Old Maps No Longer Work

I keep pulling it out-
the old map of my inner path.
I squint closely at it,
trying to see some hidden road
that maybe I've missed,
but there's nothing there now
except some well-traveled paths.
They have seen my footsteps often,
held my laughter, caught my tears.

I keep going over the old map
but now the roads lead nowhere,
a meaningless wilderness
where life is dull and futile.

"Toss away the old map", she says.
"You must be kidding!" I reply.
She looks at me with Sarah eyes
and repeats, "Toss it away.
It's of no use where you are going."

"I have to have a map!" I cry.
"even if it takes me nowhere.
I can't be without direction."
"But you are without direction,"
she says, "so why not let go, be free?"

So there I am -- tossing away the old
map,
sadly, fearfully, putting it behind me.
"Whatever will I do?" wails my security.
"Trust me," says my midlife soul.

No map, no specific directions.
No "this way ahead" or "take a left."
How will I know where to go? No map?
But then my midlife soul whispers:
"There was a time before maps
when pilgrims traveled by the stars."

It is time for the pilgrim in me
to travel in the dark,
to learn to read the stars
that shine in my soul.

I will walk deeper
into the dark of my night,
I will wait for the stars,
trust their guidance,
and let their light be enough for me.

– Joyce Rupp

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world
grows in me
and I wake in the night at the
least sound
in fear of what my life and my
children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the
wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild
things
who do not tax their lives with
forethought
of grief. I come into the
presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-
blind stars
waiting with their light. For a
time
I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.