



diamonds



in ebony



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I

we shall call these moments magical -
snapshot recollections trapping time
and faces into gatherings that are
no longer real and maybe never were -
light disintegrates and intimates
a spectral audience - overlapping
days that were with days that may or may not
ever be - like phantom photographs
that will not be remembered or denied
by any who have not seen through our eyes -

a picture permanence of motionless
activity - suspending and uniting
ageless visions of infinity.

II

a moment now for memories - where to
begin? back in nineteen seventy -two
on sherbrooke street we met as students of
the royal columbian nursing school - you were
the only married student living with
your husband in a house on london street -
i was the only single student who moved
out of residence to rent the large
room cornering your basement - private entrance -
separate hours - shift-work - studying -
uniforms and evenings at the pub -
could we have believed the happenings
waiting to twist and rearrange the dozen
searching years between the now and then?





III



morning at the kitchen table drinking
orange clove tea and eating peanut butter
toast and fruit and cheddar cheese -
we watched a hazy sun play shadow trees
across the lawn like thought waves dancing
music
through our minds - we have met many times
and places - sharing laughters tears and lives
that meet to separate and meet again -

we are not the people we were then
and are not the people we will be -
but no alterations can erase
what is already ours - sun and shadow
playing leaves of grass - and as we watch
old worlds fade and new ones rise in place.

IV

from where? this miracle of hours that we
weave - dipping in and out of time
to recreate a pattern of lives
in ways that we have yet to understand -
where to? this spell of wine and coffee talk
forging destinies we dared not dream
inside the rituals of space and time
that did not let us see beyond our skins -

one by one the stars awaken us
to friends and friends like families of thought
gathering us into galaxies
of constellations circling our names
until the very universe expands
and multiplies in worlds that are ours.





U

years of intensity - remember phobos?
the kitten i was given and then gave
to you because i was so rarely home?
sharing animals and friends and tasting
oatmeal raisin cookies from the oven -
we talked of hospitals and erratic
families and marriages that were not
made in heaven - i graduated nursing
in three years - you withdrew to have
an operation on your back - and then
phobos died - you and your husband moved
away and i moved out - neither of us
sure if lives would cross again or if
we could grow our own realities.

VI

light a single candle to remind -
raise a glass of wine to toast the sun -
distance shrinks to insignificance
when ears are tuned to inside listening -

look - the flame vibrates and leaps response
communing with your reaching silences -
the sun dives and refracts through wine to waltz
in golden silhouettes across the floor -

there is no photograph that can contain
and no written word that can explain
the mysteries of inward travelling
arising from a year of in between -

the spells of once can never be undone -
light a single candle to remind.



VII

we crack like mirrors - slowly - from the bottom
to the top - splitting side to side -
splintering and shattering until
we cannot hold ourselves intact - breaking
outwards - fissuring into a thousand
jagged pieces - we feel our bodies being
gradually - relentlessly unmade -



falling apart as if preparing to
be reassembled - rearranged - refocused
in another age and place that holds
our names in altered patterns - until
illusions of the past we used to believe
blur into the now that we perceive
reflecting us into our separate worlds.

VIII

you worked the niton junction general store
stocking shelves and overbalancing
unbalanced books - i waitressed and washed dishes
at the restaurant of the toronto groaning
board - you got divorced - i left my lover -

you moved south and i moved west - letters
dropped from rare skies to connect our one-way
conversations and occasionally
between the twisted crossings of the years
we stumbled into space/time intersections
to talk an accidental midnight wild
and disappear inside unearthly dawns -

then you re-entered nursing school and i
became a white ghost on the graveyard shift.





IX

did you hear her ask for innocence?
did you see him trying to define
the magic of its shape? they caught a scent
of lilacs swimming dawn and dove the laughters
of a morning rich in rain until
no moment could outshine their eyes exchange
reflecting and expanding flowers and skies
and smiles and wisdoms shared - as if no one
had ever seen or heard or touched or believed
before - and never would again - they plunged
into a kaleidoscope of images
exploding and imploding hours and years
within a growing sea of timelessness
to find that innocence was always theirs.

X

i think that we were warriors once - riding
deserts into mountain skies - wise
in wars and skirmishes spanning a thousand
centuries that armed us in the brilliance
of the blade - born and born and born
and born again as comrades and as kin -
we tasted metal fire earth and blood
through our endless reawakenings -

the swords we wield are now invisible
as lives pulse within lives and into lives -
but we are comrades still - battling
the subtleties of time and learning a
new mastery of space that deepens and
expands our spiralling realities.



XI

you graduated nursing school to work
vancouver hospitals - i gradually
withdrew into the turpentine and paints -
living almost next door - we visited
between conflicting shifts - trying to
reshape the fears that drove us in and out
of families - planning and replanning
the horizons of our great escape -
running away to find ourselves - you left
for the deserts of arabia
and moved to a mountain hideaway -



it was the distances that taught us how
to dive our inner kingdoms and emerge
in promises that we could dare to believe.

XII

an old man of the sidewalk sips his beer
then hides it dark inside his overcoat -
a young girl chases purple butterflies
in and out of summer flowered lawns -

walking arm in arm beneath the trees
a man and woman watch the paradox
until the old man shuffles out of sight
and the child stops to touch a rose
nodding white against the garden fence -

she draws the couple over to explore
soft petals tumbling a yellow core
with dark leaves spreading green - attention dives
into a flower's breath - wrapping the couple
long after the child has raced on.





XIII

passing years returned us to vancouver
to recollect illusions we had lived
laying ghosts to rest while gathering
our phantom lives into new images
arising from dimensions we had dreamed -

and as beginnings grow out of each end
we grew out of the autumn winter spring
to enter summer wise in sun and rain
preparing energies to escalate
beyond familiar patterns - weaving
and spinning choices into differences
of alternate directions - our futures summon
inexorably - but we will meet again
inside the where of some unknown when.

XIV

here now the separateness of one and one
combines to magnify the promises
of unborn summers - autumns - winters - springs -
that in sharing grow into your own -

here now a haunting melody of love
captures distances that can't be reached
alone - pulsing unspoken destinies -
awakening the more that you become -

here now a quiet linking of your hands
recreates your future histories -
drawing you more deeply into dreams
and challenges that were not yours before -

words exchange in rings to symbolize
the magic of the worlds you are growing.





XV

**standing - arms linked with field silhouettes -
you stare the empty fullness of a sky
cascading stars - moon at full and rising
golden white - casting you as part
and yet apart from deep night solitudes
echoing the endlessness of space -**


**like children of the infinite you watch -
waiting wise where no clouds intrude
and where no winds disrupt the shadow trees
trying to unearth a deep recall
that haunts the recesses of memory -**

**as if somehow the star complexities
contained the fullness of forgotten dreams
and the people you have yet to be.**


XVI

**this is the future memory you grew
inside the half forgotten daydreams of
some yesterday - it is your love that slices
through the camouflage of distances
to bind you friend and friend inside the now -**

**this is the tomorrow that awakened
when eyes first met eyes and recognised
more than the moment could express - and this
is the yesterday that underlies
the lives that you are promising to share -**



**this is the forever pivoting
the growing magic of your love into
the unexplored - until all yesterdays
and all tomorrows spring out of this hour.**





XVII

we will find one more evening to consume
ourselves in talk - an intense finale
to this era that is drawing to a
close - there are underground commitments
that we have not faced - neither of us
willing to let go - and both of us
feeling the differences that haunt our inner
thoughts - we shall meet once more - to seal
our private circle of eternity
before we free ourselves to grow beyond
this in between - the earth is spinning us
to different hemispheres and we must move
into the power of our destinies
while learning to connect with inside ears.

XVIII

diamonds in ebony - nights
of single stars - as she follows - as he
follows visions to be shared - love
creates and recreates the courage to
believe and live the possibilities
of impossible dreams - brilliant laughter
dance white gold where separate lives converge -
until the heavens magnify a dual
universe - as he enters - as she
enters futures that are theirs - morning
star joins evening star till midnight skies
combine - like diamonds in ebony
ringed in white white gold - out of which
a hundred thousand galaxies explode.

