

**addressing the trees**

being as you are,  
forms,  
all things,  
help me, please!  
to be this

for Maurine Freedgood Roshi,

**Mother of Dharma  
Gives Life**

before the mountain  
and by grace of nature  
I was allowed to realize "Oh!  
I am only a child!"  
and for a while, tendered  
by spruce and birds, saw  
without my usual defenses  
and endless thinking I know  
anything or everything coming  
between me  
and all creation

by that same  
grace in this zendo  
you so caringly  
teach and encourage  
allow one to feel and accept  
your living tissue  
Dharma now  
not afraid to be  
a child in this  
great wilderness I am able  
to ask will you help me  
learn to give  
this life as given

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**love poem**

what was it before  
water before kelp  
before sea birds before  
even you?

*Lassie saves the day*

*When Timmy saved Bessie from the  
slaughterhouse  
(they thought she was going dry but it was just  
the neighbor kid stealing milk for his  
baby sister after their cow had died and they  
had no money to buy another one what with the  
new baby and all)*

*when Timmy saved Bessie from the  
slaughterhouse  
did the other cows rejoice?  
Did their spirits rise  
that one of their own had beaten  
the system, Lassie stopping the butcher just  
as he was leading Bessie away his apron  
immaculate (she would have been the  
first to go) mommy's truck  
pulling up in the  
nick of time?*

*Now it's the next cow's turn but the camera's  
gone on already to the story's happy ending.  
Sorry, cow.*

*Timmy Timmy one cow  
just one cow in this sea of cows bleating  
for deliverance  
(okay I know she's **your** cow whatever  
that means but still)  
just what exactly has been accomplished  
And Bessie never knowing  
acquiescent  
such a good cow  
did she think  
this was an interesting  
Saturday outing? Does she look forward  
to a repeal performance some other time?*

ga! cold

poem, I ask  
you, how  
can you be  
written so  
everyone can  
hear? I'm  
asking you

my body opens  
to the great night  
of space and I  
am infinite  
in wonder the beauty  
of the stars I  
breathe

cell to cell  
what is me and  
what is kelp? in  
this lavish bed  
of ocean life  
so rich I nourish  
all creation

time bends  
because God is  
so awkward or is  
it the other  
way around time  
bends God  
to tides  
fluctuations days  
and years good  
and bad this  
and that every  
range of fruit  
blossom piquancy  
calls and the myriad  
arachnids?

1/12/86

Dharma Teacher Linda Parker established the Cape Ann Zen Group in Gloucester, MA in 1983. Author of three volumes of poetry, she recently completed a 100 day solo meditation retreat. She operates a seaweed-collecting business.

**bee medicine**

she was confused  
lost her way then she  
looked at the sun  
and was home

**more bees**

look  
at the sun! look  
at the sun! we are  
already at home  
being as you are  
trees birds stones  
salamanders rain  
so purely such otters  
moss diatoms flax  
and beetles please!  
help me  
be real

when I speak  
to the fire the fire  
burns

great mother move  
through us  
as you do  
inspite of every  
obstacle resistance  
we present we  
are  
human help us  
learn  
to move  
as you we  
are

not to pose  
a mystery but only appreciation  
of tender life particularity I wonder  
where do these fish come  
from who leap skyward  
from high mountain ponds?  
did fisher birds' colons transport undigested  
caviars or did Pogy Pond  
stocked water rise right  
with Katahdin's volcanic urgency  
from a oneness  
with other water other  
fish to the loft  
and isolation that makes me  
so peacefully curious  
today and the kingfisher  
en route again, these fish  
may have been salmon-kind  
swimmers up streams  
we can't see  
anymore. clearly enough  
this is their home  
even if they are going  
somewhere  
on their way to the  
sky stream now in my mind  
or by kind nature the light  
of the trout's mind I understand  
the answer to my question more  
than I could imagine: gorgeous  
trout came to this high pond  
as a life  
gift so naturally  
rendered by the rain  
bow and as far as one  
lets that gift extend  
we are and this  
all begins

*From a rural calendar*

*"Most black-tailed deer fawns  
born around now."*

*You hide behind a log  
watching for deer. Remember  
huge bright feathered dinosaurs  
(why not? you know better?)  
around here  
wasn't so far back*

*cockroaches in the walls who  
like human babies  
have no particular  
birth season.*

*Don't forget last year's  
deer crop  
already harvested*

*stars whose seasons  
we don't know:  
the exact moment they're born  
or die*

*and my first son born two months early  
dead five months later.*

*Our planet rolled  
through great crustal disturbances  
of the early Mesozoic  
through the emergence of dinosaurs  
their primacy in the Jurassic  
rolled through the Pleistocene*

*the emergence of mammals  
and of men and women in the  
late Cenozoic era.*

*Our planet is moving to its  
completion  
life bound to it  
bound to leave it  
one way or another*

*This redwood forest  
waiting for the birth of fawns  
right now is turning to desert.  
Krakatoa erupts  
Mt. St. Helens dissolves  
as in a movie how can you know  
exactly when to leave?*

*How can you know  
the time of each fawn's birth  
and if you knew  
where would it get you  
gangly boy with hands  
as large as the universe  
trapped in the perceptions  
of the Holocene*

*a time known only  
to your species here on earth?*

Senior Dharma Teacher Judith Roitman, a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Kansas, has had poetry published in numerous journals. A student of Zen Master Seung Sahn since 1975, she established (with her husband, Stanley Lombardo, who has an article elsewhere in this issue) the Kansas Zen Center in Lawrence in 1978.

*New leaves*

*New leaves  
on an old tree.  
What fills our minds  
to make such comparisons?*