

Flash Nonfiction
Kathy Fitch
4/18/2018
Allerton Articulation Conference
461 Words

Flashes of Something (For Dr. Tiger)

"Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, something."

My parents raged, quietly, desperately, violently. There was nothing safe, nothing stable, not much to hang onto--not in the mad, flattening swirl of the terrible embrace of the storm's arms, not in the haunting stillness of its unreliable eye.

I breathed in the hearts of the light purple irises in the front yard. They were sweet and tart like candy.

I walked through weedy fields of thigh high dandelions until my legs were dusted with yellow, solemnly considered perfectly round globes of webby seeds, sent them floating with steady streams of breath.

I discovered important things. Flat grasses stretched just so between the palms could hum. The hardened sap at the knobby knots of the apple tree glowed warmly like amber in the sun. Green walnut husks scraped with a fingernail yielded a satisfyingly sharp scent, and stained my skin brown. Winged maple seeds gathered by the fistful and thrown high helicoptered down thrillingly for a little while. Samara. A different kind of appointment.

I miscarried alone, past midnight. I have listened to death unfolding in the darkness of the forest that curves around my house. My cries were woven of the calls of both predator and prey. Something was dying, but I--my bare feet cold on the tile of a small bathroom garishly lit--would not.

Blood slid down my inner thighs for days. "Incomplete," the doctor said. Yes. Things tend to be. Surgery finished what my body would not. "We could not get you to stop bleeding for the longest time," the doctor said. Of course. Healing can be elusive.

An ice storm glazed every bare branch. Through the kitchen window I saw five cardinals strung like bright beads on the long empty arm of an oak.

There is always a garden, a chaplet, a rosary, even in the most unforgiving winter.

Details	
Words	461
Unique Words	293
Characters	2,778
Sentences	39
Longest Sentence (words)	119
Paragraphs	23
Reading Level	11-12th Grade
Reading Time	1 min 41 sec
Speaking Time	2 mins 34 sec

28th anniversary.

The year of orchids. I learn that I am, like a Yellow Lady Slipper, uncommon. I am a dwindling species, now a colony of one.

The year of amethysts. Amethystos. I am soberingly solitary, and that particular cup will not pass.

And so I wander spring forests, gently turning back the striped spathes of Jack-in-the-Pulpits to tend to the mute homily of one small spadix after another, bending toward still small voices sensed but unheard.

Pantheist, probably, or fundamentally pagan. Oxymoronic to innumerable faults.

But something keeps the knees of my jeans perpetually muddy or grass stained.

Something keeps me kneeling in what might be prayer.

And something keeps me tending to patterns--to arresting moments of beauty, absurdity, pain, shock, contrast that will themselves toward meaning with or without my surrender.

Something keeps capturing me in what might be praise.