

# light and shadow

Shadowbox15

Presented by

*My poetic side* 



# Acknowledgement

To life

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## Broken Love

People  
look back at their first  
Love

fondly. As if that encounter  
shaped their  
entire love life like

The beginning of a fairy tale.

My first love/ if you can call it love/ we were two broken/ I a shattered glass jar/ & he/ a shredded  
teddy bear/We slid into one another's souls/ trying to fix/ each other's hurt.

We loved one another since we could  
Not love ourselves. Suffering bled into our  
Poetry kisses

And almost-love.

I said earlier/he/ a shredded/ Teddy Bear/ his eyes were/chocolate/ & childlike sweetness/ lolled  
with/pang of death/& torment of/'I want to die too.'

I/ a brittle glass jar/intent on always/keep everything in/ but/ they slid from my glass fingertips/& I  
shattered my fragile/glass heart/ against the wall/ to stop/ feelings of/ 'I want to die to \_\_\_'/ etc.

People (I) look back at  
their (my) first love fondly.

How?

## The Dove

Oh, gentle dove which is my heart,  
fly not to summer's bittersweet remembrance  
lest my ribs which doth protect thee,  
shatter with earthquakes of sobbing.

Oh, dear dove,  
thou art but a fragile freedom  
whose wings doth soar on the winds of love.  
But when the winds doth cease,

Nothing stops thy plummeting fall.  
Why didst we love the torrents  
of pain?  
Whose sparrow-like frame did

Shake with memories of loss and  
war.  
Fly not now, my sweet little dove,  
summer's remembrance is still a bittersweet cruelty.

## Healing Charms

I remember my broken heart  
as sharp pieces of glass inside  
my chest. I painted a mask of  
quirky cheer, to hide my face;  
A canvas of sorrowful art.

I remember when my mom,  
brought my family and I to the  
animal shelter, to meet our second  
foster dog, he was trouble,  
but left me calm.

We had him for a week,  
it felt like a year. He thought he  
was top, when he was not.  
Barked non stop, tried to steal food,  
but loved me, so I was left meek.

It was a relief when he was gone.  
But, the house was empty without him.  
Weeks went by, and we went to foster  
our third. We picked out an angel with soft,  
creamy fur, this is the dog to which I was drawn.

As I now lay with this angel in my arms  
my heart feels full of love and care.  
I barely remember its shattered state.  
I feel fur between my fingertips, that's all  
that matters. Who knew dogs had

Healing Charms?

## Cats

Alley Cats prowl  
the merciless city  
searching for ways  
to survive

House Cats nap  
on velvet cushions  
waiting on staff  
to feed them

Alley Cats hunt  
in every shadow  
catching prey  
to feed their families

House Cats play  
with fake mouse tails  
gleefully enjoying  
the sport

Alley Cats leap  
from rooftop to rooftop  
tasting freedom  
that they can't enjoy

Are they so different from us?



## My Relationship with Perfectionism

Perfectionism is my greatest frenemy,  
sometimes we clash as  
two great warriors on a bloodstained battlefield.  
Other times we embrace as old comrades  
reunited in purpose.

Perfectionism has a savory scent  
of sweat and hard work and satisfaction  
with hints of beauty.  
He always makes me feel like  
I don't measure up.

He battles to gain control  
over my emotions and mind.  
I try I try I try I try I try I try I try  
to fight back and make  
him realise that

neither of us will be perfect.  
He malingers in my mind, making  
threats of unhappiness,  
by pointing out my flaws, leaving them  
barren thorns of hatred.

I scramble to the nearest bathroom,  
hopefully leaving perfectionism behind,  
but he is still chasing me wherever I go.  
I close the bathroom door behind me,  
leaving him out.

I say to my reflection:  
I love you  
I love you

I love you  
even if we're not perfect.

## Gambling Myself Away

Trusting Someone who is untrustworthy  
is a gamble  
where the victor has reputation kindled  
and the loser lives with a friendship  
lost in a storm of words and deeds.

Boldly telling truth about a liar  
is a gamble of words  
where the victor becomes the  
hunter of innocence  
and the loser loses the power of speech.

Loving someone who is unlovable  
is a gamble of soul, mind, body, and heart  
where the victor takes all  
and the loser loses everything.

## Porcelain Doll

She was like a porcelain doll.  
Cold. Hard. But very pretty.  
She was just sitting there  
like a porcelain doll;  
ready to be looked at.

## Savior's Shadow

My Savior's shadow  
I now follow no longer  
for I am with him.

## Fireworks in my Stomach

I have fireworks in my stomach.

The sizzle and explode  
with a red-hot lust for love  
adventure and life

The fireworks burst  
in flamboyant colour  
Blue green red  
hope luck and adventure

The problem?  
They can't leave my stomach  
The bursting excitement would burn  
down my sincere forest heart  
Would disrupt the garden of wisdom,  
my mind  
and as for my love organs?  
I can imagine the disaster

So I keep my fireworks in my stomach  
And I don't know how long they'll stay

## Storm of Worries

Anxiety can sort of feel  
like an endless  
storm of worries

drip  
drop  
drip  
drop.

My Stone mind  
swallows  
the constant panic

drip  
drop  
drip  
drip

Of every little thing.  
This worry/water  
strangles and drowns

drip  
drop  
drip  
drop

all of my insides  
and leaves my  
stone mind

drip  
drop

drip

drop

hollow



## Pearls

Treat your girls like they are pearls  
Beautiful, rare  
Precious, and fair  
For if you don't, one day you'll find  
that your precious pearls will walk away  
and can choose to leave you behind.

## God and Algebra

$7/2 d = 112 + 1.5$  Solve for d.

Why walk upon time's hollow doorstep  
since the end result for all is death?  
d= death and 7/2 is life. Our God  
is the numerator of all  
and there's no way to  
solve for a reciprocal.

Life and Death aren't parallel entities,  
there's life after death and  
death is a part of life.  
They are perpendicular forces  
crisscrossed in the fraction of  
time and space.

We cannot count the days until  
we give the ghost. Don't try to solve  
the equation of life and death.  
It's a completely crisscrossed fraction of time and space  
where the perpendicular crossroads  
of life and death are blurred.

The gifts of God are life's living,  
not on time's hollow doorstep of useless  
curiosity. God knows us all, so he is the  
great numerator of the universe.  
No man can be the reciprocal  
of his goodness.

$7/2 d = 112 + 1.5$  Do not solve for d.

## Her Touch

Violence flowed through  
my hollowed insides;

I couldn't wait for her to come.

I bit my tongue  
clawed my skin  
kicked my shin

and she came.

I felt her harsh embrace upon me.  
My body roared and battled  
against her.

But my desperate mind  
and tormented soul  
had never been clear  
unless she was here.

I thus was my relationship  
with pain.

## Pioneer

You truly were a Saint  
a martyr now you lie;  
Your spirit will return to him  
as mortal flesh does die.

You walked and walked  
among the plains  
and suffered a few  
too many pains.  
Despite this  
you were filled with song,  
and praised his goodness  
all along.

You taught your children  
in their youth  
his loving words  
and all their truth.  
A joyful fam'ly you have raised,  
now as you lie  
all shall be praised.

You battled onward  
'gainst all sin;  
and fought 'longside  
your brethren.  
You loved the lord  
all of your days,  
and died to keep  
his holy ways.

In heav'n we'll greet, but 'til then;  
God be with you 'til we meet again.

## Mr. Cat Eyes

Dear Mr. Cat Eyes:

May I please have my heart back?

I know you don't know me,  
but I think that you  
found

the broken little heart that I dropped  
in the hallway last forever ago.

The little heart that was  
broken

in the hallway? The one that you nourished  
with crooked smiles and  
compliments?  
I would

like that back please. But, if you  
don't feel like giving  
it back just yet,  
meet me

at the library at 7 o'clock.  
tonight. We can meet in person,  
I would like to  
know you

for more than your beautiful  
Cat eyes.

~ Shadow

## sleep sleep,

Cushioned by velvet darkness  
In a soft, safe world  
I know little about

Warmed by silky sheets  
keeping my breath  
deep and smooth  
and my eyes are growing heavy

Limbs are sinking  
into the bed  
and my mind is sinking  
to a land of dreams

Savouring the sensations  
for I know  
that the day  
will be far less comforting

## Playgrounds

A playground on a sunny day  
Is a child's heart fulfilled.  
It is the place where youthful  
Laughter  
Echoes off the earth and sky.

A hollow playground on rainy morn  
Is a memory of children's fun.  
Where spacious desire for  
Childish games are what fill  
It's empty bones.

## mirrors

we were midnight dancers  
twinkling in the stars  
of each other's eyes.  
brave, young, stupid, and burning

were the names that flickered  
across our lips, into the unknown  
of each other.

we were the animals whose fiery  
bellies almost ignored the borders.  
"danger, don't cross" it said.  
"danger, don't " it said.  
"danger" it said.

we were two sets of eyes,  
almost drowning in passion,  
because we were two mirrors  
reflecting the desire and pain  
of our lives.

I heeded the warning, stopped before  
the trenches.

....

only cowards leave their loved ones  
to fall.



## Roommates in my Head

Pain? What pain?

I said through gritted teeth.

The devil's voices said

The pain you always have.

The pain you'll always have.

Their words always sicken me.

It's sometimes hard to know the

difference between a hard truth

and a lie.

You're ugly

they say

You're fat

they say

You know that you're as dumb as a donkey

they say.

I cry as they laugh and scurry to watch

horror movies in my head.

I'm always the main character, they

like the ones where I get beat up

and left for dead.

I never survive.

I sigh, as the screen is crimson with my

blood and tears.

I wish that you would at least pay rent

I say.



## Torture~An Attempted Sonnet

Do what my eyes now see?The darkness laden;  
My pain adorning it's broken crown.  
Chemicals running through miles of body,  
the torture won't stop 'til answers are there.  
Blood dripping: solace from agonies grip,  
the interrogators: suspected sadists.  
Smiling sadists together inside the room  
means preparation for bodily doom.  
The madmen ask about secrets  
worth dying to protect. My living, or others?  
Morality's question. The simple answer  
floats in shadows. Sadists waiting for their  
answers: "Suck it, sadists", my reply.  
Needles waiting for those words continue now my torture.

## Love tonight

can you feel the love tonight?  
the magic in the air?  
do you see the sparkling light  
that never before was there?

can you feel the beating in my chest;  
the beating, crisp and loud?  
it's been too long since days of rest,  
too long since i've been proud.

can you feel the gentle pull  
that guides us to be close?  
then why act like a crazy bull,  
and hide from what you want most?

can you feel the secrets here?  
they're not from just this place.  
there is something that you fear  
something you alone can't face.

can you feel my love tonight?  
can you feel my light?  
with me here, don't fear and fright.  
i just want to love tonight.



## Let you go

I'm letting you go  
Because I love you.  
Because I tried to help you  
so many times.  
Because I thought I could fix you.  
But I can't.  
I can't fix your broken life  
as it slips from your fingertips  
quicker than liquid silver.  
I can't fix your broken heart  
as the earth and sky crush it  
with their venomous truths.

I can't hold on. We're both too fragile.

I know what you are; because I am  
you. Souls made of the same fabric,  
I suppose.

I don't want you to walk through hell  
but you gotta recover with someone  
else.

I hope you know I love you,  
because I let you go.

## Schizophrenia

Sometimes I lay awake  
wondering if the  
demons in my head  
are Schizophrenia

**honestly,**

the problem

these days

is that

people

display their bodies

before they

display their souls

and

call it

love



## Scarlet

we must look  
so little  
when you take away  
our sins.  
but wash away the  
scarlet,  
and what do we have  
left?

## I am (The Ocean)

I do not lie  
when I tell you that

I am the ocean

I do not lie when  
I say that I'm treacherous  
do not come to me  
and beg for

a drink

you will only find a salty reminder  
of what I am not

I am not

the sweet rainfall of  
tenderness you want  
I am not your Dead Sea

of silence

when I say I am the ocean  
I say I am the raging  
tide

I say I am the  
deepest blue

I say I am  
home  
to dolphins

and sharks

do not search me for the  
measliest pearl

because

kiss me now and you unleash  
all that I am

I am the ocean

## Glass

*shatter  
me on  
this wall like  
glass.*

*I  
want to  
see how many  
pieces I make.*

## Wild

*we're the same~you and I.  
we're both wild animals  
that've never tasted wilderness.*

## self~love

*loving yourself is being  
unafraid of looking in the mirror*

## Holding back

*holding back a punch*

*holding bitter words*

*holding back my temper*

*holding back the hurt*

## lonely~ little red fox

lonely

*whispered the little red fox. his shadow flickered towards the forest, inviting. his pelt was knotted with stories, and all I wanted was to untangle them. his tail tapped when I unravelled his childhood. it's funny how even the smallest creature starts even smaller. his ears drop as I continue: when I learn of his mother's death, how he grew up much too early. knot after knot, story after story, it all poured into a life as clear as the dancing smoke in the sky. now looking into his eyes, I can see a light beyond my life. the light of nature, the light of a million stars twinkled in the green eyes of this little red fox. walking away, his whisper echoes in the wind*

lonely



## What Poems are Made of

*the flicker of a moment dances in front of me, inviting the words to spill from my lips.*

*his eyes were desperate, needing me to explain why I didn't want to love him. snowflakes dripped off my tongue as I told him I was sheltering my fragile glass heart.*

*the spanish night sang as a silhouette of affection settled in my breast. I didn't realize that it was there until I was soaring in the clouds, thinking of him.*

*our love started small, just a tiny spark playing with the kindling. but as we all know, we never just settle for a peck on the cheek. it grew way too fast.*

*the affection in my chest was more than well-rooted. it sprouted it's tender branches, grew stronger and stronger with each drop of kindness that fell from his lips. it grew 'til it was not just affection. it was love.*

*a tree sprouted in my vapid soul. a fire burned in the winter called my body. we were melting together, our souls torn open, our minds singing like lovebirds, our imaginations teasing our bodies to love; despite the kilometers that would never be filled.*

*oh, he was heaven.*

*but even heaven becomes hell when you're young and wild. the kilometers were becoming too many. distance and silence were thick in the room. it was poisoning my lungs, it bled into the tree. my breast, glass again. my soul, dark again.*

*snowflakes and ashes spilled off my lips when I told him. our fire was dead, and he didn't see it. I broke his heart. I broke mine as well.*

*only time, patience, and glue can piece glass together. it took months upon months to come even close.*

*it was finally finished at camp. it seems an odd place, but that's not it at all. campfire smoke danced into the star-lit sky. the full moon sang her midnight song, casting shadows on those who wouldn't listen.*

*Starlight, Star-bright, I see a shooting star tonight! wish I may and wish I might, my wish already came true tonight.*

*all these moments flicker in front of me like the sparks on a firecracker. every passing moment, every single feeling, all well up inside us and translate into words.*

*this is what we are made of.*

*this is what poems are made of.*

## games

love  
doesn't play  
games  
we play  
games  
with  
love

## A new day

*As the sun sets on the horizon,  
so another day is past.*

*Did I live it to the fullest?*

*Did I use it like my last?*

*Goodbye day, your time is up.*

*The time is for the night.*

*Goodbye day, Goodbye friends,  
our time together fell away!*

*A bittersweet farewell,  
and a welcome hello awaits.*

*For after every sunset,  
a sunrise must take place.*

*After my night of rest,  
I'll welcome the rising day.*

*How can I live anew with this new  
day?*

*Who will I meet?*

*What will I say?*

## Fairy Wings~A Slam Poem

*Whoa. It's dark in here. But then again, everything's dark in this stone-cold cave called my self-esteem. What's that?-the girl in the mirror asks. What?- I ask back. Self-esteem she giggled; not knowing those words poked at the gelatin of my organs and left me hollower than usual. But that's okay; I force the words between my teeth so that someone else doesn't have to. It's funny how society benefits from an army of insecure little girls. I mean that's what they're hoping for since it's our insecurities that make us buy makeup and gym memberships and appetite suppressants and so forth. What would god do if he was here witnessing all the sad little girls like me? I mean the ones who look in the mirror and see scars where there are supposed to be fairy wings. I mean the fairies who look at the mermaids and think "Why can't I be pretty like her?" I think God would heal them as he did those blind men and make us all see that we're fairies or mermaids or unicorns or whatever he intended us to be. He doesn't make mistakes. Never has, never will. But since God isn't here, we need to reach. We need to let him carry us until he can walk beside him. If we can walk, let's find the people who are still in the dark. Let's give them Glasses so that they can see their Fairy Wings.*

## Predator

*Tiger stripes  
prey unknowingly  
steps closer  
and closer  
and closer  
'til it is  
too late.*

## **Il me t'aime/He loves me**

*La lumiere dans ses yeux  
regarde a moi avec quelque chose je  
reconnais pas.*

*Ses mots dance dans le vent  
parce que  
il a dit q'il me t'aime.*

*-Garde le rose  
il dit  
-tes lèvres son deux fois plus belles*

*Je n'ai jamais penser que  
Il me t'aime.*

*The light in his eyes  
looks at me with something  
I don't recognise.  
His words dance in the wind  
because  
he said that he loves me.*

*-Keep the rose  
he said  
-your lips are twice as beautiful*

*I never would have thought that  
He loves me.*



## Bury the Dead

*let the blood spill the blood  
let the bone cover the bone  
let the dead bury the dead*



## To the boy I've never met~a slam poem

*to the boy I've never met: I love you. I know that must be hard for you to understand, since I dumped you three times and the third time was the time it finally ended. I know it must have been hard for you, since you live in New Jersey while I live in Canada, and we don't talk or text or Skype anymore. I know that it must have been hard for you to have loved me when the only word that really mattered... was distance.*

*to the boy I never kissed: I still kinda love you. It's been a year and my skin still glows from the compliments you gave me. It's been a year, and I can still picture your charming black locks, the locks I never got to ruffle up when I was playful, never got to pat when I was happy, never got to hold when I wanted to kiss you. That's right! Kiss you! I'd have kissed you 'til your name was engraved on my lips! You'd have forgotten every girl's taste except mine, and I'd have snogged you 'til both of us were desperate for breath!*

*to the boy I never met: I empathize with you. I've been through exactly what you're dealing with. the voices in your head... the blade at your arm... the string tied around your neck... I wanted the same! I wanted to die because..... that's not the point I was trying to make; I wanted to tell you that we are the same. Not the same religion, not the same culture, not even the same colour; our souls are ripped jeans on a cold winter morning. our souls are the teddy bears that the dog chewed up once or twice just to spite us, we SURVIVED!*

*to the boy who proposed to me when I was fourteen with a ring emoji: no.*

*to the boy I wish didn't meet online: ....*

*I think I still sorta maybe love you.*

## War of Words/Ode to the soldiers~a slam poem

When I say 'Shut up', I mean that I want you to stop using your mouth, when I say that I want you to stop using your mouth, I want you to stop shooting. Stop shooting words from the gun called your mouth, I mean that I wanted you to stop/ 'In Flanders field, where poppies grow, between the crosses, row on row/ I would like people to end war, even if it was just for a day/ Stop talking! Stop talking! Stop talking! Doesn't the crimson bleeding from my heart tell you that you've already wounded me? Can't you see that you're shooting at/scars... don't just come from bullets. They can also come from/ trembling snipers don't win wars/ I remember my father teaching me how to use this machine gun mouth for the first/ time teaches people to be themselves. Being themselves shows them that they're/ soldiers are the only ones who use guns correctly. Hunters shoot for profit. Others shoot for fun... true soldiers/ protect me! Protect me! I'm scared. I have bullets between my teeth and I can't use them correctly. I don't know how/ Pistols! Men carry pistols, women have/ rifles were designed to be efficient at long distances. I don't know why/ my heart needs a barricade in these/ mass shootings are getting more and more common. So when I say 'Shut up', I really mean stop shooting,

## Senses

*I love  
the scent  
of lavender  
oranges  
and rain  
The taste  
of  
french macarons  
italian cheesecake  
and spanish chocolate  
fresh  
on my lips  
Baby  
the world is  
ours  
so  
let's enjoy it*

## First

*Look at us.*

*Roses are curling into  
bone*

*Our (snare drum) hearts  
both  
beating/beating/ beating*

*To the sound of  
our sadness.  
You say*

*{I love you}.  
I say that we're  
the French*

*~revolution~*

*Baby, we are too  
broken to fix  
each/other...*

## Clockwork

*groaning of gears marks the  
absence  
of the smooth, clean life which  
we desperately cling to.  
marksmen and their arrows  
hunt silently  
in the hidden winter landscape  
of thought  
and miss.     doorways of secrets  
follow the leader  
as the sweet black dog in  
mists of fog and time.  
time  
and  
music,  
displaying the auroras for  
what they really are.  
rose petals dance in my inner  
labyrinth and the wind sings!  
watch the clocks think.  
think.  
think.*

## Birthright

*who told you that you were not responsible for your history?  
doesn't the blood of your ancestors still boil inside your body? can we  
not respect the fact that our grandmother's bones are still  
cradling your mother's infant tears?  
we all came from someone.*

*i can tell you i know that my grandfather was a soldier in WW2.  
hear that? the call of my grandfather's blood is obedience.  
the voice of the blood in my veins calls me "soldier. racist.  
conqueror."*

*i can tell you i know that my ancestors were the villains of Time  
(an ambling mystery of sweat and stars)  
hungry for indians at the end of a pistol. smiling at the sight of  
chopping at tongues (deemed savage) and shoving our  
languages down their throats as if feeding a child that was already  
full.*

*i still feel the cradle of my grandmother's bones.  
it's not much of an apology. if every marshmallow human (like  
me) apologized for our ancestors, it still wouldn't change.  
who told you that you were not responsible for your history?*

## An Obsession of Life and Death

*The Dead girl living  
off' says death is wasted  
on the dying.  
Perhaps it's the way she chokes  
on the suicide notes she can't  
bother writing  
or  
maybe it's the way that air  
becomes stone in her lungs.*

*The Live girl dying  
off' says life is wasted  
on the living.  
Perhaps it's the way her body  
fights itself as she sings  
or  
maybe it's the way  
the dying find grace in an  
answered prayer.*

*The Dead girl living  
stores her pain in a piggy  
bank heart,  
hoping that someday it will  
count for something.  
She took her loneliness and  
stashed it in between her  
ribs,  
hoping god would notice  
and grant her the end she is  
craving.*

*The Live girl dying*

*answered her call to arms with  
a smile,  
saying she knew how to float  
or fly through these dark days.  
Saying she knew  
god would notice  
and grant her the beginning she is  
craving.*