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The Crook of the Path

— by Carol Rothhammer Lackey

How old are you?
Have you seen the stars fall?
Have you felt the hurricane's blast?
Has the earthquake crushed your hopes?

What age do you call yours? Mine?
Have you walked with now and history?
Has the magic of a migrating word touched your soul?
Has your heart bled dry in silence?
I ask not idly but because I pray to know,
To touch a soul whose answers are my own
Symmetry of anguished times, mingled pain --
One who sees my tears and does not laugh.

Once upon a time an arrow came;
The shaft pierced my father's bones,
Catching his blood and veins by surprise,
There to dwell in all eternity's finality.

Since his going, I await my own departure
And view a sunset, a chickadee, a ripe plum, knowing
Now -- with awe/certainty -- that light will turn to dusk
Then pitch black; the light will come fast and sharp.

A peacock's shriek at sunset begs me come
To darkness. And screeching owls above
Have silenced the sun. Crystals of the plains,
Ice, lie wrecked and broken by the sharp wind.

How old are you? Am I? This land?
Silently I watch what a lifetime brings along,
A spidery path whose ultimate origin I know not,
Whose final turn I may only shriek at.

In the crook of the path, I watch: absorbant.
Magical words of searing sun and harsh wind, crickets.
Ascending stones of order, sorrow, full.
A dark green leaf to clutch as the last stars fall.