

## Mountain Hiking

What I see is this:  
striations of rock and slices  
of shale or sand pressed hard  
into rock lines  
that lift flat from the horizon  
line parallel to base camp

earth pushes up, always up-  
ward lift to cliff where tectonic plates  
press into a slow rise  
of mountain whose lines like these  
are slower than tree rings  
counting in centuries not  
seasons

a scramble of yellow scree  
slides down the mountain  
and so I realize  
mountains press up  
and slip down  
at the same time—

we too strive to reach  
the peaks  
snow capped  
in the clouds  
up past the tree line  
where we imagine  
air is thinner  
and heady thoughts can levitate—  
we long for this loftiness

yet we also strap  
on vibrim soles and lace up  
boots with treads to grip the path  
place our prints on dirt  
bow to the gravity  
of rock mountains  
their connection to graves  
and earth  
and mistakes along the trail  
that get us to here

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Landscape Imagined (iii) by Linda Briskin

