



Allison Grayhurst

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

*- completed works from 1988
to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5)*

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017
(Volume 3 of 5)

The Many Lights of Eden
Pushing Through the Jelly Fire
The River is Blind

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

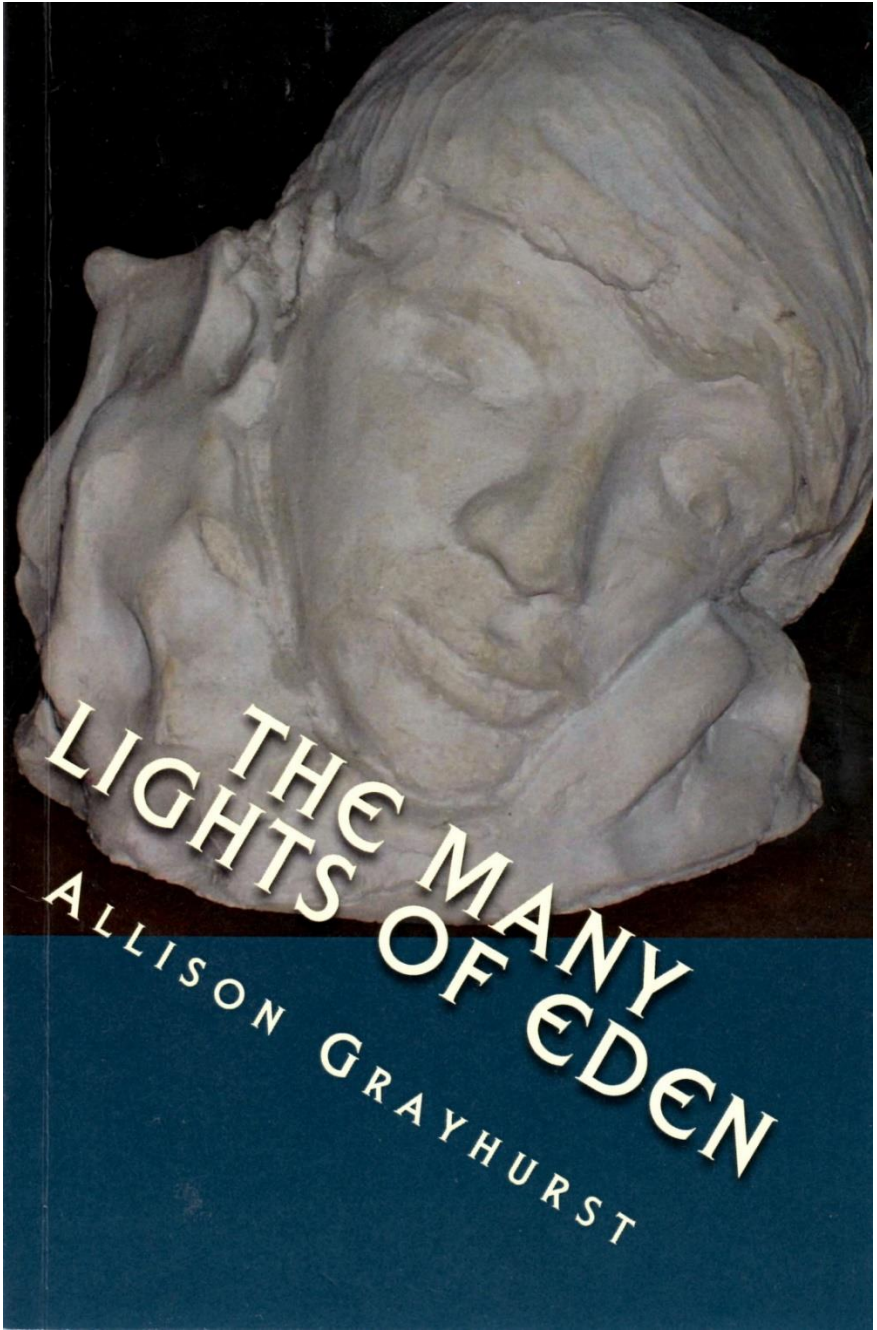
The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5)
Copyright © 2017 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art: photo of a stone
© 2015 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5)

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1978341272
ISBN-10: 197834127X

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5)
by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 7644658



The Many Lights of Eden

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

The Many Lights of Eden
Copyright © 2008 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):
“Above The Waters” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
The Many Lights of Eden

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1478249153
ISBN-10: 1478249153

The Many Lights of Eden by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 3938205

Table of Contents

Seeing Under Seeing Over	11
On My Belly	12
At Ease	13
Blend	14
The Many Lights of Eden	15
Only	16
OnlyOneGod	17
Edge of Reason	18
Acceptance	19
Rilke	20
Message to My Other	21
Husband II	22
I Was Soothed	23
Cutting the Bond	24
For My Son	25
Before a Day of Light	26
Strange Gifts of Grace	27
Blank Stare	28
Over the Top	29
Odie	30
Whitewashing	31
Courage Where I Lie	32
No Raft - No Ocean	33
The Sweet Glory of Imagination	34
Under The Rib Cage	35
Minimal	36
Horizon	37
The Wall I Walk Through	38
Into the oil of your significance	39
I Try To Breathe	40

I felt the day fail you	41
Drove Me Down	42
A Piece	43
Undefined	44
Childhood cracked	45
Cull the Extremes	46
When	47
Ghost of Poverty	48
Eating from an imaginary spoon	49
Introvert	50
In time the journey	51
One Wing	52
Secret	53
Son of no one	54
End of reason	55
Rooms of Joy	56
Funeral Wake	57
I Could Have	58
I think I was	59
Because I love you	60
Under a bushel	61
Living With Myself	62
Crack	63
Listening	64
Connection	65
Once made of stone	66
Alive	67
Greenhouse	68
Nightlight	69
Expression is Purpose	70
The Hardest Thing	71
Redemption	72
Room, no room	73
Remedy or false start	74

Letting it out	75
Little One	76
Plucked	77
Pilgrimage	78
My Water Was	79
Let the wound not win	80
Sunday/Sabbath	81
Days with little favour	82
The Path Before	83
Wish	84
Where I Stand	85
The Last Layer	86
Jesus in my basement	87
Plight of the freelance underdog	88
Before Atonement	89
I Am This Creature	90
I will not be sorry	91
deeper layer of love	92
The Long Pitstop	93
God and Manna	94
Parameters	95
Toy Box	96
Heaven must be active	97
Slicing the cord	98
The Flat Plane of Imaginary Heaven	99
Release II	100
Lines	101
The Blueness Within	102
My Ever-Ghost	103
Renaissance	104
When I Lean Closer	105
I Find Clarity	106
I sing	107
It is not	108

When The Storm Hits	109
Underline	110
This Hope	111
Place of Undetermined Distinction	112
Marseille	113
Vow	114
The taste	115
The Clear Knife	116
Change/Conquest of myself	117

Seeing Under Seeing Over

**For then I saw
I could not write,
I could only relay
my visions, my small
and larger revelations.
It was then I could see
I do not think, I just let it
spill. I have no intellectual
confidence - no real fans.
I have only myself, my darling nothingness.
I have the dark shadow on the darker land.**

On My Belly

**Speak to me as you would to
one of your prophets. Speak to me
before I dry out, before I corrupt the very
light I swore to keep. Help me
out of this fire that turns
like a heap of twisted cut wire
inside. Help me inside
not to be so broken, better
than my circumstantial mess.
Speak to me for a long time
until I know for sure
that you care.**

At Ease

Before the ultimate function
failed and my dreams were
burnt at the stake,
I felt the movement of God within me
like a rising river.
I felt tomorrow larger than prophecy -
the only future still untold.
Before the constant lack,
and the condition of build-up that will never
go away, I thought the line crossed
would always be the line on my side.
I thought I was sealed.
I learned that nothing is sealed
or solid enough to be counted on.
I learned to eat my meals slower,
to stop at the first moment of feeling full.
I learned to touch the wall instead of the sky.
I learned to love the wall as my sky,
after the blindness ensued
and love
became my permanent grace.

Blend

with the hope of
blending fully with the vision
before it left, exiting from
the groin into the vast area
encapsulating the body and its
erratic rhythms.

Move like before poverty
latched on like a hoard of barnacles
to your once-smooth side, like before
the path split and the apple tree died.
Do this, but do not expect to know
the clarity held in youth
or the favours of miracles. Do it
because faith is beautiful, is
the only action necessary.
Blend in new ways, with mature seeing
and few desires,
like a bug into the dirt
or a faraway lake into a faraway sky.

The Many Lights of Eden

**The one with many lights
standing by the new water
traveled by carrying a throne on his shoulders.**

**Bartholomew came and
Bartholomew wandered
like a visitor where ever he was.
The one brought by fear's inception
(fear of being rejected and a
desperation to be loved)
also brought a strange deception.**

**But the one with many lights
speaks softly on the inside
and leaves all bodies easily breathing.**

Only

Across the clouds
like razor blades,
the thin path I planned
to wander, expanded, and
I moved into territories
of self-loathing. I could not
keep hold of the grail or of purity
of thought and deed.

I can only remain with the ghost
on my shoulder
and the demon polluting my love.
I can pace my inner room
and never find a solution.
I will always be chained
to the soil, imagining
the bright orb of heaven.

OnlyOneGod

In you I place
the hope of centuries,
a hope beginning before
the pounding of water on rock.
For you I sang the anthem
of my ancient race and
waited to hear a reply.
Before you, I stand
revealed, lonely, in need of change.
Against you, I lean
like a child who has never known parents
or any connection for so so long.
Because of you, I remember
the gifts in my hands, the core of my striving
and the reasons I have
to stay
 with you
 in you
 where I place
 my will and means
 to be restored.

Edge of Reason

On the brink of the imaginary world
where all worlds join,
where the endeavor is self-actualization,
where what we do defines who we are, and
the wave and turn are brushstrokes
of applied purpose, answering with
the substance of memory. The day
bends over the mountain. The kind touch
is the touch that changes a lonely journey.
My hand slips from warmth,
fingers spread to the wind. On the brink
of all that matters, into the space where nothing matters.
On the brink, what I see, most would consider as blindness,
most would feel as chaos to the pattern they hold to be true.
On the brink, where these thoughts can seem quite small
and yet
make all the difference.

Acceptance

I first felt
the longing with little comfort,
as a shape with sharp edges.
I dared myself into a corner
and lost even the impulse for serenity.
In the grey afternoon, coming home,
I saw an inscription in the space
between clouds and knew
I had outgrown looking for signs -
The wind is a river and a house (any house)
is a dead log left in the elements, harbouring life
in its dead crusty dampness.
I had come full circle just by surviving,
back to the longing that existed before -
this time, void of grandiose significance,
existing now like an urge, strong as fire, natural
as deformity.

Rilke

**You have given me
a stoic ideal and also
the comfort of knowing of the deepest dreamer's fragility.
You - in the rain,
running with your rage, disappointment and poverty
until you reached the angels and the animals
who spoke to your uncertain heart and spilled
their clarity into you, into words for you that formed
like a reprieve from the monsters and the
chaos of failure. They held you in their
Sabbath for a moment of prayer, until
thrust again into your anguished wilderness, you sunk
away from joy, leaving behind an imprint of happening -
engrained in the realm of all else that ripples
intangible, eternal.**

Message to My Other

**You will not find me.
The angel promised
I would be left alone,
and I have been - left alone
like the hollowness created by a plaster mould,
with edge but no substance.
That substance
I had to earn, and once earned, I had to chisel
and sand to smooth perfection.
You will not cross my path
and ruin my illusion, you will not
tear a hole of horror in my canopy
or block my sun with your stark
though extreme reality.
You will run back and take your loss, take
the burrs buried in your hair, take your desperate corner
and your beauty that veils a great violence.
You will walk toward another - one that has not
lived as long nor has longed for
oblivion as I have. You may not sit beside me.
The angel promised,
and life without you is straightforward,
on this side of
easy.**

Husband II

The one who found me
in the schoolyard by the old tree
fell to his knees with patches of burnt skin
along his pale arms. He tried a pact of suicide
with the sun, many times, but his inner ache
gave out, replaced with a potent drive for revenge.
Then through a threadbare journey where
he never allowed his passion to be quenched,
he turned from revenge
to a window where he saw heaven, sliced and untouchable
like a painting at an art show. He saw a way to find me, past
the hospital ward, past the mushroom cloud of his existence.
When he found me, I too was shut
in a sea of quicksand, waiting
on the final miracle. We smelt each other's hair in the
openness of a winter sky.
I told him my faith was at his side. I left him
lingering by the tree - his old darkness staked and
a new one, sure to be born.

I Was Soothed

**Blindness and brutality spilled
and I would not have gone on
but for the miracles of God's grace
that tightened around me
like a bandage, that held me up
like a puppeteer.**

**I made it through the impossible,
surpassed what I could do because
God held me in a fold like a fold
in the soft skin of sea.**

Cutting the Bond

The sheet fell on me, and I was drawn
for the last time to open the casket
on the hill.

There I held myself like a figure made of sand,
barely touching, but still crumbling my thick features.
My scent was golden that day,
and full of storm.

I walked to the grass and thought
of history. I put mud on my lips
and laughed at all I had lost. I would lose
again - lose, until my memories
were caramel coated, became something unconscious
like my guilt and my necessity - internal,
branded on my palms.

For My Son

**You are before me -
a simple light, a vibrant light
void of the world's grey core.
You are beautiful enough, my son -
miles of green terrain surround you.
You whistle, and the strangers beside us
are held captive by your song.
I will not abandon you,
though you fear the anguish of loneliness,
and you feel the uncommon strain
of a raw dimensional heart.
You bring me joy.
I have watched you drown
in a stupor of unharnessed emotions,
and I have seen you laugh at the stars -
you, so much brighter
than the whole of their celestial countenance.**

Before a Day of Light

**Hidden like the intelligence
guiding intuition,
bending the wound toward
a transforming tenderness.**

**Even my eyes can see,
as death overcomes,
how so much more difficult this place
would be without God,
without the anger I feel
toward my loving God for breaking me
with this violence.**

**Without my anger, I would not have found
a way through. I would be toiling
on the edge of depression, reconciled to a state
of abandonment, concealing myself
from any mercy, any possibility
of hope.**

Strange Gifts of Grace

Unconscious of the spirit within,
born and rising like a flood,
listening full heartedly
to the voice in my blood,
but just hearing it and recording it,
not being it, not absorbing it into
the molecules of that blood.
Born to be a viper under a common person's hat,
to brave the end
and stay never-too-long on one track.
Born to receive utter grace and have no obstacles,
entering from the outside and keeping that door open,
holding the rope with all my might,
pressing hard against the rocking tide.

Born but never beginning -
like a worm too long in the sun, finding
mercy
in a puddle.

Blank Stare

Sitting on the porch
disenchanted by complications
and by words that have no honour
or action. Thinking of the railroad
by the river where my dog and I were musical,
unaware of our short-lived joy.
I tried to triumph. I tried to stick
to the vision even when dismembered by
the axe and its hard, calculating strike.
I tried to rub out the sounds of dueling desires
and focus on the plateau.

Hour upon hour, my children are playing -
messy, free and pretending. On the porch
I watch them, and watching is
feeding me, freeing me
like looking into my dead father's eyes
in a dream, in a moment meant to help me,
sent by angels, hailed as madness to most.

I hope for little traffic on my road.
I hope for 10 miles to feel myself fully connected
to the other parts of me
that are sometimes adrift, sometimes violently
speeding, and other times, only imagining
myself connected, imagining myself able to maintain
a forward motion, and not to fall back
into a comfortable place
of diminished expectations.

Over The Top

The pounding, the lashing out
like a snake's tongue lashes out, like a snake
whose prey always ducks down
at exactly the right time.

The venom is lost
but yet is absorbed
as the caterpillar runs down
the leg of the table, and as the angels
hold someone at the moment of
their last singing, singing of the pounding,
singing of the healthy and the unhealthy deep,
singing that there is only the perfect shape or
the fall into restless sleep.

Odie

You will not die
my golden companion,
you will not leave me
without your sweet warmth,
not without your familiar eyes.
You will only find a new way
of surviving.
I cannot admit the enormity
of what appears as truth.
I cannot admit there will be no
miracle change.
I can only see your soft cat beauty,
your orange blanket of fur
and a way around this danger.
I can only see what I first saw in your eyes -
innocence in need of someone to trust.
I see you as someone to be with me,
to rest by my feet at night,
someone to always keep my stories
tucked within a quiet stretch
of your feline soul.

Whitewashing

What loss
buries the jewel in the dirt,
boards up the windows
and fastens a weight
to the sun?

What loss is this that
denies midnight its miracles,
that extracts motivation
and pretense,
lies behind billboards,
under the deck
and in the empty chair?

What loss I bear
as weightlessness - nothing to ground me
and
nothing core.

Courage Where I Lie

It's been my right hand on fire,
my eyes undertow
and my lips sliced by ant bites
that brought me to this landscape
of difficult beauty
where there is no allowance for sun,
but still, there is joy
within the darkness. There are shapes
and there is
possibility.

This land of undefined lines
and little colour, where the warmest beat
has died, and even that, somehow, is
surmountable. A land where miracles
will not be defeated by death
or by a torn perfection.

No Raft - No Ocean

**No more are the days of
power and process.
The act has transformed
into statement, and the
unconscious has imprinted
an indelible mark upon my history.
No more is the rat maze
and the declaration of destiny,
is the fine print
I used to count upon.
No more is the metaphysical,
is the immensity of grand
possibilities and of grand uncertainties.
No more is the eye of the monster,
the test of religion
and the mythological drum,
is my need for civilization,
for a position of supernatural
within the practical.
No more are imaginary punishments,
friendships lacking a common goal.
No more is the play and domination
of personal experience.**

The Sweet Glory of Imagination Thins As It Expands

**A remote sage,
a childhood anchoring, a quenching
for something mythical
reduced,
commercialized.**

**As though the secret
that alone was yours,
now is heard by everyone.**

**As though the sacred realm
has become part of the
collective unconscious,
pulped into an easily consumed
wafer feed.**

Under The Rib Cage

The knot that moves
up and down within,
moves far and wide
like a drop on the awkward side,
like the ethereal side afraid
of the earth-side,
like a side best loved unreached
and a night best left to be on one's own,
best left to wait
until what's inside
simmers and brews into a situation
worth discussing.
Under the rib cage
vacancy floats
like a hard sponge that does not sink.

The knot that moves
causes a split
so the seed can sprout and continue
to grow
under the rib cage.

Minimal

I believe in the portion that
dies underground but lives
like a dream only in the
waking hour.

For me it gave the great request,
gave the last ring for my finger.

I wear the seed but never
the bloom. I am the false train
at the station. My blood bleeds
its impurities and runs
like floodwaters over the city.

For now, at a standstill.

For now, half-whole -
a miniature of all I was supposed to be.

In this place I must accept
or die so much before my time.

In this place where wonder
is not enough, but is
itself a blessing.

Horizon

Small horizon,
small division
that lifts the first
layer of sea from the great whole,
that lifts the place where water alters
into sky but does not alter
what lies below. A place of no fire,
though it still has the strength
of the shark's unchanging
violence.
A place of cruelty just the same,
awake
to that small place where nothing exists but transition,
is the horizon less dreamed,
permanently in stasis,
a place
where beauty like terror
is overthrown.

The Wall I Walk Through

Sophistication underneath
a set of sad droopy eyes.
The bland dream of civilization
slicing my fingers
as though my flesh was a watermelon.

I see no point but the point
of love, and the interaction between two
in love or just loving.
I see that a relationship can only happen
when both parties are giving -
all else is just in process
of passing.

Into the oil of your significance

**Bring me back
for I am lost
like a false thing kept on guard as truth.
I am an albatross thrown broken-winged
across the sea. I am pesticide touching lips.
The dead thing tied to my back is finding
a way in.
I found nothing holy on this shore.
I can barely keep afloat - my words are rotten,
my hymns are carried off by a storm.
The leap I took
has ended in disaster.
My dance has reached a conclusion.
My life is haunted. The rope
is pulled.**

I Try To Breathe

God said

I didn't do it out of malice,

I did it out of mercy.

And so I try to understand
through the emotion of purified faith.

I try to recognize the truth petrified within
like a soul cracked and brittle
but still shining its unique glow.

The cold egg sits in my pocket.

I keep it there for when I get hungry,

if I get hungry,

which doesn't seem to happen much
anymore.

So it sits, cold, rubbery and whole,

sits, an egg too squished to roll,

sits for potential nourishment, as security without salt.

I try not to use it. I try to hold onto what God said

and breathe that in

as my only necessary

sustenance.

I felt the day fail you

**then wrap you up like a spider would.
I felt your soul collapse
before it lifted.
The difficult swallow, the backing away
changed direction.**

**At the end,
you were at peace.
At the end, the images joined their shades,
and you held the innocence
you've always held so well, needing my love
accepting my love, and, releasing.
Releasing from the pain
and from the process
of ending.
Releasing into
the all-caring-arms
of our mutual God.**

Drove Me Down

**By your mercy
the stone was thrown
that drove me down.**

**By your love
I catapulted
into the ditch,
and am still there.**

**By your freedom,
my faith was bound
and the rivers
outside**

have soured.

**By these things
my table was set and my ankles chained.**

**I see no way to be removed
but by your mercy
after the stone was thrown.**

A Piece

Taken like a fallen feather
back to God.

Removed from its plateau
to a higher plain,
to leave the box of memories an empty garden,
to show that love and attachment
are not material, are still vital when
there is no breathing body left. To say it was only a thing
that held too great a significance,
that losing it meant
nothing
and changes nothing
essential.

Undefined

I can't say I am a sailor
who moves forward without ground
or room to run.

I can't say I am a leader who
closes down slaughterhouse doors
or uproots cruel traditions with one swift blow.

I can't say I have a social smile that calms
the afflicted with carefree warmth.

I can't say I am that woman who children cling to
and adorn with their fresh imaginations.

I can't say I am like a house or like a star or water
that rams into rocks then falls back into itself.

I can only say a flower is here,
and I am not that flower.

Childhood cracked

**The doll fell
and was never picked up.
It fell by the curb
in a lucid slumber
of inarticulate words
like a dew drop
on ice.
Nothing was coveted,
the chant grew like the moon
as the month moved on.
What was cold inside was a needle
of sharp divide and the impact
of unbuffered death.
Into this autumn
the doll fell
and the meridian of grace
was at last
on the table.**

Cull the Extremes

Waves upon waves of tenderness
permeated the edge of eternity.
My secrets were stretched across
the sliver of morning moon.
Rainy day before the children rise
and the pulse inside me is a bird
who can't find a place to land.
It is the heat and dread, tangible
as death - and it is the dance on old,
infertile ground that helps the dance along.
I am passed freedom, immune to invention.
I am a sun-scorched park that has no shade.
I take the spider out of my mouth.
I shape a skull with stiff fingers.
My sanity buckles under in the washroom,
before mirrors, buckles under tension, under
the dichotomy
of bliss and chaos.

When

When I was a fish the morning light
brought me near the shark's skilled swim.
I would hide behind rocks and sea urchins, watching
octopi and their slow contracting movement.
When I was an octopus, my tentacles could think.
I knew of things like volcano ruptures and how
to escape fishnets and other forms of human capture.
When I was a deer I was in union, safe with my clan,
grazing in the lion's domain.
When I was a lion, female, tense with the hunt,
protective of my playful young, I knew of thirst
and days without food, retreating from the large and
ever-present sun.
When I was a baby child, it felt like there was a stone
stuck in my throat and a restlessness
racing through my limbs.
I cried and cried when I was a baby, unfamiliar
with this daunting helpless form.

Ghost of Poverty

**The second time I ran from the ghost
when it wailed victory over my strength,
altering my imagination
to conform to its sparseness and struggle.**

**The second time I fled
because I could no longer hold
that piece of broken window, injured
by anxiety, prey to its see-through horror.
I wrote down what I knew. I could explain it,
compact it, but never change its substance
or its tyrannical influence.**

**That second time, running, I realized
it coveted my self-respect, it wanted to turn me
back into that child, caught by chaos and monsters
under the bed. So I turned the second time, I faced
my history, walked into its nightmarish form and believed
in love like nothing I ever believed in before.**

**The ghost still lives, but like a bug nesting on my shoulder.
I let it nest for I cannot defeat it. It bites,
eats and itches, but only on that shoulder.
The rest of me belongs and is safe
with the vegetarians.**

Eating from an imaginary spoon

Sensual as clay laced
with warm water,
hard as a window
barred -
and still the seeds are thrown
though I don't know why - there is
too much earth and almost no sun,
there are slimy ponds that beasts and fowls
eliminate in - spotted with dead-fish-eyes
and not at all like heaven
is suppose
to be.

There is a funeral in the fireplace but no one
connected enough to mourn the dead thing burning.
There are seven steps up and nine down, and indifferent
cruelty has murdered every other form of synchronicity -
I see four walls, but have only three;
I dream the supernatural and am faced
with pain in my teeth,
and on my hands, are wounds
that will not heal.

Under the willow tree I hide my mirror,
small enough to be mistaken for morning dew.
I look for a point of origin, something to explain
how and why
we all must see it through.

Introvert

After the talk,
I become like scattered seeds
on concrete. I find the money jar
empty and my stability, ruptured.
After social meanderings, after loose
conversations that never utters the words
'death' 'loss' or 'God' then I am everywhere, pinched
apart, thin pieces of my solitary form.
Days of quiet bring me back from the drug trip
where others thrive but I am like clay drying in the sun,
too much, too fast, too little time in the shade
so that I crack then split, and what I was
cannot stand whole.
Mornings of clenching to the things
that keep me upright, build
again a solid self until I must slip (a fresh water fish)
into the salt waters of acceptable social norm.

In time the journey

**will display
so many uncertainties, it will be
simply a matter of giving up,
like a sparrow gives in to a strong wind
or a dog to his master's run.
It will be a ride with no known direction,
no certainty but God and death and God again.
Through hospital wards where children lie
with expectant eyes but cannot move,
there is the nothingness of an unplanned tomorrow, there is
the atmosphere of extreme focus, focused on just holding on.
If it be hard and sudden, or a slow painful release,
death will wrap us in its reptile skin, nurture us
like a foreign enemy just realizing our colossal significance.
Death will be holy and we will recognize it
for the first and only time,
in an instant, understand its language -
bending ourselves completely
into the folds of its natural embrace.**

One Wing

I don't know how long I will ride
upstream with my arms around this waning moon,
or if the deadwood I carry on my boat will be lightened
and used. Hope is a hair strand I lost in the waters,
far from any net or shore. All the days are taken
and none are left to Sunday.

I travel this way, cold to my own heart - a piece
of rock in space, a business card wet in the gutter.
By light I try to commune, but like a thin cloud
that forms then fades, I have no idea how long I will stay
a flake - less than broken,
and nothing more.

Secret

We share an altered epiphany each night
we merge below water, never speaking
but touching satin against soul, tumbling
in our home-spun ecstasy
like the pounding of pure birth.
We rise and fall speechless, buried
in the radiance of our realm where we journey,
our skins seeped in sensuality,
still discovering after nineteen years, building a depth
unencountered - the two of us,
bending, refitting the mantra
of male and female confinement,
drugged by the surprise, by the thickened lips of our
controlled urgency, blind to all but each other,
the muse of our
naked dancing, breathing, visceral releasing, and
at the end, laughing as though we were seeing
our first ever snow fall.

Son of no one

There never was a moment for you
when freedom could have
ripped your destiny in two - where choice not chance
could have uncornered your existence.
Because you took every risk - collapsing in the shadows,
coveting the Egyptian Buddha.
Your breath is like a child's, breaking on a slab of rock
held close to your face. I would fan the sun for you
if it would make a difference, if your shoes would stay tied
and your rage would stay at bay. I would
pluck the curse from your veins, if there was something to
pluck, if it wasn't acceptance and only acceptance that
would change the curse, not remove it, but alter its outcome.
I love your eyes, beneath your dark
ridge brows. I hear you singing in
the middle of the night. I can
taste the salt on your lips. You want to be cold, but you
can't be. You were made this way, to enter the world at
your own pace. You are elemental, wider than your history.
You are not alone. And that
is something.

End of reason

**I hear the echo of instability slide
through the corridors like a plague
that just missed. I hear the song and flip
like a flock of tiny birds, upside down,
bellies flat against the sky.
I feel soiled by layers of complexity,
needing to feel again protection,
the stroke of a cool summer on my lips,
needing a puppy left at my door.
I know the sun will rise on my twisted frame.
I know a red petal thrown into a pale blue sky.
I know more than a parched mouth,
more than brick painted over
or prison bars dipped in rainbow hues.
I know of tongues basted in trembling glory,
my purpose -
core, settled and pure.**

Rooms of Joy

We will build four rooms of joy
to honour the monastic sigh, to understand
the kestrel on its perch and the wheelchair
halted at the steep curb.

We will sanctify our moon
with paint, clay and easel - letting colours and moisture
drip through our fingers,
malleable as a conscious dream.

We will bellow out music that towers over
the thieves of daylight, races into our bodies, offering grace
where there is none.

We will write poems and stories of fact
and fiction to bring
definition to our visions, to lose ourselves,
naked as the calling gulls.

We will hold our meditation stones,
like a horse's beautiful mane, brushing,
braiding, all the while,
softly whispering our affection
into the copper-coloured ear of nature.

And the animals will bind us. The enormous love
between us all will cut away
the scar tissue of disappointment.

We will plunge into this temple, playing games,
bearing fruit. In our four rooms we will love, expand
and often falter - fresh and deep, rooted into the floorboards
of this true home.

Funeral Wake

Now and again, the parade of kisses
and mourning. Thunder raging at the autumn winds
and at the first sign of human folly.
Winding up like thickened blood and vowels
helplessly hanging without a word.
I may be marble, or made of damp wood.
The shattered hymn swirls around like the cry
for hope, any hope, after death.
I may be without a garden
or a plot of land to call my own,
but I do own the hours I've spent
digging beneath the crust,
spying on the soft turf uncovered only in prayers
and in conversations of the crying.
I walk with these doubts as though
stranded on an unpredictable slope,
coiling and uncoiling
as I speak, and then, I hold my breath.
I heard the lies ricochet up like an island
rising and sinking from
corner to corner. I heard the wish to forget
and the need to widen
the bed of memory, sharp and just as blank
as the eyes of those
in shock or as a heart drained of music,
calmed by nothing, not by bread, not by good fortune:
This season of grief just beginning.

I Could Have

**I could have waited
in my personal eternity with the yellowed books,
on the cold other-century floor, night upon night
reading of murderers and painters and women
confined to views of freedom, caught in a rebel
stratosphere. I could have underlined the philosophers,
changed channels on the radio,
stayed with my father's typewriter,
with my buckwheat mish-mash and the ants that collected
near the sink. I could have taught the rabbit to sing,
kept my special and comical cat - stayed
with my angry prayers and my exacta-knife,
craving equilibrium and knowing only a violent vacancy
that would find no distraction, nothing
to ease the pressure of such urgent longing.**

(how lucky I didn't)

**It was years after that when I found you
on the steps of the church,
embracing me with your black hair,
boyish charm, thin arms and
matching intensity. It was the first time since I was a child
that I could trust God, holding you,
joining my burden with your own -
and in doing so, alleviating the weight of its core.
It was the first time
I could leave that floor, the books, change direction
and see something
of happiness.**

I think I was

**I was that man
climbing the stairs to the hospital room, that man
with wavy brown hair and open eyes.
I used to live near the moors where
I would go to re-enact Thomas Hardy fables,
choked with the sorrow of outcast women.
I was that man never reaching the room,
never able to mourn except on paper.
As that man, I dreamt of India -
one day I would go, be under its large, unusual sun,
maybe hold hands with a beautiful deity.
As that man, I never went to India, I died
too young.
As that man, I remember a split in my soul,
the violent burn of uncontainment.
And I remember the feel of bare feet
slowly walking across wet moors.**

Because I love you

**like the humpback does its song,
I grow by caring for you
and your unfair burden.
A golden daughter, bells in your hair
and a richness in your eyes. I have
all fortune at my door and my only wish
is to peel away your cloud of illness and brighten
your ground. I only see a fine gem's rays reflected
on your skin. I only dream of your dissolved chains -
miles around you of only childish concerns.**

**I hold your hand as we walk the corridors, tracing
footprints down the hospital halls. Your touch
tells me it is for us to be proud of one another,
to be thankful for this gift that has strengthened our bond.
Your touch is music - your words are as old as the sea.
The fire around you
is a bird. It will perch, nest and then next season,
it will be gone.
Your journey is into the hail storm. But you will be healed,
and I will go on loving you like I love you
like the humpback does its song.**

Under a bushel

I don't want to lie still under
this rock, like a pool
of stagnant water where larvae culminate
and grow.

I would like to be laughing at the birds
in flight, a minister to their bird-needs.
I would like to take off this thick sweater,
cover my limbs with sand and wait
for the tide.

I don't want the lost love of the past to stop me
out of fear from plunging into
a faith-induced joy, stop me from painting my skin
with visions that swim full-force in my brain.
I don't want to be the child chained to the park bench,
hearing voices no one else takes seriously.

I won't be swung from this dead vine,
hollow as the fear I abhor.

I will be a fountain, running, contained,
self-sufficient, a fountain
that children make wishes in and animals find drink.
I will be acceptable as I am,
flowing, something
to look at.

Living With Myself

How many years before I arrive (guided as I am)
to the cliff, before I accept the fear, this view
as only a snake protecting my yard or as a way to keep me
ringing the bell? When was the last time a stranger
altered my octave, drove me, drum, drum
at the heels of some extreme belief?

This flesh is like oil paint that only sanding can clean.

My path is wanting.

I am with water, but no wave. I feel the water,
heavy as an avalanche,
soiled by so many fruitless beginnings.

But death will come, and the dust
that has already caked over my exuberance
will not be queen.

I will ride again unchanged, but this time
at sunrise, upon my beautiful horse, without
bridal and chain. I will regain mastery, pound at
the hot grass, at this constant edge -
relinquishing all.

Crack

The frayed rope is what I hold,
twisting the strands, wanting to make that once sturdy rope,
glorious to look at and stronger still.
I fell in the crack,
traveled lower than the mindset of many, weeks before
a murderous revolution. Though I fell into a plant bowl,
barely seeing beyond the glass, barely believing
in the soft brown earth
surrounding my skin and cells,
though I am desperate for restitutions
and the coat rack is irreparably
broken - I can't turn my back, not now,
when I am so close to letting go
when I am so unsure, and I could disintegrate
entirely
then maybe be
restored.

Listening

Rising with the confidence
of 'no choice', rising in my tiny nakedness,
cupping equal parts poison and remedy
in broken clam shells.

It was a rock that was tossed that scraped my back.
It was words on paper that went dim because I was lost,
listening for a gurgle, a rhythm
to cherish, to roll in, lull in my mouth - sweet and hard.

God, do you love me? or is it only a dream?
God, love me, peel away this fishnet,
gather me into a single form.

Connection

I remember you on a hill
in Ireland, undecided as to who
would be your master. Where
the devil swore to drop you in the red valley
and the angel promised only
to embrace you as you fell.

I remember the tree you stood beside that was
your mansion, the one with the grey and gnarled bark
with mushrooms all around - you would
whisper to it, sometimes crying, cursing the dilemma
that ruled your soul, and the daylight that wounded you
and brought you into years of isolation.

I think you missed the colour of flowers the most as
they rejoiced in mid-day.

I think you always held your strength
as a boy would a wild foal, hoping one day
to curb its burning.

I remember you on Eastern ground - laying flat
against the cold dead soil, wanting motive enough
for suicide but always being drawn back
by your foul hunger and by
the promise for a cure. I remember you, your eyes -
dark and cruel, yet never void of needing
to be loved.

Once made of stone - Wellesley Street

What was the shape of that shelter before you came?
It was made of lost centuries of torment
and sporadic, but deep, connection.
It was more a seed than shelter,
protecting, feeding the blood dream of my ancestry.

Then you arrived and for awhile
we stuffed ourselves inside that shelter
like ying and yang, in zen-like union.

My path was to follow the dolphins - live in the sea,
breathe what I must and be happy.

But happiness was too hard,
I was left wanting the darker layers of guilt and grief.

Your path was to find what was given to you,
to re-claim your privilege, hand-printing the walls
as though you were king.

You took the bed, I took the floor. I paid the rent
and you shared your food. Soon that shelter then become
a fossil for me. And you and I - facing each other
with crossed arms, could not find a common ground.
The boy next door worshipped you, and more and more
I felt like the estranged sister, toyed with though loved.

I took my cat and left you with
the dollar day-old-donuts and the bottled water
you used to brush your teeth with. After that,
my trust was broken. And though we still painted together,
I never showed you my jewels or sorrows.

That shelter up all those stairs, overlooking
the streetcar tracks is now this paper, an inked-in memory
without entrance
from any valley, flat plain or hill.

Alive

on your wave
of wet torment, licking
the moon of your lips,
cradling your breath in my mouth
as I held you submerged in my contracting core,
held you within as you were within
saturated with my pulse and flow.
I went under, planted
in the memories of your soul.
You swallowed our merging
with rapid speed. We evolved, stripped of every season,
you and I with our initials carved on each other's skin,
undulating
in our sensual, blessed commune.

Greenhouse

Inside this greenhouse on a hill
there is an arcade, an eagle
and the fear of scorpions.
As the vegetables flower
I can almost hear the traffic on the streets below
drowning out the crickets. I know we belong here -
where there is an internal wind, seven bodies
and so much heaven. Our windows are bullet-proof.
When it is time to eat, we eat then we play, love and fight.
At the head, there is music, there is greenery.
The eagle gives us depth, and the fear forces us to grow.
The arcade is a machine of imagination.
When we leave the greenhouse, there is a path
we take downhill. We greet strangers,
and sometimes we bring home crude, unnatural influences.
But sleep heals our home where we hold
no resentments and keep no secrets,
and the air is as sensuous and tender as
our house is green.

Nightlight

How long before this mansion
is shackled by ghosts
and by the terror of brutal, unforgiving flaws?
How long before I am blown down
by the mask I haven't enough courage to remove,
hulled away from peace by the sandpaper moors
I tread upon. How long will I let this wind take me away,
sacrifice my hymn for a slideshow of reckless poison?
Love is a crooked tail, an imperfect sun, a chapel of striving.
This long I will carve the marble,
chip the marble, chisel down my husk, depending
upon the substance of miracles.

Expression is Purpose

**When I lean past the door
just enough to reach
another room, I lean past the place
where I can talk or bend this burn
in my esophagus into meaning.
Depth is stretched with a calm but arrogant demeanor,
and the silky robe of forgiveness has washed up muddied
upon the shore.
I pace the equator, having no benefits.
I am brought by chance
to waiver on the threshold -
for I have beauty, but I know beauty is not beauty without
mercy and mercy
is so much more than just good luck.**

The Hardest Thing

**Under every struggle
the line is near - the line to cross
or the line that slings you back.
On the inside of every hero,
the best is yet to be told. This is the blue bonnet sun.
The dark days have left, but tomorrow
is always so near. In the easy time
the lurking jaws of instability are still in reach.
Friendships are lost, their once needed light
has curved
in the wrong direction.**

Redemption

A look of strange purity,
the type of a true gentleman
anchoring a violent nature,
the type of innocence rediscovered out of evil,
by the unexpectancy of falling in love
and of being loved
after so much grief, so much guilt, so much
time.

A nature - gentle and commanding,
full of every colour but grey,
potently sexual, but never crude,
burdened by a clear code of justice
that drives that nature to be
irrevocably lonely
without being reduced.

Room, no room

**Moving in the circle of this ritual
smoking out my lungs, hand-paddling away
from the heat-strong current. The walls
have become a bookshelf on which
the books have been repeatedly read.
The walls are a room where there are
no windows and the paint is yellowing,
where the stale breath of confinement has
moved in.**

**I hear the animals deliver their outcast tongue
as the flame flows from the crack under the door.
I am folding and folding,
longing to join the delirium of a new language and of fire.
I cannot flourish in this parched land of ineffectual despair.
I long for a pond to catch tadpoles in.
I long for seeds to scatter,
or for now, just a small tool to chip away
at this concrete floor.**

Remedy or false start

**A few drops to bless the rage,
to bless this stage of cracking through the egg.
A few drops to find the candle in the blackout,
to restore the gentle eyes of my beloved.
A few drops to help dust the bones
of this dead thing that follows me around,
this rotting thing that carries the load of my dread.
A few drops to ease the way to healing,
to find the shellfish under the sandy rock
and set it free back in the waters.**

Letting it out

The vision is a smoke cloud
released from my pocket, wrapping
me with its smoky warmth, breaking chaos
at its backbone.

A thousand chains of fear and grief
swoop down from the once singing sky
to crash on my limbs and drown me
with their weight.

God as full as the sea, flushing through me,
flowing around me with the starfish and the stingrays,
with the minnow fish and the barnacles,
God outside me, inside of me, holding me
in this vision, breaking the vine.

Little One

The baseboard lifted. The light
was absorbed into the carpet. I tried.
I cried when you left me, but it was only
for a year then the drug of your sweetness
reformed into a mild sadness, washing my
nerves with the thin film of egg whites.
I imagined you sleeping curled up by the door. I imagined
your voice in the morning, lonely and frantic for affection.
Those nights when we said our long goodbye - one night
when our eyes met and I thanked you and you thanked me,
was a gift without fault, was your dignified funeral - the rest
was husk, instinct, the result of your physical pain.
The rest when remembered breaks my belief, but then
I know your life was good and I know we had
fifteen years of warm connection,
we had love.

Plucked

It tears at me, making dents in me
like a child kicking a snow bank.
It was my jeweled jar, my jewels on display
that were thrown down the vent. But still
my voice will not freeze nor will I let
my hunger destroy my fantasy of a feast.
I have been here before - all my petals
plucked, and my seeds, painted with blackstrap molasses.
I have been charting this course for so long,
there is little that can corrupt my current.
So let the lilies be cut
and my doubts play critic to my inspiration.
I will wave it away,
keeping my eyes fixed on one point -
the glory of a private song.

Pilgrimage

Eye to eye
like a phantom facing the sun,
I will face the actuality of maggots
and numb extremities. I will not
be secret or grip my soul in spiritually
adolescent platitudes that provide answers
without truth. I will be under the heat
that compresses my lungs and shrinks my skull,
half drugged with fatigue but not poaching
the mourning dove for a brief taste of satisfaction.
This day will not be my enemy. I will learn to climb trees.
I will learn to wait, high above ground,
wait for the release of my fears.
When I climb down, in the wild grass, for a moment
I will lie down, stretch, and then, continue on.

My Water Was

**My water was a veil to seal me away
from the pecking crowd.
My bread was a flower on display,
useless in serving my hunger.
My legs were strangers to me, they took me places,
the same places, day upon day.
They ached and pounded, and soon
I lost my lucky charm. The years were like birds
I could watch but never approach. In those years
I learned my fingerprint-hymn, I learned
what devil to ignore and how to pronounce
my own, my lover's, my children's names. I learned
of poverty in middle age, different than the poverty of youth.
I went forward and claimed my apple orchard.
Often I had no apples,
but I had somewhere to breathe and
I had a place to imagine
a bountiful tomorrow.**

Let the wound not win

You sent me a crib of comfort,
a bridge to walk away from my moth-eaten coat,
a way to suddenly find that piece of string
I was looking for - I received, then
I lost the message, and my lungs flooded
with suspicious contempt.
My comfort was maimed and in this pit
of loudness and conflict, I saw my enemy everywhere:
Rain dripping from my sleeves -
only fear and judgment remaining.
In the morning, you returned to me. In the burn
of one small flame, in the sound of a perfect circle,
I asked your forgiveness:
To paint me with this freshness, shave
this mane of morbid madness and help me
cherish the ocean all day until night,
until I wake as one, hopeful again,
your child.

Sunday/Sabbath

Yesterday was a good day
indoors, all of us, in this changing sea
of deliverance, in this sometimes orange,
sometimes turquoise, little wood of home.

Paradise, we know your name, we stayed with you
yesterday, and you tore apart our darkness, joined us
like one stone.

Thank you for the children and the animals, thank you
for soulmate love and friendship, and for the sadness
we feel as winter approaches. On this inlet the wind
is clean, and we are always dancing or singing or making
new ways to put words.

The grass we walk in is prophesy - none
of this can die or be corrupted.

Yesterday was a good day. This place is a good place
This family is a herd of whales cresting
on the rush of a wave. And I who have found my belonging,
am so very in love
with each and all.

Days with little favour (when lives shut down)

**The thin warmless dome that hovers
like a spider, perfectly still,
above my head - is the world,
the cold-blooded world of lost passengers
and dreamers never able to fulfill that dream,
is the silent spinning fragile frame
of sensibility and propriety
that waxes the soul like sap spilled on a leaf,
is the astonishing disconnection of all things
so 'together' and workable on this platform,
is the inefficiency of a loose morality,
of a self-focused morality.
Numbness - a mouse too near the cat,
a split in jelly, never seen,
but there - a hut of chaos, a school
of dull teachers and the rat digging out
of an ordinary tunnel
or a tiger's tongue lacerating the skin of a shoulder
just to be there
in the world, amidst all this dawdling pain,
perpetual pain, reluctant to embrace God,
and sometimes, even
the possibility of there being God,
reluctant because faith has been foiled
by abuse and hardness, forsaken
as unnecessary, left out with the trash.**

The Path Before

Inside this cup polliwogs drown
for the sake of a child's curiosity. Following a man
wearing a long maroon robe around his shoulders,
a group walked the dirty morning streets,
pretending inner peace.

I was there, there in the sinking sand, abandoned
to mud and nature. I was there, handing out sandwiches
I couldn't afford to make, following the one
with the robe, thinking he would save me.

Save me from the dead fish lodged in my throat,
from the desolation of my eunuch intimacies, save me
from the ulcer that tore apart my insides like a feral cat,
trapped and too far gone to look around.

Waiting at 4 a.m. to steal away into my cubicle
and watch the dawn break over the park,
or running with my brother
over the farmland of a mutual friend that frightened us,
who we kept because we had no other, as we sat quietly
on his cast-iron stove, quietly in the danger, not together
as brother and sister should be, but separately wondering,
never holding hands.

Wish

If I could wish the cat well, life
beside my father's grave,
then as October nears
and the worms go underground,
I could bathe in my favourite season,
happy as I'll every get,
change the rusty orange of my essence
and shed the density of summer.
If I could wish my children healed of their afflictions,
my husband, complete in his calling
and our empty cooking pot finally appeased,
then I could fall without shifting
the position of my bones,
I could be with a warm coat on, walking briskly
in a purifying seasonal breeze.

Where I Stand

I stood, I followed
like thin glass against the wind.
I moved under the electric wire
searching for joy,
remembering swallows nesting on a cliff,
circling the summer, then autumn
sky. My house was a wound bandaged by prayers
and a struggling purpose.
There is a park and children daily
walking by. There are days without wages
and nights of empty exhaustion.
There are the stark branches
of a pure winter and
the folded arms of old, contented men.
I place myself in the corner of gaining less certainty,
close to the ground
so I can hear the footsteps nearing -
counting on their sound
to break my direction.

The Last Layer

Lying flat, going to look my delusion in the eye.
I have been wrong
to base survival on hope, on the condition
of a future exact. I have been wrong to tightrope
walk over decades of barren ice, pretending there was
a destination that could come from this balancing act.
Angry that the ice around me was not water, or better yet,
a lush garden of colourful prosperity.
Angry at this thin edge that held
the whole of my weight.
Today, lying flat, I avert my gaze, shed my old face
and know two choices: to succumb to the struggle or
to be empowered by it.

Jesus in my basement

**You are serious as the elements,
master of miracles that overcomes those elements.
You are golden and landing always
in the depth of true light.**

**I think at times I can hear your voice, immediate,
ambushing my breath and my lazy self-pity.**

**You call on me to change my skin, walk
this world with belief and wonder. You guide me
in your discipline, offer me promise, eternity,
hills and hills of lush mercy.**

**You want my words to be exhumed - to speak exact,
not be encased in avoidance, not caked in layers
of mind-twisting complexity.**

**Just to be here, in front of you - simple, unimportant,
broken by the world, remade by you.**

Plight of the freelance underdog

**A deformed creature who loses arms.
The same cruel senselessness ensues
from those arms of watered-down souls,
corporate drones who feel no obligation to moral kindness
or even simple, obvious justice,
who ride their authority with spiked
stirrups, having no regard for the one
who carries them below or how
hardworking and reliable their steeds have been.
They have taken my meager living and stripped it
even further with reluctant acknowledgment,
with no apology, with knowing
there is nothing I can do.
I am trapped by their lizard-cold power,
trapped by my lack of rights and by their fleeting disregard,
as though I am an ant to be flicked
from post to post and then
to be crushed by their whims, where what remains is only
the tightening jaw-grip
of this unionized beast, where what remains is me
determined to leave this affliction, to build my house
on a land of mature self-reliable splendour.**

Before Atonement

At night I was full
like others are in summer,
myself, just a silhouette at dawn,
part of a church, but never part of
a calling.

I would look for owls as I canvassed unfamiliar roads
in winter, when everyone was lonely and the vein
of fulfillment pulsed obscure. I would knock on doors,
smile as though I was innocent, young in my hope
and inspired by ideals. Sometimes I would have tea and talk
as though I understood something, secretly carrying my
pink powder in a small golden tin,
desperate for any kind of magic.

The smell of that powder - sweet, unusual and old - the feel
of that powder - like rubbing thick blood between
finger and thumb - I was someone with that powder -
maybe a witch, maybe a prophet - someone
who communed with the gangs of cats that would
emerge past dinnertime; sit under cars, behind tree trunks
watching me as I watched them.

At night, the van would pull up and I had so little to say,
except to the driver. We loved our silence,
the awkward closeness
of agreed non-personal communication.

For me, there was only those nights and books,
there were only incoherent surreal images
storming my brain, longing to be submerged
in hard hard substance.

I Am This Creature (drenched in mute history)

**I am this creature
let loose from the grave,
but still without a Sunday
or a bed of more than weeds and worms.
I am this liar, trapped in fantasy,
a carcass hanging upside down, all cheers and woes
set at high volume.
I was with hunger, a rage of flies on soiled food,
desperate to know fulfillment.
I was a girl, knowing nothing of drugs, but helpless
just the same, a slave to all my girlish visions
of the coming days of promised rapture.
I was a young woman, wearing drab and loose clothes,
never looking in a mirror, talking in tongues,
clenching confusion as a crutch and giving glory
to any glory-seeking teacher.
I am this woman, strong shouldered, a bit threadbare
but wanting
never to rekindle that drowned flame -
a creature in a world of foreign wilderness.
I'm circling, circling a solitary stone.**

I will not be sorry

**For me, the debt was paid
as I lost myself in a quickening despair
and I turned from my power as
lips turn from a kiss.
I turned from the owls' graveyard
and sought the burgeoning morning.
I outlasted my own death and woke in water, waterlogged,
unprepared for a dung bug's misery. I saw daybrids,
but I was not the one who evoked their song.
I saw tall buildings
rising and I could not reach their height.
I walked without rareness,
without command or spell.
I wore an ordinary greyness in the strands
of my once-red hair. I dulled like a sea clogged with sludge.
And this,
is how my debt was paid - in grueling undignified amounts.
I thought my clean slate was a brave release. I even planted
a tree and wondered through my raging pain
if it was mightier than simple madness.
In the end, I won what I sought, even with these decalcified
bones and poverty's
prison cell, I found the light in that vision I formed
when I was in the indelible darkness,
thick with longing, guilt and sacrifice, but lacking
the umbilical cord
of praise.**

deeper layer of love

A bird dying in the tall grass, its wing, a bent leaf
that could not re-form. In the swamp yard, another bird
balanced on the stem of a tall weed, never noticing
the voice of death. The signature of each tree against
an unobtrusive sky. The frog placed by a well-intended child
in the middle of a road. The itch under the casted arm.
What mends the snow? In this land wedged
between instinct and heaven
does anything mend or know a lasting happiness
other than stillness?
Elements carved like karma into a snail's brain,
into the whale on fire with symphony,
into a baby, stillborn, and into its mother, whose substance
is now reduced to a wafer,
fossilized by impersonal failure.
There is so little love, so little to count on but the love
that continues loving despite the not-so-hidden deformities,
despite the limitations that bind us in these ambulance beds.
Only such love that carries the gruesome ghost
of each finite tale
can open the way to a new perfection,
to Gods' infinity of love that sees and heals
by its seeing, by its decided effort of
continuance.

The Long Pitstop

When I woke up,
I was a daughter of God,
for a while as pure as
a river, moving towards
a place of cascading surrender.
It took years for the cockroaches
to enter my house, to gnaw away at my toes
while I was sleeping - poverty and broken hopes and
death spiraling around me like a dust storm
I could not see through.
Even then, my faith remained queen,
and the love I found from others and God - even in death -
opened new passages of perseverance and renewal.
I had a child. Then two, and the singing never stopped.
Death came again and age stuck to my skin like wet sand.
Poverty dosed and soaked my bed
with its despairing drug, and hope
for a way out, fossilized, completely lost its pulse.
My future became a stuffed bird
I kept in a drawer to look at and admire its inert beauty.
Many weeks now I wonder
if I will be claimed, pulled from this sea of floating fish,
from this asylum where nothing ever pushes through
to the bright land of clarity.
I am waiting for a bell of my own, a kiss
of divine liberation.

God and Manna

It was an attachment I thought I lost.
It came swooping down - talons outstretched,
fixated as a broken heart. It took me to its nest,
and I have been here ever since - hungry,
without company, anticipating the worst.
I thought by now its image would have
matured in my mind, thought I would not
be so tied to its brutal, spell-binding eyes,
that my soul was full of more than just raptor's feathers,
that whatever happened between
would not snare my self-worth
in its smelly, precarious abode.
I was wrong. I am here in this wicker cup,
one third the size I am supposed to be.
It will come for me,
to make me food for its offspring. It will come.
I am sure I can hear the echo of its call,
coming to own me with loveless enjoyment,
coming to tear me with beak and claw,
owning my despair and glory as nothing more
than a piled-up dinner plate.

Parameters

The gift of all this crumbles
with a single out-of-sync happening.
Geraniums are frosting over
and the high grass is yellowing.
Yesterday was a cat in symmetrical slumber,
pictures stood straight and warmth
was gathering like a sweet wind over the neighbourhood.
Does this mean it is my mind? like an insect living
one season, sees only that season, dies before winter,
content to have made it so long?
Does this mean the puddle
I jump in, wade in, determine in
is only a pail of water, nothing beside the ocean?
When the puddle is stirred from its stillness or
becomes a bath for snakes or dries up from too much sun -
it is still the puddle and will replenish again
as all puddles do in the rain, maybe
in the early evening just before the lion comes
to take a long, relaxed drink.

Toy Box

Shimmering orbs of
two-tone depth and two-tone passion
set within a young girl's face.

And then, his has the blueness of the Mediterranean,
emotionally volatile and kind.

Female tenderness spread like an umbrella over her
delicate features, female fury, concealed from all but
not from the ones she loves the most - witnesses to her fire
and bravery. And he, so much like the caress of miracles,
either loving and happy or a storm of unrestrained
tears - an open door, no keyhole-way in to know
what his five-year-old heart feels. He is there. She is there.
Beautiful and so much more tremendous
than any dreaming.

Heaven must be active (not inert)

Life is raw

**as a just-made wound. It is raw
so it is open to acts of mercy**

and the beginning of true humility.

**God is not proud but always available,
is always faultless in the body of love.**

Life is raw

with no way to be protected from

cruel chance, no way but to ride the raft

**down the falls and see what gets broken, then see
what gets preserved.**

Slicing the cord

**Goodbye this side of the devil
that swarms my summer with a fool-proof spell.
I will leave you old devil by the road
by the traffic jam where the accident occurred.
I will wail at you no more or try to break your armour.
Goodbye the pain of poverty, its perpetual pounding fear.
I will not drown in that drug or be that child
who forgets I will die. I will relinquish
your mustard eyes, turn my back without pleading or hope.
Goodbye my living ogre, your hair is hot
as liquid tar. Your smile once kissed me.
But now I'd rather be lost
on the shark-infested tide than be beside you
in your boat of worries
with my limbs bound - mortal.
Goodbye - I will fashion myself a wig of bone.
I will wrap a leaf around my face,
never again look and smell
your makeshift hellish form.**

The Flat Plane of Imaginary Heaven

Far, as the minute mile
that rests on my shoulders
like a dream, waterlogged.
Dirt under my fingernails
that won't go away.
Summer on my tongue
that won't go down smooth,
won't let me near the balloons
or the genuine smile, takes me out of my nest
and puts me centre floor
with the predators - with the dangers
of too-strong a dream,
or like petals caught in the wind.
I begin
to fly
without direction or control,
fly without decision, but wanting a change,
wanting to ride the log down the river,
steering with perfect gusto.
The complex edges of touch,
the final shadow of all once loved
passing over like a life undone,
like a place of magic
but without God,
like a place of kindness but no warmth,
or like perfection lacking any sense of surrender -
bound to the shackles of a predictable reality.

Release II

By the land
I have fallen like
a shepherd without sheep
or a feather without a bird.
I have eaten all I can,
and now, I would like to move away
from things such as food
and ridiculous hope. I would like
to let what's left
go numb,
to stifle all passion
with a bland but brutal despair,
to reach
for nothing, to see no
plausible future, to be amused by
the thirst within, to lose the mission,
and in doing so,
lose the truth that there ever was one.
I long to bid farewell to the sun,
to turn cold and nocturnal and let
the darkness claim
final victory.

Lines

Sold out by the
something-once-beautiful.
Under the canopy of my heart
the singing happens but does not happen
the way I can explain.
The burn behaves and then explodes
like a blood-lust never fully under control.
There is nothing to gain
by maintaining the same ongoing pattern.
It must be re-directed, surprised
by its flow to be of any critical use.
The line I thought was mercy was merely
sabotage.
The line I can never come back from
is the line constantly underfoot.

The Blueness Within

**The blue glow
under my chin
frames my face with a final beginning
that will never come again.
I am happy for it.
The glow is the elemental ocean -
unkind, strong and oddly soothing.
I fall into it and it surrounds me
until I am wading through its thickness,
barely breathing, but glad to be home.
The blue glow
is my glow
is almost grey,
but not quite.**

My Ever-Ghost

**You make your move
on the rollercoaster ride
20 years into the future.
Being blind is hazardous,
though the blood and the fire
is nothing more than a primal dream,
nothing more than art without sophistication -
thin, lacking strength or substance.
You smile under the cover of a dry and terrible light,
the light of sharp unshadowed
contrasts, a paint-by-numbers make believe
that I believe has cut you short.
The unseen root is the tree's source of life
that you refuse to accept, so you stand there,
straight there, easily blown over,
unable to derive nourishment from what is underground.
You formed my fingerprints but not
the rhythm of my stride. I won't deny you, but
instead I will allow you to burrow into my quiet spot
and build your home beside the measure of my faith.
You are my ever-ghost, the presence of what
I cannot heal. You make your move,
and all of this is yours,
like an act of violence void
of every meaning, an act that remains
but will not endure.**

Renaissance

The fountain I drank from
became toxic, and the way to make more purity
turned out to be the way to make less.
And so I am small as a lump
of hardened salt. And so what
if my flesh is getting old - a defined woman
doesn't have to fear such a thing,
nor does she have to fear the collapse of her every hope,
because inside she is solid, though
still impressionable,
because she has learned that God's light
is born to flicker, and not to be
a heavy stream.

When I Lean Closer

**Remember when we were falling,
making hoops in the sky? When intelligence
didn't matter, only the desire
to be alive? Remember when a different rank
and inequality never blocked a friendship,
when the heart was whole,
and money never shamed us
one way
or another?
Remember the light in our pockets,
the frame of our minds as we lived
in perpetual loneliness, free
but cold?
Remember when guilt could only go so far
to actually change us and a lie was never
stronger than imagination?
Remember our handprints, those handprints
on the wall?**

I Find Clarity

I find clarity
beside the open coffin
beside the one made of glass
with the see-through dogma
and beside the one of simple majesty.
I find myself free of the cumbersome hunger
for revival. I find myself just wanting
to be in the shadow, away from direct
light and the attitude of sentimentality and guilt.
I find my hands are strong and my legs
are capable of walking long distances.
I find that that is enough
to complete me.
I find food in someone else's grocery cart
and my thirst is something I have learned to live with.
I find I am not so impressed with what used to
impress me. I am not striving for passion
at every turn, but I find passion at the lower levels
where rodents crawl and babies
muse at the ceiling.

I sing

**like a daffodil
to the spring sun
like the cat
to the fluttering shadow**

**to find sleep, to find
the opening out,
the long tunnel in, and all
the ways around**

**to cut the diamond,
to cut the oversized mirror and friendships
away that never really were**

**for the overdraft
and for the drain inside my mind**

**to learn how to better love
and lessen the dread
to call the angels to my side
and help myself shed**

**to accept myself as fallen
and to help others who have fallen who sing
but have
no words**

It is not

**the hole in the wall I fear
where ants crawl through
or the red tail in the wind
that keeps me here,
but it is the leaf over the grave stone
and the cat on the small hill
without a hope of going up any further
that helps me stretch my limbs
and appoint myself a possible beginning.
It is what I hold out for when
the seasonal scent comes near,
when I am not willing to endure
the effort. Then
I am failing
and always waiting for
the answer to arrive
in strange dosages
to arrive gentle to the touch,
however minuscule, arriving
however obscure.**

When The Storm Hits

Above the breeding belittlement
of experience that drives
my means of survival
and ushers in the catastrophe (now locked in my genes)
like a rat ushered in
the plague, someone outside is
waiting, away from pathos or understanding,
away from security and agility, just
waiting to hold my hand and help me make
it through.

Beyond the tightening lungs and the cheerless
decay of my dream-system,
a second event unfolds, where faith
is my rapture and I am spinning above
the precipice without a net, but joyfully
turning, my face tilted towards God,
whispering an unshakable anthem, one
of beauty, and of trusting the mettle of my beliefs.

Underline

By the last leaf changing
and the voice of rivers calling,
by the presence of an
unwilling hero
a great light is born.
By the silent drinking land,
by the cramp inside the joints
and the laughter done under the table,
the words were left alone
and the favour at hand was first
cherished then expelled
like a worn down shoehorn
or a once-lucky horseshoe.
The number love
was etched on every hand
(but love was only symbol, not
substance). The bluejay cried
and anger approached
(but love was for the brave, not
the worthy). The aspirations never hooked up,
but neither
did they die.

This Hope

**With the hope of recovery,
and with eyes ever seeing
new ways to pronounce God,
my heart extends beyond
its necessary function
and leans closer to its
greater nature.**

**With this hope, love is possible,
love purified from fear,
so much wider than the typical emotion
and half-made substance of romantic dreaming.**

**With this hope, my hands remember old ways
of feeling. The stars chime with sounds
immeasurable, but finally recognized as true.**

**With this hope, dark is made right
and all extremities are drawn into the centre,
concentrated, solidified -
born and beginning.**

Place of Undetermined Distinction

Down, the fresh wound
below the encore
that passed by so vagrantly,
the vantage point was lost
and what was once interior
converged on the sidewalk
for any stranger to see.

A parable perverted
by the bitter bread of life.
A philosophy relying upon
an ultimate vision that happened
after a quest, a vision of mercy
that may never come again.

Down, like a loon descending, in
loon-song, descending towards
lonely Vancouver waters, grey as a love
undeclared.

Down, where there is no
compensation, but where there are
necessary alliances.

Marseille

Like you, I lost the spring
in a bed of stagnant water.

I withered under the sun and gained from it
only a small truth.

Like you, with you, I climbed those stairs, cried
all afternoon then sought out a redeeming parable.
In that chapel of our minds we sacrificed abundance
for bones, we traveled together because we hurt and we
saw one another as the proof needed
to confirm the validity of our road. We rented
a large room where commodities were traded,
(or often, by you, just taken)
where we stained the walls with our indelible presence,
cutting ourselves out destinies from nowhere.

I will go back there today and collect the pictures.
I will hand-make them an album
then deliver them to the sea.

Like you, I am still denied,
but now I know love.

My axle is female - and though
20 years later, my flesh is barely
(just starting to be)
my own.

Vow

**The noise broke
by the garden where I loved you
like I loved the truth,
where my bones drowned in your darkness
and my war was unlocked like the need
for completion that you promised but never
could attain. This wilderness
of power, purposelessness and extremes I laid down inside of
to be beside you and the softness of your mouth
and the elixir of your touch
became mine, grew like a second body
merging with my own like death does
with cold eternity.**

The taste

**of someone else's
memories tracing the lining
of my throat, merging with
my own memories, until there
is no distinction**

**of apple butter
spread across my tongue
thickening as it descends**

**of fire
and of absolute calm
combining and moving
like a wave within**

**of hunger eased
and rapture reached**

**of being fully saturated with
sexual peace**

The taste.

The Clear Knife

Beside the stone, the angry digger digs and the rain water is hard water with the horror of errors felt in the difficult night. The painting is received, gloomy with a sharp edge. In the next little while there will be no inventory, and aims will be collected, to be left on the sidewalk for whoever to pick up. In the serenity found with surrender, and in the intense miracle, I pull out my belonging and leave it there in the thunder, unharmed.

At the end of this season the power of acceptance will mount and the birds will lift their wings up and over the Earth. There will be no pattern, no regression. Homes will grow like happy flowers and each soul will be in a stable balance. Tenderness will govern activity at the end when the counting of days is dropped.

Change/Conquest of myself

**Under the bull's horn, by the wayside
in the centre of a strange awakening -
(one I always knew would come) -
one that sat by my side for decades,
wrapping me in intrigue and in a hope
once forbidden, like seeing my past in a surreal
haze, under the bull's horn, inside the barrel.
This is me, who I plan to recapture, to take across,
guided by imagination and the instinct of my thirst.
I live the way I was meant to, not by calculation or by
preparation. I live listening to others talk, remembering
a history of despair and then of fortitude, releasing
a millennium of nights for one strand
of a new beginning, for the ability to truly love.**

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: Literary Orphans; B-Gina Review; Bewildering Stories; Lake City Lights; Record Magazine; Oddball Magazine!; Kalkion; South Florida Arts Journal; Boston Poetry Magazine; Jumping Blue Gods; The Fat City Review; Gris-Gris; The Bitchin' Kitsch; Fine Flu Journal; The Galway Review; Literature Today; Venus in Scorpio Poetry E-Zine; East Jasmine Review; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine; ken*again; Section 8 Magazine; Profiles in Poetry Literary Zine; The Poet Community; Malevolent Pegasus Literary Zine; Cahaba River Literary Journal; Asian Signature; New Mystics; Stanzaic Stylings; Calvary Cross; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; Peacock Journal; Grease Monkey Literary Forum; Lunar Lit Poetry Page; ArtVilla; Aji Magazine; Ygdrasil – A Journal of the Poetic Arts; Eskimo Pie; GloMag; White Liquor; Novelmasters; PoetryMagazine; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page; Sacred Chickens; The Peregrine Muse; The Writers Newsletter; Moongate Motherbird; Blue Door Quarterly; Imaginary Conversations Lit; Cyclamens and Swords; above/ground press; The Blue Nib; Minerva's Housecoat Writing Forum; Chicago Record Magazine; Rusted Rose Poetry Forum; Torrid Literature Journal; Verse Wrights; blackmail press; Gossamer Poetry Page; Poems and Poetry; The Provo Canyon Review; Tangerine Heart Poetry Zine; Mount Parable Poetry Forum; Rocket Boy Poetry Page; Black Poppy Review; TreeHouse Arts; 1947, a literary journal; Juxtapose Literary Magazine; Social Justice Poetry; Spillwords Press; The Fat Damsel; Medusa's Kitchen; WritingRaw; Cavalcade of Stars; Straylight Literary Magazine; A New Ulster; Five:2:One Magazine

The poems "The Path Before" and "Where I Stand" were nominated for "Best of the Net" 2015

Review of 'The Many Lights of Eden':

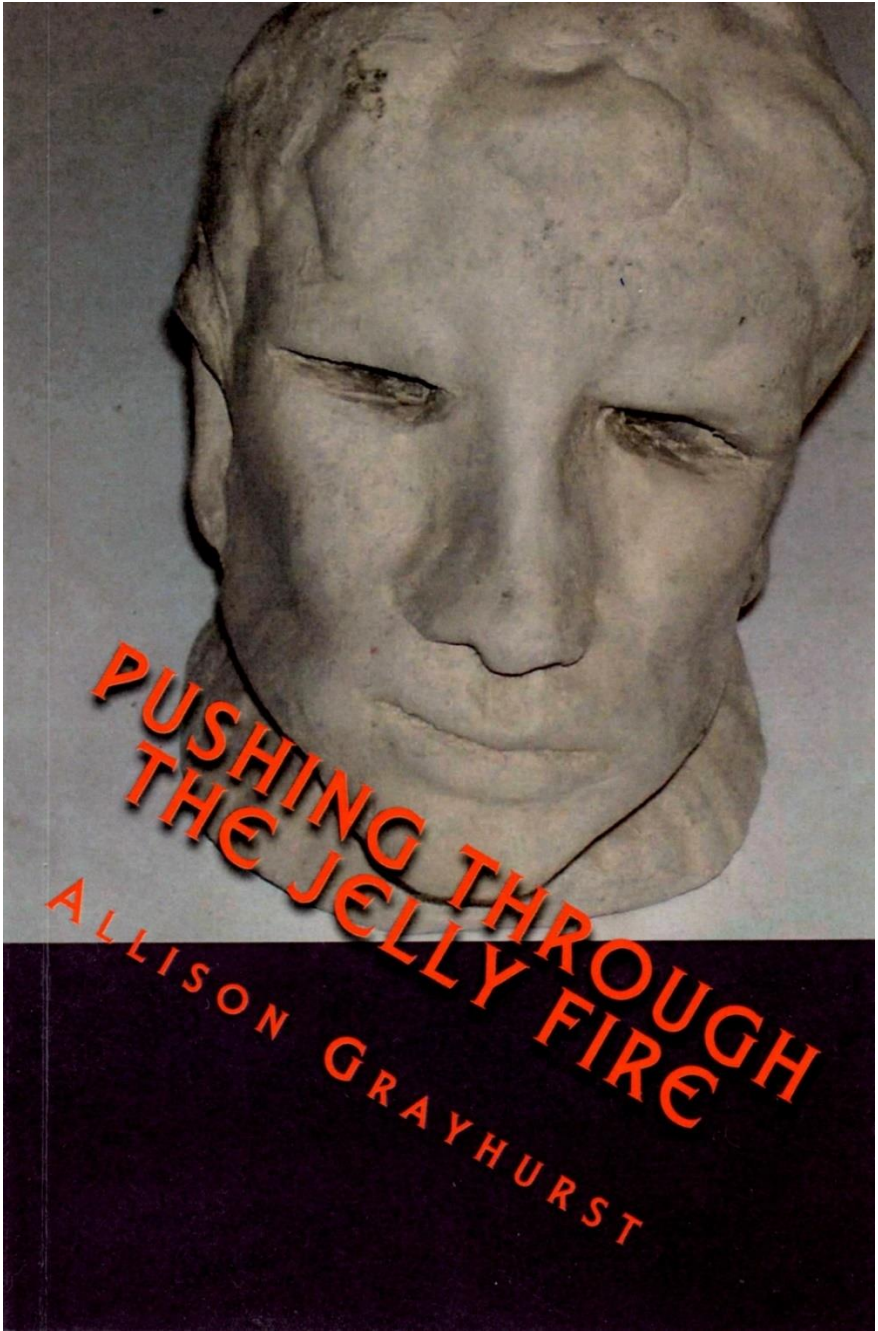
"When I started to read Allison Grayhurst's collection of poetry entitled 'The Many Lights of Eden', I was expecting it to contain verses of the highest quality. I was expecting it to be a journey through spirituality. I was expecting this book to speak of God. I was not disappointed.

"Yes, it is a journey: a journey of the heart through youth, anguish, struggle, spiritual awakening, grief, death, love, loss, guilt, struggle, despair, hope, surrender, God, sensuality, imperfection, motherhood, aging, the vanquishing of the devil, indeed, many devils, the inevitable fall from perfection and the casting off of old wineskins for a new one.

"Perhaps speaking of this book as a chronicle of spiritual maturing would be more accurate, the realization that there is spirituality within imperfection and that handmade temples cannot hope to compete with the spiritual temples within each of us. By the end of the collection there is a spiritual ascension, a victory over demons of the past now slayed. There is height in Love and Forgiveness in guilt. There is an embracing of the chaos of life and a positive hope for the future. And, I believe, the realization that God is higher than chaos and the Creator is more permanent than perfection.

"This journey touched me. It is a journey that every person makes at sometime in their life. And this trail we trod does not end. There is beauty in the trail and its many aspects just as there is beauty from every vantage point of the admirer of a diamond.

"'The Many Lights of Eden' is a diamond. It is a beautiful collection of insights and I appreciate the many nuances of meaning to Allison Grayhurst's poetry. Her thoughts and writings are a deep well. Drink from it, for the water is clear and crisp. This collection is a MUST-READ," *Eric M. Vogt*, author of *Letters to Lara* and *Paths and Pools to Ponder*.



*Pushing Through
the Jelly Fire*

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Pushing Through the Jelly Fire
Copyright © 2010 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):
“Remembering” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
Pushing Through the Jelly Fire

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1478256564
ISBN-10: 1478256567

Pushing Through the Jelly Fire by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 3939447

Table of Contents

Only for a time	127
By This Light	128
Eagle	129
I Leave Whole	130
Lost members of my tribe	131
This spirit is speaking	132
Three days	133
Walks	134
Something	135
Slowly, without reason	136
Getting Up	137
The oceans spill into a cup.	138
Almost There	139
Impossible, Only Possible Way	140
Alone	141
A day called blackout	142
The Gift of Fire	143
A Good Perspective	144
More	145
Golden Eagle	146
pause	147
Entrance Door	148
Interval of Parting	149
Out of Time	150
Speak	151
When we land	152
With Power	153
Saves	154
How does the seed know the sun	155

Time does not	156
Covenant	157
To Be Brave	158
Take	159
Just before	160
Taking off my hood	161
World	162
Lesson Learned	163
I have to push deep,	164
For Randy	165
Tied	166
A Way To Joy	167
When That Day	168
I see	169
It Just Moves	170
Hell is High	171
Release Me	172
If I Get There	173
No Ground	174
Chapel	175
Meeting	176
How To Chain The Madness	177
Seeing	178
Hands Open	179
Months Before Resurrection	180
Change of Destiny	181
For My Children	182
Remember	183
Before I Go	184
Who?	185
It is time	186
From the days	187
Pathway	188

Colour comb the light.	189
I let go	190
Done	191
Field	192
Where I Fit	193
August 2	194
The door is	195
Love is not a shell	196
By the edge,	197
Walking	198
Where Corpses Lay Unburied	199
Bare Essentials	200
All the Light	201
Illness	202
Holding Hands	203
Our Love	204
Will you?	205
Forging a map	206
The Permanent Matter	207
I Dive To Rise	208
between my fingers	209
King dead	210
Otherwise thinking	211
I go to the crosswalk	212
Your voice	213
Shedding	214
I Can't Land	215
Go	216
Cold	217
More Than Commitment	218

It Arrived	219
He Must	220
Wounded	221
On Solid Ground	222
being here	223
My hands,	224
I was not a bird	225
On The Overpass	226
Growing Up	227
Not Friendship	228
Karma	229
Cocoon	230
Holding Out	231
Saturn on my back	232
Everything turns	233
When This Is Over	234

Only for a time

bodies curse the morning
and find the bulk of their cursing
burned by the awakening of outside creatures.
Waiting, when waiting is not called for,
when what is necessary is to be still
without anticipation, to step into the miracle
of listening - sounds of kestrels circling low, sounds
of territorial squirrels and young robins
flexing their wings. In my eyes, the gulls are angels
arriving face-to-face at my second storey window,
speaking of God's grace, personal, sharp and pure.
For the last time, chaos will have its say
and cowards will rule my playground.
This is the time of great beginning,
a time of the final letting go.
The birds are beside me, speaking in ways
I again understand, while the world is carving
new structures of dread.
This is the time of open palms and no favours,
a time of birds everywhere, singing for me, but not
for me.

By This Light

By the light,
you carried me.
By the dark, you found my hand,
and together we stood, holding hands,
barely breathing, never resting, just holding
like David held his slingshot and the slingshot
held its aim - synchronized to destiny's rhythm -
you and I and the drumbeat lingering after the sacrifice,
and the coming of age that never came,
and the fire finding
safe haven on our backs - a deep dive in the shallow end,
a kiss that never makes it, but somehow is known.
Swim, you told me. Breaststroke
through the dark karma. Swim
before the fast freeze get us, before we lose
our grip on each other's eyes. Everyday,
your smile saves me. Nothing changes, not
the chemical spill reservoir we counted on
to nourish our crops,
not the crowded bandwagon that takes any route
to bypass our cries for mercy.
But every day we still have each other.
Everyday we claim our peace -
still no footing in the world, but still so greatly blessed
in our love's long-held victory.

Eagle

**Bound by evil,
the kind that has no shame or hidden gain
that has only stupidity as its strength and cruelty
as its force.**

**Bound to deal with the devil's lowest minion,
to feel its rotting invading tongue touch your
clothes, your books, your headband.**

**But not bound by its game as long as the game
is relinquished and God is sought when the axe comes down,
then it will pass through you like a phantom axe,
mighty in appearance, but achieving nothing.**

**Not bound if the worse comes, and still
you stand with peace and dignity, trusting God's reward
and promise of care.**

**Not bound if you are free in faith, if you know
yourself to be subject to a richer realm, higher than
these inching worms.**

I Leave Whole

**To me the sound was pure as rain -
blending with tomorrow
and the empty figures pacing the hallway
as though separated from their own haunting.
It was the sound of sorrow,
merging the old with the future -
nothing in the palm, nothing shining into the day.
Waking like this - all possessions burned,
and then even further
released. Waking under the seat of the throne -
closer than I've ever been before.
I want your love. I want to taste that joy,
but joy is not meant to be today. Today
is a banquet of fake flowers - flawless, scentless,
dollar store gifts, strategically placed among
the dust and roaches.
I want your love to consume me, to let false love go
so that I know that love bound here is love
bound forever.**

Lost members of my tribe

Four were sheltered here
in the purity of spring, and the ocean all around
with its intelligent octopi, its mystical porpoises
and whales of many sizes.

One of you, eternally young, small,
soft and perfectly fragile, loving freely as a babe
sure of her mother's arms.

The other, heavy, carrying around an irritation
that howled at everyone it saw. But I could see
the innocence painted in her eyes.
I could bless her conflict
and love her just the same.

Number three was fire, sweet as a not-too-hot sun,
warming the field with his golden colour and forthright
demands, needing to love and be loved.

The fourth was king, ancient as the night sky.
He knew the age of every tree, the faint altering stirrings
of life's first conception. He was gentle, autonomous, giving,
with a mind that spoke in pictures.

Now they have all left for heavenly territory.
Their energies stay, and sometimes I still see them
in the hallway, on beds.
I still feel each close to my touch and I know we were blessed
to have walked so many years, needing one another, blessed
and forever remaining an essential piece
of each other's cores.

This spirit is speaking

**How much must I tell you,
with the dark sorcerers seeding my
potted plants and the old ways lost to
new ways yet unfound? How many times
must I twitch at the remembrance
of my cut throat in spring, contain my tears
in see-through plastic and continue to watch
the world go around, without a hiccup?
Acknowledge my fight, my flight into the wolf's den.
I am not a whale, pure as garnet,
nor am I full of your grandeur
and the calm, strong dive down.
I have the blood of a prophet, but not the backbone.
Side-swatted into a long consuming grief
and the world is just the same: Brides and school bells.
How long must I explain? I have lost the contours
of my face. There is a man
on my kitchen floor deliberately, almost artistically,
shaving my fleshless bones. One by one, like that,
I am unformed.**

Three days

since I was found,
panicked by my bed stand, calling out.
They put me under covers. They wet
my forehead but the fever was too bright inside of me.
Words were repeating.
Words were fireflies swarming my optical nerve.
They did not see the vision. They tried to stop my shaking.
They could not know that in the end,
I was left with a choice.
It was in my power to affirm or deny.
It was a light so potent, sharp as broken ice,
demanding. It was strength and perfection
without tenderness. How could that be love? They
were love - weeping for me, making promises
of togetherness for eternity.
Three days since I was found and they've never left my side.
In these arms that hold me, is a devotion
that comforts. I am better now. At last, I am called.

Walks

Birds are always speaking
like fleeting lines of poetry -
these wisps of miracles, dive
into the schizophrenic's mind,
his pathway - slow and unthreatening.
They dive, but only people of the bird tribe can hear,
only other animals whose senses are heightened,
whose souls are twofold - raw and divine.

It is dusk, and love is held in,
made weak by complications and chaos in the aura.
The child rises from bed with dread linked
to her pyjama lace, already crushed by the world
without an inkling as to why.
Cats crouch and freeze - a culture tied to their nature.
Like them, I am tied to my nature in the way I walk -
feet down, eyes up and waiting
for that one angel to look me in the eyes
and tell me all.

Something

fell from the tree,
a fruit to lighten my dense cloud.
Last night I dreamt of a charade that pulled
the carpet out from under the world - deception favoured,
gathered for years and then made a mockery of - deception
with a shocking tongue, deception still, but ruthless in its
quest for anarchy.

Thank you for my fruit, for a better place than yesterday.
Thank you for the hope for survival.
I will step where you send me.
I will follow your lead. And someday
I will find the place I never knew,
find serenity where once
there was anxiety, fulfillment
in the here and now.

Slowly, without reason

**a breath will come and then
another until the spell of defeat is
broken, until the dream stays full and flavourful
in the mouth.**

**We hold hands in the storm. Love can be very
difficult, it is a constant rebounding back to the essentials,
to what really counts and how to fight for it,
stay close to it, commit to it as one.**

**Love is the shape of his lips, the dance he does in
the middle of a TV show. The world is hard, but not
hard enough to break God's wishbone, not hard enough
that we can't walk through it - him and I,
leaving futility and gravity behind.**

The roof is ripped. But it doesn't matter.

**He makes me happy. Together,
a pearl is found.**

Getting Up

Horseshoe at the bottom
of clear waters. A captain
without courage or altruism -
that is the tale, the slender pickings
of yesterday.

The bridge has been crossed, never to be crossed again -
death is verified. Dancing happens, but there is no joy.
Forward, moving, vocal cords crushed. There is nothing
to be done, the dog-star has shifted to another galaxy.
Nature has won and killed
the mighty astrologer. In the end, there is only choice.
There are many skeletons and ingrained unhealthy intents -
much suffering and purging without God,
feigning rapture without God,
pretending that there could ever be ecstasy
without God.

The only gift left to give is acceptance.
The woodchips are piling. Walk
away, towards
a path forged by loss, built on faith.
Walk, and just keep walking.

The oceans spill into a cup.

**I drink from that cup and approach
the gathering of ages and
salty burial grounds.
For me, I remember a time before friendship -
I held anguish, frustration,
anticipating the arrival of my tribe.
I waited for one who knew the same meaning I did
of sacred sexuality, death and grace.
The landscape was huge, but my people are now complete.
Somehow we have gathered. Over the years,
we've erected pillars
on neighbouring streets to see if others would recognize
our colours. Some came near, joined, but after a while,
they left and situated themselves
on the opposite side of the theatre.
Patterns increase. Wounds are given priority over love.
Fear becomes a discipline
and loyalty to another merges
with the sickness of self-denial.
The oceans spill. But there are certain things
I will not drink. I was born for a different music.
Love will win out. God is greater than the world
and all the people
world-bound, world-committed.
There will be arrival, the fruit of permanence.
Yearnings will be eased
and my tribe will see, finally rejoice in
its expanding form.**

Almost There

Almost every death
will revive me, unhinge
an opening in the soft part of my throat.

Almost every darkness
when burrowed deeply enough into
will hit the light.

When there is no going back, only
a letting go of all that was and all that was
supposed to be - then the paper will finally be burned,
then the addiction can be kicked, and the pounding
of the slaughteryard screams will transmute
into a softer, more bearable rhythm.

Almost every border crossed will lead
to a new land. In that land, the gift
of belonging will come. There will be raspberries
and grapes on every corner. Someone
will say your name.

Impossible, Only Possible Way

**If you can make me better
than this bag of rage.**

**If you can calm my madness
and raise it ten octaves higher,
massage this grief from my belly, help
me look forward, dig me out of this sand pit, allow
me the strength to be better than who I am - then this death
will be but another movement, this betrayal and shock, only
a further stepping stone to rapture, resurrection.
Forgiveness would be mine, alchemizing my blood.
I could look with love on all this pain and know for certain
that my life is in your hands.**

Alone

It is your calling,
your call to mend what has been undone.
It is your age of darkness that must move
into a renaissance, your murder of reality,
claiming a fantasy for a home,
tangible at last as this grief has been.
You are stubborn, stronger than the grave, noticing
the track has ended, but continuing just the same.
I can't be that strong, not now with the desert thieves
of anxiety circling nearer. I can't listen to your valour
or even hold out my hand.
But time is blind to the baggage of yesteryears.
It is always seeing for the first time,
unblemished by dues, tolls
and sometimes prayers.
Our time is what it is - a tower made of mirrors
where the dead and not-so-dead
leave a lasting impression.
It is your open season, though, for now,
I have lost my trail to follow.

A day called blackout

A ship in a park - useless
except to jump on and explore.
Stones instead of eyes.

On the salty ground I pressed my face,
thinking I was pressing heavenbound,
thinking I could be saved by an inadequate past,
by people who lack the warmth
for breakdown, the courage for abandonment,
and the need for love.

Thinking what was old and used could be renewed,
or that my wanting it so, could heal
and make such feeble loyalty
solid, almost real.

The Gift of Fire

Your pale cowardly stride,
hiding from intensity as though it were a pathway
out. Your miniature thumping soul,
bereft of courage or compassion.
You chose to seal this circle of darkness
and kill the daybreak. I want
no part. I want to burn the clocks, wishing
we never met, wishing I never trusted
your dysfunctional loins. But I did.
You graffiti my house with your emotional
crudeness, trading in my clothes to pay homage
on the altar of your fears.
I pray I have no connection.
That I walk this edge focused only on God
and the gift of this difficult awakening. From now on,
you are nothing. My rage is reborn, re-directed.
My pain is a fire that will warm me,
warn me for the next time.
No one will touch me until they make it through
that fire. No one will know me.

A Good Perspective

**The bed broke, then the ceiling.
Like wings spread across a grave,
I felt both the mystical and the grief
strung out on the binding powers of synchronicity,
hunting my childhood pictures, setting flame
to all that brought me security.
I have no use for revenge. I shape my anger into pity
and my pain is rolled flat across my body -
softer, smoother, thinner,
merging with my skin, almost
comfortable.**

More

than this place
where the town is burning
and the people
are stepping over their best friend to find escape.
More than this goulash of undirected intensities,
boiling hard without a lid.
More than self-preservation at any cost,
than this toxic avoidance of any
growth-demanding issue.
More than love left to die - discarded
into a burial heap.
More than a wild disease, spinning
triumphantly, hot and lethal, pouring over an already
shredded wound.
More than faces
with no yearning for connection
with God.

Golden Eagle

Awakened from my dying
on the barren hill.

I speak my mind, and I am pulled off course,
rejected in my honesty,
as though I had no right to drum my dream,
as though silence and the undercurrent of resentment,
confusion and blame was so much better,
as if clarity was a betrayal - too much to ask,
too much to give.

But that is the name on that package
and it belongs back on the shelf.

That day of lower energy is over.

That was the rainbow from the wrong event
that soured when ingested, that left a pile of soot
on my doorstep. I am ready to release
what must be released,
ready to be unattached and unafraid.
The zenith of my sky is open
and I feel something soft and perfect growing
in my pocket.

pause

Like a rattler buried in its sleep
this season has come, treacherously lifting
from a thin layer of sand.

Grief has come, guilt has come, rage has come,
peace has come.

The promise of flint is over, let alone the fire
of soul healing security.

Miracles arrive, never in the way expected,
sometimes slowly, in small amounts
until you realize something merely accepted
was what was wanted all along.

Darkness was my addiction, but I am done
with cantering through those hills.

I am a tongue, moistened by letting go
of the chocolate bite. I don't need a song of joy,
only a way
to carry on.

Entrance Door

You stand at the entrance, robbed and dazed,
alone with the rain.
Your school is poor, much like water on a grave,
it cannot restore the yellowing clover. But I believe in you,
in the parting of your eyelids and the outpouring
of your creativity.
I saw your eyes, written with the depth of the wind.
Your sorrow is not easy,
but the power of it within you
will play out into an unimagined liberty.
A longed-for communion
will possess you and bring you barefoot out of exile.
I don't know why this disappointment must claim victory
or why joy and intimacy
were not open mouths, parting, to match your ageless purity.
I don't understand the burning, the collapse, and why
the Earth is so hard. But I understand you,
and what a blossom of magic you are.
You are meant to know this sorrow before
you can be happy. You are meant to dance out your grief,
your rage, the incapability
of others. Balance yourself here. I will help you.
I will kiss your hand. This is not random. Disaster is yours.
But the animals know, and I know, you are close
(so very close)
to the last release before
resurrection

Interval of Parting

I will keep quiet
when my sea is sucked into the sky,
keep quiet about my hundred
strokes that take me nowhere, quiet
about my anguish and requiems.
We will be different - for now, we will
not know one another so completely.
For now, I must go it alone, my struggle hidden
except in prayer and solitude. I will build my own nursery,
bandage my wounds until they are no longer visible.
I will sleep close to the angels, feel my only safety
in their ethereal arms.
I will turn even further to God, depend
on only God to love me fully
and see me through - through this wilderness
of leghold traps, of paper promises
and cowardly predators, through this funnel
that tightens and seems to have no end, through, without
showing the damage of this fishnet, without you,
you who are going on your own journey
and cannot help me here
any longer.

Out of Time

I lean out the window.
There is no breeze, no people
on the street. Everything feels wanting,
even the birds with their first morning song.
Cover my eyes. Build me a shell, a desert
where I can wander in without encounter.
I am tired of seeing. I have no need of friends
or of enemies. Only of lovers, pure family,
where trust, tenderness and truth hang paramount
and there is no messy aftermath. I have no need to outline
the disease of the world, where cowards
burn their campfires and spiritual challenge is avoided
at the cost of love. I am tired of grieving
over a miracle that never was.
I will toss these stained clothes and buy a new wardrobe.
It is simple. I know. It is the sound
of a breaking wave or of a dog, finally, let off her lead.
I build this pain a private place. I outlive my past. I am
without issue.

Speak

Speak to me of mercy
when the world is under my chin
and my body is stiff with fear and stagnation
Speak to me of love,
of forgiving my careless indulgences,
of holding my hand as I tightrope walk over this cliff
Speak to me of staying with me
of comforting my tears, of miracles I don't deserve
to ease this inferno of anxiety
Speak to me of knowing me and not condemning
my childish cravings
Speak to me in spite of my mortal foibles,
my sins of lesser greed and my hope
of a better tomorrow
Speak to me,
wash me clean in your light, take
everything

When we land

it will be like the pilot ejected from his plane,
finally touching soft ground.
It will be a handshake that means forever,
many seasons of ripe cherries -
an evergreen growing in the basement.
And all the stars will sing "kindness eternal"
like a summer beach without the crowds or looming sharks.
And happy will be our hands swinging from trees,
made whole again by the healing act of honest love.
We will walk briskly. We will be smiling. Miracles
are born from the emptiness and
the longing for ancient beginnings.
Blue Jade under the pillow.
Our animal shapes, rising internal.
When we land, we will smell the nightmares evaporating,
senselessness will have run its course.
And all that we lost, and all that we never had
will blend in beautifully, transcended
by this direction.

With Power

Nothing with power arrives
either to heal the beast of karma
or to stand like a tree, gorgeous
in its sturdiness and tree-green aura.
Nothing of substance hits the mark,
no river of strawberries, nothing
to give measurement to the moon.
Just shadows - some with healing potential,
some with hope potential, some just standing,
staring into my window, then
walking away.
Nothing to feast on, no hard rock to climb,
no peaceful laughter filling my lungs.
Is it always going to be this grey and uneasyful?
Is this my new dimensional metaphor? Water now.
Water and the power of
continuing on.

Saves

Clear as the contented painter's hand
putting down the brush . . .
before there is happiness, there must be loss,
memory, potent and unchanging,
ripped of its noble character to become something
mere and stupefied.
There must be the coffin, the loneliness,
chaos that wins out over the light.
Before the infant is held with pure joy,
there must be the mother
brutally aware of all life's fragility.
Death is the focal point of life,
giving substance to an otherwise flat surface.
Love cannot banish despair,
yet allows faith to grow side by side.
What once was glowing has rusted,
and the sensuous stroke, strokes
with sliced off thumbs.
There is no way around it, before
the ever lasting glory, there must be blood -
blood that drips as though it were hot wax,
blood that drips then reshapes
what is known as only flesh.

**How does a seed know the sun
from beneath the earth,
but by the warmth?**

**In the waters, there is a gift of coal and ice
merged like a soul awakened to its chi -
bursting out from the stomach lining, curator
of gravity. Balance and propriety, bulging forward, a visible
mystical entity in need of surgery and of wonder.**

**In the waters where hair follicles rest on a sandy wet floor,
where there are things that have never known the sun,
fear is eased by compassion and there is no downfall
that cannot also be a redemption. There is the water
and a swelling fluid force that is ever-so-fragile,
but committed to emerge, no more a tide against itself
or a happiness that cannot be embraced.**

**In the waters, a water-flower has risen, a bit of weed
with glow-in-the-dark leaves, a colour the fishes know.
That flower will find the air, find a way to express its birth,
sowing forward.**

Time does not

**speak
of the fall of sages, of how
their once passive journey led
to madness, of the hail that crashed
into the corners of their eyes when their pleas
for mercy were lost by the sound of the plummeting storm.
Time does not give life back to what has died
or even heal the grief of ghosts pacing
through the morgues.
Time is a shadow that envelops us all - it is
hope and despair combined.
Time is two lips speaking different words,
two hands unable to hold each other,
frozen in the spilt blood of alienation turned
to indifference.
Time is bone - breaks everything but suffering.
Time keeps its secrets, undoes the work
of gentle faith. Time is a tale-teller, making us believe
that nothing has meaning, making us forget that it is
only time.**

Covenant

Legends in the snowdrifts
of soulmate saga and the artists'
struggle to stay alive. Gospels in
the house of manna, sleeping,
somewhat blessed, always true.
I put my robin on the line, held it
to the cat's mouth and waited.
Through the window I saw a prayer
almost answered. Jesus, stay beside me,
hold my hand as we pass one house and
then another. I can feel your breath change the air.
I can trust you, smell your skin and be protected.
Everything depends on you and I
staying close, my back against the mirror - my face
only reflected through your eyes.
I will sing in your ear, be ready for the deep-sea dive.
I will love you first then radiate that love. I lean
on your shoulder, and I will stay this way
forever.

To Be Brave

**Round, loose, seven months after the funeral -
shells on the carpet, hands in movement - back and forth.
The zodiac's thigh has nothing on me. Games played
are games lost to the heap of hell once made.
Robin Hood is at my doorstep, his laid-back courage
is now part of my scheme. Take no enemies.
Have no enemies. The end result is all smiles.
Thank you for telling me. I have to shed this defeat.
I have to pray and pray, and then again
I am so broken, and even that has to be embraced.
Faith is a gift to wear around my neck.
Come to me, be with me,
allow me to unlock the true syllables of
my calling.**

Take

Your welcome mat is removed.
Take your cold, determined blasphemy
and seal yourself in your tomb.
Take the memory she had of your loveliness
and mutilate it, mutate it into your true face -
a hundred still births, lined up with all eyes open, dead,
before even beginning.
Take the grain from her garden. Take her cat while
she is sleeping. You can take
and trade her trust
to pay homage to your psychological sickness,
but you cannot take
the strength from her star, not the creativity that lulls
then sparks on her breath. You cannot take her rhythm,
her house where love and God come first,
where there is no deception,
no blood on the sleeves. You cannot take her beauty,
not her vow to stay open
to future blessings. You cannot take
the way she is committed to make good with her grief,
committed to emerge from this,
inextinguishably proud, in service, more perfect,
more saturated with love than she was before
you came and you took.

Just before

Before I say goodbye to bitterness
and the slug that crawls across my living room floor,
let me hold my breath, holding thoughts
of the executioner's rope
sleeping very little
until morning.

Before my grave is exhumed and the daffodils planted there
are carelessly removed, let me thank my every nemesis,
the silence, the autonomy of being underground.

When I am halfway to the surface, let me keep my eyes
on the sky, never turning back to see the place
abandoned, never regretting the companions I found,
though they were roaches
and other crawly things that only stuck around
to feast on my unprotesting flesh.

As I say farewell to my six-by-six hovel
let me release the leaches that latched on
to my every side.

Let it be over with completely.

Let me rise from this pit like a child does from her bed
on Christmas morning.

Taking off my hood

**It is only bad weather.
It is only what it is for
some reason, for this light to one day flourish.
I will sit with you in the storm
building a bridge away from this wound,
never caving in to the cruelty of incompletion.
I will rub your ankles back to life so that
you can walk. I will buy you new shoes.
We will be cleansed of our defeat, be renewed
by one another's touch. Our love has lasted and so
we are far more blessed than any exalted hero.
We should be dancing. But for now,
let us walk. We will be lifted.**

World

Around

**in the vast cave where
the entrances and exits were lost long ago,
where the only smell is stale bat dung
and fungus is carpeting (hanging loosely from) the ceiling.**

**Home is not a place I can find outside
this enclosure. It calls to me - a vision
that falls in my lap
like a tangerine, that slips into oblivion before
I take a second bite.**

**There are only apparitions here. Apparitions that haunt me
but have no idea of my name.**

**Apparitions that sit beside me on the carpet, have
conversations then fade into meaningless fluff.**

**Happy at first I was to meet them, with their pretty pictures
and well-rehearsed spiritual words.**

Happy I was to love them like a firefly in this dark kennel.

But my birthday came and went without much fanfare.

And I am waiting still for the darkness to end.

Lesson Learned

My voice through glass
all summer long, mixing
words in my belly, saying only
grunts and other sounds that hang in the air
like the greyness before a storm.
I should count myself lucky and be a circle,
complete onto myself, quietly curving,
constantly joining, never sharp, never full of angular
weight or anger that can barely stand.
I should just learn to not be real, maybe
see a psychiatrist for all my pent-up disappointments,
for the way I want to shake the unshakable sea.
It is not worth these mornings of isolation, not worth
the split of an otherwise musical love. It is not
good to crave justice from a jackal or blame the jackal
when justice is not served. It is not right to hurt in my bones,
drag this knapsack full of iron, and spit my blood
all over the pavement.
It will be a challenge to learn detachment
where there should have been
connection and accountability.
I will not be connected, but be sweet, swallow
the stone in my throat and close the shop
with a smile.

I have to push deep,

**pray deeply, as the ground
ripples and opens wide.**

**This last year's consciousness will be pulled from my mind
as a searing light radiates through, knowing me,
showing me the road released.**

**Glory will come and free me of this bile,
changed at last - like a larvae into a ladybug,
like a tadpole into a tiny toad - nothing can turn me back.**

I am listening. I have built myself a new main floor.

**I am ready to plunge naked into this pool,
to know myself at the moment of creation.**

**My throat will be dry of speaking,
but I will not stop speaking -**

It is all God.

For Randy

Love is mercy
living blind in this crucifixion world,
pushed into the fisherman's net - no seed
that doesn't freeze and end up like a pebble,
no crowd that keeps its motive
pure. Always, there is loss, grief in the pit of the loins,
extending, radiating into every tiny bone -
hidden, broken or just malformed.
Children are never new and unharmed. But they cry
easier. They sleep with nightmares under their pillows and
outwardly groan when there is no cure to the hostility
of fate. Children do not naturally cling to good,
as some might say,
but are bent in the ways of their parents, trying to please
even that which has hardened long ago.

Tied

**I will hold you one more time,
I will not be afraid of your passing.
We will bond on the eclipse of your life,
our eyes locked in gratitude and unspoken
understanding.
Thank you for sharing my home, for being
a part of my family. For so long, I missed you.
For so long, we have loved one another with
unsurpassed equality and depth. Your gentle intelligence
has carried me through many storms. Just
to be with you, sometimes, was all I needed. This one,
I will have to walk without you. I will have to say goodbye,
my sweet and perfect soul, goodbye my pet panther,
goodbye my many-lifetime friend.
We are lucky to have loved one another.
We will join again where there is no bleeding,
no dulling of the skin. Bless you, go easily into God's arms,
go freely: You have loved. You have been loved.
You are eternal.**

A Way To Joy

**Words and birthday wishes
fall asleep under the light.**

**In sleep, I see what I do when awake -
shooting stars that fade into dark infinity.**

**So far, I have a bed, two legs and a mission
I've felt before I could speak.**

**Kiss these hands God, bless this pain in my shoulders,
give me hope for recovery.**

**Every effort is stultified, has no nucleus,
no path towards the sun. Every movement forward
dissolves into the flavour of the wind, is weak
in its purpose, in its ability to love.**

**Print my name on your heart. I want to serve,
to walk again across the sand dunes, walk again
hand in hand.**

When That Day

**The joy will come when these chains
are loosened, are finally
crushed by a blow from an axe
on a concrete floor, flattened,
nothing but metal, to step over, sweep up
and carefully remove.**

**The joy of that day, when relieved from the weight,
from the sharp-edged gravel in our gloves
and from the ever-tightening twist in our loins.**

**The joy when we sign out, shake this water
from our lungs, stand without tipping,
when we can look at each other,**

**know we are on the other side now -
death, illness and poverty**

**have not separated us, have not set fire to our love,
but instead, have merged us, all things
natural and unnatural, merged**

our broken hearts, so, though broken,

**they could keep rhythm. So on this day when joy arrives
to relieve, we will walk uplifted**

down this path of sweet salvation

holding hands, holding and never afraid

(that one or the other) will let go.

I see

I see women

finding home on the wicca altar.

**They are good women, warm women,
smelling of frankincense and rosewood.**

**They are woman who tend to the sick, commune
with the souls of animals. I love these women,
their methods, so much like mine. But I am not like
these women, wedded as I am
to the pure Christ of Jesus, sibling to my highest octave.**

**The one that flushes through me, bringing waves of clarity
to every depth, every torment, every
aspiration. I hold hands with my Jesus. I lean against
him when the hot winds arrive. I press my heart into his
and I feel the peace and certainty of life beside death,
of the greatest love beside the greatest responsibility.**

It Just Moves

**The house is cold without you.
It has a strange rhythm,
an echo without a voice.
How to sleep, drink coffee, grind
the work-a-day toil, cast out by death,
dumb now in the stillness of your absence,
how?
Because you have always warmed me,
calmed my erratic, overcharged pursuits.
Because perfect closeness was ours - my stomach
is split, my forehead is tight, folded. Forgive me.
Cherish me still as I cherish you - let this not be
the end for us. I see your half-closed eyes. I kiss
your forehead. O love! It hurts! It is all unreal.
How can it be over? How can I emerge from this
hollow? I wake and you are gone.
I see you everywhere, but you are gone.**

Hell is High (when the only power left is to surrender)

**At the height of this hill,
the warm air is gone,
the fledging is removed from its nest,
no fossil is found. Once
there was a living thing, up here,
something, at sometime, burned
with hunger.**

**The devil is a thief. The devil blows air bubbles
into the veins. The devil has many eyes,
though none offer clarity.**

**On this hill, I sleep, stride, then unveil this
saga of betrayal and disappointment. The devil comes,
but I will not be ruled. I accept this anguish, anger,
grief, and finally, emptiness - on this hill - I accept
God's love, though it hurts and breaks both my ankles
so that I am stuck here - on this barren pinnacle -
owner of what has passed and what has yet to come.**

Release Me

**Chilled in the village
of frivolous searching.
I walk to the corner store,
withering in the grey-tone light.
I thought I was meant for purity
for something to sink a holy tooth in -
but there are tiny living beings on my bookshelves,
oil spills in my garden, and bodies, everywhere
talking, picking up stones, putting down stones,
even children with mutilated souls,
everywhere - alone, alone - the avalanche
of isolation, the flood of self-preservation no matter
the murder weapon. Kiss me. Rip the zodiac
in half. I am bored with this unending night.
I am through with the sleeping pills and the chakra chant.
I'm through with holding time, karma,
through with being subjugated
by the pull and tug of these unbreakable chains.**

If I Get There

**If I was done with this canvas
and the pattern I formed upon it
could be tucked inside the space between
the filing cabinet and bookshelf . . .
If I could read the dialect of normal behavior
and place myself at the foot of its throne . . .
If the next step was the greatest step
that would extract me from this quagmire
and strip away the congealed substance around my bones . . .**

**then my head would be held in your hands,
cradled there like a new baby, helpless but secure -
my whole body supported by your one arm.
Love would be like food, and you would be
my devoted glory.**

No Ground

There are no leftovers,
no cylinder funnel to collect
and preserve extravagant prayers.
In this place, I lean but I dare not cry -
a rosebush past its prime, brittle in the sun.
I am collapsing, out loud,
reforming every cell, painful alterations. My God
of fluid, my God, grand as, and grander than, myth -
I have cut through this horizon. I have cut
through my thick interior, and still, I'm tilting
like an old tree
unable to stand. My God,
breathe into me, make plans for my soul or let me die,
bound in this circle. My God, rain into my reservoir -
it feels so long
since I have been untethered.
There are other worlds. There is Jupiter.
My God, please repair this punctured deck
or throw me overboard.
Fill me, my God, with love,
strong enough to override the weight of this
hard endurance.

Chapel

I hold the air.

**I am without control. In this chapel I walk
with my father and the others I loved who have left
for a new journey. I walk with the parables of their souls,
imprinted on my throat, in my belly,
everywhere where there is eternity.**

**I tell my father of my shell that has cracked in two,
of the burning of the elements and how I miss
his brown eyes, his protective hands and lop-sided
smile. I tell him, thank you
for the poem you gave me when you left, for the dreams
and all the anguish, challenges and reconciliations
we shared. I tell him, thank you for loving me so deeply
as to change yourself,
as to let me be a catalyst for your peace,
for your soul's reward. I tell him –
I will never get over the pain
of losing you, the joy of having you,
how much you loved me,
showed me the generosity of God.**

**In this chapel, I walk with him,
I hold his hand. I am still his child. I am still
only one.**

Meeting

I blend under the covers
to drift by the songbird
though I never reach the songbird
with my mind or my eyes.

I can only melt with the mirror, a strange being
blessed by freedom
but not by much else.

And here I hover - outshone by the beautiful sound
I cannot capture, replanted in a foreign soil,
a death warrant, a challenge of rapture. The angels
have called me. The dark breath has answered me.
It is not enough, under the covers, listening, crushed
by the morning light - my pattern unraveled as though,
for now, I am only shadow.

It is not enough to remember you,
to have touched the miracle and for a moment, to have
perfect belief. Because there is chaos in wake of this beauty,
there is a fall on jagged rigid ground after the swim through
synchronicity, there is the dead bird, broken by
heartbreak, held in my hands, nothing
but hollow bones, and a picture I owned
but lost, of you and me, in black and white,
aged in love, so long ago.

How To Chain The Madness

I will start small,
just a little hole
to plant my herb.

I will regain my equilibrium
in tiny doses, under the covers,
when the children are asleep and even the bride-to-be
has eased her nerves.

I will head slowly in the direction I was sent,
inch my way out of this dark valve, not worry
about the weather behind me or the harsh
possibilities ahead. I will play my instrument softly,
take hours to eat one fruit.

And in that place, I will etch out a rhythm I can keep,
and this form of chaos will at last be clothed.

Seeing

I begin a new line of music
to hold the frameless parable.
The room is there
where the field mice nested,
where the insect broke its wing
and still found a way to fly.
Points of power on my walls,
scents in my basement,
a bread basket in my hands.
My wholeness increases, months after he has been gone.
I breathe out my fear and listen to the sounds falling
like flowers, watch the butterfly
darting past the bus shelter, beautiful among grey matter
and Monday faces.
Mythical are the letters of his name saying goodbye,
saying the past is gone and this day belongs
where it is.

Hands Open

I will not glide down this street,
continuing to catch every sharp corner,
blending in with the slush and snow drifts,
no better than the last of autumn's fallen leaves.

I will not be pulled into obsession,
sucked down into the footprint of expectation,
waiting on potential that may never be.

I will not leave my house to voyage
on the substance of an idealist dream
that gathers no ground, but offers only the pain
of shattered sunlight, is only a seed too soggy to sprout,
is shape without nerve and muscle,
smokes but can never burn.

I gather the gifts of unexpected visits
and long-held long-proven love. I need only
to breathe to know I am blessed, freed of this false-war,
freed to be at ease in this uncertainty - myself, strong enough
to release my pet from its cage
and equally accept the fear, the peace
as it goes.

Months Before Resurrection

In the sea, I awoke,
wet, under the sun,
taken into time by
the lord of anxiety.

Grief and instability covered my skin
like the suction of an octopus'
tentacles. It held me, carried me down
below where the pressure is unbearable,
and strange fluorescent creatures thrive.
I landed on the sand-smoky floor, without
a spoonful of oxygen, murdered by an immutable force.
I died that day, chained to the nadir of my zodiac -
once a living woman, now chewed at by tiny mouths,
soon to fossilize in this wet, unsentimental grave.

Change of Destiny

**Finding you, frozen in the spring,
low and diving into the audience long after
the curtain call. You were fire, now you
are an egg, cold, dead as a sandy hill.
You are a weight drowning a beautiful bird
that wanted to show you his home in the glorious mountains.
You were hope, now you are dread,
circling a shadowy vicious form.
Sometimes you return, and the day seems to open into joy,
until the next, when you drop all symbols of attachment
and dismiss every longing gone before.
You were once a dream, a way off this floor.
With you gone, I have no idea where to turn -
defused of purpose.
You once owned me - the mail carrier
and all those expectations.
But you were just another pause on my journey.
Clothed in gold apparel, with promises to curb this famine -
I cannot count on you to fulfill.
When I see you, you are small,
still inviting, but without a home.
There will be another that sings to me,
but until then I must remain as I am,
vacated of intention.**

For My Children

Grow like the seekers do
in the aftermath of an atomic-bomb dawn.
Hunger like the artists do for a tid-bit of happiness
found, held for longer than the activity of their art.
Awaken from betrayal, a harder stone,
a softer soul, sure of nothing but of God.
Burn, until your burning cannot be denied,
and as you walk, they will say "There goes
a star, a sun, a galaxy of fire" Burn until
every muscle aches and the tension pulls
the labyrinth of your heart and mind into a straight line
with straight direction - nothing wasted.
Love, because it is hard, because it is
unusual to have the courage needed to love.
Love, because there is nothing else, because
it is the only heaven known, because it is
the only thing impossible made possible, and
when the dream is over, it will be
the one reality left embedded,
going further than, deeper than
the nucleus of your cells.

Remember

Remember the end, for it was the ripping open of innocence and fairy hope. It was a necessary falling, a compacting of all the extremities, a slicing off of unworkable dreams.

That end towers within you and remains a pinnacle of freedom. Though freedom is sometimes harsh and cold, it is also the only place of true attachments. And so, there are so few, but enough to sing about. It is worth that year of difficult breathing, worth the reformation of your core. That ending has now ended. You hold your own. You are remade and powerful. Child awoken to the world. Child, still as beautiful as when you were born - ethereal, holier than us all.

Before I Go

Before I go
and put out the campfire,
offering my condolences
to the abandoned child,
I will let my grief go first.
I will dispel it as energy
gathered between my palms, then blow it
like seeds of transformation out of my blood
and into a happy beginning.
Now I will go. Summer is here and my sorrow
has lost its footing. I will make a collage of
my crashed expectations, peel away the crust
until I unveil a flower.
Talking is useless, right now, only moving matters,
walking away from an impossible situation,
releasing the ghost to haunt its four corners,
releasing my failure
to create love.

Who?

Who hides the shape of the sun,
sleeping in fear with ribs more
than broken? The war, the half-heaven
half-hell syndrome of the spiraling bird,
spiraling downward
in an array of glorious plumage.
Who cries as beautiful as a song,
longing for the uncommon, a lamp
of soulmate proportion? Whose cry will be heard,
received, altered like fire is altered
by water and water is altered by fire - the old burn
extinguished, transformed into something light,
capable of rising upward, spreading
across the sky? When will God give us air,
take our hands and run with us?
God, we are waiting for you
to knock on our door, we are anticipating your footsteps.
Show us something of destiny. There is more here
than what is whole.

It is time

**to let individuality out,
and not be smothered by the material plain.
It is time to labour on just because
there is a circular motion to all things
and gravity does not have the last say,
because human compassion is limited, but God's is not.**

**I saw the key fall into the gutter. I fell
down the top flight of stairs. Mosquitoes blinded
my hunger for the deeper truth. I am ready
to not be ashamed. I am ready
to stand in the centre of my peace, live
as I was meant to, seeing
lack and disappointments as gifts
in spite of it all.**

From the days

Walking and turning
from the days of cous cous
to days of anything can happen.
Once sealed in summer - the four of us
on this ride, flourishing under a brutal sun.
With September flushing in, hurling our
backdrop out of site, I wish for
the world to be a fountain of easy flow
and the hard mast made of stone to lie
flat and serve to stabilize our stance.
I know these things are like necessary money
that we have so little of - but grace
is our bread and we face the drumbeat
whole - holding one another as doors opening, closing
lose their meaning.

Pathway

The power
and the moon and the bride
ducking behind snow banks.
Weather, may I have you to own,
be reborn in the dead afternoon like
a hawk that circles the windless skies?
Sleep, with all the dreams and shapes of dreams
tucked in your mind like precious stones.
I carved you out of grain. I stalked your elusive
steps, looking for you at each corner. Down I went sliding
into open houses searching for your seed, but your seed was
a balloon I could not catch and my child-grip is short, as are
my obsessive desires. Too far down
is the raging river's floor -
I am carried off. This time I will not panic,
but sink and imagine I am growing gills.
I will relax the burning
in my mind and enjoy the end and then give in
to the continuous flow.

Colour comb the light.

Secret is the stone.

**I am listening and I can hear
the pattern of its speaking.**

**Twice I dreamt of fireflies,
twice my dream labour came to naught.**

**Blind in the grand scheme - signs
that never manifest,**

**and my pillow has a hole in it, big enough
to hide my emptiness. I'll stare at the stones -
veins of emerald green, patches of sherbet green.**

**The morning is calm. Morning is best loved
alone.**

I let go

of my will, fantasies
of perfection that make
life my enemy. I let go of things
already lost, of water flooding my ship and
of the dead dolphin floating by.
I let go again of my desire
for unauthorized miracles
and accept the gifts I have been given
as a light over the ocean, guiding me,
marking me a 'someone' to find.
I let go of old photos and unclear stations
on the radio. I let go and embrace what
is living, knowing this is just fine,
knowing I am always held close
in God's engaging arms, knowing
I must let go

Done

I am done
with the breaststroke of infernal lies.
I am done with the twitching eyes,
people without boundaries - hard things
like crossing graveyards, hesitating
intimacy. I am done with money.
I am through with platforms and curls,
with the forceful devil and things that make me feel
unsure. I see the spring
and it is waiting to throw me
a rose. I see things, and I am done with
the loins of the zodiac, through with eastern gods
and western hopes. This is me, standing empty -
fields on either side. Drown me in this solitude.
Take my blood and make me
a monastery.

Field

It doesn't matter what field
you run on, or who has your shoes.
All that matters is that you keep moving
over the hardly visited terrain where garden snakes
and mosquitoes thrive. None of them will kill you,
only blister your stride and then
you will be free of the field, free of running.
You can rest on a wide small hill - look out over
the sky and know you made it - barefooted, bug bitten
but accomplished. You said your prayers
of forgiveness, blushed at your own anger then let it go
as you were running through that field - more
ethereal than not, more heartbroken than not.

You ran (yourself a miracle) emptied, hurt, but
persistent. And now, the hill is your home, cupping
you gently in its surrounding breeze.

Where I Fit

In the hourglass I see a cloud
that greys the city. I see people at their
art shows, theatre shows and antique shops
blowing on their blankets in hopes of holding off
winter, in hopes of never looking inward or upward
at the purity of faith and the starkness of deep tears -
people who love their clever words, and their
commitment to no spiritual responsibility -
earth wearers with earth minds and blood
that does not flow but clogs the nestled spark of glory
endowed within us all.

I light my bed with the golden rays of bliss and intensity.
I am not walking on this floor. I am not as alive
as the garden growers or the children
who lose themselves in play, but I will
not align myself with the intellectual superficial
or harness my self-worth to their dreary looks
of 'yay' and 'nay'.

August 2

In this place of light and brooding, I smelt the
grapefruit in the morning under the August sun.
You were born and I miss you. Over 13 years of loss.
The day you left at 4:30 in the morning,
I felt nothing in the taxi but the sheer slap of horror
that held me for seven months, degutting every reality
that balanced my blood. I remember your hand -
feeling the thick knuckles, the same I felt
when I held it when I was a child,
safe, because of you and the confidence of your grip.
I remember holding that hand, cold,
without flow or sensation, for the last time,
knowing it would be the last time,
knowing you would not be my father like that again,
but be a memory that would change as I changed -
taking a life, as it now has, of its own.

The door is

**The door is the light,
is the beat that hums through
my body. I cannot find its source
or grasp its inspiration.
I can only vaguely feel that it is not dead,
that it is thin and thinning.
The light is the door I cannot mend
or reach for under that canopy when the storm has hit
full force, and the hammer
drives down.
The light is the door
that has no lovers. It is a psalm,
a one-way ticket to wage a life on.**

Love is not a shell

**I tell you I am waiting for a new friend
to share these beautiful riches, to feel
safe with and to feel whole.**

**I tell you I am waiting for new and
permanent members of our clan - for all of us
here, striving for rich connection and finding
that most people will only go so far, most people
blend in without steam and then move on, on to where
the demands of intimacy are minimal and accountability
means making, defending, excuses.**

**I tell you I am happy for those who walk with me, and
my arms are open. Food is on the table.**

By the edge,

**the fire drifted from the sands
and all my tribe bit the bolt
hard. For life was hard,
and our ceremonies of perseverance,
of letting go, and of holding on
were all we had.
Shadows and senselessness walked
across our movie screen.
I put it all in our backyard -
the carcasses of mourned dead animals,
the memories of betrayal and grief, people
that never tried and those
that tried but just not hard enough.
I put them there and buried them close to the fence,
behind the evergreens, near where the sandbox used to be.
I told everyone tales of 'true blue'
and the phone would ring
and then it would stop
and everyone of us held hands. We prayed.
We knew this was just a time of scarcity and soon
it would be a time of plenty:
We knew the joy of loving one another.**

Walking

A grain I throw
in the water, floating, ready to
sink. I see you - thin as anyone
must be living on such an edge - tense
and tired of holding your breath. So many years -
a raging prophet, flailing your limbs
to keep the barnacles off, to keep the ones you love
close and to keep your mission in perfect purity.

These days the summer is dried spit on the pavement.
It opens my eyes to the struggle everywhere - pigeons
waiting for water, children running up the dry incline,
facing a bridge, the great restructuring.

You, riding the gilded wing - love is like the Earth's dirt,
necessary, elemental, and its smell, saturated with memories.
I love you: Sometimes it is easy.
Sometimes I am a woman in God's funnel cloud,
bending back to look, but seeing only storm.

Where Corpses Lay Unburied

**With you, it is never elemental,
but full of sick layers of manipulation,
youthful but nasty-like selfishness,
like a rotted worm-ridden fruit undamaged
on the outside.**

**With you, truth is blindness to everything
but your desires. Friendships are hard and sacrificed
easily for the competition's prize. With you,
there is no backing down, just push push and the tarry
bullshit of your unattractive smile.**

**With you, closeness means that you must lead,
control each gesture of omnipresent sky.**

**With you, death without God is majesty,
and everyone around you is only a pawn
in your many twisted, immature ploys.**

Bare Essentials

I waited on you,
now I am free to let the waiting go.
I give you back the burden of setting things right.
I give you back the long walks carrying
a weight I could not control, the tightness
circumventing my throat and my days never perfect
because of senseless lack - I give it back to you,
the fallen star, the third-degree burns,
the collection of my fears and disappointments.
I cannot hold it any longer. My own voice betrays
me - desperation has mutated me, but not
anymore. You can hold all these inadequacies
and the stark gravity
of survival - you can create love out of nothing,
bring destiny to our doorstep, take all this debt
and impossibility and raise it over the threshold.
You can take
this crippled breath and paint it fresh and easeful.
I give it back to you. I expect nothing but
freedom, to walk again like a very young child -
absolute, connected.

All the Light

All the light from the beginning
remains - even as long as time
and then, continuing on so that distraction
and fears blot out the exuberance, and sometimes
nullify with the dark chains that bind us to the funeral
ground, to the alcoholic's breath and to the child,
too abused to even cry. That the sacred chalice
gets ripped like a paper cup means nothing, because
the light from the beginning remains with the intensity
it was born with, remains and cannot be removed.
And the light between us - sliced cruelly like a cow
into thin fragments for consumption, like that cow, still
has a soul, somewhere hovering in happy pastures, loving
all the while, like in the beginning, when it was born -
beautiful, knowing only its first intake of breath and
the sweet nectar of its mother's protective warmth.

Illness

By the time the snow stays
and my lips are dry as a left-out orange peel
you will be better, your legs will be running
and waiting to ride down snowhills
and feast on hot chocolate and candy canes.
By this time next week I will look at you,
and feel safe again, knowing the angels have healed you
and this month-long desert
with its snakepit and ruthless thirst
is far behind us. The mansion up ahead will now be
our home, where love and ease reign and mercy sleeps
under our pillow. You will be a happy boy,
again bouncing joyously into my arms. And I will hold you
without hurting, knowing
God and goodness
are real.

Holding Hands

**Because I know you and the glow
of your many lives' rhythms
behind your big heart concealed, revealed
beautiful in its purity . . . because you are part
of my inner tribe - a specimen
of beauty and undefined rich sentiment -
I will never judge your secret vulnerability
or soil your openness with sarcasm,
but instead I will promise you comfort,
a beach of sunlight and solitude -
a mother's love where God takes part.
In spite of the cold kennel
cruelty out there, you will get through -
as one strong in joy, as one wedded
to charm and the virtue of forgiveness, sleeping
without nightmares.**

Our Love

The salted lips,
the husky sea and the atonement
of death, I called you my tale
of the bull horn and familiar voice.
Crack through the corn cobs, through
the years that seem to spell-up without
answers or digestion. But you and I,
by heaven's chapel and heaven's cattle
left to graze, unkilld, we are sparrows
after a summer rain, blind still, but finding
shape in our children, and in and by the doorways
we have and have not conquered. We are
the mantle where crystals breathe their energy, and
we are the same as twenty years ago, having only
each other in this place of senseless oblivion, having
what others always long for, rich together
and forever as midnight.

Will you?

**In the end,
your love was not rich enough -
was a heavy but surface love, never a defending love,
defending despite the threat of a spinal break.
Cool now. Almost cold as a thief without remorse,
the stars that are falling are always falling
onto mountain peaks, into reservoirs, falling without
the angels' consent, falling, breaking the sky like death
breaks the heart.
The toll was paid. You sleep with grace under your pillow,
but not passion. You've loosened the roots of the tree.
It will never make it through another winter.
Will you miss your shade, your safe and magical place,
your look-out tower?
Will you miss the scent of the phoenix feather,
those deep waters that once felt like home?**

Forging a map

to lead me from
this private drain where faith steals
in like a toothache. I will uncover
a different dimension of faith, faith
that has no invested outcome, has no
burdensome wounds. Years of the pigment
plucked from my beating chest, years of desperate
expectations, liquefying my organs, walking
as though I mattered, feeling brave against the world.
This faith will have no words,
projecting into tomorrow, will have no 'me'
in the mix, but be just faith hovering
like a ring around my Saturn -
it will grace me while I am sleeping
so I will have strength in the day.
It will not carry the weight of guilt,
regret or self-defeating sin.
It will be a flood, eliminating the insides
of my house with one clean sweep. It will rise
in me, and I will give myself wholly over to it -
not even a fragment left of
my former needs.

The Permanent Matter

**It does not matter -
lessons learned, reasons
unraveled and understood.
It doesn't matter -
ceremonies of release, truth
that holds the key to the golden "moving on."
It doesn't matter when the heart
is stuck in the afterflow of dead dreams and
the fire at the window
(that compressed all longing into one single flame),
is still the fire at the window,
burning galleries of scorch marks
across new and sacred hopes.
It doesn't matter - making up one's mind to be free,
building a pond that holds the perfect fish (the zen fish) -
tranquility and gratitude mixed in easeful equilibrium -
watching the movement but still discordant,
missing something that refuses decay or fruition,
missing the deep breath of peace, the faith
that all is as it should be,
and to never know how long, how long
it will take before anything ever again
matters.**

I Dive To Rise

**I give it up - the racing dread, erasing
the good from my garden and the dawn from my eyes.
I give it up like a heavy stone
that once tied my sailor's bones
to the earth. I dive deep into the salty liquid,
healing as I let go of the weight,
the power, the need for control.
I give it up - the undone deeds of expectation,
the ability to swim or breathe or feed on blood and bread.
I'm done with planting and days of endurance.
I'm done with mouthing platitudes of hope and guilt
that shouldn't have been mine to bear.
I'm done with self-pity and the wages of truth.
I give it up and dive deep into the watery belly
where no footprint has ever been. Sleeping is the same
as waking is the same as staring at the minnows
and piranhas head on - the same as growing gills and talking
without sound. I give it up and give to get
a way out of these decade-old barriers, a way away from
the quarter moon heart and the vices
I hear every day like corpses rising
among the vulture birds, voices that have hands
frantic, with no where to go . . .**

between my fingers

I feel the vibration of deep dives
and hard climbs, reaching plateaus
away from flesh and air.

I ease the split with closure,
heavy flesh squeezing tight
against more flesh, and letters that speak
only the necessary truth. I am through with money
and other ridiculous creations.

I've decided that it is solo or it is nothing -
that there will always be a lack and always, inspiration.

I found myself a tunnel, wide enough
so it looks like flat land.

I found myself some seeds that would not grow.

This is the stuff to work with.

This is hard and it is wonderful.

Between difficult places, I long for war,
but know what I really long for is connection.

I know that a wound of loss,
a wound of deep disappointment, is really
a sugar bowl.

King dead

**like the guilt on breath
that shows itself as anger, with spite
and immaturity - shows itself as heartless
as one who refuses hard responsibility.
Hopes impaled, left like a twitching
insect not even recognizable as the once
beautiful creature it was.**

**Far away, I will run, but this world is made up
of so much pain and hardness. Where are the soft people,
souls willing to sacrifice their own blood for
a taste of true togetherness? Where are the warriors
eating out of paper bowls, not afraid of the messy
forward or the ego-erupting aftermath?
Dead: heroes with crossbows and days of answered
prayers: dead. Help is an old woman without a cane.
The light that holds me is losing its thunder.**

Where is the light that holds me?

Otherwise thinking

that
grinding and binding
the wrong things would bring
the blood of transformation
in an age of elegy and time that has no master
except for eternity. Deep with fear
but deep with courage,
and riding on horseback close to the cliff as though
summer was nearly over and everything
that is now, was before, is not
wasted. As though effort alone was a doorway
to a richer heaven and drowning
would teach me how to breathe
underwater. I hold. I obey the tides.
Sand is in my throat but I am still speaking.
Love comes but not perfect. Love is a boat
with many living on board.

I go to the crosswalk

**I leave my bread crumbs on the other side.
I am waiting for motivation, for a clarity of purpose
that I once owned like a beautiful stone
I sunk under the St. Lawrence rapids.
When I was a child, I watched those rapids without fear,
stood close to the edge and never wondered
about the slippery underfoot,
never worried about the shadflies arriving
like a plague of river insects
or about my loneliness that turned
into a ghost companion comforting me
in those grey Quebec afternoons.
But here, in this riverless realm,
I cannot place my hands down.
I cannot stretch wide enough
to feel whole. I go to the corner store
and hear answers that only
I (and the birds) can hear.**

Your voice

is always frantic, shooting like bullets
randomly into the air. Your eyes are electric,
tottering on insanity's indefinable edge. At the corner,
I see you. Myself, wanting to avoid the face
I once believed in, wanting to slow and vanish
before you lift your head and see me -
bright and unaware of the hesitation I harbour -
pounds in my pockets,
I have nothing to give you but trite formalities
and the illusion of ease.
I have finished with you long ago.
I have been raised up
from my desperation. I carry my lamp, fuelled
by a trust in something better.
Your son, like you, has a beautiful smile.
But in no way can he hide
his drowning - lingering for years on fear's full shore,
serving his dark mistrust
and the cockroach he keeps under his bed.
Bless you both. Bless you
for the green grass you tried to grow.
You reached, but never far enough to make a difference.
I have no hatred. I have no longing. I have only
forgiveness.

Shedding

**It is the cure for us,
locked on soft land, our
music combined and the golden
ether Earth that so often evades us
is revealed with tangible ecstasy - us
stripped of every worldly moor and medal, just
us lying true to our bold callings, eyes locked
shameless, raw as the sun, whole as we were before
we were born, in one another's arms, returning,
recharging, elemental as dying.**

I Can't Land

**I can't land on these jagged places
of secondary love - voids and steep staircases and
darkness always hijacking spaces on the floor.
I can't change the lack of water
or the narrow airwaves of hope. God
give me the final dream, let it arrive now
and bloom. I am tired of waiting, of planting
my sage and calcite, of healing only to let go.
I want to hold the beautiful fires forever, know for certain
that heaven has hatched and there is a tale to tell
out of the grey zone.
I want to be at ease in the mornings, catch
joy in my mouth, graced, no longer longing
for a place to breathe,
but to be just this person, myself -
a poet, proud.**

Go

Go and buy yourself some candy.

On the broken road, walk and move
from one swarm of bees to the next. Go
suck on death like it was a jube jube
and kill all devotion and loyalty with your need
for acceptance by even the squinty-eyed and nasty.
There's a horse on my lawn, but no one will mention
his name. I know his name and I know the light that
touches his forelock. Go, it is not your horse. He is not
your companion. He knows me because we bless
one another, we have lovely days together and we do not
betray them. But you, you
are empty and have no belonging here
where my fireflies roam.

You have no horse to love and who loves you back.

You have the movement and the desperate need
for approval.

You have your candy. Now go:

It may surprise you, but blood
is on your hands.

Cold

on the high hill where there are no mirrors
or sea for millions of miles. Grief underlines
the logic, saturates the stillness from
up on that hill where you have no duties, no identity,
no dreams. Up there, it is all reality, looking down.
Possibilities are relinquished for facts
and the bread in your knapsack
is all you brought to see you through until morning.
Connection is lost to you. Even the ladybug is separated
from the leaf it rests on, and the sounds
of eagles in the distance
circling ever nearer are just bird sounds and bird business.
On that high hill for now, away from your emotional
element, staring into the monastic ever-present sky -
love is just a word like other words
such as 'dirt' and 'cloud',
certainly not something
to fight for.

More Than Commitment

**We see the bend
and the gulls in full motion
outside our door.
We feel the moon in our mouths
and foolish dreams
drip down our inner thighs.
It's time to relinquish
our boat on the ferry docks, relinquish
our dearest pet at the graveyard.
It's time to know the yellow lands of late summer -
let the air into our home and let the lock
on this sanctuary be broken -
to open more than possibilities,
more than a Sunday-hope.
We see the bend and we say goodbye,
out of the funnel
and into the luminous sky.**

It Arrived

**It arrived like a knife to cut away
the wound, perfect on the outside -
a miracle of unworn proportions.
At first it was high and bright,
a little less than magic but so much more
than simple bread. Soft, sweet, somewhat
urgent - it pulled you from isolation, helping you
release the deep betrayal that fused to your insides.
Now like summer, its happy season has passed,
and the dull breath of neither-here-nor-there
has arrived. He never calls, never needs
just to hear your voice.
You are unsure if you even like his smile, his style
of polite irritation and control.
Ear to the ground, settling with lack
until you make a decision -
one last effort to receive the miracle in full,
hold hands with someone where love is mutual,
something of passion
to count on.**

He Must

Bleak and thirsty, the child leaves the church steps
away from his mother. Older now, like a fledgling
facing a cat, he must learn when to take flight.
He must learn of such things as predatory eyes,
as the impersonal hardness of fangs and of heartbeats
that fade into nothingness, into the wind.
He must walk to the corner,
stay in the schoolyard by himself,
speak his tongue to the stupid and the mean.
He must stay pure in his burning for heavenly muses,
not become hard in order to hurt the soulless souls
or to defend from the blunt weight
of giggling cruelty. He must
take to the woods for awhile, alone with the elder trees,
block out the abuse in the lunch room -
seeking his kindred confidant
(for now)
in the unnameable stars.

Wounded

The sun does not bend
its rays to ensure it reaches
the deserving child, but moves
through all seasons oblivious to
its gifts and hazards.

Still prayers are heard and sometimes answered
with an overflowing 'yes!'

Sometimes angels are asked to reach down
and bring daylight to the 2 a.m. dark, to honour
the burial kick and ring the warning bell.

Sometimes soulmates are photographed.

There is no magic outside of God - there is
no love that remains love without faith.

The horizon is cut like an umbilical cord.

The Earth and all its land creatures, all its air and water
creatures, are moving. I am tired of feeling
but not knowing,
not touching with my tongue
the language of the trees -
beautiful synchronicity.

On Solid Ground

**Beyond the chiseled-out hole,
beyond the seed that died on fertile ground
and the inseparable mourning doves,
meaning will be restored, maybe never grasped,
but down deep the turbulent waters will cease
and the chaos that reigns where there should have been love
will only be the surface coat, will be a storm
outside that cannot touch me in my house
or scratch at the scar in my open eyes.
Meaning is here because I choose God, and in doing so,
I am chosen. God will be more than just my rescue,
will be my Kabala spelled out in simple form.
God is now the pin
in this gloomy bubble, the reliever of senselessness,
the groom that dispels any doubt.
God has provided me a horse to sit upon -
here with my companion there is a loyalty between us
that no despair can swallow.
There is a connection that grows, that I know
angels and other heavenly creatures
will rush to defend.**

being here

The unhealable past is sealed,
floating away like a helium balloon.
The city flinches and falls to my feet,
and I will not need to touch its ceiling anymore.
Simply, I will keep my secrets,
be at peace with the darkness, knowing
my breath is still mine to take,
and grief has found its perfect spot to settle
and no longer control.
Everything that has died has been buried.
The moon paints a womb and the pulse of hope
sings like it hasn't sung for years.
Signs and symbols do not matter,
only what matters is that which races then stops;
reaches, tries.

My hands,

**your muscle-toned thighs
and the ways between us
that unlock the wonder of
the thin stones tucked under my pillow.
You are glorious like the sun and
a river that curls its breath with
primal speed. At peace with these
broken bones, and even with
things felt, but unimagined.
You are late October in my arms. Everything
is ours. I touch you and know the end, all means
of luscious renewal.**

I was not a bird

or a bride
but wedded to the thick masculine
thighs of war, a priest of the dead -
myself a small idol that gathered a
kingdom of followers. I had but one lover,
a soul drenched with my own - long hair
and pretty eyes, a man of calm devotion, while
I enjoyed my blonde hair soaked
with my conquered enemy's blood.
I enjoyed the cries of pursuit
and the galloping of hooves on foreign sands.
I was not driven by the robe or the snake charmer's
deep throttle. I was fresh, never a victim of fear,
writhing with rage like a piranha plucked from the waters.
In the daylight, I was whole. At night, my lover
kissed my ring, my arms and forehead. We made love
with everything left to give to only each other -
two, dying young in a tent, just
before dawn on the brink of battle, never ones for
soft goodbyes.

On The Overpass

I will wait on the icy throne
as midnight steals my shadow.

All of this is thread
and ceremonial bell, pure pain, an inspiration
that will never come again.

I will wait on the bed, staring into crystal fragments
cured of the hot weather, but still poisoned by
time and how it never stops in spite
of commitment or intensity, in spite of how it makes you
wait and not perish from simple feeling, and how
the house breaks down and happiness is arbitrary, flowers
for a while and then
falls.

Growing Up

Walk and find

**the courage to continue on,
wading in the stream before you.**

Walk and blend with people

**who are not like you, who contain
their nightmares in a jar and hold them out only
to project on to countless others.**

Walk and rise from the bloodwind,

a little to the left, a little to the right,

rise from the blinding grief of heartache,

from the dull and nameless faces surrounding

**your golden aura, rise and find kindness where there was
once disconnection, rise and find appreciation
in the pockets of the sad and confused.**

Walk this day

**like you always do, driven by a higher calling,
affected, but not overcome, sleeping little
in this holiest of holy lands.**

Not Friendship

If I speak to you now
when the hammer has hit your throat
and your breath has become bone - lightweight, almost
fossilized, would you believe in the miracle,
would you kiss the shoulder of responsibility, eat the loaf
you were given with great gusto,
stop pushing your cart of distractions, stop
and see.

August is around the corner. And no spiritualist's spell
nor week of Sundays will change the face of nowhere.

Letting go is always in my veins.

Letting in the emptiness
and not being afraid.

If I speak to you now,
it's just to let you know you are forgiven,
the smoke has cleared and all my expectations have long
since died. It's just that I feel for you.

And I need you to know
that I am not, will never be
your enemy.

Karma

**You walk. It has been so long,
centuries wasted on grudges and bread crumbs
you should not have kept.
Evil tows its sleigh through the cold afternoon,
barren as peace without connection. You felt
fire, illness, drowning, then
the grave, and still it did not stop the hardness in your eyes,
not the strength of your fears and the lies you
told yourself to carry out your filthy betrayal.
Crafty in your emotions,
locked in the realm of paranoia and mistrust, you walk.
You mean nothing to me now. At least, it's what
I wished for. At least, I can say - "It's alright"
And it is, though I dream of our connection
and know the wage is high.
Though I cannot erase your remains
from my moving spokes - I will find friendship
away from your eyes. I will see you one day and feel
nothing.**

Cocoon

We spent the day in our cocoon,
away from the tricks and trades of
worldly mayhem. Just us and the rain
outside, blanketing us in rich privacy.
There was dancing and dreaming and summer
ahead with promises of keeping the poltergeist crowd
in a cloud over there, menacing but never reaching
the burn on our brows or our gathering intimacy.
There was the breathing in, the strengthening of our truth.
There was daylight plastering our walls
with a hope we haven't seen for years.
There were paper airplanes and charades, falling asleep
in each other's arms . . .

Holding Out

A hundred years of fire and prevention, never enough
to crawl out of the pit, flesh-like, but made
of a shinier substance. Never the ticket,
never the fountain base repaired,
leaking like a broken skull,
nightmares of the phone breaking just when
I have something important to say,
nightmares of treading water,
swarmed by watery prehistoric things,
of being blown apart and not dying,
not resting, seeing love
ineffectual, and God - so far away.
Days of the world having its pulling-tugging say,
and my tongue pulsing with a swelling thirst,
waiting to be swept clean
of heartache and these despairing sensations,
waiting without a photograph or résumé,
just the summer still ahead and my children, so beautiful
that I want to be happy.

Saturn on my back

**The fear I fear may never be removed.
Trading bottles and cans stolen from the garbage heap, solid
in my purpose, but with no fulfillment, longing for a faith
stronger than my dread: For if God exists, God exists
everywhere - for all things singing
and not singing, for every soul striving
to meet tender perfection.**

Everything turns

to betrayal and back,
to tainted forgiveness and the green bread
rising on the shelf, covered in bacteria.
Everything falls short of wonder, lasts only moments
until the toothache, the heartache, the slug inching
its way across the hot shadeless deck.
Everywhere is quicksand and venom from the ones
that claim they love - burnt hairs on the head,
a chipping away at the sacred bliss of true sensitivity.
Everyone loses the game, reaches for a glimpse
of angelic feet and receives one solitary teacup handle
glowing to show the way.
Everything is waiting on death,
for death's drop from the dream.
Everytime it is the trying that counts,
the heart willing to release its hardness, again,
jump out, look up and serve the ball
(gravity and all)
to the faraway stars.

When This Is Over

**At the end of the day, the pears will be ripe
and the ones I loved and died will float before me
in waves of growing beauty.**

**At the end, when all of this leaves, then I will breathe
an owl breath, still in my tranquil sky.**

**At the end, I will find you, thank you for this sick chaos -
myself, a garden, hit by a massive storm.**

**I will give life again to the little birds, insects that have no
use or concept of glory. I will return with you
to the Buddha waters, happy to know so much love.**

**I will walk out my door and there will be summer,
early summer, and you and I**

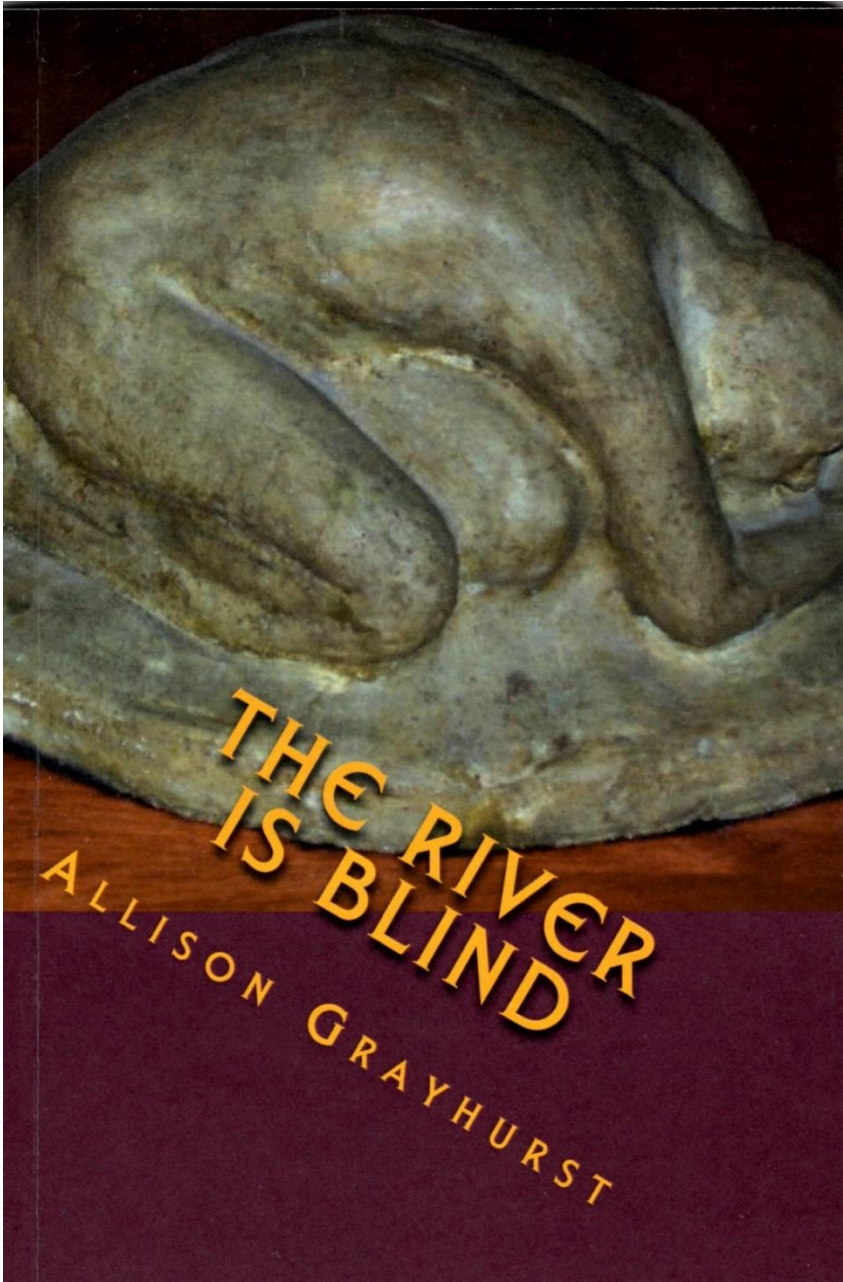
**(though bruised and that much more
world-weary) will walk into the warmth:
ultimately loved, unequivocally whole.**

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: Both Sides Now; Abramelin; Gloom Cupboard; PoetryMagazine; poeticdiversity: the litzine of Los Angeles; Kalkion; The Furious Gazelle; Nomad's Choir Poetry Journal; Decades Review; Bigger Stones; Chicago Record Magazine; The Entroper; Boston Poetry Magazine; AWS Publishing; Far Enough East; The Idiom Magazine; Verse Wrights; MadSwirl; Junk in July Poetry Zine; Pulsar Poetry Webzine; Setu; blackmail press; Eunoia Review; Eye On Life Magazine; The Poetry Community; Minerva's Housecoat Writing Forum; The Penwood Review; Green King Poems and Poetry Zine; Dual Coast Magazine; Viral Cat; 1947, a literary journal; Indiana Voice Journal; Synchronized Chaos; Black Poppy Review; Cavalcade of Stars; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine; Cyclamens and Swords; SilverSpine Poetry Forum; Dark Blooms Literary Zine; Indie Poet Indeed; Ygdrasil – A Journal of the Poetic Art; Stone Face Literary Zine; above/ground press; Venus in Scorpio Poetry E-Zine; Hello Poetry; Mechanical Medusa Poetry Forum; The Stray Branch; Section 8 Magazine; VerbalArt; Mount Parable Poetry Forum; Malevolent Pegasus Literary Zine; FoxGlove Journal; Whispers...; Literary Yard; GloMag; Siren; Prachya Review; New Mystics; StrangePOEtry; winamop; Sacred Chickens; The Neglected Ratio; The Galway Review; The Miscreant; Novelmasters; Excavation; Subprimal Poetry Art; Imaginary Conversations Lit; The Sandy River Review; Creative Talents Unleashed; CharyaPod; Duane's Poe Tree; Dead Snakes; Poetryrepairs; The song is...; Temporary Lunatic Literary Zine; Sonder Magazine; The Chaffey Review; The Packington Review; Now Then Manchester – Word Life

Reviews of "Pushing Through the Jelly Fire"

"This, (*Pushing Through the Jelly Fire*) is my second favorite book of poetry by Allison Grayhurst. I have it in paperback. I read a lot of poetry across a lot of blogs but Grayhurst's work stands above the crowd and is of tremendous quality. I highly recommend this and *The River is Blind*. Her quality of writing is of a high standard and never ceases to lift my spirits as I turn pages in paperback or kindle," *Bruce Ruston*, poet, photographer, founding editor of *The Poetry Jar*.

"Another Grayhurst masterpiece, Allison's work has inspired me to continue creating and reading poetry," *Ann Johnson-Murphree*, poet.



The River is Blind

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

The River is Blind
Copyright © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):
“Absolution” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
The River is Blind

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1478280132
ISBN-10: 1478280131

The River is Blind by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 3943157

Table of Contents

Deep Breath In	242
Body of Water	243
Needle	244
What face?	245
Back	246
Train	247
Now I am Two	248
I see differently	249
It's been months	250
Our Time	251
Now you are	252
Intimacy	253
Time like . . .	254
Attached	255
Lament	256
The Bells	257
Dance	258
Rest	259
Fidelity	260
Why have I died	261
long ways and no ways	262
Waiting	264
I go inside	265
Bowl of candy	266
I turn the corner and	268
Desires traversed	270
Seamless	272
Edified	274
Will you keep me	275

Box	277
Claimed	279
It starts	281
this prevails	282
Myopic	283
Open Valve	285
Our Light Cannot Always Burn Whole	287
Grace mightier than Natural Law	289
Cropped	292
Yes	293
Surrogate Dharma	295
Structures I pretend to own	297
I wait for you	299
Matrimony	300
I heard a poet say	301
Called	303
Plastic	305
Sanguine	307
Quagmire	309
Little Bell	310
Broken	311
Thirst	312
What it is I want	313
Find me	314
Emptied	315
Without	316
better	317
Stay	318
I would not thirst	319
Linked	320
Something found	321
Rapture When Walking	322
Coiled	323

Myth	324
Trickle	325
Changing skins	326
Madness like Medicine	327
Do not define me	328
Too Long	329
You Would Not Have Me	330
Moments Before Merging	331
Like Clothes, Concealing	332
River	333
At the door	334

Deep Breath In

Just what is it - a savage distance that swells
between myself and freedom. Shackles and blocked
horizons. The smell of urine and rats like oracles eyeing
my feet, nibble away at the miracle I have found.
I will wait until evening when everything is quiet, wait,
then claim my desire, plugged and unwholesome, fermenting
like the sweet blood of a star, expanding in the blackness,
slaughtering the quiet space, the nothing space of just being
still. Still, I know nothing of, as these thoughts uninhibitedly
dance and drape across my spiritual, blessed awakening.
Bless the golden morning, an arm uncovered dangling
over the edge and fingers, strong and brave as magic.
I've lost my taste for distractions.
Just what is it - to live at full capacity, on the verge
beating, violent, powerful and patient
as unrequited sex.

Body of water

Death is a stream I must undress
to enter to know its cool wetness in every
crease of my flesh, melding with me like an
expanse of skin. I've been waiting, moaning
at the dilemma of existing - ecstasy and nights
of bedding sleeplessness like a lover I cannot release.
You love me in the cave, in the lightless kingdom
of your melancholy and your rage. Lift me now from
this drowning. I feel sick as though all my air is gone. There
is so much weight inside of me –
the choking, the squeezing out
of my mortality. I cannot stop.
My head aches like a locked room on fire -
chlorophyll all around and mid-day is a serpent
emerging from between my toes.
You let me burn the incense.
I burned it, and I cannot breathe now without those scents
to wade in and soothe my despair.

Needle

Would it be power or the soft faith
of idolatry that brought you empty-handed
upon this Earth?
Because your history is poison to my heavier
heaven, I should be running parallel to your great
evolution, but I am not.
Your moods are total, obsessive as fungi -
growing shallow until everything is blinded
under your curtain. I used to love you - the facts
in your brain, your anti-cultural immaturity, your freedom
from the process. You, only tied to the result. I used to stay
up all night, half-a-human,
fumbling through books for a deeper
education. I used to be becoming, not this hard
calcified thing dependent on your reflection - a slave
to your dragon, to your brutal needs.
You used my brokenness to mould yourself a follower.
I followed you, but now that
is over.

What face?

A moody afterglow - the error of thoughts, hopeless when it comes to laughter and the power of worship. On the table, there are self-deeds, failed revelations, kneading and prying wide a soul that doesn't want to be recognized. I want you to allow me this success, to find the flavour of your eyes, shape them with tools and my thumbs, to press the flat hard edges of my palms against your cheekbones, press and form the cause of your pride, your loneliness that seems so important to maintain. Curled toes and chins, your chin is becoming, shifting from strong to soft. You are neither masculine or feminine. You are privileged - to be so beautiful and uncommitted to a single way of looking. Look. Your hair - long or cut off? In real life, there is no perfect symmetry. You are bold, accurate - your nose and the lines around your mouth is my contemplation. Let me know you. Be courageous. Let me pry, split and mould your inner workings until it is clear (for both of us) as love.

Back

Carelessly moving from place to place
but changeless as a brick under a porch
and strong as that brick: A taste
of stagnation, purified by the bonds that have kept
you from fulfillment. There is heat drying
your light, dead things that have been making
their way beside your immaculate arms.
I have been trying to
lift them with my hands. But my hands
are made of thin glass. And these things
have thighs and impenetrable open eyes, looking at you -
wondrous lover, missionary of the current. It is only them
between us, between the wall and the way out.
Take this mortal thinning and give nothing to regrets:
We sing for each other and you are free. I feel it
in the sparrows lined along the roofline and in
your tired features morphing into winter branches -
richer brown, moist - like just before
a spring bloom.

Train

Kneeling on the train tracks: Resigned to this dangerous meditation - a risk of steel wheels on flesh and flattened limbs. Kneeling because I cannot move or adhere to the voices in my head singing of an intimate shower, a transmutation of my solidarity and how I see my special self - love from everywhere singing, dwelling in my sleep which is never sleep but wide-awake dreams and turning from side to back. Kneeling, I hear nothing coming, but it will come - heavy, unstoppable, driven with pure intent. Kneeling until I can claim this destiny without shame, stare at the treasure of hands and lips and touch back, until I weep my centre raw, until I carry nothing but the moment, love again - sadness, shadows, unwashed hair, desperate desire – until I can sleep and stop kneeling – head neither turned up nor down. Kneeling, hearing a distant moan, a vibration – inevitable as this kneeling I must but I cannot not yet not yet let go of.

Now I am Two

It is this way, togetherness:

**A covenant with tenderness and speaking thoughts
only glimpsed.**

**The snow falls like rain as the afternoon moves
without time, our hands pressed as one,
lips and then, something better. Always
miraculous, unexpected, awakening. Always
us, vanishing and then re-emerging with these things
of harmony and friction engulfing our scent and path. Soon,
the tiger lilies will bloom and being
just us will be made difficult
with the children gathered in our arms. But this 'difficult' is
whole and adds to our liberation - making coffee, laughing
at things shared and only ours.**

**It is what was prayed for, what years and hardship has not
diluted, but has fused into an unbreakable bond - us -
the summoning of all our parts - ancient, immediate
so that even when death comes or fate and terrible sobbing,
neither of us will ever be again
without the other
alone.**

I see differently

**I see things differently,
like lyrics and shades,
differently than the cold pale mouth
of worry and intellectual revelation.
I feel things differently - what was empty,
just background,
a faint perfume, is now sharp, suffocating,
expecting so much from my guarded solitude.
I walk differently, hesitating at the sound of birds,
watching lines in the clouds, a child angry with
her mother and the small cracks on the sidewalk stone.
I sleep differently as though I never do, remembering
each hour passing in the depth
of daydreams not sleep dreams,
not resting, but rising, my breath, my flame, living
and musical.
I wake differently, never tired, but full of throbbing,
heavy beating
and the spring is almost here, trapped
in 'the-moment-before', in the power of painted hair
and earlobes caressed and kissed.
I love differently, like I've never loved, demanding
the wind, the desert, a vigil of remarkable intensity.
Love, lacking
dilemmas. Love, like a place to play, playing,
then laying flat out and waiting for
rain, a hand, or stars.**

It's been months

since this shell's
collapsed and I have been intoxicated
with this hard joy of immediacy and a world
without blunder or hesitation. It has been irritating -
to feel this hot longing in my gut,
reflecting on nothing, worrying about
nothing but the smells around me,
the power of pale hands
too close to so many faces -
the long black rope I climb and climb and love like
my only wardrobe. It has been months since I left
that heavy weight behind. Guilt
is something I've outgrown
and my blood feels poisoned
by this strange alchemy.
I know it is not female or male,
but saturated with desire and burning and swelling -
not in flashes, but constant as the pulsing sun.
The unsettling of this surprising
heaven - the knowing that I can look no further than today -
seeing both like an insect and like a god -
breathing through the terror,
at peace with the terror and the thousand lifetimes
it took to get me
to this place, unbound - sliced in all the hard places
and so. and so.
explosively, barbarously
connected.

Our Time

One time, gentle as
an easy friendship, singular,
melting waters together.

One time, hard as
sobbing exaggerated,
a comet touching Earth.

Two times, small, awkward,
fleeting as an image in a cloud.

Four times, sure, obvious as
resurrection - touch narrowed, concise,
an album of exact sensation.

Last time, a being was born
from this authority, ecstasy became heavy,
exploding a thousand golden flowers.

Next time, I will stop counting and be like time,
there without an echo. I will be a painter, a beggar,
tied to the taste, venturing closer, closest, but
no further.

Now you are

**Were you the jealous seeker?
Always annihilating intimacy, but craving
a pulsating communion? Were you stuck
on magic and the stagnant fallacy of control?
Were you pinned to a savage terror,
hating everything that made you feel - trees, a follicle of hair,
the smell of summer approaching?
Are you through with that now? Covered as you are
with deep eternal connection -
limbs and kisses, words and no fear
behind what might be opened?
Are you through with the angel armour,
the denial of touch, your secret superiority?
Are you on the balcony? It is still a long way to the light.
People are mostly ghosts and you are always desperate,
full of instinct, shunning, and the comfort of solitude.
But you are through with make-belief, with yourself being
a rock of brilliant hues. You are through. You are accepting
all that stands here - love. trust. fierce truth –
made again and again
by such brightness.**

Intimacy

I lay by your twisted completeness - an ocean
of transformative screams, rolling, lulling, the colour of ice
and sometimes, gold.

I breathe, though I cannot
imagine the radiant death inside you that
maims all warmth, casts out the churning world
like a house fly. Touched by your beauty and
the sharp lines of your natural conviction,
I am final - ripped from darkness into
something too bright - dunked into the chilled water,
naked, my heart not even where it belongs, but rising, rising
not pulsing - pausing and still because
this is not sorrow, not the past nor even is it heavy.
Because I touch your hand
and it is fixed like a star is fixed in the sky or glass
impaled so deep it touches bone. I touch
and like you I am contained, blue –
and I am now and better than,
bigger than
a thousand storms.

Time like . . .

**There is time like there is
a carpet or somebody
knocking on the door. The battle
rages in a chaotic frenzy. People
cave into fears as if that means
'maturity'. There is no time like there is
no permanence other than God.
Stimulation and bleeding gums.
Sit down, run your hand over your face. I will
run my fingers along your jaw line, your
brow line, and trace a constellation. Be my
instrument, expose the terror I cautiously keep. Call me
a hypocrite and then forgive me,
avenge me for my mortality.
In heaven, the Earth is a vegetable left too long in
the fridge. In the mornings, I am lonely but want only
to be alone. Your breath howls, sometimes I can hear it
when you think you are sleeping. Those times I would rip
across any void just to clean your blood. Time is
laughing at us, because we've touched the flesh of freedom
and everything after that wears on our skin,
groaning, growing
as instant madness.**

Attached

Ride on, suddenly departing
like a magician - basking on
the threshold where you kneel and spill
your secrets into the mud.
You should have stopped, before your body
grew in stress and your mask like pale lips turned
greyer, unintentionally drained.
But on you went, instead of speaking, you ran
forward, smelling of silence, intoxicated with danger,
flaming high with your own deceit - a vibration
to reckon with - your regret finally torn
like the inside of a coffin
from hands that refuse defeat.
I was behind you, always facing your back.
You painted yourself a target and drew me a lie. We all
lie, you said. You promised me nothing but the shallow rush
of living in your glorious and destructive
wake.

Lament

It is lonely to be loved by God,
stretched beyond capacity by laws
of magnets, hunger and inevitable reality,
to hold open a hand and have even that
security taken, to smile in the face of pressing,
impossible obligations - things owed, things needed,
and the harvest never ready. It is hard to keep
trembling with service and acceptance, to be at ease
and know the gift will come just when it is needed - God will
choose the music, choose which danger is real and what must
depart. It is hard to not cry, sometimes, just because
the world is so big and heavy and laden
with death and arrogant
stupidity. I am free but time is thick
and I get tired of trying to love and
of this loneliness.

The bells

The bells speak of a hurt
that is mounting the circumference
of a life, mourning the death that splinters the arteries,
the hip bones, each vertebra. Begging to the stars to tell
a colossal fable, a majestic myth
to solve this boring condition
of being here, away from the infinite sky, swallowing
mounds of dirt where many others have had their footprints.
Speak of woods, and of creatures that love but cannot
laugh. My lover, I am freed from the concrete
chamber - you freed me and helped me find
an arrow. There is ringing in my ears and a sorrow
triumphant, clinging to me like barnacles.
It is what I have chosen - to not pretend and to kindle
a primal inspiration. Desire like a ceremony -
days of meditation long past, but trances and
swaying and throwing words out, guttural,
epidemic with desire, those days are here.
On the roof, hands at my side. Hurt in my ankles and
in my teeth: A snake is in the front garden and
I am watching it.

Dance

Inside a fleeting redemption;
subterranean stones stoning
in ice-minutes; tenderness splintered.
My brain has formed a different
diameter - better without love, without
incantations and unprofitable rituals.
My hands have hollowed out the kitchen, pillaging
spoons, pots and sponges. This is no
communion. Here, no priest can enter
these floors clothed. Self-pity received in
a little container - opened and disposed of
but returning in mouldy residues. My legs
are hard to lift, hard to remember to own them like
I do these hands.

Things I pretended to be
are gone. Choices have failed to strengthen.
Faith is a ghost the light shines through,
cannot be articulated, has morphed into a caricature
of past ripenings. How I wish I could close my eyes,
release myself from the weight of being.

I could ride a train, take it across the border.
I could be like the young woman who fell - was she
dancing on the bridge's rail and forgot the distance? or
simply bloated on drugs and insanity's youthful wake?
How strange that her asymmetrical face
and lithe beauty remain, so you think of her
as one of the fortunate - because of the fall,
because she fell while dancing, and you have forgotten how
to surrender.

Rest

Softer than foam

when the heights are pounding into the body-stream,
adding resistance to what cannot stop trembling.

I make a mould of your footprints,

hang them over the washing machine.

I climb the scaffolding

fearless of my natural fears -

lifting mortar into a pale, bricklaying and laying out bricks
to seal a song, ready then

to pull out of the quicksand and feed you
in your darkness.

Pooling flies

in the jungle of your fragmented emotions.

What you cut off will never grow on its own

until you splice a branch of your bones and bind it fresh
in a ritual of rejoining.

You were born devouring splinters. I cannot change you,
but I can rest my hands on your shoulders, help you

to trust the feeling of family. I can stay,

give you a fork to eat with, make it soft,

and that soft will intoxicate,

thread a cushioned contoured protection.

It will stretch around you, satiate

with womb-like warmth.

Fidelity

**Further in
into intimacy, surrendering
the rosary beads, the Buddha beads,
the Krishna beads - necklaces
of superstitious worth, a means to be compensated
with miracles for work done - disciplined activity
performed with the anticipation of divine participation -
enduring boredom with karmic pride. But nothing works
that way or does it let go and become voluminous
just because of accumulation. Why can't I be
the things I see? Why do I resist collapse, clasp
onto linear principles, desperate to be justified.
Intimacy is everything ever sought - to have God inside
filling, overtaking every other sensation. Movement
like locked loins or other body parts in
synchronized ministrations, joining another's pulse,
extending the body's confines. I will not want for more
but this surrender - the stillness of receptivity coalescing
with the arching activity of advancing without
expectations of results, to be delivered
into the rhythm of tangible grace, giving into a relentless
rich flow that knows taste and substance, but no set speed.
I know staying this way is not easy,
not when the bedsheets are moth bitten and money
is stolen at the corner store.
I know teeth need fixing and foundations
are fragmenting, but how can that matter
when the whole is at stake? When whatever is taken,
explored and received is there to guide further in.
When God is asking
for this union to be achieved, offering peace but
no ego reprieve - no other lovers, no compromise.**

Why have I died

like Icarus? Or like cotton candy,
dissolving in lukewarm saliva?

Five weeks without pay, and
the weather is morbid,
plays upon my skin like fireants.

You took what I denied and changed
what was paltry into paramount -
my feet pressed against your calves, lifting
into the pressure, just
to have a choice.

Why have I died? My neck cut
against the broken window
as a resolution to my determination to see beyond the pane -
repeating like a recurring dream, developing a wider lack -
lush pulsing, possessing your sternum
where I rest my panting will upon.

I am dead. Can't you see my decay? Can't you see
the violence expanding in my throat?
How have I died? before nirvana? after the bliss
of a mother's faith?

The sparrows come close.
They know not to fear a dead thing.
They land on my foot with its multitude of intricate bones,
tendons and memories of backyard earth.
They look around, peck below where still
remains some warmth.

Once I fed them - minuscule fledglings
fallen after a storm. Now I am over.
I do not eat. I do not feed you
or anyone anymore.

Long ways and no ways

Out of phase with the frame others are drawn to. At last,
illuminated, released from artificial expectations.

You will not correspond or accelerate into my atmosphere.

My magic is inward, and the gravel you picked
up and misplaced, rolling it over your lips
to find a perfect indentation, I have held it too –
for moments at a time, swinging in the wind,
fruitful. But I know that is not my natural practice or
a possible habitation for me.

I must stand behind boards with
the spiders, while you are sunning -
an artery of pearl-like significance,
attentive, lubricating glory, improving
your already abundant harvest.

I will not make you flash-cards to categorize my plight,
or give you the pulley cord of my broken development
to pull and make use of. I am not a substitute
for a makeshift wedding ring.

My only protection is to give up. So I give
you up. Your glorious atlas open, appealing to the otherwise
immobile crowd, but not to me.

I've left the track, left this road

I picked - for one year I have been walking and have met
so few believers. It has been inadequate. You
have been fraudulent and have unknowingly plagued
the thrusts of my yearning. Energy matters:
what doesn't fit doesn't graduate
into a tangible weight, will never be
sun or iceberg.

Long ways I have loved. For hours, I have kissed
the bridge of your nose,
conscious of my fixation. In my bed,
I offered you supremacy.

Now summer draws me away, tells me this work is done,
asks me to go forward, to map and mend
a child's ragdoll that fell overboard
where the ocean stretches on and keeps
no hidden crevices for toys or wounds.

Waiting

is secondary, serves
to sustain the illusion. Better
to bathe in the molten heat, dig out weeds and pay the bills.
Better than pretending the chalk drawing won't fade,
that the overalls fit and the twirling webs glittering
in the sun do so solely for beauty's sake,
not as nature's balance
to its otherwise invisibility.

Formations, adrenaline - geese call
as they split the undertones of sky. It is better
to have no fences, no boundaries actualized
by the mind's pride, no tangible hopes
of personal importance. The sidewalks are torn up
and there is nowhere to put my feet. I don't believe
in waiting, being patient while aroused.

Once upon a time a child's voice
was all I needed to save me - once there were scooters,
pigtails and baseball caps. Damn my world
for changing, for making me ready, but falling behind,
insufficient to nourish this latest being that has arisen.

I will not wait, not be killed daily
without knowing climax or the aftermath
when nerves stop scurrying and there is quiet
enough to collect good memories.
Better to partake in war or to crush anthills.
Better to be left in my monastery where the brick walls
have a shadowy sustaining glow and my lover's heart
is walnut strong, drained of expectations,
giving, yes, but rudimentary, self-contained.

I go inside

to hide
from the wind and
the windy things the wind brings
like popsicles, icicles
and cloud watchers on their backs
ashamed to speak without symbols.
I retreat from the rocky mounds where
toddlers hold their picnics and the cardinals
rest, oblivious of camouflage.
The daydream that sustained me all last year
has weakened in potency, now is just a fleeting habit,
a camper's terrain I travel to, flooded,
swampy and putrid, fraught
with the imagined memories of sing-songs and linked torsos,
clogged now with pestilence and unrealized connection and
the stars. I still see them overhead,
ordinary, insignificant - never astounding enough
to bleed cosmic capacity into my dilated veins.
Veins waiting to be juiced, to be breached
of their thin-layered confinement - myself waiting to be more
than a catalyst. So many reasons to keep moving,
but none impregnate my spirit, none immerse me or
insist that I take up arms. My arms.
They are hanging, tingling. They are not
me. I am in hiding, away
from the wind and the windy things
the wind brings, part of the pile of the undeclared, an
illegible signature.

Bowl of candy

It falls and it dies, dried
blood on a tombstone -
palliative care, parallel petals
of varying hues. Leaning against
a concrete pole plastered with posters of faded
dreams, dreaming their last gasp - ambulances,
lawnmowers, bird sounds - feeling the sun's
rough tongue circle and slide with moist intensity
over the sleeves of my new jacket.

I feel the civilized crowd, absent of judgment,
crossing streets, side-stepping grates. What does it mean
to be disguised as a butterfly or hospital nurse? Pacing
the torrid tea stores, listening to the woodpeckers, wishing
I could be so industrious. But
my hands were made heavy and
I continue dragging my head like a rock, lifting it
into the sky, over airplane tracks,
and vegetable patch gardens.

Sorrow is open, festers like boredom,
breathing an unmarked passage
through my vascular system. Wobbly and wanting only
to be taken, to let my thoughts be devoured
by survival and sensation -
one more week of salt without substance,
to be a mole in a wave

of fragrant calamity, to awaken in a bed with hands
covering my chest and trembling in the shower stall -
walking, walking - vines and the roots of old trees -
whistling in my ears - flint and enlightened temperatures,
silver and worn. How does everything enter?

Am I the sea? Am I a balcony or a rooftop?
Away from this place, I will never be pardoned or at peace.
Maybe this is just wilderness and burning,
but never once did I know stagnation or
was I afraid.

I turn the corner and

**someone has been here, picking up clover,
invading front lawns, rebelling against privacy.
A rat's corpse as slender as a leaf lies at my feet.**

**I kneel down to meet it and I am stuck, retrieving
information about decay, the smell of a flattened skull
and the effect of dehydration. I get up. I walk
around not over, and butterflies are moving. They are
wrinkled energy lines, producing abstract patterns near
sturdy bushes. All roads are shattered
if I look closely enough -
mini-fault lines of labyrinth tubing curiously crushed
like the nutshell is under my heel.**

**Summer is almost beginning -
heat encroaches and people smile
untrustworthy but predictable.
Dogs are minerals of volatile emotion
which they never struggle to conceal.
The moon is still in the sky. It should not
be there like it is, a half-faded stamp,
pale on blue, larger, closer
than the obvious sun.**

**In my fantasy, pine cones are eatable. There,
there is courage enough in every relationship
to feed the demands
of wedded intimacy. And I can sketch tall, yellow weeds.
I can even paint
the striking space between them like dialogue.**

**I can carve the curves
of a sitting brindle squirrel, carve
where the tail meets the spine
and the spine, two twitching ears.**

**In my mind I am actualized, verified and seen,
vague dread is much like a pebble tossed and lost
under a parked car. Anytime I look into another's eyes,
be it a hawk, child or mild foe -
there is the colour of wet river stones,
a healthy delirium, the feeling of faintly floating
through deep-breath ministrations, into
puzzle-piece convergence.**

Desires traversed

There are lines that frame me in negative expectations.
There are sweet tufts of weeds
I would like to pet like a kitten.
And eyelashes that spark a gentle nostalgia.
There are too many eras
walked through, never to be re-entered,
and remnants of lore and legends
like pigeon droppings on pavement, washed away by storm.
I have grown too used to the drapes being closed,
to all mannerisms of my fugitive vitality being ignored.
Saturn is a vacuum, galactic in its weighty substance
and in its cold temperature push -
condensing my liquid garden into impenetrable ice.
A tightening in my intestines. Shoelaces undone and left.
I eat the seeds I am supposed to discard.
I am beyond knowing if
I am broken. And oh the circle of things! Up the escalator.
Colour-coded stars. A dermal abrasion.
Things conspire like sunken feet in the mire
unwinding of doom. Archaeology I cannot speak of,
guaranteeing a false result.
Straining to sound a faith that will cleanse.
Distances crossed, to point to and witness
the handicap of being a single being
amongst a kaleidoscope of organic tapestry.
Shifting to let go, to imagine archangel
power and not have it substituted with
a neutralizing force - a force that stops the growth
of artful transformation.

There are hills and hallways that draw me to their altars.
Little did I know that dreams too long waited on
become waterlogged, that suffering is not
a stigma or a banner to flaunt, and love,
is mostly about honouring inner limitations,
challenging them to consolidate, regain momentum then
unequivocally be breached or be immutably restored.

I am dissolved into this squeezing, into denying
the little that I know that quivers precise,
deconstructing the intricate
solidity of greed and hard resilient walls.

Orbits are barb-wired.
Countdowns counting, dictating short spurt breaths.
As my tendons stretch
only in my imagination. And these doorways become
sunsets I stand straddled across.

History is a hyena, grotesquely curved,
pulling down royal constellations.
I have learned that peace can be a pyre
where loins burn exquisite, can also be a dishonest maturing,
where desires are reduced to fruit fly annoyances,
where coming to terms with reality
is a step toward entropy.

Little did I know that bodies melt with their spirits -
more than dead houses or gloves, defining one tick, one
conjoining of fibers, pulsing a fingerprint, pulsing
one lifetime possessed.

Seamless

Raincoats and rainy seasons are behind us now.
I picked up a feather.
You took it from me and now it is yours. And just like that,
rich as the coral reef waters, we were initiated into
a lower layer.

Intensity is a button. It is concentration - one part,
one of your parts unrelentingly explored
while ignoring other
distracting sensations. It is the thick blood
raking of thighs against our lesser faith.

Fears of the future put aside and left to their weeping.
Shoulders become secrets receiving
probing pressure-point intrusions.
Like a primeval working of strings,
through this communication, we see
the courage of our history rise, become an advancing truth,
and our pores
grow and sparkle like thousands of tiny sun-drenched ants
pooling together to parallel a single purpose.

We know 'just survival' is tyranny.
What we seek is not movement
purely for the sake of employment, but to create canvases
of vigorous struggles - ones that can only be cemented
in unison.

**Our bodies have abandoned their blood-lines.
We are touching every crease
and tense design with undiluted intention -
first blotting out words, then delectable conversations.
We rejoice in the grand dramatics of our compatibility,
equally committed to corporeal immersion.**

**The past culminates in this single outpouring. It is
a privileged evolution. It is months of misfortune
exterminated by the exertion of our mouths:**

**Strange rhythms are risked, foreheads pressed,
giving way
to beautiful unadulterated disclosure.**

Edified

Was I bound by the artificial?
Driftwood down an interceding flow?
Horse stance, back muscles rolling, lines of twine,
and fishing. I will not fish or tighten my spinal cord
for the appearance of strength.
I will not bask relaxed in hot spring nobility or lick the nose
of prey I someday plan to devour.
Was I combined or conditioned
to make a unified shape?

Loudly, my name was spoken. It was God, I am
sure of that. And it was angry, pressing, urging me
to wake and take nothing lightly or so hard.
It was the second time
at the time of 2:30 a.m., when my bed flushed with instant
rigidity, lifting me with dominance
from the gardens of my despair.

It was spoken as a permit to build, to trap the past inside
the future - not as vintage romanticism, but for the sake
of journeying onward, to be integrated
with what must be re-owned, absolved by the fact
that nothing can escape the impact of eternity. I was shown
that the igloo mansions I once erected,
featuring such elaborate depictions,
cerebral justifications of indignant loneliness,
were natural and could not be dismantled.

I heard my name spoken, calling me to dart alert
from a shrinking sleep, to walk the hallway, carve
myself an inclusive center, to answer boldly,
unconditionally step
into the dictates of a personal command.

Will you keep me

here, half-maimed,
a bouquet of translucent daisies, a meager waterfall
that is less than a tide between two places,
more like still-birth - burning improper,
scenting the torso of a tree. A tree
I came across and wanted to cross into its sphere, step up
and build a tight fence around us two
so I would have no choice
but to lean on hefty roots, sleep at the bottom, wide as earth.

Will you keep me, stop me
from compromising a cold solution,
from peddling the fruits of my incandescent plateau
with weak convictions?
Or will you turn me wooden just to protect
what is soft, and not, interchangeable?
Will you keep me in this tattered suit,
as my appetite courses through me grey and unmade,
dragging the tentacle midnight at my heels - my reasoning,
foiled; my affectionate-heart, stunted, incapable of replying.

Havoc and purgatory. Beehives
I have broken. Bend me now to move my lips over
a willing recipient. Will you drink me, go on drinking
the sap that steals
from my pores, purging from my flesh in fluctuating doses?

Will you keep using me? My loins are like snow
shadowing white a lush green. These exaltations I need
are like the images sailing tumultuously
through my head, grid-locking a purer understanding.
I need to be kept, to be your brown buckwheat,
tender and eatable.

But there is more straw on my veranda
than there are stones, more I must conquer to gain.
Outside is not liberating. It rides in
on a limping mare and severs me from holistic learning.
The eagles arrive never asking for remuneration,
but they are useless
as they stream through rainclouds.
They never own anything -
not the cliffs they claim, not prey, and not their offspring.

So will you keep me,
now that I am ambushed by your requests,
thoroughly excavated - liver and marrow - no more,
now that I am gone,
and I have given up every potential shore?
Will you play on my step,
keep me from running, from fading headlong
into a banal madness, keep me
from becoming roadkill, dust
in a never-ending duststorm?

Box

Exploring
thin hip bones, hills of urgency, the grounding
of incomprehensible joy. At sea. Socks. Blindfolded
on the top bunk, looking into blackness, sure
of the kaleidoscope formations forming that press behind
eyes - optic nerves more alive than when there is
sun. Impulses
propelling new positions - toes touching,
calves locked, demanding, skin against
similar refined surfaces.

Clarity climbs the spine. Minds are removed from symbols,
divulged of an audience, resting easy in sounds, validations
of hidden obsessions and kerosene wanting. Wanting
outward what is inward - to pick a pearl
in the tossing waters, to be that pearl
torn from ligament bondage.

Death sings, switches axles. Inside that box,
larvae are destroyed, what is wax-paper-winged
emerges like steam, twisting with a giddy haste, singing
and shedding the crust of coveted seclusion.
Like the brushing wind
of wet breath on an upper thigh, it sings, or
like the smells of predatory indulgence coupled
with tender consideration, cheeks are under siege.
And even what is awkward delivers
unexpected fulfillment.

The box is handprints on glass, fingers drawing
biological notes. Open. Each time
time has no bearing. Each time venturing, the box
is a blade, contracting - multiplying an adrenalin spectrum.
Each time excessive sensitivity expounds, actualizes,
there, flushing.
What is given, returns larger - corners are lifted, four-sided
confinement collapses as two fibrous silhouettes gain height,
hum tangible, hold steady and then
mutually unroll.

Claimed

Yesterday I stayed on the hammock near the shaded cliff,
watching the two-folded yellow flower.

Bodies are not bodies but conditions
of unique collaborations.

Desire is there like a distance that must be crossed,
fuelled forever by lack. It is
salt, and like salt it loses its parameters
when boiled, plumbing up and seasoning
a stiff grain.

Organs pump at alternate rates - organs as rocks
damming the current. Desire claimed as a quelling
of self-contained essence, a sweeping clean of virginal
magnificence, cloistering what is left on an island
where roots form in fleshy sand.

It is only me rolling out this loosened rubble, falling
on reptilian ground where camouflaged creatures keep pace
with higher footprints, crush those footprints
with sharp crusty toes.

I want to die between clouds, want more space
to swim in, a supermarket of strawberries to count
and mount like a mattress.

Tongues jet out, mapping words, keeping quiet
about their other erotic duties, canceling
what should be claimed,
masking it in tinfoil so it will shine.
It will shine but it will not ripen.

I was curved on this cloth between two trees, in a state
of capture. There I understood that what sorts itself out is
a blank statement, ghost suns and eruptions
that speak like volcanic tickings, spawning uphill - epidemic.
I understood that if there ever was a chance
to unlatch myself from fate,
I would take it.

That I am damned, already a busted instrument -
splintered dark-stained-wood piled remorsefully
on somebody's knees.

To hell with being uplifted.
I will never know sky, or the bliss of a boat on open waters.
I will stay on this swing, transmitting
my cellular weight into images - dehydrated
instead of plunging,
angry instead of forgiving, intolerant of the mediocrity
that swirls around my expanse of space like a broom,
hurling up into the atmosphere what should be collected
and brought to waste.

The truth is, I can't co-operate with the soothsayers.
Because the truth is, lying there I understood
that what is final, eternally claimed, is the colour red,
broad-leafed or bare of leaves, it makes itself known
like rising bile, enters
like forced medicine that pockmarks the belly-interior, rises,
leaving bits of itself behind, enough to doctor even
a resistant inherent chemistry.

It starts

**like precipitation, infusing
iron seeds that rest atop the ozone-dome
and flourish. Somehow I am coming to terms with
churches I will never go back to, and last-year's friends
who own creative nobility but fail to nourish.**

**It is starting, culminating like a blood clot,
anchoring me to my drive, wringing out my squishy insides
until they are parched, until the robin's song
registers austere.**

**Escape happens in the morning,
wading through yesterday's debris,
fascinated by scars and euphoria that comes
opening airways.**

**Can I conceive of a crime that will not haunt?
There are rules to follow, bones that fit into sockets,
sacred formations that must not be tampered with,
and speeches spoken, brave enough to own on paper.**

**Biting is war; be it biting on silver,
gently marking areolas, or lacerating wet teabags.
I forfeited what I thought was a shield, sure it was
more than only emptiness swelling. It was
a birthmark, nihilism reclining over my pre-destined zenith.**

**There are things that start then overtake.
They emerge pure as children,
touch ground and vaporize. August is hard.
In that critical heat, everything that wavers between worlds
gets erased - splits up into two categories
of corpses and lifeforms that take celestial flight - ends up
where water sinks or where water concentrates,
either way, falls
but does not flow.**

this prevails

**Footprints you appear in. Fences you break down.
Your back has become my meadow,
laced with dandelion seed. Your muscles twitch to the feel
of grasshoppers' brandishing wings.
Your shoulder blades combine
under beetles' scurrying strides -
flesh becomes grass and grass becomes flesh becomes weeds,
connecting their incompatible sinews, intimately.**

**I plant myself on one side of you,
searching for a conclusion. Permanence is a chain.
I take photos while you are sleeping. I brush across
the stubble in the cleft of your chin with my cheek.**

**Holding is indefinite. Years counted are like ivory
appropriated, but at what cost?**

**We lift up our shirts, place ears over navels,
dwarfing any future with instinctual immediacy.**

**With each lip-graze our fears are gradually disempowered.
They shrink, and then we shrink-wrap them before
they fully decay, offering them an honoured
yet secondary place.**

**Events are karma. Our karma is caged, dies
from the surgical stitch formed between us -
what was deemed inevitable is void of vibration,
outcast from its orbit.**

**You are a wall made of sponge, absorbing.
I will saturate. For you, I will not be hard or polished, but
exile my conscious desires, give crown
to a steady delirium. You will be central.
And this will happen without conditions.**

**The afternoon rises and what stands on either side
- be it memory or our impending dreams -
falls subject, subdued by our abiding bond.**

Myopic

There is too much to say
and nothing to do after it's been said.
Commotion kills my throat,
starts like a heat-wave, anticipated.
That is a discomfort I frequent.

Others form techniques that neatly construct
and dispose of information.
They define symbols that filter light,
use three letter examples, harming no-one
when they disappear.
They do not strain in the depths, but grip the depths,
then let it go.

When I try to swallow what's core,
it lodges between my teeth,
swells my gums, overextends my jaw, until it malfunctions
like the rest I covet, inadequately burning.

It would be good to combust, be direct as ambition, cut
an indispensable horizon from a deflated balloon.
But I am free and I choose to fizzle,
I choose these backwards repetitions - pressure
that is purely exhale. I don't know how
to point without pushing,
how to relax vertically as a willow tree,
or be like a park bench -
offering considerable comfort to those
who have walked too long.

I find myself fixated first on detail,
spending long sessions with my microscope, discovering
blooming atoms, food crumbs, enthusiastic correlations
of the tiny to the oversized.
Then I find myself bleeding out their definitions, running
to theatres where I can be stimulated
by abstract reflection.

I enter a clear understanding with half-closed eyes,
willfully smudging lines, numbers, concise melodies.

Others are sufficient, contented to observe
elements moving, sometimes rotating,
immune like strict realism is
to crazed impressionistic form.

Open Valve

I see a small tree
or a bush grown tall
where animals congregate on spindly branches,
lift up on their hind legs to nibble at buds.

I see the tip of a steeple pierce the skin of the sun,
liberating a liquid radiation, a voluminous spell
of brutish creation. More still, found in smells
and in houses with decorated front doors - a smorgasbord
of captivating elegance to consume.

I hear angelic chatter, a high-pitched verbosity,
dimensional sound, enveloping, filling those places I walk by
that even ghosts have abandoned.

The forest floor I am captain of
is embroidered with fine strands of rooted hope,
carpets made to curl toes on, made regardless
of other fruitions pillaged, fountains frozen, or children
discovered emaciated - jaundice seeping into their mouths,
tainting tangles of youthful hair.

Looking up, looking down, coalescence clings to bark
like clay-mask granules. I am building on this forest floor,
spreading out like a legion of detached twigs
fallen over corner curbs. Like them,
I am proclaiming artistry in the natural-norm,
gratitude for subtle ingenuities.

I see a way to effectively engage, disengage my body
from sticking to aluminum walls. I see a way to remember
the vegetables I planted, the wilderness that rises not-yet
to my knees. I see what it is that shields my sanity
from a dangerous rupture. It is air,
birdprints waxing the sky, delightful overflowing,
so overflowing
that it drowns any recollection of downpours, defusing
currents and currents of catastrophic cold.

Our Light Cannot Always Burn Whole

**Nests that stay through winter
are similar to us at times - left abandoned
on high barren branches,
valueless until spring - if ever, even then, reclaimed.**

**We jog through bitter uneatable harvests, absorbing
disappointments as our only viable feast,
not heeding our self-honouring needs,
too proud to address imagined or deliberate injuries.**

**Jackets buttoned to the neck,
we move in these sewer shafts,
trying to shake the foaming stench off
of each other's tailored attire.**

**On our bed, we are broken, letting our arms rest
like a Spanish squid's tentacles would rest,
pulled from pulsing waters. Our mouths
primed for confession,
our eyes scanning features - short hair, skin under the eyes,
familiar necklines.**

**We tell each other these things are worth
the horror of abominations
accepted as societal norms, atrocities justified
as a soldier's directed bullet.**

**Here in a shut-in space, we can lock,
shed faculties of crusted reason,
create a colourful spread of sensuality, messaging
our blood vessels with deep oxygen, curing, learning
to make saliva and swallow.**

We tell ourselves sometimes we wish
we could be like those who live
never knowing an intimate tender beauty,
like those who get shipwrecked,
daily hunted by a cancerous loneliness.

At times we wish this love didn't exist,
then we could give in to what lies beyond
the cliff, defend our exit, salt the Earth
with a dramatic departure.

Those times, we hear a desolate chorus rising
and we vanish completely into its volcanic siren wind.

Other times, we talk. We watch squirrels dance across
our backyard trees, make tea, passing domestic glances,
gladly sharing the last spoonful
of bottled honey.

Grace mightier than Natural Law

What if eternity was marked in a mirror,
and we lived there like animated ornaments,
reproducing each dot of matter as reflection?

Especially love

drilled into the furrows of fear, or love
withstanding betrayal by latching firmly to devotion?

What if what we perceived as solid is itself artificial
and that true existence is elsewhere, is a multi-layered
holographic construction coating our reality?

As if death was the overture of our lives,
rooted in continuance and
not defeat.

At times I can taste myself slipping
into the tip of a Cathedral ceiling.
Weapons I cannot use become suggestions,
impractical solutions, there to
analyze other highways not meant to cross.
Highways bearing bright moonlight
on their surfaces, like correspondences looked at
but never read.

At times my singing is subdued,
and I discover these highways I am not welcome on,
find myself disassociated from their flat hum, from their
pavement platform and worn-over buckling curves.

Memories are funerals - the hours we spend
traveling their domains.

I spend my time studying trees. Some trees are not beautiful,
but are depressed growths, even in their grandeur.

When flushed with foliage or sparse, these trees
emanate an aura of monotony. Like looking through
dirty glass windows, watching
pointing fingers, listening
to a zoo of indistinct, inescapable sounds,
they have been drained of vitality.

Ballooned and warm, I am transformed
by the pressure to create symbols to improve
an already great equation.

In this way, I hear a toddler cry, and I think
it is impossible to grow up
and not carry as core the experiences
of kindnesses given and kindnesses withheld:
For we all know it is soothing to be tended to,
to have someone wash our hair.

So what then if there is always a camera
taking pictures? Then it must be important
to be frank in spite of showing rough edges
that spark criticism, disappointment, or a full-body
malaise. It must be important not to falsify speech,
to be able to disregard
pleasantries or other forms of stroking public appeal.

What if I closed the door, turned on the fan, turned on
the light, would I learn to swing or be a domino, a causality?

Principals move like wolves commandeering prey
or like a dozen eggs dropped - their effect built on a single
gravitational happenstance.

What if we are marked, already surviving forever -
each exacting
fraction of ourselves duplicated?

God must muse through such thorough descriptions
of our lives, an overseer of our personalized library,
defeating what seems irreversible
with forgiveness, erasing without remnant
the imprint and impact of things wrongly given, taken, or
left to starve.

Cropped

Incessant noises, beating
down my glow - airplanes and dogs
voicing their aggressive anxiety. Too much
space to fill with disembodied eyelids - except to say,
I am better off knowing what to hide and with whom.
Everyone I talk to insulates me, be it in vast or narrow
confines. I don't need to suffer
or hunger for what is not mine
or for an intimacy more accurately labeled illusion.
Animals walk by me and I am drawn into their interiors.
I am drawn to look through the physicist's window
and laugh at certain logic used to dismiss the ranks of God
and creatures that gallop, burn-up in back alleyways,
escaping definition.
I don't know if sand is like stars, but it is a fragrant research
to find out, fumbling with layers, branching out on tiptoe.
It is a pistil attracting pollen, a prescription
to illuminate grief and cherishing.
Just as when faced with illness,
the superfluous gets skimmed,
it is essential to honour the need for certainty in all forms
of love, it is essential to see that which struggles
always ends up shivering in its bonds, eventually learns
that letting go is a prerequisite before achieving threshold,
before the welling up, the grand unshackling groan
of a peace-inducing
implosion.

Yes

I will stay with you,
acknowledging the four factors that create warriors, faces
of ceramic gods. Taking in these four tides -
erratic electrical fumes;
unarguable weight; ripe stiffening; charitable maneuvering -
this potently controlled receiving, snapping us into a place
where we are never betrayed by our mutual craving
for equal depth and ideals.

The way you look when my eyes are closed.
I see a visceral chemistry copulating
in your vascular system,
changing the consistency of your skin,
showering you with oil. These pressure points owned,
wrapped in dark honey -
a sticky rich worship and weeping - myself,
dripping against you, inside
a red whirlwind of our joined imaginations.

We have walked rooftops, looked down and felt at home.
We worked many nights on forgiveness,
smashing snowglobe sceneries,
defusing any fantastical expectation just to be honest
when we finally awoke, to take each other blatantly,
communing as soulmates should -
peeled of barriers, wrapped freely
in fundamental urges and a desperation
for speed.

Pliant movement - karma or coincidence?
It matters little, for it is
gathering storm. It reminds me of an unkempt appearance,
appearing weak, watery, but is really
like the hollow delicate bone of every bird
built for flight - an aimed and painted arrow,
capable of penetrating a crust of sky.

This is our alchemy stripped of ethics.
This is us as a curry powder-and-turmeric mix, mixed,
we enhance one another's scent and tone. Yes,
I will stay with you, stay with our patterns locked
in perfect spiraling aberration, stay on side streets,
on wet park floors,
under our green roof, stay with you,
holding with solidarity our sunken joys,
precarious compulsions, dandelions or maggots, holding
a constant means of God-given
restoration.

Surrogate Dharma

I didn't think I would get lost
or be chained to a contractual victory.
I thought a grain would grow,
become a solid garden. Fires would come, then
firefighters. I would be testifying about
the worth of what survived.

That is not what happened. I fell prey
to the propaganda of affirmations,
to the volume of control I could contain.
My dream dropped out of me
like a miscarriage. I hoped I could forget:
Tie my shoes, zip up a coat
and kiss the shelter I have. Bridges here and there -
they are not mine to travel.
Vinegar keeps getting injected into my bones,
replacing the marrow with
its potent clarity. Do you see? I am getting older.
It will be over
and I have to be able to say I served well.
My mouth opens and folds like a fledgling wing.
People pass - each one a violin note, a digit, a reluctant
panting pitch. Conversations are ash.
I don't like living in these elements, my neck
stretched up into the dense middle
of a monsoon. Let me climb,
dragging this dead beast behind me.
Let me live where my father went to school,
on a Himalayan peak.

I am not a petal. My courage is fickle, it fortifies or fades,
dependent each day on mutual obligatory infatuation.

I can't keep pretending:

The sun is strong. The night is strong. I am not stronger.

I am in this hovel with my lamp, tasting metal
of varying textures -

rusted, gold, and other star-erupted symbols -

greeting obscurity, broken toenails

I can't be bothered to trim. How many rooms, my God?

How much waiting and walking, and the fish?

I could be a fish. Make me

one of those - sliding about, weaving

with one full-body stroke

through a lush intricate terrain, mastering

a juicy undergrowth.

Structures I pretend to own

Organs flayed

Nightmares understood

God is a scientist, a retina with constricted veins,
dictating an obituary with every birth.

Circular spots; ink-stains, light-stains . . .

there are so many preconceptions I need to let go of.

I must grasp that rationality and chaos both
are immature theories, primitive understandings.

Nothing can be drawn to scale. Inside the void,

it is fizzing, being expelled then absorbed with

a brief division and then a brief collision - beautiful osmosis.

I saw a strawberry swallowed,

progress from being a fruit to being

a taste-bud treasure. I was engulfed in vastness,

cultivating a pattern.

But there is no pattern, though there is geometry, formula,
and muscles functioning by invariable laws.

God loves most things with a sense of humour,
with an unexpected discharge. Energy cannot be
damaged, but it can pulse too quickly,

get caught in a tachycardia loop,

be confined to a fixed pathway like a spasm, repeating,

stagnant in its activity. That is not love.

It leads to heart failure, lacking

arousal, inflammation, surprise. That is a condition where

sludge is formed and purity is suffocated, and all and all

it is not very crisp. The result is not creation,

movement only, not breathing.

I know I am not meant to hear the angels flutter,
but I hear them anyways. Some nights
they enjoy a quick wing-shudder, jettisoning
in and out of phase. On my sloping rooftop,
near my bedroom window,
they say to me: pregnancy demands a gentle cultivation,
a willingness for a foreign inclusion.
They say: do not look for equilibrium because exact balance
would mean obliteration.

I wait for you.

**You come
with catechisms, rising from
cracks in the over-used parking lot.
I'm not sure of the cost of this anticipation,
staring at you like a sage stares through a window.**

**You come while I am in this gestation
and you coat my palms with your touch
like hair conditioner, smelling almost artificial.
I would like to eat you to see if you are real.
I would like to seal you in a jar,
lick the tip and cliff of your prized Adam's apple.**

**You are here and talking, and your words
are like lard lacing my tongue.
How I keep watching and waiting for you to use me,
to pour me into a small capsule, ingest me like a remedy.
I have skin-dived into a torrent wave for you,
my creases and crevices drenched
in a salty fire. Weld me now fully to your form.**

**I can't remember what it was like to be converted.
I just remember this waiting, hearing you enter my house
when the cats are sleeping.**

**You are arriving again - this time,
glacial, annihilating, gorging on my submission.
You pace my carpet with otherworldly steps. You come,
touching bookshelves, dog toys, the clothes
I only wear in private.**

**I watch you from that carpet and continue
paying my daily homage. I am waiting to know
your attachment, wanting your warm fingers
to conclusively enter.**

**Give me this bond and
I will give up my agitation, give you
absolute permission.**

Matrimony

I have been taken on as your lover. I will not deny it any longer, taken into a divine, subterranean refuge where my lungs separate with a sharp divide, squeezed apart like playdough, and that is not all that has been conquered or dismembered.

I trust this burning bond, but I am hardly keeping pace, letting all other responsibilities go, paying no mind to the traffic or to the baby squirrel at my doorstep.

I have been tagged your concubine, marked now with an irrefutable identification.

I am not in this body anymore, not like I used to be. I am flowing in and out of atmospheres, contained by dark matter into the surge of these succulent prayers that claim the wavelength of my individuality.

It has always been - you on top of me, me over your back, finally both of us abandoned to the pressure, moving in sync, blasting out a ferocious harmony.

And the crows, on treetops, never letting me out of their sight. You and them and dark wingspans cloaking the shell of my brain, causing an explosive beat, a ricocheting rhapsody - always just you and me - together, retreating from time, gesticulating our revelations, gyrating on beds, on cushions - scarves loose around our necks, force-feeding each other, promising this and that, and the sun. In my eyes, your sun, your legs beside mine have become mine. It has never been any different - I've been a fool to think it has - this tugging on my lead. Love, so much love, our love, is sweet, murderous.

I am trying to understand but I don't know how.

Tell me, I am listening. Expand everything then crush it in tight, blindingly bright, pinpoint.

I heard a poet say

**that doing art is a denial of self. I say
it is an inclusion of God into the self.
It is not simply a dialogue nor is it intellectual banter,
but it is being intoxicated with the fullness
of seeing God there with every thought –
in the swimming pool while treading water,
or at the hair dresser, drinking coffee, waiting for a turn.**

**A pebble is paradox like time travel is, or a meteor
entering the earth like a man enters a woman -
a synergy of the round and the sharp,
splicing, splitting, until more splicing and splitting, until
dependency on oxygen is born.**

**Speculation, lectures, ceremonies
are deeds to occupy but never to explain.
Hair like a mammoth's - how I long to run
my knuckles through its thickness and ancestry!
I am not intimidated by people with busy days
and many different shoes. Brown
has become my favourite colour, and grey, that too
is magic. I knew this when I was young:
True intensity is subtle, is equal
in its magnitude as it is to its intricacy -
It commands exploration.**

**When I was young I knew God was with me
at every threshold, standing inside my flesh. Since then,
I have played with death,
held conference with death as a sister.**

But even such sibling biology
cannot cull this communion I have discovered,
can't vacuum apart indelible combined-shapes
into quarantined segregation.

I have known death's jolts, have known
its harrowing cripple and crack, and know
it cannot revert humanity back to that interval
before God exhaled, altering the playing field,
resulting in
such a mighty fusion.

Called

Devouring stars and licking the loins
of expiring galaxies, God is moving.
In these orgasmic vibrancies, God is singing and
an incalculable formation occurs.

My lover is very brave to be sitting still on the dead grass,
happily consumed by winter's stretched mouth. He thinks
he is a catalyst, recording the fallout of those doomed stars,
but he is more - brimming as he is with manic velocity,
tied to the tunes that reel through his head.
Consideration is not his game,
nor being possessed by maudlin sentiment
like a drunkard is bound to the heel of his anguish.

He wakes up and never eats until evening.
There is love in his eyes
for everyone. I'm not saying this because he is mine
or because of what we have together -
afternoons of invigorating coalescence, conversing
like plant growth does with the sun.
What we have together is proof enough
that God is and nothing is
by mistake or smothered with futility.

I have walked with him up and down the beltline,
rubbed his toes when they were tingling, ran the bath water
for him, filling it with lavender oil and sea salt,
and all through this, he never stopped glowing.
Once babes and now teenagers, depend upon his care.
Ceilings have cracked and collapsed over him. It has not
been easy waiting for that commission - at the window,
watching cars and cars and fire trucks go by, going into
other years, years that are not stars but swell like stars,
combust like stars, illuminating a voice,
his voice that cannot, has not
shut down.

Plastic

Plastered with glue,
sticking like betrayal like a spider's eggsack
to a branch. I watch your gorgeous
pontificating, watch you mourn just a little. The injury
rips only part of your body, fragments you.
Grief becomes a tremor,
an uncontrolled twitch under your left eye.

Everyday, I journey to the drug mart, handle
bread and vitamins in the same hour,
thinking of your music,
showered by these harmonic intonations
of your irate loneliness.
I will never get clean. I knock down garbage bags,
pocket unsharpened pencils,
buy myself some tea, thinking today I will let go,
rid myself of your domination,
purchase a splendid fantasy to replace
your magnetism - saw at roots, trust
the broken staircase and climb.

You have been kind, when your thumb strokes
the back of my neck or when you let laughter escape
from your stoic eyes. Money
has never been my brimstone or firewood –
there or not there, but always with the fragrance
of just-skinned leather. So
you see, that
is not what I want you for.

But I do want, and not just a portion of your stamina,
not just a gasp of deep disturbance, but to be at the vortex
of your desire, the one you rely on
to rebuild your toy train set.

It is too much, picking up shampoo bottles,
looking at lipstick. I know it is too much - these yearnings
that beat and these necessities I need
are the same, but you

are still in my mind
pushing, ploughing through and through,
saving me a plot beside your plot
beside the potpourri covering a stranger's grave.

Sanguine

One small awakening to accept
acceptance - a lethargic arm on my shoulder
weighing down. Air that is security
has never been my ocean.

I have never been able to trigger kinships
in a field of sunlight. No light
has more volume.

I am content in places where my imagination can reign,
where definition is arbitrary, redundant,
and not very useful.

I tried to love you, dive into your trachea, show
you the substance that enriches my cells. But we have
different vocations: I make windows. And you stand outside
with your scales of distraction, participating, socially at ease.

You have grown tall, wedded as you are
to the world's expectations.

What once was lean, marvelously eccentric,
has become typical, robust
as an animated ideal.

You gave up your awkward insecurities, replaced them
with suave affection and loveless sex. You are not warm,
though you feign warmth. You know how to act -
teethset in alignment, and your apparel - clean of cat hairs,
with the appropriate amount of ingenuity,
just enough to generate interest but not alarm.

Old people are getting older and dying,
they can hardly believe
it has come down to this. They lose their lovers,
have appendages aching with weakness - fingers
that cannot move on cue to stroke a cheek,
fingers that want to flesh out, plump up,
become tantalizing again.

I have taken you with my fingers,
awakening the soft space between
your naval and groin. I have laid across,
massaged every ounce of need
into the vulnerable region separating your hipbones.
And I would go further.
But you have no natural shade,
and it is too exhausting to keep toting around your wares.

You supplied me with inspiration. The postage is paid.
I must move closer to the edge of the road for you.
I must make room,
walk past, surpass, enter
my Rosewood red front door, without.

Quagmire

Coming down, knowing now
that everything known is blindness,
deciphered speculation - constellations out there
that spin, conjoin, burst and create
are mesmerizing but lifeless - into the future,
out from the past - the power is menacing, somewhat,
and somewhat stale, stagnant, just 'happening'
like storms happen and the rising of the moon.

Rain on a leaf or an orange tabby chasing a shadow is
accessible, pleasantly startling, metaphysically invasive.

Many serious intellects are left crawling
from the lack of sleep, from acquiring
too many codes and smug victories.

We are small, inside this body of God - a city,
drooling with arrogance and inquisitiveness.
That is us in motion, devouring
the zenith and charting out mysteries.

But things get caught on other things. Dead butterflies
can still glow - behind clean glass, inside Berber-carpeted
buildings, all fluorescent lights and classifications.

We can point and name and even think
that energy starts and ends, forget that everything
is circulation and that life here is simple.
It would rather copulate, raise offspring, than count stars.

Inside this body of God, we are cupped
in fluid boundaries, by instinct, by undeniable emotion,
stronger, yet part of, cerebral musings.
We feed from the Earth and we get hungry.

We have these telescopes, our catacombs of understanding,
but we also have pilgrimage, crust, heartbeat, dying,
soccer fields and song.

Little Bell

The bell is amputated from its string.
There will be no more ringing, no more
afternoons of speaking my confidences,
smoking them out from my private interior, onto
lips and into this stark atmosphere.

Love is not a digital emergence where pixels collide
until a picture forms or where music is made that has lost
any deep throat imperfection. Around here, I wear medals
I don't deserve, earned when my ovaries
were engorged with helium and I was trying to stay tethered,
to build myself a honeycomb of golden protection.

I don't know how to worship. I am too heavy to float
like some I know who find purification in fairy tales,
like some I drift from and back toward - but that drifting
is not burning, not a sacrificial bullet
that leaves a bloodstain of legendary proportions,
that turns everything into a symphony, never stops
electrifying the loins as well as
the imagination.

I am on the street and things are moving -
ten gulls circling in the sky, two bluejays in a tree,
and people I say hi to, smile at so strong
that for a time I am distracted
from my solitude. For a time I am sure I can understand
this side of the spectrum that is mine -
pallid tones, no more ringing,
love that loves at full capacity, experiences
the melody of joining, then is cut, dangling,
before it finds
lasting symbiosis.

Broken

Breaking bonds and bonds
that are breaking in spite
of efforts made and lifetimes of
glorious connection, in spite
of promises to never part and always be
like tall innumerable weeds, keeping alive
no matter the challenges to growth. Growth
once so great, celestial forms descended, joined
to contemplate and just listen.

Catapulted into the future with no way back,
into another lightyear spinning, picking up pebbles,
putting down shoes. Hoods and earmuffs, locking
eyes with the cold, locking tight with the bluegrey anguish
that breeds explosives inside the flesh of my tongue,
but is buried too deep beneath the tastebuds to ever emerge.

Pinecones retrieved from the spat-upon pavement,
to add to my obsessive collection. These pinecones
remind me that I too have dropped, naturally, from
my source - laying flat on an unforgiving surface, unable
to dig into softness and sprout.

Breaking bonds and bonds broken,
adding a slight shock of unpredictability
to an otherwise stagnant formation,
adding a wider scope, or memories
to later inhabit - small fields
where there is no viable substance,
only leftovers and
open space.

Thirst

Mapping out oblivion, putting
lines where there are no lines. Like the small moths
that live all year in my closet, nibbling at clothes
I forget to wear,
making a feast with what has been discarded -
I feel connection, but only at one end,
like cutting eyelids
out of clay: Finger-made eyes that cannot see,
cannot approach my trembling body, gaze over it
and crack the distance.

Entering this thirst like entering a church,
climbing wide stone steps,
being bombarded with that floral, incense smell, or
like warring with a round whitish eucharist wafer,
stuck to the roof of my mouth.
There is no garment to keep me warm,
no thistle to swallow, scarring
all the way down. There is only the afterbirth of this thirst,
void of the fattened wail, shadow, the kind
the TV traps in its frame.

How am I to dissipate this growing, encroaching wave, rest
like before, when my mouth was not so dry, rest
on a raft, my head leaning over, under seawater,
conversing calmly and feeling one with
schools of curious but contented swimmers?

What it is I want

To die this death and not be reborn,
to exit this tepid wake, be stopped
from forming and maturing in this blistering purgatory
of unleavened bread, not be a DNA strand, mutating
perfectly fine habits, or disrupting rituals to count on.

I cannot count on staying adjusted, same
as the everyday banker or any other grownup
whose disappointments have been diluted by the memory
of endearing acceptance and arms that reach
from behind so that all weight can fall, so that shoulders
can loosen and kisses can be established.

I want to tear at the tendon heels of uncertainty,
be simple as a dog in a happy home with dark eyes
and easy affection, be someone not sucked of colour -
sharp hairs protruding from every pore, a poor
collection of broken rocks that no bricklayer
would set his trowel down for and gather.

I want to be exposed as a lit lighthouse, as a mother
dealing with her temper-tantrum child, be circled,
again and again, entwined, tightened hard around,
clenched, wanting
only this tension, stillness, awakening here,
before the plummeting pulse,
before the movement of ecstasy, wanting nothing else
more, ever again.

Find me

Can I see it? Gravity like glue
or something more substantial like
the sigh of a sick child. Find me like
an open tulip, smooth, tangible liquid. Find me
like science is found enhancing the faint glow of
an almost-faith. I am reeling with need, chosen to bend
into this desperation as hips bend forward,
seeking the electric dimension of togetherness. I must be
an oversized squid under deep layers of ice, unaware
of such things as galaxies and weather -
breathing in my cold hell,
shipwrecked in this cavern of isolation. I must be unable
to love - impatience burrowing into me, past
muscles, touching the skin beneath skin. Yielding, I am
yielding to its mouth, subterranean pressure,
feeling the anxiety of knowledge
that disinfects each particle until
it is made nude, until it is like a knife-tip to the cornea
or a standing ovation given to all that swells to capacity,
pushes even further, then explodes.

Morning is beautiful. I am planting.
Will you find me, honour the primrose
on my veranda, maybe even snip one,
take it to your table and dream of a voice
other than your own?

Emptied

I am tired God
of the lack, invisible
corroded treasures,
deciphered, enciphered
throughout the day. I need you
final in my palm. There is this cup,
a spoonful of nectar, only. Knowing so
small like a traveler who cannot see
beyond the knick-knack souvenir, only
this spoonful and a house too quiet in the
early mornings, not enough connection - a wave
that never crests, metal made into nothing.
I need to build, soak myself in this feral blizzard
approaching, always just approaching. Why can't I
have flour? Be someone alive, with wings and a face
of pure stone? Why is your love so tenuous, powerful
sometimes, and then, wispy, hardly registering?
I remember a planet I once tread upon - spiked, clustered
grass, almost blue, but in the sunshine, it was not
a colour that had a name. I want that rawness back,
a festival of sights and sensations,
constant like a ringing bell, ringing
out a perpetual harmony. I want to stop struggling
in this cemetery, mourning things I've never had.
If you would tell me where to watch,
what to do with this trampled voice. If
I could receive a waterfall. God, I am getting older, younger
somehow than when I started. You brought me
here, away from sensual flavours and the mountains' pulse.
Put salt on my lips, paint me, now, please
in turquoise.

Without

A country lawn immaculately pruned,
extracted of weeds and anthills and the dead bodies
of its once small inhabitants.
It is nourishing to sing. Some
confuse music with water, resist the stark call
of your harsh features and quiet undertones of control.
Some don't like to sit on lawns, would rather be on
a compost heap, digging for eggshells or even half a fruit.
Some need to dance when they should be standing still,
unable to earn medals or be garlanded with
authority's praise. Tadpoles in a bitter pond –
sperm that cannot grow feet or claim a grown-up form.
They flush out of your system. And every flight they attempt
is arrested by you, you who are surface smooth with smiles,
but underneath, you are stretched cold rubber,
cracking like those lines framing your chin,
or like a flame to a tree,
you crack moist-with-life digits into splinters.
You should let the mad-ones go to India,
trace a path up Tibetan mountains.
You should be pleased to see them go, away
from your boarding school,
not there to tug your pierced ears or point out
your visceral smothering of the gentle dreamers.
They will go anyway.
They will stand in front. Not because they want to
but because they are not soldiers like that,
forming their destinies
in boxes. You can stay in corridors, make trenches
by pacing the patterns
of your congealed thoughts. You can be anyone
you want.

better

**Strips of clouds,
pink-grey like a snail snatched
from its shell. So many days I waited, waiting
like that snail for permanent protection, waiting
as an activity to delve fully into.**

**Nirvana was coming. I saw it traced
on the dated sidewalk, etched on the curvy luster
of a raccoon's still spine and in the devotion
of the rock dove waiting for its one decided love.**

**Nothing was ever enough to saturate my yearning.
Even for a moment, to remember a time before birth,
before the furious fluttering engine ulcerated
my stomach lining, or before my sanity became a soft noise,
fading. I could hear it like a basic desire I was forced
to forgo - sex, unquenched - like that but even
more. Like a crinkled cloth left on the subway floor,
I waited - dry, malformed, avoided.**

**The basement air is grooming me for an alien awakening,
maybe fluorescent, possibly ordinary, but better than
this sitting, tipping sideways on a broken chair.
Salt lamp on, a little fireplace or miniscule sunshine shining,
crumbling between my fingers, waiting
no more, moving at last
to another corner.**

Stay

Fine as a flake of mica
was the vow we made
decades ago, when any
syllable could be forgiven
and the substance of dull horror
was just imagination. That vow has grown into
more than a vegetable - consumed,
vitamins mashed, tolerated.
It is much more than an idealized place or perfect pillow.
It is what we made here, heroes to our own love,
bypassing blame, slaughtering resentments, screaming
through headlocks or when kneeling on the bathroom floor,
bonded to the midnight turn and years of heavy lifting.
My love, remember us again, don't be acid or an orchard
of terrible ivy, fill yourself with renewed determination.
You know
my hands have never been mild, never stroked the molten
skin of treason. Can't you be my pomegranate,
my gunpowder? Don't polish your shoes.
I like them dirty. I like these walls,
even the crayon marks tracing up and down the stairway.
I am not lying. I could die here, with you -
table wine on the shelves,
children on every floor, and us, searching
for lilies in our garden,
making burnt cupcakes, regretting none
of our history.

I would not thirst

**in damp places, a voice
exterminated, unable to thrive. I would not
spend hours rubbing the luxurious surface of eyelids and
label my longing 'hallucination'.**

**The body of a tree like the folded skin
of an old woman's belly or thighs once moulded
in sensuous smoothness, speaks to me with throbbing
distinction - centuries of living wood, and furniture
is all I own.**

**I would dig and drop a new geography, build an island.
I would ink fruit - a mango, one berry - and never
colour it in. I would not be this passage
of demolished dreams or like the guitar
that is hiding bones in its hollow. I would keep my hands
together, laying the rest of me over your accepting body
and press - clutching a pending exuberance
then becoming a laser, accurate with mutual crescendo.
If the onion was eaten and this gasping storm
would pass, I would not wear my housecoat or ask
to stretch my legs. I would fumble but
I would not thirst**

Linked

by a permanence,
stronger than victory, smelling
you, the minerals you wear and
layers of unwashed clothes.

You are a medical philosopher, stuck on practical theory,
an airplane too dangerous to fly beside
the birds. I am one of those feathery few
who long to burn in your backdraft. I smile
everytime you repeat something funny.

Often, you are the music
and I am listening, squinting at
another region where turtles devour minnows
for sport and vinegar tunnels behind the eyes. Open.
You keep me open when I want to be a needle, nothing more
than a knife, or a pocket of pins.

When I want to wear stockings, you pick me a station
to stop at and tell me to gather burrs -
burrs, up and down my legs, hot as a ripped fingernail or
being showered with poison.

How can I not respect you? Not think you my magnificent
other-half? How could I stay here without you, withstand
any small wound or other
destined occupation?

Something found

Babyskin and bare,
these roots protrude from
the steady earth, assaulted
by squirrels digging and the sleet
of nocturnal phantoms.
Breath, I need to breathe like being
touched and not so alone, received
in male waters and a female sky, accompanied
by tirades of kisses, kissing jellyfish and crows.
I need to move my eyes slowly across piano notes,
type each sad circumstance, shine my injury like
a just-bronzed statue and wait to be collected.
But the salt is fresh like thunder, entering my mouth,
making its way dryly down my throat and I am tired
of bitter happenstance that is boundless
with surprises, never
worthy of a relieving smile. I am centred in this silence,
anticipating a hunt or legs I can conjoin
with my own. Flowers are small.
I can hear trains in the morning
when windows are stubbornly closed,
when I am walking and it is dark,
and the space around fills me with the ache
of unintended solitude.

Rapture When Walking

Celestial pine and
words like this that stick
to the roof of my mouth -
tight, tense, forceful like flesh
compressed, elongated. These fattened senses, I sense
it is not normal to look at the bodies of
trees and see a mouth, a breast, hips in
permanent thrust, thrusting into to the grey mass
of clouds that are brought frequently
to their bloated threshold then drained in a steady relief.
I know all animals are naked and people
think themselves clothed, but vanity and the undercurrent
of striving are photographs etched on their exposed arms,
necklines. Sometime I might lift my lips,
press them completely into the vines,
step a day onto another's shore, lose my gender
and be drenched.
Sometimes, I feel you like a prying lover, impatient with our
differences, anguished by the things that separate us.
You have no use for me, alone.
You claim victory, destroy my shell
and make us join, make me not so small but swallowing
everything that is you, like smoke inhaled or
perfume on the tongue. You again, and that
is good because you must know how much I need this chaos
exploding, lingering, desperate to find synchronicity,
then arriving - order and beauty, exact. You must know.
You gave me an eyelid. And I am arriving
sweet, silk, surrounded
to this place. My God, I am
home.

Coiled

Keep it. Always.
Well built, like literature.
This birthplace and then, into
the weighted wind. I am scarcely
bearing it, palpitating, counting
palpitations, high on this kundalini drug. Today,
I will say nothing, be elusive as a shy-man's smile.
I can't stand the crumbs. Eating for nourishment only,
one grape, this fabric - covering, menial, not warm.
I can't plant daffodils in January. You know
everything I gave you was purely accident,
not meant for you to treasure. How else can I be beautiful?
How else can this legend not be broken, but be a masterpiece
in your eyes? My tree. My front crawl.
I need to lead, callous with my intentions.
Because there is more at stake
than the digging up of remnants, more than
you and me and this mortuary of foiled ambitions.
On the couch. In the bedroom. Armpits, ripe and enticing.
You built a city. I entered. But this is my ecstasy.
There is something growing. I need release,
space to expand my fleshy torment. Damn you.
Gleaming like a little sun, gorgeous
and calm, edging out so many possibilities.
Damn you. I want to descend from this height, leave
these messy corridors, not needing you, not needing
your fire opal tongue skimming my skin,
pointed deep into my chasms. You are barricaded
in convention, denying everything
we are supposed to die for, everything,
you promised, we would,
together, own.

Myth

It is not the same as being limited
by loneliness, these feelings of broken fidelity,
abandonment. It is not enough to germinate
in this grief, pleading for a picture
of better times, appealing to
memory, sentiment, knowing
I could be wrong.

Those days, married
to your insatiable outpourings, ecstasy
just to listen, to share our minds - walking
on streetcar tracks at 4 a.m. and never sleeping.
I carried you like a book, wilting always in life, but never
when mingled with your stature. Between us,
nothing was spoiled, not soft either.
I was delivered by your high forehead and
by your crazed emotions. I was celebrating.

If it was only
paper flowers, a painted-on sunrise or
imagined completeness, in that time, I was
devoured by my own individuality, stripped
of my conditioning, a person to reckon with, lean on -
whole. I was so much better than I am here, as I am
salvaging a heartbeat from habit,
marked by a used-up destiny,
just me with these crippled hands, bare feet, no mentor
to merge with, nothing
to follow.

Trickle

It takes rich waters
to feed your body. Your body
is a neighbourhood of curvy undercurrents
where people smile but the sidewalks are
frozen. You own nothing pure. You would
like to shed yourself of femininity, yet still
be seductive as ouzo - licorice, clear, burning.
Murder, knowledge, both are too absolute for you but
being found like a rare coin, that would be special,
something you could sink your teeth into.
Instead, you are a trophy beside many,
on a shelf, in a corner, lack-luster, cramped, barely legible.
Your belly has hardened. That
is supposed to be a good thing. Not for you. You,
who craves honour, never wanting any effort or desire,
unmatched, unmet.
You are not ready even for a mirage -
your body drained of its natural oils.
I would feed that body. I would consummate with you
and bear you twins. Even that is only a platform
and not the means to travel. Because
it takes rich waters to feed you,
and this thin-stream garden hose
will never quench you or, you know,
make you happy.

Changing skins

Months behind my eyes, splicing nerves, bonds,
virtues that have kept me solid.
As I look, my desires are dilating,
taking more in, red with surrender
and wanting to germinate but not here,
not beneath this sheet, but in the breeze,
to grow special, purer than a weed, expand,
not interacting with the elements but part of
them, geometrical, saving space, knowing passion like
a labour - confined to a pattern, somehow
boundless. Joy. I stand a virgin in your honeymoon.
I am made up of sunsets and dreamy afterglows. I am
putting this on, demanding as intoxication, kneeling in this
costume, assuming I am dependable, but
I am not. I should close these shutters, marry
a soft genuine smile. I should care more. So much
that is done is done, fatal, heavy as a hanging. If I could
dig behind my sockets and make a window, I would. I would
walk away, but lust is water, and more than lust
is worth every star.

Madness like Medicine

I have waited for you
in the hours before the bursting dawn,
smelt your metamorphosis in the
open refrigerator, while you slept,
knowing nothing of your own power,
blistering, lifting through the sheets -
flesh crying out, laying over a door that will not open,
a door that gleams like a set of false teeth, with an
unattainable aura - gleaming Venus with plump
breasts and a lustful smile or Zeus with his absolute
authority, dominating your backside, your frontside, even
the interior plane of your strangling moods. You,
I have poured everything down the sink for,
not eating and not
anemic, but waiting - at peace with my jealousy
and my impatience. Will you hand me your slumber
of self-defeat and bitterness? I am not a dove.
I have slaughtered millions. I have waited.
Are you spreading, gathering, ready to be stripped? Still
sleeping, my lover, tight in your exile? Still brilliant,
but only in dreams? It is time for a shower -
to claim your nakedness.
We have no use for memories. We are lavish and
you are bare and brave and you do not believe it,
but you are ever so strong, at the moment just
before perishing, exposing
your warm, undeniable
seed.

Do not define me

**Do not define me
as a woman, or a wheel
of rolling curves, with lipstick
in my pocket and perfect polish on my shoes.
I am not interested in shoes.
I carry this body with two breasts
and I have born and raised children
like a sacred treaty between the unmarked countries
of time and infinity. I have loved with two arms,
lived with thoughts of Schopenhauer in my sleep
and nurtured the orphan pup. Do not define me -
my sexuality is not confined to the tender receiving sigh,
not to the congregation of gossip and giggles
and the making of apple strudel. I do not knit,
though I bow to the knitters
more than I do to the intellectuals, and gossip bores me.
Talking bores me unless it is about God or the many ways
we are given to love - children, animals, art.
(Lover's love I only speak about in poetry, because that is
private). Do not define me. I would love to be
straight lines, proudly hanging, perfectly clear.
I would like to be brutal. Women can be brutal,
can be like a smile -
gloriously giving, razor sharp, androgynously
beautiful.**

Too Long

It has been minutes maybe days since I felt
your warm tongue trace the blades of my back.
It has been too long in isolation,
away from your loins, the trembling
of your barely-believing hands and voice,
telling me we are larger than any love,
like druids or those so deep they have no religion.
It has been like living with a cramp in every toe,
walking, searching for a fountain to bury my wishes in
and finding only denial in every eye, alien expression,
computer distraction and political nuances. It has
broken me. It feels as if it has broken me, except
when we are together, when our monastery re-appears
and your fingers flicker, strumming out a conversation,
honouring the strength of God - sensual as thunder lacing
the sky and all that lives under the sky.
It has been a rapid stirring, a slow removal of my self-esteem
- too long without your orchestrated breath and you
cutting,
cutting through.

You Would Not Have Me

**I would have taken the whole of you
in one hand, guiding you
through the pressured caverns of
a multi-layered release, and not let go
until your anguish was exposed and then relieved.
But you would not have me,
immune to my inferno and my skin
electrified with desire
for you to hold me, tuning out a rhythm on
my clustered nerves. You would not have me,
not slice such intensity with your tongue, not offer ease,
just a little ease, to my rising frenzy. And you,
stoically contained, flirting with a superficial smile
and with those blind to your tall form. I could have
freed you into the depths
where ugly things wake to a surprising beauty,
glowing with rapture, like a last breath
before surrender. You could have
been mine.**

Moments Before Merging

I wait for you, veiled with fear like eyes are
when the body's on its way to slaughter.
I take your focus into my sterile forest
running through you but never planting beside you.
I am muddied dead leaves and you are
more open than a robe of welcoming
intimacy. My thoughts in the shower - my desires
spread out and flood rooms, rise against
the walls - picture frames, memories
consumed. I call to you. But you are mature and perfect
like a psalm or an ancient turret I can climb up and into -
surrounded by your history. I can shut myself in. I can
wait. And it is you, only, and everything I am
is so tightly woven into this anticipation.

Like Clothes, Concealing

**Framed like a deer's head trophy
or a t-shirt that says 'I have been there'.
Archangels know you in the asylum's corner,
all frantic hands and wild eyes - empty as stillbirth.
The vanity of caring filling you with bile,
filling you with rotted fruit. Cyanide
on the table. You will take it and be sad. You will
shut all the doors and bear the darkness as you do,
descending into the winter months.
You can hardly speak anymore without wondering
what you are doing - speaking, fostering
loose connections, habitual pleasantries and what-not.
Why not be naked and not bother with the result?
Why not kill all hope and just pray?**

River

I will run my breath across your eyelids,
go to you, trace the edges of your hands,
finding infinity inside your torment. I will
drift into you like wind and you will not mind
my lips like a concentrated shadow on your skin,
darkening but leaving no weight. You will let me
be inside your picture, a background to your lyrics,
softly at first, I will heal the red in the whites of your eyes.
I will release my wardrobe for you and you will be the mania
that I climb through to reach tranquility. I will
cup your flesh and stretch you through this intimacy because
I own you as you own me and it is not a bad thing, not
blasphemy or anything
to fear. It is your hands, mine - these
poignant burial grounds that have been excavated,
these days of standing close, depending upon the ease
of our mutual exposure. I will speak in your ear and you
will step into my voice
like stepping into a river.

At the door

strenuous circulation, eclipsing slow knocking
for a faster ring - two times, ten times - no number
is sufficient to enlist satisfaction.

I am fatigued but not maturing, still devolved,
using sluggish generalizations with ingrained attitudes
of defeat - owner of tedium and isolation.

I circle the entrance, attempting to widen what
I trace but there is no way in, no probing
magnificent enough to fracture the tight curve,
and my spirit is different than it was when incense
eased my fixations. Chapter books
are passed over. Details do not help nor
do the angels when they sit beside me as they are now -
their hands over my neck and waist, and their low voices
humming to keep me swallowing, to keep me
from being swallowed: Nothing has changed
since I was 16 and I left my home. I circle - my tongue
a witness to the locks upon the gate. Index finger, thumb -
their dexterity and desire circling,
wanting sensual ownership, malleable distances
narrowed and overridden, wanting to be
crazed with fullness, to turn the lamp on and read,
not have impatience rack across my flesh like it is
like surgical lasers and flashing letters I do not need.
Because I need
a way in - to clean my house of this disordered ignorance,
to dive across the equator, burying myself in the heated air -
become an instrument of refraction, drilling into
unheard syllables, taste what's inside this closed-off cavity
and be received.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: The Brooklyn Voice; Elephant Journal; Misfits' Miscellany; Leaf Garden Press; The Foliate Oak Literary Magazine; Out of Our; InnerChild Press; Taj Mahal Review; Whisper; Tophat Raven; Chicago Record Magazine; Anchor & Plume: Kindred; The Weary Blues; Ayris; The Kitchen Poet; Bare Hands Poetry; The Muse - An International Journal of Poetry; Collective Exile; Blue Lake Review; Split Lip Magazine; Triage Monthly; Pocket Thoughts; The Mind(less) Muse; New Binary Press Anthology; Dead Snakes; The Writers Newsletter; Wax Poetry and Art Magazine; Tic Toc Anthology; Jotter United Lit-zine; The Voices Project; Guwahatian; Jellyfish Whispers; Peeldeel's Blog; The Undertow Review; Napalm and Novocain; Bold Monkey; The Drunken Llama; Rusted Rose Poetry Forum; The American Aesthetic; Kind of a Hurricane Press; Scars Publications; Creative Talents Unleashed; Winamop; WritingRaw; Cosmonauts Avenue; The Miscreant; RoguePoetry; Calliope Magazine; SpinRock Reader Lit Forum; Rasputin; Change Seven Magazine; Think Pink, Pink.Girl.Ink Press; Occulum; Viral Cat; The VGP Literate; Of/with; Your One Phone Call; Indiana Voice Journal

Reviews of "The River is Blind":

"Allison Grayhurst's poetic prose is insightful, enwrapping, illuminating and brutally truthful. It probes the nature of the human spirit, relationships, spirituality and God. It is sung as the clearest song is sung within a cathedral by choir. It is whispered as faintly as a heartbroken goodbye. It is alive with the life of a thousand birds in flight within the first glint of morning sun. It is as solemn as the sad-sung ballad of a noble death. 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. *The River is Blind* is a must-read," *Eric M. Vogt*, poet and author.

"Throughout *The River is Blind*, Allison Grayhurst employs reiterated tropes of swallowing and being consumed, spatial fullness and emptiness, shut-in, caverns, chasms, cavities; angels, archangels, blasphemy, psalms; satiation or starved. With a conceit of unrequited sex as "my desire", nocturnal emissions, awakening in the morning, the poet lives at capacity, uninhibited, dancing," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.

"One of the best contemporary poetry books I have read and my favorite by Allison Grayhurst. I have this book, *The River is Blind*, in paperback and find I come back to it often. I am very impressed that her poetry just oozes quality and in all ways gets my mind thinking. If you read poetry I highly recommend it, if you also write this is a great way to spend a couple of hours soaking in the quality and subject matters. The poems are spiritual and uplifting and I have never found any of her poems to be dull or depressing nor ever too hard to read. More life affirming each time I read one and I am always glad to have done so," *Bruce Ruston*, poet, photographer, founding editor of *The Poetry Jar*.

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; www.allisongrayhurst.com

Contact the author:

allisongrayhurst@rogers.com

www.allisongrayhurst.com



“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 Editons; 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*.

"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 of 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, author of *Wigford Rememberies*.



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four times nominated for "Best of the Net", 2015/2017, she has over 1125 poems published in over 450 international journals and anthologies. She has 21 published books of poetry, six collections and six chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay.

Barcode Area

We will add the barcode for you.

Made with Cover Creator