

Earth Stories And Human Stories

most books begin
and proceed in rational ways
leading toward a predetermined idea
but real life doesn't work like that

real life reveals itself
in fits and starts
in juxtapositions
surprise images
odd leaps of connection
using every sense to make its way
toward something we could never
have predicted

our tendency
is to construct
a rational pathway
leading back into the past
that brought us this present
that's why we write books
to rationalize
that which is organic

that's not to say
the organic Earth Stories we see
aren't rational
but rather to say
Earth Stories find their way
much like rivers and streams
moving between high places
diving low and feeding growth
at every point

when we find growth
we are tempted to think of it
as something human
in other words... who planned this?
who planted it?
who watered it?

WHERE THE GROWTH BEGINS

who drained it?
eating raspberries in June
right here in this place
we make a rational story
about eating raspberries
and that's the difference
between Earth Stories and Human Stories

that's why I've always liked poems
a poem works more like a river
or a stream than a book
a poem makes leaps
juxtaposes images phrases
a poem wants to surprise
take you places you didn't think
you were going
take you to a place you could
never have guessed

a poem digs in the dirt
you find bits and pieces of Earth Stories
organic matter broken pieces
pebbles
dead bugs pieces of bone
but then sometimes
you come across artifacts
bits and pieces of Human Stories
the china-doll's broken foot
spent shell casings
stones laced with smoke
from old fires

fires lit by people
trying to stay warm
gathering to tell stories
gathering to make their lives
meaningful and rational
gathering to pass wisdom
to their children

stories of successful hunts
of hard years of famine

DR SCOTT SIMPSON

stories placed in children's hands
models for
when they take over
how to be good human beings
how to be good parents
how to be hard workers
how to be leaders

all these stories
Human Stories
lessons we pass on
reasonable and rational
are also the things we
argue and war about
with others
because their stories differ
from ours
their image of how to lead tells
a different story
their understanding
is different than the story
we've told our children
seems somehow in opposition
to our definitions

and so these bits and pieces
we've dug up
from the dirt
we've pulled out together
tear our fingers
leave us bleeding
leave us fighting
leave us arguing

they are more like books full
of arguments
than poems full of images
juxtapositions metaphor
surprises in fits and starts

how can we learn to war less
how can we learn to oppose and argue less

WHERE THE GROWTH BEGINS

despite our torn fingers
bringing blood?

perhaps immersed
in the Earth Stories
the organic patterns
the networks that formed us
twisted our DNA into place
tapped on our souls with messages
we understand partly
and don't know the source of
they feel like home
like deep wisdom
wisdom deeper than we could have
figured out on our own
wisdom deeper than a story
I might tell
wisdom as deep as a story
I discover myself a part of
wisdom like a poem
coming in fits and starts
in juxtapositions