

## The Use of Woods

When did I read of that clinical study done  
on vets at the Army's main hospital, Walter Reed?---  
if they could take a daily stroll, relax in the woods  
nearby, they'd heal just as well as if they'd been

shot up on schedule, pacified with cocktails  
of drugs just barely cleared through diligence trials  
(and no cost, even for troops transported out  
from daily combat-work where they'd lost

a limb, their minds, or half their bloodied unit?).  
How those shadowy murmurs of leaves, the eyes' reach  
for bedded moss, spearmint scent of spruce tingling those maims  
of stress or parts blasted, hint reprieve from firefight haunts,  
though never release.

No matter. Now it's I must try that wander back  
to one of the old forests where I might have lost her,  
paths we'd once hiked---go to ground, with luck pick up  
her scent or spot the quickened shadow of her ghost,

then for solace coax her back: she, my ten-year's Queen  
of Heaven (dog: off-lead, paws to her ears obedient)---  
comparing great things with small, of course, but still not  
knowing, these days, how to tell which is which, even

these weeks, since her tumor invaded, then shattered  
her brain like shrapnel.