If I Were a Poet

Allen J. McGrew, for Heidi S. McGrew

If I were a poet, I would summon for you the cold creak of the board walk beneath your booted feet,
And the gentle caress of the cool breeze on the back of your neck.
My words would paint for you the glint of the just-rising sun through the trees,
and the scarlet flash of the blackbird’s shoulder,
And the soft rap of the downy woodpecker,
And the startle of the waxwing in the morning light.

If I were a poet, I would know the right words to conjure for you the lavender blush of this new-dawning day,
the way the mists hang in mute witness above the still-flowing stream,
The way your own breath hangs before you
like the crystalline shadow of a prayer
you did not know you prayed.

You would see the cattails transformed into crystalline blades of shimmering color by the October frost.

And the frost-encrusted wheel of the orb-weaver.
And the delicate perfection of each hoary crystal fringing the last aster of Fall.

And if I were an artist, I would carry with me a palette of a thousand colors,
And blend them into a nuance of a million hues.
I would know just the way to render the myriad subtleties of the clouds,
as they drape their mute homage to the blushing dawn.

My palette would carry not merely a generic rose hip red,
No. It would have THAT rose hip red -- that one, just over there.
I would crush rubies, and mix them with glinting diamonds
to capture its ice-encrusted brilliance.
No expense would be too great.
No detail beneath my notice.

And if I were a musician,
and a singer of songs,
I would sing the song of THIS day.
I would beckon from the flautists the whisper of the breeze
through the autumn leaves.
And from the drums, the far-off rap of the woodpecker,
And the blackbird’s call,
And the rattle of the kingfisher, as it surveys the stream.
And I would bring it all to a rising crescendo of Silence.
So that you could hear your own heart beat to the pulse of the rising day.

And if I were a god, I would create such a world as this for you.

I would offer it to you ever so gently,

cupped in great hands quaking almost imperceptibly

with the reticence of their own strength.

I would create such a world as this for you.

And lay it with a single sacrificial tear

upon the altar of my love.

But I am no God,

and but a clumsy-worded poet.

I feel the crimson flush of my cheeks

as I consider the profanity of my words

Against the sanctity of their task.

Nor am I a singer of songs,

Nor a painter,

my brushes dripping with every hue of the world,

and my palette glistening with crushed gems.

No.

I am only a child.

I am only a child.

What know I of poetry,

or painting,

or singing,

or Grace?

I am only a child,
stumbled unwittingly,
slack-jawed with awe,
Into this throne room of Wonder

So I give you my awe,
It is all I have to give.

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