

Becky Burton,

Some years ago

Author Robert Bly gave a talk at Butler University  
It was right after one of his books had come out.  
In it he described the business model of education  
The business model forges student souls  
souls like smooth steel rods.  
impervious,  
slick,  
shiny,  
A hint of intimidation.

If you've known Becky Burton for any length of time,  
None of those words describe her.  
she produces souls that are like oak trees.  
They are not forged with fire and heat  
They are not shiny  
They are rough,  
They are impressionable,  
needing care  
needing maintenance  
They suffer quickly if neglected  
able to be deeply affected by events,  
Oak shows signs of wear,  
It grows slowly and never quite in the way you want it.  
It quietly holds its place  
Little known fact.  
Oak is stronger than steel.

That's Becky

From creating a place safe from the intensity of the sun's rays  
From generating the nourishment to sustain generations of visitors  
Some visitors just stay and do not leave  
They are universally welcomed  
Without question, without hope for reciprocity  
Enduring change with a gentle rustle  
Carpeting the floor with memories that fall with the seasons  
Fully expecting the hummus to find its own way

To be fair, there are many trees here  
We are Orchard, it's in the name.

Becky - you have held your place in our canopy for many years  
Generations of students have found shelter beneath your grandeur  
Your absence will be noticed  
We will endure  
But the hole will last  
for a while.

Godspeed you to the mountain country  
To be with your children