PERMISSION TO COLOR

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PROJECT

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PERMISSION TO COLOR

A Project

by

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Department of English
Abstract

of

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Kimberly Carol Brunson

This thesis is a collection of poems, which explores the development of the author’s poetic process in three parts. Part one, Memory, focuses mostly on both the ideas of memories and experiences as well as actual memories and experiences lived by the poet. Part two, Dream, explores the abstract aspects of poetry. Part three, Opinion, is an amalgamation of dreams, rants and experiences liberally laced with strong viewpoints.

____________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Joshua McKinney

____________________
Date
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MEMORY

Memory feeds imagination.
—Amy Tan (1952 - )
On the Road to Grandmother’s House

Amani – Swahili, meaning peace or place of caring

Crunchy golden leaves blow
over licorice
roads dipped
in skipped
icing curves
and sways on grass
stained dirt hills
a green road sign at night
reflecting yellow white
like cats eyes in the dark
and a mostly gravel dirt road
caramel in light
missed easily by the coverage
of snake spined trees
a house lined with gray easing
evies and a lean
stoop
—then—
the peeling ginger cut door
of grandmother’s house
Just an old felt hat

brown
—worn—felt
covering
comb-over hair from
ear to there

blue jeans jacket—
creamy sherpa wool lined—
and thick brown winter gloves
for morning—evening work

it got cold in the dark
but you could see
the stars
for miles millions
more

when I looked up—
it snowed—
from a clear spotted sky
to my skin
where the flakes slept
on my lashes
Ferguson

gray and yellow mud
wish-washed the chrome detailed frame
years had seen this thing work
cracked and black seating threaded strings of fields
a shredded tarp wax wear worn
off and frayed
where weeds entwined with electric wire
grit and rust eats metal dust
but Ferguson though cracked
is clear
Frizzy Haired Girl with Frog in Cup

There is a picture hanging

(still hanging?)

on the wall of my grandmother’s house,

(by that door that used to have the crystal knobs that raced
(imaginings

there are many pictures,
hung on the wall or propped against it

back-dropped by wall

(once white)

where cracks
ride their way down from the ceiling disappear
behind the antique wood bookshelf with broken glass doors
The Kitchen

pale yellow-white
light patterns itself
through lace lined
windows shimmers
off tiles reflects
back steel a single round table
sits
in a nook
beneath a picture
window
its glass surface solid in the creep of morning
iron chairs
curl, twist
and rest with pillows
of pale blue gingham
the tea pot whistles
coffee perks
two cups clink on the counter
My Mother’s Tin Cans

S’mores
by the
Campfire
Roasted Columbia Bean Coffee
Maxwell House
or
Boston’s Melrose’s T. Walker Co.s
Celestial Season
warm
Crayola Colors
with
Players Gold Leaf
or
Prince Albert
kids have a
Jolly Tyme
and munch on
Bower’s
and
Barnum’s
no
Grape Nuts
for
Uncle Ben’s
mama wants the
Singer
at the
Groceries & Provisions
she buys
Pear’s Soap Berringer & Browns
and
Milk Bone
daddy buys
Public Benefit
and sneaks mama
Kisses
Six Years Old

rough wooden handles
we march in line
soft feathers flash
danger flickers hungry
welcome beating fast
peal down our fear
our grand adventures
of cardboard boxes
and broomsticks
Plastic Sand Castle

taupe
rough hewn edges blasted
(on holidays)
with iridescent glitter
un
even lines and ragged finger imprints
race and drag through houses
cut
windows
and stairwells
and doors
and
tiled rooftops square off
in staggered peaks
a lightning rod that caught
on strings of lights
turrets stacking in corners
with forgotten building blocks
and broken crayola color crayons
shelved together

This little plastic sand castle
and 30 years
Figure 3 Log and Iris, MacKerricher, CA
Mackerricher, CA

turquoise colors
the sky and bleeds
to the ocean
king of seas
circulates
in royalty

a leggy sand
crane sashays
through surf gentle
trap in
her temp
ting stems no
sunred sand crab
can resist

slick sharp spikes of green
spread
up out through
grain, sand-shell

purple iris blinks—
between its fan
Figure 4 Gabe at the Lagoon
Gabe at the Lagoon

bare fleshy toes peek through crunchy rough brown green grass
trek to water to dip and swish their tongues
real cool hip low shorts white draw string low
sunglasses tucked
in checker plaid lining
ride low low to the bank
farmer tan tip toes the way through sand
grass-sand weeds
fern frames shadows of this bottle blonde boy
a corner landscape day in frame
castles

grains packed smooth

shaped into a whole

a mound formed by small hands

now sprouts rough hewn towers

defined

walls barricade seashells

a serpentine moat

performs flood insurance

waves shall not take her

but heat dries the walls

and returns all efforts to sand
Portrait of the Desert Sun
*Painted for a brother on his eighteenth birthday*

Brush strokes paint red
the landscape with liquid streaks
of gold
the pallet is
the landscapes bed
with colors

bright bold
in purple

shadows

a smooth
red brush
creates bronze

particles stirred
by the wind
temptation

“but mama...

he says i’m pretty...”

refrains

hope lies

plucked

and shivers
the seeping dots spread poison  
to cure her browning  
skin a child’s words echo from her  
    I love you mrs. B  
    but I do not like your face  
a little tube of white left  
uncapped on the counter  
makes her bleed and scar to cure  
her the pretty poison paces her recovery  
almost better for a knife almost easier  
almost fair  
    the cream goes on  
the parents said  
    mrs. B –  
    you scare them  
i remember reassurances  
and they echo  

    we are frightened
Cannon in D Major

it hurts

when they take
from your body

one asked if her gown would fit
another
about her hair

it grows back

but what a miracle these new pills are
they cannot change the pain

she walks

each step measured

as if in practice
Missing December

I saw his face in the ditch by the road,
shrouded red
down the right side.
He would not move.
We drove past to the house.
I had never met him
but his picture stood,
his clothes laid out
   identical they said
   look for this you’ll see it
   we were told you’d be here
tell us
but I told another.
Then we walked and called.
Ten hours I’m told.
I took a soda as we left
and again as I passed
his face still masked.

Today is the 25th.
They’ve called it off.
They found him,
in a ditch,
half shrouded
   red.
At night I dream of fire,
how it burns and consumes,
of the night the fields fell
to it
and how we carried buckets to soak the house
then had to run and watch the steam rise,
then smoke, as it took the house
my grandfather built.
Do Not Call Me

do not call me—
because I
am—
we marched with yours
stood
by yours
when the time came
fought
side-by-side-by-side

do not call—
because I
say
a word—
we walked
side-by-side-by—
seeing the hidden—
too scared
to—

do not—
because you
expect—
because
I—
DREAM

Things are only impossible until they're not.
-Jean-Luc Picard, 'Star Trek: The Next Generation'
Après un Rêve

purple blood of dawn doesn’t break
over earth I wake
the Blue Knight dies and stains
the world still drowsy in shadows still spread
out from black walls into crisp cornered light
dust bunnies lead the monsters under the bed
White Space

We met at night
    in a white room
    off white?

There were no walls
    no ceiling
    no floor
though we could stand
    no windows
    or doors
just blank
    white
    space
we sought answers in this room
    there was no room
from
    images and actions
    with mis
    taken words
    you left
    behind at night
in a white room
with no ceiling

no walls

and no floor

no windows

no doors

just blank

white

space
Attn: carol

you’ve lost
the banana in the sky
its peel tripped up the airplane
and left

  S
  S
  S
  K
  I
  D
  D

marks on the clouds

focus and eat

your laughter
trees paint shadows on the sky
through walls
the tawny owls earthy cry echoes
“hee hee”
a fossil imprint of a voice
a laugh
Atmosphere
silence walks
the tawny owls earthy cry echoes
“hee hee”
a fossil imprint of a voice
a laugh
newly turned
Figure 5 Concert
Blink One Eight Two

misshapen hands swing about in purple hue
face blur black stage
a pinky punk rocker cast of camera
“no video ma’am no recording”
dim lights flash bright
eco phones spaz streaks
jagged lightning rips of white
energy in a blurred moment
doubles faces in a film
I asked

these words
to think

about

what they
mean
to me

control these random

phrases

much more

than

I

ever thought

I would

I was thrilled
to play

music

on his wall
Inverted Hourglass

The rain never comes spilled

from the languid lake to the heavens.

Look up!

The sun strikes hard and begs

permission to color the skies.

Over me it rises

a kind of limit.
Fragments

synopses fire and something snaps
shards of what we were scatter
Lucy
“Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes,
And she's gone.”
–The Beatles

Somebody calls you
the missing

you answer quite slowly

missing
linked together

with red brown mud and rock
fossilized pressure
fractured bone

A girl with kaleidoscope eyes

in an dirty ivory patchwork of man and monkey
pieced and puzzled back together
missing

look for the girl with the sun in her eyes

the missing

and she’s gone
Figure 6 Pain
Resting Place

The trees signed
in the breeze of
geometric shapes
over shadowed grass and stone.
in sun stained bright spots
flowers twirl
graceful in their
color
stones scatter
on grass
in random peace
names show off
polished stone
reflect
the eyes
of—
Hope
predict
predict again
and wait

sing of— sing of — sing of hope
-a deceitful lying thing
disguising poison

its distant vibrant plumage
Gold

scat
tered alchemy
bastard science
the penny
shines gold
a moment
only make greedy
good men
and kings of Fools
shadows cast laughing
faces in their arms
    I make
        mis               takes
bubble gum bubbles blow
        through hair
and skin
playground mud gathers
        bright blue boots
and buries them
        in fallen
of gold and pink
    leaves
Figure 7 Bee
Gray and sleek with some
sharp angles,
some round.
If you turn the knob
it changes how you see
the flash at night,
    for the day,
for shade
    or indoors by the window with the heavy red curtains.
There are attachments
for near,
    for far
wide or action with extended view,
one to hide light,
another to bend it.
You can fuzz it for teddy soft
or razor sharp each pixel
to find the bee in the background
and catch his wings
Here we can brag and bluster and blather and almost like a comic book character you could invent, Captain Bombast, pull the cape around the shoulders and shout the magic words, “Get him.” And rise above it all in a blast of hot air.

– Alan K. Simpson
traverse beyond all knowledge
light travels beyond
rough round objects swirl and collide
interrupting journeys
never completed echoes
    repeating fading?
    winking again
    that one picks the direct path past the obstacles
and pierces

Infinity

past all knowing
Figure 8 Apple
The seed drops its seed
a child grows and births itself
loss renew repeat
built to use destroy
ruins
A world evolves then extinct
implode
reuse repeat

Phased Out
Radio Waves

and Wells broadcast ‘round the world.
this is the end now,
a fossil imprint of a voice,
when the radio says,
“We KNOW you’re listening!”
and, of course,
we are.
Go Down, Moses

Go down, Moses
before I go,
exactly as I will.

When what is needed
is grace and change within,
we, fated to —,
fated to —;
we—
we do no harm.

Take what the — has given,
to achieve life.

Extremely focused
for the first and last time,
dissolve the boundaries.

United by perceptions,
but only
momentarily.
Generation Gap

The repetition of an innocuous morning
four doors down on Bakers Street
where the radio’s singing the
Hit

The Road
blues
a morning pot of coffee steaming
on the scarred and peeling orange vinyl kitchen table.
There was nothing very special about apples.
His mother never cooked them in a favorite recipe when he was a child;
his mother never cooked them.
He didn’t even really like them.
Their sometimes blush held no appeal,
even those that sparkled he could do without.
But everyday at nine o’clock,
he sat down with a plate and sliced through skin and flesh,
cutting exactly eight pieces he would eat.
Bite, chew, swallow.
Bite, chew, swallow.
Until there was nothing left but the eviscerated core,
carved in half and the nut brown seeds cradled in their hallowed out wombs.
A Modern Cure

choking on foul
air culture
of convenience
round round the merry-go-round
with a horse
wound
down
musical theme
where fashion and passion are life
other people live
infestation of pestilence
an ocean of polluted water
with a preserved
all
natural
cure
Conformity

passing time
fighting the irregular
the tic-toc
of nine to five
traffic
of uniformity
pre-school
high school
no school
—snow day
a president
set
of the people
by the people
inform the people
of choices
they have not
made
society rules
not
made or abide
by truth
in false advertising
wasteland
of the purified
impure
by products
of a dying
age
defying mechanism
of youth
—full rebellion
Figure 9 Wedding Chapel
Vows

In a world so ordered by our consciousness we become unbalanced by the smallest phrase; three words displayed on decorated windows screaming “Platinum and diamonds: let everyone know you love her!” catching the eyes of shopping lovers barely getting by on minimum wage simple gold will do it’s the vows that count while the another buys his most recent mistress a star encrusted finger and wrist to match taking a five minute call from his wife ended with false professions of unkept
Walk of Fame

a call
  sent out
for glamour
  free admission
only costs
  this much more
than you have
ride the tide
of fame
  glory glory
in thy name
  they scream
pittance here
  for more
    and more
      and more
out come shines
  for imprinted stars
a name in lights
  for dirty finger nails
Greed

“Oh the jealousy, the greed is the unraveling.
It is the unraveling and it undoes all that joy could be.”
–Joni Mitchell

Midas saw in his finger
the power to rule nations.
Flawed in his view;
for who can help
but to touch?
Food falls heavy
and life surrounds himself with statues,
until
one day
you lock yourself in gold.
Gluttony

“Feast, n. A festival. A religious celebration usually signalized by gluttony and drunkenness, frequently in honor of some holy person distinguished for abstemiousness. In the Roman Catholic Church feasts are “movable” and “immovable,” But the celebrants are uniformly immovable until they are full.”

–Ambrose Bierce

Baccus raises his glass to his supplicants,  
the wine they crush with their  
labored feet  
fills his belly, sloshing the world  
they roll him to his bower.
Pride

“Pride is a vice, which pride itself inclines every man to find in others, and to overlook in himself.”
– Samuel Johnson

A man in a dark wool suit shakes the Bible with fervor at his congregation, preaching humility, standing straight and tall with the knowledge he is right.
Wrath

“And Wrath had left its scar –
that fire of hell has left its frightful scar upon my soul.”
–William Cullen Bryant

The gravel suit hides him
His painted eye assesses
through its telescopic lens.

It’s funny what passion does.

The pungent yellow smell of gun oil, sweat and piss
drift in the sporadic wind,
assailing his nose.

Twitch.

The sweat of fear, excitement and adrenaline,
of holding still for hours,
drains down his nose,
soaking the ground.

He squeezes.

He stands, a shaggy gravel covered shadow,
breaks down the scope
and walks away.
Note to Self:

: don’t tease the dust bunnies… they lead the monsters under the bed

: there is nothing more confused than a Cameleon in a bag of skittles

: when you get mad it is NOT a good idea to super glue a persons mouth closed and lob bits of plastic at them... no matter how much they deserve it

: conversations like this should be warning enough
  R: don’t tickle her! She doesn’t need another concussion!
  T: hes right…lets bite her!

: if you stamp your foot because you are angry while driving your car expect the accident which invariably follows

: don’t laugh at the guy talking and making faces at himself… he is just copying you

: your capabilities do not extend to walking and drinking at the same time. Walking and reading or walking and txting no problem but walking and drinking will invariably cause you to trip over your own damn feet

: stop wondering how many paper cuts a Macy’s gift wrapper gets during Christmas

: men with luscious perfectly formed god like bodies should not ride down the interstate on motorcycles while wearing skin tight riding suits that emphasize every muscle... it will cause accidents

: There is a reason the locks on the stalls at the airport restroom are called "hiney hiders"

: when going to your car to leave for work having keys is always a good thing

: find out if sheep shrink in the rain

: pay attention to signs which say “STOP! Open door slowly. Someone’s face may be on the other side”

: be a believer in the conspiracy that bacon will take over the world

: bring a man to the bbq... does anyone know where they sell them?

: glitter is the herpes of craft supplies
Buying into the Funny Farm

slashes of pepper red
work their way up arms and legs
the scissors were angry
she says

this time men in blue come
with a rolling velcro bed
candy white stripe straps lay useless at its side
unwilling to restrain
escape is all that’s on any mind