

One Sacred Moment

...
with you
by Vicki Milewski

“Has it ever struck you that life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quick you hardly catch it going?”— Tennessee Williams.

1

The rocks are patient to be recognized
their weighted pasts obscure our useful
hands
grasping at soon to be washed off
dirt
by fast-moving, spring-thaw waters

2

Washing over decades old
dam on the north branch
of the south fork;
my father designed this dam
from his youth
my father created this dam
from his dreaming,
my father built this dam
for his life

3

my father constructed this dam
to renew his life
unleashed
from library books on dam
construction,
unleashed
from farming nature
to working with her
a dam made to hold
water
recreated his world

4

I share this moment with
the rocks given to me
rocks meant to rebuild
my father's dam
rocks left in the fields
from the last glaciers
10,000 years ago and counting,
waiting for their return

5

in this warming dawn moment
signaling another
growing spring day without rain;
greedy for more
I breathe in the bent over grass
Watching the newly planted fields
for a trace of corn

6

I breathe out to the still naked trees
competing with dandelions
yellowing, green and white
ready for their seeds to take a
perilous flight toward
growing another flower

7

I try to be as patient as
these rocks picked by an
Amish dairy farmer
off the rented field
with his sons
and a wagon
and a steel wheeled tractor

8

soon,
emergent corn will unfurl a
greening stalk with thin lined leaves
that will curl and then dry
building toward the yellow protein cob
that will crowd these fields
patiently waiting

9

for his steady
black and white cows
will chew as the winter
blows more ice
and
cumbersome snow against
his secure but slowly failing barn
holding the receiving jar
filling with milk twice a day,
every day,
for the rest of his life

10

but patience is like these rocks: hard
when my heart exerts a force
beyond any reason
or prayer
toward days we could
tirelessly pick rocks together
and say, "Now the plow won't hit
them."
slicing off their curving uniqueness
into a leveled flat side

11

we'll say, "Now the lake will stay full,
once this dam is strengthened with
these
field stones."
allowing water to move
through the spaces in between
feeding south of the north branch
to continue the river winding
south pulled by the greater space
of the ocean

12

so I choose the rocks off this pile
he made last year
stooping
and
choosing
out there
in that patient
field
deciding
a life not lived is worth another try
wondering
if I will touch these rocks
in the same places he has

13

I try to exhaust my ranging mind
into submission that could look like
 patience
when seen from the outside
 as a dirt-caked, red rock
 rolls
 from the pile
 moving
on its own predicted gravity path
 calculated but unknown to me

14

 and I see
 the rock is
 like me
we both wait to be seen
we both roll along a path
we both know life isn't chance

15

we both know life can be altered
 by a gentle hand choosing;
we both know life can be fortified
 by an eye met with an eye;
we both know life can be confused
 by words matched with a smile;
 we both know life can go on
because a feeling remains, even now
 we both know waiting

16

As ice cold water covers exposed feet
 seeing geologic epochs
 in a simple rock dam;
 watching the sun swiftly rising
 marking each turn of the earth;
 stepping onto tender grass
 which comforts frozen feet
 back aching asks for waiting
with the rock catching sun on its side

17

 and in our waiting
 we both share a sacredness
as the water rushes somewhere else
 neither of us knows
 where it comes from
 or where it goes
and not knowing doesn't matter
doesn't change intent or movement
 doesn't make it less sacred

18

as water surges over the dam
 washing this red rock
 clean
 chilling my feet with this
 snow turned
 stream
depositing seeds that will grow
 unseen

19

while the morning
exclaims its message for today,
the sun x-rays my efforts
at being patient
while in love,
the sun lights on
us all waiting
for that moment
bringing an end
to patience
and a
beginning to life

20

the trees sigh in relief
that the winter is over
the grass moves in its growing
toward being cut
the water sparkles as it rushes
toward another, drier spot
while I watch
hoping for
that moment

21

but
for now
I choose the red rock
almost clean
I move it to another place
that may stay the water's flow
I marvel again
at my father's dream made real
And wonder how long I must wait
for my own

22

as my patience
is shown to be
unseen movement toward purpose
like a seed grows beneath soil,
its patience paid off by emergence
I too grow in my patience as I come
to understand my purpose
no longer disputing
my meaning

23

under skies without clouds
to rain understanding
down,
under skies without stars
to wish longing
upon,
under skies without wings
to carry me
from the ground,
under skies that drip blue
beautifully down

24

under poem slips ringing
their words like bells,
under choices I plan to make better
with age
under this effortless expanse waiting for
love
within one sacred moment shared...
with you