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The Breath we walk on

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THE BREATH WE WALK ON

by

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Bachelor of Arts
University of Utah, Salt Lake City
2005

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
Department of English
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Graduate College
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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend that the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Sean Matthew Tribe

entitled

The Breath We Walk On

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Creative Writing

Claudia Keelan, Committee Chair

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and Dean of the Graduate College

December 2009

ABSTRACT

The Breath We Walk On

by

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Dr. Claudia Keelan Examination Committee Chair

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“The Breath We Walk On” is a collection of poems written during my time at UNLV, instructed by the poetic works of George Oppen, DH Lawrence, William Blake, Alice Notley, Walt Whitman, Allen Ginsberg and John Donne, as well as, *The Greek Anthology*, *The Bible*, and *The Gnostic Gospels*. The major ideas forming this collection detail issues of self in relation to the world. The poems that were most instructive from these books explore this idea in the best of their works. Other questions addressed are how can human beings live in a way that inflicts minimal harm to the planet? How can human beings envision a world that allows them to live in the most honest way on this planet? The poems that have inspired me and that I have written tend toward political and religious discussions dedicated to seeking ways to be truthful in relation to the world.

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Exodus Again

Jesus wants me for a sunbeam to shine for him each day

Jesus

Don't want me for a sunbeam

A sunbeam is not supposed to be like me

In the beginning I was taught

The presence of divinity,

Was a fire burning

In my chest.

I was raised to believe

Some men knew god personally

I began associating the origin of fire

With obedience.

True holiness, they said, came from being a servant

To the institution to which I was born.

The days grew dark as I grew.

Listening to choirs through walls, plastic glass

Smoking a cigarette

In a suit and tie.

Too stricken

To go home.

Inside my tribe,

Sang the tribal songs.

Cars zooming on highway 95

North to Maine,

South to Florida.

The hedge smelled like lacquer

And I think I was allergic.

I could not cross the street

Yet,

Still listening to the stories

I heard through walls:

Cows and men moving toward a center

Feeding off weeds in field's gods had walked.

Places holy men had kneeled.

A woman weeping for her husband

Who stood next to invisible heroes

While the spears of the infidel pierced their side.

Until the voices are forgotten

In a sea, material life begins to grow

Barnacles on the tongues of those

Who re member.

And the cows walk past

Leading others within the noise and

The bustle of a current looking for a center.

One day leaving the cows and the hurry

To get to heaven a young person

Climbs a hill on a rainy day

To talk to God.

Then dreams of the prophets being led by demons

And the villages burning.

In the ashes everything is clear

He knows what to do.

Something is helping him.

He thinks he hears a wheel turning,

Sees the laughter,

Smells tar and gains a coat of many feathers,

And turns

Toward the center,

Hoping the gates will open

The sunsets.

Dancing Naked in Front of the Ark

When I was a weasel disguised as a saint,
I wanted harmony with my Brothers and Sisters

Never were my antics and arguments with parrots accepted
It was agreed I was too didactic
Too scientific
Too secular
They said I upset the Parrots

I was forced to learn the two-step
In front of the church house
While I was on leash in my tiny velvet vest and hat
Tender souls tossed coins
And they filled my box with literature
Pamphlets ranging from the obvious map of the earth
To books on Dancing in the Eyes of God
One was about King David and his naked dance in front of the ark
Sometimes it made me feel better
Mostly I knew I was running out of time

In All-Saints

In awe
In God
In church
In LA
We are conjoined
At birth on earth
As in heaven
As LA
As this land
We see cultures
Of each dot
On the landscape
With angels
Under an arching ceiling
Could you believe
There was more than
Family hatred
False tongues and empires
Built from wrongs
Built in awe with
Everyone we leave
When each goes under
The vaulted or
The dirt
Dust mixing with a mould
Of another climate
In God we trust
In LA we see
In awe we are us

Lift Up your Voice(s) and With Us Sing

How firm a foundation my wife
Puke green flower dress. A foundation?
A famous haircut. This week my lusting was me.
Why the cross
Scary. How firm a foundation is my sweat lord
A serf in vassalship to a lord? My oh my
Jesus put me down, I don't care if it was
My silly mistake, I am human. I am just trying to be honest
A mighty fortress the walls are my lord
Her neck I'd kiss. Sex in heaven?
Better be? Jesus please don't send me back that way. I don't think I
Could be that way again:
Let down
On to the earth after
Visions of something
I couldn't keep.
 How firm a foundation
Does the lord change, firm, is firm to firm to move like a river
How could a statue have died for my sins
I stole a candy bar last week working hard making money
I do my job I do
As well and I am devout
Jesus is down. There is a green hill far away
All Creatures of our God and King
My voice, my dog as it poos
Hallelujah anyway
Hallelujah anyways

The Road to Damascus

Through a massacre
Through a forgetting
Through losing sight of
Through revelations, through seizures
Through falling from a horse
Through being
Murder, savage
Paul, disciple
British, Bedouin
Through war
Or the approaching war
Our approach to
Damascus is coming
No matter the manner we arrive
We arrive
Bruised, burning, homeless
Newly named, more human than God
With no banner
On foot
Sun burnt

Merciless Hero-Pass

The journey back was sad
We had traveled without rest for months

Whenever we had time to consider
What would be waiting
We could barely go on

We had to learn
To surmount the things
We so often found

As we finally fell
On to moist-green-grass
We entered the house and showered
Gathering in the living room
Draping ourselves
In purple-silk-cloth
We stood
Shoulder to shoulder

Titus Magus

In

J
E
S
U
S'

T
I
M
E

(I am starving)

Reaching

To

God

For food

I

Drop-

Ped

Dead

Tesla to Edison

May each— ah ha

Make our dreams sweater
With dancing visions
The yarn
Layers upon layers under

Which touch is sleeping
As we sleep in separate rooms

May our
Eyes guide
In spring
To suns exploding in our chests
To still more spheres awaiting the arrival of green

In a Museum

Dread formed just under
My navel
My eyes rested on a re-
Built T-rex

Holding to the center of a domed room
People rushed around me
Continuing breaking then
Reuniting, flowing

The sun must have dyed

A current
Pushed onward
Past the stuffed shark room
Beyond the mammal room

Into a new kind of darkness

Feeling for something
Falling backwards onto a marble floor
The air stale
Full of movement

Full of darkness
The light must be reforming

Conjuration #1

WB: Do you believe in God?

WCW: I believe in the earth and the power of man. Religion is a superstition meant to keep people unhappy. It's a way for the ruling classes to keep the poor in chains.

WB: I agree but do you believe in God?

WCW: I believe in a continual creation. I believe in man and I believe in the goodness of nature. I do not believe in a bearded man that sits on high and judges us below.

WB: Once again I agree. What are the arts like these days? When I was alive the first time I was a painter. From the poems of yours Sean has shown me you seem to have a painters eye also. So tell me what has become of painting.

WCW: "There is no subject; it's what you put on the canvas and how you put it on that makes the difference. Poems aren't made of thoughts — they're made of words, pigments put on ...Modern painting is unmediated, sensuous. "I've attempted to fuse the poetry and painting. to make it the same thing, "I imagine the angels will have forgotten, by that time, whether they had been niggers, archbishops, -- or even the sex or their parents. Memory will not be their occupation they will have escaped it or escaped all its less significant details. When they look at the new pictures of those who remain artists among them they will seek qualities more mineral than protoplasmic, to be graded as they repel, absorb. or transmit light, but we -- are full of memories and the best we can do is to seek in them for the luminous. What about you?

WB: A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour, or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not imagine in stronger and better

lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing and mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all. The painter of his works asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing seen by his mortal eye.

WCW: Do you claim the artist should have authority over his text?

WB: Who else. But the work should be porous enough to allow truth to filter through.

WCW So a divine servitude?

WB: Not really...

WCW: I am the genius of my poems.

WB: I am the speaker for God.

Hey Joe

Con man in-
Sane man teach
God he need machines

From black magic a church
Wielded as white

Now you are well polished marble
Now you are devoid of blood

Directive to the Israelites: Cut Down All the Groves

The top of the tree is the least important. The fruit of the tree, take an apple for instance, blunt object, also displeasure. What's the use of blossoming if the roots don't reach noisily to the imaginary center? Is the fruit the result of a tired mind, or an attempt to pollinate the earth and reproduce? A tree is evil: blame paganism on trees the source of runes and wisdom in the north, while in the south the tree is a place for sacrifice, not for the wisdom of the Norns: misplaced spite. What are the roots that still dig and carve bending archaic matter searching through the breath where the ground we walk on springs?

Pan 1

No fun.

No longer am I a guide
To joyous, rapturous, nightmare peristalsis.

I have become horns, hooves and erection.
Second to Apollo in music,
To Hermes for love;
No lineage, banished from the gods.
Shepherds looking to the Christmas star

For less than 12 silver pieces: a Heaven,

A Disney paternal, motionless no where
Full of fluffy bunnies humbugging lions.

Nightmares: a distraction?
Panic, no longer civilized?

Abstract fear from its source and
It will always spring;
Birthing that bastard psychoanalysis.

Nightmares are only the earth sighing from
The cold weight of matter.

The underworld is closed
Sealed by the lamb's servants.
My name was stolen, the shepherd of shepherds.

Delude yourselves,
Sheep don't need a shepherd,
They know their way home
And they will pile into a cage safe
Before sundown,

That was my joke.

It is so late
For the living
Breath we walk on.

Slave/Time

Wind sun shepherd
Standard mean time from a mistaken dominion
From life's first burning now again
Unclenched flowering
Back into ether Unbound
Caw squawk moo what veil this is coo-coo-
Coo-coo covering
A Sigh

Towards Gnosis

I

So the muzak opera of my forefathers
Will be crushed under the pressure of necessity

II

To watch the world
Spin no more circles
No stricture no corner
To crawl to

III

All grass dies
All men dies
Therefore all men are grass

All dogs need food
Plants need food
Therefore all dogs are plants

Strange to be a thing

IV

The sleep of
Decay a tone
Nervous squirrel
Ever retreating a deer
A quivering mole
It is hard to enter a forest and not change the mood

V

Nary a dream goes by without us dreaming something soft

Proverbs of the Swamp Thing

- 1) Pollution is bad.
- 2) A plant can't become human.
- 3) Always strike roots in the murkiest ground; depth is the way plants survive.
- 4) It is not wrong for a human woman to make love to a plant trying to remember the man-husband.
- 5) The earth is not earth, it breathes.
- 6) Gaia-Sophia is not geometric.
- 7) There are no circles in nature: circles the globe you'll find none.
- 8) Roots connect everything under the sun: save human relationships.
- 9) Neither plant nor human, only seeds form from dirt and clay.
- 10) Only humans and Archons can abstract from Gaia-Sophia.

The Rebirth of the Natural World

Not all
Not the Great God Pan
All never was more than a shepherd and he dwelt in a pasture
The all was born with empire
The structure all was built
From a clod as common and naked as a freshly singed veld
He arose never frozen
A flutter in the nerves of all

Answer

Your happiness is more real for now
Leave the names that hurt you
Names of meanness and spite
Your happiness is more real for now
It is Christmas

Come into the wild
You have looked too long at brick and concrete
Look out the window
Look away from the TV
Look away from the internet
Look away from Books
Come into the wild

The head is a mindful place
Of a narrow space
Flee to the wild places
Fear not you will not be overwhelmed

The Ever Yes

Fountains flower
Our purple scars burn
Kindling a surge I can't say so I

Dear Hyena, Thanks I Can Now See Gods Shadow

Hyena
Strip my mind
No more symmetry
Clear the room of
Common sense ways of seeing
Let my mind be reformed
No more
Golden Ratio

What spirit moved you
From moist rooms
To shadow the camps of humans at night
Back
Neck
Jaw
No visible pupils

Maybe the creator was confused
As he created you
Did he not care if all of his creations
Would be minded or loved by man

The Pigeon

To keep us from crying
Too long
Their necks

A different time
Pigeon
Keeper of fairy flames

We feed you today and kick you tomorrow

Erasure #1

The palace roof
Shadow the smells of
A honey suckle vine

Untitled #1

I can't decide if the dog
Who pillaged my trash can
Last night if of you or
Away from you Pan

Woodbridge is in Arcadia too

God now of suburbia
Luminescent forests
Prenatal memories
I never heard a bird
Sing in a thunderstorm

Let Me Rule No More

Let me mete out
My steps away
To land
Never
To mould
Never again

Melt away
O Melt away

Toward Gnosis II

A love remembered
In a moldy birch grove
Bound to a slanted gaze
Only the matter
We pressed against

Directive #2

Recreate the turning of Sophia from light into this earth. Look to nature for the feelings she felt, as she transformed. It needs to be through revelation, not out of a book.

Recreate the struggle and the Christos Intervention.

How do I, Pan, fit?

As the interpreter of each groan of Gaia-Sophia, I serve as an avatar. The nightmare is her sigh. Inorganic matter is death Gaia-Sophia is alive she is fighting the enemies of organic life through her struggle life moves forward as fire.

I Love in Loaves

I leave the factory assured

In loafing we waste the worry of the world

In loafing I bloom
Nerves anew in leaving loafing
I recall atoms
Never resting causes
Matter to solidify
Nervous thoughts always moving
Let us loaf then

In Loafing we waste the worry of the world

Gaia-Sophia has need of us

In loafing we honor our Universe
And Gaia for
Sophia comes as we open receptive in our loafing
The earth breathes

In Medias Res

And everyday the future arrives
On my door step and in newspapers.
My eyes forming
What will follow;
The magpie nibbling on its dead and
The eggs of the robin.

I hang a laurel wreath each morning
Above my bed
Over toast, reading the newspaper.

Sermons To Squirrels and Pigeons

Did the trees bloom

 In an act of longing

To be touched?

Did the squirrels laugh

When you told them about

 Redemption and the need to overcome this world?

Francis,

Everyday

In the park

 I hear people talking to ducks.

Once I heard a guy

Extolling fighting pigeons

To be grateful and kinder.

Even Ezra Pound was sustained

By a toad while lost.

And once I was uplifted

 By a dog

Who emerged, hungry, from a crowd.

I gave him my last peanut butter sandwich while

Something touched my back.

An Ostrich With Its Head In The Sand

The earth shuffles as it sleeps
Ants tick, kicking up dust.

Swerving light has no space to cast
Shadows over conversations here.

What does you mean?

Beauty in worms
Not cicada's
Staring birds in trees.
I retreat nothing;
Save the distortion of words.
There is no stasis underground

Don't believe it is still.

Roots pushing to a center.

Would you explain what you mean?

The noise of language exists
On the prairie
With gazelles who never speak
And the wind always whining.

The straining noise of roots,
Ticking of ants and
The fierce silence of moles.

Don't believe it is still here.

The Mountain Goats Progress

I ascend to seek food
I descend to seek food

Peaks crossed by creeks
Small ledges and cruising clouds

No more environment
Only moulding forever more

To speak
The language of scent
Imperfect crags and jangly leaps

Who can live with so much
Certainty underfoot

Billy, Up

A wind blew those yellowed days
Greening on mounds of dirt
Flesh-fired-ranting
Can warm
No more

Love
What/that we made
Near the surveyed-woods
In basements, outside
Clock-time
Come out
Stop now

Head to stone
Up look up

Mermaid Avenue

Somewhere, this place

Your hands

Friends and family going out the window

A trash can alley

Stillness no break

Peace can be a place

For a small time

Tattooed by Norway

Paths full of mountains

Too many views

Down the backside in shade

Connections plucked from narrow gullies open

Fairyland Asgard Childhood

In never arriving

You never

When You Arrive in Sparta

I am whale

I sing for a new conductor

Not dulcete

My whaling deserves neon

Broadway not purple gazes

Xylophone my ribs

When you find me beached, bleached, exposed

Don't let the faux whale speakers

Keep me from Broadway

Bang my bones

With your open palms or with tiny rocks

Write in the sand

No thing to conclude

I am whale

Shelter yourself in my ribs

I am not present

I am not the director

The Snow Slid From the Roof

Why bother at all

With a shared reality

Snow spreads thickly across the asphalt and grass

The roof and the ground are covered the same

The space next door is full of babies crying

And a mother and father trying to be cheerful

They have a hole in their door too

The front doors have warped from the weather

It never could seal out the wind

Yet I never fail to see the light

Fall onto the carpet

My Albatross

It landed on my balcony

Midnight under a full moon

Green Yellow Orange and Red feathers

Bursting and Flashing images

Images of failures

Dancing girls and the stranger fruit of humanity

Images leapt from his feathers

My many heroes

Iggy Hank Kurt William leaped

Into my minds eye

And all the teachers I'd respected

All my worries and tiny trembling fears

Unroot and disperse

Hair, Age, Dirt and Dye

Not a gesture of fenestration

Never my love's no

Archeologist in a sandbox

Sifting aside plastic toys

Searching for that burst of breath

From a more innocent time

Water for the sprouts springing

From the shivering sandy frame

Shrinking under time

Nor a nod to a virgin time

When beauty walked always in

The cool breeze

Glazing the garden floor with moisture

Red Emma Red

Emma o my Emma

It's Raining

Darkness reigns in the news

Herding me into stalls

No more red

No more black No more Flags

o Emma steal?

I owe

I am aroused and enflamed to what end

o Emma

I have no plain sight

Stone crumbles with the passage of water

Ivory births ivy o Emma

o Emma When hungry I crumble

Emma it is raining

Please Emma dance

Non-Business

In the drains behind the Safeway
I find my echo
To the ocean we go
Insoluble stuff
Drain me

Let me sponge no more

VITA

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