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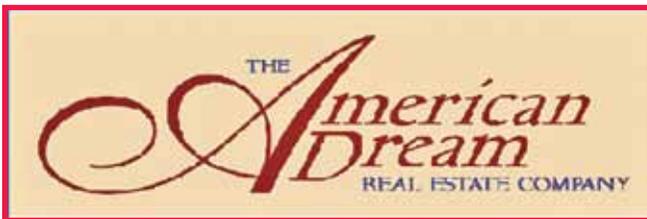
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Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

Oh my, it’s the hump side of summer, sigh. For school-aged children it is a time for boredom to set in. While watching my ten year old grandson this week, he looked at me wistfully and poised the question, “Grandma, what was it like when you were a little girl?” “Well, what part of it would you like to know about?” “All of it,” he replied, “and what was it like without electronics?” (Making me feel ancient.)

So we talked about playing outside more, less stranger danger, less air conditioning, fewer toys, black and white and then colored television with only three channels, running through the sprinklers, sledding, using our imaginations; all my looking through rose-colored glasses good stuff.

“But grandma what was it like not having electronics?” “It was just fine.” “But grandma, how did you live without tablets, or kindles or smart phones or Xboxes?” “Well, how do you live without a MOB transit sender?” “A what?” “A MOB transit sender.” “What’s a MOB?” “Mortal on board transit sender, how do you live without one of those? It’s a device that will be invented in the future.” “Grandma, do you mean a teleporter, why would I need a teleporter?” “Well, so you could move across long distances instantly.” “Really grandma, I have planes and cars for that.” (Why isn’t this working like I imagined?)

“Now you almost get it. Grandma didn’t know about cell phones, so land phones were just fine at that point and time.” “Okay grandma, but I bet you still missed not having electronics.” (Okay, kid I give up.) I am now in need of a MOB transit sender to be used on a ten year old SMACK (smart alec kid).

So here I am in the hump days of summer, being tortured by my grandson and loving it. You have to admit, MOB transit sender, pretty good imagination for someone who grew up without the new electronics.

Having meaningful conversations with grandchildren are precious, with or without electronics. Maybe I should’ve sent him an email explaining it... no, not the same. The looks on his face during our conversations would’ve been missed; yes we did just fine with a limited amount of electronics. Where life is good and face to face conversations are priceless. Now where did I put my kindle?

Voices

from the Valleys of the Nemaha
Photographer & Publisher, Stephen Hassler

Writers This Month

Devon Adams
Carol Carpenter
Merri Johnson
Lee Nyberg
Marilyn Woerth
Thank You

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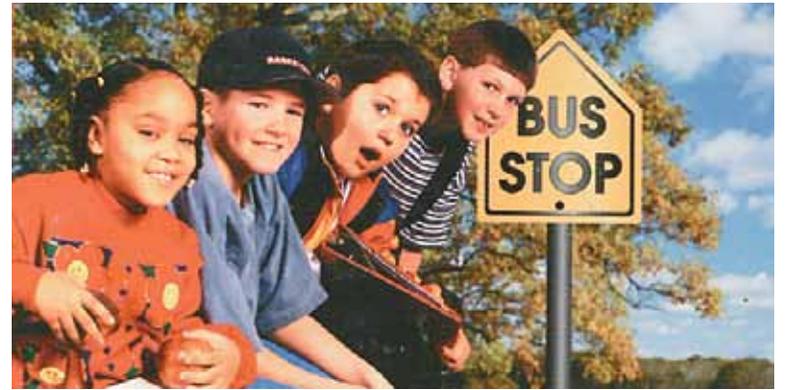
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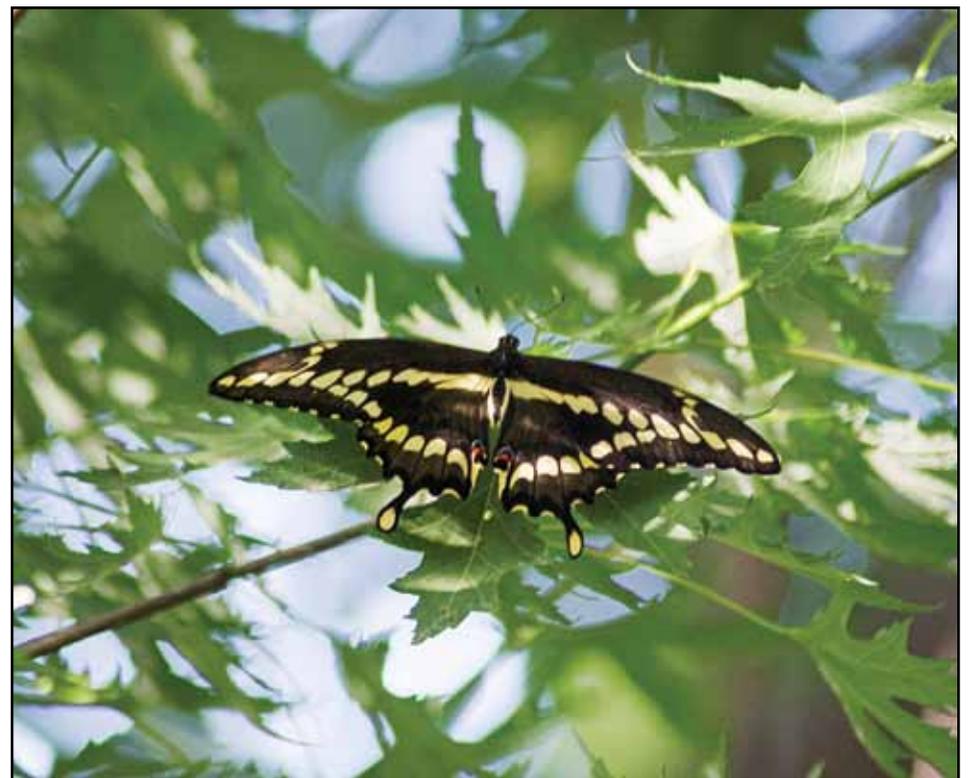
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Roadside Elderberry



This Swallowtail butterfly selected a leaf on my little Maple tree around 6:30 one evening and remained there until after 9:00 the next morning.

Poetry by Devon Adams

SHADOWS IN THE DARK

There is a darker
in the dark, lying
next to buildings,
trees and cars.
On cloudy nights,
a glow suffused
from distant cities
and silent stars
conspires to draw
the shapes of things
we know by daylight.
In the black vault
of a velvet night,
without a moon,
deeper shades prevail,
leaving us to ponder
realities and shadow lies.

SILVER SIDES

Across the creek, high
on the shoulder of the
rugged bluff, is a line
of oaks that guards the
edge of the sky, like
soldiers in camouflage.
In winter, their bones
are black and sharp,
cutting the sullen storms
into whispering fragments.
In summer, they wear suits
of leathery leaves that slap
against the waves of wind
that cross the prairie, like
endless tides of dry water.
But the beauty of this battle
is the silver undersides of
the leaves, that flash defiance
to the turbulence that turns
the trees to metal flares.

OVER THE HILL

It seems ironic
that we spend
our lives climbing
up the hill, defeating
obstacles or going
around them, being
happy or not, rich or
not, busy or bored,
scared or serene,
healthy or sickly,
spending or saving,
moving or remodeling,
renting or buying.
And then what?
Just when we're
standing on top
of the hill, we see
that it's not level.
Our shaky old legs
cannot resist the
gravity of age, as
they pull us down
the slippery slope.

TIME ENOUGH

Measured only in years, our lives
are puny compared to rocks and
planets, and the galaxies, and
bursting stars whose light comes
from back behind the first days of
gas and dust and radiation. But we
really have only now and not tomorrow,
until today is yesterday. Sometimes
a minute is all the time you have,
but it is time enough to love.

RUNNING DOG

There are limits to his yard,
but sometimes he forgets, and
follows his nose into random
adventures that lead to trouble.
Unaware and unrepentant,
he reacts to triggers buried
deep within the ancient genes
from wilder wolves than he.
He knows no right or wrong,
only the direction of his senses,
and his escapades are due to
human failure to provide the
safety and control that he
deserves. No doubt all blame
will fall on him, and he will pay,
without a trial or a lawyer, or a
chance to plea for mercy.

PENCIL PORTRAITS: PEOPLE & ANIMALS

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Devon Adams

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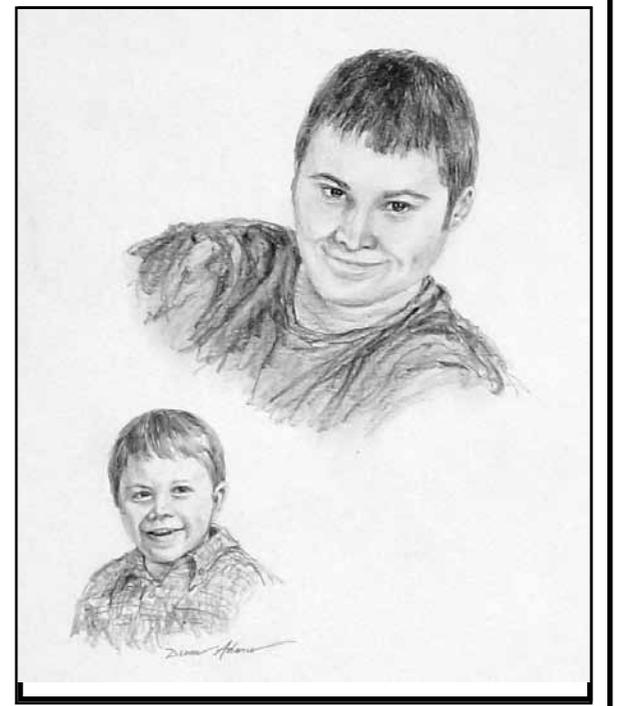
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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

It's larder-stocking season again. *Larder* isn't a word you hear much these days, though perhaps it will make a comeback along with the return of popularity of gardening, home canning and other domestic pursuits.

We spent a couple of hours last evening freezing nearly 30 bags of sweet corn. Never mind that it was hubby's birthday. Once he got wind of available corn, he was like a hound on the trail of a raccoon. A stand of just-ripe corn is his version of a "field of dreams." Wading into that green jungle and coming out with a sack full of ears represents some sort of primitive survival test. And the grip-and-rip of husking a big pile of nice, long ears of tender corn is elementally satisfying. Anticipating the taste and crunch is a big part of it, but it goes deeper than that.

That stockpile of "gold" in the freezer is genuine comfort food in every sense of the word. Hubby recalls summertime childhood meals of nothing *but* corn on the cob. I personally can attest to the fact that he used to consume up to nine ears in one sitting when we were a young farm couple in the late '70s. He's much more moderate in his consumption these days, but his enthusiasm for the ritual of harvest and storage hasn't waned.

I understand the urge to preserve. I picked six pounds of beautiful, slender green beans last week and had them all prepped and in the hot-water bath before I realized I was supposed to *pressure* can them, not just boil them. Rats. What to do. I don't own a pressure canner, so I dashed over to Shopko, and quickly decided that I couldn't justify purchasing a \$90 canner for six pints of beans. (Good thing my math skills exceed my canning prowess.) So, I decided to experiment with what I'm calling the "ice block" method of freezing. I processed the beans and let the jars cool and then put them in the freezer. We shall see how freezing green beans in blocks of ice, as it were, works out.

I've never canned meat, but I'm thinking of trying it. The other day I was in the grocery store scanning the frozen dinner section seeking a quick, easy meal. TV dinners used to be an actual treat at our house, so I finally settled on two fried chicken-mashed potato-corn dinners for hubby. At a whopping 9 oz. total weight per dinner, I knew that only one meal would be completely inadequate. It turned out that *two* meals were completely inadequate.

Hubby nuked the dinners and eagerly dug into the purported chicken "thigh." After several forkfuls of nothing but breading, he took a closer look and made a shocking discovery. It appeared that the "thigh" had been boned out, and the carcass dipped in heavy breading and deep-fried. I kid you not. There was not one scintilla of meat on that "thigh" bone. I will be calling the manufacturer and giving them a piece of my mind. Their quality control department needs a serious talking-to.

I suppose canning meat would require a pressure canner, so I'll have to get out my pencil and calculate the cost. Just knowing that I have some shredded beef or chicken on the shelf to make a quick meal might be worth it. No more crummy frozen dinners for us.

Happy picking, canning, freezing, drying, etc., to all of you. May your harvest be bountiful and your larder be full.

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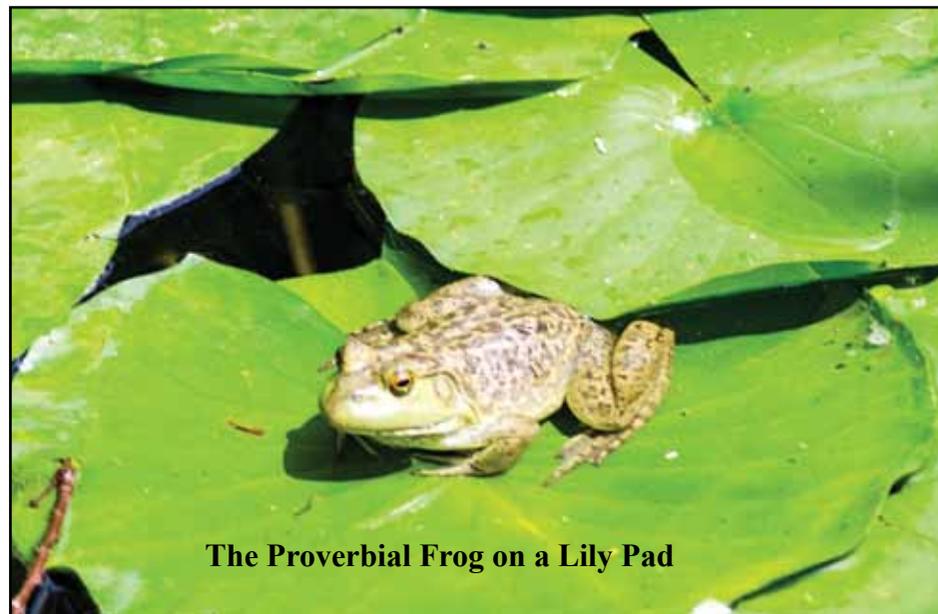
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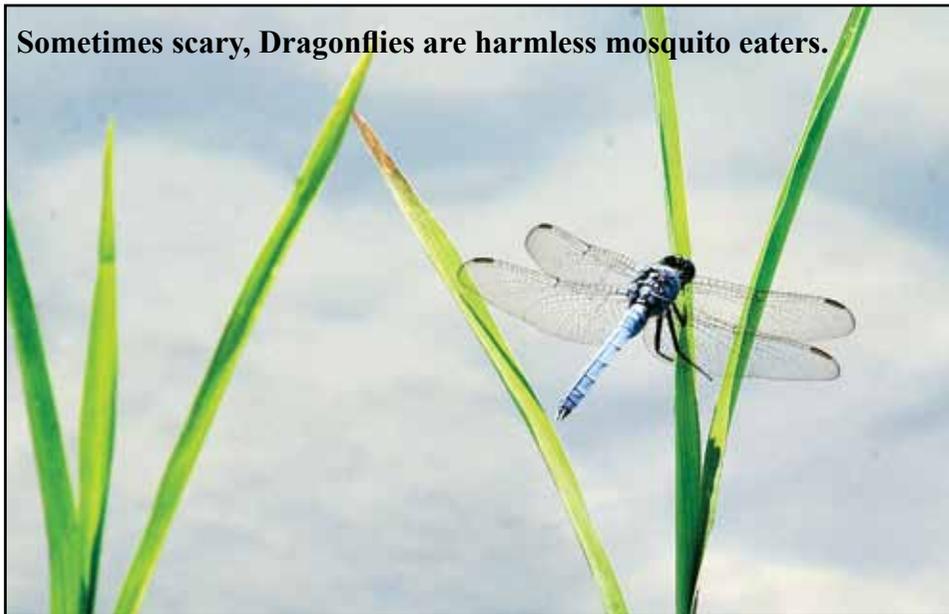
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Sometimes scary, Dragonflies are harmless mosquito eaters.



Black-eyed Susan



Alzheimer's Affects Us All



What Every Alzheimer's Caregiver Ought To Know About Medical Histories

By Lee Nyberg

Emergencies crop up at the worst times. You might have all the information about your loved one's mental and physical condition stored in your head, but what good will that do your brother if he needs it while giving you respite from caregiving and you're 1000 miles away? Or worse, you're in the emergency room with your dad on Friday night and you know right where his living will and medical power of attorney information is; it's in the safety deposit box and you cannot access them until Monday morning at 9 a.m.

For on the spot access to critical information and medical directives, you and your loved one's other caregivers need an Emergency Response Kit in both electronic and paper copies.

Gather the following for the Emergency Response Kit:

- Health insurance and Medicare cards
- Emergency contact information (name, phone number, relationship)
- Doctors' names, contact number and specialty
- Medical conditions, listing Alzheimer's/Dementia first
- Past surgeries, dates and reasons
- Blood type
- Assistive devices uses (glasses, dentures, hearing aids, oxygen, walker/cane)
- List of medications, all current and any recent discontinued, OTC or prescription, supplements and creams or ointments
- Orders for DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) or POLST (Physicians Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)
- Medical directives (living will and health care proxy)
- Current use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs

Copy and distribute:

1. Paper copies: Place in an envelope clearly labeled "EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION," and tape to the back of the main doors of your loved one's house. Distribute sets to other family caregivers. Insist they familiarize themselves with the contents of the medical directives.

Continued on page 9



Queen Anne's Lace

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Continued from page 8

2. Electronic copies: Store pdfs on a password protected, on-line storage site, like Dropbox. Share access codes with other family or respite/professional caregivers. Carry a flash drive of the same information for medical personnel to access; or provide them with the password/access codes for the Dropbox.

A complete medical history for your loved one will ease beginning care with a new physician and give medical personnel the best possible information for making diagnosis and treatment decisions. Medical history includes all of the above as well as complete lists of past illnesses, hospitalizations, rehabilitation stays or treatments, all lab and test results, and dates of all doctor's appointments. Since you'll need to update the information after every doctor visit, use Word documents and then save them as pdfs.

Wallet cards are another very important safety measure. If you are the primary caregiver for a person with Alzheimer's, carry a card which says, "I am the caregiver for John Doe, who has Alzheimer's. In the event of an accident, please call these emergency contacts." Include a list of emergency names and phone numbers. Do not list your elder's address and phone number.

The person with Alzheimer's should be registered with a service like Alzheimer's Association Safe Return, have an emergency alert bracelet, or information inside clothing or shoes which lists the Safe Return number (800-625-3780) or other emergency contact information, in case of accident or wandering.

Be Prepared... thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so... [a scout] is never taken by surprise.
 --Robert Baden-Powell

Sounds like good advice.

Lee Nyberg seeks to help families and those living with Alzheimer, through education and her company, Home Care Assistance. If you'd like information on Alzheimer's care, please call her at 402-261-5158. Our website: www.HomeCareAssistanceLincoln.com.

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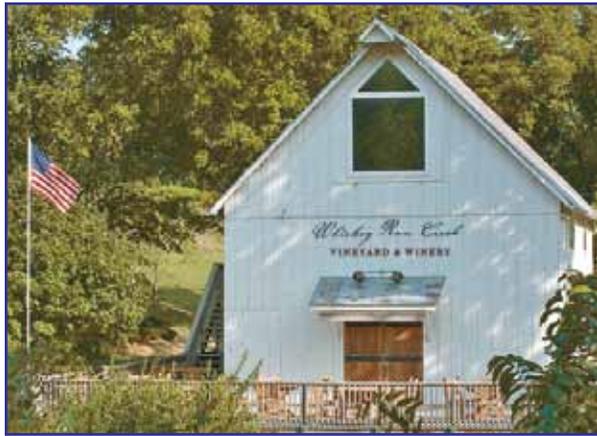
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Friday, August 15th, Enigma (*Pop, Rock*)

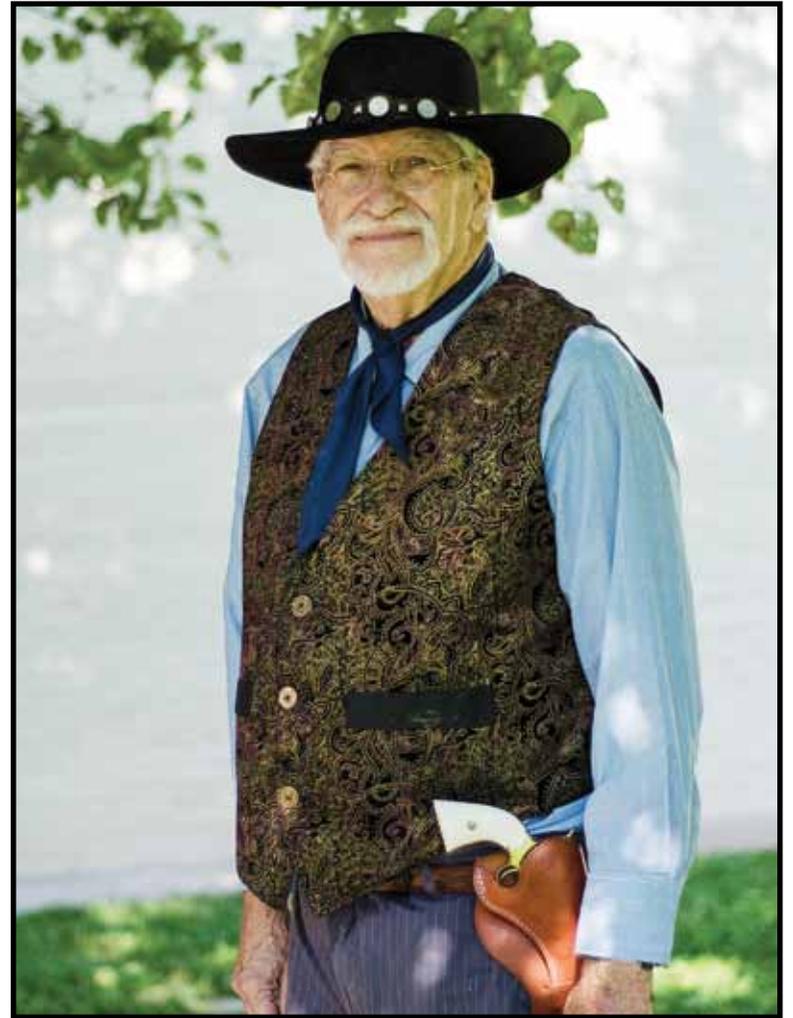
Friday, August 22nd, Stephen Monroe (*Blues, Rock*)

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Poetry & Photography by Carol Carpenter

The Meaning of One

On this bright day sitting
on a rock ledge in the middle
of the Niobrara River
warm breeze blowing over freckled skin. I lean back
into the water and let the cool river flow all around
me and my hands become the soft rain falling over
the rocks, silver fish darting in clear streams, green
fronds anchoring under gravel bed where I feel the
pulse of the earth; I feel the tides ebb and flow,
moonrise and sunset, where crystalline music trickles
between my fingers and my eyes become sunlight
and moonshadow, lightning and fire, hoarfrost and
hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanoes, flood and
drought, where my breath blows quietly between
the distant stars, whispers across polar ice, sizzles
across the scorching desert, moist between the
mossy jungle trees when my bones melt into my
ancestors and remnants of dinosaurs, tiny creatures
incased in mud and tar, fossils buried at the bottom of
ancient seas, where the surface of my skin becomes
glacier scratched and lava scarred, where at last my
soul feels the spinning of this beautiful blue planet,
this tiny jewel twirling in the cosmos, millennia upon
millennia, circle upon circle, spinning backward
forward to meet me in the cool water
on this bright day sitting
on a rock ledge
in the middle
of the Niobrara River.



Niobrara River

Summer Rain

I stand in the doorway
and watch the dark clouds,
see the first fat droplets fall
between the tall maples.

I smell the delicious scent
of summer rain on rich, warm earth.
The grass sighs while
tangled roots drink deep
from a tall emerald goblet.

The west wind prickles my skin
as the shower splashes away.
Ruby-throated hummingbirds
whir around the feeder.

A double rainbow drapes in the
golden light of the setting sun
while cantaloupe clouds skim
across a cornflower sky.



Summer Rain



Summer Rain

Transition

At fourteen, his body betrayed him
as a direct result of
avalanching hormones
trapping sanity behind walls
of concrete and steel
consequently turning a fairly
mature teenager into a
rather blithering idiot

At war with a magic trick gone bad
anger also bloomed while
in the distance, doors slammed
from self inflicting imprisonment

While I, his mother
cursed with observance,
with this in mind
see my son
silent as snow
filthy with Kryptonite
a boy becoming man



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