

## TRANSITION

by

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When I came to this town, I was a stranger in a strange land, always adrift, like a leaf, wind-blown, my heart full of longing for friends far away.

Gradually, Corvallis drew me in—first by its courtesy, then, its generosity. Shopkeepers and clerks who always had time for hello, how’s your day? Drivers slowing to a stop as I waited in the driveway, waving me in to take a place before them on the road, chivalrous to a fault.

I fell into step with the rhythm of the seasons: winter gray and rain forgotten in spring—a profusion of color and scent, children at play, cherry trees in bloom—their flowers floating down and around, carpeting the sidewalks in a soft pink snow, all of us easing into sunlit days and summer daze; music and games and art in the warm blue air, abundant trees offering shade from the heat, their lush green leaves surrendering, at last, to autumn’s chill, suffused by an amber fire, each leaf a gem, bright, brilliant, crimson and gold, nature’s treasure, wealth beyond reason.

As I walked in neighborhoods, my own and those further afield, I grew to love people I didn’t know, except by the gardens they tended. And then, over time, not quite knowing when I crossed the line, this was home.