

# LandTrust

*poems by*  
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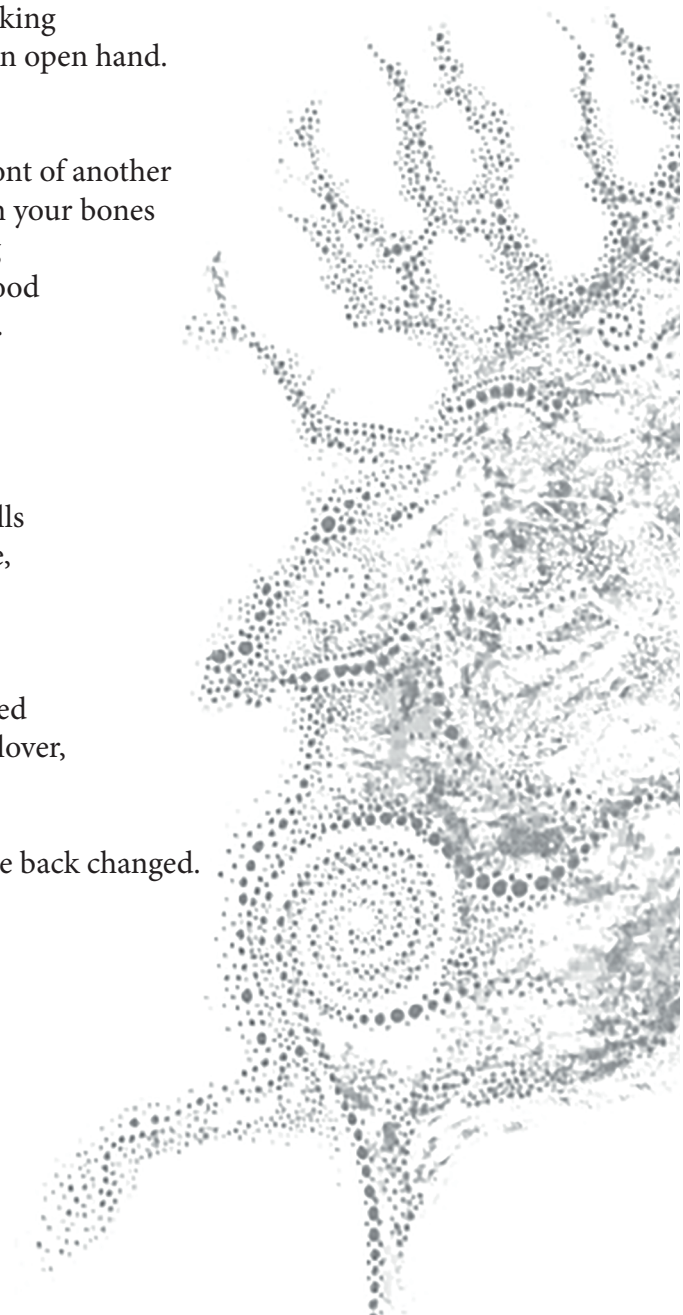
# Landtrust

This is the magic  
you walk the land  
take nothing, not even your eyes  
you must close them  
until there is no looking  
only darkness like an open hand.

This is the magic  
place one foot in front of another  
like a trail blazed on your bones  
embrace wandering  
some iron in the blood  
leads you safehome.

This is the magic  
the treasured knife,  
the mica stone,  
above you sky unrolls  
a maryshawl of blue,  
to hold them.

This is the magic  
every lightray pressed  
to your heart like a lover,  
every newbud leaf,  
like you, it will fall  
like you, it will come back changed.





*from Away*

# Mud Season

We are waiting on the mountain.  
Every day I test the path  
down to our rushing stream and back  
see if I can risk the hike, not falling.  
Springmuck takes you down  
if you let it, dangerous as deepice,  
call you won't answer, letter  
that stays on your desktop accusing,  
words you can't separate  
from all the tears this winter cried.

Outside my window, the mudflow  
suckstep river in the shape of water  
swirled like an endpaper  
these delays are holy, I know this  
but my heart is the sneaker  
I won't put in the washer  
scar of so much failure  
dirtying the soul.



*from Here*



# The ghost in the church elevator was happy to see me

This is not metaphor.  
New Englanders hallow their ghosts  
like old addresses, exboyfriends,  
lost diamonds, burned down farms.

The community life committee  
agreed it was a little girl  
who died before her time,  
the parents, ghosts themselves,  
built a children's chapel  
and she must have tagged along  
unable to leave them desolate  
in the sparerooms of loss.  
No one could pin down  
how she felt about it, except  
at some point, the adjacent elevator  
must have proved more interesting than  
white pews, sad carpet, reverence,  
a matter of energy, or just self-expression,  
finally making a sound.

Stick around long enough  
and doors opening and closing  
just seem like conversation.  
You take the stairs.  
Set an extra place at table,  
chair in the children's circle,  
leave out an empty pageant costume,  
make room.

When I left, she was on my mind.  
Take care of the ghost, I said,  
not in a don't-cross-the-streams kind of way  
but leave her flowers, bowls of milk,  
tell her once in a while she

can elevator up beyond the peeling steeple,  
past all our names, to what's next.

I don't say this easily.  
You are the first people I've told,  
and even then I've changed names,  
lied to a reporter or two, some ghosthunters  
nothing to see here. Move on.  
And six years, pandemic,  
everywhere silence,  
I thought she had.

Until I came back,  
my children learning French vocabulary  
repeating one after the other  
words for hello, for welcome,  
for how have you been,  
my dear lost friend  
and I heard the elevator  
restart itself, rumble  
like a cat along my backbone,  
miraculous ordinary,  
Monday wondrous,  
such cosmic gentleness  
how time must look different to a ghost.

I want to tell her there's a school here now.  
French in the parlor, cooking in the kitchen,  
my daughter's old Christmas dress  
still the angel costume,  
I put it back on the shelf  
make room for memory  
like a ghost in my hands.



## From Here

It started when I crossed the river,  
so much water  
headfirst like a wildthing,  
it felt like being born again, that breath.

Our first eveing, oldhouse waking  
all the grayhaired ghosts came to whisper,  
this is where the Christmas Tree goes,  
this is how you knead the bread,

lost buttons, earrings, barbie shoes  
appearing in the center of the rug,  
as if I had just failed to look,  
gardenbloom of strawberries overrun with bittersweet.

I turned a corner when our oven broke  
upcounty repairman told me weeks,  
meaning months, meaning,  
when it was time, and not before,

slowheat rising like an answer,  
macandcheese and brisket, castiron skillet  
right on the coals, that magmic shimmer,  
green with fragrant fire, summergold from flame.

Now our cabin, strong for winter,  
hours knit and perled, grow long with sun.  
Everything settles, finds true shape,  
a rosary of cracks, these beads, these prayers.

In our backyard, a doe and her buck,  
shoulder by shoulder, take calm shelter.  
Good neighbors, we detour  
past hoofprints and bittrunks

place seeds in the hemlockhollow  
plant brackenfern, bramble,  
jewelweed and winterberry,  
clear every sharp stone our living made, away.

