When I a ship see on the Seas,

Cuft with those watrie savages,

And therewithall, behold, it hath

In all that way no beaten path;

Then, with a wonder, I confesse,

Thou art our way i’th wildernesse:

And while we blunder in the dark,

Thou art our candle there, or spark.

—Robert Herrick

**Stepping Westward**

*“What, you are stepping westward?” — “Yea.”*— ’Twould be a wildishdestiny,  
If we, who thus together roam  
In a strange Land, and far from home,  
Were in this place the guests of Chance:  
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,  
Though home or shelter he had none,  
With such a Sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;  
Behind, all gloomy to behold;  
And stepping westward seemed to be  
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:  
I liked the greeting; ’twas a sound  
Of something without place or bound;  
And seemed to give me spiritual right  
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake  
Was walking by her native Lake:  
The salutation had to me  
The very sound of courtesy:  
Its power was felt; and while my eye  
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,  
The echo of the voice enwrought  
A human sweetness with the thought  
Of travelling through the world that lay  
Before me in my endless way.

—William Wordsworth

**The Path**

Running along a bank, a parapet

That saves from the precipitous wood below

The level road, there is a path. It serves

Children for looking down the long smooth steep,

Between the legs of beech and yew, to where

A fallen tree checks the sight: while men and women

Content themselves with the road and what they see

Over the bank, and what the children tell.

The path, winding like silver, trickles on,

Bordered and even invaded by thinnest moss

That tries to cover roots and crumbling chalk

With gold, olive, and emerald, but in vain.

The children wear it. They have flattened the bank

On top, and silvered it between the moss

With the current of their feet, year after year.

But the road is houseless, and leads not to school.

To see a child is rare there, and the eye

Has but the road, the wood that overhangs

And underyawns it, and the path that looks

As if it led on to some legendary

Or fancied place where men have wished to go

And stay; till, sudden, it ends where the wood ends.

—Edward Thomas

**The Way**

My love’s manners in bed  
are not to be discussed by me,  
as mine by her  
I would not credit comment upon gracefully.  
  
Yet I ride by the margin of that lake in  
the wood, the castle,  
and the excitement of strongholds;  
and have a small boy’s notion of doing good.  
  
Oh well, I will say here,  
knowing each man,  
let you find a good wife too,  
and love her as hard as you can.

—Robert Creeley

**The Way of One’s Desire**

One not lost finds no way:  
terror brightens what it sees:  
home’s a destination one  
  
departs with to part with:  
okay never looks to be okay,  
and not-okay, looking, sees  
  
the only not-okay: you who  
know, even as if not knowing,  
tell me, how does one err  
  
to find one’s erring: where  
in the wild are the wiles  
that school the way back home?

—A. R. Ammons

**Overland to the Islands**

Let’s go—much as that dog goes,  
intently haphazard.  The  
Mexican light on a day that  
“smells like autumn in Connecticut”  
makes iris ripples on his  
black gleaming fur—and that too  
is as one would desire—a radiance  
consorting with the dance.  
 Under his feet  
rock and mud, his imagination, sniffing,  
engaged in its perceptions—dancing  
edgeways, there’s nothing  
the dog disdains on his way,  
nevertheless he  
keeps moving, changing  
pace and approach but  
not direction—“every step an arrival.”

—Denise Levertov

**The Way**

Card in pew pocket

announces,

“I am here.”

I made only one statement

because of a bad winter.

Grease is the word; grease

is the way

I am feeling.

Real life emergencies or

flubbing behind the scenes.

As a child,

I was abandoned

in a story

made of trees.

Here’s the small

gasp

of this clearing

come “upon” “again”

—Rae Armantrout