  
the tight red cones (the flowers) of spruce opening  
becoming pink, and no kingbird on the pitchfork's handle  
where one perched yesterday, wind stopping  
so that some of the blown off seeds from dandelion heads  
just hang in the air. Will they descend now or wait  
until this breeze starts blowing and  
the yellow jacket comes buzzing in my ear?

# In Pasture

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*Gigi Marks*

I wouldn't need to think about the pale moon  
projected into the day's blue sky. Its half  
round shape, its flatness that belies the orb.  
If your gaze was closer, near the braided  
land of my skin, finely furrowed and  
unplanted, soil-brown in the unshaded sun  
of long reaches of pasture around us,  
the green rush of grass like the sound of wind.  
So like yours, if I was close enough to see.

# Gap

*Gigi Marks*

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It isn't much, the open window,  
the screen with thinnest gap  
to let them through, just enough  
clear light up high to call  
a moth, to see another flutter and  
another touch my hair and another  
settled on a chair. It isn't much  
at all, the way they find the bright  
-est room and disappear when all  
goes dark except for how they move,  
the smallest shiver in  
the air that says they're barely there.



# The Edge

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*Gigi Marks*

Once, we caught our feet  
together in the surf walking  
the line, the edge of tide,  
of sea, and another time, you  
drifted off. Nowhere else  
do we matter so little—  
even the tiniest grain of sand  
and crushed shell will stay here  
longer, joining the others.  
But I still noticed, once, your closeness,  
once your distance, even while  
waves crashed at my feet  
and filled my ears and the salt  
spray crusted on my lips, and the sea  
wind blew around my face,  
and seemed to me to hold me there.