

Hallmark



Canada's 150 Year Anniversary

Emily Isaacson



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Published in the United States by Dove Christian Publishers, an
imprint of Kingdom Christian Enterprises, Bladensburg, Maryland.

ISBN 978-09986690-3-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017956468

Cover design: Voetelle Art & Design
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Section II: Mottled Recession



my forehead, salted with death—
as the night fades into remnants of dreams
to endure . . .

—Emily Isaacson

Part One: Layered Realism



Historical Hurricane

The recession stretched for almost a decade,
as vast rooms that go on and on,
as the lucid dreams
over oak floors
temper the alpine mist.

The flamenco-red walls,
and the kaleidoscope of lights
endeared history.
Here I sit—
bold and proud as
a tartan plaid.

I could dance in an organic whole
of limbs and pauses
before the hurricane;
with a rather moody folk skirt
brushing the granite hearth.

There was only a wind at the chimney.

That would be my signature style
of delicate arches,
brilliant height,
and stony-blue curves.

What the Lilac Was Not

The lilac was not lustrous,
but rather historic,
alas, I did have to explain
each delicate trivet of colour,
each satin sheen of purple,
next to the rich plum and deep wood.

The flourishing variety of botanicals
beyond the velvet drapery,
through the meld of glass,
echoed its mystery,
a contrast to the century-old molded
plaster ceilings,
growing archaic with beauty.

Simply, the garden
unfolded through time
like a linen cloth,
with each dried flower held
in it as potpourri.

A Little Fury

It was a magical silver wood,
all glittering with the dew,
where the light gleams through morning's seams,
and fairy wings are not lack-luster,
speaking of iridescent things.

A furious thunder storm sprang up, threat-laden
from the other end of the garden,
where the hummingbirds and bumblebees
hang on florets, like tea bags in steeping tea,
sipping the drifting transient fragrance
before darting into the forest oak trees
that are solid before the fury.
The grey squirrels and the rabbits scurried,
even their young were hurried
into their burrows before the wind.

The storm haphazardly whipped
the evergreen branches root to tip,
scattering fern fronds hither and thither;
the aristocratic deer will not today delay,
though they usually in these paths meander,
drinking the nectar from flowers of clover.
The rain melted the blue and green
into rivulets pristine.

In Relevant Cards

Feeling lost in the room
of hickory-plated emotions,
where dreams could be almost trite,
there were deep roots and tall branches
of the tree of my life,
that brushed my skin
when I stopped in the card aisle.

I am too innocent
to consider that my most jaded sentiments
could be passable in a card, leisurely and soft,
with underwriters,
hope under their belts.

My anger melts like ice cream,
sweet and sticky, with chocolate chips,
drips to be caught as holidays and moments
when we can't forget to send
a wish, a note, a card . . .

Petrified Wood

There is something durable
about immortality,
the iconic style of nature—
a petite woman
in a little black dress.
She is first living and warm,
then aging:
turning from sepia browned,
to diamond-icy and dying,
then dead with journalistic starkness.

And she rises
each spring,
with her immortal cloak
of color. Dazzling gardens,
a glitz of fragrance,
shooting the crystalline rain
clear through
with sun,
bereft of fear
of her time in arrears.

Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver

When you spoke, I listened,
and it was as the pattering of rain
after a long dry spell in the Fraser Valley,
soaking the yellow ground.
There were diamonds of glassy water
like tears on the eyes
of the flat blueberry fields.
They welled up
into juicy night-blue stones,
like sapphires grow in caves
for Lady Sappho.

The baby, in her white eyelet bonnet,
sat on a blanket in the afternoon.
She was the muse of time
and the canyons of her ears
heard the songs of the rivers and the forests;
we painted her that day
on cardboard,
as we could not afford a canvas.

Reservoir Blue

The potter's wheel turned around and around,
lassitude becoming pottery
from deep within the ground.
Clay being tamed and pulled
from a wild blue coal:
fierce and swift, to re-worked, reserved,
light over the sea, conserved.

This sentimental molding is making you resent
being rather old-fashioned,
the subtle blue glaze to wet rock rationed.
It was traditional that you take a deep dive
into colour's blood,
there were the jewel tones, rather serene linens,
hanging stars in a dark wood.

I am of beauty and all she holds captive,
you said—
must I explain this prolific art
of turning 'round and 'round as a thousand earths.

Breathing Space

Where the robin red-breast made its nest,
there was a sweeping fence
overhung with subtle evergreen trees
beside the timeless garden of cornstalks,
spindles of beans,
and square strawberry leaves.

Here, in heaven
there is a window to our little earth,
where, peering through the glass
we see quite clearly—
The old steeple bells ring with song
to the purple ground
and the royalty of the wood—
this artist's green
subdued the spider's finite threads
with a crack of rain chenille.
Then the layered reparation
of old and new,
like oldest leaf clung
to newest bloom.

View of Mount Song

Did love the 'morrow break,
when winter came too fast to me,
and seeped under the door,
a mist rose o'er the woolen floor,
too fast held tightly to my feet,
and bound them.

All weighing in my despair,
I lost my soulful child there,
all hurried in the straw street.
The wind passed by
the ashen flower box and swept it nigh,
camellias to a fiery finish.

What of comfort here in the Orient,
a far away land of copper hands and lotus flowers.
A wall surrounds my heart, my days
have all been lost in a maze
of rice fields, cries ringing out from dawn, I sing
only in the dark amid burning embers on the lawn.

I am far away, too hot to touch, too alone to stay.
The sun is a round red circle in white sky.
My books are scattered in a nomad pile.
I wrote to you in burnt sienna style.

I am neither poor nor rich.
I am neither young nor old.
I am neither black nor white.
I am neither slave nor free.

In the Custody of Angels

I stood here for quite some time
with my back to you,
I was an ancient sky
decorated with only the sunrise,
and the smoke curled from the chimney
rather like the curls on your neck.

I took my angel wings and rose
from the place of a wood stove,
a fire table, and a poet
in a cabin by the river.
The clouds reflected my appearance
and equivocal disappearance.

Once I knew you quite well
and I thought you would never leave me.
I only know now that if you fly away
I'll fly away too:
the nocturne thrush twittered
on a branch just outside the clematis fence.

Beyond your prison you could see the sky
of my custodian.
You are in the custody of an angel.
She is bright, flashing and you
water-coloured her world—
just so from aged.

End of Sample

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