

FIRST HIKE

The first trail hike a puppy takes
is full of tenderfoot mistakes.
As he begins, he doesn't know
the basic rules for stop and go.

The Rockies' trails are steep and rough.
Without experience enough
a puppy trying to be first
will end up under foot, or worse.

He needs to learn to take a break.
Let others choose what step to take.
A boot that's landed is a friend.
Not so, those waiting to descend.

He needs to find his footing place
where hiking boots won't claim that space.
When he learns patience saves his toes
he'll stay un-stepped on as he goes.

To learn the rules will take a while—
about three hikes in single file.
Thereafter, he will always be
a dog who boasts, "Won't Tread On Me."

by Lee Netzler