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## Girlfriend

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# Girlfriend

by Karen Webb Owen

We're close now and I look for her;  
this time of year we keep similar hours.  
I've always known her;  
she's marked courses and periods of my life.

A few years ago I saw her hiding,  
screening her face with tree branches,  
not wanting to be noticed.  
It was no use. The ice ringing the branches  
reflected her shining beauty like diamonds  
or tears.

"I know," I said, "such shame, sorrow and weary grief:  
the wish to conceal the scars with a cloud of mist,  
or to hide in the dark."  
Still she rose to the challenge, ascended her path.  
"Your courage outshines your beauty," I said.  
The look she gave me warmed the cold night.

So we continued to watch for one another,  
sharing an aspect, a moment.

Months later, I caught her draped in orange silk,  
face turned away sidling between the dark bushes,  
unable to hide that certain glow.  
"Ah," I said, "You've courage to try again."  
I caught her sideways glance and smiled,  
winked, and wished her well as she sank,  
lambent, towards her assignation.

Of late we've shared thoughts on being.  
Reputations are mutable, fragile.  
"Don't believe all you've heard about me," she says.  
"I've been poked, prodded and analyzed,  
worshiped and walked on."  
Well, haven't we all?

I can still tug at a heart or turn a head like a tide.  
I'm still here, still making my rounds.  
You can count on me. Many do.  
Praise, blame, adoration, accusation, all the same.  
Sorrow, suffering, guilt, grief?

"Rise above it," says she.  
And, beaming, she does.