Zip-Line, Fernie Alpine Resort

A little hung-over, for a lark, you
let them harness you up, crash helmet
and all, to try the zip-line run maybe
eighty yards long, over high grass, from
one tower to the other—your guides, skiers
in need of summer work, ramping up
the enthusiasm. A little awkward at first,
you lift your legs and fly along the line
till you hit the brake point, jerk to a halt,
dangle and sway. It’s a safe life this,
a one-way zip down a straight path,
seeming to soar but held in by straps,
hooks, braced against falls, reeled
in and hooked to another rope to get
you off the platform, slow-fall to earth.
So unlike the life you tell us of:
miscarriages, a still-born child, the grieving,
difficult marriage, the adoption and
sudden new pregnancy out of the blue.

If sport is escape, then surely this zip line
serves a purpose, hurtling us forward
but breaking any fall, no getting lost
in the woods, going off the trail.
The clouds hang low today. We cannot
see the mountain peaks, only glimpse
patches of snow left in the high rock-face
awaiting next winter’s unmerciful cold.

Philip Wedge