

Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park



Releasing the Sherpas

The last two sherpas were the strongest, faithful companions, their faces wind-peeled, streaked with soot and glacier-light on the snowfield below the summit where we stopped to rest.

The first was my body, snug in its cap of lynx-fur, smelling of yak butter and fine mineral dirt, agile, impetuous, broad-shouldered, alive to the frozen bite of oxygen in the larynx.

The second was my intellect, dour and thirsty, furrowing its fox-like brow, my calculating brain searching for some cairn or chasm to explain my decision to send them back without me.

Looking down from the next, ax-cleft serac
I saw them turn and dwindle and felt unafraid.
Blind as a diamond, sun-pure and rarefied,
whatever I was then, there was no turning back.

Campbell McGrath

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