

# Souls on these Shelves

These shelves stacked with books  
drip gold from their pages  
mined from the souls  
of the fathers and mothers sisters and brothers  
who I've placed side by side  
resting and waiting for my eyes  
to sojourn from between bookends  
down the crooked path into my heart.

I pull one out by its spine  
and Rumi walks down my fingers  
then leaves of grass waft with Whitman  
falling from his beard as he laughs his rich humanity.  
Buddha's followers file behind him  
and perch on my shoulder whispering in my ear  
peace, detachment, and compassion.  
David, Samuel, Jesus, John, and Paul sail their ships  
onto my legs as if to urge me to rise and travel with them  
from the comfort of this peaceful space  
into storms, deserts, and paths of discovery and grace.

And there is Black Elk and his native kin  
speaking from weathered tortured souls  
drumming the earth and wind across the ages  
I hear their jangly dances wafted by feathers and leather  
and their horses run over the land sounding a deep beat  
thu-thum, thu-thum, thu thum  
over the decades, plains, and mountains.

And here I am feeling so small in their presence,  
honored to have them resting and sleeping under my roof  
until once again I open their pages  
and they cry out and whisper their centuries of wisdom.  
I am humbled and unworthy of this gathering of giants  
and yet they sleep silently on these shelves  
knowing they are my friends and fellow travelers  
who have found their way and dwell within me.

I am full of them  
my heart bursting with joy  
and quiet peace.  
I feel them in my lungs  
as I breathe in their scent  
and hear the echoes of their voices and rich, sonorous music.