

Poems by Allison Grayhurst

At Ease

Before the ultimate function
failed and my dreams were
burnt at the stake,
I felt the movement of God within me
like a rising river.
I felt tomorrow larger than prophecy -
the only future still untold.
Before the constant lack,
and the condition of build-up that will never
go away, I thought the line crossed
would always be the line on my side.
I thought I was sealed.
I learned that nothing is sealed
or solid enough to be counted on.
I learned to eat my meals slower,
to stop at the first moment of feeling full.
I learned to touch the wall instead of the sky.
I learned to love the wall as my sky,
after the blindness ensued
and love
became my permanent grace.

Message to My Other

You will not find me.
The angel promised
I would be left alone,
and I have been - left alone
like the hollowness created by a plaster mould,
with edge but no substance.
That substance
I had to earn, and once earned, I had to chisel
and sand to smooth perfection.
You will not cross my path
and ruin my illusion, you will not
tear a hole of horror in my canopy
or block my sun with your stark
though extreme reality.
You will run back and take your loss, take
the burrs buried in your hair, take your desperate corner
and your beauty that veils a great violence.
You will walk toward another - one that has not
lived as long nor has longed for
oblivion as I have. You may not sit beside me.
The angel promised,
and life without you is straightforward,
on this side of
easy.

The Sweet Glory of Imagination
Thins As It Expands

A remote sage,
a childhood anchoring, a quenching
for something mythical
reduced,
commercialized.

As though the secret
that alone was yours,
now is heard by everyone.

As though the sacred realm
has become part of the
collective unconscious,
pulped into an easily consumed
wafer feed.

Horizon

Small horizon,
small division
that lifts the first
layer of sea from the great whole,
that lifts the place where water alters
into sky but does not alter
what lies below. A place of no fire,
though it still has the strength
of the shark's unchanging
violence.
A place of cruelty just the same,
awake
to that small place where nothing exists but transition,
is the horizon less dreamed,
permanently in stasis,
a place
where beauty like terror
is overthrown.

In time the journey

will display

so many uncertainties, it will be
simply a matter of giving up,
like a sparrow gives in to a strong wind
or a dog to his master's run.

It will be a ride with no known direction,
no certainty but God and death and God again.

Through hospital wards where children lie
with expectant eyes but cannot move,
there is the nothingness of an unplanned tomorrow, there is
the atmosphere of extreme focus, focused on just holding on.

If it be hard and sudden, or a slow painful release,
death will wrap us in its reptile skin, nurture us
like a foreign enemy just realizing our colossal significance.

Death will be holy and we will recognize it
for the first and only time,
in an instant, understand its language -
bending ourselves completely
into the folds of its natural embrace.