



**FLUID
&
CRYSTALLIZED**

KJ Hannah Greenberg

Fluid and Crystallized
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Preface:

Our entire lives are strewn with evolutions. We hazard, we get burned, and then we dust ourselves off and try again, on and on. In simple terms, our days and nights are constituted by patterned developments and deaths.

It would be easy, and often is tempting, merely to throw up our hands in concession, to drink copious amounts of cola and to hide in books' worth of soft fiction. We acculturated sops, we senescent beings, we receptacles of irritations and of elations, could make excuses based on gas or on bad hair moments. Fortunately, in general, we continue to act culpable for cleaning up parking lots and for making sure that new trees are sprouting. We tend to reserve our escapes for weekends and for vacations.

Beyond acting accordingly, our reports of our experiences, too, must be dappled. They need to give over the sad as well as the gracious, while providing testimony for broken bits as well as for complete snippets. Toward that end, this collection of poetry, *Fluid and Crystallized*, focuses primarily on challenging and, only secondarily, on pleasing. This chapbook uses words' color and consistency to provoke interpersonal mindfulness. "Risk," not "peace," makes these pages heuristically valuable.

What's more, given that the creation of texts is the act of leaving signposts, of making traveling a bit easier for later trekkers, and given that, at best, our encounters are uneven, witnessed life, contemplated life, and personal delvings into the muck of life all deserve rugged representation. Consequently, I try to cheer on, to shepherd, or to whisper softly not only about success, but also about failure. While I can't fully grasp others' destinations, I can share my cautions and my appreciation of the scenery. Enjoy the words.

KJ Hannah Greenberg
Jerusalem
2012

Developments

Goopy with Clay, Peanut Butter, and Snot: Intergenerational Faceoffs

Goopy with clay, peanut butter and snot, with ensembles referencing
The slippage of years, Filene's bargain basement, maybe elegiac costumes,
They shoved fat fingers into coin returns, then scheduled nuptials days later.
As well, they erased mementoes of motion picture industry peer support,
Imparted meaning to unanticipated death, permanent crippling, romantic challenges.

Elsewhere, their fourteen children squeezed together. Some uninhabited ones gamboled
Directly to parking meters, whose issue, in turn, got insufficiently appreciated
When divided among those frisky frolickers, ones accustomed to dashing sans breakfast.
They retained no problem, though, when taking multiple buses to raves and corner stores,
Excepting the fellow whose bed dissolved many social unions, wiggled group karma.

Ballooning with opined sagacity, exacerbated levels of hormones, kindred reality shifts,
Such boys and girls pillaged enough comestibles for all hungers, especially of upper legs,
Collar bones, their lanky hair. Oral tradition trumps poetic language, even other literature.
Night whispered no new superficial lessons in feminism, machismo, or gender confusion;
Kids never did and never will feel compelled to stay wholesome, "helpless," or immobile.

Midnight reached, cultural mischief approached, alternate views of ecstasy tried on,
Their parents reclaimed some mastery of comings and leavings, returned their space
Invaders games along with newly gleaned feelings about borscht, dental floss, life's stations.
Devoid of youth's impunity, elders no more glide through written texts than through regular
Tribulations, self-determined manipls, albs, things needing childhood's waterproofing.

Midlife body parts, no matter how regularly applied are psychological soap and water,
At best, present as staid responses to goings on, at worst, as unctuous, non-utilitarian
Kudos to garment industry sorts, to fiduciary whims, to poofed audiences, to poodles.
Ritual items, prestige goods, agents of vengeance, headaches, bring interpersonal strife,
Sign guest books in permanent marker, use old-fashioned fountain pens to pick noses.

Seasoned by labor's measly wages, the lonesome pulp fiction of social climbing, hemorrhoids,
Folks inimical to unspoken civilities, numb to single parenting, ballets' price, downers' impact,
Prove smoke stack-belching of pollutants, show down manufacturers' clerks, snigger.
By fifty, edifices support unsustainable hypotheses until feuilletons faithfully reflect,
Perform abbreviated work, kickstart wealthy mistresses' careers, fail, recycle, forever lag.

Midas' Touch

'Ol Roper,
My weasel-chasing dogbit,
Toted home THIS PRODUCT
Wrapped pretty.

THIS PRODUCT makes muscles,
Produces magnetism
Enhances personality, so
Ma's picture magazine promises.

Clementine, my darling, packed,
Lost and gone forever.
I kept THIS PRODUCT;
Paupers ain't need queens.

Picot

Sticky brown resin, eldritch in viscosity, the stuff of twig-based cantilevers, presents
Like temporarily filling; it's altogether less helpful than time swimming backyard passages.
Accordingly, we note public discourse's lost saliency once filled obstreperous rhetoric.

When trade winds swallow, whole, persons whose particular handicaps stagger angels,
Rather than compromise assembled worlds' qualities, "ethical" divas elect, at days' end,
Ample examples of social exophthalmoses, also luxuries infrequently awarded settlers.

There remain circulars boasting two-for-one admissions fees, other interesting diversions
Within nominal energy fields, especially those locals impervious to outside influences,
Such as hoodrats, wayfaring young maidens, winking elders, gibbering prime ministers.

Cultural ouroboroses, stipple from commonplace struggles while juxtaposing
Distasteful facets of celebrity against Frances Bacon's claims about self-fulfillment;
World crises, domestic mess, twisted ribbons, bad hair days, cozy up, often, in contrast.

Those sorts are wont to dissect many a fish, leaving their viscera to dry stiff
Per textiles. Usury, here, becomes classified as containing unalterable variables,
Taking into account unmodifiable equations ordinarily distress baleen types.

Accordingly, "dawn" and "dusk," those extraordinary temporal hyperhymes,
Rely on book smarts, wit, popularity contests, sometimes even wisdom,
Word stories work akin to stringing beads; color, shape, texture, color, shape.

Afterwards, gatekeepers' peristalsis, those motions made famous with foraminas,
Enthrall folk to swallow finite numbers, beguile their ownership of infinite loops,
Bring forward, for selective adoption, other mute mathematical acquaintances.

Recall, wee girls' ova contain, at birth, features fully compliant with forming life.
Only new ideas, rarely newer organisms, generally require imaginative morsels.
Otherwise, cloth hewn from raw resin, then boiled with leaves, best serves tussets.

So Aloes Grew in Vietnam

So aloes grew, where once some selection of mute acquaintances
Wiggled tentacles across dimity covers, stopping to pick lint, also nits.
Such bedtime vitriol got replaced often, but never because of political bribes.
Then, sweetgum, sycamore, also alder, transformed into lintels, matchsticks, lamps.

I was just five when bell bottom blues filled the airwaves.
Yesteryear, conscription was the *de rigueur* most often fought by youth.
“Levy” was attributed to jeans, not tribes, taxes or armies.
Raconteurs sang of Canada via self-mutilation, furthermore, free love.

Sanky-pankies got hired to distract corporate suits from playing badminton;
Pentagon types bettered domestic rent boys in pulling out shirttails.
Together, they saw movies, chowed through kibble, smoked weed;
Anything to avoid ordering more troops to jungles’ killing floors.

Asking employers to equivocate, to spin like monkeys,
To rank outfits per levels of starch, payola, kickbacks,
Meant allowances for pulp stationed anywhere, but was more
Well-liked than were talking heads tergiversated boardrooms’ duvets.

Epigones, erstwhile, sorted birthday greetings, air kisses, enticements,
Refused to contend with arbitrary matchmaking of careers with war adventures.
Pressing answering machines, apprising salaries, pinching clerical help,
Those corporate hicks, once, were silver-plated luncheons, lapel pins, stogies.

Local ethnics, whilom blared music enough to erase their bosses’ celebrations,
As quondam lieutenants, less-than-kickshaw in their dungarees, meanwhile,
Practiced no-nonsense ethics alongside of childbirth options. Clinics flourished.
If we blinked enough, clicked our heels, inverted our eyes, they flew away.

Morally Tall Friends: Eucalyptus' Lessons

Sturdy trees, such as cedars, acacias, myrtle, oleaster, cypress, boxwood, elms,
Share no medical organizations, PTA committees, or scout troops with eucalyptus.

As fast-growing admonitions, the latter espouse desired boundaries, all the while
Urging foresters to reminisce, even to forfend, on big thrills' less-than-sober realities.

Notable among green giants, those gummy providers of practical materials
Ride over small surfaces, contributing needed compasses in most civic woods.

Such economically-beneficial groves transport us, help we feeble-minded approach
Bits and pieces of human experience that show up on LinkedIn or on YouTube.

True swap drainers, they ground flighty veracities, skip clay, carnival glass, bubbles.
Their roots seek fresh structural archetypes, tap new means to stockpiled securities.

No matter our reading habits, intellectual ambitions, or level of self-dishonesty,
Mallee trees can issue constructive building blocks, ward against emotional
"pioneering."

Lignotubered or not, smooth-barked stands do: counterbalance empires' "magnetic moments,"
Suck away rhetorical twaddle, set aright individual orbital motions, fix cultural slop.

Straight-trunked, "them wonders" stuff our waste into foil-wrapped packets of meaning,
Exclusive of stooping to romanticize regular railcars, chipmunks, out-of-the-box fancies.

Their cousins, rough-barked morrells, too, leave propulsion amusements lingering,
Flit us away from favor unreliable sorts like politicians, bankers, wholesalers, cosmeticians.

Either's "normal" yield supplies enough kinetic energy to propel our populations,
To shoot kin past opining quintessence, salty balderdash, more patchwork beliefs.

True myrtles, tall friends teach satiation derived from climbing platforms,
Enjoying views, looking groundward, breathing, breathing, breathing, then dropping.

Those full-leaved, towering phenols frame social accelerations as neither good nor fun,
Question suffering möibus strips repetitions rather than deferring, honorably, to reason.

Deaths

Like Moving through Mercury

Like moving through liquid mercury, rather than air,
My best gleaning's unctuous sounds, iconoclast screeches,
Manufactured by third world drug companies' thugs, resonate.

It seems betrayal brings no freedom, just barely trodden dreams.
My unchallenged rhetoric becomes something similar to intimate rejection.
Emotional infidelity, forever egregious in existence, hurts. Simply.

Your promises fade as worthless occupiers of rooms' weary feelings.
Wastrel verbs congregate, mocking *liebestoden*, laughing split infinitives.
Explicated behaviors, especially omissions sting, then sting, again.

Other, ordinary sources of misery remain incomparable, excepting poison.
Surrounds bludgeoned, their frames attacked, cudged without thought
As to kinder ploys. They shatter, fall down, drop to pieces, evidence harm.

Your own cat, dog, or webcam brings no furry comfort. Straight away,
I expect less from pitted autumnal skies than from romantic matters seeped
In deconstructed espousals; duplicity's bane bites deeply, leaves trails.

Voiced discrepancies, likewise, make kings of naught, confirm your complete
Disinterest in cleaning up messes, no matter the tolerance I'd developed
For underwater breathing, bungee jumping, also branding patches of my skin.

Pity you plucked so many junkyard diddly bows, when one duet-worthy
Fiddle was needed. Communication's role in caretaking minors remains
The province of zither-like, flat, wooden sound boxes, mongrels, and angels.

Under these circumstances, abrupt cancellations ought not to be captioned
As surprises, guerrilla warfare, or packaged nastiness. They're mere reactions,
Just pieces of viscera left for tripping upon, strangulating or lacerating.

Undercurrent: A Parallel Universe for Sylvia Plath (a *bref double*)

Sea urchins, some undercalcified shells,
Cover sand for miles. Strong
Waves tug; cold tides
Pull my feet a third time.

Crawling backward, ebbing beyond
Jagged bits, broken fish, syringes vie
Like seaweed. Such tangled halos,
Of light or self-push chimes, shimmer.

Imagined bells peel. Stillness remarks,
While myriad voices jell together,
Cacophonously. Wet turbulence
Softens. Life remains.

I greet land afraid. Yelling,
Pummeling the shoal, I hope.

Denied.

Had I Wishes

Had I wishes, they'd not be spent on wings,
On super powers, other synthetic things.
Given millions, I'd save for infirm years,
Evading magic, avoiding social fears.

Yet, balloons collapse. Friendships, like ours, deflate.
Your provedores cease sending sweetheart telegrams,
Substitute with unripe ackee, likewise toxic elderberry,
Determine the need to mark how we think, speak, act.

Morally relaxed hearts then meter out gestures, roses,
Hankies, sugar, give bad reviews, unambiguous critiques.
Assume levels of love, longing, destiny, also obligation.
Spit at fairytales, give over unhappy narratives.

It seems, your mothers, all ebullient, lethal cassava,
Elected to your women, to hastily throw sprigs;
Samphire plus parsley. Their ballistics, honed to right
Angles, are meant to deter daughter-in-laws, also brides.

Swimming in *Shemyim*: Jacob Nissim Bensussen

Water runs downhill, toward unfathomable springs,
Where *kedusha*, *emunah*, origin mingle. Familial tears,
The ministrations of the *chevra kadisha*, the silences
Of *tahara*, and later of soda among sandwiches,
When respect poured out by callers fill memories,
Connections fashioned from immersed goodness.

No *midbar* here; Torah's sweet fluids flowed
Through Yaacov to his son, daughter, wife, friends.
Life meant joy as oceans, mazel as rains. Washed
In teachers' precepts, in Hashem's righteousness, what
Exocrine glands confused, his neshemah gushed,
Overflowing quantities of the universe's best lubricant.

His smiles soaked easily, his compassion saturated
Others' soulful dryness, steeping away their pains of separation
From G-d, from *klal*, from self, in valuable streams. With ear,
With eye, with hand, he infused hope, *b'tocheh*,
Union. Now slippery with those *mitzvot*,
Jacob Nissim Bensussen, zt"l, swims, deeply in *Shemyim*.

Reduced Acuity

I brushed teeth twice,
Daily, before my wife
Died. Leaving three budgies
Plus an angry adolescent.

Sweet atrophy of mind or
Decreased function almost
Never gift me any more;
With five minutes of dysfunctional solace.

Depression, too,
Skips my address
Cancer or car accidents
Offer better venues.

So, my "troubles," stay unpackaged
By glitzy news, by tidy breveries.
Such inner neap waves, roll, maybe
Ebb, without collected commotion.

Thereafter, no solecism, its sister
Faux pas, or other of the community's tarts
Compensate my empty spaces. Just
Rough-hewn dissonance follows.

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Credits:

Three of these poems have been published previously elsewhere, as follows:

"Morally Tall Friends: Eucalyptus' Lessons." Jun. 2012. *Spark!*

<http://www.getsparked.org/uncategorized/channie-greenberg-and-jane-hulstrunk>.

"Reduced Acuity." *Bewildering Stories*. Jan. 2011.

http://www.bewilderingstories.com/issue413/reduced_acuity.html.

"Swimming in Shemyim: Jacob Nissim Bensussen." *Remembering Yaakov*. Mar.

2010. <http://rememberingyaakov.com/hespedim.htm>.

About the Author:

KJ Hannah Greenberg, who only pretends at being indomitable, tramps across literary genres and giggles in her sleep. She worries less, however, about linguistic beasts that roam at dusk than about bold fiends that smile and gulp up writers during broad daylight.

In the beginning there were *Watercolors*, 1979, a musical, and *Conversations on Communication Ethics*, 1991, essays. Following a tour of duty in academia and then decades dedicated to parenting, there are: *Oblivious to the Obvious: Wishfully Mindful Parenting*, French Creek Press, 2010, essays, *A Bank Robber's Bad Luck with His Ex-Girlfriend*, Unbound CONTENT, 2011, poetry, and *Don't Pet the Sweaty Things*, Bards & Sages Publishing, 2012, short fictions. In the future, there will be, *b'eH: Supernal Factors*, 2012, poetry, *The Nexus of the Sun, Moon and Mother*, 2013, essays, and *Oh Your Goodness!*, 2013, essays.

