

Demolition

Mount Eerie

Wind blows
Moving dark silver blue
Clouds showing moon

I wake up in the still deep dark, and in that moment pull thoughts back in through the open window to the ground of this beginning day. The floor by the bed is wood. From my feet to planks to plywood to posts to cement to bedrock, I touch ground and stand up. In the dark life becomes clear. I'm almost 46. I have so many hopes. Behind me is turbulence. I sweep the kitchen every night. I fumble my delicate knowing, called back in each idle moment to the archive of smoldering old wounds, to run through them again. I wake back up.

Is there a song on the wind? Recurring questions nudge me along. People ask, and I answer that I'm a musician, but that's not it. Mother night. The self-evidence of birdsong. I sing my little songs in a burning time of nature and woman-denying authoritarian landlords, of numbed-out spectators glazing over the genocides, privileged and healthy for the moment while seas rise. This place where I live is beautiful and troubled. They say it's in a nation but I disagree. The sloping hill curves around and the river changes course.

With decades of baggage, I moved a little bit away from the town of Anacortes where circling military jets roar their reminder: "There's wars. This peace you breathe is flimsy. We rule." I bite the inside of my cheek and sidestep mere despair at the gnashing human world. And I go downstairs in the dark.

A stream finds the low place and glitters

There is no other home but here and now. Here: on the paper thin west edge of a colonized continent, enclosed and named and sold and resold in multi-generational deep ignorance. I used to dream that my roots were strong and deep, then I dug down just barely and found cathedrals. Here: a long guest in someone else's home. I watch the islands over the water and wonder if maybe someday my daughter's grand-daughter will be old here, healed and grateful. The flat fertile sea between these islands holds everything, like I try to.

Only 10,000 years ago there were meadows here, a short 2 day walk to what's now "mainland", bison bones in the kelp

Here on this thin rind of spanning time, I laugh at myself and this scrap of identity scraped from the thinnest soil of recent history. A few flashing decades of a hand-me-down homemade myth

h, a few more boxes of disintegrating poetry books from a barely cohesive mouse-eaten lineage of white hippie west coast seekers on this edge, trying to get perspective through the fog of America. I shrug and laugh and count myself in, yes. I kick and jump beyond this inheritance, this too-shallow view. Back to the land to Land Back.

One year, late spring, I went to a meditation retreat on a very quiet island nearby. I arrived entangled in all these considerations. Why to make a song? How to open the underworld? And who is thinking this even? And the weird, alienating, looming, eerie blindspot of colonization, the ignored and informative wound showing the way through, the way the roots that held the tree down left a deep hole, now full of water, reflecting sky.

I arrived weighted with all this, with my backpack on the beach, one eye squinted, murmuring who do we think we are to be doing this here, now? I wriggled, but still I stayed. My precious skepticism got left there in the sand and I climbed the bluff into the woods and found my campsite.

Days passed in quiet demolition. Gradually I softened into the insane meditation schedule and noticed a relief, like a sloughing off of all the extra winter coats. I slept the few sleep hours in total black, my tent loud with indecipherable night wind through the old forest. I dreamed, until a 3am demon with a headlamp and a wake up bell stomped through and tore the veil.

Middle-of-the-night-mind still unformed, I shuffled through the salal in the dark toward the glowing womb window of the one room cabin meditation hall where I sat back down

The iron of the woodstove cracks
Coals chunking down
First faint blue of day
Breath slow in and out

Am I the ocean or in it?

Single candle flame still
Before the first bird and sun fingers through
One hot iron crack snaps
Soft rain begins