

MERCY

I was brought up

To think independently

When I wasn't breaking

Or being accused of such things

'you could break a battleship'

Brother shields announced

To little boy blue

Who only wanted to see

What a monkey wrench can do

Dismissed to find

What else a latchkey

Could get in to

Nuts as big as my head

Gripped just to see if

They'd move

Hammering out rivets

Upon hearing the news

To hold me together

While bursting at the seams

In the hands of mercy

Since i was conceived

And given a language

To deny my needs

While barely learning to read

I learned early

The duplicity

Of mercy

Actors unrelenting
And rehearsing
The scene in to my psyche
While other role players
Took pity
To stabilize the stalk
So the bean could too
Taste fruiting
Coveting the simplicity
Of space to be
Occupied ignorantly
Only my deviousness
To supervise
The innocence
Shattered in the falling
At the mercy of the street
Patient hands to reassure me
To breathe
When I couldn't
Feel my feet
Silver linings
To carry us
When all we see is bleak
To let mercy's heart speak
With words locked by key
A hope chest filled
With the discreet
Offerings of Emily Dickenson

Waiting for her father
Enraged by his absence
I turned on her page
Furious she locked it away
Like her gold was used
To gild the cage
My reaction acting
My age
Because i was cracked
Open and wanted
Mercy for her too
Finding solace in a bug
And a flower
And the most basic
Of their doings
Universally free
While in servitude
To family duty
Mercy transcendently
Planted me in the woods
To worship Whitman
For his self-reliance
Trying mightily for compliance
Finding more connection
Answering my lonely calling
Mercifully never alone
I think the reason
For offense

To do with personal reference
Of male arrogance
Like growing a flower
We somehow own the fragrance
Claiming through reverence
Emerson pointed at the seed and
Thoreau poured waterly
To wet my ambiguity with
Mercy in social responsibility
As an inter-connected part
Of a whole being
For even the language
And letters of understanding
Are regurgitated
Inherited tools
And materials
As living proof
That no work is free standing
Each given to mercy

CANOE POINT

Mount Desert Island holds
A special memory of those rugged
Souls who hunkered down
Year round to brave
Isolation of sea
Before the road was paved
With modernity
The causeway
Permitted occasional provisioning
From the intrepid ferry
Long after the blueberry leaves
Were given to brining
Canoe Point was my grandparent's steadfast
Where life unraveled slowly
My grandmother held
The place uncomplaining
Of the lonely perch
Where she formulated
My earliest memories
Arranged randomly like
The sheets of slate on the beach
And the remnants of trees
Fortified in the rocks
By my cousins

Where we played
Just out of reach
Of the ocean spray
While the lobstermen
Keep hauling them in
Day after day
Nothing but an occasional whistle
While under sail
The noisy outboard motor sound
Found its' way in to my bath time play
Tooling around a plastic
Tug boat parade
Even tic-tac-toe was transparent
And we chose red or white
Marbles three dimensionally
Sending bubbles from the battered
Board deck so they could
See what they could see
My grandmother sat next to me
My dad rowing
To experience the immensity
His muscles facing us
Directly in to the churning
So gracefully
When another desolate rock

Bodily disappeared in a
Loud belly flop
My eyes opened my mouth
To wonder and we
Registered the harbor seals
Diving under the barely
Submerged up jutting cliff
Where they could catch their breath
And sun their face
Most vanished mysteriously
But for a pup
As curious as me
Played peek-a-boo on each side
Of us
Just out of arm's reach
In a jovial display
A play date I thought
Arranged for me personally
We planned on having many
Such days
Yet there's but one
As we make our way
Around the sun

CHECKMATE

I can't fall from the tree

To play the snake

For thee

As much as I can't face

The dragon headed you

I used to call you 'doodle loo'

And 'kee-gee'

That brother fallen jewel

Scrambling for resourcefulness

Duplicitous duel

En garde

For i come for the Queen

For she is the fiercest

Warrior in the dream

Yet her majesty curtsies

To the king

Kept in royalty

In case of

A good dicking

Limp and benedicted

Claiming domains with his semen

For nary a proper flotilla

Pawning at the ocean's floor

Can knock a kitten
Back on to shore
As in waking your mother
As she finds her soporific snore
Too often mistaken
As whores and witches
All due a proper staking
But I told you kid
I'm not playing
Though I serve the curve
Of the serpentine
I'm not your
Daddy dragon king
Yet I offer my love to eternity
For the honor
And blessing
Of paternity
Equally i am birthing
My life a newborn baby
Given to the responsibility
Of parenting
Just as you taught me to do
Unequivocally
For you