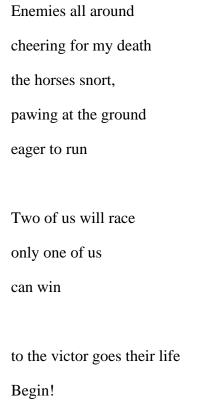
### Chariot Duel



### Warped

I only wanted to protect you And grow stronger.

So you –
Pushed me over the edge
Brought me to the brink
Of death, said

"Look. In order to protect me You must become a monster. Are you sure you want To keep doing this?"

Your tears fell soft as Rain drops on my face As I smiled and said Yes.

#### Call of the Haunted

Ominous premonition creeping raw danger an unseen enemy, breath of shadows here for me

calling, "You were never meant to belong. I will steal your last breath, your life To fill the nothingness in me."

Storm clouds consume the sky rain pours
thick as tears
the heavy burden
of the past
crushing me
impossible to fight

Shadows wait, calling, taking over me – I'm so – tired jaws of the monster open wide –

Confrontation.

A friend, here, to catch the gnashing head of teeth and drive away the enemy – at a price.

Blood spills, thick and red.

"Fool," she whispers, "never fight alone."
now we're both on the verge of defeat
the monster roars
furious and hungry for
memories of despair

her cold hand slides the leather wrapped hilt of a sword into mine

Last chance for life

A blaze of will ignites the crying sky

## Call of the Haunted, pg 2, new stanza

Emergence of a new warrior
Compassion for the eaten ones drives
Defeat into the heart of the monster
Shadows part
Life is never peaceful.

## The Trampled Flowers

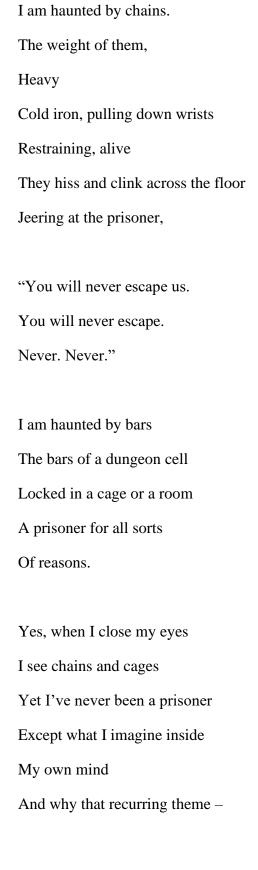
Climb the twisted marble stair
Half cast in shadow, half in white
A chanting choir turns
Your blood to ice
Go back,
Go back
Still, you press on
At the top, a marble arch
Festooned with deep red poppies
The air is heavy and sweet with their scent
Walk into the sunlit garden
And begin the duel.
The challenger awaits
The challenger awaits  Calm and ready as a heron
_
Calm and ready as a heron
Calm and ready as a heron Behind him floats a castle

Enter the silver gate of flowing water

# The Trampled Flowers, pg 2, new stanza

You draw your blade
Petals swirl all around you
Light and delicate as wishes
The challenger responds
Your swords meet
Clashing steel rings
Soon the green grass
Drips with red.
The question remains
If you win the duel
Will you enter the castle?
But
What is the point of this fight?
The shed blood
And trampled flowers?
Up high in the tallest tower
The prince is sleeping.
Will you wake him?
Or let him dream?

#### Chains



## Chains, pg 2, continue stanza

prisoners and chains
always returns,
I can't say
Except to ask
What is freedom?
What is liberty?
Until it has been taken away
The door is locked, it is heavy
You can't leave
You can't get out
Chains
Like a pair of hands
Closed tight around
Wrists and ankles
Jerking the prisoner back
When they come to end
Of their restraints.
Hands impossible to break
Unless you have the key.
The days crawl by in misery
So long, so boring, stuck in
One place, nothing to do until

# Chains, pg 3, continue stanza

Yes! You are out, you're free!
Free to move, to do to see
To breathe the outside air
Everything is glorious
Everything is beautiful
No matter the weather,
The time of night
Or day
The smallest acts are valuable
Being able to step through a doorway
And back again
Whenever you wish
Is a victory.
Yes, that is why
I think of chains
Imprisonment, torture, and pain
That is why, so often
My characters are captured, restrained
Unable to speak

## Chains, pg 4, continue stanza

Until they escape
Until they are free
Only with liberty is life
worth living again.

And so I think of chains.