**The Sacrament of Waiting**

by Macrina Weiderkehr

Slowly

she celebrated the sacrament of letting go.

First she surrendered her green,

then the orange, yellow, and red

finally she let go of her brown.

Shedding her last leaf

she stood empty and silent, stripped bare.

Leaning against the winter sky

she began her vigil of trust.

Shedding her last leaf

she watched its journey to the ground.

She stood in silence

wearing the color of emptiness,

her branches wondering;

How do you give shade with so much gone?

And then,

the sacrament of waiting began.

The sunrise and sunset watched with tenderness.

Clothing her with silhouettes

they kept her hope alive.

They helped her understand that

her vulnerability,

her dependence and need,

her emptiness,

her readiness to receive

were giving her a new kind of beauty.

Every morning and every evening they stood in silence

and celebrated together

the sacrament of waiting.

Review Tips for Retreats

Orientation from Retreat House Director

Social hour

**Lightening the Load**

-Francis Dorff, O. Praem.

The first thing we have to do

is to notice

that we've loaded down this camel

with so much baggage

we'll never get through the desert alive

Something has to go.

Then we can begin to dump

the thousand things

we've brought along

until even the camel has to go

and we're walking barefoot

on the desert sand.

There's no telling what will happen then.

But I've heard that someone,

walking in this way,

has seen a burning bush.

Closing Blessing: A Blessing for After—Jan Richardson

**A Blessing For After**

This blessing

is for the moment

after clarity has come,

after inspiration,

after you have agreed

to what seems

impossible.

This blessing

is what follows

after illumination departs

and you realize

there is no map

for the path

you have chosen,

no one to serve

as guide,

nothing to do

but gather up

your gumption

and set out.

This blessing

will go with you.

It carries no answers,

no charts,

no plans.

It carries no source

of light

within itself.

But in its pocket

is tucked a mirror

that, from time to time,

it will hold up to you

to remind you

of the radiance

that came

when you gave

your awful and wondrous

yes.