

The Something of Something

Bounce off these anaphora poems below. Start with a noun and pepper it with somewhat descriptive phrases, so still there is poetic sense.

Looking For A Place To Hide

I went down the street of false gods
The street of men dressed to kill
The street of a rat breaking cover
The street of moths courting and mating at night
The street of runaway brides

The street of the grand hotel on the skids
The street of painted smiles
The street of the sorcerer's apprentice
The street of smoke and mirrors
The street of shadow puppets

The street of bloody wars and revolutions
The street of the pacing tiger
The street of a policeman on his horse
The street of a sleepwalking child
The street of the illegible address

Charles Simic
from Scribbled in the Dark

Still Trying to Climb

The ladder of fleeting days, offered rungs
the ladder of tender mercy,

the ladder of forgive those idiots
the ladder of get over yourself
the ladder of old Chinese poets
the ladder of gratitude's sunrise
the ladder of laughter's surprise
the ladder of buoyant calm
the ladder of sweet song and prayer,
the ladder of stretching for wings
the ladder of sky poems
the ladder of you come too

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To Learn

There were nine fields between him and the school.
The first field was deep like his father's frown
The second was a nervous pony
The third a thistle with a purple crown
The fourth was a suspicious glance
The fifth rambled like a drinker's talk
The sixth was all wet treachery
The seventh was a man who did too much work
The eighth was downcast eyes, determined to be tame,
The ninth said hello, goodbye.
He thought of the nine fields in turn
As he beat the last ditch and came
In sight of the school on the gravelly rise.
He buckled down to learn.

Brendan Kennelly
A Time For Voices: Selected poems 1960-1990

Footpath

Path-let...leaving home, leading out,
Return my mother to me.
The sun is sinking and darkness coming,
Hens and cocks are already inside and babies drowsing,
Return my mother to me.
We do not have fire-wood and I have not seen the lantern,
There is no food and the water has run out.
Path-let I pray you, return my mother to me.
Path of the hillocks, path of the small stones,
Path of slipperiness, path of the mud,
Return my mother to me.
Path of the papyrus, path of the rivers,
Path of the small forests, path of the reeds,
Return my mother to me.
Path that winds, path of the short-cut,
Over-trodden path, newly-made path,
Return my mother to me.
Path, I implore you, return my mother to me.
Path of the crossways, path that branches off,
Path of the stinging shrubs, path of the bridge,
Return my mother to me.
Path of the open, path of the valley,
Path of the steep climb, path of the downward slope,
Return my mother to me.
Children are drowsing, about to sleep,
Darkness is coming and there is no fire-wood,
And I have not yet found the lantern:
Return my mother to me.

Stella Ngatho (Kenya)
in *This Same Sky: A Collection of Poems from
around the World*
Poems selected by Naomi Shihab Nye