

Allison Grayhurst



# A Wish Alone

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

# *A Wish Alone*

*Allison Grayhurst*

*Edge Unlimited Publishing*

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**A Wish Alone**  
**The poetry of Allison Grayhurst**  
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## Egg

Periwinkle garden,  
flowers folded  
into a dumpling.

I sit on the bottom floor  
of a blessing  
before it builds and blooms,  
before its face has distinction,  
expression, perfect individuality.

Low ache of forming,  
wandering cold plains, over icy lakes  
through dead forests and caves.

Almost ripe,  
platelets connecting, composing  
a singular solid substance. Then

out of the egg and into the vast ocean,  
forward, shell collapsing, imploding, out  
free-riding, embodying  
a fully sufficient infant form.

## **Darkness**

**Darkness heavy as a hunter's  
footsteps, as a sermon  
up the sleeve, offered like  
a ripe strawberry covered in ants.**

**Darkness like the green  
on a last slice of bread  
or the dome of pollution that mutes  
Earth from the zodiac hymns.**

**Darkness that binds  
thumbtacks to the temples,  
dirty as a campfire after the fire  
or a marriage after infidelity.**

**Darkness as a shell, hardness  
masquerading as strength, terrors  
of complexities, moral confusion  
and the allotment of grief that mushrooms  
in tiny pockets here, here, until all greenery  
is overcome with fungi.**

**Darkness that holds no peace,  
no joy in just breathing,  
makes up myths and ceremonies  
to try to blast out  
the darkness, flaking at the core.**

**Darkness I am done with your engulfing disease,  
your canopy wings, trickery, making me believe  
there is rest and safety in your shade.  
I lay down my fossils and my weeping.**

**Darkness, I blow you over  
and when I am blown over,  
I will offer no resistance.**

## **Resilience**

**Violet-hue star of mighty purity,  
a fixed point, directly overhead, anointing,  
a release from the symbiotic purgatory-fold,  
from the loop fire enduring coil  
and the billowing dead land once before me.**

**I will build a bonfire and dance  
under this eight-billion-year-old star,  
no longer held hostage by what I know,  
inevitable observations, time turned to stone,  
locked in one position, dammed to have no meaning,  
no longer trapped in a rippling tremble, continuous  
and static state.**

**I will lean into this bright gathering,  
translating the bursting floral mastery  
of endless constellations, keeping my height,  
keeping my mind, ready to engage  
in a divine exchange, discourse.**

## **Declaration**

**The declaration came,  
ground-breaking, significant  
to every aspect of my nature.  
At stake is the stability  
of my core symbolism, the root  
and the fruit combined.**

**What matters is this day  
to walk the wooden floors,  
replenish my joy  
in the simple things of duty and care,  
opening to the embrace  
of alternate thought patterns,  
pursuing the paradox,  
digging out its centre for a braver scenario  
to catch and be malleable with, kneading  
and knowing the vision will form,  
overtake and dissolve superfluous  
dreams and attachments until it  
pulses like an embryo  
forming, being formed  
readying for  
exposure.**

## **Fish**

**I saw a fish in sleep  
beneath a curly wave  
dreaming in a prophet-trance,  
its lips and fins relaxed, no resistance  
against the water's sway.**

**Some say the fish was dead,  
but I could see its eyes enflamed,  
traveling deep in a vision unnamed into  
crevices of underwater caves, finding  
peace in a pitch-black reverie.**

**I cupped that fish inside my hand  
and still it did not move, continuing its  
placid ephemeral journey,  
now journeying into the sky,  
able to breathe, transitioning  
into flight and becoming intimate  
with the sun's heat like never before.**

**That fish was so far gone  
into a state of transcendence as  
I released it back into its salty wet home,  
kissing it forehead first.**

**I felt it absorb my love  
under its scales, floating away from me,  
silver and white.**

**Tranquil, in steady rapture,  
I watched it vanish as it rolled  
across and under the oceans' blanket,  
as though it never was.**

## **Chain**

**The chain is cracked, only  
a small tug will break it  
and the wall will let down its curtain,  
the leech will release its hold, find  
a new host or none at all.**

**I empty my heat on the bed  
toss with disorder, too slow on my feet.  
But even so, I am carving a future  
I can get behind, lift myself onto a plateau  
that has many plateaus above it, sure of my growing  
strength. It is possible to keep my internal  
promises, not like before when the dirty current  
rippled through me like a disease,  
threatening, consuming  
my substance and storages.**

**Can I say the chain is rusted,  
dissolving, no access  
to its binding power?  
I go for walks. I am grateful  
for the open door, one step  
forward.**

## **Child**

**The child twists a ringlet,  
runs to the shops to buy  
candy, rides her bike  
by the river and assembles  
a dream-world, bigger world  
than her whole reality.**

**The child found worship in her heart  
for God and love  
for an infant raccoon alone under a tree,  
talked to herself incessantly, and often,  
she talked to God, and to his son, Jesus.**

**She went to school, but chalked it up  
to unimportant servitude, felt joyful  
and free, plucking the autumn leaves,  
engaging with the neighbour's dog.**

**The child was wild, swinging  
from willow branches, throwing stones,  
skipping stones, toes always at the edge  
of the unsettled river.**

**Cats were her guardians, confidants and kin.  
Church was boredom, except for the one place  
where the light was let in, that place  
took over her full imagination  
as she traveled through and into  
an instinctual reverie.**

**The child loved her family,  
was allowed every independence,  
was ostracized by the other children  
for her crocheted clothes and the colour  
of her flaming hair. Some called her witch,  
others, an atrocity, and the grown-ups, beautiful.**

**The child rode horses when she got older,  
wrote down the songs of clouds and the names of  
the crows that would follow her, converse with her  
from the school bus window.**

**The child found her belonging in her own head,  
with the animals, and sometimes, she remembers,  
walking silently, holding the hand of a great angel.**

## **Running, lightwave riding**

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

**Answers start up like old machines,  
make noise, but cannot be useful or join  
a continuous flow.**

**Depleted bank accounts, rough-shod carpets  
and rotting wooden subfloors – all of this is the same,  
but what isn't is how I kiss high above,  
feel myself and all who I love, cradled  
in divine tenderness.**

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

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

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

## **Sinkhole**

**The rain rolls down and  
acidifies the flowers.**

**A month of teetering over the abyss,  
barely standing, panicked with  
your unnatural lack of strength  
and your anger, your soft special  
nakedness, needing to get off  
the steep slope, find a resting log, feel  
that you can defeat this gravity pull, break  
the shade around your mind and waterproof  
your walls.**

**How can it be so hard?**

**So quickly the eclipse came and covered,  
thinning your resilience. The moment the cloud  
loses balance, it descends from the sky.  
The condition is stark, helpless  
words and prayers rot beside it like cabbage  
left too long in the sun.**

**My love cannot save you,  
never leaves a mark. Only  
waiting now for the medication  
to kick in, for your psychological  
equilibrium to be restored -  
holding hands across the sofa.**

**I would hold the whole of your pain  
if I could, hold and pull you  
from the weighted mass, sinking.**

**There is nothing. Watching your eyes  
not your eyes - both us trying with all our wisdom  
and might but nothing shifts. A vacuum,  
inhospitable to miracles or mercy.**

**O God please give him green, let the tall grass  
brush across his limbs, let your angels gather, electrify  
his inner current, reviving, opening a path to  
his immaculate freedom.  
Let him stand again.  
His dreams are authentic  
and still burning.**

## Unharmmed

Silent as a predator  
on the far side of a hill  
nearing, reality inches closer,  
hungry and stealth.

Days inside a half-grown dream  
nurturing this ideal that is unable  
to fully mature and tower.

This hallway fills with sludge,  
that hallway with toxic fumes,  
and another with mealy worms searching  
for a host to infest and consume.

If I stand still none will take me  
but movement happens without my accord,  
time decides, aligns everything to its filthy trade.

I see with one eye - linear. I can hope but  
my hope is made of straw. I can grow, but in  
growing I condemn myself even more when again  
I will be trapped and reduced.

I can burst through in my mind.  
In my mind, I can leave these ruins,  
take flight, take shelter,  
wilt the taste of defeat,  
cover the lamp and pretend I hear  
soft chords, harmonies  
converging.

## **Loss**

**There, the cement  
is broken by a heavy fall,  
ants make their way in,  
dig tunnels, weeds sprout up  
and birds land.**

**Beginnings are ugly, born out of death,  
harsh endings and spoonfuls of stone and flame.  
Even the perfect, soft, love-filled endings  
are brutal in their permanence.**

**I drown in the shallow stream.  
I make music in the desert.  
I touch the worms of my thoughts,  
wagging and whipping up the smooth level below.**

**Do you know how much I miss you -  
the light in your dark special eyes,  
the light that seeped into and saturated  
wherever you went, and the natural love  
pooling around your small body,  
extending into the corners of this house,  
upstairs, down basement stairs,  
all the empty places?**

## Harvest

Cry out -  
the light is golden,  
simple, with no secrets,  
no detours of conniving depths  
to trap the soul in a maze made of concrete  
where no seed can root or sprout.  
What was promised was always  
the light, needed only  
to be believed to be true.

Mortal dreams  
Mortal spinal cords  
and hopes that press like  
the edge of a sword against  
your soft belly.  
Mortal light that gets  
turned off and on again  
by a switch or a changing season  
is not the light of blanketing glory,  
is not mercy in the pit.

Take this point in the fault line,  
stand on it as it splits the crust  
and everything below.  
Here the light grows  
like words inked on your skin,  
cutting into the meat of your organs.  
It is light like no brightness you have every known,  
a golden penetrating, undiluted glow.

## **The Final Despair**

**Reaching the madness of failure  
plugged like a mouth stuffed  
with a sponge, unable to express  
the agony experienced with a outward scream -  
curved under pressure to turn in the direction back,  
circular damnation. Gifts of grace,  
pillaged and gone up in smoke.**

**A child's every breath was my breath,  
joy as yellow as the sun - years of happiness  
that meant love was working, that the  
mutilated and hanging seekers  
had nothing up their sleeves to defeat such truth.  
But now,**

**my heart is small, barely beating.  
My horse is burning,  
racing the fields.  
My hopes are maimed,  
crushed by senselessness,  
helplessness and the feeling  
that O - there must be switch,  
if I could just find it and lift and set  
things aright. But my prayers  
billow into the air, head for the abyss.**

**I doubt everything and bottom out  
in that emptiness, moving mechanical,  
tethered to a trusted routine,  
happy only in the peace  
of a morning's solitude.**

## Sparrow

I see the spider dance, smoke  
dancing on the edge of a scream.  
I am that spider  
dancing as I continue downstream.  
Can I be a tree or a curvy vine?  
Can I grow a cloud or just one  
bulb flower?  
Fated to be broken like all else  
living on the Earth, soiled, striving, but always incomplete.  
Can I trust enough to win back my soul?  
Be immersed in the fog and still know the way?

My keeper, my mid-summer garden,  
the bull shark is coming with the encroaching wave,  
swimming will not be enough, not a floaty, not a raft  
will stave off its violent power.  
I will need something larger to fit on, something absolute  
to cull this danger, an island on its own, a hand,  
blessed and strong to raise me from the inevitable grave.

Your love is all I have ever known  
when I know love. Pick me up with the rest of  
the laundry you plan to clean - make light work of me,  
set me down folded, refreshed,  
ready to be worn. I am prepared to live  
and I don't want to die  
like a rusted vent, my metal  
slowly corroding, crumbling until I am left without  
grace, usefulness or substance. I don't want to walk  
into the darkness again - the hollow of all hollows,  
wailing with pain and rage and nakedness  
in the burning coal fires.

**I am your child. I am your sparrow, please  
open the cage-latch, cup me as your own -  
then let me go, and my freedom  
will give you joy, will give you glory.**

## End of the Line

Consumed like a passion  
that exceeds its limited energy,  
like a sorrow when anger  
gets a foothold.  
my anger tightens, incapable  
of finding culmination or the subsiding  
soothing aftermath of shame or reason.

Around the circle, banishment from joy  
and movement, the scattering of dead seeds.

Through the circle, a chance to develop,  
foster trust in the goodness presenting,  
to rest my head, release the futile struggle  
and devote my intelligence  
to examining this foreign peace.

But the ladder has demolished,  
and I cannot climb without it  
or travel the same path, going around.  
I will not withstand being chained again  
to such an unrelenting foe,  
wearing this false face  
fated to merge with and shadow  
my own.

## **Choice**

**I swayed and found fire  
on my backside, in my insides,  
quaking, cracking the edges and the surfaces,  
melting the dream that sustained me.**

**Down the slide, there can be no laws but the law  
of commitment to love, to making up for winter  
by honouring the snow and days of hibernation.**

**Though I have been broken  
like a broken dolphin's fin,  
I find hope, in the piled-up books  
I plan to read, on the peninsula I leap onto,  
leap while I am sinking, leap  
from one ledge to another, leap  
for summer is ending and I refuse to go with it.  
I refuse to sway, joyless, no music.**

## **I hope**

**Then they took what  
was mine to keep  
and I tossed like a broken-winged bird  
trying to gain elevation.  
I am in the land of bright and golden limbo  
and I am listening.  
Is it courage I need or a miracle  
that will arrive like a true and lasting foundation?  
I am hoping to pass through these  
narrow corridors once and for all,  
significant, conquering, not forsaken.  
I am hoping for a buffer zone, for a hand  
to help and make my climb out that much easier.  
I hope to say thank you,  
all traces of decay are gone,  
to build something beautiful  
not side-by-side an equally growing intolerable loss.  
I hope to gather myself, seal all the holes,  
see what it will feel like to lose  
my rage, my despair, exiled  
no more.**

## **Now**

**When will it be?**

**The white bird says now,  
the backyard sleepers, eaters,  
say now  
and the souls that left  
and the souls that arrived  
are deep in the immediacy  
of an overpowering change  
that will guide the current into the sea,  
a coral reef barrier prosperity  
a summer like a summer never  
before - blessed, pulsing with an infant  
eternal song, glorifying the dissolving shapes,  
the empty spaces now made complimentary,  
now made into a rippling harmony singing.**

**When will it be?**

**It is, says the voice.  
Close your eyes. Open them  
and see.**

## Cure

Joy is but a minstrel's flower,  
lightening under the thumbnails.  
Preach of mud around the eyes,  
myself a centipede, fast but fragile.  
I gaze and I know the way is a path is a dream  
of a hawk landing and inside that dream  
anguish quickens to gold, despair into  
overcoming. Inside that dream, Jesus stands  
insistent in a child's purity, burdenless, fresh  
as the sun always is and always burning.

A tiny stone that cannot break, a love so graced  
it welcomes the flooding tide. But I am broken,  
eaten in tiny increments by the changing mirror -  
around the evenings, around the first day's light,  
blind to all but the persistent churning.

Jesus' great love has left me weeping,  
suffering mended, miracles under  
a white desert sky, offering a gift  
seemingly small, unassuming,  
but full enough to prevent heartache's  
lasting damage.

## **Someone other**

**Someone said - “Be sensible,  
a song is essential only if it can be traded.”  
Someone squandered decades of rich meaning  
then died on the rafters of an abandoned ballpark.**

**Intellectual dreams have no limitations,  
strong in complexity, strong without drama  
or disappointments.  
I will dream intellectual, taste desire  
as an idea, be friends with the professional  
and marry into a profession.  
How much time does it take to fashion an identity,  
keep it with solid sides and a resistant core?**

**Someone said - “Don’t bother  
nothing is for keeps, ideals exist  
until they inevitably become soiled and then  
start reeking of their opposite intent.”  
Many years seized you up in spasms,  
aching and making  
a mockery of such extremes.  
This planet is overstrained, never a gentle  
day of just sitting.  
Someone said - “Learn mediocrity  
if you want happiness.”  
Faith must be fought for, in every choice,  
in the mid-days of winter and when  
love has gone astray.**

**Someone said - “Deal with the collapse of  
what you hold as true - contemplate it like a cloud  
that shifts form and wisps away.”**

**I heard that someone, but the joy of love  
is real even when it lies flattened. Hope  
is not for the faint-hearted, but for the persistent,  
the reformers of gravity, the warriors against inertia.  
I say - Hope void of illusions  
draws its first breath as faith  
only in the purity of compete darkness.**

## **Inheritance**

**The end is almost here,  
rises like a blessing  
like a storm, demanding  
my commitment,  
to go inside, hide and pray.**

**The end overthrows  
the engrained pattern, arrests  
the spread of illness and holds  
the future like a tiny turtle in an egg,  
struggling out of its shell.**

**The end is an escape route, a mind  
losing consciousness, asking to be caught  
before the body lands on unpolished  
concrete floors, deprived of a buffer, asking  
for a soft act of grace, a reminder  
that love exists even under the executioner's hood.**

**The end is happening like forgiveness happens,  
a miracle stronger than duty and grief,  
strongest of all efforts -  
a clean slate, consolidating  
each action, blanketing over  
every direction  
to and away from home.**

## **Reformation**

**I am tackling my circumstances  
void of myth or the fallacy  
of wishes.**

**I am trying to see straight even  
if I must murder my own liberty,  
harpoon my freedom and go under.**

**I see the road but I cannot  
take the road if it leaves my loved ones  
in jeopardy - parachute strings cut, plane  
door open at high altitude.**

**I must go back, ache all over, unable  
to sleep or find a resting position  
without pain. Unless**

**supplies arrive, compassion comes and strips me  
of this brutal incremental starvation and I can  
stand unencumbered by such a load, unashamed  
of my joy - no void of doom slicing through  
my budding strength.**

## **My Cup**

**Dream the light that blazes  
over the arch of time.  
Plunge in and peel.  
Now. You are here.  
There is no path, but the path  
of intensity, trusting,  
even when you fail.  
Shave off the matts, the baggage of loss  
that has outlived its necessity.  
Step on the grass. Reach. Know you are  
on the other side.  
The past and its broken greenhouse  
cracked walls, yellowed stems, rotted leaves  
are of another country.  
No loss was unbearable.  
Torment has transformed,  
has been set right and matured.  
Happiness is a horse.  
She stands before you, offers you a ride.  
Be brave as a confident child,  
feet off the ground,  
in union, in flight.**

## **Submit**

**When**

**submission to reality  
is an example of good  
behavior, and submission  
to God, an example of  
lunacy. What do I choose?  
Can I choose or must I dive  
back into the sludge-pool, struggling to  
surface and keep the stench from moving in,  
being absorbed?**

**Rage that takes me on a round-about,  
adopting a slice of indignation coupled with  
the exhausting sigh of failure.  
Is this my path? I have tried  
for a quarter of a century to brave it, be my best self  
in it, and it works for a while, but never for long,  
never before long when it ties me to its destruction,  
grows things inside of me I cannot eradicate or soothe.**

**It can't be another year without mercy,  
another conviction, revelation  
dashed to shards against the wall.  
I can't be another lost cause,  
my entrapment a burden to all  
who love me, where I am given two options  
- hide my suffering or spread it -  
no relief for me, harming my loved ones  
with my vile and personal conundrum.**

**I can't make it another day, flat out  
giving myself over to this wretched occupation.  
I will die tomorrow if I continue on,  
split against  
this unmovable rock.**

## **I saw the Face**

**I see what I take  
and I circle back  
to give  
nourishment into the stream,  
wisdom of a kind that is just  
thought, intention and striving.**

**Gaining mortal burdens, feelings  
that last lifetimes, failures that  
embed in the body like a blackhole  
and draw everything into a calamity  
of despair and senselessness.**

**We are shining, vessels that are brooms,  
dishcloths, meant to clean, not accumulate.  
I block the violence  
of Self up against the world  
and exchange it for  
individuality before God,  
peace that moves unexpectedly,  
never still, never sure.**

**Love is nothing when alone.  
I ask for healing for this unit, this tribe  
of artists wandering,  
trying to make our way through  
poverty and loneliness, coming to terms with  
things that perished that were  
meant to bloom.**

**Take this family into your well-spring,  
drench us in your everlasting waters.  
We have no fashion or charm,  
just us fitted together, sharing everything,  
pierced by a sickness we cannot expel.  
Expel it for us and fill the cavity  
with your affluent efficient flow.  
Make passages within that can be maintained,  
built-upon, as we honour equally  
the silver dollar, ancient ruins  
and the blind alien fish  
thriving far far below.**

## Calling Again

**My clothes are loose  
my mind is out of the shadows,  
stern in its unwavering demands.**

**God is my one protector  
from disaster and from  
unhealthy bonds.**

**I will keep my faith as each day  
draws me close to the gaping maw  
quaking darkness that I know will consume  
my strength and my peace.**

**I will hold faith each step I get closer,  
trust in my rescue, blind as I am, wobbly  
and languishing. I will have faith and grow myself  
a brightness that will flash and flood the  
tangled thorns, blast through doubt and time  
and impossibility. I will trust in my saviour, the  
One who sent him, merge with him and play  
the tambourine in joyful abandon.**

**I will find my feet lifted from this path  
until I see this path below  
and then never again.**

**Grace fills the air like the scent of incense burning.  
Grace is revealed as the only door  
out and into a good life.**

**I will keep faith, have my yoke lightened,  
fueled by a journey of less dread, more  
alignment, sacred dependency.**

## **Sing**

**I will sing until the end for you  
of centipedes and endless hallways,  
of the warning stream rising  
and the dead birds on the snowbank  
that came back too early, fooled  
by a false spring.**

**I will sing of flashing lights  
and other conditions  
that tempt sanity's hold.  
And then I will sing of glory at the dinner table,  
a morning hug, leaving an opening for grace  
throughout it all.**

**I will love you until the end, believe  
in your majesty above all  
although I am equally blind in the sun as in the dark,  
but what I sing for out-paces sight,  
is faint but obvious as a babe's eyes glowing  
in quiet delight, pulses a clear small core  
in the tumbleweed confusion of everyday love as  
everyday I need you more, and so  
I will go on singing as I am,  
rusted, cracked, always  
leaning.**

## **Visceral**

**The voice breaks down  
into tiny fragments, each  
filled with a unique harmony,  
some clash in reckless bawls,  
others fill with a steady fever.**

**The voice collects itself, gains frenzy  
like a stallion no one could tame or mount.  
The voice claims death, as even in death  
it will not be defeated or subdued,  
but will grow like waves in a storm, crash  
and come back, rising, swallowing the shore  
as it wakes.**

**The voice is a raging giant wanting fleshy dream,  
rejecting limitations, leadership  
from a reasoning baritone.**

**The voice outweighs imprisonment,  
carnivorous oppression and the sighs  
of consuming cancer.**

**The voice is tall  
for its years.  
The fabric it wears  
is from the entrails of fate,  
from the sinews of predictive design.  
It has no cause and effect,  
as it shouts out its riddle, its savage roar.**

**You can't confront it and win.  
You can't pollute it with existential doubts.**

**It grips the universal jugular  
with its teeth and claws,  
digs in, utterly enjoying  
the bloodied feast.**

## Casual Garden

I keep a casual garden  
burnt in places, lush by  
the climbing trees.  
When in despair,  
I examine the corners of that garden,  
pluck the dangerous weeds.  
I scrub the birdbath  
and fill it with fresh cold water  
placing stones as platforms  
for the bees and small birds.  
This garden is my favourite place to walk,  
small, but with hidden nooks  
and a seat for solitude.

It took years of tending to get to this place.  
A once-thought cursed corner is now deep green  
with violet hues and the perfect shade.  
Still there is more to tend  
as it is ever changing. Birds come,  
leave their droppings and kill  
what can be restored.  
Squirrels explore, dig holes, preparing for winter.  
Raccoons work their nocturnal havoc -  
birdbath on its side, flipped steppingstones - evidence  
of their hunting for grubs.

The sounds when the neighbours  
are sleeping or away  
are best. The smells are perfect  
of marigolds on the deck and the rain.

There is an animal graveyard in my garden -  
a place in front of two tall trees.

**My mother says this garden is beautiful  
and she would know.  
I rejoice in its poetry.  
Everything wants to live,  
expand, overflow in this garden.**

**When I forget God loves me,  
I look at my garden,  
I step onto its bumpy terrain  
and know I am one -  
joined to its hallowed ground.**

## Revived

Sideways into the thicket  
prickly roar, eyelids closed  
and then a decade later, a sunbeam  
latches to your arm and pulls you out,  
renews your skin, the tone of your hair.

A decade lost without a voice, without  
connection to your core.

Here you stride, hardly limping,  
a queen, tall, sure of your kinship,  
sometimes still weakened by past sentimentality,  
but mostly remembering  
the promise to you that was made on the swing  
when you swung high as the swing could carry you -  
your childhood legs gleefully kicking, your long hair  
behind you, and a smile that was more glorious  
than the first spotted spring flower.

Whole again, set upright,  
shedding the last of your apprehension,  
growing deeper into maturity,  
letting the shadows go, as the nectar pours  
sweet all around you.

## **Creature**

**Out of step, filled  
with a flame that ignites  
a windfall and dreams  
upward reaching, past  
the umbrella and the cherished flight  
of the cardinal.**

**One step, dancing, then tomorrow  
comes and there is no dancing to be seen.  
Maimed and fearful - the setting sun  
coils its rays around an unhappy future and feeds  
the roots with sewage.**

**Preferring the hope of a soft landing,  
I count the pillars and make a roof, a home.  
I fall asleep with this glorious creature at my side.  
I wake and it is the first thing I see. It takes me  
out into a land of picnics by the water, out  
of the stark slam of ancient debts that  
must be repaid.**

**It takes me to a greener land  
where I can walk, turn corners  
and run. Where I can do my rituals,  
relieved of desperation, at one  
with the hand that opens, at peace  
with the hand that holds.**

## **Direction**

**Can this moment be a fruit,  
a moist secret, picked and juiced?  
Can I follow through with my leap of faith  
and leap into the coal fires of survival's uncertainty,  
be selfish as the hunter who conserves nature  
so he can have enough nature to kill  
and make into wall trophies?**

**Am I a dead mouse on the porch who made it  
as far as the first freeze, forgot  
to build a nest and suffered the consequences?  
Am I fortunate as the found street dog,  
given kibble, a warm place to lay,  
a pack to call her own?**

**Am I here maimed but alive,  
like all things living,  
crippled by the weight of time?  
Why is everything half-formed?  
Only young things leap and frolic,  
free because of their dependency  
on maternal sustenance and protection.**

**My endurance is threadbare.  
If I wash and wear it one more time  
it will disintegrate and not hold form.  
I know nothing but  
I do know Jesus -  
the bridge and the tunnel below.**

**I know one way, one path  
all else is  
phantom blood, phantom fulfilment,  
just renderings humming 'yes yes -  
take my false face as truth,  
count my money, my grand accomplishments,  
my soft seats, my high seats,  
my triple thaw and my double freeze.'**

**The butcher is a psychopath. The liars are in charge.  
Steady now, the hand, the moon dangling on a string,  
say your necessary farewells.  
Jesus is walking, walk with him,  
eyes forward, summoned.**

## **Bridle**

**Tear and rip and proclaim  
a path you cannot follow  
but can taste its every nuance.  
Bend into its horizon as though it  
were yours, there on glorious display.**

**When change does not come, and it sleeps  
like a long clouded-over moon, and spirits  
are bones sucked of their marrow -  
the most vital of these eaten by mechanical doom -  
metal teeth and the turning, turning  
of grinding eventuality, wait  
and watch the images come and go.**

**The windows are stained  
and there is no way to clean them.  
Through them I see growth.  
I see days I long for that may not come  
for another decade, where I will be free.  
What is a day? But this thing done, this thing not done.  
What is a life? Stealing wakefulness violently  
from slumber, pressing into joy  
despite the chains and another  
book is read. All dreams are singular. Know  
the in-breath counts. The out-breath is simply  
exhalation.**

## **I Need My Blood**

**I need my blood.  
I need the mornings  
sightless of dark duties  
and encumbering failures  
that rise like a high wave  
teaming with unseen predators.**

**I need a house without deep mud  
at its doorstep and a fire menacingly  
burning in the furthest backyard tree.**

**I need to wake up like I used to,  
energized, a life to look forward to, bow to,  
and say yes, I can do that, I am full.**

**I need God's blowing kiss, a dream  
that is more than a dead seed or grand illusion,  
to step here and there solid in authenticity,  
shed the dread and the pounding trip and fall.**

**I need my blood  
not horror-cold professionalism,  
being polite while vital body fibres  
ricochet against each other, bawling inside,  
ripped and rolling like a fish  
on a hook, heartlessly pulled  
from my home and element, amazed  
by how long I am still breathing,  
here, without oxygen  
or the salty waters of my belonging.**

**I need a bridge  
to walk across,  
a landscape of freedom and prosperity,  
away from this decaying island I sit upon  
where massive reptiles wrap  
their spiked bodies around, many  
creeping on the shore.**

**I need my blood,  
to keep my blood,  
flowing, be a voice at full strength,  
no longer a sigh or a held-back moan.**

**I need this now  
to carry on.**

**My branches are all but broken.  
My spirit is hardening, tight, tighter  
than a heavy stone.**

## **Building a Temple**

**These words are a goodbye  
to the dust-bowl chaos, a vision  
to act by, pick up pebbles and throw  
across a field, over a fence, almost  
to the other side.**

**The angels make a wall protecting, bending  
their bodies of light like shields  
over my children, as they find their way  
through uncertainties, undercurrents of terror  
and the moon's dropping glare.**

**Addiction in the ice.  
Organs enflamed and removed.  
But God's love is merciful, takes us  
to the threshold, but not beyond.  
Secrets are exposed, talked about without shame,  
and then are burnt.**

**Sometimes the storm creates a treasure,  
a blooming happiness  
after its destructive force.  
Sometimes after the emptiness, there is finally  
a conscious letting go, letting in  
the zig-zag flight of finches.  
Sometimes after  
ghosts are silenced, pathways  
are exposed, and hearts once harmed,  
are now repaired, easily redeemed.**

## **Lift**

**What I need to see,  
I can't - the shape,  
the vibration,  
a mouth full of Amens.**

**What I need to happen  
is the gates I've laboured  
in every way to lift, to at last  
be lifted, and there will  
the re-arranging of disorder,  
hopelessness vanquished,  
along with the dissolving of cursed errands  
and their damaging and rippling influence.**

**What I long for is to be released  
but I cannot find a way, surrounded  
by chaotic void, as I lie belly-up  
capsized in a space of cruel  
and perverted punishment.**

**What I dream  
I can only envision, clear  
as the scuff marks on a white floor,  
clear as a male cardinal  
on a snow-covered branch.**

**What I dream  
is to hail a hidden strength,  
to drive a wedge under  
these barred doors, lift,  
just enough  
to fully  
slip through.**

## **Milk and Honey**

**The time has come  
to say goodbye  
to sticky death, the thick  
latching-onto shadows  
following you  
from the laundry room  
to the dinner plate.**

**It is time to shape your future  
on the other side of this impossible wall,  
unite with a merciful tide,  
join a breachable adventure.**

**Pollution rises in this captivity,  
stiffens the air and brings transgressions.  
If you want to leave, ask to leave  
and you will be on the other side  
of this raging torment.**

**The time has come,  
your intentions are exact.  
Release any malice,  
release all unnecessary bonds.  
Walk forward, the way is cleared.  
It is time to receive.**

## **Stand**

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

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

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

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

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

## Poet

My breath and blood,  
my spiritual soldier,  
death expresses itself  
then ends to find another muse.  
Hold me in your form,  
unoffended, know I am  
capable of true choice,  
planting colours before unseen.

My last call, I am withdrawing,  
weakening, biting a bitter morsel.  
Darkness is a hymn, infiltrating  
my subconscious.

I will take the globe and smash the sphere,  
my boundless exemplary love, lover  
of the embracing midnight, star light and roses.

I have no customs I am determined to keep.  
I will give up all my rituals, my summer garden  
to walk again, with you, on fire.

## **Backtrack then forward**

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

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

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

## **Threshold**

**The eruption ache  
of an ultimatum,  
laid bare its beams and  
its unsunned skin,  
a voice bellowing,  
roaring a vow that  
grows like a creature  
absolute in its hellish  
demanding form.**

**All things stand extravagant  
and excessive especially  
when unarmed, unexpected.  
Leave the painted dream  
with the waterfowl to peck at  
and drive under.  
There is something here  
in this early day, contracting, anguishing  
but with cause.**

**Wretched vigor, swelling  
with the effusion  
of threatening extremes,  
held hostage, here, in a place  
where a choice must be made  
where all outcomes perceived  
are perverse, lethal.**

## **Chasm**

**The chasm stretches  
wider, takes in tree roots,  
purple flowers and hedgehog homes.  
Feeding it seems like the best thing,  
but it only grows in its immensity,  
never settles with what it already has.**

**By necessity it formed,  
by decades of perpetual hammering and floods  
it tore the ground, became  
a mouth-hole, wide and hungry  
to increase its possession of the joyfully living,  
to destroy the green sprouts of creativity  
seeded by a fullness without fragmentation,  
self-deceit or a draining wound, continuous.**

**By its nature, this chasm is a long pit,  
entering the underworld, releases ghosts  
and gases to toxify any hope remaining.**

**I wish I was a bird with a great wing-span, strong  
enough to fly away from its vacuous maw.  
But I am human, and it wants me inside its dirty  
chamber, to lick the salt from my skin  
with its sharp ridged metallic tongue.**

## **This Day**

**Is this the day  
we fall free into a reverie  
of tranquil totality,  
no more groping for fulfilment  
in the plastic-container stacks  
left outside our door?**

**Is this the day  
when we release all damaging alliances,  
when we can seek  
without the weighted past  
tethered in chains to our heels?**

**Is this the day  
of metaphysical reckoning,  
when reason sharpens, reforms to merge  
with our own devotion -  
ideals and reality become the same  
this day, this existence - a dissolution  
of repetitive efforts and suffering -  
where life and truth yield equally  
each into the other?**

## Union

Do you love me,  
or is your love  
too magnificent  
against my failed and hapless  
virtue, fetus-formed,  
barely pulsing but trying  
to flesh out and depict details  
in contrast, in a fundamental form?

Do you hear me,  
as a mosquito-buzz nuisance  
to your bright and flawless grandeur,  
or is my deficient faith worth  
the encounter, evoking your mercy?

Do I know you  
at all or only as a dream  
of being engaged to your  
wild erupting  
lava-flow inspiration,  
to the hot touch of your tenderness  
here and here  
and my heart and self  
at one, at peace  
fastened to your love,  
receptor of your astonishing  
calypso flavour?

## **Combat-zone**

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

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

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

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

## **My love**

**I am still in awe  
of the deep delight that  
rises in your eyes  
like a constellation surfaces  
from the thick flesh of dark night  
and sings to me - ethereal,  
images pounding the back of my mind,  
breaking through the wet cemented barrier,  
sure to drown me, incorporate me into its own.**

**You are magic, a wilderness  
tempered with spiritual intelligence where  
your genius sits on a throne, high above the  
primal ground, directing each disruption into  
an exuberant harmony, changing the dull light  
of chaos into a living ceremony, pulsing  
and sensually tearing the seams  
- heightened evolution -**

**my love,  
my truest friendship, your power is beautiful.  
It never wanes or falters. I love you still  
like at the beginning  
when we found a field and twirled  
in joyful abandon, knowing what we found  
and what was to come. It is coming  
again, a future without waste or holding back.**

**Your rich glory raging like  
a storm-tossed sea.  
You are tied to the resting point.  
You are tied to the gravity  
of the moon. You spread your arms.  
I watch you receive, and then  
I will watch what enfolds.**

## **Crisis**

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

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

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

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

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

**Everyday the birds wake at 4 a.m.  
and sing your glory.  
I know your glory**

**and so I must see  
this harrowing hardship as an illusion,  
crack this façade  
and its senseless insides,  
hold it to your light, saturate in your light,  
and believe in that light, only.**

## **Triage**

**The fragility of failure,  
sunset over the ruined city  
and life never the flowering garden  
it could be.**

**All is captured by death,  
after leaving heaven and  
when returning - decay and fear and hope  
of eternity in spite of the silence.**

**A wilderness of anxiety overtaking  
the summit, suffocating the interior  
with its acid juices, following the chain link  
until the grave.**

**Waste and enormous hunger,  
rejecting reality to keep sane.  
This is no way to continue,  
no life of rapid transitions or stepping out  
of the mire onto solid land.**

**Here, the temperature is predictable,  
the yawning pit of disaster is always expanding,  
nearing and nearing.**

**So take this last bit of courage  
stand on the edge and let yourself go,  
know what it is to be truly radical,  
risking the fall, committed  
to the end result.**

## **Released**

**In the end I call you  
dark as spit, corrupting  
intuition, bringing sickness  
to a child's mind, dragging her  
by the feet through your everglade  
of grasping demons, blotting out  
her dreams and prayers, corroding her  
imagination.**

**At this end, weak and wispy,  
your form is residue, your power,  
only a dispelling illusion, nothing  
against the greatness of love.**

**I will give you forgiveness,  
no more warring  
with your bloody dominance,  
lacerating you, lacerating me - a war  
of equal ferocity and destruction.**

**Our interdependence is broken.  
The umbilical cord  
between us, dissolved.  
You are now a stranger.  
I bless you and send you  
blessed, on your way.**

## **Worship Art or No Art**

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

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

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

## **Fountain**

**A fountain sits  
in the centre of my backyard,  
watering and shading the mourning doves  
pecking at the dirt below.  
Yet I am deep in a hazardous denial,  
giving weight to an illusion that  
bonds me to the desert and  
sand dunes rolling as far  
as my eyes can see.  
So deep I cannot see the fountain  
or the backyard or  
the delicate joy of choice.**

**Today I will make a decision  
step onto the platform  
and take my chances.  
In this place, this quiet morning,  
I will feel myself changed, unchained.  
Then, I will start to dig into the sands  
until I find a wetness burning, keep digging  
until I release a rising flow,  
a personal permanent resurrection.**

## **Rules**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Initiation**

**Punctured  
on the last step, from  
the last step.  
No openings, breath holes.  
Rigid boards, brick work  
for miles, and infestation  
in the corners, under  
floorboards.**

**Call me a dreammaster,  
someone to remind me  
who owns me and how much  
I am actually worth.**

**The landscape begins,  
first in ice-cream tones  
of frosted blue and whites,  
then into a rich mustard yellow  
and animated dark purple.  
Seeing this on the cold walls, under  
false lights and a dreary atmosphere,  
consuming, watching duties  
done, lacking eloquence or  
personal concern.**

**Guide me into your soundproof room,  
tempt me with insanity, then  
let my accusations be muffled  
until they are inaudible.**

**A clean bill of health,  
health in every salutation.  
Days spent spawning music and shrines  
to whatever passes as holy.  
Days showered with talkative sparrows,  
no spots left to rot or grow a putrid stench,  
just small spillages, here, there,  
easily wiped, not worthy of  
being recalled or inducing  
a lengthy tortured conversation.**

## **Waterfall**

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

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

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

## Slingshot

Itself, lips  
high off the ground.  
Answer twice and then  
no more.  
Retreat, understand  
all the world is a grave  
and still, sprouting.  
This journey, this climb  
collecting the many shades  
of intertwining foliage.  
Half-moon is enough moon  
to see. Dump yard turns  
into a mouse's home, a place  
to raise her offspring, find food,  
with many secure hiding holes.  
Flesh is a revelation,  
is the end result of pure spirit  
sparkling.  
Tomorrow we will know why  
today we feel lacking  
when we find our watering-hole,  
a reservoir garden, glorious labour,  
cascading.

## **Monarchs**

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

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

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

## Publication Acknowledgments

*All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:* Ink Pantry; Borderless Journal; Synchronized Chaos; Amethyst Review; Fresh Words; The Wise Owl; Raven Cage Zine; Medusa's Kitchen; Academy of the Heart and Mind; New Mystics; Written Tales Magazine chapbook and online; Winamop; Open Skies Poetry; Creation and Criticism; The Clayjar Review; Across The Margin

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# About the Author



**Allison Grayhurst** is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four of her poems were nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2015/2018, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2017. She has over 1,375 poems published in more than 525 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 eighteen other books of poetry and five 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.

**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).**

**More recently, her book *Tadpoles Find the Sun* was published by Cyberwit, August 2020.**

**In 2020, her work was translated into Chinese and published in "Rendition of International Poetry Quarterly" and in "Poetry Hall".**

**In 2018, her book *Sight at Zero*, was listed #34 on CBC's "Your Ultimate Canadian Poetry List".**

**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.**

**Some of the places her work has appeared in include Parabola (Alone & Together print issue summer 2012); SUFI Journal (Featured Poet in Issue #95, Sacred Space); Elephant Journal; Literary Orphans; Blue Fifth Review; The American Aesthetic; The Brooklyn Voice; Five2One; Agave Magazine; JuxtaProse Literary Magazine, Drunk Monkeys; Now Then Manchester; South Florida Arts Journal; Gris-Gris; The Muse – An International Journal of Poetry, Storm Cellar, morphrog (sister publication of Frogmore Papers); New Binary Press Anthology; Straylight Literary Magazine (print); Chicago Record Magazine, The Milo Review; Foliate Oak Literary Magazine; The Antigonish Review; Dalhousie Review; The New Quarterly; Wascana Review; Poetry Nottingham International; The Cape Rock; Ayris; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry (now called The Journal); The Toronto Quarterly; Fogged Clarity, Existere; Boston Poetry Magazine; Decanto; White Wall Review.**

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# Quotes

**“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*, legendary singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of ‘Wigford Rememberies’ and ‘The Abandoned’, Nightwood Editions; [www.kypharness.net](http://www.kypharness.net)**

**“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity’s authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst**

is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water,” *Taylor Jane Green, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology and The Rise of Eros.*

“Grayhurst’s rapturous outpouring of imagery makes her poems easily enjoyable ... Like a sear the poet seeks to fathom sensual and spiritual experience through the images of a dream,” *Canadian Literature.*

“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.

"Biting into the clouds and bones of desire and devotion, love and grief, Allison Grayhurst basks the reader, with breathtaking eloquence, in an elixir of words. Like lace, the elegance is revealed by what isn't said. This is stunning poetry," *Angela Hryniuk*, author of 'no visual scars'.

"Allison Grayhurst is a poet whose work is characterized by startling imagery and uncompromising emotion, whose pieces have appeared in prestigious magazines. Lights, darks, colors, and passions intertwine throughout the pages of her work," *Louise E. Allin*, Literature and Language.

"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.

**“The breath of roles covered in Allison Grayhurst’s poetry is exceptional. Even poems covering similar perspectives express subtle distinctions, distinctions which add depth to the poet’s larger themes. The cohesive psychology of the poet is clear, allowing for long reads and re-reads.”** says author *Patrick Linsenmeyer*.

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

## **Books by Allison Grayhurst**

### **Paperbacks with Edge Unlimited Publishing:**

**Book 1: Journey of the Awakening, 1997, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH6WO5Y; ISBN-10: 1478189339; ISBN-13: 978-1478189336**

**Book 2: The Longing to Be, 1998, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH94ZNK; ISBN-10: 1478197684; ISBN-13: 978-1478197683**

**Book 3: Death and Other Possibilities, 2000, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHB8M0K; ISBN-10: 1478208163; ISBN-13: 978-1478208167**

**Book 4: Outliving the Inevitable, 2002, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHBYD1W; ISBN-10: 1478220295; ISBN-13: 978-1478220299**

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**Book 6: Red thread - Black thread, 2006, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHQOJFW; ISBN-10: 1478244186; ISBN-13: 978-1478244189**

**Book 7: The Many Lights of Eden, 2008, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHTR6IQ; ISBN-10: 1478249153; ISBN-13: 978-1478249153**

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**Book 9: The River is Blind, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CICVQ6K; ISBN-10: 1478280131; ISBN-13: 978-1478280132**

**Book 10: Seamless – A Collection of Love Poems, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIFTU0G; ISBN-10: 1479304816; ISBN-13: 978-1479304813**

**Book 11: If I Get There – Poems of Faith and Doubt, a collection, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIZQGI0; ISBN-10: 1479348740; ISBN-13: 978-1479348749**

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**Book 15: Walkways, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OR1VVH4; ISBN-10: 1502792133; ISBN-13: 978-1502792136**

**Book 16: As My Blindness Burns - three long poems, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OS7HFZY; ISBN-10: 1502838265; ISBN-13: 978-1502838261**

**Book 17: Our Children Are Orchards – collected poems about animals, children and pregnancy, 2015, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00TZDDP5K; ISBN-10: 1508582920 ISBN-13: 978-1508582922**

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**Book 22: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 1 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZTQNX5; ISBN-13: 978-1978078833; ISBN-10: 1978078838**

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**Book 28: The Sculptures of Allison Grayhurst, 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B078TJTY37; ISBN-13: 978-1983534270; ISBN-10: 1983534277**

**Book 29: Animal Culture (rules of commitment), 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07H1WRD5K; ISBN-13: 978-1719094962; ISBN-10: 1719094969**

**Book 30: If I Knew This Haunting, 2019, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07VQWS6PZ; ISBN-13: 9781082365133; ISBN-10: 1082365130**

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**Book 33: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst – completed works for 2018 to 2021 (Volume 7), 2021, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ISBN: 9798740225913; ASIN: B0932GSD5C; ASIN: B093FW56NQ; ISBN: 9798773718482**

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ISBN-13: 978-9390202553**

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**Make the Wind, 2016, Scars Publications; ISBN-  
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10: 1518842046; ISBN-13: 978-1518842047**

**Common Dream, 1991, Edge Unlimited; ISBN-10: 0969542313  
ISBN-13: 978-0969542315**

**Somewhere Falling, 1995, Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic  
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**Surrogate Dharma, 2014, Barometric Pressures Author Series,  
Kind of a Hurricane Press**

**The River is Blind, 2012, above/ground press; ISBN-10:  
1-897224-99-0; ISBN-13: 978-1-897224-99-1**

**Four chapbooks published under the pseudonym of Jocelyn  
Kain:**

**Jumana, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-36-9**

**Perfect Love, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-66-0**

**Before the Dawn, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-11-3**

**Joshua's Shoulder, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 1-55072-025-2**

"Allison 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.

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Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Five times nominated for "Best of the Net", she has over 1300 poems published in over 500 international journals. She has 25 published books of poetry, 12 collections and 6 chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; [www.allisongrayhurst.com](http://www.allisongrayhurst.com)