

Reflections On Survival
By Ethan Fox

After getting lost
After being scratched in the scrub oak
After being tricked
And toyed with
After the night of ashes and frost
The fires we could not start
The camaraderie of being broken
And tired and done
After the trust
After we almost died
After forcing ourselves to eat
Of being scared to eat
We did not know what was next

After.

(We slept lightly in camp)
After the long drive home
Nodding off
Startling awake
(The ground was feverish
And harshly gratifying)
Head dropping into sleep
Startling awake
And again and again
After we got home

After.

Everything was unclean
I stepped into the shower
And all was instantly black.
Dust and ash and dirt.
Layers of chapstick
Layers of soap
And I ate ravenous amounts.
I drank too quickly

My chest hurt and I kneeled over
It hurt to fill the void.
And the bed was comforting
And too soft.
And I slept until dawn.

Once all is stripped away
All we have is each other.