

Window to the Words, **Part I: Uprooted by Tragedy**

Parental Pain is a vicarious look at my parents' reactions, emotions, and experiences.

Shaking and *Waiting* were both written after my second visit to Texas—the worst of all my visits. During this time, Kevin had undergone a series of complicated surgeries. Plagued by infections, internal bleeding, fluctuating fevers and much more, the doctors did all they could to stabilize him. However, it was a time seized by anticipation and constant waiting—waiting to hear how the surgeries fared, waiting for updates on his condition, waiting to see if he was finally stabilized. And waiting is often the most difficult state—prolonged uncertainty and anxiety. These two poems described the agonizing waits.

Anguish of War, Is there a Reason, and Flames of Anger were all composed within 2-3 days of each other. During this time, I was overwhelmed by anger. Anger at life, unfair circumstances, and the cruelty of war—I needed to release the pain. These poems were the cathartic release I needed. Each of them came to me while I was driving. *Anguish of War* was actually written in a parking lot of a grocery store in Philadelphia.

Tunnels was actually written en route to visit my publisher in Virginia. As I entered the tunnel near Baltimore, I was besieged by anxiety and tension. The muscles in my arms and face tightened, and I gripped the steering wheel with an intense might. In reflecting on my discomfort, I realized that my experience seemed to mirror the physiological reactions I experienced when my brother was injured: tension, angst, apprehension. It dawned on me that tunnels were symbolic of trauma—dreaded and suffocating. I wrote this poem as soon I exited my car.

Upon looking up the definition of “uprooted,” I felt as though it was telling of our family situation. For it felt as though life had been suddenly displaced with no guarantee of relocation. Musing over the ramifications of being uprooted, I wrote this poem. *Uprooted* encapsulates how fragile our life seemed.