

Rock-Temple

It's not the temple
at the top
but the climb itself
that changed us.

The footpath
ran up the mountain
faster than we could
brushing aside the bulky bushes
moss-laden rocks and coiling creepers
and advisory whispers of the tall grass.
The canopy of branches
hugged the mountain wind
and the shaking sun disappeared
behind dark fleshy foliage
Panicky chameleons turned into leaves.
We ran up, panting
tripping over tree-roots
stopped to catch our breath
and clambered up again.
The screeching of insects
was like a net around us.
We climbed higher and higher
and suddenly the sky
took us unawares
leafless and blue.
The sun appeared like a picture
from a schoolboy's page.
At the top, the elders prayed
crouching in submission,
floating over clouds of worship,
while we looked out,
and down below was spread out
a sunlit Sunday, schoolless and misty.

— Prof: Wimal Dissanayake