

The Teacher

She's never been to university.
She doesn't have a certificate from the province
saying she is qualified.
She's never been in front of a classroom.
In fact, she never went past the eighth grade.
But she is my teacher.

Trusting in her husband,
She travelled from Wisconsin
To a new life in Alberta.
She joined a large, new family.
How to keep them all straight.
It was, she said, far easier
Than splitting wood.

When death touched her heart
Not once, but two times, three times, four,
There was great sorrow.
But no anger, bitterness, fear.
Only the courage to love again.

When her children searched the world
For themselves.
She let them go,
Not needing to know their paths
For they were always in her heart.

And she showed great faith in me.
How else does one teach an 18-year-old to drive.
After she sold her Volkswagen to me,
We could never keep it straight.
Was it her car or mine?

My teacher also learns,
Painting lessons after sixty year,
Learning to weave past seventy,
Trips to Israel, Holland, Australia.
Life doesn't stop for her.

I don't always notice her touches
In my life.
She is a quiet teacher.
Her lessons, though, are always there to see:
An apple pie, a birthday mug, the gentle way with children.
The way she laughs and lives and loves.

She is my teacher,
And I love her.