

Paul Farley

Moles

Any walk into the hills
begins with the surprise of height
gained suddenly, over the shoulder
a view further than you thought you'd earned.

It was like this for Orpheus
looking back into the Underworld,
except this was happening in reverse
and it came towards the end of the climb.

Within sight of the blue of the sky,
with meadow scents and the song of birds
as the gradient slackened, he looked back to find
more emptiness than he thought earth held.

In this version of the myth
we leave him there, helpless and blind,
skimming for worms in the topsoil, cursed
with shovels that can't even hold a lyre.