

Joel is a special human being who brings care and magic to everything he works on. Our community of storytellers are among some of the most creative people in the world, and he displayed a unique ability to inspire and move them deeply.

Harris III
Curator of STORY, Founder of The Poetics.

We have always waited and asked for better windows, a truer lens, some ways to see the brightness and goodness that we somehow know is there. It is to this deeper, already knowing, that Joel McKerrow appeals. He draws us through a much better window.

Father Richard Rohr
The Centre for Action and Contemplation.

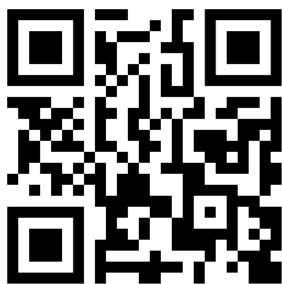
Joel McKerrow is a true leader in Australia's performance poetry scene...his writing reveals a wisdom beyond his years and his devotion to his work and to the greater good of all of humanity shines unwaveringly.

Luka Lesson
Australian Poetry Slam Champion

Captivating...Warm generosity, deft poetry,
powerful charisma and no ego.

Krista Monson
Creative Director Cirque Du Soleil

Joel McKerrow is one of Australia's most successful, internationally touring, performance poets. He is an award winning writer, speaker, educator and creativity specialist and has performed for hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world, including being the third ever Australian representative at the *Individual World Poetry Slam Championships* in the USA. Based out of Melbourne Australia he is the director of *The School for Creative Development*, the Artist Ambassador for *TEARFUND Australia*, is on the teaching staff at *Melbourne Young Writers Studio* and is the host of the *The Deep Place: On Creativity and Spirituality Podcast*. Joel has four previously published books as well as five spoken word/music albums.



www.joelmckerrow.com

If you like this book then check out these other creative projects from Joel McKerrow...



The School for Creative Development

Joel is the director of an online creative education community with four modules, over 100 hours of teaching content and a whole community of creatives to journey with. For any creatives who need inspiration and coaching and community for your own creative practice...check it out.



The Deep Place Podcast

In-depth reflections and conversations around the creative journey and its intersection with the spiritual journey. This is the kind of podcast that goes into the heart of creative practice but also into the heart of your life.

Copyright © 2023 by Joel McKerrow

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other - except for brief quotations in printed review, without prior permission of the publisher.

Author: McKerrow, Joel.

Publisher: Joel McKerrow

Title: Even Lost Things Glow

ISBN: 978-0-646-87360-2



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

Artwork: Joel McKerrow

Design: Joel McKerrow

Website: www.joelmckerrow.com

Even Lost Things Glow
Poetry for the Misplaced

By Joel McKerrow

**For those who wander
and those too afraid to do so...**

Acknowledgments

This writing and performing life is not an easy one. It is less than consistent. And it certainly takes a supportive family for me to be doing what I do. So thank you to my wife and my children and my parents and in-laws. These words could only find their place in the wake of your support and love and consistency.

A massive thanks to my dear friends cheering me on from the sidelines and also those in the trenches with me. To Richelle Bourne, my longtime creative collaborator, your love and your hard work and your ability to put up with me are the only reason this book could be. Thank you! And to Candace Smith, you are a constant creative support, soundboard, source of inspiration and so much more. You were the first one to see many of these poems and so these words too would not have made their way to the page without you. THANK YOU!

And to those others who have made this book a reality through your constant friendship, support or simply inspiration. There are SO many of you, so this is just a few...people like Grace Naoum, Liz Milaney, Sabrina Lloyd, Dan Nixon and the MYWS crew, Luke and Sarah Hawkins, Kerryn Fields, Jae Twyman Mills, Anna McGahan, Beth Lansom, Pearl Taylor, Michael and Hailey McQueen, Jess LeClerc, Brooke Shaden, Franzi Zimmer, Colleen Pocknall, Fleassy Malay, Dani Vee, James Layton and all the Larrikin crew, Scott Stuart, Diana Hadaia, Pip Williams, Harris III, Stephen Roach, and lastly the amazing Elise Hurst, whose incredible book *The Storytellers Handbook* provided me with so much inspiration for many of the pieces within this collection.

Author's Note

I write these words the morning after a big night (though not what you might think). It is the morning after I spent half the night holding up my kids hair as she threw-up over and over and over. I am under-slept, exhausted, emotional and just, well, done with it all. A perfect time to write a super encouraging authors note. Ha ha.

Yet, perhaps, it IS actually the perfect timing. Having been bombarded by the gritty stuff of life it is now I turn to creative expression. A turning that I have learnt well over the adulting years of my life. For my turning toward creativity is also my turning toward God, my turning toward that which is larger than me, my giving over of the dark place I can find myself within.

There have been many times I have found myself lost over the years. Unsure of the next step. Bewildered by the divisiveness of the world. Overwhelmed by my own frailties, by intention that doesn't turn into action. Stuck in the slough. A dark place. Lost in the forest.

Truly it feels as though sometimes I sit in the dark and all I can do is write the dark out onto a dark page with dark ink and dark thoughts.

And yet, as I write out the dark, well, I gotta tell you, the words, in their turn and in their time, they

begin to glimmer. Soft at first. Glow-in-the-dark words. And my light craved heart reaches out towards them and in that moment...nothing is fixed, everything is fluid, nothing has changed and yet everything has changed.

Friends, what you have in your hands right now is a collection of these glow-in-the-dark words. The poetry that has sparked some light inside myself over the years. Some are from old works and some are brand new, but either way my utmost hope is that this poetry might be the same for you. A light in the dark. Some kind of phosphorescence to guide you, no matter how lost you may feel. May these words lead you on.

Lastly to say, I wanted you to not only be able to read this poetry, but to immerse yourself within its glow as fully as possible. For this reason there are TWENTY ONE poems within these pages that are also spoken word/music tracks. All you have to do is point your phone camera at the QR code and it'll take you to the musical track. My suggestion when you listen would be to do so with your headphones in, eyes closed and preferably wine or whisky in your hand. That is what I what I would suggest. See you out there friends. I'll look for the glowing ones.

*Joel McKerrow,
11th January 2023.*

Contents

The Lost Things	12
With a Whisper	14
On Vomit and Poo and a Mundane Existence	16
Younger Days	20
All of this I have Felt	22
The Art of Preening	24
The Autumn and the Fall	26
Cartography	28
The Day the Colours Bled	30
I Want Everything	34
Loneliness	35
Lying Down	35
Speaking of God	35
Embodiment	35
Heavy	36
These Days, We Burn	39
On Moving On...	40
The Chase	42
Excavation	44
A Smallness	45
On Finding Ones Purpose	46
Masterpiece	48
The Weeping God	52

A Meditation on Capability	55
A Forest	58
On Smoke and Foxes	59
Train	60
Waiting for the Storm	62
The Brave Ones	64
The Weight of Things Un-named	66
Cold Shoulder	70
In the Wake of Meeting God	70
Remembrance	71
Silence	72
The Search	73
The Sound of a Thousand Wild Brumbies	76
Giving Thanks	78
Dweller on the Threshold	79
Where the Luminescence Begins	82
A Hopeful Moon	83
A Sacrament	84
The Breath	86
When to open your eyes	88
God, Rid me of God	91
The In-Between.	94
Notes on Entering the Very Large World	96

The Lost Things

In the midst of everything that exists
 there is a solitary city
 and in this solitary city
there is a leaning building
 and in this leaning building
there is the smallest flicker of an orange glow
through tiny window. Blink and
 you'll skip it,
 disregard it,
 not notice.

Of course there are other buildings complete with
orange glow in this city of steel and cement and
sharp distinction. Even some front doors are a
welcome to the stranger.

But this tiny window,
 up high and tall, it is a beacon...
 for the forgotten ones.
The undesirables. The left behind playthings.
 The dropped out,
 kicked out
 scraps of a life gone by.
They huddle up together by the fireplace.
They gather around the ember
warming their cold hands.
 A one eyed pixie doll.
 An engine with three wheels.
 A father who forgot his sons name.
 A stranger who never found a friend.
 A lonely woman.

Would you look at them, if you could,
through the window aglow
with a warmth not often seen?
They certainly would not look like much.
Not even with their powers combined.

They are still a listless handful of vagabonds and
tweasered shirt sleeves. They are a mess of cotton
spools and a splotchy dress and a toothache and a
coughed up furball. They are a past mistake. They
are a moustache cut in half. A fear formed into a
shadow. A forgotten regret. An empty fishbowl. A
dusty record player. A lost sock. In short, they are
nothing to take notice off, nothing to dream about.

And yet, when they gather here,
 in the warmth of the glowing room,
 in the leaning building,
 in the solitary city
 in the midst of everything,
when they sit side by side
and look each other in the eye
it is then they realise
the most important wisdom
that any misplaced thing could ever let you know...

It is then they realise,
that even lost things glow.

With a Whisper

Everyone feels it,
or if they do not feel it,
they hear it, or sense it,
or know it,
somewhere deep inside,

 this desire to swept up into beauty,
 into the cascade of life,
 into the movement of the sacred.

We know this, have known this, always known this,
 this pull at our ankles...softly.

This coaxing, taking us out into the flow.

But it can be so bloody scary sometimes,
 to feel the surge beckoning,
 to know the shallows was
never meant to hold you, not now,
 as safe as it feels, as much as you needed it
 learning how to walk and grow and move.
Now the shallows are just that,
 they are too shallow for who you are.

Do you feel it now. Know it now.
Every time you stumble across the sacred,
 every time beauty moves you,
 every time you create,
 every time, it is always the invitation.
God holding out her hand with a whisper,
 "Come swim out here with me beloved
 Come let the currents take you.
 Come let the water hold you.



You no longer need to feel the sand at your feet when you can hold my hand in the flow.
I am the water and the whale,
I am so much larger than...well...anything.
Come swim out here with me beloved."

So once again I turn to where the waves break.

I may be scared, but I make the choice,
the only one that matters...

I take my feet up from the sand,
from security, from the shallows,
and I let the water begin to swirl,
flow around me, through me, in me.

I float out to sea
and the mystery
and the trusting
and the holding
and this new beginning.

Everything filled with beauty and invitation and
over-flowing. Everything. Everything.
But more than anything, it is Me.

See, this movement is nothing,
but the simple acceptance of the self.
To love who you are. Truly love who you are.
This is the invitation.
And it is an invitation that changes...
everything.

On Vomit and Poo and a Mundane Existence

I talk a lot more about vomit and poo than I ever used to. It is true. The joy of parenting. 3am spew flowing through fingers in a somewhat hopeless attempt to avoid changing a bed sheet for the fourth time that night. Bucket lying somewhere on the floor. My then pregnant wife throwing up in the room next door. Pregnant mothers with morning sickness are superhuman.



The next morning our boy is playing pretend and he holds up a bucket pretending to vomit in it (just like mum does). He laughs his head off as he does so and I think to myself...

This is who we have become.

Vomit and poo. They have become a consistency in my life. Often more so than writing and poetry. And if it's not these bodily explosions then it is hour after hour of reading the same damn book over and over. That hungry little caterpillar has eaten through planets worth of food by now. And there can be no lying down for more than ten seconds before being pulled up from the couch to play games and to chase the boy around the house and its one more load of washing and the lawn that needs mowing and dirty dishes in the sink and this playground

followed by that one and it's a crying son and counting down the hours till mum gets home and this, this is life. This is all life. The mundane kicks you in the face sometimes. Hard. It leaves you exhausted. Blistered.

And I don't just see it in my life as a parent. But it is there for us all. Behind the instagram photo and the facebook post there lies reality. Mundane reality. Vomit and poo. We spend our lives running from it, escaping from it, but its always gonna be there. Even for the full-time poet, or the famous singer or the actor or the travel photographer or the...(insert any glamourised vocation). It is all filled with the mundane. So I figure we might as well own up to it then....Are you ready...?

Your life is not that exciting!!!

Sure there are moments of exhilaration worthy of the movies, but most of the time it is working hard and cleaning dishes and answering emails and dealing with annoying people and problems with your bowels and a friend who is depressed and it's eating and pooing and buying groceries and getting sick and insect bites and self-doubt and crippling loneliness and suffocating families and watching countless hours of TV. There is no escape. Life can be so darn...boring.

But I do wonder if it has to be. I wonder if boredom comes only when we give ourselves to it. I

wonder if boredom comes because we have lost our sense of wonder. Wonder at the small things. I wonder if learning how to wonder again is a way out of this. I wonder if I have used the word wonder too many times in this paragraph.

But could I find the wonder still at 3am cleaning up vomit? I am sure it must be there. Possibly in the knowing that I have a child and this child looks like me and he came out of the love of my wife and I. And I know so many people who cannot have children for one reason or another and actually how blessed I am that I can clean up his vomit and if need be I could take him to the doctors whilst so many sick children in the world do not have any access to medicine. This is life. Beneath all the mundane and all we are tempted to be bored with and escape from, I do wonder if there is always more to it. The grass seems to be always greener. It never is.

So friends, may you let the rope that ties you down be the anchor that holds you in the midst of storm and circumstance.

See, perhaps the trick to this thing called life is to find the wonder right where you are. The grass on which you stand. Like where I stand...It is vomit and poo from a son who makes me laugh more than I ever have. It is countless children books carefully crafted from extraordinary artists. A wife that I still call home who is soon to give birth to a Melody.

Clothes hanging on a line in the yard of a house that keeps me warm and safe. Dirty dishes washed after eating delicious meals with the family and friends. Time to write. Like right now. It may not be as much as I would like. But it is there. This is life. This is all life.

So may we delve beneath the facade of the self we want to project out to everybody else. Let us not seek to escape from the mundane reality that we find beneath it. Boredom is the curse of a generation who has been given too much. Let us see if somewhere in the midst of it all we can find the wonder again. The grass is not greener on the other side, so let us find meaning in the mundane. Beauty in the boring. Enchantment in the everyday. Positivity in the poo. The virtuous in the vomit. (Ok that may be taking it too far). This is never easy. This will not be easy. For it flies in the face of societies conditioning. But still I say...

Here's to life in all its glory and all its ordinary. I'll see you there, in the midst of it all, probably with red tired eyes, vomit stains on my shirt and poo beneath my fingernails.

Younger Days

It's the way that life
comes together,
pushes us forward
into progress and production,
 into growing up
 too fast and too much
 and if I can't do this
then I gotta pretend that I can.

 And I'm meant to
have it all together by now but I don't
and I won't and the throat of life
constricts tonight till I'm barely breathing,
 just trying,
 just failing,
 just stumbling,
 to the ground,
 to the ground.

 On the ground I hear a sound...

It's the pitter patter tripped up feet
of my little girl. Her world
is twice the size as she.

 And she is trying,
 failing,
 stumbling
 to the ground.

But her mistakes are what makes her.
These baby steps
are the necessary progress
 toward the larger.



She holds out her hands toward her Father,
trusts that I wont condemn her
cause she cant quite walk yet.

This Faith of a child
who is learning how to walk.

And I am learning how to walk,
how to trust,
how not to rush,
how to reach out my hand
to the one who'll always catch me,
not condemn me,
not play me for a fool.

Who gives a snake
when his child asks for bread?

And I'm just asking for some bread,
just crumbs,
just to have a little faith,
the size of my baby girls
she learns to walk and play.

This is the quiet, quiet
pitter, patter tripped up calling back...
to the younger days.

All of this I have Felt

It was an age ago that we left.
Stretched out from the confinement,
we felt our way forward.
There was no one to teach us this
experimentation of supposedly dangerous emotion.
They had told us that passion
was an unruly master. A trickster at best.

'Emotions are like the weather', they said,
'always around, but better off ignored.'

This is what the pastors told us, urged us, pushed us
toward. To separate faith from emotion. 'Don't trust
yourself,' they said. Don't trust yourself. I wonder
now what they were so scared of?

Perhaps themselves. Like we all are.

But I couldn't do it. Couldn't ignore the fire that
burned inside me regardless. Instead,
I learnt to wrap emotion around me.
A blanket against the world.
I learnt to let the feelings rise up within me.
I walked away from the rigidity
of a well reasoned life toward the unknown.
It was the beginning of breaking free.

And now, now I have cried often.

Laughed loudly.

Danced wildly.

Raged softly.

I have obsessed.
I have fallen.
I have regretted and grieved and spun naked under
the stars. I have tasted the fruit. Smashed the fruit.
Drank the vine. Curled up fetal.
Dragged a dagger through my ribs.
I have tasted my tears. Drank my stars.
Fought my insides.
 Befriended them too seldom.
 Held them hostage too often.
I have held her close and thrown her away.
 I have felt.
 God, have I felt.
 God I have felt.
 I have felt God.
So close. So far.
God as absent as the worst father.
God as present as babe on breast.
Suckled drunk. Pickled and scampered
 and laughed at the absurdity.
Cursed and heaved
 and storm brewed severity.
The cutting tongue.
The slow healing.
The impassioned bellow.
 All of this.
 All of this.
 All of this I have felt.
 I have let myself feel.
 And I do not regret one moment.

The Art of Preening

I wish, sometimes, for a nest.
One lined with all the soft things...
Feathers. Petals. Sentiment. Stillness.

I would sit, silent and preening, arranging,
holding the quiet. You know they stole that word,
preening, they slapped it onto the prideful.
But they forgot when they did...
 the way that lorikeets
 draw each individual feather slowly
 through hook of beak,
 the way the Mallard fluffs so soft,
 the way the finch, so precise,
 spreads oil over its entire body.

And none of this for pride
or for show, but for survival.
An insulation
 from all that mess
 and noise and cold out there.
A waterproofing of this porous skin.
A mending and a fixing
and a re-aligning of aero-dynamic wings,
that the great Osprey may still take flight.

Have you seen the way
the Parakeets preen each other,
removing the dust of a lonely day?

Parakeet with me?

I will sit with you,
the same way I have learnt
to sit with myself. I will care for you,
the way that I have learnt
to care for myself.
This is my offering.
A space to crawl inside.
A nest in the midst
of a loud and busy world. A preening.
This is the offering I give also to myself,
a nest of my own acceptance.
the affection of my own love.
The knowing that nothing,
nothing, nothing is missing.

I remind myself and remind yourself...
 be proud of this life you are building
 from twig and twine.

The Autumn and the Fall

Hey you! Yeah, you!
You with the sand-dune
wrinkles of a skin worn well.
You with the eyes now so full.
You with the rough hands,
blotched skin,
worn down threads. You,
with all those years you wish could be lived over.



Why not just let yourself go today?
Let yourself walk lightly.
Stop with the heaviness of regret.
 Stop with the way you judge so harshly.
 Stop raking up the disgruntled leaves.
Pick them up instead.
One by one.
Study their flow and their landscape.
Their fingers. Their rivers. Their dance.
The fall of the leaf in the season of letting go.

Isn't it time?
Isn't it time?

Yes, the colours of life have orange-d somewhat
lately. The cold wind has come to find you.
Blowing around you.
Between you. Within you.
When what has been green now curls and fades.
When the feeling of love wavers.
The lines deepened.

The faith hardened.
The substance now well worn.
It would be so easy to feel like the best is gone.

But can't you see...?

The way the leaf soars through the sky still,
even as it dies. The way the tree surrenders.
The shedding of old skin.
The way the air rises
 underneath the brittle
 and the frail
 and beckons now to you.

She can hold you.
Like she holds all the little creatures.
She can hold you. Even you,
and all the weight
of the life you have lived.
Can you feel it?
Beneath you...
 a rising...
 a stirring...
Can you feel it? Can you hear her...

'Come fly with me,' she whispers.
'Come believe that even tired bones
 and old dreams
 and weary hearts
may still find their place in this world.'

Cartography



I once saw a girl empty
herself out upon a napkin.
Ink met tears. The paper wept.
She screwed it up,
threw it in the bin and walked away.

I, a teenager, could not help myself, reached in my
hand, took out her crumpled story and laid it
gently out upon the table.

You see paper is a precious thing. It is willing.
It takes in upon itself
 our very wounds
 our very wishes
 our splotch and splatter
the blot of ink on paper. Spilt lyrics, like spilt milk,
spilt rhythms, spilt rhymes, she spilt this time, so...

I lent over the words, studied the contours,
 this crumpled map of sorrow. A poetry
 spilt as mountains on parchment,
 a deep lake and the cut-through river,
 a valley where the lonely wander,
 a forest too dark.

Guided only by the map of ink spilt on napkin
I found myself walking the edges of her life.

Cartography, it is built on the premise
 that reality can be modelled.

The stretch of a landscape laid flat out on the
paper. Friends, we are sailors
 and our ships are our craft
 and the ocean is our imagination
 and the wind that fills our sails
 is something that we know,
 but can barely even name.

Yet it drives us forward.
A gale that began inside us.

Every word is an island.
Every story is a mountain.
Every time I speak I am drawing this world for you.
I am setting sail. A navigation.
We are the map makers,
 tracing lines of a land that others cannot see.
The uncharted and the unresolved.
 There be dragons here, there be shadow and
nightmare, there be wonders, there be more beauty
than you could ever contain.

The map. The direction. The way through.
A writer. A cartographer.
They are one and the same. So come sail with me.
 Be curious with me.
 Wonder with me.
See artistry where others only see ugly.
Pick up the parchment.
The crumpled paper thrown into the waste bin
of somebody else's life. See it for what is.
It is a map, to find your way home.
Come sail with me. Come sail with me.

The Day the Colours Bled

She wraps herself in violet. Hushed tones.
The colour of grandmothers shawl.
She has been doing what we all do,
 holding ourselves up to the light,
 just to see what colour lies underneath.

He is a faded denim blue.
It did not begin this way. It never does.
Colours that fade when left lonely in the sun.
He was faded, like we are faded,
like we are left lonely.

I remember paint-by-numbers from my childhood.
I was never very good at knowing where
the colours and shades mixed and
how their unique hue could lie out on the canvas.
So to be told where to put what colour.
It made it so easy. Just,
 stay between the lines. Stick to the numbers.
 Stay between the lines. Stick to the numbers.

Fear demands a certain reading of reality. It forces
anything unfamiliar to be named as dangerous. To
take a stranger and paint them. To take a culture
and blame them. And isn't this world thick with the
dripping paint of our prejudice. The lines of this
paint-by-number they are the lines of the systems,
drawn by the powers, patrolled by the privileged
who demand that everyone has a fair chance whilst
slapping down white on anything in sight.

This paint-by-numbers world...

Number one is white and privilege.

Two is an orange incredulity.

Three is black, you know that poor African.

Four is the sky, always blue.

Five is immigrant brown.

Six is a homeless grey.

Seven is anti-this, or pro-something-else.

Eight is conservative right.

Nine is progressive left.

Ten is red, the colour of blood.

If you have seen the emptying of a woman at birth then you would know, red always bleeds. You would know, all the colours, they bleed. Just like every, every, every one of us.

Today I listened to her story, a girl so different to me. Her red was a blush. The creeping heat that veined up pink neck as she told us of the black rape and the burning burgundy of flame and the purple bruising and the grey shadow that follows her everywhere. Midnight blue was her sadness. A charcoal loneliness. The white of bone. The white of snow. A velvet sunset. The hope that green may bring a new beginning.

I tried to paint her,

like I have learnt to paint everyone.

Paint-by-numbers. It was not working well.

The colours would not stay in their defined areas.

They mingled too easily with each other.

They defied the borders. Seeped,

into the segregated.
The neat lines were not working.
Too much mixing and running
 and the way the black leaked
 and tried to cover everything.
And the green shied away into a corner to hide.
The numbers were all wrong.
Nothing made sense. Not the order I was used to.
The sky behind her was a murky brown,
 cut through with slash red scars.
Her skin was a grey mingled green
 and everything washed together.
Where she ended
 and her surroundings began
 I could not even discern.

I could think of nothing else to do
so I dabbed the yellow. Just the smallest drop.
It lay on her skin. I let her paint it in.
She painted until she shone. Golden. She shone.
Beneath the grey and the dark and the brown,
 she shone.
And it was not the eloquence of my brush
that brought it out. It was her. It was who she was.
She could not be painted with numbers.
Who she was. She was all of this. All of these
colours and none of them fit and none of them
were neat and it was messy and dark and it was light
and it was beautiful and it was a masterpiece and it
was so very...human.

This was the day that the colours bled.

Her story told and now I could not see anyone the same. As a child I had painted like a child, but now this system of paint-by-numbers was useless. Nothing lies so neat anymore. Nothing so defined. No person. No people. No God. Nothing that is born of relationships.

As much as I might want to paint them all into their place, the colours always refuse. And I thank her for this. And I urge you with this...behind every person (and the colour that you so desire to slap thick upon them) there lies reality. The messy real. The truthful real. The nuanced real. The blending and the merging and the hoping and forgiving and holding and dropping and forgetting and seeking and the fear. Always there is the fear inside them, as always there is the fear inside you. You will know it by the thickness of the paint that covers it. Layer and layer and layer of prejudice and control but I dare you... scrape away the dried paint. Wipe off the neat lines. I dare you, as I dare myself.

And so now I pull out a canvas, blank with no paint-by-numbers lines. Just brush in hand, or sometimes no brush, sometimes fingers and hands and messy and hope and confusion and pain and betrayal and with all of these things, on the blank canvas of my life I paint us...

Humanity.

I Want Everything

I could soar here. Where explanations are not necessary and the less wary my mind becomes the more fertile is its ground. Plant a seed. Watch it grow. Through the looking glass in my mind I look in upon the fervent and the aspiring. Enough inspecting and critiquing, I want soaring and living. I want butterfly oceans. I want oak tree castles and cloud spires made of cats wings. I want it all.

This is what I am trying to say...let life drip down the lips and onto the chin of this satiated face. Fill my mind with wonder. My heart with gooseberries and Sunday picnics and crashing waterfalls.

Let me draw the world. Taste the world. Smell the world. Lick the world. Give me water drenched ecstasy. And philosophy no longer concerned with explanations. I want to drown in life not explain it. I want to dance with it, not deconstruct it into a logicians notepad. Give me an art pad. A dance floor. A dance pole. A bed for more than just sleeping. The quiver of a feather pen in a hand that cannot stop shaking. I want to write this world upside down. Kiss its tongue. Feel it soft and tender like she is. A cat purring into my neck. A bird taking flight. A full sail. Give me a full-sailed world. I want to be breathless. So moved that I cannot speak.

Loneliness

There is a loneliness under the surface and yet I have learnt to befriend her, place an arm around her shoulders and whisper my secrets. She listens. This is surprising in itself, that loneliness can listen. What is even more so, is how safe I have come to feel in her presence.

Lying Down

If I stand really tall, stretch my back as far as I am able, lift myself upon tiptoe and reach, reach, reach... I do not touch God. I grasp air and a frail faith. But if I lie down in the grass and just breathe, then God finds me.

Speaking of God

When I speak of God, I am not speaking of God, but of my conception of God. And this conception, it is a mirror that must be smashed over and over, lest I turn God into my own image. And who does the shattering of said mirror... God herself.

Embodiment

Don't forget, this body is yours. Fully and completely yours. And don't forget that you are your bodies, fully and completely. One and the same. The dance of the self. Skin touches heart. Soul touches flesh. For too long I did not think of him, my body. But now I am learning to dance again. Now I am learning to dance again.

Heavy



There is a time, when those
who hold up the world,
 can no longer do so.

Strong arms and a straight
spine for too long and too
many and too much. And I know,
 you would carry them all if you could,
 every single one, you would let them come,
 find safety in the nest of your life.
You would pile them high.

But do you realise how heavy it has all become?
 How even small things held up by eager hands
 start to weigh down tired arms.
A back now curved, bent over, bent down.

Do you realise how sacrifice
 can so easily turn saviour, turn martyr,
 how what began as generosity and self-effacement
 may be laden down now with expectation,
 to be seen, acknowledged, made worthy.
What you perceive others needs to be,
 it defines your own reality.

So you turn to catch them,
 turn to help them, turn to hold them
 you turn and you turn
until you have lost yourself, forgotten yourself,
given of yourself until you are so small,
or at least subservient,

at least least, at least less,
at least insignificant.
To give and to give and to give
until there is nothing left...to give to yourself.

And still the weight presses down, pushes you down
into the ground, through the ground, now covered
over and the world goes dark.

But it is ok friend. Wait there. In the soil. Alone.
Wait there. Where you cannot help them.
You do not have to hold it all together
for everybody else. They will be ok without you.
And you will be ok, without them...
needing...you.

You are enough without them,
You are worthy without them.
You are enough without them.
You are worthy without them.

So wait...for the seed of something growing
can only germinate in the soil of your aloneness,
in the dark and the lonely. When it is just you.
Wait there, not having to serve anybody, right there,
where you might just be cracked open and growing
and stretching out toward the light with
limbs that are reaching
and grasping
and breaking through surface.
Strong like antler, tree like bone,
to grow and to grow. Deep roots remain,

as deep as the pain
and the broken has ever been.
They need to be, for
you shall grow tall here friend.
Planted. Whole and holding on to the earth.

And they shall come,
the ones your heart beats for,
they shall rest in antler nest,
held up by your giving.
But this time,
you do not need them to.

This time, you do not need them to.

This time, this deer, she is not holding up the world
anymore, the world holds up her.
A depth of self-assurity. You are planted. Deep
roots. Stretching branches. Antler and free.
The self that is worthy of love,
just for being you, just you.
This is enough.
This is always enough.

These Days, We Burn

We cast aside
all that we cannot change,
but wish sometimes that we could.

We cast aside
our self indignation by cutting from our skin
such unrealistic sentiment.

We look
with incredulity,
yet always with perseverance.

We look
with the deep knowing
of those who realise
they do not know much. We look
with a glint, in our eye, a glint.
The fire that burns
and shall not be put to ash.
We shall not be put to ash.
We shall not be put to ash.

We look and we look and we look again.
Every time something new. A curiosity,
The audacity. The fire that grows inside. And if
something is still growing inside
then all of our fears and all of our unbelief
and all that is thrown up against us
shall come to nothing.

These days, we burn.
And this burning is our saviour.

On Moving On...



This is for the day when you
are torn in two.
When the discontent comes.
When a world once endless is
now four walls and closing,
 the constriction of breath
 and the whisper out ahead.

This is for the day when the old ways
can no longer hold you.
When you realise they have not been able to
for quite some time now.

This is for the day of dissatisfaction. As you
take back your cupped hands
from the drip of a tap
that is no longer flowing. Cast it aside.

You are more than this, so
throw yourself from the nest, flap wings,
fall hard, find a current of air,
a stretch of wind and rise.

This is for the day of choosing,
itchy feet, shaking knees,
clothes too small,
stringent borders and
high prison walls.

The streets that knew us and gave us our name.

This is for the day
 you choose to walk out of the front door.
 To leave the house of your conditioning and
follow the path, around the back, through the fields.
Keep walking. Though regret may follow you
 it shall soon lose interest
 as you lose interest in it.

This is for the day when change comes to find you.
A new scent on the wind urging you to
 take off your too tight skin.
Fear is a pen who has misplaced her ink but still
marks up the pages regardless,
like a boy drawing pictures in the margins.

 The new frontier, it always outweighs
 the pain of our tearing.

This is for the day you leave.
On that day, turn around, quickly now,
not for too long, take a picture with your mind.
This is the last time you shall be here so,
thank it for what it was,
for who you became under its soft gaze,
pay it the homage it is due.

Now turn once more around,
 give yourself, to this, this new path,
the unfamiliar and unknown.
Keep the wind at your back. The sun on your face.
Your pack is light and the world is calling.

The Chase

We are learning how to exhale.

Slow down. Breathe out.

Slowly. Be still. Be present.

It does not come easy.



For how can we sit still when life is
so full, when it's so brimming over
with promise and invitation.

Something new around the corner

and everything is the call to adventure,
to taste, to feel, to race, wind through hair,
fireworks in the sky, this celebration, this party life,
this pace, full lungs, hoist the sails,
ride the waves, itchy feet,
always horizon, always chasing,
to not miss out on the next thing
and the next and the...

We are learning how to exhale.

Slow down. Breathe out. Slowly. Be still. Be
present. It does not come easy.

To remember there is anchor for such a time as this.

To remember there is a mooring and a safe harbour

and it ok to let the world pass you by, for a time.

To sit and be. All bovine and free.

Have you met my friend, Highland Pete? A

highland cow with his brow over his eyes. He can
amble like the best of them.

Dawdle like the rest of them.

What I am saying is,
do not run so fast that you leave yourself behind.
Every ship has to find berth, lower the sails,
to check hull, to look inside.
For it is the underbelly of the broken boat
that matters most,
and hasn't the world leaked too fast into these,
our wooden boat souls.

So chase the wind, of course, chase the wind,
but remember the reason. Pull out the maps. The
compass. Do not let your wandering
be a wayward thrust into nothing of value,
know that your direction is sure.

Around the corner is indeed another adventure
you beautiful boat, you broken vessel,
you holy ship, you sacred sailor.

The tides will rise
and the winds will come
and the sails be full once more.

But for now, just be bovine and free. Just amble and
dawdle and chase the wind out of this reality. It
does not come easy,

but we are learning how to exhale.
Slow down. Breathe out.

Slowly. Be still. Chew the grass.

Be present.

Be slow.

So slow.

Just for a time.

Excavation

I am taking myself apart here.
Excavating bones out of the mire.
Pulling memories like pulling teeth.
They resist, too invested in hiding in the dark,
they do not want the light. Or so I am told.

I keep digging and these fossil memories
slowly surface. They are scattered and jagged and
broken. They are a puzzle. Where one goes and the
other joins. I have long since forgotten.

So it is slow work, pulling up the pieces
and dusting off their substance
and discovering where they fit now.
But they do. They fit together. All of them.
The back bone connected to neck bone.
One piece joins the other
and one more and one more and soon
I am staring at a complete picture.
A sacred assemblage. It is something beautiful.
Holding its own dignity. A moment I thought was
only ever lonely and isolated I can see now
where it fits. How the rest would not exist
if they could not connect back to her.
I am who I am, only because each part
holds within it an importance I so often fail to see.
Who I have become, it only makes sense in the
context of the rest. So I am putting myself back
together here out of the excavated pieces.
Can you see?

A Smallness

When smallness comes to you,
like the feeling of folding oneself inwards,
it comes so often as a stampede, an invasion.
The sudden stripping away. The feeling of not
being seen. That which only yesterday felt an
appropriate size is now giant in front of you.
The smallest snail appears mammoth.
The smallest grievance has turned mountain.
The regret is an ocean. The pain is the sky.

But friend, stay there. In the reality. If you can. Stay
there. Like any pain it is teaching you something.
So stare down the mammoth and the mountain.
Hold your ground as tiny as your feeble attempt at
courage may feel. For this is the truth...

 you are not small.

And this is your secret. This is your weapon.
Though everything demands it of you.
Though you feel it must be so...

 This smallness is just that...A feeling.

 A fleeting shrinking. You are not small.

You are giant. You are mountain. You are ocean.
You are wider and taller and greater
than any attempt to squash you down as inferior.

So stay there in the very embrace of the smallness.
And lament the feeling but realise this...
Still you stand. There. In the presence of all that is
giant and oppressive. Still you stand and soon, very
soon, these things will take their appropriate size.

On Finding Ones Purpose

They say there is a place you may go. A secret door of sorts. Where they hand you, in all your shaking curiosity, a parchment. A rolled up scroll that tells you who you are and why you are here.

And I am wondering if I should go find this secret door. Debating what the merits might be of such an instantaneous discovery of purpose.

Of course it would be lovely to know in all finality who I am and why I am here. But suppose I am not happy with such. Suppose the very purpose of my life is not one that I wish to live out. Am I then forced, against my will, to give myself to such a vocation. Suppose I do not like the person that I am. Can I swap? Or am I destined to be this rigid specimen. This absolute declaration.

I don't know, perhaps what first appears as a gift might just be another prison and another expectation, or maybe not. Maybe it would indeed slip onto my psyche like a silk glove. The perfect fit. And I could sit back into it. Relax into it. And yet, not, because that is not me.

No, I chase and I wonder and I breathe and I leap and I fall and I find myself lost and I hold myself out and I study who I am with microscope and meditation; and so damn anything that would take that away from me.

I am never the same from this moment to the next. I would have to show up at that secret door everyday wouldn't I? Or at least every week. For surely this being that is me is changing so constantly. The ink on the parchment never dry, never decided.

So I walk away from the door and I continue the search for who I am and why I am here. I walk the alley and the backstreet and the valley path and the mountain top looking for myself. I lose myself in this wide world. I ask the stranger who I am. They might know. I ask the friend. I ask my mother. I ask my daughter. And all of them...all of them tell me of someone different and I am all these things and I am so much more.

This is why I cannot line up at that door...

Because the very chase of who I am and why I am here, the very journey of discovery might actually be more my purpose than anything else.

Masterpiece

(Written with Grace Naoum as part of Tearfund Australia's *An Upside-Down World Podcast*).

A portrait artist,
she sits and she studies.
She researches the subject,
scribbling down their history,
listening, note-taking, not-talking.
She is breathing in
the subject's longings,
their loves, their fears.
So when she starts she captures not just form,
not just line and colour,
she is grasping the spirit of the subject,
the heartbeat of what lies beneath,
the concealed colours that surface
only because she has slowed down enough
to listen to what is wordless.



Have you ever listened to the silence?

To what is not said
but is always still there
pressing through into reality.
To the truth that lies underneath the facts.
To the people who are so much more
than just another opinion to denounce
or to rail against.
To the God who is waiting in the unspoken.
Beloved broken, May we stop
climbing over others in our conversations

just to gain control, may we stop
running from conflicting opinions,
stop jumping to black and white conclusions,
the delusions of spiritual grandeur,
our blind insecurities
and that constant need for control,
for protection, to prove the worth of my own
intellect.

What unknown languages may we learn
when when we just stop. Be present. And sit. Just sit.
In the silence, sit. Be the student. Be the student.
The one with no armour. Un-armed and empty
handed.

Its so uncomfortable though,
here, in the not-knowing.
But gradually, in the slowness of sitting,
her kindness greets me in the waiting.
Her deep care sits beside me.
Her empathy pronounces a warm good morning.
The motherly affection of God kisses my forehead
and her sacrificial love washes my cold feet
and holds my worn out mind
and draws me close to heartbeat. Heartbeat.
I speak too much. Too soon. Too blindly.
Too confident in my own knowing.
Speaking the cheap language of absolutes.

BUT the artist, in her doing, in her painting, in her
portrait, she does not make a mark until she knows
that every brush stroke stems from her

scribbling, listening, note taking, not talking.
She is breathing in the subjects longings, their loves,
their fears. This, the very definition of Compassion.
To breathe in the longing and fear of this world
and translate it into love through our empathy.
How much to give of ourselves in empathy
to the bloodied and beaten, the weakened,
the spat on, splat on the canvas,
muddied ripped and torn.
This canvas was never meant to hang in priceless
galleries, this canvas is humanity
and it holds the gravity of redemptive history.

A master painter, is God.
She sits with her people
and listens to their pain,
paints suffering alongside celebration.
Where the light and the shadow meet.
She paints
 bridges in Mozambique,
 weeping willows in Sudan,
 In Rajasthan she paints sweeping dark cloud
 shadows and a dawning morning,
 The mountaintops of Nepal,
 a man walking on his hands.
She paints
 courage in Mumbai,
 bread made from gritty reality and falsity,
She paints
 Artana in West Papua
 and Radiet in Ethiopia.
She paints me. She paints you.

With the nuanced detail of a God who is not afraid
to get messy hands
and bloody hands
and pierced hands,
paint the canvas with blood,
with his blood.

Are we not all a masterpiece painted in love.
Are we not all a masterpiece painted in love.

So let us sit long enough in the mud,
to see her brushstrokes,
trace the shapes of their faces with our fingers
and find the courage to
let our five senses roam in foreign fields,
to swim in the unfamiliar,
to sit in the face of difference
with curiosity and empathetic wonder.

Are we not all a masterpiece painted in love.
Every detail in love
Are we not all a masterpiece painted in love.
Every detail in love.
Every detail in love.
Every detail in love.
Every detail in love.
Every detail in love.

The Weeping God

(From Tearfund Australia's *An Upside-Down World Podcast*).

I was twenty four years old
when I stood beneath
the weeping willow in a refugee
camp in Northern Uganda.
White skin amongst the brown and
the many who fled there from the
war in Sudan. They knew weeping like the tree we
gathered under, like the sky breaking over, like the
wounded God who weeps for the world.



And I was there to help them,
those who had lost everything.

I never did meet Rachel in that camp,
though I heard her story much later,
so similar to so many...A dis-location
from her home and her land,
The contrast of our lives could not be more stark.
Me, white boy, from rich suburb,
with a whole world laid out for the taking.
She, forced to flee across a dangerous border,
leave her south Sudan farmland,
holding nine children, six her own, three from
family members killed,
now on her hips,
 under her feet,
 holding her hands,
 dragging along the ground,

and she pulling them,
pulling them, pulling
them all toward
safety.

She knew weeping like the bent over willow,
like the sky breaking
 under the weight of heavy rain,
 like the wounded God,
 like the wounded God.

She walked for three days,
 like the wounded God,
and still she does not know
what happened to her husband.

I remember years before and the people under the
weeping willow all pleading and crying out for they
had run out of food and sickness was rife in the
camp and they were all squeezed into such a tiny
space. And all I could think was, what do I have to
offer them? What do I ever have to offer them?

And I remember, it was actually them who offered
to pray for me. Them, who had nothing, and me,
seemingly everything. Me who had come to help
them. Them now helping me see clearer.
Me kneeling on the ground now,
them praying now,
laying hands upon me now, under the tree.
And its another moment that proves the flipped
script of existence. This upside-down reality.
Their empathy. They knew weeping

like the tree we gathered under,
like the sky breaking,
like the wounded God,
like the wounded God
who comes to the weeping.

Yet still I run from the pain
And still they are forced to sit in the pain.
And somewhere there now is Rachel,
taking care of all those children.
Resilience, it is really just a word for me,
just the slight notion of pushing through under
difficulty. Resilience for her...Is a word that could
not even begin to describe her strength through
what she went through, is going through. Rachel
has started in a trauma recovery group and its a
space of comfort and its a journey of healing and
the children are in schooling and the farmer in her
is still alive. She still wants to cultivate the land,
for she knows that in the soil of violence and fear,
even here, where the weeping tears flow to the
ground, they may feed the seeds of hope.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted
by the weeping God, beneath the weeping willow.
In the arms of the other
we find ourselves too in the arms of God.
This wounded God. This weeping God.
Like the tree we gathered under.
Like the sky breaking over.
Like Rachel. Like Rachel. So Blessed. Rachel.

A Meditation on Capability
(From Tearfund Australia's *An Upside-Down World Podcast*).

This is a meditation
on capability
and the inevitability
of my own inability.



See, on the mountaintops of
Nepal, amidst jungle and rugged path there lives a
man who walks upside-down. Truly. Hands to
ground. Palms to dirt. Since birth, he has dragged
his body along rocky ground.

I have it easy in life. I know that I do. These two
hands, these two feet, walk to a privileged beat.
Beat. Beat. Nothing gonna beat beat me down.
Cause it cant reach, reach me up here, on my own
mountaintop. I haven't looked at life from both sides
now. Just this prosperous position. These clouds are
blinding. I don't know what it is to be desperate. To
hunger and thirst. Food on the table. Roof over my
head. These things I am thankful for, said at the
beginning of the meal. Amen. 'Thank you for the
food. Amen. Thank you for the shelter. Amen.
Thank you for these two hands. These two feet.
Amen.'

His name is Punya Prashad. He's one of the hidden
ones. There are many of them. In the shadowed
corners of the world, the people and the places we'd
rather not tell about to each other, pretend they do

not exist. But what do I miss from life when I have never had to crawl along the ground just to survive. His arm muscles are stronger than my gratitude could ever be. Blessed he who hungers and thirsts for what is right.

Wheelchairs are useless along the mountain path, so hands must become feet, rubber sandals an palms. Don't you dare tell me that lameness makes a man weak. His biceps alone could crush these entitled lungs. He is no less because he is not able-bodied. His body has made him able. He does not sit idle. Whilst all the time I idolise my own capability.

This is a meditation, on capability, and the invisibility of dis-ability and the ability that bravery brings me, if only you would teach me Punya Prushad.

Teach us, how to live when the going gets tough and the rough terrain of life feels overwhelming. If I could not use my legs I'd be so tempted to just give up. But every morning he rises with the sun, palms to dirt, he works the fields and he turns a barren plot into 150 trees yielding 300 bananas and the garden is bringing in the food he needs to feed his three children and to sell at the market. Do not tell me disability is weakness. This man is the epitome of strength. He will not stop He will not do nothing, just feeling sorry for himself. This is his life and he takes it in his arm stride.

But he doesn't stop there. He trains the farmers from all around, frees them too from the chains of poverty. Those with disability he takes to get grants and support and forces the powers that be, to see these invisible ones.

I have stopped seeing the invisible ones. Open my eyes God to see the invisible ones.

Not to save them. But to sit at their feet, lame feet, teach me of my own lameness and your strength.

So blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right, for they will be filled from the top of their head to the tips of their fingers, to their toes, to their feet. These two hands, these two feet, walk to a privileged beat beat.

Teach me how to see.

Teach me how to listen.

This is a meditation on my own inability.

A Forest

A forest, like a cathedral, holds the sacred.
But, perhaps, unlike the cathedral,
she does not hold God with gripped fist,
does not seek to contain God behind four walls.
She has no walls. Of this I am so very thankful.

She has archways and circular stairways
that lead to the bell tower of birds.
She has a narthex to welcome the worshippers.
A nave to lead them further in.
She holds no presbytery
for she sees no distinction
between the lay and the clergy.
The Saint and the sinner.
The creature and the human.
The spirit and the dirty and the stumbling and
the hurting. All are one under her celestial vault.

If you listen, should you listen,
there is a choir singing. There is the echo
of something ancient. There is presence.
Here, under bough and branch, there is presence.
We are held like nest holds baby bird.
The forest is gentle. Beckons with a whisper.
'Come closer. Closer.'

We come closer. Along the path. Soft step. Soft step.
Until we arrive. Not at the altar.
For every step we have taken has been an altar.
We arrive at the moment. This present moment.
The most important altar we have.

On Smoke and Foxes

It's all smoke and mirrors. The way we subterfuge, the way we trick the world to not see the great beasts that we carry around with us. I have held the reins of this monster for so very many years. But I won't let them see. I conjure smoke and storm and the billow of fire until this part of me is covered in platitudes and camouflage.

You tell me that I am on fire. Red haired passion. But I'm just blowing smoke so you don't look too closely. You tell me that you can see me, but I'm just billowing out all the things I want you to see. This hidden part of me...this undiscovered...this grossly manipulated...this ability to hide away in my own bullshit.

I once looked inside me. Inside the cloud. Inside the smoke. Behind the curtain. And I know I'll have the courage to do so again. To see the little boy. To see the shadow. To see the treasure. Yes, the treasure. I know that it hides too in the smoke. In the dark. It is the dark. The light in the dark. Within me the light and the dark all swirling together. All ugly. All beautiful. The me I am too afraid of. The reality that inside the cloud might be creature and monster...but that monster is beautiful. He has a name. For I am beautiful. And I have a name. Thankyou for taking notice. Please now friends, blow away the smoke.

Train

I hear the train in the distance.
The whistle and the steam
and the many who board its carriages.
Those who leave the station
of where they have been,
now travelling so lightly into the future.
It is the becoming of something wholly other.

I stare at the passengers...

There is the finch
 who rides atop
 the pull the cord.

The bird
 who cannot decide
 if she is woman or feather.

The curious bear
 reading of his future.
 A red book.

The old man
 who talks to the finch in his hand
 like she is a lover.

The girl
 who coated herself in dress,
 the one with the pet dragon.

The man
 sleeps and dreams that he'll wake
 to find that everything has changed.

The blind woman
 holds the rabbit to her chest.

It whispers to her of what she cannot see
but still knows.

The monster,
who owns a green tricycle,
has been working the late shift.
But still, his life is bliss
and his horns have sprouted this spring
and he knows why he is here.

And then there is me.

Now boarded the train,
sitting beside my fellow passengers.
Wondering at the stories that overlap
in this meeting. Stories never to be spoken of
or acknowledged. They have lived their lives
and I have lived my own.

And for a moment we mingle in the presence of the
other on this same train carriage.
Each of us lost and found in the same moment.
Each of us on our way somewhere other.
Each of us on our way.
Each of us.

Waiting for the Storm



I remember the day
the storms came.

She told me that all
would be well;

That raincoats were clothes

worn too many times in the rain, they take away the
best parts, the puddle splash, soaked through, wet
hair, squelch between toes...with nothing to lose.

So we sat on the swing.

Alongside the creek back home,

we waited for the storm to break, looked sideways
into the sky till clouds became friends became lovers
became gods. The clouds they were never scary, they
held us in their thunder and their storm.

I miss the storm.

I miss the slap of wind and the sting of skin.

I know I should be thankful for the summer,

It is dry outside now and the stars are all shining
and how many nights of the storm do we ask for the
morning and every fibre of our being wants all to
be well, but when all is well,

I find myself dry again.

So you pray for the sunshine,

but I, I pray for the rain.

On the evenings when the clouds gather loudly
playing bump in the night, when they hurl their
light, I am told on these nights that hospital birthing
suites are full. The crying of new born babies

echoes down their halls. I am told that storms bring
on labour like hunger pains, like friends in need, like
her waters are breaking, like babies hear thunder
clap and mistake it for God calling their name.

So tell me there is pain.

Tell me we'll be born again,

Tell me there is more than just

sunsets and sunrise, though they are pretty
they leave me unsatisfied.

Tell me there is more than the clear nights.

Tell me there's a wind rising.

Tell me the clouds are forming.

Tell me one day we'll play again, for you
pray for the sunshine, but I, I pray for the rain.

Tell me I am somebody special
cause I never quite believe it when I tell myself

That swing by the creek is long gone. And now
aren't we all just too serious. Yet, this is the way that
I keep afloat. This is life framed in the doorway.

This is the dry tongue of hope.

This is me and this is you.

You pray for the sunshine
and I, I pray for the rain.

The Brave Ones



On the pavement outside the restaurant we spoke of how life changes and the moments that make us and she remembered being babysat at our house and she remembered my eating of a tomato sauce sandwich and the sauce dripping down my cheek.

I remembered years later. My eighteenth birthday. Rebecca and her had picked me up from my house and we drove down to the beach as the storm gathered out at sea like a curious puppy learning of the loudness of its bark.

We had stood at the edge of the ocean, where the waves kissed the cliff face. Next to the lighthouse. We stood looking out to the sea and we dared the puppy dog storm to come at us. She listened and came bounding. And what else can you do in such a moment, but dance. So we danced. Wild. Unrestrained. We screamed and we yelled. The storm barked so loudly. Thrashed wildly. And we three wilder and wilder still. Limbs like storm. Body jerking. Barking. And somewhere in the loose movement I let myself go. I lost all sense of the tightness of my skin. I let the storm come in.

The thunder crashing and the wind whipping and the lightning striking and the ocean pounding and the three of us screaming. Everything was alive that

night. Filled with a life and a luminosity. Including myself, I was alive. Everything was screaming that night, including myself. And wouldn't we always be the brave ones to turn and face into the surge and bellow back.

And then it came to be., many years later, that...Rebecca died. The first girlfriend I ever had, my first teenage love. In her sleep. She died.

We remembered this too, my old friend and I, standing there outside the restaurant, her child eating burgers, tomato sauce dripping down his cheek. We remembered where we were when we heard she had died. I had taken all the photos I had of her, including one taken of the three of us that wild night. I laid them out on the floor all around me. I wrote her a letter that I could never send. I could not get to the funeral, so I buried her inside me instead. Wouldn't we always be the brave ones to turn and face into the surge and bellow back?

My old friend tells me how she has just split with her husband and she feels a widow at thirty three. I let the tears come. Held her arm. Wouldn't we always be the brave ones? Wouldn't we?

The cliff face is still there. I stand on its edge whenever I go home. Looking out to the ocean. I go there that night, after talking with my old friend outside the restaurant and I stand there and scream at the top of my lungs and then, I begin to dance.

The Weight of Things Un-named

Where do we go
when the loss comes?
When our shoulders
bow under its weight?
The things that are
too heavy for the naming.



Like touch unwanted. Like keeping his secret. Like blade on wrist on tiled floor. Like slamming the door. Like the drop of your stomach when you find something out. Like the drop of your stomach when you have been found out. Like the silent emptiness that fills a space once the laughter has left. Like the crippling feeling that no matter what you do it is never enough. Like the loneliness that comes after a night on social media. Like bruised eye hidden underneath dark glasses. Like the death of a child. These things are a loss and a grieving and most often we do not have the language to speak of them.

So where do we go with them?
The unspeakable things.

Usually I run to the water. Moving water. When nothing makes sense anymore I turn to the ocean and to the river. The ocean is as good a place to hide as any. To hide like grain of sand, like the smashed glass. I have found that grief is a grindstone and so too is the ocean. They break us apart. They rough away the sharp and the piercing.

They smooth us out, even as we hide in their depths. So I let myself sink under the water and stretch out my lungs beneath the spray. A surrender. The wave that breaks and turns and tosses and smooths me over. The grindstone of grief.

Some say we should turn to God in such moments of despair. And I guess this is my way of doing so. For pain too is a baptism. Perhaps, in the end, they are the one and same sacrament. They are both a loss of breath and a coming home to depth. A dying, a drowning, a rising again. The ocean. God.

Enfolding my own story of that which is too heavy to name into the hands of something larger than I.

Till on the beaches is where we pick up the pieces. Sea-glass green. The ocean decides when she is finished with us. She gives us back to the world of men.

Smashed glass somehow now made smooth,
 sea-glass green.
Hold it in your hand and
 I know that it still doesn't make sense,
 but may you no longer need it to do so.
It still hurts, it always will. It is still heavy.
The weight of things un-named.
But somehow may it be light enough to just
keep on walking.

Wrestling with God

I am speaking of God
and of disappointment
and the sacred who
can feel so far away.

I am speaking of anger
and frustration
and a faith that is broken and scared and
running. I speak of shame.



My self-condemnation is getting too loud.
It blocks out everything, including, you and I.
We need the silence. The empty space
where we once held hands.

But now too many severed tendons,
and too many broken bones,
and I do not know who to blame,
so I blame myself and the shadow.

I am broken open
like momma bird, like papa bear, like first
love, like tears fall, like the cross, like grace.

Now holy and broken
Now lonely and hoping.
Now doubting.

Still I chase the flame.
Still, I chase the flame.

There is a restlessness, A disquiet on the inside.

A whisper. There is a fire.

The chase for God
or something that we might call God.

But still I doubt I ever saw you God,
sometimes, in the dark night, I doubt you,
 when the fire is so low and I am
 more darkness than light,
 more ash than flame,
 more ember than burning.

I have demanded your face and it never came.
I have demanded the undeniable
and you deny me still.

I have demanded and you have not
 listened to my demands. Or have not
paid heed to my demands. Or will not
pay homage to demand.

 You would rather me doubt.
 and rather me stumble, than to not walk at all.

See God is present here. In this moment. God is
here. And the next moment. God is there too. And
the next. And the next. And every time she doesn't
seem to be, when we think she must be hiding, there
she appears. When the coldness gets into our bones
and we cannot find the warmth we once knew. God
is here. When everything crumbles. God is here.
When we have lost her. God is here. When we have
lost ourselves. God is here. When we leave the place
we call home. God is here.

She just doesn't look like she once did.
And this doesn't just look like it once did.
But it is life. Sea-glass green held in hand, smashed
and now made smooth.

Cold Shoulder

The cold shoulder of God
is how
I have known
Him most.

 No warm breath upon face.
 No kiss upon forehead
 No breast to rest upon.

Just the cold shoulder,
where His right arm joins
His chest
and His back.

In the Wake of Meeting God

They told me that, should I meet God,
a hole in my heart would be filled,
the answers to become ever clear.
Yet as God came near one night,
the hole in my heart
became the universe,
the answers
were scattered to the wind, and I
was left with nothing
but questions

 and a hole that could never be filled
 and the sure knowledge
 that indeed, I met God.

Remembrance

When the world has come to an end, when the bread that I once ate sits stale and dry, when the wine is now gone and I cannot but sit in the midst,

I remember.

When I cannot raise these rain soaked eyelids, when vision blurs and the colours melt into stone, when the darkness is brighter than the light has ever been,

I remember.

When there is no way around, when the labyrinth has taken us too far from the centre, when I sit here now scared and alone,

I remember.

When the creak in my back is only just the beginning, when no matter which way that I walk I always find my way back here with the wall before me, the mountain above me, the forest behind me, the cliffs beside me. When there is no way to turn and no path to follow,

It is then that I remember.

Silence

I am walking at a pace, I always walk at a pace
too fast. Too many steps in too short a time.
My mind is a litany of the things
I have not been brave about.
Fists jammed into my pockets. Knuckle white.
I am trying to find my way out of this town.
The sound of silence on this quiet street.
It should bring the peace I am seeking,
but suburban silence is still suburban.
Is still so facile, so surface.

I need true silence.

They say the deeper underground you go
the more silent the earth becomes.
Until you realise that the silence of the earth is
actually a deep rumbling, A humming,
not of electric wires, but of molten earth.
Yet I am no caver, no deep sea diver,
I am stuck on the surface of so many things,
as is everybody else. We are surface dwellers,
stuck in noise, or a fake silence.
Or a suburban fakeness. Or a...

Ah, just give me hills. Rolling hills. Give me
meadow. Give me mountain. If I can not go down
into the earth, perhaps I can walk higher.
Stand atop hills and listen to the silence of the
screaming wing. To feel the silence of the stolid
mountain. Drink from a deep lake.

The Search



They say that a girl who
walks the edges of this world
will find herself, if she looks
for long enough. But to see
the beauty of what will be
she must turn her face away from what was.
Unravel yesterdays and the ways that these ropes
would wrap around her and the chains that bound
her. Familiar city streets that held her as a baby
became a child and a child became a lady, but
maybe this cityscape has held you for far too long.

So wriggle your toes a little friend and they'll crack
the clay that binds your ankles. And stretch your
fingers another time till they point you in the right
direction. Move your limbs one by one until you no
longer remember taking that first step and do not
look back with longing, for your longing should
always face the direction your feet are pointing.

Be sure that I still see sweet dreams of melodies play
through your head. And if you took just one note of
this song and laid it out on the ground before you it
would be a path through the mountains that no one
dares to cross. At the top of the mountain you'll find
a temple there where the air grows thin and the
monks that gather will cut the wisdom from their
hair and braid it through your own.

But do not stay their friend, as tempting as it may be, for in the valleys beyond, your frozen arteries will be thawed under the summer sun of promises come and beyond the valleys are the deserts and beyond the deserts is the ocean and beyond the ocean you'll find what it is you are looking for.

So break free now my lady and search the edges till you find it. Swing wide the narrow gate and walk fast the narrow path, slip flowers into the spokes on your bicycle wheel, hike up the edging of your skirt and run the wind till the landscape around you does not remind you of home.

And I see the journey has been long. The ground beneath your feet never-ending. Your tattered skirts now torn around the edges and I know that if I could place you on a steed the journey would ease but you'll never get there in the end my friend. So I'll let this old horse run on ahead and find his own way through. But as for you, as that slow wind wraps itself around you, as the sand finds its way into the joints between bone and sinew, may you, not turn your head back to whence you came, for it is far better to walk this world blind than to fall back to sleep. So turn your face now into the harsh breathe of the wind and let it burn away, let it scrape away, let it sculpt your face as sand paper to the stone.

And were you to find another way around this mountain then we could run the world in such

shorter days, but the souls who have gone before us never found such a way. They let the path of pain surround them and then they wrapped it around their wrist. But if your wrist is too small then would you wrap it around your God for he is the one who made the mountain in the first. So lift up your skirts and run the river tide for your faith is worth more than just air in the sky. It is flesh and it is bone and it is mud and it is mire. So run, like 50 tonnes of shattered memories are not enough to hold you down. Run, like you were falling from a cliff into the arms of a lover. Run, like the eight legs of the spider were not enough. Run, like your world is just about to begin.

And here in this new day sometimes the sky may still be grey. But everyday, somewhere in this world the sky is always orange and yellow and purple and gold. So let's chase sunsets together like we've never seen them before. Cause if we catch enough of them, maybe the grey skies wont matter so much anymore. So walk the path and run the valley and cross the ocean and climb the mountain until you come home into the soft arms of yourself.

The Sound of a Thousand Wild Brumbies

There is a horse that
gallops inside.

There is a herd.
Sometimes the sound of a
thousand wild brumbies.

Sometimes it feels like
freedom.

Sometimes it is
overwhelming.

Sometimes hoping.

Sometimes stampede
and we can feel
trampled down under the weight,
until all we know is fear.

These wild horse feelings.

This growing up that can be so hard.

This movement. This walk. This trot. This canter.

This gallop.

Tossed in every direction. A rodeo.

We hold on, try to find our footing.

Knowing that every wild brumby can be bridled.

Every wild horse inside us can be ridden well.

So we are learning the names of these horses.

The ones inside. We quieten down,
tell them not to run away.

We ask them their name.

They are frightened to be tamed,

But if you hold out a hand,
and let them look you in the eye



and see the strength of your becoming.
Draw near to the wild beast.
And whisper in its ear,
 'Don't be afraid.
I am here to stay.
I will learn to ride you this day.
I will learn to become
 one with all that gallops inside.
I do not want to tame you, I want to see if we might
be able to ride together you and I.

Let us begin to ride on the back of the beast,
 until horse and the rider
hold nothing between them,
 know nothing but love for the other.
I am learning how to love myself. Believe in myself.
 Trust these feelings
might be telling me something.
 If I can ride with them and
let myself fly into such freedom and becoming
as we gallop the mountain,
any mountain that comes before us.
 We may take it in our stride,
the horse and the rider
and the wind and the way that the fear
 that holds us back might just disappear,
 when we learn to whisper its name,
 take hold of its mane,
and just ride...

Giving Thanks

I am thankful for rain-spit, for wing tip of tiny bird,
for hopeful eyes, for moments of flow, for touch of
friend on tired arm.

I am thankful for shards of glass, for splinters stuck
like teeth, for tripping over feet, for bruised back, for
the pain of denial.

I am thankful for music melody, for head placed on
heartbeat, for presence, for the cast red of a sun
disappearing, for peach season and throat.

I am thankful for loss, for the tearing and the
unresolved, for the empty.

I am thankful for hands held, for pen in hand
and paper being filled, for she who could not stop
listening, for he who thanked the God inside me.

I am thankful for frustration, for grinding teeth and
the pacing, for harsh words, for the bleak, for the
lonely.

I am thankful for the light.
I am thankful for the shadow.

It has not been easy today, this choosing of
gratitude.

Dweller on the Threshold

I am an artist and a
pilgrim. We are artists
and we are pilgrims....
of the threshold.



Between the dying and
falling away of winter
and the rebirth of the song
of the birds of spring,
we dwell in rhythms of possibility.
Between oranges, ochres, reds and yellows
and greens, jades, limes and ocean blue
who thread themselves together
in threshold tapestries
 of death and life,
 despair and hope.

A cocoon of shedding skins and promised wings,
of caterpillars dying and butterflies rising,
of dark enclosed night and a light filled day
where whispers of the night
entangle threads into daylight. And
in this lowering sun, I am at one
with the dusk of earth's closing eyes.

 I can see a world that was here all along
yet hidden now until the dusk fell.
Until the night met the day.
Until I dwell as a pilgrim of the threshold.
As the sky that breaks through this night,
it bends low to whisper to me
of the green land that I once called home.

Where I stood tall in these rains
and knew at those moments
that life was larger
than every drip and every drop upon my back.
That there were stories I could get lost in.
That there were stories I could get found in.
Where the puddles that I played in
were the pooling of all the things
that would call us out beyond these stars,
out of our cocoons,
to play in rain soaked playgrounds
where anything is possible
and every drip and every drop
broke their backs upon the ground
they rushed toward.

‘SLOW DOWN!’

I wanted to yell at them
Slow down and realise
that life does not have to be like this.
Dreams to not have to wake like this.
For here in this twilight we are artists
and we are pilgrims
with one foot in the clay,
one hand chained earthbound,
as the other still stretches to the sky.

We find the tears in the curtain
where the divine reaches through her hand
to offer her water to our lips.
This is the true pilgrim...

He who stands upon the threshold
with one hand to the heavens
and the other to the earth.
To not run from the world into the heavens
but to hold the two together,
the dweller who holds worlds together
beneath these stars.

We hold worlds together
beneath these stars.

For we dwell in possibility. We are artists and
pilgrims and actors and dancers and poets and
prophets and singers and painters and lovers and
creators and there is hope in our eyes.

Between the dying and falling away of winter
and the rebirth of the songs
of the birds of spring,
there is hope in our eyes.
There is hope in my eyes.
There is hope.
There is hope.

Where the Luminescence Begins

Are we not all made of water?
At least some large percentage of us.
Salt water. An ocean inside. Deep.
I wonder how deep this goes?
Down where the light fades. The sun fades.
Down where the luminescence begins.
A creature that might generate its own light.
Down there
 where I believe it must be only dark,
 perhaps there are those parts of me
 that must live there, can only live there.
Get rid of the dark inside
and I am killing off whole species
of my inner beings.
So take me further. Deeper.
Below the great octopus.
Down beneath the groper and ray.
And I know, she hides down there too.
The scared one all curled up
in some bubble of her own. Watches.
She just watches. And waits. Of course she waits,
for I barely acknowledge her.
Do not even know her name.
The part of me I have let so few see.
Do you see? Do you see her?
I do...barely. Help me. I seldom ask. Help me, just
to be me. Just to stretch out into the inside pushing
back the boundaries and knowing how deep this
ocean goes. How deep does this ocean go?

A Hopeful Moon

The sun shines and it is bright
and the moon wants to hide, sometimes.
Wary of the way it is seemingly outshone.
But it never does, it never hides,
it never backs away, it stays, it remains.
It knows that the circling of the earth
is a calling, no matter the orbit,
No matter the twisting desire
just to shrink into back seat small.

And I know the moon is not the only one to shine,
to reflect, to give itself to the night.
Not the only one
to sometimes feel small and insignificant.
To doubt the call it has been given,
the hand that life has dealt.
Some say the moon is at a disadvantage,
that she doesn't burn as bright.
But the moon is coming to know the truth...
She is smaller than the sun,
and yes she does not burn as bright,
but see how she shines still in the dark
and how the night gathers around her
and how this night is full of a magic
that most muggles
who live in daylight cannot see.
This moon, she is...hopeful.

A Sacrament

We come holding out our hands today.
Reaching back down through the years
 with our hoping
 and our doubting
 and our tired believing
 and the faith of our knowing,
that way back then, way back when
the curtain was torn
 and the last breath was taken
 and it was finished
 and the darkness came
 and the earth was broken
 and the earth was remade,
though today, it barely seems as such.

Still you wait for me.

We come holding out our hands today and we come
hoping that grace covers the cut deep fractures and
the ruptures of a shame we can't quite name.

We've been trying to rid ourselves of our violence
for so long and our silence is a song we stopped
listening to so very long ago.

Still you wait for me.

I sit at your table. We gather around your table.
Shoulders touching, bodies knowing, this giving, this
receiving, this beginning, this blood, this bread. We

stretch ourselves out, take skin and haul it across our bones. Pretend that no one sees. We are cast in the glare of light and loss and the scrape of fingernails. The common condition. The broken mass of us. The broken mass. Our daily bread. Our broken bread. This broken body. Blood. Bread. Mass. Broken. And you pour out your wine and it covers our sorrow and it washes the stain and somehow we remain. Somehow we remain.

Still you wait for me.

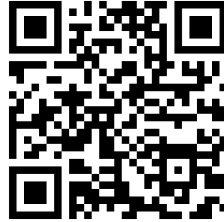
The shit stinks and the sweat drips like drops of blood and he drinks the wine and they pierce his side and the water flows and it's not just messy, it's holy. It's not just broken. It's whole. It's not just blood. It is water. It's not just bread. It is body. It's not just human. It is divine and I am not just human, I am divine. Taste the wine. Break the bread. The shit stinks. Human. Sweating blood. Human. The holy mass. The holy mass of us. We stretch ourselves out over the stench of our common humanity and it tastes like blood and shit and wine and water and bread. Our daily bread. Our broken bread. This broken mass of us. This holy mass of us. This holy mass. We come holding out our hands today and we pray for a resurrection.

Still you wait for me.

Still you wait for me.

The Breath

Start from the intake,
the silence of full lungs,
the exhale of God
as she rattles in your chest,
the sound of breath.



The inhale of life
through sacrament and lung.
The chest is a holy man.
Every breath is a prayer.
The wind that blows above us,
ruach within us,
knees that kneel to the ground
Within the movement of our lips,
we curl heaven beneath our tongues.

Remember the first breath.
Newborn and desperate.
You screamed your lungs back then.
Start back then.
Before life got stuck in your throat.

The wind came, shaped us as clay.
Forgotten moments of the storm.
Breath that was here from the beginning,
when lips were pressed to dirt there were
too many ribs to hold her.

This night is a bird for you.
By our breath we make love.
The Divine is a lover.

We within her, two lovers entangled,
 threads one around the other.
She within us, arms that move
 in slow embrace.
We within her.
 Through my mouth you enter my blood.
She within us.
 We are wrapped in silent sheets.

It is right that I cannot hold you,
 our love is too perfect
for full lungs and clutching fingers.
I must breathe till the leaves shake.
Another intake.
Through my mouth you enter my blood.
Touch every part, before I depart,
before I leave such windswept bed sheets...
 We make love in the sky.

The lovers are a whisper.
Their love is the wind.
Let it lift the roof from our walls,
our steeples tall.
The divine is a lover
Beauty is her love.

Beauty stuck her tongue in my ear.
I did not realise God was the type
to make a pass so
abruptly.

When to open your eyes

In the morning, when the night time fades
like receding tide, and you find yourself
washed by salt and by ocean
and you find yourself shining,
open your eyes.

Open your eyes when you are so shining,
you may not be able to look for too long,
but still try to stare upon your brightness
until the tears come.

In the afternoon sleepy,
when coffee calls
and you forget the reasons,
and you have stared at that same screen
or that piece of paper for too long.

When you have been reading the same page over
and over and taking nothing of it in. Open them
then. Though it may take cold water once more.
Splashed on face to wake you from your tiredness.

In the setting sun, when the colours come.
Open them.

In the night hours, when the loneliness arrives.
Open them.

If you could keep them open all the time,
that would be for the best, but I know you cannot,
so what about just now, right now. Open
your eyes. See what you have forgotten you cannot
see. It is waiting. Always now. This moment.
Open them. Open them. Open them.

The Wild Ones

As the tamed horse
still hears the call of her wild brothers
and as the farmed goose
flaps hopeful wings
as his sisters fly overhead,
so too, perhaps,
the wild ones amongst us
are our only hope in calling us back
to our true nature.

Wild ones, who have not
been turned to stone
by the far-reaching
grasp of the empire
and its programme
of consumer sedation,
the killing of imagination.

Where, my friends,
have the wild ones gone?

Answers

Answers are to humanity what the moon is to a moth. Though, some would spend their entire life looking for them, it is not in fact the answers that they seek.

For, deep in our being, our souls are imprinted with an insatiable curiosity that drives us ever higher toward the light. Yet, in the end, it is not the moon that the moth seeks, rather it is the light that emanates from the moon. For a moth, in reaching its lunar destination, would just as easily be transfixed by a brighter light calling them beyond what it was they first thought they were destined for.

And so it is not the cold, lifeless moon we seek, it is, rather, the path of light by which we fly. If it were not so then any dull lamp would satisfy and we would stop looking, stop asking, stop searching, stop seeking. We would close up our dusty wings, fade away into the blackness of night.

The genius of the divine, is that he would put in us the search and never respond with the answer. Offering wings instead of absolutes. light instead of lifeless moon, awe instead of definition. That light would emanate from the divine and we shall forever fly along its path, The journey being the destination. the questions being the answer.

God, Rid me of God
(In honour of Meister Eckhart)

God, would you rid me of God?
Of the smallness of that which I comprehend.
Of the arrogance to believe that I see clearly.
That these answers I hold so dearly could be just
another notch on the belt of my own insecurity.
They may help to hold up my pants but they'll
never let me run free.

So liberate me from the idolatry of abstraction.
That I would be radically undone.

You are unknown even as I know you. You are at
one and the same as close as my skin yet as far away
as the moon on some other planet on some other
day. Yet I still feel your breath on my cheeks.

I know you now, but I don't know you.

I can see you but I can't see you.

Your transcendent immanence. Where distance and
closeness are two sides of the same coin.

So would you let me keep this coin in the
pocket in my chest and sometimes I take it out and
flick it in the air, but it never lands to show me
where you are, whether near or far.

So I say God, rid me of God. Of the names that I
write on your forehead, for they're not the reality,
the totality of you. They would better be scribed
upon my own, for that is what they are.

And I can see you now but only through glasses
thick with lenses embedded with colours painted
from the years of my own understanding. The
world around me becomes what I perceive it to be.

I do not see you as you are,

I see you as I may be.

I am in bondage to these things that I think I know.

My idols are my understandings set in stone.

So stay liquid God

even as I try to freeze you into my moulds,

especially the one that looks just like me.

But your water in me, all around me,
may I be a sponge on the bottom of the ocean lost
in the expanse of you. The mystery of God is
looking into the sun, to be undone by the radical
excess of light. So that even as I see you my eyes are
blinded by you and this light is undefinable yet
undeniable and I am left to delve into the knowing
of the unknowing where the light is so bright the
mystery is found in the fact that I cannot look lest I
go blind.

So leave it all behind. Leave behind the
machinations of the intellect. Leave behind the
senses and all things sensible. Beyond reason.
Beyond rationality. The fullness of God dwells in
mystery. Leave it all behind that thou mayest arise
by unknowing towards the divine. Until we find the
places where the paths of our stories fall back upon
each other.

And here where the webs of the weavings come together with such care the waves of the wind may pound against us but they'll never break us.

So this thing called God is not a thing at all, not a theoretical problem to be solved, but a mystery to dance within.

Take my hands within yours
and we'll dance to the rhythm of her beat,
my feet may stumble as we do as I,
enclosed in the captivity of these senses,
peep through the blinds of this window and yet shut down the curtain in fear that I would be lost in the expanse of you.

God, rid me of God.

I'll not seek to define you again. I'll not speak of you again in words that are not metaphor, that are not these poetics where similes drip from my tongue to speak of that which cannot be spoken.

God, rid me of God.

Until I find you in the silence of my breath.

The In-Between.

She holds her heart,
in pieces, but still she still
holds it.
She is broken down to
memories



of hands held soft
and moonlight kisses
and its the way he would look at her,
it's the knowing that she was known.

Two are torn
and the clouds have gathered bruised
and the notion of all that this was going to be
is to be now no more.
With every new beginning
comes an ending.
She is ending. She is beginning.

On love and loss and where to from here,
On fractures and wounds and this ocean of fear.

The thing is, that most days we refuse to end
what needs to be ended. We hold onto it,
carry it with us, let the poison mingle.
A knife in the back, we leave it piercing, keep
stabbing heart and lungs and the once whole pieces.

To begin again. A rebuilding.
It always occurs on a solid foundation.
The clearing of the ruins, no more 'what-ifs'

no more holding on with gripped
fingers. She is learning how to let go.
She is learning how to build again.

The reconstruction after the crumbling
that begins with a closing and a clearing
and the pouring of a new foundation.

We give ourselves to these moments.
This beginning, this forging, this change in the
wind. We lift tired heads demanding
that we are more than this.

Even as our necks are splintered
and our backs are broken
and our tongues are blistered
and still we turn ourselves around
smell the movement, let the soft breeze blow, she
always comes slow. Like everything that begins
again, she does not hurry. She knows that
if we hurry we shall miss this, so she speaks,

‘Don't rush this...It's where the real is. It's in the
in-between and in the overlap. It's in the dusk and
the dawn and it's in the autumns fall. It's in the
threshold place and the way the wave breaks and it's
in every space that lies between you and all that it is
you wish to be.”

So stay there. In the in-between.
For as long as you can, stay there.
Give yourself to where the moment that is not quite
done greets the moment
that has not yet begun.

Notes on Entering the Very Large World

There is a bonfire that waits for you on a cold
winters night. So come, take your place by the
firelight. And on the upturned logs
around you sits the Christ and
Mother Earth, and Brother Sun
and Sister Moon and the elders of
your ancestors.

So sit around the embers
with these elders
and talk the wisdom
that hangs in the air between you.

And when these heroes choose
to throw you in the flames,

know that it is not to burn you alive.

Rather they have seen past skin to see steel that lies
within, the wolverine metal that frames your bones.

So let their words be the breathe

that fills the bellows

that blazes all around until

this furnace burns hot enough

that the blacksmith may strike blow upon

blow upon red hot flesh

until the shape that emerges is...

not a sword to fight the world with,

your sword is a plough

and your shield is a shovel.

What I am saying is...life will beat you down,
but you choose the shape you shall become.

So with shovel in hand,



step up to the front line of battle and there...

Dig a hole
and plant a tree
and water its seed till you sit in its shade,
Pluck its fruit,
invite the world,
to eat a meal,
to wash their feet,
to greet their sons,
to love their mothers,
to hold their chins high,
to look you in the eye,
to know their name,
to break the chains,
to begin again,
to ride the waves, raise the anchor, sail the
seas, bang the drum, split the rock, chop the wood,
carry the water...

What I am saying is...
plant yourself and let them come.

Build a house from your life, not to live in,
not of brick and mortar, of buildings and
bedrooms. Build... a cubby house,
in a tree, in the forest,
make sure it's enchanted, call it a castle,
drink tea with the pixies there,
play chess with gnomes,
pick Berry's from the bushes nearby and eat a royal
feast with your queen.

What I am saying is...never think you are
too old to play pretend, to imagine away

a busy world full of problems.
Your problems will still be there in the morning
but the fairy's would have left at dawn.
So never let your eyes become over familiarised.
Stay wide eyed and wide open to a world
that is always speaking.
And let the breeze blow through you,
as leaves clap hands to applaud the wind
and so the trees awake from their slumber.
So you too...
slumber no more. I have heard your ROAR,
it shook this cubby house and broke the floor,
It sounds like the echo of lion.

What I am saying is... You should be proud.

So never back down from the line that runs between
things, a black and white world was not made for
you. Labels are lazy so do not use them.
Boxes are easy to make to put people in, but they
are so much harder to escape.
Remember a box was cardboard once
and that cardboard was a tree
and that tree would hide itself in
shame if it knew what it had become.
So honour the tree, don't make a box from its skin,
If anything make a pen from its flesh
and begin to write a new world.
And look around you,
for there are pens in the palms of every passerby.
And if they are not in their hands,
then they are tucked within breast pockets
close to heart spaces. And if they're not by their

chest then dive into their side pockets,
pull these pens out from dark places,
blow the dust from its tip
and you offer
to be the first paper that they write upon.
Let them ink their words upon your forearms,
Let them write their stories on your soul.

What I am saying is...
Never look past a person,
look inside them,
you'll find yourself there,
you'll find God there.

What I am saying is...
Go into this very large world friends,
with eyes wide open,
arms outstretched,
hands cupped before you,
quivering though they may be.

The hardest thing we have ever done
is the opening of our lives,
the giving of ourselves,
in the screaming face of our isolation.