



He went up, thinking all the while of all this falling apart. This delicate grouping of interrelated spaces, conversations, sites. Off the trod path he met the water and followed it.

Soon he was higher up from the flow, though still in the damp cool. Leaves compressed to dicey, no rain today, but underfoot still there. Taking his time he tracked a safe route along the half-there path. Safe by steady footing, and safe by stealth. He was tall and big, made under vines by folding his whole centre in half. Lost sight of the sky a second. Righted, it came back to him: saying by moot white that it was still there. The sky had not fallen away, then, just its reason for being seen.

Such securities as the sky no longer felt a given, this was how it was now. He did not feel secure: in the last weeks he had discovered a rising vertigo in himself, so true safeness might have been there on the path, but it was not in him. It might be there in enough covertness, and by steadiness, but it was not in him. That open drop, over there, opening furtive and deeper as he got higher. Opening more and as it opened the water got to hastening, upped ante. The edges upon which he tracked a path were softly foliated, worn down by lines and moist, and down there it was much less cushioning than it looked.

Where he was going he called a cave, though it wasn't one. It was a holding place, was keeping everyone safe in the way that a cave also might, so it made sense to him. What he was calling a cave was at the end of a sharp gorge, one that cut its way in. One that made itself invisible if you came round onto it from the open land up above. One that was canny, played tricks from different angles.

In the last long weeks with the vertigo came a feeling that a cave, though enveloping, could be brittle. At least one like this one could be. Brittle as it's edged by a steep drop, wetted by hillwater, made noisy by falling water. Brittle as it's towing its own line. A creeping testiness between a good hiding place and the potential unsafety of its nature. And so, a double bind: in offering refuge to the fugitive it might also put them in a vulnerable position, make them more fugient.

He knew that most everybody else was already there, nooked in below the overhead rock, propped up against the rock's face in the sheltered passage. He thought of them now, stood alone in company, not really speaking.

Stooping, holding bundled vines in case and keeping low, he thought: *it holds the idea of a cave, is a place you could stay, was a place you could stay, a place beyond the usual passage of people...* In the before it was only smallholders who'd be crossing this way, a risky shortcut only taken if conditions were right. But now, under threat and known to be sheltering in these lowlands, more and others came.

He was bringing shoes for them, to be mended and fit for those who were in need. He had with him some leather scraps and some strong linen thread. Had an oak last, a small hammer, had tacks loose in the bottom of his cloth bag. On this trip out he'd also managed to secure a wee pot of dye, found squirrelled away at the back of his old workshop, dry but still usable. This way he could dye the thread to match the leather – a small not absolutely necessary thing but one that pleased the dormant craftsperson in him. To be able to do again, in spite of it all. In these times this kind of foible seemed naive, but meant he could hold his nerve a little longer. It buoyed him to focus on this inanity. You don't just shiver and be scared, you have to exist, to go on existing. And, as horses need hoofing, people need to keep their footing.

He had to keep his head down anyway, was alone as anyone is in this act of walking a rough path where you need to keep testing your footing. All he had to look at on the path was his shoes as they sunk into the claggy earth. He bent on and thought, *all you have are your feet and where they are...* The stone that's ground down already and met the rain and become rich gunk underfoot: that might get you. The clay of it. Even though the material of the gorge is soft and so erodes readily, it won't be that that gets you. You are ready to slip – but it is not the ground that is going to fall away beneath you, it is you. It is you falling against it.

He got to a fork in the path, where to the right he knew they all were, but instead went up and around. At this side and higher, round a curve and really plum directly above the cave, was a soft stone ledge, something like a bench. And, it was usually here that he'd come to sit, sheltering further in by night and inclemency, but sitting out during light quiet days, moot white, tending to the shoes that needed it. Branches many, all around, above and below too, crossing crisscrossing cutting across one another, bearing down. Quietening, but also taking sound, amplifying any wind.

It was dry so he went on to spend all afternoon at this stoop. Hands holding toes, holding heels, palms of hands holding the toes and heels of shoes that had held feet over this rough terrain, wet and sharp and glistening black metallic. Fitting new leather to a strap where it had worn down rough-thin from getting wet, being wet, staying wet, then drying to brittle all of a sudden sat before the fire. He'd felt the two pins of the buckle, angled them up and down to check for clean movement, saw how the two sat flush and happily in their divots when closed. All was working well there, then, just the leather needed attention.

Later, crossing the threshold, where stone interfaces stone more closely, there was an atmosphere change. Temperature, yes, and the pressure of the sandstone: two charged forces of stone facing each other more closely. A risen, sustained tension, held by those inside.

Because, a face that is looking out to sea is different from a face looking into another face, and this is the same with rock. He thought, *the water down below, if all of this were to be falling apart, is blood-thin.*

It was brown with dust from the sides of the gorge, newly being quarried upstream and down. Thought – *the gorge is formed by the action of a stream coming down. It has attended to this route and by its attention has dug deeper. The more you dwell a thing the more readily it's available to you. If all this were falling, blood-thin, how would it look? If all of this were falling, how could I be approaching with tacks and leather, thinking a buckle's clean movement? My frame a buckle that flops closed and open, mouth a quiet buckle with three pins. Eyes down only looking at feet. If a gorge opens, how to hold to the ties at each edge, to keep at the stays, to keep on crossing and recrossing the wooden bridge, to be not falling too?*

Stooping, holding bundled vines in case and keeping low, he thought: *it holds the idea of a gorge. Is a place you might find by accident. Each time you walk it you do not know to what it points or how far away that thing is, what ever it is. It might end or change at any point: this is a form of magic. You do not know until you are there and falling, a place at once beyond the usual passage of people, and too, at each passage's close.*

K. Morgan is an artist and writer based in Glasgow. In February 2024 they undertook a short residency at CAMPLE LINE, from which this story, 'a rogue, a gorge', emerged. While at Cample, as well as walking for long stretches every day, K. spent time in the gallery making folded sugar paper pieces, using small units of text to make phrases into sigil-like posters — incantatory, tongue-twisting, mnemonic — a rogue, a gorge. The folded poster overleaf is an iteration of this body of work. Both the story and the posters speak to what repetition does, to forging a record, to new grief, to burrows and rifts, to what land might hold.

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