

Climbing Olympus Mons
By: M. Frost

The sky is black and the earth is red.

Being close to the gods changes all perception—
light with dark, water with dust, truth with desire.

Those who came by ship must end on foot
despite their modern craft and navigation.

Ritual will be served; the mountain
must be climbed, step by perilous step,

and those who ascend with their pleas, silver orbs
wreathing their heads that they may breathe celestial air—

those who would see Olympus approach madness.

Bodies of those who have tried
litter the mountainside, are swallowed

by red earth, and if they still have coin,
will pay to cross a dry river into Hades.

But those who scale the peak to rarest light—
these few behold the gods. Those few deliver
supplication to a cold and mighty heaven.

If they return, the god-touched will not speak
except as dust and wind. They will point to the sky.

Their hands will be red and their eyes black,
and those who can bear to receive them
may regard such ruined pilgrims as heroes, or stars.

M. Frost

When not writing, M. Frost studies public health. Her creative work has appeared in Star*Line, Astropoetica, Doorways, Strange Horizons, and other magazines. Finishing Line Press published her first chapbook, Cow Poetry, in 2006.