

## **Recalibrating Normal**

I gave up a career and got a life,  
turned acquaintances into friends,  
snacks into meals,  
and errands into journeys.

The bell curve shifted and flattened  
with all standard deviations visited regularly.

I gave up babysitting and became a mother,  
shifted from fourth to first gear,  
and finally noticed the blades of grass  
growing up between the cracks in my life.

My averages improved on love's scoreboard,  
my statistical anomalies became the norm.

I gave up agendas for conversations,  
found days where once were minutes  
and  
caught a glimpse of peace.

## **Dream For James**

Sleep is deep and still

Rugs are right and non-addictive

Ideas fall easily out of the way of happiness

Lust rages longingly on the stairs

Appetites are always fed and ravenous

Words of love are uncontrollably voluminous and shared readily

All associates weep with calm gratitude for cakes cooked together

Preconceptions deteriorate on contact

Everything manifests like love from your tongue...

## **Eulogy of Negation**

At my funeral they will not say she was fluently gracious in multiple languages.

*Occasionally understood in English*  
will be mouthed across the aisles

They will not say she had an enduring marriage of enviable calm.

*Chaotic passion*  
will be the hymn's refrain

They will not say she was surrounded by many children and adoring friends.

*Often seen alone and wouldn't answer the phone most nights*  
will be written on the back of the program and passed over the pews

They will not say she had monumental genius with immeasurable talent.

*Prone to a sporadic idea of dubious merit*  
will be the consensus in the receiving line

At my funeral, they will not recite a litany of prizes and great moments of recognition.

*Noticed when necessary*  
will be the whispered agreement by those forced to attend on a hot sultry July afternoon by their aged parents who once had a cocktail with me at some long forgotten fundraiser

At my funeral, they will not say her beauty drove men to paroxysms of breathless awe.

*Not unpalatable when properly attired*  
will elicit nods of agreement

But before the end of the closing hymn, standing to sing a shared confidence,

*Her lilies were beyond human understanding*  
will generate a brief murmur of admiration for a life lived.

## Housecleaning

I packed up my ambition and sent it to the Salvation Army,  
hoping for a tax deduction  
hoping its remnants might better serve some other lost soul.

I washed my ego carefully  
and put it at the curb with the other recyclables,  
hoping it would come back in a milder form  
seven generations from now.

I dismantled my arrogance  
and bubble wrapped it for shipping to far-off places  
more in need of my aggressive idealism,  
hoping it would better balance justice in the world.

I turned my jacket of pride inside out  
and found humility hiding in the lining.

My karma exhausted by this cleaning, I took a nap.

And awoke in the autumn afternoon light  
to find the last of the golden summer lilies in bloom.

## Once Lost

When I move through this house  
in the low light  
of the late evening kitchen  
rice steaming heaped in its bowl  
all quiet  
food stored for another  
with beautiful remnants  
of croissants and olives and cheeses  
vestiges of purple tattered wines  
in the bottle  
under the low light of the late evening kitchen

When I move through this house  
past pictures of dead sons  
living sons  
kind friends  
fractured graceful family moments  
deep shelves of books  
read long ago in a class on reality  
filled with small boxes  
and vases  
lacquered, stitched and hewn  
from so many travels

When I move through this house  
hiding in the deep hot bath  
red baked soft muscles  
far from the doorbell  
and the dust shrouded windows  
out to the garden  
down to the brook  
where the ice came at eight degrees  
and the children will find their way  
in the spring

When I move through this house

I remember that I knew it before I found it  
longed for it before it was built  
a hundred years ago in a different moment  
of faces not screens

When I move through this house

I know I'm found.