

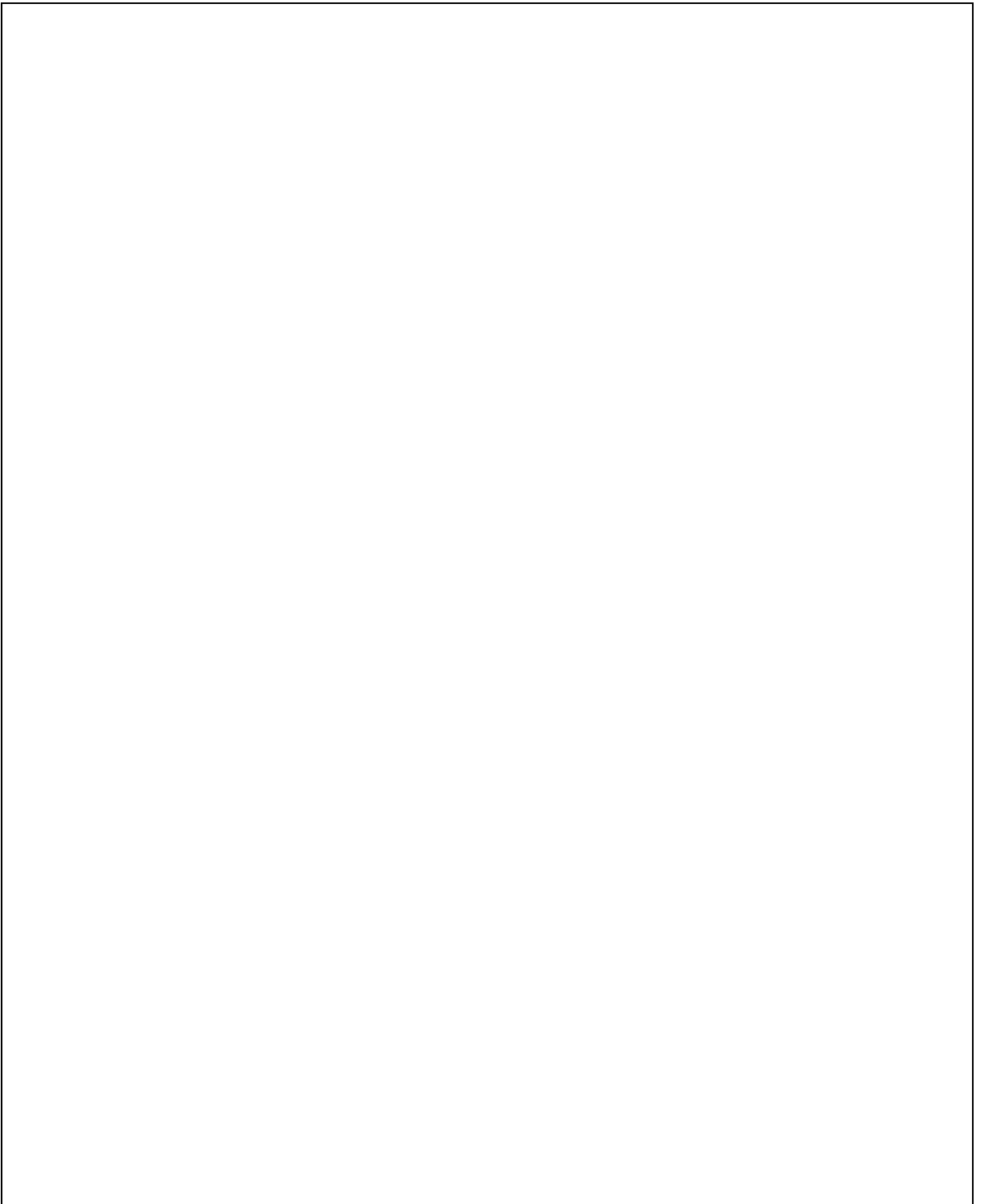
UNLESS SOUL CLAP ITS HANDS AND SING

Winter Solstice 2012

Barbara Romney

*An aged man is but a paltry thing
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress. . .*

W. B. Yeats



UNLESS SOUL CLAP ITS HANDS AND SING

MOAB SPRING 2012

- I. *Equinox* 1
- II *Too Late* 2
- III. *Early April* 2
- IV *Urgent Urges* 3
- V. *To No Avail* 4
- VI. *Constancy* 5

SEEKING

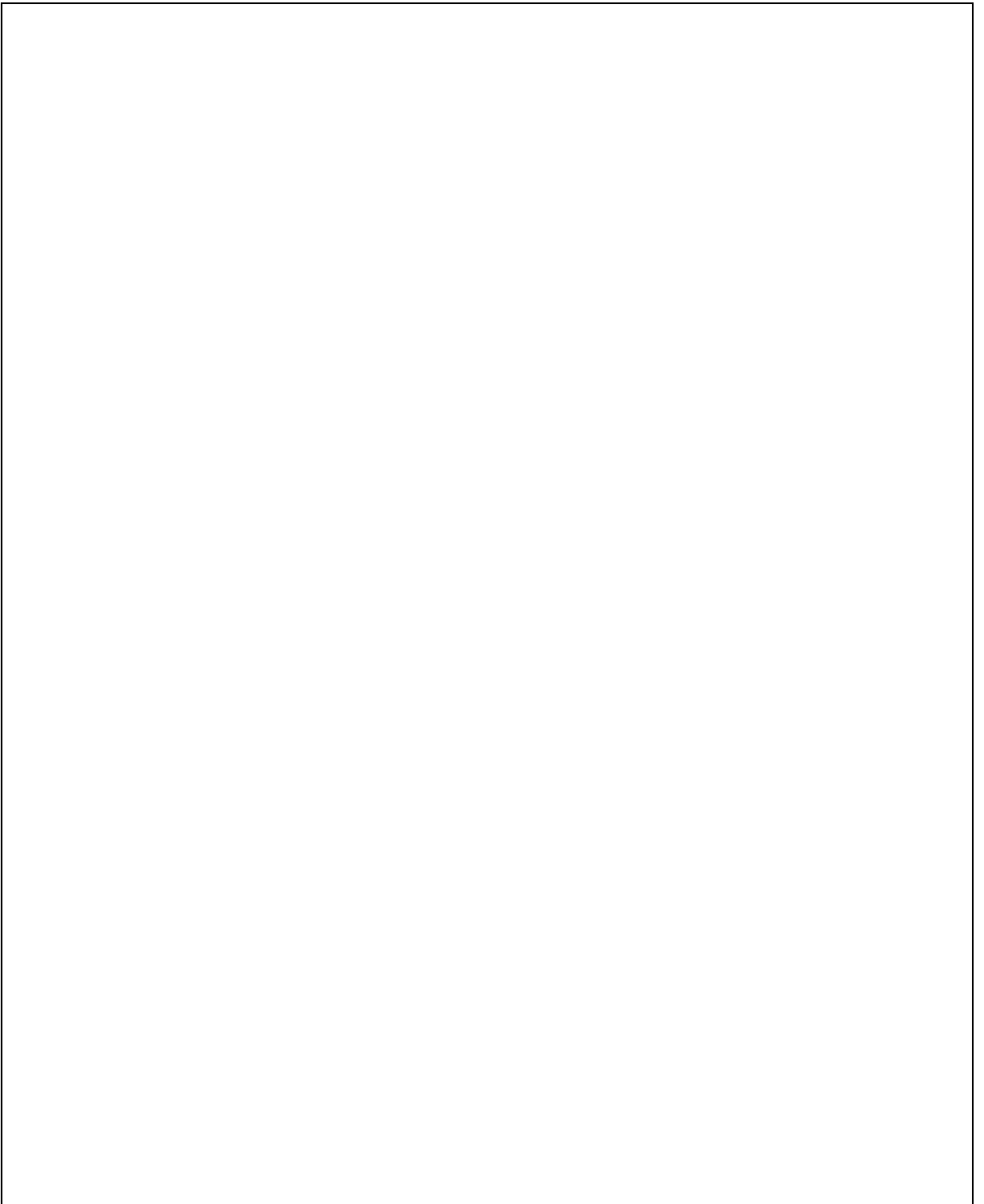
- I. *Bumper Sticker* 6
- II. *Time* 6
- III. *Memory* 7
- IV. *Two Ring Stories* 8
- V. *Seeking* 10
- V *Untitled* 10

DARK DREAMING

- Broken Things* 11
- Wandering Hands* 12
- Of Hope Bereft.* 13
- Afraid* 14
- Dark Dreaming.* 15
- Sky Has Closed Down.* . 16
- After The Fires* 16
- We Shall Breathe*
 Deeply. 17
- Untitled.* 18
- Memory II* 18

REQUIEM

- Knowing Ravens* 18
- On My Windowsill* 19
- Premonitions* 20
- Generations I* 21
- Generations II* 22
- The Child In the*
 White Dress 24
- Our Wings* 26
- Myriad Points of Life* 27
- Reverie In November.* 28
- Requiem* 29
- The Last Dream.* 30
- In The Dream.* 31
- Fragments.* 32



MOAB SPRING 2012

I. EQUINOX

1.

Down on Third South
those apricot trees
are near
full bloom

Returning mourning doves
flutter
in twos or threes
searching for
their habitual
homes

Perhaps tomorrow
forsythia bursts forth in
fresh and festive yellow

Then we'll know for certain
spring is here and
lift our faces smiling
to the sun

2.

Remembering
yesterday's casual hug
Remembering
her constant beauty
her lovely ways
but mainly
Remembering
that hug and
my body's liquid feeling . . .

3.

Then comes
the wind
the rain
the hail and I
remember Equinox
is still two days away

Hanging christmas lights
on blooming trees
to ward off the cold
the freeze
They glitter red and blue
and gold
They're pretty
but impatient
we await
the turning of the year
the coming of the sun

II. TOO LATE

Yes

It's true

We could have been lovers
if I had not been me
nor had you been you

And yes

It's true

I fantasized such

But that was before
surmising that you
really hankered after

A "not me" sort of person

Now turning around

You say

We could be . . .

Though blown about
by fickle winds of spring

I say

Too late

Too late

I know too much of you and
too much of me
to even fantasize

Way too late

III. EARLY IN APRIL

Equinox is past
and here's April

Yesterday's wind stormed in –
This morning the redrock wall's
crusted with snow
Wind pushes grasses bushes

Dark clouds roll northwest
over the wall
as melting snow
mists the air

Still

trees blush

spring green

and far southwest

the sky's clear

desert blue

Tomorrow I'll not need
socks nor sweater

For in spring
tomorrow's
another day

IV. URGENT URGES

In winter
the year's dark time
 folks yearn for light
 indeed create everywhere
 festivals of light

We sit in front of a fire
holding one we love
 or even one we
 wished
 we loved

Oxytocin holds sway
This is the one
 we've loved
 forever

But spring is here
with urges
 much more urgent

Along with birds
 and beasts
 we surge
 with estrogen
 testosterone
 and all that
whatever our age or gender

We have no interest
in cuddling by the fire

These urges call for action
Perhaps with one we've
 loved for ever
perhaps with someone new
perhaps with that one
 walking down the street

Or
spring means simply
getting behind the wheel
 and taking off for
 a long road trip
 who knows where

Or
a back-packing trip
disguised as meditation
 or retreat

Spring
and our bodies
 tingle awake
 so
what are you
going to do
 today?

V. TO NO AVAIL

On TV I see

Christian Mingles:

Find out who

God has in mind for you!

In my spam

Over 50? Mature?

The place to find

successful men

desirable

women

Over fifty?

Give me a break

How 'bout over eighty?

Slim

mentally competent

in love with life and living

Looking for such a woman

for two years

to no avail

I'm reduced

to finding pleasure

in peeks of jean-clad buns

and

breasts in tight tee-shirts

When my desire is

a lively luscious

little old lady for lover

certifiably

healthy enough

for sex

VI. CONSTANCY

Large bird Black
white breast
 perched upright
 on tallest still
 leafless tree

Then
Flying over the valley
 under-wings white
 long tail
 solitary

Not certain of identity
I find
 Magpie and
 mates for life

Days later he's perched
 on the same tree
But then flying
 another flies with him
Is this his errant mate
 come late to meet him
Or is it
 another?

Oh, I admire
 these monogamous birds
 magpies
 ravens
 mourning doves

But do remember
 those who study them
 find in the same nest
 a chick or more
 fathered by
 a different father

Great Apes make great noise
 when having sex
But should a female fancy
 a forbidden youth
 they find a secluded space
 and neither makes
 a sound

In spite of all that
 years ago
Fish and Wildlife
 picked up the injured raven

But then her mate came back
 day after day after day
 confused
 searching

They should have taken
 him as well
 for
 who knows
 whose wound
 is deeper

SEEKING

I. BUMPER STICKER

In the parking lot
at City Market
on an unfamiliar car
there it is:

***Don't believe
everything
you think!***

And of course
I think of you
and how it seems
 whatever
you choose to read
 or listen to
you believe

But now
I'm thinking of me
and wonder about
what I believe

 If
it may be or
not be
true

 If
it's only
what I think

II. TIME

My once trusty watch
is losing time

 Now
I'm quite aware
that time
 if it exists
cannot be lost

But here's the rub
If I'm expected at two
and my watch says
 one
then something is surely lost
Perhaps not time
 but something

Some potential
Some budding possibility
 now beyond retrieval
 a poem
 unwritten
 a lover
 never found
 a friendship
 passed by

 So
time on my hands

I drink my tea
 peruse the view
 beyond my window
 thinking it is only
 one
 instead of two

Such losses may become
 more profound than
 losing time

III. MEMORY

The sex we had
before we ever
had sex
was

tender
erotic
passionate
reciprocal beyond belief

Before we ever had sex
our sex was
more fervent
more fantastic
than any sex I've ever had
before or since

That's my memory
She remembers
no such thing

Oh
She has memories of love
before and since

And I?
I have memories of sex
before

NOTE

She: Is that about us?
Me: We didn't have sex
before
we had sex

And the sex we had after
I suspect
we both
remember
as it was the most memorable
actual sex
I've ever had

IV. TWO RING STORIES

1. Finding Badger

Clarity is crucial:

He found me

I didn't find him

Oh

I admit to looking

but was thinking of

perhaps

Bear or

Snake

Of which

in the tray of silver rings

there were plenty

The Snakes

both too small

and none of the Bears

quite right

Then

thinking he is Bear

I see Badger

He fits me

perfectly

but he is not

Bear

Rather Badger

bringing

assertiveness

stick-to-itiveness

focus

but watch

for distraction

and if need be

dig

a cozy little cave

for protection

Oh yes

Badger's just right for me

But remember

he warns

Humility

I didn't find him

He found me

2. Of Amethysts and Lavender

This is

not

Finding Badger

It's a WabiSabi trip
for dresses

There
under the glass
a tray of rings
a tiny amethyst
set in a simple silver circle

Slipping it on
the color brought me
the scent
of lavender

and how
some time ago
in one of those new-agey shops
I went looking
for lavender

The girl
meaning to be helpful
reading my snowy hair
rather than my aura:
My dear
having trouble sleeping?

I had to laugh
No, no trouble sleeping

Then why lavender?

Because I wish
to seduce someone
Don't you know
lavender's
an ancient potent
aphrodisiac?

She looked at me askance
thinking I'm sure
her own grandma's
well beyond such thoughts

Yes
I bought the tiny ring
because the amethyst
reminds me of the scent
of lavender
and lavender reminds me
of much else

V. SEEKING

It's said
Seek and ye shall find
Well
most fervently
I seek
and what I find is
unless there's another
seeker on the path
coming my way
I can seek
'til doomsday
and never find
whatever it may be I seek

VI. UNTITLED

the worst part
is
no acknowledgement
that anything
ever
happened

DARK DREAMING

BROKEN THINGS

As a gift of love
I offered a tiny
alabaster owl
 never thinking
it could be discarded

Years later
jumbled in a box of broken things
I found it

I love this snowy owl -
this owl with desert eyes
 blue un-
 blinking
returned to me by
 happy
 happenstance

Reminding me my gifts
 even those of love
 have little value
if left behind
jumbled
in a box of broken things

WANDERING HANDS

- a dream

I'm to read my poems
live
in some crumbling ancient
radio station

The technician
a young man
in whom my faith is weak
diddles with the plugs and such
then

I
am
on . . .

After two poems
I wilt
then
well into the third
voice breaking
I give it up

Me
too weak to stand

He
carefully
guides me toward
an exit

He
holds me up
with wandering hands

A couch -
I slip down
as his hand
firm about my waist
creeps up and gently
cups my breast

With an elbow on the couch's arm
I look up at him
standing before me
like a schoolboy
looking
oh
so
sad

My wandering mind wonders
is he sad his hands wander no more
or more likely
is he deeply chagrined
his own hands betray him
or
is he sad this old woman's
too weak to let her poems
fly out over the air
or
is it just his nature to be sad

Are there ever really reasons
or
is it just in the nature
of
a wandering mind
to wonder?

OF HOPE BEREFT

Oh yes! It's spring and
the valley's lush with lovely greens
of every shape and shade

That magpie's found
his longed-for mate
They've claimed the tallest branch
of that crooked tree
sharing with last year's ravens
peacefully
The mourning doves gather
in gentle
choirs

And the redrock wall stands guard
over the tenderness
of the valley
of birds

This is what I see
on April mornings
but my peripheral vision
displays a darker scene
When I shift my eyes to focus
it shifts to the periphery again

Be not deceived
It's always there

Mingled with pestilence
plague
wars and rumors of wars
I hear the voices of those
who worship a malevolent
and vengeful god

Will their vindictive
self-righteous rage
reflecting their belief
and adoration
resurrect those
visions of ancient horror?

Nighttime
No sun to brush
the tops of trees
No redrock wall
Birds silent
Then come
dreaded sights and sounds
Horses racing around
within my head
and I am drenched in night sweats

Listen! Do you hear the horses?
Two have passed
the third is passing

The fourth
that pale horse
radioactive
is upon us

The trees
green leaves shrivel
birds drop

Our home
our desert
sweet waters
desecrated

Red rocks can't weep
and no one's left

The earth itself
of hope bereft
is dying

AFRAID

Are you afraid?

Truthfully, no

not afraid

rather discouraged

My response to what I thought

she meant:

Are you afraid of dying?

But what does

discouraged

mean?

I heard someone say

You go in the hospital

and then you come out

but you never get back to

where you were

before you went in

So

with all the fuss and bother

the ambulances

the nurses

the doctors

the tests

the procedures

with all that

I may not get back

to where I was

Perhaps inside

discouraged

there's a kernel

of fear

And worse yet

a further fear

that seed may grow

as time goes by

Yes

I am afraid

but not

of dying

DARK DREAMING

After nights of dark dreaming
body heavy
limbs stiff
eyes puffy
chest tight

Oh
for a cigarette
and you bet
several cups of coffee
black & steaming

Waking's tough

How comforting
it could all be
easing back
into a life
of cigarettes
of coffee
and a bottle
of Jack Daniels
ever handy

Desires grow stronger
Tempting?
Yes

Who knows when?
Perhaps soon
or
somewhat
longer

THE SKY HAS CLOSED DOWN

They say
 there are furious fires
 on the other side
 of the mountain

The snow on the peaks melted
 ages ago
 and there's no chance
 of rain

The sky has closed down
 as haze shrouds the valley

Sun cannot burst through
 to brush a butte
 to dance with leaves
 on tops of trees
 or glisten patches
 of tall grasses

Wind's a terror
 ripping through rocks
Dried, desiccated stream beds
 swirl up sand
 dust devils
 deepen the haze

The night sky's closed down

This haze
 reflects back
 headlights
 street lamps
 campfires
 whatever

The haze thickens
Nor stars nor sun
 break through

The sky has
 closed down

AFTER THE FIRES

... and may there be a bird
to dance my story . . .
 Judy Grahn

These poems
 I'm trying to write

I find
 already written
 so . . .

These poems
I didn't write
 but now read
assuage despair
 remorse
and grow my hope
our spirits may survive
 the mayhem
to scatter seeds
 of love
 of life
to germinate after
 the fires
are over

WE SHALL BREATHE DEEPLY

Who he is
or why I brought him to my dream
permitted
 this dark amorphous being
 to my bed
I cannot say

Quite willingly
I held his penis
 in my hand

For length and circumference
it surely takes the prize
over any I have known
 in waking life
My fingers scarce encircled it

We lay quiet
There was no
 as we used to say
foreplay

No kissing
no fondling of the breasts
no licking of those
 most erotic
places

I said nothing

No
 Yes

No
 No

But somehow
I acquiesced

Heavily
 he pressed down
 and
 without the kissing
 the fondling
it slipped right in

My whole body's
 filled
 with that enormous
 inert
 penis

Paralyzed
I try to shift

His massive body
 pins
 me
 down

I can't breathe
I'm fading fast

My screams are silent
 then
 struggling
my life force
 strengthens
 rises up
breaks through the spell
 of sleep

I catch my breath
 then
 breathe deeply

And he is gone

UNTITLED

The sky hangs low
 a mottled grey
as mists shroud the valley

Trees
their autumn colors
 subdued
 muted

Then of a sudden
one ray of sun
bursts through
catches tops of trees
 glowing
 golden
 orange
 rust
 radiant

Wet asphalt reflects
a glimpse of desert sky

That ray of sun
 though momentary
changes everything
 makes all
the difference

MEMORY II

Remember this:
 I have memories
 of past lives
but I don't believe in lives
 beyond this one
 either past or future
 So
how can I have memories
 of lives past
 or of
 lives to come?

She asks this question of me
quite seriously
I have no answer

REQUIEM

July 13, 2012

Thanksgiving Afternoon 2012

KNOWING RAVENS

A raven conference
convening in the crooked tree
birds clinging to branches
fluttering
as leaves flutter

Nearby
latecomers congregate
as trees
fill with ravens
fluttering to and fro
conferencing with those
in other trees

The theme of this convention
the significance
I'll never know
nor can the end be told

even as
they all rise together
a great cloud of ravens
wheeling off
skyward
'til they're well beyond
my
ken

ON MY WINDOWSILL

The small translucent
golden bear
sits in the sun
glowing

He hunkers down
as bears do
when made of stone

The elephant is taller
dark
almost black
his trunk held high

If they could talk
what would they say?

If the bear turned to gaze
up at the elephant
would he fear the opaque darkness
looming over him
or
would he send out golden waves
of greeting?

Would the elephant
lower his trunk
gently
stroke the bear's back
or
is friendship even possible
between
such creatures?

PREMONITIONS OF JOY AND DREAD

1.

A skinny boy
 six or seven
sits cross-legged on the floor
All he wants is string
to fly his kite
He works assiduously to untangle
a piece of discarded jute
with total focus
No whining
No complaints
He'll work on that string
 until
by some miracle
of his own mind
it's straight and long and strong
 Then
he can fly his kite

I sit to the side
unnoticed
and wonder
how young children
believe
anything can be fixed

They DO believe
Is it naïveté or faith?
 And who am I to judge
 this lack of reason?

2.

The woman huge and heavy
 the elephant in the room
hunches over my table
demanding something
something within my personal purview
something I won't yield

If only I could discern what it is
and why I guard it
so closely
She doesn't see the boy
near her feet
quietly at his task

3.

I search my house to find
some string
 untangled
 straight
 strong
long enough to fly
the child's kite
 higher
 than
ever he dreamed

As for the woman
she grows heavier more ominous still
The air around her stagnates
 fetid
How much longer I can breathe
I do not know

Comforted by
the boy's escape
 in my mind's eye
I see him on that high hill
his face upturned
 greeting the sun
his eyes
 holding the kite
 cavorting
 among the ravens
 in their playful sport

GENERATIONS I

1. for Merlyn Romney Wolters

My favorite aunt
youngest of my father's sisters
was the last to go

Tough
as well as beautiful
 she
at sixty-five refused
to train another to take her place
and since no legal reasons
could be found to fire her
she continued work
 The choice was hers

Years earlier
her son
barged into her small cottage
crashed on the floor with friends
 then left
taking whatever small treasures
they could find
 to hock
 for drugs

She sold her charming cottage
and bought a condo in the city
 safe
 secure
decking it out in aquamarine
 to match her eyes

One night she had a dream:
A high hill
 grassy and beautiful
and at the top a splendid gate
 cast iron with
 Celtic curlicues

A glorious table
 her papa
 her mama
her seven sisters and two brothers
 calling
 calling her to come

The next morning my aunt got up
drove to the hospital
where shortly thereafter
 lying in her bed
 she died

2. for my sister and me

My sister and I talked of our aunt's death
She said:
*Don't you think that is how it is
 when we die?*
*We'll see our parents
I will hold my baby
 the one I held so briefly in this life*
*Don't you think
 that's how it is?*

Some say our afterlife will be
as we envision it while we are here
 If so
my sister's safe
 embraced by
 mother
 father
 cradling her baby

For her sake
I dream her dream
 is there for her
that she is joyful every day
joy diminished
 only by
 absence
of some she loves
 or
do memories of us
who are not there
 fade quickly
 in such a halcyon place?

GENERATIONS II

for Anne Romney Brockbank

1.

Unlike my grandmother
my sister never had a chance
leaving
so soon
so sudden

Our grandmother
painted
through thirty years
beyond her husband's death
delicate flowers
from imagined gardens
ever rising mountains
brushed with sun
Her paintings never stopped

Ten children produced a multitude
of grandchildren

Her interest in all of us
was negligible

No memories exist
of her
giving out cookies
of her

even giving hugs
Grandmother never held my daughter

It's about time

she said
and
checked fingers and toes
noted the Romney's blue blue eyes

And that was that

She walked down and up
the flight of stairs
to her small flat
every day 'til she was ninety-two
Our grandmother kept on painting
'til the end

Was it the painting urged her on
or did she stay alive
so she could paint?

2.

Our mother
though a true aristocrat
came from no such stock
lasting barely six months
after her husband's death

She fell
within herself
lost in
the lovely home
she'd created
lost to
her children
her grandchildren
indeed
lost to her own self

Having
no interest
in life
life
lost interest
in her
and so she died

3.

My sister never had a chance
Seven children grown and
finally
her last husband gone
sent to the nursing home

We women care for others
It is our nature and our lot
but comes a time
for some of us
when
children are grown
and on their way
whatever their way may be

There comes a time
when
long-term partners are gone
dead
or
to the nursing home

and we are free
to follow our own bliss
to paint or write or say
whatever
we may wish
to love
whatever
whomever
we desire
as did my grandmother
and
as do I

My little sister
her death
too swift
too soon

I weep
for her
my sister
who
never had that chance

THE CHILD IN THE WHITE DRESS

1. The Dream

The country road's straight
no curves in sight

The day is clear
The sun is bright
Dream people are everywhere
visiting with friends
quietly

Suddenly
just as the little black dog
saunters into the road
a speeding car
zooms by

I know the driver can't see him
because there isn't time
yet the dog emerges
tail wagging
on the far side

Another car approaches
leisurely
as
a small child still
not old enough to really run
heads toward the road

This little girl
in a white dress
running as best she can
follows after the dog

It seems the driver
has plenty of time
as she toddles on and on
then
there she is
arms and legs outstretched
smashed
as bugs are smashed on the windshield
her white dress
ballooning around her

2. Awake In the Night

Now
fully waking
my body's stiff
joints sore
as
I stretch to relieve the pain

In the dark
the dream repeats
over and over
the small body smashed
and I ask myself
how the driver could have missed
seeing
this little girl
who never had the chance
to even learn to run

Out of bed
I
open the window
The moon is full
and seems to fill the whole valley
illuminates the redrock wall

All
is quiet now
and seems serene
 until

I remember that rooster
I so loved to hear
 on spring mornings
He's silent of late
 and
the tiny girl
in the white dress
is dead

3. Driving to City Market

Later in the day
driving to City Market
for milk and bread
I wonder

 who
in real life
would be held culpable
for the death of the small child

*The question always remains:
Which of us is ever certain
 of
our innocence*

Was it the driver
 who was simply driving along
 enjoying the lovely day
 or
was it her parents
 who were nowhere to be seen
 or
was it me
 who didn't rush after her
 as she started on that brief
 journey
 toward her death
 rush after her and catch her back
 to safety
 in her white dress

OUR WINGS

Sometimes a poem
breaks through
our everydayness

I hold these times
 in my heart
 then
from the cocoon
of everydayness
 we burst forth
 into another realm

flying as our highest
lightest
ephemeral selves

selves composed only
of light and color
 and
while they last
our wings are beautiful

MYRIAD POINTS OF LIFE

We drive over the loop road
picnic at a lake
then take the long way home
passing through
wild
fire
ravaged scrub oak

Under black branches
the earth erupts
into a carpet of flowers
wild as fire
tiny red penstemon
miniature buttercups
bluebells
daisies

As our senses and spirits
embrace
we're overwhelmed with awe
for our universe

(You held my hand and said
This is the endgame)

We lie in the grass
of Old City Park
Faylene tells star stories
where the next constellation
will appear
as the sky darkens

Soon it's deep dark and
each star outshines the other
as myriad points of life
spill over us

We're overwhelmed
with awe
for our universe
and our eyes
follow our spirits
as they rise

(You said *This is the endgame*)

Now your body's ravaged
tethered with oxygen tubes
and drugs

From your window we see
those two old ravens
still watching

They know
ages ago
we strayed

But oh what a gift
beyond imagining
walking that path together was
however brief

Now I hold your hand
This is the endgame

REVERIE IN LATE NOVEMBER

The crooked double-branched tree
free of foliage
 black
 barren against a
 bright November sky
is home to two ravens
who return each year
to survey and guard the valley

One spring
as the tree bursts forth in new green
the ravens pierced us
 with their raven eyes
and you and I
 envisioned the worlds
 within
 beyond
 in kaleidoscopic color

The ravens witness our whole story -
 how
when spring came again
and the tree was all new green
you were simply you
 and I
I only me
 but the bond is always there
 beyond memory
 beyond
 the then
 the now
like the ravens
 ever faithful
 'til the end
which comes on soon
long before another spring
 can grace the crooked tree
 with new green leaves

I wonder as I hold your hand
 when there is
 no longer you
 but only me
I wonder if the ravens will return
 when their tree
bursts forth in new green leaves
 will they still come
 to keep me
 company?

REQUIEM

We had
what we had

The high heaven
the deep night
the stars
They all had us
as we had them

River flowing
sun setting
high red rocks
River and rocks
they had us
as we had them

In desert sun
our hair
 yours and mine
spun from white
to silver
Desert and sun
held us
as we held them

And we made love
old women
with eager tongues
and open hearts

You were afraid
 I said
*We're two old women
They will think
we're only having tea
What else
in their minds
could we
possibly be doing?*

As our tongues
and breasts
our nipples
and oh
how our whole bodies
were consumed
 time
 and time over

Two old women
woman loving woman
 for a while

Now
 with some delay
you leave us all

Plucky and bold
 though frail
you stay for us
 who love you
you stay
 to tell your stories
 to those you love
you stay
 to hold my hand

And oh
I would have loved you
 longer
 deeper
but we had
what we had

THE LAST POEM

- images from the evening of her death

A tree
barren of leaves
 black
against the darkening sky

A single star
clings to the topmost branch
 calling
 calling after me

Silence envelops everything
 until
slowly drifting
we talk of what happens
 after life is gone

We talk
 of what was said
 of what was left unsaid

I didn't say
 I love you
when last we met
 so
now I say *I love you*
 over and over

We drift on until
 I'm overcome
 by sleep

Morning light
Three small birds
 fly up
 up
 up
Our star is gone

IN THE DREAM

In the dream the
 911 crew came
The ambulance waited below
I said
NO

No hospital
Just make me comfortable
and let me be here
in my own bed

They checked my heart
gave me some nitro -
there was little else to do

A fireplace
in the room
with a fire
gave me comfort

The EMT folks left
 and then
it was time
to call my daughter

I am tired
 oh so tired
almost as tired as my dad
 had been
the night he died

I ask my daughter
to put a cedar log
 on the fire -
I love the smell of cedar so -
to put a cedar log
 on the fire
and hold my hand

I think about my father
but don't tell my daughter
This is not the time
but I need to do it soon -
I need to do it soon
 otherwise
 it is too late

But that entails
 another poem written
 another day
when I have strength

My daughter holds my hand
 as I held my dad's hand
the night before he died
 Safe
 secure within my dream
I fall asleep

FRAGMENTS

1.

Who decides the sky
whether it be
 high
 desert blue
 or
 misted white
 sun
almost bursting through
 or
dappled grey
gathering to darker deep

Who decides
 shall the wind be
 mild
 or
 wildly
 ripping us apart

Who decides the person
 we shall love

Who decides the day
 she shall be gone

Who decides the sky
 above

2.

Yesterday is here
Yesterday is here
Yesterday is here

Whatever
 ever
 shall we do
 about tomorrow

3.

A skiff of high clouds
floats
over the valley
muting the winter colors

So far

no rain
no snow

The drought intensifies

All we can do is

hope

or

pray

or

call to the Hopi to

dance

dance for rain

But so far

no rain

no snow

4.

Tips of desert bushes bloom
with snow blossoms

Mists obscure

the redrock wall

This whiteness

muffles every sight and sound

Those huge white humps

could be cars

or

apparitions

phantoms

ghosts who

flare up

then

subside

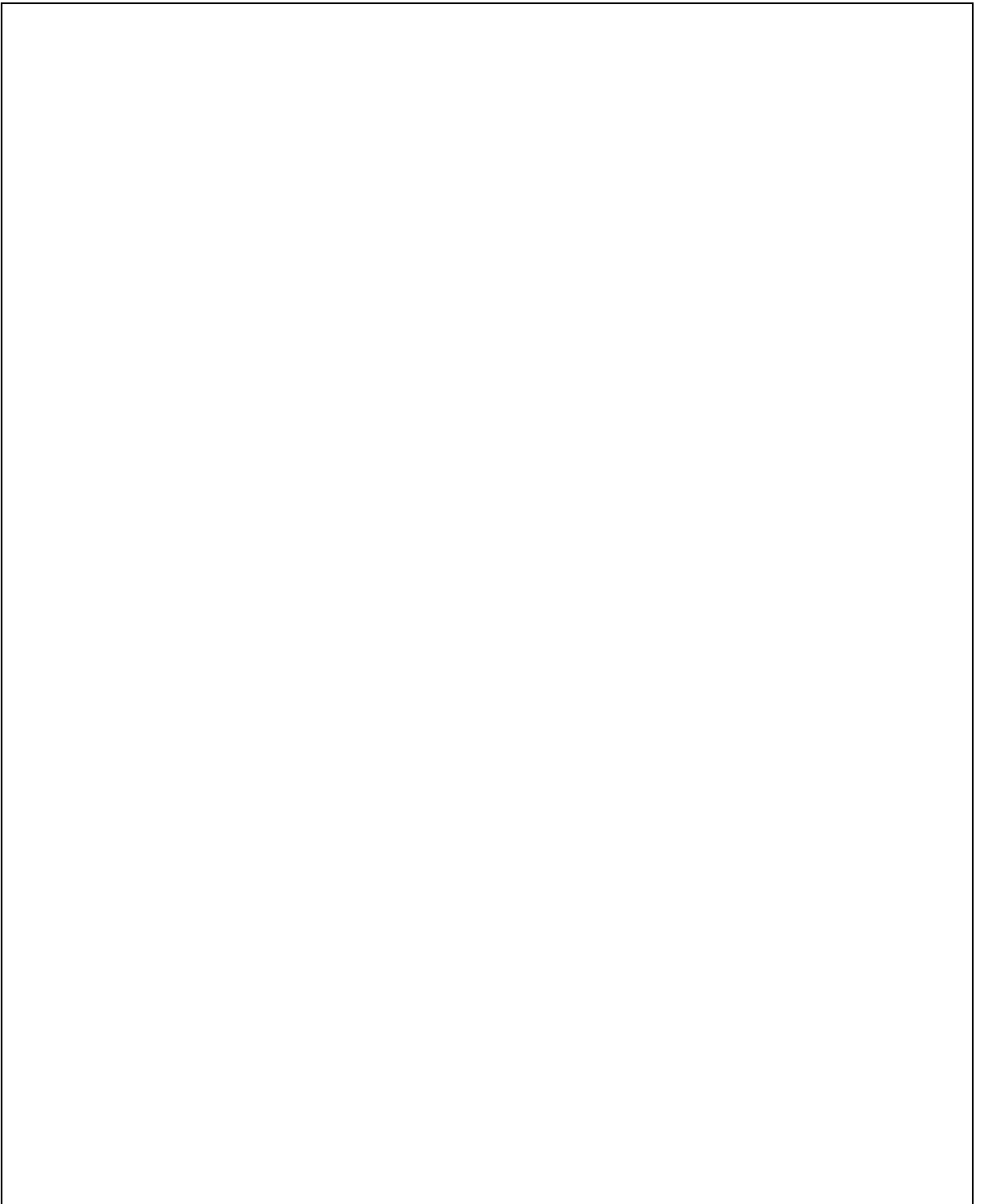
A bird drifts by

opaque

as

reality

with no song



Barbara Romney Galler
Moab, Utah

