

# Cinnamon Smoke

Walking out to the mailbox  
I breathe in the cool scent of fall  
and from nowhere in particular  
a memory of me running out for a pass  
in the vacant lot - our neighborhood stadium -  
where teenage boys  
felt the thrill of freedom  
in their lungs and limbs.

The cinnamon smoke  
of a red candle  
reminds me of my aunt Madeline  
who prayed before the vigil light on her home altar,  
and told me of her visions of the Virgin,  
taught me the joy of faith and sacred music  
and being a special nephew  
destined for something higher.

Driving west on I-20 at 6:00pm  
the layered gold and coral clouds on the horizon  
bring back a trip to Colorado  
pulling our little camper trailer  
driving toward high altitude adventure.

It is said that poets  
rely on brief encounters  
with snippets of memories  
arriving in a scent, a sidelong glance  
or beams of light hitting a daisy, dandelion or dragonfly  
at just the right angle.  
And if they are smart  
poets allow these little moments  
to glide on wings of imagination  
and light gently or with passion  
on the page.

I thank my muse  
for each and all of these snippets  
drifting in a momentary breeze  
through the crack  
in the window or my determined travel  
and officiating at this marriage  
of memory and writing.