

Out of the Blueness



KERRIE O' BRIEN

Number

**OF A PRIVATELY PRINTED,
SIGNED AND NUMBERED EDITION**

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Dedication

For you -

Memory

I hold it like a wounded thing
Too close and breathing
An old story
That will not hush

We are made of such things –

I carry it
Because it happened, it happened

And what am I without it

Blurring

Take off your coat.
Let it fall from you.
Want to watch you do that.
I've been thinking of you too much.
Now, I want to make you real.
Do that and come here,
Fall from yourself and don't think.
Stop talking.
To name this moment
Is to sap it of itself.
Stop looking.
Don't ask love,
It's beyond me.
Leave before I wake, will you?
It's kinder that way.
Morning, and your searchlight eyes,
Shining, trapping, blinding.
Who can bear that?
I'm sorry I talked
To everyone but you tonight
But I find I'm like that.
Please accept it all, or go.
It's all the same to me, these days.
Now I know I'm saying
None of this out loud,
But I'm hoping you'll hear it in me
This time,
If you're listening.

moth

she flails,

dusty silk

crimson.

rose firework

red star

she sparks

floats slow,

soundless.

fire blooms

roused by

wing beats.

I reach out –

drawn

Awake

It was years ago
a bad time of things
and you led us to Glencree.
people had left messages
all over the statues;
prayers, begging prayers
an inhaler, some pills.
you insisted we light candles
but I couldn't bear the thought of it
even kneeling proved too much
so you coaxed me, carried me over.
we lit them from the same wick
perfect little blank sticks
the size of my fingers
we pushed them down,
together
and I went to walk away
it was too cold now
but you said
'look, please, just look'
so we huddled there
in the flickering warmth
and watched them all weep
down to whispers and smoke.
we wept with them
in the hush and glow.
you held me up
as I had held you that night
and walked you round
that dark room
trying to rouse you,
not knowing you
were dead in my arms

sculptor

every moment or so
he wipes the ice
which masks the stone
and tap, taps
feeling for
the blood flow,
the pulse.
the blows slowly
become soft.
life awakens
angels emerge
beneath his hands.
what he creates
will outlive him
guarding the graves
resurrecting dead
memories.
at a dark hour
with one last touch
he will rise, traipse
across the street
lay his cap
beside the drink
lean back at last
sigh,
white dust
drifting
in his wake

Cleanse

I heard a man talk of it once –
At the end of every mission
They order them into the sea
Where nothing is forgotten
In salt light
Stripped bare
Going in slowly –
Shy, almost
After the filth of war
The heat
All of it caught
In their eyes
And stand
Facing the light
As if for the first time

Empathy

I lay down my arms

My body tells a story

You trace each mark
Like Ogham
And try to decipher –

They only go so deep.
Let you –

We are scarred alike

When I look hard
I see myself in your eyes

drifting

there is talk in the air
but it lowers

as the light disappears
and the colours
explore the room

pink in the blue in the black
disguising themselves

everything is moving
slightly – like so

but we remain still

new in the dark
pulled in and glittering

I know you most in these hours

the red thread

between all lovers
lies one, fate spun
unseen string
attached, unbreakable
blood-seeping and blushing
a straightened ring
of rosy and we
all fall down
bound
hands to feet
we meet
it has begun
begins, still is
we tug, twitch
tied as one
strung
endless

Fireworks

Bursts of flowers
Falling and pulsing out
Of the black
An echoing of colour
The heavens are screaming
They suffer to create

Ashes

Is it her memory or mine?
Each bit so slow and vivid
I must have followed her
through the house
watching –
no need for talk

As she roused the days,
opening slow and bleary
like young flowers

It was ritual, ceremonious

On her knees like a witch
whispering to the ashes
Invoking

Fires, red flowers
from her sleeve

Her mouth a bellows
coaxing blushes
from shy embers –
grey birds fluttering
allowing

Some burn for centuries
in old houses

Ancient art passed
down, murmuring
in the blood lines

Not here, not with me
In this house of red eyes –

Empty grates

whisper

It was so quick.

Like the numb shock
of blood on your own skin
before the pulse and ache spread

In that blur before truth
settles and it hits
you lose yourself

The world slowed
As I felt your breath –

Before I heard the words

Eulogy

We're all slightly drunk
In the dark of your garden
It's so cold for June

Your young body wracked by grief
Trying to put his life into words

You have to say them in a few hours
More wine

You're too young for this
All pretty in the candlelight
We talk, smoke

And you write
About his love

Love
Which is stronger than death

Storm

The air feels thick
Everything gone slow
Old terrors stir
You felt on the outskirts
For days
I lie here
Animals kneel in the fields
And you get dressed
Your back to me
Light cigarettes in the stillness
The mountains look near
It breaks
Cold smatterings
Brutal as punches
Blue
We have angered gods
You're up now – restless
At the windows
The mouth of the rain
Calls to you
Tonight
I will sleep beneath rivers

Transfixed

By the way you do it

Hanging by your neck all quiet.

You're in a different world

Swaying up there each night

Slow and faceless.

You hang like a raindrop.

And when you come down –

Eyes wet

You are miles from me

and I cannot breathe.

flakes

never saw you in the snow
wonder if it makes you blush
against the whiteness
things are the same here
the days aren't so rough
but it's always dark
think it's making me
strange, I'm a bit
distracted lately
chaotic
like I'm tumbling
and it would be good if it snowed
if things stopped for a while
and I could breathe
think it all through
I hear
it's snowing where you are
tell me
how it feels

feathers

there if you look

white gifts
thin hands
waiting

to be touched
hardly felt
never still

like gold leaf,

weightless
quivering
slow things

falling

falling
always

from those
walking
with me

Pause

It was awful to see you talk like that
You seemed so defeated
Lost in yourself
And looking away from me
I, briefly
Put out my hand-
Instinct
To touch the side of your head
And stop you falling apart
But then I paused,
As if too close to fire

Block

An opening of doors
You making these small efforts
We talked today – briefly
Felt you were brighter
Still not sure you know me
Can't imagine where you've been

Most days we sit in silence

I've seen you struggle with yourself
How you're locked in
And I'd carry you back
If you'd let me
I'll stay out here tonight

Keep you safe round the edges
For as long as it takes
I'll only walk through
When there are no more doors
To be opened

Boxes

There for years now
Leaning over like drunks,
Coming apart
The years of your old life in them
Heavy to you now.
Old possibilities
Leave them in the dark –
You might move on
But your life will always
Be in a box

Incense

The bed is too small
as I turn and try
not to wake you
your body is still unfamiliar.
It could be anytime –
my first time
in your room.
I should go.
There's a smell of incense
you burn it like a priest
hoping to purify
you burn it like flowers
that will cling and remind me.
Slowly you begin to touch
without opening your eyes
as if your hand is awake
and the rest of you sleeps oblivious to
your slow touches and the morning
making its entrance.
I move with you
without words
my hands in your black hair.
You'll never be mine.
Outside,
There are no birds singing

dark

is arriving
on foot

bark and green abandoned,
hairless with grief

it lays broken – that sky
sewn with cold pink

the air unhealing, licks.

you know how it will be again
thoughts mottled, pricked

your laugh has left
through the back gate

winter?

a word, a scapegoat.

this is too unsimple a thing

Ariadne

If you can't give me water
I'll drink the black rain

I am barely here
as the sun lifts and fades

no word tonight

the warmth
falling quietly away

the seeds will be
of no consequence

with unwilling hands
I give you up

sore body
that has loved enough

wrap me up

I'm delicate

Roses

And it should have been roses
They would have dried up,
Lost their scent
And faded a little
In the light –
But I would have kept them

Mist

Someone
Must have brought me
Through the streets
Lost to it
Have no memory of
These mornings
What was said
How I came to do this, that
Madness
Pulls
And I am led
Into this wood
Deeper
Than the first few times

reaching

dawn creeps in, slowly.
you are not yet awake
as you go to touch him lightly
dawn creeps in. slowly
hands close – empty –
sensing their mistake.
dawn creeps in. slowly –
you are – not yet – awake

your tears –

gold rivers

felt like stars

burning in my hands

last words

Before you go
Know this –

You are different in every light

But I know the way of you,
How your heart moves

I'll have you – again

You will remember me
My old rose

We will swirl from the earth
And come undone again

Our folds are infinite

I will not bury you

every morning

you wonder how you got here
how it's come to this

idle thoughts
like broken bells

life, off the pedestal

nothing looks
like you thought it would
like it should

someone else sits
in the mirror

they look like you
but thinner, worn through

with eyes that won't meet yours

so you sit
and sadly stare on

until they disappear

and you can't see where you're going

every morning
and the mornings after

awaking in such states

not knowing dawn from fire

Escape

The day has ached
And you must walk tonight

With the wind sighing
Through your skin

Walk it out of you

Think – of anything but him.

It burns to be still

Stand
And the roads
Will engulf, pull

But tonight
The world is yours.

You will move
Untouched
Light as smoke –
Whole

Move through each life
Dancing on coals

Your body on earth
Is a gift
In rough hands

Elastic

It was starting to give
Cracks thin along my skull
Trying to get out –
Relentless.

They found me
Walking the beaches
Half dressed
Couldn't keep it all in

Hold my head
It's full of clocks
Wait for me awhile
I will snap
Out of it

Reminders

let there be no signs
of what occurred here

take them down
faltering

worried
by the marks left

you know
they'll be with you
for years.

cover the mirrors

burn every word
strip, bleach

act like nothing happened

these walls
will never speak.

you are clean now -
all put away

in this bright, bare room

Chance

out of all the moments
there comes one
that lets you see
how it all fits
like pulling back a veil
here we are
and all of it
flickers beyond
I saw sense
beneath the stars tonight
It brought me to my knees

Sign

It comes back
On still days

Recognise it
Like an old scent

Things have been better
Of late

You've found your feet

Time flows white
No longer at you

And in between

The heart grows

Strong enough

To break again

It is

Out of the blueness
and blinding

Trap sprung open
jack in the box
screaming

A resurrection

Earth again, voices
breath in cold night

I am singing

Rising like the sun
and bursting gold

Like
Coming out of water

Your mouth

To my mouth

Spark

Don't regret me
I'm not out for that

Years from now
Let it still matter

I'm coming to this broken
Think you sense it –

You're carrying me

If all goes to hell
Let's say it was worth it

Cos we have fire

We have fire

And I want it to burn

Moving

The days overlap
Staring out the windows
Of too many fading rooms

I run my hands over this city
Know the skin of it, how it opens

Don't know if I should go

There's something about the rain
The bitter taste of it
The way it gets right to you
Closer than your veins
And stays

And it's not grey
Not in the mornings
When you feel like you were born
Just to know what it is
To walk alone in sunlit streets

It's dark tonight
Don't let me go out
Like the others
Without looking back

But if I do –
If I go before you

Remember to bury me here –

It's the only place my bones
Will lie still

Turn

Feels like twirling
Hardly know where
I stand, where
I'm going and the
World comes down
Around us
I try not to fall
When you touch me

We blur

And move blind

Pure

So rare

I hardly recognise
The form of it –

Standing before me
With its arms out

Offering.

I have lived for this —

After all the dark love

We've finally run clear

Awakening

The breath of it stirs me
Comes out in birdsong
And lightness

There have been so many mornings
But this one is for us
The city turns, opens its eyes

And we are alive again today
I am waking up –
With you