Beauty's Noon

You stand between me and the dazzling day  
No wonder I confuse you with the sun  
The halo of whose wide-diffracted ray  
Cloud-burnishes the face it glances on  
Which by the subtle optics of the skin  
Blood-quickened shines as if lit from within

Singing I press on up the forest fells  
The enlivening shade renews the enlivening sun  
Beneath the sheltering trees my song now swells  
In notes like wood flowers from the green light spun  
As sky unfolds again in every glade  
To grassy sighs the shy melodies fade

As the trees thin so my illusion dies  
No crafted spell-song can win me the grail  
My alchemy is merely fear’s disguise  
And not of mine alone I must unveil  
Surrender to free choice soft steps direct  
To approach smile listen talk and...and connect?

The downward slope too yields reward to those  
Who go without regret nor grudge to fall  
Will there be one to halve with me its woes  
Help and be helped up onward me enthrall  
Or if alone I once look back will I  
See you alone fire-haloed on the sky?

Joy gnaws me in the thin air’s cold  
Surmise hums in my buoyant blood  
Through fear’s cruel smiles my eyes unfold  
Crowds stretched below me as a flood  
Distant the rush of hungry eyes  
They think they seek to drown in mine  
To beauty born the peaks that rise  
Beyond their envy aquiline

I hear them sighing up the slope  
Waves of desire batter my ears  
The gentle violent in hope  
Despairing as it disappears  
I do not ask it is my right  
Not to be seen as charmed divine  
Nor as unwilled dumb flesh-delight  
I am not heaven’s not earth’s but mine

A smile I give each suppliant face  
From beauty’s time-bound light-wide store  
For beauty gives more joy in grace  
And given joy returns the more  
But there’s no promise in a smile  
Looks can divide but lips must cleave  
Say not I glory in the trial  
As much mine as your cause to grieve

Shall I turn to the south at last  
Watch their backs shrink who sought my face  
Shiver in shadows eastward cast  
Down lonely flanks of fading grace  
Or is there yet a hand for mine  
A voice that calling to me thrills  
At last the heart for which I shine  
The one to walk with from the hills?

Late September–20th October 2009