

**Martin Robertson**

## **Los Altos Hills**

On the high hill, in sun-bright scrub,  
the path wound under trees  
a big loop, and then  
out into a space of powerful slopes,  
grass long and burnt silver, bounded  
by clumped, huge close-leaved trees, green and dark.  
Something like an English parkland  
but bigger, wilder, stronger,  
unearthlier.

The path went on and on  
irresistibly leading  
like a path in a ballad or a story  
leading the wandering traveller  
(the youngest son, the chosen man)  
at last suddenly across an unmarked border,  
thrilled by a hand  
beautiful, inhuman,  
the Queen of fair Elfland.

I am not for her  
nor need fear her, holding you in my heart,  
your presence at my side in this your land.  
But still the path tempted me on.  
And suddenly I reached a board:  
“End of Reserve. Private land beyond.  
Do not trespass”.

The unbroken path whispered, but I did not trespass,  
turned back, wondering  
if this perhaps were the border of the worlds  
masquerading behind the notice.

We walked together back under the trees.