DRIFT AWAY AND...
AN ADVENTURE WITH WOLF
(APRIL 2012)
The Treasure Hunter

I want to walk
With the tall quiet one
Who sees the points
And gathers dropped branches
That are not wood

Sifting them out
From the fallen oak leaves
Even before
Watchful mice are aware

At Dawn

Blackbirds came for her
They took off for Minnesota
On a strong south breeze

Night in Bakersfield

In the day’s last light
The dark river will shimmer
And then it turns black
NeAr ENCOUNTER

It was almost lunchtime
When she spied us coming down the dirt road.
She was guarding her cache of magic gourds
Laid out on the coarse sand above an old channel.

She looked us over very carefully.
When she could see we had no interest
In looking like a Santa Monica model
Or even lusting after one,
She knew right then we wouldn’t be easy marks.

And so she turned, a bit disgusted,
Slipped down into the channel
(Looking back a couple times to make sure
she wasn’t being followed)
And slowly walked the hidden route
Under the barbed wire fence
Towards the dusty little town.

MY UNSENT REPLY

If you should ever write those words again,
Please don’t let me see them.
If you have no passion for your craft,
No confidence in your results,
Then why work at all?

What’s to be gained
Just by going through the motions,
Or by turning loose your unsure children
To drift aimlessly among fickle winds?
**Drift Away?**

Master Deng, how long must you sail
Before you realize that your destinations
have become useless
And drifting is the sole reality?

**Overheard in the Park**

He should be happy
But she wasn’t smiling
He made a quick ten thousand on the deal

**Waiting for the Plumber**

Morning began with a warm, damp breeze
37 Canadas moving north, fast
And every close bird in song
The newly cut brush wanted to dance along
These are tumbleweed times
Soon to be rain-in-black-soil times
And black soil in rain
But now, just an awkward dance
To embrace the wayward brush
Before it tumbles away
THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

With Gabriel at my side
And the bright sun on my back
I walk up Colorado Boulevard
Seeking out the old school of my mother’s dreams

It seems an unlikely venue for paradise
But there’s a quality in the morning air
That sings of fresh roses and graceful dancers

At last I find the worn sign
Turn to my left and see it
Just down the street
Her starmaking academy
Her Hogwarts of the West

Slowly I approach its black doors
Should I open them and see what lies beyond?

Not today – the courtyard is empty
And the grounds are silent
Except for the fountain’s splash
And the caw of a crow

NOT YET READY

With long-tubed jasmine blossoms
spilling over the wall
And doves settled in the branches above,
It seems impossible to wander off
the fragrant path.
Yet the man behind me avoids the blooms,
Cuts across the street,
And walks the other side.

THE ORANGE GROVE REMAINS

On warm spring days
When the wind’s just right
Visitors to his tomb
Can catch the fragrance
Of the sweet white flowers
And the sharper oils
Of those fallen fruits
At peace beneath the trees
Are There More?

I’m guessing there are three kinds of miracles:
Some are miraculous only in the eyes of the beholder;
(I’m not so interested in these - unless, of course, I happen to be the beholder or the beheld.)
Some occur when one is moved by the deepest love to go beyond all expectations;
(Saints still walk among us.)
And then there are the mysterious ones.
(When cosmic forces that we cannot truly fathom cause something that we notice, how do we know? And when they cause something that we don’t quite catch, what then?)

Sweet Treasures

The color of his cotton shirt matched the blue of his eyes.
The Chenin Blanc was a perfect foil for her Shrimp Rice Quiche.
So much sky, so much sweet wine…
A candy pebble was dislodged from a mountain cliff.
As it made its way down,
More and more treasures stuck to it.
It’s falling still.
**WITH NEW HANDS AND EYES**

This bank was once planted with care
   and weeded with sharp eyes.
But diligence dissipated,
   then disappeared.
The tenacity of daffodils is manifold,
As are the colors and forms on this bank.

The gardener is long gone,
   but long live such a garden.
New hands have arrived to take another try
At weeding and planting
   and feeding the neighborhood,
With good cheer,
With nectar and pollen,
And a little something more...

**EVENINGSONG AT THE LODGE**

Sitting on the deck behind the lodge
Finishing the last of my beer,
The vacation’s nearly over.
In front of me, the river rolls on.
And over my shoulder,
Something stirs the spoons,
Animating a sterling chime.
And cool night falls.

**THE ENGLISH SUITE**

Cumulus timelapse
Dreamy Bach will lead the dance
The scent of cloves strays
**RETURNING**

Dry country sits beneath the haze
Returning home on a tailwind
In satisfaction tinged with loneliness
From three days up near wilderness
That filled my soul with unshared peace

An apricot and two black figs taste sweet
While the passenger in 19E sleeps
And I wonder are dreams aloft
Yet closer to wilderness

Above all, be attentive to signs. We may be sophisticated creatures, but we are of the animal realm. And long before we fashioned words, there was an eon of signs, signs of all kinds, which we ignored at our peril. Always be aware that symbols and signs have the power to cut through mere words and reach down into our deeper core.
I don’t know how he heard about it,
But word gets ‘round.
Wolf told me about this place in the Valley,
And their Saturday Roast Lamb Special,
And he really wanted to go!

I told him, “Are you crazy?
You’ll get us both shot.”
He just stared back intently.

As we were driving through town,
He signaled for me to stop at the Farm & Fleet
To go in and buy him a harness.
Then I knew what he had in mind.

He’d be my Service Wolf in a new way
For an hour or so,
If we could pull it off.

I was getting used to him leading me
Into new places,
But this was more than a little crazy.

So I found a deserted parking lot
Around the corner from the restaurant,
Put on my dark sunglasses,
Placed the harness on Wolf,
And let him lead me slowly down the street.

Did I have the confidence to play this game?
Wolf caught wind of the cooking
And picked up the pace.
I got nervous and said “Sit” with authority.
Wolf sat.
“Good Wolf – You will be on your best behavior.”

We followed a couple guys through the door.
One kindly held it open.
With Wolf on the lead, I waited to be seated.
I think the waitress was on to us.
She seated me in a far, quiet corner.
Wolf rested quietly at my feet.

I did not pick up the menu,
But asked about the specials.
When she got to the roast lamb,
I just smiled and said, “That’s fine.
I’ll take the lamb and a glass of wine.”

I ate my share with relish
And kept the rest on my plate.
I almost asked for a box for Wolf,
But caught myself and wanted a doggie bag.

Then I asked her, “What’s the bill?”
She told me,
And I slowly pulled a fifty from my pocket
And told her to keep the change.

With Wolf showing the way (like usual)
And the bag in my other hand,
We walked back to the car.
I drove us out to a grove by the dry river.
By this time, my friend was as hungry
As a you know what.

He wolfed down his treats
With a gleam in his eyes
Knowing that he,
As a Wolf in dog’s clothing,
Had just taken one of the flock
From the wool growers.