

Sunset Hill, Father's Day

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [June 1, 2022](#) issue

Exercise, observation and contemplation are not mutually exclusive but may be orthogonal to each other, if I understand that word

aright. I'm trying to walk fast and notice everything and slip into the poet-trance all at once. Sun and breeze after the night's rain.

I won't get far today because somehow I've become patriarch of the group, and even slipping off for half an hour seems a betrayal. But it's all right,

I'm out, it's warm but not miserable, I can give up a few drops of blood where blackberry thorns caught a wrist. That might be a tick

on my sock, but my legs seem uninvaded. Traffic and birdsong, half-burnt embers in the fire ring. Nodding grasses with old words

to say. The valley spreading westward, definite but concealing almost everything, as happens in these hills, as happens.

None of this is permanent, but some things are durable.

If the rocks remember anything, it won't be me, passing sudden

as a cloud-shadow, heading back to hug my grandsons large and small as they pile into their car seats, weary and happy,

sweaty from their play, as my sons and their wives speak softly to them, take their own seats and back out, crunch the gravel lane

to the blacktop, to the highway that will smooth the boys home as they grumble a little, as they nod, as they fade into easy dreams.