Cemetery Road

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Grass and trees lie tended. Soaring birds stretch their wings in an August-blue sky.
Under the peaceful scene, long ago,
I remember this road—
the march behind my young sister’s coffin,
the deep purple songs as startled birds fled the nest,
and my heart seared in this slow-winged farewell.
Huddled in sorrow we walked the road back.

Deep in the winter, some years later,
like transparent black angels
we walked by my mother’s bier
her flower-soft final bed.
Cloaked in snow, the wind helter-skelter,
strange birds screamed
as we walked the road back.

I played the panpipe and sang
as years of healing passed
for the two who had left home forever.
But my sorrow became all the more.
My brother wound away in mid-life—
soon my father, my heart’s treasure
entered the earth as a dog howled
amid the grave mounds.
Broken, we walked the road back.

Today, under a chrysanthemum fresh sky,
as magnolias stand guard, row upon row,
I write poems, plant beans as months pull me along,
live between heaven and earth...
I see I’ve become old, my hair gray,
since first I walked the road back.