

## **Peggy Turnbull – Two Poems**

### **Changing Weather**

Father fights the mid-west ice with a sidewalk scraper  
while I scatter ice melt. At 91 he seems wan, weary,  
his white sneakers too flat-soled for this skating rink.  
When Mother and I exit the drive for a trip  
to her Physical Therapist's, I recall my own  
broken bones and shout at him to stop,  
"It's dangerous to work alone." My voice is caustic  
as the chemicals I toss. As he backs into the garage,  
his brown eyes track us, a rejected cur in retreat.

After her appointment, we are back to attack the ice.  
Father's puffy jacket is bright as a cardinal  
in the soft steel afternoon. I slip and chip  
at ice ripples glued to concrete. Suddenly,  
above me, he stands astride a roadside snow bank  
glossy with frozen rain. He scrambles, surefooted  
as a Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep, a spirited boy  
who wields his ice scraper like a trekking pole.

He is my father, Montana-born, newly escaped  
from the imaginary corral where I like to keep him. Again,  
I feel the mystery of who he is flare up between us.

### **Escarpment**

This April forest teeters  
on a limestone ledge  
thick with fallow saplings.  
Trills and chirrups echo  
while Yellow Warblers  
and Song Sparrows flutter  
among dolomite outcrops,

the pocked remains  
of a prehistoric coral reef  
once alive in a Silurian sea,  
until it receded and glaciers  
flattened land older  
than the Appalachians.

The birds' chatter ceases.  
Their hush feels watchful,

the species alert to us.  
If I could pirouette for them  
in hiking boots, I would.

Instead, I contemplate  
eons past, the cataclysms  
that made this location,  
then envision epochs forward,  
the climate altered,  
the temperate forest tropical,  
flamingos wading in warm water,

or some new genus  
evolved from chaos.  
But then I fail.  
Gravity glues us to the surface  
of a rock that spins in a vast void.  
We are specks.  
Nothing we know will last.

But, like the birds,  
we are here today.

**Peggy Turnbull** lives on the western shore of Lake Michigan in the U.S.A. She's worked as a librarian, archivist, and factory worker, but has always been a writer. Her poems have appeared in *Rat's Ass Review*, *Quatrain.Fish*, and *Communicators League*.