

Small sampler from *Thrown Again into the Frazzle Machine: Poems of Grace, Hope, and Healing* by Margaret Dubay Mikus © 2014.
www.FullBlooming.com

2/4/09

Meltdown

To melt,
to be liquefied
under high heat.

To go down,
to fall,
to not be rising.

To change the state of matter,
to become more dispersed,
to become both more and less.

To lose emotional control,
to weep unceasingly,
to seek higher ground

and not find.
To float lost
as if it would always be thus.

To release,
to let go the anchor,
to be unwilling to jump

and yet jump
or be pushed
by dire circumstance.

To come out the other side
of this trial by fire,
to know it would always

end this way.
To be cleansed,
to re-form,

to cool and coalesce,
altered, yet beautiful,
even luminescent.

2/14/09

Floating On Sitar Notes and Drum Beats

Dinner at The Peacock on Valentine's

So much done to the body.
So much stored in the body.

The body a map of the past,
the snake entwined around Eve.

The body: the sitar, the lotus, the onion,
the pond to swim in, and the fish swimming.

The foam in the cup,
the gyrations of dance,

the main course,
not so much dessert.

The color red as it
plays on the water,

the helium balloon,
the red rubber ball,

the accelerating rhythm,
the glint on sheer glass,

baby's breath and
tiny ruby carnations.

It is amplified,
it is sober and still,

plays well with others,
puts dirty feet on the table.

The body is the flying horse,
the sparkle on new snow,

it is a glass full
and a glass empty.

It is payment for services,
it is the nourishment taken in,

it is the pen and the words
and the hopefulness.

It is less like soap
and more like anise seeds,
more a home, than a prison.

4/26/09

Inspired by Something Partly Heard on the Radio

I do not know
how much time
I have with you.

I read the stories—
or avoid reading them—
of all the sad, tragic

things that happen
and tears run down my face
in sympathy, in empathy

whether I would stop them
or not. I know this dark place.
Yet I do not

want to know the limits
of the hours, the minutes
I have with you.

What good would that do?
Just to be here
where you are

for as long
as there is...
and be grateful.

5/28/09

Put Down the Sword of Self-wounding

After talking to Geary about a ritual to ease pain

Put down the sword
of self-destruction
and self-immolation,

of self-defeat, self-demolition,
and self-defacing. Stop
stabbing myself in the vulnerable gut

in remorse, guilt, grief and regret
at what I could not
control or plan or shape.

Melt that sword
into the ploughshare
that carves the furrows

into which I place
the seeds I have been holding back.
Let forgiveness

flood the field,
let love shine upon them,
let the earth be fertile and loam-rich

and bountiful harvest my just reward.
After all the lifetimes
of all the dark and light alike

let my new life
result from a conscious new choice:
to put down the sword.

No more self-blame
self-criticism or self-judging,
no more crimson shame,

no more self-harsh words,
no more self-unkindness,
no more self-disrespect,

or screaming at myself
at perceived imperfections
or unbearable failings.

Only forgiveness
to the bone of things
to the bottom and top of memory,

forgiveness heaped
on forgiveness, eaten
at a great feast of forgiveness.

And when sated,
love as dessert and
as the main course ever after.

10/12/09

From the Stars

Here I am
naked before you
all scars, weakness,
vulnerability revealed

as beautiful.

Steely resolve,
stubborn determination,
hard-won power

as foundation.

Unashamed,
unassuming,
hiding nothing
I might once have deemed

unacceptable.

Something to be said for
enduring, growing,
transforming, transcending.

Every wrinkle
tells a story
of care or neglect.

Every scar a tale
of chance or choice,
guilt, healing, awareness, or regret.

I can tell you
have come from the stars
just to see

life here in action.
Here I am.

10/17/09

From Mary Jane D. and Stephenie Meyer

For Ira, Bob, Geary and Eric

Something that shatters
pre-existing life structure
stretching out to the foreseeable future.

No restoration
of equilibrium
or the familiar,

the details
don't matter:
a choice point where

all is divided into
before...and after
and darkness is the dominant color.

The decisive end...of what was,
the promising beginning...of what is:

verdant, vivid vibration,
riot of sensation,
vibrant colors of all description,

almost beyond bearing.

You get to the point
where you say: This
lightening bolt that struck me

was the best thing
that ever happened.

12/31/09

Small Hope

In the darkness
everything is covered
in that dampening blanket
even a pinhole of light
makes all the difference.

1/8/10

Soave

From Llubav

Speak to yourself in a soft voice
I know this has been a tough time.

Soave.
Be gentle.

1/11/10

Because My Star

Because my star
is tied to yours

my love,
my life is entwined

with your own.
And what you do

or say or think or feel;
and what you do not do

or say or think or feel
affects me too.

Some days I wish
it was not so,

that I was not so vulnerable,
that I was like

anyone else, but
then would you have

been drawn to my beacon?
And would I have

recognized when
my heart sang?

1/20/10

Something Small

After listening to Poetry Center CD

You can write a poem
about anything:

mundane, mystical, trivial
momentous, silly or banal.

A car in front of me
on a dark winter night,

not even snowing
or particularly cold,

the car about to turn right
when the flasher lights went on,

slowly completing the turn
as I did behind, and

out popped a son,
not mine, but someone's,

and began to push
the cream-colored Ford sedan,

and then, presumably the father
sprang out of the passenger door

wearing a gray knit cap,
an ordinary coat, and also put his muscle to it.

Someone behind me long-tooted
as I edged around,

but what can you do really
when a car that had been

reliable, suddenly wasn't,
or maybe there were warning signs

unattended or maybe gas ran out
or gages were broken,

whatever it was,
a bit of grace please,

a small prayer,
or gold glitter energy sprinkles,

if not more substantive aid.
It could happen to anyone.

Do unto others....
What goes 'round, comes 'round.

2/24/10

Room on Cardiology Floor

I can still feel her surprisingly soft lips
pressing on my forehead,
a good bye and good luck kiss as she left.

My roommate, sweet Italian lady,
both of us not our best, faces pale,
hair tangled and matted.

Her husband, most kind, friendly
and hopeful. Full of stories with
ambulances and happy endings. How he'd

been recognized by the ambulance driver in the grocery store.
How she'd had a seizure maybe
and he'd carried her to the door

though he had a pacemaker and they were older.
All her surgeries and still her spunk.
"Good bye," she said, "It will be fine,"

or something like that in her gentle Italian accent,
pressed into my hopeless forehead.
Unexpected, spontaneous, natural and welcome.

Three weeks later I feel the kiss still.
Her easy gesture, her faith,
her sweet kindness.

Of course she was right.

3/2/10

Post Surgery Follow-Up

After Tricia...Again

Would you be willing
to let go the good for the better,

let down defenses, dissolve armor,
release grievances old and new

to expose the true you,
the power, the creation, the ultimate vision?

Who else could but you?

Allow excision of adhesions and scars,
liquefy the crust of a hard life,

let go misunderstandings, expectations,
false beliefs blocking radiant sun?

Remember before you coalesced
and emerged here from your cocoon

when you could fly like a dream,
when thought and action were one?

That is still who you are...
buried within somewhere

and waiting...
if not now, when?

3/7/10

Inspired

Song by Danny Schmidt at Folkstage

To sit in patience
and walk in patience
and swim in patience

trusting.

To not wish for things
to be other than they are

and if sun darkens for a while
to remember
this too shall pass.

4/6/10

Life Skill

Make a list
of pros and cons
recognizing the risk
inherent in any decision
cognizant that not choosing
is still choosing.

And choose.

6/3/10

Dear Body

It is not right
for fluid otherwise known as serum
to accumulate in a pocket under the skin
to the left of the belly button.
I have tried to do what I can.
Please remove.
Thank you.

Sincerely
Yours Truly

6/4/10

Aftertaste

Do you know
how it is

when you drink
a fine wine or beer

or eat a luxurious meal
and something lingers

in the mouth after,
some taste definable or

unnamable, pleasurable or no,
exotic or ordinary

to be savored or
washed away?

That's how I want to be:
refreshing with a hint of mystery

surprisingly sweet
with a generous dollop of honesty.

6/12/10

Shadow Healing

James Keelaghan at Folkstage

What part of me
is overflowing

What part is a
river dammed up

What part of me
longs for release

What part is tears
flowing unbidden

What part is unkind
or uncertain

I'm only saying
trying to decode a language
spoken in symptoms

trying to heal what
has arisen.

What part of me
is unbending

What part needs
immediate release

What is becalmed
stilled, expressionless

What is inflamed or angry
deserving to be heard

What is in shadow
unforgiven, denied

What part is unloved
buried deep, pushed aside

What is impatient, impotent
small, voiceless

worthy of healing

worthy of being part

of the perfect again-
welcome whole.

What part of me is
weakness unacknowledged

What part is unwilling to rest
and restlessness

What part of me is
tears un-shed and
fears hidden and
words bitten back

What have I walled off
what am I pregnant with

What desperate pleas
have gone unanswered

What part of me is
warring against another

What is revealed
comes up for air

what comes up
light shines upon it

what has light
has hope and promise

anything is possible
anything is possible to heal.

Don't give up
anything is possible.

8/3/10

Yes, I Noticed You Being You

What can I say of friend Amy
who spoke tonight so well and courageously,

who opened arms wide, glad to see me
before I even stepped through the door.

Who generously watches out for me
and graciously accepts me.

How fine a friend is that!

Amy, who paints her sad tale so vividly
parts of it are funny,

disconcerting when she feels more the tragedy,
but she pulls us into the humanness of the story

and humor allows us to keep looking,
to keep listening to what was imaginably unbearable.

A skilled weaver, illusionist, wordsmith,
she makes me care...what happens next.

10/11/10

Just Before Tops Diner

I am not ready to leave the river
with its infinite variations
and endless fascinations

its effortless sliding over the earth
playing with wind and sun
the birds, the fish, the nightlights

the river as mirror
with ever-changing reflections.

But the river I suspect

is unmoved by my moving.
What change have I wrought
by my wistful longing

and incessant watching?
What can I take of it
back with me into life?

How the river never gives up
even if it seems to be going backward.
How something new can always happen.

Today after 5 days of observation
the first boat cuts across the mirror surface
making delicious patterns of thick wake.

I will miss this river
its width, its depth
its breadth, its calm

the unexpected gift of its presence
flowing along, flowing along.
But if I don't leave, I miss...

this.

11/24/10

For Alex In Times of Trouble

This may be a relationship
you learn from
or you overcome

or climb a mountain
you thought was impossible
or stretched you thin and then some.

This may be time you learned to support
or to let go of someone or
some preconceived notion,

when you learned to take one step at a time
when you put aside assumptions
and fully lived in the moment.

When you accepted as much love
as you gave, more than you felt
you deserved somehow.

That you looked underneath
and deep and could be kind
and self-loving no matter what.

You healed and became more whole
exactly when you felt your heart was breaking
and stayed with that feeling

to see what it really means,
where it really leads you.
What choices you make in staying true

to your highest vision of yourself,
what gifts come out of darkness.
No matter what, anything living

cannot stay the same, relationships included,
to grasp onto what was good
may block what could be even better.

No one knows the future—
how much time, when, why, or where—
part is given, part created by you.

What courage to do this hard work...
what courage to watch you.

12/21/10

Inevitable Woman Nature?

When I am eighty—
should I make it that far—
I will look back at photos of me now
and see how beautiful
how smooth the skin, bright the eyes
wide the smile, white the teeth
remembering how easy it was to get around
how gracious I was, how lovely my full hair.
Even on the good days at eighty
the me now will favorably compare.
Just like now looking back in time
to when I could only see my younger flaws
and now can see her beauty and grace
and wish I had...
noticed.

12/31/10

The Leaving of It

Part of life
the leaving of it
with what grace and
awkwardness

items still on the list
unfinished business
opportunities now lost
stories, secrets, dreams

what was true once
unknown at best
the mystery unraveled
the tapestry complete.

1/16/11

**Poetry Reader:
The Times We Are In**

The plain, pale young man, regular-featured,
did not take off his ordinary blue-gray cap
or remove his unremarkable gray-tan coat
before he stepped to the microphone and spoke.
Something in his air, how he kept his eyes down,
uneasily shuffling his feet and
how he kept repeating his need to fight evil
and something else indefinable
made you wonder if he had a gun in his satchel
and you being closest or almost
began to consider how to disarm him.

1/28/11

From the 31st Floor at the Hyatt
Chicago

What you spend your time on
shapes who you become,

choices made on the run
or with full deliberation,

unintended consequences
part of the decisions...

for what is known now
may turn out to be untrue

and what is unknown
may ultimately lead you

by the nose or seat of your pants,
kicking and screaming

or acquiescent, complacent even,
caught in the naked act of

becoming.

3/2/11

Mom Back in Hospital

There is a certain inevitability
about the last breath
following loss of hearing, eyesight
slow disintegration of memory, speech
regular rhythm-spark of heart
personality, muscles, joints
especially aching inflexible knees.

And there is relief at the end
of long suffering, and grief
at the loss of all that was
or could have been, and
the last inevitable hug
last lucid conversation.

We are at the apparent abyss
the catalyst, the chrysalis
the caterpillar beginning
disintegration into pupa
reconfiguring into butterfly
unexpected from linear extrapolation

but entirely normal
as the way things are.
Goodbye sweetie,
it's alright to go you know,
it's alright to go.

5/5/11

Basking in Solitude

To be alone
to be able to take up all the space
breathe all the air in a room

flow from one moment to the next
and next without outside consideration.
Not that I am unhappy with you here,

my dears, but I change
from what could be. I change
to fit your shape, your—

even unspoken—expectation.
Your wanting to be with me
alters time and space.

And that said...
to be alone
more than enough to replenish

can be lonely
and I need you here
to remember me as loving

to bring me back
when I wander off lost.
Never forget...to bring me back,

my love.

8/15/11

For My Mother

Who is still here

If I think about
where this is all going
I'll cry again

but if I am here
as I said I would be
we talk and we listen

in easy gentle conversation.
If I don't jump ahead
or fall behind

then, right here
in the middle of
nowhere in particular

I am content.

8/23/11

Grieving as Part of Life

For Evan

Each person who leaves
leaves a hole until
what is left
is the lace of your life,

holes of variable
sizes, shapes, depths
that resonate but do not merge,
each revealing a bit more

of the pattern, the weft
and heft of days,
if not the purpose,
the grand scheme.

What is left is more than
what was removed though
it doesn't feel that way at first.
At first numbness then

awareness only of what is empty,
missing, lost. The mind constantly
strays there like a tongue to a jagged tooth.
Slowly intentional consciousness

returns heightened, senses sharpened,
suddenly becoming a beagle who sniffs
a hundredfold more smells,
an artist painfully naked and exposed.

Gradually new skin grows
over the raw wound
which may continue to heal forever,
not every moment, like now,

but now and then.

9/12/11

An Ordinary Conversation

My mother wanted to remember
and I want to remember

this particular conversation
which started out about disarray

of a problematic week and
took a journey to calm consideration

of life as it plays out.
And if her voice is rough, throat dry

and if memory slips in and out
well, so what? Here we are still

talking of past and mostly present
telling stories that mean something

lending support, encouragement
eye to eye, heart to heart.

What could be better than that?

11/9/11

To Hammer

Love to hammer
to make noise
the immediacy
of pounding in a nail
of fixing something
making something

creation in action.
The heft of the hammer
in right hand.
I was the only one
who took a hammer to college
just in case.

I still have it
small, useful
scarred by the years.
Other heavier hammers
more impressive
and powerful came along

but the beauty of that first one....
Now joints and bones
can no longer absorb the hits
without a murmur.
My serious hammering days are over.
I may allow a tap, tap

to put up a picture
nail the hanger into soft drywall.
But not arm ricocheting off
unyielding hardwood.
If I am smart

those days are over.

1/28/12

The Signature

To Eric Whitacre with gratitude

The beauty of dissonance,
in itself...and resolving,
the strength of moving to
and off of and onward,

continuing the run, each note
clear and strong, not shy away from
close connection,
let all notes be possible together

in the greater scheme of things.
Regardless of what was taught
about what was right or right rules once
in the world as it existed then.

To let become and bloom
from sheer joy of breath and sound
as if the world is being
created all over again...

as indeed it is...
from pure vibration.

3/16/12

Choosing Expansive

Spark #2

A door opens
walk through.

Opportunity knocks
answer.

A boat glides up to the dock
where you stand waiting
to take you to your dream
no explanations
no guarantees.

If you don't go
you will wonder
and if you don't go
what will you do
and if you don't...go
when will you find out
just what you are made of
just what you could be
if only?