

Stephen Robertson

Daydream Dale Journey

From Ilkley's old stone bridge I trace a path
against the stream, back up the river Wharfe,
to Bolton Abbey, and the Strid beyond,
and Barden Bridge—and now I flick my wand
some miles of dale and moor to skip across
and find myself in wooded Janet's Foss.
Upstream again to clamber Gordale Scar
and rest, and breathe some more the cool clear air.
Beyond the scree the open path leads on,
a gentler walk, to bare bleak Malham Tarn.
Then back to skirt the edge of Malham Cove,
with fields below and limestone crags above;
descend the steps to reach the valley floor—
to leave behind, for now, the wilder moor.

The treasures to be found along my path
are elemental: water, sky and earth
and rock and air; no fire and no gold,
no gems nor coins nor jewels; just the old
and weathered hills, created by some force
beyond imagination; and of course
extracted from my fickle memory—
elusive and illusive treasure, she.