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## Cliff Path

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Anne Britting Oleson

*Cliff Path*

Brassy light, hard enough to rap knuckles against,  
foretells rain, but she continues to lead the way  
along the narrow path through gorse and sedge and bracken  
toward the glimmering line that is the ruffled sea.  
Humid air presses them both groundward, dampening  
her upper lip, his shoulder blades beneath his shirt.  
No birds sing—the silence unnerves him—yet he follows.  
Too soon they reach the end of the world,  
the cliff face dropping away at their feet.  
*Where is this place?* He hears his voice ask,  
and she says, *here*. The wind freshens  
and the western sky grows dark. Her skirt flaps  
away from her legs, her hair tumbles about her brow.  
To his right, the sea. Far off to his left,  
the low whitewashed daub which is the cottage.  
From the sky, and from her eyes—he cannot  
tell the difference—sparks of lightning.  
Even the rain, when it comes, cannot dampen the day.