

# Sacred Calderas

Above the caldera at Yellowstone,  
a brittle soil-rock crust  
caps a lake of liquid fire  
with only fumaroles and roiling geysers  
to stay its upward thrust.

One errant step is all it takes  
to breach that mantle's fragile seal -  
spelling death by fire  
to any hapless wanderer  
who fails to guard his path.

Fragile calderas also roil  
buried in darkest hollows of our psyches -  
brewed of failures, slights and fears  
dissolved in molten pools  
of self-consuming misery.

To dress and salve our wounds  
we sow gardens of reconciliation within,  
with beauty, trust and reason  
and bow to gods of grace and solace.

But a despot's studied eye  
knows just how to tap our fragile crusts,  
releasing acrid lava flows  
from pools where fear and rage reign hot  
and reason has no district.

Sisters and brothers of our flesh I pray  
we find a holy and transforming alchemy  
to convert our heat to light  
and shield our sacred calderas  
from enemies that stalk us from within.

*July, 2006, revised December, 2014, 2015 and 2018*  
*Robert Charles Howard*