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Moon Called Her Visage Woman

Ann Michelle Villanueva

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, ann.villanueva@unlv.edu

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MOON CALLED HER

VISAGE WOMAN

by

Ann Michelle Villanueva

Bachelor of Arts in English and Political Science

Mercer University

1992

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Fine Arts - Creative Writing

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Ann Michelle Villanueva

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Moon Called Her Visage Woman

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Donald Revell, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Evelyn Gajowski, Ph.D., Committee Member

Maile Chapman, Ph.D., Committee Member

Lezlie Cross, Ph.D., Graduate College Representative

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the Graduate College

May 2015

ABSTRACT

Moon Called Her Visage Woman

by

Ann Michelle Villanueva

Dr. Donald Revell, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of English
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Moon Called Her Visage Woman is a thesis-length collection of poetry submitted in fulfillment of the MFA program in Creative Writing. It is comprised of short poems, generally thirty lines or fewer, and is influenced by the works of John Ashbery and Emily Dickinson. The collection contains three main sections, titled *Petals for the Divide*, *Settled Beer Awaits Us*, and *Postscript: Lions*, which explore the possibility of the feminine as a redemptive force in society and nature.

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1. Petals for the Divide

element

at the dinner party I
was the sparrow who called
outside the window come forth
beloved of sky and dirt briefly
while the line blurred
breathing blurs the line

all along the tree
reaching forth with tree
hands held element of sky
as though the dancer
were the same

and promising
through its primeval glow
star and horseshoe
temple and temple spawn
wonder and inevitable gaze
while the squirrel

acorn love pats the earth
redeem with your palmprints
redeem from all the fibers
we are sentient tendril stretched
breathing

the beloved

with the flower
she still searches
casting out beauty
for a handful of dirt
kneading light starved tendrils
where forbidden hands reach
the book says we learn
being from the trees
she replies my beloved
whispers his heartbeat
like they do

when the firmament breaks
with your sadness
I'll be with you

when time breathes in element
I'll be with you

when trees fail to reach you
I'll be with you

awash in starlight higher
than the dirt waiting for you
breathing your ether always
to the end of the age

different these sounds

to count the strands of time
passing the tree scraped
its prophecy rattling
light soaked lilac awaits
breathing cold ether she said
my beloved dwells there
shining warming my skin
with science stained limbs
she is the voice of one
crying out in the garden
make straight the element

lying back she inhales
mystery shifting form
breath was the medium
liquid viscous clouds
birds gaze down upon her
hands move aside the grass
stretching with each exhale
wider than the sky
closer than the dirt
widening still

hope the dance

begin in this space
hands persistent reaching
all the flowers three steps
who stretched return cast
aside these vines

we were the beloved
before symmetry bound
those hollow call weeping
squandered alone within
glass indifferent

while the trees dynamic
scrape their promise
dirt spewed salvation
from on high shall break
always that line

crowding the glass
for warmth sun stylus
etch that element hope
points outside fleeting
the dance

breathing

they pulled apart the rain
grasping each element
sky rapt hands cold cracked I
cried out from the parlor

only in the hardness
should along pain as glass
stings against the edges
pressing this evenness

that love so lost where was
time friend the need you held
sparrow called once beloved
then from the mist you say

everything starlight fades
your consolation bleak
too silence tight this shell
within harsh the structure

still parlor dust books piled
caked air for one moment
wisp along sudden page
divine exhale

days spent drifting

pieces by threes we scattered
serene edges sorrow sharp
always quiet snow she left
trapped we glass submit weeping

cease ourselves among these lines
standing where once was flying
silence where before we sang
what know sparrows of exile
is their flight similitude

lost within cold scraping those
ordered corridors we live
abandoned bereft remain
slightly breathing blur the glass
slightly cast aside that line

writhing still to break this form
take drink that stark element
then in your isolation
remember our spent birdflight

tourmaline

once I heard all the trees
whisper starlight bleak repose
katydid were you once this way
pushing this symmetry forlorn

whisper starlight bleak repose
tendrils tight moment I was there
pushing this symmetry forlorn
breath itself runs tourmaline

tendrils tight moment I was there
squirrel rose and love abide
breath itself runs tourmaline
untie and break that knot

squirrel rose and love abide
drifting and the sky my soul
untie and break that knot
grass promise sparrow song

drifting and the sky my soul
once I heard element
grass promise sparrow song
katydid were you once this way

snow paths

imagine a line she
whispers soft pine sketches
gathering within winter
while tightly snow

breathing against trees cross
consecrate this element
too stretching your fierce
redemption

anticipate the wind when
winter scarce tightens
dreamily haze this line
blessed inhale

new snow paths settling
exhale through wistful
paling crest the effort
cast aside cast aside

constant she beams forth
scars begotten where bounded
grasp petals once reveal
seeping presence

recollection

before I formed you
wing soft breeze kneading
ever dirt glorious I loved
you stark standing inhale
pulsing life starlight love you
still among the roses

trust always the grass
points inevitable such rain
chart your element exhale
tracing voice skyward woman
what is that to you dancing
the beloved birdflight
garden freed

within your hands mercy
breath dynamic whose trees
receive your wing streams wistful
moonlight seems

take me willow simple sent
again fulfill this river briefly
transforms quiet along acorns
constant flower

mathematics

voice this presence
dynamic every point
spreading void singular
the branch vertex pulsing
multiply beyond old wine
constant stirring potential
within life

bridging the element
I count atom lilac milk
heavy truth trees whisper
expectation the squirrel taps
breathing in threes the rose
my beloved pulled into being
the real angles we pray
taste and see

close always the edges
sky soaked sparrow alight
rejoice that prime radiant
born apart rending passion
numerous too quantify free
morning embodied pounce
to dance her new mercy
exponential
scalene

radiance

whispers always press the snow she
line stark alone clarity stretch
brambles scrape the element glass
one was

apart from these thorns her beloved
gone wind streams light sparrowsong
perfect love casts out fear when love
petals depart love bereft

promise breath blurs lines to the end
that age ending past harsh sketches
caught within her bold the line he
wisps some other place

ascended still that line the glass
redeem this time and blur redeem
exhale anew through parlor drift
these sparrows

she cries out am I words
that I should live within this line
while entry jagged gains the trees
too spent to answer

ever blurring

your salvation streams forth
children meadows playing full grass I
squirrel patting rhythm earth dynamic
know these lilacs

music she too dark window hears
crystalline her ambivalence
flakes petals chipped from sparrow calls
this pathway lies dormant

trees always whispering alive
pebble loosened by the wind along
bird branches exhale through her hair
seeds becoming stalks alight
briefly through star fields the wings
flower abundant tracing the sky
element blurs those paths together
snow breathing with the spider
they all are

she barely listens sighing stark
walls dust covered still the dance
touches the everything softly beckons
outside waiting

when we were that flower

past that line web was
breath beckoning drift through hands
we live these strings our heart
coursing through the veins we are

slight music for an instant
glides into everything trees
I felt that gossamer pull
and all along these wings this air

sky sand filament and branch
becoming all the bee alight
upon the flower we all were
starlight still within whispered

release too close child beauty bound
alive expand freely meadow breeze
disperse beyond this skin element
wholeness swirling mist your home

then silent grasping web bleak fear
cricket chirp among blinding wind I am
parlor dust this self alone I turned
toward the shelter of the line

capillary

draw a line this self gently
layers sand packed between trees
more than veins divide
I from sparrows dance alone
creating the line we blur
salvation fleeting those apart
construct I grasp the mist praying
freedom beyond the solid we
twist among ourselves

he becomes we becomes these
these becomes all breathing one
element rhythm beating track
deliver through these cells new life
arise these bones and cast aside
your singleness you so tired invent
awaiting squirrel rose lilac river
breeze within you live

redeem all this breath these hands
earth connects we swirling starlight
embraced within this mystery
I dissolve

exponential

breathing pain music I drink
cast and silken fronds your face
caresses sun grateful leaf
love and subtle stark the depths
grass raise violet and turns
your book living script they add
who add trees and element
fills with the dust this parlor

whirl along lines glass writes
and your stone dashed sparrow
whisper and redeem brilliant
pulsing joy petals fleeting
still dance garden tendrils home
branch and pristine lilac drift
these meadows reach and laughter
children acorn life the paths

end and the dreams they point
skyward beginning brambles
twist and arise dirt austere
heavy with your difference
and the heartbeat ever all

slowly we turn

heartbeat singular pain these fires
jewels scrape runes upon her beloved
sky wing memories along grass
secrets she reads the sparrows know

children play rushes with one sound
this flower every bee its veins
she waits with the lilacs exhale
element for the song this balm

when she felt all the trees unite
one tree voice birdflight carries forth
and chant breaks through the spider web
seeping still more these streams expand

flowing the meadows abundant
too grab the hands their hunger turns
her prayer petals they take and feed
seized as though the gift were fleeting

forgive them slurping surfeit grasp bereft
they know not beloved this fragile breath

reaching always through

slow hope grows garden gently the night
element pristine snow she dances
stretch bossa nova evanescent
the trees reach forth leaves strings to touch her

night expands hands grasp the dance still dance
remains abundant flows these sparrows
flight through night soaked skies bright the rhythm
she gave them salvation the roses

float soaring girl through star starved meadows
lonely earth my arms alone know you
shine warmly this winter indifferent

shuttered hands cast through the paths we are
dreams stretching mists lilac sky serene
children sing glistening starlight streams
while whippoorwills call these woods beloved
unclasp your petals wisps breeze release
bellflower song

less than bees

this garden holds still our hope
winter grey between harsh lines
salvation takes element
springs forth from the paths we laid

winter grey between harsh lines
depart while the lilac sky
springs forth from the paths we laid
whisper anew sparrow flight

depart while the lilac sky
you love crowns the trees you gave
whisper anew sparrow flight
bees spread forth their meadow song

you love crowns the trees you gave
listen while their children play
bees spread forth their meadow song
alight petal gleams the air

listen while their children play
this garden holds still our hope
alight petal gleams the air
salvation takes less than bees

element

because we forget the trees
still whisper love reaching
branches steady course veins
release tendrils the dancer
promises to return
and returns

the sky shone these roses
emeralds your flight tracing
when glass scraped script divide
breathing makes whole the petals
one flower remains ever
all rejoice

she stretches high stark vines
garden mists reveal this shell
tight skin element breaks
slowly shifts the bird meadow
beckons with grass music
wing alight

all along the tree beloved
leaf abundant the secret
feathers touch acorn they are
waiting moment call her
paths divine

2. Settled Beer Awaits Us

weathered

crystalline the world knows
steel breaks the tenement shaft
chalk scrape these lines life scoffs
trembling sweat the lawman

staggered straight tracks your blood
mocks slight heroes their heads
still girders these capillaries
our disease all

samson moans my prayer
soul streaked terminus let me
shatter these walls the dust
hollow pangs this strain tightens
asphalt fleeting

your skull steeped eyes the hymn
mutters all my brilliance
these battlements creak rust borne
sigh this indifference die with me

leather long the wear these chains
stain your hallowed skin
may yet live

once these fields

sun beats these blistered streets
disease harsh steel we were
the day ignores our names

counting survive the sand
they are chisel strength beam
wire rebar desire glass
expand past girders grasp
concrete mere reckoning
stylus styled the noontime
while these tendons tighten

structures stretch beyond light
desolate ripening
strain along alleyways
trembling these our hope
too stone stark roads forgive

fitfully dust caked walls
reveal these tracts we feel
always the desert fumes
scraped sidewalk cast aside
bituminous streams stain
rubble bleak wisps fleeting
forlorn we seek the paths

aquamarine

water was our vision I remember
you were that sky and I whispered the rains
revealed the pain thinking through this skin
indifferent treetops lined wing tracks above us

the pond we loved striped along vertical blinds
humming songs these vents as though carillon
timpani electric crashes glass strewn yards
living when I touch edges cast within time
rocks alone mark paths between these lines
breeze there was dancer sent from that garden
I dreamt floating these waves she tendrils exhaled

aquamarine primeval through this gutter
flows I imagine the streams capillary
green these weeds crack as the prairie grass
filigree golden the sun I can feel it
past desert winds mists sparrows alight
the children I hear call forth the heather
say we could live among those meadows
again that ribboning brilliance behold
fading it brushes my outstretched fingers

iconoclast

every time you breathe the dragon
wings stretch gossamer your inhale
sweat simpers along tattooed skin

shocked whispers warm the air we hear
cinnamon once made you wonder
can we live reaching toward the trees
mother painted your room lilac
praying the stone gods might hold you
still stream soaked fields beseeched you home
your picnic remains uneaten

fight you always told me skyward
the road will give you all you need
chuckling we wander stars away
while you make our stark arrangements
be careful slight roses call you
skillfully you wrestle those clouds
we escape among the tundra

these galley winds rest wildly through me
scarred arms point the direction you ran
pitiful dogs drawn upon thunder
scattered sings that stylus again
too stung streaked fingers wring the mists
your journey etched within these eyes

mistakes their sheen bright beyond us
divination leads me ahead
ever tracing wistful your smile

meanwhile the moon

what else could the girl have done back then
floating on turgid ponds reflection thinks
you sing straight while these store parking lots
every puddle smiles she wonders and moon
always quick to conversation that one
grandfather said front porch chair creaking
tonight remember the picnic when we played
circumstance these wheels rusty trailer
ever the highway waits for us be sure
arms outstretched you call deadlocked
her blank draperies

pulling alongside the tournament I
sort the mail and drift slowly power tools
cry out for this first solution every time
too soon you return finely beams this church
shucks corn as sacrament the birds prevail
over lunch you tell me you always loved
working late the office sounds of frogs
and she lisps each raindrop during your call
did you know then she would one day decide
everything waking from that nap I shook
greedily starlight reaches
your eyes the mantra

if you skate that edge choose swiftly your friends
letters restore the powerful their blossoms
hitchhiking at sunrise we remember these
throughout you remain hungry for croissants
their melted butter ruined my report still
I think of lilacs whenever the city
your dreams stale crumbs under this table
within tendons move empty beasts stripped bare
heartbeat echoes all she ever told you
breeze carries her scent mere wisps
along these canyons

as though reconciled

slight springs these velvet paths time reckons the harsh waves
rise beyond your tight skin flight splintering always we were
icicle heady blue flows the sanskrit page wings your guide
ever the wilderness evening freely breeze divide

1.

in a clearing age the dance rushes spring filament
grass we played hayfields the mirth cardamom stretch reveal
lowing if dreams were hush finely pine sentient beheld
seeds we cast lay still eastward these hands petals you
along meadows gather waits crystalline the exhale

2.

pierces the skies capillary close knowing your ocean trace
sextants squint alone these ropes passive the horizon sighs
what were land your blessing we simply guess hay moon home
eyes divine these waves we orbit wistful passing tarantella star spun girl
thoughts blink aside the spray wheel grips the hands still hands
drift the hours granules memory grit as though sketch aloud
rudder only creak our wings slowly slight cedar air
suez the clouds whisper these crinoline sails

3.

heartbeat you ever streams I wonder did you hear the same bells
the same strings aloft flutter raise indifferent winds I taste it
violet these years cast within timpani canvas alone my wounds mark the time
thunder as counting dreams my arms the dance your mists beloved
promise still this comfort always wings pristine warmth abide
mercy gilds these hallowed paths grass sighs your lullaby tender
petals fleeting grasp evade dance this nightfall we remember

sidewalks too shatter

riding from the market I hear wings
caution lights strain these streets dynamic
the drivers release their feral moans
three times these chain links a symphony

hedgerows mutter her name still the spring
ignites torches once bright boulevards
pedals spiral air pieces divine
her possibilities carillon

meanwhile bees disturb sunlight my hope
stark black boots their sleet hands I feel it
heavy the curtains drawn among us
those moon soaked rafters await her song

we count the lines between my colors
skies timpani when devotion fails
divide all our simple streams again
then tell the trees to stop their chanting

that old straw soul too strong the mantra
only knowing one way I hold her
laurel beautiful enough for here
their branches while we breathe it quiet

watch as it drifts away

paint the dream while yet these spindly arches cold kisses the crest
hands make the space I am always pressing against beauty your beams
when did this exist cure this sweet disease these regiment starlight
quick raise scrape the pain along grasp

minuet
bleak strain streams
rains straight
grass we felt
speckled cows
low sharp leaves
beckon green
 shadows
meadow grace
stretch lean sky
sparrow paths
dewdrops paths
reaching they
reaching they
past these mists

the clouds gauze was particles infirmity bright still calling breeze
release time the pattern among empty shelves bellows these arms bear the scars
memory strings beyond these walls would you sing that lullaby distant the
chimes
breathe brisk fog heavy this whisper seems sketches child remember
if the air fading transparent colors ever

a parable for midday

what would you change my love she said trees
peering through vertical blinds thick the sound
wine ringing into her glass perhaps
coat checkers await some forbidden fall
antelopes chomp reeds we will never know

when I refrained from counting those lawns
starlight cleared away the emperor's lunch
apart from that we saw slight wilderness
generally tea leaves interfere
the preferred nature trails evanescent

come noontime children crawled into her lap
looking up from caesar salad divine
circumstances drove her mother to song
this amused her friends believing it proves
pantheons call their chanting distraction

still the garden breeze crisp on her skin
delight alone remains of those bleak fields
indigenous saints beckoned metallic
always regard bursts forth from their harvest
gears grind away all virtuous remnants

after dessert I followed her outside
her melody sleek as though meadowlarks
whisper was the moment I first knew her
undisguised she shone past those violet clouds
her hush surrounding me with petals

one more prodigal

it was raining when we last spoke
I strummed string tapestries and you
awash in coffee spattered songs
while the front porch steps need painting
your sister closed her eyes and dreamt
someday despite this filament
we will breathe hay air together

the thought seems so fragile and still
helping the children get ready
I notice meadows believing
the breeze whispers it possible
bristled paths back may yet know you

do you sense this ripening fall
within the sparrow flight you are
listening these footsteps mere raindrops
you unlike that once tattered boy
these marshes that now bear your name

lost within dreams again these pines
reach forth their branched arms as though yours
your leaves greet me along this road
running your winged chants cover me
with weary hands I hum them home

afterward

while sparrows
grass we were
brightly the air
wine perfumes
seeping thunder
she says still
we can go back
too late fields
whisper her eyes

each drop sky
feeling the leaves
her lilies she
considers yet
love why these
hallowed oaks
prevail she asks
my hands mists
cast aside

overlooking
harsh sediment
the trees scoff
embarrassed she
stands ahead clouds
once firmament
fading her grasp
dust breezes
briefly past us

filament

hay moon
oaks sigh
brown
own story
their limbs

linger stark
the trees I
suspend
as their eyes
long with
recollection

aware sky
this promise
stretching
birds all

windchimes

despite leaves turning toward her silently
mouthing words to string quartets she sighs
gardenias fill the air with attention
their aroma seeps widely the office
calls unaware our conversation shifts
necessities prevail over coffee

apart from the filament connecting
two hands along gravel studded lamplight
only her eyes finely hint these railways
speak multitudes past breezy boulevards
eventually maps reach their limits
rumor has it her friends plot the journey

rivers away the department debates
whether she should have written that letter
delightful strands perhaps the rope bridge holds
the climber pulls her aside to inquire
while gliding through stark cornfields we notice
reflection heavy upon our shoulders

desk drawers alight with anticipation
supervisors discuss their agendas
love beyond burdened glass the cubicle
too fierce to touch watching from the break room
cellos their last streams warble around us
she follows the tune as it wanders past

the good thing about the cold

three file folders and paper clips later
she asks me whether we will ever know
what causes the roads streaking violet
is it that faint timpani I wonder

meanwhile waiting for sun tea annoys her
fingers patter across the barroom gate
gathering mists with the scent of her hair
roses indignant peer through scattered dust

if I dance alongside these trumpets still
love multiplies sparrows across the skies
grandfather says he would pay good money
parades were so extravagant those days

the main route fills me with rain anymore
one bleak triangle tinkling the breeze
beyond likely plants stretch past banquet walls
we settle our bets and work alongside

the roads know their own

across the table she asked me
brightly chimes your corn god these days
refusing to raze these fields I
admire while the flat train traces
possible cats carving starlight
amazed I catch her feather falls
all along the shadow these eyes

she always cries out when the waves
loud against screen doors her temper
straight strains beyond the firmament
I remember when she first loved
we traveled starkly in those days
for warmth she streamed bare wheels jetside
these streets her heartbeat she left me

hummed with her motorized buzz we
once riding my friends still delight
what else could they have done she said
gravity rarely touched her lips
I wrote about such joys back then
ever before we stretched harsh limbs
gingerly whispers the pavement

alone my prayer these file folders
catalog gods indifferent
she reads through them almost sighing
once after lunch I follow her
trees reach her wings lightly she smiles
eager skies the moon protects her
beaming while roads breathe her away

whenever I see my breath

delighted I prayed the port into being
you stayed until the mists covered your hands
always I think about that day shivering
here in the parlor drinking hot chocolate
my mother used to tell me son those eyes
were never born of woman yet now I
cup in hand believe she must be right

your call wrings me from my reverie
chasing you may take all this paperwork
still they never would approve my transfer
afterward we discussed slipping fingers
bridges bare against some streaked countryside
infinite the roses you could go there
these simple gutters might scarcely miss you

when we are older we may look back
at those days that you have already passed
laughing I gasp this thought leaves me listless
my thumbs tremble at the chance to hold you
the apartment door flings open among dust
echoes alone await my expedition
snow embarrassed that I would so linger

taken with slight scenery

besides the dogs that gather beyond these gates
who else did she tell I wonder our friends
coffee always sends them running splendidly

incumbent in the finest holiday lace
and you should have seen the ballerina
hold court beneath fluttering skies
moon was the last time we wandered among them
circuits buzz alive as these words our roses

remind me why we ever left this flat tire
heavy with mercy were the priests those days
cardamom their liturgy while sunrise
feasts upon tattered tablecloths her hope

she blames me for the changing waves I know
all these borrowed trade winds make her love you
hedgerows crying from her song strung potential
cast lots overflowing dotted mailboxes
they breathe while she brings their patterns enough

you leave the reckoning past feathered creeks
dynamic were their flights ever behind you
at eleven she calls me from the game

fleeting this springtime

I would have been those birds she says
exhaling the willow leaves stretch
around her wistful symphony

she wanders still paths to love you
touch alone her guide bleak through fields
children point upward the treetops
sketch sky patterns lighting her way

who could tell you floating girl
you say blessed moon you call her
careful whisper the doves those eyes

she would answer were the roses
words her marks upon your parched skin
clarion mists stream staccato

times she turns you left wondering
can we live within the pieces

slight seeps between that opening
you along these shore struck grasses
running to reach the song blooms wide
her petals disperse in the breeze

brook once was moonrise

gears trip the slightest shine fans say
chopping this air bold with difference
when will too strained colors prevail
sleet spreads its tattered sheen around you

chipping visions from my windshield
reminds me you played when these last stars
sang through the masses relevant hymns
and the firmament whispered your eyes
ever love this rain streaked monument

piles of aluminum cans reveal
capillaries bright with polishing
the office staff busily tells them
management may never know my plans
fields white with care beckon just beyond

overtime leaves me thirsty with schemes
seeing your kitchen light thrills me
you bring me outside the water you know
excitedly we chase sky petals

afterward settled beer awaits us
together we could scale these girders
as though whirlwinds were not our home

chasing lilacs the breeze

whisper your devotional boulevards
then the convoy will carry you home
strangely that hymn penetrates my mind
whenever they sidestep our appointment
divided these streams call you mother

ready with our travel bags we scatter
farther than those racetracks will allow
three sleek raindrops trace through distant wings
advice you always see fit to give
thin among my fog heavy demands

if we could breathe within those fields again
you would still leave me the secretaries
laughter harsh seeds along these sodden paths
call even when you arrive there safely
my direct line crackles with the thought

hold me once more mists chant around you
revelation your strength as spattered days
spiral our blank clockworks into being
over my coffee break we examine
whether highways dynamic the lilacs

arriving your priority springtime
breeze yet our life alone these petals
sketch gently their sky patterns elusive
symphonies swell just beyond those branches
from the bleachers we can almost touch them

apart from sky castles

crowds worship that straw god
the priest told us then the sunset
my pencils cast these shadows
whenever you draw prim lines
over wine I thought I loved you
this river runs blindly at night
you tell your friend still the stones
mutter their disapproval

pushing this wagon uphill
each weekday you sail straight lanes
while I count these capillaries
your mother packed two raincoats
as though we travel together
worrying makes things different
so we were wrong once you whisper
I trim hedgerows in silence

sunlight always hides the best paths
you touched me through long grass again
later we rode slim to the wind
when you floated beyond my reach
crying I remember you said
if we were not empty my love
there I would build our castle
two skies could never hold it

3. Postscript: Lions

anger slowly she moves

moans obscure these roots as before
and seedpods whirl their approval
bitter this wilderness crumbles
I see through rising mercury

his impatience dissolved wheat fields
scarlet was morning when he left
while smacking her gums keeps the time
she seeks him across spiteful dirt

the dingoes carry meat twos and threes
dust scattered as though seasoning
carefully they avoid the breeze
aware of her passing shadow

mother would oftentimes tell me
before the mountains called her home
skyward was the only refuge
when fury took shape as woman

tiny birds chirp warnings alight
she barely hears them through the haze
foreboding her rattled exhale
they heed the sound and clear her path

tepid grace

that evening the bonfires lost their resolve
while sleet exotic as the scars across her back
sketched runes in the fish market window

cafes dark with the scrapes of past mumbling
remind her why she left despite whispers
that she alone deciphered

automotive the sound of her rosary
thrashing guttural against vacant skies
redeemers too listless for wine

after the overture bleak seas unfurled
detritus adrift with the penitent
branches hallowed those streets beyond

her heartbeat loud with the blood call of martyrs
abandoned among citadels their chorus
ever shifting the streams call her puma

seeping lamplight breathes sheen along her footfalls
keys jangle their indifference around her
morning brings only the sparrows

spatters of kindling

I called her on the way to work she said weeds
seep the delight from arborvitae
as though pointing upward they fail her

strange as light always seemed her lover
and clouds reached forth their swollen arms
lingering mist her scent when she drifted past
horses traced her pattern along creek paths
while bees strummed petals in store parking lots

apart from them scaffolding sighed
with the weight of those simpering gargoyles
the dirt miles away conspired I heard it
we barely noticed the thin grass
when she exhaled across the vineyards

these are the packs they carried
these are the smoldering drifts they live

these are merely atoms among hedgerows
bleak their glimmering eyes in the warm sand

rapt and throbbing

the heat from the whites of her eyes
could burn waves through the crisp savanna
grandfather said were these fields quiet
from the drumbeat of seedpods and blood

direction gives slight comfort these mountains
shattered strings divine what grows in sand
trickling against the grit of perseverance
hardened bone shards muffle her whisper yes

past lit match the last words those grasses sigh
around you fingers of tendrils scrape the dirt
while ragged gods beguiled by the bleating scent
bright these glistening husks with your exhale

this sacrifice anodyne for her hunger
embrace it as though precious bread and wine
seep from the edge of her lips to the greedy earth

rain alone dissolves regret while mercy
wizened as the crow hands that release you
and impalas seethe with the force of smoke

departure

time dispels myth through ridges of bubbled paint
mechanical trees blare as though hummingbirds
sing uttering more beautiful names than these

while goats gather for the committee meeting
remembrance teases through the corner office
dogs in charge of us all force their agendas

forgettable seeds roving gently the breeze
caked hands scraped with age distract smiling lions
all along the main switchboard they hum unaware

file folders skin heavy with their acrid scent
match thick sulfur mingled with the sighs of blood
experience shows their rosaries float past

solemnly bide the blind assistants these skies
elevators crammed with sleek fawns light their way
arid the fleet exhalations alongside

rocks trees birds thrive beyond this bleak scaffolding
predators slink through the negotiations
when fluorescence betrays these prey their footfalls

still though we move

your love too strong whispers those fields she knows
reaping these very blades the girl so young
clean slices glisten fast against slight hay

lame engines bellow forth their liturgy
she laughs when she remembers the blank words
while she traces star petals with her fingers

tease apart patterns of shifting tendrils
grandmother told her still she scans dark skies
waiting for some break in the firmament

cautiously the lace border around us
sends shadows through distant dividing walls
timid as freedom we seek these gardens

electric she sighs paths into being
creation was once that easy the sands
call her while the meadows breathe their firm hush

alone she scales the breeze for our own sake
her cubs though we much older than these hills
delight in the pitted youth of her hands

salvation patters rain toward the window
awash within the dunes she made herself
we wait sniffing the air for coming storms

sparks may yet occur

beside lint thick candy grandmother
stores purse size secrets while forgetting
paper engulfs flesh as tinder for lions

she cries when torrents of passing time
move further touching houseplants for warmth
love fails while love once throbbing with smoke
sings pathetic the dirge along pitted dirt

rain leaves small circle marks within charred brush
her sick breath cloying arches through mind corners
handily covered such deafening teal ringed sounds
while beauty as powdered sugar streaks the breeze

opening the package called old lady she smiles
cantaloupe grey her whispers slim through pale air
hands scale the lines scenery scratched upon her
and sweat unforgiving blurs her dust caked eyes

always chagrined when reducing robins to words
she wields her pot lid against waves of complaints
wary that unsuspecting skies might behold
known and yet knowing fully the mirror blinks

pulling her loose skin gives meaning as roses
ripe with the day she first felt that bleak embrace
gears grinding heavy with dull reminiscence
fade away for the moment while she drifts past

only the oak trees call forth women from mists
tales past these settled tomes writers beguile her
when starstreams cast to the sand tremble home

silt soft as dancing yields to her touch while lace
graces the table that lately held their plans
she lights one sap stained letter then another

beyond evening prayer

love bitter as wine outlives these oaks
quiet long after scraping branches
only those slight maidens remember
rumors of water thin while slim sands
divide the remaining light among
prickly pears their primitive needles
warm with slick lifeblood beat alongside

communion mechanical the gears
ground to powder her devotional
sighs while lightly growl lions beyond
breeze blows apart their sanctuaries
whisper immediate despite them
stripped and the altar blares forth brilliance
louder than blank symphonies those eyes

constant hunger pulling her forward
mouthing indifferent prayers as though rain
breathed its last before she left the room
for her sake mountains infuse stark skies
mythological their pronouncements
with etchings distinct against the clouds
she barely hears above those sparrows

all along love streams over sand dunes
thick from the promises she exhaled
at the shore mercy still awaits her
running those paths she almost feels it
paw prints heavy through forgiving grass
gods finally rouse with the sweet smoke
they turn their heads as she floats past them

blank revelry

new cars clog the turnpike
every day while I drive to work

exhaust the filament sheen
dazzling against sullen skies

wreckage those promises
still traffic teases these wings

and rain tastes of acrid pines
far from the sands that borne us

love so tight this bleak stain
stripped dignity the burden

lions sit thick as though gods
wine stained breaths slim redemption

sighs stronger than gridlock
break metallic walls this flame

ours are the moans within time
while needed things expand

fury brightly we fly
strings beyond impotent smoke

marks streak these sounds our passage
gently ash falls with petals

while the sun roamed elsewhere

rapture meant something once grandmother said
painting swirls onto concrete walls

judgment so bright would sear Gethsemane
if lions still paced the savanna

instead gods surfeit themselves on our prayers
as though muddled groans quench their thirst

redemption burnt out long before bleak sleet
fingers streak through the wilderness

while forgiveness sits heavy in the gut
tracing these furrowed lines of woman

through the thicket of capillaries those scars
sigh desperate sparks into being

aftermath

breath provides slight warmth within these rushes
while natural fields shrink with snowfall
chains jangle the only hymns we hear

we could have flown those blank stars forever
if hedgerows pointed the journey home
instead we wander through slim pawprints

where is that sleek solemn girl I once knew
floating back when desert dreams revealed
music along blank industrial streets

last I saw her maelstroms streamed electric
as though anger could erase fetid wrongs
and disease lay weak with her pirouette

since buildings block light from capillaries
measure the years in dust lines through lace
almost too late for reckoning

locomotives growl vigils with lions
the firmament tired of listening
sighs with ruminations we barely feel

redemption more filling than wine
rumbles across some horizon
we can taste its smoke on the breeze

CURRICULUM VITAE

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Ann Michelle Villanueva

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, English and Political Science, 1992
Mercer University

Juris Doctorate, 1995
University of Wyoming College of Law

Master of Divinity, 1998
Bangor Theological Seminary

Thesis Title: Moon Called Her Visage Woman

Thesis Examination Committee:

Chairperson, Donald Revell, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Evelyn Gajowski, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Maile Chapman, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Lezlie Cross, Ph.D.