

HEXAGRAM 2—**Natural Response**

Mrs. K, the only mom in the neighborhood who worked outside the home in the 60s, walked to Sears to catalog orders there.

What Mr. K did was unclear. Gloomy like Willy Loman, he came and went unnoticed. Their brood gallivanted coatless

in January. Our mom wondered why they never got sick. We fought things off all winter long. Still, we grew hardy once

the trees leafed out. Now that Sears is closing, I think back to that spring day. All of us kids in school a couple blocks away.

Mrs. K busy at the store, taking inventory. Mr. K a few doors down the street from our house in the upstairs bathroom slitting

his wrists. Our mom, facing that gruesome scene, scrubbed the red room clean before the family came back there again.

HEXAGRAM 9—**Nothing Can Be Done Externally**

Forget your grand schemes. Numerous
trips to the Apple Store at the busiest mall

during high holidays was not your first
clue at being stymied. Computer snafus

suggest solutions may come, but all
repairs take time. Sitting in gridlock

forces you to examine the lane
of self-importance. While you wait

for traffic to flow again, there's time
at least to tame the small things.

Wipe down the dashboard. Remove
the old park pass from the windshield.

Write a haiku on a fast food napkin
with a pen found on the floor mat:

Dense clouds. No rain.
Check your impulses.

HEXAGRAM 32—**The Continuance of Things**

You can freeze cut-up avocado if you saturate it first with lemon juice.

The citrus bath allows the key-lime colored pulp to endure until the day

you want to make guacamole, or reinvent a green goddess dressing.

Sometimes you save the hard oval inside the meat of the fruit. Prop up

the nut on toothpicks in a bowl of water. Wait weeks for germination.

Connections take time: friend, lover, mate, family. Acting on the laws

of the seed, the potent center might sprout roots. Might bear fruit years later.

Patience is a slow beast. The Chinese promise you this, without hesitation.

HEXAGRAM 34—**Nothing to Prove**

We made sport of her poor spelling,
eighth-grade education. Mother watched,
but never played the *Scrabble* game
mastered by our father who basked

unbeatable for decades. We children
worked at winning, came close, learned
lessons in futility. The old wizard could
not be taken down. On Sundays

he gathered us at the board to strategize
and conquer. During their long marriage
he once coaxed her to choose the seven
letters. She agreed, then trounced us all.

Emptied her tray with *S-T-O-P* on a triple
word score, abruptly ending the game.
Father was put in his place, mute, mortified.
She tempered her exuberance in the face

of his loss. Rose quietly from the table.
Signaled us not to gloat over her unexpected
victory. We understood restraint, the danger
of getting our father's goat.

HEXAGRAM 51—**Thunderbolt**

Vertical sear on the trunk of the silver
maple is still visible twenty years later.

We camped on the covered porch near
the tree to watch the sky darken. Wait

for the faraway rumbling to roll closer.
Even the adults were childlike, measuring

the distance of the storm in miles, counting
seconds between lightning strikes and thunder . . .

*One one-thousand, Two one-thousand,
Three one-thousand.* It was dangerous fun

guessing when to run inside the house where
we'd listen safely to the promised downpour.

Just before it happened, a dull metallic
taste in the mouth. A force that raised

the hair on our arms and necks. We shook
with the unpredictability of our lives when

the maple lit up in sync with the sound.