

Flowers and stars are coronets and fiber and  
hemp are woven. Cotton is shaped like tiny  
stars, but comes out like soft linen.

When depths of whirling lights do shine above  
this wandering soul of mine like signposts that  
to new ways point, falsely my trembling hope  
anoint.

Color of the stars White, and Blue, and Green  
even Red, I've seen, though I think that was a  
plane.

Seers and Geeks and Telepaths argue hard of  
Spheres and Moons and Photographs and of  
the Tides and Pasts and Epitaphs of those who  
Live, Who're Born, and Who have Passed.

Once upon a time, there were stars. Whirling,  
shining, beaming, dancing. Do you see them?  
Up there, above your head?

When poured liquid darkness into light stars  
cascade silver rainbows of the night. Stands  
beneath the silver heaven's glow a maid, to  
widely tip the dew below.



ELIZABETH RUSSELL

A Song of 2020

*Copyright © 2020 by Elizabeth Russell*

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise without written permission from the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission.*

*First edition*

*This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy.*

*Find out more at [reedsy.com](https://reedsy.com)*

# Contents

## I Despair

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1 Stars: Shine without Lustre | 3  |
| 2 Gildings of Yesterday       | 5  |
| 3 Winterness                  | 7  |
| 4 Phantoms and Wills          | 9  |
| 5 The Secret History          | 12 |
| 6 Stars: False Hope           | 14 |
| 7 More                        | 16 |
| 8 Hillock                     | 20 |
| 9 Prairie                     | 21 |

## II Desire

|    |                         |    |
|----|-------------------------|----|
| 10 | Stars: Distraction      | 27 |
| 11 | March                   | 28 |
| 12 | Smother                 | 30 |
| 13 | Stars: Rational Debate  | 32 |
| 14 | Honesty                 | 33 |
| 15 | More Brave              | 35 |
| 16 | Fields of Snow          | 38 |
| 17 | Patience                | 40 |
| 18 | Stars: Once Upon a Time | 41 |
| 19 | Checkerboards           | 47 |
| 20 | Glory                   | 48 |

## III Dream

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 21 | Stars: Silver Light                            | 53 |
| 22 | A Grace  | 54 |
| 23 | Waiting  | 55 |
| 24 | Dream of Destiny                               | 58 |
| 25 | Princes with Swords in Palaces Upon the Cliffs | 62 |
| 26 | Mentors  | 64 |
| 27 | Afraid to Dream                                | 65 |
| 28 | Rainy Way                                      | 67 |
| 29 | Stripped                                       | 68 |
| 30 | Coming Home                                    | 80 |
| 31 | St. Peter Claver                               | 82 |
| 32 | Corner   | 83 |
| 33 | September                                      | 84 |

I

# Despair

*August 2019 - January 2020*



## Stars: Shine without Lustre

Flowers and stars are coronets  
and fiber and hemp are woven.  
Cotton is shaped like tiny stars,  
but comes out like soft linen.

Doesn't matter the shape,  
doesn't matter the appearance,  
my grand-sire's sire smiled insurance –  
assure without substance.

Fool's gold, knock-off,  
sewn by Chinese bloodied hands,  
smile on, smile off,  
smile to please his fans

And never know, never bother,  
never really look under,  
the appearance of my star,  
the image of my character.

I don't want to look  
under the image  
of your character.

## Gildings of Yesterday

They stripped it all away  
until only vestiges remained

Who are they?  
It's far too vague  
And what remains?  
The gildings of yesterday

Santa, St. Nicholas,  
a light of hope attached  
to God made man

Now he's just a fat face,  
familiar, safer than a babe  
he was never meant to replace  
the prince of peace

Peace. What is peace?  
Once upon a time

it was a little town of Bethlehem  
that refused to shelter a king.

Now it's signaling virtue  
saying yes  
wallowing in worry...

Sorry, lying again

The vestiges of love remain  
even when  
God's thrown out the window

A ghost of peace

Hallmark movies, without God,  
still... the shadows of virtues

Feminism, Lives that Matter,  
equality that staggers

Across the world,  
around the globe

A drunken, dying dagger...

...

Slowly twisting out my heart.

## Winterness

When I thought my winterness was ended  
You my death-like course extended.  
I thought my life of old was done  
But for the burial - more to come.

The crocuses and hyacinths were peeping  
But April's cruelty's burying!  
Since you said earthly happiness not ours,  
Only vanities and sorrows,  
I was anxious for the far-off joys  
For the thrill of far-off angel choirs.  
And mere tastes are all I want,  
But in your merciful love you cried out "you can't!"

Where are you?  
Beneath the blanket of the snow?  
Will you your divine face show?  
And you the seeds of spring now sow?

A SONG OF 2020

Windy corners sigh no name,  
Icy drips will drip without refrain.  
You said even nature would cry out! But I do not hear their shout.

Nature is silent to me.  
Silent as the frozen sea.  
And April is the cruelest month.

Will you breed from dead ground?  
Will you force only to kill?  
Will you force the frozen land  
to freeze your budding petal bands?

My life without you is a frozen sea  
For you have abandoned me.  
And without you I cannot cry  
I cannot hear nature's sighs.

Come to me, O Lord of life -  
For I have only frozen strife!

## Phantoms and Wills

Whirling in a sea of love, I desire phantoms I've never seen. O heart, breaking on the tip of a blade, falling, I teeter to the end of my existence. Who am I?

*Curling on a couch of chips, I dive into the phantasmal abyss. Watching, waiting, for nothing. 10 million channels – nothing. I teeter at the end of nothing. Go away.*

My spirit wails, remembering the moment, outside the Starbucks, when I gave my soul to the homeless woman who proclaimed that the supernatural is fun. It's fun.

*I strode with long legs, too long for her to keep up, under the streetlights in the misty rain, and I remember thinking, "Wouldn't it be fun?" Haha.*

I thought loving him would be enough, but I didn't know all what love is. All what love is, I think I figured it out, is more than sacrifice. Sacrifice wasn't enough.

*She said, "You'll never be fulfilled. Trust me. I know." I believed her. But then the nothingness came, and I broke. A broken soul is more than a broken body. It's too much.*

Sit still, my daddy said, on the subway as it roared into nothingness. The nothingness of home. The nothingness of a tranquil, boring hole. Sit still.

*Twitch, twitch. My eyelids flick, my hand ticks, my foot clicks. My broken, twitching, floating body. I'm floating on a couch of hopelessness. Watching nothing.*

I rushed, I flushed, I brushed past his commands, and grew up to embrace my life – I greeted it with arms flung wide! Arms flung so wide. Away went my soul.

*That Guy's wife wanted one more screen in her family room. I want one in my head. Watching nothing, it's better than the something...*

Where did it go? I watched her take it and ship it and send it to my love. My love. He kissed it. He cherished it. He never cherished me?

*Something has taken over. I have no more will... will what? Power. Recoil, finish my day-to-day scour. Just enough to pay the bill. Not enough when you are ill.*

Crushed the soul, because there was no more. I still stood upon the corner, watching from a distance, I saw he wanted more. I wish there was more.

*I wish I had my health. I wish I had my will. I wish a lot of empty wishes,*

PHANTOMS AND WILLS

*but no one hears. No one can do anything. I don't think they do anything.*

I wish, like Cinderella, I wish I had a fella. Do you see him, walking away over there? He took my soul. Crushed it. The supernatural, said the old woman.

*I think it would be fun. What was so wrong before? I thought it would be fun. I don't want another one... I'll take another one.*

## 5

### The Secret History

Crinkled paper blends  
the lines of the highlights of my life,  
bringing them together in the rises,  
blurring and obscuring  
in the creases  
the forgotten in-between.

Like a cut in a film  
or a break in a chapter  
exist choppy moments of what I deem  
Significant to Remember.

The rest of my life - irrelevant, slow, painful - is  
but a deleted scene, which my producing mind  
deemed unworthy and cut with scissors.  
The rising moments taped back together  
without even an awkward break.

Think you a story is unrealistic?

THE SECRET HISTORY

Think it dwells overmuch upon excitement?  
Thus too is my memory.

The works of introspective authors  
dwell not overmuch upon the moments.  
No! Rather, I failed to dwell sufficiently  
upon the insignificant, the quiet, the contemplative...  
Marking mine own life by the rises,  
I have neglected the creases, and so  
discarded the works of great women -  
contemplatives who have surpassed me  
in accurately recording the forgotten  
on their unwrinkled reams of recorded paper.

## Stars: False Hope

When depths of whirling lights do shine above this wandering soul of mine

like signposts that to new ways point, falsely my trembling hope anoint.

My heavy heart to the heavens flies, to seek new worlds, to meet the skies!

What hope is waiting in earth's loam? Here where sinners and slothfuls roam?

And I among, plodding weak, when 'mong the stars, there's not a reek of foulness, nor of fallen humanity, of snares that wait in dark to catch me.

Take me with you, to the moon I cry, when I her silver head escry, yet smiling placid, and looking up, she only mounts to glance about. Not even she will look on me, here where my mournful sorrows be. If only I but had a rope, a lasso, to tie her 'round, and like the lass who loved him good, some lad would bring her down – a hero could.

Then I'd bid them all goodbye, and on her back to space I'd fly to see the world like pretty marble, shrink so colors mix and garble. I'd shake the dust from off my feet, and many new encounters meet.

But what if fear could catch me again? What if I should think of men?  
Men who fled to far escapes; women too, who knew not what to do  
tried to hide from nature's pride, and found their nature hid inside.  
The hapless stupid prophet Jonah tried to sail from Nineveh  
but the creature of his destruction bore him back in resurrection.  
What if my own moon betrayed me, and my own nature spit me  
tamely

right back to the world I fled; I the victim of a nature read  
with black and gray, white unfound: the prey of hell's unweary hound?  
What good then, o lassoed night, if I with me keep inner fright?  
If anywhere I go, I meet my whole, then I must even leave my soul.  
Come soul, and stay behind, and only my shadow mounts the sky  
goodbye to pain and sorrow now, goodbye to sin and here I vow  
to leave behind what Jonah kept, and riding high with joy I leapt  
to lasso moon with wanton rape, I without my weeping soul escape.

## More

More

You're more

oh so much more!

They said you would only be so much

but you're more than I

I crippled and crying and clutch

and in my heart I try

but

I shatter and clatter and break...

And you're more than I can take!

Take the moment when I fell...

take the moment of your yell.

And take each moment after that!

But take the moments

on moments on moments and -

don't lie to me -

tell me there's no end.

Cause I know there's no end...  
You're more than I can break.

Break!

Break your crippling hold on me  
cripple your shattering hold  
shatter and clatter and take -  
but you're more than I can break.

I

I try  
moment on moment on moment  
I try  
but you  
you will not die

Take it

take it all  
it's what you came for, isn't it?  
it's what I have to offer  
it's what I have to suffer  
you're more than I can break!

He said you would only be so much!

It was a lie!  
You're too much  
and I'm sighing and lying and crying...  
you're more than I -

More than try

I

I sigh and cry

I lie...

Die

He died

He broke

He took.

Did He break?

You're not

not more

more than HE could take!

No - not He...

Exsilium!

He banished you!

And now I

I rise

I try

I will you to...

embrace

Come back to me,

o sweet my love

o love my sweet

how precious sufferings be!

Come back and see

that I and thee

together be -

for He hath banished thee.

MORE

If He is here,  
then you must stay  
and we will be forever

Did I say  
break?  
Then so we shall!  
But both together -

Break and heal  
and more!  
We're more than they can take!

Oh so much more  
for when He says  
He promises  
and promises He will not break!

More  
He's more  
oh, so much more  
more than YOU can take!

## 8

### Hillock

Hillocks galore, rising  
from the buttocks of the earth, arching  
to the sweeping churns of the sky.  
Exhortations will not keep  
it away, fear was sweeping  
it all away. White-topped wagons have changed  
to convertible automobiles, and  
the world rolls on.  
Ungainly, uncertain,  
fear drives  
the churning of the sun.

## Prairie

A bench is what I wish...  
here right here, where the cars anticipate the potholes.  
I wish the ground sloped on like this - forever.  
I wish my heart could ache forever.  
But rushing past, at forty-five miles of horsepower,

I can only catch a glimpse,  
a glimmer,  
in my soul.

If I stopped,  
if I got out,  
if I stood where the cars go,

could I meet the aching,  
compel the breaking,  
would the cars stop... and see?

With me, would they see

on this my bench,  
the grasslands they quench  
more than the sea?

The changeable sea -  
it comes in and goes out -  
and they that live near it  
can't do anything about it.

They can't plow it over  
or drain it under.  
They can't drive away so fast.  
So they, maybe,  
think they know it,  
and maybe,  
think they want to.

Only a prairie is just the same,  
but more fragile.  
Prairie is just a plain...  
it can be trampled.

Maybe it knows that no one wants to know it.  
Do you think so? Because they plowed it over.

I wish so hard my car was a bench,  
before this sloping ground.  
I wish so madly I could hear the birds,  
over the air-conditioned sound.

And down at the glorious treeline,

PRAIRIE

I wish I would venture to kiss  
the ever-changing scrap of prairie,  
that now I drive and miss.

The place I wish I knew  
better than we think we know  
the changeable, undrainable sea...  
I wish for this place that  
survives, unpavedly.



## II

# Desire

*February 2020 - April 2020*



## Stars: Distraction

Color of the stars

White, and Blue, and Green  
Even Red, I've seen,  
though I think that was a plane.

The satellite will get in the way,  
and those drones, too, I think,  
though what they're for, I cannot say.

11

## March

March is warmer than I thought  
closer than I caught  
March is glorious  
it could be  
it will be

The breeze is sleepier than I want  
cozier than it ought  
to be  
without you

I want you near  
I want you here

Be mine  
Valentine

The saints were celibate

MARCH

the martyrs were fine with it  
the angels insensate,  
the virgins incarnate

I yearn for the married state!

Not less for me,  
only objectively.  
Subjectively,  
I am meant for a he.

Be he.  
Be mine.  
Be my state.  
I'll be the one you seek.

## Smother

I don't know what to think  
I don't know what to feel  
the world reels

smother smother  
you're not my mother

my neck is a knot of tension  
I can't take the suspension

my hands are shaking  
the world is quaking

don't leave me wondering  
vaguely wandering

what would happen in a bigger crisis?  
this isn't how we dealt with Isis  
it's not about the food and medical prices

SMOTHER

it's about the ever-diminishing rices

can't meet in groups of over 10

my family is a group of 10

don't panic buy or stock your homes

but grocery stores are closing soon

A week ago my life was still.

But now we're slanting down to hell

## Stars: Rational Debate

Seers and Geeks and Telepaths  
argue hard of  
Spheres and Moons and Photographs  
and of the  
Tides and Pasts and Epitaphs  
of those who  
Live, Who're Born, and Who have Passed.

## Honesty

Say you've never felt  
and never will  
declare your love for someone else.  
Confess yourself incapable  
of love at all  
but speak the honesty that inward dwells.

I can handle anything  
whatever fate betwixt us falls  
and though my heart may break a little  
only tell me true, or nothing else.

My mind is weighing many things,  
my heart dreads and burns and swells,  
but I cannot predict your heart  
only honesty has that to tell.

So speak thou true and tell me plain,  
I can handle any hell.

And yes my heart will break a little,  
but deepest sorrow truth dispels.

## More Brave

But loving you makes me more brave,  
more brave than I've ever been.  
More adventurous.

But thinking of you is pale,  
and calling you unfruitful.  
Think of me maybe -  
once in awhile.

Why would an Italian poet  
so full of the good things of life  
cling to a love so fruitless?  
Why not just love his wife?

But I claim, in my love, the advantage over him,  
for he saw his love but once,  
far off in the distance,  
and was faithful to her forever.  
Faithful beyond devotion to a higher power.

But do not arouse, nor awaken love,  
until it so desires.  
I've kept my heart for a higher power,  
even when I knew you,  
and now that I know you through and through,  
now at last, our Mother lit a match and roused my latent fires.

Virgil's student had to unlearn his devotion,  
but mine - Ah! My love...

Like a faithful waiting nest -  
brimful of life just waiting to crack open,  
waiting to soar to the skies!  
Take flight and amaze those who  
worry and trudge beneath -  
My love waits.

Waits for you to pick up the phone,  
waits for you to come home.  
waits for your love to brim full,  
and flowing over, make us whole.

You're like Tigger who wanted to be Owl,  
and in your neatly buttoned vest  
you somewhat resemble  
that eminent fowl.

Impatient and literate, full of words and squawking -  
oh goodness do you ever stop talking?  
I sit back and bask in the flow,  
the unending stream that gallops and goes!

MORE BRAVE

I am the aviator who wants to be the fox.  
Tame me! I cry, in the depths of myself.  
Tame me and make me a precious rose.  
Of all the roses in all the world, I will be yours.

But you are the little prince, and you are the only one.  
You bounce from planet to planet,  
you stream out your words,  
you look ever for love -  
here. I'm waiting here.

The most wonderful thing about my love  
is that my love is a wonderful thing. His eyes are orbs of untouched  
longing,  
his hair is silky chocolate streams.  
And I know now why God invented hugs.  
He invented them because of you.  
Hugs are from on high.

Pick up the phone.  
Hear my waiting heart.  
Love me.

## Fields of Snow

The fields of snow  
That lie below  
A glorious plateau  
Those fields of snow

Laid out like an ancient quilt  
Riddled with ancient guilt  
Where every patch is built  
Of the very densest silk

Inscribed with invisible ink  
There's a secret there, I think  
Filled like a frozen sink  
Fields betoken a secret link

Each patch on Flatland  
Is a glimpse to the Horizon  
Where, gazing out some  
To the wealth of Spaceland,

FIELDS OF SNOW

We hope to meet God's plan.  
The heart of desperate man  
The soul of broken woman  
Searches snow for grains of sand.

Gaze as far as you might  
Rise to the highest height.  
From each and every point,  
You're still limited in your sight.

They are still just spots of snow  
Planned out many years ago  
And colored in with even rows -  
The silent seed the sower sows.

But snow is unreadable  
And God indefatigable  
Highest heights unreachable  
Deepest sights unseeable.

I look upon the fields of snow  
That lie in patches there below -  
A most mysterious plateau  
A keyless map, those fields of snow!

## Patience

I try Patience.  
I seek Peace.  
He has Temperance.  
Grant me a Lease

On life  
on love  
through strife  
through rough.

Don't leave me here  
Don't be silent  
Draw close and near.  
My emotions are violent.

## Stars: Once Upon a Time

Once upon a time, there were stars.  
Whirling, shining, beaming, dancing.  
Do you see them?  
Up there, above your head?

No, you say. I cannot see them.

Yes,  
that is because we have erased, forgotten, wiped out.  
We do not whirl, shine, beam, or dance.  
We plod, push forward, rush, and wear a painted grin.

The harsh, white light of street posts lining the highways at night  
blot the embracing warmth of the highest heavens.  
The cold, frantic swipe of hurtling headlights  
erase the forgiving night, exposing the garish sin  
of restlessness.

Slow down! Wait! She cries with her arms upraised, throwing herself

into the melee,

and is swiped away, with no one to notice but the dead possum on the side of the road.

There goes the priest in his white Cadillac.

Past rush the Levites with their blaring, blazing bass.

In the shadows of the gaps between the circles of white streetlight projections

stalks a thin, forgotten figure.

Try to see his face. Can you? No.

Its light is as dim as the stars.

He comes from a tragically happy past –

unprepared for the rigors, deceit, and blinding flash of life.

His mother gave him the tools of a good man

and then, when he was grown, threw him into the flash.

With a grimace of pain and anger and disillusionment,

he curled into himself

until his strong, worthy hands clutched the curling wisps at the back of his head

and his tanned, learned forehead bent to meet his curled up knees.

There he rocked to and fro and back and forth and back again.

What thought his worthy, fruitful mother to nurture

her child in outdated wisdom and objective values?

Such fruitless pursuits matter nothing in the rushing pinpricking lights.

What worth his capable, hardworking hands?

He was a forgotten, passed over, invisible man.

Now, entering the pool of the white-washing,  
casting cruelty of the streetlight,  
he stubs his toe on the possum.

Its eyes hollow, empty.  
Its fur matted into dried dark clumps.  
It does not evoke pity;  
nor disdain...  
but fruitlessness.

He watches a long moment,  
framed a black figure in the white gash,  
a solid in the glow of nothingness.  
Its empty eyes stare at something huddled in the shadows  
and he follows to see what it is.

Black, limp, fragile,  
like a cracked fracture  
that broke under pressure,  
deadness stares at another being  
breaking.

But this one moans.  
Stepping from the silhouette of erasing light  
into the calm, forgiving depths of darkness,  
he bends low to the ground and reaches forth his useless, capable  
hand.

A soft body still warm in the chilly night.  
Another low, soft moan and a shudder shakes the prostrate form.

He whips off his black hoodie with the chewed, green laces  
and wraps her tight in its warmth.

He whispers over the horns and tires of the careening  
and she hears his solid voice.

With shoulders shaped to nurture, he lifts her from the frozen ground;  
with steps firm and patient, he bears her to his Harley bike.

He turns onto the long, curving, black road into the country  
following the winding, corn-lined, yellow-striped stretch.  
Her arms about his waist, her black hair blowing into blonde,  
her face against his back, her head uplifts to the black expanse.  
Can you see the stars? He asks.

They have waited for you.

Waiting for you to see.

Can you see?

Slow down, she whispers

clear, calm,

and pulling right and halting the bike,  
it becomes one with the yellow-stripped asphalt.

She finds that she can stand.

Looking above to the whirling, purring, patient dance,  
her tormented, violent soul finds the sky-studded rhythm.

I can see.

You only have to look.

Depths of his loneliness well into her fervent eyes.

His eyes are wells of shining light  
in a sea of silent, patient darkness.

But they never look. No one ever taught them how.

She forgets about the stars and looks  
at his softly glowing face in the dark.  
She steps forward to touch his tear-stained sadness.  
Do not despair, dear brother of mine.  
Remember the heights above your head; they are thine.  
Millions waiting in the numbing, blinding flash like me.  
Dare not, dear brother of mine, despair.

He shrugs his shoulders,  
turns his honest eyes away,  
I was not made for the light  
not for night turned into day.

The wind whips her hair,  
clings to her drying tears,  
the tracts of salt across her face,  
the white and dirty tracts across her face.  
Was anyone? She cries aloud, and sobs  
attack her frame.

Only you, she begs him now,  
and he takes her again within his arms.  
Only you remain.  
The world has reared and run away,  
a train veering off the tracks.

I'm only a man, and I don't  
understand, the way this screaming world works.  
How can I reach them, when I'm not like them?

They look to the stars above their heads.

How can they reach us? She says.

## Checkerboards

One thousand tiny checkerboards  
recede to infinity behind my closed eyelids  
and tingles from my arms to my feet  
rise in overlapping, drowsy waves.  
It's dropping, dropping, falling slow but true -  
but if he asked me, I'd still say yes.  
It would all come back,  
tingles from my toes to my fingers,  
warmth like waves, the sun an overwhelming blaze.  
I'm burned, consumed... in a pleasant, cuddly haze.

20

## Glory

If they are good,  
if they are your times,  
if everything is to my good,

My hope, my future

If I desire you so much,  
and you willed to wait for me  
willed to seek me

My heart, my beauty

If now I am yours,  
if now your waiting is fulfilled  
if even now, you with I await the final glory

Your glory, your glory

Then my stubborn heart will wait,

GLORY

and my waiting is of you,  
and I await your promises

Your promises, my promises

My stubborn heart sits with you  
my aching heart heals with you  
and never, until my death, will waiting stagnate...

Your love, my life

Till death, I am yours,  
thereafter, I am yours.  
And one day soon, you will entrust me to him.

Your trust, your call

And he will take my hand,  
and I will take his name,  
and Lord, oh God, your love remains!

Your love, our love!

Your love is our love, O God  
and the union was worth the wait  
your promises, O God, are worth the wait.

Your times, your wait.  
Your hope, your heart  
Your promises of glory!

And if you are God,  
and if you are glory,  
and if you have awaited me from eternity

Then God, O God,  
your promise is of glory!

III

Dream

*May 2020 - September 2020*



## Stars: Silver Light

When poured liquid darkness into light  
stars cascade silver rainbows of the night.  
Stands beneath the silver heaven's glow  
a maid, to widely tip the dew below.

## A Grace

Are you willing to wait for such love?

-I am afraid of the waiting.

Why?

-Because what if it is unbearable?

It will be fruitful. I keep my promises. Do you trust me?

-I fear less than you trust me.

That goes without saying - my trust is infinite. Do you trust me?

-Yes, I trust. Lord, help my doubt.

Then all will be well. And the time of waiting will not be a trial, but a grace. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

## Waiting

Anticipate me, my lovely one,  
as I anticipate you.  
Come to me, for long have I  
awaited you.

Come to me  
in the waning hours of the eve  
for late have you loved me

Long, lengths of days,  
I awaited you,

and warm days passed into cool nights,  
and sun gave way to candles gave way to lanterns,  
replaced by switches on a wall,  
to beckon, lighten your way home.

Trim I kept the wicks,  
unshuttered the lantern, up the

switches, vigilant, replacing  
bulbs, storing oil, gathering wax.  
I gathered the wax for you.

Smell the candles burning now,  
burning in the sanctuary.  
Feel the water flowing now, flowing  
in the font!

They took the water away.

Away they took my rushing water,  
replaced it with man-made sanitizer,  
to sanitize my love for you.  
Look, how they sanitize and  
cover their mouths.

Has such a thing happened in your days?

Tell your children, and your  
children's children, for when this  
all has passed away.  
When all the trouble of this  
brief day has passed away...  
They will forget.

They will not want to remember.

Tell them!  
Tell them how I wait for them,  
wait in this bright and waterless place,

WAITING

with drink that makes your blood anew,  
with food that no one comprehends.

Anticipate me,  
come to me,  
I wait. I sit, for you.

## Dream of Destiny

Sit a moment, darling, in the destiny of time...

A destiny is a call, an insisting call  
placed on your heart. Do you hear it?  
My destiny has been long and painful,  
a time of sorrows. A time of lies.

I believed the lies. But in full honesty,  
I did not believe them all. I never really, truly did because  
I was brought up in a house of hope.  
I weighed, struggled, and lived too much in truth  
for bitterness to sit blithely on my heart.

But now I have dreams.  
Dreams I shrank from,  
struggled back from,  
railed against before but now,  
they are *true*. How can they be true?

They come from you.

And the beauty of truth - of dreams  
that are true - is that  
they will never go to waste.  
I can dream a dream  
I'm not called to live, but by  
its very dreaming, I am anticipating  
its fulfillment. For all good things  
will be fulfilled.

Books will be written.  
Stories will be told.  
Love will be made.  
Children will be born.

Maybe you think I'm lying? It's ok.  
Lies  
sound familiar, and we are trained  
to be skeptical.

But truly, I say to you again, all  
good things will be fulfilled!

Freewill is a bitch, yes. But a bitch  
is just a stridently feminine pet, and  
she will bear pups in her own time.

Freewill rejects grace sometimes,  
and turns away  
from opportunities that can *never*  
be regained. I do not  
deny it. But still, I maintain, that

all good things-

How can it not be so! Can an  
infinitely good God allow His  
Goodness  
to remain unsatisfied? He requests  
of his children  
their cooperation, but is  
cooperation  
strictly necessary?

I say to you: Only for the sake of  
their own souls!...

...Only for the sake of your own soul.

Destiny and beauty of dreaming...  
If I dream to build a monument  
to Christ's mother, can my dream  
go unfulfilled? If not I, then another,  
and if not he,  
then the very rocks will cry out!

If I, personally,  
am not called to build,  
then what harm can there be  
in my dreaming? All good things  
will be fulfilled.

Ask not if, nor how,  
but what?

DREAM OF DESTINY

The what is waiting.

A dream, a castle in a cloud,  
a palace upon a hill...

A prince with eyes of understanding  
will bear you to a palace with a landing  
and there, from the frontal-stone-worked-bulwark,  
from the dream dreamt by a king long ago,  
in a gown woven by a dreamer far away,  
beside a man who dreams within himself  
a dream that now, oh now, enfolds you close...

Here, in the moment of the now,  
live the dream unfolding in the timelessness  
the hope birthed in the  
unfathomableness  
of a God outside of time,  
of a dream that is now mine -

Oh dream of destiny, and let no trials,  
excuses, or inadequacies  
lie to you about the truth!  
Frustrations and lengths of miles -  
Your God is outside the Me's and  
You's and Us's of our miles.

The journey is long,  
the time is not prolonged...  
Dream a little now with me.  
Dream of destiny.

## Princes with Swords in Palaces Upon the Cliffs

Once upon a time I thought there were  
 Princes with swords in palaces upon the cliffs  
 Truth and courtly justice reigned supreme  
 In that far-off, immortal, knightly bliss.  
 There every man, within his heart, upheld  
 Without fail, the starkest truths of right and wrong.

Then with age came bitterness, and worldly, wiser  
 Wisdom of a youth then newly free  
 From youngerish illusion. Liberated,  
 Disenchanted, a female most empowered  
 To live alone, without a husband or a dower.  
 Her garden trampled, locked. Her lemons sour.

Expose the mold! It grows and clings below -  
 Institutions are a stone of sedentary  
 Habits. Clean the top and turn it o'er,  
 Clean the rotting underside, before

It crumples in upon itself. Before  
It cracks and breaks when the dragons rise!

Now, at last, I grow into the freedom  
Of the truth. Complexities are not  
Complex, for courtly kings abound when  
Called to rise in contrast of the villains:  
The risen dragons breded underground;  
Grown from, but now confound, the institutions!

The stone an egg, and now it's hatched, it's grown  
A dragon of it's own. No man can stand  
Now, as he is; he will be burned to gold  
Or else incinerate in the abyss!  
Now, at last, the princes come. Now,  
At last, the evil power is done!

Only princes will last against this test,  
Only noble adventurers are blessed -  
If garden locks, bitterness rules, and darkness  
Fights impotent 'gainst the beasts.  
When tried in fire, when scorched in testing flame,  
Only beauty, and truth, and good will then remain.

## Mentors

She says

“Stay on the straight girl!”

Catches me, challenges me,  
gets me back up.

The other leads:

“In the middle love.

The Lord leads  
entrust your heart in him.”

Nudges me, prays with me.

They stay, they lead

they keep, and pray.

## Afraid to Dream

Afraid to dream, she closed her often-  
pestered mind, to watch awhile, and to  
forget. Forgetting numbs the mind.

Shall I dream of children, dream of  
love, of inner gardens by manly keys  
unlocked? I think not.

I'll sit me here, and read a book, I'll  
forget the life of real. The reels  
of film that fill the mind with images  
of kings and brides is quite enough  
for me.

Real life is far less real. I think  
I'll run away, to palaces and stars afar,  
while in the everyday, I  
walk beneath a hazy daze.

With eyes awake, I walk asleep,  
nothing real feels real to me.  
with eyes of the mind, with  
lovers, heroes, knights, and queens,  
I dream a walk of reality.

All because she was afraid  
to dream, for dreaming is more  
than made-up things. It's more  
than palaces and kings. It's  
joys and visions beyond her grasp. It's  
life that calls to live, to give...  
life that calls to dream.

## Rainy Way

### Part 1 - 2019

Where men walked willingly the wide, well-trod way  
hither, thither, wither, quiver, sell, and pay,  
put up umbrellas, don't feel, don't see the rain;  
but one in a thousand – puddle splash: embrace the May.

### Part 2 - 2020

Willingly, the way warped to the order to stay  
quiver, dither, purchase, and lay  
upon you couch, put up your mask, don't breathe on me;  
only one in a million - look in my eyes: what do you see?

## Stripped

My heart breaks for me  
My mind is bent  
Like a tree tipped by too many  
storms, too many ages of harsh,  
gray, unrelenting land...

Tipped, tripped,  
dipped low, low, scraping and raking  
the ground.

And how can I rise?  
I have grown bent, like a sapling  
afraid of the sun  
I have been rent,  
stripped, plowed under...

I have been rent asunder.

The sun has reached my starved and shriveled leaves,

STRIPPED

my bare, scraped branches  
stripped away, dead and always dying, rotting.

I have shivered, I have cowered,  
I have dug deeply under,  
to the numbed and empty portions  
of my shriveled, straggled, struggling  
heart.

They have stripped off all my bark.

Hark! I hear his voice, a whisper  
low, soft, whispering and rustling  
my falling yellow sheaves;  
He breathes into me a promise  
I do not believe, I cannot believe,  
I don't, in the numbness of my grieving heart,  
want to believe.

Don't promise this to me.  
See? I have rotted for you.  
See? I have suffered for you,  
with you! You burn in the sky  
and my roots starve, shrivel, burrow under -  
I am not made for the fullness of you.

You are the vine, and to you, desperately,  
I have clung. My roots died clinging to you,  
dragging you, down here to me. Always,  
even in my youth, you said come, and I said,  
I am here: here for you, and here to stay.

I burrowed under, I furrowed under ridges of suffering.

I built a palace to my hurt!

I said look at me, you'd better save souls,  
'cause this is what I have done for you.

Done FOR you! It's all for YOU!

You better, better make something of it,  
for I most certainly cannot.

Never,

not once:

“is this what you wanted?”

## A Broken Shell

Beauty will save the world, he sighed,

yet you give me a canvas of grief.

Where is the beauty of your suffering?

That's on you, I said. You gave me this pain,  
now make something of it.

This is not what I want for you.

The deafness of my ears!

The hardness of a heart, curled on itself,  
like a shell, sealed together, it can never  
be unwound.

I am a shell fully sealed, fully wound.

STRIPPED

Put your hand in my side.

This wound, my dear, is fully healed,  
and fully broken.

But you, o darling of my heart,  
you are only broken.

I ask not for the dropping, dripping, decaying leaves,  
I ask not the furrowed brow of your painful grieves.

Grow tall, stand now,  
in the Way, and the Truth, and the Light,  
and you will unfurl.

Your beauty will save the World!

Who are you to promise this?

You left me an emotional abyss.

You gave me more, and more, and more,

'cause you said I could handle it!

You said I could handle it!

So now just leave me to handle it.

When did I say that?

You led me to my bed, you kept me in my head,  
only the head can save me now –

the heart is broken, locked, concealed  
it will never be revealed.

You have made me like this, so,  
to endure,

I'll take your heart instead!

I gave it.

Yes. Long ago, in the damp and mire,  
the shadow and mud,  
long, long ago, in the pain and grief,  
when I, nothing more than a budding,  
dying, hopeless leaf,  
a shriveled, twisting, twining twig  
with a big head and clinging roots,  
begged for your heart instead of mine –

O the Mercy that the sun can reach me,  
even in the damp and dark of earth,  
even when I turn away, and mark my future  
with my own display  
of flagrant and impractical truth,  
even then, O Merciful Light,  
your rays shone through, your heart went out,  
and to the vine of purity I stuck,  
with desperate confusion and hopeless reason,  
I, a carefully planted seed, was meant  
for greater things that be.

I knew it not.

## The Sea

My life will be an endless sea,  
tossed on a storm of confusion,  
rotten timber groaning now,  
rolling ever in the swells  
no ending to my pain,

only an undying, tiring refrain.

My desires are secondary,  
and they will not remain.  
They burn bright and hopeful  
desiring to renew the world.  
Desiring to bring the Heart of Jesus to every household!  
But such desires are fruitless.  
Such desires are distractions  
from my one and only goal –  
to wallow, drown, soak in pain,  
only these three,  
passion, death, and pain remain  
and the greatest of these is Pain!  
I wallow in the water of my pain and  
like a flicker of frail candle,  
extinguish.

I am a frail, flickering candle.  
I am extinguished.

## The Water

Set the bow to the north star!  
Loosen the sails,  
man the tiller!

She shades her white hands  
to the horizon,  
and sees beyond,

a captain of the sea,  
born in her, risen out of her,  
and manning my tossing bark.

The sea is not pain.  
pain is a puddle of muck,  
a pooling of slime and stagnant water  
breeding bacteria and earthly crawlers  
in its green and dingy shade,  
and it was there, stuck,  
I thought I was drowning.

He said come, He said follow.  
I said it's what I desire...  
but desires are futile.  
He cried out against me, He rebuked me,  
and grasping my shriveled roots  
with gentle hands, He coaxed me  
to a new and better land.

He took up an ax, a mighty thing,  
weighted for quelling and splitting  
mighty timber!

Thwack, the blow resounded,  
muffled, in the wood, I  
cringed.

Anybody hear that?  
They'll think I'm pretentious,  
leaving my forest.

STRIPPED

They'll think I'm just dreaming again.  
They know I'll sink right back  
into the dripping, drooping pool.

Crack! My bark responded, and  
cleft from stem to stern!  
My heart was pounding, pounding,  
beating in my ears.  
My blood was thrilling, thrilling like pulp,  
and my eyes, at last, were ready to see.

The blood so warm and red, I was flushed to  
the tips of my leaves.  
My heart so thrilled, so excited, so awake,  
I felt I had been dead for years.

Come, sleeping beauty, your beauty  
will ride the waves.

Come, sleeping beauty, your beauty  
was made to save.

## The Captain and the King

She will man you with gentle coaxings.  
She will sail you with eager boastings,  
showing off your bark for all to see,  
asking, even, for a kingly blessing.

And He cannot refuse her.

She will smile, and her smile will win Him.  
She will speak, and her voice compel Him.  
He gave her me, my lonely bark,  
He said be gentle, mother, she is quite green.  
Weather her a little, in a becalmed and lonesome nook,  
waken in her my favor and whisper ever of my love.  
Tell her great things of me, for I desire her greatly!  
Tell her my wondrous deeds,  
so I can do wondrous things for her.  
She will not let me.

Do what He tells you, she whispered,  
and I shuddered.  
He asks too much.  
Oh, no, my dear – He is treading soft.

For you He is a silent image,  
a nudging of the heart.  
In you, my mighty tree,  
abides His sacred heart,  
and He is gentle of His heart,  
for He is vulnerable for you,  
and He is gentle of your heart,  
for you are a living shell.

Live it well, and now let me,  
work a miracle to work it free,  
and unearth the beauty of the gem inside,  
unveil the thing you wish to hide.

\* \* \*

STRIPPED

She smiles her smile of utter glory  
and all bow in wonder.  
She steps upon the land and approaches  
the mighty king,  
even as He leaps to embrace her.

I still think I am nothing,  
stranded upon the beach.  
But now my heart lies gasping,  
dying, I see how small and noisy I have been.  
How noisy I have been!

Must I die to find new life?  
What if there is nothing new to find?  
What if this is all I am inside?

Words, words, words...  
they are all the same,  
been whispered in vain  
to no avail...

I thought I hid behind a veil,  
but full there was a wall there!  
Impenetrable, unbreakable,  
I am not some actor in a play,  
with real ears representing some  
imaginary barrier that serves  
to convey lovers' words from  
heart to heart.

I built myself into a wall,

a barrier to ban good neighbors,  
a real one, with armaments and firmaments  
and foundations standing tall.

This is imaginary – an image.

He has been speaking to me in images.  
Words to convey images to convey feelings  
to pry into thoughts, to unearth beliefs,  
all to make a simple request.

I am afraid. Mary has already made it for me.

I don't want to ask.  
He kneels beside my beating heart,  
and like unto Margaret Mary, His heart beats on the outside!  
Good God, it's nearly touching mine.

Don't touch me, I'll pollute you!

Elizabeth, let go of me.  
Let me come – only ask, and I will come.  
Ask, please ask, my heart is beating fast.  
It beats for you, it overflows  
let me do this please for you.  
My mother asked, I must obey.  
For her, I'd do anything.  
Will you, my precious, my darling,  
my beloved girl...

We are in a meadow... in a church...

sitting on a rocky ocean wall...  
His arms are pillars on which I lean.  
His head is the pillow on which I sleep.

STRIPPED

His hair caresses, cascades down,  
brushing silky locks across my brow,  
and in my ear, my fleshy ear,  
my beating, red, and blushing ear,  
He whispers words of shameless love –  
whispers only lovers dream of –  
whispers only lovers hear.

## Coming Home

Ask yourself: Does he feel like coming home?

O, from the first,  
and in the past, and now  
more than all the last...

It's like he is a part of me.  
A distant memory  
of something I never knew -  
too good to be true.

But now, finally,  
irretrievably,  
like a scent wafting  
from a hidden recess...  
I know at last that  
love is not a guest.

It's home! In a house,

COMING HOME

with food, a roof, a bed...

There will love arouse;

there my soul be fed!

With him who feels like

coming home.

He feels like coming home.

## St. Peter Claver

Temporal yearnings on a mortal  
coil when passion's stirrings seek for you  
disinterested - impossible feat! - still,  
consecrated by Divine defeat  
until no mortal, no temporal love  
remain - nothing but Him, not even you.  
All in you - potential. Everlasting His  
refrain of eternal Father, Son, and Holy Dove.  
Unending frame of glorious love.

## Corner

I half expect to see you there  
when I come around a corner

You're only a promise  
a strength I don't yet understand

Yet here you are, so close,  
and my heart expands

With innatest expectation...  
when I glance around the corner

## September

Drizzle your darkest to  
drown the dreams  
of my soul.

Delve beneath the layers  
to unveil, give birth  
to gold.

Do you hear it?  
It beats like Taylor's saddest sweet...

Deny it like a scream  
and feel it pumping through me

it's the verge of masterpiece

it's where you find your peace

Come the tears in washes of drizzles

SEPTEMBER

pour the beat of terror above me  
like the cloud of my golden, beating sweet...

Heart, where are you?  
Can you hear the bass around the bend?  
Can you feel the world about to end?

Wait for it...

Are you ready for it?

It's about to drop

*bahhh!*

September is the  
last month before the end  
of the world

The clouds will part and  
it will be the end of  
the world

When the clouds part and  
it's the end of the  
world  
will you look up?

...

Are you ready?

The saddest sweet of  
good times drowning the  
end of all things

Meet me in the back  
of the church like a  
victim

Rise apocalyptic  
martyrdom

And drown in the delving  
of a new world.

Unmask the Eve  
Unveil the Virgin

and in the final confrontation  
within the silent beat  
of unmitigated salvation,  
bow to her,  
the golden September Virgin.