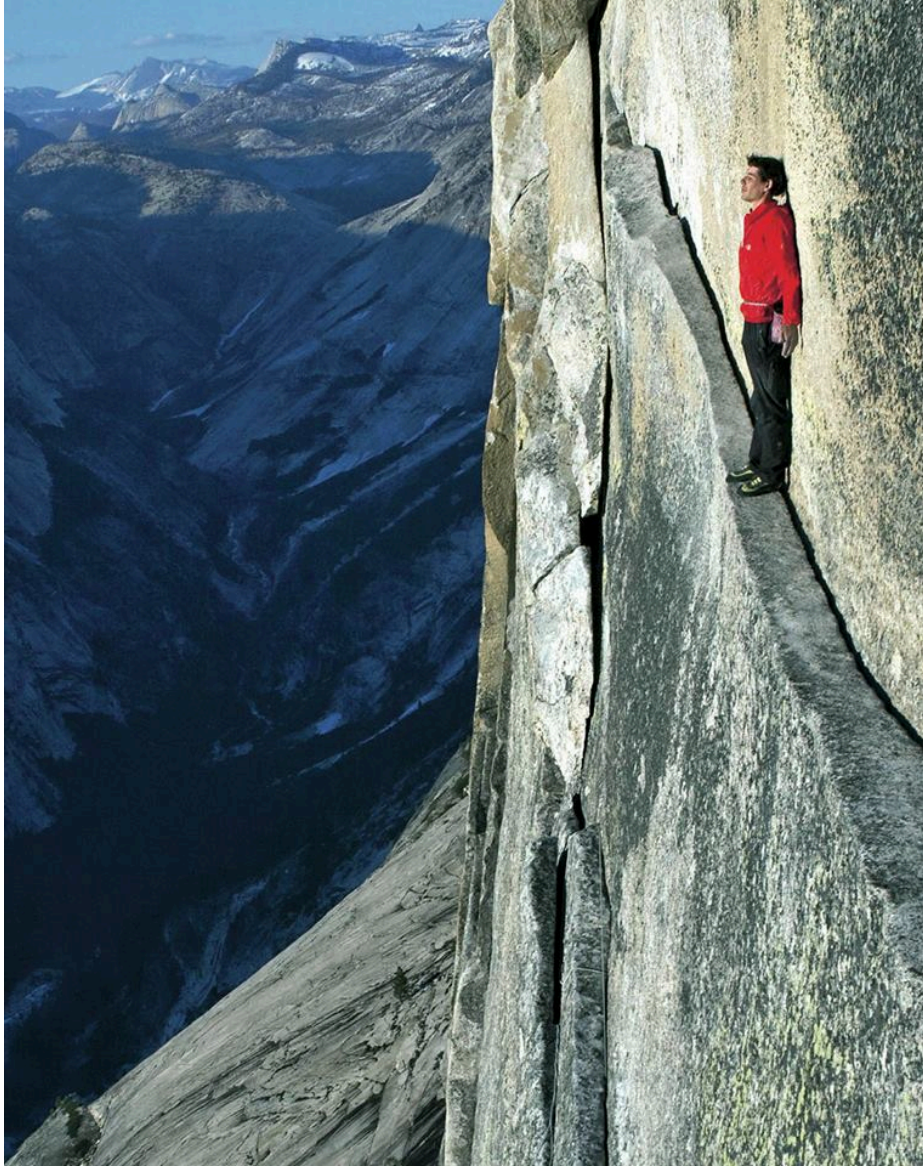


# The Extreme Verge

by Evelyn Hooven (August 2016)



*"You are now within a foot of th' extreme verge. . . ."* (King Lear, iv, vi)

Karl Jaspers on "boundary situations" (Grenzsituationen): "Death, suffering, struggle, chance, guilt—along with wonder and doubt—we react to them either by obfuscation or, if we really apprehend them, by despair and rebirth: we become ourselves. . . ."

You led me to a verge

Past falling, when all the falling's finished,

And I lie grieving, bereaved and dumb.

At a point past falling,

And past the bruise of rocks, I lay waning,

Dull and diminished, waiting to disappear.

The point past falling

Is like a bell unstrung from the tower

And hurled from ropes that held it high and spired,

Like a bell unringing

With no ritual to sing, no tolls exhorting

Celebrants to trample the homes of death.

Like the point past falling

I lay, a bell with no hours, no striking, no

Ceremonies to say, an unperformer.

You pushed me to a verge

Past mourning, and I lie like a still-struck

Griever, unchanting, bereaved, and dumb.

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Evelyn Hooven graduated from Mount Holyoke College and received her M.A. from Yale University, where she also studied at The Yale School of Drama. A member of the Dramatists' Guild, she has had presentations of her verse dramas at several theatrical venues, including *The Maxwell Anderson Playwrights Series* in Greenwich, CT (after a state-wide competition) and *The Poet's Theatre* in Cambridge, MA (result of a national competition). Her poems and translations from the French have appeared in *ART TIMES*, *Chelsea*, *The Literary Review*, *THE SHOp: A Magazine of Poetry* (in Ireland), *The Tribeca Poetry Review*, *Vallum* (in Montreal), and other journals, and her literary criticism in Oxford University's *Essays in Criticism*.

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