

# The Inner Daughter



A Sequence of Six Poems for Performance

by Sharon Lia Robinson

*The Inner Daughter* is a reflection of my life as a victor. Artist, outsider, orphan. My wish to be seen as someone of value and worth placed me in many precarious situations, bonding with unusual and unique people who also could not find a way to live within conventional society. Yet I was always aware of the spirit of renewal in my heart. This collection is dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba, who has helped me to see myself as a victor.

--Sharon Lia Robinson, from the Introduction

each day, my body is immortalized on paper, clay, canvas. with pencil, chalk, paint. this does not mean i become immortal. the warning is, to still watch out for cars. and protecting the heart.

--from the fifth poem of *The Inner Daughter*



Sharon, Thank you so much for sharing this gift from your heart. You have great talent and speak to many women. I am happy that you have gotten this work into book format. I love that you are sharing your endeavors with me. Your uniquely individual voice calls out the divine feminine in everyone. This particular work is powerful and lovely.

-- Marsha Milburn Madigan, MD, Human Design Guidance and Gatherings



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by Sharon Lia Robinson**



**Dancing Heart Press**

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Donations for my play and creative projects are appreciated.

Your support is beneficial and welcome to assist my purpose and work in the arts and as an independent scholar.

In thankfulness and gratitude, I welcome your ideas in support of my creative projects and my research. With Peace and Blessings, Sharon.

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*For Meher Baba, the Awakener*

**Healer of Lost and Found Hearts**

*When real light appears this darkness which you think is light disappears.*

*— Meher Baba*

*Do not search for God outside of you. God can only be found within you, for  
His only abode is the heart. — Meher Baba*

*Out of our tears we make little songs and dances. — Anonymous*

## Introduction

### (A Note of Completion)

The Inner Daughter is a reflection of my life as a victor. Artist, outsider, orphan. My wish to be seen as someone of value and worth placed me in many precarious situations, bonding with unusual and unique people who also could not find a way to live within conventional society. Yet I was always aware of the spirit of renewal in my heart. This collection is dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba, who has helped me to see myself as a victor.

*The Inner Daughter* is a sequence of six poems for performance and libretto. This experimental performance piece encompasses poetry, dance, music, theatre and visual art. For this collection, I first present the poems alone to preserve the flow of sequences (Part I), and then again with performance concepts and stage notes (Part II).

My inner sense for this play has always been that the form will further emerge from the rehearsal process, with an openness to both improvisation and stage direction.

I envision the work with three women actors whose alternating voices give a unique and exciting quality to the performance, in homage to the historical concept of a Greek chorus. One more imaginative concept is that the last two poems may be performed in an outdoor urban garden habitat.

As I began to research and to explore the music of Alan Hovhaness, Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders for possible inclusion in this collection, I concluded that *The Inner Daughter* is also meaningful as a potential libretto with original music.

From 2001—2020, I worked on this project, experimenting with various ways to present the poetry for performance. I believe the most important thing I have learned as an artist is to follow my heart.

In drafting this manuscript I wish to express heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to my editor, Karen Stimson, for her encouragement and inspiration. I also want to express gratitude and appreciation for family and friends including Martina Abba-Richard, Janet Goldenbogen-Self, Steven R. Johnson, Val Johnstone, Key City Public Theatre, Bonnie Masi, Margaret D. McGee, Jude Robinson, Rachel Smith, St. Mary Star of the Sea, St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Dr. Fred Whitehead.

With gratitude for global discoveries, prayers and encouragement.

eternal  
infinite  
always

Sharon Lia Robinson  
November, 2020

*A Nomad Mannequin*

*A Poem based on my program notes and stage directions for The Inner Daughter (A Sequence of Six Poems for Performance)*

this quiet sun  
restless resting  
as I turn the page  
into now  
becoming

veiling and unveiling  
robing and disrobing  
like a whirling dervish  
she moves to the wind

veiling then unveiling  
concealing  
then revealing  
her essence

the clown is kissing the Buddha  
cloud sway closer

a mannequin  
outside the yarn shop  
near a solo saxophone  
drifting

when she is dressed fine  
the mannequin glitters  
like jazz  
on the corner

tonight she stays home  
for her radiant solo unwinding

a nomad

this shawl  
became the flowing  
mystical dance veil

flowing  
twisting  
winding  
unwinding

toward her authentic clarity

Tambourine. Her gypsy voice. Nomad wanderer in search of a home.

Nomad Fragments



## A Sparkling Poem

(Commentary based on stage directions for the fourth poem of my play  
*The Inner Daughter, A Sequence of Six Poems for Performance*).

a place of folding, unfolding, opening and closing  
safe guard for the passage of the self

veiling unveiling  
concealing then revealing  
her essence

weaving, twisting, fashioning  
in a dance of exploration

a dance of the scarves  
the various adornments  
mirror the twists and turns in life  
reflects her various identities

masks on and off  
playing with the masks

diverse drapes of the mannequin  
embody life choices karma  
imagination and chance encounters

the last adornment  
a rainbow scarf  
of inner tranquility and safety

the scarves and the adornments  
are the gifts and the presents  
she has received

sparkling lights dazzling starry

all encompassing the earth

Birth healing rebirth

Peace on earth peace within

the mannequin is shimmering

removing the veils in movement, stillness, prayer, poems and music.

## ***Part I, The Poems Alone***

### ***Order of the Poems***

- 1. The Inner Daughter At Fifty*
- 2. The Inner Daughter At Dinner*
- 3. The Forgotten Daughter*
- 4. The Inner Daughter*
- 5. changing the ways of the heart*
- 6. Live Exultant*

## 1) The Inner Daughter At Fifty

at fifty  
she is ready to dance  
who will she dance with

across the sky  
a crowd gathers  
will they speak with her

she walks away  
the mask returns

weaving her heart  
into the arms  
of a stranger

I will return  
she tells her friends  
driving into the darkness

nighttime moon upon the hill  
frost clear beach  
eyes of no return

I am here she speaks to the stars  
when will they love me  
for I am here  
and they said they would come to me

## 2) The Inner Daughter At Dinner

a beautiful daughter  
walks through the room  
in the middle of dinner  
she is graceful  
her parents compliment her  
her jewelry shines  
her parents compliment her  
her father smiles kindly  
her mother nods  
this is our daughter  
they announce to their guests  
this is our flower  
shining in the darkness  
her star is rising  
this is our promising youth  
her poetry is exquisite  
she has a fine flare for fashion  
she is one in a million  
she is our daughter  
our graceful dancer

our princess  
our sweetheart  
our sun  
here she is  
she shines  
in the midst  
of darkness  
on a gloomy day  
she gives light

she is good with cats and plants  
she is learning to garden  
and our mother is helping her  
dancing lessons  
music lessons  
a trip to Mexico  
for her eighteenth birthday  
yes, she is our star...



### 3) The Forgotten Daughter

at times  
she was not their daughter  
or so it seemed...  
she had a hard time  
becoming her own person  
to trust have courage  
faith to believe in herself  
odd looks might not have stopped  
that kind of knowing  
giving the daughter dignity  
living as part of a family  
yet totally alive to her truth  
alive to her inner heart beat  
if only they had known this  
she tells a solemn midnight  
someone she can tell the truth to  
a friend or a stranger, whatever.

#### 4) The Inner Daughter

today  
on her path  
in her walk  
going on in her life

the inner daughter  
reaches for her healing

in vain  
she reaches  
for the love  
the healing presence  
of her father

in vain  
she reaches for the nurturing  
words of hope and reassurance

that she is beautiful desired and whole  
that her gifts are special  
unique  
that she is honored  
cherished

adored  
admired  
spoken of with thoughts that are helping her

today  
the inner daughter  
on her path  
gets off the train  
at grand central station  
to meet the anonymous man  
who will set her free

he doesn't have a name  
he has a face and a body and a walk  
that exist in her imagination

she meets him in a cluttered room  
where wine bottles and candles  
are cherished

music and lights that are soft

paintings that nurture  
her truth

she offers her nakedness  
on the altar of gratitude

because someone  
with a face and a voice and a walk  
wants to kiss her

this is the only way  
she can feel  
she can love  
she is loved

of course  
it's not the real way

she sees this many years later  
because  
in wanting to meet her inner lover  
she found her inner self

the old wounds  
they come up  
yes  
for healing

the nuns ask for money  
outside the train station

a man smiles at the girl  
he wants to kiss her

on a ride to coney island  
with inner city children  
her body is redeemed

she needs this as much as they do  
flora, making out in the back of the movie theatre

just a kid who needs to get away  
from the housing project  
for the day

later  
meeting Danny Bluestein  
it seems so special  
he gives reassurance  
saying, your skin, it's like silk.

this could be a normal courtship  
with a Jewish elementary school teacher  
who plays guitar  
writes poetry  
sings Bob Dylan songs

yet his pain must be buried very deep  
deeper or as deep as mine

he enjoys speed and heroin  
he has to go to Bellevue  
a New York City mental hospital

when he gets out  
we meet again  
I love you  
he says  
I know  
and we part

now  
so many years later  
I'm grateful we met

I see that his pain  
was close to mine  
although I know  
very little about his family

when I saw him with his mother  
she seemed to pierce right through me  
her intensity overwhelming

Danny lived with his parents  
to get off drugs  
to get out of the East Village

I saw him  
without similarity  
after Bellevue  
he seemed ok  
their cat was named Love  
this I remember as significant

that he always tried to meet the world with love  
maybe that's what brought us together  
a well-meaning match  
through his sister

about our time together  
I am happy  
I am sad

I had to keep looking  
I couldn't undo  
the damage he lived with  
inside his veins



yet we both sought  
through art life and poetry  
to heal ourselves  
sometimes, that is everything  
that is everything we need.

## 5) changing the ways of the heart

even the heart changed. it was so good. she thought of it. lois taking a walk. the center. taking it slow. the heart. rendering itself. drawn out on paper. all the simple feelings of a heart. taking messages. all the things that could be found. slowly skating. remembering a pattern, a field of wheat next to a dreary schoolyard. or learning a new religious blessing.

learning a pattern.

all the patterns i remember are found here. the woman said, “when it’s icy, walk on the earth.” this is found here. leather boots and wool scarves. class. feelings. food. blackness. watercolours and children. fantasy. all these people are repeated. they were dormant in my imagination. they have sprung to me because i am ready. in a way, it is healing. in a way, it is mighty. such a cycle, remembered and enhanced. such a cycle, when one is living.

each day, my body is immortalized on paper, clay, canvas. with pencil, chalk, paint. this does not mean i become immortal. the warning is, to still watch out for cars. and protecting the heart.

## 6) Live Exultant

Concord today. Afternoon. A young woman, her smile exultant.

This scene could be a dance piece. The role of the artist in freedom of speech.

A small pond in the woods close to Walden. Only one jogger. I took the train here.

Sticks and stones may break my bones.

Aromatherapy for dreams and clarity. Rosemary, cedar, sage.

The curve of the white birch tree this autumn day.

Massage for health and pleasure.

Dark until she slept. Into a crowd of children, a nursing mother.

The leafless twin oak branches. A lone leaf falls. The root of passion and your own vulnerability.

And the birds chirping to sundown. "Rest yourself," he said.

The art model during naptime at Brandeis. Her blister last Thursday. Green pine leaves and crimson yellow.

Talullah Bankhead. A pine cone. Her scarf. Her pond. Her fiction!

"I haven't sold out, I've just stopped steppin."

Your vibes. A Greek salad. Stan Strickland. Survival. A plump root, a branch, a twig, a plaything, her cat and mine meowing: a round hollow O. The acorn drops. Paul is dead. Shall I go to his funeral?

Watch your step on this split log. It's hollow in the middle. The leaves a camouflage. Pine. Aunt Leah the trailblazer. Normal kids. I love him.

A skirt for \$50. A dress for \$12. Stockings, boots, a corset, and I'm set for the winter.

Live. Live again. Exultant.

**Part II*****The Inner Daughter, A Sequence of Six Poems for Performance  
(With Stage Directions Included)******Program Notes******(A Poem and Two Quotations)***

this quiet sun  
restless resting  
as I turn the page  
into now  
becoming

the clown is kissing the Buddha  
cloud sway closer

a mannequin  
outside the yarn shop  
near a solo saxophone  
drifting

when she is dressed fine  
the mannequin glitters  
like jazz  
on the corner

tonight she stays home  
for her radiant solo unwinding.

“Blessed are those in emotional turmoil; they shall be united inside by love.

Healthy are those weak and overextended for their purpose; they shall feel their inner flow of strength return.

Healed are those who weep for their frustrated desire; they shall see the face of fulfillment in a new form.

Aligned with the One are the mourners; they shall be comforted.

Tuned to the Source are those feeling deeply confused by life; they shall be returned from their wandering.”

—From *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus*.  
Translated and with commentary by Neil Douglas-Klotz.  
Harper/San Francisco, 1990, page 50.

“Let it sparkle. Let it be.”—Martina Abba-Richard



### ***The Cast***

Three women of various ages and appearance.

Lucy, in her early twenties. A full-figured woman, Renoiresque.

Bella, about thirty years old.

Gia, about fifty years old.

Please be sure to include at least one full-figured woman in the cast, to share my desire to include and to welcome all body types in theatre performance.

### ***The order for performance of these poems.***

1. *The Inner Daughter At Fifty*
2. *The Inner Daughter At Dinner*
3. *The Forgotten Daughter*
4. *The Inner Daughter*
5. *changing the ways of the heart*
6. *Live Exultant*

## ***Stage Directions***

*The Inner Daughter* is an experimental performance piece.

The stage directions including set design, lights, costumes, choreography and music are included for each of the six individual poems in this manuscript.

Selections including movement, music and costumes may also be developed during the process of rehearsal and improvisation.

The performance presentation includes spoken poetry, songs, chant, music for cello, and creative dance. Jazz poetry.

One or more of the poems may be developed as original songs.

*The Inner Daughter* has the potential for being a libretto.

Ideas for set design are as follows.

In one section of the stage we see a small, simple prayer/meditation altar with candles, incense, a meditation bell and flowers or a potted plant. Perhaps a small statue of St. Francis or the Buddha. The altar remains throughout the performance.

In another section of the stage there are various percussion instruments including bells, xylophone, small hand drums/tabla, shell bracelets, gungroos (ankle bracelets), a tambourine, wind chimes, claves, egg shakers, maracas and musical gourds.

The instruments are to be played by the three actors at various times, including for musical improvisation or as a written score with the solo cello.

Perhaps include a small portable percussion stage or wall of percussion as part of the design of the stage set; with a vertical or horizontal xylophone. The xylophone is played with a percussion mallet or by running one's hands across the bars to make sounds. Percussion is also onstage throughout the performance.

(Additional musical selections include music by Alan Hovhaness, Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders. Ideas for specific musical compositions are given in the stage directions for each of the six poems.

For suggested music, all rights for the music are the responsibility of the producer).

In a third section of the stage there is a small set for a simple yet beautiful dinner table with flowers, a bottle of red wine, a plate of fruit, a loaf of bread, butter, jam, cheese and utensils. The table is covered with a beautiful white tablecloth, abundant flowers, crystal wine glasses, and water goblets. Perhaps there is a beautiful tea pot with tea cups as well. There is a feeling of material abundance and prosperity.

In a fourth section of the stage, a female mannequin, draped in gauze or other minimal cloth covering, waiting to be dressed. With a large hat box filled with flowing scarves, long, elegant gloves, jewelry and the mannequin's mask. Perhaps also a standing coat rack for scarves and additional mannequin costumes. With an attractive cloth bag for make-up, such as lip gloss, rouge, powder, mascara, for the mannequin.

For the fifth and sixth poems, there is a garden setting for an outdoor tea, with books and plants. A place to be quiet, to meditate and to write. A back pack or a large shoulder bag, with notebooks and journals inside.

## **The Inner Daughter At Fifty (the first poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*The play opens with solo cellist playing music onstage as the audience enters the theatre. This melody or improvisation is also a musical theme that is integrated musically throughout the play. The cello music may include both improvisation and a written score.*

*Semi-darkness. The three women, Lucy, Bella and Gia are onstage in various separate places, (not together).*

*A spotlight comes up on Lucy who is standing, center stage. Soft, golden colored, golden patterned lights complement the gentle solo cello music.*

*Facing the audience, Lucy approaches the altar as the music is playing. She lights the votive candles, softly rings the altar bell. She makes a silent devotional gesture, such as a bow, hands clasped in prayer, a meditative moment of silence.*

*As she lights the votive candle, the soft stage lights become brighter.*

*Lucy begins weaving her spoken words into a slow, gentle and delicate chant with creative dance.*

*As Lucy recites/performs the poem, gentle cello melody and cello improvisation accompany the words. She may also dance at various times during the poem. Music plays then stops for parts of the poem, or music may play continuously.*

**The Inner Daughter At Fifty (text of the first poem)**

**(Lucy)**

at fifty  
she is ready to dance  
who will she dance with

across the sky  
a crowd gathers  
will they speak with her

she walks away  
the mask returns

weaving her heart  
into the arms  
of a stranger

I will return  
she tells her friends  
driving into the darkness

nighttime moon upon the hill  
frost clear beach  
eyes of no return

I am here she speaks to the stars  
when will they love me  
for I am here  
and they said they would come to me

## **The Inner Daughter At Dinner (the second poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*Soft solo cello music or opera music plays.*

*Bella approaches the dinner party table.*

*From the small dinner table, Bella pours herself a glass of the red wine, lifts the wine glass in a gesture of making a toast, and then she takes a drink of the wine.*

*Bella, dressed in a flowing dress of white and black contrast, recites the poem.*

*She is still throughout, like an opera singer, and does not make many gestures.*

*Simple spoken word. With minimal movement, yet intentional.*

*Soft cello music or opera music intertwines with the reading of her poem.*

*Music suggestions if copy written music is used: The Spirit of the Trees, or Lady of Light or another musical composition by Alan Hovhaness.*

*Lighting may be shades of yellow from light lemon to deeper yellow hues and shades, and a sunrise yellow gold swirl.*

## **The Inner Daughter At Dinner (text of the second poem)**

**(Bella)**

a beautiful daughter  
walks through the room  
in the middle of dinner  
she is graceful  
her parents compliment her  
her jewelry shines  
her parents compliment her  
her father smiles kindly  
her mother nods  
this is our daughter  
they announce to their guests  
this is our flower  
shining in the darkness  
her star is rising  
this is our promising youth  
her poetry is exquisite  
she has a fine flare for fashion  
she is one in a million  
she is our daughter  
our graceful dancer

our princess  
our sweetheart  
our sun  
here she is  
she shines  
in the midst  
of darkness

on a gloomy day  
she gives light  
she is good with cats and plants  
she is learning to garden  
and our mother is helping her  
dancing lessons  
music lessons  
a trip to Mexico  
for her eighteenth birthday  
yes, she is our star...



## **The Forgotten Daughter (the third poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*The lights come on in a beautiful rainbow hue, then proceed to swirl around, to the sounds of discordant and high pitched music.*

*Bella recites/performs this poem. She moves around the room.*

*For this poem, a simple chant.*

*Improvisational or written solo cello music accompanies her dance, poetry reading and stage presence.*

*Bella's poetry performance may include playing of the onstage percussion instruments by her and the other two women as well.*

*Also, music by Alice Coltrane may be used for this poem.*

*Alice Coltrane has written and performed innovative jazz that may be of interest for this poem and elsewhere for the performance of The Inner Daughter. For example: Journey In Satchidananda, (there is one version which she performed with Pharoah Sanders).*

**The Forgotten Daughter (text of the third poem)**

**(Bella)**

at times  
she was not their daughter  
or so it seemed...  
she had a hard time  
becoming her own person  
to trust have courage  
faith to believe in herself  
odd looks might not have stopped  
that kind of knowing  
giving the daughter dignity  
living as part of a family  
yet totally alive to her truth  
alive to her inner heart beat  
if only they had known this  
she tells a solemn midnight  
someone she can tell the truth to  
a friend or a stranger, whatever.

## **The Inner Daughter (the fourth poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*Subtle light changes throughout the performance of the poem. Shadows, music and lighting shift and change.*

*This poem begins with an introduction of music for solo cello and mannequin.*

*A life size mannequin, covered in light gauze, is brought on to the stage and is placed next to a large hat box for scarves and a standing coat rack, also for scarves. On a nearby side table there are a selection of various masks.*

*Dream dance sequences weave into some of the poem and feature the cellist onstage.*

*Additional music may include recordings of jazz innovators Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders.*

*At various times during the poetic choreography of the fourth poem, actors Lucy, Bella and Gia take turns draping and dressing the mannequin. The three women draw the colorful scarves of various sizes and colors out of the hat box and the standing coat rack. Draping them on each other and then on the mannequin at various times during the performance.*

*The women dance and play with the scarves, alone and together, in dance, poetry, song and chant.*

*Use of large flowing colorful chiffon scarves and also hip scarves like belly dancers use. A long scarf may be worn as a skirt.*

*Lucy, Bella and Gia dance around the room with the scarves, then they toss them off and drape them around the mannequin.*

*Creative dance sequences weave in and out of the poetry.*

*As the three women take turns draping and dressing the mannequin, they are also finding and pulling out of the hat box or from the coat rack various other costumes and dress items, such as bracelets, a necklace, a glittering, sequin mask, gloves, a hat, some lace, a hip scarf, ankle bracelets, a sari.*

*A large, folding paper fan is unfurled.*

*A mask from the small side table transitions an actor from one section to the next of the poem.*

*The three women play with the masks, incorporating them into their exploration of the scarves and the costumes, tearing a scarf or fabric, then knotting the pieces back together, discarding some pieces, keeping others.*

*The last veiling/unveiling is perhaps a beautiful rainbow colored scarf.*

*Silk or fresh flowers could be included in the dance and in the costuming for mannequin and actors.*

*Mannequin may be depicted as hobo, fashion icon, Middle Eastern dancer, etc...in a transition/transformation of various identities.*

*Toward the end, the mannequin is sparkling, wearing a costume with glitter, sequins, scarves and other adornments she has received.*

*Sparkling stage lights.*

**The Inner Daughter (text of the fourth poem)**

**(Lucy, Bella, Gia)**

today  
on her path  
in her walk  
going on in her life

the inner daughter  
reaches for her healing

in vain  
she reaches  
for the love  
the healing presence  
of her father

in vain  
she reaches for the nurturing  
words of hope and reassurance

that she is beautiful desired and whole  
that her gifts are special  
unique  
that she is honored  
cherished

adored  
admired  
spoken of with thoughts that are helping her

today  
the inner daughter  
on her path  
gets off the train  
at grand central station  
to meet the anonymous man  
who will set her free

he doesn't have a name  
he has a face and a body and a walk  
that exist in her imagination

she meets him in a cluttered room  
where wine bottles and candles  
are cherished

music and lights that are soft

paintings that nurture  
her truth

she offers her nakedness  
on the altar of gratitude

because someone  
with a face and a voice and a walk  
wants to kiss her

this is the only way  
she can feel  
she can love  
she is loved

of course  
it's not the real way

she sees this many years later  
because  
in wanting to meet her inner lover  
she found her inner self

the old wounds  
they come up  
yes  
for healing

the nuns ask for money  
outside the train station

a man smiles at the girl  
he wants to kiss her

on a ride to coney island  
with inner city children  
her body is redeemed

she needs this as much as they do  
flora, making out in the back of the movie theatre

just a kid who needs to get away  
from the housing project  
for the day

later  
meeting Danny Bluestein  
it seems so special  
he gives reassurance  
saying, your skin, it's like silk.

this could be a normal courtship  
with a Jewish elementary school teacher  
who plays guitar  
writes poetry  
sings Bob Dylan songs

yet his pain must be buried very deep  
deeper or as deep as mine

he enjoys speed and heroin  
he has to go to Bellevue  
a New York City mental hospital

when he gets out  
we meet again  
I love you  
he says  
I know  
and we part

now  
so many years later  
I'm grateful we met



I see that his pain  
was close to mine  
although I know  
very little about his family

when I saw him with his mother  
she seemed to pierce right through me  
her intensity overwhelming

Danny lived with his parents  
to get off drugs  
to get out of the East Village

I saw him  
without similarity  
after Bellevue  
he seemed ok  
their cat was named Love  
this I remember as significant

that he always tried to meet the world with love  
maybe that's what brought us together  
a well-meaning match  
through his sister

about our time together  
I am happy  
I am sad

I had to keep looking  
I couldn't undo  
the damage he lived with  
inside his veins

yet we both sought  
through art life and poetry  
to heal ourselves  
sometimes, that is everything  
that is everything we need.

## **changing the ways of the heart (the fifth poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*Lucy presents this poem. She retrieves books and her journal with her poem from her onstage backpack or large shoulder bag.*

*Dance, movement, song and chant with music. Lucy dancing to wind chimes. Dance/poetry and percussion.*

*Lucy is playing percussion at various times. Music also involves the onstage cellist or recorded music.*

*In poem five and poem six, the cast and the audience go to an actual outdoor setting such as a park, an outdoor coffeehouse or a courtyard.*

*A garden setting for an outdoor tea, with books and plants. A place to be quiet, to meditate and to write. Sounds of birds, trees in wind, rustling of leaves. Sounds of nature.*

*Perhaps a garden statue of St. Francis of Assisi.*

*One or more photographs, slides or short film segments of dance and nature.*

*Clear light of multi-rays, of a pattern of multi-colored blue around the audience and within and on the stage.*

*Music: Prayer of St. Gregory by Alan Hovhaness.*

*Bella and Gia are the silent observers, sitting at a table or a park bench, drinking tea, writing, reading, listening (alongside the audience).*

## changing the ways of the heart (text of the fifth poem)

(Lucy)

even the heart changed. it was so good. she thought of it. lois taking a walk. the center. taking it slow. the heart. rendering itself. drawn out on paper. all the simple feelings of a heart. taking messages. all the things that could be found. slowly skating. remembering a pattern, a field of wheat next to a dreary schoolyard. or learning a new religious blessing.

learning a pattern.

all the patterns i remember are found here. the woman said, "when it's icy, walk on the earth." this is found here. leather boots and wool scarves. class. feelings. food. blackness. watercolours and children. fantasy. all these people are repeated. they were dormant in my imagination. they have sprung to me because i am ready. in a way, it is healing. in a way, it is mighty. such a cycle, remembered and enhanced. such a cycle, when one is living.

each day, my body is immortalized on paper, clay, canvas. with pencil, chalk, paint. this does not mean i become immortal. the warning is, to still watch out for cars. and protecting the heart.

## **Live Exultant (the sixth poem)**

*Set design, sound, lights and choreography as follows.*

*Gia speaking the poem.*

*The cast and the audience are again in an actual outdoor garden setting for a tea, with books and plants. A place to be quiet, to meditate and to write.*

*Sounds of birds, trees in wind, rustling of leaves. Sounds of nature. Perhaps a garden statue of St. Francis of Assisi. Aquamarine lights.*

*One or more photographs, slides or short film segments of dance, nature scenes and poetry.*

*Perhaps include music from Avak the Healer by Alan Hovhaness, especially the five minute Overture.*

*Bella and Lucy are the silent observers, sitting at a table or a park bench, drinking tea, writing, reading, listening, (alongside the audience).*

*After the poem is finished, Lucy approaches the altar, as she did at the beginning of the play, facing the audience.*

*Now she again rings the altar bell as she did at the opening of the performance piece.*

*Then the altar candles are extinguished by Lucy, who again makes a silent, devotional gesture of reverence as she did at the opening of the play. Such as a bow, hands clasped in prayer, or the gentle dance of her hands.*

*The final ringing of the prayer bell and the altar candles extinguished signal the closing of the play. Bella and Gia join with Lucy as silent participants in this closing.*

*The stage lights go out when the candles are extinguished and all exit.*

*Finis. The lights come up again for the actors and musicians, the stage manager, the director and the writer, etc... to bow.*

## Live Exultant (text of the sixth poem)

(Gia)

Concord today. Afternoon. A young woman, her smile exultant.

This scene could be a dance piece. The role of the artist in freedom of speech.

A small pond in the woods close to Walden. Only one jogger. I took the train here.

Sticks and stones may break my bones.

Aromatherapy for dreams and clarity. Rosemary, cedar, sage.

The curve of the white birch tree this autumn day.

Massage for health and pleasure.

Dark until she slept. Into a crowd of children, a nursing mother.

The leafless twin oak branches. A lone leaf falls. The root of passion and your own vulnerability.

And the birds chirping to sundown. “Rest yourself,” he said.

The art model during naptime at Brandeis. Her blister last Thursday. Green pine leaves and crimson yellow.

Talullah Bankhead. A pine cone. Her scarf. Her pond. Her fiction!

“I haven’t sold out, I’ve just stopped steppin.”

Your vibes. A Greek salad. Stan Strickland. Survival. A plump root, a branch, a twig, a plaything, her cat and mine meowing: a round hollow O. The acorn drops. Paul is dead. Shall I go to his funeral?

Watch your step on this split log. It's hollow in the middle. The leaves a camouflage. Pine. Aunt Leah the trailblazer. Normal kids. I love him.

A skirt for \$50. A dress for \$12. Stockings, boots, a corset, and I'm set for the winter.

Live. Live again. Exultant.



## Biography

Dancing heart press presents poetry, stories, films, and visual art by artist and independent scholar, Sharon Lia Robinson.

She follows the path of her heart to create innovative cultural connections. Her dance, films, poems, stories and visual art reflect the search for a sense of belonging and the mystical trip to love, self-acceptance and redemption.

Sharon was a catalyst for the pioneering feminist anthology *Shadow on a Tightrope: Writings by Women on Fat Oppression* (Aunt Lute Books, 1982). Her poetry and essays appear in that collection under her early pen name, Sharon Bas Hannah.

She has directed and produced two documentary films.

In her 2002 film memoir, *My Journey Toward Wholeness* she reflects on life as an artist and her research as an independent scholar for healing of early psychological challenges.

In the 2009 film *Edge of the Sea Gallery* (1998-2003) Sharon documents the art center she developed with visual artist/photographer Steven R. Johnson, as a sanctuary to nurture artists and poets in Port Townsend, WA.

She has shared her poems in liturgical prayer celebrations, secular places and journals. Her 2017 collection, *Wayward Star, Devotional Poems* is available from Sheriar Books (843) 272-1339 [www.sheriarbooks.org](http://www.sheriarbooks.org)

Sharon is inspired by the spiritual teachings of Meher Baba and by the inspiration of Pope Francis, the saints, the poets and the mystical Oneness within all of the major world religions.

Sharon's writings are archived in the Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Please consider giving a donation for Sharon and her projects.

[www.sharonrobinson.org](http://www.sharonrobinson.org)