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Into the Howl

by Blake Kilgore

There is another boot mark on the upward trail—
soon it will be covered, then forgotten, yet
it will not have been irrelevant.

The harbor remains veiled, distant.
It is on the other side of the mountain,
but now, closer.

Biting winds whistle, mocking,
resisting progress, carving sorrowful monuments from the crumbling, weary earth,
humiliating stone and leaning on forests,
till even the strong trees fade, lurching like crumpled old men until, finally they snap loudly
and crash to the ground
to rot.

Such a short path for such a long journey.
The lifting seems futile, the push arduous,
the laying down again brings no relief.

Many despair, and sit, yielding—
surrounded by the pitiless sandstorm, languid eyes staring past gatekeeping lids upon the
steady shifting of sameness that eventually engulfs, buries, consumes.

This is not sacred interment, though, no dead kernel burgeoning to altered vigor—
It is simply forfeiture.

And this climber mourns the stationary mounds of decay, the pale orbs that no longer twinkle,
the quivering of swollen, cleft lips, the gnashing of teeth, the repetitious murmur—

“there is no milk, there is no honey”

“there is no home, no promised land”

Knees creak, arthritic hips and shoulders sag; but, I drank the Blood, and it courses to my toes,
to my fingertips.

Defiant, they stretch out into the howl,
and wait,
and believe.