

Stephen Robertson

Emerald Lake

The winding trails
through forests waking to the spring
intersect or fork. Some of these meeting-points
are signposted with names and distances
that only roughly match the map. At others, though,
we have to guess.

The woods are full of streams,
swollen with spring melt. But an old pine forest
always provides a bridge. The trunks
of fallen trees, fresh from the winter's storms
or long since stripped of bark, criss-cross
the forest floor, streams and all.

A seven-mile climb
brings us to a hidden jewel lake,
soup-spoon-shaped, still half-covered
in slowly melting ice. On the far side
the steep snow-covered slopes rise up
to rampart rock walls, knife-edge against
the deep blue sky. We take our boots off,
dip our feet into water clear and aching cold,
and dry them on warm rock.