

ELIZABETH BREWSTER
PARALLEL IMAGES

Elizabeth Winifred Brewster (1922-2012) was born in the small logging community of Chipman, New Brunswick. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of New Brunswick in 1946 and a master's degree from Radcliffe College in 1947. She taught at a private school in Cobourg, Ontario, and published her first collection of poems, *East Coast* (1951), before earning a bachelor's degree in library science from the University of Toronto in 1952. She worked as a librarian at Carleton University and Indiana University and continued publishing poems, winning the E. J. Pratt Award for her second collection, *Lillooet* (1954). She also earned a doctorate from Indiana University in 1962 and worked as a librarian at Mount Allison University and the University of Alberta, where Margaret Atwood introduced her to tarot cards. Atwood also convinced her to teach creative writing at the University of Alberta in 1970, and in 1972 she began teaching at the University of Saskatchewan, where she remained for the rest of her career. She reached the peak of her productivity in the 1980s, publishing nine books and earning a Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts. The following poem was published in the winter 1988-1989 issue and included in the collections *Spring Again* (1990) and *Voices and Echoes: Canadian Women's Spirituality* (1997).

The Bible or the Tarot pack:
I find consolation in both;
the book of Job, Ruth in the fields of wheat,
Ezekiel's chariot,
the woman clothed with the sun

the wheel of fortune turning,
the hermit seeking truth with his lantern,
dark waters under the moon

strength, in woman's clothing,
clasping the jaws of the lion

the angel blowing his trumpet
above the tombs
on resurrection day

and especially the fool
in his coloured garments
with his jester's cap,
his pilgrim bag and staff,
his little dog at his heels

journeying over sandy deserts
and the mounds of graves

past towers, treachery, death, and devils

towards green trees
the celestial city
the world's
 consummation.