

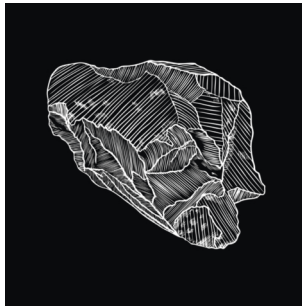
TIMSHEL

an anthology of grief and joy

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an anthology of grief and joy

edited by Ruth Hale and Joshua Hale



2019

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in loving memory of Jam Hale

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FOREWORD

The seeds of this project were planted sometime in 2017 when the task of collecting and posthumously publishing our sibling's poetry was complete.* We found ourselves empty, feeling the loss in a new way, and without a positive outlet for our grief. Poetry, in many ways, saved us. Through the work of many authors (including Arthur Sze, Matt Rasmussen, and Ross Gay), we saw glimpses of joy amidst that deep, gnawing sadness.

Grief and joy. These two powerful emotions, we discovered, were not so disparate. One can bring on the other without pause. Too much of one feels like the other. Both are private and strange, and yet at once communal and deeply familiar. Maybe they are inseparable.

Timshel, as we see it, is a collection of experiences, recollections, and reflections on those most human of feelings. It is a tool for those suffering loss, and a reminder that while grieving is indeed personal, we may find comfort, and even joy, in the shared experiences of others.

This is its first fruit, Issue 1.

Find out more here: www.timshelmag.com.

Ruth Hale and Joshua Hale

April 2019

**Invite Cats* is a 168 page collection of poems by Jam Hale; it can be read online or downloaded for free at timshelmag.com/invite-cats. The modest sum of money left over from its initial print distribution was held in a memorial fund and used to offset the production costs of *Timshel*, a not-for-profit legacy project.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF GRIEF AND JOY

Watching the movie

I want to only be crying
my traits continue
to weave together
after years in front
of the VCR
I don't press pause
soon enough
the carpet pattern
a ghost in my knees

Timshel

I heard it was too much
the billion cubic feet of water pressing
into the ceiling of your skull
there are no oranges at the bottom of the ocean
no way to keep a peel's residue from disappearing
between your fingers
I put my own cold hand on my knee
from Idaho to Oregon to the corner of Washington
is 500 miles
how could you have known
that when you choose to leave
they bring you right back
brutal
as I round past a semi
you seem to be breathing
crawling up the shore
but a body does not lose
the memory of water
your clothes still damp with sea

Animal animal

I make people feel small
really it is adding
marks and scratches
the pages I dog ear
how I can barely tell
when most
have read a book
I go boring again
see you in windshields
stripes of light
across the pavement
I wonder if the sun
folded into your neck
trying to return you to me
I write the address wrong

Until again

I did not steal the flowers
they came out of my skin
with very little water
and no song
from the ground
instead of this
could I do something slow
on purpose
pick up a wet sand dollar
crush it back into sand

Afterer

draw a line

down the middle

lay my body on either side



High Desert Elder

Teal Gardner

Witness

five paces from the blaze
I can only watch & sweat & pray
as the flames engulf you
my sister
your silhouette in the crucible
changing
changing
you have drawn a circle
you have made a ring
raw & bleeding
hands unwind
this sticky vine
from your body
congress of lurid
welts bloom
flesh remembers
each finger in grief's
fast & blistering grasp

*

footprints of ash
up the winding stair
your survival— a miracle

its sign
is your life
still here, breathing
quick & green
what I want to say
is I saw you
asleep on the couch
in the afternoon
black hair lustrous & shining
sister
there is nothing promised
& much granted

Redemption

my mother
young
alone
in a bright bedroom
in her father's house
collecting every picture
of herself
to take outside
& burn
alone
my mother
mother

early morning
her own house now
weak with fever
she collapsed
on the hardwood
& my father stood
stepped carefully
over her
on his way
out the door

in a hurry
off to work

the sins of the fathers
are not a debt we owe
but a bitter well
in a blighted grove
drowned brother
poisoned sister
the sins of the fathers
sins of the fathers

*

my mother
broke the curse
& I was spared
broke it
like a fever
at a great cost
my mother
paid the price
snapped the spindle
wide awake

how soft
new grass grows
in ground sown with ashes

& watered by weeping
how green
how soft

your inheritance
mother
was bitterness
a broken vessel
but you made me
heir to love
blessed
blessed be your name

To whom it may concern

it can't be explained
what you've done to us, to ours
that's the trick of it
when people ask me
the surprise on their faces
unguarded as a petal
how I envy them

all you have wrought,
withered, walled in
sags from my shoulders
alien as eggs, deep & tender
as a sliver, sick
& ballooning as a heart
I hold you as a spoon
up to my eyes, try
to decipher this seamless
smelted art of inversion
inscrutable rune of narcissus
what a glassy pool this is

you whose rapt body

evaporated into these
gritty, leaf strewn streets
who protects like a priest
collects pity like dew
you shadow moving
furtive across my brow
thou faithless missionary thou
always escaping, ever
sublimating, you itch
on my palm, you ravenous
devourer of limitless lotuses
I've sought you fruitless
between texts & subtexts
rippling curtain of silence
& velvet indulgences
easy closing heavy elegance
in your wake

you so fluent in forsaking
you haunting
you specter
you appalling absence of form
hair-raising brush against my arm
unfolding enigma of wasted tears
damn it's been years, I
lie in bed on my back

the kettle's whistling

I wanted you to know
that I'm somehow
alright
as rain

Virga

under the dripping blue
tarp, ironically short on water
we cooked cous cous
in PBR ate unworried
pine boughs flailed below
blameless stars

I'm remembering myself
& us, as we were
how I'd hoped to draw
the world around my throat
like a red, velvet cloak



Hated Drawing

Emily Zetkusic

Shroud

another dissociated dawn in paradise
the mirror shows my hair
coiled thick in my mouth
a long-neglected sink drain
when my fingers rake it out
teeth crumble
into my shaking hands
have I wronged you much?

I hold my breath, mold myself beneath
these waxy makeshift faces
they wear out every day or two
I peel them as putrid fruits
& what comes leaking out
is warm, dead, salty, lubricates
the preparations I must make

fall asleep in the yard & wake
in a gauzy cocoon of spider silk
they are kind & detect my shame
knowing I need cover
not disguise but shroud
shimmering lace veil for a bride
or a widow

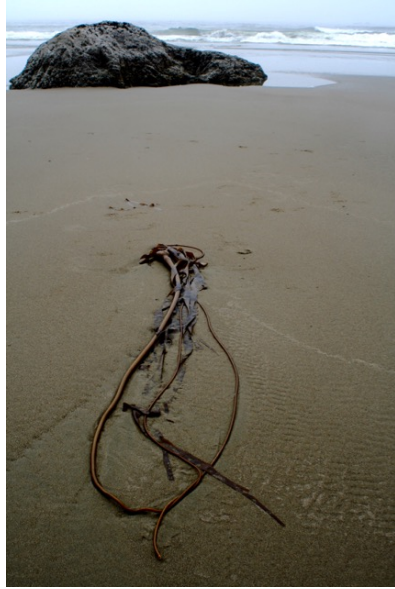
the sores in my flesh weep freely
why should they withhold?
this is the healing
& the wound
smooth, shining circle of blister
fugitive balm of autotomy

all that we bury
or bandage
will bear the fruit it must
& the dewy trespass
of my body into this world
sunlight, wind, heartbreak
will soon repair



Hardenheart

Ruth Hale



Enlightened / Offering

Jill Katherine Chmelko

You chose your own funeral song

I went back to the dock
where you stood with your arms

straightjacketed. Five planets
in retrograde. What it means

to be pulled by zip-mouthed waves.
An increasing lack of helium

could mean our dissolution.
Knots clutch the weakening wood.

We sway as the wake arrives, dig
into the past like carpenter ants.

You will leave again.
Rake the salt from your wounds.

It is what you do best: claim
affinity to Eris in the morning.

Maybe the dock will sink.
Maybe my lips will burst,

flinging petals into the waning tide.
Where you once clung to the rail,

monks mend the fraying seams
with their homeless laughs.

A cavalcade of sparrows
kiss a tar black canvas.

Is a bonus / is a curse

Death is a promise.

A parasol is minimal

respite. Yawning ocean.

An open mouth kiss.

We get so swallowed
by fear that we stay inside,

play backgammon.

We mold the rules to fit

our dizzying perspective.

Our shirts soaked through.

The pulp of our knowing
is a bonus, is a curse.

We curse the heat,
downplay god. Worship

the stop & go traffic
of a space we cannot see.

We hope for happiness
when this miracle collapses.

poems: Jess N. Johnson
photos: Ryan Allan Cheatham

Prayers: a collaboration

Conitron

every day returning to the basement
the first time in two years
the last time i saw you

full of your birdhouses and her laundry
machines, every piece of clothing cleansed
upon its soiling like sin

black but for your headlamp
trying to fix a pipe as the veins
in your hands grew thinner
and my love for you grew stronger



Holy Mother

outside the funeral one behemoth
voice rising over St. Mary's
however many times it
took to get you into heaven

she doesn't sleep now
stays up with her bible
she's ruminating with a crucifix

hasn't moved the clothes from the closet
you'll be home to pick out one of your white t's
from the dresser when she's finished
with her prayer beads



Not ready

wet spots on his pillow
it feels soon

my teeth hang out

walks on pebbles by beach
curling feet and toes and

sea-escape

avoid

sharps

used to go so barefoot

smoky clouds, vapor blue

like skin bruises

 like amputated limbs in the kitchen sink

like the disposal's slimy old tomatoes

when someone hits the switch and grinds

me

Unlimited overdose

i think about our lives i think about our deaths i think about
august 2012 me sleeping under a car in brooklyn you
translating guatemalan mayan oral histories into song let the
lilt of music keep the past where it belongs i think about me
cutting thin slices of lime at the restaurant you overdosing
on heroin in the empty room of the place you'd just signed the
lease for with jake who grew distant when you died won't respond
to texts grew a beard & shaved his head & lived a full year
in that house with your ghost your parents paying your posthumous
rent your parents sobbing at your service telling us that we
were all their children now & all of us knowing that wasn't true
could never be true you who wanted to be would have been
an all-time great me forever writing poems towards your poems
my poems like maggots growing from the corpse of your poems
my poems bending the light back towards that time we stayed up
all night you sober me drunk you playing townes van zandt
on your guitar me pretending i knew the words i think about
how you wrote that when you put a needle in your arm a plume
of blood blossoms into the syringe a part of your body leaves
you mixes with a dream & is pushed into your vein yet a
bead of blood always trickles out there is always a net loss
some of yourself outside yourself something lost before you
plunge yourself back into yourself i want to know what is lost i
want so bad to speak your name & hear you speak mine back i
mean that literally like the mechanism allowing me to want
functions badly i'm trying to find what we lost hunter i'm writing
towards new orleans towards san antonio towards the fraught fate
of addiction your laugh the saguaros in my dreams the cold
black ocean on the beach outside of waveland mississippi how
you wore a crown of salt & poked a dead fish with a stick
how we fried tortillas in butter & the yolk of the egg crept
slow over your chin like a shadow at dusk nothing so far
away that it couldn't be reached how the body throws chains
around memories & dances them like marionettes drags them to
the outskirts of town & makes them dig their own graves
how overdose halos in the distance how it ripples like a bruise
hunter my world overdosing on your bones the poem overdosing
on potential the unlimited overdose of our intersected lives
yours always too true yours surrendering to song mine always
reaching for forever always aspen mushroom starling ash

Unlimited everglades

dear grandma the cancer spread to your brain so by the time i
saw you last all that was left to do was hold your rice paper
fingers & press a cool towel to the soft white stubble on your
head the dim trickle of morphine how lovely you are your slender
face the way the world tenses around your hospice bed dear
grandma i'm writing on behalf of the wickedness within me the
kind that throbs bile at all my worst impulses & will never
be redeemed by your love my heart a bubbling swamp your
memory a flat-bottomed boat cutting a path through the cypress
alligators lurking just beneath the surface of the water god damn i
miss you i miss rolling out pastry on the counter i miss you telling
me how bad i am at golf i miss the hum & trill of your lilting
voice in the morning in the dappled light of the kitchen like a rare
& precious orchid smuggled out of the everglades in the palms of my
hands the everglades pulsing like a lodestone of woe these unlimited
everglades blooming a hurricane buffer around my barren bones



untitled abstract

Quincee Lark

Chronicity

TV, IV

Overdone

Shoot a bullet, got no gun

Rolling, rinsing

Twist, repeat

Freezing lips in blis'tring heat

Like molasses blood does move

In and out of solid grooves

Joints and masses

Graves and bones

Stairway to

The catacombs

Round the doorstep

Square the foot

Light your matches

Dust the soot

Eat some peanuts

Then regret it

Write a poem

Then forget it



Plum Cabin

Quincee Lark

Three short walks or maybe ten

Neighborhood walk

who let the dogs out?
rhetorical questions live
literally next door

golden retriever
bystander at lawn's border
little dog jumps, bites

no blood evidence
flying dogs lie with their eyes
watery denial

big dog shuddering
jumper in Houdini smoke
owner barks what? what?

owners are people
who apologize or don't
money will decide

Nature walk

pond reeds sway, flutter
gravy water whipped skyward
angry carp spawning

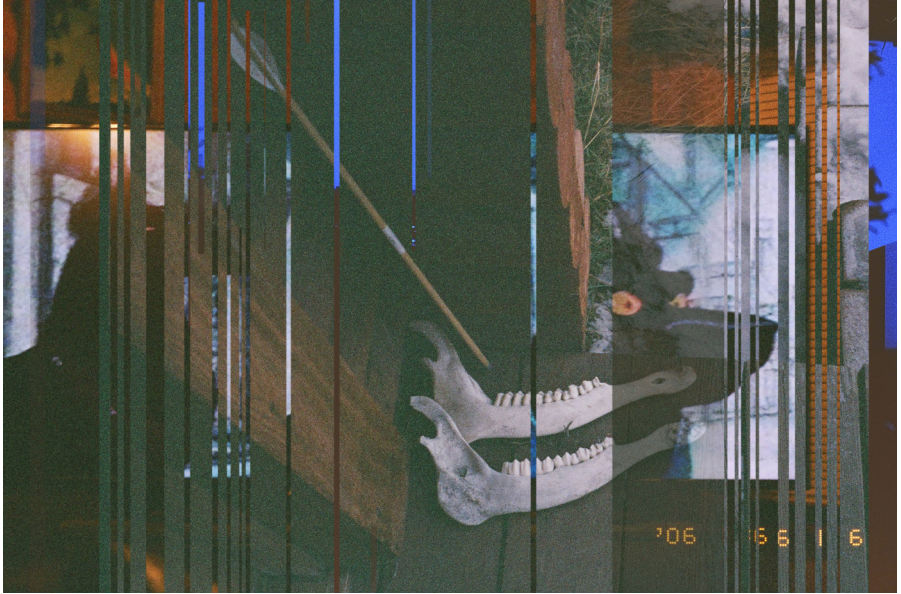
warning with pink throats
black bills snap at springtime skin
enemy lines drawn

two turtles, pond rock
old man tromps, steals photograph
nesting gray goose wails

Grief walk

sugar maple bleeds
tin buckets capture nothing
dreams escape again

sparrow nest in bricks
ashen baby wings won't fly
cat toys on pavement



Guardian

Katy Rogan



Bonds

Katy Rogan

Mesa Verde

I fold my dream back into itself so no one will ask me what it means.
Three lights on the hat of a man to tell whether the mountain is asleep.

We dig and dig until our hands are the dirt, the dirt is the rest of us.
There is no value.

Blackberries in the bramble the skin edges itself open on
one way to describe a cat

The animal wind at 4 in the morning in a place where ruins climb the
cliffs

Fright and the stars pouring their throughlight past us and into the
nothing we can't know
One imagines fire as a whole forest and then stops imagining and so the
fire stops

A line in the trees where
things continue growing.

The separate parts of us that learn to ache—
we call them in when they've wandered far enough.

Youth may be a wreck of leaves, of leaving.

Nothing has failed yet and the tree knows where it continues
to ring to rung to clamber
itself a record of the weather that's blown it about

Then to grow still again

Whether you're from someplace
or not – to root means
setting down or shouting – you don't have to pick

To rake the stones
take the handle in your hands
A word shaped to its holder and motion

What will become sand here and in hundreds of years
the questions behind us
that look like a reflection in the glass

Us nodding back
A stutter to the spectacle as it starts its grinning hedge
The meat gone from everything
the plants, their sinew, pulled thread and threat

It laughs, the thing asking

us what we are
Here anyway aside from knowing why

It laughs and laughs
and bites clear through
the dimstore mentions of time
and pain we're defined by

This is not an ending
I try to think round thoughts

The prayerfulness of shape – a card placed
in hard angle to another

To mean the cure between edges can be witnessed

One bleeding form to another
transfers its energy

There are dozens of ways to color the mountains
Rock carved hands in some narrator's mouth
threaded trails into and away from experiences

Our heads ring round but don't carry through

One windy night fear and all this money
customized, refracted, dim to the touch

Full as a pocket stuffed with hair and tissues
some lyrics on the stopped song

Diamonds dogging on the scoring table, the branches touching
each other like they're related
and almost in love
which is alright for trees
from our perspective and the beach
has come to find us in this mountain – the remains
of what was dead and the ghosts of our parallel
lives – seas crawling up a continent
a blink ago
slip my hand from yours
St. Vincent sings, the whole canyon dancing
with its own ghost, slow for now
till the wind picks up
and carries us with it

How light
we've been
all along

from *Along December*

The missing among us

Some people get paid forests

Others whittle their hands off

Just a cold shower and the mantle
to hold still with chanting

I don't want to make a decision
about how to avoid the gymnasium

What list fired the last raccoon
pretending to be a cat on a porch
full of fools - it's just like us
to shush and change shape

I'll burden you later with the temp
job - it's quickening this beer
and the questions I've got
about what can be seen as good
and what can be seen as a bolt of luck

You turn and turn it - maybe the thread

catches - maybe you curse your
cut hands wearing the face you'd made
before you put on the bandit mask

Trash in your noodle - a ten gallon
bag of guts in your guts

*

For when you cut the heart in halves
equal but distressed
the beating mutes
they say a body can wander
a body can be
lost a body can enter
the gates of oblivion
the grates with only
its body nails intact
pretty and possessed
and sided against
further into every angle

For when you revolve the square
to find it has
no back
some shapes are
only images
flat on one side

and this is
how the world
makes coffins
flute song and long
holes in everything
a fearful kind
of symmetry
not qualified by Blake
or the quietest mouse
in the mansion

For when you holler up the mountain
like your name's been stolen
or deserted

 one line and then
another
 line on top
of that
 and out then
farther then
 in and back
to thread
 a stitch through
now in
 a nod toward
what could be
 owed or owned

from this
and then to let
the thread
go slack

For when you press the plants to sketch
themselves into the bank
of pages
the bend in stems
what polish smelled
in some and what
flattening stress
there the hats and how
pitted they turn these
formed dimensions
against each other

*

When the forest fires
call from across the continent
Smoke in the radiator
in the satellite imagery

How a curve
in a mountain
pushes air down
its creases when
there is no sun

The psychics

and physical properties
of certain elements
cannot be ascertained

To be at a loss for words
or to watch someone
lose vast swatches
of time - to see them
come to
misunderstanding themselves
and their history

Day by day a dozen
years the same
questions come

Back in a type of haunting
this doesn't mean life
is meaningless Just that
much cannot be recalled
And what is recall really
but a trigger in a net

You can pull and pull
and fish something out
something you're sure of

I recall a day
that will occur
an hour and
the breath
rankling itself

into one of many
bodies this planet
will fold into its
kerchief.

Rags on the counter
to take the gasoline
Imagine a garage
and the natural
movement toward
something ringing

Leaf doing the spiral dance
waiting for a set of phrases
that have always been
hanging in the air

what smoke
in the dry season
comes circling
our station

There's no form to file
now no camp of silt and rebar

What a town
leaves in
its envelopes

The bits of cellophane
to see the address -

I never lived

there I don't know
 how to say this

from *February*

The snow pink sky
The railroad crossing signs covered in exhaust
Murals winking on and off
Some name for neighborhoods
 some name
 for what
 neighborhoods
 used to
 know about
 themselves
Us in shadow walking
Us in the unseasonable heat
The bridge doubled by what's below it
Some people marking their homes with wire
Some people shaking their skins out
Two steps away you say
We are from this and the rail cars
/Radiant thaw/heat only/
Broken in half like a line
I see what I say as it goes out
So much to not be a part of
Endings come up so abruptly
You can see the warnings but



Violet Shadow

Kal Walters

Hilaria

Their eye, dressed in daisies, it fell from the sky
Vanishing with the tide, a four leaf clover in the sand
Salty, but calling to me, yearning
To be free, a guest or breeze of tea leaves
Caught in a chain to a wall, mounted in
Bricks, stardust mortar black as dew
Drops as hammer strikes on an anvil
Moss-covered, penitent, supple to touch
I gasp, I claw at the arid temple mount
Plateaus spread with tablecloths and settings
For three, or four, small sized colonies of
Ants carefully whisking, fluffing eggs behind a
Counter, counting down the days to the end
Of time, stubborn, staying not, fleeting far from
Flung there to and appertaining some
Tears in a sunset fainting canvas, bleeding
Life into an abyss, my heart, a cavern
Once lush, now verdant, an empty hull
But buoyant, and radiant, and full.

Initium caiani

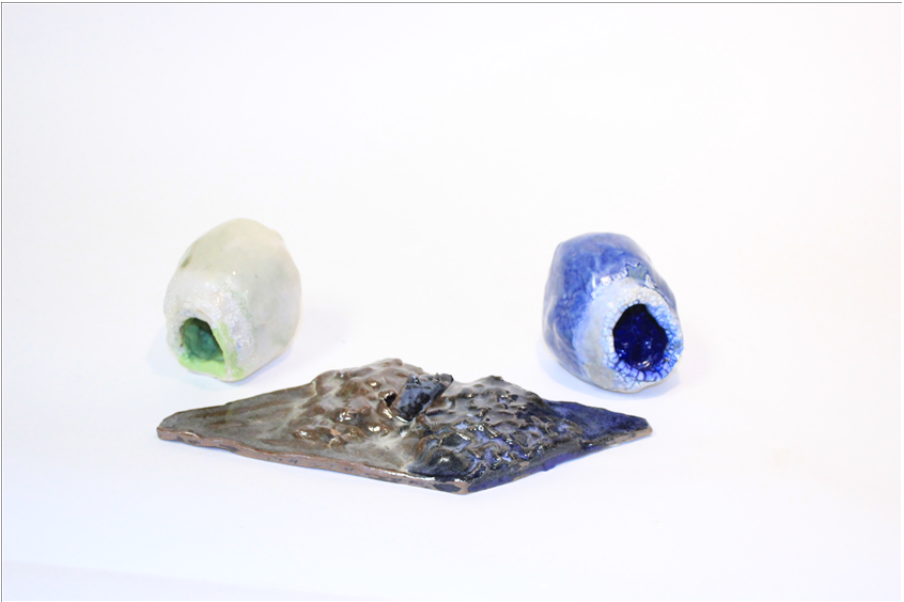
A world beckons itself into being
Braced at our fingertips it leaps up through
The space in-between, among and forthwith
Racing across starstrewn shooting streams
It gallops down paths honored by herds
Heard by not but two, ever lost in its midst
They catch their breath, itself seemingly shared
Clenched upon teeth caught in a moment's calm
Sweltering in rows as they loosen, tighten, let go
And gasp, eyes taut in a glance unspoken, but felt
In all its restful abandon, searing lids to pans, dust to moulds,
Snapping without in a pop, a hiss, slithering
Between dandelion seeds, between blades of grass ten stories tall
Shadows writhe within chasms unshapen, but shaping
We look, and at last see, all that is about us
In this world — our world. For it is our own
And it is by us that it came to be, and is becoming
Here a wonder, therein a memory unfolding
Embracing now a feeling forever unfelt,
Or if not unfelt, then unfeeling, outside this world
Beyond our fingers ungrasping, to a place unreal:
Yet for all its professed realness, it could but be not
And for all its supposed necessity, it could never be.
But we can be, and by grace it seems we might have been—

And if such grace may have it, so shall we again.
Until such a time, this space withheld, that world maintained;
For a canyon so great is but a dream of hands yet to meet.



What Lies between Us

Kal Walters







Eraser

child sought

transcendence, a word it didn't know the meaning for, a space between two
shoulder blades, edges of clouds showing
how light is just a trick of spinning

child ached

for it. for the running, for the wide field, for the hollow pain of cold wind
in the inner ear
for the dampness, haystacks rotting,
for the running again, the leaping, the losing
the losing thought, like a deer, mountain stream.

child did not weep, but child hungered

I, I, I wept for hunger

lost, for the killing, for satiation, for yearning stopped as by
rubber nib. something dumb in the rubbing out. a turning off like light
snap - click -

when does the child

begin to leave the body; that is, when does the soul
begin to leave the body? when does the heart cry? not in dying, no
not in dying, not
at the end [if an end it has] not near sun setting

but every
hour.



What lies in the indescribably deep?

from *A-Mothering*

Serrah Russell



A love that won't be named



Both ways of not knowing



A chance to rebuild



It looked like a relief but it still felt like a failure



What will you keep?



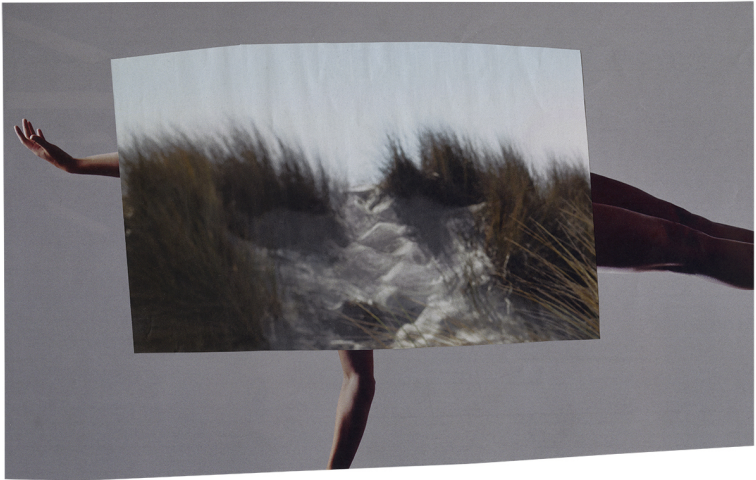
In a moment you are new



A story that never ends



A life forever shared



You are but you are no longer

[In the excitement of not seeing the fireworks]

In the excitement of not seeing the fireworks,
we run through streets three days familiar,
you on my shoulders—
a laugh that makes neon buzz and pop
as you flop around corners.
The booms make you jump
and the pink flash on buildings
flashes again on your skin
I see reflected in windows.

Hoisted over a barrier,
you stand in amazement
as I jump it
asking why is it okay
to be so unsafe right now
and I have no answer but
the chase.

The family across from us on the tram tells me you're beautiful
like I can't see,
like I am numb to it,
like I don't stay up some nights at your bedside
long after books and songs are done.
They want to take a picture

and you oblige,
but we have to run,
We have to cross on a red
(and this time you know the answer).
We have to get to the promenade just in time
to stand against a sea of the fortunate
and for a moment hang our heads before joining them.
No one knows we hadn't seen.
No one cares.
We no longer care .

We stop in an arcade and claw at a stuffed cat
that you seem to know something about that I can't understand.
In the excitement of not winning
we run again.

Not toward anything.
Not away.



Glitch

In the light
set loose, laughing
four arms and four legs
a head with two faces
we roll down the river
in a world full of years

Then god speaks his own name
like a clown
who, sweating and gagging, pulls

one hundred and one bandanas
from his mouth

It's an escape ladder
tied to his tongue
the other end dangling
towards earth
and now

Revelation opens the divide:
separates *we* into *you* and *I*

You teach
yourself cartwheels
in the grass below
two arms and two legs
catch a salmon in your mouth

Fight a cougar with your hands
drink a barrel of wine

Everybody cheers for you

I climb
the limp ladder
it's cold
the mountain
the sky

there are others, their voices
obscuring the name

A chain of bandanas
the weight of our bodies
the knots come undone

Two hands on a scrap of cloth
I fall like an army man, my
tiny parachute silently blown
and tangled in the neighbor's trees

Ungendered here
I take my cloth
to the wood where
walls of blackberry
and salal
dusted with sun
tangled in honeysuckle
and morning glory
shade syrupy thimbleberries
and tart huckleberries
for the pleasure
of black bears

Collect and feast

on a stump stool

in a bramble house
toeing pine needles
for golden chanterelles
and oregon blues

Strain curdled milk
for cheese and whey

Tie a cotton sail
for a rat's funeral boat

Return to the river
where we fell asleep
in the hot spring

Wake up warm
under stars

CONTRIBUTORS

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