

Walking and other poems

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Volume 33, Number 1, 2017

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1050866ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050866ar>

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Publisher(s)

Athabasca University Press

ISSN

1705-9429 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Marks, G. (2017). Walking and other poems. *The Trumpeter*, 33 (1), 92–99.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1050866ar>

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Walking

Gigi Marks

An older grove of maple, beech,
the stream that runs through it,
the shiny pockets of moss that disappear
in the hazy new undergrowth, clouds
tucked among the opening of branches
where the canopy has not closed yet
with leaves; still there is green everywhere,
even before leaves, before May has come.
One gray trunk after another, and all the wood
that holds up a tree is dead, while a thin skin
tells us what is alive, what runs up
from the ground and fills with sun. There is,
also, a fine network of spring bloomers
on the ground, and while the stream trips
the water into waterfalls over rocks
all those flowers shake and shiver, petals
pale and dark only here a moment longer.

The Wake Robin

Gigi Marks

To find the smell of green bud and red flower,
the low-hanging stink that doesn't leave those inches
near the ground, you couldn't stand above and look:
you'd need to be near enough to also find the smell
of leaves that haven't turned to dust and mould yet
but are as much like dirt as dirt is in the way it settles
on the skin of your lips and tastes like dirt.

You would need to be sister of the ant who nimbly,
always ready, climbs inside the flower, or child of the spider
who has set a web from leaf to petal, who looks like nothing
at all until you are eye-level and you are there.

Cloud

Gigi Marks

Hundreds of black flies
heated in the sun
become quick and make
a hum and then turn back
and forth in the air,
make a cloud around you,
with a single one caught
in the feathers of your
eyelashes, blink, blink,
it stays there until you
rub it off and the flying
of the others stays with you,
walks you home, eye closed.

Unseen

Gigi Marks

There's the mirror on the lake
that reflects the great fringe of the forest
and single overhanging trees, the sky
unbroken by clouds, then a cloud swinging by,
then several geese that take the waterway
as theirs to sail over and on. I see the mirror
that doesn't see me, as if I were lost in the trees,
as if I were caged in places far away when
I am here and close, so near and close.

Altogether

Gigi Marks

six or seven ants moving over a bare patch of ground,
the tight red cones (the flowers) of spruce opening
becoming pink, and no kingbird on the pitchfork's handle
where one perched yesterday, wind stopping
so that some of the blown off seeds from dandelion heads
just hang in the air. Will they descend now or wait
until this breeze starts blowing and
the yellow jacket comes buzzing in my ear?

In Pasture

Gigi Marks

I wouldn't need to think about the pale moon
projected into the day's blue sky. Its half
round shape, its flatness that belies the orb.
If your gaze was closer, near the braided
land of my skin, finely furrowed and
unplanted, soil-brown in the unshaded sun
of long reaches of pasture around us,
the green rush of grass like the sound of wind.
So like yours, if I was close enough to see.

Gap

Gigi Marks

It isn't much, the open window,
the screen with thinnest gap
to let them through, just enough
clear light up high to call
a moth, to see another flutter and
another touch my hair and another
settled on a chair. It isn't much
at all, the way they find the bright
-est room and disappear when all
goes dark except for how they move,
the smallest shiver in
the air that says they're barely there.

The Edge

Gigi Marks

Once, we caught our feet
together in the surf walking
the line, the edge of tide,
of sea, and another time, you
drifted off. Nowhere else
do we matter so little—
even the tiniest grain of sand
and crushed shell will stay here
longer, joining the others.
But I still noticed, once, your closeness,
once your distance, even while
waves crashed at my feet
and filled my ears and the salt
spray crusted on my lips, and the sea
wind blew around my face,
and seemed to me to hold me there.