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Poem by Mary Jo Robinson-Jamison



The Movement of Souls

Straight sidewalks. Straight railings. Man-made straight. Window sashes and awnings are straight. Things that move are a different story entirely. Kent's car is parked at an angle. That old red maple that houses generations of squirrels is twisted by lightning. A new silhouette emerged this morning. I found one of three juveniles I've noticed running up and down the trees lately. Its small eyelids were closed. Its nose was just a tiny pinkish-gray protrusion. At another house, my friend Ruth is pulling weeds from the pavers on the winding path she and David put in around their Victorian home. The path encircles their large three-story, wide-porched home with towering trees in the back and a winding stairway to

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her office. She is pulling up dandelions and plantain, clearing the curved line, smoothing the way for Sarah, who lies restlessly in the maw of the white medical machine. Our friend's wheelchair has grown to Jabba-the-Hutt standards. It could never fit on the small paver path of pseudo-stones that curve around Ruth's house. The wheelchair is massive because it holds a body enlarged by extra fluids. So the path cannot be for our friend to visit Ruth at home. It cannot be for feet that no longer support our friend's weight. No. This is for the world that is within the world. Yesterday, I paused at the dry husk of squirrel pelt flattened by a car. A soul without a holder. The weeding is for Sarah. Ruth, obsessed with walking and shoes and footpads, is clearing the way for the movement of souls.

Art Information

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Mary Jo Robinson-Jamison has worked as a music therapist with the severely handicapped for the last forty years. Over the years she has taken countless classes at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis and originally studied with Natalie Goldberg. She lives in St. Paul with her husband Kent, with whom she raised their two children. Retirement allows her to turn to reading and writing.

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