

CARTOGRAPHY

Poems

Priya Muduli



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Foreword

They told me poetry doesn't pay the bills. I told them reality doesn't pay the soul. This is my second ledger of debts, desires, and dandelions. It's a bit messier than the first because I've stopped cleaning the windows and started looking at the dirt. If you're looking for 'gentle tomes' and 'kind heroes,' you've wandered into the wrong terminal. But if you've ever felt like a 'myriad ruin' reborn after dying a thousand times—welcome home. Mind the greased nails on your way in.

Acknowledgement

I am told it is customary to thank a village for a book. I find this weirdly suspicious. Writing is not a communal sport; it is a solitary confinement I chose for myself. Therefore, I have no gratitude to spare for 'rocks' or 'mentors' this time around. I have only a nod for my daughter, whose inexplicable desire to see my name on a spine is the only reason this book didn't end up in the fireplace. To the rest of you: you are holding the book. I have provided the words. We are even. The sun will still set in the grey.

Preface

I once had an 'honorable wish' that this book would touch souls and evoke real emotions. I've since recovered from that particular delusion.

You are standing at the entrance of a book. Do not expect it to breathe for you. If these words 'encapsulate' your mind, that is your concern, not mine. What follows is not a 'beautifully crafted' sanctuary, but a ledger of things that refused to stay buried.

I have spent countless hours in rumination, not to offer you solace, but because the silence was too loud to endure. Within these pages, you will find the human experience stripped of its decorative paper. There is nature, yes, but it is the kind that bites.

Read if you must. Connect if you can. If you find yourself moved, try to stay upright. The floor is hard.

Table of Contents

Existential and Identity	1
1. The Dreamer	2
2. The Empty Era	4
3. The Art of Unbecoming	6
4. Ghost Geography	8
5. Psychomachy	9
6. Architecture of Void	10
7. The Infinite Tree	11
8. Dolls Made of Grief	12
9. Caustics Art	13
10. Hymns of The Uncounted	15
11. Truth of Multiverse	17
12. Maple's Rhyme	19
13. The Myriad Ruin	20
14. Solivagant	21
15. The Alchemy of the Void	23
16. Song of Gravity	24
Love and Longing	25
17. Violin's Lament	26
18. The Grammar of Almost	27
19. Persuasion	28
20. Love	29
21. Withered Rose	31
22. Waiting Under The Almond Tree	33

23. Forbidden Touch.....	35
24. The Door.....	37
25. Song of Plead.....	38
26. The Honeyed Ruin	40
27. Scented Cinder	42
28. Monsoon	44
29. I am waiting.....	45
30. Black Magic.....	46
31. The Maroon Shift.....	48
32. A Glimpse Unveiled.....	49

Melancholy and Grief.....51

33. Cardamom's Kiss.....	52
34. Endless December.....	53
35. Ode to Suffering.....	54
36. Unread Verdict.....	55
37. Departure Hour	56
38. Jitters & Butterflies	57
39. Monoliths of Melancholy.....	59
40. The Proximity of Ice.....	61
41. Unworthy Shell's Worthy Shade.....	62
42. The Mirror and The Frost.....	63
43. The Stagnant Season	64
44. Unmade Bed.....	65
45. The Pyre of Autumn	67

Dark and Gothic 68

46. Stench.....	69
47. Pearl Drops.....	70

48. Era of Ruins.....	71
49. Rose-Red Pain.....	73
50. Redact the Reminiscence	74
51. Mysterious Evil	75
52. Hanged Till Free.....	76
53. The Beautiful Poisoner	77
54. The Anatomy of the Dagger.....	78
55. The Scarlet Ledger.....	79
56. The Opera.....	80
57. The Lunatic Woods.....	81

Trauma and Survival82

58. June 25th.....	83
59. A Gullible Child	84
60. The Pastel Drowning.....	86
61. Fractured ‘Love Chunks’	88
62. The Little Hurricane.....	90
63. Marbles.....	92
64. Salt and Pepper	93
65. Possessed.....	95
66. Ghost of Childhood Friend.....	97
67. Apartment	99
68. The Menagerie of Sheets	100

Social Commentary..... 102

69. Frictions	103
70. Reasonable Mankind.....	104
71. The Architecture of Repetition.....	106
72. The Greased Nail	107

73. Facade of Virtues	108
74. Gate 17: A Soloist's Terminal.....	109
The Dancing Puppet.....	111
Lonely Longing Eyes	114
Solo Flight Ahead	116
Inspired and Experimental	119
75. Winter Tote.....	120
76. The Liquid Art	122
77. Heaven's Beloved Bluebell.....	124
78. The Secure Estate	125
79. The Patient Oxidation	128
80. The Liturgy of the Standing Oak.....	131

Existential and Identity

1. *The Dreamer*

Let me be the mess, the saddening.
Let me be the darkness beneath the candle,
and the sprawling sunlight on meadows;
the chilling fear of being lost.

Let me be the winter: freezing air, snowflakes,
the scarred moon, the monstrous mountains.
The beauty in the eyes of those who espy—
If only I can be.

Let me be the dried stain of blood,
the most alive river,
the windows with downpour views,
swaying curtains and chipping walls.

Let me be the soft, the honeycomb, the dead flesh.
The glowing skin
and the first sight of love; the choking dust,
the surface rough, the feet, and the footwear.
The suffering and the bliss.

Let me be all of it.
The tears, the smile,

the haunting mansion, the stranded lighthouse,
and the rogue clouds. Let me be all
and all until I feel myself everywhere, nowhere—
Yet shackled, sitting with blues without identity.

Let me be the believer,
the destroyer, the mender,
the dreamer. That is what I am good at.

2. The Empty Era

I have seen the empty things:
the bottles, the files, the shelves.
The roads that go nowhere,
The woods stripped bare.

I have heard the empty sounds:
the void that hums, the breeze,
The wind chimes with their hollow song.
All noise, and no music.

I feel it now—a silhouette—
not a companion, but a fact.
I always knew it would arrive
after a certain point. A knowingness.

This is the empty era.
Look at the heart, the eyes.
See how the beliefs have gone.
Trust, hope, prayer, the pages of a book—
all flawlessly empty.

The lips have forgotten words.
The tongue is a stone.

Even the distant noise falls short.
There is no one to call - nothing to express.

The pen is dry, a hollow bone.
And still, it fears its only purpose:
to stain the white page
with a dreadful truth—
this empty testimony.

3. The Art of Unbecoming

The rotten food,
The stain of long departure,
I yearn to be that,
A silence on the platter.
Those frantic hands that sketched impossible portraits.
A chaos of creation, no academy permits
I wanna be that.

The crescent waning moon,
No lover stops to praise
A silver scrap retreating from its blazing days.
I wanna be that.

That Sunday evening everyone hates,
-a closing door,
The heavy, blue-dark dread of having to want more.
I wanna be all of that, all of those, incompletely
complete.

A vessel drained of hope and counterfeit sweet.

I wanna be perceived correctly incorrect-
A perfect failure, a flaw the mind can't wreck.

An art with hunger gnawing at the canvas edge,
A silent scream unheard beyond the window ledge.

A truth that no one believes, a whispered, barren thing,
A hollow bell that only winter winds can ring.

4. *Ghost Geography*

The unusual grief's silence, a parchment pale,
A ghost geography—a city's stilled tale.
Upon the vellum skin, the trembling ink lines
Trace a blueprint where no sun ever shines.
The engraved compass marks a "proper" square,
Yet no soul breathes that stagnant, carbon air.

It feels the phantom ache of unbuilt streets,
Where ghosts of rhythm skip their hollow beats.
Blue veins for rivers that will never flow,
Beige dust for valleys where no grasses grow.
The "well-mannered" mock this paper-bound art,
Calling it "useless"—a map with no heart.

But the ink is restless; it refuses to dry,
A black hemorrhage beneath a paper sky.
Lakes filled with dark honey, viscous and deep,
Guard the secrets that the unbuilt must keep.
It waits for a traveler, rugged and lone,
Whose fingers are dust, whose heart is not stone.

Is it a haven, or a geometric prison?
Awaiting the soul of a traveler unrisen.
Harder to break than a rampart of stone,
The Wall of Ink stands—silent, and lone.

5. *Psychomachy*

The wind's harsh struggle, the vacuum hangs still,
The leaves descend, where autumn lovers thrill.
The moon and the sky, in constant, silent strife,
Eclipse the Stars—a tragedy of life.
Between the Man and God: a war to yield,
Where neither side surrenders on the field;
For who has felt the "Other's" soft embrace,
Or seen the Mercy in a rival's face?

The Universe observes its own intricate cob web,
with infinite reserves, in every silken curve.

I stand and mock the greatest war of all,
A jester's tale, a melancholic fall.
The body and the soul: a bitter plight,
Two ancient ghosts who grapple in the night.
This restless peace, this journey I must fly—
The endless battle: my Psychomachy.

6. Architecture of Void

There must be a world
beyond this crimson sky,
its red horizon bleeding like a wound
no bandage holds.

A realm stripped bare of air and water,
those petty tyrants of the flesh—
lives no longer choking, frayed,
dissolving into dream's faint dismay.

Emptiness scattered like autumn leaves,
unbiased, stained with old beliefs,
their rages spent, turned to ash.

There, eyes would open clear,
hearts withhold their ancient mourn;
fingers trace the quiet edge
where souls, at last, need not stand alone.

7. *The Infinite Tree*

The sky's blank stare—a glass indifference—
In summer's blue and thunder-gray of showers.
The grasses stand in stiff, green pride,
Unlike the leaves, whose destiny is a descent,
As if they never truly held a place.

The swaying branches whisper to the air,
A liturgy for birds with long, chromatic notes.
The dusty lanes and streets long for the lake,
That sapphire calm where sky and water meet,
By the sun's cold diamonds blest.

Lives breathe in a rhythm of "on and on,"
An unseen presence, ghostly and unborn.
The mighty universe—an unwatered tree—
Awakens in the skull's dark space.
The blank stare of the sky is carried home;
The cosmos, in its grand, internal theater,
Simply loves to dance within.

8. Dolls Made of Grief

I remember the old me—
The lost, the disposed of, the grit.
A puzzle of splintered parts
Where the pieces no longer fit.

I am existing now.
In the shadow of a purple bag,
A small girl walks in my stride,
Tugging at the heavy, velvet lag.

Her face is mine, but the hands are bare
Of the old sand and the marble's leaf.
She carries the sharp, white origami
And dolls stitched out of grief.

9. *Caustics Art*

A portal hangs suspended there—
Divine, or perhaps a gold-lit snare?
Hard to name the truth for now,
Yet liquid wings must follow, and bow.

Where the wall and the ceiling meet,
In a precise, stone-cold greet,
Holds the sorcery of the sun—
The sneaking, goofy art begun.
The afternoon's heavy, golden heart
Stays warm, and plays its poetic part.

The rest of the Present
is choked with thorns,
Itchy truths and horrifying lawns;
Nothing so white as an autumn bed,
Nothing so blue as the crimson's stead.

The eyes are rebels in this hour,
Desires break from their frozen tower;
The cells refuse to pulse or dance,
Lost in the ceiling's liquid trance.

And the heart— Is slapped back to its seat,
A masterpiece drawn, yet incomplete.
Not by the hand, but by the tongue,
Licking the goodbye while it is young.

10. Hymns of The Uncounted

In each sand grain's whisper,
I've lived a lifetime,
As my steps wade deep,
on the shore's timeless rhyme.

In gentle strides,
my toes applaud each shard,
Treading softly,
safeguarding every hardened guard.

They've journeyed far, weathered and worn,
To cradle what's left of their essence, forlorn.
I pay homage to the ocean's grace, the dunes' gentle
sway,
Gathering in my palm, a fragment of the sea's display.

Some moist, eager to trickle,
Some grains, gleaming bright,
Though I grasp with fervour,
They slip away in their flight.

No harbour do they seek within my grasp's hold,
Free from resentment or fury, divinely bold.

They emerge fearless, but retreat when observed closer,
Ah! A crab, stumbled upon, so dear!

In the ocean's embrace, life and art intertwine,
Within the shoreline's depths, the Universe aligns.
They choose not destruction, but to inspire,
Prompting me for no rage's eruption, but a tranquil
desire.

Despite the crucible's heat and the scars of disdain,
I'll mirror the ocean's flow,
Serene yet potent, ready to bestow,
Majestic strength to alter fate's course,
Subtle force, with nature as its source.

11. Truth of Multiverse

There must be a parallel verse
utterly identical to this Universe;
if not, why haven't we figured it out yet,
that mystic source of optimistic aura
that penetrates our mind, solving tragic emotional
algebra
in our most darkest hours?

There must be a parallel verse
even if, not identical, yet with alike characters;
if not, how by stroke of luck,
we bump into our soul mates,
feels like, we have known them from incessant ages
that revives us with their one single touch,
the single analogy between their hearts and ours?

There has to be a parallel universe even if,
with not alike characters, yet with alike chronicles and
souls;
if not, why it feels like I'm not me or myself,
that "myself" who might be another verse's luckiest elf
yet with identical dreams and sufferings,
homeless and void of beloveds to invest its feelings?

There is a parallel verse
I believe, and you too, not just one, a whole multiverse
and if it's there, why should I feel dejected,
unconsolably shedding my tears?

Why should I be submissive to my fears?
Why should I let my skin get smoked in the fire of avid
desires?
because, at least in one of those verses,
I might be full of life, blooming fully in my existence,
my flaws and my decisions, because one of those verses
would be witnessing me as one of the wildest gallivants
alive.

12. Maple's Rhyme

Who am I when no one's watching?"

My conscious mind wondered,

"A deciduous maple tree

shedding its leaves

in the time of vibrant spring",

My soul promptly answered.

Am I the tree that produces

kindness as my sugar syrup?

Am I the tree that attracts

tourists and lovers?

Am I the tree with tonewood to carry

sound waves or robinhood to bear the criticism?

Am I the tree that produces both whiskey and poison?

Whoever I am,

I am the ancient one

with sad tales of seasons,

My fleeting beauty is destined to live longer

and suffer, once a year.

13. The Myriad Ruin

Encrypted ruthlessly, the reality
The books I would read, decoding
Where angels and demons share a neighbourhood
I would make the demons, comb my hair,
And angels washing my blood.
With uncertainty, fear and agony
Hanging to my throat
I would walk endlessly on the seashore.

Carefree or careful, doesn't matter anymore.
The toes never to question my feet
The chest embracing the heartbeat.
The impressions on the sand grains, not to listen
The screams of horror within.
They won't ask either, therein.

For I am someone, I would never know
Perhaps, I am the one they gaze upon
The ruins, covered with snow
Reborn after dying, myriad
I have been every character
But never without pain and fear.

14. *Solivagant*

A mess, these days, a tangled skein
of endless wonder.

The couch - a bloated spider, bears my lazy weight.

Unread books, like stern, grey judges, stare
with angst, or pity's icy glint.

Words, pregnant with purpose, wait
to scar my rustic diary,
with a wild, unpenning graffiti.

Ages bleed; dusks and dawns
have passed, unmourned.

A mess: my body, soul, and then, this hollow 'I'.
What a cruel parody!

I am unraveling, no longer myself.
This seeking, a ceaseless, frantic pulse—
the woman I was meant to be
outgrows my shrunken desires,
a ghost found only in the pages of novels.
Now, autumn's brutal fall within me,
for those I lost midway,
those discovered in the mid-journey,
and the ones I endure, a slow poison-
they flay me, like empty galleries

where once masterpieces hung.
Yet, something claws me from the brink,
a kiss, perhaps,
within this sprawling chaos.
A kiss of sweet dementia, or
a single, brave garden of buttercups.

15. *The Alchemy of the Void*

I walked past a field of sunflowers.
I found the feeling caught between
The riverbed and the parched bank—
One cracked, the other lost,
Slanting away from the current.

I wore the midsummer's heavy heat,
And stripped the electric sting of winter.
I remember the torn shreds of my history;
The way I had to undress to survive.
I smile, despite the architecture of defeat—
I am alive, even in the dead parts of me.

Emotional slaughter—
And yet I wonder what still has the nerve to ache.
Sometimes it is the melancholy,
Or the alchemy of shadows and the rotting leaf.
Like the shedding of dead skin and old scars,
I craft my favorite void. I step inside.

16. *Song of Gravity*

Perhaps it is the sparrow,
Feasting on the crumbs of human thought,
Sitting bare—a ruminant on the frozen lawn.

The shying honeybees are startled
When the white, fragile, tufted head
Explodes into a thousand tiny wishes—
Before the mind can name it "Dandelion."

How shallow is the math of existence?
The heaps of crunching, skeletal leaves
On the cold ground, gossiping of relinquishment.

But the aerial braids, the hanging beard
Of the grand and ancient banyan tree,
Still offer home to the squirrel, carefree.

Perhaps it is this: the hidden silence,
The gravity of a beauty that requires no effort,
Remaining the same through all the shifting eternities.

Love and Longing

17. Violin's Lament

That love-bound violin
Sacrificing itself to the ear's melody.
A fascinating, love horror—
One lost, close interaction.

Strings trembling to sway the air,
feelings to dance in between.
Suffering, the waves, find a home—
There, afar, they all could see.

Harmonies and melodies, stay still,
None to ask, the exhaust screams.
Now the bow moves, a lament,
bereft of skin's warmth,
It's grief sounding softer than breath.

What was beauty with confession—
each note, a wound reopening.
We all listen for what's left of the soul,
to hear only wood cracking in the cold.
Love, too, chose to be sound—
and so vanished, before it was heard.

18. *The Grammar of Almost*

All this time, living inside the gloom—

I have you,

And yet I don't.

The illusion flowers, fragile and cruel.

My smile learns to bleed salt,

pearls the sea would not claim.

And time, that familiar predator,

halts only to watch

as it races the length of me.

19. *Persuasion*

It feels ecstatic, how his thoughts pour onto paper,
a journal of precious prose, a living poem,
as similar as his cheek pressed to mine,
His chest on my breast—a sublime echo.

It feels romantic, how his words in a late-night letter
stimulate my heart, a constant, low fire,
As similar as his eyes latched onto mine.
We fuse like rain on thirsty soil,
a divine petrichor after a long drought.

It feels dramatic, how his wandering calligraphy
leaves lasting, scary imprints on the page of my mind,
as similar as the salt from his eyes
As he kisses my forehead, my own lips tasting of winter
sun.

It feels erotic, seeing his name signed at the end,
the page bled through with his intellectual ink,
as similar as the ravaging way he makes love,
a forbidden touch like velvet and thorns, blessing my
skin
until my core is filled not just with him, but with his ink.

20. *Love*

I love you.

I love the mirrors of your eyes,
And the eyes that dare to behold you.

I love the blueprint of your skin,
The dark craft of your making.

I love this Universe—this heavy jar—because it holds
you.

I love my own eyes for the crime of seeing you.

I love my cells, those shuddering, white ghosts,

I love my bones, snapping like dry wood to feel you—
A salt-ache, sharper than the last.

I love the pump of my heart, the mechanical breath,
For keeping your ghost warm in my ribcage,
For stitching your name into my lungs.

I love the dawn;

I love the dusk you swallow.

I love the sky—that blue bandage—and the ocean you
dream.

I love the wind, that thief in your hair,
And the maple leaves that fall like red hands when you
sit.

I love your atoms, your microscopic dust.
I love the life that hums in your wires,
And the black dog of Death that follows you.
I will sit in the lap of your ending,
Keeping quiet, a stone by your side;
I would crawl into the mouth of the grave with you.

You see, my love is a hollow thing
That reflects only the light of you.
It is selfless, a stripping of the skin.
I love this paper, this wet ink, this world—
Only because they are the theater where you walk.

21. *Withered Rose*

I found it in the garden—
One violet-pink bulb, half born.
Thorns mistaking its depth for beauty.
A day, meant for my eyes, awaits.

That cloud-veiled day; a deceitful sun.
It glimmered, fully blown, for me.
The pink: ready to fly.
The violet: scared, unsure, and tired.

And I knew you then—
The love I felt long, long ago,
Passing by, oh dearest you!

We had the brightest clocks,
And ethereal conversations—
The beauty and the behold.
I caressed the silk, loved deeply,
Smiled with saddened eyes;
A hefty heart that
Ceased to believe in tomorrow.

The petals fell.

The garden, void.

A heart—forever lost.

And so would you.

Won't you?

22. Waiting Under The Almond Tree

The shackles governed once.
The years were a haunting,
a cold rehearsal until the breakthrough.
Then, my feet—propelled by a starving heart,
or perhaps by a ghost-light—
landed me here, in this surreal geography.

I was a traveler meant for departing.
But the soul stayed, stilled by a love
too resonant to be merely fact.
Now the summer rains begin—an evening of theater—
where the street exerts its heavy pressure,
and the cafe offers its dark, selective repose.

Beneath the massive almond tree,
the leaves drop in a rhythmic shedding;
pale petals and green sighs falling like confetti
to dull the shriek of the metro rails.
The sky spills its pearlish haze,
a glazing of the world, a testimony, they say—
yet it touched me not at all.
I watched the streetlights slick the pavement,
looking only for the beauty I had practiced in my sleep.

For years, my carefree self, lived in a fever,
scratching at emotions until they bled into ink—
the sacred, aching wish to be pulled from the crowd,
to be known by one pair of eyes among the hundreds.

Then the smile. Then the arrival.

He stands behind the high wall of my bashfulness,
a figure composed of silence and heavy, amber light.
The almond tree bows, caught in the wake of him.
His eyes are louder than the word love;
they are a mirror where I finally recognize myself.
The love is louder than the sight of him—
It is a pulse, sharp and distinct,
yet—like the rain—it is the only truth I have ever known.

23. Forbidden Touch

It feels ecstatic, similar
The way his cheeks touch mine
And these thoughts I read on a paper,
Written journal, prose and poems.

It feels romantic, similar
The way his eyes
Get latched into mine
And his words stimulate
My heart all night.
The newsletter I hold,
That I had subscribed.

It feels dramatic, similar to
How his eyes drain brine
While kissing my forehead,
Worshipping my lips
And his calligraphy
That leaves a mark on my mind.

It feels erotic, similar to
How he makes love to me,
The most dreadful way, my mesmerised skin

I feel when I see his name signed
The page, the letter, the journal
Be blessed, bled and soaked with his
Intellectual ink, the similar way
My desires core get filled
With his forbidden touch.

24. *The Door*

I hear them open the door.
The decision to descend,
leaving the door ajar.

They have chosen to remain afar—
not as an acquaintance, but as
a concluded star.

They leave, they are gone.
Like monsoon cotton,
moving, floating on the mountain's crown,
A possession – the wind disowns.

I smile. They always drive away
to learn, down the hill,
the grammar of love.
And I am the lesson they leave behind.

My gaze, a blank page,
fixed on the door,
on the persistent ache of the ajar.

25. Song of Plead

Let's play the melodies—
Some more, some more.
Let's kiss the memories—
Some more, some more.

Let's slay the thoughts,
A little more, some more
Let's detangle the knot
Where the innocent, broken hearts rot;
A lot more, some more—forever.

Let's lick the wounds
That you have of the gone.
Let's fight for the sand dunes
That are left of us to mourn.

Let's mend it for a pair of wings, anew—
Once more, once more.
Let's make the wings fly to freedom,
One last time. One last time.

Will you be here? Tell me.

Will you help me find you—and me?

Some more, A little more.

Let's write a story,

Immortal and incomplete.

Some more. Once more.

Once more, once more.

26. *The Honeyed Ruin*

The biggest tragedy is this:
To love the one—to be the very love—
That is architected to ruin you.
To stand as the unloved witness,
Watching the endings of others
While kissing the mouth of your own solitude.

You hold poppies
Between your lips like a secret,
Eyes dreaming the impossible,
Hallucinating a devotion
Never destined to be discovered by the light.

Your hands pretend to be warm,
Reaching for the one you long to drench in lilies—
Flowers dipped in the golden comb of honesty,
A nectar sweeter than any honeyed lie.

But the gut holds a double-edged blade.
It carves a reminder into the bone:
That no matter how many cells or atoms you offer,
No matter how many lilies or poppies
Stood witness to your "Spring Bookish Love"—
The truth remains cold.

Sadly, the blades are always mistaken
For vibrating, hopeful butterflies.
You felt the sting and called it a flutter.
For this tragedy was always meant to be yours,
And my love—this love—was never meant to be.

27. Scented Cinder

Bloomed to an aroma,
Ablazed branches for an embrace.
A green weather, wheezing monsoon breeze—
A silhouette walked away,
Haunting the fragile, pale parts of me,
Shackled in a moment of blooming love.
Racing the time lever toward no future.
A presence—once a sane breath, free of knots—
Abandoned me; hopes severed like a dead log.

Never to fear hell.
The love for a smiling silhouette,
Gazes endless, yearning in pain.
No recognition left to be picked—
Not in giggles, nor in blank stares,
Not in silence, nor the silent screams.
Self-realization lost between pretending and surviving.
The alchemy is to blend the silhouette into the stranger,
A stranger to my own bits and spirit.
Mortal covetousness is all that remains,
Then, now, forever.

The exhaustion of a kettle, pouring into curiosity's cup
Now, only fragments of places and feelings,
Fights, memories, and people
Ever loved and lost.
Atoms stitched together: A beaded necklace of
emptiness,
A cursed relic of all times.
Searching for a home, a beautiful neck for escape,
Turning cells cruel, filling the abyss with a void.
Love is parched, feared and disposed of.
The lips still smile and smile.

Believing there's nothing more magical
Than a cosmic alchemy: an unloved person worshipping
people,
Over and over again.

28. Monsoon

Of all the Junes I can't forget
The one spent, eyes blinded
Blinked with pixie dust grinding within,
Writing a triolet on my cheeks,
Each time, my heart ached.

The mysterious mist, afloat,
Kissing the smoky funnel, blending in
For a divine petrichor, dreaming, dreaming!
The June - when the sun considered to be kind-
Thy feet discovered my porch's wooden flooring,
Each step closer, my heart sunk to the creaking.

The "touch-me-not" peeping, swaying, shying away
My ears embraced the soft, loud joy
My arms stretched with all parched hope,
Thou walked away, under the strawberry moon,
For the keys to be left behind, the bitter blood spell.

My blinded eyes, overjoyed, built a nest
Out of all ablaze dreams
Humming for the rest of the year
But all the Junes I can't forget.

29. I am waiting...

My hands like moths, against the glacial pane,
Flutter & freeze, a desperate yearning game.
You swore, my darling, in that fevered vow,
Your hand would be the warm anchor,
The moment, the chills would make me drown,
Darling, where is your hand?

My lips, crackled shells on this bone-dry shore,
Long for the music, they once could implore.

My heart, a timeless art, stranded within a living corpse,
You swore my darling, a solace, a sweet sound,
When silence choked me, your ear would abound.
Darling, are you listening?

For I am waiting & waiting, and the hours bleed
Each drop a tear, a desperate, unmet need.

30. *Black Magic*

A lifetime lived in each other's filming gaze,
In the dazed yearn, the unspoken haze,
The unseen tears, the saddening Fall,
The December's frost,
The vibrant Spring, the stubborn Sun,
And the nimbus rage, the tempest's Thunder.

I could promise this, my little finger
Squeezing a drop of blood,
An oblation, an ornamentation.
Proudly, a tearful glee for
You would find your wandering way to me
I would find my unfound home in you.

My longing, your desolate street
To keep on walking, on and on
Till I find my abode - 'You'
Standing in the heart of the vast meadow
Looking at me, confound -
A feasible uncertainty,
Like the swaying buttercups.

Our feet to surrender, to the gravity, the cold grass
Our souls breaking free,
Emotions caged within, the unseen bars.
No word, to be uttered, unbidden gesture,
Silence awaits the slumber.
While we share the agony, the tender smiles, the pixie
dust
The severance's ripples and shudder.

A dusk, till dawn, not enough
The moon, the night creatures-
The surreal metaphors, hear us
Basking in words, missed in that lifetime.
We speak, void of sounds and syllables
Our eyes to film, an idyll still,
The nostalgic frame holding you and me.

31. *The Maroon Shift*

The shirt is a bruised maroon, a heavy wine,
Sleeves folded back with a butcher's precision.
Below, the trousers—white as a hospital sheet,
White as an eye before it learns to see.
He stands like a pillar of salt or a dream
I am forced to wake from.

My eyes are two candles in a draft—
Tallow running, the fire-wick drowning in its own fat.
I am melting, a soft wax doll
Against the cold, metal ribs of the turnstile.

Then, the spectacles—those twin, clear moons.
Misty, transparent, a pair of glass lungs
Helping him breathe in the sight of me.
The dream is thin, as any phantom's breath.
The mystic films, clicking shut.

His smile, his arms barred across his chest—
A pleasurable laceration on my heart.
A beautiful, permanent fixture
That stays on the platform, burning,
Until the crowd becomes a monster, eating me out of his
sight.

32. *A Glimpse Unveiled*

I knew, but didst thou truly know?
I saw things in that hallowed glow-
The stillness, the close proximity's hold,
Secrets thy heart believed untold.

With lids half-drooped, a feigned repose,
The carolling throng, as daylight closed,
The famished feline, the owl's soft flight.
The speeding carriage, a flash of light,
The setting sun, impatiently it yearned—
Of these, my soul, now deeply learned.

I marked the fingers, circling mine,
A touch so strictly, yet gently divine!
A moment painted, hues of naive grace,
Modesty's blush, upon thy face, I trace.
I knew, I saw it all, my dear,
But didst thou? Didst thou see it clear?
Thou deemed I slumbered, lost in dreams,
Yet I, in truth, saw all that seems.

Thou thought I thought thou thought I dreamed,
And in soft slumber, blissfully reposed.

Those loving touches, light as air,
On tender clefts, beyond compare-
I knew and saw these things unfold,
But didst thou, love, thy truth behold?

Melancholy and Grief

33. Cardamom's Kiss

A kiss of cardamom
on the winter breath.
It lives in the cells of a sigh.

The jar does not seal.
Its lid—a silver question—
waits for the answer of a hand.

Apricity at the window.
Gold light finds it:
this vessel of restless seed.

All morning it practices
the one lament:
how a scent can hold
a closed room,
How can a jar keep
a silence,
until a kindness opens it.

And the merge begins—
sun, cold air,
and the lingering ghost
of cardamom.

34. Endless December

Endless seasons bloom
Dawns and dusks, kissing the rooms
Countless births and forgotten deaths
Holding a tome, nothing changes.

Lived, the lighthouses
Wailing silenced,
Falls and blossoms
Crooning for the waning moon.

Months sprinting to meet
The lover on the deathbed
April and August, serendipity's fate
December, the last breath of sigh
A gilded lie of the impending sun,
The New Year's promise
Sounds same, tired yet loud.

The fragile wings
December's hands had spun,
Now merely dust upon the sterile crown.
Spinal thorns, where flesh retreats,
For the last crown of the bone to wear.

35. Ode to Suffering

A disguise of truth, a lie concealed,
A fleeting joy, when wounds revealed.
A phantom's touch, a wet hollow kiss,
A charred dream, a fleeting misty bliss.
A remorseless darkened soul,
With each beat of heart, to be forever missed.

36. Unread Verdict

This autumn is not lost.
It is a needle, stitching its tissue of scars.

A soothing, yes—but in the way of frost
numbing the thorn.
From which a hope, small and cold, was born.

Evenings of mist, that kiss
what the heart cannot confess.
We sat on the sheets, a silence
so deep, the tongue grew heavy with it.

Now the melodies have made a home of my bones.
This is the body's memory: not a thought,
but a longing in the marrow.

To have it back—the undecided future,
the fall that was both falling and growing,
to be that bare thing again,
embraced, kissed,
before the verdict was read.

37. Departure Hour

Let the melancholy waltz,
Little by little, each night,
Inhaling deeply, where it began.
The cold feet spin and sway
Until they feel the searing warmth.
The weary melancholy,
Settling down, breathless vows -
The hour for departure has finally come.

38. Jitters & Butterflies

Jitters and butterflies, once swaddled,
Now muslin hope—it soothes no more.
Eyes will not entwine; the melodies
Are fading into a chaotic roar.
Lips curl; a heavy brow is frowning,
Prepared at last to give it up.
The night sways with appalling truths
Poured into a bitter cup.
The words evolve to a frantic dance,
While darkness grins in a sinister trance.

The butterflies have died within,
Or lie unconscious in the dust.
Revival is fatigued; the giggles-
Are dry and orange-black with rust.
Sleepless neurons, speechless lips—
The cell is silent, the nerves are thin.
While imagination wanders, lost,
Looking for a way back in.

Haunted by the half-thought thing,
The void summons; the spirit flees.

We eschew the converse of the living
To fall on our bruised and shaking knees.
The heart is a deceiver, a spark from afar,
Tangled and rotting in a coal-black jar.

39. Monoliths of Melancholy

A valley of ash-filled pits;
Maple trees stand amidst shying komorebi.
Leaves, parched and heavy,
Hold the weight of ancient sins.

Aches throb in the veins of the grasses;
Dewdrops, rebellious, melt only to breathe.
Frail autumn trembles
As the onset of winter cries.

Moths, the servants of fragile demons,
Flicker and fly, churning the peace—
The clouds burst,
And the chaos of chrysanthemum dies.

Unlike the sweet swans on sparkling lakes,
The reflections of disoriented trees
Pierce and shatter the breeze.
Monoliths of melancholy
Move on tip-toe, where death lies.

The chronicles are endless and fervent;
Leaves and dewdrops smirk in the gloom.

Trees watch the monoliths, refusing to vanish,
While the valley within stays as it is.
A pit grows, consuming the tender anxieties—
Feeding on the dark.

40. *The Proximity of Ice*

That little, surgical touch—
Like the pre-noon sun
On the back of a soggy slug,
Crawling its aimless, silver track.
It is not warmth.
It is a trick of the light.

It is merely the proximity
Of two substantial opposites,
A friction of skins that produces no fire.
The soul is a white room
Where the radiator hisses, but the air stays blue.

There is an icy chill
The concrete and the soil swallow whole—
An enunciation of a word
That was never meant to be spoken.
The tongue is a heavy bolt,
Clicking into place.

Who wants to speak now?
The breeze is a sheet we tear into,
A white noise, a static hum
Felt while walking amidst the dust
Of a world that has forgotten how to breathe.

47. *Unworthy Shell's Worthy Shade*

A dream of dark sand, a heavy shade
Swaying in an ineffable, salt-thick wave.
This bliss was always destined to fade—
Tides and moon, a monsoon too unworthy to save.

The wooden roof creaks its rhythmic complaint;
Moments chuckle as the grey waves soar.
Lost, then found, then lost—a draft, a faint
Stargaze from a roof that can hold no more.

Duskier shades—a rarest, bruising love.
Walls and cloves, freckled like your dark skin.
The cuticles ache for the gold they dream of,
Where the morning glory kisses the brown within.

Sunset glories lie in sunrise stories;
The heart is a ruby, the alchemy stirs.
"What stays, until owned by the sailor's worries?"
Lost, found, and lost—as the eye confers:
You are the shell, and I am the shade that occurs.

42. *The Mirror and The Frost*

The swan's deep love is for the quiet lake,
Not for the river's frantic, thoughtless race,
Ignoring debris and the leaf's sad shake
To find the mirror holding every trace:
The ache of thought, the joy with sting and stake,
And eyes that drink the water's vast embrace.

Her only world—this veiled and secret lake,
Where sun-kissed ripples shiver in their space,
And sprawling waters are the only break.

What frost can grip a heart so lone and stark?
Not the moon's shadow on a lover's bed,
But she: a silhouette within the dark,
Untouched by warmth, though loneliness is bred.
A soul by "burnt-out love" has left its mark;
Each night she waits, no tender comfort fed.

And he who sees her—frozen, stark, and dread—
Drags back the sheet to claim the warmth instead,
Leaving her bare to her unyielding dread.

43. *The Stagnant Season*

A day wasted again,
Like the past months, the past years,
The fruit flies mock my path.
They trail my feet, a small, black cloud
Mapping a track to the kitchen sink.

My footsteps echo—hollow drums.
Time is a rider on a vanished horse,
Purposeful in its desertion.
Emotions lie like unattended laundry,
Bare, lifeless, and losing their shape.
The imprints of old characters
Pike-like bruises against my breasts.

Hefty breaths—a void large enough to kill.
I ache to feel, and then to trust the feel,
But my feet walk aimlessly, a rhythmic ghost
Followed by the fruit flies
Who finds a banquet in my silence.

Like the past months, the past years,
The air has the same, stale scent.
Loneliness sits like a heavy bird on my shoulder,
Hissing its daily ledger: “A day wasted. Again.”

44. *Unmade Bed*

My bed, my beloved
This white square, holding the shape of me.
Letting me sink like a stone,
Cradling the fever of my sick days
Loving me more when I bleed
A crimson bloom on its patient face.

It knows the science of my needs
The when, the why, the unspoken how.
Never to judge, the sour scent of me
And stays firm when a sudden joy
Makes me jump.

Unmade it's a silence - a knowing smile
Made, it speaks my own brittle language.
Never to call, the rumples a mistake;
They are the topography of our nights
The classic art of our embrace.
We press into each other,
A pact of thread and bone,
This warm valley is "yours-mine".

But the scary part
What of the day, I am finally
Lying lifeless, taken to the cast-iron bed,
Memories to fade, existence to cremate.

What if the bed remains unmade,
A permanent scar, a bed of freedom
Will it search the empty air,
For the ash, for the wisdom?

A landscape of despair,
Waiting for a ghost to fill its hollows.

45. *The Pyre of Autumn*

Hauntingly beautiful—
Autumn's disturbing
Truth of the Universe,
Carrying its courage like a weight.

The autumn trees
Shedding their skin—
And the beauty of this sadness
Is praised and adored—misinterpreted.
None sees the feelings
Gathering as heaps of rot on the ground.

Perhaps a wildfire may soothe.
Let me ignite the matchstick;
Let me set you ablaze,
Oh, Autumn trees!
Until your roots can finally breathe free.

No more "beauty of separation."
For letting go isn't a grace—
Your compliments chill my bones,
Feeding on this unfortunate,
Misunderstood beauty.

Dark and Gothic

46. *Stench*

The clock has stopped
And so the river.
Miniscule beauty - worthless flow
Through the cruel, colossal rocks.
Time pities the burning moments.

Pair of eyes: two stones
A throat - a parched well.
This sack of scars - a new skin
A sweet monster born.

The heart, a rock
Watches, the virtuous suffer.
The wind, blind, judges,
Criminal hidden behind curtains.

Hatred is a prized medal,
What a pity!
Love, a piece of rotten meat
A stench, hopeful in my pocket.

47. Pearl Drops

Beauty, a golden curse,
A heart made of feathers
Patina of abandonment within.

Life flies, a blind bird,
Beauty longs to be tainted.
Alas! Life won't stop its barbarity.

A heart beats faint, a soul to explode,
The real terror is not love,
But eyes that see impossible dreams
Around and within.

Dust on the poetic flowers.
Mortals read love scriptures,
Suffer the bosoms
That becomes a fantasy of dreadful suffering.

Inebriated brine, pearl drops
Cough, parched for ages.
How long, the unseen execution?

Let me summon the clouds of swords
to downpour where beauty happens
Where suffering is born.

48. Era of Ruins

A ruined soul, unveiled
A ruin's spectral sight.

A ruin ever ruining
Lost in endless, starless night.

A ruined dream, through
Once believed, a ruin's fading grace.

Ceasing the cruel cycle of ruin's cold,
Relentless embrace.

With love's warm light,
A fragile bloom amidst the ruins' hold.

The ruined heart, now slowly glows,
Brave and fiercely bold.

The ruined part, a phantom weight,
Forsaken case aside.

The ruined fragments of what was,
shattered, torn and wide.

The ruined echoes of lost laughter,
Weary, faint, and low.

Relinquished finally to ruin's heart,
The final, fatal blow.

49. Rose-Red Pain

I found an endless comfort in loving,
infatuated with its invisibility—
the love people rarely talk about.
Except for sighs, when lungs feel malnourished.
I'm in the mood to bleed,
perhaps endlessly, to become a veteran
skilled at chewing the stones of suffering.
For the eternal scars and shreds of my fate,
my hollow heart with its rings,
the age of invisible love—
Some days, suffering would be the stitches,
And some days, a canyon to bleed.
And then one day, the invisibility ebbs.
Suffering sits, turning to rock,
surviving through all times and ages.
Everything about it is black,
except its core, where comfort still breathes
and hope in limbo,
a rose-red shade, smiling silently, infallibly,
the rose-red shade.

50. Redact the Reminiscence

Restless raven, ruminating remote,
Reaping rare, rigid rhythms.
Revenant ruins, raging red,
Reeling reverberations—razing the roses.

Rote! Rote! The reflective roots
Ransom for reconciliation.
Relics and riddles, a rusting reef;
Registering regicide—redundancy.

In respite, the ravenous raven
Ruptures the rectum, reviling the roles.
Regulating revoke, regaling the rats,
Recognizing the rout, the raven rests—
Redacting every reminiscence.

51. *Mysterious Evil*

The facts turn grit upon the tongue, unrecognizable—
coarse grains of silt and the heavy, weeping base.

Bruised petals curl in twilight's ink-black hush,
Embers of forgotten roses smouldering to ash.

In pursuit of a fleeting, tender apricity,
the wanderer unspools—
shedding skin like silk among the jagged boughs of grief.

Scented thorns pierce the veil of dusk's faint sigh,
Where embers' hush cradles the soul's veiled cry.

Not dead enough, the charred hope, tries to fly
And grief stares blank, with eyes like sun-bleached bone,
Counting the seeds of the harvest it has sown.

Yet stars withhold their indifferent gleam,
As barren winds reclaim what sorrow deemed.

The wrongness rejecting - the wings' nerve,
the ground with hot cinder's aww,
mystery of evil, waiting to devour.

52. Hanged Till Free

The inevitable haunting oblivion
Pulls the strings of my eyelashes.
The three dusty aerator blades hanging inverted
The bland roof walls staring emotionless.
Morbid eyes, mine, deferred, seeking demise
The tripedal Nkrabea, the paralytic gazes
With grave sinistical grins, a summon, as if, it feels.

I feel helplessly destructed,
The craned neck, looking up, endlessly aches
As the pictures of innocent, teary eyes flash
Imploding my bones into millions of mournful cells.
I hear, within silence, a loud noise
Dragging me swiftly to jump beyond,
Hanging to the end, pale, with the weight of my own.
In the ocean of atonement,
I might find a sip of peace
To soothe my regretful, ablazing anguish.

53. The Beautiful Poisoner

A woman, "not so good"—
But beautiful, even in the marrow.
She scours the shoreline of a long regret,
Gathering pebbles of self-abandonment,
Calcium artifacts, hard to name.

She walks a coast of casualties:
The salted corpses of reality and nerve.
For her, the simple act of existing
Is a slow grilling of the skin—
A scorched-earth policy of the soul.

Hope was the murder-conspirator;
Love was the quiet assassinator.
So she brewed a tea of hemlock and ice
And poisoned them both.
A woman, "not so good,"
Spitting on the white dress of truth,
Wiping her hands of the blood and the brine.
Beautiful, even inside out.

54. *The Anatomy of the Dagger*

Thy life's no soft-paged gentle tome
No heroes kind will e'er appear,
Nor shall you find salvation's home.
Just eyes to hunt in shadows deep reside
Unlike the figures found in tales

Thoughtful longing eyes,
Diving into the soul, deep inside.
The warmth within each leaf turned
Poor thee, pinch thyself awake!

Enduring the biting cold, the burnt truth, in now
A soul's cold wail, thee- hear, hear the ache!
No compassion of caressing pages near,
Just the present dread and chilling fear.

Thy life's no soft-paged gentle tome,
No heroes kind will e'er appear
To extract the dagger shoved into the bones
Thee must acquire the art, the skills
To lick thy unasked wounds,
Thy tongue to wipe the venom'd steel blade clean
The abandoned self,
The kindred, cold bayonet's chill.

55. *The Scarlet Ledger*

Those goddamn splatters—
Not mere stains, but the low whispers
Of a soul unspooling on the floor.
Disturbing. Yes. A raw, red truth
To be witnessed by the sober—
Not the ones dancing to their own frantic clocks.

A sight like a slaughterhouse in a dream;
In every crimson depth,
I howled, wearing my mask of melancholic giggles.
A siren's keening—
From the grey birth of dawn to its dying gasp.
They christened it "The Room of Red,"
My scarlet cage, beautiful and airless.
I drowned in the velvet of it.
But for the eyes that read only hollow art,
This carnage is a forgettable nothing.

56. *The Opera*

I'm uncertain
of the brutality
you might encounter.
When I place my charred truth
in your hands,
you would hold it
with love and care-
I'm certain of this.
Yet, the uncertainty lies there, vague.
The scars are fresh,
and the frozen shards—
of my cursed future and past.

You would be licking them,
kissing along with me,
I know, I know.
But all I see is
another dagger falling in love
with my throat,
moving swiftly forward
for a brandish
to be penned with blood.

57. *The Lunatic Woods*

By silver light, a blessing softly poured,
When Luna's orb is perfectly restored
The dark woods stand, their emerald silence deep,
While on the still lake, pallid glories sleep.
Each full moon night, a spectral grace is known,
A sylvan shrine where peaceful beams are sown.

Trauma and Survival

58. June 25th

A house of a beggar - a giver
Crumbs of love & affection on plates
A facade, full of sham
Years to pass since adolescence
A fossiled heart, true mortal
True to existence,
Looks at the beggar -
Alms and pity offered, to conceal
Exploitation of innocence.
The beggar chugs water
Mixed with sadness and soil,
Each evening, a rattling sound,
The soul hears within,
The shattered shards shudder
Loathe - the numb feeling
Flooding eyes, wrinkled skin,
Chuckles at the fate.
The beggar remembers the date,
June 25th, a journey of uncertain madness.

59. *A Gullible Child*

'Tis what none deserves
The vile prevailing as oxygen
Counting on it, to breathe, anew norm
And here, a hand lifeless,
Unsure fingers, shivering to hold a pen.

Gallivanting proudly- The pain and fear
Back are the brothers of different eras.
Only this time, it's two against one.
Isn't it unfair?

A lane from brain till chest, crawling within,
the diaphragm to be nibbled, gut retching.
For a name unforgettable, echoes of fear
Adding another, a name to haunt again.

Happened the egregious,
a moment of venom cascading
Bound to be chugged, choices countless-
Lying there reckless, giggling.

The destiny had it framed, to be left on streets
Emotionally stripped, abused

Lost, abandoned, wandering, chewing the dust.
Preying eyes, a grotesque feeling
Resurrection awaiting, since how long?
To oblivion, achieved fleetingly each time,
Still a part of being
Stays gullible, disposed off, a scared little child.

60. *The Pastel Drowning*

The metal wardrobe,
My breaths aware of,
The cold and dark space,
I live without dreaming of.
My ash grey skin,
And woollen soft being
Itchy a bit, who I am, within.

The migrated fibres,
Fly to me, I never welcome
Every now and then,
Gifting me – the lint balls.
The ugly greyish fibres
Worn out, wandering once
Fell into the languid fluid
With rigid viscosity,
The pastel paint, marbling
The bucket - a divine galaxy,
From friction to buoyancy.

A traveller, an explorer, my fibres
The blue pastel licked my sadness
And the patterns of mint
Waited to introspect.

The Royal Stain of Magenta's breath,
Kissed every crack of my ruins, beneath,
Upon the ruins, deep and wide,
The Saffron poured its golden tide,
The stillness in the spirit of yellow and white
Met the simplicity of my eyes
With each molecule, it embraced me,
Like a poet under the moonlight.

The long-lost love,
There, my heart skipped a beat
Not a cliché, the lavender-
Felt like the bruise of lost love,
And the pale rose envy of red,
Welcomed me with a warm touch
Felt like home, marbled with melancholy.

Now my lungs are filled
With viscosity, adorable
Suffocating me, yet
Transforming me into a paradoxical marvel.

No more grey, no more longing,
My woollen fibres have surrendered
and so the lint balls,
With a desire, a dream
Beyond the itch of time, and grey, confining walls.

67. Fractured 'Love Chunks'

Mirrors hold still -
A gaze upon the fractured Kind -
Love's brutal shatter -
The massive stone resigned.

Some kissed by Sun -
A sizzle in the fierce Bright -
Some flee and flee -
To river's endless might.

Ground fine as Sand -
A polish cold and deep -
And some there be -
From gentle soul asleep.

Here at the Glass -
A friend with silvered eye -
Chunks blue, and bleed
Hither and thither
Cracked - it falls -
To motes that drift and lie.

Each, crowning the void -

The core - a splintered Thing -
A chunk borne off -
On some new suffering.

Each fragment blooms -
A daily small and white -
To kiss and soothe the hand -
That seeks my shadowed light -
The trauma - silent - clotted tight.

62. *The Little Hurricane*

She speaks a little less these days,
Yet her eyes—marble-like and wide—
Roll louder than the thunder,
With silence as the cloak where angers hide.

Those tiny spheres, that searching pair,
Look for what was missed within the light.
Confined by walls, she sways through shadows,
Gripping window bars against the night.

Even the darkness isn't easy for the lad;
To speak is a mammoth, heavy task.
A frown sits anchored on her brow,
Until a petal-soft peck removes the mask.

Before slumber hits, the morning haunts her—
The weight of dawn on narrow, cute shoulders.
Angst is there, brushing its teeth beside her,
As the day's calculations turn to boulders.

All day she bears the alphabets and sums,
Leaving a single sticker on my bottle's rim.
A totem left behind until the next dawn breaks,
While the light in the room grows dim.

A bottle I hold to chug my own anxieties,
I feel the love amidst the dusty bits.
The glitters remind me,
in the quiet of the knee:
The little hurricane is a part of me.

63. Marbles

There were a few broken teeth,
Scattered on the floor
Like pale seeds.
The blood stain on white marble
Edged with torn gum.

The silhouette, turned inward,
Moved through the silence,
A scavenger of what was lost,
Collecting each piece
That once chewed dignity into dust.

The horrendous gaze
That found me then,
Sharps, unforgiving
Held a recognition.
An image glimmered
And it didn't belong to me.
A ghost in the bone,
A self I had outrun.

64. Salt and Pepper

A frail, weary, grieving soul
Knocks at my door every dawn,
With no other place to go, except my haunted home
It sits at my table, gazes at me endlessly to quench its
thirst,
With the brine sap from my dreamless eyes,
That I fiercely spare on worthless ties.

The frail soul sitting at my table, asks
If I want some peace
I linger in the kitchen to find sugar, out of my caprice,
This time, it takes a little longer than it did, yesterday
I remember, yet again, I go back to the table with pepper.

The weary soul sits patiently at my table,
Noticing that I am left with no sugar
I look at the soul, briefly, eyes filled with fear
With a hope to comprehend,
I step outside, to the porch, to ask the sun for apricity, to
lend.
A long time back, that had already been drained.

The frail soul licking the brine water
With quivering hands, picked up the bottle of pepper

The soul knew I had nothing else to offer,
Hence it asked, how many more of them, I have.
I closed my eyes, squeezing them tight,
With my sharp nails as claws,
I scraped and scratched my scarry skin, and felt the
pride.

The pepper never ran out, as my beliefs never parched
out.

The frail, frightened soul,
Handed me a cup of brine water, of its own.
I smashed it on the floor,
it was dreadful as anything ever known.

The floor slowly got bleached
For the salt, pepper, and red venom in it.
The poor, frail soul held me tight,
Resting its head on my lap,
Took the sighing breath, without a fight.
The soul sits at my table for the one last time,
I smiled at it, kissing its forehead and eyes.

My heart felt the lost beat,
My blurry eyes,
Found the mirror staring back at me
With tiny droplets of conceit on it.
For salt and pepper, my grieving soul had made a silent
visit.

65. Possessed

Nothing makes any sense now—
For hearts have been brutally slashed;
The blood drops are not falling; they are splattering,
Oozing with a deafening silence
That has forgotten the geometry of direction.

Nothing makes any sense now—
For the demons outside are hosting the demon within.
The monsters I once spent my life slaying
Have returned for their cold revenge;
They have possessed the sanctuary of the soul.
My own shadow has committed the goriest of sins—
A genocide of hearts—
While my pride and my morale dissipate
Into the grey indifference of dust atoms.

Nothing makes any sense now—
Not the dreams, the borrowed hopes, or the ancient
traumas.
The very sins I used to protest
Have been pampered into life beneath my own ribs;
They were born from my own pulse.
My stained hands have forgotten how to hold a pen;

My mind has forgotten how to hold its sanity.
The dead half of me simply stares at the living half—
A look of infinite, stone-cold disappointment.

Truly, nothing makes any sense now—
Even my tears are contaminated, refusing to roll.
They go against their holy nature; they refuse to be
truthful.
No one stands in the witness box; no voice offers a
psalm.
Even my inner echo has gone mute.
Purpose is a phantom; dreams are directionless ghosts
Seeking their own assassination.
I wait for the ghastly, purifying breath of the end—
Because nothing,
absolutely nothing,
makes any sense now.

66. *Ghost of Childhood Friend*

She, Who Was and Is
She, I used to walk with,
Each day, to and from, the school.
She'd splinter the quiet with her chuckles,
A chaotic balm, turning heavy darkness to light.
Her skin, the new moon, a deep earth,
Yet she sparked spirits, to sit in flames
Long hair, a river of silk,
And yes, the occasional lice, a tiny trespass.

But never gross. She, my friend,
Taught me the fierce art of surviving the dark.
A fighter, a current, meant to drive.
She, a woman, growing each dusk and dawn,
From friend to foe, to bully, then to empath.
Life carved her hard,
Leaving a heart at the end, worn but whole.

She, my friend, I used to walk with,
Each day to and from the school.
Lost touch, then lost herself.
She, a haunting still,
A moment, an evening's hush,

A laughter, a prize I'd tearfully sing,
A memory to which I'd forever cling.
She loved whole, with the brutal wholeness of her heart.
And for that, she was silenced, disowned.
Disposed of, then murdered.
For being the love, for daring to be in love.
She was my friend, now a soul resting above,
A star, perhaps, in the terrible, vast sky.

67. Apartment

Nights are no more for him
The dawn and dusk aren't a truth anymore
He lives in and out of his bed
Sweat only visits him as a testimony
for his resilience and hard work.
He makes his bed, sees the mess
On the days when he doesn't.
The bedsheet summons his loneliness
Feeds on his warmth
Giving him cold, brutal truth of being alone.
He wakes up and goes back to sleep
Each night, and nights are no more for him.

Mornings, to rinse his eyes
Mere for the art of noticing and functioning
He drives his scooter, what is he looking for?
With a heart full of uncertainties, courage and fear.
He is loved by life's brutal lips
No one believes, neither he does
Until a chascanum flower falls on him
Sitting on his arm's hairy skin
For a while, that feels like home,
Maybe that's what he was looking for.

68. *The Menagerie of Sheets*

A wild soul I keep as a pet within.
Occasionally, I break its stride
With the bit and bridle of my paradoxical wisdom.
Once, I was a creature of righteousness,
Pampered, then thrown to the teeth
By a specific, cold wickedness.

The forest floor is a layer of dried grief:
Some tender monsoon foliage clings to the bough—
All of it felt, a Braille of the woods, unseen.
The wild love has left its geometry:
Scars, mapped on every inch of my skin.

Then you—a monsoon that never breaks,
Drowning the deepest timber of my thoughts.
You felt like home,
a sudden, golden hue—remember?
While the others were wild things with moist,
Uncertain eyes, you were the fire.

A gentle utterance of desire, sitting still,
Waiting for the mouth's soft ignition.

An embrace carried by the blur of the night,
Two poor hearts, in a fever of denial.
And at the end: the wild things, broken,
Tamed animals amidst the sheets.

Social Commentary

69. *Frictions*

No tongue speaks, the friction's necessity
A friction lies in each cell's function.
The thundering skies that hurl hailstones
Once, a sunset sky, red all crimson.

The trees ablaze, writhe in insane storms
Once danced to raindrops and autumn falls.
The dew drops relinquish, the fragile grace
That once kissed the foliage, in a tender's embrace.

The spirits that violently hurt and kill,
Once, cared for and loved, and jotted with a quill.
The abrasion and chafing, a beauty talked less
Brings wrath, followed by existence's silence.

No tongue speaks, the necessity,
But the prior and post beauty,
The sweet settlements and admirations.
Tis' what bleeds stains not just the fabrics and fibres,
Petrifying the beliefs.

The miserable truth of necessity,
Life's silent screams,
Echoes empties, voids cling
Until the tempest of frictions again.

70. *Reasonable Mankind*

Cobwebs cling to corners,
A crippled root, a primitive home -
Where mystic, bitter truth resides,
Silent and lifeless, exhaustion whispers,
That freshness festers, reeks.

Primordial cells,
Regenerate, fueled by egos.
Beauty bloats the skin,
A gilded cage, nothing beyond,
Cells and consciousness.

Kindness and generosity
stare, hollow-eyed, at hope-
Hope, grinning,
With tears that carve deep lines.

Cobwebs gently sway,
Embracing each egocentric stride.
Mankind and humanity,
A purulence show, stench of pseudo-pride.

From dawn's first ray, to dusk's decay,
Virtues ablaze, a pyre in endless nights.
Unreasonable living, entices reasonable mankind
A garden of poisoned blooms, ashes sprawling within.

71. The Architecture of Repetition

You speak of skies and loneliness,
The kissing of blue and bruised shades.
There: the flickering of curtains—
Eyelids and lips, a carousel of cassettes.

Neighbourly faces are flying kites,
While the sky wears a plastic, fake smile.
Fatty hopes bite at the caked walls;
In labouring gardens, the bashful bull calls.

A gift, tainted, left on the wooden stairs;
A nail driven deep for the silence kept there.
All of us: ignorant of the clock's repetition,
Chewing on solitude in our small, boxed partitions

72. *The Greased Nail*

A dandelion, they saw—
Shackles snapped, the cold words spoken,
Seasons and muses, finally disclosed;
An amateur notion, where expression's toes curled.

Thoughts rebellious, white and tufted,
Harnessing the pappus—a silk parachute
For feelings too heavy for this world's gravity.
Salvation in mystic verses, stung by heavenly bees.

A hatred for dandelions, deep and unfathomed;
The birds confer on the Palo Verde branches,
Waiting to harvest the hopeless parachutes—
The loathsome dreams, begging and barefoot.

Now, a single nail is found,
Embraced and greased for the coming strike.
A spike for the haters, a debt for the crew;
For the world is drowning in impossible poetic dues.

73. *Facade of Virtues*

It is a comedy, I think—the way we move through the world on the wheels of our own convenience. We roll along so smoothly, untroubled, over tracks that are both indifferent and rough. We are asleep in our intentions, like a dog dozing in the sun, until that shy and whispering chancellor—Convenience—demands its due. Only then do we wake. Only then do we put on the heavy robes of the philosopher to find a reason that matches what we already wanted.

But listen—the mirror of virtue is not so kind. It does not reflect the easy current of the day. Its image is severe, unadorned, and forged in a different place—in the furnace of the gut, in the fire that tempers the soul.

It is easy to believe the statue of our life is noble when the air is still, and the public square is quiet. We all fancy ourselves worthy of the pedestal when our principles are never asked to bleed.

But it is the tempest, and only the tempest, that reveals the hand of the sculptor.

74. *Gate 17: A Soloist's Terminal*

The Inception

Navigating through Bengaluru's choking traffic haze,
Speeding toward the airport, a bit in breathless haste.
Constant exhaustion and nausea left me dazed,
A yearn for dissipation into thin air's embrace.
Reality obscured by smoke and dust, a familiar place,
In my mind and heart, a shiver—a lingering trace.
The cab finally arrived, breathless and time-bound,
My feet finally treading upon the hallowed ground.
The sophisticated lines and the pristine landscape of the
Valley,
Impressing the voyagers and the entrepreneurs alike in
the alley.

My brain receptors ablaze with a sudden rhapsody,
For it's rare for an episodic introvert to feel such liberty.
Espying the conduct of others, my emotions
overwhelmed,
My heart pounding at the prodigious lengths the airport
has helmed.

Raised brows, being anxious, biting my innocent lips,
Nudifying the hazelnut caramel brown of my tints,
While being scanned by the eyes of the stern sentinels,
Bags gliding through the doorway, slight as the tolling of
bells.

My eyes are seeking, captivated by the interior's white
light,

My emotions in a trice, a desire to fly even before the
flight.

Takeoff, emotions, or the fluttering of butterflies.

Hopeful me, wanting to achieve more, to shine bright,
To be a maverick girl, going solo, ready to ignite,
To meet new souls, making confident gazes at their tales.

Bound by nonsensical bounds, unfortunate me,
Wishing to reboot my fate and set the spirit free.
Creating willful memories, breaking through the mist,
Noticed by a stranger, lost in a baffling twist.
Butterflies flutter in a sweet, rhythmic refrain,
In the biggest of firms, embracing the new terrain.
Flying solo, a fearless woman with a clean slate,
Dreaming of a future where all boundaries dissipate.

The Dancing Puppet

"Hey, come this way," the audible, urgent plea,
Reality's grasp is tight, yet my thoughts flee.
Hopes are fleeting, gravity's pull is strong,
Airline staff's gentility, guiding me along.
Their fearless demeanor is a wonder to behold,
While anxiety's grip, my silent thoughts enfold.
Their notably pro skills, dealing with the diversified,
A mystery to me: how are they so fearlessly supplied?
When my brain and mind haven't yet overcome the
disorder.
Such smooth enunciations, they truly amaze me,
Even analyzing before speaking is a hardship for me,
For the fear of being judged or embarrassed engulfs me.

Baggage of vexation, burdens belonging to none,
Wishing that the past regrets could finally be undone.
The courts of life resemble the airport's familiar sight.
"Let's go up, there's the escalator," said my consort, to
my alight.

The words entered my ears, to be a forever follower,
The walk of uncertainty toward the moving escalator.
The ascent with its gliding speed is strangely relaxing,
Bringing me to the site, the most exhilarating.

My brows are all tensed, my eyes feeling the cold,
Heavier my head and nerves, too much for a soul to hold.
My eyes are scanning the security checkpoint,
Watching the procedures abided by all others.

Whispers in my brain: "Find what is needed further."
"A tray—no, the big one for the laptop and the charger."
"Okay, I need another for the headphones and the
phones."

Sealing the bag zip-tight, letting the baggage go,
The emotions and attachments that I stubbornly hold.
Also, my fear-packages—it is time for me to let them go.
"Is anyone noticing my anxiety? Oh, gosh, no."
Waiting in the queue, scared of the mind's deep dive
Through the metal detector, though, there is still some
time.
The security lady looks relaxed; why do I feel so
collapsed?

"Don't cross that yellow-marked line, please,"
She spoke the instructions loquaciously,
To which my feet stepped back instantly.
The moment I adjusted myself to finally chill,
"Next please," her gesture called me with professional
skill.
Swiftly moving ahead, my feet toward the checking
room,

The detector superficially glided, a mechanical loom.
Sniffing pleasantly, she complimented: "Nice perfume!"
The boarding pass got stamped—to be untagged and
unbagged.
"Thud"—the sound was clear, the sound of being free.
Curbing the fear, asking my soul to fly boundless and
high.
Fly high with dreams or watch them falter, strangled in
the night.

Waiting for reality to slowly and surely unveil,
In patience and discipline, we must not ever fail.
Faces, souls, and gestures, thoughts in a throng,
In this vast space, anxiety's pace feels strong.
Drained thoughts, palms sweaty, oh, so very pale,
My soul yearns for freedom, to set its own sail.

To become my own boss, whispers the internal plea,
A desire deep-rooted, waiting to be set free.
Disobeying commands, for I detest this life. Alas!
A resilient, savvy woman, aware of her life and her
desires.
Redefining the parameters, seeking my dream-man out
there,
Seen by only a few, with bold highlights in my hair.

Lonely Longing Eyes

Gosh, it is a bustling and crowded boarding lounge.
My lonely longing eyes scanning the duty-free shops,
Luxurious indulgences call, from the books to the
liquors.
Amongst the mortal plastic dolls in their distressed
jeans,
With their short dresses, fake smiles, and striking scenes.
I see a mother with her cranky and tired kid,
A newly-hitched couple drowned in marital bliss.
A group of outlanders in an enthusiastic conversation,
Beside them, a quiet stranger—a sorcerer of repose.
I wish I could be the woman alluring his attention,
Instead of being shackled in a tailored, cold marriage.

“Ladies and gentlemen, this is the boarding
announcement for
All passengers of 6E6178 from Bangalore to Delhi.
Kindly proceed toward Gate 17.
The boarding starts in five minutes. Thank you.”

Watchful eyes awaiting, ears attentive and strained,
The terminal's announcement, hearts palpitating and
pained.

Urgency forcing me to stand, emotions zipped tight,
Grabbing the luggage, my neck twisted to the side.
Like an entangled vine, discovering my vanished
husband,
Astonishment clutches me in the bustling crowd.
Amidst a hurling stretch of fear, my mind screeches loud.

Yet, my heart giggles, confronting the humble dream.
“Where are you? Where have you gone?” I scream.
“Should I wait, or let the flight be drifted by fate?”
“Will he join me later? Is it my fault again?
For losing my man, oh, my nervous, blue veins!”
Should I ask the attendant, who’s busy being obedient?
My mind assessed: he might join me in the cabin.
I should definitely be get going; the boarding is certain.
“Boarding pass, please?” she asks with professional
courtesy,
Her demanding eyes stuck on me, a clinical urgency.
The scan echoes—a sharp, digital cue to my fate.

Solo Flight Ahead

Striding past the gate, bags heavy in my hand,
Frozen my feet, for there is no turning back.
A gentle breeze mutters, caressing my hair,
Urging me with ease to seize the present air.
Substantial ground underneath my numb feet,
Approaching the shuttle bus, a sensation bittersweet.
Palpitations unsettling me, the onset of the cold,
The anxiety takes its grip, a story retold.
Stepping aboard, passengers shuffling in a line,
Unescorted in the crowd, destiny finally defined.
Glances of aircraft, a bustling, metallic affair,
Grounded, a timid mortal, breathing the air.
Am I afraid or elated? I ponder. The flight awaits!

The passengers getting off, finally earthbound,
Leading my steps onto the bridge, a novel experience.
Free of the chains, for I am finally unaccompanied,
Receiving warm smiles from the souls I have led.
Seeking my seat, nerves static: "May I help you, Ma'am?"
A soothing voice like apricity in a winter's chill,
With no other choice, I relinquished my soul to will.

Being heard is a rare sensation amongst the strangers.
Wait! Could it be real? That handsome, quiet stranger!
My eyes are broad open, a heart that is a carefree
arranger.

Hours to gamble in his company—what a delight!
My heart skips and beats, knowing no heights.
His gaze arrests mine, proffering assistance divine.
My lips fumble, a shuffle of words, far from the herds.
Fluttering my butterflies, in my bosom they dance,
His eyes diving into mine, a tender, deep trance.

Rendering his seat, his sweet gesture is so kind,
In the middle seat adjusting, he truly didn't mind.
My heart knows no limits, no boundaries, no fear,
For the first time, my joy feels entirely sincere.
His words are melodious, sweet, and crystal clear,
In his gaze, my old worries won't ever reappear.
His thriving voice, soft and wise, while uttering twice,
Asking gently, with caring eyes: "Is this your first solo
flight?"
I smile, infused with a newfound, terminal light.

Hopeful my eyes, determined and strong,
Embarking on a journey where my heart belongs.
Never traveled alone, yet fearless to explore,
With him to be accompanied, now and forevermore.

Ramming the limits, with wings certainly unfurled,
In the hues of uncertain love, we finally swirl.
Brewing a future with a passion's bright flame,
Together we soar, with the soul's favorite game.
Hearts whisper: "Desires and flight," yet to be named.

Inspired and Experimental

75. *Winter Tote*

The bogie's screech, a constant pitch.
The wind's chill. Held in the cold iron's clutch
Warm breaths sprawl, virus's friendly touch.
Winter's onset—a silent chuckle.

She takes the seat. The tote's on her lap-
A manmade apricity thaws her darkness,
For a moment, enough it is.

Eyes ogle on; her thoughts, blind.
Her lips are bitten from the bone within.
Her fingers know the worn corners
of the book she carries,
as she carries her lungs.

The book inflates her, giving her breath,
Forgives a careless, her hurried hands.
The tome grows warm.
She almost smiles—that it offers
what the world has left unsaid.

Her stares hold no hope.
Cinder-feelings. A blank page.

She reads on, saving herself.

The realisation, the hot delicacies resting in her tote

Waiting to be devoured by strangers

like darkness does to fear.

Thence be rewarded with warm words

—compliments to chew,

A last bliss to swallow.

76. *The Liquid Art*

This water hits different.
Not the sweat off a cold can,
not the salt spilling from your eyes
down a face that's seen too much.
Not the kind you lock lips with like a damn fool,
or the kind that ghosts your skin
when you're stripped bare, and the room is cold.

There's a book on the table,
a tender paperback gathering dust.
A ghost of someone I should've known—
a love I let slip, a life I never quite dialed in.
My feet feel nothing.
No edge in sight.
Just this other kind of water, a manufactured bliss.
"Gin," the label said.
I swirled it with Coke and drank the lie.

Now it's all just liquid.
All fu***ng water messing with my head,
staining my blood, washing me out.
But I know the real thirst. Always have.
I know what keeps the static at bay:
the water locked in the steel cage.

It felt like kin. A quiet love.
A touch to calm the riot in the skull.
My eyes finally locked on it— solid, true, there.
I kissed the cap off.
It kissed me back,
tender as a goddamn lie and sharp as the truth.

It made my tongue sing.
It made my lips euphoric with the chance of drowning.
Then I slammed the lid shut.
I put it back in its place.
I stared at the steel and the glass
until the silence sat naked between us.
It asked a question with a cold gleam: Need me more
than ever?
"Raw and unadulterated," I whispered. And left it at that.

77. Heaven's Beloved Bluebell

He opened the old novel, placed on the dusty higher shelf.

Felt the hardbound on his fingertips,
the golden intricate strips,
like the graffiti of beauty.

Pulling it out,
gently touching, with pause and doubts.
With thoughtful eyes,
and a peaceful hesitation on his lips,
he turned the rustic pages,
with adorable handwritten clippings,
amidst the vulnerable pages,
as if discovering an old, broken temple,
with remnants, dripping uncertainties.

His heart sighed, oh! Good Lord!
when he looked into the novel's core,
her tears had weaved a whole garden -
of warped and curled pages,
screaming loud, about the chronicle,
how she spent her life, without him,
except keeping her love alive, reading his dearest penned
novel,
"Heaven's Beloved, Bluebell"

78. *The Secure Estate*

The Depth—within
His Eyes—
A strange—and
Quiet Place—
His Lips—move
Deliberately—
For what—is
Worth—the Phrase.

No one detects
The Pause—
The Moment—
That he thinks—
All—unaware—
Around him—
While the Spirit—
Shrinks.

I know—the
True Design—
I've seen—and
I am Blest—
To find within

This Prospect—
An Everlasting—
Rest.

It feels—perhaps
A Fleet—
Not anchored—
For my Soul—
Yet—nothing—
Stops the Vision—
Or makes—the
Dream—unwhole.

Not His—Silence—
Nor—the Gaze—
He lowers—
To the Floor—
Not—Thoughtful
Phrases—
Nor the Dry—
Unsuredness—of the Door.

I'll keep—the
Vigil—now—
Looking—at Him—
For the Same—

And still—keep
Loving—Him—
Home—is but
His Name.

79. *The Patient Oxidation*

The Rust—
Has a Patience—
The Paint—
Can never know—
Ask the Iron—
Of the Embrace—
That comes—
After the Hiatus.

The weightless—
Oil paint—
The red—
Corroding Breath—
It happens—
To the naked Eye—
A slow— Russet Death.

The Grief—
Is in the Crumble—
The Strength—
That used to be—
Eroding—
Through the Years—

To find—
The Crack—the Cavity.
The Iron—
Now—an Echo—
The Void—
Within the Rod—

The blank—
Dust---Dances—
In the Diamond—
Of the Sun—
The Gold—
Waits—patiently—
For the Moon—
To be done.

The Moon—
Offers no Apology—
For taking—
The Sky— too soon—
A premature—
Adorning—
Beneath—
The Afternoon—

And Rust—
Obedient Learner—
Knows the Dusk—
As a Friend—
Who listens—

To the Scar's—
Long Elegy—
Until—the very—End.

80. *The Liturgy of the Standing Oak*

The sun, a golden geometer,
measures the distance between what was
and what remains.
I am the pillar of rough-barked patience,
a sentinel of the lawn,
watching the house through the glass eyes of the
windows.
Inside, the stillness has become a monument.

I am the Oak, the heavy-limbed ghost.
My roots go deep into the cold floor of the earth,
just as the silence has gone deep into the floorboards.

The Hallway: Like my long, reaching branches
holding only the weight of the air,
the hall stretches into a terminal expectancy.
It is a hollow throat that has forgotten
how to swallow a footfall.
It waits for a presence that has folded itself
into the thin, blue horizon.

The Bookshelves: These are my kin—wood planed and
polished,

stripped of leaves but holding
the gravity of a thousand paper thoughts.
They stand in a rigid longing,
a vertical forest of unread spines,
the memory of shade in a room
that is now only light.

The Whiskey Glasses: On the table sit the crystal
hollows, the empty bells.
They are like the acorns I shed in autumn—
vessels meant to hold the spirit of a season,
now resting in the dust.
They wait for no amber pour;
they are transparent tombs for a thirst
that has moved elsewhere.

The Books: Each page is a leaf that will never turn.
I see them through the pane, brittle and white.
My own leaves fall and decay,
but these books are frozen in an eternal October.
They are the hushed rustle of a story
stopped mid-sentence,
waiting for a hand that is now only a shadow.

The Bedsheets: The bed is a flat, white meadow,
undisturbed by the storm of a body.

It is the snow that never melts.

In my world, to be crumpled is to be alive—
to be bent by the wind, to be scarred by the ice.
But here, the linen is a perfect, terrifying peace,
a stasis of weight that will never return
to press its truth into the cloth.

I see the silhouette mere walk and walk within,
Sore feet and numbing thoughts.

The Confession: You see only the mist upon the
windowpane,
a thin, exhaled ghost of my being.
But it is an ocean I feel for you, running within my cells
and not even mist that I express.
What is left unsaid are numerous universes,
each harboring seven oceans of their own.
I am the collector of these drowned worlds;
only if you knew the count
would you see that my bark is but a skin
stretched over a thousand submerged histories.

I am the Oak. I do not move. I do not weep.
I only endure the architecture of the "no longer,"
standing tall while the interior world
turns slowly into stone.

