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The Climber

James Doyle

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The Climber

Knee-deep in snow
before the mountain,
he already feels immortal.

which has been impatient
for him beyond
time, and he smiles

It is not just religious
that the mountain
truly came to him, though

to fulfill it finally,
takes his first step
towards it,

he had to travel
five thousand miles to let it,
but a truth

and shadows of the high
crevices, ice caves,
raw curlicues overhanging the sky

buried in a Book of Hours
written long
before he was born, his name

take the next step
towards him, that brief opening
of all the ages past.

surely scratched
there in a forgotten language,
parchment to be

James Doyle

discovered centuries after
he dies. He looks up shyly
at the mountain

JAMES DOYLE's latest book is *Bending Under the Yellow Police Tapes* (Steel Toe Books, 2007). He has published poems in many journals, including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *The Iowa Review*, and *Poetry*. His piece "Severe Aunts" was read on National Public Radio by Garrison Keillor in 2004.

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