Each poem was read between and as an echo of Rod Jellema's beautiful verses, which can be found on page 4.

1.

Lent

Yes, I know it is dark,
but hold us here a little longer
in the stillness,
that the glitter and glare
do not distract us from
learning to trust there is
more,
go deeper into the silence
where we find dark's consolation,

like the way grass whispers
to our feet as its roots stretch
and flutter,
or the way stars flower the sky,
petals of light
blossoming in our eyes,
or the way we hear the ocean
humming,
wave after wave,
its lullaby to the shore.

On this night,
as we wait for the brightness,
let us linger in the dark
long enough to receive its gifts,
intertwining threads
of who we are with more,
and reminding us,
we cannot see the light
without the darkness.

2.

Harboring

For RMS

You're right the phone doesn't ring
like it used to, and a full night's sleep
is as elusive as winning the lottery.
There is no question you could
use a dose of sun instead of another
gray day, but honestly
when you saw that red siren of
a cardinal at the feeder this morning
didn't you feel delight.

While there are more doctors
appointments, your fussy heart
wants your attention, and all those
greedy tests that consume hours
of your time, you still walk miles
every day, still shovel the snow,
still carry the wood. Yes, we
are older now, the body is softer,
the mind more mired.

It is all holy, the way one day
unfolds into the next. The surprise
of what we don't expect is still there.
The mystery of leaf and flower
appearing, disappearing,
only to appear again, the flutter of
clouds, the fragrance of lilac and lily,
the pursuit of dog and squirrel, the taste
of the first snowflake on your tongue.

Listen to me, you have to hang in there,
if only to recall that late August day
at the end of the season when
we entered the harbor, sail stiff,
boat heeled from a warm wind
muscling down the Reach
when we caught our mooring
in one pass, locked the tiller
and settled back to watch the sun set,
the dog and you and me
glowing gold as the water.

3.

Peace, please.

Not the pain in the middle of the night
that disappears at first light.
Not the x that marks the spot
where the ice dam melted through
our bedroom ceiling causing it
to bleed like a knife wound,
not the falling stock market,
not the meanness swamping our borders,
not the lies flitting like so many
horseflies we swat away,
not the fear we brazenly wade into,
not the dozen eggs costing $ 14,
not the snow that arrives in March
to the birds' despair,
not the workers fired for diligence,
not the bureaucracy of egos
vying for attention,
not the sneak attack of
body aches despite Pilates,
not the prayers earnestly
sent to the farthest reaches.
Just

Peace, please.

Reading: Selections from *A Litany Prayer for Darkness in an Age of Glare* Rod Jellema

As we wait
in this lonely dark of our selves
we do sometimes see tracings and splinters
a flicker of the dream of your world-
sparks and flashes we almost remember…

Come now Holy Spirit, through this dark,
light up the real world redeemed by the
light of the Word-made-flesh.
Then bring us home again, Lord, to everyday shine,
the dazzle of leaf-green and sky-blue, the flash of bird flight
the textures and shapes of wherever we walk…

Coming out of this dark, show us, Lord God,
as for the first time, the rich glowings of our different skins,
the eyes of the oppressed searching like beacons,
the flares of wonder that play in the eyes of our children.
By way of darkness, seeing anew,
we pray to live again in the wonder of light. Amen.