

By the Compost Pile

Extraordinary
that the Latin *compostum*
suggests "burial ground."

This morning I sat
on the hot soil of my garden
alive to earth's potency,
the sun's fiery gaze.
For an instant I was granted
day eyes in a night season,
looked and really saw,
heard everything humming,
knew the threshold between
this world and the other
in the wonder of living
a particular moment.

Rumi says we cross over
on our knees.
I was led limping through,
the heady reek of rotting
perfuming grateful prayers.

Winter Ripened

The healthy young, the suddenly ill,
the senselessly accidental:
winter ripened from death to death,
each more stark than the last,
until, at yet another funeral,
I knew my heart as frozen ground.

It takes a fierce and fiery imagination
to keep death from setting life's agenda,
to push back deepening darkness
with songs of wonder, not howls of despair.

And here is the greatest mystery:
after weeping in winter's upper room
can come a claiming of the future
in spring's incandescent garden
where the stone rolled from the tomb
crushes the heart that it may rise.

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