

Autumn Song

By Adrienne Wolfert

The sugar maple,
In her headdress of yellow leaves,
refuses to yield
her summer
ornaments.

The hollow of her space
filled with denser light,
her roots found deeper veins
to quench an endless thirst.

Some secret life
blessed
her...

But the winds slip
round, pulling the pins
till the feathers fall

even though she's a princess
casting seeds in the ice.
The chartreuse sun cools.

Sewing the Duck

By Adrienne Wolfert

No longer the city woman
she thought herself,
she was heralded
as befits a fallen queen---
in the court of the henhouse,
by a cacophony of cackles, clucks,
and the quacks of a duck.

On milky country mornings
spread like linen,
she offered the eggs---
fluffs of down clinging
from the chalice of her hands.

My school clothes warmed
by the black iron stove
as I ate the duck egg
for “extra strength”
against the cold.

That year, the preserves
she had canned from the garden
she planted and weeded
and gathered, went soon.
We churned butter,
ate cabbage soup
and stale bread
warmed in the oven

and tore newspapers for the outhouse.
At night, donning boots and scarves,
lighting the lantern,
we took the dog
to scare off raccoons.

I never knew
why the duck
but when the ‘coon
ripped open
its breast,

she laid it on her lap,
a feathery apron
and sewed it together.

I had to thread the needle.

The Poet

By Adrienne Wolfert

In the shrunken hours
humans usually surrender
to relentless visions,

she sits at the kitchen table
under the Tiffany lamp
writing poetry.

The world, she knows, is loaned,
the furnishings rented
and the length of the lease
non-negotiable.
She cannot sleep
in the clock's silence.

She feels fatigue,
It is her robe
and slippers.
She holds the warm
coffee mug between
her cold hands
as the female flesh
holds the male.
She unfolds
experience
like a ball
of socks,
trying it
for fit.

Her head lowers.
What is love?
The word is only
possibility. "I
resent love."
She scratches out the line.
I stretch it out
like strudel dough,

fill it
with what I have.
Never enough.
She writes,
“A complex
of cellular behavior
opposite of cancer.”

Why did that write itself?
Cancer multiplies,
love divides.
One leads to death.
One to longevity.

“The body hates itself.
the body loves itself.”
That is the difference.

In their beds,
her children lengthen,
are her poems
to life.
Why do things leap
out on their own?
“There is no truth.
Only view.”

“Everything’s true.” She writes.