

IRENE LOY

I'VE NAMED
THE
GODDAMNED
RAVENS

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“There’s a science to walking through windows without you
All of my thoughts of you
Bullets through rotten fruit
Come apart at the seams
Now I know what dying means”

- GRACELESS, THE NATIONAL

. . .

“I think now that maybe true sweetness
can only happen in limbo.”

- PETER HELLER

INVOCATION OF POWER

With my Inner Beloved
I go down to the river.

Here I am, marrying Air.

I ask him a question.
He speaks to me, humbles me, praises me.
Mostly he says, "It's not time for you to know yet."

He offers me goat cheese, red wine, honey.
I receive.

He says, "Look how unbothered the river is."
I say, "Yes, but what is the answer?"
He tells me a joke.
I laugh, and tears of joy come out the sides of my eyes.

We make love,
and I forget my question.

Then, as I rest with him by the river,
distracted,

He drops the answer
silently between my lips.

MY DIVORCES

My divorces
 like a double death
 before I die

But they're mine -

Rolling them about on my tongue like ash
They're a sooty meal,
 and nothing I ordered

My longing for a love affair with myself
 turns my blue moon to gold

But I'm still drinking and smoking too much
 in this sacred-profane
 space of grace,
 my head leaning on the john door
 because I might throw up.

CLOSE YOUR EYES

Close your eyes
and when the time is ripe
Love will reveal to you
the secrets of your heart.

Love - patient, kind - can wait.

Rest, Love, and for now:
eat this peach.

DISCOMFORT/GLORY

Sun rising slowly

We're drunk, me and my Beloved

run down to the water

the brush cutting our naked calves

The water spraying our faces

as we descend the staircase

I might die from joy

my love my love my Love

Touch my hair

and kiss my tears away

We fall, swim in the tumult

climb out again

It's perilous and worth every breath

I'm gaining in unease, discomfort

and transition ever present

in glory, glory, Glory!

TAOS, MY DESCENT PLACE

Taos, my descent place

Ravens cawing

outside my window
announcing more death
I'll have to leave this place I love
and which repulses me

Mourning the past

dreaming up the future
I love this air
I don't want to leave these trees

I'VE NAMED THE GODDAMNNED RAVENS

This summer, I started planning for my death
with DeVargas Funeral Home
like a good, strong INFJ
who shops local

I moved to Taos and lost a spouse

my Granny, and two lovers
I'd like my ashes spread here
I've died here already, before death

I've died a spiritual death here

upon my ascent I must admit I'm leaving
like hiking the Slide Trail
to memorize the feeling of YES:
I can climb back out of this gorge in my life.

I want to summer here endlessly
in this portal, this liminal space of self-quarantine
Perhaps autumn chill will kick me out -

Life will never be the same on the other side.

ONE MORE HERM

I ascend

this roadside, rockscape wonderland
picking up pieces of the mountain
and placing them on itself

Herm after herm

leading to some unseen summit
tired and parched, I turn
admit, it's time to return to my car

As I prepare to descend

I feel them behind me
perhaps one more herm
one more herm

As if I could ever fully know this place

but New Mexico is a fathomless ocean
it will never be revealed to anyone
in its totality

And my love for it

will not keep it from lovingly pushing me out

Last week

on a bench in a courtyard
I had a sudden urge
to stuff my shirt with dirt

To make love to this place
to eat it whole
keep it in my cells
I love you, Taos

And you repulse me
you will forever be a love
and a past lover of mine

So I will exit
to create
- Universe willing -

A new chapter of my life

SEA/SALT/TEARS

Oh, this.

I've done this.
turning back to behold my past
like Ado did
the salt she became was undoubtedly tears

Or sea water
Those little pillars

Why do we treat
the metaphors even the obvious ones
in the Bible
like such mysteries?
I explain this as to children because I'm crying now

Sorry, I've been a wreck lately
falling to pieces even
while following the will of god
doubts: the chocolate chips in the cookies of faith
Now there's a metaphor we can all follow

I've come apart
excuse me
I'll just - (grabbing a piece of herself from the
ground in front of you)
my past gone - my future as yet unformed
Limbo has a way of wrecking a woman

Please be patient
even while I'm not
fears came up this week, jitters, anxiety cubed
just before the outgoing tide comes back in and -
A wave crystallizes me where I stand.

A LEAVING

She braided her hair the morning she left me.
washed it in that cocoa butter shampoo I love
braided it still wet
held up its bottom to complain of split ends
sat on the edge of my bed
poised to stand
hesitating?
and then walked out without a word
half-waving to me from the doorway
as if it were nothing.

ON GHOSTING

I fight it

It is not communication,
so I feel no need to learn its rules
yet its rules are imposed on me:

1. One can ghost another they've been very close to.
2. When one declares a ghosting game, the other is beholden to it./must comply.
3. An ashy cliff ensues.
4. I, a Fool, step off it.

WHICHEVER PATH
(A CALIFORNIA POEM)

The heart that follows this path
is broken

I nurse it

get up - read maps - go to bed
go for daily walks
pause on the path to discover crocuses
another yellow!

Try to find the place to plant myself

when what I have is a(nother) gathering urge to leave

I just need one corner to make this hearth fire in
where it feels true

Yet uprootedness feels more true at the moment

My presence here is my own response
to all this heartache

I hear

'You could go to any spot and it would be fine'
yet I'm 20 spots in now
a leopard roaming

We are what we are searching for?

What map am I following?

going off the map

Hindsight shows me where I've been

accumulating fortunes I don't (yet)
realize by doing this work

Well, labor is work.

Giving birth is work.

HOW TO SPEAK THE COUNTRY INSIDE ME

The official languages of the country inside me
are Enthusiasm
and Sadness at unmet ideals.

German and English, too,
but like the grantig quality of Austrian German
or the “spend time” commercialism of English,
the tone of my country’s languages is critique.

An urge to live abroad,
somewhere better than this
but it isn’t time yet

So I move my country-body
around this Americanah
and I am often not amused,
but disheartened

All the ideals we brought here -
how did we so profoundly miss the mark?

All this pavement, so many strip malls -
we forgot that people matter more than money

So the citizens of my inner country are crying,
wondering where to locate this country
inside of that one.

PEACE

Peace

- that slope
into my own anger

I hated his never-ending silence!

I threw large stones into his calm lake!

Lack of conversation

is drought
is no love

I became the keeper of the peace
the one who controlled my speech
and hands

I chastise myself

you're covered in thick cloud
forever pining after a love that is not there

When this - this pen

this thought
this cup of tea
rises up to meet you

Like all the solutions to the problems of absence in your new home

You project all these images of love

when everything great in the man you love
you have manufactured

MUST THE MYSTIC SHED AGAIN?

Descend

descend

descend

Inanna

down to the bottom of Hell

shedding something intensely valuable at each gate

Until She

naked

sobbing

alone

is all Woman grieving and bone.

Hanging on a hook on the wall

the Hanged Woman

nurses the baby,

her own future

until her friend helps her claw her way back from death.

Like Cixous

women giving birth to ourselves

over and over again

A TILTING WITHIN MYSELF
(A SANTA FE POEM)

This pine tree growing thick in my trunk
 has sprouted one tiny little root here
It doesn't mind commitments
It stands still, unwavering
 and waits for me to tilt toward it
 to quiet the mind
 move back and down
 where the sweetest shoot is growing
 down toward the soil from my tailbone.

I - inexplicably, and with reverence - relent.

PSYCHOPOMP LOVE

Six of Swords

Psychopomp

Trickster-Ferryman

rowing his little boat across the River Styx

The first time we cross, descending, I'm worried, shrouded

the second time

my head is held high

I've learned something, been coached by

midnight and darkness

The ascent has made my tear ducts puffy

grieving all this loss

I open doors and find no one

no one

no one

While the Buddhist monks sweep the sand painting away

I twirl my fingers in the water

wonder at the woman now reflected there

I love this psychopomp

without whom I would've merely sat on the shoreline

and died

I am filled with love for this crossing,

and crossing back now

toward a dawning

I am on the verge of my own personal resurrection

TRICKSTER AT OUR EVENT

Is it wrong that
I chuckle when
 after all our careful planning
 the wind blows all our
 table seatings away?

LOVING PETER PAN

1.

My mind said,
Do not love this man
Who is incapable of loving you back
But the love came anyway
 and set up a little nest in my heart
I fed it peaches
 and bread
 until it grew so big
It flowed out of my eyes
 when I looked at you
 marvelous fireworks display
All I saw was the beauty
 the handsome
 I hoped for you to be a man
 as you told me, you're a Peter Pan
 and your goofy red tennis shoes
 belied your teenage approach to feeling
A running, running
 toward your damn freedom
 and away from the love that came out of me
 as you were slipping beyond the hope of touch.

2.

Forgive me, but I'm not sure how I'm supposed to love anybody else
 after an experience like that
Of falling through the clouds
 like FKA Twigs after piercing the dragon's face with her
stiletto

Tattooed Beauty,
you loom large in my consciousness now
when you may be unable to love me back.

3.
All my life for those two hours Wednesday night
All the bridges I've burned lighting the way –
I'm a carnie at heart and should be running a festival

Arms up around this glorious man's neck like aspiration
just enough light to watch him enter me
I turn my head aside in glory –

Foolish woman, loving those who can't love you back
crying inside my mask
in a courtyard built atop Native graves.

4.
I love you
like I love fireworks
from a distance
jaw-dropped
in awe of you
always shooting into space
colorful, vibrant

You, like fireworks, are unable to love me back.

It's alright
I get shy anyway, teary,
unsure what to say
to such a series of bright lights

who, at night,
makes even the sun look small.
I am in love with my romantic notions of you
shocked to be out in public
acknowledging this much beauty.

5.
You hand me stickers
like a child
of the 80's
your flyers
and magnets
until I feel small

6.
This is my full surrender
to your speed
Me, snagging windows of time

Trying to catch your eye
while you look past me

You beautiful tattooed Sag

I buy new bathing suits and bras
that you don't notice

Sit dumbstruck
while you don't ask me questions

You feel affection for me now
I can tell

There's this shared gratitude
that we can still be together
and then
you're off again

Giving me nothing

I develop a thesis
you know nothing about

Work some job
it's hardly relevant
when you're off again

Quick drink before you go -

And if I love you still

then that's my own damn fault.

I SHOW MY AUNT

I show my Aunt
 this place that pains me
 that breaks my heart

A series of beautiful sights
 and inconveniences,
New Mexico
 has already disenchanted me
 before she had a chance to make it out.

I hit my head
God dammit!
Will this place ever work for me?
 I've returned to answer this question.

I try to be a good host
 while encountering a thousand memories
 of loss.

These are a few of my favorite things
 even though

 I still hate my job
 don't know what to do about my rent
 I'm contemplating adding another nine months
 to this long goodbye.

Something feels like it's concluding
 letting me go
 again.

I long for my calling, like a lover
and sit here alone
smoking cigarettes on my patio
(once a week)

The pandemic times,
a transformational leaving
and staying
I'm given no answers yet.

And the clock is ticking on my lease

I hate my job
did I mention that?
It is so wrong for me.
BUT I could reframe it!
Some series of boring tasks I do eight hours a day
before soaring
into my studies

A new crush
someone I could love
I hope I haven't ruined my chances of being loved.
I've been poisoned here
you know?
I've taken in the energy of
a Madman
an Alcoholic
and a Peter Pan

A man who,
 when asked if he loved me,
 batted the word away
 like a fly

He said,
 You can just lose track of me altogether

My losses have scabbed over
 I don't pick at them anymore
 because I'm sick of bleeding

The ravens know me now,
 and I've made their acquaintance!

Trying to prove to her, I've learned something -

I show my Aunt
 this place that pains me
 that breaks my heart

A series of beautiful sights
 and inconveniences,

New Mexico
 has already disenchanted me
 by the time she had a chance to make it out.



ABOUT IRENE LOY

Irene Loy is a PhD Candidate in Creative Research with Transart Institute/Liverpool John Moores University. She holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from the University of New Mexico and an MA in Speech and Hearing Sciences from Indiana University-Bloomington.

She has written several plays, countless poems, and plenty of creative nonfiction. She has published online with *Sol Forte: A Journal for Spiritual Writing*, *HowlRound*, *Elephant Journal*, *Truity*, and *Live Taos*.

Irene has served as the Research and Communications Director for Improv Medicine, an applied improv LLC based in Taos, since 2016.

She hails originally from Indianapolis (born and raised) and has lived in Canberra, Vienna, New York City, and Boston, as well as in a handful of cities and towns across New Mexico since 2009.

She is on the verge of her own personal resurrection. In the meantime, she enjoys high desert hiking, improvising, and eating blackberry pie.

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MASTHEAD

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As an independent press, we seek poetry that sounds like music, and music that sounds like poetry. Our titles strive to answer the question: *what is it all goddamned for?*

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We recognize that we work on unceded land of the Coast Salish and Duwamish peoples.

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I'VE NAMED THE
GODDAMNED RAVENS

IRENE LOY

what are we fighting for?

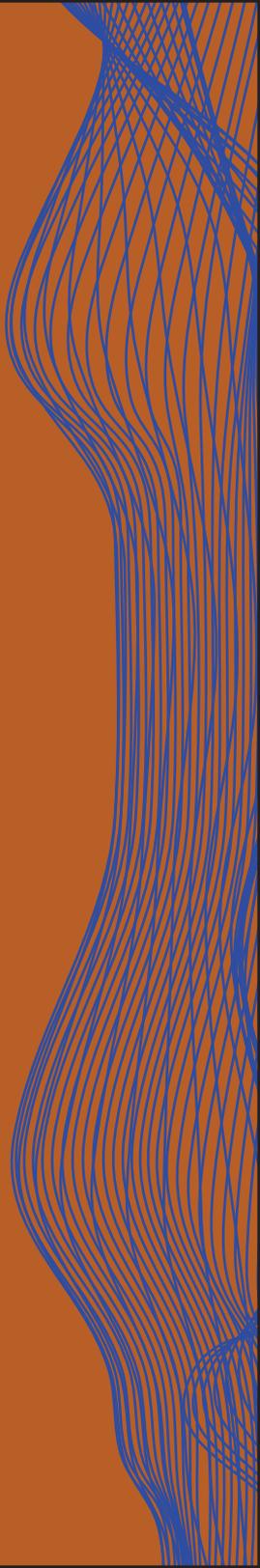
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Maybe I'm Ready to
Talk About What Happened

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