

From The Heart

a collection of poems and threads

-joshua

true north
cardinal direction
the path with a heart
knowledge alone has no compass

love knows the way

connect to body as a bridge to mind
in tune with self, tune with purpose
singing the soul alive
from the heart

welcome ... whatever brings you here today and in this
moment, thank you for being here ... and, thank yourself
you made it to today and despite every obstacle, you are here

take just a moment...
“to thank all the people who have loved you into being”

i believe the lessons we need to integrate are found in what we
ignore, push off or have come to do automatically by habit
... the intention of these writings is to bring awareness around
forgiveness and gratitude, what it means to love... so that your
path may be a little easier... may these words be your medicine
and may my open heart open yours

start on a new moon, read one moon phase everyday



coming undone as a becoming yet to witness
a new life for the price of everything i once was
i have either been opened wide or a wild fire has stripped me bare
i am a story yet to be written
you are my muse
i made this for you
and i wonder what we could make together
thank you for direction, inspiration, a place to rest
for a life once lost
in your memory i am found
even if we only scratched the surface
everything was worth a moment's glimpse
still the mystery is unfolding
the spaces between hold the meaning
cherish the waiting
a wrong worth correcting is time well spent
walk me home
now and forever
until i have nothing left again
only Love

the first voice is your heart
the next is doubt
i worry that if i protect myself too firmly i will push away the goodness
"your feelings will kill you but if you don't feel then you're already dead"
sink or swim
you can't bury the ocean
but i've been treading water all my life
sink or... fly
how much of myself am i willing to change?
you are worth compromise
somewhere between watering flowers and building a fountain
hard work, emotional bloodletting
pouring out my cup a thousand times and a thousand times more
determined to die empty





i did not choose to be an artist
grief is love that has nowhere to go
i have to pour myself out before my life implodes

and i refuse to be crushed
so i will write a poem
as if moving every word like a boulder

art is the alchemy of transforming suffering into beauty
meaning is connection, something to share
pass thru me and sculpt me from within

rough hands, tender heart

am i more creative when i am messy...
or do i dance better with strength and stability?

am i afraid of falling for you...
or am i afraid to be happy because i expect disappointment?

is despair comfortable because it is familiar...
or am i just talking myself out of something special?

if everything was predictable would i still live it...
or would i still choose the great mystery?



is the magic in making it...
or allowing it to happen?

how can i be open to love...
without being overwhelmed by pain?



should i have pressed harder?
how much farther can i let you go before you're gone?
love is not possession
but i'm still figuring out the balance
i'm trying to ask more questions

from the heart
is listening without thinking of what to say next
a flexible boundary and accountability
giving spaces to breathe
or letting you go
they don't know what love is

sometimes a poem
is dressed in plain clothes
like guarding wisdom for only the most persistently curious
every wrinkle contains multitudes
there's constellations in your mind
people are only boring if your eye's wide shut
dig deeper
and don't forget to look up

and, a poem is a messy collection
like looking inside a jewelry box at hard won gems
oh the mountains i've had to climb just to write one sentence
and i will only give myself to someone who's ready to behold
you wouldn't water a garden in winter would you?



phantom lover
show me who you really are
i will set you free
but i am a fool for you

"i play it off but i'm dreaming of you"
i keep my cool but i am feeling, feeling
that i'd love you that much more
if you can just show me who you really are

i don't want to find another
there ain't no one as special as you
every set of eyes that i find
just end up leaving me wanting you

never met someone so aligned
everything was right except for the time
but you don't owe me anything
thank you, i'm grateful we tried

"the past is a ghost and the future's a dream"
no expectations without agreements
and tomorrow is not promised
just a wish upon a star

come as you are
in my arms
give me all your pretty
and your scars
i can hold it all
in my arms
come as you are

the shadows point to the light
like scars in sand traced back to the hand
"they can only meet you as deeply as they've met themselves"

pulling punches, words can do the most damage
but tell me the truth, i swear i can handle it
why is judgement easier than acceptance?
is knowing you easier from a distance?

heart of glass, take a look in the mirror
and give it back
accepting our differences is connection, love is the medicine

imagination is giving the benefit of the doubt to what is possible
universal blues, walk two moons in their shoes
ever surprised by our capacity for contradiction
assume the best intentions
build each other up and see what happens

accepting the sky for the clouds
for pulling weeds destroys the wheat
and children of the sun
must live and let live, coexist
no idols only horizons
no idols only... land
is our connection, inter-dependence



perfect is the illusion
i am sorry i put you on a pedestal and deceived us both
what could have happened if we weren't masking?
the shadows face the sun
like wounds waiting for the light to pour in
yet in the night
all is forgiven (if you don't say it now then when?)

and i accept you for your messiness
for the mess pales in comparison to your completeness

maybe i am already my best self
maybe i need others to become the best version of myself
the space between
the layers of becoming
secure
i am learning to cherish uncertainty

and i am ready
for
the ultimate surrender
i could give you everything ...i seek to be delivered
as sacrament
what else is sacred anymore?
what higher art is there than worshipping eros?
if i love myself first love will find me like a birds of feather

my eyes had rested too long
glazed over by mirages of the sun's reflection
even one minute on the surface
is an eternity lost in the holy moment
betrayed by gold

yearning for return
a safe harbor
is where the heart is
sanctuary
feels like floating
my beating chest
sounding yours



forgiveness for survivor's guilt

a million second chances

grace and mercy

thankfulness

what a miracle it is to even exist

is any life a life of abundance?

or is gratitude just easier with a full stomach?

savouring what it's like to be out of survival mode

yet longing for restoration like the earth after us

sharks did not survive an asteroid just to be turned into soup

yet i was willing to end all life within me just to find peace

what is satisfaction?

teach me a thank you song

will we ever stop developing?

and what kind of creativity is self destruction?

how many times must we be born again?

before we realize the greatest gift

nature was here

still found in each other thru ghost and ash

speaking in tongues and footsteps

kiss the feet of the outcasts

ashes in your mouth

forgiveness and resurrection:

superpowers, super-natural

no matter the damage done

nature will be there

and you are never too dirty to be loved

most of my life i am far less than proud of
and the shame could ration till the end of my days
yet deep in my heart i hunger and long for
sharing the humble reasons i have been allowed to live
cleanse and nourish
cleanse and nourish
together we mend
may the best of our days far outweigh all the hurt that has ever been
somehow we all belong to each other but you don't owe me anything
so that everything given is simply a gift



the body keeps the score
but nobody wins
ain't getting out of this life alive
the blues run the game
the only way to win is not to play
but i'd rather dance in the moonlight with reckless abandon than go dim
just be true
and maybe what's meant for you
won't be so fucking hard

i refuse to be a victim
i've come too far to fold
blaming gives away my power
and love is accountability
no matter how much you hurt me
i will still find the strength to apologize
i was made to love
and no matter how many times i get hurt, i get up

i used to think i had to prove my love
grand gestures and yearning, chasing and performing
but it is what it is
i meet you as you are
for love is less of a force
than it is understanding
harmony
complete me, equally
no one person holds all the cards
and dang, we sure had fun

forgiveness is the secret to peace

how can i calm the waters of my heart...

when the wind is blowing and the moon is pulling me from deep within?

i think our chapter has been coming to an end

i just hope the world is kind to you

it's a tough time for dreamers

take me down to the river i'll go

just to wash my feet and cleanse my soul

rinse away all the dirt and grime that's been weighing me down

how can i remain open to love...

without being overwhelmed by pain?

if i am numb to sadness i am numb to joy

and i wish to be strong enough to feel it all

take me down to the river i'll go

just to wash my feet and cleanse my soul

and even if this water don't mix with your oil, no

i still love you so

i want to forgive so much that i say the word forgive so many times
that it begins to sound different like hearing it in a new way
for i give this to you, a new start

i just want to bring some joy into your life

and watch you grow





the spark is a lie
only a slow burn endures thru time
passion is just the icing on a cake built by curiosity, sweat and devotion
teach me about you
fill me with your secrets
hopes and fears i can hold equally
let me walk with you
through your inner cities and cathedrals
darkened forests and all the places you hide yourself
you can have me
like no one else can
only you

but you have to meet me halfway
mutual pursuit, no chase
a good heart never forces itself forward
still willing to moratorium my peace to explore the mystery unfolding
just for the chance
to shower you in your preferred language
to know your scent without protection
what's a question someone never asks you but wish they would?
curiosity is an invitation not a challenge
somewhere between the opening of a flower and unlocking iron gates
i promise the moon and the stars but only if your window is open
and first i will sweep the floor, do the dishes and clean the car
"i got a ticket to anywhere
maybe we can make a deal
maybe together we can get somewhere"
we can drift into the unknown and still make it home
"the greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return"

whalesong

i was once an angel looking for chaos
now i am just a demon seeking eternal peace

and i think i found myself in you
you're one in a billion, once in a lifetime

having a good heart's a blessing and a burden
i can't help but look a little deeper
i can't help but be pulled down
pulled down

can i change who i am?
if i learn to fly will i lose myself?
will the music inside me die?
when is it time to let go... or hold on?

i can try to meet you at the surface
so i can stay inside your nature
but the depths keep pulling me down

still i will be so patient with you
i have seen much, much worse
ain't gonna scare me now
so hold on...

imperfectly improving like rivers finding our way
patiently moving mountains into the sea
searching for what we once knew
calling out into the deep blue



underwater

have you been underwater?
has your life been all too much?
i tell you i'm here not to fix you
just be real steady and keep you warm

and i trust, trust in time
all the parts of yourself
you once thought lost and were broken
return to you like tears in rain

and how i think, think about you
with the memory of water clear
does not forget and i remember
just as fresh as the day we met

if you came back i'd accept you
in all your truest forms
for the ocean refuses no river
when you find your way back home





just breathe



i wonder if you can die of limmerance
i was daydreaming of you and missed my exit
forgot to smell the flowers, to eat dinner... to live



if it's not confessional it feels like avoiding vulnerability
i'm done being clever or too available
now is the time for courage
i cried while i wrote this
we can only be friends if i can stop imagining what could have been
i want to be your best friend
i've never been able to belly laugh with someone so soon
and our joy is deeper because we've known pain
no one else has seen inside the box without opening it
real recognizes real
you touched me more deeply in two months than almost anyone ever has
i didn't know that was possible
do you really think we can put the water back in the clouds?

the truth is that i wasn't ready either
i have so much growing left to do
and although i will never be fully ready for goodness
what does it mean to wait a long time?
i've been waiting for you all my life
still i will not put my life on hold
just as i will not convince you or beg to rush
i've never met anyone more compatible in my whole life
but ideals don't matter if the timing's not right
what's meant for us changes based on decisions we make
and whether we grow together or grow apart
we will have grown
thank you thank you thank you
"my heart is glad to be known by you"

is friendship the highest form of intimacy?
to want nothing more than your time

your chosen family
building the foundation of... potential

holding up a mirror to who you are
unlocked and reflected back to you

different people hold different keys to parts of yourself

the sincerest joy

an open ear without judgment

the softest touch

parallel play and the deepest laughter

a helper not a fixer

the gentlest smile, encouraging your direction

a spell of words

back dimples and that one freckle on your nose

a reminder message

knowing who you were, how far you've come

your favorite breakfast

bringing you homemade chicken soup

without having to ask

eager ears that are glad to listen to the storyteller in you

someone willing to like pickles

and knowing your favorite color is the magenta that appears on
the clouds after the sun actually sets and most people have left

but i remembered
and i will stay with you



i can understand not wanting to share your deepest, darkest secrets

the wrong people will use your weakness against you

yet the right people will receive & hold you exactly as you are

and free you so deeply the feeling wholly redefines acceptance

dare to love unconditionally

and i decided to hug the darkness everyday to feel the wretches dissolve in my acceptance

and built a blanket to comfort the truth

i thanked them for the lessons

the voids taught me everything i am wounded by and afraid of

they have lived with me my whole life, nurtured by my failures and regret

the shadows called themselves Grief, Hate and Doubt

and why they still cut the threads that hold my life together

i demanded to know who they were

i invited my demons to sit with me



warm heart for a cold shouldered world

cardinals always remind me of my grandma Helen...
i would visit her weekly sometimes twice a week and especially as a surprise. she is one of the only people to ever love me unconditionally. no matter how i showed up she would accept me for who i was with no unsolicited advice, and show me love. we'd play gin rummy and watch her boyfriend, Joey Votto play for the Reds. eventually i even started playing music for her and i always felt safe to express my truest self.

...even as bombs fall today, remember the people that have loved and accepted you this way and those cherished memories can't ever be taken from you.



for Mom and Dad

dear Dad did i ever tell you i still remember going to car shows with you all those years ago?

seeing a Buick Skyliner for the first time - it was candy apple red with ivory accents and the convertible top still worked

later that day, we would get caramel apples and look at purple Barracudas, green Shelby mustangs and all sorts of shiny beasts staged in the field on a perfect summer's day

thank you for these cherished memories, the time you made just for us to make a day special

you're the most hardworking and loyal person i've ever known

you could have given up, become an alcoholic when we almost lost the house but you didn't – all the hurt aside, i appreciate your commitment to joy and special days like these

i wonder what Mom and my sisters were doing meanwhile?

dear Mom, did i ever tell you i still remember all your home cooked meals from years ago?

...the apricot glazed pork chops, the creamy chicken over rice and the delicious meatloaf that made me actually want to eat something with ketchup – i wonder which meals you learned to make just for us

our dinner plates changed as we grew and the partitioned plates with drawings of fruit to help us learn our numbers were traded for ceramics

i deeply respect your consistent effort to make a house a home

i hope you felt appreciated for all this hard work and if you were not appreciated enough back then i hope you feel so now

Mom, you're the most resilient person i've ever known – thank you for inspiring in me humility, for if insecurities are loud then safety is calm and consistent like your love

there are many pathways to the heart... but through the stomach there is a highway

sing, sister

with a microphone or a megaphone

with sacred rage and a soapbox

sing as if you've never been judged

the chorus behind you is your jury of peers

we believe in you

did your mother teach you how to mother?

did your father show you what a good man is?

did your sister give you a mirror for sisterhood?

did your brother hold your hand?

we are so proud of you

and we need you now

this is matriarchal land

sing to release every disappointment born from decisions made for you

be decisive

the road is littered with with squirrels who couldn't make a decision

if not now then when?



is revolution not deeply motivated by a striving love to save each other?

i wonder if the crow has ever watched a friend die
nuzzled it's face in the neck of a slowing breath
if it now realizes how precious life is in the raw wind

the sweet smell of death makes the heart a little more tender

if two cardinals can mate for life...

then why do good, loving people question everything?

i read the other day that couples in arranged marriages are just as happy

as all of us who are given a thousand choices

i guess it's possible to choose perfectly, but what are the odds?

i don't want to live forever as long as i don't die alone

just sing me a sweet song along the way

and if you love me, choose me everyday ...before letting me go



i don't know if ignorance is bliss but innocence is
would you know it if you lost part of yourself...

or does someone need to tell you?

dear sister will you show me how to heal myself?

interdependence as virtue

who else will fill my cup when my well runs dry?

where else will i pour mine?

healing is not linear, be patient with yourself

break open the wound, be brave

clean out the hurt

purify the worry or it worsens

bitterness or entitlement

i know i am capable of violence, compassion is a choice

apathy is infectious

and it's been too long since i've had a good cry

people break apart in funny shapes

a comedy of errors

can't find the right answer

i want to know you deeply and forever

the memory of water does not forget

and always forgives, making room for possibility

"i'm not healing to handle trauma, i am healing to accept joy"

therapy is going back in time to hold the hand of your inner child

be brave

"i forgive myself"

"i am good enough"



"i am restored"

"i am worthy of love"

breathe

"the best things in my life haven't happened to me yet"



if something as small and timid as a hummingbird can migrate hundreds of miles above an ocean to get to the nectar on the other side, then we too can rise above the heaviness of life to reach a sense of inner peace and joy... do we turn away? or do we face the tragedies of our life and the world head on because the only way out is through? ignorance is bliss until it isn't... yet, how can we plunge into the deep while giving ourselves a life raft, some levity, so that we do not harbor the heaviness of it all? as the Talmud states, "do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief... do justly, now... Love mercy, now... walk humbly, now... you are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it" life is both tragic and beautiful, somehow our capacity for contradiction is endless... may we sincerely acknowledge sorrow but not be destroyed by it... somehow, it is possible to hold, if just for a moment, the hard truths while ultimately choosing to focus on the sweeter things in life so when we share time with our friends, family and community instead of grief we can resolve to give comfort and dare to in spite of everything, risk joy



how to die well:

- forgive everyone for everything
- tell untold stories, in person, in journals
- say how you really feel, love freely
- follow dreams fully, die empty

do this every day

“...under the present brutal and primitive conditions on this planet, every person you meet should be regarded as one of the walking wounded. We have never seen a man or woman not slightly deranged by either anxiety or grief. We have never seen a totally sane human being.”

-Robert Anton Wilson



“Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and being alone won't either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning. You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth. You have to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up. And when it happens that you are broken, or betrayed, or left, or hurt, or death brushes too near, let yourself sit by an apple tree and listen to the apples falling all around you in heaps, wasting their sweetness. Tell yourself that you tasted as many as you could.”

-Louise Erdrich



“Kindness eases change. Love quiets fear. And a sweet and powerful, positive obsession blunts pain, diverts rage, and engages each of us in the greatest, the most intense of our chosen struggles.”

-Octavia E. Butler



“The silence of the spheres is the music of a wedding feast. The more we persist in misunderstanding the phenomena of life, the more we analyze them out into strange finalities and complex purposes of our own, the more we involve ourselves in sadness. But it does not matter much because no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there.”

-Thomas Merton





"some people go around the world for love but they may never find what they dream of" i could give you what everyone's searching for but i've seen flowers die of over watering... timing is everything, love is liberation and you are free

“

unable to perceive the shape of you
i find you all around me
your presence fills my eyes
with your love
i am humbled
for you are everywhere

“

if you won't be surprised you can't be let down

but people can change

if you don't tell them they can't

does fondness require distance?

come back

and show me how beautiful you've become

i love you

