

Pruned

Kathie Rampton Rockwood

I have always been a flowering vine,
Seeking new trellises to trail on,
Climbing ladders to the sky,
Lusting over neighbor fences
And stretching green tendrils to fly.
I have blossomed profusely
Season after season,
First petal to peek through snow.
I have sifted my fragrance
And scattered it windward
To the four corners of my earth.

Yet once in a verdant life
Comes a storm that would tear
The heartiest oak to firewood shred.
The clouds sit smugly black,
Horizon-laid and waiting,
Wind-ready and panting for the unleashing.
And I must, with speed of light,
Prune back,
Discard the blossoms,
Petal by petal,
Plucking religiously
Til there is only naked stalk —
Then turn all my blood to root,
Send shooting down and inward
Sap strength to tunnel new finger feelers
Down, down,
Strong around
Mighty rock and weighted earth.

And the land and sky
Unleash their fury.
But I,
Root
And hold,
Grown cold and craven
Fighting, not to thrive,
But merely
Pruned,
To survive.