Jole Reley

A POETIC JOURNEY
OF LOSS, DESPAIR AND HOPE

March 8th, 2013

A poetry book

As with my first book of poems, I wrote these in the middle of the night when my cell block is quiet and free of distraction. If you read my first book, then you might consider this next selection to be darker, more pessimistic. I write what and how I'm feeling at the time and believe me, I am mostly an optimistic person despite my subject matter. My promise to you is that I intended to find the hope and joy that I intended when writing some of these poems. I trust on the first read, then perhaps on the second.

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REVENGE

You slapped me hard and I fell to the floor, 
She made the mistake of thinking I wanted more. 
The pain gets deeper, grows harsher with time, 
Yet I walk thru town as if I'm feeling just fine.

My thoughts in my head grow dark and twisted. 
My drinking at the bar gets labeled two-listed. 
Right vs. wrong is about to be crossed, 
As a one way bus ticket out of town gets tossed.

That gun in the drawer I was saving for her 
Might get used to abuse. Are you ready to rue? 
I stall you here and there as if you cost a dime. 
Stay visible, please, move closer to that line.

A parking lot, quiet you ear here water tall. 
You walk to your truck not seeming so tall. 
I walk up beside you, all cozy at first. 
With gun in my pocket, it will quench off thirst.

The last glance of your eyes and my memories burn. 
Your Nickels hit gave me few places to turn. 
To face me, you bastard, Am too nervous to stall. 
My victory to savor as I wanted it all!
REVENGE, cont'd

One bullet in your head and the blood matches black.
Sleep, the dominion, your spine crumbles, goes slack.
Now a cell with a clock in the penthouse to kiss.
For what I did, it's all of my freedom I miss.
I wanted revenge. I wanted you dead.
But the fun was short-lived, in and out of my head.

It went fast and furious, just like that one bullet.
The haunting of what I did brings forth crying, her vomit.
Her more vomit.
GREY MOON

A moon that once burst orange
Now shines as grey in a sky filled with loss.
The orange moon gave and took in equal amounts,
But the grey overcomes reason with leap, too easy to court.

Harder to find in the sky with its circle less proud,
The stars and the planets don't twinkle so loud.
The grey moon, will it last from one month to the next?
Will it vanish forever, no lingering thoughts to ease?

A sliver, a crescent, a plate in the sky
I look up to guidance and shout out the cry
"Grey moon, do not leave me alone or this night!
My loneliness I feel wraps around me so tight."

"Good night, grey moon."
DESSERT LOVE

Wrap me up, put me down.
You seduce me in this town.
At western rip and tequila shots,
you're hot and steamy whether you're ready or not.

Chili adobo and their sauce call for you to be my boss.
Margaritas, chips and salsa, true to taste, never false.
It's Santa Fe, my heart tells me.
And I know this town's on fire
to hold me round my middle and let the dancing
take us higher.

A Spanish coffee placed beside the burning fire
At a hotel bar with its walls of pulsating desire.
Creepin' elevator to a floor hovering above,
Then down that plush hallway to a room inviting love.

Santa Fe, Santa Fe give me hope and cleanse my spirit;
But don't hold me too tight or I'll lose this love just given.
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

God, it's 2 AM, can't the dawn come any faster?
The shadows of candles writhe like the cracks in my plaster.
My throat's somewhat studded with bourbon to spare,
But I'd rather be lying in bed with my chair.

If only sleep promised had come like it should,
I wouldn't be crying, I'd be very, feeling good.
But the demons are calling, my soul to sway,
No relief from their crawling, the sheets slow to tear.

Every noise in this house seems louder than life,
And the cat and the dog stop their playing this night.
I watch them take in the rain on the glass
Of windows once clear for my head to see past.

I hope for some quiet, the rumbling of time
With heavy, gone to neutral, so bright lights to blind.
A glass of warm milk should now call me to sleep,
And the wind dries my tears as I fade counting sheep.
WOUNDED HEART

The walls are hard, the concrete thick,
the bars on my cell too evil to hit.
My heart is encased within these bars,
No longer a prisoner of soft tissues void of scars.

The same I'm called, the terrible love
surround me at night when push comes to shove.
In and out of my cell, in and out of me
I turn out, turn away, as I give up my plea.

When you see me again and you flinch at my pain,
Remember I stood were walls brought forth the rain.
My heart yanked and twisted as my body lay prone,
My spirit all but lifted to a cloud all alone.

I cannot convince you I tried with all my might,
Yet plotted revenge and nightmares made me give up the fight.
Red, sometimes purple, my heart's color is real,
But the shades are growing darker with pulses to feel.

My heart still beats despite the odds
Of screams, praying, crying inside the jail's pods.
But I won't you to love it, my heart though it's weak.
In time it can heal and to you it will speak... again.
A CADILLAC CALLED HOME

What waits for me in a parking lot of police cars?
My bright blue cadillac to drive me to the bar.

You see, I got out of jail this morning under a blazing sun.
So I'm counting on your cadillac to take me to the bar.

I'll turn on that AC, I'll crack up some tunes.
I'll stop at the Walgreens for coffee and balloons.

It's been twelve months since I sat behind your wheel,
Concrete and bars now replaced by chrome and steel.

From floodlights to headlights to face, but in a tast
Brittle liquors and blankies to press set to crack
Stainless steel stools to plush cushiony seats
Glass partitions and wells to windows that roll
And a trunk to carry a new life complete.

Heading out of this town and miles to the next,
Nothing feels better than a wheel to careen.
From biways to highways down and up hills,
Red lights and green lights that could have once killed.
A CADILLAC CALLED HOME, cont'd

I'm home in my ear. It feels good to drive.
No message to send except "It's good to be alive."
Tears in my eyes and my hair blowing free
From a year without freedom and so roads to see.

Oh, my bright blue cadillac, I won't lose you again.
You're a home and a comfort, let's keep going round the bend.

TWO SEASONS

spring
  mild, radiant
  planting, growing, pruning
  flowers, flowers, harvest, pumpkin
  reaping, warming, blazing
  chilly, crisp

autumn
A RAG DOLL LIFE

Smacked and punched, what more does it matter?
Lifeless and limp, here was this right to batter?
Some time ago a message was sent
That boys will be boys, a rule you can't bend.

Pretty and sly with green eyes of splendor
Making that boy consider his heart to render.
Yet, an arm around her waist meant power
And her life once endless lives near to tear.

She keeps things together thanks to make-up and wire.
With a long glassticket she's soon out of time.
A supper home-cooked on a white table cloth
Meant a day of devotion to a stove and fork.

If only his kisses were soft like they were.
If only his blessings overcame his curse.
A front porch swing used to capture our mood.
A lilac in a vase meant the promise of love.

What caused him to change, she'll never know.
She'll smile her way through it, but under a black crow.
Her straight ends and flowers, but his always stays strong.
She didn't bargain for this, her marriage gone wrong.
Wrong... terrible wrong.
ANGEL WINGS

I held on tight to my dreams that night,
A night of treachery and rapid heartbeats,
A night of anxiety and pain in my chest,
A night when at moments I wanted lasting rest.

An angel so pretty, so blonde, so white
Flew into my dreams through the wreckage of that night,
Helping me to hold on and cry without guilt
To remember the halls and the hearts that I built.

The warmth of her wings, the gold in her robe
Lift a crown on my head, in my cell which was cold;
She fastened a fire to heat my rapid thoughts
To love and to hold, just so more aine to be sought.

Stay with my sweet angel,
Your comfort takes hold.
Your care as you promised.
Your wings now untold.

Shore away is the heat that the devil had spun.
In place comes the comfort and the love to be won.
We like a medal keep high over head.
Please stay with my angel. Please don’t leave my bed.
CHERRY RED

There's never been so much blood on the floor,
with the clattering, the baring of my cellmate's door.
A shattering sound breaks the silence of night,
the initial roar of a crowd expecting a fight.

Red on red keen stains the tile,
He cuts from the knife for the tissues, spared the dice.
Help to stop it was lame at the time,
Heads turned sideways then downward on a dime.

I felt helpless as he cried against the brick,
Not knowing if I was next to take the hit.
There's no place to run when your cell is packed,
And the guard starts to smile but he turns his back.

From light to dark, the puddle's near my bed.
It seems so dreamlike, a beautiful cherry red.
A painting well suited will frame this memory
Of a cherry red floor across a jailhouse floor.
STANDING TALL

Once on hands and knees
Where the world seemed so small
Looking face down at the ground
And holding onto tracing each sound.

Kneeling on hands and wrists awaiting doom,
Done voices give comfort, others run to rooms.
The one who ran the fastest to a room
Was the one who accused me of more than she spoiled.

I'm ready to rise and go to apologize.
I'm ready to get up and leave this place.
For a lawn much less stained than this one A face.
It will rise up! It will stand and walk tall... done.
STUPID BOY

I used to think I'd have a love,
Coming from down under or maybe from above.
I wanted it to consume my life.
I wanted affection, not reflect and strive.

You stupid boy, how dare you ask for that?
You're not deserving, so put down your bet.
You'd only strike out not once but three times.
You just can't mix the rowdy with the sublime.

Hey, stupid boy, you better get your into town,
Cuz, there ain't no whisky left to pass around.
And you look like you need some to help up your fear.
There just ain't enough to wipe away the tears.

To want the best but get the least can knock me against.
It well.
And love that forgets its promise of forever seems destitute.

To be small.
So, one sloppy, stupid boy, get shelter while you can.
There's always tomorrow, the beach and a tar.
HOUSE OF DEMONS

There is no church inside these concrete walls,
No stained glass windows between these bars,
No choir singing hymns of joy and peace,
And no pews of comfort, no confessional, for release.

What exists on these grounds is a room called "multi-purpose."
But its flavor of the north ones from bland to explosive.
For me, teachers and preachers take over its space.
And the inmates just look as can’t finish the race.

Pulpits that preach and preach seem to serve only that,
But they lack understanding. They’re too matter of fact.
The minister, too, minister their portions of hope,
Yet they only leave yearning for a drink and a smoke.

Black ties and polyester set the tint for attire.
The voices soar forth condemning, rapid breath and fire.

I wish for compassion, not judgment so terse.
I wish for healing, not better to worse.
Black angels seem to descend on this room,
And the walls echo misery, abandonment and doom.
SATURDAY NIGHT

When the bartender's hot and my beer stank and vice
And my Manhattan needs just one more dash of bitters,
Smoke swirled upwards from pretty mouths so chic;
Oh, yes, it's Saturday night and things are lookin' cheap.

Yet that they'd look much better on any other night,
But it's easy to see why we lower the lights.

If the proof is in the pudding, so my bar buddy says,
Then bring me the pudding, I'll keep my judgment at bay.

A twirl on the dance floor under hot flashing lights
Don't necessarily mean you've got a home for the night.
The rest dude walkin' in might look better than you,
So dance your little heart out. It's no time to feel blue.

There's always another round of drinks to puzzle.
Keep your hands off charters or you'll stare into a puzzle.
Not that you're in danger; I mean it's Saturday night.
But testosterone and liquor, well, get ready for a fight!
VALENTINE'S DAY

On a cold wintry day with no one to hold
I'd have rather been outside in the cold.
I used to see red all day on this day,
But all traces of that color have faded away.

I see hearts in my mind but not in my heart,
Mistakes made keep my lover and I apart.
It's easy to cry red tears and near it,
Cuz blue tears don't go with this I've been given.

I wish for good chocolate or even a cupcake supreme.
Red and white candies take on life greater than it seems.
No card to open, yet a white letter expresses love
As an envelope scented with the perfume of a dove.

St. Valentine, I know you're here for me to call,
But don't scold me if I'm not up for the ball.
My tuxedo and bow tie get put on hold.
I'll leave them alone. Let the nightlife air grow cold.
SICK AND SATIN

Virtue never crossed that woman's path;
Only a pantomime with a body to match.
Cocktails and cocktails led her life astray,
And, of course, she was mad on a wealth of Fridays.

One ladder to think of what more she could do
To escape the drudgery and drink wine, but with who?
Bawds and beakers occupy her stage
And she's always welcome at any occasion on the bay.

A beauty once flawless now lined with fingerprints
Of those who invested fully into perfume well spent.
A white Persian cat guards her plush velvet chamoisee
And a serpent coils boldly in her garden of splinters.

Fragments of her like her staircase to pleasure—
A suite of temptation with square feet too big to measure.
Emeralds and rubies rest on her porcelain skin
As they mark conquests and money given freely to sin.

Her fur piece could wrap and keep skeptics away
With red roses aplenty on Valentine's Day.
Lovers and ne'er-do-wells tick in her talce,
And her boudoir embraces a cigarette and lift stools.
SILK AND SATIN, cont'd

Let her slimmy and opiate from dusk until dawn. The servants gather, sweeping the night's debris from the lawn.
Induce me, touch me, hold court with my fire. You'll captivate, dark lady, and paint a portrait of my desire.

PUNKY, THE CAT

I once cared for a cat named Punky. And a bit of a "punk" he was. A bright orange toby always welcoming me to his master's house.
Punky followed me round and round as I did my duties. And I laughed and played while he held the booty. What is it about orange tobbies that make them so endearing? Could it be that "love me" personality? Well, yes, I guess.

Anyway, hope Punky will always be well. Hope Punky will always be strong. For I know Punky is loved by me... still.
DEAR EDDIE

I do miss you each Christmas!
I miss the ellipses you used to make.
I miss your generosity - to give, never to take.
I knew your soul rests well with God's Spirit.
I knew your wonderful mind takes hold in my spirit.

God rest ye, the you gave me so very much.
I will always remember you and your touch.
I visit your grave many times and speak to you.
REHAB 101

Papers to fill out and a baseline for my pills.
"Have a seat, please, and where do we need the bill?"
It wasn't my idea to come here. A judge made it so.
But I better make the best of it or turn around and go.

The nurse takes my vitals, my history and such.
And my blood pressure rises when I see in the cup.
"It's a long walk down a hall with no answers"
To a "This is your room, so unpack and join the dancers."

Dancers are the others I'll soon get to know.
And the dance itself - is it fast or is it slow?
God, I need to check out of the pace I've been on.
No clear memories left as it's been so long.

One day at a time is what I need to learn.
I'll give up the treadmill as they're no calories left to burn.
Classes and groups will be the typical day.
Sessions with the shrink will keep the demons away.
REHAB 101, cont'd

"I know it's for the best," keeps rattling in my head, that nightmares keep intruding upon my sleeping. 
I'll make new friends among the dancers, some almost Black.
New miles from the highway and the "breakdown" to Black.