

Field notebook

It is drily factual - places, rock types, features,
the numbers of my samples and where I found them,
explanatory drawings. It records all that.

It does not say how the bracken changed colour
through the day, through the year,
how the fronds unrolled in the spring,

stiffening like a butterfly's wings.

It does not tell how you found the pink spider
rare in the north, camouflaged in heather bells,

how I quite failed to see it until you made it move
to bare its harmless fangs at your finger.

It does not say how you were always there

even after you'd gone, a face glimpsed
behind eyelids, a voice soaking into me
like rain on parched soil.

From my notebook's pages, speckled sometimes
where ink has run in water, I find my observations
on the day you left seem much as any other.

My notebook records my work in detail.

There are marks on sketch maps like kisses on letters,
all carefully numbered. Its precision surprises me.

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