Meditation on Friendship: Getting Lost in the Woods with Deena-Jamesville, NY

Judith Minty
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You think I am like your grandmother 
because I’ve been so far 
North. But even a wolf marks territory, even she 
sets her teeth, lets no one beyond.

We stand at the edge 
of winter. The desert beats in your blood. 
I haven’t lived here 
long enough, though I tell you 
I’ve been here before, though in fact 
not exactly here. These are civilized woods.

You try to put on 
the skin of this place, but it doesn’t fit, the pelt 
stretches and binds. Oh friend, we aren’t animals after all. 
We’re troubled women, unable 
to see clearly.

These are the oaks where, in October, 
migrating robins rested. Now chattering half-truths, 
we step off the path into mud. We know better, 
still we wander a thread of a creek 
to bark and dead leaves, musty soil. 
We’ve not been touched for so long.

Almost dark, and we’re turned 
to repeating mistakes. I’m ashamed of my feet 
stumbling, snapping twigs, grown clumsy as old women. 
They sense the circles we’ve made.

We’re lost and we know it. 
There’s no farmhouse, no cabin. We’re locked in 
these woods, the trees our markers, 
the setting sun our compass.
We need to speak from the heart again, to listen for the river. It's our way out, that water flowing. We need to be led downstream to the bridge, we need to reach the other side touching.