

Net

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Words and Longing

Net

POETRY,
the large cap,
big field,
big deal,
Erudite,
goose bump
array

~ makes me feel like
a very small girl ~

Standing at the free-throw line;
hopeful face upturned
with a freckled,
wistful, one-eyed squint.

Hoisting shots
at the backboard ~
Yearning for nothing but net.

Some days,
I practice my serve;
blazing chosen words
over the tennis net.
Or, dreamily floating
into Pablo's unweaving
net of years.

I could be
tangled in a mosquito net,
collected in butterfly nets.

My words are buoyant on
the boundless Sea of The Internet.

Words served by a silver-haired
lady in a Luby's hair net,
with a side of
grits and seventies dragnet.

My words navigated
eighty's net gains,
and the blameless shame
of ninety's net losses.

Stretched upon the bed in French fishnet,
I polish the jewels of Indra's Net.

I find the
bottomline
of my net net,
futile measure
of my net worth,
and learn
to trust;
or not
the Safety Net.

Swish
bounce
Swoosh
no boundaries

So
go on now,
girl.

Leap,

and the *Net* will appear.

Trolling

I love dragging
words behind me
like nets trailing a boat.

Deep blue
water
illuminated
by a golden
lasso of spotlight;
pool of desk light.

Soft green
nets
trailing,
undulating
like Triton's
salty daughters.

Ramping up the wake,
the net of words
folds in
becoming fuller
louder
heavier.

The winch
tightens
the line.
Gears
mesh,
drawing
up
the net.

Desk filling with
catch of the day paper;
words, phrases.

Above deck,
the net
sways pendulously
like a tear drop
on
Poseidon's cheek.

Dripping,
suspended
for a moment;
a ripe tangle of words.
They dangle ~

Silven
word
snippets
drip
between
the fibers.

Falling like quicksilver
to the deck.
where they roll
to the back of the boat
and fall from
the gunnel ~

back into
the ocean of words.

Offering

It is the likely half-net of my life.

I stand
casting and casting into a
tumult of surf
heaving the shoulder high swing
of heavy roped fisherman's net.

I release,
and it sails through the air
before plunging heavily
through clear green water.

My Net
sinking.
Arcing,
slowly,
gracefully,
lethally
over it's
yearned for
(vital) occupants.

Before being dragged
hand over hand
back to the surface
to be checked for
it's wide-eyed offering.

Ocean's largesse
the jewels of Indra's Net
sparkle at each union.
Reflecting us.
Reflecting me,
and the sea, and the sea, and the sea.

Firefly Work

Release the
firefly words
onto the blue pages of the nocturne night.

I will chase you.

No more lingering by the side
of the field
at twilight.

Staring under
the canopy for wayward flickers as the clock shades later.

I have a jar to keep you by my bed.

(no idle threat)

Capturing your glow

for brief
evenings of enchantment ~

Until I decide to lose
you back into the clean slate of night

that I may sleep.

Bellows

Thank you for finding my bellows ~
One swift push
and
the drifted ash
blows away.

I find the coals of my heart
are still hot
under their smoky blanket.

It could've gone either way.

Smoldering red
waiting to ignite
~ or snuffed
into powdery grey oblivion.

My heart pumps
with muscle memory
and tremors of excitement;

There is hope for a second act.

Put another log on the fire
poke
stoke
stir.

We will pull
the mesh curtains
and watch
the thin reedy flame
become a crackling
(respectable) Fire.

Sit by the hearth
and warm yourself
in the long awaited
heat.

Rivet Gun

I want to
shoot words
with
pneumatic
precision
&
focused force.

Piercing
the vault
of imagination
with
clean metal
clarity.

Decisively binding
persistence
and hope.

Finally
riveting
alchemy
to success.

MISSIVUS

With a crisp salute
the fortune cookie
yields its'
treasure,
"A message will reach
you from far away."

Typed paper slip,
tiny missive
far removed from
ancient Chinese characters;
ink, brush, papyrus
and the almond hand that created it.

Ricochet
to modern day;
satellites orbiting
Earth
trailing wakes of
asteroid dust,
and the new noise of
the human generation.

Beaming celluloid
Beaver Cleaver reruns,
to the far reaches of the galaxies.
Broadcasting...
across the ages
Are we reaching?

"After a word from our sponsors,
we will explore the mysteries
of the ancient thirteen crystal skulls
no humans could have fashioned."
Message thwarted.

Moses' missive
from the Mount;
carved in stone,
heralded by a burning bush.
Message received.

As the Trojan horse
pauses at the gates,
the soldiers
sweat with fear.
'Peace,' offering
masquerading
as Athena's gift.
Envoy of
the downfall of Troy.
Message received.

The Bishop bends
to kiss the flame of the torch
to the pile of gnostic books.
Afterwards,
when the queen
unties the scroll
from her raptor's claw,
she will gasp at the contents.
Messages thwarted.

A woodpecker taps the flue
of a fireplace -
morse code mimic.
Pioneer of sound,
Radio god Marconi,
worried,
"Have I done
the world good
or have I added menace?"

Evidence of D-Day
echoes endlessly into the universe.
Verlaine's poem signaled
Allied forces with
the first three lines;
'Sabotage rail lines.'
Message received.

Public television screens
a kingly candidate
speaking words of equality.
The flickering candidate
reaches into the crowd...
as they grasp and shake his hands,
they relieve him of his cufflinks;
a pair a day.
Memento Mori:
Message received ~

Inside Hawking's nutshell,
we explore,
"Is the universe shrinking
or expanding?"
We are told...
both.
Message relativity.

Paleolithic shamans
press pigment-coated
warm hands to cold stone.
Transferring
hunting magic
to cave walls.
"We are here.
Buffalo here."
Message received.

“Mr. Watson come here,
I want to speak with you.”
 crows Bell.
thereby connecting us forever.

Continents away,
a bottle washes up
crumpled slip inside
to a deserted shore.
Message thwarted.

In the white light halls of
Berlin’s Archaeology wing,
a scientist delicately lifts
 a fragment of
 Elephantine
 Egyptian scroll
to the magnifying glass
as it crumbles to dust.
Message thwarted.

But, The People
Still have Faith.

Any day now,
a pony express rider
will venture over the
snow-bound pass;
rough-shod and leathery
with *The* crucial letter
 that bears the
 True News
 and Hopes
 of the World.

~ We are safe ~

Message received.

GLASS EMPIRE

As for me,
I far prefer
the speed of eras past;
of distant
Civil War
news
and campaigns
waged afar.

The
hoofed
reprieve
of waiting
for the rider to
deliver
yesterday's,
or even
last month's news.

Braced,
suspended,
horn-rimmed,
mail bag,
or scroll
carrying certain reports
of victory
or
defeat.

Death,
blunders,
plunder,
swords unsheathed.

Bullets,
canons,
their
fresh shots
hovering smokily in midair
until news of the war can be told.

Followed by
the instant
the wax seal is broken
~ the hurtling heartward ~
with deadly accuracy.

The intervening days
between the knowing and the telling
allow the luxuries
of
ignorance and hope;
encourage the gathering of
palm-pressed composure
and thundering decorum.
Nurture the fleeting
fretful peace of wondering
if all could still be well...
... preserved a few more precious days.

It is left to the rider
to hand across
the baton of record.
Dismounting from the
heaving,
sweat-flecked flank
of his thirsty horse,
the rider
wafts contrails
of sweat and fear
in his striving to keep
the
past
the past.
The pony express ~
~ the pony repress
regrets to say...

II

Roll tape
there will be no intermission.
You will not be allowed to exhale.
Sighs are forbidden.

Today's News
is the sold out
livestream
of the downfall of humanity.
Season ad nauseam.

Shattering,
chattering, panels of
experts grinding the daily news
into greasy burgers
for your forced consumption.
You may binge watch
and like us on Facebook.

In the time it
took to formerly type a telegram
to its' single unlucky target,
millions of users will be
Twitterfied
on the electric fence
of Being.

There is still hope the death toll
will be low.
Build a wall,
to try to
hold it all back.

There is no cure.

Take this prescription to the pharmacist:

Take *Dusty Civility*
down from the shelf
and apply liberally
to regain compassion.

(Ignore the black box warning.)

The Volcano opened
18 vents in your
neighbor's
yard.

*What do you do
to care?*

~ After the flood ~
reason evacuated
and privacy burned

(continued on A6)

IV

The pace of the World
accelerated with the assassinations.

Lincoln,
Kennedys,
Kings.

We have to know
who shot our innocence
from the grassy knoll.

Turn on the TV,
slide down the avalanche
of bad news.

Helpless
to self arrest.

The three-lettered deities
broadcasting
echo chambers of
Kim Jungunification,
the populace redacted,
surveilled,
and the diplomatic disruption of
the Darwinian
conclusion rushing
toward us.

V

Invaders appear
on the ridge above us.
Hostile silhouettes
bows taut...

Our re-emergence
to peace will be
guarded by Poe's raven
and Mona Lisa's smile
which is protected from us;
protected from you,

by bulletproof glass
within a glass pyramid.

If I do not write this in stone,
it will not survive.

Pixels will not hold
The News.

The Timex is ticking.

The scribe will pen your letter,
but you will deliver it
to Emily Dickinson's
daffodil drawer.

Where we will
look at the scrap
and determine
our future.

(Absence)

Deep Eddy

Swept away

again
by
the
beryl
green
water.

Floating
into the
deep,
circling,
futility

of our
family's
familiar
eddy.

Years of knowing

as I barrel down the current;

if I reach for
the long-dead branch
above me,

it
will not
hold
my weight.

Soul Choke

The need to fly
from the brown hills
with the
wild finches
overpowers me.

The wish
to leave behind the
withering
territory of
familiarity.

Cresting and
falling
ever south
to the verdant hills
and tender grass
of renewal.

Tiny breast heaving,
straining,
with maximum
effort.
Feather-tipped
wings beating air.

Kernel of beak
tipped to sky;
perched for flight
from evergreen branch
to wide open
grey cloud sky.

Ruffling feathers in
exhausted contentment.
Safe in the instinct
nest fidelity will
bring me home.

St. Germain

That day will dawn
butter yellow.

Black birds strung
like jet beads
on phone lines.

The aisle we will not walk
lined with flowers
that will not blossom.

I do
not
know where
to put this
pain.

Tears are mere water
and my belly is a well.

Echoing:
I will
I will
I will

but never,

I Do.

Bitten

It is not
the worst
habit
as they go.

It will not
kill you
slow
like a glowing
butt,
or fast
like a straw and mirror
night.

But like those,
it calms
the gnawing.

The gnawing need
to reach
a brief
peace;
Detente

But, make no mistake.
The unavoidable
display
of shorn fingertips
creates the same
hair raise of nape
in the viewer;
Doubt.

The visible,
delicious uncertainty;
all sharpness
blunted,
torn,
ragged,
short.

Bitten to the quick
sans mercy.

The manhole
over the morass
neither pills
splifs
syringe
nor spoon
will ever cover.

It is a small forgivable.

Nailed like a piece of
paper to a post
fluttering hopefully,
flapping in
the breeze;
gesturing wildly,
calling,
begging,
for
forgiveness,

and ultimate
understanding.

Seekers

Must I lose
a sister
to gain a poem?

Days
seeking
catechism
from aspirin.
Days upon
days.

White pills
streaming through
my palms.
Chalky rosary
never touching
the pain.

Knees,
fists,
futility,
amen.

II

And so it began,
So it began,
So it began,
Coming.
For a long time.

The dream;
I stand in the desert
Sapphire blue raw silk
streaming
through my hands above the sand
Faster (faster) now.

Sibilant sister
She recedes from me.
Fleeing like a river ~
Faster
Faster now

Until the end pops from the bolt
Flying into the sky
Billowing away
Bolting deeply into the paler blue

Eyes straining,
looking up
standing in the desert sand;
wading through a river of sun.

Until the receding speck becomes
a mote, a beam
in my eye.

Matthew 7:3

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

III

I need to rescue the
Valley of the Moon poem.
Exiled
to the garden house.
Fretful prisoner of Neruda's fish book.

Set just east of
beloved
Isla Negra,
featuring
screaming sisters
in the desert
Valley of the Moon.

The desk we've been waiting for
washing up
on the moon-shored desert
drawers stuffed with sawdust.

Neruda's voluptuous figureheads spilling
cleavage and tears
on our misery.
Crying for the connection
that will never be.

III.5

It is sunset
in the Valley of the Moon.

A woman ascends a dune.

Behind her,
her daughters find purchase
in her footsteps.

Walking in her shadow,
the coolness
of her experience
falls over them.

Together they seek.

Listening for
the cadence of
coherence;
the silence between
the ticks
of clocks.

Poring over maps
and charts
of heart
wishing to be guided.

Small tribe
searching
for footfall of soul.

Guiding one another
to the
(perfect) path;
like threading a needle.

Take a stitch
Take a step
Make a plan
Build a life.

They will learn
that watches slip from wrists,
time buries moments in sand
only to uncover them later.

Eye of a needle
Eye of a hurricane
Head of a pin.
Rushing hourglass sand.
whispers
'tempus fugit.'

There are no hurts like these.

IV

In the lucid dream,
there are women in my heart.
Surrogate sisters,
riveted by the story of my life.

They stand and murmur
each to each
and (sometimes) fidget with their parasols.

There are days we dance
and others
that stifle like corsets.
Pioneer hearts
open like the plains
and the chapters of books.

Kneeling
and fervently praying
(sometimes crying slow, fervent tears)
...and we will wipe the pain away
with real linen hankies...

After,
sitting on the riverbank
dangling feet, toes, petticoats, and skirts
in the river.
Faces tilted expectantly to sky;
like waiting for fireworks
on the Fourth of July.

Hopeful,
giddy,
like only girls can be ~
even after they're women.

V

And so,
it is better to seek no more.
The watch's face will never show
the time
I want it to be.

I will carry you
over my shoulder
from the
chamber
of my heart.

You'll do no more
damage here.
Not on my watch.

To Combat Silence

Enemies all.

Electronic sentinels
designed
to pilfer and
steal
silence...
Negate peace.

The tartness
and hardness
of apples
sold
every day
regardless of
season.

Filled with arsenic
laden
seeds of
distraction.

The art of the selfie
filtered through
100 applications
of reality.
Each of us
the personification
non grata,
persona
enfant
terrible:
youthful
exuberance
rampant
and extruded
onto the
protuberance
in our
hand.

Two way mirror
with a view of
the destruction
of the bees,
blue whales,
and gorillas;
2nd cousins
of all mankind.

Please hold for a call from
the Full Solar Eclipse
of Life as we know it.

Ad Nauseam

~ push away
from the table

there is no food here
only waiting

the menu changes

but the service
remains
the same

you set a beautiful table
but never bring sustenance

the candles sputter wax on the tablecloth

it seems a good time to leave ~

The Day after not Winning the Award

Stripping the stickers
from apples,
the orbs
become anonymous.

Tumbling,
settling,
into the bowl.

Stripped of
the provenance
of orchard
and titles.

It will only matter
that you're good now.

... delicious
... worth biting

As we all race the clock against rot.

Toll Road

We breeze through the toll gate
headed home.
“You want the receipt?”
she draws.
“No ma’am.”
I answer.
We gently roll
through the turn stile.

A halcyon field
appears
to the right
fog illuminated
by exhilarating sun.
Green of the field
studded by fresh hay bales.
A golden moment.

A treasure squandered.
As we accelerate past it
in our mandatory seat belts.

I will fight not to turn the
car around
for the next three turn arounds.
But our exit is
already ordained
and we forge ahead.

II

3 days ago
hurtling under the underpasses
in your Nana’s Lincoln at dusk
you see the mounded nests
of the swallows under the overpasses.

Evening starlings
 in an intricate dance of feathers and insects.
 You felt their community and harmony.

Today,
 as you leave,
 you see the birds
 half a mile away.
 displaced, agitated.
 Dispirited swarm of small
 warm bodies evicted
 by the man with the shovel.
 Shrugging away his crown of swallows
 with hapless, hunched shoulders.
 He executes his task of on-duty mercenary.

It is a melancholy diorama
 that will not leave you for miles
 not until Kansas bridge # 10-10.

III

In my next life,
 (then)
 I will turn the car around
 and wade through the golden misty light
 breathing in the soft green exhale
 of newly shorn field
 and abundant hay bales.

Exiting from the heavy toll roads
 of a family trip.
 Passing the exits we didn't take.
 Avoiding the tolls.

Taking the scenic route.

Lone Star

It is how
old?
I dunno,
maybe 50-100 years?

Drizzle falls on the highway.
as you park on the shoulder
and prudently gauge
how far away
the oncoming semi
is at 60 miles an hour.

There has never been
a grayer day
as you walk
up on the long gone
ghost of a deserted barn.
Walking through
the November field,
dead sunflower heads float
on rough brown stems,
dry thistle heads drip rain drops,
and burs hitch a ride on
your jeans as you pass.

Trash trees ring the barn.
Protecting?
Shrouding?
You can't tell their
intent;
to shield?
to hide?

It is a long way to walk
to the barn from the highway;
to sneak up on desertion.

Leaving behind the stream of semi-trucks,
their head lights wetting
the foggy flannel of
descended clouds.

You feel conspicuous,
guilty,
conscious.
Let out of your mother cage
for a moment
back to girlish roots and free.

There are very few moments
your young family is not
the arrow of your heart.

In *this* moment,
you drove away from the house,
stopped the car and ran away
to the unfamiliar;
impromptu field trip.

The prairie sea has lapped
the barn wood dry.
You bridge the circle
of surrounding trees,
briars? brambles?
myrtles?

Inside the
falling down
cathedral of barn,
all color has drained into dirt.
A pristine,
single-starred brick
rests in the ashy dirt.

Tiny altar to the unfamiliar.

The rain turns to sleet
heavy drops scudding
on the holy tin roof.

Through the busted stalls,
fading light illuminates
the loneliest, broken gate.

The quiet isolation is
a simple revelation ~

Leaving this place is hard.

Walking back to the hissing river of
headlights and pavement;
a beam of
blanketed peace pulls you back.
You can feel it between your shoulders
as you turn to home.

Twisting the tether tighter
as you walk away
until it twangs
at the proper pitch ~

The former usual.

As the ring of trees
closes ranks behind you.

Odessa

old 8mm
world.

Windmill
in cathedral silhouette.
Field,
field,
field,
oilfield,
amid truck stops of
forgotten industry.

Giant iron horses
labor for petrol.
Telephone lines
and train tracks
string small towns
together on the prairie.

A dull silver train
carrying cattle cars
of desolation.
threads the needles
of tumbleweeds
and pipelines.

Owl eyes of culverts
peer from dry outland grass.
The yellow-lined
black asphalt door
to the world
opens here.

True distance is
the unmeasured
space
between
heartbeats
and
the flap flap
of the spool unreeling
on gray enameled metal.

Captured,
translucent,
sprocketed memories
worthless to anyone but you.

Witness the Lioness

I long

to lay my tawny hide
next to yours
on the savannah.

to stare into your yellow gaze
reflecting surging herds
as they have been in all animal memory.

to feel the loving sandpaper of your tongue behind my ears.

to know that the sister shapes
surrounding me
share the blood rushing in my veins

to revel in ancient urges
unfathomable to reason
known only to instinct

to savor the simultaneous embrace of death and sustenance

to know that for all I long for you,
I might never feast on the sight of you

Frustrated huntress
far from the Serengeti.

Together

Eve

I cannot recall the genesis of our love

only a green seed
of rising hope.

While waiting
for the incantation of marriage,

my love for you swells

~ like poppies ~
on the eve
before bursting.

gin joint

Some moments get stolen
like a penny ante.

Sheared
right off the top, shaven of stubble.

So get this Mr. Chips, some i's
don't get dotted.

The juniper berry gin
joint
hummin' with lovin' and static

with The Noisy Crazy.

There's a hole in the floor where All the fun is stored, and a piano built
strictly for the dry matches to set it on fire

on good nights.

...The Good Night everyone hopes for... the one to be tucked into
the diary pages of
memory next to

the faded four leaf clovers found
while lying on your belly in your tart green youth.

Over there
lucky lady's titties slouch softly against men's chests and all is
Ayrie, man

just don't stare tooo long

Belonging is
bumping
up against
people you don't know, but soon will.

The netless
swoon into debauchery
and the momentary grab at no grief.

Certain creeping dawn will find the inevitable
stumbling
neath the faded stars

toward the brimming pink horizon

Then we are again
simple folk come back to earth.

Humans on the Beach

This is the twelfth summer
you've brought me here.

After each long journey,
in the span of our first beach walk,
I see your eyes soften,
and smile broaden,

We revel in each other
and the freedom found in
slipping the collar of the city.
There is suddenly *more room*
for chasing sandpipers,
and gazing off,
collapsing
in wet, happy heaps;
lolling like
litter mates ~
baring our teeth with joy.

Avidly I watch the earnest
collection of
the most beautiful shells
on every walk.
Knowing that each time
they will lose
their wet magic
on the kitchen table.

On early trips,
youth drew me
down the beach.
Maniacally chasing
your stubby-toed,
chubby-legged children
and gulls.

Sand clings to my wet
black muzzle.
You throw balls,

or fling frisbees
with abandon
and bad aim.
I tumble and
leap for
sport.

In the middle years,
I nuzzled your sandy-bottomed spawn
away from the water's edge;
guardian and
playmate
soaking up
the fur-pulling adoration
of our pack.

Occasionally the zephyr
of puppyhood
whistles up my spine,
Frolic finds me again,
and you laugh to see it return.

In my 12th year,
I am calm
and watchful.
Head held high,
stately.

There is no more need
to herd
our tribe;
legs and conversations have
grown longer.

We are the loved and beloved.

In spite of stiff haunches,
I am a paragon of canine clarity.

The sun lights
gray muzzle
and steady brown gaze.

The horizon of my departure
looms
in your wistful eyes.
We have grown to be
wise together ~
dog-eared companions.

You are my people.
I will forever be
your dog.

Your memory.

My hope is *never*
to leave your side ~
tethered by devotion.

It is the dearest wish
of every hound...

...and every human on the beach.

Sentinel

In my quail breast,
I long
for
the simplicity
and speckled endurance
of
nest,
egg,
crack,
life.

But what I truly want, comes after.

The Guardian in
the bush.
Feather and sage
wing and bone
sitting high
observing
each tiny peck.

Relishing
the
relentless lives
they have ushered here.

While guarding against
the flush
of the covey.

thursday night muse

4 orgasms in
and I'm a paper tiger
all impetus
robbed from my limbs.

your studio

I am here
to lightly fluff
the pillows of your source.

your torch

I carry your fire throughout
the week
burning smudgy smoke
yet kerosene clear

stepping over dropped embers
with tender feet
~ only because I like your smolder.

your root

When spent,
we fill our eyes
with your paintings
bathing in
precious metal and crushed pearl;

dilettantes of love
& pirates of the sly glance

your treasure

While waiting for gold to anneal
you must be an avatar
of patience.

your muse

The smashing tractor beam
of the mundane
will not have its way
with us.

Hold out for solace ~
breathe in for inspiration
breathe out
repeat.

your universe

I am a meteor
of creativity
and you are the Earth.
When we collide,
there will be
such an explosion
of painfully good
Love.

I long for you
and gravity's work
is far too slow.

Deep Radiance

renders me lucid.

My center burns hot,
but it doesn't quite
make it to the tips.

Thus my cool nose as I nuzzle your neck.

The chilly fingers I tuck behind your back.

The cold toes I slide behind the backs of your knees.

Come closer darling,
I need to bask in our heat.

Marriage Feast

And when we go to Venice,
me with my crown of invisible white
butterflies
and you with your
bluegreen
stained glass
heart,
the tidal waters will rise ~

I will carry your cloak
well above
the wet
and darkening cobbles.

Ermine
flecked with paint ~
pulled by
your lion's tread
over the Rialto.

The people offer you
golden eggs,
golden beer,
mead and honey.
Honoring
radiant fortune.

A namesake Celtic Goddess
presides in a crooked room
full of orbs and light.

What of my
fleeting glance?
Giant bronze doors,
limestone dust
and onyx,
a baptismal font.
bathed in cool church light.

But the lesson eludes me,
lost in the
personal ephemera
of St. Marks
and the labyrinthine streets.
Wisp of a memory
inhaled for good
~ pressed
like rose petals
between golden-edged pages.

Merchants, gondoliers,
princes,
assemble for
la bella vita.
The bells of Venice
are inescapable;
noise and riot
peace and quiet.
All is music in this
jeweled lagoon.

When I enter the temple
behind your eyes
I am surprised
by the energy there.
It is green and full
like grasshoppers chewing grass.

On the delicate architecture of
the bridge of your nose
there is an altar
drenched in color.
The silence hums
and the black stone floor
is littered with dragonfly wings
glinting like fish scales.

The vault of your forehead is
quilted with moss.
I would like to sit here
a long time.

Soaking *you* in
basking in
your energy
and stillness.
Slowly rooting to the spot.

There is a rush of sweet light
over the stones.
Pure, it illuminates
the dark
corners
and slowly fades.
I realize you have just
looked at me.

I sit both within and without
illuminated
in the glow of
your light:
radiant fortune,
my Lion of Venice,
eager to return your offering.

Point of Contact

Father and son, come home
from an evening drive,
and say, "We saw a bear cross the road."

The specialness is not lost on any of us.
Plenty of drives have no animal sightings,
but this one, this sight,
they will both remember.
The cooling night air
as they passed through
the thermoclines along the river
the wildfire haze
illuminated by sunset.
And then, the bear
making them stop their motion
for a moment to
ponder the wild things in the world.

When driving with them,
separately,
weeks apart,
both will say,
reverentially,
"We saw a bear cross here."
The third time I hear
them say it
independent of each other.
I realize,
we each have visual bookmarks all over our valley.
The place you saw the,
'insert wild animal sighting here.'

I catalog
my own animal bookmarks
Amber of memories
preserving observed crossings.

It is Universal
to look to those spots our
eyes brushed up against *the wild*.
As if the portal could open again

and emit
the same golden moment of
spontaneity and wildness.

The towering evergreen treetop
(always passed with a hopeful glance)
we saw the hawk alight on.
Pulling the car off the road
to take in the sight of her.
Flying like a kamikaze;
freshly caught snake
striking her talons and fighting
for life ~ with everything it had.

Followed by the the moment the snake became live no more.
I cannot pass that hero tree without
reflexively looking at the sky for hawk shadow.
Remembering that precise moment.

The road trip
we saw the Eagle -
cresting the river bed with good speed
flying at window level
for enough time
we could study his
deep, sweeping wing beats
propelling him next to us
at 40 miles an hour.
seemingly unaware of his
careful of groupies.

There is *the* field,
a wildlife portal, that has yielded so many encounters with animality;
I make up excuses to drive past it.
“The most beautiful commute in America,”
I proclaim *everytime I* drive it.

The elk command that field every fall...
The first time, coming home from teacher conferences, feeling lonely
~ we had only lived here 3 months ~
Cars lined the rough hewn log fence and people leaned there watching the
animals be animals. I stopped.

A black speck on the ground
drew my eye away from the elk,
until finally, the black speck stretched
and moved.
Unfurling his giant bear self
across the field at a stately pace
calmly parting the elk.

There is no way to forget the way the horses on the other side of the road
lined the fence
shoulder to shoulder
ears pricked forward
nostrils flaring quietly
watching the bear pass with alertness born of instinct,
and avid curiosity.

Another autumn night, you took your visiting family to witness the herd.
It was like a giant waltz.
Sweeping movements and partners cutting in with
the violence of desire.
The buck with the fairytale rack with an entire sage brush stuck in it
like a medieval crown; ruling the harem of does and young, male challengers.

The night you saw a coyote and an elk touch noses.
Both leaning cautiously back on their haunches
to greet one another.
Putting as little body forward as possible ~
A brush of inquisitive noses, a sniff;
then the awkward parting ~ as if no one saw them.
Did they meet again?

Each moment witnessed,
a glimpse into a page of animal history
but never the whole book.

The frigid morning driving into town watching the snow sparkles
over the same untracked expanse of field.
Healthy fox poised, listening, head cocked...
Suddenly springing straight up
diving down - full head under snow.
Emerging jubilantly
to fling her prize vole into the air.
Relishing her catch with glee ~
playing with her soon to be snack.

The falling dusk you saw a mountain lion sinuously
cross the roundabout just ahead of you
with great speed and no regard
or care for cars or humans.

The hummingbird who buzzed your face
on the green-smelling June hike.
Hovering aggressively,
wanting your notice,
before swooping
and settling lightly into her perfect
tea cup reed and spider web nest.
Smugly watching you depart on your journey.
Content she had dispatched the threat.
The two times you've passed it since,
her branch draws your gaze
but each time, the small cup of nest is empty,
and you feel some small sadness
and longing.

The ebullient night your small son hooted the owl
in close ~ *a miraculous conversation.*
A call and repeat that went on for
many minutes before the night's coldness
shoed us inside ~ our bare feet feeling the winter creeping through concrete ~
And the three saucer-eyed owl babies we would watch fledge the next spring.

There are others ~
the bear cub you could not see ~
only hear ~ in the dark July night
plaintively calling for her mother
over and over and over
never receiving the answering cry.
Next days' paper said Mama was illegally shot and dumped.

A few weeks later, that baby bear and her brother would crawl up your tree
the same day hot air balloons were floating above.
So you'd run from the front to the back of the house.
Balloons, bears, and *the scratch marks small claws left behind.*

The deer who would not back down from your barking puppy
standing her ground and rising to pummel the dog with purposeful hooves.
It was only after the deer chased the dog,
you realized she was protecting something.
As she turned to go, you saw the
afterbirth dangling between her haunches.
Two days later *twin baby fawns followed her to the thicket.*
One night later, you hear coyotes goading at 4 am
Followed by a pitiful shriek and a death cry.
The mama will navigate the hillside with one baby
for a few days and then you see no them no more.
You will never know their story.

There was the time you decided
not to see the story.
You hit the accelerator
to pass the scene ~
small fawn barreling from the woods
with wide-eyed noise and panic.
It took a mere moment to decide
to never see the end of the story.
You did not wait to see who it fled,
or their numbers,
but you think of her ghost
each time you pass that patch of trees
on the edge of that field.

Always wondering at the point of contact.

Offspring

American Bath Time

Amid a swirl of colors and warm clean water
bath time commences.

Brimming bright toys and white porcelain,
the tub receives
a hopping two year old
clutching a smiling crocodile.

I baste in
his noisy happiness,
soap grubby hands.

Washing the day's play away,
I think of the world's boys
born half a world away;
tiny unlucky doppelgangers,
and the mothers who wash them.

Bath time for them might include
a cold river,
a bucket,
a dirty cloth,
a slurp of toxic water,
or a tragic crocodile.

The risks of an American childhood
are a different sort.
Surviving the machine
of gluttony and want.

The lessons of plenty are many.
What is scarce here?

What accident of birth
landed us in this Technicolor dream
of an American childhood?

Happily slurping your bathwater;
ignoring your mother
at no one's peril.

aperture

The magnets of
my heart will
always
track to my babies.
The compass needle guided
by the magnetic core
and heart of the earth.

Those will get me back to you every time.
A tractor beam of certainty.

I carry your small faces in
my locket
creased edges...
corona of ringlets

I find myself
dreamily
turning
the wooden block
of your nursery days
over and over in my palm,
fingertips tracing
half-moon braille
teeth marks
you left as a baby.

The camera ~
I wish the shutter
could stay open
just one more
moment,
or two.

So the shadow
of your face
will burn into my heart
before you leave me.

The Beauty of Need and Fulfillment

Today, as I watched you fall asleep,
the sun left the cedars.

Your tiny head at my breast
frees me
with the
blissful weight
of mutual devotion.

Each day
as I nurse you,
the field I gaze on
through the window
is frenetic
with life;
a wild-eyed romp
of bugs and birds.

Each day I await
the black-crest of
the dapple-feathered predator;
our roadrunner,
to shade the golden
grass.

I savor his
long hop
&
run.
Neck outstretched,
beak to sky;
the dazzling everyday capture.

With what looks to be
a satisfying crunch,
the kill...

Grasshopper
no more.

Our
roadrunner stalks
cockily off
the field.

You startle
at my chuckle
over roadrunner
antics.

Blue eyes wide,
you look to me
for
cue.

Before,
with a tiny sigh,
you nuzzle my breast
contentedly,
and finish.

Anointed

You who are
the anima
of the universe.
Breasts bared,
nursing...
soapy-handed goddesses
birthing
immaculate progress,
nurturing
tiny selves
of light.

Exalt in
your *beingness*.
Allow the
power of the
divine
to course through
your fingers
igniting
paper flames
of imagination,
and baring the
clean wooden floors of self.

You, the anointed
caregivers.

Keepers of
sacred thumbprints
imprinted over
every surface
of your temple and heart.

It will take big faith
to weave
generations
of family
into happy tapestry.

Depicting
ages
of sacrifice
and mutual adoring.

In this holy shrine of tribe,
we must not let the fire go out.
It is duty to guard the flame;
assure safe passage to adulthood.

Here,
sweet one,
close your eyes.
I will keep a vigil
of your progress

and anoint
thee,
holy ones.

ORBIT

“3-2-1
Wiftoff!”

You are Two.
Orbiting
the twin suns
of mom and dad.

We have known you
forever and a blink.

It is the honeymoon phase of
our acquaintance of you.

Our faces turned
toward the sunlight
of possibility;
reveling in your
once and favorite son
future.

Hoping you never
slip our tether.

Each night,
planting one last
goodnight kiss
on your sleeping ear
like a dare.

You are Two
at the dawn of a
New Age.

Ready to blast off
into the limitless Universe.

Epiphany

alacrity

aspen, february 6
2017

a monday
warm winter morning
sunrise
coyotes
yipping

it is the day after
the
super
bowl
epic game
we did not see

we assume
one team was heroic

as the sun crests the mountains,
we watch the woodpecker's
avid alacrity
at the suet cage
& listen to
the feral coyote ruckus

the weather report
is wrong again
no snow
only clear

the kids (just) boarded the school bus
sallying into the world
of new facts
& recess
their very own lives

I have recently
put a love letter
into the box of saving

it
is
just
and merely
a
day

I will walk the dogs
grateful
the ice has gone
from the road

you
will
go forth
to (conquer)
this day
with alacrity

we feel
capable
full
Free

Able to keep practicing
how not to die

&
how to Live

Bulb Envy

As I pass
your tender
yellow flag,
envy flashes
in my heart.

Friend of the sun,
your yellow trumpette
upturned
for warmth.

Yours is a true path.

Beginning
as bulb
papery wrapped secret
tucked beneath
the weight of the earth.
Simple ancient code
written on
your papyrus layers.
Bearing the magic
of complete silence.

No waffling or
decision.
Only the certainty
of growing
each shining
season.

Springing from dirt,
pushing green
nubs of leaf
through darkness
to the imminent
welcome
of the sun.

Your glory will last
to bounce in the wind.
You will accept the rain
to the pale toes
of your roots
while the rest of you
stretches to flower.

To be admired
for the gift
of doing
one small thing
well and greatly.

True to your nature.

ephemera

Ass in air
elbows on ground
hands on chin
heart near earth
eyes shuttered

waiting for you
to arrive
with your love

listening hard
for the green edge of
sound
the hole the
night pours through
cricket
cicada
at their perches
doing the work of
reverberation

At your tread
on the stair
the veil of noise lifts

frogs
fill the void
and a lone
chained dog
solos

the moon listens
hard
for the work of lovers

DELUGE

Water it in deep.
Rain in August.

Lying naked on my back
on rough wood planks
in a rainstorm.
Legs and feet
held straight up.
Soles to the sky.

Pelted
by forceful drops.
Staring upward
into a storm brings
watershed perspective.

Drops stream from my
eyes down my cheeks.

Every atom awake.

I
will
myself
to
stay
still.

My body
will not stop
trembling.

And Then,
dreamlike, it flies above
through the deluge;
and hovers,
a delicate giant.

Dragonflies fly in this?
How on Earth?

II

On the
other side of
the Earth,
beneath the line of Equator
a cheetah rolls
on his back.

Sun warming
the slack hammock of his belly
in the dry dusty dust
- he gives himself
a rough-tongued
bath
before deeply
stretching four legs
upwards
to the killing blue sky.

Black tears from
long ago
streak his cheeks
as he soaks in the sun.

He turns his cheek to
the desert floor.

It is no effort to be still.
Acceleration
requires
rest.

A breeze
from distant,
dragonfly wings
dries his fur
while balancing
the axis
of the Earth.

III

I was happy when my spots
showed up.
Fifty years
and my tawny hide
finally graced
by the spots
animal judgement
bestows.
The discernment of
age and wisdom
distilled
into tiny brown spots
scattered about
over-tanned skin.
Joy for the sun
trumping vanity.

I slip through
dry grass
roused by hunger,
anchored in instinct,
stalking certain
death.
Pent up
wanting explodes
on the concourse of grass.
Everyday savannah full of need and lack.

My tail flicks away the fly's
dusty hum and thrum.
They are always guests at the party...

IV

So I will rise
from the wet boards
and assume
my life's usual position.

Tucking my spots
under sunscreen.

Resume the
thwarted days
when forcing a
grocery store
orchid to bloom
is my biggest
kill.

The laundry, a koan never
completed.

But I will pause
before acceleration,

and marvel at the dragonfly.

Drying
his wings
after the deluge.

When Aspens Stretch

The white limbed
corps
reaches and
bends
ballet branches.
Stretching their flanks
in a delicate
flex
and balletic unison.

A shower of
golden gypsy
leaves
shimmer
to the tambourine of earth.
Glowing skirts
forming
beneath them.

The trees
anticipate
the curtains of
first frost
that will gild
and glaze
them into
various
positions
of rest.
Revealing
bare
white arms
at sides
or held elegantly aloft
awaiting the first
keys of spring
to animate
their dance
again.

Trunks,
roots,
arranged
in graceful
parentheses,
to wait
the winter
through.

Hypnagogic

My eyes close
seeking sleep.

Mind,
adrift,

I find myself
standing
just before dream
on the rock point
that juts above our valley.
Cozy Point.

Once,
kids hitched up
Pa's wagon
to sit outside the city
getting cozy.
Victorian Inspiration Point.

My sleep-seeking brain
will not let go.

Unconscious
urging,
whispering,
“Shout into the quiet.”

My voice
is *deafening.*

It arcs
into the era
of railroads
and gold mines,
past elk herds,

before waterfalling off
the ridge
and pooling
near the Indian's camp.
Finally
tumbling at the
Mastodon's muddy feet.

Arrowheads
arrowroot
frayed
animal
canvas
teepees
tattered Victorian
lace
curtains
over wavy
glass
windows.

The velocity of my voice
gleams from river
bottoms
of gold,
and grazes miners
on mountaintops
brimming silver.
Before
boomeranging
back to my open ears.

There will never be
as pure an echo
as a shout into the quiet ~
bouncing back from
the stone ages

before sleep.

Spice Rack

I spin the carousel of spices.
madagascar vanilla
cumin
smoky paprika
white pepper
sea salt
cayenne
and wonder at their journeys.

From
ground
tree
ocean
bush.

From when the sun
stroked
leaf
berry
or pink peppercorn.

Harvested just after
the dew
evaporated
from the leaves.

The growing seasons
the rain traced
the brown vanilla
beans of Madagascar,
the rosemary of Provence,
or the golden wire of Indian saffron threads.

How many days by boat
to the mainland?

Whose hand
old or young
plucked
you?

The pestle
grinding seed
to powder.

Now they
sit waiting
for their moment,
the spices.

The flash
of light
as the cabinet
door opens.

Thrill of the spin,
and the blessed hand
on the bottle.
Intoxicating moment
of unbottled free fall
a dash,
a pinch,
or the cool
confines
of teaspoon,
Tablespoon.

Measured
and released
for a
taste
of comfort
or the exotic.

Harvested
to trip the tongue
and fill the nose
with the treasure
of pleasure.

Another Moon Poem?

The world does not need more ink
praising your light;
nor odes to beauty and
starry skies.

The great *need* for comfort
cannot come from
a heartless
cold rock.
In truth,
a mere reflector.

When men believed the Sun God
horsed his chariot and
plied the skies,
men and women
began the fearing;
grieving and fearing
personal gods and pharaohs.

Tides and moons rose
with no knowledge
of gravity.
The only certain hope
resided in
the transcribed knowledge of cycles.

Pandora's box opened centuries ago.
Evil flew,
but *perhaps* Hope still waits
in bottom of box
for the lid to be opened again.

Sun and Super moons
now grace skies
filled with jets
not chariots.

Paper ballots
confer
the illusion of control
for the people who cast them.
no longer pharaohs...
... presidents.

The myth of fingerprints still sorts us.
All alike?
No two alike?
commonality
duality
plurality.

The conflicts of the tribes

me versus you

Us and Them
begin again in the rolling sunrise
filling the news cycle.

Filling horizon after horizon
the papyrus morphing
to screen
to the ragged edges
of the black hole sucking us
to the bottom of the box.

There will never be
another like you.
Gazing at the moon
head full of self.
A repeating echo
of me
versus you
versus you
and your earlier tribal self.

The sun warming mountains as she climbs,
and the moon cooling peaks as she treads.

Grasshopper

All years are new ~
opportunities to seek
our higher selves.

** noted*

Young You,
standing on the diving board,
steam penanting,
off your beaded shoulder blades;

You run off the end
and leap
into the
mineral green water.

Steam wings billowing behind

before

sinking

with small limbed

weight

back to the depths

of seven

and eight.

One day
you will grapple with
your unrestrained impulse;
douse your overly fiery id.

Realize all along...
Dad the accelerator.
Mom the brakes.

Step on it, please,
'I am ready to grasp my grasshopper self.'

One day
Buddha's river rock soul
smoothly skipping
on calm reservoir water
will beckon to you.

Consider,
who was buddha before he was *Buddha*?

Just a boy...

Ghandi?

Just a boy...

Your smile distills 1 part moonshine innocence...
and 3 parts sunburned mischievousness.

Keep in your heart the thought ~
"The life you hold in your hands is your own."

Self reliance will
surely come to the surface.
Bursting from the depths,
like a rubber ducky
to float on the elusive calm.

*Someday,
we'll all
get it
given to us.
Ya see?*

Ya see, Epiphany?