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SLOW PILGRIM

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I saw the road, and saw myself, and fled.

Suppose the pilgrim's ready. Let's say
that he begins. Let's say he lifts his bed
and stuffs it in a sack, then wanders off
into the rain, determined now at least
to make a fitting end. Thus, of a given day,
the cedars weep, the hemlocks dip their crests,
the bracken drip and tremble as a pool
of varied green. And while the pilgrim beats
the underbrush, an indistinct and mute
immensity obtains *en route*. Just so.

A long-held, dim desire for what might pass
for progress leads him to a road, and lately
to a narrow path inscribed across
a wilderness, where, with something
of an unaccustomed turn, that same vague
wish becomes a taste for the vertiginous,
a vast expanse upheld, if not contained,
just here among the bracken as perhaps
within one's own walled garden's hidden grove.
The wish occasions, then, an opening

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and momentary glimpse, within which more than can be gathered is nonetheless beheld.