

What does it mean to survive? By Sara McEwan

Nature knows that it means to reproduce
to stay alive until our genes can be passed on
then we can rest easy
knowing we will leave a legacy
at least for a little while longer.

Labourers know it means to put food on the table
to withstand struggle and discomfort
to feed the family
to keep them comfortable
and without struggle.

Immigrants know it means to get there
where is there?
it doesn't matter
to have unwavering faith that a world unknown
is better than the world left behind.

Mountaineers know it means a delicate balance
between energy in and energy out
between being vulnerable
and defensive
and truly self-reliant.

The broken-hearted know it means to push on
to willingly fall
eyes closed
into a vast expanse
that dropped us last time.

But they all know it means to keep going
the exhaustion of survival being
the very hill we must climb
for when we reach the summit
that is where we cease to survive

and begin to live.