
POETRY | SPRING 2024

The Trail to Ahous Bay

By Dan Yashinsky

For Joan Bodger in the palliative care unit of Tofino Hospital.

Two-thirds of the way
along the trail
to Ahous Bay
the sign - official, yellow, square - warns:
TRAIL CLOSED
BRIDGES REMOVED -
Nobody stops or turns back east,
nobody minds the sign at all -
You keep stepping down the rainforest track,
careful of the thousand-year muck on either side
as you follow the ancient makeshift route
across Vargas Island, Clayoquot Sound -
Your feet find a way along
somehow
and you see that many have come this way before,
crossing the boggy terrain on
a three-mile zag of rock and corduroy logs and sand -
Sign or no
your own walking
opens the closed trail,
until at the end
a final push through thick green bush
and there's the surf
that's echoed in the woods
the last ten minutes of your hike -

And now you are on the vast, outcurving beach -
Now you stand naked
in the thunder of the breakers
the wash of salt foam over your feet -
Naked yet somehow warm in the late spring sea mist,
alone on the beach except -
see: the brown head of a seal on shore patrol,
the quick arc of a dolphin
or maybe it's a killer whale -
The trail was closed:
you opened it -
The bridges were removed:
you became a bridge -
It led you to this strand,
to you standing before this western sea
this endless trail-ending ocean
endless
endless
endless
endless
endless
end less
end
less
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Dan Yashinsky is a storyteller living in Toronto. He's the author of *Suddenly They Heard Footsteps - Storytelling for the Twenty-first Century* and *I Am Full - Stories for Jacob*. He worked for five years at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care as a storyteller-in-residence, and created — with social worker Melissa Tafler — a story-based approach to healthcare called "storycare."