

Thoughts On Paper

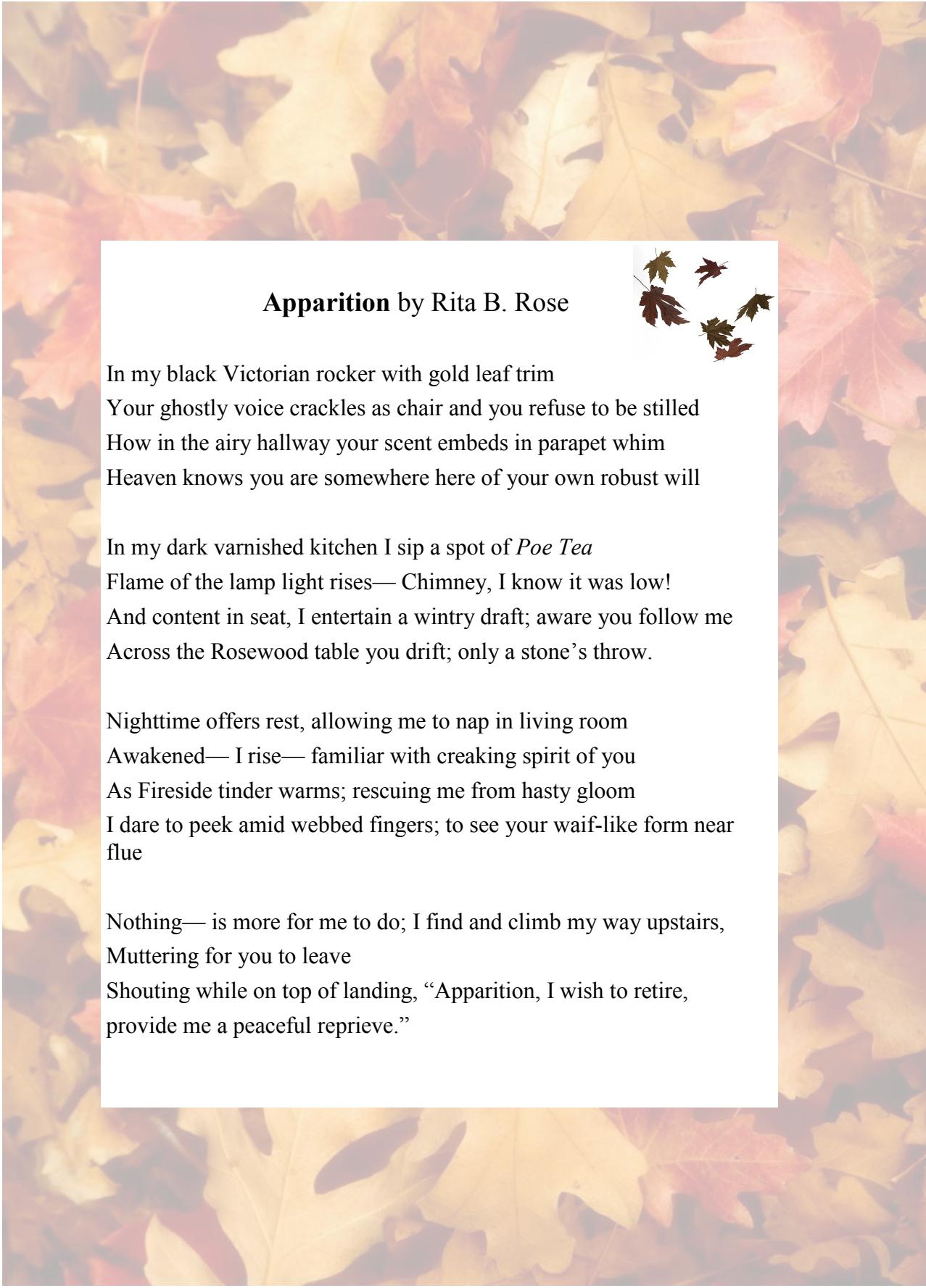
WBPL's Writers Group Quarterly Journal

FALL IS UPON US

**"Autumn shows us
how beautiful it is
to let things go."**

—UNKNOWN

...A LITTLE RAIN MUST FALL



Apparition by Rita B. Rose



In my black Victorian rocker with gold leaf trim
Your ghostly voice crackles as chair and you refuse to be stilled
How in the airy hallway your scent embeds in parapet whim
Heaven knows you are somewhere here of your own robust will

In my dark varnished kitchen I sip a spot of *Poe Tea*
Flame of the lamp light rises— Chimney, I know it was low!
And content in seat, I entertain a wintry draft; aware you follow me
Across the Rosewood table you drift; only a stone's throw.

Nighttime offers rest, allowing me to nap in living room
Awakened— I rise— familiar with creaking spirit of you
As Fireside tinder warms; rescuing me from hasty gloom
I dare to peek amid webbed fingers; to see your waif-like form near flue

Nothing— is more for me to do; I find and climb my way upstairs,
Muttering for you to leave
Shouting while on top of landing, “Apparition, I wish to retire,
provide me a peaceful reprieve.”

Halloween Dreams by Rita B. Rose

Purple moons full of Witches flying high
Shadows across a darkened sky
Black Cats riding on thick corn silk brooms
Bats dwelling, in number, in cave-like tombs

Pumpkins crawling from their vines;
Hollows for eyes and teeth in jagged lines
Skeletons creamy white bones all aglow
Dancing to caws of '*Nevermore*' from a flock of Crows

Goblins and Ghouls giving us a scare
Invading homes and the outdoors, taking all—
unaware
Do keep a watchful eye, do not fall asleep
For a Ghost may come and pull your hair— ah, the creep!
On a cool autumns frightful Halloween night



"Seasonal" by Julie Newman

The seasons change
They always do.

It renews the future, but does not let go of the past.
As the year passes by, certain types of weather, the smell of the air, the
chill on my flesh, bring back memories of time gone by.

Oh how I wish I could have done or said things differently to my parents.
All the love stored within me, I didn't even know I had.

Mom, Dad, I wish I could of told you then, what I know now.

As the seasons pass, those certain sentimental times of the year, I yearn to
have done things differently.

I see you, mom, sitting on my small porch with a blanket around your legs,
taking in the cool air and beauty of the sky in March of 1994.

It wasn't Autumn. It was the end of a really cold and icy winter.
The temperature was mild as if an Autumn day.

I asked if you wanted to come indoors, but you shook your head no.

I had no idea I would only have you for another few weeks.

Each year, as the weather changes so often, not having to be that time of
year, just the smell of the fresh cool air, not quite warm or freezing.

A hint of some greenery and birds re-emerging.

A song for you, mom.

I wish I could of told you what is in my heart now. It was there all the time,
but kept it to myself.

A song for Dad, too.

I see him as I last saw him, resting in complete peace.

I love you Dad. Should of said that more.

Growing up, marriage, responsibility, put a hold on what never should go
dormant.

So much love wasted, when I could of told you that more often.

The seasons change, but my love will not.

The air today is like the day of you sitting on my porch, mom.

My memories of all your energy and love for your family.

I smile, it is a sad smile, because things have changed.

Just like the seasons, the air and essences of life, things change.

As they do, I think of you and dad with love.

As the seasons change, I think about sameness and more of the same.

Mom, Dad, I want something better.

To be a Kid Again by Tony Trapanotto

Oh, how I wish I could go back in time and be a kid again. To relive all those wonderful and special moments as a child. As I sit here on this beautiful summer day in my back yard. I close my eyes and in my mind wander back in time, 70 years ago.

And I can see it all so clearly. The day that my dad brought me my first bike, and the fun time I had with him teaching me to ride it. And how every time I fell down, he would get me back up on it until was that good to ride it without his help.

The first time dad took me fishing, out on the lake in a row boat, just the two of us. And the very first fish that I caught, only 4 inches long. I wanted to take it home and have mom cook it for supper. Dad and I decided it wasn't big enough to feed us three, so back into the water the fish went.

Than there was little league baseball, that I joined and dad never missed any of my games. He was always there cheering me on. And the look on his face, when I hit a home run. We celebrated by going to the ice cream shop.

Then there was mom, she was the love of my life. I can still see the beauty in her face, and that lovely smile she always had. How she always took care of me when I was sick, sat by my bed to comfort me. And every night would read me a bed time story, and the gentle kiss she gave me, as she said good night son. The many times she would take me to school, hold my hand as we walked. And as I was ready to go inside of the school building, the hug and kiss that she gave me, I still can feel it today.

The homemade cakes, pies and cookies mom always baked, I can still see her there in the kitchen in her apron and can still remember the aroma of her baking.

Then at Christmas time, it was always mom, dad and I who decorated the tree. I remember when I couldn't reach the top of the tree to put on the star, both my mom and dad lifting me to do so.

I then opened my eyes, looked around, there was nothing there but me and the silence of the yard. Oh, how I wish I could once again sit down with my dad and mom and thank them for giving me such a wonderful childhood.

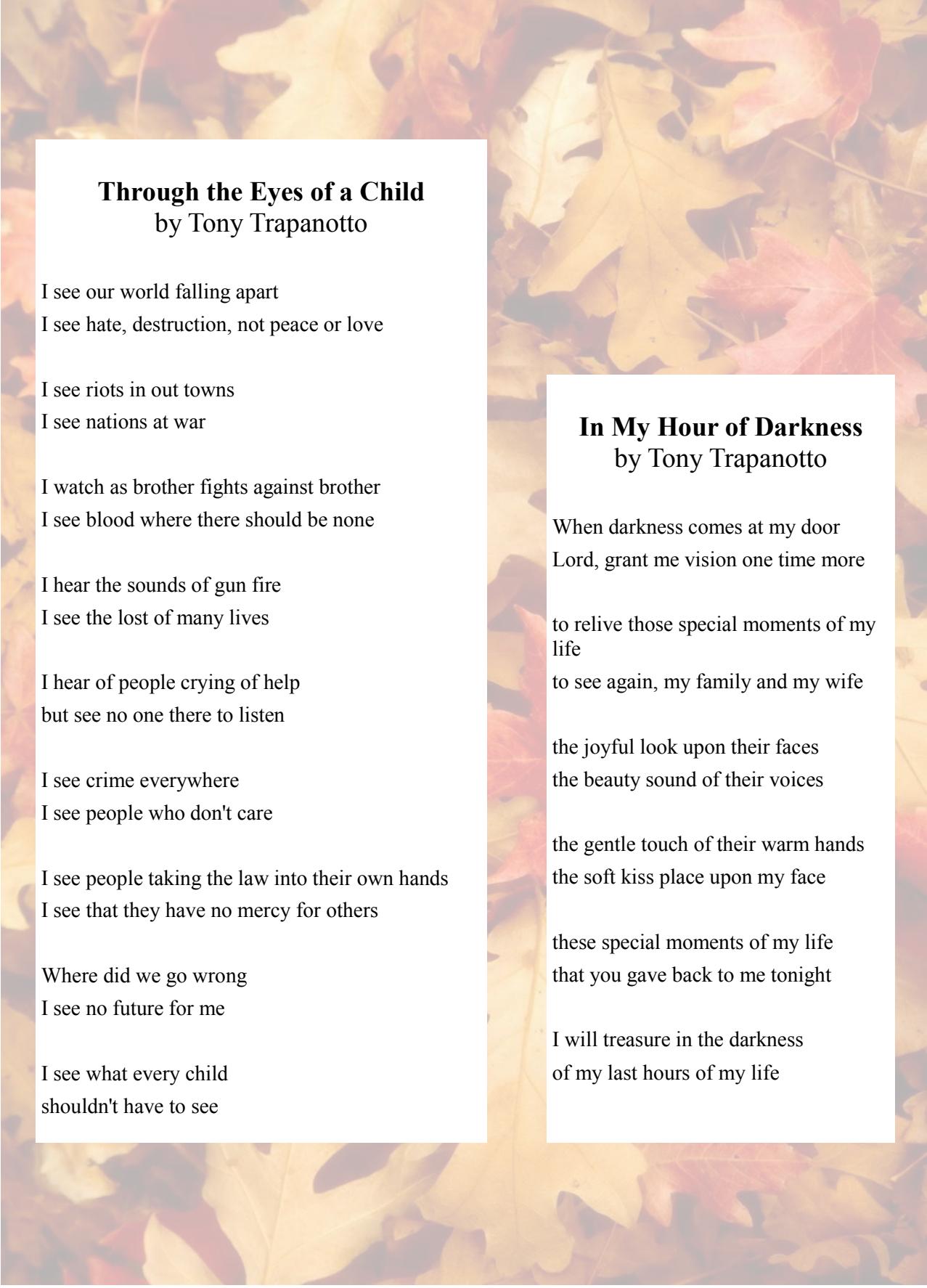
Yes, I can and I will, as once again I sit back in my chair, close my eyes and travel back 70 years.

The Eye of the Storm by Patricia Soper

The hurricane's cyclonic turmoil
plundered our shores on my birthday.
I saw Her as Goddess, Kali, destroyer of illusion,
a powerful ally to metaphorically sweep away
lopsided castles built on shifting sands,
not solid, nourishing, nor true.
Her receding tides, I'd envisioned, would leave
a pure empty stillness, a clean slate of fresh beginning.
As Her roaring tempest ferociously flung debris,
I was surprisingly at peace.

But once Her winds calmed, I no longer felt serene.
She had stirred things up and, in Her wake, left
a chaotic heap of memories, sharp edges and open wounds.
As She headed north, I heard Her say,
"You can't just whisk pain away.
It must be felt, wept over, accepted and
forgiven...really, really, forgiven.
That is the only way to truly be free.
Remember your peace

When my wrath swirled 'round you
threatening destruction.
Learn from those trees that survived my winds.
Choose carefully where and with whom you plant your roots.
Then do not fear storms nor resist the gale.
Bend gracefully, dance with it
and you too will remain standing."



Through the Eyes of a Child

by Tony Trapanotto

I see our world falling apart
I see hate, destruction, not peace or love

I see riots in out towns
I see nations at war

I watch as brother fights against brother
I see blood where there should be none

I hear the sounds of gun fire
I see the lost of many lives

I hear of people crying of help
but see no one there to listen

I see crime everywhere
I see people who don't care

I see people taking the law into their own hands
I see that they have no mercy for others

Where did we go wrong
I see no future for me

I see what every child
shouldn't have to see

In My Hour of Darkness

by Tony Trapanotto

When darkness comes at my door
Lord, grant me vision one time more

to relive those special moments of my life
to see again, my family and my wife

the joyful look upon their faces
the beauty sound of their voices

the gentle touch of their warm hands
the soft kiss place upon my face

these special moments of my life
that you gave back to me tonight

I will treasure in the darkness
of my last hours of my life

One Too Many Missiles in October by Carlo Frank Calo

October 22, 1962

I listen to my President, remembering the desk I crawled under in sixth grade, just four years ago...

I taste the smell of ammonia from the floor, dried gum raking my hair, hands clasped behind my neck as I glance – as I always do during these “duck and cover drills” – at the fallout shelter sign outside.

“It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba... as an attack...on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.”

There are many words which continue. I hear none. I think about that fallout shelter sign leading to the basement stairway, supposedly to safety... *For some reason this yellow and black symbol, signifying sanctuary, is my obsession. Every time I see one – they’re everywhere; the school, the library, the A&P; even Our Lady of Grace Church – I feel anything but safe.*

JFK felt this way too, but not nearly as much as his brother.

October 21, 1962, one day before JFK’s televised speech; one week after America’s U2 spy plane confirmation of Russian missiles in Cuba...

He’s sitting in the Oval Office, alone with Bobby. Today’s meetings are over. Many more will follow.

Jack, at the windows behind his desk, lights his cigar. The sun’s warmth is welcome against the chill.
“Jack, for Christ’s sake will you answer my damn question?”

“What Bobby? I’m sorry, I was just thinking about that game last summer, you nearly busted my arm, remember?”

The furrows on Bobby’s brow melt and reappear at the corners of his mouth as, despite himself, he flashes his – famous to others, embarrassing to him – toothy grin. “Yes, Jack.”

“I had a clear angle on Ted and you came out of nowhere.”

“Jack...”

“I was positioned to stop him, no question about it and you”

“Jack...”

“You were on me like white on rice and”

"Dammit Jack, enough!"

"Jesus, what do we do now Bobby?"

"I'll tell you what we don't do. We don't invade."

Robert Kennedy had spent his brother's presidency less as Attorney General and more as trusted advisor. Even this portrayal was understated. Bobby, the younger brother, was essentially Father Confessor. In this role he learned of Jack's dalliances and – always in conflict with his own higher angel – granted absolution freely. He understood both the height of Jack's strengths and the depth of his weaknesses, ignoring the latter to enable the former. Enabling though, has its price, both for the donor and the recipient.

October 27, 1962

US Navy destroyers track Soviet submarines as they loom, furtively, east of Cuba – southeast of Florida. Under orders from their Commander in Chief – a former Navy man himself – the mission of the US ships is to keep the Russian subs in their sights – and off guard – at all costs. Ideally, force them to surface to minimize their threat. The destroyers know the submarines stalk for advantage. They do not know that each one carries fully armed nuclear torpedoes.

As the Russian submariners try to stay hidden from their US hunters, conditions in the subs deteriorate. Day after day they remain underwater, in sweltering 50 degree Celsius – 120 degree Fahrenheit heat, rationed to just one glass of water a day.

Above them, the U.S. navy are 'hunting by exhaustion' – trying to force the Soviet subs to come to the surface to recharge their batteries.

After a week of constant harassment and unbroken stress from American destroyers the Russian sub Commanders are stretched to the limits of their endurance. Further complicating their predicament, they are burdened by a political and military hierarchy managed by misinformation from Moscow and poor communication throughout their chain of command. Add to that a natural state of claustrophobic paranoia and they are at the breaking point. When the US fleet's destroyers drop their pseudo depth charges – bombs no more powerful than hand grenades, designed to agitate and confuse – too close too often at the wrong sub at the wrong time, its Commander believes it is under an actual attack. He believes they are at war and at risk of it being destroyed without releasing his own weapons in retaliation. He reacts, in desperation, with the sub's nuclear torpedo and a 15 kiloton Hiroshima-sized blast.

Continued.....

Within seconds, millions of degrees of heat, hurricane force winds, and a mushroom cloud covering an area the size of San Francisco annihilate every US destroyer, each American sailor and all living things within its reach.

Hell is now unleashed. Mutually assured destruction is a reality. The pall of death, immediate and consuming, gradually spreads over the next few days, weeks, months and years. It begins with firestorms and the injection of about 147 million tons of soot into the atmosphere. The soot then spreads around the stratosphere plunging the Earth into darkness and a nuclear winter and radiation sickness from fallout. Inexorably, the malignancy extends across continents – and decades – a nuclear winter decimating the earth's population of humans, as well as flora and fauna. A holocaust of unimaginable proportions.

October 27, 2018

The streets are empty this morning. I look up and down with my one good eye, the other gone opaque after chancing a look at the fireball that October day, long past. The remnants of last night's harvesting are scattered, rat heads and tails the only evidence of the monthly ritual enjoyed by the children. Though it still disgusts me I know they need to have their fun. What else have they got? Just like chicken, or so they say, and after all, meat is a rarity these days. As I walk alone, I remember the date on the hand-made calendar that I have been keeping, against all reason (as if there were any meaningful point in keeping track). Still, today would have been my kid brother's 68th birthday. He died on his 12th. Somehow, I survived, but few remain on these lonely streets. I have no family, no friends and no country – surely not the one from over fifty years ago. Yet some things resist change, like the rotting yellowish-black YIELD sign on the corner. I curse this irony, --- the only remaining cars mangled; some fused grotesquely into that signpost. I wish those other yellow and black signs, those which aroused fear, had instead inspired the patience, those many years ago, for both sides – to yield



3.5

by Nicole Peters

His little feet hit the ground running—the air was still—the trails empty
An autumn walk through the forest, the “*big dark woods*” is what he calls it
“*Are there wolves mama?*” he asks on the way?
“*Perhaps*” I say, his eyes grow wide with excitement
All of the stories he holds in his imagination, none scarier than the real world
I know the days are growing shorter, not because it’s autumn but because a growing boy will
grow too fast
He didn’t want to leave the house, but I asked him to come, to go on an adventure
I knew once we got there, dogs in tow, he would look around in amazement
A new dirt trail, new discoveries
The immensity of nature - the fallen trees - the great pond - leaves turning colors
“*What’s this mama!*” -So many questions
Children remind us of wonder, we forget - we know everything
I wanted him to go
so mama doesn’t have to bear the stunted days just yet
But cherish each moment
watching the leaves fall to the ground
One by one - each memory unique
When all the leaves are gathered on the ground, we walk right over them
We forget their journey
We forget the leaves still holding on
We forget the present moment
“*Pay attention mama!*”
To the questions
To the curiosity
To the time.....



About the Authors' Six Word Biographies

Carlo Frank Calo: **Pondering life's journey; enjoying it more!**

Christine Colligan: **Star-drop in a cosmic sea.**

Megan Goff: **Always writing from the heart.**

Julie Newman: **Perceptive, honest, kind and open-minded.**

Nicole Peters: **Forging the road ahead, endless skies.**

Katherine Regina: **Shelving books, writing stories, exploring worlds.**

R.B. Rose: **Resilient, Perceptive, Honest, Kind, Sage**

Patricia Soper: **Discovering mystical wisdom in nature & crone-hood.**

Tony Trapanotto: **Energetic, Helpful, Friend, Companion, Dad, Grandparent**

J. Roland Sullivan: **Womb to crypt; so be it!**

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