

# *Yggdrasil*

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**Winter**

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By Maria Jacketti

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## **Post Scriptum**

The Test

# Introduction

For Gaia, for the Earth

Some poems in this collection first appeared in the following journals:

*Etchings*

*First Literary Review - Eastm*

*Kinte Space*

*Many Colored Brooms*

*The Athens Group*

*Voices International*

*Ygdrasil*

## **Medusa's First Seed Catalog of Winter Arrives**

The new flower book comes  
during an ice storm: while  
this list of desires explodes into an icicle- jungle:  
February , dare your candy-sun, a bluer- than- blue- moon borealis,  
you still make the season of unquenchable fevers, and  
I am your Zodiac child born to burn off a Yeti suit  
with this cayenne blood, I  
reach into the catalog of  
foamflower, snow-in-summer,  
petals of flamingo pink : and Florida is a  
state of wish-brain bouquets,  
where I send elephants  
to steal spring's nonchalant swimming pools.  
So many months have given a once pastel thirst  
torches to liberate the great cinnamon dirt you sequester,  
dearest tundra give  
up your diamonds.  
Let me bloom just inside the ocean of your kiss.

## **A Coal Necklace**

My father gave me a piece  
of solidified night.

Remember me,  
he said, then coughed  
with black lungs,  
climbing up from the deep basement.

I was eight years old.  
I clutched the stone.  
There was fire within  
its lake of smoothness.  
A fellow coalman designed  
the pendant -  
a teardrop  
crowned  
with silver filigree -  
it embraced the stone  
with a hard lace.

My father and others  
fed the earth,  
extracted somebody else's plunder,  
loved their wives in furious silence,  
gave kids mule rides  
on angry backs.

Now their offspring recycle luck  
or leave behind a scarred map.

But for some, the Earth is a jewel box.

I've searched for years  
but still cannot find that fossil tear -  
my father's half century of night,  
congealed.

\*

1989



## **Hairy**

once hirsute as kiwi, Chihuahua  
in the works, so very  
gorilla gorgeous, with my  
tree bark covering legs, every swimsuit part  
mustachioed, I lost my  
homegrown fur coat, somewhere between the years  
that were supposed to hag me  
once upon the eight track of  
vermilion snow days.

.

## Noah's Egg

In the water  
she is almost forgotten,  
so full of babies,  
she knows she'll survive  
because she is fertile,  
well, in fact,  
the most fertile of them all,  
and because her cargo is prized  
by gods and men and courtesans  
and wives  
lucky enough to hitch their chromosomes  
to this dingy.

There are younger women, sure,  
on this old tub,  
threadbare  
beauties,  
sudden  
athletes  
waiting to rise  
and feed the new world  
like worthy loaves of bread.

Why must she  
spread her body on the water  
and remake the land?

So many, all sailors now, grope  
her scraps  
of paradise  
and she  
already plumped,  
a cherry womb  
mission in the making  
dreams only of  
landlubbers,  
the great cookie earth,  
oasis,  
and a tame  
fountain  
dancing  
like the virgin  
she will someday make flesh  
again.

And tonight  
As the old world is ending,  
Where is this storm not touching?  
Where it will never touch -  
her star.

Queasy Noah  
was not made for water.  
Help me, he whispers,  
but even he's already lost  
in the aftertime,  
just like his old lover,  
beyond the loneliness of the sea.

## Witch Watch

### I.

Angels like to stop clocks;  
and so do nuclear bombs.  
Lipstick succumbs to soap,  
sometimes the pumice-infused ilk  
that demands blood from stung petals.  
But lips remained tattooed  
with inks sometimes persistently stained  
or lit incandescent.  
Even when the kiss never happened.  
"Yes, Harry," spake Dumbledore,  
"It's all in your head."  
That's just the way it is, real as rain.

### II.

You wear me like a jewel,  
of purloined thrones, a miracle of coal mines,  
so invisible in good light.

Yes, diabetics dream of sweetness,  
but spinach builds the heart's gymnasium.  
Every clock stops at a different holy day,  
quaint numeral or fluid light of digits.  
Yes, all of this will pass like a sundial, yet today

I want to watch a chick flick and fall into it,  
the way only actresses can,  
without sin.

or jiffy-prudent regrets,  
this swing of snowflakes  
astronaut Angels made when halting  
It could make clocks and kisses obsolete,  
and we could replace kissing clocks with a sensible prairie of spinach,  
or nuclear bombs.

## **Ode to a Dental Emergency**

Lady of the Drill,  
last Saturday a molar  
savored the last judgment  
of one perfect breadstick,  
a little bit of body, sent to crumbs in your basic  
Jersey diner:

and now the Tooth Fairy brings it on, my butter pecan  
butt-kicked,  
after an orgy of root canal,  
medicinal saw dust  
stuffed into emptiness,  
this head dug out and weeded,

running on electric prayers and injections  
that feel now all too pastel --

I'm just holding on to my head,  
unable to see anything but a world of tessellations,  
numbers making hideous and spiteful love,  
wallpaper erupting into artificially-flavored operas, banging on my sleep,  
a nervous system so bludgeoned,  
sick days stacked like pancakes.

## **Not Anymore**

They don't lay out the dead like that anymore, in the living room of a homestead, with chairs stretching through the dining room, through the kitchen, out the door, into the snow. The funeral homes have to charge more or less, but it is the real fear that the soul won't leave the house loved so much, the walls your blood pumped through, Daddy. You whirled in fury after Mom sold the house, and new people moved into your room. Your blood turned to fire – and it burned to the front page. But actually, I carried your coffin in my backpack around the world and into the storms beyond the blue.

## **Laurel, Five Years Old, in Kindergarten, Explains Politics**

Medusa: Dear Child, what did you do in school today?

Laurel: We prayed to the Flag.

Medusa: But what did you learn in school to today?

Laurel: We prayed to God in the flag. And then the teacher made a robot. And then we broke it with our feet.

**Smoke from the Sistine Chapel, Medusa Speaks Infallibly  
(Or Was It the Snakes?), 2013**

Grab onto to your girdles and jock straps!

Black or white in the peace pipe make one dreary smoke. Perhaps medical marijuana, or some nouveau narcotic confection, might suit this chronic pain, a world's apothecary, ascending into the playground of the stars . I can't choke on this smoke another mad minute. Stepford Wives, grab your frying pans, and make the music of scrambled eggs, for cast iron banjos., for the delight of roosters, or why not simply call them cocks? I will not worship a Father in Heaven, in any church of testosterone, nor kneel to kiss a mafia lord's amethyst. Give me green Plantagenet, a pagan faerie Queen! Or a naughty leprechaun who procreates like a yin Pharaoh. Impossible. Give me Barack Obama with a sex change. Red, white, & blue garments? A yank to bless baseball. A start. And follow those Sousa colors with a gust of pink. A goddess will pop out of a cake (made by the Cake King on Food TV). The rock star, Pink, will sing "God Bless America" and beat up the stupid girls. (Stupid girls, you know who you are. Or maybe not?) Oh, God, how I just loathe to monkey shit stupid girls, so come on honey, take off your babushka, and ditch the totalitarian family that will disown you, if you don't obey. Come not unto me ye woman who accept the old ways, for your days will come to rags of the apocalypse and ashes. And you will behead your selves. And you will live your days strangling on he- loves me -not daisy chains. Your dowry brims with worms, and your wombs will ache for daughters, and you will weep until you green the deserts when you bear sons. And you will menstruate battery acid. Women who have not risen to this call, the light of this century will blind you, as your kind become extinct. Some pink incarnation will let her wig down, and ride the planetary grid, quite naked, singing the good news.

## **Medusa Shows Off Her Achilles' High Heels**

Politics. It only works through magick. Star Wars – mind meld? Good start, Barack. Advice? (Medusa is like Dolly Madison – a secret member of the secret cabinet). I will not cut off my Achilles' heels like the ugly Grimm stepsisters of that mutilated and anorexic sweetheart, Cinderella. The golden shoe doesn't fit. Gold has turned so posh, and they are too cheap to mint my size. I'm worth more gold than you can imagine; in fact, you can't afford. The only way you can get my gifts, is if I give them to you, freely. No Vaseline on the girdle-peds. No old shoe-hag! No compromise. The glass cat heels do not fit. Societies of glass slippers should not run marathons! I will harden my heels to walk over glass and disco dance through fire. Mr. President, check out my ancient and thoroughly alchemical saddle shoes. And P.S., we will dance together and almost be lovers, nevertheless, from my nook in the Library of Alexandria so many years ago, I wrote your name in light in the book of days of change. This is our time now, Star-Brother.

## **Spell to Banish Writer's Block**

(For my 53<sup>rd</sup> Birthday)

Words, break the dam of this silence. Silence like scabs and snot-on-a-mission. I am the crouton that breaks the hush. And you are my teeth, and fangs if needed. Be gone vile blockages to life in comprehensive bloom. Cascade and drench me in the waterfall of your brilliance, the quenching of ultramarine midnights. Be warm, nutty bread, and sweet butter, lemon-squared in sun. Bring aloes from pink and tan deserts and the guts of woodsy- junkyard comfrey to these wounds of a life of aborted dharma simmering in stink- pots of karma, the rotten stew leftover from so many lives gone by, in deeded shackles. Let volcanoes heave their diamonds and lightning electrify glimpses of the arteries of the divine.

February 11-12, 2013

## **Thanks for the Sweets, Medusa**

Call me, Killer Honey, goddess of desire, sweat of sun, bumbling intoxication, in hive, crystal, Amphorae forever, pollinating every synapse we zap alive.

12-12-12

**First Family Reunion  
(For Grandmother Maria (Mariuna) Jacketti)**

A lid of mist – *try the sausage and peppers* – canary-yellow jawbreaker, mop-grey clouds – a purple granite grandmother's downpour, and we're bombed. Let's talk about the weather, or maybe the end of the world. Amethyst gravestone sundered to babies. She's here. She's here. Lights flicker the way only ghosts can make them. Wish I knew Morse code. Wish ghosts wouldn't buddy up to me. Hailstones rocket against those unable to endure feline airs. Grandma loved her alley cats!

Into the garage some run, not quite a bomb shelter. No, never that. We drink to each other with bloodshot eyes, grapes distilling secrets, and the mantra of our world: "*Svata-git, Svata-git!*" Fried dough for shoo-fly pie. And shoo-fly pie for silence.

Our high noon pot-luck lives, strewn across plastic oilcloths of destinies, cross-stitched, the allures of mother-ship breathing down, enfolding us again.

Summer 2012

## **Mother to Mother to Mother**

The house of this gymnasium was haunted, or just alive and disembodied, or a sponge for ghosts.

My mother has moved on, and although I feel her vibrato in old recipe cards, and in an afghan crocheted on the winds of destitution, I wonder what she is doing in that other dimension – but stand out of the way. Are you kneading the gritty dough of this past life? Wearing a quarked apron? *Madrecita*, standing under an umbrella, sapphire-transparent, with a hamper of badges to award, as if we were long-abducted Girl Scouts, more likely rebel nuns, barbecued. But Mother, today you endure unruffled, a perfectly made bed of rune-raised chenille. A program ended, memory run out of space-time. And glockenspiels. So, you join in the parade. Cherubim cheerleaders: pom pom pom goes the psychopomp. Within a core of light, your uterus brims, a core of light, days unhexed to new holiness, a church of slaves held in supplication's gutters, until this moment of complete forgiveness awash in the plasma of ages, drunk with the sweat of clowns, truly born again, again, again, and never again.

2012

**Out of the Black into the Blue with Green Expecting Purple  
For Batman (with a Kiss to Neil Young)**

Not even a wildly flowered acre, fine. The purple air still moves seeds. Black-eyed-Susans could be Rockettes on the rag of eons. Yarrow has stopped the bleeding. Good thing it's a promiscuous weed with a soul like Florence Nightingale. Nature opens her melting mouth to swallow the anthropoid ego. Teacup meadows suffice. Demi-tasse forests hold on. I want to think like the prickly thistles and ride tongues of the expectant wind without putting goop fossils into my broomstick, formerly the abode of starlight. Out of those Buzz Light Year jammies, Billionaire. Get some *cojones* for your ice cream, Bruce Wayne. Your endangered bats are embalmed in bottles of glow- in- the- dark, whatchamacallit, you-know-what.

2012

## **Portrait of a Girl Swinging Over the Ocean**

Swing over the sea, over the swan, into the clouds what's holding you up -- is there a storm?  
Swing without a set. Who's holding you up? Is there a god? Or gossamer broomstick, from  
which you've embezzled your aerial floss?

Look down into the heart of the sea, the swollen waves of sorcerous grey, shimmer of aquatic  
astronomies only the unpolluted  
can hear the cries, catch the mettle of girl who ventures without wings or fin, over the tongues  
of this ocean's opera, lost in swans.

Maria Jacketti

11/17/13

## Consumer Spell from the Caller ID

Unknown caller,

*go away,*

I will pay my bills another new and twinkling day;

oh Lord, forgive us our love of primate comfort and credit cards,

and lead us not into that temptation that belches me out

like sushi from

Jonah's belly of cetacean lard,

for in goddess I trust, and I will re-invent your plastic fangs and fees.

Bankers, you will not squander me.

2012

## **Birth, from a Shamanic Regression**

A knife again a knife: they are sending me back forever now. I don't want to be born.  
I don't want to die.

Where is the air they promised? I need to scream, and screech, and yammer, until I awaken the  
hung-over gods who drink my oxygen again. Surrounded by coal miners, scratching for breath, I  
cannot breathe, sing, or swallow the lotus of forgetfulness,  
The saffron bath-robed priest force-fed me before this fall into this matter.  
I will die soon without the ozone of evergreens, a go-cart sun-quest in the win yard of all win  
yards.

And then all the coal miners, give me their air, they cough it up In black blood clots, spit  
tobacco on sheets stained with the placenta of ages, born again.

The old medicine man tells my mother, "The girl is stronger than the two boys you lost. This  
one will make it." And my lungs fill up with unworldly air, as the coalmen go off behind  
elephant curtains to smoke the baby blue cigars, they are not given to waste. Somewhat  
modern, they decide not to throw me in a well. Or bury me in a mine shaft. After all, this is  
Pennsylvania, where Betsy Ross sewed the flag.  
Tonight at the speak easy, they will throw soiled diapers at God, the guy behind the bar,  
who distills the moonshine of anthracite nights.  
Nights like black rabbits, diamond-flecked.

**Black and White Photo of a Breaker Boy,  
Hazleton, Pa. Circa 1920**

After war's global thrust,  
these mountains' guts devoured  
by the starved, including, you,  
Dad, no choice but to prizefight,  
to separate dead dinosaurs  
with your hands,  
to fill your lungs with their ghosts,  
your young photo rendered in  
sepia and hard coal shadows.

2007

## A Gardener's Biology Lesson

The brain is a rose  
a well bruised rose  
a time machine, a radio,  
CEO to the heart,  
that monk.

The brain is an osage  
orange, unskeletoned,  
grooved-deep naked open  
to the world,  
grown spine high

the brain is an osage  
orange, fallen onto a  
New York City highway,  
redolent,  
moth-proof-bitter,  
a pioneer fruit, quite  
inedible  
except when a corner turns  
and we turn with it,  
and all becomes  
a weeping willow,  
wide-waisted,  
century-hipped,

a maiden's long flow  
of innate aspirin hair,  
where Medusa waits,  
harrowing  
so much Play-Dough,  
perfecting the bloom,

sculpting the snakes  
that permanent wave,  
that groove with the rose  
and now, I tell you,  
go south, glimmering back  
to the Southern Cross where  
ovaries are pomegranates.

2004

## **Manure**

Every time you  
spoil the lilt of my potpourri,  
every time you stick to my feet or  
thoughts along  
that path I want pristine,  
I need to remember  
that you are the Limburger cheese  
behind all things verdant.

## **Buddha of the New Age in Astronaut Time**

All life is not suffering –but it certainly can be; desire what is floral; desire the green.

Ride a bike to heaven  
like that craggy olive dude, E.T.  
Compost karma  
for parsnips,  
the deeps roots that teach us  
the earth's subterranean whodunits.  
I scatter wildflowers in your head;  
bloom now or go to seed.

## **Call Me, Cloud**

Today I speak for the rights of the flocculent:  
disremembered angels have cooled  
to sentient  
weather.

I am the chameleon skin of so many flying saucers,  
the hoodoo placenta of mother-ships.

Inside me, the zephyr cubs,  
tornadoes of the apocalypse.

Frog rain.

2008

## Hot Snow

The room brims beige and empty.  
only ten attend,  
anything must be better than coming here  
to watch a film about glaciers melting–  
hot-cakes, hot flash, I walk among zombies,  
hot-damned this generation that won't read or  
feel the seasons of this discontent, the fevers  
that drown the ice, pernicious little fuckers, come awake just long  
enough to hate their parents,  
spoiled narcissists look into the water, that used to be  
ice and fall in love with their steaming reflections,  
all these years I have given to nothing,  
allergic to chalk,  
anything must be better than this ending.

## **Aquarian Anniversary**

Crack open  
the amethyst  
quaff plush wine:  
cathedral in grape crystal,  
I am happy to be born  
again in this sooty snow,  
time quickening,  
the half-life of birthday candles,  
making sense:  
sorbet and torte: space time, warp and weft,  
magic carpet, mummy's blanket.  
Years quiver in abduction.  
Happy Birthday: wolf breath plunges to  
belly-nadir to quench  
the pastel forest, toothpick torches,  
each one proxy for a star beyond,  
coveting a wish that might yet come true.

2009

## FAITH

And if I scrape  
the last black nectar flakes  
sweeter than their mother dirt  
of Jamaica's Blue Mountains,  
and percolate with hope  
enough for one,  
and if I brew my senses  
and stir out the galaxies  
in this very last cup,  
and if I guzzle and quaff,  
snap my lips milky, nirvana's cat,  
and dare drink the second cup  
in all emptiness  
and find it fuller, sweeter,  
beyond zero,  
the joy of negative delight -  
then into sedimentary shadows,  
I'll hunt the last drop  
of doubt  
that vanishes when this movie  
plays, dreams,  
invents another wrinkled  
pathway  
in the gray jewel.

\*

1988

This poem is based on the Japanese Zen empty cup tea ceremony.

## Corrective Vision

The doctor numbs me proper,  
tells me I look *great*,  
lances a cyst pulsing  
above a chestnut iris, mercifully  
blackens my eye. At last,  
I weep with allergies,  
allergic to myself.

And in rosy light,  
despite my laser-induced  
twenty / twenty vision,  
my world spins too fast:  
I cannot see this woman I am  
quite.

Circa 2004



too eager to perk nanny for tenure,  
and mend sentence fragments,  
with the jasmine of my bones.

## OUR TIME PASSING

What time is it?

I am lost without my wristwatch,  
although sometimes I race back  
into warm folds of flesh  
where a clock hardly matters.

This panic is like a virus -  
time is slicing, slicing.

Fortune cookies fall from the sky.

I eat them until my tongue is inked  
and lips bleed, paper-cut.

Breakfast already?

Yes, why fast?

What time is it?

Time to love:

I feed the meter, the bomb ticks.

I want to read the runes of the body  
with astonished fingers,  
and fish pearls of resuscitation  
from the bitter husk of sky.

In our fantasy, the King and Queen  
become squatters in the fourth , better fifth dimension;  
they manufacture, then manipulate their own time.

But tonight such realities exhaust us.

I unplug the clock, plug in the windmills, order  
take out like Cinderella, cracking open the poufy  
pig of science and charging with the loot of its guts—  
stop. Breathe.

Take off that bra; it's strangling your heart.

Squeeze limes over quartz, ensoul the ultimate cacti lover.

Bleed for him.

Sundial old friends, and while you are at it – phone home,  
Sweetie. Your stars appear,  
like salt spilled.

Now revel in the translucency  
this ruby

semaphore  
breath of perpetuity  
just stop  
the only time we were made to make.

\*

1988-2013

## **After the Heart Attack**

I stay late up listening to his snoring, celebrating each breath.  
Like confetti, free tickets for flatulence, rain down from heaven.  
Oh, farts of life! Sweeter than roses. Orchestras of trolls blast their tubas,  
And I would not care if shit hit the ceiling.  
He makes me want to cry, guffaw, and fart, too, in concert.  
He belches at the table, no last suppers, no zephyrs here –  
as our first and only born lectures her father on manners, hidden or forgotten.  
Let toads of all colors and spots and stripes fly out of his mouth,  
nose, thundering anus.  
My love is alive.

2/8/13

## Eviction Letter

Dear Tenants:

Your rent is now two months overdue. The mother moon is watching you, dripping the pure perspiration of my only cottage industry, that house.

And my cats are watching you, as their chow bag dwindles. They made that garden where your dog now craps.

I know that the silver maples miss me -- and the holly, the heather, the mints with their naked imperialist intentions, the experimental roses of neon coral, the cream bruleé of wild petals, the elemental tears, the astrologer's amethyst in hot lavender draughts, the bobcats' catnip, even the slugs. Pay up or get out. You rent the bedroom where my mother died. Give me my grand, or if you continue to deceive, the roses will bare their fairy tale thorns, the garden itself will show its teeth, white roses like her bed sheets, my mother's legacy, a widow's townhouse, my marriage hut, earned by unbreakable labor, two generations, the check of a life remembered, in monthly installments, cat turds turned to pearls. Life is never no deposit no return; yes, our debts must be paid in real time: I tell you my checkbook quivers. I send you love. And justice. And thirty days' notice.

Yours truly,

The Witch

## **Jolie's Rabbits**

Dreaming,  
she listens  
for the song of rabbit monks,  
snow-cozy  
self-bundled,  
redundantly amorous,  
these herb-fed communists  
the honey-pelted  
wild bunnies  
of our bygone backyard.

Jolie,  
my silver tabby,  
will be twenty years old  
this August,  
and still  
the solitary queen of her instincts  
opens her pink mouth  
in luscious expectation  
of the hunt  
she has not forgotten  
in this city apartment,  
stuffed plush  
with artificial animals.

## RITUAL BEFORE SLEEP

For Kimba, tiger of my heart  
(1985-1992)

My back  
bristles against his damp chest,  
our bodies, question marks,  
near sleep.  
Our cat,  
who is blacker than the darkness,  
arrives between pillows,  
confidant of her place,  
gold eyes defying  
the lack of light.  
She comes to sing,  
to reaffirm that first touch.  
A rough tongue anoints us -  
licks away the seed of nightmares.  
But like happiness,  
she finishes quickly  
and leaps into the larger darkness.  
We clasp each other closer,  
our only defense against loss,  
and pull the cord,  
falling net-less  
into sleep.

\*

1988- 93

## HALE-BOPP

Humanity needs some angel food and we need a the wizard sous-chef, star-maps with rabbit or worm- holes, that open like pilgrim motels.

Have you beheld the millennial comet cutting through these April skies with its mystic lip?

It comes with a mission in its frozen fire, kissing the world awake: candy- apple-red alert, heaven's blood in cascade, watch the skies' carnival.

The horizontal Ferris wheels are coming with moon-high angels in cotton candy bathrobes. And they are landing in your yard.

\*

1998

## **Eye of God**

The saucer, a silver eye, slides out from behind its cumulus veil over the A & P in a Bayonne, New Jersey parking lot, where Bruce Springsteen, legend goes, lost his virginity for the third time. Look not to these concrete heavens without the eyes of the past and contact lenses of an impending age, for this is the end of time.

The shiny lentil winks at me, knowing I see -- and then slips back behind the pregnant clouds, unzipping itself back into a dimension of secrets, knowing, yes, that I identify.

## MADONNA IN THE MOUNTAIN

(In the strip-mines of Northeastern Pennsylvania, any time like now)

And when I climb  
again  
to find you,  
the hills are sharp,  
the graves are pits,  
deep as blood.

And when I touch  
your face  
all around me,  
the mountains I suckled,

you become a map of scars.

## OPENING

Blood  
to song  
my metered breath  
turns chaotic  
a baby's house overripe  
its sap dried up

something says it's late  
beyond time  
so hurry now please

in blood to song  
she beyond me somehow emerges  
thirsty  
famished  
readier than I  
am  
screaming like a ruby  
carrying the prayer  
we composed outside of time:

an end to pain.

\*

1996

## **SORRY**

I'm sorry he or she says all over again  
sorry for everything past, present, and  
future perfect  
sorry for feeling sorry about everything  
smashed and retrieved  
so sorry with roses and gluten-free carrot cake and reincarnation  
only I remember everything  
without anesthesia and live it in my bones  
until I'm purple  
and then when can I get drunk  
on a word so empty?  
Sorry.  
Yes, I know.  
Never again.

\*

1997

## RSVP

Marry, friends  
Marry the idea  
Vibrate love  
Marry dazzling sequined  
A Virgin again  
No matter what  
How little or how much  
Before or after  
Love vibrate  
To a particular frequency  
& never breathe  
To another for another  
By another's lips  
Marry with the pastels  
of a honeymoon sky  
and tropical latitudes  
call in Martha Stewart in Jimmy Choo  
or pay less,  
This time --  
dance the Pennsylvania Polka  
with a member of the modern clergy  
and lottery-lucky-lawyer, lusting after your demise  
stand like a statue of modern attitude  
underneath the negligée  
of prenuptial armor --  
crack amorous, if not pornographic jokes  
about the husband and bleached bride.  
Marry with skyscraper tortes  
and the royalty of these worn down hills  
spinning like hooch dervishes,  
all your guests  
to a band rented from the Pocono  
satellite of Caesar's Palace  
Marry in secret in a Tiffany chapel  
or elope as if you have something to obscure.  
Let them wonder...  
Give them something spice-wracked,  
tongue-burning  
to deep dish about .  
And then make them recant when your stomach  
Doesn't protrude "I told you so,"  
according to their timetables.

Okay, I will buy a new vintage dress  
and carry public bouquets -  
but make them everlasting  
molded of good plastic – maybe I'll be lucky  
With flower-heads and tussy mussies.  
Good luck. Yes, I will. I want to be a soldier of  
love's bygone protocols. I'm antique, recycled, a dead language  
in osculation back to life --  
Yes. I do. Count me in.

\*

1999

## Hide and Seek Under the Forsythia Hedge in the Nuns' Yard

He is older than the child hidden, hunted and captured  
in the lush church garden tent of forsythia-gold  
just a game:

a nun rustles by, her wholesome black habit  
would kill them were they not stone-still,  
if she found the pair,  
hiding in this vegetal nook of a  
mostly holy yard.

Understand that he is fifteen,  
and she is nine, mere moons away  
from bottle green womanhood,  
and the mulberry umbrella, that long fall of hippy hair,  
buds across the path from the forsythia,  
while his mind jumps wild with purple thoughts  
for the child, who is all cat, bright and feral.

Somewhere behind them,  
across the infinite street, her mother is calling the girl home  
for blueberry pancakes; everywhere something  
is growing, cooking, calling,  
now hungry for another experiment, in the name of  
blue-eyed hotcakes, abrupt S.O.S. and blessed bread,  
she bolts through the deep forsythia, freeing herself of his hard embrace,  
twigs whipping his face as  
the boy seizes the air, falling face down  
into rotting leaves and rat droppings,  
laughing to himself, ---  
*there would be others.*

## **WANTING**

He wants what he wants  
but he doesn't  
know what  
he wants  
only that  
he wants it.

\*

1999

## **Beyond Life's Clichés**

At solar conclusion, in ultimate tally, when we unearth the stone age of our bones, we will float across all bridges without effort or even breath. But that will take an eon of space-shots, a full galactic rotation. Time is mean, essential to itself, and attic junk. You never boogie into or out of into the same hurricane twice.

## **Dearth and Abundance in Jersey**

No longer in need, Sandy walks up Broadway,  
perky as woman can be for a moment when she  
has won a trophy of desire,  
enough for wine and smokes,  
she is waving to us,  
in spandex that shouts every bone,  
dead presidents pack her wishes, yes,  
she can still do the whole room of mobsters, if only her father had not  
broken her arm, redundantly, for an entire year of high school,  
the crack and cast, and blotto of daddy porn  
deflowering no chance of Snow White's resurrection  
in her Barbie coffin, bones find their glue.  
"Why was I born?" she asks me.

## **In the Stream of Consciousness**

I caught Moby Dick,  
and he swallowed me,  
so now I simply stream.

## Hey, What Are You Anyway?

Look:

among Buddhists, I am a black cat in saffron robes.

Among Hindus, I am Lord Krishna's chef,  
flash frying okra in coconut ghee,  
casting fenugreek and asafetida like fairy dust,  
splitting open the fire of unspeakable chilies.

Among Presbyterians, I am akash of karma, and the karma of dharma, a somewhat Christian translator, knitting and unraveling this seemingly endless scarf of free-will, reciting to myself of rosary of déjà-vu, remembering, oh, yes, ***I knew that would happen.***

Among Methodists, I invite John Wesley for tea with lunar frequency.

Among fundamentalists, I am a Shamballa Warrior, filling my grenades with the laughter of the Dali Lama.

Among Jesus Freaks, I bake brownies.

Among shamans, I am the embryo and apotheosis of all animal powers, and pharmacist among reincarnated vegetal souls.

Among witches, and especially the Druids, I trace crop-circled steps, terpsichorean, in the glen with the fairies, and sometimes with Joan of Arc.

Among alchemists, I am the radio telescope atop Glastonbury Tor.

Among the ancient mystery schools,  
in particular the Delphic Apollonian: I am the oracle in sun caves, chewing laurel leaves for visions, endlessly pregnant, with the beloved of Apollo, our goddess, Laurel, Daphne, most adorable.

Among agnostics, I am the seduction of freelance angels.

Among atheists, I am all super-storms contained in a thimble, well-guarded.

Among Jews, I wear Joseph's Coat and then do one hell of a strip-tease.

Among Moslems: I am wildflower skirts twirling, the second coming of Rumi, revolution held in time-sparked DNA and the mosques of mitochondria. I take the axe out of the Taliban's hand before they behead her, and free the women of the world, in the name of the Goddess.

Among those who worship messengers in flying saucers, I gather star-stuff and whip up airy endless flavors of angel food, scattering its crumbs at night to banish all things grey and the vampire-astronaut's invention, that *chupacabras*.

Among Catholics: I am Humpty Dumpty, smashed among a Santeria old friends, holding onto a sky-blue rosary, and several quite potent novenas.

## Last Suppers

A fruitwood table, once beautiful,  
now brittle peach or pear -  
no dinner keeps upon this altar,  
you see, she can't chew or  
swallow or sit up now,  
but life still insists,  
as if trying to conclude with something  
redemptive,  
something that would this disease  
somehow worth the crime.

I must prop her up  
like one of my old dolls,  
and try to nourish my mother,  
her diminishing sixty pound labor,  
with only the ashes  
of my eyes.

**The Persistence of Memory**  
**(After Dalí)**

Digesting the last crumbs of time,  
Clocks, like quantum pancakes,  
melt onto a floor that never was.  
Won't someone help me to remember  
the future  
when I fell out of Pharaoh's sundial?  
2012

## **Faith II**

I strain to picture faith,  
this priceless real estate.

If my mind  
would believe its power,

I might cure  
this crumbling house.

## **Incommunicado**

For Annette

Old friend,  
we are busy,  
we are prodigal.  
You think of me, but can't remember  
a face.  
But I am here - a ghost of old geographies.  
Now your word comes with wings  
and guns,  
a postcard of the desert blooming,  
places I might never smell,  
taste,  
caress..  
But your message is received without  
pilgrims in straightjackets,  
I am happy  
that your body "has never been happier."  
I am happy  
we still exchange sparks  
and thorns,  
like ages past,  
I trust in something  
vanished,  
perhaps a vow.  
So, I've memorized where you live,  
no matter where the postmark touches down.

## Her Garden

Untouched is how I see her  
now retouched, always focusing  
until the picture blooms  
in hymns and sighs,  
when this heirloom ripens to blush,  
never the same molecules  
of need, oh Lady Moon,  
I wear this big dress  
to hide the wild fields.

1998

# Post Scriptum

## The Test

Come back down, or give up stand down  
hands up, slave, don't stand down, when the coup was just an arrow away,  
when the revolution knew what was right in your blood,  
when your voice cracked with fury fracked to fire,  
when you could have occupied and gone nouveau native,  
scalped all that was arbitrary and unexplained in the Plantagenet,  
the one who covered your white flag with the excrement  
of afternoon rhetoric, only you had the power, just you,  
to be American is to live revolution, every minute,  
to topple what it totalitarian, to seek the most  
ball-withering answers, when all authority stands for God,  
the makers of this land buried that useless God,  
in the beauty of their atheism, they would kneel  
before no Plantagenet, they would take no no for an answer, oh baby, oh Babies,  
to replace it with the democracy of rolling stones,  
oh school of rock, guitars aflame, drums given to beats of self-flagellation,  
we stopped the war,  
we took bullets, can you revert to Father Knows Best? They reincarnated as hippies,  
to break the war, and they birthed you.  
Did America give birth to you?  
No ,embryos cannot return  
to the womb, the test, to be American is to live revolution,  
to embrace disobedience, to evolve, every minute, to free the slaves, to eviscerate  
every religion and ghost of religion that commands your obedience  
and takes your freedom in return -- but  
the sun ceased to polish your moment when you represented all that is the future,  
when you became Swiss and returned to the bomb shelter caves of Switzerland,  
a place to hibernate or turn cryogenic, rich and cozy in robes of neutrality.  
Live free or die. To be American is to live revolution every second.  
Yeah, Baby.  
You went back to class.

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## COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

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Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.