

Personal Alchemy

By Jessica Pumphrey

Once upon a time
I considered survival
To be simply enduring
The stick we measure against
Of how long, how much, how many
then it was made clear
That I can endure most anything
But I might not survive it

The slow grind of endless days
Each the same but
A little worse
Righteous anger stiffened my spine
Squared my shoulders
No matter how much was piled
Or how high
I can carry it all
I can endure
Like Sisyphus always pushing

Realization comes eventually
The slow slide of stubbornness
Breaks against the rocks
Of understanding.
Enduring the crush
Is just the first stage
To survive one must
Take endurance
And spin it
Rumplestiltskin bartering for better

The drive to endure
Must become the drive to succeed
To find stable footing
Grab with both hands
And pull yourself forwards
No matter what happens now
You cannot let go
Endurance is about pushing onwards
Survival is pulling yourself up

Once upon a time
I learned to claw my way out
Transmute
Straw to gold
Endurance to survival

Personal Alchemy

I bartered for better against myself
And came out victorious