

Not Walking Alone

Meadowland, woods and fields stretch away from the canal, while the towpath where we used to walk together unfurls miles of sky, uncrowded by buildings.

My legs pace off tick-tocked hours, past church clock and bells into the seasons' timelessness. A slowworm snakes and sparkles in warm sunshine – silk-stitching a pause in the dust-dry mud, then gone.

A startled heron darts from swaying reeds to silvered clouds. I gaze up after but find nothing of you until I look again at the water, where a bluetit flits through grass needles, threading onwards.

Later, a fox laps up dusk's dark wetness free of earthy reflections. I walk alone yet hand in hand with you and a younger me. Watching, my mouth is a bindweed flower in white-petalled gasp; my heart's mass rests in one expanding breath.

*breeze ruffles through reeds
sun ripples water, ghost selves
rebound into flight*