

OUR CHILDREN  
ARE ORCHARDS

Allison Grayhurst



- COLLECTED POEMS ABOUT  
ANIMALS, CHILDREN AND PREGANCY

***Our Children Are Orchards***  
***- collected poems about animals,  
children and pregnancy***

***Allison Grayhurst***

***Edge Unlimited Publishing***

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– collected poems about animals, children and pregnancy

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First addition

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# Table of Contents

Mother chimp	7
For Waldo	8
Shyla	9
You came to me	10
Because of course	11
Guardian	12
When Small Things Die	13
Turtle	14
Humpback	15
Light Rich With Innocence	16
Raising Grace	17
The Boy	18
Girl	19
A Month Unthawed	20
Donkey	21
Child Unconceived	22
Animal Sanctuary	23
After twelve	24
I Found You Singing	25
before	26
The Gentle Seed	27
Pregnant	28
In Preparation	29
my child	30
Our Little Pushkin	31
Sweet	32
Daughter	33
A Day	34
An Infant	35
My Little Wonder	36

<b>With a mother's lips</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Sacred Beginnings</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Her Gift</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>My Little Girl</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Child</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>At Fifteen Months</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Almost A Girl</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Under My Skin</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>New Tree in the Garden</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Six Months Pregnant</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>One Little Heart</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>How Lucky I Am</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Tribe</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Mustard Seed</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>A Place For You</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Days Before Birth</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Little boy born</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Siblings</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>My Little Ones</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>A Better Life</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Son – almost one</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Daughter – almost five</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Faces of hope</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Wallpaper Stars</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>From Us Two</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>For My Son</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Feral</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Odie</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Rooms of Joy</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Because I love you</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Greenhouse</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Toy Box</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Little One</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Lost members of my tribe</b>	<b>70</b>

<b>For Randy</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Tied</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>For My Children</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Snowy</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Our children are orchards</b>	<b>75</b>

# Mother Chimp

Gentle Flo of the  
great apes,  
does not sing  
nor look for  
comfort from the sky.

Mother of patience and playful  
as moonlight upon a wave. Face  
like a roadmap of a sad  
primeval journey. Sad  
like the first thoughts  
of wasted love. Sad  
like the night jungle in all its  
apparent peace.

Cry for the terrible loss  
in the midday rains. Cry for the African  
trees, rotting from the weight of  
a human-made world.

Shaggy arms embrace  
to receive your large-heart's manna.  
The lonely climate  
surrounds you  
with child, near a river that carries  
the many deaths of those before  
your wild and doubtless  
existence.

## For Waldo

Am I to speak of the hangnail pain,  
though no season was lost and there  
are no backstairs to climb?

Am I to miss you in the garden  
we never had, in the memories  
of never being close but always  
being near?

And the time you ran frightened of me  
through the alleyways, as though we never loved,  
never knew the trust of wounds  
we helped each other heal. Never you  
wanting more than to maintain  
your dignity, your freedom, your  
contemplative stare. Never you  
giving more than the most  
of your compassion, the gentle restraint  
of your excited spirit.

And to die like that,  
killing the final cord. Stinging slowly, so slow  
it's hard to cry, to not wish one last swim with you  
under the full moon just staring  
forever into that small-town sky.

# Shyla

The green dust of your eyes,  
the cameo coat of your  
body sleeping like  
a chinaglass doll, still  
by the window's light.

The years and thoughts I cannot  
exchange with you nor hope  
to savour a single shared  
laughter, but between  
these broken walls, under the hand  
of my affection  
your warm head  
moves like a small star,  
gracing.

## **You came to me**

**through the hard jaw of the world,  
anguished, under the weight of bad habits,  
your happiness fading like  
your fate, into a fine line running out.**

**You came, prowling the landscape, out of  
some gripping past, eyes driven deep by  
loneliness.**

**You came, dressed in feline black, carrying  
the weight of a shattered city  
in your arms, and your blood was cold  
with howling.**

**From the snows, finding me with a glance, you came  
like spring in my nostrils  
and cried & cried as you came  
plummeting down, lost from some angel's  
symbolic grasp.**

## **Because of course**

**you will go with summer  
never knowing a remedy.  
You will go beyond where you go  
around the ninth and final life, ducking  
in dark boxes to fade finally alone,  
away from instinct and nurturing.  
You will go into the natural earth,  
and from there, my vision staggers and  
cannot name, but caught  
on the wind, in sensual shades  
of forgiveness mighty & forever,  
you will know a place unhindered by death.  
You will hear the secret  
your pale eyes  
have always harboured.**

# **Guardian** *(for Beeper)*

**Dog-eyes like a morning  
infused  
with warmth.**

**I dream of sending you  
silhouettes wedged  
from the mountain,**

**where we would go  
flooded with lyric & hazy light.  
By the campfire furnace,**

**chasing the breeze through  
the haunted wood. And then,  
by the river, by daylight,**

**your tongue outstretched to cup bee.  
Your oversized ebony head gliding through  
the water like a dolphin's.**

**Under the bridge, on the railroad tracks,  
your muscles moved erecting  
monuments of innocence and incomparable strength.**

**Past the fence, past  
my sight, releasing sounds of excitement, sounds  
of a simple, language bark,**

**as you ran  
thunderous & dark  
as departure  
often is.**

# When Small Things Die

This is the guilt of being,  
the empty horror,  
the fearsome weight  
of living conscious,  
awake to the dull and lingering  
ghosts. In my hands,  
a small death, a mild cry,  
a feeble resurrection.

This, the detached cycle,  
the rotating climb  
that no feeding heart grows used to.  
Infant soul, infant eyes gazing  
into my own. Body wriggling under  
my warm fingers.

This is my love  
expanding, my love too limited  
to hold the healing needed, or shut off  
the crude struggle of a gasping life. Life  
thin-boned and motherless.  
Cold paws, blue tongue,  
neck, a loose ladder holding such a heavy,  
awe-inspiring head,  
slips  
down into final slumber:

looking now  
like a child's prized toy.

# Turtle

Hard slow force -  
back the shape of half  
a bell. Lipless  
mouth wide with sunstroke  
fear. Double eyelids  
close, looks like gel  
over two black wounds.

Your elbows tight inside  
your chamber-shell. Your neck  
stretched like a slinky, nodding  
from side to side.

Without voice, your legs  
leap out like arrows, push  
frantically at the air.

You are in my hand, the size  
of half-a-hand. You are quiet now,  
head back inside your giant roof.

Released from human grip,  
your feet feel water, edge  
across piled-up rocks,  
where you stop

to smell the dark aquarium  
and rest  
your tortoise-green  
toes.

# Humpback

I give this flower,  
these historic eyes  
to the Atlantic whale, who will perform  
for me a symphony of genius. Hungry, we will  
rob one another of mistrust,  
caress each other's hairless skin,  
holding things that gravity cannot forsake.  
Once safe in the ocean's dune,  
we will open our eyes, our mouths,  
swallowing moonlight like pirates  
from a ship.

Together through  
the salted plasma we will swim and hope  
for the violence born by medieval fear,  
promoted by division  
and encouraged by judgement  
to be terminated by an acknowledgment  
of identical love  
(which is not accident).

Tenderly we will axe the human prejudice;  
and the child and calf, rubbing wing and arm  
will know the blessing of a marvelous unity,  
which has been concealed to the point  
of near extinction.

# **Light Rich With Innocence**

*(for Justin)*

**Picking stones from the shore  
to give your impressive, delicate  
hands.**

**You repeat your  
simple words, each time as a new  
discovery, dramatic with joy.**

**On the rocking chair in your  
uncle's arms, your eyes glow strange  
like flowers do to a heart burdened by grief.**

**You pick the small rocks, one by one,  
pile them up - a rainbow tower that only  
your pure imagination can see.**

**You hand them to me as gifts  
from good fairies, smile  
a smile that stretches higher than mountains.**

**You carry your jewels in a glass  
showing them with proud delight.  
They are to you, tiny miracles.**

**You kiss each one.  
You bless and you  
behold.**

# Raising Grace

A child in a mother's arms.  
both dissolve in joy, freed into  
the instinct of love as I watch bewildered  
by such beauty.

This I hear  
says farewell like all else  
that seems immortal, that makes ripple  
the human heart, perfecting  
our inwardness.

Sister and brother, natural  
friends that no obstacle could  
burden beyond repair. Lovers too,  
safe in a tender silence are able to  
bear the weight of clouds.

Yet the rain does arrive, folding fists  
of isolation around my heaven. Around the bend,  
still breathing, listen to breath as if it was the only sound  
not blurred by vagueness. Disconnected like  
the sun is from the moon.

Then I see the mother and child hold  
in perfect intimacy. And I place  
my candle there, beside them, to be  
influenced.

# The Boy

Under the limp tree  
he sits, curing himself  
of the bawling rains &  
patchwork  
gardens.

He inhabits heartbreak  
& hunger as a primitive,  
refusing all  
that does not measure with  
instinct.

The cloud's configuration alters him  
like a new philosophy.

He thinks of the cosmos  
like a bird, who plays its part  
blamelessly  
under the yawning cover.

Destiny is  
a grain of sand.

Life itself - enough  
imagination.

He holds hands with  
the outlawed beasts, bearing  
the world as though it was nothing  
but a small, small  
shadow.

# Girl

Under the willow tree a girl  
was standing, lonely with  
the worst of nights ahead.

They said

drink from the tarpit waters and swallow  
the oysters that lost their shells.

She saw the drug the wind made  
though she did not let it shift her steadfast heart.

Everywhere the notion stood  
that fighting back is better than  
the tender wave, better than  
empathy and believing in affection.

The willow leaves have gone brown and the girl has moved  
beside a cliff. She dances as though she  
could not fall. And though they gasp to pity  
her poor body against rocks and ridges,  
she continues to move like a beautiful sound,  
sure of the hand that guides her.

## **A Month Unthawed**

**You sleep each day  
without sunlight.  
Gentle, as always, you  
resign to the fatal bruise  
inside. You look with sick,  
half-closed eyes, with love,  
barely visible, but in your veins  
death is unveiling, deliberate.  
I am the one to hold you,  
to weep a yellow suicide,  
to press your thinning back  
with my palm, maternally  
holding, whispering of sunflowers  
and of faith.**

**Any other would have sank  
into the hairy blood of wrath and blame,  
but you and I, with an affinity between  
that no illness can kill, are bearing this as one.**

**You are the favourite seashell found as a child,  
a warm hearth in a room of shadows.  
You have comforted me when the world  
harassed and promised to rule.  
And now humbled to lose what I cannot lose,  
the doorway is opened.  
Hope is what has been given.  
Strong together in this giant pain,  
we will raise each hour as a lifetime  
and believe, unflinchingly, in miracles.**

# Donkey

Large liquid eyes,  
a slow four-legged walk,  
seeking true affection from my hand  
that wanders along your cheeks and nose -  
its gravel grey, brittle as the straw  
you sleep in.

Small and old as so many lonely are,  
you follow me along the fence,  
patient for my touch, for a soft voice  
to speak your name or a palm  
to stroke your dusty back.

Like the feel of foreign sand  
or the miracle of a flower,  
our hearts join in this brief faction of time  
as I stop walking, offering some plucked grass -  
a token of our mutual need.

# Child Unconceived

Tomorrow may bring you nearer  
to me, but then it may cause  
grief that no instinct nor love could  
rectify.

If I cannot form the dustgrain of your life  
in my womb, cannot carry  
your limbs within my belly proud  
and drench my veins  
with our combined blood -  
(you and I merged for a time, guiltless,  
expressing the earthy essence of God  
with each our individual heartbeats),  
then be damned my entrails  
and this longing  
that drives my impatient summer.

When I see your face for the first time,  
and your father and I behold your  
living smile, be sure  
there will be a depth of welcome  
that no hardship could turn cold  
nor ever diminish.

## **Animal Sanctuary**

**He turns his hawk head  
to view the shells of turtles streaking  
the still-shroud of water in tanks  
as blue as sky.**

**He lifts a leg and talons tensed,  
pivots to defend against an enclosing shadow.**

**With whitish eyes and an impossible urge  
to fly, he hops along his man-made perch toward  
the cages where squirrels leap  
from metal to wood, scattering like leaves  
in unpredictable flurry.**

**He listens to the ducks' lipless sounds.**

**Spring, he will never experience again, nor know  
the scent of a pent-up life released like  
sunflowers blooming, or the feel of the moon,  
colder but more comforting than being touched.**

**He is without time or tribe,  
and like fire, he haunts  
by just being.**

## **After twelve**

**affirming years,  
your head is raised toward adulthood.  
After twelve like the zodiac sphere,  
they came to snatch your heart  
into a barren day, where conformity  
would dry the void in your stomach  
and the radio would be enough to hang your  
curiosity upon. But you, like a starfish,  
swam slowly out of childhood - kindness intact,  
individuality still pressing through your bones.  
You would not tip the turtle on its side,  
would cry for the crushed ant, for children  
in pain you never saw. You kept the truth  
you had when you were one, kept a depth and wonder  
that refused to be buried.  
After twelve affirming years,  
the night still beats  
softly for you.**

# **I Found You Singing**

**I found you singing  
tight, beneath my skin  
like an armful of swallows  
or an oak tree conversing with  
a squirrel.  
I found you pushing your foot  
against my ribs when dinner  
was late and hope wore thin.  
I found you like I found no other,  
there, from where no science  
can explain, formed with intricate  
splendour - a face, a being, a soul  
a part of, though unique from my own.  
I found you when I was on the sofa-chair  
excited to hear your father's voice,  
needing us both from behind the curtain,  
somersaulting in your liquid sphere.  
I found you after my father's death,  
not sure of my strength to carry this through.  
But now you are in me, and I am rocked again  
like a butterfly's wings are rocked  
by the summer wind, caressed  
by the mystery and miracle of all dreams  
so very beautiful.**

## before

This child will come  
like the spinning of a maypole -  
strong colours entwined  
and all her blood in unison  
with the sun.

She will be a glorious bird,  
sure of her place on this earth,  
sure of the love that moves from  
each breathing lung to the unseen stars,  
tied to it all like water is to the shore,  
like a night breeze coming to soothe  
the summer day's scorch.

She will be set free by her heart's  
irregular beat, unique in her beauty and  
in her strength.

This child will come, welcomed  
like a prayed-for dream.

We will hold her and know her -  
our highest visions united then separated  
into an infant being.

# The Gentle Seed

The gentle seed  
has changed face and made  
its being heard.  
Thickened veins, oversized  
breasts and hands that no longer sing  
are reflections of the pulsing heart  
of one who has not learned  
the ways of the human cry.  
No voice but the kick and turn, but  
a destiny yet to begin.

The gentle seed  
that has grown within me  
is like candy on the tongue,  
like fruit to the green insects and  
spring to the marigold, is a no-turning-back  
and a waiting-to-behold.

The gentle seed  
that will forever be part of my own,  
has turned death on its side,  
showing me peace in the remains  
of my burnt garden.

# Pregnant

The ringing bells,  
the stone on high  
that falls like a swan  
with broken wings  
are things that hound me  
with a chill and send my peace reeling.  
I wait for you under the arches -  
May, June, July until November.  
I am a silk sheet changing to a  
woolly blanket - breasts and tummy large  
like mother-icon, and the end is  
a far way off. To meet your tiny eyes  
is what contains me beyond the fear  
of crazy labour and the pure moon  
that swallowed my name. This is earth  
finally, complete with no open edges.  
Like another country's familiar animal are my  
swollen ankles and weighted walk.  
Sometimes I am bewitched by this declaration  
of my mortal being and sometimes, trapped  
in the change like a cat behind closed windows.  
Will I be good to you, little one? Will it be  
natural, our song and our rain? You come  
without earned ugliness, wriggling inside.  
We breathe as one, though still  
to each other's heart and form we remain  
as strangers.

## **In Preparation**

**Down is the way I carry  
this new soul in my mouth,  
like the weight of pure responsibility.  
I am glued to nature, my laugh is  
no longer mine but is the sound  
of soil breaking beneath the plough.  
I have been here alone for over eight months,  
and it is heavy like an arm that has  
fallen asleep. It is good in so many ways -  
a vision completing itself, like the brushing  
of wet hair in the sun.  
The bulk of this tiny being in my belly  
is the paradox that lifts and roots at once,  
is the dancing of the spirit in the earth's  
thick mud. The crib is waiting for her weight.  
Her father dreams of her sweet mouth and eyes. Fragile  
as the essence of flesh, she has wooed me with  
her kicks and turn, with her yawns through  
the ultrasound shade  
and the scratching of her cheek.  
Soon we will see her and all her beautiful colours.  
I begin to be overwhelmed. I am gathering my  
childhood jewels, gathering  
all my totems to meet the unveiled gaze  
of her glory.**

## **my child**

**your skin alone is as soft as  
a goldfish-back,  
your smile is my last breath  
and your lips puckered for cooing are  
a glorious gain of candy apples.**

**We two are now three  
merged in the depths  
of touch and long stares.  
In the trinity hug, we delight in  
the smell of your fresh-washed hair.  
We look into your navy eyes,  
whispering words you can't understand.  
We break the shell of just-us-two. You,  
entering our sphere like a beautiful dream.  
You, a gentle symphony that changes everything,  
like the touching of the stuff of fairytales.**

## Our Little Pushkin

In the mornings I watch  
your sleeping face like  
a chinadoll's, perfect in every way.  
I see your smile when you awake  
like I would a waterfall on my street corner.  
I see you curled tight with joy,  
and flinch at the noon day sun.  
When I hold you to feed, and you talk to me  
with playful glee, I love you more than  
my heart can carry.  
I think this blessing is stronger than death,  
strong like an acorn tree growing.  
All night you rest on a pillow in my arms,  
we play with bright coloured dangling things,  
and your navy eyes open wide  
as your legs begin dancing.  
You watch and watch like a Buddha in disguise,  
taking in life with a calm and thoughtful presence.  
You are the spring's first butterfly, an owl on my shoulder.  
You are wonder incarnate, freely showing  
what grows so beautiful inside of you.

# Sweet

Her skin is like a morning maple,  
painted by the day's first sun.  
Her eyes are cradled in the ocean's centre,  
blue as twilight's water.  
Her laughter is faint but glorious as  
a baby rabbit.  
And she needs me through the night, beside  
me like a thirsty flower.  
She is old, a soul of many gatherings.  
She is a dancing swallow, a strong and steady creation.  
Like her father, she is made of nameless folds,  
full of terrible and tender mysteries.  
On a November night she was born,  
altering the Earth's air with her first cry.

# Daughter

Drum, drum  
the drake of dreams  
and heed the head that  
knows it is blind  
to all the mysteries.  
My hand is here, my  
hand to follow. I love your  
cleft chin and your strange blue eyes.  
I love your laughter at night.  
Live like no other has lived.  
For you are more than a kaleidoscope,  
more than six months of hope and happy endings.  
Thank you for arriving, for changing my view forever.  
I watch your sleeping face  
and feel a thousand souls merge behind your  
soft skin. Every day is your birthday, when a new  
part of you is revealed like the most beautiful of wonders.  
Play with the ropes of many.  
I am here, and will always be  
yours in love.

## A Day

She lies beside me,  
wakes with bliss,  
legs flailing as she grabs her father's chin.  
Eating is not simple, is a process  
of song and distraction. Her will is  
like the river's tide when nearing the falls.  
Sometimes she smiles with abandon,  
nose crinkled and mouth wide, other times,  
coy and half-made with lips adult-like  
and meaningful. Her eyes are denim blue.  
In the afternoon on the floor,  
she raises her body on hands and toes.  
She plays by herself with her xylophone  
and toy car. When the day is waning  
and the bathtub comes, she is nearing  
the end of her resources. After splash time  
and putting the cloth in the mouth,  
when drying off she cries 'ma-ma'  
working herself into hysterical sobs.  
We hit the pillow, her between us  
talking and exploring the sounds of her voice.  
Then her father turns the lights out,  
and she snuggles into me to nurse.  
I kiss her forehead and feel our hearts full -  
three kindred saplings  
stroked by the night's June breeze.

## **An Infant**

**An infant is like a wonderful stone  
being shaped by the tide. An infant knows  
nothing of solitude and does not believe  
in the built-up hardness of  
kindred blood. An infant is  
the night, is the day, never hiding  
its hymn and colours. An infant arrives  
from both the nadir of the earth and the  
zenith of the sky. An infant has the laughter  
to change the most dismal of days,  
and the softness of tiny symmetry in its moon-like  
face - and fingers, each a little bird,  
bringing joy by just being, moving  
like dancers' thighs over a flaming sea.  
An infant is the eye of the whale,  
the beginning and the potential all in one.  
An infant is of flesh and perfect trust,  
needing nothing from tomorrow.**

## **My Little Wonder**

**By the light there broke  
a heart of no comparison.  
Hers was the eye of the mountain,  
the vibration of the tides, and  
the colours of the Mediterranean fish.  
Hers was the lost star found,  
the end of revenge, the juice of our single moon.  
In a womb where her legend almost died  
and the hangman knelt before the doctor's foot,  
I made a promise to her land and the sigh  
of her raving waters. I marked her tree in our  
backyard and bent to wash her hair.  
Hers was a boat that bore no time, a leaf  
in the midnight air.  
My old joy is the shell of this new one,  
for she is my workgloves and cathedral.  
Hers are footprints on the sun.**

## **With a mother's lips**

**I felt the ceremony of the stars  
soothe my tired throat.  
I felt the sun's fire in my hand  
when I bent in the direction of tomorrow.  
My child is like  
a choir at my doorstep,  
seducing my joy with her own.  
My child is without enemies  
or days, having no secrets from those  
she loves. She can carve a jewel  
from a crayon, and with her first embrace,  
she sanctifies each morning.  
With a mother's heart  
I tell the fruitflies of my blessing.  
Money and mortality  
cannot be true, but only  
the music in her grey eyes, and the movement  
of her small hands at play.**

## **Sacred Beginnings**

**I love you under water  
in the crescent cracks of rocks  
where the roots of the rose begin,  
inside the weather's tailspin  
where you colour my sleep  
with your dance, and loving you  
is worth more than I could ever offer.  
I love you beside the coral reefs, even when  
the serpent and shark are near. I love you  
in the sandbox as we make our miracles  
daily, pointing at every passing bird.  
I love you with yesterday's dinner  
in the fridge, before and after the starlight falls.  
I love you in each bubble we blow, in every fever we share,  
and in our synchronized laughter, gracing  
this mother and daughter sphere.**

## Her Gift

She opens up the cupboard door  
and smiles the beautiful smile.

She moves across the hardwood floors,  
focused as a hawk.

There is something in her I cannot touch,  
that has lived long beyond her short ten months.

She claps her hands and passes the ball. She waves  
goodbye and washes the stains from my heart.

She is calm as a resting lion cub,  
sure of her place beneath the sun. She is  
a good friend, marked by her own brand of humour  
with a love so bright it strips anew  
even the roots of my belonging.

# My Little Girl

My little girl  
is the flesh of creative love.  
She keeps in time with  
the rhythm of her muse  
and unlocks the special light  
in her pocket.

My little girl  
is the warmth of an unhatched egg,  
like being in the comfort of home  
while watching a rain storm -  
she is summer on the porch,  
the soft evening glow on a newborn's skin.

My little girl  
is young, but carries  
a deeply-rooted compassion in her eyes.  
She is crazy as a painter's erratic brushstroke  
and funny as a comedian's best stance.  
Her will is her hunger and also the music  
of the rain. She loves the butterfly and the  
cat, loves to caress the head of the thin-haired infant.  
Her colours are yellow and grey, like the autumn sun  
and the sea without the sun on an overcast day.  
My little girl is tender and free and  
I am grateful to know such a one and to have her be  
my little girl.

# Child

As wounding as  
the stars reflected in  
the river, yours is a beauty  
too big to embrace.

You are the everlasting miracle  
that walks these floors each morning  
and day, marveling at every turn.

Your easel is full of yesterday's colours.

There are songbirds under your bed, and in the closet,  
are assorted hats that call to you to try on  
and wear down the hall.

You are the syrup on my toast,  
the first tulip of spring.

Before you, I was too afraid to dance with freedom,  
crippled by a servant mood.

You are the open door where teddy bears  
dream and live - a soft, unhindered love  
that cures the hardness  
overpowering any room.

## At Fifteen Months

She has learned to walk and sing.

She stares out from her  
calm eyes, watching the other  
children move to and fro.

When music arrives, her  
whole body starts keeping the  
rhythm, bound to it like a bird  
is bound to the wind.

When she laughs, all the world's brightness  
fills her mouth and resides there.

When she cries, it splits my heart.

Gentle and solid, she balances beautifully  
her warmth and will, like a child sent  
from the throes of a living mercy,  
like a long-held hope weighing  
sweetly in my arms.

## Almost a Girl

We play with sounds,  
making a flower out of tissue paper.  
She bounces a ball,  
miming the harmony of its rise and fall.  
She paints with strokes  
that calls the orange seed to bloom,  
and all the while she dances  
to the starlight's tune, loving  
its brave expression.  
We read tales told in rhymes  
and sniff the picked herbs  
in our garden.  
Every morning we count spoons  
and watch the boys play next door.  
She knows her colours purple and blue,  
plays Boo! behind the door.  
Her body beats an ancient symphony of affection,  
loving easily my inviting arms.

## Under My Skin

In this month  
slumbering onward,  
I feel your kick  
saying that 'yes' a change is  
coming - one so strong it will  
open many doors along side it.  
I press my hand against my  
belly and wish for you a healthy world  
of open spaces and unwavering affection.  
I have no fear of the boy you will be.  
I have darkness in me I cannot shake,  
but that has no hold -  
for it has always been love  
that has carried me along.

## New Tree in the Garden

I know she sees  
her meadow broken by  
thundering changes sinking  
through the floor.  
I know her home feels cut  
by a tide unlocking an invasive unknown.  
But still the horn must blow  
and our love can be her temple and overcoat.  
We would never cross her off to cheer  
a new seed or count her a little underscore  
while welcoming the infant sound.  
With love not lead by guilt  
and a grace that releases all habitual chains,  
we will burn with family-joy  
humming strong and stronger  
when the walls fall down, making space  
to hold one more.

## **Six Months Pregnant**

**Thud, thud  
my body burns  
to stretch and hold your  
growing form.  
Kick and twist, you within  
having no shadow, only  
the liquid darkness that is your  
right, your atmosphere of rich  
undeniable movement and depth.  
Soon you will breathe a new force  
into this family, and we three will  
sing at your bedside -  
little boy, welcome, grower  
of dreams.**

## **One Little Heart**

**One little heart  
graced with purity.  
Yellow hair and happy eyes  
and all the dreams of a child's mind  
like the shape of a butterfly in the drain,  
or elephants in mushroom soup.**

**One little girl  
dancing to sunshine  
making eccentric faces  
and laughing outloud.**

**One little child  
painting pictures with her hands,  
crying hard for babyhood  
and spilling her fears on the ground.**

**One little heart  
unknowing of all the gifts she gives,  
of how much love she allows to live  
and change this place called home.**

## How Lucky I Am

So now she is three  
and like a lake that has always been there,  
soothing me, feeding me with wonder,  
she grows, continuing.

In ten years it will be a different  
language we share, but always  
the same connecting laughter and the feeling  
of being buried in velvety flour  
by her gentle ways that move my ravaged heart  
into peace.

In twenty, we will drink coffee, sharing  
the same window. She will teach me, and I will be  
her secret underground where she can nestle from  
the revolving world.

In thirty, I will be old and she will be settled  
into the source of her strength and individuality.  
We will love each other the same as today,  
when love is like the very air that rocks  
so sweetly between us.

# Tribe

Upon these days I spot  
some children, hair like  
silken straw under a daisy sun.  
Three so in love with the wild bush  
and humorous song and with each other -  
with strong affection they spend their  
mornings in exalted play.  
Arm around arm, the oldest only five,  
they know friendship that separates the lucky  
from the hoards of thirsty travelers, they know  
the embrace of childhood connection unmarred  
by fractured homes.  
Two joined by blood, one by fate, each  
by the unseen link of tender recognition.  
I watch their actions of natural glory  
and feel their laughter like swallows circling  
above their small heads.

## Mustard Seed

I know your name,  
but not your face,  
octagon of tiny wonder  
changing as I move through  
my days, cloaked in the drain  
and joy of your mystery.

I think I can feel you sometimes  
sitting beside me, playing games  
with your sister and laughing with  
all the rest.

I think of someone fiercely beautiful  
merging souls so easily with the family-us.

I touch my belly, remaining clothed  
in this still-normal body.

I turn the lights out early, happy  
when I think of the future.

## **A Place For You**

**It's nice to have a place for you  
among our tattered wares.**

**It's good to hold onto what little light  
breaks in unawares.**

**One time I was traveling through  
nameless streets and unclaimed yards  
aching with solitude. But that was when  
life was spent on temporary truths.**

**The weather is good, whichever way I turn.**

**My mind is sure of only love and love only  
brings on this weight.**

**Doubts move like maggots after the final blow.**

**Although doubts feed on a solid faith, they also cause  
such a faith to grow.**

**It's nice to be here half asleep watching  
the grey outside.**

**One day soon our eyes will meet  
and I will recognize your face  
like a perfect lullaby.**

## **Days Before Birth**

**Thrill and feel the last days approaching  
before the great change.  
It is sliding down a ladder  
into the full of the noon-day sun,  
quickenning the blood and bringing night dreams  
into the open.**

**Under flesh and sinews  
dragons burn,  
making way for the new creation. Taboos  
are swallowed by mud puddles  
pock marking streets, and safety is a far-fetched  
dream.**

**Imagine and hold  
these last days of gold  
that will bring forth a brighter, more enduring metal.**

**Let the heart be at ease,  
for life will learn to breathe  
a shade undiscovered.**

## **Little boy born**

**before sunset**

**your head a perfect dream,**

**your hair so soft and gold -**

**I make my amends at your stroller side**

**for pain before endured.**

**I kiss away the darkness that came without solace**

**and press your small body near.**

**Little boy of mine**

**good fortune comes**

**hard won and not without trial.**

**Love is everlasting, but never free**

**of the hardships that make a person appreciate**

**love**

**in the full of its glory.**

**Little child I adore**

**the smell of your skin**

**and the movement of your eyes.**

**I will do my best by you**

**and God willing, my best**

**I will not be denied.**

## **Siblings**

**Her laughter breaks your fold,  
wedding you to your primal joy.  
Your extremes keep tune with her emotions,  
setting them close to yours and your  
canvas of sharp colours.  
She has no veil. You have no hidden chamber,  
just the charm of your sleepers  
and your dimpled cheeks.  
She loves you like kin should,  
dancing for your comfort and crazed  
intensity. She makes you  
happy, her soft voice connected  
to you like a necessary limb.  
She is just a small child, and you, have not  
even arrived that far, yet already  
your steps are locked - each one's light clearly  
helping illuminate the other's.**

## **My Little Ones**

**They go forward  
with the brightness of trust  
on their backs and with laughter  
that loves the other's affection  
and humorous ways.**

**They run water through their chubby hands,  
opening and closing fingers in grand delight.  
They are testing the ground, days  
of love and giving the whole of their intensity  
to growing up.**

**His colour is deep blue and hers is olive  
with a yellowish hue.**

**They grace this home and atone for the damage  
of other failed dreams.**

**They are smiles etched on my shoestrings,  
coins under the carpet, a sprinkler in  
the noonday sun.**

**They give and they receive, rich with the substance  
of these and of all spectacular worthy things.**

## **A Better Life**

**In the beginning  
I rode a burning steed,  
crossed a violent river  
and destroyed my home.  
But now my footsteps are slower,  
I never climb the rocks or chase  
the landed hawk. I collect shells  
for my garden and sing to the great  
ocean's waves. I take my children  
along the shore and show them how to dance.  
I tell them my tales of long ago, though  
they offer no interest or praise.  
But they love me like a petal does its stem,  
each reaching to me to know the effort of  
my arms. We eat fruit near the underbrush  
then bury each seed, tenderly,  
in hot white sands.**

## **Son - almost one**

**Through your eyes  
of blue infant glory, fresh  
as a yawning bird, I see  
heavenly bodies turning  
and the last of summer's flowers  
appear. Fragile as the space between  
the void and faith, your beautiful hands  
were born to tower over the stifling air  
and shed mercy on my wound.  
Your perfect-shaped head is full  
of milk and magic. Under your seat,  
music flows and you are my light:  
a third to add to the other two.  
Thank you for your raw temper and  
the gemstone of your dimpled smile.  
What would my days be without you?  
Without the air or this living dream  
to behold?**

## Daughter - almost five

I live inside the gentleness of your mind.  
The subtlest of emotions you grasp  
and give back  
in soft waves of compassion and trust.  
In dreams I find you  
beside me for always,  
a friend like no other and new  
as autumn's first changing leaves.  
We have been here before,  
filled with joy and good madness -  
your eyes rich as the colours of earth  
and your rhythm, profoundly ancient  
like the dance of a seabird upon water.  
Your thoughts and your fast-leaning heart leans out  
to the lost and the hurt. Your brush stroke,  
and the paints that you choose  
reminds me how blessed I am  
to love, watch and guide  
the unfolding presence  
that is perfectly you.

## **Faces of hope**

**I watch the future  
as I watch the motions  
of your lungs. I see  
so much change and so astounding a discovery.  
I see two asleep, plenty full  
of love, bearing themselves up  
against the world. I see the frames  
of two who have no boundaries,  
who have extraordinary powers  
in ordinary reality, who have presence  
and beauty with the added blessing  
of fitting in.  
I see the advances of light on your skins.  
I see the unexpectancy of time  
in the simplicity of your smiles.**

# Wallpaper Stars

At the top of the stairs  
sits a box covered  
with wallpaper stars. In this box  
there is a small coin that  
holds the memory of another time.  
A child has pushed the box down the stairs  
and the light has caught the coin on the way down,  
glimmering like the leaves on branches after a rainstorm.  
I pick up that coin and I take it away.  
I am better than the coin that fell,  
but less than the child sitting and  
staring and waiting for the coin, sure  
of the gift like Job was sure of God's love. I once was  
the same, now I am different, tainted as grownups  
always are.  
The box is empty but I will fill it again.  
The box is beautiful like the child who  
sits and smiles - coin between fingertips, knowing  
its proper place - inside the box  
covered  
with wallpaper stars.

## **From Us Two**

**We give our time like you give  
wild laughter  
and full affection, fearless of rejection.  
Two of paint and music,  
of flashlight play and dress-up magic,  
you are the ones we hold in the torrential rains, the smile  
that comes regardless of the backyard trees that crash to  
the ground - all wires touching pavement.  
Two of everglade emotions,  
of all-out tears and jealous eyes,  
we bless you as we would the best in our lives.  
You have made us closer -  
caring for, rejoicing in  
the effort and rag-time joy  
that is the two of you.**

## For My Son

You are before me -  
a simple light, a vibrant light  
void of the world's grey core.  
You are beautiful enough, my son -  
miles of green terrain surround you.  
You whistle, and the strangers beside us  
are held captive by your song.  
I will not abandon you,  
though you fear the anguish of loneliness,  
and you feel the uncommon strain  
of a raw dimensional heart.  
You bring me joy.  
I have watched you drown  
in a stupor of unharnessed emotions,  
and I have seen you laugh at the stars -  
you, so much brighter  
than the whole of their celestial countenance.

# Feral

I bend in mourning  
bending to the loss of someone  
so familiar -  
your nurture-needing eyes  
and a temperament of molten lava  
whose tone was innocent and unrefined.  
I see you now in the doorway,  
flat and tensing but never moving,  
then at ease with me as a soft sigh  
overcomes you.  
Born in a tight spot -  
resigned to a tight spot - isolated  
from all but me.  
So strange, hard and pure,  
unlike any feline I've ever known.  
I will miss you, loving you  
as one who didn't belong.

## Odie

You will not die  
my golden companion,  
you will not leave me  
without your sweet warmth,  
not without your familiar eyes.  
You will only find a new way  
of surviving.  
I cannot admit the enormity  
of what appears as truth.  
I cannot admit there will be no  
miracle change.  
I can only see your soft cat beauty,  
your orange blanket of fur  
and a way around this danger.  
I can only see what I first saw in your eyes -  
innocence in need of someone to trust.  
I see you as someone to be with me,  
to rest by my feet at night,  
someone to always keep my stories  
tucked within a quiet stretch  
of your feline soul.

## Rooms of Joy

We will build four rooms of joy  
to honour the monastic sigh, to understand  
the kestrel on its perch and the wheelchair  
halted at the steep curb.

We will sanctify our moon  
with paint, clay and easel - letting colours and moisture  
drip through our fingers,  
malleable as a conscious dream.

We will bellow out music that towers over  
the thieves of daylight, races into our bodies, offering grace  
where there is none.

We will write poems and stories of fact  
and fiction to bring  
definition to our visions, to lose ourselves,  
naked as the calling gulls.

We will hold our meditation stones,  
like a horse's beautiful mane, brushing,  
braiding, all the while,  
softly whispering our affection  
into the copper-coloured ear of nature.

And the animals will bind us. The enormous love  
between us all will cut away  
the scar tissue of disappointment.

We will plunge into this temple, playing games,  
bearing fruit. In our four rooms we will love, expand  
and often falter - fresh and deep, rooted into the floorboards  
of this true home.

## Because I love you

like the humpback does its song,  
I grow by caring for you  
and your unfair burden.  
A golden daughter, bells in your hair  
and a richness in your eyes. I have  
all fortune at my door and my only wish  
is to peel away your cloud of illness and brighten  
your ground. I only see a fine gem's rays reflected  
on your skin. I only dream of your dissolved chains -  
miles around you of only childish concerns.

I hold your hand as we walk the corridors, tracing  
footprints down the hospital halls. Your touch  
tells me it is for us to be proud of one another,  
to be thankful for this gift that has strengthened our bond.  
Your touch is music - your words are as old as the sea.  
The fire around you  
is a bird. It will perch, nest and then next season,  
it will be gone.  
Your journey is into the hail storm. But you will be healed,  
and I will go on loving you like I love you  
like the humpback does its song.

# Greenhouse

Inside this greenhouse on a hill  
there is an arcade, an eagle  
and the fear of scorpions.  
As the vegetables flower  
I can almost hear the traffic on the streets below  
drowning out the crickets. I know we belong here -  
where there is an internal wind, seven bodies  
and so much heaven. Our windows are bullet-proof.  
When it is time to eat, we eat then we play, love and fight.  
At the head, there is music, there is greenery.  
The eagle gives us depth, and the fear forces us to grow.  
The arcade is a machine of imagination.  
When we leave the greenhouse, there is a path  
we take downhill. We greet strangers,  
and sometimes we bring home crude, unnatural influences.  
But sleep heals our home where we hold  
no resentments and keep no secrets,  
and the air is as sensuous and tender as  
our house is green.

## Toy Box

Shimmering orbs of  
two-tone depth and two-tone passion  
set within a young girl's face.

And then, his has the blueness of the Mediterranean,  
emotionally volatile and kind.

Female tenderness spread like an umbrella over her  
delicate features, female fury, concealed from all but  
not from the ones she loves the most - witnesses to her fire  
and bravery. And he, so much like the caress of miracles,  
either loving and happy or a storm of unrestrained  
tears - an open door, no keyhole-way in to know  
what his five-year-old heart feels. He is there. She is there.  
Beautiful and so much more tremendous  
than any dreaming.

## Little One

The baseboard lifted. The light  
was absorbed into the carpet. I tried.  
I cried when you left me, but it was only  
for a year then the drug of your sweetness  
reformed into a mild sadness, washing my  
nerves with the thin film of egg whites.  
I imagined you sleeping curled up by the door. I imagined  
your voice in the morning, lonely and frantic for affection.  
Those nights when we said our long goodbye - one night  
when our eyes met and I thanked you and you thanked me,  
was a gift without fault, was your dignified funeral - the rest  
was husk, instinct, the result of your physical pain.  
The rest when remembered breaks my belief, but then  
I know your life was good and I know we had  
fifteen years of warm connection,  
we had love.

## Lost members of my tribe

Four were sheltered here  
in the purity of spring, and the ocean all around  
with its intelligent octopi, its mystical porpoises  
and whales of many sizes.

One of you, eternally young, small,  
soft and perfectly fragile, loving freely as a babe  
sure of her mother's arms.

The other, heavy, carrying around an irritation  
that howled at everyone it saw. But I could see  
the innocence painted in her eyes.  
I could bless her conflict  
and love her just the same.

Number three was fire, sweet as a not-too-hot sun,  
warming the field with his golden colour and forthright  
demands, needing to love and be loved.

The fourth was king, ancient as the night sky.  
He knew the age of every tree, the faint altering stirrings  
of life's first conception. He was gentle, autonomous, giving,  
with a mind that spoke in pictures.

Now they have all left for heavenly territory.  
Their energies stay, and sometimes I still see them  
in the hallway, on beds.  
I still feel each close to my touch and I know we were blessed  
to have walked so many years, needing one another, blessed  
and forever remaining an essential piece  
of each other's cores.

## For Randy

Love is mercy  
living blind in this crucifixion world,  
pushed into the fisherman's net - no seed  
that doesn't freeze and end up like a pebble,  
no crowd that keeps its motive  
pure. Always, there is loss, grief in the pit of the loins,  
extending, radiating into every tiny bone -  
hidden, broken or just malformed.  
Children are never new and unharmed. But they cry  
easier. They sleep with nightmares under their pillows and  
outwardly groan when there is no cure to the hostility  
of fate. Children do not naturally cling to good,  
as some might say,  
but are bent in the ways of their parents, trying to please  
even that which has hardened long ago.

## **Tied**

**I will hold you one more time,  
I will not be afraid of your passing.  
We will bond on the eclipse of your life,  
our eyes locked in gratitude and unspoken  
understanding.  
Thank you for sharing my home, for being  
a part of my family. For so long, I missed you.  
For so long, we have loved one another with  
unsurpassed equality and depth. Your gentle intelligence  
has carried me through many storms. Just  
to be with you, sometimes, was all I needed. This one,  
I will have to walk without you. I will have to say goodbye,  
my sweet and perfect soul, goodbye my pet panther,  
goodbye my many-lifetime friend.  
We are lucky to have loved one another.  
We will join again where there is no bleeding,  
no dulling of the skin. Bless you, go easily into God's arms,  
go freely: You have loved. You have been loved.  
You are eternal.**

## For My Children

Grow like the seekers do  
in the aftermath of an atomic-bomb dawn.  
Hunger like the artists do for a tid-bit of happiness  
found, held for longer than the activity of their art.  
Awaken from betrayal, a harder stone,  
a softer soul, sure of nothing but of God.  
Burn, until your burning cannot be denied,  
and as you walk, they will say "There goes  
a star, a sun, a galaxy of fire" Burn until  
every muscle aches and the tension pulls  
the labyrinth of your heart and mind into a straight line  
with straight direction - nothing wasted.  
Love, because it is hard, because it is  
unusual to have the courage needed to love.  
Love, because there is nothing else, because  
it is the only heaven known, because it is  
the only thing impossible made possible, and  
when the dream is over, it will be  
the one reality left embedded,  
going further than, deeper than  
the nucleus of your cells.

# 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.

## **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.

*All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:* Spokes; Hook & Ladder; Wascana Review; Harvest; oasis; Pennine Platform; Out of Our; Poetry Salzburg Review; UC Review; The Bitchin' Kitsch; Ann Arbor Review; Literature Today; Subprimal Poetry Art; Writers Haven – Verse Land; Studio Journal; Anchor & Plume; Greensilk Journal; Bursting Plethora of Rainbow Colors; Mothers Always Write; Boston Poetry; Magazine Torrid Literature – Evolution Anthology; Ginosko Literary Journal; Duane's Poe Tree; The Galway Review; Both Sides Now; Medusa's Kitchen; The American Aesthetic; Creative Talents Unleashed; Grease Monkey Literary Forum; Think Pink, Pink.Girl.Ink. Press; VerseWrights; Novelmasters; See Spot Run; EskimoPie; Scarlet Leaf Review; Poetry Magazine; Poetry Quarterly; Corner Club Press; Ygdrasil – A Journal of the Poetic Arts; ken\*again; Chicago Record Magazine; Social Justice Poetry; Narrow Road; Rusted Rose Poetry Forum; The Writers Newsletter; Foxglove Journal; Moongate Motherbird; Indie Poets Indeed; Tangerine Heart Poetry Zine; Stone Face Literary Zine; above/ground press; The song is...; Poet's Corner; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page; The Antarctic Journal; AWS Publishing; 1947, a literary journal; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; TreeHouse Arts; Peacock Journal Anthology; Dreaming Big Publications; Synchronized Chaos; Communicators League; The Peregrine Muse

# 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*.

## OUR CHILDREN ARE ORCHARDS

"Allison Grayhurst's poetic prose 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.

### *About the Author*



*Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four times nominated for "Best of the Net", 2015/2017, she has over 1125 poems published in over 450 international journals and anthologies. She has 21 published books of poetry, six collections and six chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay.*



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