

No More Regrets

Abyss grows deeper, darker, colder.
Shrouds obscure souls from light and warmth.
Regrets accumulate, piles of discarded bones.
Worldly influences create universal suffering.
Life's circumstances and choices determine regrets.
If only, I had...

Retreat from the shadows of excuses,
escape the caverns of denial,
cast off the veil of disillusionment,
climb the jagged walls,
reach for opportunities,
transform through new experiences.

Live and learn from past mistakes.
Time on earth runs short,
Judgment day nears,
Forgive yourself and others,
Change your heart, your life,
Live with no more regrets.



Escape

Chilled sunrise,
smoky mist rises
off vast snow fields

Cloaks mystical castle
with glistening silver spires,
ice glazed branches tower

Within salt water taffy sky,
bands of seafoam green,
heather lilac, cotton candy pink

Pastel colors fade into
creamy pastures as a magical
beast, rare albino buck, leaps,

eludes archers' arrows, sun rays
stream, fog dissipates,
frosted illusion retreats.



Merciless Storm

Emergency sirens blared, too late to evacuate.
They sought shelter in first floor bathroom,
threw blankets and pillows over their bodies,
anticipated the hurricane's arrival.
They clutched each other, mumbled prayers.

Rain pelted roof with deafening drum beats,
surf surged and devoured the beach,
wind roared like a hungry beast.
Shingles surrendered and flew away.
Windows succumbed to pressure and exploded.
Battered walls buckled, wailed like victims under siege.

Boards splintered,
concrete cracked and crumbled.
They ducked their heads, closed their eyes,
pressed their hands over their ears.
Their bodies trembled.
They clutched each other, mumbled prayers.

Waited an eternity for the light of day,
finally they emerged to painful discoveries--
houses dismantled, property ruined,
buildings lifted off foundations.
Who is missing among the rubble?

Downed trees and power lines,
debris scattered for miles,
infrastructure crippled.
What is salvageable?

Uncontrollable tears, lives devastated.
They clutched each other, mumbled prayers.
Clouds parted,
sunlight streamed hope.



Suzanne Cottrell lives with her husband and three rescue dogs in Piedmont North Carolina. An outdoor enthusiast and retired teacher, she enjoys writing, reading, knitting, hiking, and Pilates. Her poetry has appeared in journals such as *Avocet*, *The Pangolin Review*, *Plum Tree Tavern*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *The Remembered Arts Journal*. She was the recipient of the 2017 Rebecca Lard Poetry Award, Prolific Press.

~ *◆*❁*◆* ~

The Pangolin Review, Issue 14 (8 January, 2020)