

# Three Thousand Doors

by Karen Elaine Greene



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# *Dedication*

*for you.*

*and you.*

*you, you, you.*

*and oh yes! You!*

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# Three Thousand Doors

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## Introduction

Why do I write?

Because I HAVE to.

I yearn for the feeling of the river running through  
my veins.

I crave the rush of power necessary  
to push words through my pen and onto the page,  
send them thundering over the rapids of my life —  
the chaos culminating in a surging torrent  
tumbling violently over the edge,  
down, down,  
crashing,  
rumbling,  
roiling,  
into the frothing maelstrom.

I float up  
gasp for air  
plunge again to the bottom; push off the rocks  
thrust my way back to the top  
break the surface like a mermaid  
and gently collapse onto the calm glass-top face,  
gliding quietly through the clear,  
breathing deeply of the space surrounding me.

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I write because if I do not  
I feel I am no more than a leaf  
trapped in the brush at the waters' edge.  
Aimless, worthless;  
stagnant and decaying waste.

I write to remind myself that I have at least a toe-  
hold on sanity.  
I write because my life is extraordinary  
And I cannot sit idly by.



## Dandelion

Souls are like seeds.  
Some find purchase  
in the first soil that may beckon.  
Others  
ride bareback on the wind,  
wild and drifting  
until they find  
the place they belong.



## Planting Seeds

I am on my knees,  
swallowing the night stars  
as they crash upon you.

I am blinded by your light,  
cosmic love;  
a comet blazing through me.

I am dashed against the rocks,  
pulverized; ground into the soil,  
tilled,  
that future seasons may profit.





## Meteorite

There are some obstacles too big to overcome.  
Love fades and twists  
then ends.

Some love is too vast to maintain.  
It bends and blurs  
abandons everything  
gives more than it can spare.

It is passionate  
wild  
obscene.

Sometimes  
it simply burns itself out  
in its struggle to endure.

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## Katy's Ghost

She comes at night,  
when the world is dark  
and the stars shine  
like silver sapphires  
on midnight velvet.  
She whispers to me,  
poses questions I cannot answer,  
dances across my skin  
that she might wake me and force me to respond.  
She is ethereal and unending,  
the moon hovering  
full and bright.  
She stretches my grief,  
makes it transparent and harmless.  
A goddess in the high trees,  
sparkling harbinger;  
omen of things to come.  
She will stay  
'til she no longer needs me  
nor I, her.

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## Unleashed

I am limitless...  
no orchard rows of conformity,  
no delicate, pale nectar concocted to tame me.  
I am infused with an unquenchable thirst for the  
incomparable.  
I refuse to be mundane.  
I am a pillar of light  
walking in harmony with the moon.  
I will carve my destiny from the stars and echo softly  
with their song.



## Fortune Teller

If I lay my hand out flat  
palm up, within your palm  
and you scrutinise the lines within,  
these lines which may show you  
my past, my future,  
everything I have been  
everything I will be...  
if it is all laid out in my hand  
where then, is my free will?







## The Dancer

Graceful swan  
she moves like silk across the stage;  
liquid poured from a chalice.  
Her garments of gossamer and twilight  
wrap gently 'round her frame;  
a sinuous embrace.  
She stands en pointe  
and waits  
for her lover to lift her to the stars.



## Faust

He was mendacious.  
I was willingly naïve.  
I allowed myself to be drawn in,  
dragged under,  
permitted myself to choke  
on the sulfurous profanities  
issued from his lips,  
convinced myself to live  
with blinders on  
to see roses where there was fire  
and love where there was venom.  
He never had me fooled.  
The tragedy is that I fooled myself.

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## South Wind

A southern wind blew in today  
he kissed my neck, then ran away.  
Shy, I think, to be so bold  
Embracing me against this cold.

He tiptoed back to tickle me,  
played with the skirts about my knees,  
then leapt up high to toss my hair  
and left it dancing in the air.

This playful breeze, I think he knows  
that love like this will come and go  
but love me now, fair southern wind  
until it's time to soar again.



## Neptune's Invitation

The boardwalk is hot against the soles of my feet  
I have left my sandals on the porch  
I tip-toe dance along the planks  
anxious anticipation fuels this reunion

I hear the waves falling against the shore  
just a few more steps...  
around the bend  
over the dune

the ocean greets me with a sunlit grin  
brightens at the sight of me  
opens up, falls again  
rushes to meet me halfway

I race toward the surf  
leaping over logs tossed ashore by angry waves  
I am hungry for his soft embrace  
jump in, fall back...



## Desert Bloom

Love brought me here  
to this place of sand and wind  
infused with blustering gales  
sweeping in from every compass point

far from the land of waters; far from the sea  
which bore my weight so easily  
like dusty cotton on the breeze  
I was carried to this desert landscape  
where I learned to bear the weight of my soul

The sun blazes across the desert sand  
the winds, vehement and endless  
and the rain falling as though heaven  
has seized a fistful of cloud and hurled it earthward

I came here to strengthen my resolve  
and restore my soul  
to grow like a cactus flower on the southern range...  
and then love found me.



## Bonfire

You would poison me with your false faith  
a ricochet of the dust we once were  
like the ocean bringing glorious gifts  
teasing with trinkets  
only to steal them away.  
Your words are promises in the sand  
phrases written in powder  
to be carried away by wind or wave.  
The pages of you are leaves on the trees  
the first day of autumn will find them burning  
and I will be the fire.

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## Sleepwalker

Trapped on the edge of a dream  
light web-like filaments  
stream by and surround me;  
I am wrapped in this cocoon.

Ancestral light swirls around my skin  
ghosts of the ancients;  
whispers.

Whispers cloud my senses  
and I am swept away upon this wind  
streaming  
diving  
rising  
trembling as I wake.

I am caught in the rapture  
and the sweet echoes  
of this dream.

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## Blowing Bubbles

I imagined you  
preserved  
inside a bubble  
forever floating  
from flower to flower  
like a soft bumbling bee

in vain  
you desire  
to maroon yourself upon some petal  
burst your prison upon a thorn  
and live forever  
as Thumbelina among the roses

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## Gliding

There are times I love you more.  
Not that I ever love you less  
only that you sometimes overwhelm me  
send me soaring  
cause my heart to expand and almost burst  
open open open  
like a soft parachute  
bringing me safely back to earth.



## For Jane

You are not flawed.  
Like everyone, you are perfect in your imperfections.  
It is what makes you human; unique.

Our scars make us appealing, loveable, amazing.  
And you are.

Remind yourself every day  
that you are a magnificent child of creation.  
Your smile lights up the day,  
your heart makes the wind move  
and your love spins the earth on its axis.

We could not be the glorious creatures we are today  
without having been wounded along the way.

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## Twister

Scattered and disjointed,  
a storm ablaze with blame and guilt,  
she rages;  
tries to gather,  
like a cyclone,  
the garbage around her;  
weave it into a beautiful tapestry.  
And she can —  
structure her lies  
to create something  
tangible and glittering.  
But on closer inspection  
it is just junk.

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## Tidal

Drawn to you  
like the ocean to the shore  
I am the wave  
far out at sea  
I hear you calling  
and slowly  
I begin the journey  
that brings me to you

## Spring's Whisper

Come winter.  
Bring your cold, dark days  
and your long, dark nights;  
your mists,  
your fogs,  
your bright winter moons.  
Greet me  
with arms open wide;  
wrap me in silence.  
Place your cold hand on my heart  
that I may warm you;  
sit by my hearth.  
Your frozen song echoes in my mind;  
there is laughter in the distance.  
It is spring that follows  
so closely at your heels,  
chanting her songs of love and rebirth.  
Your icy veneer  
will soon dissolve in the wake  
of spring's smile.  
Your mistress has come once again  
dear winter,  
and for a brief moment,  
you will share her space  
before parting.

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## Kathy

It makes me smile to know we share the same  
    moonlight,  
tucked quietly away into our separate corners of the  
    earth;  
breathing the same air,  
watching satellites navigate the night.

I remember being fifteen with you,  
lying on the pavement in the driveway  
staring at the midnight sky,  
talking talking talking for hours,  
no concern for the dirt in our hair  
or the bugs curiously crawling toward us.  
We marveled at the vast number of stars –  
    unfathomable numbers –  
and wondered aloud about who might be looking  
    back.

Now we are both mothers;  
our children, the center of our universe;  
their perfect faces, our stars.  
I sometimes watch my son when he is not looking;  
unaware of my presence;  
and I am certain, at his age,  
he cannot fathom the depth of my love for him.

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I still find the stars irresistible.  
I still try to grasp just how far away they are,  
how certain “stars” are actually whole galaxies,  
and universes capable of life,  
and other fifteen year-olds.  
My brain starts to spin.

Sometimes  
I notice one star moving swiftly between, across and  
    through the rest;  
a satellite  
perhaps looking back at me.

It makes me think of you.

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## Iced Apathy

I am indifferent to the love you fling at me;  
I am impervious to your charm —  
a wall insurmountable.  
Your piteous cries — unheard —  
bounce off your trampoline heart  
falling flat against the brick  
of my fortress.

I've reinforced the walls around me,  
those I so recklessly opened for you...

A flaw in my armor,  
I was a fool to grant you passage.  
I lost sight of the struggle,  
stepped away from the battlements,  
closed the cannon doors  
and walked across the drawbridge to meet you.

Your arrows blazed through me.

You cannot wave the white flag now.

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## Gravestone

I mourned you as I did my father's passing.  
Dead forever,  
to be visited only  
in dreams and vivid musings.  
You were a ghost to me,  
a phantom of my damaged past,  
rising on occasion to char me  
in the fires of recollection.  
Your face, a faded etching in stone;  
a watermark on my history.

Imagine my surprise to find you alive.  
Not at all feeble and ethereal as I'd imagined,  
not meekly tucked away in the darkest of shadows.  
Instead arrogant and palpable  
in the mists of forgotten love.  
A violent bolt of lightning  
stealing the breath from my lungs;  
my words imprisoned in my mouth.

Your poison tempted me once,  
your tongue churned acid lies.  
Innocence shattered in your wake.

I fear madness will betray me.  
or wrath...

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## Canyon

You move through me  
like wind through the trees  
and just as swiftly  
disappear  
a whisper  
a ghost in my heart  
echoing across the chasms within me  
I fear you will stay here forever  
carved into my walls  
a haunting and terrible memorial  
to what was.

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## Rain Dance

come dance in the rain  
where we can move  
with the water

let it soak our hair  
drizzle down our faces  
make rivulets along our arms  
fall at our feet

we'll splash and stomp  
sing along with the thunder  
turn turn turn  
face to the clouds  
arms wide

wet doesn't bother me  
I am shaped and embraced  
by the rain.

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## Diffused

Don't fade away  
slink off into the corners —  
fate still has plans for you.  
Icy fingers may have pricked your heart,  
but a warm shower  
will soon fall  
melting the glacier  
that has become your hope.

You are a child of light  
born in silver dust and golden glow.  
Your force cannot be bound.  
Weak ropes hold you back.  
Lift your arms  
and break the barriers that limit you  
they are composed of gossamer threads.

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## Flight

I find  
I am a bird  
swept to flight  
on your vital breath.

Blowing kisses into the air  
you keep me aloft.

Wild winds  
fold my feathers  
in a tumultuous embrace.  
With reckless furor I am tossed  
among wind waves.

I find my calming breeze once again,  
my grounding  
lies within you.

---



## Dark Matter

She is a wall you cannot scale —  
no secret door  
no hidden tunnel  
no gate to peek over, or through.

Though perhaps there is nothing to see.  
It may be that what is elusive  
is the pathway to an empty garden;  
a vacant soul;  
she contains nothing, absorbs nothing,  
radiates nothing; permits no entry.

Perhaps she does not glow —  
a black star in no one's sky  
and the mystery which lies beyond  
may be nothing more than  
false luminosity.

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## Ghosts

Crawl inside  
while he fades.  
Disappear a little...  
let him drift away  
from your heart, your thoughts.  
Or drift away from him.

Don't allow the milk to spoil,  
but give it time to curdle  
into something thicker —  
something substantial.  
Something  
else.  
Something...  
other.  
Let it melt into another shape,  
take form as something new.

Or let it haunt you until it drifts  
into the ether.



## Solitaire

Me and alone,  
we get along just fine.

But sometimes  
he talks too much,  
sometimes she weeps too loud.  
He snores at night.

She likes to sit by the river with me.  
He loves to stare at the stars.  
She needs me now and then,  
and occasionally, he likes  
to just lie back and be silent.

So I'll lean back against a rock,  
a pillow.  
Lay down on the ground,  
this bed.  
Oh yes.  
We get along just fine,  
me and alone.

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## Earth Sings

She whispers

Moans

Laughs

Screams

Sings

She hums

She is magic

Motion; music

Beautiful

Sacred; silent

At once weak and strong

She is art

She is ours



## Malleable

Space surrounds us  
void and solid both  
which yearn to shape our form.  
We are comprised of  
positive and negative light,  
forces battling for balance  
which we must strive for  
within and without,  
that we may walk the paths of our ancestors,  
cross the bridges of forever,  
and become our yesterday, today, tomorrow.

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## Exile

We have allowed magic to slink off into the corner,  
hide in the shadows and lie in wait.

It is patient; it has learned to linger.

Magic is always near...

It is in the slow-flowing stream  
trickling gently down the side of a mountain,  
and in the thunderous clouds pouring life  
back into the earth's waters.

It is in the glittering stars of night  
as they cast their subtle glow  
on the worlds surrounding them.

It is in the first green buds of spring,  
the blazing summer sun along the beaches,  
the last orange-red fire-blossom leaves of autumn  
and the crystalline snows of winter.

Magic does not hide,  
it throws itself in our path  
makes us look, listen, love  
until we are aware of it.

And then it grows.

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## Shadow Storm

In those times  
when we are forced to walk through  
the shadows  
open doors which house the unknown,  
close the gates behind us  
and step into darkness  
we must believe  
that we will find a way  
to let in the light.



## Sunshine in the Room

Whitman sang the praises of the earth;  
The grasses in their splendor,  
breezes waving through each tiny blade.  
He sang of the electric body  
and the ceaseless soul.

What are we but tiny blades of grass  
in the grand scheme of everything?  
Feathers on the wind...  
We are here and gone.  
We blink and a moment stops,  
is ours, and disappears.

We strive to leave our mark,  
hope that we have made a difference  
in some great or tiny way.  
trust that we have touched others  
and made ourselves unforgettable.

If we have lit up rooms,  
warmed hearts  
and left a smile on the face of a friend  
it is because  
the impression, the fire, the soul  
goes on and on and on...



## Behind Me

I am sometimes devastated by my past.  
There is no atonement for the things I've done;  
my sins committed.  
I do not seek forgiveness.  
I have neither need nor requirement of such,  
but I am often haunted by ghosts  
I would rather forget.

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## Myth

Where fairies dance  
in the shining mist  
far from the forest edge  
deep in the hollows  
where the leaves reach down  
to touch the ground  
completing the circle  
earth to sky  
sky to soil  
and all that lies between

I want to dance with them.

---

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## Soft

Light filters through naked trees  
soft as candle flame  
casts gentle warmth on cold ground  
spills quietly over golden fields  
sneaks tenderly behind dark hills  
rises bold, on the morrow.





## Refrain

Much of my past lies dormant,  
like a tattered quilt hidden in the attic —  
too precious to discard,  
too damaged to display.

I have surreptitiously torn some pages from the book —  
even unseen, unwritten, unrecorded —  
these pages, these songs of my life  
remain part of the greater story  
and the writer knows they exist.

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## Broken Family Tree

I never felt there was anything missing from my life.  
Your absence never left me hollow.  
You were simply a clipping; the end of a branch  
trimmed away in anticipation of spring

It didn't occur to me to miss you.  
I barely knew you.  
I never felt cheated or wronged,  
never felt let down or abandoned.

My life has always been my own.  
I blossomed and became something strong.  
I learned to be brave and stand on my own,  
because you were never there to catch me.

If I fell, I simply got back up,  
without your arms around me,  
without your hands to guide me.  
Had you been here, would I have been different?

Yes.

But I do not regret who I am.  
For better or worse, I am this woman  
because you were not there.

---

## Balloon

Tethered tightly to the earth  
I am a zeppelin  
full and anxious to take flight  
save for the ropes  
holding me fast against the wind.

This breeze, inviting and serene  
calms my restless soul  
tempts flight from my soft roots  
eases my aching wings from the harness  
and I am once again  
found among the clouds.

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## Rodin's "Gates of Hell"

these gates  
which lead into hell  
they cannot be  
for they are much too lovely  
man in repose  
man in thought  
man coiled and writhing  
man in fear, loathing, disdain  
there may be fires at their feet  
reaching up to lick and burn  
but a cleansing fire is just as beautiful

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## New Year's Resolution

This night  
dark and lonely  
holds the moon captive.  
I am in awe.  
This silence, a quiet chill,  
binds me to the shadows  
draws me down into  
dark dreams of long hallways,  
secret rooms,  
locked doors with clandestine keys  
and cloudy visions of years gone,  
years to come.  
I offer up my sorrow  
to the altar of the past  
and ring in tomorrow  
with the promise of better.

---



## Wild Grass

I am the wind charging through you  
disturbing crisp leaves on a fresh autumn morning.

I am the phoenix risen from the ashes.

Burst into flames

scatter

rise again.

I am the butterfly wandering from flower to flower,  
unaccustomed to settling long on one blossom or  
another.

I am the grass that grows wild at the fence.

I will not be tamed; shaped into some pattern.

I am yours to treasure for a time  
until my roots grow soft and I drift away  
with the wind I am forever disciple to.

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## Waterfalls

the sky is dripping  
a woolen blanket hoisted atop the canopy  
in vain effort to hold back the rain,  
wool and water do not mix,  
heavy begets heavy

souls are dormant  
waiting patiently as the water carves  
new pathways into the soil,  
canyons forged from deluge,  
mysteries begin and end in quiet contemplation,  
silence begets silence.

A new dream founders in the clouds  
while the rain recoils  
awaiting the new torrent

---



## Vanity

clouds move above me  
below me  
I am mesmerized by their dance  
drawn into the song  
twirling, floating, tumbling  
lost and discovered

I am shamed  
naked in my flight  
standing before the fates  
my eyes turned downward  
I am at once delighted  
and moved to mourn

I am here  
gliding among the stars  
but I've left footprints  
in soil that should have remained untouched  
I have saddened angels along my way,  
treacherous and egocentric

I have trampled on lives not mine to devastate  
and demolished hopeful sand castles  
in my anger and grief

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## Seraphim

She is an angel,  
a sweet, cherub-faced,  
winged creature  
sent to inspire, treasure and adore.  
She is gentle, kind, trusting;  
her wisdom  
sound and sage.  
She has the power to overwhelm  
and power to calm.  
I am strengthened by her smile.  
Her voice is a waterfall,  
shimmering trickle of a wind chime,  
but thunderous when consumed by rage.  
She is a beacon in the darkness,  
a guide to the lost;  
a lighthouse on the shores of our struggles,  
that we may find our way back.

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## Goddess

A clouded moon  
peeks through naked trees  
this bare winter evening.

Twilight has come and gone  
leaving fine traces of  
January mist  
in the glow of her features.

She is swollen; pregnant  
with the sun's light,  
reflecting his fervor;  
brightening the midnight sky.

She is glory,  
beauty;  
she is worshipped and adored  
as woman; goddess.

She is Helen of Troy  
Aphrodite  
Diana, Selene, Isis  
Mother Moon  
Sister Moon.  
Princess of the night sky  
Queen of the stars.

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## The Call of the Wind

It is not easy to ignore.  
When he calls,  
I echo.  
His voice is deep.  
Booming bellows  
or wandering whisper,  
I find it impossible to pretend  
I cannot hear,  
so I reply.

His voice is my solace.  
It softens my desperation;  
my instinct to fly.  
My wings eased gently  
into tiny finger-like roots  
pushing timidly into the earth.  
It is unfamiliar territory, this soil.

I am a child of the wind and waves.  
Everything I know is contained  
in the voice of the air  
as he whisks me along the skies,  
drops me into the sea,  
lifts me to the stars.

I am learning to be still  
but my wings still flutter.

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## Lying Fallow

I left a candle in the window  
waited for you until it burned a hole in the wood  
lit another  
and another  
foolish  
no  
hopeful  
I thought you would come  
I left a candle  
thinking you would see it  
then blew it out  
buried it in the backyard  
threw the flowers out with the trash  
and moved on

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## The Quiet

It is so quiet  
the silence itself  
echoes off the night  
bounces back  
hits me like a wall;  
a great wave  
of nothing  
but the empty sound of space.  
There is no hissing  
no hushing  
no night creatures  
whispering to one another in the darkness.  
There is only this empty  
swollen quiet,  
and the quiet overwhelms me.

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## Sepia

Everything is brown,  
drab and colourless  
standing against the sky.  
Not the oasis of my dreams,  
merely a stepping stone  
on the path of my life.  
When it paints me sullen  
I must move to light up,  
make music,  
dance,  
paint it brighter,  
make it new.

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## At the Ballet

*pirouette*

*arabesque*

*ronde de jambe...*

they glide across the stage,  
lovers enchanted.

*plié*

*attitude...*

he lifts her lithe form;  
she floats above him.

*Pas de deux...*

He is Atlas.

She is the world.

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## Revelation

When the light of inspiration grows dim  
and I am flooded by unnecessary sorrows  
and wearied to my bones  
I look to the stars for guidance  
ask the masters of old to lead me  
gift me with vision  
purpose  
resolution  
illumination.

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## Vesuvius

maybe today I will exorcise your ghost for good —  
finally release all this pent-up anger  
allow my painful memories  
to float away on the wind  
like flame  
rise up  
away  
dissipate  
burn off and cool  
in the upper atmosphere.  
maybe today I can finally  
let the damage done just be done,  
fade away like a silver shiny scar  
and make my escape from  
these caverns of haunted memory.  
maybe...



## Crossroads

Memories,  
like subduction zones  
intersect,  
submerge  
renew.  
The plates slowly shifting  
one sliding beneath the other.

Some  
too agonizing to recall  
are resurrected  
in future moments...

Cultivate your soil  
and allow  
the ghosts of your past  
to move on.

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## Vagabond

your arms were strong enough  
to bring me back to earth,  
ground my flighty soul for a season,  
tame this bohemian.

My roots extract easily,  
no soil has kept me long.

Wind calls me  
and clouds taunt me.

But

I love the shelter of you,  
steadfast and deep-rooted.

So this wandering heart  
is learning to embrace the calm.



## Shimmer

sometimes elusive  
quietly taking hold  
the tide moves in  
waves of fear, unrest, discontent  
crash suddenly along the water's edge.  
heart-weary and disheveled  
sadness settles in  
like a hibernating cub.

breathe deeply  
eyes closed  
conjure a tranquil coastline  
where gentle waves  
warm and coaxing  
lap  
retreat  
leaving behind only diamonds  
of sanity and solace.

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## We Three

We are stronger together,  
though time and distance  
cannot break us apart;  
Our bond is solid. Secure.  
We are fire and water  
air and earth  
light and shadow.  
Whether divided or unified  
our strength is in the blood  
that ties us to each other.

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## Demolition

We criticize  
constructively —  
justify  
that it is for their good.  
Helpful?  
Not always.  
To the one who hides in corners  
afraid the sky will fall  
how constructive can it be  
to tear them down?  
What right do we have  
to be their wrecking ball?

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## Gloaming

Stars speckle the night veil  
dots of silver shining valiantly  
against blackening cloak  
we walk a path less trodden  
hand in hand  
look to the sky for answers  
to validate our existence.

If only the stars could speak.

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## Monster

unworthy hands  
leave fingerprints  
on broken souls  
with no concern  
for retribution  
and recycled lives





## Breaking Horses

Your eyes betray the grief you've endured.  
Anger, holding hands with pain  
threatened to break you in half.  
Your face writes a narrative of your anguish.

There were no barriers strong enough  
to stay the lines,  
keep them from being crossed.  
I do not apologise  
but I am sorry.

I didn't mean to be the catalyst  
that led you down that road.

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## Hanging On

I could embrace it  
but I don't want to.  
stubborn —  
arms crossed defiantly —  
I won't do it!

I could give it a chance;  
the benefit of the doubt;  
but it just doesn't fit.

Like a too-tight sweater  
keep pulling  
stretch  
until it's long enough in the arms  
tug at it  
prevent it from riding up and baring my waist  
pull at the neckline  
it itches  
it's just too snug;  
uncomfortable.

but it's the only thing in my closet.

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## The Recital

clouds dance lightly  
across the vacant blue  
scantly clad  
wispy ballerinas of the sky  
willowy arms outstretched  
reaching toward  
fat tumbling cotton balls  
racing to join each other  
before the big fall

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## Rain

spiraling gently  
from sky to earth  
soft glitter  
falls quietly  
discreetly lands  
with gentle splash  
on dark pavement



## Forgive. Forget.

I have not forgiven you.  
Loathing has festered  
colouring my soul dark.  
I have purged,  
cleansed my spirit,  
found solace,  
but angry words  
still wriggle free,  
find their way onto my page,  
surprise me with their ferocity.

It was not the ugly truths  
rising up along the way  
and even uglier lies,  
ultimately,  
it was your cowardice which made me hate you,  
the shriveled craven you became.  
You should have stood up  
faced your danger head on  
and then  
I would have been able to forgive you.



## Cycle

The cold eases in like slow molasses.  
I am layered in fleece and cable knit,  
covered in blanketed mounds.  
I sometimes forget how the heat of summer  
beat down and baked me through,  
but I am aware of seasons changing.  
Winter will softly dissolve  
into flower-laced spring,  
shifting into over-heated summer days,  
into crackling autumn afternoons,  
into frozen winter mornings,  
round and round.  
For now  
I will lie down by the fire  
and dream that I am somewhere else.

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## Community Pool

soft fingertips  
form diamond morsels of delight  
bliss-wrapped and ribbon tied  
waiting patiently  
in gentle pools  
for each solemn soul  
to reach in  
take a sliver of inspiration  
walk away happy



## Airborne

through this window  
wafts willowy sound  
of music and laughter  
sugary strands drift and dance  
across the air  
come softly to me  
find me sitting on my bed  
writing these words





## Severe Storm Warning

Shadowy clouds drip despondently  
cymbals crashing in the atmosphere  
fat drops thrash against hot pavement  
break open like overripe fruit  
oozing rancid flesh  
lying dead and blackened  
against gnarled branches  
left untended and forgotten  
long past their prime.

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## Diving In

I drove down to the sea  
walked to the edge  
stood on round pebbles  
salt waves washing over my feet  
I gazed out across forever  
past the crashing waves  
far beyond where they take form  
beyond where the sun sparkles  
on breaking caps  
into the deep blue  
where ocean swells were calm  
beckoning...  
hurry now  
into the waves  
let the water take me  
where it fancies.

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## Partly Stormy

I am not always sunshine and buttercups;  
love and light.

I sometimes rage,  
fire off round after round  
of brutal ammunition,  
make sounds like a harpy  
when her nest is threatened.

I have a soft side,  
of whispered melodies  
and star-song,  
but many shy away,  
loathe to be near  
when storms are rolling in.

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## Self-Portrait

Funny girl  
prone to pithy fits of melancholy  
stares the world in the face.  
She picks herself up  
brushes off  
begins again.  
again  
again.

Girl with invisible wings,  
she flies away,  
comes back,  
flies away again.  
Almost fearless,  
she would fly once more,  
save for the love that tethers her.

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## Across the Bridge

What if forever  
is just  
crossing into nothing?

Sallow, murky  
sadness  
Hollow, empty  
hallways  
echoing  
with silent songs  
of lonely yesterday  
wondering  
where we went  
when we lost our way  
how we wound up trapped  
within the labyrinth  
while waiting to cross over

What if we close our eyes  
and find only darkness?

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## Sad Seattle

I see a man,  
thin;  
tall.

He is racing up the steep side  
of a high hill in West Seattle.

I am no more than four.

I am pressed against the vinyl  
in the back seat of an old blue Chevy,  
one with tail fins;  
wings.

My face against the window,  
I watch him scale the hill  
with cat-like speed.

My mother, in the passenger seat,  
shouts after the man  
as he disappears over the top.

It is my father.

My sister is gone;  
a runaway.

My parents,  
anxious and afraid,  
have been scouring the streets  
to find her.

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They see her.

She runs.

My father jumps from the car  
leaves the door open wide;  
heavy hinges creak.

Seattle rain is falling lightly.

My heart is sad,  
my comprehension thin;

I am anxious to see her.

Little heart pounding,  
waiting to see the two

come over the hill,

walk back together;

my heart leaps,

then sinks.

My father is alone.

We drive home.

I try to imagine what is on the other side of the hill  
that would dare to keep her away.

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## The Last Picture

I used to have a photograph...  
you in a yellow shirt,  
smiling gently at the  
now-forgotten photographer.  
Your counterfeit smile,  
dull eyes;  
no fire, gleam, passion;  
no hidden happiness.

I loved those sad eyes,  
and the broken man  
who looked out through them,  
though at the time  
I didn't allow myself to accept  
that the false smile was more than skin-deep,  
masking an ersatz soul.

One day  
I drew through your face  
with a black marker —  
a huge 'X' — both symbolic and ironic —  
your smile peeked through and around,  
Cheshire-like,  
weaving across the broken image.

---



Later, as I regained my spirit,  
I tore the photo into pieces,  
placed the shards of you  
in an old cigar box  
filled with tarnished memories,  
and waited for the winds to change...

The bonfire lingered,  
anxious to chew up the lies;  
a blazing funeral pyre.  
Without a last goodbye,  
I placed the box  
within the flames  
despite the burn ban in effect.

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## Phoenix

I used to think love should be  
soul-shattering  
earth-moving...  
and then it was.  
The aftershocks rattled me for years  
blurred my vision  
altered my focus  
displaced my soul.

I have sometimes lost sight of my horizon  
blurred the ley lines  
that guide me on my flight.  
But the veil drawn over my eyes  
designed to skew my vision  
is rice paper thin  
and can be broken with the slightest push.

I am reminded of my capacity to begin again  
reconstruct  
my yearning to create my own balance  
spread my wings  
soar above broken clouds.

Now I lie in the shelter  
of soft, serene  
tranquil love...  
my passions rekindled  
resolve reaffirmed  
the inferno transformed.

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## In Love

Watch your step...  
cracks and chasms scheme,  
look for faltering footholds,  
conspire to capture  
heart, head, soul  
in spider-like webs.  
Silly prey tumbles face first  
into the muck  
of what is  
or is not  
trips on the fine line between  
capture  
and self-sacrifice.

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## Twilight Falling

One by one the stars arrive,  
pinpoints in a darkening sky.  
One by one, I try to count them all;  
imagine myself reaching up  
to pluck them from the night,  
stuff them in my pocket  
to save for dark days  
when I cannot seem to  
find my way out.

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## panic attack

frenzied, frothing, foaming fear  
rises like bile  
acid; bitter on my tongue

panic comes in waves  
slow, lolling, rumbling earth  
building fiercely  
undulating  
shaking feverishly  
pitching forth and back

my body is not my own

seething, searing  
smoldering fire-like  
heat consumes my skin  
spills over  
boiling, bubbling

my thoughts are  
manic  
unfocused  
screaming!

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## Shape Shifting

Memory reshapes itself  
swirling in and around  
reframing portraits  
erasing and discarding at leisure

like shadows dancing  
weaving among the woods  
dappled and daring  
fleeting and distorted

like wasted waves  
crashing against the sand...  
in my memories  
I have all but forgotten you.

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## Gone Unnoticed

Yesterday,  
when I danced on my toes for you,  
you didn't even blink.  
Didn't you know  
it was a feat of amazement,  
on amazing feet,  
something to be awed by?  
Dancing barefoot —  
no shoes!

It's sad that you missed it

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## Momentum

I cannot lie down and be still.

There are times I hear my voice  
screaming inside my head  
and four walls surrounding me  
feel foreign

like heavy blankets hung on steel rods  
to block the sunlight  
streaming through windows.

I stand alone at the center of the room,  
turning turning turning

unwilling to stop for fear

the blankets will free their holds

fall on top of me in a dark, woolen avalanche  
suffocating

smothering

until I can find the strength to move

peel back the layers

and bathe again in the light outside.

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## Endless

Edges burn away  
soft, like paper  
cracking in the heat  
revealing the heart of the image.  
Unframed; untamed  
unkempt and unadorned.  
Not one to be  
boxed in  
owned  
I will leave at will  
and stay by the same.  
My soul has no walls, no boundaries  
and my love is forever.

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## Ragged Edges

borders  
distorted and untidy  
unravel quickly  
as thread pulled gently  
from unfinished hems  
no shame in the disheveled  
unwrap your gifts  
and share them  
like stars wait patiently  
to be unhooked  
and thrown free

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## Four Seasons

I should take the time to  
go back to California in the spring...  
the orange groves  
full of intoxicating  
citrus blossoms  
the air laced  
with warm promise.

I should make a point to  
be in Washington in autumn...  
walk through the orchards  
at picking time,  
the heady scent of apples  
hanging in the air like ornaments.

I should go back to  
New Orleans in the summer...  
Sultry mists form a steamy shawl  
wrapped 'round my arms,  
and warm wind settles in  
among the swamps,  
hangs softly; drips  
like Spanish moss.

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I should be in Kentucky  
in the winter...  
where snowflakes fat as fists  
fall softly from the sky  
creating mounds of white divinity  
to be razed by  
tentative footprints.



## Being

I wrote a song today  
sat at a dusty old piano  
carved out a tune on tired ivory.

Flimsy cobwebs broke  
along unused wires  
sent sleeping spiders scattering  
as my fingers timidly struck each chord.

Weaving its way  
into the world like a newborn  
the song reached out  
from the silent ether.

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## Bergamot Kisses

I walked along the garden path  
my ancestors were next to me  
they wrapped their love in Bergamot  
and threaded leaves of sympathy.

They danced before me; my eyes bright  
their whispers weaving through my ears  
and patiently they wiped away  
my old and tired disquieting fears.

My past walked with my future self  
I watched them as they kissed the trees  
I walk with them, they walk with me  
along this path of memories.

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## For Tara

Those who would bring you down  
haul away your happiness  
drain your divinity  
steal your smile  
are not deserving of your love  
though perhaps  
they are the ones who need it most.  
Take your anger,  
pain,  
animosity,  
vengeance;  
rip it out of your belly  
through your skin.  
Find your spark  
light your fire  
take your sadness  
turn it into love  
and...  
let it go.

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## Drought

Thunder cracks the clouds  
severs the sky  
tearing the fabric in two.  
This torrent  
unleashed  
overwhelms the earth  
inundating the parched soil.  
Greedy ground wicks water away  
pulls deep gulps down into  
hungry, gluttonous rivulets  
forms new streams  
bulging at their banks.

The drought is over  
the waters run clear.



## Iceberg

I have composed a thousand letters in my mind,  
what I would write to you if words  
would not escape me  
when pen is pressed to paper.  
I have forgiven your collapse  
but I've not forgotten.  
Frozen bits of anger and unrest  
silently thawed and slipped  
through unsealed cracks in my shield  
revealed something ugly and unexpected  
terrible and tragic.  
A surprise visit from these past monsters  
left me feeling detached, vague, alone.

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## Knife Wounds

I am blameless and at fault.

Innocent

and guilty

damaged, scarred

stained, bruised.

Someone please

peel my battered carcass off the floor.

I stumble to the mirror

stare blindly at empty eyes

watching me in the glass.

I was temporarily lost;

on leave of absence.

I sank back into the shadows;

jumped the track.

Though sudden sadness

creeps up on me from time to time,

I do not stay broken.

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## Safe Deposit Box

Perhaps I should lock happiness away  
in a silver box  
keep it in the basement  
on a high shelf  
save it for rainy days  
when laughter is harder to come by.  
But, no  
happiness is not so easily contained.  
It would bubble over  
ooze around the seams  
tear through the hinges  
break the lock  
and explode into daylight.

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## Prohibition

Something about the way you touched my hair —  
part of me softened and yielded.

You were standing near me,  
watching, observing,  
protective and solemn.  
I glanced at you secretly,  
'your eyes already watching me  
In that moment, you reached out,  
your fingers brushed my hair back,  
lingering for a moment too long  
as though we were already lovers from long ago.

Later, when you stood behind my chair,  
rested your hands on my shoulders,  
I leaned back against you  
forgetting for a moment  
that we do not belong to one another.



## Woven

tricky little spider,  
universal master of patience,  
spindly legs moving quickly  
down silken silver rope  
to sink tiny teeth into captured prey,  
flail, flutter, fight,  
paralyze,  
spin spin spin,  
fluttering moth wrapped in  
tight cocoon,  
glittering web,  
repeating patterns.

I am amazed at the beauty  
and simplicity  
of your home  
solid and secure  
until strong winds come,  
tear down your construction,  
whisk you away on the breeze,  
carry you to your next destination,  
where you begin again.

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## Word of Mouth

I love you  
spills so easily  
from your mouth.

Now.

But then?  
Then you were like  
a terrified child —  
tongue-tied and feeble —  
quivering under your covers,  
hiding from the monsters in your closet.

What a bad trade-off,  
this bad timing.

So you love me.  
What good does it do now?  
Now it's just words.



## Combustible

Night visions wade in soft song  
rivers of desire and despair —  
I am summoned to your grace.

Your eyes, the colour of water,  
haunt my dreams.  
I wake  
yearning for your hand on my arm.

My soul erupts  
violent and volcanic  
spewing ashes of me  
miles into the atmosphere.

Thank you  
and damn you  
for waking this giant.

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## Rose-Coloured Glasses

You bruised my soul.  
How unimaginable  
that you could injure this part of me.

You were like a maggot.  
chewing away at my energy  
leaving me tarnished.  
So, perhaps I will never  
regain that faith...

the sweet, perfect faith  
that comes with first love  
and dies with the dust of betrayal.

Instead, I gained instinct and wisdom  
and the ability to see your kind coming  
from miles away.



## Fresh Pavement

I love the feel of new places;  
new homesteads

change

it smells like lilac  
and orange blossoms  
Spanish moss  
magnolia  
and the Ohio River Valley  
sultry salty sea air  
and the subtle breath of lavender on the wind

it is opportunity  
and reinventing,  
a time to refocus; recharge.

I fear becoming numb;  
complacent;  
staying in one place.

I am forging a new path  
and the road is calling.

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## Forgiveness

It's about forgetting...

No.

It's about letting go.

Unlocking the anger  
and allowing it to have its day,  
closing that door  
and moving into the future.

Little beads of hope  
like raindrops  
falling in the ether,  
cleansing the soul,  
renewing the heart,  
breaking through stone barriers...  
washing memory clean.



Other Books from  
**Laughing Cactus Press**

imprint of Silver Boomer Books

**Poetry Floats**

New and selected Philosophy-lite

by Jim Wilson  
August, 2009

**Bluebonnets, Boots and Buffalo Bones**

by Sheryl L. Nelms  
September, 2009

**not so GRIMM**

gentle fables and cautionary tales

by Becky Haigler  
November, 2009

**Milagros**

by Tess Almendarez Lojacono  
coming December, 2010

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## About the Author



Behind each door is a sampling of life, and Karen Elaine Greene declared early on that she would not miss any of it. Whether the result turned out to be a bitter experience or a sweet bonding, she swung each door wide on its hinges and entered boldly. Some doors were barriers she held up with her

own hands, and from some she beckoned Welcome. Karen's poetry distills the essence of exploring a world with at least three thousand doors – not one of them the same. Her collection is a collage of friendships and feelings. Each poem holds a fleck of herself, though she is even now throwing wide the next door in her path. Mother of Riley Thomas McCone, the doorway Karen waves from these days is in the West Texas town of Abilene where she lives with her sweetheart Mason Staggs.



Books from Silver Boomer Books:

*Silver Boomers*

prose and poetry by and about baby boomers

March, 2008

*Freckles to Wrinkles*

August, 2008

*This Path*

September, 2009

*Song of County Roads*

by Ginny Greene

September, 2009

*From the Porch Swing*  
memories of our grandparents

July, 2010

*Flashlight Memories*

coming January, 2011

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Books from Eagle Wings Press  
imprint of Silver Boomer Books

**Slender Steps to Sanity**

**Twelve-Step Notes of Hope**

by OAStepper, Compulsive Overeater  
May, 2009

**Writing Toward the Light**

**A Grief Journey**

by Laura Flett  
July, 2009

**A Time for Verse**

**poetic ponderings on Ecclesiastes**

by Barbara B. Rollins  
December, 2009

**White Elephants**

by Chynna T. Laird  
coming October, 2010

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