

## **Closed for Business**

My heart and mind are housed  
in a desolate, isolated cottage  
with ten locks on every door  
shutters closed on every window  
and every exit (and entrance) completely boarded.

I hide within dark and dusty rooms  
with an all-but burnt out candle  
as my only light with which to read  
and to re-read my self-defeating thoughts.  
Occasionally I trick myself into thinking  
that I see the hint of warm sunlight  
coming through from outside  
and I dare to try to hope.

Slowly, painfully,  
I remove each nailed-in plank  
covering the windows  
I desperately rip at the wood  
until my hands bleed  
I search every drawer, every pocket  
until I find every key.

But when I finally take  
that first, eager step outside  
I find a wasteland, devoid of sun  
there is no light, nor warmth  
just acid rain  
burning all my senses,  
and monsters in every shadow.

Defeated, I rebuild my defenses  
lock every door  
close the shutters  
nail boards on every entrance (and exit)  
until I can once again sit in silence  
wrap myself in a flimsy blanket  
and watch my candle slowly die.