

Thoughts on *The Creative Process*

by Photographer and Sometime Poet Nancy Rotenberg

Season of Hope

Hibernating,
invisible under white blanket,
drops of snow
melt.

Dormant souls disclosed,
with revelations of
a warbler's clarity-
a bud swelling.

Layer by layer,
cocoon awaken.
Petal by petal,
leaf and life unfold.

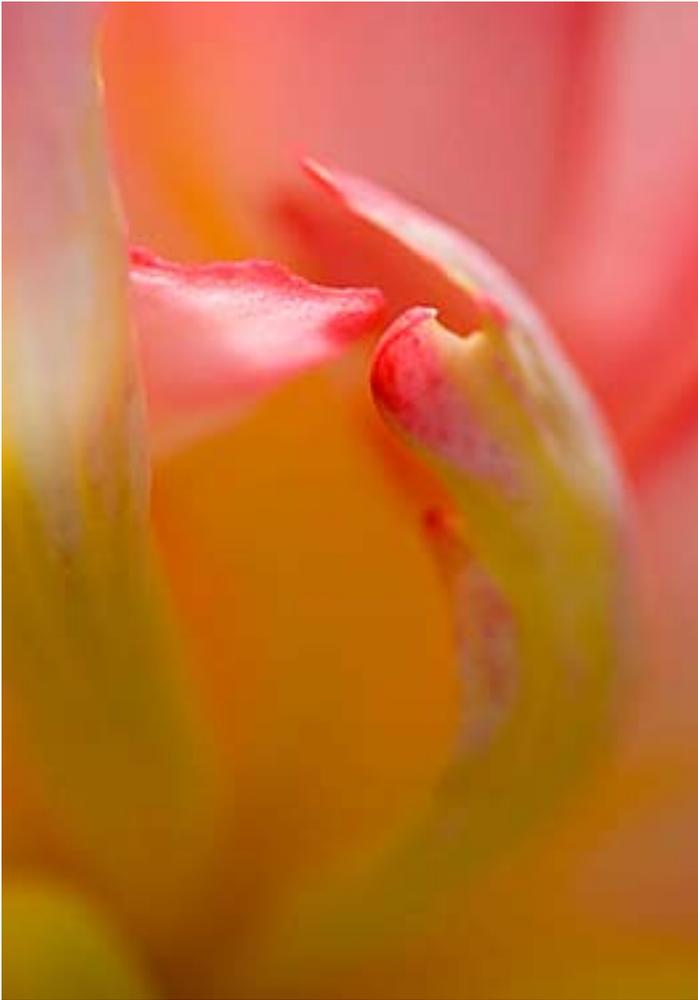
Free to connect
to their breath,
lost love is stirred from sleep.



So, why a poem and an article on poetry on a photography site? For me, photography is poetry. It's about clarity of expression through the use of imagery. When I write poetry, I look for metaphors that can be catalysts in the discovery of the essence of life. When I photograph, I do the exact same thing

I don't just see trees and wildflowers; I find ways to compose those trees as if they are dancing with the wildflowers. I don't just photograph a flower with a label saying, "begonia"; I look for the visual designs in the flower and explore its shapes and lines. I am always searching for the essence of my subject and how the juxtaposition of elements work to create rhyme and rhythm. If you are looking carefully and with mindfulness, the poems will call out to you. These are the metaphors which will elevate your photography to a poetic expression in your creative journey.





How could this work? Well, here we are embarking on a season of hope – spring. The whole of nature is renewing itself. There is the hearing of the first warbler, the swelling of buds, the spring peepers announcing themselves, the colors where there were none before, your feet, bare now and closer to the earth. There are ancient smells in spring and there are seeds from your heart that can unfold, just as the season does.

Spring and poetry and photography are all ways of putting feeling to form. Spring arrives, delicate at first and then with strength as it travels over what was a bleak landscape. It is a mysterious and magical process. It is as the poet William Carlos Williams said in *Spring and All*: “rooted, they grip down and begin to awaken.”

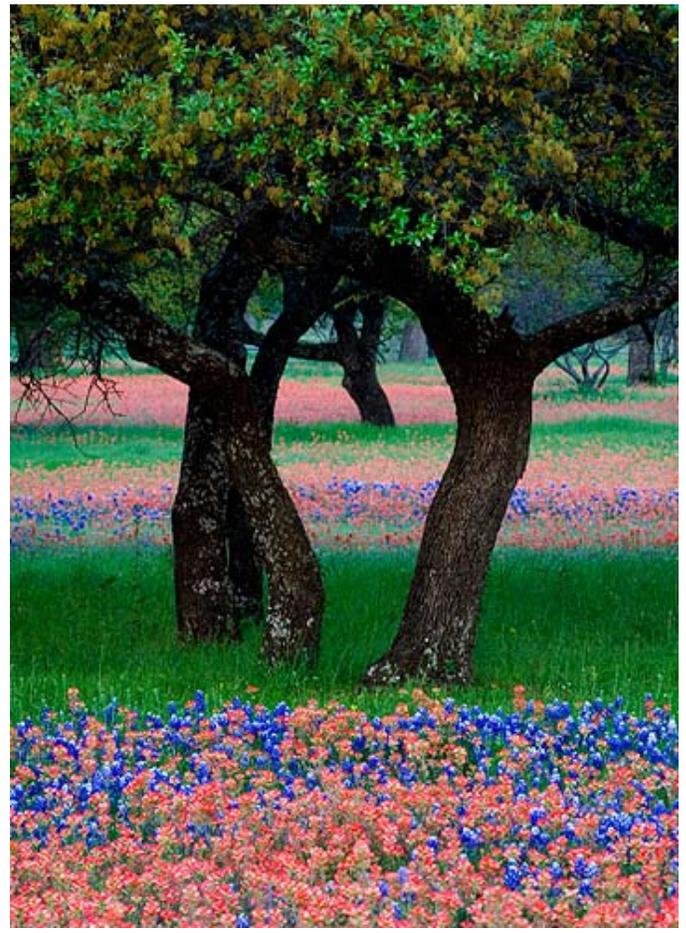
Why not write poetry this spring? Wake up from *your* dormancy. Come out of your cocoon and let the rains and warmth ignite your juices. If you are open to allowing the poet to awaken and to join you in your creative process, you will experience an incredible rejuvenative power.

As you emerge, the barren will flourish and the brown land and leafless world will blossom. Petal by petal, you will feel your growth. What might have been thought dead or lost, will be found again. What might have been thought non-existent beneath *your* surface may emerge as an extra dimension to creating art and to living life as a poet.



Both poetry and photography are about seeing. They both incorporate the eye seeing vs. what the eye sees. When we explore what the eye sees, we discover what is stirring beneath surfaces. We see what might not be apparent to the casual observers. Through the creating of images in poetry and photography, we compose elements in the hope of gifting those observers and sharing our vision. We are sending the light out into the universe making it a much richer place. How lucky we are to be part of this process.

If we connect poetry with photography we have the potential to travel beyond the literal. In our relationships with what we are seeing we can go beyond handshakes – into a more interpretive expression. You may not want to sit down and take pen to paper and actually write a poem but it is the idea of incorporating the idea of poetry which may influence your expression.



To learn more about Nancy Rotenberg and her newly released book, *Photography and the Creative Life*, visit her website, www.naturaltapestries.com