



Time Around Scars

Susan Musgrave

(from Songs of the Sea-Witch, Sono Nis Press.)

Going back the last time
propped up on the bleeding walls
a broken-down car and
stealing a razor from
a slivered man who
wailed about this the
last time it happened—

I thought
—I'll send him an ambulance
full of blood

or at the trigger moment
think of something else . . .

I came back to you again
only the day after

but the unhappened moment
is real blood.



Celebration

Susan Musgrave

(from Songs of the Sea-Witch, Sono Nis Press.)

Being somebody's last woman
and the only passenger of the day
I rode out after madness,
that long journey beginning nowhere
meeting shyly at motels
not for each night's love,
but sliding around the edges
from earth to earth
on parts of a face
that love wore out.

Of course I'm still living.
No one has taken too much blood
although I admit I stole some extra
where fine needles had coffered
bundles and rolls of it. I came back
after to burn the hospital down.

But no one will find me here
asleep in my bones as polished as the night.
I am bled now
like the end of a spear
and blunt as a carpet
ruined once by careful feet.

One day the right disguise
will work, the right frame
slide into place
like counted medicine.
One day I may give up everything
and wear that disguise
to its final sleep.



**I Do Not Know If Things That
Happen Can Be Said To Come
To Pass Or Only Happen**

Susan Musgrave

(from *Cocktails at the Mausoleum*,
McClelland & Stewart Ltd.)

But another year has passed
and the change is marked.
Right from the start my life stopped
making sense

At the core there was only terror,
a compass of blood in the heart's
wreckage and blood and more blood
in every direction.

It spilled out of me,
there was no reason.
As a child I buried everything
I loved, buried it down deep
and seemed pleased.

Years later the doctors
dragged it up,
opened me inside and cut the
stubborn mother from my womb.

My father rocked in his chair
unable to share his last breath
with anyone.
That was years ago when we
thought he wouldn't live much longer.
He still drives down the highway
to see me.

Ten years ago I spent Christmas
in a locked ward.
Some of my best friends
had already committed suicide.

I tried too but it wasn't in me.
The terror went deeper
where nothing could reach me.
I fell in love easily
and for no reason.
I still think, even now, I could be
more discriminating.

Another year has passed,
a decade
Walking on New Year's Day
with friends who have survived
like me, by accident
—there is something to be said
for having such friends—
I think of the choices we made
along the way, how things
came to pass, or happened,
what brings us finally together.

The ten years will make sense of it.
Deeper into the shadows
where the patient trees endure
and grow, a small bird rises up
out of our silence, crying
shy and wild towards open water.

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