

Allison Grayhurst ∞ Wallpaper Stars



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Edge Unlimited Publishing

Wallpaper Stars
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Ripples

Dirty dish, I lift
and know I am holy.

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

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

Blessings come like other conditions, feeding,
filling, then the fish is hooked and the river goes on.
How many cupcakes can I keep? Not many. Not one.
At night I wake up absolute,
solid as a never-touched stone.

I stare at the clock and have conquered time.
For that time I am the best thing of all things to be.
For an instance, I am more than metaphor, I am witnessing.
In the day I hold out for a fickle hand's generosity,
sweeping floors and making beds.
What a hot rhythm to keep, like kisses and eclipses
of sexual elation.

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

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

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

The laws that find me bind me

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

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

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

Dealt and received, a stack of conditions
that can never be lifted or walked away from.
I will speak because
the explosive veined-sun dominates our Earth's universe,
and bloody barren corpses infiltrate the ground, calling upon
mealworm dialogue - calling for useless conversation,
eating makebelief applecore practicalities and gossip seeds
like 'Bobok''s people in various degrees of decomposition.

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

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

Under mosaic whisperings

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

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

Complete, but

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

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

Sanctum

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

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

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

Ceramic-tile stuck

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

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

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

If it is empty then it is empty

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

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

Undertow

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

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

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

Grazing on the flow

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

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

Saltwater Sprint

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our children are orchards

By the door

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

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

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

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

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

The fault of sages

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indulgences dig as glass into exposed roots.

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

Spread your Fullness

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

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

You do not accumulate.

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

If I was responsible

I would sell my discipline for higher wages.

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

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

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

I don't want degrees of ecstasy or appointments.

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

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

Muse,

**like a seahorse floating forward
you are brittle and small. When you move
you barely touch the sandy ground.
My eye to your reflection,
forging for fundamental truths.
Your skin to my aura, skimming the anointed flame.
I wear you as a wig to fight off
prejudice. You lay over me like a shroud
made of woven sunlight and shade, made
to supply me with defining features
and leave an impression.
You are like the freeway I fell onto
when I was barely grown, rolling over
to the side, watching the car I rode in
shrink into oblivion.
I am a reptile in a drying-up waterhole,
cocooned in sludge, where you sniff me out,
expose my underbelly and devour.
Pocket knives and crushed branches,
I owe my secrets to only you.**

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

Growing the grey

Splendor is stolen.

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

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

All things I have are stolen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Making up questions

to fog the edge of our clarity.

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

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

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

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

Fundamentally, we are our own culture.

We are crazed as lit candles by the vent.

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

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

Soldier

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Neruda

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

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

Snowy

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

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

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

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

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

Endure

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

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

The Book

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deciding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Circle

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Age does not slow or still desires.

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

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

There are names

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Under the vines

Ways the willow swishes freely,
washing the wind into the sun.
Child in a tree fort dives fearlessly,
surging with elation to and fro:
over snails and uncut grass,
elements passing, back against the evening sun.
Waves are the evidence of the ocean's breathing.
Minds run swift, masterpieces of destinations,
forming their own geography.
Reality burns like a blood-clot -
an over-stuffed museum, updating slow.
Pirates of power and horoscopes bleating,
the only refuge is to forget.
Out through a backyard window, the willow tree
owns both ground and sky.
Imagination comes as suffering's negation,
potpourri to the stench of debt and worse-things owed.
Destruction overtakes too easily,
like a once-hollow ditch, now satisfied with its

**fill of bones. All needs are political. Heaven
comes close in secret Sex, immortalizing flesh,
though never arresting decay.**

**Child on a vine joined with the ways of the willow,
swinging, thrown-off shoes.**

Lotus

Sleep, into triumphant sleep,
waking is a tide of abysses and senses
reflecting illusions. Cursory stresses,
repairing at the bedside where my knees bent in prayer,
scuffing my skin with cosmic complaining.
I've thought about this, and I've decided
not to care if I fail at swimming or grooming or trophy-getting,
or in collecting eggwhites, having more than what I have
necessary on the table.

Love is the weathervane is the station,
earning eternity, a teaming ocean worthy of a dive.
The rest is a stunted fetus that will never coo
or be baby-dream sufficient.

I've spent too long weight-lifting chaos's hammer,
flinging myself from wall to stump.

I have eyes that hold me, another's and another's
I can take pictures of and sing to, and I wish for nothing
but to retain this fertility of tender revealing.

Children and the final history of desire,
predestined to return as a speck - own my freewill,
multiplying with the rhythm of a brighter responsibility.

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

Govinda in the mud

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The means to obliterate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We sorrowed far when the sky tore,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fill the ghosts with upward rejoicing

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

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

In Labour

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fire and more,

gracefully bobbing

like a floating stone trapped in my throat.

To do something with a sting but with skin

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

get caught and limp back, collapsing in confidence

because of the hum-drum yawn of repercussions.

Death is anywhere, a man wrapped in a sleeping bag

walking fast through the barely wet streets of almost winter.

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

pregnant with souls, never born, never beginning.

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

or the solid sidewalk, taking and taking.

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

like pressure is, concentrated tight

where vital organs are supposed to break or function.

It has been a long while since

you watched me and glowed. Broken windshield wipers

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

days before you died, when your countenance was calm,

and your smile, half formed.

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

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

Where are you? I've been calling

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

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

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

like a solid spike, but weightless in its consequences.

I drive the rattle. The world is huge and

I am capsizing, eaten by its ignorance and filthy demands.

Where are you? Did you fly away?

Can you be my gravy, not dry and vague

as a passing half-hearted smile?

Can you not pay for my funeral and be done with the obituary,
sending me into the afterlife, a new life

of baby days and infant trust?

Where do I hurt? For you, everywhere. It is impossible
to escape, impossible to cross my legs, fold my arms.

Tender or with a shovel pounding,

break through this cobwebbed room,

give me a background I can play with, a full dish, delight
in the splintered wood.

Tidalwave Making Moon

Decades lived by finding hope on the cliff.

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

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

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

Corners blend then curve and curve again to make a sphere.
Searching is only born from blindness. Perfect vision comes
with the maiming of everything non-essential, when the only
essential is love and being alive to excite clouds into paintings.

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

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

Branches are lizards I have broken before.

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

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

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

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

Before you

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

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

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

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

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

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

Voice

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

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

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

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

Detour

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

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

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

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

Today what is natural is inside the cupboard.

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

With the purity of a single intention

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

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

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

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

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

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

tunnels where the earth shines copper
with forgotten buried pennies.
Look up and drop the stone of objection,
the stretching sorrows of realism.
It is divine, if you choose it to be.
It is the freedom of a fugitive, freed
of the rusted bars, equipped with appetite
and the exuberance of a gamble.
The ship is lost and an ocean is gained.
Water and water rhythms
are teaming between your toes,
salting your hair and open wounds.
From side to side, look at the glorious space around you,
then up, envisioning yourself strong-winged, safe
as a seafaring bird.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: The Brooklyn Voice; The Blue Fifth Review; Ancient Heart Magazine; Miracle E-Zine; Pyrokinectation; Kritya; Leaves of Ink; Nostrovial; Milk and Honey Siren Anthology; The Milo Review; Wilderness House Literary Review; The American Aesthetic; Straylight Literary Magazine; Chicago Record Magazine; Ehanom Review; The Kitchen Poet; Blast Furnace; Guwahatian; Cartagena Journal; River Poets Journal; Jotters United Lit-zine VIMFIREmagazine; Electric Windmill Press; Ginosko Literary Journal; Your One Phone Call; Down in the Dirt; Scars Publications; Change Seven Magazine; The Commonline Journal; Verse Wright; Kind of a Hurricane Press; Creative Talents Unleashed; The Furious Gazelle; Winamop; See Spot Run Literary Magazine; Sentinel Literary Quarterly; Contemporary Poetry Anthology; Storm Cycle Anthology 2015; WritingRaw; Wax Poetry and Art Magazine; Indiana Voice Journal; Fine Flu Journal

About the Author



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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"Allison Grayhurst's poetry is insightful, enwrapping, illuminating and brutally truthful. It probes the nature of the human spirit, relationships, spirituality and God. It is sung as the clearest song is sung within a cathedral by choir. It is whispered as faintly as a heartbroken goodbye. It is alive with the life of a thousand birds in flight within the first glint of morning sun. It is as solemn as the sad-sung ballad of a noble death. Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," Eric M. Vogt, poet and author.



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