



2008 Teaparty Magazine Poetry Contest Winner: **Danna Ephland**

Shift

When the room rattles in Berkeley, she has no idea how long it will go on. Each quake different – the next rolls, next a truck hitting the side of her pastel apartment building.

to change the arrangement of (gears)

It is an overdue science project. Tectonic plates scraping below her feet. Facts on the National Geographic poster hanging on the back porch wall, somehow reassuring.

to move from one person or place to another

She shifts her weight on a Michigan couch, writing under the influence of fall sun shifting in trees and dirty windows, empty house to herself. Sand dunes are quieter,

to change position, direction, etc.

but thorough as earthquakes in rearranging the landscape. Great Lakes pound in the middle of a country in the middle of her life. Is it the place or herself she does not recognize?

*to get along, to shift for oneself
make shift – to manage (with the means at hand)*

Her husband did not climb the giant dune, ritual ascent of school kids every year. Didn't feel like it. Watched them scramble up the steep slope, shrinking to ant-size.

a shifting; transfer

Any sixth grade scientist can tell her what she sees. It used to be the moon, shadows like dunes, a shimmering desert starring Peter O'Toole, stretches of eastern Colorado

an evasion; trick

in the rearview mirror. It has little to do with the husband, climbing or not. Her focus shifts and the horizon settles around her. She turns the questions on herself and answers

a plan of conduct esp for an emergency

shake, but don't surprise her. A new coast capable as the Pacific of burying her deep. She barely locates herself in the new landscape and that is where she starts.