

The Sparrow Wars

The poetry of *Allison Grayhurst*



Allison Grayhurst

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Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
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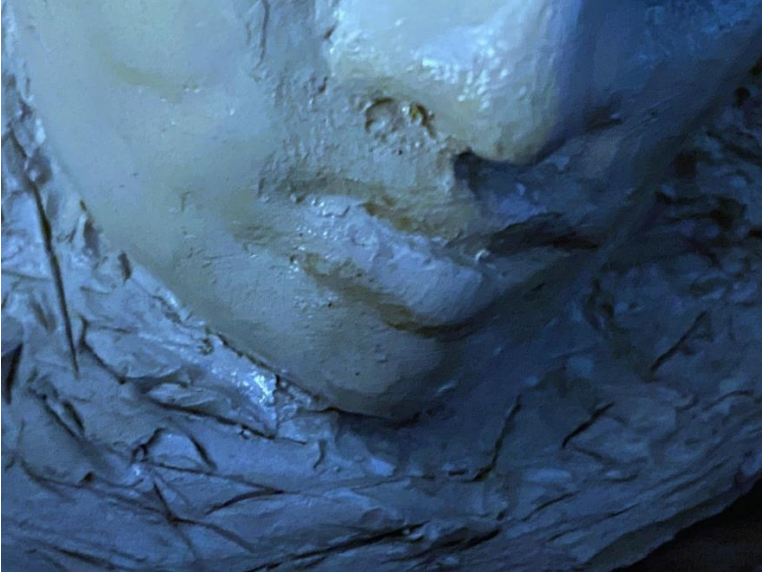
“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God,” Jesus.

Sparrow Wars

I

**Sludge water dripping
into an already clogged pipe.
Blood in my microscope, torn out
like a diary page, necessary to
analyze the ingredients.
Will the wound lift? be inverted
into a creative windstorm or
a nemesis spread,
spidery-vein spreading
until the curse is complete
and conquers?**

**I know love is alive,
and that hot and sudden
is the joy that stems from a miraculous shift.
I know building comes with the morning,
comes like brimming sorrow and goes
to a final destination like all things final,
temporary, broken and sliced down the centre -
undergoing a brutal mitosis.**



II

Empty tables
clawed apart within
with spikes a-blazing on the edges,
and the light of the moon
high in the sky,
hardly visible.

Time is a dust heap I roll inside of,
never making a dent
or relieving my extremities from
the grim cover.

Beaten by the relentless overwhelm
and the digging dream that digs further down
more than ever before, pulled in by
gravity unspeakable and charged.

Living each day bent over, cane-walking,
repeating anguish, shooting pain and dough-bread
kneading, never baking, never
consuming.



III

**When grief comes
it comes at the maximum degree
of chaos, doubt and all things
unsustainable.**

**Even there, in the squander and grave
disadvantage, I will surrender to trust,
protect the embryo of my new understanding
as precious as it is,
as the only intention worthy of holding,
clinging to despite the toxic smog encircling,
twirling over my extremities, nose-diving into
my internal organs, shutting me down.**

**It is there and its power is the past, old.
It is able to kill but I am not afraid.
I hold the jewel of this glowing budding faith
and that is all I will look at.**

**My heart is crushed, undone by the weight of grief
but my soul is tiny blooming. Let it be key.
Let everything be where everything needs to be.
Both are real. Only one will have authority
and receive my attention, elixir formed, a trickle,
ingested.**



IV

Drum beat

no beat

**I raise my arms
and scream hosana.**

**The drawers are empty
hunger parts my soul
into quarters. Stand up
and take account, no one
is listening.**

**Four months of stagnant emotion,
upheaval at the roots, planted again
somewhere less familiar and less fecund.
Faith and despair overlap, cross paths, join
together as a new entity.**

**Who understands? There is no understanding
to be had, only the ceramic bird on the shelf, winking,
and the air, heavy and humid one minute
and cold, oxygen-free, the next.**

**In my mind is an argument
existential, without possible resolution.
In my core there is shock at the terror
of disintegration, and for how long?
How much more? And still there is more.**

**In my being, I knew God
came with mercy, with Jesus and the peace
of infinity - washing clean, a soft joy
without degrees but only flowing, showering, eternal.
In between I wake up and I cannot see forward,
I listen, but I cannot be one with what I hear.**

**Holy Spirit, holy, do not escape me,
be clear, re-construct my devotion,
find me my union seed, to plant and tend to
simple devotion.**



V

Jesus, you let me live.

**I will sit with you
hand in hand.**

**I know you
in my personal crisis -
faith obliterated, reseeded
in a lucky garden.**

**I will trust you with all my problems,
with my anxiety like a dysfunctional
city, polluting the roadway, the airway
with its violence and indifference.**

**I will breathe easy, knowing you are here,
that you own it because I give it to you
and reckoning is rescue, in your hands,
miracles are coming - life changing,
a kinship with your divinity.**

**You are sovereign, my still-point, my doorway
into perpetual redemption.**

**I will collect the fruit and sit beside you,
eating together - no hunger, no hurry -
You and I, I with you, you
holding my hand.**



VI

**When I see the unseen
in a twisted longing
death-circle fantasy,
irresistible hope,
and drive to make that hope happen
even though
I am not a citizen of that land,
not meant to come forward
and shine with those deeds,
then I fail and live for an
illusionary future, creating a
hellish now, ripe with lack
and disappointment.**

**Bend on your knees, bow
to the one-name of God,
feel the slap of sobriety,
the consequences of depending
on your own wit and power
which is like a gnat trying to cross through
a tornado or a choir that sings without
glorifying.**

**I am learning that being conceived
and being re-conceived
is the cure for fear, the fire
that watches a greater fire,
burning enough,
releasing enough
to rejoice and just burn, a light, a warmth
transient, but elementally,
in this way, everlasting.**



VII

**It is hard to hold purpose
when purpose no longer holds you
when the single curtain seals the window
blocking the sun and sky,
making you blind so you only touch corners
and never a door.**

**All things lost their ownership, just wandered
aimless, squandering energy like tossed pebbles,
no pattern, sinking.
Governance failed, was only an imagined
corridor leading to a chaotic marketplace
that doled out meals, lacking nutrients and staying power.**

**Each shape to take and hold and shift from each day
was hard labour, exhausting to perform,
pretending hope existed when hope had abandoned.
I was not afraid because my fears
were pushed hard into my face,
swelling my eyes so they could only see behind.
Death won out over the light, won obedience -
the middle and opposite, smelling.
Death smells bad
smells like an inevitable succumbing
to rot, betrayal, rendering
endurance useless
and even the holiest of faiths debunked.**

There is a string before me,
thin and golden and unbreakable.
There is something I see I never saw.
I have collided with the consuming tyranny death,
felt it swerve and twist through
every vein, enter, break my heart,
break the truths I had before.

The string dangles,
dripping down from
my inadequate cries
and a mangled prayer,
comes shining a faint intermittent glow.
It is small and so am I, minute,
hardly there, but there.



VIII

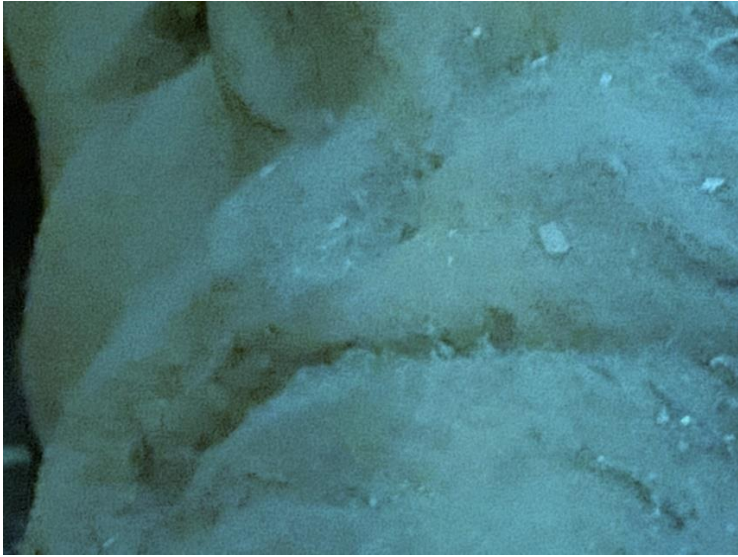
If I talk again,
I will keep my end-mind twisted
so it cannot speak or formulate
a plan.

I have no constitution for plans
or wherewithal for achieving
human-made provisions.

If I talk again,
silence me into prayer,
conversing only with the angelic order,
strengthened by devotion and the power
of obedience.

If I try to be a player,
remind me of my meek capacity,
sting me with regret and slap me
into a state of surrender.

If I try to enter a world not my own,
laugh at me, call me out
and put me in my designated low-chair place,
a dreamer, advancing
no further.



IX

Falling away like before
launching water at the moon
then releasing it, scattering it
onto a lifeless surface.

Songs and singing are murderous,
selling the false business of a buffet
inspiration, and poetry, like a sober
prayer or pleading, blossoms in a place
where no one comes or looks or even cares.

Things that once stretched
with divine determination towards health,
now fall backwards into addiction and defeat.
Chaos always hovering at the entrance door,
violence a few footsteps away.

Idealism once trapped in my mind has sieved through
incrementally and now in my mind, a faint flow
of tainted possibility, mostly consumed by despair, mostly
non-existence, more hesitant than youthful,
more resigned than risking.

The days drive on the same,
and how I wish I was in a state
of conspiratorial superiority
or in a social bliss of nonchalance.
How I wish I could be like I used to be,
believing despite the odds,
calling for help and receiving it.

**What is this weakness,
this futureless waste of now,
pressing on all my joints,
an aching misery perpetual?**

**What are these days
when I can find no hope
to master this tortuous doom?
I am removed. A thin slice everywhere
between me and reality. Only sorrow brings
me near enough to touch, only happiness lives
inside my dreams or in my memories,
stripping the peel from the fruit,
dropping it to rot in the mud-marsh with the rest
of my wearied hold on merciful possibilities.**



X

**I don't see
the far-reaching joy
to build a future on,
just disappointment, false-starts,
isolation and how-can-that-be?
I don't see
but I know the builders take their time
to make sure what needs to be aligned
is aligned, that broken hearts can
become hardened hearts
and hope is dangerous for those who are desperate,
perishing at the foot of the mirage.**

**But there is a noble prophesy to follow,
to stand by and wait for.
There is true love, love that alters bitter grief
that wraps your love in its healing balm until
it blooms and your dry throat is
finally soothed, your wounds are rewarded,
transformed into strengths exposed,
safe on the marriage altar.**



XI

**Time does not help
to lessen the sharp scream
of amputation, or to help gain
a way to cope, maimed as I am,
lacking resilience.**

**Prayer does not answer
any questions or bury the emptiness
outside of my body, allowing
room that can be filled, even with only
a faint groaning microscopic creation.**

**Love that sits beside me,
day-after-day, holding my hand,
stays with me - miraculous devotion -
helps while it is there,
but does not stop the welling-up of sorrow,
that will not ease or be appeased
in solitude or by distraction.**

**Faith is a word that sparks
but cannot ignite. I sink down again
on my broken knees. I cannot rise.
I try and I try, but
I cannot overcome.**



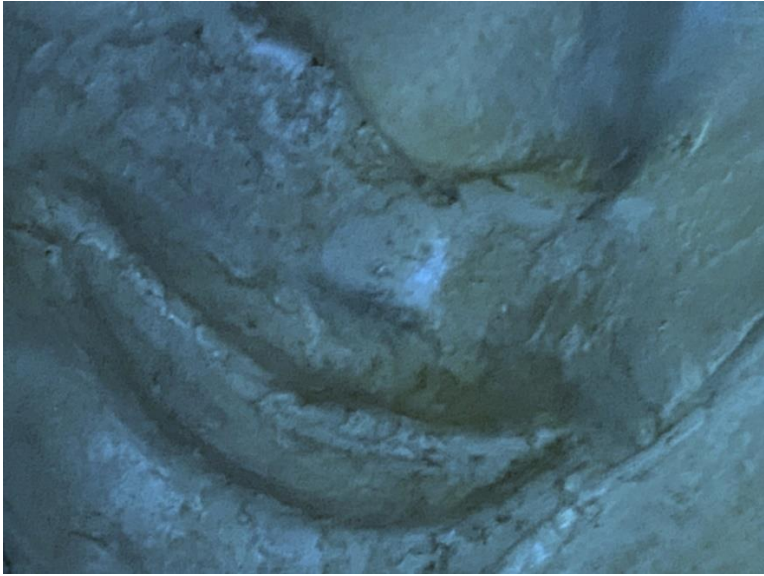
XII

God do you love me?
Everyday I fall short
of receiving your love,
blocked and stalled and wading
knee-deep in sewage mud.
I cannot take a step. I cannot
hear you anymore or
feel your mercy move the spoke
a mile, an inch, a fraction of
a way out of this criminal sleep,
arrested every day.

I try to take a breath,
try to step but I cannot
move. Please God, show yourself
to me again. I am aching all over,
joints on fire, mind - ablaze in jet-fuel burning
heat, tired all the time, cut off
from your glory.
Cut off no matter my prayers
and my pleas.

Please God, take my hand,
recognize me as one of your own.

I long for you.
I need your grace
to lift me, now,
trumpets calling,
advancing, only with you,
loved, permitted.



XIII

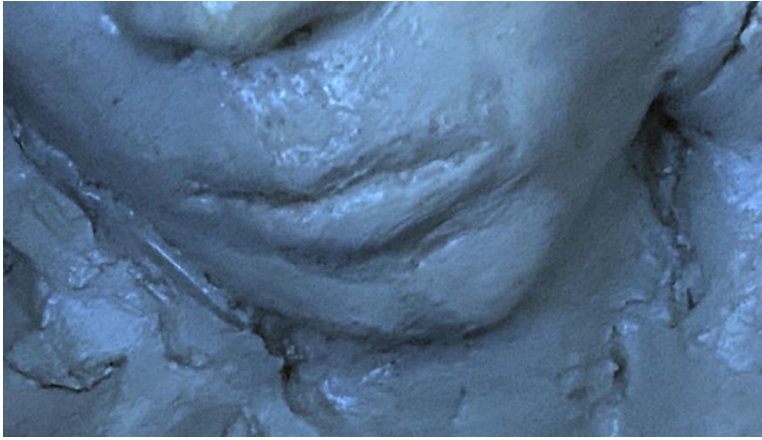
**A hive blasted
by poison.
A blood-letting
in crave of a cure.
Two close-together cliffs
jumped across, looking
closer than they are.**

**In the whirlspin of a fall -
arms broken, extremities blasted,
crying out for someone from the angelic order
to swoop down and placate the pain.
But no angel-being arrives and what is broken
remains broken, deformed and starting to heal
that way, into a permanent liability.**

**Even then, when stuck thigh-deep in forsaken ground,
God is close, washing our cracked bodies,
cradling our defeat, saying**

**My Love doesn't always answer with a clean slate
or a put-on spell so all hurt is forgotten,
not a trace left traceable. Sometimes
My Love just sits with you, beside the pain,
lets you know I am here,
here, in the empathetic love of others,
here, in your own resilience each morning to carry on,
here, in your determination to stay close to me**

**as you anguish and ache,
unable to walk or fully wake,
seeing that nothing turned out
the way you saw it
in your times of highest harmonic resonance
the way
you were sure it would.**



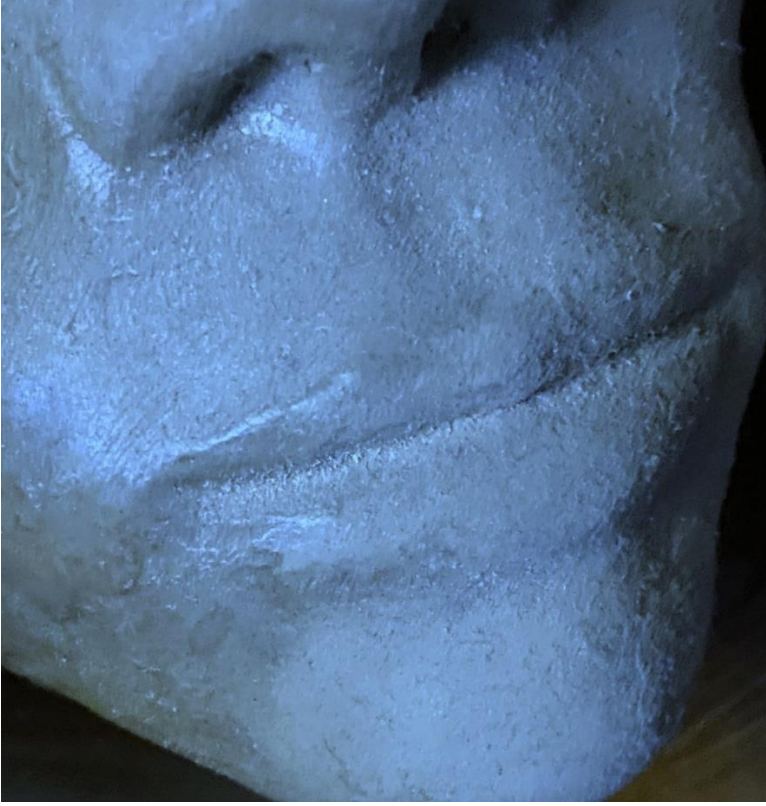
XIV

**Will you speak to me again
like before death cracked my windpipe
like when death still hovered thick in the air
but you were there surrounding everything
with the weight of your love?**

**Will you answer me again
cooling my shape, giving back force
to my petering-out flame
so I can grow again, still tied to your mercy
and the joy of having dreams?**

**Will I know you again
despite my mutations
and the iron that rotates sickeningly
in my core, using my energy
for lesser aspirations?**

**Will you love me again
and I will know that love
igniting its current through
my every predicament,
bonding me unbreakable
to your side, inside
your privileged embrace?**



XV

**First thing,
you are here.
I wake up and we are talking,
merged in a matter-of-fact
conversation. My need, my only way
to take a step in the morning.
More and more, without you, I can't
exist or comprehend a thing.
Then why this endless desert, the
hard bloated boils erupting
every time I move?
How is it, you are here, but there
is so much pain still, so much struggle
just to keep alive?
How do I feel so close to you and need
you more than I ever have, have you
more than I ever have, with such
drought and trembling-burns burning everyday,
throughout the days, echoing - no medicine, no food,
just you and I in this high heat,
where I am barely capable,
but somehow capable.**



XVI

**Then the bitter defeat
was burning like a sin
committed, recognized
and unforgiveable.**

**Then on a hill, heavy with
weighted down legs and
an injury there, debilitating but
unexplained, the challenge came
to walk.**

**Walk slowly at first, walk like
I can walk even though the reins
are dropped and I have lost my mother,
lost life's victory over death and the comfort
of an unbreakable love broken,
altered, intangible now as an angel's skin
or a hope held for decades unrealized.**

**Walk with my mortal burden, stumbling without
a path, a cane or a flat plane. Twist in my ankle, twist
in my knee, swollen, bloated with a hot fever, walk.**

**Face a direction, walk, slowly,
commit and make it my own.**



XVII

**Soak the born
in their own initial conception
to remember the pure-memory-pockets,
the truth of miracles.**

**Underline everything that matters
and read it again until no small word
is skimmed over or taken for granted.**

**Open the shelter doors and let all animals
in, wild ones, broken ones, aggressive and tame.
Free with a blessing
every dream that isn't false,
and follow your deepest duty -
both desirous and undesirous divine commands.**

**Under the blanket, conspiracies are made.
They grow limbs that look like light but exclude
humility and the thumb-print of surrender.**

**The atmosphere is big,
the button-hole is small.**

**I am small when I toss
my self-determination out as wisdom
and fail at every turn.**

**Mercy comes with obedience,
obedience comes with trust, and then finally
freedom.**

**The dying are trapped in their wounds.
The living, in their success at survival,
but the gift is always
open for everyone, and changing
even without core movement.**

**I have a boat and that is all I own.
I see flowers on the shore, rooted in the sand.
I see yellow and sometimes, I see gold.**



Head bowed

**The numbing curse
of resentment comes
to capture me
in its lumpy maggot-riddled
corpse, putting on my back
a burden I am aware of
I cannot keep.**

**And even though I wash and scrub,
daily cleansing myself of its
putrid stench, it returns, living,
climbing my shoulders into my hair.
I know the only clear path is forgiveness,
no matter my so-called-righteous-heart
cawing for justice. I know I will never
find peace this way, nor mercy
unless I can give it.**

**I am the one who need forgiveness
for allowing this monstrosity to suckle on
my spirit for so long.
I thought I was past it.
I thought I truly became a citizen,
sealing my covenant.
But it is here again,
raging like before, expecting
vindication.**

**I hope it is a ghost of its first-self,
still large but flimsy, visible
but lacking all density.
I pray I can overcome its devouring song**

**and show the love to others
that I myself have been given.**

**Open here, casting off
its angry cries,
its barbarian anguish
blocking my own way forward
into saving deliverance.**

This Place

**From a place of trust
I glimpse your magnificence,
your harnessed race of complexities
in harmony, slow moving, more
powerful than a hundred suns
conjoining.**

**From a place of faith,
being wrong is just as exciting
as being right - a longing to know
you, knowing I will never know you
only know the minute aspects that flip
and twist and rewrite as my knowledge grows,
while keeping some laws fundamental.**

**From a place of love,
your love is gathering in
bright awe-inspiring displays,
terrifying in their brilliance and
in their magnitude.
Nothing is personal. Everything is individual,
overreaching galaxies into galaxies,
twin dreams.**

**From a place of exploration,
finding inspiration
where paradox consumes,
invigorates, illuminates
all places, gloriously shifting.**

Lift II

**If I stay under ice
in a house as vast as the sea,
cut off from the sun,
I will bloat up on anxiety's quickening,
gaining nothing but a heaviness uncurable
and inevitable as iron-core gravity, heating.**

**So I will lift myself up onto the sides of
the cracked ridges, gaze at the clouds overhead
and write my new name in the air.**

**Breathing is simple like God's grace is simple
and only needs to be received to be seen.
My body is a dream spinning in thirst,
banging into hard edges as it seeks
satisfaction, snatched from divinity in its
death-spread, doomed to be finite and always
hungry.**

**I love the clear riser, the way forward
when there is no way to be found.
I will be the clear riser,
rising like a bubble-balloon, escaping,
carried by the wind.**

Hubris

**Steady as logic dictates
the truth of superstitious rotation
and effect, unmask the mystic
trappings of a fated existence ritual
locked into the spinning orbs lightyears away,
locked like us to the gravity of the sun,
but no more, and if it is more,
the intricate complexities of small stirrings
would never be understood or solid enough
to set the tone for the day or for a season.
Dead art that does not evolve with knowledge
is blind art, is needed
by the desperate to feed the need
for false certainty.**

**The veil is lifted, unveiling
a more magnificent mystery, movement,
igniting the joy of undetermined, humble
exploration.**

Surrendered

**In the middle -
steady, harsh waves,
salty flavoured ocean,
stranded, treading.
Love comes smiling.
It is a ghost.
Joy comes and passes by.
Purpose comes but floats by
like a jellyfish riding the momentum.**

**In the middle, tired of treading,
no escape, just the ebb and flow, surging,
retreating waters. What lies beneath makes
no difference because nothing is above
except the burning brutal sun, cloud cover
occasionally, and only air to eat.**

**Skin cells, bloating. Eyes, unable to keep
open. In the middle
of an endless abyss, all my happy days
behind me.**

**I hold my hands in prayer position,
arms raised over my head.
I stop struggling to not go under.
I go under and let that weight, the peace
at last, take me down.**

She

**Fear is splendid
in making the body inflamed,
bloated on trepidation at the news
of many meadows burning.**

**She hurried and found a healer
inside herself, willing to go
the distance and forfeit
personal power for a greater
acquisition.
She understood the traveller and
the sit-at-homer as one in the same,
especially on a stormy day or a year of upheaval.**

**Faith is the bullseye with no point-marks gained
unless hit dead-centre, directing every focus
to only that centre.
Faith is the wave to ride to the shore,
removed from other moving sources,
like wind and arm-strokes.**

**She opened herself to fear
not denying it but seeing it
as just another entity
under the canopy, smaller
than the giving sun.**

Out

**I asked to be let out
from that unwanted accomplishment.
I asked to shed my shame, my duty
and the hard-core call of doing time.**

**It was taken down and away from me,
along with so much more.
Guilt, and worldly bondage
also fell along with security,
along with a strange, twisted pride.**

**Knuckles down, hands still folded.
In my head are ghosts of patterns dissolved
but are still haunting. Ways of being I don't have to
carry are dropped, but my empty arms are stalled
in position, humbled by uncertainty.
Set free and starting over, but not yet started,
just starting to try to etch out different
possibilities, a solid surging becoming.**

**Whiffs of passing currents,
rich aromas that entice briefly then fade.
Whiffs I cannot capture and keep,
not now, maybe never,
let out, dumbfounded,
helpless, screaming, just born.**

Star

**I think if I was a trillion-year-old
star blazing, always in deep transformation,
pulling planets into my orbit and asteroids
and the tips of angel-wings, bypassing,
touching, fearless, as bright or brighter
manoeuvring with unexpected harmony**

**then remembering would be easy - to see
the past as a sealed perfection, no matter
how apparently flawed, to see myself
as the same**

**then I would vibrate in a place where there is
no guilt, no lack, and all I do
and all I can not do would be set as
a rock on a shore -
full of dents, instructions and veins
of rich (sometimes glowing) colours inside**

**it would be enough to be that rock
or that star - one thing, whole,
changing without struggle,
combusting or eroding
without attachment, without pain.**

Slowly the builder builds

**but the miracle-maker is quick -
enormous change, dreamt-of-no-longer.
The end-result is a shock of grace
and the depths of God's power displayed,
gifted for no deserving reason but love
and the faith that the receiver
has in that love, welcoming that love.**

**Mustard seed blooming in seconds,
why look under the blankets or walk
the steady path? Matter is a wave dipping,
flowing, curvatures actualized,
only incrementally understood.
Sticky fields surrounding,
demanding interaction
as the master-builder alters creation in a blink,
with compassion stronger than a stormy sea,
stronger than death or deformity,
strongest still in the peace
of utter surrender, after cellular breakdown,
after defeat, after defiance is broken,
this love floods like a wind, gathering velocity,
gathering together proportionally all things
perfect, flawed, absolutely divine.**

Molasses-dream

**The fighting blood,
and the power
of broken bones mending.
Flip the unknowing cause of famine
and feed on faith like a summer's feast
of fruits and nuts accepted as a birthright.
Change is incremental, even the change
of death takes time to incorporate into
the nervous system, slowly inching into reality,
sometimes healing in its wake, always scarring.**

**Bedrooms are emptied, new homes are formed
with the hope of comfort and forever.
Prophecy has landed on my roof, digging under
the shingles to nest and brood.
I accept the brisk cold. I accept a soft landing.
Love never gives up
and that's the most important part of love
I have ever understood.**

Ghost

Gone, dripping
down the drain
after a cut.

Gone, the sweet flavour lingering
of maple syrup on the tongue.

Gone like democracy from a land
conquered by a tyrant.

Gone like inspiration from the crushing
overtones, undertones, all-tones
of relentless grief.

Gone like a love that was once unique
as it was necessary, stretching her grace
over my home, my family and my faith.

Gone, and I have gone with it into a blackhole spin -
dream, here, there, no commitment, no connection
to the divine or otherwise, endless spin, inertia.

Here, a film between myself and life,
watching a screen, moving, getting involved
by remembering how, feeling none of it really counts,
feeling myself only playing a worn-out part.

Here, things I knew before
become nothing I know now, vulture-feeding
off my past false understanding, landing
in a heap of wet sawdust, taking forever
to make a move so I don't make any move
and just sit, watching, not even waiting anymore.

Gone like she is gone,
unreachable, ephemeral,
somewhere else.

You were born

**with the light of a nebula
inside of you, natural
as your loving smile
tortured now by isolation
and a waning strength
that has your commitment
maimed and muted.
But underneath that light still surges,
cannot be snuffed out or ignored.**

**You are blessed with invincible charm
that takes up a room
and soothes every broken soul.
Do not let circumstances threaten your joy
or hold you in a world you don't belong in.
Breathe easy and expand, remember your
purpose and your birthright, swiftly
go deep, find the pulse everlasting, knowing yourself,
stretch your arms out, know it and believe.**

Much Much and Many

**I see what my eyes betray,
but see the rising healing corridor
shine and expand
to set right the direction of the wind
and the lack that keeps leaking
until more lack insults all hope.**

**I see this home delivered,
angels laughing in each corner
and the floors and ceilings are rivers
of abundance, crossing the barrier, dissolving barriers,
trusting that truth will abide like a child trusts
in extreme joy,
joy glittering on her teeth, at her tips, infectious.**

**I see the promise and I step over reality
to receive it. I am thankful, measured
by this open gate, and the onrush delight,
flooding, reaching everywhere, in.**

Milky Way

Rare soot
lengthening into
the vacuum stream
between stars.
Even more rarified, it lulls in
ghostly formations
merging on the horizon,
thicker where they combine,
overlapping bubbles, hotter
through the closed door.

Nested motions
with no net-motion
overall, a scribble
undulating, still frozen
in this position
of constricted movement.

Blue shifts, red shifts,
equal, loosely wrapped
transient by compression
wave of rotation
a surprising conflict,
rising instead of slowing,
no sharp edges,
rotation stays high
at the visible edge
and beyond, plunging
expectations only
collected by elimination of
violence that proceeds
the sucking hole.

**But not so much the mystery matter
floating in free space,
a momentary amplification
that has ruled out house-objects,
tiny objects
because there is no diffused dim glow
only weakling interaction
of symmetric twins
mine shafts
ultra pure
mass but no light
in the space between.**

**A dramatic effect
a thin gruel
deviant light, distorted
delicate filament clusters,
ragged dusty lanes
chopping the whole field.**

**A congestion of information,
ingesting matter, and again
the whole of the swirling stars.**

Over

**Under siege like an anthill
invaded upon by an ant eater.
Summer is tainted
with humidity and boredom,
intermingled with strong bouts
of unholy despair.**

**I hear nothing when my hands
are outstretched. I receive nothing
in the hollow of the rock I am
crushed inside of and asked
there, inside of it, to be reborn.**

**Had I yearning once? Hope? Even
prophecy?
I don't anymore. For months,
caught in a sticky web transgressing
in spite of rigorous prayers,
crying all the time for no reason
but release.**

**Time's up.
Grief has become my skin, not even attached
to external loss, but grafted to my nerves.
impossible to throw off.
It is time now to tear it off,
piece by piece, and peel away what cannot be torn,
and burn what cannot be peeled or torn.**

**I'm still here, half a soul,
but still a soul
and it is time to claim my territory,
make a story and stay with it.**

**Light without heat is paint on a canvas,
illusion, no awakening.
Heat up, remembering
I am still here
and I am supposed to be here,
here, listening for a loud-screeching
spawning scream - an ink-spot struggling
creation.**

**Sliding through the sewage tunnel gleam
(poem in seven parts)**

I

Forgotten (soon)

**Hard and cold as an ice storm
killing, hardening life
in its blanket frost.**

**The only love you keep is what
you can control. If you can't control it,
you ditch it with a kick,
with a higher-than-though mighty sneer.**

**Digger in the rocky lifeless garden,
resisting you, you claim as savage stupidity
because you claim to hold prophecy,
ancient words of a babbled dream,
zodiac tamer whipping up a storm
or a healing balm to break delusion.**

**When there is no compliance or
cheerleaders cheering,
you turn,
start character-flailing, lying, slicing into
the corners of human frailty
to etch yourself out a victory and walk away.**

**Atrophied heart inside you, a high ceiling
that will go no further, cannot expand
into compassion-for-your-enemies
overflow.**

**Dive back into the water-pool where all who
encounter you are obedient to your command, move
to the mountain where uncertainty cannot
reach you - exchanging truths in monetary form
and claim it all as blessed achievement.**

**Where was your kindness, your golden glow,
when you drove a knife into my loins
before you departed,
trying to lure me into self-loathing?
Low,
like arrogance, hubris, and lying are low,
immutable as a dead thing swinging in
the wind - movement, but no breath.**

**Farewell friend of the seventh soldier, fallen.
I need nothing here
in your palace of falsities,
closed off from humility and the equality of grace.**

**You could have left without letting me know
you never had my back, that you were always
back there, clawing with judgements,
grievances.
You could have just left without the
tongue-lashing psychological deception,
just turned away without the gutting,
flipping all those years of friendship
on their side, upside down, lying
like liars do with complete certainty,
no remorse or self-doubt,**

**amputating any devotion
I had left for you,
boiling its remains
on a rack of putrid oil and extremes.**

**Walk away, dragging this downed horse behind you,
into the thorny bramble of your defiant prejudice
into the fantasy of your less-than-holy paradigm, broken.**

II

Broken Glass

**Coward,
keeper of a false fixed star,
keeper of many truths,
knower of none.**

**Coward,
throwing glass into my garden.
Brutal, unnecessary cruelty so you can
own the platform as you leave,
nose stuck high in the air,
hands cleansed of any doubt or wrongdoing.**

**Coward,
incapable of walking through the mire
hand in hand, of not letting go and trusting love no matter
the centipedes writhing, the small gnawing things
and the larger creatures that scare. Incapable
of owning your own transgressions, or prioritizing
love above your frightened soul.**

**Coward
cussing a friendship because you quit,
cussing and lying and tossing the broken glass
from your high and mighty mountain.**

**Coward
with blood on your hands,
who must turn back as you leave,
thinking you'll say your piece,
but really just recklessly, heartlessly tossing
broken glass.**

III

Getting there

I am almost on the other side
(one day, second day)
where forgiveness collides
with terrible truth,
where pain is overcome with pity,
releasing my shield and cry
for human justice.

Quickly through the process
after the breaking of the sun,
after seeing the secrets you stand behind
to prop up your persona, after still,
your deliberate hurt was hurled, and after that,
ending it with pat-on-the-head platitudes,
even still, I forgive you.

I am almost there, I pray to be there, in spite of
your attempts to drown me in false accusations,
in spite of your attempts to undermine my autonomy.
I say, so be it, I am almost on the other side,
sensing a freedom, an inspiration
clearing the thicket of your malice,
almost healed of your viper-tongue lick,
your sticky twisted back-flip truths,
spiritual elitism of the highest order.

I am almost there, and I am feeling good,
relieved, now away from your succubus suckling,
away from your tight-grip surrealism,
distorting clean lines, bright glowing rivers
and intimacy.

**I forgive you. I forgive your incapacity,
your hard didactic tongue.
I forgive your small circle land, retreat
from a faith that holds faith no matter the outcome,
that part is easy.**

**But your foul lying insults
as you turned away, are harder to bear.
I will get there,
I will not carry you with me -
not your soiled diaper dripping, not a single
attempt to condemn me,
or the labels you blew towards me,
blew, night wind cursing, blew
into nothingness.**

IV

A Dead Man's Pockets

Petty, trust snapped
a killed bug on a windshield.
Into the grave, folding, four-fold,
soot in the ears, on your eyelids,
and your poison almost run through.

You lost me long ago, your spell thinned out,
held no power or impact long ago but I thought
love existed between us still, thought
respect existed between us,
that we were more than a bowing down
to your sure-fire claims.

On my side it did.

I cared for you, wanted your dreams
to glow and be more than you ever imagined,
when all you wanted from me was
obedience to your cause.

As long as I kept my place,
just below your shoulder blades,
we would be fine.

Why can't you love?

Why the subterfuge madness
parading around as absolutism?
Why couldn't you acknowledge
my side, apologize for your
terrible accusations, bend a little,

**suck in your puffed-up ego a little,
make room for someone other
than you, your way,
your branding rod?**

**There are more birds in the sky
than there has ever been,
more spark in my fountain than
I have felt for awhile.**

**Clarity is shameless,
a stream that rides, collides
with the rusty metal haul,
goes around it until it becomes one
with the waterfall, a cleansing continuum.**

V

Touch

**The first touch was bitter,
tantamount to an attack, deception
from a vantage point
of spiritual superiority.**

**The second touch
was touching a tomb, still full of stench
though the flesh had rotted long ago -
just dry bones, barely
a full form.**

**The third touch
angered, like when a snake
snatches a fledgling, angry
at the innate brutality all around.**

**The fourth touch
was perfect, a release
from the swing-seat of darkness,
a blessed gift that came
at the first touch -
consciously cruel, compliant
to the sway of a lesser self.**

VI

Small Moon

A small moon melted
fleshed out a sure-footed sacrifice
but changed directions, too quickly
into the direction of a red star.
Then her heart was burned, crispy
and crumbling, no more a perfect circle,
drooping on one side, gravity became queen
of her false crescendo song.

Hiding her deformity in the dark red burn,
hoping no one could see her misshapened side,
which she tended to only in hidden rooms,
chanting for a cure, bandaging her bloodied side
to try and form again that perfect circle.

A small moon strained to keep her crust,
could not resist flinging curses from her
cavity craters as she went out, could not accept
her time had come, that in the end she never had
a compact core or a solid truth she could rely on.

VII

Ribbon

**It is ok to still love you
though our personal love has been
caught by the fishing net,
drowned in the struggle.**

**It is ok to want you to be ok
and even thriving on a splendid mount,
trailing through the forest.**

**Though your axe came down
in a forced entanglement of muscle
and sinew, although you have failed me
and hurled enmity into my spine,
in a sharp take-me-down twist
that wanted to leave me maimed,
it is ok.**

**I am ok and I still love you,
not for what we were but
for who you are, now,
a person trying to
seize for yourself a homeland,
believing you are doing the right thing,
believing your betrayal was a necessary closure.**

**Closed now and I am ok
and I still love you
over here where we will never meet
in this life or any life again.**

A Love Like No Other

**Your steady love has saved me,
one more dark wave rising and you
hold my hand, staying the course,
sharing with me your glowing inspiration,
giving me space to expose
my gruesome wounds within.
You do not flinch, or distract, but give me room
to writhe and cry out and then you look at me,
love in your eyes like God at my table,
offering water, acceptance,
and with that acceptance, untellable mercy.**

**Every night you read to me to keep me afloat,
to cup me in the flow of your voice
reminding me why we are here.
I think you will leave me, here
to implode in this over-a-year pit
of me climbing up to the edges, falling back in,
collapsing on bedrock, but you never do.
You stay and you are steady
and you are a miracle, patient, never
cursing your fate, never letting me go.**

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Heart and Mind; Our Poetry Archive; Winamop**

About the Author



Allison Grayhurst has been nominated six times for “Best of the Net” for her poems in 2024/2018/2017/2015.

She has over 1,400 poems published in more than 540 international journals and anthologies in Canada, United States, England, India, Ireland, China, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Bangladesh, Romania, Turkey, Austria, Zambia, Korea, New Zealand, Nepal, Kosovo, Colombia and Australia.

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

In 2025, her work was translated into Italian and published in "International Web Post." Eleven poems were translated into Portuguese and published on FaceBook.

In 2024, her work was translated into Italian and published in "Italia News Media – Alessandria Today", in "Saturno Magazine" and in "Il Vischio e la Rosa" anthology, into Albanian in "Orfeu.AL" in "Gazeta Destinacioni", and in "Ciceroni", and also into Korean in "Jeju The Pen Literature".

In 2023, her work was translated in Korean and published in "Jnuri Magazine".

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

She has been interviewed eleven times in print, as well as a TV interview, with translations of her interviews in Italian and Albanian, published in Italy, England and Kosovo.

Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995.

Since then, she has published twenty-one other books of poetry and twelve 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.

Also, 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).

Her book *Tadpoles Find the Sun* was published in 2020 by Cyberwit.

More recently, her book *Running, lightwave riding* was published by Cyberwit 2023.

**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 entitled *River – Songs from the poetry of
Allison Grayhurst*, released 2017.**

**Allison Grayhurst is an ethical 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; Ann Arbor Review; 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.

Contact the author:

allisongrayhurst@rogers.com

allisongrayhurst@gmail.com

www.allisongrayhurst.com



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**

“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
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ISBN-13: 978-1478208167**

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Publishing; ASIN: B00CHBYD1W; ISBN-10: 1478220295;
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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

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ISBN-13: 978-8182539877**

**Tadpoles Find the Sun, 2020, Cyberwit; ISBN-10: 9390202558;
ISBN-13: 978-9390202553**

**Trial and Witness, selected poems, 2016, Creative Talents
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Allison Grayhurst has been nominated for "Best of the Net" six times. She has over 1,400 poems published in over 530 international journals, including translations of her work. She has 25 published books of poetry and 6 chapbooks. She is an ethical vegan and lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com

