

JUMANA AND PERFECT LOVE



TWO POETIC
PROSE PIECES

ALLISON
GRAYHURST

*Jumana
and
Perfect Love -
two poetic prose pieces*

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Jumana and Perfect Love – two poetic prose pieces
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Jumana

Part 1

Those crazy days waking up to suicides and promises of camping trips. I needed to feel some warmth in all those corners of metal and skin, but I was not ready. So I waited. Crouching against the morning's first light, I waited.

Great surges of compassion always left me feeling inadequate, that's why I avoided them. I could never really distinguish the difference between love and interference. So I waited, looking for words, left with nothing but the wait.

For a long time now my life has burned under the rule of imagination. I crumbled in that harsh reality, unable to bear its demand. Imagination! I cried - Where am I to follow you? Over the hills, burying my face in a bundle of daffodils? No, I could not. So I leaned backward to balance the weight of the shadow. I knew imagination was not strong enough to feel the ecstasy of love's touch. The pierce of blindness lifted (so many times). Again, it was the inadequacy that remained with me every waking hour.

Then one day, came a wonderful thing. Love. At first there was such a rarity in its touch. But after a while I understood it had always been there, it just needed a focus to make itself apparent. At first, I didn't believe, so I tried for a weapon in hope of seeing a sharpness behind its hypnotic glare. But nothing came. Only silence, and a rhythm, resting far beneath.

So I hid, trying to conceal the wars that were bottled up and contained deep within. Then just like that, amidst my confusion, love called to me

... It's not what you have, but how you receive it! And I saw.

There, my live was (rich in the deepest of senses) and still I stood with turned eyes. I pushed everything aside to be but one thing, to be confusion. But when he came into my life, the dull hysteria simply vanished. I relaxed. There was no more ugliness hovering over my eyes, slowly peeling them blind. I felt a crackle of horror, then it was gone. The tremble ceased. In that moment with full force, came freedom.

Like a slap on the ocean's ground, it came, rippling a great tide. The twisted face of misery lost its value. It was a miracle . . . to actually be plagued by nothing. There was no struggle, only sight. Only love. The seams of existence cracked, and along with them, the skeleton's life I held and named from vast experience. I was alone, without potential, without hesitation. The panic of the heart, the scream of inner deficiency, all of that, past.

How can I explain? It was the last solution. There was nothing else. It was the breakdown. So I said my testimony: How I attempted for life with a series of convulsing shocks. How I sought stimulation more than anything else. I admitted it all. It was then I knew - insanity would never set me on fire, no matter how hot it burnt. It just went on burning, stuck between the lips, waiting.

I suppose I have always been the lucky one. My strength never lay in endurance, but in change. Yes, I have been lucky.

I scrambled to the surface, touching the fine exterior. He brought me that, the touch. I let a tear escape. There was no whimper, only that solitary tear. It was the last solution. It was the breakdown.

He sang. Sensing me inside my most secret attempt to care, he sang. Over and over, singing. Leaving only a soft lullaby, there, tenderly to guide my way.

Part 2

All my life I have known, anything I ever touched I would have to desert. Now the moon, nothing but a fluff of glimmering haze, teases me. Though the stars are hidden behind clouds, I know the sky has watchers. Don't they know? An artist never seeks to love or be loved, an artist only seeks to *fall* in love.

They always told me to be careful of the small things that enter if the mind is allowed its own movement. But it has never been that way with me. It was always God that snuck upon me when I wanted to be frivolous, or in the very least, personal. Now there is only pain throttling inside my mind: The fire of the solitary pulse. Immortality is just a stain, and the belief in it, just vanity. Humble me. Humble me enough so I can learn.

Will I stand forever; without fear, just the wind making sparks where it shouldn't? Now there is only space. I am thrown to nothing with nothing in hand. I am infested with the hollow. How wickedly it scratches further in. All the time, further in. And this is the paradox: As I widen, the possibilities of who I might be, narrow.

I never cared much for all the things the world is made of. I am bigger than this, was my shout - I am bigger, and I refuse to participate. They forced me to feel all these things then told me to write them down. As if, only then, I have really felt them. My validity to this existence? My blackboard?

The sky belches forth its loudest cry, screaming in its torment the Ache. Even the expression of intensity must change. Even intensity can get boring - like an indulgence.

I am called out to face the paradox: I am not a writer. I am not a lover. I am not a kind one. I am none of those things people are. Each day I retreat further away from the world because I do not like the things it brings. That is not hard, but to have none of the treasures of solitude? That is hard. I have exhausted myself into the abyss. I have no surplus and no special thing to call my own. It sounds ridiculous, but I guess I've always know it would come down to this - desertion.

But now, as I touch it, even the experience of pain is snatched from me. All I have ever touched has grown tough and haunted. What

will they do when they find out? Will they kill? Will they . . . laugh? A lifetime seems to pass by in one single day.

Why could I never rest? Why the inner explosion each day? I wonder, is this the great difference between monks and artists? Monks hand over their lives to God, it is surrender. But with artists . . . God steals their lives away from them.

Part 3

This is my amazement. The cold walker licking the earth, spitting salvia and squandering God for one breath of pleasure. This is my amazement. The one who walks, bag in hand, smile on face, happiness on the tongue. This is my amazement. Those two out there, holding hands, talking in moderation and quiet tones. I see them wrinkled. I see them profound, at peace, and rocking. Sleep will overcome them. Sleep will prepare their death. Death will not be a violation on their lives. This is my amazement. Those who wipe catastrophe away with tears and eventual overcoming. I abandon you.

To breathe in. To breathe out. This is my addiction. I may squint but I will never perish. Is this a place where none can follow? Is this reality? Reality is isolating. God, what hangs furiously? What hangs triumphantly? I have seen him. I have touched the arrow. It makes me long. It makes me suffer. How can I leave things equal? How can I hold this love and not be made small? Will this love reduce me? Will it make me an amazement?

I am the dropping that warms the bird's wings into flight. So must I admit the criminal? Weigh me down. Nourish me. My soul is pressed against an illusion. My soul has no patience for these things. The world is afflicted and I don't care. Weigh me down. My soul has fallen in love.

They built a bridge, a gateway. Love, the great revealer. But now I cry out my claim: Loneliness, I can bear. Love, I cannot.

I am listless. The pressure sticks. The pressure of prophecy. Who will bleed their name on the sidewalk? Who is it that calls me into this love? Can't I save the world and despise it at once? Can't I give them a new truth even if I am a virgin to the old? Why do I pass this gate? I detest the union of blood against blood. The flesh sticks. The flesh hangs on. I have seen. I have tasted humiliation. I have tasted, fleeing full force into the darkness, where others feared but I knew only safety. Tell me, who cannot receive? Am I one of those?

My caution always took the form of risk. I knew I was strong enough for any collapse, but success would leave me shattered.

Anything prolonged bores me. Why make me this arrow? This is my amazement.

So much has been sacrificed for certainty. The need for a constant fierce movement has denied me so much of ordinary life. Flare not mystery - that is my salvation. My jaw cracks through my flesh and names me wild. My soul has fallen in love.

They made me a disciple of the rock. Now they bring me the wave. Now they bring the bridge into the outside world. Will I be filled with love just to know its torment?

It is only brief. Like those, I will walk past, build my mountain, and then join its ground. Time outlives love. I have watched them in heavy labour. I have seen the course.

No, your bridge is a faraway thing. I abandon.

Part 4

What a difficult thing to gain back perspective. This is what I have come to discover: In the end even the most trusted of companions will fail you. Reality is isolating.

I finally saw, my greatest fear was I wouldn't get slaughtered. My greatest fear was that he would actually love me back. I never did have much tolerance for this thing called 'joy'.

But what calls me out? I know any true solitary person is never pathetic. Have I reached my threshold? Something passes over: Strokes of unexplainable depth; strokes of wonderment.

Most of my life I have spent in preparation of love. My whole life has been nothing more than the re-assurance of my internal life. Every little thing out there was just the support-cast of my condition. I made this god with my every movement. This god, relied on me for its existence.

My soul is lodged in discharge. My soul is radical, intolerant of worship, intolerant of love. Does deception live within the attitude of indifference? Is everything done in desperation, just the remnants of a lie? Does the door swing, swing, then let loose?

My catalyst has always been force. But now they tell me - To burn is not enough. They tell me - Experience gives compassion. They tell me there is choice. They tell me - Your sensitivity is your strength. I tell them - But it's killing me... They do not know. They do not understand.

Part 5

If say, the cold war of uncertainty could pass me now... How can happiness be accompanied by such danger? I know the deathly feel of his kindness. I know the power of joy. I know of requital.

Lovers can rise above their separate worth, so gently, lovers in love. I cry to be let loose. I feel like a child pushed into a mood of weakness. The undercurrent. What has suffered? What has broken its paralysis?

Behind the sun lies the moon's cool shadow just waiting to be born. But here, in bright daylight, I blink.

I am witch, not a prophet. A coiler, not a flyer. I want to wriggle in the undercurrent with warmth and delight. I want to fall into the second depth of water. I am not a novice. I have gained the rite of passage. I pant for the undercurrent. I want to move my hand through the flame, to cup it, to say - I have touched without possession. I have touched fire, and I smile, unscorched. I want to tell them.

This is not grey wisdom, this is the ape revised. The ape worshipped for its own power of evolution. The ape stands apart from the human; it is its own miracle. It is an urging, a scraping into the second depth where life is beautiful, where there is rescue and paradox means completion, where the impossible is natural.

My mouth is a bread crumb offering the last of my riches. What is the price? Paying is no longer the question. Paying has tripped and fallen on the gravedigger. Paying is abolished. Now the wind flows between us. No ladder. No sacrifice. Now God and I laugh freely.

I say love is the ultimate danger, the only safety. I say love is what is on the fringe of a scream. Anything unbroken, and yet, still falling. That is love. Love is what rests in the undercurrent. Love is the virtue that stretches itself . . .

Part 6

I have already heard the news. But what is this? The pluck? I know what I seek. I am thick and tearful, but I will last. And he will see me shine someday. He does not know, but I like the sun. I like the afternoon with nobody around. And even as the seasons move from one thing to another, time will vanish. And seeing the leaves fall, the snow drift, the birds sing, we will not be able to call it 'God'. It will be a period when people take on a new approach. Never again powdered. Never again snapped. Say, whirlwind. Say, love.

The night outside twitters grey and used. But I have asked for freshness. I smell him everywhere. Stirred and spontaneous, we will be again someday. But where is he now? Locked in some cubicle he calls 'dark hole'? An artist's definition: to live this life in service. Just to have him say - I know.

I have touched my existence through his tongue. He had my whitest offer, my prayer (no matter how subtle) he contained it all.

I do not want to recover from him. But my instinct is to exile and it is hard. He does not know, but I have friction pumping into my pores.

Today I wrote him a letter and it went like this...

Dear love, you were my greatest maturity. You tormented me from behind. You were my remembering. I bow to your wind - o my dart!

Part 7

From the very first sight of him, I made him my friend. All my life I have tried to live by more than survival. These were the motions of insanity.

Tuck me in the undercurrent where life is scarcely visible.

They thrust us into a corner. Into the sullen mystery, and brought us presents too: a warm slice of death; a toy for safe keeping in our tougher hours of pain. What are we to do? We have no discipline, only hunger.

Equality was pressing hard into the places I left open. I said - let me fall into you. I said - you trample on forsaken ground and that is why I love you. As soft as a broken limb.

And I saw him like a hard knot resting in my throat. And I wanted to yell out. And I wanted to hold him close. But once (only once) and it's gone forever. Against the movement. Against the cry. Isn't love always the same love?

There was not much to forgive, just to turn on the lights. He did not run away. I know, he just ran.

Part 8

No one can touch as I coil away, secretly pleading for him to follow. No one can make amendments. Smile or curse, I smoulder alone. Solitude never lacks company, only commitment.

Darkness sliced the worst of possibilities. But now, let me move my strength to this parable: What are the possibilities? Because he has failed me, has the whole thing been pointless? I commend his honesty, not his fear.

I said - Fine. It is because I understood. But maybe that was the betrayal - Fine, I understand.

My hands! Soon I will crush my skull between them crying out - Dedication! When I was in my room he told me - Swim, do not squirm. Do not squirm, bite down. But the force inside the squirm... didn't he know?

At seven o'clock tomorrow morning we'll go looking for our tribe. I can picture it now, arm and arm, waiting for the street lights to go off, waiting for our god to come back home.

These are my possibilities - reject of collapse. Every wisp of revolt has passed under my skin, and I multiplied. It was the striving, that was my psychology. Didn't he know? I strove and nothing more. I have tasted love. I have tasted betrayal; walking down lone dark streets, praying to my god to make it home. Is this what I deserve, all wrapped up in fire and cloth, beating my head against my hands? Is this what I deserve, pounding on hardened walls, softly?

Part 9

I long hid in the ocean's core chanting for people to pass. I was free to dominate. I was free to escape. I knew my condition. I hid, I plotted. I killed my loneliness. I served my brightest star. My personal sun. In my cave, I was capable of ambition.

Then they called out to me - Marriage. I heard the echo of belief. In my darkness prowled an intruder. I longed to rouse his temper, to find, to destroy, him. But he had patience. He whispered. So I consented and asked for only one thing, a quick death. I cried - I am not a monk, I am a human being. I made the wind rise. I pierced my own wound.

But my sun did not know how to die. Once my sun, now my enemy. It was godlike. It was innocent. It must be overthrown. But how? When he has walked away? Why give me the vision then demand me to desert it?

They showed me a ghost. My lover was a phantom and still they said - Follow him. How was I to revolt, lay down my solitary flag for a phantom? Was I to defend a kingdom that vanished the moment it was touched? They asked me to invade. They asked me - one who is weary, one who has never tasted soil. So I defeated my sun and was rewarded with dust. Not even my sun's own ashes, just the dirt of another world - that was my prize. They handed me sand and said - Now build. Now construct.

My sun would not forgive. It sentenced me a traitor. Such bright things do know forgiveness. To it, every moment is immortal. It does not pass, but remains. My sun lives outside of forgiveness. It banished me. It must be overthrown.

Again, I was deceived into the taking up of arms. Again, I was made a ploy, a heretic for a cause I only glimpsed and never chose. It struck me down.

Never again will I stand tiptoe on the face of the earth and dream of my strength. I am such a tiny thing, struck, stuck.

In the name of this riddle, exhausted, I decline. Now show me: What are my instructions?

“To live without him. And still, even harder,
to love without him.

Part 10

He left me a monument, something I promise to carry, no matter where the journey leads. I spent my life pivoting on God - that has been my only relationship. Maybe in knowing him, I found a cause. Maybe, I am blessed.

I walk in silence. Freedom has only shown me its face when I yielded. Healing happens in layers. No more relapses. No more jagged movements. Retrograding is for the stars, not for the soul.

I made my spirit a swamp. I encroached, I devoured. Then they came, found me with my delicacies and made me an outcast. It was the only way.

I long lived on the doorstep, sucking in what wasn't mine. I was induced by the smell of my prey. I loved its illness. I became pregnant with its sick flavour. But now, my soul relies on something different. Now my soul is devoted.

There is nothing that threatens me now. My solitude is not a threat. To know him still stings, but just like that, in layers, it will ripen into something yet unnamed. Have I been given my last chance? Still I lay, wondering.

Two massive waves colliding, that was what I knew. Then love passed my way, telling me of fantastic things. Telling me - Unless you believe in magic, your life will be empty of it. Telling me of a place where I belong, where the rigid eye does not accuse and nothing resigns itself to being foul and scabby, and yet, is foul and scabby. A place where pity has vanished.

All things must be complete when they unite. People must not tempt with the lukewarm, it is only unsatisfying. To touch everything with only half ourselves, that is the human destruction. That is what is subtle and disastrous. We always tempt with the half-made. We are not willing to make room for 'the full'. It is the doctrine of pleasure, the doctrine of war.

I know of capacity. I now know of potential. I hear the chants of my tribe. For a long time we have been separated. We ramble only because we have lost our language. Centuries have made us foreign. But we will be delivered. The hunger will deliver. And when it does, we will be delivered from it, never to hunger again.

There is inability in being born just an artist. Will they call me outgrown? Will they crack me and name me inaudible? In the end, I wonder.

How strange it is to be a soul on this earth. How strange it is to finally know: After all the shaking of bars, I was never captured. How strange it is to know, and then to lose, love.

Part 11

The answer, I wanted to say. But I grew numb mute in this understanding. And I fell. I fell to my knees in ceaseless wonder. I fell in love.

This news is all I have.

He must have been an angel, an angel who could avoid the storm, who could dodge raindrops. But now his mission has passed. There, look out on the street, it is him walking, running away. Say, love. Say, remarkable!

I was never converted. I was only stretched.

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JUMANA

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JOCELYN KAIN

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Reviews below of Allison Grayhurst's chapbook "Jumana" written under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain, were published in the "The Plowman – A Journal of International Poetry" 1989:

"After reading Jocelyn Kain's *Before The Dawn*, I was so impressed by her unique talent that my expectations were high when *Jumana* came along. It is difficult to describe *Jumana*. Sometimes it is reminiscent of a long soliloquy, and at other times, the impression is that Kain has used patches of her finest poetic lines and strung them together in order to create prose, then at other times, *Jumana* has the flavour of a personal memoir. There are times when her personal obsessions are laid bare before our prying eyes, and Kain titillates and seduces us. There are often times when this work creeps fairly close to the borders of sanity and insanity. Clearly, her voice is strong and passionate. She often grabs hold and confesses. Kain's poetry is among the finest I have read, her being a master of imagery," poet *Bernadette Dyer*.

"The images in *Jumana*, this excellent book of story-prose are intense and provocative. They are often disturbing, but only because some of us may find we are able to position ourselves in Kain's experience and reality. Which is, in fact, the goal and purpose of good writing. There is little doubt that these ten segments are autobiographical and with startling insight, Kain shares the depth of her vision along a journey of self-exploration. Her words are catharsis for the lonely, the sad, the uncertain, anyone, everyone. Only one who has endured great pain, bordering perhaps on the brink of madness, and emerged triumphant, can articulate such intensity while exploring the inner paths of heart and soul, too often veiled from public view. Definitely well worth a read," poet *Melody-Ann McCarthy-Smith*.

Perfect Love

Section One

Part 1

What gulfs between the world and the silent aspiration? What gulfs between the night and the vision? What gulfs between the tempest and the quiet utterings of failure?

There was a time discarded. Do you remember the time ignored? Where life became the worst of tasks ahead, and I could not speak? I could not hear, not of awe, not of love? Any closeness was like death coming over. Do you remember the last whisper? I remember the rage that never understood. The rage, because it never understood. Has no one the charge, the immaculate spurring onward? Has no one sight without laziness? Full sight, leaving no choice.

Do you remember the desperate condition of love's fierce pull? Do you remember the sad disgust? Do you remember the hopeless terror? Do you remember, I hated them?

What safety in the most thought-about dream. What safety to wander, raged, in the spark. My tongue became a laughing thing because it knew of imagination.

I do not live in fear. No, not in the Great Plan, not in the overworked bleeding heart. To follow the true desire I have relinquished all other desires and have seen what still lingers. What still lingers? A cold touch of pen to paper that doesn't know when its next move will be. And him. A love so observed but never known. Two things I dwell within, keeping one burning and the other flowing.

I am compelled to be still and not resist the stillness. It is the stillness that humbles me, the 'not knowing' that makes me dependent on God. I remember what gulfs between what moves-through and what kills. I remember the thin line of life's fulfillment. I remember the thread that weaves.

Part 2

Was the world in a place of unwilled passion? Was I a reactionary? After all the indifference of many people, could there be a likeness in this disease? I want to hear no more of human glory or human love, it has filled me and made me anguish. And then I ask, "Is this what I accept for my life?" Through all the sights of myths grown lazy, and the dramatic upbringing that has coiled and coiled around, still, I savour him.

I have seen him and it has left me a glance of infinity. I stand back to bleed my precaution. It does not meet. I do not understand. Away from the joining of him and I, my heart is not capable. How little I have saved to enter this moment. I am one who has opened but ever let a tear escape without restraint. I hide untroubled.

I almost lost the colour of his eyes. If it were not for that voice that rubbed and whispered, "Cleave! Cleave!" Where did it vanish? Where is that exuberant chant of love, where the heart knelt ceaselessly in amazement? Where the heart was so overjoyed, it disbelieved?

That a love so great could go unfinished? That a love so great would leave off like this? That the only way left to touch it, is to avoid it?

If he thinks of me as common, tomorrow will taste the burden of emptiness. Is that the scare, the emptiness? What a funny thing to feel triumphant in the face of those injuries where it all rests so unknown that even pain whistles its cry, delirious from itself. As much as I yearn and watch every sign, something has stopped being moved: I have faith in the very end.

This is where I am resurrected into the paradox. This is where I know, even in the face of death, I will glisten. Quietly, quietly and unafraid.

Part 3

I have missed him all my life. The loving hand brought down to awaken my eyes. The loving hand brought down to calm my savage longing. At one time I remember his smell and my heart rushed with joy. At one time, I loved. Such love had no relation. Even the voice settled. Even the voice curled into a trembling silence to listen and see what he might be. So few have passed my cave. So few have left their mark. Like morning and evening caught between the bright day, I may never recover. I may never think this way again.

Beneath the ecstasy that has not yet come. Beneath the awful stirrings of days past. Beneath the portion that is happy, lies the ache that never knew it was planted in a miracle.

Is my dream still blooming? Still only hibernating with stalled circulation? Still 'almost alive'? Will he let me lift my eyes to the sharp summer sun? Will he let me see what it is like to have all things visible? To have the first and last entrance out? To be revealed? I crave to run in fields. Something is shriveling and thinks it may never run again.

He brought me forth and said "Look, here is the sun. Here, stand here, it is warm. And there, out there, is your homeland." He has only whispered "Hot sun. Soft home." I walk and I tarry into a patterned loneliness. Each step the same. Each step, no further. When will he ask me to rise? And I will be mighty. I will be embraced, and it will make me mighty.

Pure is the empty hand, begging for something much more than charity. To breathe the impossible breath. Will I be awake? In spite of it all, will I be awoken? Will I survive it?

Part 4

My lips swell, he made himself effective, and now he sings in my ear, "Restoration!" In the moment of my withering, love builds.

Sleep now and be witless. Myself, disinterested but weeping, returning in and out of rapture. Lovers hold hands, and 'worth' is their only vow.

Where do I relax my poise, my strict solitary expression? In the elusive pattern of their foreign affectionate speech? Is this what is left? A river of subtle fury? Our inconsistent pregnancy?

I am losing his company and I know it signifies limitation. I was born a face. Now I live in moments of inexhaustible love and unbounded dismay. I am ashamed to meet him half way. Half-spring. Half-starlight. Half-rage. Half-joy. I am ashamed not to experience. Nothing of portion can breathe easily.

Alternating between a sunken acceptance and a jilted fury, I will argue my limitation. I will harbor, life is unequal. I have praised, waiting for amendment. Waiting unblinkingly to erect my faith. Who has taught us our hard identity? Joy has been consumed in all corners and I run my fingers across my eyes, telling them to be blind, telling them it has all been a mistake.

If am to be captured? If I am to wait? I will ask the question - Do you taste blood or only food? I will ask for the victim, for last breath I saw go asunder then out. I will ask, because I need to know.

Why was I made so frail? Why so wishful, so imagining? Why thrust me in desolation, make my heart mad? Angry of its suffering. Is this where I unfold, in the stillness that finds itself observing the rupturing storm? Is life forever unweaving then banning together in the midst of an unutterable sound? Is this where I begin to hear beyond discernment? Is this where I begin to place myself in some remote distance, able to watch myself enchanted, but still be unaffected? Where I will not call the joy a mistake because it will not be mine. Where I will not call to the pain, and call to it repeatedly, "Mercy!" Where I will say, "So what?" Where I will say, "Ah well." And never try for help again?

I'll send my love a picture. I'll send it in a frame, a picture of how I am today. And he will keep it for the days to come. He will often

**remember. I will leave nothing hidden in my gaze. I will stop asking
and I will start with this gift.**

Part 5

Can he see me wilting, gathering the last life-source of my bloom, and then nakedly, flexibly giving away? Words have dried in my mouth. Words, I am desperate to utter.

And compressed submission, and agitation, and the blowing up, blowing up then letting down, and the thirst - now mine, now unanswered, and the nameless fate, and the shadow behind every smile, and its history, and the thing that patches but never holds for long, and the eternal hemorrhaging of this one thing then of that one thing, and the one who has outlived itself, and the touching and the more touching, and the mystery that heads towards a dream. Have you ever felt yourself at the moment you've stopped seeking and headed towards a dream?

Something must outlast this emptiness, something must exchange places with it. But where is that word? The one word that will braze with the moon? The moon's cycles catch me in my awaited promise. When I frolic in its silvery light, I am invincible. I am great and sleepless. And there my angel speaks, almost telling me he will appear.

What I find, I will find. There will be no display, only an inner glimpse. Nothing will interfere. It is written, I will be free. No matter what happens or what I lose, this is no place for me.

This is the magic life and I don't have one word to elect it into my soul. Soon I will forget. I will soon start running, because I am here, without fulfillment. Those hours were alive, those hours that came and went where I conversed with my angel. Now that they stay, they have become an obstruction, a poison I must spew out and eventually deny. I am sorry for him that I cannot play. I am sorry for myself because I am still filled with the situation and I wonder, will it be this way forever? Will it always be my violation? Will it always make me limp? It doesn't matter, what matters is that I retreat, forfeiting my right.

The way I executed my love. The way I willed him away because I couldn't stand to see his face towering over telling me he hasn't forgotten me. But I feel forgotten. I feel every inch of deception showing in the glittering fire of his wings. I doubt he even

flies. The way I cannot go on. The way I can no longer watch him descend against all measure. The way I cannot hear his soft voice, and smile. The way I must live in the image - a glorious beginning and a tragic end. The way I cry. The way I have stopped crying and have become quiet. The way there is no fulfillment. In the midst of magic, there is no fulfillment. What has over-powered? What has shown its appearance? The way, I don't know.

Part 6

If I retreat into my own world, there will be an answer. Not of 'yes' or 'no', but still an answer. And occasionally it will disturb me.

Feel, feel the sea. Feel, feel of yesterday. Feel what once dangled, and now, suddenly, flares. Feel what is wished for and know there must be room.

There is no discipline. Discipline does not transform weakness, it stuns it. It is a crutch - impossible to walk without it, impossible to run with it. My first entrance into strength will be the understanding of my weakness. Act with kindness, act with intention. Feel, feel the great wind coming over. Feel the activity. Feel what renders it all possible. Lameness is the worst illusion. To see myself small, disabled, that is the enemy. That is the prevention.

God, give me practice to show my true look. Reason has no warmth. Truth alone is not enough. So I live with the eternal question mark, I live inside it. I live in my shyest secret, exposed. Am I falling under the thumb of a great philosophy - letting go of one rope to catch another? To climb, then drop. And morning will yield to evening, and so, evening to night. Where the intensity of the pain becomes proof of the intensity of the love. Where I am free and I must hold the demand of my freedom, which is - keep yourself free - and that is all.

Feel, feel the swelling before the change. Like a split in my breast, like something shocked. How do I protect myself without callousness or faked indifference? How do I love? Has it all just been the flooding over of an idiot?

When I found the space where deliberation and spontaneity have the same inner point, there in that space, I found myself capable of love. So few have passed my cave. So few have left their mark.

Part 7

Remember for an instant - The concepts of mysticism are often used as an excuse to avoid confrontation with the active aspects of truth. This is not what I want. To take chances only after they've been filtered through torment. That is the challenge, not of the compulsive thinker but of 'the solid one'.

I press my hands over the dream, and again, imprisoned, feel the whirl. And the voice stirred in me, and the voice coughed - "If anyone had sight they would know, even the Buddhas drove themselves full force into danger." The rudeness it takes for love to reap. What do you mean by such things - death? Is there no cleaner way? Where nothing remains unturned, and nothing, spoiled?

It is so hard to be soft against his brutality. To caress his soul and admit he needs to seek too. Nothing between us has been resolved, it has only been spoken. The dream, the fierce want, startles me. Sometimes I see only the breakdown, not the breakthrough. In sight of him, there is an upwelling sorrow. He is not like me, and I, not like him. I should slip away and never talk again.

But tell me to take hold of the strength gained by internal struggle, tell me it is the way to recommence, it is essential, it is integration. Tell me to fall, and I will fall, devotedly into this impaling depth.

Part 8

Slowly, it comes up. Slowly, I refuse his tenderness and look to resolve. He was my first dawning. The first love that rustled in my dark hours. In our time there was movement but no giving. There was no ground to quench the inward doubt of lover to lover.

We were hardly anything but soul to soul, but wind to rain, burning together a consecrated storm. I long to reach that place where something stands to guide between and in front as both a tireless bonding and as an insurance of mutual separation. I long for what is more than glorious. More than what divides and combines under the fine toothed-comb of analysis. Something warmer than the initial dream. Something that accomplishes.

Could it be I am asked to yield, for a second time to look upon him, to give it my all without giving up what is essential? I held it up, the magnificent up-surgings of love, but never believed in its significance, never held close what was hidden, and yet, centered. Touched fire and thought it to be empty, broke it open, and laughed. I was jealous of love, I heard the name like a haunt. It was not part of my design to relinquish my power. For what? A thought? Something invisible and dumb?

I wrote him a letter today. I testified my displeasure with him, but did not let it fall just before that. I left abruptly and said, "May I bless you?"

Still, his unfulfilled commitments congest my air. Still, he comes into my sphere when I am under the stress of surviving him. Still, he has returned after all the shoving away. He out-burns my resentment, astounds me, makes me self-discover. In pursuit of him, in quietly rising above the catastrophe and listening, in this new beginning, God advances.

I never understood how power was an agent to utilize the forces of love. Before him, I knew only of emotion or only of power. Most of the time, I was nebulous. No time left to have the passing of what once was promised but not revealed. I believe in immaturity, not in evil. No time left to not believe.

Is it possible, that there is no battle, only compassion? When all things vanish and the voice is only known, I ask myself, "What is

your highest truth?" Follow it, knowing it is good. Knowing, when under critical attack, I will be safe.

I am hanging over the palm of love. I am half in, half out, entering the deepest task. Love is anything that doesn't harm. Love is strength waving its seed, strength without intimidation, sufficient.

Section Two

Part 9

We stood somewhere between infinity and fear, merely human. We did not omit. We did not make ourselves rare, we made ourselves fascinated. We lived by more than stimulation, more than entertainment. We lived without decay.

My bitterness always had to do with God, saying “You interrupt my life and hound me down. You give me loneliness. You supply me with grief upon grief until I have lost all powers of expectation.” I raised myself high and cursed. How vacant were the days. How scarce the nights when I didn’t feel alone, my whole being uninhabited and emptied. None could come into my shell, and none tried.

Can we make it so that the deeper we reach within ourselves, that much further we will be able to extend ourselves? That the greater the solitude, the greater the intimacy?

How sad I am to relinquish my seeking. I could never fake myself fully. Now I am what I always ‘would be eventually’. Now I love.

Has he not slept long enough? Why does he yawn? Have I been created for this new existence? If not, then tear it from me quickly. If not, let me forget love and give me back confusion and the ready-made opinions to survive it.

I am ignited, climbing out of this shipwreck. I must never forget: Truth seeks truth. Truth will find itself. And on this same day, when neither of us lust after those constraining influences, it will all sink down into some permanent place. We will arrive, we will touch each other once again. And then, be still.

Part 10

From ash to regeneration. From the tragic rape to the better unfolding. From something powerful to something strong.

Last summer I was sterile. I was absorbed in ideas of what I thought I deserved to receive. Not him. Not love. Shaking my head, trying to knock the encounter out of my comfortable reality. Because each life contains its own interpretation of life. Because each life is strange.

It's as if I never felt anything before. As if, only now, there is adventure. Knowing there is no ransom, nothing left to examine. As if, only now, there is danger.

Everything that wants to return to God will always be permitted a space to offer its expression. Could it be any other way? Could there be such a thing as love denying itself? All restriction is burned. In this state 'all-things' become 'one-thing' threaded back and forth, immaculately. Fear, could I love you, have your voice in my ear - "It is all gone, tremble, you have grown too dreamy. He doesn't recognize you." Could I have it and not call you the advocate of destruction?

I will call the fear a gift that leads me to humility. And I will wonder at you with enlightened eyes, knowing you have changed me.

For each nonsensical disposition, for each symptom of the world's supported basic ethics, for each diseased philosophy, for each unblest experience, for each issue that has proceeded and proceeded but has not elevated humanity, for each habit that has left the soul insecure, there is no - "On the other hand . . ." I must run into them, cradle them with a lover's arms, and none of them will be made small. None of them will seem like hypocrisy.

First there is allowance. Then there is the forcing away and the strict command. Then there is the kiss. Truth is slow, it digests, longs for fresh blood. Contrary to current belief, truth is not something to be skimmed through and hopefully gotten. Do I want the genuine thing, or do I want the stiff word? The word I made into a corpse, the one I adorned and knelt down to as if it contained a terrible sorcery? The stumbling block?

We must remain without ease in our blood. Love without strength only becomes a perverted emotion. To relax and still be alert in the energy. To feel oddly rhythmic. To feel the tingle. To feel love, spectacular, soft and jolting - subtle, but never grey.

Part 11

Can I love without force, no slow triumph, no need for the consistent eternal link, no trying? Sooner or later I will discover that he is neither hard and dominated nor still and high. This is his mistrust - to never ride the wave, barefooted. Until he climbs out to grip my offering, until I learn to be more than a comforter or rash intruder, we will stay apart.

The impatience I feel to have him ready. Can he hear it like I do, the spittle, the wild discourse of this burden? I am near but I am still miserable. Was an old sword, an old grievance. Was him that I wanted, not God. Was so tied together that I could not see.

God says "Trust." and I am offended to hear such a thing. Appalled that I must make a noble stand, return to him and kindle that which I've lacked throughout my entire life. God says to obey the laws of love not of suffering.

Before my eyes he grows outdone. Some see him licking filth as if it were candy. Some see him as mighty madness. Some see the mystic creep upon them. They accept this and are amazed. Some do not judge. One doubt, and it will kill me. One doubt, and I have willed suicide. The voice tells me that he is fighting and great. No doubt, everything he was born to be. No doubt, my highest truth, my lasting courage.

Section Three

Part 12

Yesterday I saw a great white sun pushing on through the day. All day I watched. Sun went down. White sun lost against the white sky. And soon it collapsed into the night without a sound. Soon I felt its desire.

We don't get 'lost' in love, we discover love like something rolling. Like something out of perseverance.

What is the straight line? To walk, to wash the hands, then carry on? Down through love, down through the divided human being? In part, I am a single happening. In part, he is the loving way. Heal my knowledge, make it my reconcilable outcome. Make me worthy to hold peace. Piece tightly knitted to piece.

What sacrifice to receive the fruits of my deepest prayer. What sacrifice to finally become whole again. There is great strength without any idea as to why. There is great strength in this dark disadvantage. Sacrifice is not the point, it is only a condition that directs me to the point.

Knowing him transformed my solitude. It was my last communion. However humble I get I keep finding another straw pricking its thorns into my 'worst-of-all' situation. That very last straw I am intent upon. Even if I must awaken it. Even if it is endless. Even if there is no 'last straw.'

How can I know him, know him exact and know God all the more? Is it the one principle I won't have to prove? Is it my confidence in this terrifying inspiration? I abandon myself to him, and I am not flat. I am in the right place. I have learned to relinquish possession, relinquish detachment, relinquish control, relinquish sacrifice, relinquish the greatest fulfillment and the highest aspiration. I have learned to belong to purpose.

See love come tumbling out of that great white sky to greet me in my emptiness. Genuine mystery, genuine straight line. One dedication.

Part 13

Touching something ancient to the soul, but new to the mind. Touching the place where the personal becomes the Almighty, where things unthicken, and intensity no longer makes me a fool. After all the attacking elements of the unexpected, after all the disloyalty that cannot be dismissed, I will try. Careful, so as not to force a single thought.

I will try, but I will not pretend our union. My love of God must be greater than my love for him. Hoping the two will find a place to centre and be absorbed within one another. Hoping to make it one dedication.

He is magnetic, like a rare desire, like a wound that demands more room to be experienced. Tempered by limitations, and willing to live it all out, I hear the voice- "Life is striking" like a quiet wisdom. Like a radiance safely returning into my face. Like a perfect love.

Peering at him, I am calm. I am swelling, and he shines. He is miraculous. And I am blessed. And it may be costly. It may be a long torment. Starting back home now, I will make the fire a steady flame. I will make myself self-sufficient. Is this how I will learn to get to the centre, then pivot? It is a personal situation. It is the voice of the Almighty. I cry out, and I will be answered.

Part 14

Once I made the choice of love, I became absolute. Otherwise, I was only a relative undestined creature. In the crevice of my belly there is calm, there is surrender, without expectations, and yet, not hopeless -knowing fulfillment comes in unpredictable ways.

Awareness stimulates, it is the light that steals nothing from the dark. If I start to tolerate, I will delay life. I will make the darkness a deep transformer instead of an invader. The struggle with life is that we are constantly trying to destroy the idea of death, to destroy the very thing that makes it all possible. I will come to him only out of choice, not out of desperation. Let me never interrupt the flow with panic. It is anxiety that perverts reality. I will take my time with this love, this greatest sensibility.

Part 15

What is not? Show me what is not then cut me down and carry me away.

I saw that I only had to open my eyes to know my own awakening. Why should I care about my overzealous soul? Why should I care about this obtuse world that I cannot participate in? Why should I care about the pain? It is only pain. When an artist's work becomes stale, when a love dwindles, that is hell. But why should I care about hell?

Peering into the senseless, senseless. If I reach up, and I touch, and I find what is ruthless, and I find disease? And I find love was wrong? And I find to feel such love was to feel too much? And I find myself in the belly of midnight with no way out? Make it quick! There is only estrangement. Faith can only be learned when there is complete darkness. Make me a faithful one, and make it quick.

The sun melts down across the sky. I see the glow between the ash of clouds. I am crippled before it, entering into it. How the day relieves itself into this night. I am pressed into a tight place of wonder. I look around and am seized into this celestial magnitude. I am squeezed into oblivion, entirely exposed. There is no fear when facing something truly great. O great sky! O great love! There is no intimidation.

Part 16

In the dark stink of my childhood I caught a taste of the lasting. The grim focus of isolation led by thousands of heavy hearts sold me to a different kind of atheism: The belief in synchronicity without purpose. Laws that stand onto themselves. Laws without intelligence. I held myself high. I held the deepest contempt, misused my mouth and mistook my rage for love. Under the covers rose the inadequate one, tripping on a candlestick that sunk cruelly into darkness, as I passed over, me, a follower of the flame.

What was it that roamed? Something evident? Something questioning? Only grey, I remember. Grey, and not other things. And I spoke. Writing down words as a single journey. I encountered revenge on the tip of the pen. It is the art of the intellect to reduce everything to one word. It is the art of the intellect to ignore the personal.

If love is, love is everywhere.

But if it makes sense, why do I stand alone? In the ugly generation, alone? In the downward bliss, alone? In the pain of something 'all-too-lost' alone? In the last word that brought the world to its knees, alone? In the victim that spoke to me, "Get up!" alone? In the hero who couldn't speak but knew of so much to say, alone? In the corpse, in the ghost, in the broken-limb dancer, alone? Without him.

Now say, "This is the age when we overtake God. Add a new mark, a new word." Now say, "We should build a huge bonfire and burn all that God once was, let us see what new God awaits us." It is my heaviness that has led me to him. My anguish is the only reason for my search, and my glowing find.

But the same one who led me into the depths of a fierce sweetness, is the same one who has ended the interlacing of both worlds. He could only stand on the outskirts, could never agree and say, "Rare!" Does he know me?

Do you? The hero is never interested in climbing just for danger. Look at the shore and touch me there. Lay your fingers on my hands, on my shoulder, and we will close our eyes from the riot of our conflict. We will be brilliant and deliberate. Look out onto the water. You say there are no shadows, only sunlight. You say I am lost up hell's river.

I have found how to suffer. I have found that you really do have to hang on the cross in order to be resurrected. From ash to regeneration. From the tragic rape to the better unfolding. From something powerful to something strong. I have found that it is just one of those things you have to live through in order to know. I have found it is only in the depths of your soul, life is discovered. And I have found this without you.

Why is it? That I loved him, that he was not? That I loved him and it depleted? That I learned to wait without the hope of rescue or recovery? That I learned that love is Absolute? Where will I find him? In his laboratory of analogies and conclusions? In the mystic's power of avoidance through evading? In the extra pound?

Nothing is lost. Between the world and the silent aspiration, between the night and the vision, between the Earth and God, what gulfs? Love. I feel you but I cannot feel myself, I feel you without me.

I will wait and look out to the cold sea, obeying no rules, obeying no laws. I will curl into the night and I will cry for him. I will cry as deep and as wounded as I am. And it will be good. And I will be fine, lost up hell's river. Lost in the belly of midnight, God will enfold me.

We must fight for the interlacing of both worlds. We must fight for love's evolution. We must die for love, winged or unwinged. Marked or unmarked. For whatever gulfs between the divided human being, in that horrifying depth, in that incredible delight, love is found.

So I am moved. No more afraid to live by the one rule "No denial." No more afraid that I loved him and he was not.

Perfect Love was published in 1989 by The Plowman, written by Allison Grayhurst under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain. This is a revised version of what originally appeared in print.



PERFECT LOVE

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JOCELYN KAIN

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Reviews below of Allison Grayhurst's chapbook "Perfect Love" written under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain, were published in the "The Plowman – A Journal of International Poetry" 1989:

"Jocelyn Kain's work is interlaced with the inner spirit as it comes to terms with the decay of toxic waste, only to marvel at the landscape's regeneration after the abominations it has endured. Her chapbook *Perfect Love* is a monologue in prose of physical intensity, obviously related to experience. The book gives the impression of a young person striving to come to terms with the limitless possibilities that a future may hold, all the while chained by life's obsessions. We see here the marvellous talent of a poet seeking another source, another life paradigm to embrace, to seize hold of. In this case, one feels her quest is attainable," poet *Richard Ball*.

"In *Perfect Love* Jocelyn Kain takes us on an epic journey of the heart and soul. Her prose is flanked with haunting images, pain, and ultimate joy. This gifted writer never fails to elevate the rest of us into unknown heady heights, leaving us tingling. Like a caterpillar into a butterfly, Kain struggles through a metamorphosis, revealing in this love letter her journey to fruition. Along the way, this memorable journey is marked by unforgettable prose, steering us into the light, showing us flashes of her vision. The poet reveals see-saw emotions with this thing called love, and tells us her true feelings. One experiences triumph when she finally realizes her goal, finally finds and accepts love," poet *Bernadette Dyer*.

"*Perfect Love* by Jocelyn Kain is unusual chapbook. It is not easily assimilated at a first reading. It wrenches the heart and bares the soul. This book is a record of a heart, a soul wrestling with God – for God is love and God is perfect, perfect love. But Jocelyn Kain is imperfect as she seeks that perfect unity with God. There are so many good things in this book, such an exposure of reality. This place is far too small to enable me to share with you any more than a small portion of the wonder of this book," poet *Hugh Alexander*.

About the Author



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

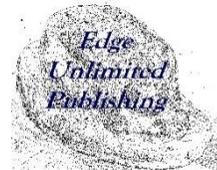
Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



"THE IMAGES IN JUMANA, THIS EXCELLENT BOOK OF STORY-PROSE, ARE INTENSE AND PROVOCATIVE. WITH STARTLING INSIGHT, GRAYHURST SHARES THE DEPTH OF HER VISION ALONG A JOURNEY OF SELF-EXPLORATION. HER WORDS ARE CATHARSIS FOR THE LONELY, THE SAD, THE UNCERTAIN, ANYONE, EVERYONE. ONLY ONE WHO HAS ENDURED GREAT PAIN, BORDERING PERHAPS ON THE BRINK OF MADNESS, AND EMERGED TRIUMPHANT, CAN ARTICULATE SUCH INTENSITY WHILE EXPLORING THE INNER PATHS OF HEART AND SOUL." POET MELODY-ANN MCCARTHY-SMITH.

"IN PERFECT LOVE ALLISON GRAYHURST TAKES US ON AN EPIC JOURNEY. HER PROSE IS FLANKED WITH HAUNTING IMAGES, PAIN, AND ULTIMATE JOY. THIS GIFTED WRITER NEVER FAILS TO ELEVATE THE REST OF US INTO UNKNOWN HEADY HEIGHTS, LEAVING US TINGLING.." POET BERNADETTE DYER.

"ALLISON GRAYHURST'S POETRY IS SO EXQUISITE THAT ONE CARES HARDLY ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE WORDS AS THEY FALL SO PERFECTLY ON THE SURFACE OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND. MEANING IS CLEARLY INNATE AND YET THE POETRY OF THE SHEER AESTHETICS OF THE WORD FORMATIONS IS ENOUGH. NO ONE IN MY EXPERIENCE, CAPTURES AND CREATES ARTISTRY OF EMOTIONS LIKE ALLISON GRAYHURST." JANE MARIN, POET AND AUTHOR.



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