

Previously Published Poems
Angel Rosen
2011-2021

Angel Rosen – Previously Published Poems – 2011 to 2018

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The Bug

Soul, so insignificant and tethered.

Heart, now made of artificial leather.

What had become of the tale, of heartbreak and of dwell!

What! But a smile!

could fix my infection, a parasite, a bacteria with limited detection!

Found its way into my brain, whole way down my spine and made its brand-new home in this heart of mine!

Professionals were afraid of the outward symptoms, crying, writing, past reflections!

I put disease on a diet, no love in my chest.

Shriveled and dying was the little beast.

My lungs filled with courage and I never sought
for any other cure for the bug that I caught.

To Rattle the Bones

To rattle the bones. Am I a bird?
My frame shattered by inadvertence.
I could brush it off or lie to die. I am a bird...
Flock or not, so singular.
Fleeting, and yet I am bruised.
The shell to house my thoughts...
Demolished by ignorance,
unrestraint and self-indulgence.
So, I feast.
I seek nourishment in pity and pain...
I see relevance from what I earn or gain.
The fruit of many trees has poisoned me.
Only it may have been less accidental.
To rattle the bones. I'm a feline.
I'm owned by many or by none...
I am cunning and strong and do not bask in luxuries.
I watched as inadvertence took my prey. So, I feast.
To rattle the bones.

Hurricane

Say this storm will bring down a tree—
five hundred pounds of integrity...
Say that you are the space between my teeth,
obsolete only when I breathe.
Now, smirking, exasperation ceases,
a life of only smiling leads to
a face that's full of creases.
I am working to achieve a standard
on which I could thrive,
for my body to be dead
but my mind to stay alive.

Speaking

Anatomically speaking
the space between my lungs
is no larger nor no wider
than another anyone

Realistically speaking
my heart beats
thirty-one times per second

and I learned that from experience,
not just merely guessing

Hypothetically speaking
I have been in love with everybody twice
And I still haven't found a lover
who is worth half the price

soiled sober

Hands!
Unclean hands!
Unclean hands of those
Full of drunkenness
And unsobriety
Hands unclean with sex and lustfulness even too treacherous to sink into the Inferno,
Seventh layer...
Those fingers composed of sex and intoxication
Touch my skin
My shoulder freckles
But... I...
I am so pure that dirty hands do not stain me.
I simply clean them.
I cannot be tainted but they can
Be
Sobered.
Worry not, I will make them drunk again.
My words like drugs,
My lips addictive.
Bitter nicotine in my
Poetry and out of my mouth that alcohol
Oh, how it is that I am.
So pure.
Permanently sexless.
Crawling
From
The Inferno
Cleaning you
Along the way.
Almost bleached,
Like my heart when you touched it.

Spot of Time

Borrowed in a spot of time
The birds see me and whistle
A flamboyant tumble weed
Loud flower, thorn, or thistle
Painted fuchsia to deceive
Protected like the treasure
Pricks my finger now I bleed,
Turn mute but all the deafer

Take me nature, I digress
Rain is only permanent
Each petal reads love me not,
I have loved the time I caught.

The Ones Who Choose to Die

some people don't get to choose how they die
they just choose to leave the house
fifteen minutes early to stop for a coffee
and it ends in some kind of disorganized vehicular homicide
and people lie about how great they were
on the local news station
others, they drink beverages filled with
artificial sweeteners that turn stomach aches into cancer
some women are beaten to death in countries where women are the part of the furniture
and as disposable as the trash
Some boys are thrown to war with bones between their teeth like dogs,
digging holes to bury the bones and their bodies
some people don't get to choose how they die,
but they do not ask for more mourning
they do not require better funerals
or charity donations
screaming in their honor
for anyone who may have had
the chance to decide
how to die –
the ones who drew it
carefully with a pencil
paper free of eraser marks—
their aches are not unaccounted for
their names aren't carved on
gravestones
in a smaller
typeface,
hoping to be read in a whisper

You are Almost a Moon

You know, she is almost a wolf for the way she loves you.
Like the moon, she cries to you.

No one considers that every wolf is in love with the moon,
but he can't hear them calling.
His heart breaks from its emptiness,
while hers breaks from being too full.
Too full of a love that is too far to touch,
but too close to ever stop loving.

So she howls, hoping that the moon won't set again,
but she knows that like her heart,
his light is just a loan
So she howls, hoping that the moon will love her too
and he will tell the sun to take back her light,
he would rather always be dark and always love her.
But the moon is too selfish for that.
So she howls, painting the sky with her aching.
The moon always follows her home.
She will only find bigger trees to cover the sky,
and a heavier darkness to sleep in.
Even if she's lost without his light,
it is better than lost in it.

She will stop howling someday,
the sky will know a new empty
because she won't fill it with her howls
and the moon will never know another like he didn't know her.

I Know the Kind

I know the kind;
she walks about the world
all hollow and unaware
announcing her differences
like party favors
and shrugging them off
to the wind

I know the kind;
she walks with steel and iron
among others made of
precious metals and
her fists are clenched
like white angry stones

She knows the kind;
she barely sleeps because
her body is only
entirely afraid of who she is
the sun hits her as much
when she is bitter and when
she is better but
they fade into all the same feeling
turn gray
and don't ask permission
to be bruises

Battleship

you were a rival ship,
disguised as the lighthouse.
you were too big to change shapes
but god, were you were bright enough.

I heard your slippery sirens.
I mistook your voice for guidance
and in all the time
I spent etching explanations,
I forgot the shore existed at all
I forgot that
I could stand in places without water,
or you.

Taking up Space

There are a lot of things my mother didn't
tell me
that could have saved my life.
She never told me that I was going to
have to apologize for
how much space I take up,
that my apologies must be sincere
and that I'm worth more than
the space I'd leave behind,
if I left
and that spaces don't matter so much.
I wouldn't think about leaving,
if she would've told me.

She never told me to stop falling in love
with everyone who was kind
because some people are kind to strangers
and sometimes
strangers are supposed to stay strange,
just because someone holds open the door
and says thank you sometimes,
doesn't mean you have to get married.

She never told me that when the television
says
"growing up is optional"
to not take it so literally,
and she didn't tell me that

when I grew up,
I'd lose way more than I gained
but I could give more than I lost.

but she did teach me that
if you have to get something done,
do it

don't wait for men to plant flowers for you
and don't let them manage money
don't wait for them any longer than it takes
to brush your teeth

and she taught me
that people take up the same amount of
space
despite how big they are.

Add-or-exic

she was a straight-C math student
who hated graphing fractions,
in a flood of A's and extracurricular
until she started skipping
lunch
the excuse sounded something like
the half an hour to do homework
was more mandatory
than the menu
in two months she brought her
math grade up ten percent and dropped
ten percent of something else,
the way she was
learning to divide her body
made her understand why she had to find
“x”
each meal taught her to add
and she invented new ways to subtract
in five months she
became the fraction
and the only thing on the graph
was two digit numbers
and red circles to mark
every
wrong
answer.

Infected Mushrooms

I've been several sorts of hungry
in a minute this past hour
jaw clenched between two
needle nose pliers;
propped open

plaid-coated spelunkers
chiseling my cavities
and chewing on my enamel like
infected mushrooms;
tied around

my canines are clever mountains
my eye teeth are a gold harvest
my molars are beds
of lava

I seep into your hive-mind
when you eat my words
like infected mushrooms and
disobedient
opulence

The Anvil Diet

sometimes people tell me
to stop worrying about
my weight
like I hadn't already been trying
like the idea of
shoving the worry to recess on the moon
wasn't already my favorite
I carry the launch in my backpack
on the way to school sometimes
ignorance sounds a lot like
"you don't even need a diet"
"you're not that big"
"life is too short to worry about it"

life is too long
to be stuck longing to be
yourself in a different way
to say "I will always be here
I will just change the way you see me
I will be altering my first impressions
and my right to exist."
this weight is an anvil.
ignorance sounds a lot like:
"size doesn't matter"
"you're beautiful despite it"
"you're too young to worry" ...

but too damn
old to waste any more of a lifetime
throwing dimes into wishing wells
and picking up lucky pennies
asking for self-control
a smaller jean size
the relief echoes
as I walk down
the stairs
to being
myself
again
my
identity
rests within
my ability to shrink

The Ache of Creativity

I want to buy sixteen Halloween costumes and wear them
during the third week of every month
that isn't October
and I will never answer a single person
when they ask me why—I will pass them,
witchy-fingered, evil-eyed,
entirely in character,
I won't even smile

Someone told me today that I am so lucky that
I am smart and talented—he wishes he could make
such beautiful art,
but on most days, I feel that is the opposite of luck
I just want to sleep
I don't want to earn degrees and throw my name onto books,
I'm sorry that I'm too tired to learn anything
I'm sorry that I know too much to sleep
but I sleep so much
as a result of never sleeping, the combination of the two
is nothing like insomnia, and all of this—
I wouldn't call it luck.
It's more like a costume. I won't even smile.

Pre-boiled

they could call me schizophrenic
for the ways I am keeping myself
alive—I stopped being human at
two in the morning.

my voice grew hoarse from
talking myself awake
instead of counting sheep
I send them to the slaughter
instead of night sweats
I wake up soaked in memories.

I was left to boil
in a pre-rusted pan
though after I settle
I am blamed for the rust.

Eight-Legged Eviction

the only way to solve a spider problem
is to treat them with sarcasm
ask them to stay the night.
like any toddler they only ever want to do
what you don't suggest,
they package their hurt feelings on their backs
and move to taunt the next house,
usually apologizing with bitter biting
until they lie—underboot

at least she sleeps

Some girls pave the road with
getting even but end up getting
lost,
somewhere between he deserves it
or I did
or they all had it coming
she gets it back
her heart doesn't heal
she sleeps in sleeves bigger than emptiness
but at least she sleeps

she takes pills bigger than her eyes
and her eyes are bigger than her stomach
and her lungs are smaller than her
cigarettes

she inhales
but at least she sleeps

Deciding Flower

every kiss had felt like it mimicked the last,
the final
so I cherished them like the ending petal on a
deciding flower
but in my triumph, I stopped being a thing to
decide about.

A flower, nothing more than growing,
not a verdict but I got picked—plucked
but not for the sake of watching me wilt
I am preserved, now
the hands that asked me
about love-me-nots
have pressed me
into a book

No Tower

I remember the first time I was in a hallway with shrunken hips,
both my hips and those halls were white and red.

A decoration.

I remember the summer that I half disappeared,
holding tight to my bones,
so they wouldn't press out of my aching edges.

Another girl said she'd heard a rattle, she claimed it for herself,
but I knew it was me.

I wasn't excellent against the wind and water,
I just was. Eroded and slightly slanted. A leaning, but no tower.
No shrunken head, no voodoo doll,
Just a skinny girl with a too-big soul.

Until I ate the Baby's Breath

I am Sick in my fingers and out of my mouth!
I can't open it to foul strangers
I whisper like wolf, teeth bared.
My heart sits in my throat,
I roar and it metastasizes.
I hemorrhage
my prefrontal cortex, the abuse victim of
women on the sun!
Without shoes!
In skirts of straw and satin.
Oh, God, do they burn.
My eyes used to be blue, you know.
Until I ate the baby's breath
Oh... the innocence
Until I swallowed.
My eyes are green now, you know.
I am practically a snake!
And about just as good at climbing,

They fear my poison but the proper word
is venom and I do not bite
I enhance,
submerge, swallow
and singe, siren.

How Big of Us

The sky is full of you and me,
and I think it's rather big of us
to be too busy raining to matter
who we're watering and who we're drowning
I think it's mighty of us to stand still
and place our droplets upon the sandy
and the snowy places without asking the feet
which weather they can weather,

I don't feel so good about starving
out some flowers and letting the other ones
uproot in the storm,
stems and leaves carried down the drain as it were.
Others remain intact,
but still we stand.
Forgetting to consider anything
How we ever got to be clouds, I don't know.

Also featured in "Aurelia", Angel's full-length collection

Fox Moon

I fell in love with a fox
while trying to find
an animal to call my body.
I was shaped like nothing but myself
and lost in it too,
geometry failed to tell me
exactly what angle
my back is supposed to be arched at
when someone told me they loved me

I fell in love with a fox once but
foxes like that get tongue-tied
and so, I spoke in a detangling voice,
I told her my favorite phase of the moon is
a waxing gibbous
and that is the phase of a fox
almost entirely there
all bright and noticed
whole enough to light your eyes in it
but still
quietly incomplete

a little excitement

I bought a dollar store match box,
half price because
the box had a tear in the side.
It had lost a few matches and I did
about anything to save a dollar.
I knew the first time I pulled a match out of
creased cardboard that
I had bought an extra burn.

The first stick, she was humble
the Red of her face tickled against the grain of
such a flimsy box.
I used her to light a candle,
but I know if I let the flame flicker,
she will take down my house.

That's what happens when you
get what you asked for at night
when you are on your knees praying
for a little excitement and
just a spark enough to engulf you
and she comes to you
blending, in and bent
but better at burning
than any of the lovers
in your bed

the ash at the end of the story,
wall space and door frames
photographs and memories,
none of them of you

Sleep Tempest

In all of this, I may
have been the thunderstorm
and the best part of the rain.
The gentle roars,
the ballet of droplets,
the dim porch lights,
a cool flicker,
the strip-tease of lightning,
the sleep weather,
the gray.

Teaclutter

Where is the laugh in owning so many
teacups but never owning any tea?
It's not the absence of sugar.
It's not the ants,
it's your taste buds
and the time of day.

We skip Saturdays so often,
roll them up like rugs and
feed the dust through the windows,
I never asked for tea,
so why are there teacups
on my front porch
and sitting on the lawn chairs,
circling in the microwave,
hanging from the curtain rods,
filling a cavity and most of all,
cluttering up my countertops?

I still don't have any tea.

Frore

This is the most Decembered spring,
I've brought my buckets and my
silk flowers to the mourning patch.
The fog rises, sure, but not at dawn,
and I am eagerly washing at nothingness
on stone.

Why do I need a place to lose you?
I could've built a church from the sticks you left,
the only evidence that you tried to burn beside me,
and the holes in my legs show that
I tried to stomp you out.

I was dancing something ferocious in your place,
but I got us back to green and believable, sometime
and that is where I bring the bucket—to rinse the ash
and the flowers—to make sure that I
was not responsible for winter this year.

Season's Aggrievements

I could put a gun in my mouth
or you and all your furnishings,
hang you about my neck
like a big, dumb bird,
beak stuck open
collecting flies

I could swallow poison,
or you and all your decorations,
hang myself with your rib cage tinsel
as you put the best of me into ornaments
for the seasonal display

You choose how to lose me,
in pieces or all at once,
I could breathe in the ocean and
it would meet you in my lungs

Ugly Numbers

I watched you wash your hands
like it's a delicate procedure,
you counted to twenty-five.
I said that is how old I am right now,
and that I want to die
more than you will ever know.
You added more soap,
and counted to eleven.
I said that thirty-six is an ugly number,
you agreed.

I couldn't wait to be underneath,
with my organs rearranged
in alphabetical order.
Every room is blue, and white,
you said to think of Christmas,
because that's how I look on the inside.

I dressed in the noisy napkin,
my evening gown,
I took my bow but the fat lady
isn't going to sing.

The strip tease begins.
Remove my lungs, first, please,
and then my shins.
Take me apart in no sensible order.
I beg and beg until you put my
voice box beside my lungs, and when
I am almost completely dismantled,
I would remind you that I am twenty-five now,
and you would say that
I should never be thirty-six because that is
such an ugly number and
I am already ugly enough.
I agreed.

Also featured in "Aurelia", Angel's full-length collection

quarantine-contemplation

there were county fairs and musicals.
there were meals shared with friends,
there was embracing and card decks and
holding hands. there was air.
there were dresses, swimming pools,
friend's houses and thrift stores.
there were gyms in the morning
and June Pride Parades, and
sometimes even what seemed like balance.

now, there are lit screens,
bad art, eighteen-hour periods of sleep,
and too many apps in my phone.
there are microwave dinners,
pajama bottoms and the illusion that yesterday
was three months ago and last year
was only several minutes long.
the air is different.
there was peace and panic all at once.
a reassortment of obligations.
a little ease, with a rush of distrust,
everyone carefully announcing that they
don't really believe in dying
and that they would simply not be dying
if it meant they could not go outside.

it was a three-month conversation between
ourselves and the world about what
the outside really is and why we have
passionately convinced ourselves that
everything must be external.

you'll laugh with friends and believe in death again
and know what a week feels like again and maybe
next year, dinner will still be cold in the middle,
naps will be shorter and you'll take hugs for granted.
there will be the outside then.

A Different Haunting

It was weeks before Halloween and I'm still in my house,
I fell asleep again while watching "Get Out".
There are no decorations, no special scare.
This year has left my October miserably bare.
In my room, I've collected some depression snacks
and last year's trauma, which I've yet to unpack.
It's pretty obvious now, there's a slight sort of haunt,
it's the Ghost of Halloween—she thinks we forgot.
She wants to remind us of holidays past
with parties and costumes and friendships intact
but this year, the killer is not a work of fiction—
there is no man in a mask slowly pacing your kitchen.

It was weeks before Halloween, everything is scary,
I fell asleep again, this time while watching "Carrie".
I made some more popcorn, then decorated a sign,
that said "Sorry Kids, No Candy This Time,"
I put the sign high, but I hung it with shame,
I turned off lights. Nothing is the same.
They said: "stay indoors, it'll be over by fall,"
while some had listened, others, not at all.
It's pretty obvious now: the warnings ignored.
Despite all this haunting, the ghost is still bored.

Unbelievable

I was such an unbelievable girl,
the way I imagined things
and demanded them into realness
with my little fingers. The world
I created that housed things only
evil and glorious to me
was that word: unbelievable.
If I dreamt of an animal,
it existed, if I said things were
hideous and dark, they were, if
I said I invited Death to a tea party,
and he came, he did, if I said
I would only eat croutons, I meant it.
As I grew and my imagination
did, too, I continued to build
a separate world around me.
It wasn't until I was twenty-four
that my mysterious case of
unbelievable
had a diagnosis.
I knew that maybe no one would
believe me, they said that
women have to do over half of the work
to only half-convince the doctors, but I did it.
The tall man in the dress shirt and tie
asked me if I had any friends
and when I said my best friends live
in my television, he signed the paper
and gave me freedom:
the diagnosis that explained
all things unbelievable about me.

The Modern Truce

We must divide the world between us,
I'll keep this town and the next one over,
but you can have the rest of them.

I'll take the birds and dogs,
You can have the felines,
I'll take board games, the Uno cards,
and all of the poets.

You can have beaches and vehicles,
I want the internet, and a backpack,
I want some cereal and bowls,
but you can take the forks.

We will have to divide our friends
in half, if they let us,
give me one half that listens
and a quarter that loves.

We can decide how much
they are allowed to love us
and on which days of the week
when we break them apart
into increments of time
and things to laugh about.

You can keep Walmart,
I guess I'll take Amazon,
I want the bank, and my body back,
but you can have the hospital.

You can have the tattoo artists and
the bars,
I'll take Amanda Palmer.
I'll take musicals and
Chinese, but you can have the seafood.

I guess you can keep your own mother,
she is already divided enough,
I want English class and high school
graduations
but you can keep your favorite teachers
and some of the morning announcements.

Our schools are mine.
So are the lawyers,
but you can have at least one judge,
all of the bodies of water and
the movie theater, too.
There is not much left.
We've halved it all –
the video games included,
the food, too,
the oversized hoodies and
whose trauma is whose.

You have Twilight,
I have Dr. Seuss.

Once I'm done cutting
my life into a fraction to give myself a
break,
I hope you know,
at last, you must
“get off my side of the state”.

zombie Madonna

once upon a time
 i stood on stage
with the band that saved
my life
 at a younger age

suddenly, a decade of
 memories played
through my head like
a bad video tape

in washington d.c.
halloween,
the dolls and me

dressed as a zombie
but never more sure
i was alive

Notes:

- The Butler County Community College Literary Facets was the literary journal of BC3 in Butler, Pennsylvania.
- Information about the Poetry Marathon can be found at <https://thepoetrymarathon.com>. The anthologies are available on Amazon.
- The Bridge Literary Journal is in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Their website is <https://www.bridgeliteraryartscenter.org>.
- In-Flight Literary Magazine has shut down and its issues are no longer available.
- Seton Hill's Eye Contact still accepts submissions at <https://blogs.setonhill.edu/eyecontact>.
- Allegheny College's Overkill still accepts submissions at <https://acoverkill.wordpress.com>.
- Because of a Word: Anthology is available on Amazon.
- Coin-Operated Press is located at <https://coinoperatedpress.com>.

Not featured:

- "A Recipe for a Birthday" – The Poetry Marathon Anthology - 2020
 - "Sugarwood" – The Poetry Marathon Anthology - 2021
- "Cost Analysis" – Unofficial AFP Poetry Club Community Poetry Anthology - 2022