



IN WATER
NOT BLOOD

By Karin Jervert



For Grandma.

And all warriors of story and song who
walked the path to be what I hope to become.

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A PRAYER FOR THE WARRIORS OF STORY AND SONG

For the warriors of Love and authorship,
Art-making and Song.

What does the world see of you?
What does the world hear of your voice?
What hands hold your face as the truth falls from your lips?

What Water do you drink?
And from whose cup?

How does it taste?

I do not know what is wrong with us.
I do not know the Tree to pluck the Flower that grows for us—
The warriors of Story and Song.

But, like Water, like ink, like Sound
Our Love flows into the hands that hold each other's faces—
Into the lips that kiss the feverish foreheads,
Into the cups filled with Flowers that we share,
Into the ears that have not heard of Love,
The eyes that have not seen it,
Into the backs that break reaching for it,
And the minds that fracture from the weight of it.



A WOMAN, A WOLF, AND A WHALE

As the land is set ablaze,
And the people's souls are aflame—
We lay awake at night,
Listening for a song of peace,
A song of grief—
So we can finally weep for what we lost,
For what we forgot.

But, the only sound is the roaring of the sea at the edge of
everything.

Underneath the Water,
The Whale sings for healing.
She knows that the Fire only eats the Air,
But she and the Water are one.

She knows her song is filled with sorrow.
And she knows its purpose and its power.

Somewhere a Wolf sings to the moon of Hecate,
Calling on the leaders of the lost.
She knows her song is one of solitude,
She knows she will always vie for life,
And never be sacrificed.
She knows there is no disguise of harm clever enough to make
her an offering.

And she knows her purpose and her power.

Somewhere at the edge of Dreams,
A woman smiles at Christ's Cross,

She sits on one arm of it swinging her feet,
While her ancestors dance below to the beat.

She knows her people have nowhere to put their sins these
days,
No coin, or priest—
Not even in the bodies of their brothers,
Or the wombs of their daughters,
Or tossed into the void of Death.

No, they must tend to it themselves,
And use Songs like magic again.

A Woman, a Wolf or a Whale,
Who knows the purpose and the power of her voice—
Can only put it to use.



A BIGGER LOVE

Remind me tonight—
Remind me again of the story of Love.
The one that ends when you point to the Stars and tell me,
“Our lives are the same as the Earth’s—
As the Night Sky’s.”

Our youth prancing there in the dark,
Our heartache shining like the Stars.
The ones for which each of us yearn,
Across all Oceans.

The story both mends and tears my soul apart.

It means I could Love them all—
Or I could Love just one.
It means I may never know the things some poets know,
Yet in some way know them best of all.

A bigger Love leaves me at your feet morning and night.
A bigger love that begs me to write.

On a beach at the edge of the world,
The sand beneath my feet,
The sky expanding into the disorienting distance—
The farthest reach.

And me, alone, with you,
The biggest Love.



HANDS OF SAND

I have as much of her in my hands,
As I had before I let her go.
Yet, my hands feel so much emptier now,
Than when they were full of ideas of her.

Lifetimes ago,
I must have broken her heart.
Lifetimes ago,
She must have filled my hands with sand,
And roared with laughter.

I must have been begging for something,
Because I have always felt so cheated of her.
But, she was so much of my own trickery.

I must have hoisted her out somewhere on the road.
I must not have realized it until she was gone.
And the words I used to usher her out of my life—
Must have filled me with dread.

There must have been piles and piles of broken hearts between
us—Not even our own!
Hearts of people we had never met.
The still heart of a deer struck on the road;
That of a trout stolen by the fisherman's hook.

I don't know why we've come with so many ghosts.
Why you are so much like sand in my hands,
Tickling the soft skin between my fingers.

I don't know why it all falls into a River we swam in as sisters,
That now, in this life, sends us both away—
Far too swiftly.



WHAT I KNOW OF YOU

What I prayed to be true of you,
Falls to the Earth—
And is planted in the true Earth.
In the ground of mind,
And a baseless love,
Written in a sea of mirrors.

What hope can I make of someone else?
The storyteller—
Pitiful and disappointed by my own passions.

A rose for the one I thought differently of,
and continued to Love.

What a gift to give,
To Love the Truth of you.
What Tree might grow,
From the seed of that witness?

And yet still there is some imagined veil,
Between the fanciness I dressed upon you,
And the simple beauty of the truth of you.



ALONENESS IS LIKE FIRE

Why does aloneness feel most like Fire?
Like Fire raging through everything I thought I knew,
Of what I was ever worth.
Why does it whisper words only a world I don't belong to
would utter?

Accusations of need—
A prison of a word,
No one I know can even speak it.

Accusations of embodying imposition—
As if burdens were creatures, dark and wild,
Waiting in the limbs of Trees,
Seeking a host.

How did we learn this creature?
This character of need?

The circle of ability culturally defined,
Was designed to adjust.
But we desire perfection:

Perfect ability.

What is this living machine we've built?
And passed to our children,
Grinding us all forth into isolation?
As if this was how to care for one another.

Aloneness feels like Fire because it is made of Rage—
And I am on Fire tonight,
I am on Fire at midnight.
Wishing I could squelch its burning.

Because all of it feels like there will be nothing left—
All of it ashes.

And no one, not one of us, ever wished for that.

Yet here is the Fire.
Here is this wasted heat at midnight—
Wild and unstoppable.

Here are the words of this creature of need,
Imprisoned by the barren night.
Who has done nothing but survive,
And is on Fire tonight.



A GREAT AMERICAN GRIEF

With Death and its company,
A clarifying horror—
Hidden deep in the cracked walls,
Patched on city streets,
Keeping the disparaged,
The desperate,
And all the ways we weep,
Away from us.

All while we maintain that old aesthetic,
The architect long ago forgotten,
The artist long ago dead—
His true dream lost.

Yet we build it with every breath.
With each way we fortify ourselves against Death,
Against the truth.

And the ways we play at each distraction,
Each shiny thing,
Between us and all the mourning we've neglected—
All the death we haven't seen.

While we sip tea and poetry,
Unable to hear the Song,
As it is laid into the Earth like a corpse.
Waiting for our grieving—
Waiting for our reverence.
Our ritual loss—
And our sending off.

A great American grief,
Is as heartfelt as the dirt we eat.

It is as much alive as the Death we do not see.

A country who does not know how to mourn,
Builds walls to hide the wholeness of things.

What it means to live,

What it means to lose.

This is where the mysteries of Love become alive in us.



SIGH OF SURVIVAL

2020

Midnight—
And a sigh of survival, so far.
At least through this year.
And then, a sigh of bracing.

Words like 'together' or 'we' on the radio in the car,
Feel bitter and at once make me weep—
From hoping I am not alone.
That this whole time,
'We' have not been alone,
Yet, very much lonely.

Each night this past year,
My routine became more and more perfected,
Teeth, face, pills, heat, locks, lights—
And then try to feel loved,
While I close my eyes,
And hope for the nightmares to stop.

It's been a long, long year.
A birth from safety to danger,
As all births are.
A birth from trust to discernment.
From freedom to independence.

A sunny nook to a studio spattered with pain and paint,
And a joy of knowing something so foreign to me,
I did not think God had created it.
Or, perhaps, I thought God had not intended it for me.
So, it atrophied,

As if hundreds of thousands of years in space,
Rendered it not even a memory.
Something less real to me.

That I was worthy.

This year fear was like Medicine,
The only kind I've known—
The cruel kind.
The kind that kills.
And I took the tincture daily,
But, only some days did I know it,
Only some days did I see its effects.

There were days I feared for every living thing,
Wondering if the end had come to pass.
And I had to continue on,
Knowing what would never be,
And what was still to come.

And, that I was worthy.



YOU HAVE NO HOPE

A Shadow of a question,
Passed to me in the night,
From a Jet stone on a beach.
Offered like a seagull feather—
Whose stories have been forgotten.

Goddesses of the Sea have lost their seats,
Yet they whisper to me,
“You have no Hope.”

A fearful drop beneath,
into the despair of the truth.

I have no hope?
No hope for anyone to open their eyes to me?
To who I’ve become—
Who I am becoming?

“You have no hope,” She says.

This powerful Medicine of shadow,
Mischievous reversal—
I know it.
I honor and respect its mirroring.
I hold awe for this line of mysteries.

“How, then” I ask the dark stone,
“Can I find it amidst this?
This night of soul that surrounds me?”

I walk the beach with this question,
And a strange gratefulness inside me—
Gratefulness for the chance to seek.



LET THE HIDDEN THINGS BE LOST

Why should I weep?
What use are tears shed for the miracle of things—
Come and gone as they are always?
Why cry for what is,
What will be again and again in the end?

Instead, I say,
Build your life like a castle of sand.
Create a life that will be glorious when it is gone.
When it's washed away by the Sea.
So all that is left is Breath and Music and Memory.

Sometimes I smile and laugh at the likeness of all things—
Coming and going as they are always.

What happens now that I have no need for your secrets?
Nor for the worlds?
What shall I crave?
Without its mysteries and locked doors,
The unknown floors.

Let King Solomon's secrets sleep.
Let the Kabala's pages turn to dust.
Let the Cross turn to ash,
And let the Buddha be buried beneath a thorny bush.

Let the hidden things be lost.

I have no need for them,
I have only the rising Sun and hopes for sleep.

Let the beggars seek.

Just listen to how my body bleeds.

Listen to how it has for centuries.
I know the only hidden thing worth seeking:
The document of my body—
And how it carries me.
How it sings.

How Stardust becomes a poem.
How Water becomes life,
And Blood becomes Soul.

I write because the words beg me,
Even if I don't know their meaning.
In my younger years there was a River of Fire I loved to float
on.
But, I never knew where the current would take me.

Now I write alone and for a woman who mourns an exile of her
own.
For a grown man who cries for his mother's lullabies.
For the women I can feel listening to me when I slap my thick
thighs,
Laughing.
Thighs I'm told are just like hers.
And I have to remember I did not leave him—
My father,
But, her wanting to run still lives in me.

Now I write with time in mind,
Knowing the strange way words travel.
I crave no answers and no secrets—
Just the words and the work that live in me.



THE EARTH DOES NOT SHUDDER

The Earth herself does not shudder at Death.
But we, her children, quake from head to toe at our losses.
So quietly the Earth slips into the moments of absence—
Into the days after the end.

There is no wail from the Trees;
There is no splitting of the Mountains;
No tsunami of the Sea—
No matter how great our grief,
No matter how great our lives.

Yet our cries can split minds and hearts in two,
And send waves of grief for us to drown in.
The Earth's vantage point so vast,
Our knowing of time so small, so quaint.

It seems so strange, with all the pain,
That the Sun was not blotted out for a moment in
remembrance.
No—
It is bright all day.

Is it strange that the Earth does not scream out for us?

No—
I turn the wheel as I drive home,
And nothing has changed.
The Earth is only whispering with her steadfast love,
“Death, my dear—
Death is always here.”



THE OCEAN ASKS US TO DIE

Wisdom lives in our bodies,
The ones that lay naked to dream at night.
All of it beyond story and struggle—
Beyond the daylight.

In rest and in weariness.
In the sounds of absolute quiet.
Of a mind with no mind.
In the Stars of the night—
In what points to them,
But does not speak of their light,
Or their meaning beyond Love and our bonds to one another.

It is only like this:

How the Ocean asks us to die—
Like all the other creatures.
And how there is no choice but to give our bodies to Her,
Because they already, and have always, belonged in Her depths,
In the Earth.

It is becoming.
It is belonging.



ASK HER IF SHE FEARS YOU

So sweet to be cruel—
So sweet to fear each other.
Like a child who knows no other way to feed,
Left hungry for generations.
Finding food in destruction,
Veiled as protection—
Veiled as power.

This is the fear of drowning in each of the seven Seas made by
human beings.

Look deep—

Starvation has stolen the eyes you use to see.
I see differently.
And maybe you would murder me,
Just for this.

While the world devours you with its diversity,
While the Earth laughs at you.
She stops to see you pass,
Without much to show of your jealousy.
Your rigid holding to one strand of dull light,
and your passion for destroying the rest.

She sees a wound where you hold a sword.
Ask her if she fears you—

What do you think?

All of these voices are not mine.
Keep trying and She will return,
Until you are tuckered out—

Lost, exhausted again,
By the futility.
Wishing only for a cup of warm tea.
For company in the inevitable.

Tell me what do you see?

I will breathe until I don't any longer.
Just as you will breathe until you don't any longer.



WHEN HAS IT COME?

Newness comes from below me,
Dressed in darkness.

My trembling voice shatters on the rocks in a Sea of self-doubt,
In a land of echoless uncertainty.

But have I made any sound at all?
Or have I only been reckless with the holiness within?
I do not know who could show me the truth.
I don't know who I could show it to.

Perhaps with a blade at my throat,
I might bleed the Song of it.
Death is as close as it has ever been—
My life at the tip of it.

If it has not pried my eyes open—
Has not drawn the blood of my voice,
When do I feel it will be done?
When has it come?



HOW THE QUIET ONES WALK

I do not know any way,
To bend the light,
Mend the truth,
Heal the lost ways.

I know the Medicine comes,
as the Sun sets,
And the women rise in a dark place.
Where roots churn the dirt,
While no one is looking.

I do not know how the quiet ones walk,
With their souls buried below,
And their bodies above.

Must the silence kill them?

Unless they learn aloneness—
Unless they learn to speak in riddle and rhyme,
Sign and symbol.
The truth just below their feet.

What is there in such a fractured state?

We can only be the truth,
When we speak it.
When there is no other light,
To resurrect it from Death in the daylight.
Where all creatures of thought—
All creatures of Fear,
Remember the eternal return of the night.

The night with no riddles.
Just the turning over of those that Dream.

In the dark a great forgetting awakens the dead,
A great forgetting of how we once lived.



MADNESS I RECOGNIZE

Believing is not so much a harbinger of the real—
As is the Wolf,
The lie,
The loss I fear the most.

Pressing my foot down here—
On this Earth,
Feels like a step of less a distance,
Than on the Earth in my Dreams.

Like there is less time to travel,
From one ghost to the next.
Less time between one healer who watches,
And the woman who mourns a darkness,
That is piled upon darkness,
On top of darkness.

But believing the Wolf is not so much what matters—
It is the loss of resistance,
That quenches a desire,
That is born in an unknown Sea,
Dark and full of creatures.

And all the ghosts given light and life centuries ago,
Are trapped in the gaze of those who wake but still sleep—

It is all madness I recognize.



THE RED RIVER

God painted our bodies with the Water of a green River.
A gray heart lives in our head and God painted it Blue,
Like the Sky.

Inside it there is daylight,
And the daylight reaches into the night of the whole of the
universe.
Night and day both live there in the gray heart God painted
Blue.

Our bodies move, and think they move.
Our bodies hold, but like a River in our hands, nothing is held.

Sometimes the River turns red—turns red.
And the damage is done.

So, we eat poisons from the Earth to heal.
But there is only the purity, the perfection, of the damage,
The violence of the red, red River.
Our green bodies negotiate the wounding, but it is all what it's
meant to be.

Love binds the broken.
Love is painted black, like the space between the Stars.
Better than man's Medicine when the River turns red, red.

Love painted black can be cruel, too, ripping apart the bound.
For Death, maybe.
Death painted white for what is after, maybe.
It is all what it's meant to be.

Disease and the doctor.
Love and the red, red River.



ROSEMARY REMEMBERS ME

Rosemary remembers me.
I can see the path to cross the River.
The path that connects the forgotten roads.
The tide is low,
And the Sun burns away what obscures the way home.
I see the stones I left to mark that one important thing.

That I remained me.

That I am that one thing—
Even under night Skies I do not recognize,
In strange houses while strange rain falls onto the roof.
In the strange beds I sleep,
With strange Rivers flowing outside—
Holding strange Waters,
Steeping strange tea.

Strange hands,
Strange hearts,
Resting next to me.

When Rosemary remembers,
I am all these strange things—

And I remain me.



FALLING IS LIKE FLYING

Remember—
Falling is like flying.

Remember—
This fall is eternal.

It is the learning to fall, and fall, and fall—
All the while, no ground at all.

Grow fast and furious,
Like a young tree,
With the heart of a Faerie

Fly!
Fall through the clouds,
And bid them goodbye.
See no end to the falling,
See only freedom and grace.

Dance,
And pray,
And feel,
And sing—
Let the Air be a friend.
Forget you knew anything at all.
Embracing nothing.



DREAMS OF THE WOLF

Months ago I dreamt of a Wolf.
In the dark, I asked,
Would this land beneath me embrace me?

My Earth is America now,
While my bones are still wet with Europe.
My body is of the conqueror.
My soul displaced even from that.

What Gods then will take my prayers?
Would the Wolf hear my cries?

To fall into her arms,
I fell through generations of my ancestor's eyes—
Knowing I was not this Earth's first guardian,
Knowing I am not even her guardian now.

A discoverer of what had been long discovered, loved and
tended—
A supplanter of land; Expander of my people's domain.
Naive of history; A soldier of erasure.

A Swede; A German; Irishman or English
I came for freedom at any cost,
Grieving and exhale of my own.
In a trance of assumption generations deep—
Filled with the spirit of consumption.
My spread both sleepy and slow,
And crazed like a wild Fire in a dry Forest.

My Mothers and Grandmothers,
forced to abstain from their power,
From their love of the Earth.

I fell, and fell, growing close, crying out:
"Who will carry me if I have no Earth now?"

And still, it is no surprise,
That there is no hesitation on her part,
As she holds my homelessness—
She embraces me with no regret.
Soft and warm, churning my slight Death into fields of
Forsythia.

Because Love, and Death, are so much everything to her—
They are almost nothing.

She embraces the conqueror the same as the conquered,
Drawing them into her transformative Love.
As long as they come to her without weapons—
Having walked a path remembering.



I WAS NOT THE ONE

The world and its wounds,
Laid heavily on me from the beginning—
Like an accusation.

But, I was never the one.

I did not deny him, or my motherhood.
I was young, trying to avoid his tongue—
That verbal whip.

I did not force his dream into slumber.
Nor did I crush him with duty.

I was not the one who made her weep.
Or measure her tears in tablespoons each night.

I was not the one.

I was your child and you her son.
I was your daughter and she was your wife.
I was none of the violators,
The deal-breakers,
The betrayers.

The world and its wounds were waiting for me,
When you said to my mother, "Shut up and look!"
When my head crowned from between her thick thighs.
I wonder if I knew, just then, how Love worked—
How hate-filled it can be.

How am I to bear it?
Looking at my own, grown hands,
At the weapon and the wound?



WOMEN WHO RUN

Some days it's all so red and real,
I feel there can be no forgetting.
I remember my father's mother—
Because the man in me is weeping,
And does not know how to love.

I see him, and I know,
Though I have loved him all my life,
These days, I'm more his mother—
The one who ran away.

The one for whom a town whispers, "Shame."
The woman who has too many secrets,
And too few regrets.
Whose story will never be told—
Never be whole.

I think of her blood when I bleed—
And how through it my father came to be,
Came to bleed, and bleed, and bleed.
And then blame the world for the wound—
For the way she learned to run from his needs.

I don't know why she ran from him,
No one ever seemed interested.
She was only a specter of desire—
The kind that makes mistakes,
The kind that destroys innocence.

I slap my thick thighs,
And smile, catching my father's tears in a tea cup,
I say, "Isn't that all desire does?"

Isn't she free to destroy what she wants to destroy?"

My mother,
His mother,
Your mother,
Grandmother,
My daughter?
Aren't we all destroyers of things,
Not forgiving a woman who runs?



MY GRANDMOTHER'S LETTERS

When I left home,
My Grandmother's letters were filled with poetry and
apologies—
Begging forgiveness for the time that had passed her by.
Time that left her confused and afraid.

Anticipating my youth,
With its expectations of ability and beauty,
My eyes could not see her truth—
The strength it takes to watch all that time pass you by.

Most of her letters are lost now,
Buried somewhere in the past.
I keep memories everywhere,
Yet, I can't find the lined yellow paper hers are written on.

She wrote them to me when I was 20 years old,
Away from home for the first time—
My soul torn, and then torn again,
In a world filled with cruelty she knew well.

Away from her tea and crumble cake.
Evenings spent in her living room,
Wrapped in blankets.
While she listened to me,
Sat silently,
Smiling—
Her hand resting between the ears of her dog,
Content at her feet.

And the only words from those letters I remember:
"We were powerful witches once, you know?"

And just then,
The songs of women filled my head.
Women in lands I never knew,
But could feel the winds of.
The kinship and the faith,
The betrayal of kings, lovers and sons.
My mind filled with their power.

In my studies of history,
I finally heard their voices.
Lamentations;
Secret grins in the dark;
Poison eggs;
Vengeance and justice—
All from the womb.

Dancing, grieving, breathing, singing,
Telling the world's fortunes—
Laughing at their fear of them.

And I saw what we all had become—
My Grandmother, my mother, and I.
In these few English words,
Veiled, mocked, passed,
No—
Pressed to me.
Our hearts living in them.

My Grandmother's books of Shakespeare,
Her Dream dictionaries,
And spell books—
All scoffed at and swallowed by the centuries.

In my life,
I had begun to time travel,
Through worlds with flowers brighter than the Sun,
With signs and sad Songs—
With Love.

I had started singing.

Dancing with death; Dancing for life.
Moving my body through time.
Learning what strength it takes to watch it all pass by.

Remembering that my Grandmother had no apologies to
make—
Only more Song.

She placed what she could in my hands,
Tossed what she could from far off into my heart.
“We were powerful witches once..”
Written on lined yellow paper,
Flung to a young woman traveling through time.

The Song still with us,
Still singing,
Through all the centuries and the silence—
Breaking her and I free.



WHAT IS YOUR MEDICINE?

"What is your Medicine for me?"
I asked the Earth,
Passing the poison of the poke weed.

"You send all these Medicines up,
I beg you to send mine."

The men who they call healers here only sent me to sleep.

I ask a kind Quaker man,
"Is that Queen Anne's Lace down by the creek?"
He says, "Yes, and the Woodland Sunflowers will be out soon."

They turn towards the Sun,
Which touches everything.

Are you, the Sun, my Medicine?
Your light which shines on the side of life?
Is the night, too?
The longing in darkness?
The absence?
The Oceans of Dreaming?

"What is your Medicine for me?" asks the Earth.

I think I knew once,
I even think I know now,
But it lives in time, in patience and a life of mindful action.
Not in the words of a poet,
Or the visions of an artist.

I feel angry at her as I pass the Milkweed,
Like I could strike the grass.

I feel she has left me to be prey.
"I do not know myself as one," I say, and touch her.
"Help me understand this web of meaning,
I am caught in its endless interconnectedness."
"Surely I will be eaten by any hungry spider," I say.

Leaning towards the warmth of the Sun I realize,
"I've been gone from you so long.
Thousands of years maybe," I muse.
I do not know your Medicine yet.
And I do not know my own at all.

Perhaps I will learn in loving you.
Perhaps I will learn your Songs.
If I can stay awake, if you will sing them to me,
If I can hear them as I cross this Middle Way.



THE SHAPE OF A POISONOUS SNAKE

I remember being struck by her—
The Earth,
Her darkness,
When my traumatized teacher—
A warrior,
Kneeled on a path in the woods,
To draw a shape into the ground with a stick.

The shape of the head of a Poisonous Snake—
Like a spear.

All I could see was the poison in her.
As she drew the eyes, too—
Like slits.

“Don’t fear the others, but both will do you harm,”
She said, throwing words behind her, as we walked on.
“They all hide at night,” she laughed.

“The Poison we need to see, is plain in the daylight.”



WATER AND WHALE EYES

The Whale sees himself only as he sees his brother.
The Water has no reflection to offer.
And the Whale knows he is beautiful.

When the Whale speaks—
When the Whale sings to his Gods and Goddesses,
His voice is made whole by the Water.
And he knows it is beautiful.

When harm comes to him or his brothers,
He mourns it—
He mourns all violence.
And he understands the chain of life

But when he knows the desires of Humans,
And sees their ignorance—
He does not understand.
He does not know what they seek on land.

For them, the Water is a mirror,
they can see only themselves within.
And when their heart is alone there,
They see only that loneliness.

And the Whale does not understand,
Why their violence strikes him.

It's a mystery to the Whale how Humans can deny their beauty,
Then blame the Water for what they cannot see in their own
reflection.

It is a mystery to the Whale,
How Humans pass their lack onto the ones in the Water,

Who are one with their Song.

The Whale knows there is nothing lacking,
And there is nothing to be removed,
Except by the burning of the Sun,
And even that is returned.

Humans have forgotten the gift of even this returning.
So, they think they have so much to burn away.
But, it is only what they do not want of themselves.

Humans must remember, that with the Whale and the Water,
We are the guardians of the Earth.
And if they do not—
We will all have only the ashes of their Hatred to eat,
and the Blood of Death to drink.



SACRED WELL, ANCIENT SEA

What do you choose?
Your life waits for your convictions.

I am an artist, a poet,
And some kind of mad prophet.
And I love the weeping ones—
Because they know what to do with their Love.

I look into the Water of the well and wonder,
What do I choose?

It seems each moment asks this of me lately.

Even the dishes hem and haw with me,
As I wonder where I'm going,
And who will catch me if I fall.
I wonder what it is all worth.

That is the question in the Water,

What is any voice, any Song, worth?
What will I Love enough to offer everything to it?
Who will I Love that much?
The Water or the well?
Or the Song of it all?

I tremble to think what it will take from me.
My voice gets stronger,
Despite everything.
Despite knowing how the world holds people like me.

No matter what I do,
I become the well, too.

Becoming more ancient with every word.
A holder of the Water,
The sacred lake above it all,
Amongst it, and below it.

And there is nothing to do but know that to choose,
Is just to follow the Water to the Sea.



MY GRANDMOTHER'S SORROW

To grieve what is lost, I sing.

A great sorcerer came to me when I was young,
He sang to me an enchanting song,
And I was lost.

He made me a stranger to myself.
He made my own mother—
My grandmother,
A stranger, too.

I was enchanted by a great musician—
A great magician,

Bless me to grieve what I lost.

May I come sit and sing with you?
While we drink tea and remember who we really are?

What have I to offer you now but remembering?
What have I to offer you now but to join you?
And take my seat among the Ancestors—

Singing,

“May there be someone left to drink tea with me!
May we have many daughters and sons,
May we save them all,
So they can sit with us till dawn,
And learn to grieve again,
Learn to Honor and Trust—
To Love.”

I take a seat at the Fire now,
To drink with the Ancestors.
I take a seat now in my Power,
Singing,

“May I be worthy of my Grandmother’s sorrow!”



THE BRAVEST POET

Where are the old poets,
Trained in the ancient ways?
The ones who sit by candle light,
Concerned only with what Gods provide what comforts,
Facing the dark of night—
The unknown of life.

The poets who know how to keep those Gods fat with Song,
Content to lay blankets of sound on our silly human bones.
Where are the poets who wonder what even that is worth?
As we're ground to bits by the machine of things.

The ones whose poems are sweet moanings,
Chipping away at the enemy of meaningless Love,
The enemy of eternity,
The enemy of no one, throughout all of time,
Ever knowing you breathed any of your heartbroken breaths.

And what poet am I?
What poems sing of my wonderings?
Why do I write,
In this vast nothing—
This void where so many songs have failed?

I yearn for the old words,
The Songs that stir.
As if I'm addicted now to that sweet nectar,
Of a nearly extinct Flower.
Driven to the brink by the inability to find language for the
challenge of the nameless life.

Is there another kind of brave poem?
One even more naked that you might find?

One that writes even in the nameless, identityless dark?
One that shakes, while walking in those nameless worlds,
Writing about them still.

A poem always scanning for another note to pluck,
Having lost the last in silence.
Another string or key to feed the heart,
To send off an SOS,
Or even some reconnaissance in the dark.

A poem that is not a martyr,
Who dives deep to find the remote hills,
That house the last of those mysterious Flowers.
A poem foolish and broken-hearted enough—
To live there.

A witness, a guardian, and messenger.

A poet who thinks only,
How do I make a gift of this?
How do I make sure this makes it out of here alive?
Makes it out of this void, this vastness
This 'me' contained in this solitary life?

What a thing to think of a poem.
Because it is foolish to think it of ourselves.
We will die,
We can wish anything of a poem.
There are no boundaries of the Love,
Or the Hope we can have for it.

Is the brave poet the one that protects a precious thing, then?
Convinced of nothing less than the eternity of the Song itself.
While they wade through time,
Disintegrating into Death?

Is that the brave poet?

Is the bravest poet of them all,
The one that writes,
Despite their concessions to all the impossibilities of life?



I CALL HER SUNDAY

I call her Sunday,
For all the sacred days.
I call her Sunday,
For all the sacred ways.

I call her Sunday,
For all the mistakes she's made.
For all the crooked paths she's laid.
For all the lies,
And the Truths she gave.

I named her Sunday.

A name can create a future.

And her future is to know her true name one day.

I call her Sunday,
So I can see her gleaming face,
In this Sea of strangers,

Hear her voice.
in this Sea of sounds.

So I can love her.

I call her Sunday.
Because hope is never lost,
In this call and response,
Between realms and rooms,
Doors and Deaths.

Illusions, all.

So let us talk,
Have tea and learn—
The both of us,
How to send this Song across these boundaries of loss.



A JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO RIVERS

From Forest's end,
to Water's edge.
From River to River,
from Ocean to Ocean.

For your grief and mine,
We walk like prayers over the Earth,
Loving everything.

Let each footstep cleanse what is between us.
May we meet were our pain and suffering cease.

May we hear again the voices of our beloved dead.
May we hear the story of Life and the story of Death.
And may we know the Truth,
That the end of everything is a mystery,
Passed from hopeful hand to hopeful heart.



I LOVE TO SEE YOUR HAPPY HEART

I come to you,
Free of guilt but full of Fear.
I see you celebrating beyond the veil—
I smile with you.

Yes! Isn't it a time to dance?
Yes! Isn't it a time to sing together?
She is awake and watching.
She is learning to be alive again,
In our world—
In our time.

Bring forth the wine!

But, I am afraid to drink.
I am still but a child,
Growing so shy in my mind.
So unsure of my speech.
So unsure of everything but the salt Water of the Sea,
The salt Water and the Rain of my body.
So prone still to aloneness,
And wounds unhealed.

Yes, dance and sing,
Draw me into your circle of Story.
What choice do I have?

I've always loved you.

I have always loved to see your happy heart—

Amidst the chaos and hurt.

So, I take your hand and I promise,
I'll dance and sing—
I will be with you in Joy,
Until the end.



PRAYING AND PAYING

Praying and playing.

Praying and walking, eating, thinking.

Praying and wondering—wandering.

Praying and knowing—
It is not enough, it is not enough.

Praying and frozen.
Surrounded by flecks of dust,
Dusts of anonymity.
The dust of not enough.

Praying and remembering all we lost.

Praying and planning.

Praying and asking,
“What could ever be enough?”

A poem, a platitude?

War is upon us,
War is eternally upon us.
And, I do not know how to be more than I am.

I do not know more than to pray,
And plan for the day I might have something to say.



LIVE WHAT YOU LOST

I had the strength to listen at midnight.

I did the work I came here to do.

I traveled back and saved that Song.

I did not forget the Truth.

Now I can bow at my altar,
And live what I lost.
A little broken, yes.

Joy is all that is left.
Because I've done what was asked.

I did not waste Love.

I did not waste the divine within me.

And now Joy.

Now Rest.

Now Love.



YOU WILL NOT FIND MY NAME IN YOUR BOOK

You will not find my name in your book.
You will find it in the ashes of the books you burnt.

My name rests with my family there—
Lost in the Fires of Fear and Hate.

With the Gods whose voices you haven't heard.
With the Goddesses whose Stories you silenced.
With the Songs yet to be sung—

Languages you dared not learn.

I advise you not to look for me anywhere,
And find yourself in the book of Earth—
Before it is too late.



IN WATER NOT BLOOD

Some artists choose silence—
Some prophets the cave.

Fearing the words they gave their life to cleanse,
Would be bent again—
Lost in ignorance.

For better or for worse,
I will speak until I am done—
And I will die in Water,
Not Blood.



KARIN JERVERT



Karin Jervert is a visual artist and poet. The third generation of women artists in her family, Karin has spent her life studying the power of art and language to affect history, change individual as well as collective consciousness, and transform suffering and trauma. She facilitates healing through art-making and poetry with workshops, public talks, and one-on-one sessions as a certified Personal Medicine Coach.

You can find out more about Karin at somethingwonderful.net and on Instagram at [@Karin.Jervert](https://www.instagram.com/Karin.Jervert).



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