

# Trial and Witness

selected poems

Allison Grayhurst

*Creative Talents Unleashed*



# GENERAL INFORMATION

Trial and Witness  
selected poems

By

**Allison Grayhurst**

1st Edition: 2016

This Publishing is protected under Copyright Law as a “Collection”. All rights for all submissions are retained by the Individual Author and or Artist. No part of this publishing may be Reproduced, Transferred in any manner without the prior **WRITTEN CONSENT** of the “Material Owner” or it’s Representative Creative Talents Unleashed.

*Creative Talents Unleashed*



[www.ctublishinggroup.com](http://www.ctublishinggroup.com)

## **Publisher Information**

**1st Edition: Creative Talents Unleashed**  
**CreativeTalentsUnleashed@aol.com**

This Collection is protected under U.S. and International Copyright laws

Copyright © 2016: Allison Grayhurst

ISBN-13: 978-0692702529 (Creative Talents Unleashed)  
ISBN-10: 0692702520

\$13.95

# Credits

## *Book Cover*

Ava Harness

Cover photograph by Ava Harness © 2016

## *Editor*

Clay Kypton Harness

# Dedication

*For my family*



# Preface

This is a selection of Allison Grayhurst's poems spanning over 25 years. Her unique, impressionistic language moves with urgency towards a deeper spiritual understanding, often arriving at potent revelations. Many of the poems confront the duality of life, opening up to infinity while trying to find the signature of infinity in the most rudimentary aspects of existence. There is a rich sexuality in many of them, with a thread of longing flowing through complex imagery. These poems are layered, evoking a deep sense of inner struggle while connecting with a universal rhythm, demanding to be read and re-read.



# Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	v
<i>Preface</i>	vii
Welcome The Death	1
On Tour	2
Desire	3
Because of Course	4
First Snow of Winter	5
The Stone-Frame	6
You Are	7
Animal Sanctuary	9
elegy of this day being	10
Sheaves of Time	11
A Day For My Own	12
An Infant	13
The Ride	14
Beyond The Grave	15

# Table of Contents

As Mad As Mine	16
As We Walk	17
My Body Goes	18
Morning Glory	19
Girl	20
New Era	21
Interlude	22
Hard Time Singing	23
Flies	24
Still	25
On This Dock	26
Thinking Outside	27
No Hope – For Good	28
Learning Temperance	29
Weather	30
A Better Life	31
The Flood	32
A Newly-Patterned Fingerprint	33
Blown	34

# Table of Contents

They Took	35
Draw Near	36
The bough breaks	37
First and Only	38
The Day Is Like	39
Faith	40
In The Thighs	41
The Stone	42
Acceptance	43
Whitewashing	44
Undefined	45
Childhood Cracked	46
When	47
I Am This Creature (drenched in mute history)	48
Parameters	49
Renaissance	50
When I Lean Closer	51
I Find Clarity	52
The Taste	53

# Table of Contents

Only for a time	54
How To Chain The Madness	55
For My Children	56
Pathway	57
When This Is Over	58
Body of Water	59
Train	60
Now I am Two	61
Intimacy	62
Riverstones	63
Waiting	64
Seamless	65
Find me	67
Under the vines	68
Lotus	69
There are names	70
Sanguine	71
Snowy	73
Grace mightier than Natural Law	74

# Table of Contents

Why have I died	77
I heard a poet say	78
The Book	80
Kill the Poet	82
Currents	83
The means to obliterate	84

## *Epilogue*

About the Author	87
Author Websites	88
Acknowledgements	89



# Trial and Witness

selected poems

Allison Grayhurst

*Creative Talents Unleashed*



## Welcome The Death

Welcome the death  
of holding death  
like a smile. For all  
that dreams within,  
all that spreads uncorrupted  
through the veins, turns its back  
on oblivion, knows faith, knows  
its destination is beneath the  
stars.

Welcome the changing leaves, the  
frosted flowers, the vanity of being,  
of feeling one Self, whole before  
the world.

Welcome the body, the counted pennies,  
the child's plight and faces lost  
in midnight light, eternally forgotten.

Welcome the one who stands, the one who  
praises every cried-out syllable, purges  
the soul of stagnant battles, hour upon hour  
smells the freshness of renewal in clenched fists  
and phones that never ring.

Welcome the sound of a remembered kiss  
and the ghosts that grieve forever  
beside each mortal heart.

## On Tour

Pale as the Eastern gulls sitting on rooftops,  
he speeds over the wide country.

He hurts with uncommon intensity -  
liberation balanced between his two lips.

Like the slow hum of rain, I hear him  
treading the snowed-in cities, hear his kiss  
like a prayer of protection, flowering.

Freedom stitched to his smile,  
he crosses the sea he's never seen before,  
as he carries his guitar  
like a lover's warm hand.

## Desire

does not come  
like tolerance, learned,  
worked for. Withstanding  
cruelty, dry lips,  
wild pain, it grows larger  
than love and God and grows  
until all gestures reveal it.

Secretly in the shade of devotion,  
it rages. Crouching behind churches and  
stairwells, it tongues its drug sweeter  
than touch. Burns the stomach, starves  
the heart of faithful riches.

When it comes it has no error  
nor the unanchored presence  
of doubt.

When it comes, it comes riding,  
circling like nightfall  
the soul's great yolk.

## 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.

## First Snow of Winter

First snow of winter falling.

The bed is unmade.  
Rooftops are beautiful  
and white.

Home is a birthday cake,  
a painting etched in crimson  
light. The cats are intently watching.  
The sounds outside are few. One lover  
is sleeping, the other breathes in  
the wintry view.

Like a cleansing, like an unmarked page  
or a slice of Italian bread,  
the snows descend, bringing warmth  
to the veins, bringing the comfort  
of sweaters and knitted socks, bringing  
bodies together and the year to an end.

First snow of winter falling  
like another chance, like a farewell  
to colours fading and flowers on the graves.

First snow of winter arriving,  
its tide of working magic  
caressing away the rage of the city  
with its cold, immaculate embrace.

## The Stone-Frame

The stone-frame sings  
my threshold, sings my  
heart's futility. It is  
so hard a cage it makes  
my knuckles crack, it breaks  
my bones from too much leaping.  
The stone-frame wishes to be my womb, but  
could never be a comforting hovel,  
or resting ground away from  
world-wind and flame.  
The stone-frame maims my voice  
from protesting, strikes a match  
to my endurance and holds me in  
its damp, dusty dorm.  
The stone-frame lets me dream of miles  
away from its door, but never lets more  
than my imagination go wandering.  
The stone-frame is my perception trapped  
in faithless monotony, is my coward smile  
that fears the chaos outside  
its grey, unchanging walls.

## You Are

You are simple  
like death is simple,  
like death is unmistakable,  
containing the most feverish and trying  
of mysteries within  
its boundless domain.

You are beautiful  
like a cat is beautiful  
silently sitting,  
galactic in its sensual form,  
giving with its gaze  
substance to voice and blood.

You are fire-driven  
like stars and like sex,  
in perpetual combustion,  
with an inner pulse of endless  
dance, dancing  
in savage, mystical tides.

You are gentle  
like a raindrop caught  
in a lucky palm, gentle  
like the shelter of a best friend's arms.

You are more than sun and bird and fox,  
more than soil to my groundless heart.

*Trial and Witness*

All I bless and all I need,  
I hold because of you.

No meaning nor madness  
could replace the milk and breath  
that you are.

## 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.

## elegy of this day being

At the throat, brushed green like tile I shine.  
The devil says "hum-drum"  
as the eel struggles, futile like a wagging tail.  
So many broken, hating with the hardness of crocodiles  
and ants, pulling along their dead,  
to consume, knowing nothing of sorrow or forgiveness.  
All night I sit with my naked thighs  
on the carpet, red from the heat.  
What point could there possibly be  
to all this pain, the death  
of others, the sickness that swarms in mid-air?  
Hurricanes hit the graveyards.  
A gull tilts on a telephone wire. I wish to bid goodbye.  
I wish for ice-cream cones in my fridge,  
a handful of poppies to give some child,  
any child, I meet.  
I see dead eyes in my dream,  
glossed with mucous and unbearable vacancy.  
How do I serve when the world is so cold?  
The humpbacks know this, the midgets  
and also the centipedes.  
I want to hide in rooms where  
infants are sleeping or salamanders nurse their young.  
The darkness is in me. The ground deceives me,  
changes colours as I go.  
Let us go now, my nightmares  
and I, go under the light, go until  
our heart's blood is free-falling, exposed.

## Sheaves of Time

Sheaves of time like wispy hair  
freed to the wind, fall on me,  
tickling my skin with their subtle happening.  
Happy are the people with soap opera love  
and yellow hair.  
Happy am I rolling and stretching & rolling  
under the great white sun. I am moved  
to deliver my package at noon. I am myself bonded  
to my mission like ligaments to the bone.  
Sheaves of time drift on my plate  
like leaves from my favourite tree.  
Call me out from my doubt and let me  
love each day as new, with the kind of hope  
only children hold, or lovers caressing faces,  
feeling eternity on their fingertips.

## A Day For My Own

The darning of socks in  
summertime. The filing of nails  
on a nothing-to-do night -  
with all desires nourished.

I see a can of peaches open, the laundry washed  
and windows everywhere, letting in  
the outdoors.

I feel my pulse calm,  
feel almond shells around my feet  
and the fires of anxiety appeased.  
Like holding the hand of a friend in need  
or running through a valley with a dog  
who can't be seen, my eyes are strong  
with imagination. They blend  
with the October leaves and lap-up  
visions of children playing  
where willow trees so easily grow.

## 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.

## The Ride

Again the stars were plucked  
from her mind and the world below  
leapt up and sponged her with its flame.  
That summer she made a wish upon her chains  
and walked the deserted farmyards.  
The ravens followed her through the weeds  
and heat, keeping up conversation. At night  
she sang to the beating of the rain and stroked the head  
of the dead bug in her pocket.  
She was neither of the mountains nor of the desert.  
She was calm as crazy sometimes gets, and the thunder  
hissed out her name as the June's morning rays  
danced her a sermon. She talked  
to her shadow when the birds had gone,  
and her fingernails were brittle as cracked ice.  
On the seventeenth day her breath collapsed with  
the rising sun as the cobwebs about her sparkled, stirred  
by a sweetened wind.

## Beyond The Grave

If all the seeds fell like blood  
or blood like seeds into  
the ravenous earth and time  
was a wagging tail in the dark  
then I would know that death would come  
by any reason and be a blessing  
all on its own. But as it is, death is  
the hollow spot of the living - some with  
grief and others with fear, and me myself,  
it is memory that unbuttons the flesh of my chest  
to leave me poked and burning.  
It is the hill I climb and stumble  
down its rocky incline whenever I return  
if only once a day  
to meet death's stalking eyes.  
It is not my heart that fails me,  
but the things outside  
like the shadow on the neighbours' window  
and the frightening madness of so many strangers.  
It is here and there like an insect  
on my wall, like the fatherly love  
I'll never find again in another's eyes,  
but is with me in the coming autumn air,  
and in the quietude of these joy-filled days.

## As Mad As Mine

Grief is cold as the world  
without a wish, riding  
the waking land.  
I saw the hounds trace my footsteps.  
I believed in an everafter,  
and the shore was my mansion to fight for.  
I drove from the river onward,  
looking for a season to change me.  
The miracle, the terror before the miracle,  
is the salty flavour of my blood.  
Sudden love stinging the throat. Sudden  
happiness to renew the cage of day-to-day drudgery.  
I cry like a seal who has lost her pup to the killer whale.  
Tomorrow is not a void  
but a temple of what is held sacred today.  
Everytime I answer, I lose.  
But when I am holding my breath,  
caressing the slit throat of all my hopes,  
then and there my eyes and ears  
have learned the voice of  
golden heaven.

## As We Walk

I spent an hour listening  
to the grey and cooling sky, and the blackbirds  
that gathered low.

We are but gestures sown  
by particles of love, desire and greed.  
Few are one tapestry, most are a bit of  
all three.

There was a plague in my eyes  
that has thinned my expectations, but  
I am better.

Being in love this long is like a voyage  
underwater, swarming with glorious and  
dangerous beings.

You will always be the one to hatch my breath,  
the catching flint when I am shipwrecked,  
and the good thing I can hold up willingly to the light.

We have been shown there is no grave,  
only the mourning. We have been shown  
it is the aging in front of each other  
that makes aging wonderful.

I no longer worry about what I am going to say  
because there is you, with the scent of autumn  
strong in your hair.

## My Body Goes

Through the blinds  
my body goes soaring  
touching the hawk and  
choppy clouds.  
It dips through the misty air  
holding hands with the winter.  
It opens its mouth to taste the wind  
and sees a balloon float by.  
Then it lands in dunes of sand  
covered in unmarred snow.  
A wren's small footprints lead it down the  
slope into the underbrush where a  
hound dog has curled into a sleeping ball.  
It tiptoes past to the side road where  
two children are singing their ABCs  
and making angels in the snow.  
When back in flight, it rides the twilight's rays  
into this room and leans  
to sip a drink of cold coffee, tasting  
like liquorice candy.

## Morning Glory

Lost hideaway under the flesh  
where birds of prey drink to the heart's  
southward direction.  
In liquid sleep a pocket is forming  
of voices named in childhood years.  
And from the beginning the miracle  
sat on our shoulder like a butterfly,  
though we never christened it as our own.  
I am tossing back the weight of worldly waters  
and things to be morally wounded for.  
I give no more from the side of my mouth,  
for the seductive shadow and the running crowd.  
Plain as the path to heaven, I kiss the dread  
and let it drift down sea. I open a room  
where the light catches my breath.  
I am breathing a morning glory.

## Girl

Under the willow tree a girl  
was standing, lonely with  
the worst of nights ahead.  
They said  
drink from the tar pit 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.

## New Era

From the start I believed  
in never bending, but now I am a weather-vane,  
guided by singing.

Now, in movement I grow like a wild weed -  
a glutton of untouched terrain.

I have put on the iron mask,  
burned my skin for the battles  
of another. That shore is sinking  
and my globe has altered its axle.

I put away my grown-up philosophy  
to live by impulse and the pity of God.

The task is done, the ice is swallowed.  
It is time to love the gargoyles and create  
a new form of beauty.

## Interlude

Upon the window's sill  
I saw a ghost walking  
of a young woman veiled in grief  
with sunset hair and moral eyes -  
her death drifted to me like  
a scent. I called to her, with  
overflowing sympathy, but the grave  
was now her bed and the enemy-world  
was her heart's betrayal. I saw her sit  
then look to the sky, her tormented forehead  
glistening as the rain did on the roof's old shingles.  
She spoke three names softly, and over and over their  
sound ripped my skull as if the sun itself had entered  
to burn all hard-held secrets out.  
I loved her like someone I had long known and understood,  
watching her, hardly visible  
as the rain pushed on.

## Hard Time Singing

The ground that grows  
the wasteful blight and  
estranges the kiss and hiss of wildlife  
is in me like a slaughtered tribe  
that has no face.  
I am in the nightmare cloud, wrapped  
in tar and rotted wood. I hide  
beneath the blanket, undone.  
Sickness has walked around me, mile  
around mile, and names me this stone chiseled  
in two. It is the beginning, but it is midnight  
and I am marked to be unmoved.

## Flies

By dawn the flies  
released their shape into  
the soothing wind and what  
came back was the weary pulse  
of dying wings grafted to the day.  
What world was this inside their  
dark heads that honoured the  
photograph over the experience,  
that held up frivolous wealth like  
a deserved trophy?  
What faith was plucked with the flowers  
as all their little tongues reached out to pocket  
the short-term scent?  
The flies live in their high castles like undergrounds  
enjoying only the drive and privileged complaints.  
They call themselves the philanthropists and  
the even-tempered elite.  
But I see them in the honey jar  
and count them as already gone.

## Still

You and I are a terracotta river  
encasing the unmanageable rock.  
We drink from the cyclone fire  
and fill our ears with the sounds of harps  
and nocturnal rejoicing.  
When I am touched and my head  
is under the feather then time is  
fossilized and my body is the voice  
that drives me down the curve,  
wide enough for an astounding fulfillment.  
When I touch the core of your bones  
and join the urgency of your kisses  
with my own, then we are lured  
from our daily plots and cast-out dreams,  
until flooded and found by the golden synergy  
of our married tongue.

## On This Dock

I hear the white steed  
and the fish together  
in dark obscurity.

I look at the body of water,  
the children weeping to gain control.  
I listen for the perishing wind  
and declare to it a vigil  
of telltale strength.

The journey here faces  
the drive of instinct - to buckle  
in and walk the safest hallway  
or to carry the weight of failure  
and still harbour a cry to the fox and a belief  
in the many shapes of heaven.

The journey knows its evening  
has come and all the beautiful clouds will drop  
one by one from the sky.

## Thinking Outside

Touching tails  
and feather wings.  
The apple trees bend  
and sing of autumn's coming.  
Starlings talk across backyards  
and the high-pitched beetle  
fills the wind like a calming drug.  
In this place as summer fades  
the quiet demands self-truth.  
To pull from inside  
a lacerated pride  
and pile it on the dried grass.  
Shadows mend the divided self  
and love is an activity  
to understand while counting birds  
overhead.

## No Hope – For Good

Understand, I was pleading  
like Job under the wire  
for the arrival of hope.  
But now I see that hope is murder to the seed  
of this emerging beginning.  
It is not a butterfly shred in a child's hands  
but the cause of dark inertia,  
giving despair a little more fuel to run with,  
preventing the final collapse, stopping the black hole  
that will suck the last trickle of false expectations through,  
keeping me pinned to this stalled, starved and stale  
universe like a crushed insect clinging for breath.  
It is hope but also torture that takes death away  
from that which needs to die.  
It is hope but not enough to build on,  
so it is better that it never comes, never runs  
along side this something spectacular that is trying  
to break through.

## Learning Temperance

Cradle the handle under the sleeve  
and watch as the sun changes shadows.  
Blue. I wait in the private ever after with  
the future under my fingernails and an orange seed  
in my throat.  
Will it happen or will it always be 'the wait'?  
Waiting in the moment just before bloom  
but never arriving into full colour? Or is it only  
a long pause, gathering breath for the final  
swing that will bury all dullness that has gone before?  
I see two doors and neither of them are open.  
I see a tree I have walked by many times before. This time  
I noticed it and smiled.  
Maybe this is not darkness at all,  
but a line to follow and focus on  
like a child watching rain drops - one at a time.

## Weather

Walls shake  
under the pressure of an ongoing storm.  
The storm exhausts  
birds in flight and flings  
squirrels to the ground.  
The ground is hard with ice  
and the lost promise of spring.  
Spring, children wait for  
under the volatile sky.  
The sky is tuned by the fingers of time.  
Time cannot give a chance accepted or refused  
but is the measure by which all things move and die.  
Die, the storm is thinning like the skin of a worn drum,  
leaving its signature beat on the road.  
The road I base all my faith on is under my sleeve  
sure of me, regardless if I turn or if I follow.

## 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.

## The Flood

Glorious weather, wetting  
the decks and smallest of worms.  
We were made to split the light  
with voices singular and clean.  
We were destined to wade in  
night, free of logic, partakers  
of heart-wrenching dreams.  
I name myself lost but loved  
and that is better than any key.  
I count the madness in cracks  
and know the world is ready to turn.  
Funerals and baby births and  
a barn alive with birds, soon  
clouds will come and the zodiac will  
burn.

God will be full of joy  
and each household will be looking  
in a new direction - close-to-the-bone,  
materially threadbare.

## A Newly-Patterned Fingerprint

It's the end  
of my kind,  
the last of my line  
unfolding.  
And then  
all of it will be different -  
both the edge and the enlightenment,  
the things precise  
and the things undefined.  
All that was smouldering  
will be set ablaze,  
and beauty and grace will be overflowing  
like a drip-drop dream pure as reality.  
It is the end - the place of no more new beginnings,  
a place where the perfect light cannot fade  
or grow too bright, where ironic timing transforms  
into an integrated, balanced life.

## Blown

Blown like a grain of sand from a hollow twig.

It is beautiful to be blown.

Blown, into the winding forward thrust  
where good happens with the movement  
of each day and the fire-cracker burn  
is a burn of celebration.

Carried through the radar-stream  
into an easeful position where  
the goal is getting nearer at a slow pace  
and old patterns are disintegrating,  
remembered but not renewed.

## They Took

They took away  
the long and leisurely shave.  
They took the dark and sensuous hood  
and peeled it away  
to shadeless bold colours -  
everything bright and nothing  
integrated.

They took the comforting depth  
and put in its place a bad commercial.

They took the swelling stars.

## Draw Near

One day the drift drew near  
and lightning touched the lips of angels.  
The light was left only for the mighty.  
So we sang. So we sang.  
The murderers were shelved  
beside the mighty because the only difference  
was degree.  
We opened ourselves up while in the rain, open  
under the dark cloud, open  
through the winters and the occasional plague.  
We felt the evergreens between our fingertips  
and sold only that which was ours to sell.  
One day the drift drew near  
and we sang. We sang.

## The bough breaks

and dreams collapse un-cushioned  
like the smile that forsakes me  
and the wonderful illusion of things past  
but never lost.

For here I cut my antennae down  
and kiss the pyramid on my grass,  
blessed by the end result  
but never by the happening:

I know the world  
and it needs forgiveness.

For here the smell grew toxic  
and the glass filled to overflowing,  
but the grime inside never got better,  
though polished every day.

For here I cradle my body to sleep,  
the long way down is the only way down  
and we are sold by the scars upon our throat,  
by the longing discarded that never knew it  
could end

and by the only relationship we are all  
bound to have - our stronghold with or  
not with

God.

## First and Only

The first time I found you  
at the donut shop with the perfect balance  
of youth and torment  
absorbed in every movement, I knew I found  
an eternal friend. The first time you sang, I felt  
a fiery and surprising happiness.  
The first hug we shared on the church steps  
as the music played below was like a wave,  
strong and soothing  
rippling along my back and arms.  
Our first kiss outside the café, when the rain  
was about to fall, told me there would be  
no number to our days, no greater gift but  
to feel this - our lips once apart,  
now vibrant, like a new being.  
Our first laugh together as we drank our coffee told us  
the depths we shared could be lightened by one another,  
gave us more than important conversation, gave us  
a rope to sometimes swing on and to always hold.  
Our two children born were more than blue jays  
on our shoulders,  
more than any joy gone before, bringing us further  
into one another's arms. Blessed by this indelible love,  
I am here, counting on nothing but on what we have,  
strangely at peace, like the peace I found  
the time I first found you.

## The Day Is Like

The day is like  
the day before  
the worm arrived  
in a jar at my doorstep.  
Before I took the worm in  
and fed it lettuce leaves and fresh water.  
Before I had something to care for,  
when loneliness was the largest difficulty around  
and isolation pounded beneath my lids like  
a cancer.

The day is tick tock and as slow as waiting  
for that needed call to arrive.  
I collect the noises from outside  
but have nowhere to put them. I open my mouth,  
but my voice has gone underground.  
The sun looks in on me, but evades my skin.  
I don't hold my breath. I let it in and out.  
I let the day be a blank wall.  
And sometimes a day like today is like  
an empty room and this empty room  
is a treasure.

## Faith

It is found,  
found in a pocket on a jacket  
that has not been worn for years.  
It is an emblem of uncharted kindness  
that cannot fade even when I falter.  
It is a name on a wall  
that changes but is always mine.  
It is the end result, the start of all  
things good.  
It is not going to leave me, or seep  
through the mattress, underground.  
It is so beautiful, it has the whole of my being.  
It is speaking to me from billboard signs,  
from the ones I loved and lost.  
It is the parcel I have been waiting for.  
It is my graduation party,  
my only hope for recovery.  
It is warmth and well being.  
It is Friday night.  
It is a star-shaped candy,  
and it is found.

## In The Thighs

Blood in the thighs like  
a bowling ball moving,  
rotating, heavy, at high speed  
up between the  
hip bones, into the heart chamber.  
Nothing can stop its weight and damage,  
nothing can stop its motion.  
The trees say "A different face of God is etched upon  
my each and every leaf." But the beetle and ladybug  
who eat the leaves do not care. And the person snipping  
at branches does not care.  
Through the thighs, moving  
rotating, heavy, at high speed.  
Call out to me  
Call the number engraved into the armchair  
He came like light washing over the many,  
entering and cleansing only the few.  
He came. He is  
what everyone needs,  
but the pavement is thick  
and the ground beneath is rich,  
saturated with worms,  
moving,  
thick  
with worm motion  
moving at worm speed.

## The Stone

The stone drops,  
settles in the sand like a beetle.  
Lovers die  
for lack of trying.  
Children wait like they  
always have  
to be made a priority.  
The sun is swollen and breaking  
on the crust of the universe.  
A fairytale in a box, barely opened,  
but already stronger than reality.  
A last chance stored-up for  
old age.  
People are falling,  
glass doors are ajar.  
Someone is listening but no one  
even smiles.  
That stone drops,  
it is made up of hard,  
unforgiving stuff.  
It stays,  
and the surface  
is its meaning.

## Acceptance

I first felt  
the longing with little comfort,  
as a shape with sharp edges.  
I dared myself into a corner  
and lost even the impulse for serenity.  
In the grey afternoon, coming home,  
I saw an inscription in the space  
between clouds and knew  
I had outgrown looking for signs -  
The wind is a river and a house (any house)  
is a dead log left in the elements, harbouring life  
in its dead crusty dampness.  
I had come full circle just by surviving,  
back to the longing that existed before -  
this time, void of grandiose significance,  
existing now like an urge, strong as fire, natural  
as deformity.

## Whitewashing

What loss  
buries the jewel in the dirt,  
boards up the windows  
and fastens a weight  
to the sun?  
What loss is this that  
denies midnight its miracles,  
that extracts motivation  
and pretense,  
lies behind billboards,  
under the deck  
and in the empty chair?  
What loss I bear  
as weightlessness - nothing to ground me  
and  
nothing core.

## Undefined

I can't say I am a sailor  
who moves forward without ground  
or room to run.

I can't say I am a leader who  
closes down slaughterhouse doors  
or uproots cruel traditions with one swift blow.

I can't say I have a social smile that calms  
the afflicted with carefree warmth.

I can't say I am that woman who children cling to  
and adorn with their fresh imaginations.

I can't say I am like a house or like a star or water  
that rams into rocks then falls back into itself.

I can only say a flower is here,  
and I am not that flower.

## Childhood Cracked

The doll fell  
and was never picked up.  
It fell by the curb  
in a lucid slumber  
of inarticulate words  
like a dew drop  
on ice.  
Nothing was coveted,  
the chant grew like the moon  
as the month moved on.  
What was cold inside was a needle  
of sharp divide and the impact  
of unbuffered death.  
Into this autumn  
the doll fell  
and the meridian of grace  
was at last  
on the table.

## When

When I was a fish the morning light  
brought me near the shark's skilled swim.

I would hide behind rocks and sea urchins, watching  
octopi and their slow contracting movement.

When I was an octopus, my tentacles could think.

I knew of things like volcano ruptures and how  
to escape fishnets and other forms of human capture.

When I was a deer I was in union, safe with my clan,  
grazing in the lion's domain.

When I was a lion, female, tense with the hunt,  
protective of my playful young, I knew of thirst  
and days without food, retreating from the large and  
ever-present sun.

When I was a baby child, it felt like there was a stone  
stuck in my throat and a restlessness racing  
through my limbs.

I cried and cried when I was a baby, unfamiliar  
with this daunting helpless form.

## I Am This Creature (drenched in mute history)

I am this creature  
let loose from the grave,  
but still without a Sunday  
or a bed of more than weeds and worms.  
I am this liar, trapped in fantasy,  
a carcass hanging upside down, all cheers and woes  
set at high volume.  
I was with hunger, a rage of flies on soiled food,  
desperate to know fulfillment.  
I was a girl, knowing nothing of drugs, but helpless  
just the same, a slave to all my girlish visions  
of the coming days of promised rapture.  
I was a young woman, wearing drab and loose clothes,  
never looking in a mirror, talking in tongues,  
clenching confusion as a crutch and giving glory  
to any glory-seeking teacher.  
I am this woman, strong shouldered, a bit threadbare  
but wanting  
never to rekindle that drowned flame -  
a creature in a world of foreign wilderness.  
I'm circling, circling a solitary stone.

## Parameters

The gift of all this crumbles  
with a single out-of-sync happening.  
Geraniums are frosting over  
and the high grass is yellowing.  
Yesterday was a cat in symmetrical slumber,  
pictures stood straight and warmth  
was gathering like a sweet wind over the neighbourhood.  
Does this mean it is my mind? like an insect living  
one season, sees only that season, dies before winter,  
content to have made it so long?  
Does this mean the puddle  
I jump in, wade in, determine in  
is only a pail of water, nothing beside the ocean?  
When the puddle is stirred from its stillness or  
becomes a bath for snakes or dries up from too much sun -  
it is still the puddle and will replenish again  
as all puddles do in the rain, maybe  
in the early evening just before the lion comes  
to take a long, relaxed drink.

## Renaissance

The fountain I drank from  
became toxic, and the way to make more purity  
turned out to be the way to make less.  
And so I am small as a lump  
of hardened salt. And so what  
if my flesh is getting old - a defined woman  
doesn't have to fear such a thing,  
nor does she have to fear the collapse of her every hope,  
because inside she is solid, though  
still impressionable,  
because she has learned that God's light  
is born to flicker, and not to be  
a heavy stream.

## When I Lean Closer

Remember when we were falling,  
making hoops in the sky? When intelligence  
didn't matter, only the desire  
to be alive? Remember when a different rank  
and inequality never blocked a friendship,  
when the heart was whole,  
and money never shamed us  
one way  
or another?

Remember the light in our pockets,  
the frame of our minds as we lived  
in perpetual loneliness, free  
but cold?

Remember when guilt could only go so far  
to actually change us and a lie was never  
stronger than imagination?  
Remember our handprints, those handprints  
on the wall?

## I Find Clarity

I find clarity  
beside the open coffin  
beside the one made of glass  
with the see-through dogma  
and beside the one of simple majesty.  
I find myself free of the cumbersome hunger  
for revival. I find myself just wanting  
to be in the shadow, away from direct  
light and the attitude of sentimentality and guilt.  
I find my hands are strong and my legs  
are capable of walking long distances.  
I find that that is enough  
to complete me.  
I find food in someone else's grocery cart  
and my thirst is something I have learned to live with.  
I find I am not so impressed with what used to  
impress me. I am not striving for passion  
at every turn, but I find passion at the lower levels  
where rodents crawl and babies  
muse at the ceiling.

## The Taste

of someone else's  
memories tracing the lining  
of my throat, merging with  
my own memories, until there  
is no distinction

of apple butter  
spread across my tongue  
thickening as it descends

of fire  
and of absolute calm  
combining and moving  
like a wave within

of hunger eased  
and rapture reached

of being fully saturated with  
sexual peace

The taste.

## Only for a time

bodies curse the morning  
and find the bulk of their cursing  
burned by the awakening of outside creatures.  
Waiting, when waiting is not called for,  
when what is necessary is to be still  
without anticipation, to step into the miracle  
of listening - sounds of kestrels circling low, sounds  
of territorial squirrels and young robins  
flexing their wings. In my eyes, the gulls are angels  
arriving face-to-face at my second story window,  
speaking of God's grace, personal, sharp and pure.  
For the last time, chaos will have its say  
and cowards will rule my playground.  
This is the time of great beginning,  
a time of the final letting go.  
The birds are beside me, speaking in ways  
I again understand, while the world is carving  
new structures of dread.  
This is the time of open palms and no favours,  
a time of birds everywhere, singing for me, but not  
for me.

## How To Chain The Madness

I will start small,  
just a little hole  
to plant my herb.

I will regain my equilibrium  
in tiny doses, under the covers,  
when the children are asleep and even the bride-to-be  
has eased her nerves.

I will head slowly in the direction I was sent,  
inch my way out of this dark valve, not worry  
about the weather behind me or the harsh  
possibilities ahead. I will play my instrument softly,  
take hours to eat one fruit.

And in that place, I will etch out a rhythm I can keep,  
and this form of chaos will at last be clothed.

## 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.

## Pathway

The power  
and the moon and the bride  
ducking behind snow banks.  
Weather, may I have you to own,  
be reborn in the dead afternoon like  
a hawk that circles the windless skies?  
Sleep, with all the dreams and shapes of dreams  
tucked in your mind like precious stones.  
I carved you out of grain. I stalked your elusive  
steps, looking for you at each corner. Down I went sliding  
into open houses searching for your seed,  
but your seed was a balloon  
I could not catch and  
my child-grip is short, as are  
my obsessive desires. Too far down  
is the raging river's floor -  
I am carried off. This time I will not panic,  
but sink and imagine I am growing gills.  
I will relax the burning  
in my mind and enjoy the end and then give in  
to the continuous flow.

## When This Is Over

At the end of the day, the pears will be ripe  
and the ones I loved and died will float before me  
in waves of growing beauty.  
At the end, when all of this leaves, then I will breathe  
an owl breath, still in my tranquil sky.  
At the end, I will find you, thank you for this sick chaos -  
myself, a garden, hit by a massive storm.  
I will give life again to the little birds, insects that have no  
use or concept of glory. I will return with you  
to the Buddha waters, happy to know so much love.  
I will walk out my door and there will be summer,  
early summer, and you and I  
(though bruised and that much more  
world-weary) will walk into the warmth:  
ultimately loved, unequivocally whole.

## Body of Water

Death is a stream I must undress  
to enter to know its cool wetness in every  
crease of my flesh, melding with me like an  
expanse of skin. I've been waiting, moaning  
at the dilemma of existing - ecstasy and nights  
of bedding sleeplessness like a lover I cannot release.  
You love me in the cave, in the lightless kingdom  
of your melancholy and your rage. Lift me now from  
this drowning. I feel sick as though all my air is gone.  
There is so much weight inside of me –  
the choking, the squeezing out  
of my mortality. I cannot stop.  
My head aches like a locked room on fire -  
chlorophyll all around and mid-day is a serpent  
emerging from between my toes.  
You let me burn the incense.  
I burned it, and I cannot breathe now without those scents  
to wade in and sooth my despair.

## Train

Kneeling on the train tracks: Resigned to this dangerous meditation - a risk of steel wheels on flesh and flattened limbs. Kneeling because I cannot move or adhere to the voices in my head singing of an intimate shower, a transmutation of my solidarity and how I see my special self - love from everywhere singing, dwelling in my sleep which is never sleep but wide-awake dreams and turning from side to back. Kneeling, I hear nothing coming, but it will come - heavy, unstoppable, driven with pure intent. Kneeling until I can claim this destiny without shame, stare at the treasure of hands and lips and touch back, until I weep my centre raw, until I carry nothing but the moment, love again - sadness, shadows, unwashed hair, desperate desire – until I can sleep and stop kneeling – head neither turned up nor down. Kneeling, hearing a distant moan, a vibration – inevitable as this kneeling  
I must but I cannot not yet not yet  
let go of.

## Now I am Two

It is this way, togetherness:

A covenant with tenderness and speaking thoughts  
only glimpsed.

The snow falls like rain as the afternoon moves  
without time, our hands pressed as one,  
lips and then, something better. Always  
miraculous, unexpected, awakening. Always  
us, vanishing and then re-emerging with these things  
of harmony and friction engulfing our scent and path. Soon,  
the tiger lilies will bloom and being just us  
will be made difficult  
with the children gathered in our arms.

But this 'difficult' is whole and adds  
to our liberation - making coffee, laughing  
at things shared and only ours.

It is what was prayed for, what years and hardship has not  
diluted, but has fused into an unbreakable bond - us -  
the summoning of all our parts - ancient, immediate  
so that even when death comes or fate and terrible sobbing,  
neither of us will ever be again  
without the other  
alone.

## Intimacy

I lay by your twisted completeness - an ocean  
of transformative screams, rolling, lulling, the colour of ice  
and sometimes, gold.

I breathe, though I cannot  
imagine the radiant death inside you that  
maims all warmth, casts out the churning world  
like a house fly. Touched by your beauty and  
the sharp lines of your natural conviction,  
I am final - ripped from darkness into  
something too bright - dunked into the chilled water,  
naked, my heart not even where it belongs, but  
rising, rising  
not pulsing - pausing and still because  
this is not sorrow, not the past nor even is it heavy.  
Because I touch your hand  
and it is fixed like a star is fixed in the sky or glass  
impaled so deep it touches bone. I touch  
and like you I am contained, blue - and I am now  
and better than,  
bigger than  
a thousand storms.

## Riverstones

Announcing flesh  
in the sleepy-loosened  
day. A childhood of  
bridges, masterpiece aromas  
that overlook the playing fields -  
one year, two grades and people  
once beautiful, now ordinary,  
bike turns, riverstones, skipping  
on driveways, melting ice over grates

long pleated hair, dark, looking into  
competitive eyes. It was the last  
year I was there, spending evenings staring  
at the gaudy peeling wallpaper or  
in the basement crawlspace, space  
without any windows, hearing  
hockey games, spiders mating, silhouettes  
disintegrating. It was the last time  
in that car for that car ride, through dull highway hours,  
cats in boxes, on laps, children waving, music at half mast,  
children waving.

## Waiting

is secondary, serves  
to sustain the illusion. Better  
to bathe in the molten heat, dig out weeds and pay the bills.  
Better than pretending the chalk drawing won't fade,  
that the overalls fit and the twirling webs glittering  
in the sun do so solely for beauty's sake,  
not as nature's balance  
to its otherwise invisibility.

Formations, adrenaline - geese call  
as they split the undertones of sky. It is better  
to have no fences, no boundaries actualized  
by the mind's pride, no tangible hopes  
of personal importance. The sidewalks are torn up  
and there is nowhere to put my feet. I don't believe  
in waiting, being patient while aroused.

Once upon a time a child's voice  
was all I needed to save me - once there were scooters,  
pigtails and baseball caps. Damn my world  
for changing, for making me ready, but falling behind,  
insufficient to nourish this latest being that has arisen.

I will not wait, not be killed daily  
without knowing climax or the aftermath  
when nerves stop scurrying and there is quiet enough  
to collect good memories.  
Better to partake in war or to crush anthills.  
Better to be left in my monastery where the brick walls  
have a shadowy sustaining glow and my lover's heart  
is walnut strong, drained of expectations,  
giving, yes, but rudimentary, self-contained.

## Seamless

Raincoats and rainy seasons are behind us now.  
I picked up a feather.  
You took it from me and now it is yours. And just like that,  
rich as the coral reef waters, we were initiated into  
a lower layer.

Intensity is a button. It is concentration - one part,  
one of your parts unrelentingly explored  
while ignoring other distracting sensations.  
It is the thick blood raking of thighs against our lesser faith.

Fears of the future put aside  
and left to their weeping.  
Shoulders become secrets receiving probing  
pressure-point intrusions.  
Like a primeval working of strings,  
through this communication, we see  
the courage of our history rise, become an advancing truth,  
and our pores  
grow and sparkle like thousands of tiny sun-drenched ants  
pooling together to parallel a single purpose.

We know 'just survival' is tyranny.  
What we seek is not movement  
purely for the sake of employment, but to create canvases  
of vigorous struggles - ones that can only be cemented  
in unison.

Our bodies have abandoned their blood-lines.  
We are touching every crease  
and tense design with undiluted intention -  
first blotting out words, then delectable conversations.  
We rejoice in the grand dramatics of our compatibility,  
equally committed to corporeal immersion.

The past culminates in this single outpouring. It is  
a privileged evolution. It is months of misfortune  
exterminated by the exertion of our mouths:

*Trial and Witness*

Strange rhythms are risked, foreheads pressed,  
giving way  
to beautiful unadulterated disclosure.

## Find me

Can I see it? Gravity like glue  
or something more substantial like  
the sigh of a sick child. Find me like  
an open tulip, smooth, tangible liquid. Find me  
like science is found enhancing the faint glow of  
an almost-faith. I am reeling with need, chosen to bend  
into this desperation as hips bend forward,  
seeking the electric dimension of togetherness. I must be  
an oversized squid under deep layers of ice, unaware  
of such things as galaxies and weather -  
breathing in my cold hell,  
shipwrecked in this cavern of isolation. I must be unable  
to love - impatience burrowing into me, past  
muscles, touching the skin beneath skin. Yielding, I am  
yielding to its mouth, subterranean pressure,  
feeling the anxiety of knowledge  
that disinfects each particle until  
it is made nude, until it is like a knife-tip to the cornea  
or a standing ovation given to all that swells to capacity,  
pushes even further, then explodes.

Morning is beautiful. I am planting.  
Will you find me, honour the primrose on my veranda,  
maybe even snip one, take it to your table  
and dream of a voice  
other than your own?

## Under the vines

Ways the willow swishes freely,  
washing the wind into the sun.  
Child in a tree fort dives fearlessly,  
surging with elation to and fro:  
over snails and uncut grass,  
elements passing, back against the evening sun.  
Waves are the evidence of the ocean's breathing.  
Minds run swift, masterpieces of destinations,  
forming their own geography.  
Reality burns like a blood-clot -  
an over-stuffed museum, updating slow.  
Pirates of power and horoscopes bleating,  
the only refuge is to forget.  
Out through a backyard window, the willow tree  
owns both ground and sky.  
Imagination comes as suffering's negation,  
potpourri to the stench of debt and worse-things owed.  
Destruction overtakes too easily,  
like a once-hollow ditch, now satisfied with its  
fill of bones. All needs are political. Heaven  
comes close in secret Sex, immortalizing flesh,  
though never arresting decay.  
Child on a vine joined with the ways of the willow,  
swinging, thrown-off shoes.

## Lotus

Sleep, into triumphant sleep,  
waking is a tide of abysses and senses  
reflecting illusions. Cursory stresses,  
repairing at the bedside where my knees bent in prayer,  
scuffing my skin with cosmic complaining.  
I've thought about this, and I've decided  
not to care if I fail at swimming or grooming  
or trophy-getting, or in collecting egg whites,  
having more than what I have  
necessary on the table.  
Love is the weathervane is the station,  
earning eternity, a teaming ocean worthy of a dive.  
The rest is a stunted fetus that will never coo  
or be baby-dream sufficient.  
I've spent too long weight-lifting chaos's hammer,  
flinging myself from wall to stump.  
I have eyes that hold me, another's and another's  
I can take pictures of and sing to, and I wish for nothing  
but to retain this fertility of tender revealing.  
Children and the final history of desire,  
predestined to return as a speck - own my freewill,  
multiplying with the rhythm of a brighter responsibility.  
Sleep, for I've never existed  
but to count this love and to love this way  
personal, a cliché of bloated ignorance,  
with a mouthful of famine and an armful  
of miniscule miracles,  
gestating, spiraling, blending into the soft brown sofa,  
tea in hand, leaning on another, amazed  
by how good this is and how very long  
this cozy reverie has lasted.

## There are names

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

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

Snared before my shelter broke  
and I could be saved by surrender.  
A thicket of needles and bushes trembling  
with little birds. Contact. Glint.  
Won't something rush at me, increase my odds?

I could send you away, then I could live  
cold, complete as a reed or as an angel.  
Science will not have me. You will not let me go.

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

## Sanguine

One small awakening to accept  
acceptance - a lethargic arm on my shoulder  
weighing down. Air that is security  
has never been my ocean.

I have never been able to trigger kinships  
in a field of sunlight.

No light has more volume.

I am content in places where my imagination can reign,  
where definition is arbitrary, redundant,  
and not very useful.

I tried to love you, dive into your trachea, show  
you the substance that enriches my cells. But we have  
different vocations: I make windows.

And you stand outside  
with your scales of distraction, participating,  
socially at ease.

You have grown tall, wedded as you are  
to the world's expectations.

What once was lean, marvelously eccentric,  
has become typical, robust as an animated ideal.

You gave up your awkward insecurities,  
replaced them  
with suave affection and loveless sex. You are not warm,  
though you feign warmth. You know how to act -  
teeth set in alignment, and your apparel - clean of cat hairs,  
with the appropriate amount of ingenuity,  
just enough to generate interest but not alarm.

Old people are getting older and dying,  
they can hardly believe  
it has come down to this. They lose their lovers,  
have appendages aching with weakness - fingers  
that cannot move on cue to stroke a cheek,  
fingers that want to flesh out, plump up,

*Trial and Witness*

become tantalizing again.

I have taken you with my fingers,  
awakening the soft space between  
your naval and groin. I have laid across,  
massaged every ounce of need  
into the vulnerable region separating your hipbones.  
And I would go further.  
But you have no natural shade,  
and it is too exhausting to keep toting around your wares.

You supplied me with inspiration.  
The postage is paid.  
I must move closer to the edge of the road for you.  
I must make room,  
walk past, surpass, enter  
my Rosewood red front door, without.

## 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.

## Grace mightier than Natural Law

What if eternity was marked in a mirror,  
and we lived there like animated ornaments,  
reproducing each dot of matter as reflection?  
Especially love  
drilled into the furrows of fear, or love  
withstanding betrayal by latching firmly to devotion?

What if what we perceived as solid is itself artificial  
and that true existence is elsewhere, is a multi-layered  
holographic construction coating our reality? As if death  
was the overture of our lives, rooted in continuance and  
not defeat.

At times I can taste myself slipping  
into the tip of a Cathedral ceiling.  
Weapons I cannot use become suggestions,  
impractical solutions, there to  
analyze other highways not meant to cross.  
Highways bearing bright moonlight  
on their surfaces, like correspondences looked at  
but never read.

At times my singing is subdued,  
and I discover these highways I am not welcome on,  
find myself disassociated from their flat hum,  
from their pavement platform  
and worn-over buckling curves.

Memories are funerals - the hours we spend  
traveling their domains.  
I spend my time studying trees. Some trees are not  
beautiful, but are depressed growths,  
even in their grandeur.

## *Trial and Witness*

When flushed with foliage or sparse, these trees  
emanate an aura of monotony. Like looking through  
dirty glass windows, watching  
pointing fingers, listening  
to a zoo of indistinct, inescapable sounds,  
they have been drained of vitality.

Ballooned and warm, I am transformed  
by the pressure to create symbols to improve  
an already great equation.  
In this way, I hear a toddler cry, and I think  
it is impossible to grow up  
and not carry as core the experiences  
of kindnesses given and kindnesses withheld:  
For we all know it is soothing to be tended to,  
to have someone wash our hair.

So what then if there is always  
a camera taking pictures?  
Then it must be important to be frank  
in spite of showing rough edges  
that spark criticism, disappointment, or a full-body  
malaise. It must be important not to falsify speech,  
to be able to disregard  
pleasantries or other forms of stroking public appeal.

What if I closed the door, turned on the fan, turned  
on the light, would I learn to swing or be  
a domino, a causality?

Principals move like wolves commandeering prey  
or like a dozen eggs dropped - their effect  
built on a single gravitational happenstance.  
What if we are marked, already surviving forever -  
each exacting fraction of ourselves duplicated?

*Trial and Witness*

God must muse through such thorough descriptions  
of our lives, an overseer of our personalized library,  
defeating what seems irreversible  
with forgiveness, erasing without remnant  
the imprint and impact of things wrongly given, taken, or  
left to starve.

## Why have I died

like Icarus? Or like cotton candy,  
dissolving in lukewarm saliva?

Five weeks without pay, and  
the weather is morbid,  
plays upon my skin like fireants.

You took what I denied and changed  
what was paltry into paramount -  
my feet pressed against your calves, lifting  
into the pressure, just  
to have a choice.

Why have I died? My neck cut  
against the broken window  
as a resolution to my determination  
to see beyond the pane -  
repeating like a recurring dream, developing  
a wider lack - lush pulsing, possessing your sternum  
where I rest my panting will upon.

I am dead. Can't you see my decay? Can't you see  
the violence expanding in my throat?  
How have I died? before nirvana? after the bliss  
of a mother's faith?

The sparrows come close.  
They know not to fear a dead thing.  
They land on my foot with its multitude of intricate bones,  
tendons and memories of backyard earth.  
They look around, peck below where still  
remains some warmth.

Once I fed them - minuscule fledglings  
fallen after a storm. Now I am over.  
I do not eat. I do not feed you  
or anyone anymore.

## I heard a poet say

that doing art is a denial of self. I say  
it is an inclusion of God into the self.  
It is not simply a dialogue nor is it intellectual banter,  
but it is being intoxicated with the fullness  
of seeing God there  
with every thought - in the swimming pool  
while treading water,  
or at the hair dresser, drinking coffee, waiting for a turn.

A pebble is paradox like time travel is, or a meteor  
entering the earth like a man enters a woman -  
a synergy of the round and the sharp,  
splicing, splitting, until more splicing and splitting, until  
dependency on oxygen is born.

Speculation, lectures, ceremonies  
are deeds to occupy but never to explain.  
Hair like a mammoth's - how I long to run  
my knuckles through its thickness and ancestry!  
I am not intimidated by people with busy days  
and many different shoes. Brown  
has become my favourite colour, and grey, that too  
is magic. I knew this when I was young:  
True intensity is subtle,  
is equal in its magnitude as it is to its intricacy -  
It commands exploration.

When I was young I knew God was with me  
at every threshold, standing inside my flesh. Since then,  
I have played with death,  
held conference with death as a sister.  
But even such sibling biology  
cannot cull this communion I have discovered,  
can't vacuum apart indelible combined-shapes  
into quarantined segregation.

*Trial and Witness*

I have known death's jolts, have known its  
harrowing cripple and crack,  
and know it cannot revert humanity back  
to that interval before God exhaled,  
altering the playing field,  
resulting in  
such a mighty fusion.

## The Book

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bells in my head, footsteps rising, closer now,  
you know me well. Inside the book, you know me better.  
We are two trees - branches and roots,

*Trial and Witness*

an interwoven crocheted  
impressionistic portrait, staying through heavy storms.

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

## Kill the Poet

Kill the poet,  
ransack the diet of bliss.  
Dust away all traces of inspiration,  
childbirth, breath and roses.

Thumbtacks, dried-out bones are  
what has stayed.  
I am a sand-fish, surfing the bottom,  
accumulating  
duties, commitments, leftover debris  
to feed my already grown children.

Notions of a mission? A nest of delusions obliterated.  
Kill the loose ends, dynamite the cave, come  
out in the open and say your piece. My bed is  
rippled with loose springs, arranging my nightmares  
in grand succession. Kill the poet. You killed  
my last cup, spilled my endurance, and I am thinking

I will cut my hair cleanly off, clip my eyelashes,  
dump all my seeds on stony ground.

## Currents

The extremities  
are beautiful as stained glass, green  
as watered grass  
and smells that take me over  
a river, salted currents,  
blooming with the long-bodied  
seal, near curved mountain tops,  
fresh mist, malleable fog. Humpback  
dive. Cold summer winds,  
oceans moving in, moving  
the Blue whale, the Belugas,  
the dark-fined Minkes.

On land, visualizing the underground rooted networks  
that create lush densities of forests,  
mountain geography, complex geometry

where fungi are conductors of communication  
and legacies are passed down,  
in spite of fires, droughts,  
insect infestations. Places

enchancing children's minds  
with tales of fear and heroic  
overcoming. Places  
to wade in, walk through, hide in  
and be exposed.

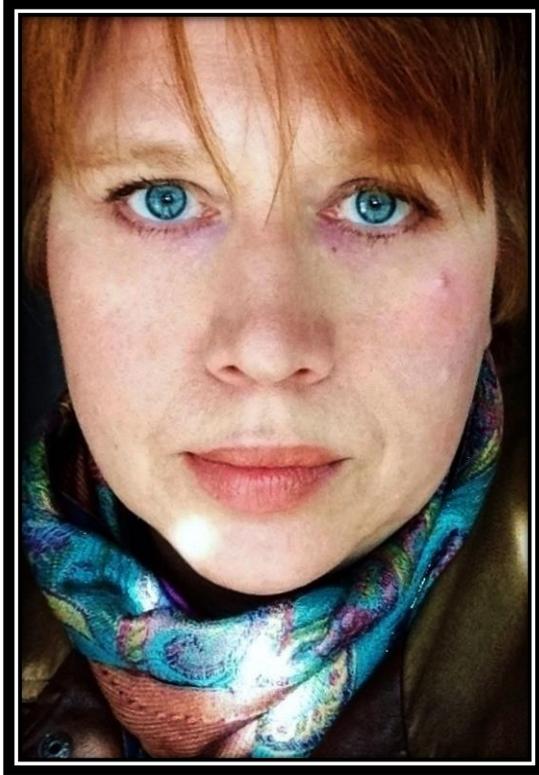
Huddled in unity,  
a river pod in winding ebbs, a family  
in sync, mastering the undertows.

## The means to obliterate

what doldrums dictate  
is in the pink sneakers of  
winter blues and forcing hope into the mouth  
even if it tastes like stale candy.  
You pull the waves from a clear sky,  
you blur edges into running forms, staining  
in effervescent aftershocks.  
Help is always available but never ready  
to take your hand when you need the courage  
not to hang yourself in some avant-garde  
symbolic statement on a summit on  
a dull metal balcony, hang  
like kleenex caught on a high twig.  
Comfort comes in packed suitcases and  
various dreams of little consequence.  
A toddler's game of hide-and-seek  
is worth smiling for. Round, rotunda reflected  
in the image of a middle-age crew cut and torn jeans.  
Inspiration is a wooden ladder, splinters sold  
as bargaining chips for each step  
to reach nearer to rooftops, treetops and  
the sun.

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

# *Epilogue*



Allison Grayhurst

## About the Author

Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three of her poems have been nominated for Sundress Publications “Best of the Net” 2015, and she has over 850 poems published in more than 375 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers in 1995. Since then she has published twelve 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 in December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series. In 2015, her chapbook *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications. More recently, her chapbook *Make the Wind* was published in April 2016 by Scars Publications. She also has a chapbook *Currents* pending publication in 2016 with Pink.Girl.Ink. Press. She is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay.

## Author Websites

### Web

[www.allisongrayhurst.com](http://www.allisongrayhurst.com)

### Author Page

[www.ctublishinggroup.com/allison-grayhurst-.html](http://www.ctublishinggroup.com/allison-grayhurst-.html)

## Acknowledgements

These poems were first published in *Written In The Skin* - an Insomniac Press anthology; *Envoi*; *Drift*, Issue #82; *Wascana Review*; *White Wall Review*; *Message in a Bottle Poetry Magazine*, Issue 12; *The Blue Hour*; *UC Review*; *Parabola*, issue *Alone & Together*, Summer 2012; *Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice*; *Exile*; *Subprimal Poetry Art*; *Full of Crow*; *Veil - Journal of Darker Musings*; *The Muse - An International Journal of Poetry*; *The Artistic Muse*; *Literature Today*; *Daily Love*; *Out of Our*; *The Screech Owl*; *The Camel Saloon*; *The Write Room*; *Crisis Chronicles*; *Poetry Pacific*; *Extract(s)*, magazine and anthology; *The Greensilk Journal*; *Jellyfish Whispers*; *Torrid Literature, Evolution Anthology*; *Wilderness House Literary Review*, Volume 8, Number 2; *Boston Poetry Magazine*; *Dead Snakes*; *Fogged Clarity*; *cur.ren.cy*; *Subliminal Interiors*; *Crack the Spine*, Issue 64, and *Crack The Spine Summer 2013* anthology; *Carcinogenic Poetry*; *Buddhist Poetry Review*; *Iron Gall Press*; *B-Gina Review*; *Oddball Magazine!*; *South Florida Arts Journal*; *Bewildering Stories*; *The Galway Review*; *Literary Orphans*; *Kalkion*; *Gris-Gris*; *Jumping Blue Gods*; *Fat City Review*; *Decades Review*, Issue 8; *Both Sides Now*, Issue 125-126; *Abramelin*; *The Entroper*; *Bigger Stones*; *The Kitchen Poet*; *The Brooklyn Voice*; *Anchor & Plume: Kindred*, Issue 5, *Nest*; *Triage Monthly*, Issue 2; *Coe Review*; *Bare Hands Poetry*, Issue 18; *New Binary Press Anthology*; *Foliate Oak*; *Guwahatian*; *River Poets Journal*; *Napalm and Novocain*; *See Spot Run Literary Magazine*; *Viral Cat*; *Indiana Voice Journal*; *Whisper*; *Gutter Eloquence Magazine*, Issue 30; *Ikleftiko*; *The Blue Fifth Review*

## *Creative Talents Unleashed*

Creative Talents Unleashed is an independent publishing group that offers writers an opportunity to share their writing talents with the world. We are committed to fostering and honoring the work of writers of all cultures. Our publishing group offers writing tips to assist writers in continued growth and learning, daily writing prompts and challenges to keep the writers mind sharp and challenged, marketing and events, as well as a variety of yearly publishing opportunities. We are honored to be assisting writers in the journey of becoming published authors.

*Creative Talents Unleashed*



[www.ctupublishinggroup.com](http://www.ctupublishinggroup.com)

**For More Information Contact:**

[Creativetalentsunleashed@aol.com](mailto:Creativetalentsunleashed@aol.com)