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PATIENCE WHEATLEY

Evasions

Your friend
the psychologist reproves you
for not wanting to live beside
the prison –
you explain that at Versailles
you felt a terrible sadness

as if the misery of Marie Antoinette
(whose portrait
painted when she was only thirty-eight
was of an old woman)
had sunk into the rectangular
stones, the glossy floors, even
the flower beds in geometric patterns
of scarlet, purple, white
not less because it was a queen's despair –

and if Marie Antoinette didn't understand
why she was hated
nor does the imprisoned terrorist
who tell us his crimes are our fault.

Your friend
the psychologist
doesn't mind your avoiding Versailles:
it's far away in France
and only history.

Patience Wheatley has had two collections of poetry published by Goose Lane Editions and lives in Kingston, Ontario.

KAREN DELL KINNISON

Driftwood

I let you go a little bit today
like loosening a twine rope.
My wood barrel heart floated out,
not far, wobbling on the waves.
When it reached the boundary of its passion,
(which is infinite), it pulled taut,
back into this definite love
that is like an ending.
This love is gravity force or magnetic want.
My mineral heart cannot help
but yearn to return to original ore.
The attraction imprisons me;
I cannot break orbit
but circle loops around love.
I am dizzy, wracked by false freedom.
Even now I skirt the composition
of your soul, its familiar form and range.
Our rust iron hearts are anchored
Like sunken ships beneath the sea,
too heavy with feeling to drift.
Wise, you know the lure of this bond,
It is you who loosens the rope.
You know that fate has tied our hearts
and that I always will return to you.

Karen Dell Kinnison's poetry has been published in The Texas Review, South Dakota Quarterly, Bottomfish, The Amethyst Review, Poettalk, and the Yearbook of American Poetry. She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.