

## Un-Chosen

Like limbs of a tree the versions of me  
Fork in all directions  
Infinite  
Each branch a tiny moment  
A choice  
Decided in a decimal point of  
Life

One is on a swing  
On a wraparound porch Down South  
Pouring sweet tea for my friends  
Making sweet melodies  
A child on my hip and one in the den  
The old floorboards of the canary yellow house  
Creak as I creep through to  
Put a blanket on my sleeping son  
I whisper "Daddy will be home soon"  
As I write a love note to leave with the piece of  
Pineapple upside-down cake  
Waiting in the fridge  
After his gig playing guitar at Charlie's Bar  
Sweet jasmine wafts through the window  
The breeze lifts the lace curtains  
The jangle of a collar  
The clicking of toes against the tile  
And soft fur snuggled in the spot behind my knees

One is alone but hardly lonely  
In an old house on the eastern shore  
The weathered green shutters like sleepy eyes  
The fog a blanket to  
Tuck me in on chilly spring nights  
The whiskey swirls around the rocks  
And my head spins with thoughts of  
The unwritten third line  
In my fourth book  
The only time I regret saying goodbye  
Is when I see couples on the beach

Ice cream dripping down  
A waffle shell an a child's hand  
Laughing smiling families remind me of  
The one I'll never have  
The nursery turned into a library  
The moment I moved in  
The den a dungeon  
For boxes of bestsellers signed  
And memories of him sneak in  
When I hold a pillow  
Instead of a warm body at night  
But the silence and the space  
The freedom without  
Ties  
To an un-chosen place  
Are worth it  
Most days

One of me has  
Given up  
Gray before my time  
And days sliding by with nothing on my mind but  
Constant questions  
Of what might have been  
What should have been mine  
A million trips my heart has taken in a single year  
Down memory lane  
Remembering when things were  
Bright and hopeful  
Better days  
When I was strong enough  
To resist what was  
Comfortable  
A kiss hello and a kiss goodbye  
And in-between  
The droning of the television  
The ironing of a shirt for the  
Hundredth time  
A glass of wine and a bottle of pills  
A solitary life

His presence looming large and silent  
In the other room  
Secrets held like  
Anvils  
Around my heart

One of me is merely a  
Memory  
Because I  
Chose the only choice  
That  
Can't  
Be  
Changed

One is wrapped  
In a blanket of words  
A pen in hand  
A mug of hot tea  
And a warm goodbye  
From the man who loves  
Like the sea  
Deep and unending  
Despite my  
Staying up all night  
Writing poetry  
Lines with near rhymes  
Hell bent to bend just right  
Wondering  
Which one of me  
Is the most content

The answer needs no words  
For the culmination  
Of all the un-chosen choices  
Brought me to  
This place  
Now  
Breathe in  
Breathe out

All the other versions  
Poorly executed paths not taken  
I rest my eyes with  
A sly smile  
Knowing this moment  
Knowing this me  
Knowing I'm exactly  
Where I've always been  
Meant to be

## **The Other Shoe**

When everything is beautiful  
And nothing hurts  
That's when I want to hide  
For the fall will hit that much harder  
With my heart so far up  
Tumbling down from unspeakable heights  
Balancing like a leaf on the tip of a cloud  
And so I spend time that I should be  
Singing with bliss in this sweet situation  
Celebrating the ease with which  
I've achieved this dream  
And then the next  
Waiting  
For bad news  
Bad luck  
Late night phone calls  
Sirens and  
Dramatic endings  
Rejections and  
Depression  
I buckle down  
Build a wall  
Try not to smile too wide  
Prepare for the best way to lose my mind  
When the inevitable happens  
A dark gray woolen blanket  
Musty with hesitation  
Cloaking whatever  
Joy  
I have left

## **Safe Harbor**

I am the sea in a thunderstorm  
Churning with the energy of a  
Thousand volts  
Bolts ripping through the sky  
You are the lighthouse  
Strong and steady  
Standing calm as the wind  
Whips around your weathered  
Wooden panels  
And waves wash over your windows  
Flinging rocks and foam  
Yet your bright beacon of light  
Never wavers

I am a small boat  
Alone and  
Lost in the depths of a  
Dark expanse of sky  
Creaky boards  
Tossed about like a child's toy  
And you are the stars that  
Align to  
Make a map and  
Guide me home

I am the swimmer  
Lungs burning  
Churning froth and salt  
Sipping air and  
Losing hope to  
Reach the other side of the beach  
In time  
Heart racing

Mind on a loop  
Calculating all the little things  
That could go wrong  
And you are the island  
Where I rest  
When I have struggled far too long  
Gentle grasses and  
Trees blowing in the breeze holding me  
Like a lullaby

I am the seagull  
And you are my stern  
I am the seal  
And you are my soft sand  
I am the wayward soul  
And you  
You are my safe harbor

## **Drowning**

Some of us are drowning  
And some of us are waving on the shore in wide-brimmed hats  
Bright-eyed with smiles as big as our egos  
Watching the waves with wonder  
As they come crashing over our heads.  
And somewhere a child is pulled under  
His scream during the struggle failing to compete with the fly  
Buzzing around the wine in the woman's glass  
Today her own boy is down at the buffet sampling chocolate cakes  
While others are being swept away  
But it's OK  
Because others aren't the same  
Are they?

Some of us are drowning  
And some of us are laughing as the shore tickles our toes  
Noses plumb from too much sun and foreheads wrinkled from disdain  
Straining to hear each other's joyous refrain of self-congratulation  
Never counting on the sounds of drowning  
To be such a disruption  
Hoping for something a bit more abrupt  
So we can return with our lack of concern and our sunburns  
To our regularly scheduled lives  
Only better this time  
Because some of us are drowning

Some of us are drowning  
But in this deep sea of awareness  
We build rafts and learn to surf  
And the waves will do their worst  
But joined hearts and clenched fists  
And spirits strong enough to resist the frigid churn  
We ride the tide to shore  
And those sunning on the sand  
Who merely pointed at the men and women fighting for safety  
Distracted by the lies of all they don't understand



Will one day come to know  
The power of the undertow  
When their very own are blown away by life's great hand

For when some of us are drowning  
The whole ship takes on water  
And rips apart  
Plunging down  
The sound of seven billion broken hearts  
When walls and fences  
Fail to sever the connection of our collective  
Breaths

And history will write and repeat and forget  
The gravity of events  
The words a day's lesson and a blip in time of regret  
A page and a half for the future to highlight  
And a caption below a photo of a carving on a rock  
Let it be known  
Some of us were drowning  
And the rest just let us go