

CHANGING WITH THE SEASONS

For the springtime of my life, I was a letter,

the sensitive greeting handwritten on pastel paper,
the airmail post to a distant pen pal,
a declaration of love for my mother, illustrated in crayon.

In the summer, I grew into an essay,

the college thesis typed on onion skin paper,
book reviews, creative non-fiction.

Now, in autumn, I am haiku.

Instead of the long swim across the blue bay,
I am the entry into the water—
movement from vertical to horizontal.
A splash illuminated.

Will there be a time when one perfect word will suffice?

In hospital, with Death herself
meandering the hallway,
I re-imagined the dictionary,
searched the thesaurus of my memory,
narrowed myself down to only
one milky opalescent word:
cherish.

And my near-winter heart is completely satisfied.

—Nancee Pace Cline

