

LESSON FROM A FLOWER

by Piya Tan

Look at the flower growing beautifully
but it is impermanent, and will soon wilt
to return to earth, water, fire and wind
that it has arisen from, like every thing else.

A clever man comes along and sees the flower
and makes a replica of it in plastic.
It's more lasting, more than a life-time, in fact,
so he has become the flower's creator.

But what is he looking for in such a flower:
Beauty? Permanence? Control? Technology?
Perhaps all of these and more,
yet he's done nothing but rearrange elements.

For the living flower and the plastic flower
are the same, both made of the elements,
they are earth, water, fire, wind, and space,
the flower and we rise from the same space

Like the flower, we too return to the elements:
we are both changing and impermanent.
The universe is in the flower,
And the flower in the universe.

We are each of us that flower
when we look at it or see it in the mind's eye.
We are the flower when we hear the bees,
coming for pollen in the flower.

We are that flower when we smell it;
we are that flower when we taste the rain
we are that flower when the wind touches us,
and when the sun shines warmly on us.

The flower and us, we stand on common ground;
The earth's compassion smiles as the flower,
even so our goodness beautifies this world,
filling it with a healing fragrance for all.

Sit with the flower the next time you meet her,
for, she has this eternal message for you,
that all things must move on in life's journey;
for, this will give you true strength to move on, too.

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