

## What Lies Slumbering

*...Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth what lies slumbering, forever ready, in all words. -- Walt Whitman*

Beneath the poem lived a poem -- hidden till I scratched the surface image -- pentimento of time and space.

Strange how the hidden lies lonely, scattering sunlight, whispering lies -- guardian of shadow and truth.

It seemed at first a place -- street of burning leaves, front walks, muffled voices, boy leaning on a rake. Then all the boys. On the riverbank, hurtling themselves from the footbridge into the cold, sunlit water.

I had something to say to the boys -- or not the boys, to the men they would become. Or the street, those houses that live inside you all your life. And the river endlessly carving channels, turning stones in the riverbed.

Turning stones the way the wind turns leaves, or the moon turns waves, lifting, pulling, then turning back again. And always there is what lies under, the hidden stones, still, still, dark.

Out of the river one boy hoists himself, gleaming. He wants to love a girl, to walk past the houses with his arm around her shoulder. The girl is quiet as the world underwater. What voice will wake what lies slumbering there?

Maybe it will be a cool fall evening, with the wind soft in the trees. Maybe her father will be home, reading in the kitchen while the boy and the girl whisper love letters on the porch. This could be the beginning.

But it is also an end. An end of what he knows: summers in the sun, diving deep into clear water. What comes now will be new, bright, hurtling fast into his life. It is on the bridge. It is lifting off. It is free-falling till it lands, boldly, in the cold sunlit water.

-- Anna Turner & Marcia Brown