

There was once a student  
pouring over books-  
A scholar, as it were,  
on a pilgrimage.

Turning pages,  
taking notes,  
he sought answers  
in the lines,  
between the lines,  
behind the letters.  
On and on  
until  
exhausted as a pilgrim,  
empty in his frantic search,  
he sat in his silence.

A whisper was heard  
from a distant corner of the room  
filled with other scholars  
on the same pilgrimage.  
The student tried to listen  
above the rustling pages  
and strained to hear  
between the scratching pens.

He could not,  
did not want  
to believe the whispered words,  
"You must learn to ask the questions  
before you seek the answers!"  
They frightened him  
those hard words, difficult words.  
Questions  
only tore at the walls of his security.  
Answers,  
he wanted answers,  
neat and lined on a page,  
secure.

And so he returned  
to search  
for the answers  
in the lines,  
between the lines,  
behind the letters.  
At that moment  
he left his pilgrimage  
and ceased to be a scholar

but he did not know it.

Pat Long  
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