

Robbie Gamble

Mahoosuc Notch

My hiking companion is Russian
her English fearless, experimental.

We have hauled up this ridge to brew
coffee and oatmeal, watch the sun rise,

hover, break open a blinding spectrum
across the corrugations of western Maine.

This feels *patriotic*, she says.
I think, how compact a sweep

compared to your exponential Motherland:
the dead-ass mill town beyond that last rise

sloughing into the Androscoggin River,
limp flags on porches,

mangy clearcuts marching up
far slopes. But we do love this land,

the tessellating sky,
the mud, the fractured granite footholds,

the swirling sugar maple
foliage reignited

by the dawn. Here, now,
we are equally alienated,

palming our coffee mugs,
all the color drained from our words.

Robbie Gamble has work out with *Scoundrel Time*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Soul-Lit*, *Poet Lore*, and *Carve*. He works as a nurse practitioner caring for homeless people in Boston.