

17. *The Gratitude Song* Copyright © 2011 Richard Lawrence Norman

Oh how early I did climb  
To find crushed winter branches  
And crumpled silence,  
... in still air  
Double dry and snapped bright in Dawn's chill.  
Early did I find feet to flee the shadows  
Even before they had begun their lazy stretch  
My breath did gulp at the night  
And drink its purple black into my sneaking early steps  
Crushed under Night's last sip  
Of lonely moonlight.

As the shadows stretched downward  
I did ascend to meet you,  
To find you here in this place  
This shimmering ice shawl of climbing pearls  
Jeweled in flecked sunlight, caught purple and white  
Rose sparks of Sun's blood and treasures  
Caught shimmering  
Caught unaware and silent  
A thousand winking vanishing eyes of prised frost  
Sparkle to carpet the horizon  
Cast with pointed liquid jewels  
Silent and vanishing  
Catching the spark and gone into the whole  
Reaching each crystal drop into the light  
Splintering it alive  
A shard of Dawn in iced gemlight.

Oh my friend  
How I knew I must find you here!  
Here where our teeth have found their mirrored tears  
Spilt starlight once bound fast to black  
Now outpouring as the joy it has ruined  
Spent pain but happiness spilt  
Now awash to warm all fragile iced places  
And bring my heart of gladness to the cut chill  
Of frigid Dawn  
To return Life unto herself,  
Warm for cold,  
So do I love her!

You too know our secret  
How dearly we have bled into the black Earth  
Only now to know what might be nourished in our fisted pain  
Now unbound and spent to gladness

Poured into the jeweled horizon  
Spilt opal, and ruby treasure is our pain  
Once unbound from black  
Again, silver streams flowing to fill our meadows  
A rippled glaze of clear light spattered in silver sun  
As jewels outpoured to nourish the blossoming Earth  
So is the rain of our pain unbound  
Its shuddering trapped places  
Freely pouring upward in silver streams of rain  
Spilt into Heaven  
The clouds nourished and full  
Now unbound in glad overflowing.

Oh what happiness I return unto you, Oh Life!  
Under no shadow are you cast  
But bliss and Death alone are thee!  
Into your sky I pour my treasure  
Into the ice arch of Dawn  
I climb to find you.

As noon did burn  
So did I laugh to pull myself  
Up closer to the burning coal  
So did I laugh at the Sun with you  
For we must laugh at our weary step  
And step above it!  
So did I climb through noon burnt white  
With sheets of staggered heat  
In laughter did I let them lavish me!  
Spend their weary heat upon my glad spirit  
So chill and filled with mocking iced air  
Snapped blue and splintered  
Chipped light and shining air  
Cracked silver blue, from the prised glass lid of the world.

So did I climb to find you!  
So grateful am I to know of this place  
For surely I must find you here.  
We must celebrate!  
So did I climb higher and faster to find you  
Over my pain and past the hungry shadows  
Into the purest silver air  
Clear and iced with blue ether.

At last I see you, my friend!  
Ah!... For I have found you!  
Here, where I knew I must  
In the purest Ice air  
With silver wells of iced light, and prised frost

Cut blue wells and sparked water, warmed by firelight  
A melted jewel, an impossible brightness  
Poured into form.

Here at last I have found you  
Here where we belong—  
Over all valleys, pressed crisp and bright  
Against the arched blue lid of Heaven...  
Oh how long I have climbed, and waited, for this moment  
Waited, for this time, to find this place.  
Oh how I have longed to see these things  
With another, another worthy... one who knows.

Oh Life, in gratitude do I come to you  
As the Day does bleed her warm bright happiness  
Into the light starved Sky  
Hungrily licking up her slender gift of promise  
So have I drunk you in, Oh Life  
So gracious and severe  
As blood and milk in my saucer  
So did I lick you into my soul  
So did you purr and glow, scratch and turn within me  
Oh Life, how I drank of you!  
As a fool drinks, did I consume you  
Staggering and stammering as a fool  
I gorged upon every outstretched shadow  
And knew your sour, and did sicken to know it  
So spit you out and cursed you.  
But how red and stuttering, silly and ruined  
A comic and a spot of sublime madness to spit you out—  
For every well is not for every spirit!

Oh how you teased me, Oh life  
So gracious and glad am I to know you now  
In streams of silver and upturned shadows of spilt light  
Splinters of Sun and chill catch my chest and tickle me  
And I drink you in  
Know the spent Sun upon my lost gratitude, as you,  
a gratitude spilled out unknowing of any eye  
Or who has been spilt into light, you or I,  
So as Life do I repay you  
To give the Song up into the air and shine its notes  
Hidden in forgotten splendor  
Dripping with Sun and Song  
A prism's misted brush outstretched  
An arch of color swept across Heaven,

From nowhere...  
... to nowhere.