

## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE PRIZE WINNER

### *Forty Years or More*

Silver Camries and old white Acuras, blue  
Honda Civics and big black Rodeos pass  
the leaf-puddled bus stop with fleeting feeling,  
driven by ghosts—back from the grounds  
of buried love.

Passing trees that now drop ambrosia apples,  
an old-world couple strolls unhurried along the  
Alma Street sidewalk, one with bending back,  
holding the bent and bony, soft arm of the other.

And on the bench, waiting in the glass shelter  
across the street, a woman wrapped in olive-  
green sits with hands inter-held inside soft,  
tough, tanned gloves.

Watching over apple cheekbones the metal,  
flesh and fabric passing by, she feels her face  
embrace the golden sun rays reaching through  
the south pane, adorning her silver-plaited crown.

She shines at a small child skipping, holding  
in one hand a woman's fingers, singing, and  
looking—open-eyed—at the apples, and around.

How great the gift of the changing body,  
and the changing of love, like leaves, whether  
on one tree through four seasons, or over a span  
of four woodlands, and forty years or more.

**Charlene Robson**

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