

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 ...