

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Blowin' Against the Wind, Prose/Poem 7/17/ 2014

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A breeze tugs at my curtains
Enticing me outdoors.
To hear silver metal chimes
Clinging from the tree at my door.

What caused this welcome breeze
I wonder. Is it as folks say,
“Wind blowin’ from nor’-east?”
Or, as science says, a vacuum

of low pressure in the south-west
is sucking and siph’ning air from the north
in a sweep of several hundred miles?
Science studies how nature works,

yet our common sense, our intuition’s
not in synch with modern science.
Is poetry so wedded to convention
that science’s discoveries can’t

be part of poetry till they’re old hat
and feel as comfy and broken-in
as slippers we’ve worn for years and years?
When will we retire fossil words

like “sunrise” and “sunset”
that make us feel the sun is climbing,
or sinking in the west, even though
we’ve known for centuries that that’s wrong?

Why can’t we feel what we’ve learned,
That earth spins as sun is steady?
Do old words and habits of mind
Keep us from re-perception?

How many centuries will it take
to replace the old word “race”
with variation-in-melanin,
and “immigrant” with one-of-us?