

Title of Collection: Love, always

Empath

My heart, since my youth, has
whispered to me, pointing to
other lives, other places
Other people.
Demanding that I bear witness.

Once, these faraway lives
Told stories of joy and laughter
But too many know only
Heartbreak and fear,
Pain and loss,
Helplessness, hunger
And a deep, aching sadness.
The despair of souls that are not my own.
“Yet,” says my heart, “we shall bear witness.”

And I can feel them with me,
Their songs of sorrow all around me.
Although I long for the quiet
And ease
Of ignorance.

The world tells me “You don’t have to look.”
So I should be blind to other’s wounds?
“You don’t have to listen.”
So I will be deaf to their cries?
“You can have your comfortable life.
Their burdens are not yours.”
“No,” my heart says. “We shall bear witness.”

For I am not blind. I see.
And I am not deaf. I hear.
And I am not numb. I feel.
And I am not ignorant. I know
Their burdens are too heavy.
I will grieve with them.
I will grieve for them.

I shall bear witness.

Title of Collection: Love, always

To David

How do I say
What you mean to me
When you are every breath?
Every heartbeat?

Being with you -
The world is
Brighter, lighter,

I am completed.

We say we
Match-Mesh-Complement-Overlap
But
This merging of
Hearts-Bodies-Minds-Souls

Is so natural
As if we were truly
Two -now One
And always meant to be.

"I love you" isn't enough.
"I need you" doesn't touch it.
My soul yearns to be one with yours-
Lost, now found.

Title of Collection: Love, always

Embrace

We arrive unexpectedly,
Kicking and screaming -
Pushed roughly from that peaceful womb
Into the chaos that is world
And life.

So much to do, see, feel, say!
We jump in, running fast,
Stretch, catch and return;
Shouting, laughing, crying,
Loving,
Experiencing life,
Collecting joys and sorrows
By the armful.

Eventually,
The process will reverse.
We leave the chaos of world,
Retreat into gentle, constant days-
Oatmeal for breakfast,
Pudding at supper.
Naps in the dappled shade.

Vision and hearing begin to diminish.
Oh, the relief!
The cacophony of life, the dissonance of
8 billion souls.
Finally muffled.

Time now
Is marked by slower hands.
We can revisit memories,
Ponder goals achieved,
Loves lost -and found.

And so we are pulled
Gently back into the quiet spaces.
At night we sleep with covers tucked
Securely all around,
Dreaming into eternity.

Title of Collection: Love, always

Grief

Stephen Crane:

A man said to the universe

"Sir, I exist"

"However," replied the universe

"That fact has not created in me

A sense of obligation."

~~~~~

I lost my husband a year or so ago

Lost. Such a stupid euphemism.

He's not lost.

I know exactly where he is – and it is the one place I cannot go

To bring him home.

Gone home. There's another one.

Careful, gentle phrasing.

But I'm home. He's not with me.

What other ways is death described?

Terms that aren't as gentle for sure.

He kicked the bucket.

An old farming trope, that.

Kindof like "don't cry over spilt milk."

Or what would doctors say?

He expired. Right. Just like that milk.

And I cry all the same.

The kindest, easiest term is that

He passed away...it is a bit more accurate,

I think.

He passed through this world on his way

to a place I cannot follow.

Yet.

I continue to mourn, quietly.

I don't think that goes away.

They say you grow through it, around it.

And eventually you rejoin the world

And begin again.

I have. I'm good (mostly).

And I've moved on -or at least I moved away.  
New life, new places, even new love.  
But the deep sadness came with me.  
It's part of me now, healed but still tender.  
I know. It takes time.  
So I'm getting on with my life  
Except when I'm not.  
Except when I stare out the window  
Or lie awake in bed  
Or write futile, angry poetry  
At the universe.