

blackberry picking

I had other plans this morning
but am persuaded out
in the last days of summer

a narrow path leads down to trees
almost hidden by vegetation
giddy with growth

quiet the trees stand
like cathedral pillars
leaves drunk on sunlight
arch neon green above

last year's leaves underfoot
slowly regenerating
giving back to the land

the gentle wood
calms my busy mind
invites me to be present
to this place and time

birds call out
in warning
I am intruder
as well as guest
and must go softly
in this their place

lizards scurry
butterflies flutter
beyond reach

underground
badgers are sleeping
and I wonder
if they hear me
if I disturb their peace

this walk I'm afraid
isn't selfless
but has purpose
yet another thing
on a list of tasks
that seems to never end

with empty box in hand
we retreat to the grassy lane
to hedges heavy with fruit
and start to pick

we disturb insects
deprive birds of lunch
even the hedgerows fight back
drawing blood
which is fair enough

not to be greedy
we take only what we need
we'll remember
and be thankful
when we eat fruit pie
on winter days
though I know
it's small recompense

I did this as a girl
along Scottish lanes
with cousins
who were boisterous
it was a noisy affair

today we are silent
as we pick side by side
lost in thought
we each are present
to our moment

grateful to be guests
in this place
in each other's lives
continuing a tradition
as old as time