

Tread

I've had it up to here with industrial carpet, too tight, wiry, and noticeably un-worn in the path to the doors by a thousand black-Vibram, poly-rubber soles; a clever, practical, and durable design; a no-slip, no-nonsense, synthetic success, for your own floor? Naway. But industrially groovy, understated, and with a subtle utility; where we share and dare to care too much, at least; when we step from the blasted, glaring, humid concrete, in through an out door, to a pallid hall, an airless eco-lobby, barren and poisoned by Freon, too crisp and sunless, like the ground floor of our blue-iced picnic chests, surrounded by spiced meats and mustard-seed cheeses, but odorless in cellophane, hermetically sealed in white deli paper; disguised by soapy roses and plastic vegetation, rendered inorganic by roll-on antiperspirants.

Do you remember now a powdery, dirty-velour path, a healthy worn carpet of clay or silt— on an island, weaving around medium storm-thrown boulders, past thickets impenetrable for most besides deer and pheasant that leap and duck and nudge so swiftly as if their nose-tips see better than our eyes— that bent you under fir-needles and cones of a sap-laden branch reaching across the path for years now, as low as your chest, or chin, ducked under, limboed, or pushed aside, but never snapped, trimmed, or even tied, tempting your taste for the sweet gritty salt, just clear of the clef in the shifty dunes, where the path holds footprints namore, when your thin-skinned feet felt the heat of the land?

Tad Hogan