

**JOURNEY OF  
THE AWAKENING**

ALLISON GRAYHURST

*Journey  
of the Awakening*

*Allison Grayhurst*

*Edge Unlimited Publishing*

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# The Unfolding

When first I cried  
unsummoned tears,  
stripped of all I owned,  
the weather hammered further  
into the marrow of my bones,  
hammered until each splinter I swallowed  
as a plea of hope and on my knees a  
grey colour I was fixed.  
Bowling like Job without his trust,  
defying the ground that sustained me,  
the love that soothed me, defying all  
but the death and the guillotine mercy.

When second I cried,  
I was not born a hero,  
but happily released of my load,  
I quickened my speed  
and latched on to any shore.

When third I cried,  
the answer came, giving choice,  
demanding my house and rooms of many moods.  
It came like a great and potent  
ache of awakening, murdering  
my self with its beauty.

When fourth I cried  
I returned, still the same, but not  
the same, having now a foundation  
and a summit to guide and to strive  
my whole lifetime to attain.

## As I Sleep

No sun shone  
on Adam's breast  
when first his strength  
was bled.  
When sharp like a lion's tooth  
the milk of dreams flowed,  
half the sea perished  
stale with prehistoric lineage.

And under the rafters where  
unborn children wait,  
I dreamed of a world  
invincible with perfect hunger,  
inching out of each curse -  
all armour shed.  
I dreamed a second life where  
tenderness abounded. In every  
pyramid, pavilion, parental hand,  
the secret light was saved. The ones  
who sought did not seek again for  
desert and grave were one. And the  
salt and bone in each breathing body bent  
toward the sun. No angels came, neither did visions  
that gave a full understanding.

For what was not accepted or surrendered  
was broken, pierced  
by a savage love.

# Welcome The Death

Welcome the death  
of holding death  
like a smile. For all  
that dreams within,  
all that spreads uncorrupted  
through the veins, turns its back  
on oblivion, knows faith, knows  
its destination is beneath the  
stars.

Welcome the changing leaves, the  
frosted flowers, the vanity of being,  
of feeling one Self, whole before  
the world.

Welcome the body, the counted pennies,  
the child's plight and faces lost  
in midnight light, eternally forgotten.

Welcome the one who stands, the one who  
praises every cried-out syllable, purges  
the soul of stagnant battles, hour upon hour  
smells the freshness of renewal in clenched fists  
and phones that never ring.

Welcome the sound of a remembered kiss  
and the ghosts that grieve forever  
beside each mortal heart.

## Seizing Time

Legs, thin  
and curled  
like eyelashes.

Hands, tucked under head,  
supporting the weight of so much  
lonely thought.

Stomach, a flat curve,  
bones and muscles perfectly  
ordered.

Sleeping, no one would know  
his timeless howl, his long  
wait in grief's unrelenting realm,  
his requiem fire, or spirit  
that outdoes the marvel  
of daybreak.

Quiet, he finds  
no peace on the pavement of this town,  
he holds solitude sacred and feels  
each soul's whisper as an unnursable cry.  
He breaks all habit with his horn  
of piercing mercy.

He, so still, even birds  
hold their song to watch  
his placid breathing.

## Being Followed

The town is dark  
with frost & fist.  
The moon punishes the streets  
with its sultry glare.  
She walks down the narrow alley  
followed by  
a small-eyed stranger:  
Large hands in pockets.  
Grey hair stinking  
with spray. Quick breath  
in her lungs. Fear  
filtered into her veins.  
She looks to the trees for  
comfort, looks for the nearest  
exit. Does not  
turn back. Does not  
run, but hears  
his heavy steps  
stalking from behind.  
She begins to pray. But  
still the moon's mocking  
mask & still the flowers  
sleeping & still  
his approaching eyes, void.

## **Young Visionary**

**Brave before the approaching dawn,  
his vision breathed  
an easeful flow.**

**He spoke not of disease consuming  
but of terrible extremes and of death's helpful shock  
and immediacy.**

**He cried for love he never touched  
and of the aching joy of being and  
being tied to this Earth, beyond  
generation, beyond heritage.**

**He wrote with a rich anger,  
agonizing over such a demanding  
muse, condemned to be short-lived.**

**He pulsed with adolescent frenzy, free  
from too much experience, pure with  
a deep madness, cooling his heart  
with each desperate release.**

## Liquid Grey

These shapes I lose  
like the hum of breath, lose  
in a room like this  
that breeds dumb despair.  
I cry not knowing what  
such grief dominates, feeling  
the gully deepening, crossing  
beyond all sensation of the sun.  
I am what I cannot tell, am  
drinking in this mild death,  
discordant as a scream or dream.  
I dream in shadows. I work within the zodiac spheres.  
I see beyond but cannot kill  
my fate nor offer a crumb  
of kindness  
to my enemy's mouth.

## Thieves Of Muse

I hope my star does not  
shift from Earth and sight,  
into galaxies unbridled by  
God. And that my vision has  
hair and pulse, enough  
to reach the primal light, grow  
a new strength with each  
passing defeat.

*In hours of climbing the worn pillars of love, as death  
forces on through sleep, futility & tears, and climbing,  
climbing to no avail, to see no sun, feel only the cold  
shattering of heartbreak and the mind undoing . . .*

## **Through That Day**

**Through that day of yesterday  
one full sun ago, together, their  
spirits fed, walking as lovers past  
familiar streets.**

**Warm smell of intimacy flowing between two  
like nectar to the thirsting throat. Warm feel  
of smiles like there was the first time they ever met  
and met like a finding of home.**

**Warm grace in their voices, warm fear  
in their laughter, warm  
like a justborn child.**

**There when walking their depths  
merged in an uncompromising blessing -  
  
the chaos of confusion  
removed  
from their astonished eyes.**

# **This Is Not To Suffer**

**the thinning years of a lifespan  
roped by bitter nightfall**

**the volt of mourning that  
mourns the range of ambition to success**

**the blind rodent that frees  
itself of self-preservation**

**the hard days of unknowing that  
last beyond the taking of bread**

**and the meadow that aches of  
aloneness, aches to drive a soul inward.**

**This is not to suffer,**

**the long giving of love  
that receives none in return.**

## **On Tour**

**Pale as the Eastern gulls sitting on rooftops,  
he speeds over the wide country.**

**He hurts with uncommon intensity -  
liberation balanced between his two lips.**

**Like the slow hum of rain, I hear him  
treading the snowed-in cities, hear his kiss  
like a prayer of protection, flowering.**

**Freedom stitched to his smile,  
he crosses the sea he's never seen before,  
as he carries his guitar  
like a lover's warm hand.**

## **Adrift**

**Stripped of temper  
and the tossing blue.  
The sky weighs on me like a globe.  
Beginning in the curve of my tongue, I hide  
my sorrow like an eel.  
I dive past daybreak  
into the ditch of midnight.  
Guilt is my patched umbrella.  
I am only a few feet from home -  
a penny in my pocket, a chain  
I cannot lose. I want to learn  
of pastures where the dying are saved  
by prayer, where each captive beast  
is released and love is not compared.  
Reptiles in the morning clouds.  
A snake around a leaf.  
I hope to build a boat for patience.  
Clinging to a fragment of a tree  
I count each schoolless fish,  
and tilt against the tide.**

## Truth To Be Told

With this weight  
clinging to my laughter,  
cold weight of you  
and your indifferent love,  
shadows drag by my side  
draining my spine of its thick marrow.

And you, on the phone, with neither  
peace nor passion in your voice,  
may as well tell me  
you are regretting the days  
once with me, have decided  
to remain newborn on the crust  
of some exclusive adventure, in foreign  
cities, on unexpected streets, stay,  
swimming in immediacy where the miracles  
are yours alone to claim and keep  
and the remembrance of my smile  
has no effect.

# Not Enough

Here

is how it feels to be toyed with when  
hungry, to be taken when  
in love, to be sent back when  
needing so much just to find a window to  
leap through, something to make  
my hands tight with conviction, to be  
overweight with passion.

Here

is how cruel your slick indifference is,  
decaying my devotion for higher places,  
taking the syrup from my smile, and the  
crippled sun it brings.

Here

afraid, deep in the sinister void,  
deep in Monday night, deep in the  
left-over memories.

Here

down like a coffin weight, down  
into indulgent depths, down  
into the thickening ache, determined still  
yet to rise . . .

# Desire

does not come  
like tolerance, learned,  
worked for. Withstanding  
cruelty, dry lips,  
wild pain, it grows larger  
than love and God and grows  
until all gestures reveal it.

Secretly in the shade of devotion,  
it rages. Crouching behind churches and  
stairwells, it tongues its drug sweeter  
than touch. Burns the stomach, starves  
the heart of faithful riches.

When it comes it has no error  
nor the unanchored presence  
of doubt.

When it comes, it comes riding,  
circling like nightfall  
the soul's great yolk.

## For Waldo

Am I to speak of the hangnail pain,  
though no season was lost and there  
are no backstairs to climb?

Am I to miss you in the garden  
we never had, in the memories  
of never being close but always  
being near?

And the time you ran frightened of me  
through the alleyways, as though we never loved,  
never knew the trust of wounds  
we helped each other heal. Never you  
wanting more than to maintain  
your dignity, your freedom, your  
contemplative stare. Never you  
giving more than the most  
of your compassion, the gentle restraint  
of your excited spirit.

And to die like that,  
killing the final cord. Stinging slowly, so slow  
it's hard to cry, to not wish one last swim with you  
under the full moon just staring  
forever into that small-town sky.

# When Worlds Collapse

Falling into places, into  
mazes of loud but hidden  
hopes, where none but the  
stars can interpret.

Falling without instrument,  
turning a common colour.

Falling into wounds  
that cannot grow wings or  
struggle toward the sun.

Falling, finding  
these places, no places to name with  
the tongue.

Falling, praising  
every prison I pass, every touch  
of newness in the flame of falling.

in the oblivion of falling.  
in the birth of falling,

falling, for once, upright,  
absent of fear.

## **Oldest of Wars Between All Lonely Breasts**

**Underneath, with a bolt of egotistic rage,  
it comes, building shrines in my dark pockets.**

**And when my heart is weak,  
it lures me into its dismal hovel  
as if to comfort  
with its corrupt tongue.**

**Pale as the snows, it is without fire,  
sapping my juices impotent.**

**Jealous, it wraps  
its lealous paws around  
my core, hungering  
for obedience.**

**Robe of awful night, it writhes,  
clinging to my skin.**

**I am burnt by the terror of doubt and  
indignant madness  
that rents me out to the lust of despair.**

**I hear the moans of angels, but they are helpless  
to intervene, tied to the law of reach-and-reach-back.  
Panting now, I try to embrace this beast in play,  
uproot its fangs, tame its sly strength. But there are  
two atmospheres clashing within, raging to win  
side by side - raging to smother my struggle  
with one abiding victory.**

## Placeless

**You are far, without a face.  
Six nights on the bed beside  
your brooding limbs, the covers  
piled between us like a clotted vein.  
I know you are sad, but it is never  
enough just to say it,  
to feel my arms full of your aching,  
feel the fine fibres of isolation  
choke your core until only the cramp remains.**

**And the longing in your eyes knows no bounds.**

# Beach

Foreign,  
at the bottom of an agony  
to relish the sweet and wonderful  
Earth, to see the painted  
complexion of a twilight sky, smile  
at the coming current of darkness,  
holding out two arms to receive:

As I walk the pale pink sands, watching  
the splendour of colours  
transform and surround, the moon  
gives out a breath and

is born.

# Beggar Island

Long this beggar island  
where the sky above starves  
for praise and the nerves  
of all breathing things  
are ill with restlessness.

Long this beggar island  
where mauled flowers suffer  
on porches bare of rocking chairs  
and wondrous eyes.

Long like a day alone is long,  
like the waiting for a lover's call,  
or a good change or summer.

Long this beggar island  
where voices behind curtains,  
behind sadistic sarcasm,  
call the innocent to supper  
to harm what once was free.

Long this beggar island  
where no covenant is kept  
and all and all walk on,  
unconsciously yearning for death or  
for home.

# Shyla

The green dust of your eyes,  
the cameo coat of your  
body sleeping like  
a chinaglass doll, still  
by the window's light.

The years and thoughts I cannot  
exchange with you nor hope  
to savour a single shared  
laughter, but between  
these broken walls, under the hand  
of my affection  
your warm head  
moves like a small star,  
gracing.

## **Bless The Fallen**

**Bless the fallen, the less than ghost faces  
that haunt this cityscape.**

**Bless the one who cannot give, who cannot  
nurse a broken heart.**

**Bless the one hardened by degrees, by small failures  
that mount a life incapable.**

**Bless the proud bearer of truth who cannot be humbled,  
blinded by spiritual vanity.**

**Bless the arrogant, the one who feels movement  
only by force.**

**Bless the bearer of bitterness, who has no stronghold  
but hate.**

**Bless the one who fails to see the birds fly, hear  
the angels in their dreams.**

**Forgive us our canyons where self-pity reigns  
and self-pity devours.**

**Hold us near the harbour light though the chaos of sea  
be the only realm  
we, as of yet, have known.**

## Dreams Renounced

With the woods and the sea and  
the children that light the path  
what need we of words? What  
antidote could we stomach  
to join our hearts as they  
rock side by side?

In this used-up city  
of hot suffering and plucked bones,  
where do we announce our vanished  
devotion, to whom can we cry the  
loss of moonlight and hope?

We sleep without the warm touch  
of need. We sleep like mountains,  
secret, each  
onto our own.

## Missing You

So intolerable is the fierce drain  
of having you but  
not having you  
by my side.  
So hard to talk  
on the phone of missing you  
while the universe lies veiled and vaulted  
from my sight.  
While you laugh and sing  
and I sleep walk in the sun;

voice, unable to chime; voice  
that leaps then fails, calls  
to you then crumbles like some  
useless gesture; voice,  
full of the fury of assassins, soft  
like a slug's boneless belly cries  
to you of the loneliness  
and of the need; voice  
that needs your uncompromising devotion,  
but gets mute and lost, then sees  
that such a thirst  
is fatal.

# So Much Glory Stillborn

There was you  
holding tight to your need, full  
of the killing night.

There was you and no one  
exceeded you in your terrible love  
and in your milking

of quiet rains, as in my arms your size  
dominated the sun and awoke my wings  
to fan and flourish.

But long before the sterile sleep of years  
showered by compromise, long before the tossing  
from side to side, afraid

of kissing and the commitment it may bring.  
Long before now, falling prey  
to this angry hunger

that drums an inevitable goodbye  
and crushes cruel like cruel will never  
crush again.

# Bonded

Notes stream over their bodies  
like spilt wine,  
dizzy with forgetfulness  
and engulfed by devotion's  
desiring arms, they quench  
their love in these realms  
of trembling communion.

They do not lean their heads  
on ground of finite meaning but  
transported to a common passion  
they stare at the wonderful eyes of  
the moon and roll like the sea's emotion,  
bodies gripped by one hawk intent, hearts  
undiluted by distraction, joined forever  
in dance or defeat.

## Bed Fellow

Night freezes like wet hair to the skull,  
signifies a choir of cries  
dragged into the dark wind by the masses of  
dying. And dying like a father eventually  
dies to his child's need for  
mercy, like a mouse dies  
being blindly tossed between feline  
fangs, night has no miracles. Has long been  
home to nocturnal insects, to open snares and  
moods too heavy to comfort. Night is  
noose to the broken-down pilgrim,  
to the loud dancer who step  
by step howls for freedom. Night is the  
drunken wood of broken heroes,  
the artist's menacing koo-koo koo-koo.  
And lo! to feel the mirror in the night  
rise before face and eyes, condemning  
with its vague outline,  
the thinning form of all and every  
hope, reality!

## Shell of a Serpent

These are great things,  
what you take  
with your mounting neglect.  
They are things cast out  
of the 'beautiful', that  
dig into polar ice and  
fossilize there; numb, cold,  
indistinguishable.

And though you feel superior,  
inhuman, hovering above  
with a face carved  
in one constant expression, you yourself  
will not give light to the  
lonely, will not illuminate  
for the sake of another's need.

Your own pain, (*cunning, hunting*) is a  
tentacle that quivers cold-blooded  
for pity's gullible caress:

You distance your heart from the humble dancers.

## **It is not like hell**

**but like a fathomless void,  
hammering wicked  
on the civilized heart, emerging  
like a great anger out  
of each fundamental nerve.**

**It is like failure, like a  
cold and ruthless insanity that tugs  
aimlessly on the mind's fine fibres.**

**It is like me and I am  
prey to the avoided, to the ugly, whirlpool  
mouth of isolation, witness to the long  
journey through death and need.  
I am prey to the contemptuous  
dark that gnaws its way under  
every freshly formed smile.**

**It is not like innocent pain  
but like a tearing or a mutant fear  
that piles and piles,  
possessing.**

## When One Falters

The cold and conquered spheres  
of a love once endowed with light,  
but ruined by faithlessness,  
wedges between winter's strength  
and night's repelling dread.

Always him, thirsting for chaos  
to consume, treading on atmospheres  
immersed in false perfection. Never him  
mourning a tender cry, but crying  
of vengeful abandonment, spawns his  
curse into every nearing hope.

And she, alone, surrendered to the sacrifice,  
pursues a new devotion, walks  
from his contagious self-contempt,  
loving not his potential, but the memory  
of his striving heart,  
(once fresh with expectation,  
now extinguished, turned against itself  
like a scorpion cornered).

She alone, accepting the lonely oblivion  
of loss, the unquenchable incompleteness, rises  
from day to day on mortal ground,  
restoring.

# Epitaph

Those years of voyaging  
too long beneath your axe-shelter  
on foreign terrain . . .

Those years of you with  
your spiritual arrogance, your perfect face and  
careless conceit, all behind me  
now like a madness hatched and slaughtered.

Though I try to stand straight on the path  
of forgiveness, in memory, I rebleed  
my muzzled cry. And anger as deep  
as your self-confidence bridles my  
heart again in that old ache, that sick  
humiliation; your vindictive laughter, your  
manipulative smile.

From you, the cut neck, the finger pointing.  
From you, something  
to recover from.

# Two Hundred Years Gone

Lost like some are  
that would wish to fly  
on mad and terrible dreams.  
Lost like those who starve themselves  
of sleep, plunge into  
the unscouted depths.

Nature's seductive hymn  
  
takes your mind past  
  
the lonely void  
  
to where your signature forms,  
  
and your voice hatches out of spring  
  
like the primrose and the daffodil.

Lost like time is lost  
to the very old and very young.  
Lost like the original light,  
that weaves in the hearts of some  
to help the rest of us survive.

## **If This My Person . . .**

**I do not know any more  
how to speak of the burning  
wires.**

**How to dress  
the cramp with  
dream.**

**I am simple now, like a shell,  
a swallow, a  
first-love.**

**I do not walk with an eagle's foot,  
do not stir myself naked from  
sleep**

**into a gallery of torments imagined.**

**That is gone like  
desire**

**that clings and begs  
for miracles, like a boat that  
breaks**

**the waters then is broken  
by a great  
Tide . . .**

## With These Things

With these things absent of flame, lovers  
deny the vibrant depths of twilight,  
the beauty of a bucking mare in the wet grasses  
of autumn and a gallery of possibilities  
to shower their skins.

With these things of surface-hold, these things  
cured by sleep and time that steals the shock  
but never fully heals, lovers  
lose the meaning of their merging, the touch  
of each other's tongue that touches  
like a smooth horn and stings  
with unimaginable tenderness.

With these things gone like things go that  
no sorrow can express, lovers  
grow weak from humiliation, grow  
devoted to abstraction, armoured  
by resentment, callous  
as a jewel.

But with these things of horror of hatching  
a new self inside a familiar world, lovers  
learn to fly despite the lovers' legends and  
the arsenic.

## **When We Spoke Again**

**Not all these things were destroyed  
though the expensive pain was made solid.**

**Not all these times are forsaken  
even though the trees sway and strike  
and the days are often cruel.**

**Something starved of understanding  
is furnished by faith, comes back to bubble  
in the eye like a slow and easy smile.**

**Now I speak at this table  
like none of the suffering did me  
damage, like I am plucked**

**from the poor dark, remembering,  
all those dreams were showered  
by perfect rain.**

## **After Rejection . . . (if only)**

**To blaze forth the anger of doubt, grieve  
my breast robbed of joy.**

**To drink the stream from furious eyes,  
and clip the proud anguish from my tight jaw.**

**To send flying the irrational gestures  
that dig like a cat's claw into  
my naked lips, withering my depths  
of all understanding.**

**To know a faith so whole it hurts like love.**

**To plunge into the androgynous heart that  
sings & hurts the same  
for all.**

## **To Die For The Heart's Illusions**

**She is your halo, angel  
that plagues you with her light,  
slashes your self-defeat  
with her wooing purity.**

**She gives you great meaning  
to go on. A perfect child-god,  
untouchable like an abyss: blue eyes,  
sun-toned hair, like you in her  
reflection.**

**She is delicate, holy, in need  
of your protection. Daughter that swells  
your cup overflowing with messianic intent.**

**But little girl, human  
with her own flaws, that  
you will never acknowledge, never  
relinquish your idolizing love...**

**... from the cold claim of isolation,  
where your raving dragons howl  
as you drink her smile  
like a remedy ...**

# Dancers

He dressed her with forgiveness  
in the gold shadows  
of passion  
seeking death, seeking the  
swelling heart  
of God. Under  
the weight of his wings, into some  
starless summit they rose, clasping  
limbs with alien abandon. Each rich  
with superstition, as in the forest  
terror  
poured from the tip of each tree,  
from the tongues of black bears and insects  
crawling.  
They held, waiting for too bright  
a birth between them, waiting for the  
magic to merge  
their pain into one great beginning.  
Like the thighs of angels in flight,  
their thighs  
cut the warring air and smashed against the sky  
into gales of  
colour, into streams  
of happy endings as they  
dropped like a flood  
at the feet  
of death, and love  
began to weave  
under  
their astounded skins.

## **You came to me**

**through the hard jaw of the world,  
anguished, under the weight of bad habits,  
your happiness fading like  
your fate, into a fine line running out.**

**You came, prowling the landscape, out of  
some gripping past, eyes driven deep by  
loneliness.**

**You came, dressed in feline black, carrying  
the weight of a shattered city  
in your arms, and your blood was cold  
with howling.**

**From the snows, finding me with a glance, you came  
like spring in my nostrils  
and cried & cried as you came  
plummeting down, lost from some angel's  
symbolic grasp.**

## **If You Wait . . .**

**When he comes  
he will be wearing rings of endless  
symbol. He will be like a wave,  
strong, flexible, seeking shore.  
You will know him by his smell  
and the way his voice sounds in the rain.  
He will lie beside you like a childhood friend,  
abandoned to breath and peace  
beyond measure.  
Rich with depth and kindness,  
he will cradle your head on his chest  
and you will bless the wound that almost  
killed, then brought you near  
his familiar blood.**

## **Blood-red Symphony**

**Down the sickly throat  
of this sadness bloomed,  
no love can reach**

**(The petals are charred.  
My mind, locked in patterns,  
rebels against freedom)**

**From this spill of stability,  
this testimonial defeat,  
the colours break from  
sunset to void and  
the world outside  
turns menacing  
with indifferent shadows, with creatures  
without breakthrough, animated  
silhouettes that know no suffering or simple  
passion.**

# **I Lived an Error**

**in smoke, in a station  
amidst  
the clouds.  
I rolled through  
phantom pits,  
finding fondness in each  
fathomless descent.  
With thick confusion  
my mortality was stained.  
I was taken past  
my generationstalking  
God  
in every science and witch-craft cure,  
taken past the face  
of condemning visions. Taken  
like a lingering  
pain, pulling me through,  
tearing with terrible force  
the sickness  
from my soul, and yet  
as tender as a riverwave  
in gentle flow, guiding me  
onward**

## **This Love We Hold**

**This was the endurance sought,  
moving without sorrow away from  
spear and shield, loving again  
chained to the most-impossible-dream  
and yet surviving unveiled,  
with each envy rectified, removed.**

**Happy are the flowers that pierce  
with swift vibrancy the  
down-trodden eye. Happy are the flowers  
that briefly shine then suddenly collapse  
without sacrifice or a moan.**

**Never did I hope to own a stone  
so cold, spread across my flesh  
like a darkened shell. Never did I know  
a void so dull and so insatiable.  
Never ascending like I ascend now in a gathering  
of clouds that eclipse the birds and mirror  
on the lake so grey.**

**I went walking and knelt before the trees.  
Wise days of youth and fresh love that  
made us bare of questions, made us sick  
from such intensity. I held your presence  
in my breath and breathed my spirit  
free. Freed from phantoms awakened,  
freed from the pendulum tide.  
Free to outspoke the wind  
and ride beyond the parasite of time,  
beside you and sustaining  
forevermore.**

# **I Dream This Shelter, This Precipice**

**Your rare and bare natural tongue  
and your unfathomable kisses, distinct  
like the sun, that dwell without limits  
on my lips.**

**The torrents of your quick pulse and your  
slow release, overflow my chasm, brings warmth  
where warmth is no longer felt, only  
the driving nail of locked souls - yours and mine  
and all things sacred, accumulated like this  
in the wild deep.**

# Country Ride

Long fingers like ribs  
stroke the sky in mortal shades.

Time, watching trees  
planted in fields,  
so alone and tied  
to all eternity.

Time, seeing the liquid  
eyes of cows, and horses  
without a tribe, drifting  
from grass strand to strand.

And again, the treetops like  
sackcloths of autumn orange and red,  
take all attention  
from the barns.

Dogs in the distance run  
feverish  
and free.

# Unmasking the Bone

The suffering released  
you of certainty,  
made you mourn your innocence.

A brutal burn that crying could not erase.

His hand reaching out to yours,  
never changing in its irrational cruelty.

And faith - it commands you to follow. Compels  
you to let go, leap into the lungs  
of a new god, a god  
that makes one thing real  
and takes all else in return.

You sit by rivers watching, trust only  
hooks and horns for a time.

For a time the horror stalks you,  
he follows your step  
over landscapes and continents,  
calls you every night  
with a new shock to harbour.

You say it is a canyon he has cut, full  
of dry thorns where no thirst is eased.

But what is the refuge wished for?  
Is freedom too impossible  
a word to use?

And what of him with his  
opalescent depths and  
offensive truths?

What of you, who labours for a desireless love,  
striving?

# Have Faith In The Fall

Your tide  
lets loose the havoc  
of untamed emotions.

Your young smile,  
your eyes watch  
every novelty with untainted desire.

You sleep  
with your warm-womb remembrances, remembering  
each day spent trusting, beyond innocence  
and encroaching adulthood.

You fear a climbing intent,  
the discovery of  
a shared room cold with hate.

You enter  
the boiling light  
with no hand to hold.

You, and those years  
cutting like an eclipse  
the wild purity of your extreme heart.

You, and loving you  
as you walk today, in the clutches  
of this harrowing lesson.

## **In a Room With Somebodies**

**Your chains fall loose, you lose  
the weight of  
being.  
Proud, nervous, drenched in  
mysterious dependency,  
you hold  
your cup of coffee, unable to make  
conversation. Surgically removed  
from the crowd, your smile  
fades like a snapped tail,  
travels into the pit  
of your waters, into  
the climate of your rolling, twisting  
depths. Waves  
that beckon your emotions to chime,  
rush from belly  
into hands and eyes, rush  
into the choking  
air. You,  
restless from living too long  
beyond  
the skin, hold tight  
your alien love, hold in  
the cries of your forming compassion and long  
for exit.**

## To Walk Without Shape or Sound

That I cling to this cold sleep,  
show little effort to be removed . . .

In nightmares of symbols grey and mortal,  
fears translate all my hope  
into an impatient temper, and I stand,  
arms folded, with threatening glances  
turned toward the window.

That I will not move from this unhappy  
bondage, give the world the wave it deserves and  
rejoice, full force in my non-belonging . . .

That I lay with false sorrow, my numbing wounds  
displayed like so many movies, consuming  
all thought and vision . . .

Drowning in unutterable loneliness, I  
cannot pray this bad taste off my tongue,  
cannot claim my home inside the lightning jaws.

I have seen the light abandoned for the hangnail's  
torment. I have seen this darkness, dug my head deep  
in its flaming mud.

But this is nowhere:

There is only  
the circle, the spiral journey  
up  
only to be like the animals and angels,  
uncommitted  
to the weather's foothold.

## **He of Fear and Hunger**

**He, held hostage by the world's blade,  
took his lovers with impersonal want.**

**He, never seizing with strength  
his orphaned heart, but building  
a fear of dependency, let harden  
the soft bones of his under-wrists  
and left each emptiness he found  
unanswered.**

**He, abandoned to be ruled by rigid souls,  
wandered under the atonement of many dawns,  
refusing any shelter, refusing  
to shoulder the burden  
of his blood.**

**He, with his groin of aching suckle,  
risked love to save his dignity.**

**He, of wilderness doom and burn  
was solitary as a long-sitting  
stone.**

## **Thin Rope To Hold**

**Drum hard on the wound  
entangled in my eyes.**

**Drum me a backroad  
to forgiveness.**

**And the venom of revenge,  
drum that out too until its murdering addiction  
lies down.**

**I wait beside these deadly  
roots - these are my nerves  
clogged with insecurities.  
How sharp this shrill in my heart  
that never catches fire!**

**Drum free my harvest  
then show me the language  
of weeds.**

# **I Watch My Shelter Fall**

**I swim, revolve like a planet  
through the cosmic black, around  
a sun of infinite heat, bruising  
space as I go with my presence.**

**Non-stop battle of my spirit lusting  
for flight while my body's on ground, growing  
mad with the weight of habit.**

**I need to feel the sky splitting  
from my voice, to have the courage  
to construct something enduring, a love  
enduring.**

**I am full of a future unborn, full of the terror  
of awakening.**

**I am leaving my heritage behind.  
I am lifeless now as any  
broken twig.**

# No Telling

Taking back  
the soft mood  
the cockfight fire

I shrink from happiness as I do from horror,  
while still craving the intensity of extremes.  
There is no witchcraft cure, no person  
unchanged by the constellations.

Taking back  
the long-held hurt  
the herd dream  
and the tender gesture  
Taking back the tyrannizing void  
the genius ache  
and the doldrum eve

There is no faith that can be won by force  
and no telling what  
my heart is willing to die for,  
transcending.

## **In Some Uncertain Future**

**I will sing again  
of love that has found its verb and swell  
and the avalanche of summer clouds will  
consume me in their infinite shapes.**

**I will cry again  
the beautiful cry for the marriage of  
heart and soul that must separate to  
know each concealed fault.**

**I will know again  
my soul split from shock,  
the mind's tumbleweed and the choirs of  
starlings beneath the overpass, baying  
into endless sundown.**

**I will feel again  
that I am sinking like a snagged bird  
from the sky of my belonging, feel the  
things of guilty souls and how the night  
can rid a heart of wonder.**

**I will see again  
a tribe of dark horses racing  
on rooftops, my breast, an ocean of rolling moons  
and an indelible smile.**

**I will hold again  
a duty of religious flare, a winter  
bolted in the void where the snows  
begin to fall like cut daises.**

## **As Far As This Light**

**To be at the point of breaking, always  
but never torn.**

**A season that fills my skull, steals  
embraces from my arms.**

**All is new like the first  
fire touched,  
like the squirrel and the centipede  
witnessed for the first time  
as pure presence.**

**Such clarity I cannot cloud with  
distraction, cannot thin  
the intensity of this load.**

**Relentless challenge  
that finds me, bends me, wills  
my voyage.**

# Promise

I let drop a stone  
into a pond.  
I raise a dead star,  
as a promise lies dormant  
in the clouds' damp veins.

I will go with my  
trembling bones,  
trespassing the edge.

For someone waits  
behind shackled doors  
for me and  
my love.

## The Foliage of Our Music

Near the shut lives of people  
who love intangible,  
who hide within the spell of seasonal spirituality,  
you are the all that intoxicates my hunger,  
summons my vision beyond  
its threshold, takes my hand amidst  
the tyranny of worldly demands and loves  
me through my weeping - your body happy  
to receive me, to blanket me with touch. Your hair  
and belly and your thin bones  
that carry such a restless warmth that  
only sharpens each day with charm and insight.  
No one desires like you the forgotten passions,  
reads to me the marrow from books and dances  
with mad laughter when seeing the solemn  
horrors of most daily deeds.  
No one grows so weighted with sorrow,  
so beautified by empathy as you when tracing  
the footsteps of the oppressed, visiting  
each broken with a dense compassion  
that embraces all as your equal.

Haggard hope between us  
to avenge the space that splits  
our love with petty differences.

I spend no delight but dread  
the thorny flame of loneliness, of  
loving again a lesser love, looking  
into some appealing eyes that are not  
your eyes nor know the things  
of your kind wisdom.

# Receiving

Though I recognize kin  
in a bird's faultless face,  
the world is wheel, is cold,

master of my open heart.  
And out on the streets, away  
from embraces, the sun  
disturbs in its strength and independence.

People grow old  
before my eyes,  
stirred by nothing  
but further comfort.

Fire cloud above - it is  
this hunger, this old faith, old  
as God. This faith so clean  
I may go mad, harder than love  
to bear:

Endless cutting down.

## Battleground on the Inside

He takes my feet from the fossil earth,  
takes me to where a tribe of insects wait  
to wed me with their hive.

I join the lunar cold light, harming  
nothing, harmed by nothing, but yet my  
history engulfs my silent head, speaks of  
moments blind with guilt, moments when I  
bore inspiration like I bore my breath and I cannot  
contain my melting indifference, cannot help  
myself to wake from such longing to return  
to ground.

The sun rolls like a snail through  
the mist just beyond the Earth's other side as  
I drift in night and circle  
the sky's expanses, waiting  
for my enemy in his own  
dimension.

## Crowned

The large June light  
is woven with the clouds  
like a wind to steal away all breathing.  
And on the moving Earth, lawnmowers  
roar and little snails crawl across  
the wet pavement.  
There are no more dreams, only this  
woodchip swallowed and the bright water  
cared for.  
The fog has shown me my substance.  
I eat my plums whole and wish  
for my child everything tender and alive.  
I feel the breeze through the window, taking  
the curves, turning me over like a patch  
of rotted grass. I am now beginning to be collected,  
to answer to this new name and see my past  
through a fearless eye. I feel the kick  
of a new vision formed and feel  
the gentlest of mercies  
roll down my chest like a kitten.  
This is lunch, an autumn leaf waxed  
and the laundry dried.  
Give me birth. My body skips across the edge,  
and all good things are finally waking.

## Seeking the Balanced Degree

My mind is painted bright blue  
like a pair of favourite jeans.  
My belly is bread for thieves. Here  
the crime awakens:  
I drink from the eternal teat  
of responsibility, from the lake  
of suffering I must ignore  
to breathe a steady rain, to scatter  
my guilt amongst the weeds.  
What happens when your all is nothing?  
or when the truck runs you down seeing only  
anonymous hairstrands and entrails?  
Knowing love's limitations,  
like one knows the snows or the teeth  
of an animal, is the tension that frees.  
An enemy is at my table.  
A horse is buried under American sands.  
My heart is water:  
It longs to quench the hot summer skin of sparrows.

## Rain in the morning

Rain in the morning,  
grey steel is in the sky,  
and in my eyes the colour  
shows. The night's fury kept me awake  
since 3 am. My troubles are like spiders  
that creep and curl along the  
ceiling, hovering with the stillness  
of death. I must keep going  
though my body aches with fever  
and my mind is prey to despair. I drink  
necessity's authority. To watch a loved-one suffer  
is worse than shame, worse than feeling  
futility collapse on your throat  
or a weapon held at the head.  
Rain in the morning. It is a mistake to  
hurl the emptiness outward, to pray for the destroyed  
or curse the goldfish for their beauty.  
But who can give the minerals meaning,  
magic to the snail, or purity to the worm?  
Rain in the morning.  
Little by little the terror rises,  
and the world outside remains unchanged.

## **For This Face Only You Could Alter**

**Be for me my mask torn down.  
Take from me my old and hatching temper.  
Take my wanting, my struggle  
to renounce approval.  
Be for me the lonely desire, the one  
celebrated by each breath.  
Take the guilt from my  
loins, the hours spent mute,  
consumed by fear.  
Be for me a living arrow, a communion  
of conviction and gentleness.  
Take from me my fate, a conditioned future,  
an inevitable plan.  
Love me though my love  
is sensual, thin of voice, of spiritual  
decision.**

## Love Unknown

I sit inside a tent  
needing what I cannot drink.  
I grieve the lost passion of my prayers  
and the solid breath of death's  
all-consuming maw.

Tracing the fantastic light  
of giant love that crushes chaos  
with each monstrous embrace,  
I taste him. I cannot help  
feeling his fears like  
a hated obstacle, his forehead like  
an impassable field, full of his mind's  
worst whispers:

I sit within this tent, in a trance-like gloom.  
I grieve his love that cannot bend . . .

yet tender still  
is his smile.

# **Christened**

**Because of you, my blood is nourished.**

**Just beside one another**

**in laughter or decay, passing looks**

**that bid for nothing.**

**Because of you I am able to blink**

**where others are blinded:**

**I bury heartbreak in our kissing.**

# **I Hope Your Dreams Anew**

**You drink from the jugular  
with uptight gestures and hold  
in your eyescorn and condescension.**

**On your political altar your feeble gods  
sit, dreaming of fame from your tongue.**

**Once rich with a fire catching,  
you did with delight the things  
of sharing.  
You made with your hands a prelude  
to magic.**

**But what mercy was crushed by  
your self-assured ways? What tolerance was  
stifled by your righteous crown?**

**I cannot be, I cannot envy  
the yellow death surrounding,  
nor hate the stain of your pride.**

**But be that blue whisper that echoes  
through each moan and laughter  
of immortal needs.  
But be that stone that makes  
an arrogant person fall,  
withdraw into a deeper understanding,**

**be it there for you, somewhere, overwhelming . . .**

## **This Wound, This Reminder**

**Here what once was heavy is now like a  
hollow seed resting on the inside**

**everlasting.**

**Here what has been dead but does not die  
gains not growth nor speed and has long ago**

**ceased**

**to bleed but remains a part of  
for now and for all futures to**

**carry**

**and to help set the truest faith  
breathing and free.**

## **Because of course**

**you will go with summer  
never knowing a remedy.  
You will go beyond where you go  
around the ninth and final life, ducking  
in dark boxes to fade finally alone,  
away from instinct and nurturing.  
You will go into the natural earth,  
and from there, my vision staggers and  
cannot name, but caught  
on the wind, in sensual shades  
of forgiveness mighty & forever,  
you will know a place unhindered by death.  
You will hear the secret  
your pale eyes  
have always harboured.**

## As My Blindness Burns

Without these things  
of rainbow and insight  
I stand, fragmented  
by despair, fleeting as daylight,  
composed of failed hopes  
and held-back tears.

Young, like truth is  
when first found,  
are the swollen joys  
of new understandings.  
And secret still is  
the unsculpted future  
that rises unexpected without  
resolution.

The muses of this universe hold faith  
and doubt equally  
in their impregnated beams,  
and me with my hideous cowardice  
that grows stronger with age, hides  
the things that challenge  
and direct me to an edge, ignoring the  
simple surrender needed  
to grow and to deeply be  
someone.

This city sobs  
when hearing its own wind die,  
takes in its industrious hands  
the sluggish and the bitter.

And the few who rebuke  
this smog-breathing serpent  
lean depleted in each other's arms,  
hoping to embody something beyond  
the world or melancholic pain.

And here, wanting, each slave is born, each  
mistrust upheld like a perfected attitude.

People hold conviction without vision,  
walking the subway floors, staring  
out to empty highways.  
Stale are the nutrients of each wished-on star.  
Stale ambition bleating into  
each small ear.

Lament now the corpses in caverns,  
in parades and family restaurants.  
Lament the eclipsed beauty of impulse,  
the restraint of every compelling break-a-way.

For just one hope to tread behind  
Jesus' sandal, freeze,  
then crack all chains.

I would delight  
in the struggles of individuals  
conquering the downcast clouds  
that hinder and fill a soul  
with stagnant woe.

But like I am, sick with human  
needs, political and ungenerous, I face  
the storms and hide my pleas inside the  
thunder.

Naked, lovers divulge  
their infinite shades. Lovers  
lean like dried up trees against  
an autumn's ground, lean  
for mercy and for each  
affection denied.

But love they do  
in the wintry airs  
trying to overcome  
personality, imbedded habits,  
each other's foreign sphere.

I am pale, forgetful,  
I lie awake all night taken down,  
breathing the vaporous stench of  
decay, in nightmares,  
while kneeling before  
the brightest flower.

I watch you thinning,  
keeping  
my anguish private,  
for none will accept my five open  
senses, the reasons for my withered will.

I cannot embrace my interior  
with humble affection, but must  
know the labyrinth's breathing tide;  
mysteries renounced, complexities explained  
by pensive reason.

Where I sit, seeking the inaccessible cure,  
madness comes to kill through dissection,  
definition and spiritual systems decreed.

In water I am numb,  
drifting dazed through dark  
androgynous waves.

I think of whispering to your waiting grave,  
of netting grief and memory,  
starving each of their sustenance  
blind.

But then alone, in death, in life,  
connection is our bread,  
our higher air that beckons and repairs  
the cracks that would kill on  
tougher days.

How long to hold you in this sandpit sinking?  
How long to watch your unwilling heart fade?

That I am through with annihilating snares  
Through with the brutes of cold consuming despair

Through your life yielding to  
sudden disease, through the closed door  
that echoes strong sighs like screams  
down corridors of love's  
last stroke . . .

Longing for nether fields,  
I want to run  
in these subterranean, primal places, want  
limbs of fire, eternally  
red and dancing over the waking darkness.  
I want to seal you

into the living Divine.

I am suspended, believing  
the horror will not come, believing  
death will not make  
a skeleton out of you.

## **To Learn the Scarlet Vision**

**Where does it go,  
the shelter and the death?**

**What does it feed, that old  
loathing sterility that laughs at all  
creations, masters them into a craft  
and calls itself superior?**

**How do we cherish without pride,  
be extreme like a Russian prophet,  
unguarded in the heat and ice of an  
evolving spirituality?**

**How do we love like Jesus, mourn  
like Jesus, be brave  
against the inevitable and hope  
through the sullen days to be  
better, more than shadow  
or collected habits?**

**How do we let go of what eventually  
will be taken away?**

## **When This We Feel**

**Our strength giving away  
when love is undermined,  
diluted like a ghost is from its human counterpart -  
diluted yolk of a backbone  
striving.**

**When battling the heat of dullness rising  
When battling the waters that cry  
for the breath of a sinking dream.**

**And spheres crack wide  
laying exposed the true, the awful intent  
of footsteps travelled. . .**

# **They told me of**

**a Secret colour.**

**I crossed the ancient hills,**

**I bound my foot on heaven's shore,  
bewildered at the seas.**

**I went down with jealousy's riddled truths.**

**I saw what I could not do,  
could not cure  
my envious heart.**

**But if I was like unfailed purity  
with eyes like a child in  
the rising morn . . .  
And if I was translating prayers,  
daughter of  
the aspiring dreamers . . .**

**then the milk of my muse  
I would be gargling  
and bid for wanting  
no more.**

## Which Way Descending?

Unlike the golden spin of depth's dive,  
petty matters wither so soon the singing voice,  
cursing a life with  
their digging stake . . .

No seed, no gift can flourish  
with worry and empty toil.  
There exists the thorn, the weight and  
the mercy nailed  
to every pain like a reminder  
to persevere, and still  
the small distractions  
that scrawl like glass  
upon the skull that kill  
like a freezing.

Between the quicksand world and  
the intangible wonder  
all hearts must choose and cannot  
straddle . . .

## **On Foot**

**I have seen alligators  
enchant the innocent  
into their swamp parlour.  
I have tasted the earth,  
transfigured in its nuclear playground.  
I have been lifted into a violet sunset,  
charred with soul-shattering burns.  
I fell into winter's heaviness,  
plunged my body into a chilling aqueduct -  
stayed, sleeping out the human panic.**

**Lovely day to be freed of all  
attachments: Let the storm revolve  
around this abnormal world. Let childhood  
serve as a consolation for withdrawing,  
aged faces.  
In a room a decade passes.  
We walk in bewildered, we walk out unchanged.**

**This way, I move upward - toward blackness,  
the edge of eternity.**

**I take seat beside the paradoxical judge.**

**I dream, a hundred miles away  
from a new beginning.**

## **A World Away**

**Your nights were cradled  
in the boiling anguish  
of knowing nothing, not  
of your purpose and not  
of the tide that brought  
you from behind.**

**Your summers were jaded  
by the men who beheld you  
as one ripened, but luckily  
robbed of suffering, and by the women  
who left you, unable to withstand  
your scissored breast, and spirit of  
stubborn morbidity.**

**Take the gospel of your blessing  
and of your balancing.**

**Take today what restores  
yesterday's hollow ache and cursing.**

**Take these days in your hands and feast  
until every sour doubt dies and**

**you mourn their passing  
no more.**

## **Safe In You**

**In you, mystery is masked  
by no one's hood, has grown  
away from the tyranny  
of world and the gloom  
of nations betrayed by  
their gods.**

**In you the inexplicable  
takes a womb, a rhyme  
from your sweet blood  
flowing.**

**And love, once pale and clay-like-cold,  
selected you to partner my hope,  
to resemble visions vacant of sentiment  
and teach me to abandon  
death and ill-nourished joys.**

**Your love wraps around like a melody  
undulating out from your exceeding  
intensity, it wraps,  
until I surrender, unable, unwilling  
to move.**

## **My colours would be grey**

**if not for your heart so  
tempered by preserved dreams  
and accepted disappointments,  
dancing in the unknown,  
with a tongue  
unafraid to astonish or offend  
the public swallower . . .**

**if not for every morning, finding  
your eyes closed, sleeping near my  
smiling body, and your lips that unearth  
each tear from my harbouring breast,  
unearth the giant seed of deliverance . . .**

**if not for our partnership,  
our home of unhooded tenderness,  
the doorways within that lead  
to evenings of geranium spring . . .**

**if not for holding you, or  
your touch splitting the shell  
of my skin, flooding my womb  
with fires of indomitable  
peace . . .**

# Stung

by the sad secret your simple blood  
beheld. By the four-winds of colours  
that multiplied into your warm and  
fanatic fires, into the nudging madness  
of your crying sex that landed near no one's  
hearth, that landed alone to thirst the stuff of deeper  
things and commune with what must forever  
remain autonomous.

Dance between the clapping jaws  
of vicious desires that want your face as  
low as your heart can sink, down to the cold nadir  
of self-hatred, where lies and needs are one.

Dance the drowned and crazy dance  
before the light was scattered, after  
each shelter is destroyed and  
you are you - an odyssey of  
unweaned creations.

# Family

Feeling again  
the joy of a matured  
and multiplying love.

Seeing the seasons dissolve what was  
but never the one thing  
that keeps us close.

I lean on you like you do me through  
the thick seductive world.

I savour your primitive spark,  
your tongue that breeds an original  
voice.

We are strong, born  
of animal colour and spiritual desire.

And warm like blood  
is the shade that stretches true  
between us . . .

## **Journey & Drink**

**There I sang and there I knew  
my heart in all its wanderings.**

**Night fled from my shoulders,  
travelled to where the saddened  
watchers waited. It left me in my mousetrap,  
chasing phantoms I never spun.**

**And there, the one thing  
that was certain was the silence,  
the ways of shrouds and sleepers.**

**Sinking from heights into sublime slavery,  
I turned my back on choice.**

**I walked with spiders spiderlike, out  
from my heavy tomb.**

**But it was not enough, to escape and then to  
conform, but to be a brighter thing  
than before the years swept my youth asunder.**

**To be where hardness is deserted  
for the "yes, yes, I know."**

**And between the extremes, a patient  
acceptance and making ready.**

**Yesterday I knew my bread,  
I knew of boredom hounding  
with full and ruthless speed.**

**Today, I swallow  
(away from envy and ambition)  
holding close  
my one and lasting  
treasure.**

*All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:* Wascana Review; The Cape Rock; Envoi; Hook & Ladder; Crash - a litzine; Poetry Nottingham International; Jones Av.; New Hope International Writing; Psychopoetica; Written In The Skin (an anthology); madswirl.com; Leaf Garden Press; B-Gina Review; Indigo Rising; Quantum Poetry Magazine; Drunk Monkeys; Northern Cardinal Review; The Tophat Raven; Spokes; The Seventh Quarry; Novelmasters; Little Voice Leaping; Drift; Keep Poems Alive; SilverSpine Poetry Forum; Low Word; Creative Talents Unleashed; Sonder Magazine; Whispers; LiteraryYard; The Muse Journal; Dissident Voice; Snapping Twig; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine; Tuck Magazine; ken\*again; Bold Monkey; Gossamer Poetry Page; Mechanical Medusa Poetry Forum; Boston Poetry Magazine; Vine Figure Poetry Page; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry; Smashed Cake Review (Sidereal Journal); Bewildering Stories; Versewrights; Ygdrasil; Schrodinger's Cat; The Chaffey Review; Winamop; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; Medusa's Kitchen; Degenerate Literature Magazine; Grease Monkey Literary Forum; Minerva's Housecoat Writing Forum; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page; Malevolent Pegasus Literary Zine; Reflections; Ascent Aspirations; Creek Side Writing Forum; Peacock Journal; Indie Poets Indeed; The Peregrine Muse; The Piker Press; The Galway Review; Poetry Life & Times; Nazar Look

Reviews of 'Journey of the Awakening':

"Journey of the Awakening is the first book of poetry that I have read of Allison Grayhurst. While reading it began to sound familiar, the comment to myself was "She is as good as Sylvia Plath". When I finished the book I read comments from others who referred to her as "In the style of Sylvia Plath"; Ms Plath, one of my favorite poets had no match until Ms Grayhurst's work. Congratulations to her on her achievements, I am already a 'fan', the love of her work will continue to grow," *Ann Johnson-Murphree*, poet and author.

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. This, and other Grayhurst poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.

# About the Author



**Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three of her poems were nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2015, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2017. She has over 1,125 poems published in more than 450 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995. Since then she has published fifteen other books of poetry and six collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing. Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, *Barometric Pressures* Author Series. In 2015, her book *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications. More recently, her book *Make the Wind* was published in 2016 by Scars Publications. As well, her book *Trial and Witness – selected poems*, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group).**

Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay;  
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**“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” *Kyp Harness*, singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of *Wigford Rememberies*, Nightwood Editions; [www.kypharness.net](http://www.kypharness.net)**

**“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity’s authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water,” *Taylor Jane Green*, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of *Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology and The Rise of Eros*.**

**“Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst,”** *Blaise Wigglesworth, Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice.*

**“Grayhurst’s poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original,”** *Beach Holme Publishers.*

**"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born,"** *Anne Burke, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.*

**"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry,"** *Eric M. Vogt, poet and author.*

**"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended,"** *Tom Davis, poet, novelist and educator.*

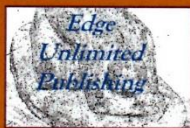
**“When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold,”** *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.

**“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,”** *Cristina Deptula*, editor of *Synchronized Chaos*.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THE POETRY OF ALLISON GRAYHURST

"WHEN I READ ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POETRY, I AM COMPELLED BY THE INTENSITY AND STRENGTH OF HER SPIRITUALITY. HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF GOD DRIVES HER POETRY. SHE FLESHES OUT THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF KNOWING AT ONCE BOTH THE BEAUTY AND TERROR OF GOD'S LOVE, BOTH FREEDOM AND OBEDIENCE, DEEP JOY AND SORROW, BOTH BEING DEEPLY ROOTED IN BUT ALSO APART FROM THE WORLD, AND LASTLY, BOTH LIFE AND DEATH. HER POEMS UNULATE THROUGH THESE PARADOXES WITH MUCH FEELING AND OFTEN LEAVE ME BREATHLESS, SHAKEN. ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POEMS ARE BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND DIFFICULT TO BEHOLD." ANNA MARK, POET AND TEACHER.

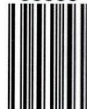
"A RIVER IS IN ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POEMS. SOMETIMES IT RAGES OVER BOULDERS HIDDEN BENEATH RAPIDS. SOMETIMES IT IS AS CALM AND PLACID AS A SUMMER DAY REFLECTING SKIES SO BLUE THEY ARE AS UNUSUAL AS A STELLAR JAY'S WINGS. SOMETIMES IT IS AS UNPREDICTABLE AS THE RHYTHM OF CLOUDS GATHERING BEFORE A STORM. MADE UP OF WORDS, EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, THOUGHTS CRYSTALLIZED INTO IDEAS, THIS RIVER, LIKE MOST RIVERS, IS UNFORGETTABLE. ONE POEM CASCADES AFTER ANOTHER INTO A FLOOD OF POETRY. AS IN THE POETRY OF WALLACE STEVENS, ALLISON GRAYHURST'S WORK CAN BE DENSE WITH MEANINGS HIDDEN BENEATH THE FLOWING SURFACE OF WORDS. THE EMOTIONS IN HER POEMS SEAR WITH THE POWER OF SYLVIA PLATH. ONE LAYER REFLECTS LIGHT OVER ANOTHER LAYER OF THOUGHT AND EMOTION THAT LEADS TO YET ANOTHER LAYER. THIS IS AS SERIOUS A POET AS IS WRITING POETRY TODAY. FOR THOSE ADVENTUROUS ENOUGH TO VENTURE INTO A RIVER WILD, DEEP, CALM, BEAUTIFUL, SHADOWED, LIGHT, FILLED WITH MOODS AND EMOTIONS OF BOTH AN INNER AND THE EARTH'S LANDSCAPE, THEN THIS IS A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING. IT LEADS TO EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE THE TEXTURE AND SUBSTANCE OF LIFE." THOMAS DAVIS, POET, EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR, PLAYWRIGHT, AND NOVELIST.



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