

Write of Passage

with Lori Saltzman



Collection

Spring 2007

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Come, let's make poetry soup,
a tasty pot of private tongues
Yes, we will mince words,
cut up what we don't understand
Delicately slice our silent visits with god, paper thin,
until their fragrance releases anew
Dice up old sorrows,
bits of leftovers from hopeless love affairs
Simmer them in tears of laughter over
desperate dramas
 so silly in the remembering
Bring your tender secrets
in plain brown wrappers
So we can slip mystery into the mix,
taste the subtler flavors of each other's song
We will feed on bowls of these succulent tales
until we loosen our belts,
rub our plump bellies
Sated, content
not to dine this life alone

Lori Saltzman



: : one eye out one eye in : :

on the outside, air feels cool on my feet, vapors
wrapping a dance from toe tips to inner thighs,
painting blue, green and the whitest white.

on the inside, a hollow holding, harsh hands keeping
guard atop my belly.

outside, buzzing machines, quiet darkening sky.

inside, vague outlines drawn with a pen drained of ink.

outside, the earth clock turns, reliable as a brother, or
the inside of a pollen-dusted flower, yellow.

inside, flowers bud and bloom, fold back into
themselves and vaporize into imperfect.

outside, stacks of the past, in 8 and a half by 11
episodes, my mother's name atop each.

inside, regrets in near-black reds lurch to unseen scenes
of glory, destruction.

outside, wisteria reveals waves where the fog-held wind
lives.

inside, dreams of a place where nothing is important
and everything matters.

Michael Zipkin



.....

How it Looks to Dance Me

I am roaring roots whipped by the wind.

A stepping sister lioness,

churning as she prepares for the ring.

An agitated, focused athlete I become

a running Celt ripped by the world.

Beth Ulrich

.....

She worked at *Drisco's of Waikiki* on the bed with the windows so men could look at her naked body while touching themselves. Everyday on her way to work she would stop outside of the Wal-Mart and buy a toy for a quarter or sometimes fifty cents from the vending machines. She never looked at the toy until after work. It was her reward.

Today the rain fell hot through the sweaty air and it steamed off the gray pavement. She inserted her quarter, it ground through the red machine while she closed her eyes, flipped up the miniature door and let the plastic container roll into her hand. She dropped it into her purse, opened her eyes and hurried on to work, hoping her mascara wouldn't smear, her feet squishing and slipping in wet spongy flip-flops.

Before it was her turn to go on the bed, her boss told her she needed to touch herself more. She bit her lip, turned her eyes downward and nodded. Tomorrow she would buy two toys. She wondered if she had reached a thousand toys yet.

After work she always went for a night swim in her special spot and afterwards would look at her toy. The rain danced lightly upon the ocean's flat bed. Her arms and legs carved circles in the dark water as she glided out to the red buoy. She hugged onto it and whispered, *hello*. Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath and floated up on her back, keeping one hand clutching the buoy's chain. She exhaled and lay there with the ocean's gurgle in her ears.

She wanted out of her life. Sometimes she wished she could let go of the buoy's chain and let the ocean

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take her away. Her belly began to swell with pain and she started to cry, violently, her mouth drooled, she moaned, her body heaved. She hadn't noticed the other being who had been in her space for quite some time. It had to nudge her in order to gain attention and she yelped in fright. A single dolphin just wanted to play. She was tentative but she let the dolphin lead as it nudged her with its nose, tail, and fins. Then she did a somersault in the water and the dolphin followed. The two danced together a little more and she started laughing right before the dolphin swam off.

She swam back to shore feeling a warmth radiating from her belly. The saltwater dried sticky on her body as she walked up the beach. She reached in her purse and found the plastic casing. She cracked it open. It was empty.

Heather Marlowe

.....

Give me back my Voice
Give me back my Voice in all its
meek and strong richness.
Give me back its trills and sighs,
explosive snorts and whispers.
It knows its no's and yes's
yet stays caged
in pleasing pleases.
Rebuild the bridge
the bombs destroyed,
my heart to voice connection.
Slather balm on my parched,
burned throat.
The pain to ease,
the wounds to heal.
Slacken the ropes that hold me still
and crack the shell that hides me.
Give me back my Voice
then listen
with fearless ears,
then listen,
with your heart.

Nathalie Valette

.....

I

When I dance
boundless motion bumps up against form
form bumps up against rhythm
rhythm bumps... thumps... empties... pumps...

II

When I dance
an anxious child moves towards rhythm
sucking at her breast
soothed, turned on,
by sweet seductive nourishment

III

When I dance
thought takes a tea break and bathes in the honey jar
judgment rides in the back seat, barely able to see
awe takes the wheel, driving me towards knowing and
nothing

IV

When I dance
nothing happens.
I pretend. I move my arms.
I bend my knees and wait.

Deborah Bry

.....

I am Not

I am not sure or pure, sane or insane. I am coherent and numb but I am not who I was or who I will be.

I am not terrified or calm all of the time, just some of the time. I am not sending myself to a place my heart doesn't understand.

Nothing escapes this pen, this paper, the way I see things.

Muscle on bone, pen to paper, these feet, these fingers so busy with words and self expression, these aching joints and this flexible mind. Stiff and limber, closed off yet, realized.

I am not as open as my heart, these arms, or thighs. My hips tight and willing, jaw fixed. My parts run out, renew and dazzle me with resilience. My fluid dancer friends move like butter and water, delicate love making. How beautiful and pliant.

I am lucky to feel their acceptance, bones, muscles, fingers and teeth offering.

Wendy Abrams

.....

Smooth erotic tingle.

Blissfully sensual in rapture's allure.

Yet not a trace of exclusion

for my raw simple lust,

fueled by the strength

of my pulsating beast.

Hot on the surface.

All the while cool in the center.

Sunset stillness deep inside.

My pearl warmth says

“Come near and I shall give near

this melting honey nectar within”.

Michael Sereda

.....

Thought 59

What do I want to be? How do I want to create?

Pay attention. Pay attention. Pay attention.

Reality no longer exists outside of my grasp - it is intention,
pictures, breath, dreams.

Layers are falling away. I know this drill now –
stay on the edge.

Edges of layers are getting harder to find, like packing
tape that lays flat on itself.

Me, I keep circling that roll, seeking the edge with my
dirty fingernails.

Thought 99

Precious one,

Let me rest my hand on your face to steady us and
hold our attention.

Let my touch bring you to this moment.

Let this moment be quiet and liquid
so that I may recognize you and step in beside you.

Thought 48

What I don't say is I don't know how:

to follow your breath to those places of unseen holding.

to stay close to you without feeling foolish and uncertain.

to let you into those places where I so desire you to be.

I choose this path with you.

Holly Aurell

.....

I set off
wrapped in mild prayer to not crash...
instinct carrying me until
sufficient caffeine jolts cobwebs from my mind
and senses engage

Trying to orient along a freeway of nerves
I continue to weave slightly
until mind and machine become one
Cruising life's highway through portals of thought and
thoughtlessness
I accelerate...destination unknown

Just me and the road, me and the wheel, the small and
big bumps along the way
Spirit liking the ride
Windows open, radio singing to me and me alone
All songs relate to my sense of being
I breathe deeply,
open my lungs
sing with all my heart
Cry and suffer with
the singers who have lost everything

I drive til I'm done,
til I arrive
Nowhere

Catherine McConkie

.....

Give me Back

Give me back nothing.
Let my house burn
after my policy lapses.
I become a vagabond,
most beloved.

Give me back my innocence,
let me look wide-eyed in wonderment
into all hearts, all actions
with the thrilliant air
of discovery.

Give me back my ancient animal awareness,
unclouded by thought.
Animal waiting, food or mating.
Staring for days at a time
as the stars wheel overhead,
unnoticed.

Give me back all the loves I have lost,
all the passions I have discarded,
or was unable to hold,
or the ones I simply let go.

Give me back my memories
of being 3 thousand years old.
A red giant, with 3 thousand sap rings,
living the stasis of deep time.
Let the fires come and go
like the breath of the planet.
I feel the hot breath,
and simply watch the centuries glide by.

John Fraine

.....

On Writing...

I got thrown out of high school, ended up going back to school in Montana where the schools are tolerant and they need the money, and I got a degree in business. I was able to do this because I could get any class I wanted by using disappearing ink, and then writing in the class with the teacher that gave multiple choice tests. I only had to take one essay test during my whole four years and failed it. That teacher called me into his office and said “Is this a joke? What is this crap?” I explained that I had a hard time writing and that I cheated to get into classes with only multiple choice tests. He said “How did you get this far? You’ll never amount to anything with your writing skills”. He took my books and notes and said “Come in tomorrow and I will give you a multiple choice test.” I got an A on it. My writing skills have improved a lot since then.

Brad Schwan

.....

Sweet

What drives him to write is remembering his
encounter with Sweet last night
That was more medical than it was emotional all right
It was taking what was happening and by doing his
part, awesome receiving
The more he was giving, the more she was
participating
The more he would do
The more she would too
And in that time period when they were zapping to give
Something must have happened that forever will live

They both must have felt a certainty that this was a
moment
That was special and unique, which would have a great
consequence
It was clear as light that this was a special delight
That comes when destiny roars its wondrous might
The more he would know
The more she would show
And the fact that he did not take her in his arms
Only means that later is the time when his heart will
turn into charms

Everett Brandon

.....

I love the smell of lilacs in April, memories of
Midwestern summers.

I love how your voice cracks when you're close to
something dangerous.

I love kind strangers, the old woman at the grocery
store who picked up my runaway apple with a shy
smile and a twinkle in her eye.

I love the memory of the first time I visited you, the
quiet joy you expressed when you said, "This is my
home. I love my home."

I love a whispered secret , your mouth moving close to
my ear.

I love the clear, bright sound of birds singing on early
spring mornings; welcoming the day.

I love sunlight dancing on water, winter rain dancing
on broad leaves.

I love when a poetic phrase drops me to my knees,
stays with me and sinks into me for safekeeping.

I love being loved - how soft and tender and fearless it
makes me feel.

I love the way laundry smells when it's been hung
outside to dry.

I love the freedom of crying in my car at night . No
one can see me. No one can hear me.

I love vintage cars, muscle cars, roadsters, little foreign
cars, dressed up in bright hues.

I love running in the woods, a straightaway sprint in
the dark of night.

I love the warmth of summer sunlight on my bare
back, bare feet and flirty skirts.

.....

I love the way you move toward me without hesitation.

I love the hard little nugget inside myself that I used to hate. I love it because now I know that some days it saves me.

I love finding the exact right word.

I love hot tea in the morning, fresh blueberries on my hot cereal.

I love that you always look up from your book to watch me undress and slip into bed.

I love the way you wake me with sprinkled kisses on my face, shoulders, neck.

I love when the ice breaks and warmth comes rushing in.

Kristin Bowers

.....

Seeing that enormous jump between here and there
Just one little movement to the side
Just one more degree to the left
And perspective completely shifts
I am beside myself
Literally

If I will only require a smile in the shower, the entire
skew of the day is changed
Spontaneous re-alignment
Into an unpredictable runway

It's safe to say that a smile in the shower was my daily
practice.

No special equipment, no calories counted, no mantra #2.
Just a smile.

Without intent
or meaning
No important thought

Just stop and smile
Shampoo and rinse

Makes me smile even now

Joan Lazarus

.....

on the outside, fog reaches through trembling leaves
on the inside, invisible fingers strum an ancient song
on the outside, a two year old slurps his cereal with
gasps like he's
emerging from the depths.
on the inside, so much love tangled in the threads of
freedom's call
on the outside, a tear trickles onto my sleeve
on the inside, a sweet release honors even this and just
lets it be

Elly Kaufman

.....

In my dream

a baby dinosaur kept in the chinaman's garage
It is growing every day.
It can only go out at night to poop
and get fresh air
because
the keepers don't want it exposed to daylight

Dinosaur
Dinah Shore
Relic of the past reborn
Dinosaur
Dinah's sore
So sorry that we lost the war
Dynamite
sodomite
filled with fright
at the sight
of the hidden reptile

Catch the moment
in my hand
hold it
to examine
every aspect.
right and wrong
write the song
try to find the voice

a still small space
a special space
where I can be
me, myself and I
I
aye aye

.....

I am
I am
I am
iambic pentameter.
I am a pensive meter maid
pentagrams
and anagrams
and sweet alliteration.

I'm on my way to New York City
unprepared for the nitty gritty
of a new business
when
what I really want
is
to slow down
and
seize the moment
in my palm.
catch it with my fingers
close down
bring it in
examine with a looking glass..

The song
is long
and fairly strong
but something's wrong
I've lost
the tongs
that held the songs
and played the gongs
with such abandon

just to feel my body
odor

.....

odor
order
ordure
endure
endive

enjoy
the envoy
who said ahoy there matey.
Who's the lady
looking lovely lately

the subject is weighty
wait til you're eighty
trying to move your bones
and muscle

Trying not to shuffle
but still stay straight
and narrow
trying to stay small
so I can be
the baby
time and again.
Get held
be the baby
tell the labia
quit while you're ahead.

Sometimes I wonder what all the rhyming stuff is about
wanting to be seen and heard
wanting my life to matter
when
it doesn't really count

.....

Sometimes I want
to be the essence of things
to breathe the essence
the effervescence
the evanescence
the thing that can't be held
between my fingers.
the thing
that has no shape
but still has presence
in the room

I'm trying to get back to
center
peace
center
fold
quality.
beauty of the body
I had when I was young.
Sometimes
I long to be
the girl
who wore the lab coat
over her bathing suit
Hitchhiking down the hill
to body surf
with swim fins in her hand
leaving slides
still under
the microscope

Naomi Epel

.....

Bolronde buikwand
round under my hand
behind -- the soft dark inside
my womb
stirs under my touch
Do I know you?
Belly is my source
what I spring from
dance from
where my heart finds solace
in the confusion outside
no ultimate answers
just life growing around itself
around my belly
weaving me in and out of this world
When I am checked
when the outside
or the inside
finds a barrier to its flow,
I breathe from this belly river
root my feet
clear my eyes
and step, wide open, into love
away from those places where I doubt,
or don't recall myself
into the light of no-matter-what,
where love presents itself
in this moment.

Kim Castle

.....

Blown Away in the Dance

Begin again,
 We'll dance again.
Be born again,
 Dance again.
Die again,
 No longer Ben.

Ben Eiseman

.....

I AM NOT/ I AM

I Am NOT who you think I am, want me to be, wish
you were or weren't;

I AM alive, a river flooding over the edges,
gathering back the love once twisted.

I Am NOT anything and everything you imagined me
to be or not to be;

I AM a whirling, swirling typhoon of thunder,
shifting shapes and surrendering this suit of skin.

I Am NOT finite or definable, my not-ness is endless;

I AM a sweaty mound of flesh and blood and guts,
feeling, sensing my sensual body, birthing itself;
Pulsing against, pounding, pushing, emerging,
becoming.

Ben Ringler

.....

Alone

I can hear the birds' sweet song,
taste toast and butter
and milky tea in the morning.
The cat puts his soft paw on my cheek.
The tenderest moments now dear to me,
as if I've been asleep a long, long time.
It feels good to be free.

Sometimes

Sometimes I feel like I'm dying.
Dying to a life "not good enough."
Dying to a life sentence of performing.

Sometimes I realize no one is looking.
I relax into my own skin,
laugh and play and dance like a child.
It is bliss.

Sometimes I want to tell everyone:
Love is important. Tenderness is the way
into the world, into self.
Kindness and tenderness are the keys.

Sometimes I remember these things.
Sometimes I forget.

Beth Hird

.....

What I don't say is that

I am dying too.

Dying to get to know you

to feel you, to laugh!

Dying to stay alive this moment

What I don't say is that

I would like to die in your arms

held in silence

'til it swells to a single word.

Until then wait and we will die together

in the silence of knowing

that we are alive in this moment

David Raynal

.....

My heart fills with gratitude

You have deeply touched my life

When I dance with you I know happiness

I am a gifted goddess opening my heart

Safe and sound in the warmth of arms

When I am with you I forget

Every single thing but our souls' pausing

Just you and me being,

loving,

ourselves.

Ilena Andrews

.....

Flow fills up my lungs and throws off my shoes,
 sending me to the edge,
 where ocean meets land,
 Venus meets Mary

Staccato pushes my crotch and my beat-boxing heart,
 granting me permission to move all the life
 that someone else's god
 told me to keep private

Chaos damages my extra-ego and repairs my birthright
to be freedom, bound.

I AM Pele. I AM Kali. I AM madness.
I AM spider and bumper-car, owl and shooting-star.
I AM beauty. I AM addiction. I AM nothing.
I AM I don't know, make a decision, fuck you.

Lyrical tickles my fingers and talks to my toes,
 releasing my wings, my antenna,
 my wide-eyed little girl

Silence reminds me, again and again and again
 That I am separate, that I am connected,
 that I am alive...
 and simply, so simply... dancing...

Deborah Bry

.....

Beloved Self

If I sing,
will you hear my song. or will you only think it is the
morning dove calling to the sun,
 nothing unusual,
 only its daily ritual.

If I sing,
will you turn your head, perhaps surprised there is a
stream so close,
 wonder why you have not noticed it before,
 then excuse the sound as imagination.

If I sing,
will you smile, grateful for the trees that catch the wind
 allowing the unseen
 to have a voice.

I know you hear my song
And so I sing.

My song is the only way I know to call through
the distance, the fear and the desire.

My song is of me,
 to you, for one.

Holly Aurell

.....

My Rhythms

My body moves in whirls, swirls and fullness.

My heart wants beat, breath, sameness.

My mind knows no bounds; flying, clear relief,
grinning, grinding, freedom.

My soul travels my smile, my body, my heart, my
creation, my joy.

Spirit enters the deep space between worlds; my
nothing.

Beth Ulrich

.....

The giving and receiving of love
the flow towards and from
here and there
giving out is easy, flows like water -
it's hard sometimes, to let it in -
that I'm loved
just as I am
without doing a thing
Can it be true?
Old memories
of mothers
and fathers and brothers
crowd in
crowd you out
crowd love out
What if I don't let it happen
don't shrivel up
or bend double in protection,
don't live my life like that
Open my heart
trusting it's all for good
that it all means something
even when it hurts.
I seek
the places where I dam up,
double up dry up shrivel up
My heart can't break anymore,
it can only break open.

Kim Castle

.....

Having Recently Lost You...12/27/06

1. My devotion to you flows from me,
even as I join with another.

Flows back in small moments,
remembering.

2. I weep as I balance on a knife edge,
of wishing you back, remembering the suffering.

The staccato pulse of
push and pull, back and forth
and in the end, choose to be without.

Without.

3. In the early hours I writhe
in the chaotic mess of my mind.

Fearing

to ask you back is the wrong choice

to not fight was a mistake

that no other is enough to forget you

I write in the early hours,

Toss. Toss. Toss.

4. You are becoming my past,
even as I still hear your melody,
sweet and strong, melancholic and morose.

I discover myself watching as

I am gathered in by another,

so happy to be so.

5. This mystery revealed, all in time.

What else is there?

I trust in this, the stillness of my calm.

I trust you to know what is best,

I trust me to know too,

choosing wisely, and flowing into God again.

John Fraine

.....

My construction of possibilities
is a wall that rises or descends depending on
confidence, undistracted
Where doubt has not presence,
where paradise is, if nothing, all clear
where clarity brings deep breaths of the gifted air

No doubt, it has its ups and downs,
this world's going round and round
Change is inevitable and age is a sometime friend
Not so much the repetitions, but the accumulation of
memories.

Reflections upon reflections in incomprehensible
dimensions,
no time, no space,
only the truth, the dance, the movement
that brings contentment to its creator within
and without

Us girded mortals yearning with lathered faces at the
morning rise,
to interact with those outside our world of sleep and
dreams.
Battered, yes,
Our character formed in daily etchings,
as we search for freedom from pain...

Everett Brandon

.....

A friend told me that people want to read what reflects the good in the world, what gives hope. Well the good news is that you are in a lot of pain. There is more good news: it is unfolding exactly as it should and there is nothing to do but what you are already doing. I told my friend that this should have the readers of my prose telling their friends about me and writing my phrases on bathroom walls.

We are in pain because we believe what our culture has taught us. We have agreed to believe a set of perceptions and to live by them. They make up the structure of who we believe ourselves to be, what we stand for, how we judge ourselves and the world. What we believe keeps us in pain because most of it is not true. What is true is only that we all agree that it is true.

The next time you are in pain, ask yourself: why am I hurting? Where did I learn that this hurts, what belief am I believing that makes this seem true? If it is not true then what is true?

Interesting answers come from clever questions.

Brad Schwan

.....

“I am with cards”

Waves, waves, all within
I am streaming
A marionette becoming earth
Such a stark, dear attention
Lost and found
Nowhere else, and
Here
I am without edge.

Joan Lazarus

.....

When I Dance with You

A partner poem

When I dance with you, I feel hidden smiles.

When I dance with you - a mirror of most
magnificence

I sense single-armed longing, plaid-wrapped joy.

The Heavens hold back not.

We share the same space, question if it's possible.

I am lifted beyond the sky.

We grant permission and witness like curious girls, all
pigtails and knee socks.

We dance the dance of sex and wisdom, of
pomegranate juice and triathlons.

When I dance with you, movement surpasses the
music's rhythm.

What a perfect pair - you and I!

Deborah Bry

Beth Ulrich

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