

## Temple

by sadh *Saturday, Nov 25 2017, 7:02am*

international / poetry / post

a small temple stands ivory white  
and majestic at the top  
surrounded by flowers  
and fruiting tress  
revealing itself momentarily  
through the mist and clouds

but the only course to it  
was carved from the stone, steep incline

not one step aligned with another  
they seemed carved, scattered  
laid out by  
madmen of great skill  
as tho the steps were  
fashioned by magicians  
as there was no safe  
footing other than the steps themselves

people thronged at the bottom  
of the hill wishing to reach the temple  
but stood hesitant before the first step  
which was disproportionately large,  
so large in fact, that it required great effort  
to surmount it, yet there were hundreds more to negotiate,  
madly unaligned with each other

despondents balked and didn't attempt to scale  
the very first step, resigning themselves to failure  
others made progress but became stranded on  
steps which were carved for that purpose

few made it half way, while others watched  
hoping to gain some knowledge of an easy and safe route  
but none existed

undaunted, i decided to reach the temple, learn its secret  
or die trying, and so my ordeal began

every excruciating successful movement upward was won  
at huge cost in energy, physical pain and anguish of mind

years passed during which time i had made it  
to the last slippery and scattered steps

when it rained i drank from rainwater pools,  
which also served as washing basins,  
i was sustained by berries and fruits growing  
on the slippery slope

until i reached the last 72 steps which  
i counted

without undue further descriptions of the ordeal  
climbing those last steps  
i reached the summit and wondered how it was possible  
to build this exquisite temple atop this inhospitable hill,  
which had gained a reputation as the source  
of eternal life and the healing of every complaint  
of body, mind and soul

and so i entered via a small sturdy door  
into the domed main room;  
a monk of indeterminable age greeted me  
with a knowing smile

i asked the secret name of the temple,  
the monk responded, 'Life,'  
i could not resist asking,  
why the stepped path to the temple was so  
incongruous, treacherous and arduous,

the monk responded,  
'that's the nature  
of Life!'

he also advised that descent was impossible  
and i need not bother or attempt the impossible

i looked up at the aperture in the domed ceiling  
which revealed an ultra-violet,  
other-worldly sky ...