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Cover: *Dark Petals*
by Lauri Burke

Origami Poem Project™

Three Strikes
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Three Strikes



Bill Sullivan

1. Petals and Shadows

I didn't see the shadows
until I zoomed in tightly,
brought the lens and eyes down
to the strands of darkness
staining each and every white
petal. One could not be without
the other. Sisters holding hands,
the pure one more prominent,
the earthly one so shy. Hidden
but ready to be discovered.

Let the violin's high note announce
the dance the cello's mellow
tones carry the tune. Watch the sisters
twirl like black and white dervishes,
twirl until the sky darkens, until
they stagger and fall to the ground
petals beyond their time.

2.

Holding On

The roller coaster car inches up
the steep hill. Our eyes question
blue skies. Hands linked, we anticipate
the terrifying thrill. But as we reached
the apex and viewed the wrenching
drop, our stomachs groaned, our hearts
shook. Then gravity and machinery
shot us down. Took our breath away
as we loosened our grip on the lap bar,
then grasped each other, inseparable
we thought until you and so many
more were no more. Now I cling
to what remains--out of love
and fear. Hold on tight
until my knuckles turn white.



3.
A Steep Climb

I once scrambled to the top.
Leapt from rock to rock.
Sped over the trail's snags.
Sang jubilantly atop the summit.
Was kin to cloud and sky.

But in time the hill became
a mountain, the path, overgrown,
armed with thorny bushes
that rip the skin and shifting
rocks that steal steadiness.
I hesitate at the trailhead, a dark,
small opening in a tall thicket.
My backpack, crammed
with yesterdays' troubles,
bends my back and desire.
"Perhaps another day,"
I mumble, to the mute boulders.

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*Come, sit under the fig tree.
Thoughtless and open, feel the sun's
warmth, hear the wind's wordless song.
Touch the breathing soil beneath you,
See and know the unending sky.
Picture yesterday's grief, tomorrow's
anxiety as a tangle of knots untied.
What is stirring muscle and bone?
What recedes; what comes forth
from the shadows?*