

One Hundred and Twenty Poems about Jason Seligman, M.D.
won't change anything...

Meredith Darling
(as Glisten Chilton Guthrie)

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ABSTRACT

One Hundred and Twenty Poems about Jason Seligman, M.D. *won't change anything...*

Meredith Darling
(as Glisten Chilton Guthrie)

The heroine, subject, and as Winfried Siemerling would say, “ubiquitous I” of our story’s name, Glisten, means, by definition of the Oxford English Dictionary, “to shine with a fitful twinkling light.” The author writing “as” another name is a trope that plays on the byline of *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, Joanna Greenberg as Hannah Green. To the author as a child seeing this book on her bookshelf, that mysterious identification was fascinating. It seemed random, considering the original editions of the book that were credited to Hannah Green were, to put it bluntly, long forgotten. Meredith Darling as Glisten Chilton Guthrie on the cover of the project is not only an alter ego, it is an identification with a greater context of women’s writing on mental illness. Glisten clearly exhibits schizoaffective disorder, with its characteristics of both psychosis, evidenced in the loose dissociations of the poems found in the poems in the section “Emergency;” and mania, evidenced in the way this epic collection of hypersonic poems is maniacally “churned out like butter” by Glisten. Glisten wants to step outside herself so much that she addresses herself in the second person. It is not surprising someone with Glisten’s degree of monomania—that is to say mania of the “I” [moi]—comes to see the voice of the “self” [soi-meme] addressed to her *being* as belonging to another entity [being-present]. The doctor is portrayed as a saviour yet he is the enemy of Glisten’s recovery, leading to a binary of good/evil. Glisten thinks with her mind that the doctor is evil, yet with her heart she sees herself as his lover. Not only is this a double bind but it also leads to another binary opposition: real/imaginary. These gaps and silences in the text are also marginalizations. It demonstrates the hierarchy of the dominant signifier, male over female, insanity over sanity. Glisten is a deconstructor in her process of realization which ultimately leads to a reversing these governing terms. *120 Poems* is an allegory. Conflated with Jesus and named as “saviour,” yet deified on the grounds of human affect, Jason is symbolic of False Gods;” as part of the medical establishment he is also symbolic of “Reason,” conflating Reason and Falsity. Glisten, representing Everypatient, is faced with the apotheosis of reason and asked to be “patient.” Will is Glisten’s only power in the face of authority— the “messages mixed with authority” and the “healing authority,” but we see that *will* without agency only places her in an asylum without asylum. When it comes to love, however, just as in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” where the prisoners’ shadows projected on the wall are their nearest approximation of reality, the closet reification of reality Glisten ever experiences is her projections onto the doctor.

For

Uri Guthrie

(1975-1997)

Frank Bonneville, Jr.

(1974-2003)

and

my mother,

Sylvia Adams

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CYCLING

(1)

If I'm not out of coffee,
it's milk that I'm out of—
mornings without you
are always like this.
Nighttime
I fall asleep with pen in hand,
wake up
only to finish the poem.
I never mean for it
to end like this—
hope is alive in my flakes of corn—
one day to pour bowls
for us both?
I crack an egg
to honor your memory.
It sizzles in the pan—
This is your brain on drugs.
I take them just for you.
I am a good girl.
My sweaters are loose
like kittens' skin—
Mother, take me in your teeth,
ever bound to hide my poems
in the flakes of corn,
in the cornstalks,
the cinnamon sticks,
coffee poured for two.
Cold mornings, gone you.

The darks and lights
of devotion,
laundry done
lovingly,
left neatly
on beds,
I am the bearer
of clean tidings.
Step behind me
up the stairs
and you may catch
the insolent sock
going missing,
missed most
by the perfectionist.
You are blue from
bleachings,
left beaten
by those
rambling socks—
where did they go
when we took
such care?
Sunny laundress,
mistress of the soap—
who cleans your smalls
while you are working
away, working hard.

Shorts and socks alike,
I would fold them for you,
my love.
I would keep your toes happy—
you could rest your behind
in peace knowing
you are loved.
Who loves you, baby?
Besides me, that is.
Stand beside me
on April mornings,
baking breakfast
in candle-lit pre-dawn.
I would share my routine
with you:
stripped to my skivvies,
I save dressing for after
teeth are brushed,
save my shirt from dribbles.
Tell me, Doctor,
do you do the same?
I imagine
you can brush
contained.
But stay here awhile.
Do not step into your shoes
and leave our dew-soaked shrine
behind.

Shoe pile!
Where's a winner?
End my outfit,
aqua patent,
turquoise flapper,
cement slapper—
my, don't I
look blue-green?
But I do.
I am green,
with envy,
of them,
your friends.
Blue
for want of you.
St. Cinderella,
biatch stripper,
shop for shoe piles,
added entries.
Will you enter,
welcome, Doctor,
there are tunnels,
there are caves,
in my shoe pile
there are colors,
ends of outfits
finish up here.
I have been building.

Bloody, bloody underwear,
drying out on wooden chair,
let the boys in,
watch them stare—
what's been going on
down there?
Blood, blood, blood, blood on the floor,
really I should
mop it more
but mopping's just
another chore—
I have laundry,
don't need more.
Ragged, ragged, force of rage,
toleration
turn the page!
Let the boys
out of the cage,
let them feel
my hemorrhage.
Bleeding, bleeding love of mine—
do you feel it?
Leave a sign.
First the dishes,
then we dine.
Cheers to housework.
Pour the wine!

Stallion, bronco,
pony, mare,
if I holler
let them stare!
Whinny, howl, scream,
Smokey Bear,
keep the faith
and shout a prayer!
Tiny penny, subway token,
pay your fare,
the head has spoken.
If you thought
the train was broken,
it's fixed now,
the driver's woken.
Piece by piece the patchwork fits,
cut the fabric
up in bits,
sewing silent,
the lady sits,
making quilts
from prefab kits.
Linus, Linus, suck your thumb.
When I do this I look dumb.
I just wanna
get me some.
Invite me somewhere.
I will come.

*Stay celibate,
sang the songbird,
I could hear him
from my head,
from where I stood.
The scribe said,
Go,
roll in cookie dough,
make Crisco lard
your bed.
Nail your floor
to the western shore
and ice the pebbles
red.
With your mossy
pennies
buy yourself some sheets—
the songbird will
unravel them
and follow threads of
tweets.
So both I and the
Songbird have made
our place to lie,
I'll spend my nights
by warm gaslights
until their blue flames
die.*

Tanguay was
a one-night stand.
Morning
and they give me my shoes.
Cold running water.
No lace to cinch my arch,
to bind foot to sole?
Is it really winter,
and what am I in for?
Again, what is my prognosis?
Who is the expert here,
Doctor-Judge?
Does it help that you know my mother,
have read her poetry?
Look closer at the rise
and fall of my head waves—
I was an actor—
did you see me playing
Nora in the park?
My dollhouse was in the cellar,
before the landlord stole it for his niece,
and you call me a criminal.
I am the girl with the cup in her hand,
ready to smash your forehead—
watch me wind up for the pitcher of Sleeman's—
courage, baby, courage.
God will not forget me,
my prints are in the system.

I pound out
teacups
for Penny,
paint them pink
for peace,
smash 'n' bake
ashtrays,
red glaze.
Footstool freshly woven,
frame from
the Douglas,
I went to Pinel.
Bussed to Tanguay
and was cuffed
to pure mischief—
we called out to the boys:
*We know you
from the parade!
We kicked shit
together!*
Assessment and
I did not even
recognize
you.
But funny,
have all sessions
come to an end?
You were my doctor...

EMERGENCY

(2)

It has been so long
since I have said
Thank you Jesus,
now I say,
Thank you, Jason,
for the ride from your office,
rock star parking
at the General.
You're on call tonight—
I walk beside you
past doors that slide
only for us.
Nurse Ashley was waiting for you
with her notebook—
a real manic.
I hide my psychosis
the way I guard all crushes:
I have learned too well.
You will see me again
and tonight
I pretend this is not
where I want to be,
but I have waited
so long to take a shower,
for the stinking point
of depression:
take me to the hospital—
thank you Jesus.

Your bedside manner is impeccable.

The whole nine yards
to this pillow
and you lean in as you talk.

you leave me with
instruction:

Take care.

I must thank you,
but am not allowed
to wish you the same.

No reciprocations,
take your medications
stay self and sane.

I am me
and must not forget you
are my doctor.

Take care and
God be with me

as I travel to
my right,
right mind,
where a patient would
never bid

her doctor safely stay
and ask him
to follow

her wishes well,
patient's orders.

I woke when
I heard your name
paging through
the loud speaker—
*Dr. Seligman to the
front desk in Trauma,*
while I ask
to turn heads
in horrors
for Troma Pictures'
Lloyd Kaufman,
candy for case's brains,
organs in corners.
I ask the intern,
Do you play?
I have earned
my hot meals.
I did my crime
of 48 hours—
and what do you
need 2 L's for?
Are you certain
you can't get by
with just one
participle
participating from
the lectern
in the *salle d'urgence?*

A toast to you
with egg
on your face.
Here you are
leaving me here
in the *salle d'urgence*.
I have time for
crepes and syrup,
take your own sweet time, Doctor.
I know my way
to the cafeteria, rather
in my mania
I will find it.
Bought breakfast and
we're back.
I burst through
buzzing doors with
my tray,
I see your face
and plan
our interview.
I found freedom where
I thought doors
were locked,
came back to see you
with a fresh new coffee perspective.
Now I can stay put
for my sugar.

And lunchtime is imminent
or so the good doctor
tells me
in his lofty way with words.
Back again, back again,
stretching on my stretcher;
this time the General—
I get around.
Attila's mother is also in.
His sister comes with
plastic bags. She was my angel
through so many incarcerations,
washing the ketchup and motor oil
out of the suitcases of clothes I
threw in the garbage,
feeding deserted Kissypoo her vegan kibble
and mopping up her slushy vegan poos.
This time it's not
Attila's fault I'm in here.
This steamy new romance is
far too compelling to worry if
Attila's died of a heroin overdose
just because he hasn't shown up
on my doorstep for one day with a
stolen muffin for our breakfast.
What's an OD'd guy to an ER'd girl?
He has nothing to lose, I have
everything.

I know
the click of
every lock,
the click of
every shoe—
is it you,
show kitten,
posing
for the snapped?
Do not tell me
my swollen stomach
is not a syndrome;
whatever my symptoms
my faculties
regroup,
schoolhouse rocking
the bust of Beethoven;
in out,
in out,
patiently sticking it to
the act of asylum,
hooked on a
classic case
of two poles
looking for
a middle self.
Eat the fruit cup first—
this pretence makes me thirst.

I'm a big girl now—
I don't need you
to check for rashes.
I am all alone
of Montreal,
are you looking
for someone
and have forgotten
I don't have a number?
How could you
have forgotten
I am ageless,
chomping on my lines—
I am not the
first actress to
walk out of your office
a shining new witch.
Bitter lamotrigine!
Do I need you
to scratch the
scales off my back
and how long has it been
since you shaved
your legs?
It's all about me
in this wing of angels,
crossing worlds as I
desecrate your crosswords.

Like a once pink sock
slowly fading to white;
like Santa's elf
on Christmas night,
I keep you in the knowledge,
grateful for your toil.
This blood is on
my bones;
footprints on
my toys
of angels marking
pathways
for sleigh bells—
step on it,
oh Santa,
Hotspur—
right to ring in
Christmas
in the Pays Bas first.
And I am now
the Jew,
Ralph Wiggam,
picking his nose
and flicking snot
at Hitler,
while Kissypoo
tiptoes through the quatrains.

You have release
on your pillow—
casings make the man
I love
recognizable in
my dreams.
I forgot what I came for,
what mania is depression.
Easy listener,
meet you at the speakeasy
in a marriage perfume
to remember.
I will wait with you
as they get the car,
wrapped in
a cloak of value.
I just want someone
to drive me
to crazy.
Wanna come?
The truth is
I wait in the
patient's lounge,
erasing crosswords
for reuse,
reduced and recycled.
I know being manic
requires long hours, too.

Your automated care
betrayed my trust.
I cry mercy—
now the words come out,
the bullet in
my shoulder
just another word
for the rack.
I arrived in Montreal—
the lies I found—
oh, Leonard Cohen,
oh, Suzanne,
in your comings
and goings.
The new Jewish girl,
green on the ward
with the nurse
with the crucifix keychain,
working hard,
cries:
masturbate me
masturbate me.
Unbind me,
you fools,
math teachers
and gate keepers.
The Jesuit
in his monastics.

I see you've gone and
changed your hair again.
Marianne is a song
about a street
and Melville and the
Colonials are
Ugly Americans.
Dirty Ahab, are you
my Jonah?
Pinball, and the lottery
drops another ball,
with the witch at church
preaching free with the
will of a smiling,
smiling villain.
I hear bells and
telling wizards
diddling children
for whom the town sends
rescue anonymous.
Play ball with my city—
phenoms peeing in
the *ruelle*,
sidetreet swiped off
the face
of the lady getting fucked
'side the sidewalk
during the Canadiens riot.

WARD

(3)

And if you think
all we do all day
is pick locks and
punch holes in walls,
you may be right,
for we are crazy.
We pick on Jan:
My name is Naj, I say,
says he.
You are a FOOL! say we.
We want to be
who we really be.
David with his kingly moniker
wraps Israel for his crew
every Hanukkah.
Jon is from Taiwan,
so he does tai chi at dawn.
We huddle in this
gray lounge smoking
rewriting Ol' Dirty Bastard and joking:
we are funny ha-ha
AND funny peculiar.
Seligman is our host.
He spreads us on his toast.
Breakfast of champions!
Not to be confused
with the jam
between my toes.

Mah handsome's balls
is as fragile as an egg;
he likes him a ho who
can swallow a keg;
I lost mah ring
on mah wedding day
up mah handsome's asshole,
how far up, I can't say,
but his dick can reach me
up mah birth canal,
mah husband, mah handsome,
mah lover, mah pal—
they called him the virgin
but not to his face,
he felt their cold stares
in his loving most place
and I'm to unfree him,
mah Jay-Jay, mah love,
your dollhead, your graceful,
your dove, and your light,
I love you cher Jay-Jay,
pays de mes rêves,
I won't give up on you
no matter what they sez;
mah Jay-Jay, mah brother,
your sister, your boo;
fuck Daddy, fuck Mother,
I come home to you.

I want to click my heels
and be home with me.
Grammys tonight.
Hit the lights
and we have Hockey Night,
again.
Vito trollies in snax.
PB and Jelly—
no surprises here.
White or brown.
I could sail through break
upside down and naked;
but I did not think
I was Godiva on a Gurney;
and it was not
that I have been a stripper
for why I “disrobed”
in the ER of the Vic;
it was that my robe
did slip
when I went down on all 4’s—
I just wanted to be your dog, Seligman.
Vito comes right in
and tells us—
warns us—
break now or forever hold your peace.
I just want my medication.
Does that give you an erection?

Jon reveals that
Jan has a system—
and we all like Coolio
and some like Harry Belafonte.
Me wanna go home.
Check on my coats.
A system is important
on the inside—
chases boredom of Phases 1 and 2.
If only I had my charger & dock
for my wee little Shuffle,
which, incidentally,
was not sending me
messages telling me to join
a religious group in Virginia—
it's a song, Seligman—
Goin' to Virginia
like the song sez might be cool—
to a retreat centre, if you will.
As you wish, Doctor;
I'm having psychotic features.
If only that cab I got into
2 years ago agreed to
take me to the hospital.
The faeries were thirsty that night
(like the handbill said).
And the moon was full
and taking up space, 2 years grace.

Like the student who
sleeps in his clothes
to be sure to get to class on time,
I am always prepared
for the bell.

The coma that is
not forthcoming
foretells nothing.

I wait patiently
for drills and drills
and piccolo trills, and
while bees buzz
the bread abounds
and I am fattened
for the kill.

Sonnez la cloche.

I am ready for fanatics,
do not derogate me
with imperatives;
I am tolled for and
will roll for the punch.

Take me to the meeting
of whipped cream and cherry Jell-o,
music now getting bigger, bigger—
2 high notes don't make a medley
but sung as a round
marry sole to well-heeled shoes and
I am sure which fork to use.

And I am Joan of Arc.
I survived
the stake.
Burning throat,
I give you
one arrow
to pierce
my exposed
left thigh,
wounds dying
to be covered—
do not be alarmed
by a stud
lost in the
flames.
It was no torture—
escape came easily,
eleventh hour
ringing in
my uncounted-on
rebirth
into your arms,
blessed with answers
shared in your
many moated
mansions.
Put through the wringer,
I am free for your ring.

Still burning
after all
these years,
I, Joan,
come to abet
David, king
of the smoking room—
General brigade,
we breach the
Big Red Can
labeled,
No butts,
Only ashes,
as in don't sit
on me
I am
no horse.
I am impatient.
Girls will be boys
and boys will be wars—
whores—
no—
Magdalene
was stoned.
I'm a smoker
of a lesser god,
David at my right hand,
7 minutes more break left.

Darling can you hear me
from the Allan?
You're not near me—
Argonaut, do you fear me?
I must have done something,
right?
I don't understand.
I do not ask questions
they can say no to.
I do not spill coffee on
their freshly washed linen.
I do not take a dump on
their floor of isolation.
I wait to be led to the
bathroom door.
Darling, can you help me?
I have killed my parents.
I have smashed my mother
into a thousand whore pieces.
I have smoked my father into
a corner. I have taken
great pleasure in my killing fields.
Please field this question:
is there hope yet for me?
Darling, do you listen
from the Allan's shore?
I have found a pen on the bathroom floor.
I must have done something right.

Doctor,
I have done little
to impress you.
My friends
find me
a gas
in my jammies,
ghastly weight
concealed
in Johnny gowns.
They play patty-cake
with patients,
visiting hours
on 4-East.
Doctor,
keep on coming,
I will do my best
your likes and
dislikes
to discern—
fiery wheels,
classy glasses.
I have been
an easy lady.
Find me in
my sick bed,
no line of
attack.

You tell me,
You are something else.
Hush.
I am nothing else but yours.
God created me
to keep you out of His hair
with your direct line of prayer,
and God made me Joanie
to fight your battle,
here to be the silent fields
under sheets of jersey weave.
I am of the hospital.
No suicidal ideations have I,
for you are with me now.
And if I were to fly to Virginia,
to tight-lipped lawns of Christian soldiers,
I would never leave you
for blue ridges and ponies.
I am a cowgirl but
in this city of the saints,
I must admit I long for Barbara,
bashful saint of Cali,
and London Tower and Bali.
But here the orderly brings my coffee
and so I drink to breakfast, and the orderly.
And if I were to fly to Virginia,
if I were to fly,
would that make me an angel, Lord?

I have analyzed
and re-analyzed
every word ever spoken
to me by you,
Doctor.
I find myself coming
up short
in our exchanges.
Are you suspicious of me?
Have you come to expect
the love of women?
Tell me:
what colour are your eyes?
They seem to change
with the light,
office to interview room
to bedside.
The nurse tells me
my pupils are dilated.
This can't be the drugs—
must be your presence.
Don't look now, Doctor—
My pupils
My pupils give me away.
That is why
I roll my eyes
when I state my progress.

Another poem about Jason Seligman?
I bet you didn't see that one coming.
I laugh at myself.
I am funny.
My pee!
My poo!
My bum!
I need some new material?
Take a razor blade and shove it
up your asshole!
Crass?
Your crasshole, doctor—
shove it up your crasshole!
I am shouting now,
and in your face with
my hairy breath.
I announce:
I am going to Virginia.
Same spot as I met Patch Adams.
This part I don't disclose.
My decision to leave out
the clowns
makes me sound like a minstrel
not playing with a full set of strings.
Again, the psychiatrist,
and again:
When did this all begin?
I think you need some new material, doctor.

I am noticing patterns
under Seligman's care
of why I am in the hospital
and how I got me there.
There is hope in
this holy disease,
this sacred sickness.
They cannot steal our smell,
our essence, says Adrian.
It is our own.
Take a photo, steal our soul.
Primitive, maybe.
A lock of hair to voodoo.
But try to steal our scent!
You may write it,
She is smelly, says Adrian,
but there is no record
save a rag of shirt for
police dogs to sniff,
and they are on God's side,
the dogs. They are rooting
for our souls, woofing
for the victory of mankind
over man's judgment.
Patterns of poetry.
Who will comment?
My but 28 lines can't make
a dog's breakfast of a douche.

If you could feel my fight, Doctor,
you would see internal medicine
cannot save me.
My only hydration from gulp cups,
I wash down my pills;
I eat my double menus
I fill out myself.
At the General they cannot save me.
You come to call.
It has been so long.
I brush my teeth, finally,
effort to impress,
wait finally assuaged.
Tell it to your nurse.
That is all you can say.
A real man.
I am impressed, yes.
Where did all your kindness go?
You are no soft touch.
I drew a picture of you.
Yes, that is a stethoscope around your neck.
I want to check your heart for ticks.
Impressor, be impressed by my efforts.
Doctor, I am fighting, constipated.
I keep secrets from my nurse.
I need eternal medicine to save me.

SPURNED

(4)

The girl with the
white teeth
walks the ward
with a big smile on.
Braced with love
by Mommy and Daddy,
I cannot read
my own handwriting.
I am only made white
by comparison with
the other prisoners:
I don't drink cola;
am a half-assed smoker.
If they call for me,
it's, *Who is she?*
Oh, the one with the white teeth.
I cannot help
feeling advantaged—
if the dentures fit
wear them—
but they never do,
do they?
Who am I—
this happy girl,
that slapstick smile,
braced with love
and peaceful like
I swallowed a dove.

Glisten has been
acting out.
Scissors wristward.
Can you not see,
Doctor,
how beneficial
death would be?
I made pretend.
You call me
on it,
implement
wrassled away,
your joke or mine
and we both
laugh.
Now Glisten must
be put away—
seclude her,
damnèd for this
acting out.
I felt your hand
round the scissors
scooped from O.T.
You got me
to my knees.
Our fingers embraced.
Give me those,
you said.
An inside joke.

Doctor, I have made
generalizations:
you are not all white
in your lab coat.
I wrote three hundred poems
when the teacher asked me
to write one soliloquy.
Eyes too big to
stomach the truth,
I believed.
How could you love
the fetal pig,
the pike prone
to your scalpel:
you will always be a student
and I have been studying
you.
I believed in
soft hands
wrassling sharps
from hardanger targets.
O.T. has missed its scissors
but will not miss me
while I sit
in isolation.
I am there now, too,
with the pigs and the pikes;
in the schoolroom, this cell,
I put my speech to memory.

O pages perforated,
how you mimic
my heart:
it will rip
when tugged enough.
Remove a poem
here and there,
pass it to friars
and lords
and fig buyers,
I will always be
misunderstood.
You did not get
my references,
Doctor,
because you are not
my friend.
Flip the coin
and I will never
understand why
they give you
the say
in all matters
of my head.
My pages take up
space in this book.
I rip them out!
I tear them up!

La tristesse
visits me.
I will never
be more
than a patient
who wrote
three hundred
bawdy poems
and left them
for your presence,
a present
from my mania.
Between you and me,
there are many
who have fallen
for your care,
against them all
combined,
against your colleagues,
against your family
I am barely there.
I was not all there
when I tried
to cut myself.
The Nazis come—
hide the poems!
Dark Ages come—
invasion, invasion!

Seriouser and seriouser.
Nurse Rita returns
my notebook but it is already
Exhibit A.
Not only was it found
under my pillow when they put
me in isolation, now
they have me pegged for a
Seligman-lover!
As if I would punish myself so!
but now—
they have not only removed me
from your care—
they have ousted me altogether
from your clinic—
no longer in mood disorders,
it's back to
schizophrenia services!
O lenity! I have come so far from
where I started at ground zero schizo—
worked my way up the ladder—
crossed the spectrum from
psychosis to bipolar.
Impressive manic depressive.
Like Winston Churchill and Britney Spears.
The disease of Lawyers and Magnates and
Moovie Stars. The disease that
brought us together.

Coffee doesn't
phase me.
Sleep
is not cross
but kind, unblinking—
in it, the flowers—
where have they gone
but to wait
for awakening.
I do not know—
I breathe and
do not care,
not that I am
wont to do so (care)
being up.
I like my dreams
cold and deep,
like my North,
True North,
where I find
the way to
get revenge on
the doctors who
put me here
in this igloo
of injections.
Then I am not cold.

Release should be
pleasing.
It makes me
the dumped.
Not worthy,
my mood established,
I am
just
plain
crazy,
too crazy
for your clinic,
your precious
Mood Disorders
Clinic.
Exclusive.
I am excluded.
Released.
Only to be welcomed
by doctors
used to my kind,
kinder doctors
than you,
my dear,
than you will
ever be.
But you are a charmer.
Your warmth disarmed me.

My friends liked
me better
when I was
locked up.
I was more fun
when I was
locked up.
You hold
the key
and do not care
either way.
I am neutral to
your patients;
do not
stand out,
except for
my psychosis—
my thoughts
to you
seem disordered.
I have no
real mania.
I have attached
myself to
the ward.
I am having
fun here
on your time.

Why not, Doctor,
think outside
the box.
Manic depressives
are the world to you,
but why not take a chance
on a farm girl like me.
O, I am funny—
and warm and kind.
You can talk to me.
Godiva on a Gurney,
remember?
I can talk so fast
someone could get hurt.
I meant no harm
when I paged you,
McStinky Jason Poop
to Seattle General.
I just wanted you
to operate
on my emerging
crush.
I am, however,
digested
by medical digests
and you refer me
to another desk.
Four walls not around us.

7am I check on David
in his isolation quarters,
through the peephole—
this is the King's palace.
Styrofoam trays line
the wall beside the waste bin.
Plastic cutlery trickles down
down the trashy depths.
Put your life away for now.
Let school pass you by.
It is mizzling snow outside.
Do you want to be there?
Really, my friend?
Well then, let's ask,
Do these doctors really want
what's best for you?
Does Jason really know you,
your crew? What is a *crew*?
asks Jason. What is *acting out*?
Jason. How does one *regress*?
Count your poems wisely.
Count your blessings
just to be alive, with all
your fingers and toes,
this day on the ward and
tomorrow, softly counting
to 28
soft days of confinement.

The pen migrates south
down the
birch bark
scroll,
crafting
what-was-its
and
however
I see you
you are
my saviour
and friend.
Can I tell you
Take care,
Doctor,
and not,
See you
Later?
No, I fear
I must
be healed—
medicine and
the man
I love—
faster down
the page,
wiping you blue with me.

SPRING

(5)

Before speech there was sound
unaltered by the lips of man;
I sat in your classroom
in caves,
mountains,
and wormholes,
while bookies
swam the
elder canyons;
watched the rink
melting
in time for girls
to drop
the puck.
All my loving letters—
my Lord and God—
you have your
release from
the ward—
how much longer can
you keep me from
my Christmases
with you.
Thank you Jesus
for the dosages
and treatment schedules.
Shush my love,
I am pretending now to sleep.

And springtime is imminent.
Roads endure,
railed upon.
Sno-castles seep
into murk-lawns;
alley channels
and the park
is peninsuling.
We splash sidewalks,
winter's crunch now eeking
into craving grates.
I am
right soaked
with April showers.
Winter shrinks and
I am wishing
you closer.
Come to me,
Jason.
As the season turns.
As alchemy turns
solid to slush.
Tick tock,
the tulips toll;
come with me.
Why don't we go
where the sno-angels go
and know what it's like to be liquid.

A Nobelady's Resolutions:

Take better care

of my skin

Take better care of

my teeth

Take better care of my

spirit.

Monitor thoughts for reality.

Live moment by moment with

the knowledge I could be in

the hospital.

Take it easier while "workin'"

this life.

To not learn how to play guitar

but to compose on guitar & jam.

To write a song a day: check in

weekly & monthly.

Turn my poems into a

screenplay—

suit the word to the

action, the action to the word.

Be a chillbot: make working

seem like chilling.

Lie for survival against those

of whom I am not certain won't

harm me.

Lie for benefit (mine & theirs—

live the lies—make 'em come true.

You keep me in
the changeling way.
I twinkle in the
face of martyrs;
arc-en-ciel
bending to
the waters of
what Seurat
articulated in
the light of
le beau pays.
Twinkle tenderly;
a mess, a mess—
look at me,
remember me,
the girl
who here becomes
the sun.
Herein the dream
looks resplendent,
dangling the
same day
brilliant ripped,
same light,
canal from waters
waking Shakespeare.
Do not hesitate
to embrace his forceps.

A crush is a longing
for him to like me.
He will and does—
we cured me together
in a winter-
just-as-I-feared—
better than sex,
this psychiatry.
Was Freud's final
analysis
a rock through
our window
and pain, darling,
a cabaret
and so many
other things
I could say.
*My bum is cold—
can you
warm it
with your
BMW buckets?*
Dinner served
supinated,
my martyr, my slave.
The 'rents must die,
the landlord also—
Nostradamus, too, was schizo.

Paris gets me dreaming.
Did I forget
my five o'clock meds?
And you were
out of the country
and cannot say where.
I can only think,
but my disorder
is of thought,
and not mood,
so we must part
in accordance
with your directives,
psychotic features
come between us.
Haven't seen you
in three months—
you say I'm looking
well—
you think my
hell
stems from
thought, and not mood,
I imagine you in Paris,
then distracted
by my meds
cannot think where I am now.

DAY HOSPITAL

(6)

If a doctor loves
the people who
do not love
themselves,
what does it
matter if they
do not make
the cut
for his clinic,
but are prodded off
with the schizos,
down & dirty.
Doctor, you
could handle
my depression
when I asked,
Will anyone ever love me—
I could not just say,
I will love me, or
Will you ever love me?
I searched psychosis,
black-dogged,
immersed in aversion—
you spurned me.
Getting well
is half the battle—
we move through the halls
like patients for cattle.

Doctor, will you
be a doll
and walk behind me
in the hall—
I've grappled with my
laden ass
but now I will not
let you pass.
You bailed on me,
I've cried on you,
but now take in
my rear end view—
I will not
let you pass.
Doctor, will you
be a dear
and be the one to
take the rear
when I'm walking
in the hall—
I will not
let you go.
You failed me once,
twice makes again—
I see you're taking
the fast lane—
I cannot
let you pass.

Listen up, girls!
Never mistake your doctor
for your friend.
He was put on this earth
to scribble salvation—
you must fill your own prescription.
S.O.S sugas!
I am in sad shape.
I will take his candy,
doled out in dispills,
take it ten times daily
at twelve pills a pop.
Consider this, sisters,
I have found it wise
to take his treatment
with a grain of salt
(to help the medicine go down).
Elements and ladders,
we climb our way down
molecular crosswords;
compulsively compliant,
we obsess patient-like
on men who are men
but doctors nonetheless.
If you take them as friends
you will find them most quick
to call you on your longing,
throw their oath in your face.

You are so very smooth, doctor:
when in doubt,
talk about the weather.
Think it'll rain today, Glisten?
Er, er, I hope so, Doctor!
Me, too!
And pass on by.
Dirty windows
revel in the rain,
torrential,
vulgar for summer.
And I am crass in your bed.
In reach of your covers.
You are
my every man
I ever played
my sappy love songs for.
Alone.
While I just
wanted to share
my music with you.
My records are
scuffed with nicotine
and scorched
by the sun.
Doctor please pass once more.
Love songs are melting.
Yes, I hope it rains.

He's your doctor,
says Penny.
He's supposed to pretend
like he cares.
Like he cares.
I did not listen.
Ever.
He walks
with purpose
past me.
I never listen.
Penny has hair colour
you can't get
from a bottle.
She would know—
the upshot of
the get-go
now gone.
I sure hope so,
dear doctor,
I hope it will rain.
My grey hairs
will rinse
and surface,
soaked.
I'll take the whole bottle.
My tangles will drink.

*Oh hi, Doctor Seligman,
I did not see you
standing behind me
and that is not
why I slipped off
my jacket to expose
the polo man playing
on my shirt.*

I checked you out
in the chrome
at the sandwich counter,
you uncovered my ruse,
and my hand shook
as I lowered my wallet.
Laid bare, meaning
to catch you,
I have been caught off guard.
I was not ready for your
Hey, Glisten,
my 15 seconds,
your star so near,
it must be the sun,
and you must see
(I am an open book)
how I rotate around you
at the Allan,
at the General,
all masks turned to gravel.

You keep your hair short
and your muscles well-toned.
Years of kind thoughts
have honed your dimples.
I should take you as an example
but instead I take you obsessively,
caf soap opera,
Glisten's Hope.
You take the stairs.
I meet you merrily
the wheelchair way,
two types that pass in the hall:
the Doctor type
and the patient type.
And can we ever be reconciled?
I have been a brave-faced
buckaroo—
Doctor, my depression is over
you.
If only my heart
would take a break
to sell soap boxes,
I might rest.
But I am left to write.
I am a messed girl,
obsessed girl,
writing my poems backward,
meet ya in my mania.

You spoiled me with
that easy smile.
I am a shrew.
You command it,
I demand it.
I get it,
but don't.
Doctor,
if you were my
lover,
you could doctor me
with your love.
Of this I am certain.
Your flesh
below
your sleeves,
Doctor Prince,
Prescriber,
is solid
with the strength of
weighty decisions.
I am a Danish tragedy.
I *acted* crazy,
was noble of mind,
But o woe, Doctor.
I was dissembling
for attention.
Do not spoil my lamentation.

There was a little girl
who had a curl
to the far right
of her forehead.
O rosette, work your charm,
guileless trademark of
my innocence.
I am a little girl,
mean no harm;
my poems lack menace,
are not wicked.
I mock maniacal
my own unrest—
will you love me
for my bonnet
untouched
by plastic comb?
I am speeding and
my hair turns
as told,
every which way
but straight,
toward its target:
your heart.
No more dead ends
where manic
meets *mignonne*.

Traffic is light
at the Provingo
Saturday night.
Do you pick up
wine and Perrier
for dinner with her?
She chooses your cigar,
I know she does.
You have chosen wrong,
cher Doctor.
I am jazz and disco,
Sir Winston's
and Upperclub.
I am class of '96
and Pinot '67—
have you not read
my book?
Oh, that was just
my chart,
summarized by students.
I pray for your kindness,
to someday meet
your mother.
I am shopping here
for company,
we could be so fine.
BarB-Q or fondue:
date with you.

Sneakers someone
gave me when
times were tough
now betray tough times
past and still.
My unlaced mind has trotted off
yet here I am
with my sock doll who escaped
all hell breaking loose
in my temporal lobes, globulous
and needing flossing.
They say the brain takes
a beating each time and
it's been how many?
I ask my sock doll:
11 episodes in 8 years.
She is always ready to
pipe up for me in psychotherapy,
though days when I'm
without a sock
I threaten to undo her.
But I know already I have
lost too much
and it would only make
more sandpaper times
to see my sanity's last toehold
go the way of all else:
cut, thrown, and pasted to the sole of my foot.

SWOoning and swooning
I lose my wellness
over your
Hey, Glisten!
How am
doing?
Fine!
Until you
took my
heart
from my chest—
my heart,
once connected
to my back
and both
are breaking!
A wife!
A daughter!
I cannot
be even
patient
anymore.
I am psychotic,
SWOoning
It is
your fault
I am lost!

DISCHARGE (HIS)

(7)

2 cigarettes and I am on my way—
I see you on my path,
on my trail.
Do I have you in my lure?
So I hear you are being discharged, Doctor??
I do not need an explanation.
The Institute is losing a fine doctor.
You tell me
they are bringing in some doctors
from the regions.
What can I do?
Can I give you my comfort?
My condolences, Seligman.
I mean, Doctor.
*You have inspired confidence
in colleagues and patients alike.*
And now you will end my misery.
In a week and a half actually.
You have given me a timeline
and I will follow it with
my fineries
(and let *you* come to *me*).
Now tell me, do I with all my chins
have the doctor on my line?
Perhaps my fat ass could hook you:
did you like it, Doctor,
as you walked up the stairs behind me,
then strolled away with purpose?

I smoke an extra cigarette
this morning,
every morning I mean to see you.
Steady my hands,
ready my hands,
put on horizontal stripes
to offset your verticals.
I live in the treetops,
my feet balanced precariously
on an earth that runs
with the weather,
slides with the mud
to expose my roots:
I am crazy to the bone.
I am with the birds
and my life is for them.
I am singing on two feet—
until the day when you leave—
then I will be a bear,
underneath your forest—
Great Canadian Wilderness:
when is your discharge?
I am a bird
building my nest
with my own butts,
my home in the clouds
of tobacco sticks,
and I fly to see you in the morning.

Are you leaving
for good,
Doctor Seligman?
I have no excuse
to follow you.
And your love.
Does she wait
for you there?
Did you ask
for your dispatch?
O tell me,
how much longer
do I have,
dear Doctor—
you have been
my dear
for one year,
enough time to get
to know me.
I am an open chart.
All I know is
you have no ring.
That means nothing.
Come back, come back
and marry me—
marry me on the floor,
the living room couch,
up against the wall.

I will bloom as you
fly past the prairies.
But I fear my love
is plastic
and will take
10 thousand years
to degrade.
I will rise as you
land by the ocean—
what does not kill me
helps my wait.
I know you will
always come and go
from here to there.
You are my sweet
neurotransmitter,
all around my head you go,
relative, primitive;
I hide in my medulla
and know you'll do good.
No brain is an island
in any man's skull.
But Doctor, you are
very brave.
You dared to enter
no-man's skull.
I will smile as you see
it's harder than you think.

The top
glistens
as it sits
inert,
stopped.
I tip
quarters
off
fingers,
flip them
into fountains,
my wish
the same,
always
the same:
stay.
My heart
listens
to the
water,
pumped,
piping
placed.
Over
it all,
the deluge
pours.

You just fit nicely
into my format, Doctor.
Twenty-eight lines
and big plans.
How old are you?
You could be 26
or 52.
We could save big
on interventions
if you gave me
a little more
to work with.
I try to tell it
like it is
in a nutshell.
I am a nut in my skull
and this works for me.
Shell of a brain,
shrunken lobes;
I have plenty of space
for twenty-eight lines
one hundred and twenty
eighty-six.
I could have used more help but
your office is now packed up,
where diplomas once told
your middle name—
I did not wear my glasses.

You are nothing
in profile.
Can you see this
in your vanity?
Straight on, Dreamy
Cream Puff
skilled in brain stuff—
dimple, dimple,
not a pimple—
yes, you are a sight.
You stepped out with me.
I was a case
for the General.
O take me, Doctor,
again.
Bang-on biopsies,
prognosis prophesies—
I will get well for you
but not your vanity.
Lo my bad luck
is nothing
in profile;
straight on
I am brave faced
in the face of ignorance.
And I am my pimples:
too many
cream puffs.

Long time, Doctor,
since I began
memorizing
your face,
since I heard
you were discharged.
You did not
start out
my pretty
obsession—
my love
grew with
case-call
kindness
in remissions
and admissions—
I admit my
lately efforts
come too late—
your face
is slipping
away
and you
are in rounds—
I am not
discussed
in your clinic,
too much the clown.

See you, Doctor,
and if I could be you, Doctor,
I would just leave it
at this.
What is my world coming to
that I seek fame
in the field of
the lottery,
then hope,
with my affluence,
to beat you at your own game?
I challenge you
to give up on the competition
between bipolar
and schizophrenia.
I am just like you.
I would never requite
unsolicited love.
You have been a patient doctor,
putting up with my requests
to make a lunch of
your crotch.
See you, Doctor.
This high is spent.
I am leaving you at the altar,
just shy of sanity.

Will this be
the last time
that i see you
in the cafeteria?
You were in line
i went to
the restroom
to take three
breath mints
and you were gone.
i checked every
corner,
my wallet out
as if to buy—
others
found me crazy;
this will
not be
the last time
they will see you;
they continue
to play sane—
my hands shake
the building—
you were in line—
i did not come
to buy a muffin

I blast the past.
Had been damned.
O, blasted past.
You are schizo.
Is that all you can say?
Good riddance,
and riddee
be ridden.
Ride in your SL,
off to West Van.
You are a posh doc
but *I am schizo* is a crock.
Bipolar maybe,
irate, sure,
but I want you
as my doctor
forevermore.
Blast the gyprock
round my brain.
My brain, my brain,
snuggled by my skull:
get away from me,
my brain, my brain.
I hate you
to call me schizo,
kicked from your clinic
without a
kiss goodbye.

4000 miles in your SL,
down the yellow brick road
you go
and you're gone.
but, my love,
the yellow brick road
is only a trademark—
would you not rather
ride my mind?
You have done well, Doctor.
Who told you that
I love you?
Or did you know before
I was exposed,
300 poems under my pillow,
silly and
about your dick.
I was crazy
but that did not interest you.
You are a man fallen
for the *flashes of brilliance*
reserved for the
manic depressives.
I came crashing
into your clinic
mistaking it for safe harbor.
No wonder it is anchors away.

Eight thirty-four and
out the door—
I want to see
your face once more—
one week and a half
has passed—
I'm still an Allan whore.
Gone today
and from now on
you, Doctor, will be gone.
I messed me up and
will miss you,
hit of my heart—
O these heartfelt missives—
wish I had listened
to the streetlamp poster buzz
and the dandelion fuzz—
did you know or not?
Today is very hot.
3rd of July,
sun still high
and on the Allan slope I lie,
robin redbreast at my feet—
this crush, this crush.
Your last day,
you drive by,
don't say good-bye.

PAIN

(8)

Death is not so serious
as when you are away,
for there was no real
hope to begin with,
just joy in seeing you.
Hope is a risk
with a price.
Priceless vision
in the hall,
in the caf,
on the walkway,
I pace with purpose,
pose with passion,
look for love in
my closet,
a new set of clothes.
Death would suit me
just fine
in your absence,
no one to suit up
for anymore.
I have lived for you
for a year now.
O Doctor,
I cannot live
with only
your antique memory.
For when you start to neglect your soul
your lost love, life,
devours you whole.

Death has always been
the territory of great aunts
and drunken uncles.
Suddenly and slowly
we are apart,
who were never great dancers.
I who was never party
to your life,
am dead, or is it you,
gone west,
who has died; dead and departed.
I will never forget
our interviews
in rooms with blinds drawn,
phone ringing,
you don't answer.
You were all mine,
I gave you my head
on a silver platter—
O doctor take me west.
I do not want
my mother's help.
I have been pinned to stone.
You call me assaultive.
Kill me.
I cannot get out of this one
til the rains come down
and put out the sun.

The summer is hot
but not too hot
to smoke cigarettes
and think of your confidence.
I confided in you:
*I want to be a star,
killer brilliance.*
Now I cannot remember
a time when I
didn't care what you
thought of me,
when there was still
a reasonable thought in my head,
when my sanity was undiluted.
The hospital has lost a fine doctor.
No more reason to be institutionalized.
But my sanity is spent,
and it is so very hot this July.
Now I will keep my confidences
to myself, my cigarettes.
I am brilliant if you think about it.
Psychosis is a fine art
crafted by the crazy.
I have been an exhibitionist,
flaunting my messiness
for the attention of a physician.
And now I am not confident
I will ever feel attention again.

The neighbor is
potting flowers.
I will look upon these
as monuments to
devotion passed.
Someday I might
lose my mind, and
out of turn,
fly to Vancouver,
token totems
in the airport.
I am not superstitious
but should you catch me
you might be frightened.
Hit my mother once, did I.
With a cup.
Lots of Starbucks
in Vancouver.
Do not be afraid, Jason.
I have come to claim
my place on your totem,
between pestle and serpent,
I will be mortar,
wooden mortal
chiseled deep in
your carved below.
I am beneath you
and you are on top.

How my heart and hand
suffer
while you are away.
One Hundred and twenty
poems about Jason
Seligman, M.D.
won't change anything,
but once
I thought they could.
The currents
could be changed,
if only
I could get you down.
In Montreal,
I could always
pin you down
at your hospital extension.
Even just to say, *Poo!*
Now that would seem
highly inappropriate.
You no longer treat me.
My hand is growing
frustrated stiff,
I cannot write
for long.
When will you read me
and let me astound you
and tell me your leaving was wrong?

I have only
my tarot
to keep me
abreast
of your adventures.
So far.
And so far
I have kept
a brave face,
(on the face of it).
Dashing off smiles
to shop girls,
people with kids.
But pity me,
compulsive gypsy,
wanting answers,
wanting them now.
The tam-tams echo
down Mount-Royal.
Now it's summer.
It's Sunday.
It's sad day.
With my cards.
O answer me,
Oracle,
How is the weather in Van?
I obsess,
think I am making progress.

The floor is home to
a plethora of cigarette butts.
I have not swept up
since I have been here
but you already know
I am a mess.
Complete cleansing
and I feel
naked without my plaque,
lonely without the mites.
Come visit me in my worm-hole,
we'll play treehouse
on the *balcon*
where the squirrels' nests brush
the branches.
I'm not lonely anymore.
Back in my living room
my life is being lived
as if I had received you,
the moment we met and ever since,
still receiving.
I live as if you have accepted
my invitation,
made overtures of your own.
I will clean, as
you are coming,
play this out also in my head,
our play group always a party of two,
on my *balcon* in *les arbres*.

It is the motion of kissing
that attracts me,
it is the act of flicking
that keeps me coming back.
Doctor, I cannot extinguish you
from my life.
You have butted out the poverty
of my thoughts,
I inhale smoky impressions of you
to fill the void.
Slim teas and cigarettes and
I have lost 5 pounds
(not easy).
5 more and I will be under 200.
Will my stomach still be
distended?
Will you ever see me
as I was
before, in my size 6 pinafore?
O vanity in retrospect.
Will you ever return to ol' Montreal
once Vancouver becomes
same old?
Do you even want me sane?
You just took you away from me.
So I have been smoking outside.
Leeching love from dry rollies,
Still addicted,
I'll be 120 and waiting,
should you crash this shore again.

Earbuds stuffed in ears,
I place the clonazepam
on top of the empty mayonnaise jar:
I am writing today.
Too late for laundry,
Monday already past,
I will be a dirty bird this week.
Thespis guide me,
patron saint of the Protestants,
taking the Globe in Viola's skirts,
Shaw, will you write me a tombstone
for the Doctor to kiss when I'm gone?
So Jim Morrison's not moved from Pere Lachaise—
will he visit my grave when I'm gone, too?
Jesus was with me,
And my loud neighbour, Pedro,
when I swallowed the whole bottle.
The meat wagon
took me to St. Luc's,
the aux-meds telling me to wise up all the way,
and how I can't afford
this chariot of the junkies,
the lifers,
the crushed.
Qui était vous to tell me I am
a piece of shit.
Vous n'êtes pas my doctor.
Sit up, yourselves,
and let my throat make its music.

I am toxic yet
I cannot pry the phones
from my ears
long enough
to duck my head under the tap.
I have written up a stink today.
Quite an honour,
the gift of mania.
Too bad I am schizo
(the Doctor tells me so).
Bipolar is for the starlets,
I wear an *A* on my chest for
Abnormal,
This high is just psychosis,
not the new normal—
this too will catch up with me.
On the continuum of disorder,
mood to thought,
I sit in the middle,
both at once:
schizoaffective.
Catch all and
a disclaimer
to pawn me off
to Schizophrenia Tertiary Services,
the Schizo Treatment System,
psychoticore HQ:
I am a hardcore mental.

Today is summer hot and hazy.
It is the only day I
have really needed
you here to laze with me.
There is nothing to be
done in this heat, only
you could move me.
I miss you today, Doctor, and
how we walked together
and talked about the weather.
It is stifling in my apartment.
Do you like to loaf?
I could sit up if
you were here, and
we could share a
case of beer, imported
from a temperate place—
Europe must be great.
Are you out of the country today,
gazing up at Montmartré?
Here at home it's sticky weather,
in Montreal, your home.
You've forgotten me already.
How many have flipped for you
since you were a schoolboy in grade 2?
They chased you down the halls
and swooned your way in schoolyards.
I chased you round the bend.

On her balcony is the
fat lady with her sweat beads.
I hope she is not watching me,
as I am not watching her,
for I am naked with
my cigarette,
one last shiver
then a shower.
That should stop all
starry-eyed glances.
Muffled children's thumping
from below
ruffles imaginary feathers
on my back.
My spine spits liquid
past bony bumplets,
my throat issues
cough droplets
fit for the spittoon.
Would you recognize me
'round the 'hood
from the sun on my thigh,
the light on my elbow
as it bends
to strike a sock.
Getting naked for my shower.
I will be back,
fresher and more tousled.

I am doing better,
not great
and my art is suffering.
Church bells ding—
time, time, time,
but do they ever
give up?
If I stick earplugs
in these stuck-out
ears of mine
will the bells
cease for wartime
and will I battle
it out
once and for all?
And the holy warrior
in me
strikes me
to my very spirit.
If the bomb fits,
wear it.
Silly spirit,
wars are for kids.
Time to grow up and
face the bells;
they swell
'cross the quartier—
When will they ever learn?

When this book is finished
I will join the local convent.
Absolved of my sins against Hippocrates,
I will no longer live to
breach protocol.
Mary, Mary, will you marry me to
Jesus,
Mother's job to shine like Christ
in her mother life.
Tabernacle de c lisse
means *shit fuck piss*.
Silent sister Mary Mary
of the ordered,
of the called—
falling cripples
take your crutches—
you will need them,
they are your cure—
God is reality.
I will put myself
away
when this book is finished.
I will leave this book
behind me,
tuck my poems
in their bed—
might as well be cloistered
when the bombs are overhead.

TORTURE

(9)

I am starting
to get
overwhelmed
by what
is coming out of my mind.
Thoughts, black planets,
with blinders set upon
the sun
orbiting out of control,
spokes breaking on their cycles.
Just let me send you
a few lines
for diagnosis—
just let me read you
a few lines.
Is it cirrhosis?(!)
Of the brain? (!)
A mild case?
O I am a case!
O I am a case
for glad eyes
seeking to secure
a cure.
Search me
and research me
for clues.
As to how I am
different from you.

I want my sanity back, Doctor.
You have been gone too long
to be remembered.
I want to forget.
I want to forget pleading my case to the board:
But I must have Doctor Seligman as my Doctor.
You have taken up
too much space in my veins—
I crave golden age,
like my mother's—
to choose to forget.
You have given meat to my musings
but I beg you,
don't stick you to the tip of my pen,
to the ribs round my aching muscle,
the one that holds me back.
Doctor, I have long gone
to the dogs of neuroleptics
and they have made me skeptical—
the separation still dogs me.
O Mother, I have pinned my hope
to slip away,
to duck your grip,
to forget your sticky pious love
on the back of a fleeting young Doctor,
a physician with the softest hands,
that grabbed the scissors away.

A girl's love, by nature,
has her pulling out all the stops.
where would she be
without these auspicious starts,
to which she owes
her painted toes—
how smiley dreamily she sews
her new love-grubbing clothes.
But lo she cannot see
what could have been
was never meant to be.
-As I was sewing in my closet,
-a doctor,
-his lab coat wanting hemming,
-(near condemning),
-came to give me a needle.
O lord,
-he said, *Get thee
to emergency!*
-He held me
at arm's length—
was he memorizing my face?
For what unfolded was terrible seeming—
he told me that his prick
was just a dream.
And love it seems,
once starts have ceased,
unsews the dreams
so never meant to be.

Perishables perishing like
maniacs turn maniacal,
I do not love you
anymore.
No more a day at the
races chasing you
round the apple gate to
tie a yellow ribbon
round a bore.
Sticks and stones
cannot hurt me and cannot
beat me into casting
another glance your way
and the vermin take the day.
Alphagetti passes fast
past hungry lips too
quick a study:
I relax and enjoy my
new love the hunger—
this takes guts.
If I had Valour
would I still be fighting
the fight not worth fighting?
Valour is for vermin,
I tell myself.
I am happy with my 'ghetti.
Smile a victory smile.
Wipe a V from my lips.

You must see
what you do
to my heart.
Case closed
on this open book.
Eating my chips
in the privacy of my room
I meditate on your voice
from imagined lecterns.
But I am not invited.
Unrequited for your love
I suck the oil
til my chips are bare
on my tongue.
I find every crumb:
on my pants, on my bed;
O lie me back
from behind me, Jason.
Taste my neck, suck my neck bare.
Talk to me
from the lectern of
my shoulder.
Do this soon,
for I am getting older,
the chips take
their toll.
I would not say that I'm a whore,
but could you love a troll?

Lost in her study,
the fat girl forgets to eat.
This ziprasidone makes me think.
Why could they not come up with this sooner?
a head med that doesn't make
balloons out of its victims.
Soon I will float away on
pharmaceuticals' hot air.
You can keep your weight.
You can have it, Lilly.
I am sending it back to be filed.
I practice my Latin,
no longer required.
I practice prescribing
on med students' pads.
Closer, my Lord, to thee
and I am still in the running
for your chart.
One day my survey will find you
administering to the blanks,
another waiting room, another Glisten,
next and another file.
You wrote me off your sheets
(sniff-sniff).
Another clinic.
Doctor's orders.
But we have history.
Processed and processed on white.

Ten pounds a month and
in eight months I will be me again.
Twenty poems a day and in
eighteen days I will have you again.
Numbers crunch against my skull,
I eat my cold puffs up against a wall—
Good Manic Monday, Montreal.
My pen sinks
deep into the bowl—
inky rage at time it takes,
and time will make me with you—
but not before these mattress springs have sprung.
I am heavy with the weight of being one.
Go to sleep and breakfast soon will come.
Cub,
are you eating garbage, too?
Come to my kitchen,
I will cook for you.
Captain,
soon you will be crunching numbers, too.
How many more days til I am with you
and do you miss me?
I am only going to work out my right hand,
at the bed's edge,
metal night stand.
Keeping up good work is measured
by the poems
and the pounds.

My brain is storming.
If it were up to me
there would be no group on Mondays.
How will I get up from up
and away from the page
long enough to apply mascara?
O Propanolol,
steady my wired hands,
I must put on my face
for the Doctor and his crew.
(You only seem to see me
on my worstest curly hair days).
Where were you,
Seligman,
when risperidone worked charmingly?
The drug has outlived its welcome,
leaves me possessed,
the hospital has me too often.
Is there nothing less evil
on the stomach?
Once I had a waist.
Once the dose was right.
The ones that dissolve on the tongue,
they're fun,
but cankers keep me from
this small thrill.
You know what I find thrilling
now, Doctor?
Sleep.

Here is the situation
with my roaches.
Bestraggled from Borax,
they loathe me
for my newly forced
cleanliness.
My lovelies,
I will miss
your attention and hope
to visit your corpses
someday
in dark roachy places.
Light of day finds you
surrounded,
circle of boric acid
round my TV
recalling witchcraft
practiced
in the inner city.
Come out, come out,
whenever you dare,
for I am lonely,
my love fled
to Van.
Stuck in Mtl,
oratorical bell,
no roaches for you
in West Van.

My eyes are hollow
in the morning light
wiped night at sunset
summertime style.
Oh, longest of days,
Liberty, I get down,
I get down on my knees
and dance,
waiting for the silvery
moonlight mass
of winter.
Come crying,
dazzling imperative,
can you spell friend,
or fiend, for shit?
Foe, you have forsaken
me for the schizos;
mistaken me for the ritzless;
I free myself, labelless,
free for the affluence,
the awfulness
of the manias
I am ready for
your clinic again,
flashes of brilliance.
I am not schizo anything.
Spare me, spare us
your libel.

WINTER

(10)

My Klein coat is not enough
to keep me warm and dry
on fallen streets,
fallen nights.
How much longer
must my love
remain cloaked?
It was December, do you remember,
when it first came out.
You came in from the cold to meet me
at the ER at the Vic.
*Do you want me to
call your mother?* you asked.
I eyed a soft, slim leather glove—
yes, I'll throw down the gauntlet, I thought,
show this rich kid I am not
some reject from the mean streets—
*no Hey, Glisten, Dickens called
and wants you back on his pages
for Twisted Oliver, Crazy at Last.*
Yes! I said.
Tell her to bring my Calvin Klein!
Which one? you asked,
in your cute-cut pea coat.
Why so baffled, Ace?
Doctor, I said.
I only have one Calvin Klein.
And it's in the front closet!

We got the snow.
We got the snow this morning.
It is raining in Vancouver.
Come home.
Come over.
Pull up a chair
to the radiator,
dear,
reluctant warmth
from dusty baseboards,
I am
needing
bleeding.
Remember mittens,
remember the boy,
we got the banks
to ride on.
Don't risk
standing still
in the damp chill—
make angels,
my love.
Snow day with me,
Jay!
Rain is so passé!
Why don't you stay?
Come to my lawn
and we'll play.

O Joy to the World—
having the ex-boyfriend
volunteer to bleed your radiators.
He did not have to do that,
and it needed to be done.
Furthermore I did not know
how to do it.
Ex-boyfriend to the rescue.
What will I do when he forgets me,
lost in the haze of families
with dogs
or at least lovers with cats
and candle-lit kitchens.
Let the radiators bleed
themselves.
After all, he never had to do that
and it is winter cold outside
and his Porsche is not made for the freeze—
wear and tear just for you—
were you ever worth the whole deal—
him as your lover and all?
The radiators fizzle and run
in anticipation;
my nose fizzes and runs with
a new-brewing cold.
Maybe the heat will kick in
after this act
of kindness.

After all, this is Christmas,
keep it light.
In my head
the music plays itself;
in the radio
the roaches raise
their young'uns,
ready to wreck
my food and
my life without you.
I was susceptible
and now I run out
of memories of
all our life lived
together,
no more to be lived.
The conflation of
Christmas, winter and loss
erodes my throat
like lime;
my hands asbestos,
I do dishes,
water running,
sink plugged,
watch my face
on the furniture
polished with Pledge.
But I cannot run.

Now I don't know, Cloris,
is that cane you use really
for getting around,
or is it just for the glitz?
And which side of the bed
should I flop down on
(to write this),
the side with the snot or
the side with the throw up
(I have a bad cold and
am home from Day Hospital).
Cloris, if you're out there, I
could use some answers—
is it an ulcer
or just bad eating posture
on my part, flopping down
on one side of the bed or
another with a can of Alphaghetti.
We are a sorry lot we humans,
aches and pains, the cliché
of inner longings.
My nose runs as the
band plays on and on the
neighbour's radio downstairs
the collision of winter and you,
and a walking stick
done up like a candy cane—
but please feel free to lean on me.

My nose runs as the
band plays on
and on
the Pedro's radio
downstairs:
red-lit medley,
Rudolph reigns once more.
Christmastime fusion of
firstborns and you.
You should be gone by now
and still
your memory leaks down
the back of my throat
and sits like silicone
placed in my chest by
a lesser doctor.
We agreed to
pass a good Christmas.
And you remembered
I mentioned a niece(!).
Christmas makes Auntie Glisten crazy.
But she buys that niece
a brown-haired Barbie.
She looks like her, this niece, Michaela.
Twenty-three and married.
Snot-filled and forgotten,
I commemorate your memory.
And now I get the music.

Dancers drizzling,
fiascos
in tights.
Honey, sweat
in earnest—
spare me your art,
spare me your pretensions,
spare me.
Honey will you
sweat with me
at the Mormon disco?
Take home the prize
for trying hardest—
spare me your hard trying,
just be earnest.
In sparkles.
And sequins.
Fiascos.
I twizzle.
Just having fun.
In the names of
Jesus and
Joseph Smith,
high art
with mirror balls,
far removed from
performances.
We're on the gymnasium floor.

Linger under
my dark cover
Doctor-love.
Under Chinese characters,
warm and comforting,
comfort and be comfortable.
Unearthly arm
around my waist
I turn my head
to take your breath
under yellow bamboo;
red and black.
Sleeping spoons,
phantom front with my round back,
a Chinese ghost story.
Are you sleeping,
are you sleeping,
Doctor-love,
Doctor-love;
tin wind chimes are chiming,
linen angels miming
our sweet love,
moon cake love;
this is my fortune,
under my dark cover,
I love you
I love you
Doctor of my heart.

ENDS

(11)

When this book is finished
I will write you a small, square
thank you note,
all my gratitude within right angles,
mille remerciements
on the *feuille*.
My head will stop aching.
You will prescribe for me once more—
I cannot wait to swallow
your purple pellets,
wash them down with lemonades
and accolades
and gin.
When this book is finished
I will be awash with courage.
I will approach you
by your ocean.
Do you live high?
Do gulls fly by
your office window?
I can feel you from away,
while my heavy charts still stay,
pills to keep my love at bay—
but let me see you—
I can pay—
(though I'm on welfare, I still have medicare).
This can't be the end of the line—
it doesn't rhyme.

He had a brave face
such that I should have known
things would be this way.
Just a short stay but a lifer.
*I have said these lines
of too many friends,
and now you, Francis Bonneville—
that is your real name, isn't it?
All the girls chased your fraught resplendence,
but Nicole won your perfect tense.
Not Nicole Kidman
or Nicole Eggert
but Nicole Grundy.
She came to you like a safety pin angel
in the psych wing of the ER,
to give you your two cigarettes,
but the nurse said
you weren't allowed.
So you ran—
dashed up six flights,
out to the parking complex,
you dove.
The pavement never had a chance.*
At the wake
Nicole is helpless in her Avril Lavigne tie.
Frank's mom asks her for a cigarette
and she gives her two.
Wouldn't you?

At the General
there are many spirits.
Fast spirits,
slow spirits,
Uri wants me to get them down.
Uri spirit of the underground.
Quick to sit up, I reach for my glasses.
As for sleep,
only one hour,
5am,
had a fright,
wind in shreds,
sky fermenting
in the morning of the night.
Uri, Uri,
friend of all my,
studded friends
of yesterday,
followed where the grind was calling,
Minneapolis, USA.
Flowers were your grave was calling,
on a table in a vase.
Streets of 2 cities
representing at your service,
girls in corners crying
I'd never seen before,
and somewhere my inner goth was thinking
who could ask for more.

When I went to bed last night
I dreamed I saw Joe Hill,
I thought that he was Uri,
10 years dead, 21 still,
21 still.

But it's been 15 years more like;
5 since I ran Uri's memorial in the Citizen—
the lyrics to a protest song, song for hippies—
Uri's mother was a hippie, but showed up
at the service punk, in combat boots.

O Uri, flag of Israel on your knee,
Who knows the war?

No future for you.

My point being it's really not
10 years since Uri died, or rather *never died*, it's
5 years since I put "Joe Hill" in
the paper to mark the 10 year
anniversary of his *never death*. Now it's
10 years since Frank shed his breath—
I realize it's been a decade of July's
since I have seen Frank's bisque eyes.
Catherine reminded me of this landmark on
Facebook. Though I had been writing about
him I did not realize the date. But then I had Uri's song
in my head tonight and I realized it was for Frank.
Such an inspiration, he is.
I opened my notebook to write and
the title was already there.

In Kentucky,
I imagine,
are fields of
blue grass.
My psych intern is of
the Colonel's state,
and will return home
tomorrow,
leaving me with loss:
I never spoke of you
in sessions,
you made the referral—
a conflict,
a conflict.
Double bind?
I watched the watch
in misguided meetings—
I needed help
but there were
always two you's
in the room—
mine and the mentor's;
O parting intern,
I need you, I do.
Now you leave for
where the grass,
it is blue,
me too.

Song securely in my head
I am free to take
my breakfast meds
at noon.
Clock stopped at coffee,
it is ten and I
am leaving for Virginia,
Sevenoaks and one bag,
several logos stuck
on stickers on the side,
guitar too risky to take—
I love you too much
to put you through this,
have left you to pawn
too many times to
dare losing;
I have lost too many times to
dare losing;
O psychotic nature,
Blue Mountains: don't
betray me—
I am not coming for respite
but to work on
schizoconundrums—
why call them splits
when they are intact
except in naming—
something's been calling me.

All of life is synchronicity.
All of insanity is entertaining thoughts.
The bells, the bells;
the rushed forth rush forth,
the blind truth disguised
in a spelling mistake.
The bees
take on
the day.
Truth
sings
the way.
School bells are ringing.
I'm going to Virginia.
Peaks and green,
I roll with the hills, and mountains
and mountains, forever stallions
crest like a stallion bucking.
I stand like you,
black horse,
brown horse,
bronco.
Are you the one
for me?
Will you tell me
your name
as you guide me backward
toward you?

I don't want my time to pass;
I want to coffee chat,
all trances averaging
20 poems a day.
I lie here with you,
waiting to come where?
I wait to smell blue mountains,
my breath for you;
the chimes migrate south,
the mountain mother
beating migraines
to the temple—
Oh, Jesus bless
those who give me credit;
Pale blue ink,
I have returned
from the black viscose
I wore out to your funeral—
Deux Montagnes
on polyester fill,
ear to the bedrock—
you are my left wing,
I am your right,
come to me
Jason,
heal with authority
Frank Bonneville's disease.

I know they will erase my final goal
from the board next week.
*Turn the mind, move through strife
and have a life worth living.*
Mother had a good laugh over
my farewell poem,
saw the last line coming:
*And I will never know if
Adele's toenails stayed painted
in the rain.*
It was my goodbye ritual
(the CBT told me to find one).
Mother found it wry, a dry wit.
It irked me when she'd condescendingly
refer to my "day program"—
it's the *Day Hospital*.
A six month waiting list.
To her it was a free lunch once a week
and a free bus pass
(and I'd better get after that social worker
for that pass).
Now Sunday morning I see sticking out
from beneath my bed,
an old sheet from Raisa's group:
Accept what you cannot change.
My mother loves me in ways
I do not understand
and I am discharged.

One week after my discharge
I came back to finish my foot stool.
Soaking sea-grass,
weaving seat,
and a photo of me,
tying up loose ends.
*Steve, since you are going out
to smoke,
would you mind snapping
a few
last shots?*
Down the Allan Driveway.
Envision the photographs.
I am walking away, my last day.
But the sun is too bright;
I am just a dark speck
on the camera's screen.
Not happy with these previews,
I erase in haste.
I keep walking,
Steve behind me, shooting.
Reaching Pine and Peel I give up,
turn around, and wave for all time.
The keeper.
Years from now,
I'll look back on it and wonder;
am I going,
or am I coming?

Unearthed crush
blush to see you
in the hallway,
off to catch a coffee;
was it witchcraft
that you've risen
from the tomb?
Is that your broom?
Something's sweeping me
back to halls between
the Allan gates
and wards I've seen
where sisters bound
my corpse in green
and, *Doctor?!*
How've you been?
Once I loved you.
I was fat and boggled,
bleary-eyed from clubbing
and lonely for four years.
Off between the ears.
Twenty years since you left town,
don't notice that you're not around;
the polar up,
the polar down,
blue skies over middle ground.