



# CCW 2009 Spring Writing Contest Winning Poem

Wisteria

by Susan Florence  
About the Author

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## Wisteria

It has lost everything.  
Last leaves fallen  
on teak table, chair  
and wooden deck.

But what is it that draws me  
to it even more, now  
that it has given itself away?

In silence  
gray branches arch prayerfully,  
as I have seen morning hands  
gracefully lift and give offerings.

It is as if finally the pressure  
of showing beauty,  
providing leafy shelter  
and shade has ended.

...and I remember her telling us  
of that night in the hospital  
when it didn't matter anymore.  
When the will to live for her children  
and husband changed  
because the pain was too much.

...and she saw at that moment  
something about herself,  
that one moment when she knew  
she could give it all up.  
She knew she was more  
than all she held onto.

So I am called to these branches  
every winter trying to tell me  
how much more there is to me.

This is not to say I don't notice  
the first pale buds awakening  
in early spring.

And I am transformed in the days  
when fragile lavender clusters open,  
hang in scented beauty  
and bring big black bees  
to their steady chanting.

But now I am called to sit  
under these bare branches  
and like the wisteria,  
let the sky in.

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## About the author

**Susan Florence's** career as an artist and writer has been creating gift products, from greeting card collections to lines of giftbooks. "Poetry has been for me a personal way of passage through the years," she says. "My poems were kept hidden in files 'to be worked on.' In 2005 I attended San Miguel Poetry Week and began my pilgrimage into what Stanley Kunitz called, 'the telling of the stories of the soul.' This prize gives me tremendous joy and tells my 'inner poetry judge' to stand back. Thank you."

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