

Our family tells the story of a pancreas  
in Northern Ontario. It expands, contracts

with prayer. Great-Aunt Rebecca lives  
by the grace of the word

and that word lives in the good pine room  
downtown. You can smell Lake Timiskaming

through the window.

*Your arms always filled with gifts (Hail Mary)*

Our grandmother's sister was a nun named Mary. Once, she saw  
my sister dance barefoot in High Park. *Contemporary performance,*

my sister lifted her hands to the cherry blossoms  
as if sinning. I have found myself

that blooded. It began at thirteen and went on,  
lifting my hands in the blue night.

*Full of grace; grace spilling (Hail Mary)*

Rebecca's daughters are truck drivers who never  
married. I look like the eldest, except  
  
for my mouth. I believe in a cellular god, the glass slide  
under a blinking microscope. I believe  
  
in a belief in the light, and also that women  
are quietly loving women in passenger seats  
  
at truck stops. Illumination can be  
blinding. That day on the mountain, Mary; my hands  
  
in the grass of a good woman's hair.

*Alive with Holy beauty (Hail Mary)*

Water and lace      pockets of salt  
rosemary      in dry fields at dark  
walk the circle      heat rising from hands  
what you might call steam      a reddening light  
rose scarves      a dozen wings lifting

the bower bright      & beckoning

*Deeply I breathe your roses (Hail Mary)*

My friends wash each other's feet on camera,

listen bedside, survive in sex. To own a name  
is to own a wig, anyway. What I know of Magdalene

I know of love. Bright morning in the diner, hot fries  
the colour of dawn, we touch

each other's brows with water.

*Sweet advocate of sinners (Hail Magdalene)*

In hospital, my friend Mary is raised in bed like a prayer,  
and her father is knitting

a narrow scarf. Liver in sepsis, red as a plastic cup  
when I picture it, under my arbutus,

in silence.

My cat seeks out the same black snake  
every morning. It bends into a perfect circle

and she takes it in her mouth. Then?

Then it goes free.

*Unity in Trinity, World without End (Hail Magdalene)*

In *Droughtland, Oregon*, ninety witches pray  
at the trunk of an oak tree. Crones

in nuclear grief:        *forgive us our plutonium, DDT.*

Elders who handcuffed themselves to fences,  
weeping tear gas, as power plants rose

in the Bay. They slept it off in jail, set their sigils  
by wire light. The right hand casts,

left binds quietly:        *may none lay claim to hydrogen.*

Chanting as a woman's eyes rapture, roll back sober,  
and that night, midnight—it finally rains.

*Who before darkness wast restored (Hail Magdalene)*

By that same oak, a near-mother kneeling.  
Seven months pregnant as tumours are found in her lungs—

*forgive us our Lanthium, DDT.*

*What is remembered lives*            in us as in soil.

*May prayers be made*

in the name of Mary  
in the name of Mary        *hear us*  
   *pray for us*

& her child lives.

*Now and at the hour of our death (Hail Magdalene)*



Watch, now: a girl weeps into water, as if kissing the stream.  
And the stream runs down the mountain.

In silence, lightning hits the ocean  
and becomes phosphorescence.

I'm lying, the way good women lie—(Liturgy);  
sand becomes glass this way.

There are food stamps in America,  
hysterectomies, class action law suits—(Litany);

people find a way.

A white owl perches in our driveway  
in a dumb shaft of sunlight.

I believe you, you said.

My lungs like a broken violin  
in the tire fire of downtown.

I did not know what pain was,  
and then I did.

The legislature tells us to have faith.  
Oxycodone, Pain Industrial Complex—(Eulogy);

there is power in prayer. A parking lot  
presses its palms together and sings.

Retrogenesis, reogenesis:  
some lizards self-actualize their young.

In the realm of bacteria, all law is gone.

In the morning, a yellow flower  
blossoms from your ear.

Pulses, unfolds as I watch it.  
You sleep deeply, curled on your side,

lips parted as if to speak.  
The smell of pollen so rich, I expect

bees to surround the cabin.  
Both of us naked, I think maybe

they'll swarm or walk across our skin  
like a living blanket. And you will lie

still as honey until one slips onto  
your tongue, only wake as you swallow

its sweet-blooded sting. I watch for  
an hour, tempted to break the stem,

place it in a jar on my nightstand  
like a sugar trap. Instead, fall back

to sleep, hands light on your lips,  
trying to keep out the bees.

It started when you were a kid. Left ear infected  
twice a season, nothing could drain it

properly, and who could afford all the doctors?  
The eardrum ruptured like a storm at dawn.

Like your mother shattering a window.  
Deafness was the first room no one could break into.

You spat yellow medicine into the sink;  
prayed the silence would grow.

It started when I was a kid. Three weeks of macaroni  
salad, antipsychotics, cold recycled air.

A blond girl clutched her cross, still shaking from ECT.  
Beside me: endless dawn, her wiped amygdala.

She prayed from the vinyl couch like a Mary,  
and I lied my way free, even as I witnessed

a yellow flower rise from the prescription  
on my new doctor's desk.

At dusk, a hawk drops  
a squirrel's rib cage at our feet,

picked so clean the bones are yellow.  
I wrap it in silk, light a candle

in the cabin where I am unmaking my life.

This is the gift of a half-broken body:  
you relearn everything.

At world's end, we hold a willow branch.  
In cold green water, wading toward Graces.

Oracles in denim, oracles stripped down.

It is time for two-hand magic,  
the circle cast both ways.

Our mouth, a yellow flower.  
Our mouth, our mind, our kin.



Infinity is not a noun.

The speed of light is the same as the speed of gravity.

At the base of an oak tree, acorns.

A white squirrel digs his implausible home.

I forgive you, I tell my hands.

I forgive you, future—(Benediction);

Together, the joke goes, we have made God laugh.

In the garden, a maiden queen arises to find her drones  
abound. After the death

of monocrop in the valley; no more sweet glyphosate breeze,  
her sex begets an ecosystem. Contagion,

creation, *trophic cascade*.

O see thy colonies lifting, queen.

O find thy way back home.