



7th ANNUAL
POEM
TOWN
BRADFORD

Come

Lady of the wood and sea,
come to me.
For I long to hear the smile in your voice,
the softness of your whisper,
and see gentle laughter in your eyes.
Hold my tired, calloused hand.
Let us walk along the shore,
where you can tell me once again,
about the upward least-trod path.

Reassure me,
the struggle for my dreams,
has not stolen your time.
Our days are on the wane,
not like those of our youth,
on the California coasts,
when we scaled the cliffs at Laguna,
to watch the sun go down.
Still, you draw me in,
and call me to my better self.
Life took a different meaning,
when we became eternal.

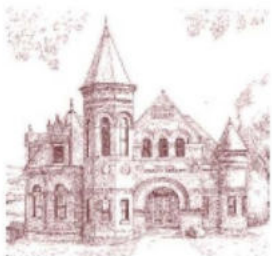
So clasp my hand.
I will put mine
at the small of your back,
and draw you near.
We will celebrate in twilight,
in the cottage,
swaying on the hardwood kitchen floor,
singing the old Stephan Foster song,

Hard Times Come Again No More.

*"Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears,
while we all sup sorrow with the poor,
there's a song that will linger forever in our ears;*

*Oh, hard times, come again no more.
'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary;
Hard times, hard times, come again no more.
Many days you have lingered all around my cabin door;
Oh, hard times, come again no more."*

James Jonathan Ruggles
East Corinth, VT



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