



# Touchstones

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Suddenly  
a path not taken  
in 22 years  
is there  
ahead of me.

I walk, almost run  
to wrap it around  
my shoulders.  
To wear its familiarity  
after so long.  
To live in my childhood.  
A cool, welcome respite, for awhile.

O joy!  
Stunningly present.  
Older, graying, heavier.  
But their voices . . .  
etched on my brain and engraved in my heart  
float to me on the draft.  
Melt over me like soothing balm  
on anxious skin.

Touchstones are there.  
Scattered along the paths  
of my life.  
Smooth, worn  
from years of hands  
touching as they go by.  
Solid, warm.

Savor rare moments  
from long ago paths.  
Hold the embrace tightly.  
Ignore nudging time.  
Lay cheek to stone,  
priceless warm exchange.

Gushing relief,  
later  
invites  
unbidden, heavy dread . . .  
Whatever will I do  
when the touchstones  
are gone?