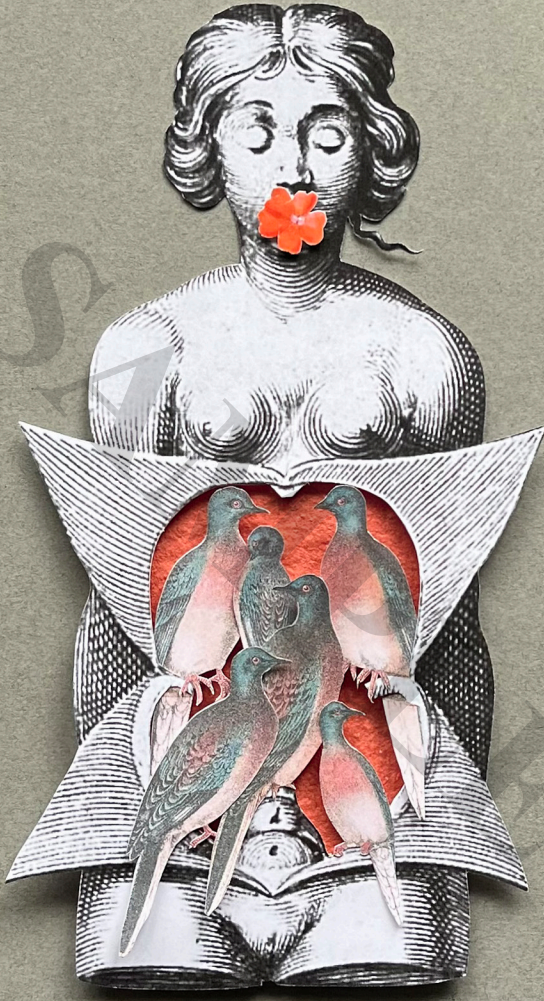


# The **Tinder** Sonnets



Jennifer LoveGrove



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Book\*hug Press  
Toronto 2026

FIRST EDITION

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: The tinder sonnets / Jennifer LoveGrove.

Names: LoveGrove, Jennifer, author.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20250310074

Canadiana (ebook) 20250311364

ISBN 9781771669665 (softcover)

ISBN 9781771669672 (EPUB)

Subjects: LCGFT: Poetry.

Classification: LCC PS8573.O8754 T56 2026 | DDC C811/.6—dc23

The production of this book was made possible through the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. Book\*hug Press also acknowledges the support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Ontario Book Fund.



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SAMPLE

## The root of the Holy Ghost

When you're out on a bad date — groped, followed, cornered, stalked — just ask for Angela at the bar, say discreet signs in bathroom stalls.

Centuries of women warning women:  
codes in folded fans, secret Facebook groups,  
a thumb tucked under four fingers, grandmas  
telling daughters-in-law who not to leave  
the kids alone with. Black dot on the palm.

*Angelica archangelica*, wild  
celery, Alexander's archangel.

Used as protection, women grew it to  
prove they were not witches and to ward off  
unwanted male attention. Tolerates  
freezing, thrives in cold. Smells like licorice.

An angel came to a monk in a dream:  
*angelica* as a cure for the plague.  
Often masquerades as the poisonous  
*Heracleum*. Fake profile, catfisher.  
If you need help, ask for an Angel Shot.  
Straight-up is an escort out to your car,  
on the rocks means call for a taxi or  
Uber, with lime is an emergency.  
An expectorant, heals bronchitis, colds,  
shields against evil, soothes digestive ills,  
hastens delayed menstruation, expels  
placenta, eases cramps. Unclear if it  
restores suppressed voting rights, access to  
health care, hormones, birth control, Roe v. Wade.

We'll never run out of secret signals,  
quiet signs. Silence is prototype then  
protocol. We'll augment the programming  
with our collapsible coffins folded  
into fantasies. You have to prove that  
there were no witnesses. And then you must  
audition to play yourself over and  
over and over 'til you're finally  
believable. You're both badger and bait,  
bounty and bog. Eat the root, and maybe  
it will inoculate against all these  
brand new plagues. We can thrive in collapse, but  
don't chew off your hands just yet, you'll need them  
past curfew if you dare open your eyes.

## New dating profile

I like hairy chests and thick thighs, beards and a flamboyant fashion sense. I don't want —  
I like looking out of windows and that used to be enough. I like to spend my time crouched and worrying about the wind. I'm a crocus, always too early to the party, opening so wide before anyone else is up, too small, over budget, dismissed. I want to be the ox, steering from the back, shouldering the pace. (Growth mindset a must!) But I'm sick of my civic duty: checking and rechecking, checking and rechecking, open the blinds, close the blinds, sit down, stand up, light the fire.

I have hobbies: I plate slate shards faking  
it underfoot, all crunch and jump, one leg  
hooked over high noon, the other limp from  
kicking the bass drum, while online shopping  
for unconditional love. Do you like  
glory holes? Hedge fund fraud? Morning glories?  
I like red, a good nose dive and nosebleed,  
sleeping forever, long walks to the moon  
landing, short scarves on Miranda July,  
but I'm so bored of everything else. You  
look tired. You look better without makeup.  
Stop trying so hard. A guy in high school  
threatened to rape me in the back of his  
dad's truck, but it's okay, he's a cop now.

I'm trying to accept my night terrors,  
but I'm always cold and I can't tell time.  
Look out, I'm a scarf, a watch strap, a vase,  
a candlestick, a snow fort, a treadmill,  
a catapult. Female to decimal,  
femicide to decimate. How about  
defund, abolish, and buy me one of  
those miracle bras, women got the vote  
now, click click, all flashbang, and which women?  
Filament and waiting, ligament and  
longing. But by invitation only.  
I put away my tilted head, who cares  
about the imprint of the wingspan of  
the swift that flew too hard into the glass.

# Extinction of the passenger pigeon: a cautionary tale

Pike County, Ohio, 1900:

A young boy shoots the last wild passenger pigeon. Cincinnati, 1914:

Martha, last of two in captivity,  
dies alone. Once legion, a migration  
would take thick hours just to pass overhead,  
blocking out the sun, the day gone dark, gone  
cold. Flocks so dense that no one could hear each  
other for a full day beneath their vile  
thunder. Diving from sky to valley, they  
poured a massive waterfall, a cascade,  
a tsunami. Horses bolted, children  
screamed. Villagers covered their heads and fled  
indoors. Bronze feathers shimmered, metal sky.

Yesterday I found a starling in the cold wood stove. Still, seated, tucked into his ash nest. Dignified. I set him in the field by the yellow trout lilies, his beak slightly parted, like a sigh, a kiss, a quiet accusation. There's a hole in the roof of the screened-in porch, a sparrow snuck in and couldn't figure out how to get back into flight. Flapping and flailing and bashing into exhaustion. I watched all day. Relatable, I thought, and slept soundly for the first time in months. Then this morning, a mouse in the trap. Front paw crushed, pupils huge. I let him out for the owls.

Populations in billions until white  
men found pigeons both tasty and easy  
to kill. Considered degenerate, they  
pealed loud like bells when mating. Licentious.  
Any weapon fair game: guns, rakes, fire, nets,  
sulphur, pitchforks. This land soaked and coated  
in wet flesh. Today, something caws outside.  
Squawk-beak or love-mouth, perched and blinking, but  
who can still maintain eye contact? Murder  
ballads on repeat. We still think that we'll  
never run out of anything: air, meat,  
sex, those small plastic people to flaunt on  
the tops of cakes. Touch screen tap, pulse pull, dull  
thud at the edge of the sky. Limitless.