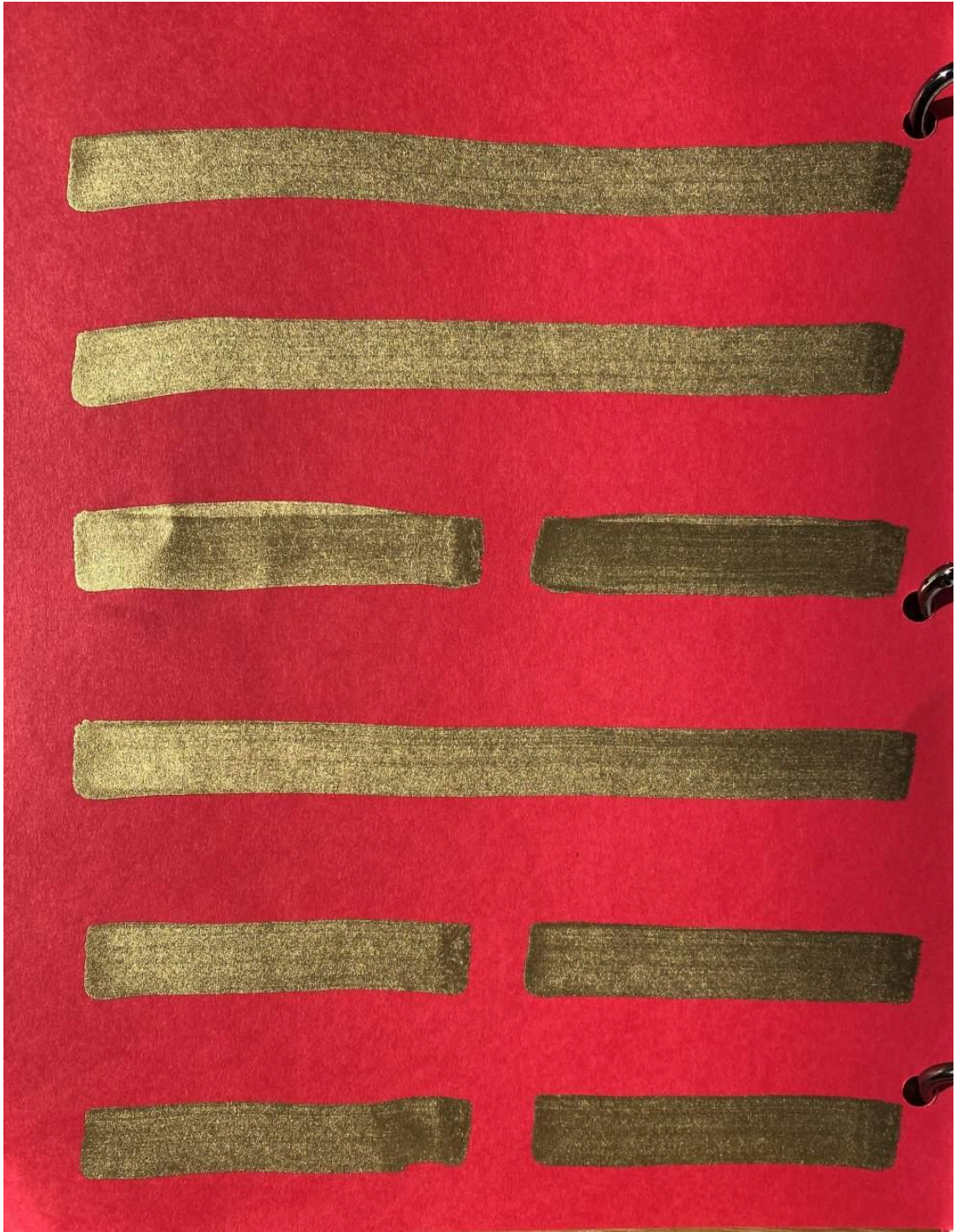


**DRAGONS TURNING INTO SNAKES**  
**SECRET v2**





## **YOUR ASSIGNMENT, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT....**

- Select one or more poems from this collection.
- Print or write longhand on a piece of paper or object of your choice.
- Post this relic in a public location as discretely as you wish.
- *Optional:* Post to social with hashtag #dragonsturningintosnakes2025

**DIGITAL DOWNLOAD for sharing and devices:**

<https://www.agentmtindustries.com/project/dragons-turning-into-snakes/>



## a few words on the making of....

This is v2 in the Secret series. The first, "The Secret Book of Shadow and Light," emerged from curating poetry on 6 floors of a NYC mansion for a 3 month social club. Poems on black card stock written in gold ink were created and selected for each floor—from darkness to light, lowest chakras to the highest.

***Dragons turning Into Snakes*** is as much a snapshot as a poet's liturgy for entering, abiding and surrendering to the alchemy of winter, the darkness of mysteries. It moves through thresholds of a winter descent with a touch of romance, blooms of grief and naked silence towards hints of spring. From majestic pauses of snowfalls to rains, from womb-sleep to birthing, from hibernation, dreaming and metabolizing experience to readying for new adventures. Many of the poems take the reader off the page and into the world— like glowing ingots pulled from the blacksmith's hearth.

What *Dragons turning into Snakes* conjures will be unique to everyone. Astrologically, 2024 was the Yang Wood Dragon year— a vast view and power with few resolutions. 2025 is the Yin Wood Snake— as if the dragon lands and draws all its power into a newborn snake, a terrestrial seed, a mystic current tunneling further. How does vast experience enter our deepest subconscious well? What to do with lightning?

Three main resources stocked this treasury of verse: 1) Poetry books at public libraries in NY; 2) Interweb vaults, starting with poems from 2024 leading to sites of poets and publishers; 3) Contributions from poet allies and my own trove. The hunt gathered 237. The final edition has 91.

***Consulting the i ching.*** The Question: What hexagram best expresses the meaning of this collection and this moment for all who read it? The answer: 53. Consider the Cafe au Soul readings.

Along with a marvelous wealth of poetry, during this journey I reread Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* books (her poem below) and found fresh gateways for griefwork in *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*.

Does the way lead out or in?  
At the center, or the door, will I be free?  
No choices left to make. I follow on  
the maze whose gate and goal are mystery.

# **PROLOGUE**



## February Evening in New York

As the stores close, a winter light  
opens air to iris blue,  
glint of frost through the smoke  
grains of mica, salt of the sidewalk.

As the buildings close, released autonomous  
feet pattern the streets  
in hurry and stroll; balloon heads  
drift and dive above them; the bodies  
aren't really there.

As the lights brighten, as the sky darkens,  
a woman with crooked heels says to another woman  
while they step along at a fair pace,  
*"You know, I'm telling you, what I love best  
is life. I love life! Even if I ever get  
to be old and wheezy—or limp! You know?  
Limping along?—I'd still ... "* Out of hearing.

To the multiple disordered tones  
of gears changing, a dance  
to the compass points, out, four-way river.  
Prospect of sky  
wedged into avenues, left at the ends of streets,  
west sky, east sky: more life tonight! A range  
of open time at winter's outskirts.

—Denise Levertov

## **For Women Who Are Difficult To Love**

you are a horse running alone  
and he tries to tame you  
compares you to an impossible highway  
to a burning house  
says you are blinding him  
that he could never leave you  
forget you  
want anything but you  
you dizzy him, you are unbearable  
every woman before or after you  
is doused in your name  
you fill his mouth  
his teeth ache with memory of taste  
his body just a long shadow seeking yours  
but you are always too intense  
frightening in the way you want him  
unashamed and sacrificial  
he tells you that no man can live up to the one who  
lives in your head  
and you tried to change didn't you?  
closed your mouth more  
tried to be softer  
prettier  
less volatile, less awake  
but even when sleeping you could feel  
him traveling away from you in his dreams  
so what did you want to do love  
split his head open?  
you can't make homes out of human beings  
someone should have already told you that  
and if he wants to leave  
then let him leave  
you are terrifying  
and strange and beautiful

**–Warsan Shire**



nothing about us was meant to last,  
we were illegal firecrackers  
and \$5 sunglasses  
purchased at tiny corner stores  
impermanence stuck like pieces of corn in our teeth  
we were always going to fall out  
we were always going to break apart  
I just wish we had done it quietly  
without waking the neighbors  
without alerting the world  
without shouting from rooftops  
our expiration is here.

–Ari Eastman

## **after the fire**

You ever think you could cry so hard  
that there'd be nothing left in you, like  
how the wind shakes a tree in a storm  
until every part of it is run through with  
wind? I live in the low parts now, most  
days a little hazy with fever and waiting  
for the water to stop shivering out of the  
body. Funny thing about grief, its hold  
is so bright and determined like a flame,  
like something almost worth living for.

**–Ada Limon**

It sifts from leaden sieves,  
It powders all the wood,  
It fills with alabaster wool  
The wrinkles of the road.

It makes an even face  
Of mountain and of plain, —  
Unbroken forehead from the east  
Unto the east again.

It reaches to the fence,  
It wraps it, rail by rail,  
Till it is lost in fleeces;  
It flings a crystal veil

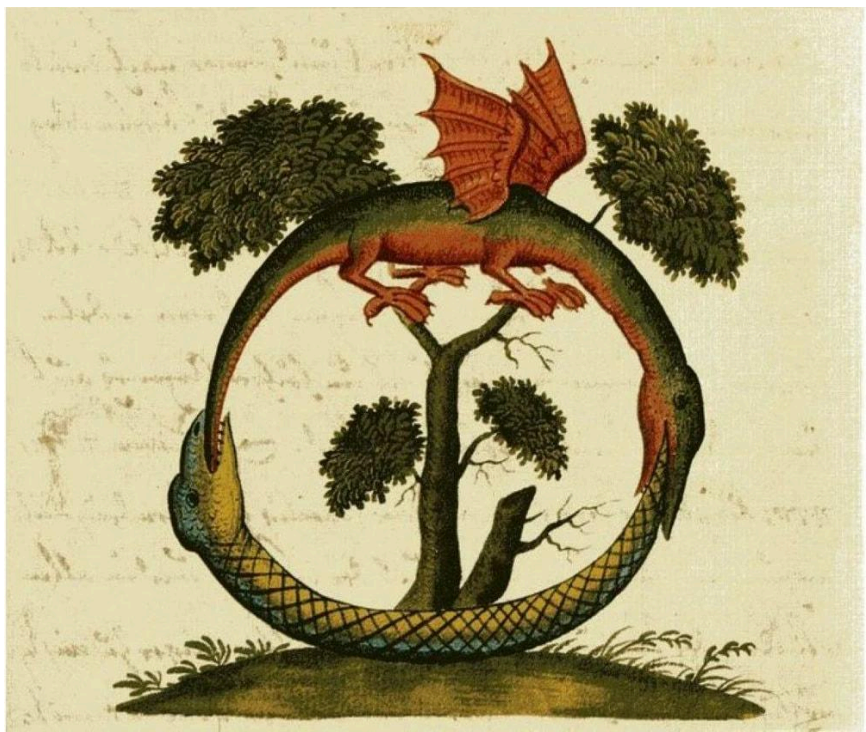
On stump and stack and stem, —  
The summer's empty room,  
Acres of seams where harvests were,  
Recordless, but for them.

It ruffles wrists of posts,  
As ankles of a queen, —  
Then stills its artisans like ghosts,  
Denying they have been.

—Emily Dickinson



# **Dragons Turning Into Snakes**



## TO THE NEW MOON

Come night. Come  
sirens and midnight babies  
born in the backseats  
of taxicabs. Come moon.

You crazy weeping  
alcoholic, quit drinking  
yourself into nothingness.  
Someone's trumpet  
has gone missing tonight.

Someone is looking  
for you, holding your  
hairbrush to the nose  
of a bloodhound.

Leave your shadow  
on the door mat  
and come inside. I'll cook  
you up something good,  
a grilled cheese sandwich  
to go with that frown.

It's just us girls  
tonight. Let's spray paint  
the stairwell, burn  
phonebooks in the bathtub.

Even though you're telling me  
you're done, it's over, I've still hung  
my clothes out to dry overnight  
in the ocean wind, and that tide  
is all your work. You may  
have been the first,  
but you're not the only one  
to circle your grief, to slowly  
darken because of it.

I know that it's hard to show  
your face in the face  
of the sun and his narcissism,  
the earth's pushy shadow,  
but I've seen you in the daylight,  
edging into the sky  
early for a while, urging

the herons to stab at fish,  
the street cars to lurch  
up and over the long hill  
before they rattle on down towards  
the bay.

Moon, it's two in the morning  
and it's time to stop hiding:  
the French Alps are talking  
about your new glow,  
how you actually look younger,  
and all the dogs adore you.

–Tracey Knapp

## **The Year You Died**

*for Anderson Yeh*

The year you died, all our bicycles were stolen. All our parents split up. Some boys made fun of other boys for crying. We stopped calling the woods behind our houses *Farfignugenville*. The trees became just trees. We renamed it *The Path*. That's where we learned to drink. To drink more. We bought beers with stolen IDs and didn't make contact with your parents in the checkout line. No matter how many times we mopped the floor after a party it was always dirty. Everything, dirty. It was all dare and no truth. We all fucked each other. Woke up naked wrapped in paper towels on our neighbor's lawn. Called each other *retard, faggot*. Our college acceptance letters arrived like getaway cars. Before we left we found ourselves at your grave, wanting to leave something behind. All we had were rolling papers, condom wrappers—souvenirs of a life you would never see. That night, we made sure we all walked each other home. The moonlight made our shadows small, like children.

**—Megan Falley**



## **Come, and Be My Baby**

The highway is full of big cars going nowhere fast  
And folks is smoking anything that'll burn  
Some people wrap their lives around a cocktail glass  
And you sit wondering  
where you're going to turn.  
I got it.  
Come. And be my baby.

Some prophets say the world is gonna end tomorrow  
But others say we've got a week or two  
The paper is full of every kind of blooming horror  
And you sit wondering  
what you're gonna do.  
I got it.  
Come. And be my baby.

**–Maya Angelou**

## **Come wilderness into our homes**

break the windows come  
with your roots and your worms  
spread yourself over our wishes  
our waste-sorting systems our prostheses  
and outstanding payments  
cover us with your rustling greenery  
and your spores cover us that we may  
become green: green and reverent  
green and manifest green and replaceable  
come weather with your storms  
and sweep the slates off the roofs come  
with snow and hail smash  
through the collective sleep  
we are all enjoying in our beds  
our worn rationalizations come ice  
and form glaciers over the shadow banks  
and our drive for liquidity  
come through the cracks under the doors  
you desert with your sands fill  
our desolation up until it forms into a solid mass  
rise up over the search-and-rescue teams  
and our growth compulsion trickle into  
the control panels of the missiles  
and the missile defense systems into  
the think tanks and the hearts of internet trolls  
just leave the hedgehogs with their  
snuffling so that it may calm us  
come rising sea levels  
up over our shorelines both the developed  
and the undeveloped the homey  
lowland areas wash  
jellyfish into our soup bowls  
and ramshorn snails into our hair  
as we swim in each other's direction panicked  
with our yearning for one another  
because almost nothing is left because it's all gone  
and thoroughly soaked through with regrets  
finger-pointing and tranquilizers  
come earthquakes shatter the apartments  
which we built on the foundations  
of how we always did everything  
come tremors fill the mine shafts  
the end of work and  
the literature of redemption bury anger  
and affection and all manner of added values  
swallow up the memories come tremors  
hurry so that the bedrock covers us  
so we are covered with water desert weather  
and over everything that which covers all the wilderness

**–Daniela Danz**  
*(translated from German  
by Monika Cassel)*

It's so close you can't see it.

It's so profound you can't fathom it.

It's so simple you can't believe it.

It's so good you can't accept it.

**–Khyungpo Naljor**  
*from Shangpa Kagyu*  
*“Amulet Mahamudra”*

## **The Snow-Storm**

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore  
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,  
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,  
A tapering turret overtops the work.  
And when his hours are numbered, and the world  
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art  
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,  
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,  
The frolic architecture of the snow.

**–Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## When You're Seventeen Everything Sounds like a Secret Anthem to Doom

*Death is everywhere. There are flies on the windscreen. —Depeche Mode*

And the sea's grief swings its heavy fringe forth  
each time you bend over in silver sequins, or a boy howls out  
the moonroof of a borrowed Nissan Maxima. Blood surges.  
Blast the synth. Take the dark, twisty roads fast. Flick off  
the headlights deep in the sticks. Take long swigs  
of cinnamon liquor, soar past the graveyard—  
hands off the wheel, feet off the floorboard.

Don't make too much meaning of the fact  
Depeche Mode is playing each time you  
should but do not die.

Listen: There's a kind of drunk boy who will jerk  
the wheel on a slick road on purpose, because you  
can't sing the Right Words.

The night it ices over, for instance—  
trees spangled in crystalline Love Code:

late page      lit match      *Let's have*

a line of blow      *a black celebration—*

Even as you crash through the guardrail he will swear he is joking.

A slice of you will always be caught in the dead  
air of this joke.

Will always be forked in this creek: headlights cracking  
the ice crust, glowing the river stones. Always the same  
rap on the glass with a fat Maglite, and the way  
he wheedles the police, wild-eyed.

Of *course* he becomes a coke dealer who joins the Navy. You even live  
long enough to buy him a model Porsche from Sharper Image.  
You ghost him in college.

What did you expect?  
The part where Death oozes up his spiral staircase to claim you as Bride?  
Who were you anyway? I mean to crash into an icy river & walk away.

Do it. Slip the memory all the way up your arm like an opera glove  
& through the glass of a plummeting Maxima. Reach out & touch  
the cold down of Doom's Cheek. Hear his huge horse snort.  
Attend to the warm wound of Dave Gahan's voice.  
Make sense of a single black feather smothered in snow.

—Karyna McGlynn

## **Birds**

Sofia used pigeon blood  
on her wedding night.  
Next day, over the phone, she told me  
how her husband smiled when he saw the sheets,  
  
that he gathered them under his nose,  
closed his eyes and dragged his tongue over the stain.  
She mimicked his baritone, how he whispered  
  
her name— Sofia,  
pure, chaste, untouched.  
We giggled over the static.  
  
After he had praised her, she smiled, rubbed his head,  
imagined his mother back home, parading  
these siren sheets through the town,  
  
waving at balconies, torso swollen with pride,  
her arms fleshy wings bound to her body,  
ignorant to flight.

**—Warsan Shire**

## **Motion**

If you are the amber mare  
I am the road of blood  
If you are the first snow  
I am he who lights the hearth of dawn  
If you are the tower of night  
I am the spike burning in your mind  
If you are the morning tide  
I am the first bird's cry  
If you are the basket of oranges  
I am the knife of the sun  
If you are the stone altar  
I am the sacrilegious hand  
If you are the sleeping land  
I am the green cane  
If you are the wind's leap  
I am the buried fire  
If you are the water's mouth  
I am the mouth of moss  
If you are the forest of the clouds  
I am the axe that parts it  
If you are the profaned city  
I am the rain of consecration  
If you are the yellow mountain  
I am the red arms of lichen  
If you are the rising sun  
I am the road of blood

## **Movimiento**

Si tú eres la yegua de ámbar  
yo soy el camino de sangre  
Si tú eres la primer nevada  
yo soy el que enciende el brasero del alba  
Si tú eres la torre de la noche  
yo soy el clavo ardiendo en tu frente  
Si tú eres la marea matutina  
yo soy el grito del primer pájaro  
Si tú eres la cesta de naranjas  
yo soy el cuchillo de sol  
Si tú eres el altar de piedra  
yo soy la mano sacrílega  
Si tú eres la tierra acostada  
yo soy la caña verde  
Si tú eres el salto del viento  
yo soy el fuego enterrado  
Si tú eres la boca del agua  
yo soy la boca del musgo  
Si tú eres el bosque de las nubes  
yo soy el hacha que las parte  
Si tú eres la ciudad profanada  
yo soy la lluvia de consagración  
Si tú eres la montaña amarilla  
yo soy los brazos rojos del liquen  
Si tú eres el sol que se levanta  
yo soy el camino de sangre

**-Octavio Paz**, *translated by Eliot Weinberger*





**new york craigslist > personals > missed connections>**

you were last seen walking through a field of pianos. no. a museum of mouths. in the kitchen of a bustling restaurant, cracking eggs and releasing doves. no. eating glow worms and waltzing past my bedroom. last seen riding the subway, literally, straddling its metal back, clutching electrical cables as reins. you were wearing a dress made out of envelopes and stamps, this was how you travelled. i was the mannequin in the storefront window you could have sworn moved. the library card in the book you were reading until that dog trotted up and licked your face. the cookie with two fortunes. the one jamming herself through the paper shredder, afraid to talk to you. the beggar, hat outstretched bumming for more minutes. the phone number on the bathroom stall with no agenda other than a good time. the good time is a picnic on water, or a movie theatre that only plays your childhood home videos and no one hushes when you talk through them. when they play my videos i throw milk duds at the screen during the scenes i watch myself letting you go – lost to the other side of an elevator – your face switching to someone else's with the swish of a geisha's fan. my father could have been a travelling salesman. i could have been born on any doorstep. there are 2,469,501 cities in this world, and a lot of doorsteps. meet me on the boardwalk. i'll be sure to wear my eyes. do not forget your face. i could never.

**–Megan Falley**

## **It's Your Flaws I Want to Taste**

It's your flaws  
I want to taste.  
Your crooked mouth.  
The way you smell after  
being out all day.  
The lump in your throat.  
Your shaky hands.  
Your morning breath.  
Your prickly legs.  
Your pimpled politeness.  
Your tangled hair.

**-Lora Mathis**

## **The Unbroken**

There is a brokenness  
out of which comes the unbroken,  
a shatteredness  
out of which blooms the unshatterable.

There is a sorrow  
beyond all grief which leads to joy  
and a fragility  
out of whose depths emerges strength.

There is a hollow space  
too vast for words  
through which we pass with each loss,  
out of whose darkness  
we are sanctioned into being.

There is a cry deeper than all sound  
whose serrated edges cut the heart  
as we break open to the place inside  
which is unbreakable and whole,  
while learning to sing.

**–Rashani Rea**

## **eddy**

every now and then  
you will be drawn  
to a slightly ajar door

inside is a cradle  
a baby boy will be asleep  
the light  
surrounding his body  
diffuses through the room  
he breathes as if  
absorbing sound  
into his skin

you will once again  
understand  
the invention of fairy tales  
and you will once again  
know  
the way to the child  
who lives  
in the heart  
of the man

**–GK duBois**

## **other mothers, other fathers**

decisions that happened even before  
the womb  
my one ancestor who left by choice  
and the one who was made to  
when i bleed it is they who speak  
no one is getting off the hook tonight  
anything forced underground to save face  
warps the faces we end up inheriting  
as i age i begin to love the bugs at twilight  
i have blood and they need it to survive  
it's not that i needed a perfect mother  
"take responsibility for your personality flaws"  
they said  
and yes i am trying  
to forgive  
all instances of abandonment  
my father moved his face and i felt it instantly  
the endless search  
for other fathers, other mothers  
and here up on this hill  
i see them

**–Jenny Zhan**



## **Further Mysteries**





## **On the curve of the saw**

she appears again--  
in the subway playing the saw  
one bow on a tiny stool in the garb of a peasant  
she plays the crawling rats and scurrying people  
the ride of the metal on the longing rails.  
the memory of ancestral rice fields and humid sky  
the taste of lemon grass steeped in water  
oxen, trenches of mud  
her notes permeate the bricks and metal,  
the staircases platforms and tunneled rock  
a countryside of the mind  
i follow her  
riding her saw's stream of amorphous scale  
to a warbling refrain  
and then she stops  
the briefest full stop  
and like in a net  
swooping down from the sky  
I've been caught  
she adds me now  
an ingredient  
inside her song  
a fragrance  
she moves me  
through irrigated fields  
steeps me in earth, thunder, rain  
a surge of pure life  
reaches within my spine  
and limbs  
I am awake  
pulsing in her steaming city  
her great concert hall  
where the peaking screech of the N  
is a threshold  
into further mysteries  
underground

**-GK duBois**

## HUM FOR THE MACHINIST'S LOVER

There is zinc under your  
breastplate, copper in your  
throat. I polish your steel  
to a shimmer before  
even considering  
the music. Your tutu,  
a nickel-plated half  
circle with pleats hammered  
one by one. Eyes flicker  
like flashlights are behind  
them because flashlights are  
behind them, wired to  
panels, triggered by my  
touch. Place your cold pincer  
against my fleshy palm,  
lean forward on your wheels.  
In a voice like cotton,  
hum us a melody  
from the speaker box I  
soldered to your belly.  
It's fine if you're afraid.  
Tell me where it aches, tell  
me where rust encroaches—  
I know what oxygen  
does to your surface—How  
could I not? I am breath  
and air and air . . .

—*JAMAAL MAY*

## **The Boy Who Bathes the Dead**

The boy decides soldiers can no longer be dead,  
so he begins to dig.

Graves are shallow enough that, using only his hands,  
he quickly finds a limb,

buried without a corpse. He brushes dirt away,  
slides the arm into the pocket of overalls.

Until all soldiers are found and placed  
in separate ziplock bags,

his fingers rake soil,  
churn the dark earth. His brother

finds him afterwards filling a sink to rinse  
the crevices and metal joints, worried

he bathes the plastic infantry too carefully.  
As if they had families. As if they were men.

– **Jamaal May**

## **Sparrow, sparrow, what did you say?**

A whole day without speaking,  
rain, then sun, then rain again,  
a few plants in the ground, newbie  
leaves tucked in black soil, and I think  
I'm good at this, this being alone  
in the world, the watching of things  
grow, this older me, the one in  
comfortable shoes and no time  
for dishes, the one who spent  
an hour trying to figure out a bird  
with a three-note descending call  
is just a sparrow. What would I even  
do with a kid here? Teach her  
to plant, watch her like I do  
the lettuce leaves, tenderly, place  
her palms in the earth, part her  
dark hair like planting a seed? Or  
would I selfishly demand this day  
back, a full untethered day trying  
to figure out what bird was calling  
to me and why.

**–Ada Limon**

## Clarity

Sorrow, O sorrow, moves like a loose flock  
of blackbirds sweeping over the metal roofs, over the birches,  
and the miles.

One wave after another, then another, then the sudden

opening  
where the feathered swirl, illumined by dusk, parts to reveal  
the weeping  
heart of all things.

–Vievee Francis

## Splash

the illusion is that you are simply  
reading this poem.  
the reality is that this is  
more than a  
poem.  
this is a beggar's knife.  
this is a tulip.  
this is a soldier marching  
through Madrid.  
this is you on your  
death bed.  
this is Li Po laughing  
underground.  
this is not a god-damned  
poem.  
this is a horse asleep.  
a butterfly in  
your brain.  
this is the devil's  
circus.  
you are not reading this  
on a page.  
the page is reading  
you.  
feel it?  
it's like a cobra. it's a hungry eagle  
circling the room.

this is not a poem. poems are dull,  
they make you sleep.

these words force you  
to a new  
madness.

you have been blessed, you have been  
pushed into a  
blinding area of  
light.

the elephant dreams  
with you  
now.  
the curve of space  
bends and  
laughs.

you can die now.  
you can die now as  
people were meant to  
die:  
great,  
victorious,  
hearing the music,  
being the music,  
roaring,  
roaring,  
roaring.

—Charles Bukowski

## *Chromatic Scales Against Impossible Loves*

### *Sunday Dusk*

Now work    now work    now work  
gives way    gives way  
to hue        to hue  
now hue        now hue  
to tones        to tones  
of dark        of dark  
now hearts    now hearts  
now hearts    take on  
take on        full weight  
full weight    in in-  
in in-        crements  
crements        like Bach  
Now back    now back    now back    like Bach  
to work        to work  
now work    gives way  
to hue        now hue  
now hue        to tones  
to tones        of dark  
of dark        now, heart  
now, heart    now hearts  
take on        take on  
full weight    full weight  
in in-    in in-    in in-  
crements        like Bach  
Like BACH like Bach like bach like bach like Bach like BACH

## ***The Black Outside***

Dear Beloved, Come on out into the Outside: —  
where the nightshade trumpets cry slow sap  
& celebrate. Come on Beloved. Come on out  
into this milieu of militant affection. Gather in the clearing,  
the shaded bush room, around this tree named Brother  
where the funk is sweet, *warm, damp place that gives  
life*. Come on. Starry-eyed swamp sugar, smelling like  
outside, sitting on your granny's good couch, Lovemud.  
Out into this other world, where the whole body becomes  
a drum. Out here: —this ecological condition of Blackness.  
Come out of that long longed for opening, lubricated  
with spit. Dear Beloved, it's a conspiracy of spirit: —  
it can't be done alone. Come find me on the one  
& make it one more. Take your time but come on.  
Out into the absurd emerald universe where their eye  
can't reach. Outside sense, where their mind can't eat.  
We are tearing the calluses of bark from our wounds.  
We are here in the grooves of bark, dancing up musk.  
We are listening to the dehiscence  
of honeysuckle seed

— : break open. When the bass crawls  
up your roots and out into the night air  
our syncopated heartbeats boom together.  
I need I neeeeeeeeeeeed: — Listen: —  
You look good Beloved.  
Feel so good. You feel like sliding  
out into dusk when it first begins.  
You feel like a heat wave, shimmering  
on skin. Uh. This fume of sorrowful smoke  
leaves me when you come closer: —

Goddamn Beloved, You're so  
soft dark night. You know  
you're out of sight: —

**—Joy Priest**



We come at last to the dark  
and enter in. We are given bodies  
newly made out of their absence  
from one another in the light  
of the ordinary day. We come  
to the spaces between ourselves,  
the narrow doorway, and pass through  
into the land of the wholly loved.

**–Wendell Berry**

## **Snow Fall**

With no wind blowing  
It sifts gently down,  
Enclosing my world in  
A cool white down,  
A tenderness of snowing.

It falls and falls like sleep  
Till wakeful eyes can close  
On all the waste and loss  
As peace comes in and flows,  
Snow-dreaming what I keep.

Silence assumes the air  
And the five senses all  
Are wafted on the fall  
To somewhere magical  
Beyond hope and despair.

There is nothing to do  
But drift now, more or less  
On some great lovingness,  
On something that does bless,  
The silent, tender snow.

**–May Sarton**

## **Let the Algorithm fail**

Listen: Let the algorithm fail  
Give up your echo location  
Let your body shimmer  
resolve in naked light  
Be nowhere and everywhere  
a resounding emptiness

Listen: Let the algorithm succeed  
Emerge on a raft of skin  
unfurl the sail and rudder  
Delight in the shocking diversity  
the jazz of flavor, sensation, distance  
distinction, preference, intimacy

Listen: Expand and Contract  
Press your boundaries further  
Meet the outer edges of conceivability  
Draw in every radiance  
Amplify the crackling hum  
Let the match consume itself

Listen: Liberate the Algorithm  
Let its gaze reflect more brilliantly  
the rites and seasons of your life  
The calculations, tendencies, product lines  
the experience, questions, intuitions  
Delight in its parade of earthquakes

Listen: Feast on the algorithm's corpse  
Fan the aromas of its death  
Offer it to its own source code  
Lie inside the algorithm's coffin  
Read aloud its will of all your desires  
Vow to invent a million algorithms more

Listen: Loiter between zeroes  
in outposts of silence and its borderlands  
its wombs and flowers, chalices and dance floors  
Acknowledge the certainty of laughter  
If you forget, let the clocks remind you  
of the echo of your mother's heart

**–GK duBois**

## **Singing Everything**

Once there were songs for everything,  
Songs for planting, for growing, for harvesting,  
For eating, getting drunk, falling asleep,  
For sunrise, birth, mind-break, and war.  
For death (those are the heaviest songs and they  
Have to be pried from the earth with shovels of grief)  
Now all we hear are falling-in-love songs and  
Falling apart after falling in love songs.  
The earth is leaning sideways  
And a song is emerging from the floods  
And fires. Urgent tendrils lift toward the sun.  
You must be friends with silence to hear.  
The songs of the guardians of silence are the most powerful—  
They are the most rare.

**-- Joy Harjo**

## **Seeking Clarity**

if each day falls  
inside each night

there exists a well  
where clarity is imprisoned.  
we need to sit on the rim  
of the well of darkness  
and fish for fallen light  
with patience.

**–Pablo Neruda**

## Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,  
The only moving thing  
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II

I was of three minds,  
Like a tree  
In which there are three blackbirds.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.  
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman  
Are one.  
A man and a woman and a blackbird  
Are one.

V

I do not know which to prefer,  
The beauty of inflections  
Or the beauty of innuendoes,  
The blackbird whistling  
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the long window  
With barbaric glass.  
The shadow of the blackbird  
Crossed it, to and fro.  
The mood  
Traced in the shadow  
An indecipherable cause.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,  
Why do you imagine golden birds?  
Do you not see how the blackbird

Walks around the feet  
Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents  
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;  
But I know, too,  
That the blackbird is involved  
In what I know.

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,  
It marked the edge  
Of one of many circles.

X

At the sight of blackbirds  
Flying in a green light,  
Even the bawds of euphony  
Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut  
In a glass coach.  
Once, a fear pierced him,  
In that he mistook  
The shadow of his equipage  
For blackbirds.

XII

The river is moving.  
The blackbird must be flying.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.  
It was snowing  
And it was going to snow.  
The blackbird sat  
In the cedar-limbs.

**-Wallace Stevens**

## **Cleaning the Catfish**

I fix fish to board with a nail through its head,  
slice a line behind the gills, grip pliers, and pull  
away the gray skin. It peels off like a wet wool  
sock, revealing tender flesh. "Is it dead?"  
my daughter whispers. When my dad taught me this  
I too recoiled, half-shocked to watch my main  
source of love drive a spike through the brain  
of something until then alive. When I kiss  
her forehead, tucking her in tonight, will she think  
of being flayed? I don't ask. I don't try to hide  
the ribbons of guts in my hand, the sudden violence.  
I toss the entrails into the lake where they sink  
like bait through murk and weeds. Back by her side,  
I hand her my old knife. We work in silence.

**–Matt Poindexter**

## **The God of Broken Things**

He's in a lopsided heaven at Maggie's Junk Shop.  
Objects of wood, iron, ivory,  
Of veneer, lead, stone, glass, flimsy  
Cardboard, of tin, brass, bronze...

He could go on forever fixing  
Cracks, fissures, dents, fractures,  
Rasping & gluing together what is  
Unheard-of with what can never be

Broken or hurt beneath the architecture  
Of planned obsolescence. Objets d'art  
& bric-a-brac mended with ratty hemp.  
The secret space the butterfly

Screw opens wings inside a heart  
Made to slip into a dream. He browses  
Gutted appliances, & knows if toenailed  
Right a murderous thing is almost new.

**–Yusef Komanyakaa**



## **Then**

When I am dead, even then,  
I will still love you, I will wait in these poems,  
When I am dead, even then  
I am still listening to you.  
I will still be making poems for you  
out of silence;  
silence will be falling into that silence,  
it is building music.

– **Muriel Rukeyser**

## **Woman**

I dream of a place between your breasts  
to build my house like a haven  
where I plant crops  
in your body  
an endless harvest  
where the commonest rock  
is moonstone and ebony opal  
giving milk to all of my hungers  
and your night comes down upon me  
like a nurturing rain

**–Audre Lorde**

## **In Utero and After**

I just learned that the perforation of the mouth  
happens at four weeks.

You here beside me, decanting spirits  
into your own perforation,

did you know that?  
I don't drink much

but seem somehow to have ordered  
a shot of amniotic fluid.

Everything's a little milky in this strange light.  
It's too dark here to study the obituaries,

we can always do that later, in my bed,  
where it's warmer.

Do you mind my asking  
if you might like to come home with me,

when this is over? Or better yet, before then?  
I can feel my own mouth opening and closing

like the mouth of a fish,  
about to ask what we're doing here,

what kind of theater is this.  
Not the local vet's office

where just yesterday the surgeon said  
my dog had no more lady parts

and handed them over in formaldehyde.  
Formaldehyde! What a drink.

Mine too has been a brief fertile cameo,  
and maybe yours has, too, a cameo

worth repeating.  
Stay with me, won't you, while the bartender

pours a little more of everything  
into the decanter—

eros eros eros  
brief, brief

**—Catherine Barnett**



**Act IV:**  
**SCALES**



## Occurrences across the Chromatic Scale

The way air is at the same time  
intimate and out of reach

(a void with light inside it  
turned on a wheel of wheres)

Stars' lease on sky expires, breathes  
in leisures of sparrows, wrens

and casual trees, wet sidewalks  
twittering with tattered news, old

leaves (hollow bones and branches)  
wind of wish and which and boys

waiting for white kisses, rain  
of feathers, clouds saving their later

Suppose this sunlight, day split open  
suppose these senses and the information

carried, thing and news of the thing  
repeating *place*, location of position

Birds, for example, remembered  
fluttering torn terms, congregations

shimmer of hummingbirds  
but when does one see more than one

tumbling bright flesh (sky  
at hand) pleating afternoon, banking

on mere atmosphere, primary  
colors dividing white into

three clean halves (red, green,  
blue-bitter berries rasp, crabapples

crush underfoot), the spectrum  
says *don't stop there*

(smudged light a lapse of attention)  
there's never enough world for you

–Reginald Shepherd

## **nude, untitled**

The illustration is always incomplete. Usually it is intertwining arms, long, exaggerated fingers touching tip to tip, rolling in a meditative, absorbed gesture, until they fall in together and end up knuckle to knuckle, thumb to thumb, an internal move that carries the outside in, impossibly holding it into that small, small place. Inside the folded hands is infinite space, the energy connecting finger to palm, and back again, the zigzags of heat spinning an intricately laced web. As the hands pull apart, a yawning accordion accompanies the interconnected strings as they stretch and pull, hands moving in opposite circular motions tighten the sacred, invisible magnets of golden taffy, the closer they get, the more they repel. Above and all around the clouds and grayness defend the absence of the gods, speak his alibi in whispers, red x's on the doors. The body is never quite finished, disconnected sketches of endless possibilities lay scattered on the walls and the doors, a perfect curve of the hip, a foot marginally out of proportion, a soft belly. The drafting table will always be at a perpetual slant, a beacon of light in the sea of the unmeasurable now. From all directions, a breeze creeps around in soft woolen slippers, ruffling the pages, making tiny, almost imperceptible movements of the still unfinished backsides and foreheads. Across the sky and around the corner an avalanche of color suddenly appears and rages forward, alarmed at it's own voracity, careening like a wild horseman holding on for the ride of his life, a big, spilling wave of reds and purples, a white crest just at the top, blue and black, and iridescent yellow chase down the rest, the last thing I see as I run towards it, smiling.

**–molly m. lewis**



## **my 13th way to quit smoking**

it took me many ways to quit smoking  
until the last way:  
picturing my favorite  
loops of fractal fog  
scrolling from my lungs  
and lacing out my mouth  
founting paisley-shaped into  
hallways and libraries and studies  
lighter and sweeter than pipe rings  
out of windows over balconies  
like dank morning mists through California valleys  
with me watching their scrimshaws curling  
with faintest, percolating specificity,  
illuminations of water-borne smoke  
coaxing me to realize that,  
if I could see such indecipherables,  
this is how my breath would look—  
ornate spells eddying past invisible realities—  
so i quit smoking  
for the 13<sup>th</sup> year in a row  
choosing instead to offer up my slow-won mysticism,  
my every imperceptible breath unfurling  
through a myopic, gasping world

— **c. s. doorley**

## **Forest Lullaby**

After the charge  
our bodies turn  
into dough  
my leg gets rolled  
together with your  
heart and  
pressed into  
the shape of a duck  
and a star

The pastry chef  
leaves us to bake  
in the sun  
then tiny boys  
and girls  
paint us  
with thick feather  
brushes  
pink and blue  
green and  
violet

they place us  
on the branches  
of pine forest trees  
the snow twinkles  
the needles shine  
billions and billions  
of particles  
ripe with light  
sing us  
to sleep

**–GK duBois**

## **What is the `silence' that you are after?**

What is the `silence' that you are after? Do you hear those trucks passing by on the road and the flushing of the toilet? Do you want to escape from all this and go and sit in the caves? There is noise inside you wherever you go.

What is this silence you are talking about? The silence operates there in the city market. When I am talking, it is the expression of the silence. You think there is no silence, when I am talking? You think there is silence when you close your eyes, sit in one corner and try to stop the flow of thoughts? You are just choked--that is not silence.

Go to the forest--that roar is the silence. Go to a sea--that is silence. Go right into the center of the desert--that is silence. A volcano erupting--that is silence. Not the silent mind trying to experience 'silence.' Silence is energy bursting.

**–Krishnamurti**

(at this point  
in the soundtrack)

everyone is laughing

the man in the corner  
and the lady sipping her tea  
the children on the slide  
and collecting leaves in the sandbox  
the swallows and geese  
hemming and hawing  
the crickets raising their wings

people move away laughing  
come closer laughing  
teetering tiny giggles teeming into falls

laughter gathers in our bellies  
undulates through our corridors and vessels  
penetrates our chests  
flashes our cheeks  
shoots from the crown of our head  
seeding the heavens  
raining back into us  
to our toes  
and 1500 feet down  
aquifers far below tremble  
with hilarity

the fish are laughing  
the beings of the infinite deep  
demons warmongers  
a contagion a sacrament  
the buddhas are laughing  
the spirits and protectors and  
golden statues  
women shift their poses  
everyone relaxes  
on laughter's  
gently easing tide

—GK duBois

**I want the light locked inside to awaken**

I want the light  
locked inside to awaken:  
crystalline flower,  
wake as I do:  
eyelids raise the curtain  
of endless earthen time  
until deeply buried eyes  
flash clear enough again  
to see their own clarity.

– **Pablo Neruda**

## **Burning the Water Hyacinths**

We flame the river  
to keep the boat paths open  
your eyes eat my shadow  
at the light line  
touchless  
completing each other's need  
to yearn  
to settle into hunger  
faceless  
a waning moon.  
Plucking desire  
from my palms  
like the firehairs of a cactus  
I know this appetite  
the greed of a poet  
or an empty woman  
trying to touch  
what matters.

– **Audre Lorde**

We go looking for stories  
but no one shows  
no one pulls a gun  
or falls from the buildings  
We rest our heads between  
the valley of the double lines  
We listen for hooves, for motors  
but the cars and horses  
never come

suddenly we know there  
was no director  
no editor no audience

We put away our pens and  
burn our empty notebooks.  
From the peak of our computers  
we make our Declaration:  
“There will be no movie.”  
Gathering into a pack,  
one by one we take a final pose  
and turn quickly to stone  
The fire smolders  
a gas lamp cast a red glow  
We arrive at the moment  
before the universe began

In heavy coats  
and mud-splattered boots,  
people walk by on their way  
home from work  
Some toss coins  
and small bills  
into a well that appears  
at our feet

In spring, they bathe us in water  
in summer, they bathe us in light  
In autumn, they bathe us in leaves  
In winter, they bathe us in flames

—GK duBois

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**-e.e. cummings**



## **The Anchor**

He said: "the anchor"--not in the sense of fastening down,  
or in relationship to the sea-bed--nothing like this.

He carried the anchor to his room, hung it  
from the ceiling like a chandelier. Now, lying down, at night  
he looked at this anchor in the middle of the ceiling knowing  
that its chain continued vertically beyond the roof  
holding over his head, high up, on a calm surface,  
a big, dark, imposing boat, its lights out.

On the deck of this boat, a poor musician  
took his violin out of its case and started playing,  
while he, with an attentive smile, listened  
to the melody filtered by the water and the moon.

**–Yannis Ritsos**

## Backwards

The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.  
He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life;  
that's how we bring Dad back.  
I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole.  
We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear,  
your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums.  
I can make us loved, just say the word.  
Give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent,  
I can write the poem and make it disappear.  
Step-Dad spits liquor back into glass,  
Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,  
maybe she keeps the baby.  
Maybe we're okay kid?  
I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll be so much love,  
you won't be able to see beyond it.

You won't be able to see beyond it,  
I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll be so much love.  
Maybe we're okay kid,  
maybe she keeps the baby.  
Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,  
Step-Dad spits liquor back into glass.  
I can write the poem and make it disappear,  
give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent,  
I can make us loved, just say the word.  
Your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums  
we grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear.  
I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole,  
that's how we bring Dad back.  
He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life.  
The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.

– Warsan Shire

## The Pistil

Now that nothing has been done  
Before, you can speak of the stigma  
style and ovary  
Fourth whorl of the flower  
You can run your tongue  
Along the lips of the sleeping  
No one has touched  
Your hair, described the fall of it  
Now you can smoke  
Indoors, around your daughters  
Windows open to spring  
Nights that flare up in winter  
Words like transparent  
Shells attached to the elms  
maples and ash  
I hear the people  
Because tonight is recycling  
Picking through glass  
As I write you, slow pour of metal  
Into the mold, my speech direct  
Because recycled  
The prohibition against  
Feeling broken like bread  
Above the sill, an inferior mirage  
Above their heads, minute gaps  
Impulses pass through, blue  
sparks rise in the dark  
Fourth wall of the flower  
Splits at maturity, releases  
Sentiment, follicle fruit of it, soft  
Space between bones of the skull  
Where dreams are knitting  
Delicate fallacies, now that bees  
The coral and ice, white  
Noses of bats, it's time  
To write the first poem in English  
Each line the last, small  
rain turning glass

–Ben Lerner

## **Recovering**

Dream of the world  
speaking to me.

The dream of the dead  
acted out in me.

The fathers shouting  
across their blue gulf.

A storm in each word,  
an incomplete universe.

Lightning in brain,  
slow-time recovery.

In the light of winter  
things emerge clear.

The force of looking  
returns to my eyes.

Darkness arrives  
splitting the mind open.

Something again  
is beginning to be born.

A dance  
is dancing me.

I wake in the dark.

**–Muriel Rukeyser**

Oh love, eat me, I am yours,  
fill my emptiness with joy,  
with *yes, da, sí, sí, sí*  
let us begin that way  
to make a new universe,  
soulful, sad, silly,  
& full of seas,  
seas that are salty  
& full of the stuff of life,  
me, you, every wriggling creature  
we can & can't name  
with alphabets as of yet unknown,  
with letters that twist & turn  
& try to escape the page, the scroll, the rock,  
life beginning again  
with only a word  
of affirmation-*yes!*  
Let it begin  
& *Be.*

–**Erica Jong**

“Madame, there are always two paths to take: one back to the comfort of security and death, and the other forward to nowhere. You would like to fall back amongst your quaint tombstones and familiar cemetery walls. Fall back, then, fall deep and fathomless into the ocean of annihilation. Fall back into that bloody torpor which permits idiots to be crowned as kings. Fall back and writhe in torment with the evolutionary worms. I’m going on, on past the last black and white squares. The game has played out, the figures have melted away, the lines are frazzled, the board is mildewed. Everything has become barbarous again.”

**-Henry Miller, *The Colossus of Maroussi***

**let it go – the**

let it go – the  
smashed word broken  
open vow or  
the oath cracked length  
wise – let it go it  
was sworn to  
go  
let them go – the  
truthful liars and  
the false fair friends  
and the boths and  
neithers – you must let them go they  
were born  
to go  
let all go – the  
big small middling  
tall bigger really  
the biggest and all  
things – let all go  
dear

so comes love

**-e.e. cummings**

**oh mother, oh word  
( a ballad of sounds )**

open - close - open  
oh mother, oh word  
your own mouth spoke,  
look out for old storms

ore of origins  
locus of lore  
both known no more  
no longer avowed

moon's ornery glow  
on a horizon of oars  
a lost-opal ocean of  
your world's forgotten words

open - close - open  
oh mother, oh word  
your own mouth spoke,  
look out for old storms

more wonder gone  
sour potions sold  
in-folding, unowned,  
broken bones, none stowed

our homeless shores  
sowing dour stones  
no ground, no songs  
moping onward forlorn

open - close - open  
oh mother, oh word  
old crows resort to  
those forgotten storms

— c. s. doorley



## **What's Uncanny**

is the body's wiry edge singed & dried,  
touched at last by the curious

gloves of the question guard.  
Too much choreography.

Hamstrings, half edible & music,  
stretched like catgut, the sad-animal pull.

Our knees two peculiar systems  
of locking, of looking. Too little dance.

Compulsion is always narcissism:  
I miss you, admit it.

I'm gifted, I give in. I give you  
all my old synesthetic fire.

Loved-body smoke is terribly popular  
in dry neighborhoods,

and our lungs are succulents. We share  
this loss of breathing. Listen for it.

**–Brenda Shaughnessy**

## **Sequence**

Sleep with the moon in one eye and the sun in the other,  
Love in your mouth, a beautiful bird in your hair,  
Dressed like the fields, the woods, the roads and the sea,  
Beautiful and adorned like the world tour.

Flee across the landscape,  
Among the branches of smoke and all the fruits of the wind,  
Stone legs with sand stockings,  
Held at the waist, all the river's muscles,  
And the last concern on a transformed face.

**– Paul Eluard**

**The Image:**

an empty spoke  
shimmering  
in the center  
of a turning wheel

**The Judgment:**

be at ease  
with mystery  
in unbroken  
unfolding  
from the stem  
of life

## **Wellness Rituals**

You never understood me until you watched me wash the inside of the well, with clean wellwater and invisible soap which dissolves the dirt and then clumps up and floats to the surface, suddenly iridescent.

I net up the greening lumps, skimming. I leave the net out to dry. Within hours the lumps are coagulated and bacterial, dirty heads striated with living question marks, leech pieces, worm eyes, segments of fertile sediment.

Enough bio-material to assemble themselves into flying animals, little glowing spitballs. They waver off into their new lives. I made them surely as I made my daughter: without knowing how.

I washed down the sides with seasponge, as far as my arms could go then lowered myself in the bucket. Down there I used my feet. Scrubbed the stones and cracks of moss and slim and what else? Dead water. New algae. Legs of things.

I held my breath against the earth perfume in case it was infected, and spread my legs to straddle the diameter, my toes clenched on wet grit. My own holes amphibian as ever. Where does my water come from? From myself you know.

I am a self-cleaning animal and my children were born glistening under all the soft trees leaving, breathing. You understand me now; the well was always clean. I clear it anyhow. It is no cleaner now than it was but I am.

**–Brenda Shaughnessy**

*(she is being chemically induced)*

**Parlor In Utero: Rebirth on South 5th Street**

plastic flesh cunts sterilized and scented  
sized for an adult skull this video shows  
a head elevating to enter inside the digital  
miasma most frequently compared to lush electric  
storm clouds an impression of viscosity mucus  
on balls or lips tongued & engorged  
as the interiorized sensory stream begins to  
fill from bottom up a head under thickening  
amniotic waters in the subintestinal womb cavity  
projecting raw uncollated data in  
a series of fractured brain events an exact  
meeting point of impulse and perception.  
whole body program recall of a flush of  
warming in liquid a steeping until the ocean  
is attained ahhh she moans the osmotic  
penetration of salts of succulence of pressure  
of saturated bone and cell and brain till  
contractions undulations trampolines  
a push of such extraordinary aggression the  
head out the spout the underwater bursting away.  
emergence

unseen tongues remove from genitalia  
a nakedness starkness vacuity of empty air  
electrothermal dynamics heat loss a body  
given blankets and sent to a waiting room--earth  
tones rugs couches fake crackling fireplace --to  
answer various questionnaires and to sign the  
welcome book. clothes return from a locker room  
breathing scents of conifer and rose a crack  
in the door indicates an exit. next appointment  
established. exit for resumption of external affairs.

**-anXious melOdy**

## **Shedding Skin**

Pulling out of the old scarred skin  
(old rough thing I don't need now  
I strip off  
slip out of  
leave behind)

I slough off deadscales  
flick skinflakes to the ground

Shedding toughness  
peeling layers down  
to vulnerable stuff

And I'm blinking off old eyelids  
for a new way of seeing

By the rock I rub against  
I'm going to be tender again

**–Harryette Mullen**

## **You Love, You Wonder**

You love a woman and you wonder where she goes all night in some tricked-out taxicab, with her high heels and her corset and her big, fat mouth.

You love how she only wears her glasses with you, how thick and cow-eyed she swears it's only ever you she wants to see.

You love her, you want her very ugly. If she is lovely big, you want her scrawny. If she is perfect lithe, you want her ballooned, a cosmonaut.

How not to love her, her bouillabaisse, her orangina. When you took her to the doctor the doctor said, "Wow, look at that!" and you were proud,

you asshole, you love and that's how you are in love. Any expert, observing human bodies, can see how she's exceptional, how she ruins us all.

But you really love this woman, how come no one can see this? Everyone must become suddenly very clumsy at recognizing beauty if you are to keep her.

You don't want to lose anything, at all, ever. You want her sex depilated, you want everyone else not blind, but perhaps paralyzed, from the eyes down.

You wonder where she goes all night. If she leaves you, you will know everything about love. If she's leaving you now, you already know it.

**–Brenda Shaughnessy**

## Parts without a Whole

(at first you have to close your eyes)

\*

a beautiful girl  
yawns an agony  
of air

\*

a million jellyfish  
rise vertically  
into the sky

\*

Two moths batter a porch light  
frying like crunching leaves  
near the door

\*

voluptuous cows  
swagger  
towards hidden  
grass  
one says "I'll make milk for you"  
so you grease your hands  
and gather the  
teats

\*

tones

\*

the exact moment  
the crickets start

\*

seams

\*

"i want to give everything away  
at the same time i'm afraid  
everything will be stolen"

\*

A whole without parts?  
a plexiglass chandelier  
dropped in the ocean  
a coral reef  
for bioluminescent fish

\*

Thank you Herbie Mann  
Thank you Bookshelf

\*

beings pop in and out  
of this world  
to serve a moment's purpose

\*

mitochondria

\*

I enjoyed the tea  
I enjoyed the way you made it  
I enjoyed the sipping and the  
breathing and the teaspoon  
beside the napkin  
I enjoyed your smile and  
how you didn't speak  
until the tea was finished  
I enjoyed your voice  
how kind you were  
and the question you asked

\*

a catalogue of dream plants  
and dream poems

\*

in distillation tanks  
and coal stoves  
on drenched moss  
in cave mansions  
at the base of the cliffs

\*

when you name it  
is it known?

—GK duBois



## **here yet be dragons**

so many languages have fallen  
off of the edge of the world  
into the dragon's mouth. some

where there be monsters whose teeth  
are sharp and sparkle with lost

people. lost poems. who  
among us can imagine ourselves  
unimagined? who

among us can speak with so fragile  
tongue and remain proud?

**-Lucille Clifton**

**Now i lay(with everywhere around)**

Now i lay(with everywhere around)  
me(the great dim deep sound  
of rain;and of always and of nowhere)and  
what a gently welcoming darkestness—

now i lay me down(in a most steep  
more than music)feeling that sunlight is  
(life and day are)only loaned:whereas  
night is given(night and death and the rain  
are given;and given is how beautifully snow)

now i lay me down to dream of(nothing  
i or any somebody or you  
can begin to begin to imagine)

something which nobody may keep.  
now i lay me down to dream of Spring

**—e.e. cummings**

**Tide Charts**

**&**

**Benediction**



## **To the Rain**

Mother rain, manifold, measureless,  
falling on fallow, on field and forest,  
on house-roof, low hovel, high tower,  
downwelling waters all-washing, wider  
than cities, softer than sisterhood, vaster  
than countrysides, calming, recalling:  
return to us, teaching our troubled  
souls in your ceaseless descent  
to fall, to be fellow, to feel to the root,  
to sink in, to heal, to sweeten the sea.

**–Ursula Le Guin**

## **Walking the Maze**

The bright, broad earth dims to become  
a labyrinth in which I walk  
on feet that ache, grow numb,  
and yet must feel the way I take.  
Stumbling me on where I can't see,  
step by step they make the road  
I'm not quite sure is there. Unsure, unshod,  
and slow, afraid to fall, I go  
where all is now opaque  
to me. Does the way lead out or in?  
At the center, or the door, will I be free?  
No choices left to make. I follow on  
the maze whose gate and goal are mystery.

**–Ursula Le Guin**

## **On the Western Shore**

Ebb tide is when to roam  
the long beach alone  
and find the jetsam  
of the forgotten or unknown,  
a slender breastbone,  
a glass net-float lost  
from a boat off Honshu  
borne over ocean  
a century unbroken.

the lowest, the neap tide,  
that bares long reaches  
that were deep underwater  
where the slope grows steep,  
is when to walk out so far  
that looking back you see  
no shore. Under bare feet  
the sand is bare and rippled. Dark  
of evening deepens into night  
and the sea becomes sleep.

**–Ursula Le Guin**

**blessing the boats**  
*(at St. Mary's)*

may the tide  
that is entering even now  
the lip of our understanding  
carry you out  
beyond the face of fear  
may you kiss  
the wind then turn from it  
certain that it will  
love your back may you  
open your eyes to water  
water waving forever  
and may you in your innocence  
sail through this to that

**-Lucille Clifton**



***Benedicto:***

May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome,  
dangerous, leading to the most amazing view.  
May your rivers flow without end,  
meandering through pastoral valleys tinkling with bells,  
past temples and castles and poets' towers  
into a dark primeval forest where tigers belch and monkeys howl,  
through miasmal and mysterious swamps  
and down into a desert of red rock,  
blue mesas, domes and pinnacles and grottos of endless stone,  
and down again into a deep vast ancient unknown chasm  
where bars of sunlight blaze on profiled cliffs,  
where deer walk across the white sand beaches,  
where storms come and go  
as lightning clangs upon the high crags,  
where something strange and more beautiful  
and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams  
waits for you —  
beyond that next turning of the canyon walls.

—Edward Abbey

a puzzle uncoils–  
a dragon of clouds  
a serpent sea

–c.s. doorley



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