

Meteorite Dealers



Amy Trussell

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chicago

moria poetry

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Zora's Daughter

A uniformed angel puts a box on the step
with large hands that work the strings
but I'm busy playing psychic warfare
with encroaching thorn plants
and irrigating the bleeding hearts.

Sometimes the gem is occluded
or even fished out of ashes
Take this piece of locust wood
for instance, rescued from a fire

dragged through ashes and embers
by a visionary in thick soled boots.
He blew off the soot and left
the earth naked there, doused and smoking

then took it to the artist
and she revealed out the torso
of a curved woman
against a black maple cross
that intersects behind the heart.

Cutting down through the center
a crevice through the body
as if split by lightning
to show the female line
open throat, ribcage and womb.

Yesterday I saw Zora, mother of a girl
born with a hole in her heart.
Now eleven, she'd just had a pacemaker put in
the incision reaching from chest through midriff .

Someone brought in azaleas
in a girl shaped vase and Zora misted over.
The trials of women astound one
the memories are deep and searing.

Big Bang Static

Contemplating a stellar embryo in a photo
I observe the region of the brain
where stars birth from dark matter
and a memory that breaks off the central stem
zooming in on the embrace of Summer and Fall
and the midwife gently pulling a living form
from darkness into light
with filaments still unbroken to the sky's membrane.

Now he is becoming a man and loads his paintbrush
with indigo swirled into black
and china white to ignite the stars.
We are in a cabin flying over the Hiyuenta Mountains,
and the Grand Canyon and I know he see differently
from the rest of us on this plane that is above it all.
Showing us snow pure as stolen
and the gorge that looks like the Delta of Mars,
cored out by river, wind, lighting, and time.
The wing that comes out from our left side
Extends further from him, its tip waxed in sun
and he can see far into that direction
His eyes are keener, hawk like.
We older ones eat blueberry to sharpen our visual purple
like the jet pilots of some ancient war

Then the obsidian sphinx and pyramid are there
attracting his desires like magnetic sand
to a lodestone.
Las Vegas, the second rate jewel of the desert
with its women and wine.
We reach the earth again with a spark
soon driving through India Basin in San Francisco
in the sunset light.
It's is another city he would like to lose himself and grow up into
with its sea of humanity, dodging tentacles
from the seventy-five percent dark matter that could hook him.

He's on a suspension bridge between here and the horizon-
the ground where his umbilical cord
was housed and broke down
and the place where astronauts dock in space.
He wants to buy an old TV to find the empty
stations where there is static from the universe being born.
Soon everything will be wide open.
His heart and mind are his falcons
who will go scouting and then return
to his thick glove
Where your "home is in your head".

for Jasper
quote by Bob Marley

Cayenne Pepper Dream

Morning and blackbirds settle on a white washed wall.
I kneel in the stillness and pick up nuts
coming out of their hulls
like turtles backing out of eggs into the day.

The heat will warm up a body
like the deliberate slow burn of cayenne-
The charge of someone pure and astringent
reading wine dregs thrown down in the dream.

Then within the dream is the experiment
conducted to have the same dream
but you never begin it
because soon you're cloyed together
in the universal gesture of affection.

Then someone from the lab interrupts
and it all dissolves like salt in a rain sheet
and your mind is on a rope
stretching forward for the lunar surface.

There is no way to rehearse it:
confrontation with another face
and its depths pouring out towards you
while you lie in an alley between worlds,
Neptune's diamonds slinging through a portal.

And who cares what kind of volcanic mud
comes up through the ground cover
and that you're lying naked in it.
The dream is reduced and has enlivened you
both in its arrival and its unfinished ending.

Cut Free

Mei says “seasons are an amulet
against the heartbreak of things”
But here where the seasons are dilute
there is less time to guard against that breakage
because the door stays open longer
and hibernation is scant.
A mountain lion can slink down from the hills
looking for water or prey
and grab at the back of a head with its teeth.

Or a fawn can wander into the yard,
eat rhododendrons,
and end up on the asphalt
with a chalk outline around her,
the red blooms scattered as evidence
and vestiges of mourning.
The artist that lives there
photographs and paints the thing
spattering the canvass back
with spots on a winter night.

The wind usually isn't bad enough
to break windows in the red house
like back in the tornado belt.
But it bosses trash cans down the street
and people get helicoptered
out of the Russian River Valley.
In times of flooding, loss of face and possession
a river can pour through a den or bedroom in a heart-
beat and split the house in two.

But now its May, what's called Spring
and not much chance of voluminous water
breaking umbrella ribs.
Only solar flares pouring in
through a gaping hole in the sky and cracking

over us like volatile eggs

Its been a fortnight since the hospital and
today Dr. Singer cut free the retainer bandage.
Now I shelter against a sea wall in San Francisco
like it's a fortress.

Soon it will be time to open all the dams on the river
so people can sun barely wearing a stitch
on a day when we used to honor the dead.

I hear John Lee Hooker sneaking through me
singing "Decoration Day" and of his prescription
of cream and liquor.

A baby plays naked on the beach
before the white caps,
the warming hut, and the Golden Gate.
She's like a charm against growing old
or losing one's head to addictions-
absinthe frappes, wanderlust.

Here it doesn't frost much so the door is ajar,
bourbon brown tea on the desk and ghost writing-
dark words clumped together like caviar.
I sit on the beach watching someone swim
with two guys in a lifeboat and a red cross following.
Look at her, putting real distance
between herself and Alcatraz, its haunting lighthouse
operating all day and night.

I think I will too, soon, leave all this-
Ditch the hospital and pints of blood
hanging upside down like roosting bats
and doctors Grackle and Singer
who knocked me out to where
I thought death was making a record
in the operating bay.

The wind chimes talk and

Neptune drops light on the ocean
moving mountains in the night.
Set a course for Amsterdam by buying a
suitcase that could hold up to anything.
It also has a kind of built-in radar
so it could never get lost .

quote by Mei-mei Berssenbrugge

Dead Ripe Summer

The water is opaque and muddy,
Summer's heavy syrup,
but I desire it clear and running
and to run like it as well.

The head can act like a beehive
with its workers going off, trying to collect
and bring back royal jelly.
It's a Martian return now with travel favored,
but there's no money to burn in this summer
that's dead ripe, waiting for pitting and tasting.

So the mind muses on places from the past:
Singapore with its lapis and illegal mosquitoes,
Ireland, where the train station was bombed
the hills studded in Conamera marble,
Mexico City, its lights from a distance like
an Aztec king dying and torched in sunlit mirrors.

New Orleans, where people look
into each other on purpose
and a spell is wrought by the singer on the street
down from that dive hotel called The Empress.

This soul is hungry, and keeps getting up and
picking blackberries
while laying down ink gently
like one would an animal with a thorn
or a love who needed to go to sleep
after welding all day.

I drift my head off towards the ocean
where the river opens out
and swallows salt streams at high tide.
In the rainy season it comes up to
flood stage sometimes

reaching the bridge where Chauska,
young and restless as a goat,
jumped off and fractured her pelvis
against the water.

The river was unforgiving that day-
the hell's angel empress that usually guards it
was off flirting with a barfly
Tonight the moon will shine on many rivers
and hopefully the chief of dreams
will take me somewhere deep and mysterious.

Remember when everyone was making off
with airplane blankets and sleeping with them?
Some tribes keep ungulate horns near their beds
to amplify their dreams.
Others cut out at night and astral travel.
I bumble around, hovering by the window
waiting for the soul of someone lost
to pilot in for fuel.

Arrested Heart

Every one should have some irons in a case
and a floor plan of what to do if the heart arrests
next to the fire extinguisher on the wall
and a couple of Balinese wooden angels.

There's nothing to stop the natural progression here
save the espresso machine drowning us out
every time we start talking
or a couple of jackhammers that tear up the walkway
in front of your steps.

So the guest room remains empty at night.
You can hear a pin drop from the hand of a cloth doll
and the restless horses up on the hill
snorting at the wind like minor dragons.

The refrigerator starts up, protecting the last night's
aphrodisiac victuals that once swam in butter
and the full moon is on the wall, an old carnival prop
wired to fall like a lobster trap.

Here's the fake bookshelf I push against
to get to another shore
The rag rug is made from cast off clothes
and looks like a fuse coiled up on the floor.

Pyrex Heart

Everyone has some old sadness that trails out
from behind their backs like a flare
in unexpected December warmth.
Smell of the untamed woods in this small room,
in my mind I trudge along looking for mistletoe

But have no ladder, only long toes to grasp
the skin of the tree while edging along the periphery
towards that parasitic sphere of midwinter
entanglement and delight, the mistletoe,
berried up with green man's essence.

There is a piece of my brother's soul still here
lodged in the dark hollow of the solar plexus.
So this is how to troll the burial ground,
unearthing one shard at a time and dusting each off
in twilight with something like an archeologist's
concise removal tools.

As I gaze into the chamber there's a frozen frame
of my brother and me standing at a festival
after we had flown the red-eye in.
I'm turned toward the camera with arms raised,
extinct volcanoes behind us, and Santa Ana winds bending
things.
He is grinning, having been the only guy in the place
who could have done what he did:
three hell's angels looked down on us, but still we kept our spot.

I don't remember that much of the music,
but the mass exodus at the end after midnight
and a couple of bodies next to a bonfire.
They were passed out in a hallucinogenic stupor
but looked to be casualties of war or some other disaster
their feet dirty and cold in the primitive flickering.

It wasn't the shock of his crossing
that I thought would polish me off.
his ashes held no energy,
as if old and spewed by an indifferent
Mount Vesuvius long time before.
It was the ensuing pain that built up
that no clay or dead sea salt
or being nailed on the bed could ever draw out.

"The monkey stuck in a jar story", a friend said
but I never heard if it got out,
Though monkeys are often smarter than us
so I banked on it escaping on it's own steam

Or perhaps with the help of the man in the yellow hat
who seeds the clouds with his cone of power
and makes a thunderstorm
Then breaks open the jar with lightning
so the monkey slips out unscathed.

Watching for banana peels from trick gods,
I consider myself lucky not having gone
through a windshield or the floor
and I don't have an eye patch like a pirate or actress.
They say beauty is thin skinned,
but the bones have their own depth and purpose
emanating from them.

I go places to get heart stimulation
while the wind blows, the creek rises,
and rocks above the main artery
between here and the mountain dis-
lodge and slip down into the eastbound lane.

I summon the dancer then, or cave painter,
and push her out on the killing floor.
There she makes the mercury rise in the spine

turning into the unknown with fireproof feet
and a pyrex heart.

Gash in the Volcano

Escapee forestalled at the border of time/space.
Field studies blown through the slot in the parallel,
invitation to merge into last night's kelp forest.
Screen it. Duck under woolen cloaks that
throng the infinite ceiling.

Sleep to escape self plastered on everything,
mix it up in a palette like bridal science or husbandry.
One thread invites another to cross it and soon
a loose weave of self forgiveness.

Lift it out of the dye bath with tongs so as not to burn skin.
Density grows with each shuttle across open space
this is all that's left now, our glowing interiors.
Everything else has been shed or torn off
without warning or predating.

Bolts of altar cloth stretch over the ocean
like a mass of blood carnations
and a feather is loosed from the fierce hummingbird
who darts into the pueblo at the base of the skull.

This is a pelting of jade against wall for no real reason
the coral secretes more of itself
in order to lace the sea with more layers,
like blowing glass underwater.

The heart is a mollusk, seeking to lock on to
something consistent and strong,
even in a hollow that once contained danger.
Then there are the exotic species that glow all night
and drink silt and runoff all day.

Jeep across time and see the fossilized spiral
made by the turtle who lumbers on

with nothing surgared in its movement through wind blasts
devoting richness to this spelunking
and foraging for ferns worming through the gash in the volcano.

Gold Ash

In the morning wings bring in the clouds.
There's a current of birds
with hearts beating hard as wings
from the scant liquor of comfrey .

Rumble of a train like a far off storm.
upstairs one lover ministers to another,
tongue to nape like a brush to rice paper
and the room dusts up in gold ash.

After all the broken limbs of late winter
the fingers still pulse
and want to reach the elements
tindered long ago from stars

melted like butter inside them
and the pet snake out in the yard,
the wild irises with their small gutters,
and the buck shedding dirty antler velvet

as he rustles up through bracken.
There are patterns in his migration
that filter through his bone marrow
telling him to lie down in a solar eclipse

when the spores from a distant comet
settle into the streambed stones
and vultures glide over treetops
like angels blown off their thrones.

The couple tangle the skeins of time
stretching out in the clouds where crimes dissipate
and the moon flakes off zinc light
as it rotates.

The bird perches on little but faith,

a memory of a satin stalk that once held it.
The lovers' skin salts over in warmth
far from the quicksand in the next valley.

The Layers of Love

I heard a song about “the layers of love”
and wondered what the cat meant.
Are they like the layers of skin that peel off
when touched by something burning?
There are seven on the forehead, each a little stronger
as they get close to the bone.
It was there my father touched me
before he flew to the Ketjak dancers
and white god monkeys.

Are they like stories of forest canopy
studded in large weeping flowers and insects?
Exotic animals range through them
with long arms and tails
and the upper register brushes the low-
lying areas of heaven.
I heard there are thirteen layers we’ve gone through
and that move through us as well.

Perhaps they’re a huipol, sari, or kimono
spun around a woman with arms raised
and a calyx of blue fire inside
Not yet hardened over by loss or pain-
those too will come and flesh her out.

Or the belly dancers’ array of veils and skirts,
some swirling around her in storm clouds
others tossed to the ground like Moroccan roses
as she teaches her apprentices the secrets of birthing.
When Jasper was born the cord was wound around his neck
his line to source long and charged.

There are stratified civilizations found in the tell:
Bones, awls, shards of vessels
pulled near Black Mesa, and the central potter’s wheel.

Rocks fell in corn mounds from the meteors.
Tree ring analysts say the worst drought in centuries has hit.
The unwinding herb is harder find by the springs.
There's an old quiet in the mesas felt from the road
and a roar in the head from "progress" that won't still.

Back here in the West there's smoked mirrors
and a need for everyone to quiet down.
I search for comfort and depth in the eyes
of a half breed angel blown off course,
above possession and floating in the euphotic realm.
Anointing oil pours into the ocean
dispersing and free on top of the swell.
Its buoyed and drawn into the moon
then pays out again on water.

Consommé

Life is tough and dark marrowed
so we boil the neck bones down to make consommé
and spoon it while the sky sheds,
a deciduous blanket of purple and black.

Catastrophe blows in
semi-concealed in a repository.
It falls through the attic trapdoor.
and we partake of it willingly
as if it were a spitted lamb.

Or at least approach it curiously
like our grandmothers with ostrich feathers
hearing the phonograph for the first time.
We'll be having leftover succotash for a while
til the christ-fish start jumping again.

Or until the center of the disaster falls away
like a rocket stage
or the calloused skin around a deep splinter.
Kudzu chokes off the path to the creek.

It seems this house has a set of invisible antlers
that attract bad lightning
alternating with branches that fruit off
in moments of ripeness.

We drop to our knees and claw for plums on the trail
the wind howls like a wolfhound
and asks obtuse questions
speaking in a mother tongue we can barely remember.

The Blacksmith's Apron

Here we are, full suction in the muck of life
needing to don the blacksmith's apron
against sparks near the lap and chest
or jump into the poet's boots
that are running wild down the chasm.

We stitch along the ledges
grazing our heads on locust branches
searching for a telegram or a beam on the head
from any distorted messenger
or a glimpse of Venus with welder's glasses
volleying across the sun.

But its only the next green dragon
storming through the part in the hair of a sage
who's looped and spilling sangria on our faces
then dropping his torch in the foyer
while heads roll.

We write our intentions to one another on the high wire,
a pulley clothesline of laundry with torn eyelets.
We hold on with nails to the last pillar of civilization
as it crumbles in the wind
knowing there is no god aiming lightning bolts at us
only a tentacled planetoid, leaking its guts.
We conduct a kind of erotic devilment to avoid it.

Blue sparks fly out
when we grind the raw materials of life
on cupped rock feeling only a grit of
soil that's sifting through water
seducing with fools gold
at the bottom of the well.

In order to taste the wine it once held
we chew on the bitter edge of the bowl

turned out from the humble lathe
in the center of this idiot village.

It eventually churns back down in dissolution
in the barrow that runs between two hemispheres.
How does one slay the beast with a knife
dull and pretend as a letter opener?

To hold an idea is to hold a glass knob that
falls off in the hand.
Our parachutes tear on a tree
as we find we're already back on ground.

Love and other Natural Disasters

The planes surge forward in the split of the seasons
The prevailing winds seem tropical
or risen up from the thin layer of asphalt
that a steam roller sealed the underworld with-
everything looks so malleable in the heat.

This is the airport fire fighters break area
and on the other side of the fence is the runway
But no one suspects that I'm not a fire fighter, a rescuer,
or even a ticket holder
just come to write and get the wind in my face
like a semi-aggressive lover.

To fly is like opening into the chest of god
or a demi-god, or someone who at least meditates
fairly regularly.
Now there's a new re-make of superman.
He doesn't blink when he flies without eye protection
or ends up naked in a burning crop circle.

Couple of weeks and I'll be remade too
beneath the hands of the white coats,
who are shrinking my scalp, or at least
the shorn terrain where it looks like a waterspout
took a flying leap over the top of my head.

They'll put it together while my cousins nail
their dock in Mobile where hurricane Ivan
came ripping it up tossing palms against the window.
I'll be able to face the boat launch again without a hat
beside A's cousin, Helen of Troy, Alabama.

Will I remember where I go in truth serum dreams?
Last time the anesthesiologist
talked me to the tropical island of my mind
and those words TROPICAL ISLAND

spelled themselves like contact dancers

as I came up, connected to the oxygen like a diver
or my heroine astronaut, Sally Ride.

Why are we magnetized to, yet terrified of disasters?
Meteor showers, oil spills sucked up by oyster mushrooms,
Apollo 13, the free-fall that follows docking in love.

There's a travel poster of
"Peru of the ancient Incas" from the 30's where
the Indians looked up from their mountain plots
at the eerie metal object surging through the sky
not sure whether to fear it or build friezes to it.

We all need a sort of propellant to push us up to
the euphotic layer of cream-
something to untangle all the knots in the cord
that is connected to the master gardener on a high plateau.
I too squat outlined in blue to pick up my pen
and look up hoping for a UFO or at least a nod
from the chief controller.

What is it like to be in one of the current rooms
In Brazil taking holy water through a straw?
The whole clinic is built on a bed of crystals
soaking in the depth of the forest and
they say the entity that takes over Joao
is so bright when it works you up
it can break your zoom function.

So we light a candle that says abre camino,
and has a path that is painted on glass
that leads into glowing orb on the horizon
Or maybe that path is a river, or a long lit inlet
streaming from the hand of the Orixá
who rocks the ocean when she moves her body.

You can see the drummers coming in droves

to bring her in at the edge of the continent, steaming
and smell the flowers and fruit and candles
being sunken on the boats as a tribute.
And god its an epic journey.

There's an eel that begins migration from a river
three thousand miles away in Greece
traveling towards its nuptials in the Sargasso Sea
near the Bermuda Triangle.

Now the eel and is on its way home
to re-attach itself to the head of any divine mover
who will welcome it to her nest and re-hatch it
after it has fathomed all the undercurrents
that run up this body of lit water.

Mass Requiem for New Orleans

Parting of beaded clouds and the smell of funereal oils
waft through the parlor.

A mass requiem unravels in the bell towers, spills down
Bourbon Street, and swallows the world.

A Mardi Gras Indian costume is nailed by the X on a house,
yellow and brilliant, wet around the edges
with a Gulf breeze sending a shiver through it.

The rescuers recover from bridging themselves to roofs
as if Rafael had hovered near the precipice with them.

How they clung above the rushing water where the people
waited for the lady of Ponchartrain

to administer medicine or take them to the top
of the cloudy staircase where they could dissolve
and shed it all!

L. Moon says to build a fortress against the crashing water
but keep the valves of this heart music open,
keep the queen of diamonds tucked in the hatband,
though the boots might be muddied.

Find a small corner of earth and make it arable again with ashes
and compost.

Inoculate the wood from houses, fishing boats
and cradles washed up in the reeds to grow healing mushrooms.
“Boost the free radical scavengers”, called the doctor.

Acres of pitched tents in the light of Charon’s eye,
who poles back and forth the river with a raft of spirits
and those left behind use soul to propel themselves forward
when the limbs grow weaker:

A lone singer on Rue Royal sings the self-preservation blues,
his eyes ancient as the cradle of civilization
and his audience of one is electrified by the voice
of river mouth emptying into sea.

Two musicians sit drinking wine and eating bread
and boiled peanuts at the table of perception,
a door blown off its hinges.

The Black Indians loosen their sleeves from the nails
and scatter their wild magnolia seeds of music
and pumpkins sprout between the piles of trash.
The survivors wait in mosquito netting for new crutches and
clothes
and wish jazz funerals for those who blow whispers through the
pipes
of heaven back to New Orleans.
They instruct us to do the blanket dance to set them free.

Old Fire Tale

En route to our plateau
I see telephone poles
and the dark belt of storms
coursing over a celestial body
complicated as coral
but strong like a chieftain's mask.

Short circuit in the sky
and your middle button is missing.
Here, an upwelling chemistry-
stories lacing the tongue up.

Blue agave fans out, warm and effusive,
An old fire tale I warm my hands on
generating in the middle.
I can't quarantine myself from the bearer of love.

We end up on a flat rock trying to hold up shelter
with tension lines that go slack in the wind
and what was once fragmented
smokes together again.

Clay relics laugh with their legs snaked up
we take an old manuscript and twist it
starting an expert fire,
the kind that dragons used to breathe
when they blow torched over Mexico.

Now they say the universe
is white not vanilla black
Like the rounds of your eyes
we could dive through at this reef

As we stand on the strand
tracking phosphorescent evidence
where desert meets sea
and pirates run medicine in a lifeboat.

Old Lava Beds

Shock of light and voice of thunder.
Here you are, consumed in the trappings of body,
drawn to the primal pull of mud
while the galactic pinwheel propagates another arm.

The earth spinner pays out a song, dancing
while you slide down an exotic tree
following the threads as they fan out into time
yet keeping an eye out for the snake
that slides out from beneath the roots.

A log as heavy as a telescope
can point anywhere and find a city of stars
within the glowing detritus.
Some seeds need the heat to score and
split them open to for release.

You try to galvanize the mind
towards present occupations,
bails that require a ladder and a severer,
mistletoe and other seductive parasites.
Avoid walking into old lava beds
full of holes and liquid rock undercurrents.

Who knows what there is left to cultivate
in this rocky plot on the side of a hill.
There are single red anthuriums
for sale in the marketplace
that thrive on a piece of igneous and a spoonful of dirt.

Everyone wants to open to the dance that cleanly
like the veined succulent making it's
niche on the side of a mountain
poised to bleed magma anytime.

Painted Story

for Maureen, on her 50th birthday

I wish you a mouthful of peach quark
and a feisty but loyal horse
to take you to Bridget's Bowery
and for your Southwest psyche
to penetrate the T'hono Odham
petroglyphs and smoke and joke
with the gorgeous old men at the base camp.
Then to scale up the wall to
paint your own brave story:
How you jumped up on a desk
to teach the children,
drawing a bolt of lightning
on the blackboard to illustrate how
quickly a brilliant thought can spark
into the head
"So dog, you'd better be ready".
How you threw rocks at that crazy bastard death
mangy coyote slinking down the
wash behind your house
and when that didn't work
you set the whole wash & his tail on fire
trying to root the damn thing out.
For days you burned with fever
and the sun wouldn't lay his Aztec shield down
That reflected heat into all the hidden recesses
while you navigated the canyon perimeter,
the abyss, from your hospital bed
with only the frayed rope of your faith and will,
narrowly missing the scorpion's raised tale.
How afterwards you barreled down the desert roads
in your wheelchair at the survivor's race
keeping the earth's orbit from wobbling
and in climbing the steps at the survivor's fashion show,
with your head wrapped like a chieftainess
or snake charmer, you also charmed the beholders

and they rose, straightening spines to match your grace.
I wish you more midnight warm whirlpools
with an endless wine skin, laughing and singing
with a cast of all your friends,
an angel cooking ribs,
and a five planet hook up.

Pretend Liar

A seven day candle burns for the eighth day.
Wheels crunch on shell roads
shaking the horsetail tea on the window sill
looking like neglected swamp water
that was supposed to mend her head.

There should be a rope bridge leading out of here,
a direct line to dryer ground
out of this parallelogram shack-
these few boards thrown up with coffin nails
a roof that buckles in a tropical depression.

The blue clouds unravel like a bandage
from god's knee.
In the evening oils and acids rival each other
on rag paper black and madder
with salt thrown into paint.

There's a way to get plastered in a hand built mask
that stills the mind
allowing the wooden statues to talk
and the nearest person to awaken with an eraser

And sprout a veil between two shoulder blades.
Feel the finish on a Neolithic wedding pot,
open the window.
study the volcanic soil of the night sky.

Make a pilgrimage to the train wreck grave in Key Largo.
Break down the etymology of some old letter left
in a mangrove shadow.
Sit at a mossy table at the smallest airport in the world
and watch the planes rise like sopped rainforest bugs.

The Lifeguard

Another plunge into desperate waters
where stinging jellyfish prowl along the coast
and bring barbed feelers to the bathers.

This is how to lie on the beach
packing cool sand to skin trying to retrieve grace
after being stung and laid low by an undulating presence
that went through the legs like an electric ghost.

And when the relief comes
there's the benevolent gaze of the lifeguard
who gives the remedy and is always at the ready
with ice, analgesic spray, transistor radio,
accoutrements of his post.

He could draw a splinter out of anywhere
with deft fingers and a needle and
is skilled for any circumstance
involving compression and/or a slowed heart,
reanimating the victim after a strong wave comes.

He could even deliver a baby at the edge
of earth and sea if pressed to.
Twilight with moonrise, an arc of light
sprays up and over with a wave-
the heart gives off a murmur

of what it feels like to dislodge and thaw a glacier
then rise and break water over the ruins,
cramped muscles are rubbed back into grace.

Hear the whole afternoon of time,
continents drifting apart from one another.
The water's fingers scumble up and
eventually paint the cliffs down into sand.

Sometimes there's a piece of washed up raft
that needs a candle melted to it
and a push back out to sea.

The Ascent

Each day you draw yourself down out of dreams
and align your spine and body
with the same magnetic axis
that funnels in the Northern Lights.

We are sparked by adventure and desire,
following their liminal threads
to the ends of the earth
or at least the next parallel.

Every kid from here to China goes through
their silkworm stage, reaching up to mulberry trees
and pulling down leaves
for the pupa stirring in a dark box-

Those spinners of small cumulus bundles
extruding something out of themselves
stronger than their own cells.
they turn on instinct to wrap themselves in it.

Eventually the strands will mesh
to form the raw silk of someone at the edge of
the ocean, wondering when
they can turn themselves up.

We reach for berries or Flemish pears
hoping the highest has extracted the most complex juice.
The top note is sweet from the orbiting sun, wind,
and the ploughed lit path leading from the orchard.

I don't know how far you will range out
but I had a dream in which I handed back
the tobacco you had left
with mountains as a backdrop in your own movie.

They rose up from behind your shoulders

which have grown sturdy from all you have lifted.
and the snow caps dusted in blue shadows
called you to begin.

for Jasper

Mirrored Snakes And Orchids

The clouds are horse-gorgeous today,
spooked and pawing the hilltops.
I am sacrificing a vanilla mango
that should be offered to some crossroads transient,
leaving a slice beneath the tree
for black butterflies studded in sapphire
to taste with their feet.

One can trace entire civilizations in a slice
chased with ginger beer,
how people dropped anchors in the sun,
magnetized to lush climes
where poured magma and volcanic glass
shaped a tribe's future.

I remember holding a shell and pearl backed
mirror before me to see my first child's head,
waiting for the Pleiades to ease open
before he made his entrance, quiet and elegant
like a small chieftain on the Pacific Rim

Again today the moon is true in daylight,
a lunate bone in this arm of the galaxy
The heaviness of the world has sheared us
down to the grain
like big jungle ants bogged in honey
we swim blindly from limb to limb.

Now in this time when many are dying of thirst
at the shore of the river
we must forage for everything- roots
glovefuls of nettles, and love, the antidote,
nursing sugar out of dark dirt in the night.

Even the horned toad has its special skin
that mimics Venus' surface

She turns counter clock-wise to prevailing logic
and blows the fishing boats over glass.

Now they have set up a pipe near Baton Rouge
a thousand times longer than a digiree-do
with mirrors mounted inside at each end
and a laser beam to harness ripples in space,
stars colliding and the like.

Random gravity waves, you are out there.
We have trick knees and murmuring hearts
that register climatic changes
and articulate phantom winds.
We stand by to receive the front blowing in
from the ones adorned in snakes and orchids
who dwell in the archipelago.

Mosquito Net Tunic

for William

Dark smoke from a fire-proof bowl makes me think of you
and the southern Himalayas from a raven's eye,
cooking fish in a field that looks like the moon
drinking water that has just tumbled through a cataract.

I stand at the end of a lashed together pier
and watch the birds make a run round the earth rim
wishing for that moment when the wheels of the plane
tuck into metal flaps like an egret losing its legs to higher
purpose.

Whatever is packed is coming, what is not falls away
like the stages of a rocket burning up quietly,
having outlived their usefulness.
The boundaries now are severely frayed at the edges.

If only I could bring them to the Indian tailor
who sews a tunic of organza barely thicker
than mosquito netting.
Bring edges together and make a painted canvass to shelter in.

Tectonic plates beneath us shift like the underworld
gods clashing shield to shield
and the old men congregate around a hookah and blow
smoke up through the vents.

We saw people tending fires outside the moving boxes
that they lived in and something inside us fell apart
as we watched them from a manic taxi
and a bug crawled up my leg.

Now half my possessions are packed
and a move will come soon
to where the old plates have pushed up

against each other into peaks

The time here melts like an idol carved from butter.
What if I should keel over at the sight of myself,
pulled out of rubble with Shakti blowing into this mouth
then dialing her ear to my heart bone.

Shot Glass Moon

Water orchestrates through filters
of loam to drench roots.
There is germination in the margins
of that swath of road leading

past the erotic sculptures and we're propelled
back through the shot glass of the moon
and the moisture floor where we lie
flecked in red synapses.

The desire to survive and repeat is
etched in pure jungle and spoon flowers
and exploring a flat light plane
with the cunning of ocelots.

Recurring funerary items spike up in the soul.
The vibration sensors re-grow and
shadow boxes rise from the refuse
and art of separation.

Supernatural clouds sometimes
blow through the heads of humans.
A tree startles into its full height
then drops dew onto unfurled tongues.

The Meteorite Dealers

Turn around and be in the flat land again,
Orion's belt coming out up ahead at the state line-
an opening into the future
almost swallowed by dusk.

Confluence of rivers, gash in the land
ripped for a fire break
new starts stuttering out of burnt ground.

Everything looks like a grainy photograph,
a collection of sepia browns and blacks
an old buffalo horn to lay across the chest
to signal in lush expansion.

A global dust storm races across Mars
and gives off fallout and heat to this
sagebrush, red dirt, and a junked impala.

Here the meteorite dealers scavenge
and close in on rocks re-warmed by sun,
squatting with fig leaf bandannas.

You can examine one with a magnifying glass:
it looks like a piece of placenta
unearthed in a storm, petrified.

A lone cottonwood tree like a sprouted crutch
in the stream
and pieces of unexplained types of metal
as bright as several candlefeet.

You can never break down the components
of objects completely
even with the finest vixen telescope
mounted before your eyes

There's a residual big bang flash
against every dark molecule
like the ones of your fist sized heart

Or that snake over there at the watering hole
black diamonds down its back
its tongue turning to taste wind.

Martian Winter

The months came and went
in splotched and crushed paper
everything blown off the desk
to where there was nothing
and yet if there had been something there
it would have been a mound builder relic.

Something went streaking across the skies
in Martian winter
and darted up on the flood plain
in the form of foxes and their shadows charcoaling along in the
ancient creek bed
with the fruit bats

And in the morning called a woman to
look out the window and find
every line as tangible as
snakeroot seeds popping off the head.

In the autumn she penetrated and lit
the dam of the interior
stacked in different directions with old brush and the bones of
small animals
gone down in the heat driven floods.

The Western Frontier

There is relief across the land
that the dark moon has blasted off
and one static spark flies off her hand
as she looks into the abandoned well
when the beloved comes up.

The bat stars have swum from the sea floor
and they tip further from grace
doing the dance-crawl of out each quarter
in a sketch of movements

from the mountains to the sand
where water and blue air
are divided in a skimmer line
dark moist cliffs sculpt up behind them.

And the water pounds the soul
into a more tender abalone.
The outdated crumbles
like the walls of the old bath house.

They lean against a cruciform tree
and feel the pressure of gravity
maintain a place on the edge of space.

The colors feather out
at the base of the sun's skull.
Fishers row through the tide
and the far waves unravel their silver cords.

On the radio its is said there are
gondola shaped UFO's that float over earth
and crash into windmills.
The lovers lie against the hood and wait.

Wild Turkey Halloween

How was this canyon carved-
avalanche, lava, or a river of pterodactyls
dragging their wings
like the wild turkeys I watch from the creek?
Eventually came the horses,
ambering through and
salting the air with their sweat
and I hear the sound of wind in the bay leaves
or a messenger in the forest.

The last time we mounted the crest
I held on tight
because I wouldn't see you again
until Samhain when candles are lit
in sacks of sand to pull down ghosts
seeking out any lost baggage that fell
onto the runway:
A steamer trunk filled with empty hatboxes,
a gray samsonite filled with haiku and letters
to an almost-lover,
A vanity case the handle of which fell
off when we picked it up:
Worn out accoutrements of our beloved dead
left in our house where we've had to sand-
bag and trench for fear of losing all in the storm.

I thought a planet or UFO was blowing up in the sky
the other dawn when awakened by a blast of light.
Then came thunder like a guillotine sound
and a freak summer rain
spawned by hurricane Fabian dragging the Gulf Waters.

Drops fell on the albino pumpkin plant
I decide to raise up because you weren't here
worrying that it would grow to monstrous proportions

and rip up the walkway to the gate
that opens and slams for no reason.

The pumpkins so far are stunted and green
and I don't know if it will be albino
by the time you return
when the trash of wayward souls
caught on branches moans in the night.

This week I wanted to find a psychic surgeon
to remove the obstruction in my body
I've seen them on black & white film-
first they go over the skin with deft fingers
feeling it like Braille.

Then they go into the solar plexus
with an entire hand and pull out small rocks.
Or is it sleight of hand
using rubber sleeves, false bottomed bowls?
Perhaps they keep the stones hidden in their mouths
like an indigenous runner
who ran a long way to deliver a message

Its almost a Cesarean section
the way one entity quietly divides the body-
Sometimes a small piece of rope is brought out
reminding one of the cord
or the astronaut's tether to it's rocket.

You told me how you once rolled out
of your body while sleeping
and rose above it all.
But the slam back in can be quite startling.
Once I dreamed of flying to the delta
to see Joan and then had to turn
around in a few hours.
I ordered a dwarf bottle of wild turkey
to try to smooth out the rough edges

of something sticking in my chest like teflon.
But I hate weaving down the aisle
so I sit and project myself
out the window of my forehead
and climb out on the wing
and down the side of your building
and then you call and we speak
through a contraption that sounds like
the speakers we would hang
in the window at the drive-in
to watch "2001, A Space Odyssey" .

Its almost next year, come home soon
Before I need my head checked.
The construction is finished on the suspension bridge
and I think those cables will hold
I keep looking at the map with its veined surface
and putting my finger on your spot
as if I could go inside it and be there in New York.
Come home and wield that glowing skull
on a stick that makes fake thunder.

for Patrick

Portulacca

Here we are in this, the mystery crux-
how to barrel through pre-creation
in semidarkness touching portulacca
and sustain the pilot light in the navel
with few ingredients:
artemesia vulgaris shoved under the pillow,
vial of antidote broken open and breathing in the hand.
Make yourself invisible
like they do down under
to the burglars of the heart.
Throw them sideways
and put weather stripping on it
Then grow orchids in the oxygen
you share with your kinsmen
and ignore that seductress gravity
Burn the calendar for light
and listen to tall guides drumming
in low slung vines
Approach purpose like a sky-diver
sprawled in the wind
with a sack of buoyancy
about to billow open at your back.

for a.

Orchids and Air Dwellers

After the whales pull mountains up
out of the ocean
and it churns red in swallowed sun
this is how the timeline rolls out,
lying on the floor with a storm wind picking up
but the sky is crystal clear.

Nightfall on a bamboo mat,
the hot yoga teacher at the door,
the life to life bringer:
A solar flare separating off the heart
in the distilled night.

We stream through a flaming hoop
like dolphins
to glimpse the universe repeating itself
and ask the second hand
of the many armed galaxy to anchor us.

Then strain and hold to the mast
that connects the clouds to the depths
traveling at the speed of infinite knots
against the wild and beautiful squall.

Large wings flutter by our heads
and usher us into the milky way
then a budded lotus
emerges into the hands
that are ever opening.

White Tara hovers in the corner
doing feet mudras to keep it all going.
Her daughter emerges from water to air,
then comes afterbirth, milk, lunae lacrimae,
Ritual release of lily

from the runner.

We are sentient beings, glowing and
bound in copal, blood, and dew
from the orchid where time began.
We stretch out spines to meet each other
and the air dwellers in this secret evolution

for Tara Itzcuahtli Mini

Author's Biography

Amy Trussell's poetry has been published extensively in journals, including *The New Orleans Review*, *Poetry Flash*, *The Prague Revue*, *ReVision*, *Oshun Afrikan Quarterly*, *Mesechabe*, and *Poetry Salzburg*. She has also published articles in *Mothering*, *Woman Of Power*, *Native Self-Sufficiency*, and *Midwifery Today*.

Performance venues for her dance and poetry have included The Dancing Poetry Festival in San Francisco, Zeitgeist Theater, and Loyola University in New Orleans. She has received scholarships from Poets & Writers and Faulkner House and was a finalist for Poet Laureate of Sonoma County.

Forthcoming in 2007 is also her collaboration with A. di Michele, *UNGULATIONS* (Surregional Press, Slidell, LA). Current works also include a collaboration featuring her poetry and the visionary art of Krista Lynn Brown.

Books/E-Books Available from Moria Poetry

Jordan Stempleman's *Their Fields* (2005)
Donna Kuhn's *Not Having an Idea* (2005)
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Clayton Couch's *Letters of Resignation* (2006)
Thomas Fink's *No Appointment Necessary* (2006)
Catherine Daly's *Paper Craft* (2006)
Amy Trussell's *Meteorite Dealers* (2007)

The e-books/books can be found at
<http://www.moriapoetry.com>.

Meteorite Dealers

Amy Trussell

Reading Amy Trussell's poetry is great for the soul. Her work is steeped in rich imagery, with colorful, soulful elements. Her poems have movement. . .they're magical, and one can almost see them dancing off the page!

—Marjorie Mann, actor and screenwriter

Reading *The Meteorite Dealers*, I am reminded of the sorcerer-bards in the Kalevala, singing objects, plants, everyday items into a dynamic existence.

Amy sings a mean (but compassionate!) deep-sea ink that somehow gives us a glimpse of deep-*space*. . .perhaps the first hurtlings and hissings of what would later become that pagan, celestial stone now statically housed in Mecca.

Though Amy certainly respects our intelligence, she rips us straight to the heart, to where we *may* remember what we might *not* have fully experienced.

Amy Trussell is truly the meteorite dealer, midwife, muezzin and juggler of octagons and essences. In this work, as in all her other works, language multiplies and issues forth another dynamic meaning for: singularity. Finally, the Ka'aba meteorite performs *zikr*. . .

—A di Michele, author, artist, educator

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