

Georgette Unis – Two Poems

White Crepe Flowers

In war zones everywhere
people are dying
but all I have today
are white crepe flowers
from the sentinel bush
in front of my window.

This room is cold in winter
and warm in summer.
It was once part of my garden,
then a garage and finally, a studio.
I cover its skylights
with sun-resistant screens
because their cobwebs
don't protect me
from constant exposure.

Now its tiled floor
and open shutters
welcome the fragrance
of lavender and orange blossoms
all the way into deep winter.

Here is where I read the newspaper,
watch television and dwell
on the evergreen plant as it guards
like a village grandmother,
round and wide,
its white petals crinkled, transparent
as an old woman's skin.

My blooms don't always fall
to the ground when their cycle ends.
Sometimes they seem to disappear
in the heat of political and war information
as though their presence becomes a mirage
when hope is fragile.

The End of Summer

The blaze kindles another
and another and, in turn,
each ignites more until
they coat the clouds
in orange dust
brilliant at sunset
as though a league of dragons
breathe flames across the sky.

All night our windows rattle
in the congregation of Sierra winds
and the fierce energy
as aspen and pine disintegrate
like medieval heretics
whose only sin—their existence.
By morning, a burnt haze
shrouds the sun
and acrid smoke infiltrates our lungs.
Everything tastes bitter.

For a brief respite between storms
I examine the tip of a fir tree, a triad
of one long stem supported by two others
where we once placed an angel,
homemade out of a light bulb and paper gown,
when my brother lived and our children young

and our families shared these mountains
on holidays and long vacations.
We hiked the forest trails with promises
of chocolate bars at the summit
and hot cocoa after ski adventures.

Time consumes our past slowly
as in a daily meal
we give to a tame pet
but these uncontrolled burnings
devour our history
like a ravenous beast,
with barely a moment to capture it.

Georgette Unis writes about the intricacies of relationships in families, friendships and the natural environment. Her poetry has been published in the *California Poetry Quarterly* and in *Poetry Quarterly*. She is a painter and ceramic sculptor with several solo and group exhibitions.