

cating our hopeful message and implementing our most practical goals.

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'The training program was designed by Thelma, Ekiyor, the Coordinator of the Women in Peace-Building Program.

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## ALEXIS EASLEY

### To Dorothy Wordsworth

When I stood between those black walls,  
peered out the window at your wild garden,  
I could imagine how ivy and foxglove  
drew you out of yourself and into the rocky  
valleys,  
walking ten miles per day, Grasmere to  
Ambleside,  
writing thought in motion.

On your page the lake dazzled  
with shifts in light and cloud,  
silver moon or damp sun.  
Back at the cottage  
you mended shirts by lamplight,  
then stitched sentences  
with thread of beeswax and tallow.

Only later, when you moved  
to your brother's house  
and wheeled his gravel walks,  
did you feel confined.  
How did you fall into buttoned up poses,  
the maiden aunt, when inside you must have  
wandered at ridge-top, words spinning at your  
feet?  
There would be no one to walk with you,  
to see the cataract through your eyes.

It wasn't until last summer,  
when I finally walked your path,  
trudging through cow gate and muddy field,  
that I was able to know what led you  
to walk and to write: it was a way  
of defeating stillness.

*Alexis Easley's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*