

## **Pachelbel's Canon in D major**

How did heaven happen upon such a hymn  
To the beauty, sadness, and mystery-  
Silencing all fear, all anger,  
Centering the soul in a melody so still,  
Each note a twinkling star?

When triumphs are forgotten,  
And lust lives only as an ember,  
And heart forgives all hearts-  
The infinity of time and space  
Sings this song.

## **From Giotto's Tower to the Ponte Vecchio**

Sunrise sweeps over the sleeping Tuscany city and  
first light baptizes a constellation of beginnings.  
Giotto conducts his tower symphony- by climbing 414 steps  
from middle ages to modernity! There Brunelleschi builds a duomo  
and from that high balcony, Ghiberti ponders those bronze gates.  
Did Lorenzo and Michelangelo savor that heavenly horizon?

Medieval walls shield, and gates of heaven haunt –  
Beatrice, Laura, Florence... unamesimo.  
That Tuscany terra and Arno acqua- this flood  
of genius and imagination energized, transfigured-  
a tapestry of language, music, marble, sonnets, sculptures.  
Philosophy flourished, and dignity- your name is mankind.  
A mason's son listens to talk of Donatello's *David*  
And Botticelli imagines raindrops as angels from Ponte Vecchio.  
A tower to humanity once inspired a near Platonic, perfect city.

## **A Maine Seascape**

A Maine seascape hangs slightly askew on living room wall.  
I see it every day, but I hardly see it at all.  
but today my craft has lost its mooring,  
and I watch that crash of white-capped poetry assault the shore,  
and study those smears of tintured oil on surf-plumed canvas  
creating that sky-blue sea, those autumn colored sands,  
and weed-green tidal pools hidden among huge garnet rocks  
where as a child I climbed and jumped and hid  
during those forever sun-swept summers. And now-

the single color of lead scratched on this icy bed  
must near create that garnished rock and sea-  
those tidal pools of seasoned memory-  
a red lobster boat bobbing beyond the painted rocks,  
an orange-billed tern splashing into fish-filled seas.

## **A Day Unlike Any Other**

*written as a celebration of mankind's favorite insect,  
the Monarch Butterfly*

I don't remember being a worm  
or a caterpillar- nothing like that,  
nor those ten days as a chrysalis- nothing at all.  
My story, like yours, is about shifts in time  
and place and color, about flights and discoveries.  
My small brain, like yours, is rapt- for me  
resolved to finding milkweed, nectar, a mate,  
or flying day after day for 2500 miles.

I was born in Maine where milkweed is abundant  
and spent an uneventful week as an egg.  
I never met my parents, but I had many siblings.  
We ate the milkweed down to its stalk,  
and became very plump before something  
very strange and marvelous happened-  
That week of slumber and transformation-

and that morning I woke up and spread wings!

One week I was crawling on a half-eaten leaf.  
Two weeks later I was sailing over New England  
hills and valleys and mountains- to where?  
There was no *where*, only the daily flight.  
I often stopped to nectar at all those wildflowers  
and in your wonderful gardens. Thank you!  
Some days I flew over schools, churches, cities,  
But there were better days, too.

Some nights I was joined by others. We huddled together  
like that night in the pines on a sandy island beach.  
I remember flying along a shore, and then just water,  
and that long flight above the lapping waves  
with no land in sight. Was I scared? No.  
Mostly I flew alone, following the updraft of ridgelines.  
Then one day, the mountains disappeared,  
and my journey was punishing, often into the wind.

When flowers and nectar were hard to find- I flew on.  
When thunderstorms and rain knocked me off course  
and out of the sky, I hid, just like my siblings,  
some who had been blown into the vast ocean  
or were struck by lightning or shredded by squalls.  
I never thought about those things,  
never imagined or feared. Every day  
had its challenges. Every day was the same.

I drifted across your state borders, unnoticed, even  
that wall by the river, and barely observed children  
and adults trying to cross that river and wall.  
Soon there were mountains again, and I flew on worn,  
torn wings, flew fewer hours. The days were shorter.

I followed those mountains for hundreds of miles,  
and one day I saw many of my kind flying in the distance.  
Where were they going?

The next day was unlike any other! I flew along a ridge  
at 10,000 feet, and below me was a blanket of orange!  
I dropped down to see- thousands, no millions like me  
clinging to oyamel fir trees on the mountain sides  
in the cool mountain air. I nestled in with so many others  
of my family and became part of that orange blanket  
as the western sunset and our family became one.

## **Your Roads**

*Written for Earth Day 2019 about one  
of my favorite creatures- the Box Turtle-  
a species that can live for 100 years.*

May I talk to you from my lowly orbit  
as if my chatter were like yours?  
I tell you- your roads, your roads  
have scarred our forests and tarred our graves.  
Your humpbacked, flashy steel is our executioner.  
Listen. I wandered those once green forests  
and your manure-spattered old post roads  
which allowed my plodding venture, poking around  
searching for food, for another boxed-in soul,  
yes, for another, when spring clouds showered.

Now I am old. You have stopped and carried me many times  
in the direction I was trudging. Thank you!  
Now your tarmac criss-crossings are everywhere,  
and make my every mile a crossing's curse.  
My downturned eyes retreat into a worthless shell.

My years are so many, my memories so raw.  
Where you burned and breached my woods,  
I try to hide in creekside flora amongst the worms.  
Now twenty years alone, I've seen no other  
except my smashed sister crushed in the middle of your road.