

Anthology: Hannah

hpoetry

Presented by

My poetic side 

Dedication

With love - S, D, K

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Longing for an Answer

How can I know
if I love you?
Don't I just love love itself?;
the aching, burning longing, the
gentle rush of wind as it settles
somewhere deep inside.
I have reached into the cavity of my chest,
fingers bloodied and sore,
tried to find it with my own hands,
but there was nothing there.
How can I know if I love you?
Something simmers when you go
and there's someone else
when I look into the mirror
and you are not beside me - then
the earth turns, and God, I can feel it,
I feel it all so deeply that it hurts,
so I hold on tight
and I write and I write,
asking every God I've never believed in
to just let me keep this one, this time.
I don't know if I think it makes any difference.
I don't know why I still ask
when I think I know the answer.
How can I know
if
I love you

Bliss (Descriptive)

Sunlight beamed on the world below. The busy streets of London buzzed, people scuttling undisturbed like ants during a storm, scurrying to take care of their own business. Vibrant flowers lined windows all along the dazzling streets, filling the air with their scent and mingling with the pungent perfume on women's wrists and the enticing aroma of fresh, bright fruit in the market stalls; yes, this was bliss.

Down an alleyway, resounding calls of churchgoing boys echoed into the sun. Each sound wave smashed the windows of the church, stained glass painted fresh with the voices that would remain for centuries to come. Heavenly, angelic, the choir flew on its wings happiness into the sky ? which crashed and fell peacefully on the streets below as if it were confetti from a cannon. Still their song reverberated and shook the walls of the cathedral, overflowing an air of sound, uplifting anyone who listened. It filled them with warmth, and to them, this was bliss.

And just outside of these very walls were dozens of people listening intently, absolutely speechless. Simply relaxing to the beautiful sound that echoed through their bones as they lay blanketed in the soft earth. They remained until sunset ? but remained still ? to hear the very last of the angelic chorus as it faded into the night. They were happy watching the stars appear behind the stormy clouds ? watching the sun rise and fall ? watching the world pass them by ? until they were but a story-less amnesiac on a slab of stone, forgotten by their own time, but still to them, this was bliss.

Night arrived and drowned the sun. The church suddenly fell silent as the choir retreated to its sleeping quarters, and further away on the high street, the markets hid themselves away. Rain fell from the sky, impassively smacking onto the empty concrete.

This was the end.

Roads fell silent with disquietude, death, lifelessness. London was obsolete, its sleepy alleys no longer teeming with the life that had enriched and poisoned them. The rain continued to fall, and it struck suddenly into the thoughtless minds lying six-feet-under in the graveyards; and while they had lost the privilege of freedom, to anyone present, this was bliss.

I Want Her (To Be Mine)

I want
what she has.
I want her life
to be mine, to be
intertwined
with mine. I want
to explore her
identity as if
it were my own
and to see
her life through
her eyes; to see
my life through
her eyes. I wish
to have her
eyes, to have
them staring into
mine, perhaps to
trade them
with my own,
lovingly, to
fall into her,
become her,
to live her life.
She is beauty
and I want her;
to be or to be
with.

Is This Home?

How many people have made me fall apart on this bed?
You could be the only one to never do it;
you could be the last one to ever do it.
I can still feel you on my skin, the palm of my hands,
the kiss on my cheek, the wrists you never touched.
And if I feel you everywhere, won't it rip me apart?
There are no pieces of you scattered in this room
but when I look out of the window at night
it is your face I see reflected back in the dark,
and no, I can't say the words down the phone
but there's echoes of you in every inch of this town
and in everything I do;
the divots in my chest that can be filled with only your face;
the house at the end of the street filled with memories that are not my own;
and in the daylight my love fades away until you are just a man again.
I took the train home for the first time since I left
and there was a girl standing behind her father,
and kids sitting on the platform floor giving a hi-five,
the windows with families playing and laughing,
and someone with the same hair as you,
eighty miles so full of lives, of strangers, of homes,
and I saw the clouds reflected in the water
which rippled under the light breeze
and I thought to myself - is this home?
Is home where I came from, or is it where I made it,
where I choose it to be?
The end of the journey or where it began -
and did I begin when I was born, at my first breath,
when I can remember the spring of childhood,
when I left and sowed the seeds alone for the first time?
Did I begin at the beginning or at the end?
If home could be in the arms of a lover
would I choose it to be?

James

Why must I wear your name around my chest
when the very taste of it I detest ?
it sickens me to roll it off my tongue
but you left me alone when I was young.
It lingers in my mouth so bittersweet
the day you left I remember sorely
the eternal echo, you burn and grow,
not to be rid of, but how much it hurts,
not to be forgotten, but from which to
learn; that those to say they'll stay don't speak the truth.

My Raft

I gathered sticks and string,
tied new knots and tightened
well; loose ends can raise a
tragic demise in the
water if you don't take
care. I picked up every
thing I needed from the
woods, most of it I found
on the forest floor or
beneath the twine that lay
by the roots of each tree,
and built myself a raft.

I took to the water,
raft in hand, holding it
carefully for fear of
breaking such a fragile
thing. I didn't want to
have to let go, I was
reluctant to put it
in the water, to lose
it; I loved it and I
almost went home. But I
stayed, sat by the water,
and let go of my raft.

Floating on a placid
lake, my raft looked strong, bold,
majestic. Swan under
sun. I pushed it further
out, almost out of reach,
an arms' length away. I
wanted to pull it back,

to keep it close but I
was brave and jumped on, held
on for the life of me
and it. I sat, paddled,
and floated away on my raft.

A million planets
above me, countless and
pure. I would never know
what is up there. Next to
me, a rocky cliff face
and ghosts calling for me
to see them. So as they
ordered, I opened my
eyes wide and saw it all.
I was blind and crashed, broke.
My raft was in pieces,
collapsed, you beside me,

and I fell.

Norma (Head Rush)

I put my head under the water as it runs cold
in some futile attempt tasting distinctly
of oreos and lime juice and cheese pizza
to quell the nausea that comes with
the daily remembrance of your last inhale.
And I hold my breath, feeling the air trapped in
my lungs like some sort of twisted jail cell,
closing my eyes, and welcoming the head rush.

- for Norma, forever in my heart

One In a Million

The first time we went to New York together,
we attached a padlock to Brooklyn Bridge.
I wanted to throw the key into the water
but he wanted to keep it as a reminder.
'A reminder of what?' I asked him.
He never gave me an answer - just a smile
and a wink and we never spoke of it again.
In fact, I forgot about it for years,
until one day I crossed that bridge again,
wind dancing between my fingertips
where his hand once held tight,
and I caught a glimpse of metallic gold.
It was by no means sparkling or extravagant,
but that's the way he wanted it to be.
Ordinary, blending in with the crowds,
because we could never be that. We were one in a million.
And I became half of that one when he left,
incomplete
and
fragile,
so I walk that bridge, listening to the melodic striking
of metal locks on metal wires,
and take that small key out of my pocket.
I close my eyes as I twist the key,
barely hearing the internal crunching of mechanics
I had never found the time to learn about,
and hold my breath, hoping I had finally found the right padlock.
It unlocks with a click. The one final item in
my pocket is a platinum band, a ring
I had been so anxious to present to him,
a ring that had seen decades of us together,
sharing breaths and laughter and last names,
until my breaths became my own once more.

I knew long ago that if I couldn't share them with him,
I didn't want them at all. The lock clicks once more,
trapping his ring. I wear mine on my finger still,
as though it is a part of me, melted into my skin
with a heat that only burns when he's far away.
He'll be close soon. We'll be together soon.
I take the key and kiss it once, gently,
taking my time to feel the cold on my lips
as I had when we first came to this bridge
on that spring afternoon, the wind biting.
We had kissed so passionately, so freely
in public for the first time in a new city
set to become our home. I had often thought of this moment,
this instant that had been chasing me for years
like the ticking of a clock, had hung over my head during
those lonely years in my youth and every second we were apart.
Sometimes I felt it when we were together,
but he always buried it with his love and affection.
'Promise me you'll never do that'.
I remember holding back the whispered 'I can't promise that',
instead nodding in acquiescence.
He had kissed my forehead and we held each other for hours.
I would give everything to feel that warmth,
the safety of being in his arms and tasting his lips again.
He was so soft. I know he would catch me if he were here,
pillow the fall and tell me I'd be okay.
I only hope I can hear his voice again on the other side.
The bridge stands stoic with the next strong gust of wind,
my clothes flapping noisily, creating a rhythm
with the clang of metal. I hold the key tight
in my hand, the teeth biting into my skin,
a sensation I am numb to feel because of the cold.
Perhaps it would be better if I could feel the pain.
It will only take one more strong wind to topple me over.
The last years have been a storm without him to shelter me.
I remember he always hated it when I went to sleep

without telling him I loved him first.

A climb over the railing.

A deep inhale.

A whispered sentence, as meaningful as it had been that first time in our hometown.

I love you.

Pebbles

I roll pebbles between my fingers,
dancing to a slow song playing only in my mind,
imagining a candlelit ballroom
and a romantic starry sky
and all the makings of a romance novel;
dreaming of a warm body wrapped
around my own.

I wash the pebbles in the sink
with the sweetest smelling soaps
so I can press them to my lips
and feel their smoothness like a kiss of nature,
inhale the soft scent
and know that it is safe and clean and okay.

I keep my pebbles on my bedside table
and I hold them in the palm of my hand,
feeling them turn from stone cold
to warm

Providence of a Dying Planet

Petrol fumes on Rushlake Crescent
Wafting between the grey buildings
That skirt the reeking tarmac road
Which, with great thanks to the sun,
Smokes a poisonous and sickly gas.
Polluted lungs and choking children
From a nearby school zone, thick
And threatening white stripes painted
Eternally on the road, lines that warn
Drivers to slow! or else the innocent
Strips will be stained red with blood.

And on what was once a verdant horizon
Lay thousands of shining silver squares
That gleam with the light of a dying
Planet, an earth that hungers for
Simple salvation; for relief, for security,
For life. It longs to be saved from us.
Among that grotesque skyline beam
Bright lights from inside every building
Glowing industrial yellow behind each window.
And beyond, further in the distance,
Unmistakably indistinct, there is more.

There is more than what we can see right now,
What we first interpret as a spreading urban
disease, there is much more. There is yet
Another city, yet another conurbation of dejection
And complete relentless dereliction
That cannot be combated with even the
Strongest mind, or the strongest will to produce
Luscious greenery. Inevitable, the metropolis
Afflicts the natural beauty with its greedy

Ashen abnormality that plagues even the
Brightest city. I watch as my own city is drowned

In a grey sea, until nothing remains but callous
Concrete, and all that remains is ourselves, until even
We fade away from the earth (at our own hands),
And my head is held to face my city as it
Decays and I can do nothing. With the earth
As my city, I had so much to protect, and
Now I have so much to lose. The fire
Spreads and engulfs my city in one last
Flame, going out in a literal blaze of glory.
My city is the whole earth, and someday soon
We shall all have to bear witness to its fate.

Scorpio

She is the ocean in the winter,
Transcendent, sparkling, strong,
The hope filled plunge
Into cold water at the bottom
Of the sea, immense waves
Crashing onto the stones of
The beach where they fell.

She is the sun on a spring day,
Warming this cold earth,
Bringing colour and beauty
With her as she arrives for the
First time, blossoming flowers
From bright seeds, beautifully
Lighting up each day.

She is the wind in the summer,
A cooling zephyr that lifts the
Weight off my chest, calming,
Carrying on her breeze something
Curiously new and exciting, a burst
Of colour and a sweet relief
From monotony, an escape from
Overpowering heat.

She is the trees in the autumn,
Standing tall and greeting all
With a smile and a flash of
Reds, yellows, browns, an array
Of colour, a change and arrival
Of something so precious that
It shakes you to your core,
Just as the trees themselves

Tremble with their own height,
Courageous vertigo as their
Bright leaves fall to the floor.

She is every second that passes,
Present and inescapable,
Always on my mind and I can't
Shake the memory of her though
I don't want to, she embodies the
Acceptance and inevitable love
Of change and stepping out of
Comfort to face a world of
Beauty when I look in her eyes,
The terrifyingly calming nature of
Change that you can't climb back
From if you fall.

And in all her might, I fell.

Silk

Breathing in sync, deep and heavy,
your weight on top of mine and mine
on top of yours. Play, venturing,
tumbling down a magical
path, unpredictable. Silk draped
across your skin, dragged across the
sheets. Your heaviness on me, your
body swallowing my heart whole.

Eyes wide with pleasure, gasping and
grasping for your body, clutching
the silk sheets that lay disheveled
beneath us. The bed a mess, your
hair wet with sparkling sweat, ruffled
like the silk that we lay on. Drip
by drip I'm overcome; then by
tsunami I'm in love with you.

Hands gently caress, your soft touch
on my skin, soothing my bruises
and healing me. Your body strong
and pushing, weighing me down but
freeing me all the same. Your back
arches as we collide and it
feels good. Eyes still wide, blue, staring
lustfully into mine - we finish together,

your silk skin slipping over mine, released.

Smile

you offer me a smile,
as though you haven't just
stolen the very air from my atmosphere
and plunged me into a muffled world
under a dark blanket sea. my lips twitch
but I am too weak to pretend this time.

Stars

Stars twinkling, turning, bowling through the blackness
and planet rings orbit multicoloured gas giants
as they hang sorrowful in the vast emptiness.
Billions of years ago when it was all dark and
no light shone, no stars glowed, no planets had
ever thrived with the life that enriches them now,
our world never existed. But now as we stare into
nothingness from the mountaintop wondering
where does it go, what is out there, why do we exist
-and what will happen to us tomorrow, the stars
that existed centuries before us look down on us
in awe of what we've done, how far we've come.
As a mirror we look back to them, frozen in amazement,
my eyes wide because these stars led me to you.

Sunlight

Everything happens in an eclipse;
A day's light snuffed out by a single shred of darkness,
A dark night lit up with a whispered promise -
I look good -
And they all want to feel me on their skin like the sun
Whose golden light brushes the edges of buildings.
I take a photo
And it is beautiful and I have no one to show it to.
Who stands with me when the light is gone?
I try to grow
But the sun holds me back in its shadow
And it tells me - my child, if you wish to grow,
Do not shine your light on others, but yourself.

Take Off

Ready for impact, hold my breath
when I hear my name. I feel the
words come for me, knives sharpened
aimed at my heart, taken apart
and built up again until I'm
who you wanted me to be- blocks
stacking foundations, falling. You're
intolerable. You turn the
mirror and suddenly I'm not
"doing right by you" so you pick
at me. Taking off three, two, one.

I can't help the way I feel and
I'm trying so hard to hide it
but I see you every day. The
countdown starts and I feel all
the pressure building up
steam hissing bright lights
flashing beeping
explosion.
Three, two,
one.

We take off.

Thirty Seconds

I miss the sun
and its warm glow
the way it seeps
into my skin
and I can close my eyes and live.

I miss the air
how it slowly
brings me into
the light, lifts me
and lets me be still, and just breathe.

I miss the sky
always empty
yet so, so full
the way it holds
so many lives but is so still.

I miss you too.
I felt so safe
when you smiled and
when you held me
and I'll never forget that warmth

but I was never truly safe.

This Daydream World

Burning, burning, escape the flame
and you're 'home safe' to freedom's prison
dragging you back again, luring you
from the fire. The thick smoke hangs, lingering,
a gloomy shadow over your head,
so you're in the dark alone, with no
companion but the very smoke that
drowned you. Fearing solitude, grasp and
hold onto it, as on it your life
depends. Out the crevice between the
floor and wall, the very smoke that killed
you, befriend. Open your bright eyes and
recognise me here, but all you see for
miles is a dead, barren wasteland, the
remnants of this daydream world. The smoke
seeps in, slipping under and around
until it's in you, contaminating
your skin; it lingers and won't let go.
It billows, engulfing this daydream world.

What If

What if
I open my eyes
and the world is as beautiful
as I had wished it to be
in all those years of darkness?

What if
I do not let time pass me by,
living each day as though
it matters?

Because
it matters.

What if
I stop holding my breath
and I let the air
fill my lungs
and I let the scent of flowers
enter my body
and I let the sun
surround me
like the water
in the lake
which sparkles
like the dewdrops on the grass
of a fresh spring morning
under the light of the sun?

And what if
I open my eyes
and the world is as beautiful
as I had always pictured it to be.

Zephyr

Each drop danced a ballet, piercing the thick layers of solemn pall. They leaped and twisted from the clouds and guided the dagger blades that slashed faces and whipped leaves off trees. Wolf-like, it howled on the mountain, relentless, as a crow soared overhead through the clouds. Its wings worked hard to keep it alive ? what a monotonous existence, we chuckled. Sustenance is not enough for us. We crave amusement, but the bird just wants to live. What a peaceful existence, I thought, and what a lucky crow.

Perpetual drumbeat becomes unsteady as chaotic serenity descends from the grey. Shrouds of death linger in the crisp air, rickety as zephyr calmly pummels even the strongest trees ? then the breeze becomes a wind, and the wind becomes a storm. Battering the city and demolishing everything in its path, it left nothing in its wake. We were abandoned, we were alone. Drumbeats faded away and we watched the crow's despondent body descend down and smack on the concrete.

What a monotonous and grey existence, and what a lucky crow to have escaped.