

I SING
THEREFORE
I AM



**VOLUME
THREE**

I Sing, Therefore I Am

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THE **POEMS**



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When

Soon,
Before the end of June.
After I've cleaned the house,
Well, tidied up a bit,
At least put those papers away.

After the clock dings,
When I've dealt with these urgent things.
Maybe tomorrow,
Or later this week.
Next week at the latest.

One night,
While evenings are still light,
And everyone's on holiday,
Prior to my birthday. Party.
Later that week.

Eventually,
After the visitors go, potentially.
Before the end of the month,
When I go away.
As soon as I get back.

One of these days,
Before Christmas. Day.
As soon as I've put the decorations away,
And the kids are back at school.
When things are back to normal.

Never:
After I've considered whether
I must get this done,
And what might happen if I don't.
Life, it seems, goes on, unchanged.

Our New Friend

We first came here in January, me and my mate.
We provided welcome comfort on those cold short days,
When troubled hands struggled to contain troubled feet.

We helped to steady him, as he began to walk again.
Our structured softness an anchor in the early days,
When everything felt new, though still the same.

As summer came we spent less time together,
Though always reunited on the warm evenings of long bright days,
We happily enveloped his weary feet.

Here

Here we are again
In this paradise
Drenched now
In emerald green.
Here,
Where you are just my husband, and
I am just your wife.
No cares, no caring,
Just us
Two peas from a very peculiar pod
As you said on our wedding day.

Here the only interruptions are welcome
A shock of violet: lilac,
A magpie's wing
Glistening like sapphire.
Here,
Where sparkling laughter drifts, muffled now
By a closer persistent bird.
Calling out, asking,
Answered with a cacophony of replies.
We smile, happy to be
Here, together.

One Moment In Time

I sit here on my own in my calming pink place
my fingers run through tufts of soft carpet.
It's silent apart from my husband's snoring.
My moment in time before my hectic day
snatched moments of peace will definitely pay.

I stare at the bold outline of black metal sculpture.
Dust fills the air in magical ways in sunlight beams.
I juggle in my mind my today's must do lists.
I raise up from my place on the top of the stairs
putting my first step forward I go down with care.

Whole New World

Life's race now begins when our feet touch this earth
we no longer stay in our warm cocoon mother's belly.
Our life begins with the care of others guiding us.
Will our lives explode into something wonderful
or dark times as our carers put us on the wrong path.

On the way down life's path, we may stray off.
Friendships will grow and sometimes fade away
as time dwindles on and we grow and learn.
Not all of our lives will be a roll in the heather
illness might change our route on life's road.

Our body clock ticks on, as years go by.
We may share a ring of love with another.
In time we may make together a new life
this bundle of joy might not always be perfect
but to us they are our world of stars.

Wrinkles grow, laughter lines in weathered skin.
Family commitments grow, time is getting shorter
Juggling day to day routines is fighting with time.
Our partners' words get muddled and forgetful.
Our world goes from lovers to being carers.

Chris Earle

Colours Of Life

Pink warm and calming

Blue is the sky full of lost tears

Green is nature and wellbeing

White is pure and bright bold

Yellow the early morning sunrise

Red is tape and lots of form filling

Grey is those down days lost

Black is the day I lost you.

Power Between My Thighs

She calls to me to transport me here and there.
Chic black paint, leather seat you need to hug tight
She takes me on adventures in the warm sun.
Black leather jacket and trouser cling to my body.
Flick of the key the engine turns and she purrs
twist of the throttle she goes from a purr to a roar.
Rubber on tarmac I go forth like a knight on a horse
I feel alive energised my problems left behind.
you're maintained with oil, diesel and coolant.
Weather does not deter us, but we slow in the wet
I am your rider; you are my fate I hold you firm.
Eyes on the road stop us drifting from the margins
white lines on the road keep us in the right lane
when problems come, we can switch with speed.

Poem 01

The bird keeper

I'm the oldest bird keeper in this town.
My heart is busy, never slowing down.
My eyes always look up to the sky,
wishing for rain to fall from up high.

I am half a bird keeper and half a bird.
I have two tiny wings on either side.
These wings, they never hide.
Because of them, I can't hear or understand,
everything you say, it's hard to command.

Oh, these wings, they make such a sound!
It's hard to keep my feet on the ground.
But I'll take the time I need to hear
every word you say, loud and clear.

As a bird keeper, I always watch as golden and silver birds take flight.
I know I'm not flawless, that's a given
but my devotion to these birds will never be shaken.
Despite the clatter of my wings,
I'll still nurture other feathered beings.

Poem 02

We lay in a bed of feathers,
We rest our weary heads.
This a refuge from life's harsh art,
When wings can no longer fly.

The room may be empty, but thoughts are crowded.
Drinking clean water from a glass,
A predestined act for pills.

I wonder if the doctor feels any aches and chills.
As my mother opens her mouth,
And the doctor turns into a fully colorful bird,
I feel a sense of wonder,
This is not at all despair.

Whether it's a bed made of feathers,
Or one bed made of buttons,
They are there,
But where am I?

I find myself under the dining table,
Unfolding a new set of wings.

Poem 03

With glasses on, I witness the bloody eclipse's glow,
Liquid soap overflows, filling room 202.
Dreams of those who slumber deep I hold,
Sharing my vision, my mother wears the glasses too.

Metallic birds soar high beyond the sky,
Tuning tears with breath held night.
Glasses reveal beyond the veil,
Seize the moment with each exhale.

Only birds can recognize bird keepers
the way they are, the way we care.
Most of past injured birds, we tend to fly
from South to South
from hospital beds
to an unwritten page.

Poem 04

The bird named cosmos:

Like a bird that looks at itself in a raindrop.
I mentally practice acupuncture with words:
I choose the words that I want to feel
from a wooden drawer, I place them very near my chest.
Erotism is trapped now in the spider's web!

Oh bird named cosmos, magnificent and grand!
Weaving stories in celestial strands!
Oh cosmos!
When my mother was born and
She was held by an ancestral midwife:
This mysterious woman
spit into her eyes
a fluorescent beverage,
some colorful lights have started to dance madly since then.
Liberating her from Earth's haunting fears,
Unveiling a path where love has no end!

Oh, bird-cosmos, our mission is clear,
To channel compassion, dispel every fear.
As descendants, we carry the sacred flame!
So let us embrace our cosmic flame
As bird keepers of eternity, healers with glee.
We didn't lose our tenderness
after being expelled
from the cosmic uterus of Mother Earth!

Poem 05

Crosswords

A metallic grass, a pill wrapper's sheen on a food plate,
Like in a serene landscape for a childhood picture.
With sparrows' touch, a transformation occurs
Soft feathers merge with my skin,

Hope seeps through injections in every tiny hole,
A lifeline of optimism, nurturing words.

My mother's voice harmonizes, asking me to stay,
Amidst the fireworks in her thoughts' display.
Her lips echo my phrases, a bittersweet symphony.

No translation is required.
While waiting for the frozen meat to thaw,
Desires of freedom are unfrozen.

Every time a bird swallows the first metallic corn,
it becomes a fish.
Every time that bird takes the second metallic corn,
it becomes a bird again.
Then I can see in its eyes, the eyes of my beloved one.

Angi Holden

Glove

Even now it retains
the form of her hand,
as it reaches out, palm exposed,
leather fingers distorted by arthritis.
Its partner long-lost, forgotten,
the button at its wrist pearly,
the shank stitched tightly
secured by waxed thread.
A sleeping creature,
it lies curled on the hall table
next to the telephone
that never rings.

Catheter

He tells me he can feel blood running
between his legs, warm and sticky.
He tries to sit up, but I rest my hand
against his shoulder, press him gently back
onto the bed. It's only water, I say, describing
in detail the nurse, the jug she pours from.

She looks up at me,
her eyes heavy with sympathy;
in her hands the cloth is soaked
and brightly scarlet.
It is the eighth attempt, the surgeon
reluctant to go to theatre.
One more go, he says, his voice soft,
his accent humid and middle-Eastern.
Just one more.

And finally into the iron stench of blood
comes the smell of piss, flooding the bed,
splashing across the floor,
while beneath my hand my son
groans and relaxes, suddenly relieved of pain,
exhausted, already slipping towards sleep.

Caroline Kemp

Swallow

I lay out a-l-l the pills . Packs and packs of them . Pills to mitigate pills. We measure each day in pills. Morning breakfast pills Night time supper pills. Dosette boxes stack up staring. Have you had your pills?
Pills spill and spill
HEY HEY I say You're supposed to remind me...have YOU taken your pills?
I keep forgetting running out.
Everyone else's are there neatly laid out sorted accounted for dealt out
Apportioned
Did I? Did I take my pills? I cannot remember. Did I swallow them? Or think I did?
Was that yesterday?
The morning sinks in settles head too heavy muscles taut Light too bright
I didn't take them after all
Did I?

Promise

Will I get my dream?
Do you promise?
Yes I promise
Are you sure?
Yes I'm sure. You'll get your dream.
Put it out there.
Do you see children in my future?
You'll get your dream. You will be happy.
I'm so lonely.
I need someone to love To cuddle
Pick someone who is kind
Be careful Take time do not rush in blind
I'll just stay here and look after you
Until that time
We'll all look after each other.
I love you You are my best friend
Do you love me?
I'll always love you
Best friend
Will I get my dream?
YES
Do you
PROMISE
YES
I
Promise

Caroline Kemp

Jet

My silver chain is soiled, links in need of care a soft caress of polish . My jet face is a perfect oval framed in creamy silver, a silver that curves easily around my black heart. Her fingers seek me out, restore me , make me clean, place me slowly around her warm skin. My face and coils soon lose their chill close to her beating heart. The last heart wouldn't beat strong, the rhythms weak, irregular and now long gone. I know my jet face will be passed on, never outworn. Another daughter will lay me out, remove the dust, restore the sheen. And put warmth into cold black stone.

Helena Marie

Believe

Allow the light to enter – don't flinch. Turn if you must, away from the sun, the birthing day and breathe into the dawn calm, let stillness settle before chaos comes clamouring. Make space for sanity – mental health is such a trend – throw some affirmations, manifest your universe. Allow the truth to enter. There is nothing to be feared.

In A Quiet Moment

Keep the cat away from busy roads

Pluck whisker (mine, not his)

Try to work – stave off personal recession

Don't worry about the future

Don't worry that that's a to-don't

Stop collecting crumbs on the counter top

Another to-don't

Count how many lines have followed instructions

Decide not to start again

Ponder split infinitives

Put the kettle on

Helena Marie

Gift (for Wynne)

Perfect o of silver
peaking emerald
sits on smallest finger
worn scuffed
by a tired wedding band
blue-boxed ring of love
kept safe on mother's hand

Helena Marie

Ring

Once a man
kissed me
let go and left

She wiped me
on her dress
ran hot water

soaped until
I couldn't breathe
lifted me

to the light
pursed-mouth pouted
lipstick red

Alison Raybould

Untitled ['borrowed blossom']

Borrowed blossom
lolls over the fence
somewhere between
Crave the Chaos 235 and
Rita Ora Neon Fest
but matt, powderlike, fizzy
icingsugarcoated
raspberry bonbon
on the bramble side of rhubarb,
loganberry mousse on Sundays
from Mary Berry's Family Recipes
teenage fingers pierced
on nextdoor's thorns,
the cuboid strip of dense dusty pink
from a square tin that clicked
(still don't know how to use or say
Caran d'Ache pastels),
and on a frosty night
or out of the bath
the colour of your toes.

Superdrug Nail Polish listings:
essie Expressive 235 Crave the Chaos Hot Pink
Rimmel 60 Seconds Super Shine Nail Polish Rita Ora Neon Fest

Are you sitting comfortably?

We never see the light of day. Through our cloaked nine by nine
neoprene network, invisible connectivity recycles valved air.
A possible inspiration for the Xenomorph egg colony
the kiss at our peak a weak spot that overtime splits and hisses.
Cradling your softest tissue you think we are sensitive
to an atmosphere but constantly under pressure
mischief abounds, tickling the Velcro to edge ourselves forward
or concocting a numbness you begin to notice after three days.
We watch you wrangle over inflation or deflation? Either way
for a week you're sitting on bricks not floating on air.
Surely there's fancy tech to replace the poking of a depressed
finger into our smashed shiny domes? We're responsive beings
worth more than prodding and guess work!
Taking off the weight of the day we decompress, redistribute
to preset contours, our left back quadrant slower to reform
ready for action tomorrow.

Our Bedroom

A king size duvet straddles
two single beds
pinnacles of practical pillows for heads
and your mechanically raised legs
our place to snore, snuggle and make
dreams...
Trampling on 'Heather Glade'
our first home furnishing purchase
servicers, technicians and clinicians
assess form and function
our pictures, trinkets
and choice of deodorant on show
collective discomfort
ebbs through the window
carried on lapping traffic
your soft cotton shirt snags on straps
of the no frills sling
you're swung with unease
across the thrust of metal
carried on a chorus of beeps and whirrs.
The ceiling track unit
permanently glares
Emergency-Exit-green.
There is no escape
but we are in this together

My Caring Colour
(after Christina Rossetti)

What is pink? Your straw is pink
Paper, straight, long: dunked in every drink.
What is red? The hoist charge is red
Flashing bright nightly over our bed.
What is blue? The Uri-bag's blue
Deployed when it's tricky to navigate a loo.
What is white? Our ad-hoc prop's white
Keeping your eating arm balanced just right.
What is yellow? Your sling hook is yellow
Swings you up-down-along, too fast or too slow.
What is green? Your appointment file's green
Groans with each change and decision there's been.
What is violet? Your extremities glow violet
Wrapped in super fleeced gloves, scarf and hat.
What is orange? Our Vitamin C's orange
Just an orange or probably a satsuma!

Alison Raybould

Love Among the Ruins
(after Edward Burne-Jones)

Unusually we sit together
the waiting room is buzzing
but you have reversed over the patch
where the endoftherow used to be.
I thrust your coiled body forward
strain your coat over your head
rearrange your bottom
and hope my jazzy blue top
is distracting the glances.
I'm at the peak of an overstretched list
and you are my rock
fused in places
your soft voice tumbles
into the crumples of your chest.
To deflect over-rehearsal
I look at closeups of the briar rose
wefting through metal
a mothballed new build
has devoured four storeys of concrete
and two blue badge bays.
I show you my phone
and you stick up your left thumb.
Catching a flash of my lock screen
three decades vanish
our first summer
you have more hair
and I was less wobbly
your wheels are now powered
the pint glasses swapped
for mugs of tea
yours on a cushion with a straw
but there's still that spark.
Your motors click in
someone is calling
'Mrs Raybould'

listen to the poets reading their work at
carerspoetry.org



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