

# One Day's Return, Long Past Childhood

*It is time . . . to locate ourselves by the real things we live by.*

—William Stafford

You walk out beyond pasture  
to see where it will take you. Dawn  
blossoms from the hilltops. No breeze.  
You come to still drowsing fields, a rock slope  
with buttercups congregating.

Something in you scours the earth  
for what memory knows you've wanted.  
Bright flags of paintbrush, always erect.  
A Meadowlark calling a brief pliant prayer.

Foothills now, and a stream  
with its easy moving on. . . .  
Scent of sage like remembrance.  
Regrets come back with a sudden  
moving shadow: overhead a hawk  
glides and glides

then falls—  
the clean precision of a blade.

Should you feel guilt for days  
of loving something easy? You try  
to pay attention—*all this normal beauty!*

In the press of high altitude sun,  
you will turn back to the farmhouse  
and cooling spring water . . .  
bone ache almost welcome.

Soon dusk will rise up lavender  
from all the hollow places—benediction  
for one day's passing.

—Dixie L. Partridge

This poem was a finalist in the 2023 BYU Studies Poetry Contest.