

Meditation on Friendship: Getting Lost in the Woods with Deena—Jamesville, NY ·

Judith Minty

You think I am like your grandmother
because I've been so far
North. But even a wolf marks territory, even she
sets her teeth, lets no one beyond.

We stand at the edge
of winter. The desert beats in your blood.
I haven't lived here
long enough, though I tell you
I've been here before, though in fact
not exactly here. These are civilized woods.

You try to put on
the skin of this place, but it doesn't fit, the pelt
stretches and binds. Oh friend, we aren't animals after all.
We're troubled women, unable
to see clearly.

These are the oaks where, in October,
migrating robins rested. Now chattering half-truths,
we step off the path into mud. We know better,
still we wander a thread of a creek
to bark and dead leaves, musty soil.
We've not been touched for so long.

Almost dark, and we're turned
to repeating mistakes. I'm ashamed of my feet
stumbling, snapping twigs, grown clumsy as old women.
They sense the circles we've made.

We're lost and we know it.
There's no farmhouse, no cabin. We're locked in
these woods, the trees our markers,
the setting sun our compass.

We need to speak from the heart again, to listen
for the river. It's our way out, that water
flowing. We need to be led
downstream to the bridge, we need
to reach the other side touching.