

Digital Mountains

by D.E. Morgan
a poem in a 4pagezine

I was advised to write a poem
on the beautiful Rocky Mountains.
I had only seen them briefly,
passing through decades ago.
I suppose there was also a tiny moment
where I saw them from an airplane
flying from San Francisco
back to Chicago.
There was beauty among them,
this I remembered.
I remembered I mistook their heights
for clouds that ran to the ground.
Imposing they stood,
growing larger down the road from us.
We made our way toward them
And then...?
I don't remember!
I was young, forgive me,
I honestly do not remember.
However, before me I have
this wondrous device called a laptop
and I could search the Internet
for the most beautiful photos
of the Rocky Mountains.
So I opened my browser,
(I use one called Brave)
and went to the search engine
that is called duckduckgo.
I typed in the entry field
"the most beautiful photo of the rocky mountains".
Less than a second later
I had some results;
some images were visible

and I clicked on the first one.
It was definitely an impressive photo,
a view from my living room
floating in two-dimensions
upon my laptop's screen.
There was definitely rockiness,
conifers that jutted from the rocks,
and in the background was a bare mountain.
As bare as the moon.
A blurry tree was in the foreground.
There was greyness where there was no green,
and a clear blue sky hung
over the scene
like a silent father.
The image had come from a person
standing in the mountains,
coming in through their camera
onto an SD card.
It made its way onto a hard drive
on the photographer's computer,
was uploaded to a website,
and had garnered enough popularity
that it was the first result
on my most inquisitive search.
There was shadow,
subtle, subtle shadow.
It was not too immense, maybe the photo
had been taken at 1:30pm.
There was a whiteness to the rocks
that I briefly mistook for snow.
But I was not there.
I laid on my sofa sideways
the image reached my eyes
in full HD resolution.
It had been turned to dots,
tiny little dots
pixels that made their way

into my retinas.
Aren't most things we see pixels,
in these most pixelated days?
Yes, there was life,
it surrounded us,
even beckoned us,
it was easy to imagine
that it was perturbed by the fact
that we seemed to ignore it
and were being fattened and sucked
into the digital world.
I imagined that the photo,
though beautiful was inadequate
to communicate the experience
that the photographer felt while there.
We were making metaverses
on our most useful computers
escaping into
worlds within our world.
But I thought:
wouldn't it be nice to be there,
to give up my cares and stare
at these mountains
so partially covered by trees?
But these thoughts of authenticity
were mere fodder for poetry
to ramble on a page
about this digital photo;
to ponder its implications,
to speak my mind with words
that diminished the beauty
that it legitimately had.
Blue was blue
whether digital or not
and white was white
whether we were here
or there.

I decided to look
at another photo
to see what I had been missing
while tending to my computers.
I found a wondrous JPEG
of a pristine lake
surrounded by conifers
and then mountains that towered high.
There were puffy cumulus clouds
like extensions of the mountains
that climbed into their depths
parting them like they were not even there.
Even so, the sky shined through.
The lake was perfectly framed
by two conifers
in this picture the search engine
had brought to my attention.
The lake was a rich, royal blue
that reflected the blue sky
and distorted it in wondrous ways
in these pixels
that I embraced with less cynicism.
I almost desired to ask
if anyone wanted to go
to visit the Rocky mountains
on somewhere besides the web,
this spider-web we're in.

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