

## ***Five Things You Didn't Know about Water***

The surface tension in a drop of water is enough  
to hold a world in,  
if the world is small enough

A cubic meter of salt water contains seventy billion tears  
and tears are what you are made of -- salt and water and pain and  
relief

The distance between you and me can be measured in drowned  
fishermen,  
ships lost at sea, shipboard romances, and tidal waves

When you sweat, your frustration comes out in rivulets,  
meaning you have many avenues for relieving your stress:  
heat and hard work are not your only choices, but they do the job  
if you let them

I brought you this glass of water  
because I don't have any comfort to give you  
so I comfort myself  
with this wet  
gift

# ***Autobiography of You***

*for Jennifer*

Effectively, she said  
it has no effect,  
your flailing and moving about  
and time in the world.

You could be better served  
by taking your leave of these people  
and their frantic activity,  
buying yourself some chocolates  
and a copy of Vogue,  
and sprawling on the sofa,  
immobile, impenetrable,  
alone.

When you move,  
when you insist on muscular range of motion,  
when you locomote,  
you ask for trouble.  
You invite injury.  
You work on the last nerve of a world  
and a system  
that want nothing more than to irritate you,  
mangle you,  
give you a bone spur  
or a pulled muscle  
or an ingrown hair  
or a paper cut.

## ***You can't have everything***

*for Michele*

They tell you, because they think they should,  
that you can't have it all  
That even if it were in your grasp,  
you couldn't hold it, couldn't mold yourself  
into someone worthy and capable enough  
into a person it all made sense for

What they didn't know,  
what they still don't know,  
is that you can't have it all because you are too grand  
you are too much beauty to fit into one person  
you are the Universe's white light and the deep brown of the earth  
and all the good things that move into you  
quickly reach the top of your head  
and spill out  
flowing onto the ground  
seeping across continents  
making rivers of abundance  
that cannot be  
  
contained

## **Choices**

*for the Professor*

We didn't do the things we said we would  
We didn't keep the promises; we had  
too many hormones rushing through our blood  
too much adrenaline. We made some bad

mistakes. Remember brushing them away?  
Remember all those nights that went 'til dawn,  
and how the hard realities of day  
were battered first, and then unraveled on

the sweet-sharp edge of what we knew was wrong?  
Remember how we tried to turn and go?  
I won't pretend that I knew all along,  
but leaving love for me is always slow.

And yet, I wouldn't change a thing with you.  
The choices weren't right, but they were true.

## ***I play in the band***

I play in the band,  
not the orchestra.

We walk, we move, we make loud, happy music.

We do not sit still

we do not know Mozart

we do not know Mozart.

This life of stillness you have and love

I had it and loved it, too

back then

back when

I played in the orchestra

and knew Mozart.

## ***The Track***

*for Lisa*

You can't blame the track  
for not going  
where the train wants to go

You can't blame the river  
for not flowing  
up and out to that town you loved, inland

The map may not be the territory,  
but the territory isn't all there is, either  
there are edges to things  
places beyond,  
where the train jumps its track  
and the river jumps its bed  
and I jump through my own memory,  
through my own me,  
and become the power that moves me,  
become that unworn mountain trail,  
that craggy, parched land that hasn't seen a river,  
that destination that doesn't appear on any map,  
and doesn't tell you where it is  
and doesn't tell you where you are  
that makes its own way

A train track  
A deep riverbed  
A map  
A metaphor

None of these things will save me  
None of these things will tell me where to go

I get to do that  
for myself

## ***Photo of my mother, 1972***

Only people who are dead or enlightened  
are done with their mothers. -- Anonymous

The girl behind  
the arched  
bay window  
moves with competence  
through her realm  
of parties  
and Pampers  
and PTA.

(Homebound glory...  
Tethered ecstasy...  
Muffled abandon...)

She plans, one day, with  
all the force of her  
longing,  
to heave the ottoman  
through the plate glass  
just to hear the sound  
that freedom makes.



## ***rage***

Cool and satin-swathed, she turns slowly on one tiny heel  
you haven't seen her angry  
you don't know that yet

The times she crossed your path before  
and was a receptacle for your rage  
she was  
as all women are  
anonymous

You spewed your hate like gobs of spittle  
or sticky ejaculate  
and expected it to stay put

You don't even know you should expect different  
from this woman  
but you will

Soon, you will

## Sea

Once upon a long time ago,  
a girl  
a woman  
leapt into the sea  
a girl  
a woman  
who was water, earth, light  
a girl, a woman who cried seaweed tears  
who bled saltwater  
who was water, earth, filtered sunlight

when she hit water, she swam until there was nothing  
nothing breaking the silence  
no breakers, no families on beach vacations  
no children splashing in the waves

she enveloped the silence, the sea woman did  
she embraced it, enfolded it,  
until all she could hear was her heart and nothing else  
until all the world was her heart and nothing else

the sea wove itself into her hair  
her skin  
her cells  
until she was blue-green and glittering  
until she was cold and glassy  
until she was warm and salty and wet

the sea dissolved her  
the girl, the woman,  
who was water, earth, light  
who was the ocean  
who was the undercurrent of courage  
who was unafraid of reaching out and being  
the great, wide sea

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