A VERSION OF PASTORAL

I think I might have liked to be a person who could write some version of pastoral, but my way has been different. And still I love the high valley.

Once I walked for weeks from Tubingen in Germany south into Switzerland — to Winterthur, Lake Constance, Zurich, Luzern, Lugano — then hitched a ride to Genoa,

then south to La Spezia to a place where Shelly stayed in Italy, San Terenzo, and nearby where in my visit an old mistress of a dead Mussolini-count reigned in a fortress-become a youth hostel. (Lord Byron was said to have swum to it across La Spezia Bay — called therefore “The Bay Of The Poets” — from the Cinque on the north side. And I went future, further. But in that place next to San Terenzo called Lerici, I met a Hungarian-Frenchman who did things because the flowers were beautiful and a German poet Dieter who later died in London on a conference when a passing lorry’s wing mirror snapped his neck. So much for pastoral.