

## A Dream of Suffering

by [Sydney Lea](#) in the [February 2023](#) issue

*. . . in such strength  
Of usurpation, when the light of sense  
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed  
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode . . .  
—The Prelude, Book VI*

Not my suffering. So whose?  
I couldn't determine. It was someone pale,  
someone entirely lacking  
in flesh, or very nearly. However,

his physique—or was it rather  
hers?—looked heftier than my own,  
though it may have been my own . . .  
Whoever's it was, it was evanescing.

Perhaps less a dream of suffering  
than scarcity. Accounts of dreams  
are dull because words fail them.  
So why do I persist? I feared

my paths through these woods all these years—  
their flora and trees, their lichenized rocks,  
wild tracks inscribed on their mud  
or snow—would shortly cease to be.

I feared. She feared. He. We.  
Or was it fear? Even the mountain  
off east was an emblem of dearth.  
The light of sense was rapidly dimming,

and soon we found ourselves wanting  
to lose ourselves, so we might see it:  
the eternal. Nor was it the realm, we thought,  
of nothing—no, of indescribable spirit.