

WOODSOME

What drops out of the green-lathed light?

Slithering of yearning for new skin • thousands of fresh pores prickling with starlight • lacey-wrap  
of birdsong and fir-spiced air • potent stillness of breath • hunger to be hungered for

Stalking itself • envy of the apple tree, half its boughs bear-smashed for the hard fruit • sap spilling  
slowly to earth • the sting and salve

Susperated patience evaporating and its mist saturated with expectation • glimpse of drifting  
filaments twisting in the last of the light • golden pistons of light-wings pulsing up and down across  
the aging sun

Lingering weight of musk • the plush oily hide lumbering away silent as a shadow and as unknown

What is faithful to a moment?

Life-shards of eggshell • traces of clinging yolk • dwindling croak excreted from mud • imprints of  
leaves in mud's memory • begging for visibility and the hawk's gazing-through without mercy • what  
isn't devoured

White as alabaster pelicans stranded amidst the shadeless bones • fumes of strange green water  
toxin-laden with cyanobacteria • dullness of dessicated aqueducts • relentless unthinking shoved  
from drought from wildfire from slurried sun of smoke • millennial forgetting • embers kindling  
themselves deep in pondering roots

Something beside hope

Moves in the shadows and the word ripples the vastness of water still searching

## SKY TEA

Where. Is not where • the pilgrimage you • you have neglected to make • hiking instead up and up  
• on a strange trail. It was all so unfamiliar • the man at your side starved such small dreams • the  
things he knew would never come to pass • would never come to pass • We laid our sleeping bags in  
an abandoned hermitage across spumes of sky and mist • He opened tins of food (it all came in  
tins) and unwrapped makeshift sandwiches • (how did he do it? we were in a land without bread) • Is  
this a sacred place? • There is no difference • The mountain is not the mountain. The sky is not the  
sky and surrounds us • knowing how bodies tremble and far below • two old monks (surviving  
how?) • hidden by deep folds of a remote mountain • (persecution had only paused, not for any  
lifetime) • two old monks toothless • casting up their voices into the rising • rocky shadows • “You!  
Foreigners! Come to tea!”

SIRI POETRY SLAM  
SERIES

I.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE  (HEART EMOJI)

“To you and 8 others”

Kathleen sent an image

newborn baby

mom baby

dad baby

uncle baby

grandpa baby

baby

Theresa replied to the group:

“Beautiful! Congratulations!”

Kathleen  loved: “Beautiful! Congratulations!”

Teri replied to the group:

“Perfect angel!”

Kathleen loved “Perfect angel!”

Liz said to the group:

“Very Sweet! Heart. Double heart. Teardrop heart.”

Kathleen loved “Very Sweet! Heart. Double heart. Teardrop heart.”

She loved each one,

Congratulations! Perfect! Beautiful!

Love love love.

Heart heart heart.

II.

NO WONDER

Gary liked “When you have a minute, please. . .”

Julie liked “Yes”

You liked “Yep”

Lauren liked “How ‘bout 1:30?”

Sean LOL’d Gary emphasized Sharon loved the picture

of the baby

the summit

the wind

the headline about the miracle of birth

III.

JULY OR AUGUST BY TEXT

[Shall I come in  
July or August?]

(The storms will  
be grand in August)

(The light in July  
will be just so. . .)

(effervescent.)

(Come in July or  
August~)

(there will be plenty  
of tequila and  
line-dried towels. . .)

(The robin hatchlings  
under the eaves  
of your bedroom  
will have fledged  
and flown.)

## DESALINATION OF THE OCEAN OF TEARS

1.

She tells me she's full of sadness as if there's something wrong with being full of sadness.  
As if the long sobbing in the shower behind the locked door is worse than the redundancy of water  
and tears.  
Or that locked door.

We know we will trace the shuddering wake of her back bone.  
We all can hear what comes to crouching in the cooling water.  
We are on neither side of the door.

"Mom, don't do this to me!"  
or is it  
Mom: "Don't do this to me!"  
or is it  
the locked door?

2.

As if long sobbing for so long long lasts too long shred-  
ding something at all vital crying at all hu-  
hu-hurts weirdly so so sobbing  
takes tears choking tears without end  
now again over and over palms ache  
all of this repeating without beginning or ending or swallowing  
**this sadness** takes over falling without end **takes** darkness over  
retching (even the word retch makes me retch) **over**

**everything**  
me her she  
cries  
at least once  
one tear  
from  
one  
eye.

3.

He tells me he's full of sadness as if there's something wrong with being full of sadness.  
As if there's something wrong with being.  
As if there's something.  
Else.  
*As if.*

(Desalination of the Ocean of Tears, *page 2 of 2*, new section, new stanza)

4.

Then I walk around wobbly, full of this watery teariness,  
a puddle in skin, swollen water  
balloon, swelling and swelling and too  
frivolous for this drought  
of joy.

## LOST MEADOW

### I.

The meadow held a stone within a stone  
Rounded in a hollow by unknown tides,  
Deluvial rivers long gone.

Once I held a pebble in my mouth  
To suck its salt and heat.  
I cherished the little blister no one knew,  
Its brief blooming, its secret sting.

### II.

Waiting for the god to come to the girl  
But not like the neighbor boy.  
*He* brought me into his bedroom,  
Back to his meticulous little boy's desk.  
He opened the books of pristine stamps and coins  
Coveted alone. Wrapped in plastic,  
Shimmering, sheathed in their impenetrable  
Preciousness. To me alone, rapt,  
Very young, he whispers. You cannot touch them  
With bare hands. His breath pushes  
Into the small, secret hollow behind my ear.  
His arms reach around my small body. He guides my finger  
Across his small, shielded treasures. He shows me  
How to seek their special marks.  
*They have never been touched.*

It smells like model airplane glue.  
It makes me dizzy.  
Nose to nose on his lower bunk, he speaks to me softly  
Hushed, urgent: This happens at night —it comes to *me*.  
The milky gleam. *I have been touched.*  
His breath sweet and gooey. Our mouths so close  
We might choke on his dream-spittle, the silvery  
Track pulling him away, enormous snail  
Groping for a stone lost in a meadow  
We had not found, leaving me  
Wide-eyed in its shimmering wake.

### III.

I remember that it is always summer. Light lingers long after supper.  
All the children slip away after warm evening baths.



We take to the hot, sticky meadow, squeaky  
And shining in our light-weight Winnie-the-Pooh pajamas  
Shouting and waving.

IV.

We wonder what to say in the morning,  
How to find our special marks, how  
To ask each other, did you eat the seed?  
Sunrise on the beach, low tide  
Clattering with buckets and shovels, stomping  
The sand for squirting clams, plunging  
Our shovels into the half-yielding.

Salty plumes pluck our fresh noses.  
We poke at the thick, penile necks protruding  
From folded shell lips in the clean water of our full bucket.  
Who dared to touch a raw one to their tongue?  
Our sacred squeals are not for mothers' ears.  
We put a clam in the sand and watch  
It melt into the sand's welcoming fold.  
The clam—digging furiously through the sharp grit—  
Desperate to return.

V.

I cannot find the stone holding a stone  
Nor the meadow, though I want to show it  
To someone I love. I want him to touch it  
With his sacred tongue.