

Heart of a Woman

By Glenn Currier

Slender and humble in its youth
the oak grew in moist earth near the bayou.
Roots pierced the dark land
ate the rich gumbo
silently morphed facets of soil
into a heart
with unexposed power and poise.

Across the bayou
on a screened porch
a young girl watched the new rain
make puffs of dust in the dirt
she daydreamed in the drifts of clouds
and wondered where they were born.

A young man and his friend
off the beaten path of their travels
found the town pool.
Swimming, he saw the beautiful girl
perched above the deep end
and across longitudes and latitudes
of loving, laughing, and weeping
they birthed and raised a family.

The bark's ridges and gaps reveal
centuries of storms and floods
the oak's long limbs laden
with life, wisdom, and altered environments.

These two entwined lives enriched
by learning and prodigious practice
their wine a vintage
of passionate enchantment
imbibed by thirsty learners
across decades beyond ordinary borders.

But she like the oak
with open arms
her strength born in good soil.
Hers is a rare power of gentle love
hers a courage born
of some cosmic connection
at the heart of her beautiful humanity.

Dedicated to my cousin Melanie on her eightieth birthday. Both of us born in the Durand line in southern Louisiana not too far from the Evangeline Oak with lives seemingly divergent but somehow parallel and ultimately connected, I think, by a power greater than ourselves.