

## **On An Autumn Afternoon**

Leaves tremble in the wind  
As I sit, looking in private wonder at the shadowed ground  
Where white billowing clouds pass overhead.  
I feel the warmth soak under my skin.  
We have been blessed by the sun this year;  
Too blessed—its days are numbered.  
I stare at a blade of grass,  
Slowly changing green to brown  
And suddenly I see the universe—a network of lines and color, of the complex configuration of  
cells, of the hustle and bustle of a thousand microscopic organisms. I see life blooming  
and blossoming from every corner. I feel the sweaty pulse of life. I see creatures large  
and small drinking, feasting, mating, sleeping, tingling, wiggling, wriggling, loving—  
And suddenly I understand—

A leaf falls.  
The epiphany is lost.  
I feel cold.  
I am reminded that winter is coming on fast.  
And dinner is ready,  
And laundry needs done,  
And dishes need washed,  
And . . .

## **Wisdom from a Stone**

Would I were a stone on the shore of life  
I'd sit inside the ebb and flow and feel  
waves crash upon my head.  
Some days I would be cast about,  
battered, beaten, buried.  
Sand and salt alike would have their way with me,  
and some days I would feel that I was ever sinking.  
I cannot say that it would be easy,  
sometimes I'd feel tempest struck  
and wonder if God himself was vengeful  
when it seemed likely I would drown.

But on those days when the tide recedes in its flow  
and leaves me in the sun to dry, I reflect,  
take stock of what's been lost,  
and realize with piercing clarity all that I've won.

Here I sit:  
a polished stone, battle-tested, bold, eye-catching, smooth.  
The scrapes and scratches all burnished out;  
the scars now a quilt of my identity.  
I am me, risen out above the sea  
to proclaim with shining pride all that I have been through;  
all that I have survived:  
all that makes me beautiful.