

GROWING ONWARD

Mike Ramsden

Going back to the light, where we started from,
A pathway through fern and bluebell,
Where pearls of dew glisten in dawn's rising,
Where tree and bush
Sing to the ascension of the sun;
Where fresh-turned earth, it's warmth
Sufficient for growth, awaits a bounty of seed.

Nothing shrivels and dies in these fields.
No blood stains the fleece of lamb.

So we travel beyond this time until,
Bent with burden, we stumble
On stone and root, where hair-moss,
Like ancient web of spider, clings to skin.
We hear howl of wolf, find a house of straw,
A crazed woman in a hut,
And Little Red Riding Hood is not what she seems;
And the Golden Egg is nothing but papier-mâché.

Lost in narrow alley-ways,
A maze of hard-packed earth,
We limp past crumbling dwellings
Baked in a sun that kills.
Sometimes we see them stoking fires
In nights that freeze the breath
And squeeze the spirit dry;
Traverse burning fields and houses razed to rubble,
And lives hanging by the thread of conquest;

Past inns you dare not enter,
For the tumult will bring you down
To a place from which you cannot rise.

You arrive in time
Knowing you cannot risk
Losing what you have brought this far.
Broad highways roar and hiss
With the passage of fools
Who feel nothing but the speed of arrival.

You retreat, the other side unknown,
Until you find avenues
Perfumed with eucalyptus and oak,
Dwellings of solidity,
White under a beneficent sun.