

Nine Poems by Allison Grayhurst

Running, lightwave riding

Keeping a holy flame
close to my chest, in the mornings,
deep in the base-line sleep
I throw a stone sideways - many pipes
are broken, hearts clogged with
despair, disappointments and dreams
of eternal dreams.

Answers start up like old machines,
make noise, but cannot be useful or join
a continuous flow.
Depleted bank accounts, rough-shod carpets
and rotting wooden subfloors – all of this is the same,
but what isn't is how I kiss high above,
feel myself and all who I love, cradled
in divine tenderness.

Do you know love, that kind of love?
It is better than smooth skin, soft fur,
or a year away on Spanish shores.
It is dangerous because it is all that is left,
and in that lofty beauty, all else is
forfeit that doesn't match its wonder,
simplicity, discipline.

It has to be surrender.
It has to be in this world
of chaos, unpredictable danger
and mishaps.
It is about connections,
fumes over the swamp, fledglings left alone
to die in the too-hot sun, and
waterholes gone unreplenished.

It is always this fear, this faith as one,
balancing, illuminated, filling up with pressure
then taking in every blessing,
the singularity of life, senseless conditions,
steel-bar limitation, pleading while satisfied,
longing while fulfilled, coat off, shoes off -
toe bent and broken, glad to still be able
to walk, to climb a chair, clean a home
and ask myself - is this freedom?

Stand

I stood
where all things feared
were served with the promise
of this perpetual.

I stood
at half-mast,
my energy so recently
abundant, now draining, and
my hopes, mummified, soon
to be buried.

I stood and saw what I saw,
but it made no difference.
The light was inferior to this calamity.
Declarations came and went without execution.

I stood and said I would not go back,
but I did. I let the fruit spoil,
my own humanity overcome
with a ripe mix
of rage and despair.

I stood on a steep slope,
looking for
a soft grassy landing
or a way to stand
with equilibrium.

Backtrack then forward

Here
staring at a verging
dignified future
without the disfigurement
of a beggar's shame,
licking-boot gratitude,
and the lies you expect me
to live up to, get in line with
like the gummy-bear being you
think I am - a misdeed,
an aberration, desperate for charity,
and the smiles, pat-on-the heads
from the world's elected ones
of shocking good fortune.

Thing I know in the crevice of
my cease-fire, when I let my anger dissipate
and I rise above the long-lasting wound,
take no punishment and offer no prostitution,
then I know the grand gifts I have been given.
I conquer your societal meritorious upbringing,
declaring my own justice

declaring one light, one hell
I will not stride across or
venture into, not for you
and not to appease
the ingrained guilt brewing below,
jolting my integrity, scorning.

Combat-zone

How do I receive a future,
inheritor of such
a dense darkness?
Healing is spared, the sunburn
grows into a rash and takes over
the possibility for stillness, sanity.
Everyday I am splintered, struggling
to conquer the dominant strain
lacerating my equilibrium with
its anarchy and drive.

I see the black hole conjunct
with the sun, transitions
that can transform any wound
into a terrifying progression.
I embody lethargy as the renouncer of hope
in the afternoons where there is nothing
to understand.

Fantasy is not a future, not
a worthy evaluation, though hypnotic
in its almost tangible relief.
It is not about an unfortunate circumstance,
but about the journey of my faith,
the validity of miracles
and God's gracious love.

Sing me a future. Do I believe?
Do I step down from all insight
and fall into an agnostic stand-still?
Do I accept this nullifying reality,
impenetrable, embrace meaninglessness
and lose my final ground?

Crisis

Release this sickness from my spirit,
call me to recuperate,
to be on the verge of a tremendous awakening,
and then to cross over.

Pluck me from this impending catastrophe.
It is yours to do and no one else',
to solve the riddle and allow me
to heighten my focus, undistracted by
this draining burden.

In this place, there is silence,
has been for so long, silence enough
to make any atheist gloat,
affirming a barren heaven, denying
everything that does not serve gravity
and inevitable darkness.

But I am no atheist.
I have felt your ground-shaking tenderness
envelop me, make me yours, eternal.
I have known your great mercy, your personal love,
your taking away what must be gone
and letting stay what I cannot live without.

But here, in this spawning hell of hopelessness
I cannot find you, cannot hear your
whisper or your guidance out.
I am scared and at the end.

Everyday the birds wake at 4 a.m.
and sing your glory.
I know your glory
and so I must see
this harrowing hardship as an illusion,
crack this façade
and its senseless insides,
hold it to your light, saturate in your light,
and believe in that light, only.

Worship Art or No Art

Speak of God as a necessity,
finding peace in the wilderness of
eternity, shining.

Speak of God not as an artifact
of the uneducated past,
knowing the greatest poets and philosophers
struggled, even if flawed, with letting in the light.

Open the richest of intellectual dimensions
through obedience to truth,
giving honour to art that outlives
more than one season,
as bloodlines are cut, cultures revolutionized,
and heroic forgiveness
is seen as paramount, the holy grail
of our strivings.

Rules

Rules have rubberized
lost their erected stiffness
and are more like a wave,
pliable, still connected but
able to make adjustments.

Rules enflamed with strange
possibilities, leading the argument for
erratic purity.

Secret rules made individual,
measured by how they inspire, how they
sustain inspiration and that is all.

Rules like bamboo, alive, fed by the angels,
malleable as hope, mature
with equal strength and flexibility.

Rules to abide by,
honour the turning of the clock,
allowing for precision, grounding
and Dog Star following,
roaming bright, invigorated.

Waterfall

Sweet and long
is the blooming tide
to take me over the dam,
pushing me down the waterfall,
graduating to reckless exhilaration.

I belong to the tender aftermath
the peace of the freed captive,
the relief that lies in wait
of every oblivious soul.
I belong to the late-spring fields
and the baptism of butterflies.

I will take no misdeeds with me
to this elevated service.
I will cut out the tongue
of any discovered demon,
let them know
they have no resources
or influence.

Monarchs

The monarchs begin their migration.
The souls of the deceased start to visit.
Temperance comes
with discipline, conviction
to not evade the truth or promises.

The last time I looked into your eyes
you were dying, trusting my love for you
and all the love that shielded around
your frail and fading body.
One year and I still miss you in my gut,
an emptiness that cannot be quelled.
This is the bird song, the emphasis
of individual brightness. The gift of you
and others too of gentle and lost natures.

The monarchs come to my back garden.
I greet them. I know each one -
their wing patterns, their flight patterns.
One day I will be a monarch,
a whiff of my soul, darting
from flower to flower, offering
a mild comfort to soothe
the pangs of vanished intimacies.