



Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize 2022
Written entries

Chinnor Hill

I see it from my window.

Often sunlight brushes its brow, but today the January fog
is down. I sidle up the lane, chalk mud sucking at my boots. A sparrowhawk hovers over the
field, changes tack, vanishes into grey.

I reach the Ridgeway to join five thousand years of travellers,
ghosting into a future past.
Dogwood smarts crimson
with cold; old man's beard puffs white
breath into the ivy's gloss. I jink right

into the ancient sunken way that toils
upwards. Yews stand sentinel; badger sets gape empty eyes. Stillness
clings to my skin; the only sounds my breath
and the cracked-throat
warning
of a sudden raven.

Up in the beech wood fringing the brow, first pale sun
fingers elegant silver trunks. I follow the light path out onto the plain
where anthills heave at juniper crones
flailing at the coming day.

I rest, two Bronze Age barrows at my back; genii loci.
The valley sprawls before me
and I can see home.

Vicci Bentley
