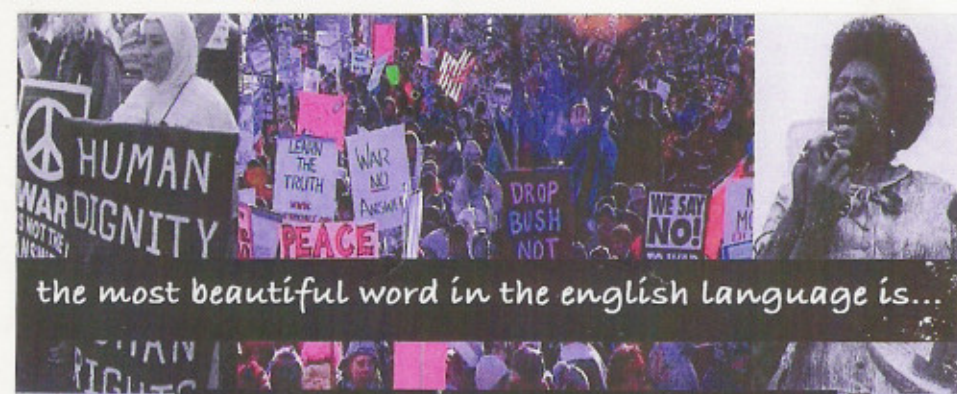




window installation at The Babylon Art and Cultural Center



the most beautiful word in the english language is...



poems by ellen marie hinchliffe







Great thanks to Cynthia for help with editing and the company of a writer and to my Mama for her paintings which are a part of the cover, appear on page 2 and fill my life with color and road maps to the Goddess. And to my Dad who talks movies and books with me and shares this vision of justice. Great love and respect to my family and friends, the turtles and willow trees at Lake of the Isles, all the writers, poets, musicians and visionaries that sustain me. Especially the poets of this town, too many to name but I will say- Rush Merchant- brother you share with me what it's all about! The work of Ed Bok Lee shines with how poetry can change the world. And finally so much love to the Ancestors, Mama Earth and of course my dearest Henry and Eleanor, little fire-flies, blink, blink.

I am humbled by what other human beings have given me  
and by the spirit of resistance that never dies.

xoxo



ellen marie hinchcliffe is a poet, video-maker, sometimes teacher and above all a loving aunt. She has worked many crappy, low-paying jobs to support her passion for art and social justice. She is a feminist and tries never to be polite to those in authority (that are busy destroying our mother). She lives with her sweet cats Bill and Emma in Minneapolis, MN and is sustained by the good company of many. Contact her at [ehinchcliffe@yahoo.com](mailto:ehinchcliffe@yahoo.com)

It is the sacred duty of an artist not to give up hope.

Peace.

dedicated to the memory of

June Jordan  
Phil Berrigan  
Ingrid Washinawatok

You open me  
break up the rocks in my head  
break my heart  
and then

break open the dawn

Perhaps women like me of another generation are a bridge. Pass over, use the energy of the root in our witness and our singing. So we will never be gone. You have more tools now. The fog is lifting over the illusions. You will bear sharper witness. Be bold. Tell all...The earth is waiting to hear you. All the children and ancients are waiting. We shall come home together.

-Meridel LeSueur

For the People of Iraq

I do not claim  
to know how you go on  
day after day

I am sustained  
by a vision that holds me

of birds flying  
among brown limbs  
that are not  
blown from the body  
but reach, laughing  
towards the sky.



Rest Weary Heart

good to see the night  
coming  
down

good to feel the earth  
spinning  
round

thought I'd find my home  
and it would be forever

thought I'd go home  
and it would be forever

rest, weary heart  
head out again

rest, weary heart  
head out again

rest, weary heart

head out again.

song given to keep me going fall of 2001



December 31, 2002

If you are sitting alone in your house completely overwhelmed by the state of the world and wondering how you can stop this madness the answer is, YOU CAN'T! You can't stop this madness by yourself in your house. I was struck by something I read the other day in an essay by June Jordan. She was writing about the stolen election of 2000 of which she had plenty to say- but what struck me was her calling up Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison to ask her what she thought of the whole Florida mess. Toni said she was so glad for the call because she was feeling a "punishing sense of isolation and disregard..." I sat up and thought damn, Toni Morrison feels isolation and disregard! It was good to hear for two reasons.

First, folks don't talk about despair that much and by folks I mean progressives/revolutionaries/activists/leftists and so on. I think to many it's considered a sign of weakness or there is a fear of letting folks and by folks I mean our peers/the elusive mainstream-whoever that is/the media or those in authority see we don't have it all together or something. (umm...I'm gonna come clean right now with the news, we don't) Secondly, it was a good reminder how easy it is to become isolated in this society. We all need to reach out to each other and not assume anyone of us has got it all together and doesn't need support, comfort, connection. We need each other so much and we need to share with each other our despair as well as our hope. I think our tendency (including mine) is to mostly share with each other our anger and while there is plenty everyday to be angry about- I think it wears us down.

I have struggled with despair for many years, at times so overwhelmed by it that I was in a constant state of grieving for the world. I claim no great morality for that- in fact it has often paralyzed me to the point of not being useful to anyone including myself. I have worked to find a place where my grief can be useful. The grief is rooted in a deep love for the Earth and all relations, especially humanity-this complex, beautiful mess we are made up of. This grief when channeled can be a source of strength and compassion. And as the writer James Baldwin put it, *If you can't know great suffering you will never know great joy.* So true.

## House Fire

There is a house fire in my heart  
I am burning everything that owns me  
not carelessly but with great intention  
I stand, in the hot breeze of flames  
ugly and beautiful  
and shining  
like the red swollen moon.

You find me asleep by the side of the road  
taking my heavy head in your hands  
you kiss away sweat and tears.

We rise together now  
brush boredom from our thighs  
and walk off,  
the arsonist of a history  
not of our making.

for bell hooks with a dozen wild red roses



Rollin' on in good historical company  
marching with all those ghosts  
that know the way  
don't fear the dead  
they are the path we walk on  
the bones will rise from earth blessed grave  
giving us the rhythm  
the rhythm to go on  
to go on marching  
dreaming  
creating  
fall in love  
raise children  
don't give up

all at once  
and among the mundane details of the day  
resistance flows through us  
and it is beautiful to witness  
and it is beautiful to feel  
and the real joy of living  
is in that moment  
our scarred and sacred hearts  
mending and breaking  
mending and breaking  
and beating strong.

The title of this poem is from a book by Alice Walker. These words have been a gift to me on this hard beautiful journey. It was inspired in part by the Anti-war March in D.C on April 20, 2002. We were over a 100,000 strong. There were more Arab, Arab-American and Muslim folks marching then I have ever seen before at a political protest in this country. It was the most powerful march I have ever been a part of. It is dedicated to my niece and nephew and all children. Peace.

For me, it was realizing that you make that choice to go on every morning, you get up, you do your best, you live your life with as much love and joy as you can. It is almost indescribable the difference I feel, for it's not that the horror has decreased (in fact with the real threat of nuclear annihilation it has increased) or that I am any less affected or indeed terrified by it. The change I feel is subtle but a mountain (this hope). It is a sacred vocation to not give up. It is a practical vocation to not give up. Quite simply, I am better off when I work in service of my vision then when I crouch in terror from theirs.

There are a lot of people in this country that don't care, that live in denial built on a certain amount of personal comfort or actually share the apocalyptic vision of our "leaders". But I think many more simply crouch in terror from that vision and try to stave it off. And it is not enough to berate them or fall back on the old stereotype of stupid middle-american sheep. We need to say to each other and by each other I mean the human race...It's hard to not give in to despair and fear, it's hard to face the reality of our situation- when your whole life you are taught that the u.s government is all about freedom and democracy. It's hard to love in the open- in a world where dreams and the future are torn up like so much earth for another strip mall.

As a writer I often ask myself, what can these poems do to stop the madness? I know this is the wrong question. Resistance is a river- a living breathing changing flowing river that we keep alive. Within my struggle dealing with despair is the challenge to really trust that art is vital, central. As Audre Lorde said in her concise way-*Poetry is not a luxury!* It's not one poem or one person against the madness, it's about adding to the river...it's about being an *asset to the collective*. (anyone remember that great Soul to Soul song *The Meaning of Life?*)

My niece and nephew are one of the most powerful conduits for me to that river. I love them so much but experience so much fear for them and the world they are born into. By daring to love them fully I have come face to face with what is really at stake and what is at stake is more beautiful, more precious more dear then we can sometimes bare to see. And this has taken me down to the bone- because when you love something in that way you will work/sacrifice/risk so much to try and save it. You will find strength you never knew you had, like parents over turning cars to free their trapped children. Like the countless "ordinary" people who have risked their lives to protect our Mother, to challenge the authority of greed and violence and hatred. We must love each other, our Earth and all our relations that much. This is no easy task. We owe it to the children of this world to never give up.



We know who *they* are and by *they* I mean the keepers and beneficiaries of this warmongering/white-supremacist/earth-hating greedy/homophobic/boring/fundamentalist-patriarchy (*catchy huh?*) and we know what they will do. History up until this very moment shows us clearly what they are capable of. They are the one devastating, horrifying constant through out the history of this country.

But we are the variable, we are the unknown. We are the tribes that will not be assimilated into the abyss of whiteness, that keep alive a way with Earth that is complex and varied but also the only way for us to go on living. We are the slave rebellions and their descendents that turned it all upside down claiming freedom and democracy as our own. Breathing life into those lofty documents that were never meant to truly live through the people. We are the unions that brought us the 8-hour day, the weekend, the power of the strike. We are the ones that put our bodies in front of the war machine again and again. We are the travelers that cross borders because we know the borders only serve *them*. We are the ones that forced the epidemics of rape, incest and domestic violence out of the dirty little closet of secrets into a movement for the eradication of oppression. We are the ones that claim our bodies and sexuality for pleasure, for joy, for ourselves. We are the newly arrived immigrants to a country founded savagely by immigrants on another peoples land, challenging the idea that human beings can be illegal. We are the artist, poets, dancers, writers and music makers that give form to the visions, that act as translators to the dreams. We are the ones that claim our children's future as sacred. And we are the people, the ones that live life despite everything- for the gift that it is. And if that weren't amazing enough we are just one small part of a river of resistance that flows around the world and is breathtaking in its vision and scope.

Yes, these are very grim times but where would we be if this history, if these herstories of resistance were not there? Can you imagine the total hell they would have made of this planet? They repress us, they jail us, they try hard to keep us isolated and separated, at times they murder us, because they are afraid of us, because we are powerful. In the words of Nelson Mandela... ***Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure...*** and that is not just a nice piece of rhetoric, that is the hardest truth to really comprehend and to enact together, to take back our world.

3.

It is not original sin we are born into this world with it is a broken heart we inherit. So often I question the usefulness of things.

I want my poems to stop all the rape and killing. I know if we could turn bombs from earth we would. I know peasant or villager are just metaphors by the powerful for the people who do not matter, like the urban poor- they are there to be studied or killed, depending on the need. They are there to be studied or killed, depending on the need. Then in that madness they will deny that you grieve.

I am, mad with this world and I must remember again that without the music and art of other people, without the good company along the way, I would be dead or worse. Just the audacity, the sheer audacity of people to go on loving demanding bread but roses too. This history of resistance respects no borders, barbed wire or the men and women of so called "peace" that continue to wage war.

The audacity of the 11-year-old boy in Mississippi who was asked by the cop with the club *What's your name?* and he shouted, *freedom, freedom is my name...*

The audacity of buses and buses of people riding through the night to DC and they don't get weary, don't get weary. And the Muslims pray in the parking lot of the truck stop in Maryland, facing the rising sun because war or no war, the day breaks and you pray. I am shy, drinking my coffee- my lack of cultural ways. But I pray too, am humbled by this sunrise that makes me dream a bigger dream.



This is the dream, you wake from the troubled sweat of sleep, the blur of lights you navigate by are gone, only the darkness cradling you. Run now from quiet stars into frozen fields, beat cracked hands till earth opens like steaming bread, all the way in. Emerge small and newly afraid but clear-eyed you have to survive america to have something to teach.

And in that is the lions share of joy cuz the people who can really party in the sacred sense of the word are the people who know celebration is resistance. Anyone who ever danced with a room full of people to I'll say, Stevie Wonders, *You haven't done nothing* or Spearheads, *People in the middle* or screamed along to Bikini Kills *Rebel Girl* or the drums or the fiddle or what ever gets you off, you know what I mean. Singing and dancing are your birthright. Joy, a commonly held need, like clean water and the air we breathe.

Sing now the praises of men that write sexy songs without the tired old hatred of women in the beat. They gave me back a freedom to shake my ass without feeling shame or dirty Taj Mahal, I would name a son for you. Sing now the praises of woman that never gave up their sexuality though it was bought and sold, lopped off by the church and packaged as jeans! beer! get some! To know true pleasure in a society that wouldn't know sexy if Aphrodite herself came up and bit Hugh Hefner on his boring porno ass, is some kind of fine revolution.

Resistance is a river flowing always and we give to the river what we can and we become a part of it. And we enter the river and swim and the current of all those folks that came before will carry us. All their love and mistakes and despair and incredible courage and humor and vision...it is the only place to be, it is the beloved good company that makes the struggle and getting out of bed each day possible. Love as much as you grieve, dare to be powerful, resist isolation and reach out. I am trying hard to live that myself.

Thanks for reading these poems.

xoxo

Peace, ellen marie

A few quick notes.

The title of this little book is inspired by a poem by Mike Tyler called *The Most Beautiful Word in the American Language*. The poem appears in the fabulous, invaluable poetry anthology *Aloud, Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe*. Check it out.

The images on the cover include photos of recent protests taken from IndyMedia Centers. The photographers are Christopher Loch and Bob Morris. The other image is of Fannie Lou Hamer, civil rights leader from Mississippi. The picture was taken in D.C. 1965. I liked that she was singing to the crowd, something she did often, because that is where so much of our power lies. Hamer was courageous, a brilliant speaker and funny as hell. She is part of a long line of Black women absolutely essential to our survival.

I admit to being an emotional capitalizer. For instance I use the word american because it is a rather unfortunate convenience but do not capitalize it, aware that America is not merely the USA.

I am always trying to decolonize my language because words shape us so much. The u.s government used to have a war department but after the massacre in Korea when anti-war sentiments were beginning to surface again in society, they changed the name to the department of defense. Rather than a department devoted to waging war, who is going to say no to a department devoted to our defense? I use the word authority instead of power when describing the likes of corporations and the government. John Trudell taught me this, his point being authority is something they must keep in place through force or coercion. Power is a natural occurrence like thunderstorms or the cycles of death and birth. This power is what we should align ourselves with. What *they* have is neither natural nor inevitable.



Poem in Honor of Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman  
and Emily Dickinson (on cancellation of poetry at the white house)  
And in answer to a question (they will ask to try and shut us up)

If they ask me and they will  
I will answer, yes  
I am un-american  
I am anti-USA  
I am down for the overthrow  
I am down, alright? Okay.  
I burn flags on my birthday  
I'll burn flags on any-day

If they ask me and they will  
I will answer, yes  
Yes, I am un-american  
If america means you bomb again  
Yes, I am anti-USA  
If USA means watch what you say  
Yes, I am down for the overthrow  
This rotten system has got to go  
Yes, I'll burn flags on my birthday  
Better flags than children any-day

I am not afraid of words  
The way you shake and fear  
What runs my blood so cold  
Is the wars you wage  
Both there  
And here

So wave your flag- red, white and blue  
And goose-step into line  
I am not afraid of words  
I am not afraid  
So when you ask me and you will  
I will answer, yes  
You can not shame me into silence  
While you peddle death.

In turn I am all mama bear protective wanting to shield them  
realizing with the force of breath knocked out of me that I would  
die for these children. I want to keep this world gone mad from  
their door from their beauty and souls. I know I can't and it breaks  
my heart again and again and gives me the reason to go on.

And to feel how much we need children to be wanted, not had like  
car accidents or accessories, something to go with the house and  
new SUV. This society rides its indifference towards children with  
poverty and bombs and a sick disneyfied morality full of toys that  
beep and flash and will talk to your children so you don't have to.  
As if some piece of plastic crap will hold them when they are still  
so much stars and deep roots that shudder under the bones still  
knowing the real names of freedom- written in a language beyond  
words on the backs of their lids. A map to another world.

2.

It all comes at once the ever breaking and mending of the heart. It  
is easy to have fun in america, entertainment is cheap and plentiful  
like gasoline and Big Macs that we consume endlessly on the pay  
later plan. I tell you almost everyone that has ever been my teacher  
in life was a drunk once, had to be. Walked closely, the razor edge  
of self-destruction, wandered lost in america with one more round,  
to take the edge off civilization, one more round, to take the edge  
off remembering. Empty for the promise of a good time to fill you  
up. Too hungry to ever be fed.



The Way Forward Is With A Broken Heart.  
For Henry and Eleanor at two years

1.

It all comes at once the ever breaking and mending of the heart. I was dreaming and then I woke to the sun in the sky and a bus full of people heading to D.C. to say no to war. We were driving so close to the place of my birth the only land my little heart and fists ever knew. Born into exile on tribal land, the makers of the serpent mound, people of the valley. My own tribes destroyed long ago into states and a history of brutality, offering only this lethal legacy of white supremacy.

But I can still kiss the Ohio sky and the city, Dayton, only my arms width wide you know how you can love a place for the geography of how you survived. The girl in me alive again, expect good things from people like you do from trees and rocks and the beloved dandelions of childhood alleys they insist on calling weeds. Weeds that can make wine and nourish and crowns for the heads of city kids, that deserve beauty.

I'm having one of those moments where I am wide open that make living possible. Just the sun pouring down to touch the upturned faces of Earth makes me weep.

Always the babies are the back beat to my heart even sleeping on a bus going 70 across Ohio I know the weight of them, slung on my hip with great care. They are all heartbeats and openings, soft breath and delicate bones and something of stars that floods them and they shimmer. Effortlessly they re-knit my spirit back into the universe as over and over it is torn from the very fabric of what it means to be human.

On Language

Started a fire last night  
in my room  
spontaneous combustion  
all my journals  
bursting into flames

poetry books  
going up like kerosene

catching my records playing  
all at once  
as they succumb to the heat

stood out in the street  
shielding my eyes  
a neighbor in her robe  
stood next to me  
shaking her head

"What started it?"

she asked

"Language."

I said.

This History

This history  
is a river  
of blood  
flowing  
in the veins  
towards  
the heart  
of the sea.

This history  
is loose  
in the streets  
running wild  
with the young  
towards  
the heart  
of the city.

This history  
is growing  
teeth  
to tear  
apart  
lies  
in the heart  
of the people.

This history  
is born  
wailing  
in the too bright  
light  
of the hospital  
but finds  
under steel  
and sterile concrete  
the heart  
of the night.

I Feel Everything

I feel everything  
even despair

and when you are numb to all  
when color does not reach you

I feel that too  
and history

I drag it with me through my days  
like so much death  
like the millions of corpses, the countless  
stolen by war and greed

or else it carries me

it runs with me weightless like the people

when they love  
when they dream  
when color fills them and they are strong  
when they at last own history  
and they are free

and only in art can that live  
can I live  
only in art can I breathe

even if choked with tears

even in the polluted air  
no politics or business can hold me  
that which decides for people their lives  
you will live or die  
you will starve  
because you can  
because we can turn away  
because there is a profit to be made

I feel everything

I live in that

I live in art and history

not art as artifice

not history as the deadened past

but art as breath  
and history as the heart of the people  
that chooses to beat  
another day  
another day  
another day.



My capacity's got the blues

I'm asking myself where are the love poems? Maybe you were wondering too? Maybe you were thinking, damn this girl-poet is so serious. Has no time for love poems, no time for love. But that's a lie, although at times I might just shine it on. I used to think I had something up on all those brick-walled hearts, jumped into love eyes closed, heart open. Then I got me my own little aftermath, two love affairs and two friendships in three years fell a part, completely. My own little patch of weary and I got protective, grrr! Practiced saying *I don't need nobody* in my best gravelly voice. Considered taking up smoking and some serious whisky to go with the new- too hurt to love, bottom of the barrel me.

Didn't plan any of it, I mean really you don't plan much of anything. You might plan say, I'm going to the store, or I'm getting my haircut but nobody plans on living skinny. Nobody plans on a wall going up around your heart. I got all philosophical/rational about this mess. I have given too much time to relationships and they are a waste of energy, I will pour that into the greater good, as if living skinny was some virtue in a world denied much happiness. As if anybody wanted my sorry ass for their struggle when I didn't trust that joy and love and connection were vital, central. I confused taking care of myself, with closing my heart. It's so weird to walk around with a closed heart, it's rigid and boring like some exoskeleton of useless armor and it just plain makes you act strange towards people. Ask anyone who met me at that time. *She was scary.*

But there is music and old friends that just keep chipping away at your freaky beetle like exterior. (thanks!) And there is that juiciness that calls you up from within. That lusty, trusty woman that knows it's about finding the people that want to live as if their life depended on it but to find them you have to live that way yourself. It's realizing hey, I'm bisexual my odds are doubled that I'll meet someone again. It's dancing your ass off in your apartment and concluding, *umm excuse me but I am so awesome.* It's walking around just smiling at people or at least at their dogs- if they won't make eye contact. It's feeling lucky for no reason.

I got so much love,  
my capacity goes unused  
my capacity's got the blues  
my capacity's got the blues  
the lesson of scarcity of the heart  
turns out to be  
that scarcity can't teach you one damn thing.

For June Jordan who always asked, where is the love poetry? xo

This history  
is a woman  
barefoot  
and walking  
onto the scared land  
carrying  
her dead child  
in the heart  
of memory.

This history  
is carried  
in seeds  
hidden  
from corporations  
that kill to own  
everything  
dropped  
in the heart  
of the dirt  
to grow  
free.

This history  
is not for sale  
will not be jailed  
is not  
a movie  
you walk out of  
blinking in the late  
afternoon light  
this history  
is alive  
and beats,  
the heart  
of the mother  
the terrible beauty  
of a rhythm  
survived.

For Filomena Barros dos Reis and the people of East Timor



## Don't Shoot

sometimes I don't know where to put my eyes  
to meet you across, this distance  
of history  
this distance  
of my face and skin

sometimes I don't know where to put my hands  
to touch you across  
the distance, of so much blood

torn flesh  
my awkward hands

(how can you shoot an unarmed man in the entrance  
to his home forty-one times and not be guilty?)

I turn my hands to the  
sky

my eyes to the  
earth

as an act of atonement

not just for your death

but for this terrible distance  
they keep calling  
the american dream.

in memory of Amadou Diallo

By now all the other stylists and their clients were looking at me, shaking their heads in agreement. Surly a short haircut would bring me nothing but misery and pain. I peered tentatively into the mirror. My god she was right! My face so thin, my neck protruding from a black trash bag. Had I always been this disfigured and failed to notice? What was I thinking with a short haircut, I must begin to work towards the appearance of an oval face and I must begin at once! Kirsty patted my shoulder reassuringly, *Don't worry, I know just the hairstyle for you. Have you ever seen the show friends?*

As I walked to my car I knew something had gone very wrong with this whole experience. My hair looked terrible. Not only had she talked me out of what I wanted she had given me a haircut exasperating the aspects of my hairs personality I so hated. On top of that, the haircut cost \$35 bucks! I never thought to inquire about the price when I made that ill-fated appointment. I know what yer thinking dear reader, I should have raised hell. I should have thrown hair care products and snapped sterilized rubber combs in half with my bare hands. I should have bellowed... *Thirty-five fucking dollars and I didn't get the haircut I wanted, no way ladies, no way!*

But I didn't, I folded, I paid my money and slunk away. I mean I have stood up in front of 90 people and called out my teacher on his sexism. I once addressed an entire subway car about abortion rights and ended my speech by clutching my breasts and shouting, *This is my body and no one controls it but me!* But I just couldn't stand up to Kirsty and all those smiling faces.

This sad tale does have a happy ending. A few days later I was in the capitol mall looking for underwear with the union label and I saw a sign that said haircuts \$6. I thought okay, I can't wear a hat forever, I'm going to go in there and demand they shave my head. I marched in and they said someone could see me right away. I knew I was in good hands when this older woman with a crazy mane of black and white hair walked over to me. I told her what I wanted and she said, *Oh that will look great on you, you have such a strong face.* She yelled out to the other women in the place... *Hey, won't she look great with really short hair?* And I did.

For Moses at Great Clips who always did me right, I miss you man!



## Bad Haircut, True Story

When I moved back to Olympia a few years ago, I wanted a fresh start. You know a new look to go with my new life. I have never liked getting my hair cut, I always have these small anxiety attacks while sitting in that chair that swivels up and down. You are at your most vulnerable in that chair. They put this big trash bag like cape over you, get your hair wet, comb it all forward on your head and say, *Well what are we going to do today?* For awhile I had been growing it long and it was getting to that awkward stage. It was beginning to kick out and curl up in a way I have fought against since junior high. So arriving fresh in Olympia, Washington I decided I would pay good money and get it cut really short.

I ended up at this place called Waves. I don't know why, it seemed like a good idea at the time. I just picked them out of the phone book, they seemed like this contemporary, kind of hip androgynous salon. A place that would do me right. When I got there I had to talk myself in to keeping my appointment. Something about their pink and blue neon sign made me nervous. *You have absolutely nothing to worry about, I told myself, everything will be fine, you know exactly what you want and these people are professionals.*

Well after waiting a few minutes the ever-smiling receptionist said, *Kirsty is ready for you now.* Kirsty seemed nice enough; she had that bleach blond, worked within an inch of its life, permed hair that I think is regulation for beauticians. She lead me back to the salon, put a big plastic cape tightly around my neck, got my hair wet and said in an extra cheery voice, *And what are we going to do today?* After a deep breath I said with a confident air *Well, I want my hair really short, maybe a little spikey on top, but not so I have to spend a lot of time styling it...* I stopped, something was obviously wrong. Kirsty was shaking her head violently with this pained contorted look on her face. *Oh nooooo* she said *the last thing you want to do is get your hair cut really short. You see you have such a long, thin face.* To emphasize this, Kirsty drew two straight lines in the air. *And your neck is really skinny. You must understand you are trying to work towards the appearance of an oval face. It is absolutely critical that you have hair coming out from either side of your head at all times, to create the illusion of a rounder face!*

November, 2001

They are dropping bombs again. In a country I've never been to, on a people I do not know. They are lying to us again. They are saying what they always say, military targets. They say this is a new kind of war but I have to look at another george bush with that bland serial killer grin, talking about good and evil again. They are dropping plastic packets of food with the words, *a gift from the people of america* on them. Do the bombs also say a gift from the people of america? After all we paid for those too and daisy cutters and cluster bombs cost a lot more then a few thousand packets of pop tarts and peanut butter. It is night in Afghanistan and my country is bombing the people there. They assure us this will protect our civilized way of life.

The lies are so heavy, you want to lie down with them. You are Dorothy running towards OZ to discover the wizard is a fake. To discover that we had the power all along to carry ourselves home. But the lies put you to sleep in the field of poppies. And meanwhile the bombs fall on strangers. Strangers not enemies and despite what our government hammers at us, there is a difference. And the generals and senators (both republican and democrat) come on television to drone about freedom and agree with each other about what a great country we are to bomb Afghanistan. Only Barbara Lee (thank you!) stood up to the war makers sickening *use of force* resolution. Our courageous elected officials would rather appear pro-war then un-american. Because dropping bombs on third world countries, is right up there with apple-pie. They do not talk of death and terror from the skies, they do not talk of starvation, they do not talk of history. I hear them say military targets again and blood drips from their smiles onto their suits. Such friendly smiles, such nice suits.

Then they break for commercials and ford motor company is going to keep america rolling with 0% down on a new truck. It's perfect. Experience a national tragedy, have a sale! Keep driving gas-guzzling cars! This so-called war on terrorism might just secure us enough oil to finally drive our planet to extinction. And after the news you can watch shows where attractive people solve grisly sex crimes and don't worry we will show you all the glory, oh I'm sorry I meant gory details.



This is all okay little more than a month after 3,000 innocent people were murdered in our country. But it's not okay to question why we in turn are going to murder innocent people in another country. And it's not okay to put this one horrific incident in U.S history, into the context of a U.S history that is horrific. It's not okay to bring up the fact that the president was not elected. Or that thousands of Black folks in Florida were denied the right to vote, making the election in 2000 look like 1961 or 1900. It would be in bad taste to point out that the vice president is an oil rich criminal who is there to finish an agenda started under Reagan or that before 9/11 the mayor of New York was not so beloved for his racist police state. That before Giuliani was making tearful speeches about how we all need to stand together he was busy cutting poor women and children off welfare so they could starve. Forced into *workfare* for less than minimum wage, because raising children is still not considered work.

And nobody in the media wants to point out that the puppet government hand picked by the U.S to replace the Taliban is made up of thugs just as brutal. We in the united states are amazing, they present someone in a suit who speaks english and we are convinced they are about democracy and freedom not rape and murder (whatever their history might reveal). We should know better than anyone what a man in a suit speaking english can do. Or the obvious point that you don't liberate women by bombing them.

And Dan Rather the "watch dog" of our government is ready to line up wherever his bush tells him to. The firing squads over there Dan. The gas station across from my apartment says *God Bless America-Cheetos 2 for 1* and I'm not kidding. And the word from the white house is, *Watch what you say*. Because after all, scary fundamentalists like Ashcroft are busy ensuring our freedom from scary fundamentalist like Bin Laden and questions about, well anything just get in the way. The lists have already started, the round ups and detainees. They disappear people in this country and it's reported along side hate crimes, like sports and weather. America's favorite scapegoat, immigrants are in the spotlight again, useful to blame for everything short of El Nino, damn the ocean! And the Oprah mentality is going full steam, people across america are having trouble sleeping since 9/11 (duh) bring on the experts to help us with our dread. Maybe we would all be sleeping better if we were in the streets demanding an end to this criminal bombing and a new presidential election with U.N observers and some real candidates. Instead we stay home gazing at our own suffering in its gilded cage, as if horror and dread about violence were invented a month ago. They take everything real about being human and make it about being an american. Try all those scary emotions of "post 9/11" coupled with starvation, 20 years of war and bombs dropping, not once but day after day with no end in sight. Hey, I wonder how they are sleeping in Afghanistan tonight?

clenching my belly  
not living

when was the last time I just felt okay?

no shrink can help me  
how you gonna say  
when the blood is real  
and the screams

*it's all in your mind*

try to find a metaphor for the sorrow of a mother  
and her murdered child  
and you come to this

tossing your body back and forth to darkness

I don't trust my own impulse to feel anything good  
don't want to fall for rationalizations  
shot up in the veins of this country  
with all the other junk they push  
makes me doubt my own desire for joy

which they replace with the impulse to buy

the debate in my head rages around,  
hovers on the useless

*how can you feel good when the bombs are dropping*

as if feeling bad is gonna stop them?

when was the last time I just danced?  
ya know when you think you can't no more  
and then,  
they play your song

at night I measure things all wrong  
and forget or never knew

how can the bombs and music come from the same animal?  
how can the animal forget to dance?  
how can the animal forget to dream?

how can the animal forget to dream?  
and think instead their apocalypse is destiny

It's 3am  
I need to dance  
I need to dream  
as real as anything.



3am poem, I need to dream

I'm trying to make peace with the world  
alone in my bed at night  
sweatin' out all the poems I'm afraid to write

I'm turning over

mouth dry, heart beat  
to the clock, 3 am  
dread sleep

wait for dreams

cold blooded killers calling themselves  
my government  
blowing up the world again

nightmares with your eyes wide open

it all rushes up too real  
a thousand realities to choose from right?  
new age fetish  
live fast,  
fame  
and rushing beauty  
right?

Only one reality at night

they have the authority and the will to commit violence on a mass scale  
I can't make peace with it  
I can't

I try and sleep won't come  
struck dumb  
flashes of the burning  
faces of my friends  
my babies  
anyone's child

something so simple and innocent like a bird

a song bird in a tree  
it kills me to think it can't make peace

*United We Stand*, turns out to mean shut up and sit down.

So the news and the commercials and the rape as entertainment continue to put america to sleep and meanwhile the bombs drop on a people we do not know and have no reason to hate. I want so much for america to wake up from the lies, to tear the curtain from the illusion and come home at last to humanity. But tonight the bombs drop and I know there will be more innocent dead to bury in the morning.

Postscript November 2002

By the most well researched and conservative estimates the u.s. bombing has murdered 4,000 civilians in Afghanistan. (and counting) Proving that when it comes to killing innocent people the USA will not be out done by some terrorists with box-cutters. The image of a few happy girls going off to school is not the reality in Afghanistan. We in the states hear almost nothing about a country we just spent a year bombing because there is nothing good to report. Never did get Osama Bin Laden dead or alive but our fight for "freedom" has moved on to other fronts and the people and their suffering will be forgotten until it is necessary for our civilized country to bomb them again.

I suggest going to the web-site for The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan ([www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)) send them money if you can. Also Peaceful Tomorrows ([www.peacefultomorrows.org](http://www.peacefultomorrows.org)) they are a group of people who lost loved ones on 9/11 that are working to end this so called war on terrorism. Many of them have traveled to Afghanistan to meet with people suffering the same loss because of the bombing. They are also travelling to Iraq and opposing the impending invasion there. Amazing solidarity work that the U.S government tries to suppress.

i heart N.Y.

In New York, the city that everybody loved after 9/11 there are an estimated 40,000 homeless people right now. What is the response? To do a comprehensive study to get the exact number of people and the exact location of where they are sleeping. Because it sure ain't in a warm bed in a safe home. I'm confident getting the exact number of people forced to exist in this inhumane way will really help end the crisis. We can bomb a country for an entire year, spend 400 billion on war, but we can't give everyone a place to live and enough food to eat. Good ol' american know how, it can really break your heart.



## The War Killed Her

Who killed Anna Mae?  
the government

thinks if the evidence points to an Indian

that pulled the trigger, then it's all okay  
see it was one of her own  
that killed her  
as if to say

this is not a war.

the most painful, destructive part of war  
is betrayal

by the fearful, the beaten  
down, the neighbor who cries witch  
the neighbor who turns on others  
turns away

as they are loaded into cattle cars  
enjoys the spoils of war

the Indian man so far from himself

his heart  
left perhaps in Vietnam, at the doors  
of the government boarding school  
that he pulls the trigger

and murders Anna Mae

and the frozen heart  
the severed hands

from columbus to the f.b.i

for gold and oil  
for land and uranium  
not for who does the dirty work  
but why?

this is a war.

the war killed her.

Anna Mae Pictou Aquash was a member of The American Indian Movement. She was found dead in February 1976 on the Pine Ridge reservation. The f.b.i cut off her hands and sent them to Washington for fingerprinting. Her killer was never found, like countless other native people murdered at the time. Many were murdered by the GOON squad (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) a death squad on the reservation armed and trained by the f.b.i in a well documented campaign to destroy A.I.M and terrorizes anyone who supported their work. The mutilation done to her body by the f.b.i is (consciously or not) a continuation of columbus cutting off the hands of Indians for not bringing him the required amount of gold. Anna Mae lives on in the struggle and in many poems and songs.

It's about the connection.

I was having it right then. In that hit and run way things come to me in a society where we are mostly a drift in stuff. Where the cars are always waiting. Eventually we headed back down the hill, that fast way you buck down hill with the wind at your back.

Walking and walking in silence, I became aware that I was trying not to cry, which is such a physical act holding it in, such a common act. My friend said something in a choked voice and I looked at her, tears were streaming down her face. It opened me to everything and I cried.

So we walked and wept, and laughed too. And the people (white) struggling up the hill to see the Medicine Wheel pretended not to notice, as we so often do.

We didn't try and explain to each other, which is the blessing of a real friend. We just let it exist between us, all of it. It's far worse than most days I can fathom and in moments it's so much better than I ever expected. And it's' not gone. It's not gone.

Two years later I think often about that butte, about those prayers, the chain-link fence, about going back there someday and the tears drying on my face. My tears falling to the earth, becoming a part of it. The hard packed dirt of the widening path leading me home.

for Rocklynn and her company along the way.

Sacred places to indigenous people all across North America are in an on going state of siege including The Medicine Wheel. The Sawmill logging company is determined to run their logging road right by the Medicine Wheel. Another devastating example of this in my own backyard is the Highway 55 travesty and the threat it possess to Coldwater springs. Devils Tower another high profile site is constantly desecrated by rock climbers. (For a little perspective you can rock climb on Devils Tower but it is a federal offense to rock climb on Mount Rushmore) Everyday the private property rights and the insatiable lust for progress and growth takes precedent over sacred places that were a part of humanities spiritual relationship to Earth on this land, long before private property or the invasion of the Americas.



## The Medicine Wheel

We were driving from Minnesota to Washington State we stopped at the medicine wheel in Wyoming things were better than I expected but worse still than any of us can fathom. The guide (white) spoke to us visitors (white) *This is an ancient cathedral, you must be respectful, you must not touch any of the prayer ties or add anything only the tribes can do that.* People nodded.

The wheel is flat to the ground, white stones marking the 28 days of the journey- the guide said something about the moon nothing about the blood. The wheel is enclosed in a chain link fence because this land was invaded a few hundred years ago or yesterday, because america knows no other way. Because when the heart is all wrong you can destroy so easily that which must not be destroyed. You see rocks in a circle and rip them from the ground.

I was thinking how once there were still wars but the enemy tribes would never have destroyed sacred sites. You just don't fuck with, ridicule or destroy another persons relationship to their Creator, God, their Mother. I'm betting this was once true all over the world. I'm making an educated guess, holding wishful thinking under my tongue.

I'm standing in the wind on top of this high butte and there is very little to look at and there is no gift shop. I found healing at the Medicine Wheel and all I know how to do with that energy is to buy something. (this is a joke that's not funny)

We moved slowly, my friend and I, slower and slower around the circle. Others were already done, headed back down the hill to the waiting cars. Our cars, always ready to take us to the next place fast.

This was slow.

The chain-link fence was covered in prayer ties as were the few wind-swept trees. This is what I've learned most from native people, you tie your prayers everywhere, let nothing get in the way of your relationship with your Creator, your God, your Mother. You go on praying with or without chain link fences wearing your Metallica tee-shirt or your ribbon shirt.

Iraq is not a metaphor, the war is real

The war is not a metaphor  
he showed me his painting and said  
*This is my country, once a beautiful flower, now destroyed.*  
The painting was beautiful  
but not like a flower, he said  
*When the bombs dropped there was so much blood  
a river of blood and I could actually feel my heart break  
my mind, you know? go crazy. And I swam in the river  
and there was only death.*

war is not a metaphor  
war does not stand for freedom  
for good over evil

war is bombs and guns and blood  
war is terror and the violent death of thousands  
and thousands of human beings  
war is dead children and orphans and refugees  
war is dead moms and dads and grandparents and friends  
war is dead lovers, dead birds and dead animals of every kind  
war is starvation and no shelter from pain  
war is destruction and deafening sound  
the smell of death  
war is children so terrorized they live but will not speak,  
they drool constantly and can not sleep  
war is the loss of homes, clean water, work, pets,  
trees, food, beauty, joy, music, comfort,  
hope and play  
the small precious rhythms of each day

war destroys everything that makes life livable  
for every bomb, for every rape and death and senseless destruction  
for every child that is denied the human right of dreams  
there is a circle of grief that can not be measured

The heart is a flower  
and this too is not a metaphor  
the heart wants to bloom  
the war is real  
the heart is a flower  
war breaks the heart  
never to be healed.

For Haider



## A New Pledge

I pledge no allegiance to the united states of america  
I will not be a good citizen to the abstraction of freedom  
and the reality of endless bloodshed and rape  
I am not a democrat, republican or liberal  
I am not a communist, christian or devote member  
of the so-called white race  
I am not a terrorist, consumer or collateral damage  
I am not hysterical, naïve or holier than thou  
I live in the untied states of america  
I was born into this system of oppression and formed by it  
despite the best attempts of my mother and father  
I benefit from white privilege every single day  
I benefit from living in the united states  
the hot water, the endless food and material comforts  
that are accessible to me  
for a price  
I live with the contradictions of this insane set up  
and I bite the hand that feeds me every chance I get.

Even when I am half-crazy with grief and fear  
even when I sit in front of the television for the mundane familiar  
even then I am not lying to myself  
and I know I'm just trying to get through the shit, the best I can  
I know they are feeding me my sister and brothers death  
half way around the world and down the street  
I don't just mean some symbolic connection  
I mean hard economic reality and blood  
someone's son or daughter  
blown open with bullets again.

The american dream comes to us with a price  
bigger than anything we can see  
the price is our spirit  
the price is life  
not just our life  
but all life  
they murder rivers, streams  
dam the salmon to extinction  
change power to authority  
steal not the song of life, but the will to sing  
understand what is stolen

I can not speak, whiteness  
does not even use the same language  
black pride means loving yourself  
white pride means burning crosses and terrorism  
white folks don't say *my people* and hear home  
don't know how home might feel  
like a long drink of water  
we lost so much  
we don't even know were lost anymore

and if they ask me (and they will)  
I will have to say, yes

yes, I have known well the hard set face  
of young white men  
the cruel mouth spitting  
the flat lean bellies  
the red flush of beer and hatred

I have studied for my own survival  
for the sake of sanity, young white men

waving the flag as if to ward  
off the sky

the blue that could break something  
in blue eyes  
and yes,

I do and do not claim them as my own.



It was a long white night

I can not speak.

it breaks under me cold and brittle  
it cracks and turns to dust in my worn hands

the hands of a housecleaner  
the hands of a woman  
last night was despair and a maddening thirst  
to know culture  
what it feels like to be inside  
not seeing, buying, or appreciating but being  
forever

birth, life, death always belonging

like driving by the grand canyon or taking a picture of it  
or living there in that wide deep place, so that every stone  
knows the rhythm of your breath  
the weight of bones set in motion

in the car next to me at the stoplight  
white boys yelled,  
*Take that sign off your car! You stupid fucking lesbian dyke!*  
the sign asks,  
*How many white men were attacked for looking like Timothy McVeigh?*  
Ah whiteness, ah culture  
I had to laugh, what else can you do?  
(especially at lesbian dyke, as opposed to heterosexual dykes?)

they were not laughing  
their faces flushed red in that way white folks get  
when we are angry, we flush like that when we are making love too  
but I did not think of that until later at home  
in the bath tub, I choked on tears  
while the people next door cheered on the football game  
it wasn't their anger that got to me, I'm used to it

it was this thirst

I carry like grief  
they carry like weapons.

That is what being a good citizen means  
trust the liars, pledge to the abstraction of freedom  
accept the rape and murder of air, water, earth  
sisters, brothers  
just one more child  
in Chicago or Iraq,  
Mississippi or East Timor,  
Ohio or Nigeria,  
New York or Afghanistan  
Columbia or Texas,  
Palestine or Israel  
Chiapas or California  
starved or shot  
or jailed  
or drugged  
and another and another.

The united states of america is not my mother  
gives me not spirit, not water  
or plants, not sunlight  
or moonshine  
not the pleasure of another's touch  
or the gift of cycles

**Earth is my Mother  
to Life I pledge my allegiance  
and to the Living Resistance  
for which it stands**

not as a good citizen to a country  
that started off slaughtering and enslaving  
and hasn't stopped yet

but as a human being  
as a child of earth  
doing the best I can in a crazy world  
to remember the song of life  
and to go on singing.

Inspired by and dedicated to John Trudell



## Night Story

I went to see this woman read poetry last night. On the way to the bus my belly ached, was it my period coming? The shot of tequila I threw down before I left? Or the rage that burns in me living with this insanity a couple rich white men named freedom. The bus careened downtown and I joked with the driver. When I got to the bar, I found a good seat and looked busy with my own reeling thoughts about self-conscious bar scenes.

Then She walked onto the little stage.

She said shed like skin  
like snake skin

She said let your fire out  
so it don't burn you up

She said incinerate

She spoke words I could smell  
tissue and blood

She spoke of death as a reason for living

She said take your time back and use it

She said take what life you have left and burn with it

She said pleasure and left the stage.

I don't know if I seemed mean at the bus stop, it was late and I was the only woman on the street. All those words and universe come down in a second to one woman determined to get herself home alive. When the bus hit my neighborhood with the strip of lights I know better than the stars, I got off. I needed to walk with the moon, She almost full, me spilling over. Whispering poems under my breath so She could hear me above the traffic.

And there on that ugly street  
I burned beautifully under the moon  
bright red with a thousand connections  
the tides  
the blood  
the words  
the power to go on

I say  
make connections unseen  
make something you can't buy  
or sell  
or love or hate  
make something that burns in the night  
make truth  
and give it away.

For Lydia Lunch

I slip him 5 bucks cuz it's all I've got. He reels at me and says, *You want to have a good time?* I say, *Yes I do and does he know where I can find one.* He thinks for a minute and says, *Nope.* I say, *Well that's the problem with this country ain't it?* He laughs and says, *Fuck yeah, they took all the good times and left us with this.* He swipes his arm at the whole city ridiculously lit up under the ink blue sky. He loses his balance a little then and the whole earth tilts just enough to steady him. He goes, *Whoa,* just to feel her move under him and rides it out. I feel her move too, cuz I'm standing near him, close enough to smell him.

He's done with me now and I walk on with his voice trailing behind me. I know he will be gone from that corner soon, five bucks is enough to buy some cheap wine or beer. I long ago made an uneasy peace with giving money to street alcoholics. I can't offer them more, a home, a healing that can elude even those with access to healthcare and therapists. I still consider the disease not so much alcoholism but colonization, and we are a long way from a cure for that. So I think of it as grant money to keep his performance going, at least until he passes out.

Walking on through the city I imagined asking him, *What the hell did we do to get in here? And how the hell do we get out?* And the earth tilting just enough to steady him as he leaned in close touching my ear with his cracked lips, whispering his answer. I wish I had asked him, cuz we are all in various stages of dying just to know.

To the man on the street who wished me happy birthday.



## On street crazy and the difference

I'll tell ya. . . I write poetry cuz I'm afraid of going crazy. But I want to hang out with the crazy ones, put them in my poems maybe they will put me in theirs. I don't want to be an observer of life, taking what other people have survived or didn't and making *cutting edge art* out of it. That kind of crazy reserved for the very sane, scares the shit out of me much more than street crazy, then the common crazy of living in a so called civilized society.

At times, I wish I was the crazy drunk man on the street past caring what people think. Yelling toothless and breaking up reality, with his refusal to play by its rules. You want performance art? Transformative ritual? The drunk man on the corner will reach more people in a day than all the grant-supported artists in soft fabrics and tasteful jewelry will ever reach. Ever.

I'm betting those envelope-pushing bastards cross the street when they come upon my friend. They are more comfortable among the cubed cheese and golden wines, talking about their latest creative project. Working with imprisoned women, taking their stories, taking them, and creating an original piece exploring confinement and redemption, through movement and space. (what?) Performing for a bunch of people who will never do the time, regardless of the crime. And the tall white performance artist, who I'm quite sure worries if there is too much yin and not enough yang in his work, leans into his friend and says, *Working with these women I must admit, I really wonder what they did to get in there, I mean I'm dying to know.* Hell, if his piece flops at On the Boards in Seattle he could probably sell it to A Current Affair.

But back to the drunk guy still on the corner. He is talking to everyone that passes by, not stealing stories but giving them away. He says, *Raise yer hand if you know the answer.* And then laughs till he coughs. He says, *Tell me what I have in my hands and win a prize.* His hands are empty and broken open. I want to kiss his knuckles like a mother would, like a lover could, like a poet should, but I'm just another anonymous patron of his art.

## At the window

I must love more than my desires  
my loneliness, intense

must come to mean more than the drudgery  
of this window  
watching traffic come and go  
feeling life is in the streets  
without me

where are my hands?  
how long have I been asleep?  
who knows me?

my heart must overflow  
with great love  
for those that are alone  
even in the cliched crowd

this window  
my heart, open

sounds drifting in, breeze  
wrapping lightly on my skin

I shout to the world below  
I'm here  
I'm here  
I'm coming down.



So we gonna have a party

So we gonna have a party, you wanna come?  
think a high rise

pointing out the flat dark sky

a thousand people living in little rooms  
just trying to get free

some are sad  
some high  
some happy  
some want to die, like fly  
buy, fuck, taste some good luck

sun  
goes  
down

every square bursts into electric light, flight  
bang yell fire or money at every door  
just trying to get folks to fall out, file down the hall  
best to take the stairs

down  
down  
down

to Mama ground  
under our feet  
yeah like they say dance in the streets  
to this and that beat

dance so hard we gonna wear away concrete  
dance so long we gonna shut day down  
let it be night, free flight, when the chance of a better dawn  
can play along to that bass guitar, yeah you know the one

that rolls slides like you can with that woman or man  
still don't understand how they make all that sound  
or why in the presence of a certain one  
the slightest rise of my hips, makes honey  
rush like pleasure to my lips

A new album at sunset can change it all

You know when the sun does that thing  
that it does

and color?

and you wanna go that fast too  
all the way in

to deep blue

and this song playing  
you've never heard it before

but it's got you already

got you running between computer and window  
to catch the sunset, put something down  
take in every word and beat  
open a cold beer, dance around

and the red and orange  
and all the colors

deeper than words, spreading across the sky  
flooding the apartment

so you write a couple lines pause to take in, gather  
inspiration, thank Goddess so much for the music  
for men and women  
and all those places in-between  
especially the in-between

and you wanna keep writing  
and you wanna tell everyone you love them  
run through the streets as fast as this song  
as colorful as this sky  
and it's so much at once  
and the music holds it all together

And you realize,  
that this precise combination  
multiplied by the coming night  
equals joy.



as if we didn't owe those women our lives  
as if it wasn't a river  
stretching back through us  
the force of water carving rock  
not just some debate about  
whether you can wear lipstick and still be a feminist.

Pussy Power is not some cloy Britney Spears  
hinting at the possibility  
she might actually have one  
and you can't buy your liberation  
no matter how cool the products might be.

Which brings me to the point, feminism  
is one deep motherfucking ride  
and they treat it like, well like a woman

So they put two white women and Ally McBeal  
on the cover of Time and ask *Is feminism dead?*  
kind of like some Sesame Street game  
one of these women is not like the others  
one of these women just doesn't belong  
yeah, one of these women is a scripted television character  
and not a sentient human being

then someone asks Kathleen Hanna  
*What do you think of the cover of Time?*  
her answer was brilliant she said,  
*I don't read Time.*

She's too busy being a feminist to debate whether she's dead (again.)  
I'm sick of reading about post-feminism  
and wondering what planet they are writing from?  
but I'll make you a deal  
all you purveyors of the death of feminism

you give me a post-rape culture  
where women haters don't win Grammys  
and I'll give you the cover of time.

Kathleen Hanna was in the band Bikini Kill and is now in a band called Le Tigre, I admire her work,  
she is one smart cookie. For the record, I love Crocodile Rock.

Oh so anyway,  
we gonna have this party and there's gonna be some changes  
cuz the way it's been going it ain't flowing  
the way night, excitement, sexy and everything  
got all mixed up with violence and killing

this time around a woman ain't gonna have to  
wonder if she's in danger of going down  
just for getting up  
if she moves her hips, will she get ripped?  
if she lets it go, will she live to crow  
with that brilliant blaze of tomorrow?

so get it when I say party  
I mean in the ancient sense of the word  
as when women danced free

it ain't history, it's how it's gonna be

we are gonna dance this living open, leave the squares  
of electric light and split round  
ripe life flowers in the night

we are gonna outlive a thousand years  
of rape  
hate  
slavery on the take

the concrete under our bare feet is gonna wear away  
and we'll feel mud slide between brightly painted toes

and Goddess knows  
pleasure will realign with the divine  
and honey on my lips

we gonna have a party  
revolution

it's heart beat  
bass line  
about fucking time.



## Free Speech and the Death of Feminism

So this woman wrote a book, very popular with all the right post-feminist books and in it she said how Little House on the Prairie was more repressive and limiting than Penthouse magazine.

I was thinking yeah, fuck Little House on the Prairie  
but yeah, fuck Penthouse magazine

cuz what they ever did to you  
they did to me

I'm tired of either/or  
I'm tired of angel or whore  
I'm tired of only two choices in the debt  
pro-porn or anti-sex

I want a pro-sex  
post-porn, evolution  
guaranteed sexier than this capitalist pollution

I simply want to be worth as much with my clothes off  
as with my clothes on  
no more, no less.

Because that stupid little girl on Little House on the Prairie  
she probably grew up to pose for Penthouse magazine

cuz what else you gonna do on the frontier  
when you killed all the people that were already here  
and you enslaved the rest  
and you did your best to be a good girl

(and you found out it doesn't pay)

Now free speech is something we can all get behind  
but in a capitalist society, a market economy  
where everything becomes a commodity  
and corporations have the same rights as you and me

except they have a lot more money  
and honey  
free speech, is all about whose got the money

and Elton John (good god) gets props  
as some kind of ambassador of gay good will for his duet  
with Eminem at the Grammys™

and Bono backstage saying,  
*Well sometimes we don't like what people have to say,  
but we gotta support them anyway.*

I'm thinking, shut up Bono!  
yeah Eminem has the right to say whatever hateful crap  
he can rhyme today

that's not the point  
never was.

The point is, whenever you express something that's already so  
much a part of society

it's practically in the goddamn water  
you can get rich  
and famous  
and be championed as daring  
and white boys will say, *damn, that white boy is just keeping it real!*  
and you will win Grammys™ and your only punishment  
is having to sing a duet with Elton John  
and the little circus of hate goes on

maybe if you die young  
Elton John could re-release again  
Candle in the wind...

to my dear, dear fag hating friend, Eminem.

They will take anything  
including our own liberation  
and sell it back to us

give us big bad 70's feminism  
to rail against in total *do me* oblivion