

Sculpt Your Future

When we are young, we reach for the treetops.
We climb to the top of rocks just to stand proud,
looking down as an overseer on the world
so it knows that we have reached the top.

When we are young, we fight and face our fears.
We sit straight, eyes forward in our desks.
On the first day of kindergarten, I was silent;
my stomach quivered when I tried to speak.

I waited for the fluttering to disappear, and finally I hear,
“Neil, what’s up?” Or so I thought—someone said, “Nate shut up.”
The silence had to end, like Mom said, “Be yourself; do not pretend.”
So I faced my fear, I spoke out clear, and let my friends know I was there.

When we are young, anything is possible. We dream big dreams
and think big thoughts, with no repercussions.
We open up to vast discussions, consider the impossible as plausible
because even if improbable, everything is solvable.

When we are young, Martin Puryear’s ladder expands infinitely upward.
For children, there is no down; they are always facing forward,
striving to reach the highest rung, the tallest stair,
the seat of Papa Bear’s chair or the crown of Rapunzel’s hair.

As life progresses, our motivation to reach the top regresses,
We see twists and turns in Puryear’s ladder.
Previously extending to the sky, it now has boundary,
unnecessarily, because we see only what we want to see.

As our grasp on the next rung slips, we look blindly
at a limit that doesn’t exist. Reminisce on those long days in calculus:
My attention drifted as my mind sifted through inventions,
linear regressions, and hopes of my future health profession.

Sculpt a ladder of your own. See with a child’s eyes.
Become a devotee, not an adversary.
To achieve we must believe,
It will be a surprise how high we will rise.

by Neil, Woodbridge, VA