In 2021, the border between Canada and the U.S. opened in early September. I packed my bags and journeyed for my directed retreat to the Algonquin Highlands, which are north and east of Toronto. This time I remembered to bring my Totem cards, drawing book, crayons, colored pencils, and pen and paper.

The Little Kennisis River flows past the cabin I rent, and I am literally in the middle of nowhere. I have neighbors on either side but can’t really see them. My spiritual director is just a stone’s throw away.

I was pleasantly surprised when Haiku poetry again flowed freely...everything I gazed at called for this response from me.

My experience writing Haiku has been like a beautifully wrapped gift, freely given, inviting me to open, to look closer and to be surprised beyond all my wild imaginings. All I need and want to say is: “Thank You!”
The River

I stand still gazing.
The river flows by swiftly,
swollen by the rain.

I hear her sighing,
Making soft, gurgling sounds
as she passes by.

She does what rivers do,
always moving fast or slow
true to her nature.

Teach me, my River
to keep moving toward my goal
with every small step.

And what is my goal?
It has changed over the years
as I grow in age.

Right now, it’s PRESENCE –
being who I truly am
without fake pretense.

Offering to others
that which only I can give:
me, myself, and I.
Parade

My river hosts a parade.  
The ripples are the backbone,  
flowing whimsically.

Red, yellow, green leaves  
drop in along the way,  
as do pine needles.

All of them keep step  
with the pace the ripples set,  
not ever whining.

All are having fun  
being a part of this march.  
It’s a fall ritual!
Two maple trees and
Sentinels

They whisper on the breeze that
It's good to see me too.

I smile at them.
Tell them how happy I am
to offer their energy
there to protect me.

I come once a year.
They teach me not to
take for granted their presence,
or anyone else's.

Look, but also see.
"Be aware," they say,
of what is before your eyes.

They're tall sentinels.
two white pines form an arc.

"Be aware," they say,
of what is before your eyes.

Sentinels