

“Bongsusan Mountain”

by Chad Corrigan

We left the mega city behind.

The first trail was wide and paved
yet the canopy was real.

I have always loved the mountains.

Mountains are important in Korea.
Here Shaman and Buddhist share their reverie of the mountains.
Both sought their refuge.
I have often sought refuge myself.

The Bonggoksa Temple had a long history
and had been destroyed and rebuilt.

Agnostic, but still appreciated the serenity
and peacefulness
and beauty.

Mindful exploration complete, we looked for the trail up the mountain.
It was barely a trail. A single-file cut.

We left civilization behind.

The trail steepened.

Halfway, a smaller peak.

We unfurled an American flag and took a group picture.

Soldiers in a foreign land, serving together.
Away from our families
happily exploring at the start
of Veterans Day weekend back home.

We continued up.
A single-track along a ridgeline.
We climbed above two giant valleys on either side.

At times, it was nearly vertical drop on either side of us.

There was a rope handrail for the final ascent.
We needed it to climb.

535 meters up.
The pleasure of physical work.

Another group picture.

The views.
The camaraderie.
The mountain.

Chad Corrigan is a Soldier and writer. He has served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Korea. His work can be found in the anthology, *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, and *Wrath-Bearing Tree*. He is also a member of the Military Writers Guild.