

A photograph of a book cover. The cover is dark, textured, and appears to be made of cloth or paper with a marbled pattern. On the left side, there are several metal fasteners or staples. A rectangular, light-colored label is affixed to the upper part of the cover, containing the text "PAS DE DEUX" in a bold, black, serif font.

**PAS DE DEUX**

PAS DE DEUX

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

Can a poem have a partner? Can verse, when standing alone, imagine a companion that brings it to completion? In these 22 poems, I have come across one answer to this question, an uncovering of connections that don't fall into the usual structures.

Each section of Pas De Deux contains three poems: A left side solo, a right side solo and a unified duet. By themselves, the solos take on a bit of loneliness or incompleteness. When combined, the two solos come together, beside and into each other, using the same words and lines to become a new poem. A new poem that may be the shared destiny of the separate lines.

Each of our dances alone has a beauty unto itself. Transformation, and perhaps even fulfillment, comes when another dance enters our room. We may try, or we may resist, but the dance for two that follows, takes both dancers to places where they hadn't stepped before. Their footprints surprise even the ground that holds them, reminds it that each step was born to be shared.



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# Pas De Deux

---

Pas

If it were 'not',  
it would clench its grip  
to be more than just one thing.  
The result of one  
solitary longing merely  
sighs. Sound from this place,  
consummate in presence,  
drapes like prayer, remains  
worn in the river. Stone  
cracks in love's  
shadow, the lover's  
steps become a bit  
cruel, a sentiment  
so trite, it could be  
mistaken for caring.  
Outlast any longing and  
become the dance  
of futility. In its offering,  
today brings even less  
of what could be.  
Plaster the walls of  
morning with scraps of  
days gone by,  
an altar where  
that which is 'not'  
covers the journey that bores,  
keeps in wait  
until we learn.

---

1 Solo

---

De Deux

A single emotion,  
until it is revealed,  
is a fragile wind.  
More entwining is all  
a prelude to this.  
Where the two are  
but a promise,  
tears collect in bowls  
reserved for the day when  
thirst is everything,  
until the time when the  
less wistful never  
arrives. Without feeling,  
the world was  
by itself. Can  
this empty trek will  
tomorrow? No hint  
gives itself for reading.  
Shelter for doubt, a seer  
casting bones in a sacred  
ritual. Lean toward the  
days to come and  
assemble a monument. Perhaps  
the forlorn may bring  
their birthright beneath these  
light shafts. Into us,  
it watches over  
the steps.

---

1 Solo

---

Pas De Deux

If it were not a single emotion,  
it would clench its grip until it is revealed  
to be more than just one thing. Is a fragile wind  
the result of one more entwining? Is all  
solitary longing merely a prelude to this?  
Sighs sound from this place, where the two are  
consummate in presence, but a promise  
drapes like prayer remains. Tears collect in bowls  
worn in the river stone, reserved for the day when  
cracks in love's thirst is everything.  
Shadow the lover's until the time when  
steps become a bit less wistful, never  
cruel. A sentiment arrives without feeling  
so trite. It could be the world was  
mistaken, for caring by itself can  
outlast any longing and the empty trek will  
become the dance. Tomorrow, no hint  
of futility in its offering, gives itself for reading.  
Today brings even less shelter for doubt, a seer  
of what could be, casting bones in a sacred  
plaster. The walls of ritual lean toward the  
morning. With scraps of days to come and  
days gone by, assemble a monument, perhaps  
an altar where the forlorn may bring  
that which is not their birthright. Beneath these  
covers, the journey that bores light shafts into us  
keeps in wait, watches over  
until we learn the steps.

No Longer

Homeless

---

No Longer

There is just enough air  
to pendulate shadows,  
reminding that light  
once held us, but  
no longer reveals  
the dawn, without hope.

---

Homeless

As you walk by  
into disappearing,  
starved caverns,  
our home now fades.  
We can not sing  
of all we were.

---

No Longer Homeless

There is just enough air as you walk by  
to pendulate shadows into disappearing,  
reminding that light starved caverns  
once held us, but our home now fades  
no longer; reveals we can not sing  
the dawn without hope of all we were.

# No Memory Of Feeling

## Thirst

---

No Memory Of Feeling

A stream crept from the crack  
on the edge of my eyes' extent.  
A memory of an evening when  
a hand washed blessing  
never came to pass.

---

Thirst

As I drifted the trail,  
a dry taste was but  
a lost chance turned into  
a dust caked remorse  
where I knelt.



---

No Memory Of Feeling Thirst

A stream crept from the crack as I drifted the trail.  
On the edge of my eyes' extent, a dry taste was but  
a memory of an evening when a lost chance turned into  
a hand washed blessing. A dust caked remorse  
never came to pass where I knelt.

---

3 Duet

She Steers Herself

Into Him

4

---

She Steers Herself

She turns the wheel of trust into where  
shrouded currents swell, their arc gives  
a sheltered place to rest from  
hope. She found softened  
paths hiding among fears.

---

Into Him

He charts a course far from  
others, a cloak against the chill.  
Expectant verses, an octave above  
tears, called him back along his heart's  
setting sun.

---

She Steers Herself Into Him

She turns the wheel of trust into where he charts a course far from  
shrouded currents swell, their arc gives others a cloak against the chill  
a sheltered place to rest from expectant verses. An octave above  
hope, she found softened tears, called him back along his heart's  
paths, hiding among fear's setting sun.

## Dark Patterns

### Perishing

---

Dark Patterns

If, when it were born,  
the dark carried patterns,  
who would dwell on  
the edge of the dusk or  
fate, a page of gloom's  
diary; in night and  
sorrow, will we be one?

---

Perishing

Some light escaped, seeking  
imprints of its own children,  
the far of their extent.  
The dawn writes its own  
death. We read each other's  
noon and still we wander without  
lamp for the story.

---

Dark Patterns Perishing

If, when it were born, some light escaped, seeking  
the dark, carried patterns, imprints of its own children,  
who would dwell on the far of their extent?

The edge of the dusk or the dawn writes its own  
fate, a page of gloom's death. We read each other's  
diary in night and noon and still. We wander without  
sorrow. Will we be one lamp for the story?

No Time

Unloved

---

No Time

In the north, the ancient ones feared  
heaven, willing to swap a  
rapture for the least of  
earth's moments, each one  
an infinitesimal eternity.

---

6 Solo

---

Unloved

Only the clime of a loveless  
void, for some small portion of  
us, is the sacred cache of  
tenderly preserved  
flecks of hope.

---

6 Solo

---

No Time Unloved

In the north, the ancient ones feared only the clime of a loveless  
heaven, willing to swap a void for some small portion of  
rapture. For the least of us, is the sacred cache of  
earth's moments, each one tenderly preserved,  
an infinitesimal eternity, flecks of hope?

No One

Left Alone

---

No One

Once, when God was in  
other heavens, love  
became an alchemical  
promise of nothing.  
That night, no one was  
all in all.

---

7 Solo

---

Left Alone

A more concealed place  
gave up its ether.  
Reaction time was a  
hidden eternity, was born  
alone, but was  
for all.

---

7 Solo



---

No One Left Alone

Once, when God was in a more concealed place,  
other heaven's love gave up its ether,  
became an alchemical reaction. Time was a  
promise of nothing hidden. Eternity was born  
that night. No one was alone, but was  
all in all for all.

Fleeing  
Trepidation

---

Fleeing

Climb with the bighorn, until sight no longer is the primary sense. The turns before the summit bring to heart your dread of never being satisfied.

---

Trepidation

The valley fades from reason. The thing to be sought falls slowly, becoming the fear and trembling. Take note where you walk.

---

Fleeing Trepidation

Climb with the bighorn, until the valley fades from  
sight. No longer is the primary reason the thing to be sought.

Sense the turns before the falls, slowly becoming the  
summit. Bring to heart your dread, fear and trembling take note  
of never being satisfied where you walk.

## Autumn's Death

### Cried Beauty

---

Autumn's Death

It may have been  
memory, dissolved somewhere.  
Autumn, I knew, it carried  
no promise. Faded colors struck  
in the leaves. No ashen shadows  
left, half of myself  
dying, only its own.

---

Cried Beauty

My fourth or fifth year,  
when I first noticed  
beauty, in its bosom  
I longed to rest.  
Here it was but the  
awakening to no  
fulfillment.

---

Autumn's Death Cried Beauty

It may have been my fourth or fifth year,  
memory dissolved somewhere, when I first noticed  
autumn. I knew it carried beauty. In its bosom,  
no promise faded. Colors struck, I longed to rest  
in the leaves. No ashen shadows here, it was but the  
left half of myself awakening, to no  
dying, only its own fulfillment.

## The Lure Of Certainty

### Discontents

---

The Lure Of Certainty

The lure of certainty waits,  
a promise of safe  
passage. Where faith  
parched spirit cries,  
there comes no rescue.  
Doubt no longer  
lashed to the mast.

---

Discontents

In the communion cup,  
answers turn to the  
ferments of  
disappointment. Breathes  
there the hope of  
a wait? Knowledge, alone, is  
lost.

---

The Lure Of Certainty Discontents

The lure of certainty waits in the communion cup,  
a promise of safe answers. Turn to the  
passage where faith ferments. Of  
parched spirit cries, disappointment breathes  
there, comes no rescue. There, the hope of  
doubt no longer a wait, knowledge alone is  
lashed to the mast, lost.

Stars Can't Form  
In Seclusion

---

Stars Can't Form

They spoke of a night without  
stars. Clouds of gas hung  
where light belonged.  
Their million fires never had  
felt heat, death without  
notice. Beings formed of  
cosmic dust, they fall.

---

In Seclusion

Longing for their hearts were  
burning masses. Darkness knew  
fate completely. Consumed  
stars burned without remorse.  
Shadow or ash, they don't  
matter, their souls can't dissolve  
into spirit.



---

Stars Can't Form In Seclusion

They spoke of a night without longing, for their hearts were  
stars, clouds of gas, hung burning masses. Darkness knew  
where light belonged. Fate completely consumed  
their million fires. Never had stars burned without remorse,  
felt heat, death without shadow or ash. They don't  
notice beings formed of matter, their souls can't dissolve  
cosmic dust, they fall into spirit.

## They Strike, But Catch

### No Wind

---

They Strike, But Catch

Speak of heaven,  
I dare you.  
When last night's toss  
led you to the grand trade,  
joy for restless shadows.

---

No Wind

In tones once lost  
to tears, they come calling.  
Falling into slumber,  
empty basins for  
waiting can never be your sail.

---

They Strike, But Catch No Wind

Speak of heaven in tones once lost.

I dare you to tears, they come calling  
when last night's toss, falling into slumber,  
led you to the grand. Trade empty basins for  
joy, for restless shadows waiting, can never be your sail.

Imperfect

Revolution

---

Imperfect

I did not know this  
was not a perfect  
way. Beyond notice,  
variations and tremors,  
many thousands of  
men may grow and die.  
At this point, it returns.

---

Revolution

Earth's orbit or rotation,  
ellipse or axial tilt.  
There are slight  
periods of  
years when every race  
of earth arrives  
with a sigh.

---

Imperfect Revolution

I did not know this earth's orbit or rotation  
was not a perfect ellipse or axial tilt.  
Way beyond notice, there are slight  
variations and tremors, periods of  
many thousands of years, when every race of  
men may grow and die. Earth arrives  
at this point, it returns with a sigh.

Absent

Remorse

---

Absent

Onshore, there broke  
a thousand promises;  
those who lay  
down their arms.  
Molten dreams, their only  
blessing vanished. Before long,  
the line was still.

---

14 Solo

---

Remorse

A wave of compassion  
once again only reached  
low upon the sand.  
Ocean blood ran like  
regret. Was that a  
tide cresting,  
our overwhelming?

---

14 Solo

---

Absent Remorse

Onshore, there broke a wave of compassion.  
A thousand promises once again only reached  
those who lay low upon the sand.  
Down their arms, ocean blood ran like  
molten dreams. Their only regret was that a  
blessing vanished before long tide cresting.  
The line was still our overwhelming.

Amidst And Against  
Unworthiness

---

Amidst And Against

Amidst and against the fog,  
indifference and defiance  
are never complete. The gray  
itself cannot calm. Be greater than  
this schism, it calls  
to a forgotten soil.  
In the end, it never returns.

---

Unworthiness

Redwoods stand with  
both sides soaring, but  
mist has a way of instilling  
disgrace, reaching  
deep beneath the bark  
where visions and archetypes mingle  
lower than Eden.



---

Amidst And Against Unworthiness

Amidst and against the fog, redwoods stand with  
indifference and defiance, both sides soaring, but  
are never complete. The gray mist has a way of instilling  
itself. Cannot calm be greater than disgrace? Reaching  
this schism, it calls deep beneath the bark  
to a forgotten soil where visions and archetypes mingle.  
In the end, it never returns lower than Eden.

Walls  
Don't Keep

---

Walls

The Shin of the Buddha escaped  
the wild country faster than  
thought. Strange things saw  
it flee from  
liberation. Fortresses and  
other walls keep out no.

---

Don't Keep

So it is, now stronger than  
any storm. It was here it  
exposed fraud. I watched  
complacency thrive on the wind of  
forests; contain and release each  
particle of nature.

---

Walls Don't Keep

The Shin of the Buddha escaped, so it is now stronger than  
the wild country, faster than any storm. It was here it  
thought strange things, saw exposed fraud. I watched  
it flee from complacency, thrive on the wind of  
liberation. Fortresses and forests contain and release each  
other. Walls keep out no particle of nature.

A Space  
For Collection

---

A Space

Just beneath the skin,  
a slight gap.  
Eons past keep watch  
over prayer candles.  
Give the gap  
notice. How close  
to the out we are.

---

For Collection

There is a layer  
where remnants of  
a stasis decants,  
collects in bone sockets.  
Attention pushes and pulls.  
Is the in  
the only direction?

---

A Space For Collection

Just beneath the skin, there is a layer,  
a slight gap where remnants of  
cons past keep watch. A stasis decants  
over prayer candles, collects in bone sockets.  
Give the gap attention, pushes and pulls  
notice. How close is the in  
to the out? We are the only direction.

## Is The First Taste Of Sky

## The Lesson Of Water

---

Is The First Taste Of Sky

Some lives fly  
in kinship with  
their birth.

The first rush of air,  
when love slipped from lungs,  
is the first taste of sky.

Birds become darting guides and  
guardians of all the veils  
between the two states of paradise

---

The Lesson Of Water

While others swim,  
the lines that mark  
their wet womb days remember  
the shock of being dry.

And so must be re-learned  
the lesson of water.

Fish mirror their starts and stops  
in the to and fro reflections  
that sip the air and sigh the water.

---

Is The First Taste Of Sky The Lesson Of Water?

Some lives fly, while others swim,  
in kinship with the lines that mark  
their birth. Their wet womb days remember  
the first rush of air, the shock of being dry,  
when love slipped from lungs and so must be re-learned.

Is the first taste of sky the lesson of water?

Birds become darting guides and fish mirror their starts and stops;  
guardians of all the veils in the to and fro reflections  
between the two states of paradise, that sip the air and sigh the water.

## Under The Spell Of Mercy

---

Under The Spell

Before a regretted pilgrimage,  
nights were spent  
in prayer, for nothing  
could lift or carry  
the load of duty.  
Remains, under the spell  
of lost images, faintly etched.  
Of cynics, they cry  
burdens for the children.

---

Of Mercy

A singularity formed  
when restless sparks  
ran down the canyon.  
On updrafted fate, let saints wash away  
any chance of warmth in the dawn.  
Cast deep into the current,  
mercy again avoids the hook.  
For fireflies and their ilk  
have gone to the grave.



---

Under The Spell Of Mercy

Before a regretted pilgrimage, a singularity formed.

Nights were spent, when restless sparks,

in prayer for nothing, ran down the canyon.

Could lift or carry, on updrafted fate, let saints wash away

the load of duty? Any chance of warmth in the dawn

remains under the spell cast deep into the current

of lost images. Faintly etched mercy avoids the hook

of cynics. They cry for fireflies and their ilk.

Burdens for the children have gone to the grave.

Less Color

Blind

---

Less Color

The night bird cries.  
Color, to pale veins, is  
a lonely path;  
steps to color, a mystery  
that burns the signposts.  
Without these hues,  
time becomes self aware.  
This one says no  
color will find you.

---

Blind

A herald to summon  
darkness, the only place where  
dead ends are the last  
stand for every spectrum.  
Mark the words that wander  
in and out of color.  
This place is a collection plate for  
fear, the one who says that  
color will blind you.

---

Less Color Blind

The night bird cries, a herald to summon  
color to pale veins. Is darkness the only place where  
a lonely path dead ends? Are the last  
steps to color a mystery? Stand for every spectrum  
that burns. The signposts mark the words that wander  
without these hues. In and out of color,  
time becomes self, aware this place is a collection plate, for  
this one says, "No fear." The one who says that  
color will find you, color will blind you.

Alone  
No More

---

Alone

When empty, lanterns take on  
sadness. A breath brings  
nothing, not even a void.  
When air remembers it once stirred,  
I feel it covering memory with  
darkness, and the earth may be  
heaven's shawl. Are there  
breaks? Cracks where a heart  
rested, slowly fading.

---

21 Solo

---

No More

A glow, reminding me there is no  
light for fading flames. There is  
nothing that can hide from this.  
It enters the reaches where  
softer things washed ashore. Eliminate  
trembling and I may chance to touch  
places where loneliness  
dwells, where an ache was  
found at home.

---

21 Solo

---

Alone No More

When empty, lanterns take on a glow, reminding me there is no  
sadness. A breath brings light for fading flames. There is  
nothing, not even a void, nothing that can hide from this.

When air remembers it once stirred, it enters the reaches where  
I feel it covering memory with softer things washed ashore. Eliminate  
darkness, and the earth may be trembling and I may chance to touch  
heaven's shawl. Are there places where loneliness  
breaks? Cracks where a heart dwells, where an ache was  
rested, slowly fading, found at home.

## Against Your Heart

### I Melt

---

Against Your Heart

Still night, I came to the  
end of my explorations. The  
remnants of love laid never  
sure strands across the path.  
Fear was an icy sheen melting into  
skin and flesh, filling up  
undiscovered bowls  
with brokenness.

---

I Melt

Time, it revealed no  
clue, keeping its company with  
ending light. I knelt, painting  
a thin layer of what stood for  
hope, masking the fire beneath  
empty cauldrons. I pour  
with faith's measure,  
never again.

---

Against Your Heart, I Melt

Still night, I came to the time, it revealed no  
end of my explorations. The clue, keeping its company with  
remnants of love laid never ending light. I knelt, painting  
sure strands across the path. A thin layer of what stood for  
fear was an icy sheen melting into hope, masking the fire beneath  
skin and flesh, filling up empty cauldrons. I pour  
undiscovered bowls with faith's measure,  
with brokenness never again.