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Hill of Doon

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CLARE ROSSINI

Hill of Doon

A dust barraged by breath, a bone-cage drilled by rain,
I set out

On the western way, by the shores of the lough, beneath a mountain
Tweaked by a cairn.

And the road, splintering off
To shape-shift through woods, and the wind buoyant as a sparrow

Above me, or wandering
Errant from my side.

And as I walked, the mall in my head
Slowly shuttered itself, likewise, the freeway-buzz of my heart,

All the skyscrapers I have known growing dark in me
But for one that some name the soul, from whose back room,

Off the copy machine, came sound at first like a keening,
Spurred by wind

Into a singing
That looked for a door into air breaking water made fast in the fullness,

Full-lightness that verges on gloam.
And then the trees around me yelled, "Hey, girl!" And the clouds

Through the network of branch spoke, too,
In the halting and bumbling way of clouds, and in none of their talk

Was reason.
And just once, friend, I passed on the road a stranger,

His backpack plastered with names, all the countries of the planet,
And on one arm,

Tattoo of the Buddha, on the other,
Tattoo of the snake,

The walking stick in his hand
Slim as an oar or winnowing fan. He looked at me and I grew

Enormous in my fear, the two of us
Beneath a sky obscured by a shuddering leaf-roof. And behind him,

The woods opened to the Hill,
Solid of tree, empty of path, a fragrant, untraversed, hump-heart

Of the planet, not thudding but breathing, valved by wind
Going deep into the bone of me, the bone-

Green of me,
And the wending.

—*for Larry Sutin*