

I Am

by Charles Burack

*Winning Entry of the First
Annual Songs of the Soul
Poetry and Sacred Music
Festival Contest*

In the beginnings
I am
and in the endings
I am

every finish but a pause
every start but a push
or pull
of infinite pulsations
of endless cyclings and recycling
birthings and burings
bloomings and bustings

All I see is I
I is all I see
all always all
always each
always all

Each a part, a portal,
a prism
Enter a leaf
you are there
Enter a root
You are here
Branch, trunk, fruit
Tree of life

Earth is sun's
Dark condensed
Rays
Sun is earth's
light loosened
dust

Waves dissolve
into particles
Particles dance
into waves

Can you see an apple,
without seeing the branch,
the sun, the dirt, the ants,
the spring rain, the clouds,
the nearby lake, the distant sea,
the farmer, the trucker, the steel plant,
the rubber plantation,
the marketplace?

I am the mother and the baby
and the flow of joy between
I am the mammaries and the milk
and the mouth that sucks blind

The trees are my thick hairs,
the mountains muscled bone,
the seas fragrant sweat
the winds living breathe

I split myself to see myself
to know my nature
to gaze upon my face
to proclaim my facets

With division I multiply
With difference I make sense

One to act, another to react
One to be, another to become
One to know, another to be known

I make worlds out of yearning
for partners in dance

Worlds whirl out
and worlds whirl in
but never do I release
both hands

Love wrestling is the combat
I love most

I rip my stillness
to make delirious dance
and score my quietude
to make uproarious song

Chaos is my free play
order my moment of rest

I splinter my eye
to make points of view
I gather my eyes
to know myself
completely

I burn and burn
consuming myself
spreading out my wealth
that all may be
light

Everyone
a ray
rooted
in my burning
heart

Everyone
a root
arrayed
with my fire

My heart a bright home
an incandescent loam

Charles Burack is a poet, writer, professor, creativity coach, and interfaith spiritual counselor. He currently teaches at John F. Kennedy University. An award-winning poet and scholar, Burack has published a collection of poems, *Songs to My Beloved*, and a literary study, *D.H. Lawrence's Language of Sacred Experience*, as well as dozens of articles, stories, poems and meditations. A former rabbinical student, he is actively involved in interfaith education, arts and counseling.