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IN THE BONES OF WINGS


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I dedicate my first book to my daughters,  
Oona Astrid and Morgan Erin.



IN THE BONES OF WINGS

Someone I Can Name

Close by me, the river rolls heavy  
in the dark night ahead.  
I turn off the light,  
someone is outside moving  
a quick shadow or is it the wind  
trembling up the corner of a blanket?  
I step down on the weeping ground  
to move the water in the darkness.  
I walk under the sleepy linen  
of white lilacs, my breathing  
filled with constellations.  
I walk back through your words,  
my feet burn the grass, ironing dark prints  
and the diamonds roll out on the tough mosses  
changing everything by turning  
the light over into light.

For William Pitt Root

## A Woman Combs Her Hair

In standing flight, the Marsh hen  
pinwheels the flurried ground  
meshing light into nets. She spins  
one long strand from many,  
naming each thing that passes by her.  
In season, the nests are well hidden,  
raising spring water on names  
that are never known  
for opening pink brush in rotation.

A woman combs her hair loose,  
withholding her name in the glance.  
She whispers names passed to her  
in the night. Her hair is named  
in the richer ores, in the veins  
of spun linings, her name catches  
on a bright comb.

## Navigation

In the darkness, one man dreams in the all night  
drone of fish spinning red forked tails,  
bending lacquered fins forward  
straight into the moonlight.

The ocean splays wide over the beach  
spreading high the cold water mark,  
another late hour charted, bending  
the light like roses on the arc  
and fixing the center of the eye.

Champagne Mercy

For all the shades of blonde,  
pink peonies bend center stage.

Petals drape velvet lawns  
in bridesmaids dresses, by the row

speedy dashes of red trim,  
a water ballet stopped.

A moist thread beads above my lip  
after a long nap.

You seem closer  
when the streets are quiet,

and the bow of the archer  
will rise like a seedling in the north.

Together, we can escape into Summer,  
your face going to the ten acres grown wild

behind the house, flickering in white moths.  
Along the muscles of our lean legs,

kites fly victorious, we push back the wind.  
On the high balcony, so blue under the evening

star, you leave by the back stairs and Venus  
is a brooch on the crescent moon.

And the wild house holds me,  
by bounds, in vines, my stormy hair.

## Daughters

### Camas Daughter

Limestone tipis cast conical leaps  
on the dry gray floor of the hillside.  
    Camas blooms on glacial tide ripples  
    fraying ribbons at the edges.

### Obelisk Daughter

Driving the long valley in  
    rain thunders a sweep across the pines.  
In the land of black and tan foothills  
    red arrow stones sleep.

Black Fig, White Fig

On the walls,  
    black leaf shadows overlap the view.  
    They clasp and let go  
of houses that blink behind the trees  
in a new posture.  
It had been a big night  
and the stars were hasping  
    short wave signals to Australia  
    faster with the increasing light.  
A grain stone bolt  
engraved the lowlands sunrise  
filling up with clay pinks  
like lips funneling back morning.  
    On the bed, one yellow skirt  
    Bring up two candles  
    not the red one, not the white tree  
    Fill waterpans  
    Bring the large container  
    from the west window  
Miles and miles of black leaf shadows  
reflect in the polished glass.



In A Room Caught In Flames  
From The Milkglass Vase.

The vase opens in fireworks,  
a room caught in flames, landed  
in strikes and shooting red-violets.  
Reeds of color rock on the opal bottom.  
We watch the street intersect  
black touchstones with the streaks  
left on it, the purity of silver  
or the arrangement of the lights struck.

Curtains in the mirrors float in the room  
with the shuttles working back and forth.  
You move me with your body of stars,  
in a silhouette of galaxies, moons  
orbiting arms. We are breathing,  
not breathing.

## Victory Garden

On a starboard night, a disk  
of ball lightning thunders blue stallions  
racing in breakneck electricity  
and rearing in their shapes.  
They collide with the angels  
who take care of the terminally dying  
by turning dark gold to wild hay yellow.  
Their feet are underlined by deep soil,  
moist and cool, bathing in the deep sink  
of dippers, small and large.  
Under the bolts, I dream of the victory garden  
with corner fans in bridal white and gold  
bearded Irises. Green Irish Bells border  
the house and martinis wait on the veranda.  
Stripes of pink Poppies carry the cups over  
and wave past the boundary of the flag.  
Lightning flashes our bodies  
inside the house and outside  
years of brides and grooms.  
All the sons are back from wars  
served in vases that break open  
with white lilacs.

## Triptych

### In The Bones Of Wings

On the edge of water  
the blown rose breaks  
in shreds and spirals down.  
A wing clears the branch  
running the jagged snow  
where fields lie deep  
in the way of things.

### Unbroken Plumage

I walk the dense reeds  
that trap the air  
under ebony wings.  
Raucous cries feed loud  
in the parents of my hands.

Both calls remote,  
the quarrel concern of mates  
brood for nesting cavities  
deepthroated.  
A white bird preens the edges  
of gloss banks  
diving night.

Triptych.....

The Tent Wife

They go like leaves  
on the low hills  
boned for harvest.  
In the labor of horses  
cold clouds of breath  
trap what lies ahead.

Late and barren  
winds hide for night  
coming to an end.  
In this narrow life  
pale birds  
leave their wings.

## Opera House

The clock shifts down each minute  
like a camera shutter. On the wall  
the photographs seem to have changed  
expression in this room. He was born  
protecting three generations. Faces  
are heavy with leaving, double roots  
in the open air, the stern immigrants.

The cattails have already furred  
majorette drum hats and sunlight  
lifts the lawn the color desired  
to offer up the silver lake.  
In one photograph, a man holds a woman  
in pleats of white, one arm circling  
her waist, one arm dropped like a long stem.  
Her head is turned to the wilderness  
watching for the long prowl.

The parliament lit up at night  
is a chandeliered wedding cake.  
The brilliance has faded in the photograph,  
the years are combed with flying stars,  
cities are full of celebrities  
in the smells of midnight.

After the bombs in the rubble  
tiaras of tin, the gold dome  
is half invisible, a gigantic Easter egg  
rising in a sink hole. In the photograph

Opera House....

a man walks thin and gray by walls  
that glare in authentic crosses.  
A dear relative searching, as if lost  
in the still smoking ruins.  
He remembers the Opera House and where  
it stood; Madame Butterfly's trunk  
layered in bright gauze, exploding  
in white ermine for her shoulders.

The helmets had beady eyes,  
were real bronze, in real rain.  
Girls in white dresses lift bouquets,  
smiling bravely the same way.

Ancient August Light

In memory of Martin Luther King

Snake Priest

A man sings alone  
across a song,  
ebony sliver skin  
coiled heat. His eyes  
close. The man watches  
himself singing to thieves.

Strength

Sharp pointed cones,  
breasts part spheres  
and branches that ellipse  
the thrust elsewhere in hairropes.  
A woman bends to fill water gourds,  
her face is two shields.

There Will Be An Uprising

Faces fasten together,  
unseeing eyes, sharp teeth  
moving hollows, each limb  
shaping grooves and ridges.

Ancient August Light .....

Weaver Of Palm CLoth

On the water gourd she painted  
a terrible face. The children  
ran from thumbs and fingers shaping  
animals in the sand. Incisor teeth  
fringe forests, rule clearings,  
dark gods and flowers.  
The head in a cone blossoms.



## The White Moth

On the running board he leaps  
an ancient ride East  
on the last bridal canopy.  
The low cars roll up the distance,  
the weeping of hysterical departure  
burns the brow of the hillside.  
He climbs his mother's heavy hair  
to the thin sides of the moon,  
where silver peacocks fly  
with a grace that raises slender sticks  
piercing clean holes in the sky.  
He rides East  
past the rim of a cave  
where a man waits  
holding an umbrella.  
He tells him  
the rain is coming down  
in small tied bags.

UNBROKEN PLUMAGE

## Writing Rock

I turn back and the wind makes a bell  
of my hair, becomes the prairie leaning  
woodworn barns, the older ones breaking  
full weight. In summers, I crushed rocks  
for paint, antelope stained red, the buffalo  
huddled in the twilight, hair raised  
to diffused stars.

One summer, my father and I boxed red flowers,  
I followed the smell of earthworms beyond  
the spokes of the black spired gate.  
A cross cut deep shadows  
on the wall. My fingers probed,  
bone-chilled, the baptism water,  
I traced the way a violin begins.  
Light sculpted his face.

An axle in the sun ground whole afternoons  
as I bent looking for hairbone needles  
and untied hammerheads from the bottom wires.  
I traced the pictographs and flecks of granite  
turned the coyotes back.

## Fireball

A meteor fell into her parents' garden  
guiding her back to the stars,  
                                the ruby giant sun  
                                and nearly a star cluster.

The universe is born  
of a supernova, meteors  
bomb young moons and ring planets  
on large avenues.  
The obelisks encouraged the people  
to come on a pilgrimage,  
on an old pipeline to cafes  
and all the rest. Light triggered retinas  
and in the stars heat wielded heavier elements.  
Gravity swept back the seeded clouds,  
collapsed them back into themselves  
to a second generation.  
Man molded from clay,  
woman in man's rib.  
Six more angels are twisting around  
rinsing the world  
in diamond polychromatic cuts.

Flathead Lake

Blossoms

bare rock on worn paths,

are hearth fires.

Flying snow combs

the lake mirror.

## Sunbathing Tornado

Long grass whispers on light leaping  
phosphorescent green and whirring  
in molecular insects. A first kiss,  
a golden hairpin arches ladders  
swinging on star tassel tresses.  
On diamonds and black luster,  
rivers are located at their beginnings,  
magnetically parted, the water divides  
the many roads.  
On thick knots and sashes of breezes  
to wider berths sail rain greens  
breaching ionospheres of pearl,  
sepia-toned and perishable light.  
That odd light that happens  
before turbulence. A feather  
suspended on a blue whirling globe.

## Yellowstone Bridge

The sun burns the pans  
    of shallow streams  
and seeds  
    thread the broken plains,  
broken by distance  
    and years of words.  
Cattle kick the earth  
    into clumps of dry ovens  
as rays of dust  
    move again in their old eyes.  
Sons  
    rest their hands  
    on the hard flanks of horses,  
in the torn silks  
    of sunsets  
and the dark swarm of harvest  
    and full return.

Mad Adorations

Brilliant are the bowed heads  
in the bronzed fields,  
weather meets unnoticed.

The stalks in the field do not surrender  
to the dust plows storms. Careful rows  
twist in the silky hair of the husks  
making a long drift through the crosses.

Leaves cascade as though startled,  
the red bleeds around the green veins  
falling on the garden jades, the unguarded  
marble flowers on the benches, glacial blue  
throngs of dried flowers from last June.

The afternoon shadows torn tea roses  
in the hush of the dinner hour. Silver  
chafes the linens and we sit knee to knee  
as voices shroud the windows. Another winter  
is carried in on the bladed air.



In Memory Of Marilyn Monroe

There was a teal sheen as she climbed the ladder,  
the wonderful feeling spreading over her  
of being bright gold,  
a halo  
against the royal midnight,  
the purple tips of her hair,  
the lavender body spearing  
in and out of disappearance.

A tiger strikes orange,  
one foot after the next  
in the dark liquid night.  
The rain is like ink  
turning the leaves black.  
For the last time  
there are no signs of life  
in her room, no one is dancing  
in pink and cashmere arms.

Through the venetians  
light slants across the satin sheet  
and milky shoulders.  
Who was she calling  
in the blinding sunlight  
down a dark corridor?

At The Hotel

I don't know what the land looks like  
where you are and with what kind of trees  
or where you are sleeping,  
if there are tall grasses from native seed  
six feet and over.

The gardens can be so old  
they have tried to grow everything,  
                    dolls from faithful Hollyhocks  
                    skirts starched

all the sweet Sundays.

Even the grass can hesitate in green leaps  
and so distant

                    the land shakes the mountain pass  
between us and throws the lobby filled train  
speeding through the Idaho hotel.

## Snake Mounds

A frey of Pelicans,  
hunger crusted on sharp mouths  
are the last to feed on  
the thin metal of the sea.  
Heartbeats,  
single and swallow  
and you nestle somewhere.  
We saw what we devoured  
and the air breathed  
for us, when a handful  
of seeds  
should have been enough.

For Richard Hugo

The Tent Wife

## Man In Roadside Trees

In the rainfall, old men curse  
their own weaknesses, the Saturday nights  
and hotel windows that lift the globes  
of a breast. To them, the hills stammer  
in dry weeds and the band slices the air  
in double time.

In the Badlands, they learn to speak  
silver and relieved of flesh,  
broken dishes bring nights to rest  
on keyboard stops. It has happened  
many times before, all the weary hands  
trying to count the times lived on miracles.  
The arms of a woman reaching for the body  
of a man. She knows her hands lay prints  
in the field the color of blood.  
It happens many times, a man  
in roadside trees trying to jump out  
in front of cars. He does not change  
into a leopard.

## Wind Harp

She belongs to the cliff  
in the sound of wind leaning,  
                    wave shaped and continuous.  
Caretaker, end of Sun's influences,  
sound of wood thracking the sharp air,  
sound of mist forming.  
                    Dawn is the traveler,  
                    bringing Orchids from silver beds  
                    winged in glass leaves.  
She is the sound of never returning,  
                    wind playing itself,  
sound of bright tears,  
desperate  
blue  
ports.

## The Shawl

Careful strokes  
under the faded sky,  
ormolu  
sea swells  
the eager arms rowing  
the boat to an island  
where smooth pebbles  
tile the tufted grasses.  
The shawl lifts a wave  
of wild magenta,  
in the same rhythm  
plants yield to water,  
we yield to the dense,  
hot silence, listening  
to the knotted wrack  
of the water, listening  
to the siren's ancient pitch  
sound the stony deep fjørd,  
for all the labryinths,  
for all the vessels.  
We meet the summer clear day  
for what brought us to lie here.

January, End Of A New Moon, In The Year Of Another

Fingers twist loops and cast in ice,  
reins fringed by rocks and leather.  
Early mornings I fall awake to see  
how threads are wound. Sagebrush spins  
before the storms, giving no direction  
to take, how to be two of a kind.

As a girl, I was a ruby  
circling card players, expected to dance  
the downward strokes that flounce plants  
to solid ground. In trammeled hills,  
voices sound landmarks in each corner  
of a room. In the triangle past  
the next place, great fluffs of women  
guard the pastries and sunlight cuts  
the glass, spotlighting etches in rose  
and thistle, the carnival shell cups.  
Doorways invite soft warnings  
over the tops of the creamery pails.



## Figure Study

All that remains are dreams  
and landscapes that idle in high speed.  
Deserted rooms sway to the longer side.  
On the table there is a map in the varnish,  
petroglyphs fade and vanish, as stars  
mark the dividing line of blackness.

The figure of a woman,  
sits alone in the scent of pine,  
a peach color is pressing her breast.  
By the window she sees the sky  
and mound of snow.

She fears the rocks, the arrival,  
dark dobermans and no one there to meet her.  
There is no station, no platform  
with stairs for her to climb.

Rain Moose

Ice wind panels  
the moon,  
snow sprays deep sleep.  
We release the weight of it.

## Metal Kiss

A silver ring clatters up  
from a pool and waves  
over the Earth,  
waves and waves  
orbiting high on the crescent  
moon.

Hot in the city  
and all the broken waiting  
and pulsing  
from every part,  
spread over streets  
like large stones.  
The metal pool  
is slip you can say  
anywhere,  
thin, thin,  
and at night, the flocks  
are composed shards  
in the black  
as the wind comes in  
and waves the Earth.  
After I sleep,  
I speak,  
I do not see where,  
but can see nearer and feel  
the dark staging  
metal shapes.

Metal Kiss.....

I go after them,  
running,  
they rise up,  
birds.  
Someone will see me  
scared  
in the hot hinges.

## Winterpark

The cars streamed out of town days ago,  
first passing Cocoa Beach, the iced guard chairs.  
Snow blind, the decks are building up  
camphor white tombs in the airless bounds  
of my long sighs. The tombs face  
in all directions, they brave aliens,  
the long prayers are said by looking up  
for any distance, to stars marking the places  
that need liberation. Winterpark is a mausoleum,  
the holidays are too long and typical,  
chilled postcards. And what is the blessedness?  
The angels fly between the decks of air,  
their conversations from another time.  
They have faces, they face the curling sea,  
they see with granite eyes, the tombs underneath.

Gör

Northern lights spear the dark  
in a war of whalebones  
as the river's tongue  
carves the ice  
for a fragile expedition.  
Gripping beasts mount  
the harped ships  
while the Gods prevail  
over everything  
in the ecstasy  
and the death of it.

## Glass Leaves

A breeze slips through the birches,  
ships of light fall like stones  
in the forest of Poland.  
Wind weaves a forgotten language  
around Hitler's tanks  
that struck the womb,  
splintered the life  
lying in bright tears  
on carpets of hair.  
Shorn,  
naked under the nakedness,  
love lies shuffled  
on the pale masks  
as a steel quiet looms  
in the breast  
for the generations  
heaped  
like leaves before the inferno.  
Never to return  
fragrant as new grass.

## Atlantic

The pier was a crowd set up,  
black hitches on iron leggings  
waltzing on shrapnel, way out there.  
Mine field prisoners, fortune is a dance  
around the corner in the chutes  
where the surf is breaking sticks up.

Is it candlelight by daylight?  
Are mad wings passing over  
traceable regrets, invitations  
to a closed room, cell or body?  
Silver ridges cannot be removed  
from the moon.

A wind guest,  
I watch myself walk below,  
trying to lose my mind,  
have a conversation with a bird.  
For me, Picasso goes for a stroll,  
a bony crane stands between columns  
trying to adopt indescribable singing.

We wear any mask  
and feed on pictures.



## Fossils And Genesis

After I knew you were really gone,  
I walked into a museum of shadow boxes,  
clay Indians by shale fossils, old trains.  
One fossil was of a leaf from a plum,  
a lost species, no one alive can describe.

There were boxes of butterfly wings,  
all were ordinary, except the one in the middle  
from Brazil, torquoise and gold,  
old as Egypt. The herons stand on glass legs,  
since 1917 .

As quickly as city lights can trigger dusk,  
you leave me under the cover of hurling snow,  
in the sinking black, abandoned by everything  
in night skies. In the open air  
everything can turn to dust.

Obsidian Cliff

I drive along the river, driving up  
the narrow neck of it along canyon walls  
bleeding verticles to a thin crust of land.

I had to leave the slow erosion,  
the sting in the long toned wind  
and the same desires rippling

sharp and glossy.

Black muscled birds are forbidden  
the gold stalks that winter in the drift.  
They move in a slow circle  
that must cover the land in time.

Sixty Moons

My hands splinter the ice, reaching  
into the hard lines of streams  
and locking my shoulders in the cold  
drawing up, a chant I have known  
for five years, the unforgettable cold  
my blue veil, that drifts home  
the secret bloom,  
the jagged sky.

My hands still carry the fire  
between the days and dialogues.  
My body is cast by the years  
smooth as the prayer ice,  
hands melting through hands  
resting. My hair, whitening.