A Beautiful Haunting: *Poems Between Light & Dream*

Senior Paper

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For a Degree Bachelor of Arts with
A Major in Literature at
The University of North Carolina at Asheville
Spring 2014

By Mel Holmes

____________________
Thesis Director
Dr. Holly Iglesias

____________________
Thesis Advisor
Dr. Evan Gurney
The Fall in Eden

I found Eden after treading water
in the middle of a stream,
alone, far from home.

I looked at the arching willows that frame the river, I almost
swam to land, I almost
didn’t cross the rapids,
massive rapids, yet they grooved in the tune of a lazy river.

Someone painted the water cerulean blue
with white foam trapped in slow circles
after that first fall, like soda fizz or mouthwash spit out &
stranded in the washing machine.

After the rock drop,
Eden awaits.
She is a vast sea of still water.
She absorbs people who rejoice in the blue,
their arms dance, their laughter unheard over the fall.
All eyes ascend towards the mystic goddess
She towers us by hundreds of feet.
With every inhale,
Eden releases a new stream, births a unique life:
baptismal fount from the mouth of the river.
Its mist melts my skin as it touches my face,
the secret bath washes away my thoughts.

I drink the blue and it is the first sip after a night of heavy drinking,
after that moment when you spot the top of Sam’s Knob after the climb,
after a fast dance with a new stranger:
communion.

If I could go back to this place,
this wet, wondrous space,
I would do anything just to die.
the chicken
hops on the other side of the barbed wire
clutches the girl’s sad stare
  the girl who is watched by her mother
dressed by her mother
  taught what to say by her mother
who stands thirty yards behind, in the empty field of sand
drowns in a cherry-print dress, her black eyes scrunched like a squeeze-ball.

in the afternoon heat,
the kind of heat that makes each breath a marathon
the girl’s fists remain clamping the fence
with all the strength hidden in her skeletal frame.
and she will wonder why
a feathered bird will travel farther than she.
barnyard montage

a possum is smoking a cigarette
on top of a barn in the meadow.

inside the barn, a loaded sheepdog
releases her gut--
a batch of newborns creep out
their eyes still caked shut--

as the possum finishes his last drag,
i watch the trees in the yard stir,
they rise up
they walk away.
Enter the Apiary

I zip up the astronaut suit, & I drop a cubed veil on my head. I am the observer behind a television of nets.

My partner is a teapot who twists. My other partner is a pair of stained yellow gloves.

We enter the boxed colony and steam from my teapot wakes clusters of plump insects--they were aching to dance.

I rub the rough edge of honeycomb, I drain the visions of nectar.

When the day is over, I gather the jars, amber sucrose, the pee-color concoctions. In the kitchen, the timer aches to sing as the clouds from the pumpkin loaves sift through the room.

I hold my honey and I store my bread.
In the Kitchen

We have conditioned our housewives for destruction.
In the 50’s it began,
the years when we sucked them in aprons too-tight
made them short of breath just to show
the peach curves of their bodies,
We only saw them as luscious fruit
caked in the blackest lace.

Consider the vicious clawing
to grate aged cheddar in thin slits,
the gut grip around the edge of your fork
when you stab straight into the sweet potato
over & over again.
the crazed knife dance right into
the heart, the bulb of the onion,
the juice, the blood from the raw venison
splatters all over the kitchen floor.

They are an army in training.
Listen as they sharpen their knives,
the sound dark & sweet,
like a violin gone mad,
a chocolate bar with a hidden razorblade.

I can’t help but wonder,
Where are they going with this cutlery?
home

today i showered with a sister under the sun
& we tiptoed to the lake,
cool sand silked the soles of our feet.
we wore the heat on our skin
after months of piling on layers,
icing ourselves like a cotton cake.

now a crowd of nude brothers & sisters
tread banks of sand & fallen pollen.
Pops comes around the bend with a green canoe,
he takes us to the dock in the middle of the lake.
Pops, with his sunburnt skin of muscles and tales
names me goddess of the lake.

all of us hold a bit of the net
to catch fish through the hole in the dock.
we laugh because
this is how we are meant to be,
i find home in shared laughter with strangers,
not in walls that keep us away.
August 1992, Miami

Off the highway ramp to Miami,
clusters of cars perched like baby robins in treetops
some shimmied back and forth—ready to fly.
Telephone poles and oak trees did the tango ‘til they dropped.
Unwanted vomit, they spilled onto the grass and streets and
the twin palm trees from Carol’s backyard fell in a stupor into the inground pool.
Her favorite spot, her reading haven.
The sun, the only light, radiated in waves,
darkness to light to darkness.

Carol had phoned the bank earlier,
her untouched safe deposit box the reason for her trip.
She parks her Buick in the spot with the least ashes,
begins towards the bank
its scattered walls & teller’s desks now
piles of cement.

She eyes the security guard who sits in a grey folding chair near the entrance.
“How may I help you, ma’am?” the words exit his lips as if it’s another work day.
She tells him her business, and starts towards the back, but triggers the guard...
“Enter through the front door, ma’am!” Her feet guess at the old location,
she gathers her savings, leaves out “the door” and
a sharp smile crosses the guard’s face like a crescent moon.
A crescent moon that will never wax or wane.
signs

i read the sign on the wall,  
trace worn, beige corners  
of stained, manmade words,  
like braille, these six words  
with the paint-stained pads  
of my fingertips.

silent objects, cold copper posts  
on roadends, bite-sized amber lights  
shaped like a cigarette on an airplane,  
triplets of ovals that guide your foot on the pedal  
& yellow beckons you to make rash choices:  
cross me. smoke me.  
terrorize me.

who writes the monologues for walls?  
my walls of celery speak for themselves:  
this house is powered by tacos.
phantoms

down when I lay
for a nap until midnight,
I left the house lights blazing,
all doors cracked open
as my tabby cat chews
on the ends of my hair
on my bed.

midnight comes & goes with ease,
the cycle of my saliva waterfalls
begins, watercolor
on the pillowcase,
my breath deepens with moonrise.

as the hour enters the darkest point of night
the lights in the hall panic-- seizure:
they dance on & off with indecision.
there is no one else in my home
yet someone is here.

her atoms tug my chest
in-between dream & light,
half-cracked eyes & a heart of speed,
i levitate to meet the spirit
face-to-face
hers, the vintage frame of a Lichtenstein
in shadows,
a talking head
i can’t hear a word
all i see is a mouth in motion.

Can I borrow your mouth so I can kiss your cat like you do,
make a ham sandwich and taste the veins,
whisper melodies that share my miseries?
Pt. II

i felt them again in the hummingbird room,
above the feeders in the old mountain home,
the room with its thick window that shows
swaying shagbark branches winding up for a fight,
and the high window that lets me stare
at the waxing gibbous,
when the clouds let us catch a glimpse of her.

spirits came in through computer screens
in the invisible attic
but the Lightweaver
sent them away.

Pt. III

wafting smokerings of white sage
when i cleanse the room doorways in my home
to let 3am’s phantoms dissipate
into unseen pathways

is
reliving still moments--
same smoke filled the same lungs
in Allegheny woods in Pennsylvania,
when Jesus grazed his wand of burning sage
across my torso
down my thighs
to open myself to whispers of Love from human angels--
or in bed with a past lover, our chests stirred upright
from the old-lady ghost in her long prairie-dress
that outlined her floating frame,
she, the emitter of jostled confusion, of japan’s mah

wafting is witchcraft,
mesmerizing & waking
still moments of memory through the mirror,
it is knowing what the cat stares at
when he sees something you can’t.

spirits travel in those shadows
i waft, since the smoke knows not to linger
Concatenation on the Full Moon

in the blackhole parking lot (you will never find your car or your sanity)

the ketchup-stained pool table from the Cheers bar you practically live at

the despised dentist chair, with its navy cushions & recliner falsely beckoning for you to be poked by metal

the airplane that frequents underground tunnels or the ocean with killer whales at the shoreline

you pick up the spike that sits in the lot at the gas station to save us from an imagined crash.

you handle the wolf spider of pure snow climbing your thigh.

you gaze wide-eyed as that dentist whips out his pliers: bi-annual torture that pays for all that touched your saliva: lovers, berries, wine, gluttony.

you stand by the shore as the bluewhale vacuums up your brother like a dust bunny.

you transform the plane into a dive bar, throw the airplane bottles of Skyy vodka to all the passengers so they don’t notice when you go down.
you watch the first bite in the cherry tomato:
the teeth settle into the plump yellow flesh
fangs puncture the skin & seeds turn to fleas--
you watch it again & again, in slow motion, on repeat.

you walk down the aisles in the grocery store
under florescent ceilings, canned goods explode
as you pass, a blackbean rain.
but the ladies in line for blackberry pie
squeal when you forget to take a number.

share the closed-eye visions,
these untold stories are
cobwebs of our collective mind.
Stink Eye

I am sentenced to stay here
in the pockets of your face.
I know you don’t consider me much,
as if I’m not working away
flipping reality into headstands,
painting the images that swim
through the streams of your memory.

You have taken me to
dark places: apartments with thick, thick smoke
that stains your sweater for days
when you sleep in the guest bedroom
with tonight’s stranger from the bar,
the underground bar with toilets
caked with scum, or
those bedrooms with too many
moving, naked parts that rub &
hand over drunken disease.

I will sit and be sour
in my God-given pocket.
You will stroke that raw pork
in your freezer, then stroke me.
You will be sorry.
nightmare

in evening suburbia,
a piss-stained moon huddles overhead
to brood over rows & rows of carbon copy homes.
the moon’s glare stains the sky,
the air is a blanket of bristles.

i am on the street, calloused soles
brush chrome cement.

as i pass an empty lot, animated
with a rainbow of ripe fruits
on Saturday’s market, now grey and aching.
i hear a soft mumur, 
see Ania’s forested Suburu swarm in to scoop me, 
her window lowers and i see her eyes, 
held wide with fear settled in the irises, as if piranhas are secretly
gnawing her legs there,
it’s not funny.
come quick, she squeals at me as i jump inside
onto milky mildew seats, she
never stops driving,

on the street, a man expands into
a monstrous pterodactyl like an Anamorphs novel
he chases us, i feel his pull from behind,
inside dark matter,
as he rides atop a pickup truck
i am latched to the back of the Suburu, surrendering.
the beast sprays a mist, a potion that
makes me feel like melting, like a hit of a heavy opiate,
the dark, ethereal pull, a lovestruck teen on an apathy ride,
i become a useless solider,
ania is left alone to fight the man.
where are we?

in the kitchen of an uninfected family,
their pink lips warn us of grandmothers that wander into homes
with five-dollar bills, they ask you to take them to the theater--
but if you barely trace the bill,
their white hair will dissipate into scaly skin, the demonic eyes
won’t leave your memory.
At the pigeon river in Tennessee, we pass the days wading in blowup tubes. We are snakes who creep in kayaks of foreigners, who paddle backwards, they are already wobbling, just asking to be pushed.

In the night our bodies turn, our minds turn into the realm of distant narratives. In our small wooden rooms, with creaky doors, with walls of purple paint, with putrid air of a dead rodent, really a bag of rotten potatoes that summoned the love interest, aroused pools of fast squealing maggots--such a delicious cleanup.
The American Dream

If 

you climb the tower of the fun-house
house-party, the tilted stairways
with rooms full of mirrors & faces of Marilyn,
with rooms full of mattresses.

Then

you can hide behind the thick stage curtain
in the attic with your Patrick &
suck thick white bumps &
forget about missing your shift today
sleeping ‘til ten in the eve.

If

you walk to the Russian bakery
down rickety stone streets, or
take a flying car in your drunken state,
grab the 35 cent puff pastries
of cream, yoghurt & mint
from under the glass ceiling.

Then

you succeed,
drowning in body pleasure.
You have earned your residency.
Apocalypse Dreams

Pt. I

a hand full of familiar strangers--mixed
with recent guests of my flat
(like the faerie friend with the voice of a man,
the proud & queer Ms. Bobo-Dancy herself,
who taught me how to glitter everyone
in the dance hall)
we come together to swim.

we tread water in canals, naked
along the European street,
framed by pastel towers,
easter-egg homes.
untouched elation sits in our chests,
a rare & extraordinary organ.

our legs tango in cyclic waves,
we do the dead fish
float in the rising water.
our bodies are carried
right to a high school gymnasium.

the dance takes our legs
down the stairs, down
descending ceilings, to the blue mats in the basement
where we pull our limbs out &
the blonde lady in front guides the flow--
then
Sirens shriek in routine breaths, they are
the alarm we prepared to disregard in school drills

dirt smoke rushes down the stairs to play tag,
my eyes dash, no doors,
all the fibers in my thighs work together to perform the sprint,
across the tiled floor, up the crowded stairs

flames rule the spiral staircase
i suck in air as i rush against the cloud of grey, the block.
fellow stretchers surround me, i reach the door in time but

i look back. i am lot's wife.
i look back.
i watch the orange killer strike--
in one motion, he absorbs the school
the girls behind me on the stairs
become walking bodies of fire.

Pt. 2

Tonight we are at the ocean,
the boy from Budapest, my father, & I.

We stand on the shore
as waves gently turn with the aid of the Moon.

It is winter, yet the ocean is bathwater
under Midnight’s sky, under the rickety boardwalk,
We push off into deep water.

The boy points at the scarlet seahorse latched on my arm like a tattoo,
Through clear water, I watch a stingray swarm &
chase me back to the sand,
my heartbeat faster than my ankles.

The sand starts to growl,
the Earth hiccups,
sonic thunder,
it vomits seawater,
only over the ocean,
I am untouched.

But the boardwalk,
it acts like a sewer
The water rushes through its pipes &
I see one man on the walk,
a tall, dark-haired stranger with a top hat, suitcase & a story
The water sweeps him up
and he drops straight down,
his bottom plops onto the shore
and his arms fall right off like a plastic doll with removable parts.

A smile strikes his face,
The satisfaction of a future in disability funds?

His suitcase is out of sight, and
I’m sitting in a kitchen with purple walls and a shag green carpet,
yawning at the apocalypse.
Wednesday Eyes

The chrome half-moons
under your eyes grew darker
that morning,
layered,
like moon’s cycle at nightfall.
The wrinkles on your
forehead were defined then
from the unwelcome light
that enters through
these basement windows.

You stumbled to your countertop,
where I watched your face do the snakeroll
with snorts,
your heavy eyes closed shut
your body gave its last shrug.

I carried the old man to his bed,
placed cold water on the envelope of his lips
and lay with him,
pretending to sleep as
his bones rested on my soft skin,
his beer breath snores
were like smoke on my face.

I can see now
why he stirred me away.
My young eyes
earned their glasses that day.
rendering of love on a tuesday:

reaching in to seize my heart from my chest
& handing it over to my daughter, sophia
cupped through soft, gentle palms
‘till her womb plays the role of a maker
& molds a new heart, births a new creature.

the picture of tangled, honeyed thighs,
skin crinkled and peppered with spots made of stories
soft cackles singing in an otherwise quiet room
they will never grow mold.
dogwood mail

driving south to see
trees in bloom
after a night of sleeping in the snow
& letting the hail beat my face,
is like seeing color for the first time.

i am the wick of a candle--
ignited by vernal sun,
the light shows the beauty in strangers
like red-haired, shirtless Steven
whose eyes blazed
the picture of an olive on fire,
gold & green twists in circles
in his irises, like magic

no wonder the warm blood of new loves is harvested in this season.

at blood rock on the parkway,
i spy front seat fever
in the car next to mine,
i watch heads disappear
into the laps of their lovers,
a wave of pollination:
the lovers mimic the sassafras,
romanced by spicebush swallowtail,
winged creatures kiss buds,
birth sherbet.

in these woods,
the wind of untouched silence
numbs my fingertips with a warmth
in a way a person never could.
i am not alone, sitting
by the glasshouse over the lake.

the bloom of new cycles
in the ancient--
what was always there,
like lovers that are always within,
reflections of who you want to be each moment.

dogwoods crack open
they carry us to the forest where all trails lead to
treehouses,
they wait for us.
Cave Games

When we sit at the long picnic tables,
twenty of us with our big toes in the ocean,
at the shore by the cave, we get
rowdy with our drinking, fling cups in the air
in rotation, thrown high and low and
our shit beer dirts the water and Clay
beside me wears his heavy winter coat and he
helps me tie my hiking boots, bunny ears
style, and awkward incest thoughts run through our heads
and we touch thighs and we lose balance, lose the game
and tumble off the bench into the shallow water
beside that cave where Cyclops
sits and chuckles at our folly.
messages from the mountain sanctuary

rows & rows of rooms without windows.

scariest thought:
the business of carrying your mind into the future.
when you can’t
see the dancing loblollies right in front of your face,
taste the skin of your newest lover,
smell the burning cedar
in the ancient potbelly stove
that heats every room of the wood cabin.

let go of everything:
shape your body into an empty mug,
pour into yourself
the coffee of this moment:
it is always brewing.
View from the Streetcar

I remember looking through the window,
into a forest where bright colored hammocks
hung in trees in abundance--
ripe fruit in a fresh street market,
they are canopies full of hard covered books.

I saw only hammocks in this forest,
hammocks holding books that must be tired from not being read,
from watching people in their homes, on their screens,
with fingers that no longer fondle the soft corners of worn pages with patience,
noses that no longer take in the sweet cologne of an aged tale
that has traveled over many seas, held by many shades of hands,
of ancestors who scribbled first reactions
in the margins, in smeared lead.

These hard covers have traveled the full cycle, back to their mother trees.

I remember seeing the books, thinking
that was enough to bring flavor back to my throat.
seductive decay

i dream of the river,
of appalachian townies wandering in wet grass on the banks.
they circle the folding-tables with masks on display
to purchase like a van gogh piece.
a mask of an old person’s face,
cartoon-like, goofy,
like comic characters in the funny pages.
masks of rubbered wrinkles with bulging eyes
whiskered ears that never stop growing,
attached by a thin strip of elastic.

old age attracts the masses of river folk,
for it’s hard to fake being wise
when you’re forced to think for years.
a mid-spring winter

there is a battle in the sky--
hemispheres in armor
split by a jagged line:

the smoke of a storm marches on the left field
hard whistles slide through the maze of bamboo stalks,
stalks forced to samba back & forth.
unseen soliders batter the many windchimes of the home
tambourines being torn apart.
roars grow from the chicken coop,
the music of the moment
an unrehearsed orchestra on speed.
the doors on the porch swing wildly,
wrastled by the armies of ghosts,
each creak in the bamboo treehut is a war horn,
the place aches in
new kinds of movement,
like a new actor just fighting to be heard.

the other half of sky is peaceful, silent
the remaining glow peaks through turquoise sheets,
until it is torn out of bed.

such a beautiful haunting to the sanctuary.
Under the stern gaze of the summer moon my big sister, Juliet to Romeo, Cathy to her Heathcliff, slid each night on the porch's sloping roof down to Lovers' heaven below our bedroom window. Little sister hugged the secret into her midnight pillow, waited for the tap of stones on glass then flitted like a ghost to unlock doors and let big sister in from her illicit play. Haunting Poems - Popular examples of all types of haunting poetry to share and read. View a list of new poems for HAUNTING by modern poets. This list of new poems is composed of the works of modern poets of PoetrySoup. Read short, long, best, and famous examples for haunting. Search Haunting Poems: Exact Phrase Any Word All Words. New Poems. The greatest gift I can give to you The gift that captures all my thoughts With music breathed through a prayer Haunting beautiful hopes with a dream For something so special, so rare That I can only reveal it's glory to those Who.Read More. © Regina McIntosh. Categories: haunting, freedom, god, light, Form: Free verse. Why. A broken glass, The unknown future, Moments are lost Such a haunting past. Ranked poetry on Haunting, by famous & modern poets. Learn how to write a poem about Haunting and share it! Poems / Haunting Poems - The best poetry on the web. Newest. Lisa Winship Follow. Long halls lit by laughs of children in short bright sparks they travel over well-trod steps, and add their footprints to those fixed in dust and time passing by in dirty coats with sticky elation, sweet and syrup dusted cheeks with rose, little marshmallow pies they skip and switch about the hallways.
Nice poem. Autumn Rose Speckhardt. I’m a professional editor who loves writing. I’m inspired by fairytales, incredible writing, water, and animals. I will use my unique outlook to shake things up. Follow. 10. Ranked poetry on Hauntings, by famous & modern poets. Learn how to write a poem about Hauntings and share it! Poems / Hauntings Poems - The best poetry on the web. Newest. Seven Nielsen Follow. on Dec 21 06:07 AM. The Ghost of the Chinaberry Tree. Bridge filled with lights and romance Built in Pasadena in 1912 Gave folks chills with its charm From the distance, oh what romance! The parapet tower, lights aglow Concrete arches below, all in a row And the bridge curves over the river But the structure holds false charm What mercy can it show When its captors wipeout their lives in one jump To ended it at the bottom of the bridge Ask the lady in white atop one of the parapets Vanishing in the misty fog. Many of the poems consider dreams and reality, suggesting that the two are really one and the same. For instance, “Life is but a Dream” by Lewis Carroll. Other poems think about dreams more physically, such as the American dream is described in “Montage of a Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes. Best Poems About Dreams and Dreaming. 1 A Dream Within a Dream by Edgar Allan Poe. 2 Montage of a Dream Deferred by Langston Hughes. 3 Dreams by Anne Brontë. 4 The Dream by John Donne.