



**Ephemera:  
Winter's Sweetest Violets**

**Ruth E. Krall**

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## The Winter Solstice



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The solstice turning arrives in silence:

Our silent longing for new light;  
Our pain-filled needs for one-ness;  
Our terror-filled sadness;  
Our urgent night prayers for wholeness;  
Our desire to be made well;  
Our most intimate night terrors;  
Our anguished tears;  
Our midnight rages;  
Our ancient grief;

All of these darkness-shrouded  
Longings –these fears, tears and curses –  
Have changed us:  
We no longer are who we once were.

Unnoticed  
A tiny light  
Long-buried inside our private sadness  
Grows stronger

Our inner light  
Has been both held and fed  
By densely textured silent waiting  
Inside our long winter's darkness



## **The Hour of the Wolf**



Stroke after quiet stroke  
I fill this quiet hour  
With intentional repetition

In the dark Western sky  
The old moon dies  
Fading stars signal dawn's arrival

This is the hour  
When the solitary Great Horned Owl retreats  
And Harris Hawks begin to soar in pairs

Desert doves coo  
Swifts dive for sips of water  
City roosters waken the sun

The male gamble quail  
Perches on the iron fence  
To guard his feeding brood below

Imperceptibly darkness shifts  
Suddenly the eastern sky blazes  
Fired in red and gold

Overhead cloud angels appear and disappear  
Ancient creature spirits embodied  
By drifting oceans of air

My eyes fill with wonder  
I store memories for that certain distant time  
When all darkens as imperceptibly as this dawn began.

In this quiet stillness  
In this wolf's hour  
I pray the strokes.



## **Aello, Calaeno, Podarge, and Ocypete**



The swift moving storm  
Colors the sky black above me;  
Its destructive bluster mutes and blurs my vision,  
Yet it backlights distant Western horizons with melting gold

The heavens empty their clouds of Virga rain  
The parched earth below does not receive it

These swift wings of heaven  
These fleet-footed ones high above the desert floor  
Brings us no healing  
Our hearts reach out with unspeakable yearning

This perpetual dryness in the midst of pregnant clouds  
Dances a seductively hot tango of hope  
Harpies, all of them  
They promise what they do not deliver  
Their folding and unfolding wings reveal virgin breasts

In the absence of rain  
The cacti refuse to bloom

## The World Tree



A gnarled ironwood tree clings to life  
Its dark branches shelter tiny black chatting birds  
Its roots reach deep into a small sandy wash

The tree forms a visual bridge  
Between heaven and earth

Smaller and thornier bushes are its neighbors  
A small family tribe of Javelinas mark the tree before moving on

This particular wash was born in bear-filled evergreen mountains  
In spring, it carries a steady stream of crystalline snow melt  
The sandy desert floor absorbs its life-giving wetness

The wash follows an ancient path of least resistance  
Its roaring summer monsoon-fed current floods the tree's roots  
After generations of snow melt and rain, the roots stand exposed now  
The tree and wash survive the heat and the cold together  
They survive the dryness and the wetness together  
Both shelter the other

I am reminded of the world tree  
Its branches stretch into the highest heavens  
Its roots burrow down into the lowest centers of earth

The world tree, we are told, is a passage way  
We can find the higher gods by climbing its branches  
We can seek out the lower gods by crawling along its roots  
Following them as they burrow deep – seeking water

Entering this desert wash on foot  
I am certain the most ancient gods are here:  
How could there be such beauty without their presence

Encountering this ancient tree  
Hidden deep inside a desert wash -  
My spirit cannot avoid its ancient call

I am home

## Let Us Remember We Stand on the Shoulders of Giants



Tucson, Arizona  
January 27, 2017

Let us all, every one of us, remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who gave birth to the idea of free women

Let us remember  
Each of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who are our spiritual foremothers

Let us remember  
Each of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who placed rocky cairns for us to follow

Let us remember  
Each of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who sounded their clarion calls for justice

Let us remember  
Each of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn whose freedom-sounding voices were ridiculed

Let us remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who chained themselves to fences

Let us remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who were mocked, spit on, and force fed in prison

Let us remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn whose relentless courage birthed our own

Let us remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who risked imprisonment, torture, and death

Let us remember  
Each one of us stands on the shoulders of giants  
These womyn who broke glass ceilings for us and our daughters

Let us begin the liturgical naming of the giants  
So that future generations will know their names, their sacrifices  
So that future generations will tell these memories to their children

I will begin with my personal litany  
Knowing that every womyn's list will be unique

I will begin my personal recitation  
Bearing witness to my pantheon of heroes

I will continue to recite this litany as I wake  
And as I fall asleep

I know that as we build our collective lists for the future  
We create the permaculture for a future we will not see  
Just as many of these womyn never saw the future we live in

Our daughter's lives need to be rooted  
In this brand new permaculture of justice, freedom, equality, hope

I remember now that I stand on the shoulder of giants:

- Elizabeth Blackwell, Florence Nightingale, Margaret Sanger
- Jane Addams, Angeles Arrien, Margaret Mead
- Marian Anderson, Aretha, Jessye Norman, Dot Shock
- Judith Lewis Herman, Jean Baker Miller, Bertha Huber
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Daly, Carol Christ
- Amy Lowell, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde
- Hildegard of Bingen, Sappho, Madame Curie
- Emily Dickinson, Denise Levertov, Mary Oliver
- Esther Lucille Brown, Eleanor Curran, Jane Goodall
- Hildegard Peplau, Charlotte Gale, Katherine Hepburn
- Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells Barnett
- Judy Chicago, Dorothea Lange, Kathie Kollwitz
- Susan B. Anthony, Gloria Steinem, Angela Davis
- Shirley Chisholm, Geraldine Ferraro, Katherine Zellar
- Fannie Lou Hamer, Coretta Scott King, Miriam Mikeba
- Carol Gilligan, Jennifer Freyd, Charlotte Ellen, Sylvia Shirk
- Barbara Jordan, Hillary Clinton, Pauli Murray
- Nelle Morton, Rosa Parks, Alice Paul, Beverly Harrison
- The Redstockings of New York, the Boston Women's Health Collective, the Project Sister Collective of Los Angeles County, the women who founded and staffed the Santa Monica Rape Crisis Line
- Ann Wolbert Burgess's, Linda Lytle Holmstrom, Mary Koss
- Leta Stetter Kinard, Margaret Slayter, Doreen Chan, Edna Charles
- Chicago's JANE collective, the Bay Area Women Against Rape Collective (BAWAR), The women who founded NOW
- Barbara Blaine who founded SNAP, Jeanne Miller who founded LINKUP, Marcie Hamilton
- Rosemarie Feeney Harding, the female physicians and nurses of Planned Parenthood
- Mary Royer, Alta Schrock, Olive Wyse, Mary Oyer
- Barbara Deming, Dorothy Day, Jane Adams, Jean Houston
- Rachel Naomi Remen, Virginia Satir, Margaret Mead
- Delores Williams, Elsa Tamez, Julia Esquivel
- Dolores Huerta, Golda Meir, Anne Frank, Beverly Harrison
- Z Budapest, Lauren Artress, Carter Heyward,
- Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Queen Elizabeth the Second
- Hisako Naito Kinukawa, Marija Gimbutas, Margaret Charles

- Kathie Sarachild, Shirley Nichols Fahey, Fannie Lou Hamer
- Jean Shinoda Bolen, Verna Zimmerman, Orpah Mosemann, Anna Mae Charles Fretz, Z. Budapest, Abigail Adams
- Alice Walker, Michelle Kwan, Simone Biles, Alice Paul
- Clara Gilchrist, Helen Williamson, Edith Herr
- Hecate, Demeter, Inanna, Isis, Mary, Diana, Kwan Yin
- Tonanzin, Green Tara, Guadalupe
- The virginal Artemis, Hestia, and Athena
- Ishtar, Kwan Yin, and Asherah
- Hagia Sophia, la Madre de Dios, Yellow Corn Woman
- Persephone, Antigone, White Buffalo woman
- Starhawk, Aung San Suu Kyi, Merlin Stone, Gerda Funk
- Ann Cameron, Toni Morrison, Mary Travis, Helen Reddy
- Maya Angelou, Rigoberto Menchu, Betty Friedan
- The biblical Ruth, the biblical Esther, and the biblical Mary Magdalene
- Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Gertrude Rupp
- Pocahontas, Frida Kahlo, Luisa Teish, Z. Budapest
- Joan of Arc, Holly Near, Madame Curie, Heloise

Let us not forget  
Let us always remember

We womyn are not alone  
We each stand on the shoulders of giants

Let us always remember that as we  
Stand on their shoulders  
We pick up the burden of carrying their voices into the future  
We are their descendents  
Let us not forget them  
They are the sacred ancestors  
Let us honor them

Let us each recite the litany of our ancestors  
So we – and future generations of womyn – do not forget

Let us remember that we are born of womyn  
Not created from Zeus's head



Let us always remember that we stand on the shoulders of giants

We womyn are not alone in history  
We are not bereft of memory

Let us restore the memory of our womyn ancestors  
Let us create cairns of remembrance for the future  
Let us pray a prayer for the seven generations who follow us

Let us recite the litany of our ancestors  
So we – and future generations of womyn – do not forget

Let us recited the litany of our ancestors  
So our daughters and our sons know they descend from giants.

Let us never ever forget  
We stand on the shoulders of giants

Let us always remember  
We stand on the shoulders of heroic womyn  
They are the true giants of our lives.

## **Reincarnation**



Outside my patio door  
A camellia bush is in full bloom

Inside my study cave  
Bach's trumpets roar and Mozart's violins shimmer

A male hummingbird perches  
So still I can see him breathe.

Only when the music changes to something less to his liking  
Does he dart off to other perches and porches

For weeks, I have deliberately lured him here with music:  
Now, our ease of being together stuns me

As long as music pours from my space to his  
I can move freely without frightening him into flight.

He is picky, though.  
He does not sit still for jazz, country, rock, or atonal modern

Watching his uncommon stillness, my mind's inner voice silently wonders,  
Just who or what being perches here to keep me company

I ponder a second unanswerable question:  
Is he, perhaps, a reincarnated Bach, Handel, Mozart, Vivaldi, or Haydn

Something about his attentive stillness  
Invites me to enter spirit-listening and spirit-seeing inner spaces

In one brief moment,  
His iridescent beauty and the beauty of the music:  
Sight and hearing,  
Image and breath  
Self and other merge and become one.

## **Pigeon Labyrinth**



Labyrinths are not mazes  
Mazes seek to confuse us  
They deliberately guide us into blind alleys  
We walk a puzzle with walls to be solved

In contrast to mazes and their deliberate deceptions  
Labyrinths are spiritual tools for uncovering  
Their ancient womblike curves return us to the silence  
We walk to find ourselves

There is something to be said  
For this discipline of attentive walking  
While not every moment of walking is awakened  
There are always hints and possibilities for new sight

I walked the Episcopalian path on Imbolc  
A routine walking, I didn't even stop to formulate a question  
An intention or a tiny prayer  
I barely remembered to bow to the four directions  
I casually named and honored the totem spirits which guard this dry land.

I walk once a month here –  
A solitary practice for no one walks with me

They say some consecrated bread  
Lies buried beneath the painted concrete I walk.

I have seen broods of pigeons in this neighborhood  
They pick in the dirt for food  
Sit on the telephone wires for companionship  
And lift off into flight with each unfamiliar noise

So, here I am mindlessly walking the path  
To enlightenment: I am having trouble focusing  
On my slow steps; on my in-breaths  
The air is cold

I want this wordless prayer done with and left behind.

I become aware that another living creature is walking with me  
A solitary black iridescent pigeon is walking  
Inside this ancient path and never strays outside it  
As I turn, he turns; as I step more slowly, he struts more delicately.

I enter the center and offer my gratitude to the mineral world  
Of dirt, sand, and rock

I pay my respects to the plant world  
For its life- giving gifts

I name the animals I love  
The totem spirits of this land

I acknowledge  
Fellow humans, angels, fairies, elves, and the unknown gods

While I stand in this prescribed center – with my own prayer of recognition  
And gratitude for life, the pigeon continues his own purposeful strutting

I grin and say out loud the words I was taught to say:  
*There is no right or wrong way to walk this path, brother pigeon.*  
*We walk it together.*

I stood still in the center for long minutes

Watching the pigeon walk – how he stayed inside the circle  
He appeared to know what he was seeking  
He appeared to be an accomplished labyrinth walker.

At one moment he walked over to where I was standing  
Silently, observantly, quietly - in absorption of this miracle  
Human being and bird were both aware of each other  
Both chose to trust and to walk with each other

We were so close at one moment  
I thought of Saint Francis and how he called the birds  
To his side

But I am no Saint Francis

My next thought was  
*My God, what if it has rabies?*

I moved my foot slowly  
Asking him to move away from me  
Because his closeness felt threatening and dangerous:

It is always dangerous to talk to the gods

He fluffed his wings a little bit  
Moved closer as if to say  
*We can both share this path together on this day.*

I laughed at my fears

My teachers have taught me regarding the animal spirits

That it is the unusual behavior we look for – that we must heed  
It is the unusual appearance that needs to be discerned  
Driving home, I wondered about my pigeon encounter  
The only bread we shared was buried in concrete.  
The only path we walked together was so ancient in its origins,  
We can only speculate about Our Lady of Chartres,  
Our Lady of Notre Dame, Nuestra Senora de las Americas

The family name, in English, of Christopher Columbus, so they say,  
Was Christopher Pigeon  
He sailed from Europe looking for the Spice Islands.  
His boats slammed into an unknown continent

Well, to be truthful,  
The Amerindians knew they were on land  
They recognized and named its rivers, lakes, and hot springs

Christopher Pigeon found this place that is home to me  
And to this city pigeon  
Who today walked the labyrinth with me

In my book about animal medicine, I see that pigeons –  
Just like their cousins, the doves – represent the goddess.  
She represents creativity. More importantly  
She represents safety and security  
She represents a home in the storm.

Now, I remember my halting prayer as I entered the path.  
*Please let me see for at least five more years.*  
*Let me live in this beautiful place with vision.*

On leaving the path, I bowed and blessed it with *Namaste*.  
I turned towards the walking pigeon and said,  
*The Spirit in me, little brother, greets the Spirit in you.*

My little brother- the pigeon - and I walked this path together.  
Each aware of and respectful of the other's presence  
I am as certain of this as I can be.

I will trust the gods and the security of my friends' care for me.



There will be a way, a path into the future I can trust.  
More importantly, today, in the present moment, I can see.



On New Year's Eve day  
Saguaro cacti had just been bathed  
By winter's first rain  
But the washes were already dry.

I rounded a hill  
Took a deep breath  
And there they were: four coyotes  
Running free under the mid-day winter sun.

He asks me now  
If I don't have guns  
Or neighbors with guns  
Or even neighbors of neighbors of neighbors with guns.  
In his world coyotes need to be shot

How can I explain the ecstasy  
Of coyotes running free,  
Of celebrating breath,  
Of praying with the earth?

## **Intertribal**



I woke this morning to a chorus of coyotes singing

One would send a calling note  
To question the location of her family  
Or to signal the dinner catch  
To be shared under the softness of this moon's waning light

Led by the spirits of their clan  
This tribe of coyotes caught the beat.  
Each replied, in turn, with her own unique improvisation  
On the melody being sung

Maybe they were all facing east and offering  
Morning prayers to the rising sun  
Maybe they gathered in this noisy circle to pray a coyote table grace  
Maybe they were wearing tuxedos and gowns

Maybe they were all cosseted together

To plot out their path to salvation in men's concrete world;  
Maybe they were dressed in drag  
Dancing to their individual heart beats

Maybe they were sharing fantasies  
About winning the coyote's annual Kentucky Derby  
Maybe they were celebrating the beginning of Lent  
By tossing these musical gold beads over my garden's wall

Soon their roll call seemed to be complete  
All voices in the choir were accounted for  
A short space between the notes  
Brought a measured beat of silence to this high desert morning

Then their chanting began all over again.  
This time they had moved closer to the house  
I sense their presence just beyond my patio wall  
How many? I could not know

Domesticated dogs began to sing their own melody:

The bass of the big dog down the rutted lane was as steady  
As a tympani in concert  
The yappy terrier soprano provided a contrapuntal melody and beat;  
The pedigreed poodle left outside to pee by her human owner  
Stood silently at attention waiting an unseen conductor's  
Signal to join her solo voice to the choir's

In less than a second, the entire chorus of neighborhood dogs was singing  
A syncopated hymn to their own gods

While each followed his or her own sense of rhythm and tone,  
There was harmony and agreement  
In this urgent need to offer the world  
Their own communal song of the night

Maybe they were reminding the coyotes that they were one family  
But singing to different drums

Maybe they were answering the coyote's call  
To return to wildness

Maybe they were issuing a secretive code to the coyote clan  
About how to avoid their master's rifle  
Maybe they were issuing an invitation to an inter-tribal circle dance  
Maybe they were drinking gin martinis  
And eating Kings Cake  
While watching a nearly naked and beaded parade pass by

In the space and time of a human heart beat -  
The two choirs began to sing together

Both tribes merged their voices  
In a frenzied waterfall of sound

Then, as suddenly as it had begun minutes before,  
Dawn's silent presence returned to the desert floor;  
Morning's rising sun called awake all snow-sifted eastern peaks.  
Day animals began to replace night animals  
As sacred guardians of this desert

The new morning's intertribal concert and dance had now ended

## **Owl Sings**



Last night I heard the Great Horned Owl sing  
Right outside my sleeping room  
I supposed it was in the neighbor's tree

Sacred to me  
A Guardian Spirit  
I feel blessed when I wake to her haunting midnight song

I lay in bed  
Now wide awake  
And counted the seconds between calls

The bird was very close  
That was clear to me  
Each note of its call was distinct

I told her about "my" problem with Sonoran Desert pack rats  
These burrowing and annoying animals  
Who choose to live in the stone covered yard out front

Packrats make a tasty midnight snack  
If you are a Great Horned Owl  
Or, so I've been told

Hearing her haunting hunting call  
I invited her to a *come as you are* midnight dinner  
In my front yard, *no cooking needed*

Soon, however, her call grew more distant  
My dinner offer rejected  
A better offer was accepted

I fell back to sleep  
Knowing I'd been visited once more by one of the night gods  
Wearing feathers

**Prayer for the Worldwide Festival of Light<sup>xii</sup>**





Note: Spoken in past tense

Blessed are you  
Creator of time and space  
You have given us life, brought us to this moment  
You have supported us and protected us  
You have taught us and guided us  
You have enriched our lives with light  
Blessed are you  
Creator of time and space

Note: Spoken in present active tense

Blessed are you  
Creator of time and space  
You give us life  
You bring us into this present moment  
You support and protect us  
You teach and guide us.  
You enrich our lives with light  
Blessed are you  
Creator of time and space



## **Fire and Ice**

The felt-sense of pure annoyance  
Almost – but not quite – ruins this day for joy

I cannot change the outside world  
Or its most annoying people

So I write this short poem of remembrance:

I am not God  
I cannot fix that which is broken  
That which is wounded  
That which is selfish  
That which is self-preoccupied  
That which runs in pursuit of some obscure and obscene dream  
Some un-named healing of pain  
Some lust-filled needs for primacy of position  
Some heart-urgencies for complete control

An old woman  
Now I just notice my sense of being aggrieved  
And know I will not act in immediacy to change my ill humors.

But, do not forget this, ye gods  
If and when I continue to feel aggrieved and annoyed  
If I continue to be berated and harassed  
I will act  
I do not tolerate being abused in the name of good works.  
I can and will remove myself from the aisle  
Where these thoughtless ones congregate  
To belittle me as useless to the conversations  
To discount my contributions to the whole

I am not yet ready to sit on a shelf  
And wait for death to arrive  
While my good name is muddied by others' malicious thoughtlessness  
While my good nature is assumed irrelevant to the work at hand

## Squirrel Medicine



Get on the wire  
Know your destination  
Don't look down  
Use all fours for balance  
Use a sense of humor too  
Move as rapidly as you can but don't be foolish  
Don't look back in regret  
On arrival at the other side, shake your fur and leap  
Toward the tree that houses your dry nest

Most of all:  
Trust the universe to support you

## Salvation in Times of War



This good friend of mine  
Knows how to forage for mushrooms  
Fiddle neck ferns in the spring  
Wild asparagus  
Ripe blueberries in hidden bogs  
    (Stealing them from the bears)  
Shellbark nuts in their husks  
    (Stealing them from the squirrels)  
Cactus pads to roast and eat  
    (Stealing them from the javelina)  
And catch trout so big they will feed two

She writes this morning:

We've been thinking about when the war comes here  
Where shall we hide when our lives  
Look like those of the women of Iraq  
Look like those of the women of Palestine  
Look like those of the women of Afghanistan  
Look like those of the women of Kosovo

Look like those of the women of Columbia  
Look like those of the women of Rwanda  
Look like those of the women of Sudan

When the bombs fall here  
When the roar of hand-thrown grenades fills our ears  
When school buses filled with children burn in the streets  
When gang rape happens in the open  
When the stench of dead bodies lines our noses  
When armor-clad soldiers search house to house  
When dogs sniff out our footsteps  
Where will we go to hide

If we go north we have to survive in the cold  
Burning the furniture for fuel  
If we go to the city  
We have to survive its inevitable destruction  
If we run to the coasts  
Without a good boat, we have no place to run at all  
If we come to your desert  
We have the blazing sun and bone-deep thirst to worry about

We've decided that we will hide in the Arizona Mountains  
Where we can find mushrooms, berries, and clean stream water  
There we will  
Wait for the day of redemption  
The day of safety for women alone in the world

If worst comes to worst, we will slip across the border as refugees  
That is, if we can find a place  
Without stout reinforced fence-walls to keep us in.

I read these words  
(And, yes, I have embroidered them with my own)  
Only to recognize their truth  
Who would shelter a woman alone in a war zone  
Why would anyone care for her safety

When I was a very young child  
During the last great world war  
I would fall asleep thinking,

When the soldiers come  
I will hide in that closet up there  
I will crawl behind the sofa  
I will tunnel under mother's quilts and blankets  
No one will ever think of looking for me there  
And I will be ever so quiet

Only then could I fall asleep and wait for morning's forgetfulness

My gut reply to my friends  
Is always the same in these kinds of conversations

Keep a current passport  
Own a good knife to take with you; may need it to skin rabbits  
Carry some fishhooks and line – you can use a tree limb for a pole  
Pack a fire-starter or some flint  
Carry a small pot for cooking  
Keep water-proof pictures of your loved ones with you  
Make certain you have your birth certificate – waterproofed  
And a marriage certificate if you have one – also waterproofed  
Oh, and yes, the plastic-sealed birth certificates of your children  
Wear three layers of clothing and carry a good extra pair of shoes  
And put all of this on your back.

My friend's letter reminds me  
(In a town where every day the killing planes fill ordinary skies)  
That forgetfulness never serves  
Those who want to survive  
Who want the neighbor and the enemy both to survive  
Who want the world to survive  
Who just want to make love in the middle of the night  
And laugh out loud in church



## Trash Cows



There is something to be said  
To wild cows:  
In my mind they provide models for resistance  
Refusing the all-too-easy seductions of domestication

I have heard about these kinds of animals before

The chicken which successfully runs away from the assembly line  
That guts her sibling chickens for somebody else's dinner;

The burro whose ancestral grandmother escaped  
So long ago we can't count the generations;

The horses which forage the free range of sea grass  
And bracing salty winds on the outer islands;

The sheep which run away at night  
To live in caves nearby green pastures and running water;

The steer that escapes the chute  
And lopes down the road faster than his captors;

I remember the family dog  
Repeatedly slipping away from her chained life

Yes, for years and years  
I have heard about these renegade animals:

Moving to their own inner calls,  
These animals moved outside the safety zones offered  
By their human masters

They bleat, neigh, whinny, bark, and squawk  
Only to please themselves  
They graze where they want.  
They choose their own mates  
They care for their young.

Domesticated cows who hide in high mountain crevices and canyons  
Can be found with dogs and horses;  
Rounded up for tomorrow's hamburger,  
Next week's Gucci purse; next year's Armani shoes

A pinyon tree cannot shield the lean brownness of cow.  
It is too round, too green, too sturdy  
Too precise in its own shape to provide shelter,  
To the lean, brown, rib-exposed cow

But trash cows – ah, not only is their desire for freedom  
Stronger than the pull of easy water and free molasses licks  
There is something more:  
A canniness, perhaps, that allows them to hide in broad daylight  
On flat earth, inside almost leafless shrubs.

Even the cowboy on horseback  
Does not see them as they stand mute and still  
Inside the low chaparral bushes.

I wonder at these trash cows  
Which can stand so silently that cowboys drive the large herd  
Right past them – unseeing and unknowing.

The spiny, fragile desert scrub seems so unable to hide their secret.  
Yet, finding a stand of thorny brush,  
They enter it to stand patiently  
While the round up surges around them  
Like brown shitting waves on the sandy desert floor

In a cow, for God's sake,  
Where does the urge for freedom  
The knowledge of hiding come from  
Does their tribe sit at night under the desert sky  
Reflecting on Seneca or Marx or Jefferson  
Do they use the big dipper to show their young  
How to move north to freedom  
Are their underground classrooms  
Where they discuss the merits of this shrub or that bush  
Do the genes of the Wooley mammoth still flow  
Deep inside their neurons  
Did their ancestors watch the bison self-destruct  
Over the tall cliff's edge when they were chased  
And repeat the bison's story as a warning?

Some of the trash cows have been wild for generations;  
Babies are born and the elders die – maybe at the hands of the fox,  
The coyote or one of the big cats that roam these hills  
Nonetheless, male and female easily find each other.  
Unbranded and unaided they give birth to a calf  
Who will remain unbranded and repeat the cycle all over again.

This habit of wildness has been bred out of the docile and domesticated.  
So how did this individual one here or that individual one over there  
Find the courage to resist, find the courage to set out on an adventure,  
Find the courage to live free

In a killing zone  
Patient silent waiting, hiding for hours in thorn-filled quietness:  
These are the prices of freedom

## Old Men Give Me Quartz



Old men give me quartz  
Good, some say, for healing the chakras

The old shaman  
With wild white hair  
And sea-calm blue eyes  
Sat in his university office  
Surrounded by sacred masks

His much younger face stared down at me as it hung there.  
His own teacher – or maybe it was his student – had carved it for him  
During rites in Bali

.  
He pulled out a small drawstring bag  
With pointed stones and handed it to me. He said,  
*Find one that chooses you.*

Later that season he and I would preside over  
Consecration ceremonies for a medicine wheel on college land

The wheel is paved over now  
Its spirits offered to Detroit, Tokyo, Kokomo, Bremen

He has passed over  
And I wonder what has happened to his masks and bag of stones

Years before, an old lover with silky grey hair  
And opalescent blue eyes  
Spotted a tray filled with smoky quartz from Brazil. He said,  
*Find one that you like*  
After he returned to his life without me,  
I set the faceted stone into a golden ring.

Someday when I pass over  
Someone else will wear it and never know its power

Years later, a teacher who said he was a shaman  
Wore a turquoise chunk bolo tie from New Mexico  
And a weathered leather cowboy hat from Texas  
His drum was small yet its beat guided us

He passed around a woven basket filled with orange veined stones  
From a quartz mountain behind his home  
He'd picked them, himself, he said.  
*Find one that feels right to you and take it.*

When his wife was very ill, I asked him  
*Has someone sent her the evil eye?*  
He said, *I've wondered about that too.*  
The following year he slept with a client, lost his license to practice  
And now consults with the Dr. Phil show

For years  
His ex-wife was healthy and lived alone by a sea that she loved

In metropolitan Canada  
The shaman led us on a guided imagery journey  
I traveled on a dolphin's back to a hidden tropical island  
Sacred to the goddess

I walked into a an immense grove of palm trees  
Within seconds the grove  
Morphed into a closed circle of chanting and swaying high priestesses  
Invited inside the circle they began to teach me the mysteries

Later, crumpled brown paper bags  
Filled with polished gemstones were passed around.  
*Find one to teach you.*  
Using only my sense of touch, I chose a bloodstone shard  
Smaller than the size of a common pea or grain of brown rice

My friend Janet was dying  
Later that day she jumped into my arms  
To cry as I had never seen her cry  
She was paralyzed with indecision  
She was too late to enter the healing waters  
She was turned away at the door of the gods

The Methodist preacher I lived with  
Chastely, it turned out, gave me a polished rose crystal.  
I needed it, he said, for a safe passage  
Through the rebirth process he and I were both undergoing.  
For years, I kept it safe in my own bag of crystals and revelatory rocks.

He moved to Brazil, married a widow  
And writes only at the holidays

I still flirt with older men who could be my father.  
They still give me quartz

Yesterday, I was asking questions about a place  
Where quartz points grow like mushrooms.  
The old man with twinkles in his grey-blue eyes  
And skin as wrinkled as opium poppies in bloom  
Talked to me about the finer points of understanding  
How and why men mine quartz

He pointed to a bushel sized basket  
It was filled with broken quartz points  
*They are for the children, he said.*  
*Take one for I can see that you are young in heart.*

I put my hand into this jagged mess of rocks  
Torn from Mother Earth  
These were the discarded fragments,  
The broken, the non-useful, the unlovely, the discarded by-product  
Of men's search for wealth  
I lifted handful after handful only to pour them back into the discard pile.  
Hearing the sounds of crystal falling on crystal  
I pondered the presence of many teachers  
I wondered about the ancient wisdom of these crystals  
Pouring handful after handful of crystal fragments  
I kept thinking about the wisdom of rocks – their silent consciousness.

Over and over I have heard these words:

*Allow the rock to find you. Over-ride the ego.*  
*This choice is not a task for conscious thought.*  
*Just allow the rock to know you first.*  
*There is one that will intuitively feel different from the rest.*  
*Trust yourself. You will know the one that belongs to you.*  
*Trust the rock. Take that one.*

The old man was a volunteer for the National Park Service.  
But, as I walked away  
Carrying yet another piece of mined quartz  
I wondered out-loud to myself:  
*Was he perhaps a shaman in hiding?*

By now, I have this tiny pile of quartz stones -  
Most of them given to me by old men  
Men old enough to be my father or grandfather

This morning I read about chakras and stones.  
In new age metaphysics,

Quartz - depending on its specific mineral components -  
Awakens the root chakra, the heart chakra or the head chakra

Part of me thinks this is superstitious nonsense.  
In twenty-first century science, quartz is used to refract light.

Yet I have been awakened and enlightened by old men  
With crinkly facial lines,  
Soft as silk blue eyes  
And a gentleness as smooth as polished rock. .

They continue to give me quartz.



## Transcendence



xix

In the midst of chaos,  
Unruly clutter,  
Untidy floors,  
And a generally unpacked life,  
The dying ocotillo leaves  
Reflect translucent golden light.

That which dies now  
Will be reborn  
When the spring rains return.

## Winter Rains



Yesterday mounds of white clouds.  
Covered Rincon Peak  
Like celestial egg whites beaten  
Into a wild froth by the wind

During the darkest hours of the night  
I woke to gusty winds humming outside my window.  
Not so gently they set my bamboo wind chimes to work  
So they might offer their persistent prayers to the wind' gods

On my back patio  
Sheltered from the wet rain,  
Kwan Yin waits silent inside her cardboard box home  
She was brought here two winters ago by the moving van  
Her space is not yet ready for her unveiling and placement in my life  
Or, just maybe, I am not yet ready for her healing presence to manifest  
Her temporary home – which must seem to her to be permanent –  
Reminds me that compassion is one path to love

Outside the neighbor's dogs sing a siren's song  
Luring members of the coyote tribe  
To seek shelter from the rain  
Inside this human-constructed rabbits' warren  
Of dark paved streets and high patio walls.  
Or, just as likely, these barking dogs  
May have scented a javelina family of four just wandering through  
In search of a late night prickly pear fruit dinner

I did not leave the warmth of this purple comforter to look  
I only listened and drifted with the sound  
Without the need for a potion  
Sweet Morpheus re-claimed me and I retreated from thinking

Sometime later the winter rains began again.  
Waking, I wrapped myself deeper in down.  
Happiness flowed. The winter rains are regular now.  
About every ten days they soak the earth for hours at a time.  
The desert is preparing itself to bloom. Even now, the desert floor  
Has a scattering of new green and the creosote bushes smell of rain.  
Soon the ocotillo will flower.  
Soon the Sandhill Cranes will fly home to Canada.  
Soon the human snow birds will exit this desert basin.

My hummingbird feeder was emptied yesterday  
I think they knew the cold wet was coming back  
They gluttonously fed without shame.

The woodpecker was here too but I shooed him away.  
I don't really want him hiding his prize finds  
In the posts that hold up the porch roof.  
But I admired his stiff beauty seconds before he took flight.  
Such wildness! Such ingenuity! Such awareness! Such oneness!

The mountains to the north peek out under these voluptuous clouds  
Like a virgin bride hides beneath her jeweled tiara and tulle veil

These familiar mountain peaks, the Catalinas,  
Play hide and seek in the clouds  
As snow falls and covers the bear's den  
The great horned owls' nest  
The cougar's sheltering cave ledge  
The rattlesnakes underground rocky crevice.

This season is as different from last year's as possible:  
Then I rested here – every day filled with warmth and sun –  
Seeing and talking with no one for days at a time

Now my house fills, empties and re-fills with people  
Their conversation and laughter serves as sunshine to my spirit  
While the desert heals itself of dryness  
So, too, my spirit finds healing

The winter rains have begun  
I rejoice

## Metamorphosis

*I am no longer protected by the cloister and the garden it represented, as in my novitiate days. But the vocation continues. The tears were of grief – also of joy. Joy is deeper than sorrow. In spite of the expulsion, my vocation continues. Inside or outside, my vocation goes on. Everyone's does.*

Matthew Fox<sup>xxi</sup>



xxii

This tumultuous month is almost over.  
Butterfly images have pervaded my dreams  
They have illustrated my journals  
They have accompanied me as faithful harbingers of grace  
Images of metamorphosis and transformation everywhere  
Abound In my psyche  
Mystical reading lures me.

Words of Thomas Merton and Matthew Fox  
Read in tandem with each other  
Stand as cairns  
Along the side of the road I travel

Ancient book-learned mentors of my younger self  
They now return in my aging moments  
As semaphores to honest compassion

In spite of being force marched into exile  
Excluded from the cloistered gardens  
I am quite certain  
My vocation continues

Fox is correct  
The joy of freedom is sweeter than the bitter grief of exile.

Much work remains to be done  
I will trust my calling  
I will believe in my vocation

I will do the best I can  
And allow the Gods alone to judge me



## Spring Reveries



Winter has dipped its hat to summer here  
With only a cursory nod to spring  
As it slid by

A pair of doves nests on the patio roof rafters  
Geckos scramble over the front wall  
Weeds are sprouting like deuces in a gambler's hand  
Bright pink cactus flowers turn a waxy skin towards the sun  
Young gila woodpeckers steal the hummingbird's nectar  
The hummers dive bomb each other  
A cactus wren pair is hiding out behind the oleander  
The citrus is formally pronounced dead  
Big cotton clouds gather over the Catalinas  
The paper tells me to be careful around rattlers, spiders and scorpions  
The ocotillo has millions of green leaves and lots of bright red flowers  
Creosote is wildly blooming and the bees are already drunk  
Yucca's phallic stalk nakedly salutes the world without shame

Bikers in wild colors compete;  
Rincon Peak turns pink, gold, bronze and purple twice a day

I am so content here  
Yet I must return to the flat land of corn and soybeans;  
To the land of thunderstorms, tornadoes and high humidity  
To the land of the fathers and forefathers  
(I think there must have been mothers and foremothers too)  
For yet another summer

My winter oasis is about to close for the season  
I will not see the blue lupine meadows at Picachu Peak  
I will miss the bright reflected sun of California poppy fields in bloom  
I will not see Saguaro cacti wearing their May Day crown  
(If I am not here to see these things will they exist?)

I will watch, instead, as *corn grows high on the fourth of July*  
I hope to see tulips and daffodils emerge from winter's underground  
I will seek out trillium, may apples and wild ginger  
I will plant seeds  
I will visit farmer's markets  
I will ward off mosquitoes  
I will watch for robins and their wormy dinner on the ground  
And cardinals and golden finch at their feeders

I will drive over rivers filled with water rather than dry sand.  
I will spend time with friends

The great hoop of life turns  
The great circle of life spins  
The great dance of life continues

Each day I am filled with gratitude for life  
Each morning I am filled with gratitude to life

Heading home to my Indiana home from my Arizona home  
*I will sing with the Spirit...*  
*And I will sing with the understanding also.*<sup>xxiv</sup>



## For Maggie Smith<sup>xxv</sup>



Some days I feel as if we are sisters  
You are just four, maybe five, years younger than I  
You might have been one of the students I taught  
Your bright eyes might have surged with tears  
As you wrestled with love's full knowing

Maybe there were harsh words between the two of you  
Maybe there were shared tears  
Maybe there were apologies  
Maybe there were hugs and ambivalent farewells  
Maybe there was the laughter of unanticipated sightings  
Maybe there were moments of deep relief  
Maybe there were days of equally deep regret

In his deliberate – and might I say cruel - absence from your life  
I wonder what rituals you established  
To handle the pain of his decisions  
To honor the pain of your decisions

I wonder how many of your tears were shed in silence  
Or, perhaps, never shed at all

Blood sisters would have shared these stories  
But we are not blood sisters  
I can, therefore, only wonder how you survived

Men – writers who praise him – tell me what he did  
But they simply say of you that you met someone new to love  
They do not acknowledge his courting of you as a violation of ancient vows  
They do not acknowledge the deliberate cruelty of his abandonment of you  
Man's work, God's work – what is the difference

Books have been written about his survival  
And the gift of love you so freely gave him  
Reading these, I think so often of you  
And wonder how you survived the anguish  
Of knowing his monastic obedience  
Took precedence over honoring your female love  
With his full presence

For however we interpret it  
His needs for silence  
His refusal to love  
His vows of celibacy  
Took precedence

I think so often of you, my sister,  
And send healing thoughts your way  
I imagine you to be stronger for having loved him  
So openly, so transparently, so carelessly  
I imagine you are stronger for having survived his absence  
I hope you are stronger for living long after  
He shattered the living oneness felt by the two of you.

Reading about him,  
I intuit that you – not he - suffered from his awkward, insistent vows  
I imagine you learned about love the hardest way possible  
By being sacrificed on his tribe's most sanctified altars

Twice your age,  
He belonged to another time  
Vowed away from your embracing arms  
Matter Ecclesia claimed him

God's eternal silence replaced your human words of love  
God's embrace – illusory at best –  
Removed him from your arms  
That love which is unknowable  
Took precedence over your love which he knew

The harvest moons of September and October  
Came and went  
They cared naught about your dilemma

The planting moons of May and June  
Slipped by  
Speaking no words of comfort

In their brilliant light  
Twelve full moons came and went  
They took no notice of your anguished tears  
Of anger or grief – this much I know about these moons

Yes, I think in God's time we are sisters  
I understand your dilemma at a cellular level

Ever since I've become aware of your presence  
In his life, I have wandered what became of you

Did you ever stop loving him  
Did you save his letters and hoard his notes  
As talismans of memory,  
As markers of a discarded – yet always remembered hope  
As cairns to mark a love bidden  
And then forbidden,

Did you come to resent his male celibate vows  
To the Divine and to the not so divine

Did you ever tell someone – anyone - your side of this archetypal story  
Did you tell your friends about him  
Did you tell your mother  
Did you tell your new loves

When he died, all alone in a foreign city, did you cry  
Did you fall to the ground with anguish at his absence from life

After his body was dug into sacred ground  
Did you visit his grave  
Carrying rose petals, hawthorn berries, dried rosemary, or mistletoe

Now living in the land of the dead  
Does he visit you in your living room  
Does he sit at your kitchen table  
Does he inhabit your sleeping room  
Does he stand by you when you fill your dishwasher

Does he invade your night dreams  
Holding you in his arms

Does he invade your day dreams  
Bringing memories of his kisses

Glimpsing him ahead of you in line at the grocery store  
Do you grasp for breath  
Does he parade past your house at noon  
Does he take the bus at your stop  
Does he wait in the passenger seat of your car  
Does he step out of the airplane just ahead of you  
Does he ride the down escalator as you are going up  
Does he shop at your local farmer's market

Your story is so entangled with his story  
No one who is reasonable at all  
Would claim to understand him  
Without first understanding you

The same is true of you  
His story is so entangled with your story  
No one who would understand you  
Can do so without understanding him

It is this shared pain-filled reality of abandoned love  
Which makes us sisters

If only we could we sit with cups of strong hot tea  
And speak the memories of our dead loves out loud  
Our stories would bubble up from their shrouds  
And we would know the other's tear-stained face as our own

You have survived the unbearable knowing of abandonment  
You have made a silent home for yourself  
Away from the obscene public glaze of his admirers  
All these educated men who praise him for abandoning your arms  
Who praise him for rejecting your freely offered human love  
Who revere him for entering God's absent silence.

Blessings, Maggie, blessings  
I am, indeed, your sister

**El Encuentro**  
**October 10, 2017**



xxvii

**Years have slipped by**  
**Memories have faded**  
**My heart remains split wide open by our love**

## Vernal Equinox



The Circle of the year turns:  
The doves are nested;  
The prickly pear cactus has flower buds;  
The ocotillo has green leaves.

Inanna returns from the underground  
Persephone and Demeter hug and dance a merry jig

Life survives:  
We are still here



## Impossibilities



In these coldest days of winter  
My heart opens to offer its love  
Your heart averts its glance and looks elsewhere



## Erwinia



We human beings need to name things  
The custom began, we are told, at time's beginning with Adam  
But I personally believe Eve's naming shaped the future.  
Like mothers in the generations after her she named her babies  
Many times as they slept in her womb  
She kept trying on names  
Asking herself, *is this a Rachel, a Laban or a Joseph*  
*What is this one's nature*  
*Perhaps she will be an important artist*  
*Perhaps he will be a famous economist*

Eventually she settled on Cain and Abel  
One became a farmer and one became a shepherd  
She loved them both  
It didn't matter to her  
Whether they lifted plants or animals to the gods

It is clear to me  
Most definitely, while Eve was a namer of her babies  
She left the big naming stuff to Adam.

She watched as day after day he went out, pointing randomly, and said  
*Now that is an oak tree; that is a zebra; than is a scorpion.*  
She watched him say, *that is a cloud; that is a river; that is an ant hill*  
She would privately snicker at his obsessions with controlling nature..  
But he had, after all, a clotted thick torso and tree-sized arms.  
He could and did menacingly insist on having his own way  
He was, after all, made in the god's image  
She was a mere after thought, a creation of his rib

Girls have more verbal skills than boys  
These skills occur earlier in life  
They last longer into aging  
Naming comes naturally to girls and women  
They just don't frenetically scream about it  
What is necessary to name is named  
What exists and doesn't need a name just *is*

Let me, therefore, talk about Erwnia  
She is a solitary Saguaro cactus

She stands inside a patch of prickly pear cactus  
Alongside the small paved road I drive

Her arms reach high  
In the universal language of ecstatic prayer

She has her mouth open in a scream  
That reminds me of the painting *The Scream*

Inside this mouth, I can see her woody ribs  
Like tonsils showing themselves to the dentist.

This is not a hole created by Gila woodpeckers;  
This is not a nest occupied by the tawny desert owl

Erwinia is clearly sick  
I don't know if she will live to be 200 years old or not.

There is a sober beauty in her scarring  
A reminder that the weak and insignificant can bring down the mighty

I named Erwinia after her disease  
Her disease was named by Erwin Smith for himself.

I ask you, what kind of a man wants to be known forever  
In the name of a tiny bacteria that can kill a giant cactus

It is common wisdom in patriarchal cultures  
That woman gives birth and man celebrates death

There are exceptions to the rule  
But they appear to demonstrate the rule's truth

Erwin, like Adam, named Erwinia, the killing bacteria  
I, like Eve, have named Erwinia, the giant Saguaro who is clearly dying

She deserves to be remembered for her valiant fight for life.

## Manifesto<sup>xxxI</sup>

Pain has an element of blank  
It cannot recollect  
When it began or if there were  
A day when it was not

It has no future but itself  
Its infinite realms contain  
Its past, enlightened to perceive  
New periods of pain

Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886



xxxii

*Soul murder*, they say, with the male assurance of centuries,  
As if their assertion makes it an objective reality  
*Some never recover at all*  
*Soul murder*, they report to all who will listen,  
*Is a consequence of too much trauma, too early and too extended in time*

*Soul murder*, I reply  
*Happens only when the physical body dies*  
*As long as the individual's physical body is alive*  
*The soul, however damaged, presides over the search for healing*

*Soul murder*, I continue, is a *metaphor* –  
And a *misleading one at that*  
To me this idea of soul murder is a dangerous teaching  
A spiritual heresy  
A capitulation to evil  
A form of spiritual malpractice  
A pattern of re-victimization

The experience of human pain announces that the soul lives  
But in its experience of pain there is the *element of blank*  
The Self's body-soul forgets itself  
It knows only its pain  
Yet, paradoxically, the body-soul's pain is evidence that the soul lives

Buddhists remind us of two essential realities:  
First, *all is impermanence* and second, *suffering is universal*

In essence, therefore, none of us escape impermanence and suffering  
To suffer, therefore, is to be human  
In this model of understanding humanity's dilemmas  
Human suffering purifies the soul and brings it dignity

In moments of deep pain  
There is only pain  
The neurons can carry no other message  
The memory can sort and recall no other categories  
The neuropeptides can transmit no other emotion  
In pain, the body-Self-soul knows only its pain

Pain is the body's warning signal that something is wrong  
Deeply, troublingly wrong  
Pain is the body's semaphore  
Directing human attention to the need for change

I agree, some do not recover from these vile assaults  
They drown in their pain  
And, in their drowning of it  
They shortcut the Soul's warning, alerting call

Over and over they drown their pain  
In as many addictions as there are substances to abuse  
In as many relationships as there are abusers

Some seek out re-victimization  
Some become abusers

As a naked witness to their pain, covering pain with pain  
Some kill themselves

Nevertheless, I do not agree with this pessimism  
As a healer, it is my task  
To believe in healing  
It is my calling, my vocation, if you will  
To believe the human spirit is indomitable

I have no doubt at all  
That some individuals remain withered by pain  
Some remain trapped inside its ragged teeth  
Unable to move free

Others, however scarred, learn to move free  
They learn to manage their pain and their scars  
They choose life so that they will live  
They make bearable that which is unbearable

I know, therefore, deep inside the human experience of pain  
The human experience of terror  
The human experience of horror  
The human experience of rage  
Their victimized body-Self-soul lives  
Otherwise there would be no protest against the pain  
The terror, the horror, the rage  
Only acquiescence

After a brutal winter  
Snowdrops bloom

Under ice-covered rivers  
Trout swim and forage

On the volcanoes edge  
Tiny microbes break down volcanic rocks into fertile soil

After a red tide  
The ocean turns sea-blue

When an ice storm  
Strips a tree of its branches – traumatizing it  
The tree seals its wounds  
The tree cannot re-build the destroyed branch  
Instead, cell by cell it seals the injury  
Surrounding it, excommunicating it  
The tree isolates its savage wound  
In order to grow beyond it<sup>xxxiii</sup>

When I was a small girl in my parent's house  
The Linden tree outside the front door  
Was sick and probably dying  
The tree surgeon took his blades  
And gutted the rotting flesh  
Then he poured liquid concrete into the tree's heart  
Year after year  
I watched the tree heal its gaping wound  
Some days I would hug the tree  
Lending it my childish wishes for a long life

I loved this tree  
And was a tree-hugger  
Long before I knew other tree-huggers  
Sought to rescue trees  
So they too could live long lives

Fifty years later only a thin scar  
Marked the line of surgery  
And to see it, one really had to look

When we sold my mother's house  
The tree lived and thrived  
And bloomed every spring  
Year after year, setting seeds

I told the new owners  
If – or when - you cut down this tree  
Be aware that it is filled – at its core –  
With cement

Tree scientists tell us the wound remains  
Yet it no longer controls the tree's growth  
It no longer endangers the tree's life

Perhaps the soul's healing of its grievous wounds  
Is a life-long process of containment  
A process of commitment  
A process of recognition and acknowledgement  
A process of grieving  
A process of surrounding and isolating  
A process of growing beyond  
A time of setting flowers and making seedpods for new life

Needing to heal the wounds of violation  
Perhaps each soul has multiple pathways to explore  
Perhaps each soul has many exit doors from pain, terror, and horror  
Perhaps each soul has many rooms free of pain to explore

Some ways to healing are more viable than others  
Some pathways back into life are more walk-able than others

Perhaps each healing journey is unique  
Perhaps no healing journey looks exactly like all others

To find these unique pathways to healing  
We must uncover dusty topographic maps  
We must search out stony cairns left by others



We must, eventually, tell our own story  
We must build cairns  
We must create more accurate maps  
We must furnish new rooms to live in

For some, the wound is deeper  
For some, the healing journey takes longer  
For some, permanent scarring is always visible  
Yet, in each life, for the life to continue  
Healing must be on-going, forward-looking, continuous, focused

That which has died, must be mourned  
That which has been amputated must be buried  
That which has been mutilated must be touched with love  
That which has been scarred must be honored  
That which has been stolen must be recognized as missing  
That which has been disordered must be re-ordered  
That which has been destroyed must be re-built

I believe in healing  
I am passionate about healing

When we learn to bear that wound which is unbearable  
When we begin to seal off the wound  
When we begin to excommunicate it  
We begin to heal

I believe in wholeness  
That which is whole is alive  
That which is alive seeks wholeness  
The wounded, abraded, scarred body-Self- soul is alive  
It seeks a return to wholeness

While it can never return to what it was before betrayal  
Before violation  
Before is deep wounding:  
It can move – steadily – and with purpose  
Towards what it can now become

The heart-breaking pain, the mind-bending wound  
The shattering night terrors  
The fragmentation of memory  
The un-ending search to regain one's inner sense of balance  
The un-yielding desire to re-experience wholeness  
All of these tell us the soul is alive

The embodied soul  
In its uniquely personal search for wholeness  
Creates its own unique pathway to the rest of its life  
It has its own unique signature

Pain, healers know, is a sign that the body seeks to heal  
Pain, healers know, is the signal that something is wrong  
Pain, all healers know, only happens in a living body

The soul has resources unto itself  
Breath, love, awe, joy, beauty, music  
Family, friends, lovers  
Animals who share homes and lives  
Poetry, the living word inside us  
Music, the sound that touches us with reverence  
Art that brings new visions  
Ancient world scriptures and the ordinary sacraments of community  
Fragments of memory that can seed the healing narrative

I believe in healing  
I am passionate about healing

The amputated leg  
The bruised and broken tree limb  
Betrayed trust  
Ashes after a forest fire  
Dead starfish in a toxic ocean  
Violated bodies  
Beloved grandparents destroyed in ovens too toxic to name

That which is dead must be buried  
That which is buried must be mourned;  
That which is toxic must be detoxified  
That which destroys must be dismantled;  
That which betrays must be disaffiliated;  
That which lies must be unmasked;  
That which is on fire must be extinguished;  
That which exacerbates pain must be eased and relieved;  
That which prevents rest must be quieted;  
That which confuses must be examined;  
That which is secreted away must be brought forth and interrogated;  
That which is enigmatic must be interpreted;  
That which is pornographic must be transformed;  
That which is lost must be sought

That which is alive must be nurtured

This is the topographic map to healing  
Bury, mourn, detoxify, dismantle, unmask, extinguish, ease, relieve,  
transform, quiet, examine, interrogate, interpret, seek, and nurture

## Gecko



The gecko in my bathroom  
Sat in the sun  
As if this was the El Rancho Spa and Resort  
For the very, very wealthy

Such is the seductiveness of spring sunshine  
That he barely moved  
When I hung clean towels  
And swabbed porcelain basins

I thought to save him  
By catching him in a transparent cereal bowl  
I thought to save him  
By tossing him out the front door

I might be a vegetarian  
But I am not

I might be a tree-hugger  
But I am not

I might rescue and release good spiders  
But I do not;

I could even wild trap house mice to set them free  
But I do not

Why then am I so distressed

Just as I lowered the bowl  
He sensed danger and moved suddenly.  
I caught his tail and separated it from his body.  
My makeshift trap for his outdoor freedom became his dying place

His tail was so alive  
Outside the bowl's edge  
All of the life force converged in convulsive wiggling

Under its dome the gecko quietly died

What penance will suffice  
What prayers of repentance does earth require for his death  
What offerings can be placed and where  
What if he was a god

## Hasta Siempre<sup>xxxv</sup>



Amigo, hasta siempre  
Goodbye, my friend  
It is unlikely that we will ever see each other again  
It is even more unlikely that we will ever work together again

This poem of farewell  
Seeks to extinguish the tie between us  
Cutting it with an incandescent flame

Our lives are too unlikely lives  
Our life histories, too disparate  
Our Gods, strangers to each other  
Our work in the world, too personally focused  
For this strange friendship to blossom and endure

At our first meeting  
I recognized you as if a long-lost gene  
Had in previous lives implanted you inside my genome  
Connecting us  
At the fourth chakra

I knew you then as one of the long-missing ones  
Burrowed deep inside my life's confusing story

I have spent the years since our first meeting  
Getting to know you

Maybe somewhere in the next thousand lives  
You will seek to find me  
To get to know me  
Calling my name  
Across the star-filled galaxies of time and space

For my own well-being  
For my own sanity  
For my own sense of rightness  
For my own sense of ethical behavior  
I must sever these strange ties  
I must untangle this knotted bundle of gardener's twine  
I must sever these connections of my heart to your heart

I do not understand  
I must douse the flames  
These flames I do not trust  
I must walk away  
Never looking back

I must extinguish these flashes of lightning, smoke and ashes  
Here is this desert land

Extinguishing this flame  
Is my work alone to do

Healing my heart  
Clearing my head

In the doing of it,  
I will remember you for always.

As I leave and silently shut the door behind me  
I carry you in my heart

I will miss you immensely  
I already miss you and my heart splits wide open

Go well  
Walk freely in the world  
Forgive me if you can

Care well for those you love  
Do not disdain their small mercies that live inside your heart

Honor those who taught you these skills of word  
And the quiet habits of your heart

Recognize the legacy of their loves and work  
Inside your loves and work

Pass on your passion for justice to others  
Who will live when you no longer breathe its fire  
Who will speak up for healing when your voice is still  
Who will reclaim your written words as cairns of salvation

Love the innocent inner child who has become the adult you  
So that he can guide your days with trust, laughter and song

Love well, with kindness and gentleness, the child of your hearth  
So he will remember and bless you all of his life

May the God of peace live in you always  
Even until the end of the world



## On Being Ferhoodled



Today, this morning really, the guests left  
By early morning's large plane bound for Atlanta.  
They carried with them souvenirs  
From their stay here in this sunny winter desert.

They left lugging huge carry-on bags.  
Filled with their allocation of 3-3 items  
That's three bottles of three ounces each.  
Hopefully memories of our warm December sun go with them.

No sooner than they walked out the door  
To drive off in their Saturn rental car  
The smiling UPS man arrived.  
He brought cartons of holiday entertainment food.

The company made a mistake  
They billed me but did not send the food for Christmas  
Nor did they send it in time for New Years as they promised.  
Now, I have three dozen of petit fours, a fruit cake, and a wheel of cheese.

**Haiku**  
**California Poppies**



Along a dirt path  
Yesterday I spied a patch  
Of brassy poppies.

**Haiku**  
**Mexican Poppies**



Mexican Poppies

Brassy and golden  
Mexican poppies rise up  
Amid bare dirt rocks.

## Mexican Poppies



Mexican Poppies

Yesterday, walking a dirt path  
I spied a hillside covered with Mexican Poppies

Brassy and as golden as the sun  
Mexican poppies spring up  
From bare dirt

As far as I can tell, Mexican poppies and California poppies are the same critter. The love disturbed soil and are among the first and the longest lasting Southwest wild flowers. I have always loved them.



## Desert Dove Maneuvers



The soft grey desert dove has taken to guarding my house.  
He – or maybe it is she – sits on the patio wall  
Between my house and the neighbor's.

His three note sentry call wakens me each morning.  
It sends me to sleep each night.

I stand inside the door  
Watching him. He sits without motion  
And looks into the glass patio door  
For minutes at a time.

When the spirit of dove moves him –  
Or is it her – he struts up and down the wall's edge.  
There is no sentry box that I can see -  
No papers being stamped in ink.  
Yet his – or is it her – motions are precise.  
He walks to a certain place, turns and struts back again.  
Then he pauses for several minutes before repeating his parade.

His wings drape themselves  
Down over his body  
Like a soft grey morning frock coat.

I am acquainted with doves.  
My parents' house was surrounded by evergreen trees.  
In the summering months, dove calls filled the house.  
We watched them as they squatted low on the ground  
Pecking for food -  
Or maybe they pecked the ground just for the zen of it.

So, I am curious about my new guardian.  
Doves come in pairs. But this is a solitary.  
Each morning he comes to my wall  
And begins his haunting song parade.

Back and forth, back and forth,  
The walking is interrupted by bursts of three-noted song.  
Where is his – or is it her – mate?  
To whom or what is the melodic call repeated over and over?  
What gods are being channeled here?

Even the hummingbird's dive-bomb for food  
Does not interrupt this grand marshal  
At the head of his own parade.

Then as suddenly as he –  
Or is it she – began this solitary march  
It ends. He lifts his wings  
To fly. The strength of those elegant wings  
Is considerable. He goes from zero to a hundred  
In less than a second. He is airborne. I won't see him  
Again until nightfall.

## The Queen of Rage



xlii

The felt-sense of pure annoyance  
Almost – but not quite – ruins this day for joy

I cannot change the outside world  
Or its most annoying people

So I write this short poem of remembrance:

I am not God  
I cannot fix that which is broken  
That which is wounded  
That which is selfish  
That which is self-preoccupied  
That which is in pursuit of some un-named dream  
Some un-named healing of pain  
Some lust-filled needs for primacy of position  
Some heart-urgencies for complete control

An old woman  
Now I just notice my sense of being aggrieved  
And know I will not act in immediacy to change my ill humors.

But, do not forget this, ye gods  
If and when I continue to feel aggrieved and annoyed  
I will act  
I do not tolerate being abused in the name of good works.  
I can and will remove myself from the aisle  
Where these thoughtless ones congregate  
To dis my work  
To belittle me as useless to the conversations  
To discount my contributions to the whole

I am not yet ready to sit on a shelf  
And wait for death to arrive  
While my good name is muddied with thoughtlessness  
While my good nature is assumed to be irrelevant to the work at hand.



## Reprise: The Queen of Rage



xliii

Spring's sap s daggers  
Signal the tree has been wounded  
And has not yet healed itself  
With changes in the air's outside temperature  
Its life energy flows and freezes  
Showing the world its silent wounds

Intuiting the cold rage of envy  
Sensing the enraged desire to exclude and destroy  
Feeling the icy fury of others' irrational rages  
The soul responds to malicious disrespect  
Protects its life energy by freezing in place  
Long-hidden wounds become visible

I have been labeled *the queen of rage*  
By a woman I saw as colleague and friend

In her well-plotted betrayal of me  
She undressed her personal stash of envy,  
She unleashed the demons of fury,  
She sent forth her desires to destroy what others had built

Trust has been betrayed  
Deeply wounded by her actions  
Saddened by a nearly-destroyed dream  
I refuse to create life-sap-filled daggers

It has taken me weeks to manage my anger  
It has taken me months to understand my hurt

My goal has been compassion for the self  
Compassion for the other

The Buddha reminds us that all attachment is suffering  
I refuse to be attached to these wounds

I refuse to be attached to these wounds  
To this betrayal and to its source

Unaddressed, my former friend's wounds will eventually destroy her  
Unhealed my former colleague's wounds already have isolated her  
I am not alone in my distrust  
I am not alone in my awareness of her repeated betrayals of others

I do not wish to follow her into rage  
I do not wish to follow her into self-destruction  
I do not wish to follow her into malicious destruction of other's dreams  
I do not wish to follow her into a willingness to demean other's work  
I do not wish to join her in a malicious competition for public acclaim  
I do not wish to join her in a pseudo display of self-righteousness

In her accusations about me to others, she has showed her soul's dagger  
She has exposed her wounds by bullying and lying words  
In publicly spreading lies and mistruths about me  
She has closed all doors to future healing

My former friend's wounds will eventually alienate others  
My former colleague's wounds will eventually yield only distrust  
This is a cell-deep lonely future I would wish for no one – not even her

I have chosen the path of deliberative silence  
I have chosen the path of withdrawal  
I have chosen to deny myself the omnipresent wish to talk back  
I have chosen not to refute her claims about my perfidy  
I have chosen not to slander her, not to gossip about her

I have chosen to examine my soul's wounds  
I have chosen to refuse the obvious path of self-defense  
I have chosen the path of refusing to engage in tit-for-tat  
I have chosen the spiritual practice of no retaliation  
I have chosen the wisdom of silence

Carrying truth into this relationship  
Is like carrying gasoline to a fire I never started

I cannot save her by destroying myself  
And saving her is not my task at all

I cannot save myself by seeking to destroy her.  
Saving my Self is my task and calling in the world

In silence I protect myself  
In silence I move forward  
But I know in my heart, my soul and my body  
I am not the queen of rage

I know in my spirit and in my mind  
That I am not this dreaded but projected hologram of dishonest secrecy

It is not my soul that is bleating rage  
It is not my heart that is mean-spirited  
It is not my spirit that is deliberately malicious  
It is not my mouth that is spurting lies and telling secrets out of school

My heart is tender  
My soul is open  
My spirit is compassionate  
In the commons, my tongue is silent

Now aged and moving slowly, yet imperceptibly, towards death  
I want to live free of pettiness in the name of honesty  
My legacy will not be one of malicious revenge and hate  
My soul's sap daggers have melted with the soul's warmth

Even this protest poem  
Refuses to name names  
Refuses to begin the fight all over again

I am walking down the distant side of this mountain  
I am increasingly moving free  
Of the destructive enraged baggage of self-defense

These tiny cairns I leave behind me here

Are markers to warn others of treachery  
Wearing the masks of honesty

Are markers to warn others of betrayal  
Hiding inside the disguise of collegiality

Are markers to warn others of malicious lies  
Claiming to be God's truth

February 1, 2017

## Hasta Nunca



Close the door softly behind you  
So I can forget your Judas like betrayal in maybe 100 years

I did not deserve your malice  
And learned of it only by chance

I did nothing to earn your spite  
For that is what it was

I treated you with courtesy  
Behind my back you dished out lies about me

Jealousy was an accoutrement  
To your Judas kiss

I never saw your hostility towards me coming  
After it arrived I walked out the front door and did not slam it shut

I will not wish a lifetime in hell for you  
But you are no longer welcome in my life

I will not be as petty and as vindictive towards you  
As you have been towards me

I will not speak evil of you in the commons  
Nor will I tell your personal stories to your enemies

My silence will be the silence of your betrayal  
My silence will be the silence of strangers

You are no longer welcome in my life  
Now or in the future

Hasta nunca!



## Vernal Equinox



The Circle of the year turns:  
The doves are nested;  
The prickly pear cactus has flower buds;  
The ocotillo has green leaves.

Inanna returns from the underground:  
Life survives;  
We are still here



## **How Could You Not Act**



xlvi

Tucson, Arizona  
**November 14, 2017**

Reading the news from Australia  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Boston  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Guam  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Canada  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Argentina  
I am outraged

I read the news from Alabama  
I am outraged

Reading the news from London  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Nigeria  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Rome  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Washington, DC  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Hollywood  
I am outraged

Reading the news from Ireland  
I am outraged

How can any sane adult not be outraged  
By the sexual abuse of children, teenagers, young adults  
By the rape of college students  
By the battering acts of spouses  
By the sexual trafficking of the homeless ones

By social institutions that look the other way and refuse to act

I read the headlines  
And scream with rage as tears flow down my cheeks  
And snot pours from my nose

How can we not protect the children  
Who deserve so much better

But we look the other way  
And become complicit in their despair  
Their violation  
Their suffering

I refuse to be complicit  
I will continue to be the pariah-bitch who speaks up  
About the church's evil  
The university's evil  
The court system's evil  
The child protection system's evil  
And, yes, even conventional marriage's evil

We must challenge the patriarchal and pornographic culture  
At its root

The organizing phallic metaphor must change

## Dry Lightning



xlvi

This now is the season!

Blowing hot winds cross the desert  
Hitching rides on glassy sand grains so fine  
They can only be sensed in the mouth:  
A fine grit of single grains ground between molars  
Leaves a faint metallic taste behind.  
Too small to be seen with the undressed eyes,  
Too small to be identified by finger-thumb grasps,  
The wind twists these solitary and isolated grains  
Into towering dust devils  
That twist and bow like heated lovers just before undressing.

The grasslands are dry,

The smaller animals and insects hidden deep in underground burrows  
Lined with leaves, twigs, and dried grasses  
Or even the bones and fur from last night's dinner.

While the geckos and lizards  
Seem to me like sixteen year old girls  
Who endlessly sun themselves and preen  
Only to run away, giggling, when noticed,  
A mature diamond back rattlesnake rests in the shade  
Digesting filet of mouse  
And doesn't give a damn if he is noticed or not.

Hawks ride the thermals  
Or sit on high fence posts  
To screech at lesser mortals  
Who invade their turf

A solitary coyote drinks from the javelin's wallow  
That, this morning, is filled with muddy water.  
During the night a javelina knew round hoses contain life-giving water  
And he made a bed of mud in which to root and rest.  
His teeth marks linger long after his jagged bite severed hose from hose

When the coyote is satisfied and has ambled off in search  
Of whatever it is that a coyote lusts for in the summer's hot sun,  
A bobcat gracefully approaches the wallow  
And – like all the cats we know more intimately –  
Stops, looks around at the world, and begins to drink.  
She scratches her claws on the cottonwood tree that shelters the wallow.  
Pausing just a moment to make certain she has been admired,  
She too is on her way for the day's adventures.

The roadrunner dances his usual gig,  
Runs around the old horse barn  
And suddenly reappears with a tiny green lizard in his beak.  
He struts as if to say,  
"Look how grand I am, how fast, and how smart."  
Then he too is on his way.

The skittish quail are raising their annual covey of babies.  
The old ones are watchful:  
When they come to drink from the javelina wallow they know, I think,  
Their babies could be lunch for the snake, the hawk, the roadrunner,  
the big cat, the coyote.  
The slightest sound – a wind rustle in the trees  
Sends them scurrying for cover.

There is no rain, yet, in these early summer skies.  
The dark clouds form but fly away with their promise unfulfilled.  
The summer chubascos have not yet begun.

The grasslands and the high forests are ablaze  
Grey acrid smoke fills the air as these late sand-filled afternoon winds  
Kick up a sense of incipient danger.

There is a peaceful but alert watchfulness in the earth's living ones.  
As the sun burns its way across the daily heavens.  
It is not only the season of intense solar heat and wind;  
It is also the season of lightening-ignited wildcat fires  
And twisting whirling sandstorms as high as buildings,  
And as dangerous as floods.

Inside my own shaded burrow  
I think about the javelina wallow;  
The rancher's teeth-ripped hose;  
The coyote which fearlessly owns drinking rights when he comes to town;  
The graceful bobcat which pauses in her mid-day hunt  
For a mud wallow and water cocktail.

Dry lightning strikes without warning  
Slashes the summer's sunshine-filled skies in two  
And melds heaven's heat into one fiery arrow from the gods.

While the desert winds dry earth's pores  
And local rivers run underground  
Beneath dry gravel and tumbleweed-filled beds.  
There is an instinctive fear of these dry thunderstorms  
Which transform earth's landscape into heaven's apocalyptic fire  
While withholding for yet a little while, the life-giving and cooling waters  
The earth needs to renew itself once again.

Daily I soak my body in water – learning from the javelina;  
I drink gallons of water – learning from the coyote and bobcat;  
I sleep in my burrow at high noon – learning from the small desert critters;  
I watch the skies in anticipation – learning from the hawks;  
I rise early to enjoy the cool morning – learning from the quail;  
I watch the grasslands for the first sign of fire – learning from the land.

I am home.

El Dia de San Juan, 2008

## The Man



While he has a name  
It has become so much easier to call him *the man*

Depersonalizing this inner well of recognition  
Minimizing the dangers he poses to my heart

Thinking of him simply as *the man*, I know it is inappropriate to say to him  
*Rainy days ahead – take your umbrella and your raincoat*

That said, I pray to the nameless gods for his safety  
I ask the holy mother to watch over him

When I know he is safely home again  
I stop holding my breath



## From the Albatross to the Badger



xlix



A badger's tooth in the gambler's pocket makes him invincible  
The gambler – that is – not the badger

## Haiku



December's sunlight  
Slants across the desert now:  
Crown'd cactus Monks bow.

Fishhook Barrel Cacti are commonly called Compass Cacti because they bend towards the south west.

## **A Birth Litany**

Dear LaMaya Coleman:

Note: Naomi Krall and Beth Krall read this to LaMaya on the day of her birth as she and Tiara were about to be discharged from the obstetrics unit.

Welcome to the world of human beings. Welcome to the world of animal, plant, mineral, and spirit. Welcome to the world of earth, air, fire, and water.

Your arrival has been waited for and longed for. It is good to know that you are safely here among us – in our family – from wherever it was that you lodged before this long journey to meet us.

In the name of your ancestors, I welcome you.

Your great, great aunt, Ruth Elizabeth Krall

Tucson, Arizona  
October 4, 2007

A Welcoming Litany  
for  
LaMaya Coleman

You are named LaMaya Coleman.  
We welcome you.

Today we will introduce you to the women  
Who have come before you.

We will introduce you  
To the women who have given birth  
To your ancestors:

It is these women  
Whose bones you carry in your bones;

It is these women  
Whose blood flows in your veins;

It is these women  
Whose eyes once looked out on the world  
Just as your eyes do now.

**Your Lineage of Mothers**

There are particular mothers  
Who are named in your ancestral lineage of mothers:

From their blood you have been formed;  
From their bones you have been created;  
From their wombs you have emerged;  
From their labors you have been born.

Today, let us praise the arrival of LaMaya Coleman,  
Daughter of Tiara Marie Coleman.

We welcome you.

We promise to love you.  
We look forward to getting to know you.

### **The First Blessing**

You are unique in all the world:  
There is only one of you just like you;  
There will never be another one exactly like you.

May you find much joy in your unique personality.

And as you mature, may you learn ways to develop and use your unique gifts to serve the world and its people.

May you find many good and loving people to walk alongside of you and with you during this journey we human beings call a lifetime.

### **The Dance of you Maternal Ancestors**

Today, let us also praise the lineage of the ancestral mothers for LaMaya Coleman.

You are LaMaya Coleman:

Daughter of Tiara Marie Coleman;  
Granddaughter of Beth Marie Krall;  
Great granddaughter of Naomi Moyer Krall;  
Great, great granddaughter of

- ❖ Buelah K. Alderfer Moyer (Mrs. Frank L. Moyer)
- ❖ Elizabeth Ruth Charles Krall (Mrs. Carl S. Krall)

Great, great, great granddaughter of

- ❖ Amanda F. Kratz Alderfer (Mrs. Abraham L. Alderfer)
- ❖ Mary K. Landis Moyer (Mrs. Benjamin C. Moyer)
- ❖ Alice Sumpman Krall (Mrs. Harry Heisey Krall)
- ❖ Esther Rupp Charles (Mrs. John Landis Charles)

Great, great, great, great granddaughter of

- ❖ Hannah D. Clemens Moyer (Mrs. Henry C. Moyer)
- ❖ Elizabeth S. Reiff Landis (Mrs. Abraham D. Landis)
- ❖ Susannah R. Landis Alderfer (Mrs. Isaac D. Alderfer)
- ❖ Esther B. Funk Kratz (Mrs. Daniel C. Kratz)

- ❖ Susan Heisey Krall (Mrs. Henry Krall)
- ❖ Margaret Bolbach Sumpman (Mrs. John Sumpman)
- ❖ Hester Brenneman Rupp (Mrs. Abraham L. Rupp)
- ❖ Katie Landis Charles (Mrs. Benjamin F. Charles)

Great, great, great, great, great granddaughter of

- ❖ Barbara B. Landis Moyer (Mrs. Abram D. Moyer)
- ❖ Sara K. Detweiler Clemens (Mrs. Jacob P. Clemens)
- ❖ Susanna F. Detweiler Landis (Mrs Jacob K. Landis)
- ❖ Mary B. Schwenk Reiff (Mrs. George C. Reiff)
- ❖ Mary G. Delp Alderfer (Mrs. Isaac O. Alderfer)
- ❖ Elizabeth S. Reiff Landis (Mrs. Abraham D. Landis)
- ❖ Elizabeth C. Cassil Kratz (Mrs Abraham R. Kratz)
- ❖ Susannah V. Bergey Funk (Mrs. Abraham R. Funk)

Let us now praise the maternal ancestors  
 For they brought you here  
 By their labor and by their love

### **The Dance of the Universal Mother**

There is a mother of a thousand names:  
 She is the mother with a thousand faces'  
 She is the mother of the sky above;  
 She is the mother of the earth on which we walk;  
 She is the mother of all that is.

You, LaMaya Coleman, are her daughter also.

### **The Second Blessing**

May the divine one, LaMaya Coleman,  
     Bless you and keep you;  
 May the divine one  
     Shine Her face upon you;  
 May the divine one  
     Be gracious with you;  
 May the divine one  
     Hold you safely in Her arms;  
 May the divine one  
     Grant you a lifetime lived in peace.

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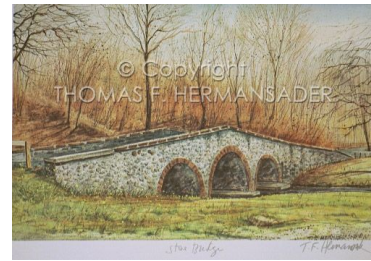
November 18, 2017



lii



liii



liv

Bridges are built to connect things  
Or people

Bridges are built to cross spaces  
For people

Bridges are built to transport things  
By people

Four years ago - or was it five  
I sought to build a bridge between us  
So we could work together

I felt so immediately attached to you  
For your written words were bridges to my understanding



I attached my own marionette strings  
To your words

I bound my own feet inside tiny glass slippers  
I put blinders on my own eyes

I did not yet understand  
You use of silence as a weapon against being understood

I did not yet comprehend  
Your flattering duplicity as weaponry

I overlooked the obvious: your charm  
Revealed a hidden form of long-nourished rage against womyn

I forgot long-ago wisdom  
Your own rage testified to your woundedness

Now, these many months later  
I am taking down the bridge I constructed  
Plank by plank  
Stone by stone  
Handrail by handrail

Each evening I review my progress  
Each morning I revise my plans  
Each morning I remind myself of compassion  
For myself and for you

I listen carefully to my thoughts  
I observe carefully my tears  
I sort through my anger  
I abandon my hopes

I go in search of peace  
I go in search of joy  
I go in search of my own abandoned, lost and wounded self

Soon there will be only empty space  
Between us



No longer will the marionette recite on cue  
No longer will the wind up ballerina toy pirouette

No longer will Tonto's voice strain to be heard  
No longer will old grey mare piss on the whiffle tree

Any day now  
The bridge will no longer exist

Any day now  
I will walk away from this particular Hecate's crossroad

An individual's journey to the Golden City  
Begins under a sacred tree

My guides have been other womyn  
Astute observers and survivors of this kind of male nonsense  
Free Womyn, walking free

Most of all, my inner guide's rage  
Has been noticed and honored  
The inner soul purified

God's silence  
Can enslave us  
It cannot, I think now, save us

I can choose to be one of the billiard balls  
Or, alternatively, I can choose to be the cue

It is now my choice; it is now my voice  
It is now my move; it is now my game

De-constructing bridges is hard work  
But it brings inner spaciousness

The deep canyons of my life are once again visible  
The storms, less treacherous

Four years later, or is it five  
I now choose to walk free

## July 8, 2018: Walking Away



Walking away – today's imagery unfolds

A snarky feral cat leads the way.  
The old woman unties the strings that bind her to the puppeteer  
She walks a fragile bridge across rivers – seeking safety  
And, then, safe in her aloneness, she leaves.  
Steadfastly she walks towards the bright sun

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i **Picture of violets in snow:** <https://www.sufficientself.com/threads/snow-on-my-wild-violets.13183/>

ii **Picture of tree with snow** [http://www.123rf.com/photo\\_7328804\\_pine-tree-covered-in-snow-and-icicles.htm](http://www.123rf.com/photo_7328804_pine-tree-covered-in-snow-and-icicles.htm)

iii **Picture of Wolf with Snow**  
<http://www.fanpop.com/clubs/wolves/images/2163796/title/wolf-snow-photo>

***Note: The hour of the wolf is the hour between night and dawn. It is the hour when most people die. It is the hour when the sleepless are haunted by their deepest fear, when ghosts and demons are most powerful.***

iv **Picture of tree and ice**  
[http://www.marcofolio.net/imagedump/a\\_very\\_cold\\_winter\\_40\\_images.html](http://www.marcofolio.net/imagedump/a_very_cold_winter_40_images.html)

v **Picture of Ironwood Tree in bloom**  
<https://ironwoodforest.org/about/the-monument/nature/desert-ironwood-tree>

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**<sup>vi</sup> Women's march, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2017/01/21/large-crowd-attends-womens-march-on-anchorage-in-solidarity-with-national-events/>**

**<sup>vii</sup> Picture of hummingbird in the snow**

**<https://greenbyname.com/tag/snow/>**

**<sup>viii</sup> Picture of snow-covered labyrinth**

**<https://walkingcircles.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/ds-cn77232.jpg>**

**<sup>ix</sup> Picture of coyote in the snow:** <http://www.goodfon.su/wallpaper/koyot-volk-lezhit-sneg-zima.html>

**<sup>x</sup> Picture of coyote in the snow:**

**<http://www.thetinyteapot.com/wildanimals.htm>**

**<sup>xi</sup> Great Horned Owl in the snow:**

**[https://www.google.com/search?q=Great+horned+Owl+in+the+snow&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS703US703&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiMgITVvbXXAhXJq1QKHRHPCAoQ7AkIOA&biw=662&bih=394#imgrc=3yKVO60BMm7UdM](https://www.google.com/search?q=Great+horned+Owl+in+the+snow&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS703US703&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiMgITVvbXXAhXJq1QKHRHPCAoQ7AkIOA&biw=662&bih=394#imgrc=3yKVO60BMm7UdM):**

**<sup>xii</sup> Adapted from a Chanukah candle lighting prayer**

**<sup>xiii</sup> Night Candles <http://www.urbanoakschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/candles-in-the-snow.jpg>**

**<sup>xiv</sup> Snowy landscape, <http://cn.forwallpaper.com/wallpaper/wallpaper-winter-creek-724878.html>**

**<sup>xv</sup> Squirrel on a high wire: <https://mahb.stanford.edu/blog/the-squirrel-factor/>**

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- xvi Snowberries: <http://mountainroseblog.com/herbs-heartbreak/>
- xvii Cow, Snow and Ice: <http://www.nwhca.org/highlandcattle.html>
- xviii Picture of Quartz:  
<https://deerhearteshamanic.wordpress.com/fire-ice-quartz-crystals-the-great-transformers/>
- xix Waterfall in Ice: <http://www.icicles.org/>
- xx Iced berries:  
[http://www.marcofolio.net/imagedump/a\\_very\\_cold\\_winter\\_40\\_images.html](http://www.marcofolio.net/imagedump/a_very_cold_winter_40_images.html)
- xxi Fox, Matthew (2016). *A Way to God: Thomas Merton's Creation Spirituality Journey*. Novato, CA: New World Library, p. 12.
- xxii Butterfly in the snow: <http://stephigardens.com/tag/monarch-butterfly/#.WljzE9lrK1s>
- xxiii Grape Hyacinths and Snow:  
<http://thedailysouth.southernliving.com/2009/03/02/snow-in-alabama/>
- xxiii Cf The Cambridge Singers with John Rutter, *Be Thou My Vision* CD
- xxiv
- xxv [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-shaw/the-thomas-merton-book-th\\_b\\_415367.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-shaw/the-thomas-merton-book-th_b_415367.html)
- xxvi Chain Link Fence with ice: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-cold-fence-frost-266945/>
- xxvii
- xxviii **Sumac berries with snow:**  
<http://dima-pashchenko.livejournal.com/36439.html>
- xxix Snow and river: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/branch-branches-cold-dawn-285853/>
- xxx Cactus and shrubs in Snow:  
<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=D063AD9E-155D-451F-67481BE5A6A49824>
- xxxi Written just before I began reading Kalsched, D. J. (2013). *Trauma and the Soul: A Psycho-spiritual Approach to Human Development and its Interruption*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- xxxii Snow drop in the snow: <https://pixabay.com/en/snowdrop-flower-blossom-bloom-244994/>

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xxxiii Snyder, M. Wood Ways: How do trees heal wounds on trunks and branches? Blog: Northern Woodlands. Retrieve from <http://northernwoodlands.org/articles/article/woods-whys-how-trees-heal>

Snyder says this: *When trees are able to compartmentalize and contain them with new growth, infection remains localized and do not spread to to existing undamaged uninfected wood...Every wound ever suffered remains within a tree but while they may not heal, most trees do get closure.*

xxxiv Tree branch with Icicles: [http://www.debbiedaniele.com/2015\\_01\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.debbiedaniele.com/2015_01_01_archive.html)

xxxv An informal way of saying goodbye with the second meaning of *you will always be in my thoughts*. So much depends on intonation here and the structure of the relationship in which these words are spoken, sung, or written.

xxxvi Snow Covered Evergreen with cones: <http://www.strudelandcream.com/2013/03/shrimp-skewers-with-avocado-cream/>

xxxvii Iced berries: [http://it.123rf.com/profile\\_krysek?mediapopup=10742277](http://it.123rf.com/profile_krysek?mediapopup=10742277)

xxxviii California Poppies: <https://berkeleygardencoach.com/tag/california-poppy/>

xxxix Mexican Poppy: <https://www.naturesfinestseed.com/mexican-gold-poppy>

xl Mexican Poppies: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/419538521506951799>

xli Western adobe wall with snow: [http://charlesmann.photoshelter.com/gallery/Snow-Scenes-New-Mexico-and-Santa-Fe-photos/G0000wtTnDizuYJo/C0000iL8Rmnudh\\_0](http://charlesmann.photoshelter.com/gallery/Snow-Scenes-New-Mexico-and-Santa-Fe-photos/G0000wtTnDizuYJo/C0000iL8Rmnudh_0)

xliv Iced Branches: [http://www.art-of-byr.com/popup.php?i=gallery/normal/1005\\_11.jpg&t=Art%20of%20Byr%20-%20Iced%20branches](http://www.art-of-byr.com/popup.php?i=gallery/normal/1005_11.jpg&t=Art%20of%20Byr%20-%20Iced%20branches)

xlvi Sap Dagger: <http://www.ruralramblings.com/icicles-a-sign-of-spring/>

xlvii Berries in the snow: <http://blog.smartpress.com/finding-interesting-winter-photography-subjects>; For Carolyn

xlviii Berries in the snow: <http://dima-pashchenko.livejournal.com/36439.html>

xlvi Snow covered berries: How could you not act?  
Justice Peter McClelland, Chair, Australia's Royal Commission Hearings into Child Abuse; Swineburn University Presentation. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-14/royal-commission-chairman-justice-peter-mcclellan-speech/9147514>

xlvi Branches covered with ice: <https://davernfarm.wordpress.com/2013/12/10/14625/>

xlvi Snow covered daffodils: <http://themeditativegardener.blogspot.com/2016/04/snow-on-daffodils.html>

xlvi <https://www.britannica.com/animal/badger>

<sup>1</sup> Snow covered berries: <http://www.photoble.com/photo-inspiration/30-beautiful-icicle-photos/>

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<sup>li</sup> <https://www.toddshikingguide.com/FloraFauna/Flora16.htm>

<sup>lii</sup> Bridge: <https://ost.edu/events/bridges-contemplative-living-thomas-merton-book-one/2017-09-26/>

<sup>liii</sup> Hanging bridge: [https://fineartamerica.com/products/jungle-journey-skip-nall-art-print.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiA0b\\_QBRCEARIsAFntQ9p20bASusovMwWClwrsx2u25ar68DxS9zLvm\\_OrPD-JQLR1AhsmwN4aAIVeEALw\\_wcB](https://fineartamerica.com/products/jungle-journey-skip-nall-art-print.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiA0b_QBRCEARIsAFntQ9p20bASusovMwWClwrsx2u25ar68DxS9zLvm_OrPD-JQLR1AhsmwN4aAIVeEALw_wcB)

<sup>liv</sup> Stone Bridge, keystone bridge:  
<http://www.hermansadersartgallery.com/gallery.asp?G=8&Image=71>