

Sally Zakariya – Three Poems

Darkness and Light

I want to relax in the quiet hold of darkness,
let night's cool hands surround me.

I want to see the stars our cities outshine –
to sense creation without the spill
of light pollution, to see overhead
the full stellar tracery of the cosmos.

Once on a hill in Virginia, far from
any town, I looked up into a dizzying array
of sparkling stars, felt welcomingly lost
in the immensity.

There has to be darkness for light
to be known, but we live now too much
in the brightness of artifice.

Outside my window tonight a cloudy smear
of streetlight/house light/car light/neon
rises above the horizon – visible, they say,
from space.

I watch in hope for a falling star.

Map Sense

Animals have it – the birds
who fly South and unerringly
find their way back

The salmon who need the whiff
of just one drop of the water
they were born in to return

The pets who somehow make it
home after getting lost miles
and miles away

Humans, not so much

We lack whatever internal GPS,
whatever navigational sense

these animals possess

Compass, landmarks, North Star –
we look outside ourselves
to find our way

Out in the world, that is

Inside, the heart has its own atlas,
its own magnetic field, to plot
a safe course home

Volcano

Earth creates itself from within
belching molten matter
building a harsh black beach
beyond the shore

I saw it in Hawai'i – Mother Pele
renovating her living room

And in Iceland now, destruction
and creation at the same time

The planets live – or lived

Active volcanoes on Venus
dormant or dead ones on Mars
and Jupiter

As though their burning souls
yearn to break through to build
and build again

Why should we be
the only ones with souls
the only ones with the turmoil
of desire

Why not the very bodies
on which our bodies live

Sally Zakariya's poetry has appeared in some 80 print and online journals and been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Her most recent publication is *Something Like a Life* (Gyroscope Press). She is also the author of *Muslim Wife*, *The Unknowable Mystery of Other People*, *Personal Astronomy*, *When You Escape*, *Insectomania*, and *Arithmetic and other verses*, as well as the editor of a poetry anthology, *Joys of the Table*. Zakariya blogs at www.butdoesitrhyme.com.