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Summoning

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Summoning

Webb Owen: Summoning

Karen Webb Owen

Is it the wind?

A wild one along the ground,
Not troubling the massive, dark clouds.
Plants on the margin of the road beckon.
Beaten stems, curved as crippled fingers,
Whipped branches, thin as undernourished arms,
With begging gestures urge me to approach.

Not the stately, blazing trees of fall.
But scrub and weeds, dingy outcasts,
Subsist on this untended edge,
Neither forest nor path.
No one wants them.
No one cares to uproot them.

Soil here is thin and dry or sour smelling
Where the ground sinks and standing water
Tans a shred of squirrel skin,
Matted fur still clinging to it.
No birds perch on these stalks

No sounds heard but wind
Rattling the skeletal stems.
Rankly tangled and struggling for room.
A few unshed sallow leaves,
Single as a last rotten tooth,
Flicker and turn grey as the light goes.

In the wind's fiercer onslaught,
Frail branches fall flat,
Scrabbling against the ground.
Then rise again, whispering.
Still beckoning, their thorns tug at me.

I should turn back.