On This Path
We Travel

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Kristin Garth
L. Mari Harris
Abigail Pearson
Elisabeth Horan
Tara Lynn Hawk
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Tara Lynn Hawk

Return

You cannot break me
I take my boots off
Place my bare toes in the sand and
        walk on
You will not break me
Cannot keep me locked up or haphazardly
        cage my heart
I will walk
Far, far
Much away
Empowered, alone
Into the forest
Tara Lynn Hawk
*True Story*

Knowledge came on fast
Then we broke free
No longer bound like
Prometheus punished
After the delivery of fire
We buried our dead in caves
In a loving manner
Dynasty born on rocky outcrop
We tend our precious flames
Knowing in the end
It is the Mothers who will
save us all
Tara Lynn Hawk

Cherubini

She walks on the chalky fog
Keeping her own time
Treading on a sandal beds of granite
Cold lips stained with stolen crimson
Seeking her own mischief disguised as some
    infernal sanctioned act
They gossip that she has too
    much time on her hands
Rebirth is not without
    a violence redefined
        in boxes of brown ancient dust
These now just details no
    one now wants to hear
But rest assured she will return to us
The singular strangeness of her being
    too attractive
A sacred entity with secrets
    difficult to keep
Chamomile

Chamomile or camomile (ˈkæməˌmaɪl, -ˌmiːl/ kam-ə-myel or kam-ə-meel) is the common name for several daisy-like plants of the family Asteraceae that are commonly used to make herb infusions to serve various medicinal purposes. Popular uses of chamomile preparations include treating hay fever, inflammation, muscle spasms, menstrual disorders, insomnia, ulcers, gastrointestinal disorders, and hemorrhoids.

Matricaria chamomilla

my mother’s name is womb
like the earth apple from her i have sprung
i see my face becoming hers more each day
i pray to gods and ground alike
may i never become a womb like her.

Chamaemelum nobile

noble plant
i have been warned against thee—
thy bitter seeds speak of death
when i was afraid i kept thee in a jar near my bed
as if to ward against the specter of pregnancy.

Anthemis arvensis

i am like you
i too was considered a weed
sown but growing up backwards and
in all the wrong directions.
Anthemis cotula

where i grew up
a woman’s life went like this:
learn what you could manage between helping mother raise the littles
find a good religious man
have babies for the kingdom of god
the end.

Cladanthus mixtus

i am a weed
i’ve found my purpose
i’ve put my womb in a treasure chest marked
“to be used later when needed”
i inscribe new words and find meaning in new places
my mother is sleepless because of me
but i cannot go back.

Cota tinctoria

little girl yellow
out in her garden
tending her weeds and rye.

Eriocephalus punctulatus

sing o muse
of the man
no
fuck o muse
that dirty man.
**Tripleurospermum inodorum**

to sum up  
i am little girl yellow  
and you are bright brown dirt  
i could never be sure  
where to walk or where to stand  
for fear of walking over you.

**Matricaria discoidea**

TO BE CONTINUED
I bled for thirty three days—
longer than a lunar cycle.
Someone told me Jesus died at thirty three—
I don’t remember who—a woman?

My mother died when I was twenty
and I collapsed within myself—

I didn’t want to talk about it,
didn’t want awkward condolences or
worse—How you holding up?

Held up,
stitched together haphazardly at loose
seams, shielding my face from the sun,
a Discalced Carmelite’s eremitic silence
—How you holding up?

I am.
But if you ask, I’m not.
Half of me left me that night.

How do you know
when you have reached
the end? Do you feel the tug
of the umbilical cord pulling
you back? Tethered, tightened,
enveloped in the amniotic fluid
from which you lumbered
so many decades ago?
And that’s when the bleeding, 
the letting, 
began. 
The punishment 
—or reward—
of sorrow.

And when it ended, 
dried out, 
I unfurled myself limb by limb.

I am 
holding up. 
I am 
not in this alone.

As above, 
so below.
L. Mari Harris  
*The Sandhill Cranes of Doniphan, Nebraska Mourn the Death of My Child*

The sandhill cranes,  
sentries at the cemetery gates,  
shelter those inside from further human folly.

I will not speak of my daughter’s death.  
It is enough to know I’ve been rendered voiceless.

These wrought-iron cranes  
watch over my baby  
when I cannot be  
there to comfort her.

Others here protect her  
in this gated necropolis along the Platte:

two Civil War veterans, plastic flags at their headstones;  
my own fourth-grade teacher who taught my daughter as well last year;  
the town’s honorary mayor, top dresser downed in a culvert  
as he flew over his thousand acres—

sentinels all, biding March,  
when the cranes arrive on their annual migration,  
trilling and purring half a million thick.

The knowing ones stay close to the cemetery  
until each day’s demise  
awakens an ancient call to prayer to fly  
over this country-road cemetery  
and roost in the shallows of the Platte—

Watch over my baby.  
Inhale her sweet-baby breath.  
Tuck her sweet-baby body under your wings.  
Mourn her and make her one of your own.
L. Mari Harris

Tornado

I will tear this house down.
    This house of prurient men.
    This house of godless men.

I will turn these pews to kindling.
    These pews of the faithful followers.
    These pews of the blind followers.

I will rip these sacred books apart,
    pages whipping across seven counties.
    These books you hide behind.
    These books you preach from.

Your cross will not protect you here.
    This house will concede and crumble,
    descending into the filthy earth
    where once it stood.

You!
    You godless men cloaked in psalms—
    your wives silent stupid,
    your sons gluttonous on the rewards of status quo—
    you all will weep and stumble in this morass of lies.

Shhhh! This is our special time.

Shhhh! This will be our little secret.

Shhhh! This is how it’s always been.

I will blow this house of godless men down.
Kristin Garth

_Gardenia_

First breath to tease her thighs is breeze. Crisp chase to cleft, gardenia behest to bed of blades, a bride in dew. Fingertip taste, unchaste, a verdant lust, for serpents, spreads.

A slither wakes, forked tongue vibrates. Its sway is silver, slivers sanctimony while it snakes inside. Fair flesh, pink fruit betrays a heathen heart too honest for denial.

Obeisant, blind, in brush he waits, segment of her who hesitates. Hand hewn by her, obsidian, recreates ravishment ophidian—a scarlet saboteur.

Her garden opens with his thighs astride. Lush lessons too delicious, red to hide.
Kristin Garth

*The Hunter*

He carved a box. Polished an axe and chopped
an oak before you rustled leaves that line
his woods. Fashions a heart, shape that’s lopped
befits the beating valentine he’ll find
behind bared breasts. By knife, conquest
in curlicue, eviscerates, renames,
reduces you to letters, four. A crest
that binds you to the rest, a dozen’s shame;
you share a name—just contents that he locks
until it rots, replaces with the next.
Pretext, particulars collects, this box
a map to innocence no one protects.
It hums until he hollows it and pours
your heart, just like a dozen boxed before.
Kristin Garth
Souvenir

A dizzy dream, in day, you drown, always remembered falling down. She’s platinum, his proxy, dimpled chin. With whirling daze a plot begins. Spy her saunter, satin her sway; employed to supervise her days. A suicide you fish from freezing sea, a bouquet grasped in gallery. You chase upstairs but cannot catch. Guilty display around a neck of golden chain with rubies square, a souvenir she should not wear. So sentimental with your pain, a face replaced, embraced inside redwoods. Their trunks with rings resplendent as her lie. Your souvenir, two times, you watch her die.
Joyce Chng

*Growth*

The curl of green,
Fetal
Emerging from the brown that is the
Fecund messy psyche
Of my mind.

Take the meds, eat this,
And what?
*You don’t like this new Me?*
I am in transit,
Changing,
My skin thinning,
I am green

Emerging.

Eat this. Take this for
Anxietydepressionragesselfdoubt,
And you will be fine.
*No, I am not fine.*
*Go away.*

Is the brown fecund messy psyche
Still there?
I am never a clean slate.
I will never be a clean slate.
I am layer and layer of brown fecund mess.

Give me time, I will
Grow.

Green emerging—
Soil black, rich:
My pared-down life.
Joyce Chng

Silence

Silence

Is when the sun goes down
And the moon rises,
When the water seeps into
The deep dark soil
Where the seed takes root,
Promising birth.

Silence

Is when the waves curve in,
Before dashing themselves against
A distant shore, their
Music heard by everyone
And nobody.

Silence

Is when the baby rolls,
The womb feels and the womb
Remembers the only sound
Of the beating heart of the mother.

Silence

Is the star-strewn sky that speaks
Of you, of me and of Oneness
And nothingness,
Because our gasps fill the gaps
Between the stars.

Silence

Is the silence that whispers in your ear,
And all is quiet.
Shhh
Shhh
Shhh.
Elisabeth Horan

Forgive the Trees

prickled in the earth are
denominations of trees
toothpicks, chopsticks
pre-formed, pre-ashamed

they are the birches and the beech
they are the deciduous-leafed
they are the conifer stands
unlucky for their soft muscles in the end

they stand embarrassed, exposed
their bodies not their own
feller-bunched—just
another John Deere’s lunch

offended by the soil
forgot the dirt’s dark toils
nibbling appetizers of leaf litter
the pungent tannins so off-kilter

rotting bark, fallen nests
the homes and roads of wandering efts
orange soldiers march without a song
damp bodies—to oblivion

do not place blame upon
such trampled, dying grasses
who die by foot and tread and track
they lie—victims of the trespass

they too have forgotten
how the wind can sing
took not of part—’twas the loggers
did shave their pulpy hearts
Elisabeth Horan

Seed Pod Waits

For that which does not come.
So busy busy
with such tarrying
birds know to feed, then procreate—

Red pod is the thing which wants to grow
wanting wanting
hungry for
that which has not grown—

Attach side wall and make a person...easy
for some; for some, I say—
but not for every
body; who wants to hold a heart, a hand, and give it all of oneself—

Once let one go—into the abyss of nothingness—
too busy busy being (18) me
busy busy with partying
let just one; one dear one go—

Red pod was willing to grow—the thing which wished to grow!
trying trying
just hoping for
a mother; she which had not grown...
(into a responsible person)...easy
now to look back upon
what one should have done—

But I, back then; what a foolish me, just a young (18)
selfish body—thought holding a heart meant only thinking of my own—
could not imagine something growing,

    a thing—which only wished to by mine own.
My own.
I can see you in the trees and I
fear, so very frigid in your bones;
what green god keeps you alive,
doe-baby, and where have your
parents gone—

Some are not meant to stay—
mothers, not men. Stags
snort I produced this. I am done.
Then deeper into the brambles where they
will do it all over again.

But mothers do not move on.

Not usually.

They stay—to keep danger
away. To usher
babies into spring; to teach
them to survive, teach them
everything.

Before you will know
how to stand strong, alert
to the breaks, snaps, and rustlings,

You will know
how to fold into yourself—
silent, liquid-eye watchful,
couched in the blue stem near the spruce.

You will learn how it feels to lose—things,
those which are the closest to you.
That one lesson which I cannot instruct upon—
and that none of us ever get used to, as a
brave doe or as a baby fawn.
Biographies

Tara Lynn Hawk is a poet and artist, the author of poetry chapbooks *Rhetorical Wanderlust* and *The Dead*. Born in northern California, Tara has traveled extensively and lived in Europe, the United Kingdom and the western United States. Her work has appeared in Occulum, Spelk, Anti-Heroin Chic, Uut, The Cabinet of Heed, Wanton Fuckery, Midnight Lane Gallery, Idle Ink, Spilling Cocoa, Poethead, Social Justice Poetry, Rasputin and more. Visit her site at Taralynnhawk.com

Abigail Pearson is a 22-year-old writer of novels and poetry. She has a black cat that she loves to cuddle with while she drinks tea and reads Dostoyevsky. Most often you'll find her writing queer love stories and about her life growing up in a cult. She resides in Eugene, OR. Abigail has published poetry collections and short stories, her latest work *A Mad Woman’s Voice* can be found here: https://payhip.com/b/A470

Blog: https://whimsywriter3.wordpress.com
Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/abipearson
Twitter: https://twitter.com/whimsywriter3
L. Mari Harris lives in Nebraska, where she works as a copywriter. Follow her @LMariHarris

Kristin Garth is a poet from Pensacola and a sonnet stalker. Her sonnets have graced the pages of Occulum, Anti-Heroin Chic, Neologism Poetry Journal, Society for Classical Poets, Rise Up Review, Paper and Ink Zine and many other publications. Her poetry dollhouse chapbook Pink Plastic House: Three Stories of Sonnets will be published in early 2018 by Maverick Duck Press. Follow her on Twitter: @lolaandjolie and Medium: Medium.com/@lolaandjolie
Joyce Chng is Singaporean. She writes science fiction, YA and things in between. She can be found at @jolantru and A Wolf's Tale (http://awolfstale.wordpress.com). She can also be called They/Them.

Elisabeth Horan is an imperfect creature from Vermont doing her best to make the world a little bit better with her words. She is an advocate for animals, children and those suffering alone and in pain - especially those ostracized by disability and mental illness. She has work published and forthcoming at Occulum, Former Cactus, Moonchild Magazine, Hedgehog Poetry and Ginger Collect. Her column "Arsenic Hour" is live at TERSE. Journal. Elisabeth will have her MFA from Lindenwood University in two more short terms. @ehoranpoet ejfhoran@weebly.com
Prior Acknowledgments

*Growth* and *Silence* by Joyce Chng have appeared in her self-published chapbook *Hiatus.*