

## 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*