

# This Wind

Poems by Joan Ruvinsky



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And I am swaying

And I am swaying

and I am swaying in front of her. Before me  
there is wind. Behind me there is wind and  
I am swaying with the wind between us. It is  
blowing now my body before me. It is blowing  
now my body from behind. The wind is swaying  
me and she is before me and I am swaying her  
with the wind. She is swaying in front of me.

Between us there is wind and I am

swaying the wind between us and she is  
swaying in the wind before me and we

are swaying the wind. We are swaying the wind.

And we are swaying and swaying and the wind, the wind, the wind.

## Gift

Here are

the rushes we braided  
that day by the pond,  
handle for a basket  
we never made, but thought of.

Instead we made the basket  
to hold everything,  
reeds, the wind, goddess of cat-tails,  
even the wings of the great blue heron  
flying mammoth against a grey-blue sky.

Today I walked  
into our basket and found  
deer tracks,  
the pond's memory of a midnight call.

And I carried away  
its weightless reflection  
and it spreads and spreads  
and cannot be contained  
in the pastel wash of deepening fall.

## The Nameless One

The nameless one  
sits on my shoulder,  
shouts in my ear:  
Instructions. Instructions.  
Step lightly now  
and quick.  
A false frost it was  
that froze the earth long ago.  
Inscribe the wood tablets  
with all that you know,  
sweep into the shrift  
the unburied, unmourned  
and omit not a trace  
so no footprints will show.  
Step sprightly now  
and swift.

## Small Ponds

Small ponds freeze first,  
in the beginning, with just a film  
at sunrise you wouldn't even  
notice and then a crust  
that lasts till noon. Now half-sunk slush  
doesn't melt and the conspiracy of molecules  
spreads to lakes. In the stillness  
of a single night, when one breath  
of wind might make the difference  
between water and ice, solid reaches in and in  
and grasps the last ripple for its own.

## Request

I ask permission  
permission to kill,  
to kill the maimed frog  
I have to kill all the way  
from the idling lawn mower nearby,

to finish the work I have started  
by machine with my bare hands,  
pluck each blade solemnly  
in the million trimmings  
I have not noticed, have never asked  
permission to perform,

to squeeze the life juice  
of this little new friend, struggling,  
leaking throaty innards on my leg.  
Squeeze the slippery evening song  
into that deafening infinity  
I have heard since spring.

We had a pact about mosquitoes,  
our way of living near the swamp,  
a common bond of blood and slime,  
trills, croaking, and the sighing,  
the final sighing as it is given  
when we die.

## Enter the Dakini

Enter the dakini,  
form-shattering flame,  
whose handmaid brought tiger  
lilies, yellow lilies  
and white—  
whose handmaid brought an orange  
salamander and left  
tingling with lavender,  
mindless, heedful,  
afire.  
I am your  
eyes seeking their home  
in your seeing —  
I am your  
tongue seeking  
refuge in the caverns  
of my speech. Hovering  
between utterance and  
the unspeakable I am  
the barely palpable breeze  
that passes through secret  
softness into light.

\*The dakini (Tibetan 'Khadro' or 'sky-dancer') is the primordial, dynamic energizing principle, manifesting variously as a woman, as a goddess, or as the general play of energy in the phenomenal world. It is the ever-changing, unpredictable, non-dual wisdom energy with which the practitioner must learn to work in the later stages of practice.

# This Wind

Blending hard-edged observation with a fine dash of humour, the text maps the apprenticeship of the heart from the individual breath to the wind. At once an affirmation of the self and its annihilation, *This Wind* opens into the silence behind the words.

“Aquifer of spirit and collection of meditative lyrics, *This Wind* explores poetry as an “emotional way of thinking.” Moreover, it is a motherboard for the Motherword. One of the most moving pieces is “Aids Chronicles VI.” It is probably the elegy of the nineties. It establishes sanctuary for compassion.” - Peter Van Toorn

A New Englander by birth, Joan Ruvinsky moved to Montreal to study physics, and later, linguistics at McGill University. She was an internationally recognized nondual yoga and meditation teacher and the author of *The Recognition of Our Own Heart*, a commentary on the *Pratyabhijñāhrdayam* and *Our Way to Here: Musings on Nonduality in Everyday Life*.

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