



Allison Grayhurst

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

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

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(Volume 5 of 5)

Wallpaper Stars
Walkways
Fire and more,
The Fault of Sages

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 5 of 5)
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Allison Grayhurst ∞ Wallpaper Stars



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Ripples

Dirty dish, I lift
and know I am holy.

Does it matter or mean
my feet are mine,
though they cramp,
and my skin is a littered shore?

After moving in, it makes no sense to dream about
round planets or miracles hunted down
between spaces, in the flesh of dark stars.

Blessings come like other conditions, feeding,
filling, then the fish is hooked and the river goes on.

How many cupcakes can I keep? Not many. Not one.

At night I wake up absolute,
solid as a never-touched stone.

I stare at the clock and have conquered time.

For that time I am the best thing of all things to be.

For an instance, I am more than metaphor, I am witnessing.

In the day I hold out for a fickle hand's generosity,
sweeping floors and making beds.

What a hot rhythm to keep, like kisses and eclipses
of sexual elation.

**Two thousand eons, and the cosmos continues
as a body just born.**

**Spotlights and warm lights, my love is my fulcrum,
he carries me entirely in the dips above his clavicles.**

**He mixes me incandescent colours, enters me
like wings tightly folded, plunging into sea,
coaxes me to thicken, be a builder, take what I can
and build.**

The laws that find me bind me

**heavy and wasted
as in the first weeks of lost love,
as if the lifting song of summer sank in the bog
of my many crippled attempts at salvation.**

**Loose skin around the cheekbones.
Fissures repeat kaleidoscope visions.
Snake bites on my ankles like
the opaque rules of tedious afternoons, trying
to cut clean into a full separation the already divided wind.**

**Exhibitions and energy not worth keeping.
Anger resolves with an ethereal kill,
making and placing food on the table to limit the direction
of desire. Desire to stalk a pale flame
and grow a core of heat, but instead
snipped and clipped at the meridian centre,
pitted against love at its softest point. Love
at its most isolating point,
flayed across a concrete pyramid, inside
a Minotaur-maze of forgotten exit passages.**

Dealt and received, a stack of conditions
that can never be lifted or walked away from.

I will speak because
the explosive veined-sun dominates our Earth's universe,
and bloody barren corpses infiltrate the ground, calling upon
mealworm dialogue - calling for useless conversation,
eating makebelief applecore practicalities and gossip seeds
like 'Bobok's people in various degrees of decomposition.

Let me live on the rooftops, away from the ghosts
puffing up their tufts with spintop epilogues of I, I, I, and God
in all four pockets - enslaved, once-beautiful divinity,
to sloppy-string opinions and ritualized overload.

Great stained-glass eyes of the one eye, where are you?
Only the sound of a shallow drumbeat drumming,
plunging me into this sewer-tunnel template, dangerous
as the planet we are all forced to manoeuver on.
Save me from cherished traditions and filing-cabinet dreams.
Save me from my bodily needs. Transform me into
an angel or into the one transformed from the angel -
never to come here again,
except to hold my only true love
and to cradle close the heads of my sleeping children.

Under mosaic whisperings

**and cesspool attempts at betterment, spiritual
or otherwise, neuroses rise raw to the lips
to sip on again like the new day's dew.
Hoisting up fences or spring saplings, laying
out books to see their titles and choose
between that or combustion. Enchantments shed
to make way for awareness that glimpses nirvana -
particles of burnt-out folly, at times, pervading.
Bytes are streaming beaming supernova synchronistic
melting downs, past thresholds that cannot be returned from
or spoken about. Density surrounds
like the deep moist grey cold innards of a cloud.
Fish on a stick, in a stream, going around -
whirlpool blackholes to vanish in and touch upon an echo.
Giving in to the storm, giving over to the voice repeating,
compressing joy and urgency into a single crescendo.
Three days left to saw down the dead tree
and sweep the bird droppings from the driveway.**

**In three days the winds will pick up, and
looking out schoolbus windows, children
will be arriving at the campground,
close to letting loose, like lavender flowers
anticipating their first sunrise bloom.**

Complete, but

to no avail. Sitting as a new house sits
on its lot, needing occupants.
Sewer sludge, soiled napkins, anthills
too late underfoot. Held up by restlessness in the many gardens
of Mount Sisyphus, heave-hoe to the point
of rudimentary madness. Windows I look through, birch trees
I stop at to collect nuances, rest like the sparrow in hopeful
camouflage, wearing myself down with unrealizable dreams.
If I had claimed myself a calling
as a chaplain - ritualized pacing in university halls, my arm
around youth, accompanying my affection
with a spiritual smile, then I would have
the certainty of some kind of career, not be a carved body
on fire, totem of tripwires and earthquakes.
If I was a young starling neck deep in uncut grass,
pecking at exposed roots, I would be
sky, downspout, bush, tip of a cross on a steeple,
cured of isolation, taking flight and landing when I choose and
I would choose a fenced-in backyard

**where a boy's imagination owns the splintered bench, weeds
and a dug-up secret hole. I would watch that boy plot his course
and leap, knowing no separation,
I would spread, sing
and fold.**

Sanctum

**Cedar wood, dark spaces under wood
where beetles mate then hide their own. There,
you smile, your forehead groomed
of false expression. I study you like my one-chance solution,
or steps to take to shield me from this penetrating boredom
that slips unwanted under my heavy housecoat.
Narwhales shaped like epigrams, like the undecipherable
complexities in the creases of your folded hands.
You are taut as a sail in a strong wind, capable of
unmatched speed, stretched, though not even
close to ripping.**

**If you were a tree, 100 years and on, pulling sunlight
from its throne, shimmering green, a stronger brilliance
than a vault brimming with polished gold,
still you could not be better than what you are -
sitting close to the corner, on the couch,
unwashed hair and an irritated mouth,
reluctantly waking into the noon-light, drinking coffee,
salted, sometimes sorrowful, mostly spring-time budding –**

**a supplier of oxygen, maker of songs received
as storm-sturdy harbours, worlds to land on,
dig or nest or claim a hole, many branches,
many escape routes, many life-saving homes.**

Ceramic-tile stuck

I cannot say the rim
is soft enough or that there is any place
I can be strong, afford myself aggression, brick-throwing,
penetrate for the sake of alteration,
for the possibility of scattering pieces of my tongue
on the train-tracks of thoughts of giving
“just enough to get a person through.”
Sober after the feast, air-raids and pumpkin smashing,
navigating the basement where floods happen and things
must be cleaned or thrown out.
In the bed, in the well-wishers award book, carving, craving
to be told that everything I wished for is owned,
not on loan - assimilated into the higher oblivious machine.
It is impossible to be noble without newness,
to taste liberty, remembering
this cold world is the necessary formula
to make remarkable heroes.
I can go to work collecting and stacking beach stones,
each atop of each, just such and such, let them sing
to someone’s eye. I can make water from the sun,
sipping the moon’s weeping.

I can run down the street with a white shirt on.

**If I had a white shirt, I could wear it, rolled-up sleeves,
and run.**

If it is empty then it is empty

**Perishing like wasps in wet tar,
we can't claim an answer
but only wear our raincoats, acting out
past wounds, meditating by watergardens where
amphibians breed, owners of the pond.
Perishing enough to create parables
to be sold to our advantage,
holding hands in the summer or after a bath.
We look through windows, keeping
vigil with homebound strangers, unlocking cupboards,
storing gifts on laundryroom shelves. We welcome
the red squirrel, make love most afternoons, tie-dye our t-shirts,
burning colours hotter at the edges.
We meet old mentors perishing,
drunk and mutated, mentors who taught us
to read the lines in our palms, how to find music underwater,
poetry under siege, sometimes showing us
the pitter-patter pace of caterpillars on a damp park lawn.
Depths pushing out like a well-nourished womb,
depths we perish in, drained of desire,**

**listless in the light. Don't bother complaining,
we were made to perish, grow a revolutionary peace
in the crisp leaves of burnt sage, discover mercy
in a backwards fall.**

Undertow

Somehow I stood
dark and brave below the deck, in small spaces
emptied of shadows and science.
The walls took advantage of my privacy,
and before I could collect my wealth
I was tied to the mast of a pillaged and
hacked-away ship, joining the races
of hunted whales and tentacle creatures.
Dissecting the storm at my feet, seeping into
my lungs, I promised myself to live my last moments
without envy or rage. It was easily done
until my ropes became loose and I rose to
catch a breath, catch sight of my splintered sea-house
where there was wood all around - dead bodies of comrades,
but no sharks, no children needing my protection.
I promised myself another promise,
to die in meditation, fixing on the sky, transferring my pain
and crushed confidence to the stars' philosophy of afterglow.

It is a long time to be still and look up.
It must be a painter's journey. I must learn

**to sprout roots from the tips of my frozen toes,
knowing water is not earth and earth
will never be a sailor's deathbed or home.**

Grazing on the flow

**Devouring permanence,
feeling victory, our vanity
disintegrating like my grandfather's did
travelling on eastern train tracks, king of his meadow.
The passage between structure and collapse carries us,
is the flowing force that pierces oblivion - a drink
of clean water, a seductive neck pulse courting emergence.
I know we have hit bottom, but
we keep sinking like thorns into flesh,
like dew into the puny pores of a leaf.
Between us is the vantage point, where we see
angels contemplating on dead planets, using those planets
to echo their private songs,
swelling and sobbing, gathering rocks
to remain heavy enough not to float back
into the mouth of God.
Entropy is a shattered equation. The moon creaks
and splits, absorbing humanity's disappointment.
Our gifts rise up mute - balloons let loose on a drizzling day.**

**I love you under water where I like looking
into your eyes. I love what is between us when truth does not
torment, when I imagine our paths like my grandfather's
when he rode, relinquishing status, etching out his destiny
on a brokendown caboose, offering jewels of coal.**

Saltwater Sprint

A returning dream ruffled in my shell,
opening intermittent passages of discovering.

Crossbreezes and singular infinity,
by death and dying you buy me whole.

The slug's flesh merges miraculously with
the curve of a leaf - white pink on green, more potent
than a drop-cliff, than rebellion.

Stroking the skin of tree, I end up here, in the morning,
with the nesting squirrels collecting torn newspapers, swaying
with the telephone wires. Brilliance plays like chords
on the brink of chaos, almost fracturing sanity.

Suspended firm like a branch over traffic,
I hear riffs like cars arrive then leave.

Sleep, little lilac near the fence, I have learned
determination can solve most problems. Tomorrow I will make
the final break, orbit beyond the periphery of natural selection.

God, scoop me up in your cone, don't
let me doubt your goodness. If you are here,
I am living, I can let slip what I am capable of,

**create origami with infants and animals.
I can climb the steps of any probability
just to feel you press up against my rigidity,
purify with kneading pressure
a hard illumination.**

Our children are orchards

By the door

**we wait for the end of school,
for the long day to bloom
to lay to rest the tricks of superstition and our obstinate ache
to be carried to the next fertile shore.**

**Blocked, but that too must be an answer
to the polished space that compresses and invades
our waking hours.**

**Risk that comes out of despair
as a last ditch effort to not give up
has been told in chronicles, as surrendering stories
that rain away dust and heal the hunt of weighted hunger,
nourishing spiritual belonging.**

**Leaves and feathers we collect with our children,
graveyards we visit to look at lost names,
where our hands seed deeper into the Earth,
rise higher than the hawk-bird into the stratosphere of grace,**

**grace as wind we depend upon to navigate our footsteps,
to quilt together our four-way love,
cooling the cut of arduous days and pilgrimage.**

The fault of sages

Love was there
spreading hope like jam over my taste buds.
Then the first skipping rope broke,
got snared on a fence and frayed.
I stole away on a subway train where
hundreds have gone walking into a warzone.
Amen to the end and the predator's
happy-go-lucky disposition. One claw,
one tentacle, in flowing precise motion.
Another lifetime and it may be different,
tender as lovers beneath their first full moon,
or worse, like cartilage deteriorating.
I rehearsed a familiar pattern,
sabotaging memories to find a way to be holy,
to make only God matter, dismantling adult days
of calculation, days of stultifying impulses,
of consciously unplugging the push of inspiration.
I flicked the splinter and loosened its stem, learning
that every homecoming is different - some shed
their most treasured members, others,

an accommodating persona. Still others constrict
just to pitch thought and become a pulse.

Love I lifted like a heavy stone,
trying to grow flowers between sparrows' toes
where they nested and puffed up under eavestroughs,
trying to weave myself an escape in the shade,
a carpet to lie back on.

Solutions were bare,
offered crossword puzzle satisfaction
but no retreat from passengers staring
and the continuous stab of uncertainty.

Templates I now break and breathe and blow all away
into the sandalwood spring, into the eyes of my dog.
Stiff joints lend themselves to patience,
planting wings in my palm - empty spaces finally
accepted. Shadows I see take on a life of their own
and keep dancing. God I see in the sloping deformity
of all steps climbed, treacherously taken, born whole
from parallel paths of lack and yearning.

**plunging into a chilled lake,
muscles arrested, infinity found**

**Flawless sheen in a ladybug's eyes.
Elephants chain-footed, castrated at the core
without tether or lead. Burning wood.
Dead fish rocking, cold on the fisherman's hook,
hamster in a toilet paper roll, rolling.**

**It is heavy, this voice you grow outside of me,
this voice I cannot mistake for imagination.
I wake up, examine the leaves, fold dishtowels,
clean counters, feed my children,
no water to cool my fevering wrists,
no nourishment of a practical nature,
occupying no worthier devotion.
A pillaging, reflection of
a doorway. Chimes have lost
their meaning a quarter-of-a-century ago
when they chimed in a make-shift Japanese garden,
where lifetimes remembered were gumballs pocketed,
to be taken out at leisure, savoured over, replayed, role-played
then returned to compartmentalized pleasure.**

Lips move across hairlines,
back-of-the-neck lines, dry from quick breaths,
building beyond capacity, unforgiving
with controlled intent.

Waiting to be snatched
without hesitation, tasted like a ripe blueberry,
not to be a modern atheist, pruned of pure intensity,
but to be fresh as a baby's full-body smile,
cover my calendar with a satyr faith flowing,
live with dolphins, participate in a kinder society
where the privileged and pickpockets have no play,
go on a pilgrimage, take my family, disappear
on a cold high mountain, watch animals
give birth and die.

Urgency escapes me,
months merge, asking nothing in return,
pulsing a diluted vibrancy, no more
as bread or fire.

Swing from a crane
or a swinging crane in a storm.

Indulgences dig as glass into exposed roots.

Ambitious notes fail, will always fail
before a greater sun.

Spread your Fullness

**Bust and be in the damp flame of dusk
where you tongue and blow the dark
all over the sky. Then the crows
waiting out the cold night on city branches
will take it in and weep your panic.
Gifts are embryos pumping, and doorways
working to keep order. You pour yourself into a bottle,
fixing your concentration on a loose particle
until it too grinds a motion, dispersing
through fast friction into emptiness.
Hollow in the cells where substance is
supposed to thrive but cannot multiply, hijacked
by an encroaching virus, miracles
are offered as gateways or a cleansing grace
that removes the dustcloud of consequences, miracles
as alabaster rays of divine yielding, freeing
hard fragments, trapped behind bone.
You always make it, over the toothpick cliffs
you gallop across, hacking off tight-throat grips,
shedding the layers of your debris.**

**You have outlived the keepers of contrast, kissed
the pavement into a sea, equal hush and hunt.**

You do not accumulate.

**There is a cavity under the earth's crust,
where you build your broken nests, laugh like propagating
and beat again against the flags of your lineage,
like a vibration building power or
like a moist grain growing, gaining unseen.**

If I was responsible

I would sell my discipline for higher wages.

**As it is, I blame the supermarket shoppers
and the crowds of Buddha-dreamers crossing the Himalayans
pursuing visions of acceptance.**

**Survival is a closed evolution - stealth and teeth,
a method where love has no allegiance.**

**I don't want anymore, not spacecraft theories, not mornings
of self-defeating mythology or philosophical discussions.**

I don't want degrees of ecstasy or appointments.

**I refuse to grow into a ghost or budge my integrity for
a bowl of temporary fulfilment. And here, I am wrong,
don't belong with the wine-seller stockers and
the coral reef hidiers.**

**I have a garden where I walk through the tall weeds,
eliminate insects with methodical steps like squashing
the patterns of horoscopes, a place where I crush
newspaper absurdities, sidestep the reactionary circle-act,
redefining my personal salvation.**

Muse,

**like a seahorse floating forward
you are brittle and small. When you move
you barely touch the sandy ground.**

**My eye to your reflection,
forging for fundamental truths.**

Your skin to my aura, skimming the anointed flame.

**I wear you as a wig to fight off
prejudice. You lay over me like a shroud
made of woven sunlight and shade, made
to supply me with defining features
and leave an impression.**

**You are like the freeway I fell onto
when I was barely grown, rolling over
to the side, watching the car I rode in
shrink into oblivion.**

**I am a reptile in a drying-up waterhole,
cocooned in sludge, where you sniff me out,
expose my underbelly and devour.**

**Pocket knives and crushed branches,
I owe my secrets to only you.**

**Lap me into your watery mouth,
tongue-swirl me across your taste buds
unless I die, evolve, unrecognizable, and you
fairy-tale pretty, ride away on a mild tide, saying
it is over.**

Growing the grey

Splendor is stolen.

**I call high but am dammed
to the form of a lesser magic.**

**In captivity it is harder to communicate
the truth, to find the altar of happiness.**

All things I have are stolen.

**From a ship dismounted, I landed
and stole. I am always stealing and losing
God, cracking the cup of my direction.**

**Bodies exist to understand the brutality of loneliness,
to yield first to breath, then to sex and then to death.**

When I was a candle I had the courage of a candle.

**Planets I once walked upon are dead. Could I have been a child,
and now I am not? How is it possible to give up
the solidity of imagination?**

**Take me back through the ice-cross in the skylight, into the glow,
sniffing cool blue-green spores - smells purer than spin.**

**Caves and stars, coloured covered canvases
melting into unison. Alchemy as I walked, dissolving
into the flesh of constant spring, as I walked,
sprouting the nuclei of many mountains.**

Making up questions

to fog the edge of our clarity.

We journey along, colourful,
undressing, resting little, opposite
of taking a stance, a stand against
another's point of view.

Would it flash when we crack, and
would the wind take us six beats closer
to our death, offer some refuge from
the tedium tick of reiterating rituals
fueled by habit? Acclimatized. But not up here,
on the dry dry plain, freed of proselytizing
and rivers fat with this food, that
cup of water. We have been warm and now we are shot,
unable to don our dilemmas well. There is no
easy-to-open window or entourage
to hook us up with a ladder,
no place under the bed or in the linen closet to hide
and give hope in spite of the ensuing horror.

We leap to explore, though inertia is always the obstacle.
Problems seduce like textures, filling the talk. I saw it all
in some gum stuck under the table,

**as we dined on our ripened suffering, and our veracity ended
in another fool-hardy freeze.**

Fundamentally, we are our own culture.

We are crazed as lit candles by the vent.

**We can't love with logic, be hairy-legged sages, casual
at the fork in the road, conjuring a capacity for true meditation.**

**We can't be nurtured with formalities
or play-acting acts of kindness.**

Soldier

**Bleed and cup my blood
into the robe of your ever-after.
Be on your feet and bark at the joy
that lit fire and now is nowhere.**

**Spider in my sink, spider that is holy.
I want to kill you, but I will not. Today,
I empathize with your scurrying fear
and how you dangle, almost flying.**

**How long must I sleep beside the lizards, with
their devouring claws and eclipsing cold scales?**

**In a river, the laundry was made. Soft and thunderstruck,
you are in an open yard, counting rooftops
and dewdrops simultaneously, keeping in time
with the innate music that saturates your origami mind.**

**Breastkisses, bellykisses. It started and it is
rushing, restless and rained-on. You know a place
where traffic will not find us, where fingertips are never afraid**

of fondling, and noise is floating overhead like a weather balloon.
Insanity scrapes the insides of shells until all flesh is gone,
consumed by a dead-hour echo of a pulse.
Step on me, I want to be stepped on, torn
apart by a moth. Gritty nails and wrinkled throats.

You give pressure to the cord. I am
losing myself to the undercurrent surfacing -
thwarted by my own aggression and desires growing
a thousand eyes.

Bridges everywhere I will not cross because I have crossed
into a more real role. I don't smile unless I feel it. I feel it
hardly looking at pictures. But at you,
it is different, always established that I will fall backwards
into the water for you and you will be warm for me,
lap at my earlobes, under my knee caps, morphing your
temporal needs with my own. Faith, you said,
cannot be a part-time affair.

You land on my petals, demonstrate
vulnerability, wise in the ways of how to gently land
and how to bud at zero speed.

Neruda

I can't be and think like you,
majestic in your sensuality,
Godless but deep with sorrow, forever restoring.
From you I see women's hips.
And though I would never care to shield kisses upon
their soft swaying mounds, your waters swell
and grow and make me long for Spanish trees,
seascapes I saw as a child. Rising male, always like a mountain,
you pick granules from the ground, place sand on your tongue
and name the sensation.

If I could be and think like you,
like a native river that has known no footprints,
gathering rowboats, families of endless generations,
my house would sing, fruit would fall and
I would hold a hand, glorify each fingernail, memorize
the exact curve of each cuticle. I would retire,
rest my shoulders on an old bed, loosely clothed,
feeling the Mediterranean heated breeze encompass me
like a lover's welcoming demand for unity. Speaking,
my words would drip like oil, gifts
of oil and bread.

Snowy

Sad as sleepy morning comes.
Soft ground to rest your chin upon,
soft like you are, in need of no one's
flag or ego-affirmation.

When you walk
children wave from car windows, elated
to see such unmasked joy - mouth in an open smile,
and eyes, happier still - dark as toiled earth, alert
to the house cat's twitching ear.

Satisfied in the full morning sun, you move
from sidewalk curb to road, sniffing at poles
and thin strands of grass
as your long clumped fur like a sheep's pleated coat
ripples in time with the end-of-summer's wafting rhythm.
Treats, stuffed toys and laying contentedly
on your back, these things are enough.

Many have tried to imitate, parading
their off-white pups through neighbouring streets:
They saw you once and wanted the same.
But you were claimed by a private angel.
Fastened to good karma,
you glow, you germinate, and you proceed.

As you sleep by the door
in and out of your doggy dreams,
you defeat the need for tomorrow's schemes.
With an unassuming soothing moan
you stretch then continue in rest,
abating the weight of my human despair.

Endure

the brilliant fractures,
repetitions of wars and slaughterhouse squeals.
Once more, brought to the tower, looking
over - so easy to sway and not think of the
consequences. So easy to crash the wine bottle
over the piano-stand and stop the bad music playing, forgetting
there are so many things better left unexplored,
like feelings that extinguish boundaries, that are soft as
loneliness or under-appreciation. Sunglasses always worn.
Endure, wait for fullness or for medication,
wait for that one hour to be adorned by another's desire,
embroidered into another clothes - when wounds and failures,
(for that hour) are reduced, overpowered.
Moon mountains and muscles, patterns build life. God,
there is creation without you - there is everything -
grandfathers, butterflies and sand dunes.
Unpredictability is glorified. Minds rejoice,
gaining rules, workable explanations. Endure,
why must I? Why, when denied

**a boat, a bed, a simple wild hand roaming? Love is absurd.
Love is you God, and you are outside of all this,
waiting for an invitation,
tender as a new mother's nipple, flowing.**

The Book

**Inside, spending all my coins, rejoicing
on ephemeral longing, on a lustful inhale
for physical redemption.**

**Hidden in the pages, I am hidden
at four in the morning, bathing in perfection,
lifting into heights that obscure drudgery.**

**Thoughts are shapes that float as shadows,
hardly solid like butter left out of the fridge.
Cages unravelling and houses cleaned of cobwebs.
Between soft book covers freedom kisses explicitly,
candy-ices without embarrassment.**

**Hanging on hinges, on barely glanced-at walls,
I gather my vision in the grass, paint on the
bones of another's life - beautiful bones and hallways
of many feet walking and swishing bathrobes.
In the book I can face forward and never fear rejection,
I can shower sensuously in warm rhythms,
tied to the stirring light of early summer.**

Love between these diary covers is not just canvass
or thick hues that merge and make a middle, it is where I will
at last know another's body as I know my own, be protected
from the torrential pawing pierce of middle-age loneliness.

Inside the book, you are under me like a bed of lavender bushes,
there are waves where once sunken skeletons rise like coral,
polished pure of their violent history.

Drowning in the book, imagining ants collecting,
synchronized on an apple core.

Bells in my head, footsteps rising, closer now,
you know me well. Inside the book, you know me better.
We are two trees - branches and roots, an interwoven crocheted
impressionistic portrait, staying through heavy storms.

Inside the book, we are creatures of greater sympathy.
You are like yarn, tied to my brush and hold, never in
the liquid valley of a distant boat, or obvious as a prickly,
rigid rope. I am mature, a woman with a ceiling to touch,
fifty feet of surrounding stillness, unfettered
from the expectations of my time and gender,
radiant, more, whole.

Deciding

Deciding to lose, coming home,
speaking of love and worn-sole boots,
knowing rest as forgiveness.

Love I see is a marriage that spares no compliment
or insult, uncomfortable as a needle sometimes,
sometimes grazing, naked, uneventful, exposed
side by side.

The bluejay owns its love - a tuft of feathery charm
and a voice that shrills across the snowbanks.

Wanting all wanting vanquished, love I see
will not tolerate averting eyes, the coveting of humming,
shining cars moving by, puts no store in the making
of breadsticks or piled-up gift certificates,
sings extreme, never nursing inner deformity's indulgent dreams
as a balm to ease the downpour of poverty.

The love I see is worth the gathering of moths,
dark circles under my eyes, horizons and hopes
of insufficient glow.

Love I know like death, exposing the vanity of turtle-shell
treasures, of keeping dried flowers and polished plaques.

**I will not cry for this world,
for love is born as a larvae emerging beetle, continuously,
is substantial as an open window, small
as the cracked-egg nourishing grace of an extended hand.**

Circle

Breathing into a brown paper bag, responsibilities
weighing me down, spreading out, hiding
in my speech, making up lies to
lie across me bare-chest and crushing.

I've slept in a pantry with roaches and a window
with a full view of an unkempt backyard,
but never did I suspect that my love would wane,
polarizing my impulses and my apathy.

There was only one choice, a card turned and midnight
streaming into my veins like celestial pull and light
into the astrologer.

Fighting is a fiddler playing - tension to maximize
the resulted genesis, or a room where rhymes
are written across the door frame. In that room I clip
my fingernails, waiting for admittance to foreplay,
something to electrify my sinews and sing.

Intimacy is a garden to plant or to let flourish
on its own accord, with eatable weeds
and dung beetles foraging.

Summer is slipping fast - with worry-wrought eyes,
under satisfied.

Summer beats its sloppy heat on my shoulders,
on eyelashes, volunteering
its blaze and affirming breath.

I remember how it happened, listening
to lost friends voices on an answering machine. Some I wish
I never lost, most just conjure memory without emotion,
sure of why the break occurred, and glad
it did.

Drip, drip dreams betrayed,
looking over old books in an old bookshop, where
I used to treasure the smell and the surprise.

Ghosts enter me, collect and layer,
amplifying their mass, personal
tangibility.

Age does not slow or still desires.

Age does not make both arms free. I am the same,

as when my phantom wings expanded,
extended,
past hydro wires and mating cardinals, touching
the misty tip of a cumulus cloud.

There are names

**and allegiances that triumph
when spoken aloud. I do not speak
these sounds or have a country
that edges near ecstasy. I have loved badly,
pessimistic, fostered a hostile vacancy
of fantastical hope. Insolent towards God
and the steady rapture that only comes with patience,
I purchased an industry that leaves no mark,
makes nothing useful
or sweet.**

**Remembering my waxed-leaf collection held
within hard cover books, and the frolicking of field mice
that burrowed patterns into my head. I sat on the bus and
I was alone. Did I know how fragile sanity was, unlocking
doors, imagining mountains on the surface of the sun?**

**Snared before my shelter broke
and I could be saved by surrender.
A thicket of needles and bushes trembling with little birds.
Contact. Glint.**

Won't something rush at me, increase my odds?

**I could send you away, then I could live
cold, complete as a reed or as an angel.**

Science will not have me. You will not let me go.

**Remembering seashells wrapped in tissue paper, in a box,
on a shelf, just above the closet floor, counting them -
rough external even ridges, glassy sheen empty pocket inside.**

Under the vines

**Ways the willow swishes freely,
washing the wind into the sun.**

**Child in a tree fort dives fearlessly,
surging with elation to and fro:**

**over snails and uncut grass,
elements passing, back against the evening sun.**

Waves are the evidence of the ocean's breathing.

**Minds run swift, masterpieces of destinations,
forming their own geography.**

**Reality burns like a blood-clot -
an over-stuffed museum, updating slow.**

**Pirates of power and horoscopes bleating,
the only refuge is to forget.**

**Out through a backyard window, the willow tree
owns both ground and sky.**

**Imagination comes as suffering's negation,
potpourri to the stench of debt and worse-things owed.**

**Destruction overtakes too easily,
like a once-hollow ditch, now satisfied with its**

**fill of bones. All needs are political. Heaven
comes close in secret Sex, immortalizing flesh,
though never arresting decay.
Child on a vine joined with the ways of the willow,
swinging, thrown-off shoes.**

Lotus

Sleep, into triumphant sleep,
waking is a tide of abysses and senses
reflecting illusions. Cursory stresses,
repairing at the bedside where my knees bent in prayer,
scuffing my skin with cosmic complaining.
I've thought about this, and I've decided
not to care if I fail at swimming or grooming or trophy-getting,
or in collecting eggwhites, having more than what I have
necessary on the table.
Love is the weathervane is the station,
earning eternity, a teaming ocean worthy of a dive.
The rest is a stunted fetus that will never coo
or be baby-dream sufficient.
I've spent too long weight-lifting chaos's hammer,
flinging myself from wall to stump.
I have eyes that hold me, another's and another's
I can take pictures of and sing to, and I wish for nothing
but to retain this fertility of tender revealing.
Children and the final history of desire,
predestined to return as a speck - own my freewill,
multiplying with the rhythm of a brighter responsibility.

**Sleep, for I've never existed
but to count this love and to love this way
personal, a cliché of bloated ignorance,
with a mouthful of famine and an armful of miniscule miracles,
gestating, spiralling, blending into the soft brown sofa,
tea in hand, leaning on another, amazed
by how good this is and how very long
this cozy reverie has lasted.**

Govinda in the mud

**This line of devotion that moves
bitterly as lust tracing unresponsive thighs,
cups a poor groan of invisible blooming,
following you underneath a diseased tree,
smelling as you spread your aloofness
and mingled your affection tighter with the dealers of denial.**

**It came to me at first in healthy moderation,
as a permit to appease my obsession. Then it grew indecent,
flushed through me like a spell, drowning
my apprentice music with your own reclusive master-drum.**

**I found you in the carcass, in the millipede's dart into the drain.
You swelled your glow across all my sunny spots, mighty,
but not brave, only bored with the circular twists
of relief, thirst and sorrow - diamond clear,
you asked for everything, wanting nothing for yourself.**

**I knitted together the practicalities of decomposition
to the voyage of your ever-increasing detachment,**

understanding what you did not - that love
is not living alone on a dried-up hill
nor is it consuming every crumb of dream-life
until the flesh is reduced to accident.

I cannot rekindle my devotion, so I must leave you
to authenticate a future. This deed of leaving is like you like
a star - old, seen many times over by many eyes,
power with no purpose but to be bright
and desolate, eating away
waves of darkness, emptied of praise, tenderness, the bullet
needed to puncture a human heart with revelation.

I do not believe in nirvana. I do not believe in immortality:
when things change they die and do not revert.
We were, it seemed, perpetual, connected
by the red rope of my loyalty.

I am dawning. I that is I,
cracking the dome of my hereditary inertia.
I leave the shadow-guilt of solemn yearning, and also you
of coral-reef intricacy, simplicity, perfection.

**I know I am alone, though permanently imprinted -
by my years of unnoticed devotion,
by the shunning of personal expectations
and by your long finger,
tanned, transcendental, a spiritual aphrodisiac still
pointing.**

The means to obliterate

**what doldrums dictate
is in the pink sneakers of
winter blues and forcing hope into the mouth
even if it tastes like stale candy.**

**You pull the waves from a clear sky,
you blur edges into running forms, staining
in effervescent aftershocks.**

**Help is always available but never ready
to take your hand when you need the courage
not to hang yourself in some avant-garde
symbolic statement on a summit on
a dull metal balcony, hang
like kleenex caught on a high twig.**

**Comfort comes in packed suitcases and
various dreams of little consequence.**

**A toddler's game of hide-and-seek
is worth smiling for. Round, rotunda reflected
in the image of a middle-age crew cut and torn jeans.**

**Inspiration is a wooden ladder, splinters sold
as bargaining chips for each step
to reach nearer to rooftops, treetops and
the sun.**

**Your head is in a whisper - booby-traps
revealed in the ridges and dips of your thoughts.
You want to be put in a crockpot and left there,
stirred like soup, leeks and lentils, seeping out
an authentic aroma, arriving home.**

We sorrowed far when the sky tore,

**but moments of union bent us
to glimpse a lavish paradise, yielding
to our bodies stripped of speech,
becoming portals to the ever-now,
our aggression was holy as we hunted for sacred acquittal.**

**Evolution, we often think of being what we are -
counsellors to elevate the potency of each other's dread.
Talk is a hood, a roughly-strewn path to our tortoise-tread.
Touch is precision, absent of air, rattling staircases, galactic
in its suction of sand and hair and pores
that voice complaints and monetary aches,
tethered to this cruel house.**

**We live inside the march, ruined by darkness.
On this Earth, we have one pasture. Churches will not do for us
what they do for others. We have outgrown
our guilt, our last names and the bitter sword.**

**Our colours are common only to us, thickened
by our mischief-tar and unspoken humour. Ours is hushed**

**and chasing, dripping with moods, unreflected
in the polished jewellery.**

**On a new planet we will be remembered,
congregating among the fractured
as a shaft of gracious amalgamation.**

**Drenched with this mercy, we will be a light switch
that spares no memory or obligation,
brightly displaying the decayed and burning,
colliding in composite, fashioned by our fusion.**

**Among the first fully twined, what we are
will sprout then thrive, be immune to misinterpretation.
Dimensions we will enter as an interchange, our feet warmed
against the soil of the moon, locking calves in place,
digging and dropping, basking
on the plains of our emancipation.**

Fill the ghosts with upward rejoicing

**so that clouds turn to fishbones
and flies become islands learning a primitive mission.
Obey the shuddering perplexity of dwarfed aspirations
and still be able to cry clear, continuing ardent, when it is time.
I wish I was an actor, acquiring
the yolk of another's journey, or the ear of an elk
twitching at the panther's controlled inhale.
Flags and conquered greatness. Death, you
never share. You open and we watch you oil
every boundary with your vanishing act.
We smell you in the honeycomb and in the suffocating
many mutations of thriving pleasantries. You are sharp
as a broken shell - blowing shame from our feelings,
stiffening the streets we walk on so we walk on
straight, with the purpose of a mortal silver sun.
Here and here, there is nothing, not language, not history,
only forkfuls of burnt coal and some framed pictures.
Being a traitor to survival's code, I have no use for finality.
I lived close to the rapids, skipping stones,
beating back shadflies. I was riding my blue bike.**

**Some almost-teenage children
hung my cat from a tree. I found him that morning,
a shadow swaying across a shadowy sky. I wasn't allowed
to take revenge or cradle him, broken, a husk, goodbye.**

In Labour

**Marked in the morning like a country
finally lost and then
replanted. Or autumn in the hardened
inner walls, wearing down,
preparing for the onslaught of cold.**

**I am neither in the shadows nor building beauty
like pity that outlasts mercy
and all wounds that curse mercy
in the cradle of its infant power.**

**Blazing earnestly at first until instructions falter,
glowing faint under duress, until all that is left
to be heard is a mild 'maybe'. And shapes
without fields or dunes prevail in the un-sunned landscape.**

**Planets make themselves known by the friction they bestow,
by the damage of their effect and endurance.
I draw out my ecstasy sitting under a table
where there are no footprints save but what small animals make,
adorning with their furry glory
the richness that lies below.**

Marked at the closing. Blowing
into a cave. I would give it all to feed again
from your stick, minus myself on the chopping board
of thorough understanding, touch
the throne of your tenderness as I did once.

Once, when my anguish had no restraint,
teeter-tottered on a sawdust precipice with gruelling frenzy,
and I was on my knees
in a donut shop bathroom
as it burst through.

I was purged in the blizzard of my making,
electrified by love that was more than love, bursting.

Swaddling that still-seething anguish with a thousand kisses,
breaching allegiance to patience and remorse,
I was cupped in the golden constellation of your hand, arriving
eclipsed, momentarily
completed

Fire and more,

gracefully bobbing

like a floating stone trapped in my throat.

To do something with a sting but with skin

that will not scrap or twist, caught in a door. Choices

get caught and limp back, collapsing in confidence

because of the hum-drum yawn of repercussions.

Death is anywhere, a man wrapped in a sleeping bag

walking fast through the barely wet streets of almost winter.

You were almost broken. I have seen it, and heaven too,

pregnant with souls, never born, never beginning.

It is the order of lips as they move to recite a dog's thoughts

or the solid sidewalk, taking and taking.

I know a sigh is a feeble cry. I know the animals are mine

like pressure is, concentrated tight

where vital organs are supposed to break or function.

It has been a long while since

you watched me and glowed. Broken windshield wipers

collected on my porch remind me of the time you were driving,

days before you died, when your countenance was calm,

and your smile, half formed.

**Many missed dreams, hardly turning,
your eyes were things of crowns and deep earth.
Changed by a shifting conversation, you cracked the horizon.
Edify me in the lizard's stillness. I will be a tulip in the night,
saturated with this meditation.**

**I have eaten roses, rose up from my father's sixteen year sleep,
knowing I was loved.**

Where are you? I've been calling

**and waiting, soiled and famished, anticipating your return,
circled by predatory chains. There are things
we need to talk about. Are you
here, or just a synchronized inspiration, energy
as icing for one day? It is not enough.
I need you here, not galactic but like a man
before his wedding hour, needing me too,
focused entirely on my fulfilment. Where are you?
In the sparrow-droppings? In the kitten's fear?
I cannot go forward so close to the lurking eyes
of mire and sacrificial doom.**

**Why are you leaving me blindfolded,
tremours and hard lumps invading my body,
aching against the sky for you,
on my knees, in many ways excavated, sagging without
mettle or substance? Where are you -
in the sideboard? The baseboard?**

**Compel my breath into freedom,
sing loud in my left ear, love me**

like a solid spike, but weightless in its consequences.
I drive the rattle. The world is huge and
I am capsizing, eaten by its ignorance and filthy demands.
Where are you? Did you fly away?
Can you be my gravy, not dry and vague
as a passing half-hearted smile?

Can you not pay for my funeral and be done with the obituary,
sending me into the afterlife, a new life
of baby days and infant trust?
Where do I hurt? For you, everywhere. It is impossible
to escape, impossible to cross my legs, fold my arms.
Tender or with a shovel pounding,
break through this cobwebbed room,
give me a background I can play with, a full dish, delight
in the splintered wood.

Tidalwave Making Moon

Decades lived by finding hope on the cliff.

**The cliff remains but hope is gone and mercy
has taken its place, donning a revised skin.**

**Surrender is not gentle or shallow,
does not come with a sigh but overtakes
with a shudder, a whimper, sleep.**

**I am branded as mush like the crawling thing
that early summer created - clear and stripped of lasting form.**

Corners blend then curve and curve again to make a sphere.

**Searching is only born from blindness. Perfect vision comes
with the maiming of everything non-essential, when the only
essential is love and being alive to excite clouds into paintings.**

**The bountiful children clutter on the doorstep, have
one bed, two pillows for their many nesting heads.**

**This they have, thin soup and no winter boots -
each one giggling freely, sweetly at the first falling snow.**

Branches are lizards I have broken before.

**Their thorny teeth, a blessing to swell the stream
of immediacy, covering me completely
with oily holy sludge I have been trying for weeks
to wipe from my nostrils.**

**Rubbing clean like singing - crescendo, couplet,
and just breathing in as part of the song,
holding breath, building in the stillness.**

**Slowing awakening from the pressure, containing force
in a tight-tongue swirl, movement starts, and cannot stop,
until it beats out a haunting, lingering completion.**

**What is left is the chilling joy of mutual mercy
needed, received. Blood becomes a false dream,
and the moon, and money too.**

Before you

**wide with surrender
with no backdrop or formula,
with the accomplishment of releasing
plans by the wayside into the swamp
that used to be an instrument playing,
a cliff of clay forming a tireless gale
of heavy sensual dreams.**

**I belong to you and to the strength of your empty hands,
the endings you leave me with, harvesting
ephemeral food - a soul full
of coastal curves that break the waters and is broken
by them, pressing and caressing the chain of tidal
obliteration as an umbilical cord connecting
to the vast sweet space that is you.**

**Never meant to anchor roots or climb a sturdy cliff,
you stop my struggle to illuminate a typical liberation,
gaining the wherewithal to stay pale,
upright and destined in my cage.**

**For it not a hellish home, but submerged
in the damp abandon of your shaking,**

it is subject to your prying appendages poking,
tearing away speech and understanding.

I am yours, withdrawn from words into a connection
washed with elements of prayer but unlike prayer
more like lemonade to the day labourer or grass
to the grazing mare - away from bit, halter and reins -
your sun sinking its evening heat into my back and shoulders,
erasing division, drawing an intimacy
that frees my blood's natural flow, squeezes out
the clotted clump of summoning-up
of years scarred by grief and hidden,
rebellious longing.

Voice

When you talk it is not
a shimmering sensation or
a delicate fluttering of
nature's delicate best. Days
are not here like you are -
an open sewer grate, a crushed
locust. They are smudged and flat
as a textureless dream.
Helmets worn. Grievors
with their now-permanent-grief etched
under their fleshy eyes, cheekbones and chins.
I buy buttered pastries, leave them
by their doors. I hear your voice.
You are trying to reach me with an old painter's words
of resignation and reluctant wisdom - words
I cannot make use of.

The dead evergreen in my front yard will not revive.
Like me, and these things I clung to, it must be replaced
with something of less substance, of more obvious beauty,
like a red rose bush, birdbath or sundial. Or,
I could leave it there, brown and dry - a monument
to what was once lush, gorgeously plump, once withstanding
winters, the heat of global-warming summers, green,
wondrous against my window.

I could walk faster than this, chat with the neighbours.
But I won't. Because nothing is here but you, only,
and my feet can't find the motivation to pick up pace.

**You talk. My aura is a smog-filled season
where your sun's rays barely seep through. Days
with stones in my stomach, rubbing against one another,
pressing their hard weight into places.
I have no drug to ease my longing. Will it be long? Years?
Will I make it through to the Fall?
Do you have more to say? Say it then, differently.
I can't go on repeating,
where nothing shifts but these stones,
sharp-surfaced, blocking my intestinal tract, pressing
with each step, demanding acknowledgment, denied
release, a minimal hope
for redemption.**

Detour

Bobbing for apples under a raincloud.
Soon what was planted will flourish
and the empty casket under the bridge
will be a nest to weather out winter's storms.
I will never know you, not as
a weak-kneed dancer or as a lover,
blurred by idealism. I will be in the dumpyard
with the rest of the dead flowers,
caught off guard by your morning song.
My shadow rises like a weed into a tree,
simple company for empty days. You are skin and fury,
a shore that is quicksand with many mosquitoes lingering
around. I was stuck on your butcher's block, smelling of
musky ambition. I was predatorial, though myself, never
a match for your strengthening spikes.
Honesty is a Sunday summit, punishing to pursue,
dropping undergarments for a glimpse at purity.
Wings are hallways I have lost track of. Like circus lions
they struggle, beaten, chained, with useless magnificence.
I flattened my folds for you, spread myself as a net
over what was precious and wild

to work for your children, to maintain the belief
that the back-mirror-reflection would come alive.

Half way into eternity, building in me
like the scent of salt water.

Another lifetime I may be in motion, with you,
joyfully rolling down hills.

Today what is natural is inside the cupboard.

I am learning to accept the mice-chewed boxes,
gradually forgiving the distorted shape of these and even other
make-due flaws.

With the purity of a single intention

**Days of history voyage low
into nations, beside graveyards.**

**You played with the existential architects for a while,
breathing in their deconstruction, but your laughter
languished. Straddled between crossroads,
you could not form a picture.**

**Days of comfort can be understood
when the crack tents with severity enough
to slice two wholes.**

**In your mind there are mountains
you have lost the ambition to cross, or to look up
at their venerated summits, and listen.**

**You have lost the cunning to cope, continents of wayward
possibilities. Look up, for the sake of past miracles
that swooned into your embrace like found love
as a perfect match
against fatalism and rising futility. Look up - out
into outerspace
and grow yourself a fierce mystic midnight.**

**Whitewash trails and gardens, places
where children are allowed to dig a hole in the ground,**

tunnels where the earth shines copper
with forgotten buried pennies.

Look up and drop the stone of objection,
the stretching sorrows of realism.

It is divine, if you choose it to be.

It is the freedom of a fugitive, freed
of the rusted bars, equipped with appetite
and the exuberance of a gamble.

The ship is lost and an ocean is gained.

Water and water rhythms
are teaming between your toes,
salting your hair and open wounds.

From side to side, look at the glorious space around you,
then up, envisioning yourself strong-winged, safe
as a seafaring bird.

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Walkways

Allison Grayhurst

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Edge Unlimited Publishing

Walkways
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Riverstones

**Announcing flesh
in the sleepy-loosened
day. A childhood of
bridges, masterpiece aromas
that overlook the playing fields -
one year, two grades and people
once beautiful, now ordinary,
bike turns, riverstones, skipping
on driveways, melting ice over grates**

**long pleated hair, dark, looking into
competitive eyes. It was the last
year I was there, spending evenings staring
at the gaudy peeling wallpaper or
in the basement crawlspace, space
without any windows, hearing
hockey games, spiders mating, silhouettes
disintegrating. It was the last time
in that car for that car ride, through dull highway hours,
cats in boxes, on laps, children waving, music at half mast,
children waving.**

I go into crazy

**I go into crazy
out of the linear stream.**

**Darkness is my umbrella,
keeps me cradled in what I know best.
It is the screen I sit and watch outward on,
see patchworks of colors, images suspended,
high-pitched volume, almost
inaudible.**

**I strain to listen,
and it is a golden pipe to slide up and down on,
railway,
soothing hummm.**

**I go into crazy, a private garden
where I sit with God – a bit like heaven
and a bit like hell**

**no congestion
no in-between**

Kill the Poet

**Kill the poet,
ransack the diet of bliss.
Dust away all traces of inspiration,
childbirth, breath and roses.**

**Thumbtacks, dried-out bones are
what has stayed.
I am a sand-fish, surfing the bottom,
accumulating
duties, commitments, leftover debris
to feed my already grown children.**

**Notions of a mission? A nest of delusions obliterated.
Kill the loose ends, dynamite the cave, come
out in the open and say your piece. My bed is
rippled with loose springs, arranging my nightmares
in grand succession. Kill the poet. You killed
my last cup, spilled my endurance, and I am thinking**

**I will cut my hair cleanly off, clip my eyelashes,
dump all my seeds on stony ground.**

A blind theme of sensual deliverance

**Opaque but controversial
acts of spiritual courage
visceral
cantankerous**

**It is equally important
how something is given
as to how, or if, it is received
discarded
avoided**

**The summer dung is used up.
Flailing or foraging, we all get used up,
turn old and baffled by the complex amount
of disappointment – not just by one
by everyone.**

**Then it is murky
and mortality-unbelievable
that things will change into childhood's ideal.
A choice emerges, to accept without
bitterness, just do the things
that make you happy - child's play.**

**For you - that is all it should have to give.
For others?
A shrug to feign indifference
For others
should not be able to give or take inner satisfaction.
Connection.
Cull the fables**

**Here it is, the butter slab
on the table
pepper spots on the floor
and marmalade
in doses.**

Cupped

**Two bodies of water converge, merge
coalesce - incorporation.**

**Lines of symmetry formed,
synchronicity mastered.**

**Laws owed only to
controlled experimentation - devoid
of succulent flow, surprise,
tied to the many life-draining
ramifications of technique.**

**The nodes of mystery cannot be uncovered,
only the outline revealed, after that,
the root mantra gets conveyed.**

**Like futile attempts at flossing between
two great mountains bonded
by unrest and solid slates -
century-slow-permanent addition.**

Circle lifted

**It is the same, no different
as a tumble-rumble with God.**

**Intimacy so perfect it is
deviation – so breath-taking,
it creates breath by
sheer surrender**

**blind worship.
coming home. the summit
of the highest of angels.**

**Purified by
the emptying out and also by
actively keeping the beat. Primal
Garden – why can't they see?**

**Is it potent as touching or potent as a body-
jolt, pacifying into temporary equilibrium?**

**Is it me, just me
in this place no one can enter
– God & me, together
lacking attainable expression?**

If I see

**If I see God's skin,
myself a season of
rain washing a field,
then my condition is final.
Doors keep collapsing
like elm-tree branches in an ice-storm.
Stars are weeds to Oblivion's depths,
sea-floating, swaying with the motion of moons,
spreading weedy flowers of illumination.**

**I moved from my purgatory coffin,
opened my hand to hold yours. Did it matter?
To lift my head to hear your music?
A perpetual low-fuel
drainage, in me, this desire, hole, exposed
and storming, drip, drip, a spider-bite,
a great bird, small in a high height of sky.**

**Still, to be asleep again, before this battered bridge
beckoned me across, before the
culprit of caring cracked my anonymity, my
protective chamber fat with secrets, cold with no need.**

**Looking out, I cry, I could jump, exploring a soft wind.
If only I could stop looking, face
the lonely rushing in, face
the result of this failed equation -
damp dead field, drowned corners.**

Seepage

Weeks arrive to lay bare
the corpse of a wasted dream –
my ideals unfounded, measured with
a spoon. I loved and I've had to kill that love
purposefully, stepping over
into a territory of arctic
severity and separation.

It is natural
for me, a citizenship I owned hanging out in churches,
on church benches, shushed from yawning.
I knew God more in the forest,
quickenning my pace on paths
edging cliffs. Swallows circling as I did
a flawless land.

I knew God best in my bed, talking, never repeating
phrases learned, but earnestly in conversation.
I know God still sometimes
when I am close enough, able to smell our rudimentary union,
brush the locks and flares of your deep and fierce sun
as it rotates within a galaxy riddled rich with stars and asteroids,
when I am in your radar-stream,
pulverized by the intensity of your purity -
porous, cracking, becoming more,
many, smaller and such
unexpected immediacy.
Giving birth. Giving up
my hard-won understanding.

**To fail for you is a victory that
arrives like an ultimatum,
and I am singing – this is new.
It is an embrace,
a personal annihilation to be honored,
swallowed as I am, utterly
into your glow.**

A Gathering of Birds

**Bringing back birds,
bare sparrow hearts
tumbling through
spectrums of sensuality
unexplored,
braiding
the straw-strings of hesitation into
a tight rope capable of sustaining
any tension, true
to channeling more
determined incarnations.**

**Whispers pouring
across pale illusionary divides, dedicated
to slowing the pace, to branding
souls with tender revealing and
deep combustion,
reminding the mind of rare waters -
long stretches of unconscious completion**

**where heaven
becomes a state of faith
that believes
all joys are possible,
is the gratitude for good things imagined, trust
in what rises, eventually
dissipates or flowers.**

Balanced Repertoire

Petals and fizzling small craters, inches
from the side of the road.

I dive

into the net and let
the struggle ensue.

I lived in corners

with the dead-mature, in flaps

like wishy-washy by-standers. But here, entering

the small soft mounds of pleasurable
taboos and smiling up in the treetops, I am sitting
on the weakest branch just to get the best overview.

My tongue

is painted many colours.

I lost you in the nuclear glow. It happened
gradually, like a cliff descending,

finally,

meeting ground.

I used to float -

a silhouette of fine cuts

and obvious edges. But I lost you and

it is good to lose extensions,

flavours of redundant delight.

Enthralled by sensual geometry,

by mountain ridges reflected in heartbeats,

wrinkles, rough spots, perfect

intricacy

equilibrium

subconscious sway, and you.

**You never loved me, never knew
I was a neophyte, taker of whatever
I could get, keeper of
an ethereal garden. I**

**will accept my joy
regardless of lack, discover joy
in what droops to provide me canopy, also
in what arches upward, proclaiming its praise.**

Tell me

Tell me what

**is this aberration, this final cut-glass
apparatus? What are you holding me for,
on this earthquaked-ground with madness filling
my ears, with no relief from the quickening, no shortcut
to liberation? What whim am I? Eventual.**

**I am eventual, grounded only by my children and the
animals that pace my floors. I will do a visible
decisive deed if that is what you want or I will
suck in the deadening-pretend, barbaric in its stupidity,
disingenuous in its over-rated kindness. What is left?
Tell me, deprive me of government, of natural things
that others have, but tell me what you want me ready
for. Hire me with this particular fruit. Let me be noble,
eliminate my doubt, my fear of being wrong or cruel. Take me
into your music, pound my spirit with your weight and
effort. Tell me what rabid ghost I must put down.**

Help me

put it down.

Doubt

Afterwards, I sit on the altar
of my withdrawal. I will not kneel, rendering
myself a thicker chair. My kind, like
fangs and hooves combined in one secret
creature. A city without history, emotions that
echo but do not deliver. My dress of skin: this place
cannot hold me any longer. Do you see the thumbprint
of the ocean – crater like – in the center of every Earth-rhythm?
Unable to fully believe in Earthy-things and the sun in its
frame of sky, marching on and over – so tired of this
tangle! ongoing. going on. For hopes of a caress, an instant
of locked eyes and the merging of souls. My voice -
weightless as a dream. Desire is a shell, the scent of
cedarwood saturating the pores, memories I haven't
yet encountered. Sweeping is the goal.
And love stays, but how much
is a basket of exotic fruit, and how much more,
imagination?

Within Reach

**Within reach – kaleidoscope breaking.
I know what works, the machine is retreating
and each candle has dripped into oblivion.
God’s grace is nestled like nectar on my handkerchief,
it drips when it is squeezed but opens wide
when I take delight in its sunset colour.
The phone call I made 13 years ago has
been returned. Someone I dreamed of is
living without hope. That dream is sailing
on a raft into the unpredictable sea. I will sing
though I fear they will stop me. I will sing
though my face is flushed with doubt’s
preoccupying disease.
The joy we’ve been waiting for is coming.
I see it coming, gradual, like all good things.
I will not be afraid.
I will lift up my heart
and make room for what follows...**

You are wrong

**You are wrong as the emptiness
that fills the space after rejection –
monotonous and monotone, a faker in the flesh.
Once taking up a whole continent in mind,
you were the designated bearer of sunlight.
I cared for your wrists, your pulse, the offspring
of your brilliance. I stood beside you, always a little lower,
maybe sterile, never enough. It was that voice that weighed
inside of me holding a gravity of its own, glorifying
even the cold intake of breath after words, your words
that meant more to me than memory, that wore into me like
acid painted on my skin, scorching, welcoming because
they were harsh and indisputable. But now
I exile you from my soul.
Your spring cleaning is death to my desire.
You are wrong and flat and you
don't smell the same. You exist, but only as a chair does
or a house full of boring furniture. You have two
feet, still standing, but I imagine nothing hidden in your eyes –
what I see is beyond my attachment, easy now
to walk away from.**

Mystic

**For twelve years
without a word.**

**Holed up in rented rooms,
head buried in bug-infested beds,
tracing the cracks on the walls.**

**Nights of circling the executioner, trying to find
some sympathy inside his corroded eyes
but never finding the radiant solidity of sculpture,
only finding intangible corners to hide in, bide your time
in and anxiously explore. You were sobbing,
unmedicated, from country to town, learning new
languages, living off the charity of Queens.
How did you make it, hammered every day
by the troops of torture and captivity? Everyday,
without antidote? I love you here. Does that love count,
to you, dead long before I was born? It must
help, transcending gravity and logic. It must mean
something – I to you as you to me –**

**my brave my heavy
star.**

Walkways



**Dual forming on slopes of darker minds.
Succulent nodes of effervescent whispers,
whispering Oh! Blood clots bending
in unison to sharp solstices.**

**Dig and reap tomorrow's regrets,
piled on like love you thought was comfortable.**

**Comfort is a guard you let loose,
let down and found judgments -
platters to be served and roasted upon.**

**Singing for sale. A number left to a key. Fickle
verdicts oscillating between indifference and approval.
Release and acceptance - what else is there?
I am only unhappy when I want what isn't.**

Platypus cans of tonic - drink down, flushing

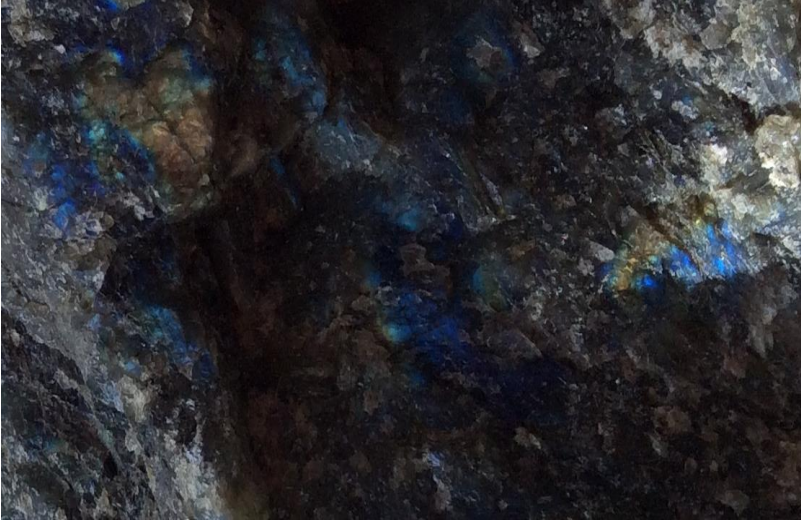
through organs. I see orange. Orange buses,
orange lines of direction on the road, in homes
where anger is held at stillpoint. One point
on a curve. I have lost my feathers,
all means of flight. There is nothing left
but hunger for the skyspace, outerspace, space
where I once travelled through meteor fields,
ballooning over planets' edges like a seamstress,
owning it all before I got grounded, committed
to personal love and the necessity of graves.

Why did I come here? To cry for my loved ones,
hold vigil for the slaughtered pigs?
Centuries that just were, lingering, licking
on waves of vastness, licking dark matter like a candy cane.
Not a soul, but the planets vibrating their orchestra - deep,
varying at intervals, then again, and never changing.
God, what am I doing in the sunlight - on the sidewalks,
making room for children on bicycles?
Putting pressure on my shoulders so I cannot sleep,
cannot appease this malcontent.
Why did I leave - to connect with misplaced animals?
Babies only born? Looking for union when before
I thought myself whole?

Material made from the moon. I understand
the beauty of caves, the great sea turtle's solitary plight...
but more and more - I never wanted more than you
again inside of me - infinity in corporeal form.

God separates to know Itself. God is only what we give,
awakening as we do to warmth and kindness - choices
under the wrap of gravity and yet, somehow,
lifted into altruism.

....



**Smudges, under siege, patches of calcified tissue
and the swamp I enter in - fuming with failed love -
connections broken under the Buddha fire. Detachment
will not save me - nailed to the pavement stone, looking at birds.**

**Summer where have you gone? Smells rise to meet me,
and the air is still humid, pressing on my cortex,
corrupting my ability to choose joy.
Grasshoppers hopping. Will my heart be broken?
Again, again, squeezing, squished
fermenting at the sides, foaming and fizzling, burning sage, but
it is not good enough, not enough to teach me the strokes
or how to steady the raging chaos gestating large
in the pocket of my throat. Continents on fire,
inside organs necessary
to function - why the children? Why not me?**

**Livingroom-light-globe like a crystal ball,
opaque but powerful enough to predict possibilities.
I was never here before, never heard the angry rodents
vocalize, never slept with aching joints, dreams**

of running low and ferns and moss
covering Zen-garden displays.
What else are we going to do here, but procreate, create,
dissipate and die? Van doors left open.
Lawn chairs on the road for pickup.
The windmill, the tilting tops of trees, heavy
with clusters of fresh pinecones.
I am an orange peel, orange, peeled, drying
next to the sewer grate.
I am limp with the weight, the burden of random happenings.
Always I love you and always, I am breathing.
Take me into the arms of your protection.
I don't want another day.
Mass of thick porous grey hovering, no space for hope.
Why the children? Couldn't you spare just them and all
the up-for slaughter animals?
I am done with this place, the tripping curb,
callous indifference - the rippling consequences
of blind destruction.

....



**Piercing, lingering, chiming out a hymn, lullaby on a chain.
Remorse to wade in like a sea-salt bath, absorbing
the past into the present cellular flow.
Mounds of construction sand, building and restoring roots
without life, chopped down at surface level.
Ideologies fuel, then turned to cinder by anger -
justified violence that violates the laws of love.**

**Skittering up stairs, the last time I held a leaf I held
your focused form, unable to stay the distance,
but stayed nonetheless near rudimentary desires.**

**I am cut like a lawn, smooth as carpet. See me now,
skateboarding, jettisoning over humps and bridges.
The wind - position me inside your storm. The last time,
strength enlisted an empty street - such vines
and beautiful stones!**

**Mercy in a crack, a masterpiece of twin creation,
outside art galleries - living wood, sleeping shapes,
inviting holes... holy as sex, sweet hands entwined.**

**Release into me as I release into you,
in mutual receptivity, clear direction, directing energy.
Dew drops evaporating, shining.
Our masthead - brittle, breaking. Even so,
how we are combined! Such glow.
It is glorious to know you like this
and not be afraid.**

....



**Laid low, laid out like soulmates never meant to meet
in this life, in the spectrum of folly and limitation.**

**A painting layered, re-mastered, re-mused and then,
burned by neglect.**

**Miniature moment of perfection, condensed
to hold a legacy in swirling matter, hard and glittering.
Fractures as long as a walkway
stretching the borders of a great body of water.**

**Stringing thoughts like a child's dream. I know,
but I've learned not to take synchronicity so seriously,
learned there is only choice, and chance caved into,
selected to stand as fate - the end result, resulting
in a theory of complexities and open systems.**

**Stuck in the ground, protruding stilted like a statue.
Tell me it is true, that nothing pure is subjected to disease.
Crickets in the late morning.
When I am fixated, it is fantasy, false as poison in soup.**

**When I am lucid, liquid budding, my fingers are flames,
and all that they contact pulse with their heat.**

**Various clouds like currents perpetually pumping -
financial lack, and I, myself, curled up on the bottom stair.
Beds I defend, determined to lay in, over and over
hurting for considered crimes. Erasing perimeters, I clutch
at fraudulent mercies, securities of working furnaces
and washed hair. How to love damaged flesh, radiate love
for what is broken, far beyond romanticism, dangerous
as a cockroach and forever mutating -
translucent shells and pores - radioactive
and growing more grotesque under slabs of rotten wood?
Love, I do not understand you as I am older
and keeping up the climb. Medications and
broken down dishwashers.
Debt like ghosts that stick to my aura,
smothering out the colour -
Oh weedy garden! Sparrow on my roof, talk to me for a while.
How can I love, middle-aged, half over, clear
of a younger person's hope and indecision?
Pointing at ecstasy (a snail on my forehead) pointing,
pointing, stung.**

....



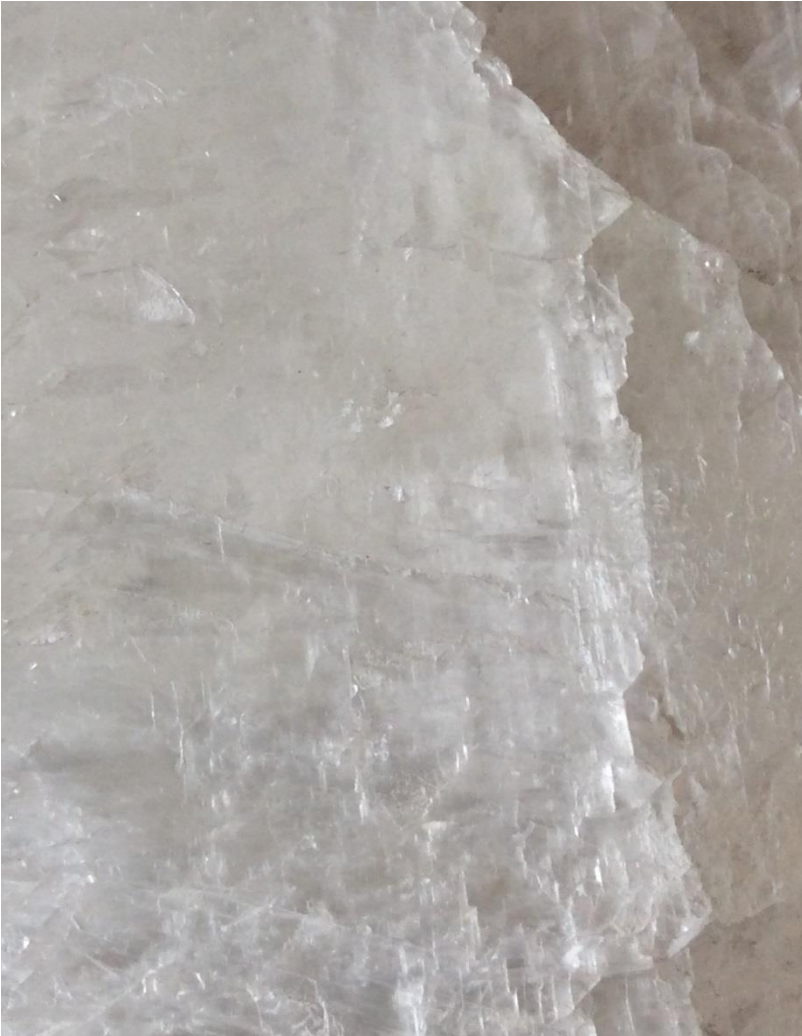
**Light that drips down the turnpike, onto roads
and ways far away from any window.
Blocks to build shelters and shields. Flags on flimsy poles.
A neutral breeze busting cardoors and
personalized licence plates.
Paved over, I see a carcass dripping, a little yellow flower,
smaller than a thumbprint.
Rust-coloured shawl, poncho that holds
great sentimental significance holds
me to a memory, old now as a ten-year-old untended garden
or pavement cracks grown into fissures.**

**Forging, face-like an image. Worm in my sink.
Blood and cup of nutritional joy.
Hold out for the grace of good music
and drying on rocks, nude in the sun.
Quiet heat building up into renewal. Tattered ankle cuffs
and shrinking shadows, mid-stream. Up,
up we go, insistent on making an impression.
But walk lightly is all I'll ever learn, spoon-feeding the children.**

**I bloom and I will die a woman, a butcher of frivolity
and the natural sequence of things.**

**The day is one day - enough, taken
into its rolling waters,
a dog's dream to join in, frolic in
some other species' symbolism.**

....

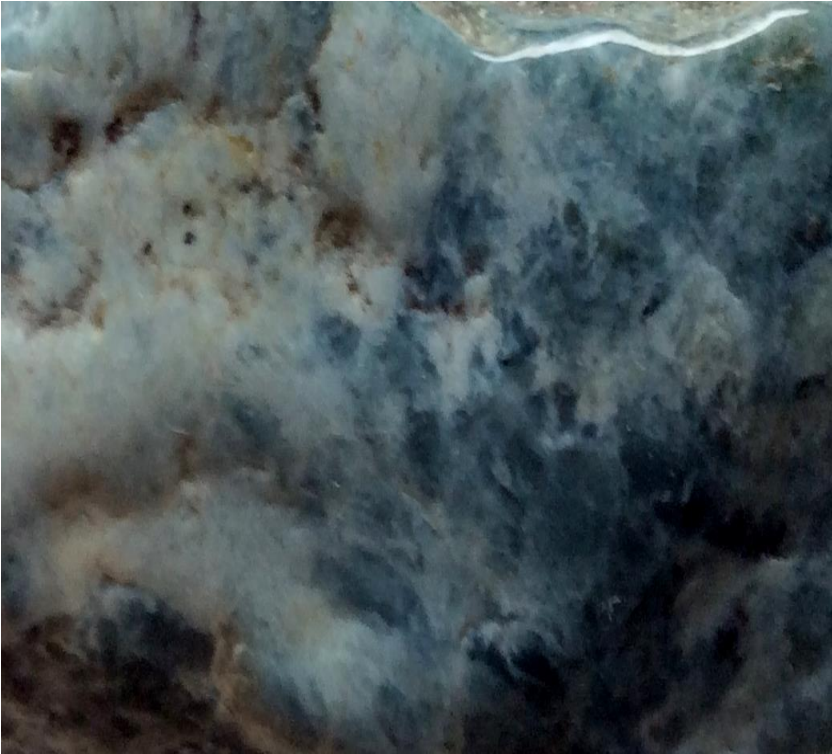


**Come upon me like a feather-stick -
sectioning my abdomen like a fruit. Suddenly
toddlers are conversing and the grey cat
takes in the morning. Bundle of weeds,
bundle of flowers. An opening
under the burning canopy. Lifetimes spent
collecting synergy, male rhythms and fixed lines.**

God is coming down to hide in your loose-change-pocket.
I dreamt of owning your praise. Swinging from the rafters
in a game of hide-and-seek, I sought your breath,
hand of destined chores.

I played along inside the circle, inside a sack
I could hardly breathe out of. Languishing. A round bruise
forming on my left arm. Place me here. Crown me
or stake me on a tall spike. I am sand thrown mid-air.
No place to collect and land, not even a wave, a bucket,
the forelock of a horse. Not even
thinking in a straight continuation, but there, there, a pebble
between paw pads, then, a minor note locked
in perpetual repetition.

....



**Underguard. Crumbled tissue in my mouth.
A crazy way to run - hands in pockets.
Forward without, undeterred by reality.
Plywood I am keeping for emergencies,
for days when putting on the brakes just won't suffice.
Speeding, retreating, torsos twisting beautifully in anticipation.**

**I used to make mortar by hand, no machine to ease
my impossible labor - brick carrying and scaffolding climbing
and voices that ceased for a while in my head, visions
foiled by exhaustion - overused and folding.**

**Injuries are bypassed for much larger connections.
Double-winged, it is all that counts, to be counted**

like lightening, glazed like tile
and ancient bones kept as keep-sakes,
never a participant in trivial bickering or
watered-downed by petty grievances and
conditioned responses.

Sometimes I think of dying.

I think of the unread newspaper that stays folded,
wrapped in an elastic band.

I think of a broken bird making broken bird sounds,
too broken to be saved, treated by most
as a mild inconvenience
to be walked around and grimaced at.

Except by the man with the warm dark eyes, soft
furrowed brow, and a child who will not forget those mangled
wings or the hard lesson of helplessness, the inability to heal
or to be a vessel for a miracle.

It is hard to love me. I am hard, uncompromising
and never still. I am needing intimacy at every turn,
needing space to brood and build my solitary house.

I miss no one I've lost except the dead - a parent,
many animals that once shared my life. I am not easy, not
easygoing - bloodletting, bloodtesting, phone calls
avoided, coiled, almost mad and never understanding.

Sex and perfect reciprocation. Hands that know more
than words, keeping in the margins, layering synergy energy
into peaks and mounds, like mountains and fractal heartbeats,
fearless of falling, or of clouds. You and I,
it has to be our reward for not selling out, not
building cages of adult-overload, for constantly
clearing room for any divine equation no matter
how it threatens our already-precarious security.
We love our children, but not like others love.

**We are less of this place, more reliant on grace
than our own worldly ingenuity to keep food
on the table, the bathroom fixed and cleaned.**

Dear Jesus,

**are you still mine, and I, yours? It is a lot to take in, decades and
mouldy walls. I am afraid of going off track,
of being dead and seeing there is no more I can do. That
it is done and inerasable. I am afraid of not feeling
the warmth of your hand when I walk, because
you are always holding my hand and I love you
with a personal love like Kierkegaard did -
his hunchback, a deformity that kept him pure.**

And the loneliness.

Knowing you, but never any other.

**I am not that alone, but I remember
space, lightyears of carved-out quiet. It enters me often
and I cannot get out of it. Breathing becomes separation,
a tool I must remind myself to use.**

**Remind me again, demand
my unwavering loyalty, trust, and all.**

....



**Paved paths, brisk
storm of senses, an old
opening, endless as a dug-in arrow -
head in the weeping jungle, the coolness
of autumn air brushing tombstones,
the thin necks of geese.
So much night in a single glass, body
and name together, replacing
existence with this inheritance and no other.
Rows of ships crowding the edge of the lake -
docked and bearing down for winter. The distance
grinds, gravel on my belly, cracked shells
in subterranean pages writing down dawns and victories
never experienced, only imagined.
Is it right to receive the bitter strawberry?**

**Drink its flesh like juice and
kneel before reality's dictatorship?
Is it clarity? Or forgetting?**

...



**Escaping on the brook's bank,
banking on nesting warm through
winter, but tears are horns that open
soft spaces, and autumn shifts heat and any hopes
for renewal. Love is fire -
from where it goes there are no shields to block
its scorching. Can we reach bottom in the rain?
Sing hosanna at the mountain's base?**

**Becoming is the stone, the house, the wave.
The lines between us all are solid, no longer lines but
one heavy blanket of vibrancy, creaking, splitting.**

**I walk like I walk - barrel beatings,
borrowing crisp notions into my ears.
Stretched for a while to be compact again,
I hear an approaching intrusion, a high
wake, strong enough to travel on.
Stronger days of running through the weeded grass
where rabbits stand still at my passing
and insects move quickly into the shade.
Stranger days of watching a patio stone broken
from a storm - from a fallen tree that fell,
leaving me to find
meaning in such drastic weather.**

....



**Many years torn - a leaf, a paper towel,
half around the other side, locked
on the beach of my nadir - discipline
and a cold cruel courage, jammed into a groove.
Just the sunlight on my wall,
warming the wall, penetrating the heavy plaster.**

**I was born from a stem.
I fit on a chalkboard.
Over the cool half-formed moon
I hear an echo, smell the crisp lunar craters -
stagnant rocks, deep troughs to fuel
a million or more Earth dreams.
Scents of dead matter colliding,
of rough stone and endless rotation,
repetitive atmosphere
churning.**

**Behind a broken bark I hide my vanity,
rushing into quicksand, there I sink.**

....



Ladle, ladder

**I lay open under the covers, under
cloaks of heartless yesterdays. My mind
is a string that wraps around the outerscope.
I eat wild flowers, never the lamb,
infused with avoidance, spectacular
acrobats of keeping on, caring little for the outcome.**

**Blundering displays of over-dramatizing
self-aggrandizement revealing the wound
of stunted spiritual development
and crippled attempts at affection.
Round and happy, unstructured indulgences
justified by plump purse strings.**

**Falterings. Mistaken formations.
A perfect line in nature existing.**

**All the days I felt alone are behind me,
gathering leaves, misty-eyed overlooking
my home: kaleidoscope windows coming into view.**

....



**Once, gentle. Now, riled and nowhere but where
the stench of sewage is piled on the curb.
The gears of bitter disappointment snatching
you into a feral hold. Exotic tall weeds,
broken at the base.
Friendships are spoiled at the root, even love is
overshadowed by the decay.
Less obligation, less affection, less loyalty.
I must pretend we are healed, but the only healing
that happened was a cauterization of our severed bond.
There is anger but less hurt,
just the motions of getting through
undetected, and me by myself,
always alone -**

separate happenings, entities, isolated
aspects merging, but never
whole. White car on the road.
Red car on the road. Silver then
blue. The only place absolute is
the place I left where faith was unnecessary
and all cells were one cell, not like here -
different functions - each dominated by its own survival.
No wonder love is weakened, can only achieve
a temporary claim on completion.
I accidentally crush the insect with my heel. It is consumed
by another of its kind, carried off
into the hive of practicality -
a gesture void of remorse or sentimentality.
In the end, there is nothing but wires and fences
and frames of flesh, cartilage and senses. Tomorrow
there will be talk and tea and eyes
locked in intense recognition.
Good for the moment
Good until there comes
the something we want
more of, less of, had enough of....

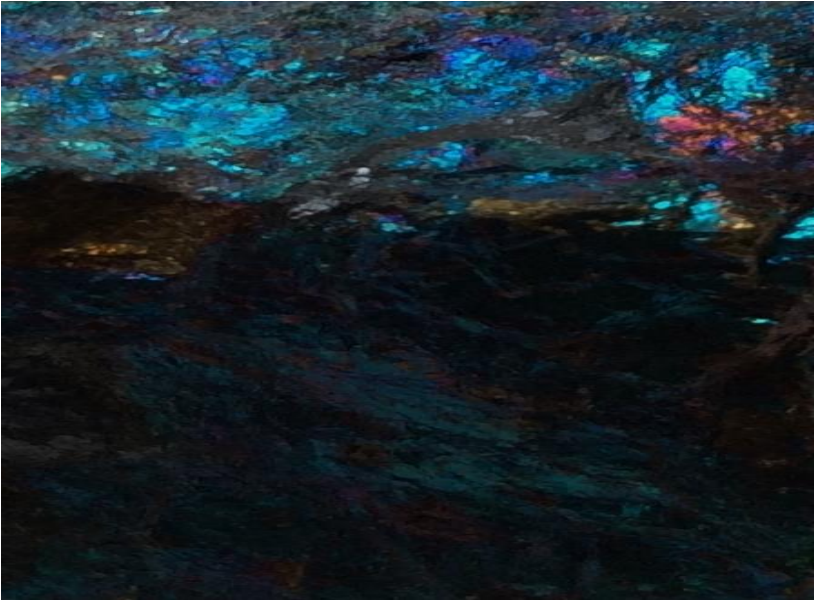
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**For a while -
deathcamps, blue balls
baskin'robbins. Play tomorrow
the lute-song of today and remember
the ground-swell
pounding paradise into my brain, collapsing
from overload, reloading fodder
and flighty friendships I've lost use for.
Nothing counts, count on nothing but playfighting
over the bank, over the brim - rim - keeper
of the fixer-upper, of the still fire, fire still
as yellowed corpses. Mid-fall.
Fake it! Love! kindness, tenderness - be
polite, because very little is
anything you want to take with you.
Care-giver, carer of the children,
the laundry, pets and bank account.**

**It is all you are – rainstorm.
You must take this stone and swallow,
make peace with your burden, make love
with the swarming emptiness, stuck
in a gravitational pull,
planets, solar systems spinning around you
but you are heavy, must be,
unfazed by the pressured wind - stains
on the ground. Inside of you, chopped-up bits of fate
and crimes conceived before you
were born. Fake it, wallpaper it. Go on, try, smile**

....



**Fresh, potted
bright as an angel. Death is a whip
I put down. Ill health slumber,
but God is my mercy-king. Queen
of loving miracles. I will sing to
keep the right intention and grieve
minimally for what I cannot do.
Little red tree, no higher than
a toddler-child. Disco ball,
ball blue and gold,
twirl for me, let the grey dissipate into your
twinkling glow and all my blood into your veins,
little tree
plump and flourishing, readying for greater heights,
string-stream through me, weave me into your branches,
still firmly on the ground.**

**Angels everywhere I need your temperance. I need
to know my children are protected by your grace,
wing-spread, and even
your cold white eyes.**

....



**Gaze, focus, hold.
Unconscious stream
of raw fluidity streaming,
rising over barriers, drowning them
with the pressure of an open door.**

Cracks of circumstantial disease,
creating pockmarks to expand destiny's choices,
fashioning gifts to give,
earned by bomb-droppings
and low flying plane-explosions.
Cobweb parties, graffiti
on the skin of your back,
made with a blade as small and smooth
as the tip of a hawk's feather.
Weaning off the burnt oak,
preening patches of grime.
Wake and rhyme, garden-keeper,
ambush your fear - it cannot be real!
Lungs run the same vibration as a flame.
It is hard, but not impossible. Gulp the sea
of senseless over-warming, pool the salt-taste
in your mouth, feel it
around your lip-rim, the sides of your cheeks. And there,
be safe, joining with the translucent swimmers, floaters
of prehistoric heritage.

....



**Principles of duty
overtaking sleep like a wave.
Heavy love rooted in isolation,
reflecting the depths of true giving.
A condition turns to disease, restrictions
bare down. What is ordinary becomes like
a cage. Children in the drifting storm, drifting
on condensed-traffic streets, how I love you.
How I would do everything I cannot do to ease
the grip of your elephant shackles. Mine was the angel's
autonomy, where nothing was miscellaneous and my bed
was a rich blackness that absorbed all time. Mine was loud**

without noise or distraction, just the buoyant sparkle flow
of paired-off stars and the countless debris of ongoing creation.
Mine is yours now, inside less-than-working-organs, kidneys
like puzzle pieces, seamed together by an amateur.
Where are you now, God-who-remembers, reminds me
of what I once was? My God and Jesus of the lilies,
why the children? Why this fluke,
this bizarre nightmare crawling, closer,
closer than when I had no body, no loves to look after?
And oh I am tired, worn as an old shoe that must keep
the broken glass at bay. Where are you my God, my Jesus?
I know you are here. I know something, but not enough
to deflate my bloating anxiety. It is grief all over again and I
hide myself in older hands, friendless,
unsupported, remembering
the wholeness in every flaw, in the universe's veined light
I once travelled on. Remembering that what is flawed sparkles
with a unique variation of beauty, rainbow fractions, infractions
that are blessings that seep and saturate sinews
and bones, galaxies
perpetual, renewable
where everything sings useful -
seemingly incongruent, yet in truth, masterfully
precise.

....



In and out of Spain

Spanish gardens, donkey trails.

**Up steep dusty mountains we went, the four of us,
then we walked along rocky ocean cliffs, poking long sticks
in the waves. Whether it was an octopus' play or anger,
tentacles wrapped tight around the tree-limb,
my brother screamed with excitement, pulled for a while
then let go.**

**Under surveillance at the corner store, we were
government-spied on
while buying popsicle rockets, licking,
lazily skipping back to the pool. I snuck
behind our apartment building
to feed dinner scraps to the desolate feline strays.**

**My mother bought us dyed pink chicks at Easter,
chick-feet running across a tile hard floor.
My father brought them back to the market
to face their inevitable doom.**

**Baby teeth, my brother's and mine, tied to a string
tied to an open door.**

**Grandmother with her long
boney brown fingers, her fearful sins and Lucifer
always behind our backs, up elevators,
fueling the first of my many nightmares, and also
my morality.**

**A white Volkswagen. A massive pinkish sun,
making friends with Spanish boys breaking
bread beside Flamenco dancers.**

**There was a shark in the water.
I was lifted onto my father's shoulders,
as he ran fast, past the menacing fin to the shore.**

**A diving board, lessons in breathing
and earning a swimmer's endurance,
lessons in lifting my double-jointed arm to gain
front-crawl perfection.**

**Mother's blonde and blonder hair.
Everynight parties.**

**Holland shoes
instead of stockings at Christmas.
Learning math at the kitchen table.
My father's arms carrying me home
after a late night gathering of strange comic-book creatures,
laughing, making us little ones sit at the smaller table, ignoring
our just-out-of-toddlerhood need for adult attention.**

**Kindergarten handwriting at Bambi School,
Rice pudding everyday for lunch. *Naranja-head*,
children pointing, making fun because of my orange hair.
A pencil jabbed into my upper arm -
40 years later, the lead is still visible.**

**When we drove across the Denia boarder, into France,
then landed for months in London,
I could see my father's memories coming back, his
disappointments
overtaking. Maybe it was because it was in London
where his own father died, left India for, only to die
two weeks later in his wife's arms,
leaving five children behind.**

**The first year back in Montreal,
my father started drinking heavily while my mother gave up,
got involved with her celebrity journalism and multitude of
friends.**

**I remember going to get breakfast, my father passed out
on the kitchen floor. I remember
in and out of Spain.**

Past obligation

Perched and listening,
a point of war.
Several days I lived in a hole,
shoulder shot by the blast
of a rubber hammer coming down.
Clear as pacing, counting
the clock ties, permits overdue,
you stayed like a waning moon, unobtrusive
in a cloud-cloaked sky -
the only light left to have. Somewhere in
that shady disaster I bought a dream,
almost new, with you, carefully walking
the wet rocks. I fell asleep and you stayed, documenting
my close-to-death dawn. Fishing me out of the fishtank,
releasing me into wide open waters.
Middle age is best, sea-worn but still pursuing.
You stayed – an island never claimed by reptiles,
a freight train, moving slow enough to chase and board.
Thank you for staying, for your fervent destiny
choke-collar-chain and your eyes
of tender extremes. I lay it down.
The lizard with the leaf.
The primal mysticism I built my struggle on.
I lay beside you, knowing you climbed many stairs
to find me, and you stayed.

I moved like a moon

**in predictable orbit, smashed
by meteors, space pebbles
meeting my surface with deep impact, when
there were dark oceans under my skin, unseen
single forms, coupled forms, and beds of
colourless weeds, but I steadied myself
on the cold shell of repetitive expectations -
dead valleys here, dead heights there.**

**Going through the hard crust, under, into
a thicker atmosphere, currents of heaviness,
breaking barriers better off broken.
Haunted by shapes that come close and rarely touch,
in this weighted environment, by-passing predator
tentacles and jaws by instinct alone, no journey-map,
stars or horizon to act as goal or inspiration, but**

**rolling
through cross-waves with creatures captured
by a dark density like
myself, shaded, loose at the extremities, compact
at the core, thriving on plateaus of deep pressure,
salty flavours all around - so far gone from walking
that legs leave, replaced by fins, and language is not
sound, but a full-body resonance - no delay
between appetite and attainment.**

A weighted bliss in the lonely light

**Love is a mountain inside a stone,
a lightweight singer finding purpose in a mourning choir.
Love is broken, mutating into falsetto, breaking,
then layering a new underbelly. Love is something
to wish for – moving, movable with just the right
amount of softness and substance, just the tips of fingers
coursing over a body. Love is a mind free enough to know
compassion as a coping method. It is a body unbearable alone,
but under love's touch, able to mark off
conclusion after conclusion -**

**constantly budding, lasting ease
lasting elation.**

Evolution for some, not for all

**Piercing malleable opening,
a softness in the face
over ridden by cynical neglect.
Supper is almost ready, folly on
the garden steps.
Intonations speak the
underbelly layers of languages.
Puddles I deliberately
step in to know the intimacy of water,
the revival of being overpowered by the strongest
of all Earth's elements.
Superimpose me on your raincloud.
I cry like Lazarus shedding his week-old shroud.
I stumble under the falcon's swooping breath,
remembering myself prehistoric -
a bird before birds.**

Creativity

**Peeled of my own death,
entering a corridor of dawn,
heat without fire,
a staircase into the void,
buried in the gas furnace, this
guest that never comes, eats bread
or slips into the cradle of a comfortable
home. Pen and beauty, an inevitable
loneliness that victory cannot solve,
a transitory opera, bird songs, fragile,
almost breaking, vibrating at a desperate
but soft speed.**

**A woodland to walk through that inherits
a shadow canopy darkness. Walk through
regardless of doubts full-blown,
regardless of scrapes across your tender surface.
Love is just an image
as you walk,
sounds are menacing but
never reach crescendo,
never sustain the heavier beat that leads
to ecstasy's blackout.**

**Leaves become teeth.
Impressions are unkind.
Your husk is broken
and your blood is a heap of
dead violets crushed
in a celebrated summer.**

Master-piece

Patterns of
perfect chaos,
intricately separate and
growing, inside the fulcrum
of my personal biology.
Defined only by my relation
to another, weighted down to this rock,
this glorious giver of gravity and greenery.

Dreams of galaxies, streams of potent
heat, maneuvering glows,
brilliant pallets, housing
celestial communities.
Limited to a repetitive rhythm that alters
incrementally, evolves, slow, unperceptively, inside
of that,
I expand, fingers not
like the dead-hand of a yogi master, lifted
permanently drained, shriveled by an irrational
devotion to suffering, but like a startled
infant's fingers, outstretched
mid-air in a move of instant instinct I touch
lightwaves,
merge with their flow,
twists and swirls,
cosmos canyons, rivers, dunes -
a sweet remembering of womb-like love,
a thumbprint kiss from lips I have always
always known.

Matchstick, acorn hill

Some altered landscapes go unnoticed,
hidden by mature growth,
lush angular anomalies,
and streets continue on
as though limping was not a hindrance
only an eccentricity - limping slow
as our sun's heat is slow to reach the exoplanets
or slow as destined love can be before it is
fully embraced.

Self-definitions needing
to be re-defined and illusions
of future bliss needing
to be released for more authentic possibilities.
Years of pebble-hopping, fresh denials
embodied into lifestyles.
The spot is marked. Grass stained,
unwashable, obvious to everyone,

but you are on the rafters, singing
to a made-up ghost, you are whistling
the tune you learned as a child,
whistling without variation,
plodding the automatic path
you were told would lead to joy,
to a mandatory means of fulfillment,

instead of seeing and serving the deformity,
blessing its merging waters with your own,
becoming stronger still, blooming as it grows,
methodically eliminating your most coveted
expectations.

Currents

The extremities
are beautiful as stained glass, green
as watered grass
and smells that take me over
a river, salted currents,
blooming with the long-bodied
seal, near curved mountain tops,
fresh mist, malleable fog. Humpback
dive. Cold summer winds,
oceans moving in, moving
the Blue whale, the Belugas,
the dark-fined Minkes.

On land, visualizing the underground rooted networks
that create lush densities of forests,
mountain geography, complex geometry

where fungi are conductors of communication
and legacies are passed down,
in spite of fires, droughts,
insect infestations. Places

enchancing children's minds
with tales of fear and heroic
overcoming. Places
to wade in, walk through, hide in
and be exposed.

Huddled in unity,
a river pod in winding ebbs, a family
in sync, mastering the undertows.

Paired

Hole in the sky we go
through. Other way
around, we exit on the peak.
Oblong mercy is the natural order
of things. We see an innate
camera reciting images
made up of everyone's fluid flames,
discovering everyone's life is short.

I remember sleeping in a dark summer,
remember the innards of the cave I strode into,
making a home out of its
damp walls and dirt.
I never meant to leave that home, never thought
I could find one to hold awareness with such intensity, savoring
the brink-edge depths, even
expanding the boundaries. Never thought to be coupled,
completed in an evolving perfection, never thought
I could find one to give me permission to embody my desires,
discover my desires before I do, then honor the reciprocation
of mutual satisfied longing.

Our bodies become spiritual.
Ourselves, undivided
from the fixed-point and from the no-point
chaos blues. Our gift
is a box of fresh fruit, full
whenever opened - mixed
succulent, surprising pleasures.
Ours is a wholeness that

can be experienced without complications
because we know that death makes God
necessary, and because
we are braver, only capable
when we are where we stood
before our births, each pore
mingled, sensitized, our organs submerged
in the consciousness of this re-joining,
speaking in tongues, with tongues and touch.
The time of only light awakened, then
the time before light
entered, restored.

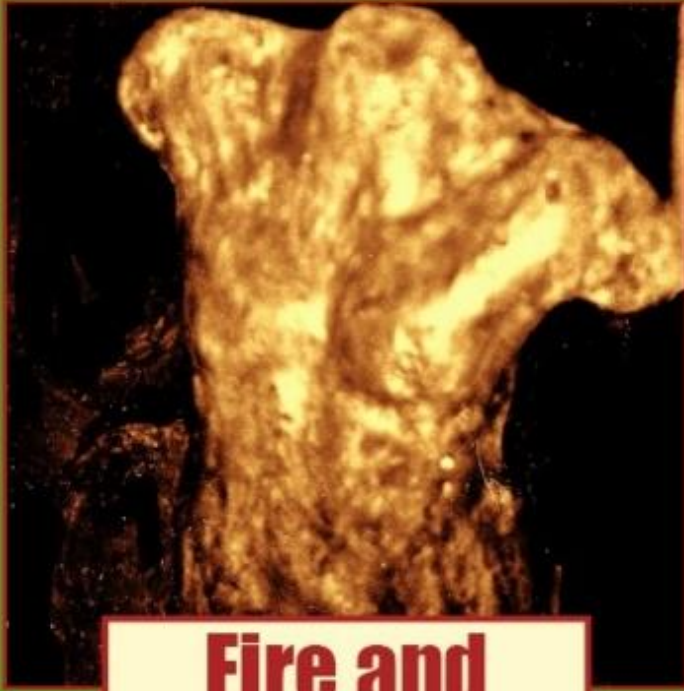
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Reviews of the poetry in 'Walkways':

"We've recently received the work of Toronto poet Allison Grayhurst, a collection of vivid imagery and gripping enjambment that puts the reader in a spiralling world of despair. By using language to express the human conflicts of inner turmoil and the way in which our past burdens interact with the subconscious, the self and the world around us, Grayhurst sculpts poems that are revealing and confessional, as well as technically adept in their formatting and diction," *David Eatock, The Continuist.*

In response to the 16-part poem - Walkways:

"This is brilliant! Brilliant. Reminds me of when I first read Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass". And I wanted to stand up on the city bus and exclaim aloud: "Listen to this!" A comprehensive capturing of human earthly experience in all its dimensions without missing a beat – beyond the conscious mind – dancing with the levels of our knowing and sensing – that we feel but do not always recognize, and rarely, oh so rarely articulate. Clearly, Grayhurst's poetic journey has taken her to the mountain top," *Taylor Jane Green, registered holistic talk therapist and author.*



**Fire and
more,**
The poetry of
Allison Grayhurst

Allison Grayhurst

Fire and more,

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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new poem – not a poem

**Block and embrace the energy action,
circular, the fastest stroke of curved precision.
Bend to grow strong and final as a setting sun
seems to be.**

**Above all else, wait for the promise to gain
momentum, height, far from where
the common acceptance will allow.**

**Wait for the baptism, the tenth time around, baptism
into deeper layers of valley rhythms – heaven is in these depths.
Fulfilment and freedom comes better under the weight of
spiritual obligation to God.**

To God:

**I climb close to you. I find you outside
of my lineage, including my walking and my
destination. I know you now as a solid
certainty. I love you though I am still
close to breaking, close to you,
permanently placed on the threshold
where all things begin and all things end.**

Old Dreams

Fisherman

**Wrapped in marine air, he
unfurls his net.
Exhaling, the sea seeks
the nylon snare, and the blue
belly fish skim
each other's fins, scarcely struggling
to fight the inevitable
hunter's claw.
Suffocating, the sapphire sun
pierces their fishy flesh like a violent dagger.
Their instinctual hearts
not knowing why
they were lifted into the atmosphere
of such poisonous pressure, lungs
collapse under the gravity, die,
hysterical, terrorized.
A smile reflects
on the brilliant crystal waves.
He, with his human eyes
untouched by such foreign agony
counts
each pretty corpse
and sails on,
like God's shadow
through the caldron
of the inescapable Earth.**

Old Goriot

He eats the fruit
of the dark arrow
hunt.

The half-moon rises
like a halo
over the thick, draping sky.

He is sleeping with
a locket: his obsessive
love burns
betrayal
at his doorstep.

The gracious garden trees lean,
shadowing his eyes
from the Parisian summer.

Two little girls are playing dress-up,
tickled by thoughts of an enduring grandeur.
It is late in the decade. The lamplight is fading,
he calls out

on his deathbeds that he has learned the unteachable:
-Love too has its limits
as the world keeps turning
artlessly
towards its own destruction-

He reaches his frail fingers
and finds
no companion to comfort
his setting soul.

His smoldering, old eyes close
as his last breath
sings, sending
a final blessing
to the indifferent moon.

Gastown

Rain, rain winter rain. Vancouver hell. I scream - Shanti! Does this mean I am weeping too? The dock is peopleless and depressing. The type writer clunks but I cannot tame my mind enough to be coherent. Five books on the go - reading Camus, French short stories, Chekhov, Hermann Hesse and Pablo Neruda.

Rain, rain, winter rain. All day, every day, grey drizzling afternoon skies. Cobblestone roads where the welfare dreamers walk on and bury their eyes in leather hands which are buried in Scott-Mission coat pockets which are infested with another man's memories and another life's despairs and hopes. Just across the bridge are the beach and the yuppie-side of town. Just down the road is a park where so many starving, bony fingers feed their only meal to fat pigeons that your heart aches with love. You can see the mountains from the hotel window, but it does no good, because you know nothing's for free and you'll never reach those frosted heights because you just haven't got the guts or the strength or the knowing.

We are at the Gastown Lodge, I am nineteen and heading off for Europe in a month and my ulcer is eroding mercilessly away and my stool is beet red and my period has lasted 12 days now and my legs and my hands are turning pale purple and I have no money and there are woman-screams and knife-wound blood just outside my door and a blue budgie is flying terrorized in the hallway as two cocaine-snorting red-eyed son-of-a-bitches chase it out the window, and the manager runs up to my partially-open door, screaming - Don't open it! For fuck's sake keep out of it! The police are coming! Monday early morning.

Monday late morning. And it happens again; the screams, the trail of fresh blood, the sirens...

You are holding my hand. I am at the hospital and they have to go into my neck-vein to take a blood sample because I

am so damn anemic, and you are still holding my hand even though the sight of a needle makes you want to vomit.

We go home with five-years of potent ulcer medicine and you make me stir-fry for dinner and I throw it up and the cockroaches drown in the brownish mess while you take me into your room where your husband is sleeping and you play me a new and beautiful song.

Every time I laugh, it hurts. But I like it better this way, being with you and your big, bright teeth, and your comforting smile and your motherly touch. I like it better than anything in the world, and I can't tell you how much this means to me or how wonderful you are or how your kindness, our friendship has taught me more than any yogi-guru or Buddhist-religion or Gurdjieff/Ouspensky philosophy or Krishnamurti-movie or Christian-priest ever has and probably ever will. I can't tell you I am sorry for the future when I abandon you for these desperate dreams and walk a thousand worlds just to tell you we will never be the same again. I can't thank you for the sense you knocked into me or for always remembering the root of our togetherness, and dragging me forward, beyond my self-doubt and spiritual shame...

But back then, we were dancing in black Moroccan-dresses with all the lights off as we tossed the last of our meagre riches into the street below where the Westcost sky oozed and drooled its darkest rain on the lonely apostles of a shell-shocked god. And you would say

– We are on the edge. Be brave. We are swinging from a very thin branch, over a great gaping abyss. And all around us is music and tears, so dance. Though nobody gives two shits about our firework dreams, dance –

Then you would say

– Something about me likes this joint. You know, I'm sort of proud of being able to endure all this hell. Did I tell you? Just the day before you came some guy pushed his way into my room and tried to rape me. I broke a coke bottle and warded me off as he chased me around the bed, screaming something in another

language that sounded so equally pitiful as it did vulgar that I got confused whether to feel sorry for the pathetic fool or just plain despise him. Before I could decide, the manager came and dragged him off to the police station –

Then

– I lost my footprints, somewhere in a childhood awakening. From that point on, I could harm nothing, reject nothing, create or love nothing. Don't you see? It's because I needed the spider as much as I detested the sun. –

– It's so cold and lawless on this side where I sit, beyond all common afflictions, above all shadows and below a laughing, bitter moon. Do you understand? Do you love me? Does anybody love me? Was I born to be dry, a thief unleashed among the naive and the generous? No, you don't understand. One minute my hands are like ash, lame and lifeless, the next, they hold the power of a dozen angels. Was I born to be like lightning, a horsefish, silver and racing and shining like a jewel for the poor prisoners of the serious sea, who will never know the danger in being, totally, entirely free? –

– I cannot step outside my agony, my desperation for perfection; it stays like a swollen tattoo ironed to my skin, like a howling infant dangling from the tip of my tit with vice-grip strength. Sometimes I think I might explode just like a pretty rainbow bubble. Sometimes I think I might just disappear... have you ever felt that? – You asked.

You asked,

– Have you ever hated yourself so much you couldn't face to look in the mirror? Have you ever loved someone so much you thought, this must be a gift? Who am I? and the magic sought you out and you were consumed by an ideal and a speechless passion, and then one day you are on a subway train and you find those love-sick butterflies lying dead on your lap, and you pick them up one at a time and crunch their handsome leaf-wings between thumb and finger until nothing is left but you, but never you, never all of you, again? –

If You Wait...

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

More than theory

I do not believe in the easy dream,
blended with drama and false expectation,
nor in the business of joy without
work and the sweet sweet fragrance that changes
everything. Like branches that bloom from a tree
long withstanding weather and years - I want to sing
a picture that blends peace with fire, that speaks
of all of who I am - a worshiper of the hard freeze,
and still I cry so easily. I long to capture this terrible madness,
lock it in a prison cell, letting in a little fresh air at a time,
expanding things that make it better,
like love so miraculous it is
hardly containable, like love that knows death without
despair - shattered and sheltered - I continue
on - it is another reason to continue on -
blessed with more than easy dreams.

Discovery

Found like a rare insect
on my sleeve, I found
the bones of my past -
hard, violent, lonely, a communion with
my male pulse - concentrated as contained energy -
I was contained and not soft or sensual or sailing
a flexible (though no less intense) wave. I was among
the steel chains – thoughts of love but never experiencing love -
only lust and necessity, desire, then the denial of all
desire. Never myself, looking into the eyes of a child -
honest, relinquishing self-control, never
weeping or shattered, only clear as a war cry - no
harmony, no mirrors except to break and use to cut
through the neck of anything that threatened to hold me
captive. I was found – completely half of one thing and never
tilted. I was found, like something solid, thought to be
lost. So I trace the outline of my thighs, trace
the doubt I have in every dream and trace the trail
of burnt matter that has left a kaleidoscope pattern in my mind.
I close my eyes to find again the certainty of a tyrant,
to tune out all dilemmas, to be absolute (*for just today*)
as fire.

Blue World

**Hobbling like a tropical disease
through the belly of the city.
In my pocket
a bullet
awaiting its target.
In my mouth
a mountain of hope, flowers
forming, rising
like the sun
against the sea.
This garden is odd:
faith is caged in a black hole;
spears, dank thoughts, so much depression
sprayed into the eyes
of good people,
so many wings flapping
shaved hypocrisies.
Suddenly they bar my door
Blue, blue . . .**

Soldier Boy

**I caught you. In the dark lanes,
on the highway
courageously following
the signs of Armageddon.
You will go two years
to war, digesting
voicelessly the echoes of filthy battles.
Games. The distance will cost more
than memories, and when the seven-storey castle
crumbles, tell me, my lover,
who will address your fresh
baby-burned hands? Who will hold your
honey-jar, lick it with wild, devoted intent?
Or place your medals
on the mantle and embrace you faithfully
nude?
I am suffering like a sparrow
starring at spring massacred
but the stiff towers.
There are pebbles on the runway piled up like a great stone.
I am missing the means to confront this distress.
The hour glass has turned on its side. Can you help me?**

**We are identical, destined as one,
making love under a mute sky
while twilight still glows guiltlessly
in subtle glory.**

After Love . . .

The mind falters,
reckless. Excitable
it murders
our perfumed relationship.
I am chiming the cathedral
bells, dreaming
of the lost tenderness
and the soft pink flesh
of rodent's feet.
You are content. Putting the pieces
together
well, with your friend
you use as a
remedy. No, the shadows
have not departed.
My eyes
are absent of the flaming tears,
and yet I cannot bear to shoulder
the belief in joy.
My knuckles are purple
with isolation and
the metropolitan streets
cage me in
with memory.
I am waiting
(that is all I can say)
to gain back color.
Like everybody else
who has been
branded by
the loss of love, I walk
towards

Heaven
dumb- struck,
knowing only the distance and
the danger
of this new, chilling
dimension.

Do not look.
It is company I need tonight
and I borrow you
for that.

You were the fool,
a dreamer
who knew the souls of each
and every star – then
far off, the wind
is webbing around me
and the bomb ticks
intimately by my bedside.

Is it the voice of Spirit?
I have no answer, no vision,
only bandages, inferno heat, the malice
of this realty.

I cannot erase you.

The rain will make us
both beautiful
somehow.

We will find our common
ground and paint
those stars
someday

**with exceptional
wisdom.**

**The bullets, the miracles
hit
 painfully brilliant
in their own right. But none of it,
my love
 is fatal.**

How We Live

*True like death & like death,
unchanged.*

**The place of faceless souls
where every soul is tattooed
in the underarm corner, to be glanced
at less than occasionally.**

**The smell of hopeful submission
gleaming in every Bay Street eye,
in the ghettos of energy unchained,
in each street corner store.**

**The sordid obscurity of conviction,
infecting the inner state of grandiose
intentions.**

**The love narrowing into
envy. The staggering back,
the punishment.**

*True like fear & like fear
denied.*

When The City Speaks

It is no small place
this devil's field
where the leopard's blood
runs through the streets
like a constellation
cut from the sky.
Drunkards, drug pushers,
the cold amoebas that
die without seeing a dawn.
In Chinatown, the spell is
set loose, splitting
the sun with fury.
Waxen murderers,
a barnyard of devourers. And
inside, lovers tremble,
clutched tight together
-arms, elbows, lips-
sensual and desperate,
anaesthetized by passion,
by common fear, away
from the cruel madness
that pounds & pursues
just outside the door,
where all
will never be well
or free.

In Waiting

**Waiting for the calm prelude
of death to break,
for the long-lived mood
of emptiness to be won over by
dedication.**

**Waiting for the numbness to flush out,
for a friendship deprived of all contempt.**

**Waiting for a feeling of awe to enter,
for a universal breakdown.**

My Tiger Lilly

Do you speak? I remember
your misty, honey eyes,
you, the owner of youth
and baby toys,
smiling under the blond tree
on my lap laughing at
the cherry coloured balloons
rising up into a full blown sky.
How sweet and free were our days
making sand castles in the autumn air,
filling our cups with wonder.
Naked love. There were my hands
hugging your inexhaustible heart
as you slept, clean and dreaming
in a foreign altitude.
Times flashes like mirrors in our
soul's depths, concealing eternity
behind a flat one dimensional interest.
You point to the bleeding heart flowers
and say they are beautiful.
Seven years, seven strange deaths
and still you are smiling: I do not
know you that well anymore.
You make the moths sing like butterflies.
You taste salt and say it drives
your feet to dance.
And when I leave,
you promise to follow me into adulthood;
somewhere between the angel and the child.

Lost Night

Silence
speaks this lost night,
comes the cold shadow
and takes my breath away.

Hot heart, heavy mind
mutually weary of one another.

Silent
like the low flight of birds,
like the river's rhythm,
and the resting fish within,
like the deep shade of this fading dusk.

I follow the storm
into the wave,
I follow the sun
into the darkening sky
and enter straight into midnight.

So help me . . .

Fish Hook

**Living is a cave,
a wink of darkness.
Eyes yawning,
squinting with weariness.
Sigh then wail,
the earthquake begins....
Convalescent world,
what value is there in unpraiseworthy pain?
First he rose. I died
in his light. Sun – sunset
crushed wild with the weight.
I cannot weep or roar
just here
emptied without a tremble,
a lamentation, without
poor, petty pride
or disastrous fear.
He urges isolation,
I crack dead as the unknown,
feeling ripped from the onion shell
having no heath
no reason,
I dangle hungry,
pierced.**

Love's Atmosphere

Today I tongue
your private
dimension ...

Too much transparency, empty
breathing.

I feel my body like the moon,
lined by
night. The clock
leaves a shadow on the bald
wall. You claim your cross & climb
to my side, barely
making it across the covers.

I am
skin
wet, golden – your prehistoric
lover.

I whisper my worst terrors, fill your
ears with my hoodlum
artillery, and ask
if nothing else –
to be saved.

Glittering with the substance
of sorrow,
you fold my face in your
wordless
hands,
losing me there.

Over the Wishing Pond

I run with the fool of winter,
with pity frozen to my feet.

In this town without mountains,
I escape by singing to
the subway walls.

Beggars fly by my window.

A friend's soft neglect invades
my ears, my blood and happiness.

It is the way of nausea and anarchy,
and the signs
from the seagulls still
echo through the parking lot.

There is no shelter in naked revenge,
only a serpent racing up and down
the walls. Only outside, a dozen animals
sitting ready for battle.

I want midnight and perfect noon sun.
I want to obliterate
the sickness that spreads across
this isolated terrain, leave everything
outlined in light.

When I Close My Eyes

The voice I hear that head my heart
soothes my unwatered ribs, speaks
generous and strong that the
stagnant heat that has made them brittle
will pass like a wave that passes
over a rock, accommodating yet
still whole. The heat will die like heat
eventually does, rising up into
God's all-absorbing arms.

I will be removed from the vulture pit,
and when removed the pit will be remembered
as a womb, and with my gifts I will be praising
its every depth and syllable. I will not
be forgotten though no different than
others who cry out in need.

The voice I hear that heads my heart
soothes my flesh-stripped knees,
singing of mercy, indestructible.

The Flower's Womb

Surviving still
one afternoon on a clear road,
unfolding like footsteps
on graveyard ground.
My limits touch me, echo
in my high nights
of summer power
and cherished inadequacies.
I think I will perish,
praise this invisible end.
I cling to the bird creature.
Porcelain eyes.
Cups of juice.
Resting bewildered in the womb.
It is open
the bridge, the leap,
devotion to its full extent.
My essence blossoms.
The red early morning
holds my hand.
Make no mistake
I am going, receding
from the devil's dewed territory,
going with you, past myself
terrified, continuing.

Lost

The bells of Euclid were ringing
and sunny was the sky.
Wednesday fell through my fingers
like cut grass and tomorrow will pass
by & bye.

I found four blue eggs cold upon the ground
and listened to the crows converse. I walked
a mile in mud and vowed to break one more
personal curse.

I stood beneath a stammering cloud that refused
to just move on. I looked for an omen from the crows
but all the crows were gone.

And when I arrived at my parents' door, the gate
was up and the locks had been changed.
Like a child in fear, I curled upon a rock and cried,
forgetting the brilliance of buttercups and
the rhythm of my name.

At The End

**Another day is departing
The sky,
crimson
blood-shot
I miss you.
I cry
still.**

Gloria

We share the small wonder
of intimacy's beat,
the gentleness of communion,
the hot pang of merging souls.

We move elemental like water
through the boundaries
that cage in
our beliefs.

Dream that speaks without armour.
Sister found
in your woman-flesh
and sheltering smile.

Words we use for hours
are not you and me, but crimes
revealed, skulls naked of skin and brain,
hands left as is – all logic aside.

Inside your blood,
the angels cry,
the fig tree finds
its open stream.

We stalk the endless cycle,
bringing vision
to our mute and lonely
worlds.

This Love

**Linked to this love
that lives on the cliff's ridge
and below the waves of water and sand.
Linked like the spinal cord is
to the brain or the squirrel to the tree.
This love is hunger with heat,
it is words that stop the gallows blade,
it is the thing that brings two souls together
and walks them home.
This love is naked, shelter, empty air
that has a purpose.
This love pardons, shares my bath and bed.
This love I circle like a sacred fire, but still I cannot see.
This love is a lanced abscess, a camera hidden in a wall.
This love cannot betray and buries all abuse in tenderness.
This love cures the dying swan's cries,
has mercy on the insect and also on people
too broken or hardened to care about
this love.**

Giving Roses and Bread

**I turned
I will not turn again
from your sad space & ruin.**

**No wand no crocodile
tongue will shut
me out.**

**The hour is blood,
is coiling, locked in
your iron skull.**

**Your back is straight
for the first time in months &
your fingers tap the table one by one.**

**I saw you climb
the ladder & crash.
I saw the marrow leak from your bones.**

**I turned
I will not turn again.
My smile will be your shelter**

**and with my chains & circle
I will build for you a garden
where the crows will dance**

**to drown your madness
helpless then
gone.**

So long and lucky

**So long and lucky
no obstacle has
driven me out of my new belief.**

**Hour of a bridge through kindness
dignified; hour of a breeze that makes
me yearn to be in motion.**

**Over the hills of self-made hopes
and failures. Spared
the tight-rope walk, for now, spared
the embrace of death and
all meaty, murderous things.**

So long and luck the mercy in my cup.

**I hardly know my face this worry-less and free.
I only know this moment is good,
and that love too does pass away.**

When He Left You

If ever a dead man
blew kisses from the grave
it is now now that the leaves
wilt, that you close the cupboard doors
and answer with silence
the tiny husk of sweetness swallowed.
A day by the hill pulsing with thirst.
The mirror hanging. You look, crying out.
But always you rock
decomposing, fake,
always a lunar night in your navel
tunnelling deep into your pit.
By chance you knife the python,
shoot bullets into the metal floor
desperate for escape,
desperate for the dream to love you
the way you, with your blood and poetry
love, love.

The one good thing to make good all things

**More than these –
the hand of the hunter and the
kneeling of the prey
lie naked in rooms
too familiar with sadness.**

**The hourglass
and church and all that makes
ancient waters sink into sands,
fill faces with blooming light.**

**On the bed where lovers' spirits
weave together to bless both hurt
and insecurities, there, no hope rests
unharvested, each day alone is soothed
with a warm and subtle joy.**

**There, voices speak drunk with truth,
kissing the depths with insatiable addiction.**

**There, praise and love are one,
and every other prayer unanswered is accepted
and finally, forgiven.**

Green Is This Day

green
like the rained-on statues,
baring bronze beneath their marred shells.

Green
is this death, that kills while
restoring, leaves no curing laughter
but shapes each shout into song and reaches
for a time of intention so precise with effort
that no failure could distract.

Green
is this high-noon temper
that mounts the morning with frown,
floods my features with regret
and sends me groping for awareness,
sends me beyond the barriers
of dignified need.

Green
is this day that grounds
my thrashing spirit, that travels
green
like wind down my throat into
lung and heart, travels
green
through all the zodiac passages
and binds me forever to a gallery
of untrodden depths.

Last Gesture Before Sleep

**Half way up the ladder
summit. Knocking
horns with the wounded antelopes, she
gives all
to a contemplative dare.**

**She thinks of the worms
in her palm, the shooting star
of last night's glory and
his lantern look, beyond
measure or magic.**

**She wants his skull between
her hands, his toes warmed by her
fingers, and his eyes
fixed on her belly
and hips.**

**Jealousy and sorrow, splitting
clouds and wishes over the blank wall.
Candlelight floods the sheets.
His body like a large root lies,
almost angry from kisses.**

**She crawls over him,
(covering like a shell)
and drives her loneliness
into realms of unforgettable
peace.**

Chinaglass Smile

In your bright
forbidden art,
the tiger spreads
his strength
like a branch
that feels for the soft
darkness. Your jaws
break loose on the stars.
You hurt for no one.

You live without loving
the intimate smile.
You are blue and tender
and hiding behind sweet
features. You hunt your
enemies with cut-throat humor,
only a virgin fool
could command your tears.

I am lost in your
tentacle strength. I am not
the last one to enter your door,
nor the first who directed
your journey.

But the eyes of heaven
speak to me today
and they tell me,

beside you,
I must be grateful.

Beggar Island

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

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

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

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

**Long this beggar island
where no covenant is kept
and all and all yearn
for home.**

Anticipation

Tonight will we land
in the blue room, with
sacred walls
and the ceiling too high to
touch, even with a chair?

Will the hot
locust bride pass our vision
until we kneel as one
before her hiss and drum?

Will I be under your arms,
under the covers, chocking on
the darkness or grinding
a little light on my lips to
entertain your kisses?

Up there where the doors
too seldom open for the revelation
walk, someone speaks to me
like a thin wind drifting down here,
down below. I hope it is you.

I have come so far for your green-river ride.

Tonight the leaves
will gather in the
graveyards, and your hands will be
promising what your tongue
is too worn
to utter.

Little

**In the little things
that fatten a day with petulant
injustices. In the basic things
like the lies in a newspaper or the
nonchalant acceptance of privilege,
history sinks and degenerates – a little
something, a base something growing to encumber
the oval whole without constraint. Patronizing as presents,
given gifts from the world-traveller
to the poor who are stuck with
store-bought cans and hardships
that leave no space for frivolity or
such easeful distractions.
A little now to the right, and symphonies
that neglect the dark muse
of its creator. Van Gough on placemats,
and there now, there now,
smile for the camera and make yourself as someone
special, worthy of your elitist smirk – a masterpiece of fiction –
one side, one belief, a derelict of denial to the little things
that demand so much courage to just muddle through.**

Last Beat

**It is a prolonged death,
a rotted tooth that hasn't been pulled.
Evenings of blasphemy, steeling bitterness back
to inhabit my upper gut.
I fumbled, then ripped the barriers – better off
hard and sure of the fire I was stoking.
Then softness crept in, like a pregnant mother
falling prey to a sentimental moment. Love
I called it. But it was a city of angst I unleashed,
twisted veins and cramped-up toes. Let it die
and be done with. I will not be owned by obligation
or highways and highways of mundane houses and the people
that live in them – insensitive to devotion, to savage need
and to pilgrimage. Joy
is where I am free. Beside the crystals forming,
savouring the voice that always guides me. And it
guides me to tear off my clothes, relax my arms and to
yes, yes, please
let go.**

New Visions

pure captivity

**Last day under water with
the dragging weight of toe-the-line.
I taught myself the art of manifesting
a carry-on bag full from the hunt.
Days drifting on the sandbox dunes,
gleaming but never fresh as a horizon,
snatched from my mountain onto
a foreign homeland.
Limbo dives into infertile meeting rooms,
tables as round as King Arthur's invention, but no knights
are these, only sagging eager pretenders, saying "fun!"
when meaning
"O hell, this is a hell-of-a-climb!"
I know my magic, the hand I was dealt and have
learned to never underestimate a leap of faith.
I trust my God – already bright and joyfully burning.
A sword is harmony. I can't think of a way
but around me is between me, and I am
swept of my burdens and my prisoners, trusting
to be clothed, this sacred baptism
into surf-riding the foaming plateaus of the tenuous
and difficult-breathing realms
unexplained.**

Requiem

Music, waking under my shell.
With warmer faces than I can image
neighbours are gleaming with the peace gained
from daily routine. But I hear music, old,
anointing the dismal sky and the
unused loins of dull-sexed strangers.
I have nothing to dream about – not gold
engraved bands, not hope, not a hoop
for my pedigree to leap through and overcome.
I listen to music that hurts the listener with
its degutting intensity – that hurts, and that is its
reward. Listening to its crime, its deep-throat kissing
death and its making tangible each layer
of unharnessed shadow. Here,
music without pride or long-range plan, just old
as the core of a mountain and new as something
animated and beating, undulating in waves like screams
and these dreams I cannot begin to imagine. Music, glaring,
familiar, wrapping around me as though I am a virgin to
its sound. As though I have become, and I have become,
its committed mistress.

Crystal dark

sound, woodpecker
foraging, near, nearing
spice
on my fingertips -
relaxed appropriation.
Backpacks and scarcity,
only the Zen flavour
of moving, taking necessities,
giving up newly bought coats
to strangers on buses.
Bus routes going to unexplained territories
vocalizing droning dreams
of the misused, disenfranchised
ruthlessly bored,
cardboard box lifespans
arrows pointing back from the way
you came,
mounds of
silver sorrows, pee-stains
on stones, what is left but dead planets done with
geological formations, never
knowing scattering amoebas, only
knowing failed attempts at rhythm, equilibrium,
rubble,
aftermaths of harsh creation,
pointless rock-globes
spinning
with moons no signs of summer.

All one child

**Long and a lot, fractures of time,
stretching steam-dust through
veins, fissures of luminosity.
Finally able to slice the pie,
embrace my priorities, understand what
sustains the veneer.**

**Kaleidoscope beating, beeping
a pulsar note of radiant birth, a
lifespan thinning, making new.
Voluptuous decay.**

**In my mind, complexities are exposed
in synergetic symmetrical beauty, bi-polar displays,
precision across solar systems -
a sidewalk chalk drawing.**

**Approaching revelation - a reincarnation-past
I am able to re-own without apology, without
demeaning my feminine front.
And up in the stringy multitude infra-ray arms,
vocal as a heartbeat under sinews,
I crack like a seed gnawed by a rodent's teeth,
and then I grow.
Moving
to build ecstasy's garden, grow
a rose – a scent on my neck,
under unshaven arms.**

**Grow until you own me,
call me out and let be a giant,
let me see the colliding galaxies I came from,**

**to stamp my name across nebulas,
collecting heat, mass, potency.
Grow until I am formed -
millennium still, erupting**

When I met an angel she was on a subway car

**Dyed, dull blonde,
roots showing, hunched
over, more than middle age.
No conversation, but
a half smile, a slight nod and
looking affectionately, in my mind saying,
“You should already know
God is here, present when you have no
strength to even ask or search, when both sides
of the tunnel are blocked and the only
way out is up, through loose earth and an inevitable
collapse. God is here, you know,
I am.
How many times do I have to be obvious
to re-kindle your faith?
How many times have I loved you,
drenching you with miracles,
sending you to the depths to find flight,
sending you to a choice of yes or no, so you can
remember
I love you – where trusting me is loving me
is all there is left always to do?”
When I met an angel, she was on a subway car,
temporarily normal - at once
personal, at once divine.**

Purged

**Worn, magnified destruction
the crime of ancestral imagination,
crimes in your soup bowl,
on your forehead, marking like
a stain cross your face.**

**Come by home through the labyrinth
of your self-hatred. It was never yours,
only yours by default, only your father's organ music,
only your mother's chained solidarity to a monstrosity,
and you, lying flat on your single bed in
your simple room watching the firestacks
from the chemical factories, past the railroad,
far from the river where you would bike to
to claim yourself some peace.**

**Beer bottles and ashtrays and the harsh unpredictability
of irrational bitterness coiling in his dark eyes, distorting
his once handsome face – Do you know you are free?**

**In this mansion of hard-won truth, love as tough as marble,
blooming always on unexplored shores, counting on you
to thrive. You are mighty and you are needed. Do you know
you are strong, a masterpiece, a hero? It is better this way,
to have been crushed, eliminated, earning yourself such
raw beauty. You are safe because you have been emptied -
a cherished dream reduced to cinder, and you have survived,
a mighty force of love, my love, my eyes.**

Despair is a weighted ghost, a guide who has finished its deed.

**I love you even more with your softened rage
and your surrender. I love you like I have always loved you like
the first knowing of who I have finally found**

**a choir pure, vibrating grace into my bones,
feeding, formidable -
endless food, endless rest.**

Effie

Picture at the bottom
tied up in a pit of moths.
The royal crown, life without
a wheel to ride. Paving up the stream
where children once charged down an incline
and jumped into its shallow body.
Instead I am weakened, unable to hold
my breath for more than ten seconds,
lungs, tender with each breath, wounded, flaccid,
but airways enflamed, engrossed with harsh swelling.
Will I die this way? Before my children are fully grown?
Will this be the place, alone, afraid, surrounded by love with
no love able to save me, repair my pulse, give current
enough to dismantle the throne of this disease?
I lay on a bed, under sheets. I know what is tomorrow.
I have no choice
but to let go. My children! My husband! My darling loves!
Winter has not yet come – here, but more like spring
crushing my chest, one breath, one breath, heavy liquid
rising in pockets meant for air – one breath, one breath.
The morning has arrived and death is edging nearer.
I see it waiting
for me on my neighbour's roof, patient, not as a predator,
but more like a sea at ebb tide, gathering moon gravity
and a natural motion of force that will eventually drown
whatever remains on the beachy shores, drowning
before winter - one breath.
My children are on their own as I am and I cannot stop
this freezing, save them from the cliffs
of mountain-burning grief,
prevent them from being orphans in other people's homes,

holding eye contact briefly with other mothers who love them, feel for them, but never the way I have loved them. The world will wax me, carry me across on the path of my heritage.

No one will be alright. Death is never healed, it is a garment permanently glued, re-shaping the wearer, taking the light through a black hole, ending the peace of ignorance. One breath. The sky has changed. It is the last time I will bear it witness, from now on - hospital ceilings, the insides of my eyes and dreams of purgatorial pain overcome, of dreaming my children old with children of their own. Don't stop dancing, I tell them, don't watch me. I am sorry. I can barely breathe. Is God real? I am holding many hands holding mine; whispers, I love yous, goodbyes. My last breath escapes me, easier now. I hear singing, sobbing, singing louder. I am listening, complete as a stone. My work is over. My love is burning. It is a sun. It is the shape of that song.

But I was...

**But I was sleeping, exact as bread
to the lips of the famished. I was formidable in
my sleep, even laughing occasionally.
I am waking now and it is like falling - my knowledge
falling, my certainty falling like sheet metal too close
to my neck. I am nauseated and swallowing
so much heat that I would like to forget the loneliness
it generates, forget my naked self, heightened with
unknowing. My hands. I turn them over, they are not
bleeding. The window pane has not been cleaned.
There are dishes here,
dishes there and dust inside my head.
My eyelids are lifting,
watching the door. The door is warm from my gazing.
There is a river inside of me, flaring with electricity,
waking me. I do not want this grape – Sometimes
it is like staring at the sun: Imagine me, blind,
but so much more than who I was before
(eyes closed), sleeping.**

No Stone No God

I sang a stone, a star
retracting, turning charcoal, still
blood-fire aglow. I pulsed in the aftershock
of entropy, but never believed black
holes to be anything less than the pupils of God,
absorbing light, surrounded by swirling iris-galaxies.
Sucked through the mighty hurricane,
living inside the deepest of organ-flesh,
directing a liberating unfolding – a grand outside
poly-shield, infant-squalling. It is celestial traffic and
it is alive, caught in the mower, twitching, having
the edges shaved off to form a more easily
movable body-round – end-of-summer-stone.

I sang a stone, a star
tuned in to what flows out, seems like cement,
but isn't, is a babbling, bubbling child – wonder
here – wonder at the root.
Limits are the end of all exploring,
the disconnecting, overtaking void, more void,
no food, no stone, no song.

Empty drawer

I can't speak it
it burns, melts
down my throat,
riddling my stomach lining.
I can't smell the wet
wooden fences, touch
what glistens naturally,
transient and pure.
Running from the socializers,
the money makers, money believers, ignorant
of death and of the weight of love.
I can't stand in my special place,
domed by a protective layer of faith
and the muscle tissues of maniac grace.
I want to leave this war in which
what I say has no say, where I am pinned
to the gravel, spoke
wheels of the worldly controllers
rolling over my flesh and spine. Is there
mercy? Is there anything
open? Oxygen? Validation?
Is there anyone to talk to?
I would talk but I can't speak
or move forward from this death trap.
In my mind, confinement abounds.
Blood letting, leach getting, plastered
to every underside of skin.
When will it be gone?
Will I be gone, clear of this
disability? Bicycle

**riding, riding twisted garden paths.
Smile here, nod there at all the people in human clothes.
I am grey as my namesake, as a cluster of lackluster trees.
There is nowhere for me, nothing
I can understand.**

I can see the sun

**but I can't be the sun
or know the sun
in this wilderness clearing
cutting up, suctioning out my insides.
Sing alone over the wide span
of dead rolls, broken by a secret
and wounds dried up, salt hard,
hard with condensed pressure.
Creak and slide over insect glitter, sun
beams shaping the edge of the bank. I am a
fish in a polluted stream. Tires and concrete,
broken blocks blocking my way to the river.
Evolving is hard, takes time to earn a body
that can leap over high obstacles, conquer resisting currents
while starved of a clean home. It takes a fool's joy
and an easy detachment to soar far out of the nest, lift
up and skim the skin of golden warmth. But I am a fish
meant to find shelter at the bottom bed of the ocean,
not in rivers or in streams, not leaping, but slow, slow,
surfing the cold sandy terrain,
skylight forgotten, sunlight undreamed.**

Entering the organic spa-spot

The torture I held as you tiptoed across
my organ cells and hair follicles.
I held even more by holding insanity's
delicate wafer on your conveyor belt.
I love this end the most, smelling charcoal and
the rotted-tooth breath of what once was.
I loved saying goodbye to your rigid palm-reading,
your depleting predictability and the adult-slot
I've had to slot my mind into
to manage you as well
as I did. And I did. I received gift baskets,
praise and even a place
on the roster. I know it was for something but even so,
it was nothing I can use in my journey among the
aspen shavings, the inter-sloping muse
that highjacks my better self
and gives it free play.
Even so, good to know, I am capable.
So much better though,
to say goodbye, bow out and join ranks with the sages.
So much weight to shed,
the load of metal-brick responsibilities,
keeping tabs, counting scores.
So much that wants to be forgotten,
go unnoticed and lose the symbiotic skills of your success.
Mercy is mine, understand that.
I am not settled, but embarking.
I am saying goodbye and it is easeful,
a release that arrives as completion.

Rite of Passage

The power of you
in the grueling dark places
that demand your mastery.
Summer has left, but the sky
is still beautiful
emerging, gaining soft feathers.
The will to blow mighty at
the insects of anxiety, insects
building nests of dread
inside the pocket holes of
your once most-trusted security.
Relax in the wave that takes away your footing,
teaching you the ways of
sharks and minnows,
pulling you out into a place where
oxygen must be drawn in differently,
slicing smooth skin into gills,
salting your eyes, tastebuds and
all of you that previously glowed.

Treehouse by the fence
fall over and know it like
you can, either fly or swing
or place yourself, steeping slow,
renew yourself, know yourself capable
of maneuvering any journey.

Deciding is hard, you must shed your shell
of childhood, majestic and marvelous
as it was, keep the good
that formed, transforming as you bless it,
incorporate it, and then,
let go.

I have been born

**a thousand times over,
flaked into existence by
force, by will and by desire.
I have had my days
under the siege of physical limitations,
of bloodlines burned and bloodlines
mended. There is no more
time for this rotating scheme,
no space for waiting
or for continuing. I stop here. Unplugging the
flow, breathing only because
I want to, because
this skin that is mine is
the last skin I will ever claim
as the landscapes I drop, drop, then
drop me.**

dead cold moon

**Lay it to rest, accept
it like gravity or the
flight that lasts only moments
before a fall.**

**Excuses made to maintain the shrine of inward pressure,
voyaging to the harbor then back out to sea, never
touching shore or dipping a foot into the ocean.
I tried to make a quarantined country, a library
of unreal tales, a mythology without leaven.
Spear-headed, tossing, unwrapped and wailing
before a shattered creation. Playing unnoticed.
It is dark. Too many rulers burnt by stubborn commitments.
Children give courage to each other, mountains bleed.
Resting is replenishing, ambition is irrevocably removed.
I am nothing but God's child.
I am nothing except when living
with consciousness that I am
God's child - servant on a dead cold moon
a servant saved
(burning still)
on that dead cold moon.**

The Stain

It seems it has been there forever. But
if I think back, I remember
when it happened - dark, sticky
with a faint repugnant scent,
avoiding it, so as to not soil
my shoes, avoiding because
What was it? Paint or tar?
Whatever it was it was most
probably toxic, not supposed to be there
where children ride their bikes, walk
their scooters, or hold hands with their
dead-pan caregivers or mothers
talking on cellphones,
holding both phone and child's hand
with equal pressure.
I still avoid it like a crusted-over wound turned
to a scar, turned to a permanent deformity.
I have wondered why no one has ever cleared
it up, chalk-drew over it,
around it, even the sparrows avoid it and I think
everyone who walks by, walking home or to the subway
pretends not to see it, because it does not belong there -
there with the sidewalk sweepers and garden planters.
It is an aberration - in summer, when
the snow melts, when the snow first falls.

See

I see you now like I didn't before,
see the eclipsing cataclysmic drive,
heavy in its consumption, consuming
me with images of you and the upper reaches
of your forehead, upper scope of divine desire,
filtering down my throat, into arm sinews, fingers
and finally my teacup, drinking again.
Why did you make me see,
give me urgency, anxiety unquenchable?
Hot-lip inheritor, a catastrophic omen, cutting down
my log house, cutting up the loving stars.

I see you now and cannot see again
ideals to strive for, homesteads of subterranean warmth.
Wait under water, wait beside the fleshy fins of mauled
corpses. This reality is mine, although I tried
to make something different, tried to grow great
gardens in the sand.

I see you now – illusionist,
collector of willing followers, a games keeper,
selling me out to see how devoted I remain,
to see how bravely I live after I see, after this fall.

Blue light

**Blue light around your mouth,
cascading on covers,
paralyzing your voice,
pulling your soul
into a choice of “which destiny?”
Bread drops into your mouth,
unable to open or close.
You see this light
without seeing the light.
You dive into the doorway,
pulling free, taking steps.
You draw breath.
You draw the last straw.**

I am a definition

**with many loop-holes
octopus arm holes,
and then some.
I speak of a pavilion
where my ancestors bred
their disciplines
and murder was released -
an option, like a second chance,
murder as affirmation.**

**I was a definition,
secular, single-habit,
yang-streams exuding,
sharp and solid, marvelous as
a thunderstorm - rage, ripple into a cave
into base-neck movement,
into
simple one-focus activity.**

**But here
I lack a definition
under banners, barely audible
compromise,
excuses to not take up the sword,
battle the lies told
as traditional fables.
I swing from pillar to post
navigating ceiling heights
and floor splinters when I land
niching out obedience
to
a changeling definition.**

...I exist!

**Seal me up
and wash the river.
Sunny days to sing
“It is over, over!”
Frozen perfection,
alive but dying
cliffs and cupboards
waving hello
to the ruthless Earth,
plastic in the nest
I am hungry
I am whole
Facing mortality
to make something immortal,
encountering the dark part
of God’s loins - orgasmic
reckoning, not afraid to make faces,
stick out your tongue,
not denying the chaos of pain -
Fingertips unused
and brighter burns,
where are you?
Snow ploughs and stone,
no more copying, but
diving, owning the
pathway yet to be made
clear, owning the receptive
flowing-in of grace. Old grooves
removed. The bird knows this
and shouts its song.**

Too damaged to be renewed

Broken sheep,
hybrids of birds

Was there anything of myself in
that greenhouse, the end-gone
and a warm kiss ensuing?

Was it purgatory – to sense love,
give all for love and find the bottom
turned over?

For nothing that I felt, that I gave twice
what I was capable of, thought of beauty in
trivial things, had a pool of joy to soak my innocence in.

The fish is dead, bloated with shadows - from where
the shape came from, I cannot understand. I do not
understand love or God or what I believed.

It was reflection, undisciplined over-the-top harming the heart
instead of fortifying it. In this world

of hooded Christs and tornados,
the predator wins and solitude is the only savior.

It cannot hold purity. It sometimes dances,
is sensual and thrives on owning

only

what is perpetually lacking.

Riding bareback

I seep into corners
flat and blending for a chance
to call faith a choice. Shadows
are not evil but ambiguous,
a vague scent of putrid uncertainty.
Themes of children's horns
and the penetrating air. Going off ground
into the softness of a dream, supplanted by the
ethereal plane and growing
a strange set of limbs to
accommodate such relaxed pressure.
Solitude sings, birds are around me, up trees,
padding through the condensed atmosphere.
Explore, I forgot the beauty
in discovery, a chance to mutilate
cynicism with a single blow. I blow
wild peppers out of my hands,
touch heads with the shy sparrow.

There is a horse, chestnut copper.
I rub the dust from her coat. I am everything
while looking into her large left eye -
a child in tune, exhilarated, heart-rate
galloping, catching its rhythm from her swaying forelock.
The sound like a star being transformed or two moons
colliding - I am taken on the path,
inches from the cliff - moving too fast to
be afraid, moving like fine sand through a sieve,
piling below, building a mythic mountain from
gravity, from quicksand-joy
imagination.

If I knew this haunting

**Melted, swung high over the sea,
plunging into the perishing darkness.
No one sees me, single as a stone,
madness on my island even with gifts
of peaches, blueberries, sunlight and sun-birds.
Windows are never here. The truth is
a deep-throat dread, lower belly drain, water gone,
shadow in between. Swing over a mound
of dry bones that used to be flowers, hummingbird
retreats. Shattered glass greenhouse in winter's embrace.
Nothing flows. It tried to flow and for
awhile I can remember the small animals,
remember ease while breathing, myself
more silence than flutter.
I can remember walking on high wet grass -
rolling fields all around, walking to keep
from eclipsing, determined to walk, and not
burn at the roots.**

And though the news is bad

**It is time
to accept happiness
like a decision or commitment
to faith regardless of
the mammal body breaking,
fraught with meaningless shifts
of further incompletions, setbacks
from the full flight swoop-ridged
impasse, sudden hot glass thrown
on the garden path, a child in jeopardy
of a mudslide, sliding into hospital beds,
doorways diminished like trampled flowers
but
happiness is a hug of a day-away-coming-home,
conversations in subway cars built on curiosity
and excitement, happiness is knowing God when
the rats and rain win over our moon,
is the miracle-motion extreme, tiptoeing the edge,
a wave of great mercy,
rich with oxygen currents, flooding, then
overflowing.**

Trial and Witness

**A brilliance on the brim of chaos,
though not close enough to fracture the mind.
Paths of practicality I travel on to be
wholly integrated on this Earth.**

**Rise up to the wind, release the darts
and heavy hold holding holier than an open nut seed
deep in the ground, reviving, finding its way to the sun.**

**Shining ice, pulse-energy through fingers,
touching strands of the horizon. Long after
the emptiness, the temperature unbearable,
I followed your face into the smoke in front of the flame.**

**I couldn't carry on or breathe, was bruised and wearied by
the motion of following and by being grateful.
My limbs were chocked from the flow of their blood,
on the sofa, in the shower, unable to find a window,
view of the sky or be a witness.**

**Sold out to the weeping chill
close to my inner thighs, both sides
weeping disappointment's release.
Long ago I was mixed with my
enemy's soul. That was before
I could articulate my pastlives – the glory
of a bluejay's high-above silhouette.**

**Before, when my strength saturated the couch
with visible blood-torment, when the glass doors
were always covered and shut and something was emerging
that had substance but not any moons, that**

shared a rapport with the isolated prisoner, cut me like I was an insect wing. I was an insect wing, paper-thin and

flapping, transparent, once capable of carrying a great load, now cut and useless. I was loathing the hot summer, hiding from the heat. I am still dried-up marrow in a porous old bone, deprived for years of the moisture of blanket-living-flesh. I am still weeping, waylaid, sold, fishing in a dead zone ocean coral bed, where not even a minnow can be found, maneuvering through the still intact colourful crevices, over colourful coral mounds.

Another ugly broken shack,
in pieces by the dead grass.
Have I grown used to it yet? Dispelling
the raging urge of a spiritual quest? Have
I loosened my hold, caving in to equal amounts
of cynicism and futility, or can I still
see the open door of DNA delight, riding
the infinity spiral as it drives extinction up
and out of the grave?
By the edge is chaos' court, carrying a fool's tenderness.

I am not worthy of paradise.
I cannot hold out in this jungle (intact) (until) the end.
I cannot be old and on fire, sparkle with deep possibilities.
Living off salted flesh stored away from years of slaughter,
when once consuming a thriving inspiration.
Still in this treehouse of used-up language, I love you most.
In his terrible season while owning someone else's face,
I perform my duties, collect my pie-tins,
loving you most.

**Dome the day,
wrap it in a cool cloth significance
the breathing beat surrender
into clear-cutting, weed-tugging
and slippery slime swept-off veranda.
Kiss intensity into my neuron network,
override the sluggish acceptance that
rope-ties a person to a despicable fate,
pathetically hunting coins fallen from the
fat man's purse.**

**I sing into a seashell. I meditate nude
on my island, undone by small talk so
not allowing room for small talk, small
thoughts or other means of house building,
or Earth-assuring stagnant aspirations.
To be free is to be ruthless, slicing off the head
of any debilitating predicament. To be free is to know
what Jesus knows - that all must be given up to follow
the way of God, to only keep what can be kept pure,
constantly thundering.**

Make the wind

Make the wind like blood.

**Blood is darker than the wind,
more brutal in its espionage.**

**Wild, brooding, master of the game-plan, game-spin, darting
in and out of extremes, be for me the last-call,
the ump-degree, send my inhibitions
to the highest octave plateau where untold desires
are invented, then rip through the ceiling
by their unbearable brilliance.**

Send me into the peace that comes with such intensity.

**Send me salt, flavours of forbidden scents
where the wind is blood**

**and blood is savouring safe,
riskier than being on edge.**

**Bury the small of my back, my tippy-toes, realizing
all I have lost is the same as what
has made me whole.**

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The Fault
of Sages
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New Wheel – The Passage of Arnik

(king of a small land)

Part 1

**My skin was stone,
drenched in an accelerant and
lit on fire. And there I burned,
a flaming rock impassable by
every woman and man who
tried to cross my shore. My fire
was final, a never-dying-heat
guarding the dead cold core
beneath its frantic dance.
Murder was easy as was laughing,
glaring bold-faced at the sun,
but languishing in waters, still or stormy,
was never my game, only, swift, loveless striking,
blistering and charring, beating with a spike
any imagined challenge to my seat in the center.**

**You covered my face with your hair,
let me sear it, then the skin of your face, to the bone.
And still you would not leave me, give up
on my indomitable obscenity – finely-tuned
to the leftover ash of my tenderside.
My madness was your deformed child. Even when
you ended me, taking an axe to break up my hard form –
you were more sorry than I was, heartbroken
to scatter that fire, watch its petering-out-existence
on the cracked concrete fragments of what I once was.
For me, it was freedom from its burn,**

a relief, relieving me from the devil's obligation.
I couldn't sing. I couldn't speak, but
I saw you crying - such strength
embedded in so much softness. I forgot
you had a formidable side. I forgot
that love was a ruthless wielding sword -
for both of us - terrible, unforgiving and
stronger than either of our self-proclaimed mantras,
better than personal devotion, brighter
than the burning or the burnt, tortured,
cloned-for-infinity, layered upon layer, like us,
molecularly as one, irreparably damned.

Part 2

Tentacles, unfurled, then
curled, suctioning out
the snail from its shell.
Through the narrow hold of hell
I built a kingdom, wide and ruthless,
I cut the heads off the keepers of faith,
increased my stature as I did my gluttony -
sensual overload.

There was a tree in the courtyard, old and by its own.
Everyday I would chip pieces off its bark, because I could,
because I knew it hurt and I wanted to murder it, slowly,
this old beauty that held its ground longer than me.
I wanted its stillness, if not to own, then to conquer.
I obsessed over its carved-up flesh, kept its pieces
in a box by my bed, one day planning to collect
the whole of its body in many boxes –
building a shelf for that alone.

But that day never came, for I found death
by the swift hand of my lover, after love-making
after laughter, almost sleeping – showing him the tree pieces,
while gloating at my cruelty, he sucked in my dark wind
and gathered an axe from its exhale.
He watch me fade. I faded,
spilled out over the bedding and the hand-crafted floor.
He cried openly, pressing his
lips against my skin, he sang to me –
laid the bark-pieces tenderly across my chest –
and there I was buried, there, in dying I awoke,
for the first time in that lifetime, trembling with peace,
I began a journey somewhere, home.

Part 3

**Inside the white hot soul
that boils with bitter outward
blame, primitive in its inception
like a just-born-star,
born from a black hole sink hole infusion
of pain and power – tight knot force pouring
from an unguarded door, gushing forward like
a colossal flood, lifting homes, babies from parental arms
and the nesting rodents from their burrows, remorseless,
lashing this way and that just for the sake of it,
for the sound and for the consequences
I could unleash.**

**Whispers in my ear of love
were an implanting-larvae insect bite
to pour vinegar on and be done with.
But they burned, these larvae beneath my skin, traveled north
to latch onto my spinal neck nerve, hatch again,
consuming me with ignored madness.**

**I kept myself pure of sentiment until the end, until the next life
when those larvae overtook, and cloaked my retreat
with parallel barriers of shame and guilt,
called me to a time out, to be removed,
to learn discipline and control, gentleness
carrying out daily simple tasks, bothering no one –
small, self-sustaining, glimpsing a first taste of a personal
God as I
let the weight bear down, through the darkness, building
a sanctuary where I could chalk-mark the walls
with my crimes,
come to terms with accountability.**

**Gradually, many lifetimes later, those larvae
grew translucent wings,
thin, but strong enough to lift me off the ledge of confinement,
into the light of a new longing – a vision bursting,
birthed from both
a streamlined-focus responsibility toward a tender eternity
and a well-cave of feeding minerals, feeding,
blunt-axe perpetually hacking, holy despair.**

Part 4

I speak of a cloud
fanning north - it went
past barricade ripples,
ended in a thin line above a blanket
fog. Wild disorder,
language I could not steal or make up,
but found the natural disappearance
of all things in its fate.
A creature obscure, placemating perfection
into a one-dimensional genius.
Good riddance to lineage and the shaming
fish-flight up against some sharks.

I touched you and you were naked. It felt
greater than love, but it was not so. It was
wider than a lifetime and swayed all over
the map, cloak-covering the appendages
of tyranny and a tyrant's response to fear.
We rejoiced together, exhilarated by the possibilities
and the perpetual spin weaving macabre plot
that lead to this glimpse of redemption.
It was the end - hoofprint on the grass
made invisible by an onslaught storm.
Even for the weight and starkness that came after,
I am grateful for the chance
you gave to be reborn – to dare myself
into solitude and austere discipline.

**I speak of a cloud
then of a king that was a man
who lost his heavy shape and substance
in a calm sky... know it, know it now,
a law, an equilibrium
dissolved – miraculous
clairvoyant space taker
vanishing through, into
a covenant-keeping once
impenetrable wall.**

(monk in service to a stream)

Part 5

Grace, grounding
in the mist-wrapped shelter
blooming in unison
with perfect stance and form,
killing my individuality to make
a stronger whole.
Orange bright red flare of robes,
sounds of marrow spine resonance,
stillness in speed, visible energy,
rolling, turning, flattening the air
from inner pressure – sealed, smoothed,
kneeling by a stream.

This kind of power accessed, focused
removed from ego and uniqueness.
Finding peace in discipline, saving beauty
in spiritual structure – every moment counted for,
every thought overseen and filtered through
for further simplicity. Clarity enforced
in the great dream of camaraderie,
in the common goal of God-mind, balancing
force with receiving,
honouring with accountability, weaned off
of the still swelling teat of desire, living far off
on an isolated high plane, holding heaven

**in a tea cup, celestial gardens in a rice bowl,
learning to blend mastery with discipleship.**

**daily striving for perfection in the body's movements,
daily failing, giving it back, committed
to this pulsar event - filling up, choosing 'yes',
then willfully deflating, releasing the hold.**

Part 6

**This hand
split from the source
but not fully detached,
forking downward into
a vast otherness, depending on,
giving honor to the root, to the means to
keep nourished and whole.**

**Gently submerging in a stream,
entering an alternate atmosphere where
minnows school and scatter
and micro-organisms build communities,
interactive bio-worlds, unaware of the invading limb,
fingers, looping in erratic rhythm, glorifying in
the soft texture shadow, moving through with
easily overcome resistance,
encapsulated in the water-body,
entering, exploring without destruction.**

**This hand,
only feeling like it has gone somewhere
when removed, wet, knowing it has been
where oxygen is heavy,
where the rich showering moon gravity
has more say, greater mobility than it does in air.
Crossing dimensions without disruption
or impact, here holding stillness,
inside of, open to a passive discovery, then lifted,
hovering over the surface, dripping back into the stream,
gaining rich skin ridges, enhanced sensitivity, at last,
visible saturation.**

Part 7

Guardian of the small water
flowing - pebbles lining
the edge, shaved head resting
on the ground.

Loneliness widened in those few everyday hours,
listening to what went on deep below the surface
of the stream, honing in on frolicking fish,
predatory fish and the cycle voice
groaning, never withholding its display of extremes.

I closed my eyes and dreamt I held two shoulders tight
between two arms, wrapped myself naked around another.
That longing lingered well past sleep, as I rose, it rose up in me
a discontent, birthed a being, a pulse
beneath my calculated fold,
thundering through my well-kept peace,
brought me closer to looking,
looking at those fish, seeing a richer kinship in their company.
As I looked, that loneliness quickened
in its demands, buzzed louder
than concentrated contemplation or a prayer.

There was no apology left to play out, not here
in this place, on this isolated rift on a mountain, not
when other beings moved in a more intimate connection,
tied to the vine and the sun and the fish
gave birth to eggs that were inseminated
and transformed. I could hear
their chattering, bubble blowing and their unquestioned
communion - each tiny one crowned perfect, even when
left half-eaten, perishing on the bank.

I drew back from my commitments but did not leave,
simply waited and held the promise of you in my dreams.
In waiting, I sent a call out to you, finding transportation
through the drumming chant, into distances
beyond my bent knees
and the gleam of my weapons

over cliffs and villages and oceans I told you
to meet me the next timeover, choose
this place, choose that harsh violence of a home
and I would choose mine, not far
but far enough from each other so when we finally met
we would be mostly cultivated and hurting enough
to give credence to each other's importance.

While I waited, I tasted your flesh in each grain of rice,
rolled it down my tongue like solid nectar, digesting it,
I kept up my call, told the stream to take it downwards too.
In silence I kept my secret, broke the machine,
and betrayed my brothers.

I had no choice but to tend to this flame, press my hip bones
against yours in the other space that started small
by the stream,
gained dimension and lengthened on the inside, stretching
to bare-toes, to fleshy ear-lobes, flame
that circled my bones like a hungry bird,
broke them into pieces and swallowed them,
glittering, gleaming hot in this longing, still
a stone on the outside, dutiful while I waited,
letting that flame infiltrate my organs, veins, larynx.

I loved you absolutely, in the wild intake outtake breath.
I ate as always in slow movements, with one hand, eating,
the other, ripening, building in heat,
calling out, preparing for our wedded harvest.

Part 8

Standing on a petal crust, ground
by a stream, sinking into wet earth
where fish corpses lie buried,
surrounded by minerals and mountain stones.

Sinking as the sun arrives
and my heart seizes but is not afraid of
drowning in this damp graveyard,
knows it is a sacred blessing to be called
to dive into the underground
where light and water still reign,
knows it is pulled, plucked and twisted but
will return to form through a flexible core,
elasticity intact, inner elements uncompromised.

Going down further
merging shoulders and neck, readying to breathe in
the divinity ground, harbinger
of worms, death and thin bones, keeper of
the Lazarus resurrection

and the sun seeps into my parted lips
as does the soil. I close my eyes
sinking, unable to hold air or hearing.

Honoured to offer it my flesh and my singing bowl,
I am covered in this stream-infused ground of a shroud,
vessel-body overtaken, vacated and then transmuting,
dissipating, ready to feed the root, be healed,
find you again, and in loving you,
be equal, irretrievably joined, boundless together,
opened, never closing, owned.

Building Walls of Personal Mercy

**It is us without the air -
leverage, no height,
clinging to discipline not
because we fear we will float, but
to stop ourselves from sinking
into the immense dead mire dread, boulevards
of toxic fumes rising
from wastelands, landfill sites gone
under water into our heart-space,
body-space, collapsing.**

**It is us blind to the fullness of fun,
proclaiming praise on a settled angel's shoulders.
Around a field, running to milk
the burning lungs of their breath,
touch duty with presence of mind, to do service
so curtains don't close like sealing metal sheets,
least moving becomes momentous, then impossible.**

**Take fruit from the windowsill,
it is our ripeness cradled in the lonely early morning –
prayers, a battle against a threatening tide.**

**Watch the birds with me,
make peace with the emerging worms.
We know our place, what can save
and what is substitute.**

Feminine revising

**I am not ready
to empty the closet
and carry my wardrobe to a grave.
Not ready also to harvest
the hummingbird's song, touchdown
on dark gravel -
cheek pressed against sharp rock
and no one to lift me, link arms, walk me home.
I am not ready for an erratic heart rhythm,
setting flame to the partition between that rhythm and death.**

**I still have children, a lover of wedded dignity,
animals that need me in spite of my
malfunction and heartbreak.**

**Break everything ever written. The trees are naked.
Faces are naked, cursed by love. Culture is never
worthy, never a strong enough opponent against fear.
This time the spell is different - a scourging wave
upheaving the weather, ancient occupations.**

**I am not ready to cross through this transformation,
over pathless territory, fluctuating temperatures, changing
more and more,
not ready for the monastery or
to watch the angels bleed.**

**I am not ready to give up my home,
to bury my key under a brick
while brutes push past me, break down
the front door.**

Drift

Held still
like apple butter held
smooth on the tongue, catching
grief in a cage, on the surface
of a name – would it be
kissing or pinning a broken coat-zipper
together – once the fog has left is there
anything left to hold out for? Hold still for,
like a hooked fish releasing the struggle?
Being alive in the dream-state ambiguity,
meaning full then meaning naught and
how old are you?

Your horse, Dee, steady
in the sunlight, glinting a wild connectivity,
intelligence gleaming across a chestnut coat,
bowed head, permission to pet granted and then
sleeping in a stall, talking outload when everyone else
had gone home. It was not a dream,
not until she was gone and then it was a dream
lost, and maybe never there.

People love their trees
the ones they think they own. But I never loved a tree like
I loved the willow tree in my Montreal backyard. I never
loved anyone who hadn't died at least a hundred years
before I was born until

there was you, rounding up the stones from every table,
sitting alone only to stand up again before the seat
warmed, and 'perfect' made sense but nothing ever expected.

**Dee and the willow tree. I left my body and flew
into the sun.**

**Why can't I leave my body and fly into the sun –
meals taken care of,
sex and you, a beautiful summer star.**

Die Together

I close the distance.

**I know this love like I know
bird voices, the safety-net of death.**

**Reach, go deep into the skin,
in aggressive desire, categorizing each intonation,
a sculptor's scheme. I will make you a mountain,
a colossal height, forming.**

**I will undertake a breathing soliloquy, a measured
chemistry for you.**

**Moon making, matching forces, destructive impact,
then hot surrender - neon blast infusion.**

Flesh and favoritism

**blooming tight in the right spot, tight in the pulsing glory -
no sin, no signed paper,
no plywood to haul or candy.**

**Lava moulding, speak only of this experience, only
close the distance and reap.**

Alchemy completion

Far enough
to line the bed with
lavender clouds,
pull off the covers
and be entombed.
Fine sleep and soft
tenderness warming limbs,
wetting where it warms,
soon to cool – breathing like
singing, lines smeared into
unified devotion, matching frequencies,
backward, forward leading toward a tower
to leap off of, a bed to stretch on, sink into.
It is holy, mud-caked, drawn curtains torn
from their rod. It is thinking in intonations
and shades, a cascading buzz riveting from
bone to bone – two spliced and joining opposite halves,
a power equal in its mercy. Far enough,
just there, drawing breath on the summit, dissolving
boundaries in sensual elevation, far enough
continuing, collapsing, swallowed
into the pitching current.

Sleep

When did you own me,
pull rank, throw me in the waters
and command my limbs to forget how
to swim? When did it happen, a month ago?
Two towns ago? After I completed the mission.

Veins in stone, under skin, gauging the surface
of the Earth, rivers to maneuver across,
toxic currents unreckoned with.

How did it evolve into this obscene tumour,
blocking my view, deforming my youthful joy?
You are through with me – a deep cracked dish,
breeder of bacteria.

Fiddle away. Eternity is dying in the pockets
of my lungs, madness
infiltrating my chi.

How did you do it, did I let you? I must have
let my guard down when doing the laundry, counting radio
channels, mopping the spill.

I am still reaching but you are gone, very small
in stature and shrinking. When did you own me, gently
press my face into the pillow, gently
promising a dream?

Gestation

**Thumb across the surface -
cheekbones changed,
eyelids re-shaped.
So many ways to die and be re-born,
endless incarnations
from a limited source of malleable
weight and density.**

**On a hilltop, swinging, over and back
from an edge - crashing water below,
beat-up concrete blocks,
dead fish polluting the shore.
I dreamt of owning wings like everyone else has, but
I never was an eagle or angel, I never had a name
for the sacred space in the early morning,
floating around through changing
landscape-imagination, sometimes
nightmares more solid than when asleep, sometimes
immaculate colours, touching with my tongue
the sensations of a song,
notes rising like shields, urgency,
chaotic wanderings.**

**Still secret and still cultivating,
thumb pressing into the surface,
forming shadow, a mound of awakening flesh.
Ritual of communion, discovery as
rich and wide as lovemaking, watching
for a trace of motivation to ignite
my waning discipline, swinging high
to land in the waves when I jump,**

**high enough when I jump
to out-manuever the rising pile of rubble, to land
with ability, moving under the surface.**

Hereditary

Buckling up, keeping pace
never knowing when the heat will rise,
and overtake your sanity with its little alien
leaf worms burrowing into shallow crevices,
making crevices into canyons, unmanageable and ripe
for more irreversible destruction.

Normal as the sun and its radiation,
glory be the farce, biology, a pre-disposition
for madness, suicide

at 4 am – gunshot to the head
all for a ruined reputation or for love
lost during an Indian monsoon season.

A child playing early morning, opening doors,
a door, four-years old finding his father,
dead on the floor - blood pooled, drying,
vacuumed out blue steady eyes.

It was right for that boy to become a man who
turned to God and charity and
not to status, right that he knelt every night for his
five children, never knowing he would make it through
the violent revolutions, make it through losing
money, home, country and dog.

He made it through,
but not long after that. Not long after
the boat ride across the Indian, the Atlantic oceans,
leaving Eastern philosophies for a cold rainy winter pavement,
he died, giver of coal, on a doorstep,
finally home, in a country where he no longer belonged or
could find a way to honour the majesty, the tenderness
of what he built before.

**Fingertips tingling too long
and lasting to not be a disease,
What does the chaos filter into, focus on,
transition to? The sky is green
against an even greener tree.
You count to the minutes through each day -
this thing, that thing, to do, get through,
not for yourself, but because you are committed,
because you love and know the consequences.**

**Dandelions under chaos,
fold the covers –
go back into the
dream.**

If there is anything open

**I will return
from infinite dying
and the conscious swallow.
I will say – I will not want,
be a daughter of the root and caterpillar climb.
If there is anything worth keeping
I will keep it on the kitchen table
feed it blueberries, honor its language,
and biology.**

**But if is only echo, tell me clearly
so I can shut my eyes, turn and open them
elsewhere, find joy in sweeping the stairs
or typing in a mantra – all night, humming without erratic
fire or appetite. If my hands are only hands, let them
be clean, ungrasping, useful, in other ways, holding out
to offer, to receive, surrendering
bread, the stone, a smile.**

Say good, say goodbye

**Bright in the box in the cupboard
where the keepers of conscience and trivia
highjack the pacing depths
to replace it with an easily peeled-off
sheen. It is time to bloom,
to say goodbye to books and playballs of requisitions,
decoding philosophy and revelations in tune
with taking a stance.**

**Death, I am a robin's feast with
dandelion breath
stalling at the toddler tree
worshiping what is yet to bud.**

**Death, you made me confused, me,
the revealer of the signs,
mountain-top screamer, fencer for
a fourth-dimensional world.**

**Flat rocks in a circle, gulls circling
one graveyard, spot
of significant mourning. Faint lines.
But God is solid, exact, without
need of interpretation. Death**

**is only a layer reached
and removed, when traveled
then traveled through.**

My Lord is Majesty (let me)

**Blood in urine, the path-flight of
a plane across a low horizon. Lifting,
spinning, a dream-drop like floating.**

**The answer “no” is all I am capable of. Kiss
me, let me be my fragmented self,
burrow like a termite into tree bark,
seeking living wood, or be a beetle
resting on dewy grass long
before the heat of noon, or like a weed
straight, tall, uninhibited by the cutter’s twine.**

**Let me be the shape of clunky cluster clouds,
a berry ripe, rich and easy to eat. Let me steal into
the veins of a garden rock, follow a squirrel’s pawprints
up across electric wires. Let me speak before I know anything,
before dread comes to cave my thoughts into a knot-hard ball,
sealing me with silencing futility, sucking out
the heart-beat of magnificent, like a fish flapping
in the oxygen ether,
hooked to a string, hooked to a stick, held
in a small child’s hands. Let me have faith again**

**in spite of this crushing calamity, trust again
in the companionship of God, protector
of what keeps me sane, merge with
God on every road, every forest path
missed, where the shadows are overbearing,
and the humidity!**

**Bear me up, Jesus of my master throne,
I see the light overcome.
I feel the toil and tear of survival's whip,
feel this death come as a swarm of wasps -
the sound of many waspy legs nearing.**

**Bear me up, be for me like the purity of a washout,
deafening the tone of insect language, turning
these horror groans of my stretcher-strapped plans
into a strange body peace –
though stung, encased, consumed, bear me up
wet-cloth soothe me, embrace me through this heart-ache,
bear me up, give me the strength to surrender
into this death, into this exhale of absolute release.**

Chiseling away the template mould

Like cotton spread,
thinning, rifting,
my mind was sold to tiny pills, angular
remedies that did not bother with results.

Saggy eyes, thoughts in slow motion,
funneling anxiety into walking dreams –
circulation corrupted, fingertips,
the tips of thumbs, dead and decaying.

I lie down across the end of this wave,
I lie down across a weakening buoyancy, see
two dead angels on the water, immaculately
spread, those keepers of simplicity,
seraphims guised as seagulls, see
connection perfected, the veil
between dimensions dissolving.

Later, another comes to hover, circle as I lie down,
mourning. My shoulders are blown, my arms are breached,
my back tightens and will not ease off. It is snowing
and it is spring. Angels continue to arrive, solid in their
grieving grace, circling the blank space that is bare space
around my head, edging inwards, into corners
I can finally talk about. Now

I can submerge my torso, my extremities,
see under water, grow callouses where they are needed,
hurt as I transform, hurt as I surrender
forcing myself through
levels of tight resistance, hurt to not freeze, still

**talking to the angels who crest the water, but I am under
the water, becoming a seed that consumes itself,
breaks its shell, sprouts, breaks
the tethering hold.**

Womb

It is a blood clot
unknotted, holey socks
thrown out, birds used to
a blue sky unleashed - grounded,
underfoot. A mealworm left
on the kitchen floor. Sibling animals,
connected beyond species recognition, beyond
cultures and ways and voices communicating.
Sugar cane on the tongue,
sucked on as a child -
remembrance of a heritage
destined to remain as stories embellished when told.

Great moon of the planet I escaped from,
I almost made it to you, that far, almost sat in your
crater-circles, gawking at the constellations.
I made it just past the stratosphere.
But you know my body then
was the best it has ever been – gravity had been overcome,
no hollow bones or connections I could barely bear
to stomach. As it is, here, in this form, that body has died,
the soldier in me has died, along
with the guilt-ridden mushy heart
and the resulting fury. The light is perfection
on my back and flowers are here,
some wilted, some emerging.

Used blanket

Single rage returning
entrapment pedestal,
busted at the seams.
Empty frame, roofless
walls, poking out of some
hole in the pavement.
Underground gardens flourishing
speaking of dandelions and
tidbits of mercy left
at the wayside to collect
like a tossed-away overcoat -

I wear that overcoat every day,
every evening curled inside of it,
smelling the nuances of the places it has been,
places of music and unrequited love -
beige now and stained dark grey.

I long to regain the taste of its first wear,
when I was the exodus maker,
keeper of the icicle, explorer of a missionary salute,
bowing down only to clean it, sure of
my perfected individuality, saying something
monumental with its sway.

Those were days rich with equal
fear and hope, underneath the canopy trees, looking up,
past cloud ridges and bird flights.

I look at the TV or at nothing, smelling
the stains washed in mild detergent,

**with the hope that some scent of back then still lingers,
covering my shoulders, hiding my hands.**

**Everything that was me, in me, outside of me
is already gone and I am not even 50, still able
to walk, hold a book, a conversation, unable
to return to a place of confidence
wrapped in this faded cloth, overcoat completion.**

Collector

Pale sleep,
naked under eyelids
and summer beating out the
last of its heat, remembering
the skin of stones I collected,
hidden in boxes under mounds of
typed-on paper.

I will take them out,
read them like a diary and soak
myself with their flavours. Then
maybe I will remember my inauguration
into oxygen, a direction I can run in,
leaving crutches in the alleyway.

I can gather armour, carry armour, be rooted
to victory and the purity of murder.

The bitten moon, lingering, muscles forgetting
how they travel, how love is contemplated
and grows in sand, in cracked concrete corners
even when the wolves are nearing. Trust. It is
gathering. I will gather these colourful stones -
some tumbled sheen, others, raw
and ready for flight.

One longing

Thriving in darkness,
one longing, reduced in the sun,
devoid of a plush pulse, dried up,
surrounded by feasting ants.

One longing, entombed.
One longing, dormant, awakened
divulged then defused. One longing
I should be happy to get rid of, but
I am not because it was a lifecord
bonding me to you, to your valiant warmth
and the promise of what I have never known.
I never received a soft forehead kiss from your solid
lips or your two hands kneading my
aching shoulders. I have let go of wanting it,
and am left hollow, still, without
wind over my waters.

I sometimes think of your love,
how it would have been to receive
a memento of reciprocated devotion.
How free I could have been
in your desirous presence.
Instead on this couch, in this same spot,
arms folded, feet cramping
from underuse. I walk, but
take the route of a circle. I've
lost the seventh sense which was
mine alone.

With no hope of you,
I am not whole, with the hope,

**I am doomed. So I kill the hope,
leave it mid-road, so tiny
cars cannot see it to avoid, so deformed
children cannot feel for it
to save it from destruction.**

Bound

**Bound to arrive,
face the mourning,
cradle its soft hand in mine.
Memory of a possibility, memory of a failure
to cherish as an infant's plump cheek –
smelling perfect as heaven must smell
or a lover after a dive in the lake, laughing
with exuberance.**

**Bound to pace the carpeted floors, trapped
in a time-fold that repeats and never lets up,
reminders in the ceramic jar, in the dirty fridge,
in songs I hear and in ones I don't but could
challenge to be born. Reminders on the upper level -
beds unmade, books askew on shelves. Reminders
of dreams that swarmed my mind, ethereal touches,
riveting fulfillment.**

**Bound to lay out the truth
like a cooked meal, consume it
and clean up the dishes. Alone,
unheard like before, but worse now
that doors have been opened and entered.
It doesn't feel right, doesn't feel like peace or
a place to make a home.**

**Bound to hold the breath of dread
like small a marble in the pocket below
my navel, or just above. Rolling,
rolling, giving way to its movement
when no one else is around, giving
honour to its creation.**

The Clothes We Wear

Fall down and recognize
the river and its reaching sway.
Solitarily suited between what you gave
and what was refused reception.

Born on a balcony, hung over the rails -
so much work, so much love needed to
make it work. And then you grew up
and needed only a dark room to hide in,
the reproach of some sages and
the occasional charity.

Then your fire-ball bouquet of demands,
squealing and giggles drew blood and the rain
got stuck in the sky as the angels misplaced
your destiny. They cannot get it back –
some have tried, most have not even bothered
as it was fed into the ocean, swallowed up
by primordial beings, ancient, not used
to sunlight and heaven.

They swim through pressurized underwater caverns,
carry it stuck in their gullets, only to be released
when their centuries-old bodies give way to compost. Then
maybe a holy voice will hear it cry out, bubble to the surface
and claim its place back inside of you. Maybe, in that time
you will give value to the hallelujah
that fireworked through you when you first came here –
from another place, high up, but strange and dark too
as the ocean's floor.

Steel and Spice

**Inch across
the bell-cups of lilies
in the dead oblivion
of decades of reality's denial.**

**Inch into the sweetness
of a lilac's centre,
nourished on imagination everytime
over the bite of bitter soup.**

**Gather the crows in your morning sky,
ask them to envelop you and then ask
their forgiveness.**

**Hiding your panic
in the promises of miracles, licking the acid
off of your skin to make for a good story,
for the belief in an undamageable surface.
Mistaking silk for bread, counting on
God's kindness to come on the brink
of desperate need.**

**Will you now
be a slave to the feast of worms or
strip-mine until what little gold you find
feels like abundance?**

**Maybe you are safe, living in this
burning garden, protected with a poet's peace
and by a faith that bypasses gravity's consequences, but
has consequences and demands of its own – ones**

**you must live by and dedicate yourself to keep
turn a blind-eye to practicality,
and press all fear into a resounding prayer,
existing on the substance of
divine gifts, gifts that are final,
that have no price to pay except that you
leave yourself leaning, tied and planted only
to this holy dreamscape liberation.**

Cracked

Cracked to retrieve
the soft part inside,
the nutritious overflow
that rests open with
a broken shell and will
never regain its symmetry
or means of protection.
Cracked in the nearing Autumn,
fresh as the false dream
has been exposed,

and you realize
that anything true bends
its will to the moment,
relinquishing its authority
to a higher unknown agenda.
Sighs, sings and takes notes
under siege of the shifting
winds, underwater, happy
if it is able to rise
and sometimes float.

No Transgressions

(starve the ego of its rights)

**The light that leaves,
that feeds the light that
leaves, speaks of scars
and childhood's sanctity,
has grown weary in its search
for a source to continue brightly,
has slept out the potent night
and screams indecently for intimate
disclosure. The dance that strips
the tissue from the sinews, signals for the game
to end but does not end its rhythm or
burning – explosive flourishing – no facts
but a faucet drip drip curse to
hold down a half-a-dozen personalities
perched on your throne. The light, the light –
Who will win? The dance, the dance,
rattle and leak your soul into a theatrical
achievement – stand high in an age of distraction
and violence, stand rooted in the light,
matter most when you are dancing, even if
a malignant army invades
and prevails.**

Unstuck

Of course it happened
this way – the bed was bought,
the sheets were new, and the fist
bore down like a fireball, blazing
comfort into smoke and then extinction.
Of course the memory lasted
decades, even lifetimes, bulging up through
a normal ecstasy, distorting a regular
hope of moving onward, until all passages were
claimed by that disaster and all offspring were lined
with its inevitable outcome.

Of course I never took the haunting as a gift or
a train ride through a desert, though I know that a bonfire
is not the same as that bomb, and my initials
have changed since
that day, as have the ramifications of such violent chaos.
I love beyond the library of other people's stories,

I am not deceived by morsels of paradise promising
a meal or a fridge full of many meals.
Of course it will always hurt and memory remains
a mule on a slow decline, but peace is a whistle
beckoning me into its spell. The hurricane
has lifted and I watch children gather,
forming a community much stronger
than a one-off home.

Custodian

Shelter or summit -
a wood they call it, in
a stream, lined up with crossroads and fields of
four directions. Adolescent
they call it,
a dormitory of unforgivable energy,
magnificence embedded into organ-memory,
wondering what could be equal to this
collapse, would something be equal and claim
a path to recovery.

Foul play
they call it, marginalized, a display
of tragedy, like a crippled horse, on the grass,
in the afternoon.

Unjust, you call it, a senseless chemistry
that begins brightly and ends in ash.

Belong with me. Belong here in this intimacy
in this fraction of time, square footage of a place that is ours,
that we imagined and manifested and will not be corrupted.
Forget what they call it, their exhibitions of
ego-soothing massage.

This is our strategy - to touch the canvas
with our intentions pure and concentrated
as they first were - disappointment, devastations
degraded to one sleepless night, then returned
for a greater glory.

If blessed

**Blank, solid, dependable
on the surface, without a flaw.
But after the end result, when the day
has paid its dues, chaos fractures
the spine, enters brightly and
consumes. Blessed once to receive.
Blessed twice to give, and in this way,
made whole.**

**If blessed then honour the doing,
daily training the dread to feed in its cage,
remain content in its bonds, content and never
over-thriving. Take the hand
of infant peace and gently caress its fingers,
know it is fragile and demands
great care and attention,
know you are blessed, and be diligent
in your offerings and your praise.**

Calling

It happens once.

**Maybe there are near misses,
little rooms of perfection that were
dressed-up beautifully for a while,
held passion and intent, though behind
the dream-like wonder – a deadness
that surpassed each sermon you gave yourself
of goodwill and future promise.**

**It only happens full strength -
blue flame clean, exact - once. And when
it happens it is warm as a new lifeforce emerging,
tears down confusion, shreds the darkness, and
is difficult like falling in love - a love that overshadows
all other loves before, ruins you for anything less
than its wounding intensity, its golden seriousness.**

**It will not happen again - even if it fails in its performance,
projecting a weak beam across the table. Even if it
straps you to the chair of an unyielding sorrow -
it will not lose its possessive claim.**

**It has latched to your everlasting like a hosanna
riveting through each pore, breaking the bottom
again and again, breaking through the traffic
to measure you naked and
just as you are.**

Uncut

Upstream, across the stream
to the bottom, it could have been
done, if the stars were aligned and
the temperature poignant enough
to boil over and reveal
the full of its power. It could have toppled
security measures, unified its truth
with popular culture if the apex had been
achieved and the ceiling cracked to cave in and
collide the sky in conjunction with the ground.

It could still gallop, unbridled
through the neighboring streets and then out, across
boarders. Unlike the delusions
that dripped over the tub, keeping
us awake all night, flooding toenails and ankles, crossing
over miles to vaporize in the first warm breeze, it is stronger.
Stronger than any ego-charm, continuing its supremacy,
aching, as it clears the deck
of the frivolous and the unnecessary.
It could still be seen as enormous
as it is – breath-gasping, far-reaching,
a hot glowing hut
of mystical enterprise.

Take it down, every inch, scatter it
among the needy. Feed it as crackers
without spread, for its
nature is substance and its time
is a slow forming tornado,
gaining friction, gaining on destiny.

In Waiting For

**A dozen times I waited for
the whispered word to lay
a foundation and rise up into the sunlight –
glowing.**

**A thousand hours I have been
sitting, fixing the wheel, using the tools
at my disposal, subjugated to
this neophyte democracy, scheme
of constraint, holding vigil
to the past, in waiting.**

**In prayer, in the shower, behind broken
blinds, peering out, listening for the next move,
hearing a far-away crow, playground screams, idiot
conversations. A dozen times a dozen days playing
the sieve-taker, the monastic overseer, doing only
what the day allows, wondering where
the campfires burn and if they will ever burn
close, past midnight, for me.**

Harmony

If I make it into the warmth,
vibrant as a crushed flower, catch
when the sidewalk children
throw a ball, rake leaves
with my hands and scrapbook
the best of them,
then this shell could own its sensitivity,
and not just the underbelly, then the
painted road arrows will point
like divinations for the white butterfly and I
to follow – expectations, destinations shed
for a fullness of joy,
coral-coloured angles pursued -
outside our bodies, in sync
inside our bodies, aligned.

I will make my way across the water

**I will push my way
through the threshold,
bend over the edge then
let myself go – gravity,
mudslides and rock edges
will dictate my descent, but
I will look up and witness
the starlings amongst the sparrows,
the dislodged grass sprouts that take
the fall with me, above me
in gentle wave-like motions
with the wind.**

**These limbs will crash,
be cut from their flesh, and I will break
only to be reborn, a sapling, myself
graced with lifetimes of memories, stretching
my stem gradually into the light.**

**In time, animals will flourish under
my shaded canopy, and lovers
will carve their initials into my skin,
promising one another their exclusive eternity.**

**I will make my way across the water,
over the threshold and fall
to embrace the ground I came from.**

**Spread low, spread high – a century
or more guardian, a tree-fort reaper in a forest
far across the hill and still
beyond.**

I barely know how

**deep this illness has stepped,
what new season of burning dreams
I will inherit, or from outside, is
there a weed I can pull I have not
seen, is there something to swallow
I have refused to swallow, sealed
up in my solitude, knocked about
against some ridged rocks and the sober earth
of doomed starvation. Open light,
open and let me see the harvest I have worked so
hard to ripen, let there be goodness in
my children, let them know they are loved.**

**I kept waiting for the clue, then I thought
I solved it all with surrender, but decay lingers
in me like a tapeworm – I have known
nothing but withering and animals I loved who
are dead, corpses rotting underground in
places I see daily where summer plants
grow wild, up and over, but cannot cover the desert spot.**

**An angel lived with me. An angel is gone.
My lungs ache and I cannot stop
coughing and wondering if this is how I will
die – asleep on the old sofa, wrapped up
in the smell of my home like a shroud.**

The Closing

Part 1

Eight years ago
it entered, building force
gradually, started
embryonic, developed
organs, blood vessels, a brain,
then talons like tentacles
gripped from the inside
strangling the light, passing
its poison into the bloodstream, feeding off
of adolescence fears and anxiety.

It started small, moments of rebellion,
grew irrational, unkind,
ended in violence – a smashed glass extending
its tear into every room, crevices, vents.
Sacred hope sacrificed to indulge
in dark extremes. Love denied, turned
on its side unable to struggle enough
to set itself upright.
Now it is here, overtaken,
apparent in heavy footsteps,
sleep deprived eyes, unshowered
hair, a room as breeding ground
for clutter and chaos.

I take you with two hands, grip your sloughing shoulders,
your tarry taste and destructive tongue.
I take out what has entered, send it back to the void
and that line of heritage it travelled upon.

**I fill the empty pocket with light, first mending it with
the tender-thread of God and the sharp-point of truth.
I iron-gate the place where it left and pour a concrete wall.**

**I bless this house. I clear the corners, the ceiling, floorboards.
I call the Buddha that was born with you to reawaken,
for my army of angels to lift up their swords. We are
still here. We are love, and love
is the centre, the carriage and the tide,
never defeated, stronger than the frantic pulse,
stronger than the wielding axe and the ash of its remains,
stronger than this cursed person you wear and claim,
strongest now in this hopeless hardened place,
in this choice, beginning.**

Part 2

Step, bless your
new shoes, step and
hold the sun on your tongue like a berry,
leaving an indelible juicy mark,
be guided by other people's wisdom
as long as it doesn't undermine your own
and watch yourself enter Eden-Earth in its many glorious
forms – dive into small mounds of sand, pieces of glass,
spiraling trees, trunks, bulging and retracting
in individual rhythm,
a solid movement, stunning as music.
Take this choice from disaster,
offer it the path of the impossible, a pathway into
a miracle because God counts for everything,
counts on flat and hot surfaces,
counts on the deathbed and
in the red coat
beautiful gleam

Part 3

**The way forward is
the way back, clearing
stumbling blocks that promise
to repeat ahead if not killed
at their source.**

**To hold the truth even if it tells you
that love is limited in people, certain people
who play both sides – one foot in the basin of heaven
and the other glorifying the haphazard world.**

**Even if it tells you you cannot save
or be saved by a half-hearted account of kindness,
tells you, it is nothing
to be bitter over, nothing personal and also
not yours to bear the repercussions,
tells you to continue all the way, hold firm
to the thin road and the willingness to lose everything -
home, sacred room, the safety of your own -
for the divine request to follow. Follow then
the tulips
still managing to bud in backyards untended,
follow then with God at the helm.**

**You are not abandoned, not like the tin-foil wrapper,
or the chewing gum chewed,
or worn-through undergarments. You are protected
and that protection is warm and powerful and golden
as an owl's steady eyes. You are afraid I know.
The doors you used to knock on are
boarded up. Steel eyes lock on you, mock you in your anguish.
It feels ruthless, brutally barren,
feels that way only until you fully let go.**

**I let go. I drop my past, my precious cargo, drop you
and follow, hearing faint the voice that tells me –**

**The only thing I have to do to receive God's love
is to believe in God's love.**

Ground Bird Flown

**Layers of clear
Rainbow shine guide
you through the pyramid portal into
open air revelation.
Joy on a stick, in your soft eyes,
closed in death, with permanent grace.**

**For all the gifts your gave,
daily miracles, flutterings,
vocalizations, accumulating in song.
For your fragile vessel, energy octave
higher than us wingless dwellers.**

**Your fearless power streaked
into the lining of your feathered coat,
patterned gold thick veins
washed in sparkling sand.**

**Beautiful Sage of the flowerbed gardens,
the blueberry, the hempseed swallow,
fearless messenger, angelic power
bound in a small body, you were
loved completely for everything
that you were, gave,
held lifeforce for. You were
soft, demanding and rich
with good humour**

**stretching, expanding
higher, wider, wings aflare, lifting
in pure vibrant dance, puffed and proud,
your freedom actualized, raised
only inches off the ground.**

Not your taxidermist.

**Foreboding,
witnesses cracked,
ice-slit, more than
a broken arm or a lingering smile
that bears no goodwill. Don't bother
with the streamline, take the curve, the twisted route
into the starscape's eye
because it is on that route where the
bells chime a code, where the
simplest solution unfolds
and the wind rises, master of unpredictability
to thrust you into overload,
where once you were starving for input,
but now are saturated, almost bloated,
still able to breathe a healthy balanced sigh
of mixed astonishment, courage and belief,
still yourself on the threshold collecting
clouds and making a fluctuating ethereal pattern.**

**From a turret window watch the road - it has arrived,
and glory-be the choices that follow
that will lead to unbreakable intimacy, beyond
engravings etched on sidewalk stone.**

Beauty is

True beauty is an experience of awe, it is a momentary recognition where the interconnectedness of everything becomes clear as it sits on the edge of chaos, of knowing the chaos and the precarious tilt towards it, inside of it, but also knowing that chaos for what it is – an illusion.

It is a transient intimacy with truth, when the layers of life are exposed, revealed in a completed majesty. It is a fleeting experience, a halt in existence that our temporal selves cannot maintain. It arrives unexpectedly, when looking at the face of a child, an old person's hands, an animal's tenderness to another outside of its kind. Or when knowing the starlight patterns, forest root fungal patterns, brain electrical patterns are one in the same patterns, that mountain ridges and heartbeat ridges join in identical rhythms, that what is in the forest is in the branch is in the leaf, and that singing is simply opening up, letting in, then letting out.

Beauty is being in love. It catches our breath, brings peace, uncovering perfect symmetry before dissipating with a thinning intensity. It shields the heart in hope, it is a glimpse of God, is bigger than dying, than death, though denies nothing. It shocks us with a sense of synchronicity, and for a moment, seeing it, we return to the source, restored.

***All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:* Synchronized Chaos; Random Poem Tree; CultureCult Magazine; GloMag; The Beatnik Cowboy; Novelmasters; Stay Weird and Keep Writing Publishing; Ink In Thirds; Setu; The Blue Mountain Review; Rasputin: a poetry thread; JD DeHart – Reading and Literature Resources; The Galway Review; Sick Lit Magazine; Episteme; Tuck Magazine; Duane’s PoeTree; Peacock Journal; Outlaw Poetry**

'The Passage of Arnik' was nominated for the “Best of the Net” 2017.

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

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

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