

## Beyond the Threshold

-- to President Steven O'Day, on the occasion of his Inauguration,  
Austin College, 2018

This has always been a special place  
where the universe stretches its arms  
and yawns, growing just beyond the dawn  
where the mind transforms and awakes  
to brilliant golds and teals  
and all the colors of ideas  
and the intensities of ideals

The stars snack on the air here  
crunching into bites of blackness  
on cool evenings where philosophy  
and possibility sing from the trees  
like crickets. Where mathematical theories  
argue casually, over a cool Dr. Pepper  
and then swap jokes, and share memories

The sun hangs out here late afternoon  
(when it's not too busy spinning firestorms)  
to hear the latest, share the laughter,  
wait for new theories to dance in over the North Lawn,  
and wonder who will come, and will they too  
see the colors of ideas, the global impact of service,  
the stretching growth of young arms robed in integrity

A father looks down from cosmic heights of grand  
perspective  
on the day of his birth, a day of his son's passage

He sees the path, his own lessons shared, transformed,  
echoed,  
Movement, to the front point of an undulating V, winging  
high  
Wild birds fly beyond their borders  
all in growth, all transforming, seeing,  
uplifted by winds of courage, in the excitement of the  
morning air

This has always been a special place, nest of hope,  
sparkling with new growth and massive skies of opportunity  
spreading bloomlike rays into a field of nations, a garden of  
languages

A new leader, at the point of the V, knows  
that ideas burst beyond the covers of a book  
that education goes beyond the threshold of a classroom  
that in this *pueblo* of a planet, *conciencia de comunidad*,  
word and thought transform to action, grow like seed in  
eager soil

The wild birds know,  
together and in one common breath of effort,  
that new worlds lie  
beyond the threshold  
Beyond the threshold...

The father smiles. He sees his son  
at the point of the V.

--Dr. Carmen Tafolla, (Austin College '72, '73)  
State Poet Laureate of Texas, and Professor of Bicultural Bilingual  
Studies, UTSA