

## **Moving to the Third Age**

*By Milbre Burch*

She feels her body is made of sand,  
loosely bundled in silk scarves.  
Her breasts and belly shift beneath her own touch or his,  
bidden by gravity, eroding always downhill.

She is an enormous dune, centuries after a mountain  
lay down to rest in the desert, still hungry enough  
to trip up the traveler who takes a false step,  
and carry him, smothering, always downhill.

She is a mountainside covered in tons of powdered snow.  
The icy crust is thin and the mountain's grip precarious.  
The wrong word spoken too loudly cracks the ice  
and sends an avalanche thundering always downhill.

She feels molten, a solid made liquid,  
something elemental acted upon by the pressures  
of time and gravity, heat and stress,  
overflowing and running always downhill.

She is erupting in slow motion,  
the oozing mouth of the bearded volcano before the lava cools,  
burning hot and transforming, unstoppable,  
pushing everything always downhill.

She feels that she is made of water,  
moving with a heaviness and torpidity,  
monumental in its power and dangerously underestimated,  
cascading over a cliffside and pouring always downhill.

Made of loose sand or snow or lava or water,  
she is aware of every vibration beneath her inner and outer layers.  
Through a sidewalk or a bus bench, a gravel path or a church pew  
it builds, pushing up through her body and comes shaking to the surface.

A thousand times more powerful than when it began,  
the vibration unleashes something, and who she is still to be  
spills over the boundaries of who she was, before she gave into gravity  
and became herself without the curse of beauty,  
without the confines of her youth.

Internationally known performer, award-winning recording artist, published poet and writer and respected teacher of her craft, Milbre Burch is a storyteller in every sense of the word. Considered one of the most important voices in the American storytelling revival, she is a Circle of Excellence Award recipient. Burch weaves gesture and language into personal, literary and traditional stories and dramatic monologues to create a whole new genre of storytelling. Her "Theatre of the Spoken Word" is both elegant and eloquent. The New York Times praised her "classic wit"; the San Diego Union-Tribune called her "mesmerizing, like a fine solo dancer." Milbre Burch can be reached at Kind Crone Productions, P. O. Box 1113, Columbia, MO 65205. Phone: 573-443-3131 and Fax: 573-443-5151.