



4/10

'LEO'

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No Room

... words and images from half a life spent colouring outside the lines

by
Melanie Graham

Written and illustrated
by
Melanie Graham
343 Anson Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V9A 5W4
250 477-2382
grahammj@shaw.ca

For my parents
and
Jamie, Bryan, Katey and Toby

false dawn

i feel like a child
sometimes
who was thrust out
into the dark of indefinite night
after a time the fear passed
and i learned to live my life well
in darkness
still
i cannot stop the leap of my heart
at the distant lights
of every passing truck on the highway
startled into the hope of dawn
and as each glow fades
into the black
i berate myself for a fool
who should know better

'til another truck passes

alien

i cry out
in a moment of bitter alone
and have not even
the solace
of an echo
the space that expands around my soul
has grown so vast
in those few moments
of reflection
when the myriad images
dreams and plans
are still
and the need to share
or to lean
drifts upper most
the reflected utterings
of my own solitude
have not the time
to return
the inner distances
have grown so vast
by the time
my cries return
my attention
has turned
elsewhere
and
even i don't hear
don't have find make the time
for
deferred comfort

if

if only
there was one
someone
with the capacity
the desire
to hold the other end
of the string
that anchors
my soul
there would be
no need
for constant attention
no need
for devoted interminable attendance on
my every whim
just
the knowing
that someone
somewhere
knew
loved
no judgement
no regret
no plans to renovate
just content
with the knowing
absolute
complete
someone
known
loved
absolutely
completely
where no distance
could separate
no time remove
just
to know
that some one
just
to share
that knowing
and be content
that's all

guest

i received an invitation
was called into the feast
i made my preparation
my hair
my dress
my breath sweet
but when the doors were opened
when i entranced
strong and calm
there was no room at table
no chair
no place
there was no arm
nervous smiles
furtive glances
awkward shuffling
muttered curse
but
no one moved
to make a place
no one uttered
word of grace
the tension of the awkward
crowded in
my shrinking space
no room
to sit at table
no route
of smooth escape
trapped
unwanted guest
still clutched the invitation
dates agreed place and time
stretched through agony no release of
easy exit
i wrenched my soul around
titters
glances seared my back
each step towards the door
they cut deeper
dance card in shreds upon the floor
brittle laugh and toss
but soul hunger
eats deep

no interface

smiling nodding
sounds exchanged
knee jerk response
to overtures of warmth that have no substance
lines
that don't translate
words
that produce
unintended images
and fail
like hands trying to touch
through thick glass
no warmth
no texture is transferred
just the teasing taunt
of the want
for contact
an arcade hall of mirrors
arms outstretched to embrace
illusion
tricks that run no deeper than
the surface
defy deny holding
yet
the images hold each other
i touch only cold
flat surfaces
un-warmed
the words
at first familiar
in tone and cadence
upon inspection
defy
comprehension
have no meaning
yet
my response brings nods and
vacant smiles
oblivious
to any lack or misperception
and
the ritual
moves on

the fun

let's have some fun
they said
fun yes i said
good plan
so off we went
laughter and debate
where and such
we drifted
a cloud of raucous expressions
with no links
but the worship of fun
into dark and much used places
smelling spaces with dead air
loud and pounding
this was fun
and so
we set about with clinking drinking
and the laughter roared raged without humour
anger drifted through
beneath the surface
like willow root
but this was fun
drinks quickly lost flavour
but no one cared
i watched and listened to the shrill and roar bore
the chaos escalated
to a throbbing menace
dark corners spread to fill the fun
i understand the cold of sober
as the heat
of unfettered inner torments
torch and smoke the loud darkness
of stale memories of fun
and i wait
like a swimmer crawled up
shivering on a beach
to escape a foetid, steaming tide in darkness
turning to stagger home and comfort
warmth
silent good times
far and fine
away from fun

rejection dance

i close the doors
and draw the curtains
to my soul
wrapping dreams and sorrows
in a gentle cloud of childhood fancies
and
like a child
part of me hopes that
somewhere
someone
will feel the loss
will seek and find me
and we'll go home
mostly though
my departure has been
un-noted
my absence unfelt
and unlamented
and like a child
on a rainy day
trapped within by tears
the sounds and memories
pull me
to the window
fancies and dreams
dropped forgotten on the floor

how long

how long
so long
too long
outside another strangers gate
hungry and cold
in darkness
grateful for a moment of light
warmth
like whispered breath
from lips that never touch
heart stirs
with the fluttering flight
of promises
like light escaping
through the open door
empty promises
absorbed into the night
after image seared into souls eye
to fade away
to throbbing black
the slamming of the door
as darkness thunders back
hunger howls in the empty
betrayed
by the promise
of a long deferred feast
soul's delight
a taunting moment of light
false beacon
anticipation
of more
a little more
maybe
trusting
believing
no more
better to walk alone
clear sighted in the dark
past boarded up doors
safe hidden
in the comfort of shadows

children

the bane boon of existence
they pull you to new heights
new perceptions
like a butterfly
pulled from the cocoon of self absorption
the exultation
of participation
in things pure and universal
till euphoria is ground down,
buried
under mountains
of demands
the light of vision fades
to the blur of exhaustion
the short-sightedness
of survival
the object of
transcendent joy becomes
a black hole
consuming your soul
your dreams
your sleep
your hours
still some iridescent moments
light the odyssey
wash away
for a moment
the million grabbing fingerprints
on your body mind and soul
still
the whining
demanding
that runs on interminably eating and corroding with
no end in sight
like prometheus
doomed
to be perpetually consumed

why mommies can't be heroes

hail the hero
noble
proud
facing dangers
braving challenge
unafraid
battled
beleaguered
yet undaunted
perhaps a touch
just a trace
of reluctance or
secret sorrow
prepared at every turn
to die
in glorious self sacrifice
so
moms make lousy heroes
they can't show
fear or frustration
no sign
of secret sorrows
no sign
of self
at all
just endless
ceaseless
selfless
loving giving in heroic proportions
never free
to challenge life or death
but obliged
to survive
no matter what
unheralded
unthanked
forgotten
until the next need
or fear or failure
sounds their name
and they come
to serve and save
against all odds
again

parental abuse

a child
a life
a part of you
exuded and extruded
to stand distinct
but still connected
to grow beyond
and if
what if
it grows beyond reach
or becomes
foreign
turns
to hack at mother root
what then
you can do nothing
no defence
as they rip you
break you
feed
on your pain
leaving for a space
but always back
always you hope
this time
maybe
but always you love
and they take
and they feed
and you cannot
ever
stop

crumbling

the veneer
thin and fragile
is all that's left
where once
there was deep true throbbing
substance
pain strain and struggle
corrode and
desiccate
'til all that floats within is gritty dust
somewhere
the soul lies waiting worn
to near depletion
still
almost gone
the waiting
becomes all there is to living
waiting
biding
someday
the veneer crumbles and shudders to dust
then vanishes
defeated
by the first inner breeze
of the stirring
waking
spirit

emergence

shoulders ache and swell
taut and throbbing
with the wings of thoughts
not ready
to take flight
until the pressure builds to rupture
there is no easy
peace
no smug assurance
no
contentment
instead
the agony ecstasy of creative drive
compulsion
sometimes
the images that press upon the senses
have edges
so sharp
colours
so hard
that the soul bleeds from the assault
the world is a puzzle
to be translated
rephrased
exposed
nothing is what it seems
what it wants to seem
dig deep
excise
analyse
and pour
back out through the lens of the soul
not for gain
nor adulation
just because
there is no choice
breathing
this soul bleeding
inescapable
perhaps explodes
freed at last to soar aloft
when the breathing
finally
stops

exfoliation

a path pursued
has been unfruitful
a cherished dream
defied fulfilment
not spitefully
unkindly
just didn't
like clothes that cannot fit
legs too long
a back
too broad
like a thing evolving
safe within a cocoon
'til sanctuary shrinks
becomes a trap
demanding escape
or termination
not a fragile prison
to dry split and fall away
but
a false skin
grown fast
to within
to be peeled away
ripped from the soul
in an agony of release
shrieking cold
exposed
naked and strange
raw face turned resigned
to an alien sun
but free to be
at last
an honest proclamation
of difference
of soul distance
impervious
bleeding strong
eyes to home
accepting isolation
jubilation
in a defining desolation
of freedom

the fading call

once
it seems so long from now
there was a hope
a faith
a dogged determination
that somewhere
could would still be heard
an echo
a promise of peace
and contentment
perhaps a touch
just a drop
of jubilation
but now
it all presses so hard
on a soul life worn
for so long
ears roar with the
never ending strain and striving
waiting
aching to hear the echo of the call
clamour and resound
loud and clear again
maybe tomorrow
today
it escapes notice
in the ringing silence
instead
a whisper
a simple yearning
for nothing
for the peace of
empty
the contentment
of dreamless sleep
a sigh
to simply
let go
to fade
and drift
deep
safe
forgotten
into forever oblivion

homeward

through the days and bright bright of
struggle muddle
through the throng
the climb
the stagger trip rip claw
upright
again and again and again
but whisper wait
the dream pulls calls
not flight
not fight
not fear
but the dark
of wide open night
unlimited arena
arrival at the highest height
where the gale of the universe
roars
in all consuming
all embracing silence
a dream
to finally stand open wide
toes aching
fingers screaming
face flushed and rushed
lifted free
speck by shred dissolving
to raging
puissant
jubilation
engorged and swallowed
by all being being all
and nothing
beyond form fear
all living
dying
home

day break

lingering soft
in the gentle indistinct place
that floats soul essence
unafraid
before waking to full day
breaking tendrils
of times forgotten
almost
but savouring flavouring
as dreams, vague
from lives long lost
soul's chalice
covered with fingerprints
lip traces of one
some one
gone
images flicker beyond eye's reach
eluding sharp focus
fond form
slipping into the dark of then
face faded
voice drifted
to gentle whispered murmurs
heart to heart beating breathing soft
beyond hearing straining
willing the soul
stay
floating there
don't move
don't wake
reach in ache of failed focus
to clutch a shadow
skin chilling
with the return to here
a whisper caress lifts with daybreak
sucked back
into the cave of indistinct dream
fingers trace forgotten form
still memory warm
soft lips,
tongue lingering on the taste
of a hot mouth
cool
and honey salt consuming

leaving a thirst
deep soul hunger
abiding,
calling
haunting memory of one
some one

roots

there's a plant
whose roots
lie underneath my garden
this place
a space
i've tended for so long
again and again i've cut it down
without
dignity
no look or glance
of recognition
mowed under
clipped back
cut away
and alien seeds
selected
planted
protected
to grow and prosper
but
no more
now
i'll make room
will watch,
water, wait and shelter
until
timid tendrils reach out
free
from dark wet soil
to reach up
embrace the heat light wet
and whisper kiss
of my living
day
growing
being
me

treasure

defined
by the spaces
no traces
no visceral substance
reactive responsive
formed
not forming
shifting
to meet match answer
demands
'til the empty within
echoes
bellows loud
and souls eye
pulls away turns in tunes out
and probes
gropes through the dark
stumbling
foot stayed betrayed
by forgotten debris
traces of treasure and lost dreams
abandoned fragments
so
bar the door
light first timid light
in the inner night
reclaim
piece by shard
one by one
like scattered children
embrace again
the faint familiar passions
spawned in innocence
in dream remembered living
from when and faded then
now

Sunrise

false light fades with a rumble
into the dark
and hope twists
through bitter to bleak

in the cold vacant black
reluctant passion stirs
angry
cold determination
to defy
deny
fly
beyond reach of false promise
high, so high
to the deepest dark
that lies up off the way
and draws weary soul feet
to a path
that grows sure safe
steep and deep with remembered holds
for hungry toes and fingers
crawl climb reach
and shake off clinging tendrils
shredded webs
of taunting dreams
break free
farther out
farther in
remote
high and higher still
high with the promise
hidden in lingering dark
of dawn breathing
first edge
of a searing lancing shaft
clear glory
to rip through the shrouded shreds and ashes
sing dance
the
jubilation
of the dawn

Post Script . . .

the jubilation song

2002

the journey is begun at last
bags unpacked
bits and pieces
littering the freeway
free to blow and roll away
forgotten
in the dust of the rushing press
the few treasures
tucked away
safe
in warm pockets
a faint path
traced through the grass of the hillside
beckons
time to slip off shoes
to wiggle hot weary toes
in soft cool earth and sweet grass
to breath deep
fresh breezes
blowing from forest and shore
heart and mind alive
open
sing the universe
and dance and sway
along the path
oblivious to all
but life