# Psalm 30 (NRSV)

Orientation – Disorientation – New Orientation

1 I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,  
    and did not let my foes rejoice over me.  
2O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
    and you have healed me.  
3O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
    restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

4Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,  
    and give thanks to his holy name.  
5For his anger is but for a moment;  
    his favour is for a lifetime.  
Weeping may linger for the night,  
    but joy comes with the morning.

6As for me, I said in my prosperity,  
    “I shall never be moved.”  
7By your favour, O Lord,  
    you had established me as a strong mountain;

you hid your face;  
    I was dismayed.

8To you, O Lord, I cried,  
    and to the Lord I made supplication:  
9“What profit is there in my death,  
    if I go down to the Pit?  
Will the dust praise you?  
    Will it tell of your faithfulness?  
10Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!  
    O Lord, be my helper!”

11You have turned my mourning into dancing;  
    you have taken off my sackcloth  
    and clothed me with joy,  
12so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.  
    O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

# Summer

The river’s

had her fill

of rain now:

still bearing the silt

of those long, grey days

she sparkles

with flecks

of careless joy –

they spring

fresh and free

from the slow

wet dark

into

summer’s

outstretched

arms.

# If we could dance

The hospice has a special place

where life is grafted on to death

and mortal wounds are salved each day

with tea and biscuits,

smiling volunteers,

and a good sleep after lunch.

I step inside the special place

and music welcomes me;

she lifts her hands

with a gentle smile

inviting me to the dance:

we slowly move

across the floor,

she with the grace

of one who holds

her pain so lightly,

and I with two embarrassed feet.

The river has a special place

where light and dark

move cheek to cheek

across the water’s calm:

Below, the deep,

above, an arc of evening sky.

They meet,

touch,

weave pain

with patient joy.

# Sunken Boats

I’m afraid of these sunken boats

at the water’s edge:

what a terrible mass of

water weighs them

down and down and down;

a living space

so thoroughly filled

with cold dark:

there they lie, pinned, unboated

while all around them

lives and breathes and goes:

this unprotesting

sullen defeat

is how it always ends –

my final capitulation

to King Death.

# Care Crash

I can no longer go.

My care is covered

with baked beans –

well, the bonnet to be precise,

the place of power

which keeps the care moving along the road;

engulfed with little beans now -

nutritious, cheap

and deadly

in large numbers.

The progress of the care,

her careful royal progress,

was stopped short

by one backfiring fart.

What to do?

Nothing.

I sit holding the steering wheel

watching beans

splattered on the windscreen;

some of them are slipping down,

very, very slowly.

Then, summoning all of my courage,

I get out of the car.

I carefully close the door.

I lie down on the ground.

I curl up like a little puppy dog.

I go to sleep.

# Falling

There are

worse things

than falling

not falling

for one.

Raindrops fall

on the thirsty ground

and sunlight

falls on your upturned face.

So, if it’s not so bad to fall

why not jump,

and land

in a heap

in your very own soul?

# Making a Labyrinth in Sobell House Chapel

There is a way -

there is always a way;

but when I look at the sanded floor,

clean as a desert,

I wonder where it is.

The path will find us

when we trust:

varnish and paint

will flow and mark the way -

a needful, grace-full way

for walking a life

with feet

and soul.