Step after Step, Season after Season

You forgot, you realize,
what dreams arrive as you walk
beneath a canopy of waking leaves,

pink at their first thrust,
their spark of new green
dappling your path, intricate

with the rust of wintered-over
autumn leaves, their noise beneath
your hiking boots a whisper

of just what story
you have yet to discover
and so you continue

toward the forest's unmarked center
where the sun rests its deliberate heat
atop the trees' dense summer roof of humming leaves,

and you walk

and walk,

with no time to measure, no trouble to entangle you

until winter's jolt,
its bellicose wind,
no sooner upon you

than disarmed by the sun's easy descent
through the branches' open weave,
and from your stand

in the deep, deep woods
you let rise and fly
your dreams
through the scatter

of leaf
and twig
and sky.

Patricia Horn O'Brien
pobrien02@snet.net