

## Grandfather Tree

Sturdy, ancient Grandfather tree  
As I look at you and you look at me  
Your bark is peeling and withered with time  
Your branches curl and twist and wind

I am but a sapling, awed by your might  
My skin clear and soft, my complexion bright  
My limbs staying straight and my roots loose and free  
Compared to you, mighty Grandfather tree

Your top has been broken and withered with age  
The hole in your trunk is only a page  
Of your story, dear old Grandfather tree  
If I listen close, will you tell it to me?

Moss grows on your skin like the sun freckles mine  
Around your trunk stem the new-growing vines  
Your color is mottled with greens, browns, and grays  
Yet you stand, proud to be seen in that way

Fauna sleep in your branch, by your roots wake  
From you, food and shelter they take  
They do not see a wise tree-man  
But a protector from this wild, free land

So, tower over me Grandfather tree  
As I look at you and we both agree  
I use not your food or home for my own  
But I lean against you, and don't feel so alone.

## My Mother's Wedding Dress

The careful, whispering swish of fabric trailing on the floor  
The grip of Tulle in my hands  
Mysterious, edged with lace and sewn with love  
Made in love, because of love, for love  
Made to dance in, to be adored in  
Pure, stainless beauty  
Adorned in floating awe

A dress that follows, that listens  
Ivory buttons dance up the arched back  
Velvet, Taffeta, Brocade  
None are the same  
As this feather-light, memory-heavy skirt  
Twirling, laughing  
First dance, just a step behind  
Oh the joy I feel!  
The passion!  
The beginnings!  
Emotion this fabric has been steeped in  
Strong enough to last decades  
Centuries

And I know it  
I sense it  
As I walk my own path  
Down my own stairs  
Into my own beloved's arms  
The dress remembers  
It murmurs the same as it did for her  
Wishes of contentment  
Blessings of fruitfulness  
They worked well in her favor

Now she comes  
To a similar event  
Though dressed now in mature clothes  
A different dress  
A different time  
Brightness in her eyes  
Tears of sadness  
Of longing  
Of leaving  
Tears of joy  
Of new lives  
Of new promises

The time has come

Whiteness, tenderness covering my head  
Doors open  
Bells ring  
People sigh  
Gardenia blooms in hand  
As I straighten  
And walk to my new life  
To a new time  
In my mother's wedding dress

## May

May is the month of the windchimes  
Coming out from their winter's slumber  
The dust being blown off of their chiming parts  
A melodic cacophony in a box

May's windchimes vary in size, shape, and style  
From ornate silvery pipes emitting cathedral peals  
To colored glass bottles clinking into each other  
All adding to the music of May

May's song is unique to it  
A song of waking, stretching, and being  
Not tinged with melancholic tones of winter's grasp  
Like the sleepy month of March

No, May is brightness and sun  
May is porch fronts swept out for the first time in the season  
May is the first summer flowers  
Exuding the fragrance of spring

May is bees lazily buzzing  
No more awake than a student in the morning  
Bumbling along  
So true to name and action

And May is a month of anticipation  
Of the first flecks of summer and heat  
Glimpsed memories of the vacation a year before  
Seems so tantalizingly close

May is the sticky taste of sugar  
In a fresh wave of beckoning air  
May is pulling out tank tops and shorts  
To bask in a sun not seen in months

May is a time of cleaning, and airing  
When the old must leave and be washed  
Or let go of in a ten-cent sale  
To whoever walks up to the plastic table first

## Control

Hey  
This TV  
It's broken  
I think  
Or maybe it's this  
Remote

I hit it  
Once or twice  
On my bedstand  
I can't reach very far  
Connected to these IV's

No  
I can't remember  
Where those scars are from  
I have them on my hands too  
Some short ones  
Mostly jagged and long

I woke up with them  
Back when they weren't scars  
But inflamed cuts  
I think I might have  
Lost control

See?  
This one parallels  
The line of freckles  
Right here  
I do remember some  
Of this one

I was  
Reading, I think  
The newspaper  
It was dark outside  
My coffee  
Getting cold  
I wasn't feeling right  
That night  
The cold-blood of the world  
Painted on my paper  
In black ink

It made me sad  
To read the news

It made me  
Afraid  
My vision kind of  
Tunneled  
There was blackness  
Foamy and frothy  
I was cracking  
And the bubbly dark came in  
I didn't want it to  
Spinning, spinning, breaking  
I thought  
I've lost all  
Control

And then I woke up  
Like I told you before  
When you came last week  
With your notebook  
Your suit  
Your pen  
I tell you every time  
How I found a gash on my leg  
Perfectly drawn  
Beside my freckles

They think it will happen again  
They think I'll  
Crack  
But I won't  
I got myself some tape  
Good tape  
To stick me back together  
Push over the breaks  
No  
That dark won't get in anymore  
I hope  
I won't lose  
Control

Oh wait  
Before you go  
Please  
Ask someone to fix this-  
My remote  
Something's broken  
It should be fixed  
Broken things  
Want to get better  
I think

I'd like to be able to press  
These buttons  
And make the TV  
Listen to me  
It's the only thing that does  
I wish it would again  
So I don't lose

My only

Control.

## A Path of Life

A misty, forested path began  
And she, a babe, walked hand in hand  
With a faceless stranger made in and of  
All-knowing, tender, unchanging love

Soft moccasins on un-calloused feet  
A drumming rhythm her paws did beat  
Naive, she danced, 'neath the sun's bright heat  
Not another soul on her path to meet

Unbeknownst to her, her helper left  
Faded away, leaving her bereft  
She did not know, but she had grown  
The seeds of adolescence swiftly sown

And so alone, she carried on  
With one less smile, and a solemn song  
The path grew harder as she went along  
To hope beyond hope she wouldn't choose wrong

Her cheeks became smudged as the dry dust flew  
Her shoes began ripping, being less than new  
Every so often she would fall with a cry  
As no one was there to hold her upright

But no tear would fall from the aging girl's face  
She would neither stop nor slacken her pace  
And when the storms came she received them with grace  
Her strength and resilience could not be effaced

As night encircled, the animals came  
Snarling and stalking, a predator's game  
And though she would tremble and pale in fear  
Her flickering fire they would not come near

Up hill, and up mountain, down valley so deep  
The fruits of adulthood she soon would reap  
She had bargains to make, promises to keep  
The means to the end never come cheap

And still she is traipsing, through forested pine  
With bare feet roughened and strengthened with time  
Hoping and praying with every sunrise she sees  
That girl, that young woman - I am her, she is me