**My Brother’s Keeper**

Dedicated to Ulysses Altland: Friend, Brother, Child of the Living God

My brother inherited gifts
Just as I inherited gifts.

My brother has bequeathed talents
Just as I have bequeathed talents.

My brother grew in stature
Just as I grew in stature.

My brother applied and adapted,
I applied and adapted so you see;
me and my brother share the same nature,
yet our environment has bestowed upon us
differing dispositions.
But isn't that where the beauty rests
and the miracle surfaces?
The family in communion with one heart
as we progress into one mind?

My brother and I believe in loyalty
in practice, not just theory.
And while we may stray from
our path at times,
We both made that choice
to sacrifice all that we have on earth
to give to those we love.

My brother and I are cut from the same cloth,
but sowed on different areas of the garment.
I rationalized; my brother acted on instinct.
I was judged; my brother was condemned.
I live free yet,
my brother has received the blessing
of knowing our true physical reality.
He sees the manifested nature of man's
current existence in shackles and chains.
Closed off from the sunlight and in turn
stripped of our inherent dignity.
Lied to and told that this dignity rests
in something outside of ourselves,
tricked into thinking that we're too dark
to be purified.
But who can be cleansed
who has not yet been dirty?
For as it is written
'the Father chastises those he loves’..

My brother and I were once lowly caterpillars.
Bottom dwellers with our bellies against the brush.
Yet even then we were beautiful.
Now my brother and I have chosen
to enter our cocoon.
The fulfillment of the Father's will
for the chosen one's own protection.
In this place we will learn to fear the Father
so that we can be born into the same family
as our eldest sibling whom they called
'the Nazarene.'
For out of this solitude of night
comes the transformation and the rebirth.
A new creature takes shape and
begins experimenting with his freshly
emerged riches.

It is here my brother where we
will strengthen the wings
that we never knew we had
but were always there.
Most wish to surface from their cocoons
as butterflies to be admired
for their wonderful beauty.
But you and I my brother,
we shall emerge as the moths of the forest.
Persecuted by man as pests.

They know that we are guided by the sun's splendor
as well as the moon's courtesy
so they attempt
to blind us with their artificial illumination;
false lights that bring death instead of life.
Yet when they realize our true potential
they strive to farm us for the silk that we produce.

They know not that the Father has perfected
us with the strength of a butterfly monsoon;
led by faith on a migration
out of captivity
and into the wilderness,
in hope of a brighter day.
It is glory like this that brings me to my knees
in awe and praise my brethren.

They said that nothing good could come
from such a God forsaken place
yet here we stand.
As healthy and peaceful as ever:

    Our heart still pumps with a steady rhythm;
    Our lungs still expand and contract in harmony;
    Electricity still lights our mind to provide functionality across the body;
    Blood still poureth into even our furthest extremities.

These are the gifts that the Father gives
to us every single day my brethren.
In return we give him our lives knowing
that there can be no mistakes,
only lessons.

Our brother teaches that suffering
is the pathway to righteousness.
That hardships are the vessels
that keep us afloat in the waters of peace.
For how can we fully appreciate what's good
if we have never known what's evil?
The fruit was necessary to see
our Father’s full compassion.
For the LORD He is good
and His mercy endureth forever.
Our brother Job’s testimony reveals this truth.

As he bore his cross,
as I pick up my cross,
as my brethren bear their cross;
we all have hope in the fact that our brother
willingly bore this same cross for all of our family
to be freed from bondage and not only covered but purified
and cleansed so that we are prepared to accept our Father’s inheritance.

I will remain faithful to you oh LORD,
so that my brother’s sacrifice was not in vain.
Amen.