

Praxis

*Our dreams must be pragmatic
- Aristotle*

He had no badge except a gun
looking for the men and women
who stopped by my stand to ask for food
in a language I thought I understood.

They knew the Queen Anne's Lace, the spring
medicine plants, the evil-headed
creature curling out of the cabbage.
They walked among flowering herbs.

I gave them milk in cardboard bottles
(more than I knew I had left over
from feeding the cats) and some bread,
cheese and apples. A little girl

was there, her eyes large and bright
with hunger, fear and unhappiness.
She said she didn't want to go on
like this, never knowing when

the man with the gun would reappear,
that all she wanted was to go home
where everything was as it was and would be.
She said that was what she wanted

no matter how often her parents explained
(and I, I admit, tried to help)
that place she thought she remembered was gone,
had never been, except in dreams,

for even there what wasn't known
was everything and everything
might change overnight as she knew
it had, you never know what might happen

which was why they had to keep going
now, to reach that dream place she
could come back to time after time
despite the change in everything.