

Growing Pains

Her taffeta dress sewn to perfection
Red like a robin, the scarlet that litters the earth, the auburn of her hair, the slow blush that sets in with
pride

She blossoms into a lady with each tick of the clock
When it reaches the stroke of midnight, the climax
The world comes crashing down around her to a screeching halt
Her footfalls sloppily thud as she staggers to catch up with life
To be awoken from her reverent stupor of innocent youth
Like the shedding of a down jacket

Just as the air gets chillier, the days darker
The realization slowly nestles in
Like a bird in a nest, a groundhog for the winter, kids for a good bedtime story
That her dreams are slipping from her fingertips
Like a vanishing plume of smoke from a hearth

She contrives to confront the conformists and most of all, the man in the mirror
To be the stone-slinging David
But the snuffing of her spark is inevitable
Those ghoulish costumes, stuffed scarecrows, jack-o-lanterns
Are not unlike caricatures of her friends
That she realizes come and go, like clothing
The clouds shapeshift
Just as she becomes what others want her to be
And is forced to play charades and masquerades

But what will always have constancy, she soon realizes
Is a capacity for hope
Her clouded judgment clears, like daylight is saved
Her battle wounds, battle scars don't fester, but are grafted with strong callouses
She realizes that things can't be as they always were, nor as she pleases
That life isn't black and white, trick or treat
That the future has a moon's opacity and she doesn't possess some crystal ball
That the past is blurred and she doesn't possess some snow globe
And albeit grudgingly, even the candidness of now doesn't dissipate the fog of later