



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

**Allison Grayhurst**

*Fire and more,*

*Allison Grayhurst*

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## **new poem – not a poem**

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

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

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

**To God:**

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

# *Old Dreams*

# Fisherman

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

# Old Goriot

He eats the fruit  
of the dark arrow  
hunt.

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

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

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

Two little girls are playing dress-up,  
tickled by thoughts of an enduring grandeur.

It is late in the decade. The lamplight is fading,  
he calls out

on his deathbeds that he has learned the unteachable:

-Love too has its limits  
as the world keeps turning  
artlessly  
towards its own destruction-

He reaches his frail fingers  
and finds

no companion to comfort  
his setting soul.

His smoldering, old eyes close  
as his last breath

sings, sending  
a final blessing  
to the indifferent moon.

# Gastown

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And you would say

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

Then you would say

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

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

**Then**

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

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

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

You asked,

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

## **If You Wait...**

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

## More than theory

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

## Discovery

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

# Blue World

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

# Soldier Boy

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

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

## After Love . . .

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

Heaven  
dumb- struck,  
knowing only the distance and  
the danger  
of this new, chilling  
dimension.  
Do not look.  
It is company I need tonight  
and I borrow you  
for that.  
You were the fool,  
a dreamer  
who knew the souls of each  
and every star – then  
far off, the wind  
is webbing around me  
and the bomb ticks  
intimately by my bedside.

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

I cannot erase you.

The rain will make us  
both beautiful  
somehow.  
We will find our common  
ground and paint  
those stars  
someday

**with exceptional  
wisdom.**

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

## How We Live

*True like death & like death,  
unchanged.*

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

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

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

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

*True like fear & like fear  
denied.*

# When The City Speaks

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

# **In Waiting**

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

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

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

# My Tiger Lilly

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

# Lost Night

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

Hot heart, heavy mind  
mutually weary of one another.

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

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

So help me . . .

# Fish Hook

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

# Love's Atmosphere

Today I tongue  
    your private  
dimension ...

Too much transparency, empty  
breathing.

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

I am  
    skin  
wet, golden – your prehistoric  
    lover.

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

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

## Over the Wishing Pond

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

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

Beggars fly by my window.

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

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

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

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

## When I Close My Eyes

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

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

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

## The Flower's Womb

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

# Lost

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

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

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

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

# **At The End**

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

# Gloria

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **This Love**

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

# Giving Roses and Bread

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

No wand no crocodile  
tongue will shut  
me out.

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

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

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

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

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

to drown your madness  
helpless then  
gone.

## **So long and lucky**

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

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

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

**So long and luck the mercy in my cup.**

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

## When He Left You

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

## **The one good thing to make good all things**

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

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

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

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

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

## Green Is This Day

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

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

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

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

# **Last Gesture Before Sleep**

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

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

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

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

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

# Chinaglass Smile

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

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

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

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

beside you,  
I must be grateful.

## Beggar Island

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

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

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

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

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

## Anticipation

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Little

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

## Last Beat

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

# *New Visions*

## **pure captivity**

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

# Requiem

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

# Crystal dark

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

## All one child

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

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

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

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

Moving  
to build ecstasy's garden, grow  
a rose – a scent on my neck,  
under unshaven arms.

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

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

## **When I met an angel she was on a subway car**

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

# Purged

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

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

Beer bottles and ashtrays and the harsh unpredictability  
of irrational bitterness coiling in his dark eyes, distorting  
his once handsome face – Do you know you are free?  
In this mansion of hard-won truth, love as tough as marble,  
blooming always on unexplored shores, counting on you  
to thrive. You are mighty and you are needed. Do you know  
you are strong, a masterpiece, a hero? It is better this way,  
to have been crushed, eliminated, earning yourself such  
raw beauty. You are safe because you have been emptied -  
a cherished dream reduced to cinder, and you have survived,  
a mighty force of love, my love, my eyes.

Despair is a weighted ghost, a guide who has finished its deed.  
I love you even more with your softened rage  
and your surrender. I love you like I have always loved you like  
the first knowing of who I have finally found

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

# Effie

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

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

No one will be alright. Death is never healed, it is a garment permanently glued, re-shaping the wearer, taking the light through a black hole, ending the peace of ignorance.

One breath. The sky has changed.

It is the last time I will bear it witness, from now on - hospital ceilings, the insides of my eyes and dreams of purgatorial pain overcome, of dreaming my children old with children of their own.

Don't stop dancing, I tell them, don't watch me. I am sorry.

I can barely breathe. Is God real?

I am holding many hands holding mine; whispers,

I love yous, goodbyes.

My last breath escapes me, easier now.

I hear singing, sobbing, singing louder.

I am listening, complete as a stone. My work is over.

My love is burning.

It is a sun. It is the shape of that song.

## **But I was...**

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

## No Stone    No God

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

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

## Empty drawer

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

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

## **I can see the sun**

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

## Entering the organic spa-spot

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

## Rite of Passage

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

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

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

## **I have been born**

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

## **dead cold moon**

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

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

## The Stain

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

## See

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

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

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

## **Blue light**

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

## **I am a definition**

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

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

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

**...I exist!**

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

## Too damaged to be renewed

Broken sheep,  
hybrids of birds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

only

what is perpetually lacking.

## Riding bareback

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

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

## **If I knew this haunting**

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

## And though the news is bad

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

## **Trial and Witness**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Make the wind**

**Make the wind like blood.**

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

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

**Send me into the peace that comes with such intensity.**

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

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

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

*All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:* Aji Magazine; Beneath the Surface, McMaster Creative Writing; CRASH; Drift; Nazar Look; JVC Poetry Newsletter; Poetry WLU; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry; Alias; Poetry Halifax Dartmouth; WritingRaw; The Amethyst Review; First Offense; Afterthoughts; Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre Newsletter; The Affiliate; EskimoPie; Next Exit; Braquemard; Scars Publication; Poetry and Audience; Envoi; Oasis; Harvest; Profiles in Poetry Literary Zine; The Muse Journal; Subtle Fires; The Miscrant; Indiana Voice Journal; Duane's Poe Tree; Little Voice Leaping; Random Poem Tree; The Otter; Prachya Review; Stepping Stones Magazine; Bold Monkey; Zaira Journal; The Peregrine Muse; Synchronized Chaos; Social Justice Poetry; Scarlet Leaf Review; The Literary Nest; Words Surfacing; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page; Think Pink, Pink.Girl.Ink Press; The Wagon Magazine; The Bees Are Dead; The Missing Slate; Anti-Heroin Chic Magazine; East Coast Ink

The poem "Crystal Dark" was nominated for "Best of the Net" 2015.

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# 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](http://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](http://www.kypharness.net)**

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

**“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*.

"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.



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

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