

Rachel West's  
30 Poems  
April 2016



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4/1/16  
Manifestation

This is the flesh I will soon get up from,  
the trickster who sheds expectation  
and cannot be snared.

The rules: moon-formed. Radical.

An element of myth  
as from a garden, stolen.

4/2/16

Poems As Notes For Future Selves

Because the past selves are already  
in the room, already saying,

though it's too late for you to know, I'm leaving  
forever this house you were  
a teenager in. Can you bear

to notice this, and write about it?  
Can you accept that this is God, this moment's facts  
are where she is?

No other book, no other place  
contains a more nutritious pain.

4/3/16

Company Of Pirates: A Love Story

We talk about the things we steal  
and what we give, bodies  
in a coded landscape.

I'm in the kitchen, whole  
and contained, my molecules  
frozen in place.

There is a bigger issue here.

The Met has always charged  
a fortune to see their operas.

There is software; there is art  
behind a paywall. This is a relic and that is a relic  
of a relic; time stacks up

on itself and makes a thick  
bottle-glass to try and see through.

In the distance your names  
are still legible; you must be there.

I am surrounded by VHS tapes.

4/4/16

A Most Glamorous Occupation

Nature abhors all  
manner of establishments.

Try keeping a coffee shop clean.

Try opening eyes to the first  
withheld rays of summer  
as you stand behind a bar feeling like  
you're on a game show  
that's about mopping up spills.

Somewhere the grasses  
are cresting in silence.  
I can't see that nor report it.

4/5/16

The Clue In The Old Man's Eyes

There was no color to recall  
in the old man's eyes. He told  
how his woman rode away  
on a motorcycle beneath blooming  
trees, on the day of the wedding.

It was like a spell to extract  
kindness, like the scent  
from those trees. Still  
they continue to bloom and always will.

4/6/15

Rainy Day

I just wanna stay home and mindmap.  
Instead of facebook, I'm telling you.  
The sky is full of zeroes and ones.  
I'm leaving tomorrow. Or the day after.  
I want to see the cars just go on by.  
I want to bow my head over my work.  
I dreamed of friends and feel certain.  
Open letter to people who write  
open letters: become a poet or become  
a demon, and get it over with.  
No one cares. Shut up.

4/7/16

She Has Always Wanted A Knife

relation to bought and made things  
is tricky; they are magical  
items which have meaning

around grandmother's house  
were so many shops  
filled with turquoise, coral, silver and cedar

these were all traps of sadness  
all part of a stolen culture  
the obelisks of a void in the desert

the dream of an empty room  
all made of wood and white paint  
offers some kind of reconciled feeling

alive, reconciliation is necessary  
it is necessary to always be in contact with something

so to choose what the body touches  
this is power

4/8/16

On The Page

The shadows of the lilac bush  
become a map of continents.  
I am taking it all too seriously.

4/9/16

Today My Car Broke Down

I carried boxes of paper,  
glass, cheap metal  
up into my new apartment  
to establish home.

When I came back my car was dead.  
Stuff happens I don't understand.

Earlier I was in the back yard  
of the house I am leaving.  
I looked up at the pale, sleek maple  
and tried in vain to imitate its power.

4/10/15  
Meditation

I read my poetry,  
I look at my skin,  
my tattoo,  
my fingernails,  
divining my fate  
from within.

Is there a cohesive rule set by which  
I can reconstruct myself?

I've been thinking of my body  
as a collection of problems.  
My distractions  
have funny voices today.

4/12/16

Eight-line Yesterday

Only God's creation is perfect.  
I dreamt about marriage, then  
the movers came. We found out  
the piano looked good there.

Listening to the apartment,  
no one here but the refrigerator,  
I will dream about libraries.  
I will make up for what I missed.

Cycle

There is no truth  
to the existential dread; I will not die  
of exposure, moving forward with my life.

Near to the source of my own motion,  
the fulcrum of the world,

I spin open and open,  
cast onto the wheel.

4/13/16

New Neighborhood

No churchtower is so big  
as to project an image of itself for miles  
over the crowns of such trees.

Birds of no account  
sing in the magnolia.

4/14/16

Snippets From My Private Diaries

Why am I listening to bruce springsteen?  
We got hamburgers and the movers did everything.  
Life takes time. I'm feeling so bored with my projections.

Create abundance by hoarding and wasting.  
One such morning would get more done  
than a million little moments of worry.

What am I without something to hide from?  
You've known me for a long time so I'm  
concerned you might feel something.  
Guilt is irrelevant. I am Borg.

I realized it's mid-month and  
it'd be nice to double-up on finishing things.  
Drop my badge in the safe;  
nevermind the fucking date.

4/15/16

Birds Of No Account

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common\\_starling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_starling)

The common starling is a noisy bird  
classified as being of least concern.  
Each bird has its own repertoire.

The scent of plants such as yarrow  
entice the female to the nest.  
She takes down the decorations.

Common starlings squabble incessantly.  
Their swarm behavior creates complex shapes  
known as murmurations, and black suns.

4/16/16  
Instead

For a brief time,  
a time I want to remember,  
I was following a brown dog  
around the capitol.

My feet, my shadow  
walked in the cool magic of the grass.

These are my first tasks:  
touch life,  
run errands.

I refuse to hurry  
and that is the most important thing  
about me, the reason  
I will always be different.

4/17/16

Our House (for Mom)

*after Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young*

Our house gets bigger and bigger.  
The lilacs bloom seemingly all  
year now; on your side where there is more sun  
the tomatoes swell and deepen their color.

Our house where we all live together  
is even bigger on the inside. Navigation  
requires a detailed map of shared jokes  
and family photos:

me in a fire helmet;  
you when you had a perm;  
the dog looking at the camera  
while Dad sleeps;  
many Christmases.

The windows are always open and so the air is always clean.  
There is rain, sunshine, snow, mountains and plains,  
it makes no difference. We change easily.

Our house is well built and it transforms too.

It's a lovely evening here. I'll light the fire,  
you place the flowers in the vase that you bought today.

4/18/16  
Practice Infinite

I absolutely have to get this right today.  
I have a half-world  
and a heart-world  
waiting to be superimposed,

a fatal and majestic sign.

When I contemplate the heavy fruits  
of my will, I see far stranger forms  
than these yet dropped

to crush the earth,  
to crush upon the earth,  
to leave a dent, a seed,  
an iron bar,  
a piece of slag,

my forehead  
a burnt moon, reflecting nature.

4/19/16

Coney Island Bay-bee

The same things are happening  
in coffee shops  
that have always happened.

My favorite Lou Reed song  
is playing. Someone I knew  
in high school is talking about  
that publishing house  
where I once tried to get a job.

Coffee is hard to drink after a while.  
I'm drawing the same  
self portraits. Please show up;  
I need you  
to reunite me with the history you know.

Always, my friend,  
you recognize my evasions.  
You remind me, joyfully,  
of my age.

4/20/16

How I Felt At 11:26 This Morning

Feeling unshielded  
undifferentiated - coming to work  
as if I will never come home

now that the house is sold  
I am all I ever was  
and the minutes of my day  
are on the march, singing  
in unison  
of grim, austere mortality

It's a long haul from here.  
Time for the portal to appear.

4/21/16

Prompts

I guess at this point  
someone else can devise  
a filter, an application  
to do the work of  
manipulating my internal contents.

Though I complained,  
it was a lovely day.

At last we walked  
in the dark and drizzle,  
just to talk, to reassure  
each other: we are not monsters.

4/22/16  
Inbox, a senryu

Email from my boss;  
another from my union.  
Which to open first?

4/23/16  
Cups and Coins

Back to the intuitive, tracing  
neural bee-lines  
to their source.

There has to be a reason  
I'm keeping myself alive, after all--

I came to this world  
not to please my boss,  
but to live in joy.

4/24/16  
Cultural Moment

There is no poem like silence.  
The world leaves me  
wondering what I will mourn  
and what that mourning makes.

If I falter now,  
what will I become?

We only have  
the old biographies  
to study, cannot predict  
what will matter.

I may as well name this universe.  
Tell me about the one  
you live in. Tell me with art.

4/25/16

Storm, Ten Miles Off

Sky like glass-thin  
agate, cloudy blue.

The lightning seemed  
immediate, but its companion,  
thunder, stayed far off.

I found you walking.

Everything I have done,  
reluctantly--

Petals falling  
from the crab apple.

4/26/16

Nightcap Oak (a haunting)

Weren't you alone,  
your feet, hardwood?  
Some insects?

The seed has a white center.

Toward a window,  
you looked-- Why  
am I thinking of you now? As if

I too am nearly alone,  
or on the verge of extinction.

Future drifts. Already  
our word for solitude  
has changed-- did

they burn it?  
Was it too easy? No,  
we are too rare. Altogether  
too protean--

extending branches blindly,  
burying others.

Night, drink, fungus;  
it is where I could thrive,  
a seed that wants to curl  
up and dive--

reappearing in a dream, alas,  
a taxonomy of dreams.  
Well. Today was hard.

I will remember being human.  
When I am alone,  
I will not look for you.

4/27/16  
April

I am living forever in April.  
Will I remember  
the dance I watched in fullscreen?  
Will I remember the boiling-over  
fear, the running without breath?

Maybe tonight I'll sleep better.  
Falling loose, reconfiguring  
the things that matter.

4/28/16  
#epigram

There was a time  
I could make poetry out of anything.

Now I just worry about work.

I have this bag  
that doesn't fit anywhere.  
It contains my passport.

I'm missing a paycheck  
and my credibility.

4/29/16

I Think You're A Cylon

Never let it be said  
my face was your galaxy, nor  
a point of trust.

I saw myself,  
the eyes which must have  
terrified you - it was nothing.

All along, love  
was the device, only  
masked by specifics.

4/30/16

Instant Poem From Several Exercises

The only indoor memory  
I have is of a church basement.

Now there is more: another church,  
another. They multiply in form and clamor.

We raise our voices  
and our hands in strange panic.