

Saving Seeds

Amazing, how a little seed
Can turn a girl into a wise woman
I look closely, at all your possibility
And perfect form

And see the past, your mother
That perfect sunny day I worked the earth
Loosened the dirt
Added the manure
And placed her with the others
In a perfect circle, a five point star

Covered her up and added water
To start the transformation
To tell her the ingredients were right
To reach out into the earth
And pull in pieces to weave into herself
To take earth and air and make something more than a sum of the parts

I look at all the seeds she gave me
From just one large orange fruit
Some now covered with oil and salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic
Roasted and ready to become part of me,
Some raw and drying, waiting for next year

I marvel at the magic of the multiplication
Makes me raise my hands, my head, my heart
Makes me dance as they go down, the roasted ones
Makes me want to make tea
And a poem
And light a candle, my ceremony for inspiration

Makes me think of my mother
And the magic she makes
How she heals me, every time she feeds me
How she takes common ingredients, lets them simmer
And finishes with something more than a sum of the parts

Makes me think of your grandmother, or great grandmother
I watched her grow, as a child
And helped her become
As she did me

I remember the way my heart leapt when she first emerged
Like freedom, and heaven, warm and wild
Remember the sting of mosquitos if I watered at dusk
Remember the reprieve from the world she offered
A timeless space, where everything was right

They taught me how to work with the earth- our mothers, and grandmothers
Taught me how to be quiet and listen
How to stand tall
How to receive
How to take common ingredients, like these words

And make something more
than a sum
of the parts

Winter 2023

I can almost feel
(I can feel)
The skin of my face
Sitting a little lower than it used to

And I can almost hear
The earth
Calling
For this body back
Singing

Gravity is love

Someday, earth mother
Take me back
Into your womb
And make me new again

Let me simmer
Close to you
And grow like a good poem
Not forced
But fed
With hope
In my own time

Brush your long hair
And dream of what I will become

Writing My Story

I like to inspect my pencil before I write
to see the way the light shines on its dark tip
on its many curves and angles of
sparkling graphite

I like to feel the soft fuzz of its shaved part
to slide my fingers up and down the length of it
so hard and smooth that I giggle at
this Cra-Z-Art

And I wonder who else has touched it
and if anyone has ever looked at it the way I have
with thoughtful doe eyes
curious for its story
of where its been and how it came to be

I notice so many markings
a large gouge on one side, and two smaller ones
exposing the flesh colored body
beneath the orange coat of paint

And I feel its depressions, little valleys
and I wonder what forces it caved under
I see its silver cap is a little misshapen
a little bit scruffy

It's almost free of its #2 label
that has all but worn off
and its surface has many lines, some deeper than others
I add 3 lines, in the shape of my initial

I cannot help myself, but to leave my mark on him also

This wise old man has many secrets to tell
Like me
So I take him in hand and begin
to write

Pearls

I wonder how pearls are made
As the oceans in my eyes rise
Too full
Trickling tear shaped pearls when I close them

I wonder what ingredients the clam takes in

And I suppose when he is open
He takes in the whole ocean
And maybe when he is closed
Is when he makes the magic happen

I picture a clam
Burying himself
In the sand
Under the weight of all that water
In all that pressure
Gathering the hard stuff he has accumulated
Putting it together
And polishing it

I wish that I too could bury myself
Beneath the ocean
Away from the world
And maybe make some magic happen

I think about the hard things I have accumulated
The pains of loss
Of empty cages, and desks, and hearts, *who trusted you*

A small yellow gecko body turned bones
Mouth wide
Screaming into death
Alone
Belly empty, water bowl empty, locked in a cage, in a school, tolerating the hands of well intentioned children for 11 years, who did not understand or would not care about quarantine and missing keys, but who knew about helplessness

A 13 year old boy, with red hair and freckles and work boots
And a smile that hid desolation
Who asked for a broom to clean the dirt he brought in
But was given a test instead

A horrible fail
A final, fatal, horrible fail
A deep, defining, horrific fail
Of a teacher who did not know about making a right decision
Instead of a right decision

Despair and confusion on the faces and voices of 20 children
Times 5 classes a day
Day after day
Staring at the weight of empty at that desk, and in the cage, and their hearts

A heart put on hold, your own
year after year
always making the right decision instead of the right decision
singing a love song unheard
unplugged

Want to hear one?

“Put a lightning rod in the top of my head
I said Give it to me God, I can take your medicine
I can take your shot of incredible light
I can let it ooze out in the dark of the night
I can be the eye in the heart of the storm
The infinite aleph when a star is born
When the galaxies are swirling and the spacetime is tight
It just takes one bang to make all this life
Now my knees are shakin', it's a million degrees
Out here in the middle of eternity
The people are cryin', don't know how to believe
Hit me up God we need some alchemy
We gotta change this shit by 20 2 3
He said: 'Take the deplorable pain of the past,
Shine it real smooth to make a looking glass
Now let's get real deep, tell me what do you see?'
The infinite aleph of eternity
The one with the scar
The one with the sword
The eye of the storm
Who turns pain to passion and pleases the Lord”

And I think about the women in Japan
and the others I have forgotten
who dive for pearls

whose whole livelihoods depend on it
who trained their bodies to hold their breath for 4, 5, 6 minutes
or more.

When the need is great enough,
the human spirit will find a way.

And I think of the pain I am polishing
asking me
to find a way

SACRED CONFLAGRATION

I turned the light on
In my soul
And inspected my pencil
Cedar wood, graphite core
Place of origin- obscure
(but Earth, I'm quite sure)
And lit my candle, "made in the USA" stuck on its front
But the flame- not of Earth, other worldly
It crackled
And danced
And said:
"The alchemist, inspecting her wand
Found the light
Reflecting
From the many facets of its tip
As she spun it, slowly
And pushed back its sheath
Of wood
To bring her fantasy to life
To make a little magic
They needed each other
Her heart and the rock, in the wand,
To transcribe
To translate
She held me closer
With soft eyes
I lit up her face
My reflection dancing in her eyes
She closed them and breathed me in
Held me to her chest
Tipped her head back
And opened her heart-
Where I met my maker-
A sacred conflagration
Roaring
Like a lion
We merged into one flame
Dancing together
Hoping the whole world
Would catch on."