

# Poetry page

## Strata

Our days are made of  
varied ages and  
altering composition.  
Layers of change through  
out time and space.

To feel the changes  
that have been made  
does not require  
the minds' knowing alone—of where  
one thing ends and  
another begins.

Nor is the  
heart's feeling enough.  
We need a gut that senses change.

An intuition that  
senses the shifting  
plates and layers  
of life. We need a  
heart and a mind that will trust  
the gut.

In us,  
down deep and beneath  
are movements we cannot see,  
upheavals we will never see,  
shifts we cannot know will come.

We can sense them.  
We can lean forward at

the first stirrings – bend into  
them and suppose or  
hunch.

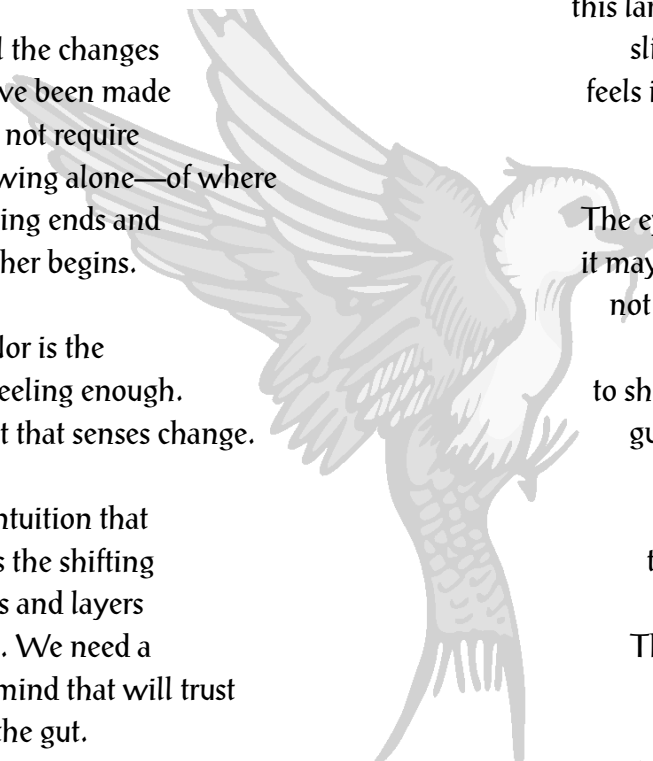
It is the gut that notices  
this larger terrain—this immense  
sliding. It is the gut that  
feels its way through changing  
landscape.

The eye may not see, the mind,  
it may not know, the heart may  
not feel, but the gut senses.

The gut holds on  
to shudders and rumbles. The  
gut explores valleys and  
hills, the faults and  
plates of the  
topology of our lives.

The gut knows nothing  
of fur and feathers,  
of brocade and silk.  
It holds no hope in the fine  
and the soft: amid  
the smooth and refined.

The heart and the mind, they  
loll themselves to sleep  
in the finery. Casting their  
eyes on the silt and lace  
of low grade terrain;



feeling for a faint  
interior pulse that they  
cannot know.

Our days shift and move  
without regard for the mind's  
vigilant hope for reason, and  
the heart's need for rhythm  
and rhyme. Things  
move about without warning.

I cannot hope to see  
that plate raised up above the others  
or that one dropped down below.

The gut knows disturbance:  
turbulence is its language—  
and it knows it well.

My gut feels them:  
A jarring drop or jolting  
rise is measured for sure in  
the gut. The heart, the heart  
reaches out and feels  
through the layers of space  
and time for the shifting  
and the rolling forces  
We no longer see—the

sorrow and the joy  
that arrives from change  
ushered in on the current  
of the hummingbird's wing  
at noon day.

Layers of life  
that we cannot see.

We are piles of layers  
within the twist of time  
and the stretch of space;  
the spray of the wave  
and the stir of air.

We hold on amid  
our lack of ingenuity;  
we dream on despite our  
innocence of any true power.  
Sensing only the dark,  
feeling only the layers  
of our piled past,  
we hope against hell that our  
heart and our mind have  
listened well and found  
what is true, what is sure—  
what the gut has to offer.

—Father Dn. Thomas Johnson-Medland, CSJ, OSL

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