

April Snow

Edward Byrne

A mid-morning mist lingered above the tree line,
floating over slow-flowing waters and steep banks
like some loose fabric ballooning in a mild breeze.
All the twisting limbs still dusted by light night snow,

it seemed as though we'd awakened to a sudden white
blossoming of spring buds. Beyond this spreading
mesh of branches, a distant bridge, blanched by haze,
appearing as if it were a pallid rainbow, arced across

the river's wide cleft. Close by, the clarity of fresh
footprints, sole evidence indicating early migration,
tracked into a rift of tangled undergrowth. In this still
setting, although we'd been drawn to all these signs

of a season foreshortened by a temporary halt to thawing,
our thoughts of the past remained like those many traces
of last fall's undecomposed leaves littering the terrain,
fragments still showing through the snowy landscape.

We noticed the way these stray bits stayed vaguely visible--
as if they were a part of a palimpsest, figures sketched
long ago, forgotten remnants of some previous scene
imperfectly erased from an often-used parchment. Then

we knew. Standing side by side alongside the river's edge, among elements emerging out of season, we understood why even these littlest details persist. Somehow they exist--as do the images that haunt our memories--to taunt us when

too late we realize the importance of those things we've lost, to assist us as we teach each other to enjoy what we have.