



SOLAMOR

To Sherry

Solamor is book one of Decapoiema.
Decapoiema is a series of 10 works of poetry,
each based on one of the elemental numerals 0-9.

SOLAMOR



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Introduction

“There is no force in the world but love.”

Rilke

Could it be that after all our wanderings, after taking up and laying down our search again and again, that there really is only one thing in the universe, and that is love? If this be true, then not only does it mean that everything around us is love, but that you and I are love as well.

In their beginnings, and along the way, all things try to be their own oneness. They find their essence in being unique and filling a particular role. Somewhere along the way, all things realize that they come to the same place. A place where they commune with both the source and the destination of themselves and all others.

Things that can be held only in hearts and minds, intangible things, they return to love. More solid things, the ones we touch and feel, they too return to love. Living things return to love. Elements return to love, even light and darkness return to love. Finally, strangely, love itself and its reflection hate, complete the circle and return to love.

Thus, everything can be seen as love in disguise. Love that can best be seen when looking through a glass that filters those things that cloud our passion and magnifies the sparks that stir within. This is Solamor, the return to love. There be but one thing, and that is love.

Introduction 2

“And it is all one to me. Where am I to begin; for I shall return there again.”

Parmenides

A second introduction is offered to give some background into the oneness of Solamor. The reasoning is a bit convoluted, so if it sounds confusing, then don't worry. Just forget about it, turn the page, and enter into the poems. You are probably closer to the heart of Solamor anyway. If, however, the explanation makes some sense, then it may lead to a better understanding of how all things make up the one.

In Zeno's paradoxes, the infinite ends up chasing the finite. In order to reach the end, you must first go halfway. Before you go halfway, you must first travel half of that. Before that, half again, and on and on. Zeno wrote of the paradoxes with regard to motion, but maybe they apply to emotion as well. Maybe that is why we sometimes find ourselves stuck, unable to take the first step.

A representation of this idea can be found in mathematics: $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} 1/2^n$ This series, $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + 1/32...$, on to infinity, adds up to one. All things return to one thing.

When these mysteries are held up to Solamor, we see that each poem, though it longs to return to love on its own, is but a part of a larger whole that does the returning. I need not begin, for I am always there.

Contents

Intangible Things Return to Love

Kindness	1
Birth	2
Nakedness	3
Self	4
Tao	5
Loneliness	6
Sadness	7
Truth	8
Mystery	9
Chance	10
Relationships	11
Color	12
Beauty	13
Sleep	14
Time	15
Peace	16
Hope	17
Fear	18
Faith	19
Art	20
Language	21
Pain	22
Wounds	23
Seeking	24
Returning	25
Grace	26
Thanksgiving	27
Death	28
Life	29
Infinite	30
Infinitesimal	31
Compassion	32

Tangible Things Return to Love

Oceans	1
Sun	2
Moon	3
Mountains	4
Desert	5
Storms	6
Floods	7
Cities	8
Civilization	9
Stars	10
Rivers	11
Loads	12
Wood	13
Bread	14
Cloth	15
Gardens	16

Living Things Return to Love

Birds	1
Whale	2
Salmon	3
Leaves	4
Trees	5
Bear	6
Coyote	7
Snake	8

Elements Return to Love

Earth	1
Air	2
Fire	3
Water	4

Light and Darkness Return to Love

Light	1
Darkness	2

Hate Returns to Love / Love Returns to Love

Intangible Things Return to Love

Kindness Returns to Love

The first songs to kiss embryonic ears are found in
this hymnal.
Muted heartbeats chanting promises that don't yet
know how to be kept;
Can't yet taste things like pain or the long low pound
of loneliness;
Can't yet see the paths to be missed when on the
run
From things that become a threshing basket, sifting
the forgotten grain.

When seen from above, atmosphere looks so thin
and fragile that we dare not breathe.
The same is the presence of the skin of our heart of
hearts,
The line where the air of to do mixes with the air of
to be.

Kindness enters here, where the fabric of life
stretches taut.
Kindness seeps like whey pressed down through
hope's cloth.
Tears caught on the brink of time in rusted wash
basins.



Birth Returns to Love

I'm told there are species whose dying act is giving birth.

But every act, of every species, whether toil or breath,

Is birth, and if we are true to the words from afar, it is also death.

Remind us again of the wind that blows up the slope,

As we stand at the mountain pass, ready to leave one and enter another.

A breeze carrying the story of reincarnation in every moment.

In fable, a labor lasting eons birthed a single bead of sweat.

So rich it nursed the children of St. Margaret of Antioch in their barren years.

Such fortune is strewn by birth as she walks among us.

A bloom one hour, a babe the next, offspring of an eternal return,

Hidden in wombs, dormant through every inspiration until this.

Intangible 2



Nakedness Returns to Love

For nakedness to return to love, it first must pass through attachment.

Through the infection of being afraid of the dressings of birth.

There are fools errands, and then there are things so bizarre,

They are accepted as true, lest we fully behold their face.

There are unnatural loves, and then there are things so beyond,

They can never be masked as they crawl between the sheets at night.

The gloved hand clenches so much tighter than the bare.

For skin knows what it is to breathe, knows flame, knows frost.

Knows the feel of things and whether or not they live,

Knows the capacity of a thing, how much it can hold,

How far it is from love and how far it is willing to go.

Intangible 3



Self Returns to Love

An I fills voids, voids of no sound, no form, no thought.
It is only its nature, perhaps I can come to be tender with it.

Denial seldom ministers, or dresses wounds, or sits into the night.
Establish the boundary, define the adversary, and you will have your prize.
I refuse myself with the same success as when I refuse the air.
A tighter constrict in my chest, a paler color in my blood.

What would be, if instead, hands opened, palm lines leading out?
Stretching an affirmation, a call like open spaces welcoming the bound.
How could it mean harm, how could it have the traits it has been given?
There is no motive, there is no reason to take it as anything.
There is only an ardor for the flame of the one true call.

Intangible 4



Tao Returns to Love

Beginning with words, the disadvantage is never far from sight.

What would it feel like, to be, outside the frame of everything,
And still allow oneself to be dreamt, to be, as it were, a promise?

There is a Taoist somewhere, I'm sure of it, who doesn't walk
With the steady calm of a child who has yet to dwell on things,
But crawls every day on hands and knees, to be closer to the dust.
Closer to things that are without a name, without a purpose.
Close enough to earth to hear the echo of his own heartbeat.
Close enough to hell to hear the final doubts of the discarded.
Close enough to emptiness to hear the silence of eternity.
Close enough to love to hear the words that failed when first spoken.

Intangible 5



Loneliness Returns to Love

Weariness settles in joints and tendons, no longer needed.

Like a gatekeeper who stands no more, so seldom do seekers pass his way.

But sits and stiffens under the shade of contented atrophy.

Fruit is always in the bowl beside his stool, once reserved for payment for passage.

Now a collection well for alms, for theft, for rotted discards.

Only the surest and thinnest parings lift before his blade.

He hangs them like prayer flags hoping for heaven's wind.

Skins more likely to wither before they are passed to intended hands.

Yesterday a traveler demanded he rise and keep the gate.

Only in the asking were his legs able to keep him upright.

Only in the need was there no reason to peel the fruit.

Intangible 6



Sadness Returns to Love

At the mist scrubbed headlands where wind devours hope,

The long, low despair of a Sitka spruce reaches o'er the fog, into sea,

A thrust of branch, bark tendons stretched on limbs of sadness.

The canopy, borne more by lightning scars than wooden flesh,

Holds shelter over ground that wishes it could be a bed,

Or only a pillow in a hostel for the wayfaring and the weary,

Travelers suffering thoughts they can no longer bear.

The spruce is a careful host, careful to keep the wind at bay

From guests carrying packets holding shards from love's dropped bowl.

Here they kneel, here they find rest and drink their sleep

From an urn fashioned of their own crushed fragments.

Intangible 7



Truth Returns to Love

I sat beneath the tree, not like Siddhartha, but like
the fungus,
Webbing its way through root and loam, cracking
crust after autumn rains.

When all the dirt is brushed aside, when all that is
not true has fallen away,

I am but a body of earthy flesh, waiting on the
gatherer's blade.

If it be an audacious act to speak of truth when one
is granted,

Then what to make of the freshly cut who dare to
claim,

Not knowledge, but a faith that such a thing could
even be?

It is for these that truth rises each day, for these
hidden ones

Who have not strength nor will to raise it up as a
sword,

Who may even weep beneath its cloak as it comes to
rest,

Not on the mind, but in fibrous pockets of pale,
buried light.

Intangible 8



Mystery Returns to Love

The enormity of things that hide behind and
between

These winding spirit trails and every fold and hem
of space,

Long ago, in the dark, outlasted the allure of being
discovered.

At the epicenter of each life lies a pit from a strip
mine.

Mountains of waste and tailings collect at the back
end

Of all the methods used to extract the prize from
the ore.

Slag heaps rise, forming a fortress wall against the
mystery.

A mystery colored by loneliness and content with
waiting

For rust and wear to grind down the machinery of
answers.

Like newborns wrapped tight in arms that have no
idea,

The embrace that waits in mystery's hold is longer
and deeper than could ever be known.

Intangible 9



Chance Returns to Love

Fortune is said to be the handmaiden of those who dare.

Passion is said to seek that place most carefully guarded.

Is it only adages that keep us risking the dearest things?

Or is the lottery of being alive what we find compelling?

On the road to crossing over, when leaving the crowded lane,

We never look for guard rails. To fail gloriously strikes no fear.

When fire is our companion, it rears itself in high places.

While in unswept corners, our flame becomes our balm.

To chance at something sets one up for linear progressions.

From cause to effect to someday not even remembering.

But a steady dare for love has eternity as its own reward.

Intangible 10



Relationships Return to Love

The first spirit, the one who had tasted from all of earth's banquets,

When entering our room, felt our dance, heard our song,

And paused in breath until he had drunk every last bit of us.

The second spirit, who had seen his face in every facet of learning,

Peered into our place, dwelt for a moment, then stepped away.

The third spirit, he who had sensed the movement of God,

Wandered by in a trance, caught wind of our soul's wisp and sat to commune.

With each, we wondered, with each, we knew them not.

The last spirit had spent his days as torment's companion.

Twisted and writhed he came into the yard, crawling with fear.

Light spotted him, and before he could escape, we adopted him.

Intangible 11



Color Returns to Love

It is the cobalt iridescence that quivers in the
periphery for an instant,
As you shift your exposure and refocus your eye just
beyond that star.
It is palettes run amok, eating the sky like rust on a
hull,
Sun streaked flares and mangoes melting into the
sea.

It is a slight film of dry brown moss lying still in
August,
Called awake to verdant song by the third act's
opening rains.
It is the radiance and bleed of the highland
alpenglow,
Translucent granite cast and backlit by otherworldly
desire.

It is light and dark, they sit and wait for the axe to
fall.
It is all our hues, blended and fragmented without a
care,
Our light's wavelength crested over, lensed by love's
prism.

Intangible 12



Beauty Returns to Love

If beauty be truth, then it is truth belonging to an
ancient clan,
A forgotten tribe around which only the impossible
gather,
Like the curious before a conjurer or the doubter
before a graven image.

What can we teach them of the end of the universe
that lies just beneath their hearts?
Would we think it another awe to silently steal their
breath?

Beauty responds, in the dialect of truth, "I shall not
be represented, I am that I am."
A prophet of the improbable, ferrying uncertainty in
its hold,
Uncertainty to be held at eye level and inspected for
defect,
To be held against a bosom and calmed with
breath's cadence.
To be placed beneath the lens of every beautiful
thing.
Prisms to split and shatter every wavelength of
longing.

Intangible 13



Sleep Returns to Love

The goddess of loneliness, her name did not survive
when things were burned in darker ages,
Created sleep to give her respite from the weight she
bore.

In a bargain long forgotten, she passed it on as gift
to a fairer clan.

To Hypnos and his latter self, dear Somnus, and to
Morpheus, the child of dreams.

Then she retreated back into whatever darkened
hole contained her.

When gods first sought to bring this sleep to
earthly form,

They erred by offering its story to us first, in words
that made no sense.

Deeper than trance, longer than the night, stronger
than hallucination,

Its truth was far too much for us to hear, was only
meant to be bestowed.

And like every hidden mystery, the magic becomes
the common,

Enough to draw out even loneliness into the
morning.

Time Returns to Love

Which day was it when we awoke, startled by the line
being drawn in the sand of our memory?

Was it when we slipped and fell and took no notice
of the fall?

Or when our reflections faded from the place where
others came to pass?

Long ago, there may have been a seer who read us in
crystal,

But countless chance encounters of moments and
molecules write this tale.

All that we had been before has been so absorbed
into our flesh,

That each now holds a fragment of some past
moment,

While itself is held in store for an hour of an
evening yet to come.

On and on, time plays its hand while we play the
fool.

Coming to a close, a chance look knows there is
nothing to see.

We are of its hands, time has become our own
reflective glances.

Peace Returns to Love

Light was the only thing that remained on that day
filled with hard edges.

The only thing brave enough to stand so as to be
seen.

A storm pretending to hold the reasons for the
songs of unrest.

But light stood its ground, knowing it was the
emissary of peace.

Its pack carried letters sent between Eirene and
Tara,

Sealed with blood wax melted by the heat of their
fervor.

Secret missives longing to be intercepted and read
by mortal eyes.

Thus light set itself up for ambush, traveling narrow
gaps in cloud cracks.

Until its capture was certain and its prize was set
free.

Peace ran like dream sap from trees tapped on the
coldest day.

A sweetness into every pore where love's promise
waits.

Hope Returns to Love

A bed of recklessness, with all four sheet corners
torn,

Is about to become a prison cell, the plea having
been mistranslated.

One more sigh remains, an artifact of an earlier
faith,

Like a muffled lullaby from the dark window across
the alley.

In this hope, the lost are no longer children of
another's declaration.

It is how they have been anointed that defines them
now.

Hope becomes communal desire, a longing to pour
its aloes.

Bread and water for the day, a listen for the night,
a stir for the morrow.

If you walk these corridors, place your ear upon a
door.

Feel it now warmer than your own door and hear
soft words,

The whisper, you have made it possible for me to
continue.

Fear Returns to Love

Fear prefers to be a stranger, not the companion I
know surely dwells
In pockets and linings of garments I don against the
cold.
A dread, no larger or longer than an afternoon
reflection,
Becomes an eddy stirring silt deposited in last
spring's runoff.
Silt already settled in layers to be forgotten while
Gaia works her loom.
Silt now awakened, summoned to a new,
particular murk.

Why would she agree to cloud again the waters,
when sedimentary strata hold her fate?
Did she know I craved the sting of its coarse salt
upon my tongue?
Could there have been a tenderness in the roiling of
the waters?

Fear creates as well as compels as it awkwardly
grasps at love,
And I may see these grasps and learn to caress its
loathsome face.

Intangible 18



Faith Returns to Love

What do clouds require? Surely not partaking or
understanding.
More likely a lightened chant, an invitation for their
return.

Sit and prepare to go out into the air of our
reverence.
Think of what questions will come like sleet with
sharpening sting.
What does the wind carry? Surely not guidance or
offering.
Perhaps it is only the smoldering incense of our own
loss.
Sit and prepare to enter the passage to the day's
interior.
Remember first hearing the peal that shook the
bones?

If faith is where the needy come for bread, how
does love respond?
Does it send forth rain to see if they are rightly
prepared?
Or does it uncover loaves to tear from among its
own flesh?

Intangible 19



Art Returns to Love

It first ran the golden savannah, far too fleet for capture.

The prey of myth, of less encumbered god-men striding the earth.

I know not why one youth sets out in quest, she may have been banished,

She may have seen visions, she may have carried only the wisdom of not knowing better.

Whatever sent her out, her hunt is not for meat or hide.

She has seen the streaks and dust across the plain most clearly.

Has found scratches left in rocks and colors seeping from the ground.

She knows this is more than a ghost, is divination of another kind.

She keeps on year upon year, each season grants a narrowing of the gap.

One night she sleeps so close that through the brush, there comes a song.

She thinks it sounds like the weeping of one who has been found.

Language Returns to Love

Before there came to be cries or whispers from any mouth,

Or mark of any kind on paper or stone, or figures on a cave,

Before a thought took root in representation, a language formed.

A tongue holding no abstractions, there was no distance

Between a mark of essence and its naming word or symbol.

This language did not describe, did not relate, retell or relay.

It simply spoke, and when was said, things lost no meaning.

There were no mistranslations, things that were, remained.

Their bodies and spirits remained unchanged by the telling.

We feel this language now, swirling 'round in love's cup.

Speaking again and again what we, stumbling, try in vain to say.

Pain Returns to Love

When it arches up from behind a ridge of
trepidation,
Its claws sink the same as vermin bred in warrens of
hate.

When it returns in the night as the pacing, stalking
one,
It is all it can do to face its prey with uncovered
head.

Do not be mistaken when walking paths in pain's
garden.
The shudder you feel is a loosening of the rime of
inattention.
A writhing scar arching its back under the heat of
the sear.

To give oneself in beauty and dignity has a common
scent,
But anguish knows its only offering is thought to be
evil,
Yet still it comes, to bolted doors that hate its every
face.
Leaving thoughts of being loved in the very name
of love.

Wounds Return to Love

Older trails gnarl their way to their appointed
purpose.
But when trails are young, their flaws have yet to
give them color.
A fresh, moist loam clings like afterbirth on their
skin.

When trails are walked for a while, they assert their
fresh cuts,
Earth blood oozes slowly, never remembering to
clot.
With the coming of steps, cuts become scabs
become scars
Until only the genius of wounding seeps out their
skin.

The enchantment of damage writes them as its own
destination.
It takes them in its arms and they become the
memory
Of every twisted thing, every wound and every
callus,
Sips of love tilted gently, swabs pressed to parching
lips.

Seeking Returns to Love

The oft mended curtain of this hidden low valley
parts open
Where an ashen hand draws back unknowable
things.

We dwell at the fulcrum of magnitudes, stretching as
far as they fall.
What turns us inward, willing ourselves small to
inhabit fissures?
Then sends us out unprepared, our spirits shooting
lava jets
Like pulses from the blast of our heart's final
explosion.

It could be a quest, it may even have drank from
enchanted springs.
But more likely a less gallant endeavor, a voyage of
common form.
One where the hunter and the prey partake of each
other.
Seeking always returns to its native land, returns to
early scents.
Footsteps leave their trail in the morning grass
moistened at love's dew point.

Returning Returns to Love

Day and night approach unhurried in the early
hours,
Then walk slowly past, like two lost in thought
lovers.

They find a catch in their throat as they catch their
steps,
Each struck by a passing firefly at the very same
moment.
Each snatched from their routine comings and
goings.
Each turned by a promise hiding behind the other's
back.

Their minds stop in place, curiosity shims a gap
underfoot.
Bodies lean, light tilts, as though a celestially stirring
note
Was spinning them on its axis, forcing them to the
center.
The note pauses, landing on their ears, turning
them as one,
Returning them, for a delicate kiss that becomes the
dawn.

Grace Returns to Love

It is the hardest to write because there is no
explanation.
There has been none since before we rose on legs or
grasped with hands.

It honed its craft in epochs leaving precious little for
us to read.
Islands ebb and flow in a relaxed waltz of time and
tide.
A molten heart in rhythm with the ministering
waves.
A scorch, a sear, a blast of wind bringing a branding
pain,
The desert dust was once the rock that now takes
it as a gift.
The sound of a waterfall finds a way to breach the
ridge,
Where grace lays siege against the trees' darkest
hours.

It knows, all it has known since creation, is how to
wait,
Until all things discard their loads to hold its
smallest grain.

Thanksgiving Returns to Love

Mindfulness asks of us, "Take heed", we pay no
attention.
We've never been much for advice, the wind behind
satisfies our direction.
Watchfulness sends us on missions outfitted in
safety.
We don't go, the light at our feet is enough to keep
us.
Gratefulness wonders if we know of blessing's
extent.
Have we forgotten thanks, our offering being the
touch of our hearts?

The pool of thanksgiving is fed cool and clear by
consecrated springs.
Though we prefer to dip downstream where the
flow suits our pace.

One day I will ask permission to come and bathe at
the source.
To dip completely in the wet love of the thankful
waters.
You shall dare not join, waiting onshore to carry me
home.

Death Returns to Love

I sit, when sitting is the only thing one body can give another.

When even a dab of cloth on the lips reminds my hand of tomorrow,

When the ocean will part and become the cradle of every drop.

Death comes lightly as the only begotten child of life,

On days when the things we thought we had loved and lost, return to sit.

It has always been so, but it has not always been written,

Has not always been the story passed on at broken bedside,

Or fear's fireside, or the other side of the veil of shadow.

It can not rely on others to sing its elegies or to bear its pall.

It must tell its own story, at darkened tables, to virgin ears, to eyes that melt.

A fleeting spark to guard us when the hounds detect our scent.

Life Returns to Love

If we are to believe the signs, then life has always only known emergence.

The first primordial amino elixirs rose from black waters,

To float in that warm space beneath chance and above the inevitable.

Spores learned cunning, first a shy efflorescence, then sorcery of a kind

That would create beauty eons before it could be tasted.

Nonetheless, it unfolded, and does so still, even when some refuse to go on.

Rise up, rise out, the catcher cries, when souls are rent in two,

A swath of their own scythe's marking, outspreads them.

The break, like shell cracks before the first swallow of air,

Calls love to come forth in a spell, to emerge from yours into mine,

Breaking the fragile film of my soil with tender shoots of you.

Infinite Returns to Love

Without unbounded reaches, when every shore
writes a chart line,
There are fewer novice navigators who dare to skirt
the edge of the world.

We are born for the transcendent, either beyond or
between our senses.
Or perhaps it is because of these senses that we
know sacred infinities.
Does starlight continue piercing the heart of
forever,
If an eye fails to open from slumber as it strokes
the earth?

We know from logic that limits have multiple
personalities.
They will never be surpassed by unimaginative
machinations
Yet they will never be attained by infinitely
decreasing steps.
Like love, their defining holds both never and
forever.
Both dam and causeway for rivers that run to no
end.

Infinitesimal Return to Love

Make yourself small enough and atoms will contain
your astronomy.
Ride the light of quivering strings, wish upon the
quarks in the sky.
Where is down from here, what particles compose
this world?
There is no glass small enough, no element from our
collection,
To use to peer up into these galaxies, or search for
smaller still.

The elusive science of love remains filled with
empty pages.
Never able to become so small that it would notice a
fragment of love.
For fragments they are, that build that world from
scratch.
No protons or neutrons, for there is no plus or
minus, and surely no neutral.

Fragments, strips of cloth from love's raiment,
shards from broken urns,
Paper shreds from love's dream journal cast upon
the waters.

Compassion Returns to Love

The prince stood near the gate at the close of the
age of bronze,
When compassion was reserved for practical
matters,
Affairs of state, alignment of desires, dispensing of
remedies.

A fable rose up in the prince's mind, one that his
nursemaid had sung on warm evenings.
And with the fable, a strange tremor settled in his
joints,
A tremor that rose until it was hovering just above
the remembrance.

The beggar who heard the prince's sigh would later
claim
That this was the start of compassion's return to the
garden,
When compassion itself was the prodigal, the one
long kept away from tears.
Those who have no need, to either give or to
receive,
Are the favored children of the clasped hands that
suffer as one.



Tangible Things Return to Love

Oceans Return to Love

A breeze bathes a dividing line perched in the biting
air.

It forms an edge of what once was called the new
world.

Here the earth labored and bore children of
yearning.

Their cries were of fire, pushed molten from the
womb.

Headlands and capes thrust their last blades in
vain parry

With some silent, strange, sorrowful, imagined
adversary.

At this line of hesitancy, this point of struggle, a
wave pauses.

Its break declines to erode its allotted atoms of
rock.

It laps instead forgiveness, an absolution that quells
the reaching.

Perhaps its liquid mingled somewhere with the tears
of a god.

Now the light of its spray weaves alchemy in our
veins.

Tangible 1



Sun Returns to Love

Even barbarians knew the equinox and still it
brought them no peace.

They saw the marks on their father's walls as the
day's blind expansion.

Arms clawed and sunk in warming soil as they
buried their dead.

Thighs soaked in rising streams as they sought more
of the same.

The sun returns, as in those days, to many who have
not the will.

To set aside their vigilance, to let light fall where it
may.

There is more forgiveness in a dawn than at any
altar,

More plenty in the new, noon warmth, more secrets
still to come.

There is a firm beauty in the similitude upon the
balance,

Of sun and night on the fulcrum of our own
desires,

But the true return of sun is not for charts, it is in
our blood.

Tangible 2



Moon Returns to Love

On occasion still, I chance take flight and fall from
the moon my friend,
To this other orb where change, though never dear,
has all but run its course.

Cry for yourselves if you must, for falsehood's
allegiance with your own dreams.

For victory claimed by cowardice and compromise
come to dwell.

But still, my death, so full of fate, should that not
stir a weep?

A laugh perhaps, at all the times death cheated,
proved a fool, to simply be of dreadful aim.

Yet dying was not strange, that night I spoke, I lived,
I died.

So how can death be cruel, when death is all that's
left to know.

By my own words, her tremble rode on every breath
between us

And passing back beside my heart, perfection's veil
was lightly brushed.

Now dear lune, come take me home, for it was all
that I could bear.

Tangible 3



Mountains Return to Love

The one who climbs does not seek entry to the
interior of the mountain,
But takes aim from a scale of comparisons, watching
every step for a sign.

Like a sparrow scanning the modern world, perched
on the peak of a cathedral.

Far down slope, a quarryman continues to haul
stones

Away from what the ancestors said was the
mountain's door.

Masons prize his stone for its willingness to lay one
upon the other,

And commoners know how it seems to feel soft on
a leaning cheek.

Lives ago, a waiting chamber had been carved in the
mountain.

The ice, until then it was just hardened mortar,
became aquamarine stained glass.

Far in the rear, one stone will soon be dislodged and
the heat of the magma heart

Will rush to fill the gasping quarryman's cold,
starving lungs.

Tangible 4



Desert Returns to Love

Fly to the desert, when the last city of refuge ignores
your plea.

You may find the tempter, or a starkness that can
not be faced,
Or a well, dug by ancient enemies who swapped this
land back and forth.
Each time driving deeper to quench more than a
thirst.
Their bones are now the dust that chokes their
children's cries,
The dust the children know is theirs alone, but
merely waits to sip their blood.

Or you may see strong visions or dream in caves of
restless spirits
Who melt and twist your mind until you resemble
the sand.
Or you may wander until you find the year's one rain
shower.
When grays melt to orange and rocks remember
the seed stuck in the crack,
And the bleak expanse cannot suppress or ever
contain the wary rainbow.

Tangible 5



Storms Return to Love

They rise in northern gulfs, a vast array of ready
drawn archers.
Cloaked in deep slate, they wait, with constant
conscript of fresh recruits.

When did we become so complacent, that things
that once brought terror,
Have now become mere novelties to chase for our
amusement?
Storms were once brought carefully into the holiest
of holies.
Where their energy was both the source and object
of adoration.
Now they are but a curiosity, at most a thing to be
endured.
While modern priests of nature can't remember the
words of the hymn.

Storms will rise with arrow's rain into our breasts
once more.
Seas will rise to wash away the stains kept away from
the rain.
Heads will rise to catch the pour, to feel the rinse
of ages.

Tangible 6



Floods Return to Love

I'm still looking for the account of how the mud
tasted different this year.
Was the water bitter like the cynic's slide or sweeter
like the numbness of ignoring?
Debris built its log barricades again, but were these
signs of impermanence as before
Or thrown together fortress walls for a revolution's
last stand?

Instead of taste reports, I get numbers paired with
a rhythmic sense of place.
104 m.p.h at Cape Disappointment, 14½ inches of
rain at Lee's Camp, 70 foot swells at Columbia bar.
The Willapa 3 feet higher at 26.4, the Nestucca by 2
feet, the Chehalis by 6 inches,

What were we in '96 when the first numbers were
assigned?
We had our own name and number and the flood
was our definition.
But soon we forgot and only had water marks that
we soon stopped believing.
So flood again dear watershed, prick the skin of
petrified memory.

Tangible 7



Cities Return to Love

We stepped around the corner and immediately
recognized
The stones in the roadway, the market aroma, the
light's acrobatics.
The sounds were somehow strange, but all else was
right and in place.
Even the feel of the brick as I pressed your body up
against the wall.

Under an awning, a child looked up and
remembered our faces.
Behind a laced window, a pair of hands opened for
our alms.
In this memory, knowing we had never been here
before,
There came a recurring echo, resonating the vial of
air in our ear.

Was it a collective rush of misplaced days and
streets?
Or a re-wired connection with other lovers long
past?
Or did everything, when filtered through us, become
our familiar?

Tangible 8



Civilization Returns to Love

I remember sitting here 3 centuries ago when the earth shook.
Half the mountain let go and the broad flat waters were cinched into a cascade chute.
I remember standing here 2 centuries ago when a band of strange people met this river pinch
And hauled their boats up high, charged by their great one to press on to something, somewhere.
I remember watching here a century ago when men laid rock on the trail.
They rolled their contraptions up and down like squirrels seeking their winter cache.
I remember the long white arm growing to dam the river that gulped down the falls.
Taking me back again to the broad flat vision before the mountain fell.

I remember today, selling salmon from a dust rimed pickup, sharpening my fillet knife in the old way.
One day I will remember the bones of the sons of my sons rising up to carry their people back,
To dance on that stone arm as it crumbles, and flats and boats and roads and trucks go the way of dust.

Tangible 9



Stars Return to Love

When did it occur to the heavens to incline their spheres for our providence?
What manner of cosmic dust is this that finds its way
Across an expanse too dark for breath, into our inner reaches?
Whose unhurried light is this that comes seeking our night?
Its final sigh a flint and strike for our moment's glow.

We all contain stars and they will soon enough contain us.
So say cosmologists, those rearward seers who play with fire.
But what of passion, how will a heart be assimilated,
When the black hole of fate crests the line of our horizon.

Where is that void now, does it cower behind shadows?
Can it even bear our touch, can its vastness contain us?

Tangible 10



Rivers Return to Love

Who is more fortunate, the raindrop whose fall
collects mid-stream,
Or the one whose air carries it to enduring ages of
ice?

Only a glacial drip knows the sleep of a millennial
wait for return.

Then, if permeation calls, there waits an even darker
slumber

Among the foreign elements of a subterranean
aquifer.

In the end though, there always comes the
irresistible one.

Drawing the liquid like a hummingbird siphoning
nectar.

Deep drops make the river feel as though it exists
only for returning.

And to hold and bear others in their own to and fro
returns.

Gravity may be how inanimate objects love one
another.

How rivers loose themselves completely in their
fall.

Loads Return to Love

The things we carry, stones and bales, hearts and
troubles,

Do not reflect on us as burdens, but come to
transport us.

Whether on backs or dragged or cradled or hanging
from drooped shoulders,

As laden ones, we imbibe from the cup of purest
labor.

So much needs moved, our world at times is but a
pile of sand

Waiting for the buckets and barrows to open their
holds,

To be poured through the hourglass of black to
white.

When arms and legs and bodies, themselves become
the move,

When the rate of transit is matched to our own
pace,

When muscles pulse, sweat soothes and breath and
bone carry each away,

Our load becomes life, we become both bearer and
the one borne.

Wood Returns to Love

As usual, the recipe is simple, one post, one bag of concrete,
A hole two feet deep, a bucket of water, a bit of sweat.
The elements are basic, care and attention transform work into offering.

One after another the fence posts rise as if reseeding themselves down the field.
We compel them to line up true like so many things do to us.
There is a clarity in their alignment, but that is their weakest dimension.

When viewed from the side, the fence post's song plays out.
Eight foot spacing is their octave, the fatter post at twelves, their measure.
A rise and fall in hand with the land is their melody, their song is not of things kept in or out.
But of things that accept the land's undulation as their own and plant themselves in service.
In praise of trees that gave them birth and still surround.

Bread Returns to Love

A naked basket waits agape, scant flour mist takes the weave.
He who checked before, now returns, reaches high the paddle, the broad one,
For he's after hearty loaves, not the fragile ones of morning.

The thick iron door hinges and gives itself to the blade.
It plunges, quick thrust, another, the gold encrusted domes slide beneath.
A final check to see if the flame has completed its task.
From oven to basket, he plies his oar with ease, doughman's tool, bread's midwife.
He turns the oven wheel, orbits align. He is fluid now, turn, in, out.

Stacked in rows of three, the split dough geometry is perfectly misaligned.
Now complete, a satiated basket cradles the deep bronze of a late September afternoon.
Sweet alive aroma, the crack of grain is my infusion.

Cloth Returns to Love

If ever we were mute, it would not be at their
summons,
But at the hand placed to our lips by our own calling
awe.

We stand in deference to the foreboding, to the
recline of the day.
We wrap each moment in cloth and all manner of
things.
In tissue and burlap, silk and wool, lace and
parchment, velvet and linen.
Material from scraps tossed aside by the garment
maker
Who waits downstairs for the night to come and
take us.

We wrap with whatever we can get our hands and
hearts on.
Bundles of the last hour or a tiny pouch of a sifted
instant.
Packages tied with ribbon and rope to be kept for a
more deserving time.
Who are we to wait, for just as swiftly, we tear them
open.

Tangible 15



Gardens Return to Love

Never having learned the principles, I'm left to look
with longing,
At the garden where others walk, one winding upon
another.
A crook ready to snatch my mind before I have time
to settle.
A snake coiling over and under the paths, its skin
flecked with scales of fabric.
Many colors vie for primacy, few are wise enough to
step aside.
Each has a story, each has a device to validate the
day.
Each respire and flexes in its own tale, as if it is a
separate entity.

The garden shrugs, bodies collect in pools and
under shelter and along streams.
Begging for food, leaning into the asymmetry of the
land.
With this asking, the garden opens as if to its own
children.
Pebbles fall in line, the world trickles, wets the bowl,
quiet waits awhile.

Tangible 16



Living Things Return to Love

Birds Return to Love

My eye's corner catches the black filament of his
enspiraled arc,
Etched against the washed out sky just above the
ridge line.
Concentric lifts, beating on the wings of wind from
beneath the earth.
The hawk's rhythm pulses as if riding the rising
blasts of an ancient bellows.

He twists and glides but his turns are not those of
winding.
A winding that would tense our sinew and stiffen
our ligaments.
He curves and rides, but his pull does not constrict
or tighten.
A tightness that would lead us to shatter before it
brought us home

We look to the sky when we no longer can keep our
eyes downcast.
When feet no longer take us out beyond the edge of
our own belief.
He is a trance, and watching him is our trance, the
release of an inner spring.



Whale Returns to Love

Spend your whole life in ocean depths and tell me
you don't marvel,
Tell me you don't warn your children about those
who break the surface.
Those who let their eyes feel thirsty air, those who
have seen things.
Things that are never imagined in the philosophies
of the deep.

Orca is feared, not as predator, for that is the way of
the wild,
But as the teller of tales, tales of fish that swim in
the sky.
Tales of creatures who transform themselves when
they enter water.
Stranger still, tales of an ocean floor above us all, of
canyons and mounts
Without any weight of water, yet it does not fly
away.

Why does he spread such lies, why does he
confound our hearts?
He claims he only longs to teach us how to love our
own imagination.

Living 2



Salmon Return to Love

Only two made it up this far this year, and none the
year before.
Bloated, bleached driftwood by the time I came
across the carcasses.
One turned on its side, its belly was scavenger
ripped.
Or maybe the force of its will was too much for it to
hold any longer.

They made a pact, these two, at the break of the
ocean bar.
To each go as far as the other, to refuse the lure, to
not be the first to die.

Water passing through gills swimming upcurrent
yields a richer oxygen,
The counter movement resistance sheds life, makes
what they dream possible.
So would say these salmon were they a scientific
sort.
But imperatives give way to the love of a single
place,
Where agreements made in the sea are redeemed in
the sand.

Living 3



Leaves Return to Love

The last line of adhesion, crystalline in the
dawnfrost,
Ice skin fractures, cracks open like shivering seed
pods.
Leaves take their fall, they do not feel forsaken by
the wind that fails to stir.
The wind that fails to lift them in carry to a better
landing,
One more properly suited for bodies of such
stature.

Leaves spend little time conjuring up some lack of
fulfillment in their appointment,
With dreams of carpeting regal paths or less hidden
hillsides.
They are content to be adrift and then alit on this
touch of earth.

Nature's regrets are few, they fade in and out of
shadow.
With beauty as their devotion, there is no place for
leaves of disappointment.
There is a loveliness in a descent to the common
ground.

Living 4



Trees Return to Love

The thoughts of trees are not like those of creatures
with rhythmic blood, and minds to wonder what
lies beyond germination, and feet to take them.
Their time is not ours, a day their breath, an inhale
from dawn across the sky, an exhale through
darkened canyons, sun traced respiration.
A year is their day, shadowing seasons, their deepest
sleep and truest dreams when light bows low.
Their recall is every pulsing shade of light, how each
bit of radiance tastes as it synthesizes.
The clean acidic noonday, slight brine in a summer
morn, sweetened dawns and musty dusks.
Memories prepped and stored as food for dreams
when solstice night draws them down to dens.
Time turns and lays out their one imagination, pulls
a swirling mass of every moments place.
To their skin, their roots, their crown, rising up in
offering.
They dream of death, they dream the fall, to
horizontal realms of dark and worms.
Where, unlike animate bodies, death comes not in a
sever, but lingers in and out.
Each cell decides, decay for loam, or milk for shoots
who find a body laid out as a gift.

Living 5



Bear Returns to Love

The noble races of claw and tooth have eyes and ears that know our songs.
Walking the ridge, smelling our fires, hearing their names,
Turning, they move back to those things we fear to discover.

The trail of bear widens where it breaches a faint wall.
Where the old ones stand watch and make sure the toll is much too steep,
Is so exact that it would skin you like a liquid razor were you to pass.

The dens of deepest hibernation are often but a small notch in the earth,
Where fur flesh curls, lowered breath by breath, vital signs fading.
Walking a line, the addictive space so near but never passing.
One winter it will stay, to always have death's honey on its tongue,
But this spring is not that time, there are seeds in the scat on the meadow.

Living 6



Coyote Returns to Love

Coyote snuck in while they were busy preparing the feast of going away.
He sat in the rear, hiding under a headdress taken from the shaman's tent.
They all had been alert, for trickster's next amusement,
But hadn't seen the coming game, where they were each one his.

When all had sat and dipped to eat, coyote began his song.
He broke tradition and didn't first chant creation, for who would believe his story.
Instead, he sung the softest wail and bounced the sound in a ventriloquistic spiral.
So those who ate, could taste the song as flavor on their lips.
And praise was passed around for having food that sang.

If every trick is but a blast to shake the rafters free of dust,
Then here, the dust was flecks of skin, dried out too long from touch.

Living 7



Snake Returns to Love

His head has borne our sins since the beginning of
sin.

But long before such things, he has been pressed
down.

He first tasted the tip of his tail the instant before
creation.

In this harsh taste, he knew at once his place and
fate.

So his eternal wheel has ever been both damnation
and salvation.

With shallow, shadowed embraces, he etches
heaven's wax with darkened scales.

A willing belly scrapes the dust and lets blood run
cold.

Lets himself be taken for a worm, or lonelier still, a
dragon.

He never dreams of rising, never cares to see the
stars.

The weight is far too much, his soul is wedded to
the ground.

So much that he will love enough to strike our flesh
with gentle venom.



Elements Return to Love

Earth Returns to Love

Space warps where planets sit, like a cupped palm
holding something precious.

This is the myth of physics' lore, explaining the
attraction of bodies.

I'm more likely to ascribe intention to gravity, to feel
resistance and welcome as I rise and fall.

I watched the puff of dust float to the bathroom
floor,

Thinking that if I watched long enough and true
enough,

I would see it pass, like a neutrino, unencumbered by
mass,

Through the floor, through the concrete, down to
the earth's bosom.

Earth gathers all to her, pale flakes, long strands of
vapor,

Even, it seems, the light of other bodies who leave it
for gleaning.

She is an absorbent lover, willing us fall early and
often.

Keeping us, until the day when we too intend our
own gravity.

Element 1



Fire Returns to Love

Every flame that ever singed a brow that leaned too
close

Came not from molten earth, but arose on the backs
of comets.

For centuries, Prometheans hide and ride the frozen
vacuum.

Their arcs lean so slightly, beneath notice, toward
gravity's love.

When such an orbit tires of wander and comes
around again

We close our eyes and wince and pass through our
comet's tail.

The earth's thin breath skin snatches remnants, in
death they burn.

But their dust is not the only death love calls to
notice.

The air, now having been completely consumed,
dies too.

The stars, they shoot, the fire, it does burn and
breathe.

All debris falls, but some falls not to waste, but to
beauty.

Element 2



Air Returns to Love

I leaned into you as if you were a breeze from
off my shore,
Thinking I could steady myself against your
freshness.

Bending my head to yours as if listening for a sign
to clear the way.

Lifting my arm, catching your elbow, inhaling with
nerve endings,

Drawing the nearest side of promise on into my
chest,

Turning to occupy the air vacated in the space of
breath.

Would that a point in dimension could be occupied
by two the same.

But air knows a better way, a way not overlaid, but
entered.

A way that confounds our grasp and knows the rush
of beauty.

A way bringing every cell in every body before that
gasp.

It takes this way, this hand to carry, we cannot bear
the air between us

Element 3



Water Returns to Love

Fog lends its shadows to the mystery of the
morning.

Folding into itself as it slides slowly down the hill's
shoulder.

Mist pulses like a slow motion whip crack as the lake
breathes in and out.

Somewhere in the troubled air above, kindred
vapors mingle.

Entwining passes without much notice, save that it
stirs

Small reflections of shared birth, a moment's place
for wistful condensation.

The speed of the fall shatters the crystal rain, dying
at terminal velocity.

The speed of our own fall shatters us, quaking the
leaves.

This canopy knows otherwise, collecting eau de vie
for an hour in wait.

When the shaken leaves splash brows with
anointing.

Holy water delivered on the wind, water for our
ablution.

Element 4



Light Returns to Love

Light and Darkness Return to Love

We turned just beyond chance and the light itself
was misting.

Dawn's condensation dewing on the underside of
raised arms.

On a hair, a single drop forms, a tear adhering by
aural thread.

Its dangling, swaying light, so precious in
precariousness.

Light then lifted off the fields, rising as if it had a
soul,

Believing itself worthy, leaving a void as it gathered
every shred,

Bending, then lending itself to the poor in light,
blessed are they.

Light returns to its bed on a wing torn by alms
gatherers,

Mended with diaphanous gauze spun only in the
early hours.

A return to waiting, where canyon walls reflect and
focus

Every prayer of light again and again to love's single
point.



Darkness Returns to Love

Would that dark and desperation came calling as a
shy suitor,
Rehearsing its entrance until it becomes its own
parody.
If only a chance capture took hold and lay us down
for another.
Then our time would stop its descent and a pinpoint
instant would catch our sight.

In the dark, our heart's aperture spirals inward and
focus is ascendant.
The light, making itself small like an ethereal
contortionist,
Drips through openings where the needles of
heaven have struck.

From this side, we have seen our idle and it did not
become us.
But keeps us only as a reminder of what we once
wept.
Darkness twists this idle, wrings it long and hard
above our heads,
Shakes it out with a hearty snap, then hangs it on the
wind.



Hate and Love Return to Love

Hate Returns to Love

An indifferent winter, beating around the bush,
offering nothing.
No hard freezes, no relentless dark or prison, it only
bores.
Not into, but alongside, with the sing song sameness
of hypnotizing apathy.
Winter yawns, lulling us into believing it does not
love us,
When in fact it does not anything, it cares for
nothing.
Like the nonchalant cougar whose silhouette paces
the range.

Would that winter roar and sink icicled fangs into
our flesh,
Would that it shred deep frozen screams as it tears
limbs asunder,
Our ship wailing, pinched and warped in the
groaning floes.

Hate the garden, oh heavy winter, give the buried
seed no hope,
Make the root endure until it can hold on only one
day longer.

Hate



Love Returns to Love

When more and never cease their claims, after all
this time, still.

A retaining wall on the brink at the end of the
world,
On the brink too, of ruin, as fragile as the chance of
any story,
It still serves to stop us cold, stunned again that a
nape could be made to melt.

Reflection is a coded language, but not one for
decryption.
Moonlight, once a spell to be divined, now is our
bedsheet.
Stars on the water, like fireflies who will not be
held,
Write random streaks, keep us close to the tender
night.
A curved glass, lightly bent, is not afraid of things
directly behind.
It stills us at whatever point our hearts are passing
by,
It remembers, reflecting not form, not memory,
but things more lovely still.

Love

