

The Book of Camp Branch

How much delight I've known
in navigating down the flow
by stepping stones, by sounding
stones, by words that are
stepping and sounding stones.

Going down stone by stone,
the song of the water changes,
changing the way I walk
which change my thought
as I go. Stone to stone
the stream flows. Stone to stone
the walker goes. The words
stand stone still until
the flow moves them, changing
the sound - a new word -
a new place to step or stand.

- Wendell Berry

Man

I used to make apologies for having the soft in my man.

A wave of woman in my masculinity.

I was called too gentle and too unmanly for not hoarding women in my waist.

Today I wear my mother in my voice,

I am clothed in her.

I wear my sisters in my thinking, my grandmother in my bone, in my soul.

I am after all my grandmother's child.

For she prayed for me.

It was she who went before God, red war paint on her face from fighting the men.

She pleaded for a son.

How then can I deny the woman in me, when my coming to earth was because women prayed for me?

Was I not made from a woman's mouth?

Only father remarks at my petal nature,

the women I come from say I am beautiful.

- Tapiwa Mugabe, Zimbabwe

Turning Points And Steppingstones

The turning points,
The steppingstones
Often arrive
As some adversity
Or opportunity—
She said that
With a depth of
Understanding
From her life—
Out of the blue
And unexpected—
Years later
We would see
The path
They had created—
But in the moment
Only confusion,
Some surprise,
Or grief, uncertainty
About what
Lay ahead.
Her words still ring:
The turning points
In life oft show themselves
As some adversity
Or unexpected opportunity.
And those to come?
Those too.

- Judy Brown