

## Transformation

Larva mimics bird droppings  
gray streaked, creamy lumps  
pupa readies for permutation

chrysalis tears, reveals  
iridescent blue bands of  
Red-spotted Purple Admiral

flutters within mixed woodlands  
seeks nourishment from  
tree sap, fermented fruit, mud puddles

Person mimics most popular  
employs social media savvy  
laughs, cries, guarded within

one's social circle  
seeks acceptance, tests parameters  
longs for self-identity

hormonal changes, adjustments  
with hope of emerging a  
reliant, beautiful butterfly

#

## Bittersweet

Yellow round capsules adorn  
Oriental Bittersweet,  
a string of golden pearls  
envelopes her bare neck.  
Lush red berries hide within  
like her flaming crimson lips  
allure potential lovers,  
disguise her fatal kiss.  
Leaves block out sunlight.  
Shades drawn, cast shadows,  
her bedroom, a sealed tomb.

Woody vines climb,  
girdle host tree.  
Her loving embrace until  
passion engulfs her victim.  
Limbs entwine, cling,  
bruise, scar trunks.  
Finger nails, thorns  
scratch and puncture.  
Each seeks to live while  
choking out life.

#

## Merciless Storm

Emergency sirens blared, too late to evacuate.  
They sought shelter in first floor bathroom,  
threw blankets and pillows over their bodies,  
anxiously awaited the hurricane's arrival,  
clutched each other, mumbled prayers.

Rain pelted the roof with deafening drum beats,  
surf surged and devoured the beach,  
wind howled, roared like a hungry beast.  
Shingles tore, surrendered, flew away.  
Windows succumbed to pressure, exploded.  
Battered walls buckled, moaned, wailed like victims under siege.

Wooden boards splintered,  
concrete cracked and crumbled.  
They ducked their heads, closed their eyes,  
pressed their hands over their ears.  
Their bodies involuntarily trembled,  
clutched each other, mumbled prayers

They waited for the light of day,  
what seemed an eternity.  
Finally they emerged to painful discoveries--  
houses dismantled, property ruined,  
buildings lifted off foundations.  
Who is missing among the rubble?

Downed trees, power lines,  
debris scattered for miles,  
infrastructure crippled.  
What is salvageable?  
Lives devastated, uncontrollable tears,  
clutched each other, mumbled prayers.

Clouds part, sunlight streams  
with the hope to rebuild.

#

## Cast Iron Mother

She shared your vacant, stone stare,  
chasms of worry, seared skin, tattered clothes.  
1936, she labored north on US Highway 101,  
picked cotton till her raw hands bled.  
2018, you wait tables, flip burgers,  
scrub floors, clerk at retail stores.  
Like her, you refuse to give in  
to hopelessness or fall victim  
to exploitation.

Your safe haven is your car as you  
clutch the steering wheel and gape at  
appliance cardboard box dwellings  
under Jackson Street Bridge.  
Twisting your hair between your fingers,  
you stand with swollen feet in long  
unemployment and soup kitchen lines  
with your children, baby birds  
cry to be fed, tug at your skirt.

Like Florence Owens Thompson,  
“The Migrant Mother,” you are a  
tribute to the strength and  
perseverance of motherhood.  
You are a hardy, well-seasoned  
cast iron skillet made to endure  
difficult times, you sacrifice  
to care for your family.

#

## Harmonious Healer

Turquoise connects sky blues to aquamarine seas,  
life giving elements of air and water.  
As my self-confidence ebbs and flows,  
I seek seclusion on a tropical island  
surrounded by soothing, tepid, blue-green waters.  
Rainbow and tetra fish shimmer  
peacefully beneath the surface.  
Rhythmic waves lap, spiritual lullabies,  
attempt to calm my inner turmoil.

My thoughts churn like ocean surf  
until wisdom glows, resembles  
dazzling, bioluminescence swirls  
like a scene from "Avatar."  
I taste, smell salty spray,  
transport myself to pristine Alaskan waters.  
Stunning, Turquoise tinted, glacial ice  
awakens my emotions as  
ice calves into northern waters.  
My worries break off, drift away,  
melt in warmer seas.

Turquoise, a master healer,  
that adorns my physical being  
while it purifies my mind,  
realigns my energy,  
restores my inner harmony.

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