



Breathing
**AFRICAN
AIR**

Karin Steyn

I am inspired by words
music
poetry
stories
conversations.
Voices take me on a journey into myself.
I live.
I learn.
I am a child of Africa, breathing African Air.

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Greatest Theft of Time

Today the sun sneaked silently
to brighten up the sky;
All the while I caught in sleep
missed Time stealing by.

Slowly awakened in darkness
with heavy curtains drawn tight;
No clock had I to guide me
so I drew the folds for light.

I marvelled at the brilliance:
a perfect day divine;
The sundial showed its shadow,
revealing the hidden crime.

With tiptoed steps and stealthy feet
to grass in shades of green;
I watched in awe, in wonderment, as
the sun embraced the scene.

I was lazy like a river resting –
a silent partner to the crime;
my sleeping late's certainly
the greatest theft of time.

where were the sharks

let us swim she said
and i was keen
as the waves
danced
on the beach
and
we raced each other
through the water
both laughing
at
the sunny
day
and stopped from tiredness
and turned to see
our bright towels
on
the sandy
beach
where we had left them
i was shocked to
see them gone
and
i scanned the
beach
till I found them far
from where we had
begun to
swim
in dancing
waves
high on the crest we
bobbed up and down
treading dark

and
thick water
salt concentration
treading dark dark
and thick thick
salt
water in
awe
for we were warned of
the warm currents
the same day
we
swam from the
shore
we were caught in a
trough with the walls
of the red
sea
on either
side
looming like a force
of doom and then
she said to
me
just kick like
mad
and i did as we
swam along the
trough against
a
mightier
force
much greater than my
will and tired
jelly legs

so
i stopped and
thought
it useless to try
and swim against
the strength of
the
sea current
then
she came back and said
hold on to my
ankles and
kick
the best you
can
and i did but with
no strength left to
carry on
and
she knew me
well
enough to know that
she was fighting
more than just
a
sea current
so
she linked our arms and
smiled at me and
suddenly
gave
me courage
not
to just give in but
to give it one

more chance and
i
waited for
her
to tell me how to
tread the dark and
thick thick salt
hell
in which we
were
she waited for the
wave to build and
take us to
the
crest again
but
intervened with the
force saying that
we swim through
it
through the red
sea
wall towards the beach
two arms linked tight
side by side
and
started to
count
three two one i heard
and went head first
through the wall
ripped
from her by
a
powerful force while

tumbling tumbling
head over heels
and
heels over head
to
be spat out on the
sea sand sea strand
spat out like
the
man jona
through
the enormous mouth of
the sea to lie
there alive
on
the sandy
beach
two friends side by side
no strength had i
but up she
got
and took me
to
a swimming pool with
water feather
light and said
let
us swim a
while
it is therapy
and it would take
away the
fear
for the sea
and

the deep dark salty
death-spent minutes
we both had
just
been to been
through
i listened to her
wisdom and thought
about the
day
and wondered
where
my wisdom was as
i was stunned to
silence all
the
time she was
there
saving my life and
hers but my life
came first and
i
never thought
of
showing gratitude
as i was stunned
to silence all
that
night and for
the
rest of my life and
now as twenty
five years have
passed
i still dream

of
treading the dark and
thick salt water
and wake and
wonder
where were the
sharks
where were the sharks

God's Grace upon the Wind

A sweltering sultry sky sends back heat
that boomerangs against its perfect bow;
Red hotness hangs motionless in the street
as sweat drops trickle timelessly and slow
across already dampened skin and mood –
Tired eyes are distant and words are less
while the morning stretches across subdued
and bothered faces all in battle dress;
Zephyr softly sweeps the air and gently
touching refreshes weary mind and soul –
Susurrant voices silent, intently
wait upon salvation from the red coal
greenhouse decree shamelessly now chagrined
at Clemency: God's grace upon the wind.

My Name is Ozymandias

Standing still in military uniform,
he sneered down at the men saluting him –
who measured his worth by rank – and with pride
he accepted, traversing each great stride
to direct him far away from fixed eyes
as hands dropped in unison brow to thighs;
Passing the man's authority austere,
marching to distance – fearing to be near.

There he walked, like royalty amongst men;
he was mighty Ramses commanding them,
saying 'My name is Ozymandias';
obstreperously as demanding as
Silence – suffering through years of consequence,
shattered to bury his belligerence.

Crossing the Border

Watching with wide-eyed emotions through the pane,
I sought to see his identity as he stood on grey paving –
noon mourning for my loss and my great pain;
nestled in my throat a stone, stressed and strained, while I was
waving ...

And the bus rolled away leaving him standing
like a rock-solid guarantee that everything would be changing,
like before but different, more demanding;
rolling south to a land of birth that soon I would be engaging.

Rolling south to a land of birth barely known;
tears held back for the drought of distance to the border, which
was crossed –
a traitor seeking greener grass than home –
my pain was his, sharing the same agony in what we'd lost.

Ending at the midnight station, where we reached
our destination, mother and siblings disembarking life's ride;
starting over where his voice had beseeched
alms for his family till he crossed the same border to our side.

What is this Mess?

lickety-split
tongue wagers loss
while the doom-laden
cone
drips demoralizing
in cradle-hand
dilly-dallying
in the scorching day's
sun
mother makes a frowning
face as she wipes
the ice-cream clean
on the park bench where
she
sits Saturday mornings
with her good friends
on derrière
tongue-warfare raging
hot
juicy gossip that is
idle as brain
what is this mess
she asks and wipes the
cream
meltedness as if the
child should've known
the messy mouth
and sticky hands getting
more
love than mother's toddler

... and there it lies

One small step then a giant leap;
one piercing scream stuns the silence
as the small insignificant
thing buzzes by.

One big can of insecticide;
one long squirt of poison aimed at
the small and insignificant
thing buzzing by.

The spinning, buzzing on the sill
increases as the substance kills
the small insignificant thing
... and there it lies.

Sleeping feet trailing

Sleeping feet trail along dust laden stoep
Stoic masks incarnated against sun
Sharp glints dance blinding crowds of deadened eyes
Shining on empty minds and work undone
Stereotypical uniform weaves
Slowly one side to the other trudging
Sleeping feet trailing along one by one
Still the day stretches across the school
Stirring emotions stripped bare for six hours
Six long senseless hours for soul-drained teens

for cecilia

baggy bones
and skinny pants
she stands and smiles
each day
and i ask
what have i done to
deserve
her
nothing can reward
such obedience
such understanding
such patient love
and i want
to give her her
heart's desire ...
but what would that be
she asks
for nothing
you have made it possible
for me to
feed her
there is no
weight
in these
two small words
what you have
done for me
for my child
can never be
expressed
but know
my heart overflows

To acquaintances and expectations

Thank you to acquaintances, I must say,
who expect so much from me in each day;
who manipulate my very being,
shaping the long day's hours without seeing
I too have things to do, dead-ends to meet,
people to see and my tasks to complete;
I accommodate their needs for their sake,
while, blinded to sacrifices I make –
they expect so much from me, their ensign,
continue to demand, ask and assign.

Thank you to acquaintances, I must say,
who ignore all my sighs along the way;
my exhaustion and faltered expressions
in response to their organized sessions;
I, the gullible fool, who never learned
to say no; I, the oiled machine, who yearned
for everyone to go away and find
a way to serve themselves; but with eyes blind
they continue to delegate – and yet
they so deliberately choose to forget
their skills, all well-developed, but unused,
their priv'leges, all ignored and abused;
t'was necessary to sit back and wait,
to insist upon and anticipate.

I wish not to bear your burden or heed
to all that you say; I wish not to bleed
for the pains and suff'ring I put into
my dedication, commitment for you.
No more can I serve you, tend to your needs;
no more can I adhere to all your pleads.
Go, but return when I am of no use;
return because you care, not to abuse;
think of me as useless; don't expect me

to do a single thing; just think of me,
visit me, contemplate my acquaintance –
then I will thank you for your acceptance.
Thank you to acquaintances, I must say,
for friendship and respect throughout each day.

Love Toils the Land

The sun-drenched day stretched out her limbs
across the sun-burnt fields and land;
with shiny sweat on sun-baked skin
man toiled across the distant hill
to the porch where she stood waiting,
standing fair in the shade so pale.

Where she stood waiting, fair and pale,
indulging in whims, resting limbs,
hormone levels never waiting –
fluctuating like heat on land;
expecting him from o'er the hill
to the shade that cooled off her skin.

To the shade that cooled off her skin
he came soon to his wife so pale;
from toiling across distant hill
with heavy feet and weary limbs,
toiling the hill upon his land
to the porch where she stood waiting.

To the porch where she stood waiting
in the shade with her cooled off skin,
her fears and hopes in distant land
standing fair in the shade so pale
to wait for him with laboured limbs
who was toiling a distant hill.

He'd work all day across the hill,
while she sat in the shade waiting;
till he returned with weary limbs
and sweat on his labour-spent skin –
she who bore his child, fair and pale,

waited as he worked fields and land.

Far from her people, from her land,
she lived on land, in dale, on hill;
bearing his child so fair and pale
in the shade where she stood waiting
while sweat was on labour-spent skin
to provide for her resting limbs.

Love toils the land with weary limbs,
pale sweat is on labour-spent skin –
o'er dale and hill she keeps waiting.

Ode To Marcelle

Where blossoms bud in flower bed
and grass grows green to summer's tune,
with toe nails painted ruby red
she wiles away her afternoon.
Though love and sorrow often dined
at banquets of her life, her eyes
twinkle softly as rays of hope
and wisdom answers back in kind;
through laughter, care and gentle sighs
she knows to wait for strength to cope.

Fall

Brownish and yellow and orange and lime,
they fall to the ground, they fall to the ground –
tossing and turning without any sound,
they fall to the ground, without any sound;
they fall through the air, without wasting time.

Swirling and twirling and whirling they fall,
laying bare branches and laying bare tree;
dropping without stopping, gently, gently,
aimlessly, patiently, shamelessly free,
spinning and twisting in featherlike fall.

Atonement

You came into my life and broke it down, down, down –
parts apiece and pieces partly paining, paining;
sinking deeper and deeper 'til I slowly drown –
refraining, refraining from gaining, from gaining.

Picking up the pieces and replacing the pain –
straining, straining; with gentle fingers I learn to
patch each part apiece and piece apart, try to gain
whatever is good, whatever is fine and true.

Sitting silently in solitude, I'm waiting
for the memory to fade slowly in my mind,
still hoping for atonement, my breath abating:
for whispered pardon, for peace; I sit still resigned.

Universal Love

Face to face against prejudice I stand,
dehumanised and victimised, alone;
hiding from the grave, as Death toils the land:
bewild'ring bloodlust; destiny unknown.

Hollow-eyed I wait, muted by the pain;
this policy of harsh ethnic cleansing
must end! Cleanse the horrors etched in my brain –
numb the hurt and the fear that I'm sensing.

Don't cultivate ignorance, or notions
preconceived; don't violate Innocence
or quench thirst with genocidal potions;
don't laugh at cruelty or children that wince.

Make me feel special, rather than despised;
universal love in my heart incised.

Curtain Call

My very worth I give to you today;
I, the stretching band, have come to please you –
emotions so unstable ricochet
against worn and tattered nerves that subdue
resentment; I present civility:
a spirit that molds and festers inside;
emotions at stake, this ability
to be your peacemaker, Jeekyll and Hyde.

I am a chameleon on your lap;
waiting, I quietly observe your needs –
your affliction and addiction entrap
my discomfort; my mood and balance bleeds:
explode my happiness and peace of mind
show'ring spitting sparks, fiery waterfall,
disfiguring my world, leaving me blind
to offensive behaviour; curtain call.

Success lies within your head

Take the word *don't* right out of your mind
and pretend that it doesn't exist;
it's negative matter and blind,
breaking down if allowed to persist.

Your thoughts control what you manifest,
creating your life's reality;
your optimism should be professed
with a determined mentality.

Replace *don't* with *want* and believe it,
live your life without being misled –
in a proactive way achieve it
for your success lies within your head.

Time is Limited

You're a victim of your choices,
not a victim of all your time;
when you think you don't have any,
you've committed another crime.

Blaming it on being busy,
you've stolen a second to lie;
it's a perfect sign of weakness –
an excuse for you to stand by.

Your time should never control you
and you shouldn't become its slave;
master all your priorities
and time won't be something to crave.

Time honestly is limited –
stop making excuses all day;
there's never a shortage of time
when you plan well ahead and pray.

Consequences weigh heavily

While they weave and wander each day
Building or breaking, way on way;
They suffer, they struggle, they lose
And they strain, they do as they choose,
With nerves of steel or nerves that fray.

Fear and anger governs each day,
And willfully wallowing they
Point their long fingers to accuse
While they weave and wander.

Consequences of each day weigh
Heavily on those who don't pray;
Faith is the truth and not a ruse
For those who think before they choose
To be wary and wise each day
While they weave and wander.

Breathing African Air

Flightless dust bathes the air as the ostrich
dances on two-toed feet to Africa's beat;
musty air hangs humid and motionless
'til rain quenches the parched and red-hot heat –
this is Africa: the birthplace of man.

A rainbow stretches across basalt cliffs
and cascading falls; painted rock faces
imprint chronicles of man migrating
across desert, savannah, terraces –
this is Africa: the motion of man.

Small streams meander till rapids beat rock;
turbulent whitewater erodes the way,
rumbling and tumbling to lose themselves in
cascading cataracts' mist of spray –
this is Africa: unquenched quest of man.

On blue-green savannah in haze of heat
the springbok stands a statue and gazes;
zebra camouflaged in shaded dry bush
flicks flies as robust buffalo grazes –
this is Africa: the treasure of man.

Marula mampoer makes monkey mellow;
while elephants forage fermented fruit,
even-toed giraffe spreads and almost splits,
an amazing feat for legs, to lap near coot –
this is Africa: for Safari man.

The albatross dynamically soars;
nose-tubed in anticipation it breathes
salt laden air, polluted like the depths,

where dolphin dances and dives, wrestles, wreathes –
this is Africa: the refuse for man.

Death in rotting carcasses call raptors
in their hordes, to scavenge the battlefields
where fear falls prey to foe; the hyena
eats as a volt of vultures pry for yields –
this is Africa, the wake waits for man.

i hear africa

the hoopoe calls hoop-hoop
hoop-hoop-hoop, on forest
tree trunk where high-pitched grey
hornbill ignores the kwe
of a grey go-away;
cicada swarms where sun
light warms and plays tymbals;
zizzing a song, crickets
chirp cheerily all
summer long; the turtle
dove mourns the heat and coos
its love song to the breeze;
green garden gnat and red
dotted lady bird – mute
marvels of the insect
world – wing their way from tree
to tree, in dappled shade
of green and yellow grass
hides mounds of red ground where
thousands of termites work;
the anteater's long snout
goes about to forage
for the delicacy
of the veld; the whinny
and braying bark of a
zebra standing near while
blue wildebeest ga-noo
in the arid karoo
and graze in the heat haze;
for days the lazy cat,
camouflaged, yawns and waits
for feline fury to
fetch the food and thunders

out a roar to warn the
cackling hyenas and
hears their manic panic
ooooh-whoop ooooo-whoop ooooo-whoop,
waiting in pack nearby;
the sun soon sets in shades
on africa and an
elephant bull trumpets
his call to a herd who
hears the rumble and chirps
to the rhythm of the
beat; the hippo submerged
surfaces and grunts on
land to roam on sand where
a crocodile once tanned
in the sun; the flutter
of feathers dust the ground
and the owl's hoo-hoopooo
breaks the silence of dark;
a distant lone jackal
howls to the moon and my
africa says goodnight!

Another

Another day newly born
And another chance given,
To eradicate sin and
Forgive and be forgiven.

Another way to perceive
With gratitude possessions –
What's stored within our living –
While curbing all obsessions.

Another day of choices
Devising new ambition,
Contributing to life with
Hope and humble submission.

Another way to deliver
Service to humanity,
Bestowing dignity to
Life's greater diversity.

Whatever is true, noble
And right; whatever is pure
And lovely; whatever is
Praiseworthy in life, ensure

To keep it in heart and mind;
For life's a short fiery spark,
A bright streak across the sky
Till toil and thought fades to dark.

They say

People say a multitude of things,
Yet no-one knows who they are;
Gullible ears listen foolishly –
Loose tongues addressing the ear.

Who are these people we seldom ask,
No-one can say who they are;
They say – they say; Yes, the people say
And we believe ev'ry word.

Statistics and facts and opinions
Bombard us, our minds steam-rolled;
With ev'rything we're constantly told,
We hem and haw and hen-peck.

to loraine

i cannot cry yet
because it may
be too soon
or too
late
the stone
in my throat
defines me in
this moment stretching
on to stop pain
that lingers
as a
guest
who is
unwelcome
reminiscence
of the C word hangs
desperately
in the late
evening
air
many
reminders
ambiguous
memories of our
childhood and so
i must ask
what it
is
that makes
me most sad
today

Let it rain

I really don't mind that the day is all gray,
That the car washed earlier is spotted with spray
Showered from the heavens and not hose in hand,
That the fish pond filled is water wasted unplanned.

I've waited for this day to blend the heat haze
With the distant horizon's atmospheric grays;
Dust-burdened air sees a cleaning has begun –
As net of mist and moods enshroud the risen sun.

Let it rain, let it rain, let it rain all day;
Misty morning, spray adorning hours allay
Dry spells of summer days – I really don't mind
If the day is moist and my laundry falls behind.

Lockdown

Widened walls draw closer to me
As I stare through thin rimmed glasses
And a window pane to sightsee
A green garden and the passers
Who seem care-free.

Breathing deeply, I hold my breath,
Count to ten and wait in fear for
The symptom to manifest; Death
Evades me and I breathe out more
This dampened breath.

Masked faces pass the house and stare
At me, a window-dressed living
Mannequin, who's in want of air,
Fresh air they breathe that's life-giving
And everywhere

But here where I sit and smother;
I'm choking in isolation
One minute after another
Without hope of liberation
To recover.

Feed my fear and make me feel that
Somehow this too shall pass and I
Won't need to wait here to combat
Another level unlifted by
A bureaucrat.

Fight the good fight

I sink into a pit of
Despondency,
With a mind reeling in blue
Melancholy;
Shades of disappointment are
Smothering me
Deep in the darkened depths of
Cold apathy –
Then opens up a treasure
Chest filled with light
And hope of endurance shines:
Fight the good fight.

Hampered by inheritance
I've been set free
From all teaching and preaching
Permanently.
Too young to stagnate, vision
Seems fairly dimmed –
Too old to learn new tricks, all
Synapses trimmed.
Where to from here and what next
To do, the plight;
Sheer faith in His purpose, I'll
Fight the good fight.

Sagan and Shakespeare's musings

All the Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena
And all the men and women merely players;
Our posturings, our imagined self-importance,
The delusion that we have some privileged position
In the Universe are challenged
As we come and go and play many parts.

Every aspect of Nature reveals a deep mystery and touches
Our sense of wonder and awe;
Yet, we look at man and consider that
He is composed chiefly of nothing.
We mewl and puke, whine and creep,
We sigh like a furnace;
We are jealous and quick in quarrel.
We age – and with age
Comes wisdom, woe and death.

Coming home

I watch you from my kitchen door
As you indulge in the abundance
Of earthworms and insects.

You flock to my garden cautiously,
And, in curious wonderment,
I watch you dine on my lawn.

Ironically, my presence is invasive;
So, as one flock, you lift to the air
On grey wings of exaltation.

You leave the neighbourhood
Calling with cacophonous flair
Your surprise and consternation.

You're quite the nuisance, Hadedal!
Yet, you've become a part of my
Daily routine! And every night,

When I hear your distant raucous
Approaching, I smile gently because
I know: you're coming home.

While pigeons coo in a tree nearby, I'll never forget

The tall eucalyptus trees
Alongside grandpa's farmhouse
Where dusty outbuildings stood
Sheltered in silent shade.

The kitchen door that led to
The stoep with rusted table
And isolated long-drop
Behind grandpa's old garage.

The overgrown pergola
Weighed down by climbers and bees,
Where we spent many a day
Playing games with darts and cards.

The two-spoor track from the house
To the gate's red wagon wheels
Where I first learned how to drive
Grandpa's automatic Chev.

Those wagon wheels where we sat
Waiting for cars to drive past
So that we could all take turns
To own cars that came our way.

The rondavel gatherings
And the singing and dancing;
Music playing till late at night
To enrich our burdened souls.

The old coal stove that brought warmth
To Grandma's morning kitchen
Where we sat at the table
Eating rusks and drinking tea.

The smell of freshly baked bread,
Home-made cookies in round tins,
And pantry with bottled fruit
For dessert with Sunday's meal.

Cranking the old phone handle
And the crackling party line
Waiting for the farm code to ring
Three short and one much longer.

Built-in cupboards covered with
Striped or floral wallpaper
With old treasures kept inside,
Like hats and plastic flowers.

Old rooms with old double beds
For family to visit;
Empty wardrobes with Bible,
Notebooks and diction'ry.

Grandma's lavender bedroom
Filled with an eerie silence;
All her wall to wall cupboards
And her many size-three shoes.

While pigeons coo in a tree
Nearby, I'll never forget
Vlakdrif at Magaliesberg
Where Grandpa's land now lies bare.

Half way

There are days when I'm half way down and up –
I'm never quite sure which is which;
I'll be sinking into the muck and mire
While climbing up for air to breathe.

Don't try to take on my reality
Or understand the pain I feel
From outside my small glass spherical world
When emotions swallow me whole.

There are days when I'm half way down the hole
While eddying alone on the edge;
The vortex keeps pulling me down, yet I'm
Kicking against the downward drag.

There are days when I'm half way up or down –
I'm still quite unsure which is which;
Always trying to climb from muck and mire
Always reaching for air to breathe.

Peace so sublime

I stood and considered the mountain
Of worry heaped in my mind;
Of the unimportant thoughts that gain
Momentum in all they find.

I stood and considered the horizon
And the blinkers on my eyes
And the preconditioned true lies in
Which my full confidence sighs.

I stood and considered my ravine
Of love that lies unmeasured;
The width and depth of it quite unseen,
Neglected and untreasured.

I stood and considered the fountain
Of my youth flowing away,
My future like quicksand uncertain,
The fears I cannot allay.

In standing and consideration
I've wasted my time so dear;
Life without faith is invitation
For the devil to appear.

I stood and considered the vast sea
Of faith that flowed over time;
I've fought a battle to victory
And gained sweet peace so sublime.

breathe life

bent like a windswept tree
your burdened soul walks
with past ghosts
that dim your light

can you lift your head
can you roll your shoulders back
and stand tall
to breathe in deeply
and exhale slowly
the inevitability of it all

empty your bitter chalice
what's done is done
what's been no longer is
move towards better choices

drop the exhausting
obsessiveness
of what's holding you back
of what's holding you down
and cultivate a heart of gratitude
for these blessings

accumulated experiences that have given you wisdom
physical strength to serve others in need
faith that you are safe to walk out the door
time for rest
time to heal
guidance from people and pictures and books and poems
love and sorrow
work
patience to endure

free will
the abundance of opportunity
if only you would look
and mostly
the promise of life eternal

breathe life
regardless of your circumstances
inhale deeply
exhale slowly

The death of my brother (25 - 26 October 2021)

I never knew death the way
I did until I touched your cold,
clammy skin.

You pushed yourself up to sit
on the smeared floor, bewildered. So
I asked you

What was wrong – my endearing
Attempt to soothe you and calm my fear
And alarm.

You struggled to rise after
The fall, but you had no strength. So
I held you.

I took the facecloth and wiped
The black blood from your mouth and told
You to wipe

Your face, but impatiently
You blew the black blood from your nose,
Dropped your chin

And rested it on your chest.
I watched you as you closed your eyes
For a while.

I placed the pillow behind
Your head and helped you to lie down
On the floor.

I had no idea you were
Fighting desp'rately for your life.
I stood up

Knowing, in that moment, I
Could no longer help you and turned
To my son

To find his sister, to call
The ambulance. I then left you
To find air.

My dear husband stayed with you,
And just before midnight, you breathed
Your last breath.

He sat with stunned Mother while
I was outside breathing in the
Helplessness.

I didn't know, because he
Never said a word. It was so
Unexpected.

My children and I waited
In the dark and cold wind for a
Distant siren

And lights to arrive. We had
Mixed feelings of hope and fear and
Deep concern.

When they came, I took Mom to
Her room and we sat in the dark
Unaware.

My son's face said it all as
He entered the room. We didn't
Understand.

He whispered the fatal words
In all his brokenness in my
Doubtful ear.

Denial made me move from
Mother and my son to seek truth –
Certainty.

It was all confirmed. So I
Returned to hold Mother's hand and
Break the news.

I had to repeat my words
Before she responded. I watched
Shock and pain

Pull her face apart as she
Processed my bitter words. For a
Few minutes

She sat in disbelief and
I seemed a stranger. She asked if
It was true.

After an eternity
The three at last turned to leave. Still,
I waited.

Courage was slow to move me
To your room to lift the duvet
From your face.

I watched you as you slept
On that cold, cold floor – my heart
In pieces.

An hour later, wheels rolled
To your room and you were lifted
And taken

Away.

Parting with Mother (76)

Feet follow swiftly ghost trails of habit
To stand at Mother's closed door
With news of something insignificant –
But she's not there anymore.

A seven year rhythm was established
For a heart wanting to share;
I'm left alone to ponder loss again
And left in total despair.

I quietly question life's teachings and
Reflect on what's left behind;
I consider the paths ahead of me
And the lessons undefined.

Moving forward with courage overwhelms –
The school of life has taught this once before;
I'm shaped and fashioned to wait for the day
To walk again through her door.

All because you sat with me

Consider for a moment
You could come and sit with me
To tell me about your problems,
Share a painful memory.

Assume I paid attention
To the troubled words you said;
Imagine I sympathized
With the bitter tears you shed.

Suppose you found solace
Keeping company with me,
And found peace in that moment
When all your pain was set free.

Imagine how you would feel
When your burden became light –
All because you sat with me
And I understood your plight.

May you be an ear for those
Who sit closely next to you;
May you lift their spirits much
Higher than I could ever do!

When perspectives differ

You know you don't see yourself
The way other people do.
Retinas are influenced by
Past experiences askew.

You may think you remember,
But tainted is your belief;
Perception alter's the mind's eye –
You're guessing at what you perceive.

The smallest of discrepancy
Confuses your mind's eye;
You think you saw, you think you know –
But other truths you can't deny.

Be soft and kind and forgiving
As you walk through each day;
Life's brief and we all have a blunt blade
And a Titan to slay.