

## **AFTERWARD THERE IS ALWAYS SPRING**

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After the land is bleak and barren  
After the cold crashes on our bones  
After the wicked wind whispers  
Words of frozen fear  
There is always spring.

After the most terrible war  
When boys too young to shave go off to fight  
And women and children are bombed  
After the deprivation, hunger  
And scrimping for food  
Even then, there is always spring.

After the hurricane rips out levees  
And drowns our low-lying land  
And lives are uprooted and torn up  
There is always spring.

Only the strong survive  
The wars, the hurricanes and the cold  
Only hope keeps them going  
Hope of spring keeps them going

When the ground is hard as granite  
The energy in bulbs lies asleep beneath  
And rises up like Lazarus  
When the warm winds come  
The energy is released.  
There is always spring. .

**I DROPPED A PENNY IN THE SOUP AND OTHER UNRELATED  
ABSURDITIES**

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Life is not linear  
Or logical  
Or predictable.  
Absurd things happen  
With no premeditation or meaning.  
Yet we are “meaning seeking” animals.

Like I dropped a small penny in my soup  
Then I ate the penny-flavored soup.  
It tasted good  
But I wondered if I would get copper  
On the brain, building up plaque  
On entangled ganglions.

But I swallowed the hot soup  
(Not the penny)  
I scooped the penny out  
Clean and shiny  
Having enjoyed the cleansing experience  
As if purified in the River Jordan.

Unlike my minister, I was not re-baptized in the  
Cold waters of the Jordan  
In a land where water  
Is almost as precious as oil  
And more holy.

One time my friends poured out  
The precious holy water of  
Very Religious Fellow at Army Language School.  
He substituted tap water  
Without this person’s knowledge.  
(Or perhaps he only told him he poured it out).  
The joke may have been on my friend  
Because the Very Religious Fellow  
May have been sanctified by his thoughts alone.

I am purified by the pine scent  
And open sky in the mountains and  
The moon with its moon dogs  
And perhaps sacred cats.

## **Don't Die with Your Song Within You.**

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On her desk was a cracked vase  
Transformed into a hungry hippopotamus  
Awkward in gait with its mouth open wide,  
Symbolic of the potential for human salvage.

Every one cannot achieve everything  
They set out to achieve.  
Not everyone has:  
    the same beautiful mind.  
    the same athletic legs.  
    The same compassion needed for teaching.  
    the voice of a meadowlark.  
    capacity and vision to help or inspire others.  
    the capacity to reassemble a greasy engine.

But how can we know what we can't become  
Unless we try to become something?  
Unless we try to learn to sing  
We may die with our song unsung.

I was only a poet in waiting  
With a love for words  
Until I put those words into song.

I was only a kid with a knack for drawing  
Until I was trained on how to handle a brush  
I was only a man with a knife  
And love of wood  
Until I crafted my first sculpture.  
I was only an untried man until I became a father  
I only had a vision until I took my first picture.

It is time to write the book or craft the article  
That I dreamed of writing  
I will not be discouraged until I am rejected 10 times.

I still have songs yet unsung.  
I will sing my song.