

**Above the Paradox Valley**

**By Rosemerry Trommer**

You do not need to know what comes next.

There is always another storm, and you

cannot hang the tent out to dry before

it has gotten wet. You cannot shovel snow

that has yet to fall.

Put down the shovel. Breathe

into the dark spaces of your back,

feel how they open like cave doors

to let in the light.

Let your face soften. Let the creases

fall out of your brow. The mind,

no matter how clear, will never become

a crystal ball.

The wisest part of your body

knows to run when it hears

the first crashes of rock fall.

It does not pause then to consider

metamorphic or igneous,

nor does it hesitate to wonder

what might have pushed them down.

It is no small thing to trust yourself.

It’s okay to cry. It is right

that love should shake your body,

that you should find yourself trembling

in the rubble and dust

after all your certainties come down.

Your breath has not left you.

Here is the morning rain. It opens

the scent of the leaves, of the air.

All around you the world is changing.

What are you waiting for?

Here is the cup of mint tea

growing stronger in itself.

Here on this cliff of uncertainty

there is a stillness in you

so spirited, so alive

the wisest part of your body

is dancing.

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**After My Friend Phyllis Shows Me the *New York Times* Obituary Headline:**

**“Lou Michaels, All-Purpose Player, Dies at 80, Missed Kicks in ’69 Super Bowl”**

**by Rosemerry Trommer**

When I die, let them write about

all the mistakes I’ve made.

Let them mention in the headlines

how many rejection letters

I’ve received from *The Sun*.

Let them say, “Missed her calling

for Broadway back in 1987.”

Let them say, “She trained hard, but

never won a Nordic skate race.”

They can note how my children

fought in front of company.

How every chocolate cake

I made sank in the center. How the beets

in my garden were never bigger

than golf balls. How I never even watched

the Super Bowl, much less

knew who played for the Colts

back in 1969 while I was still

forming in my mother’s womb

and Lou Michaels missed two

field goals that helped the Jets win.

What do any of us really accomplish?

My friend Wayne says,

“We do what we can

and have mercy.” Yes, let

them say I did what I could.

Let them say that I loved

the best I knew how and messed

that up, too. It’s what do,

we who are kicking our way

to the back pages of the paper.

Well-intentioned and foundering,

faithful and confused as we are,

we mess up. Yes, mercy on us,

mercy on all our failing little hearts,

how they beat so sincerely, mercy

on this longing to shine, this

reminder again to kneel.