

IN OUR VEINS

We woke, in those days, before the sun
to whispers and the slide of bedding
zips and clicks
the cadences of women
stalking the tail of night. Both of us
peering into the dark
that with every footstep grew lighter
until our shadows
loomed across fields of dry
and sentinel September
sunflowers. You,
transfixed
by wizened faces marching
across the dawn expanse.
So many miles ahead of us
and there, in the palm of each hill
a refuge.

It is the refuge of friendship
sheltering us now
the shared memory of weight
on our backs, water in our mouths,
blisters in our socks and still
joy in our step.

Now we carry olive
grove and fig tree, travelers
passed and greeted, the sweet
juice of the *Rioja*
in our veins, almonds
in our pockets, remembrance
of embrace and smile, togetherness
of strangers, of us

light as wind
under the wings of a kite.

—Rebecca Ring

A DREAM OF PASSING FIRE

The first night, before we crossed
the Pyrenees on the French side
I dreamed I was passing fire to others
as we crouched in the shadow
of a huge red rock

We were all there, and we were passing
fire. Bowls of fire. In clay pots.
Nothing could be seen but the flicker
of light on rock

This was not a relic of Atapuerca
where fragments of ancient humans
had been found among stones.
This was different

This was the way it feels to be alone—yet not be

This was a small stringed song
in a courtyard at dusk. Chorizo
and fried egg on warm bread.
An open-sided barn, a man and his son
sorting almonds in an old tin tub.
Fresh figs, hidden
until someone showed us
how to look behind the leaves.
Grapes full to bursting
and legions of sunflowers past flowering
heavy brown heads
bowing together
dying together

no gold left in their faces
but when we looked

all we saw was gold

—Katherine January

These two poems are from
Katherine January and Rebecca
Ring’s book, *Dreams of Passing Fire*
Companion Poems from the Camino

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