**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.