

## **Seasons Shaping Future Self**

Trying to stand, she braces for what's to come.  
Wounding words fall off, cascading to the earth,  
like a maple shedding its leaves in autumn.  
She resists being molded by the critics' mirth.

Focused, she presses on through winter's trials,  
then plunges to the depths of her deepest fears.  
Finally surfacing with new confidence, she smiles,  
discerns a vanishing paralysis, the kind that had lasted years.

She enters the lavish freedom of spring,  
holds fast to the source of creative relief.  
Her pen gives birth to new hope & beginning;  
faith-filled phrases that resist every thief.

Summer's brightness awakens greater contentment.  
Rising, she meets her new self, no longer bent.

## Sudden Storm

I survived the long hot summer,  
even the monsoon,  
those driving rains & maniacal winds  
that blew me over onto an unyielding,  
cement patio, shattering  
my serene daydreams.

Violently, I trembled,  
as I watched companions  
grappling for secure branches.  
Yet they floated away  
without a whimper,  
plunged into swift-moving waters.

Oh, that sudden storm.

Now, a year later,  
I finally awaken  
from a type of hibernation,  
having tolerated the season of sameness, enduring  
gusts of blistering heat, even at night.

Tonight, fully awake,  
I'm ready for anything.  
Thunder gently vibrates twigs & pebbles beneath me;  
a tender massage pulls at my roots.

The autumn breeze brings a new season.  
Pensive, my mind explores minute details with clarity,  
sees a panorama of colorful & promising forecasts  
collapsing & expanding like a changing kaleidoscope.  
Alert now & vigilant like a watchtower scout,  
my stalk stands at attention, even on an incline.

## The Sacrifice

I tried to imagine what it was like for you to carry the cruel burden  
of every bullet hitting its mark in war,  
of every careless word hitting its mark in a person,  
of every misplaced thought  
    bringing death to a dream, a relationship, a cherished hope,  
of every unspoken desire slinking toward  
    a clandestine rendezvous with lust or greed or rebellion or fear.

I tried to imagine your trial  
    with the ultimate judge at the sentencing phase.  
    You're so innocent.  
    They're so guilty.  
Yet you receive the maximum penalty anyway.

Now you envision events from thousands of years.  
Your brain whirls like a paint wheel of faces and scars  
    dissolving and combining into stark images,  
    a person hysterically weeping,  
    a city ablaze,  
    a nation in confusion.  
You experience all their suffering.

You relive Auschwitz, the Killing Fields, Hiroshima's mushroom cloud.  
You see the burnt, the buried, the bereaved, the broken,  
    a mass of humanity from Cain and Abel to the Twin Towers crying out for justice,  
    and you have become that justice,  
    donning it like a badge of honor on your bruised and bleeding body  
    until it is finished.

The torn flesh,  
the dislocated joints,  
the labored attempts to take one breath,  
    would have been enough,  
    but this  
  
    separation,  
    face-to-face with absolute abandonment.

Vitality drains like a sieve from every open wound;  
    your body lies limp like a garment tossed indifferently in a dark corner.  
There is nothing more to say, nothing more to do . . .

    until a new passion effortlessly breaks through the boulder.

## Rapture

The sun awakens,  
Its rays, small flashlights  
    through arcadia door windows  
        probe the darkest corners.

A missing earring emerges.  
An elusive ballpoint  
    surrenders from the shadows.

The forgotten name of a new client  
    swims beneath a myriad of unrelated facts,  
suddenly breaks the surface of her sleepy brain,  
    warning of a critical deadline.

This incessant searching for misplaced things  
    chains her to the trivial.  
    Minutes tiptoe unobtrusively into a timeless chasm.

The dressing room was adorned with paneled mahogany.  
    A simple skylight reveals a parade of crimson-tinged cumulus.

She notices a single damp towel,  
    balanced by moisture,  
    hugging the edge of a narrow bench,  
        like a climber grasping the only rock that would save her.

Then a more discriminating light  
    shatters the pettiness of the moment.

She always knew this day would come,  
    once imagined this instant would find her  
        engrossed in shaping another's destiny.  
Instead, she finds herself  
    endlessly circling the maze of the ordinary.

But now, everything and nothing matters.

She feels every quickened, pulsing beat,  
    exhilarated with a kind of vitality  
        that is almost painful.

She is wild with anticipation.

Rising quickly,  
    every molecule,  
        restless at being truly free,  
penetrates through timber & tar,  
    shingles & glass,  
    zigzagging through solidity  
        that is no longer unyielding.

A searing radiance loves her upward.

## The Sparrow

*In honor of Robert Frost*

A curious sparrow perches tenuously just beyond my feet,  
clinging precariously to the wooden edge of an upstairs patio deck.  
Strategically overlooking the place where walkway & entrance meet,  
it listens as a rasping door greets the clatter of heels on cold concrete.  
Then turning, it watches the bobbing of a solitary pen peck

my journal with ebony color, elegant loops & rhythmic strokes,  
the only movement evident in the stoic stillness of focused concentration.  
The sparrow stares quizzically. A couple passes, oblivious to other folks  
eating lunch, debating sides, or diminishing themselves with small talk & smokes.  
Then, the vigilant sparrow turns to observe this couple's strange migration

exiting together, a single formation! Now pecking the prey (my poor shoe laces),  
the sparrow decides to make sure I'm still breathing, so silent & motionless I appear  
except for a determined pen & mind dizzily circling distant, remarkable places  
coming in for a landing with each period. Alerted now by a second quizzical face  
pecking my laces, I scan the horizon where two hands become one & then

disappear.