

# Stairway to Heaven

*Brittney Mestdagh*

He was climbing the stairway to heaven  
on a whirling white winter night,  
glancing down from the mountain-  
distracted- but alert to every change in the wind.  
Shrouded in a cape flowing black and white  
streaks across the dark velvet sky, smoldering  
in abrupt contention, that day he lost it all  
and everything he touched burned, disintegrated  
into millions of pieces of ash floating on the wind.

Every detail is pixilated in precise measurement-  
ordered chaos from everything he had,  
everything he lost. What is left?

He was climbing the stairway to heaven,  
struggling up the steep, twisted path,  
screaming at the violet clouds,  
tears melting the snow collecting on his lashes.  
Some fell in droplets in the glittering white-  
bread crumbs for those who wished  
to follow the path he paved toward salvation  
from himself, from the world. Step by step  
he inched forward toward the Destination  
not sure what waited at the end of the bend.  
He felt the burn – gray, black, red, gold-  
pouring salt into the crevices, freed  
from the restraints of gravity- light, breathless, airy-  
reaching to feel the brush of clouds through his fingers,  
swimming through the puffy cotton, but

drowning and dropped back to the step on the path. Held down  
by misery and animosity, he let everything go-  
the lantern of redemption, the cane of wisdom,

the cape of refuge- floating on the wings of the wind,  
traveling to meet him when he arrived  
with beams of light stretching higher and higher.

Recalling his beloved verse, he wondered  
if the piper would lead him to reason or  
drop him like rain pelting the earth from the sky.

He was climbing the stairway to heaven,  
struggling up the steep, twisted path,  
screaming at the violet clouds,

and he was transitioned from desperation,  
watching his breath swirl with the moist flakes  
tumbling, twisting, transforming.