

Poetry Series

**Mary Angela Douglas**  
**- poems -**

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# 115 North Monroe

it's still the thing you were waiting to understand

through blue shadows on the hardwood

the floors upended, where are her sapphire rings

the seascape in the music room

the way it felt back then.

Keats and Shelley in a Modern edition

now ivoried with age

&quot;to Mary from Joseph, with all my love&quot;

and in an aqua binding

whose colour has been lost to

modern publishers

as if they swallowed the sea.

they all write about memory

just not yours.

will you go with your

small metal beach pail

to the sandbox again

overshadowed by pines

or with small steps crunching through

the fallen leaves into

the forest green neat little house

with the pale green awning;

the porch swing also the colour of pines

the angels sitting on the steps

a long, long time

opening for you,

the screen door.

mary angela douglas 1 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# 12

I remember that subterranean fairy tale  
how even as a child I loved  
the secret places, their any excuse to be...

the sudden opening in the trees  
pure branches closing over you  
or rose lidded, the unit on music.

was it the Kingdom of Dream  
that opened in the twilight castle  
dimly lit

each shadow blue violet  
and a staircase appears  
and the quarter moon.

is it a tune I remembered  
the slippered sound  
like snow

of 12 fairy princesses  
stealing down  
into the starlit underground

was it a depth of dreams revealed  
that gave that tale mysterious appeal  
or the thought of the only one clue

the slippers worn clear through  
I didn't know then  
I don't know now

the tale of 12  
the perfection of it  
the mysterious taking place

on deeper balconies of grace  
and turrets disappearing into space,  
under multi tinted clouds

and everything for the Dance, stage set  
as though they were ordained for it.

mary angela douglas 3 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Baby Mobile As Impossibly The Pattern Of The Heavens

a simple solar system over the baby cradle swung  
and flecked with laughter, glinting in the blue  
of no clouds ever, diffused a prismatic light on  
Sundays in the afternoons and on the lemon floor.

the simple solar system, sung in many colours, hummed-  
all night and the moon looked through a little envious;  
said the moon in golden letters, 'soon, what wanders here is the high celestial

brought to earth you dreaming child,  
making up your earliest remembrances.'  
here, (they may remember later on) slept a child of music-  
as if on rose leaves, as a rose may and

batting the simple solar system  
with a sigh, a sigh of the barely beginning ruffling  
the leaves of the beginning of the angels and  
before the abc's.

Mary Angela Douglas 11 April 2014

Note on Poem: impossible, but it happened anyway, you remembered it that way  
or  
felt it that way no matter what the rest of the family thinks.

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Beautiful Narrative Stalls

a beautiful narrative stalls,

is led to a stable of gold...

or it is a sugar loaf

for children at a rustic table

who break off pieces

to dip in blue bowls of

milk.

this reminds them of clouds like silk

contained in a blue sky

and the sugar loaf is bright,

sparkling like snow outside

or it is buttered gold as sunrise

the world without lies

dew beading on the leaves.

or all of these at the same time

in needlepoint.

it is a rose trellised hour.

the children are their Mama's best roses,  
the heirlooms; this is how she thinks.

but the teller of tales must choose  
which ruse to pursue

though the children want everything for Christmas  
they were made for that

to go down every last jeweled road  
singing their scraps of song  
to swing on the swings in moonlight

too long

so that they grew cold

with no fortune told but the Star

so far

from Auntie Em in a crystal globe

pleading oh please return

return from a poppy bright sleep;

it should be Spring.



but the trees break out into weeping

instead of flowers...

mary angela douglas 30 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Blue Sun Painted On A Large Piece Of Paper

a blue sun painted on a large piece of paper  
surprised itself in mirrors, starting to melt  
oh don't be candles sighed the child  
afraid of asking for more paper-  
it's no one's birthday yet-

but it was. the blue sun thought.  
I've just appeared and what is shining  
for

the blue sun shone, a little uncertainly at first,  
colouring the blue waters bluer, if it were possible,  
in the small pools where the babies waded;  
making them stand still in the purple ripples

fingers in their cherry mouths,  
lost in the blueness.  
your first daydream!  
cried their mothers.

on cue, the babies found first words:

blue sun! they cried lifting their hands as if to  
be picked up by deep turquoise, dripping,  
shy before hyacinths-

in early spring

mary angela douglas 19 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Candied Christmas Promise Swirled

a candied Christmas promise swirled  
with the candy canes you purchased in  
the drug store late November on your break

from work; shirking the constant carping  
on the job; in love with the gold rush angel abras  
stirring above

a snowy candled breeze that Grandmother lit on Sundays;  
and was it made of nougat creamed with stars, the hour,  
with baby pieces of fruit and orange peel?

the succulent glaze of cherried-pineappled  
reels among the glad too early counting  
myself among?

let the dour walls everywhere be hung  
with exorbitant holly whilst we are breathing in  
the evergreens of the Christmas stand

across the street where you meet up  
with your minted mind renewed  
munching your way through the entire box,

starting on box number two and

filled with cordial sustenance  
and more than these, let the bells relieve  
the wistful children marooned at school

and all unease collapse from the weight  
of so much glory and the clouds overfilled  
with valentines of snow arrive en masse

till the tyrants sigh we have to have to  
let you go.  
and we say from our skidding souls

overladen with deep bliss, oh

AT LAST, it's come to this...

mary angela douglas 9 july 2016

P.S. (Still munching) ...

P.P. S. No, I don't feel like a marzipan pig at all; they were two SMALL boxes (one of candy canes and the other of cordial chocolate cherries) and anyway, it was almost Christmas.

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Cherry Lemonade For The Man On The Velocipede Please

[to Robin Williams and those who loved him]

we are the jesters in old costumes  
and bright slippers, with worn soles;  
worn souls, gestures of the

harlequinade, the dancing days;  
with glittery wings and gauze,  
we give them pause,

the brokers in the rain  
bounding for their trains.  
o may they fill our felt hats

to the brim caught in the nets of whimsey;

with spare gold, a doubloon or two,  
for stories told,  
the odd star sapphire.

odd isn't it, how a lifetime

can be spent as plain as plain  
with no revelations whatsoever  
then, down the drain

we, on the other hand appear

over decorated

like Eloise at Christmas  
cause we like it that way;  
careening in and out of traffic

and making small payments  
day upon day  
on the velocipedes

of the fairly free;  
olde poetry on a spree.  
and the paper flower bouquets,

the scarves in credible array  
in quixotic shades  
pulled out of the very air

we breakfasted on,  
just yesterday.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Cherry Tree Wind Was Blowing

a cherry tree wind was blowing  
Mary Poppins will not depart  
the children will be good forever

even when the windows rattle  
from wars that can't be helped  
nothing falls from the shelf.

they will eat their cherry cobbler  
sitting straight up in their chairs  
when the cherry wind is blooming

and a beatific light sets the weathervanes on fire  
with no harm done-

and everything is as charming as pink cakes  
on blue plates and the story's not  
adjourned and

the war is won

I'm breaking off this barley sugar poem for you  
and the gilt stars are pasted back in Heaven

where they belong

and no one needs to be forewarned-

mary angela douglas 17 august 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Child's Garden Of Christmas

there it was always snowing  
tasting like cream  
like the sheen of things not said yet-

presently, poems  
not read yet  
held in the heart

glowing bulbs  
of the pristine red green  
blue orange violet

shimmering to be seen  
when the Tree is brought  
inside the house

and tinsel.  
and missing its star-friends  
overhead.

but it's shining,  
roped with gold, with apples  
dropped down from dream clouds

or the attic  
whose creaking ladder  
scares you a little-

and this is their scenery  
(the clouds, I mean)  
and this is where we kneel

the angels inside of us  
heralding  
the bells ringing like stars

mary angela douglas 16 october 2015



Mary Angela Douglas

# A Christmas Card For My Sister

more even more from the distance, childhood,

the red rose white rose storybook cries

shall we pay attention

and turn the page at the angelic chime renewed

we shall

with every clearing sky still note

the blue green fir trees

and the Christmas surprise

that everything we dreamed

was dreamed for us before

in God's surmise.

oh let us colour in the Star

above the mild manger

the startled shepherds

and the songs of gold

the harps touched in the soul

we thought had died

or been covered up

with the latter snows.

let us plant the flag of no retreat

and let the tiny silver trumpets blow

with hollied wreath and mistletoe

around the saddened the sidereal worlds

all these images more beautiful hurled through Time

above the insistent, the wondering night on hold

here we will pray before the closing

of earth's small day.

among the oranges and the peppermints

with all our hearts

and on the toy pianos plink again

the symphonies of our natal joy.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Christmas Card From Me To You (A Little Early)

to the children when they're well again, forever

'we shall meet on that beautiful shore.'

-Old American hymn, In The Sweet Bye and Bye

(sung by Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson and generations...but most beautiful when sung by Dolly...) \*

In Heaven's toyshop we may see  
some things we missed  
on Christmas Eve:

or Christmas morning it may be  
whenever you woke up to see  
a something bright but something missed  
I made a list and this is it:

the rosy doll in pink, not blue  
the bracelet bright as morning dew  
the little chair and table set  
the playhouse, treehouse, I forget

what was it that I wanted then,  
only to play oh, let's pretend  
and there's no price at all for that  
not even now and I think that

if we imagine we can see  
the whole world with a Christmas Tree  
then there'll be stars in every sky  
and no one left that has to cry

or has to wonder wonder why.

and wishes will come thick you know  
as candy coated sugar snows  
and bowls of fudge and icing too  
we'll lick the spoon and when we're through

play King and Queen of gum drop lands

dispensing gifts on every hand  
and breathe in balsam, fir and pine

and feast on snow cream so refined  
and find there's freshness in each day  
and cherry bright, find things to praise  
with angels ringed with holly, glad

and no one will be tired or sad  
we'll light the candles evermore  
and drift in boats to golden shores  
we sang about when we were young

and Christmases had just begun!

mary angela douglas 30 august 2014; rev.2 september 2014

#### Note On The Poem:

\*You can find this beautiful hymn (In the Sweet Bye and Bye) sung by Cash, Parton, Nelson (individually) on You Tube, if you wish, in slightly different versions..It's on the Cash album 'My Mother's Hymn Book'. I also thought of the song 'The Mother and Child Reunion' by Paul Simon..and of all the parents who lose their children too early from cancer and for other reasons- there is a reunion in the Forever and a Heaven where all disappointments will be transformed into eternal joy. I believe this with all my heart.

The Sweet Bye and Bye (also spelled, The Sweet By and By, bye and bye, in any case meaning, in a short while (as in after our relatively short sojourn on earth...)) is not a cathedral song (though I love those too, especially all the carols) .

It is a song sung from time immemorial in the out of the way tiny American country churches under the shade trees when people gathered to comfort themselves after country hardships with the vision of the hereafter when the 'circle [would] be unbroken'.

This is a deep theme in American old hymns and gospel tunes and when people make fun of Christianity I just feel oh you don't know how heartfelt these feelings are and how they get passed down from generation to generation and how I feel when I remember hearing my great grandfather (Mr. W. R. White of Prescott, Arkansas) whom I never met wanted Nearer My God To Thee played at his

funeral, his favorite hymn.

If you find on dvd or VHS the beautiful film *The Trip to Bountiful* (taken from Horton Foote's play) and starring Geraldine Page, check the opening scene with the girl running through the Texas fields of bluebells while the hymn *Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling* is sung in the most heartfelt ethereal and homesick for Heaven way I have ever heard. It will make you weep no matter what you think of Christians.

Or even if you don't think of them (us) at all.

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Christmas Day Prayer A Little Late

I can see You have lit the candles of your stars  
far above the snows.  
dark blue is the night

so that I would want ribbons to match  
if I were younger.  
and a dress

in paler blue embroidered.  
now I want only rest.  
cessation of pain.

a single hearted dream  
where

the rains came:  
melting the snows  
ahead of Spring.

I've told You everything now.

Mary Angela Douglas 25 December 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# A Christmas Wish Remembered

all winter long in a Christmas day  
we dreamed that we could make it stay  
my sister and I, no stockings put by yet

but orange and peppermint laden, chocolate coins  
in a golden net

and the Christmas Tree in our living room,  
live on! not only in our song  
though caroling, caroling, schottische too

in our brand new Christmas shining shoes  
we danced our dream in the middle of snow,  
wished hard, closed our eyes

reciting all the facts we know  
of time and its enchantments  
oh Christ child cradled in the hay

look down on this our Christmas day  
and turn it toward eternity's sway  
that we your children, may display

true merriment, forever.

mary angela douglas 23 december 2018; rev.17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Diary On The Underside Of Light

[for Andrei Tarkovsky]

a diary on the underside of light  
the blizzards inside the ruined cathedral  
of the soul

the balloon cut free  
is crashing on the underside of light  
of light of light

neither daylight nor is it the moon's shading;  
in the gardens of the child is it a rose of light?  
as if it flowed from Dante then was

interrupted, almost musical, to the point of tears?  
is it the curvature of angels broken apart  
from great distances;

a light,  
barely comprehended in a dream

from which you don't want to  
you don't want to  
Awake

mary angela douglas 12 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Door Opens In A Cloud

(again, to William Blake)

a door opens in a cloud  
when we say the name of God outloud  
a flap appears in the sky

revealing fire rainbows when the wind lifts it  
painted there by the high sign of the sun  
around and through hexagonal crystals..

where will I sell  
my painted enamelware  
not door to door

or anywhere at all  
it's layered colour on colour  
finger painted joy, , .

she will revert to toys now  
prognosticators say  
in a psychiatric way

having no other language  
to beg people to revere them in  
but who asked them in anyway

my mind is sound and clear  
and limpid, not-my-dears,  
though you won't say so

so why would I hear them  
hemming the music so it will fit  
their rudimentary concepts

who do not fear the waning year  
or that the clouds will drift away  
I was only here to say for a little while

let beauty unfold

like God when a cloud door opens  
like a rose, the Original one

and joy is tipped flame to flame  
you know like Pascal found one day  
in remaindered sunsets

I have been one embroidered on the sun  
I have been one long acquainted with Grace  
you say whenever,

disregarding the cafeteria crowds,  
their quizzical faces-  
you'll say God's name outloud.

till He shakes the rainbows  
out of the clouds.

mary angela douglas 1 march 2018

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Mary Angela Douglas

# A Far Away Feeling At The Birthday Party

[a true story...]

a far away feeling at the birthday party  
and you remember something from the long ago  
yet, how can you? you're only ten years old.

the cake seems meant for someone else.  
the raspberry ice from some other season.  
you feel beyond all rhymes and cannot reason it out

you only feel:

surveying the table as if from soft distances:  
are these presents  
wrapped in pink and blue with their contrasting

curled ribbons really meant for you?  
and there's a strangeness like an invisible guest  
who says to you suddenly but in your own language:

but who are you? you wonder, suddenly apart.  
and the sun leaves rings on all the furniture.  
the children's voices

still like larks but  
in a garden someone before you knew  
are just beside you in their party dress and festive too but

you're in a larger room...

mary angela douglas 26 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Few Metaphors On Working For A Living

“Work is Love, made visible.” Kahlil Gibran

we have felt half measures, quarter measures

and measured words, too

slogging through rain, or sleet, or snow

almost as soldiers do or simmering summer parking lots

like deserts

to make up the city plotted distance from the bus

to where our warehoused duties wait.

probationed like prisoners from the word go

in some places

you know, to show us who's in control.

and you're on trial, or even, on loan.

and don't know anyone this far from home...

oh, my soul by planetary wars be not disturbed

the poet wrote. I add as a footnote.

this is what is called

working for a living and we are grateful

and forgiving

considering the alternatives.

yet when push comes to shoving us out the door  
because you know they want to make more  
and the easiest way is to cut your job  
whatever it is  
to make a Merry Christmas for the shareholders.  
how can we not have a stake in this  
when our lives are at risk, our families too  
or maybe, only, our modest hobbies.  
what we consider our life. our shabby home library,  
more than shabby chic;  
astronomy, keeping the goldfish fed.  
other countries, torn by strife  
by bloody civil unrest we know, we know  
and children on their own  
in every kind of zone  
have suffered more than we, than me,  
in the land of the nearly free on weekends  
and I bow down and on my knees  
for them.  
but one small hymn  
I sing for all my peers

who are counted failures.  
wait. wait for the Gate swinging open  
for your tears are heard  
despite your being herded.  
by the one who is the Word  
that cannot be broken  
who won't use you like a token  
to barge through the golden turnstiles.  
though from the time that we sign on  
each day survived seems like a miracle.  
still to be there.  
but for how long.  
each day feels a little  
like the French Revolution.  
new heads may roll.  
so you perfect your role  
in the enterprise avoiding the tumbrils  
the best you can  
being pretty far out  
from the chain of command  
and they're not sending the



Coast Guard

to find you in the flood.

though the One they crucified will.

---

(the poet I cited is Elinor Wylie)

P.S. may God truly bless companies, managers,  
coworkers who still retain the milk of human kindness.  
and forgive those who don' may we do all, endure all for Divine Love has surely  
done the same for us.

mary angela douglas 9 september 2019

Like

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Final Thing To You Will Be Said

a final thing to you will be said  
but then you won't be here  
so you may as well imagine it,

spell it out in code to the birds  
who will fly away with it  
back to their fairy tale lands,

to their nests twined silver and gold,  
the occasional turquoise.  
something sparkles in a beak

and it's too late to take it back  
and it goes free, without permission  
into the clouds.

so it could be for you or me  
the last day on earth;  
when we escape the denouement

they had planned  
with God, sweet God,  
commanding otherwise...

mary angela douglas 20 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Ghost Story For Mr. Barrie

[to J.M. Barrie, author of Peter Pan, Mary Rose...]

the filagree of Time dismantled  
and the mists and not, the action rising,  
the character of

mist, the voice in mist, all flower=in=a=mist  
the chime-and then, gone

disappearing then, chiming  
Somewhere Else someone else  
declaring undying

love but the gold of syllables flake off  
into...the memory of doves  
of the perhaps snows and the rooms snowing

singeing the silvers of words  
of the possible impossibles  
and what if it dissolves at night?

the window is open and the

night air, the night air  
the curtains billowing  
but whose are they,

the children, when you turn your back  
close your eyes or open them again,  
then dreaming is everywhere,

nowhere on the tracks as expected  
there we were  
with our best handkerchiefs waving goodbye

consorting with ghost ships, walking the planks

with the painted moons in our eyes or

in between, entr'act, la sylphide through the trees  
never nearer, almost, clearer,  
looking back on the ballets

o! and all the orchid ways  
at the islands slipping from the maps  
all schoolroom wrapped

whenever you take up the book  
and read the page  
you thought you had

finished, look

it is never finished  
we are never finished

mary angela douglas 21 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Golden Ball Slips Down The Well And...

a smattering of paint on a plain piece of paper  
ballooning out like a jellyfish classroom mural  
on butcher paper;

roses huge as skyscrapers on green mint posterboard

and circuses with the sun in the right hand corner,  
these are the things we made  
in the goldfish days before show and tell

where we were observed at our spelling  
in the wishing well intermissions  
of the play.

and you are the good fairy in red keds  
on the auditorium stage  
and so realistically she said,

don't cry Princesss, or she is gone  
we don't know where  
a lavender cloud on the dusky stair

and when will we where will we  
ever find her

mary angela douglas 30 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Half Day Off From Work

like the trains that never arrive  
in the middle of the day  
so that you walked home

dismissed a half day from work  
a long long way.  
turning a page

in your armchair  
and waking up later  
one hundred years behind

to the middle distance  
with your name on it  
and the tartan thermos

with the glass lining

these clouds float through your mind  
you can't dismiss  
erase so hard as you may

leaving holes in the paper  
where the stars shine through  
the multiplex carbon copies'

bonbon colors: pink mint yellow blue,  
old menus you can't use anyway

waiting for the ghost train

to the ghost job  
no longer open for you.  
with a violet crayon, your best one

on a large sheet of paper  
torn in half  
you will draw a place to live in

a magic dog  
a fridge full of chocolate  
and someone's round of cheese

all you want is a place to sneeze in  
far from public view  
it's up to you they cry on tv

but its up to God  
you say and close your eyes  
and wake up on the other side

of dream  
where the pink clouds  
line themselves up in rows

prepared to drift endlessly away

mary angela douglas 20 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Letter To All The Poets On Poemhunter From Mary Angela Douglas

I am very very sorry not to reply to people who say things about my poetry for some time now. I do read what you write and i take it to heart and notice each name. I am older now and always I feel like I am running out of time. I get exhausted easily and that is why I do not reply. It isnt because I dont care. Please forgive me. On poemhunter ALL THE TIME whenever I post a poem I feel a great sea surging around me of individual poets pouring out their poetry every hour of the day and night somewhere in the world and I am greatly comforted by this feeling. We who write here may not be famous, may never be famous as fame is understood in this world but we are poets BECAUSE we write. And the fact that individual poets in all countries of the world are continuing to write here even in this difficult time period when we have the pandemic and so much else going on makes me want to never stop weeping tears of joy and the angels of God and all the poets who went before us in the same way must be doing the same. We ARE the image of God. His children. No matter what, BEAUTY GOES ON FOREVER. And you are all beautiful to me and I pray for you with my whole heart for protection from all the hurts anguish and constant cuts and blows of the world. Live for beauty and beauty will live for you and God Himself wipe away each tear. God be with you all my dear brothers and sisters in poetry. FOREVER. NEVER GIVE . Mary Angela Douglas August 2 2020 WE WILL ALL MEET IN HEAVEN ONE DAY AS THE VICTORS WHO SHONE LIKE A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD AND DID NOT ALLOW OUR LIGHT TO GO OUT. YOUR POEMS NO MATTER WHAT THE WORLD SAYS AND YOUR SPIRIT WILL NEVER NEVER DIE.

Mary Angela Douglas



# A Little Off Stage

fairy tale borders I painted on the walls  
I printed in the halls  
the coat closets in the apartment of my dreams

where on the patio

birds would come to my hand, if only  
for the stenciled cherries.  
and I am the tuning fork of

the prised clouds I kept to myself.  
while outloud outloud the fervid chanters chanted  
in the village square

near the garish fruit stands.

whilst we laid low my soul and I

where the ice breaks apart  
revealing the glazed violets  
speaking our rainbowed part, the past

a little offstage; the houselights  
dimmed with starlight sleeping  
and everything prayed in colours.

mary angela douglas 22 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Long Long Time Ago

here comes the perfect poem  
twisting itself into multicoloured balloon  
animals

for the toddler about to cry  
puffing itself into clouds  
pink ones for the babies

out in their strollers and sunbonnets  
and now its shade and a leafy avenue  
wouldn't want them to get overheated

here's the poem turning itself into a typewriter  
for the writer that's run out of words  
on deadline

fresh copy get your fresh copy here  
into coffee with cream for the  
artist plein air in his spindly chair

waiting for the

rain to stop and now it's an umbrella  
parrot green with a thin stripe of gold  
or an overcoat for you in the cold

when you just went out in your sweater  
thinking you'd only be a minute  
well a perfect poem's got everything in it

that you might ever need  
oh it's the poem for any kind of weather

or a tasty treat when you've nothing to eat  
in the house that's sweet or

here's the perfect poem turning into the  
perfect dress in lemon yellow with soft blue accents  
thank you thank you said Cinderella

a long long time ago

mary angela douglas 30 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Meditation On Those Who Judge Hoarders

it's the ultimate in nosiness isn't it?  
those pictures of the inside of  
people's houses, little apartments as if the

cameras were bearing down on  
a crime scene:  
souvenirs from the World's Fair 1939

too many polka dot dresses in the closet;  
pick just one.  
why don't we go all hog and just

get a judge and jury in there.  
maybe the Supreme Court  
right there in the living room

with all those magazine pathways.  
the New Year's Eve confetti.  
Postcards! they'll shriek.

-the viewers at home lap it up.  
you keep postcards? salt water taffy?  
helping themselves to the candy

from last Christmas;  
closeups on the mantelpiece dust...

when I was young house guests were told  
by their mothers: bring something with you:  
you know, special soaps, a little bouquet of flowers

a teacake. be nice at the party.  
don't overstay your welcome.  
help wash up.

nowdays they come to visit:

simplify! they say; leading the way  
with a smile and a lot of energy.

The trucks roll up, early onset,  
the bric a brac boxed goes out.  
burglars do the same.  
let the healing begin they murmur

on their way out the door  
with your stuff.

mary angela douglas 26 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Modern Explanation Of An Historical Occasion

costume jewelry came raining down  
on the villages, the small republics;  
seeded pearls and the plated gold

and sapphire crayons for children to hold.  
mothers removed their aprons;  
girls, their kerchiefs in the fields.

the princess simply held out her hands.  
almost rubies tumbling over the rose gardens,  
near the lilac palings and the railings,

the dachas painted in vermillion.  
faux emeralds near the ferns,  
and mysterious jade.

it's Grandmother's jewelry box in the skies  
turned over, and in the white gold shade,  
say my sister and I, as the rattling on the

tin roofs fades and everyone's gussied up.

next week's forecast...  
1950's toys from the five and dimes  
in birthday pink tissue paper.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Parable For No One

meeting the paradox in the hallway  
I prayed hard  
O Lord let me pass invisibly

and He did  
but I met another on the stairwell  
avoiding the elevator as it tended

to be packed with paradoxes  
in the mid afternoon  
all in various languages assembled

and so, arraying myself in shadows  
flecked only slightly with gold

I cried

into the handkerchief of my dream  
the embroidered one  
and there three angels came

to tell me it will be this way  
it is always this way

mary angela douglas 29 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Person Longs To Say

these things happened to me

a person longs to say

and then to sit down at a reasonable table

for as long it takes to tell to tell the whole story

with maybe a sandwich and a cup of Joe

but who knows

maybe there just aren't those kind of angels among us

anymore who can stand to hear the whole thing

from beginning to end.

and not mention options.

so all those individuals have to stow it.

,

and meanwhile there is so much talk.

people go to school and talk some more

to conferences to seminars dreaming of

an impersonal self sufficiency by design

with all those folks in mind

or draw up plans for those who live out doors



to be out of the way when the tourists come to play  
because they are bad for business.  
every year the Christmas play. Good old Scrooge.  
mankind was my business old Jacob Marley said.  
too late too late when he was dead.  
it still sounds sweet on stage and sentimental.  
but business goes another way.  
for even those who saw the play and loved it.  
and charity is just to keep them out of the way  
the surplus population  
so others can get on with their day.  
I know rich folks have their problems too;  
who doesn't, who lives long enough.  
still a person wants to be heard.  
to say what happened to them in life  
and what they tried to do.  
even if the only shoes they have  
are with the soles flapping.  
so that people are laughing.  
and the only one listening is God.

mary angela douglas 29 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Pink Chalk Moon Rising Behind A Blue House

a pink chalk moon rising behind a blue  
house, like a candy-colored picture  
from a children's storybook:

through the storybook glass wall the yellow  
leaves rained down and down  
the blue house sinking under the  
chalk pink moon trembled  
snow fell exactly like sugar  
crystals and disappeared as  
if it never formed in flakes in

gestures too accelerated  
on the blue porch in the  
dazzling day's

goodbye-

mary angela douglas 1994

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Plan For Making It Through All On Your Own

maybe they want the beautiful to disappear  
so that they may rule and reign, the trolls,  
present under every bridge and you

must pay their fee.  
or stay at home.  
how often then would we long

for the cloak of invisibility  
at any birthday, under the Christmas tree  
welcomed

or on the list of the required  
school with the protractor  
the pencil case that slides open.

and the cray pas.  
but aboveground we were too visible a target.  
how do roses grow I thought in this cold climate

why do not all castles sink at every nod and wink  
at the dubious eyebrow raised in the  
nightmare madrigal. near graduation

You are on the brink they say  
of the life before you.  
but you know

they're out there under the  
bridge construction going on  
all the time out on highway 101

just waiting for you, the trolls  
near the office park where you will work  
for some one's professional smirk to

grow smirkier while you toil and

where you must learn again and again  
not to depend on good reviews

just be glad that you are you that God is nigh  
still making it through  
and safe across the bridge again by nightfall

behind your rose clabbered walls  
small but free  
reading about invisible kingdoms

lost continents where nothing like this  
is required of d merely blooming.

mary angela douglas 20 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Poem For Easter 2016

this time I will not rush the light  
I promised You and I knew You heard  
or fault your angels for appearing to slow

the crystal unwindings of my snows;  
the fluttering of birds beneath  
the window where I live.

I live but not in this instant not  
at a physical address the one  
you use on all the forms the one that

lets you be pin pointed in the surveys  
on the grid where no one visits you.  
somewhere else I used to live

where I played hide and seek with the sun  
when under the skies of robins egg  
blue I believed in all your Easters.

and I can go there  
underneath all this  
in my olive carcoat

counting the stars  
that I remember from  
those vanished skies

those vivid yards

and hearing music  
I heard then  
lodged in my heart

against the bleak ravages  
of crows and so much else  
that life surprises us with

in unwrapped packages

we'd like to take back.  
I may not show

from year to year  
the music that I really hear  
sweet childhood's larks!

and though they may not understand  
and think I'm in a foreign land  
whenever they see me

if they see me

dear God,  
I know where my home is still.  
and that keeps out the dark.

mary angela douglas 23 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Prayer For The Unsuspecting

may God banish from your heart  
your mind the little rattlesnake remarks  
that caught you from behind

beside within the corridors of dream  
when you weren't looking;  
when you were lulled by beauty

and did not know where you were;  
suddenly caught up in the lights that  
arced the wide skies into night

unmindful of the hissing in the gulch  
at your feet,  
the writhing stars above you;

the roses scarred in front of the sod house

where you must have imagined your freedom  
from forever the little rattlesnake remarks  
that lodge with the cherished with the unsuspected;

caught in the rainstorm that becomes the flood,  
the gushing over the aqueducts,  
observed too late.

the war was only rumored overnight;  
daylight exposed the rude plane  
down in flames;

their long white dawns uncoiled

mary angela douglas 4 august 2014

Note on the poem: 'rude' only in the sense of simple, rudimentary.

Mary Angela Douglas



# A Prayer In Winter

I have been partial to Your mother of pearl skies  
I will miss them then  
the day I go;

the way the winds blow suddenly  
never letting you know  
they were coming sighed

the half blown rose  
the way all flowers surprise  
when they bud

and you thought, oh you thought  
but it's still winter, isn't it?  
not believing your eyes.

the same way, one day,  
I hope that earth  
will waken from her sad disguise,

all conflicts passed;  
and unseen woundings.

then it will be Spring forever, won't it?  
asked the child  
wrinkling her mother's dress.

and she said, Yes...

mary angela douglas 26 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Primer For Out Times

Sally run round the roses in a time of war

say what's all this bickering for

run Sally run.

say and say.

isnt it fun to talk this way

isnt it fun to play

neat in the picture book assemblies

molded to a paper doll stage.

someday you will move away

move sally.

pack the van and you will wave

wave Sally wave.

in the red wagon or the green.

with the dolls and a pitcher of cream.

in a pinafore dress with princess seams

youll wake up in a foreign dream

sally run round the roses.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Rhinestone Covered Castle In The Evening Snows

a rhinestone covered castle in the evening snow  
is the epitome of sparkliness thought the little girl  
in her velvet Christmas snood, with her

big vocabulary. she was skating on the estuary  
later that day when the snow fairy dropped in  
just to say what is it you are wishing;

I know you're not here fishing  
when it's this glazed.  
I want a rhinestone covered castle;

it would be sublime, the little girl rhymed  
or I am rhyming for her being that kind  
and besides, it is Christmas at least in

this poem. 'Tis a harsh thing, said the  
Irish fairy masquerading as the snow one  
and more than a little wary (weary) -

to be asked to replicate something, dearie, (actually  
the fairy didn't say replicate but now the little girl  
is resuming the thread of the narrative) -

and it's a little late  
to replicate something that effete just as it's  
beginning to sleet...

so the little girl took pity on the fairy  
with her working the two jobs and all  
and just said, skip over the mall then, Poll. I just want

a rhinestone encrusted  
oxford english dictionary  
but not the abridgement

and miraculously indeed  
the Irish snow fairy knew just what she meant  
and here we pause with an elision because

this poem is indubitably done-  
(she meant, an ellipsis and that is what this is...)  
so don't be aghast and

Merry Christmas!

mary angela douglas 28 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Short History Of The Poets Recited Over The Sleeping

to A.E. Houseman and all the others...

"loveliest of trees, the cherry now..." (a.e. houseman)

and forever to the poets Oscar Williams, Gene Derwood and their dreaming son and to the anthologies of Oscar Williams each one perfected like a dream...

I wrote on the walls of my heart  
thinking no one would see.  
I covered the thorns with singing.  
oh how could I know then  
what I know now: the thorns are all Yours.  
and the singing.

to use the ink of sighs of those who went before  
is risking all colours and they came too willingly  
but how could I know then  
what had been done to them-

to you  
through negligent ages-  
that they would seek refuge with such an anonymous descendant.  
and that all the missing cobblers would doff their hats...

it was only their kindness, heart's ghostly affection  
that someone's reading light was still on  
and all, and all, for them who never  
dreamed to be remembered;  
how could they know, then.

O, but I saw starlight still In the crook of the glistening winter  
of their trees and of my own

however misspent have been and will be  
the orchards whiter, still-  
intensifying, ever-increasing  
toward a Beauty unrealized and unrealizable

and yet, it's blossoming, blossoming  
in the short history of light  
that is ever seeping through

the prison doors (visible and invisible) :  
forever clanging shut on us, the wrong way,  
the living, the wrong-headed but we don't know  
when we'll be like them, transfigured into Poetry;  
snowed under it happily,  
wordlessly in the stunning light  
on an ordinary day,  
interrupted by angels  
'Hush, dear...'  
Light

mary angela douglas 23 september 2012; revised 19 november 2013

Note: and to anyone who would wonder or feel unclear about it,  
the capital 'Y' in 'Yours' refers to God and to Christ from whom and to  
whom all Beauty flows and all our orphaned words forever

A mysterious thing. Earlier today when I went to check the mail I received  
several packages. One contained an inexpensive 1917 copy of Maeterlinck's  
play 'The Bluebird' but I only opened this, the last of the packages half way as  
it was difficult to open, very difficult even with scissors. I laid it aside to do other  
things and to work on the revisions of this poem.

After I finished the revisions, I finished opening the package with 'The Bluebird'  
in it, pulled out a little green-grey volume with gilt letters and in perfect condition  
and it opened easily at p.201 which ends Act Four this way:

LIGHT  
Hush, dear...

CURTAIN

which I then appropriated to close my poem  
speaking of the short history of light, in a way you could say, this is Maeterlinck's  
play and like The Bluebird this is also happiness, isn't it, mystery and miracle to  
receive from unseen long ago hands the dream ending to your poem.

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Silver Branch Is Broken From

to the poets of the Silver Age

a silver branch is broken from  
a golden tree.

in the upper atmosphere  
are many angels  
and clouds of shimmering  
radiant symbols

if it were colder it would be  
snowing angels  
and Christmas could come early

but you lose your way in  
the fairytale forest  
forgetting to be  
on your guard-

plucking a rose in the  
fatal hour-  
turning to stone.

all blazing kingdoms  
corroborate:

the same victory on the same day

and there is world-wide entertainment  
and sherbert in 10,000 flavors

but the milk-white sky pours out  
pitchers of sorrow

the sun on its own bakes  
bitter loaves  
and like children unjustly punished

we can't stop weeping for



the silver branch

cut from the golden tree-

mary angela douglas 13 june 2005/30 august 2005/copyright 2006

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Sparkling Ensued

to my sister, Sharon,  
and all her glistening music

go deeper into the woods soothed my pages,  
butterfly fluttering from the rose of peeling shelves.  
and in no breeze at all,  
a sparkling ensued.

a sparkling ensued and all the golden paths were opened;  
though whether their gold was sunlit or was You, dear God,  
could I even imagine.

it was You. and a sparkling ensued. and I went farther back  
as though instructed, you know, to that part of the fairy tale  
where all is about to go well if you will only listen.

you will only listen  
and a glistening ensued.  
and the woods were so much greener than we remembered:  
in full summer, when we peeked through our fingers to see

falling snows and you felt like lace.  
you felt like lace;  
never losing your place in the story

once you'd begun, reminded someone dressed in lilac,  
in a peaked hat, shimmering,  
as I longed to be-

all alone on a nursery stage proclaiming: I am the princess  
who could not smile until my baby sister piped like  
a silver bird crying, angela, don't cry!

anymore. anymore.  
we'll go like the children hand in hand  
through deeper woods than these  
guarded by angels

where the roses foam in the moonlight

to the play house we know is there,  
pink coated in candy sunlight  
with a green awning.

then, the breeze is awake-  
like it's Christmas day.  
and we're the flower girls at the weddings  
where Grandmother played Mendelsohn  
for all those brides.

or in pale Easter dresses  
on the Other Side  
in new bonnets with the sprigged cherries.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2014

Note on the poem: My sister is a pianist. I remember her playing Chopin for hours barely out of grade school, and the shimmering cascade of sound. When we were younger in nursery school I gave a convincing performance of the fairytale 'The Princess Who Never Smiled' and cried (like one of our dolls) , real tears. Alarmed, my little sister stood up from the crowd and comforted me.

My Grandmother was a piano teacher and an organist who played for the weddings of all her older pupils and others at our church. My sister and I lamented we were only the 'rice girls' when it was the custom, to throw rice at the weddings.

We longed to be flower girls in long dresses, scattering the rose petals wildly.

We threw the rice very hard, however, in huge handfuls, so that the brides complained and then we were just free to enjoy the candied mints and nuts at the receptions.

And the lime sherbet punch in the cut glass bowl. I wish I had some now.

In my dream of Heaven in this poem I have changed us into the flower girls. But the brides should have let us throw flowers instead of rice and then they wouldn't have had anything to worry about.

(We threw the rice hard because we thought it would bring them more luck. I have no idea what put that into our heads.)

'pages' in the first line in the meaning of pages of a book and also in the meaning

of 'pages' from the King's court, messengers (in this case, of course, since we are speaking in fairytalese, they are winged messengers)

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Valediction To My Mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas

God be with you now, my mama  
every step of the starry way  
though the world we had not, mama;  
  
be the Greater World  
one day.  
time with sundry trials still passes  
  
some have died  
for what they prayed  
I will endure for all you taught me  
  
through the crooked  
fairy tale way.  
scorn and daily crushing set us  
  
like two jewels in God's own band  
though the world has more to notice  
still I press on, while I can

one day to see clear again  
the purpose both of us kept close  
though the earth with all its gardens

lock its gates with bars of snow.

farther on I would be going  
farther on through glacial night

till we find the brighter Kingdoms

all the poems of His delight.

mary angela douglas july 21 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Valentine For My Grandmother

[for Lucy W. Young, forever.]

hibiscus flowered the late sun tints  
the cream of clouds outside  
the piano studio

where you rehearse  
only for music's sake  
the early nocturnes

and scales of pale green  
grace notes wandering  
the flake of gold off the tick

of the mahogany metronome.  
oh grandmother in a red silk dress  
teaching us all, all of this

and God, besides

how beautifully the birds must sing  
in your Eternal Spring.

mary angela douglas 13 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# A Valentine Miscellany

attic codes of the turtledoves  
the blue birds with satin ribbons in their beaks  
making a grand flourish of it

do you see the world like a valentine sometimes?  
a rustle of lace from the winter skies  
and haloed stars, the evening's eyes

when she looks out to see  
the gracefulness of trees  
the pink heart of the sun.

it's melting we cried  
my sister and I  
playing in the backyard

rose light in our faces  
in the slow slide of the day  
and by the last ray,

it was supper time.  
this too, was a valentine

mary angela douglas 3 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# A Visitation

song itself came to the back stairs of the castle  
in a drenching rain  
like the princess in old fairy stories, refrains

of the tunes we softly used to dream  
bringing blossoms to a neglected altar-  
driven out

seeking refuge  
tears indistinguishable from rain  
and her cloth of gold is frayed

her silken shoes worn.  
petal thin she hardly stands  
like a wish pebble thrown, alone

half drowned in an ancient fountain.  
but her eyes shine candlelit within  
like a thousand thousand candelabra

or the night skies branching plum tinged  
over a wordless Spring.

mary angela douglas 1 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# A White Dress, The One Netted With Stars

I don't know why even now it seems such an illusory thing  
almost like an ideal yearned for, never realized  
but shimmering still, like a mirage

a dress to be worthy of  
a pristine dress, white chiffon with a netted overlay  
of tiny sprinkled stars silver stars

I close my eyes I see it  
paragon of all possible dresses  
and I can't trace the mystery of how it came to be

so enshrined in my memory like a second soul.  
I had once a white chiffon dress with puffed sleeves  
waltz length with beautiful seams, a perfect skirt and gathered

graciously  
and ruby red pumps, all of fifteen, a bouquet frosted  
gold by my Grandfather

and dancing school's Holly Ball to attend.  
the occasion did not live up to the dress.  
ever since, I see it even more transfigured

a dress of snow, and actual stars come down  
like a fairy godmother extra  
and they star cluster upon it and will not go of

a dress that glows  
why it is moonlight people should say  
or is it snow and the disappearing

among the colored lanterns when the evening has run out of  
its glittery evening things  
the gardens receding

as though it were early spring  
that feeling

a dress to be worn the epitome of gardenia, lily, rose  
all the cream flowers massed together  
a kind of Infinity I deem it now to be.

mary angela do0uglas 6 july 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Abatement

I'm reporting this to the authorities  
you want to say  
but there are no authorities

only people who want to make sure  
they have something to eat for lunch  
for several hours. and that you will

not impede this.  
so what can you say?  
there'll be no noise abatement

not today or any day

and it doesn't even go in waves anymore.  
it's a continual rapping, tapping

as though you were in Poe's chamber  
the day the raven came.  
and now it's a thumping clomping

relentless, Thing that will stop if you complain  
and someone comes padding up to investigate  
so that no one believes your report

and thinks you're making it all up.  
why didn't Poe write a story about this?  
but maybe his neighbors were scared

to act up; Poe being Poe, you know.  
and you want to go somewhere

anywhere else this is not happening  
but where is it, is it?  
or is the whole earth filled with

hammering  
your soul slammed into the walls.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Admixture Of Kabakov, Ilya (And Notre Dame)

here is the boat

you want to get in.

to go to the other shore.

the other shore is a toy.

this does not deter you

from drawing up many plans.

the plans take on

their own luminosity

they have their own closet now

and several angels.

the glass of rose windows

reverts to sand

the plans are everything now.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Advice For The Dedicated Reader Much Maligned

was it you that heard the clarion, silver  
opening certain books and received  
disparaging looks on account of it?

throw-away comments by the score.  
who cares what is said when you  
are in the kingdom of reading

what you please and see yourself  
among the crenellated towers  
or wondrously at sea, adrift in

What Could Be...

forget the cranks, those who cry 'misfit! '  
surreptitiously or in the public square  
and act as though you're totally unaware

of it or of a wider world.  
they think you are, anyway!  
just play among the immortals.

mary angela douglas 16 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# After Hans Andersen's 'the Wild Swans'

while toying with the sand in our teacups  
at the Great Feasts we were told  
to make ourselves useful:

grinding cracker crumbs for the  
Marvelous Meatloafs;  
mixing the berried vinagrettes for the green beans

snapping to attention.  
checking the pink and the bakelite stove  
for the little plain cakes for our supper.

in the fairytale castles  
life is not what it seemed  
and minus the icing

when we wrote on diamond slates  
waiting for our bluegreen majorities.  
carol it whichever way you can

on a green strand  
near the hollyberries  
and the soapflake snow whirling all around

but I remember when learning  
was the glasslike hills  
and the golden apples rolling down.

mary angela douglas 31 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# After Jacques Brel

neither earth nor sky, here comes the thief of wishes  
to filch the light from children's eyes from the very sun  
that shone on you, Persephone in your dress of wild iris,

neither shore nor sea.

there burns the thief of wishes warning  
those who should be told, instead  
to flee the Messenger!

or weep fresh centuries away  
or shake your Christmas angels,  
sleeping fast, awake-

or wait at a turquoise landing  
smoothing your dress of pearl till  
not a lemon drop's left;

a train in the train yard.

she'll murmur from a glassy stream  
as one who knows:  
keep stealing the beat from the heart

the right word from the page  
while the windmills turn as if in another age but  
your own fields

your own...  
fields are seldom green.

I saw in a dream with a silver spoon  
the thief of wishes scoop the moon  
till birdsong flew but not the birds

I am littered with the jewels of  
what remains

mary angela douglas 29 august 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# After The Firebirds Leave The Paintings

after the Firebirds leave the paintings  
and you are on your own  
may the ghost hearts and flowers rain down,  
almost undecoded:  
leaving mere rubies and emeralds behind  
to mark their passage;  
ah the tears, whispered someone extravagant;  
you said: this exotic loss.

is it your Palekh loneliness, refined.  
or is it the exalted solitude;  
is that the mood through  
the fairy tale woods  
long disregarded?

when you only you  
resume the path  
and fit into your crystal shoe  
the shadow tracks your  
footprints made  
on amethyst snows.

all this was long ago  
and the sheen  
of an antique brocade, ballet  
unwound from a hidden spool,  
Mary of all the opals shining  
at the same time-

and of the lost plumage of the  
red and gold.

mary angela douglas 29 may 2014; rev.12 june 2014

Note on the poem: The opening of this poem echoes another poem I wrote, 'After the Messengers Leave' and is a different exploration of the same initial emotion. Perhaps a period post-vision, post-annunciation when you are left with the emptiness of the angel-less air, or in the case of this poem, set in a Russian setting, a situation so dire or so remote, that the firebirds have migrated from

the the palekh (fairytale) paintings. This poem also elusively, allusively refers to my feeling about Russian ballet, that feeling of ballet as holy and as being carefully passed down from one generation to the next irregardless of what is going on politically - this atmosphere. The reference to Mary, the Mother of Jesus occurred spontaneously, I don't know why except that in viewing certain Italian Paintings of the Virgin, or in reading the Liturgy of the Hours, I always long to find other names for her, names that would have been given to other paintings that would have been painted of her, names that might have been given to other canticles composed for her, they might have even been composed and that we have mysteriously lost, but in any case, in this poem have the luster of mother of pearl. And all the opals shining at the same time is the name I have given to the divine longing while on earth to experience your whole experience of beauty simultaneously something which I believe can be done only in a Heavenly afterlife but which makes a space in this poem for the person in a dire situation to contemplate this pearlescent, opalescent feeling and to live in it for the duration of the art work or for the moment in which

the poem is read.

Mary Angela Douglas

# After The Gaelic

to Turlough O Carolan for his songs in Heaven  
(1670-25 March 1738)

I could not see through the crystal page  
I was ever that lost  
and wandering through the

dream you dreamed  
how could I spell  
the moon, the stars-

let it not be said  
I wandered there in vain  
when Christ was on my left

and on my right  
when bright through the  
thickets of dim sleep

his kindest name appeared all candlelit  
in reels of rose, in my own sky-  
never to be forgotten.

it was then I saw  
through the crystal  
men called poetry

straight through to the guardian green

of abiding song-then I knew  
there is no farewell to music.

and God gave me  
the names of the moon and stars  
and the harp of perfect stillness-

jeweled

mary angela douglas 12 july 2011

## Despues del Gaelico

Yo no podía ver a través de la página de cristal  
yo estaba cada vez tan perdido  
y vagando por el sueño que sonaste  
como podría hechizo de la luna, las  
estrellas  
que no se diga que vagaba en vano  
cuando Cristo estaba a mi izquierda y a mi derecha  
cuando brilla a través de la espesura  
del sueño oscuro  
su nombre más simple de la rosa  
hay que no olvidar jamás.  
entonces fue que vi a través del cristal  
que los hombres se llama 'la poesía'  
directamente a través  
del ángel de la guarda verde  
de canción constante-  
entonces supe que no hay ninguna despedida  
a la música  
y Dios me dio los nombres de  
la luna y las estrellas  
y el arpa de quietud perfecta-  
de piedras preciosas-

mary angela douglas 12 july 2011/Spanish translation 1 august 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# After The Manner Of Ilya Kabakov

this is the glass and the frame around it.

shatter the glass.

rescue the dream people.

carry them out on the green grass

near the fountains.

let there be singing.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# After The Russian

black snow descended in Malevich square

that was when I turned the corner

and then another, edged in the raveling of lace

it's late my mother it's unearthly

we ate pears at Christmas in the matchstick flare

I dreamed up in a dream when we were almost

beyond compare; compere,

folkloric embroidered with the memory of snow

soon the harvests won't come

drum circles will emerge

but all I heard

was nothing compared

with Shoshtakovich.

violins weeping the black snows.

it's the absence of light

that will not count as a country in Heaven

no matter how hard they try

to stop the swallows

when they fly with a single crumbling edict

to carry poetry into a furnace

and the furnace never dies

and black snow is descending

violas at the end, the last jette

why pretend otherwise

you could really forget

why look at spires through a mist

and imagine this as

a fairy tale

milk white; prescient with opals

I was in an orchard of whys

and no one could fell me.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Aftermath Of A Cathedral

waking up at 3 a.m. at first, no thought

it's still dark

then suddenly, the sinking of the heart anew

oh no, it really happened not to you

to the cathedral

weeping embers still

oh blessed mirage,

kaleidoscopic ark

and smouldering dawn

no war did this.

what must they think of us

in Heaven

who built you stone on stone

that you might remain

the myriad tolling

hours refrain from speech

what words can reach

what hearts can comprehend

the loveliness lost

how mended, how

we kneel in your dust

and find

His radiance still,

within.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ahead Of The Evictors

coming back from tea

it starting to rain

we stood in a portico.

this was in a dream

and thought about great literature

as it used to be esteemed

and wondered at the tearose

colour of the clouds.. what meaning there ie

in the unspoken gestures of the sky

the evanescence of snows.

this is another kingdom I know

a place I could have stayed granted one

bubble wanded wish of a summer's day

and afforded small sandwiches

to tide me over.

in the world as it is now

where is there to stay.

any sparrow in a nest can be dislodged

because some one eyes prime real estate

and wants to make a killing in a time of plague.

still within a dream I dreamed of great music

Beethoven in the hereafter

Chopin half in love with his own nocturnes

things of this nature.

now I will live in no country at all

or stay momentarily at petaled corners

unsure of the crosswalks.

my soul having vacated the premises

ahead of the evictors.

mary angela dougla 4 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Air In A Box

here's air in a box! the jester said  
the best that anyone ever had.  
come live in the box and you will see

the air in here is fresh as the sea  
and dusted gold and lily bright  
you'll sleep so well

not up all night.  
just sign on the line  
and you will see

everything breathing was meant to be.  
well I looked this way and I looked that  
and I could feel it might be a trap

cause just outside in the wind and the trees  
I knew well that the air was free.

mary angela douglas 25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Aladdin

suddenly will it flare up in the story book

in a cloud of fuchsia smoke

the lost lamp's answer and its antidote

the last words beryl and beckoning

life is long without wishes;

will he wait

not that far from the caves

though he thinks there's still a long way

to go

through centuries.

sand blows in his eyes

he thinks it is stars

its just the way you are I think

the way you would be

even if you were lost at sea



mary angela douglas 23 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Alice In A Blue Gown Wondering

shall I follow the burbling stream thought  
Alice to herself in a dream within a dream  
this was in the Pre-Rabbit days  
or just let it burble on

oh really is there any other way to burble  
than to yourself she wondered as if for  
the first time in a lifetime of wondering  
that was merely just starting to be self-evident

is there any other way apart from dreams to part  
but muddled are the colours when I find them  
(if I find them) in the galleries of sleep

and am I invited I am not to the first showings  
shall I follow the burbling stream each time it  
burbles or only on Mondays only in a green glade

God forgot to color in or left for me invitingly to find  
so I'll just fill in the blank spaces  
for Him, Shall I?

mary angela douglas 5 august 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Alice In A Dream Of What Was Melting, Even Then

in dreams we are never sure of the place:  
it could be this or another one.  
geography dissolves.

and then reappears.  
there is a melting of rooms.  
then, do they bloom again?

she asked herself on a sunny afternoon  
on the very same river but  
under a farther sun.

and the clouds float on  
the surface of the bowl  
and not in the puddles

and the mind is muddled  
and do we drift in dreams, do we?  
birthday candles in a pinafore pocket...  
(just in case you know, they bring a cake-  
and with glazed cherries...)

and though it glints like diamonds  
the sun on the river; the heart asleep, awake?  
you're still out of view in a thin sleeved dress:

though present at the pink occasion  
when they tick you off the roll

and late again, for the bus home

mary angela douglas 2 february 2015; 3 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Alice The Small And Brave Before The Fantastic

'Alice the small and brave...' a faint voice glowed on the wind  
oh why pretend she almost fumed...'before the fantastic'.  
and the voice resumed its nonsense.

then I woke up, said Alice later  
not remembering what I saw in the mirrors.  
not knowing what to write in chalk

on a slate that suddenly seemed too small  
to hold it all.  
what will the Red Queen say, the White,

preoccupied me. and wandering out of doors  
in gardens not my own in my thin sleeves.  
oh am I wiser then and am I really grown?

or who is pasting hearts of red in an antique album  
fed and watered by imaginary springs?  
never on birthdays would it be the same.

look deep when you dream.  
so you'll remember where you were  
in between cloud and cloud

when you couldn't hear your mother  
her voice made of raspberries...  
calling you into Tea.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Alive

we make useful things: things that won't shatter.  
we make useful things, things that Matter.  
think of a wave on the sea, I said;

think of a butterfly wing  
crumbling to dust,  
gold spotted;

they said weeping in lead.  
you are besotted.  
think of the rainbow edge

fluted along the floods  
think of the mists that thrive  
those in the house of sod.

and then the prairie rose  
that no one has to mind  
that glows in the mud

and the snow and the summers  
honey hived.  
these makers may stand and cheer

that long may their items survive.

but whatever is made by God  
is the thing that has been alive.

mary angela douglas 4 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# All

who could forsake this shining hour  
sang roof to table  
and bird to tree

in the garden of green fantasie  
on the porch where we had ice cream  
covered in fudge

and would not could not  
hold a grudge  
in the cherry sprung day

where we loved to play  
with the sandbox pail  
and the tea set dolls

and watch the roses bedeck  
the walls and live the stories  
not merely read

and laugh so long  
at the word succeed  
caught by surprise

in the seesaw breeze  
when all we needed to do  
was breathe

the air of heaven  
come down to earth.

mary angela douglas 8 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# All His Infinite Labouring At Bright Coincidence

[for William Butler Yeats, with reverence]

(and for Martin Burke, Irish-Belgian poet and playwright)

all his infinite labouring at bright coincidence  
has long ago spun into the gold  
of finer worlds than this one.

do you still read him  
as the rose tinged glass,  
the harp glossed marvel gone?

I wonder and then wonder endlessly  
that poets after him  
dared to keep on writing.

who will burn the sun into legend now;  
the moon, this starlit haunted maze, into a jewelry  
closer at hand too dear to us

or scan the snows of  
ancient mourning  
or note-  
oh sons and daughters,

the floating counterpoint of the swans  
on Ireland's stilled, strange waters.

I have bound these letters with a shaking hand  
couching my lament in flowers from the antique gardens,  
the rose ridden hours;

learning in this, my latter age and stirred beyond praise,  
all minstrel lays and sheared minstrelsy itself-  
tremulous, and grave to the very grave

to say to you, only: that poems like his-  
we have not earned.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# All I Know At Christmas

[to Jesus, again on his Birthday]

they say you descended from Kings.  
even from God.

all I know is that when I speak

to you, you don't turn away.  
they say princes brought you gold  
frankincense and myrrh.

all I know, when my heart hurts  
I can tell you why and  
you don't tell me: grow up,

get over it.

you don't say, airily, oh,  
just let it all go by.  
and smile, smile, smile.

try to make a success of it.

you do not quibble.  
you have real feeling  
whenever I am dealing with

all I can't understand.

and when o my soul  
has arrived at the last terminal  
on a very shaky bus ride

past neighborhoods of

straw becoming gold  
and I, still all in straw  
so that I don't know, anywhere,

where I am or

if I can...  
then I speak only

no matter to whom I speak,

to empty air.  
to indecipherable stares  
though I speak in plain English

meaning what I say.

and I bereft from all sense of  
knowing how to proceed  
doubting even if they call the morning 'day'

the night, 'evening'

or what is the correct thing to say  
so as to stop being corrected or  
even regarding the trip, what should

I have brought to the picnic  
so as not to be made smaller than small until  
it is long past unbearable

because, what I bring  
is dismissed out of hand  
and even, sight unseen

no matter what it had been;

still, still will I dream  
of arriving at the destination  
and cry through all the walls I know;

I know,  
You are there.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# All Life

all life hangs on a thread of wonder  
alas, my heart, that many don't think this anymore  
so many doors they won't walk through  
eschewing the gardens that wait for them;  
the Emerald City at the end  
I don't know how they live.  
it shines in everything, invisible worlds  
uncurl like ferns and morning glories  
golden stories that we love and shores and  
what there is to love of vast seas marked unknown  
on unaccountable maps, the elusive thread  
that winds its way through entire lifetimes  
only to begin again

beginning itself, first snows with no footprints yet  
oh may my heart not learn to forget  
its treasury of sunrise

I will not countenance any other music  
all my allusive days and ways; waste it  
standing down in darkness,  
far from Praise.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# All Lives Are Unfinished She Said

all lives are unfinished she said  
finishing the seam and seamlessly  
on some cotillion dress

it's the brocaded life you'll always miss  
if you chose the one accented with only crystal  
the slippers to match

the little little veil  
and you are not held in place as you imagine  
sewing your toeshoe ribbons down but

slipping away on any windy day  
without your barrettes

and wondering  
where am I next, never indexed  
on the colorfull index cards

in the little box  
and is this passible

she said holding it up to the light  
a dress of sheer fire shining  
not made to impress but astonish

how could I answer her  
while I was weeping merely pearls, emeralds, rubies  
and could express, nothing.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# All Prayers Under The Sun Came Down To This One

sometimes the heart drifts crosswise against the sun

in a dream in which there's nothing to be done

sometimes the heart.

is still and thinks it has died

when desolate news comes to it,

before Easter tide

and life is not alive oh then

the heart could fall from great distances

never to be revived

foundering on the cliffs with none to see.

oh God please rescue me Who alone

know all that can be done

to wreck the heart before the dawn had come.

mary angela douglas 4 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# All That I Can Say

clouds accelerate to rain  
and I on the porch of the world again,  
not their person of means,

practically houseless,  
shadowless, dream.

how backwards they would wind the clock  
to resume the old myths that every time the  
weather shifts, it is the old gods arguing

but I will not pray like them to the skies,  
nor to the earth, not even to roses  
when I know the God of all holiness

is real and Love itself  
Christ died to reveal;  
Dante said, the Love that moves the sun

and the other stars.  
the Bible says the one who knows our hearts  
better than we know ourselves;

each word, before we speak;  
the one who holds all depths within Him,  
the shape of Leviathan. the memory of tears.

why look elsewhere, I cry to the shining years;  
still more, to the waning days.  
why look elsewhere,

is all that I can say.

mary angela douglas 25 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# All The Names I Have Held In My Heart

all the names I have held in my heart;  
cherishing so they could not depart;  
fending off the days of erosions in

the picture dictionary with its beginning

of apples, or oranges, of the lemon coloured  
the clementine ways, the strawberry cones  
intact, the major holidays

oh Christmas firs and the snowy scenes beyond  
what could have been in the tangle of Christmas bulbs unearthed  
with the tinsel still in stray corners

of the universe  
and the surprise of angels suddenly appearing  
in the night skies

when the world whispered, incorrectly,  
'Doom'

mary angela douglas 9 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# All The Things You Thought You Knew

all the things you thought you knew  
can be swallowed overnight.  
what will you do without walls?

without the same curtains?  
pickpockets at your lock  
when there isn't even a door

anymore but a cubicle curtain  
not in your favorite design.

it's you at home isn't it?  
knocking around your soul  
for a bit of cheese;

a trifle or two.  
a familiar shoe  
amid the debris and the jackhammers.

they wear well,  
those wash dresses  
retrieved from someone else's

clothesline sailing  
over the backyards.

mine you say.  
mine?  
carry your heart in your hands

and watch the skies, not not the mail.  
it's a long way now.  
My God.

it's a long way.

mary angela douglas 15 june 2015; 11 march 2016



Mary Angela Douglas

# All They Talk About Is You

to those spoken About while they are still in the room  
who wave back then find they were waving at someone else, not you.  
to those left alone at parties at the punch bowl.

on the stairs  
eating fishsticks  
on special occasions

watching dog tricks on TV

to those who save only their imagination  
for a rainy day and spend freely  
on what they believe in

happy when the Easter candy goes on sale.

to those censured for being too quiet too stale  
too vocal too whatever it is they are that  
they are in fact made of

to those forced to stand down from the shade  
at picnics or called in for the fifth interrogation  
this week for rules infringed that

only that moment exist  
to those with the wrong perfume at the wrist who try to make the most of this,  
their being out of place=

I have heard (oh human race!) the night birds singing  
in the lovely orchards under moonlight.  
under starfall perfect jeweled symphonies dropped

into the World, unheard:

and seen and seen the elm and the alder trees sway  
in love with the winds of God:

and all they talk about is you  
all they talk about is you.

mary angela douglas 27 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# All Things In The Morning

all things in the morning will shine again for you

though every path seems useless

and almost nothing true

though with your heart unevenly

you try to see things through

and what you make with your own hands

every tide comes through.

still all things in the morning will shine again for you

and all that's latticed one day

will open to the dew.

and everything will bloom

and winter will not be

nor thorns nor endless curses

nor ships lost on the sea.

and weeping in a land of drought

will never never be

the way it was before you learned

there is a God that bleeds

for each and every lost thing

and every single wound.

and you will find the morning

and not the dread of tombs.

mary angela douglas 26 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# All This Singing In The Color Red

all this singing in the color red  
exorbitant with the flare of trumpets  
loud and then louder

timpani.

I fled from rooms the color red.  
seeking the solace of the pastel breeze.  
the unfeigned marble richly veined

and testing Time, the white gold

rose of the moon unfolding  
the dove of quiet only  
restlessly silken, not needing to please

perceived as mist is not; not

to be counted among the numbered  
making their splash among the splashers  
or the lightning fed. eschewing instead,

the fools gold ratatata of the rococo.  
at home in the kitchen drinking cocoa  
watching the snowy sweep of the tick and the tock

past the apartment window  
through complimentary interstices of venetian blinds  
settle the evergreens and the pines  
in the winters deep.

mary angela douglas 6 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# All Your White Legends

[to Mary, the mother of Jesus]

all your white legends,  
folded into Time...  
I stood in a whiter dew

and freezing  
crying over the spent orchards.  
this endless seige of

whiteness;  
this murdering of snows.  
and the perfumed winds

through the glass green blow  
of what was once  
your fortune told.

men have bartered it for gold.  
they have bought and sold  
and bought again

thinking they did not sin.  
sure of their weight when  
speaking of weighty matters.

what cassandra at the end of days  
can say to you, oh, Holy Spirit,  
Stay!

in the tender grass  
of Aprils past  
by the monuments to Mary

not yet desecrated.

mary angela douglas 22 december 2015





# Almost A White Horse

[inspired by the film. Into the West]

almost a white horse with a mythic eye  
arose from the sea bred carousels,  
stranded pearl,

from shipwrecks under-reported,  
glimpsed - now-  
barely breaking the surface.

almost a white horse is  
stamping the mists down,  
and I see clearly for awhile  
caparisoned in rose gold

that might have been brought near.  
the old fear stilled if  
almost, a wish to be tamed

could have been granted.

then: tossing, again the  
gem bridled reins of the fairy tale  
you quite expected yesterday

almost as if he were free, perhaps,  
from the certainty of snows  
or soon would be, or someone else  
would be-

that blind the heart on the broken journey  
that freeze the cross road laden mind

he turned aside the harrowing reflection  
of the sea bred skies over the silk of waters  
for a little while-  
a cloudless space

between the eternities

mary angeia douglas 29 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Almost The Wish You Wished For Did Come True

almost the wish you wished for did come true  
pointed out the good fairy softly  
there it is under the Tree, and are you

really going to ruin Christmas  
just because you can't see can you  
how almost the wish you wished might

be the one you really wanted?  
she waited. we unwrapped at last  
the shiny paper, curling ribbons

new oh spanking new as anything  
bright could be.  
whatever it was I won't-

she won't I mean  
tell you.  
you'll just have to find out

yourself  
when it happens to you!

mary angela douglas 5 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Amaryllis Ah The Lily Light

to Edgar Allen Poe

amaryllis ah the lily light  
when will the spent wing flame  
lifting the sky that's fallen down  
on those with sudden fame

rose was the colour of the sigh  
before the bent knights came  
flauting the codes that shone like stars  
above the winter's plain

amaryllis ah the lily light  
and, will you come down the glen  
to shine like music in our hearts  
and let us bloom again

mary angela douglas 15 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Amy Lowell In Pale Narcissus Mourns For Modern Poetry

'And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.'  
-John 1: 5, The New Testament

on reading 'The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell'

you don't know how it feels to wear the sky-  
the blue and the pearl shifting into moire,  
roseate, taffeta; the very  
life of roses in the arbor of her mind.

you don't understand this sheen of emerald  
leaves and their transparency, the singing  
through many waters as though  
she were the wind.  
it signifies.

and you will pretend you know,  
that you can guess  
the motive of an ivory shawl

the shell pink sash the amethyst  
brocade and the pall of the face  
through all this wilderness  
of second guessing cruelty

of strange asides  
on a summer wardrobe  
for a winter bride oh.

splendid Cinderella  
of the sunburst heart  
believing God in all His colours  
could be magnified

in the finery of her rainbows,  
opals scattered through the dark  
of Poetry's wild surmise\*

betrayed, comprehending nothing

mary angela douglas 3 december 2013

'wild surmise' of course is an allusion to the John Keat's poem  
'On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer', i.e. the following  
passage:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
10

Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien

Mary Angela Douglas

# An Accumulation Of Autumns

lately I feel she said an accumulation of autumns  
as if all that red and gold had been stored up  
for me, a kind of harvest

of the years, of the strange glistening of  
the turning of the years and I feel a glaze  
come over my soul

like a katydid and porcelain green  
pale green  
and as if I stood at the same screen door

when the evening wind came through, fifteen,  
and heard the bells from down the street  
drifting on what I called to myself, back then,

the convent's wind.  
but that was then and now it's high midsummer  
that autumn comes to mind, an accumulation

of autumns and I am a child so deep in the  
crunch of the dream of the piled up leaves  
never dreaming that all this gold all this

pumpkin lanterned hold on me and the  
sunset miasmas clinging to the after sleeves  
the ache of childhood's backyard trees

I no longer see-

will disappear

mary angela douglas 29 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# An Angel In Coral Or Carmine Headlong

an angel in carmine or coral or most intensely rose so  
headlong appeared behind a lacework's winter branching of trees...  
cloud angel, I whispered it seems this January, snow soft, aloft

our God is already showing off.  
as a child I would have sought  
that angel in pastels, chalks in vain

oh Heaven must be where all His paintings remain  
on all the skies ever made, coming and going  
and all aflame and never burning down

at least, I dream of it that way  
whenever Glory comes to town.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# An Angel Will Come

[for the angelic music of Judee Sill]

you who strike cold tambourines  
whenever the numbers add up right  
maybe the clouds will wipe

the sleep from your eyes  
an angel will come  
and demolish the sum

unsmiling in the limelight for  
you who believe success succeeds  
no matter how hearts bleed

no matter what fades

what do you have to say  
if it all flows away  
and who are you then.

standing outside on the porch  
of the winds are you a friend  
when someone sends you

to the other side of  
the tracks running through your dreams  
where no trains hum

threading a different seam

and the ticket collectors rust  
and nothing can be done  
and they won't know what you mean

when there's no race to be won

then you'll come home  
when the helicopter leaves curl down  
without a sound, a word to call your own.

that heralding angels  
haven't already heard

mary angela douglas 5 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# An Artist Of The North Country

I have painted my heart under the snows  
said the artist of the North Country  
who wished to remain unknown.

in caverns of ice, the heart glowed.  
under many on layer  
as it is in the sleep an epoch dreams

and colours slept  
or else, were wept.  
unlettered and unseen.

light years went by,  
by Light sustained.  
and shone above the snows, the plains

the caverns, the heart  
indiscernable.

and the cloudy stars sang,  
clanging their violet bells  
and not knowing, not knowing

like a child's riddle blowing,  
the rose word spelled.

mary angela douglas 10 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ancient Maps Defined

once there was water  
here it's said;  
there's the spot

exactly.  
here's where you may fall off  
should you ever get this far.

there.  
there is cold rain  
continually

no roof.  
golden leaves spent on the ground.  
the scent of earth,

your former orchards  
under far moonlight.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Be Raised

for Walter De La Mare

walking at dusk in starlight

some have lived

parting the trees as moonlight does the clouds

making their silvery vows

scene after shining scene.

what is it now you waited to believe

caught between centuries as you clearly were

dim is the thought you thought that you preferred

when shifting.. gleam to gleam.

then you are shadow,

sorting out what you dreamed.

bear with it as you can

the livelong days

pass, as you pass among them

in your praise.

tread as you may in velvet

the sad maze

you'll still be kind

in the wanings, and be raised.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Closing Our Eyes We Dreamed That We Were Snow

(a lullaby)

and closing our eyes we dreamed that we were snow  
the milk white netting on the stars when it is not quite day  
and we lay between world and world quilt heavy in our antique cribs  
and would have counted the purple shadows on the bars  
If we could have counted then  
How vague- the dimmed green crown of trees lifted in the outside wind  
as if they were friends  
we could see through the upper window;  
we nestled in.  
and suddenly it seemed as if the same dream came to us again  
or a sifting of rose petals from the grandfather's garden  
and the snow was falling over us and we understood  
Its heart its heart is the crystal in our Mama's necklace  
and we were comforted..

mary angela douglas 5 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Could We Ever Be Dressed In The Sunset Foils

and could we ever be dressed in the sunset foils  
of islands, crinkled with shining?  
where it rains colours

everywhere there is a poet  
under the shifting fronds of something magical;  
forever whispering on the foam, o my pink island.

and is it a whisper of mimosa green, the feathery pink  
that will never be this distinct again-  
the mango hour?  
the froth in the cup of warm apricot

brimming over at the airports of welcome? or  
splashed and splashing in secret inks like Easter dyes remembered or a bon-bon  
sufficiency-  
we will write, how strange, dimmed islanders

may remember  
our starfish music

rising early in  
communion dresses of the unexpected pink,  
Mary, mother of all Pearl.

we will adore the God of many colours:  
orchid, hisbiscus, looming lemony starry  
arcing over the pink and turquoise  
tiny homes inset

in the sidewalk chalked, the  
hopscotched cliffs of the soul.

mary angela douglas 24 july 2014

Note on the poem: I wanted to use the word 'pink' like a glass handbell rung just  
at the point in the music where you had forgotten about it.



Mary Angela Douglas

# And Diamond Light Filled The Kingdom

that stepshoe is too tight the sisters wailed  
and who wears see-through shoes that's anyone anyway  
they sniffed though not in unison

but it was too late for complaining now  
when Disney birds flew through the grate to  
dress her hair with roses and with key in beak

one bluebird springs the door  
and she's downstairs in time from the dream crumb attic floor  
that's their rude ceiling

and in a pink sprigged gown with mint green leaves  
to hear the intuitive Regent say  
but there's one more, isn't there?

how glittery shone the shoe on its real owner  
if diamonds could speak, they would be her.  
now Light has come we'll all dress bright as day

sang Cinderella  
as ashen faced the sour-pussed  
passed away

mary angela douglas 22 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Ever The Chilled Sunshine In The Painting

[on reading Edgar Allan Poe]

and ever the chilled sunshine in the painting;  
the limpid discerning eye;  
and doom is dusting the furniture

in the room that resembles a tomb.  
what time the sandcastles bloomed  
bathed in an unearthly pearl,

there seemed beauty's aura tinted there,  
a serene behest and we, her guests.  
but prescient page by page we

gradually guess and want to snap the book shut:  
what has already crumbled  
was a world,

the world to someone

who churns on in a spurned music  
and who has no rest  
canvassing us from a querulous distance:

with hidden outcomes  
and the piano lid down.

we sense only (when we are in tune)  
a melancholy happiness has passed  
into us while we were tying our shoes,

adjusting a dress, and a lock springs open  
near the kitchen cabinets and the coffee cake  
for the far removals of a soul

we cannot laugh away;  
the disappearing of the light of day  
into something else, not night...

and this lament in a bottle will  
never quite be stoppered  
in a quaint antique shop

where daylight's people chattering  
and lunching stop  
to linger, fascinated

but must not linger long  
where the heart is a miasma  
and an unsettling song

you can't get out of your head  
whenever  
you stroll through rust coloured leaves=

and feel you can take your ease until it is too late  
to see you were strolling  
below an encroaching sea; a cloudy gate

that shouldn't have been left open.  
the margins of battle, for a litte, fade;  
the horses return to stall.

but the surrender,  
if it is even made-  
is not received at all-

and a worn voice cries: o  
fasten my heart to sky  
and let the lulling winter through

mary angela douglas 2 december 2015

P.S. Help. I have scared myself silly and must think of something cheerful quick.  
Please do the same yourself. In the second version I went back into the poem  
(bravely) and threw the coffee cake in and then dashed out the door. It's  
amazing what a little coffee cake can do.

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Every Night We Leave In Dreams

to J.M. Barrie

strange world we are always leaving  
all the time every night we leave in  
dreams not knowing how to get back;

some don't.

some leave in the middle of the afternoon barely packed or  
before daybreak or even the dew on the grass is settled;

and now, it is lock-out time for sure and who has the key or keys...  
or knows if there was even a road  
before it rained there  
or a single feature, footstep fastened with snow...

think how many times can it be  
really not the same for you who are still here  
and still the one charged with watching them disappear  
and there's no answer to that, brief angels...

though I may look clear through your april shadows  
layered green-on-green  
knowing less than ever now.

and the leaves are leaving the leaves and  
the trees,  
the flowers are leaving the fields and the  
small bouquets, the clouds leave the sky

but the sky never leaves without  
leaving a thread of having once been:

some kind of gleaming over rooftops...  
and a glittering, somewhat, in the curve of your small hands-  
though you did not notice, at first...

children leave themselves the most, the longer they live  
almost breaking in two sometimes to see  
If something is still behind them, trying to catch up:

like a shadow, but not a shadow;

strange world, to be always leaving us  
ever distant from ourselves:

beyond disarray.

I will try yes I will try  
not to be the last one scolded:  
and so slow on the job at sweeping up  
(it's what they always say)  
all these lost coronations...  
curled ribbons, collapsing suns  
knowing that God is still writing  
somewhere, Further On-  
with a purple stylus on  
His diamond clouds

and never flickering;  
I believe. even to the last  
dram of all colours  
fading fast and always...

mary angela douglas 25,28 march 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# And I Have Been Scolded In Dreams

and I have been scolded in dreams  
the day after Christmas  
by those who insist

I do not know my task.  
and I ask myself  
did I let them through the door

who let them through.  
false gatekeepers have I then  
and a rusted gate

that they are free to say  
in between the dark and day  
whatever they please.

but today I had something to say  
in between their abrupt so smug  
arrivals and departures

at an airport I could not recognize  
on an exam.  
I am that I am said the Lord God.

and I am His child...

mary angela douglas 27 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# And I Was Sipping In The Cherry Dark

and I was sipping in the cherry dark  
the whole summer as it first appeared.  
the early years;

the golden tinge.  
so much hinges on the fact that the fairytales  
did not surprise me,

seeming only an extension of our little house.

I will wear a cherry sundress  
when I go back I notified the time machine  
and set the dials for a little while

even if it's midnight, packing a picnic  
and pinwheels streaked in pink and green;  
viewmaster slides

of the Disney castle.

when I arrive,  
I hope to find the right house.  
you know, with the roof all shingled with candies.

and no oven.

mary angela douglas 6 novemer 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# And Not Blue

it is possible to live happily in catastrophes

I thought to myself on an early spring day

to find in the ruins, wild strawberries

or to hear in memory

the mantel clock ticking away.

it doesnt seem a thing likely

to happen

because we didnt grow up that way

but even midstream among evictions

the larks sing.

the skies suddenly become rose

and not blue.

mary angela douglas ` 11 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



Peddler on that road-  
&quot;or small white-wicker pocket-books  
fastened with bunches of life-like cherries? &quot;  
for it was a jam=bright day and it seemed possible  
to always be reading the Classics twice-over  
after the newspaper comics came-and before supper.  
communion is over but we're left dazzled in  
polished cotton's grape-juiced, Sunday seam  
(don't get that all over your dress; it won't come out)  
and now we've finished my Grandfather's golden  
scrambled eggs  
Grandmother calls &quot;welsh-rarebit&quot;  
we think the Easter Bunny invented it.  
but we keep it to ourselves  
the way children do when they're sure  
they solved the riddle without help  
like a shoestring happiness tied.  
it's all in the pronunciation.  
&quot;Enunciate, &quot; she says - showing us How.  
We Can Now Leave the Table  
Having Been Measured For Fullness  
By the Grandfather's Invisible Food-In-Your  
Stomach-Level Measuring Machine.  
(if you get up too soon he says, &quot;not yet,  
you're only half-full...&quot;)  
so we keep asking, &quot;how about now-&quot;  
so earnestly, and &quot;now? &quot;, five seconds later-  
believing he can see straight through and tell:  
&quot;three-quarters full&quot;, he smiles as we fold pink  
damask napkins down and skip away...  
&quot;Don't Kill the Goose That Laid the Golden Egg&quot;  
she says when she gets tired from teaching us manners,  
fairytales and the value of Putting It Back Where You Got  
It In the First Place, memorizing the Beatitudes.  
after teaching piano all day.  
but she's in rose taffeta for recitals  
or playing Liszt like an angel on a wash-day for my Grandfather  
tipped back in his leather chair, tired out from working for the V.A.  
for whom she's washing now all the sorrow out of the house with  
pianistic brilliance I cannot explain  
and no clothes-pins-A Wash-Day Miracle who could improve on.  
how soon the glittering hours give way

to pumpkins with the wheels coming off in the gravel.  
you know the story yourself, don't you,  
from your own childhood spent looking everywhere for milky quartz  
on your own time. not knowing what can be taken and not brought back  
while you're away...just in the backyard.  
in spring, my mother died  
leaving me the cat from Dick Whittington-  
mysterious improvisations  
for an imaginary piano:  
small yet elegant and just for me with pale  
roses scrolled on glassy ebony-a mermaid's music-stand;  
pink alabaster, paper-weighted hearts  
a dime a dozen at the world's finest dime-store  
and picture hats, for every-day.  
all her poems, tied up with blue silk ribbons...  
and lilac swayed by the unseen.  
letters with fleecy details  
bright and clear as summer clouds.  
or stained glass Christmas ornamentation  
to put all those cathedrals in the shade.  
a lasting love.  
I would have sent her one more superlative  
construction=paper Valentine-bright red and  
paper doilies, dolled and gliitered, too, - Heart-  
if I had just known when  
she was going away...  
here's my too-late, unbridal bouquet-tossed backwards  
over the shoulder, away from the withering Sun-  
of moss-cooled pale white-  
violet violets from the Arkansas woods  
with a few choice gardenias  
overwhelmingly perfumed  
for the overwhelming sadness of knowing  
  
that there was no amethyst marquee advising:  
Another Crystal Ship Has Gone Down.

"My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is"  
so what gave them permission  
year after failing year  
to diagnose her Kingdoms with no reprieve in sight  
for they were lovely...

every one, unique as drops of snowlight. I have the letters and the soul to prove it.

let the question remain  
for those who know how to answer  
and not in lame psch-pop-while rifling through the files  
they cannot own-  
with burdens of their own  
I must not judge.  
as far as making the soul more accessible  
to pounding  
(or uniform in texture)  
tracking it through the System from childhood on, let's just say  
I'm not the one well-schooled enough to turn it all into pies, rolling out  
the &quot;well-balanced&quot; dough in the spic-and-span Normative Kitchen  
with the requisite cookie cutters close at hand, copper-kettle all lined up  
icing in colors of the rainbow squeezed out, in the end with the same rosettes:  
fantastic! Kudos to the chefs whoever they are.  
nor will I walk away or just &quot;move on&quot; impressing  
whoever's watching with my own&quot;stability&quot; in a &quot;crisis&quot;  
when the heartbeat of gorgeous  
Poetry drops dead on any summer day  
for any individual King or Queen too suddenly led away and disinherited  
from their own simplicity in unending rains-  
these are the real and every day occurring crimes against humanity.  
visibly sanctioned, oh my God.  
oh, but now-  
let the blood-orange gladiola sing  
though heaped up by God knows who on  
the cream-colored Altars and for what reasons-  
for her real exit can never be reclaimed.  
this paper work's final.  
let Gossip die instead. and not be mourned  
by True Believers on a roll all over, dressed in  
flowered organza, hats at Eastertime-  
and perfect gloves, solicitous and cruel-  
anytime that you look up to see them, searching frantically  
for the telltale signs in you  
they thought they saw in her: pathetic, envious gerbils  
stoking the silliest wheels of hell in silk from crown to foot  
impeccably finding sickness where there is none-  
how did you lose your dignity Christ died for?

leave my soul alone.  
un-blessed are you...the murderers of Beauty you gush  
you "just adore";...  
and unaware that no one listens anymore  
when you get up to speak.  
May God send you better hobbies!  
I dreamed of blizzards for days when she was gone-  
but it was still summer, I remember-  
when I gathered bittersweet for the table-  
trying to make up for the charcoal lentils at supper  
{Reading Again, I'm Proud to Say but needing some  
Non-stick Cookware, Possibly)  
with day-old huckleberry coffee-cake from the grocery  
store down the street.  
remember the summer they painted it pink and pea-green?  
(the store, not the coffee cake)  
1960's architecture...with the space-age arches;  
a few same scrubby pines scribbled in on the architect's Design.  
where's the Tang, drink of astronauts.  
everyone thinks their childhood was unique  
but who else in the English-speaking world  
quoted Tennyson, whenever the dog sneezed,  
or the Grandfather-  
like my Grandparents did (his sneeze was like a freight  
train whistling through enormous echoing caverns  
and scared the dog so much-  
when she jumped up, it  
made her flop-ears bounce and curl anew, almost like Disney's  
"Dumbo", momentarily)  
we had hopes she'd fly...  
if it just happened once at a 45 degree angle, we dreamed-  
it could happen even more dramatically than ever  
right there in our own living room  
automatically cueing my grandparents, taking turns...  
"Blow, bugle, blow-  
Set the wild echoes flying..."  
until we doubled up with laughter on the Grand Scale  
felicitous phrase (the laughter, not the Tennyson)  
though I am partial to 'now the crimson petal...'  
Banner Headline in the Gazette: Local Dog Flies First Time Ever, Beating the  
Soviets To It  
And underneath, in smaller type: new sneeze-propulsion does the trick

And in a sideBar: Unassuming Pooch Makes Good; Talk of Nobel Prize. Dog: 'No Comment'

and now they're singing all on a summer day  
for our best entertainment

&quot;Pickin' on a Harp with a Golden String...&quot;

&quot;you won't need your cherry shawl, after all-

once you get up here&quot;

my mother called down new

cherry-pie balconies, all her own-

sweetly breaking into my reveries-

'over there! the green house on Monroe Street,115, '

Beyond all curb appeal now and

floating mystically high atop

lost Little Rock cummulo-stratus, maybe, cirrus clouds-

they've drifted far afield

to hover above my current address, out-of-state

&quot;Can you see the Gazette from there? &quot;

I queried-

&quot;can you see me

in the dear old days beyond recall&quot;?

&quot;right now! it's coming into view...

run down to the store, honey, and get me some cherry-vanilla, :

4 cones, soft-serve swirled for appetizers'; horse-dooovers,

Gramp would say, trying not to laugh at his own joke.

but knowing that Grandmother always will...

&quot;we're having minute steaks with French dressing.

fruit cocktail for dessert, the kind with extra cherries;

and lima beans. save the gooseberries for your sister and the color pink.

then we can say her dessert was different;

we'll call it: 'gooseberries in a cloud.'&quot;

&quot;I'm wishing her diamond dresses and whole houses strung

with prisms&quot;

&quot;it's a start, &quot; my Mama said. &quot;but we'll need pork-chops, too.

have a strawberry tart. or pink-iced cornbread...&quot;

Angels floated down with them after I chose.

&quot;there's cranberry Trilby by the pailful, so save some

room and let's be

Merry and talk in Esperanto, &quot; (M-a-r-y, I thought, to make her smile

since we have the same first name and she can almost read my mind.

she's paring the potatoes backwards

but who cares:

and singing La Traviata, the whole thing

from start to finish, - filling the greenwood  
full of hawthorned song. you know, she can.  
I would have flunked out on  
Pineapple frappe homework, myself-  
that winter in home-ec-  
if Grandmother hadn't stayed up overnight-  
and made it for me:  
aware of my propensity to Drop Things and mix  
up the ingredients horribly encrusting the Double-Boiler  
gazing into Space (so crowded with possibilities...) -  
thus freeing up my time for the Brontes and E. Brrett-  
in Chemistry I was excused from experiments entirely-  
after a few trial runs.  
making it up with essays  
thanks to the nuns who loved God-  
but wanted to remain on earth a little longer  
and not be done-away-with by a 4 ft. klutzy non-Catholic.  
Day y-eyed over the Sacred Heart and far  
Too Shy. (says who)  
in earlier news...  
(“Thank you, Mrs. Young”, the teacher's note  
read that accompanied her dishes home-  
“we thoroughly enjoyed the jeweled fruit  
cookies and the pineapple frappe you made for us  
yesterday for Angela's assignment”)  
did she have to put it that way, my Grandma said-  
reading, like me, the puff-pastry snippiness set between-the-lines-  
derailing a pristine thank you note on flowered, scented paper,  
perfectly done- put a fork in it.  
but how could I not take heart-  
despite the C minus  
living as I did in a household  
where people were apt to break into  
the “jitterbug”  
while a capella singing  
“Flat-Foot Floogie with the Floy Floy...”  
whenever they were even moderately happy  
And Right in the Middle of the Living Room  
In Front of the Picture Window with the  
Drapes Open  
and the girl-scouts walking this way, up our street...  
so unsuspecting...their sashes chock-full of cooking badges



earned in the wilderness-  
 "Great-Grandmother, burned the toast again,  
 letting the preserves boil over on the stove.  
 But nothing really boils over Here.  
 She's out back eating strawberries by the bushel  
 and we can't stop her." Mama laughed  
 just like before, while vacuuming the clouds.  
 "how do you think she lived to be 99?  
 it had to be the strawberries.  
 not the heavy cream. at least she could crochet. and ride  
 horseback anywhere-" "I'm right here, " said Sweet Adeline  
 "feeding the chickens " in a dress that swept the ground, fringed with  
 the Pleiades  
 we peeked through the sugar glass end of the Panoramic Easter Egg to see  
 the chickens eating strawberries, too. bye to the jelly.  
 and Addie reviewing her sepia inscribed autograph album-  
 the one I used to look through on the family bookshelf  
 because it was sealed with Victorian hands clasping the sweet peas  
 fervently...  
 "don't pack your sweater,  
 Angela, " Grandmother whispered  
 "not even your Juliet-cap.  
 Bring your books -"  
 out-guessing my second-guesses  
 like she used to, and  
 slipping me a Hershey bar  
 through the luminous crevices in the ceiling  
 "have you dusted lately? "  
 "I didn't imagine you'd inspect the ceiling."  
 "Don't eat that Hershey Bar all at once - but  
 Square - by - Square-  
 it'll last longer."  
 as though I were home from School and 6 years old-  
 all set for the Mickey Mouse Club on TV at  
 49 Belmont Drive-  
 or Shirley Temple Theatre's  
 sequined programming shimmering  
 beyond what the heart could even sigh over-  
 even in black and white on NBC.  
 I'm still Unmapped like the Land of Green Ginger.  
 I day-dreamed over my shredded wheat-the last shred left=munched slowly  
 "Fools Names and Fools Faces...don't dawdle over your breakfast"

-&quot;or your Christmas presents.  
&quot;and you're still eating your oatmeal every-day,  
aren't you,  
with its little lake of butter and cream  
poured nicely from a milk-glass pitcher, hobnailed?  
are you practicing? Reading John 14?  
I've planted mustard-seed for you  
Where the cobblestones shine like honeycomb for the Lord  
even without sweeping...  
I met Charles Lamb on Friday (your time) and we had raspberry sherbet.  
'Be good sweet maid, let those who will be clever.'  
(no wonder, I thought; you quoted him so much-  
did he say, &quot;life is not a bowl of cherries, &quot; too? '  
(I heard that, Grandmother said rather parenthetically-  
-I forgot she could do that-)  
&quot;I haven't seen your home-ec teacher yet-  
but then, there are many mansions-  
maybe I'll drop by there with some pineapple frappe...  
or pink-lemonade cake I didn't make from scratch...  
N00o, Thank You, Betty Crocker.  
we've started living in that old house  
with the fan-tailed St. Cecilia window.  
when the light of God pours through  
the chinaberry tree it filters-  
(I've only &quot;seen&quot; a chinaberry tree in Conrad Aiken)  
there's fine little pools of amethyst and rose  
all over everything, even the throw pillows-  
the ones we got with the Green Stamps  
you pasted in on Saturdays with your sister.  
and the dog gets petunia-colored, too,  
as she's heading home like the cows used to-  
when we had that dairy and delivered milk  
in a surrey - over in Prescott  
-to your Grandfather's chair and  
five times fluffier than you'll remember...  
(I'm starting to get sleepy and confused-  
like Alice in her Wonderlands - Did we have fluffy cows?)  
Does Somebody need a nap...and a Danish wedding cookie or two?  
with nothing else to do until we want to-  
we're sipping Coke Floats thickly  
through peppermint-striped straws  
and eating pink Divinity by the handfuls.

(&quot;3/4 full, now...&quot;)  
&quot;we just go on from glory to glory...  
what did you say? Did I bring you some Lily Fields perfume?  
Well, that's for me to know and you to find out'  
she smiled, handing me a package wrapped in a star  
or candy-bar silver foil;  
as I said, &quot;Thank You, Grandmother.&quot;  
&quot;don't speak with your mouth full, child-  
sit up straight&quot;-  
so I munched happily still, on  
bread and butter pickles, Vienna sausages  
and endless Milky Ways- but

as we spoke between the worlds  
I saw the deep clouds roiling in,  
trying not to worry...we'd all lose touch this soon, again-  
&quot;You aren't sugar, you won't melt&quot;  
(now how did I know that line was next)  
I heard her in the next room over  
Rummaging in her dresser drawers  
&quot;Now where did I put these...&quot;  
for gold-wrapped chocolate coins in a  
net more golden leftover from some Christmas, years before  
and fresh as ever (you try one) .  
&quot;here, honey, you might need these at least until  
your Food Stamps come, to tide you over.  
you'll never guess, the Commedia del'arte just showed up  
by the snow-ball bushes in the yard  
with Life Magazines! and all the flowers heaped up,  
leftover from Last Spring-&quot;  
&quot;it must be winter now, - Outside...&quot; I said,  
as soft as snow and almost, to myself-  
&quot;I knew He'd never let them go-  
Now they'll be beautiful, forever! &quot;  
she smiled her most artistic smile and said-  
while through my tears  
her sherry earrings sparkled:

&quot;Angela-mia-  
that's Some Story.'

mary angela douglas 14-18 april 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# And The Christmas Emmy Goes To...

the imaginary toy company  
spitting out Christmas toys  
secretively

behind the high hedge  
behind our school  
behind the back of

the Christmas beyond  
we sneak outside in between  
classes, just missing the bells

if only we had more time...  
one Christmas when Grandmother  
was sick the packages were labeled

on the back to separate the toys from  
those of a neighbor doing double duty  
shopping, her angels and us.

look my sister said in awe  
they're labeled.  
and unwrapped them while I watched

beneath the Tree-in marveling glee

then wrapped them up again  
meticulously.  
we thought we'd beat the game of

waiting. but Christmas morning  
there were no surprise.  
just our rather too wide eyes.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# And The Incoming Tide

I think of toys, of vanished children

of deep pockets in old storybooks

perhaps a caramel or two I

might fish out wrapped in gold foil,

the silver net of dreams.

I think perhaps it was all sugarplum

bright, Eden without exception

the cream, real cream in the coffee

the steam from old radiators rising

and their clanking announcements

it's January mornings. or it's April chill

old Fords built to last.

oh my surmising heart

from fiddle stix and pick up sticks

in every shade inlaid

I wander there in proverbial attics

and wonder why they retired

the chintz chairs. the cottage furnished  
with everything echoing flowers, flowers  
the maple and the lemon leaves  
flying against blue windowpanes  
blue windowpanes and sticking there  
Jack Frost, the hurricane lamp it's flare on  
oilcloth, tablecloth, bone china  
the cracks in the window frames  
letting in all the stars.  
the candy jars  
where once we ate our fill.  
geraniums on the window sills  
brave and scarlet.  
and Sunday newspaper thoughts of brides  
with stephanotis held high  
the silvered, pearled bouquets  
and the incoming tide.

mary angela douglas 24 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# And The Skies Cried

quotes in her reveries unregarded  
whirled away or swirled in the small pools  
where watercolours gathered

it is Spring she said to the flowers.  
and they opened and the heart  
grew wise; the skies changed colours

as if they couldn't decide  
which dress to wear.  
wear all at the same time,

she faintly smiled  
and wandered from grove to grove.  
and the skies cried.

mary angela douglas 5 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# And This Is Music

[to God our Father]

this is to the One who caused, who causes  
music to arise though He is denied  
He cannot help but Shine

above our tormenters rising  
early or late from unexpected  
corners to deride, to hound us home

thus, bitterness is sown  
and the whole vast earth a lemon grove  
frozen over besides.

once the lane it was lined with roses  
where the larks sang and there was  
no need to lock and unlock doors but now

our honeyed Springs gleam past;  
just see how Winter soars and will not let us go  
and we live snow to snow or, if we can

wherever we reside and fret  
His instruments and cannot rest when  
the noise comes thick and fast

the storms, our agonies abide

from which what other reprieve, repose  
can ever shall ever be found by us  
except that You bright Singer of the real

the only ground  
of our being  
cause us, bless us, to resound

and unaccountably to feel:  
still. There is Beauty.

mary angela douglas 17 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Though The Looking Glass Hours Should Turn To Snow

and though the looking glass hours should turn to snow,  
you will not regret the things you knew then, long ago,  
when the Guardians of roses stood:

edged flame to flame  
and you were unaware  
of those turned out of the Garden because, everywhere,

it was still snowing flowers

mary angela douglas 24 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Were You Dreaming In The Licorice Night

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,  
And sing, and weep, soar'd up into the ring;  
But most would use no wing.  
O fools (said I) thus to prefer dark night  
Before true light,  
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day  
Because it shews the way,  
The way, which from this dead and dark abode  
Leads up to God,  
A way where you might tread the sun, and be  
More bright than he.  
But as I did their madness so discuss  
One whisper'd thus,  
'This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,  
But for his bride.'

Henry Vaughn, The Ring

again, to Valerie Macon, true poet laureate of North Carolina- on the true nature of the poetic calling, ultimately, as a calling from God

and to Joseph Brodsky, who said at his trial in the USSR (being tried for being a poet and accused for that presumption, 'you parasite, ' they said) while he said, simply, 'I thought that was something decided by God.'

Esse Quam Videri\*

and were you dreaming in the licorice night that words  
like vagrant stars drifted through your window?  
and did they settle like snows of your young Decembers

on the covers, setting up their illusory summer camps?  
oh yes. and with orangeade on tap and the strawberry swirled; conversant with  
all the dolls.

and could you see, through the semi-transparent tribunals  
of poets, even then, trying the poets they wouldn't let through their chain-linked

honorariums?

oh fences dissolved for you, perhaps, as in the paintings of the Impressionists  
and  
you were living then in their springtime washed in pink and

green, who measured time in the colours of the flowers  
and the violet shadows flared. and you were in love with the licorice night

and thought God made the stars for only you. and thought that poetry was  
the bright ring endowed by Him, for you, a chosen bride of words, and to you  
and

you, perhaps, reading this and, aren't we linked by love alone in the chain of  
eternal  
poets, poetry who were never chained, being loved by God?

and this is pearl scented like the gardenias in your grandmother's gardens;  
like the magnolia bush weeping white linen in a vast

perfume they cannot pretend to know  
who crucify, if only they could,  
the glow of flowers they did not create.

mary angela douglas 20 july 2014

\*Latin for: To Be Rather Than To Seem, State motto of North Carolina...

Mary Angela Douglas

# And Yet I Salute The Flag Of The Golden

And yet, I salute the flag of the golden  
who live in Light.  
who have no other country., really.

holding their breath  
till the storm passes  
or the one note

in the bravest song.  
who smile anyway  
whenever the shingles fly

strange birds  
or the earth shifts.  
who think of something better

even on the brink  
on the verge  
who watch the flight of birds

till the silver flickers out of the clouds.  
and who do not need to speak of this:  
out loud.

mary angela douglas 11 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angel Taxi In The Last Of The Lemon Light Dream

weaving the lemon light through the raspberry clouds  
my only angel's occupied I know  
and suddenly I trip on a staircase

not even there  
afraid of the wavy lines on escalators  
and now I'm on the wrong floor

for key lime pies and tiramisu  
and now the last bus appears  
in front of the store; it's closing time  
for fine perfumes,  
the Cinnamon, -Stubbed-Your-Toe-On-It,  
Did-You Coffee Cake Cafe

and all I see is the door snap shut and the bus  
careening off into a sunset pinched like a pie  
and baked into summer fluffily

now I ask my angel lost in lemon chiffon  
(pie) reverie-  
and loud enough to beat the band-  
is it done yet?

mary angela douglas 2 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Angel Voices

"Fled is that music; do I wake or sleep?"  
John Keats

I did see the saints and they were gathered  
as the song says and I would be  
forever singing that song

by the river Beautiful  
in their white robes  
snowier than snow

and with gold tinsel  
around their waists  
the kind we wore as children

in the Christmas pageants,  
American primitive  
early American primitive, silken

whispered the angel docents in the dream  
isn't it lovely  
yes I said as it is well with my soul

like a bell intoning: well.  
how deep the wells of music are  
when sung to the Lord but

primitively as us in our gay gowns  
as Grandmother Moses remembered  
all red and green and flat paint and

busy is the scene and the fields are ripe  
and I sing apple orchards apple orchards  
and reach to gather them

as though they were made of gold  
those apples  
then I wake up to

voices yelling in the hallway  
in a concrete fortress, edge of town  
and the voices echo as they always will

oh candle burning down, my soul,  
the jangling of tears and fears crystallized

in the pit of my stomach like  
milk blue mornings before school it's deja vu  
the coriander fragrance of the bed bugs

a sense of je ne se quoi, the richer inhabitants  
willing us all away  
and where are the angel voices fled

I sob.  
are they stilled?

mary angela douglas `15 november 2017  
WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angel With Ferns In A Far Landscape

a little Italianate the violet twilight  
in the background sets off the shimmering of the ivory pillars  
on either side-  
you know that easily don't you?  
but who notices the

ivory shadows on the far snows  
the rustling of trees in the olive groves  
you hear as though it were real

while gazing at the  
unfinished portrait of the angel with  
ferns, with stately roses  
saffron-splendid,  
the quizzical angel of the far landscape

in between Christmases and cirrus clouds  
with a lemon grove to watch over  
maybe an infanta in a burgundy gown  
the baby princess with a pearl smile

but that's in the next painting  
isn't it?

mary angela douglas 18 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angelology

over the braided starlight and the pines  
is where the angels live, we decided (between us)  
peering from the top bunk bed by turns

in the sweet screened air.  
and over there in the backyard wistfully  
shines the pail to catch the meteor dust

our Grandfather collects each overnight,  
we know he can! and that the stars will be glad  
to have landed there.

they'll pick the cloudberry  
out of their fruit cocktail at a  
sky blue table...

that was our Saturday fable  
speaking of angels, still,  
while we ate our trix and drank up

the rainbowed milk...

or wear blue silk with a pale pink sheen.  
or float for awhile in your best bubble ever  
the one that never popped.

what about Christmas?  
then they're everywhere,  
not only chiming round the angelabra

till the dog stares getting glassy eyed

they're thick as red and green  
fingerpainted  
you can make them!

On shiny paper

we laughed so merrily then

at nothing- and the word 'translucent'-  
-or ice cream colours occurred to us...

will they melt, then?  
this, she said a little anxiously  
the smaller child in pink.

I don't think so said her sister.  
God wouldn't let them.

Mary Angela Douglas 23 July 2015 rev.12 June 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angels Are Darning Socks In The Sunset

angels are darning socks in the sunset  
you can see the ragged holes in the clouds  
turn rose to gold

then drift away whole  
and they mending the clouds  
cannot sing out loud

until Christmas day  
so we might as well play  
on the swings all winter

and when the ice melts on the slide  
and the icicles where they  
kissed our roof

wild violets will appear  
in the grasses  
where our dolls sleep'

blanketed  
with snows of the rose petals.

Mary Angela Douglas 30 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angels Churning The Butter Brickle On The First Day Of School

angels are churning the butter brickle  
you think to yourself in the shaded room  
and Christmas is wavering uncertain

where the door is of my homeroom  
so I'll wear red and green  
to school tomorrow...maybe the plaid.

nightlights in the dark  
are mellow like moonlight  
moonlight near the floor is making you sad

where the vents blow the warm air  
always in tune  
and the toys sleep wistfully

long past noon  
all-knowing that soon  
their guardians will depart

into the Christmas ornamented

dark  
where the bus is waiting  
and the next grade up.

Mary Angela Douglas 29 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Angels If They Are Good Are Transparent

angels if they are good are transparent  
so that their message shines; not them.  
they step aside for the Word made clear

and disappear themselves not even  
into themselves but further away.  
they make no friends but God

yet they can weep to watch our sleep  
and stir the waters that were still before  
where the wounded come:

endless streaming over darkened hills.  
do angels dream I wondered; maybe  
you wondered, too.

or are we their wondering?  
we who still can't find our way without a nightlight;  
no longer in our infancy.

and in distress,  
even while laughing,  
are they our looking glass?

are they the passing breeze?

mary angela douglas 28 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Angels In Their Cloudy Dispositions

## ANGELS IN THEIR CLOUDY DISPOSITIONS

the skies are painted over: eggshell blue  
why can't the angels make up their minds  
or settle on ecru with a tinge of tangerine?

you've no idea how many layers of variegated,  
green leafed  
figured wallpaper they have used; how many sistines;

over aeons I mean, or in glorious lipstick shades  
or over the last, graced moments of any given day  
glazed over with frost (the crystal quandries considered)

bringing out all the hues before they disappear into lost silverpoint forever.

I'll take the rose they say, in my diminishing year  
and to the Lord but wistfully,  
do You carry the same cloud

only, in fuschia? but never,  
who's in charge of this dress shop, anyway?  
of course they know, sorting the laces;

preferring the Alencon.

oh, we'll take some in snow, pastels! say the younger ones,  
their halos askew. while their older cousins want the  
stained glass, broken parts and scattered views

soft focus through a child's keen,  
momentary tear;  
that way they get to use up

all the crayons, fingerpainting the stars, and  
innermost, the orbits of the heart  
out christening poinsettia,

silver bows

above our yards.

mary angela douglas 28 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Annunciation

I remember the flight from the dance floor, the waltz  
suspended the chimes suspended and the  
flight of time-

in the outer air, the snows, the waltz suspended  
the angels flowing when you thought it was  
the stars, the flight of the stars and the

april nights. the april nights branching  
and from them  
a music richly unannounced and in a dress of white

you mingle with what is left of light

and you are streaming, caught in the dreamworks  
and the children's rhymes.

I remember the flights she cried from the dance

floor, the bouquets of gold tossed aside-  
in haste, the dream floating toward the exits  
toward the air, foaming with stars

the velvet recriminations  
heard from afar  
but near, and nearer,

the pale green voice of God

mary angela douglas 27 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Anomalie

I have seen the after mirages of the visionary sometimes  
and been effectively, momentarily punished for that seeing  
but I still know despite all punishment  
what I know and I do not dress for success because  
it isnt the outward thing I want to be.  
call me an anomalie or whatever you will  
I am rooted in sheer poetry forever  
and soon, this tree will grow wings and disappear  
or leave its rings in a mirroring lake  
from which forgotten kingdoms rise.  
mary angela douglas 6 august 2019  
Mary Angela Douglas

# Another Alicean Song

and you are plummeting though  
you don't yet understand why  
and your skirts billowing out

like summer clouds in the sky  
but you're not falling upward.  
why o why do you think; can you think?

not yet prompted to take the drink  
to shrink into the beatific garden;  
to snack on the snack with the

arrow pointing toward it:  
this gemstoned italic.  
you should have paid attention in

geometry but that won't matter here,  
where homework never ends oh dear  
and your answer's bound to be

wrong.  
go ahead,  
find the tea parties

you never were invited to at school  
and you just dressed for the riverbank,  
not in a party frock;

in the colour of Chartres bleu

will still have manners  
better than theirs.  
though still faced with the dilemma

of how to beat the clock;  
the false charge charged  
in your honour

by the rose raving Queen.

and when the dream  
gets a little crowded to bear  
you can always

wake yourself up:

you with your red gold hair;  
your way of making peace,  
well sort of,

with the fantastic.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Another Crystal Ship Is Going Down

for the poet John Keats

" whose name was writ in water"

for Immortal, Timeless Poetry...and the children-  
for whom it was all and will be, written down.  
and not forgotten...

"The very music of the name has gone..."  
John Keats, Endymion

and for Dr. Robert J. Connelly

another crystal ship is going down  
there where the violet waters cannot reach the sun  
or where, the bargained-over heart  
is run aground  
no longer feeling anything at all  
for the Attic messengers berated and

berated and  
thrown overboard  
in waters that won't register the sound  
of this bleak sowing.

the moon on bartered waters gives no light.  
dim are the trees that used to  
green the shore.

jingoistic captains seize the day:  
cueing the numb musicians on the deck  
for one last, auctioned song  
to bear doomed passengers along  
cold, flooded passageways.

we're losing time and memory every day

observing the Grail float by us on the Tides  
and willing it all away to starfish  
while we just hang on in the frozen waters  
to the driftwood prayers  
we must remember...

&quot;Our Father...

another crystal ship is going down-  
another and another - everywhere -  
alive with diamond words...  
that must be spared  
though we're - just - ballast - to them:

the odd Ringmasters crowing  
at the glint of Beauty drowned  
and going down  
they'll claim -but it's not true-  
in Ophelia-coloured waters=

Not - this - time.

for we have heard-  
though half-awake  
the mist-bright mermaids surging Home  
and we may see, half-blinded through our tears-  
that when curbed lovely words  
disintegrate - they cry out in soft rains:

&quot;Hallowed be thy Name&quot;...

however long we wait, we wait  
at the edge of these coiled waters-  
clear on their Return on the evening's tide.

pearl were the hulls  
now singing on their way, so &quot;optional&quot;.  
sheer Pearl, the tears of God  
who only sent them all



(&quot;Deliver Us From Evil...&quot;)

to save our children  
in the glacial days ahead...  
treading implacable waters...

mary angela douglas 18-20 april 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Another Kind Of Snow

you in your gipsy skirts  
your white jade smile  
will pause for awhile-

taking your cerise turn onstage  
cast in a children's play and colourfast,  
folkloric with ruffles.

the cherry stone riddle queried  
you do not know nor can you see  
of all snows, being the first

riddle this also may be,  
by the last chorus,  
the last riddle answered.

later at home,  
the eggs on the griddle perfect  
breaking into sunrise on the plates

and sunny side up on a Sunday  
peace seems certain, never melt-away.  
april will come and you will long to stay,

to wear moss green  
to live unseen  
where petals blow

under the wide white violet sashed skies,  
another kind of snow

mary angela douglas 4 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Another Meditation On Cinderella's Dress

the froth of her dress was like a small sea  
or something branched as flowers can be  
in the spring or starlight caught in a looking

glass. oh how can you ask me  
who only stood at the door and gaped  
and counted for riff raff in the end.

green I would say if you asked me at ten  
but then again maybe turquoise laced with  
galaxies but in the afternoon

she stood in her bare toes dressed like a rose  
in rose, I know, being her fellow servant  
and her friend

such beauty will not grace again  
a thousand, thousand balls  
not even by royal invitation.

insipid nations crowd the board  
and swear off fairy tales.  
proud of their ragged boats

washed stem to stern in ordinary time  
and have not learned to measure music measureless.  
beauty must be cherished said the ghost

or it will dim is all old poets say, or said  
and nearly wept at this  
and so did I in the world of the dead

waking too late in the day.

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Another Shop On The Street With Mary Poppins

hard words with a candy center,  
can such things be?  
queried the wanderers fresh off the bus.

I went with them to see:  
hard words with a candy center  
and more, besides

in a sweet shoppe off the beaten way.  
where egg whites were beaten  
40 times a day to freshen the

peaks imaginations slid down  
hard words with a candy center  
lined up in apothecary jars

and here's a handful of the lemon  
sunbursts  
the caramel twirled the raspberry

indented shells overflowing with  
hazelnut (reserved for the poets  
or children after school.)

or blue ribboned ribbon candies  
for the vocabulary builders  
in the back of the books;

aurora bright, day long  
lollipops and sundries  
the sugar dusted conversation starters

glasslike, made with honey,  
pink vanilla fudged  
my and my again we sighed

taking some of each  
till the last bell chimed  
taking pink sackfuls back with us

and, at christmas time  
red and green sacks of mince pie words  
for those who never minced them

what a surprise  
ginger orange peeled snug under the Tree  
'where did you get these? '

(keeping the key lime answers for ourselves)

mary angela douglas 28 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Another Song For Walter De La Mare

imagination's clearest pane is breathed upon  
fern imprinted, silver dusted from the suns  
behind pale clouds of gold

a shivering breeze and  
suddenly, our words are clouded over  
and a presence thrums

and something like

the tinkling of small bells has come  
it's in between leaf and leaf  
the circumference of the rose

half guessed at, behind  
snow blinded eyes  
and dreams flit in and out of

reality

haunting your disguise  
and you won't hear a thing  
when the evening news comes on

which doesn't mean  
beyond your chintz covered  
arm chair

the ghosts aren't all  
still there...

mary angela douglas 24 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

## Antique Shop Reverie No.5

you in your picture hat, in an antique frame;  
did the rains stop for you as you crossed the street  
holding your gown above the puddles?

then I imagine you on the train, the tram, the trolley  
going home, with lilac thoughts  
or standing in line at the picture show

or eating a sherbet made of rosepetals,  
snow, or pineapple ice.  
perhaps life was never this way.

perhaps you scrounged in the day to day  
I cannot be sure.  
in the photograph your gaze is heavenly.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Any Heart Breaking Over The World Is

to the once and shining, Russia-

On Vladimir Ashkenazy's beautiful interpretation of Prokofiev's Cinderella...

any heart breaking over the world is  
breaking off in mid-sentence  
still, I believe in words:

in music tuned from words  
in words inlaid in music  
emerging with farthest meanings;

reduced to no one's ashes.

don't chronicle what no one  
can endure, we'll be our own  
country - after all - and

I will embroider former themes  
while the birds come back  
to the right trees

and lachrymose clouds are scattered  
in cross-stitch across  
a silver-threaded moon

or just lie down in a simple field  
to speak my sonnets to an ear of corn  
but my secrets reach the ear of the king

and life shears off  
again with little warning...

yet-  
my fairytale's not wound  
on that spool forever,  
I say

surveying the star-flecked tulle



in the closet  
or the watered silks packed away

in too-opalescent legends of  
the snow child's disappearance:  
defending to the end

her hand-stitched manuscripts,  
oh firebird lamentations, you know that I am.  
there's poetry behind the lines

no matter what they say at Court;  
we'll ford the invisible moat  
in spite of the neighbors' opinions

and rescue everyone we knew  
with songs and marzipan-

or like the children  
in *The Bluebird*, taken in hand  
by Light itself

retrace the inner light  
of things unbroken even when  
the birds fly off

in every wrong direction, not one of them blue,  
viridescent in the glittering distance too long  
eluding you

but never-mind the static  
of world-wide emptiness,  
your message is received

and we're illumined on the frozen stage  
through your lucent pink filter

awakening  
our sleeping castle-kingdoms:  
it's the joy of many angels.

you're learning to live a very long time

and the chiming air around you feels so free;  
catching the silver sounds before they fall,  
bright golden pears, unbruised.

catch yourself before the notes snap off, unlistened to  
but here they are, glistening

all for you and the ticking clock  
breaks open spilling over  
in lored, jeweled singing

still.

the air is awash with golden sparkles  
the fleur-de-lis stars arise  
seen for certain through the azure mists  
and I sense her sky-blue scene

is coming...

smoothing her rose-trimmed skirts  
on an improvised stair and

humming her belle epochal tune;  
packing up apple blossom drifts  
and tiny acorn dishes

for the Queen of Moss and  
nothing this brilliant could ever be lost  
on the Faberged wind

when the crystalized waltz begins again

for Our Lady of Infinite Glass-

mary angela douglas 9 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Anyone Can Do It And Taste Testing As We Go

old mashed up peanut butter and banana half of a  
sandwich, marshmallow fluff because it's fluffier  
strawberry tarts to make it strawberryish, whipped creams,  
(caramel) , maraschinos, coffee, tea, no, gingerbread currants,

sweet coke syrups on dry ice, kind of halloweenish chocolate candy melting I feel  
kind of greenish, chicken soup with rice is nice and grilled cheese (colby) ,  
nothing moldy, blts and something made of old swiss cheese, tomato aspic,  
nothing plastic,

scoops of fudge oh I can't budge and raspberry trifle  
high as the Eiffel, folding in the butter cookie tin dumped out, alfalfa sprouts, and  
butterscotch butterscotch topping there's no stopping, the endless  
gloping,

the thin mints thinned and peanut brittles and hot off the griddle the boysenberry  
pancakes, the last of the cornflakes, cold mashed potatoes, gravy from the ladle,  
a little vanilla, a hill a beans, and pink ice cream, a meatloaf slab, a  
can of Tab,

a little bit a butter I think I hear my mother what is all this clutter? Martha  
Stewart said oh just use whatever  
you've got on hand in your kitchen and

whip something up for dinner

mary angela douglas 13 august 2014rev.16 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Apres Le Deluge And The Wounding Decree

the kings roses are in bloom  
whose else could bloom  
in winter snows and cast

a pink tinge on everything  
even my old gown she sighed when  
creeping round the edges

of the parchment multifoliate  
the painted flowers cannot detract  
from the decree

of wounding me.

I hide in the shade of smiles  
I can't remember when  
all this happened

still. and roses fade  
but not the brier  
roses fade and not the brier

she sang on one note only  
till the last string broke.  
and word of this floated

out of the Kingdom.

mary angela douglas 19 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# April In Fairy Tale Weather

oh, she should not stand in a pearl light  
said the petulant seeing as how it beaded  
her golden hair

and they rearranged her dress so that  
it no longer reflected the blue skies anywhere  
and tied the sash crookedly

and saw that her eyes were gazing far way  
from this melee and filled with lilies  
towers, something, they could not say

but it made them irritable.  
then she was driven away  
into the far woods

and left to pray  
for whatever sustenance there was.  
but the blue skies were near

and berry bright, the clouds  
and nothing loud, obstrepersous  
came near her then.

with God for friend;  
the evening star.  
the cooling waters.

mary angela douglas 8 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Aqua

the skies were aqua in winter too; they gleamed  
and the snows tinged with pink with  
lavender even, beveled; how can this be

my Spring wondered aloud

wandered, careful of her ribbons, her lost clouds where  
rippled the aurora borealis everywhere  
one season mirroring another unexpectedly

into the Living Stream  
God dreamed.  
and it was so.

mary angela douglas 2 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Arcadia, The Word Is Like A Cherry Lozenge

Arcadia, the word is like a cherry lozenge on the tongue  
or butter rum my sister proposed  
looking up from the swing sitting idle

in the sunlight  
peripatetic child of music.  
and now we're seeking the names of clouds

and we are far from trouble in the blue isles  
sprouting wings and laughing sporadically  
in cumulo nimbus, cumulo stratus, cirrus

cirrus, circuses in green and the tightrope lady  
in pink sequined skirts  
and this is our just desserts

we say, scooping into the fudge sundaes  
or playing in the sprinkler on  
hot Arkansas days

when the roses boil  
and summer lasts till Christmas.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Are You Going To Spend The Whole Summer This Way

all the things you thought you knew  
can be swallowed overnight.  
what will you do without walls?

without the same curtains?  
pickpockets at your lock  
when there isn't even a door

anymore but a cubicle curtain  
not in your favorite desing.

it's you at home isn't it?  
knocking around your soul  
for a bit of cheese;

a trifle or two.  
a familiar shoe  
amid the debris and the jackhammers.

they wear well,  
those wash dresses  
retrieved from someone else's

clothesline saiiing  
over the backyards.

mine you say.  
mine?  
carry your heart in your hands

and watch the skies, not not the mail.  
it's a long way now.  
My God.

it's a long way.

mary angela douglas 15 june 2015; 11 march 2016



Mary Angela Douglas

## Around The Fairytale's Gemstoned Page

to my Grandmother, Lucy W. Young, my Grandfather Milton B. and to Hans Christian Anderson and the Brothers Grimm, among others...thank you! and thanks are due to God since as a friend once said, 'God gives us the fairytales to show us the way home...' (P.S. To my mother too, of course who spoke in syllables of strawberry and utter diamond all the time. really.)

around the fairytale's gem-stoned page are sun splattered leaves and berries softening the borders ferny angels lightly penciled in beyond the trees that shift like pedaled dreams on the dream piano of the pale blue country lined with gold I pray to someday rescue if I can- pure swansdown drifts down these elaborate Capitals on every sunset's page the swans revert to children and are saved on the one rock left in the watercoloured whirlpools of their sea- and I skip backwards to a small green house with spearmint strip-ed awnings or a pink-beige brick with picture windows and mimosa trees... you can't fade away along the borders flushed with glazed roses I won't let you- and everytime I close my eyes the skies are pleated with your swans the ruby candlestick in Beauty's room drips very lime-green wax all over my small table with the circus scenes. maybe for childhood's jam-spooned days, alone, they gathered all those startling coronations, words of best green velvet, I don't know how else the carriage came to be cut from the creamy rind of citrus afternoons as if with the golden scissors of a King Hans Christian Anderson it's still me wavering in a pink embroidered dress and golden slippers, wobbling near the icy angels with their candlespun whispering as they say: rework the hidden brocades now of all lost feelings, places, courtiers, things- in snowy silence heaped with silver lilies...shine... I can't break faith with the fairytale task till vaster kingdoms come and my sister's perfect Chopin bubble clears the pink-white-red azaleaed fence while the clouds keep billowing out beneath their clothespins the milk makes butter islands in the oatmeal until- the last sweet early peas are sorted satisfactorily from the Milky Way and kept in the stoppered bottle on our etagere, the one the colour of ashes of roses... but will they turn to diamonds in the end or chicken pie you may well wonder when the curtains close... Grandmother's playing Liebestraum again in her rose taffeta on a rose taffeta staff she turned to diamond music in the end taking my Grandfather's arm and heading upward without her pearl opera glasses but with the Psalms all double scored in moonlight... the day winds down like antique toys in soft yellow chenille- the jeweled heart sifts in the furnace the tin soldier cannot reach the tabletop... someday I will learn to live expecting better swans and in your name I'll find the lemon latitudes so fine of the summers everywhere now- of the hidden mermaids with a sainted love dissolving

into foam... mary angela douglas 5 april 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Arranging The Pasteboard Furniture

arranging the pasteboard furniture  
in the dollhouse, won't the  
summer be fine? and

edged in the lace of Queen Anne;  
diecut valentines  
the elegant names of the meadow

flowers, flowers all under the blue

sanctuary of skies  
we'll scatter so pinkly there;  
where cloudlike, again the bride doll glimmers

for her 100th rehearsal  
confetti coming down  
little bells going off.

and you, will you hold aloft  
as carefully as you please  
in your school

cherry coughdrop reveries  
her sequined train trailing  
the clover-starry grass, or will I?

while the Queen stares into  
her looking glass a little distracting  
in a cherry trimmed gown

breaking the clasp on  
her favorite jade necklace.  
alas! you cry in your sleep

where all afternoon you practiced scales  
up and down, up and down  
in a sing-singing, silvering sound,

faintly in daylight

tracing through music  
your very own

Milky Way

mary angela douglas 25 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Arriving On The Same Day You Are Going

and there's you thinking they will come out in silver to meet you  
and the little bells ringing through the chill air  
as though you had arrived in a shower of gold

proclaiming it is Christmas, everywhere.  
time to shut the factories down then  
to feast at the table with perfection's apple pies

and the lemon chiffon subtleties reprised;  
the raspberry meringues.  
the surprise of everyone remembering,

with their: aren't you glad you came.

you have the tang of apples almost in your speech  
you imagine you imagine they will say  
and welcome to our clime why don't you stay

where the trains still run on time  
but the afternoon ticks by and so  
you have put away the gift wrappings of it

finding nothing inside.  
a few buildings you remember.  
the way the tall grass leans in the wind

a sprinkling of stars oh then a something in you cries.  
you thought they would come out in silver.  
you thought they would be your friends.

mary angela douglas 8 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Art Project

when the ink has dried on the sky

He may write across it in stars

and there's your house

the one made out of color forms

or etched into scratch art

with colors layer on layer

so that you want to make

if your mother will let you

a color layer cake

using all the crayons at once

oh then you want to finger paint the sun

with more light than anyone has ever used before

except God of course in the beginning

with all His meteors.

mary angela douglas 20 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Art Song 1

because you sang of the moon impearled

as if you held all pearls in your hands

they banished you from the Music Room

and exiled you to a foreign land

where strange birds caw from the chinaberry trees.

but all your songs come back to me

come back to me on a variable wind

and I transcribe from the tone deaf world

scorned beauty's skirls.

and witness the shining retinue

the gold leafed trees

in a variable wind.

mary angela douglas 9 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Art Song I

because you sang of the moon impearled  
as if you held all pearls in your hands  
they banished you from the Music Room

and exiled you to a foreign land  
where strange birds caw from the chinaberry trees.  
but all your songs come back to me

come back to me on a variable wind  
and I transcribe from the tone deaf world  
scorned beauty's skirts.

and witness the shining retinue  
the gold leafed trees  
in a variable wind.

mary angela douglas 9 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# As I Stood Before The Looking Glass Wood

as I stood before the looking glass wood  
seven angels at my side  
all other mirrors glanced aside

their windows blackening.  
I saw the balloon of emerald glide  
down to the shivering shore.

seven angels at my side  
the rose composed of deep thought  
and a singular fragrance

wrought of me the vow of childhood  
not to forsake.  
not to forsake and the seven angels cried

and the candelabras of the stars wept the dew  
and this is you then and you now dressed in meteors, simply

still at the wood's edge and the candled whispered wish  
in your head on the fond cake with the family then

the pledge taken  
with vows as soft as snow unbeknownst to them  
the emerald balloon ascending

the seven angels by my side.  
the night countries of Orion.

the woods lit up with snow in the Dream Time.  
I hear them whispering, goodbye, goodbye my child  
the red rose shielded in my heart through thickening winds

no emblem of the moment but abiding

and God the garden, guardian, the snows in my heart filling up  
to the brim of starlight broken apart, the bread of Beauty.  
and all of it, in a lava of gold cannot cannot subside

a quake of the beautiful  
awakening awakening  
I have brought and sold none of it

cherry bright preserved it beyond diamond bright  
There, on the Other Side not made of stone, but if so,  
stone weeping weeping

mystifying the angels  
my balloon glides home.

mary angela douglas 24 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If It Could Be That Way

let me exchange  
as if it could be that way  
three more wounds later on  
for the silver crumbs scattered  
under sudden moonlight  
for I'm misplaced  
in this kingdom of glass  
where anything breaks into  
rainbows if you just look at it

and always picking rose-petal words too fast  
to be believed by the nursery floor  
lions split at the seam  
half-splayed in their pink  
night-lighted dreams  
and always butternut whispering:

'why is she always this far  
from the castle  
and no further-

waiting to be believed? '  
as if it could be that way.  
that I may not distress  
any further the voice  
of darling God caught in the  
brambles, every time;  
moving that stickily on Lily-pad Paws  
too beautiful to be believed,  
oh my savannah.

to be believed.  
as if it could be that way.  
when I have closed my eyes  
too far to see  
and no one comes to find  
I will exchange  
one small rose petal kingdom  
Misplaced in the kingdom of glass

for three more wounds later on  
when this has passed.

there's too much shattering, anywhere-  
so that even the roses know it,

the rumpling lions

mary angela douglas 21 april 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If It Were Christmas Flowering

she loved the word crimson as if it were  
Christmas flowering, the colour of carols;  
lavishly bells from

crepe paper rafters ringing  
in honeycombed laughter  
with rustling as ringing;

crimson, she was singing

let it be made of taffeta,  
a favorite dress and  
beaded with little stars;

crimson, a rose garden gown;

a lost thing found; the sound a sparkle  
makes on a country way to town  
with town full of unceasing presents

like a Saturday in December;  
the home that you remember

and pomegranates and cherries  
and the resounding: cerisely cherishing-  
all other evidence to the contrary-

a language of sheer Joy

mary angela douglas 30 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If On A Porch By Childe Hassam

as if on a porch by Childe Hassam  
in a lily rosed light I lifted lightly  
the evening shade

with my still, pearled insteps

to see what once was clear  
be clear no more  
and stood near the open door

and would not could not  
walk there anymore  
and this is the porch of late evening

or it has become that  
tinted of twilight  
brimming the teacups with dusks

I can't contain  
and so it spills over staining  
in deep blues and greens

these shadows about to turn the corner  
of a faraway music you only hear  
this late in the year, this late:

in a dress of lawn  
in the aftermath  
of tears

mary angela douglas 29 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If The Sun Had Words

for Piper Laurie-  
in the alternate gardens of no cinema yet revealed-  
on her irreplaceable voice and its musicality-  
her incarnations spun of glass, substantially appearing,  
irrevocably, memorable.

a tone poem on her jewel-like trajectory in the film,  
The Grass Harp...

it's not made of glass and yet it chimes  
like the wind through old roses  
in a garden from another time:

gardenia watered  
through angelic rains-

almost - of china - breakable-  
ringed with the fanciful;  
making the twilight hour

stand- still-  
ghost children, think so-

far away, wavering between Shine and shine  
in the brocade of the prised air

and down the bow of the night's proscenium where

the stars seem to have caught her light.  
onstage, on the stage of verities,  
simple as a valentine or not-

with scrolled handwriting  
you thought you recognized?  
was it a dream?

inscribed for someone else's life?  
like the debut of flowers in each spring,



a freshness, with a difference -

a painting painted under the one we're used to;  
the one we're unaccustomed to feeling, long out of view.  
not now-

when suddenly the Soul  
feels it was stashed in rooms with no other harps  
through centuries:

contriving never to be smashed.

not that contemporary,  
something harkens farther back  
than anyone can remember rehearsing then:

her song, initialed with unaccountable jewels.  
jewels on the surface of everything,

she refracts without even intending to.

and is the world made of crystal, then,  
sighed the children, wondering-  
with an occasional orchid flare  
going up, from the elsewhere

and is it Christmas everywhere or  
only where we are snowing?  
where can the fountain flow for

such enchantments and can we go there,  
please- and far from the broken things-  
drenched in the borealis  
up past bedtime-

or, is it, the lost languages of birds or  
just her standing in a ray of light  
filtering through the green-

about to speak

as if the sun had words

mary angela douglas 7 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If The Trees Could Not Help; Or Dystopia In Its Meager Hour; Or The Brightest Light Bulbs In The Room...

as if the trees could not help but burst into flowers

nor the stars swirl into galaxies without them

or streams run. under the summer sun

they have decreed all things to grow

in depressing mandates issued by the score

and as they see it, are charged

with telling us so. even how to breathe.

this is the nightmare role

they have conceived

who take notes on the less fortunate

they suppose are unenlightened or just plain lazy.

the lightest reading of the old forgotten tales

would enlighten them

that men perceived to be in ill fortune

are often the most blessed.

but you can't tell them anything

they don't think

they already know unless they can think

that you know less. o so much less  
though you are schooled in great distress  
they imagine they were the first  
to come to all knowledge.  
and have degrees from every college,  
earned or not.  
lead the horses to water as you will  
they will not drink  
no matter what their thirst  
unless you think they thought of it first.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# As If We Could, After All

[to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas]

we laughed when the clouds were wispy;  
knowing they were called cirrus,  
we adopted them

and drank pure limeade gladness  
in the shine of our familiar trees.  
will you go to sea later on

or last and last  
without ever sailing forth  
in your cherry best or

will you go North at some behest

confiding to old diaries  
your fears about the expedition  
or work downtown near the Library

and wear navy blue dresses  
with little collars  
or collect sand dollars

in lieu of cash  
keeping your stash  
of butterscotch well hidden

from the children and  
their Halloweens...

life came to us unbidden  
as our dreams  
by the questions we never asked

but I like to look back  
and consider these things  
as if we could, after all,

start out, again.

this time, with wings.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# As Though Filtered Through Violets

[reflections on the Lady of Shalott]

was everything for her refracted more softly  
so that moonlight entered the chamber  
as though filtered through violets;

sunlight streamed through intermediating angels?  
dear Lady. tower lost and spinning.  
it's hard on the heart, isn't it

never seeing life up close.  
they will turn to other things,  
new tournaments, what they may.

flowers will send their regrets  
and you will just keep weaving  
grieving in this way.

how candlelit and solemn  
the processions for you  
after you left.

if only you could have stayed to see them.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# As Though We Lived

we will find acorns of gold  
scattered carelessly on the ground  
the wind from far stars

gathering its bouquets  
we will wear dresses  
smocked with lilies

and carry our hats in our hands  
the ones with blue streamers  
paler than water

oh daughters of dreams upon dreams  
we were then  
amenable to every roselike thought

why was it always every season at once  
in our house  
as though we lived

on the edge of Time?

mary angela douglas 29 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# As Though We Were Children, Still

we will spend the splendid pennies of our days  
to the very end  
drenched in the wind, the perfumes of cut grass

the antique stories that will last  
told over and over again and  
gathering up late violets on the hills

or singing silverly to ourselves  
taking down the cherished books  
from familiar shelves

and dreaming more than reading.

stilled is the water in our wishing wells  
and ever clearer and there we linger  
not lifting a finger

concentrating so hard  
and wrapping the world in our wish;  
sealing the letter

with the luminescent heart  
red o red and shining.  
rich in the measure of days

that drift oh, amber! like the leaves away  
while we cry stay, stay  
and are heard of God

who blows them back  
to us mysteriously  
in colourful array

as though we were children, still.

mary angela douglas 26 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ashputtel Has The Loveliest Dress

to my mother, Mary Young-Douglas and my grandmother, Lucy White Young

Ashputtel has the loveliest dress  
made all of stars or tiny spangles  
on a peach background;  
against an aqua cloud  
she leans, or aquamarine-  
in my first Storybook.

how can she stop herself from dreaming  
in tulle that is aglow with sudden  
marigolds?

she's folding a sapphire fan just  
like a cake, not wasting anything  
humming 'La Traviata'.

or in a tarlatan whispering  
'violets, like the twilight hour'  
that she believes in-  
while I go on just reading,  
lilies in a mist.

and everything she says  
is only waiting to be:  
A diamond or a  
peridot embroidered on the air  
in the distance between dream and dream.

it's God knows best  
when she's blubbering over the parsnips  
snipped too fine-  
or snapping the clothespins off the  
apricot crochet of clouds

or carnation petticoats-

how her shadow's pale pink silk  
is dyed to match

His favorite orchids, orchards, sighs-

oh how could it be  
any other way than this  
when she glides out in the froth of  
plinking moonlight unaccountable  
happiness

that I have stored inside  
to keep from crying  
when the stitching's wrong-  
the seed-pearls scattered-  
and daybreak errands wounding  
on a crooked-not a crystal,  
stair-

she says, 'God will take care of you'  
and she should know.

before your melting vision soon  
how gently she will step into the snows as into blue-belled meadows  
holding on  
in her glimmering house shoes;  
decorative and true-  
and spilling stardust as she goes  
more beautiful than the mirroring sea  
in my jump rope rhymes of green taffeta.

let the jeweled clock weep  
the lucent tatters back-  
the yellow gold pumpkin  
crank itself up the hill  
beside the little house with the rick-rack curtains and  
the apple tree

let the raggedy rosebush  
in the Mama's garden  
burst into everlasting rubies  
Raphael's cherubs gather still...

mary angela douglas 21 october 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Aslan (The Brigands Go The Other Way)

to Christ, the Lion of Judah

the brigands go the other way  
calumny stares, stone-statue dead  
at the white-frost crossroads

in my head  
suddenly everything  
turned to song.

white flowers stanch'd  
the senseless wounds  
where late and long my soul had bled  
and I cannot relate to you  
how suddenly the winter fled.

everything suddenly turned to song  
the hand upraised struck down  
at last

and evil's anvil hatched and passed  
flowed by You into  
silver stars

I wept at Your bright armies;  
and I could only bow my head  
when  
wolfish sorrows stalked away

and shadow-puppet Scorn  
knew Dread

suddenly everything turned to song  
like a forever Easter-tide  
and we were finally by Your side

and couldn't be overthrown-

mary angela douglas 7 february 2010

\*Aslan: the figure of Christ in C.S. Lewis' fantasy, Narnia

Mary Angela Douglas

# At Dusk We Wrote Our Names, The Name Of God

AT DUSK WE WROTE OUR NAMES, THE NAME OF GOD

what if we wrote in meteor dust

our last goodbyes to the skies

what if

say that it is so

say that the glow of it remained

for longer than we thought it would

though we were shunned

wasn't it all becoming Light

sad angels asked in the dusk

and I am in the blue of it

falling all around

in the blue light

of the sapphire escapade collapsing

to the ground

the scaffolding of

brief Sistines, unrepeatabe

doesn't anyone remember this I cried.

it was called music.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2018



Mary Angela Douglas

# At The Academy Of Golden Birds

at first I heard them singing  
in my dreams: the golden birds.

when you're older Grandmother said  
you'll know what it means;  
you'll go to school  
to learn about the golden birds.

I went.  
with my plaid satchel.

the walls were bare.  
chalk letters over and over  
on the black board almost fluttered  
but the stories were always about  
something else.

day after day I waited sorting apples from oranges  
cutting out paper leaves  
till waiting wasn't a thing I could do  
not even with waxed paper,  
pressing the flowers.

when will we learn  
about the golden birds I asked?  
coming in one day from recess

from dust-clouded running like the  
gold horse of the plains I reigned so slightly in.

the teacher grew red faced  
though she hadn't been running.

not explaining anything  
that's what we're doing.

sit - down.

I never saw them there, my golden birds;

not even kept in cages by the pencil sharpener  
or beside the aqua water fountains  
where I would have gone to feed them gladly, pineapple cake.  
at least on Wednesdays.

oh they should have arisen like their four and twenty  
brethren from the King's own pie...

but they couldn't live at school.  
in combination lockers.

maybe I should have stayed at home  
where they came so easily  
before I even learned to spell them  
flock after flock to my Grandmother's rose bush

without even being asked, nicely...

mary angela douglas 29 may 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# At The First Harsh Word

crumple of stars within my head  
at the first blow said and  
then the moon spins sideways

blue dusk  
no longer the colour of dreaming  
how does it feel to the one

winning all arguments this way  
reeling in all the rainbows  
who has words to say

the prodigies of silence  
learn the hard way  
turning to snow

and then to wind  
and then  
the second round begins

the angels in amber, in rose  
can see themselves  
in the perfect oval

of her tears

mary angela douglas 25 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# At The Piano

time ticks in your hands with a sad translucence  
you don't understand because  
the metronome is weighted

the carpet the color of roses  
and the piano still standing.  
the trees outside

are with you too,  
practicing in the wind;  
the blowing pines

the pine winds beckoning.  
this is music too and you rise  
to see the sunset snowy

beyond the picture window glass.  
all this will pass.  
even the metronome

will vanish.

Mary Angela Douglas 4 January 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# At Times He Is The Weeping Borealis

At times He is the weeping borealis

where all the colours reign orange, rose

and the mystical violet, the equation of lemon

the crimson and the candy cane

we listen, the elves of ourselves

and we know

his footsteps chime

He is the design blue white in frost

delicate latticing the dreaming

window panes and blowing the whistle of

the silver winds to summon it all

while we remain:

only the entranced,

His children.

mary angela douglas 18 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Aubade In Autumn Remembered

migrations of the monarch or the amber ambient suns  
that's you on the path where the bright leaves scatter  
with your plaid lunch box, your plaid dress too

and new penny happy on your way to school,  
to the farther land of stories. you may go  
through gates without number in the unseen

thinking it's everyone feels this way  
when the moon sways, Mother-Of-Pearl  
between the minor branches

singing the shadows of leaves

or at home, with your honeycombed  
toast and cocoa where the big picture  
window smells like cold when you put your nose to it,

streaked with the dews  
and suddenly it's Christmas you're  
purely in love with:

the Royal reds and the greens heralding

the straw roofed nativity brought  
down from the attic  
and green is the very fragrance of Christmas

greenery and of a wondering sheen,

the linen skies that whisper 'snow'  
in your dreams and the flecked  
tissue of a school costume.

later you learn the histories of the world.  
but they will pale before these  
maple avenues that you will keep

in ever cherishing conspiracy:



you! and God's best angels,  
oblivious through Time

to the pursed, sorry ravages of sleep:  
shine and Shine in the  
glitter of the far-away afternoons and the wind-stirred:

pristine, so many years after...

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Awake

[a piano piece for my sister]

is that the far kingdom she asked

through sleep misted eyes

through sleigh bells

through the tolling of dreams

small angels held her hands

I knew she was there

though the room had faded into space

the space between keys when you are little

with your first piano piece

and proud; is it Christmas there already

I heard her say in the sharp breeze

in the blue breeze turning the corner

where our roof froze over and the leaves

not long ago, on the trees, soft gardenias

in an in between season the colour of clouds.

you were clad in snow and if I could have

I would have painted you in blue and rose

the way you looked at five or four

in your first sun dress

oh don't get cold I cried aloud in my sleep

then everything vanished.

and I was what they call in this life,

on any green apriled evening

wrapped in pearl occasions like a first concerto

younger then,

and &quot;awake.&quot;

mary angela douglas 8 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Azul

to Juan Ramon Jimenez (1881-1958)

Juan Ramon standing amid blue flowers  
did not hear me calling  
small birds flew on every side

through chinks in a chain-link cloud and over  
the scuttled rainbows of your sighs I picked up on the ground  
to far-away laughter

oh but 'not-it' I cried out from  
the space left by your shadow  
on the grass

like a child in a game of tag,  
the last one left in the

blonde and feathered fields still  
unashamed  
of starlight by the railroad tracks

and hotel rolls with real pats of butter-

at home in the pink stucco of 'play-like' afternoons...

Sr. Jiminez bluer than the bluest  
shadows could be,  
could it be the earth is disenchanting?

will we grow apart?  
stand still, I said, with a mouthful of pins  
I will sew your shadow to the sky

and line it with pale green stars

it's strange while  
I'm still trying to speak  
in lilies and small roses

in blue diamonds secretly

distinctly...

oh why do you keep on  
haunting your own poems

it hurts so much  
even in my minted sleep or  
is it, dream?

to be crumpling up the violet  
of mimeographed vocabulary lists  
again-

and practicing  
balletic leaps by the  
persimmon trees

it's not that I'm that far  
from all those merry dialogues  
about butter about arroz con

pollo about beaten chocolate-

regarding time I find it hard to keep  
the tenses straight:  
do I keep breaking the heart of moonlight  
without knowing why-

or is all that hushed?  
and can I pray to God in  
pure hibiscus, too?

entenderás...

a hundred years from home  
no one recognized my speech  
but the blue wind and God

and the tire-swing swung  
in glittering silence by the  
small girl dressed in

blue porous happiness...

mary angela douglas april 26-april 28,2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Baby In The Sun

all wrapped up with a silver bow  
a green or a gold they think  
they have it so

all the philosophers, theosophers.  
a baby plays with bubbles and  
is happy in the sun

and knows more than  
anyone of them  
what the world is for.

mary angela douglas 31 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Backstory Breakfast For 'The Emperor's New Clothes'

to my Grandmother

the peacock visions preen: sheer emerald,  
turquoise, gold paint dribbled dream  
down the chins of the boo-less  
(don't eat so slow, dear)  
with a thousand eyes blinking  
losing the contest

if you'll stare hard enough, long enough  
piercing through the sheen.  
so the child at her oatmeal heard

her Grandmother; pouring the cream  
like a lake into the bowl lit with  
islands of pure marigold butter.

-study hard to know the angel music  
beginning with the first measure  
she twirled the piano stool that afternoon

and opened the Steinway lid  
as if it were gold.

-oh, sweet Pandora!  
here's hope for you  
in a dark-turned world  
for the topsy turvy,

the witless and the scurvy days ahead;  
though you are dressed in rainbow fashion now,  
with a green bolero, thinking it's all candy  
and the music box.

so passed the cherishing cherry pie days.  
and every empty jar filled to the brim  
with the wild honeysuckle.

till the festival day in the Square  
where the scammed king stood:



exposed to the cold and a little more, the  
rounded o; the child cherry lips composing

to disclose a fine truth spoken plainly  
in a voice that carried over the confetti snows:

O  
He has nothing on

mary angela douglas 9 june 2014

Note on the poem: of course this is my mini-Stanislavski  
piano exercise on the very real fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, 'The  
Emperor's New Clothes.'

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bacon On Sundays

the black-eyed Susans she brought with her  
meant for her auntie wilted by the time  
she got to Oz.

she cried.  
then Toto snuffed around  
for emerald flowers instead.

they never said she was inconsolable  
after that. they never said.  
the whole time in Oz

missing the butter running down the johnny cakes,  
and bacon on Sundays.  
in love with the sparkles on the Good Queen's dress

and her own shoes.  
but missing the haystacks by noon.  
the Scarecrow felt as much.

but he wasn't talking either.  
at night they both dreamed of sunflowers.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bailing Out

perhaps in our souls sometimes we are bailing out all day

from strange aircraft

with tiny milkweed parachutes

for a soft landing in some blue grass perfumed dream meadow

we used to understand.

the soul has its own life and is capable of this.

and sometimes, it is necessary

to be in other realms

when the shattering news comes.

the telephone call you didn't expect.

a door slammed recklessly.

then the soul retreats with lilies in its hands

and quotes Shakespeare

or the 23rd Psalm

and finds the green rivers where the sheep are banked

and soft as clouds in their woolly slumber.

down deep there lives the dearest freshness Hopkins sang.

therefore in our wilderness we will find the pear cactus

and drink deep

removing the spines.

watching the clouds turn from azure  
to magenta.

mary angela douglas 18 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Balloons

we came upon the balloons of Heaven.  
this was in a dream and  
after climbing a green hill

in search of picnic grounds  
as it happens sometimes in daily life  
that you find an unexpected thing

while looking for another.  
we saw them drifting endlessly,  
the lost ones from Oz

in unchronicled years;

the pink and gold  
from secret birthday wishes appearing  
and the passengers also

in rose as if posing for  
the Impressionists on a summer's day and  
peering through pearl opera glasses.

and then there were herds of the azure  
simply fantastic  
escaped from circuses and fairs;

from the soft curved hands of tear streaked children

one instant earlier unaware  
that here on earth  
beauty slips so easily from us.

but here they came back to us  
newly in love with clouds  
and every bit as high as we used to swing;

consorting with the  
rainbow flavored zephyrs  
and a something aeolian

that came ringing from the leaves  
of trees

the tall and guardian ones  
we loved so long ago  
when we were home...

mary angela douglas 22 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Base Camp

they like the ozone and the high altitudes  
wept Cinderella; not for the first time.  
I'm too weary to climb, to fetch, to mend

what they send down to me  
so I pretend I've something grand to do  
in the afternoon

and so, prepare myself  
by dreaming of peacocks  
and the land they live in.  
when will you give in  
my sisters say  
if they say anything at all

and understand  
you'll never be  
what we are.

and they are dancing on a distant star  
and glittering so hard  
while I wile away each hour

dreaming I'm just a flower  
with nothing to do but bloom.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bears Can Be That Way

bears can be that way  
when you forget them  
they still play

I mean the kind  
you wind up and  
sweet music plays

and plays all day  
when you're away  
I've got to say

it's easier than I thought  
to write a poem about them  
you may scoff, but

bears can be that way.  
(all afternoon, and then

there's ice cream}  
I hear them call  
all the way to the corner

where the bus lets us off  
and down the hall to  
my sister and I

in our apple pie skirts  
what's for dessert? their furry voices ring  
and we're abandoning

our satchels stuffed with homework  
that's got to be finished late  
cause bears, you know,

won't wait  
where ice cream's concerned  
no matter what you learned about them



today in school.  
(with fudge sauce...)

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful In The Post World To God Above

beautiful in the post world I may bloom  
said someone undistinguished we thought  
little of perhaps;

in the aftermath of all their afternoons  
in the Kingdom they were too afraid of  
left alone on earth

to believe

and where there was no atmosphere to breathe  
suddenly we will be in the high the starry winds  
and no more alas and everything, reprieve,

beautiful in the after worlds aglow  
and branching out in light toward Light  
though thought so little of on earth

there we will be loved

mary angela douglas 11 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful Obscurity

solī Deo gloria

beautiful obscurity I have come to know  
the hem of the soul from the inside,  
rimmed in gold

and in the waking nights have spent such coinage  
on God, doling out the graces.  
If they accuse, if they accuse you oh my soul

of not working hard enough God knows  
what is made in tears.

through sheer curtains, the ice in the breeze  
bee sting and honey in the same blanched hour;

building the blocks of abcs  
with childish real intensity  
though mockery seeps through

taking all from You

we vow to build anew, even overdue  
even on our knees,  
in beautiful obscurity.

mary angela douglas 19 november 2018; rev.25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful Reader

beautiful reader taking on the snow colours where  
you walk, the variations in the pearl;  
apprehending unheard music

in a hushed world still.

beautiful reader of the pines the guardian streams  
half cracked with ice, the glaze on the

words you used to say and then the page  
is turned for you by someone else  
who knows better who you are they dream

at the agencies, or at the church bazaars  
the jazzy intake sessions,  
if they dream at all.

who could imagine you held all this within you  
world upon world and as you read

it all comes back to you or opens up anew from  
a different chapter. long will the gold in the leaf  
you pluck in the dim air stay

when used to mark the passages  
you loved to play on an old piano  
though no one suspects you of such depths

on any day job you may take, bus stop round  
that you may make or where you stray  
on the sun ridden lot behind the housing projects.

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful The Essay That Doesn't Fade Away

beautiful the essay that doesn't fade away  
that picks field flowers in a bright meandering way  
or clouds from a cotton sky

whatever is nearby  
or far as dreams or ancient gleams  
of what returns on summer days

or when the winds, the rains rap pleasantly  
at winter panes. because you are inside.

cast far away from you the present lies  
all that disturbs and clouds the eyes  
with sorrow.

walk awhile with those beloved ghosts  
who wrote and wrote and wrote  
wherever it would lead

whole paragraphs of gold  
the page of mead  
and take their lead

and a few apples with you  
cheese and bread  
and listen for the magic

that was said.

mary angela douglas 10 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful Theories Imploded

beautiful theories imploded  
we went home to the folkways  
where shimmering beans were planted

and the harps amazed.  
and you were the one half turning  
when the bells called deep and round

turn back turn back Dick Whittington  
to London town  
we will ransack all the treasures

that can astound  
in the bookshop lanes  
the tea shops glittering

the Lost Child found

and a kind of grace settles down  
and the cries of those who sold their wares  
all cherry bright and cherry ripe

and caroled upon the stair  
the ghosts of those you loved  
the valentine and the dove

sweet sweet reprise  
the pearl edged tuning of the harp  
and the heart's refined disguise.

mary angela douglas 6 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beautiful, Coming Due

a far away feeling on your birthday  
and suddenly you are transported  
from the pink table

goodbye you sing softly  
to alarm no one  
to the cake with pure rosettes

to the presents glistening  
something called to you then  
perhaps the ghost of who

you would become  
some years from now  
with no pink table left

not even a streamer  
but the memory of how  
when you were ten

and the party set to begin  
the party favors at each place  
suddenly a feeling came to you

swept over you  
like a forgotten kingdom, beautiful,  
coming due.

mary angela douglas 29 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beauty Asks For A Rose

to the Saviour of all saviours

only bring me the Rose of all roses  
clouded pink in winter's storms  
the Artic rose no one can comprehend

or reconfigure

the high serene silver  
rose confounding moonlight  
recovered by kings in flight

from their lost kingdoms

the one that is mirrored in  
the starry triptich  
whenever I close my eyes

only bring me the cardinal Rose, the rose of  
hidden music, scrolled and scrolled the

wounded Rose  
the silence of petals streaming

the heart within the heart within the heart

mary angela douglas 4 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas



# Beauty Floats Above In The Old Poems

Beauty floats above in the old poems.  
made of clouds, pictures in the clouds  
in the beleaguered galleries.

leaving the town at war.  
old gossips hurling apple cores  
after her.

it doesn't matter, really.  
she'll turn into the apple trees  
and laugh in the returning breeze

when April stirs.

or be the first thing you see  
when you go home  
after strange travels.

the thing you said you couldn't forfeit  
if it came down to it.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beauty In The Room Marked 'All Her Own'

[for Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve and  
Jean-Marie Leprince de Beaumont in gratitude  
for a deeply beautiful fairy tale, much misunderstood-except by Cocteau! ]

her rubied candlewicks can't burn down  
or cause alarms to sound.  
rose perfect are the flowers on her dresser

with the matching dresser set done  
all in pearl. she lives in opalescence.  
quietness.

her books in sunrise colours  
sing of Eden, childhood confections  
happily recalled and when she

turns, the wall, revolving, shows  
the paintings from the Louvre  
in their primordial state:

bright hued as future Daylight  
may anoint her cherishing  
painters-to-come.

sleep is pillowed by the dream of home  
more real than when she was there  
and here's a winding stair

that leads to God, sheer banisters of light;  
small birds in the music of pure  
flight; unending consolations...

mary angela douglas 29 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beauty Itself Is Burning Down: To Notre Dame Cathedral, April 15, 2019

beauty itself is burning down

a newsman cried

with Notre Dame lit like a torch

against the sunset sky

what can we say

from faraway

will the rose windows melt inside

I wondered, can it be so many saints have died

and now their images too their agonies renewed

for another contract, lease

is the name for Paris, rue,

not rosemary, please forget me

what I knew or thought I knew of

Hugo, I thought randomly

cathedrals burning in a green april  
april, the cruelest  
does the world skip a beat in an afternoon  
  
of eight centuries  
the world within the world  
  
we never see  
not being visionary  
  
the cathedral erupting into great roses  
in a penultimate Spring  
the cathedral a great green candle  
  
consumed for the Lord  
  
as if by example, we should be shorn  
of our somnolence  
in the lily of this hour

with the traffic no longer surging, transfixed

in the rose of its crumbling

singing, singing singing

the bell into the tower

the tower withstanding

the bell in the tower

the bell in the tower

beyond all wars and scars

the little mockeries in peace time

and yet, crowds grew

and thronged the singeing avenues

willing the walls to stay

for hours and hours

the spire of Notre Dame

our lady's arrow-sorrow

lit in a golden flame, flickered, floated sideways

what next? The flaking, flinging down of stars. the moon falls into the earth, a  
mirror no longer

ashes for beauty?

time itself collapsed in a deep black hole

remnants of a single spring twilight

our souls in the rubble still singing.

will not cease, will not leave it this way

on this, no calendar's day.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beauty Of The Seven Dresses

[an original fairy tale]

beauty of the seven dresses  
a tale that proved my theory  
that some tales are hand-me-downs

for their titles only,  
some poems.  
for the one thread throughout

the iridescent one  
the one of pure viridian  
and if you pull on it

the moon will unravel  
the stars will pucker  
in the night skies

and it will be all your fault

and then you will have a real story to tell  
all over the kingdom if you live that long  
only, this time, can you please describe

the seven dresses in one?  
and don't forget to say that of course  
if you had a dress like this

you're only going to wear your best  
opals with it!

oh all right, I'll do it for you.  
first of all, of course they were sumptuous:  
each one in itself a paragon

such silks, such stuffs, such inset beadwork  
colours of the Renaissance  
deeper deeper by far than the Princess sighing

in the gardens; all the velvets you suppose  
of rose of azure of provencal purples yes  
and the veils over them misting so that

the other fabrics shimmer through like a seven note scale or  
a perfume blended of the seven flowers

giving a hint of layered dimensions, superimposed  
dream on dream unto the seventh scene

so that this is indeed a story of the seven joys  
and cannot be embroidered too finely  
no matter who translates it, , ,

mary angela douglas 25 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Beauty Remembers The Poet

we've saved a lot of gold in the cloud banks today  
dreamed the painters down-at-elbow  
half asleep

before it seeped through and children said  
but we don't remember it being there, before  
now the small birds fling themselves against the

stars and it doesn't seem so far from here to there.  
and we will prop our ladders against the skies  
to gather the golden apples Yeats loved so.

perhaps he will shake the tree of Heaven  
oh, just this once, he sighed from far away.  
and she was happy with all that glazed fruit

heaped up at her wandering feet  
in the silvered over grasses  
somewhere clear

Mary Angela Douglas 20 July 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Because I Don't Know Why

days seem longer to you than they are

you can't explain this to your friends

when you mention you haven't seen them

for centuries

the blush roses are new

the stars hidden

on the other side of the building

maybe the clocks will be backwash

then when you wake up

you won't feel sick anymore

you went to sleep and dreamed

that the sky so full of pinwheels

was lifted off frail shoulders

by the angels.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Because She Was Going Away

what if today you peeled off the back of stars  
and pasted them in your scrapbook  
so you would not forget them?

those were the gingerbread days, you softly  
perhaps said where we bought hair ribbons  
every time we went to the drugstore;

for some reason, more of the spring green  
than anything and glistening.  
I miss old wrapping paper, wall paper she

said suddenly and I could see she would  
gladly live in a house with roses stenciled on the walls  
until God called her

and the mimosa trees in the yard  
wept feathery pink flowers  
because she was going away.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Because, I Don't Know Why

days seem longer to you than they are

you can't explain this to your friends

when you mention you haven't seen them

for centuries

the blush roses are new

the stars hidden

on the other side of the building

maybe the clocks will be backwash

then when you wake up

you wont feel sick anymore

you went to sleep and dreamed

that the sky so full of pinwheels

was lifted off your shoulders

by angels.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Before The Voyage

## BEFORE THE VOYAGE

maybe you packed the wrong things:  
the sequined shoes, the lamp that can't go out  
the diary of Moroccan leather

the dress for any weather  
figured in stars  
the map of who you are

not were, witch hazel  
for the bruises of time  
assorted rhymes and candies.

the three wishes folded  
into a plain handkerchief  
an opal ring and patchworked things

for patchy occasions.

it's late now anyway it's Spring  
the gang plank's down  
the sun

and all you thought you'd won  
shines in a mist like a dream  
that recently fled

before you woke.  
before you wake again  
mid liquid after notes of birds

you'll remember the lillied verse  
your Grandmother pressed into your hand,  
the silver edged Testament: the worsted

purse with the little pansies.  
everything is dandy Grandfather says

the flower fades but not the Word.  
despite the rest of all you've heard or will hear  
oh my dear

under His handmade firmaments.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

## Before Which Wishes

you raise your head like a cloudy nebulae

but you aren't good for the GNP

the lilacs thunder, but you keep it to yourself;

who needs the visionary

when we have all this tv;

commercially commercials all night long

who cares if you see stars in the gutter

if you wear old dance dresses inside out

to make the most of the sprigged fabric

the bright tulle overskirt of light.

you spend your time sorting the clouds.

into various tints of the profound or the acrylics

who cares if you shed tears of pearl

on a silken route made specifically for you,

it's still your world; there are gardenias, somewhere.

your mind is the garden and you keep the gate

as Rilke said, even when he was dead

before which, wishes wait.

mary angela douglas 30 april 2020; rev.7 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Being In The World

there must be  
another way of being in the world  
I must have said to myself as a child

not wanting to depart the shores of childhood.  
after seeing Peter Pan, thinking I can,  
I can do that too.

keep wearing the same shoe.  
the little dress.  
and hang my coat on the same hook

reading whatever books I want to.

always the same height as the flowers  
the taller ones. maybe the iris; one bright snow sprigged tree.  
I will be quiet when they speak to me.

they won't find out I can speak in complex sentences  
without even trying.  
I'll be steady as a star

over the same backyard forever  
in my head.  
I'll go to work.

and pay the bills.  
and make my bed;  
manage my small meals

but in my mind  
oh, how I really feel is this:  
I'm in the hills

and gathering up blue dusk  
the only way I must  
the way I always will.

mary angela douglas 31 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beneath The Dripping Trees, Midsummer Or May's

beneath the dripping trees, midsummer or May's  
rain having swept the gardens, the scent of this  
or of October woods along the fire leafed days

is all I would like to say or wish for  
even in Heaven.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Beribboned Stand-Alone Petticoats

beribboned, stand-alone petticoats  
in the winter sunshine,  
seamless snows, half-stitched in hope

on a day less forlorn-

peek from her garret wardrobe  
though she knows, she thinks  
she'll never wear them.

even the dress is so far off.  
but she imagines it:  
a rose confection, done in tulle

or skylark's blue with a faint glimmering  
of gold, or handsewn sapphires, reticent pearls?  
emerald, set as the stone of the days that follow;  
the early springs

are the thoughts of her, embroidered.  
and stashed so far that no one finds it yet  
her primrose heart, the earliest sign

in the fairytale book of a little girl's first reading  
that here on earth, beyond the birthday candle shine-  
sheer peerless beauty has been known to sigh,  
but not surrender-

in such untwinkling times.

Mary Angela Douglas 26 July 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bette

[for Bette Davis who cared about what she was doing  
past all comprehension, a great actress because  
she wanted it that way]

maybe she was like some improbable flower  
exotic beyond the neighborhood  
transplanted by the vagary of a wind

to a vegetable patch  
Im an orchid she insists  
don't turn me into mashed potatoes

chicken feed

and there she is up on the big screen  
bigger somehow than the screen  
than any role she ever played

the sand in the oyster

and the pearl at the same time  
you thought you knew her  
but later

who was ever like her before  
her eyes like immense beacons  
or like a doll's eyes watching

a doll's eyes that can never close  
awake or asleep  
a fixed something more than a little spooking

you gauging something  
but you don't know what  
like she sees ghosts over your shoulder

and is communing with them  
so that you are uncomfortable

in your theater seat  
despite the plush velvet  
even at home

in the safety of your apartment  
living room with your own sofa cushions  
you wonder what it is that

incandescence  
was she from Mars  
another era, radioactive?

was she made of snow  
and then the snow caught on fire  
but its still permafrost

what is this element anyway

one we never learned in school  
Bette with an e  
so often imitated

what were they imitating then  
they couldn't know  
we didn't know you really

a few mannerisms  
the makeup caking in the end  
emphatically deep wrinkles

you fought on  
not to be the same  
apple in the bunch

of apples  
they thought you were rotten  
you just didn't want to be

small potatoes  
but that isn't it either, is it

but the soul

staring us out of countenance  
out of ourselves

who could know

a kind of largesse masquerading as temper  
temperment  
a voice like an ever crisp autumn near rasping

kind of raspberry coloured  
eyes of ocean deep blue  
wasted on black and white film

the voice again

etching itself into the mind  
like the phonograph record  
you think its scratched

something in you is irritated past endurance  
change the record somebody  
no wait, don't you say from your armchairs

nobody else can sound that way  
like topaz speaking

deeply engraved.  
her own medal  
in the end

mary angela douglas 23 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Better Than Roses, Thank You St. Therese

in Christmas storybooks the dolls are all lined up  
in the pictured shop window, variously  
dressed in pink, in blue, in yellow and mint green

with matching socks, appealing arms stretched out,  
curly hair and an apron over their frocks  
that looks like milk white silk

and so, reading the story you pick all four  
gazing at the picture  
while the storybook girls pick just the one.

all childhood long I did this  
with every picture.  
I chose all

and felt a little piglike as I did  
even though it was only wishing  
until St. Therese with her 'Jesus,

I choose all' story  
made me feel  
a whole lot better.

Mary Angela Douglas 20 July 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Big Rock Redux

today I was accused of writing poems about  
the Big Rock Candy Mountain.  
In America.

times have changed I thought.  
is it better now? now that folklore's down the drain  
and people want poems that complain and

paint a bitter picture.  
I will be glad, gladder than the gladdest thing  
I heard a poet say once on the wing.

and so will I  
I say today.  
and so will I.

mary angela douglas 23 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Billy The Kid In A Sky Blue Kerchief

on Mr. Perry Cordill's illuminating, 'speaking' portrait of Billy the Kid

Billy the Kid in a sky-blue kerchief, barely standing still against the skies under which he wandered; he wandered, wished the skies would open up; wished for the angels on a black day, suddenly sunlit and is it sunlit in the

portrait, would you say? the eyes slit with a pale blue marksmanship; the diffident something besides a smile; the head aslant, unsure, under the porkpie hat of

the stranded Magi, what, you never heard of?  
in an off gold shirt and open at the neck to the gallows?  
for this year's pastel Christmas card, hand-painted.

oh paint, he seems to suggest if he had the nerve,  
to the portrait-maker-

a stage coach one-way ticket

to a different homeland, maybe I'm the  
orphan of too many destinations left to count  
cut out of the picture book, a someone to save when trying to reconstruct  
lost prayers for all the outriders in the margins of

the unwept for (perhaps, not now) :

American West

mary angela douglas 13 july 2014

Note on the poem: This painting 'Billy the Kid' by Mr. Perry Cordill, a Sonoma County California artist can be found at . Just click on Wild West and it's the last painting. And use zoom to magnify it if you wish.

There is such real intensity and feeling in the face. It's simply incredible. While you're there, you might want to look at the other portraits. I especially love Annie Oakley against a prairie rose pink sky the color of a dress she might have wanted to wear but didn't get around to. The freshness and the glory of a dream Wordsworth said of his lost feeling for natural scenes. The same phrase could be used to express the wonder of these American West portraits.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Birdsong, Over The Ravines

where words break apart  
and a trickle of sorrow enters in  
and then the streams, the floods,

the ice floes rushing

the coldness settling about you, numb, all limbs  
hush, for beyond words there will come  
the consolations of little birds

who do not know of your grief  
and sweetly sing as though  
sorrow was never in the green leafed world

nor shadow of war  
nor wars' bloody aftermaths  
nor what now: you cannot grasp,

only just having heard.  
and you enrapt in their silver

poured forth on the air  
cannot, will not despair in the white dawn  
suddenly blanched beyond what you can bear

and it will be

as though bright angels came to you, quickly! -  
to forestall the wall going up immediately  
between you and all former joys

and soothed, bathed may you be there  
as you lean in the cool grass  
in music, strangely and mysteriously blessed

that you might be at rest

mary angela douglas 24 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Biscuits Should Not Bounce

biscuits should not bounce

I thought to myself in home ec

but mine do

there must be a rule spelled out like that

in a home ec textbook or two

and I knew

whether it was white sauce one or two

my lumps would be so obvious.

what else could I do

the other girls on our team in the kitchenette

made breakfast. And let me pour the oj.

I could manage that. and butter the toast

of all my friends back then I loved them most.

thus they saved the day and my grade.

much thanks to God and the Heavenly Host.

mary angela douglas 14 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blackberries Drenched In The Cream Of Good Consciences

to Beatrix Potter

blackberries drenched in the cream of good consciences  
set before the good little rabbits...  
poor Peter, I thought uneasily,

almost baked in a pie.  
sent to bed with no supper while his  
bunny sisters tittered

filled to the brim with berries,  
almost growing wings.

I wanted to bring him blackberries myself  
or at least some lemon ice cream with  
a thin cookie, maybe, from the Howard J.'s

we visited in summer or  
a candy bar, an ice cream sandwich or two.

later I loved dear Beatrix for the Christmas tale  
of Gloucester  
and it's twist of cherry silk

and wanted to write innumerable poems  
or stitch them bit by bit with a twist of her  
cherry silk, but how could I nibble

in her story patch

fearing I'd be baked in a pie, too?

mary angela douglas 24 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blake

to William Blake

I saw you walking  
the hills of green,  
angels on either side of you, conversing

and cherry-bought bells resounding.  
in the dove-sought skies such flame-tinged  
clouds appearing:

sheer cirrus roses-  
and you were so happy with an inkstained smile-  
peeling a scroll of topaz from

a frayed coat pocket,  
meant for the martyred poets.  
you said: don't cry anymore  
all consternation's fled; don't cry:  
no rose is dead.

art is a shining ship, delivered:  
the choken river's spanned;  
the mocking charter's been revoked.

annointed sounds are spoken  
into a halcyoned rainbow shell.

they hoped your vision was a sinking sun  
marked by three crosses on a stolen hill,  
but the day is a flower endlessly fluted;

and cut in crystal now  
where tygers keep their radiant promise-  
where darkness is banished

to a farther castle and the  
Face of the Lamb is so revealed  
whenever we are speaking  
our sheer unfiltered gold



and we realize  
we are still alive, my  
bartered friend

a bright wind drives your  
mended sails toward home  
with the diamond husk of every poem,  
received:

and all your trees are filled with singing  
where nothing, nothing is a bane  
how

blazingly the light  
of every song, remains-

mary angela douglas 21-22 may,2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blossoming Sea And

blossoming sea and  
scent of my sorrow,  
manifold turquoise

of the storm, I  
seek the waters  
of your heart and

am torn by emeralds.

mary angela douglas 15 may,1972

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue

an excess of sapphires,  
setting no turquoise aside.  
the light at dusk

over the fields.  
the way you feel  
in the picture

with the aqua background,  
its peach blossom spray.  
bouquets of you on quiet parade

scented or unscented  
forget me nots,  
hydrangea snows;

the sea green crayon's repose.

the taffeta with the pearlescent sheen  
you would have worn  
in another century

with slippers to match;  
a trace of glitter in the air  
where children dream

picking one colour out of one thousand  
or blueberries and cream;  
sewing a seam made of skies

in Spring, in Spring, in Spring...

mary angela douglas 7 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Distances Don't Make Me Cry Anymore (Revision)

BLUE DISTANCES DON'T MAKE ME CRY ANYMORE

Anna Pavlova stepped onto another stage

at first, so imperceptibly,

in more than pave diamond Light.

it doesn't take so much to know,

even in surroundings that new

she'd hardly feel the difference: always dreaming

past you in her own distances, anyway;

waking up in this recurring dream

as it very driftingly came to her

that even when she was telling the

first dream to a dream-friend:

&quot;I had this dream...&quot;

she's still in a

a subset of the

larger dream and

not awake yet...

will I catch fire?

she whispered to herself onstage-

upsetting the candles at the stage's  
rim (not knowing they were stars)  
blue distances don't make me cry  
the way they used to;  
will I forget how to breathe - again-?  
then, realizing some mistake,  
unfocused light, some trepidation, alarm,  
a phantom fluttering of the heart already phantom  
how will I die here?  
but that was earlier...and before-  
fresh angels sewed  
strange jewels on the  
same costume  
festooned her dress with unfamiliar flowers  
and every step  
and gesture she  
remembered as if snow  
could be conscious of snowing (itself)  
again.  
my feet aren't bleeding -anymore-  
she marveled out of sight and

fluttering softly, softer through  
such hues of silkeness beyond distress.  
angels watched her turn  
into a pearl diminishment of light  
and trying to speak, but failing-  
she found, with joy,  
she couldn't end-  
that it was  
like a mirror reflection endlessly  
ribboning into another mirror...  
but real  
and vivid fine crystal etched as  
she always knew  
the sheen of ballet could be  
if one stayed up White Nights  
to wind the music-box...  
always running down  
Anna Pavlova, I am standing still  
I said softly to her there- and  
not in a lithograph of my own time-  
here at a door I'm not permitted to enter

with one rosebud

question left, -I'm quarter-turned - and unresolved

not wishing to wound my God, my Christ,

my Full-Blown Rose

trespassing on your wilderness, winter's bloom

an opalescence irretrievable now:

some questions don't belong to me at all

even if blue distances can't make me cry

as Mandelstam, for the draping of another Anna's shawl

the profile swan, the living cameo...

the way they used to...

it's only that it streams so hauntingly on and on... and sometimes,

beautiful beyond bearing that

Anna Pavlova stepped out on another stage

surpassing all comparisons, and dying too many times

at last, perfected her intricate petit pointe

revealing the flash-points of the Living Swan

and mignonette variations on the evening air...

though it's

perishable as any dream strophe can be:

let something heartfelt still seep through

like music from a far distant Court or undersea-

though it's like baby star-shine

learning to be, &quot;star&quot;;-not any star, but Yours, alone-

(my God)

Anna Pavlova stepped out on another stage:

when will Russia..

through prayers barely spoken

it shall be wrought:

blue distances won't make you cry anymore,

tenderly was whispered.

mary angela douglas 29-31 january 2012 rev.8 january 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Blue Distances Don'T Make Me Cry The Way They Used To

Anna Pavlova stepped onto another stage  
at first, so imperceptibly,  
in more than pave diamond Light.  
it doesn't take that much to know, that,  
even in surroundings that new  
she'd hardly feel the difference: always dreaming  
past you in her own distances, anyway;

waking up from only one dream  
in her dream, as it very slowly came to her  
that even when she was telling the  
first dream to a dream-friend:  
'I had this dream...'  
she's still in a  
a subset of the  
larger dream and  
not awake yet...

will I catch fire?  
she whispered to herself onstage-  
upsetting the candles at the stage's  
rim (not knowing they were stars)  
blue distances don't make me cry  
the way they used to;  
will I forget how to breathe - again-?

then, realizing some mistake,  
but not entirely:  
how will I die here?  
but that was earlier...and before-  
fresh angels sewed  
strange jewels on the  
same costume

and every step  
and gesture she  
remembered as if snow

could be conscious of snowing (itself)  
again.

my feet aren't bleeding -anymore-  
she marveled out of sight while  
fluttering softly, softer through  
the hues of silkeness beyond distress.

angels  
watched her turn  
into a  
pearl diminishment of light  
and trying to speak, but failing-  
she found, with joy,  
she couldn't end-

that it was  
like a mirror reflection endlessly  
ribboning into another mirror...  
but real  
and vivid as  
she always knew  
the sheen of ballet could be  
if one suffered long enough  
and stayed up at night to wind the music=box...

Anna Pavlova, I am standing still  
I said softly to myself- and  
not in a lithograph of my own time-  
here at a door I'm not permitted to enter  
with one rosebud

question left, -I'm quarter-turned - and unresolved  
not wishing to wound my God, my Christ,  
my Full-Blown Rose-

with questions that don't belong to me at all  
even if blue distances can't make me cry  
the way they used to...  
it's only that it streams so hauntingly on and on... and sometimes,  
beautiful beyond bearing that  
Anna Pavlova stepped out on another stage

beyond all their comparing, and dying too many times  
at last, perfected her crystal petit pointe  
revealing the flash-points of the Living Swan  
and mignonette variations on the evening air...  
though it's  
perishable as any dream strophe can be:  
let something heartfelt still seep through  
like music from a far distant room or undersea-

though it's like baby star-shine  
learning to be, 'star'-not any star, but Yours, alone-  
(my God)  
Anna Pavlova stepped out on another stage:  
when will Russia?  
through prayers barely spoken  
it shall be wrought:  
blue distances won't make you cry anymore,  
tenderly was whispered.

mary angela douglas 29-31 january 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Gardens

lost in blue gardens  
on the edge of time  
we gathered late hyacinths

happy in the waning of the light  
with supper time near,  
the house within in creamy lamp light drenched:

a subject for numerous paintings  
over various, the suburban years  
the lemon glow of windows seen

against the faded blue outside, through screens,  
the yards of lavender, besides;  
turning to that house I want to go

in my light slippers woven of what seems-  
gathering again the blue flowers, the shading dreams  
the dusk of once upons,

with all that we knew then of life  
by thimble fulls, faintly,  
of music back then, literature of the piano

the pine tossed winds  
with the picture window we thought would always  
be ours:

close, onto the vaster, water coloured blue  
beyond the swing set mystical in evening dews  
where the moon was an opal fete

that we cannot forget: through clouds  
the feeling in music then, unexplainable  
mounting sapphire winged, unattainable

as Chopin's fourth ballade  
melting into the blueness  
of everything

I dreamed we could get there by dawn  
brushing aside the implausible,  
just crossing a lawn

toward the gardenias.

mary angela douglas 4 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Light Scatters, Apart From The Rose Of Day

blue light scatters, apart from the rose of day  
my angels chime, unwilling to go away  
outside the bell jarTime where snows drift

then we pray, my darling ones remembered.  
I pick up the sticks of childhood on the plum stained way  
and suck the honey from the honeysuckle; stay

cries something in the cupboards made for me.  
we will dress in lilac remembering those springs  
with shoes to match with little straps

and the lemon drop sun shone on everyone then  
when we were carried into Christmas  
by those who loved us,

forever happy at the Matinees or  
barely awake and dreaming it was Heaven,  
the lawn done up in diamonds.

mary angela douglas 20 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Not The Blue Shading Into Lilac

blue not the blue shading into lilac

but the blue itself, isolate crystal

I isolate you

clean precipitate

of the dreaming soul

without rejoinders.

see I have built from you

a few lacework kingdoms

from a single strand

one eyelash from the moon.

how out of favor you are

blue not going anywhere at all

they think

I see you on the brink of tears

and glimpse you through dissolving years

ah blue of the world so weary

vanishing beyond clouds

into the Far Sapphire piled up stratospheres

where the winds are found.

sleeping.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Blue Ribbons

going to St. Ives  
the cherry tree splendid  
nursery rhyme land

opened up before me,  
the barley sugar sun.  
am I the only one

whistling? mu? sed the cobbler  
new to his trade.  
and the cobblestones are made

of gold and business will be brisk  
with plenty of tallow saved to  
work by night or moonlight moonlight

in my pockets.  
he went down to St. Ives  
and was cherry tree splendid

in the nursery rhymes  
and all his steeds caparisoned  
and jeweled.

and I am the simple fool believing this,  
bereft of huckleberry pies  
each time I go to the market or

the Fair  
in a patched disguise  
and bartering everything

for blue blue ribbons. an honest face  
the shawl of snow bright lace...

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Sequins Over The Planet Blue

blue sequins over the planet Blue will simulate stardust  
she muttered, her mouth full of pins  
so do not shift in the chair

where you stand  
soon you will see the ribboned night  
come in through the unhemmed windows

the curtains shift in a taffeta wind  
that's sheer so sheer, the little cloud eyelet

(hand me the shears...)

and blue starlight is pinking-  
makes itself a little home  
(there in the dresser drawer dear) and

streaks and sprinkles the leaf pale walls

almost astronomically oh gleaming  
I have always loved you.  
and these are prisms at twilight

(she told the little girl) introducing them  
she thought, are my manners blue-violet  
violet-blue she was getting sleepy...

when I feel close at hand blue sequins over  
the planet Blue at my command oh come  
we will glue the stars on.

don't be sad.  
this is our handiwork.

mary angela douglas 13 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Starred In The Blue Grass Spring Lullay

to e.e. cummings

blue-starred in the blue grass  
bell floating are the flowers  
in the land of before not after

blue starred is the laughter  
of the small clouds above the  
sunlit,

violet strewn and is the moss  
beside all else in green velveteens  
right up to the small oak door  
of the fairy queen invisible?  
so it seems in

the blue starred in the blue grass  
in the cream of the day frothing over  
the rim the deep blue rim  
of the before not after

of the wafting of the white rosed  
in the bubbling of forever just  
starting to be

a little blue starred (sleepy, aren't you)  
in the blue grass almost  
tumbling over into april  
that can't exactly walk yet

floating with little stars and dreams  
toppling over into the  
pink mysterious

mary angela douglas 11 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue Words Were Spoken From A Golden Book

blue words were spoken from a golden book:  
aqua blue, colour of summers, or aqua green  
(mystic, the colour of repainted bookshelves

in the living room ;)  
pure gold of the honeycomb dream that  
graced our summer table, peach ice cream

and constellations with improbable names,  
zinnia bold-  
in daylight invisible. you said they were

still there.  
star forms. color forms. the jigsaw names  
I remember, tar papered, the little room we

played was a playhouse and it's rick-rack curtains,  
stored antiques. the bells of bicycles, the afternoons  
lush with ice cream trucks.

scholastic paperbacks in the mail  
crisp in brown paper, crackling.  
more extravagant than school reading.

the infinite swish of sprinklers on the lawns.  
the Monopoly days, the afternoon clues  
from Nancy Drew. the humid roses, boiled.

the summer camped rains  
and orangeade. with hamburgers on the side.  
the sound of the back screen door-

worth more to me now  
than many kingdoms....

mary angela douglas 29 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bluebird

to Maurice Maeterlinck author of *The Bluebird*

there is a soul in light you said  
and blue birds nestled in the folds of night that you may find.  
why then are we still weeping on the shores so near the floods

that took it all away

before we learned to carry it all inside from  
kingdom to kingdom,  
and always?

In the Land of Memory dear Shades of the long ago  
fall away, beseeching, please turn aside down this  
folkloric lane, won't you?

we'll have bread and cherries today  
under late summer trees, or  
toasted cheese on a fork

near the winter hearth and bowls  
brimful of cream or is it dream in an Alpine spring  
and then, dream more, , ,

a history made of lead weighs down on the heart too  
imperceptibly so that we do not know we do not hear you

rustling the raspberries.

now they will slam the door on you  
as if you were a cheap peddler  
if they even see you at all,

stamping with a modern library's stamp:  
&quot;DISCARD&quot;.

But I can see the shine of something still not dead  
all made of fantastic speaking twined

from a rubbed thread  
children leaving home may still find, sometime,  
in the woods again

in golden gazing up or  
whenever they spill the sugar for the Tea  
imagining they are grown-up now, irretrievably-

they may remember suddenly,  
exactly why they came  
and, like a flash of something brilliant  
in the world they only think they see-

Who sent them

mary angela douglas 3,10 november 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Blue-Quiet On The Tear Streaked Waters, Shipshod Sun

blue-quiet on the tear streaked waters, shipshod sun!  
I cried to the nursery paintings one by one  
and weaver's weave invisibly the empty embroidery looms

of those who swore to us they loved poetry more or music  
than we could

and still there's no silver moon threading  
fresh clouds for you,  
no amethyst place to play.

and the peridots weep openly in the jewelry case unlocked  
remembering our playlike jewelry days all summers.

dancing in golden slippers she slipped away  
and spoiled the view  
and it's too late to tell you but it's true you left

the paraffin off the red raspberry jam  
and the field mice stole the winter tallow.  
the rag doll wags her head and is wise still

but it's someone else's attic now oh but not  
oh purely not the rose punch red, faint pink,  
and showy ivory towers of the azalea flowers

that bloomed small when we were small, too,  
in the corner side-yard:  
bridesmaids, sisters-

they have outcropped the stars...

mary angela douglas 7 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Board Games

such a fun thing to do play board games  
when it rains and you've got cabin fever  
or home with the measles and feeling better

and everyone else has them too so let's  
get one out of the closet and see what happens.  
Life, Monopoly, Clue.

fun fun fun  
run run Dick and Jane  
Puff and Spot whatever your names are

cause Sally's winning every throw of the dice  
and we don't feel so nice anymore  
like we do in the pretty pictures.

run very far from board games kiddos.  
Carol Burnett said it best, remember that skit?  
Once you hit your lucky streak, and you're

the 'it' girl the rest of them

suddenly want to get up and leave.  
watch reruns.  
take a nap. go make a cheese sandwich.

trim a hat.

anything but that:  
to see you win again.  
you and your lucky spin

moving three spaces forward  
with your lucky lucky game piece  
the one that's Kelly Green

it's a wonder you don't take it to work  
with you just in case of emergency  
or a meeting goes too long.



hey-o let's build that team  
who wants pink, or green?  
the last thing that was said.

let's make sure said someone  
more well read than I:

on the International Space Station  
when they come with the ice cream.  
no one's bringing them any board games.

muppets maybe. but no Candyland!

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Book Condition: (Fairest Of The) Fair

this book is not a former library book. it has mild  
smudging where a child lay down her candy bar  
on a hot summer day; a few nail polish

spills enhance the hand-coloured  
illustrations from A. Rackham, charmingly.  
the spine has not cracked. God knows why.

the dog held it in his mouth for five whole minutes  
(after the chocolate bar fiasco) slightly foxed, it is.  
dog spumed. you won't mind, it's a rare edition.

grass stained, owner's former name in  
Christmas inks, a bookplate with a mustachioed pirate.  
a st. therese funeral card, bookmark-

the one with creamy roses in her arms,  
tear creased;  
in a former life, greatly loved, thumbed through

by small thumbs on finger-painting day at nursery school.  
a magical screed. and glitter spattered that day we attempted  
(for a school geography project) , the glittering snows of

Russia done, in papier mache and cerise towers.  
bravely crayoned in.  
once left under the redwood table, at the beach, after hours

you'll hardly wonder at  
the mild water damage, scent of summer rains, old ferns,  
the tuna fish lunched wax paper scrap from a

vanished picnic. tally, a

moon map scissored from the National Geographic  
by my Grandfather.  
a day that something wonderful was learned.

the once pink rose herein preserved.

the laundry ticket, included for free;  
extravagant as Easter, one foil candy wrapper

smelling, faintly, of toffee.  
coffee stains, no cream. no extra shipping;

dreams...

mary angela douglas 17 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Branches

these are the branches of the hours  
the silver, the golden the unlooked for  
filled with their glazed fruit

in the nursery sighed for  
and the ribboned rose.  
these are the branches of the hours

the amethyst skied in the februarys gleamed  
and you were quiet then.  
like a wall of snow

an icicle tower  
and you tried not to know  
except the tolling of hours

and these are the bells  
not for your instruction  
the ones that spell holidays

and the holiness apart  
that wound your heart  
and this ah finally is the

tree in all its dower  
and the end of Time for you then.

and the foliage of when.

mary angela douglas march 28 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Brand New Day

such a charmed life was shining  
with cherries on top and malted  
malt shoppe double malted

salted caramel wafted  
through the cinemas of the Saturday children  
no more wildnerness

was chanted and we said goodbye  
at the Easter stations plied with  
lilies kaleidosocpe turning

paperback yearning at  
the school book fairs  
and madrigaled near the holly everywhere

the rose cheeked frost engaging  
dream of the bride doll's satin  
redeeming down the aisles

of our play  
I have seen the lustre  
of the diffident moon through clouds  
and cried for the crayon of the

rose rose red  
and said is it Christmas Eve  
to the now long dead

saying please in the cherry strewn Spring  
let them Return  
the ones the one and all

who loved me when I was small  
with cherries on top  
in the gleaming of

a Brand New Day...

mary angela douglas 5 septemver 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Break Like A Closed Wave

if your smile should break

break like a closed wave

Jesus won't forsake

the midnight of your days.

if the wave should close

rosebud not a rose

if your heart should ice

winter will suffice.

He who calmed the sea

will surely comfort thee.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Breaking

it's in the quality of the falling snows  
and I cry from my knees  
who is the King of all this delicacy;

how can we know Him?  
fingertip pressed to this vanishing;  
rose in a forgotten book forgotten

we may be or not be  
but is His kingdom far  
as star from star in the purple glaze

wise men asked and so I ask again  
of evenings when I am aware  
the wind stirs from pure regions undisturbed

above the broken body of the world  
along the limbs of leafless trees in the park  
and something silver shines

over and above our wandering  
a something we cannot touch  
said our mothers lest

we break it  
and no one hear it breaking like a Heart

mary angela douglas 29 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Bride Doll: Her Poem

I remember the way we imagined her wedding  
veils like clouds, holding paper flowers.  
and this would be everyday.

she would be the everyday bride  
always in satin.  
pearl drop earrings.

she would float down the  
aisles of cathedrals  
and never do shopping.

what would she eat?  
wedding mints?  
lime sherbet punch

to drink?  
rising every morn  
to Mendelssohn's one

song for her  
and the organ starting up.  
pearlescent the skies would greet her

at the door.  
her lily dressed bridesmaids listen  
for that glistening instep.

later on the porch  
with more cake, stuffed  
my sister and I

would crown her again:  
queen of all the brides.

mary angela douglas 29 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bridge Collapsing Near The Farthest Dream

bridge collapsing near the farthest dream  
I read on the walls of my nightmare  
or on the sign illumined in gold at

the dream deer crossings...  
lifting their hurt eyes to me, their delicate hooves flashing,  
signaling the last time

I have tucked my words inside  
as into an embroidered shoe, a bridal one

with the earth all dew and fire and earliest lights  
near the shrine of the Sacred Heart.  
but you are fleeing your white shadows

even in prayer said my angels where

the ceremony stands open like a wound that won't close;  
the pews still ribboned and the larks enshrined  
and it's time say the reckoning angels you recognize

there is a bridge collapsing in the blooms;  
the orange blossoms everywhere scattered.

and this will matter  
today and all tomorrows as an eternal forecast.  
like the things you said to God in satin;

your tread on the first rung of sorrow.

mary angela douglas 20 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Bright Penny Rolled Out Of Sight

she wrote in emerald on the falling clouds  
Goodbye to Oz, to the lavender teacups  
in the china cabinet

boardwalk taffy and the Land of Sighs  
to everything we were to the rose garden,  
scented in the rains

this, my refrain, my canticle falls apart  
in the naming of names so Beauty appeared to us then  
the shimmering Christmas angels come to

gather us near too  
early you cried and hid  
in rounded handwriting

Scheaffer penned;  
just so, our blue room dissolves

I cannot find it again

the only thing I hold onto  
is our prayers back then, the lilled verses  
when God knew where we were

and still He knows, though wild  
the winds have torn us  
from the place we loved

and oh eweet Dove of former remembrances  
when will we be

bright penny, rolled Where there is only Light  
beyond the music of Time.

mary angela douglas 27 october 2018; rev.2 february 2019



# Brightness Is Brighter

to e.e. cummings

brightness is brighter  
gold on gold ever gathered  
falling out of creases in the clouds  
beckoning from the quartz glints  
unexpected, on crummy sidewalks

flung flower filled through twilight skies,  
not penny-pinched, the seldom truly glimpsed,  
wildflowered out the windows of the proud  
and drawing room banned; of little note

between raindrop and raindrop  
pierrots weeping into the sequined suns  
whenever sommersaulted nothing's won-  
still, musical without the audition-

muddled, opal-puddled  
it goes on gardenia-gleaming  
in a basement atelier

sweet columbine spinning tulle graced  
into God's best guessing games  
there is light there is light  
sang the child in early spring's  
white violet arias  
forgetting the scales oh not the halos,

brightness is lighter than all aureoles,  
orioles in the auroras  
tangerine sectioned out of sight

you can carry it in the corner of  
your eyes, in any disguise  
cloud shaped piano  
drifting, dreaming through the droning:  
multicoloured, even after Christmas  
goes away and I have loved Your

multifoiled winds their infinite snowing

invisibly valentined reprieves  
of the non-descript days  
crowned queen of the  
maybe something lavish will happen...  
who can say,  
rose-trellising the drizzle.

you can ferry it no matter who  
they think you are in the day-to-day,  
clandestine, marveling in the thought of it;  
cramped in dim corners but otherwise,  
cherishing the faintest ray

you're that regally ragtag  
though they shove you  
out of their way.

whatever else you're lacking  
even with no packing on each  
dress white eviction day-  
pearl punctuated, bride ghosted  
brightness goes with you  
mere dragons dare not slay

mary angela douglas 26 march 2014

Note on Poem: cloud shaped piano - this is the second time I found a way to allude to that wonderful image in Chekov's *The Seagull* referencing the writer writing down each thing he sees without respite including a cloud shaped like a piano...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Brocade

'the poetry of earth is never dead.'

-John Keats

(for my mother Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas)

you were the jewel set in the roseate ballet perhaps  
the princess at christening under the pink veils  
the tiara flash glimpsed from the balconies:

what snow could dream if  
snow dreamed now that everything's  
en pointe and vanishing: (to be

pineapple sherbet scooped from the moon  
by the surprised children at the  
lemon layered birthdays)

have april snows answered a pale green summons?  
why where is the gleam of earth disappearing to  
said the teachers plainly mocking our surmise far

from the blush rose words they have sifted out of everywhere before distracted  
minds could sense  
that captive beauty in the closet with the mops,

the confiscated lollipops, smuggled fruit chews-  
was being punished through the classroom day  
and only for shining.

is light reduced then is time is dreaming gone  
with the apple pie fractions filed away  
fled is song the way it was known

flown without icarus bright without  
the suns ah, canceled flights:  
o rose coronas crated, shipped

out of here by the laconic half-hired herds-  
they see us as, but we do not

though it feels, almost, overnight

the banded rainbows break apart  
for words in the weeping spectrum:  
say goodbye to your sisters,

indigo, cream yellow, shimmering  
cherry and lime while violet sighs while orange  
commiserates with tangerine

ah not for long in party dress  
it seems, and never again?  
it's back to work

where the hourglass tips on its side  
bleeding soft ochre sands of the sunsets  
on our shifts the ones we've missed

when the flowers girls in mauve  
scattered the last of the petaled weddings,  
are we madrigal-silenced by the coteries?

or is this where the princess kneels  
slipping the golden ring down  
the orchid ripples of the ancient spring

no one knows the way to anymore.  
o lore lock stocked and barreled away  
His tropical isotopes

His sequined kaleidoscopes  
by the inescapably in command  
how long will lost worlds waken to poetry where

men who were scarcely poets marked 'discard'  
on every apricot delectable word He spoke us into:  
coining His opal skies, His illimitable

freedom the sweet great magic trick of a World?  
ah but who will diagnose, and hurl  
forever from our sight to any prison dark consign



His watershed crystals done by nightfall  
coded in currant inks and torn with the soul from  
the spiraling notebooks

vast collations of His heart abandoned  
just-in-time my radiance,  
buried in deep space through filmy sleep we fine no

blueprints of the apple orchard years  
and dare to breathe:  
is this His lilac wishing frozen in reserve?

spare parts of birdsong, the pastel chalked repose,  
love tunes ruby caged, old mechanical  
valentines with clasped posies in

no disappearing whirl, beyond disapprobation:  
the extra geranium crayon in the Art box  
stashed with all our raspberry velocipedes,

missing maple leaves and drenching pearls from  
the waterfalling screens, the iridescence once  
we lived in, didn't we? embroidered greens and golds

flowed from our shoulders, hints of a robined sky, as yet  
unrolled new seed beds of His exceeding floweriness  
for just such emergencies as these!

all the Easter dyes! cupboards of coconut from the  
candied citadels of infinite Stories-  
my child, my own and queen of the cordial cherries

all milk weed spoked and spoken now:  
keep, oh keep! their delicate parachutes into Summer.  
coated in grey ash, we have retrieved

our sparkling King.  
though we were whittled down.  
all winter long

the little cakes managed with the  
last of the raisins-

better than all frosted

sugar eggs holding the pale pink rose garden  
(one tiny rose)  
of the world's wordiest princess.

under a brand new moon-  
lick the Spoon!

mary angela douglas 27 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Brushstrokes Of Snow On The Silentist Sky

brushstrokes of snow on the silentest sky  
carry my wings that can no longer fly  
far from the green and blue of my dream

lost in the petals  
and bright as the sheen of words that have flowered  
ahead of the stream

and rooted in grace and beyond all recall  
inscribed in a gold that is brighter than all  
I know they will live since they answered the call

of the innermost trumpet the one in the hall  
of the King that has saved us and carried us all  
to the blue and green country the gem spangled ball

where we'll all dance forever and sing for the earth  
forgetting our sorrows in infinite mirth.

mary angela douglas 5 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Budding Artists In A Tempera Grove Play School

a gold leaf sun in the corner of the picture  
lets you know it is a sunny day  
in the tempera landscapes painted with

Big Brushes: Christmas laden with the blue,  
the red, the green  
in a kindergarten scene out of Giotto.

oh swirling, swirled in the mysterious waters that cannot dissolve  
the gleam of something glowing in all the colours sparkling

the geraniums on the window sill the orange fish  
in the aquarium and swimming through the air  
even though you cannot name them yet,

more vivid reds and greens and unexpected blues  
chagall wrote in the clouds before you were born  
pink sands of the sandbox, castled, won

and the lily bouquets violet, dream shaded  
now, for you

and all the rose fragrances, child

mary angela douglas 30 may 2014

Note on the Poem: I remember the feeling when I was five years old at nursesey school of being allowed to paint at large easels with big brushes in red, blue, and yellow, and mixtures of blue and yellow to make green. I remember a room flooded with light and a feeling of spaciousness inside and out. I lost this feeling in a junior high art class. But now I can remember and access both feelings. Especially I remember a feeling of joy, a mysterious feeling of joy...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Burton Bringing The House Down

on the voice of Richard Burton (cerdd dafod) \*

He didn't want them to tell him  
how it was going to be  
so he stood back a  
little from the stage of  
burnished expectations  
still, with a force of fire  
and wonder shaping  
while the gossip mills  
stepped up business trespassing,  
so I think, out of sheer envy  
on a  
something received beyond they couldn't endure:  
transcendence made immediate- an impossible thing-  
cut crystal net overfilled with singing birds that little tamed out of wildness  
so vivid who could believe it anything  
but the voice heard by the saints in dreams made more astute;  
or dream-music half-retained by kings  
on waking to another day  
forgetting for a moment where they were  
or what they had to do

wading through poor Richard aftermaths  
we've heard enough from the queasy forerunners  
others at the scene  
quashing the keylight  
you didn't even need  
and asking themselves if it was really you  
making the pieces fit  
until the stained glass shone  
as if it were almost Light itself-  
then swallowing it?

oh who can kill God inside himself-  
He'll only rise to pity your  
thinking you've brought the whole  
thing to a close when you're really  
only tugging at the stage sets.

even if you burn it down He's  
smoldering half in ashes with you,  
willing it to end well...cracking at the edges-

you think by flooding it to the very  
brink the soul will drown  
and then you'll show them it was  
Yours, not theirs-

but fare-thee-well-  
whatever the heart sounds like  
translated into Welsh was yours-

stand fast in a shaft of Heaven's light  
only you can see declaiming everything at last  
without saying a word-  
mary angela douglas 20-21 november 2011

Note: cerdd dafod is a Welsh expression denoting something like a kind of  
language that embodies the heart of the heart the heart of language, something  
untranslatable from what I understand (not directly, I don't know Welsh) but  
something which many Welshmen attributed both to Richard Burton and Dylan  
Thomas (among others) .

Mary Angela Douglas

## But The Snows...

how are the shadows so plum coloured  
I wondered always looking out on the yard  
or out the windows of a childhood lengthening

into fire, the scattered stars. a thirst for God.

how is it possible and that the day feels  
gold edged to me and in the fall I dream  
in the colours of apples and feel this

freshness every day. I know I lived in that country.  
forgetting the news. observing snowfalls as  
if I were made of lace the moment they came down.

all this is besides the point they murmured to me underground.  
but the snows kept gliding  
and the light

gilded my hands.

mary angela douglas 8 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# But We Will Be Beautiful

and will our names be transparent then  
and will we step through them as  
we meant to do in childhood?

and will roses too become translucent toward their evenings  
and dear familiar scenes revived,  
the leaves more alive than before,

the dew drop quivering  
and constellations one or two  
fall out of their sewing patterns

in the skies?  
a wind will come from the source of all octobers  
and all our leaves turn jewel like, of a sudden.

what will it feel like, she breathed,  
the ghost child on my lap.  
I don't know.

but we will be beautiful.

mary angela douglas 5 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# By Next Spring You Won't Feel This Way

by next Spring you won't feel this way

when the flower snows lift off in the winds from the trees

that you loved so

the ones of plum and the pale ones, the ones

you imagine are tinged pink and then you find

they are peach coloured and the april earth is a small

emerald set in space

so that St. Exupery flying too near

is blinded and crashes again into a foreign sea

or into the sands and is free again in the lavender dunes

to make up stories. and summon whatever he can

to forget history the dates of wars the price of cinnamon

the way the sun glared down only on

some people's backs in the sugar cane don't think of that

regulate your tears sad angels

or you will nearly drown like Alice

becoming too small to reach for the requisite key

left out for thee

on the sweet glass table; the cherry lacquered bottle labeled,

drink me

not ever stepping into the garden

where all the roses were talking about,

about only her.

not to mention, the irises.

where the pages stirred, and you read pure gold

the sun of orange bitters made.

the toffee scent of shade

when the skies were cerulean

and we knew relative peace.

before our friends in the afternoon

drifted away like clouds.

mary angela douglas 13 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# By Summer Rains Apprehended

[to my beloved Grandparents, for all the stories...]

the sand of a moment in my shoe,  
then I am dressed in a gown of pearl  
thought Cinderella, queen of marveling

as she whirled on tiptoe, star  
to star entranced  
in a dance of crystal

whirred by chance

and fortune and a glance  
across centuries, still,  
where you are sitting in your living room

and thumbing through a green blue storybook or two  
and she's in a gown all aqua and peach  
just getting out of the carriage...

in a world just out of reach  
to you, not far from born yourself  
and barely reaching the shelf

and a few summers old  
when the june thunderstorms  
turn gold in the afternoon...

the book in your hand, to stars.

mary angela douglas 2 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Calling The Game

the game was called because of rain

the monsoons of the weather vain

the intellects that pare it down

so words are finally, only sound

and rip the heart from its own ground

in or out of season

give me one good reason why those

who reign need not apply

need never ever seem to show

the source of anything they know

but let it slide while on we go

the extras in their picture show

who vanish when the curtains close

oh banish those that tell us so.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2020; rev.6 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Can A Word Be Mapped

'can a word be mapped'

-Dr. Maureen O'Neill, from her website 'map passion'

testing the acoustics in my last cathedral  
I folded up the petal of a song  
into my best pocket

like a map only clouds configure-  
not to scale  
I wander and

I wonder why  
the sun is leaking light and  
I'm afraid-

already the wounded images are  
in hiding and 'nowhere' is written  
large across the sky

though not in script of gold

can a word be mapped?  
or will it fly like a color wheel  
falling off a sunset sky

or like a ghost ship sailing  
on no water

it's the marbled music I  
can't find anymore  
no matter how I try

since moving from an old neighborhood  
though I  
cast my Mercator net

so wide so wide  
from the mark  
that distance cannot measure

can a word be mapped  
or must we live  
blind and deaf to music

in the end  
wondering where the poets went?  
ceding their diamond letters  
one by one-

mary angela douglas 29 july 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Can Anyone Steal Your Soul

Dear Fellow Sincere Poets:

Today I found 6 poems with someone else's name attached. (Not anyone in this community) . These poems have been previously copyrighted and documented by me in several ways. This is just to let you know that if you see these poems with anyone else's name attached, that person is perpetuating a fraud.

Here are the names of the poems:

The Doves of My Mind  
May This Reach You Where  
Blossoming Sea And  
Since You Fail  
Exile, I am  
The Waves That Almost

I am in the process of keying in these poems today.

Can anyone steal your soul? Of course not. But here on earth we do have the right to claim title to the things that come from our own hearts and minds which is why, Michelangelo, for one, got up in the middle of the night long ago in Italy to carve his name on his own sculptures the day after he heard a conversation attributing them to someone else.

Who can steal the flowers of your soul? When the soul returns to God from whom it came, those flowers will be there. Before that time comes, the words sincerely crafted and sincerely felt know to whom they belong.

All I can say to you dear poets if this happens to you, claim them back and be careful who you trust.

God Bless You. I pray you all write everything you have to write in this life and the next.

Most Sincerely Yours,

Mary Angela Douglas  
June 16,2010

copyrighted! (why not?)

Mary Angela Douglas



# Can One Steal The Sun Or The Twelve Gates Of Heaven

[to Jesus Christ, Now and Forever...]

can one steal the sun  
the moon and the stars  
the handiwork of God?

yet some have stolen the gold of them from our lives  
the notion of life itself, the honeycombed flowering of it  
the silver as well, pretending to be brave

and all things that gladden,  
feigning kindness.

how can I wish them well.  
how can I bow down.  
though I dwell in caves like David

though I eat grass, the wild grasses  
while they feast on roasted apples  
all manner of fine things;

counting my evictions  
in the counting house of my everyday-  
while they play.

though I risk the censure of kings  
helping themselves to all the buffets,  
did harm flow from my hands?

my God, they have buried the Cross  
of Christ my Saviour,  
wounding bright music.

can this be?

then may there be  
in coming years no rain on their land,

their empty holdings.

and I will fight my fear  
and try to understand these indignities  
and speak what I see that

these are the psalms of centuries  
they have put by.  
and curled the lip and

made the widows cry and  
orphaned the orphans further  
so that they cannot stand.

where can mercy be found when  
even the sun and the moon from our familiar skies  
have bled have bled into their grasping hands

and I am left for dead  
or feel that I am no longer-  
an I at all.

or viable, in any sense of the word  
until I turn to You alone.

oh God my only Home  
in all the major and minor  
of these interminable eclipses

guard my soul from the ravening wolves  
and from the cowering Darkness  
from the searing lambs that do their bidding

that the children no longer be captivated, captive ah,  
in their own their very own native lands.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Can The Wind Breathe

can the wind breathe  
through ice crystal beading on the trees  
when currents of air are stilled above the town

in an overcast dream, sparkleless and clean  
the ground greening and window glimpsed,  
we could say in a drowsy way

it's ice orchards, only resembling Spring or  
may it be the trees' precognition settling the matter  
or that we are here in a season we do not recognize

Spring from a tower window spied like the Snow Queen  
sees Spring, as only the ice crystallized into flowers  
still frozen are the hours

I guard; white roses too she said viewing the  
petals melting into the ground  
no honey for the silver bees.

no nectared music.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Canary Diamonds From The Antiques Roadshow

canary diamonds from the Antiques Roadshow.

I think I may have one of those mused someone's grandmother in her fuzzy bathrobe,

matching bunny slippers.

peacock feathers from the quills of Rilke?

a cherry silk barouche

(and matching horses)

in the attic? under the hatboxes?

the candy coloured palette of Chagall.

under the sink?

in your Grandfather's tool shed with the lawnmower.

they must be somewhere somewhere somewhere

the mariners maps behind the paintings bought from a 5 and

10 store way back when in the aisle near the Tangee lipsticks

or the ruled tablets, the zinnia Burpee seeds.

pink china from Marie Antoinette,

handpainted by herself.

a basque shawl, red rose poetry aflame.

and glittering, still,

the stars above Van Gogh's cafe,

the originals, crowed the appraisers.

we've looked everywhere.

the names of famous ancestors unearthed

and all their diaries glow in faded handwriting

in the tv aftermath, switched off.

we didn't find a thing. it's not so bad.

it's fun to dream of things we almost had.

mary angela douglas 26 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Candle

surely you are the candle that cannot be put out Lord God  
the vast candle of the sun that lights the earth the only One  
the small candle in my soul lit from my beginning  
surely You are always winning pushing the darkness back  
and on my foggy track the beckoning and the lighthouse  
where I dream  
I dream of refuge always knowing you are there  
in any turmoil, movement toward despair  
one shaft of light from star or sun  
and I am overcome and hear you say  
throughout my day however long and lengthening lengthening into night  
Let there be light and light and light  
mary angela douglas 11 octobe

Mary Angela Douglas

# Candy Cane

to Henry Van Dyke, on my grandparents bookshelf  
(by the Christmas tree and the living room picture window)

red and white should always taste this sweet  
and painted just that way you are  
crunched in English perfectly:  
candy, candy cane.

a quintessential name, we crowned you queen of the  
Christmas candies; such a delight to see you gaily striped  
and peeking out from the stocking Christmas a.m.  
when our a.m. was very a.m. then.

you kept that secret well.  
or caught in smaller crooks between the icicles on the tree  
as proud as any of the other ornaments, even the glass ones  
in jewel tones from the 1940s,

I'm sure you twinkled  
bright alongside them, beckoning us  
to the Great Feast.

Candy cane, cane, cane appearing in ice cream as if the  
angels folded you in, oh, how can I explain and turning the ice cream pink as  
palest roses on the rose tree  
in our picture book.

how you should spill from the clouds whenever it snows  
as from the angel choruses;  
when you were porous, we sipped oranges through you  
wondering, oh orange and peppermint together

even the dolls had no better wedding;  
even the ones in peau de soie and  
crystal embedded veiling with mysterious smiles.  
and carrying their little paper

bouquets of white violets seriously-  
gross grain silver ribbons streaming.

who dreamed you up?

all the ships of childhood sailing on  
a golden pond, in a diamond wood  
should have sails like these.

wrapped in chocolate and golden foil  
I would put you in the offering plate on Sunday:  
the brass one with the purple lining=  
a treat for God and for the baby Jesus.

maybe the fourth wiseman brought you  
wrapped in scarlet silk, a long, long way  
even a little late for His birthday  
bearing the tang of fir trees

and coated with starriness.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Note on the poem: Henry Van Dyke wrote a little mysterious book, *The Other Wiseman* and another book I love as well, *The Blue Flower*.

Also, credit where credit is due, I read a Russian folk tale recently in an English version for children by Virginia Haviland (in the 1950s or 60s) in which the following images appear as belonging to the king: a silver wood, a diamond pond, a golden castle, which I have altered a little bit here, transposing the images...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cantata Of Fireflies Jeweled, The Stars, And The Taskmasters Denied Entrance

[to [Jesus] Christ, the Lord]

your jeweled fireflies, stars, your radiant inconsistencies  
your flecks of gold on an inky sea  
and the ship roiling out of sight

your rose whorled sorrows caught in my bouquet  
and the doorways vanishing into snows and  
the lilies caught up in the light skirts netted

blue on paler satins and this is the beginning of  
nothing new they scoff and I say how would you know  
who cannot pass a branch without snatching

off the sequined fruit and passing it off as your own  
and the firebird scatters in the orchard  
all her rarities her rarities

and the poor with richness, rue in their souls

despair of ever coming home  
but it all comes whirling back like Oz  
stunning the evening air

with emeralds with

velvet nuances of the Springs  
you have flung across our remembering  
in their green in their greenesses

fountaining oh fountaining.  
Christ of the vivid valentine fold on fold  
we stand outside these gates

outside the pealing of odd bells untuned mere  
saints of the wishing wells of  
your reflecting ardor



imperishable in the crescendo, cascade of images  
the crippled rainbows made whole  
the soul banished here and scorned

made to bear an unconscionable load  
there welcomed as at the fairy tale's end  
where the shower of gold

just keeps descending and descending  
and children stretch out  
their dream hands willingly

no more to be  
bought and sold

mary angela douglas 31 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Canticle Of The Anonymous Poets

we are the circus behind our eyes  
the pink or peach ballet of blind words  
candlelight in the sun

who needs us? pale of commission who  
knows whether we have snowed apart  
in a universe beyond or if we play our part perhaps

backstage at the operas of vacant lots  
and write and write the self addressed  
invitations to all the parties,

never asked to dance. we'll  
take our turn on earth and learn to be much less  
than we imagine; pierrots of confetti shadows;

colombines, the same-  
be happy when your words fall soundless,  
short of flame and

sightless after all-  
but read by God, it may be, later on  
or by His slightest

angels, doves;  
remembered at Christmas, sung by some-  
as in the cherry sprigged folk tunes on

crystal hand bells rung

for the Christ child! newly sprung!

mary angela douglas 14 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Canticle To Robin Williams

for Robin Williams (July 21,1951-August 11,2014)

'send not to know for whom the bell tolls'

-John Donne

'Nought but vast sorrow was there -

The sweet cheat gone'

-from Ghost, by Walter De La Mare

dreaming in colour with our eyes wide open  
we thought we heard them say that you had fled  
oh no oh no oh no we cried we cried we cried

the fool in motley wiser than all kings is dead  
by his own hand and we the starless witnesses  
and snows bled snows in summer shock by shock

in California, spreading clockwise fault line by  
fault line: can't you make it disappear, sad conjurer,  
dear robin, making amends?

but this, this the thing that can't be mended  
by a sudden sortie of your hidden angels  
fraught with the tinkling of bells on the jester's

cap, and doffed and doffed again, to us  
as if we were royalty in a velvet box  
convulsed with happiness zig-zagging

lightening quick, mercurial, ariel ariel  
why, what- is this?

last seen at 10 p.m. on sunday night, and at home..  
(yet not at home)  
and the fairytale

decreed with its happy ending:

let it be 10 p.m. on a sunday always-  
didn't it? or earth, earth has skipped its heartbeat;

honey ceased its sweetness,  
captain crossing now, crossing the thin line-  
rainbowed meridians, scarves pulled out of the hats

as if from the borealis, wonderful! and multifaceted,  
the doves of extravagant wit flew up from the silk top  
hats towards what, towards who, towards when you're

jumping off the shortest cliff of all, come back  
come come back they must be wrong...  
the laugh lines in the moons of distant planets dim-

oh were you Hamlet in the end, mad Lear-  
the one we thought we knew send not to know  
to know to know for whom the bell has tolled

has tolled has tolled has laughter ceased  
and music spilling from the soul oh jigsaw piece  
my favorite one! cried the child in us

all unconsolated:  
is merriment weeping unregaled?  
ah, Genie, out of the bottle murmured

the Academy.  
o tenderest of clowns  
we will not find you now.

the puzzle's strange without you  
fretting upon no stage at all that we can see.  
the hour was golden, seized,

but it has raveled.  
dies, laughter on the lips of God for  
this brief shining,

now

mary angela douglas 12 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose

[on the painting by John Singer Sargent]

we hold the lanterns in our gaze and they shall not go out

the lily, the rose, the lily rose shadows their carnation

coolnesses, the children will not ravel

the edge of this twilight ever, softly they blossom

in the borders near the clumps of the flowers familiar to them

and the lanterns sway in the painting as if it were a real garden

and only slightly it is, the wind of the carnation, the lily,

the rosied lilies partake of Dream and dreaming

the light the light diminishing only lightly

we hold within our hearts within, within

like coloured lanterns swaying in the

purple, this cannot fade

the lights go out or

the lanterns stir in the evening breeze

e

the carnation breeze' be remembered, the beautiful the beautiful

weaving of lily and rose all before and after

shining, the weeping afterglow, the childish laughter

glow worm gloss and

mysterious mosses,

the self-same lanterns in our gaze

the night that will never fade

the distant song forever distant

time and the flowers at a standstill

the children, murmuring

mary angela douglas 19 february 2015 rev.11 june 2015; 23 january 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Carousel

CAROUSEL

To my Grandmother Lucy

to my Grandmother Lucy, my Mama 'The Princess'  
and to my sister Sharon on her birthday...

you can't live on the carousel forever

I could imagine her saying

when I was candy appled

with the stars nearby

and our yard at home

seemed to me more favorable

than any country yet born.

who knew then how ribbons would fend

or the small cologne we bought

at the drug store to be rose imbued

at the cotillions.

or a small notebook, and a green pen

to write in green oh evergreen words again: oh

what is this round trip in time

with no ticket station

I would ask my nation



of dolls and there would be a pause  
and they would say so many surprising things.  
gather our gemstone rings of glass  
from the gum machines at last we know what Song is for  
and we won't be dissuaded from picking up  
blue jay feathers from the ground  
and the Arkansas milky quartz I found, I felt was like pearl  
when I was a little girl wearing velvet.  
and like the littlest angel from a tale at Christmas told  
we'll keep it in our pockets so we won't grow old  
these souvenirs from earth  
so when the sheep are folded in the emerald fields  
and the last tinted sunset peals  
we won't feel that alone.

mary angela douglas 19 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Carpathian Journal

someone else's treble clef dropped out of the sky  
and fell slipper soft upon the new sprung grass  
where I was idling thinking of lovely intervals  
of lovely intervals and a phrase floated down  
as if proffered by angels, something...  
carpathian journal in violet whispers or was it the  
vermilion, the bronzed sunsets  
an avalanche of rose  
was it a code mislaid by someone in the front office  
peace made with a former enemy  
a purple horizon arriving  
or a yellow one.  
I will go back and arrange my Grandmother's irises

and pick my Grandfather's marigolds

and look up something in his stacks of  
the National Geographic from that very International Geophysical Year  
when I learned to hear the pear toned echo and not the one of ruinous  
consequence the Giant's Fee Fi Foe and Fum  
spelled out like a law firm from Kingdom Come  
when I was dreaming beside the new grass springing  
of the carpathians in purple relief on a grade school map  
and ate my cake of poppy seed and riddles accordingly  
and sang my cherubic cherry folk song over twice  
and opened the mail chute in the clouds

on a day of alphabets foreordained  
on a day they served pineapple upside down cake  
in the cafeteria and small I with my best thick pencil

smote with starry aims  
the pale ruled tablet:

to begin

mary angela douglas 11 august 2020; rev. august 14 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cartwheel

I wonder where old cartwheeled shadows go  
when children leave home  
no longer standing on the picnic table

to reach their favorite tree  
or scraping their knees on smooth linoleum.  
strawberries we called them

knowing they weren't dessert  
and as for that wouldn't you  
give almost a king's ransom

to relish strawberry ice cream  
the way that we did then  
when the sun winked like

crushed raspberries through  
the picture window near  
the piano;

where you learned all that music  
by heart.  
and the pine trees loomed like

guardian angels  
in the firefly dark

mary angela douglas 30 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cats Do Not Trust Me

cats do not trust me.  
they sense I can't stop looking at them  
as if they were some kind of exotic dog.

they know I secretly want to throw the ball  
for them and watch them scurry back with it.  
really, I am their worst nightmare as far

as human beings go. well almost.  
only once did a cat try to communicate with me.  
a very plump and aged cat, a long suffering family

cat, on the deck next door to mine,  
second floor. garden apartments.  
Glumpy, (we'll call him that; it fits)

lay helpless on his back  
oozing off of the side.

near him kneeled an exuberant little kid  
a gleam in his eye  
waiting to push our Glumpy off the balcony's end.

green eyes flashed a message  
with which I empathized; cat telegram:  
'God no, not again.'

mary angela douglas 5 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cause Celebre

for causes that are trends  
they will roll out the flower seed carpet  
and in a time lapsed dream of all Dreams

the flowers will all  
gleam at the same chime.

this is our wonderland they lie from the dais  
awarding each other prizes at  
the flower bedecked scenes

while those in the ditch outside of town  
and in between where they can't qualify  
for the Magic Beans,

the random sparrows- freeze;

falling in slo-mo from the picturesque branch.  
those outliers! those unlucky sods

are only picked up,  
cradled, in the hand

of God.

mary angela douglas 18 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Chaconne For Federico

to Federico Garcia-Lorca

the paper birds won't sing here anymore  
the crystal birds can't fly - they say  
the moon is leaving home

and I don't know why  
the children turn away  
from oranges from sweets from ruby fountains

how softly the angels  
carried their carnations  
on the day

your windmill was repealed-  
Quixote having no tears left  
bowed down under

a moon of shaded green...

how stars of pomegranate  
should rain down

and the silver sea grow olive-colored  
as it did beneath your gaze-  
but words can no longer be found

for so many things and the soul sheds  
golden wings and aureoles unknowingly.  
they will not ambush

your hidden flights of jade  
poetry my wounded bird poetry  
my wounded bird

mary angela douglas 17 november 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Charm Bracelet

charm bracelet in a white gold mould remembered  
cast charm by charm  
and will you come to harm

not wearing it, perhaps  
each gemstone there's a prayer  
for every home you lived in

disappeared and there, against all fears  
the little joys in miniature  
the wishes shine, tiny, the hinged piano....

each one, in time misplaced  
but jangling here against disgrace  
in curious moonlit filagree

designed and for a sign.  
oh hear the bells with the intricate clappers

ring nor rue the small hours lost, unmapped,  
not counting any cost at all because you wear  
on a wrist no longer fair

this bracelet of it all sans tears  
this -linking of the years, this-  
amulet of Heaven.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Checking Out Of The Punch And Judy Show

to Rod Serling

to the Russian people, forever the guardians of Poetry

to all the Americas in my heart

to the poets of all lands, seen and unseen...

"since in a net I seek to catch the wind."

-Sir Thomas Wyatt "Whoso List to Hunt"

"Never forget! ...I love you all, from the bottom of my heart...

Forever! "

-Van Cliburn, September 8,2012, Fort Worth, Texas

(and to my Mama, this small bouquet is rendered)

it's all candy striped at first you think and carouseled;

you gladly give your hand

and laugh when the others laugh at the same scene

in the movie.

and love the wafting of the buttered popcorn;

sidewalks where petals strew the soda fountained stoop; . blue twilights-

and treading carefully because you still can't see

your soft red leatherette shoes in the theatre dark;

you're waiting for night vision to set-in

gemstoned like Christmas.

but when the score's your own they turn and stare

and you're aware the line has suddenly turned surly

for the larkspur ticket torn in half

is you in your own stories

thrashed candy striped oh not in jest

and sotto voce off-camera, always,

spurned lark beating at a thousand windows

so that it can't be proved in court or to main street

glitterati who thought why, everything was fine in study hall

with the one book only and the music stand

stuck to her hands just the way we glued it on in accessories  
or was she born yesterday

you know how she is  
living on her own at the doll house museum  
near the Carnegie  
now that she's the jester that can't find the grey-eyed king  
in the stereoscopic parlour pacing tinily.

but lingering with her pianoforte,  
melting in colour in the final frame.  
pure pink spun sugar, vanishing, where?  
in a sweetheart neckline in this weather?  
into the greenwood.  
one could well wonder, unwrapping the paper cone  
only holding air now, a bunch of pale blue ribbons  
brought far from the farther fair  
oh dear, and promised it looks like  
only to you in her last letters  
on lavender paper.

oh vellum pressed flowers in a volume of Keats  
or Akhmatova or Barrett-Browning in Moroccan leather  
slight tissue of India ink.  
pressed pleats pressed out forever in my poem.  
dear pink linen words, keep wrinkling.  
(and with eyelet embroideries) .

or you're on the other side of the house-front and it's sprinkling.  
put out in the rain, bad prescient cat, no cream and no gelato!  
observe the directorial gleam  
on the puppet face smushed in or is it carry the day, dissolving  
in the hose green town with its toy train circling back  
from the water tower for you forever in your best black velvet  
winking out with the Giant stars...

you're at the interview within the hour without  
another dress to your sunburnt name  
sent home to the mannequin station  
we've just a thimbleful of dream to sell you  
but you know you were there  
on your one semi-formal occasion out,

oh party-frock laden lament  
in a pencil skirt from work that will have to do and a notebook

when the child dissolved in the magic spring  
blows in again on your sound stage kitchenette  
with her black cherry warning: "it's not what you think, remember?"  
she washes the Haviland in the sink.  
stir the double boiler cocoa double-quick she says  
I want a raspberry phosphate...

why didn't you listen when the sun melted on the canvas?  
now there's no Time, I wept for the flickering.  
and the Cross lifts shakily from earth as in the painting by Dali  
on the necklace of this dizzy universe Christ,  
what did they do to you I cried  
in our lost episodes by the stained glass props-  
the rhinestone summonses.

but you'll pack early by moonlight  
this time, Titania,  
ill met by sponsors everywhere  
if only they could find you  
and just as rich suns are creaming in your mind...

the cocoa boils over, scalding the milk  
for the lilac ticket-holders massed outside  
thick pure green shutters.  
you're in the wrong line for the aliens they shouted.  
reality cried in opals.

when suddenly you were asked rose-red to dance:  
wistful in voile by the cake and punch:  
by whose list to hunt.

there's the little girl with the fetched pink handled scissors  
from the dressing table,  
the gauze spooled bandages, ticked off-  
the baby's breath, . a tiny drop of tea-rose perfume... :  
old marionette, with your cold strings beautifully bleeding  
through the fabric of His maritimes she sighed lightly  
here's my corsage for you, a hallmark snip was whispered

and the rose rose tear of it is shed to let you know:  
oh, flee! for the soul's white night has come too late here  
to the children in their dreaming; it's Christ, in the  
windfall of all our twilight endings  
light years beyond the countries of  
their rending of the storybook rich tick tock  
of the fairytale lacquer through the evening skies...

for you, the clasped hands with the sweet peas  
Cliburn's last Chopin  
and my red-rimmed eyes  
and all this misplaced creaking in a jewel-box lock  
of the soul's strange, lovely lovely light.  
God rest your pearl-drop music its swan-crested flight  
sweet, sweet is the night air when we walk out  
in a kingdom where they will not hunt again...

mary angela douglas 26,27,28 february,1 march 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Chemistry 101 And The Resultant Daydreams

the truth in precipitate out of any solution I have long sought

or a pink titration or an amethyst one

or the mortar and pestle of the sun

a fairy tale meditation upon

the endless radical perfection of the periodic table

pulled down suddenly on a Wednesday a fantastical

visual aid that changed my life that day.

all that I was able to absorb in Chemistry class I did

as it became crystalline, latticed, with the electrons whirling

around a center of pearl it was to me that dazzling and allusive

though I couldn't balance the equations or be trusted with the

Bunsen burner or so I was told. who cares,

let mold GROW on the Petri dish.

it's all alchemy I thought;

everything's turning to gold.

mary angela douglas 24 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Cupboards

the cherry cobbler cupboards look askance  
since pie saving's gone out of style such  
a long time now

but I remember the buttery crust taste  
well mixed in with cherries  
add a custard tart or two for the refreshments Alice drank

to become much smaller through the keyhole

into the incomparable garden  
where it's me and my sister on the swings again  
in our dresses from school the very same day

but freer than any classroom will ever allow  
to reach someday the clouds  
and learn to live there

everything turning pink  
until it begins to snow  
and bounces us back home.

mary angela douglas 4 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Kerchief

[for Isabel De Clare]

this won't be remembered, perhaps you said  
inscribing it in your book of snow  
or tying it up in your cherry kerchief

where the peach winds blow  
and the castle is near at hand.  
it's near at hand and burns like

crystal in a night blind land  
or etched on sea foam.  
but how would you know-

you, with so far to go.  
you, with your book of snow.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Pie Medley With A Peach Pocketbook

it's cherry marvelous sighed a little girl somewhere  
after hard traveling.  
it's peach pie perfect

and medlied with all-spice, cinnamon  
and coloured sugars and of course,  
it's apple pie every day of the week

with whipped cream peaked to perfection  
and dyed pale pink with strawberries.  
it's the extra gooseberry in the fruit cocktail  
blueberry skies in a hometown twilight,  
infinitely, smiled her mother.  
blue taffeta...

it's your Sunday best when you're in cherry velvet  
with a peach pocketbook  
and lace frills in your speech or  
ruby red patent slippers

mirroring the rose, rose-bright cotillion.  
and snow fresh air.  
and I am wearing a dress  
of frost white stars, semi-formal,  
before you disappear

it's Christmas everywhere  
at the same time  
and Christmas raspberry pie with a pink pearl star on top  
and ice cream every other minute; little cakes

with icing to match the spring  
pastels for the Dior  
paper dolls (and they're all Dior,  
my dear, circa 1950):

it's a wishing well, when every dime  
whole-heartedly you fling, every silkenly single thing when wishing  
for a world is blessed



and caught by God.  
it's- happiness...

mary angela douglas 5 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Popsicle

it's the cherry popsicle feeling that you get  
in early June convinces you  
really, there's no homework left to do

and you stand entranced in the backyard  
as if at the entrance to Christmas  
now we're drifting in the summer sea

of days  
and wondering will it always be this way  
your whole life long

that time stands still.  
and you're on the earth the same time as the zinnias  
and just as colorful.

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Trumpets

[remembering the trumpets of Herb Alpert 'Up Cherry Street']

transposing the cherry trumpets in the sunlight  
or twirling a pink parasol shade  
we came to life

in lessons of astronomy  
when we could gaze and gaze  
in our backyard and there's Orion

and how it does amaze  
Orion remains though others have gone away.  
and the cherry trumpets replayed on the phonograph

and the cantinas blue as blue  
their twilights tied with silver ribbons;  
the evening dew.

time is music or music is time  
we thought we knew.  
it's only later as the music fades

we feel that it's not true.  
and yet we linger when the music starts  
and feel it's altered in our hearts

as though we were fresh winds again  
paused at a golden beginning;  
sweet on the tongue as a candy that lasts forever

knowing all, all the songs.

mary angela douglas 6 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cherry Velvet

yesterday on tiptoe you wrote your name in the snows;  
on the glass, clouded with the wind's breath,  
a Snow Queen's hour.

and thought of the flowers under the snow;  
how they would fare, could they be there?  
and were unaware of the snowlights

in your face shifting, the roselights  
and that later your face would melt  
into something closer to stars. for now,

still brimmed with flowers.  
your soul spilled over  
as if you were in the painting of the Primavera

and every step was gauze to you  
you took without consciousness  
of it; velvet the days,

cherry velvet,  
you spent at home.

mary angela douglas 10 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Child From The Careful Tower

child from the careful tower you'll keep watch  
and pray and dream and live your stories through  
and they will not come after you

though their horses flash silver, thundering;  
how mirage like you will see them pass,  
missing the entrance and the winding stair.

and though they search, o everywhere,  
thinking, there the treasure is at last,  
God Himself

will confound their paths.

mary angela douglas july 21 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Child Near The Half-Glazed Pond In Early April

anchor your stained-glass shadows in the grass  
it's irised still, your Easter;  
your heart is full of flowers.

the chill of the pale greens gather fast  
in the woods and on the playground  
at recess;

recessed in the stone  
the Madonna keeps her smile  
even in the snows that interrupt your aprils.

child.  
hold fast the page that they would turn for you  
and anchor your stained glass shadows in the grass-

the grass that blows when the  
winds of His presence, pass.  
you are the spring's cathedral

beautiful, wavering, there, in His looking glass-

mary angela douglas 19 january 2014; rev.20 november 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Child Of Immensity

child of Immensity  
you who cry in furtive corners, fiercely, why  
do you know

pure gold is showering upon you  
in the strangest hour  
when you are abandoned, kicked

silently under the tables  
of seeming grace.  
one day the reel will break

the film not take your image anymore  
and you will be at Heaven's door  
and you will see with your own eyes

all that you felt inside  
and became a bruise  
bloom like a rose

bloom like a rose  
Eternal

mary angela douglas 15 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Children In Their Dreams

in between worlds and the half light fluttering, the quince light shuttering

they float and then are suspended as school is suspended chock full of delight

and found in the peach fleece skies

suddenly they could fly. and there's no milk spilled in space

where gravity knows its place and there is no disgrace.

for children in their dreams.

paint them a peppermint house shingled with gum drops and fine gold

and no witch no witch stories tediously told; only wishes neon bold

or flower scented air where they may ever wander their arms full of

wild orchids and bluebells. I will never tell.

and let their kites the brilliant hued startling the birds mid winging.

exorbitantly singing rise over. the pink imbued hills.

let them eat their fill of cherry, blackberry pie.; oh let all their whys be answered  
by God Himself pouring the orangeade

and let them read in the green lanced shade

every book on the shelf twice over till dawn.

that they may carry on in love with the once upons

putting to rights the patchwork earth.

left to them from birth.

stitching the strawberry seams:



children children in their dreams.

mary angela douglas 27 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Children In Their Dreams, Dreamed Apple Green

children in their earliest dreams,  
dreamed in apple green  
translucent in their souls.

we are where the light shines through  
their angels sang  
and small bells rang.

who was there to tell them  
correcting in red pencil:  
this Spring may not last

when May was everywhere?

come to pass,  
they breathed on windowpanes  
when the frost paintings appeared.

and who could grieve  
them in their primary towers  
turning the page of gold,

the page of rose.

who would offend their angels now  
changing the meaning of music  
so that there is no sound

but only noise.  
so many.  
but music is from the spheres

the ancients knew  
and star inscribed  
like the bride doll framed

turning down the lanes  
of the embellished imagination,  
truculent, reprobate nations, farther

than politics can prove, disprove.  
even farther than you'll construe  
in the kingdoms

that may not be overthrown.

mary angela douglas 3 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Children Sighed For The United States Of Snow

children sighed for the United States of Snow  
what's in forever that can't be said must  
surely be purely be snowed

over the playsets of the earth  
and so that state is indistinguishable from state  
as yard from yard

or we are all living in melting ice cream  
or packed solid.  
are we sweeter then we laughed

what's in forever that isn't snow  
is that which never melts  
what we catch on our mittens

rosy with delight  
because it is starlight frozen.  
and we are that diamonded wind.

mary angela douglas 6 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Children Wanted Cherries

children wanted cherries  
embroidered on their pinafores  
pockets to hold the butterscotch sun in

a stiff kite wind for apricot dragons  
maps for fun and hidden treasure:  
there's the spot.

and will you be the one to find  
the ducats, rubies spilling over  
or the one to fall down in clover

laughing every time you fall  
and then forget where you wanted to go  
and stay there to make daisy chains

and chains of flowers to bind the world.  
I like to think you would.  
and that your world was good.

so good we could pass out chocolates  
all around even when it wasn't Christmas  
or somebody's birthday.

and you would whisper: have you heard?  
it's the birthday of the World.

mary angela douglas 3 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Chilled Tangerines

the fairytale

with the chilled tangerines

in a grass green bowl, art deco.

my Mama's stories

new and old

and in a rosy ring

my sister sings and laughs when she falls down

in Easter's baby lemon chiffon.

and I etch feelings about many small things

the flowers on our lawn the wished upon stars

for you to listen to, if you want to, bar by bar

like my Grandmother's old glass records

in the studio.

mary angela douglas 7 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# China Doll Sumptuous

how china doll sumptuous her imaginary birthdays,  
rose braid trimmed the curtains of the pretend  
playhouse

with its pale green sills and the whippoorwills  
her grandfather called in real life echoing  
suddenly you are recalled to this world,

supper, and the yellow kitchen  
and to reading How and Why  
with coloured pictures.

no pencil box of gold could match  
the one your grandfather filled  
after sharpening each one

in the apple cold each new september  
crisp as the plaid sashed dress you wore  
and the wave you waved going out the door

to what seem now  
truly, the schools out of folklore.

mary angela douglas 3 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Chivalry Is Not Dead Came Over The Rattling Wires

to those who imagine as if they could  
they have overthrown the chivalric, the mythic  
stalwart who now less and less each hour

triumphantly report the trending dour

are feebly telegraphing us, say,  
from the scenes of their irrelevant ancient disasters-  
take down THIS message

magnified through Time  
that none who lived before are gone  
that they quest on

and in their questing live  
more vividly than those  
who imagine as if they could

that they have overthrown in their modernity  
the Good, all those who enchanted the stones  
to human speech and

were unashamed of griefs, of faith, of God remembered  
of wrongs assuaged in remembering,  
battling on

who lived in Springtime daylight through  
blizzards of brimming and blossoming fear  
intrepid in their flights and

greener than the green that surrounds you now  
this May's commencements, through heavy nights

they kept the freshness of a dream  
unto the ebbing of their day  
the young men fervently schooled to learn

their chivalry in turn  
before the decimating wars



oh how will you wipe their blood away their scars  
the stains on every page of glory beyond this Age  
of disparagement as far as star is from star

still their angels stand in the breach  
the heavenly Door ajar  
and will not-

give way

mary angela douglas 9 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Chocolate On Mars!

Chocolate On Mars! the newspapers blared  
and we all went out into the summer school streets and cheered.  
And NASA broke out the BLTS, the thermoses

of cocoa.

School let out and we headed over  
to Mrs. Filagrees Candy Treasures

but she was all out  
so we drank coconut milk instead  
and traded old stories.

how the first expeditions found butterscotch.  
better luck next time, the board games said  
on the little green cards

no little green men.  
and then, the peppermint swirls appeared  
in plain vanilla ice cream overnight...

Bradbury took his glasses off  
and whooped it up  
with chocolate covered malt balls

exactly like

the ones I got sick on  
after I sneaked the whole bag  
and the doctor said

not knowing I was bad,  
here: try this chocolate coated medicine,  
two spoonfuls

as I stared  
realizing it's true:  
God is everywhere.

mary angela douglas 25 march 2016

□

Mary Angela Douglas

## Choosing Carefully A Career In Candy

could valentine cut outs folded end to end and paper chained  
fill the chambers where the plans are laid?  
I want to live in a Kingdom like that she declared

to no one listening under the stair.  
let honey be thickly folded under bread  
forever and ever the little cakes sprinkled with the sugar snows...

bring me a nickel's worth of mottoed hearts that no one knows  
or wishing stars expired, on sale near the aisle of mysterious  
chocolate bars and pastel marzipan and I will  
make a career in candy as long as it lasts

she laughed and drank up all the orangeade  
before there was even one customer  
with a gold beaded, quenching glassful of it

mary angela douglas 5 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Choosing The China Pattern For The Wedding Of Words

to William Allingham (1824-1889)

and to Camino Bakery where I hope to go when I've found all my books

it's the moss green circumference of charming words  
chimed the fairies, heigh ho! (from  
another lifetime.)

or the scarlet of leaf-words, chill in their own sunset:  
striped with a golden meaning.  
almost.

painted words, echoing over canyons.  
did they return to you,  
lost doves from the ark?

eclair eclair eclair\*  
spun the fairies round my ring,  
in love with the sound of it...

in peppermint time, on Jesu's birthday frosted  
snow bright words began to float, to heap up in  
the corridors where language falls asleep

like the princess beyond  
the hedge of mere thorn, beleaguered

roses.

well you may ask is it the moon over lavender waters;  
the opal wing that fell from where?  
the child behind you wanted to know

can we have opera cake in the morning and  
are you skimming the foam from the cream of  
how things used to be or, are you only-

waiting for the poem to breathe

Mary Angela Douglas 26 July 2014

\*No matter what never utter the word 'spumoni' in front of a fairy ring or you will never hear the end of it.

P.S. There's a bakery near where I live that serves something delectable called opera cake that somehow made it's way into this poem dedicated to Mr. Allingham who wrote delectable fairyland poems. Don't ask me what it tastes like; I spent my pirate money on books. Come to think of it, it was probably the fairies wanting to know about that cake. Here's the description from their menu in fairy handwriting:

Layers of a light hazelnut cake, coffee buttercream, and chocolate ganache.

They could fling some raspberries over the top layer, ventured the shortest fairy. (That's the part from me, ahem...I mean, the fairies)

Mary Angela Douglas

# Christ Died For

there are angels with flaming swords

at all the exits and entrances of the lies that can be told

to justify throwing people out in the cold

who have no where else to go

you may talk of the founding founders

get mad at the out of towners, out of bounders

I am telling you

you will be full of rue

if you continue in this vein

leaving out in the rain

the lowly and the disdained

Christ died for

mary angela douglas 10 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Christ With His Brighter Shadow I Believe

Christwith his brighter shadow I believe

though I'm not one for walking out to sea

I know He's there

when the wind is fair

and when no one says anything to me.

and if the earthquake breaks the seams apart

he'll be whatever's left of my scared heart

the ore of gold revealed

and the way, out of it all.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Christmas At The End Of It

we could have borne anything  
had we known Christmas would be at the end of it  
and so we thought of things that way

from a really young age.

an orange like the sun rolling down the hill from us  
until the whole earth caught fire  
we're still at play; why waste the day

the candy canes absconded in the waiting after school  
the lump in the throat not knowing which rule you  
broke today

since there's no telling though everyone's telling on you.  
the swelling in the head that comes

from waiting in the rain between buses.  
and you, such a small doll, too.  
with your collar of lace.

a mysterious grace between punishments  
when the sun comes out  
they blame you for being faded.

thus we trudged on.  
in our cotton stuffed ways  
our red headed yarn in disarray

bearing fixed smiles  
and a mysterious radiance  
in our appliqued aprons.

so that you always say  
it's the vintage music box  
always just slightly off

that's struck, replaying  
in a mournful way and yet,  
remaining music

faithful to its one tune

the crepe paper bells  
never making a sound  
rang for us still

they always will

showing that Christmas would be soon  
even when you are the last one in class  
beckoned to the Christmas party by the sour puss teacher

shunned in front of everyone as  
the last one to finish your math

when snow comes down  
we don't care  
there's music everywhere

I, loving music dont despair  
cannot explain away even in latter days

how we foraged on  
always with a song  
sponging it all in, in water colours

for the classroom murals  
even with disapproval  
happy anyway at the least, least chance

and in the roundelay rounds  
to illustrate the Beautiful  
being burned down it felt like that

never tipping our hat

without turning the page or  
acknowledging rage we were always

still phoenix arising  
in Christmas surprising.

mary angela douglas 13 november 2018; 27 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Christmas Card On Parchment (With Glitter)

a white gold peace in a pale blue chapel  
I always feel beneath these skies.  
even when the sun is clouded over

somehow there is still, shining.  
radiance comes in undisguised;  
shaking her cloak out in the hallway.

reft of her galoshes.  
instantly, it's Christmas.  
skaters on the pond forever in tune

on the tea tray, cocoa tin.  
the music box that plays:  
The Skater's

glossy Christmas magazines,  
trumpeting their recipes.  
glorious with little last minute gift ideas.

the sugar plum movies on T.V.

the handbells of the children  
ringing a crystalline, crystalline singing.  
sweet steeples in a pastel light.

and the glitter snow indicated.

bells of the red the green the gold  
the ones with silent clappers  
meant to be the finishing touch

on the gift wrap  
suddenly start peeling.  
on the packages wrapped

in blue snowmen, holly wreaths  
with a thin gold stripe.  
the delights of curling ribbons.

in our cherry mittens we will go  
to find the yards of hidden snow  
frosting on our Christmas cake

the one we couldn't finish till New Year's.

mary angela douglas 3 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Christmas Standing Still

CHRISTMAS STANDING STILL

how I wish it could be Christmas standing still  
and etched in crystal  
you whispered in the frozen air, perhaps.

with an evergreen sigh  
you will remember this after  
the angels departed

just as the shepherds did  
when standing still  
they paused in the music

on the hills  
and sought the Glory inside  
of them, still ringing.

christmas standing still  
we breathed upon the glass  
so free from school

and safe at home, at last  
the star lingering across the street  
in our vacant lot woods

we saw in our sleep  
I swear that Christmas  
the very same

and now as then as  
it shone it shone  
in Bethlehem.

and I would trade  
the orange and the spice of it all  
the revels in the yuletide hall

these many decades far from home,  
for the starlight, alone.

mary angela douglas 16 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Christmas Twinkling

[to my Grandmother]

how forthrightly you carried Christmas twinkling  
long after the presents were unwrapped;  
the creche with the star

stashed, never far.

and you, yourself, the Tree  
bedecked even in

]

sleeting February with little stories.

within is hearth and home  
the old novels promised,

come in

sit close by the fire.

here's tea! of Coca Cola

in a tall glass, on ice

(and cake, I always hoped  
for the heroes, heroines) .

oh, don't forsake me now,

happy endings.

respites from the storm.

I will keep warm

and Christmas twinkling

cherry baked twice if

need be

and Christmas bedecked and glittering  
though they wreck the whole world.

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Christmas Village Redux

looking back, I was always hoping a little  
that the neighborhood would turn out to be  
a kind of Christmas village

all year long. you know the kind.  
with the cheery figurines at the realistic  
windows near the decked out Christmas trees

waving as the train rushed by.  
the little girl in her red coat  
feeding the cardinals in the snow.

the seamstress making the angel  
choir robes for the children.  
the church with its cellophane

stained glass...its bell that never  
rings out the disasters.  
alas. the neighborhood didn't know

it was meant to be this.

but I still feel a more than Christmas glow  
just dreaming, it could...

mary angela douglas 17 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cinderella On Time

the clock will chime and you'll  
remember what she said.  
your dress will turn to sand;

your ribbands dissolving...  
and criss-cross in the stars  
you see your future, marred

and the diamond ships wavering.  
it's time for walking home at  
a fast pace leaving no trace

but you don't realize yet  
(your heart is dazed)  
one slipper still remains,

its own constellation  
in plain view.

so drenched in evening dews  
that even in rags, you'll  
still sparkle,

vanishing from his sight;  
oh, that you could take flight  
from your own grieving;

singing, the world is sand  
and the Hour glass, God;

forgetting a dream's  
a bit opaque, at best.  
but something at the gate's behest

gleams, try to understand... the rest!

says wait, oh wait, while from  
the shimmering tree in the garden  
slips mellifluously;

in gold array,  
another day.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cinderella, Early Days Still

[to my Grandmother, with love]

we are the queen of nooks and crannies,  
she sparkled, pulling a raisin bun from the air  
with pink frosting on it?

you have to come prepared, she said  
then a can of pink frosting appeared  
on a lower shelf with a butter knife

I never saw before in my life.

and we had tea, deliciously who cares  
what anyone else thinks.  
plenty to drink of cherry fizz

or raspberry glitz or anything else  
if you think of it, chilled, on chipped ice;  
be nice and don't dawdle.

but dawdling is what the day is for  
we both agree when it's green outdoors;  
an April green and a wind that blows

and we are the very rose that blows  
my fairy Goddear and I;  
two twinkles in God's eye.

mary angela douglas 9 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cinderella. Cendrillon.

On the memory of seeing Mary Pickford's 'Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper' on a children's toy projector one silent film childhood Christmas; the companion piece was a Mickey Mouse short feature; my father was driven to desperation every time he was asked to thread that impossibly small machine (and we asked him a lot) .

to my mother and father for separate beautiful reasons -

feather-stitching these glass shadows  
silent frame by frame  
how could you help but wonder  
later on  
what all the shattering was for?

then you were telling us stories  
in the dark green garden chair...  
let it not be said  
that is where the story ends...  
Cinderella. Cendrillon.

though it may not be magic-  
you can't be blamed for  
storms on a distant sun  
am I the only one who sees

those  
sunspots seeping through  
the mystical rustling in the orchards-  
where did they come from?

where did you?

here are the crystals, sequined- still-  
in my lost hand- you may find missing  
from your gown, your head, your heart  
soft lemon afternoons like the ones in Renoir.

somehow, it all gets scattered in the dark

and you wonder where to stand  
in a flickering brilliant language seldom used  
except in a few newsreel half-projections  
on the wall-the year in semi-review-  
whose year was that?  
it wasn't mine-  
though it might be said  
and surely was, that  
music was her last diadem,  
even when she fled  
leaving all Enchantment behind her-  
so they said-  
and her bright skirts swirling  
like the dream of Light itself  
in a receding universe

and tearing her pale  
raspberry satin hem-  
it must have been that colour...  
on every hazel twig in sight  
barely above ground...

God lives in the remnants  
so she smiles, opening her birthday gifts  
of clocks that never chime;  
putting in water the bunches of violets  
that last and last...  
you cannot fail to notice, even now,  
that earliest sparkling is best and the  
last to leave the party under the trees she says to  
her crystal children on the breeze

the one with the paper lanterns  
no longer living.

my darlings, don't get lost  
beyond the pink glass frosted  
fawn on the walnut what-not...  
so we promised not to-  
and to live on where rose curtains swayed  
Cinderella. Cendrillon...  
shine out of sight, yourself, alone-

you'll know more than angels in  
the end for you are good-  
the best clue in all the kingdom  
after a lifetime spent  
rinsing out your pale peach  
print again and again  
hoping not to be found but just to be left  
here dreaming...

and slipping the slipper carefully  
into an apron of cloud...

mary angela douglas 9 april 2012

Note to Reader: It has come to my embarrassed attention that I  
have pronounced the word 'Cendrillon' in an imaginary accent  
but I am leaving it that way because I cannot hope to duplicate the  
coincidental special effects in the video. Does it help if I listen to Debussy and  
Ravel continually? I hope so...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cinderella's Table Cloth

for Alfred Lord Tennyson and Charles Perrault

(or anyone who ever wondered, where did Cinderella really get that dress?)

threaded of fine snows, and worked with silver  
scrolls, pale apples, faint flowers from one heirloom spring.  
tinged in lavender; cast in blue shadows,  
casting off, on myriad ships to embroidered isles,

they were never found; glass waters beaded there;  
their ghosts embossed in crystallized appliques. a tree,  
weeping amethysts: the web flown wide and nestled  
at my nursery door...

or tied with heraldic ribands  
flowing at the sill  
a day my mother died

or on the wedding banks of Skye;  
the fairy pointelle of her rivers or

it is patterned on clouds, was whispered,  
gold at precarious edges  
inset with the costly moons of kings that set not on  
dark empires; bright rose chevrons-  
o puzzle pieced, aggrandized, lost

from the table of  
The Seige Perilous...

at each corner where the winds  
puff out their cheeks in scarlet.  
worn by no bride on earth, it could  
have been made over

or for the fair Elaine.  
and here am I, thought Cinderella



awash in her hard times

eating beans and franks on pink chinette  
and late for work in my own scullery;  
rolling up the inglorious sleeves

of my last gingham  
in rainbow popping dishwater.

and that's no story.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2014/rev.24 july 2014

p.s. an almost irrepressible notion to echo Robert  
Browning's opening on My Last Duchess, came over me  
at some point: (as in Cinderella sighing 'that's my last gingham, on the line.' but  
that's a subject for another poem on her fantastic laundry days)

Mary Angela Douglas

# Clarion

who wanted to live on a wrap around porch with a sea green awning  
yawning always waking from dreams to the honeycomb on the toast  
spread liberally

could understand how it felt when the roses chimed exquisitely  
in the garden beyond all memories

and the sun in egg yolk splendor rose to the occasion

behind the nations of pine we called our own or

making a tearose splash in the heavens, another backdrop formed;

who is painting the scenes backstage we know cherishing

the children remember the scent of grass when their grandfather

cut the lawn and telstar roved behind violet clouds

we were told to study hard and that all things tend toward delight

when you are truly learning and we were

such boarders on the pages ourselves full of the red rose

random meteors

and the speculative of clouds going so many color forms

soon without knowing anything of shadows anymore

we know this may emerge out of a silk screened sky

and cirrus lovely from

the corner of the eye that is glad that

we may see the traffic of angels on a sudden ladder suspended

our flight trails cancelled on an endless tack deferred

done with the faltering of old bridges on earth. oh then

may we arise in Easter colours dyed our imaginations still holy

in an arriving music invincible

over the brief world with love with love

looking, looking back.

mary angela douglas 25 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Clarity

I sought clarity but darkness was on the wind  
things that couldn't be mended then  
with their one wing  
had taken their toll:  
hairline fracturing the china soul  
I sought somewhere else to go, to be  
to remember what it was like  
walking under a canopy of trees  
thinking that time on earth was a green roof  
to cover me, since I wished hard enough for it.  
if I get permission and the necessary paperwork is done  
can I speak to you who skip brightly on dry land  
while I am drowning the best I can.  
what should I say.  
have a nice day?  
while waiting for the ship to come  
and feeling like something inventoried.  
should I bring you bouquets  
and lighten your load  
where sunken treasures are.

should I wish upon a star

I will mend my heart with red sealing wax

and carry on as if I were a tree

newly branched.

and play my part in the mystery.

that the sun in my heart is

still sparking words

even if the world goes dark.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Clavier Dream

clavier tempered of stars and other suns  
on piano practice afternoons...

I remember you at the picture window's  
piano or when the moon floats into view  
and she falls off the bench so small

but large as music already she will be  
as if music were this April sheen  
we would see no Spring ever died but feel that

pale green branches touch across the

avenues  
of the Eternal and  
this is Music, too, my sister smiled...

mary angela douglas 14 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Clear Pink And Green Glassware In A Little House

clear pink and green glassware in a little house  
she wanted, and to wear only the colours  
of roses.

nothing loud.  
nothing crowded  
except at Christmas

and in summer parades.  
strawberry, chocolate, vanilla,  
that's enough

ice cream for anyone;  
we thought so, too  
and that to live

in May by the honeysuckle vines  
could surpass Heaven.

mary angela douglas 4 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cliburn In Moscow

'is there anyone  
who can peer into your eyes  
and with his own blood fuse  
two centuries worth of vertebrae? '  
-Osip Mandelstam, The Age

cliburn in moscow  
holding in his arms  
the flame-tipped roses of the bygone,

a last music box from the tattered silk  
families, inscribed with only song-  
like a favored child

overloaded at Christmas-  
could not contain enough music  
to express this miracle:

amethyst sunbursts beading the river  
music, ruling the world...  
how could he leave (he never could)

raspberry, the light in the skies and the  
weeping coronas of a music  
exquisitely tuned, returned through him

to them, in the jeweled air  
by an orphaned moment looping in on itself  
from the long-ago: whole etudes of the

half-forgotten summers rippling the ponds  
willow stirred; fire-branded, the white piano  
evenings, on our hearts, then the ghosts of music

whispered, now...  
and was it engraved on the pale blue snows  
of the soul's long fortitude, all along, their delicate

farewell in you repeated, going back to



the first measure?  
once domes of pure silver glinted a silver music unbound,  
  
unprecedented, fusing the brokenness  
and continents merged as though there were no ocean  
but the ocean of music, sparkling, flashing diamond myriad

mystical, pressed to the heart but the heart is... fleeting  
and cannot be embroidered on your pillow, child  
not even in vermilion, tamarind, glistening, blue

snows will not erase, nor all of time,  
the burnished image from the mind the sounds  
dropped from Heaven by the astonished angels

uncareful of their prize

mary angela douglas 12 june 2014; rev.14 june 2014

Note on the poem:

The first stanza of the poem refers to scenes of Cliburn being loaded down with family heirlooms and souvenirs by kind Russian concert goers deeply affected by his music. This happened to him, I believe, each time he returned to Russia.

You may think I dropped a note or two to call the gold domes of Moscow silver. Or is it Petersburg? Or was it a deliberate misreading to indicate a psychological state when the inner light is so blinding that physical details of the outward scene, no matter how beautiful cannot register properly or is it that the domes of silver rising from the music of Van Cliburn's concerts, were silver? the very silver of the poets of the Silver Age...

uncareful (in the final line) , also, is not a real word in English but I often use the prefix 'un'(meaning, not) in front of a word if this causes the sounds to flow together more beautifully (so I coined 'uncareful' instead of using the usual 'careless').

Where Is the Beautiful Where You Were is an elegy I wrote after Van Cliburn died. And this shorter poem, though written so much later is kind of a broken off icicle from the eaves of, the opus of that larger sorrow, if this makes sense to you I would be amazed.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cloak Of Invisibility Arrives: Populace Doesn't Notice

they will fold your tears into the smallest cloud  
on the horizon. I mean the cherabim  
in the old paintings; oh that there

could be such kindness you let yourself  
think at lunchtime let out for  
a moment's reprieve.

and oh, there is a breeze.  
mild sunshine.

oh that you would not wander blind  
missing the thing you were born for  
your angels try to say

and you almost hear them.

then you'll go back to work where  
on good afternoons you'll be seen  
as invisible.

or else, a thing to command.

invisible.  
wasn't that what you wanted when you were little?  
just think! now you get paid for it.

mary angela douglas 22 november 2015; rev.29 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Clockwork, The Princess Shedding Crystalline Tears Is Still Required To Fill Out Forms

am I clockwork then, she wondered,  
to shed on the hour the selfsame tears  
that turn to crystal and then

I start all over again.  
it's the new year and suddenly  
there's snow only I'm

in a globe and the snow is  
the same snow the same snow drifting down  
and swirling up again

and I am shaken but

my crown stays on  
at least the children say so  
but only on Saturdays

when we watch cartoons  
and there in the afterglow of the tv's  
blue white fade or is it stars I too

declare myself  
the princess of

fading out

and cry the selfsame tears  
and say to you whoever you are  
that I am clockwork shedding

the selfsame tears  
that turn to crystal and  
this goes on for years that

I don't answer to you

and I don't have  
any other information

to give you.

mary angela douglas 21 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Closing The Books On Those That Insult The Golden

[to William Shakespeare in the 400th anniversary year of his death]

closing the books on those who insult the golden,  
I wept into an unseen rain, the fall of dew  
on abandoned plains

the brief opening of the night flowers.  
how have they stoned the bright remains  
of those who went before

and slept a just sleep? rising to  
their elaborate, modern morning coffees.  
who will deliver us my soul from

the ever encroaching tribe of scoffers  
tearing the gilded page in half,  
making us beg for crumbs.

somewhere the knights shine on  
their valor kept by a discerning God  
whose hand could sweep the Board

at any instant

mary angela douglas 1 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cloud Song To William Blake

don't be afraid walking on waters

a small voice chimed

perhaps from a charming cloud

as painted by Blake

seen walking on the Thames

and singing brilliant hymns

when the not so sanguine tygers

burned in the night.

is it indelible I said?

hoping it was so.

all those illuminations,

long ago.

and the angels blurred in trees

in watercolours, please.

oh all of these and the sick rose healed

and all that we can feel

when dreaming of his pastorales

and the New Jerusalem.

mary angela douglas 21 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Come Back, I Said To The Riddles

come back, I said to the riddles  
but they would not heed me  
in time for the party, scrolled

on pastel strips of paper  
or wrapped with favors of  
foil wrapped toffee

caught like kites in the wind

or the best chocolates  
along the meridians.  
they said they were.

what will we do by sunset  
without the answers  
when the riddle masters come calling

wanting their fortunes told.  
I shall grow old, waiting.  
and the cakes, stale.

and who will let the jesters  
out of jail.

mary angela douglas 21 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Coming Back To The Hedges In Bloom

coming back to the hedges in bloom,  
when you unlatch the gate,  
will you see this as before?

home. after long wars.  
and the fractured time awash  
in lilies now; the afternoon sun,

the myriad rainbows  
focused into one,  
over the front porch;

the holly bushes  
in the side yard;  
the breeze in the alley way,

the quiet in the heart.

mary angela douglas 12 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Coming Down On The Side Of The Angels

coming down on the  
side of the angels  
is not as easy as it looks

in Christmas movies

when Your kingdom on  
the tip of our tongue  
dissolves like snow  
or like something we  
walked into a room to retrieve  
and then forgot

I reach but I cannot touch  
I feel but I cannot say  
a splendor flaring up  
momentarily-drowned out by idiocy

getting on the wrong bus  
I look for you in vain  
going past stops I can't recognize

I stand in the rain for hours  
finding no Samaritans  
either good

or bad-

mary angela douglas 19 february 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# Coming From The Cinema I Met My Soul

[reimagining a PBS interview with  
Dame Maggie Smith, the poem being her answer to  
the questions about her 'process'...in a kind of monologue with her own soul.]

coming from the cinema I met my soul  
caught in the tread of the moviegoers exiting;  
whirling in the turnstiles.  
dream on dream in the seam of all this seeming  
I feel carpet-tacked under the shuffling  
sometimes in the scarlet lobbies of the world

she said to me, on the escalator, going down.  
is poetry dead? is there an arrow in my back  
skimming the moonlight at the crossroads?  
it snows on the screen and I am cold

and stitched by the anti-heroes to the track  
with my best silver sash I never lent them  
and only God to lean on when the train comes.  
somewhere there is thick soup and a pale blue shawl,  
Chopin's etudes and the blossoming trees  
beyond all this popcorn and the flatlands' flash.  
and is my jeweled kaleidoscope  
still trained on the moons  
I left for you at home

dissolved in sequined weeping near the weeping cherry?  
oh nowhere do I find  
the citron country sung of long ago: .  
the silken maps the missing compasses

for the kingdoms broadly confiscated, never atoned for...  
oh what can I begin to say  
who still can see in bright array  
the subtexts of the brave and free  
shifting imperceptibly  
from stage to stage.  
at the gate of every village left on earth gold coins  
rained down her face instead of tears

as in the ancient fairytales when the sun appears

or near the atriums, decked in pearl-on-pearl  
she merely stood  
embroidered with laments from the dream-time.

unraveling:

like party favors at a birthday.  
or what can I pretend to know  
who saw the weeping cherry go  
in winds that heeded not my will  
in a tinfoil crown that's shining, still...  
is there feeling anymore she asked the stragglers  
in the afternoon-  
before the sun fizzles or the universe or

wouldn't you like to know.  
what is the sun they said  
descending like no twelve  
princesses ever could.  
she fastened her words to the spokes of  
the winds behind them-  
are you lost she said, almost in velvet

prodding with a violet hatpin  
a tearful music, missing home:  
..brief -charioteers-  
in the mesmerizing tread of the tread and the tread of the knock-off party shoes

plodding on in front of you, and filing on and on  
into a dungeon, and not a jeweled mine?  
oh Love from love cannot be severed when  
enchantment's sthistedown blown down the opaline anything  
chimed from the stage God would have staged for you forever

in any summer evening's lemon sheen...  
lean, lissomely, to hear  
her least soliloquy in a lilac picture hat  
for the last rose leaving...  
take the pale green daydream  
wrapped for you in snow.  
I really think you should

she whispered to the last child in line,  
the one with the Juliet snood  
and the cherry car-coat...  
it may do you good.

mary angela douglas 23,24,25,26 march 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Coming Out Of The Spell, Gladly

have I mislaid the fairy tale tasks?  
well, not the ones set for me by others  
who wanted their castles finished by sunset

and then larger ones by next evening. instantly.  
did I come here for real estate I wondered;  
was this why my mother pricked her finger

on a rosebush so that she never saw me again  
and why I was selling roses on street corners  
and little else dreamed because I was too tired?

I will learn to see  
the moon as the moon only; also the sun  
floating through flushed clouds

as I did once when happiness  
fell easily to me from out of any vivid sky.  
than I had nothing to do with

those  
who dwell only under toadstools  
always coniving,

in vain in vain  
seeing us all the same  
if indeed, they saw us at all;

devising new afflictions wall by wall  
to keep us in  
when the old ones passed away impossible

impossible to please

on every given day.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Commencement

now it's Commencement  
and the pearl gardenia shine of it  
links you down the years to the ones before you.

their green wreathed days are with you, too  
and you feel candlelit inside;  
as if you were a bride;

as if there could be no more winters.  
there you are, at your beginning:  
the white dress, the suit pressed.

and the singers. the elegant programs.  
the wilting heat and the fans' relief.  
and the speeches, for what may be.

promises tied up with silver ribbons.  
brief tears, the parting friends.

maybe Heaven will be like this,  
a Commencement, but in reverse.  
I will bring you flowers then

with the dews abiding on them  
and we will depart to live  
in the flower filled air.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Committee

## COMMITTEE

now you will be afraid, the committee droned  
underneath my dream not even out from  
behind the woodwork or the old t.v.

they drizzled on.  
you will be afraid and we  
will not tell you why

at least, not at this time  
but leave you with a vague,  
a sorrowful surmise

and a mist will settle on you  
pervading old clothes.  
a klieg light selected

for this purpose  
you have been selected  
for this purpose

but in the murk  
Arise I heard Christ's beacon speak

inscribing light itself with more intricate light  
and banish out of sight  
beyond the camera's range

the jerks,  
the whisperers, all.

you will take flight, committee,  
from the green of my dream.  
it's you that have much to fear

whispering in the ears of angels:  
the reasons not to be glad.

mary angela douglas 13 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Complaint To The Vanishing Lute

yesterday you wrote in gold, in pearl  
upon the surfaces of clouds;  
who was ever that happy

they don't dare to say  
to you outloud

wearing all the blues and the fluttering ribbons;  
mornings, edged in lace.  
is it the trace of summer in the air still there

on greyer days in June that brings you back  
to the time of berries and laughter?  
a something that's not seen

but promised in the wings or the shadows of wings  
as they flit in the grey green gardens.  
oh but when will the mists lift?

you complain to the lute,  
to the lark, to the winding staircase,  
winding nowhere;

to the castle,  
and to the vanishing.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Conestoga

[to Bess Streeter Aldrich, author of A Lantern In Her hand  
(on the settling of Nebraska) ]

on land they must have seemed like huge white ships  
sailing the prairies and the mother with child  
sickened by the endless dipping of the prairie grasses

or else the wagon was a plough through fields  
as yet unsown a drifting plough from home to  
home they clung to like a dream just only on

the way and loaded with the sacks of grain or more,  
the flour, the beans and tools perhaps the rose bush  
wrapped to plant again beside the small sod house...

much later the stands of poplars, even the lanes.

they would find much later the easiest part  
had always been ng the children fed  
on what could be:

the hardest part lay ahead.

mary angela douglas 29 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Confessions Among The Jeweled

these are the vials for sunsets, evening stars  
the curious peddler cried; the antique dealer  
with his camera obscura obscured.

and have you quarried rubies from roses,  
emeralds from the trees in the jewelry box  
of His worlds?

or is it the other way round  
you must, you must turn  
in the common round

with your new kaleidoscope  
fresh from its Christmas wrappings.

we whirled on, my heart and I  
and reveries returned I'd not been  
scolded for, in the past

because they didn't know,  
did they, sans and sans the Looking Glass  
the entire time my eyes were fixed

in the rows on rows (on 'today's lesson! , class')

I was thinking only of this.

Mary Angela Douglas 5 September 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Confetti Islands Dot The Map

to Robert Louis Stevenson

confetti islands dot the map...  
I must have left it somewhere  
mulled the pirate

sipping his eggnog thiner than the  
clouds above red morning's warning sun.  
ah, here's the one, in piratese he murmured

to no one:

green was the parrot sun when we sailed out;  
flamingo bright our hopes to be mired in diamonds  
by month's end big as peacock's eggs

but then, mired we were, though not in mermaids,  
coffers of the queens;  
floating near the ghastly shoals

when the scavengers came out  
pretending to rescue us.  
too late cried the ghosts and drifted on.

one spyglass floating on the soured, spilled jewels remained  
for the one child scavenging for stars, not braided bread nor meats, wild cherry  
brandy...

he plucked it from my hands and learned to see

mary angela douglas 19 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Conflations

there should be golden apples

a glass mountain

the force of gravity

a diffident princess

and Time to solve the riddle

so that the shoes don't wear out

and embarrass the owner

on the way to the bookshop

that wasn't there yesterday

a pink cube

with an aqua roof, slanting elliptically

the feeling of starting all over again

on a fresh sheet of paper

a freshly sharpened pencil:

go where the snow queen goes the problem's stated:

a swathe of snow

just opened cream

for the coffee.

two trains with variable speeds

in a toffee afternoon



that's the colour of the leaves  
as they depart  
and I'm reminding myself  
art is art; fiction is fiction or  
of when the fairy tales were a  
brand new diction.  
but there is something about this solitude  
so that all riddles merge;  
certain elements in a room contemplated  
as if I were on a star where  
there should always be these color forms mingled  
even if it never gets solved  
the golden apples, the crystal clause  
the mountain crystal. plunging into it  
like a sea  
surpassing the mermaid soliloquies  
it's own liebestraum and on and on  
the floral accents of the harbour breeze.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Confused, Tangled With Starlight

CONFUSED, TANGLED WITH STARLIGHT

{to Jesus, the Light of the World]

did the dark illumine the corners where you were

confused, tangled with starlight

no longer sure of its demesne

how could it remain the same

in the presence of true Light

perhaps the Magi wondered

in their flight from Herod

warned in dream.

it takes centuries to gleam

what else did Rembrandt mean by mingling

dark with light so that it seemed

alchemical, all of it, gold

waiting to be petticoat showing through

the funereal.

Light shines the scripture says

in darkness

darkness does not understand

why suddenly

it is embroidered with marigolds

and the children are singing it hymns.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Context Is Nothing Beauty Is Everything

beauty will seep out of the pages anyway  
no matter how you frame it  
leaving a trail of clouds

the angels follow;  
follow you, reminding you there is a glory  
they cannot bind

and in your heart and mind, stay free  
and these belong to you who cannot be taught  
a higher thing than what you feel

when beauty peals out,  
despite of everything

mary angela douglas 17 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Continents (On The Music Of Josh Groban)

somewhere there are other continents than these

where we stay indoors dreaming of other shores

and tilt the globe in the music rooms

and wait. for shadows at the gate.

oh liltng, music alone, I think of thee

where there have been no wars

no upset in the afternoons

of the order you keep

when sleep is negligible

and clouds diffuse the moon

oh to be forever obscured from history

that we might find in the music

only the stellar nights

and shine from stage to stage only

on an inner range of mountains,

as in dreams,

obscuring Time...inclined to and favoring

the sudden illuminations

and the chime

of the first bars of the scores renewed before

the wounding at the core

of the old continents, shifting,

and music, restraining, just for this little space

the angel at the door, too early

at the porticos of sunset;

and gathering the damaged in.

mary angela douglas 5 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Corina In Her Red Shoes

corina in her red shoes leaves scuff marks on the stars.  
corina in polished red patent in a white summer dress  
painted by the painter.

corina in her red shoes, indoors when it snows  
sparkles like rubies, doesn't need to know  
if there is really music anymore,

a book of fairytales open to the page  
she loves the best and more tumbling  
from the shelves and in a green dress

with cabbage roses  
she is princess for awhile  
in cotillions of her smile.

corina tap dancing down the avenue  
for several carrots and a few odd apples  
strangely patent red at the market

don't you tell. my golden delicious.  
corina in new springy shoes  
with the strawberry satin straps

was seen on Sunday, shod in pink velvet, velvet shoon  
and floating tune by tune with God  
in a magenta wide brimmed hat in a lemon sundress

what do you think of that?

mary angela douglas 18 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Corner Of The Sky

that's your corner of the sky

I whispered to no one standing by

to those who had gone before me unexpectedly

so that the day forever was divided into two parts

the part when I thought they were still on earth

and the part where it seemed to break down

why is there such a veil between heaven and earth

I asked the rains when they swept like the harp glissandos

music, over pain

oh our Sustaining cannot be measured

like a star for magnitude

that's your corner of the sky I sang and sang

and prayed that it was true.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Cotillion

we will scoop up the moonlight so that our lamps won't go out  
and leave every night surreptitious as the seas  
twelve princesses at our ease

at our own cotillion.  
and we are breathing lilies lightly  
rosebuds on our wrists slipped from the tower

in love with mists and our own dower  
insignia of the rose we are those  
who wore out their embroidered slippers nightly

waltzing in twilight blue dungeons.

we will cross the lake making no mistake  
do not follow after;  
spy on our sequined laughter

like Amy Lowell's "Opal", darling-diaphonous,  
shimmering with one thousand radiances, hidden  
shot silk, and brimming with mirage-

and pinned like a corsage or flung carelessly  
a glittering shawl  
in our illusory wake

all the colours in the lake  
the trees will glow concealing  
all we know

to wake drowsily farther on  
in a faun coloured dawn

we won't grow old or waited on  
let us have our few white nights  
on the shores of Spring still fair

our stephanotis and our stars  
in the dreaming everywhere

far jasmine and the sandalwood

fish not caught, swimming in amethyst,  
we won't be missed or understood.  
rose and briar in the wood

the branching dancing  
of an hour.

sifting through Infinity  
in our own vicinity.

mary angela douglas 22 november 2018; rev.25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cottage

of course, the chairs will be chintz;  
the sofa, with resplendent pillows  
in the rainbow colours

and only prised lamps, a baby Grand.  
the birds, in golden cages hung  
will be let out at moonrise

and the shelves...  
inlaid with mother of pearl  
with all the books in the world

you love.  
you love the shadows when they fall  
on the simple floor,

angelic radiance at the door, two windows...  
and the cherry, and the plum  
as next door neighbors.

mary angela douglas 16 july 2016

P.S. There should also be waterford vases filled with snowy, pale green, violet blue, and pale pink hydrangeas mixed in with pale pink roses and tea roses but I couldn't get all that in the poem; it was already stuffed like a sausage, I'm sure.

I have to insist on this as the poem is not merely a poem, it is a wish and wishes, as we all know, turn out better the more specific you are in phrasing them.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cotton Candy

pink air coned, and sugar throned, called fairy floss  
or candy floss or candied air or everywhere at the Fair  
or Princess dream or sugar seemed, or hurricane of rose

you can't save even if it froze, why isn't it an ice cream?  
that could be supreme. a childhood love the colour  
of (on earth) or the most

exquisite dessert above sing the Heavenly Host dreamily;  
say the little kids on Sundays  
please, please

can I have some, circus bound  
or not? or funnel cakes, hot, melting

with cinnamon-sugar, sure to disappear

all summer long into the cidered Fall  
of candy, caramel, apples dipped and dipped  
but that's a treat for some other day

when pink spun blue spun happiness comes  
to (almost!) stay...

mary angela douglas 10 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Could Forever Have Been

the flower face the face of snow  
melts into the afterglow of Light  
lit long ago

thus is the long ago of words  
still seen a glimmering a  
player piano roll of ghosts

still singing fata morganas  
of the Christmas bells still ringing  
past long julys and fortifications

past crumpled marigold reasons why and the sand pails.  
the flower face the face of snow  
misplaced in the land of the neon velvets

of the foundering city at night, displaced

while the babies looked on  
whole kingdoms sobbing fractions  
and birds and flowers doomed to repeat

and fated to flower again my sweet  
on the nether side of discarded reasons why  
in magnified rainbows in petaling skies

magnificats fantastically altered  
fantastically altered kaleidoscope wise  
as any language past melting

could be  
could have forever been.

mary angela douglas 22 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Could There Have Been A Day In Ancient Greece

could there have been a day in ancient Greece  
when you could go back there, and just breathe-  
standing stock-still for a moment to observe

in your bare feet  
no beautiful ruins,  
but the marbles, all complete

against an azure sky unclouded.

and no need, like the philosophers,  
(when no winds stirred)  
to question, wonder why

at all the Music still unheard

and reason it out unto infinity.  
there, in the lemon groves  
I would wander,

by the rose mottled Aegean;

no need to thrash it out with Socrates,  
whatever I believed;  
whatever didn't even cross my mind.

and still to no altar inclined,  
I would bend and kneel in the fresh grasses  
dotted with wildflowers I never knew

grew-  
in ancient Greece.  
and to God, as yet, unrecognized-

in unrequited Peace.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Could We Help It That We Thought

[to my mother, Mary Adalyn]

could we help it that we thought  
the galaxies should be made of flowers?  
and that they should pelt down on us all hours  
when you read Rumpelstiltskin to us

as though it were fact-

when poetry was Poetry,  
the golden intractable and snowy  
when we wished it so;

and holly berried, making us merry

as if we were by the fireside  
after long and drenching rains;  
and Rochester calling Jane, Jane  
beyond our suburbs.

and now, draw by the fire again I will  
though others think it an ill thing.  
let the sleet plie on the roof tops  
when we will make a play where the Snow Queen

turns suddenly kind; where April shines into  
oblivious glades and breaks into  
small rose afterthoughts.  
where the buttermilk churned makes it all

turn fine again when we go hunt in the grass  
the waxy eggs in their pastel modes;  
caught by our own peach sashes on the sticker bush.  
and we, we never will grow old, we pledge.

and the half moon smiles.

mary angela douglas 11 april 2016



Mary Angela Douglas

# Could We Like Clouds, Float Over

could we like clouds, float over  
chagall like above all circumstance  
and would then the piano turn bright

green the screen door let the clouds in?  
it is late.  
the musicians tune on board for the

last time so it seems  
above deck we fall in love with God  
more quietly than before

and gleams from afar float across  
your nighttime vision violet in the waning  
while no children keep score.

but somewhere we may unlatch the sky  
and somewhere we'll find  
that when we die

it wasn't really dying,  
it was flying over.

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Could We Perceive The White Feathered Sky

could we perceive the white feathered sky from farther up

would we sing in crystal would we fathom the moon

as it is we fall under the spell

and cannot cross the room. and cannot pick up the pencil of gold

to write on the diamond slate

why will you wait and watch the swans become more remote

and stop writing notes to people who can't hear you

because their ears are stuffed with snow

everything's long ago at a certain point

how will you retrieve it

or will anyone believe you,

when you do.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Countering The Bells Of Sadness

[to be sung in counterpoint, if necessary...]

not only on the high, the holy days did we love  
the sound of bells but in our sleep the sweet bells  
ringing from the ancient steeples over the

cobblestone streets with their dream tidings.  
and songs were gliding then, were they?  
yes, I sang, again and again throughout the summer air

the clear green winds from the seas.

and it was lemon, lemon lovely fresh and  
citrus everywhere so that orange clouds drifted  
down from the great heights over the

orangeries and there were no factories, no whistles  
shrill no tiresome till, no toiling only deliciously the  
tolling of the carillons and school is out and every prised

thing and it is the holiday sent straight from Heaven  
it is everything, and every word trilling,  
beautiful in silver and gold

and what you please and never again  
never ever again the funeral bells, the heart sickened;  
thudding to the ground of the unripe fruit

the angels gaping with their wordless 'oh no's' and

tolling and tolling  
the bill of an unpaid disaster  
suddenly come due.

mary angela douglas 15 june 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cranking The Livelong Ice Cream Day

cranking the livelong ice cream day  
on porches out of the sun  
we never danced upon

do their angels see us  
in the yard at play? the ghosts  
of their summers?

and what will they say to us

later on, in Heaven.  
did you play too, your spools  
on a different coloured thread,

your lives.  
trajectories come and go.  
and snows.

our orchards are too pruned.  
your poets wandered in a vast demesne  
before the wars, in love with rain

and every single thing.  
and every single living thing.

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Crashing

how often when I crash through the nets

that are supposed to be there

I think to myself, well at least

at this very moment I am flying

through the air since plummeting

is a form of flight until

it's not

and that has comforted me a lot

at various circuses

over time

and made a kind of life

instant to instant

so that I am unaware almost

of any reason to despair

since some instants

last a spangled lifetime.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Crossing The Lawns, I See Them By Moonlight

'boys and girls come out to play

the moon doth shine as bright as day...'

=Old English Nursery Rhyme

crossing the lawns, I see them by moonlight

in fanciful dress and with their antique toys

the children who make no noise by day

ghost children over the merry green

as seen by Blake or in other rhymes

of the English kind in the orchards of Walter De La Mare

scooping bright berries with mirroring spoons and under the

restless trees content with cherries;

trailing the blue mists of dawn

and the rose ones.

silver in their play.

I see them stray and gather each other up again

in circle games

and toss the ball into the heavens so that it is meteor bright so

that the angels retrieve it, laughing

in their variegated Christmas moods.



and there is bread and milk for them as in a fairy tale and  
never doom  
and sweets too so that the air itself is spun sugar and the  
clouds.

and the milk is from the moon

and it shines like pearl poured from the blue the dark blue  
pitcher of the skies.

I see them, every boy and girl

and they are free with no disguise

as dreams are until sunrise and beyond

and the world for them is cloth of gold

as it was not on earth

and they are made of the marigold sun the morning one

and know all the exits into God. and right from wrong

as it was for them on earth

and have left me this song.

mary angela douglas 11 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Crushed Raspberries In A Sky Of Cream Last Saturday

crushed raspberries in a sky of cream  
over the puffed pastry village  
in a dream I ate desserts

galore and did not have to ask for more  
and it was all holiday, holiday  
strung from tree to tree

a glistening, candlelit scene:  
the scent of bayberry, hollyberry. pine  
I pined for.

this our Christmas glee  
has come to stay I prayed  
blowing out the candles on the cake

frosted red and green  
perfection of buttercream. rosy  
ice cream on the side

didn't hurt a bit, and something frothy to drink  
tasting like pink should taste, I think-

have some posies, smiled my Grandmother  
dressed in her red taffeta and her opera glasses  
passing me a plateful, sugared over.

merry marzipan sang Mama.

then I woke up and had some shredded wheat  
in a dimestore bowl.

mary angela douglas 5 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Customary Castles In The Rain

bouquets of odd numbered flowers are best  
the guidebook read.  
no further information

for the Kingdom of Rus,  
one page torn out for tourists.  
a scrap, . not a page:

don't offend. don't offer

a dozen roses, iris.  
mend stockings by firelight  
Cinderella said in the guidebook

she never wrote,  
old candlelight is best,  
from candles that won't wane.

Grandmother said be careful  
when it rains; but you're not  
sugar, you won't melt.

but kingdoms melt sometimes.  
panoramic eggs of hardened sugar,  
never.

looking through there's a tiny castle,  
turrets of a crimson hue most  
beautiful at sunset.

there I will come  
when Spring has flung her odd numbered  
roses over the landscape

where fountains glow  
in courtyards I can't  
recall the names of

even if I could pronounce them:

sweetly folkloric are  
the uses of adversity...

I will be circumspect  
cherishing my one  
custom of the country

making sure, arranging it with God  
far in advance that  
the flowers are of the requisite, the pristine number.

and the overarching stars.

mary angela douglas 1 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Cut To The Quick Of The Living Word

to the poets afflicted in the Word

cut to the quick of the living Word  
we strive and crave the waters  
crashing through the gates

though gashed by a guarded silence, well-enforced  
by the heartless sinecured, forever on the prowl.  
oh, laying the jewels and end to end this way

may we be blessed even without bread  
with few friends or none at all  
to find the music that departed Eden with us

magnified at last  
in the full mirror of His shining

mary angela douglas 8 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Daphne In The Rustling Serene

the myth is one of many  
expressing the need for escape  
for sudden harbor.

as in the children's fairytales  
when the children pursued  
turn themselves into a lake

a bridge  
the mirrored skies.

Daphne, crystal clear

in her musings chose  
the tree to vanish into  
so she grew bark

and branches, leaves in the instant roots  
and golden twigs  
in the early the perilous Spring

and foiled the Enemy. rustling serene.

and under her boughs as well and the kind winds filtering through

beleaguered children sought refuge too

as with surmising angels.

mary angela douglas 22 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dark Green Blackboard

you are the sum  
did they write on the dark green blackboard  
at the front of the class,

the living poem of all your days and ways.  
or was that what you saw in the looking glass:  
the sum of what will be, or what has passed? minus

nothing and you win the prize of  
bluebirds sung and cracker jacks cracked all  
cherry pie pasted down

in your very own scrap book, notebook

spiraled like the sun is  
when you dream you are astronomy itself.

did they warn us? on lined paper?  
keep your margins and your seams straight.  
or was that how we spelled it all out

to ourselves when we were late, and  
made to wait in corners  
when they thought that we weren't listening

in the glistening of the year...

I want to start again, I think, in tears,  
and try to blink them back  
down the block to the phantom yellow bus

to the starched beginnings;  
in eyelet petticoats fresh as clouds  
and gingham-sashed:

to big block letters in all the right colours  
yet to learn! and I won't be found when  
they call me out of the twilight saying,



it's already been your turn;  
we can see where you are and it's time  
for supper anyway.

the rust coloured leaves won't allow it,  
will they? just- another- chance to play  
in a Keats like gust of wind or is

it Shelley? I'll remember;  
gingerbread, surely,  
and the pure sugar snow on the cakes

of Christmas freshly  
baked, once more!  
and the marble spun and spinning azure

of it when you're out of doors! and raspberry sherbet  
at all the parties I have learned by heart

if you won't tell them  
where I am all firefly lit and glittering where  
it's growing dark...

Mary Angela Douglas 16 August 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dear God Lift The Lid Off The Box I Am In

dear God, lift the lid off the box I am in  
and let there be Sky.  
again.

soft clouds, a little wind  
and friendly trees.  
I'm squeezed in here

with unexpected critics  
and I can't breathe.  
dear God, oh please

fashion for me little ladders  
that they won't see  
(but I will)

wove of a golden cord.  
and I will ford little streams  
for You, later on;

though to me-  
they will seem Seas.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dear Poems We Will Dress You Up Like Paper Dolls

dear poems, we will dress you up like paper dolls:  
an outfit for every occasion! here's the poem  
having tea with the Queen in a hat with red roses

on it, a pale pink afternoon dress (insert tea tray here) .  
and then, a day at the beach! and the poem's in flippers  
with a golden beach ball (it is a poem, after all, something

has to be golden.)  
sleepwear. well, a kimono embroidered on fine silk:  
every colour from a distant spring...

you'll know it's here  
when every word you say  
starts turning into flowers

mary angela douglas 20 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dear Sugar In The Delft Blue Bowl

dear sugar you have sparkled long enough  
in the delft blue bowl shift out and come  
with us cried her new companions

on the bluebird road. since everyone's  
suddenly loquacious even the curtains.  
she dimpled, yes!

and the cherry branches swayed without regret  
but what they said you must imagine  
as you imagine the day

was like a dream as all days  
should be but if not then  
we'll read Maeterlinck hour by rainy hour

and count the flowers in the meadows  
of Night having slept  
all their colours...

Away

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# December Snow Day Wished Into View

there was just a hint of snow  
in the crystal air...  
sometimes it's that way

when a wish begins  
so you wish harder  
and the clouds descend

and then: an early present tied with  
silver ribbons: a sequined Everywhere!  
Ballet begins for us again

when it's snowing in the present tense.

why every time did it feel  
like fairy land come down to earth  
on every holly bush and fence?

because because my friend,  
how could there be  
for you or me

a sufeit of shining wonderment?

especially when  
we're happy bundled up at home  
with no new homework, in our cherry carcoats,

and it isn't even Saturday?

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Deep In Our Enchantments

let us go to the storied beginnings rosepetaled,  
I cried out not to the red ashed caves but  
to the greenwoods, greenwoods.

sweet echoes came back.  
come back to me mourned the mirroring moons  
in the dark pools reflected

and no one to children at sea.  
come back to me murmured the lilled fronds  
and the wildflowers sown all down to the seas

and these the margins of our happiness,  
or should be, mayflowered and splendid.  
let those who lied to all children flee

and beauty reign over us, and the sound of the seas,  
the wildflowers bent in a crimson wind then  
turning to ochre, to sudden rubies; Again!

said we; deep in our enchantments; Home.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Della Robbia And Other Things

to a dry fountain

small birds came to drink  
when holes were punched in a daylight sky  
and the blue of old plaster flew as if it were the wind.

and an eggshell quiet shattered in a dream  
of the whispered sonnets

freezing through the trees

and I said only, I do not lie  
to the dry fountain where the small birds came to drink

in the Park you may remember or not at all.

and a small twig breaks that was already broken  
and nothing scurries through the last leaves on the ground

where small birds shiver near a glazed stream

or lodge in the holes punched in the sky

and sing through the end of the punches thrown  
in delicate aqua or marine

where an eggshell quiet shattered in a dream

of the whispered sonnets freezing through the trees

and the ghost of Mary Stuart counting all her beads

and whispering

deliver my blue soul from the cracked marble of the world

mary angela douglas 31 january 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Demitasse

demitasse on random afternoons  
quite richly she'll explain  
though she has very few

and we, our eyes awash in tiny flowers  
of the springtide hues  
will feel it like a dream

our whole life through  
as from the soul a floral feeling  
attaches itself forever

that we become accustomed to;

to the china in the cabinet;  
a feeling that will deepen into time  
like the chime of a spoon

on demitasse  
or the words, refreshments will be served...  
from a cut glass bowl

with lime sherbet melting into it  
on summer afternoons  
or anytime, after school

when we have unexpected lessons  
of delight of gemmy words  
in the lights and the half lights

of home.

,

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Department Store Christmas Window, 1958

oh christmas window in the downtown area  
where the dolls move from side to side carefully  
pouring their infinite tea;

dressed in christmas velours! by a doll-sized Tree!  
wide eyed, will they never look directly at us?  
but then, they might spoil their attire.

their mothers might scold.  
who cares, there's snow on the glass;  
behind us a sky like cranberries

hand painted and an otherworldly lighting  
from somewhere we both feel

(my Grandmother and I)  
beauty stricken at the same time  
standing before the scenery if not yet, the Play

in the same candlelit hush:  
pre-Edison, branching angels

mary angela douglas 3 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Describing Your Disease

it's the way it's written on the evening air  
that makes you stop until the people stare  
around and through you:

you, with your shoelace half-untied;  
your rich propensity for dreaming,  
who notice every gleaming

from each cornice, seraphim  
without, within the music's meaning.  
lost in a twilight, loving these

they're certain you have some disease-  
oh, let me name it for them  
before they get to it, in a continual unease

with those who don't keep their heads down.  
who neglect the shoehorn premises.  
it's the disease of looking at clouds,

the rose turn of the light

the spiral of down, coming down  
the aching brightness that weaves the trees  
together in the orchard;

of seeking not to please the burnished  
flocks hunched at the cafeteria tables back at school;  
who'll look askance at you,

observing perfectly the Rule,

as they used to call it in the cloisters,  
only I mean, the Rule of seeing Beauty  
in everything

and of not being ashamed of it.

mary angela douglas 18 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Diagramming The Sentence Or, The Sentence Commuted

the first tyranny imposed is that, you know,  
you will no longer be the subject of your own sentence.  
at worst you will be the verb and serve, o underserved

at the pleasure of someone else's noun, pronoun.  
oh yes. at best the adjective  
for something near at hand:

on their land.  
and you will write on the nightmare blackboard  
ten times ten thousand times

I'm somebody else's rhyme  
and I must make do  
with their old shoes, their superior mind

for knowing what it is that I should BE  
to deserve to continue to receive the castoffs they  
no longer need and oh, God, not to impede

their reasons to feel good about  
what they no longer want  
on any given day.

for giving it away  
they will be given the great awards  
at the very fine banquets raised

to keep you in tin cans.

but you are majestic catching as catch can  
extraordinary as. the subject of His wakefulness:  
in God's resplendent hand.

mary angela douglas march 29 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Diamond Cutters

waiting on the pillar of cloud  
I rested on a moss-bright wall  
too tired to think of my own name

determined to forget  
those who attack without regard  
the scarcest jeweled moment left.  
oh since they adore

grinding the farthest stars  
to gravel, cutting  
the last madrigal from the program:

the one of sheerest spring's  
petaled music may

their policies rule on no day when  
the heartless penny Valentine's revealed  
for all that it is not-

and we find  
through childish tears  
our first real words to say to You:

'We have no Pharoah now.'

let the weighted sorrows be weightless than  
like butterflies resting on the moon  
after aoenic flights, consoled

and You shut down  
all faux leaden skies.  
sure of our return;

pouring for us, again,  
the crystal remedies of Your stars.  
then I won't wonder anymore  
I won't say to You, oh God,  
'am I far from You, still?

let it not be so.'

mary angela douglas 26 october 2009

Mary Angela Douglas



# Diamonds In The Yard

[to the exquisite poet, Chumki Sharma]

it won't be the same when we are older  
no child knows to think  
and neither then, did we

playing with the doll sized sink  
the little dishes  
believing in three wishes

and though we try we try so hard  
to gather the diamonds in the front yard  
and the hard frost glittering on the ground,

when we go out  
they can't be found.  
so we imagine we just weren't quick enough

and maintain hope.  
who cares if all the diamonds melt from  
all the surfaces welcoming light

we have the right to dream  
I say to the children in that backyard scene  
whenever I'm looking back.

but ah, they can't hear me...

mary angela douglas 14 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Did I Arrive Too Early In My Apple Green

maybe I should have regretted  
almost treading on your shadow;  
removing one charm from the bracelet of the sun:

the one shaped like a treble clef?  
the tiny piano with the hinged lid?  
these were my crimes

the winds never whispered through the lilies.  
the fir trees.  
there was a meeting somewhere.

did I arrive too early in my apple green  
confounding the centuries  
and steeples with their glitter snow.

it comes down when you shake it.  
I should know.

mary angela douglas 28 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Did They All

the valentine beyond all seeming  
appeared in an afternoon sky:  
blue streamers

sun shaped like a heart  
and the doves, fluttering.  
was anyone wise

or tender, looking up  
to see in the clouds slip from  
their envelope, this

message arriving  
or did they all  
as if they were one flock of birds arising

gaze at their watches  
at the same time

mary angela douglas 3 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Did They Butterfly Pin The Stars

did they butterfly pin the stars to their night skies  
the fashionable artists  
oh we hope this isn't so but how will we know

if someone saw the paintings move in their appointed frames.  
just once I did looking at Monet across the room  
mother of pearl cathedral against the white gloss walls

gathering lustre still.  
this is art the way you feel it to be  
as if you were gazing through a startling window

or into an Easter Egg panorama  
and it is sugar sweet to you  
the night you thought had fled

remains  
if not, the green things whispered  
supremely on the flower filled winds

by some solitary in an early april.

mary angela douglas 26 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Did We Play Hide And Seek With God

did we play hide and seek with God  
in the long blue twilights  
there where the stars fell

into the night grasses  
and not the dew as we had thought.  
there we were promised three wishes

three wishes and more.  
is it vain to store those half lights  
jewel toned though they were

to rummage in boxes tied with a silver string?  
this close to Christmas,  
I don't know.

I won't be held to account.  
but I have seen His shadow on the grass  
and felt the tremor in the stars.

and something mysterious, come to pass...

mary angela douglas march 29 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Did You Say Something

did you say something?  
perhaps they ask.  
or maybe, they won't.

but you did.  
you do.  
and it's you that is always feeling your

words drift back  
like lines of snow  
when the wind shifts.

and there are they gathering,  
the plains of snow;  
such an accumulation.

and soundless.  
do birds hear your  
snowspeech reaching

into their flights in dreams  
the small ones in storms

their wings also beaten back  
and still they soar.  
and when the light comes streaming,

they sing.  
you, too.  
I know.

mary angela douglas 26 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Different Than We Were Before

we may have planned to connect the dots in workbooks  
or in purple mimeograph watching them become  
flowers, leaves, constellations the dolls never heard of

this would be additional work but we were happy to do it  
knowing it must lead us somewhere different  
than we were before

outward from the penciled labyrinths  
the simple crosswords, riddles just for fun  
spelled out in languid Saturdays after chores were done

and mystical movies, Hershey Bar  
popcorn freedom,  
trifling with sets and subsets off and on

clearly without the nets of the lady in strawberry pink  
circus tutus using the sun  
as a reference point, the northward moss on trees

calculating these: parabola, parasol, what you please by  
sunset, moonrise gifts of the numbers, One in gold  
meaning prime but we're in the after time

of school where the sundial rules the shade  
with the metronome at home  
and music runs on in the piano studio

twirling the stool  
because Grandmother's pupils are diligent  
and love their Mendelssohn.

counting the threads on the vivid spools  
we occupy ourselves with her sewing basket  
the tiny gold thimble tisket or tasket,

and we resemble thieves but we are not

because we love her, Grandfather too, and admire her wares  
the stairs from note to note she taught us

that we will use long after she's gone  
when they have wounded our once upons  
hearing that music still, not missing

the northward moss on trees  
on and on  
connecting the dots from star to star

and not that far from it now:  
from finishing off the last spinning wheel  
in the last castle

thereby saving the Princess,  
the Kingdom of whole notes replete with  
beauty cascading everywhere

through the grace notes too  
a few of them sostenuto,  
sustaining

the worlds we knew then  
that still are new and  
back to back and sidewalk crack to crack

with the narrow passage through  
rose garden to Rose Garden.

when we're through  
we'll bring her back the best bouquet  
the intricate piece done well and

marked with a golden star, the memory  
of who we are at the core Whose Music is  
leaving us, somewhere different

fording the rivers of dream-  
than we were before



mary angela douglas 12 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dimes For The Meter

we need a new way to look at time when time is running out  
no more dimes for the meter  
and the sky with more of a faraway cast to it than ever  
is closing in.  
even in the cinema it rolls in with its clouds  
past the lobby, the refreshment stand, rumbling  
its cumulus colours; rounding the finds you.  
the winds gather speed.  
the ink you write in bleeds to indigo though it starts out gold  
and finishes in amber whatever it is  
you are finishing invariably knows that  
you know winter is about to descend  
you dont consult your watch anymore  
or even distant friends  
but wait for something sensed as if a bell might ring  
causing commencement  
a crystal bell summoned by angels you are  
summoned by angels or you will be or a  
ship is docking where there are no waters now  
and there's nothing to mend  
because you won't be wearing it tomorrow

mary angela douglas 26 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dining On Cherry China With A Rose Overlay

for Raggedy Ann, best of dolls...and for my sister, Sharon wherever she may be...  
best regards!

dining on cherry china  
under the trees  
the children in the picture book remained at ease

while we made Storybook Plans...and over-mixed our Fizzies-  
eight flavors at a time  
and wondered why we had no customers...

for the inky drink no longer tasting of root beer black cherry lime...  
or anything- anymore- ever...

never mind, we'll drink our Cherry Sparkle down  
like Lizabet and Margaret Rose

and we'll be dressed in pink and blue  
velveteen and sing for them...  
something else that we made up...

I'll wear my fern green velvet with the  
peach cummerbund  
said a Cinderella sister, changing her  
mind.

or maybe the plum...with your best caramel slippers...  
she said, almost meltingly

we'll have cake with apple-blossom  
on top in case we run out of icing-  
and start collecting orange crates early tomorrow  
for the house we'll someday live in

when we're grown, cobbled by  
hidden elf-help while we dream  
who'll paint and repaint it when it rains

pale pink and green  
with the Prang watercolors -  
or paint-by-number sets used sparingly after Christmas-

we'll leave them out in the open  
so they'll know...

and we'll survive near the Slip-and-Slide  
eating how many day-old donuts  
dipped in snow,  
said Raggedy Ann, with  
powdered sugar on her nose.

she's gotten good at making up word problems  
with no possible solution...  
at appropriate moments in the conversation

how many chocolate eclairs  
should you eat  
while listening to Clair de Lune?

I asked to see what she would answer  
and where do you see yourself  
five years from noon:

face down in clover, flung there by the Dog?  
(it's a trick question, when we're playing School

or wondering if we'll all get jobs in the ice-cream

shoppes later on,  
taking home what can't be sold -  
on very strawberry evenings...)

she never told about the five year plan.  
but Raggedy beamed her  
maraschino smile-

never making me feel I'd said The Wrong Thing-  
she was strong, that way  
though she almost wore her cloth-made doll hands out

the day she clapped and clapped for  
Tinkerbelle to get well on that old record  
when the needle got stuck on...'if you believe in magic,

clap your hands...'&quot;  
-poor thing!

and was taken to the doll hospital quite suddenly, for exhaustion  
where she drank only nasturtium milk-shakes for a month  
(the orange kind)  
(creamsickles, really, melted down, so frothy

And so cooling.)  
and read free comic books,  
the lucky thing.

you should have seen the word problems once she  
got back...!

tres intricate,  
but then, she never grades...

and wears quite charmingly that same dress anywhere

even while helping you with that over-inflated book report on  
Rosa Bonheur-

though she wouldn't mind eating lemon drops in a frock  
of pale yellow seersucker...or sunny batiste, just once

(but she can't spell that yet)  
she knows the importance of Matching...

she'd have to change those candy-cane socks,  
though, not to clash...and wear a tan head-band.  
possibly, Tweed perfume.

&quot;Pure Cake Vanilla! &quot; countered Raggedy Ann,  
&quot;And taffy apple accessories, if you please! &quot;

while she can't open a single jar  
of maraschinos When Ice Cream Comes-  
or a can of corned-beef hash  
without breaking off the key-

delaying lunch by several hours-  
while the Army's called in  
to bust the can wide open...  
(so we won't be stuck

eating jelly-beans all day-)  
no one could see more flawlessly

that cloud of marshmallow fluff by the sticky steeple  
through steadfast shoe-button Christmasy eyes:

she's her own Christmas card:  
anytime

which saves on postage...

"blue taffeta, with a rose overlay, " my sister  
filmily decides - this one's for Cinderella-

if you tell me one more story from The  
Twilight Zone, I'll die:

Spooky Silence Sets In...

But we're contented with cherry china  
or going faster on our chores  
pretending that Dorothy's cyclone  
will get us if we don't  
(this really worked)  
and freed up our Saturdays!

while the trees are changing colors for Raggedy Ann,  
who's staring straight ahead  
into the future:

waltzing in striped lemon-seersucker  
teaching us how to manage in quick-sand  
on the living room carpet  
after reading that useful article in  
Reader's Digest...

or lopsided in the grass - lost happily  
among the apple-blossom drifts and reading paperbacks  
four- at- a- time from scholastic book services

really fast  
quite focused, really

or onstage, in an emerald tutu  
and garnet Capezios-

still candy-hearted, well-behaved-  
but wobbly,  
even with yarn red hair

who cares?  
she dances everywhere-

even flopped down beside the Bumble Bees, one trillion ant hills-  
and that green ball coated in dog-slobber...  
so near and yet so far from the butter-rum Life Saver  
on the Sidewalk...

either way you tell it, she can only love you and keep smiling.  
and isn't that what matters in a story?

(coda) :

I make my poem to honor her  
in cross-stitched cotton constancy  
pink-sprigged...with bluebirds by the lemonade springs-

(and a few flounces, neither here - nor there -)  
for all Dear Readers, Everywhere...  
and for my sister, musically rare:

this cotton candy made of air...  
held out to you in a star-shaped cone

mary angela douglas 18-20 march 2012

Mary Angela Douglas



# Directive Under Moonlight

stay still. do not move.  
your shadow's looming.  
the moon is breathing near you.

stay still.  
gold will fill the spaces  
where you wait.

white gold.  
falling onto the floors.  
take the small key

in your mind  
to unlock the cabinets  
inlaid with mother of pearl.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Disappearing Islands, Coast To Coast

[on hearing overnight on the Coast to Coast radio show a segment on disappearing islands]

there really are lands that appear, then disappear,  
no longer on the maps;  
the shops with the charming bouquets

no longer open at your time of day: that  
suddenly, gone from the block.  
and you rub your eyes and you glance back

with a tick and a tock  
and there the flower shop is again;  
the silver bell over the door, the violets...

or you're afraid and in the shade of  
your mother's skirts looking out at a world  
of larger people

and nibbling at your gingerbread

and then you're grown  
all on your own with all the books left to be read  
and where is the shade or the summer trees

you knew back then  
the why or when  
the soda machine at camp

with the orange pop, the grape  
was a first taste of freedom

the muddy river never green with trees.  
and where are these the way you felt  
and would you tire

to find yourself back  
in the shire, the veldt  
with the Christmas pudding

whipped creamed sips of hot cocoa  
and your Grandmother's laugh  
at your Grandfather's oft repeated joke

and you're in their vernacular  
it's spectacular  
you all go out from the porch

with your ice cream in the yard  
and the dog dances for scraps  
and the pines whisper overhead

this is where you begin  
no time to nap  
on the National Geographic

foldout map  
hold onto it

this time  
angels chime  
there's thunder

grandmother says  
get away from the windows, the doors,  
running water and the piano.

but none disclose  
there's more to the storms  
than anyone knows

on a radio show  
the news broke into your dreams:

mysterious islands  
keep going under.

mary angela douglas 23 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dish With The Spoon And Other Things

hey diddle diddle  
the cat and the fiddle  
the cow jumped over the moon  
the little dog laughed  
to see such a sight  
and the dish ran away with the spoon

-Old English Nursery Rhyme

young words in their emerald sheening grew  
all cockleshell, silvered only for you  
oh shine like old ivory sang the moon  
the wind laughed at all your cherry ruffles.

that was before the candlestick wick  
the flame that flicked the cow that kicked  
the crystal bird flew

when we were new  
and pages were thumbed  
in starlight, shadows of starlight  
and beside the rosy red.

and the world is made of posies someone said to you  
nodding like a posy on your own stem;  
putting the silver back into the skies;  
the applesauce into the Spoon...

Mary Angela Douglas 20 May 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dispensations

in the eternal moment in your teardrop dispensation

suspended we survive

though we don't how we are still alive

waiting out the storms.

a crystalline peace descends

the wind picks up

loaded with fragrances

though we don't know

where the next dollar is

coming from

or who will come beating an old drum

and take our loved ones away.

the axe seems at the root

in the middle of the day and yet

it could happen this way

that angels will stand guard

at our decrepit doorsteps

freezing the axe stroke,

the bureaucratic stroke of the pen.

we are golden

who cannot turn the Ikon to the wall.

we are in your high tower.

the moment flowers between us oh Lord

and your deliverance is sure.

mary angela douglas 22 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Diversionsary Angels Out At Night, The Moon Behind Clouds

my diversionary tactical diversions do not work  
I sobbed to the map of ice cream colours  
handed out at school

and to the weathervane malting too

is everything melting then I cried  
but something said don't cry  
they won't understand you're ruled

paper without the lines

they'll think you're making it all up;  
that your feelings are out of all proportion  
to the event, whatever it was

that shrank the flowers in the flower pots  
on a sunny day  
and I'm amazed I can do it

if I try if I pretend my  
life depended on it:  
efface

all evidence of tears  
and learn to wear  
a face within my face

that still believes in roses  
though not in outright poses  
and this, for years and years.

how soon the moon disappears  
through diversionary clouds  
when you're out at night walking

and in the upper atmosphere

some angel may appear from  
time to time and chime

when you're on the scene the  
answers to the sweetest letters  
you almost wrote to God

mary angela douglas 21 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Diy Instant Christmas Snow

[for Lanie Pope local weather lady supreme and sparkling team]

there should be a toy with many windows.  
behind every window a silver sun.  
it's foil said somebody's little

brother,  
from chewing gum.  
there should be a toy

that, when you wind it up  
all worries are gone  
or tons of snow immediately appear

so the school bus just can't get here  
hooray they all say  
in their best confetti voices.

on the way! says the so cheerful weather lady  
on the t.v., in love with clouds in the upper atmosphere.  
let's be home all day, and DECORATE ALL YEAR

even if I did  
just make the whole thing cocoa...  
(with tiny marshmallows on the top)

mary angela douglas 18 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Does Anyone Want Beautiful Poems Cried The Peddler

does anyone want beautiful poems cried the peddler  
from his cart, a litte broken down.  
just hold them up to the Light, he said in a winsome tone

you'll see.  
I stepped out between the hyacinths  
somewhat shyly.

oh sir. I'll have some  
their colours flying that do not set  
with the moon or sun.

and when the purple evening flung  
almost over me, her last shadow entirely-  
I was not sorry

for having done so.

mary angela douglas 29 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Does Light Grow

does light grow, does it have roots

can it become, does it have shoots

is it restless like a stellar tumbleweed

,

does it need more or float like a pond lily

it seems to me

it only Is. beyond all shores known and unknown

a kind of beneficence on its own, an attribute of God

that it flows not only to the green tendrils

though we cannot see it do so

sometimes a net caught

on the waters

threaded with gold, light appears to be

the shining of the Sea

which could not shine alone

a blue line in a green wave approaching

I dreamed like Dante

Light was a rose

forever unfolding

scented like stars

or snow.

I dreamed it was healing us so

in our sleep

even through unaccountable weeping

and when,

we arose.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dogs On Other Planets

dogs on other planets softly zoom

closer now than ever to the moon

they've less to say

when so distracted by the milky way

when bones float almost all away

and arf and bark and woof

won't help them anyway.

dogs on other planets cannot bay.

they wag their tails and try to run

but bounce instead too near the sun

and fetch and carry for no one

where no one tells them stay.

or come.

mary angela douglas 10 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Doll Poems

doll poems made of finery,  
tiny stitches, lined my sleep;  
rippled the vintage wallpaper

or slipped in the creek-  
or bubbled in the lemonades  
we made. doll poems:

snip of cherry silk,  
basted with lime thread;  
blue taffeta curtained;

softly sung to bed.  
I will keep them in the attics beyond  
trap door entrances

pulled with a pearly chain  
for days and days when it rains.  
and rainbow riven, they'll

come back to you.  
you, consistently in love  
with the Kingdom of small

where we scattered pillow feathers  
to simulate Christmas snow.  
and walk about pink halls

in our miniature shawls;  
mysterious, with our painted teacups  
tamed, on tawny kitchen shelves

we'll whisper what we know...  
and own the wishing wells.

mary angela douglas 24 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Doll Translation No.1

dolly has got at last something to say  
she of the apple pink cheeks the  
realistically rooted hair

her arms always a little outstretched.  
she doesn't like the dress she came in  
she wants a new one right away

she's tired of staring at the wall all day  
when you go out to play in the snow  
and of being thrown back into the doll crib

when you have to stop playing really fast  
because you're sposed to be  
taking a nap

and here comes Grandmother  
down the hall in her spooky scuffling slippers  
to check on you

and you don't want to get in trouble

do you, never mind that  
you just gave your favorite doll  
the worst headache she's ever had.

when you threw her up against  
that Giant hard plastic Baby.

oh yes.  
and she's sick of pretend blueberry muffins.  
o.k.?

she wants steak.

mary angela douglas 19 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Doll Weddings Made The News

doll weddings made the news  
in the Christmas town by the sea  
or under the Christmas tree

in the star flecked snows  
or what we thought were those;  
tree skirts all confetti

and we'll send off in the mail  
for the aurora borealis  
just for selling Christmas cards

in July to the crabby housewives  
without a/c  
drinking up all the tea all

summer long and the clinking sound  
of ice in the glass was a musical one to us.  
as were so many things.

the froth of ice cream shakes  
the little bake oven and its spongy cakes.

we lived in dream town  
lilacs over the back fence  
at least in our readers

and pink flowers clambering too  
though you couldn't say for sure  
which kind they were.

we'll live there one day  
that is what we thought  
and pack our trunks with

costumes from the fairy tale plays  
on our way  
to the town of perfect friendship



having mastered our spelling by then  
and all the word problems  
in the back of the book.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Don't Be Telling The Story Straight (Final Draft)

if you tell the story straight it will be over in two seconds.

we want the story to last the way some kids make candy last

the whole day

sucking on lemon drops as they play.

oh let the story be such an unwinding tale

it could go on for years; with cherry danish up to Here

put everything in it please.

the maraschinos and the cheese.

the mouse not caught and running off

with the moment's feast.

or if it's a Christmas mouse

don't leave the sugarplums out.

You know what to do.

put in a castle or two.

make mine pink and make yours

blue

and then we'll switch.

and speak of swans

sailing mirrored on a crystal pond.

we'll put in all the toys

they'll want to hear it too

if you were a toy wouldn't you want that too

put in some teacups and Cinderella's dress

the one you made yourself in sewing class

in dreams all of a pink voille, and in between, a lavender sheen.

put in a jeweled Alas! for the goose girl as she quails past

and put in a vintage song and before too long

put in three bears and make them walk till four

so Goldilocks can get out the door

and off the lawn without a yawn

and speaking of that you better go along.

it's a school night now

much too late for the purple cow

you know where you belong.

though there's time for one more song

to banish worry

scurry scurry

Click off the light.

good night good night.

mary angela douglas 18 april 2020; rev.16 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Don't Blow It, Whispered The Wish Fairy

it's picture book pretty and candy box locked  
it's the frock of all frocks in the shop window  
you saved up for didn't you

it's the book you hid in the bookshop  
hoping no one else would find it  
of rarities most rare

it's the something out of sight  
but on its way  
almost any day

you can think of  
any time now  
don't say, tapping your foot, impatiently

or you'll cause delays  
or the mail truck may break down  
or go to the wrong house

the wrong town  
with your treasured treasure  
sent from afar

your wishing star come true  
I'd be nice  
If I were you.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dorothy Nears The Land Of Dainty China

[an episode in the book 'The Wizard of Oz', though not expanded on in the film, I think', as well, on Cervantes tale, 'The Man of Glass']

will words break here in the air  
as you speak them?  
dorothy wondered then

approaching the village of china.  
how to speak with such  
breakable residents.

it looks slightly bleak  
she almost said to  
her little dog

in Porcelain.

should I paint rosebuds  
on the breeze  
to put them at their ease?

forget me nots! she  
almost cried  
thinking of home.

step with your satin footsteps  
only here.  
or they will tremble as

though it thundered.  
(learn to)  
breathe like. snows.

mary angela douglas 25 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dorothy Slept In The Emerald Eye Of Cyclones

Dorothy slept in the emerald eye of cyclones  
hearing the sound of running water, running footsteps;  
away from these gold fields, she cried!

to her surprise already  
missing home, and that amazed by trees  
shedding emerald leaves  
along the boulevards of dreams and

feeling a little small among the figurines,  
the lemon drop candy dished breakables.  
Dorothy, at once! in a green dress, once ice blue-

remained herself, predictable as storms  
finding the irregular beautiful; on the doorstep of  
many houses peering in  
to admire so rainbow-boxed!

the blooms of near neighbors  
next door to a dream and  
violet, swirled as carnival glass, country, contrary-wise.

deep in His iridescence, not to be swept away.  
I haven't come to stay she said firmly.  
waking up in the afternoon  
to ham biscuits, farmhouse coffee

2/3 cream.  
to her own room  
with the bluebird wallpaper.

mary angela douglas 2 january 2014; rev. august 20,2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Downtown Is Coming Along, But The Ghosts Complain

for Luther Snow Lashmit, AIA, architect of Crystal Towers, other towers too, in Winston Salem.

it's evening when the patio fills up with small stars  
a serape of purple thrown over the far hills  
and you remember where you were

not where you are. facing the mirage of the triple balconies  
buildings that crumbled into the ghosts, surprised,  
coming back suddenly for the picturesque marquees'

to see an old movie's

lopped off disguise.  
no more gingerbread trim,  
they signed to each other then

sighed how the bridges washed out all summer.  
the land bridges too.  
they were looking for you

the only one who didn't  
see clear through them, Art Deco reprised  
Spanish grille work or the porticos.

who knows.

this is For Luther Snow, I'm sending this  
for anyone to telegraph what happened

to an old 's weeping in my hand

in words you'll understand, not fifty words or less;

not minimalist



but it says simply this:

how the sun falls out of the West  
not one stick upon one stone

of what we once called home.  
the mists that we had honed.

mary angela douglas 28 november 2018; rev.23 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dream Of The Sequined School Assembly With Pale Pink Programmes

caught in the sequined rains of every colour  
we longed to be brighter than the brightness  
of all things

and all at the same time.

and sorting paper roses for the play  
of course, in every pastel ever made.  
you said maybe your costume should

be made of stars

(real ones) or liquid as waterfalls  
and they will call you Princess Many Waters,  
your secret Indian Name

or you will wear a dress of tulle in every shade of rose  
that flares out when you dance as if you were blossoming  
for the whole Garden

or you can't imagine anything but chiffon  
for the Waltz of the Flowers  
and crackerjack tiaras from the Lost and Found

mary angela douglas 29 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dream, She Sighed And Dipped Her Wand In Starlight

dream, she sighed and dipped her wand in starlight  
over the castle, the drawbridge, moat and all.  
dream, she cried, a long, long time

and cast the scuttling days aside  
all chandeliers must dim  
and Time itself.

above the seeming waste of years  
they slept.  
beyond the reach of gossip, now and

untold calumny. a Kingdom preserved  
beyond the stir of battle. a message  
sealed in wax and waxen leaves that grew

and roses thorned to keep intruders out.  
one day they will waken.  
one day, to take their kingdom back

renew their crowns and joy itself will reign.  
but now, sleep on through the winds and rains.  
cloud breath suspended in the cold, cold air

promising only, snows

mary angela douglas 26 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dreaming Speaks To Dream Alone

[to Emily Bronte]

I spoke with trees and rocks and clouds  
because I could not speak with Crowds  
or when I did my words were spurned

and that was how I came to learn  
that dreaming speaks to Dream, alone  
as Light, unto the blind.

or else my soul I must disown  
when whispering through the tunneled snows  
with grave presentiments for those too early on

the plains of human life disdained and disappearing.

through hell's disputes and flame to flame  
at winter's core I still remain apart from those  
who mock there is no gain in words for their own sake.

and for the Soul's.  
awake I cried and on my knees to God who heard  
me in the trees and in the rocks and in the clouds

and when I could not speak aloud  
unless my words like shattered glass  
lay splintered on the fallow grounds.

unschooled is better knowing this  
and weddings ever stripped from bliss.  
let Time itself melt into seas

that I may still delivered be  
from those who hunt the singing word  
and slay the singer in the silver wood.

mary angela douglas 14 june 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Dress Code

weaving the fabric made of clouds  
and of the retreating armies-  
I whisper to myself, again-  
maybe it's not too late

for the new-spun colours in my head-  
the cherry velvet ravelled swept aside;  
a silver tack of wondering again,  
never setting sail-

who lost the Age of Rose?

I count the last gold  
in the corners  
and count again, sweet  
polished cotton dresses with no seams:  
the sprigged details  
for the diffident day  
on a simple field of honour.

not knowing the pearl of minutiae  
as You do, oh God-

I'm turning this inside out to find You-  
and twining the dreamy-treadled thread  
that keeps on breaking yet still shines

in tiny roseate crystals stitched on snows.

piano music's sateen on the wind  
and seems to disappear, pure lemon verbena.  
but sparkles do not dwindle, lily-of-the-valley mine  
though I'm so small and slide off of the bench  
never reaching the pedals by the chiffoniere

where it's always almost spring;  
you won't disturb  
the shawl of dappled roses on the doll crib-

the childhood fortitude so pear wept  
twig by twig, the same;

remember me, and, if not-  
the pale green earrings-  
my geranium gown...

I turn the diamond spackled key  
of an antique conversation:  
who lost the pockets of the  
children filled, the little sashes made of  
white violet velvet  
isles?

mary angela douglas 6-8 november 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Dressed For The Occasion

## DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION

I dreamed the skies were navy chiffon  
silken the clouds, lemon silk  
alternatively, putting it simply,

we wore the stars that season, the sheen of  
pale green, midwinter's cherry velvet  
it was my soul dressed in violets

holding her bouquet  
on sequined occasions, not on display  
this, when on waking I remembered

I was dressed in rags  
clothes too old, laundered to infinity,  
even to give back to the Goodwill

though pink and blue plaid taffeta  
a darling skirt, sweeping to the grass stained ground.  
paired with an ornamental blouse.

what difference does it make

I dreamed in my dream that  
once I close my eyes  
I wear cream velvet well,

and not from the lost and found;

dressed in the enterprise  
of lily gilding imaginations  
and gloriously beaded

with little seed pearls, the foremost rubies  
I am, whispered each basted cloud,  
hand embroidered in the grand style.

poufed out, with many petticoats.



mary angela douglas 25 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Drifting Into God

to Matthew Arnold

to Alfred Lord Tennyson

parrot gaudy, carnival emblematic the stream of human events

we watched over Avalon, Camelot

the faring Fair and thought of this: the hidden life

as on the other side of a mirror recessive, recessional

the nightingale furred music killed despair

the saints and fools for God achieved finally

their very own silence.

which to choose the candled gloom or the rainbow riot

each must choose beyond the news, the collective summing signifies, nothing,  
really.

swans as they vanish leave a trace

as Jesus did on the Loving Cup

of what has been and of the Return.

we seized our chance for a furtive glance perhaps

and were doomed to litter the knight bled trail.

but saints, they know whose they should be

still seek the Grail,

and where to go even to obscurity or further into woe

it still, it will always come up Gold.

and where far from the madding crowd

as the expression goes

oblivious as snows they are

drifting into God.

mary angela douglas 29 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Drifts

though I am lost as though I never learned directions

as if the weather vanes had taken flight

off the main trail with no illumination

losing all bearings overnight.

gone are the tracks before me others made

clear in the snow each imprint bright as bright

gone are the traces now that cheered me

gone are all landmarks out of sight.

how will I know where fences were or houses

how will I recognize the sound of wolves

everything fades from the familiar highways

everything vanished into the tangled woods.

still is the night and yet it is not Christmas.

stars behind clouds have locked themselves away.

when everything beautiful I cherished

was made and unmade within a single day.

why is it now Your presence feels like drifting

cryptic the chords I can no longer arrange

yet I strike the flint of dreams past grieving when

sometimes your shadow shines like the blaze of day.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Drinking The Cocoa Up

the froth in the cup is so beautiful  
tiny rainbows winking round the edges  
how can I drink it down

oh but I will and then another  
cocoa when the marshmallows melt too fast.  
why can't they make marshmallows last

in hot chocolate;

is science not up to it?  
drinking cocoa out of season  
suddenly you wish you had some

animal crackers to go with it  
in the barnum and bailey box  
with its string carrying handle

all because of Christopher Morley's poem.  
come home, Christopher Morley, you dream

from wherever you are  
stop by the little corner store in Heaven  
and bring some by, old ghost

or we'll have cheese toast;  
you'll like it.

and then you start to cry

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

P.S. In case you may not know this, here is the poem by Christopher Morley called 'Animal Crackers' I referred to. It's my favorite children's poem I think.

Animal Crackers

By: Christopher Morley

Animal crackers and cocoa to drink,

That is the finest of suppers, I think;  
When I'm grown up and can have what I please  
I think I shall always insist upon these.

What do you choose when you're offered a treat?  
When Mother says, 'What would you like best to eat? '  
Is it waffles and syrup, or cinnamon toast?  
It's cocoa and animals that I love the most!

The kitchen's the coziest place that I know:  
The kettle is singing, the stove is aglow,  
And there in the twilight, how jolly to see  
The cocoa and animals waiting for me.

Daddy and Mother dine later in state,  
With Mary to cook for them, Susan to wait;  
But they don't have nearly as much fun as I  
Who eat in the kitchen with Nurse standing by;  
And Daddy once said he would like to be me  
Having cocoa and animals once more for tea!

Mary Angela Douglas

# Drinking The Pineapple Wind Out Of A Cloud

drinking the pineapple wind out of a cloud  
we picked nasturtiums on an orange hill.  
and coloured the sun so carefully.

open the window because  
the world shines like cut grass cologne  
the breeze colors the snow cones secretly  
when you can't see the ice edge wear away

knowing that summer can't  
pass all the board games can be  
played as many times as you like  
and you're walking in the rain cleaned air at camp  
with the stars over all of it all of it or

home, in the a/c dressed in sunsets  
with your mother and grandmother  
squeezing the lemons and the limes  
to quench the shaded thirst of time

we picked nasturtiums on the purple hill  
and let the dolls out for fresh air  
and knew that the leaves of the silken trees  
were calling after us  
in dreams where we had left them behind

mary angela douglas 14 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Drowning Happy

I dreamed of colours  
falling through my hands of  
signs and symbols

radiant beyond description  
and fruit sailed to the ground in  
clear profusion

in a wind of sparkles  
puffed out by the angels in four-cornered maps.  
where are the gatherers gathering

I cried  
outside the fate of the sports arena or  
the charming cafe with its pale pastries,

light as angel's breath beyond frosted glass-  
doing brisk business  
I couldn't afford.  
Beauty's trapped like the princess

in the tower  
I remarked to no one caring-  
-where?  
in the tower of the

perishing imaginations  
-So?  
then who'll be there  
to take the last stitch under

so the ruby strawberry  
stands out against its  
field of matchless snow

in Desdemona's handkerchief?

the painter deprived of light  
the poet without music

carried on anyway-

in every camp in every secret cell  
in every annex under the vari-coloured  
stumping boots of history's trolls

and landlords-

or under the nose of nosy neighbors  
taking notes  
jabbing their heirloom pin-cushions full

with the sharp-pin question, 'Why? '  
and stirring their coffee-clatch sugared coffee  
a little harder

than was necessary.  
but theirs was not my question -  
mine was 'how? '

and I died happy  
on a lilliputian sword  
run through with the rainbow riddle

of it all:

they built their ships of unearthly gold  
for others to sail-  
even while going down

for the third time-

mary angela douglas 12 july 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Duduk

they did not realize the latter day tribes

one sentence in the fairytale could indicate five hundred years

the smoke rising over the village

and the fires banked throughout tears

innumerable roses in the garden and the banquet set I know!

and no inhabitants.

what do you mean the surly asked

missing the winter ingredients for the stew

i cannot rescue you

I cannot be rescued from this page this lapse

though I look on every map and clasp and unclasp my Soul

though I throw out the ropes of silk

made for us in a distant more prescient age.

there are the mermaid transformations

to walking on land. the knife of every step

and the song still glad in an infinitely sad way

rising over the ochre the forgotten roofs

forever while we pray

mary angela douglas 24 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Early Rilke

music, foundation of empires I dreamed then  
in the rattling days suddenly a clear space rose,  
and everything fades except a single terrace

of night, this fabric of stars; .lost,  
coming into view  
where are you he hears his angels call

the violins in the yard  
spilling out of windows wending through  
the early lillacs' scent.

he answers nothing

while the universe forms words slowly  
in a drift of mint.

I am lined with stars he cries

what am I to do with them now

mary angela douglas 28 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Eating Red Velvet Cake With Premium Icing

eating red velvet cake with premium icing  
my guardian angel smiled stickily-  
scooping fresh lilies from the clouds...

It's no use having that shimmer of expectant wings  
I said, breaking the news as kindly as I could-  
I'm not a painter;

and no one's painting anymore the Madonna  
standing tiptoe on Pink tissue clouds  
while gazing straight up into unseen starlight  
by a glittering residue in her oval face, surmised...

you could try, fluttered my angel  
forgetting the Christmas clothes again  
that gathered crumbs but  
trailing the late spring light, nostalgically-  
start with crayons.

or a simple easel with a temporal sun.  
(you mean, tempera, don't you)  
you know, the one in the corner of the page  
you painted first, letting the colors run:  
dressed in pure marigold by your Grandmother,  
on your brightest day away from home

it seemed to you the house outlined in green  
with a rose rose roof  
could be played in, Infinitely...  
I know how you feel I said-

but the angel cried into a cloud in the  
late sun, losing light  
don't be afraid don't be afraid  
sad earth away from Christmastime;  
what a waste of iris blue was set here in the  
firmament the angel mourned not to be comforted,  
it seemed-

perhaps, they'll start again  
softly I strummed the gathering twilight, overcome-  
or the light mist falling suddenly-  
they could remember (after school  
or the last job interview falls through-  
or the last three red potatoes drop - unexpectedly-  
one by rolling one on the subsidized linoleum) -

that once, there were harps...

mary angela douglas 25 september 2012

Mary Angela Douglas



# Einstein In Math Class Early Days

your mind so filled with stars and whirling things  
wandered from eclipse to eclipse  
examining ellipses...

field flowers by speeding trains.  
o who will gather them  
admonished your angels

in the haze, tilting auroras,  
sunspots mazed-if you won't  
that maytimes, Time-

may stand still?

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Elaborating This Kingdom Of Silence

elaborating this kingdom of silence  
the dream-snow settles down  
everywhere is a marvel

and the fragile song arises  
with no witnesses  
against the backdrop

of yesterday's distress

the burden of words is light  
and fused with light,  
beyond all sorrow, hushed-

your heart fills up with snow

mary angela douglas 9 august 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# Eleanor In The Park

[inspired by the film 'A Portrait of Jennie']

eleanor in the park  
loves the snow-shine  
from another time.

and distance doesn't mean anything  
she will write on her slate of moon  
all the lessons she can't resume

eleanor in the park  
bewails the scattering of leaves  
and tries to not seem so bereaved

while it is always growing dark.  
and what is it that candles sing  
she longs to try remembering

what trips her up, that she forgets  
she used to know by heart  
when stars are falling through the nets

and all my angels flee,  
cries eleanor from an empty door frame.

why, what is? chimes keep wondering  
what was it that the summers bring  
where wedding veils shan't cost a thing

since all their lace is yellowing  
and snow falls so bewildering  
on a cherry red dress, a

twilight cloak while she imagines it is Spring  
for eleanor, my favorite ghost;  
for eleanor, their favorite joke

where jokes are made on growing older  
when the wild winds shake

the snows from her frail shoulder.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Elegance

[to Lucy W. Young, my grandmother]

she will fix you tomato consomme  
when you are sick  
and the way she says it

you just know  
it's something elegant  
and it's the elegance

that makes you well;  
the way she dresses her grandchildren  
for the recitals,

always in pink, sometimes with rosebuds embroidered  
and a wrist corsage of pink and cream carnations.  
they will play nocturnes, vintage pieces

and the notes falling through the air  
with an unmatched delicacy  
because she teaches them that way

as though music were the snowflakes  
driven in by crystal winds to desolate porches  
or the sun,

melting all the gold on earth.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Elegy For A Small Tree Sawed To Death While I Wasn't Looking

oh little tree that seemed gold with grace  
even when you were leafless and iced over.  
how the little birds chimed in

your branches whenever I looked  
from the window down.  
how glad I was to see you

in season or out of it,  
shimmer ever my very own Christmas  
while the birds flew up and down from you

so endlessly weaving  
their back and forth symphony, a pattern of  
their play through the whole day

and evening, too, when all turned blue.  
in shadow and in the chill you were  
still merry with a good will

in any breeze.  
and when your sticky leafed  
greenery tipped out it seemed

the cup of joy tipped over  
in the shade of you  
and I tripped over your aprils

laughing from the high window  
when the little birds sang  
and sang and sang so twigged was music then-

and oh, you were just their size  
and mine  
until the buzz saw's zip and clang;

its cruel surprise

chipping your miracle  
breaking the heart of the four winds

despite all your friends who couldn't conspire to save you;  
scattered you listless, on the ground.

oh my golden, then the birds flew thronging  
to your Invisibility branching  
where the seven sisters shine;

and no mirage.  
and fair may you be found-  
planted out of Time-

far, far from the Age  
of cutting down.

mary angela douglas 5,14 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Elsinore By Daylight

for William Shakespeare

Elsinore by daylight

still seems night

exit all heroes borne from the stage

of what they are, or were

of what they seemed to be

to visionary sweethearts

and the fruitless trees in shadow;

now winter stands prolonged

the castle bare.

the players played

or those for whom we cared

in garnet executions scarred

and I will sing thee threnody

a ghost myself out in the yard

in other dawns than these

yet whispering the same

retribution for the Beautiful

slain.



mary angela douglas 1 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Emergency Preparedness, Toto Not Left Behind

[to Charles Schulz]

close your eyes and pray to land in Oz  
I say to myself on gusty days  
when the wind picks up the

plastic patio furniture in the  
apartment breezeways and  
slams it against the railings

or pray to be somewhere still-  
without windows  
or in a hobbit hole

root cellar of the long ago  
stocked with plenty of jams.  
and your best friends.

your freaked out dog  
with its floppy ears standing straight up  
in a wind tunnel.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Emigre Life Not As It Is Pictured

we were made to hide in Cezanne

the planes of light the leaf scarcely sketched

and there you have a house lemon yellow

of sorts the ghost of our speech

populated with its allusive fairy tales out of reach

the chimes of arvo part

this is emigre life not as it is pictured in the New York Times

more venerable venerations over time

the chimes of arvo part

the infinitives split disclosing the pearl

the icon that is weeping that is weeping that is weeping

into the mirrors of God.

mary angela douglas 29 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Emigre Life Not As It Is Pictured (Final Draft)

we were meant to hide in Cezanne

the planes of light the leaf scarcely sketched

and there you have a house lemon yellow

of sorts the ghost of our speech

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more venerable, venerations over time

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the infinities split disclosing the pearl archive;

the icon that is weeping that is weeping that is weeping

into the mirrors of God.

mary angela douglas 30 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Emily, No Letters In Hand

[for Emily Dickinson, a letter a little late]

why is there no word washed ashore for me  
did she ever cry in silent reading of a  
New England twilight, breathless at the window

how will we know her in her white dress-  
when ghostlike perhaps she comes to call-  
from snow or mist

my name is Emily she says

soft as snow intense she said  
as the sherry in the cup  
after the guests have fled.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## En Pointe Point Of View

we'll dress up in cherry tulle

and weave the sparkles in our hair

and we'll pretend that we are dancing

on the sidewalk, anywhere.

floating in a lilac mist

just en pointe and all of this

while we catch the bus to work

or wend our way through winter's murk.

mary angela douglas 7 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# End Of The Line

end of the line  
the bus, trolley drivers too; train conductors  
always find or found the same words for it

above ground.  
somehow it comforted me  
on days to work whenever this resounded

to reflect no matter what the day would bring  
by way of suffering in the little ways you can  
at work, the outsized smirks, the putting down

you always face as a temporary employee  
always out to sea as far as the permanent ones  
are concerned and ever on trial for their

superiors no matter what you learned  
in the job preceding this.  
this helped me get by, and bookstores

so no matter what was endured  
I could say at the end of the day  
I went through that for Kafka,

Fairy Tales, or Michnik's latest essays,  
Ashkenazy's spell, and April, at the museums.  
so work was the straw I spun into gold

on paydays. other days there was always  
the soothing reminder, end of the line,  
and then the chime or the accordion fold

of the doors that let me off in the purple twilights.  
'this is the end of the line.'

one day  
it will be.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# English Literature

this vast extravagance of words  
should we then shelve, discard or  
bar from view

of little children coming on the scene  
some centuries late  
who must be taught

all words are equal maybe,  
only words that are socially useful  
equal to the cause of being, almost, human

that is, imagination scorned and shorn  
of beauty, used to advertise  
a world grown wise but fool enough

to lose jeweled language  
by design  
abjuring the time the poets

spent in anguish to deliver one word:  
that bird has flown

and relevance is god  
relevant to who, to whom  
do these distinctions matter

when they have scattered  
the ashes of what cannot burn  
except brightly

except, forever.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Enough Reasons To Leave

when they sew your shadow to a wall,  
this is a reason, or before they do.  
when sweet waters are poisoned

and they hand out the cups to little children  
and praise the cup bearers eagerly.  
when the good is mocked

and all definitions changed accordingly

and those who protest this  
are mocked and, even more,  
accused of sowing discord.

when real purity is deplored.  
when the face of God is erased  
from the chronicles of those

who waste no time in  
applying for the position themselves.  
when those who say all manner of things

shall be well stand aside with a smile  
and good manners  
to let the destroyers pass.

mary angela douglas 3 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Entrancingly Pink, The Peppermint Rag

a drugstore bag of peppermints can set me dreaming:  
pink, fleet peppermint ice cream, texture of Heaven;  
candy striped stripes of thick red, of vanilla snow

sometimes with a slender, tremulous.

thread of green. I know that it's tremulous I seem to be  
half announcing to no crowds that you can see: oh  
there must be a peppermint train to Fairy Land indeed

though the clouds are low; still, sumptuousness melts in pink  
at the table of my merry schemes  
like berries in cream with a slight glaze of

winters remembered. as of wintergreen, through

snowfalls somewhere else like a vast dessert  
we've no spoons for yet; so we'll just sip it through a straw  
and call it malted when the incredulous caw from

grammar schools all over that I said the sun is caramelized,  
wrapped in golden paper;

that I'm in cahoots with  
peppermint in all its phases and I gaze  
at the minty moon above the candy castle multicoloured

when I'm supposed to be  
doing my arithmetic before the Christmas Party,

dressed in rose dimity; bright as tinsel can be  
and it isn't even my birthday-

mary angela douglas 9 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Epiphany Of The White Apples

for the poet Osip Mandelstam

I don't know why white apples in the frost  
seem suddenly to sob;  
reading Mandelstam three in the morning,  
I dreamt of God  
in an in-between time; or try to rhyme  
Him with something else, deeply felt  
but it's too cold  
where after decades throw the arced lights' brine  
as if they know  
this Neva is not mine.  
and who am I  
to make my petitions here  
on the other side of the world, the room I fear  
assorted people will not believe  
I do love Russian poetry;  
where the moon is made of glass,  
will it shatter at last? will I  
the milk bright pieces hold  
I ask like a child from a hand towel embroidered  
folk tale not my own  
God knows I'm bound up in the story though  
I won't turn and become salt...if that's your worry  
&quot;it's not your past&quot;;, a thin murmuring grows,  
how do you know I plead to no one heeding me  
what words came to me in a midnight hour  
and laid down their shields  
or that the blanched petals fleet so lingeringly by me  
on this heavy darkness, sown  
as an antique honey scarcely bottled.

I don't know why  
white apples in the frost...  
make me cry unto the light vexed distances:  
sheared seraphim may guard the long scars  
lightly felt now, the buzz of  
summer flies; soul freedom's reedy tunes so

lemon starred, no longer die, deep as  
Christmas hymns to the infant Jesus should be.  
one candle grown lilac in a perpetual Spring  
precariously I perch among worlds and  
So.  
they sigh, it's you again and  
won't even let me in  
for the ball dress, being less than Cinderella.

packing one useless shoe  
I'll look within  
wandering down Mandelstam Avenue,  
a quarter brimmed with wonders and  
remote viewing as through a screen of ancient snows.  
things, being foreign, suddenly parted  
on a mysterious stage, oh Star, my star  
where I, unaccountably, not knowing where You are

but in a blinding Grace,  
have all the parts by heart.

mary angela douglas 10 september 2016/3 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Epiphany Of The White Apples (Second Version)

for Osip and Nadezhda Mandelstam

to the music of Messian's Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus

I don't know why white apples in the frost

seem suddenly to sob;

reading Mandelstam three in the morning,

I dreamt of God, His marred meridians and pearl

upwards where the gnats swirl angelically

lighter than the air they almost dwell in; alighting on

the purple lines dividing these geographies, my dusks,

may clouds float, swanlike then, bright dust,

in the ballet cirrus of Akhmatova

in an in-between time. I try to rhyme

Him with something else, deeply felt

but it's too cold

where after decades throw an arced lights' lost and emerald shine  
as if they know  
this Neva is not mine.

and who am I  
to make my petitions here  
on the other side of the world, the room, I fear

assorted people will not believe  
I do love Russian poetry;  
where the moon is made of glass.

will it shatter at last? will I  
the milk bright pieces hold in a wounded perigee  
I ask like a child from a hand towel embroidered

folk tale. not my own.

God knows I'm bound up in the story though

I won't turn and become salt...if that's your worry

"it's not your past";, a thin murmuring grows,

how do you know I plead to no one heeding me

what words came to me in a midnight hour

and laid down their shields

or that the blanched petals fleet so lingeringly by me

on this heavy darkness, sown

as an antique honey, scarcely bottled.

I don't know why

white apples in the frost...

made me cry unto the light vexed distances:

sheared seraphim may guard the long scars

lightly felt now, the buzz of

summer flies; soul freedom's reedy tunes so

lemon starred.

no longer die. oh live jewel jangled as

Christmas hymns to the infant Jesus should be.



one candle grown lilac in a perpetual Spring

precariously I perch among worlds and

So.

they sigh, it's you again and

won't even let me in

for the dress ball, seemingly less than Cinderella,

packing one useless shoe

I'll look within

wandering down Mandelstam Avenue,

a quarter note's brimmed with wonders and

remote viewing as through a screen of ancient snows, all

things being foreign, suddenly parted

on a mysterious stage, oh Star, my star

where I, unaccountably, not knowing where You are

but in a blinding Grace

have all the parts by heart.

mary angela douglas 10 september 2016/3 january 2019; 24 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Etched In The Stone The Weeping Fern Survived

[to Tommy Dykeman, childhood friend-  
earnestly searching for arrowheads and fossils.  
in the vacant lot, on a Sunday afternoon]

etched in the stone the weeping fern survived  
to startle the finders who may never find  
what it feels like to be green leaves trapped in rock

no longer under tender shade by the violets;  
wondering what became of them, the summer  
clouds that day

or the lime green mosses where the children played  
in their secret homes near the waterfall spume;  
or sweeping the forest floor with pine twig brooms,

and rainbow wreathed where the light  
came through the trees so sequined glancing,  
the girl in cardinal red.

so heavy words professionally said contain  
merely the shadows of crystal leaded starlight,  
never the stained glass ray straight through the heart

but cut-and dried  
and stowed away for the after parties-  
igneous permutations of the Rose

colleague to colleague  
whispering  
the things for which

great prizes are bestowed  
in rooms with little air-  
while the living transcription,

imprint on the soul  
vivid as lightning never caught in a bottle-  
lives on unknown and still imbued

and elsewhere,  
perhaps, in this-  
perhaps, in you.

mary angela douglas 1 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Eternal Music Turns The Page

she was the one  
who ate from dishes the colour of raspberries  
who longed for snows in deep summer.

carving ivories in the shade  
the snow maid glimmered,  
and was gone

while we made april stations of the cross  
and crowned the emptiness with flowers.  
how will they auction her piano

when everything she dreamed was music  
and angels guard the treble clefs  
the grace notes made of diamonds.

and grant her rest.

ah! bar the creditors at the door  
and break the rabble  
and deplore

the trampling of her shadows  
in the afternoon by the curious  
seeking curios and no more.

by those who itch  
to sell Forever  
having no tune of their own.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Even A Stone Chirping In The Road

[to the Russian poet, Osip Mandelstam]

even a stone chirping in the road  
they would praise as great poetry  
in a dim age.

there have been many so praised  
and the glass raised high  
with few to wonder

why do they worship the eclipse  
and let the sun go ragged.  
who knows?

maybe God  
or Christ  
who saw it long before

the Ark set sail  
or the evening mail was lost  
for a thousand years;

the starry telegrams  
from jail  
by those indicted

for Beauty.

mary angela douglas 30 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Even Late In The Day It Was Comforting To Think

for Ray Bradbury in memorium (August 22,1920 - June 5,2012)

Even late in the day it was comforting to think  
You were still out there in California  
Holed up in your toyshop basement  
Writing another sheaf of them

Golden, amber, green or blue  
Radiant royal blue or violet  
Scarlet rarer than rare.

Oh send me down a dandelion wind  
I don't want to think that this has ended.  
Surely some mistake was made.

He died quietly last night his publisher said.  
Why didn't we wake up and stop him?  
Don't go Ray, we'd plead holding his  
Lovely shadow back as if he were Peter Pan.  
Don't go yet.  
Tell us another story

Like children cranky before bedtime;  
That's why it happened when we were asleep.  
Besides, the angels have story-times, too.  
They needed him longer.  
I'm sure they brought him ice cream.  
That did it. I'll bet it was cherry-vanilla...

Venus in transit was seen from Tahiti  
The radio said linking it in the next breath to  
Bradbury's gone.

(Is he on Venus? In Tahiti? I thought like  
One of his stories unfolding...  
Myself. By myself. Oh, gone...)

At 11: 02 I was at home

Drinking coffee peaceful and dreamy  
Halfway listening to radio news.

The author Ray Bradbury has died at 91  
I heard at 11: 03 a.m., it's Wednesday, June 6th.  
I couldn't believe it. D-Day for all the writers now  
Left still on earth and the dear readers too.  
Why couldn't we hear the trumpets?

Oh I would like to break off my sprig of lilac  
For you like Whitman for Lincoln  
But I am only I and can't stop crying  
And I don't want to say goodbye.

How will the Summer survive?  
Having lost the one who loved her most sincerely.  
If only we had those magical tennis shoes to follow  
You where you are now...

But we must wait like you, for Appointed Times...  
Or stories...for the wings of clouded poems  
To arrive, oh are you listening?  
Did you arrive yet. Why are the skies so grey.

Here is my sprig of lilac anyway.  
Is that you passing by?  
Did you come back for your files?  
The ones you kept for years bursting open at the seams and  
perpetually sprung-open with ideas  
For stories to come.

For the stories to come...

We are bereaved.

Green trees in the rain touch over the antique streets  
Green trees in the rain can't stop weeping

And Venus in transit stops for a moment, overcome-  
And the simple stars - sing-

mary angela douglas 6 june 2012



Mary Angela Douglas

## Even Now

we could wear dresses threaded with starlight  
I thought and why shouldn't we  
loving the night skies as we did

almost from the cradle  
and this is how we would live  
dressed in starlight

innocently and breathing in the green  
perfumes of the night unseen  
and being, only being

like the winds,  
in from the sea.  
why couldn't we.

why couldn't our steps chime  
in unison with the heavenly spheres  
and we be dancing

tulle draped, meditative years  
posed for a moment as in  
vintage photographs of the ballet

where the air surrounding  
seems filled with snows invisible.  
pinning the rose adagios to the wall

of our favorites and thinking always  
in terms of the dance.  
giving a backward glance to it

even without these things coming to pass  
I am so glad I dreamed of them then.  
thinking that I would live like the wind

and thinking beyond  
what would have to be endured  
that even now

this is still possible.

mary angela douglas 18 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Even The Earth

this is not the city perhaps she cried  
at the tearstreaked window of a dream  
and slept a troubled sleep

this is not the city I remember  
the one of green spires.  
the one where miracles happened

while you buttered your bread  
and put your school dress  
over your head

and found the other shoe  
and stood for a moment at the bureau's mirror  
assuming you would always

gaze back the same way.  
you can't say enough to strangers  
these days about how it feels

to no longer be living on the earth  
the way you were and that even the earth.  
with its alien picnics,

with not even the same stars or zoo animals,  
doesn't seem to know who you are now.

mary angela douglas 6 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Even Your Shadows Shine Oh God

even your shadows shine oh God  
whenever we're waiting for the train  
or something else, or in the rain

your shadows shine. and then I think  
is the Divine really impossible for us  
if you could be that near

when the weather isn't clear or  
so many other things to me.  
and I have sung alone there

waiting for the bus to come  
at odd times of the day  
and I know you hear me singing

but I'd want to anyway  
you made even the shadows  
so beautiful

the shadows of trees falling  
across the pavements.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Every Sentence Is A Train Of Pearl

every sentence is a train of pearl  
gliding into whiter distances-  
where you will whisper in the

cloud-filled air

remonstrances of silver

there will never be another snow  
like this covering even  
the beginning of silence with

softer and softer tracklessness

and no one needs to come to  
your assistance under a sky

this vast-

mary angela douglas march 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# Everywhere Everywhere Christmas

I remember the glorious ubiquity of Christmas wax stencils  
in red and green and convincing aerosol snow  
even on the storefront glass of the car lots

crepe paper rose red honey combed bells hung from classroom ceilings, the  
chiming of hand bell carols we played at the assemblies and

department store windows beyond compare  
we were glued to the scenes peering into their tableaux vivants  
(we thought)of fairy land.

I remember when even wrapping paper in the drugstore

bound in rolls of Christmas sheen signified opulently the  
implication unmistakable of PRESENTS!  
we would receive or give, what would they be?

and all that glee from the mystery  
at times a candlelit feeling inside

and how I could never make believable bows  
from the cardboard spooled ribbon  
but no one ever minded. and

brazil nuts cascading out of stockings,  
sugarplums in our heads (what were sugarplums)

oranges beyond orange itself and peppermint sticks,  
milk chocolate wrapped as golden coins in foil,  
in little bags of net

and wondering wondering while flinging  
icicles randomly

what will the dolls look like this time  
and will they come with extra outfits?  
and the excitement of books new minted

rose coloured socks, a Mickey Mouse watch

my Grandfather's face passing out packages  
and calling our names like he was  
calling us into the Heavenly feast and

our intrepid yet fluffy dog atop the piled high bliss of  
unwrapped wrappings, flouncing around in these  
as if they were autumn leaves,

the puppy queen of Christmas.

the nativity in the front window  
and kneeling near the pine fragrance  
under the tree as close as we could be

wanting never to leave

forever and ever  
as though we could be Christmas birds  
in the boughs, no longer merely children

in the vast and snowy air,  
breathing starlight.

mary angela douglas 26 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Exactly Where We Are

if only Your children didnt have to wade

through so much terminology

reading off the same script

any which weathervaned way they turn

because really all we want is to see You as you are

to be again in the garden against the vivid green

the blue sky changing itself into pearl

to see the spring speaking itself into roses

what dowe need with all these poses

what in the world can we understand of You

unless we hear you speaking only to our heart

in exact syllables

in the light and in the dark

we simply want to feel

it is you that wheels the stars

and knows exactly where we are.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Exile I Am

exile I am  
betrothed to you.  
I am:

your requisite child  
your wilderness honey  
you'll carry me with you

like a heart.  
I am  
your purest

timepiece.

mary angela douglas 1980s

Mary Angela Douglas

# Explaining It All Away

contents of this poem may settle  
here's hoping they won't unsettle  
you who are now reading the

ingredients list with your glasses on  
and remembering when  
there were toys in the cereal

and kids left unattended  
would grab the new box picked up on Saturday  
flinging the cereal out by

handfuls looking for the prize.  
later they went on to  
major in archeology.

noted for their findings on  
Etruscan cereal bowls.  
little clay spoons.

mary angela douglas 23 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Face To Face With Reality As They Say

face to face with Reality, as they say  
I saw each leaf by God outlined with fire one day  
my heart's desire in every wind conveyed

I saw. though I was not seen.  
what did I care. I was living like the green world  
and in the forest of words

I heard resplendent singing in the silences  
in the gaps where beauty perishing remained  
behind the fortress walls where I had learned to say

each word like a honeyed clock is ticking  
the more I am away;  
away from home, forever turning back

forever missing the bus  
my train on some irrevocable track  
knee deep in homework, far from the flowery fields

I yield to circumstance  
I do not yield my crown  
indivisible it seems when

I know it's richness to be here  
and through the louring clouds to catch  
the gleams of the Brighter World

the lapse in suffering  
where the diamond light sweeps through.  
the towers that I knew.

mary angela douglas 27 october 2018; rev.2 february 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Facing The Other Way

I think of choirs like ghost trains  
crisscrossing the prairies  
of rich violet shadowed trestles

of the restless heart we all embody:  
our American byways.  
I dream of your folkloric remnants

stowed away from grade school remembrances  
collections of cider tales, New England chill  
the headless horseman thrills

and Rip returning to the village that cannot be again.  
Hawthorne branding us with his own hauntings  
and the much vaunted White ille Mellvile

the very seas sound the name.

set sail now, set forth like Whitman on the berry laden  
country road or earlier Manhattan's scapes and the War's  
dear, dread toll, embrace

through you we see the harbors as they were then  
and all in all set true with green leaves bound  
in fresh air, mystical rhyme oh out of the cradle

inexplicably beyond our own time snatched but merilly  
are we all, are now yet resting in a great expansiveness, geniality

the light glancing off the busy waters wreathing his face.  
we would bring sprigs of lilac too, to you Walt Whitman

at some old homeplace  
for the elegy burgeoning in the soul from year to year

and centuries now the ghost train never disappearing  
that bore old Abe. some poems are trains too.  
some will think me corny, retrograde to remember these

things this way but oh, I do  
and Sandburg's double named tales and the view out Emily's  
lone and burnished window

cryptic, extravagant the things she knew  
and quiet fruition  
from the instant she surmised

and I, in the classroom too  
suddenly grown too wise to

Death's horses, facing the other way.

mary angela douglas 11 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fading From The Fabled World

fading from the fabled world  
we wondered fleetingly,  
where had the colours gone

and calendars we knew  
birds in their songs, renewing  
every Spring

and the dim waters falling.  
now is it all foam and spent  
like gold we never owned

and can we no longer trace  
in the least frost our  
imagined names?

what is fame to this,  
the loss of kingdoms;  
the jewels out of the setting.

irrevocably.

we mourned upon the harps  
even as they vanished.  
and the rose lavished gardens,

closed.

mary angela douglas 14 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Faintly We Trace It Gold In The Mists

faintly we trace it gold in the mists  
and in the time of banishment your Kingdom  
wishing we were nearer we plod on  
sometimes in acute distress  
when you whisper to us my child  
this is no wilderness  
for I am with Thee  
weary of fighting what we cannot see  
inscrutable mockeries  
weary of so many things and unsure of our footing  
we pilgrimage on and every dawn missing you  
our true home till a soft breeze rouses us  
a voice deep within says you are not alone  
and we move on faint in the mists etched in a finer gold  
we glimpse it through ever gathering clouds  
and cry aloud dear God dear Saviour  
help me now through the miry gates to a place  
I remember a place in childhood with green moss carpeted  
and circles of glimmering stones we imagined was home  
where we ate honeysuckle flowers and brushed the rooms

with pine branches broken in the storm

help me to go there again in the kindest winds flower lifted

far from the wings of ever besetting war

and let the honey of your presence flow

over these ancient wounds.

mary angela douglas 10 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fairytale Capitals Guard The Chapters

fairytale capitals guard the chapters  
and from them fall pink blossoms scattered  
applewhite in natural light or some other

lamps are lit in far off rooms  
where the evening comes in through the windows  
in powder blue and it's almost taffeta

the rustling of pages in firelit corners everywhere.  
swans down floats down from the far off spaces.  
intermittent starlight, firefly passages twine about

lost summers. do the children wear lemon well?  
their mothers discuss before ornate mirrors we never saw.  
I like to think on later battlefields or waiting at home

for the ax to fall, for the last letters ever on earth  
tied in apple green ribbons  
those children grown were comforted

by these scenes

mary angela douglas 14 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fall Into Books

[to Roald Dahl]

fall into books as into a mirror:  
the one near at hand.  
as into snow drifts

in Christmas land.  
as into green waters  
with summer dappled

and on either hand:  
one shore is golden,  
the other, contraband.

but you, you in the middle  
like the jam in the doughnut;  
like the apricot center

in a strange candy;  
they won't find till later  
like the honey bun

in a corner cupboard  
when they're low on funds.

mary angela douglas 8 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fall Into God As Into A Snowbank

fall into God as into a snowbank,  
you will not freeze.  
or into april's breeze.

then will we be flowers?  
asked the child so hopefully;  
and may I be their queen?

may there be clouds of angels

and dessert afterwards?  
fruit salad, with all the  
gooseberries, palest green, left in!

and the rubied, rubied maraschinos...  
and I held all her words most carefully  
as though they were music

that could vanish  
almost, instantly;  
like snows dissolving into seas

while we had cherry tarts  
for tea.

mary angela douglas 18 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Falling Down Is Rising After All

[to my Mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas]

falling down is rising after all  
you said to yourself when you were small  
and the staircase was too high

and if you swing into the sky  
on any day in Spring from the outside swing  
will the angels bring the flowers

down to you  
seeing you've come this far, at least  
on your own?

falling down is rising.  
getting up again is singing  
bunching the flowers in your hands

so fervently  
your Mother has to smile.

mary angela douglas 16 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Falling Back Into God We Will Not Fear

[a meditation on death and dying]

falling back into God we will not fear  
as into the snowlights of the waning year  
as dream fades into Dream, more real

by the ageless minute.  
the music ticks the metronomes away  
the ladders by dim windows stray

and they are made of gold.  
they will unroll, defying gravity,  
the flower seeded carpets on the lawns

regretfully, we leave behind.  
that we ourselves may finally be

the flowering we thought we were  
when we were young.  
or only, just about, ready

to become  
in fields forever and  
familiarily green.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Falling Down In Flowers You Will Laugh

[to the poet William Blake]

falling down in flowers you will laugh  
and in the snowy fields  
and in the pearled waters

of the local streams bathe your feet  
green summered, sweet  
and rural in your origins sing

the tide will turn upon a thread of gold

and cherry brightness compass you in  
fold on fold  
before you come to understand,

and that firsthand,  
the wilderness of man.

and to withstand

mary angela douglas 17 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Falling Into The Myth As Into Silver Water

falling into the myth as into silver water

I dreamed I could not drown a useless daughter

and everything sparkled

a wish to be found

and no one said

can you subtract this in your head

dividing the sentence as if it were

from the deli.

lunch crowds come and go.

this is what I know

there is no limit to wondering

reasons why

turning the stars wheels further back in time

to the dream towns when they were

looking for Christmas, the rose red rhyme

and all this time,

spurred on by the Star.

mary angela douglas 6 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Falling Off The World We Came To See

falling off the world we came to see  
the underside of clouds  
the breathing of leaves

stars scattering before the storms.  
before the storms  
we believed in the Golden Age

and did not know that we should pay our way  
and that the way was paved with tears  
the kingdoms sinking into the sea

merely at an unkind word  
we did not know we would be herded  
and not heard

and fastened onto a track and measured,  
fined for looking back  
at the illusory

we did not know these things

and so we lived in dreams  
negligent to a fault  
still owning our own souls.

mary angela douglas 29 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Falling Out Of The Picture

I met so many of the knights errant

I thought of them that way

they would see honor in me and

always be my brothers.

but it didnt turn out that way.

this was a kind of blistering thing

to find out. To think you were woven into that fairy tale

to milk white bet on it as on a palfrey or moonlight

then suddenly to fall out of it

to fall out of that picture frame

in the same pink dress

and all your tears like diamonds.

into the mercies the lovingkindness

of only God.

mary angela douglas 10 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Far Off I Heard An Elfin Music

far off I heard an elfin music

a teletype of snails the stitching of sea shells  
far off I heard the bird called Forever,  
falling from its perch and then or

as if the drowned cathedral emerged from the lake  
the bells slowly mending and clearer now  
and this is coming back to life somehow

the ghost leaves murmured and the  
winds from their caves of blue diamonds.  
i wrote with red pencil stubs on tablets of clay

reed drawn the living waters  
and skated over time, over a crust of ice  
falling into the wave

it was cold like the night of shipwreck,  
unremitting as stars  
and the bell tolled and I translated it

oh I tried

are there any survivors I cried?  
but that was when  
old continents drifted apart

what is art I was asked  
how could I answer bound to my task  
as Ulysses to the mast

as Penelope at home weaving and leaving it out  
of the letters never to be finished  
it may be love to listen this way

and night and day to write it down

I tied the nosegays of the bridesmaid Past

and said oh God this once may it last,  
the fleeting sparkles on the ballroom floor

the organza and the starry conservatory word  
spoken under moonlight never returning  
war widowed, weary, yearning

the shadow tracing went on and  
silver falling on an unwritten page,  
the ink of tears

aren't you a regional poet they sneered:  
if eternity is A on the map, and after that  
or a scrap of

paper flown out the window

the dust of years like sifted gold.  
perhaps, this glistened.  
I only listened.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Far To Go

the shadow sewn dream handstitched with little stars  
worn in the twilight mind I have come to know  
dusk following dusk and the blueness settling in

and the thin silver crust of what was once the moon  
and shall be again I have noted as a bird call  
among the birds of silver heard through watercolour clouds.

how will I fasten and where  
the last words of my heart to the Unseen  
seen or almost seen

from this earth wherever beauty breaks out again.  
God is always near and those who went before  
though in vanished and vanishing colors

all that I survey melts as snows into the atmosphere  
and is a far flung cry from sphere to sphere  
crowned among angels where I cannot hear

but only surmise  
star showers notwithstanding  
crimson deep the showers of rose

still I have far to go.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Fare Thee Well: To My Grandfather Milton B. Young

...

my memory's screen door opens to the stars;  
there's my Grandfather in the yard  
gazing up at the constellations  
'That's Telstar, going over us still, '  
he whispers softly  
his face in the moonlight lined;  
no Hamlet's ghost is he  
though he whistled when he was worried.  
He's not worried now  
tending the ghosts of the marigolds  
and I am light years from then  
though I wish it weren't so.  
I wish I could go and turn in my silver flats  
in my 12 year old party dress of blue taffeta  
(that used to be my cousin Rosalie's)  
and sing him the alphabet or a thousand other things  
made of mystery and the beautiful, the blue back speller  
but I'm too old for that now or else  
he's too young.  
younger than I am now  
but still in the pea green jacket with the fedora  
trousers from the 1940s.  
tall as any tree  
still in love with the Space program  
the baseball scores of the Arkansas Travelers.  
and shining my shoes for school,  
the penny loafers later on, in this nostalgic dream: to a farethewell,  
bright as copper stars.

Mary Angela Douglas 21 October 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Farewell To The Legends

farewell to the legends  
wove of the boughs of beauty  
heft of tapestried moon and

the stars  
the pearl waft of evening  
the arches of the green.

yet what they had seen  
let it remain  
in books put by

like the purpling of the skies  
that men who are wiser  
and are blind, ignore.

this lore was ours  
I hear through mourning grasses sigh  
the ghosts of an old surmise

what have you done with it

mary angela douglas 22 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Farewell To The Ship In The Harbour

farewell to the ship in the harbour  
that is not yours, the snow whirling  
in the cherry late skies;

angels surmise, and you could do no better.  
now, in the tolling of innumerable bells,  
the invisible swells on the oceans of air,

hosts of heaven see us and they know-  
clearly the cost of what would have been gathered.  
inland now, farther from shore, the farthest-

and safe in a little house,  
store your jewels.  
no need to burn what could have been burned.

the tides are all outgoing now,  
there are no returns.

mary angela douglas 22 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Farther Out

when you're young you're still so close to the shore

you could reach with one hand and touch the leaves

you've seen since childhood the purple shadow on the floor.

you don't know yet as you launch farther out things will start

to float past you as though on a separate flood

or someone waving to you on the escalator

going in the opposite direction until

they disappear over the ridge you'll never reach.

and you think with a start: that was me

the way I used to be

and you adjust. and think It's not so bad.

I'm still midstream and suddenly you wake up

from a fairly long dream and think

my God I; m drifting farther out

than I have ever been

where are the moorings.

you would give anything to dive

into the beautiful foundering of your life

and bring out even one bracelet.

but you survived.

there has to be a reason why.

as slow as the clocks tick or as fast

you'll reach your cloudy destination,

home at last, among the strawberries

mary angela douglas 22 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fern Curl

I believe every blade of grass that ever died on earth  
is up in Heaven; God would be that much of a scrap booker.

and the red clover too

certain specimens of the wild onion.

some in glass cases clearly labeled in Palmer handwriting.

and albums of brown wrapping paper

to showcase the meadow lark, the finches

their feathers as they fell caught up by angels

or snowdrift, rising in the wind.

a jar of old marbles. the see through crystal blue

the tiger's eye.

and so many jams put by

the hobbits would approve.

what do I know of heaven.

just as much as you

reading my poem and watching the ferns curl

by some green river in the summertime.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ferny Roses On Old China Appeared In My Dreams

to my sister

fern roses on old china appeared in my dreams.  
the saucers held light; we sipped it carefully  
so that the children would not cry.

(we meant, our dolls) .

so that the children would not cry  
I fastened soft words like a brooch upon the sun.  
but the sun melts everything,  
even Chopin.

will I pour from the Milky Way  
from a pitcher of milky quartz  
the tea party punch we loved back then?  
when roseate was our favorite word of all.

or will invisible weddings sigh through the trees  
and the ballerinas we were going to be  
dance green: as if it were  
the only child of all the colours?

in tulle, of course!  
with a sugar cube sparkle!

lean back in the swing;  
this time, you'll fly through clouds.  
you'll barely notice grief.

and on the seesaw  
rickety with our laughter-  
cold as Christmas air-

one of us may reach  
the moon in her mother of pearl

lighting up your firefly piano scales;  
the dark green garden chair.



mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Finding The Things In The Picture

well here's that Umbrella you lost  
right beside the Parrot in the upside down cage;  
the cerise one you bought in the drugstore

by the cash register, on an afterthought.  
and then, it didn't rain.  
and here's your old

Windup Alarm Clock:

lime green with a navy face;  
huge numerals in white that glowed,  
topped with alarm bells; that's why

they called it that, you know. and here's your  
Easter Hat, the one you wish still fit you-  
crowned with realistic cherries.

was there ever any hat more beautiful?  
a China Tea Set made for the Queen's own dolls  
still packed in straw with those Vocabulary Lists

you forgot to memorize- Pale April's Shade;

and just inside the Big Clown's other pocket.  
the other one holding, to our collective grade school gasp-

a Strawberry Ice Cream Cone,  
quite smashed.

mary angela douglas 4 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fire Opal

[to Gerard Manley Hopkins]

to the Living God...

on the day I heard of Your fire opals

I cried: where is a fire opal language

the one you've hidden from us somewhere beyond  
our pride

all hours I might have thrown away

or crumpled needlessly, I want to say

to speak alone in fire opals along a

glittering way that will not disappear

though there is none to hear

and firework clear beyond all jewel work known and  
dazzlingly,

there must be this little, blinding language, out of sight

like rainbows redacted from tears

from the inward collapsing of castle dominoes from

the sudden fears the flights that won't let go that

take the icarian

children captive; captive my dreamers, falling away

falling away all is exile then, all dream speech, reft

from the scriptless heart the poets stricken

for years missing they knew not what

composing in the dark

mute in their transcriptions, then,

drowning in lamentations without recourse

stunned into there is no diamond, rubied

flare there, no sight, but, blighted emeralds

at once! dispersed banished in

such pure astonishment, small glories, syllables

brought to the coiling surface of their seas. how much you

cherished Light to speak us into it at the beginning

to refract it this- this endlessly...

how can I, can I even know

the least fringe of this brilliance, universe, universe

in the small stones gathered; the ones we would have thrown

away carelessly, needlessly ah, how you shattered

beauty there and caught these colours fountaining forever

You said, You cried.

and it was So.

mary angela douglas 8 may 2015; 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# First Day At School Or Soon After

I had persimmon coloured flats  
a sash to match;  
a cream cotton dress

imprinted with silver scrolls;  
a vest of grey velveteen;  
a feeling it was holidays

every day  
we're learning the alphabet!  
and how to write block

letters on our own  
and this is  
almost worth

leaving home for.

mary angela douglas 4 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# First Days At School And After

letting go of the clouds comes first, and then,  
the winds and then the lets pretends  
and you must sit at a desk with

eyes straight forward  
learning to love the formulas.  
outside is formless

or may as well be  
since eyes must never stray  
when real teaching is going on.

attention please!  
you would wonder if you dared  
do the grasses miss me

where we used to play  
all day the little flowers in  
the shubbery the panes

where my nose was pressed  
second guessing Christmas  
every minute.

slow days will come again  
yet never the same  
the honey laden time

when you were you  
and the world was fine.

mary angela douglas 25 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fix Your Attention On A Distant Star

FIX YOUR ATTENTION ON A DISTANT STAR

fix your attention on a distant star

whenever you dont know where you are anymore

or when the grounds shift just from a feather fall.

fix your attention on a distant sun

heartache comes to everyone

such kingdoms pass.

the endings come to everyone at last

fix your attention on a distant star

so the angels will know where you are

and the winds will gather you so far

from all of this now.

mary angela douglas 14 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Fizz Out; Not The Fourth Of July

[to Ray Bradbury long ago, on a fire balloon night  
with his Grandfather...]

fizz out bad firecrackers, in the long grass  
you who wanted to see some trouble  
come to pass

and brought your own flashlights to the -do.  
children who sense you coming  
hide under the underpass of God

and let the trucks roll over.  
you think it's all clover now  
you've got whole worlds

under your thumb and that  
we're on the run as if we  
were your shadows, retinue.

chew toys.

but you don't view like the birds do  
taking in the whole scene.  
there's Someone with a heavier footfall

on the way whose keen  
to confiscate your bag of tricks  
your snaps and wicks

and oh, by far

He's a bigger candle than you are.

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Fizzy

there's the little girl fizzy in pink  
it's dotted swiss I think, her dress  
pink dotted swiss

and she looks fizzy  
and we think it's the pink that's the fizziness  
the fizz of the little miss in the story book

and we want a dress exactly like it  
only of course in a larger size  
and tied with a lime satin sash

fizzy slippers to match  
and then we'll dance until we're dizzy  
stop making yourselves dizzy

says Grandmother  
and then we fall down in a heap  
just laughing

and go sit on the pink divan with her  
to watch the fizzing T.V.  
until it's time for supper.

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Flood Stage

are you lost in your own life  
and the signposts down  
the rivers slipped their banks

and drowned the town  
and you're the ghost of your own Ghost  
and look around

at nothing familiar.  
does the water reach the porch  
and wash your dreams

and turn to rivulets and then to streams  
and then are you swallowed up  
and have the blue prints turned to clay

and every day a link in a nightmare chain  
rain and rain and rain  
and no tears are left

earth has become one weeping sea  
and you're bereft and then bereft again.  
come unto Me he said.

come unto Me.

mary angela douglas 1 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Floretti Of The Hidden Stars Who Has

floretti of the hidden stars who has  
carved you into my heart  
that the blue and the gold of you

should not be turned away  
from the fine fair fairytale doorstep  
swept clean of sorrows.

for all the fairytales are truth  
down to the least detail.  
This I learned to say.

let the debris of exile  
castaway, on a ship of no devising  
be only the ghost ship sailing away from you,

Beauty in exile,  
even after Christ!  
floretti floretti I murmured to  
bright children sleeping  
to the ghost of their tears

in the curve of your canticle, moonlight;  
Your broken silver candle still not quenched  
though many have thought so

stringing their Mays like pearls and  
forgetting the Jeweler.

mary angela douglas 16 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Flower On A Stem

'Consider the lilies of the field...'

Jesus

how do you carry yourself  
oh flower on a stem  
in the rude world blowing

I watch you from any window then  
looking out on anyone's garden  
or on fields where you grow wild

and watch the sleet beat down on you  
and wonder if I may be like you  
who must endure the cold

and have no indoors place to go at times.  
and looking out I see the human flowers too  
and sometimes it is me

who on the wild moors or the winter streets

must wind my way and wonder how, more,  
day by day I carry myself and so do they  
like flowers on our stems

without breaking down

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Folding The Poems Into The Suitcase

first of all you'll wear the same thing every day;  
poems come first. one raincoat; a snack.  
fold the red leafed ones on the bottom.

in a separate compartment,  
the ones of shaken snow.  
apart in a little case

with a hand mirror,  
the brokenhearted ones  
with their single ray of light

and in a jeweled bag  
those where the angels sighed  
green sighs and in the pink patent pocketbook

you'll hold by your side  
containing no map (and some coffee candies) :  
the ones in pieces

waiting to be  
kaleidoscopic.

mary angela douglas 11 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Folger's Theatre April 4,1988 8 P.M. Washington D.C.

FOLGER'S THEATRE APRIL 4,1988 8 P.M., WASHINGTON D.C.

for the Polish-Ukrainian poetess Irina Ratushinskaya, of eternal memory and beatitude born 1954; died July 5,2017

why doesn't her suffering show  
I should have thought as she read  
the winged things she wrote in a hole

between beatings for three interminable years  
like centuries...from age 29 sentenced for 7,  
for 6 poems...and to be frozen alive.

but what did I know  
what had I suffered to compare  
but I was so happy then to hear

and in my summer dress of snow  
someone this back from the dead  
that close though so sleight of build

to the poet warriors of heaven  
so merry and so bold yet tenderly  
she held aloft as if with only her small hands

that had warded off blows,  
the trembling skies of Poetry as I knew them then  
while we passed from hand to hand the dead sea scrolls

her tiny writing on cigarette papers disclosed:  
the very ones composed in SHIZO and smuggled out  
oh who could break that spell and I held onto them

as long as I could until the others looked at me: let go  
not wanting to say that out loud  
how could I, how could I let them go

how can I understand; that I was there.  
breathing the same air, who had so far to go.

from the Capital as I knew it then.

she read in Russian in a milk and honied voice  
camelia faced and like a child, the youngest one  
her eyes like black cherries

the theatre was so still we held our breath

to keep her from slipping we thought  
in that hushed air  
her translator making it clear to us

that words may fly above all else on earth  
that visions cannot die. that love sustains.  
that poetry ns remains.

I looked at her and yet I could not see  
my eyes blinded with tears at such a mystery  
incarnated, the will to ever be in love with Spring

with Christ, never to be deterred  
with everything, with Igor standing in the wings  
and in her prison dreams

willing her strength  
such truth between them lies  
I closed my eyes

to such young souls streaming  
with joy with joy  
having found land; after a sea of hells

all my notes, attempts at notes abandoned  
with the tears streaming into my cupped hands.  
I wanted to bow my head

perhaps I did in that small crowd  
overcome with veneration  
then the april hour was gone

then briefly I shook her hand  
thank you for the poetry, I said

with tea party manners

and filed out silently and stunned.  
and that as they say was that.  
so many years ago that evening

at Folger's Theatre

I felt my heart transfixed,  
on a different plane and then today  
I found that she had

died last year  
Irina the youngest one  
in summer beautiful summer

in a seahorse hour turned pale

in Moscow's summer and in her husband's arms  
when the trees were green.  
when the trees were green

at Tsarskoe Selo and in Pushkin Square  
the trees were green  
and Christ was nigh

the trees were green  
they whispered to me:  
Irina Ratushinskaya...

mary angela douglas 31 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# For All The Saints Who Go Back Into The Burning Building

for all the saints who go back into the burning building to retrieve  
the artifacts, the hearts under glass that shattered all the kristallnachts

for those who asked the follow up question under fire  
the one question that made the difference.  
I sing to them who for love of truth forgo reprieve

who have the need to say the word that needs saying

while the gossiping scurry, crablike, away  
and sideways sideways plot to overthrow  
the last one standing in a shaft of light

delivered by angels  
from Eternal Night

amen...

mary angela douglas 26 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Banished Music

[for John Dowland and myriad others]

why do they balk at the beautiful words  
and send them pitiless, away?  
and for this, they expect to be admired:

that they have let the opaline fires dwindle  
down to ash or that that they have lashed them  
laughing in a superior way

onto the departing masts until they drift

harbor to harbor now, unwelcome in any language.  
gilded, gilded for naught I thought  
until I thought I would break down.

ah no breathed my glad angels, no.  
find them wind them then the clocks of  
beauty scorned and phrase by phrase

renew the obviated music!  
no light was ever lit for banishment.  
renew the facets of their diamond days

the emerald grasses sapphire suns.  
hold sway. the jeweled winds arise.  
and fashion, fashion it as though

you came upon their snowdrifts suddenly  
in an ancient wood, so struck by awe and stood:  
bowed head and tears flow my tears, flow

for the arrows let  
go from the stinging bow, the wounded deer,  
the Rose unfolding heedless sterling Center

of it all

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Dylan Thomas In The Dark Blue Dusk, The Dust Of Words

[for the poet Dylan Thomas, his every word]

as you were singing that the givers of light  
would have no end that the green rills  
growing greener would furl in waves

about us ever near and clearer from year to year and that the  
sun dipped in the clouds down low  
would ever arise

somewhere farther beyond your white roads chrisms  
we forgot that poetry is not prose  
and no longer gathered the rose upon rose

the once upons.  
now the prisms web breaks apart  
and with it the human heart and where

and what and how in Art will the angels come  
to trouble the springs again  
so that healing descends

when your voice is stilled  
when the news is all we know  
I cannot comprehend

only that vaguely

blue and darker blue with the dusk  
as your disguise the village from afar  
you view

and weep for Wales  
for all that meant to you.  
and we go casting about in sighs

mere ghosts of ourselves

forgetting what you knew.  
and that bright words, though few

are wise.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Emily Dickinson

she was writing for ghosts for the  
clocks in the hall or someone else's staircase.  
not at all thought the neighbors of anything

she said except that it was strange  
while she only dreamed of  
how to arrange words, thoughts, feelings

so beautifully, elegantly

not to be met with such disdain in even  
the smallest of tasks, gossiped about  
by even the rains perhaps she would have

smiled to herself, certainly  
by the satin denizens she commemorated

and even mocked at in a later age by Billy Collins  
in a ribald poem all the rage, a century plus removed.  
how could she have deserved a doom like this

I question but I keep it to myself.  
and feel her momentary presence  
in my room by the bookshelves

where I'm learning to spell her out  
a little, I think and wish oh wish her well  
the bride the bride

of Poetry itself in this or any other Day  
(I hope to catch  
her bouquet...)

mary angela douglas 16 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Everything Beautiful That Was Made

we were the waifs of a language that was jeweled

I hear the poets ghosting it as a rule

just after dusk

and in November's spareness and in God I trust

I learned enough in school to know

they were cruel in their time

to the garret prone.

those who ate three meals at home or going out and more

with the port wine included, the Madeira.

I don't know anything about that.

or not that has been made

to live by the clock for most of my life

nickled and dimed but in love with the chimes

on holidays be that as it may with the tick or the tock

the fee simple.

I know a price has been paid

for everything beautiful that was made

long before it ever

showed up on the auction block.

mary angela douglas 25 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# For Harold Bloom

the maps to the poems have been lost!  
the king cried out in his sleep  
till his sleep was worn quite through

and cried in unison his  
royal shadows from the errant castle  
no longer that distinct- but doomed

to a strange obsolescence.  
never cried the Knight!  
till his last breath countering

the murky stream  
while dark angels proclaimed:

now you will weep no longer knowing why  
and the blizzards lock you out  
of the laceworks.

but I stood still in the clouded  
woods waiting for the vagaries to arrive,  
shaking their pearled manes-

did he exclaim? did I realize

or put another way, as all things will be, someday:  
I have come to this courtyard  
mused the merchant

to this particular courtyard and no other  
to the wild rose hedge  
glow in the snows;

cultivated roses, soothed the Invisible  
(editor of all fairy tales then) .  
anyway, he came. but then forgot to

pluck the rose and Beauty regardless of  
this at home may go on to lead

her ordinary ordinary life though

somewhere the silver bells peal out  
in ordinary time with a difference,  
tone, that some are

called out of the world to  
enjewel God and his prophets

or at least, the ornate calendars-  
supping on cabbage soup, dark bread.  
oh but he is a jewel on his own

I said (knowing that I remember  
the silver names of God  
and stand unshod on an

uncomprehending plain  
as if to say, I remember light  
when all is night and

we had lost our medieval way;  
tearful, not even hand in hand  
laid rail to rail in a fractured land

that Beauty may float over us unstilled  
in the kingdoms of our sleep

mary angela douglas 29 august 2015; 25 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Harold Bloom A Valediction Of Sorts

[music: Requiem, Gabriel Faure; Fanfare for the Common Man, Aaron Copeland]

the maps to the poems have been lost! the king cried out in his sleep till his  
sleep was worn quite through  
and cried in unison his royal shadows from the errant castle no longer that  
distinct- but doomed  
to a strange cried the Knight! till his last breath countering  
the murky stream while dark angels proclaimed:  
now you will weep no longer knowing why and the blizzards lock you out of the  
lace works.  
but I stood still in the clouded woods waiting for the vagaries to arrive, shaking  
their pearled manes-  
did he exclaim? and did I realize  
or put another way, as all things will be, someday: I have come to this courtyard  
mused the merchant  
to this particular courtyard and no other to the wild rose hedge  
glow in the snows  
soothed the Invisible(auditor of all fairy tales then) .  
pluck the rose and Beauty regardless of this at home may go on to lead her  
ordinary ordinary life though  
somewhere the silver bells peal out in ordinary time with a difference,  
some are called out of the world to enjewel God the works of God, of man written  
under duress against the exile  
of loveliness  
or at least, leaving the ornate calendars behind-sipping on cabbage soup, dark  
but he's a jewel all on his own  
I said (knowing that I remember the silver names of God and stand unshod on  
an  
uncomprehending plain as if to say, I remember light when all is night and we  
had lost our medieval way; tearful, not even hand in hand laid rail to rail in a  
fractured land  
that Beauty may float over us still, in the kingdoms of our sleep)

mary angela douglas 29 august 2015; 25 october 2019; 26 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Harold Bloom, Passing Away October 14 2019

FOR HAROLD BLOOM, PASSING AWAY OCTOBER 14 2019

the ghost of Autumn flits and you are no longer here but there

who thought it fit that you should cease now

has left the door open

and the classroom not so empty somehow

we wonder where you are

and hope you land

on the nearest star

and that you are welcomed

in the House of the poets you praised

your friends, mentors who passed away before you

the marvels of so many days, ages, epochs saved

oh nothing is in vain

despite all damning with reluctant praise

that you endured

how glad we are that you were here

and pray you're in a kinder sphere.

mary angela douglas october 19 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Helen Keller, Seeing All

spelling the blue clouds indistinguishable from skies

I may come to the sense of things seen never with my eyes

but understood

the leafblown missionary green of woods

the cinnamon fr earth, the blowing tide

the secret tolling of an inner bell

inside all spelling done

I had come to love so well

before they ever ever sang

to me the names of God the sweet mild sun

and then the floods came down

like liquid doves fluttering

in the touch of water and vividness arose

to link my heart to the name of the rose

the utterance divine, all things now

beneath their shapes reveal

the cut of orange and the orange peel

the waves of light illimitable

the message of small birds

the weight and heft of language

on the things unheard.

mary angela douglas 24december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Ireland Always

FOR IRELAND ALWAYS

three silver stories have I kept  
and the Trinity rising  
the Trinity rising like spelled seas wept

the grey seas, the ceaseless seas  
and the ones of fallow green  
the feather edged without flying,

the ragged seas of departing,  
the inconsolable isles.

spell is my heart the colour of roses  
the rose thorned overcome  
the moon waxing in the time of diamonds

three stories and the silver branching  
branching of the mysteries and of the  
winter soul, the winter soul besides, abiding

the deprivation of maytimes.  
the grey seas and the turning into the green wave spent  
I have lent all our jewels out, sighed the princess in exile

the prince on the white road mourned and fallen into  
three stories and they unchanging and more-  
unchanging as God and the Trinity rising

and the rose road wept and the thorns overcome.  
I have kept I have kept all the Kingdoms come  
through the ageless days of the heart unremembered and

Time the trial extended through the reign of shadows.  
all under the renegade; stars the feeling of who you are  
who you were in the sainted beforelands

as you turn on the white road, flaring into diamonds  
as the roses beckon you full in bloom

as the piper's tune returns and the silver of home

and all of it in bloom  
and all of it in bloom.  
and spelling forever.

mary angela douglas 22 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# For Ireland Always (Final Draft)

three silver stories have I kept  
and the Trinity rising  
the Trinity rising like spelled seas wept

the grey seas, the ceaseless seas  
and the ones of fallow green  
the feather edged without flying,

the ragged seas of departing,  
the inconsolable isles.

spell is my heart the colour of roses  
the rose thorned overcome  
the moon waxing in the time of diamonds

three stories and the silver branching  
blanching into the mysteries and of the  
winter soul, the winter soul besides, abiding

the deprivation of may times.  
the grey seas and the turning into the green wave spent

I have lent all jewels out, sighed the princess in exile  
the prince on the white road mourned and fallen into  
three stories and they unchanging and more-

unchanging as God and the Trinity rising  
and the rose road wept and the thorns overcome.  
I have kept I have kept all Kingdoms One

through the ageless days of the heart unremembered and  
Time the trial extended through the reign of shadows.  
all under the renegade; stars, the feeling of who you are,

who you were in the sainted before lands  
as you turn on the white road, flaring into diamonds  
as the roses beckon you full in bloom

as the piper's tune returns and the silver of home

and all of it in bloom  
all of it in bloom and spelling,

Forever.

mary angela douglas 22 may 2018; 31 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Isak Dinesen, Her Incomparable Stories

threading words like pale pink diamonds

roseate through old demesnes

will the bearers of this message

sink or swim or just explain

will they vanish disappear

love the ghosts from nameless years

in the story find reprieve

in the richness of its seams

tidewater of the fading stars

does it mirror where you are

human hearts across the bar;

antiquated though it seems

just now waking from their dreams

bright enameled on each page

from a quite mercurial stage

from a realm none else could mine

looping shadows over time

quests forgotten lore renewed

emblematic of the few last- lost- curios...

chiming bells, an attitude

caught that moment in the light

anecdote or wrong set right

Edens green the long goodbye

will the princess even cry

there the countess, there the lie

there the vow that must not die

families of heraldic sin

ice floes at the story's end

when the sweethearts must depart

farther than the story's arc.

mary angela douglas 23 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For James Joyce At The Beginning Of Days, Or Near It

in the after winds of her, Maria Stella,  
he sees the small ships rise,  
the silver and the rubied and the dimming

surprise of the pearl coves opening  
and the hidden doors. and the whole of Dublin  
sea washed, as in a dream

the ruby ships of the children crest and the  
silver ones and he is all at sea and does not remember  
his dream or how he felt then

or what it was he wanted to be or

maria stella, queen of everything and of the fabled ships  
that fall away too soon. the silver and the rubied  
stream breaks off into the blanched thoughts in the afternoon  
where the orchards are razed in the snow blinds

when all is losing, lost and the cost of forgetting  
maria stella, queen of all winds and of the beginning when  
the small ships rise and the lore lies all before me when

prayer is love and love is prayer only  
it is only

the moonrise in her eyes  
and the harbor takes the little ships farther than the foam of  
those who left before rippling back now, for awhile, into the small coves  
in the pearl coves and it overflows and he cannot forsake now can he

the silvered and rubied brimming over, the ruins of the beautiful  
about his feet

in the shoals of his lost kingdoms

mary angela douglas 6 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Lake Wobegon, Disappearing...

for Garrison Keillor

the land is going away they cried  
let it be Green Ginger's then  
not appearing on all the maps

by the wayside fruit stands  
at the ESSO Stations where  
they wiped the windshields clear

with thick pink paper towels for free  
and dished out wintertime's  
Goodyear Christmas Carols

oh don't disappear and yet,

goodbye to the land  
rising in an apricot apotheosis, dear  
its cornstalks like the fiery golden spears

sometimes appearing  
in paintings of St. George and the Dragon.  
we will miss you when we're walking on

the air that's left  
when Beauty leaves the room

or on craters where the apple orchards stood  
in white pink radiance cadences of the blessed  
and it's not I that have a tear in my eye

or that myriad lakes have all dried up  
from ruthless second guessing  
for as yet the earth beneath them

mourns in a strange blue clay

remembering-  
but that the sum of all things,



mermaids turning to stone

they murder in this world

that find their place again  
down God's long  
golden road

still fills up my Soul.

mary angela douglas 4 december 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Martin Burke: Snow Dreamed

[for the fine Irish-Belgian poet, playwright Martin Burke, in memorium. and for his Marie-Anne]

snow dreamed.  
dreamed it could become white roses,  
lost brides

sudden angels.  
snow dreamed it was something else besides  
still somehow, snow

the flower without stem  
the pause in music;  
waiting to begin

floating it longed to fly

flying it longed to lie on fences,  
rooftops, to become the town  
the plains

never to turn to rain  
and weeping.  
snow dreamed and dreamed and dreamed

it was our sleeping

in bouquets extravagantly cold  
and danced on the mittens of little children.  
of ship avowals it dreamed at sea

and floating with the waves  
it disappeared and who could tell it then  
from foam

from Praise

and still, it dreamed until we all were snow

and delicate and forever  
branching and branching...

mary angela douglas 6 december 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# For My Sister Playing Her Chopin Ballade

[to Sharon, the sister of Music]

as if chandeliers were weeping, your ballade.  
I remember that feeling in our Grandmother's studio:  
your shimmering piano and the happiness that if

I asked you, you would play it again  
all that mimosa fond and fronded summer.  
and you drank Cokes incessantly

and never stopped practicing.  
now you are far, or seem to be-  
but I kept the gleams in that music, you know?

as in a fine handkerchief in their sleep  
knowing, inevitably, they must go  
the fairy tale travelers kept some golden souvenir

to remind them when they woke,  
that they were, most certainly, there.  
forgive me, anyone else, if I seem exorbitant in

my praise for her prismatic music, muse..

it's only that I thought if he were here  
again on earth, dear Frederic of  
the rain swept long agos, Forever

moving in sound as if from dark to Light-  
just hearing her play this way  
would break his heart.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# For One Coconut Cake From The 1950s

['Wouldn't it be sweet, ' mimicked Marjory, 'if we could have the moon and about twenty stars to play jacks with? ']

-Dandelion Cottage (a lovely children's novel by Carol Watson Rankin) ]

for one coconut cake from the 1950s  
with its solo ornamental maraschino,  
I would give a kingdom.

or for a german chocolate cake  
from 1961; perhaps, a few jacks  
glinting in the sun,

the porch we played on.  
or, better, the batters all put by,  
the lemon meringue

the chocolate ice box pie.

No! Wait!  
a princess gown, a real one  
straight from Fairyland

embroidered with the strands  
of all roses; moss velvet leaves.  
a sliver of moonlight,

wedding cake underneath all these,  
a cracker jack surprise?

eclairs, eclairs, a crystal stair...

but we delayed too long  
in the wishing time machine  
and woke up suddenly

from a really good  
(cream-filled)  
dream.

mary angela douglas 28 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## For Poetry

everything she held in her hands turned to snows;  
the starlight above diminishing where she had departed  
no longer sacrosanct in the little villages of the world.

and the evergreens shed needles under the moonlight's  
vast expanse and this was of her going; the trees weeping  
what they could; the little clouds leaving, with her,  
shod in her threadbare slippers of gold.

so diffident she had become, inured to Cold  
and begging for crumbs from the new.  
and in this vultured darkness some,

a lovely few-  
wept for what was lost.

in the accounting systems of the world  
who will account for this.  
Beauty spurned from door to door

the citadels closed.  
they will marshal  
their armies of words

(the ones that they have left.)  
and make new words, impossible to sing.  
and numbness will spread and get all the prizes.

and curl the lip and the modern mien  
as those of antiquity, the same, before us did:  
scorning true music and the Soul.

it is still the same she wept into hands of snow  
still.  
not vanishing...

mary angela douglas 9 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# For Ray Bradbury In His Immemorial Centennial Year

in the centennial year of your fire balloon, Life! , over an

horizon invisible drifting

in the year of the twining of green leaves over the avenues

still o Waukegan:

the census of shadows librarian-hushed

the dawns of summers made more heavenly on earth

by your prescient absence, Ray we remember

not only the stories but that they came from you

infused with eternal sunniness even in dungeons or up on

treeless Mars where we must be if we be at all the green

mornings ourselves or in many storied Araby or,

or carnival crowned, enamoured of

the baked bread aromas of home or the zig zag electric

loveliness, that Feeling: young or old, Chaplinesque, a trifle

whimsical after the manner of Pickwick or

with Icarus enthroned far from the green-blue, the troubling

seas

to be the first one up

to see the stars and street light diminishment.

there is no diminishment though you can't count time by

dandelions anymore by the vintage year stored.

but we can

when we read you still. and when,

treading on the mystical lawns.

we dream on.

mary angela douglas 28 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Robert Osborne, Monarch Of Movies

for Robert Osborne, In Memoriam d. march 6,2017

dreaming my dream as if it were an old movie  
in sepia tones or the interiors with the luxuriant  
contrasts

in a vast house of lamps with little prisms  
ornate mirrors, and corridors of snow  
or sunlit orchid paths or a lone hill

where the riders ride away.  
the riders ride away.  
it is sunset in technicolour

oh stay cry the summers from the page  
turned into films that we watch over and over  
but there is no delay

the old clocks tick and the cherry branches  
and the axe is at hand,  
the orchard stilled.

gone is the familiar presence  
and the rider on the hill.

mary angela douglas 20 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Sharon In Her Musical Displays

I wonder if we'll be on the other side of music one day

ushered in with pink programmes

or you will swing on the gate of it

as you did before, roller skating

in preludes, wading through scales., Scarlatti

geranium coloured.

will the notes sound like crystals

falling; will we still admire the azaleas?

will Grandmother spell out tone poems

while we listen to small records

of the great composers;

remember, when we're away

the reticence of Beethoven

how he was charged with Light

after the rains, the wind shaking the leaves free of raindrops.

will the sheet music be scattered through the rose garden

because we left the windows open

or glimpsed in the pink nightlight

short songs on the page, arranged.

our faces in cameo infant profile; the toy pianos at rest

and then, the almond trees somewhere,

blossoming.

it seems so distant now

the way we dreamed it then:

both hands on the keys

the gardenias, scented through the back screen door

now we are carried each on such a wave

through portals on a ship that wasn't there before

we never booked passage on.

you said in your sleep a baby corsage!

I know you must have in your rabbit dreams

with the guardian angels and the metronome;

this is Heaven

this is home where

music goes on and Mama sings our birthdays

rose light through the curtains in the afternoons.

may it always near the pines.

after a dry season

you will lift the piano lid

like a sunrise.

and small bouquets will arrive

for the recital.

mary angela douglas 14 january 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Sharon In Summer

you will dress in periwinkle perhaps  
pouring our tea from the Royal Doulton  
and we will eat little cakes

frosted in pink or white or chocolate  
with ice cream to match.  
Neapolitan, you sigh

and I rush out to a corner store  
in a perfect neighborhood  
where it's always on sale.

and now there's lemonade  
by the pail and  
sugared finely in the libby glass

tall and frosted while we watch

old movies and speak of the looking glass days  
remembering old dolls with fondness.  
then you say in a winsome way

there's only so many hours  
to practice in the day,  
even in hummingbird summers.

and you're on the way to your piano  
while I make other plans for leaving home  
not knowing there was so far left to go.

mary angela douglas 12 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Sidney Lanier

FOR SIDNEY LANIER

to Sidney Lanier for his poem The Marshes of Glynn

the rose refractions of this stained glass hour

fall about the grass in my tree cathedral

in the woods where in my mind

I always pray. in the midst of pines

in the later blue of the day

and with the twilight bells.

there in the long shadows of the moss green aisles

I lift my heart as once did Lanier in the Marshes of Glynn

and i seem to see him there

and his prayer is heavy with yellow stars

with yellow stars and the exaltations

of the marshes of glynn

and I in the scent of the pines remember everything

I ever heard have ever read of beauty.

beauty rarified in the stained glass hour

and now the stain of iris blue the purple of the evening hour

has hastened.



and I must haste too

though I dont know when from all these reveries

and the sound, the sounds of the marshes of glynn.

the birds arising.

mary angela douglas 8 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Stephen Hawking

perhaps he made up for us a little  
who waste so many chances  
to even look at the sky  
complaining in the traffic-about-  
the sun in our eyes-  
in all his wondering whys  
his looking back at the broken picture puzzle cracked as  
on a vast uncharted track, an endless spiraling,  
diamanded, past what anyone else would do  
should the thought even occur to them  
star mapping Time, first breath christening  
and paradoxical flowering into the  
personally catastrophic and then, to begin again  
as if it were music and the very first bar  
picking up the golden thread no one else perceived  
and leaving everything but his mind as collateral  
for all thieves and enforced loitering, demented roadblocks  
as perhaps the price to pay for meddling with the known  
conclusions of those who own the prize at the moment  
and will not let it go

how odd that he only burrowed farther on  
as if he nested then among the stars  
there being truly no alternative  
and the faraway look in his eyes hardening  
crystalized into  
the day before the day before..into a shoal of light  
no equations of the lost but a firmer step  
where for him there was no ground possible  
forming the formulated never yet conceived  
in syllables no longer couched  
in his own human voice  
and circumspect  
without real wings  
there being no other choice;  
shutting out all the noise of the self  
pitying possibilities  
ever more thickly befalling  
deformed in the outer world  
yet still his bow was bent and the golden  
arrows flew so straight  
past all anyone knew or could acknowledge, calculate

such a fate he had! and acceleration  
the riddle more and more beautiful as he  
climbed, nay, crawled toward the summits  
oh angel I will not let thee go  
except thou bless me  
to grasp the fantastic hold he had on measuring  
what couldn't be measured they said  
once they glimpsed he already had  
and were sore amazed  
oh let him be laid to rest on a boat of stars  
and rowed on the magic waters  
home.

mary angela douglas 18 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# For The Angels Dressed In Green

did children in another scene  
make jump rope rhymes of angels  
dressed in green

when they leaned too far over the edge  
of the poster board sea  
we painted tempera dark blue waves

and, quickly, a small boat outlined rose red  
on a sky blue cardboard in May, instead  
or just before summer

scissored shirt board cut outs  
emulating the paper doll sets of birthdays  
beloved

never seeing the soft pink sunsets accumulating  
as a problem in arithmetic  
the recurrences of Spring

as a whittling down of our singing life is but a dream  
in rounds where  
white candles and the veil implicit

of our childhood dreams  
our Paramount.  
I know where they are now

I said to a roomful of scientists in my dream  
a convention onTime  
but they didn't believe me.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2018; rev.17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# For The Clouds As They Slip From View

everything then belonged to our backyard  
complete with even our very own moon!  
and you too clouds we saw you every day

after school as though you were waiting for us  
until the bell rang before you started drifting again.  
I didn't know you died when it rained

and that it wasn't really you the next day.  
I always thought it was you, only, maybe a little pinker  
a lot more fanciful.

oh you had your moods we knew that from  
watching The Wizard of Oz every Easter on T.V.  
and timed our chores so that tornadoes would

never come. we'd made a pact with God  
that if we finished our Saturday chores at lightening speed  
there'd be no cyclones. at least, not in Little Rock.

I wonder if we were the only ones who thought of you  
that way: light, yet constant, still, only you

in your souffle and lovely in any weather  
will you be for some other children one day,  
when we're disappearing, too?

mary angela douglas 3 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# For The French Majolica Plate With Or Without Strawberries

perhaps you were painted for the Queen of Summer  
in the dead of winter  
so she wouldn't feel nostalgic

for the bright teas under the shade trees,  
the little cakes.  
for she had far to go

in a cherry frock with lace of snow  
a petticoat, little shoe of pale blue satin.  
oh could you break in two

would you be her heart  
in pieces of french majolica?  
on the shores of a kingdom

partial to strawberry vines.  
let it be written in dust  
on the neglected pianos

by those in slightly modern times

that she sang like a thousand larks  
or like the summer rains  
and cherished strawberries overmuch,

overripened, with cream or without  
and served on French Majolica.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# For The Moment, A Sanskrit Illumination

for the moment, a Sanskrit illumination-

and clouds slip over a polished moon  
they are throwing voices on the  
surface of things

I am dying from the sand of all  
replies

but this condensation of infinite  
sadness

diamond by diamond, will appear  
much more like love than  
evanescence

so many light-year generations later-

mary angela douglas 25 november 2001

Mary Angela Douglas



# For The Romantic Poets In The Dissatisfied Light Of Post Modern Poetry

dry sticks in the wind,  
how have they made this from your music?  
I can't pretend to like them for it.

once the skies were ours  
the rainbow gleaming dome  
and the multifaceted shone

even in a single dewdrop  
and the blown rose.  
but they have bundled you off

to the ragmen of the soul  
for pennies on the dollar  
I never owned.

what's owning for  
if you lose this?

what will you tell your children's children  
when they come to find  
the trees stripped bare in summers

in a world of care,  
I would ask them if I thought  
they could listen and, if, I dared.

let the sere winds blow the betrayals away.  
God speaks still in the solitary ear

unquenchable gold and always,  
glistening

mary angela douglas 22 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

## For This

for this I came onstage she thought  
perhaps, towards the end  
of the production

in a small part, with infrequent lines  
to embroider rosebuds in the corners  
of my mind as though my mind were

a cloud and very fine  
superfine they might complain  
but here I am to braid the rains

the silver with the silver  
plum with plum in the afternoon  
or to run on the plains at recess

when the day is done with the  
jeweled bridle slipping a little:

a wild pony so that after years  
when it may be difficult to walk  
you will remember running like that

as you remember Easter hats with cherries  
strawberries in high season, sugared, creamed  
and reading poetry out loud not to any crowd

just in your room pale blue with the white curtains  
stirring in the winds coming through  
to hear what you would do with Keats, with

Elizabeth Barrett Browning with a thousand sounds  
with their jeweled awnings stretched over you  
as though you were the bride, and the canopy, music.

I was here she breathed through the mists  
in after years to embroider small rosebuds in the world  
on an imagination lost at sea so that children after me

arising from a dreamless sleep might wake and see again  
a sail! a sail!  
even from a landlocked window

and exclaim  
all this, is ours, forever, honeyed hours  
and beauty after pain

to find this out is  
why we came

mary angela douglas 11 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770)

Il pleure dans mon cœur...'  
-Paul Verlaine (after Rimbaud)

Thomas Chatterton the rain  
runs in rivulets off the roof  
and down the colors of dreams

so obliquely  
this distilled  
you might remember

Thomas Chatterton  
youngest brother to amending music,  
so unmended

is it always raining  
at the back of every poem  
and just for you?  
with your antique pen brand-new

your last loaf hard  
as brickbats-  
steeped in documents  
of moon-drenched moment;

rosebud, salient madrigal

these small strawberries  
in the grass  
I've picked for you

your eyes pooled with treasure  
only you could name.  
forgive all lack of feeling:

the forgeries of the cold;  
all those who meant to read you  
whole-heartedly.

bless from your starry attic  
those who followed you, too late  
the rain in this poem

and all others

mary angela douglas 1 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Those I Tried To Find

for those I tried to find but then the way doubled back:  
the cornstalks rose above the roiling fields  
the house we knew with the little porch

disappeared and at my back  
all trace of every summer thing I knew  
I tried to find through thickets of the years

the old castles

and wept while slogging on  
that in such disarray cruel storms removed  
the hay pitched sun.

where roses blew,  
now there were thorns.

I have torn have torn my only heart  
and bent my back under the gloom  
knowing that what was once, must

still be there, though far from view.

are you alive? I call to the fairytale statues  
under enchantment, bright as the singeing air:  
are you alive?

yet there's no answer there

Mary Angela Douglas 11 May 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Those I Tried To Find (Second Version)

for those I tried to find but then the way doubled back:  
the cornstalks rose above the roiling fields  
the house we knew with the little porch

disappeared and ah, alack,  
all trace of every summer thing I knew.  
I tried to find through thickets of the years

the old castles

and wept while slogging on  
that in such disarray, cruel storms removed  
the hay pitched sun.

where roses blew,  
now there were stinging nettles.

they have torn my only heart  
and bent my back under the gloom  
ill showing that what was once, must

still be there, so far from view.

are you alive? I call to the fairy tale statues  
under enchantment, bright as the singeing air:  
are you alive?

yet there's no answer there

mary angela douglas 11 may 2015 rev.27 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

## For Those I Tried To Find (Third Version)

for those I tried to find but then the way doubled back:  
the cornstalks rose above the roiling fields  
the house we knew with the little porch

disappeared and ah, alack,  
all trace of every summer thing I knew.  
I tried to find through thickets of the years

the old castles

and wept while slogging on  
that in such disarray, cruel storms removed  
the hay pitched sun.

where roses blew,  
now there were stinging nettles...  
they have torn my only heart

came the cry suddenly  
out of the dawning dark

bending my back under the gloom  
ill showing that what was once most fair  
must still be there so far

from view.

are you alive? I call to the fairy tale statues  
under enchantment, bright as the singeing air:  
are you alive?

yet there's no answer there

mary angela douglas 11 may 2015 rev.27 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# For Those Who Wrote The Poetry Of Rain

for those who wrote the poetry of rain

as if they mingled with it I write

each small refrain for those

who spoke in the language of clouds

I whisper this aloud

and with the wind to them I send

each line's regal end

that is no ending.

for those who lived

the fragrance of the rose

the root the stem

the metamorphosis and then who

could who did dispose

with one phrase a world of woe

I dedicate my life as Rilke said

far beyond strife to live and

to go on knowing.

words, as the vessels of the Lord

contain all Beauty.

and enduring love.

mary angela douglas 8 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# For Trilby My Ruby-Eyed Stick Horse, Wandering

to Trilby, the ruby-eyed: long may you ride!  
my pearl bright stick horse, across the grasslands  
where the myths abide; the good ones with

the halos; no longer on earth.

I understood the meteoric flash of your side eyes  
set in felt, sidereal;  
impatient, the faery bells on your bridle

only I could see.

and here, when I am home and by myself  
and not that far from childhood, yet-  
the stir of something in the twilight air

still lets me know you're out there,  
nuzzling the lilacs, eating the blue asters.

through the window I will go  
as down the slides, I used to-  
in quilted slippers from last Christmas

for one last ride beneath  
the custard stars-

mary angela douglas 3 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Foresighted Christmas Too Late For The Time Machine

we piled the tiny oranges high  
in the produce section:  
ripe, bright, of molded plastic.

the steaks, fine cuts that couldn't be  
eaten with knife or fork ever.  
there, on the meat counter

where the smaller dolls shopped.  
ringing it all up,  
and the canned goods with colourful labels

finger nail sized-with nothing in them but  
doll air.

if I had known how many in-between times  
there would be;  
in-between jobs, in the future,

hardly tiding us over, maybe  
I would have traded that Christmas toy in,  
that shiny grocery store with its white

plasticine counters

so darling, built to scale-  
for shelf stable groceries  
a twinkie or two and

astronaut food; whole

boatloads of Tang  
breakfast drink  
with the concomitant fruit filled

toaster pastries; meek  
doughnuts powdered with sugar snows;  
mercury dimes for the Operator

for calling Home.

but I don't think so.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Forever

should they be printed on paper as soft as rose petals,  
more precious to us they could not have been,  
the old stories...

the ones, a kingdom to themselves, appearing  
through a dense childhood fraught with angelic light  
when in the wood oh child your hair gets

tangled with the moon and dawns cannot come too soon.  
there the owl glints, eyes of the rubied stone.  
oh but you were never far from home, only

turn the page;  
all monsters subside.  
and it is you, for certain,

in a carriage of gold,  
a bouffant dress to match overlaid with constellations,  
catching all the bouquets

you can, turning wintertime  
to Spring with a wave of your delicate hand and  
bidding adieu to the ghost orchids,

a vagrant servitude,  
Forever.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Forever Unable To See The Stars As They Were

after reading Rilke I thought now we are

embroidered on his far distances, not our own, ,

the encroaching stars

the angels at Eden

where it all burst into bloom

Rilke, the trees whispered then

and the wind arose the interstellar

space the unutterable flowered between us:

the collapses endured in childhood, winged.

oh how will we sing this, forever translating hymn

his song upon song enfolded

vast, petals of the Rose...

infolding now in us, but first,

in him.

mary angela douglas 18 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Forgive Me If I Remain Ignorant

forgive me if I remain ignorant  
of the routes of silk, of spices  
of the rise and fall of the dreaming child

while gathering into my silver baskets  
all possible birdsong.

forgive me for vanishing so often

in the schoolroom

or far from the working day

into the reveries

hidden within clay

journeying to the center

of my imagined earth

and overfond of ferns

while they forever whisper

when will she ever learn.



I learned to ask this thing

how can stars be so vast

and the working day so small

so petty as not to be seen

though magnified to unwarranted sheen

forgive me for failing the eye test

on these and other things

Deemed Important by Our Leaders.

the most brilliant, in any room.

what is freedom for sometimes I think

if not to wool gather gold

or like Poe, to contemplate El Dorado

urging the mists forward;

the horses forever mired in mud.

or what is this republic anyway

all republics foundering in their cloudless Day  
when they mark a trail far from God.

maybe it's that way, finally,  
everything goes astray

but the republic of music  
of High and Intractable Song

all possible birdsong and  
the heart appeased  
if not, nations.

mary angela douglas 31 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Forgive Us Lord That So Many Things

forgive us Lord that so many things

seem infinitely more lucrative, you can't miss,

a sure fire thing

than your lovely banished Wing

still hovering near us banded with o! all rainbows.

what do we do we are like infants still

not knowing what we want

and cross with every thing

and spoiling our dinner.

let us remember Who you are

the One who made the Star, all roses

planets and ordained

that we should dream to ride the wind

I do. under the shelter of your Wing

and only then

mary angela douglas 10 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

## Forgotten Waltz No.2 (After Liszt)

subsiding in the crystal wave,  
the mermaid turns of phrasing  
let us renounce  
while we still can

the plated words, the minimal things to say  
that wear off quickly and betray-  
while the heart's

own music is buried.

oh when  
will the jeweled cathedral

rise  
from the lake of mere forgetfulness;  
the sword be taken back

from the glistening hand-  
and who told you

the prospering word,  
laconic  
day was gold-

and a necessary armour?

mary angela douglas 3 september 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Four Horsemen Will Not Ride Tonight

Four horsemen will not ride tonight  
a cowboy sang to the lone and yellow stars  
I imagined it this way

a night he could not rest, a Christmas Eve  
and the steeds are restless  
and the cattle moan

as if they expected  
the worst snows ever  
the blizzards of millennial proportions.

Four horseman may not ride tonight  
he sings to the velvet shadows  
from his soul

the one of woe, the one that splits the skies  
the one of disastrous enterprise  
the one of sundering flame

sweet Jesus looking down  
remember my refrain and

turn them down another road  
and take from us this heavy load  
who roam and guard

your Plains.  
lest the bitter world

remain.

Mary Angela Douglas 8 July 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Four Summers Gone Now

(birthday eve poem for a Mr. Ray Bradbury)

ripping the bandaid off of the end of summer  
did you wince then at the sudden snows  
or just drift out your own windows

as if you were the which of an October wind?  
and it should just be snowing stories  
but it's not I thought

when they said on the news that you  
had gone and, later on, that the lemon house  
stood less than empty

now that they had razed it-  
as if they could, raze moonlight  
or the golden groves not

come up again;  
give us a spade, a small blue pail  
we will find your China

just as you painted it  
on the other side of Time  
and mermaids too

and this Ray Bradbury is

my fishtale poem for you  
if you cherry fizz please;  
on your third invisible birthday party shore or

birthday eve...where it must be snowing ice cream  
at least, where you are, by now  
and cakes galore!

mary angela douglas 21 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Fragment For Rilke Inlaid By Akhmatova And Dante

the last Christmas train has left the station.  
beatitude is drifting with the sun.  
all things have gathered flight  
for the last poets rising  
on a golden wind  
now that frost has cut the  
moon out of the skies.

and the snow in the heart keeps sifting down  
keeps sifting down  
all along the kleig-white evenings  
where you whispered to yourself  
and the First Angel, out of hearing  
I am no longer cold.

mary angela douglas 13.14.,19 january 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Francis Thompson On The Vision Of Thomas Chatterton

where will I go, I implored Him,  
to the strange warehouses of the world?  
and hide my griefs in a thicket of sand

or sink with the river beyond commands  
finding in its depths no christening  
but the means to evade in death

the details of my unease.  
and then a golden light increased  
oh inexplicable constellation;

not regret, but some other thing  
and Chatterton spoke to dread  
on the miserable turf

and I saw him stay my hand  
and heard him reprimand like birdsong  
filtered through

the chill of tubercular mists  
on the waterfront...  
self slaughter.

stay, came the voice  
as if allied to gold  
still young and laced with tears

or the lost years will infuse  
your reveries in the underworlds  
and poetry will go on

without you  
covering the names of angels in your head  
as if Spring were suddenly reft

of all her flowers.

and language itself were dead...

mary angela douglas 5 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Friends

you think you are spoken to as if you mattered  
then you find you're a backdrop, stage prop, sugar pop  
a thing perhaps bribed with candy or

useful to know.  
the wind blows.  
the sun shines.

the flowers smile.  
think about this, for awhile.

what do they ever ask you in return.  
count them friends.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# From Far Away The Visionary Bird

for E. Nesbit and her Phoenix

from far away the visionary bird

carried his fan of purple and of gold

the turquoise ringing

and the seeing emerald; his air of regality.

his stare from other realms.

what is it You have made what does it signify

I asked the blank and wounded skies

at the bus station or on the tavern green

where God watched over our demise

the seen and unseen and the subpar

who must be carted out

the bird with so many feathered eyes

how much it has to see

and stand in peculiar intensity on the redeveloped sidewalks

and float into flow chart reality and, misery

strange memo to the shackled in the holy grind

the managers of space and time and those at the exit

interviews as if announcing the slaughtered kingdoms

forever denied and to sigh we have risen,

despite it all and come for the disinherited.

I am the creature tearfully

He could never explain to the angels

to productive mankind and those

not pulling their weight berated

that in all He has made there is this something

out of an enchanted wood we cannot pay for;

and yet it exists

though it's not on the List:

other than and it is myriad

and it is our souls

beyond the fight or flight

or the stakeholder's claim

or the 10 year plans

or the capital gains

beyond an extravagance unnamed, unnameable

not in the budget

we have no way to gauge

a creature that fantastic what it lives on,

on its own dais making its way

through our urbanity, our mockery

and so out of predicted range and sustainability

how can it even exist without our say so oh

if we discount the beautiful

what have we to say

it beggars all plausibility

how could we fetter God this way

in our rubber stamped parades

watching a peacock emerge ethereal

from out of the chilling rains.

mary angela douglas 8 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# From My Own Rose Tree Petals Sifted

from my own rose trees petals sifted  
downwind of the unpetaling moon  
all that's silver's cast up again too soon

on the farther shores of darkness  
I cried or someone else  
harkening to the larking green.

the unseen children wept  
while we told ghost stories  
in a modern age.

you have hidden your rage  
in old rooms I said to them;  
the ones patterned with rose trees

on the sliding walls  
with a thin stripe of green.

mary angela douglas 30 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# From The Place Of Exile To The Pearl Ear Of God

why did the golden place flee into our dreams and lodge there

never to be seen again on earth

how we have wept for you, invisible country

how we have laid rose petals down and our lives

to make the magnetizing path for you again

the shadows of you have withdrawn inside of us

fleeing the persecutions

but even your shadows are light.

who will take the baby from its mother at the time of birth

will understand what has been done to us

and the murderers thrive

even after the Lord has risen.

roll the stone from over my mouth

and cry to the earth and sky

we LIVE

we LIVE

we LIVE

mary angela douglas 23 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# From These Dark Angels

Lord God of hosts deliver us

from these dark angels hovering near

ruling the precincts of our fear;

from tides we cannot see

but feel when we are afflicted unreasonably

despite all signs of progress in the West

despite the faith that we confess

invisible armies gather innumerable

and lay siege.

you know of these by rank and each as each

we cannot see them

yet we feel

an unexpected gloom and powerless to wield

as you the right commands to sunder them in two.

let them be banished from this blue green earth

before the accomplished time

we are sick from the dearth of it all

and we are small

to fight against invisible things.

and we are Thine.

let your bright rings dapple the earth and sky  
and ripple through it all  
the music we first heard  
from every leaf and bird  
restore to us, o God we pray  
in everything we think or say  
the garden invincible  
at first we thought we knew  
would always be ours,  
with You.

mary angela douglas 27 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# From Which He Cannot Hide

He is Who He is.

we didnt create Him.

how backwards the story

has become

and inside out,

how will we wear our souls

how small are we seen from the other side

seen in the mirrors of our antlike pride

and gnatlike in the frame how long

will we remain

the Ice Queen's tiny puzzle

on a chain, the least

of all that He has made

in our ridiculous disdain.

how large His tears

that could all oceans make

and from all glaciers flow

flooding the stars

who do we think we are to barter him

for anything at all

who gave us everything

and never asked for it back

who flows beyond reason into the stupid cul de sac

where we abide and chide and chide Him

who is only Love

hurling our insults from which He cannot hide.

mary angela douglas 7 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Full Magic Dwells With Him

to C.S. Lewis

and to Dr. Louis Markos for the intensified magic of Lewis - reinterpreted

above all, to Our Lord and King...

full magic dwells with Him  
the greening of the stars  
the rose unclosed bright as the infant snows

and rainbow beading rain all  
diamond shot on the windowpanes  
half fruitless we will load thick with

the Christmas stencils, holly flamed  
or muted green of pine; the bells we  
cannot name, the faery foam of Time

that's disappearing here  
and funneled where?  
on dreaming's other side?

the back of the mirrors?  
in the King's library under lock and key?

though Rose be  
crimson as the heart yet stilled  
we are by the perfumes spilling

endlessly on the winds:  
His secret lilies.  
dwell apart

and so must we  
to see beyond seeming.  
He glides there too

adown the merest molecules of light  
is flight itself oh fly from us never

for I fear the night is coming when it's

dream on dream suspended: in This,  
our Heaven and our wilderness until

beyond the windowsills of all our dreaming  
full magic is forever upon us and more  
than Once Upon...

mary angela douglas 25 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Fusillade

wars are all around us.  
in the small offices.  
in the family room

with its advocado carpet or

out in the yard,  
at the party with the Chinese lanterns  
and the fondue.

a subtle sigh can do you in;  
an arched brow,  
the horrible now

when the earth sinks in with you in it;  
and many gape jawed witnesses  
taking notes behind the shrubbery for future reference or:

the upset stomach, churning

later, after the words sink in  
with their hidden fangs at 3 a.m.,  
their toothy smiles reinterpreted;

the sneer disguised so thinly  
as a compliment;  
the hidden barrage of lies

starting with one pale thread  
that unravels as  
you travel out of the labyrinth

and toward a few serene stars.  
or dream that you are.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Galileo, Galileo

working through these endless  
accusations, I leaned my  
cheek against my hand I  
dreamed of your absconded kingdoms.

I walked on clouds.

losing ground before your  
last appearance, I renounced  
the court astronomers, those

managers of light disparaging  
the sun of Your heart in mine:  
so bright  
so bright and so  
incapable of being bought off

mary angela douglas 29 march 2002

Mary Angela Douglas

# Galoshes

will it snow stars when we get there  
my sister perhaps asked me  
when we get to the end of the story

on a day Cinderella was dressed in blue  
at least, we thought so  
having decided on different hues for

her on different days  
though really there were probably only the two outfits  
in most paper doll sets:

the rag she wore around the house  
to do the housework for the grumpies  
and the one the godmother summoned

all spangly from the air.

yes it will snow stars we declared  
and so it would happen.  
and we'll arrive at the depot

in our crystal shoes  
or the version of them  
Grandmother found

in the rz  
Christmas Catalogue.  
let's go look for presents

she enthused (not Grandmother, but  
my sister) since her  
favorite thing to do

her face all sticky  
with candy cane, the odd petit four

was rummaging while  
Grandmother taught the pianoforte.

so we did, and Grandmother, unaware

and found them everywhere.

so we expected Life to be:

all presents in unexpected corners

snow tinsel falling out of the skies

and we're prepared

good Brownies we were and wise

amid all falling stars-

ready for anything,

in our crystal galoshes.

mary angela douglas 31 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Game Shows

must we dance only for prizes

must we sing only for fame

must our lullabies and our crises

be a ticket into the Game.

I would rather be obscure

living on without a name

then to schill in those dead gardens;

out promoting summer rains.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Gazing At Flowers In My Fading Floral Dress

gazing at flowers in my faded floral dress

maybe we make a poem in this public garden

fading to future fading, addressed

and the skies are fading too

into a watered silk blue near the hyacinths

as they are fated to.

yet, they are new oh watershed

within my heart,

fresh fountains flow

and not as in Dowland.

if you knew brief casual passersby

the freshness of the gardens there...

but you are unaware

and see if you see at all

just one in an old dress shrinking

among bright roses

and perhaps feel irritable

at the contrasts.

mary angela douglas 28 august 2018/rev.4 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Gerda Not Yet Among The Roses

[wintersong from The Snow Queen...]

your dress with its apron of  
out of the way stars  
is starched with snows

the whirling hours prolong

your dance in reindeer shoes, fur lined;  
the dance of knowing not yet what to do  
the robbers' daughter left behind for you:

the dance of half remembering

the one you seek.  
it's far away the lime leafed summers grieve  
the little lanes, the balconies between:

and in their mirror's mirrored ponds you find

the glazing of your soul at rest  
as it was then in once upon a time  
before God gave you this unwieldy quest;

before you'll turn the corner of the Blessed  
and find the puzzle melting- ah! its cruel surmise...  
the childhood different than the rest

by virtue of the tears you've cried...  
all your brave wandering into dread  
awakening among the dead.

mary angela douglas 19 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Getting Out Of The Ruins While It's Still Dark

getting out of the ruins while it's still dark

we fed our last sweet crumbs to the moonlit birds

this is the last of the cherries I said

when I was speaking in the colour red

and telling times by twos.

what did you learn in school

I learned tea set rules, to model in clay and

how to be somewhere else all day

and that the pelting of words

felt like sleet coming down, stray marbles

thrown at the visionary weddings

the sudden quizzes, quizzical;

fractions, sweetly the conjugations of llorar.

even with aprils sweeping through the yard

this is the last of the dreams my star; I said to you,

be careful with it.

mary angela douglas 5 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Getting Through The Day

[for Thomas Merton]

melodious the patriarchs we revered  
disappearing into corners of the break rooms  
where we hid their scripts

from the this and that  
of the things we ought to say  
when being evaluated for

the 15th time that day  
but in our heads auld chants  
we played and roundelays

all rose bright and with marigolds entwined  
when sorting out the twine from the nails  
and listening for the sound of the rails

beyond the vending machines implore.  
the endless stream roved on  
beneath it all...

in winter working in the drafty halls  
inured to everything till Spring  
or the bookstores opened

up like pirate treasure  
in the Malls, or metro stops galore  
paid for, by the way

with temporary employment  
living in a postage stamp apartment  
where we hoarded up

the eternities; the memories of God.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ghost On Ghost, November In The Woods

ghost on ghost, November in the woods

and bubbling up through heavy mist

their voices little understood

I think I hear something of their blunted songs

and I drift on too.

we want to go to the beginning of the measure

to play it perfectly through

but there's no concert but the dew

the mold impenetrable fog

the sun trying to get through

to you in clouds of amethyst

a birthstone lost among the leaves.

how is it so easy to get turned around here

to be going around in the circle of yourself

a lonely treble and no staff at all

or the self you think you knew; you used to Be.

but we are vanishing banished through and through

because we loved the purple words best

and would not recant.

the ants are frozen in their small

huts of rust coloured sand

I think I know who I am again

the balletic poem turned out.

how lovely this illusion is

and ever may be

while it lasts but the song is overcast.

only the plain remain.

we are not in the land we think we were

and all the leaves whirl up

and cover the sun.

mary angela douglas 14 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ghost Ships I Have Seen

ghost ships I have seen  
in my own time  
not in my time

the sequined rigging of the stars  
and cast away farther than the mind  
can go.

ghost ships, in the snows of  
Christmas departing  
where we no longer wait

for the Rose of all roses  
unfolding.  
so we have gathered to the heart

the bridal finery that disappears  
in contravening years  
and stood at the docks until

there was no more light to see by.  
there was no more sea.

Mary Angela Douglas 17 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ghosts Around The Altars (With Chrysanthemums)

will they remember that we were here?  
their voices souged around old houses  
growing farther than this, away,

into deeper mists, try to remember this  
that once we played near the shade trees  
venerable, even then-

trees they are loping down now  
and the branching shadows  
to make way for whatever it is

they are always making way for.

then, let there be ghosts of trees  
said the drizzling winds  
I brushed aside

fearing their tears.  
let there be ghosts of roses, grasslands, sun motes,  
ghosts of years.

ghosts of brides  
and of their rhinestoned shoes.

soon too soon will you  
no longer long for your place in the Scheme,  
the coach lined with green silk and the

plumed horses;  
all landmarks having vanished with their  
gleams

where the wind has gone.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Gingerbread With Silver Beaded Buttons

gingerbread with silver beaded buttons  
I was given once in exile  
between jobs

and in the rains  
and it was almost worth  
the fairytale feeling that ensued when

I was given gingerbread and bright paper  
icons of the Greek Orthodox Faith  
and I went home

to the little apartment I was receiving eviction  
notices for every month which had not come to pass  
due to delaying kindness yet

put me in mind of Dostoyevsky's executions  
in the prison yard that kept on being announced  
and then canceled,

and Lord, I pray, sustained on your gingerbread still  
that those who say evil against those who are kind  
be exiled in the rains the beautiful rains

that will wash all cruelty from their lips  
and then, will you feed them on honeycakes.  
so that their speech no longer wounds us.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Gingham

can anyone surpass the glory of sandwiches  
wrapped in wax paper  
the pink lemonade cake on the

silver cakestand?  
and you're dressed in a gingham plaid dress well sashed  
rushing in after school to the birthday

of all pinkitude courtesy of Grandmother.  
here we would repose forever in the kingdom of Rose

I would have wished if wishes had been  
clearer then.  
as it is I see it still on transparencies

when I cast back again  
with a jeweled rod to hook

one scene after the other  
mercurial, not cast in stone  
but wearing, like gingham, well

after many washings on my own  
autumn sunned in a pinafore wind.

mary angela douglas 18 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Give Them No Pillow For Their Heads Even Of Granite

give them no pillow for their heads even of granite  
haul them away with their unearned wreaths of laurel  
suspend their lousy pay:

let the chorus that surrounds their evacuated stage surge on

as though they were freshly laid and left to crows  
let carrion tribunals be gathered in this bold update  
send their angels away

who are they to receive the honour  
of having their death masks made  
lay not the sweetheart's myrtle wreath

in any possible proximity

before them though they were only pawns to other men's say so..  
or called up as surrogate victims. fodder for the profiteers  
ah ah shed no shed no tears

let their names unheralded be not even what snows can whisper over  
and glaring light henceforth reveal only the shame  
of the remains of blank pedestals and the petals scattered

in futility over their marred shadows.

we want it that way o we do  
the harrowing left to us anew  
the bereaving left to

court the air who knows where  
the harbours in this disappearing act after the fact  
the drowning columns.

though in leafy shade  
they had long been ignored by passerby  
part of the background of days and artifacts

forever at their backs

the nightmare trumpets in retreat  
fanning the night. the awol and the mad children.  
stumbling the other way over brier and branch  
wild in their tears

the unpensioned in no flight.

their pension their preamble too.  
let them never breathe stone breath again

now never laid to rest by our decree  
as though Christ had never come.  
and Lincoln never said with charity with  
malice toward none, let us bind up the wounds of the nation...

in this new shunning.  
the childish drummers stilled.  
broken. stone stubble in the fields.

mary angela douglas 4 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Glasstown But Not The Brontes

the glass soldiers broke while I looked on;  
standing in pieces on the ground  
and overhead a droning sound

and in my heart, a blankness.  
you talk around me in the frozen air  
while my breath clouds the windowpane

and all your talk of guilt and blame  
rolls down the glass in streaming rains  
and winter dreariness.

you will say that I broke them on purpose  
when you find me.  
I will lose my chance

at blackberries for supper;  
an extra scoop of dream.  
do I seem to you that ragged?

I am a glass soldier too;  
the shards all driven inward.  
what war did I ever start.

mary angela douglas 22 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Glimmer

teachers tell me I have used this word too much  
as if it could wear out  
but there's no other word in English

for the light that glitters about which  
you are not sure and could not answer  
if the question were put to you

in front of the whole class:  
What Is Its Source.  
you'd swallow the gold

and keep a gilded silence  
and yourself to yourself  
knowing you cannot say:

from hidden kingdoms

a charged beam has strayed  
and escaped certain tyranny revealing  
that pathway of moonlight

across the counterpanes so that  
children wander in a vast sleep  
where every tree is...

everything they see is...  
glimmering

mary angela douglas 2 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# God Hoards Us: We Are His Gold

to Edward Taylor, Anne Bradstreet, John Donne

God hoards us: we are His gold  
or could be, if we wished it so  
on earth oh let such wishing grow

from cockle shell earliest and row by row;  
so stood the angels snowing in a vast array  
above the head of Jacob where he lay

pillowed on stone  
and caught up in the mysteries  
that glided on the ladders made of light.

God hoards us: we are troth  
pledged, bartered, bought so holy John Donne  
came to know, and not so late

we are His best bell rung if only  
Christ's best bride we stand:  
just, pearled, appareled in a field lily faith  
before the last gate closing.

and in unnumbered songs our earliest poets wrote  
in gilded script I long for still  
though hordes deride.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# God In Our Infancy So Real

who else could write in purple ink on clouds of gold

when we were only barely four or five years old

or send our shadows sideways in the past

when we were playing tag on dew drenched grass.

or singing carols in a stained glass light

or hearing angel lullabies so faintly

late at night.

without theology, or saying our prayers right.

we did our best to bless the trees and sky

and pray for all who loved us by and by

we drifted in our dreams. and watched the rain

pour silver into streams and down the sleep filled lanes

and felt the kingdom radiant of His shadow ease

small childhood pains

from our cribs; the creche and manger comfort

that was His

when gazing out the window at the stars

and feeling sure he couldn't be that far

we knew Him early; still his moonlit wayward

children oh we are.

mary angela douglas 27 may 2020; rev.1 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# God Is Not A Game Show Host

God is not a game show host:

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

there to give you what you wish

Spin the wheels and you are rich

He who made the sun and stars

there to shower you with cars

He who made the angels sing

there to pluck you diamond rings.

nothing in this world compares

just to knowing that He cares.

go out on a shopping spree

if that's all you want to be.

as for me, I'd rather have

God as He is

not a wheedled Dad.

mary angela douglas 29 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# God On His Long Trek Recognized

is the gold of His tears remembered  
slipping from the sun  
from distant clouds

from everyone  
from leaves the colour of honey  
is He letting go

of all He knew of us  
before the rainbows set in  
or can He be a friend

to us  
who turn the other way  
as night can turn to snowblind day

where it is continuing to snow  
and cover our tracks so  
that it's needless looking back

and we can't hear Him in  
the arctic winds, His colours  
brandishing weeping weeping

in the borealis  
for it is no dawn yet.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# God Save Us From The Surreptitious

God save us from the surreptitious wounding  
of those aiming from the half lights  
who cannot decide between shadow and sun,

which disguise to put on.  
and you in the rosepetaled dawn  
leaning out from your tower

your heart full of birdsong

expectant of hours  
cannot begin to know  
what waits for you

and the highway robberies to ensue.  
you dressed in gold from crown  
to tip of satin cased shoe

the fairy tale having given you your due  
after woe filled hours,  
still may encounter them

butter dripping from their chins  
and weasley at the feasts  
with their sleight of hand

the cutthroat words at their command  
sotto voce;

the endlessly snipping tailors,  
instigators of the picnic showers;  
take cover with the flowers

and cover yourself in the dews.  
they are looking for you.

mary angela douglas 10 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# God, By The Numbers

proving God by the numbers how could I ever explain  
I've never been that good with them  
but when I see the wind

I feel that it is Him  
the dew on the grass  
the rain rising and falling continually

the clouds over the sun  
the way that moonlight comes and goes  
and always has since

I've ever known anything at all

and whether the rose  
was dreamed by Him or not  
Somebody must have thought up

such loveliness

Someone goes with me  
more than my shadow  
and if He were a shadow

even then He would be beyond  
all brightening  
Who lightens every life

that comes into the world  
says His mysterious Word  
beyond all other words,

the most heartening

I will gather all proofs

and scatter them to the wind  
And close my eyes

to realize again  
the heart knows what it knows  
and cannot be convinced otherwise

mary angela douglas 28 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Going Away Is Dying Said The Snows To The Hills

going away is dying said the snows to the hills  
and the hills cried  
this we called melting

not knowing anything then  
as candy melts in the mouth  
that we were savouring

going away is grieving said the leaves to the winds  
and the winds pretended they did not hear  
that the leaves were sere

or would be soon  
and the moon in the clouds turned away when  
somewhere the stars clanged

ringing the bells of their demise themselves

and someone was whispering  
this is all that I had left  
and now you are bereft except for the snows

the hills the leaves and the stars  
that remain to tell you who you are  
and how, if not when

you are going away like them

mary angela douglas 22 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Going Back

how the embroidered shadows fled  
before we knew;  
casting our jacks on the summer porches

in the pink sunrise of perfectly fried eggs,  
you know the kind.  
you knew

each rose was rosy only for you  
and birthdays had to last.  
this was a long ago kingdom;

it has passed they always say, don't they?  
reproving us.  
but I still have the looking glass,

the toys of memory.  
and the books! though not on vellum  
and a dress in mind of cherry velvet

unsurpassed...in clouded tissue wrapped  
to wear for best occasions  
such as: going back...

mary angela douglas 19 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Going Back Were We Crossing The Dream Meridians

[our souls are love and a continual farewell  
Ephemera, William Butler Yeats]

going back were we crossing the dream meridians

or did our better angels hold the key

and were they turning it as on His Nativity

the moment and the hour pure splendor owned the skies

and were we weeping stars or centuries,

so that everything, suddenly, was Light

after interminable darkness.

home is the name we shuttered by ourselves

and kept alive through infinite travesties

remembering that we owned the sunrise there

lunar uncertainties

the murmur of the pines.

I have cast everything aside now

going forth at a latter age

birdsong seems so far away

but He made everything

every place we knew

or thought we did.

the poets say

I know they do, in all their starry traces

everything is a continual farewell

and though, we cannot conclude

the farther journies by ourselves

something in us knows,

beyond Oz and the city of emeralds

the landscape of the moon

Time will not trespass anymore

and we will be reborn

in the Heaven we were intended for.

mary angela douglas 25 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Going North

to George McDonald-  
and to my mother, at the back of the North Wind-

dreaming lines from Your book of pearl  
we carried the snow in our small hands  
from the white-worked embroideries on the lawn.

you only feel the cold at first;  
then you don't.  
a dish of frozen cherries for the King: scooped out-  
a Queen looks out from her diamond windowpane  
and sighs,

"will these ships sail?"

cover my words in the green shade of your hands.  
the sun can blister what should be said.  
and you may find the back-hand of the wind  
and every lost subaltern telling you what to do  
with your fine soul  
though filmy valentines from God Himself  
will shadow you...

and may I scoop from the frozen honey  
of your tears, white velvet on my slightest wings,  
bright words to remain on earth with  
after you've disappeared...

she cried.  
while children standing on orange crates  
declaim it's best to be  
eating oranges at Christmas-tide  
and peppermint ice-cream.

the Queen smiled out  
rich stenciled window-panes  
where they finger-wrote in frost  
their last goodbyes.

carry fond words into the eternities,  
she wrote them back -  
carry blizzards on your back  
for the sake of the truth

we saved from melting...

mary angela douglas 21 january 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Going Up The Stairs Of Dream

[for Amanda Shute Sullivan once again, on a beautiful photograph...]

going up the stairs of dream  
in a landscape never seen before  
we frame the picture's stillness

restlessness

and it is our own.  
on a grey day filled with light  
we rearrange the elements

I am the element myself  
the wick that makes the picture glow  
and is it a detached dwelling,

ultimately, the Soul  
and all details are telling me  
this is so

how can we see finally  
where the stairs will lead  
surely and purely they will go on

and so will we through distant Song  
though Heaven is clouded over  
and the way at times so strange-

and just out of our range.

mary angela douglas 3 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Goodbye And Yet, Not

written in coloured chalk in the toyroom  
or on a pincushion of silk shaped like a heart  
we left a final note to the fairies

do not follow us into the world  
they won't believe you  
take instead the fairground train into the country

a country of lavender where never wars  
wounded the skies  
and where you may live

the greenwood sort of life  
we knew you were partial to  
when we were with you

in crimson crushed velvet.

ah, but they persisted  
packing their luggage of light,  
not forgetting the Grimm paperbacks

the tales of Andersen  
and the heart  
with its radiant needles,

already threaded...

mary angela douglas 24 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Goodbye To The Christmas Madrigals

goodbye to the Christmas madrigals,  
the holly berries' sheen  
whether of outward frost

or inner let bright candles  
bright windows be lit  
and the silver sun shine on

the brittle snows iced over.  
goodbye to the fondness  
towards old schools

so recently left;

the summer hallways  
or late May  
causing us grief

for the days  
too suddenly gone.  
who will retrieve?

I sang in my song  
whole summers long  
forever looking back

and beckoning.

goodbye to the madrigals  
and to the Spring they promised,  
they promised us

in white dresses.

we sang in rows,  
our faces shining.

mary angela douglas 15 october 2015



Mary Angela Douglas

# Goodbye To The Elephants

[on hearing the elephants were retiring early from Ringling, Barnum & Bailey...]

for Ray Bradbury, and for my sister who I know, remembers the snow cones...

goodbye to the elephants in the circus  
old children cried not wanting to see them go  
except to Elysian elephantine fields

where they could play in the snow  
or slide down the glass hills happily  
and when they'd had their fill

be given tubs of hot cocoa  
with giant pastel marshmallows  
at the vast skating parties

held in their honour.

and I still miss your sand baths  
at the zoos and the snow cones afterwards.  
how we fed them peanuts and they smiled

their baby elephant smiles, knowing  
we were little, too.

this time around may the circuses come to you.  
the lady in sparkling pink on the far trapeze  
the lime green polka dotted clowns

the lions, making do, and slightly disconsolate;

all as you take your ease  
or dream the dreams of the kind;  
losing, gradually, from your mind,

and crowned with field flowers sweet!

the memory of sawdust,

under your rumbling feet.

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Graduation

we'll heap gardenias on the stage

and sing together only the true songs

from the heart like a petal folded down

to mark this space, this transition

others made before us too.

and in the chapel of ourselves recall

the universe we studied the pale green halls and feel

one course finished, another yet to start and so we pause

like trembling stars in the early evening

and wait to play our part

seal off the exits that fear may not enter in this day

nor war nor sickness tragedy that bears so many away

too young. God make us sure in the way that we must go but now

hold us still in the rose bower of this hour

and let the spell be cast through mingled prayers and tears

that makes the fragrant moment last and last

beyond the felling of the years.

mary angela douglas 13 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Grandmother Explains Paprika To Us At The Kitchen Table

the way she pronounced paprika  
we imagined it a red flower,  
colored very red by bearing down

hard on the crayon, a lipstick colour!  
or a paper lantern at a party  
or to be put in a jewelry case

with pearls in the topmost section  
strangely gleaming.  
paprika from foreign ports

part jewel, a hybrid star  
punched out of a cardboard puzzle  
to find out where you are

in a dizzy universe  
can you guess? or is it  
a beautiful dress put by

for a princess in disguise  
all shimmer and net, we won't forget  
paprika paprika paprika we

sang in our room outloud

dismissed from the kitchen table supper  
forever forever we vowed to be 'now on'  
twirling and twirling like the jewel box

ballerinas  
we knew that we were  
because of paprika, suddenly-

uttered like a magic word.

mary angela douglas 21 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Greater Than Your Disease

where will we land when it's all over  
some of the children asked in their sleep  
as if they could speak

scoffed the Known, certain of their assessments,  
blandishments.  
we don't want blandishments

we want home  
forever they sighed  
the derided, living in their vans

on Ramen and the lean of the land  
abscond with the truth and tell "them lies"  
and say they have no enterprise

yet God in his golden realms prepares  
for these  
a homecoming greater

than your disease.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Green And White

imagine the greenest place  
and you'll go there  
every time you close your eyes

and you will feel so cooled  
by the green winds  
and the cherry lime surprise

and wade in the green water

and sunbeams through the trees  
will whisper emeralds, emeralds.  
you will drink in green

green Time  
and be quenched and breathe, breathe  
green so deeply until you are clearly filled

with the sparkliness of it all,  
the April facets  
and to yourself you will hum

a festive green song  
at the behest of angels  
that will cause everything sweetly, serenely

to break into small white flowers

mary angela douglas 14 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Green Bees In Oz

green bees in oz

I thought of that one april dawn

or just because

while wintering at my table

no moonlight coming in

the residents restless in the hallways.

there must have been

green bees in oz.

maybe you think what an odd

subject for a poem

Frank Baum wouldnt think so.

and he was the real man behind the

curtain who failed at chicken farming

and in furnishing his emporium out

with too many beautiful not useful items.

like pitch forks and hay balers.

Oz was beautiful. Useful too.

useful too is dreaming about

green bees in oz.

not fighting for any cause but the imagination free

and open in the Kansas dust and floating beyond

where dreams chip rust

in the once upon in search of green honey

and really, really not for money.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2020

poem for an upcoming book: green cherry on top  
this is an imaginary title of an imaginary book  
because the Ozian poet is forever shifting the  
titles of book proposals and works in progress.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Green Ginger And The Reading Assigned

[after the fairy tale on The Shirley Temple Storybook Theatre...  
'The Land of Green Ginger']

the land where you think you are going  
is not the one that arrives  
wrapped around in mist, pale balconies trailing

...a little out of sync;

clouds at the battlements  
and in the air a golden something  
that is unaware

of you in your small shoes,  
embroidered as they may be  
but which you dream of endlessly.

fasten the pearl insteps of the moon  
you will until

it all comes round  
but you're not on the map  
and can't be located on the grid

or on the ground  
though you, yourself,  
are the Lost and Found and

though you lift the lid

to see what's cooking there.  
and stand on the stairs entranced before  
you enter the room

and finish the extra chapters,  
before noon.

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Green Horses Neighed For Their Gold Apples

to Dylan Thomas

green horses neighed for their gold apples.  
pink in a twilight never-ending  
it was maypole beribboned; peach rose-budded

or all the canals were violet,  
the tiny gears still capable of turning  
blown by a sigh, a child's silken

puffball of a dream,  
a hidden courtyard's  
roses blooming in the snows...

I knew.  
green horses in a golden courtyard  
remembering it like yesterday  
that the Princess only laughed

and all the fountains with her.  
still intact, my artifact breathed God again

upon the music-box of the world

mary angela douglas 16 september 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Green Violin

green violins are drifting near the sun  
I think of clouds as Marc Chagall  
tipping his thick fingerpaint colors

over.

it runs together in my mind  
with oil-spun opals on the concrete  
or mirrored puddles I walk by-

concocting always other skies.

and Bella, with hidden lilies in her eyes  
composed and bridal as before  
and the confetti roses raining.

and rising over rooftops after rain  
is a corsage of lilac...

her last tear.

it's living through these shifting rainbows here  
springing up again - I know that

I'll survive:  
holding my pitcher's terra cotta  
up to the fountaining sky-

reading the holograph upside down while  
hoping to catch one green violin  
with spiraling music rose rose red

or the flowing parachute moon  
as it sails down  
the clockface of the clotted  
clouds and citadel,

dissolving;

the sequined-velvet pear just ripe

from ever and ever the  
tree of night

and sewn like a charm  
at riddle's end unraveling,  
shaken out of a dream you

won't remember  
you'll be reminded  
by a torn-out scrap  
so evident to you then  
as the tear-stained apple-green scrawl

of the Pirate's best hand with  
one tiny diadem's cornered clue remaining:

for the almost perfect fingering of the blue viola-  
or a single silver day-

mary angela douglas 28 october 2010

Mary Angela Douglas



# Greeting Card

did you ever think the stars in the skies  
were wishing you well?  
and the night winds woven with fireflies,

the scent of lilies, the gardenia  
with its vast perfume, soothing you.  
and that each rose unfolds

so that tomorrow from your high window, Lady  
you will see the rose garden, differently.  
and in the afternoon

discover that you, too  
are blooming again.  
and this is my greeting card

to my sister.  
and my friend.

mary angela douglas 10 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Greeting Card Land

[to Hallmark and American Greetings greeting cards with love, not forgetting the penny valentines on thicker cardboard with one for the Teacher)

and to my mother who always sent me the best cards, hands down.

Greeting Card Land is the pleasantest  
with curlicue writing on the clouds  
and where, if we are good

the glitter snow comes down  
and we walk in watercolours.  
translucent is the sky

as though made of parchment  
and we live on sentiments there  
having little else to wear

and having nothing to confess

except on little candies  
on Valentine's Day, bought by the bagful.  
and all our artists paint the best

their assorted bouquets  
for Mother's Day.  
and each time:

crisply, brand new, wreathed in  
ribbons crackling (with matching gift wrap!) .  
and they pop out all over the place

the diecut bluebirds of happiness or I mean,  
the sweet peas and the bows and the cakes of pinkish cream.  
and we go dreamy dancing in the strawberry lanes

pristine in our petticoats

whenever we stroll by the lavender streams  
with the old mill wheel turning

and turning

forever on display with felicitous quotes  
in the drugstores of blessed memory  
where it smells of tobacco and perfumes,

with their high floral notes and we, so merry,  
in the cherished precincts of the chocolate cherried.

mary angela douglas 5 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Gretel's Reminiscence

once there were clouds like flowers.  
people held onto their hearts  
with kite strings.

when they went floating up-  
they held festivals for hours-  
spooning out the thick cream

of afternoons

we walked among them,  
penny-splendid,  
breaking off sugar-candy;  
above us,

continents of roses-

mary angela douglas 26 january 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hamelin

"whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit? " from the Psalms...

I saw crown molding tip the walls  
of an unbelievable stage-set, real, at the time-  
set the table  
they will tell you everything  
you're entitled to know

while sipping their rubicund tea  
on a lush and leafy afternoon you dream  
is still your very own-  
with your whole life ahead of you  
as the saying goes

and still so near your own real  
childhood home you could walk back there and be done with this  
Why didn't you  
before they trained you not to love  
or even be, as if they could...  
and to fill your hands with pearls meant just for them....  
but I learned slow and never  
to believe  
all their lost lovely angels far from home and  
to fight the battles only

I could see -to know what's mine  
alone  
not underwritten by game theorists  
or Pavlov's pirates, looting my bright way...

as from the beginning of clowns-  
and mesalliance

oh all my faceless springs in the name of God,  
my God, unused and lilac-  
I'd teach the children not to ride  
that monochromatic ferris standing by

the carnival children modified to sell: flowers waxen friendship-

and world peace...

I'll sing you the song my mother lent me  
as she died:

I saw the cream of God  
brim at the top  
and those who skimmed and skimmed  
rich bubbles from my only Soul and from my rainbowed home

I saw their skinflint empires rise  
and the parties they threw each other  
at each eclipse

who could explain  
the vacancies of cranes  
on the tilting horizons that they owned

and all the summers subcontracted out and  
sparkleless

what made me turn around  
to find  
the trapdoor in the Night and  
it was God up late, still  
counting the tears of those waylaid  
as if they never stopped being:  
His own embroidery forever-

&quot;Here's your doll finery, &quot; He whispered.

in the voice of all rosepetals-

&quot;I've hidden it here.&quot;

You are -pure life - I cried - I'll never give away-  
as if I could...

reward the kidnappers

oh my King where wishes turn to palms if we endure;

I'll buy fresh groceries, pay the rent and  
find the playground where they're waiting still:  
all my tin soldiers whirring in the dust-  
I'm caught in  
the lace of the day  
and cannot leave You-

mary angela douglas 1-2 october 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Has Anyone Seen My Red Velveteen Flats

knocking the paper doors down  
that they have made of You  
I turned away,

not knowing where to go  
with my child-sized suitcase, in  
my red cloth shoes.

the clock of yearning's set to  
endlessness and

I weep on pouring the news out to the wind  
but it's like a ripped-out seam within  
not knowing when I'll find

all my lost porches  
floating backwards on the Tide  
and my best dishes, ringed with ferns...

when one Word tolls the  
bells that they have muted, smashed-  
maybe snow-jeweled quietude  
will return

but now I only find  
that I am I  
and dream for you even  
without knowing how.

ethereal clouds will come  
and their attendant angels  
as if from an extended Trip:

bring me crushed violets  
bunched  
in silver ribbons strewn  
the never-ending stars  
the winding mists to live in-



mary angela douglas 25 august 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Have Chains Of Sadness Bound You

after John Dowland

have chains of sadness bound you;  
ropes of tears?  
through the gloom I see

the dismal jewels shine  
festooning ancient madrigals or rather,  
like the sun, it's climbed above

the dense, deep graphite  
grey of thunderheads,  
a gold at a far remove, ineffectual-

in a Storybook  
whose pages you are loath to turn.

Beclouded is that picture,  
the one I have in mind  
and no shepherds piping

in a greening meadow's clime  
can I infer:  
above, below, on either side

I see strange Melancholy  
on a throne of ice,  
the vain assays of knights

up the glassine hill,

the silver apples rolling down,  
like tears, like tears  
in the stymied after tones

of all our years  
consigned to the workhouse of the shrill.  
like a ship that won't be turned,

the ice bound will.

mary angela douglas 27 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Have Chains Of Sadness Bound You, Second Variation

[after John Dowland]

have chains of sadness bound you;  
ropes of tears?  
through the gloom I see

these dismal jeweled years  
festooning ancient madrigals or rather,  
like the sun, all's climbed above

the dense, deep graphite  
grey of thunderheads,  
a gold at a far remove, ineffectual-

as a Storybook  
whose pages you grow loath to turn.

Beclouded is that picture,  
midnight's noon  
the one I have in mind

and no shepherds piping

in a greening meadow's clime  
can I infer:  
above, below, on either side

I see strange Melancholy  
on a throne of ice,  
the vain assays of knights

up the glassine hill,

the silver apples rolling down,  
like tears, like tears  
in the stymied after tones

of all our dears  
consigned to the workhouse of the shrill.

like a ship that won't be turned,

the ice bound Will.

mary angela douglas 27 september 2016 rev.22 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Have You?

have you defended the falling rain from rainbows  
crumbling in your armour  
and you fought to crumple the paper sun

the firmament of tears  
in your own sphere working late  
ah throw away the moon the stars and the sun

the old ways of thinking about them  
we have learned to fly  
with nowhere left to go

have you defended the glistening snows  
from Christmas taken the children far  
from their native Star

and broken the looking glass  
weeps from the path where the children always stray

now holding the moon in their hands  
incapable of understanding  
why has the sky the sky fallen in

on them

mary angela douglas 3 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Haven Ifor Vladimir Bukovsky)

for Vladimir Bukovsky who, among other notable things, built a castle and tended his rose trees...

I planted a rose garden in my head

and labyrinthine scented too and hedge on hedge

so when trouble came

roses were my only view and quaint

against a silk screened sky I wandered there without reply

away from cares and far far from the needling; needless sighs

and plucked them where they grew;

then more profuse my roses blew

nor torn in the erratic winds

and I could all belief suspend except

for that haven and the fountains pluming near

the orangeries...

and all that blended there to please, to make of solace

a flowery stair and no more ambuscados of words

or pernicious stares or the blank sun glaring everywhere

the workplace blaring the tedious forms the roaring

inspections

and the reprimands for I had roses near at hand  
and hedge on hedge since I was born o the rose trees;  
a bench of pearl to sit and dream  
to make of roses a faerie screen  
to forget a thousand thousand stings and all the world's  
scalding: the ratlike gnawing codes to oblivion assigned  
where the pale and the emerald waters flowed.

mary angela douglas 11 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Having At Last So Many Things To Say

[to la belle au bois dormant (the sleeping beauty in the wood...)]

having at last so many things to say  
will she awaken in an unlettered age?  
someone has turned the page but oh,

the page is blank as snows.  
though clear midsummer's roses  
scent the air

as fair as she is, still-  
where may she tell the things  
stored up in a hundred years

of dreams.  
and where the gold is hid?

though gardens bloom  
and fountains resume their weeping  
in the afternoons

she stares into the Heavens  
with a muted heart and knows  
by story's end there's no one left

to take her part or comprehend  
where she has been.  
the lutes are laid low

with no one left  
to string them.

Mary Angela Douglas 2 May 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# He Keeps The Stencils Of The Living Day

He keeps the stencils of the living day  
the crimsons and the evergreens  
the snow washed opals o vast expectation,

feelings on the eve  
where time cannot squander,  
eat away the edges of the gemstoned stollen  
ways, the giddy sleds and sleighs the

bells glazing deep silences.  
hushed between the wars we find  
He is on straw or in bleak cold but within

our secret cherishing, rubied caroling cradled  
brightness of brightness all else, concealing.  
there is no praise of angels we won't find

burnishing the clouds as in old paintings  
rich with his interior velvets, crownings from  
afar and opulent as the multifoliate rose

long longed for, the Star enlarging the skies  
that breaks our darkness and the ache apart revealing  
the snowflake enterprise again

the wishes standing still  
before the Gates

mary angela douglas 1 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# He Only Smiled

there was: in the yellow shadows on the lawn  
a looking back, as if at the back of the beyond:  
over an angel's shoulder

something stopped - as by a rest, at the end

of the bar- a music of yellow splashed on green  
in patches of why did you use that colour  
they asked the artist later

at the soiree where they served up pineapple punch  
from a cut glass bowl on a bright green tablecloth  
and noting this, he only smiled.

mary angela douglas 21 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Heart Under Construction

happy with classroom construction paper hearts  
we welcomed February, her mulberry skies.  
the paper doilies' lavishness; more than enough

glitter for an icestorm.  
we were warm inside, tracing the heart again  
and again with perfect pencil lines

edging it with lace.  
with snow in our yard  
and the moon just

one exquisite scallop  
of vanilla scooped.  
how simple to think that there

could be  
a box on a calendar day in the classroom  
covered with butcher paper

and cut out hearts  
that could contain  
all the love we could send in one day.

and so I rain down all my paper hearts  
for you oh cherry riddling world  
from now till then

inscribing your name  
on all the candies.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Held Aloft By Angels Did He Depart (Or Just Like A Prism In Tears)

[goodbye, exceptional artist and poet,  
David Bowie]

was anyone else like this? a harlequin  
who made himself into his own material  
regardless of the pain; almost not human; just

his own art, and that only... or how can you say it  
best, he himself was the canvas and the rest-  
painted on, hammered and nailed: by his own hands only

snowdrifted hands thousand jeweled

a billion interpretations couldn't convey the whole

and he was lost there or he  
was his own nations praying;  
in astronomical dimensions dusted, obscuring

his own army losing the way  
it seems to us without a map  
mercurial to the farthest power

exponent of colours not in our spectrum,  
hearing, sight or hummingbird quicksilvered  
minute by minute fanning the air in costume in space or out of it

too many to keep account of  
certainly not by critics erased

changed rearranged and with an anguish  
delicate as a filament keeping a universe alight  
and often filled with fright I felt beyond all singing

possible. clown of night of the carnival suspended  
misrepresented. fingerprinted  
you still won't know anything about him

the original alien's alien

maybe on other planets or one in  
particular he might have been king  
dressed in a silver outfit, a violet smile

always falling down in this hemisphere  
making the falling down a song

a shudder and the chrysalis shifts  
and falling up, his own maze  
then he grew wings. amazing

he was here for awhile. or even at all.  
so vastly riddled  
we never knew him.

and know it now, a little:  
[o bluebird shining too brightly;  
oh prism in tears for years...]

disappeared

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Her Favorite Way To Say Goodbye

cherry vanilla should be the day  
you are going Home I mean,  
home to stay:

sweet cherry vanilla.  
and there on the side  
a slice of cake, almost bridal

with silver beading  
and you'll be reading  
all your favorites poems at once

dressed in rose red and  
when the light dims  
and there's no turning back

or mistaking the signs  
you'll be dreaming again of the  
Rose, Rose Red

upon the Rood of Time...

mary angela douglas 16 august 2015

Note: of course idea for the poem other than the ice cream and cake is the loveliest of poems in the English language by the Irishman Wiliam Butler Yeats: To The Rose Upon the Rood of Time

Mary Angela Douglas

# Her Wishes Were All Strawberry, Flecked In Golden Cream

to my mother

her wishes were all strawberry, flecked in golden cream  
that never soured in summer; such a dream  
of raspberry ice in the dead of winter making you  
happy to be cold or colder than or  
a slice of green lime in sparkling cranberry

that is quenching but you can't guess why  
her wishes were a blue sonata in a bluer  
town, true as larkspur lilted the lilies, as  
pink as mignonette at sunset

sunrise never far from here  
is a stillness gathered in a white bouquet  
of all white fragrances you can't imagine  
simply, said the good fairy,  
such a sweetness concentrated.  
will you try?

I, too was enchanted by her wishing.  
entranced, I only stood there-  
moon coloured, shy and wondering-  
incapable of granting anything at all...

mary angela douglas 10 december 2013; revised 11 december 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Here Is The Harbor Where The Ruby Ship

For Amanda Sullivan (on a beautiful photograph she composed)

here is the harbor where the ruby ship  
docks with its curios long-forgotten  
with its bolts of

hidden brocade, its doll finery  
and tangerines  
its rose of attar\* and

its ambergris; its bears of little or  
no trepidation  
its dolls with eyes that close  
and open

on the fairytale reprised  
in waves smoothed beneath us  
like spun glass.

here are the peppermint towers  
of former graces, bracing the river  
and its silk-screened sky-

the hold where the jeweled  
nightingale is free:  
the soul's musicbox in tune

and every reflection is reflecting  
a happiness vivid and undisguised  
and buildings white as cream arise

and non-industrial uses of the day.

and everything is a surprise  
but perfectly pictured as in the heart  
where no one loved  
need ever depart

mary angela douglas 2 may 2009

\*rose of attar is attar of roses reversed to indicate the photograph's mirroring waters.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Here On Apple Island

here on apple island  
winesap sunsets come and go,  
stray cats,

the whirring of fans slowly  
on the skylscapes  
of our favorite landings.

call it home.  
and in an unexpcted breeze  
confettied light

we'll have apple tarts complete with  
tea sets carved of wood and deep  
within they harbor

teacups, saucers  
everything pretend  
you could wish for

being new to housekeeping.

children play in the pinkening doorways  
apple cheeked and are so neat  
and housewives sweep

when the needles fall  
all golden delicious when  
it's Christmas always

toffee foiled and laden  
and apple buttered up and down the yards  
for all the visiting bards

whose poems are labeled in the little store  
near the feedsacks and the jams, the canned  
goods and the rose geraniums: the oversalted hams,

'made on Apple Island'.

mary angela douglas 5 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Here's The Vivid Crayon Of The Sun

here's the vivid crayon of the sun  
the one that's not broken  
the very one you could peel

instead of oranges  
if the fairytale required it-  
to survive

and the gold foil  
chocolate coins in  
nets of confetti-stars

fall out of the cupboards  
of old houses  
whenever you yank the

little glass knobs too hard-  
it's  
just in time for supper  
in your new thrift-store

dress with a second-best  
stiff-starch magenta petticoat;  
it's fine as Christmas wrapping,  
pleated like a star  
only God could summon

even as another interview falls through  
or simply melts away...

there's still the lemon-waxy streetlight where  
the last bus waits for you only

slightly transformed

mary angela douglas 21 august 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Here's To The Candy Corn!

october winds have gathered

the moon is on the trail

the children go ghost sheeted

and the branches scratching wail.

our hearts were high for candies

the risk we didn't mind.

when folks latched up their shutters

and swiftly shut the blinds.

we knew they owed us greatly

at the turning of the year

like pirates out for treasure

with foil wrapped cutlass, spear

tiaras in the daylight grew paler in the shade

and we were ghosts of princesses

who wandered dale by dale.

we prayed for chocolate kisses  
three musketeers and more  
we prayed and prayed on Sundays

for pounds of candy corn.

how well can I remember  
the plunder that we made

rejoicing over chocolate

over licorice, dismayed.

how simple then to gather

from neighbors of good will

a cup of apple cider, a brownie

what a thrill.

or caramel covered apple

a ghostly tale or two

and then to plunge through darkness

to safer shores we knew.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Here's Where I Keep My Costume Jewelry Words

[to my Grandmother, words in apple pie order-  
(but don't look into the sock drawer, please) ]

here's where I keep my costume jewelry words  
and the everyday china. forget me not I cried much  
later thinking on those days

of the many coloured mirrors, beads and  
silken stuffs she flung my way  
looking for her spectacles

or gilded wrapping paper; paradisaical leisures.  
try this on, dear;  
here's a scarf to match...and stomachers of

venetian lace; and bridal pearls, a single strand.  
how can I make you understand

her stores of stories gleaming in the afternoons when  
we wore only green, green

as the glades are in the ancient poems.  
come to stay? she always said  
her wands at the ready every Saturday

or on the Christmas holidays  
or only after school

and I brought small cakes, frosted pink in  
baskets lined with fine wax paper, a bunch of lilies  
mayhaws. perhaps relapsing into music,

never speech

to pay for the adventure; sipping green glassed  
colas, dipping into the bowls of dark cherry vanilla.

I'll wash the gay sprigged teacups up  
in a sink full of bubbles, extra rainbowed

on occasion. what did we care for chores.

yes! I said and it was cherry branching  
happiness we shuttled through the loom  
of her fantastical rooms with the

ruby candlesticks. the windows  
opening wide to the snowlight  
and slowed molasses, God's best Gingerbread:

Time...

mary angela douglas 4 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Herr Rilke's High School Reunion

oh to the drill and the picking apart of the heart remembered

at dinner is poetry's orphan picking at his food

impossible to imagine the perjuries

in the drawing room

where pupils learn manners

and how to cloak mockery

beneath it all. fall in.

its the fall of the year

he walks the footpaths endlessly

and the leaves are with him sympathetically

and the roots of trees

the stars, far from military occupations.

robot student expectations

click heels. it comes again

endless misery to the dreamer

perched as if before death

on an unseen branch

that weeps in the constellations

only for him.

mary angela douglas 13 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Higher Than All Clouds

[song for my sister, Sharon (another one) ]

I dreamed that music went so high above the clouds  
that we went after it in our scuffed shoes  
launching from the backyard swings

in our plaid or gingham school dresses.  
stay for awhile sheep clouds we cried  
that we may stop and look and listen

to the colours in the sea  
where the little mermaid drowned  
no longer capable of singing.

but her music flew high, higher than all clouds  
and afterwards we thought maybe if we  
had worn our golden slippers

on the way and carried our milk money  
carefully like Grandmother taught us  
things could have been different.

mary angela douglas 10 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hill Top Again

it's the unfinished worlds they declare finished  
that rankle the most  
chains cranking in the night

must be somewhere they need to get to  
never oiling their machines  
would it be seemly to fade into

the slim branching February  
of your violet dreams  
if to be far from them?

whether or not, ready or not,  
and after deep snows descend;  
in our cherry bright scarves-

like children at the top of the hill,  
here we go!

mary angela douglas 28 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# His Stories Come To Light

[to Hans Christian Andersen]

the fragmentary stories of the blue  
across the scudding landscape  
come to view

across the light leafed pages of his dreams  
and in the rose tints of a dawning stream  
of endings and beginnings never gleamed

whence is he? the king in danish castle  
wakes to sigh  
across the rubied threshold of a mind

obscure, in poverty endowed and spoked  
with light beyond the stray familiar cloud  
hand painted in such colours orchid rare

beyond the legends of the schoolrooms where  
the floating snows reveal a magic land  
apart from any other, on command

when children in the schoolyard lose the stare  
of rudimentary knowledge brought to bear  
and find instead a sky of glistening there

with kingdoms never after glimpsed again  
but told and retold to the sheer, the dear  
the wondering

delight of men

mary angela douglas 24 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# History

we felt history a mere turning of the leaves  
the red and gold of the beads unstrung  
of the necklacing around us come undone

and the copper

sun's crying into the silver cloth of clouds  
for what could not be found  
for the shadows of the flights

going over us in the turquoise air  
and the doll finery coming apart  
and I have the key to the jewelry box heart

and I will turn it in a plaid cotton dress  
and the sash untied on the way home from school  
and the golden rules unbroken

or carry the milk tokens into a careful land  
with one hand practicing the scales of opal  
while the other hand weeps musicless

for the rainbow starred page.  
the acute brightness of the afternoons  
and the strewn gold the cold of apples

in the fairy tale  
with the inset moons  
in the ebony dark

where we depart  
in the summer grass  
on the appliqued day

called suddenly away...

mary angela douglas 3 april 2017



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the red and gold of the beads unstrung  
of the necklacing around u come undone

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in the summer grass  
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called suddenly away...

mary angela douglas 3 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# History In Heaven

in Heaven it wasn't written this way:  
all classroom textbook beef jerky dried  
the kings were in the footnotes

even when they died mid circumstance and pomp  
in tiny print not even the dolls could read,  
and they could read...oh such a romp

the artisans were tired  
and tuckered under the shade trees  
(from being that organized.)

and purple testaments belonged  
to the gilly flowers,  
to daydreamed hours

and Audubon led the choirs.  
lest we forget  
the farmer's almanac inset

with silver moons  
and the whens to plant strawberries  
illuminated like old manuscripts;

recipe clippings cut and saved  
in newspaper columns  
from a distant age

for Lady Baltimore Cake  
oh everything that quaint  
and other sundries from

the fancy catalogues, the wish upons  
could be had for a song  
just by gazing at the page

by those called average, civilians  
riff raff in their Time On Earth,  
wow!

in silver spooned rebirth  
imagine that Heaven gleamed  
for the ragbag sorters

and diffident daughters  
with the miffed in dimwit quarters  
looking on, in their petulant dawn at

angels in the corners of antique maps  
helping their ships set sail  
the ones they said would fail

in the small ponds  
and under the bridge  
with swan carvings

where the children played  
the game called  
Former Days

as they were remembered by the  
poets exiled  
elaborating on jade trees;

how it felt then in Tivoli  
when the opal winds blew  
the stars' clear panes out of the skies

make way make way for Apple Pie  
Applique and the ladies painting china  
subsidized in crummy retirement homes

and it came their time to die.  
all Heaven knows, even if you don't  
you can quote me:

that to welcome them  
all Ages folded, then  
into one Dantesque Rose...

mary angela douglas 30 november 2018; rev.23 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Holiday Song To Beautiful Information

beautiful information drenched the deserts,  
painting the suns.  
beautiful information;

in coded moonlight  
cast shadows of gold on  
the fainting gardens.

of the heart?  
I wondered.  
of the heart?

and fluffed up the yards  
in time for Christmas:  
a snowy glaze; who could

ever watch enough;  
the clouds were ever full.  
and we made merry

printing out paper chains of it:  
on fabulous milled paper

the red and the green.  
a sweet holiday scene

for our children  
in their rose coloured mittens.  
kittens played in the piano

clawing the strings of  
beautiful information.  
cozy as cozy.

and lining the shelves  
near the chintz sofa, the easy chair  
whole volumes no longer gleamed

eclipsed as they were, everywhere,

from screen to shining screen  
by beautiful beautiful blizzarding information.  
break out the hot cocoa with the pastel marshmallows!

mary angela douglas 1 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Holly Ball Trellised And Trellised, Next Time In Rose Velveteen

the quadrillionth cotillion I imagined was mine  
I stepped up in ruby patent shoes, a waltz length  
gown of snow overlaid with mists.

and perfume at the wrist,  
a string of pearls;  
a desire to whirl and whirl

all on my own  
with the best bouquet of holly,  
spray painted gold

my Grandfather ever contrived  
and I could dance every waltz  
alone

just in love  
with being alive and

this near to Christmas on-  
the holly berry side.  
with snow, light refreshments

and a few lukewarm,  
fizzy Coca Colas.

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Holy Mary Mother Of The Sequined Light

[to the Lord Jesus, the only once and future, King  
and to Poetry]

Holy Mary, Mother of the sequined Light  
where Love does not pretend;  
casting up roses on the uncomprehending

darknesses again  
we beseech you, pray;  
for the margins of gold are thin

for the children with half wings  
who would take flight from this, an  
unrelenting night;

from this  
tormenting earth where  
Love should not pretend.

begin from the alphabet of my tears  
to reconvene, sad Years! the  
orphaned languages; the fears

that where we turned, dreaming it was His Kingdom, was in vain;  
and now the rains have come; o may the floods not engulf us.

Mary, of the tongue cut Light defend

the ravaged who would be gold and glad, again;  
bluer than sapphires on a summer day's singing wave;  
truer than, to the One, the only One who saved,

who saves Forever.  
The ONLY TRUE:

here in the singing, singeing sounds of mystical Poetry  
where we would survive to find in a distant Spring  
it is we ourselves will burst suddenly into fine



green leaves and the little birds border us round.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2015; 29 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Holy Mary, Mother Of The Sequined Light

[to the Lord Jesus, the only once and future, King]

Holy Mary, Mother of the sequined Light  
where Love does not pretend;  
casting up roses on the uncomprehending

darknesses again-  
we beseech you, and we pray,  
for the margins of gold are thin

for the children with half wings  
who would take flight from this, an  
unrelenting night;

from this  
tormenting earth where  
Love should not pretend.

begin from the alphabet of my tears  
to reconvene, sad Years! the  
orphaned languages; the fears

that where we turned, dreaming it was His Kingdom, was in vain;  
and now the rains have come; o may the floods not engulf us.

Mary, of the tongue cut Light defend

the ravaged who would be gold and glad, again;  
bluer than sapphires on a summer day's  
and ah, the singing wave/

truer then, to the One, the only One who saved,

who saves Forever.

here in the singing, singeing sounds a mystical Poetry  
where we would survive to find in some distant Spring  
it is we ourselves will burst suddenly into fine

green leaves and the little birds border us round  
with all your flowers.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2015; 29 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Homage To The Brothers Limoges

[on learning to read...]

on fine papers perhaps, tiny rosebuds of gold foil  
in the borderlands beyond the words=  
(we call them margins rapped the teachers,  
impatiently illuminating.)

and you, turning the pages, aren't you?  
dressed in lavender blue and quite alone.  
is there a light from Heaven?

there is.  
and a rose spotlight when you rise from your chair to recite  
oh this is light this is light I am reading

and not the alphabets, at all

mary angela douglas 6 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Home Ec Lament No.3 Or 4 And The Visionary Plumcake

[for Margaret Sidney, author of The Five Little Peppers And How They Grew and to Valerie Macon whose poem on Little Debbie Cakes inspired me to write one of my own]

put lots of plums into the batter  
and cinammon sugar and children  
scatter before their poverty made merry,

enriched with raisin cake, the  
side yard chicken's eggs.  
I wanted to make a cake like that

from an old fashioned novel  
of families in hard times  
making the best of it.

but pineapple frappe was on the menu  
and white sauce number two.  
and never a plummy cake or two

to take your mind off  
all the disasters.  
so I made do in the future

with Little Debbie Cakes  
surreptitously unwrapped  
from my bottom desk drawer.

and a plummy imagination.

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hope Is The Best Poem Of All

[to the cyber-bullies who waylaid my poem on the blogsite Scarriet]

'Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him...'  
from Psalm 42: 11

hope is the best poem of all  
I said to the lowering clouds  
to the cruelty of random strangers

tearing the fleece of my poem  
behind their halloween masks.  
never mind it will mend.

the gold, the rubied thread  
of the word in kindness said  
for Beauty's sake:

oh snare it all apart and snag! it still  
will show in the flowering moonlight  
as God planned; in the vast snows

of His Hand.  
hope is the best poem of all  
you charlatans sounding the moonlight

from the shallows of world-wide Poetry  
not on trial here!

the conversations of angels

mary angela douglas 15 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# House Wanted: In A Dream

it's cherry sprigged from floor to rafter  
that much is certain;  
with ivory curtains  
that never need washing.

blue dishes sparkling.  
no cat anywhere  
unless it's orange.

enough chocolate  
for several winters.  
all the classics I admire

a fire that flares up  
when the first leaf falls.  
and won't give out  
till early spring

a small dog-  
that tells intriguing stories  
not only at supertime.

plenty of cushions-  
one in every colour.  
uninterrupted dreams.

occasional music  
of the stream.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Housekeeping

you couldnt really call it that.

beating the scorpions out of the mat.

barring the door to the bruin attack.

watching the soddy ceiling cave

with hidden nests the snakes had made

watching the blizzards sweep right in.

and the locusts too. what was it so sustaining you.

how did you fight so tooth and nail

you who came from the leafy east

to face the wilderness in the Beast

who cried because there were no trees anymore.

how did you fight against the dust the whirlwind's sky

the lightning 's lust

the poisoned berries and the musts

that never could slow you down

or else a child might drown

or be stolen by tribes.



Good God the fight you fought just to stay alive.

while making the candles and the soap

and everyone's clothes

nobody knows.

how can we gripe at chores

who merely mop the floors

when every second of your day

keeping the fire and the gloom at bay

drawing the water from the well

you made a home at the mouth of hell.

mary angela douglas 21 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Beautiful They Stand

how beautiful they stand  
like ships beyond command  
above forgotten lands

the clouds  
and I am one composed  
of the same clouds

or, I dreamed it so  
being the dream child  
in the glass

of the fairy tale winds  
surpassing.  
oh what will I see when I look last

and will these kingdoms come to pass  
in the mirror they will offer me  
above the vast the final seas

or will I vanish into these  
murmured the sea maid as she shone  
till the indigo waves closed over.

mary angela douglas 31 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Can I Praise Beautiful Poems

how can I praise beautiful poems  
on treating people badly?  
on running off with the prize

while others on shore remain  
having no boat to cross  
resigned to the weeping rains.

what seems beautiful  
can perhaps be theft.  
what seems innocently sleeping,

piteously dreaming  
can perhaps be, scheming.  
jeweled snake

coiled at the breast.  
what seems lyrical  
can perhaps be Death

in a beguiling disguise.  
but it is beautiful even  
if poorly worded

to defend honor.  
it is beautiful even if  
you strain at metaphors

to regard love as holy;  
to understand: the beautiful  
flows from God

to whom is due reverence  
even if you can't spell.

mary angela douglas 27 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Can I Think They Gazed At The Sky

how can I think they gazed at the sky  
thinking of poetics? a leaf, a cloud,  
in a natural way;

a sigh seemed nothing more than a

dream to them, God's dream Hopkins  
may have said in later may times springing.  
even then, I am not sure that any

definition could define them.  
don't look in the back of the book for them,  
the Immortals. they have become a part

of all that we survey, that is, if we do,  
with a feeling heart, a striving after something  
not in words yet.

cloudy, green, beyond the classroom drone  
and the windows with the wandering breeze beckoning...

mary angela douglas 18 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Can They Speak At All

how can they speak at all?  
distancing themselves from music  
as they do?

my quarter notes spill all on the ground  
in front of the before-school witnesses  
like rubies from the wounded as they

are carried off-stage.  
whole notes never found  
the milk white maids betrayed

in the ancient songs.  
'spoken in jeweled tones'  
said they of cold renown

putting their two cents in

as if there were any language  
left to them at all,  
or should have been.

cheering their cheers to win.

the skies floated out  
like a pale blue shawl.  
I will count to ten and hide

as if I were a cloud at home  
in the silken spooling distance  
away from all this hurt;

my sapphires  
summer rinsed.  
hung out to dry and with

no recompense.  
the song the Queen sang to herself;  
the one you lent to her

before you thought better of it.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Do You Feel About Rainbows

how do you feel about rainbows  
in someone else's sky?  
or the river going by their door

bypassing you in your landlocked dream.  
until you remember you like forests,  
not seas

and then are you happy again?  
and it seems good news to you  
that first a crimson then a gold leaf

flutters down on you.  
on you!  
and that you get to be here

when it happens.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# How I Dream Of Heaven On Wednesdays

American meadows edged up to my doorsill  
I was that happy;  
in love with all the wildflowers

I never made grow.  
I will live there  
in a house with a crumbling stair

almost a porch  
and when snows come  
I will make snow cream from them

and declare it is Christmas then  
no matter when.  
neither the sun nor the rains

will accuse me.  
this is how I dream of Heaven  
on Wednesdays, or Tuesdays...

Mary Angela Douglas 15 June 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# How Is It You Have Lined All Things With Light

how is it You have lined everything with light Lord God

so that no matter what befalls us there is still a way home

as if you foresaw every impossible known emergency happening to us

providing the needle and thread, the silver thimble too.

and every war long in advance of its breaking out

all upheavals you have rendered useless by your Glory

by your hidden streams. your indirection.

so that even in our weeping

a provisionary sorrow gleams and

there is something glistening

so that even in your shadow, even if we should vanish from the earth

there is a plum darkness

where a lone bird sings.

mary angela douglas 15 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# How It All Turned Out

what if everything you had ever loved  
was all of a sudden in one place  
as if you had fairy tale wished it back

and there you are, with all your treasures  
heaped up, shining, and wondering which  
toy to unwrap first and then you

call the wish fairy back for another wish  
and she chimes in before you can even say it  
and says 'Time! that's what you want, isn't it? '

and so she waves her wand and now  
you're the proud owner of a clock shop  
and things are ticking along all green and gold

and bought and sold  
and carved so beautifully and dutifully  
you wind them all

and then go on a picnic  
and wish for the pink cake you  
always coveted in the cartoons

and just as you begin to cut a thick slice  
of it, the one with the singular rose,  
your sister comes in the room in your new clothes

and throws your bunny rabbit at you  
and says, get up you lazy thing  
it's time for school!

mary angela douglas 16 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How It Is Down Here Right Now

now we don't even have the unjust judge to go to

Jesus said for very weariness finally heard the widow's plea

to be rid of her

because he needed sleep and was tired of her knocking

at the door at all hours but now Lord God the powers on earth

could sleep through anything and so we look to you

who see what there is of grief and gold mislaid here

and what and who will carry the day oblivious to our tears

while men work hard for their Country Club fees

and leave us all to our unease

and leave us all to our unease.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Overcast The Earth When Men Must Keep Their Jobs

(to the courts of Heaven in an evil time)

how overcast the earth when men must keep their jobs

and let the Dragon live where what is to be done is nothing

but the lucrative

not mention to the one dim rising star

where God is I am though it be too hard

let brimstone leak where man soft hour by hour

let the Dragon the lost town devour

than speak one word of comfort to the few

who stand in wind and fire to spoil the view

how overcast, how sorrowful the Sun

that casts itself into a summer sea

and would forever for true liberty

and for the sake of love, Christ's love unending

lose all

lose all

lose all.

mary angela douglas 31 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Should The Sand In The Oyster

how should the sand in the oyster on display  
garner the rainbows and the pearl intaglios  
how

should the orange cream dripping of the sun  
down the kindergarten page not be  
praised

the brushstrokes of the moon  
on velvet waters  
i have seen the gladioli recitals

shine the dress circle carnations won  
entwined with little rosebuds  
and the petticoats layered

and this is dancing said the little ones  
little ladies in their gloves  
cast out adrift

later on later on  
who will depress the pedal in the right measure  
in the precise measures of beauty

the piano is sold the silver the onyx ring  
with its one diamond star  
is far afield

and the National Geographics garish with Coke ads  
the cola spilled the glass rings on the coffee table  
none to scold

I am old  
I have looked in the glass  
at last I have seen the end

of old familiar things  
the antiques sent into space  
and Grace has fled

ah no the Christmas angels said  
you have the stars

mary angela douglas 10 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# How They Have Forgotten Your Orchid Words

[to poetry when it was called poesy (and was rosy) or:  
some posies for poesy]

how they have forgotten your orchid words  
the ones lined in gold.  
the mother of pearl.

we get by with the insides of shells.  
the fishboned rainbow  
left on the platter.

I was in love with your orchid words.  
I am not happy at their disappearance;  
with the pretenders to the throne

who murder the adjectives of your glories.  
your rose-limned stories...

still, in the piles of discarded books  
at the modern libraries  
I take solace.

opening the page  
to your sunset's glow  
your bayberry candles Christmas-lit

in the high holy days of Literature.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# How To Create Time

how to create time the dream book read:  
its title flashing for a moment from its spine  
in the mind's half-sleeping bookshop,

beyond Time.

oh, that we could extend the golden minutes beyond  
the limits that we perceive and grieve over

and then, joy to find the landscapes, homes  
we thought obliterated  
and learn again old home truths

as if, at the beginning:  
new rose blown in the gardens,  
fresh as the earliest winds;

suspended between  
our Eternities

mary angela douglas 10 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How To Flunk Out Of Clown School

wear normal shoes  
pin stripes  
claim the seal ate your homework  
talk in mime class  
wear matching socks  
crash the unicycle and blame the seal  
dress for success  
eschew polka dots  
abstain from going in circles  
burn down the baggy pants factory  
make powerpoint slides out of the circus flyers  
make people cry

Mary Angela Douglas 31 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# How To Look At A Painting

how to look at a painting the course title read  
while other fireworks in my head went off  
from a sky lark's point of view

from behind a rose hedge  
standing in your shoes  
through a kaleidoscopic lens

with your best friends  
with your face pressed up against the canvas  
to see the brushstrokes

in a lily pond kind of mood  
with dark green shadows strewn  
sipping something cool

after school in sandals and your best jewelry,  
a folkloric dress  
as if you had no secrets to confess

completely in the dark  
with God for guest  
since it's bound to be dazzling

then no matter what your bent is

as if it were a valentine sent  
from really far away

mary angela douglas 7 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How To Read Another Poet's Poem

how to read another poet's poem:  
carefully, as if a world hung in the balance:  
sapphire, suspended.

as if you were the wind  
turning the page.  
without rage, animosity

the hidden sharpened knives.  
simply, as if you were a child  
learning letters one by one

by blocks of the red and green  
in a land without clocks and  
in, if possible, impossible:

the fairy tale's gleam

mary angela douglas 5 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Will I Make The Song Outlast My Heart

to Rainer Maria Rilke

[on the Rilke translations of M.D. Herter Norton and J.B. Leishman]

how will I make the song outlast my heart  
perhaps he cried  
but song in the mirror quested continually,

the reverse

in fragments almost breaking into fire  
or like small forest pools  
and the moss besides,

their least token beckons.

rose petal from the rose tree ingathered;  
far from the field itself  
the wind, unearthly desire

has lost its way, strayed into the branches  
where the far flung birds are caught  
and then depart

departing never,  
their singing in the heart.

mary angela douglas 29 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Will They Manage The Clouds, I Dreamed

how will they manage the clouds, I dreamed:  
when they dissolve in tears.  
how will they fetch their gold from the moon

they banished years and years.  
knights fall away from the path of truth;  
leaving behind a world of rue.

damsels bury them with no proof  
that Love was under the starry roof.  
and orphans wail at the vanishing hoof

of the horse sent to save them,  
the milk white steed  
while kings go on

from greed to greed  
but God is God  
and need is need

and there is accounting in Heaven.

mary angela douglas 30 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Will We Know When We Have Reached The Sun

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE HAVE REACHED THE SUN

[in memory of the Challenger disaster]

how will we know when we have reached the sun?  
Icarus never said who flew with cloud and wind  
and solitary as the rains.

be glad, he told his children, for the flights  
of iridescent wings inside your head  
and for the wounded shadows leaking light.

and then he left his midnights on the workshop floor  
and rose and rose when none were looking up...

into the seas of no regret he sped  
as they were waking-  
and splashed into a brighter world than this

and where he felt his mother's kiss, again  
and all the dreaming of the:  
before this ever happened.

how could they know that, as he did,  
from that time on,  
long Ages would miss him

while his legend soared

mary angela douglas 28 july 2015 rev.10 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# How Would It Be On The Balcony

how would it be on the balcony  
in the moonlight of some other  
century's poetry

sometimes you wondered  
in the glare of the early morning sun  
adjusting the miniblinds

in your efficiency

apartment with the  
books piled on the floor  
with not much time before

your winter trek to the bus  
or summer's humid hike with the  
picnic ants lounging at home;

showing up through the floorboards

even when there's no picnic.  
imagine it:  
writing green verses

with a florid pen  
Imagination's very best friend  
or confidante I guess would be

the word  
or playing the pianoforte  
for the party

in the great salon  
for patrons 'richer than Croesus'  
grandmother said

when we were little.  
(who is Croesus we wondered)  
come on, said someone practical



tapping a shoe inside your head:  
let's get this  
show on the road.

and you turn ruefully back  
from reveries  
to cold coffee and toast.

mary angela douglas 4 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# How You Must Have Felt (To Sharon Douglas, My Sister)

HOW YOU MUST HAVE FELT(TO SHARON MY SISTER)

how you must have felt

when the raids came through

and no one there to comfort you

in the war zone too.

how you must have felt

at the break of day

when the sky could only

turn to grey

and no one there

to hear you say

alas my heart

has gone away

has gone away.

to a place where flowers, hills

remain

and there's nothing left to be explained

just a firefly startled into star

and a wish for you

though from afar

a wish for you-

though from afar.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hungry

can you be in a maze this thick and this deep  
and still wind your way without panic  
without the darting flight

from windowless shadowless something;  
making the pavement stay beneath you  
is an act of will but you trudge up the hill

from one unfixed point to another  
or will the compass crush you

in the bell jar, caught as you are,  
a finer specimen.  
can you be in a question this immense

with sidereal issues crawling crablike  
never starlike never getting anywhere she  
cried at the grocers with her list

with nothing on it again.  
some oranges, some coffee something said  
it's hard to think when you're starving

hard to recall the names for food  
and what was on the table then

in another life and the centerpiece, candles.

a bunch of cherries queried the angels  
chocolate bars chimed the children  
she never had

unfrosted cake she said.  
I had no batter at home.  
butter I mean

what good is bread then

mary angela douglas 22 june 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hurt, In The Waves Hans Andersen Turned Aside

to Hans Christian Andersen for the beautiful story of  
'The Little Mermaid'

weeping shells, the mermaid on dry land  
longs for the pearl of her underwater  
suns, her baby rainbows  
wavering in deep waters.  
nothing here is deep

and she sleeps sand.  
she sleeps sand and cannot breathe  
uncertain of a way to believe  
the beating of her coral heart to music.  
new steps for the ballet, no longer

gliding on a wave, she has to learn  
through dancing on crushed shells.  
and in her violet eyes, the far-off look  
of skies reflected down and down the miles  
of taffeta waters, swells

and clouds the view of nothing  
till it feels like dying.  
later in the story, could she turn to foam?  
heartbroken, on the surface of all surfaces;  
her soul, dispersed...

but this was a fine love, cried the author  
weeping shells and out of stories in the moment;  
his hands shaking on dry paper:  
unable to unfold her valor and the sorrow more  
and still to bear-  
the vanishing point on the horizon.

the invisible Glory where she fled.  
the moire closing of the waters  
above her sea bright head  
or how the seas turned, then,  
the colours of all roses

mary angela douglas 21 april 2014; rev.8 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Hyping The Hurricane

## HYPING THE HURRICANE

I was alive when they were hyping the hurricane  
while in the shadows of small riverbank towns  
the floods really did come.

the shadows thickened in the mud flats  
the tree frogs sang.  
then we were a million miles from home

home floating off as if it were a barge  
so far from Homer and all his songs.  
they were all out

hying the hurricane. so long, they said to us  
while we just prayed.

in a parallel universe  
they remained  
on a flickering tv screen.

seeming to me at least a bit insincere.

drowned crickets sang  
their angel ghosts  
the Heavenly Host

the ghosts of summers drowned.  
what does truth matter anyhow  
when they lie about the weather

some places got no rain at all.

they think we are too Southland  
small and stupid to notice  
when rain gets hyped

and small towns too.



and who is who  
and catfish fried  
where someone died

and water burials  
lily pad dreams.  
and schemes of those out

hying the hurricane.

those of us  
who really miss our homes.  
who care about the details.

of an elegiac sadness  
getting the story right.  
staying up all night because its

us you know  
with no place left to go  
no games to play

with an ear out for rushing water.  
oh sons and daughters of the being not seeming.  
look to your redeeming.

the folklore of the free  
who can still see things with their own eyes.  
and know the wisemen really did come at Christmas.

no matter what the papers say.

mary angela douglas 17 september 2018  
WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Am A Number Or A Series Of Numbers

I am a number or a series of numbers  
in someone's report, file, analysis  
data compiled of the waves goodbye

and the reasons reasoned why of

generalities poorly understood understated  
colorless, faded  
to printer's ink or what they think

when all the results are in, the votes counted  
the games of let's pretend discounted  
I am a mere tick of the box

a heart without locks  
that can be raided at will  
by those who stoke their tills

and lack for no skill in robbing me  
of any soul at all

and I do not know the writing on the wall  
exactly when, how, or where  
God will dispose of them

who think of me not as a person  
rare, exceptional  
but just fair game for

forever counting me over and over, out  
in the rain  
but I hope it is soon

and somewhere where

they can't find me  
and resume the census

mary angela douglas 21 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Am Certain That Jesus Is Not That

I am certain that Jesus was not that  
person walking down a dusty road  
in an immaculate robe, in Cinemascope

that he was not could never be  
whatever it is that you think he was  
while worshipping before altars

ornamented in gold.  
he was a quieter gold.  
he cherished the heart of people,

things. small flowers on the hillside.  
the olive groves.  
I know he has been depicted otherwise

but Jesus in my heart  
never wears this disguise.  
he is all candlelit within his own

secret Christmas.  
this I thought as a little girl.  
when I felt his presence on

every wind.  
and in my Easter frame of mind  
when the air is heavy with springtime

I think of him as I knew him then  
King of the beautiful  
and my friend.

Mary Angela Douglas 15 April 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Am Going Away Where Words Are Not Arguments

I am going away where words are not arguments  
where they fall softly from the tree of language  
and it is moonlight and you are in your secret house

near a window and off to the side you see  
it is either petals or snowflakes falling from  
the skies, the cloud trees scudding through the

evening and you are as solitary  
as the one star that will not forsake you there  
if they twinkle they are planets someone says

but the fragment fades, the last photo in the album  
and it is tied to your heart the whole thing as if  
you were a kite

and you float over all the arguments the broken china  
the recriminations in your red shoes the ones from the fairytale  
but you did not lie to get them and so they are rose red slippers

and you fly and the rooftops know you but say nothing  
knowing you are in need of rest and you are part of this  
the petals the snowflakes falling from the moon

and the starlight covering you from head to foot  
in clean silver.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Am The True Giselle She Said, She Did Not Say

for Olga Spessivtsova-  
and to all the Giselles, the Swan Queens,  
transformed and transforming

I am the true Giselle she said; she did not say;  
it was for someone else to say or not.  
the swan transformed in the lakes of a living mirror:  
meticulously pearled within or the wavering of what you

glimpsed underwater before you came up for air on  
a summer's day, an opal breeze  
when you are lost, in need of wings.

oh is it really true foreshadowing of the soul's eternal  
freedom? their flight into lakes of light beyond the dress  
circle. sparkling only for itself. oh rise

en pointe, as if God lifted you, there and there: the rose,  
the cloud, the pale blue intersections of  
the far dimensions. forget yourself on cue;  
you must or what is training for or life or anything

the handsewn sequined dress spinning out, centrifugal  
petals on a flower whirled through opposing fronts:  
hand layered with tulle and starlight and a sudden

vanishing

released from the jewel box stations of no cross  
to the storm of music, the flaring of old griefs, illusions  
set to music; the studied drift, the tips of satin shoes catch a gleam from  
somewhere else and are you

walking on Light as if you were jeweled  
whisper her predecessors in every language  
and are we somewhere else.

so that later, walking out from the theater  
on legs like pins

like the fairy tale's mermaid for the  
first time, on land

can you understand  
when the mirror no longer clouds with your breath.  
you're no longer recognizing

the metro stop across the streets  
the little grocery with the red onions and  
the newspapers-

in the after-mirage, still snowing, of the matinee-

in the trackless woods of  
who you were and where  
you meant to go

in the late afternoon

mary angela douglas 12 july 2014

Note on the poem: I only saw Olga Spessivtsova and heard her sorrowful, beautiful story through the dream-like, incredible documentary by Anton Dolin called A Portrait of Giselle which I saw on the A& E Channel (in 1988) when it was still about the Arts and not Law and Order repeats and I have merged these images with my childhood love of ballets and my later feeling, after seeing a Kirov Ballet matinee of Giselle in the early 90's at Kennedy Center when I walked past the yellow leafed early autumn trees and the roar of traffic by the Watergate still dazed by what I had seen and far removed from my surroundings.

The poem began today as I remembered the beautiful voice of the French ballerina Yvette Chauviré in the documentary, recounting how someone had called her 'The True Giselle'.

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Believe In The Mythical South

I believe in the mythical South  
the one dripping with magnolias,  
honey suckle vined but

interspersed with the tick tock  
of my grandfather's window shield wipers  
on rainy days

when he drove us to St. Mary's  
my sister and I  
in his pale blue Ford Galaxy

I never learned to drive but sporadically  
I believe in the South like I  
believe I dreamed I was in a world

without sadness dripping Poetry's  
golden lines, the gingerbread times the  
nursery rhymes and Liszt as

played by my Grandmother in  
her rose red dress.  
please, do not think of me as

remiss that I don't count up the crimes  
I know are there, the lack of air for some  
their stolen lives long.

we have to live somewhere, all of us.  
it's clear to me we can't live in history,  
not one of us;

even God wouldn't want to live there

and so I say again as if it were a prayer  
that bears repeating the South is a dream

of corn bread dipped in the honeycomb of  
what you all dreamed was home when home



was no longer there.

mary angela douglas 27 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Bless The Little Cobbling Cells That Mend My Wounds

[for Dr. William and Nina Bergman, their calling]

I bless the little cobbling cells that mend my wounds  
and wish them well all at their golden looms  
that weave the body to the soul again

when all that God had spun's unspinned by fret and care,  
dark things that take us unawares.  
oh, keep the heart within its golden cage

amenable to april and less prone to rage.

I feel the tears subside in all my limbs  
and now I am a living tree again though small  
and the green leaves wink and sally forth

and so my music gains another chord  
and builds upon itself.  
O God who made the starlight, please make me anew.

there's still so much I want to do

and think and feel and reel in all the days  
their substance sure as mine to praise; perform this,  
sewing the shadow back to the silhouette as Pan

could not himself alone, so Wendy tried.  
and then all shone.  
may I count it all joy

in every joint and bone!

mary angela douglas 6 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Can Be

you're going to need a shoehorn for that slipper

I heard a passerby exclaim

why there was always someone standing around

like a one person greek chorus interfering band

I don't know. Dear God. and with cymbals.

i don't know what the odds for it even are.

I lock my door. my golden key in hand.

they're still out there in the hallway;

self appointed in the land.

you're doing it wrong

whatever it is.

you plop the tablets fizz fizz fizz

it doesn't help.

so I go somewhere in my lovely clouded mind

and there I find

somewhere a place where no one says anything.

where its quiet as after a snowfall.

and the glaze is over it all.

the sky is dreaming again.

the leaves coated with ice

the roads of the empire all closed.

and I can think my thoughts and let them grow

like rosebuds into a gentle wind.

and I can be

without the tanks rolling in.

mary angela douglas 7 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Celebrate Construction Paper Chains

I celebrate construction paper chains of red and green  
or green and red depending on the word order in your sentence  
and schoolroom paste the wide mouthed wonder of it

with its own brush and each to each the colours linked  
bedecking the first grade's Tree say, can you see  
through classroom years those Christmas clearings very dear

crepe paper bells, their honeycombed weave  
folding out precisely as a rose oh holy night silent  
rimmed and multicoloured lovely across the street

who knows how kindly we felt toward those  
and rosy punch in little cups we supped in  
the middle of the day let out early, on our way

with butter cookies shaped like stars  
with sprinkles, silver beads  
soft thoughts of those in need

oh there you are, lost Christmas party joy  
and tinsel garlands flung above street lights, boy oh boy  
we're all candle glow and caroling

car showroom windows stenciled with spray can snow  
and holly berries goodness knows what else, wax angels!  
hardware stores lit up like fairy tales

the drugstore paradise, chocolate cherries' shrine  
the toy trains showing off the rails  
last minute gifts before the final chime

mysterious trinkets, what a find!  
fresh hair bows, velveteen and reindeer cheerful gift wrap,  
spring colognes and early snow

this fountaining joy everywhere we go it's Christmas  
who is ashamed to know and let it be echoed  
soul to soul as if we all were peeling bells

children and grownups too in pageants of our own  
the Christ child scenes enacting through and through  
the shepherd, wise man, the free from school

at Christmas feeling evergreen new.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Certainly Can Imagine Blue Blazing Light (For Ray Bradbury On His 100th Birthday)

for Ray Bradbury on his 100th birthday

I certainly can imagine blue blazing light short circuiting out of his fingers at the typewriter

and Sistine instances, paragraphs of gold so that the sun on hold ready to make its next scheduled appearance fumes behind clouds

who is this Bradbury, anyhow bumbling among the blackberries

denizen of summer self crowned King, American Orpheus

and in the end casting green shadows into his ravines

our sanguine hero departs and breaks his heart on the stars for us

so that everything green apple delicious

is peremptorily won over so that they are now best buds.

the sun and ray, ray of the sun

coveting all summers forever so that what is told is vintage

even before old age with its fantastical fantastic ear trumpet

still held out for the gramaphonic rains ceaselessly silver or

melon ripe thumped oh stories you have

become forever the pink and green slices picnic dribbled or  
winged from his dovecote and arcing rainbows altering  
this river of dreams so that we can no longer distinguish  
the streams from the seas the earth from the sky  
or the allegiance we pledge torn in half because we cannot decide  
which we love more  
while we stand children on the banks of it astonishment's own  
at this prodigious imagination flowering past us zone past hyacinth zone  
and radioed in:  
crackling dont just stand there, DO something  
and we think to ourselves there is a tangle of berries  
long forgotten let us tarry there and in the raspberry thickets  
lay aside the selves we thought we were and old despairs and take  
and take on the colours of everything chameleon bright  
or the armor of light lit up like a thousand stained glass windows on Mars  
all that you think or are or could be if you tried  
maiden and dragon transposed or it's suddenly snowing



chaplets of the stars and me with my one ruby candle, candlestick reading him  
calliope proud and whispered aloud to a chimeless midnight

or in the baked bread of the day we pose I and my soul

ribboned rosed and beaded flummery on flummery and slipping past us he goes  
into our own parades so that we feel he's still with us, mist! and then it fades.

missing him, all we need do weeping mirages. adagios

is turn the next page his children of rust clutching our amulets

and we are on it in the zenith of the zinnias at autumn's cusp.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Could Weep For Joy

the last wick of the blue dusk verging on nightfall  
I saw once in a dream in the twilight that precedes  
wakefulness

and it seemed to me the angels were saying goodbye  
and I was still in my grandparents house in the room  
with the taffeta spread, the frost white curtains

the earlier blue of twilight  
and I remembered a dress that colour  
I wore once with a tea rose

picked from our garden.  
there are moments cloudlike  
in the silver treasury of my mind

so that despondent angels sing suddenly  
though it isn't Christmas  
and when I see my face in the mirror then

it seems also lined in silver  
like a sudden cameo in the gloom  
or a star in the spring evening

when someone is playing the piano  
and I could weep for joy.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Do Not Take It To Heart

[to the Indian poet Chumki Sharma for her beautiful poem 'Running Away With The Garden']

just for this space of, perhaps, a cloud's, hair's breadth,  
filament not meant to be on fire or at the music's  
rest in the score

before the tumultuous passage; it's  
then sad angels retreat and draw their colours in  
and the earth grows blank by God's decree

as if under snows

and the poets are even more understated than  
they were before, so dormant is everything.  
there in that space a small bird sings or several

in the cold and I am marveling again alone  
and glad to be at the song before the sparrow freezes  
and I do not care that soon the burden will be

impossible to bear and that looks are stony whenever  
I start to sing because the angels lift up  
on their broad wings

such infinite colours and the pearl of the sky is mine  
though you would not think that  
to look at her so

the old crones say and the news ones too  
but I am the fairy tale (aren't you?) and I do not  
take it to heart.

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Don't Have To Be Cinderella To Dream

I don't have to be Cinderella to dream  
that I am sitting by the pond near the willows  
when the ripples come up to my feet and I am standing  
awash in the pearl waters of my sleep  
and happy in a way I cannot describe even if it's not  
like fireworks over the castle  
even if it's not the coach and four all in gold  
the brocade gown glimmering in all the colours  
God ever made if it's not so lemonade in the shade  
still it's my dream. it's quiet there.  
and a sky of rose sings over me as the larks go.

mary angela douglas 27 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Don't Know What They Say To Each Other

[to the Chief Musician, to David, singing Psalm 64...]

I don't know what they say to each other in the duck blind  
in the woods waiting where it's cold as the poles  
and the mist is dank there.

I'm not talking about your ordinary run of the mill hunters  
but the soul quenchers.

you know.  
the ones that lie in wait  
while shooting the breeze.

watch me comes the cry  
destroy the innocent with a golden arrow  
don't I have the superior poison, the know-how?

don't I? aren't I full of the king's own strategies.  
or for that matter, the queen's.  
the world is full of it.

the casual slaughter in the daily conversation.

the arrow hits its mark  
no valentine.  
no foil wrapped chocolate this time.

but the heart goes on as it must;  
bleeding in front of the angels

who wait their turn while rust gathers.  
and the final reaping.

mary angela douglas 18 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dream Of A Large Studio

[after the essay by the artist Miro dreamed, not read]

I dream of a large studio,  
forest greens, the sun folded like a rose into gleams  
and I will send

the petals of pink phrases down  
each tea rose afternoon  
like St. Therese

or compose the ivory sainted clouds.

the clouds sing: space to breathe, fortes  
and change colours as if they  
were Easter eggs severally tinted

and isn't it tangerine splendid that  
whatever you tell, turns into lime stucco poems  
where anyone could dwell, really,

if they wanted to, with verve-

happy in light, in the simmering of delight  
in whatever is sent and in the glint of  
fairy tale laughter, after: the

dreamed of the

dreamed of  
the widest windows drinking in the cream or  
where, when the jeweled bird of night flows in

sweet everywhere, to stare at you  
through an open screen  
with a golden, concerted eye, and somewhat, shy-

you are impelled

to reach to the ceilinged skies

and snatch for yourself or others  
a peach shade- happenstance

quite whimsically portrayed or,  
of a sudden:  
this snow of stars, of shimmering pears

of lemon froth, half caught in the sieve  
all on a dare  
that a masterpiece may take place

mary angela douglas 8,9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dream Of Staircases

I dream of staircases  
I cannot descend  
because the stairway runs out

into uncarpeted Space  
or only goes a little way down.  
I dream of train stations

where the train has taken Forever away  
or only just left  
or of buses

and I don't have correct change  
or I am in that building again  
the one I never saw in real life

in an imaginary town  
and it is dusk with no known address  
and I can't leave

because the staircases recede  
though others are on the ground  
and the jump is too far down

it could kill me

and it is sleeting  
and I cannot slide  
and when I ask for a ride

they are all going  
the other way

mary angela douglas 27 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Dreamed A Dark Green Pilgrimage

I dreamed a dark green pilgrimage  
unfolding on newsreels lit by a midnight  
sun or catholic candles blooming

sunbursts on film the candles wavering  
yet not, the saints. the shattering of pale roses  
down, adown I cried: whither, these miracles unending?

none answered me. not one.

I, a mere witness to the spectacles of healing  
cloistered beyond the front row seats  
beyond the balconies even.

I'm in the front lobby or on some street wept my soul  
I cannot recognize where no bus runs or cab is called  
and I seem to hear singing

but it was my own voice streaming into

a strange music like a crystal cup  
where sometimes an indifferent coinage  
dropped and this was dissonance I said

going on with the music anyway

beyond the fol de rol, the jesters sheening the tickets  
bought and paid for by the jeweled attendees  
I worked at times for

if at all until they decreed, no more.  
but I footsore and memeless, even so  
I caught the meaning of something behind the news

that the sun dissolved or everything I knew oh

Jesus of Nazareth

my castaway's candle,

brilliant stub oh

quench the floods the rise and the fall of  
the faux events. the heart stripped of all sense

like a bird with no ark I strain against the tides  
and dream of waking on the other side.  
expensive moments past.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed In The Sea Of The Children Of Lir

I dreamed in the sea of the Children of Lir  
coming through the mists of their childhood  
unrecognizably

oh beyond reach  
let words be fought for but  
what am I supposed to say

when saints have courted endlessly  
the hard and diamond edge of  
your impossible retrieval?

when are you coming home  
o vivid heart eluding  
bereavement, banished wing-  
are you carving the thick tiered

wedding cake mists as if they  
belonged to you?  
when will you find rest

beating the crystal air to a  
fine snow over centuries;  
are you very nearly free

or do you dream your muted  
carillons below  
have all passed on?

it is a real question.  
are you?  
stay alive can you

be carried sleeping into  
deeper exiles over  
God's bright shoulder?

it is a real question are you  
finding no more countries left

for you

on earth...

I lived as some suggested  
sending golden transcripts off  
somewhere into space

from brilliant institutions no one ever heard of  
and the envelope sealed with evensong and  
all the mauve distances dissolving...

are you the one  
bargained over at sales  
not open to the general public-

subject to steering committees  
charged  
with capturing the data?

let us return, unopened,  
frailer than snow and so unchartered  
to live in Danish stories, after all-

dreaming of journeys  
over long waters  
looking at light

through the spent leaf  
and the mottled cloud  
as if at a kingdom  
somehow lost to me

still still my own

prospective student,  
employee, friend,  
any person at all:

launched to the unfairytales-like  
docket with a  
mirage-like defense

jump over the railing!

there's no qualifying ground  
for one so fey and the wild swans must  
move through  
the lilac foaming of their weariness.

it is also true  
the glimmer of your sunset mind  
is a sheen of no use to them at all

and will count against you at the agencies  
more than the questions you leave

blank  
when you're combing the waves  
oh not

for 3 good references and a jacket  
they can believe in.

then you'll descend, dear  
Christmas-bright contestant, saint  
like the exemplary

Children of Lir with your  
one cloud-sleeve unfinished  
down to the violet waterline at last:

caught up by sudden angels on command-  
recommended by the wounded Trinity-

weeping poems and  
the clear bells  
of little stars

mary angela douglas 16 august,14 august,20 july 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of A Language

I dreamed of a language  
that would not fall away or  
be brushed aside like

snow on a winter sleeve-

or go unheeded.

of words that would never

shine at the approach of  
the deliverers-

and the rose of this word was  
the same throughout  
and the heart of this rose was

my provenance-mary angela douglas 30 april 2001

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of A Language In Prussian Blue And Gold

I dreamed of a landscape in prussian blue and gold.  
was it the castle at the top of the world  
I wondered;

the one with towers of mother of pearl?  
and was it the sky that was prussian blue.  
I know that the road

was paved with sapphires,  
that the trees were blowing.  
say that the winds were prussian blue

and gold was the sheen of the wish to be there  
it was stamped so clearly  
for a child out walking.

you see the spires in the distance beckoning  
and it seems to you  
you will be there in no time

and that it shines it shines for you, you only  
if the truth be told  
of the dream landscape

in prussian blue and gold.

mary angela douglas 27 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of Ancient Music

[for Gerard Manley Hopkins]

I dreamed of ancient music  
fresh as cream; all honied  
dulcet, a bright stream

visionary, winding through  
the wanded wounded  
worlds: trellised, trellised lily,

and rose and star you are  
and deep embellishing.

strummed on a lute in  
private chamber; recollected  
for the tarnished days impending;

on the execution eves;  
failing towers long past Illium crumbling  
not yet not yet

the sound of linnets liltling,  
don't forget!  
princess, queen, or shepherdess.

he sang the unknown;  
of the bright- through vanishing vanishing.  
though kings are poisoned and

kingdoms withold through the  
terrible nights their gates, their gleams  
she sings, she sings at her work

and it's a fine embroidery;  
porcelain, quaint, of the  
highest order,

o that  
the earth could be: just this.



earth trembles and then quakes,

not long in bliss;

evoking everything made.

in praise in direst straits sweet

music remains in the sifted ruins.

trembling in the leaves again

on the mystical air, darning darling

floating towards you, after a while

a festive festooned tune in bloom

forever its own Spring, sprung

imagination's queen recoronated:

beyond death beyond dooms

beyond all this so out of tune;

stirring the withered blossoms in the courtyards

the begonias of the poor who only hear begone

in the semi golden world so rickety raggedy

they may build their castles

flame tipped on the tip of

what could be said, even out-of-doors

though it's said no more,

say again! cried the Lord

dream again your dream driven out

and cleaved though it may be.

I

poured you out in my secret heart

that you would adore

even Beauty's shadow and not

not rend it, not buy or sell it

or quelled, never may it be

by any catastrophe.

oh minstrelsy of the honey buttered  
livelong, livelong mornings.

mary angela douglas 25 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of Colossus

(This is not a political poem. this is against the political throttling of the individual, individuated beauty of each human soul; imago dei, for those who think they were born to engineer it, on both sides of the aisle. who lie and lie and lie...

It is, in fact, a nightmare and not a dream though as for Alice in the horrid wonderland, the key is on the glass table, if you only look for it; and the Door to the beautiful garden as I do not believe in leaving the reader stranded)

-----

I dreamed of colossus and a marble stair  
where I looked out on everywhere from the last landing  
on the same blank scene  
and I woke up and I said I will mean  
more than the vastness of snow over the empires  
of no soul. those selling even the moonlight for profit and  
control  
and the view from the empyrean  
that outranks God.  
all these greek names.  
what they reign over now.  
sadness the myth of sadness  
I can see, all its golden apples  
rolling down the hill. the Princess, in name only.

distress and the case for myrrh  
and the crystal devastations  
of the king's will; Cassandra and Antigone  
perhaps for a little while I'll be  
but never never the chorus  
for the song is not good  
that hammers fate, determinism home  
like a nail through the heart  
to rule in God's stead.

Only Christ is free.

let it be understood.

there's a tyranny in dreams

that lord it over others.

their sisters and their brothers.

though I am a glass harp

and not the timpani.

still, I dreamed of colossus.

and I wish I never had.

mary angela douglas 28 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of England Returned To Herself

I dreamed of England returned to herself  
and the bitter knights reconciled;  
Albion, coming clear in the mists  
and the cherry carol branching  
and ah, the dream of the Rood  
tremulous in jeweled bloom.

I will leap up to God, my God  
and see the angels rustling in the trees  
where once the poet William Blake  
fell to his knees and understood  
that poetry is certain good  
and illumination, praise.

the sea of faith is verging in the dark.  
the poet soldiers mark their place  
and turn again, homeward  
silent, rank on rank and lilted,  
the lanes all apple blossom filled,  
the lovely strand...

and all their words  
are like a field on every hand  
with madrigals strewn  
and not cut down.  
and not cut down.

while ancient wounds  
break into birdsong, flower,  
into the bridal tunes.

mary angela douglas 17 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of Manderley Last Night

[for Daphne Du Maurier, on the novel, the film, Rebecca...]

I dreamed of Manderley last night  
wrote the second Mrs. De Winter, years after  
her coronation was still fresh in mind

it was a dream but even so  
it was not the same in Time  
as the rusted gates close on us all,

don't they, drifting back, even in dreams

but she went back to Manderley it seems,  
seeking a gleam of what remained,  
remains for the fragmented mind

in beautiful sentences wrote Du Maurier

the most beautiful of any I had heard  
in modern novels  
and at the beginning of the book

not saving the best wine for last.  
ah unsurpassed I dreamed of Manderley  
last night I dreamed...

I dreamed and dreamed over just those  
lines like the voice-over of angels  
on a familiar narration that's no longer just

your own though it sounds like you speaking it;  
you, farther back

and you are all alone now  
and you dream of Manderley  
your own version of it

and shadows and shadows  
on the long avenues

cast by the fitful trees wind-torn

as the heart remembering;

lining the roads, the trees and their reveries  
that won't that can't lead home.

mary angela douglas 5 june 2015; 4 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Of Manderley Last Night (Second Version)

[for Daphne Du Maurier, on the novel, the film, Rebecca...]

I dreamed of Manderley last night

wrote the second Mrs. De Winter, years after

her coronation, still fresh in mind

it was a dream but even so

it was not the same in Time as dreams refracted it, there,

as the rusted gates close on us all,

don't they, drifting back, even in dreams

the dream gates waver.

but she went back to Manderley it seems,

seeking to savor it again;

seeking a gleam of what remained,

remains for the fragmented mind

puzzling it again.

in beautiful sentences wrote Du Maurier

the most beautiful of any I have heard



in noveldom turning the page on beauty,  
to peruse it, farther on.

and at the beginning of the book  
she said this, beginning a dream alphabet,  
language of her own. dream language dreamed  
not saving the best wine for last.  
ah unsurpassed I dreamed of Manderley  
last night I dreamed...

I dreamed and dreamed over just those  
lines such a voice over of angels  
on a familiar narration oh not really my own  
your own though it sounds like you speaking it:  
you, farther back the angels graciously suggest  
and you are all alone now  
wither shall I roam and find the dream-time home  
and even yet, you dream of Manderley  
your own version of it  
and shadows and shadows

on the long avenues

cast by the fitful trees wind-torn

as the heart remembering;

lining the roads, the trees and their reveries

that won't that can't anymore

lead home.

mary angela douglas 5 june 2015 rev.22 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed Perpetual Kingdoms

I dreamed perpetual kingdoms  
that were not fazed by the waves  
or could not vanish submerging their cathedrals  
as in Debussy

or waver in the sunlight for a moment  
so that we asked, what was that? was it there.  
a rainbow brilliance so suddenly dispersed,

I dreamed perpetual kingdoms in the worst of times too  
and a winding stair  
and I could go there breaking off with my hands  
green leaves that would never depart.

and this was the place I rested at noontime  
by the hidden streams that curled under a day lit crescent  
moon of blue ivory  
when the sky shepherd was bringing  
the small lambs home

the ones that changed colours

the ones I thought of,

as my own.

mary angela douglas 9 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed That God Wore A Wounded Skin

I dreamed that God wore a wounded skin  
almost an animal skin comprised  
of all the wounds that were ever felt of  
you and I or devised  
like peacock eyes the wounds were open  
and ongoing. majestic and terrible  
I dreamed this was a cloak he wore  
that fused to His invisibility and Light and more  
that could not be burned off because he would not let it be  
until each child's misery came to an end even the smallest  
bird brambled cut  
and this was his defense against  
the taunts of the Enemy of those  
who thought he was the origin of pain and willed it so  
so He carried Himself and was His own mystery  
by His own perfection by his all seeing Heart  
and Eye  
and this was the coat he wore in season and out  
that kept on growing and that he felt what we felt  
all of us each of us and all the time and so specifically

each recorded in His skin: lash of the day  
eruption within, uprising chained and muted  
so that the coat kept growing through all  
the sad disputes of his existence and our wars  
He was our scars completely  
and He moved through time and space this way so slowly  
with the wounds seeping and each one fresh as the  
day it was made  
and that it became Him more and more  
He was so one with it  
in such a specific way  
that when we prayed oh Father help me here  
all the wounds sprung fresh tears  
and He named them, name by name.

mary angela douglas 22 january 2020

Reply

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Dreamed That Music Faltered

I dreamed that music faltered like a piano in the rain.  
a cloudburst, and then, it will not be the same.  
and no one's going out there in this weather.

they could at least, close the lid I said at the high window  
or thought I did as the rain gushed in.  
but no one came.

a staircase floated by derailed from a home.  
I know I am alone but I will try I cried  
on a rising wind

but I couldn't find the stairs.  
where are the angels where is saving grace  
what kind of place is this where I feel

like an astronaut drowning in space  
and then the clouds cleared. the rain stopped.  
a strangeness in the air. not a drop of mercy.

the grand piano wasn't there somehow.  
so I went to the bus stop, retracing steps  
thinking I was getting somewhere now.

mary angela douglas 8 november 2015

P.S. In my dream there was no music and therefore no mercy. In real life there is both mercy and music, thanks be to God.

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Gathered Fresh Gardenias: You Were Missing

For Virginia Woolf

I gathered fresh gardenias: you were missing  
and zinnia periled summers waved me by.

I followed down the path of your demise,  
my own breath caught in trees  
above the Flood

and pressed my fingertips into  
your orchid-backed mirror's  
perfect pearl-on-pearl

turning through each  
dream-curved edge  
into the whorl of  
contravening years

and sallow interpreters.  
o willow willow war was near  
but the kindness of your mind

does not contract; the crisp  
carnation rooms are still  
your own:

a crystal condensation's flame  
on the flung-open window; the  
inlaid diaries of quartz  
and rain-

all chatelained gestures foregone  
for these moonlit cloud-inscriptions  
of uncalibrated grace are written  
on the evening sky.

sensing your angel's churning wing,  
I cried.



o rose geranium stillness

violet sky  
against which lemon lovely sounds were  
splashing...

your apricot excursion's standing down  
oh why

no second snow on snow's appearing,  
starred like winter's cotillions,  
only warmer...

your garnet constellations  
break apart and my heart  
falters

losing this kaleidoscope  
forever  
with no continuance:

the semi-precious laws remain in force.

mere sleeves of her egress remain:  
sheer-beaded brocade caught  
as the moment, strand by strand

too visibly dissolves.

desert me now, sotto voce,  
as your angels melt in music,

gone

then I saw  
brightness brightness

every shining phrase unshunned

and drowned in Light

mary angela douglas 30-may-2 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Gathered Fresh Gardenias; You Were Missing (Reposted On Virginia Woolf's Birthday Jan 25 2018)

For Virginia Woolf

I gathered fresh gardenias: you were missing  
and zinnia periled summers waved me by.

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brightness brightness

every shining phrase unshunned

and drowned in Light

mary angela douglas 30-may-2 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Had A Feeling About The Stars

I had a feeling about the stars  
that maybe they could be  
the outward shell of God

and he was speaking that way  
in silver to us all and from distances  
no longer calculated by the radio astronomers.

and this is why we misunderstood  
and he was weeping in pearl aureoles  
above the quiet snows inconsolably,

beyond His incontrovertible Will  
because we did not know Him, still.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Had Golden Apples

[for Mama]

I had golden apples in the second grade reader  
and green ones at home.  
and apple appliques sewed onto

my best jumper.  
this was in apple days when  
I carried my writing tablet in a

plaid satchel, the one with the wide  
and broken lines in icy blue, alphabet  
letters crowding thick as malteds there

the pencil shavings' perfume in the air

the workbooks making sure you  
knew apples from oranges.  
and saddle oxford shoes

I must have scuffed on the leaves  
there being little else to do in gladness  
than stare at the apple sun

even though they told us not to,  
and the world so round.  
and fairy like, the snow curbs

when they appeared  
in the apple cold;  
counting the crystals of frost

on the ground  
like the days before Christmas...

sometimes on the days of gold  
they served us  
apple sauce cake

in the cafeteria.  
then all the apple valentines  
were mine

and Time itself,  
construction paper red  
taped to the windows  
of the school room

and pasted on with too much glue;  
sometimes with glitter  
and sometimes it came off  
but not the I Love You.

mary angela douglas 19 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Have Been Looking At Flowers

[for Carol Ward for her beautiful photograph of, as she said,

'a lotus resembling a swan']

she said 'this lotus resembles a swan'

and we peered closely in the looking glass pond named for

Lily Pons through

an actual photograph

out of a dream; then it seemed to me perhaps

I have been looking at flowers all wrong

and all my life

never seeing that they were gliding

and that the air around them made a kind of watermark

in wedding golds and whites

and that they flowed there with great significance and imprint

that perhaps in each flower soul there was concealed a

birdlike core prone to soaring also

if only it could be so;

an element like a moon whose phases were petals of pearl

and they could imagine themselves also snowing, whirling

above the stars and the treelines falling and falling

from great heights on little children  
into the errant and the silver meteors,  
their own parachutes forming;  
shimmering down on us encoded in starlight'  
time exposed above their former gardens  
or full of pink and green momentousness  
over the castle splendid  
forever and ever.

mary angela douglas 14 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Have Friends In A Box

I have friends in a box.  
beneath a screen.  
I think I have.

I tap on the blue blue glass  
as if it were the sky  
summoning angels.

the things I say are kept by clouds;

don't drift away!  
I have worlds under glass  
awake when I'm asleep

long past the meridians  
of what used to be called  
dreams; (or countries) , my

houses with no furniture.  
drawers I can't open.  
letters I'll never tie

with a green silk ribbon.  
much at arms length  
rich as a click away.

yet sometimes I wonder  
if on a winter's day, alone at the bus stop  
I suddenly decide to sing the way I used to

will there still be clouds in the air?

mary angela douglas 5 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Have Loved Braided Rains

I have loved braided rains

rainbows in oil on the carport.

being in the painting of the day we're in

and standing still when the winds begin

to ruffle the trees of april

scattering the plum petals before us as if

we were royalty or every moment was a wedding.

so many phases later still

i remember the whippoorwill

call that my Grandfather made

&quot;lemonade stirred in the shade&quot;

the silver rhinestone buttons

on my grandmother's red taffeta

dressed for the recitals where she played Liebestraum

better than anyone.

the calm of after school.

and after work.

eternally the feeling of turning home in all weathers

in sleep or out of it,

reading the stars.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Have Wandered In White Kingdoms

I have wandered in white kingdoms  
where the bleached lights  
lingered

over an expanse like tears

suspended, like  
tears suspended-

where  
leaves encased

could not bear their own silver  
or the ache of a

winter existence extended  
beyond any plausible contract-

mary angela douglas 11 december 2004

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Heard Sad Angels Whisper Rise Above

rise above. I heard sad angels whisper rise above.

though clouds may fester bringing bitter rains

rise rise above all of your pain oh rise above

cirrus decorate the summer skies.

rise rise above remaining lies

God is only really ever love

rise rise rise and do not cry

let the evening breezes shut your eyes

let the garden flowers soothe your heart

let the shy stars over you still

play their part and rise.

mary angela douglas 22 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Held Fast To The Cherry Branching Skies

I held fast to the cherry branching skies  
even when the earth slipped, the angels  
vaulted over the unseen banisters.

they lay on earth dissembled, and starlight  
was chipped and I heard the broken glass  
of far away sighs that some called music.

all this has passed except for the museums  
where long ago springs remain you can see any Sunday  
settling down with your coffee and biscotti

they are painted in  
sweet greens and blues in a sunlight that

cannot fade in the gardens to which  
we can never return, you know,  
in the same way.

I have made much of the cherry branching skies.  
staying afloat in this way.

painting over the livid lightening of the storms.  
the steaming fissures in the sidewalks.

mary angela douglas 31 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Imagine My Grandmother On A Day Trip From Heaven

things get coloured inside in  
That colouring book  
to a point where it seems like

it's all made of stained glass  
and you can't shake the radiance off  
of even a blade of grass

it's that crystalline here.  
I imagined you might say to me  
on a day trip from Heaven

and answer the questions you  
never answered in dreams  
though I've tried so hard

to hear you.

everyone feels that way  
at first, you said, recently  
arrived from earth though

later, the light changes.  
you don't see things the same.  
the shadows are made of diamonds.

do wishes come true then?  
the little girl in me wanted  
still to know.

any pound cake in this house?  
Grandmama queried:  
with sliced peaches?  
and a tall iced Coke...

mary angela douglas 29 july 2015 rev.9 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Just Want To Go Home

who got a heart that ticks like a watch  
at the Emerald Fair?  
a thimbleful of courage.

a mind that sees  
through crystal doors.  
oh why not skip the route through the

poppy coloured fields  
and pick at very last and least  
the door that

leads to pure freedom; to  
crushed diamonds on the winter air  
and to the open plains.

but you demur and I despair  
and circle the wagons  
that just aren't there when

the dolls won't drink the milk  
in the bottle  
that never disappears.

oh we'll go on for years  
you say, thinking you  
are some visionary.

but I hear bells like stars  
and the Christmas steeples glint  
through the blizzards of

bright lies I've heard before.  
I know that Christ

is real and I mean Jesus  
not someone else  
in his disguise

though you use coloured  
chalks to QED it on the Palace  
blackboards and cry, otherwise! when

your equations shine in the dark.

and though the drowning sink  
below the water lines  
it's all just watercolours

in a gallery where  
it's always raining and  
I just want to go home.

mary angela douglas 7 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Kept Your Carnelian Word

I kept Your carnelian word  
every day in the street  
that was never mine

I forgot how to walk, I  
forgot to remember all  
local customs

I only emblazoned Your  
word of flame

mary angela douglas 19 december 1998

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Know

every day I dig the tunnel deeper

every day I wash the sea out of the door

every day I rinse the curtains

every day is Heaven implored.

I believe in exits from the sorrows.

I believe in sudden bright reprieves

i believe with every click the tumbrills

will unlock and then disclose the keys.

carry just a cloud in your last pocket

meteor showers in your only pail

I know God made earth to be a meadow

only man made it to be a jail

mary angela douglas 3 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Know You Will

I know You will catch me whenever I fall  
into the nets of Your delicate provision  
whenever I envision  
the world as it was before.  
before when you were dreaming  
of the colour green  
of the canopies of trees and clouds.  
before You said one word of leaves, aloud  
when Light was a thing unseen.  
and wished for, by the angels.  
I will remember with You  
the notebooks on birdsong  
please  
going back to those scenes:  
Eden before the ruin.  
looking for mushrooms  
and the tiniest flowers  
spellbound for hours  
in the green shadows.  
in the plum's purest stain.

the benison of rains;

Orion.

mary angela dougla 22 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Like Icicle Music, Candy Cane Cold

I like icicle music, candy-cane cold;  
peppermint swirled ice cream: dream  
of all pinks to be

and sugarplum lore, frozen oranges.  
I like going out of doors  
when the almost-snow sharp air

sparkles into you so that you know, you  
want to sing in your knitted mittens  
your old overcoat; your mouth like a cherry O,

Christ I adore...  
but you are hushed,  
waiting for evergreen angels

to appear  
each time this year  
half touching the straw

on the roof of the small nativity in the window  
until wishing only this:  
that the shepherds under the Star

would blink to life and all within  
to shine before you  
Christmas past of all pasts:

and most of all-

that this,  
would last.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Look Behind

I look behind and then I know  
the distances that I have sown  
are mine. alone.

each footprint taken in the snows  
that melts in faintest winter's glow  
is still the way I took one day

though in a place I cannot say  
because it's not the same.

yet each, to each God points a way  
and there we wander if we may  
and though the trail is mystery

it's still our own real history  
that none, in truth, gainsays.

mary angela douglas 21 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Looked Up And All The Stars Were Jasmine

'The call to action last Saturday draw less attention to the Chinese people. However, in Beijing, a man named Liu Xiaobai 25 years old was ambushed by the police when putting jasmine flowers in front of fast food restaurants, especially, McDonald's, which was mentioned as the location of a planned protest, and took some photos there.

'I was very scared when the police took my cell phone. I just put some white flowers. What's wrong with that, ' said Liu. 'I'm an ordinary citizen who love peace.'

Security forces intended to arrest Liu previously, but the crowd of journalists initially prevented the arrest. Two other men were also arrested. Not yet clear whether the actions were related to 'Revolution Jasmine'. The arrest took place in Shanghai.

On Sunday, the government went further, reaching the virtual world. Search for the keyword 'jasmine' is blocked in similar micro-blogging site Twitter in China, . Not only that, short messaging service via mobile phones are also disturbed.'

AP Article found on VIVA newspost Internet Sunday February 20,2011 after initially hearing about this on BBC Radio

I looked up and all the stars were jasmine  
the moon was veiled in jasmine  
the crickets in the dark  
sang 'jasmine', 'jasmine'

in my heart a small white  
flower so perfumed  
in my heart a small  
white flower, delicate, in freedom

bloomed and bloomed.

I looked out and all  
the earth was jasmine  
folded into Space save in

one place, only-  
a poet with one last word to spend  
spread a trail of jasmine

and was led away to who  
knows where by those afraid  
of only flowers.

now the lines on God's own weeping palm  
are crossed and crossed again,  
but they spell 'Jasmine'

and all my tears-  
and all my tears-  
are jasmine. jasmine.

mary angela douglas 20 february 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Lost That Summer Walking On

I lost that summer walking on  
golden sidewalks,

returning to no wisteria-laden porch-

the golden road slit  
through the universe.

like the girl with  
red shoes I  
just kept going down it  
under no sky at all  
while the sea filled up with clouds-

mary angela douglas 30 may 1998

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Lost The Colors Of Giotto

I lost the colors of Giotto:  
the steady pouring of  
earnest angels; the  
forerunning fuchsia  
of generations of light

and fountaining ardor.

I lost the sorrowless  
carmine quiet, the  
rectitude of stars lapped  
in lapis lazuli

the indigo stairwell of clouds.

I lost the olive branching, the  
sweet cerulean days; the small  
birds gathered in the lemon wind;

I lost my place at the shell pink window  
and grieved for the shimmering ladder,  
misplaced;  
through the vacant castle I sought so many things  
but the way was fused I lost  
the sunset aureoles  
the unchastening wing  
then it seemed that I lost Earth  
and all my tears flowed upwards  
in the Space where you were not: I lost  
the sundial in the shade

of your last rose

mary angela douglas 5 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Only See

back then we thought the emerald way

would always be ours

the golden hours of play

the witches few.

the curse lifted in the midnight tome

the Kingdom sparkle under a new moon.

how I have yearned for you,

lost fairy tale worlds

your silvered spinning-...

at every hour I must be winning back

and follow every track of, every trace

the grim have erased.

let the race be to the swift

and the lid be lifted on the miseries.

I only see blue fairied Hope

the ferry to the green slopes of Avalon and

the King Returning, the end of wrongs

and hear: the vast, autumnal Airs-  
the rubied orb of Song.

mary angela douglas 23 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Promised You What Could Not Happen

I promised you what could not happen:  
wax melted into diamonds,  
the ruby vanishing into pearl

and to be jade myself,  
in a swirl of snow.  
how could I know

which task was first  
or that on earth, they always said  
none of them would be done

by one who lived wherever  
I happened to live  
with other people's curtains

floating in the breeze,  
with the lease unsigned  
and I like jade white jade

disguised in the falling snows.  
this is not the clock on the mantle,  
you complained;

this is not the stocking hung by the grate.  
this is your fate, I thought;  
I have nothing to do with

the leaves that skirl before the door;  
time that slipped past you  
as though you were born ghostly.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Read Of A Book On The History Of Glass

I Read Of A Book On The History Of Glass

I read of a book on the history of glass

in the National Museum of Ireland

and I thought on a cloud drifting day

with the rains not that far away in Carolina,

I thought, all that has passed

my thinking on the destiny of glass

and high Irish song.

yet still from the aeons where I belonged

a faint stirring rises like the wind,

signaling a storm

the kind that clears the air for clear eyed speech

or shatters it all

and angels beseeching

the beautiful, the faltering airs behold them fallen where

I could not reach

and all was lost from each to each

in a thunderclap morning.

what matters now in the aftermirage

green island and fair where I never was yet wanted to be

I never went to the National Museum of Ireland.

but something in me seems a part of that

and I feel that this is so through the little else I know

through the door that has no key

they will come back to me, in the rounding of the hour

the wounds that have staying power-

and become the sea.

mary angela douglas 17 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Read The Day Inside My Mind

I read the day inside my mind  
before I opened the curtains.  
I read its branching ways

its unexpected breeze the way  
the trees rang out to me  
across dim fields

letting the mists come between us easily  
and I read the mists themselves  
mystified by their music.

then I read: pinkness of skies, like baby roses  
and no passerby as if I were on an island here  
and everyone disappeared and I could read could read

the beautiful mind of God  
it was that clear to me.

mary angela douglas 2 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Remember A Tv Program Called Queen For A Day

I remember a TV program called Queen for a Day  
for some reason my sister and I were not that enamoured of  
the crown and the confetti that came down on the lucky

lady about to win all the prizes, mainly new kitchen appliances  
who had a facial expression as if she had just gone through  
The Pearly Gates.

we were interested in the applause meter. How was it really  
possible to measure applause?

as for ourselves, we played with a tiny doll sized kitchen

out in the back yard with cheerful curtains  
and an outdoors scene  
painted on metal so that you would be looking

at the painted outdoor scene 'through' the tiny  
window above the sink at the same time  
you would actually be in the real outdoors

scene of the backyard  
the hot summer grass making your knees itchy.  
a few stray ants near the clover beds.

and now I recognize we were always in love  
with everything then and were so happy  
when we played because we always lost and found

the worlds contained in worlds.  
even without confetti coming down.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Remember The Pear Tree

I remember the pear tree  
though you would not call it a golden thing now-  
or even possible;

the partridge with its ruddy wing;  
the swans upon their pond:  
that they were spun of fine glass

like my escalating heart into  
which God could pour in snow bright radio waves  
deep colours

when I thought, it was only you, my late remembered  
picture book of days.

oh that you had given me unnumbered days,  
His mirrors, the flocks of the stars.  
many dancers danced to my door;

the wreathed singers under the windows  
that I flung wide that day  
in my amazement stunned.

though the pipers drove me mad at daybreak  
till I sent them away to other foundlings,  
how glad was I for the singing colours,

the rainbow ribands, floating tides  
of some Divine clear victory decreed;  
the inner scars branched into cherry stealing;

the vivid air you christened with crystal.  
and merriment, in waves.

now the castle is dun.  
the dulcimer dimmed with dusk and  
the way is shut to me,

littered with your fantastical presents.

so once upon! ...  
how will you answer me when I call,  
dressed all in silver, caroling to the last;

unclasping the sunset colours.  
no gold upon the tree.  
with only the mourning doves for company.

mary angela douglas 29-30 november 2015 rev.3 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Remember When We Were Standing Still

I remember when we were standing still  
and the day was a drop of honey  
beading on a spoon,

the spoon of silver made.  
how intricate our delays seemed then  
in the afternoons

like Florentine colours laid on

thickly one by one.  
peach bloomed in the skies  
over the cypresses

while  
our shadows  
embroidered like frescoes

the dreaming walls.  
now the hours  
do not come to me

when I call  
but I must wait  
at the gate of all the stars

God ever made  
reading the night skies  
like the apprenticed Magi

mary angela douglas 4 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Saw Clouds Like Words And They Were Filled With Light

I saw words like clouds and they were filled with light  
with rains with jeweled wings but oh they are floating  
away and who will retrieve them.

so it is with a lost language when its continent goes under.  
under the beaded waves with the mermaid countenances-  
all that seaweed hair

and the pearled combs.  
and if my eyes are detached from seeing  
and if my heart is misaligned

it is because it is the cause the cause my soul:  
these symbols have drowned in the tides;  
the rose reign's images reined in.

mary angela douglas 23 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Saw Hawthorne's Scar

I see Hawthorne's scar in the winter sky:  
the cloud gashed light  
and we will gather this harvest in

my soul and I yet, if God wills.  
the scar will blend into a Night  
that cannot vary and where

the summer birds unwarily take flight  
too late descending toward the flowery clime.  
these portents driven in the sound,

along the strange and rocky coves  
of what has been, pale wreckage! floating  
off the Main; Heart-bound, not Land! and

scavengers will come who'll never understand  
a century too late and remonstrate  
and strive so each with each

to claim a dread treasure.

but we know it does not avail  
who wait upon the stare of old ghosts;  
that where the stars set, chill

refractions lash unceasingly  
the haunted prayerless mind-  
and pilgrim blanched,

the sun oh cannot  
cannot find us  
where we ignore

Divine glory-  
and take the mantle on ourselves.

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Saw In Effigy The Prairies

I saw in effigy the prairies  
as if nothing had ever been  
but that expanse under starlight;

carnation pink the light of afternoons; that  
tint of the prairie rose  
I wanted so to live in

when I was young.

water towers waver in sunlight;  
the silos too.  
and through the miniature downtowns

the first snows fly and  
the squared off town squares shine.  
and was this mine? and is it true that

soon husking will be done and one  
by one the little farms blink out like  
ruddy stars we remember

in the long grasses?  
everything passes.

but I see, as in a glass  
or in snow panes of the white frame houses  
with the well shingled roofs

built against inevitable storms

some self effacing loveliness I cannot be torn from,  
eternal heartache born of the wind and sun  
that the wagon wheels,

move on.

mary angela douglas 7 january 2016

P.S. I owe the exquisite phrase 'snow panes' to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas and I hope she doesn't mind my using it here; it really fit in the poem like a sparkling snowdrift of her music and I used it only for the sake of Beauty.

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Saw The Amazing Skies With Their Very Own Watercolours

I saw the amazing skies with their very own water colours  
shine and I felt the shine inside of them the pearl decked clouds  
the feeling of music in me

drift, do not drift away I yearned but could not say.  
and this was childhood.  
they do not teach us this and think we are little because we are

amazed at the  
skies and pearled within; they think of us as shells  
and require of us school.  
and yet without being taught we loved beauty, the high winds;

the little breezes in the rose garden.  
and felt we could say things to the stars.

mary angela douglas 25 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Saw The Fleeting Clouds Above The Plains

[my American dream]

I saw the fleeting clouds above the Plains  
in my own mind;  
the beautiful are not always fleet,

I cried.  
I saw them massing in silver  
in amethyst in rose in tropical orange  
above Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska;

I saw the fine snows like lace, attending-  
the stranded cattle moaning.  
doomed Orion, clouded in the blizzards

and those who lost their homes,  
their will to live.  
and those who fell in wars.

or strokes, from overwork;  
their skylark measures turned to dust.  
the inheritors of rust.

I saw the tall grasses bending under the cyclones;  
and marooned, the homesteads gone  
from Oklahoma on toward the Dakotas

in a sea of grass and all that was past.

the mountain passages closed.  
the ships that sailed on land-  
for fool's gold.

the Faith that ploughed, ploughed under sod.  
oh God. the clouds return, as fleet and charged  
with meanings as before.

let the beautiful return again  
let the beautiful return again

mary angela douglas 11 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Saw The Ghost Of Walter De La Mare

'why fade these children of the spring? '

-William Blake, Thel

I saw the ghost of Walter de la Mare  
leaning on an April curve of music,  
unaware

I saw his hands of tender glass  
and the thin china he was drinking from,  
reflective, the dark raspberry stillwaters

of Beauty he drew up in pailfulls  
the silver pooling stars

at his beck and call-  
the curio cabinets bedizened,  
strongholds of childhood jams-  
and the apricot laughter of the cherubim  
by his side.

now acorn cups half-brim from twilight rain:  
the fairy feast's abandoned he complained  
'Is there anybody there? '\*

he said, answering his own soul, alone:  
'the whispering trees of Eden.'\*\*  
he wept.

they pour the ocean into a thimble-  
our golden ships may founder in the moss.  
there are other losses-

song is made desolate, Walter de la Mare,  
long years since your flag was lowered to the ground.  
rust from the muted region's flaking;

your antique tears I've brushed away.  
no one's watercolour for so long- -

mary angela douglas 20-21 december 2009

\*line from his poem, 'The Listeners'

\*\*line from his poem, 'Goodbye'

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Saw The Lights Go Down On Vivid Lines Written For Heart's Ease

I saw the lights go down on vivid lines written for heart's ease  
and not to please the kings, the courts I saw the curtain close  
and my soul on oblivious waters: ships without sails, clouds

without moons, music leaving the rooms forever.  
caw like this like this the crows told the children of Eden  
seizing the stage, darkening the skies, removing the

shine from apples, stars, blossoms...  
He decreed in love, and for love's sake, alone  
we're losing time, mourned the tappers on their keys

revising everything  
productively, and minimizing, mimicing laconically  
filling the moat with tears and no one could cross over;

filling the coffers of their circuses. what is gold said the Soul you shifted out of  
sight in your modernity to please  
the new kings and their courts, you thieves-

to burnish your spot in the spotlight  
how you've kept up with trends.  
but some remember:

there's one more spinning wheel in the kingdom;  
words were cherished once, we will defend defend  
the lovely prayers you say, unsay

but Keats said ' as if a rose should shut and  
be a bud again', our flowering language cannot  
be unsaid though you have stripped the

elaborate Tree and poets left for dead who  
died for Truth or Beauty, it's the same said  
Emily whom you have shamed

and opened the dungeons for those

you banned from your magazines, your wilting coteries-  
who loved these banished snows, the bright veil lifted

over the Unseen, the mysteries, the lavish dreamed.  
now forward thinking teachers scold when we quote them,  
critics mock, you're not accessible

but they were lent by saints who went before.  
what have you done with them?  
who let you through the door and

where have you thrown them overboard

I cried, alone, bereft-

oh what is your disease they said  
because I mourned diminished Beauty  
nobility trod down. regardless, I raved on

they're murderers ringing the curtain down  
and locking up the Muse, key in their pocket,  
satisfied-

and winning awards for this?  
-and those of us who know what you have done:  
decry decry- until we die

your buying up of the bruised wings  
and selling, selling everything  
making a splash and not in Icarian seas...

mary angela douglas 26 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Shall Miss Silver Buttons

I shall miss silver buttons

thimbles in the King cake,

the many threaded hours

and waking for their sake

revive again, a little of

the roseate

the rose tinged power

of dreaming as it was then

the dew in the grass

when summer has passed

and the twirling parasol of milk white silk

in the dusk when we cried

lavender lavender

skies are falling down

how will we know

the ones we lost in Heaven

she sang the lullaby of the silver shoon

and there too she will be singing

I love the moon and the little

flowers in the grass

and all of this coming to pass

as we did

once the birds singing early or late

at His least, most beneficent Word

I shall, new sandcastles make...

mary angela douglas 16 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Smile Into Far Distances

why couldn't it be that way  
the way we thought it would  
that we would find our playhouse

in the woods like a fairy tale cottage  
marked for us alone  
and with the doll size baby tea set

done in small roses.  
there we would remain the children  
and mama the mama the mama

and grandmama grandpapa too  
the worlds we knew at first  
without the bubbles bursting

rainbow's sheen floating forever in the backyard  
sunlight dappling everything.  
I know somewhere it must be true

behind the gumball machines,  
in the old shopping center,  
inside the nesting worlds forever new

inside the present, yet another  
star flecked tissue Christmas  
evergreen as before.

you think I am naive  
and you deplore that in me.  
maybe you do

but I smile into far distances, queen,  
anthropologist of the faint gold thumb printed clues.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Think How Great Cathedrals Rise

I think how great cathedrals rise  
into the rose translucent skies  
and wonder how they could withstand

the bitter histories, close at hand.  
oh, could I not in some deep shade  
far from the things that man has made

forge such a link to Beauty that would not be razed;

I asked beneath the wheeling stars  
one fresh October wandering far  
around a lake where mists arose

oh clouded, under Orion!  
and now so many autumns, late,  
I ask you Lord, can you please wait

until my small cathedral's done?  
then I'll move on from sun to Son  
and cast all bitterness aside

with no more questions to abide;

no longer tired, cut from the choir  
for gazing up from spire to Spire.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2015; 9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Think Of Books Like A River Through The World

[For Fred W. Allsopp of Allsopp and Chapple (Arkansas bookshop) fame who died before I was born but whom i always wished I had met]

I think of books like a river through the world,  
second hand they deem them but you know that they've  
seen more than several lives

and sometimes, centuries, continents breaking apart  
where they were stored or in the heart  
behind battle lines, in the violet cul de sacs

of the backwater bric a brac cottages disguised  
like emissaries to the future they were launched  
so once upon

a Christmas favorite of a bygone year  
with illustrations as limpid clear then  
as cradle dreams

and brightly, gilt upon the spines and now

the gold is coming off, the pages foxed  
not out of the box but come to you  
in your prime with water damage, hidden sobs

like a token from a subway no one rides anymore  
but here it is at your door so you get on  
unaccountably late

and fated to understand things no one next to you on break  
or at the automat selecting the chiffon pie  
could even imagine you knew

watching the rain blow down the avenues or  
your hotel coffee getting cold-  
while everything around you recedes

though you can't say how

your head, as they say  
in the clouds...  
and the window panes beaded with jewels

as you turn the page...

mary angela douglas 13 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Think Of Monumental Beauty Often

I think of monumental beauty often  
of the rise and fall of cloud civilizations  
the pink orange folds of the

drifting sheep and who will corral them in my sleep  
my thoughts in the red clover meadows grazing  
near the invisible Andromedas

while the school films drone on

I think of the histories of small pools reflective of  
the cloud empires and how I want to live in  
their green blue world

as though it could be a second and an emerald birth  
with art deco sapphire accents  
into coolness rippling out from the center

of small mirrors

where would I be today if I had studied assiduously  
dates, treaties, the names of kings  
I don't know

I remember swinging almost to the edge of clouds  
their vast embroidered cities of loveliness tinted  
like the earliest paintings of the Renaissance

then disappearing as if the skies  
were One Pearl.

mary angela douglas 13 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Thought I Saw The Glens Of Night

(For Carolyn Hooper)

I thought I saw the glens of night  
and all former loyalties had melted away  
only the blood of Christ became starlight  
and shone over fitful Caledonia  
but oh the scene shifted  
and the angels took flight  
where are the glens I cried  
in more than song  
and what was all this for  
if Scotland forgets her King.  
ranged on no altar now  
I see again those who bled and died  
who pledged their honor and lost everything  
I thought I saw the glens of night  
and all was quiet where once there were scars  
what was won in enduring love  
can never be destroyed  
I heard the noise of waters then

the many waters gathered of the saints  
who said this is true in the glens of night  
and when the mists are rising after all.

mary angela douglas 16 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Thought The Beautiful World Had Come

('then pealed the bells more loud and deep...' Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

I thought the beautiful world had come  
haunting the space that used to be  
filled with human misery

and gold to the touch and unfolding as the rose.  
soon sighed the angels but not yet  
and I couldn't sleep for remembering

what I could not forget that the beautiful world  
is possibly near to each one expecting it  
though tempest driven and alone.

keep watch oh my soul I wanted to say  
and open the casements in an old fashioned way  
and let the spangled air rush through

the rooms of a former bitterness.  
and the ghost I was unlatched the stars  
where God had healed the inward scars in

the winter air, where it floated, the beautiful world  
just out of reach.  
tell your children this

in their fine sleep.  
that the beautiful world may come.

Mary Angela Douglas 1 January 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Want To Live In A Sky Blue Basket Said Someone Small

I want to live in a sky blue basket said someone small.  
when I'm in trouble I will hide under very pink clouds  
where they won't find me.

oh said her sister. yes they will, the clouds will fly off unexpectedly  
and then you'll get it.  
ok then. a sky blue playhouse with no door.

but how will you get in?

through the roof was said.  
it comes off, like a lid.  
it will for them too, silly.

look.  
it's my story  
and it will work.

mary angela douglas 1 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Want To Make Butter Of The Palest Yellow

I want to make butter of the palest yellow  
and stamp it with the willow tree  
or with a golden seam.

cream butter, submerged in springs all summer,  
ice cold lady-in-waiting for  
the Elderberry Queen, the jam of

all jams, spread lightly on a honeyed crust  
or the thin crusts for the gentlefolks' tea  
fallen on poverty

with wild strawberries crushed  
and savored to the last crumb  
with a prayer and the last

of the wild mint  
when winter's in the air  
Christmas so near.

when we say to the ghost of our angels  
pass the butter, dear.  
go fish where there are no fish

and make a tricoloured wish  
for the Trinity is here  
asking for drawn butter

on God's asparagus.

Mary Angela Douglas 29 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# I Wanted China The Colour Of Geraniums

I wanted china the colour of geraniums.  
teacups with golden rims.  
a small porch.

so many books that people passing by  
would say, oh, that's the book house;  
isn't it lovely?

come and read the sunrise here.  
the sheer winds  
I would say to my soul-

the sheer winds that blow only,  
through the high trees.  
fear no disease;

breathe freely the words on the page  
whether ornamental or plain spoken.  
and within your heart keep silence

in the rains.  
these and many other things  
I dreamed as many do

though Grandmother said don't dream,  
but do.  
yet I have seen in daylight hours

and no mistake-

wild angels on their sorties  
mending the breached realms  
of Poetry.

mary angela douglas 7 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wanted To Dream Of The Life Of Clouds

I WANTED TO DREAM OF THE LIFE OF CLOUDS

I wanted to dream of the life of clouds  
the scurrying of leaves in small vortexes  
illuminations of

the rose red rainbows singular in the world  
to flow near stars and to become that silver  
or the quince green

indistinguishable from moonlight  
in the clouds the crystals freeze  
into half and quarter rainbows

composing their own music  
and the birds flow too  
and dream so that then

I am dreaming of clouds and within that  
the clouds dream of birds  
the birds dream of

who knows perhaps the snows  
the snows dream of descending  
into the vast gardens

of the first earth oh I wanted to dream  
I wanted to dream of the history of clouds  
to be done with the history of earth

to turn into the sweeping rains  
and over vast seas  
to dissolve

to be mist on the faces of little children  
and to disappear  
into opalescent hemispheres

so far from here

to become the breath of angels  
and to know  
life is fleeting as all poets know

but the clouds do not know  
in their motion what is going  
what is going away

who is going away  
they are themselves  
incapable of tears

of wrenching themselves from the years accumulated  
I want to sleep in the orchards where the pink clouds  
descend

becoming the flowering of the trees  
and to float petal like to earth  
and then to swirl upwards suddenly

mary angela douglas 22 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wanted To Pack The Wind In A Jar

I WANTED TO PACK THE WIND IN A JAR

I wanted to pack the wind in a jar  
so that wherever you might go  
on any given summer day  
you could open the jar  
and there would be the wind  
laughing at you  
and fresh as lilies.  
and in another jar  
starlight, frozen.  
for the occasionally lost  
at inconvenient times.  
you open the jar:  
and what a surprise,  
you're feeling all celestial bright  
and suddenly at a party  
though it's late at night,  
tomorrow's school  
with coloured lanterns swaying  
and pin the tail on the donkey games in the carport,  
stereoscopic views of the Grand Canyon  
and strawberry ice cream.  
suddenly I was thunderstruck  
with many possibilities.  
flowers in a jar for january  
tied with a plaid gift ribbon  
like in the women's magazines  
and wooly sheep  
to be let out into the fields in March.  
they would have to be tiny  
with the lid screwed on tight  
so as not to make a commotion  
and break the glass but then at last  
they would run and play  
resembling clouds in a way come down  
clouds in the fields as far as  
your eyes could see, baby clouds,  
set free near the pines  
and Spring, all around you.

in a pink and blue design.

mary angela douglas 6 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wanted To Say Things With Cherries On Top

I wanted to say things with cherries on top  
I explained to the dream people  
in my dream but they got up

and filed out of the room all single file  
and lemon sour  
and I'm in a bower of flowers

rose upon rose and gladioli ridden  
and rid of them  
and I say: strawberries, cream

and opalescence opalescence, gemmy jeweled rings  
shiny, shiny things to laugh at the wind with  
bubble floating all rainbowing

and swing in the swings

and I can't hear you disparaging me dream people  
and Grandfather comes with the church and the steeple  
made out of his hands

the pink clowns made out of Grandmother's dinner napkins.  
am I kin to you I wonder about the dream meanies  
when all I want to do even as a grownup is

say to you something in lemon lime or mercury dined  
and I am happy most of the time  
and I'll pretend you're all made of snow

and you're not anyone I used to know  
you're only like ice cream melted.

mary angela douglas 18 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Was Wearing A Dress Of Impeachable Hue

I was wearing a dress of impeachable hue  
at least, that's what they said.  
I thought it was only the color of roses

my slippers fit perfectly,  
chiming as only crystal can  
the staircase appeared out of

nowhere also made of glass  
my heart, surpassing everything.  
at the landing,

a kind of eternity

mary angela douglas 29 january 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Was Writing In The Book Of Trees

I was writing in the book of trees

about the memory of clouds

the explosions out loud

small flowers at the base of the seeing roots and refuge,

the foliation of stars, the dreaming boughs.

concentric circles sparked to the living ground.

I want to live in forest shade seeking the words

of shade this is foremost in my mind

and in green handwriting deepening

the darker greens in pools the forgotten mosses

we will count all losses negligible

from the branch ourselves falling lightly

as the leaves, the leaves on a lost wind

weather vane crumpled in the end

there is no end



there is only branching farther out...

mary angela douglas 5 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Went Back To Find The Golden

I went back to find the golden  
age, finding it among  
the things you left behind:

your old papers, sausage,  
bread and cheese.  
the artifacts that fell into  
your hands

as if in a fairytale:  
a bird on a crystal twig, pink  
and blue towers,  
a sobbing princess, elaborate  
valentines.

a signet ring with no inscription,  
strawberries and cream, a  
propensity for suddenly appearing,  
a beautiful acuity.  
silver and gold

I found, rubies  
strewn everywhere, a rose-red  
flamingo,

slightly out of place-  
an iridescence like  
snow remembered.

old shoes in the corner  
with hidden properties,  
Van Gogh's orchards, Cezanne's  
reticence, 'a cloud  
shaped like a piano'\*, Chekov's  
last spoken word-

the colors of hydrangea,  
Dvorak in a newer world,

my soul

mary angela douglas 8 february 2009

\*a line from Chekov's Seagull used allusively (a cloud shaped like a piano- from his play.

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Went Through Your Epochs

I went through your epochs  
one by one:

blazing a circle, not  
a trail

I was not met at the door  
by anyone

while in so many dreams  
you did not appear

and I have cradled nothing  
but my fear  
that all my love is turning

into snow of a winter in  
which whole worlds will be  
lost

and one without which not  
even God can stand

mary angela douglas 12 may 2001

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Erase The Clouds Thought The Child

why have they raised again  
the towers of our distress?  
raised to be razed.

(a voice offstage...o)

I will erase the clouds,  
thought the child  
that there will be no rain.

the floods came just the same.  
and emerald tinted hurricanes  
in colouring books remained;

the floods of all the years  
appeared in shades  
of the arctic blues

the greens the colours  
of snow blindness and the gleams

but you will hear the ice begin to crack  
and feel the North Wind at your back for real-  
and fissures for which, My God

there are no words.

there's no going back, they say;  
I'm not so sure.  
pure towers in a storybook land

may long endure  
after we've disappeared.  
(or seem to, from the world):

crating up the sidewalks where  
our childhood shadows grew.  
what you can lose

God can unfurl;  
made of the Mother of Pearl:  
angelic windings of the stair,

the vanished kingdoms,  
kept elsewhere  
beyond the destroyers.

mary angela douglas 10 may 201516 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Love Pure Song Forever

I will love pure song forever  
said I to the rising wind  
and whether the wind is

rising or falling,  
the music heard or  
not heard

whether I disappear with it  
without a word  
whether it leaves me bereft

whether it is nothing

I have left, the birds having departed before me,  
and everything that soared  
and I, alone on the pier

a mere stick figure without it  
scarecrow of sound

and if, when God is near  
and I bend down so far to hear  
what signs of welcome I can

I know that without song

oh dearest song  
I shall not enter in.

mary angela douglas 3 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Mention The Blind Dissident Forever

the great players on the world stage  
must have been greatly inconvenienced  
to clam up that suddenly concerning the blind dissident  
who scaled a wall at midnight  
in the name of everyone living.  
the great players don't wish to appear  
indelicate in their discussions  
to speak with their mouths full or  
to chew gum while whistling-  
or to indicate to us at all that they have even barely heard  
of the blind man in total darkness, hoisting himself  
on a mouthful of air over the wall;  
crudely, with no stars to guide him.  
treated now, at best, like a badly behaved child  
shoved into a closet where the fine coats hang  
of the distinguished guests, appalled-  
while the Grownups figure out what to do next.  
the man with no protocols, I guess,  
to follow - must be excused for his  
crassness for putting the great players  
-on short notice- into hipwaders  
through a predicament they thought they were well rid of-  
imagine their horror, if you can...  
what was he thinking?  
at such a precious moment in the history  
of hushed corridors-  
to be drawing attention away from  
the muffled footsteps of Giants?  
sitting glumly at thick tables  
with their eyesight intact  
their expensive water-  
they'll try to take back lost heights of  
professionalism I guess it's called now  
but they'll keep slipping  
on the 'situation'  
falling a little flat...  
Playground Bullies Are Mum,  
the papers read next day (half-right, you figure out, which half) :  
Counting Out Their Confliscated Marbles



For the Really Important Work That Lies Ahead-  
may I never learn to speak that way dear God  
it's such a critical lapse in judgment  
it's such a delicate moment in the single butterfly life-span  
neither here nor there to the estimable diplomats=  
who know how to play the game-  
and should just table it-  
I want my language back.  
forget the marbles. the lost pocketbook of the world...  
where's the subject of the sentence here?  
the Big People behind the hush-hush doors or  
the barely acknowledged man who risked his life?  
dear children, let's take a holiday from all this.  
can you imagine this, children?  
can you imagine the rarest flower in the rarest garden.  
now imagine the flower living and not plucked out...  
now imagine this is not imaginary...  
may I mention and mention even in my sleep  
the blind man  
who hoisted himself over the world at midnight  
as if to see-  
and to feel the night air all around him-  
breathing all on his own the breath-taking gardens of the world.  
may he be honored above nations-  
who are silent when they should sing  
and speaking when they should just  
sit down and weep  
for starry courage branching on  
even in blind eyes at midnight.

something to shout about. don't you think?  
what's the point of discretion here?  
Thank God for him. Like Christ, before...  
let's be glad there's at least one of us left  
in the barricaded gardens of the world  
who still remembers  
how to leave at midnight-

mary angela douglas

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Praise In You The Idiosyncrasy Of Snow

I will praise in You

the idiosyncrasy of snow on april blooms

the rose of sunrise

and the grey skies down.

and then at once

the other way around.

no tombs are Thine.

the everlastingly Divine.

the breath of life in spearmint winds

the resurrected

all adrift at sea still praising Thee

the blue green of icebergs

and more than these

and everything otherwise

the steadfast zaniness of saints.

the picture palace and Mussorgsky

the gold of the heart recalled in the tolling bells

the black sea swells

the desolate autumn..

bitter the scent of zinnias still

the fading of the whippoorwills

I will praise on

in covert music till the last dawn.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Return To You, My City Of Emeralds

I will return to you, my city of emeralds  
grasping at no straws

that were ever offered

a golden rain falls in the street

in my heart, another world revolves

why don't you see? in the  
cherry balloon just overhead  
I am

casting roses at your  
incomprehension

mary angela douglas 30 october 1998

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Will Traverse This Winter Distance

I will traverse this winter distance  
I will not forget  
your white wonders

even with no gainful employment

the seal on my heart  
that won't be broken

the wax of stars  
when they cry out

melting on my last pages

mary angela douglas 22 november 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wish You A Red Crayon Heart Of A Day

[to my sister Sharon F. Douglas on Valentine's Day]

I wish you a red crayon heart of a day  
bearing down hard on the crayon, remember?  
that way you get the darkest red

waxing almost Christmas! or layered edge to edge  
and fit for roses, the roofs of little houses  
under a corner sun

and the rays extending  
in dotted lines on you, on everyone.  
these were our masterpieces of

the classroom afternoons clapping the erasers  
so the chalkdust scattered like pollen  
because it mattered to do everything

with that much heart to stay in tune so

as to fall on our aluminum foil swords  
or shimmer, the princess,  
in a tower of words

and that was all we knew of art  
and all that we knew when  
all schoolroom days parted from us

and the autographs of friends  
scattered like petals  
before a rising wind...

mary angela douglas 14 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wonder How It Is The Children Of Eden

I wonder how it is the children of Eden

came to be measured for motor skills

for if they played well with others

if they were off their feed when they ran down the hills

and gathered cowslips.

somehow I have a need in my thesaurus of earth and small tears

that children not be so quantified

not measured as gold against the silver child

weighed in one scale to count the gleams

and made to feel strange for a little while

that becomes a whole lifetime of feeling measured as in

permenant records, and the sign blinks off and on again

let's hear applause for the gregarious at the dank assemblies

and disapprove the ones that dream

stamen and pistil under the microscope reviewed

flower from fragrance torn reproved

is not so loving to these, newborn

to little ones the treasure of earth

to little ones measurable from birth

and I and I cannot praise the quantifiers.



mary angela douglas 20 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Would Be A Crafter Of Wings

I would be a crafter of wings

three riddles and the cherry unwinding to the stem

that can't reveal the life within

and the cherry tree weeps

the weeping cherry

three riddles given by the silver fairy.

one is a wish for light

for summer in a bottle.

one is the wish for flight

and Icarus remembered.

one remains for late septembers

stars burning down to embers

leaves flown out into the unknown

the Soul would go

but that is the riddle

we cannot know.

mary angela douglas 14 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Would Like A Small Castle

I would like a small castle you said  
at the beginning of wishes.  
with walls pale blue like the sky

that turn to pink bye and bye  
and then cream, a tinge of tangerine  
a small castle would be fine

the living room a forest green enclosed  
a fountain from a living stream  
and when, we dreamed

let there be stars.  
maybe God heard you from afar  
though your wishing voice was small

and bent His opal ear  
to your faint call  
because your heart was in your dreams

and like a small rose,  
flowered  
out of all roses:  
the most crimson, winsome of them all.

mary angela douglas 16 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# I Wrote On A Page Of Light

I wrote on a page of light;  
it vanished.  
then there was night.

then there was night and  
I heard the lullabies  
and then there were dreams.

and when you woke  
there were roses, lilies  
things so rare a someone so silvery spoke,

or was spoken into the silvery air that

you couldn't learn words for them  
fast enough.  
and then,

you wrote on a page of light.

mary angela douglas 9 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Icarus' Daughters Dream Of Moonlight

(in memory of the space shuttle Challenger disaster, January 1986)

[to my Grandfather, Milton B. Young-  
and to my father, Robert R. Douglas-]

if only he had fallen in love with the moon.  
I sometimes dream of him that way,  
in the winters since.

that cherishing starlight  
kept him alive.  
but he was a summer dreamer

all in all. a daylit king  
bringing us gilded toys back  
from the Fairs

or gold wrapped candies  
in the atriums where we watched for him  
or on the field flowered hills.

oh that we had sprinkled his waxwork wings  
with guardian frosts in the long midnights,  
the horrid things

but when?  
he never slept.

it's so hard looking back.  
we'll wear green ribands,  
sheens of mint-

paler than oceans' crests, diminishing.  
over the wreckage  
or pale blue ripples out toward

Arcturus-  
playing swing-a-statue on  
the attic lawns

if only to dream till dawn  
among ourselves in a code that won't redress:  
far far from the choric voices of the sun:

to wish. and wish.  
there have been another quest-

another flight than this one

mary angela douglas 30 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Icarus, The Bright Waves Murmur

[in tribute to Arthur &quot;Bill&quot; Bloxham, Jr.]

Icarus, the bright waves murmur,  
Icarus! -  
closing over

the gleam of that name becoming  
an ocean's recondite refrain.  
what once shone configured,

like Christmas constellations,

no longer remains,  
the star wheels plundered  
and drifting away,

the remnants, unsalvagable

except that a covenant was made  
however briefly  
once between his soul and the vagrant skies

so that the sun  
weeps tears of molten gold.  
and inconsolable

will rise.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# I'd Rather Be Warm Than Trendy

I'D RATHER BE WARM THAN TRENDY: A CHEERY WINTER'S TALE

I want a winter coat that sweeps the ground

no matter what they say to me in town

when they dart out in shirt sleeves

even though they're freezing;

endow me with their fashionista frowns.

well, it's alright.

I want a hat that covers up my ears so tight

though I will not be counted as your peer.

two hats, or three and I'll be filled with glee

and then I'll be a happier me

though you think I look so absurd

and then a scarf that winds around the moon, the earth,

or could, woolly, woolly

good good good good good

I'll be warm as toast

confident in the Holy Ghost

with cherry mittens on and then some.

warm all day.

no matter what you say!

jingely jingle all the way.

as if I'm in the month of May.

mary angela douglas 3 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Identity Is The Music

## IDENTITY IS THE MUSIC

identity is the music  
the fingerprint swirl in clay  
the living imprint, still,

of a bygone day.  
the piano player roll  
now on display,

the sunset repetitions.  
slight alterations  
of the way you felt one May

there you are under the willow  
and your harp at bay  
mute in a mermaid affliction

with nothing you can say.  
my identity. the trees whisper  
when their own leaves fall

but this is not a headline.  
or the writing on the wall  
nor the cause celebre by politics fed

the boring beast, just released,  
generic peace.

this is what orpheus meant, eurydice  
in the Kingdom of the Dead  
and you who think it is in

the trending ink or you're on the brink  
of the stagelit prize  
don't understand don't understand

that it's all lies.  
identity is the music

and not the polemical stand.

visionary, on the faraway Strand

mary angela douglas 26 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# If An Angel Came

for Harold Bloom

if an angel came

came to the door and wept

keening the disappearing

of the lovely bequeathed

with a look less blazing

and in a haze of sorrow

why wouldn't it be believed

what we have seen, I have seen

the poets relegated to the ash heap

who might as well have been the ones

to invent the lyre;

to such an extent

the heart is misrepresented now

and their date is expired

it is generally understood.

by those lost deeper into Dante's wood

but in my heart a rebel notion rises

I am not loth to express

and you can take the rest

of the dystopian martyrs the ones

who stress less is more when it is only less

because perhaps I am sorry to say

they are just not up to the task themselves

yet still I will bless Shakespeare

Keats, Yeats, Rilke and all the rest I learned

in green years past;

that is the Heaven I would live in

unsurpassed where words strike sparks

and there is life enobled, unbidden

to defend itself established in the Living Word

unwilling to leave Paradise even if the herd requires it

refusing to go, preparing in all I know to stand forever so,

forever toward Eden gazing.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# If An Angel Will Come

(for the installation artist Ilya Kabakov, on a corner of his sky)

if he paints the moon in a corner of the sky

it is because he knows there cannot be a page large enough

to contain either moon or sky

and so this is a gesture

a gesture made to perhaps angels

angels he has left traps for

appropriately painted in pale rose

with golden scrolls on them and harps variously

lightly scented with violets from another era

in order to pose to them the one question

he has saved up to ask

since childhood.

does the moon know if the angels will come

will the sky become overcast

so that he will not know if they have come

if they have remained on the threshold



because of the sticky angel art gum

he positioned there

to catch them unaware

or so that their gowns are caught on a golden nail

just sticking up from the floorboard

since they are prone only

to look at each ceiling sistine like;

as if it were filled with stars;

the memory of Whose we are

and Who is looking for us.

mary angela douglas 2 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# If I Catch The Hem Of My Dress On Your Clouds

[Cinderella's hymn]

if I catch the hem of my dress on your clouds  
will you defend me?  
mockers flood the ground and rivers

how can I stand still  
monogrammed with the winds  
if I catch the hem of my dress

on your clouds.  
sing aloud the sing song sing  
but I lacked wings

or anything  
too far afield  
at the bus stop every a.m.

amen they say  
and fold their hands  
and look askance

because they can  
when I catch the hem  
of my dress on your clouds.

and I don't have a valentine  
not even a sweetheart neckline  
for the party

all in pink. I will step out  
in the mists again I think  
with you, with You

my only friend  
if you'll defend me when  
I catch the hem of my dress

on your clouds.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# If I Say Or If I Withhold This Word

if I say or if I withhold this word  
will the trees fountain more greenly  
will the blue woods come closer

to the curb where I look both ways  
uncertain when to cross.  
I know that I will cross one day

the crossroads all must once  
and I'm afraid I won't see the  
light change quick enough

or there'll be some delay  
I don't expect that hurts.  
dear God I love you

and I know you don't desert  
but the earth is sometimes harsh  
in the midst of so much beauty.

today I decide is this the word or not  
in my small poem.  
or is there a word that I forgot

that became a jewel obscure in  
the cave of my mind or will I find  
it's only You and laugh and remind

myself you're here beside me  
all the Time and isn't that  
the most beautiful word of all.

mary angela douglas 2 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# If The Apple Blossom, The Cherry Or The Plum

if the apple blossom, the cherry or the plum  
were pink or white or peach or any such colour  
perhaps we did not know in the beginning

only beginning to sense the lavishness  
and in amaze that God put flowers on the trees  
and that the wind took them away

so that they scattered at our feet  
and we were the flower girls then and twirled  
ourselves soft petals in the winds

and this was april, sometimes march  
very rarely may but anyway spring  
and we could spell all the pastels

the colour green and break off into singing  
anything we were so glad to live in the world with flowers  
to feel ourselves flowerlike

the honor of this, to dream we were the  
bridesmaids of Song  
we longed for o our whole lives long.

mary angela douglas 9 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# If They Believe In A Mad Thing

if they believe in a mad thing,  
how will you dissuade them?  
you with your little spade

digging holes in the sandbox  
waiting for radiance to appear.  
it may take years to notice

no matter that you try  
with a handful of stones to get by,  
Light - must be elsewhere.

icarus maybe lacking wings to fly  
at the beginning, only  
looked at clouds and thought

how high is high.  
but you'll see farther,  
melting the sun outloud.

mary angela douglas 16 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# If Time Were A Spinning Top

if time were a spinning top we saw  
forests as a blur of greens  
the stars in between lost branches

it whirred beyond us  
sometimes recurring in dreams  
when we were not cut to size

by enterprise

if only for one instant we could stop revolving  
to hear again One calling us  
from the Beginning

and Before

but we are merry go round bound  
and carousel trained  
we cannot see Him

shining in the rains, beyond blame  
shifting the clouds.

mary angela douglas 1 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# If We Have Written In Sand

if we have written in sand  
if we have spoken in snows  
if we have died like roses die

and come back blossoming  
in a farther Spring  
or sung in between the lines

in the play that was never ours after all,  
a subtext of sighs-of prayers that are heard  
the instant you understand

how lucky it is to be here on earth  
suspended on this blue and green pendant;  
on a Tree of stars.

Mary Angela Douglas 11 November 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# If You Had Let Them

a voice within woods greenly cried  
that tears of amber once flowed here;  
then they solidified...

I knew this year after year  
keeping it in mind over and above  
best practices whatever, whoever

is meant by this. what is meant by this?  
who's there, or what, behind scenes  
shifting it all, decoding 'the best'

in offices, institutes  
that very soon no longer needed your  
services?

reminded the fairy lights  
breaking into speech  
over the Holidays...

they said you couldn't teach because

you see the world through a pink blur  
and do not reason according to their reasoning.  
depart the land of revisions because

you are not in tune they said, so not a good fit,  
(so what?)  
or would have said in the workshops, wreckage

of former mirrors held in place by darkening cherabim  
in this, the land of the dim and dimming of the lights;  
where it is perpetual night

in the ensuing classrooms  
of those who remain to be seen.  
you cantered away.

now you're collecting water clocks,

[even if not the things to eat,  
all out of Time and teacups-

in an Alician field, smiled Mr. Carroll]

and ticks and tocks of the stained glass demesnes  
that they disdained-  
for your mysterious something

that couldn't be entertained in their contracts.  
never the missing sky cloud jigsaw piece  
no lily kiss of fawning peace

contest: in other definitions, something holy  
depending on the context, contest: I do not beg to differ  
but demand, not approbation but an alternative nation

one for whom dreaming words do sigh  
the White Knight in the white nights?  
be nice said the newly stern aggressively

and why did their voice always carry  
even to the Space stations?  
carry the One said Lewis

then divide the wave from the wave  
the Sea from the sea in looking up  
Infinity in the book with blank pages...

contest: what the knights were sent for  
(in alternate ages)  
if not this/ isn't this their trial?

the trail's confused, cried the bards mistaking the  
civil court for the criminal one and we're  
wandering wandering out again (step quick!)

God's nomad(s) : through the corridors of music  
unrestrained;  
untrainable they would have said,

if you had let them.

mary angela douglas 18,21 september 2015; 2 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'll Always Say No

the melancholy measures of the way  
they used to write poetry  
laying gold ingots side by side

then garnishing them with silver.  
the moon disappearing every time  
in the books on the cloudy Romantics

on my grandmother's/mother's bookshelf.  
or they are edged with lace  
as if they were valentines.

but they were, you insisted  
and wanted to take all the poems  
to school on Valentine's Day

to be read aloud.

who would listen  
with the intercom blaring  
every other minute with

announcements of school spirit  
of snow days to quizzes popping  
and talent shows full up

with tap dancing cheer leaders  
brilliant in silver tap shoes,  
modest showgirl costumes.

ask if I feel nostalgic for this:  
I'll always say, no.

mary angela douglas 17 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'm Missing A Clue Said Nancy Drew

[to Carolyn Keene, for the entire series]

I'm missing a clue said Nancy Drew  
maybe it's in the old clock, hidden under  
the stairs under an oak tree when

the moon irradiates the clouds  
but how clouded can life be  
in a pale blue convertible

and your dad, a lawyer  
when Hannah bakes chocolate cakes  
every other minute and you can

still wear those pencil skirts with  
the matching sweaters  
and read other people's diaries?

and there'll be a note in the bouquet  
in of course, cryptic handwriting  
or a slight delay when the

operator puts you through;  
an objet d'arte in the old junk shop  
and luna moths in the attics of odd years

won't ravage the old silks. shhh...  
a click in the wall! my copy's late  
again, from working on her story

a voice comes to you in a dream  
when the spring to the hidden bookcase  
swings out with the entire series and

you will finger your omnipresent string  
of pearls and wonder who wrote  
all this, really?

mary angela douglas 19 may 2015

Note: Mildred Augustine Wirt Benson was the original Carolyn Keene who wrote many of the early Nancy Drew books. Later authored by others. The best ones are hers.

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'm Not A Wren I'm A Nightingale She Wept

I'm not a wren I'm a nightingale she wept  
into the rains where this was invisible  
and if it's all the same to you

what then is music  
that you hear the false note true  
and claim the brass

rings o it rings like cristal  
we shall be satisfied with sand dollars  
in lieu of cake

and for the sake of your fortune finally rolling in  
be tagged as if we were driftwood  
on the lacelike tides

and not pearls  
so that you might enjoy your breakfast  
your definitive worlds

the tray sent up with the eggs benedict  
the orchid  
and the morning papers

mary angela douglas 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'm Not The Folktune Said The Princess

I'm not the folk tune said the princess  
her head in her jeweled hands.  
not even the brodered kerchief

with its thread of bluer skies than this.  
I'm not the corn silk raveling  
the flame petticoat cherished

by the dancer  
washed out every night; the jacket  
of gypsy green brocade

the flashpoint on the stage;  
the open locket  
flung away.

because I am not meant to be these.  
but I am the mist where you think it is the sea;  
the one white rose in the greenery

that doesn't blink out on the Christmas Tree  
in a forest far from here.  
the one at the ball with the least modern slippers,

in the tearose gown of the screened in afternoons  
and spinning amethyst riddles  
not to be answered; not to be sing song sung;

not to wear the hat of simple cherries  
but the veil of moonrise.  
the cost of moonrise.

and to prefer the abandoned hour  
the mist when you think it is the sea  
the sea arising when you think

it's only mist.  
and this is only this and never again she said  
from the tower of the last day



mary angela douglas 6 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'm Stitching Down The Words You Gave Me Lord

I'm stitching down the words you gave me, Lord

from earliest dictionaries of sun and rain

the rose garden reverie, the Plains

the crescendos of the wind

snow under glass and shaken

into Christmases,

I pray

let them not abscond with them again

as the magic carpet I have traveled on since

You know when

since earliest days could be

yanked from me, leaving me to shift

it all to inwardness and start again but when

leaving me only the free fall

into eternities where

how can I do anything

but cloudlike, speak your name through starless air

once they have taken then

the particular language

you gave only me and filched

the golden apples from the page, the orchards

brimmed with snow in winter or Spring

gone completely gone

and the new worlds

that vowels formed in just Our way

the glow of consonants like comets

signaling the end

and still, my Joy! the forgeries won't win

the beginning Alpha

where bright words begin.

mary angela douglas 18 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# I'm The One With The Ruby Slippers

I'm the one with the ruby slippers  
I whispered to myself  
in a scene of great

distress

in a dream it all came back to me:  
the captive feeling in the unfeeling  
castle

and the witch

green as new grass  
sprung up again

I'm the one with the ruby slippers;  
I'm not the one that melts  
I muttered to myself again  
under the witch's witchng stare:

fire cannot quench  
nor water burn

the singular heart annoited  
in this.

or any other nightmare

mary angela douglas 16 may 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# Imagination, Memory's Dower

to William Shakespeare this small book of days  
and to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas

beyond the coast of what is seen  
in dreams, in the rustle of pages  
in the green of a shadow on

a greener wall, being small  
caught in the rain  
distracted from pain

have you really witnessed  
so many snows as this  
you wonder to yourself in bliss

crystaled in the cold or blown  
from the petaling trees of april magnified  
magnifying a white white glory

have you really existed under the stars

you could not see in the city lights  
or borne the flights of others on  
your back or tracked beauty itself

have you really can you really  
look back on so much gold squandered  
and still there is more

the coinage of days

imagination's stored it up for you  
in silos of the night  
not ill met by moonlight, Titania

not ill met.  
with my small border of roses, lilies  
flowerets crowned and remembered, yet.

mary angela douglas 9 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Immortal Poetry, In The Shade Of His Hand Kept Alive

the faint pink flower falling from the tree  
does not ask where we can hear it anyway  
will they remember me,

500 years from now or even next Christmas.  
not marble or the gilded monuments sighed Shakespeare.  
immortal or not, obscurely the poet writes

brightening his own midnights, if  
no one else's.  
we are the folded wing asleep or

we are awake and dreaming.  
either way, God keeps us.  
maybe. our poems, too

in the impearled libraries of the far Heavens

mary angela douglas 16 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Impermanent Pressed My Snow Clouds Fold

impermanent pressed my snow skies fold  
above a line of liquid gold in the chill a.m.  
I hear the crank and sighs; the steam rise,

dreams of old radiators; happy at home  
to be feeling this alive among  
my Christmas greens

no more wandering wondering  
under the Star and off from work  
because the snow clouds fleece

flies thick as in the fairy tales when  
the housekeepers of the skies  
beat their pillows so fine into

the sodden crystal that sugar frost my windowpanes  
I love you clouds I whisper soundlessly to God,  
and freedom.

mary angela douglas 20 novemer 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Impressions Of Garcia-Lorca On The Piano Of Pale Green Velvet

'I want to sleep the dream of the apples,  
to withdraw from the tumult of cemeteries  
I want to sleep the dream of that child  
who wanted to cut his heart on the high seas.'  
-Federico Garcia-Lorca

of the child who wanted to cut his heart  
on poetry of the child with the silvered over voice  
fretted into diamonds continually; the child

set like a jewel on green velvet, set like a jewel;  
like starlight scissored out of the skies by other children  
for a keepsake. Mama? see?  
and far away and here in both castles, simultaneously.

of the child who was cut, who was cut like moonlight  
out of nocturnes endlessly  
lamenting, pedaled over now: a silence like snow;

far off, like lunar snow.  
and in the gardens of the kings not so mysteriously disappearing so that  
even the roses whisper in the clouded nights:  
there is no more music like this.

and the trees on green velvet sobbing diamonds suddenly  
for the breezes too young to know the voice  
they will not carry now.

and the cut carnations in the vases of the Princess forming  
no fit bouquets.

and the olive winds tossing the fevered ship

no longer.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Imprimatura

wrecked gold of the far illuminations  
is coming home  
and moonlight sunk in

its own mirrors helplessly  
I find forever  
in the glazed word you speak.

but april blossoms on the wall  
when you bind your luckless  
clouds together

and you wound nothing.  
imprint this with a spendthrift's sigh  
with the knowledge that every colour breathes

the rose you gathered as if it were  
long-ago

from very Light.

mary angela douglas 31 august 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# In A Much Better Mood

am I the rainbow breaking off in the wind,  
thought the chandelier prism on the rug again  
in a little known tale by Hans Andersen

I've discovered under a stone.  
and the wind came through as storms  
usually do when the parlour maid leaves

the window open and the Family is abroad  
replenishing their stores of spiced pears, nutmeg  
marzipan or what have you.

and they will come back drenched  
all Princess-and-the-Pea  
inquiring peremptorily

what's the story, morning glory;  
what happened to the chandelier?  
and the maid for fear will go at once

into the kitchen and bake them a ten story Danish cake  
with citron in it and frosted pale green  
and they will be mollified

and in a much better mood  
than at the story's beginning.

mary angela douglas 19 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In A Silver Province

[in the Dorian mode, in the Russian minor]

in a silver province  
trackless we walked through snows  
matchless though none could see us

in a silver province  
someone brought chilled fruit  
chilled fruit for no reason at all

we were the endless looping of God  
in a silver province

and shone is the word I favored  
through and through and shine  
and shining in a silver province

stepped through a heretofore frozen door unlatched, unlatched  
my soul in a dress of pure silver with shivery sleeves  
shivery as diamonds hemmed

in a silver province

mary angela douglas 11 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# In A Sugared Quiet Lit By Multicoloured Stars

after the school auditions for the Nutcracker ballet

here is the snow-globe where the tiny fir cones  
gleam in a sugared quiet lit  
by multicoloured stars o in tiny spotlight rose,

or amethyst fire, of carillon sighs through  
a winter self-contained,  
if miniscule.

and it will never rain inside your heart here  
if you're not in the ballet.  
you will only be surprised each time

a tinny music chirps and clicks  
whenever you are shaken,  
and the universe is

flecked as if for a tiny party  
all your own and the  
self-same fairy confetti

drifts and sifts;

it sparkles, trembles, curved like a new moon  
on a wire and you twirl, my glazed  
sugurplum, you dream

you are the queen of cherry,  
drizzled whipped cream;  
tiarad sovereign of the ballerinas

who incarnate snows,  
their lavender shadows  
and the pink the blue-

in a Christmas buona sera  
even if no one calls you, 'Clara'.

mary angela douglas 21 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# In A Summer Dress The Colour Of Butter

in a summer dress the colour of butter,  
in a melting dream  
I was going to look for the passages between dream and dusk

in a summer gown the colour of butter;  
with a folded fan, the colour of jam.  
but they said, you have different homework to do

and here's the workbook of the midnight sums,  
your sewing basket in green and white wicker.  
why is it that the things we want to look for

most of all slip off the lists  
and can't fit through the turnstiles?  
and there's a rush of wings but

we're always on the opposite corner  
missing the angel bus and noting it down for next time.  
but there I was in the passages between dusk and dream

and I didn't even know  
how I got there!

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# In A Tulip Dress In Plato's Cave

in a contrary season or so it seemed  
words were never good enough.  
they might be gold plated,

wine-coloured,  
rose-tattooed with cockatoos,

rainbow banded  
as bubbles floating away from you alas,

all of these at the same time.  
speaking to one or a thousand's thousand  
always you went home later afterschool's  
apple cheeked child  
wondering what went wrong almost  
used to it.

or back to the office where the  
typewriter broke down the keys  
all jammed and nobody knew  
how to change the ribbon,  
least of all you.

or just getting off the bus  
no straight shot, either:  
headed into the tall grasses  
when the bus driver through  
the still-open door  
shouts something after you

something uncomplimentary so the remaining passengers  
can hear it and the people already home across the street  
just sitting down to their fried eggplant and  
saying: I told you so....

so you feel like strawberry ice melted-  
the tag-end of the birthday guests  
with the most crumpled favor.  
anyway. you say to yourself. anyway...

they've let you know something was missing;  
something you couldn't put your finger on  
even in white velvet, empire-styled  
with real pearl buttons

even if you had assorted fingers  
in every flavour like bright icicle pops  
and could deliver by heart free ice cream  
and the history of poetry in sand paintings

even if you said nothing at all  
it wouldn't be solved.  
or dissolved like soda pop fizz.

or only nodded.  
something was wrong  
a thing impossible to pinpoint  
by those trading glances over your shoulder  
knowingly, their Maybelline arched brows arched  
more furrily.

even if you were the one who gave the garden party  
and wore the perfect garden party dress: the tulip print:  
flounced, with the lime green petticoats;  
in the shop window for weeks  
(the one with the grass-green sash) .

even if you wrote the Dictionary yourself,  
(or had ancestors that did) the first first one  
by flint-light struck or scrunching down in Plato's cave

scribbling 'moonlight', whispering, moonlight...  
hunched away from the shadow lovers

mary angela douglas 24 may 2014; rev.12 june 2014

P.S. of course the title occurred to me relative to the Delmore Schwartz poem as a  
variation on Plato's Myth of the Cave.  
but - my poem occupies entirely different territories than his.

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Blue December Breaking Off The Icicle's Chime

the cold of the blue December sky breaks off  
the little icicles and glazes the berried bushes  
that you cannot name;

swing high into the snow clouds brittle  
children, before Christmas. afterwards, too,  
still far from homework.

I have loved the December blue the blue the  
blue shined wind the chill we wandered through the dream  
of being glazed over through and through, piano

fingers freezing in our rose bright mittens;  
playing outside! imprinted with angels-  
and the sun turned to silver turned to silver

like a chime

mary angela douglas 26 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Bubble Gum Pink Reading Old Comics

to my grandparents

in bubble-gum pink, reading old comics  
we sipped our summers slowly while  
the zinnias fried in the gardens.

after you are over the school nightmares  
when you're being tested on the things you never read  
because they weren't in the book-  
the months are yours.

in seersucker dresses, white sandals everywhere  
reading paperbacks by the score all the way from  
Englewood Cliffs in brown paper, string, unwrapped

with a crackling like the crackling of words you  
picked yourself from the garden of language.  
or the SBS catalogue

and this is more delicious than ice cream:  
Neapolitan striped chocolate, vanilla, strawberry  
we eat quietly at the retro kitchen table  
mushing it all together in a frothy heaven

while our little dog mysteriously does tricks  
no one taught her yet hoping for just a slurp  
perhaps, a sudden accident where the bowls slip  
deliciously down and she wins the cracker jack prize,  
you bet!

fresh peaches from Arkansas, like eating the sunrise,  
who could describe it?  
who wouldn't want a dress in watermelon colours,

cherry vanilla- it's decided.  
chiffon maybe, with a beaded top  
that shines like suns unnumbered.

it's just sequins, get over it a voice from somewhere said.

we squashed it like a bug.

eating Divinity candy, peaked like snow drifts,  
we carry on.  
and now we're on the back porch with sparklers

and it's always the fourth of july.  
and we wear sundresses  
while learning the scales,  
on the piano we dust on Saturdays  
zealously, with lemon pledge.

and reading the Reader's Digest we'll learn what to  
do in emergencies, like, if you're unexpectedly  
caught in quicksand

or at summer camps  
where we are horrible at canoeing  
and so glad to be back home

where the real summer is.  
even if, we no longer drink  
orange sodas every day from a vending machine  
so homesick near the humid cabins.

and there's so much of it, still left!  
all golden vanilla, the moon floats over it.  
or maybe you muse, it's butter pecan  
and it's not melted yet.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

## In Case

I dreamed we passed through clouds without aeroplanes

and we were no one's Project

but lived as we pleased, in the meadows,

understanding the field flowers,

or, when it rained,

under the broader leaves:

durations of the sunlit, the introspective hours

where the light floated through us

in gipsy coloured rays

as though we were prisms.

no census taken, night or day

we became stars and twinkled

in such profusion

they gave up counting us;

resigned from that illusion.

we became rich in ways

not easily boxed

making crowns of tinfoil,

crumpled candy wrappers

we crowned ourselves

and perched our green badged lean to's

close to the wishing wells

in case the elusive armies

no prisoners taken

and the dogs of blizzards

dormant, should suddenly awaken.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# In Elephant Heaven There Are No Tears

in elephant heaven there are no tears  
just the snatched green years prolonged  
plenty of time splashing

in the infinite waters for  
the sons and daughters and  
the trumpeting of the stars.

and where you are  
the grass is sweet  
and soft is the Heaven's earth

and tender under your feet.  
no bruising.  
no hidden tricks.

no beating with sticks  
and with gnarled commands.  
kindness. the Elephant Promised Land

the tents rolled up at last.  
the trunks uproarious.  
victorious

in Elephant Heaven.

mary angela douglas 13 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Every Cell There Is A White Dove

[inspired in part, by the illustration The Ship Arrives, by Henry Justice Ford (from the Crimson Fairytale Book, Ed. Andrew Lang, Dover Publications Inc., NY) and by themes in English lyric poetry and Christmas carols.  
and wholly by the One who said: "Let There Be Light";-]

in every cell there is a white dove  
a white dove in a golden tree  
a pale green window  
looking out to sea

and every atom keeps, as well,  
its particular dream of old: of gold,  
of copper, of selenium

of what it was made of, still-  
in silica or star forever whispered once-  
left, still to be  
in every ransomed orbit, free.

in every cell there is a white rose  
and a spiced wind embroidered for it.  
a white rose and a red,

a little pleasing house, silk screened  
where children sleep downstairs in summer  
dreaming of a white rose or

a red

while in the garden of small words and broken wonders  
forever keeping watch  
I cry a town crier's cry because I dare not drowse  
to keep awake and living still

the far imprint I almost see and etched in cloud on clouds  
I do not wish to banish by stepping  
carelessly, there.

oh let my words be heard, and fair, as at the first,

when there was light because He only said so  
for the child too far  
from the woodcutter's cottage now-  
from the parents grieving in a moonlit remorse.

hold close the solace of long berried days before,  
the pitchers of fresh cream in store  
the blue cloth on the table spread, the honeycomb  
glint of earlier Time when there was only Love:

through half-closed eyes, the lullaby, the sudden  
gleams of the dove too  
beautiful in the golden tree...

it's you by the green window looking out to sea  
It's you in the white rose and the red,  
the flowering wind that knows

the rainbowed ship and the singing will be turning home  
though it was long ago He said that it would be...

mary angela douglas 2-3 september 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Exorbitant Moonlight Shining Or When They Allowed Us To Stay Up Past The Usual Bedtime

IN EXORBITANT MOONLIGHT SHINING OR WHEN THEY ALLOWED US TO STAY UP PAST THE USUAL BEDTIME

a pure explosion of angelic coincidences met  
at the five unlikely corners of my apartment  
in parallel space

I cannot find this in Aquinas or in the evening paper  
scripted on clouds  
their calibration tuned to pinks and violets

trending away from the aqua and the mere orange  
are you talking about the sky again  
the small child said and sighed

'  
the small child with her bouquets of fields' flowers  
the occasional trespassing rose picked  
not that the rose trespassed oh never

it was the child on the moonlit lawn  
who came across the rose crossing the five corners  
of my imaginary street where the traffic lights

burn only emerald  
where generations have trodden and yet their gold remains  
the goldenness with no leaden after thoughts

small cameos of Hopkins reading in tranquility  
sprung into rhythm on the page by the least thing  
angels at midnight corners

surmised with a reading glass  
the sudden magnification  
of everything holy

understood everywhere all at the same time  
suddenly or as time melting, snowing all over the roses.

or on the one exempted child with the single rose picked  
in exorbitant moonlight

mary angela douglas 7 july 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Forests Of Calculated Nonsense

in forests of calculated nonsense,  
did Alice dream (eventually) :  
things are exceptionally cruel here

and so, wake herself up by the  
summer's riverbank?  
or is it kind in the dream, the book,

but unkind in the waking.  
the puzzle trees breaking  
like porcelain unfortunate at Tea Time

across the glazed brooks

and, back on earth, in your own  
room again-  
just as you find in books,

the same dread things awaken, too?  
this time, meaning it.  
(you know you do, said Alice curtseying)

the gleam on the White Night's  
equivocal armour the very same gleam  
bouncing off of the Rose Red Queen's

slightly askew, unjustified,  
rubied tiara.

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

P.S. In this case though all other references are specific to Alice in Wonderland, that kind of atmosphere, I also wanted deliberately to spell White Night (in reference to the beauty of Petersburg Russian White Nights and their poets) instead of, of course, the character, The White Knight in Alice still wanting that allusion, illusion obliquely to stand...

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Honor Of The American Author Ray Bradbury's 100th Birthday Today

August 22,2013

Dear Reader,

In honor of what would have been Ray Bradbury's 93rd birthday here is a poem reposted for you that I wrote a few days after he passed away last year.

In which fragments of possible stories he might have written in my imagination came and went like fragments of a dream dissolving...

And, with admiration note the exquisite animation by Google on the 151st birthday of Claude Debussy which of course you can see for kind of God to send them both...(Debussy, my favorite composer had the same birth date and I especially love his many preludes)

-----  
PARTICOLOURED TEARS ARE FALLING THROUGH THE EVENING BLIND

[small prelude on the pianoforte, for Ray Bradbury, gone:

August 22,1920 - June 5,2012]

oh all the rainbows have fallen into the earth, headfirst-

and "snow without Christmas" as he cried

has stunned his sometimed midnight's

sunned chorales.

but - even now-

when the first curled handbell of grief is chimed, at times, magnolia creamery of the long before,

you're still in business

on the ivory keys of snowconed pages turning

in the lock

or filtering round pure

apricot sparkles down

oh God knows how-

my shuttered April mind.

it's wondering I dream to find

no new poet laureate of the homesick, but

distraught cloud horses whinnying on their own in

folds of cerulean, coral, forestalled-  
    with storied apples offered: oh wrought of a banished gold-  
    (as they are now) -  
    to keep them home.  
    the day wears on...we won't know clearly now  
    when dark ferrised earth kept turning into...  
    blossom laden trees renew their snow and  
    petal the sweetheart mourning: "morning  
    minstrelsy is dead" throughout the vacant orchards but is she  
    pale pink surprised into carmine-  
    by valentines received  
    in the afternoon mail  
    from one thought dead...?  
    while we as we behold through a looking glass pinhole in the constellations:  
    his ice-cream coloured trollies  
    hauling back and forth  
    new circuses of sighs and working prisms-  
    ("dewdrop, listen"...he whispered so we wouldn't forget you ever-  
    or children would just let go and all at the same time  
    their last balloons losing everything then  
    it felt that way, to them...)  
    It's got to be now on Opal Rails  
    somewhere else, going on...

    couch this in bluebirds and hydrangeas...  
    and cool cups of liliated moonlight on the grass  
    of other planets looking just like home

    held higher above our heads than these dreams  
    have ever been before: long  
    past the vast pinwheeled parades of the strolling musicians, musicless  
  
    on earth,

    but not where motley is torn-  
    its falling its falling through the evening blind  
    and near  
    our particoloured tears, unending...  
    for the something unsurpassed  
    and all, all-in-all at last...  
    caught by a weeping God in a ruby red bottle-  
    the best firefly of the whole Summer...



mary angela douglas 14 june 2012 1: 49 p.m.

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Invisible Writing To Eleanor Farjeon

in invisible writing  
where there are pinholes for stars  
on black velvet

I have hidden the directions  
to the castle.  
or perhaps in the teacups

on the doll dresser  
behind the ivory fan  
the one with huge roses

painted on it in splendid scarlet;  
perhaps in the painted rose itself.  
which one you will ask

and missing your bread and butter  
the extra dollop of honey.  
but I will be out in the rains

sloshing toward Spring myself,  
the early violets.

mary angela douglas 3 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Just One Week They Said That You Were Dead

another poem to Valerie, driven out of office but not  
out of Poetry\*

in just one week they said that you were dead;  
(the self-appointed coroners):  
or a dead letter arriving at the post office  
they already owned

lock, stock, and barrel as the expression goes.  
they could not even rank your insouciance at  
daring to accept an honor bestowed,  
not demanded.

well, who are the ticket holders anyway?  
was asked by some

but not by the press  
who marshaled their columns like generals.  
and is it expertise that is required wept the moon

in ivory,  
reduced to this.  
oh all anonymous saints have wept the same

Light.

I do believe  
the cognescenti,  
(Dante may have said, from his particular Heaven) -

call this: Poetry.

mary angela douglas 1 august 2014

\*To Valerie Macon, recent poet laureate of North Carolina who in one week was  
so lambasted by the drummed up 'outrage' and 'uproar' of former poet laureates  
that she resigned.

are you proud of yourselves, then, my Grandmother would have asked them, her

voice like music.

Since she's no longer here, I ask it for her.

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Memoriam Vladimir Konstantinovich Bukovsky D. October 27 2019

The knight Bukovsky has died.

what are we to make of his departure.

he who inhabited a castle of his own making

in hell.

oh we wish him well, God speed.

all those benedictions that can be said

or wept soundlessly.

oh live in Eternal Freedom now

in a small voice I said

bowing my head

having met him once in the Spring

at a conference very briefly and I said in a small note extended

I hope to live in such a castle too.

Thank You.

knight invincible barely comprehensible

except to the few

who live that way too.

mary angela douglas 4 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Memory Of Earl Hamner Jr, Creator Of 'the Waltons'

is it the ghost of ourselves that is gone now,  
that we had lost, then, through you, found or  
the future ghost the one whose hand we will clasp

in a golden land at last, one day.

but now.

a rusty gate opens and closes  
welcome cries but we can't hear

a pearl sunrise

falls over his mountain features  
a face refined through time  
made more fragile before the end

endurance home  
made real again. for this, we weep.

we won't forget your blue hills.  
they are- our own.

Mary Angela Douglas 25 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In My Cherry Cadenzas

in my cherry cadenzas  
fleece shorn clouds traipse by  
at the end of their summery measures:  
a gold gummed star to light the way  
green foil or violet's blue,  
glistening dusky silver  
fixed at the top of the score and shyer  
than the pedals I barely know when to use.  
in my cherry cadenzas, I will chase the moon  
pretending I am all in lace with a mantilla-  
with one pink rose or May queen in  
pale lime chiffon-  
why not? (with a peony fan) -  
or distant in ivory earrings carved like snow,  
barely discernible from the silken seconds;  
why can't we stay inside the music,  
(I want to ask my Grandmother)  
music box where towers never failed  
where the princess lived at home  
with the Pinking Shears and  
unassayed by the riddles posed  
when the cherry cadenzas fade

mary angela douglas 8 september; revised 19 september 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# In My Spanish Notebooks I Confessed

in my Spanish workbooks I confessed  
in rose chalks and the blue  
an illustration never viewed:

Quixote and his squire  
and they are fading far from you  
the farther that you go and nearer than

the siglo de oro ever could be

shimmering before you.  
it's a sunset of marigolds on fire;  
a reedy flourishing of windmill music.

and here's the spiral notebooks from  
that beginning where you took notes  
on: not variant spellings, but something else..

scribbled on narrow lines in pale green ink,  
past telling and the secret kept close  
like a letter to yourself, the preface to

a handbook on dreams, their aftermaths, the ghosts  
half-traced and paperback abridged.  
it's still the same quest, you guess

from the ridge where their horizons whirl  
44 years spoked like a flash and vanishing,  
no one else is listening in either language

when you close your eyes  
and glistening, you'll sigh on the brink of it,  
again

mary angela douglas 23 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# In October, Commemorating Ray (For Ray Bradbury)

Always we banked on another sunflower sun beside

a timeless river of stories

or the green one

with the pop up trees

the thinness of oxygen on other planets

yet, the rustling of leaves.

through the drear trees

another race run

in orange October finely spun

poster board orange shouting

I am the one

the one with all the stories

bursting out of pockets, old lockets

the closets stashed with them

making hash posthaste

not to waste a minute

getting it all down

the cosmic reporter back in town

back with the story, that's him

grinning that grin

gulping hot dogs, washed down with  
fountain sodas  
any modus operandi you have ever heard of,  
forget it. Bradbury's got his own  
his very own carnival, circus train  
arriving at 3 a.m. with the elephants, the mystical elephants  
the dinosaurs bewitched by foghorns  
go twirl the dark green dial back the  
leatherette luncheonette stools  
the ceiling fans unwinding summers slowly  
so that you taste again the potato salad, cherry phosphate  
nobody makes like that anymore the fried doughnuts  
and you are out the door in brand new tennis shoes  
racing with the leaves  
across the lawns the Carnegie library  
breathing in all the book fragrances  
as if there had been  
some harvest of gold.o keeping the spell  
of all the stories ever told you,  
you would ever tell.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Our Dresses Of Cream

how can every graduation seem  
bathed in the same pearlescent light  
all old photographs reveal?

but some on their day of remember  
as clearly, a feeling with a difference  
in the thrilled heart stilled and

shading them in late May  
as if in the green afternoon we  
had stood there smiling, suddenly immortal,

incapable of speech, having become sheer dream  
in our cream dresses.

can anything dim this? can anyone claim  
there was not this brink, this chink

in the fortress of Heaven that day that  
we gazed through?  
unknowingly, it may be.

or perhaps it was Heaven, gazing on us  
surreptitiously and drenching us in that Light  
as if we were all flowers beyond

our winters now so we thought and backlit as  
we suddenly froze, looking up from our  
refreshments on the lawns

for just that instant, recognizing it.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Praise Aloud Through The Rose Studded Days

in your wide satin skies o Lord  
I find delight so that  
I want to gather clear lilies

of the days  
and set them in crystal vases  
and tread barefoot down

the dews on all the grasses  
and though others look at me  
through their glasses

sliding down their noses and coolly tinted  
let me compose in old ivoried afternoons  
my rose laden tunes

for you for you  
all the madrigals spilling  
down from the moon

threaded through  
your violet studded clouds.

mary angela douglas 5 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Run Down Slippers Of A Faded Brocade

in run down slippers of a faded brocade  
cast off by imperious sisters,  
you pretend, when they're away,

it's your parade, Cinderella;  
waving an orchid fan indivisible  
so that your angels shine a little more

irrepressibly into cobwebbed corners.  
there's still the bread to make;  
the endless jams of summer

while you partake of almond cookies  
at a far off wedding, and candied nougat  
by the jar

or think you are;  
there's that little demarcation between  
the dream

and its dancing day for you.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Search Of The Myth To Wrap Herself In

in search of the myth to wrap herself in, she went;  
the one made of roses, of snow drifted into roses;  
the one of fine blue,

the sky myth, the one turning clouds to silver,  
the sea from itself; the fine myth that  
can't be disputed because, unheard

it rests in the heart  
a mere bird in the bough  
and quieted from singing.

in search of the wild myth, the pure  
that rang like crystal when it did not sing  
that singed nothing and yet burned on

like the touch of snow, of rose, of blue;  
the one she knew before;  
the one that didn't crucify;

the one of lilies and of the triumph  
that goes unheeded:  
the purple one in the palm of God

extended as life is  
beyond all winters.  
as hope is

beyond the final blow.

Mary Angela Douglas 1 May 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# In Spring And Your Lady Slipper Stories

for Mama

your ladyslipper stories  
I'll find again one day  
when the new grass dew

dots the lawn  
like starlight and  
the children have all gone away

remembering their dreams.  
remembering their dreams  
they have departed

and not on this side of things  
will they return  
when the sun burns

the dew off the grass.  
you will wipe your tears  
with the kerchief of wind

that billowed out their sails  
at the last at the end  
and tell to me again

like the beads of lost prayers  
on their behalf,  
your lady slipper stories

on the fragrant air  
mid the flowers everywhere

mary angela douglas 17 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Appled Garden With A Happier Ending

why are they troubling the apple trees  
with such dark shadows.  
and the tree all brimmed with glory

as it is.  
as it is  
we cannot sleep

for keeping watch in the orchards.  
and the dews creep in.  
the little rabbits.

and you'll be up all morning  
sounding out no warning as it is  
to the angels on the perimeters.

that earth may go on this way forever:  
green. and without tears.

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Arkansas Woods

the bridge is broken where it stood

the bridge of stone

the mill wheel will not turn again

and I miss home.

November's startled leaves by some mysterious angel, jinn

by some weird turning of the wind

will lift in random flight

the earth, rich loam, seems all my own

the skies filled with their ransomed light.

I used to feel with every leaf

like Shelley, my whole soul could lift

and in far childhood with a small wagon

i carried whatever I could of drifts

time has drifted now

I am the same somehow

sifted by love and grief

for this little bit

in the woods at dusk

but turn I must

through all this gold that now has set

and the leaf mold's beauty

I can't regret.

mary angela douglas 17 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Beginning, Poetry Didn't Need Protocols

[again, to Valerie Macon]

in the beginning poetry didn't need protocols.  
it was a whisper in the trees.  
stars turning over in their sleep.

the fairytale kneaded over night  
into a luscious bread  
of everything said by the soul

to the Trinity.  
and of all colours, I choose these  
said even the poor poets

far from home  
but listening to the glistening.  
and what were they writing then

if it wasn't Poetry?

mary angela douglas 16 march 2016.

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Blue Hour

in the blue hour when all things take that hue  
so that even God is blue and the petals of all flowers  
the carport shadows

the small dewes in the grass  
and children playing in the dusk  
wish that it would last

in the blue hour.  
who chose that shade from evening made  
the last silks of the day

and you are fading and your sister too  
into the blue the enchanted the vanishing hour  
before the moon

appears pearlescent, in taffetas.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Closet With His Peach Sunsets

in the closet with His peach sunsets  
I hid my words.  
they were young:

a flourish of pale green leaves.  
they couldn't understand yet  
the gunfire of simple

conversations.  
in the closet with His provisional  
angels far from the alarms

I hid my silences.  
they were already  
like snow before it falls

on a stony landscape  
all that they could ever be  
at the beginning of glistening

mary angela douglas 17 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Country

in the country, where one grows old  
and the roses shadowing into their dusk  
the moon held aloft, a pale green lantern  
  
by whom are these things noted, gardenia soft;  
the moon a wide ribbon woven through clouds  
consumed for the Soul, that silver moth  
  
it's the crescent of ending  
  
I behold or you, as you were,  
before the floods the candles'  
drift on the snowy cakes  
  
the present of it all  
in star flecked tissue revealing  
  
you,  
on your small porch  
  
looking out on your allotted ocean of time  
and the foam of it aqua,



unto the stars, the swing's wide measure

on the playground dreamed

the dust rising from the shoe scuff of it

the blues and the greens in a whirl

on the carousel colored in; carillions counted,

blossoming pink to white;

the horses raving, frozen as they were

and turning into the Fair remembered

one was fire, singing the milkmaids

in adawn, the faun colored roses

the heart tuned to pearl

and the dew tinged hour

the freshness rose it was ever Easter

rising, sweets in the grass half hidden

the dime witched dial crumbling you thought

was diamond

the Disneyland beckoning,

reckoning,

the childhood tears behind

dried, in the sullen A pinwheel wind

the music box wounding of it, forgo;

the purple rising, the iced tea clinking

of the glass you were drinking the purple of

what is past and that gleams

the gleams of it far behind now

the Star ahead

the may blossom falter of it;

the ones that loved you

when you were new,

the honeysuckle bright of it,

blazing up

renewed, it's Christmas;

the angels draw nigh;

Hans Andersen, in a sleigh

parting invisible snows.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Deep Shade Of Luscious Cherry Language

in the deep shade of luscious cherry language  
I do not count the missing

I am an angel at  
your every doorway

whenever your heart  
is torn like paper

wherever you stand

undefended

in the worst part of the fairytale-

mary angela douglas 8 august 2007

EN LA SOMBRA PROFUNDA DE LA LENGUA DE CEREZA DELICIOSA  
en la sombra profunda de la lengua de cereza deliciosa  
no cuento a los desaparecidos.  
soy un angel en su cada puerta  
cuando su corazon se desgarras como papel  
dondequiera que usted estaria en pie  
invicto  
en la parta peor de las hadas

mary angela douglas spanish translation of original poem in English july 5,2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Dream Of The Seventh Willow

{enter, Desdemona, singing}

lost in the dream of the seventh willow  
where was her testament of flowers, she mused  
o is song strewn now

between waking and sleeping;  
the country we longed for-  
and the green willow?

the garland of snow.  
she was in the dream of the  
seventh willow and could not know

singing her interrupted song  
as we knew.  
the audience is always quiet then.

the student in the Library  
coming upon clear song  
and the breeze lifts only slightly

the willow trees' fronds o willow,  
the sweet air rings  
while unconfined-

beyond distress- all precognition, now  
must be out there already  
building the gilded monuments;

still, this does not come to pass.

but we. but we renew the matinees' weeping  
clued in to the Last;  
to the silver; to the grass green ribbons fluttering;

the bleached pearl of the moon as  
tuned through luxuriant windows  
configuring these torn shadows

the scene sings willow  
and willow and willow  
in the seventh dream

mary angela douglas 22 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Fifth Year Of My Unemployment

I am the stranger at my own gates-  
less than rationed  
they have torn the wings  
off the angels of my countries,  
rivers, suns-

and the dogs with their eyes  
like saucers in a tinderbox story\*

are staring me down:  
guarding a treasure sifting into dust;  
as I'm turned back from

appalling interviews  
and the false floor falls through falls through

falls through

but I remember the rose windows  
of the great cathedrals  
and whisper the cadence of roses, themselves

like the names of Russian poets.  
Mandelstam. Akhmatova. Pasternak.

let me cling like a saint to their iconostatic wind...

through an ageless winter the red berries  
shown above the snow-shrouds

and the poems were bleeding-  
in full view of everyone

this precisely crimson shade

mary angela douglas 24 september 2010

\*ref. to Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale: 'The Tinderbox'

Mary Angela Douglas



# In The Forest Of News I Pray

in the forest of news of the nearly complete devastations  
this I pray: you find the fairy tale clearing;  
that you get away from all this

as one poet said, if not one thousand,  
too much for us  
somewhere where the far cathedral candles of

the stars will not

burn down the inner landscapes holy; wholly  
where you are, on every hand  
the kaleidoscopes breaks forth;

their call not to jeweled alarms  
in darkness careening but

only into singing  
and Radiance, unforestalled.

mary angela douglas 16 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Kingdom Of Sweets Gone By

the cream of words that frothed the rim of  
poetry gone by poured into the sleeping village overnight,  
the one semicircling the Christmas boughs,

the lowest ones with the last of the icicles flung and shining  
unheard in the household the emerald lantern flashed and  
clicked the train on its tracks, the ruby eyed

and the blue doves on the trees fluttering arise, arise  
and the dolls woke up in their wrappings fluttering their  
dolly lashes, the Florida oranges bursting into orangeade

in the kitchen, the steaming coffee made poured into the china cups with the little  
rosebuds and the large rolls  
decked with cinnamon kingdoms iced themselves.

real blueberries in the muffins, this time just as the blueberries in the summer  
rhymes when you are counting clouds or stars or islands and fingering your  
necklaces of

coral of the improvident jade  
and have huckleberry pie for dinner followed by cold chicken  
and a sudden picnic of pink cake under a pinker sky

raspberry lemonade at the party with the candycorn theme.

all Holidays are one sighed my sister and I telling our favorite story again, and  
should the Princess sprinkle the sugar  
herself on the strawberries?

rolled into a huge Snowball of fun  
and flattening the dough with a rainbow gemmed rolling  
pin and the little dog laughed behind the rose divan

since that's where the Danish wedding cookies crumbled...

mary angela douglas 24 september 2014-

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Light From Far Away

these things have floated down to the children

pearl birds with paper wings

ancient riddles tied with string

rose petals. and the ships they came on

the lilac's whisper the pale green moody song

one opal tear

the moment wrapped in origami gold

pin wheels in beach ball colours

one apple orchard, ordered in miniature

with a small Queen

a silver slide among the blue white stars

the memory of who you are in the green hushed summer

crooning to them a weeping lullaby

in the middle of the day;

pink macaroons; and striped curtains.

the wish that it could always be

that way

like Christmas opening up

its own dear Present

in the Light from far away.

mary angela douglas 14 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Looking Glass, It Began To Snow

in the looking glass, it began to snow

the snow covered up  
your eyes your  
mouth; your

hands, with their own  
snow-like gestures;  
you wept-

but not into

the frozen-mirror pond

we struggled through:  
emerging into  
deeper snows,

but with the same furniture-

and this was the  
beginning of sorrows

mary angela douglas february 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Margins Of Song We Will Live

in the margins of Song we will live  
like the small birds after the rains  
chirping near the puddles on the pavement

drinking the clouds.  
how can I say outloud what I feel  
in the public wayfares

the heart could be stone  
that listens there  
the heart could be stone

write anywhere.  
write on the pages of the sun  
though like icarus you melt

into the uncomprehending sea.  
write yourself into the music:  
liberty.

mary angela douglas 31 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Nutshell Of Days

in the nutshell of days  
inside with the crimson  
with the gold

of going away  
and the miniature roses  
on display

the doll like river  
glittering to the seas  
and all of these

and what is more  
the door to door  
of the candlelit stars

so self contained  
we have examined  
as if it were someone else's calendar

perhaps the one of saints  
the elaborate hours  
the fleur de lis

and the other flowers  
and are we embroidered  
I would have asked you

if you had stayed  
if time had not strayed  
across the blizzarding prairies

not heard from after that.

now all is concealed  
and when the melting comes  
will I be home

I ask my soul



in the nutshell of days  
in the crimson and gold

of going away...

mary angela douglas 13 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Palace Of Incredible Roses

in the palace of incredible roses  
we were breathing only the rose-filled air  
and music fell in fountains freshly tuned

to so much jasmine.

in other rooms  
in castles of the sun  
I wandered freely-  
turning, as in a dream,

the Light-bound books  
of neglected poets...  
while an Alhambran stillness grew

into vast magnolias tended by the Lord;  
the air flamed out in little pink sighs and sang  
'oh my extraordinary

crystal cancion'...  
'remember me,

remember - me.'  
I gathered rose dust everywhere  
to build their house anew

but then  
oh broken, broken  
in a mistranslated instant:

the splendid clocks  
in the bell-towers

of a thousand ill-timed regimes  
faltered and fell  
so that we kept counting

without numbers-

new fractures in the poetry  
of an old endurance

mary angela douglas 17 july 2010

En El Palacio de Las Rosas Increibles

en el palacio de las rosas increibles  
es que estaban respirando solo  
el aire lleno de rosas  
y cae la musica en  
las fuentes frescas  
afinada  
a tanto jazmin.  
en otros cuartos  
en castillos del sol  
descaminando-  
libremente-  
pasano los libros encuadernados  
con La Luz  
de los poetas olvidados  
mientras que crece un quietud  
como la de La Alhamra  
hasta magnolias inmensos  
cuidado por El Senor  
quemado el aire  
en suspiros pequenos  
de color rosa  
y cantan:  
ay mi cancion extraordinario  
de cristal:  
acuertate de mi  
acuertate de mi  
y se reunieron  
el polvo de las rosas  
para construir de nuevo  
sus hogares  
pero entonces-  
quebrantado-quebrantado  
en un instante  
mal traducido

los relojes esplendidos  
en los torres de  
las campanas  
de mil regimenes  
inoportunos  
deshacerse  
y se caen  
de manera que  
nosotros quedaban  
contando  
sin numeros  
grietas nuevas  
en un resistencia  
antigua-

mary angela douglas (spanish translation-variation) april 12,2011  
(poem in English,17 july 2010)

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Shoemaker's Shop

[once more, to The Brothers Grimm]

how marvelous it seemed to you then  
the cobbler asleep at his bench  
too tired to dream

of the work still left to do  
the leathern apron's torn  
his own shoes full of holes

are fit for scorn  
his tools are not the best but  
he has hammered gold into slippers

in his time embroidered with  
the thread of rose  
and never glanced at the clock

painted light green, perhaps with red tulips  
all around the edge  
a wooden taskmaster with a shrill cuckoo

10 o' clock, the mayor comes at noon  
or sooner if there's bad luck  
how can one room contain

so much misfortune.  
he sighs to his wife  
munching a little toast and cheese

as if they were mice.  
the snow flying. it is Christmas Eve  
the dancers from the pantomime  
in valentine tulle tap their toes

impatiently en pointe\*  
backstage for slippers new,  
encrusted with rubies ribbons

in the sheen of cherries  
he hasn't seen for breakfast ever.  
he slumbers on while

midnight's moon floods the shop  
not caring if business is better.  
then wonder of wonders and none too soon

the green clock ticks the elves in  
one by well-skilled one to cobble  
in fairy princess stitching

never seen  
the rag tag edges of his dream  
he will remember this in daylight hours

mary angela douglas 20 october 2013

Note to Reader: in case you wonder how the ballerinas in red tulle could tap their toes and be en pointe at the same time, remember, this is a dream or just pretend it's Balanchine's choreography (who was always asking the impossible to occur as if it were nothing)

if you're wondering where the punctuation is in the above poem it may be I have my elves too, who skipped the punctuation in order not to be caught (since I get up very early...)

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Showroom With The Eclairs And Whatnot

these are the showroom cakes why  
don't they ever say to you  
in the bakeries:

won't you take one for a test drive?  
here's an éclair the size of

Mars and more, besides  
the powdered doughnuts  
light as fancies

the black forest tortes  
so exquisitely chocolate  
and cherried together

here:  
try a chorus or two  
it's so creamy when paired

with the 10-tiered raspberry orange  
fluffsicle, only a nickel,

our latest model.

mary angela douglas 1 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Studio Of The Departing Aviator

[to the soul of the marveling artist, sculptor vanished to  
realms of gold, Michael Rolando Richards]

ephemera of wings, and a gold paint spilt  
the cardboard outlines conforming to a blueprint  
wrinkled on tissue purpled with

the outlines of...  
what? a dream come true? a tar blurred view  
an adjustable happenstance seen through

a something wept for years, and not yet done,  
oh tears of tar  
the half flown years in dun; spun

into a pearl edged stream of night  
and dawn too heavy to bear the weight

this is flight, hallowed the angels  
this is time  
and chimed your brethren, out of sight

and this crossed flight crossed purposed  
now to be

abandoned due to circumstance so  
thunderstruck, too suddenly askew?  
the black clouds roiling on the horizon

the gold swallowed whole, the gold swallow. swallow  
where are you we call from the manifest  
having no names when the smoke clears

debris of starlight everywhere, Archangel o Michael  
new fallen, tears in flames; o morning dew burned up

the glass heavens  
and our this is brief, too brief



till Light itself cried Michael!  
take flight.

mary angela douglas april 16 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Summers' Day By Day

azure displaces azure in the summers' day by day  
dream brimmed, rose trimmed remember when  
lime leafed stretching farther away

than a heart could reach now

and formal, as though we were surrounded  
by borders of the art nouveau  
and wreathed in flowers, county fair

or honey golden home and drop by drop or  
fourth of july flared soda fountain shared  
and the honeycomb is wrought

was wrought as if jeweled by junes  
beyond compare so cream and clover rich.  
what will it take to find you lime leafed

in the shade again of vanished backyard trees  
and strawberry festival free in the let's pretend  
as we were then

waiting for the storybook recitals  
and the grandfathers naming the constellations  
and the scarlet maples so far off

in the sheep clouded distances  
and the neighborhood skies:

pastels shading into  
the dusk of carports,  
sheet music learned and relearned

the gardenia furling songs.

mary angela douglas 28 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Textile Museum Or The Sonatina That Breaks Like Glass

this is the curtain they made for the one  
window missing a pane of glass perhaps  
and it is beautiful to you

coming after the fact with its unmistakable rickrack.  
or perhaps, it is not.  
you should know under what conditions

anyway, this came to be, whatever the work of art;  
the glaze on the pond of their winter  
without food or candle in the dark. the rainless ridicule

of the long days before the ark  
was finished...

the shimmer of it all, pre-rainbow.  
and the lost feelings.  
the cost of this...

going up and down the mirroring scales,  
you too may shine in a different place  
a more Elysian field

and time but keep in mind:

where they piled twigs in the out of doors  
and tried to light them-  
to keep you warm coming so much later, down the years..

will you come back to visit them  
conquering your fears  
with Telstar,

a jar of cherry preserves?  
a shelf or two spray painted blue

or pretend you've done things

all by yourself.  
and never really knew them.

mary angela douglas 27 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Theatre Of Roses I Took My Seat

in the theatre of roses I took my seat.  
of course the cushions were rose velvet.  
now we begin.

each petal whispers from the floodlights of  
a moon overhead, in wisps of tissue pink  
resembling clouds, resembling dreams that

barely speak aloud, the hidden streams.  
I hid you in my pockets thinking to keep you  
alive and when you curled at the edges

I cried. we remember sighed the roses.  
we remember you near the rosebushes  
in a corner of the yard and how you

tried. and now we're here so you can see  
that wishes are never wasted on anyone.  
and their rose laughter was so sweet

in waves and waves it rose.  
I curtsyed like Alice learning my lessons curiously.  
then, outside in the blinding afternoon

on the uneven sidewalks of the world,  
I stood awhile- remembering life  
as a little girl-

outside the matinee of roses.  
I have finished now.  
this was their song.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Variety Store Of My Dreams

[to Eugene Field for the Sugarplum Tree,  
to all the Five and Ten's...]

in the variety store of my dreams I saw...  
reams of golden notebook paper,3-ringed.  
hair bows of rococo velveteen

and, to match, the dirndl skirts on sale  
the ones embroidered with the tiny rosebuds  
and, I grew pale: Parisienne perfumes

in their cristal flasks and not their

knock offs and so affordable at last.  
fishing tackle for the Magic Fish  
the one that gives you what you wish for

up to a point and wooden apples  
hollowed out with appley tea sets crouched within  
all brimmed mysteriously with apple tea!

and blue plate specials of the tuna melt, the tuna club  
I rubbed my eyes in sweet surprise  
and fountain cokes; is this a joke?

and candies, candies meant for me,  
a pennysworth, a sack!  
from the gumdrop tree in a dreamtime shower

and china fit for a playhouse dower  
and all my loves come back to me  
like the apple tree, the mockingbird,

gardenia coolness, curling fern  
small brook silvering in a shaded sun  
fountain pen letters from my Mother.

and Time ran backwards in technicolor.

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015; 10 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# In The Weeping Hour

in the weeping hour

that comes to us unforeseen

when the golden things,

people and places

are falling apart struck by an unseen hand

and the heart the heart

as Brodsky said goes on living

even while it seems to you

that it could not

let us weep diamonds then

let us speak pearls while human words remain to us

that do not have to be rented, bought or sold

out from under us

of defiant joy

so that beauty even in falling apart

may remain on though we are forgotten

even though we forget.



let Love be the victor yet.

though tenantless. torn down

stone by stone.

mary angela douglas 16 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

## In This Issue

in this issue we have the directions to the castle  
in this issue the pirate map on Mars  
the clues that you were apt to forget

when you were wishing on a star

and you can connect the dots or not  
while waiting in the same old spot  
for something wondrous to appear

or carry it with you till New Years

the Christmas glossy magazine  
with tips to make the chiming scene,  
the charming gift, the cake, delight,

and plans to renovate the night

so that the stars more silverly shine  
to point out where the simple dine  
when you are running out of dimes

in this issue, or the next one. down the line.

mary angela douglas 27 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# In Your Mind You Are The Most Beautiful Dancer

in your mind you are the most beautiful dancer  
little girl, practicing in the corner your made up things  
so that the whole world throws flowers at your feet

as you twirl and of course it's all the flowers in the world  
even the ones you don't have names for yet.  
and you think you're like a jewel box ballerina or

the one on the birthday cake of pink and cream.  
and then you think of wedding cake dolls a little distracted  
and wonder how would it feel to live on the top layer

with all that white frosting. silver beading.  
sometimes you whirl to make yourself dizzy  
thinking this must be the way they practice

and you make the steps you've seen in the  
Easter grass and in your dress no longer clean  
with its bright sash.

how long will this last your Grandmother wonders  
that you will wander from dream to dream  
jumping from stone to stone in a crystal creek

in the wilderness

eating strawberries, sewing a fine seam and then,  
going to get ice cream, you always order the pink kind.  
it's long ago in the long ago these things happened.

and you still daydream they're all flinging flowers at you  
and you're up there in lilac toeshoes. a frothy tutu.  
or waltz length, the best.

well, sometimes, you do!

mary angela douglas 4 april 2016



# In Your White Cathedral On An April Day

[to Claude Monet]

in your white cathedral on an April Day  
I watched the pink light turn to green and then gardenia-  
as all time slipped its slip-knot crying, stay.

and now, at a farther outpost,  
who can say when the parfainted moment  
flared from a snowflake, captivating?  
to close in a foreknown spring, too early.

I want to say that light  
should always be this way  
and if the spring has deeper hues, or somewhere,  
solace that can stay-

we will know it when  
our grief has turned to  
a dusk that is flowering again  
in a garden of white light, unending

mary angela douglas 30 september 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Indigo

if all the seas were ink...  
Mother Goose rhyme

ink has spilled,  
flowed into a sudden darkness.  
the ink has spilled

there's nothing left to write

except to you  
on a very thin thread of what remains  
but the thread

is gold, I said  
though there was no record  
I said anything at all

oh who will look into this for us  
when feeling's all eclipsed, when  
ink has spilled all over the world

the ink has spilled the poets go  
into shock

who will patch the moon  
the little stars  
the bruise on the Sun...

when all the shadows run together,  
viewed as one  
then how can the answers flee

when every border shows  
no margin for our errors-

the ink has spilled  
coating the seas  
coating the far distances

come, Oh Lord  
oh write to us In Light.

and still the rivers of our spilled ink  
our indigo weeping

mary angela douglas 28 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ineffable Roses Inordinately Red Or Pink

ineffable roses inordinately red or pink  
or yellow as the sun enchanted everyone  
or only one, read the math problem in

my dream the best word problem yet  
in terms of shading:  
here, in the music, it says rest

and you play one staff only anyway  
at a time. ah, are you rhyming rhyming  
side stepping the folkloric dance

on the auditorium stage;  
auditioning for the Christmas play;  
the pageant where the

Princess never awakes  
but it's ok she's dressed in  
petals of pink and will not blow away and pinkness

is all you care about  
at this age,  
shines her mother.

Mary Angela Douglas 13 June 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Infractions Rained Down Tears

to e.e. cummings  
and with love and sorrow for all those punished unjustly

infractions rained down tears  
and flooded the unimportant streets  
the ones that never got ploughed

when it snowed-  
infractions  
stayed up all night

with knotted stomachs, little sleep  
on the eve of evaluations  
already misconstrued;

they slept, if they did,  
under bridges, trees, light poles,  
were blamed for warehouse fires;

moonstruck in the Tower  
pacing the executed hours;  
unnerved in the roundhouse,

alive for the switch;  
tackled by the bait  
and waiting in thin jackets

in the cold for salty soup and  
sharpened glances above thin smiles  
bestowed bestowed.

of fairytales bereft and  
still, kept after school, years later  
to be underserved days old peach or apple pie

in the sugary customs of the country  
after a blistering lecture for being poor,  
not up to par, too easily satisfied, and late

and late again for  
the punishing games everywhere in force they-  
were taken out with the trash;

married, had children in the rubble  
of no one's- ever -song, who were sent to  
school to learn from early, on-

all they hadn't done wrong  
they must stand in the corners for  
and dream about in their dreams

especially on Christmas vacations.  
'infractions infractions infractions...'  
they wept into small hands and said

oh, I am sorry sorry sorry it's my  
birthday again  
though who could tell them why

and who would tell it well,  
in apple bright blighting-  
the reason for the spell they were under

for the orchards they never felled

mary angela douglas 23 august 2014

Note on the poem: we seem to be growing a penalty laden, condemnation before-the-fact language. I have personified the word 'infractions' here to show that a person subjected to this kind of language can be totally taken over by the constant feeling that they have, are or will be doing something constantly wrong so that the only occupying army left within them is called 'Infraction' and even their very identity becomes this 'infraction'. The one name they call themselves by in their daily, quiet agonies.

The poem reflects the situation when people are needled to death by small flaws faults pointed out by others endlessly on official pieces of paper disguised as policies disguised as simple guidelines, day-glo glowing on eviction notices, this property is condemned bylaws, used to hammer and hammer the points home, the finer points of the way human beings professionally or otherwise are legitimately browbeating each other almost constantly.

It is the language of leases, of training manuals, of hidden directives, of hr handbooks, of signs on the walls of public and private institutions.

It grows to the point that it takes up space in the human soul and eats it away, the spare, chill language of hell that unaccountably never melts, once heard, remembered forever, clanging like dissonant bells or sirens in the memory:

the universal language that wants the world to be composed only of wardens and prisoners.

Thank God for the language of kindness, of beauty, of mercies wherever it exists.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Initial Lament Inlaid With Opals

once there was turquoise and a silver sigh

a herd of dreams, no word for goodbye

once there was.

once there was snowdrift spun so fine

and I thought every day was mine

when I looked out on all the pines

all the pines.

while I was sleeping free from care

there came a noise upon the stair

there came a noise.

it promised peace and such ideals

a place to rest with all my meals.

all my meals. and I'd sell flowers from the fields.

how long ago that day seems now

when all my life without a row

they swallowed, swallowed whole somehow

when I went with a gipsy band

and left my mother and my grands

without our even knowing then

my lot was cast

but not with friends.

mary angela douglasa 20 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Installations

[for Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Andrei Tarkovsky,  
Shoshtakovich, and the poets of the Silver Age]

removing the sky, they gave us glass  
so that those who flew were continually  
bleeding;

removing the earth

and then our shoes,  
we walked on  
on singular paths.

is it the air that holds us up,  
we wondered;  
the unseen currents

that the saints knew?  
we exchanged lilies  
and ate black bread

with the smidgeon of cheese  
we remembered from the fairy tales,  
jewellike, the pots of jam;

the murals made of sand;  
the paint brush dripping from the Sun.

one teaspoon  
engraved, we saved;  
assorted kettles

and the diaries of unfortunate fortunates

who dreamed the one dream necessary,  
useful to us still:  
the fantastic ladder,

the lost green hill

with the angels ascending  
and descending in  
measureless silence;

with an untranslatable iridescence;  
and carried our candles indoors  
from ruin to ruin

where once, there were rooms.  
and enameled the palettes of old skies  
and summer dooms;

we the unwary  
when the silver myths of forests  
were shut down

observed and did not complain.  
and were ourselves transposed  
in the cinematic scenes,

watercoloured in long rains,

the coded symphonies.  
and amidst the wild grasses  
where we read our books

and wrote them too  
so out of view;

painting on sidewalks  
the outlines of the deceased  
when they closed the schools of memory;

mouthed the words  
in syllables of pure snow

mary angela douglas 5 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Interlude

again, to Van Cliburn (on Debussy's sunken cathedral-)

searching for songs between the keys  
I dreamed you were alive  
rifling the music in the piano bench.

a something's missing in the world since you left  
the metronome's set to zero; snowfall lost  
in the interlude can't find its way home

not even by Christmas  
and all things mourn uncharmed  
in the lock box of Beauty

stashed- forgotten?

oh polish the early etudes like the sun again;  
the scales like mother of pearl  
and every phrase you knew

in the midnight's practice room, again though  
it is true

the cherry concertos ripen over time  
recording to recording,  
shine!

still is the April of music since you were here;  
snow drifting are the sounds, and we must  
build the cathedrals anew from note to note

within our quiet hearing  
until in rainbow pools they sink again, out of sight  
into the lake depth of our hearts

Mary Angela Douglas 21 September 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Into The Blue

into the blue their thoughts have gone

clouded, into the marble of Time

I cannot find them;

can you- all their fountaining words-

the perfume of their language, turning;

then they asked sadly, did they, how

could we bury their Spring.

o child my child they sing, it's so far away;

like a harp's glissando; gold flakes

off of the sun into the heart unwon,

I know their phrases lilies were;

wreathed of forgotten flowers;

float on forgotten waters! I cried

to the Unseen

in an unknown tongue.

perhaps their work was done

leaving no clues, used up

leaving the empty cup its filigree

more, than it means to me lost questions

when oh why did the way they looked at things

melt like a dream

beyond angelic recall.

ghosts of the lecture hall.

we must look so small through their vast telescope now

that crystalline point of view

when all the stars were new that now are faint.

or feigned.

does anyone know

what to do

gazing into the blue after them?

mary angela douglas 7 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Into The Booklands (Or Something Lilacs Said)

to Ray Bradbury

into the Booklands with the ravaging words  
with the green net or the silver  
to draw in the stars, rosebuds, occasional herds:

the myth of where you are whoever heard of  
why Im into the Booklands you say  
while they stare after you

until the undergrowth passes away  
you are not passed away  
you are There, with lilies in your hands

issuing no commands that you be set in amber  
and Where keeps bursting into a gold leafed aspiring  
here the ferns sing ferny songs to

you with your nets your lack of cunning  
you just keep on running  
into the rose of it, roseate;

the dewiness  
the sad flow not my tears fountaining,  
the waterfalls entre onto the crystalline down to the

wallpapers on the walls, rooms with small keys to the  
corridors; the, if you please, where the knights shine  
(why don't you?) looking for what declined

help yourself to pie, the reasons why  
the storied stories glorias of it all, skittering,  
mousey velvet whispering

the tendrils

nestling the mole holes in the tall grasses  
where the otter knows

you fall into a realm of saints  
where you become small  
your shadow looms larger...

they pass like barges by you  
on the river of dreaming  
in the business baroque of seeming where lost bridges span

but you, you are the gleaming now  
who could turn you back  
the bookmarks melt away,

why save the place when you're in it every day  
or even farther away  
you're in the snow drifts, Swan

or dressed in cherry velvet, on and on  
with the applesauce cow;

in mint condition  
with no audition  
in the glazing, glitzing winds

the curlicues in winter glass surpassing  
the fairy tale of the let's not even ask  
(them for directions)

to God and to no doom  
and the lets pretends, the late parades  
forever in bloom.

mary angela douglas 6 march 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Into The Greenwoods

into a far greenness they have vanished  
with their little leaves, their fronds  
their wayward ferns

the thistles that caught on my dress  
as I walked through the high fields.  
midsummer does not last

we sighed in our pastel skirts  
turning to take our honey and toast  
by the waysides.

time has turned into something else again  
the way it will.  
the way your mother said

it would when she was braiding your hair.  
but she has vanished too  
into the greenwoods the greenwoods

she used to sing of  
when songs were already, so old.

Mary Angela Douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Invisible Piano

sweeping the floor at evening  
Time stands still;  
the grass grows starry

and the whippoorwills  
my Grandfather used  
to call in the yard

waiting for meteors.  
if Time were a loaf  
I would slice it still

the way he did  
smeared gloriously with the butter  
and the jam

we thought so enchanted then.  
now all Saturdays run together  
watercoloured, down the drains

of what remains  
and I practice my  
Invisible piano.

Mary Angela Douglas 27 December 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Iowa

[on the paintings of Grant Wood,  
and on David Lynch's lovely film The Straight Story  
and on Iowa, itself, forever]

I would have bartered my heart  
for these precincts  
wildly green;

mirroring the hills of Heaven,  
hill after hill till unseen  
with the cardinal red of barns,

blinding silos in a moment's gleam,  
the small farms  
where I longed to go

forever never knowing anything else, anymore;

just to shut a frame door on a few flowers  
or to go downtown of a Christmas  
to a perfect town square decorated

a crystal something in the air

all brick and awnings  
with the one war memorial there staunch  
through summer's heat or in snows

nestled and the tawny roads upreach;  
the plainspoken steeples  
or the vanishing points

where the trestles meet  
and the pink orchards rivaled only  
by the fragrance of the feed stores

where the rakes glistened.

the front porches fronted

by poplars, maples  
rustling with angels

these are my fables

whether scarlet or in  
their july greens  
anticipating by their whispering

the stillness before dreams  
before storms, and the hidden streams  
glazed over;

the wind through the screen door's  
ozone before the sweeping rains  
and the grain lands

sifting continuously continuously  
as though they had spoken to you all alone  
in sunlight in cool shade

even from birth;  
to you whoever you were from the first;  
wherever you were intending to be

even if you were only there  
for an hour or two or for a day,  
just passing through:

as if to say even so, to you from birth  
'your soul is made from this earth.'

mary angela douglas 3 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Iridescences

oh it is flying away sang children to their balloons  
now sadly in all their colours farther away than  
they used to be

and ice cream melts all strawberry in the afternoons

snow in December all too soon the leaves turn gold  
and just as you turn to say, how beautiful,  
they blow away

and the edge of music shimmers at close of days  
more sharply so that the heart almost stops  
as if turning on the dime of it and then

the chimes on breezes too and there is no time,  
not time enough to hear,  
waterfall cascading, all of it;

you play no longer on the keyboard of

dreams when your nightmare seams fall apart and  
spill out into the day to day of making toast,  
and coffee, maybe

but ah, say I where no one knows  
the wild cherry sum of it exceeding  
all the formulas,

the heart keeps its own chambers  
and there, it is always God saying over again  
to you as if He cherished the sound of it,

oh yes, Light, let there be...

and you cry all the iridescences  
till the floodtide,  
from happiness,

going away with Him, then.

mary angela douglas 22 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is It A Clouded Beauty

is it a clouded beauty  
that floats in the blue marbles;  
the soul of a paler blue?  
the suspended lilies in the

paper weights,  
sigh the executors of lost arts.  
caught in the amber, the butterfly wings

with the golden spots remain but not  
the child's enchantment on a summer day;  
the feeling of the eternities

blown about like kites, tossed colorforms,  
the starry nights outside, in the backyard-  
there, where the dolls cannot go;  
or marionettes attached to their drums-

-all on their own-  
unless you carry them a sweet voice cried  
like a tinkling fountain  
half-way broken down near the village of Stare.

and why their arms are still  
outstretched, by the nightlights,  
where we left them-

mary angela douglas 15 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is It The Tower Of Babel Then That You Are Making

is it the tower of Babel, then, that you are making  
day and night night and day always the fine phrase  
all the fine gloved words for you alone

your fantastical blue plume struck at an angle.  
and I - I am struck too and not wonder struck  
whenever I speak in clouds in mists

in the hissing of heat on the bare pavements  
summers without number.  
summers without number winters too

how many words you have found  
for leaving when it pleases you.  
and linking the fools gold to your watch fob

and watching the clock  
whenever I have leftovers to say  
leftovers from the ancient promises

freshet, green the words spilling out of me.  
I, with no towers at all.

but only, merely: God.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is It What You See In The Painting

is it what you see in the painting  
or is it what you are or were  
sunlight flecked in your once upons

transfixed by beauty from the first days.  
here is the light on the tree mysteriously  
transfixed and the moment stays

within its frame;  
the painter's acclaim.  
the sky branches-

but you're outside of it, regretfully,

and even the light changes

all aspects in an opaline shimmer, glaze.  
will you shine someday, far away,  
with a wish to return

to the deeper green there?  
the tree in shadow,  
when Time has burned away.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is Life Not Burning Bush Enough

is life not burning bush enough  
that we should kneel  
here in the shadow of your lovely

hand, my God? what matter if  
flamed tip to tip your angels sing  
creasing the sun or not? stripping

all music then, unrippling from the air  
let them depart, leaving no sign at all  
though we but gape at the winding stair

that held them once.

in pools of drifting moons  
reflected, let light become:  
simply your evening's name

or through the shallows of our little day  
may the deep winds come.  
miracle enough

to see You spelled in the fainter stars  
and vivid, close as hummingbird,  
pink shell- or rose

where we arise from griefs  
to know to know that You are near in them  
though we but lightly trace

from hill to hill and trembling,  
unerringly the features of Your Grace  
the purple of your sandal

where the wave-  
breaks open

mary angela douglas 25 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is Sean Hannity Irish American Or What

really? You have to be protected from harmonicas?  
I don't write topical poems but today I make an exception.  
listening absent mindedly to a talk show host in the USA

called Sean Hannity. Sounds like an Irish name to me.  
You know, the motherland of the poets,  
the muscians, the dreamers.

Lo and behold he answered the phone this time  
and instead of dead air it was a fellow American  
wildly playing the harmonica.

what is this, the host asked clearly already beyond miffed  
overriding the riff, but harmonica man kept playing.  
why and it's music, Sean, the kindly leprechaun on my

right shoulder soothed.

After, the guy explained the piece was called go out and vote.  
He was so cheerful and expectant  
after his impromptu surprise concert unsolicited.

a free lance harmonica guy and optimistic.  
Sure and he wasn't expecting pitch rained down on his head  
even if he wasn't pitch perfect and played faster than the

Wabash Cannonball probably due to nerves.

I was charmed myself, a charmed listener  
also of Irish descent, Mr. Hannity.

Thank you you barked to the caller  
after telling him TWICE his harmonica sounded like screeching.  
Not so very nice Hannity almost scowled my leprechaun.

only half astride the rainbow now. And click

the phone went dead and not even taking a breath



you said to staff on the air well you know

And then the you know what hit the fan.  
And now I am not a fan of semi Irish Mr. Hannity.  
WHO IS SCREENING THE CALLS TODAY, Sean screeched.

You're supposed to be a mother hen. You're not representing me.  
What are you representing Mr. Hannity?  
you with your political blather.

the last time I checked the harmonica  
was a worthy musical instrument

of Americana. How creative of the caller to serenade you.  
remember the old westerns, the boys by the fire  
after the long cattle drive

the lonely sound of the harmonica there or by the  
railyards drifting nostalgic while we real Americans  
can't keep a dry eye but you certainly did.

Red River Valley and all that. or is that not top hat to you.  
How ungrateful and high and mighty toora loora you were.  
WHO'S SCREENING MY CALLS.

as if a harmonica getting through  
was the lowest form of life to you.  
the most you'll come down

with a case of railroad blues cooties  
you're so above the folkloric apparently.  
you thank your lucky stars I guess for it but

Are you really from Ireland, somewhere back there anyway?  
God forbid you represent those who are.

mary angela douglas 8 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Is This The Page The Angels Turn

is this the page the angels turn,  
the page of snows?  
the child wondered

where the wind blows  
when you can't hear it anymore  
and are there shadows on the floor

while we sleep?  
quietly the angels turned the key  
and then you dreamed

and it seemed you dreamed  
for a long, long time  
till you were grown

no longer waking up  
in the old room,  
but with the same shadows.

mary angela douglas 14 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Grows Dim For The Astronauts

reading the angel bells on the wind,  
the friends who have gone-  
will you be staying for awhile,

or not for long?  
tea leaves break in the cup  
and the cup breaks too;

mirrors turn inward,  
do they reflect  
the pear ripe time

of you?  
who will you be when the winds have gone  
and the clouds are standing still;

what will you feel  
as the light ticks down  
and the train tracks stand revealed?

who is there even left to say  
what you should take  
when going away;

or even, how you should pack?  
I chose a summer dress to wear  
but a spring wind at my back.

you with no kerchief waving goodbye;  
you, who look on with a jaundiced eye  
(as was said in sentimental novels) -

what will you do when it's chimed away-  
the dream that you thought  
would be today's some say

grows dim,  
upon leaving earth...

mary angela douglas 29 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Is All Candlelit And Cordial

the heart that is not forsaken  
must live somewhere  
unforeseen and

in a glade so green  
a cottage locked away  
where roses always stay;

no petals,  
fall- away-  
and it is all candlelit and cordial

when the storms come in  
all ruby candlesticked  
and the wicks never going out

in a flaring, floating wind

there with embellished shadows  
you will have no need  
of ever looking back.

feckless and beautiful  
with God as a fact  
well established

the apple blossomed brightnesses  
blooming oh blooming  
the spindle alone

made of honeycomb gold  
worth half a diamond breeze  
and peace folded like a lily

near the hearthstone.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Is Maytime In The Picture Book

it is maytime in the picture book:  
hence, the pink ribbons, pale, the  
blue, mint green

the lemon lovely, fluttering  
the children holding on so lightly  
lightly to the ribbon's end

around the festive maypole wending and  
never needing to let go.  
and the little girls

in pastel skirts are lilting;  
the boys in jackets of peach  
or primrose

so beyond reach  
beyond the range of human griefs or toil  
beyond time forever in merriment

they in the green sward  
draw no swords but seem  
a part of an idyllic scene

for which there are  
no dream words yet  
in a primer vocabulary.

and our faces with their faraway aspect,  
still in their morning's velvets shine with  
a secret wish to be dressed in pastels

all the time as if illustrating  
in our several petticoats  
and the pinafores layering-

all this flowering...

we will move on from age to age

leave birthdays behind and  
the buttercream rose.

but today- today is ours to  
absorb intensely the page  
as if it were all we had to learn

with its border of half blown roses  
its few ferns.

mary angela douglas 3 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# It Is Night In The Emerald City

it is night in the Emerald City  
I don't know why I am writing you  
this letter  
the green stars shine ahead  
but is this cause for celebration?

there are multitudes onstage  
but no one in the audience  
and we were standing  
so magically by

in April's dappled shade:  
waiting for the cue to go on.

yet birds still trill  
and in the stillness  
golden poems are launched.

who will christen them,  
will you?  
at night in the Emerald City  
it's so hard to sleep

they are codifying everything.

I'm burning down the corner  
of another unknown page:  
here's fuel for a winter's instant!  
last evening from my window  
I heard the starry sonnets muted  
and

bright visions so indicted  
that I wept tears of emerald.  
I don't know when they'll  
banish this

it could be soon  
but I loved you

from universal distances  
in God's own grace and conversation  
I'm certain you'll remember  
we're not locked inside this maze.

performances are overbooked  
at night in the Emerald City  
you have to call ahead

all iridescence is forbidden  
I can't weep tears of emerald

I just watch the stars,  
not the regime

down to the last bright ember-

mary angela douglas 7 february 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Is No Marvel After All These Wars

..Irish poets, learn your trade...'William Butler Yeats

it is no marvel after all these wars

that we should tune the harp once more

and find in every leaf and fin

a gold that limns it all.

Yeats came not to vanish here.

become the sound of distant spheres

disclose the waning, yearning years

and bring to light their sullen eclipse.

let jewels still fall from poet's lips

who know the mysteries are real

who dare to form from what they feel

a music keened, a boat well keeled

and let the winds of God drive on

in every trembling, rose like song but

rooted in a firmer zeal

in beauty founded, found again

beyond the weal of human sin

let heart be tested in the fire

and find in words the worlds expired

that lived on in the banished soul.

let language be the bell that tolls.

and not the slogan that pretends.

mary angela douglas 28 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Isn't So Much Magic As It Is, Beauty

it isn't so much magic as it is, beauty  
she said to herself coming upon the scene suddenly:  
the unexpected snowfalls, the lemon leaf reigning

then falling at your feet and the sweep of it  
the panorama close at hand.  
how can I let you understand that this is

something dreamed yet wide awake.  
a flaking of stars; transpositions of where you are  
to where you could never be, had never been.

and this is mystery and the red rose gathered and  
still rooted in the ground and the lost and found, the when  
of every childhood minute you gazed at the sky

willing the clouds to stay

not so much wondering  
as dreaming, why  
can't they?

mary angela douglas 15 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Makes You Sad

it makes you sad  
when dark waters under moonlight  
no longer reflect:  
as in the fairy tale of the end.

and when the white  
poetry of the heart is scattered;  
when the bough cannot

break into flowers  
the sun the sun into flame.  
oh this your song they have broken into

as if they were thieves

no longer recognizing  
the sacrosanct.  
what have they made of you, sweet language!

from their thirst to be central  
but a bitter road extended and a winter term;  
God in His radiance forgives-

coating the ice with deep rainbows

mary angela douglas 22 october 2014.

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Must Be The Rose Crowned Adagio

it must be the rose crowned adagio,  
you murmured in your sleep;  
the one slipping past

the Princess as she dances  
her whole life out in the one scene.  
and the sequins flower in the footlights

and the moment itself is a rose.  
now a rose, folded in sleep  
lest dreaming take its toll

and thinking there was  
another way out than this.  
let sleep settle over everything

some lilac benediction;  
the long vigil commence.  
the one where the bells are stilled.

mary angela douglas 18 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Started To Snow In Tracing Paper Kingdoms

it started to snow in  
tracing paper kingdoms  
how will they trace us later

we did not think to ask  
taking with us the honeycomb on the table;  
only our summer dresses.

and the looking glass.

how would we have known then  
nothing lasts,  
that time is only a cloud.

then the moon fled.  
construction paper heart, deconstructed.

the valentine arrows descended,  
wounding the king.  
the ribbons were rescinded

we bought for our pale hair,  
the may pole melting into dusk.

are we rust are we antiquated  
that we can no longer compare  
apples to oranges, grapes to pears

connecting the dots.

in some labyrinthine scheme  
pouring the Sea into a jar,  
that futile.

are we rust then  
are we feudal  
and these our hearts

like paper flowers crumpled



after the Fair?

and nothing silver chimed anymore  
in the dark that was  
sequined velvet once;

though you mended the tears.

and I asked, o,  
are you anywhere;

were we really that fragile  
and tissue thin  
that everytime we try to begin

our ship's a jeweled flare...

mary angela douglas 7 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Was A Kind Of Story

it was a kind of story I was telling

to you in a blue mothed summer

on the stoop of a summerhouse

we wanted to live in

we were five and three

a little house

with pale green curtains

where we could eat pretend strawberries every day

and play, even in deep winter

and dream there were December roses

and the Christ child in our room

where we sang softly a glass bell tune

lest he should awake

and you sang the star, the star

and plinked on your baby piano

with the coloured keys

and plinked and it really was Christmas

and evergreen

we wanted it to stay evergreen forever

and when I think of it,

it did.

mary angela douglas 27 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Was Not The Way They Said It Would Be

I see the patchwork on His stars  
how He is holding us all together  
in the supposed flood zones

I see how the flood doesn't come  
not the way that agrees with the models  
outwitting all predictions.

the rain is soothed  
going as if in a dream into mist  
some other way.

predictions fail.  
the bold pronouncements  
this and then that

the flood plains drowned  
they say. they said.  
but the wind is stilled.

love remains  
He remains patching the stars  
they shine in us

and there is no flood  
no flood at all not the epic one  
they wanted to come

since it would prove  
their predictions true.  
no rivers cresting

in the small and ever smaller midnights  
I forsee  
overreaching their banks

swallowing us whole.

Tremulous, discounted, not in the mix

we lift the lamp of faith  
above the dark caverns

and men are angry  
who don't know themselves  
why they fight so hard

for the floods to prevail  
while the floods fail

and the patched stars shine.

mary angela douglas 15 september 2018  
WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Was The Distance From The Sun

it was a long time

it was the distance from the sun

and God was One then

and not divided up into petty provinces

each one could rule over.

I could count up to ten

and knew my colours well

it was a long time.

it was the time when leaves were young.

why do they ask me my name

as if I never had one.

why do they claim I hid anything.

I knew what I was doing.

I knew what would happen then.

every time I opened my mouth

I knew that it was Him.

I knew he wasn't who they said

I knew he was more fair.

I knew no matter what they did

He still would find me there.

mary angela douglas 28 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Was There We Cherished The Memory Of Stars

&quot;what a beautiful earth-turning&quot;  
-remark on a sunset by a character from a book I can't remember the title  
of...(on my Grandmother's shelf)

it was there we cherished the memory of stars  
carnation crisp, delineated-  
in the ice-box next to the lemon ice-box pie;

geranium pink of kindest skies  
and all the cooling winds-  
apple-pie divided  
&quot;a la mode&quot;  
for summer days ahead...  
in almost crepe- de-chine.

&quot;Peach Melba is the best dessert, &quot;  
she said, for musicians.  
flowers fade last on  
the purple sides of hills and  
neapolitan ice-cream\*  
still has everything  
to recommend it...

I still know the time by the  
crimson clock with snowy numerals...  
the &quot;Plan Ahead&quot; sign with its  
cramped last letter...making the point.  
the Psalms in my grandparents voices-  
golden cherubs chiming candle-lit  
around the angel-abra...

I hear the ice-cream  
bell in fudgesickle-rhymes, running out with my sister;  
dark blueberry popsickle wish just granted  
in blueberry dusk  
by my Grandfather's swift-hearted two dimes for us.

His bright amber pennies flung into  
the wishing well of the world...



remember the chill chimes of pink and green  
watermelon non-pareill  
I'm dividing the scent of cut-grass,  
cut-glass shining evenly, to be fair  
for the future of Light-  
split everywhere by those unkind-  
and Christmas days jangled  
link by link on yellow-gold  
charm bracelets-

that pink-cake, swirled;  
orange pomanders with cloves and other things glistening-  
leading up to the one Star's unimpeachable finale,  
oh far charm in the sky of  
His Nativity-

these cannot wear out faithfulness.  
the day wears gauze  
embroidered in small rosebuds  
tiny bells on the hem  
doll mirrors stitched there...

I'm only naming  
all Your past miracles of sweet design-  
so may I ask oh what is time?

is it the kaleidoscope you keep  
shaking that never breaks down  
that it does not fail to launch into further  
expositions:

candy-apple or cathedral- spun;  
the snowflake on your lost pearl mitten  
still crystalized, incognito-  
where it dropped from your hand

is it the small rubber ball that rolled  
under the furniture when you weren't looking  
never found again  
not even in the Dog's mouth pried shut as if  
by taffy-

or is it the shipwrecked histories of dolls, unchronicled...  
the sudden fires and fevers  
a few legalized captivities unprolonged  
that took the antique  
babies straight into God...at once  
and unmistakably-  
while the angel cousins looked on...  
is it in pictures on the wall-  
the remaining souvenirs:

a something eternal showing through;  
the malt-frothy clouds in the painting  
still may show ever deeper shades of  
green-blue, peach, pale yellow-

when the Strawberry wick of afternoons  
dissolves like jams on the toast of a sky or  
is pink- glassed -momentarily- in the china cabinet...

reflected, reflecting-  
etched, carefully:

the yearning rose faces  
leaning in  
of long-ago children  
admiring the teacups endlessly;  
beyond sorrow now  
if not, Beauty-

mary angela douglas 14=15 march 2012

\*neapolitan ice cream, striped in chocolate, vanilla and strawberry, we smushed  
it all up in the bowl before it melted and stirred it all up until it was no color at all  
but tasted like everything delicious all at once (kind of like the toffee, etc.  
dessert tasting &quot;drink me&quot; bottle Alice drank from the crystal table.)

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Was What We Wanted To Learn

it was what we wanted to learn,  
not only to believe  
that one could come to the edge of town

after much suffering  
at dawn and live under the shower of gold  
or that every word you uttered would

become a pearl  
and alternately, a diamond  
so that speaking could be only jeweled.

and speaking would be only jeweled  
because virtue grew  
green leaves in the wintertime

under deep snows  
and that is where  
we wanted to go

where the spearmint of the air  
was truly what we were  
capable of breathing

I believed this  
I would read this  
though I was mocked for it

long summer afternoons  
and learn the madrigals by heart,  
the Gospels,

and believe in Art  
yes, for its own sake

taking up the cause of Poetry  
floating above the common world  
filled to the brim as it was with bullies

and with ostentation.  
so that words became my nation  
and beauty spilled from the stiles

of the heavenlies,  
from the pitchers of music.  
as though it were cream.

mary angela douglas 28 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Won't Be My Fault

I'm in the rosarium-solarium,  
rose arbor, rose harbour wearing  
my new rose dress and

carrying a small bouquet of (you guessed it)  
wondering whom to address  
on the rose promenade.

or dabbing a rose pomade on my tresses  
before the art deco mirror with its golden  
cunning border of-

yes, I confess it, and you know the rest.  
and I'm frying up petals for breakfast, you  
know, the best

and if they don't name me Rose Queen at  
the pageant this year,  
it certainly won't be my fault...

(on second thought in my new rose dress, I wasn't actually IN the rose harbour)

mary angela douglas 13 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# It Would Be Cornbread, Frosted Palest Pink

it would be cornbread, frosted palest pink  
for all the birthdays wrote my mother  
concerning an idyllic place that she

called Cornbread Corners.  
that's where a cousin asked for everything chocolate  
and got his wish and was sick for days after

all that fudgecake topped with choco-raspberry ripple.  
I elaborate but how can I escape  
in Cornbread Corners no one wakes too late

for breakfast, lunch and dinner  
it's always cornbread.  
no one ever complains  
or only in pastels.

kings on stopovers couldn't eat better,  
butter dripping down the royal chin.  
but, my mother interposed

they'd have to be good kings  
to get seconds.

mary angela douglas 1 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ithaca Is Not Here

in a garden of stone I tried to go home  
but nothing came back to life;  
though I stood long over the rose beds

murmuring, it cannot be that this has happened.  
when did the cyclone come to stay,  
the doors blow apart,

and stone by stone it all come raining down  
somewhere else a long ways off; on a summer's day  
in someone else's field?

maybe it will be revealed.  
and maybe it will not  
what war was fought here

and who won when the cypresses  
grew, twisting into the thunderheads  
and the mirror backings' rue,

rootless as water lilies.

I have had no news  
and not one messenger.  
nor do I want to.

mary angela douglas 24 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's A Coffeecake Saturday

it's a coffecake Saturday,  
I decided, cinnamon swirled  
or suddenly, forkfuls

of raspberry and cheese  
or something along the line of eclairs  
or creme horns with subtle, pastel fillings.

I am willing to sample all of them.  
it's just that I keep spending all  
my gold on books;

cook books are useful to remember  
the way that food should look  
when baked, when cooked to perfection.

and poems or stories that you make up  
when the larder is bare  
to feel the feast

is everywhere  
though you keep changing stations  
and the cereal's soggy but not

the vintage cartoons.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# It's A Portable Poem

it's a portable poem to sing to you

when you're sad

a portable wand to change things

when you're mad.

it doesn't ask much

it's magic, as such

and they won't even see it

to call out "contraband";

(that is, if you memorize it.)

it will only take a minute or two.

it can't be borrowed

it's just for you.

I hope it will make you instantly merry

it's light as air and easy to carry.

so you can have fun with it all the day through

with scissors and paste or maybe with glue.

it's soap bubble rainbowed through afternoon.

no matter what anyone does, or assumes.

you'll know it by heart.

and in your best shoes.

so Christmas come early and snow come on

and let all the churlish say once upon.

let ice cream be served

and chocolate cake too.

this poem is a party

inviting you.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's A Tin Toy Cash Register Feeling

it's a tin toy cash register feeling  
that starts ringing up in my dream  
all the keys are bright red plastic

like they used to be and something-  
almost a bicycle bell rings Christmasy  
and true and the tin toy tray pops open.

it's true there's no money in the drawer.  
we buried our gold long ago, sigh the miners.  
I am lost.

how can I count the cost of  
things with no price on them?  
asks my sister

stacking the plastic oranges.

we munch on Sunday night chicken  
playing bird lotto till the dawn  
when I will

turn aside to other toys, perhaps-  
coating the day with a thin wash of  
basic Prang watercolours

while the dolls in pink eyelet  
petticoats mourn-

mary angela douglas 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's All Elliptical We Said

it's all elliptical, we said, so happy on the  
day we discovered the word fluttering out  
from the lesson plan

and certain orbits overhead in the lemon groves of

what was said or wasn't said; ell elliptical, elliptical  
the starry music fled, the secrets of the living, not the dead  
and then returned at an

instant, perhaps, of dread, with the speed of infinite love  
or angels;

just as the cherry coating of our days wore off  
and the glum rains started in, the puddings  
with no raisins, rhymes with no reasons;

bleakness with its one season...

we comforted ourselves with words, with Andromeda

and the shape of pears all glittering  
unaware in the fairytale illustrations  
that they were beyond compare throughout the kingdom, , ,

it's then that we were blessed  
with an elliptical understanding  
going off on tangents in our best dresses

all over the place,  
and better for it I would guess,  
though it couldn't be, ever

on the test.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's All Lemon Chiffon

it's all lemon chiffon  
she sighed in a fifties dress shop  
in a dream.

don't you have any other colours?  
something in strawberry pink?  
or Cinderella jump-rope-rhyming green?

you'll see, it's not the frothiness I mind.  
the skirts fuller than full moons.  
all as they should be.

the sequined, beaded tops that shine  
uncompromised as a sweetheart neckline.  
I'm just not a lemon drop person

dropping a line or two on forsythia stationary  
when there's time to say thank you  
for the yellow everything.

it was just what I wanted.

mary angela douglas 2 january 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Clouded Roseberry; What Did You Put In This Jam?

to Astrid Lindgren for Pippi Longstocking

it's clouded roseberry; what did you put in this jam?  
scrutinized my dream home-ec teacher.  
used to her reprimands in real life

for once I didn't care. oh anything, I smiled.  
oh air, clouds at dawn, slivers of pears  
from a golden tree and crusted over snows,

unsifted, with cinnamon;  
too much is never enough.  
nothing at room temperature!

whatever my Grandmother told me to,  
being mystical like her.  
a dozen kiwi frapped spoonfuls  
sipped carefully through straws first.  
then, you fold it in.

glaciers at midnight.  
red violet canals.  
from a wooded twilight,

pale gooseberries.

elderberried rains from  
dark purple clouds.  
and irised smiles.

chicken livers: thrice chocolatey scorched,  
in the double boiler.  
no cocoa today, I'm afraid,  
I sang too gaily. not even with little  
pink marshmallows...  
but have some fudge soup to celebrate.

we'll make do and ladle it out  
-I said, half-whimsically,  
on flimsy paper plates;

(we economize on party supplies)

no longer graded on biscuits, I was free to tell the truth.  
and turning the leaves of the textbook on the shelf  
of dreams on God's best kitchen shelf I found  
not one single recipe for White Sauce no.2.  
flawlessly, lump-free...

(it's in the Other Place)

mary angela douglas 14 june 2014

Note on the Poem: this poem stems from my constant  
embarrassment, bewilderment and near-paralysis in home economics class, jr.  
high school. I remember feeling intimidated looking at the recipies for white  
sauce nos.1 and 2.

Helpful Hint Not from Heloise: the way you can tell it's a dream is that there's no  
such thing as roseberries. (by the way, Hints from Heloise was a syndicated  
newspaper column throughout the U.S. giving rather unusual household tips from  
a person named Heloise (I guess that was her real name) .

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Mango Gold In The Supermarket Of Dreams

it's mango gold in the supermarket of dreams  
that keeps recurring with a juke song sheen  
or it's strawberry kiwi tarts for the dollhouse queen

or the fizz of the raspberry pop on the run  
you liked a lot when you were small  
it's the wall of clementines, the orange rind candies,

marzipan and caramel flan

or gold pieces torn from the sun  
enwrapping chocolates, every one  
come see that it's the mango of your

dreams and the pure sure apricot nectar prize  
or fill your baskets with the  
bakery surprise the cake of

all cakes dressed up in whipped cream  
with the lemon rosettes the dulce con leche scene  
and oh you bet the breakfast hash

supreme in supersized cans  
the vintage hams and the onions, peppers strung  
and the whole thing in coloured lights

when the sun comes down on the bodega  
and the angels hum by the ounces  
it's saturday night with cerise flounces

it's mango gold in the supermarket of dreams

mary angela douglas 22 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# It's Not The Illuminations Over The Palace

it's not the illuminations over the palace-  
not the moment's hesitation on the  
stairs-

not the dress with its thousand  
crystal roses that later will  
melt like snow into the air

but something you kept the golden  
tree could not shake down-

something that would not be  
swept away with the ashes:

full of invisible light-

mary angela douglas 4 october 1999/30 may 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Penny Candy Maybe They Think

[where troubles melt like lemon drops  
away above the chimney tops  
that's where you'll find me!

-Somewhere Over The Rainbow (lyrics, Yip Harburg;  
melody, Harold Arlen) ] from the movie The Wizard of Oz

it's penny candy maybe they think  
whenever you start to sing;  
anyone on any day could do that;

penny candies, easy to arrange  
them in the see-through jars on the counter  
so that they look resplendent.

but God in his rainbow diction knows  
exactly what it costs, the orange, the rose  
the ultraviolet blue

and so would you  
if you tried to do it.

or were ever around  
when the lemon sounds come down  
and it rains lemon drops all day

in such out-of-the-way places!

mary angela douglas 1 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Riddle Opening Onto Riddle

it's riddle opening onto riddle

the tributary, then the sea.

the gold flecks in the apple ridden orchards

it's what that music meant to me

the nocturnes and the barcarolles, the mockingbird

the whippoorwill calls; tilting the blinds to just reveal

the rose threaded skies...

what are you pretending now they ask me in disguise

I can hold my tongue forever

to never answer lies

it's riddle bound within the riddle

lavender lined, inside a dream

that keeps me living where all is dying

under a crystal stream

it's finding and then losing, only to find again

the circle of Light grows ever wider

in the poem that cannot end.

mary angela douglas 26 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Startling To You

it's startling to you

though you may not say anything about it

that suddenly

as you were standing in a twilight patch

the pumpkin grew

into a coach lined with green silk

the stars grow milky above your head

was it something you said, at breakfast,

you wonder

that caused it all at once to thunder

and the clouds to become cerise.

you think about this as you can

concocting something out of it

stitched together with a particoloured thread

and you ask the micelike shadows.

was this real?

people will wag their matter what you feel.

everyone has their own perspective.

but you'll apprehend

a confettied particular wind

from some Divine directive

and the moon emerges from its hiding place

your face has the far away look

of the paintings, with the Madonnas

and the frocks in your closet from an Age before

glimmer without the candle being lit.

mary angela douglas 19 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's Sure To Come True

everyone wants the life they do not have  
the princess longs for bread and butter only  
with bologna, bored with her high teas

and to be caught in the rain

the jester dreams of a university position,  
modest acclaim.  
the actor wants to go about unseen

and Cinderella dressed in green  
in the jump rope rhymes  
won't stay that way

now turn the page where

the ballerina wants to sing opera...  
it is good that it does not work this way  
in Nature.

what if the oranges all wanted to be apples.  
the hippopotami poodles?  
the layer cakes, noodles?

oh learn to make do to

be happy you are what you are,  
said jiminy cricket, don't be blue.  
wish on a star

for what you have.  
it's sure to come true.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# It's The Dark Geranium Skies That Make Me Weep

it's the dark geranium skies that make me weep  
at least I tell myself that's true in a dream landscape  
I'm unsettled

why aren't you?  
or can't you find the vu-finder on the stereoscopic snows  
the Christmas swaying through the ice storms where the angels chime  
and round about the candles fly their semi-golden imitators or

I'm on the carousel of sighs and dropped the key you gave me  
long ago and don't know where to live.  
and yet, they let me through the gate assuming it can all be sorted out as if I  
were laundry,

later; when would that ever happen in a dream

mary angela douglas 13 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# It's The Fairy Queen Out Of Sight In Pale Pink Satin

it's the Fairy Queen out of sight in pale pink satin  
you want to catch a glimpse of through the trees.  
and the harp glissandoes, and you almost

think you can:  
digging for deeper rose  
near your castle of sand.

you want to see the pearl  
of her custom-made slippers that shines that shines  
on the underside of dreams and you almost  
think you can- but then it's just

things in this summer's sunlight  
butterfly gilded, wounding sheen  
too near at hand so you drink your orangeade.

oh why won't she glide (you know she can)  
on a glittering river that winds and winds  
through a cherry bright landscape  
laddered down below-

plainly you saw from a backyard windowed tree-  
last Saturday-  
the fairy petaled snows

mary angela douglas 5 march 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# I've Looked Through Every Part Of The Castle, The Princess Sighed

to Carl Sandburg, Walter De La Mare, Charles Dickens, and Christopher Morley\*

I've looked through every part of the castle,

the princess sighed,

for the storybook I left behind.

the one that rustled like the leaves whenever it rained.

the one where the sun melted, butter-fresh, on every page

churning gold to gold ver you read

to yourself, alone...

I'm telling it my way dear she said to her younger sister.

oh Alicia be good and keep the magic fishbone close at hand

for the future you can't see yet,

whispered the illuminations.

dressed in peach silk sunbursts godmother arrives

at the exact moment you are disheartened

and the sun dress with pockets turns to

starlight over the prairies;

the dish of raspberries smiles through the cream.

drink it all up! there's the family crest.

what is a family crest? the baby wondered,

staring at the china

bottom of the bowl-

wanting more, but not yet saying specifically:

storybooks...cocoa and animal crackers or fleur -fleur di lis!

(how could she?)

at the brink, there's the queen

sewing sensibly by a green window

or is it that the green comes all indoors

whenever you start to murmur about the waterfall

you tamed in the living room last summer

when the music came through

and we were done with board games and dancing?

it's so refreshingly refreshing why did they leave

mused the dog with the silver paws

in charge of rumination and the butternut shadows.

there's the lemonade springs, the bluebirds scattered

throughout oh please

stay on that page my sister whispered, where the candy  
canes grow on trees  
or the clouds turn to cream puffs over the village and the  
stewpot keeps on (turn the page, the fairies chimed)  
bubbling all winter long, even when we can't find work;  
indeed, dear God we find other things.

mary angela douglas 16,17 april 2013

\*respectively: for that story about cream puffs,for the poem  
called Silver, for Alicia and the Magic Fishbone, (and  
her brothers and sisters) , for Christopher Morley for his  
poem about a favorite childhood snack.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ivory

standing before the space where  
poems may come  
you dodge the thrift of

ravens overhead the blue ribboned kind  
of wounding competitions  
seen and unseen

the withered branches  
branching

it is  
held in the heart like snow  
almost appearing-

very near  
in the shade of ghosted apples  
they can't pick

in the frost-

tipped syllables backstage  
or in the hold of a ship  
they'll never sail the  
blue crystal distances  
you understand-

without being told

and the next gold radiance you  
hear will slip, alas! from view

down down and down the dead words  
told to much applause by vague  
passerbys who live to silence

who can say what as long as they're ahead:  
the jeweled watch unjeweled  
the sentries astonished-

the gnashing instant the  
rose is tipping so ivoire into

ceaseless light  
you catch in your weeping hands-

mary angela douglas 18 october 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Jane Eyre

[to Charlotte Bronte]

Dove grey is the unfolding sky  
above the lucid dreaming of her soul  
shaken- still awake at midnight  
the singular one in the household  
to show

there is no love without truth  
and she must leave, she knows.  
stern conscience holds her lantern in the rains  
and all she sees is God through torrents, through disdain,  
through all the villages begging bread

from the living and the dead  
from those who feign.  
from bakers, tradesmen who won't comprehend  
she is the soul's white flame  
not derelict.

once she was walking down a faery lane  
that ripened into summer's gold.  
once she was painting ships without a rudder  
pale green and foundering in an icy sea

somehow, still at liberty in the austere-extravagant imagination-  
far above her given station  
but not, oh not yet free.

ah, now, Lord Jesus, come and see  
the frail figure lashed to the landscape  
in no watered silk, in her wilderness

and to the hilt:

indomitable in Thee.

mary angela douglas 9 april 2013 rev.28 march 2017; 25 may 2019; rev 23  
september 2020.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Jenny Lind

to Jenny Lind on the curve of Song

Hans Andersen wrote

in a rose leafed scrawl

to Jenny Lind.

to Jenny Lind on a mermaid shore

Hans Andersen cried

oh evermore I loved you, Jenny Lind.

but song is brief and life is wronged sometimes oh Jenny

my muted swan

drifts on the current and passes by

but Jenny Lind cannot espy

the awkward heart that is so nigh.

tin soldiering on he still salutes

Jenny Lind with the voice of a lute

Jenny Lind.

Jenny Lind in a pale blue shawl

why do you turn your face to the wall

and cast his embroidery out to sea

he only made for love of thee.

mary angela douglas 16 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Jewelry Box Tune For Dorothy

one emerald falls and then another;  
brilliants from the recurring sky,  
a little worn out from a repeating dream

and are you looking back in Time?

is that allowed here?  
better go back to prairie chores;  
the thinned out clouds

to scraping the last bit of butter  
on your toast.  
but heavy on the plum preserves.

oh but you can't you said  
expect that from me  
with all those emeralds in my head

and you want a jewelry box for Christmas  
lined in cream satin instead of overshoes...  
one with the wisp of a dancer

turning in miniscule circles  
to a fancy dime sized tune.  
a box of the moon and stars

from the emporium  
whenever you look inside;  
and postcards from old friends.

the one where you hide

whenever the wind starts up  
when you're out of school and  
half way home

with your little pup  
when the dust kicks up...  
and so alone.

mary angela douglas 30 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Jigsaw

fitting the cloud to the sky, the sky to the tree  
will you end up with too many pieces?  
or will it all fit easily and there

in the pastoral scene you will feel:  
there is home, the small cottage.  
the sheep feeding by the tranquil lake.

or it will take nights up late as you go through

one by one all the scenarios.  
and something seems missing,  
though it isn't you-

like in a dream where you can't  
remember your last address  
or if the next bus will wait

and your fate is  
like a jigsaw puzzle  
with a yawning canyon

of blank cardboard and no way  
to figure out where the pieces  
would go, if you could even find them.

and it begins snowing pieces of snow  
on a jagged earth and is this the dearth  
of making things whole and sound?

your sitting on the ground by the earthquakes.  
your angels playing with the shards  
of old pottery

when someone shows up over the ridge to say  
come quick! in the devastating geophysical year  
cave paintings had just begun to appear

on the walls of a heart.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# John Keats Between, What Is Written, What Is Dreamed

between what is written  
and what is dreamed  
I saw a thin, a golden margent

and the seas rushing over it  
the seawall, the rushing words  
becoming music, after all

in the tree shade as it was remembered  
and the days dripping down like the honeycomb  
the moon, its silver door left ajar.

come tell me where you are now  
something called.  
I couldn't say it all

in nightingales, in urns  
in the mauve turning of the stair  
into the everywhere

I tried.  
until I died.

a maiden cried:  
plant myrtle- here.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Jumbled Sewing Basket, Green And White Wicker

jumbled sewing basket, green and white wicker:  
of reading! coloured threads and gilded, too;  
strange bits of tulle, and on the underside,

sunset lamé, and pinking shears, if you want  
to get fancy. silks from the first fairytales,  
a spool of dreaming...

summer brocades and thimbles from the fairy haunts,  
Grandmother said. cathedral floss and something  
lost and patches from your mother's dresses,

loveliest of all: sprigged lavender, tangerine or rosy.  
chocolate bars and ruby delicious apples.  
(they're from the cupboard, stenciled in

Pennsylvania Dutch, I wished, quickly, in pink and green  
with lemon rick-rack) .

is that too much description said the teacher, gently-  
dressed in her leading questions, back-to-back.  
you didn't know my Grandmother, did you?  
I said, mysteriously, hummingbird-sipping  
my fizzing coke.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Jusr To See You As You Are

JUST TO SEE YOU AS YOU ARE

would we give up all visions

just to see You

in the corner of our eye

the shade of green going by

a childhood shoal

why are people so afraid of You

I wonder and wonder again

who wouldn't want you for a Friend

if there was even the most remote

possibility

at least we know

we didn't make the world

nor did anyone we know

going back as far in history

as it is permitted us to go

no world makes itself

to taste the salt of your stars

would be a fine thing

to kneel in the heart

that thought of Spring

but oh.

most of all

to see you as you are

to banish doubt forever

and the wayward way

and return to the garden

we left on such bad terms

in disarray

this time, going

straight through an open gate.

Lord God.

could this be learned;

would You wait?

, mary angela douglas 17 january 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Just Because You See The Word Poetry In Golden Letters

just because you see the word 'Poetry'  
high in golden letters  
sparkling over the transom,

is no indication you should go in.

or should judge where you are  
by the neighborhood;  
the iron wrought fence;

the exorbitant garden.  
oh my friend, like Columbus  
who is disliked now

though he begged bread  
from country to country  
cherishing the unseen route,

go thou also by another way;  
like the departing Magi  
who stayed alive surviving

what they had come to say  
laying their gifts on the ground  
before the uncrowned king.

there are many herods here  
in the here and now.  
say this outloud at the open mic

on a diffident day and  
let me know what happens...

having in hand your pencil  
or your quill  
a favorite jar of invisible ink

your sheet of foolscap near the kitchen sink  
lest inspiration strike you there all unprepared;  
covet only

a jeweled means to think of  
your bit of cheese and wonder  
in equal proportion to

a heart brimming over;  
ever a mind, clarified by sadness;  
prone to sudden gladness.

may you find a reason  
not to be bought  
in or out of season

though others go the obvious way  
feted and carried on the shoulders of  
whoever may be king of the mob today

or the cafe  
consider remaining a little to the side.  
or, if you can,

obey the fairy tale commands  
when they direct: go this,  
and not the usual way.

pick the plain princess-  
over the one in emeralds  
head to toe;

the small brown wren  
and not the one of gold  
though you feel

you are crashing down from one floor  
to the next, failing the last examination,  
dreading the one that's next;

falling and falling like Alice did  
in a strange summer dream;

while the roses gleam: this is not

what it seems

stripped of all pretexts

to land unexpectedly in the basement of a universe

mary angela douglas 16 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Just The Moon When It Rises

what if there were poetry with no prizes

just the moon when it rises

no critical surmises

just the birds, singing

just the birds singing and the leaves drifting

just the stars shining far out on their own

just the breath and the sudden intake,

all your rowing,

going home.

just the word softly spoken

into a light no one can see

just the trip out on a limb

only the hidden mystery

just the song without imposing

just the play without it closing

fine embroidery out at sea

wave to wave

and free as free

just the feeling;

not the fee.

mary angela douglas 9 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Kabakovian Wonders Filled My Eyes

on the installations of Ilya Kabakov

Kabakovian wonders filled my eyes  
like the varnish on a history I could not recall  
confetti marches round the  
kitchen table  
with forgotten spoons upraised  
a secret roof-blown catapult to

Space  
a cloud with hardly any  
borders  
the paintings of a milder climate  
set up against old walls to dry  
someone singing off in the distance  
the mystical simple means to save

a friend far-gone:

you will succeed at magic, if you try  
just  
concentrate...

it's up to you  
Cezanne like interruptions of  
the Party line  
someone saved everything for  
everything  
not everyone can live like this  
managing sudden snowfalls in  
the corridors

finding the hidden gardens in  
white walls whispering dreams  
to the baseboards painted

only brown or green-

the parapets are leaning



though I don't know when  
the rooftop studio will  
telescope again

into far clouds and the spiral  
staircase between star  
and star will seem to hold no one  
at all

angels off in the distance somewhere  
are lining up for this new exhibition  
passing you by  
near the velvet ropes they sigh  
crumpled up like paper roses I know  
you won't forget the brittle bright accounts of  
your mama

toast and tea in a broom closet off to the side  
while the angels gather light and wait for you

the last one out  
to close the door

mary angela douglas 4 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Kenst Du Das Land

did you bring the maps they asked you  
and then turned into clouds.  
you trudged on

where was the lemon groved land  
and the citron sun  
you wondered

the one sung about  
in many languages  
and the blue bird rippling skies

you're in Easter best and tripping over stumps  
in the disenchanting forest  
eating the last of the toffee.

that's how the day went.  
evening set in.  
the stars all tinsel

as if for Christmas.  
your mind inset with seeded pearls  
expecting the great snows.

mary angela douglas march 31 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Key

we dreamed jurisdictions of snow;

precincts of moonlight.

in the world we were the last to know

anything at all how often we were told.

but in Heaven, we turned the key.

mary angela douglas 7 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Kind Ghosts

## KIND GHOSTS

kind ghosts beckon from the gathering blue  
or leave behind a crystal shoe  
valentine cakes all frosted pink

no Valentine in sight

treasures from the very brink  
of sadness melting into dew and overnight,  
kind ghosts gather in the deepening blue

when all the shadows  
knew you knew  
the day was fleeting

so were you  
the kite string with its thread of gold,  
let go

on a day when the wind was still.  
kind ghosts.  
will they find your lost jewels

a day in school you missed  
being home with a fever  
your tryst with antique volumes

illustrated by the Beautiful itself  
suddenly falling from behind the shelf  
and in plain view...love in a mist

odd recipes, blueprints uncovered  
worlds of the once upons discovered  
filed out of place

when you were new.

mary angela douglas 13 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# King Midas, Last Spring

it's the primrose, lemon drop, daffodil  
sun sang his little daughter  
moments before never melting again

it's the saffron saffron sunflower  
butter churning wonder I wonder  
will my jangling charm bracelet of

the moon and the stars shine more  
or buttercup, buttercup light come  
streaming while I am dreaming

on a pallet swung by dandelions?  
with a yellow crayon I am colouring in  
and bearing down so hard on the

castle outlines never smudging anyone  
Oh light the candleabras Mama so the  
pools of jeweled light will flicker on

in our parlour one by one not half gilding  
my little curly dog; her green eyes  
creased with fun.

one by one the stars go out in the Heavens  
freezing where they are and where she touched them  
on her way down  
turning a pink gown burnished;  
her black-eyed susan, honeysuckle  
crown can never wither now sad angels clanged

so we were told that far from the flower fields ourselves-

Oh Papa she called her glad words ringing in the air  
piano, bright,  
like hammered gold

mary angela douglas 26 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Kingdom

then we were learning everything

only by playing in the afternoons;  
to see the gold on the leaf of green,

glittering;

to live in the music of fountains.  
then Time was a scroll inscribed with parchment roses,  
proclaimed from a fairy tale film

and we, the happy denizens  
of a kingdom that could not fail,  
sipping our Grandfather's root beer floats with the tv on.

and we could win all the board games  
using the yellow piece only,  
drawing the correct card,

advancing three squares;  
the scent of rains through the back

screen door, the perfume  
we wouldn't forget.

mary angela douglas 15 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Kitchen Conversation With Auntie Em

in every version of the fairy tale you read  
some one will come to lay the kindling  
when there is none; to sort the clouds

out when there is no sun.  
to chime the bells that can't be rung  
that fall apart in your hands.

geographies of distant lands  
some kingdoms never come and  
it hurts the same when you fall

down as it did then, Dorothy: now  
when you lose ground or  
time or space.

you're not a tree with roots  
in some dear place that won't  
let go.

you have to face it sometime  
when you've boarded up for  
the last time against the storm

that wasn't meant to come.

there's no velocity in this  
complained her soul  
harping on an old theme

not so angels could hear  
in their hairpin turns  
back to the old neighborhood.

I know I know my mother  
said from heaven but  
you still can sing

if you want to.

mary angela douglas 13 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Kite

a wish to use gold and silver in the poem  
to fly it above the hedges in a paper wind  
then to ascend  
in purple clouds as if they were drawn with crayons or  
stained with grape  
and to say aloud oh shine, shine my kite of words  
above the green hedges the ones with the holly berries  
and the little birds  
stay close to home even if you soar but a little  
have the transparency of song low flying cloud  
dropped in a pale green april  
and coming down  
slight cantering toward the ground  
and in the apple dawn, before school.

mary angela douglas 25 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Knowing Better Doesn't Solve It

what is more divinely opulent than the red

of a maple leaf as it skitters before you

on the path

or on the pavement

on the way home from school

with that apple tang blue chill

in the air feeling as if

there were too much sparkling in God

and he had to reveal it

whether he felt within him to do so

in that moment or not

and I am the child or I was, I have not forgot,

the one caught in that instant

as I reach down in my plaid dress

to gather it in

to keep that colour alas

was always a something

not meant to come to pass

why then do I still feel

the need to collect each leaf

dancing to the ground,

each Ophelian leaf

incapable of its own distress

as Shakespeare wrote of his heroine.

Shakespeare wrote in gold

though he wasn't sure of that

a something imperishable

and somehow, it has become imperishable

all that he wrote though he thought

his thought would be melting monuments.

the rich red leaf is even more finely composed

yet vanishes each to each.

why then do I feel

no matter how many autumns old

this compulsion to save it, them,

as if it could be so.

no matter how much I know

to the contrary

of what is possible.

here on earth.

mary angela douglas 16 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Knowing This, Be Comforted

when gardens spoke themselves into flowers  
on the very page we looked at  
we thought only this was how

it should always be as the golden hours flowed by  
so river sweet  
and ate our ice cream dutifully

dressed in our Easter lily frocks

and watched the clocks  
to see if we could really tell  
when the hand was on the three,

what did this mean?  
was it time for Christmas.  
glowing bulbs on the trees

in manifest colours?  
how lily lulled our mother, grandmothers  
would have lifted us in sleep

to cradle in the fleecy clouds  
to roselit kingdoms ever after  
if we could have been spared

our whole life long  
even the little disasters.  
and even now, I think

when subject to unwarranted power

when the soul is pierced and on the brink,  
still it is in, a gardenia spiked hour.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lament For Haiti After A Painting By Magrite

Ezekiel 18 (New King James Version)

Ezekiel 18

A False Proverb Refuted 1 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 'What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: `The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge'? 3 'As I live, ' says the Lord GOD, 'you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. 4 ' Behold, all souls are Mine;

a ship made of water cannot sail  
an island full of holes

should sink  
below the horizon where  
children dressed in pink and

green suddenly stop playing

forever on this side of the equation

a tiny house  
with yellow curtains has  
sunk into the sun  
bottlenecked

shadows arrive asking  
'are you still alive'  
and can't come back to

ask again  
you rest on what's left  
of the ground under stars  
you cannot tell is it the ground

or is it you  
still shaking  
you're going farther but you can't say why  
you walk for days as if



crossing continents a  
nation walks for days through rubble through  
the dead

still on earth  
you break off a crust of sun  
to eat  
with dazed strangers

someone is singing  
linking her soul to the sky  
the only thing left not broken

she is  
rocking back and forth  
crooning to herself on  
invisible piers of music while

the clouds bow down  
an audience of silk that  
flies away  
take the ferry

but I don't know where  
take the ferry  
angels with missing wings advise  
but

doctors are turned back  
and weep into a sea of  
people left alone a

ship made of water has  
an orphaned sail  
no sail at all

a man survived on  
sugar cane and water a  
girl survived on

flowers from the past  
far away people threw gold

at the sun and turned away

unable to fathom

such delay

commissioners were commissioned:

they deferred-

the flow chart flows forever but the

water doesn't

commissioners demured the people tried

to eat their words and failed

small island like a rose of fire afraid to

throw yourself on the ground

how will you mourn your dead

small ones

island like a rose a fire

you take it on yourself

you burn the dead when no one comes

held up in traffic I don't understand

how speeches all got through

small island like a burnt rose crying

say goodbye to everyone

in this protracted hell of the

initial stages of recovery or whatever

the prompter says,

a ship made of water cannot sail

cannot sail cannot sail

mary angela douglas 26 january 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lament Of Leonardo On A Lost Notebook

my fair copy of the rings around the moon  
got into the wrong hands-  
stashed in the pirate's hoard

next door to rubies and a retrograde coinage  
and the key to that lock was thrown  
by a vagrant hand for no reason at all

into silver-pointed dawn.

now in a lime-leafed summer, once again,  
brocaded planets spin so unredeemed  
but not for that much longer-

mary angela douglas 20 december 2009/28 june 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lament Of Therese Of Lisieux

just now the bars are coming down again  
blue morpheus winds are rising  
in my soul extraordinary

courier and friend-  
in my soul there are no bells;  
there is only You.

it's only waking up  
that I can't bear;  
the white rose in a dream with no confrère

remained so incandescent  
in the end

and caught in a warren  
I don't understand-  
Jesu, my flag is not down.

bright dreaming son or brother  
or someone else  
under the drizzling skies I feel

that I'm dissolving far from you  
and running late to say:  
it's only that I recognize

that star you held in your hands-  
the one that made you suffer-  
the one that, even now  
compels me to weep sapphires  
endlessly  
on your behalf-

and to lean into Space...

mary angela douglas 8,9 september 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lament On The Echoing Green

to William Blake, to Walter De La Mare...  
and to my mother

'the hidden emerald of a far off day...'  
she began to say but  
coming or going? queried her angels  
as if dressed by Kate Greenaway.

'I don't know; it's the sheen of the day  
that matters, not that it slipped away.  
may it ever be raspberry, '  
she smiled.

it slipped away.  
and the halo of her stories shone  
after the angel departed,  
I heard over Christmas vacation.

oh remain my heart's mirage she murmured.  
from heaven

and the geranium border  
in the garden faded.  
oh where have the clouds gone

that shimmered in the air  
where poetry was spoken  
on the earlier, the echoing green?

mary angela douglas 4 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Largesse

we could have had our fill of sapphires

counting the blue skied wonders we've observed

or had the key dams over flow with music

flood the world with diadems we'd already heard

such has been the excess of starlight, rubied leaves in rhe darkening

winds

we couldn't imagine in the sunrise days

with the clocks outrunning us the coronets, the Christmas drums

that so much treasure left to us

could last till Kingdom Come.

mary angela douglas 26 September 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Last December's Poet

the names of things are floating away  
oh catch them quick quicksilver breath  
on windowpanes my melting images

my driftwood brushed away from peeling canvases  
what more is there to say they shrug  
I turn away what more? can tears

form syllables

only worlds, worlds on worlds remain  
all unexplained and me  
running out of time and paper

or with a cupboard bare  
or elsewhere to sleep resplendently  
but how

when the names of things are floating away  
and I have lost  
my nets of gold.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Last Minute Christmas Eve 1964

last minute drugstore gifts are best for pure excitement!  
someone's sure to want just one more box of  
chocolate covered cherries-

look around...the greeting cards are gone  
but it's too late to mail them.  
I buy rose colored lipstick for my sister

(as we planned) . in exchange she'll bring  
her coin wrapped change to bear on  
the lilac creme sachet I had my eye on

last Saturday. we conspire this way  
considering ourselves true friends, true elves.  
how surprised our Grandfather seems

each year unwrapping the same Old Spice aftershave  
in a porcelain bottle: will the blue ship sail him away  
to destinations he dreams of in the easy chair

perusing issues of the National Geographic?  
Anxiously he peers over his glasses:  
do you think she'd like this?

wonder of wonders what find is this  
this late on Christmas Eve?  
a jewelry box beyond compare in tiers, with

rainbow opal figures from some chinese screen  
inlaid on an ebony surface lined with  
(it looks like) bright red silk!

oh yes, we breathe! my sister and I.  
he seems relieved; we take our bundles home.  
and wrap them poorly (too much tape)  
with bright good will. scissor curled ribbons.

on Christmas morn I remember well  
my Grandmother's fingers trembling at the lid

of the beautiful, beautiful box; more beautiful than jewels themselves,

my Grandfather's face-  
a quiet Christmas to itself  
a little sublime.

that was our drugstore Christmastime.

mary angela douglas 22 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Last Spring As Notre Dame Burned

last Spring as Notre Dame burned  
I felt the world coming apart in my hands  
as if it were a pomegranate bursting with stars  
and this was its stain in space and a garnet Infinity  
where so much beauty rose released into Heaven  
and angels were seen walking along the Seine  
walking along the Seine and saying their beads  
with a terrible concentration and no gestures at all  
and fisher folk putting out to sea all the changelings  
when the Floods dreamed inland to douse  
our souls  
is this a sign or can it be told and time time  
to leave the Museum of sighs  
facing forward launched into an unknown  
so vast where Beauty cries out to be saved.

When Notre Dame burned and I felt the spire of  
words crumple inside me and the shards of  
such colours never again to be seen on earth  
by little children turning their kaleidoscopes  
at Easter  
and histories weeping inwardly and the book of  
Life opening suddenly on the snows  
then Spring itself stepped back Eurydice  
taken into the plum darkness  
where there are rivers of an immense sadness  
and the poets wind blown to no avail and perpetually  
turning to stone the moon to dazed pearl  
as in Plutonian realms  
where the dream walls are shattered  
where the ice cannot find the leaf  
and I am not the self I was before this grief  
under the luxuriant shadows of the great cathedrals  
where the almond trees chimed  
and God collecting up all our tears  
in crystal bottles.  
and the Sun going backwards  
in full throttle.

in golden adieus to the little children..

mary angela douglas 18 april 2020; 16 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Last Year

the saddest year beckoned but you  
did not know that yet  
confetti in your hair

or snow or the leaves drifting,  
the last leaves  
the crystal moon dipping

further down the sky

another year they cried on tv  
hugging each other  
insane with surprise that

they'd survived another one.  
from coast to coast  
or all around the world

under their various sunrises  
wishing it would be-  
what was to be-

dripping with tawny happiness

straight from the honeycomb itself.  
oh we would be drenched in light Eternal  
like the flowers in the

impressionists gardens  
somewhere, outside the museums.  
it's in the air, isn't it

in the cold razzle dazzle  
happy as in it's your birthday  
every day and here it comes

the year long birthday cake  
with every candle lit  
well, doesn't it?

seem that way to you?

only not, this time,  
a something chimes from out the deep.  
maybe, next time.

mary angela douglas 31 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Late Summer

for my sister Sharon (yet again)

you'll wear your trapeze pink

and dangle from a cloud

or we'll go gleefully

to the five and dime

in search of dangly earrings,

once upon a time

and come back with hair ribbons instead.

lilac cologne.

new stationery with fanciful borders.

that was the summer we planned.

and hamburger stands

and blowing out straws

at our Grandfather

sitting at the little table

thinking we were grownups

while he beamed.

and we breathed in pink and green

watermelon after the games.

already we were full up on cracker jacks

but he would have to explain

to Grandmother

why we looked sick

at the mention of supper.

though double dipped ice cream

was not amiss.

I remember this.

how the mown grass fragrance

made me want to never leave.

the drone of airplanes above

the vivid zinnias.

and the sky trails.

how I cherished

getting the mail

full up with school ordered paperbacks.



the summer classics.

the quick fizz of coca cola

in the jelly glasses

poured over ice.

the sifting of days.

the malted ways.

piano pieces in the afternoons.

I miss you all.

and call you over

the backyard fences of Heaven.

mary angela douglas 14 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Laying The Bright Words End To End

laying the bright words end to end,  
could we get out of here and when  
the exit's stuffed with snows? the things

you said all summer froze.  
moon shot yesterdays piled up on the stoop,  
with the milk bottles,

the half thawed cream.

and the dream upon dream is  
you, in old newsprint, scuttling  
through odd neighborhoods,

units, brownstones  
of the living and the dead;  
looking everywhere for

a thing you said in Spring.  
it will disappear on Monday  
into the sere scrub

leaving, of all you loved, a single spark;  
and in the dark-  
the forge of a language

locked and shuttered here  
by the hunched bodegas.  
and children with their candies skip

where once mute angels stood:  
their arms - folded...  
the vapor rising near the fire escapes

and you are done with surmising.

oh how will you get up to sing  
you ask them but they never know  
all that cold awnings, dawns bring

when what was said  
to the cindered wind  
keeps dread on the payroll,

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Learning Mozart All Over Again

of course her shoes would be patent leather red!  
how could we question that? (the girl who danced  
on the record unable to stop when the music did)

since you had flats of cherry velvet

and danced on the messy side of the room  
singing 'nimbus, nimbus, cumulo stratus'  
on the Saturday afternoons we discovered that

cloud names made us laugh the most of all  
when repeated over and over.

today I prayed you would fear no funnels

fast appearing in the emerald or the Fair skies  
whisking you away. and that no one would serve  
you funnel cakes with trick pink candles.

today I prayed without disguise  
someone would remember your birthday  
and scatter small rosebuds as if you

were in an old play  
in ballet skirts of pale red and blue equals  
violet of the loveliest hue.

and you are far away  
in your own music wrapped,  
as you were then;

learning Mozart all over again.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Learning To Deal With Us As Though We Were Machines

learning to deal with us as though we were machines  
takes many years of study, so it seems.  
it helps to have a background in the sciences.

learning to throw us over the cliffs  
while simulating friendship, home and hearth  
whatever we could imagine as the safest place to be

takes much finesse. don't bring a clipboard, smile.  
ask personal questions.  
whole schools exist and just for this  
though they cry: under funded.

we are the underserved at best,  
the students who think for ourselves  
a little distressed. but they'll fix that, won't they?

they mimic kindness  
calling us this.  
we, who used to have our own names

before we came here.

mary angela douglas 31 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Learning To Say

I understood that songs could come to you  
out of the thickets, the shifting of the green  
leaves and boughs and trees

Cezanne like, the blue; and the yellow  
domicile yellow as cream  
and the pine abstractions

and deeper the cypress than anything  
far, far into the woods beyond the world  
said Morris mystically and Sidney Lanier.

and I the child in the porch swing  
early and late when the blue dusks came down.

what is time asked the child can I hold it

in my hand and will it melt

“into the pink sands” said her mother  
and then she was gone.

so long! I cried

thinking it was in a dream

and some of it was.

which am I, remembering now,

I could not tell you for sure.

but light is sifting down the boughs

in a heavy darkness I am not innured

magnolia like the stars

are large as the heart

slowly unfolding

learning to say oh,

goodbye.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leave This Behind For The Children; Say That I Was Kind

may you learn faster than we did  
how fast Time can run off the pages of your readers  
trailing a scarlet vine

leaving the winds in its wake and  
you can wake to find all fairy tales departed.  
oh my hearts, my valentines

outstretched, your hands in winter time I see  
where the windows have vanished where  
your coloured pencils shone

on little portraits taped there and the glow of them  
more than stained glass  
what is the past did any child ever ask did we even

hear the word or were our ears stopped up with snow  
by our better angels pending the time to go

mary angela douglas 4 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Leave Your Songs At The Door

[for Anna Akhmatova and the others]

leave your songs at the door  
some guard or other should have roared  
at the prison doors, the in extremis gulags

where the hair was shorn, the clothing grey dispensing  
with all colours anyway in everything sorrow trans sorrow  
two sizes too large the shoes without shoelaces.

something distracted them, say,

an angel or two  
sent by God and Grace itself lingered  
so that the poets kept something

a something indefinable stowed away  
according to the rules for such transits  
perhaps recurring dreams of lilac

unchecked, certain musical passages, regrets,  
the tracks of beauty in the hard snows  
a waxen pair

of wings or, who knows,  
the memory of Orpheus looking back.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leaves

it's just the nebulae sifting through your dreams  
because you left the window open.  
you left the window open and the moon came in,

and ivoried rains, glistening  
dampening the books on the window sill  
you put there because you have no more

room for books, but buy them anyway  
to read the words of your friends.  
to read the words of your friends and

to talk to God is all you want to do.  
and listen where  
no soldiers are coming.

no armies.  
only a pale green stillness  
rustles like leaves above you:

that's your dream  
and the nebulae, too.

the leaves you loved before you  
learned the soft word: 'leaves'  
are there, and you're so happy

to see them again  
even though it's just a dream  
and time is leaving you everyday

a little closer to the beginning

mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leaving

you will pack books, clothes, paintboxes  
old woes, whatever else you can  
in the time allowed

and now they're waiting for you  
in the car and it's summer afternoon  
as if it would be so forever.

this is going away you  
would have said, if you had known that then.  
but in a dream you relive it all

down to the least coin spent  
on chocolate or on something cold to drink,  
grape soda you never finished;

an afternoon mail's magazine not yet read.  
and so much up ahead that thinking of it  
is like staring into the sun.

back home  
the toys for tomorrow cannot bend  
without you; how will the shadows fall,

the moon come up over the driveway;  
the garden roses fend for themselves?  
you'll wonder this for years...

your loved ones turned a face to the wall  
and could not cry all their tears.

mary angela douglas 18 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leaving Home Should Always Be This Way

leaving home should always be this way,  
as if in a fairy tale you start out  
and it is summer clear summer o!

with the roses spilling over the low walls  
lining the lanes and in your basket  
a cake of butter, some rolls, the

morning news; a guide on  
what to do should you get lost;  
a raincoat, maybe two for when

a bird will come in a flash to  
warn you, the bridge has  
washed away, the way back

doesn't exist; did you?  
someday you may wonder.  
watching the slow moon rise and

wonder is the key;  
the something to say  
about the angels at your

feet and head  
before you slip into  
the invisibility cloak

of all cloaks  
because, after all,  
it is the Invisible that

is your friend  
all other friends  
having been lost

in the Flood.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leaving Small Kingdoms

leaving small kingdoms

where the gossip ripens along with the peaches

while you work in root cellars

while others hit the beaches

while you dream your winter dreams

and come apart at all the seams

and sow your tickets underground

and leave their worlds without a sound

maybe along some country road where

the skies are bursting with pomegranate stars and galaxies

you will make peace with your God

apart from all these anomalies

and remember in a fading hour

that once you too were flowers, earth

birdsong soaring above it all.

mary angela douglas 5 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Leaving The Great Pronouncements On The Flood

if you're already on the flood, you're safe.

which means, my friend, that they're too late

as if they ever would save you anyway where

words can't hear you, PSA's.

they smile at you and shut the door

behind which villains roar.

but the PSA's are never ending

telling you how they recommend

you spend the last day of the End

they're full of clues

and news and news

but can we make it to the other shore

is the one news piece they all ignore

using up all the air

just to get their market share

just for one more stare at you

through the screen.

or to see and to be seen

while you sort out

what it means

and what remains

mary angela douglas 21 december 2018

Note: PSA stands for Public Service Announcement on TV or radio, precorded...  
Those briefly worded, cheerful tips to citizens or consumers on varous  
emergencies or practical life.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Leaving The Maps Unfolded

we lived in train stations  
waiting was our forte  
for a better something someday

or at least different  
God would send it along the track  
between assignments

we never wanted anyway  
with maps from The National Geographic  
never folded away

they resembled the creases on the moon  
I couldn't make room for once they were unfolded  
we would have done better, my soul and I

still in the country of the young  
to live from cloud to cloud in chiffon prints  
not to assume what was assumed in unison

by people of that time

it would have made more sense  
everything disappeared anyway  
though it seemed so knock on wood solid back then

at least the landmarks, benchmarks should stay the same  
not melt away in the rain like my old pink raincoat left on the train not  
everything onstage has to shift between scenes

do you know what I mean;  
but you know how the philosophers are about that  
everything has

too much space in it  
to be furnished.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Legend

I had a diaphanous legend, sheer:  
with occasional sequins.  
with the telling of it,

small slow stars started falling  
out of a winter sky  
to the azure amazement

of some passersby; a few  
misplaced dogs.  
you think I am poor

with little to say for myself  
you cannot belittle  
without even half trying;

because I can produce  
no golden carriage  
from a nutshell;

because I stray  
where the Sole Pearl gathers light  
and then flings it away

and yet, retains all lucency  
in shoals so rainbow marled;

because I eat an orange in sections  
to make it last the whole day.  
because I write only in sapphires

and only then when it rains.  
you actually disdain me  
and consider it smart

to make that plain.  
genius, really.

but once I had

a diaphanous legend...  
can you, say the same?

mary angela douglas 22 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lemon Stars Over The Patio

lemon stars over the patio of dreams  
where the fronds of the ferned  
and the mystical trees,

exotic with pink-peach blossoms stream  
in-between the paper lantern sanctums of summers...  
there, our fireflies

in a lavender key  
compose in the moment small galaxies;  
we sip on strawberry sodas

carefully, the childish  
once upons suffused  
with the lemon stars.

we shall wear our quartz scattered  
rainbows well, our polished cottons glowing  
all heirloom garlanded; in beaded slippers,

in faceted earrings near the frangipangi;  
in empire dresses of the setting sun  
till Grandmother says it's getting cool

oh little ones

and oh, my dazzled angels recede  
like the lemon stars, the patio of dreams;  
like the gauzy motions of the ferny trees,

the pink peach blossoms falling  
starlike through the air

mary angela douglas 29 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lemonade Shade

## LEMONADE SHADE

a beautiful kingdom came floating down  
in candy cane December  
or in pink frosted birthday surprise

so we thought it could be  
and so it was  
Glinda or godmother (Grandmother?)

with their wands  
the Fairy Queen in rose froth  
with little silver stars

(that's our Mama)  
in the jewelry box tune  
where ballerinas always turn.

now there's stars all over the floor  
and the dolls recite all that they've learned  
about the Great Explorers

in coloured chalk when we do their talking  
for them  
how will we explain it to Grandmother

coming in to check our room for neatness  
on a Saturday afternoon that they've left  
their balloons all over the fair grounds

cotton candy, too sticky candy

when we have been playing with all the toys at once  
as though they were a toy tribe  
and all the villagers came out to greet us

as we were wearing our peasant skirts  
our gipsy blouses with the Mardis Gras beads.  
once more to the Monopoly board

where they live invisibly in little green  
and red houses, or hotels? the populace.  
and eat tiny rolls with real butter

perhaps hearing the trains go by  
the winds ruffling the wheat fields or see  
the Tinker Toys simulating "progress";

in between meals of marshmallows  
what will you have for tea  
murmured the princess graciously

she could afford to be gracious  
in her lemon silk  
carrying her perpetual bouquet of tea roses

and the refreshing ferns.  
let's go by the creek  
and gather small stones

and build a fortress of magic  
and watch the water bubbling over the milky quartz,  
the Monarchs sail by orange as popsicles

and dip our toes in between the crowdads  
there are no crowdads in Fairy Land  
oops I forgot...

let the bubbling stream live  
the villagers coming out of their immaculate homes,  
where even the sock drawers are perfect;

dollhouses dreamed of, Play houses built to scale  
with pink stoves...we wished for another day  
and the angels rain down glitter on our parades.

we'll find it all in Heaven again, finger painted!  
the two teddies waltzing endlessly...  
stashed in a lemonade shade.

mary angela douglas 30 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Let Birdsong Come

Silence, Poetry! in the corner to which you are consigned  
thundered the someones everytime  
you looked out the window

and not at the chalkboard equations.  
what is a nation mused poetry  
do I need one

or a public education

or who will plead my case  
if not Grace, she laughed.  
and the thundering began again

since it didn't know where else to go.  
let it begin to snow, she prayed so hard  
with her bright eyes closed,

and cover up my disgrace  
and the faces of those who accuse,  
having nothing else to do

than to shame the righteous,  
the Beautiful Altogether.

let it snow words and facsimiles of words  
and let them drown in it  
and then.

let birdsong come;  
the small birds to the jeweled Tree.

mary angela douglas 6 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let It Be Song

let the buzzards depart

let them careen over hell

not this place in blues and greens

we had come to love so well

let them fly and let them die

who come to claim us circling

doggedly

before we have arisen

Lord God Lord God

let your livingness be seen

let every cell burst into a lily

let every tear burst into a stream

of balm of the balm of gilead

and every note that you redeem,

let it be Song.

mary angela douglas 6 may 2020



# Let Poetry Be Crowned Again With Flowers

to the very green memory of Edmund Spencer, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

let Poetry be crowned again with flowers  
with twining leaves  
with irrepressible roses

let the antique page appear  
with the afternoon mail  
Maypole ribbons wrapped around it

with curious insignias with God's own  
diamond sealing wax and the stamp of it  
on your heart, unmistakable.

let violet curtains on a ghost-ridden stage  
part on a scene of filmy wonder  
revisited like Christmas.

let the Fairy Queen glide in impearled  
and the sparkle in the air be newly minted.  
and the angels hoisted on

unseen wires  
sing sing sing

mary angela douglas 21 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let Stories Rainbow Reign

maybe it could have been another way  
the orphans in the storm and the  
miraculous rescue

on the Christmas highways and byways  
and the angels gloria in excelsis deo  
from the loudspeakers in the snow

shop windows with poster paint stenciled  
trees and berries all aglow and  
all for you the gingerbread with the cinnamon buttons

and your frock entirely of velvet.

or the little match girl dressed in the gold  
of the one kind word you could say you passerby  
with errands to run elegant presents to stow

and the silver curling ribbons of the frost  
across the panes and the race is won  
oh where

she will never be warm.  
in old stories she could  
unlatch the dungeon

find freedom from curmudgeons feel  
all the changes of heart one could wish for  
and the heart's lone chapel

filled with the evergreen.  
but outside those borderlands  
we find in the world an immense pain

more than we could bear  
individually beyond what  
one would have thought possible

who would have thought possible

tears streaming like rain unto vast floods.  
then let stories rainbow reign.

mary angela douglas 26 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let The Earth Be Decided This Way

if only the earth could be decided this way:  
angel or star, which will it be on the tip  
of the Tree?

either way will work.  
one way is singing,  
the other, only to shine.

let the earth be decided this way  
from pine to laden pine  
on His birthday.

all the snowpaths  
we made by ourselves  
to the selfsame doorstep,

home

mary angela douglas 15 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let The Waters Go Down

let the waters go down  
the beautiful waters  
the fountaining fountains

the healing waters return  
the trees uprooted reverse  
their green in the greening sun

that we may pour distress  
no longer from the silver pitcher  
into the golden

the golden into the silver  
let the waters be blessed  
as they go down

into the ground  
or vanished into the air  
with all our cares

let the rivers be swollen no more  
your rainbows hidden from us  
your rainbows drowning headfirst into

the sea  
let the seas recede  
and with them our fears

the diminishing years  
the nations of our scorned  
the scorning thorn

grown up among us  
as if it were a brother  
the spoiling foxes

among the purple vines  
in time, before time



before the chime of our last heart

is chimed in the sullen land  
let the waters recede  
at your command oh Lord of

the heedless waters  
of the floods of our tears  
and the thieving, thieving years.

the grieving of statues  
who were men  
turned to stone.

no more  
and the loved shores again  
returned

yearned for in the little dreams of children.

mary angela douglas 18 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let There Be Lanes

let there be lanes before and after the cataclysms  
threaded with bluebirds and the hedge rose;  
the aureoles of angels through the trees

surreptitiously.  
the glaze on the puddles in winter  
and the snows when they give way

turning again to Spring  
and not the bombed out homes.  
let there be lanes the Lord God said again

and we cried  
because it was so.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let Us Become The Hidden Things In The Picture

let us become the hidden things in the picture  
that we may find grace for the wanderer  
in his day.

the storm clouds hover about him,  
the small winds play  
and become devastating.

let us be  
angels on the underside of clouds  
where the light rays pierce through

slanting to the ground like rain.  
let us become balm for the  
unexpected pain, relentless;

the bruised roses  
emitting small perfumes.  
and to the children,

the toys that give delight  
in a foreign room;  
the small candies they

have hidden in their shoes  
on the evil day,

the pebbles white  
containing the moonlight  
slipping away

let us become the bright things in the picture  
in the opportune moment disclosed

that they may not wander  
alone.

mary angela douglas 28 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let Us Consider The History Of The Rails

the history of railways  
leading back to what?  
to vanished platforms

designs in the mist  
stairways into the clouds  
vintage trunks bound

and delivered and lined  
with green satin  
the odd book of Latin

the Family Shakespeare  
tears embedded in old garnets  
and the heirlooms unwrapped

at the wrong destinations  
let us study the timetables in the cold  
where the fog is rising the sighs of the departing

the forlornest heart  
times times Time the scars incurred

considering what went before  
the illusory journeys back  
the unexpected journey home

from vanished wars  
into the infinitudes.

mary angela douglas 22 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let Us Return To The Country Of Clouds

let us return to the country of clouds I  
said to myself when you were gone  
as you said, everything is changing

in the clouds. it's always changing

(but not my heart)

in the country of clouds there are kingdoms, cities,  
of changeable hues and turrets of cream and towers  
of all the angels God ever made, of silken

whiteness guilded with sun-driven colors

in my dream I returned to the country of clouds  
finding everything unchanged.

mary angela douglas 8 november 1997

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let Us Review The Hidden Things In The Picture

oh let us review the things hidden in the picture:  
can you find them? the things that don't fit.  
the oranges on the pear trees

the blue rains slanting upside down  
upturning the parasols as if they were flowers.  
moreover.

little houses with no doors in the foreground  
the gnomes standing out there in the rain  
with no raincoats. missing the jampots.

foam on the underside of the sea and so much  
farther down than on the ink stained maps.  
your Grandmother's old jewelry in the hold

of the ships beyond recall:

oh lost and milky jade oh the soft rose golds..the tiny clasp on the  
necklace of the mustard seed.  
the pale trees snows;

the faith that you knew then with

its bridal white of the green grass verses underscored:  
gold edged on India ink paper delicate as Heaven  
must be:

the sad moon's steps all sloed in the middle of the day and  
the hour when I don't have to say

the reasons I believe.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let's Have A Party!

let's have a party! the cardboard invitation read,  
so highly coloured, with its five balloons  
in primary colours, and two secondary.

we'll have fun and party favors too and  
little hats with silver streamers.  
come as princesses, or dukes or kings

prepared to eat pink ice cream!  
to fight just paper dragons red as the sun.  
and when we're done, there's a centerpiece

like pirate's treasure. you can rummage in,  
every one! they'll be no more bills hereafter!  
shout if from the crepe paper rafters

we'll be free to build our playhouses by  
the stream and use our monopoly money  
boundlessly at the candy stores.

heck. we'll buy them and give them to the poor  
in striped sacks full of the delights  
especially toffee wrapped in chocolate, bits

of caramel in raspberry foil.  
no more of toil, hard lessons learned or algebra.  
it's the world's birthday! everyone gets presents;

a generous slice of cake with the buttercream rose.  
and free piano lessons!

mary angela douglas 30 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Let's Make A Layer Cake Of Happiness

let's make a layer cake of happiness.

why not?

frosted pink, a lot of icing

a little kid's dream cake.

or a trifle, alternating layers

of strawberry, lemon curd,

hazelnut, chocolaty chocolate

blueberries, blackberries

cream o cream

let us not be hesitant in eating it

yet, observe table manners

in case the good fairy is

whirring by and her good mood

depends on

how elegant we are

at table.

with our peach linen napkins.

our irresistible smiles.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Let's Move Away From Earth

let's move away from earth sang my soul  
packing only what is necessary  
for the soul to live

forgive the evicters what there is to forgive  
and the victors their spoils, after all our toils  
and all their souvenirs.

we shall pack light  
and Light I echoed  
echoing the spheres

transcendent are the skies  
the clouds that float and fly  
above the exigencies here.

oh God, my soul!  
don't let it disappear  
here where the waiting lists

grow longer by the hour  
the eccentricities  
of those in Power.

mary angela douglas 31 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Letter To My Former College

now when I write you

you are so formal or so contained

if you answer at all on your facebook wall

is it because I am no longer a prospective student

seeking a catalogue to catalogue all the reasons why

I should be in love with your granite architecture forever

the way the little tulip tree blossoms by the quadrangle

covered with sudden snow

the way snows sweep past the lamplight

seen from a dorm window at night lit up as with angels.

those things make me weep when I recall them

or how I listened tenderly to Mendelsohn's violin concerto

as recorded by a friend.

or read Rilke till dawn.

I lived there then. and every inch of ground and space

was blossoming with the possibilities of learning something

absolutely

golden, something rarified even holy; understood in old amber

filtering Dante's several suns or

at any moment, coming around the corner to see

Quixote in gentle poverty

Dulcinea near the tower bell.

and all the Remembrances Of Things Past.

What hell is this that now when I speak

or whatever I ask

there is no one who remembers me

and they are caught up in the sweep of sweeping

the Image, Brand up off the floor

where freaks like me have perhaps littered it

with overemotional reminescence

you are somewhat embarrassed by aren't you;

you with your new crops now.

crop this from the picture if you can.

in april or may remembering a poem I wrote one day

under a tree of great and white pear blossoming

my ghost will come to stay resolved in her ancient quest

fluttering the pages of all the books in the library.

and by infinite starlight. blessed.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2020

P.S. I remember I read Rilke on my own; he wasnt in the curriculum nor was Dante. Whom I also read on my own. Yet. Reading Rilke and Dante THERE on my own underneath the flowering trees was extraordinary. Remembrance of Things

Past I read due to a casual reference by a professor. It too is meshed with the beauty all around me there, on the college grounds in that particular time and space.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Letter To My Former College; Revised

now when I write you

you answer in templates; that place I felt was full of saints

if you answer at all on your facebook wall

is it because I am no longer a prospective student

seeking a catalogue to catalogue all the reasons why

I should be in love with your granite architecture forever

the way the little tulip tree blossoms near the mezzanine

where I looked out as it was

covered with sudden snow a stinging glow on my face

because my window is raised

and that was Spring; the Spring when I learned everything

when every blossom fall was fragrant with the whole acute

universe

and I wrote green verse in green ink

or in the winter halls I cherished

the way snows sweep past the lamplight in early December

seen from a dorm window at night and lit up as with angels.

those things make me weep when I recall them

or how I listened tenderly to Mendelssohn's violin concerto

as performed by a friend so that everything around me

suddenly rose up in a pale green and fervent whispering  
or read Rilke till dawn in the translations of M. Herter Norton.  
I lived there then. and every inch of ground and space  
was blossoming with the possibilities of learning something  
revitalized as if from a Golden Age  
something rarified even holy; understood, imprint in amber  
filtering Dante's several suns or  
at any moment, coming around the corner to see  
Quixote in genteel poverty or Picasso's poster on a wall  
beside a professor's office posted with his hours;  
me in my dress of flowers contemplating  
Dulcinea near the tower bell.  
and all the Remembrances Of Things Past  
there remain to tell but to whom.  
What hell is this that now when I speak  
or whatever I ask  
there is no one who remembers me who has empathy  
for the past that was my Present then  
or the poem about the falconer in mind.  
as they are caught up in the sweep of sweeping Time:  
the Image, Brand up off the floor

where freaks like me have perhaps littered it  
with overemotional reminiscence St. Louis at my crossroads:  
that Silver Arch through which I had come thinking of  
Tennyson's Ulysses, Memoriam before I had begun just as  
Tennyson did  
what does it matter to you now, sorting through forms  
you think of me as a ghost if you think at all  
someone to be sorted as the English say  
so you can get on with your administrative day.  
who are you; were you once an invading army  
buildings are not enough to preserve what there was then  
a something intangible sparkling in the air  
an irrefutable threshold lustre of bronze bright autumn  
anywhere  
the curious turning of an intricate mind twining  
the myriad thread through the labyrinth  
Everybody Is A Star on the jukebox  
Cherry Danish from the machine  
on Saturdays...  
you with your new crops now.  
your technological know how



your alumni dollars. anyhow

crop this from the picture if you can.

in april or may remembering a poem I wrote one day

under a tree of great and white azalea brightening

my ghost will come to stay resolved in her ancient quest

fluttering the pages of all the books in the library.

and by infinite starlight. blessed.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2020; rev.6 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Letter To St. Catherine (Of Siena)

siena's stars look down on me.  
St. Catherine-  
from pitch-true tiles of pink and green

on crumbling walls in a picture book  
I trace-

camelia faces of the early martyrs  
torn from very light  
and leaning into a wind I cannot see  
that's still - still - shining...

like a crystal they can't quite dissolve-

lean out of a crackling anguish  
I cannot explain-

fix on a vision barely  
out of view in  
this mosaic's span

with faces kind  
like home, as you remember it-

the distance widens and  
I'm by myself, rehearsing no  
brief candle's exit

but praying sotto voce at the  
temp agencies God please get  
me out of here from so

many office windows vistaless  
bring the ladder of prismatic light  
and lead me down in my

robin's egg blue dress  
a thin diguise but you will understand  
I'm reading the clockface wrong

and in disgrace-

but gold slips through the interstices  
of cracked venetian blinds though everything  
else excoriates-

and whispers that I'm not in trouble-  
and there's a word I want to say  
if only I knew how-  
to crack the  
strange veneer of this captivity:

that it's the moon washed gold to silver  
through clouds good angels hold in place  
for such a little while

and poppy red is a  
dress for Christmas Eve that crackles like  
a new bought star you can't put on yet you're

hiding your old paint-box under 'P'  
and clutching the rose-threaded book of  
hours they must - not - see...

I'll see again  
through white enameled rain  
the rainbowed sequenced eyelash  
I cannot explain

the radiance on the wall of my lost islands.  
let steps on the pavement fade

and history's parchments  
matter less and less than  
purloined arrows bouncing off the sun-

there's nothing in the mail  
when you get off the bus and run  
toward a beryl glory richly rung  
where once the noise of shadows  
swallowed prayer

and lied: 'The King is Dead'.  
let lesser kings brush by to your dismay  
the rose eclat of your

lost teardrop's  
coda smudged...  
and the unopened envelope  
stranded on the table

like a lost country.

Castaway, they're leaving  
their last scar  
said His decree,  
on purple unruled paper-

I'll be the child  
of white cathedral rains  
released from school  
and pearl-drenched in the end

and on the very page  
a snowy word waits for me  
in a poppy colored light

a nosegay, valentine set in  
bloom paper-airplane blown from God's own  
curio hand and spiraling past the

campanile in the picture  
at the right place in the music  
so that childish classroom voices  
chime out 'o-oh...! '

and doubled up in velvet like  
the princess' train and still  
in love with God you're finding

all you can't explain leaning  
out of the window set with jewels  
they can't replace-

and off to the side and smiling  
barely out of view  
with raspberry shrub fresh-made  
on the Christmas porch

with golden chicken salad golden apple laced  
on haloed toast points, lightly buttered  
with wax paper greetings - marbled cake

with a scrolled and silver music still unwinding  
sprung from an anguish I cannot explain,  
the cherished faces wreathed in pink and green  
you missed from home-

mary angela douglas 6-7,10 november 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lieutenant Columbo, Immortal Detective Of The Nagging Clue

[to the lingering memory of the actor, Peter Falk...]

he never finished one bowl of chili.  
ate hot dogs, almost, in the park.  
boiled eggs for breakfast pulled out of a raincoat pocket  
too early on the scene;

canapes when he was desperate by handfuls  
with a rumpled face, sleep=deprived at the galas

couldn't hit a target. start a car.  
grew dizzy in the heights, just about fainted in  
the OR, couldn't find the exits.

grew seasick on the piers...  
couldn't stand the sound of guns.

mostly he swallowed clues and so  
sustained life.  
a little hunched in a raincoat too small

for him. he made his wrinkled way  
in all the neighborhoods so affably confused  
(his ruse of all ruses) got  
told to have some cake at the back door.

that was on a good day.  
they all looked down on him  
but he clicked away

ticking his everything off the list  
sneezing behind the drawing room curtains or

in his grey horror of a rattletrap car  
wending his way where the parking valets

looked askance. but the clue is somewhere,

that's the dance of the off the subject banter  
the one that doesn't fit with the others

like the Detective himself. the one that stands out.  
and just when they think it's over and they're off the hook  
there he is again, snooping in the shrubbery,

no matter how hard they wished he'd just disappear  
but oh dear he's come back  
and still on the same tack

having slept again in the same clothes, colloquial of speech,  
confidential to a fault, wide eyed,  
wafting his drugstore cigars, pacing it out while learning painfully  
not to drop the ash absent mindedly in the grand

foyers or in the priceless ashtrays hey but. it's somewhere on the staircase, on  
the rug  
where the dear departed lay slain, in the spring mud  
nobody tracked in. who can say?  
'Boy, this is some place! ' he'd gush in Bel Air  
putting them at ease and then:

did it rain on Tuesday?  
reenacting it all, absorbed beyond the scene.  
wherever it is they don't want you to be  
you keep turning up, your head in the hothouse  
popping up like an orchid or

with your dog who can't stop barking  
(perhaps he's giving you clues in dog language...)  
your unpaid bills wadded in one pocket  
crammed in with an impossibly small notebook

while we wait to see just

what will trigger the latch and the grand detective spring  
at them like a mad jack in the box with

the clue that rankles. the next to the last last question, sir,  
one more thing, sir, if you don't mind. the golden ring grasped in the end by the  
unforgettable detective-

the actor's inimitable performance

an immortal performance guaranteed to irritate the perps  
and astonish us

so that we had infinite fun watching their faces unravel  
and the schoolboy, wrap the sum, the flush of victory

sustained far beyond this week's episode...  
or anything else on tv everafter.

how we wish in this evening sun that he'd come back from  
mystery Heaven for a day with that  
'just one more thing' the grand sweep of his hands

frankly, consoling the superior minds who thought  
they'd easily outwit him and  
then, the play's played out so consummately  
and we can't even grasp what we've seen.  
he's like the ants at the picnic who carry it all away.

without anyone seeing how it's done.  
or that it's even gone.

mary angela douglas 26 january 2015

Note on the poem: I had a 'just one more thing, sir' experience with this poem that I could not solve. There was another mysterious quality that Peter Falk embodied in his character Lieutenant Columbo from time to time, a really almost mystical, magical quality of seeming to want to befriend the criminal because he saw in him something else than the crime. On those occasions I sometimes felt he was (as the character) prolonging the questioning sequences somewhat beyond the point in time when he actually had all the evidence in order to delay dealing the final death blow of the arrest. Or maybe the truth is Columbo had no friends being so single-mindedly obsessed with clues that didn't fit except in the moments leading up to the arrests!

This intensified the way the actors played off of each other in an often very touching way.

The most supreme example of this (as it was reflected in the response of the actor portraying the criminal) was in the episode with the very fine actor Ricardo Montalban as a Spanish matador who presented in the final scene his cape and



his sword to Columbo in such a profound way it was incredible, as if acknowledging Columbo himself as a kind of matador of the truth, but there are many other examples where a lot more is going on than a simple plot line.

As fine as the scripts were this kind of thing could not be written into the script. It all lay in the interpretation and the interpretive power of the actor and the exquisitely humanly vivid interpretations of Peter Falk seemed to draw out unseen dimensions of the well known actors playing the scenes with him.

This goes beyond acting I think into some immortal arena or pantheon that ultimately is indescribable, and that is the just one more thing, sir I cannot get into my poem and so I mention it here. And this is also why I was not surprised that Wim Wenders chose Peter Falk to briefly portray an angel come down to earth in one of his films. An angel with a twinkle in his eye who appreciates good coffee and has divine and human secrets he keeps well.

It is said that Peter Falk worked hard at investing his character with even many of his own personal qualities and quirks, even background. I think it would be hard if not impossible to find another character created by an actor with so much attention to detail, that is, in the parlance of artists, with love.

For anyone interested he wrote an autobiography 'Just One More Thing' still available at [or possibly Amazon](#). (or in your library perhaps) It came out in 2006 just 5 years before he passed away.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Life Then Was Like The Train Around The Park

life then was like the train around the park  
with the compartments just your size  
in pink and green

and you are traveling indeed and thrilled  
but unafraid because your grandparents  
waved to you at the pink and green depot

with all good wishes seeing you off

and you knew you were making the return trip,  
in time for lunch with the little sandwiches  
and pop

feeling the breeze in your curls  
or down the slide, bravely

and grandfather is there to catch you,  
scoop you up before the dust enfolds  
your cherry dress

and best, are stories all around the world  
told to you at dusk you'll fly to everywhere  
whether with reindeer or not

but can't keep your eyes open.

and can't you think, perhaps,  
The End will be like this?  
a story told, a dream, the lightest kiss

and then you open your eyes  
in a room filled with birdsong  
and shining...

mary angela douglas 16 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Light Rain

we heard music through a cloud  
so faintly; o finally we thought either  
we are dying or is music

unable to muster the interrogative?  
though interrogated, slightly,  
I smiled:

everything in the declarative  
or it's just unclear,  
a little windy,

my dear not my dear  
or anyone ever.  
I'm not trying to be clever;

this is how it feels  
rewinding the old reels  
and not for the show-offs.

dummkopf cried they  
in their several languages.

I heard only

the chiming of distant stars...  
where are you, I sighed...  
sowing their what-ers.

do you know if it's snowing  
or is it just a light rain I heard  
someone singing this refrain,

one sided conversations  
break  
the already broken down

on afternoons we couldn't  
go into town;

on days we saw the canyons through gauze  
and gaping holes where once there  
were grand

pianos in the rooms.  
so long, he said  
to the treble clefs,

the grace notes trembling  
on their winter's eve.  
it isn't graceful to believe

In God Here.  
yet, I do.  
where the music is flowing to:

where one day  
we'll really hear it,  
you or I,

opening all the Presents at once.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lightning Falls Apart And Then To Earth Provides

lightning falls apart and then to earth provides  
a moment's spotlight and are you there  
in its charmed circle, bright-

here on imagination's strand?

can we stand anymore  
the keepers at the door of the pearled?  
said a modern world

you won't know what you've said  
said a little girl?  
till you've said it something interposed

the lightning flash on the rose  
word fragrant with its long agos  
neither here nor there

in a box, hidden everywhere  
with a folkloric lid, and your own key  
that you perhaps use sparingly

not knowing you don't have to.

the first you read on the blank sky  
of a page not yet turned  
and there ever after you longed to go

where snows of silence can disclose  
uncloyed and spiced like Araby  
the feeling beyond all this

that makes you break down  
in joy

mary angela douglas 12 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like A Seam In The Earth

[to Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Saviour for all Time]

like a seam in the earth  
a seam in the heart can  
upheave; be shaken

unexpectedly  
so that seismic waves flow out  
from it, in untenable directions

so that the stars shift  
as though in Dante's hell they had fallen.  
also, the unknown zones

who could dare? the poles,  
to dethrone unless, unless it were Christ

crossing the violet, trembling air;  
this plenitude of emptiness and shock  
to share with us, God with us; to fix this

broken animal, this blinded mind.  
oh heart my heart, pulsar:  
beating, beyond all beatings now-

surely you have been shielded  
in the palm of God  
or you would have truly died.

mary angela douglas 14 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like Candied Fruit In The Nougat

like candied fruit in the nougat,  
words on holiday shine;  
shifting their coloured sands

in the sandbox, hourglass,  
just-in-time. no longer punching out.  
under the alder trees,

near the playground.  
or coasting down the hill  
on raspberry bikes  
tailgating the ice cream trucks.

like babies in sunsuits  
out for a ride  
just hoping for treats.

nose-pressed against the early  
Christmas windows of a candy box  
language (from the inside) .

Here. Have some.

mary angela douglas 26 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like Endless Words In Flight

I love branching conversations

and when the birds in vast migrations

come to settle there

there is jeweled singing.

I sing there too in emerald enumerations

or float with clouds

over the brimming oceans and, as they recede

and in backward motion back in Time

elliptical and dreamed by God'

I still want

I want to be that kind of flowering

they will say you are off topic as if I were in a business

meeting.

I think it is strange to be that stationary

when we could be all rivers rushing down to the sea

if we chose to be or

holding on to the golden thread through the labyrinth

and that is poetry the way it feels to me

under the Pearl and watchful Eye of God

the way it always turned like an opal in my imagination



or the moon set like a jewel, glinting

on the rim of night; or like endless words in flight.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like Exupery's Rose

like Exupery's rose I  
thought myself  
well guarded-

but for inward  
shattering  
I was not prepared:

to be the suffusion of  
so much-  
bright with the crosswinds  
of stored-up

feeling-  
a rose of no rising age

mary angela douglas 3 march 2001

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like Leaving The Piano Pedal Down

on a recording of Vladimir Feltsman playing Messiaen-

[for Rodney-]

like leaving the piano pedal down  
when you play Messiaen, all the  
stained glass bells jangling at the same

time-  
let sound be prolonged  
and angels not submerged

inside the pearl of music  
where the refugees take refuge.  
and the haloes of the little clouds

be not obscured on one rosy day  
in the Life of the Virgin  
before the meadows dried on the walls;

and I prayed with my sister silently  
that flowers would never fall from the trees.  
and for a cathedral in every shade of Rouault

in my half-dream.  
and for singing at breakfast.  
and the honey crystallized

in the morning room  
the finger paints swirled in the  
backyard streams.

and hearing began so far away  
when we from the very first were  
dressed in conch shell pink by our mother  
were

just being ourselves, my sister and I  
the very sound of waves;

being ourselves, the sound of distant waves

mary angela douglas 14 june 2014

Note on the poem: Rodney was a kid in my elementary school who loved sea shells. He couldn't speak very well but when he spoke it was with such sincerity.

One day I was sick a little and was allowed to stay inside the classroom during recess. Rodney was also inside that day working on something. He showed me his beautiful conch shell with the vari-colored pink pearly interior and said, as many children do: hold it up to your ear, you can hear the sea.

But he really believed it; and then, so did I.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Like The Honeycomb

must it be raining angels for you  
to believe there is a language  
even in the leaves:

in the whisper of rain on them or  
on the back door screens;  
in the honeyed shadows

in our dreams or when we wake

pouring in for free  
on the wooden floors  
and on the children making believe and

still at play  
when the stars are out  
and they can't see a thing

except happiness is meant to be  
and this is enough of a miracle  
for today's matchless lesson

in words dripping like the honeycomb;  
couldn't you just say that?

mary angela douglas 1 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lilliput Or Something Like It Somewhere

oh tiny country  
built to scale  
once you were writ large

now you're a favorite charm  
on a charm bracelet shaken  
by infinitesimal barley breezes

or if someone sneezes  
setting off alarms  
in my heart for you  
I will stand guard in  
my nonentity

since I love it goes without saying  
your amethyst ant hills  
still.

your small pears' windfall  
in a golden heap  
disturbs the sleep of gnats

and I long to kick  
all your toy barricades down  
knowing God is the owner of  
the Great and minuscule

and how have you withered, then from  
what He made?

but I remember once the sheer  
undulating and the free emerald of your plains  
sustained my childlike song and not  
the woe and weal of these your roped in  
ripped off  
fields, your fields, your fields

mary angela douglas 20 october 2013



# Lilting, With The Lemon Stars In Love

[for the murdered poet Osip Mandelstam  
in the imagined voice of his widow, Nadezhda]

lilting, with the lemon stars in love  
how is it your gaze fell out of the earth  
even when you were here

so that almost no one recognized you  
in the last the hounding years.  
little you cared,

poet made of clouds  
maker of all my feasts and merriment

that where you tread  
the down at heel districts,  
the earth glistened.

did no one listen?  
who pocketed the gold of your lines, your name?  
scarce tokens in exchange, you with your secrets

and little else,  
only God really could have,  
maker of the lemony stars

of every place oh still  
you are and are not.  
I braid my forget-me-nots

deep blue into the nights  
imagining you in the weirs of a world  
invisible to me

on an afternoon like those we shared,  
my presentiments

my turning wind too suddenly cold  
I met you: early or late



and I will wait what decades are required

to see you yet, eternally  
and hesitate here near the  
wheeling leaves thinking

you might have left somehow  
the bright gate open:  
so I could pass

the grief is still so fresh.

this trace, transcribed  
I feel but cannot say  
of the poems you wrote

anyway

despite rank scorn;  
clouding the mirror with your breath  
even while it broke like a heart

and I drift like a torn out page  
from a notebook  
you've bestowed

in all your fars and nears inscribed  
no longer your dear, my dear  
where the weather will not clear:

but receiving this:

marvelous, snipped, oh sweet tailor  
from your cloak of invisibility-  
this, this largesse of beauty

in our wilderness  
from some o too brief  
fairytale foretold...

where I'll grow old  
where the mosses drip

all on my own

not turning to stone;  
lamenting your eclipse.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2015; 2 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lion (And You Know Which One)

[To The Cowardly Lion Of Oz]

the dandelion lion on the cream-colored road  
swished his tail in the churning fog  
'I'm not afraid, ' he almost roared  
(quite unsettling the little dog)

'of any beasties I can't see  
whenever my friends are here with me.'  
the dandelion dandy lion  
when lemon ice-box stars emerged  
purred with joy on the  
butter-rum road, picking out thistles

from his curlicued fur  
and melted gruffly  
(wouldn't you?)

as the sweet green castle  
came in view-

mary angela douglas 9-11 february 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lion, Tinman And Scarecrow

lion, tinman and scarecrow:  
was I ever really with you?  
did I really wear those shoes?

I wonder if you think of me  
and where you landed  
if you landed  
when your own storms were  
brewed-

could we ever do again  
what we did then  
believing in everything as it lay before

God in our pocket  
on a golden road-

so close to the emerald door

mary angela douglas 20 october 2007

Mary Angela Douglas

# Listening For The Beginning Of Snows, White Flowers, Celesta

for the poet Elinor Wylie (1885-1928)

listening for the beginning of snows, white flowers, celesta-  
I bowed my head far down  
into the very velvet of God;

putting the jeweled sword back in the cupboard, carefully-  
by the last of the fairytale cheese-  
the plum-starred jam.

who knows what music held  
for those who appear no longer;  
wind the music box anyway  
and don't despair,

your heart like a cloud  
still does not drift  
and it is a wonder

just to breathe the air  
that later, snow will inhabit-

mary angela douglas 22 december 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Little Bugs

little bugs.

little soldiers in a perpetual war;  
belittled pilgrims with us here on earth

in your miniscule sojourns.  
how I regret that you must live in corners,  
dart into crevices

weave and bob on kitchen floors  
where the linoleum patterns  
seem like camouflage to you

yet I can see you clearly, black against  
the white, or cream where you freeze  
thinking this is the thing to do.

I wonder if you wonder:  
what are giants for if  
not for kindness built

if they don't even want us in  
the cabinets they're not using  
or in the kitchen drawers.

or in the unheated garages,

the tool sheds where  
we hoped things would be  
different this time.

are you musing on a castle of your own  
in between mad scrambles  
where you could freely roam

about your own living room?

I will make you tiny stories of them

where fountains play,

and so do you.  
the scent of orange blossoms in the air

and rare music.

you will forget your furtive existence.  
the nights where you must lurk  
till all are asleep.

the frantic minutes when the Enemy  
suddenly flicks on the kitchen light  
grabbing the sandwich you crave

only one crumb from that could last you a week.  
in heaven may you have your own kingdoms  
and be done with hiding forever

playing Blind Bugs Bluff with the angels cheerily;  
God throwing rose petals at you in your sleep.  
and finding you cake crumbs iced.

mary angela douglas 15 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Little House

we will make a little house with tar paper walls  
no chimney and a place to rest;  
to rest and to read the things that we think best

they say no one is reading anymore.  
and sometimes, it will be a stage, with a revolving door  
and we will play all the great roles

going up and down the escalators  
into the Perfume department  
or the expensive furs;

practicing carefully how to turn around  
in a ball gown, in a very small space;  
how to curtsy after the matinee

and catch all the bouquets

and keep the pasteboard crown attached;  
how to acknowledge the front row dignitaries

because it's certain

small birds will flock in the carport  
for the ambience or the german chocolate crumbs  
we leave in our gracious wake.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Little Knowing

beyond it now with the serial numbers of the stars o  
I wish we had not tagged everything  
and put the spectrums in jars

at school.

maybe the clouds can escape the census,  
so I went to warn them.  
but they in their fleeciness rose

and gold in the cold outside a  
childhood hom: frozen as  
they were, fluffed up and chimed

and floated airily away.  
never mind, laughed I now that  
you have it well in hand in

fleecy land I'll leave you there.  
and then I climbed a wandering stair  
little knowing that I wouldn't be back

again to catch them ever again  
in their summer gladness.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lives Of The Hunger Artists

'This is my letter to the world'

-Emily Dickinson

'O Jerusalem, stoning the prophets,  
how often I would have gathered...'

Jesus Christ

'This living hand, warm and capable'

-John Keats

I am sending you this last letter:

written on snow

by moonlight.

you do not answer

when I ask:

you do not

honor what I honor.

you leave thorns

instead of roses

thinking yourself a

charitable person

you let me starve;

then you expect a feast.

you leave me friendless

then demean my friendlessness to others.

and let me freeze

asking

'why is he/she shaking? '

I am writing this letter

like a bloodless revolution

like a smile, - a simile-

broken in two

by those who abandon with  
no conscience

what others died for-  
chasing all evictions down  
rushing in to steal  
whatever's left behind they can

carry off in truckloads

after I'm dead you'll build an  
edifice of Criticism  
and furnish it like Versailles;  
you will live comfortably

pilfering old letters  
first drafts scouring  
earliest sketchbooks like  
kitchenware

munching on the windfall apples  
of ghost-written libels  
so

here is your fair copy  
with no envelope  
like a night with no stars  
a summer with no breeze  
a Heaven with no God-

a gallery with no paintings O  
Jerusalem, stoning and stoning  
what you'll never understand

yet God Himself is  
with me, His starry  
hand on my right shoulder:  
writing with me in invisible ink

this winter telegram to you O  
Jerusalem I only wanted to  
tell you how beautiful it could be

to live

mary angela douglas 10 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lives Of The Saints On A Rusty Hinge I Dreamed

lives of the saints on a rusty hinge I dreamed  
the Door having been flung open in the winds  
and the liveried voice floated over heavy as lead

why should the visions come to you instead

of one appointed by the Lord  
and this was the inciting Word  
that drew down flames upon their heads

and sealed their doom.  
oh lily bright and in the tomb before being, breathing,  
spoken into the gold and blue

of our Lady shimmering over the fields  
how I mourned for you the day I realized  
for you, there could be no escape

because the dream itself dared itself  
to bypass those, the keepers of the keys imposing  
their wills even upon God

to linger stubbornly, with no retreat  
and showering roses down  
upon the most obscure

the most unlikely to succeed  
in town.

mary angela douglas 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Living Outside Stale Customs Of The World

living outside stale customs of the world  
we painted our foreheads with  
sunset colours

over the cobbled  
fringes we would glide  
riderless the horses

at our side

in the milk white light of dreams  
and everything as it seems in  
the fairy tales

not on tv  
not on the rungs of enterprise  
painting the gold in the swallows eyes

dark violet on the appian way  
inhaling the bakery pastries scents  
for free; my apricot jam and sipping

the air from the gold rimmed china cup  
will you remember me oh clouds  
when I like you pass away

and the sweet rains rain  
without us then

mary angela douglas 29 december 2015

P.S. I don't mean to offend anyone, but I want to make it clear that I believe wholeheartedly in The Ten Commandments and the Two Commandments given by Jesus Christ (Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself) and when I say 'stale customs' of the world I am NOT referring to the Commandments given by God out of loving concern for His children to spare them from unnecessary grief. What I mean by stale customs is, you know, like when you are happy in the day and someone looks you up and down and then down again in your shoes with a discouraging, disparaging look because THEY

think your shoes don't match the outfit you are wearing. ALL THAT STUFF.  
people who think if you love God you should never look happy. (it's the opposite  
I think; our joy praises Him.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lo How A Rose On The Down Low

&quot;amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the Night.&quot;  
from the Christmas carol. &quot;Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming.&quot;  
  
the maiden speech of the maidens cancelled  
the filmy veils wrecked  
because the dragons were hungry  
  
no longer circumspect  
  
this was left off the menu  
the literature of the field  
the field where lances broke  
  
against the Invisible  
and on covenant lands,  
the quiring angels queing up  
  
for the inevitable downtown sunsets  
  
or the food trucks  
of the newly glitized  
the condo served.



oh poetry my lost

amongst the herds trampled

the popcorn crowds exiting

and under a sullen moon

no longer recited.

while we make our covert home

among the briars

waiting for the resurgence

of the Rose.

mary angela douglas 9 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lock Up

you had it locked up  
the penny locket that cried  
in a silver box

in the language of birds  
till no one heard  
and no one heard

again.  
is it a sin cried the heart  
lonely for clouds

for one scrap of sky  
not made of tin.  
this was denied.

but the heart sang on...

mary angela douglas 2 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Long Ago, Grandmother, By The Cross Stitched Orchards' Light

on winter afternoons we cross stitched the worlds  
or would have if we'd had more thread  
more colours! demanded my sister colouring

steadily as the sun coloured the late clouds  
and we will watch the late late show  
in black and white

only in your dreams says Grandmother  
it's a school night  
how the bluebirds take flight by the apple

trees in my crooked hooped stitching  
will it turn out right anyway? I wonder  
the cloth puckers and the roses too

and it's askew but I don't care  
because there's snow crystals in the air  
a scent ascending to the angels

this close to Christmas  
we're at home  
in the family circle

with every grace endued.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Looking At Pictures Of The Loggias In Snow

looking at pictures of the loggias in snow  
how could we remember where to go  
in daylight enterprise or how or when

would the trains leave after seeing them?  
let the purple skies remind you  
at day's end

there are other ways to go  
than the here and now  
treading on the sidewalks

that you know  
past the same brick houses  
row on row.

you can look at the loggias in snow  
and let it be their snow on snow  
remembered

let it be the strange dreams sown  
with ancient moonlight looking on  
the light from

passed away stars.

mary angela douglas 8 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Looking Through Dormer Windows On The Snow

[fragment from a song cycle imagined: The Queen's Daughter,  
a retelling of the fairy tale: Snow White]

looking through dormer windows on the snow  
how silverly she sighed, sighed the angels echoing  
her dreaming of a daughter

born to winter's crown.  
she was. she is  
the one you dreamed to know made

real but how were you to know  
(her mother) that the way would shift before her  
and the doorways marked in gold

alter.  
beauty with a price on its head is not in the abstract  
when it's you not knowing where is the safe place now.

and now, for the chapter under glass

and after, the waxy apple did its work  
so rubied in the morning light at the lattice  
when proffered by a witch.

and you will be wreathed in flowers sang her mother  
and all in a crystal wood and unsurpassed.  
but she did not see, did she? the strange dormition

she would undergo ah, white rose dreamt of  
far from the Looking Glass, the home you knew  
where the charmed elves cannot pass,

in-waiting...oh all this was long ago

wasn't it? shadowed the little daughter  
I never had, pulling on my dress.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015; 9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Losing The Beautiful Language Tear By Tear

do we live, absorbing the language of the beautiful  
or hide under stones  
fleeing His presence

in monotone content to get by  
devoid of colours and all the whys  
wherefores stashed

conforming to conform; avoid the lash  
or at least, the gossips  
demurring to be born and

saying no peacock grace  
over the rainbows coded in the waterfall of tears  
for all the listless years

not to understand  
they skewed your music, being proud  
where His footsteps bled into Space

am I allowed  
given a trace of former majesty now  
the little glow children try to replicate

in words or something  
I want to say oh if I may  
kicked out from job to job

at times, from place to place  
even then  
I don't know how, I didn't

to live discarding the beautiful language  
or do we go on, filling in the blanks, a blank ourselves cast down  
by every miscast word

that calls us out of place  
obscuring the seeing Him face to Face

we were born with-

because the only thing we've learned  
from all the jobs we earned is

a heart beaten down by clouds  
and how to be afraid.

mary angela douglas 25 november 2018; rev.23 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Losing The Blue Madonna To The Skies

to my mother, (Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas)

losing the blue Madonna to the skies  
the painters grieved in secret  
and the children died-  
losing the blue Madonna.

losing the gold Madonna to the sun  
a white irised stillness filled the mind  
and all my madrigals were blind.  
my madrigals were blind

and moonlight fell on adamantine pillows only  
stuffed with may have been beautifuls  
beatific, in a receding light.

and I have lost the rose Madonna  
queen of all gardens cried the child  
cried the child all on her own and,

wildly, whole angel choirs  
could not comfort  
though it snowed flowers

mary angela douglas 21 september 2013; rev.22 september 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost Letter To Rilke

all things are transforming you, you said  
in no cloudy citadel yourself at that time;  
a life fraught with roses

the glances of roses and those at overwrought tea parties  
who looked at you contemptuously, who is he,  
as if you were a saint, freakish or something to move

when coveting the expensive antiques in the room  
out of place or touch among such modern courtiers.  
I caught your meanings on a latter day breeze

the words for feelings I had felt for a long time  
outside on the porch, or in the evenings, in the small garden  
by the magnolia tree

thinking, I thought then, of nothing at all..  
what can I give or say or sing  
to the poet who opened such a door on Infinity

as though we could live there?  
we could live there as though in our dreams  
you almost said come near to the face of God

to the ghosts of music in forgotten fields  
let birdsong enter where you were  
before you knew and now,

are you beautifully altered.  
differently attuned.

I thought your effigy should decorate a tomb  
forever embroidered with the roses you loved;  
your reveries on earth's October avenues,

the rustling of leaves.  
and now, it is all leaving: all you wrote  
in how I lived-

or pure silks of victory should stream from Duino  
after you had gone for the wanderers, later on  
lost in mountain fog,

countryless and

climbing by your way

fast fading out in old photographs  
or Song should be renamed for you alone.

mary angela douglas 28 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost Role

dancing off the face of the earth  
in the ballet you trained for  
even in sleep...

beyond the effects of tulle,  
the momentary sparkle;  
the sprite poised at the edge of the woods,

the lake;  
the burgundy roses tossed and the rustling of programs.  
this is the denouement of

dancing off the edge of the stage;  
the exodus into the crowds  
under the clouds of rose and blue

that do not mirror the earth,  
the earth at this moment  
with its opaque lakes,

its noncommittal paths, its obscurity;  
when you float without wings

toward the choreography of the sun.

mary angela douglas 30 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost Saints Wandered Through Forests Of Miracle

lost saints wandered through forests of miracle  
treading the light but never crushing it;  
famished, making the music shine:  
alone.

how are you far from home  
when you carry Him with you  
lost saints wondering wondered  
and they did not err.

and they are shot with gold.  
and they are jewel like in their speaking  
if they should speak.

how will small animals defend themselves  
when they are gone  
when the bluebird blue no longer

hangs onto  
the hidden flowers,  
before the approaching heel and  
with none to gather them.

mary angela douglas 11 december 2013

Note on the poem: this poem is my impressionistic tribute to old legends of the saints such as The Little Flowers of St. Francis.

But it is not the saints that are lost, even by the poem itself you can understand this since they carry their home (God, Christ) with them and it is, after all, the forests of miracle, this being the chief one. I also mean 'saints' in the old-fashioned meaning, as all believers. And it is in the last stanza's reference the heel of disregard, the heel of unfeeling power that approaches to crush the 'small animals' or the defenseless, yet, like them, our defense is of God, so what seems like lost is not lost, what seems like threat is not threat if you realize that you carry God with you who has said to us 'I will be with you, wherever you go'.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost Things, Old Gloves, Old Fans, Pearl Opera Glasses

lost things, old gloves, old fans, pearl opera glasses  
gazing on the moon; the clouds before the storm;  
the autograph of God on all of it.

lost things, the glint of- something - in the rains  
that childhood knew: the mist before the glass,  
the Christmas past, the snows, the stained glass

stencils on the heart.  
old dressers, wardrobes, costume jewelry  
played with by the children, as if it were diamond lit.  
but it was, you'll still insist,  
weeping your sapphire tears for the

lost years, the lawn cut grass perfume,  
the scent of clover on the graduation afternoon;  
the ripples on the pond when you were new:

the dew point and the dream  
the gleam beyond the arches still not traveled through-  
poetry understood in the high old sense of it  
when the heart streamed like a banner through it all.

and why have you lost all this. the soul said to the soul  
drawing her cloud shawl closer  
barely uttering your own name.

whole files remain of the tortured,  
the torturers  
and misunderstood  
were the moments we scattered: pure gold

above the abyss  
we longed to commemorate  
above all else-

as if there had never been Beauty.

mary angela douglas 25 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost Voices Known Only To The Lord

[to the untranslated, the burned down, the unconveyed...]  
and to the Moldovan poet Mihai Eminescu -

lost voices known only to the Lord  
lost voices crowd my open mind;  
my mind, shut down by storms.

lost language, time and youth;  
lost, lost the words spoken to you  
in childhood near your loved, native streams.

and I would write to you in dreams,  
in invisible ink:  
'did you? write for me? '

Someone must be quickening lost voices  
remaindering their gold and how they strove  
dreaming into the day the other world.

but tonight I am so obscure  
half ghosted by a rusted armour  
where the leaves scuffle over your non-monuments

and you sighed, I have crumbled...

somewhere remains a bright seam undisclosed  
and there I will leave this frost tipped rose  
at the edge of sere winter's curtain.

and strain to hear  
as if the snows had words

Time itself and all her birds  
flung upward to the receiving angels

since here it cannot cannot cannot be heard

mary angela douglas 4 november 2015



Mary Angela Douglas

# Lost World Returning To Us, Again

lost world returning to us, again

with the severed pasts delved into:  
God's diamond hoard has been revealed  
held fast through unrelenting harm  
in the perfect hour of His abiding Aprils=

and His wild heartbreak, tamed.

the tear in the tissue of gold is

mended-  
the long-knived traumas tallied now-  
in Sapphire sum.

the opal stitchery is done  
on the long-lost book of sorrows  
and some of the pages lapped in pearl are  
rustling here:

their linen rainbows bending never again  
mirage-like, weeping  
through the courts of no resort  
unpublished.

listen, I think that I have heard:  
the purple of evenings  
that never were  
no longer hunted down,

the summer fern uncurling in the cooling mist,  
the sand of former planets sifting through,

stars in the crooks of twilight's trees  
singing now,  
like birds...

mary angela douglas 2 april 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Love Only Justifies Love

oh God forgive me for rank bitterness  
for insults hurled at me from cars for  
standing in the rain for hours and being drenched  
in the snickering driver's ill intent  
and for my taking offense at everything  
in a world so full of it  
oh God bring me in from the rain  
from the self accumulated pain  
I wont let go of because it seems so unresolved  
forgive me for the wounds that just wont heal  
for everything I feel when thrashing  
through the world's dense gloom  
I know that you have felt it all before  
and so much more than I ever could  
I know as hard as it may seem  
the only feeling I should feel  
is Love through you

all this I know

for every blow on blow.

mary angela douglas 26 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Loving Quixote Better Than Bread

[for John and Dorothea Gaither]

loving Quixote better than bread  
I bought the book of what he said  
400 years ago

and then the knight fought in my head  
against the things I saw instead  
against the writing on the wall

the travesties both great and small  
the tilting at the underfed, the underserved  
the underbred

the underneath of everything  
the sorrow springing in the Spring  
the festivals at all the malls

the name of Art dragged through the halls  
of politics, not learning  
of earning not discerning

loving Quixote better than bread  
I bought the book of what he said.

mary angela douglas 31 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lucinda Leaving The Garden

[with love to my grandmother, Lucy Jane...]

I've got some things to sing to the flowers  
she said, before leaving  
when they are shaken from the boughs

and lay along lost roads somehow  
in bitter moonlight gilded.  
but the flowers won't heed me easily

having to wait on the winds to descend  
and was this why God sent me here  
to sing things to the flowers

year by year I've wondered through the  
dimming tears;  
sometimes it feels that way

and I sing the peach flower songs  
and speak to the plum flower:  
the stars are turning to orchid.

if only there was another year  
filled to the rim with song  
i would dress in gauze, in lawn

and whisper pale blue stanzas  
in the garden  
and disregard encroachments on the heart,

that unguarded country.

mary angela douglas 5 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lullaby, Sweet Lullaby, Hummed From Space

oh craning our necks from the Space capsule  
we saw the greening of Poetry all over the earth;  
the pink orchards, melting into cream;

the stars over the purple birthdays.  
and the seas washed silver to gold  
and the children remembered in their sleep

ah, without being told  
old stories unfurling on the scrolls  
of rose scented kingdoms.

o then all the petals rained down  
of all the flowers at the same time;  
and mercury dimes for the

wishing wells, the fountains;  
the furtive, the penny-splendid fudgesickle;  
the ice cream pastels;

thin crusted chocolate on the  
popsickle bars of the bell curved vanilla  
and snapdragons, fugitive sales

on the garden party shirtwaists  
in the afternoon  
half price Walt Disney, at the cinemas.

and the trees in the national forests  
wept joyfully their leaves  
and the baby pine needles

the curdled blue winds  
the milk in the cereal bowls  
changing colours-

the children square dancing  
alemande left



and are Happy

mary angela douglas 26 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Lunch Money

what if you found the reference books of kings  
on sale perhaps at the thrift store near  
the old magazines, a rubied coronet

or the faded floral dresses, garish scarves  
and carried them away, having spent your lunch money;  
feeling yourself changed somehow

as if a golden aureole surrounds your head.  
and wondering, would anyone note the difference  
when you slipped back into work

the things to file having grown for you meanwhile  
in the inbox piled seven stories to the moon,  
several times over.

but you will think in another language  
in the office gloom as you resume captivity;  
or part of one, at least;

or the one that you make up in your sleep,  
dripping with fantastic colours  
like the Northern Lights on display

dripping down the candle of the day.  
the afternoon ticks by  
and then the trains;

your dubious dinner made  
but just before  
you plan the next week's splurge

maybe the Crown Jewels cast aside  
in a dusty showcase of old things  
for new brides

think of it! for only 75 cents...

you will envision bookshops in the rain

you're sloshing through  
that have rarely been on earth:

the ones piled high with the charact'ry  
Keats too richly conceived,  
with little known fairy tales

in quaint spellings, that bear retellings;  
etchings, done in moonlight.  
and on a proverbial whim,

you'll spend the last of the gold for them  
forgoing that new dress, figured, on fuschia.  
and go to live in the hold

of the ship with the cold, cold  
apples of silver  
from an intricate lullaby;

or pluck for Hans Andersen  
one january rose; one fugitive sky;  
sent to guard the children

and to shield them from the snows.

mary angela douglas 22,23 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Make It All Turn Out That Way

it should have been the letter to the king

I dropped in the tisket or tasket

in the green and yellow basket

in the thrush bright spring

with seven kinds of sealing wax

banded with gemmy rainbows

buttercups, someone said

under the chin.

and someone would have found it

wrapped it up in tissue

and sent it on right then

because we dreamed it that way

everytime we were swinging into the clouds

and Grandmother said, come in girls,

it's going to rain.

then we were going to live in a house

with rose patterned wallpaper

and a thin green stripe

another of pure silver on each panel.

but the letter wasn't delivered.

I dont know what happened that day.

call it fate, an unsatisfactory story.

but we still dream of glory;

morning glory, stay

and in the retelling,

make it all turn out that way.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Making A Cake In Time Of War

making a cake in time of war,  
the yellowing scrip scrap read:  
one fairy sparrow's egg

so lightly cracked  
the Enemy won't hear you then  
a few dried raisins, scatter meal

just for the memory;  
a teaspoon of whatever  
you have left

from the orange slice candy bag  
you bought last summer  
a day war was declared

and you cried by the snowbush flowers  
in the hedge.

bake in the sun, if you dare.  
then, eat quickly  
with nothing to spare

washing it down with dreams, .  
a sudden snowfall.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Making Christmas Last

Others have done it before us,

why not me I wonder, saving the last

sliver of fruitcakewrapped peculiarly in star glow:

aluminum foil? may it multiply to become many feasts should I skid

into harder times towards winter in the New Year.

far from here on the slick streets in the slick world.

Ironing the wrapping paper out with its sleds, its snowmen

its cheeriness and holly and the rest of it,

I will paper the WALLS with it

the incorrigible bows

and the slippery ribbons of green and gold and the ornaments open in storage boxes I dont want to stow

glittering even in January still when cold sunrays hit their surfaces

through the freezing panes I cannot afford to curtain.

how can I bear to store you, glimmerings

this year I never will. Im making Christmas last more than Christmas past the chill of orange the candy cane thrill

and Star and stable and the angels lingering ever so splendidly near the spindly tree I love I will breathe in the perfumes of: fir or pine and balsam knowing you

are mine o my evergreen Tree

all the bells of joy incessantly let them ring let me sing it over in my sleep when  
the world with its dearth wants to snatch it away, Jesus came today and nestled  
in the straw of my heart invisibly

to be born again I will not let him go!

into all that world weariness into the dirty snow on the block, Alone.

mary angela douglas 1 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Making Christmas Last Circa 1964

we'll wear Tangee lipstick just for fun  
dressing in matching shirtwaists  
the tiny flowered kind

with a petticoat flare  
the scent of all the perfume testers  
at the counters everywhere and

in clouds about us as  
we walk out of there too fast  
with the sales ladies quivering;

and we must leave behind  
a little peremptorilly  
in their winter pastels the

cards on sale!  
the best part of the Story:  
the kind with glitter on the snow roofs

watercoloured, on parchment

the way you're fond of them, in January  
when it's too late to send them anywhere.

you'll freeze the last of the cordial cherries  
the finest of the refined  
and snack on paperbacks, 3 for \$5

at the dime store or the book fair  
from Last pumpkin time:

the classics kind or the homespun,  
with Scholastic's illustrations.  
in this our summer nation

in deep winter's clime  
the last of our vacation chiming...  
our charm bracelets we got at

Christmas jingling and jingling  
almost rhyming  
like sleigh bells!

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Manassas, I Remember

Manassas, I remember your scorched earth-  
a handful of yellow leaves,  
trembling-

your letters tied with no ribbon.  
but I won't be going  
through all those

doorways hidden in your mists;  
I can't be buried under your snow,  
your sad angels.

I won't be walking up your  
honeysuckled road  
and crying

mary angela douglas 30 may 1998

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mandelstam In Dephenium Twilight; The Painting Of The End

the streets there paved with blind pearl  
how sure they were I had lost my way  
that all my chasms had been cancelled

the Lyceum razed  
the door to higher mathematics locked.  
the chalkboard filled with the odd phase

scoffed they did at my scuffed shoes  
my lightsome tardy ways  
the tropical unexpected honey of my phrase;

losing the key to the party, reprobate;  
the raspberry fizzing of former days  
and the stray dog kicked

and wandering in a carollinian forest  
out of place, sans hope:  
sensing vast carillions, and the guillotined

at sunset. their angled periscopes.

why will you insist on my ghosthood  
when I am opalescent still I wanted to say  
but it grew late, even trembling;

against my will.

I knew I could find the beautiful  
if I just dreamed longer...  
suddenly, a loud noise in the kingdom

and words flew off in a covey  
the colour of sand.

I am not who you think I am

and these are not my wounds

but yours cried I into  
the waning day the frosted heart

no longer rhythmic...&quot;I am music...! &quot;

then God replied, in stars.

mary angela douglas 22 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mandelstam's Ghost Returns Too Early

to Osip Mandelstam

someone has turned the moon's wick down  
and I can't see where the  
vague wolves gather

there's tar on the breeze  
a perfume from Space  
but I'm not the same one

I can't keep it straight  
why Song is still caught in  
my windy throat

and your smile is ravishing yet snows  
on these familiar scenes

the moon's turned up, the earth  
less featureless now

is this where we escaped the moat  
dripping like trees in the green of summer  
by winter canals?

mary angela douglas 16 june 2014

=====  
=====

Note on the poem: if you listen carefully you can sense perhaps if not hear the interlocutory presence of Anna Akhmatova to whom, Mandelstam is speaking, or thinks he is speaking.

Whether or not she hears him I do not know. Whether or not she is still on earth herself I do not know but I think this is true. That is the meaning, one of them, of his 'returning too early'.

I imagine her in one version writing at her desk a few years after he has died. But like the notebook variations of, Dostoyevsky, the many pathed woods of possibility, some or all of these versions are true in the labyrinth of Time as long

as you do not forget: these poets were on the earth and left their words for you to find...

P.S. the happiest secret of this poem that I am telling only you is that Mandelstam, although confused in the poem does not remember his pain on earth. That is one reason the wolves are vague to him or the wolves are vague because Russia has altered in that way. And Mandelstam has forgotten almost all of his pain on earth, at least, the details as well as Akhmatova's pain, Nadezhda's pain, the pain of all Russia. He remembers escaping although, in the end, he did not. At least, on this side of the equation.

The escape from the moat, a fairytale image. He must have longed to escape so much in reality. But some vestige of pain or the memory of pain remains which is why, there is the image of the summer trees after soft rains by winter canals.

He has not yet forgotten everything.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mandelstam's Heaven

for Osip Mandelstam

your sleep interrupted by the noise of stars  
perhaps the scent of pine tar on the winds  
of once, home, then turned

into the dragon's lair.  
have you forgotten  
does the air you're breathing now

emit Heaven's smell of snow,  
the whirling ecstasies,  
childhood relived?

and an angelic path softly trod.

transposing into another key  
the griefs that fell away  
you'd still be writing

things we'd long to say  
in another language  
far from strife

of dreaming then;  
you're unaware  
the day you entered There.

I hope, too long ago  
to remember:

How.

mary angela douglas 30 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Manifold Stories

you'd miss the music of unexpected weather.  
the thunderbolts at noonday.  
the bowl of the milk white skies overturned

dispensing seas, you yearned for.  
no balm for you in the mild Springs,  
you'd cherish April up to your knees in

mud, the rose as afterthought.  
the weather fraught you dreamed of.  
blizzards at rush hour.

ice storms at tea;  
the world like a wedding cake I fancied  
by Christmas

viewed from indoors and the heat working.  
and with inordinate provender in case.  
and manifold stories,

content to explore.

mary angela douglas 1 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Margins

why am I always writing in the margins of my dreams  
in a language I myself can never quite understand,  
but almost recognize

from clues scattered to the mythical winds  
on maps that lead to a treasure, or to nothing at all;  
and shakily sketched, as though the pirates

were out of time and rubies,  
and in a foreign hand.  
someday I will understand

when the skies are a parakeet blue

the way the kaleidoscope fractures  
and the endlessness of its variations:  
small rose windows of Chartres fading into

the view master slides of Disneyland,  
the old school photos and the apocalypse,  
near at hand, comprising a triptych design-

or the gold mines- or sudden wonder flaring up, again  
when a voice you thought you knew  
murmurs like a steely angel

at no crossroads you had even seen before-  
and with an anointing finger at an open door:  
Now- Choose!

Mary Angela Douglas 12 June 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mars Will Not Be

[to Ray Bradbury]

Mars will not be  
the planet that you reach from  
the inside, as if you had the key.

it will whirl off, into an Infinite sea,

scattering into little rubies;  
a scatter pin on the field of the nights  
you will rest,

but not quite, with one window cracked;  
the antique mirrors  
seized with a longing to look back on

a single footprint in the red dust;  
a child's hand imprinted on clay  
retrieved from old disasters.

or the Last Day.

Mars will not be a bent word straightened  
between one party and another;  
a radical cure for those who stutter;

an Ark impelled forward  
past all we can't endure on earth;

nor the signet nor the crown of Space, rebirths,  
though you will race to it with both hands open  
as if it had a Heart

intending to intending to...  
what you can never start;  
though others coming after

like a carmine afterthought,  
may, half dazzled stop- and marvel:

who was here, is this the spot...

then gather up carelessly,  
the nets you dropped.

mary angela douglas 14 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mary Stuart Mary Stuart

the broken altar where she was crowned  
cannot bide the mists  
or little else that she had found in life

or reckoned on.  
yet something regal lingers here and  
fraught with yellow leaves that cannot  
stay or little else besides, assay.

the air will change.  
the seasons more so, given time.  
ah Mary Stuart cry these shadows, chide  
they us and little else besides  
as if in weeping they would

be music somehow and survive;  
where we thought to find  
little else than semblance  
and more now than regret

mary angela douglas 26 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# May This Reach You Where

may this reach you where  
all else failed or was lost.  
may this speak to you

with care, with care

in words that burst  
and bloom in your colors.  
in your colors, which

candidly, I love,  
vastly, I love, since  
I loved you in your sky.

being more than stars could.

mary angela douglas 1980s

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe I Have Invisible Friends

maybe I have invisible friends.  
who would know if I did or not.  
maybe I do...

usually you outgrow this.  
pity. just when you need them possibly  
the most.

my friends do not mock me at work.  
or interrogate me on British authors.  
they do not quibble when in a wavering voice

I sing the ballad of anything  
I long to.  
even with- with- an inordinate amount of

roses and cypresses in it.  
even when I pretend I am weaving the web  
and cannot look down look down upon Camelot

and then I do and the mirror flies apart  
but it does not wound my invisible friends  
who have already departed

for the mystical shores.

Mary Angela Douglas 9 April 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe It Is Forever Having To Be Certain

maybe it is forever having to be certain

as in the tale of Sleeping Beauty that

all the spinning wheels are banned

to the last one in the Kingdom

so that the curse at hand is averted.

somehow, there is always one left

and one spindle is all that is needed

to cause her not to awake

for such a long time.

who can cut through the briars now

that have grown so thick around her

around us all.

when will we awake and if we do

will we recall the dreams

that came to us then

or will the same danger await us

some languorous afternoon

in another curious disguise

in a palace full of lies

and we repeat the miserable pantomime



the same scene in the same recurring and  
intransigent play.

and you and I

on some revolving stage

that bodes no good.

o earth, desist.

and oh my soul

find out the secret room

where death awaits

for all your lovely childhood's sake

and vanquish it

with Light.

before the perilous night returns

and banishes us

again.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe One Day We'll All Go Back To Oz

maybe one day we'll all go back to Oz  
dreaming the cornfields away...  
launched into an emerald day

and loyal to the Cause  
of finding what we lost  
along life's less than yellow brick way.

somehow a rainbow's door  
will open to us, once more  
like Eden's did

and all the glory hid  
in the dew sprung grasses we'll unlock  
to no ticking of a clock

to no heart of tin  
having to pretend  
no scarecrow jiggering,

falling over the dock.

we'll reign and rule  
with all we learned in school  
and then forgot

sure that we walk with an old familiar Friend  
who made it all begin  
where nothing ever ends.

with Home around the bend.  
the moon, not breadcrumbs  
in our pockets.

mary angela douglas 21 november 2018rev.25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe Someday In An Out Of The Way Antique Shop

maybe someday in an out of the way antique shop  
you may come across an obscure issue of  
The National Geographic

with a fold out map of Heaven;  
not the heavens,  
not god or the gods with a little 'g'

but the real Jehovah  
cloudy amid the stars  
and wondering why

it took you so long  
to believe.  
and you will forget the ribbon candy like

glow of the Depression era glassware  
for awhile  
and walk out the door with the little bell above it

like Dante:  
all beneath the stars and above them, too  
for you, just for you-

fantastically illumined.

mary angela douglas 28 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe We'll Find Lost Cities In The Snow

maybe we'll find lost cities in the snow  
and banished Spring, Persephone-  
letting go of all we know

for finding things.  
no rod, no reel, no magic seal  
poised on the letter of a King

letting us through the gates  
where others wait already  
friends with doom-

only the let's begin of  
the unvarnished page  
of the wind;

a few stars crystallized  
or barely lamplight  
from the long ago

to ease the way.  
now that going back  
is more than play.

mary angela douglas 7 december 2018; rev.19 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maybe You Will Be

(for Katherine Laws, who brings things to Light)

toddling toward daylight  
maybe you will be  
children whom I cannot see

being farther behind you in Time...  
even in caves of ebony  
darkness sans the jewel work of Aladdin

making your labyrinthine way  
seeking even without knowing  
deeper wells than we could find.

oh I hope though it may seem  
as life goes on, you travel blind  
still you may read the braille work on

our tombs, (the designs in more than random snowfall)  
who wished for you  
what you could not wish for yet yourselves

just beginning to take the books down from the shelf  
wanting to know what the fairy tale is all about  
that you are in: choose faith, not doubt

the heart that sees

what History leaves out.  
and even in midnight circumstance,  
contrives to bring it to light!

mary angela douglas 6 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Maypole Dancing Dulcet As Spring

'Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie; '  
-George Herbert, Vertue

maypole dancing dulcet as spring  
streamers of pink, of green of lemon  
like the sun, of violet, pale

cerise and candy spun and spinning  
as if we are flowers flowers themselves  
and first of the illustrations first of May

in a book of old stories inscribed carefully  
in someone else's april handwriting  
sloping, violet-fed. sighed the princess,  
in every colour.

and she's in a dotted swiss, pale green  
and a rose rose riband of velvet  
because

it's green we are dancing holding onto  
the sun (to a lemon drop one) and  
taffy pulling the pink and the green  
and the pale cerise, cerise.

compacted sweets she decided on  
for a birthday in a silver box,  
wide with a ribbon of lavender sheen and I  
want that dress in every colour, please;

oh sheerly  
pleasingly holding onto the light the Princess  
dreamed: imploring the Flower Queen

getting lost in the spectrum and laughing.  
and this is where wishes were granted-  
pastel, with softest slippers to match...

mary angela douglas 16 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Meditation On Leaving No.1 In E Minor

maybe the fear of being left here  
is enough punishment to bear  
here on earth

after the others have flown  
the cherishing, the ones who christened  
who taught you day by day

maybe the real history of the world  
is just the history of leaving of  
being left here day after day

and in the evenings, too

after the others have gone  
perhaps to return in dreams  
or tried to, or what was left of them

or as someone, almost new  
in brighter rooms.

and you come unglued or think you do  
or you don't know what to do anymore  
or even what words are for and shopping lists

and what is necessary, really?

maybe it will be enough  
that we too have been left  
that God will forgive our leaving Him

in Paradise alone:

and all our sin is only this:  
that we left Home.  
for what is worse than leaving after all

or being left here  
after bright angels have gone



and it's no longer Christmas.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015; 8 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Meditation On The Ark At Rest

[partially inspired by the Peter Weir film, The Last Wave]

champagne coloured, for awhile, the clouds disperse;  
a universe has set and still you are not sure  
you see what you have seen,

the dream-time rumbles and the tinted windows dream  
they have escaped the floods and children garbed  
like angels skip their breakfast on the morning of.

a universe has set and still you do not understand  
the gold flecked ticking wanes above the azure.  
you'll worry for the little things and stay awake

for things you have no name for-  
while, even then, the high winds rise and the floor buckles.  
drenched in the colours of the not-been-born yet,

will we awake to find the hail has not destroyed the view  
and we were held within Your summer ark  
brittle as we were-

the ancient nightmares through?

mary angela douglas 18 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Meditation On The Children Of Lir

their sunset transformations back  
from men to birds  
long have I pondered

when the dusk surrounds  
us here  
and the wind whirls up

in peculiar vortexes  
sparkling.  
and then, the toiling of wings  
and not the tolling of bells  
the breaking of the spell but  
the updraft carries them

and flung out over seas

the bright wings beat relentlessly  
without release from pain.  
so has the soul its exigencies

its duress though it's unseen  
and not at all clear to our friends that we  
transform and transform again

while speaking of nothing  
in the afternoons and  
caught in the world of men

ah, birdlike I would be, I would have been  
floating as clouds and mirrored in the  
seas which to me

from this vantage point on the ground  
quite often has seemed to be  
the indisputable emblem of

untrammelled freedom,  
and not captivity.

mary angela douglas 25 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Memento Vivere

Memento Vivere\*

in loving memory to my mother, Mary Adalyn Douglas-Young (1927-1993)  
and  
to Sara Teasdale (1894-1933) , with abiding respect

pink marigold suns have slipped away  
like the cameo cares of Sara Teasdale  
but I am here

with the dove-lasped valentine  
folded up I always meant to  
send her, across time-

and the air of St. Louis  
crumples like rose parchment  
kindling lost kingdoms:

are you there?

as I hold out one cream starched  
dawn's particular corner  
for you to catch- dim orchards washed-

green rains...

forget-me-nots at tea

I'm dreaming a cloud  
like an envelope. sepia-dipped  
twice over. filled  
with your manifold

weeping harps your sunbursts

but it's delayed, misplaced,  
and where

will I really be that  
ringed with light again

sustaining when I can  
the fleeting imprint of so many violet skies...

here at the orphaned window still  
I trace your leaves and lilies through the mist  
in tintured starlight  
scrapbook cherished

wishing you were here:

weighing in scales of pearl the clockface moon  
but the afternoon grows older, after all

the tide of wishes turns...  
above the noise of mere battlefields  
every singed and salvaged word

I praise  
and look past  
the garnet consolations of the epic dead  
to see

white wave on wave  
of your delight  
bright words

never blind, inlaid  
like fires in opal  
self-contained

the rainbowed startled reveries (of God)  
inferred:

and on - at last-  
the unclasped fairytale page unwavering  
the heart stenciled postscript of the child

who cried for Beauty  
and was heard-

mary angela douglas 13-14 march 2011

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\*'Latin, remember to live'

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mending In Time

a magical compendium shone at you  
through the bookstore glass  
but you had no pocket money

and took the blue bus home  
and cried alas  
like the goose girl and her

words like glass

when the geese had scattered  
and she couldn't find the  
ladder for the golden apples

as now they have scattered the stars,  
your purplest memories of home

as it was then,  
the bookshelves tilting  
end to end

the candy jars spilling

whenever the trucks rolled by.  
and you still sigh for grace  
when you wash your face

with the last of the almond soap  
and still have hope  
that wishes can be wanded

and then mended again so that  
everything will turn out right in the end  
the fall dress will be

finished in time  
the crystal shoes with room to spare  
if, like the poem,



the toes still keep on growing

mary angela douglas 6 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mercurial, Rattled By The Winds

silver nitrate flakes off the sun

and in the end it's antiphonal

in your autumnal dream

the leaves are rust only

we speak of amber

and are not convinced

putting up fences from

fallen stars, the remnants of meteors

we are

the wind is sound not space

not letting you know, not a day too early

nor too late

who are you now

did you slip the gates

how have all images run

quicksilver from  
the hurricane force that yesterday  
removed all houses  
  
from the landscape  
of Time.  
  
and rendered the maps to ash.

mary angela douglas 22 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mermaid: While Being Schooled On Land

(to Hans Christian Andersen)

to live part mermaid always dreaming of the sea  
even while being schooled on land  
how could she make her sisters understand

and when at night in agony the warm salt water  
gushed from her veins there was no one to see.  
she dreamed of coral of the way the green light filtered

down when she was with her parents thinking of surfaces  
of the upwards light and everything azure.  
now she swims on land and suffers for it

and sheds scaly tears under no opal moonlight at all.  
what can she reveal. her habitat is small  
and likely to become stranger

the seahorse memories crowding in  
and the rainbow fins.

something in her aches  
towards becoming a soul

mary angela douglas 7 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Merton's Last Words On The Subject

[on the enigmatic soul of Thomas Merton...  
known only to God;  
impressions from his last journals]

the fellowship of wounds unwritten here.  
the cold air banking the snows  
keeping us apart,

the faerylike hour and I;  
with only Basho for company  
or the latest all the sundry

dropping by

the poplar fruit dried to a dimming gold.  
stray thoughts of growing old: 5, ten years?  
between God and the soul, the literary estates,

an uneasy truce.  
in Asia, the white flag raised.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Midnight Blue Tea Set From An Undetermined Dynasty

golden cranes weeping on a tea set of midnight blue  
when weeping is flight away from and not to  
and mother of pearl detail on a screen of dark  
fantastic lament;  
the selfsame century.  
or maybe not. a silk-screened contract.  
the poppy opulent fan.

what am I bid for the tea rose scents of a dilemma;  
for the carnation silks of the trepidation when you watched at dawn  
the auction of the bride cast down by the casters  
and forecasters; it's the bride cut out from the  
seed pearl morning by a child: the seed pearl morning  
and the poem  
of the far-off intuited disaster.

it's the lift of the golden cranes forever  
from a field of midnight blue on the trace of  
the day you were born for;  
and oh it's mine, it's mine, the repudiating star-  
what am I bid.

and who will pour tea now for the ceremony  
coming down around your head, your head  
with its pearl thoughts braided and burnished  
and burnished and banished  
from an ancient village that can't welcome you

when you catch your golden breath instead  
of the hem brocaded on the terraces of grief.  
your golden breath that was always going to be  
going from not to  
that was going to beat against the midnight blue  
against the midnight blue and win-  
and the seed pearl illusions' shattering

someone

else, instead, from an indeterminate dynasty.  
and fortune is yours still and the carrying case;

the mirror with its opal backed splendor'  
the soul in its mother of pearl intractability  
of intricate detail  
and the auction is not through-  
it's not through yet and yet you are living

and in a little while the bidding will finish.  
the bidding will finish on a fairer isle than this.

mary angela douglas 13 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Milk Bottles

I remember them but I don't know where

milk bottles cold on the outside stair

the one we played on in the afternoons

even when it was gloomy.

but in the morning they had blue shadows

even the milk had a cast of blue

if I were a painter i would paint them there

milk bottles frozen on the stair

and the dawn is so cold

and you stand by the vents

and you almost see the neighbor's fence

or you think you do

icicles dripping over the snowball bushes

but it cant be summer yet.

milk bottles and a clanking sound



and no one else is ever around

stars of aluminum foil

shine in the pageant and it's only you

singing of the holly berries

maybe it's the angels out making their deliveries

who clinked the bottles and shut the gate

in the pale world like a dream state

two week till Christmas

we can hardly wait.

we go out in our warm snoods

our cherry coats.

and we are good.

and we dream of cream

still barely awake

of evergreen

ice breaking off

of the roof of the world.

mary angela douglas 9 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Minimalism Explained

this is your life without parades.  
at least not the parades you were thinking of;  
with only one kind of ice cream.

a firework or two. let's say. two:  
of the two one kind of explodes

above the flower bed.  
the other one fizzes,  
half way dead

and for dessert you get:  
half a cherry from the  
black forest cake

they're carting away-  
under its snowflake of powdered sugar.  
or aspartame.

you deal out one card only  
at the card games  
on the green baize placemat

all the rage. fringed on one side.

it's a little difficult to play it  
that way but  
you survive.

you, with your one earmuff,  
when winter arrives.

mary angela douglas 25 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Minimalism Has Its Little Daylight

we are zooming backwards dreamed Cinderella  
as things started springing out of the carriage wheel  
and I'm not talking fleur de lis

and golden bolts flew off  
and the horses cough  
grew squeakier

this I fear is not going well at all  
what happened to the spell of words  
that we should see bare branch to

flowery flower grown mysteriously  
but now its soup without the bone  
tree without leaves, and jamless scone or

cliff without sea  
adjectives trimmed imperiously  
primary colours less than three

and grim editors on the scene  
blue ribboning the harangue or  
letting it all go hang in

potato plain language,  
pride in no ornament at all.

mary angela douglas 19 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Minor Divinity Desolation

every year at Christmas  
and in between  
the white capped candy

so supreme  
was mythologized in our house  
after savoring.

we all agreed  
it was candy well named,  
tasting like Heaven.

perfect complement  
to angel's food cake.  
and how delightful it

can't be calculated it  
would be to say:  
with casual elegance,

pass the Divinity, please.

what a pang I felt  
at the market later on  
when everyone else had gone

to their Divinity rewards  
to find near the bakery aisle  
in cherry pale splendor

PINK DIVINITY!

I wanted to go back through  
the rose coloured blizzards of Time  
and bring them some

like a foreign treasure  
and then we could have had tiny pink marshmallows  
in the hot chocolate

and improved on Christmases forever...

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mirage Like From A Distance Stray

to Edgar Allen Poe and those who loved him

mirage like from a distance stray  
the figments of a happier day  
of kingdoms, kingdoms washed away.

how maple red the skies appeared above the castles  
always dream your own heart knocking at the doors  
walled on itself and evermore

all glistening sails with the Adored  
and never returning

how scorned by critics who can name  
who pierced a troubled heart in shame.  
around the lintels of their fame

may nothing shine forevermore  
till Time and all its angels show  
above the bitter flying snows

intemperate as his repose  
a presence deepened known as Poe and  
organs swell commemorative:

a grieving love enshrine.

Mary Angela Douglas 14 October 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Missing Old Phone Booths; Pay Phones

I miss the presence of coin operated phones

in the laundromats, the shopping centers

anywhere, far from home.

way out on the curb of the red and blue

striped gas stations, convenience stores

or in banks almost elegant, on plush carpets

in fine hotel lobbies.

in movie theatres, too

near the concession stands.

I wonder why they were taken away

seemingly in the dead of night.

who carted them off.

what miscreant gave the order.

it's true, at times they were out of order,

missing the phone book.

yanked from its chain.



I loved hearing the chime of coins.

the feeling that push come to shove

if it got stormy

maybe I could even live there for a while

closing the hinged door firmly

till the weather cleared.

you survived year on year.

American perennial.

what went wrong?

it wasn't even in the news.

one day at the bus stop

I noticed you were gone.

old standby.

the one I counted on

in case the bus didn't come.

what crime did it commit

in rain or snow

steadfast.

sure, sometimes

it was jammed with centavos

through no one's fault.

it wanted to take the call

even then. it was sentimental

if not, ornamental.

what happened to them.

all those phone fed phones

suddenly deemed expendable...

where are you?

gracing other planets?

no one knows.

not even on the antique shows.

maybe in The Twilight Zone.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Missing The Door To Dreamland

[to Eugene Field]

missing the door to Dreamland  
maybe we got in through the window  
from the branches of the apple tree

we always wished was in our back yard.  
let it grow golden apples then  
so no one can doubt

it is a tree of wishing.

let them thunder on the lawn  
waking our small dog  
who can't believe her good fortune.

and here are the sunsets made of taffy  
(we always knew they were):  
the early Christmas decorations of the stars

blinking their red green blue orange lemon starriness  
over our hearts like Life Saver candies  
so that the sky in all her branching

is the Tree  
unto itself with extra icicles for sparkling  
and the train whistle under it signaling

the angels suddenly appearing by the coffee table.

mary angela douglas 27 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Missing The Nightingales

[to 'archaic' Poetry, kicked to the curb]

missing the nightingales modern  
words flooded the town squares,  
the school playgrounds;

looked down on lilacs,

drifting moons, the  
heart, kept hidden  
drifting like a cloud:

the one for whom  
Regulations  
could not be made.

missing the nightingales,  
roses turned to rust;  
stars were only dust:

ah there was no more shining.  
what are you pining for?  
the savants asked me,

clipboards in hand.  
already shaking their heads.

there is no mysticism  
they tried so hard to say  
their mouths forming only

soundless snows.  
I'm not translating this;

I turned away  
from all they would say  
to me next

and heard the nightingale

lone singing o jeweled  
in the mulberry tree

and glimpsed the ghost of Keats  
writing feverishly in love  
with the patter of garden rains

and everything Beauty named-  
putting all of this to shame  
putting all of this to shame

mary angela douglas 2 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Monograph For Juliet In Rose

the rose-red sash at sunset  
at your window  
is glazing now with rain

that will not be remembered  
by the leaves that rush  
from summer's trees in

this bright wind  
that will not be remembered by  
the birds that fly

enspiralled in the clouds  
that will not be remembered  
by the moon

that fades so softly in and out  
reweaving each pearl drop of light  
into the event or its reflection-

into a long-lost caligraphy that  
you can't read  
into the dream that you will dream

that's not the color you'll intend  
when you lean out too far  
from any stage devised or

set-piece memorized  
for anyone to take hold-  
but, for the moment,

glad to be  
by every fresh wind blown  
and hearing a voice, almost your

own and longing to declaim it-  
unscripted as the high rose mind of God-  
until small tears begin to show

on the paper lilies held by your bent hands  
you want to disappear in the sainted word  
you can't pronounce you find

there's nothing you can say when  
looking upwards at the stars;  
you're reinserted in the slots of

the toy paper balcony next to  
the cake with pink roses on it  
for the cardboard matinee-

the one where the dolls just sit there-

mary angela douglas 22 june 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Monologue On Another Day

we can start over said my soul  
and I conversing in the bleak,  
the mystifying hour

when it is Christmas in name only  
and the cold rains drip from the eaves  
of the house that could

disappear, at any moment.  
oh, do not grieve, she whispered  
silverly do not

though some deceive and others rant  
and others mock us to the bone  
until perhaps

we have no home of recourse.  
and I said softly there will be red and green  
and shining snowlights on another day.

the Star will wait.  
on another day, not this,  
we'll call it 'Christmas',

mary angela douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Monster Flow Chart: How It Works

the important monsters sit in the front

its easier for the ones on the aisles

to arrange their tails, say, if they are dragons

but anyway

next rows left to right the second tier monsters

and so forth

standing in back near the triple locked doors

the plebians.

standing up.

the whole time

the main monster is speaking.

waiting to be eaten.

mary angela douglas 12 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Moonlight Never Melting, Mirrors Of The Rose

on a vision of Jean Cocteau, perhaps

everything wanted something different:  
who can say how much the wind  
wanted to be wind chimes

the stars to be grassland.  
even the gold leaf said no.  
but crimson...

the gold leaf under moonlight,  
that dreamed it was snow  
and capable of melting

and melting wanted to be freezing  
staying to be going  
reflections to be mirrors

and her sisters wanted the treasure chests open,  
all of them: now.

only she, out of all of them,  
wanted just a rose  
simply because

she was one

mary angela douglas 15 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Morning Glory, Morning's Vine

morning glories, morning's vine  
why, for you, should I repine  
when morning's glory elsewhere shines.

I numbered you among my friends  
but when I turned around again  
your magic vanished

purples closed, and then departed  
springtime's golds, and tangerines  
and pink ones too.

what, oh what  
became of you.

I thought you chimed but I was new  
to how time closes,  
flowers fade.

and how the roses melt to shade.

childhood's first goodbyes are hard  
the flowers in a small backyard  
and birdsong alters, while the trees

shed ochre tears on slightest breeze.  
still will I keep your pictures bright  
and not dispose myself toward night

remembering how I loved you then  
and danced, like you, in every wind.

mary angela douglas 1 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

## Mothlike, Lacunae. The Poets Gone.

mothlike, lacunae, I dreamed of that pale green shade

the hushed rose scented evenings of a former age

the truth plighted to love

and wrote it all down in a fragmentary way

dipped in silver:

when will the clouds awake let Shelley say

and then the wind comes through

laden with God.

after days I wait.

the burnished emblems sigh

orphaned after Yeats.

and his unmooring verses fly

to vaster worlds, Away!

to whom shall I cry

give notice to the violet skies, the shires,

the torch is gone.

the one they carried for so long

from ministering hand to hand

by God recalled.

men build tinkertoy walls, towers

what they will or may

out of the last few sticks, or clay

to wall it all though this had never been...

to bury them again.

and leave us to technical English.

the minimal parings. the lacklustre kings.

the public shearing of wings.

mary angela douglas 22 july 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Motion Picture

the motion picture you've waited to see:  
the one with the high sierras  
and a matching soundtrack.

you know; music that swells around you  
like the swells of an ocean  
and you're in the little ship there

the one that could fall apart  
at a whisper.  
SHHHH.

they say in the row behind you.  
be quiet!  
this is the good part.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Movie Palace Redream

a salted caramel diversionary diversion  
in a Movie Palace carved in Time  
all pink and lime

with an organ beyond belief.  
draperies for the Queen.  
your ticket, please

they say and you feel suddenly  
grown up into your estate.  
and loveliness unfolds

onscreen, life amplified  
even in black and white you see  
so suddenly become a visionary:

other people's houses, chandeliered  
dreams, shadows on their lawns  
and the movie trees even dream

their own tree dreams  
before our eyes  
immortalized and with them

their particular clouds.

and you hardly outloud can you think  
out in daylight you blink  
but you still keep

some majesty  
walking home with the grandparents  
one stardusted summer after

ice cream.

mary angela douglas 15 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Moving Day (Final Draft)

unheard melodies are sweeter John Keats said

sometimes I feel they are the only ones left

the Emperor's nightingale sings on

over the graves of everyone

do angels listen then

do angels listen to those who have no friends

who mumble to themselves in odd corners.

perhaps an angel is standing right there

receiving it all into a gramophone

that plays in Heaven.

how to speak we learn our ABCs.

we form words.

sometimes our parents are pleased

we can ask for the bread and butter

we say small words and feel their glow.

I thought that words would be my coinage

in the world but I found the sound of words

drifting from me oblivious as snow when I turned

to another and said anything,

even the dictionary meanings ah sad gleanings

beautiful language has been evicted from the world

must fight its way through crowds

must learn to listen to its own pearlescent echoing

and someday to stop sobbing.

they kept returning like a letter sent

all the words that I had lent

to everyone in the world that moved recently

is everyone moving then

is this the general moving day

to escape the velocity of words

half heard and down a bruised alley.

everyone's moving away from the unheard melodies

I will collect them now like fallen leaves

and press them into the hold of

the Lord's quiescent, listing ship of snows

mary angela douglas 23 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mr. Sycamore

[a meditation on a beautiful performance, a beautiful film:  
Jason Robards in Mr. Sycamore]

you may be standing in an open field  
and as it happens, all of a fairy tale sudden  
your hands break into blossom, your feet

into roots and you don't mind the rain  
and then  
the thought of leaving leaves you.

and do they miss you much?  
acquaintances from school,  
the clerks at grocery stores?

they never knew you well.  
now small birds come  
like fluttering rainbows to

your branches. twigged in all the weathers,  
and you are happy.  
speaking the wind's own language

as if you knew it, all along...

mary angela douglas 5 may 2015; 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Music Box

[in memorium, Dr. Robert J. Connelly, 1939-2016]

is everything meant to stop, then start again  
like a music box repaired how could I wonder  
when you had gone and there was no more rewinding;

at the edge of autumn edged in a pain fine as gold  
because it was yours and the way cleared.  
is this where the cacti bloom I thought

in my room hearing news you had died.  
what's death you always asked each classroom day  
through intimation or indirection's way

and praised our poetry, the small steps  
we took with a gladdened look.

you lived when we bent our heads in the sunlight,  
questioning,

your students  
who couldn't comprehend yet  
the truth there was in books

raveling out into the yard.

now you are There

and know what we learned to think of  
at odd moments perhaps  
more than before, in full.

more than ever now I seem to know  
we never lose consciousness, grief or joy  
stepping from gold to a finer gold refined

at our appointed hour.

mary angela douglas 16 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Music Box Redux

all music passed  
we dreamed it would not go  
and that the angels kept us from

knowing, all things go  
as music passed  
and snow from snow

was parted  
and we were parted too  
as cloud from cloud

and dream from dream  
and branching cannot branch  
here anymore you sighed

but it was into no one's language  
then, or anymore how could you say  
to the music, stay and to the

clouds, don't go  
and to the dreams oh  
never let us go if

the music has to end  
this way.

oh sweet sad fuddled music box within  
the key is turned and I am young again  
enough to know that

nothing goes  
though nothing stays in music  
after all this parting learned,

unlearned when the music returns  
glad angels say (and the Christmas children) :  
play it again!



mary angela douglas 23 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Music Box Refrain On The Day Doc Watson Died

maybe the moon will rise in full gold foil  
behind a tissue paper page  
and we will sigh  
and it will be the wind not turning

maybe in dreams to green laments that

can't come home to stay and breaking off a sprig  
I will awake with only mint for sweetest tea

and sweet gum things to say to the fire fly littered dark  
proving again that I was there, still happy-  
when the moon rose full in golden foil  
behind the tissue paper page and

the small key dropped on a summer day  
dripping strawberry coned cream into the grass  
is found and fits the lock of

the golden moon foiled perfectly  
behind the tissue paper page I'm holding down and  
cannot bear to turn...sweet music, stay-  
all mountain-bred and livelier as the day

wears on...now I hear everywhere and  
all alone on some far stage  
blue diamond notes cut sharp, distinct and

scattered everywhere like stars...

and the wild brooks berried by are rushing on  
and cannot be contained on earth...but only in that music

till all my tired-out pinafores are  
pegged and snapping on the breeze  
and the whole picnic's thrown overboard

tear dropped spilling suddenly  
into dusk blue grass and the perfumed wailing

of the gnats; oh, don't you mind

I guess though it's  
not rounded off at the corners yet,  
or cherrystone riddle unraveled:

here's my sour green apple, candied, shining  
fizzled goodbye...

at the tip of what's not  
possible to say.

I'm not that rock candy hard but this is  
...like the last wind licked and tucked away beyond too soon

because the page is still strumming light  
when angels on fresh apricot mandolins join in

and the song's refrain  
that we can't hum is intricate as Kingdom Come

it's:  
maybe the music will not end  
maybe the music will not end...

mary angela douglas 30 may 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Music In Chains

for Victor Borge

I dreamed of an infinite music: in chains.  
The chains grew stronger  
they made little arrangements  
the chains were acclaimed  
they went on stage  
music was dragged clink clink to a broom closet  
and gagged. Chains yanked free.  
poor music. we were so sad.  
those of us who noticed a difference.  
things got so bad.  
chains went on to make a name for themselves.  
the darling of the world. unfurled.

music hid in God.  
in the flights of angels.  
in the sod. in potted vague hotels

in wishing wells  
in the songs of birds in far countries  
their Emperors never heard of

in the baby tears  
in all you used to hear  
when you were glad at the musicales

in poorly lighted halls..  
and in the trees in flower  
in the art song streams diverted  
or in dreams converted,  
scattered like jewels after a break in..

and pensive, in the twilight hour  
finishing up old symphonies.  
variations, turning on a dime or on a midnight chime

for tea and sympathy.  
just waiting it out, in 3/4 time.

with the orchestra timpani.

mary angela douglas 14 november 2018; rev.25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Music In Heaven

is this what music is like in Heaven was asked  
in a dream where we telegraphed things  
with no Telegraph

who can explain a language where  
thoughts through the air spun like crystal  
intent understood not vocalized the Pearl of

music and weeping mingled  
the weeping magnified  
Beethoven presiding

still alive it's quieter than a pin

in the world we guard within  
we said on earth we shadow said

nothing could match the stillness there

elaborations of the heart, Chopin  
gazing out on the vast blue rains, the infinite refrains

is it art lost cities muse, the Muse apart

to each one listening imparts Faure, Debussy  
the melting of clouds into cities, Satie  
and Mercy. and Pity and Arvo Part, perhaps

starpoint by starpoint, merry go round,  
the children's voices like bells, carillions of the Sun  
the ladders from the ground and Time is overcome

and Ives is Ives

this is music in heaven no metronome  
only the soaring, wind through the pines  
evenings, no more

the jay startled, the sifting of swans

say only begin and not become  
to begin like snow, and never to end.  
who would return from that country, again

mary angela douglas 18 december 2018; rev.18 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Musicale

you with your peridot rings from the gumball machines  
your oversugared lemonades  
your desire to live out of the shade

all summer long  
I dreamed you had come home  
and were happy there

practicing your scales again  
on a keyboard of sheer diamonds  
so that the birds chirped

wildly as though you were april.  
where have these sounds vanished  
I ask no one else possible

that in the heart sparkle, endlessly recalled  
as though you were braiding, still,  
an indigo ribbon in and out of

the enchanted woods

mary angela douglas 28 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Musing Over The Potatoes

the fable will be finished soon  
she said snipping off its cherry coloured threads  
the whir of the music in her head

the moonlit shreds.  
will it fit them I will always wonder afterwards  
she smiled.

when they turn the turnstile  
and get on the trains to work  
no longer the kings and the queens

of the newspaper folded crowns?  
now they want poetry that is like old potatoes  
that rattles down the bins and is

collected like taxes into artful books.  
and whether the potatoes are russet or Idaho  
or Yukon Gold, well, what can I say?

they are still potatoes, aren't they?  
while I match sound to sighs and  
colours to bright replies

and chimes to the light of day;  
they just say, mashed, with chives  
or drowned in curdled cream

in the plastic trayed cafeteria  
where they have bills to pay  
since honorariums don't go that far these days  
while I'm at the city gate

and late for everything:

showers of golden coins  
raining down and down on me.

mary angela douglas 21 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Alphabet Grows Pale

my alphabet grows pale,  
sensing the ebbing of light.  
the ebbing of light elsewhere,

there where I cannot reach.  
there where I cannot reach,  
instead, I feel:

someone is almost heard;  
the rippling of strange birds  
made stranger by encroaching

weather.  
will the snow bent with the trees  
cover my alphabet, cloud on cloud

until there's little said aloud?

will moonlight withdraw  
so that looking back,  
there may finally be

no tracks in the landscape  
left to see  
of a language made so small?

no tracks. at all.

mary angela douglas 26 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Carol For Christmas Day (When It's Forever)

[to C.S. Lewis]

one day will you wake to say:  
the beautiful world has come to stay?  
and troubles flee like night

from day  
the beautiful world has come to stay  
the stars swirl out as in Van Goghs

and all the cherry trees have snows  
of flowers deep beneath your feet  
when all the winds of Heaven meet.

like crystal in the winter air  
before you know the snow is there  
something inside the soul will say

the beautiful world has come to stay

Mary Angela Douglas 17 January 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Cherry Coloured Clouds My Drifted Snows

my cherry coloured clouds my drifted snows  
so merrily she summed up all her sums  
while we traced leaves on coloured paper

unwrapped chocolates wrapped in gold  
in season and out of the orange cream suns  
the very ones the berried ones we wove we were

in the loom-ed shade and lemonade bright as brimming  
ever made was ours to quaff where creeks behind  
mysterious houses diamonded we played

or cooked on the cookless stove the pink desserts  
for anyone who'd come.  
and it's so lavish sighed the Princess with her

orchid shoes to match...and gracious  
at the wedding of the dolls.  
how can they say what we had dreamed

and thought, was lost!

marveled the poets while cloudy in the blue marbles  
the sidewalk singing grew and this is only  
one of all

the jack-starred songs we knew  
when braiding the clovered summers of  
our favorite afternoons

while the crumbed honey crystallized  
in the icebox...

mary angela douglas 13 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Faberge Egg Is Hatching Little Stars

my faberge egg is hatching little stars,  
cut crystal-  
whole cherry orchards unrazed

of a creamy pink that's inscribed  
with thoughts on raspberry wings  
in fine detail

etched  
somnolent summer, grain gold  
lime-leafed avenues and in the distance

ruby trains tunneling through the  
mountains to the village where it's  
always snowing but everyone's used to it

a fine diamond snow.  
so no one starves and is always singing  
my little village, pearl encrusted;

pale green emerald of my birches,  
live

mary angela douglas 26 January 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Grandfather In Broadmoor, Little Rock (Circa 1962)

to Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. Young

an orangeade sunset cools behind the trees  
of viridian green so thickly laid on  
the rose scented air, or magnolia, gardenia,  
anywhere astonishes and swings  
his backyard hammock

for a moment's respite  
and we recite to a summer's breeze  
through our open window the  
names of clouds as though it were a round  
my sister and I

oh cirrus, cumulous, cumulo-stratus  
beautiful everything

(we laugh at nimbus)  
and eat charbroiled burgers in a restaurant  
where the minute man stands guard  
and deep dish cherry pie  
with a pat of butter piping hot

or watermelon at a stand after the ball games  
shading into deep pink and dripping down the chin  
of Heaven how could it be otherwise

or the drone of planes fly over catching his eye  
and he points out the sky trails mysteriously  
or we have a small party for the moment  
celebrating Telstar

drinking Tang for breakfast, instant breakfasts  
crunching strawberry filled toaster pastries just before the bus comes,  
goodbye my milky stars my beautiful everything  
we will forget to say like a scene out of Our Town  
we will remember someday

outrageously the blaze of the nasturtiums  
orange, pink, and red shading into purple  
oh do not cry for what was left unsaid

since even then we understood,  
packing our schoolbooks in  
for scholastic paperbacks, instead,  
it was an Eternal neighborhood

mary angela douglas 10 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# My Grandmother Speaks Of Heaven

loveliness does not alter there  
nor the blossom slip from the branch  
you can believe in this

when you are far from home  
and we took our small suitcases then  
from the closet

packed with the let's pretend  
we will be coming back,  
the last of the crackers

in her cabinet  
a silver thirst for music

and the winds came up  
and took us away  
as though from Oz.

now I look through no crystal  
gazing at her wringing her hands  
for what happened on the way

but pray in Heaven she will know  
I hear her say  
in any storm

there will be peace there  
purer than all ths snows  
the magnolia opening slowly

in the silver bowl  
when you are the blossom  
slipping from the branch.

mary angela douglas 5 december 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Grandmother's Studio, Late Afternoon

MY GRANDMOTHER'S STUDIO, LATE AFTERNOON

every song is a sunrise.  
will it set too soon does the singer ever wonder  
leaving me here in the gloom or

in an early winter, stranded.  
but the tempo must be observed  
all the jeweled nuance

once it is learned  
once it was, will it always be  
dreams the little child, counting to three

or will they hide from me and not be found  
when cake days are over.  
let us not be banished I said to my almost twin

when the grown up world begins  
but stay here by the tea roses  
drinking in their dew;

and in the Music Room.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Lost Unicorn Wandered Far

to poetry

my lost unicorn wandered far  
from the tattered tapestry, unseen  
to graze in someone else's

dream  
the one with the jeweled soul  
the one who would eat  
from my hand fresh amethysts

every day

poetry, too, is wandering from the world  
no longer wanted  
living on scraps in

faith-based precincts (faith in what - can't they say?)  
vivid as ice-cream colors  
but they can't recall

the King of all bright words and stars.  
but there was no vanishing point  
in my picture

there was no heraldic distance ever  
and I have looked so far to find you  
and take you home

while scavengers remained behind  
snipping at the last few  
shining threads

since they know better  
how the chanson should end  
being themselves

such household names

but I know how the song begins  
and this small glissando  
I hid well in my last pocket

against the dread day of your disappearance  
these golden threads I have  
wept anew, dealing with so much straw:  
remembering the promises made to thieves;  
entreating the King of Heaven  
to make your broken music box -  
turn again, this way:

let the storied creature  
with the kind and nuzzling horn  
clomp on before your many-hued gaze

led past confetti corridors  
and children's best birthday parties -

home.  
where you are breathing the color of roses  
where you are breathing the color of roses

mary angela douglas 31 august 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Moon My Dream My Silver Ship

my moon my dream my silver ship

my galleon on the clouds that drift

my sign from childhood in the sky

my silver mast until I die

my mirror cast up in the air

you seem to float without despair

so far from us who miss you here

and watch your changes through the year

vanishing to a pie crust sliver

one arrow left in God's own quiver

returning bit by bit again

miraculous, waning, waxing

friend.

I love you.

mary angela douglas 20 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Music Box, Have They Killed You?

my music box, have they killed you?  
-I'm alright. I just can't finish the tune  
the way I used to...

and I heard a broken bird chirp.  
somewhere, a ceramic flower bloomed;  
half, hidden, would panoramas in small

easter eggs spill lavish tears?  
well, they did the best they could.  
in the china painted grass.

revolving in-place, the castles,  
carousels stood  
just as pink and blue,

a little less crenellated.  
maybe, has it really been years?  
a year is an orbiting tune

she almost chimed,  
played through.  
my stars are few.

I cried.

oh bandaged music  
split clear through  
how will I hear you now

from a chirring wilderness  
bleeding a fractured song  
on the hand hooked rug

and its gardens

mary angela douglas 28 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Poem Has Manners

my poem has manners

sometimes it is diffident

it will pour tea

when there isn't any in the house

and the cup is cracked

the one with a favorite flower

but you don't notice

when you drink from it

the whole world seems

hand painted by God

well, who else would it be

although they pretend

he's not only

an unknown artist

he's unknown period



.

he's not even there

well did you make stars

my poem wants to know

or is merely rhetorical

perhaps you should go

my poem wants to cry

it's like that a lot

you would know

if you lived with it

if you watched it sprout

green leaves.

or wings

if you saw the way

it looks into the distance

as if, into a mirror.

or into the wind

the way it brings roses

into the day

on impulse

and scrapbooks the tears

of small children;

then, their amethyst smiles

mary angela douglas 18 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Poems Leaf In The Air Their Emerald

my poems leaf in the air their emerald and then  
ochre seek, perhaps or crimson leafing in the wind  
to drift solitary whirling up in clouds of their leaving  
strewing the pavement, longing to break into stars,  
starriness lifted up again into some jeweled orbit  
braceleted and charmed or with jade cataracts armed  
oh that it could be so not, otherwise, lost in snows  
or glazing over, time out of mind with the snow melt  
aeons away...  
time out of mind beyond these earthly railings  
let them sail please God on some bright opaline sea  
illuminated by thee  
and never failing or lift them into the gardens  
where the skies are orchid overhead; my roses, a rosy maze  
a pearl embroidery that cannot fade from the loom  
and the speed of light resumed in or out of doors and healing  
on the vast shores christened by You.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Poor Poems Or Yours

my poor poems or yours  
cast up on illusory shores  
will they be mermaid pearled;

will they vanish suddenly?  
turning aside in the wake of proud prows.  
will they sow hard winters

one day becoming roses  
for a child in a summer garden inexplicably  
who turns her head to feel

the rose showering winds  
begin?

begin from the beginning, again  
my music teacher Grandmother said  
from the lavender living room

and I did.  
and I will now,  
missing those measures.

will they sail again?  
the flower ships in the wind  
of Time past curved toward the

eternal  
now,  
perfumed somehow

where we'll resume my friend, my friend  
in pearl stitching, careful pedaling  
outside the rim of Beauty counted and lost;

on the gilded sidewalks where  
no fragrance ends

mary angela douglas 16 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Sister At Her Piano

[for Sharon F. Douglas]

what you wished for  
what was wished for you  
that your feet would reach easily

the piano pedals  
that putting both hands together  
you would play moonlight

the wind over the lea  
bright birds fluttering  
or what you pleased,

with strawberries, cherries on top  
in the consummate dress  
of rose violet

with an appliqued collar  
a jeweled sash  
a candy stash

or Coca Colas  
near at hand

the wild fern under the  
shade tree  
all summer long

listening to your song played

with utmost concentration  
with your whole heart spilling the  
stars onto the hearers

so that they shone  
during the recital  
and long afterwards after

fanning themselves  
with their pink programmes

mystified at their mirrors  
or beribboned with pastel surprise  
the crystal carnation cooled tones

never falling apart

and the notes like beautiful  
migratory birds floating over  
the treasure maps of the earth.

mary angela douglas 4 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Small Boat Over The Sea Of Dreaming Glides

my small boat over the sea of dreaming glides  
night after night and since childhood  
on the tides I sense but cannot see

until I close my eyes  
gone are the old lullabies  
still my boat sails on

until dawn.

mary angela douglas 8 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# My Soul Is A Traceless Wound

my soul is a traceless wound  
a bruising of stars

a trial with no witnesses

a tree of clouds where birds  
are singing cloudless songs

a shade drawn against the sun  
a fire stung by air

a rift within an  
imaginary family

a sadness of inquisitions

no broken thread of remembrance floating

on the beautiful finger of God-

mary angela douglas 24 december 2003  
copyright 2006

Mary Angela Douglas

# My Swans Wheel Away

(after the manner of Hans Christian) \*

my swans wheel away  
in disbelief:  
could I be theirs?

I mourn in the mirror of the  
skies, perfecting my reflection  
in dismay

quaking in the clear pearl shadows  
of their going

my swans turn away  
from my frank, happy question:  
'is it you? '

incapable of reply  
so lofty, made of snow,  
but hard;

even in blue-bell decked  
midsommer, never melting-

pleased with one another  
preening the crystal feathers  
out of reach like stars-

they shine and blur  
or is it only water that's  
so dazzling

and can't be called back.

it's only I-  
am sobbing 'clouds on clouds'

drifting further than could be expected -  
(all-in-all)

and won't be comforted  
by any tribes now-

mary angela douglas 22 july 2010

\*poems references are of course to Hans Christian Anderson's The Ugly Duckling  
and represent a kind of alternative ending, or maybe it's a case of the false  
swans before the true (appearing) .

Posted by To the Russian

Mary Angela Douglas

# Mystical Evenings With The P.T.A.

the dove stitched sundials in the summer shade  
the ache of autumn in the waning of leaves  
these things I wanted to display

on the school bulletin boards, or taped to  
the Holiday Windows so you could see them,  
from outside,

when Parents came at night with the P.T.A.  
to visit our mystical classrooms.  
or fresh strawberries in May, piled high

in their show-and-tell baskets  
under a Recess sky  
and we're all laughing

and we don't know why  
at the creaking of playground swings.  
and we'll all wear green crepe paper

with snow crepe collars and stand together  
forming the Christmas Tree  
on the auditorium stage

or dance between the Cakewalk's masking taped lines  
and never stray  
and win the cake with the pineapple glaze,

the cherries on top,  
can you top that? (I think not) .  
now it's too late to turn old homework in

and paintbox privileges are over.  
but I'll weave chains of clover in my sleep  
and pretend I'm there again

in a new plaid dress so bright with starch  
I'm apple crisp wearing it

till the bell rings in the chilly air  
and it's time to go in.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2015,9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# N.D.E.S And The Immortal Book At Hand

(I was) near death, they say  
and all their tunnels glowing;  
the silver overpasses of the angels...

and now, no longer do they fear death:  
a moment's spume washed up on the  
deck of eternities; back to their home making

with alacrity; no longer that committed to  
washing the car every Saturday.

but I am still here not having made that journey  
where a commanding angel commands, go back,  
you have something left to do-

trembling over a multitude of old books  
discarded from contemporary libraries  
having the scent of gold apples procured

from far regions

or childhood's delicious, snowy bindings.  
and I want to know I want to live  
without categories

or catalogues or testimonies...  
deeper and deeper to live  
beyond mere life, near life

within these majestic phrases  
that have been tossed out like so much rubble  
into a modern alley.

or book sale-bake-sale salad  
with the proceeds going to the astonishing  
other things libraries are known for now.

while language is crowned with ever novel  
diminishments, so as to be, also near death.

except that, how can I tell you this, that

God breathes on the vintage pages  
as I read.  
and He did then, as well

when they were writ-envoys to us their latter friends  
so how in this case does death, near death  
even enter into it?

mary angela douglas 9 novemer 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Nets Of Gold

let's get away from rubber stamped poems  
at over cheerful workshops, the pained smiles  
of the resident MFAs on the back covers  
the chopping off of refulgent vines and lines and lines  
to our detriment  
the musk rose and the eglantine  
let poetry shine embroidered again  
with everything the soul requires  
or ever did.

I want to hear what Matthew Arnold  
imagined Sophocles heard  
in the retreating wave  
or felt on a moonlit balcony  
overhearing past imminence, the sounds of war.  
you have all traded your birthrights for  
no something elusive, beautiful and strange.  
rearrange your priorities as they say.  
I should say so, if I dared  
colouring the moon a different shade.  
abiding time and the political hoi poloi.



and manage to sing the red rose bordered song

the way Yeats meant: and may it soar!

music and word as one.

from an individual core.

the strings struck murmuring Thy heart,

God has lured back, no longer cold

into forever His nets of gold.

mary angela douglas 22 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Never Before This World Refreshing Dawn

never before this world refreshing dawn  
sky of the dreaming pearl arose  
among the roses in the garden

standing still, those watercoloured children  
learn their initials by the disappearing moon  
with birdsong in tune and tuning

they turn and turn in the flounced and especial dance  
unlearned and bright as meadows turning gold  
by the afternoon

will they have learned their letters,  
mended their manners, brought their angels to heel  
with their laughter

made friends with the tall, spiced grasses,  
reciting the two times two;  
will they vanish too?

mary angela douglas 27 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Never Go Away

[to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas  
and to my sister, Sharon Foster Douglas]

clear this space! I heard the Angel thunder  
and the green glades came down from gilt ceilings  
before our eyes the beautiful machinery

in place, the mists lifted  
fronting the castles the snowy pirouettes  
of the ballet brides and it is

there the sleeping princess will be found.

and the briars part,  
and the heart with the paper arrow through it  
the blue ribboned doves

serenely sails above the scenery.  
this is the stage we thought we had lost:  
a cardboard theatre heart stoppingly

beneath the candlelit tree unwrapped  
and carefully  
and the scent of balsam

and the balsam angels careening

floating and singing:  
green be the glory  
be it early or late

may the greenness  
the apple white mays this time!  
never go away...

never go away echoed, half-wailed the child  
in the sunlight lifting her hand  
to shield her eyes

while Mama vanished with the angels  
she thought  
on the way to the corner store

mary angela douglas 24 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Never Sand Flowed Through Her Hours But Only Gold

[to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas]

never sand flowed through her hours, but only gold  
I told the small roses when she had gone  
as they say, on to her reward

despite her desert precincts and the need I felt  
to cry out to all and sundry, but she is still alive!  
institutions thrive

on the Soul buried up to its neck.  
but you were decked with invisible jewels  
the way your children thought of you

and glittering in the hallways  
where the others down at heel  
forgot themselves, and shuffled in between

their several worlds. severed.

forget me nots forget me nots!  
true blue violet colours I would scatter  
in your wake

the heart breaking, breaking like crystal  
that you are gone.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# New Year's Toast, An Emerald One

well it's click, click, click of the ruby heels

Good Glinda in a froth of pink

the wand waved over all your worries

that's what I think.

it's seeing spots before your eyes

like emerald sequins

when the curtains come down

it's like saying goodbye

when you don't want to

goodbye. and you don't know how.

here's to Kansas or the way home.

the balloon adrift and the oh no

then you wake yourself up from the lucid dream.

here's to all the beauty you've ever seen

all the friends in a lovely disguise.

won't they be surprised to see you

again, when the curtains rise

when the dear earth chimes

or your part of it.

mary angela douglas 31 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# New York City Late 1970s

which part of the fairytale are you  
I wonder looking out at  
teeming sidewalks

nothing in between the  
cracks of old sidewalks  
left alive, a few withered weeds.

and where are you rushing too  
oh that you were clouds and free  
from toil, from seeking the spoils

of the wars that cannot end  
and pretending you have friends  
when all you have is coworkers,

whatever that means.  
and will you glean from the tv  
the latest magazines the

books on tape that reprimand whatever you can  
make of your life you can.  
you raise your hand in class

and the teacher passes over you  
to those who have not answered yet  
and you'll forget what you learned there

except for the unrelenting stares  
of those who figured out  
you weren't like them.

but let the fairytales without end  
unspool themselves still  
in your strawberries and cream

imagination  
or what is living for.



mary angela douglas 4 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Nightingale Nightingale Nightingale

to the forgotten, or the unacknowledged, lyric poets of Earth; forgive us...

as many times as the spectrum shatters  
and undeniable music is disbarred or  
never brought to light in the first place

by those who stuff their ears with snow  
or anything they find at hand-  
only not to hear you

that many times and more,  
a hidden star retracts;  
your misread nebula hangs fire-

and the broken poem spins backwards-  
bone-china,  
off the shelf

you're left whispering  
pure gemstone words  
in the aftershock of so much withering.

very real nightingale, hold on  
while hemorrhaging light...  
it may be that the Emperor will live  
though signs are few and an army of  
miscreant words

is blocking the good road to the Palace...

[poem embroidered on the poem]:

running down the crystal staircase  
with no crystal shoes  
remembering the prince with a backward  
glance

everything was not translated,  
she cried at a tree overlooking her mother's grave

and her tears caused everything  
that came after; her heart, that  
crystal most isolate

began to break apart  
like floes of a dream on waking.

new translators carted,  
never saying a word,

the golden coach and the sparkles away...

[under a Book of Hours by the Brothers Grimm  
her embroidery is set aside, then taken up again as the wind draws the  
curtains lightly over the gold edged figures in the distance and she sings-]

like hummingbird wings  
minute pulsations floating over the flowers  
that always disappeared  
time and times, again transcend  
the lines in antique  
books with hand-coloured  
pictures for the fairytales

beyond historical disregard  
these near-glosses in the margins  
of God oh cherished God  
are like brushstrokes of snow-  
like the braille of my heart in His

century after century  
I will embroider swiftly  
with thread of cherry silk,  
while I remember  
or violet, on grenadine-  
the things the children said when they were small.

mary angela douglas august 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# No Appointment Necessary

Genesis 1: 16...he made the stars also.

I think it's so great you don't have to call God's secretary  
to make an appointment or see if he can fit you in.  
You don't have to go downtown to his huge office  
and wait uncomfortably by the magazines and the hundred thousand others  
waiting their turn dressed a whole lot better than you are  
to finally hear the receptionist say without even making eye contact:  
The One Who Made The Stars Also Will See You Now.  
and then you don't have to go in there to his office I mean  
and there he is still on the phone with someone really gold plated important  
can you imagine?  
you don't have to feel nervous when he gets off the line finally  
and keeps looking at his incredible humongo wristwatch with the moon and stars  
also  
emblazoned on it in blinding mother of pearl  
while you are talking trying to get through to him  
and you don't have to shift uncomfortably in your chair.  
Nobody makes you curtsy to him or wear long gloves.  
you don't even have to wait until he finishes dinner to get up from the table.  
so when people try to make you feel small the last one to be  
on a need to know basis basis  
the most non essential employee ever in everland  
just think:  
I can talk to the King of Heaven  
right now silently invisibly even while you're smirking at me  
or holding your nose  
and the RECORDING ANGEL IS WRITING IT ALL DOWN,  
mary angela douglas ` 15 October 2020??

Mary Angela Douglas

# No Magic Word

reading old books at home  
oh let the pages turn the wind  
the clocks wind down again

have there ever been angels  
like this before ask the clouds  
almost out loud

you are reading to yourself  
outside the world becomes snow  
becomes the trees that graze the skies

and all the reasons why disappear  
through the bubble wand haze  
bubbling up from your primer school days

and the primrose laden

and the fairy tales regained  
in primary colors  
the fingerpainting hours reclaimed

on glossy paper shiny to the touch.  
is it so much to ask to have  
the tinsel down from the Christmas attic

and it not even Christmas  
or the magic carpet rolled up in the corner  
suddenly spring open

though you have said  
no magic word.  
and have neglected your dusting all day.

mary angela douglas 29 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# No More The Nightingale Regales

no more the nightingale regales in the space between words

fending off death in the Emperor's garden

singing in lillied music, relieving the Soul

weaving the moonlight through the clouds irrevocably.

now the poets take pride in being plainspoken

so we have banished wings content to plod.

to build the house of sod

to leave the prairie meadowlarks the skies

tinted with roses. but not our children.

stick upon stone to leave this alone.

what the Romantics were known for.

what they died for.

how can I help but sigh.

how can I ever comply.

I was raised on Shelley

and on the 23rd Psalm

and I have qualms that truly

we have made

whole kingdoms disappear

becoming only integers.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# No Muted Merry Christmas Angels Sang

did they  
have a meeting earlier in the year  
and not invite the rest of us  
who still believe  
all sugarplumed, lay plans to have no  
muted Merry Christmas?

experimenting I went everywhere.  
I smiled. then I was welcome  
speaking of this and that.  
Then I said Merry Christmas!  
bonhomie scattered like geese  
in flight before gunshot.  
happy holidays they whimpered.  
or, the same to you, I'm sure,  
they sniffed.  
wanting to remain cool in the world wide  
cool club where God Knows Who  
makes the rules; I never did.  
my reputation for a Christmas song.

did I say something wrong  
my inner child laughed.  
oh let me say it louder then.  
MERRY CHRISTMAS.  
PEACE.  
GOOD WILL TO THOSE OF  
GOOD WILL  
on earth, on earth

quadrophonically now in  
surround surround surround surround sound  
in cathedral bells in neighborhood gingerbread;  
white lighted snowfall lamplit candlelit knowing  
Light has come into the world let me be Merry  
and know why

and never be ashamed.  
oh heralding angels weren't



oh, Christ the King  
Christ the King  
Christ the King  
is chiming snow bright in the air

ring out my evergreen children.

everywhere

mary angela douglas 22 december 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# No One Knows

when do we speak of what is real

when every company has its spiel

when all that's said is said to win

another first place ribbon again

another seat in the elegant chamber

another title out of danger

salaried to the hilt.

oh I wish things to be real as silt

for us to talk of days to come

when we have time beneath the sun

to watch the skies we used to know

to watch the fading sunset glow

to be alive in every wind

and speak to each as to a friend

and not for hidden advantage.

but now we speak yet we dont say

a single thing that's ours to say

but say whats needed just to sell

and so deprive the living well

the fountain that forever flows

within us all that no one knows.

mary angela douglas 1 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# No One Will Know Now How You Look At Clouds

no one will know now how you looked at clouds  
when they turned pink; how you could sink  
into books as into your own dream.

how the newest green of trees was all of  
Spring to you (not counting the roses.)  
how you found violets early on

without anyone telling you to.  
and if they knew, what would they do  
with such knowledge

but turn from you or gossip or construe...  
even that would make no difference.  
toward all perspicacity you were like

a lake that seemed to hold the moon of your own soul  
asleep or awake there but really,  
some kind of fairytale conspiracy

that kept from view

the still invisible you  
elsewhere  
floating above sheer cruelty

so infinitely.

mary angela douglas 13 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Non-Generic Valentine To Christ The Lord, Making No Name For Himself

sic transit gloria mundi

"And now thou art set wide ope', the spear's sad art  
Lo! Hath unlocked thee at the very heart..."

Richard Crashaw I Am the Door

without a name unless a mocking one

on this green globe, my Mockingbird  
t  
they tore your paper heart in two

gathering accolades but not

for you: for you, the ones with the arrows piercing through

with a piercing that just wouldn't quit in the

valentine classrooms.

or before the Sanhedrin.

and shimmy shim shimmering at the Awards

the glitzy parties and the funerals

they've banished you from the cortege

without a nod from Personnel

or caterers who barely said, oh,

Chief among Mourners when will

mourning be done  
they tore your paper heart in two  
and beat you with the faery twigs you made  
burst into light for Mary's delight  
when you were cherry-caroled young  
oh branch of utter loveliness my Knight  
who gathered the stars armful by armful; the children, too-  
thinking, now they will know what Beauty is.  
but they kept crowning you with jokes,  
strip tease routines  
on late night TV or in the arenas  
of the proud, the free  
or in the high school hallways near the lockers  
murmuring, anyone else here to cheer for  
while in the shadows  
You tore your paper soul in two  
the one you made just for them  
the one you labored over for so long, thinking,  
now they will know what Love is.  
red lily streaming on three hills and sparrow trimmed:  
the glimmering triptych done.

now in the season of the witch  
where no doves coo, I remember how  
true love was reft with no rose red,  
no violet blue:  
the silhouette in a midnight garden before the Maligners  
after the tip-off from a sweetheart sham.  
and everywhere you are led away  
sheer poetry is slammed-  
while we bicker over our rights to the Runway  
still gossiping in the continual rains  
after your deluge-  
and gambling for your Shoes.  
and this is no song for the overcrowded stage  
or thwarted kings still craving your Star-  
but for those picking up their  
soured-cherry game-pieces never  
and managing to say between evictions:  
from the Beginning, You and the light-drenched Aprile,  
My Lord and my God.  
or all these paper hearts will come apart  
in these continual rains

on a day red carpets are stowed away  
and the faux screens are shorn  
of the stored up weeping they've retrained.  
now is the green hour still vivid with starlight  
and no heart's ease.  
oh my Everlasting Meteor.  
across my banished heart  
your forever's still inscribed  
beyond the sky where the barbed crows gather  
in a stratosphere worn out with lies.

mary angela douglas february 10,11,14 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Northern Landscapes Of The Soul

caught in the northern landscapes of the soul  
have some perished?  
were they remembered?

this was the history I wanted to know  
water coloured, a little blurred in the frost:  
the last message from the lost.

but here we only trace the navigations  
on the page in bright colours and it  
seems such a breeze to cross such seas

to memorize shipping weights and tides  
and dates and never to know  
until we're out there on our own

where expeditions often fail  
just how it feels, really,  
when you are setting sail.

Mary Angela Douglas 1 January 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Nostalgia

all Your strawberry languages, your berry plumped  
vines and bushes and the elderberry melt of the sun  
through the pines green guardians of my angels

playing in the sandbox, dreamed my mother;  
all Your delicate enflowered languages, your camellia phrasing  
on the piano, sighed my Grandmother to my little

sister ah the magnolia in the silver bowl and the  
gardenia insistence of your snow bright isn't it  
almost Christmas sheen of chiffon before the

parties I asked my sister but she was heart-sweet on  
her cherry bright scales sailing on Chopin oh  
the elegance of the medium-small

dog with the pom pom tail wagging, smiling from

curly ear to ear crumbling fried chicken  
under the modern table  
hush my dear (my dears they all said)

to me in my sleep from out of the depths of God  
who carries His jewels home  
as if they were stars  
as if they were pearls

oh they are...

mary angela douglas 16 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Not Stepping In The Same River Twice

how odd when revisiting

the places that you knew

to find so unexpectedly

they don't remember you

as if in leaving

the space for you had closed

and others wandered in your place

and others wore your clothes

it's like no dent in water

a former person said

whenever you walk out the door

it's closing on your head

seamless and so silver the water shows no change

it's you that deep inside your mind

yourself must rearrange.

mary angela douglas 5 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Not The Map Of Milky Jade

[to my Grandmother, Lucy W. Young]

you kept your heart in a box of jade  
and the trees were jade then, too  
when the leaves froze;

frost, from an early spring  
and fated to break in two  
like the porcelain skies.

we knew  
the lakes were jade  
and glazed while we stayed indoors;

all April  
the flowers grew, under the ice.  
and we who were small never knew

at all why you were so sad.  
this is the description of a landscape;  
it is not a guide.

mary angela douglas 14 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Not To Be Driven Back Again

I stepped over the milk white paling  
and the song rounded as cherry o and through  
the emerald refraction of the leaves

in the waters of a dream  
then I was free.  
there with no words to be understood

no shields to be secured  
nor causes left.  
there must surely be

that place  
a little way away  
from where we used to gaze

small children through the  
panes of frost.  
are you lost

someone failing to understand  
will ask us there  
on the cusp

and we'll say nothing that we must  
of cherry round  
nor sing but stray

and know that we've found it  
and must haste away  
not to be driven back again.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Not Yet

we breathed in the snow-crystal air  
and were not wounded;  
the scent of flowers, unaware

of where they were blooming;  
the moss green winds, the realms  
that could not end,

all this was allowed  
though not officially.  
still, our wishes sailed

and we watched them long  
after they were sent  
and waited, in their advents,

collected within ourselves,

invisible crowns on our heads  
as in the fairy tales;  
exiled as birds

we could not return  
to land yet  
in a human form.

mary angela douglas 17 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Nothing Is More Beautiful Than The Sky

it's everything you dreamed of  
and what you wanted too  
the apex of the center

and taking every cue  
it's everything they told you  
and more than any knew

but sometimes  
you could throw it all away  
to begin a different way

having nothing in your hand  
no need to understand how to climb  
how to make your life sublime

the simplest thing is true  
and it dawns when you are through  
with proving what you prove

sometimes, to a discerning eye  
nothing is more beautiful  
than the sky.

mary angela douglas 28 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas





they shake their heads at you, at best. and me, for keeping you even in the  
cupboards, on the windowsills...the walk-in-closets. in cardboard boxes when I  
have no money for  
shelves. down wishing wells...catalogued like rarest butterflies...and all along the  
rabbit hole walls that Alice dropped into one summer day evicted into her dream.

you're discarded at the libraries, out of date, and carted away in green  
wheelbarrows, red or yellow fairytale blue oh Andrew Lang in the rain making  
way for the downloadable;  
barred by the gate keepers from entry  
into the bereaved schoolrooms, perhaps one day-

or even now, some of you. but where  
in my own mind can I not find you and pick you up  
old dusty friends, -you never ending stories

Here comes the Big Nothing to tear at your throat  
warned Michael Ende from his dangerous Storybook  
ramparts -  
and trample you on the floor of the World's new nursery

but I will sing to you and bind your wounds as soon as  
the storm troopers leave or the unlettered landlords who say this clutter's got to  
disappear.

you're been snatched from the fire, so often my living brands

even farther than Bradbury's quicker-than-the wounded-eye-could-see,  
reprieved and memorized forever on far outlander's shores...by personas non  
grata.

we will embody you, come what may, exactly as you were:  
foxed and worn out in all weathers, carried by your owners under the

glittering trees to the cherry orchard's felling, into the tea shops crumbling with  
the biscuits, reveled in on the bus; or under the sound of guns or hidden music,  
half-heard from starry distances

by infants shifting in their sleep on the opulent waters

with Wynken, Blynken and Nod...

outfoxed, the hunters are, for now, among us still, not finished with you yet they  
scheme

to see you rolled out now like serviceable dough  
you could make anything of, or nothingr, really...

flatter than flatbread

on the e-readers. repackaged with no package at all;  
even the snails have better and Turtles that live a hundred years or more  
at no high speed in the sea.

I imagine my books shot at dawn and shoveled into a mass grave of

information or

in prison jumpsuits, colorless, stuffed in the cattle car, and then they take  
the Rabbit's Watch, the Cheshire Cat's Smile and the books in the tunnel  
as Alice herself goes down never again to be seen at tea or reciting her lessons.

pietas under glass, every one of you I want to weep:

where is the body? where, the soul?

where is wisdom loved of all her children then?

it's difficult to tell you all apart

collectively construed this way and everyone knows who's reading who  
and even when the pages flutter on the screen so realistically  
you cannot reach inside

to turn them, by yourself a thing that toddlers used to do-  
or watch them open in the breeze...

mottled in autumn sunlight, in the long clear shadows of Eden's Trees  
beloved, longed for, still...

your personal histories on this earth were lavish

we imagine second, third, fourth-hand colorfully bookstall to bookstall, traced  
and wondered at...who knew you? when? who wrote in pencil here or there in

scant margins made more beautiful or in sepia handwriting on your flyleaf.

Whose ghost is reading over my shoulder, wishing I would turn the page  
oftener...What did your author go through on this side of the Vale..in how many  
editions...

will we ever know the truth

that's bypassed now by dry commands: click on this link and criminals, leaving  
no fingerprints obliterate and digitize (thinking they do a noble thing to the

crackling patina of your pages, my beloveds) -

to what end?

manipulating the data

or shifting it room to room, swift hands, unseen

(but somewhere, in the castle) from cloud to unweeping cloud and rattling  
the keys to It All eventually (they must be manifold by now)

come out come out wherever you are in charge of the glass trapeze...

the dubious net of the crystal soldiers snooping at your keyhole.

I'm not conditioned to love at all the way it's going

as though it had never been another way

and we're disinherited from the things we used to love

the way we loved them for a long, long time in two, or is it three

keystrokes from now...goodbye, my bookshelves in the hall

crumbling, by the moon faced clock embossed with stars; the vast illusions;  
the mermaids surging back

into the ether; the Romantics weeping where the shining trees  
are shorn.

the sea of knowledge, too, you bore for centuries at the full...and beautifully  
illustrated...

have the folios of all dreams expired?

does it matter to you I mean that God who lives in you is not capable of being  
shoved into a Screen?

before it's all over they'll

spoon it out drop by drop to us with eye droppers. to us! who used to own it for  
ourselves when we were little-

inalienably pasting the sequins onto the

brown-paper, homemade book covers, cut with pinking shears;

or using too much glue (to make it look like jewels encrusted on the fairytales,  
we thought) .

instinctively we knew- why shouldn't there be sparkling there to match the  
sparkling

that we felt inside for you...

scrawling our jumbo sized red crayon valentines on 100 year old reprints

or on the Monets Mama taped on the rented walls?  
with the same childhood faith we traced the Letters of the Alphabet  
between the four-lane pale blue dotted highways  
of our writing tablets, eagle-eyed.

we want to love you, you're our own, we know it! and, how could you be  
otherwise, than the best of Toys: decorated, crowned, played with as in paper-  
doll kingdoms you can't leave us, can you? reading you to our dolls so earnestly

or it's early spring  
when we're practicing our eternities in the sunshine with our best pals  
(next to the Bears) even at nap-time on the pink chenille pallet  
fighting sleep under the oak trees in the back yard  
just to keep  
reading you, Little Golden Books, perhaps...  
or the Books of Wonder.

and Grandmother said I know you're not asleep, girls stop  
'playing possum' when we flung the books aside and closed our fluttering  
eyelids, quick! minutes after hearing her footsteps down the hall  
coming nearer.  
but we were never in trouble since she was the best book fairy godmother of  
them all...

and now I wonder in my anguish, why  
they're taking you down along with the Tree these New Years Eves and  
people I don't even know or understand keep saying,  
Ding-Dong, The Wicked Book Is Dead.

they dream you'll lose  
your lustre entirely, never coming back again, on India-ink paper, bound in fine  
white  
leather and crowned with lilies of the valley or small white roses  
at all the weddings in the language of King James.  
it's your denouement

the technical wizards say and the intellectuals in all the magazines  
for twenty five years now. and the journals turn their backs on friends  
they loved their whole life long (or claimed to) so easily.

and I think of all the books they must have read, degree by degree: how terrible

their  
betrayal is, as the ovens open; how can they not care  
that you're in the candy shingled house?

my God, they put you there.  
and we've got a new Witch now, or two or three  
or millions everywhere

with the oven door wide open..  
others seized you, long before, and sought to  
tear you from our dreams and deepest secrets;

those who loved you best, oh lovely ones  
could hear the screams when Beauty bore the lash; we bore it too.  
but you survived. scrolled and unscrolled, carried wilderness by wilderness, alive,  
revered oh ark of the jeweled Covenant, oh Shining Cloud (go with me, now) :

poured over by the scribes, or forged on our own Rosetta stones, inside,  
our anguish carved cuneiform on the Heart's own tablet  
oh sweet, sad inner life...clear water spills over Helen Keller's living fingers  
Keat's wild surmise-

something that men have died for endlessly or dreamed upon-  
like Charlemagne, keeping The City of God sweet scented under a tasseled pillow  
while he slept.

in what kingdom could you ever end?

as Faulkner said in his best suit, bemused,  
with his reedy voice quavering slightly  
before the Nobel crowds  
long after we are gone from here:

our language will survive...

Chief Joseph showed the same in vintage photographs;  
etched in his face...the sun, the winds the rains astonishing the photo lens,  
tracks in the snow of his eyes unvanquished yet-  
not ever...

in the beginning was the Word and it was set like a sun in golden pictures,  
uttered in silver....never passing away from us entirely when Sharansky on the

cup of freedom after 10 years of hell said  
to the gulag guards releasing him  
oh, wait, not yet, you've got something I want back  
(his small book of Psalms from Avital) ...

oh my dear, my dear golden apples sliding down the vast, the high glass  
mountains-  
will you disappear,  
forever out of reach?  
will the princess never retrieve you in this story?

abide. fast falls the eventide on the  
art of the book and undisguised:  
beauty on beauty realized

outwardly and inwardly composed, in the typescripts of the dreaming: free,  
illuminated, living, whole-  
by Williams Morris, William Blake, Rossetti  
and others I don't know

in multicoloured cultures came looking out of the same Lost Love to find, o Heart  
beyond Mind  
the initialed page of His First Light,  
yearning for us still.

and by it do all our best runners run the Heavenly race set before them; whole  
centuries flying past them while the Soul flared like a torch held by His hand,  
page  
by hard fought page transcribed

...in a noble tower disparaged now, by purity of heart to will one thing (said  
Kierkegaard) sustained by visions the beautiful do not fall away that easily.

now, in a supercilious wind...they think they'll pack it all in;  
scattering the leaves forever edged in gold  
in search of something else  
because it's blow-you-away-like-the-huffing Wolf  
time; the latest update slinking through the trees though it can't sing a note of  
its own-

jeweled and cunningly wrought, so much better than the real nightingale  
don't you think? they coo at Court...

oh I don't think so ...

sometimes I loved you best, just pocket-sized, or nursery rhymed,  
with art nouveau borders; in paperback taken into battle,  
ordered four for a dollar from a Scholastic newsprint catalog-

arriving in brown paper and twine: what a present to open  
(even if you do know what it is) . or coffee stained on the coffee table beside the  
picture magazines or ghost ridden, purple prosed for the  
antique stage and prompting, better than a pirates hoard in

postage stamp apartments where our reading shadows on the  
walls loomed larger: dreaming, almost mythical,  
forging bravely, gladly on..through secretarial days that followed

or in the stores where the floorwalker walked from floor to floor, making sure no  
one was reading at the cash registers...in between customers or on the factory  
line. we all told stories in our heads to stay alive.  
you taught us how. even Peary at the Pole brought you along.

we ordinary people bought you with pocket money and couldn't believe our luck.  
or our eyes when you made it into the movies.  
or we skipped lunch to find you, happily in the nearest bookshop, waiting just for  
us:  
the magic book as yet unknown that drew our eyes...as if by angels drawn there.

my treasure-trove over the wanderer's sea brought home (to me!) now in my  
heart your golden letters sail  
down all my childhood lanes after all these rains and rainbow-ringed I

gaze with happiness again into your small looking glass puddles, enchanted still  
or stand stock-still admiring on a farther shore, small paper boats, where go ye  
now. down darker rivers?

out of sight?

down a mysterious waterway you did not waver,  
sole tin soldier I think I loved you most of all with your  
heart that melted into a star, a spangle..and other tales as well,

how numerous your colours clanged, Arthurian-splendied,  
taken from the stone again and again



summer after summer even when it didn't rain.

I sang three ships and more come sailing into my bright harbour. and I'm still  
rich as the Little Women by the kitchen stove baking the hot potatoes  
they'll carry in their muffs to keep their  
hands warm in the cold.

or leaning on the baby piano with one gold rose on the puckered green silk

singing Christmas, home and the Dove and the pale blue Testaments, green,  
ivory or

maroon to keep you brave in the

New England household drafts

that blew in the snow, Death's sudden Angel and the War that drew the Fathers  
from the hearths

I can't leave you there, alone, sweet pilgrims...I'm in the same dream with you,  
even now. and munching Josephine's apples...borrowing her writing paper...

I think of immigrant pioneers when fording the widening, muddy streams who  
cast off sacks of flour or beans to lighten the load westward and kept  
Shakespeare, Dickens, the Holy Bible and the parlour organ wrapped in quilts

in the wagon with the rose bush slips. thank you, Bess Streeter Aldrich- for the  
lantern and the children playing run sheep run the afternoon that  
Abbie slipped away...while the bacon sizzled in the pan

I hear her sing The Lady

of the Lea on the Other Side

for the prairie grass bending farther down the Lane

new world most wondrously dressed and

exceedingly beautiful...

and mothers or fathers soothed their children everywhere, turning the fairy tale  
page just one more time and then,

goodnight. sweet book, goodnight.

flights of angels dare not take you to your rest

I don't know how it ends, yet!

I think of all who loved you

ages and ages past:

kings and queens illuminated, commissioning Books of Hours with golden flowers  
and

poppies in their margins, or lapis lazuli cornflowers opening sumptuously

...and after Gutenberg, children reading comic books in the dark with what must  
have been  
cat's eyes (but that was much later)

all those who died for you  
to be translated: they set you free like paper doves to flutter in every household  
far from castle walls  
with the Paraclete and the butter for the bread.

and translated then, by God as all must be, they paid for your freedom and for  
ours  
one way or the other, Death be not proud in the words of John Donne.  
the translators found the hunters.  
Death will find them too.

oh crystal screen, behind, beyond the Princess dreams and dreams.  
you cannot keep her, you Peter Pumpkin eater, You-  
Be Thou Not Proud.

I think of Solzhenitsyn in his  
cell and other prisoners as well  
deprived of books making them up, instead

(like others in the Gulag) in their heads on half a ration's scrap of bread and  
rancid soup  
bending further and further their bent backs and every line  
by precious line on a crossbow of invisible gold drawn back in whispers

to yourself or the trusted few: don't go, don't let the arrow fly not yet.  
they're killing the archers day by day, my friends my vanishing friends...  
oh who will hold this newborn poem this time  
there's not even a manger hush my baby don't

you cry if that mockingbird don't sing they'll hear you  
following the inward star. oh hidden Magi, journey still, please stay alive  
even in thin quilted jackets or in cheap editions, falling apart, in samizdat, in  
triplicate

with Herod hunting on the nights that he can't sleep;  
a thousand mirroring Herods by his side, and a thousand more sense something's

living ...about to be crowned.  
but they won't find you now  
though it's not that long ago

imprisoned writers wrote in matchsticks, counting on abacuses the indriven  
strophes  
in codes of their devising -stanzas made to look like birds in the air recoiling  
where they were, mid-flight, before the shot, throwing the censors off the trail  
and gathering it in again in midnights inevitably looped

through inner light alone and improvising wherever  
whenever they could -between arrests-  
or when they could not-

making rosaries out of stale bread (skipping the one  
'meal' of the day) to harden bead by bead- they prayed-  
so Solzhenitsyn said

and prayed through ancient winters longer than  
Earth's geological ages-  
his, fashioned with a dark red heart by a friend.  
solitary, hungry, frozen to the permafrosted End still they fed on you

or what they remembered of you in the dazed archives of their souls fighting to  
keep you,  
there, alive...oh my books

and you there, giving me sarcastic looks perhaps, aren't you?  
and judging me harshly (bless you, if you're not)  
for even having them at all in my cramped house  
much less, in this abundance.

do you even know what they represent?  
how legions of people died to make and keep them  
alive, for centuries?

making their souls from this

keeping it for you like heirloom pearls or one last word  
before I go out of the loop of your Future

passing it all on....

remapping the territories, blueprints  
like Bukovsky, building a castle in his mind where he kept the civilities alive  
retelling the Count of Monte Cristo for the dazzled thugs

just ten years in who'd never heard of it,  
before...

or Mandelstam in the transit camp of his fleeting, floating world the poet stalked  
by death and loved by Beauty and childlike, doomed...  
Fear and the Muse kept taking turns in the nightmare

in a luminous room that was already snowing angels even then- when Anna  
came to call at Voronezh, the place of exile.  
and the skull, the darkening sun. the figure of the weeping king.

was she cameo pale through blinding tears unshed? since there is nothing left to  
cry for, then,  
when all seems irretrievable, gone...or going soon- for entire nations within the  
nations of numbed feeling, for the soul within the soul still seeking shelter,  
farther on...

Akhmatova wrote her best poem, lamenting him while  
mourning Poetry, itself.

When they came for him in the kitchen, later on it was-'Maytime, flowering'"-said  
Nadezhda in her last letter to him unopened.

that paper flower with no water left to bloom in-  
later igrew into orchards in the West

and his poems came back to life and were  
brought back to the Pantheon, so that Anna marveled:  
how could we know that  
Poetry would be that strong but now...

whole seconds will freeze the eyebrows off the face of Time  
and the pages of  
unfinished manuscripts all hold their breath...not knowing if they will live or die,  
wrapped by the widows in linen, spiced and entombed.

they have taken you away, forever...the poems that won't be born now...

he snatched his Dante lightning quick from the little shelf that seemed to be  
receding from him in great sadness, a miracle  
of presence of mind they failed to inspect that thoroughly

before they dragged him off. I believe this legend.  
you went with him to a mass grave after some time and shone there,

lighting the way between the worlds...a small volume.  
three poets turning in that fire (counting Dante and Virgil)  
until your end that no one's sure of-

and a fourth as in Daniel it is written...like unto the Son of man...a Poet, too  
with wild bright lilies in his hands would not burn through...  
and 'manuscripts don't burn' was heard in every language...

echoing...ever-after them, as in Bulgakov...

I think of ghetto libraries in Warsaw  
where they salvaged what they could leaving home  
that unexpectedly and going, where? they carried the baby in the

shawl with the roses and stashed you, library of one-

under the creaking floorboards or attics of their doom one page at a time I  
imagine...

still reading Your lines on their palms (asleep or awake) and cherishing  
their children, to the last trusting hour: they demonstrated best I think

the life of beauty insisted on at the mouth of hell on earth,  
reading the babies something lovely to the end  
so their souls were well-inscribed

for the next life coming down on them too soon  
already in the room where you were reading...  
we will meet then, on the other side...

or in Petersburg where they buried the sun said Mandelstam, softly  
the slaves whose names we do not know  
risked all for you and blow by blow struck off the chains, alphabet letter-by-letter  
by slim candlelight or moonlight's thread, or meteor showered night by inner  
night

they traced with trembling fingertip...the open page denied them  
(not by God- or mysterious friends) -  
it must have been that some escaped with wisdom won

this way but others died  
the cruelest death among the many deaths nested  
within them where a homeland should have been (and was)

how could anyone human grow used to it but  
this was the last strange lesson learned on earth for you:  
feeling the blast of the hunters press too near you persevered  
praying it wouldn't be this way  
until

the Book dropped down beside you- wounded, too, knocked out of your hands  
by human mongrels...lunging for the kill...  
you stepped out on the ledge of Morning...

and Phyllis Wheatley in an early scene of the  
world-wide theatre of the absurd  
between idyllic spells of reading

sat there, simply like a Queen unselfconsciously splendid  
hands folded in her lap (I imagine)  
shawled in her own dreams fastened with the brooch of sheer Poetry,

interrogated as if she were a fraud or at best,  
a carnival's freak because they just couldn't believe  
she wrote her poems herself.

are you taking her books to the dustbin too?  
and crunching them, big net machine

the ones she wrote, the ones she read?  
or haven't you got it all encrypted yet

and colorless, smashed it all in there,

dear captives on the glass trapeze, let go a little longer-  
and find again, the world you knew before or never found,  
within...

it isn't 'the book' Cold Something wants to kill-  
it's you...reading it by yourself, thinking your own thoughts out  
out of view...clear eyed in the commotion.

not yet ready to buy...

lose nothing. surrender nothing.  
I'm the Ghost of Christmas Past...,  
keep all your Christmases well and on your own shelf  
not just the virtual ones

or I'll keep haunting you, my friends  
because these are my last requests:  
hold books within your hands and to your heart  
your whole life through

till gold gashed on the morning air at last  
at first not knowing

You are there oh my Chevalier (Hopkins named You best)  
we'll step out from indignities

and into Your Eternal Spring  
with every manuscript intact  
and every thought and feeling back

we'll find again:  
unpublished here on earth,

the stitch not stitched in time, the poetry, confiscated or ignored,  
row by shining row restored on shelves of Pearl; the lands of gold

between two covers told and retold  
to generations going off to war and never coming home

are there again and not erased  
among the green, the red, the blue and the yellow, dear, old Andrew Lang...

oh hearts unguessed of and unknown-  
turn again, like Dick Whittington...  
finding yourselves at last, at home in the

Libraries of Heaven...

mary angela douglas

Mary Angela Douglas



# Now We Are Crossing The Pink Part Of The Map

now we are crossing the pink part of the map  
I say to my sleeping soul and next the mint green  
the lilac countries

there were no wars here, no sudden shifts  
in the earth but everything was  
the way you feel

when you are a little girl  
and they show you the map  
and you think to yourself

it's all candy coloured  
a candy coloured world  
and you feel glad inside

so here in your dream  
it has become the same time of day  
and you are on the train

traversing the candy tinted countryside  
and your mother is there  
your Grandparents

a hamper with very good sandwiches in it  
the little toffees we loved  
a whole thermos of coffee

with the most perfect cream  
I want to stay in this dream  
your soul murmurs I want to stay

but you may not stay a guardian angel smiles  
wavering in the light of day  
that streams through the white curtains

mary angela douglas 22 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# O Crystal Heart Of France

to Joan of Arc

o crystal heart of France  
the heart is broken  
but it cannot shatter

your frayed lily banner in my dreams  
still shines with its first snow of the  
season's individual light

and I imagine you  
freed from all strife in Heaven  
standing stock still in  
the gentian fields

your bright skirts swirling in  
planetary breezes,  
newly enchanted by the Fairy Tree-

your father's fleecy sheep just  
over the green cloud of a hill  
and your mother  
gives you fresh baked

bread with butter and honey  
remembering all the times you  
ran away;

blessing the dual sunrise in your eyes.

yet.  
no matter how many times  
I've sightread your brief song  
I cannot turn that page  
so hard and bitter it seems to me:

you crowned the King  
but doubting who he was

he let you die  
whose heart they could not burn. \*  
in my dream the words appeared:  
oh crystal heart of France  
the heart is broken  
and will not shatter

but kings are made of glass-

mary angela douglas 19 october 2009

\*it is a matter of historical fact reported by the executioner  
that they could not reduce the heart of Joan of Arc to ashes even  
though several attempts were made with pitch and sulphur after the fact:

It was thrown into the river Seine.

Mary Angela Douglas

# O Is It A Rose Red Sorrow We Are Made To Bear

o is it a rose red sorrow we are made to bear  
in wisps of dreams that cannot be interpreted anywhere  
I set my myths aside and weep

but cannot understand why is it the lovely cannot keep and  
fall from us so far, so deep, and disappear  
when we toil daily just to keep them here.

this is called death we learn it on our own  
but nothing can prepare us when the shock hits home  
when what's on loan to us only, in this world

is simply gone;  
the red rose sorrow fading into white into  
a Light we do not see as yet

a presence yearning we will not forget  
because the weeping clouds it over

mary angela douglas 29 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# O Won't You Remember The Popsickle Days

o won't you remember the popsicle days  
the orange and cherry summer nights  
lemon, the lime beaded afternoons

and the purple, the purple of the grape ice  
defying all definitions of chilled through loveliness.  
and then the triple decker in the cartoons of

Tubby and Lulu chocolate vanilla strawberry  
stirring tri coloured flag of childhood; beloved brain freeze  
of the sidewalk jumping

leapfrogging over the cracks not to  
break our mother's backs so the rhyme flows and flows  
around our treasury of days well spent.

oh for the same golden coins later on  
the chocolate ones wrapped and caged in a golden net  
and priced so reasonably really, ten cents.

or fresh paperbacks come in the mail today today  
brown paper crisp and neat string wrapped  
and we will learn everything beautiful

and float and kick in the aqua pool  
with the best of them  
and then it will be fall red and golden over all

and we'll still be happy singing along  
swinging along on the sidewalks  
until snows and Christmas

catch up with us the holly laden  
lad and maiden when  
our shadows for a while will

stop growing and our mothers  
stop letting out the hems.

mary angela douglas 6 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ode To Our Dog Back Then Or We Had A Dog Like That, Too, Charlie Schulz

[to Poochum-Woochum-Tika-Takka-Too-chum Ondline Ladale]

mix and match paperdoll wardrobe outfits,  
interchangeable board game pieces  
make for fun in summer

or out  
and bubble wands  
with the concomitant green or red

plastic bottle with the yellow label;  
the comic coloured bubbles  
over our heads with

o clouds, that sailed over us then  
and the new moon lawn  
the paperbacks on their way

(o yay!) in the afternoon mail-  
our little dog wags her tail  
knowing we want to play

and we'll come rushing down the  
porch steps on our way  
to sparkling circles in the yard

she'll take just to show us all  
that running is Heaven,  
oh doggie on fire like the wind  
you run run run just like it says in the readers- and

just this short  
of the U.S. Poodle Olympic Team  
for 1961.

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015



Mary Angela Douglas

# Off-Kilter, Spinning Happily

slightly off balance in my poem  
I tilt at rainbows becoming the Top  
that spins all colours ice cream edged

and frothed all at the same Time or  
nursery-rhymed in the fairy tale,  
the wheel itself

humming and humming in the neglected  
tower and are all her hours made of flowers  
sing the children, meaning the Princess...

this is the sum of it, I try to say

but the words float underwater, away,  
you know how it is on the  
spindrift days you

are dreaming outloud but still  
somehow,  
no one can hear you.

mary angela douglas 6 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Dark Horse Nebulae

oh Dark Horse nebulae

I'll come riding in on my stick horse with its sequined reins

its mysterious felt eye

its bridle of mother of pearl

or wearing the mint green tiny brooch of Pegasus

just like my sister's we'll both visit Gemini

or just stand under the crystal snowfalls again

predicting the nearness of Christmas

the blue blue icicles on the holly bush

the Christmas star finding our house again.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2020

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Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Ghosts Of My Music, When Will We Depart

oh ghosts of my music  
when will we depart  
I will not leave without you.

here on the old rolls the census of your notes  
has been taken. they will not hold you.  
the composers in plaster of paris mold

the days into a kind of snow in my Grandmother's studio.  
and everything is made vast.  
oh may bright feelings last

perhaps you prayed  
over the etudes your contemporaries  
cast aside.

weeping into these transcriptions  
as if they were your griefs, est.  
and I have heard your violins, your pianos

the flowering glissandos and the harp's  
descrescendo in order to outlast these deserts  
under your invisible palms.

mirage-like you are not.  
more solid than their schemes  
who live to banish you.

as if they could  
who breathed Heaven into our exile  
as if you were a Heart

and chartered the countries where we  
joy, apart.

mary angela douglas 26 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Giotto! All Your Colors Are

oh giotto! all your colors are  
standing guard at my heart  
how can they ever

leave

your rows on rows of  
stalwart angels

I'm living for  
celestial repetitions  
of antique olive of

gold of a rose beyond  
all roses-of the most serious azure

mary angela douglas 14 february 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh God If We Must

oh God if we must  
crawl on our hands and knees to  
nothing that was ever a shrine

will we still be the ones  
you made the stars for?  
almost asked a child asleep

prescient and dreamy eyed.  
not all your ragged roads can  
end like this, smiled the Scarecrow

deep inside; though conscious  
the taste of sawdust still abides  
while sampling the royal ice cream.

and it's not the way we planned it,  
the guards insist while kicking up  
more than the powdered snow

in this: your final winter.  
I won't collate these sorrows,  
I won't was my clerical litany-

tuned to the tune of the copy machines

while the lions come and go  
leaseless as the sun, unticketed  
unwarned with only a minor thorn

now and then, in a swiping paw

mary angela douglas 22 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh God Wedged In, I Praise

oh God wedged in this slightly dingy place  
oh I praise you that I am still alive  
and that the cracks in your ceiling-Sky

still let the light in which does not subside  
so that here amidst your blues and greens  
and even the obscene crimes of this world

we know that souls on fire in their beatitude  
may still look down on us,  
and long for Earth;

ah, clouded in mists  
when viewed from afar  
and the Space capsule door ajar

in dreams,  
perhaps the astronauts wander home  
and are given cherry pie

once more  
that doesn't defy gravity.

Mary Angela Douglas 15 May 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Life Of The Deep Dish Cherry Pies And The Sudden Discrepancies

oh lifetime of cherry pies, of the sudden discrepancies.  
you, with your quicksilver yearning to fly but  
stay cried the child through tears for the years of

the mama departing to get groceries; imagining  
she would not return.  
and she sat down on a sunny step overcome

on this thin porch; too young yet to tell the difference  
between one goodbye and another;  
feeling that to disappear round the corner

was not to be ever coming back.  
and so, that was you: in your small blue dress, disconsolate.  
prescient, perhaps considering what

happened later.

what cannot be learned is second sight though you  
fling the leaves of shadows down  
the dream trees growing out of time

she said she said to the wind  
outside the school choruses;  
the December madrigals

I'll wait for you here and  
standing still in a circle of small stones  
that mark these rooms in the dust.

sweep with pine twigs all of this, you must  
she sighed to herself  
not only on Saturdays that the

marigold light will filter through the afternoons  
and laugh and play that it may  
always be this way was her final



word on the subject where we said 'no backs, no backs'  
even while playing jacks; even then,  
the sorbet sun would be already melting

where only the small birds heard and chirped  
in a fond, green answering music:  
'forever. always...

Mary Angela Douglas 12 September 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Lord Let Me Be Accurate As To The Colours

oh Lord let me be accurate as to the colours of your skies  
as they marbelize and shift and glow with altering lights  
and not to the outer night where there can be

no sunrise, nor eyes expecting anything true  
let me be specific as to the hue of the golden apples  
in the far away myth and as to the

child in the grass in the pink dress  
picking the small, pearled flowers  
and gazing for hours

at unseen angels.  
I will describe their halos  
and the fresoes all of this makes

on the surface of lakes.  
let me not forsake the least fleck of  
your beauty there or anywhere really

year after slipshod year

but turn my back on the cruel, the tactless  
the supercilious world  
destined to disappear.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2016

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Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Skylark Word In A Prison Of Bones Contained

we have the names of things still  
but not their former richness, allusion.  
Springs without crocus or rose  
Heaven without God.  
we have misspent words the words of miscreants  
we have counterfeit and not the gold largesse  
of words so beautifully careless flung over the stars.  
pauses, caesura where we could revive. Selah.  
in the kingdoms of previous poetry  
when words were still alive and we read them  
honey dripping down the day candle wax down  
mysterious green bottles...  
skylark blue and winging  
gemstone encrusted how I trusted you oh fairy tale way  
letters conveyed with the King's own seal.  
barter barter for the green green wave

what have we come to.  
codes. hand gestures for  
get me out of here  
i am a captive. they have laid down my soul  
and pitched pennies over it and ground in the dust such garnet  
till I am rust and a rusty gate with no hinge.  
poetry with a hand held sign  
in the back of a speeding junk heap.  
tell me why what was silver is now dross  
what was blooming is now withered  
and the unwatered shoots.  
why the word that fell from your lips like pearl  
has turned to sludge.

mary angela douglas 2 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh Starry Word

oh starry Word how is it you are broken  
so that the dew is splintered in the grass  
and all my angels pass

going the wrong way home.  
how low down to the ground  
I cannot bow

to those who think you came  
to be continually mocked  
mock orange blossoms I

would scatter before you  
small perfumes, antidotes  
or is it too late.

my fate to be  
always the last one on the scene.  
how vivid are thy wounds

beyond the life of roses torn-  
and bound  
to the mast of distant laughter

while we in uncertain poses  
shatter the rainbows in the glass  
still watching our angels pass.

mary angela douglas 4 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh That The Clear Eyed Singers Would Return

oh that the clear-eyed singers would return  
I heard them sigh  
but I knew then as I know now

that if they had oh if they had  
snow driven they would have been  
sleet ridden and shoved and kicked

from the dais, certainly, oh and hounded.  
oh that the clear eyed singers  
would find an oblique way, an opaque day

to sing where the herods  
could not hunt them at their ease where  
yet dreams would come thick as

plumset branches lovely, lovelier,  
loveliest who can choose  
in a secret orchard brighter than all Mays

by another way the wise men departed  
and were saved.

mary angela douglas 16 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh World Where It Often Happens

oh world where it often happens  
the fairytale's bitten off at the stem  
so that it can

no longer flourish or  
the rainbow bales are pitched  
too far from here

so that the horses cannot feed  
and run away  
and we must run after them

coaxing them back with impossible apples  
all made of gold enwrought of former  
happiness ah

tilted moons over the village  
and lilacs all afternoon  
we watched you blown in

a silver wind and all this  
even without pretending!  
will it not come to pass

then sighed the older child  
the older man, alas,  
the lady with one rubied shoe

at last at the last  
sunset hour  
where it still might all happen anyway...

I can't say otherwise

mary angela douglas ` 15 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh, Fasten The Moon With A Small Pearl Hatpin

to my mother

breaking off pieces of the stars, she tried not to cry.  
and this is for you, and half of it, for your sister.  
and the night sky entirely, evening's shadows glistening after

quiet rains and letters written on snow.  
oh melt into the heart we cried in turn.  
oh do not leave.

she smiled and vanished into the remainder.  
and this is the distance between sigh and sigh.  
the reason for poetry.

mary angela douglas 2 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh, I Promise

to all those on the rack of uncertainty  
at random hours of the day  
who want to say finally in any  
language that could be understood  
why is the ground shifting ever and ever  
under my feet;  
what could have happened to the magic wood  
my wishes vanishing under the cherry boughs.  
how can this be withstood  
the sudden breaks in the sentences  
the crackle of twigs the ice storms flown in  
the telegrams sent but none there to receive  
the house lifting up on a dark wind  
landing, set down abruptly just  
Beyond  
all, all the emerald cities until Then  
so that you only say where,  
where are you  
and out of reach of  
the skies so full of stars.



when will I feel again even the  
wan sunlight on the path  
maybe you asked  
chilled in the colouring of leaves  
deceived by every premise deserted by every belief.  
oh I promise you that in the codes of God upended  
suddenly it may be revealed:  
the diamond eye of the aled  
and everything that was torn  
by His love mended.

mary angela douglas 14 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh, Singing Once More To The Cranberry Skies

oh singing once more to the cranberry skies  
recollected the Princess, it's all tranquility.  
and children looking up from play

could sense that something golden  
came to stay and they were swinging  
on old tire swings hung from the stars

and could hear their Mamas call  
its supper now all through the cranberry  
neighborhoods of the glassy galaxies.  
and it's like milk glass-

it's the Milky Way said grandfather,  
the whole shebang; it's his you thought  
and yet it's not and the cranberry sunset

fades and takes the light from the mirrors  
of the Princess, reflecting the day back to you  
and you are no longer sequined with love

for a long time afterwards. opaque is the mirror  
and the heart is scarred and something  
folds the moon into a cloud  
that hides from you that hides from you

now

mary angela douglas 29 september 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oh, Washington

I saw the city in its monumental snow  
a white city made seamlessly of moonlight; glowing  
even while it was terrible.

it was terrible to know that  
in this snowiness reposed a vast  
indifference despite the cherry blossoming,

flutter of frail leaves in the spring,  
the petals raining down on us.  
it was a sad moment and no monument

at all recalling the blind man  
on Connecticut Avenue  
sensing raindrops plop inside his styrofoam cup and

thinking it was someone's spare change

and he said thank you and passersby laughed  
though they were of the same colour  
stylish in their career wear.

I remember the small offices I worked in

far larger than my apartments.  
and quieter.  
and people under every bridge,

stretched over every steaming manhole  
through the whole of winter.

though tourists come in the spring;  
though your monuments shine as if  
they held candlelight within their marbled

porticos, I know I know this city is not  
what it seems though I love overmuch its  
little bookshop-cafes, its ballets

it's lavish displays at Christmas and  
its gourmet picnics on the public grass  
when viewed from space or in documentaries

of the Metro when the doors chime  
and it's open and closed time  
with the sufferings airbrushed out

with the professional faces blurred and

perfect in its statuary; its petals  
unfolding every april.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Old Alphabets Haunt My Dreams

old alphabets haunt my dreams  
the ones in dark green  
construction paper red

the things they said to us  
when we were little  
in capital letters and very loud

inside our heads,

the important things we thought,  
on these we counted 1.2.3; the  
glories that would be when we

reached the end of the times table perfectly;  
the last ones standing in the Spelling Bee  
with perfect penmanship and gold stars

by our names; where have the clouds gone,  
the ones that we loved then, when  
singing about the rain

in someone else's folksong;  
with a cherry bright refrain  
and you, reciting in your sleep

the things you'll want to keep  
much later, from fading away  
and all the things we used to play.

mary angela douglas 19 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Old Christmas Revisiting

[on the Nativity of Christ the King]

dream sequence sequined you return again as  
in old movies, to a harp glissando  
to this drift of leaves

and this year's calendar  
in red and gold comprising all others

or to old houses with the pantry stocked  
and the cherry preserves falls unexpectedly  
as if the angels announced their joy

not that mysteriously, entranced by  
heavenly provisions here on earth;  
or your pause, on entering a room

in this nativity

in a few steps descending a few stairs as  
if you were eurydice  
on an unseen stage still

capable of turning back  
where there is Light delivered  
at the sheer beginning of your myth

to rearrange the lines inside  
your head and hope

that poetry will lead you  
like the Star  
to the more than decorative

silence, shine! out! from the dark  
from the corners of your eyes  
espied, the lilt,

the vivid Heart

of all things:  
standing still

before-  
in a hushed and snowy Hour,  
this Miracle

flowering

all over again, Jesu.

mary angela douglas 10 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# On A Springtime Production Of Ionesco's &quot;Exit The King&quot; (Fontbonne College,1970)(Third Version)

[to the memory of Don Garner (who played The King)

and to my Father, Robert R. (Bob)Douglas, newspaperman, In Memoriam]

[dulce et decorum est...my Father's newspaper was the best]\*

all his kingdoms cried: you are going away!  
and we the last breath witnessing  
on the stage

do the dominoes falling edge to edge  
displayed for the handkerchief benefits of lace  
footlit, the fitful society in the audience

well met!

the tickety tack rickety rack of the teletypes  
as I veer back

and day has fallen,  
all its golden suns;  
Garbled: unto the Kingdom Come

and night, with its moon manes wavering,  
trebled, troubling the linotype means  
the balcony scenes sans ladders,

cheering sections,  
the princess caught  
in the madrigal brambles

and the lutes, abandoned.  
for this little space  
there was infinite treasure, grace

and Time grew large as a Heart



that set it all in lilac motion  
swaying, and the fragrant winds

now are we scattering  
the last of our devotions

and valentine wise-  
in commotion,  
the councils dissolved like comets

absolving the paucity, fragility  
of the last edition, and the last words Flare!  
one last, at the landing of

crystal staired and docketed sighs, the beats,  
the unclocked exiles clocked, the streetwise surprise  
no more seeing in disguise, hearing or bearing

calling it in and the rewrites, the headspinning  
the deadlines rocketing

the flights of birds distraught, breaking off, disappearing  
into the jeweled, and now, the unsyllabled worlds...headlines fraught

the air quivering, teardrop diamond shivering  
with what was here.  
Before...the late great Copy, heavenward,

bourne from the stage  
and the nevermores

mary angela douglas 7 march 2018

\*(my Father's newspaper, The Arkansas Gazette...for a long time known as the oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi from November 20,1819-October 18,1991 when it went bust shortly after being bought up by Gannett.)

This poem mingles three strands: my memory of Dan Garner's beautiful performance in that most poetic play about death, *Exit the King*, my elegy for my Father, and my elegy for his paper, *The Arkansas Gazette*.

Mary Angela Douglas

# On An Easter Feeling

lost world returning to us, again

with the severed pasts delved into:  
God's diamond hoard has been revealed  
held fast through unrelenting harm  
in the perfect hour of His abiding Aprils=

and His wild heartbreak, tamed.

the tear in the tissue of gold is

mended-  
the long-knived traumas tallied now-  
in Sapphire sum.

the opal stitchery is done  
on the long-lost book of sorrows  
and all the pages lapped in pearl are  
rustling here:

their linen rainbows bending never again  
mirage-like, weeping  
through the courts of no resort  
unpublished.

listen, I think that I have heard:  
the purple of evenings  
that never were  
no longer hunted down,

the summer fern uncurling in the cooling mist,  
the sand of former planets sifting through,

stars in the crooks of twilight's trees  
singing now,  
like birds...

mary angela douglas 2 april 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Beautiful Imagination

we were half in love with beautiful imagination  
turning the clouds to stallions we were on our way:  
the straw straw moments into gold on heavy days

transformed in colourful displays.

in great weariness of soul we slipped away:  
there was beautiful imagination  
a cherished fountain flowing

a glory fold on fold of the richest fabric made  
and in the heat, the deprivation  
we stooped in a fairy tale shade

and all was green again  
and cool and cooling  
and we were saved

because of beautiful imagination.  
in unrelenting hunger  
or facing the doors slammed like thunder

carrying nothing in our hands  
but the luggage of dreams  
oh seam on seam I would stitch

our souls together in one phrase  
turning aside the evil ways  
it's beautiful imagination

and the day full of diamonds again  
the way God called it by, just yesterday,  
our own jeweled names.

Mary Angela Douglas 7 March 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Coming Upon The Phrase &quot;Rosa Mystica&quot;

to my Grandfather, Milton B. Young

and Grandmother, his Lucy

rosa mystica.

in my garden.

why, that was all of them,

all the rose bushes

my Grandfather ever planted

in one corner of our backyard

and how we regarded them,

my sister and I, being young

drinking them in

mystified they were ours

as much as for him.

and he wanted it that way.

and also, bouquets

for Grandmother.

for Mama.

each one our blossom

we wanted to save

and almost wept to see

rose petals.

the roses

weeping their lives away.

so we collected them

the unfortunate petals,

wrapped them in plastic wrap

hoping to make

rose perfume

that would stay

and we did feel

with glad hearts

when we stuck them inside

Grandmother's linen closet,

we had rescued them.

later on

they came to mouldering light

what is this?

Grandmother said.

so we took them back out to the garden

and laid them to rest

among their youngest sisters

still in bloom.

and felt a little gloomy

at our failed experiment.

so now I think



perversely, not looking up

the Latin, over catholicized,

bound to be definitions of

the phrase Rosa Mystica

this is what it means to me,

that delicate phrase...

God raised our petals up on that day

each one

a rosa mystica,

while we played

Mother, May I?

so say I.

This May.

mary angela douglas 16 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Hearing On The Radio That The Brontosaurus Never Existed

dear brontosaurus on the planet Pluto  
or somewhere with Ray Bradbury?  
are you green plastic now or brown  
or have they melted you down completely  
now that you're no longer anything in natural science  
and were only born in a cereal

box and didn't you go to show-and-tell  
where the girl that sat behind me  
got up in front of the class and

told us about the jeweled unicorn  
she brought in to say (in its freshly coded powdery hoof language,  
silvery as snow  
you can't believe everything, you know,  
now children)  
invisibly of course, in Prang water-colours.  
oh it was maypole beribboned.  
it was shod in emeralds...

while the teacher snapped  
you should know this by now, class;  
we've been over this material  
since before St. Nicholas Day

(who got, they say  
kicked out from the Canon on an uninspiring day  
out of the clear-blue and  
never lived or never was a saint though  
relentlessly quaint in all the Christmas books  
he remained with a red and blue folkloric halo,  
robes painted in five wounded crystaled shades of snow.  
and a gold-leafed beatitude cinanmmon red-hot candy homemade  
applesauce rare as really caring-  
with tiny marshmallows and almost crunchy are  
(the letter 'R'? wondered my small sister)  
your borders, holly-berried-

where have they fled or have you fled beyond the

Where we will never know who disproved you  
and can they produce for us here:  
the five proofs for your non-existence and  
why have they made for us these

wooden toys painted solely by elves-  
with not enough wheels to get through one day  
we'll be given art homework  
fit for an automan\*over the holidays

who lives in a house of  
construction paper and pipe cleaners.  
if at all, down beside the modeling clay:  
or with me, in the corner again  
and made to feel more small  
for asking too much from it all:

'trace this leaf stencil on your  
vanilla manilla tablets over and over'  
while outside the day is inscribed

in genuine crimson, ochre, variegated  
rose is the leaf that's veined with pumpkin  
yellow I will believe in still  
despite my limited crayons  
and the fact that I'll always remain  
no matter who, what, when, where or how I explain:  
the shortest one  
in the class picture

mary angela douglas 16 november 2013

P.S. Automan apparently I just found out is the brontosaurus word for cyborg.

Also, dear reader, I apologize for throwing the bit about the applesauce into  
themix. It was very idiosyncratic of me. But I was creating a kind of fugue (in  
both the musical and the psychological sense of that term) in which a few real  
aspects  
of my school life appeared.

The applesauce in reality stemmed from a mildly traumatic incident in home economics class in middle school where in teams of four we were to prepare for breakfast store bought applesauce by throwing red hot candies into it (how elementary, dear Watson) and sprinkle cinnamon on store bought raisin bread toasted in the oven.

Clearly, it does not take four people to do this (hence my social trauma) so the group decided I would be the one to open the oven door and slide the bread in. I believe I also was allowed to open the oven when it was done. We may have also had orange juice.

In the poem, however, I have turned this real life village school idiot scene into a Christmas memory which it really never was, but shouldn't poetry turn straw into gold, the horrible into the beautiful or else, dear reader, really, what is the point of this fairy tale?

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Her Wintry Planet, At The Close Of Day

to mz

'...and it was summer, beautiful summer'

-Hans Christian Andersen's last, perfect sentence of The Snow Queen

on her wintry planet, at the close of day,  
the snow queen counts her silver  
and her stores of haze.

and this is confusion, put to good use  
she says, as she does always  
when prisoners are numb and sway

in the mirrors as if they were free.  
she smiles; and glaciers grow greener  
in the seas and more distracting;

she hunts sorrows

with the polar bears, at ease  
and stocks her quivers with snarled,  
snatched colors from the Northern Lights

above the suddenly bleak rooftops.  
indoors, the tea forgets to boil...

flowering with the frosts  
and almost, peerless;  
off-the-shoulder accomplished

dream her mirrors,  
or only seem to; succinct.  
collapsing the sunsets.

and in her eyes,  
the linen of uprooted skies.  
who is the queen of snow blindness

she almost, sings;

regal, from certain distances.  
and the white bees sting.

but somewhere in a summer  
she has forgotten to freeze,  
a child weeps into the roses underground

and murmurs, Kay, Kay...  
where are you?  
and the Maze is unraveling.

and the little stars.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2014

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Mary Angela Douglas

# On Katharine Hepburn's Performance In Mary Of Scotland (1936)a Tribute

perhaps she was Duse, even then

budding into the role of a young queen or trying to

who would have noticed then a few from the Old School

when everything relied on the tit for the tat

witticisms in the back rooms.. so young to be crowned...

and then, to lose..

so waiting in the wings, she dreams she is Mary

and the dreaming seems to compensate for anything

irregular or like a bird half caught in the net of a scene

she knows the role what it could mean if she could branch farther

out on untried wings, brittle

imaginings

and she does so tremulously the camera almost weeps

the key light grieves in flickering cadences

but this is a clip joint hollywood that doesnt like the sentimental

anymore and pictures it fading

waiting at the stage door calla lily face; they want: ready for it's

big break certainly on the make what

wants to be modern pacing the city filled with asides

that will not see Katharine as the bride of time most rare

she envisions, she longs to be

nor Mary either though the images are there; the dear ghosts too

she longs to demonstrate her face can turn to snow to gestures

from so long ago

even if she could and even if she did

the audience wouldnt have understood

the directors would have been irritated



she is oblivious to that her face falters her eyes  
and for a moment the two faces merge  
both in the tower both tres sweet before dark doom  
  
how visible how with so much pearl her soul is laden now  
bent to the light and inexplicably radiant  
perhaps there are lines unheard  
  
rehearsed with angels; they certainly are cut  
while the footlights are too jazzy  
the raz mah taz in the next room taps its toe shoes underneath it  
  
all bored and chewing gum  
  
undermining the fourth wall  
and swivels a hip (while Katharine is rapt)  
  
impatient to make this show biz not the antique  
  
curtain call where people rise from theatre seats transformed  
for Katharine wanting it all to be so beautiful  
as if Bernhardt rose  
and rose again; or, Hepburn on her own

to the classic metier of the fate set out

set in stone with no more recourse oh Mary, Mary

losing the throne and love and life and Spring

behind the film another scene is there pristine

of Katharine striving with the tempo of the time

Katharine subsumed in Mary most tragically composed

Katharine Hepburn prescient and so beyond the role now

no critic will comprehend; such transfiguration was there

such -capacity

from the very start though the coda is played unevenly

because they despise such sublimity; such art;

they are jaded;

the heart torn to achieve such ends

even in a nascent form

disgusts them.

mary angela douglas 9 may 2020a

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Leap Day I Thought About The Life Of Colours

I thought about the life of colours,  
a lot to think of there  
God's Paintbox

or the cigar box that held old crayons  
worn down to the stub in an early classroom  
and the red one always broken

in two when a child bore down too  
hard on the paper  
wanting to make the

darkest rose appear. or pictures  
on Sunday school leaflets;  
Joseph's coat that

bothered his brothers but  
bedazzled us.  
or Noah and all the animals

looking out of the portholes  
almost smiling when the rainbow showed up.  
our dog smiles we thought

my sister and I  
it seemed logical the rest of  
the animals could too

especially after what they'd been  
through  
on the high waters

mary angela douglas 29 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Not Naming The Disasters

things that cannot to us seem real take shape

and we are asked to adapt to a new vocabulary

to accommodate the strange shape the puzzle piece makes

that didn't come with the Christmas, birthday box yet that

we are required to acknowledge.

I don't feel words that way but as clouds

tinted by amethyst light that glints and is gone

before you can see it long enough in your field of vision

to call it a jeweled name why should we name disasters, hurricanes

and bring things to those altars as though we were primitives again

when God is the medicine for all these ills in the running streams

the pines, and the evergreen.

this I will not do but keep the shine on the water clear

inside myself deep down as Shakespeare said once,

to the edge of doom.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2020; 20 may 2020



# On Pale Blue Paper

on pale blue paper  
with a scalloped edge  
on the underside of clouds

inscribed on the lily pad  
barely said aloud  
or silver belled on a cream invitation

or in the violet rains refrained  
where the silver ink has spilled;  
quietly let it fill

the crevices where flowers failed.

is it written on water  
is it far from land  
impossible to understand

in scrapbooks bursting with  
tinted postcards, gingery recipes  
schoolroom commendations

happy families

cut from old magazines  
in garish array;  
the boxed candied days...

whatever it was

or that it may be:  
the disputed colours of an undiscovered sea  
wildly streaked with snows

the final starry blow

or an arbor that's closed  
the list of those who know  
or those who have no clue

the last thing you do

let it be written

let it be written

let it be written

mary angela douglas 29 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Pilfering Emeralds And Other Things

they are stealing the imperial emeralds  
worried the Wizard not under his breath  
on a summer day with the trees in

their summer Oz gleam full blown  
cried the birds of viridian, glass blown  
even the skies are crackling

when the green heart of the citizenry  
cracks anew  
being newly sprung;

just like in Kansas Dorothy thought,  
before the Storm and wrung her old  
dress out, the blue and white checked

since she had far to go yet and so put

thinking by: all thoughts of pilfering  
emeralds having never occurred to  
her; her pockets already chock filled

with straw bright thoughts of Home

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# On Ray Bradbury's Yellow House, Demolished In Los Angeles; Strange Winter,2015

The Props assist the House  
Until the House is built  
And then the Props withdraw  
And adequate, erect,  
The House support itself  
And cease to recollect  
The Augur and the Carpenter -  
Just such a retrospect  
Hath the perfected Life -  
A Past of Plank and Nail  
And slowness - then the scaffolds drop  
Affirming it a Soul -

Emily Dickinson

'the stone that the builders rejected  
has become the Cornerstone'  
Psalm 118: 22

for Sam Weller with gratitude hopefully  
from us all...and to Ray Bradbury with sorrow  
for beauty for possibility lost  
(the children's vivid field trips to the old magician's haunts)

can houses go to Heaven?  
I wondered, stunned at the news:  
Ray Bradbury's yellow house demolished...

by an architect.  
an architect who won prizes.  
prizes for what?

demolishing the immortal?  
at least, where they lived.  
I won't be bitter I sang to the lemon sun.  
houses can go to Heaven, well

this one could.  
a house where stories spun  
the color of midnight and the honied noonday  
hived and the violet rains swept through;

a carnival whine of train whistles.  
where will their ghosts go now?  
they'll linger somehow

near the new swimming pool.  
where the new lodgers view  
(the ones with second sight, it they're lucky)

pearl dredged, the vast  
and Christmas migrations of his words;

no more the house where the fantastic figured.  
a man padding in bare feet to the midnight fridge  
devoured cheese sandwiches, picked pickled books off a

shelf or two

luxuriating in his own stores...  
and dreamed his readers knew him.  
but history shifts when the wrecking crews show up.

on any dazzling day in 1962,  
on Blake, the Norton Anthology read  
(it reads no longer, trending beyond the old neighborhoods) :

When a child. William Blake saw God peering through the window.  
Did William Blake change what he saw? Did God cease peering?  
so that editors revised in later editions?

the constructors deconstructed?  
can you alter a vision once it's envisioned?

even without the window,  
God still sees  
do we do we-  
some things, you can't excise

the stucco fading to tangerine in the sunrise,  
who comes now to displace, being wiser than

music, past the clock of hearing.  
we're not buying it!

someone removes a phrase, a shelf, perhaps a roof  
when no one's looking but the clouds  
and then it's gone. at least, the shell of it.

it rained the day they took the roof off  
the newspaper read.  
as if the skies were weeping...

small goldenrod things crept near  
keening in the debris:  
and readers throughout the world.

these dreams can come and go no matter what  
the planners they don't really understand  
that censored visions, buildings reappear to children  
in the after years

beyond all earthly zoning.  
and in the neighborhoods with curbed appeals

old monuments resurface in the magma..or  
start bobbing up  
in a summer lake with the wounded dinosaurs.

oh it's so searing this has come to pass. alas  
the house cried out in vain, while everyone was at work  
at the book store, ice cream parlour

and then, whirled off (and All Souls with it)  
like the house in Oz...remaining in a far kingdom

because...because...  
the grass could grow as tall as it wanted there or

you can't kill a yellow house the colour of myriad suns  
all marigold and gold finch bright

disconsolate the green trees sigh all the way from Waukeegan, ah

amber preserves but not Los Angeles

I can't stop crying to any passersby on the sidewalk

where eggs could have been fried...

July rockets launched:

uproot the century plant and plant it somewhere else!

or gather the movie moguls here to stop this!

but once dismantled there's no going back.

alack alack unless

invisibly the house transformed itself

well out of view enacting its own Bradbury tale of

little by little and much by much

all shadows tucked in to the very touch of the curtains

at the windows

dreaming itself apart from Time, letting go into

a better berried clime and

plank by plank chimney brick by brick

little garden in the back with wildflowers strewn

and birds that flew and chirped around the eaves

missing the writer scratching in his den

clickety clack on the typewritten track

his golden lore no more no more

oh no was not torn down but like an old shoe

that missed the wearer, mystically removed from here

(its inner self)

and by Whose hand? lifted gently from the land.

and only babies knew; though

children hoped, as they wondered, cherry bright again.

oh do not fear sighed sunflower angels mending

this scarred landscape

despite the worst laid plans and blueprints

made of sand should be denied but  
whenever it looks like, on this side  
where you need stories to get by  
as if the undertakers had won! wheeling their barrows

of the stripped down walls  
carted off to charities...  
where's charity in this? I sorrowed  
in a nightmare land:

they've stolen  
our pilgrimage forever.

or it had wings to fly, that buttercream house  
reading over his shoulder, (all butter pecan and dreamy)  
for 50 odd years as the notion slowly formed though it

grew paler than pumpkins toward the end  
at what it had to do...and railed at  
losing its butterscotch perch or porch?

it dimly reasoned,  
'out of all Seasons now! '

through tears I see  
what it saw  
right down to the sawdust floor  
of the Circus really leaving town  
this time

on a day perhaps of cotton candy clouds...

to the coffee grounds of a well made story  
you won't perk again (it thought,  
more than a little overwrought) :

it huddled closer to the Sun.  
but what's done is done  
the story book house is overcome by the

bulldozers no longer dozing by the raspberry shrubs.

then it arose  
like a wondrous yellow cake  
about to be crowned with frosting oh my friends

while it chimed it chimed like a carillon:  
there is- there is- no End!

a buttercup house in new-fangled Glory shines  
where Ray eternally presides,  
near gold foiled volumes, rainbowed ice-box pies

and he'll look up with a glad surmise  
(a booming I told you so)

when we'll drop by someday to see the house spiffed up.  
the haloed cream drenched apple fritters fried  
and pour with him the dandelion wine-

fine toasts to the yellow house!  
when it's our Time, when it's our Time

mary angela douglas 23-25 february 2015

P.S. I am not making this up. an incredible synchronicity... On feb 25 at 8: 58  
a.m. as I was revising this poem again and lingering on the phrase 'I told you so'  
wondering what I meant by it exactly  
the local radio station (wsjs) announcer said just before the newsbreak: 'You  
might get a chance to go to Mars...forever. more in a minute...'

so that's how I knew the poem was finally done, fork-tested.

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Receiving A 50 Lb. Carton Of The Great Books

my categories are never in the great books  
she laughed what to wear when larkspur blooms  
the color of the moon at Christmas

are there enough rosebuds in the small bouquet  
and when the trees sway, what do they mean  
and how many shades of green are possible

and what should we sing in the moment it turns to Spring  
and are all wings iridescent or only a few  
and will I know you in the next life

will we all be together under the sun that never blinks  
and will we still dream wide awake.  
do you think so?

when the Lord takes all our souls  
back home

mary angela douglas 28 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Saint Saens &quot;Aquarium&quot; From The Carnival Of The Animals

(there are many days when I feel this is the most beautiful piece of music ever written)

to saint saens for the jeweled music, once upon remember when

I think, he dreamed of the Queen's Aquarium

the angel fish, the waving of

the purple and amber fins beyond all this

and this is where she goes toward orchid overtones

in the ruffling palace offended then

to ruminate in silver and blush quartz melting

in mother of pearl and liquidly, paradisisally

to fashion a world

where things are smoothed out. no longer quizzical.

and the fish know this as such fish can

who are fed by a royal hand

pure particles of gold. this

is the turning of the soul

in Eden's shade remade.



in the healing waters of

mysterious days.

ethereal afternoons.

mary angela douglas 7 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# On Shakespeare As Inaccessible

why is he so hard to find  
even to read, a little.  
each time I climb I fall

back a child before  
such steep language.  
sometimes the flowery vales

I find and try to rest there  
but it beckons onward  
so that my heart knows

with Rilke, staying my dear  
is nowhere.  
no one interpretation satisfies.

and those who simplify him  
I think, commit crimes though  
they do not mean to

casting him as accessible.  
the least of all words I would  
ascribe to him. impossible!

and so I start again  
the starry slopes to climb  
as if to God

and wait on Time and miracle  
to read these lines  
at last, from the jeweled inside

and weep to read  
whatever I can find.

mary angela douglas 8 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Alternative Quantum Universe; My Neglected Homeworks

of all alternative &quot;universi&quot;

which are you or

which am I

some billion billion

paths to find

out of space

or out of time

like maypole ribbons

round the poles

split decisions

whose are those

the you of yesterday's surmise

the me of multiple sweet sunrise

algebra was hard enough

God knows Ill never get this stuff.

mary angela douglas 16 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Assasination Of Benazir Bhutto (12/27/07)

On the Assasination of Benazir Bhutto (12/27/07)

here let us chronicle the  
futile detonations  
of the Rose

in every age, the same

who is standing guard

oh stand with me on this  
bridge of air on the sharp blade  
of a world-wide

intake of breath suspended

only don't look down-

take my hand  
don't take my hand  
it doesn't matter

in the country of Benazir  
the heart of the Rose is

shattered again

the heart of the word

a golden script signed off on

mid-sentence

a math problem for the more astute;  
how many armies would it take to defend her  
and:

if such a heart could not be defended,  
what are these garrisons for

let the stars collapse inward

to gather ebbing light  
for the rose is broken  
from the Stem we

occupied unbelievable space  
as the shadows in your eyes darkened  
prefiguring death

unbelievable space as  
the heart of the Rose stood still  
at close range

not at close range?  
it doesn't matter when  
even at a distance we

hear the ripped mantle of  
weeping  
as though it were in the next room

take my hand  
do not take my hand

I would fall from this  
bridge of air, alone

or lean into the wind from  
the high tower of sorrow

to learn your radiance  
let these frail  
improvisations endure  
the wide-world over

the soul is sovereign over  
every terror  
the soul that loves in the face  
of death  
blaze and blaze on

Benazir

mary angela douglas december 29-31,2007

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Cutting Room Floor: At The Emerald City Soda Shoppe

a pale green mound of pistachio ice cream  
in a pale pink dish  
would be so delish

said the Cowardly Lion.  
fond of shortening his words  
to fit the songs

speaking a little backwards?

sideway; making the phrase fit,  
natch.  
showing compash, Dorothy

helped him a little to  
some of the strawberry.  
it's so in fash, perhaps

he exclaimed

lashing his tail back and forth  
with the invisible string from the  
movie set not so invisible,

in sheer happiness.  
then they broke out into their  
Imperial Oz Pale Green Ice Emporium

Song and other delicacies.  
too bad you never saw it.  
it was wondrish.

mary angela douglas 3 january 2016

P.S. Toto had some too.



Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Day You Choose

on the day you choose  
on a day this is chosen for you  
you will hear the news

you will make the news yourself  
and read every book on the shelf  
or let others read to you

exactly what they choose  
what they leave out  
and watch their clock

until there's no time then  
for you to grieve  
or even feel the need

to know what feeling is at all  
anymore;  
to dutifully watch a wall, a door

expecting angels any minute  
or at least a few fault finding

managers good at telling  
others what to do,  
especially you

they think won't have a clue  
without them.

and you hear it drop,  
that other shoe,  
the final snow;

snowed under, You!  
and the winter  
of the life you chose not to choose

is blooming like a blackened rose

they want to sell;  
your soul at a discount

so they can live well.

remember it when (your Soul, defend!)  
so fresh so new,  
so golden, God would talk to you!

but you obeyed  
bizarre commands  
that never came from God's dear hands

on any mountain, near or far  
to quench the light of your birth star,  
to not live as yourself.

and you know well  
if nothing else  
after a lifetime left unlived

and nothing more inside to give  
how not choosing was choosing.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Immortality Of English Literature

these living books and the fair dreams that rose from them

in all times, places, ornament of the souls

that dwelled before us in the daily round

or in the aftermath of war's affliction

the heart bowed down to the very earth in grief

and chains unbound:

still to be read, still to be understood

you will not vanquish here on earth this certain good

where Heaven has affixed a golden seal

and angels wept as well as men

to read what cannot be written again

what must remain enshrined

for all men for all time

so far surpassing was a language incarnated

In the Beginning; now, in my rhyme remembered.

mary angela dougla 10 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Jeweled Road Home Or The Ruby Glass Found

the definitive the ruby glass shining suns  
the ruby slippered days we've  
counted off one by one to

the rockets gleaming  
and the popsicle banded tricolor  
floats grand standed ice creamed handed round

look we are still the same  
even while stranded sans our party frocks  
at the castle gates they've locked

through the looking glass beveled edge  
we pirouette and wait even while

old chandeliers cast crystal tears  
for what is fixed immutable  
what can no longer sing.

oh let the coloured fountains weep  
for the Christmases that sleep  
I will bring sprigs of holly

evergreen secrets to the forest pools  
and see the reflections that we used to...  
princesses in disguise reprise

let the dimpled waters sing

bring light refreshments  
for the journey is long  
in the rose velvet cape

let the basket fill  
with its sugar lumps, pats of butter  
chocolate eclairs

the jams of a thousand thousand berries

and the fresh caught cod.  
we'll still make merry  
on the jeweled road home to God.

mary angela douglas 25 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Mirrors Of Arvo Part And His Departure

yesterday you wrote  
inscribed and ever inscribing  
in the pooling of mirrors

crushing the kaleidoscopic colours  
of feelings past music into an undiscovered realm  
or as if angelic beings held enormous

mirrors reflecting music back  
from its beginning in a universe  
we could not know or forgot that we knew

or were we driven in fear from the yard of gold  
by the dogs with eyes as enormous as teacups, windmills  
in a neighborhood of sounds distressed

compressed our hearts boiling with the lids on tight

so that you alone guessed and then took note  
in notes as rare as certain birdsong at night  
did you wake to hear? sheer

refractions of the rose, the violet, the forest shards  
ah children turn again, you whispered, Christmas uncle  
that you are

and then it works

the battered toy, the hidden borealis, star  
no longer receding

and in your midnight watches so composed  
beyond the guarded borders of our sighs  
of the whirling angels that we all stood still

a kind of requiem in ourselves

weeping that this music filled  
an ache in the soul



never before comprehended

mary angela douglas 2 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Mirrors Of Arvo Part And His Departures (Second Version)

(on the music of Arvo Part)

yesterday you wrote

inscribed and ever inscribing

in the pooling of mirrors

crushing the kaleidoscopic colours

of feelings past music into an undiscovered realm

or as if angelic beings held enormous

mirrors reflecting music back

from its beginning in a universe

we could not know or forgot that we knew

or were we driven in fear from the yard of gold

by the dogs with eyes as enormous as teacups, windmills

in a neighborhood of sounds distressed

compressed our hearts, boiling with the lids on tight

so that you alone guessed and then took note

in notes as rare as certain birdsong at night

did you wake to hear? sheer

refractions of the rose, the violet, the forest shards

ah children turn again, you whispered, Christmas uncle

that you are

and then it works

the battered toy, the hidden borealis, star

no longer receding

and in your midnight watches so composed

beyond the guarded borders of our sighs

of the whirling angels, list! that we all stood still

a kind of requiem in ourselves and then, the glorias

weeping that this music filled

an ache in the soul

never before comprehended

mary angela douglas 2 october 2016; rev.23 january 2018; 28 june 2019



# On The Novels Of Kazuo Ishiguro

a door opens in a mist do you remember this  
fading into brightness  
coronas of the sun

corollas of the flower the flowering  
narrative of a life as seen from within  
petal by petal unfolding

the small miseries revealed  
the thread is pulled by the child  
of the Christmas cracker and the

ancient bells revealed tolling  
where the mysteries are buried  
we will tread lightly there

a magician of the air and of  
the forgotten seas  
do you remember these

it isn't reading then  
it isn't even writing this  
inscription of a soul

each time concealed  
then brought to light  
as it were something

you felt yourself so long ago  
but could nevr put your finger on  
at the time with whimsical asides

the ring of silence broken open

the ore of truth so gold so golden  
the light the arc of it  
on the rim of things

not your own

or are they  
star to star concealed

brought forth revealed  
the door in the mist swings open  
into endless nativities

we are reborn

mary angela douglas 3 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Planet Small

venturing into the toy forests  
we were protected by merry tunes  
from the vicissitudes

cherishing the boggy ground  
when it did not give way  
ah under moonlight's shreds;

the maraschino moon overhead  
lit the slits of paths  
as we dropped crumbs

of thumbprint cookies  
for the aftermaths  
of the apricot, the raspberry kind.

were we stepping blind  
blending into the eglantine  
the nodding roses wild

following the marsh sprite  
a little tepidly  
for a royal child

missing tea and the last of the  
little pink cakes.  
but foraging on

with our hummingbird hearts  
our birthday fluttering songs  
(not forgetting the trick candles

doubling as flares)

mary angela douglas 7 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Princess Aurora, Certain Lies

how can roses bloom in a thicket of lies  
the townspeople never asked  
the ones who kept her legend alive,

the Princess Aurora.  
sleep where there is no dawn  
but empires poorly run

the evil fairy screamed.

dream, though the world  
seems a nightmare.  
this small children knew

and they grew up  
to know it even more.  
and closed their ears in school

when errant teachers droned  
dream is an insubstantial verb,  
what can you do when every word's ill spun

that's bright and winged and wants to sing  
is shot down; then the fogs roll in  
and misanthropes hold sway

who think they own the day  
and put the Sun in chains.  
and tell you how to

rearrange the furniture of your Soul.  
I don't care how many naysayers say  
the truth is not the truth

I'll never swallow it whole.

the rose still bloomed in a thicket of lies  
more roses, besides  
and truth, real truth



can never be undermined.

mary angela douglas 3 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Removal Of Certain Statues

the ghosts of former statues drift  
through public squares  
unmoored we are, they wail  
as if they could  
twice dead and solid as ;  
once we gleamed near shade trees  
sentinels of grief  
to those who raised us  
now are we razed  
we who never dreamed but were  
immemorial, so were we deemed once?  
engraved, and left there, weathered, weathered  
eating the air of time for lost sons remembered  
and home shattered, shuttered, never to be repaired  
lost mirrors now  
of the, - the ships that reached port  
too early. of the untimely frost  
of the absurd cause ruined and ruinous  
dragged from our perch  
and assailed, war criminals

rocks on trial  
though we have shed no blood nor drawn it  
where will the ghosts of war go now  
we are banished from city and town  
the widowed brides long past  
of those whose line died out for nothing  
we cannot ask, being but that  
shadow of stone.  
sentinels now of a grief expressed nowhere  
because we were on the wrong side of  
the question we never understood  
for those whose farms burned down  
or would have had they not stood in the breach  
and we would weep if we could  
slow tears of stone  
but we have grown wings in a manner of speaking  
scrawled over and stained as though we could be shamed  
and from our exile dreamed did we? that  
gone are the trumpets from our marble hands  
the horses from under us so are we punished  
who never drew breath

all snowy sunsets down!

but wished we could day after speechless day

unmoving in the college quadrangles

we might have stood in, being the semblance of men

for those who rode death down and drowned

for no resounding phantom son of their old age...

ghosts of ghosts are we

in perpetuity

now they have come symbolically to say

we must wrong the wronging brother his last image

that canceled equation of the brother against brother

the space at the supper table new defiled

a puzzlement before God.

and ever, the unwreathed tomb.

the marble mistaken ed,

erased now.

Mary Angela Douglas 17 May 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The So-Called Death Of The Romantics

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
    Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
        Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
            In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
    Fled is that music: —Do I wake or sleep?  
John Keats, from Ode to a Nightingale

the ones you left behind, leaf-torn, gold  
in their weeping from their autumn boughs  
are living still

in the currents of the winds that Shelley never bartered; that Keats died for-  
eddy in the self-same streams

reflecting Infinite colours now-  
in the glass children may see or not see  
since the script has been hidden away-

made over into only a 'context', parodied.  
and we're in a new play now, come see us!  
the literati urge and preen and trample

on the past that was their legacy  
in a hard-won language, cathedral built.  
why must you strip the boughs of Poetry

that flourished here? I hear the poets ask,  
however faintly- and then  
beside the banks of all their streams I pause

and weep and cannot stop  
for the brilliance of their crushed words  
enchants me yet and

is hovering there, in the very air around us  
as in old paintings, bookstalls,  
phrases that have been turned against them

for expediency's dim-witted sake.  
the brilliance of their crushed words  
I have kept in my heart

and their fires burn as bright as  
when they were here-  
though in a coming landscape, more and more

I see the bulldozers in their pretty colors-  
bereft of all sense-  
waiting their turn

mary angela douglas 6 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# On The Veracity Of Fairy Tales

I was thinking about the fairy tale lore  
how often it speaks to distinguishing  
the false from the true  
and yet it is condemned as being  
out of reality by sniffy people  
looking straight through you,  
you, who persist in cherishing them,  
the old tales,  
whatever else you do,  
are deemed fools.  
but this is the vein of gold  
running through the marble immutable  
not to be bought or sold  
but earned.  
and the heartfelt bird  
sings more true  
than the mechanical one breaking down.  
look, look what I found  
I ran to tell my mother,  
my grandparents too, though they were gone

who schooled me in them.

all those ardent stories

though now they are disabused

(the children) , from reading them

and given sand in a tea cup

by the witches turning them

into political fables

disabling beauty and the good

as if they could

in a turgid, not, an embellished Wood

yet, in the original, what else could we use

when the Soul is falling, falling down or bruised

or pushed from behind.

time out of mind.

the best that can be found,

all, all I know:

the dog with its jeweled bone;

peculiar moonlight when the breadcrumbs are all gone;

the road lined in opals is leading straight home.

mary angela douglas 26 july 2019



Mary Angela Douglas

# Once

how many golden ages have we dreamed  
and then woken up in factories;  
sewing seams in the fairy tales

and then, the strawberries and the cream  
too beautiful to consume  
and so we don't

find reasons for this  
and was there is there  
continental drift

in between our sentences  
when in one sided conversations  
it begins to snow

and the children mouth  
what once they could not know  
and still can't say, is it from fear?

the golden, the golden  
once was here.

mary angela douglas 2 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Once I Waited Till Dawn

[a prayer at the present time]

once I waited till dawn  
for one white word from You.  
I remember the greenness then.

the aprilness of everything.  
the dew on the grass where I kneeled.  
the stars that were my own.

time has carried these away  
so that I feel I was nor there  
where the rose blossomed out

of the dark and the rains finally ceased.

if I could reach back far enough  
would I find You there in the same  
white whispering as of leaves

against the pearlescent skies  
and oh would the trees remember  
it was I who counted then

on their guardian shade.  
or was I another person then  
and just unwise

and has it really been that long  
when I was accustomed

to think the earth was  
only made of birdsong

mary angela douglas 20 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Once In The Gold Of The Day We Wore Blue Dresses

[to my sister Sharon]

once in the gold of the day we wore blue dresses:  
robins egg blue or ice blue  
with a superfluity of lace

and watched Sky King on Saturdays on T.V.  
and Telstar in the evening sky  
from our backyard

and the Big Dipper,  
the North Star to steer by  
when we were out with our dolls

or on the porch, before ice cream;  
and it is the fourth of July  
with golden sparklers

rivaling the stars.  
and this is who we are  
in our blue dresses

in the rose of the day  
and loved by those who love us  
who can say how much.

and overfond of vanilla,  
chocolate and raspberry,  
or strawberries over cake;

spumoni, o the pink  
and the green of it:  
and every wish we make

and the new day  
when we wake.  
and we pray to.

always.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# One Day The Poets Of Earth Will Sing Again

To-

'the Love that moves the Sun and the other stars...'

-Dante (trans. John Ciardi, 1961)

(and for my mother, Mary Adalyn, on her immemorial birthday)

one day the poets of earth will sing again  
forgetting their eclipse, the early deaths, the  
wilderness they knew

the taxes on the heart. the hem of trebled Beauty scorned  
and traded for stale biscuits, the anisette coffees.  
the endless fevers and no cooling irised hand:  
the accolades awarded to darkness  
trampling to dust the psalter of the free oh and the tearless,  
making no sound.  
consigning iridescence to the ground.

the raven-plucked sorrow down, adown the silver branch  
no longer inscribed, the surveillance of the lovely.  
manuscripts deferred, forgotten, ridiculed;  
and shot at dawns so unrehearsed, the quietly embroidered  
age on age-  
painstakingly, by the confused.

'newness' drowning them again;  
cooking up whole brassy pots of Stone  
Soup with shriveled parsnips for the  
entire neighborhood squawking

false change, small change quenching the candles of the Sun.  
fooling no one, really.  
one day the star fraught messengers sent  
as gleaming doves from the Ark will live again green as First Green  
green on first gold could ever be dreamed to be and then

above receding waters they will tum, mid-air  
astonished, astonishingly

flawlessly to diamond fire, instead  
of beating the futile air and scarred-  
marveling marveling  
that the hour of the smashed urn is dead  
and all this rising and setting at an end  
no gorgeousness, gone

and each word glorified and each page  
brightening hue on hue for always now the  
linen on linen the snow phrases yet  
no longer melting from view on the funeral trains  
crossing continents unseen-  
sped by the merchandisers clean out of the Picture  
as language is bled dry. I-

no more, I whispered to the ghosts of beauty  
sensing a glacial change, finding the silver buttons made fast,  
the golden thread for the children's winter coats: and  
unpacked from a toy suitcase, dancing by the  
miniature rosegush\* of first syllables, my school scissored paper snowflakes,  
multifoiled gum-starred universe, for you

and say to the pale blue corner of a room and I do-  
unchristened yet by Christmas:  
make way, the glitter train is coming through:

Manifest, Your rainbow in the clouds remains  
leaving everything to the children, said at last:  
the winged hearts fluttering the valentines unclasped are everywhere now  
oh every heartbeat word on word is jeweled not as morning dew  
that disappeared till no one cried for the dewdrop vanishing, 'alas'  
for all flowers under the boots of those half-way  
inclined to crush the lilies-  
to raze the orchards in full bloom-

but it spans the reeling stars, the heart splintered years  
and sun on sun as Dante said  
or may have said, through prised tears,  
(or small 'i' under the chandeliered heavens)  
impelled by the Love that urged the horses on-

mary angela douglas 1 december 2013

P.S. I really did intend to say rosegush a made-up compound word that expresses hood state of mind with pinpoint accuracy, my endless enchantment with roses (even if it did start out as a typo)

Mary Angela Douglas



# One Day We'll Go To Crayon City

one day we'll go to Crayon City  
where the sun's always up there  
in the right hand corner.

to a house outlined in Jumbo Red  
with a green chimney.  
pink puffs of smoke.

a roof of violet-blue.

who knows what's there inside? do you?  
maybe it's always someone's birthday.  
where we'll have cherry pies and no homework.

our mothers in flowered dresses  
will widely smile.  
and if we spill anything,

it will look like rainbows come-to-town  
all over our Sunday best.  
we'll never get in trouble

just for wishing.

oh! oh! look outside.  
the orange paned windows.  
it's already Christmas!

(of course, it is) wrapped

presents falling from the skies

wherever you turn! goody goody.  
don't forget the ribbons!  
leave the ground blank on the page:

that's where the snow is,

my new best friends advise.

and leave fluffy outlines scattering  
throughout your turquoise coloured skies

not bearing down so hard

because you'll make it break in two  
(the blue green crayon

they whispered far too loud  
and got us all in trouble.)  
then you'll have clouds...

mary angela douglas 8 may 2015; 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Only Because We Built Dream Cities

only because we built dream cities by the rivers of dream  
were we accounted incompetents, ne'er do wells  
those untrained for success, obstinate in class genus species

but I, she said I washed my cloth of gold, nevertheless  
in the Infinite, where fountains flow from Christ's breast  
and gold is gold though the dress is faded

after many washings, the sweet rosebud print...

we were accounted nomads, less than.  
we didn't make a dint at parties.  
those with no plan. of wayward bent

who studied castles instead  
of what we should have. Always,  
the songs of Caledonia,

the crenelations.

flip burgers they all said, while  
flipping from station to station;  
you'll get along.

we were the turncoats

barely registered on the GNP  
less fortunate in Society  
without our gloves, our hats

no requiescat, yet.

the orphaned dove of the Ark  
from dream sea to dream sea flitting withouten any boat  
falling flat off the census in odd years they noted it down

immune, but not to tears and the polarities,  
abiding in the Trinity,  
having had all our shots

and pot shots taken too as if we were zoo animals  
always on view in quilted coats visible from the road.  
and whatever the leftover cans are on Tuesdays

free, at the pantries, we have paid our dues  
washing our souls by the river of dreams.  
not self sufficient sniff the orderlies

and the would- be takers in hand.  
we are God's merry band.  
the ones you dread

as you dread sinking Higher.  
the Cross that's not for hire

the lilies, the lilies, He said,  
beyond all tiring.

mary angela douglas 2 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Only Because We Built The Dream Cities

only because we built dream cities by the rivers of dream  
were we accounted incompetents, ne'er do wells  
forever untrained for success,

obstinate in class genus species

but I, she said I washed my cloth of gold, nevertheless  
in the Infinite, where fountains flow from Christ's breast  
and gold is gold though the dress is faded

after many washings, the sweet rosebud print...  
we were accounted nomads, less than.  
retail fodder.

how could we stand  
those with no plan. of wayward bent  
who studied castles and paid the rent

Always, on the songs of Caledonia  
the crenelations.

flip burgers they all said, and  
flipping from station to station  
on holidays for the nation

you'll get along.  
but we had the life of trees  
our heads in clouds

barely registered on the GNP  
in any Crowd- deemed  
less fortunate in Society

with mothball gloves and hats  
no requiescat, yet, I smiled at home  
and home was God, whenever we set out

on the fairy tale road  
or sent

the orphaned dove of the Ark

from dream sea to dream sea flitting withouten any boat  
falling flat off the census in odd years they noted it down  
immune, but not to tears and the polarities,

abiding in the Trinity,  
having had all our shots  
and pot shots taken too or it was

as if we were zoo animals  
always on view behind the grille  
or in quilted coats visible from the road.

with whatever the leftover cans are on Tuesdays.  
generic at the pantries  
we have paid our dues

washing our souls by the river of dreams.  
not self sufficient sniff the orderlies or  
the would- be takers in hand.

we are God's merry band.  
the ones you dread  
since it could be you, instead

as you dread sinking Higher  
the Cross that's not for hire  
the lilies, the lilies, He said,

beyond all tiring.

mary angela douglas 2 december 2018; rev.23 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Only This

we were in love with the chivalry of God  
the unknown troubadours sang  
to you or I

in a world apart  
where we went searching for the extravagant names  
of things as though they were diamonds.

oh weep for the unrecorded tournaments;  
the unwitnessed walking of the planks  
set in motion

by the pirates of their time.  
I do. I do. as though it were a wedding vow  
and know the history

of real poetry  
leaving its scars behind,  
can only be this.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Only You Should Be Adored

ONLY YOU SHOULD BE ADORED

only you should be adored

God of all that we implore

only you are.

keep us from the hidden traps

all the thises and the thats

all the misses near or far

mistaking wishes

shooting stars.

keep our sweet horizon still

only on your holy will

fervent in our one intent

to be true to all You've lent.

to believe you at the core

Holy God whom we adore.

mary angela douglas 6 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Oops! I Fell Down The Rabbit Hole

oops! I fell down the rabbit hole  
in my poem  
Hello Alice, lovely dress the  
perfect shade of blue I  
was sent to warn you  
I wish I could have  
warned myself

now we're plummeting  
past the rabbit's  
bookshelves  
stop! I want to  
read the titles so  
I can find them  
when I wake up

there's going to be  
a tea party - you'll  
be sitting at the  
table in your party dress  
but you won't feel invited  
despite the pink cake  
in the middle of the table  
you won't get a slice  
no matter how nicely you pour tea  
you ask too many questions

and you won't have a moment  
to yourself, even if you  
cry  
other people will utilize  
your tears on the spot this is  
that kind of dream you  
can't wake up when you want to,  
dear

but the door to the garden  
once you get through  
just stay: on the still point of

a turning world that makes no sense  
like a jewel-box ballerina when  
the music ends

remaining you by barely breathing  
so that at the last  
you'll be  
unperceived and bounce yourself out of

their false rose frieze

mary angela douglas february 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# Oops! Or The Fairies Have Really Good Hearing

would you care for a drop of chocolate,  
a pink iced bun?  
we asked the Fairy on the run.

but she wanted only  
apple crumb cake,  
baked Alaska.

eclairs? we asked again.  
she flittered.  
then, she stared.

she must think she's someone  
we both almost said  
when her moss green wings

unfurled replete, with tiny gold spots.  
but she heard us then  
and never forgot.

and never returned  
though we cried a lot what  
with all the jeweled things

we'd wished for

mary angela douglas 25 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Opal

in the opal underground  
of the next to the last word  
I felt that birds through the pearl skies

skirted the edge of the painting.  
and this was resembling what was  
what folds into evening

behind the trees  
what some have called the moon.  
but they have called the tune too long

I said in my distress  
and the milky colours weep  
their rainbows out

the clouds hapless to defend  
oh don't you remember the green winds  
were for you

and came every day  
at the beginning?

mary angela douglas 4 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Or What They Were

the snow crowned disappearing swans  
or what they were I have watched  
where a milk white dawn disguised

their vanishing;  
into my heart, I cried.  
you could have fled

but you did not yet  
who would believe me  
if I cried:

they have gone. who has gone  
sighed children with their bouquets  
and then moved on.

they have gone and the tournaments  
of our imaginations with them

slain by those who came after,  
whose signet is impatience.  
progress they say is everything

or if they do not say, they mean  
that everything in disguise  
cannot serve them.

how will I call them back  
I ask my Lord  
but He is also in disguise

and with them  
and wears the look  
if one could look at the sun directly

or all the myriad suns  
in the conflagration of original love,  
of the one in original exile

pleading our cause.

mary angela douglas 29 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Orange Crush Grape Crush

orange crush grape crush  
who has a crush on sodas  
in the sum sum summertime

and the strawberry cone is melting  
on the picture book of rhymes  
the vanilla and chocolate

in the wings, standby  
so you won't be disappointed when  
it plops down pink on the sidewalk

and it's Christmas time for the ants.  
its a heart sung library flung out dream  
our skirts spinning wide

of the cream skimmed off the top  
of the Big Top

mimosas in the front yard fluttering  
feathery their pink and green goodbye goodbye  
that I remember best

the silver beads on the iced tea glass at home  
and the slender, the silver spooned repast

of the banana split, whipped topping dream  
fudge sauce rendered in the fluted glass  
or the Melmac cereal bowl transfigured

by my Grandfather

as if someone suddenly said to you:  
here child, this is Heaven.  
taste it, please.

mary angela douglas 24 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Osip Mandelstam

he sewed Dante  
into his breast pocket  
perhaps

and carried a bucketful  
of stars  
and clouds made way for  
him but the others did  
not

in the last days of  
a held-over doom-  
leaving behind  
an inconsolable future  
and

as many scanless notebooks;  
or were they also  
taken into custody?  
rustling a coded matchless snow:

oh worldwide language distressed-the more-than-widowed questions-  
on the walk to  
who knows what  
I hope

snow-blindness  
saved him  
from complete collapse  
and that he entered  
Heaven like a bridal  
page on which

only light could be written  
surely there was  
a point of endless rescue,  
of a thousand angels whirling  
when he heard:  
the diamond waves crashing

on a finer shore,  
and felt on his back  
the black sun, infinitely

illuminated.

may children stitch together,  
barely understanding orders:  
new notebooks from the periphery of that rose  
maryangela douglas 19 september 2005/2 december 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# Other People's Christmases

other people's Christmases seem somehow better,  
all aglow,  
while you're at home in later life with the shreds of

rewrapped wrappings and it's cold unless  
you remember to turn up the heat,  
eat something sweet a little

desultorily or watch It's a Wonderful Life on tv  
though you already have the dvd  
all year long.

what will it take  
to make the sugar plum shimmer  
grow a little less dimmer

you carol alone  
and no sudden movie snow comes down  
on cue.

well it's in you  
the Christmas capability of making do  
with the Christmas you've got

which when you think of it  
is exactly what Mary and Joseph did  
so far from home

all on their own

until the Christmas angels came  
and lit up the skies  
as if it were daylight

for the whole world.

mary angela douglas 24 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Other People's Horses Stream Milk White

other people's horses stream milk white  
in the clouds so far from here.  
you dream they will come to you

but then their morning fades.  
they disappear.  
tomorrow other riders will come

to the same glass mountains.  
they will think they've won.  
and who will dispute them.

its hard to feel where you will be then.  
no longer waking up in the same room  
ghost or spectator

merely a child again  
where none of this seemed real  
when you stepped from dream to dream

turning your head  
when they called you-  
or is it you, they mean?

mary angela douglas 17 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Our Red And Green Houses Bloomed

## OUR RED AND GREEN HOUSES BLOOMED

our red and green houses bloomed  
on a pale green board;  
not much of a town really.

a few railroads, Banker.  
no dogs or children running through the sprinklers.  
no candy stores or malt shops

no fragrance of fried pork chops, fried apples at sunset.  
moving from square to square not that aware  
and sometimes winding up in jail.

i wonder how we ever lived there  
in Monopoly town.  
when fate could be decided by a thimble

or standing in front of some hotel could cost you everything.  
a vacant lot really except for a few properties  
owned by a few.

who couldn't tolerate loitering  
or even, sometimes,  
passing through.

on summer afternoons  
or indoors when it rained  
invariably the whole town folded up

played out.  
until the next game.

mary angela douglas 6 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ours Were The Emerald Currencies Of Oz

ours were the emerald currencies of Oz  
the slipstream of the fairy tales regained  
the loop through time

of the fanciful,  
barnstorming over  
spent fields of grain.

I have saved the paperbacks from school fairs  
the books redolent as apples.  
and cloud filled music:

tree filled, with birds  
singing without stint  
and mother-of-pearled,

for these relentless hours.

and vivid flowers in  
fading precincts;  
yards and yards of

the home flowers  
that I might be cut from  
that pattern only

and all the neglected bowers of Keats.  
against the dream quenching-  
this laborious world

a faery bright defense;  
the arc of infinite colour  
unsubmerged

the kingfisher flash and burn  
of God  
whose phoenix Name-

who, o who dares tarnish.

mary angela douglas 8 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Out Of My Life! The Meager And The Sour

out of my life! the meager and the sour.

the snail shadow feeding on the hour

the stinging insect cloud the gloomy dower.

I have seen the rainbow cast in shade.

I have felt the beautiful unmade.

shattering dissolve the sunset ray

all small things of evil pass this way.

this is the day the Lord sincerely made

and all for joy

you can just all set sail and ship ahoy

far far from here.

this blue and grassy starry sphere.

mary angela douglas 23 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Outpost

there should have been zigzags of green  
lightening in the skies;  
an unfamiliar outpost suddenly felt like home

with copies of the National Geographic  
from the early 20th century;  
a brown leather chair.

a floral rug.

there I would have gathered the stars like seed pearls  
in old rusty buckets  
left out all night.

or lingered at the screen door at nightfall in the rains  
just breathing the ozone and the ionic plains  
in the distances would be mine

though I would never try to own them;  
the roses, sodden in the garden  
weeping for what they were blind to.

so did I.

it is a velvet darkness  
I said to my soul.  
the farthest outpost.

all I will do is stare at the night  
and remember old ghosts  
rattling the bowls in the kitchen

to serve up the cherry vanilla  
or radio shows, coming through.

or they will be right beside me  
when I do-  
pointing out to me again,

with oh, kind hands:  
the constellations  
as though this had started again.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Over Spoken Word

let the spoken word pour into the deserts  
beyond the absurd, fractured-  
the belligerent kingdoms

as if it were water.  
or sway, hardly bent by storms and false alarms,  
charming, yet tensile Tree

diverting us from the Flood.  
it has been written in blood  
by those who would not sell it out;

where are their histories now?

speak into a cloud,  
a leaf, a forgotten wave  
before street speech miscued

or the garish, misconstruing  
carry it away:  
shot down from the skies,

oh jeweled bird my Word my foreign star;  
my fallen angel, phoenix, marred

mary angela douglas 15 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Over The Boughs Of April Floats

over the boughs of April floats  
the peach coloured moon  
half hid in clouds

the clouds that evening gathered  
when we were new  
and the singer sings

and as she sings  
the peach coloured moon, blooms  
blooms unaccountably

it blooms toward music

and the singer makes the stars  
a dark azure thimbleful  
the birds of evening rise

the world is beautiful in our eyes  
a garden enclosed  
where our mother sings and the moon

is a flower that blooms or is it half closed  
over april boughs  
and it means everything to us

no matter how  
small we are  
we're blooming too

where the song comes through  
the skies translucent or are they milk glass vintage  
when we ask for stories that are envisioned

and to know in the moment's crystal  
as it passed  
where is the vase containing the flowering moon.

the place where the music vanished, then.

mary angela douglas 14 december 2018; rev.18 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pages Of Light

[to my Grandmother, Lucy W. Young]

I remember the pages of light  
where the leaves shadow scattered-  
spatter painted delight!

album or maple? queried the fairies,  
the songs my mother taught me  
out of sight and I leafing through her scrapbook.

I remember the blessed darkness,  
the pink nightlights,  
the sick bed consolations

and the little pear salads.  
small fears made right.

the shade  
where the dim ferns perked after green  
rains; the fragrance risen intensely from forest floors;

like mist, the kiss of my Grandmother

when I was almost sleeping;  
the sound of distant horns as background.  
Peter and the Wolf, the oboe the oboe.

the phonograph keening.

around the maypole sleeping I go round and round  
wearing all the ribbons at once as they did once upon...  
the dresses she bought us brought down from the

Heights they were that like pages of light  
with baby rosebuds;  
ginghams sashed, the cut-work graduation white

in tissue paper rustling,  
try them on! make them last

she pleaded and the cotillions later,

the apricot jackets and the  
multicoloured cummerbunds;  
only what's done for Christ will last

green-gold taffeta taffeta  
premised upon mere please and thank you  
penmanship, the rose carnation spray,

verses learned today

and tea set privileges, the demitasse.  
the heirloom piano revered.  
and all of Music practiced bar by bar

the Arkansas stars  
the lemon chiffons, the pages of light.

I danced needing nothing else  
on an inner stage  
and it is for this reason

and no other but that Christ saves  
this poem to you Grandmother,

and the books you gave me gladly  
from the turquoise, the sea-grey shelves.

mary angela douglas 10 july 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Pale Blue Lament For The Caucus Race In Early Summer

to Lewis Carroll

handing the comfits round  
poor Alice cried again  
away from the sun drenched page.  
the last that I had left she thought  
and never cake for tea

tomorrow they'll want my blue hair ribbon too  
snipped up in equal parts  
for another race round the circle.  
(what next? my heart?)  
there can't be laurel leaves enough for them.  
inside or outside of a dream  
and I can't find the perimeter of shining.

why can't we live  
glad to be in the sun a little while  
eating berries by the river.  
leaving the race to someone else  
for whom clear moonlight is never enough

the pink-white orchard shine  
or unauditioned, all  
exuberant birdsong  
I ever heard,

and little Christmas bells...

mary angela douglas 1 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pale Flowers At Candlemas Chaunted The Lady

to Loreena McKennit, for her singing

pale flowers at Candlemas chaunted the Lady  
and I will live in the space between the lilies  
pale flowers are best:

they do not outshine the Light but gather  
sweetness inwardly and I will not flicker  
in the white dawn of pain I will not

be afraid said my sad angel echoing  
the gardenias.  
pale flowers are gathered and shining upon  
shining, starred as snows as they were  
long ago, at Candlemas;

it's the inward sparkling I believed in then.  
though the needleworked heart may bleed  
on the fabric of winter, on the hidden sleeve  
of moonlight and I am in

winter, endlessly chaunted the Lady  
of Candlemas and through the year  
though May baskets come by the hour

lined with green silk, with moss with white violets  
cream colored roses-  
only, I will not tell you everything I know  
she wept slow tears that glowed

oh, evensong  
it's ivoried music at Candlemas and  
the light will not go out in me:

uncherished -  
Christ is the Knight of the World

mary angela douglas 4 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pale Rivers Of Light At Elsinore

pale rivers of light at Elsinore  
I can recall and a tilting of the earth  
and skies she signed

when questioned by the angels afterwards  
I wanted to be remembered  
I wanted him to remember

I wanted to remember at least the  
names of the flowers I wove together  
how beautiful their trailing in

the sunrise waters, rose-lit,  
clearer than clear  
and was it, rosemary?

mary angela douglas 16 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Palm Sundays

to Boris Pasternak

'.....

.....

In the thickets toy wolves are gazing  
with terrifying eyes.

O my prophetic sadness

O my silent freedom.

.....

.....

-Osip Mandelstam, 1908

some shout Your name  
to talk to You dear Christ  
whom I hear

like a pale green whispering.  
dew-bright are Your rowan stars

like tears remitted  
in a honied wilderness;

the lily days passed by me, pearl by pearl.

but like the pieta, behind glass-  
or fairytale burnished pears  
the King keeps counting-

something's missing  
something or someone\*  
and ink is weeping everywhere now

drowning in things to say.

oh You who guard the merest shadow  
of the Rose where thieves cannot break  
through nor steal guard my rose sadness

falling lightning-struck and seared  
by the gossip of seeming multitudes-  
when all the words too late to say

surge over the fronds of  
nova-bright insomnia;

acute are digits queing up  
for yesterday's lotteries-

for a momentary phone call-  
but Giotto's angel, weeping blood,  
won't be consoled by me.

beneath the glittering surpluses  
of horsehead nebulae neighing.  
I bring the foundling songs of Your unutterable beauty-

knowing at last what crowds can do  
or the heart with no compass in an age of luminous wolves

pierrot lunaire my God- \*\* my God

Selah  
mary angela douglas 20-21 june 2010

\*reference to the poet Osip Mandelstam

\*\*musical composition by Arnold Schoenberg  
the phone call in the poem is the infamous one placed by Stalin to Pasternak  
after he discovered Pasternak was upset by the poet Osip Mandelstam's arrest.  
Stalin hung up on Pasternak when he said he wanted to meet with him to talk  
about life and death and could not be reached for further comment. Mandelstam  
died it is supposed in 1937 of a heart attack en route to a prison camp. But his  
poetry survived gloriously, thanks to his widow, Nadezhda and in part, to Anna  
Akhmatova.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pandora In The Morning

she lifts the lid on the box of day  
and it comes out blue,  
with silver linings

and there's no hint of anything  
but jade leafed summers  
where she runs to play

while her mother smiles  
the smile reserved  
for a happy daughter: this is

pandora in the morning.  
how could things go that far astray  
with so little warning

I wondered when I read one day  
the child sized legend that made me want  
to slam the lid shut tight on everything

just to be safe.

and was it just a trick of light  
in that wild future where you  
lost the singing world, delight,

and caused our plight  
merely by

not hearkening to your mother?  
finding suddenly [and too late  
to close the gate

the infinite things that sting  
though you mean  
no harm

just at your play in the Beautiful  
doing what you always did

till it all turned drastic

so fantastically, irrevocably.

why couldn't the winged fairy Hope  
be the only one who rose or why  
couldn't she have summoned batallions

or rainbows  
that day from the things too deeply stored  
and too ignored

and packed away; why couldn't there be  
a lock so strong to lock out all the  
hurt and wrongs to follow

I wondered, wondered even as a little girl  
told in my turn, not to wander;  
not to wonder too much.

where was the path backwards  
I wanted to say  
to unclouded joy when you were free

as the seas in your brief brightness  
happy about the house with the pillars  
of trellised vines.

this was the dream her mother had ever after

well who can say when  
the charm wears off the toy,  
the little idols made of clay.

that day or any other.

and a shadow  
crosses the Sun.

mary angela douglas 22 february 2016



Mary Angela Douglas

# Pandora Opened A Box Of Light

Pandora opened a box of light.  
this time she wasn't dismissed  
from the universe

all her colors rose  
they didn't cause any trouble  
only angels of mercy stood at

the round earth's unimagined  
corners  
and she kept her distress

to herself

mary angela douglas 30 january 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# Panoply For Lucy

PANOPLY FOR LUCY

'the grass withers, the flower fades.  
but the word of our God will stand forever.'

Isaiah 40: 8

to my Grandmother, Lucy W. Young

are we tourists or do we seem  
to want to be more in the  
accident of dreams

in the full fledged formulas revealed  
or does the incidence of roses gauge  
the gardens green

the rainbows furled over violet vast  
oceans, the courtyard fans fluttering  
the grey doved sonnets shirred.

basting the words on the hemline

of the sheen  
of suns of stars of anything  
grandmother was a girl in silver

once upon in her light shoes amused  
at the glint of rain on pavements

in old paintings  
film left in the cameras too long  
and lightning struck

or peach starred on a blueberry background,  
dusk that must come to the children in the yard  
will she think hard and be acclaimed

or merely fade away an ornament of Time

and the near distances not on the concert stage  
Chime! and the clocks come out to play

in a nursery way in the pink light nightlight  
and the fluff of ancient feathers down the hall down draft  
in the sunlight beams

as if from the Firebird.  
my ballets.  
my visions of tulle and the amethyst tiaras

the bows taken from the last gardenia stage  
and the old South going North to heaven  
the East met West displays

in the firecracker dark the fade, fade, fade

mary angela douglas 9 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Paperwork

in my dreams I'm finishing up old paperwork  
not my own; someone else's.  
someone who didn't do the work themselves

and judges me continually.  
in my dreams I can't stop working  
for other people

without getting paid  
though wondering why  
at odd moments

am I  
still there in  
dusty warehouses

with one violet windowpane

adding up the results  
and falling short

of expectations  
I never had.  
and if I find the key

I'll let myself out.  
I'll let myself out  
on a side street

and hurry away  
and I'll never go back

and they can file old invoices  
up in the Sky  
for all I care.

I'm anywhere else.  
until I die.  
and on my knees

asking God  
for no carbon copies.  
please.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Papier Mache, How Lovely Was The World

to Sharon

papier mache, how lovely was the world  
when you were small: hand-painted in  
mauve and green and with a streak

of blue when you got tired of holding the  
brush the way your sister said to;  
we carried crepe paper streamers carefully

from one end to the other and fastened them-  
feting the moon, the stars, the ornamental sun  
on someone's charm bracelet hidden in the closet

before christmas.  
let oranges rain down and peppermint sticks.  
oh let the earth be mauve and green again and spinning

spinning with its own dream under the glitter paste;  
its paper roses sleeping bud by bud  
in pink tissue.

though this was long ago and candy shelled.  
or wishing welled, said someone, still.  
and we have left no tracks in the snow  
as if we were angels then.

mary angela douglas 22 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Parasol

rainshine you said or would have  
if you could have and what a lovely  
day it's turned out to be.

you were still small when asked to tea  
and balanced yourself  
with Grandmother's huge

pink silk umbrella.  
and wouldn't go to sleep  
without it.

my parasol you insisted.  
an elegant word for sure,

for one so young.  
but you knew what was yours  
in the new found lands of

the living room, dining room,  
baby atelier  
even then.

mary angela douglas 21 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Parlour Song

every day is a star that shines on you

even through the mists.

what will you do

will you remove the cloud cover

will you polish the mirror of the sky

will you sigh oh bye and bye

if I get to it. maybe, in the amethyst afternoon

and withhold your dream horses at the ford

pulling on the jeweled reins...

till the night comes and the moon too.

to shine on you. with missed refrains.

what will you do now in your snowy dress.

there is still enough light to see by. you confess

the vase of flowers in the parlour had

such hopes for you when you brought them in from the garden.

just - try. play something on the piano.

put a glass record on the victrola.

hum to the carpet sweeper. strum on the mandolin.

through the beaded curtains, let a little joy in.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Particoloured Tears Are Falling Through The Evening, Blind

[small prelude on the pianoforte, for Ray Bradbury, gone:  
August 22,1920 - June 5,2012]

oh all the rainbows have fallen into the earth, headfirst-  
and "snow without Christmas" as he cried  
has stunned his sometimed midnight's  
sunned chorales.

but - even now-  
when the first curled handbell of grief is chimed, at times, magnolia creamery of  
the long before,  
you're still in business

on the ivory keys of snowconed pages turning  
in the lock  
or filtering round pure  
apricot sparkles down  
oh God knows how-  
my shuttered April mind.  
it's wondering I dream to find  
no new poet laureate of the homesick, but  
distraught cloud horses whinnying on their own in  
folds of cerulean, coral, forestalled-  
with storied apples offered: oh wrought of a banished gold-  
(as they are now) -  
to keep them home.

the day wears on...we won't know clearly now  
when dark ferrised earth kept turning into...  
blossom ladened trees renew their snow and  
petal the sweetheart mourning: "morning  
minstrelsy is dead" throughout the vacant orchards but is she  
pale pink surprised into carmine-  
by valentines received  
in the afternoon mail  
from one thought dead...?

while we as we behold through a looking glass pinhole in the constellations:  
his ice-cream coloured trollies  
hauling back and forth  
new circuses of sighs and working prisms-  
(&quot;dewdrop, listen&quot;...he whispered so we wouldn't forget you ever-  
or children would just let go and all at the same time  
their last balloons losing everything then  
it felt that way, to them...)

It's got to be now on Opal Rails  
somewhere else, going on...  
couch this in bluebirds and hydrangeas...  
and cool cups of lilled moonlight on the grass  
of other planets looking just like home

held higher above our heads than these dreams  
have ever been before: long  
past the vast pinwheeled parades of the strolling musicians, musicless  
on earth,

but not where motley is torn-  
its falling its falling through the evening blind  
and near  
our particoloured tears, unending...  
for the something unsurpassed  
and all, all-in-all at last...  
caught by a weeping God in a ruby red bottle-  
the best firefly of the whole Summer...

mary angela douglas 14 june 2012 1: 49 p.m.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Passed Note To The Teacher's Pet In The Third Grade Just Before The Christmas Party-Confiscated

just because you've got fifteen petticoats  
in double shades of the double rainbow  
starched out to the moon and back

and wearing them all at the same time  
makes you float about the room  
at show and tell

completely defying gravity  
and winning the All Schools Everywhere  
Science Fair Project

doesn't mean you should get all the presents  
at somebody else's birthday party.

mary angela douglas 29 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pasting The Book Of Hearts By The Paper Doll Stream

&quot;Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in Thy book? &quot;

Psalm 56: 8, The Holy Bible

&quot;Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.&quot;

Psalm 84: 3, The Holy Bible

[in memory of my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas]

pasting the book of hearts by the paper-doll stream

I paper-cut the moon and the glitter from antique cards

hoping it would make You appear too soon, my Lord

and the hedges bloom long before spring,

time-lapsed, lilting into a golden light.

It's the perfect silhouette of a world in Hans

Christian Anderson I still seek or the onion towers'

reckoning In full colour: scarred are the skies the wide world over

for the poet blinded for his imagination.

yet he still sees, spurring the moon bright horses on

for our Lady of the Fleur-di-Lis and the rose gardens:

toward her never collapsing lucidity.

and now, and now again I grieve on the scissoring cello  
of the fairytale ellipse like Shoshtakovich-  
recording the eclipse at land's end.

I 'll make you apple blossoms pink waxed  
on blue crayoned pages

and later, the cherry repetitions of a heart in construction paper  
but now, no longer measuring the cocoa out at Christmastime  
the xxxs and the oooos...

whole countries seem to be cut off overnight  
from the crystalized candy-cane singing, the Holy Night  
she is so far from the land.

and God goes collecting the rosewater tears  
of the daughters the daughters the daughters  
and the pink dominoes of the childhoods  
falling, falling through your 40 year misdiagnosis and  
the country you used to come from.

let it all be momentary:

do not weep ma mere

in the courtyard where the artist  
condemned to linger

traces on the air allotted him

the roses no one sees and colors them in.

we will archive everything

In poems without number

convinced of an afterlife

pale pink and blue

where megaphones cannot blare

this cannot be (they mean your soul)

and neighborhoods

turn to pour the stone cold kitchen coffee out

never dreaming you're right there in a dress of pure magenta.

a smile like Alencon...

one instant ever after...

I'm weeping paper lace in an endless stream

to wrap the flowers for a small bouquet

for the one in a thousand's thousand

who knew how to read the music this way:

it's long ago we played in the late afternoon

that the world could not be banished anymore



that someone would recognize our Fate  
and that we still hear our mothers calling  
from an orchid twilight  
all the way from Eden or the State Hospital.

mary angela douglas 30 november,2,3 december 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pavane Of The Sleeping Stream

in memory of my Grandmother-

and for Judy Collins

it's the pavane of the sleeping stream  
the sleeping stream that leads I won't know where  
fresh out of the gate like Peter in Prokofiev

I hear the white duck's oboe  
I hear the white duck's oboe in a vivid spring  
and I follow the sleeping stream

and cut blue lavender flowers  
and the snowy green from the snowball  
bushes of the neighbors

thinking all things are equal  
at least among flowers  
I am least among flowers

and follow the sleeping stream  
the onyx with its one small star  
and lose the pavane never weeping

and the crystal beaded sunsets,

Grandmother's jewelry  
in the distance;  
I don't even know I'm leaving,

and it's all Rouault in the mists,  
the weeping clown, Pagliacci  
on glass records and

being the vanishing point of rain  
rain on her watered colours  
rain upon my face

I can't see dissolving

I am the sleeping stream  
I am the piano stowed away by strangers.

mary angela douglas 6 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Peach Swung In The Vernacular, Day After Maya Died

'Do I dare to eat a peach? '

-T.S. Eliot, The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock

to Maya Angelou and those who loved her

go ahead on and eat that peach, Mr. Eliot  
it's clear you've been away too long  
from all the Peach Streets of America

and those old orchards raining their thick golden rains  
it's positively Providential: it's our  
hard turning of the ice cream stile;  
we make our own miracles with the help of Sweet Jesus.

my oh my my my  
peachalicious-charming in her Sunday hat  
her caftans, gowns, long strands of beads

was she was all that and more?  
whisper the children with round surprise  
in their church silk voices.  
every day of the week she's gone now,  
from our small town.

I'll never sit down to her caramel cake  
a fantasy of mine on my dessertless days.  
it wasn't her poems that mattered the most

just like it wasn't the peach that really mattered to T.S.  
it was the goldenness in her oozing out in a voice,  
a dusky goldenness, a dark lily shining

insisting you notice something - Life!  
and sit up straight.  
a voice fit for Shakespeare's queens, a tragedienne's dream

but she wasn't that.  
she stirred up- something -  
everywhere she went and now, she's spent-

Red crayon, out of the box

her smile like a huge valentine-volcano.  
her voice like dark pearls spilling over  
beyond the reach of the low flyers always

daring, Mr. Eliot,  
to eat that peach,  
why don't you ask, for so many more-

mary angela douglas 29 may 2014; rev.12 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Penelope At Her Loom

heroic virtue was to stay behind

weaving the same threads over time

then most of all, unweaving.

but in the book I understand

heroic virtue in that man

was leaving.

gold in the honey

amber chimes;

the waves caesura

in her mind

reminding her of all of Time

and all of Time, is grieving.

who would that adventure choose

weaving love up in her room

unweaving it again.

yet still, love proving,

until then

having so much to pretend

and no one no one to defend

her seeming lack of household skill

her fortress against every will

to unweave her.

basting and unbasting still

I think of her

I always will

beyond the clash of steel and verve

the mariners, the sea's wild curve

the house in ruins and still she weaves

stalwart beyond every seam and meaning

of the world's reversals, queen.

and love itself dreamed and undreamed

relentlessly. I don't know how

she kept through anguished epochs

such a vow.

mary angela douglas 8 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Penny Wishes On Mercury Dimes

one day our penny wishes will return  
so copper bright.  
the ones we tossed; wishing fiercely

by random fountains.  
wishing wells.  
even the stage set kind

made of cardboard  
at the school fairs.

I used to wish for the world  
a something...  
every time-and me, in it.

now I forget...  
but nothing's wasted  
if you pay attention;

not one dime my

Grandfather gave  
me then to spend  
on what could be

that wasn't then.  
and isn't now.

one day, somehow-  
someday on an ordinary day,  
and far from Christmas still

some radiance unannounced

will come and ring the doorbell  
after all these years  
and I'll remember through my tears

his kindness then

in teaching me to spend  
and from the heart you bet

on penny wishes  
every chance you get.

mary angela douglas 30 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Penultimate Fairy Tale Collection Or Is It

you must have read all the stories by now you tell yourself  
(or They do)  
but something wistful says, there's more

as there must be since there's more of anything else,  
more clouds, more ice creams, certainly, more roses.  
and the Princess sighs almost distraught, self taught

in the King's own libraries.  
whenever I rise in the morning mist  
(she lived there, too)

I think there must be more than this

an ending more surprising than the last  
with more fantastical pictures  
as I want a dress to match what Will Be

additionally to What Was  
be 'if' velvet or not; oh, if you must  
repeat yourself

then let it be yards of cherry velvet  
or the shade of creme de menthe

spilling over into  
poem after poem...

mary angela douglas 9 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# People Were Hamming It Up/The Moon Like A Marble

people were hamming it up at the Kennedy Center Honors  
outside a drizzle, a mist above the Potomac  
the recessive angels sang, the small birds

Whitman in the dock, who else  
angels have run amuck  
somewhere a crystal clear star is shining

unobtrusively  
to God belongs all acclaim  
I whispered in the rains

to the mists above the Potomac  
recitative and the long dawn lost  
after the longer night

angels wept in the outer rings  
the monuments kept watch  
the moon like a marble

stilled the music of the heart  
except where it turned to Glass  
as on the day after battlefields

and beauty has drained, at last, the cup  
while people are hamming it up  
at the Kennedy Center

center of whatnot.

Mary Angela Douglas 26 December 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Perfect Christmas Stocking

stuffed with rubies, perhaps  
kaleidoscopes made of rose window shreds  
a plaster saint made of snow

perfume of birthday candles  
from the long ago (the cake, still fresh  
and every rose, your own)

a new novel by the Brontes.  
I don't know!  
enough oranges for all the orphanages

instantaneous homes for the oppressed  
complete with cherry wood staircases  
dresses in the style and just your size

of your favorite dolls  
the Washington Mall in cherry blossom bloom  
the skies, too, cherry on cherry piled;

another dress in those shades, moire,  
green velvet sash-  
a drifting feather from Pavlova

like an eyelash from dancing stars  
tears in an emerald bottle from the child you are  
a pale green tree house (it folds out)

with perfect bookshelves, sustained  
by the music of Time;  
sachet of gardenia and

the summer rain

mary angela douglas 18 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Perfumes Smiled From The Flowers

perfumes smiled from the flowers  
on your finer days.  
and you were always finding

crystal things to say.  
I remember these things  
whenever I'm farther away

and when the afternoon subsides  
into a winter I can't yet see  
because I seem, remembering

perfumes that smiled from the flowers  
someone finer than,  
remembering how it was at home.

mary angela douglas 19 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Perhaps She Was Born To Illumine Small Corners

(to the fairy godmother in all her guises)

perhaps she was born to illumine small corners  
to sow sparkles amongst the cobwebs  
bridal finery for the dolls

on afternoons after all, when she could hardly lift the clouds  
managing the lights in majolica, instead; to lighter duties wed:  
Shakespearian carriages drawn by moths-

awaiting, a shade melancholy, the will o' the wisp commands;  
the sewing trials and the close knotted stitchery, stitches:  
between them, no moonlight, her mother said

dark tea, no clotted cream, no princess gaunt  
certainly, no spindled dream, .la belle au bois dormant....

for cameo appearances she was well suited  
in peach velvet with the magic fishbone  
occasional sorties into the hall closet

rummaging sweet ballgowns of a distant age;  
turn the page of visions and the songbird flees the cage,  
the jewelry of a moment;

memorize Forever,  
put away, with the crystal recessionals.  
put away from you the garnet inconsistencies

her voices chided  
renewing like Yeats  
the wands.

the reticent swans  
the pale blue legends  
of the Easter silk days.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2018|rev,17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Perhaps There Will Be Ships In The Afternoon

perhaps there will be ships in the afternoon  
with the shuttered light appearing on  
the open page

of the book you wanted to read  
and it will slip from your hands  
when the old ghosts grieve to

gather roses from your side,  
the tides of white and gold.  
or will they hide

and you will go out  
to look for them in the yard  
having misplaced something

with a forgotten name  
with the zinnias at their zenith and you,

desultory, the old wounds awakening.  
but in the palace

for this instant only  
a rose light abides  
as it did at your beginning.

the courtiers awaken

and you are the newfallen bride  
covering the orchards  
with the snows of bright surmise

or the ship that floats above us all now  
through a beaded treetop's door  
and from earth's winters flying

that they may strive  
no more

mary angela douglas 27 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Perhaps They Think Us Scattered

perhaps they think us scattered

but light itself is scattered like a veil of opals

by God Himself through so many prised raindrops

all the time perhaps you think one thought does not connect

to another in a reasonable blueprint in our minds

but then we're not making blueprints, but song

and in the multiplicity of notes, the veering back

to childhood themes and variations on a star

we come to no decisive point but dissolve into dreams.

and thus, we are happy in a world beyond our means.

you in your scheming to deride us propose

we are silly and will never attain the pinnacles

while we admire the blue lights over the hills

cast by twilights we can never cease warbling about

you think from your armchair in your study the cigar smoke curling around

your head in ordered hieroglyphics much to be admired.

but I know the roses twine in me and in old stories of the antique kind

there are so many primrose bordered paths that do not betray.

what is so inconstant as woman grand operas say

to the point of tedium. yet in our wandering, wondering souls

God does at times make his abode and finds relief from schoolroom lectures  
in our multicoloured, our charmed and chattering gardens.

mary angela douglas 26 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Persephone Leaving The Party Early

[to Christ the King, the only one]

baked in the cake the sullen charms remain  
where you'll not find them.  
you've barely touched your plate,

they'll croon.  
then sidle by the fire.  
it's summer; sweltering in the room...

I'm going to the well  
to quench the day you say,  
almost gaily.

the moon, the moon,  
like silver lame is threading where  
the fireflies mingle

in the softer air  
and you are free  
and treading home at last

you'll find, brought down from the attic  
the Nativity packed in straw  
glows like a star

and you'll remember  
you'll remember  
in cherry returning gladness

Whose you are.

mary angela douglas 11 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Personal Day Out At The National Gallery

they tinted the public gardens (or their own)  
with a Heavenly brush  
those old painters you rush by in the museum

thinking you've already seen them  
your mind on what's for lunch, what's going on

and you don't see the mystery of what they captured there  
so far exceeds where you are going, anywhere  
that, if you did, I know you would stand here too, transfixed

in a room filled with white radiance so long  
admiring Monet's white cathedral and its opaline  
qualities until the guard thinks you're going to

steal it and carry it out somehow in your pockets.  
but I ride home on the bus so nondescript you think  
if you think of me at all while you're holding court

in front of the Supreme Court or near one of those marbled  
entities that made up what was never a city for human  
habitation really but only the monumental and those

who serve them;

you don't know but I do through delicate presentiment  
by afternoon the city will be covered in snow from tip to toe  
all the monuments, snow making a second snow

on the permanently snowy  
while I'm at home removing from the raincoat  
pocket of my mind most carefully

lest they fall apart,

as though they were mine alone from so much gazing:  
those surpassing  
those snow blinding images

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Philippe Petit: Balanced On His Best Day

he will be balanced on a diamond thread  
between two points: connecting the heart  
to the Heart someday

around his head flowed the stars of Van Gogh,  
the unfounded galaxies, the future snows,  
the opalescent birds cut from their fairy tales at last,

escaped into ruby paned air oh through the ivoried  
plumes of cloud oh

how will he wound the doves with a mere gesture?  
she sighed to his detractors  
doffing his crown of breezes and if he slips it is not into

the abyss but into our wondering care  
or wedged somewhere, so quietly  
he thinks it is dreaming,

in a pale blue notebook,  
cloud clotted lines  
of the elegiac poem of a

little girl's old homework,  
returning on a crayoned wind  
inferring

she's from the everywhere,  
collecting her bouquets,  
her pocket creme sachets,

who rushes there-  
as if to say: oh, not too late papa-  
with borrowed gemmy wings o!

just in case?

mary angela douglas 8 june 2014



Note on the Poem: the little girl in the poem is a reference to his daughter, Gypsy who died at 9 years old of a brain hemorrhage. This poem was written just after a very poetic interview (I mean Philippe Petit gave poetic answers to perfect questions) of Philippe Petit by Bob Edwards radio today on the subject of Mr. Petit's new book: Creativity: the Perfect Crime. Previously I had watched the lovely film Man on Wire, which also influenced the poem in a similar way.

By 'unfounded galaxies' I mean: non-commercial space,  
Space as dreamed of through centuries by children, poets, and astronomers...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Photo Finish

the photo finish grows sharper in all your dreams

we're everywhere now

in the former houses

eating strawberries and cream

and towards evening it seems

the soul leaves its faint impression

on the constellations

the walk to the station takes less time

and you're uncertain what to rhyme

or if you should rhyme at all

you feel like you're all the Springs combined

and you can't stop breaking into flower.

or the clouds, in their vague blue stratosphere,

the fading worlds;

the wind set with small pearls.

mary angela douglas 9 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Piano Recital With Pink Carnations, Red Gladioli

to my Grandmother, Lucy W. Young  
and to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young Douglas

ah breathlessly exquisite the carnation nosegay, pink spiced  
with its center of paler pink rosebuds, pale satin streamers  
for a little girl's first recital and matching her dress.

can she reach the pedals in all this pinkness  
whisper quiet asks an audience of all the neighbors.  
softly, first notes spill like little pink sapphires

onto glass, like

grace notes plucked from a cloud and the older students in  
polished cotton, waiting their turn stop fanning themselves  
with their programmes.

there should be petals raining down said her mother then  
as if she were the flower girl-  
at the wedding of Music  
said her Grandmother, in gladioli red and stylish,

The Piano Teacher

mary angela douglas 9 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Picnics In Eternity

we were so happy with the lemon drop sun

with the pink cakes in cartoon picnics

on red checked cloths

and the light green lace of april trees

I don't see how Eternity

could not have these as well

as angel choirs. there sinking in mud

in the rain soaked lanes

and the scent of the flowers all our own

would feel like home; like home, prolonged

and the flowers would never die there.

the blossoms would only get brighter.

we would wait for the stars, but no Sunset.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Picture Book Story Of Plush Bunny, Puppy, And The Princess

a plush bunny plopped off of the comfy sofa  
with the vintage rose pattern  
and landed on the equally plush carpet

in the early morning hours  
when the sky was turning lilac  
and the princess rose in her sleep

missing the plush (oversensitive) bunny  
coming into the living room  
sensing it in moonlight there

and scared  
its purple ear a little smushed  
because let's get real

it wasn't a good landing  
even if it was indoors  
away from the cats

and so just at that  
moment came the pitterpat of the new puppy  
paws a little unsure on the hardwood

flooring in the hall a little small  
for the job but unerring  
picked up the plush bunny by

its violet ear, tugged on the rose print  
robe of the princess  
and led them back up the stairs.

both at the same time  
queried the over critical?  
yep. it was a magic puppy.

that's what kind of day it was.

you forgot to say!

mary angela douglas 26 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pie Keepers. Cake Savers. Poetry Makers.

pie keepers.  
cake savers.  
oh who will bless the poetry makers

in their obscure kitchens?  
they store their gem-starred jams  
laid in before fresh winters of

neglect, perhaps  
in the cool cool larders where  
their suns never set and the

sunset colours remain  
of the mint, the hawthorn apple;  
or rose geranium.

pie keepers.  
cake savers.

how delicious to the Holy Ghost  
their uncelebrated jellies shine;  
consider them from time to time

whenever you weary of the garlanded  
forever making merry from the dais of  
the same-old same old.

the minor poets  
in their obscure kitchens  
over the hot stove

and solitary at dusk  
branching into the wild cherry

mary angela douglas 3 august 2014

Note on the poem: What a difference a word makes. At first I had the last line as 'breaking into the wild cherry' and I almost heard my mother say, bubbling over with laughter from the Unseen: 'you'd better change breaking to branching



or else it will sound like the poets are breaking into the wild cherry preserves, 'pigging out' on their own larder', when what I meant to say is that the jellies keep piling up like their poems, unread and untasted.

Give me an award. I spared them from embarrassment. And myself, since I definitely consider myself a minor poet. In English there's Shakespeare and the people who translated the Bible for King James. And then there's the rest of us.

I'm just happy God lets me play in the poetry sandbox at all.  
Especially in the one under the shade tree, in summer.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pilate, That Paragon Of Civility

I'm sure Pilate thought he was  
showing good form that day  
with his thoughtful, 'What is truth? '

his dreamy stare indicating a reasonable man,  
admirable, even in that situation to have  
given the Criminal a chance to answer in the docket

a question about his favorite hobby.  
(Pilate's I mean; quite the dabbler in it  
and a paragon of civility.)

What is truth, asked Pilate a tad dramatically  
aware of his question  
ringing on the air.

But Christ said nothing

knowing the question wasn't real.  
knowing he was about to die as the Answer to it.  
and then the I find no fault in this man

thus washing his hands of the whole thing

especially the bad dream his wife had,  
begging him not to condemn that man or else.  
so he comes up with a game show choice:

and proud of himself, for neatly solving  
what could have been a real career breaker:

Jesus, or the thief? and Barabbas goes free  
as Pilate must have forseen,  
thus letting him off the hook

with his bosses, his wife and  
keeping the crowd, the Scribes, Pharisees happy.  
letting Christ bleed.

how civil of him.

mary angela douglas 3 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pink Candles Flare On A Rose-Decked Cake (Before Dripless Candles)

pink candles flare on a rose decked cake  
how quickly you must wish so the buttercream  
roses won't taste like wax.

looking back, under the duress of this  
how could you know what wish to make?  
maybe the way it's all turned out

depends on that  
as much as on anything else.  
let fresh cakes be ordered thundered

the king or queen  
in a diamond anniversary epiphany  
trying to make up finally

for all the wishes made imperfectly  
just to not ruin the frosting.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pink Peppermint Ice Cream

pink peppermint ice cream  
my favorite poem among the ice creams  
candied cream pink of the infinitesimal

served at a birthday  
there should be no further presents.  
you are more than sufficient.

rosy in the dish melting and crunchy  
you defy all descriptions of deliciousness.  
and then my Grandmother

unveils, under the silver cake lid: the epiphany of  
pink lemonade cake...

mary angela douglas 5 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pinnochio, The Sequel

the Blue Fairy with her wand touches all the  
wooden toys in sight and  
they coo with delight

we are alive  
and wink and blink and spin their colours  
till they are out of sight on the way to

Happiness Castle, long may it last..

but I among them sit in the roadway still  
still fasting, weak and unbendable  
and cry where is my alibi; I have none.

nor bread. nor anywhere to run

so beaten and so tried.  
and, azure as she was,  
and glittering, notwithstanding I-

I cannot fly.

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pity The Beautiful Word That Cannot Chime

pity the beautiful word that cannot chime;  
underground, in exile from the  
naturalist poets who find

more coinage in the simple words,  
they say, who barter our heritage away  
lightly, while talking at the conferences or

holding forth at  
the dinner tables set with wine no longer roseate;  
with crystal, whilst the crystalline word 0

shivers and cries,

shimmering under the table;  
really, barely even a pet anymore;  
still less, Divine

since it has been decided  
all around and with snifters held high  
yes, Gentlemen! to banish the Divine as well

from these proceedings.

mary angela douglas 18 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pity, Isosceles, You Are No Greek Play

pity, isosceles you are no Greek play

only an angle on a page I cannot fathom

as easily as I fathom clouds

the sound of my grandfather mowing our lawn

and leaving the clover alone

the mint in the garden

the rose as still the rose.

pity that I cannot understand

the need for theorems

when music is at hand

the blue jay or the mocking birds

heard from our back porch

the tack of silver winds; the

near summer drone of bees

the soda pop poured, the ease of new magazines

and more than these

the bubble up of Time



when textbooks won't be needed

and all my reading will be the books I choose

and all these angles a mere interlude.

mary angela douglas 25 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Places With Such Beautiful Names Have Endured Such Atrocities

[to William Blake and the Space Program]

places with such beautiful names have endured such atrocities  
I heard the angels chained complain complain  
and not unto their lutes of fire.

it is the inward love that I desire cried Jehovah  
into His new handkerchief of the somber, silken skies  
while over the earth with a myriad surprise

the sunrise rose and rose and rose  
dazzling the astronauts.

mary angela douglas 8 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Plagiarizing The Pom Poms

down to the last rag doll rag and bone

my God we have been used by those

with side-winding smiles by those who say

we'll see you in a while but who mean never

as they drop off the cliff with everything they could lift from you

with an oh i'll take that off of your hands

or I'll raise my hand with the answer you already gave

but the teacher couldn't hear you

and borrow your words your finery and not use quotes as if that were

their prerogative and the kit catty cat burglar game made bona fide

right in front of you while they bask in a ripped off glow

and bushel basket strangle your small flame

as they ascend ascend to spiral staircase fame

flinging a stolen glance from the shoulder a rhinestone shawl

but the oddest thing of all is the staircase runs out

and they haven't even got a shout for help,

they could call their own.

mary angela douglas 1 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Play In One Act

oh spindle bright or the  
ballet looms of snow  
shone in the lamplight not my own

for who owns the moon she said

or the sun  
that we may embroider it on our petticoats.  
and it's a school play

and the audience comes  
and the lines are given but  
all the wrong ones

and the play is spoiled  
and the costumes ruined  
and the stage sets serve

for the homes of fools  
who wear the crown and  
the lopsided sun

and the moon sobs down  
the dawns among  
the annointed

on the sidelines

mary angela douglas 31 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Play Money Christmas And More

in the play money days we thought ourselves well off.  
Monopoly money, bills of every candy coloured denomination.  
thinking ourselves rich one Christmas tide

of board games galore unwrapped

my sister and I ran down the hill the day after  
thinking we could buy every chocolate drop and more  
at the corner candy store of a neighbor.

and actually came back home with a few that day  
where no one had the heart to tell us, right away  
the money wasn't real.

same thing with the Claus when we understood  
the Eve my grandfather hammered his thumb at midnight  
putting together a lovely gunmetal green desk

for us- who was the real St. Nicklaus.  
and that not every tick tock comes in  
all the colours at once.

gradually these things fade.  
then come back into view  
without the red plastic View Master.

without even, trips to the Store.

in fresh giftwrap  
delighting once more.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Play Something On The Violin For Rilke

Rilkean birds flew out of my heart  
startled by the nearness of the skies.  
cloud music I have loved you  
with an unseen love  
imagining the winds at Duino

and the first gold fissure of  
angels floating nigh  
the pale green parapets in  
dangerous weather, the  
Poet almost blown overboard...

who can forget to love  
the poet born  
to be wounded by roses,  
business letters and the unrecorded-  
covert sniping glances on  
the endless evening pavements where you walked-

the leaves whirl up as high as the sunset  
roses left for you by God, alone,  
though you're no longer here to gather them.

children gazing from new windows-  
unused to the battlements of high Song-  
suddenly-began to dream...  
began to notice the teacups rattling on their own-  
and the far distances...

as though they were meant to be  
strange neighbors  
in the same music,

Shining-

mary angela douglas 27-28 february 2012

Mary Angela Douglas



# Please Accept This Crust Of Bread

'I am the Bread of life...'

Jesus Christ

please accept this crust of bread.

may it be buttered with the sun.

with wildflower jam.

washed down with amber tea.

with forgotten happiness.

may it crunch when you bite into it

with the crunch of no more dreamlessness.

when you're hungry.

suddenly in prison

or merely alone in the day-to-day

with the moon behind the clouds

remember this piece of bread.

and be full.

mary angela douglas 30 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poem For Only Easter

the skies are enameled turquoise  
robins egg blue  
we hear fantastical trumpets in our sleep

and wake to dream  
the world is made of lilies  
ah, in the night the stars

hid their faces  
the sun cried gold  
but now there's dew on the grasses

and we are new and of His fold  
alleluia  
alleluia

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poem Leading Upwards

if you find this poem there is no mistake  
coincidence all the words that banish mystery  
when you are led suddenly  
into an upward gaze  
where the angels weave anew  
in cloudlike fits Jacob's brightest Ladder.  
orif, and if the shoe fits the message turns to a crystal shoe  
don't let it bother you. or to a rose to a wild rose  
as in the poetry of Edward MacDowell.  
suddenly on a well tuned piano you hear the grace notes  
and leave all you have  
in search of the one rose.

mary angela douglas 21 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poem To Sharon, Through The Looking Glass Of Time

to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas

we'll write on the snow in cloud languages  
no one will know the poets were here  
that someone pushed the swings from behind

so that we landed in different countries  
that's where the angels snowdrift through red roofs  
or through the yellow skyscrapers

on a blue background  
as though you said  
as though they were sistines.

we wanted a ceiling of roses  
bearing down hard on our old crayons  
red and pink, occasional blue green leaves

rococo as the day is long, we laughed.  
rococo sipping cocoa.

I pack them up with my tears  
remembering sad years,  
seraphic, your piano.

its silver blue plink plink.  
the rain falling on taffeta.  
she plays the music of the spheres  
I cried in assembly

no one believed me.  
we went on from year to year  
surviving adjoining kingdoms

the mustard coloured jester popping out  
from the jack in the box of our worst dreams  
you wrote on a postcard in pink ink perhaps from Siena

how would I know

the pines are too beautiful to live on here  
let's turn them into far  
green angels

mary angela douglas 10 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poetry As I Believe It To Be

in previous scenes the lark sang all night long

the moon imbued the apple trees

with a strange silvering of the leaves

and gazing from the gabled windows

I and my compatriots believed

believed in poetry that it was all around us within us

God given like the night quenching dew

or the violets edging

the woods behind our school

where we played we could rule

over the beautiful even then.

what has it come to now?

a few slogans about dystopia?

somewhere the same old kingdoms

await us as if we were in our memories turned to be

ourselves rhe coming of Arthur

the swelling of the tide

that bears the sailors home.

mary angela douglas 14 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poetry Is Not A Contest

poetry is no contest I cried unto the living skies;  
but the flickering of images lit by electrical storms;  
with no warning,

the telegram from God  
hidden in snows, the windswept;  
the crystal breath of angels,

who knows,

at the windowpanes  
where small children barely stand  
after letting go

of  
the word between here and there.  
the table where the roses were;

the room where the table was-  
in Shining, long ago;  
the shaken pillars driven further

underground,

away, away from sound,  
nearer to glaciers.  
poetry is not a contest

a competition of herds.  
of who deserves or not.  
where, in any of your shadows

could you ever find

its resemblance  
clutching at the grass  
you used to know

while hurricanes pass



over you  
or the unnamed stars

mary angela douglas 17 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poetry Is Viewed Now As Through A Periscope

poetry is viewed now through a periscope.  
outside are clouds, vast trees, restless  
galaxies.

the gleam of silver  
on a bird's wing.  
how can you understand

your life in a cubicle  
or filtered through The News  
that is always the what is not

your own picked apart by the talkative.  
shut it off. become yourself,  
like trees do.

without fanfare, prizes or  
voicing your opinion endlessly.  
with hidden scars.

sweet green interiors.

mary angela douglas 15 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poetry With No Prizes

[for Landis Everson]

poetry with no prizes wouldn't really be  
like the birds singing but minus their trees  
like the wind through no harps

like the porch with no chimes.  
no it wouldn't.  
poetry without prizes

would just be  
singing for itself and God  
when he happened by or

for the bystanders waiting out vast Storms.  
careless, filled with clouds

and wings  
no need of microphones, megaphones.  
well kept stages, brittle cafes.

but telegrams, at Sea.

only the faces of angels; all greenery  
left in the woods to its own or  
Christmas with the snows stopped

suddenly,

the holy hush.  
just itself, and free.  
asking nothing

the inordinate Star above.

mary angela douglas 2 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

## Poetry With No Prizes 2

birdsong at morning  
and the unfettered skies  
above the ant farms of the world

and it is no surprise  
that we don't want to board the trains,  
the buses, the remains of our lives

after merely glancing at fantastic sunrise  
but we endure  
sure of our prize.

but birds are free.  
free in their chirping green  
or in their decimated

Falls, still glorious or spiraling  
in the cold and myriad songed.  
and this you realize

all on your own, this pure gold  
the way you did as a child,  
is music,

poetry, with no prize.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poetry, My Little Ships

of all my little ships silver floating on the water

the ones at sunset ruby tipped

the ones merry in the sea green foam

the one I want most is the one edged in violet

edged in violet and singing to itself

I know I know God floats upon the waters with me

and shapes my notes my notes

my fluted arrangements on the brink

of dreams my bouquets

descending and ascending the waves

regardless of who finds them

farther downstream beyond the ebb and flow

or receives them or receives them not

at the docks of gold.

Mary Angela Douglas 3 May 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pooh, It's A Day For Typos

pooh it's a day for typos piped Piglet bravely  
but Pooh was busy unspelling:  
that's spelling or trying to

while walking backwards  
in no shoes  
and thinking it's best now

to stop for Honey.  
yes, on a day perfect for typos  
oh so sunny

our friends tripped on in  
the Hallowed Woods  
not trying to be funny

while writing tragedy  
(they thought they were-)  
locked out of the writer's conferences

for making up new words  
but happy in their traipsing  
trespassing ways

their forays into the language  
paws and all  
so happy they could burst:

headfirst, into all the mistakes...

mary angela douglas 31 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Postcard For The Tin Soldier In Tintypes Of The Rose

to Hans Christian Andersen, of course!

how beautifully you remembered that room;  
sailing back from doom it seemed far lovelier  
than when the something snatched you from it.

stately, the Christmas castle on the nursery tabletop  
imparts a rosier glow;  
amid the evergreens and swans  
the pink dancer perfectly pink  
is balanced still on the mere spangle of her heart.

how long you had floated in the gutters  
gnawed by the water rats-  
never wavering in the dark-

still musket bright  
though who would have seen you there  
being brave in the dream  
of not one toy coronet flourish  
to sustain you.

and now you're home ah, so it seems  
but the wind will find you  
turning it all to snow  
outside the elaborate windowpanes

till not one flake of you remains.  
the nursery fire dissolves  
and you are gone.

beyond the storyline I see each time:  
each of them, stalwart not pretending  
and my toy coronet surprises  
not ever the green, gold,  
crimsoning angels  
with its small Christmas  
epitaph, at last, for you:

here blooms an Eternity of  
floating on pink waters-  
mirroring the rose gardens  
of Heaven

mary angela douglas 15 october 2013; revised 18 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Postcard To My Sister From The Magic Kingdom

maybe we will write again with the ruby, the emerald fountain pens  
we got one Christmas  
on fine tea coloured parchment as on clouds

with mysterious rays of light falling down  
as we fell in rings o roseys to the ground  
when poetry was still allowed

and fairy tales recounted  
in swan whisperings, enchantments of the Rose.

and we will write all birthday crowned of those  
and maypole streaming of what we found  
in the school Lost and Found

in the square dances on the early stages  
dear Virginia reels, and folkloric ones too  
when our favorite costume was the gipsy skirt

(or the pink tutu)

the peasant blouse, embroidered  
the lustrous dime store beads  
in many colours rivaling Joseph's coat.

in particolored ways we wandered  
on strawberry sundress afternoons  
a little confused thinking

shouldn't sundaes be consumed on Sundays  
and why are Hush Puppies edible, and yet shoes?  
till we found our language all apricot filling filled

bursting at the seams with extra cherries  
the Frontier and Tomorrow Land.

I'll dial you up on the red plastic phone  
that Mickey's voice came through on  
or Donald, or Pluto

and we'll be Mouseketeers again  
loyal to the end  
counting our red gold pennies for the pilgrimage

to the pink and blue castles, by turns.

I won't say everything was perfect then  
but in imagination world's fairs and all  
it really was spectacular

and all of it in living colour thru the Vu Finder,  
Living Stereo, razzle dazzle colour wheel turning

on our aluminum Christmas Tree.

mary angela douglas september 22 2018/rev.4 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Poverty Is A Wound That Cannot Heal

sudden poverty is a wound that cannot heal  
like a star that drops from heaven  
and becomes a stone

like a scar on what was known or  
unknown, weighed equally  
you want to shake it off

like a dog shakes off the rain  
but you are always on that train  
when people around you sniff

the absence of gold  
and turn away  
thinking thank God it isn't me today

maybe tomorrow  
but they just want away from the sight of you now  
as though you were a prison, plague

somehow  
in mirrors you don't look the same  
but God stands out in the rain with you

you who are afflicted  
not afflicting  
anyone

they think he's a hobo too  
the King of everyone!  
so the two of you laugh

and that brings out the sun.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Praising The Book People

'the faint whisper of a turned page'  
-Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451

would you sell your heart's desire  
would you chop it up for  
firewood in the bitter cold

or throw it over the bridge,  
sparking futile distances,  
to spare yourself?

how would you choose,  
sensing the end was near,  
from all these things so rare:

what to pawn  
what to carry on your back,  
kind refugees of this beleaguered Word?

there is a library of the mind  
where books like jewels shine  
where we could surpass

the farthest runners to the edge of Light  
leaning over the rim of its deep well  
whenever a second universe appears.

not to betray this universe,  
to shield it from inquisitional fire  
or the permafrost of  
brutal disregard

we choose this role, even to be lost,  
tearing out the blank pages of ourselves  
inscribing them with ink that

can't be traced

in love with cherry-scaped language

we'll memorize it all  
warned in dreams to depart

another way,  
bartering life for art  
reading reading reading to

fuse the broken continents within  
beauty and truth, once again,  
our touchstone

through harsh midnights of sheer

inarticulation

we stand guard  
refusing to stone the messengers  
sheltering angels, unaware  
weaving bright meaning  
into our banished souls

as on the first day

mary angela douglas 13 october 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# Prang Sunrise And Castle

in the kingdom with its watercoloured Prang  
sunrise and castle  
you still live on tiptoe

as in the sugarplum days  
so good at finding diamonds in the clay  
at Murfreesboro;

what else can you?

not too famous, just enough,  
a Goldilocks fame as yet  
in your cherry velvet,

cherry appliqued collar.

we'll race to the Living Room Tree  
oh, our multicoloured!  
to pray that this never vanishes

to the One who holds all sparkling  
in snowy hands...

the distant lands in picture books  
with the clouded towers we share-  
bell towers that almost ring

for you with the gum machine  
semi semi precious rings  
on your every finger

and not a bit gaudy;  
where you are citizen not merely but  
Princess beyond reproach at the Piggly Wiggly

the first to reach the moon from the swing set  
near the air conditioning water tower.

on a most unusual Saturday

we pray to Our Lady of the Orange Nasturtiums  
when with all dolls looking on we'll

lemon pledge, sweep, and bake to a crisp  
the Gold into existence; singing the birds  
into their own trees as we harmonize.

this, I commemorate here and there.

for the soft air through my window  
would be cherry branching, always,  
strawberry chimed

in the pale blue room with the muslin curtains...

are we the golden twigs broken off  
at the last moment  
in a dream

of the Golden Tree?  
we'd be in cotillion dresses by then.

maybe she asked me in a dream  
within a dream within a dream  
so many things,

both of us in our carcoats in  
a Little Rock snow entranced  
with the brand new glazing on the holly berries.

only I couldn't hear her then,  
my sister,  
as her Music swept away

that could have crowned the Flood-  
with rainbows

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Premonition

your mind with its stained glass  
its reverent fissures, cul de sacs  
its lime green neighborhoods

peridot coloured moons  
they want to exhume, examine  
and ask you: please say back to me

a few minutes later the words:  
penny, apple, table  
and of course you do

you will  
but the drill keeps on going;  
they'll ask you to count backwards

to subtract the current atmosphere

from the one in which you were free.  
oh it's all for your own good  
they say benevolently perhaps.

how could it be  
when I hear the jeweled bells ring out  
from the distances in peril.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Presentiment In Winter

winter's porcelains in the skies  
have this finish:  
tinted, mother of pearl, or the color of doves;

snow skies in their bridal satins.  
this was painted on her mind  
and layered over years.

winter's porcelains...

is it the Snow Child's ensign  
from a thousand, thousand legends  
that you glimpse again

when icicles chime and you wonder,  
can the snowdrops be retrieved  
she held so wistfully, then-

the bouquet of her final hours?  
oh you will melt away  
one day, verging on flowers.

or on all the silver suns  
whose time has come

in your own winter, delicately.  
in February's distances.  
when the geode of starlight

spills open before you.  
and the earth sobs.

mary angela douglas 5 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Promised

even so this April green this misted scene  
unfolds as in earlier years the treble clef of birds  
the liquid trilling of the hidden days we chanced upon

merely opening a window.

and the sudden flowering, bursting into bloom  
of trees that God Himself regretted he had not made  
originally Flowers, and so, these green rains pouring

still, this misted scene;

still, the mint of winter's coolness upon  
all once upons  
in the mornings remaining;

this infinite raining washing my colours away until  
I feel the white gold of the sun give credence, rest  
from the race that's run too heedlessly ever without

hearing, seeing, being the rose through the mists  
the rose through the mists that is the Heart  
blossoming, biding Time and the

dark sorrows rained away, drained away from winter's  
wound the ravens sorrowing and on the cusp of music  
I say but can hardly say that in this misted scene

and the watercolour  
of it delicate tendriled all around as singing  
launches from the

rose core through the slight door of the mists

of my vine clad praise and in this greening flight  
and the Soul the rose the rose  
blossoming that

what you seek oh Lord day and night

we have found  
and bring you wreaths and coronals

of the promised Worlds  
we had denied.

mary angela douglas 21 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Publish It To The Air

with blue or is it the red pencil this time

do they really tell you where to breathe

in your own poem

fantastical I said but under my breath

when I understood this was true.

no editors then

but publish it to the air

that those who bore the poem

from that world into this

should edit themselves and remain free

even without recompense

and let my words die on the wind

if I must send to another

in this wilderness

to know my own child.

mary angela douglas 29 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Pure Tangerine Is The Colour I Would Speak

pure tangerine is the colour I would speak  
irrepressible cherry, lemon-lime so lingering  
from the jump rope times

pineapple, coconut orangeade in the  
tiny hamburger palaces  
frothing as you wait in line  
a little dreamy as you should be

as if for a midsummer Christmas  
parfait but I  
lose light, lose time  
while keeping in my mind the swirl of

the giant lollipops I never got to wreck my  
teeth on, sweet shipwrecks at peanut  
butter-logged Stuckey's

only 50 more miles

mary angela douglas 11 july 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Purple Martins In The Shadows Of Trees I Have Never Seen

for Oliver Sacks

...suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending'  
e.e. cummings, Somewhere, I Have Never Traveled

purple martins in the shadows of trees I have never seen,  
flicker and then go out.  
suddenly.

I am left alone in a violet fluttering of wings  
I sense, I do not - see.  
not seeking to see.

and this is the music of purple, I would have said softly,  
if there were anyone left to hear  
in the thicket of words where we imagine the worlds

coloured, the way we will,  
when the tidliwinking stars pop up  
like firecrackers or in the fantastic

way that children imagine snow,  
confined to the tropical-

or the way that children in the snow countries,  
hearing stories about mangoes, start to shine  
with an unknown gold.

for how could we keep from  
capturing the azaleas of  
the petaled snows next door  
to the garden hose,

as if they were butterflies?  
unknowing, unknown the steps-

but still, the Ballet! that we made up-  
before we heard The Waltz of the Flowers-

and still, I am still the same:  
in the thicket of words, half-whirling like the child  
I may have been in may-times formerly,  
sifting

the perfumed drifts of something:  
oncoming Night? or at the semi-sparkling least,  
transported where  
through darkening dusk and opulent:

my mother calls me back from twilight games  
whenever I don't know enough of-  
is it the fireflies lingering, sparkling? or

I'm just waiting, here, for the silver-ferried-  
brushing away, small tears;  
on the back steps  
asking, please.  
oh, let it be lilacs

mary angela douglas 18 june 2014; rev.19 june 2014

Note on the Poem:

The incomplete feeling of words to children, most of  
all, the feelings...

I have never seen purple martins. I have never even seen pictures of purple martins. Yet when I read about them in books, a colored image of them appears in my mind that is very appealing. It is the same with the names of wildflowers, trees, in fact many things I have never really learned to identify in the natural world partly because I think to myself, secretly, but these are the names we gave them, perhaps, not their real names at all. While, at the same time, taking great delight in the names themselves without knowing at all the visual they signify.

For a long time I felt deficient in not knowing these things until today, in fact, when the purple martins came to me anyway, coloured by just an imagined radiance (but an imagination, from where? from what? since I had never seen them?) the way they might come to the highly favored (in this sense) blind.

As God came to Helen Keller.

P.S. I do, however, 'know' all the colours of azalea since my Grandfather planted azalea bushes near our childhood home.  
and I am not sorry.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Queens Of The May

the tinfoil treasures of the candy wrapper eras...  
skimming the surface of the summers  
we read on

in paperback palaces of our own devising  
old costume jewelry pirating away  
or home with t.v. gingerale

cherry cough dropping and lollipoping the precious  
respites from school, and dubious carnivals  
and the P.T.A.

how can we regret the time we

dreamed away all coconut cake and cherried  
we made merry  
when riches were any home spent day

the backyard leaves the meteors fluttering

down, the five and dime town, the breath of iris and  
the moon for free and Grandmother's pearls  
the Christmas necklaces of the stars

and the attic decorations displayed  
how everygreen and always  
peppermint striped and threaded with fairy slipper

bells ah fabric of the early spring skies all  
pale blue moire  
the color we wanted to dance in

with a thousand petticoat clouds o  
queens of the May.

mary angela douglas 20 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Questionnaire Concerning The White Horses

to the ones on white horses who lost their way  
we will not blame you that this our minstrelsy  
seems dead and that the nightingales

refuse to sing because you are not here.  
and in the mists rising, we rise too,  
in fleeting years,

in coded songs remembering  
you used to think of us perhaps  
in your dense forests,

now and again.  
o why pretend?  
the sallow children sang;

no reign is certain,  
no matter how tightly they hold the reins.  
and the white horses, were they only

what we dreamed?  
or are we vanishing, too?

mary angela douglas 23 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Questions To Ask Before Going Away

will there be bright colours there and clouds  
and will it snow on Christmas at least, sometimes  
will summer last

there longer than it should  
making the schoolchild glad as May

will there be icing on the cakes there on display  
in the little shop windows  
and books I've still not read

and roses too?

and will my heart still break, , ,  
into every rainbow hue  
after every rain

mary angela douglas 28 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Quixote And The Knight Of The Mirrors (Absolutely Final Draft)

quixote facing the knight of the mirrors...

I dreamed of him last night and the cover of the book

was midnight blue; the spine in lilies stamped.

the horizon was midnight

the way it kept raining forever

the way there could be no rest

the clouds were so opaque

even the Isles of the Blessed

even with the Spanish lanterns.

the lure of the towers

the sweet valedictory hours.

ever the advance guard

Quixote cried so hard.

his tears were gold, como los siglos del oro

and molten, so that his skin cried out

I am the clown of nothing and they

have buried the sun..

his hands falling into petals

the petals falling away.

all that butterfly armour, drifting.  
ya no se como luchar;

how can I live this way

with every socket bruised

myself a bruise on the sky

and the sky, fallen into clay.

the heart like a mantle spread.

his fractured shining shadow over the earth.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2020; rev.14 may 2020

trans. siglos de oro: the centuries of gold, the golden ages;  
ya no se como luchar (I don't know how to fight anymore) .

Mary Angela Douglas

# Quixote By Cloudlight Pitied Only

to Miguel Cervantes, forever

crying out on the slow blade's curve  
could no one hear him but the jeweled clouds?  
the lowland sorrows gathered here

in after years, and bowing down to the ground.  
imperial scorn and local gossip did not die here  
wept the angels yet-

he was hoisted on the stars; it must have been.  
and are the Giants vanquished yet?  
nursery rhymed the children, bringing flowers

to the gaunt one, laid to rest  
in an evil hour

mary angela douglas 31 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rain Affects Incident Light

in light that streams paradisaical  
through trees rustling in old movies, films-  
there must be so many

soughing angels  
or why does the light caught forever  
in these branches-

even in black and white-  
reel in my heart  
with holy shadows cast

in strange familiar distances  
I seem to know.

cinema. cinematique  
quarto shadowed suddenly  
to me it seems your

dreams are woven in dreams are  
woven but the golden loop  
slips from your hands and

childhood hoops spin backwards into night.  
say you're sorry to the brothers Lumiere  
if not to God my pearly fountainhead

it's Yours.  
but the guardians of these images sleep.  
the moon drops from its murky frame.

expatriate angels  
sought no more  
sit in the pouring rain and cry-

mary angela douglas 17 june 2010

[\*incident light is a film term referring to light that shines directly on objects  
rather than

reflected light. I am trying to say - in the arts - if you lose the light that comes from God you lose everything, because only with that is an extra dimension woven into what you do that you could never produce on your own]

\*brother Lumiere, very poetic film pioneers in France experimenting in color in the early 1900s.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Rain Song

RAIN SONG (REVISED)

the rain is rain all over the world

I heard the little girl sing to herself

who thought she was by herself

but the baby rain heard and gurgled at the curb beside her

where she stubbed a pebble some farther ahead

and then she said the rain is rain

all over the world and the rain blew past her on

a bright wind and sprinkled its sparkles on every fern

and whirled in circles and rivulets then the little girl

said I can't forget that rain is rain all over the world

and suddenly in the puddles it swirled and was configured

in rainbows and pearls and the rain said cooing

I am talking to you and talking and talking and

melting too and the little, little girl she never knew

the rain was falling and pooling for her

for her in her blue dress and ducky umbrella

her small galoshes and they were yellow

and the rain gushed on in its silver song

and cried, "Goodbye," when it all was dry

and soaked quite through when she was through  
the little girl peeked through the lattice too  
and her mother said oh, what happened to you  
were you out splashing in the dew and the little girl smiled  
and after a while she still, still sang  
in a voice that rang 'the rain is rain all over the world...

mary angela douglas 24 april 2020; revised 27 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rainbow Picture For God's Refrigerator (On Manila Paper)

apricot, roseate, pale green as the sheen  
of Your luna moth, or all berry stained,  
or gleamed:

prepared for the parties in silver or gold lame...

May's flower girl shades; pristine! blue violets.  
nectarines! oh pomegranate red with stars inside.  
or white as in crystals, sugared or iced. or cream,

beloved clouds;  
the seams of the bridal  
oh please stay

or lollipop wiled, away!  
all sweetness gone.  
or like a sea then just be

indigo washed or pineapple lights  
my rainbow, swirled:  
over the flood of childhood tears

sustained  
like a festival chord at the piano played  
finally, with both hands

in pink linen recitals.

on pearl taffeta days  
espied through mists or rain  
(the colour of Where?)

the arc of inordinate beauty over the strand.  
or the one with all the maypole ribbons  
on Command: the last scarf of a departed Princess

I sighed with my crayon wands depicting a lost

continent's colours, semi-formal

streaming, dreaming, spectrum so  
spectral becoming ever more vivid, there  
some day may we be on the other side

of the hinting maze  
where we no longer gaze momentarily  
as through this too beautiful gauze

where You come and go  
or melt from us as  
pale as snow.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rapunzel In The Tower Waving Goodbye

is this what it feels like to be waving goodbye  
when you're the last one standing still?  
perhaps she wondered at her loom

when the moon was a full blown rose  
distinctly pink at the edge of town.  
this is the tower I live in

while the earth spins  
she almost sang.  
and the bells ring far into the deep

from all the churches half asleep;  
from lofty cathedrals with their  
windows half on fire in the sunrise.

I will make a ladder of stars  
so that God will see  
I have not forgotten him.

by day it will be spun of  
honeyed light.  
I will go from here

she prayed  
and then took flight.  
I will go from here.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rare Words Were In My Shoes

rare words were in my shoes  
stuffed tight, and wadded there  
so out of sight, new penny bright

beyond the inspectors;  
in my pockets with old gingerbread  
absconded from that store

with Mary Poppins, you know,  
the one that wasn't there  
the next day...

oh that I could save the gilt stars  
from being pasted back  
in the Heavens.

how much we need their gold here,  
close at hand.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Raspberry Gingerale

I was so happy the afternoon I discovered  
there was raspberry gingerale.  
or maybe it was cranberry

that I ate Thanksgiving food  
every day for an entire year  
or remnants of it.

and it almost seemed  
Grandmother could return  
with the crystal relish dish

in time to join me in a can  
of yams, or cranberry sauce  
with the can indentations still intact

like cranberry tree rings if  
there were such a thing.  
when she was here barely

cooking herself- well, that's not  
what our family was known for-  
we baked poetry. and dusted

the piano. and we sang a lot  
and not only at Christmas  
I try to explain to the ladies

on break in the box store I work in.  
but they cannot hide their queenly disdain  
that I don't bring homemade pimento cheese

sandwiches to work  
they gingerly let me sample,  
wrapped in wax paper

and know nothing about  
the little garnishes  
that make a picnic, a picnic.

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Rc Cola Cola Cola

rc cola cola cola  
bottle cap snapping  
ice cube cracking

cola cola  
fizzing, frothing  
cola cola

I see bubbles  
winking blinking  
rainbow edged

and edging, on the bottle beading  
coolness gliding down the glass adown  
down a summer movie pass light violet or

are you still reading that paperback book  
from the school book fair and crossing the  
moat of words or sliding anywhere

on a slip n' slide  
hillside

cloverbee backyard  
its holiday holiday hula hooped blue or green and  
roses fried by the afternoon

(pre-Chicken dinner) as

]

we're dripping from the plastic pool  
or on the grass side slipping  
cola cola sipping

screen door nipping  
little dog tripping over  
frothing over

shaken too hard  
and lauging laughing in the yard till

your sides hurt and  
peach bright ice cream turning turning

crowned with vanilla nostalgic  
yearning for

cola cola floats and I'm floating  
back on the tide of it all  
much later though it's only april

by the wall calender  
and pale green now in the parks  
I could see your vintage summer lanterns swinging

in the dark  
no need to turn the kitchen light on.

mary angela douglas 17 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

## Read This Poem

read this poem in the language of snow  
your last thought as you turn to go  
read it in silence

becoming yourself the syllables of a silence  
no one owns  
read it in all colours

or as apple tree shade

as if it were transparent or  
the last call made between God and ourselves  
as if it were the last pear shining

in the orchard of the skies  
read it and tell no lies.  
read it in transitory gleams

read it as if you were breathing flowers

read it as you would be read to  
as a child, floating on a stream of, is this possible?  
read it and bring on the milder weather

let your heart think evenly silverly  
so our boats do not tip over  
on the lake of dreams.

mary angela douglas 13 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading At Home

internal differences were charted  
epiphanies of the winding stair  
the ghost that looks clear through you

when the winter trees are bare  
the prospects of the novel  
on the day you're left at home

the summer branch rescinded  
and the ice cream cone  
and you're boarding at the harbor

the ship of the Unknown  
and casting off forever  
from the local port's zone

in indigo waters  
o sons and daughters caught  
in imagination's breeze

as it kicks up  
or lost, deliciously  
from flowering lea to lea

in an untoward destiny  
time after jeweled time  
released from magic:

drenched in the fairy tale chimes.

mary angela douglas 7 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading Monet At Midnight

reading Monet at midnight  
the search for water lilies  
was suspended.

the torches reflected in  
the water

but I couldn't see  
the torchbearers.

mary angela douglas 29 january 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading Rilke

let now no altering angel cloud the sight  
that summons all things into the Delights.  
who has read Rilke dearly

expensively has read the night  
beyond the face of stars  
and all we are or could be

if we but lingered, dreamed  
where he had wandered, on our own stair.  
let no altering angel close the ear

let no despair shut out  
the sound of roses, rains reclaimed, transformed  
old legends burnished and the leaves drifting down the

young winds entwined again or

the endless plains of feeling out of sight  
but intimated here. but There!  
in verse unscrolling like the silver disc

of Time hammered out, immemorially engraved.  
not distant!  
the heart cries out from trivialities absolved.

for- God.

let now no altering angel ban the flight  
of the real nightingale  
into the jeweled wood

from childhood fears and fragments of fears  
shadowing forth great Light.

tears suspended;  
the whole earth revolving within.

mary angela douglas 1 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading The Book By Heart And In My Sleep

reading the book by heart and in my sleep  
I follow the page of snow and try to weep  
but I weep gold and know by this

I am latched in the fairy tale and will  
not wish away what follows next;  
I'm reading the book by heart

and need no pretext, library card  
or interdepartmental vexation;  
waiting in line no longer or for vacations;

soft as a bird in a nest of intricate  
things plucked here and there by glittering wonder  
picked from pale rainbows, unaware  
and over the waterfalls tumbling down  
only to rise and fly  
above the netherlands where

they ask me why, why  
do you have your nose forever  
in a book tick tocking your life

away, unequal to all tasks  
frown the taskmasters tapping a foot;  
I'm reading the book at last

and cannot say to you anyway

in my sleep you don't understand  
that it's my heartbeat  
reading everything

and garnering all the wishes.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Reading The First Chapter

reading the first chapter of the words they left behind  
a stillness settled over all the castle  
and they slept...

and silver was their sleep, entwined with gold  
set with all the jewels of what was before them then  
before the spell...

and you were in the garden then  
near the new roses  
and far from foretelling,

under a flushed sky

with the new moon lingering by  
and you wondered, how can the sky  
be pink and silver too

and the cooling breezes came  
the diamond slates with the little ruby pencils  
you will write your fate there

in barely legible letters widely formed  
the birthday wishes of the fairies...  
and this was the curve of the song

so interrupted  
the underside of the leaves  
you held to the light

like a favorite plaything  
and the long low everafter overnight  
before the bells ceased ringing.

mary angela douglas 21 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading The Snows As Though They Were Blind Music

[for Maurice Ravel]

reading the snows as though they were blind music,  
one day the numbness will flow  
into la vallee de cloches\*

becoming flowers.

now, it is not so; it is the blind reading of snow  
falling always past you, the velvet hours,

past the window sills, past the old untils  
in the folk songs and where the brier and the rose  
will never be one.

what is oneness to the blind snows, to the music  
falling apart, to the frozen heart of the skater in  
front of the toy castle?

all, all through the looking glass!  
the iced and the sudden  
fountaining of the stephanotis...

and there is the tin soldier. home again;  
the fleur de lis bunched in his hand;  
unsure of how to stand: as it was, before?

replete with the little silver trumpet?  
or pausing for what to say that is not made of tin  
when a blast of wind unsettles him

and carries him away

mary angela douglas 21 january 2016

\*reference in the poem to the piano piece by Maurice Ravel; the fifth piece in  
Ravel's Miroirs, entitled: 'La Valle De Cloches'.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reading Wallace Stevens Under The Flowering Trees, 1970

the assurance of flamingo sugar pink  
against the near jade waters...  
I think of angels, the aprils that they wear and

carols in the carolinas  
and the abstract wren chosen  
over the pearl edged dove, spiraling,

and wallace stevens at home,  
never at home, anywhere  
or why is he never

answering the door  
forever the connoisseur  
the Beats cannot endure of

the impractical, the expensive  
work of art the extravagant non-protest  
the high toned avering crystal surreal

of the evening angels whirring  
and the polonaise malaise,  
the palmettos you know you cannot afford

on your salary  
the rare oranges  
for the sunday brunch...

but it's what you feel the most  
the attention to beauty  
amber honey on the toast

even at the edge of doom  
bearing it out  
and you've missed lunch

in the cafeteria now

because you couldn't  
admire enough the outre

oranges  
you'll never munch  
haha, can you even imagine

him saying, oh please have one  
yummy as tropical suns  
while you await

the bridal apple tree's  
blooming over the fence of Eden  
to release anointing petals never-ending

the angels with their swords notwithstanding...  
you cannot hear a word I'm saying  
who wonder if it is too late

in the tropical green of the sward  
in the painting  
for me to lift the latch on the gate for the

falling words failling through a  
jeweled space to ever be meant  
for the human race

for this is a dream not well disguised  
the crayons of children  
not good at growing up

who will not sup the usual fare  
while they are dying  
for the fairy tale pear on the Sevigne plate

or who,  
casually pluck the Firebird feathers  
to look as though

you hadn't been crying  
to be near the revelatory throne  
in your abstract years now that

they are mounting up, strange birds  
flapping in the offing  
where the emerald rainbow shone

nearer to St. John than to the business phone  
in Hartford, Hartford bring me the file  
with the rose birds set against

the mere and blue green skies  
all those pretty lies they once called poetry  
before they all wised up..

I cannot forget I am  
reading under the shade trees  
at the college I don't care if I get wet

I'm in the peach shadows  
and I know it  
of the moratoriums

and turn the page  
as it introduces thunder  
over the roses in the Carolinas

but briefly  
o that you are never sure, never assured  
in the galleries is it out of reach

the rich intaglios, the peach  
if you saw, if you heard  
in a waning, warring world the

extravagant exits painted  
like a door  
you could almost go through

not being really a political you  
you try so hard to comprehend  
what it was that you adored back then

so far away-o that you're defending now

from the relevant, the relevant:  
the visuals and the parrot seeming

the poet assuming another pose  
in the steady rain pouring in the roses  
angels everywhere now and slippery

because he cannot stop needing them  
to cover up the tracks of God  
in the elaborate mud

and near the doorbell now of Zion  
raising an emerald finger, the Deity  
before the floods

because you know I know  
He loves, He loved  
the poet in his Ethan Allen chair

(you guess, you've never been there)  
impassive near the magazines  
and in nectarine lamplight

the expensive prayer in disguise and it's  
dreaming and dreaming...weeping as the pearl edged Dove  
was murmuring into a petaled shell

Arise! and come

Mary Angela Douglas 9 March 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Real Poetry Is A Haunted House

[to Edith Sitwell]

real poetry is a haunted house  
said the princess. looking over her shoulder;  
drenched in the fabled rains.

'who among all these ghosts, '  
cried she (at the clavichord formerly)  
in her last velvets, reverie

'could not help but be  
numbered among the musical  
I ask Thee'.

oh stand in the castle door;  
that's all that's left  
besides the wild grasses.

Time...passes

whispered the Princess  
and none to hear.  
'real poetry is the haunted house'

she murmured to leaf mold  
and to the ancient spores;  
the stars swung in

their windy chandeliers=  
and none, and naught to fear-

'the saints must live in,  
or else, turn, out of doors'.

mary angela douglas 13 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Really Poor People Cannot Die

really poor people cannot die  
at least not in public,  
unless they slump over on the bus,

while waiting in line  
or overnight, frozen sparrow fashion  
come to dust outside

when they'd rather die  
than go to a shelter  
where they can get knived.

well, you never see them lying in state  
in a rotunda, banked with flowers  
behind velvet ropes

where the myraids in hushed wonder  
pause and look their way.  
sometimes they pass away in

their apartments.  
no one knows, for days  
unless it's someone coming upstairs

to post the eviction notice  
for non payment of rent  
but you tell me how do you get it sent

from Heaven when the trip's one way  
to the house not made with hands.

mary angela douglas 2 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Recently, This Letter To Shalott

I sought the courtly world but it had vanished.  
behind the curtains of uncertain dawns  
I stood, the unappointed lookout, looking on:

gone were the purple banners and the gold  
banishing of the small fears  
held aloft at the parades

and decked in flowers.  
I stood amazed and soundless then for hours;  
the battles I thought over, veering

back, shone illimitably:  
in the Pageant of everything unwon.  
fresh rains have washed the back roads in the sun

while I scoop rainbows from the clouds...  
they're falling away like leaves in the last  
horrific winds before the calm,

but not taking me with them:  
the years that no mirage sustained.  
and through no haze I contemplate again

the debut in the perfect white dress  
the embroidered handkerchief bestowed  
the golden task importunate

only you would recognize at all.  
I am seeking my lost King, the corner of a last word-  
tranquil, folded down;

and reverence linked with song oh, long ago  
left for dead.  
knowing that I may find instead

ruined cornices dripping icicles before spring...  
and these few winter roses for a crown;  
more than enough to live.

my mute processions I have gathered tenderly  
in the emerald shade of God.  
oh let the lights shine down on Camelot renewed,

confessed in these late dreams without regret.  
let knights be true.  
and constancy my only jewel

though held aloft in the final verse  
by fingers this absurdly frail still weeping snow  
above the apparent waters of the town.

mary angela douglas 19,21 may 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Recurring Lifelong Dream

## RECURRING LIFELONG DREAM

you're in that dream again.  
the tsunami's coming  
you're the only one who knows.

or at least a major flood  
of historical proportions. you have mere seconds to warn  
them, all the shell gatherers; the children in their school

clothes  
you go down on the beach or downtown

to the glass buildings  
to tell them all. that there's a squall

and all the bridges will wash out this time.  
but just like in the sundial day  
no one registers what you say

or pays you any mind  
because you're not a major player  
in anyone's flow chart,

come what may.  
still you persist in a dreamlike way  
it will be like this, you say:

laying the blueprint out in full detail.  
but they are intractable  
and doze deep in their own waves

and brush you away not even like a fly  
certainly not like one of the emerald ones  
or the blue bottles of etymological fame.

there you are. a ghost not a meteor

lighting up no sky.  
swinging a lantern, bye and bye

by the grey and ominous coasts  
while the wind gathers speed and the Holy Ghost  
or on the pavements and trying not to bleed  
when you've done all you can to plead;

is there another way to phrase it? .  
so they will understand. you beat your head

against the stone of words all in a tone deaf land

and know you're not even barely heard

against the gusts and all the protocols and the musts.

it's happening again.

you can see the tip of the wave descend  
and inevitability  
is written in streaked sorrow across the clouds

and the lemon lighted window panes.

the doors flapping open...

you scramble to safety up the dunes  
and wake up in your room a small Noah after the rainbows.  
a wilted Cassandra bloom

and burst into tears that no one listened again  
even when their lives hinged on it.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Red Shoes Retelling

the forbidding angels stand  
and snowy aisle to aisle perceived  
blocking candlelit the faint

rose of windows  
she once loved.  
she once loved the quiet woods

beyond but now she dances on  
and cannot stop her vivid tarantella  
to breathe in the scent of pines

gone shadowy as in a dream  
and she is spinning past the moon  
in a dress of silver and centrifugal

are her tears and unseen in the dusk  
they fall thick as mercury droplets on  
her red shoes

made of fine leather that blazed  
in the shop window on that summer day...  
and now decree from year to year

she'll always be this way  
the ghost of her dancing on the turquoise seas  
seen by little children as a warning that

truth in an instant disregarded has its cost;  
yet God is kind and beauty unrelenting.  
thus was the poet-storyteller told

by his transparent imagination  
brodered with lilies  
and solitary, aisle to aisle, in snowy steadfast

dreaminess transposed from heart to heart  
and red as reddest roses shone, as fragrantly,  
with a melancholy festiveness that lingers on,

and hidden, folded petal in petal  
or under a heavy candy jar lid for our disclosing  
sweet after sweet, little children

his love in  
his love for art  
and where it was deep midsommer...

mary angela douglas 26 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Red Velvetten Wouldn't The Rosebuds Wish To Be

red velvetten wouldn't the rosebuds wish to be  
thought the little girl colouring endlessly  
in the afternoon while her mama

listened from the kitchen.  
red velvetten.  
it feels the same

indoor as out  
she sang brightly of bright petals  
all afternoon

red velvetten  
why wouldn't Cinderella  
choose that very shade

I would if I were her she sang  
and wouldn't you sing  
on a rainy, rainy afternoon

red velvetten  
red velvetten  
with a scattering of tiny pearls

if you were her?

mary angela douglas 19 january 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reflét Dans L'eau

clouds have fallen into the waters  
will their mamas rescue them?  
what will the skies become now

the fingerprint sun spreads like a rose  
or God, in swirls of gold, my thumbprint.  
even the trees are melting there

in drips of green  
from a thick brush gleamed.

does no one care?  
then you look half dissolved in tears and still the clouds  
chase lace on lace through the atmosphere

while the sun tints them vermillion.  
and as for the trees, the trees  
rimming the lake still shake their green

laughing above dark waters.

they were only looking in the mirror,  
you explained to me.  
and you child have your riddle.

if you want to, keep it.  
put it in your locket.  
and I did.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reforming Christmas They Will Shift The Snows

reforming Christmas they will shift the snows  
where children yearn for them beyond the Glass  
but cannot reach them anymore

and bring no Father Christmas but the cyber snowman at the end of

the make us forget who  
we adore, who adored us too.  
but we will forage for old presents

somehow, still in crisp wrappings

with all the trappings  
the stockings stuffed with oranges and sweets.  
the world is not often sweet

why should they want Christmas to behave  
to colour within the lines so barely  
red and green to the point of fading from view

and drive, and drive it on minus the reindeer, anything,  
minus the cherry o caroling and far from the public squares.  
listen to me! you will not do this.

the Star will staunchly us defend  
and the skies grow purple silkscreened  
once again falling fold on fold

and opulent

for the Wise Men  
who still must labor  
though you would not have it so

to find the uncrowned King  
born for our recompense  
and make sweet remedy

and o Jesu clear melody

comprised of starriness starriness  
for His distress.

mary angela dougas 5 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Relevance/All These Bright Soldiers Falling In The Mist

to Sidney Lanier, the American Keats (1842-1881)

is it too late to let you know  
the green shade in your marshes  
lingers still-

and the tree-tiered cathedrals, depth-on-depth that  
you believed in?

who can replace all those  
born with a feeling for music;  
still less, the few  
whom Music loved:

crowding Beauty in a  
handful of poems  
on less than a lifetime's sigh-

it takes that long  
to understand  
all these bright soldiers  
falling in the mist  
that we have left behind-

mary angela douglas 1 march 2012

Note: on the question of relevance in poetry in my opinion as Emily Dickinson  
inferred all those are relevant who died for Truth or Beauty

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reliable Witness

Im going through too much upset now

to be a reliable witness

I think I say I said or would

in my courtroom imagination

watching too much Perry Mason.

I'll get by and so will you

inventing laws that dont offend the skies

so that it rains and then it floods

and then whatever you think it was

it doesnt seem it will ever be again.

how many lives do you live till the Kingdom comes

not even saints can count that far.

what kind of math is this they teach us then

leaving too many scars

so fastidiously some could reach the stars with it

but it still doesnt answer the question how

or why we linger on earth

when we feel that we could die too easily

from monstrous lies

and if someone let the light out of the Sun

and it's all drained out.

and we are residual light

losing its right to immigrate here.

what CAN we know but God.

here where tears are canyons.

and relief from them is being dialed back

by unexpectedly and unasked for

masked and now unmasked

cruel leaders

Lead us not into cruelty

well let's depart

and find another well made Ark

built to God's specifications

it isnt our country anymore

where monsters know the score  
and we're left in the waiting room too long.

I dont know how to write this song  
much less sing it.

But I know God made the earth.

whoever thinks he owns it

is a fool

that we will find it easier to leave  
than anything we have left before

God is real.

and more always more

than loving.

and we, his doves

will fly to him

in any storm.

they can dredge up.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2019



Mary Angela Douglas

# Remember To Be Happy You Exist

everyone's waiting for their big break maybe-  
their chance to be discovered.

to hit the stage, to write the page, the song

that will be remembered.

and we storm heaven asking

why, so long? what's wrong?

not realizing nothing's stopping us now

from singing if we want to, acting brand new.

painting too.

dancing day by day.

why let fame get in the way;

the thirst for gold.

the illusion that if no one's clapping

it just isn't real. we've forgotten how to feel!

be happy being you. that God is real.

sing because you have to, you're so glad.

write because you want to.

don't be sad.

what more can you discover;

what bigger break than this?

your chance already arrived:

your golden ship.

you are alive!

and this is happiness. isn't it?

mary angela douglas 9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Resolution

I'm lost in the woods I cried softly  
knowing none could hear  
knowing the wild beasts near

at least I was told so  
when telling was still a possible thing  
and I have lost the golden ring

of words to stay me  
the crumbs from the last little loaf  
from home

my copper coins that shone  
and have only  
the dunce cap

simpleton's pie  
wool gathered in all the dream colours  
to warm me.

foot not shod  
still I will walk  
in the thought of God

heart not eased  
and near no stream  
I can cup my hands in

splashing the sorrow off.  
here I will live among the leaves  
under a huckleberry sky

until I do not.

mary angela douglas 31 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rest Like Water

yesterday I looked for rest like water;  
whole civilizations were in want of a green shade  
and rest like water; music,

a dreaming glade. or did it only seem that way.  
set this aside, once God his angels told  
and I remember going there once as a child;

we had lemon ice cream after.

now is it overgrown?  
is there a road left there, white sanded,  
diamond shone?

oh close your eyes and you are home:

the waterfall gushes over the rocks,  
the fragrant branches stir.  
even the shadows are yours, and cool.

mary angela douglas 5 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reveille Or Something Like

(for the dead of World War I...in eternal life)

is he the one standing there trying to recall  
was it Camelot or Avalon he loved when he was small;  
Atlantis?

have words grown underground, no longer to be found  
the blocks he played with as a boy  
each letter like a castle he could capture toy by toy

what was warfare then  
the game of let's pretend a fortress in a garden close  
the Christmas leaden soldiers out for a stroll

by the piano with the piano rolls  
out for a lark. if not a song.  
is he the one waiting there so long

for the gas lights to come on  
like pale green swamp gas, just a spark  
it flickers and it's gone into the Dark

the slogging through the mud  
the gaping wounded and the life to come  
suddenly made real, from all our zeal

jagged as pure lightning  
on a filmstruck reel  
we're off lads we're off the planet now

and vivid as you please  
and sorry for the way we took our leave, somehow,  
Time out of mind...the sweethearts kind;

from grief, they're blind and cannot feel us near  
and do not see us in the starry spheres,  
the ghosts we left behind.

mary angela douglas 11 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Reveille, Or Something Like

(for the dead of World War I...in eternal life)

is he the one standing there trying to recall  
was it Camelot or Avalon he loved when he was small;  
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mary angela douglas 11 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Rip Van Winkle Sends Regrets

to Washington Irving

the whole world has gone by  
and can he rethread the broken threads  
not knowing who cut the strings of the  
rainbow flossed or bobbed the bobbin-  
or ever find in amber  
what could not be preserved

so much has changed.  
even the leaves.  
even the flowers on the hillsides  
look at him strangely

and who are you  
the petals sigh  
and why have you returned  
whisper the perinneals flaming out;  
nor will they crown him purple clover chain- on-chain,  
King of what he no longer surveys.

it burns in the mind  
that cannot calculate  
what has been lost  
while dreaming underground  
half-drenched in the lily snows

of a faint moon in a distant sky  
of the charmed who no longer live here.  
of the weddings' finery held for ransom  
kettle on the hob scuttled  
of the flights down the canyons, precipitous and blind of  
the wingless shimmering birds of time.

mary angela douglas 4 february 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rose Carol Caroled And It Not Even Christmas

it's certain I am He counted every needle and pin,  
every dropped stitch as a real attempt.  
as for me, I wanted to live by

the rick rack stream  
near the mill wheel turning  
and all the millers, free.

why shouldn't it be  
I'd ask Him dearly, this  
being my very own prayer and

clearly wanting it to be so

that the spokes in the tangerines  
would carry us to all the balls

and the honeysuckled air would breathe  
and flow around the fairy tale's obstacles  
as in the paintings of Van Gogh

with the marshmallow clouds all billowing

and we would stand small, firm and  
arm in fairy like arm with all our  
bracelet charms

before our Grandfather's rose garden  
as it it were the entire world.

mary angela douglas 20 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Rose Pink Flamingo Flurries Over Africa

on Nikolai Gumilev, a brief cadenza-

Rose pink flamingo flurries over Africa  
he might have seen, if he had lived  
a son grown taller, deeper, not displaced-  
still not following Anna anyway perhaps  
at times repeating what he said before  
oh, you should take up the ballet  
returning later to find fresh fairytale scraps  
bound up in no ribbons, scattered on the floor  
and changeling, the tawny glints in cloisonne  
jeweled combs that weren't there  
before trist bisque doll with the books all sold  
and very little left in a ragged shawl she might  
have been still adorned with red roses fading into  
old silk but

she's no longer home the one he left in worn down  
slippers floated a queen slightly foreign to him  
a girl who wept flowers and stars  
at the least provocation.  
singing.

Africa, he sighed and was off again.  
how would her verse have altered  
if he lived with so much absence  
so much more, filling  
up with snows and Mandelstam the same.

still haunted, haunting the pavements where  
they used to roam watching the Neva in the cold  
fill up with raspberry lights, little clouds and poems  
commemorating in advance  
the later lamentations

unaccountable joy

mary angela douglas 26 January 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Roseate

could I find in the fairy tale wood

a beautiful something understood

not spoken

could I speak and learn the writing off the page

the Christmas pageant in the margins of the Star

could I speak of where You are

a different way I never thought

on days of play

but I was in this anyway

this play, this sparkling understood;

to learn that language,

if I could!

or try to

I would venture all

though I am counted very small

as small as I, can feel the wind

through all the pines and whisper then

oh I will I will try again

to speak what roseate words I can

with just a twist of a sleight of hand

unfold the rose, unwrap the stars

oh Father, I know who you Are.

mary angela douglas 7 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Roses, Roses, Roses

these things could border the mind, if you let them:  
roses, eglantine, a few stray stars from old report cards  
the glitter and the glue the

perfume of our new shoes bought just in  
time for school

the feeling of new things unwrapped in a  
never before seen day our shadows  
melting on a childhood lawn, we pray,

along with the strawberry summer cones.  
or being left alone all day to read  
inside the playhouse

the accounts of all that June brides wore  
on a previous Sunday: the alencon lace  
the orange blossom grace, the satin-

and the sequined veil, the seed pearls  
oh to such avail my sister and I imbibed  
each word in the paper and drunk on bridal finery

played with our dolls, wondering:  
what is stephanotis and why don't  
they just carry

roses, roses, roses  
in all the colours

mary angela douglas 19 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Ruined Illium, Again

'PAST ruin'd Ilium Helen lives,  
Alcestis rises from the shades;  
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives  
Immortal youth to mortal maids.  
Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil

Hide all the peopled hills you see,  
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail  
These many summers you and me.'

Walter Savage Landor

=====  
=====

to my sister, in memory of all the wished-for playhouses

we came to the towers after long rains;  
well, we imagined it that way  
when the ground was spongy

and dotted with violets  
and the wind so green  
it took all Time away;

and there we saw the sunsets  
through the ruins, their strange embroidery  
and wanted to play this was our house

where castles once stood  
and now, only broken porticos.  
still we may visit in dreams

on days when the mist lies thick  
upon old windowpanes  
and find once more the moonglow

in the sunned on stones



and wonder wonder do you suppose  
when the honeysuckle climbs past

the frail rose window, does the princess know  
if living anywhere else than this  
could be the same?

and the rains swept in with their refrain,  
from violet shadows summoned  
to murmur, no, oh no...

mary angela douglas 10 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Russian Folklore At A Glance

the year of our enchantment in the provinces...  
this is a folk tale you may recognize on  
lacquerware or stenciled on trays

with which you come away through customs  
having been served tea with raspberry jam  
from an ancient samovar

and everything's clover, so they say  
in the mystical guidebooks published in the U.S.A.  
as I am snow blinded May to May

in a blizzard of flower petaling trees  
by monastery domes;  
all the blue and gold or silver unalloyed

of a waning, wedding day  
I imagine for a country I'm not from;  
but, anyway,

I hear the choirs at sunset hum  
in the square; it's a Malevich Square  
so White Night white on white

where they sing, I sing,  
come away, imagining I am a bird  
the most folkloric

you ever heard  
capable of the finest translations  
of the martyrologies

wrapped in a pale blue shawl of a sky  
and dying for them all.

mary angela douglas 9 december 2018; rev. january 19 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Russian Poetry Of A Certain Era

the needle points north, the needle.  
but the heart, the heart  
can't settle itself

a thousand stories or one play  
it's Chekov in summer, Turgenev in May  
or starlight trained on the ballet,

cherry orchards, brimming over with nightingales  
a stage set, set  
laments spelled out for something

not yet named  
an ill fated train. a lilac veil  
over landscapes of interminable snow;

unfinished, the Wanderers,  
no matter where they go; the students with  
scores of Mussorgsky under their arms

court moodiness and the Neva;  
the fairy tale spires, the steppes...regret;  
the incommunicable mysteries  
Bells of all the years;

in Scythian gold  
a drifting cloud, cloud full of tears;  
my groundless soul

above History.

mary angela douglas 11 december 2018; rev.19 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sadness Comes In Waves I Said

sadness comes in waves I said

they closed the door

leaving me to wander near the shore

of it

captive to the day of writing me off

like a bad debt.

they did not care that the ebb and the flow of it

seeped under their door, and marled, and beautiful

as disastrous

pooled in the well waxed hallways, lapped at the balconies'

recreational edge.

my pledge I have kept

windswept

ridiculed, words skewed slightly sideways

by the knowing smiles.

I dont know what they know.

or how they tally up the miles.

God keep me safe.

under no bitter moonlightnor escape.

unmined. with no resort but You

oblivious to the time we live in

they think they've wasted with me.

in the palace of your mercies,

with my small candle lit.

and Infinite.

mary angela douglas 18 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Said The Child Of Silver To The One Of Gold

said the child of silver to the one of gold  
how have we landed here  
in this fair place

and still they do not know  
but this was long ago  
when the winds were theirs alone

and every stone on the playground  
shone with more than mica gleaming  
we were strawberry seaming then

stitching between the rhymes  
all, all the time with rose budded china  
and the let's pretend

under the berry coloured skies

not sorting the hows and whys at all  
not even meaning to, using up all the crayons  
at the same time

we only dreamed as if we were

resembling more than slightly  
our portraits done in chalk pastels  
at the World's Fair.

wide awake the whole time  
for perpetual Christmases descending  
the stories never ending, you said

in your sleep nevertheless.  
we grew away and  
I confess still a love for music

fostered then, and lemon meringue pies  
and Cinderella read again and again  
instead of homework

and the fairytale disguise  
all glitter and sequin  
birthday beribboned surprise

it's not what they say what you thought was said

growing up would be growing older; more remote  
you're even more silver; Im ever more gold  
or is it the other way round

depending on who's telling it now or what day it is.  
we ask all Alice, wondering still.  
in search of the green, the pink chalked hills.

I think, we always will.

mary angela douglas 16 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Saints And Those Who Knew Them

what if they were caught in the thickets of the stars  
(the saints and those who knew them)  
so that the heart could shine somewhere else

not here where fears arise to be cut down

and then arise again the rank and file displaced  
by the rank and file.  
and all the bills due at once.

and the 3 a.m.'s rising and setting  
setting and rising  
gloom on gloom

in a perpetual fog  
so that the soul is launched-  
it must be-

from another site

where the colours of dreams  
flow over the canvas of Night  
and there it is Spring

and the fantastic  
while down below  
what was left of you

mourned  
in a continual wake.  
thinking mistakenly

that God had departed.

mary angela douglas ` 15 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Saints Of Words Were These

SAINTS OF WORDS WERE THESE

to the Immortal Poets

they had taken up the cause of beauty  
and for them God had in reserve  
whole wildernesses

timed to bloom in one compacted hour  
and as though we had wept flowers  
those hours descended their ghosts sang

their words jeweled in a driving rain  
and flame upon flame of the Word  
driven inward

having no other home.  
saints of words were these  
last poets, lost though they seemed

their own illuminated manuscripts  
torn, and destitute of little repute sometimes  
in the heedless world

what is poetry they ask in the magazines  
and I cannot say but how can it be  
they do not know

when such as these were on the earth  
and vanished slowly  
giving birth

in every language possible  
that beauty vanishing with them  
should return

to us, the uncomprehending.

mary angela douglas 26 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Saints With Their Roses

saints with their roses  
beckoned you back then  
beyond their tissue guards'

repose in antique books;  
or traced on funeral cards  
in gold, consoling lettering

replete with lilies against the aquamarine;  
cream candles behind their votive glasses gleamed;  
burn slowly time, we whispered to God

and rose hastily with the school bells' breeze.  
these are my natural shrines you felt  
treading the dew wept grass and the shadows shine

with April even now

and the healing fountains under the  
apple white moonlight, receding;  
I may plead for beauty still

at the innermost altars, even held against my will  
or taken suddenly from home by social authorities  
who know best, they deem, but at whose behest

it will not matter when all souls return  
to the family bower and are  
the flowers themselves,

gardenia gleaned,  
radiant beyond reprisals;  
in Heaven, where this is not allowed.

mary angela douglas 18 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Santiago

caught in the downdraft of scurilous words  
could I walk on my knees to Santiago?  
would candles come out to meet me

Mary, in her mantle of sobs  
I stood on no ground  
no hope of going over

in the little boat moored.  
moored forever I must be on this shore  
I wept to the skies

to the skies over Santiago  
to the endless shrines  
to the candles never going out

in the long rains

mary angela douglas 18 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sass

sassafras you want to sass somebody  
anybody in town  
and tell them after Sunday

sarsaparilla's going down  
and you're in a children's western  
the best heroine in town

and sassafras sass sass  
is the only game around.  
maybe it's a nursery rhyme leftover

maybe it's a jump rope rhyme in clover  
maybe you'll go back in time time time  
on your Grandfather's dime dime dime

and scoot out there to the curb  
where the soft ice cream is served  
in the purple of the day

when dreams are on the way  
and you can hear the bell  
and the tinkle of it swells

and it's a day of note  
when Gramp makes root beer floats  
and that's why I say:

sassafras sass sass  
sarsaparilla's going down.

Mary Angela Douglas 29 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Saturday Praised

on saturdays the realm of freedom widens  
the smell of cut grass in the neighborhood  
the drone of the occasional plane

from the base overhead  
and we revel in cirrus clouds the cotton candy of them  
the peanut butter and banana sandwiches

made by our Grandfather's hand  
and, after chores, the endless ocean of time  
that holds whatever may come.

the small dog's tricks across the kitchen floor  
for the fried chicken to get dropped somehow  
under the table

and grace to read under the trees and the  
kingdom of home that feels so wide and deep  
even when you do have to straighten the dresser drawers

for the umpteenth time for they are not neat  
or polish the silver or pick up everything that fell  
from the sky when you danced so hard on the grass outside

saying this is mine this kingdom of green and blue  
and roses too and the winds the winds through the pines  
and saturday the very emblem of Heaven, someday

when every day it's Saturday Forever

Mary Angela Douglas 16 April 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Say That An Angel Came Instead

north of the stars we looked for her  
and the weathervanes creaking  
in January's snowiness,

in the hidden heart or  
where her veils lifted, her dress,  
in a painting by Monet

of the meadow strung wind,  
its beaded sunlight-  
or among the wreaths

left along the highways  
of diffident shrines  
and the weeds grown over Time itself.

shy was she of discovery, perhaps  
crowned prematurely by  
Renaissance artists

and not at her behest

painting grandiloquently  
her departures in heavy velvets,  
cherubic decor. brocaded duress.

of course, she did not die,  
they murmur, the crowds,  
what the saints once called The World

lingering like children  
after the Fair or  
like you or I, renunciation's dream

our candle cast shadows  
apart

waiting for visions of  
the blue and the gold,



for the tinsmiths to finish the heart

for lilies cascading from her hands;

the beatitude that understands  
everything that can happen  
on Earth

to those thought poorly of.

and will there be the myriad wings  
of the valentine doves  
we made in school?

her children sing but  
as a rule,  
on earth, she kept things to herself

since who would believe her,  
think that she had heard  
the goldfinch encrypted rains on the roof

withholding their reproofs,  
and far less, God  
with His pearled and storied

Word in the early evening  
of all her singular prayers

say that an angel came instead  
she whispered to the chroniclers  
of blood.

and then she whispered, Love.

mary angela douglas 16 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Scanning

[to God My Father from a dubious kingdom]

I carried Your universe in my mind  
through long years  
walking in winter's shade.

the winter sun shone  
like icon gold whenever the cadence  
of icicled stars so brightly sounded

but veneration slept  
and could not be wakened.  
I saw the tears of angels freeze,

their stunning incapacity-  
and seraphs of every nation leave the room  
too brokenhearted

when the chrism of sheer poetry was voted down  
by those who should have known better.  
I saw the altar of numbers

and how nothing was  
accounted for

there

and scant children cryng  
for the loveliness departing,  
kissing their outstretched

fingers, as though for the last time:  
'come back! '  
there were warriors

who fought against a cold and  
impeccable emptiness  
and could not win.

now ice has settled  
over all of them  
as in the Snow Queen's parlour

and we are wasted, waiting there  
for one more performance review;  
counting on You, just you, to know:

the fugitive heart still scanning  
after all this snow-

mary angela douglas 4 january 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Scarecrow Not Quite Dissolving By Orange Lollipop Lamp Light

the scarecrow mixed his tenses but  
he smiled  
although inside he was  
weeping straw, sometimes-

he gestured with his rag-doll hands,  
the very soul of courtesy.

oh did you hold onto the tangerine days?  
each one was like a best balloon-  
and straw-by-straw on your

lopsided way, find everything  
was meant for you?

and we were sorry for the times  
you skittered into the flame-throwers-  
and so happy you were stitched up-

in the end-

mary angela douglas (probably 2012)

Mary Angela Douglas

# Scratch Art Card Directions For The Primary Child

etched through layers of rose  
leaf on leaf briefly stenciled  
the child in bright lemon

wandering  
the prised flowers  
and is the ground you walk on

pure violet, violets scattered  
the first springs the breath  
like lace and you're trying to

speak in clouds engraved on clouds  
they will drift away  
amid cowslips, wild roses you May sit down

and cry after them.  
ah! your first lament  
the first of their many colours

bind them you will  
like valentines

mary angela douglas 6 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Screenplay

this is the screenplay of the stars peeping out  
of the apricot soft air  
of you swinging on the Gate of dare

and keeping your lace handkerchiefs  
free from dust.  
we would be dusting the piano of a saturday

and the lint off the music stand  
and it was all silvery, silvery  
the afternoons pleated blue

and in tune both hands together

when we played  
or we played anything  
swinging the statues relentlessly

with the fireflies winking Mother May I?  
over the cut grass, stained glass feelings.  
and then there is the feeling of blowsy trees

dimming in the darkening skies still  
alive alive as the winds  
as we were then in rose velour looking out the window or

gathering pastel easter eggs in the grass  
at a late hour I would be in that particular sleepwalking  
petticoat bright saying goodbye once more to the dolls in their

stiff finery, outstretched hands in tinsel daylight  
and to fractions and the crescendo of  
waiting up staying up on Christmas Eves

at least figuratively, all sugar plum beside ourselves  
the tulip bulbed Christmas lights astonishing oh  
to see the fireworks, to hear the Christmas bells

all water coloured blended now is it all an ancient reverie

the clarion call announcing presents, brocaded, folkloric  
reverberating shore to mystic shore

announcing the Present  
that is no more.

mary angela douglas 18 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Screenplay For The Walrus (O.K., The Carpenter Too)

let them scuttle away with their pincers  
into the pink sands those who want you to  
wash their dishes forever etc.

I've heard of the oysters demise

and how they thought they were going to be happy.  
we were not born for someone else's feast  
I wished the fated (feted?) oysters cried

who thought they were going to dinner  
but were eaten alive;  
some picnic!

there by the sea, seaside where they did not  
could not, suspect a thing  
being spread with premium little eyes shut

dreaming it was a summer Christmas  
and there was going to be a surprise.

Mr. Carroll was miffed perhaps the day he wrote  
this being maybe sick of mathematics, faculty politics  
or the Mathematics Department, (sigh)

I know the feeling. whatever the cause (pause)  
only Alice got out alive.

mary angela douglas 24 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Screens

swallows have gathered at the door of an infinite sadness;  
who will remove their shadows from the grass,  
from the moon, passing through clouds?

occluded is the eye, becoming a single tear  
and the years, in their octobers, rust.  
is the heart ash, is it dust, has it come to be

spoken about in whispers  
in a hospital room or is it the sudden gloom  
in winter, even before the sun has set?

give me a clue, a sign, a dream  
while I am standing at the screen door  
when the rains come in

still trying to breathe and to assume, nothing:  
when meaning becomes so sharp;  
filed to a fine point;

to wound the already wounded.

mary angela douglas 22 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Script Writers

sometimes I wonder why so many scripts sound the same  
you know, you should have, if you'd looked before you leaped...  
you've never had a grain of sense in your head

not enough sense to come out of the rain  
one picnic short of a sandwich who needs to know  
you and inquiring minds; you and whose army

who's wearing the pants go to the ants you sluggards  
who's getting the grants, it's so dog eat dog and  
water logged never starred but you'll go far

every time you just happened to hear in the school yard  
who was your servant this time, last year  
dumb cluck ewok sad sack break your Mother's back

you've let us all down get out of town psycho loco  
spaced out whacked out with a brilliant mind  
so don't mind them; who died and made them God so

sticks and stones the flock all together  
come out of the weather  
unfair feathered friends and how the story

begins and ends  
and begins come rain or shine  
we just want what's best for you

Time out of mind

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Secret Flights

you imagine snow, snow at the poles  
snowfall on distant diamond stars  
or falling within

in your mind there are no tracks  
only the blessedness of snow  
covering the artifacts

so that you no longer remember  
what you don't want to know  
and there are the secret flights of birds

tinged with the gold of ancient lore  
enchanted forever  
beyond the margins of the world

these are your flights also  
in the interval you can think of them  
don't let go

of the snows of the mind  
of the secret flights  
you are going away

where all is velvet  
antiphon echoing in a hidden chamber  
beauty salvaging the wreckage

mary angela douglas 6 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Secretarial Manual, Scrawled On The Blank, Back Pages

I'll eat coffee candies surreptitiously  
and pretend that they're not yelling at me  
but someone else, perhaps some clerical ghost

who never finished the job on time with no mistakes  
after the typewriter bell had chimed  
and on my lunch break, window shop

for dresses beyond elegance itself

and drift through an April park  
just thinking of all the books I'll find  
when I get paid;

new shades of lipsticks  
with the flower names

but for today, it's the 23rd Psalm  
to keep my mind so green and clear  
and coffee candy and hidden tears

typing as though  
my life depended upon it.

mary angela douglas july 10 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Seed Pearl Not The Rose

seed pearl not the rose that it may lovelier shine

or drop a stitch into the wishing well of Time

embroidering not the falcon nor the falconer's hand

let the bird that we called poetry

fly free that it may sow the skies with silver

so that the trees of jade weep

weep into the mirroring waters.

mary angela douglas 23 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Seen Or Unseen

what does being 'seen' in a world  
that's going to pass away some day,  
mean anyway?

a chalk mark on the sky.  
a ragged butterfly caught in a loop  
that cannot end.

better to dissolve my friend  
into a more resilient day  
out of the way

than to court the supercilious

who will say anything anything  
or something, nothing just to say  
(until we're all dead)

something opposite to  
what you just said.

mary angela douglas 20 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Selling Garcia-Lorca

.'...a las cinco de la tarde' -Federico Garcia-Lorca

selling garcia-lorca  
I walked to the edge of  
the olive groved sea

and wept into it  
the citrus stars shone  
down on the last moon

in its lemon yellow binding  
selling garcia lorca all

all the deep  
grass shadowed singing  
with the fabulous flowers  
opening  
to the same green page  
I try to forget I had to ransom you  
bilingual edition

complete in a world of incompletions  
es que yo no estoy completa  
la sombra beatifica lo sabe\*

they paid out 1.20 in the bookstore  
for the entire works of Garcia Lorca  
enough to go home

I spent 40 dollars  
in another lifetime  
skipping lunch on several

days to buy words unfiltered  
and cerise as pomegranates  
silver under the olives I say goodbye  
to you  
where you were bordering

my mind.

now like Rachel

I cannot be consoled at five o'clock in the  
afternoon

or at any other hour

Mary Angela Douglas 22 August 2009

\*but I am not complete and the beatific shadow knows it

Mary Angela Douglas



# Sentences

the beautiful sentence.

the beautiful sentence, alone.

the lillypad sentence

floating

the suspended sentence pale green in its estuaries.

on the wilypaper drawn in thick pencil!

I want to write in the largest cursive writing ever

spiographing in cuneiform on flaming poster board

with a Magic Marker

and each succesive sentence even larger

because it is the way I feel

when beauty is reeling me in;

but the teacher marks me down for this.

like it's a sin

in the Sixth Grade, on my report about Jane Eyre  
on Unruled Paper.

it has taken decades for me to understand  
why this seemed tyrannous; and why I fumed on the orange  
school bus home.

If you do this again...she said, not unkindly.

It is Spring. trellised with lilies, small violets;  
the cream bright rose. and we learn madrigals.  
a sentence for posies my

Grandmother says and she should know

Shakespeare writ large in sepia  
in vast memorials echoing still;  
my mother sings of Marble Halls

I will too, despite you all

whoever you may be who imagine

you are in charge of me sentencing me

for sentences ah

my bailiffs, cuffing me

for the way they weave in and out of traffic

or how they appear in dreams; so scintillating,

the way they behave in public company

or pirate like, at sea, brandishing adjectives.

the way they distinguish themselves in opal suddenly

above lost centuries skywriting

on cloudy evenings perilous and clear

showing the way to the King

beyond the wistful the inarticulate heart,

clanging and clanging

the one and invincible Star.

the sentence of where You are.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Set It In Concrete Or Under The Glowing Sun

leaving behind the pretense at breath

that keeps us cowed in the dubious cubicles

that keeps us filing S is for Sun

forgetting that there really is one.

there is a sun that flares

and rays a glowing medallion

all day long as if its shining

were eternal song

while we take time for lunch

then dash like moles

semi home again.

of all things most pitiful under the sun

it is you who barely remember the earth is green

who fester in concrete

waiting to be seen

as the most productive

the most productive

the most productive

mary angela douglas 6 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shadows Of Swans, Snow Tears Magisterial

shadows of swans, snow tears magisterial  
in this white valentine enfolded are  
framed at the window from  
which I cannot turn

there are silver apples in the air

will I ever understand  
your pure spectacles of soundlessness before me  
through the glass

or what in your mind makes it begin again...

how your heart breaks off  
little pieces from a distant  
sky to say something, anything

filtered through lace and lace and  
mystifying - so that I cannot hear-  
but only feel it-

shred your clear crystal flowers from on High  
for softest reasons known only to You-  
and hush the shadows of swans in me  
that want to sing only the ends of the stories, oh-

there are silver apples on the air  
this winter in Shalott and the wind through the  
syllables of trees

stands still-

mary angela douglas 7 december,4 december 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shall I With My New Minted Paperbacks Disappear

shall I with my new minted paperbacks disappear  
in the maple leafed shining of the year  
the gate through which we speed

I asked my dream self quietly  
but first we need grilled cheese,  
a few fig newtons

pieces of the Sun.  
and our paste diamonds?  
yes.

what's homework to me  
or me to homework somewhere  
Shakespeare said

meaning algebra and I'll not read  
what's required necessarily  
in that order

but turn the crackling pages one by one  
inhaling them o sweet book perfumes  
and read and read into the gloom

just to be reading out of doors  
in book eternity once more.

mary angela douglas 10 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# She Dreams Of His Death

[to Fanny Brawne and to John Keats...]

it's in the garden or it's in my heart,  
his nightingale singing in the mulberry tree;  
the orchards beyond remembrance now.

the universe was rich with petals;  
the heart is filled with snows.  
it's in the garden or its in my heart.

am I the one that knows?  
am I the one with the lifted lamp  
using light like a knife?

the uncrowned Queen of all this vanishing.  
I vanish too but they won't hold me guiltless.  
it's in the garden or it's in my heart

my love my love my love

Mary Angela Douglas 2 February 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# She Remembers The Word Corona, Crown, The Halo Around The Sun

[for Sister Marcella Marie Holloway  
and for the poet, Paul Roche]

equinox and the orange flares of crayons in the leaves  
we stencil drew and cut with blunt ended scissors  
at the first cold snap, renewed; she snaps her fingers and

wraps the colours induced by frost

in her own room, using up all the tape.  
for the gift wrap's sake be kind and mind  
at the white gloved receptions in the afternoon

and let the scarlet maple lose all leaves at once  
in a cardinal flash of breeze so that her mind is lost in the  
fleetness of beauty past unreckoned on

and the air is cooled and the sunlight glows

with the regrets of her last angels.  
the scholars read by candlelight of stars  
the coming and waning of kings

but for you, God made the trees  
that they could shed ochre tears  
that you yourself would ever disappear

while the sardonic teacher read  
in the corona of her years  
Margaret are you grieving, dead?

before your time?

making enemies in rhyme in every line  
this time the competition's clear  
and casting your heart before

the unknown God? my dear, my dear,  
too young to be mystically inclined  
all things considered.

mary angela douglas march 29 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# She Tore The Page With The Rose On It

tearing the page with the rose on it  
on the way home  
she cried, I didn't mean to.  
somewhere may we build  
If we are kind and eat our cereal faster  
-(before it colors the milk just like Roualt) -  
the world's most perfect playhouse, out of sight-  
in a circle of fond trees-  
and not only Saturdays  
outlined in milky quartz.  
we'll sweep the rooms all day  
of pine needles-  
and eat our honeysuckle off the vine  
and sing duets not only at Christmas time;  
grass staining our cathedral clothes  
while the dog frolics conspirationally, eating snow...  
we will not tear the wind  
from the trees no matter how high we go  
swing sailing, hello clouds- we love you most of all  
and God-  
and my Grandfather soaking in  
the arrowhead sunset just across the street...  
so tall with his outdoors cigar-  
hello, tree frogs he says and smiles.  
Grandmother's diamond weaving  
music in the afternoons....  
Or the big spoon's Icing.  
guard my fairytale now.  
I'll bring you gardenias from the side-yard  
and almost make you come back...  
blissfully overusing the lilac cologne  
having no control over the nozzle, yet...  
sparklers stir the dark  
or is it gummed stars rainbow showered over piano pieces  
done?  
my mother, far and nearer, than anyone-  
I tore the page with the moon on it.  
I don't know how.  
dimestore paste can't mend it.

who will forgive me now

mary angela douglas 10 may 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shed No Tears, Fond Unicorn

shed no tears, fond Unicorn  
golden are the tapestries, still,  
I leave you to inhabit, shyly on these

museum walls,  
in rooms with guided conversations  
guided tours-

beyond burgundy ropes of velvet  
graze on, continually - with good will.

your hoof in my hand:

I hope you'll be discreet  
munching the shadows of  
departing guests

only a little  
and the pastel mints at party's end.

Be brave, always.

I'm braiding my primrose stories  
just for You

and the farther fields of honour.

mary angela douglas 30 may; 1 june 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shell

I thought I deciphered the meaning of faces  
until in sudden twilight I discovered behind certain of them  
a falling away of masks, and behind them, more masks  
so that I couldnt ask each one the same question and be  
answered truly. The masks talked at once loudly disputing  
whatever chance remark I made  
and worked upon me such a sorrow that I  
lost all praise for the evening  
for the pink ridge at daylight.  
thus have I come back to the land from a sea of derision shaken.  
unsure of the moorings.  
like a child with a shell to her ear  
listening for the voice of God alone.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shelley, My Shelley

bright as the wanderer on the beckoning air

Shelley my Shelley whispered Blake

presciently above the tree line

as viewed by angels.

Sistine as it was then and setting

the several suns

through the holograms of autumn

the beckoning ones

and the sky all Depression era

white and rainbowed glass

the angels of glass falling to earth

and their parachutes useless.

you have wings Shelley my Shelley

far above the treelines and the dullness

that dreams it is shining

earth, oh earth you should be heaven too

the poets sang



when they remembered you

mary angela douglas 16 august2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shifted

was it an impossible thing: a katydid green  
on a snowy canvas; the snow, crumbling in  
your hands?

the violet sands of deserts  
on the planets of the sun;  
or vermilion dried up in the tube

so that the sun is bleached;  
also, the roses  
and children cry for water

in a foreign tongue,  
near the ancient fountains,  
o aquamarine;

why have you vanished  
into the seam of earthquakes, shifting  
everything.

mary angela douglas 7 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shining Was Harder When There Was No Light

shining was harder when there was no light

then Christ came, Light's dower rising

mulch leaf and flower

hour by hour

birds regained the dawn

pale as the palest rose

singing returned unscarred

angels to the Guard

moonlight in the yard.

Beauty, to where you are.

mary angela douglas 16 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shop Window Shopping On Display

the poem alive outside the shop window goodies  
piled up high, the little pink cakes, the alibis  
for why don't most read poetry anymore

especially not from the Holy Ghost

or why do they call poetry  
that which is not  
the rooms where moonlight never seeps

all deeps unfathomed.  
fathomless it is to me  
what poetry has come to be

yet I dream all the gold it ever was  
and will not let it go.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Should We Live

should we live-  
interpreting the colours of flowers;  
finishing our schoolwork

in green ink?  
paying attention to  
the linen calendar towels

with their imprints of red barns,  
old mill streams, currier and ives?  
dreaming the Christmas countdowns away?

purple and lemon are the skies there  
above the memorialized skaters. or  
on tin trays made up for the holidays,

overseas.  
should we memorize art songs  
before they're no longer sung?

at least not simply,  
from the heart  
standing still;

your mouth like a cherry O so  
filled with birds.  
in a pale gown, an extravagant shawl.

Song, like the scent of gardenias.  
through the breezeways,  
it lingers...

oh I will fly away she called  
to an Age that murmured naturally,  
poetry should be beautiful,

the golden ball retrieved for the Princess-  
from the well of the world.  
or, not at all.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Shutdown, The Stars Have Scattered Before The Devastated

'The earth is the Lord's; and the fullness thereof...'

-The Psalms

the angels at the entrance did not speak  
but gestured toward the sky, the earth, the sea  
and snow formed words and hardened everywhere

and we are under glass  
as in a museum; artifacts at last.  
and blue and green and gold a crime scene.  
leaves of flame half-quenched drift over the barriers  
not knowing the rules.

.  
the angels at the entrance did not speak.  
how could they?  
the Soul was closed.

the emblems desecrated  
on a day when we are mere tourists  
turned away from the land under our feet.

my heart under glass  
we are locked down  
and wistful at windows where the Bell has  
cracked again from these bizarre sorrows.  
look down oh Christmases dispersed  
oh Magi fading fast

in the grey gloom I will gather you  
and storm the barricades hidden and in plain view  
of the weeping ghosts of those who gave their lives

mary angela douglas 10 October 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sidelining The Elephants

'sidelining the elephants by law'  
in some localities, 'earlier...' the CBS  
news feed read on the radio

played in my head with wonder.  
sidelining the elephants,  
doesn't that sound sad

like they did something bad  
and were being punished?

and as if the ringmasters  
are still in power  
and glory in the hour:

they can say: the elephants are  
sidelined from today.

all washed up  
hunched small in huge corners  
in a Schoolroom melee;

and that 'by- law'-  
branding my elefantinos 'criminals  
for the day' worded to imply further shame!

or maybe it all went down in town or  
as at some strange neighborhood committee  
meeting after coffee cake where

they joy in making  
continually nitpicking little rules for the hugely innocent  
lest they trample the lawns and the curb appeal.

or unionize with seals.

not, 'the elephants are freed'  
not 'the elephants fled in glee'  
careening like gray flowers



down the slopes of our imaginations  
emblems of inhumanity.  
how I cried into the kerchief

of what was left unsaid.  
on this, their happy new birthday day  
shouldn't THEY get the cake and presents,

be the glory of the sentence, in red ribbons  
as the verb of running away? liberation day!  
not recipients of yet one more command.

'Disband.'

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sidestepping The Classroom Slide Shows

side stepping the classroom slide shows  
of the new New World's Fair.  
the bouquets made from kleenex and

green pipe cleaners.  
I read the fairest of the fair

again  
shattering the mirrors,  
old records

tracking us  
like birds in  
all our future migrations,

they warned.  
we played fruit basket turn over,  
musical chairs; happy with the

pineapple upside down cake.

and where can you hide from questions  
you don't recognize?  
in the closet with the school supplies?

I'll improvise with crayons  
another way out: slipping from the monkey bars  
after the third rung;

making something tacky  
out of construction paper  
to take home.

where I'll be glad on Christmas vacations  
ever after.  
though no tunes swell from the crimson

crepe paper bells

hung from the rafters  
for the hurricane parties.

and I'm not the class hall monitor  
and I'm not anything at all;  
too small in the yearbook pictures

not to be in the front row  
ringing the glass bells

dreaming of snowfalls  
deflecting paperwads  
and smirks

and whatever it is that lurks  
distracting you from finishing  
the Classics.

but  
read on, my friend.  
despite the caterwauling

from the cafeteria  
coteries of the cotillioned  
you hear still;

take the game of Let's Pretend  
out in the world with you  
in your pale cutwork dress,

in love with the Spring air  
and half remembered madrigals.  
you're going to need it out there.

mary angela douglas 30 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Silk Screening The Day The Blue And The Green Intensities

silk screening the day  
the blue and green intensities of it  
I wandered on my way

and you said I departed;  
this was never so.  
I wept, silk screening the snows,

the icicle violets,  
thinking you would know or recognize the  
deeper blues and the news

that's never said, just understood.

what if I bled light?  
what if everything I did right,  
you read as wrong?

and I silk screened the moon  
in the afternoons and looking so displaced  
showing her ivoried face against the blue.

silk screening the end,  
I will begin again  
the rose in my heart

.  
like a fan unfolds.  
ah, it should be God that knows:  
how to bring this to a close;

I can't.

mary angela douglas 23 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Silly

everybody's razzle dazzle  
walking in the sunshine God made  
admiring the flowers;

the man made landscapes  
which are lovely, it is true  
in all their variations, hues

their little borders  
their benches by the roses  
their unexpected fountains.

statues.

the goldfish gaping at clouds  
and fresh mint in the yards and clover..  
don't worry, we'll make bigger typos

before It's All Over  
and call it the avant garde.

but God, where is He in the picture?  
did you make a bench for Him near the white lilies,  
the irises flaring their purple?

he must be tired after making that  
many flowers, the shadow specific to  
each tree and the orchards

o the orchards. each Spring.

don't you feel a little sorry for Him  
so out of the way  
relegated to nothing really

barely invited to the flower party  
not even in the Play,  
or was He?

but we're so razzle dazzle in the sunlight  
thinking the Martians came and invented it all  
or something, chorused the two year olds,

made a Big Bang Back In Time  
o thank you Great Big Ole Firecracker  
o thank you Martian man our dinocester

or please and thank you Mister Humongo Particle,

String Cheese Of the Unified Strawberry  
Fields Forever...  
long live that scene.

but Christians who think there is a God  
you know, those people are just silly.  
don't you think?

thinking God could feel when  
He's not wanted...  
thinking He cared about what He made

and wished you would just pay Him a visit  
once in a while.  
or send a card.

OR JUST SAY SOMETHING, ANYTHING,  
ABOUT THE RADISHES...

Mary Angela Douglas 15 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Silver Poets Census In The Firefly Galaxy Aftermirage

'...in the secret place of the Most High.  
-Psalm 91

the directory of unpublished poets  
drifted under no one's sun  
yet did not set with the moon;

mysteriously undervalued,  
God takes the silver census of the poets  
and the snows

far from the kingdom of newspapers,  
closets brimmed with crystal slipper knock offs.  
green is the faded hour in His hand

the manuscript purple with tears,  
where the blue ink smeared and,  
undefiled.

for a little while I have hidden you  
under my hand, perhaps, He said  
like a firefly glow in the galaxy.

here is the place they buried the sun  
said Mandelstam, softly.  
said Mandelstam.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Similitude

[after Pavlova]

swan on the similar waters  
I have seen you shine  
when snows vault through

the heavens  
as if they were made of stars  
drifting, drifting

to where you are;  
to where you are drifting  
and where you remain

in my heart past time's measured climb  
as though in crystal  
you were divined within my name

and to my soul's own rectitude had claim.  
also, also o swan so  
similar how she was always

drifting away and towards you  
simultaneously all all her life;  
this unquenchable refrain...

mary angela douglas 2 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Simple It Was Then And Lovely To Be Told

simple it was then and lovely to be told  
that all the leaves were red and gold  
and this was named, autumn

or that clay could be moulded into shapes  
blue pink yellow or green  
and you would indicate snow

in the picture falling down on the town  
in crayon silver or gold  
or fill the whole page with roses

corner to corner  
but blue is your favorite  
because it soars

you tell yourself streaked with  
pink until it shades into violet  
you tell yourself you love the

fairy tales best and always will

what good is rest from wishing wells  
when there are picture books to be read  
and turning the pages crisp like Christmas

is all you want to do anyway  
and so you stash them under the covers  
not meaning to deceive but just because

it's possible to dream like this  
even when you're wide awake  
in the middle of the day

and counter your fears for years and years  
away from the windows that opened onto  
the playgrounds, the little stream

the honeysuckle vines

the stalwart pines

on grown-up sleeting days, on the days of  
infinite reprimands at work  
in the identical way

you did then.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Since That Afternoon

so it's you that will stand on the balcony  
your shadows made of tinsel  
mouthing the words to the song;

glistening the melody  
so that others who are listening  
listen in on your dreams

unconscious they have mined  
a seam of gold.  
and will it be the window of rose

when I look out the child in you  
longs to say.  
or let it be silver, the light

flittering down like glitter snow  
and you and I are in the dome  
as if it were Christmas suddenly

so long as it's you,  
your tinsel shadows appearing  
banishing fear as though

you had been an angel  
for a very long time  
and not only since yesterday,

in the afternoon

mary angela douglas 13 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Since You Fail

since you fail to  
hear the flower of  
my heart

fall, how  
can I succeed?  
can you not

feel the  
dilemma of  
the heart

now, full of  
this final beauty

without you?

mary angela douglas 1980s

Mary Angela Douglas

# Singed On Bright Waters

singed on bright waters  
from our first day  
the message of

our going away  
the leaf whirls down  
the flower can't stay

the snow melts like  
old dreams that stray  
into an ever running brook

oh one last look  
you'll want to say  
when angels come

to bear away  
the you that never  
knew how dear

the earth had grown  
from year to year  
how odd, now, to be leaving...

but you were written in the book  
that someone else was reading

mary angela douglas 1 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Singing Was Different Then

singing was different then  
as though we had cast our nets  
toward the Beautiful

forever slipping through  
the jade territories, hints of the early Spring  
or lit our candles privately

before an unnamed shrine

in evening dews;  
endowed so quietly  
as if we could reach Heaven, somehow,

on a dime with one note only,  
only a silver bell,

a rubied chime  
so that Time drew back  
at the edge

of the glimmering wood  
as in childhood,  
where it was forgot.

and song was the well  
rimmed with wishes  
into which was set

one jewel, and then another  
sinking down into clouded depths;  
what men have wept to find.

such was grief and laughter then;  
the gift of pretending kingdoms until it became so real  
that we could fell all hearts

in the grimness then, made Light and

threaded music  
spilling into,  
over and above,

the thunderstruck love of God.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sipping Cherry Cola Through A Moonlit Straw

sipping cherry cola through a moonlit straw  
I mused on green creation and was overawed  
and sifted through the mounds of ice cream

strawberry, chocolate, coconut noon had  
melted in the patios, and scooped up to the  
tune of cherry cola through a moonlit straw

sipped slowly.  
tomorrow for breakfast,  
ambrosia sundaes,  
berried angel food...

mary angela douglas 30 september 2013

P.S. If I don't have ice cream in the house I just write about it!

Mary Angela Douglas



# Sitting Down On The Tracks While The Trains Stay Right On Time

there is no exceptional exception I heard the angels cry,  
never in their own language when they said this-  
mimicing the earth; or children dragged where

they don't want to go  
sitting down on the tracks while the trains stayed  
right on schedule. fanning themselves with their

wilting haloes.  
tracking the luggage down,  
the candy-cane carousel,

the martinets of sorrow.  
while you sigh  
when will I arrive

they look through everything  
while deep inside I'm  
unfolding the singular valentine

to the One unchanging heart  
the christened fool  
who came prepared to die

for the snowed-in exceptions;  
the shimmering rule-

mary angela douglas 18 june 2014; rev.2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sleepers As They Dream

sleepers as they dream  
glissanding through pure violet canals  
displace their own weight

in music; in the silks of the soul  
raging, racing toward a moon that vanishes  
and then reappears, but differently-

as you may appear to yourself  
not as yourself exactly, occasionally-

as though it became  
a cloudy room,  
a lopsided night.

the glass bells rung.  
the honey thread spun.  
and will they go- will they surpass

all earthly sight one day-  
where God Himself cries 'Stay! '  
etching the stars like a heartbeat

floating free from sorrows?

or knotting the golden thread  
before they awake,  
lest it all unravel.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sleigh Bells From Mahler Drifted Near

sleigh bells from Mahler drifted near  
in the way that I remembered it  
oh how much farther I could have gone then  
down the wishing wells of the world

to find my home again.  
you leave the table and the strawberry jam  
stepping out into molten sunshine  
just for awhile

and it seems so rich as though it could not fade  
but life is not this way despite the bells drifting  
over a landscape of precious inner snow  
each time the music plays;  
the doorbell rings, the little dog barks  
as if in a fairytale, this never happened

you will say, not I

brighter than diamonds ever could be  
of the ripple cast by the small stone  
given me by my Grandfather  
from star showers long ago  
in our clover patched backyard.  
and just before Christmas and the Star-  
the angels keening in the Heavens

mary angela douglas 26 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Slides

going down the slide in spring, summer or fall  
(in winter it was always glazed over) ,  
there was always someone to catch you there

at the end;

though climbing up the ladder on your own  
was a little dizzying;  
you felt kind of brave.

later on, the same playground, park  
or even in the old backyard, the shade,  
you looked at it: a simple thing

not that high off the ground.  
why did it seem such a challenge.  
have you forgotten how small you were,

how everything loomed large  
or the smell of cut grass in the yard;  
the summer splish and splash

not wading out too deep?  
now you've drifted far  
and wonder, closer to the end

or the beginning,  
where you are;  
and climbing up, now,

rung by silent rung  
through every season  
you'll wonder what's to come

when you're careening down the utmost slide  
into the angels.

mary angela douglas 16 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Slipper

Slipper

its cut is for glory  
its opaline shine  
its part of the story

like a tuning fork chime  
you're taught to acede to it  
make it your own

even to bleed for it  
this far from home.  
But something inside you

noting the hour  
suddenly knows that its not in your power  
to wear it in style

at the cost of your dreams  
to be as it orders you  
all that it seems

so the slipper comes off  
as if telling you so  
this is my dear what you're

destined to know  
far better to walk with your feet unimpeded  
than to buy at this price

a fake kingdom so deeded  
then it's back to the ashes  
and down with the sash

of the window that opened  
the sorrow that gashed.

mary angela douglas 27 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Slipper Song With A Matching Dress

the soul in her simple dress was so happy.  
do you remember?  
the one with summer pockets;

the danceable one that whirled convincingly  
like something cloudy, clouded, clouding.  
but now the last leaves on the trees can't bear to

leave the already mourning branches and  
it's been hard to say anything new to no one.  
still, threadbare, the fairytale slippers will last

with care,  
somewhat longer than you expected

from the first:  
fresh from the glimmering Godmother,  
'sugar pink ballet leather.'

Mary Angela Douglas 20 July 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Slogans

sometimes I feel we are only speaking in slogans  
and then I see the different coloured slogans  
speaking to each other across the fences of the world

disarranging the lilacs and  
looking a little folkloric, at least at the beginning

then leaving us out of the conversation entirely.  
and the slogans have grown legs and arms and heads and hands  
and are walking among us crisp in their new suits,

their dotted swiss dresses they are waving us on

while we start feeling slippery, losing our labels  
so that our mothers don't recognize us  
a dish of jello here, a pot of watery jam

a shadow, a creek bed dried  
and the slogans have taken over, side by side and  
linking arms

they are running everything  
the slogans run the bank  
the shoe store

the bar and grill  
the gas station  
the monopoly board

the seventh ward  
the silo and the grain  
and there are slogans now for rain

for windy weather for the trains when they come on time  
for snowfall and the picturesque antics of the children, codified  
and they are always on tv! See.

and oh God I am tired of slogans.  
I am so tired of slogans.

mary angela douglas 18 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Candies

small candies I have hid around the house  
in case of sudden emergencies.  
and in the hollows of trees

in the thin alleys  
where the rain trickles through  
and in the nooks of

forgotten gardens, crooks of  
skeletal trees where my birds sing:  
'sweets. sweets'

cheered by the thought of

the small candies,  
I grind the coffee for  
the daily grind

and wind the clocks, so out of time.  
someday the hordes will come  
perhaps leaving neither stick nor stone.

then we'll creep out alone  
my shadow and I, a multitude of books,  
my God, my dearest God, a friend or two

out from under our mossy roofs,  
our polka dot toadstools,  
to retrieve them:

our small delectable delectables  
starting all over again  
with the aid of small candies!

mary angela douglas 20 june 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Fairytale Told To My Sister From A Distance

(for Sharon F. Douglas)

she would hold her pinafore up to the moon  
as if to gather moon flowers. then a flood  
of stars: red, green and blue as if they came unglued

from the page came flocking into  
her second best pockets.  
is it Christmas yet? she said

oh it must be and the silver glitter birds  
turned on a phrase from the toy piano plinking  
in the dark:

pearlescent- sequined- Notes

and the violet, the twilight shades  
the paper silhouetted hearts  
came hastening, eating the star shards

out of her baby hands  
and the red and green twinkling, blinking  
over the clover beds no longer

mowed over too soon  
for the applesauce spooned I'm writing, still that  
this was concocted by angels hidden

between treble clef and clef  
drifting from snow to snow  
I said or think I did

in the rosebud glow of the nightlight,  
our rabbit shadowing lands.  
whose hands whose hands now

are jeweled with the glass rings from  
the gumball machines and they fly over the  
keys of light...

well. who can tell, even if we can't spell yet.

we made it all up..(it wasn't that hard,  
going up and down the scales)

and in the morning went  
to gather the dewdrops  
in the front yard

thinking they were diamonds.

mary angela douglas 24 march 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Fluted Pastel Paper Cups Held Coloured Almonds

small fluted pastel paper cups held coloured almonds,  
salted nuts at our place settings.  
wrapped in gold, the trinkets we would carry home

tied with curled blue ribbons.  
the denouement: strawberry ice cream!  
with a slab of cake and frosted white and pink and green o  
why did it seem then we were kings and queens

holding our breath and birthday dreams  
then, blowing out the sun.  
anything could have happened then,  
even all the wonders.

old tvs flicker with their rabbit ears  
even when the set's switched off.  
we watch all the reruns now  
in colour, when they're on.

revisiting those family scenes  
and wishing they were more than dreams  
and only down the block

and we could run there fleet as fireflies  
where they played Gershwin in the park  
drifting through the grill pavillions in

fancy ball gowns the colours of bon bons  
then we could see all the stars  
tagged with fondest wishes

about to come true as taffeta

mary angela douglas 9 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Landscape Done In Crayon

splitting the difference between the blue green, green-blue crayons  
we were paid in lemon drops, strawberry skies.  
the pale pink dress for the recital.

living at the edge of vacant lot sunsets  
on the corner of the stories told.  
and dewdrops on the front lawn

are diamonds we said;  
let us gather them fast.  
but it was too late.

and now we are colouring the evening sky in salmon.  
and the shadows of roses  
in gold.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Meditation On Raspberry Strudel

it's iced raspberry strudel in the bakery aisle  
I cannot afford that seems as far  
out of reach as if it were caviar.

I try to choose:  
chips without salsa,  
salsa without chips-

which one's more filling?  
I spend all I have on books  
still hoping to be a better poet;

I do not starve for words  
and words are better than bread,  
He said

when He walked among us  
or the Word from which, green-vined  
to the point of emerald, it all comes  
sparkling through-

.  
someday I'll have raspberry strudel  
every afternoon in Eternity:  
a thousand years in His light.  
and that's a lot of pastry, isn't it.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Small Mermaid Showered With Roses

was she surprised to find on deck near the harbours  
suddenly, the rose petaled winds?  
am I crowned with flowers then

being this near, Land? she wondered;  
still in the hours she hoped to win his heart,  
poor mermaid, drifting on different

currents now.  
soon would they rise, to overwhelm.

this instant, she remains in bliss  
embroiderering roses on all the mists...  
and her invisible singing took on an

overlay of bells, heard far away.

why are they ringing then  
she was heard to say  
when no one has died?

in dreams, in underwater speech  
since everything else was out of reach-  
is happiness on its way-

mary angela douglas 27 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Prayer In The Green Gold Wood

(to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas who was also a poet)

for those who have stolen the gold dusting on my small half wing uprising  
despite of storms for Christ whom I adore  
surely you know you should have known

there was more gold where that came from replenishing  
and what good did it ever do you  
to take the shine off anything disparaging

you devious apple pilfering polishers movers up the rungs  
of a not so divine ladder of ascent  
shoo flies shoo from off the jams my mother made

and gave to me all damson in a universe  
of summer sighs what makes you think  
I should report to you

you are not my officers  
and I never learned the drill  
and sang where I could under the cumulus clouds

and dyed to match  
rose tinted chartreuse and azure true  
as in antique postcards I sent to you, my mother

knowing you were very far  
from as you said, "the land of births and christenings."  
painting the nimbus round the saints

in your own radiance and beyond all blame  
embedded in starlight and in your finest pearls  
while they asked me underneath in the world

if I knew how to file or was that too hard for me: .  
in several languages I said  
knowing the alphabets were on my side

because I never used them

to self aggrandize to dole out wrong for wrong

o give me back the other half of the wing  
you hired mourners at the funerals

Christ will mend it still

even if I will only fly to the smallest twig  
in the green gold wood.  
where the sparrows sang of Him, continually.

she said, as they always would.

mary angela douglas 12 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Rehearsal For The Last Song Sung

the white rose blows in the wind  
we're on  
the jelly bean trail again

or blistering in the sun  
near the clover fields  
when twilight comes

and the dinner bell calls  
or you're in your new dress  
with nothing to confess

while everyone else  
is doing sums  
becoming what

you will become  
so secretly  
and petal by petal

the white rose blows  
the soul  
with a clean candy center

and God will gobble you up  
the shadows say  
one day one day one day

when we're past the swing set stage  
or red is the rose red rage that fades  
that fades that fades

with nothing left to say  
when the curtains close  
but I was there

on that small planet  
oh, so long long ago

mary angela douglas 18 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Scissors

if I cut out with my small scissors

paper dolls from the leaves left to me

will this comfort be

will this comfort last

or only a little while

or will I find a way to make

something else with the felt pens.

the remnants of toys

and the pinwheels that spin.

I promise never to think of this again.

to only remember the arch of the meteor's sky

over me when I cried.

mary angela douglas 7 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Star In Lieu Of Lullaby

the weeping heard at the heart of the star  
was not by us the world weary  
let it be heard by someone small

a child? who can't get to sleep  
and is looking out from atop a bunkbed  
further, into the deep

the circus curtains halfway shoved aside  
and then the star cried  
I am small and weak

and who will see  
to find their way on sea or land  
my wavery beacon

I see! I see! sighed the child  
in primer school fashion  
do not cry!

Mary Angela Douglas 31 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small Things Hide

small things hide in You; the things that are not revered

though they were created some of them at least

on the First Day.

creeping things get in the way even of the ferns.

but I discern on any random summer evening

snail tracks on the moon all made of silver.

wings of a fine rust.

on earth they must they take shelter how they can under a broadleaf in a rain puddle.

and have wistful dreams of one day living in another phyla,

kingdom where the kind and storybook princess arrives

in her nutshell carriage striped gold

and gives them favour.

I weep for small things. spotted, on the ridge roof rainbow motes.

unknown in their desertions. for how they get swept down drain pipes

tin soldiers on their way with a tiny kind of valour

that flickers like the flame of a lost thing too all suddenly firefly

floating fleeting in a foreign neighborhood with no echo home

when I am lost in the woods myself so far

far from the stone cutter's cottage.



mary angela douglas ` 15 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Small White Stones

children learn to tell themselves small stories  
so that the sun is always out at night  
or falling down a well they remember

nursery rhymes, counting songs  
the beautiful sudden ray of light  
falling down the shaft

and afterwards.  
we grow up.  
still needing little stories.

in the plum coloured darkness,  
tracing the way back home  
with the small, white stones.

mary angela douglas 30 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snatching The Tufts Of Starlight From My Lambs

[to George Herbert]  
and to my poetry 'flocks'

snatching the tufts of starlight from my lambs  
a thief of mere peach sunsets came to call:  
Hold Sir! I cried for I have more than technicoloured flocks

from the One who made all colours shine  
than you can carry off in broad daylight:  
under God's unblinking Eye,

thieving the type from the printer's, bold as May

in her several ribbons but it's obscene and will not  
last the hour that fades that fades from grass  
green (and gold to straw spun backwards) .

though gem cracked are the stars before you've finished  
gleam to gleam and the very winds will cry away! away! to no avail  
from the golden apples in the hold of childhood fantasies=

bereft, all all the silver strays-  
the violet-ridden and the Praise-

, .  
and tissue thin your arguments hold sway  
above the indiscriminate mobs  
you cannot emulate my soul.

mary angela douglas 20 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snow Carol Caroled, Stars Within

[for Christ on His birthday-

and for George Herbert and Henry Vaughn...  
poets of blessed memory]

love falls away as from the skies  
the pearls of former loveliness reprised  
return to glaze the dreaming ground

and glide soft stars so all around.  
so all around I want to be where  
love in crystal surety sings undefiled

and all, for me!

the Mystery

That love is falling from the skies  
and we who grew so worldly wise  
beyond the din can feel within

the lovely loveliness of God our Friend  
that now so gently does descend  
our brokenness this way to mend.

mary angela douglas 14 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snow Globe Vision Of La Belle Et La Bete

to Christ in his sorrowful incarnations  
(and after the film by Jean Cocteau)

the teardrop diamonds in your hand  
rueful rubies can't be spent  
who are you really

do we even know?  
bearing our disfigurement  
in the desolate garden,

most desolate Rose

is it too late?  
are you still there?  
turning the ring three times I pray

for the ancient fairytale trumpets  
the snow-glitter ready to descend-

mary angela douglas 1 june 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snow Maid The Page Before April

I have vanished she said  
in the miasmic, splendor  
of the autumn day

maple leaves pinned to  
the dress of the winds  
all friends disappearing, disappeared

and I have counted the candle years  
as though they could not burn down  
in this blue shawl

that folds to snows.  
where shall I go, will You defend  
softly I ask

the Maker at Land's End.

stars are melting into the angelic  
and I have no poems left

mary angela douglas 7 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snow Maps By Nasa And Their Inversions

can such a thing be seen that to me is too

delicate to measure, the migrations of snow

oh but on whose wings the ruby glinting of

a stray particle of light,

the quality of the glazing I want to follow the snow map

in my dream but it keeps on melting singing of other things

than following

surging from the unexpected clouds stray angels in the picture

upside down

in perhaps a Midwestern air stream, little town or over French valleys

by now, coating the silver Loire.

making mischief in Moscow over Cyrillic domes

the many coloured

is it that far from home. or are snow maps

what children made in the ice barely crusted

what we made on winter Saturdays powdered sugar dusted

only just now coming into view

and do those kingdoms show a propulsion toward Spring  
the return of birds and birdsong the return of everything  
we thought we had lost  
before there were snow maps and the silver treasure  
everywhere confounding us.  
the sun warming, the rose leaves. the gardens  
frozen in Time.

mary angela douglas 15 may 2020

The title of this poem is: "SNOW MAPS BY NASA AND THEIR INVERSIONS." it is a poem of pure imagination, not a scientific treatise. And if you think that science was developed without a poetic imagination you may know how to think, but you don't know how to dream. Yet you still could find out how to by coincidence or synchronicity or by sometimes, not listening to your teachers at all. Or to the voice in your head that tells you what other people expect you to say next in the conversation. Beautiful intrusions from other realms should be welcome I think, like the angels in scripture that we may entertain, as the Good Book Says: "unaware". This is a comment I wrote at the end of this poem I posted on a facebook entry by NASA in reply to many people who didnt understand WHY I was talking poetically on a scientific page. ON MAY 15 information from NASA on the snow maps inspired my poem in the first place.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Snow Moon, Comet, And The Gold Ellipse

the side show shadows o my heart recede  
the snow moon falters and you shift  
in dreams, kicking the taffeta covers

while comets bead the grass unseen.

and you wake up from childish songs  
spinning on an old machine and scattering  
the papers of pins milk diamonding on

the floor or the orange and lemons ringing  
from the steeped before  
and the snow moon sighs

and the comet speeds  
and the cloud folds lavender,  
the backyard grasses bead

and you'll wake up  
when the briars part  
and the red rose shows

the bride doll heart  
the snow moon valentine  
almost come to rest

above the tinsel roof you loved the best

and the blessed blue winds in the rhymes o.  
and the room forsaken and the border of gold  
and the hushed fears scolded,

the world gone apple green cold.

mary angela douglas 11 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snow Should Fall Like An Eyelash From The Moon

to Dylan Thomas and every dreaming child

snow should fall like an eyelash from the moon  
(that softly)  
on the child reprimanded for dreaming;  
made to stand in corners after school  
for paying attention

to the spooling blue of the sky outside the window;  
the waving trees. and you wave back in your greenery,  
too, it seeming that important to acknowledge friends.

let peppermints spill out of the stockings  
with the orange and appled profusion  
you have merited early,  
oh child like a silver riddle.  
like an ivory eyelash from the moon.

swirling and swirling  
thicker snows will come to you  
and a violet noon from the vagrant poets  
who can't misunderstand you.

hand in hand their angels sing  
and they have set watch on you  
and sent the feathery owl-wise snowflakes spiraling  
like an eyelash from the moon forever and ever

where you will wander-  
leaning into the icicled chiming and  
tracing the trceries of the frost-made feasts  
on All Souls' windowpanes;

stalwart in green and gold, remembered,  
taking your stance against the vanishing

mary angela douglas 13 december 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Snowlike: The Supposition Dreams

'Mais où sont les neiges d'antan? '  
(where are the snows of yesteryear)  
-Francois Villon

the readers of a fine braile  
refined; the readers of snow  
themselves snow

passing away into mirrors  
not of their own  
devising; revising

words and do they fall away  
like snows beyond the sleeve  
of the woods you know, you knew

and will they be renewed  
or will they fade frost flowers into  
Infinite windows

closed on Earth?

mary angela douglas 7 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# So God Can See Us From All The Way Up There

we'll make semaphores in the snow, lost angels

so God can see us from all the way up there

and swoop down, vast Eagle that He is.

we'll rig something up with the dolls and the bears

the celluloid pink plastic mirrors of our childhood

reflecting the solar flares

or Mardi Gras beads brought back to us from New Orleans

by a favorite favorite teacher.

or we'll divert the streams

into the mossy hinterlands

where He casts his green green shadow

among the trees and longs for His own shade

and drops his golden apples when He may

and keeps on demonstrating Gravity

as if Newton lived again or he missed him.

or maybe He's just a friend to us

children playing tag in the apple orchards

or waiting for summer rain lagging in this heat

and thirsty for lemonade

we wish we could pour out

for Him and the Baby Jesus.

mary angela douglas 20 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# So Jewel-Like In The Stirrups Flash The Outriders

[to the immortal voice of Ethel Barrymore-  
to all the outriders of our language]

jewel-like in the stirrups flash the outriders  
saving what can be saved of a forgotten line.  
fitful sleep the children near the hills  
that they forgot to climb.

when will you return, if ever,  
my dissolving language, trebled with tears  
forever shining on the brink-

so lost! for years.  
I hear it like a whispered snow  
of maytime petals recherché

but who will clink the fairy tale chime  
against the painted backdrop of her moons in storage?  
portray: the silhouette of Juliet as once she was remembered

when brief, the nightingale was in tune  
recedes into a ciphered gloom as  
the audience streams from the garish marquees  
pleased with themselves and

taking aim at the sound of waters  
the sound of waters  
outcroppings of the stars

beauty in exile far from the land  
and the promontories  
where the sea walls broke through.

and it's the odd story in an antique book  
no one ever looks at now.  
an actress floated in on

white rose perfume, in rose fraught dresses  
stage post stage  
in the jeweled stirrups outriding, , ,

are you deriding, deriding  
the sound of her own language so out of style?  
where the heart was wedded to the

sacred names-  
the Soul remains:  
impervious in her dreaming voice - outlawed-  
while the commonplace takes hold dressed  
up in preening gold these after years

by foul-mouthed stage coach robbers  
technicoloured turncoats generations of  
the whatever.

but are you sure she's disappeared  
disposed of by the Huntsman; unanimous  
mirrors tuned to the unfair 'Fair...'?

I hear a murmuring lapping at the cliffs  
of ignominy, not dispossessed! angelic,  
wearing away at the stone:

ah, the Mysteries; the voice unwearied, starry-  
recitative as scented rains:  
remains. Remains.  
synchronized to an inner flame.

mary angela douglas 24 february 2014; rev.3 march 2014; rev.3 november 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# So Many Times We Have To Learn

so many times we have to learn  
how to walk again  
(as though we hadn't learned)

how not to trip

how not to hurt  
when we fall  
to laugh in the grass

though we feel so small

and start again  
or cry on the pavement  
without a friend

helped up by  
God's invisible hand  
and learn to stand

to see the sky without wobbling  
to ask a million questions why, why  
is everyting

so beautiful

and what are all the names

mary angela douglas 1 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# So Much Depends

so much depends  
on a yellow glass candy dish  
filled to the brim

and capped by a lid  
with a golden knob  
and will you lift the lid or not

or when

and choose hard candies  
jewel like in the night,  
painted with flowers or

ribbon bright and the crunch  
coincides with the crunch of snow  
of course

it's that euphonious, our Christmas;  
Christmases I will make of you one necklace:  
tulip bulb lights, the laughter of the

angels out of sight; the house near  
the tinsel woods fades shining from my sight  
across the street in snow or not

where we can no longer go  
I sob.  
I sob.

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# So Shy In Our White Straw Bonnets

so shy in our white straw bonnets  
with the realistic cherries bunched on the side.  
this is Easter we felt

in the mild sunshine.  
in our pastel dresses as if  
going to the party of the Lord.

and Grandfather polished our shoes on Saturday  
and gave us the collection dimes.  
then we sang the hymns we thought of

as robins egg blue you know  
'When Morning Guilds the Skies'.  
later at home, finding the Paas eggs

cradled in the irises  
we got cold  
and went inside filling up on gumdrops

jelly beans, the chocolate rabbit stuffed  
with marshmallow cream.

and this was was like a dream  
and makes me cry now.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# So What If We Threw Words Into The Air

SO WHAT IF WE THREW WORDS INTO THE AIR

so what if we threw words into the air

repairing nothing

they were all we had

aspirant jugglers that we were

but sometimes merry

spinning our plates

while Time waits at the Gate,

the garden one.

beyond it are the Fates

spinning the gold of Shakespeare,

Keats, the clarion greens of Rilke,

all those letters.

from high towers he called the angels

and his words grew little wings

and they have gone so far

into my heart

as to become a landscape

littered with stars.

we wrote in cloud breath on the panes

of Christmas;  
punctuated in offices on our own  
keeping the dream of appled home  
amid the tiny exiles.  
the sword upraised from the Lady's lake.  
brush your rosebud tears away  
for what seems to have come to you  
too late. the amber birds of Mahler rise  
to stay your executions.  
maybe the heart gives out,  
but Music remains  
like the golden ball in the well  
the frog kept fetching back  
alas alack the goose queen, princess, cried  
stepping out in the moonlight on the Other Side  
where she never can grow wise  
because she can't leave lace like  
wonder, ever, behind.  
the clouds shaped like the bracelet charm  
pianos.

mary angela douglas 11 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Soliciting Information From The State

For Sharon F. Douglas

they will bring you information back in a thimble

that maybe was true two years ago.

you will scrape the bottom of the well

of wishes. but there will be no residue.

you will write and there will be no reply.

or there will be a reply as transparent as glass

taking wing into the Invisible

and meaningless in any language.

we are free scream the posters

scream the candidates on tv

or whisper to themselves at odd moments

happy with their salaries.

that their favorite restaurant in a chic spot

is always glad to seat them.

we are free I cry myself to sleep.

free to be told nothing

as if our heart had disappeared

our soul skipped town.

mary angela douglas 6 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Some Ballet

out of some ballet did you wander  
looking at home in the snows  
you with your tiara

made of vagrant moonglow.  
it is made of frost, hard words  
your day to day

are you still in some ballet  
shirring the music that's your own  
and pure, without memory,

mirrors falling away;  
courting old dismay

consigned to this  
where the glass in all rooms  
shatters at the clear

note attained.  
though no footlights stray  
and barely a moon

that's pear shaped  
comes your way  
are you still in some ballet

you with the lilac cast to your face  
your eyes, your hands your grace  
composed of snowlight

of what falls apart  
so easily  
fragile to the last

unaccustomed to the haze  
are you still  
in some ballet?

mary angela douglas 16 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Days I Just Want This

some days I just want to look at the land  
at the bands of rain sweeping over it  
in crystalline beading

at the green haze of trees sponged in  
as if in some middle distance painted  
by an unknown painter, not me,

who can only gaze and gaze  
into the violet blue of skies  
above thunderheads

the cream of what's left of the day  
brimming, the birds skimming  
thin gold off the horizon

the lemon moon made new.

those days I cannot speak at all  
or be spoken of  
be spoken to.

what language is greater than this  
to see no matter how briefly  
to feel

the scope of it all.  
to be caught in the rains in this way

may be sheer Heaven in the end  
to feel as Whitman did  
the sacredness of grass, blade by miraculous blade

the petal of shade falling over it now  
near nightfall  
the rich eventide, hushed etude of the soul

even with its scarcity, cloud covered,  
of stars.

mary angela douglas 13 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Days I Think Of Swans

some days I think of swans  
the way Hans Andersen did  
on the glass lake in front of

the castle and the tin soldier  
helpless without water  
gazing without water

in the thirst of his soul  
and the dancer there  
with her bit of tinsel

he mistook for a heart.  
some days I think of  
swans, the wilder version

living out their spell  
and from the height of vast cloud  
countries he can tell you

how it looks down below them  
and it makes you dizzy.  
how did he get this from books

the way of telling  
so that you could feel  
it was you there in the clouds

you yourself there circling and circling  
looking for the place to land.  
or still, on the glass waters

with the other actors  
playing the scene  
or like the mermaid

only a gleam  
upon the waters.  
this gleam is your love-

you are gone, then.

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Late Night Headlines From Cnn And Two Rainstorms Hours Earlier February 24,2016 11: 19 P.M.

seen from the upper floors  
the rains are moving sideways  
trying to be clouds. or tides.

the small hail flies like birds  
blown sideways  
and next I look for someone else's Spring

from another planet to fly past  
the child at the window  
knowing it will last...

no matter how long it is  
it comes to pass like the  
sudden wildflowers in 28 varieties

the newspeople marvel over  
in Death Valley  
appearing after another rainstorm...

this was my etude to the winds  
on a february day  
in a small town (it started out that way)

far away (but with extravagant rainstorms)  
from the new map  
of the milky way's possibilities

announced, today  
and the astronaut  
longing for earth

and ready to return  
who feels he has earned it.

mary angela douglas 24 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Some Little Goose Girl

some little goose girl

some people think you are

what difference, does it matter?

God knows where you are

and those who see you flatly

because that's how they see

will just go on forever

straightening your seams

thinking, oh God. if she only had a clue.

else is new.

here's what I would do

in a situation like that.

scatter the rose gold crumbs by the river

and wear my favorite hat.

the one with the Hanging Gardens on it.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2020; rev.18 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

## Some Of It

maybe we were meant to go on dream errands

seeking the golden lemons for our tea

slicing the bread more thickly than we could

in real life.

thinking in summer clouds.

half way through the dream you remember

someone required you to bring back silver buttons

or the pink pearlized kind like knobs on a fairy's treehouse door.

I really did walk through meadows then.

the burrs catching on my skirts of blue violet

and I felt like the lady with the green parasol

in Monet's painting

standing on that ridge.

you will say I imagined it all.

but I didn't.

some of it really happened.

mary angela douglas 4 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some One Told You The Old Stories

[for M.R. James]

some one told you the old stories;  
how a traveler at night  
was waylaid by a family

of robbers:  
glinting, their eyes, with a diamond light  
and even the light, stolen.

were there other roads?  
you want to believe  
there could have been

some way out for him.  
but you look at the picture,  
and it glows

and the snow is still accumulating there,  
obscuring everything.  
the air is chill

and you feel a draft with the windows closed  
of all the befores and afters  
that were plausible.

and mere moonlight overflows the causeway  
spilling over into your small room.

mary angela douglas 7 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Problems Concerning Translation Of A Single Language Into Itself

when I say 'rose' you read it in a different colour  
when I breathe 'sky' you think it is full of light but  
it's a nocturne that I only

heard  
all my life.

what if I wrote it's a midnight rainbow,  
midnight's rainbows causing me delight  
though I live nowhere near the Northern Lights

and you do.  
you'd fill in the blanks, wouldn't you?  
and is it true like they always sing:

we see  
the same moon.  
do we?

when the moon shines to herself  
so many names.

mary angela douglas 13 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Things I Wanted To Ask Him (Meaning, God)

how did it come to You to make glow in the dark stars  
or pick the fantastic wall paper, ceiling too for earth  
so marbelizing blue and green

so that little children everywhere  
were happy under the tree roofs branching  
and wrote in the dust your diamond name

with sticks and outlined their playhouse outside  
with the innate moonlight of your milky quartz  
oh blue jay feather falling farther from me

than childhood I loved you as Rilke  
his peacock feather.  
and do You send your sunset messages to everyone

and if you do  
why does it feel do I feel oh every time  
and for the longest time

with the rose the violet the tangerine

unfolding in late afternoon's skies  
that only this letter  
is meant for me?

mary angela douglas 20 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Some Things Just Can't Be Said

like falling off the edge of the world,  
the cliffs, blindfolded, you didn't know  
were there

like never hearing the bright word said  
but still listening for it  
after the speaker's dead

like stitching together no reasons why  
or having no mottos on the walls  
of the heart, the dazzling aortic

continuing on despite this

like looking for the sun at night  
or flight from the frozen sparrows on  
the budless twigs or

keeping music's secret like the marrow

of dreaming with your eyes entirely open  
some things just can't be said  
the way they felt to you

at the time

mary angela douglas 17 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Somebody's Got To Say This

my mind. my thinking is,  
most people say we say it all the time  
I think, my mind's my own. I think for myself.

I'm telling you, there's bad elves in there somewhere.  
some real bad boogers.

if your mind is yours  
why does it always obsess

about the one fly in the ointment  
the one gaffe at the party  
or at every birthday, say

for decades  
remind you of that time  
two people

gave you the exact same thing.  
is the mind a friend? really?

why does it bring up in vast array  
at odd moments: every single  
horrible thing that ever happened to you.

would a friend do that?  
does it ever bring up at odd moments  
the vast array of good things that happened?

the compliments?  
it throws those in a dungeon  
surrounded by crocodiles.

good luck getting in there.

to get it to remind you of the good stuff on its own  
without conscious effort on your part is well nigh  
impossible.

somebody's got to say it out loud with a lot of  
pauses between the words so that it sinks in finally  
cause the mind just doesn't want you to know this.

your mind is NOT yours. it's occupied by foreign forces  
marshalling, to the default always set  
like some nightmare librarian, historian, contrarian

data clerk all the records on:  
things you wish you'd never said;  
the grade school days the

whole class laughed their heads off at you.  
everytime you spilled something on your tie, your dress  
or pronounced something the wrong way

in broad daylight.  
all the people that ever looked at you weird,  
the cast of thousands. and it's always,

going forward, scribbling it all down faster and  
faster like a haywire stenographer, court reporter.  
did you get that? screams one bad elf to the other

but not so you can hear. Here's a new Fear, they chortle.

why doesn't the mind ever spontaneously  
bring up things: like dark cherry ice cream, rainbows,  
extra puddings in your lunchbox.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT? ?

Mary Angela Douglas 21 November 2015

P.S. Hey, now I know who's making all the typos. It's the stenographer.  
(stenographer) .

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someday God, Seeding The Clouds With Rainbows

someday God, seeding the clouds with rainbows  
will be only overjoyed and then we'll see  
his riotous roses overtaking the gardens

and the sea ruffled seashore dotted  
with perfect sandcastles.  
who made them you will ask

and then you will laugh  
having answered your own question.  
and the butter yellow butterflies

through the roadside grass  
will swarm in the honeycombed day  
that doesn't have to end except when

we say

and the bluebird summons come to our door  
and the doves grow iridescent  
well into the evening's eaves.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someday I Will Find The Dollhouse: A Doll's Ghost Story

some day I will find the dollhouse  
I have forgotten, in old catalogues;  
of several stories, surely

with an elaborately carved staircase.  
a stained glass window at the top.  
an attic whose little door pulled

down from the ceiling, easily  
leads to realms of Christmas decorations  
from another time, and still pristine

go inside. there's the dollhouse dust  
smelling mustily, fustily just  
like real dust, you exclaim!

and not a penny extra smiles  
the toy store clerk who  
offers you immediately,

(for your discernment) :  
a strawberry cone

swirled perfectly  
soft serve chocolate and vanilla  
through mists of something, far away-

I almost see the paved drive  
leading up to it...  
the flagstoned terrace

where doll infants played.  
the trees of gold that will not,  
cannot shed their leaves.

the light left on perpetually  
for me, for me

who eventually - someone

has faith in this:  
will waken suddenly,  
remembering where I am.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someday On The Page Where The Monsters Are No More

someday on the page where the monsters are no more  
we won't believe that we've escaped them;  
we won't remember how

we came to life again in the frozen courtyard  
as though there were a worldwide spring  
sprung, secretly:

a rush of green and who let all these flowers in  
where the guards were fiercely posted and forever.  
a train emerged from a golden underground

as in a dream, the ways and means were found  
the ways and means were found  
little children. picking up loose

diamonds on the ground  
who can't stop laughing now

mary angela douglas 3 july 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someday We Will Speak Again

someday we will speak again  
without dissension  
now an unknown tongue, but Then

a heavenly declension  
so music is to us now  
a mysterious turning of the prow

of the heart's lost misty and confounded ship  
not meant for earth  
the Soul's so fitful turning in its sleep

the silvered leaf burning  
on the tree of grief, released:

the reclaiming of the deep,  
the unutterable;  
the starry door swung open, suddenly

unto God.

mary angela douglas 3 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someday When The Crooked Mile

someday when the crooked mile  
becomes a little too much-  
and wild strawberries are just

not enough to get by on anymore  
not even by candlelight;  
may you pull from your best locket

the one with the clouds in it,  
the right shade of pink.  
and when you think

to yourself oh far is too far to  
walk now  
and how can I measure the

immeasurable and when your diamond thimble  
rolls out into the raspberry shade  
so you can't you just can't thread the needle,

please.  
sing a song of windowpanes  
frosted all in holly

and try to be what rhymes next.  
(hint: starts with a 'j') ,

o.k.?

mary angela douglas 11 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Someone Has Spread A Carpet Of Roses

on Cliburn playing, Widmung (Schumann-Liszt)

someone has spread a carpet of roses  
as light comes and then goes and comes again  
and a face is dappled, and you know

someone was here in the music before you  
but where?  
you wander through castles endlessly,

through clouds, through subterfuge and  
who is listening? is it only you and blindingly  
alive in endless variations: glistening, a

crystal of unshed tears in a palm extended  
or are you

held aloft by those with wings and still  
in the stillness all your own

alone except in dreams where someone has  
spread for you a carpet of roses and feeling  
flows as in music and seemingly crescendos and

then it flows away I hear you say, diminuendo...

who is playing? who has left this shimmer of  
something in the air more fragile than a sigh  
oh who, who is it there, still nigh:

after the sound of roses dies

mary angela douglas 10 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Someone Remembered Snow Cones In My Dream

to Ray Bradbury, for the story "To The Chicago Abyss";

someone remembered snow cones in my dream

a person I had never seen in real life

how funny I have often thought

the distinction between dreams and real life

except that in dreams you don't pay bills

or trudge up hills that make your muscles ache

but to get back to the snow cone

it was brought up in a casual way

and I knew out of everyone in the room

the dream room, I was the only one there

who knew why the man spoke of it and that it mattered

because he wanted to remember that

and not the original topic of conversation

which the dream did not remember either

in fact, some would call the dream remiss

and just for this

though I insist

blessed be the dream that makes allowances

where the most astonishing things are not off topic

off message or ever conceived as such

for much have we also wandered

in the realms of gold

taking all the side roads even after Keats

and it is meet after long drudgery to suppose

even to long

for any interposition at any time as though

we were children waiting for the assignment to begin when

suddenly

we were in the kingdom of roses we made up

my sister and I in all our summer waking

when dreams spilled out into daylight

for the taking and the fairy tale adjudged

it right for snows to fall on the rosebuds overnight

but I'm talking about a public scene

the venue for some purpose with the

carpet in style from other decades

the complimentary buffet

implied the working dream day

in any meeting room, let it be assumed glorious

for saints or angels to float down or chime

and for this to seem normal to

bypass the facilitator

and not to cause a flurry the children had

the snows come early, early Christmas too

and there was not one rule that could govern the skies

or put us wise to news reports breaking over us like waves

like waves

that meant to drown us

ah, to no avail.

mary angela douglas 5 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Something

even in a closed system, God can breathe on the pane

out of the ash a sudden ember

though the eye remains

shuttered.

there, on the border of dreams

one may not remember in the morning

something stirs the curtains

in a heralding way.

who can say what it is for sure.

was it the wind

the child awaking early wondered

something else, that gold let in

why pretend if not to know

something glows; it isn't us.

something

in search of what was when:

Eden, and the rusted gates.

mary angela douglas 14 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Something For Arthur Rubinstein

even earlier you were beginning to be connected  
to something no longer on earth  
so that ghosts of white orchid hearing their music played

so rarely, paused to weep  
and then forgot they were.  
it may have been on impossible blue evenings

someone begins to perceive and weeping sings  
or tries to say:  
who can hold the note of rapture

in a noteless age..  
now music is a shriek  
and echoes fade

breaking away,  
as if they were continents=  
from the main

mary angela douglas 29 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Something Found But What

it isn't the right feeling on the page  
a someone says and so, it blows away  
and on another day and looking up

from play, a small child finds it  
hidden in the grass while the white  
stars sway then,

turning into snow  
oh there you are  
she says as light as sunshine

pouring onto glass  
a forgotten radiance  
at last, at last.

mary angela douglas 14 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Something Will Be Lost

something will be lost  
in-between jewel and jade;  
farther than glen or glade.

something in the shade.

will it be gold-leafed,  
figured in rosebuds, sung  
for the Queen?

a scene from a fairy tale play  
with the sequins raining down.  
how will I know, if I haven't found it yet,

never rounding that corner;  
never having been in that neighborhood;  
never having come

to the charabanc sum of it  
on holidays that few.  
choosing other things to do

like fighting off the flu;  
sorting the red onions from the bread  
in the cupboards

Instead.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometime, I'd Like To

sometime I'd like to  
live under a snowbank  
until Spring and

little birds would bring me  
things, shiny objects  
berries on a string

an ice pink cake or so. and then  
I'd dream I fell into a farther cave  
below all rainbow glow,

but softly, so as to stir no sound;

with unusual staircases  
and no one yelling in the halls  
so that it echoes endlessly

and no one slamming doors on purpose.  
no one at all.  
and I'd translate from phrases delicately made

snow patterns or the traces of the stars  
dead, long ago come back to life  
and find green rivers farther, deeper down

and waterfalls so clear, bedight with angels.

and solve bright mysteries in the lost  
and founts and swear to you  
that life spent underground, this way,

is closer to Heaven  
than you might think.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes

something the trees forgot to say  
stayed with me throughout the day  
in a pale green whispering.

did the birds leave  
with no silver warnings  
were they mingled with

the voices of angels  
these things I pondered on  
while riding the bus

or filing later in the file rooms  
of the world  
thinking of Aquinas

his angels whirling on pins.  
what does it feel like  
to be the one sent

with the earth shattering message  
to be filled with that much light.  
or stooping through an unknown doorway

all gold and ruby with annunciations.  
we never talked about this in school  
or sitting at the kitchen table.

sometimes I saw a glistening on the walls  
when we were all home.  
and my Grandfather spoke of the Resurrection

as if it were filled with bird calls  
in the Arkansas woods.

mary angela douglas 26 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes I Look Too Hard To Find Things

sometimes I look too hard to find things  
while keys leap up like trout from stream  
out of an unexpected dream  
lost homework spirals through the air  
and lands just somewhere on the stair  
but I have already packed my bags like Hannibal  
and gone on far expeditions to reclaim  
the name of the song in wind and flame  
the right made wrong from all disdain  
the colours of the evening star  
just about over the topaz bar of Heaven  
and dusk and the shade of it, wisteria.  
in my backyard.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes I Think Of Pompeii

sometimes I think of Pompeii  
you know, one instant before:  
was someone scolding a child

did the tears of that child  
turn to ash, crystalized  
for those who came later

collecting the artifacts?  
was someone happy  
in a new blue dress

or gazing at clouds  
for the last time  
on Earth.

on earth we know  
we are not destined to last  
and any instant could be

suddenly, ash,  
suddenly frozen for historians  
to record.

and then look past.

mary angela douglas 26 june 2017

NOTE ON THE POEM:

PLEASE READ.

My goal in writing poems, one goal among many is never to write a completely sad poem. I always leave a light on in the poem or a trapdoor, exit in it to some kind of hope. I totally believe in hope and that no matter whatt the arts should ALWAYS give people hope. So in this poem, well, it's about a horrible human disaster Pompeii you know where people suddenly were covered in molten lava and ash and frozen there for all time and these people had no warning, no

warning at all and were caught in that moment, in that ray of light, in that shadow, in that moment of happiness or daily sorrow fixed forever like statues frozen under some kind of fairy tale spell. And they did not know in the moment before: you are in the last moment of your life. And they didn't have any angel or anyone to come and tell them, flee, get away pack up the moving van and get out because it is going to be the last day on earth for this entire city. No one came. Maybe someone had a dream and then forgot it by breakfast and then the moment came, and they were translated to heaven or to some other place, before Christ. But in my poem there is a splash of hope. A blue dress, a child scolded by a loving Mother, a few clouds. And then the peace that comes over the landscape in the centuries that followed when later historians, archeologists came upon the scene that was now serene and no longer suffered from.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Sometimes I Think That Clouds And Trees Are Enough

sometimes I think that clouds and trees are enough.  
the wind. a dazzle of birds.  
when you're tired of making things up

to entertain yourself or keep from  
thinking of things you'd rather not.  
it's good to see them still there.

everywhere. clouds and trees.  
and in the yards their shadows blow  
as well

and it is well to gaze on clouds and trees  
to feel the wind again.  
the freshness of all this.

the evergreeness.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes In My Dream There Is A Boat

sometimes in my dream there is a boat

I cannot see; I know it's there by the sound

of the waves slapping against boat.

it is a most patient boat. it's sturdy, unpainted.

something unperturbed about it.

and it's firmly tted to the dock,

a kind of rowboat.

once in a while I see a kind of light

limning the oars; no one in it.

my boat is patient. every minute

it waits for me. unconcernedly

having its own reverie.

I know one day

I will step all silvery there. it will be time then.

the sky of orchids going down.

over the waters, a vagueness,

something I should have said

but no matter now.

someday I will look out and see

a night with one star

and lingering fades; and singing....

my muse torn in two which shore which shore

is mine

almost I will cry and then

like a child I will I began

why was I crying with the clouds smoothed over.

why was I crying in my dream

why can't I remember

the whole thing.

mary angela douglas 28 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes It Is True That We Are Breathing Sand

sometimes it is true that we are breathing sand  
and find it difficult to walk even the small hills  
when we have had our fill of the unanswered

questions, conversations muted  
the vow of beauty remembered no more.  
then I think of trees and worlds on worlds

of green and the oxygen of kindness.  
I imagine kindness, real freedom. I think what if there were suddenly  
small rainbows over all the brooks at once

and all the books opened to the very page you need  
and were to you  
sometimes we make our own oxygen

sometimes we must.  
for all the times  
it turns to rust.

mary angela douglas 14 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes It Makes Me Sad

sometimes it makes me sad  
to think of the vanished cities  
the ones of desert mirage

the ones bombed out  
in wars we don't remember  
the childhood blocks tumbled down,

oil rainbows in the garage  
old raincoats, galoshes in the front hall closet  
the game pieces lost

in summers, on picnics,  
amid the tall grasses.  
the beaded frocks, the looking glasses,

the floral printed, fading.  
the butterfly broken hands  
of the cloisonne clocks, the midnight tokens

of God's grace, remaining.

I think of this in deep winter  
or on the cusp of Spring.  
is it really possible

they are all gone, the citadels?  
the carols about the golden rings  
the continents of memory

breaking myrrh of wings  
presented to the Infant King  
the wounded heart in the stories

come back to songs the  
babies sing in the dark  
or it may be, their angels sing

the islands washed over.

the bride and bridegroom adrift on the cake  
the coral kingdoms under the sea.

old coupons, no longer redeemable.  
the way the world was dreamed  
is dreamed, before we awake

the wavering colors in the mirror of the sky  
the way they looked to me then, moire, moire,  
the gold decked, the beautiful, beckoning.

mary angela douglas 22 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes The Real Seeps Under The Door

sometimes the Real seeps under the door  
and you are happy and you can't think why  
though there's no sunshine in the sky.

sometimes a Gold is with you, unexpectedly;  
the Beautiful: the one they turned away  
from many doors or never even noticed

it invisibly shimmering while they were  
shivering at the bus stop.  
a leaf falls from a tree in polished red

with a message; take a Holiday, won't you?  
and you don't understand how it was  
that it fell just at the moment when

you appeared, as if it had been waiting to,  
throughout the year, and there it is:  
a telegram from God, or valentine

maple scripted; meant for you;  
you'll press in a book, later  
to recall this vivid day.

mary angela douglas 4 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sometimes, In The Absence Of Light

for the Russian filmmaker, Andrei Tarkovsky

sometimes in the absence of light  
we imagined the sun  
collected through secret prisms  
as if you were the only collector left  
in a film by Tarkovsky.  
there the leaves grow sodden  
through black and white scenes  
yet insistently they whisper, Come,  
the Zone is breaking apart  
as though it were a heart  
while you evade its gates, your natal star;  
and you've become they'll tell you, every one,  
the last known weather vane spinning  
among the dreamers of dreams.  
there Time has split its silver seam  
and runs on  
into the measures  
where the Listeners have come  
into their own.  
into late landscapes occluding the moon  
there your waylaid vision shone  
on the lost coordinates of where you are  
in the Dream Time vouchsafed you.  
there the small comets weep  
into the borrowed mirrors of the fleet,  
are we that handful of stars?  
and you are only a quarter note asleep in the music  
of a beautiful egress  
when with your childhood pail  
you hurry to where They are  
looking for little diamonds smashed

there where the Ark of dreams  
has not yet come to rest;  
it one day, will



mary angela douglas 4 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Somewhere A Childhood Waits For You

somewhere a childhood waits for you  
like rippling cream over the strawberries.  
well sugared, a lemonade afternoon.

april, and you are april too and you feel  
that way whenever you stand near the backyard trees  
in the shade with the early violets;

your Easter-basket smile.

white violet, wild and infinite were your skies.  
it seemed it seemed they would never disappear.  
that always when the new grass sprung

so would you.  
In Heaven, this is true.

mary angela douglas 15 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Somewhere An April Star

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,  
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,  
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,  
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten  
Long and long ago,  
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall  
In a long forgotten snow.

-Sara Teasdale

=====  
=====

[for Sara Teasdale, poetess]

somewhere an April star could chime  
the name of Sara Teasdale.  
name of quiet.

name of flame.  
made of shadows in the rain  
weeping over the beautiful.

your poems were sung  
then grew from fashion.  
you wrote cloudier poems

and turned from girlhood's fancies  
charmed to stone.  
sara, the winds sang all alone

when you weren't there.  
sara, your poems would call you back  
from everywhere

till the next star chimes in Time  
with ever the green of earth imbued.  
such poets now are few,

Sara.

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Somewhere Kneeling On A Dandelion Shore

[to Ray Bradbury (again) ]

somewhere kneeling on a dandelion shore  
like old explorers coming home  
perhaps we'll meet you

in your beatific horn rims beaming  
fresh sheafs of paper in your hands  
ready to scatter

confetti for the children  
up their in the Heights.  
until then we'll make up our own stories.

wishing we had the keys to the story files you left;  
who has them now?  
is there some clerical mistake? you'll ask in

Mars-Heaven.  
I've got to go back and finish them.

mary angela douglas 27 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Somewhere Music Waits, Hidden In Stones/From The Towers Removed

somewhere music waits, hidden in stones  
for an Easter rising  
and the saints in long surmising burned  
relearn the mysteries one by laboured one  
never to be forgotten again or  
dropped along the way  
in a diamond aphasia and in our ruined clothes  
in the distance sown between  
home and not my home with  
the white stones garnering moonlight  
for the mother of pearl, and clouded over. Returns.  
through all rude silences they have kernal, in locking,  
stalking the manuscripts they could not burn of  
the genuinely shunned, discarded  
and remaindered, stunned it is  
is sewn together for the dying by degrees  
from the peerless weeping,  
sleepless handiwork of God  
outlasting, having discerned it all

and we with h beaten

into the sod, spurned gold.

then we will arise from former disenchantments

won, won! from the chilling, chilled,

the diurnal naves, knaves! of the cruel

depositions, inquisitions, dispositions

done.

from the bleak towers removed

where winters find their suns

and the mocked Kingdoms bloom.

mary angela douglas 9 august 2019

mary angela douglas 13 march 2018; 9 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sonatina In Rose

to live in a house with rose patterned wall papers  
overlooking a rose garden  
and when it snows, the roses merely sparkle

not forgetting to bloom.  
to drift from rose room to room  
as if you were fine perfume.

the venetian blinds are pink.  
the tablecloths pale green.  
you play the piano and then it seems

that music blooms and remembers your name.  
how when the rose gold of familiar clouds shifts  
over the trees

will you explain to the neighbors  
to the angels at their ease

the tint of your windows.  
or how will you even care  
who live, a rose, among roses

anywhere you dream this.

mary angela douglas 26 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Song For The Last Interview

'it will flame out like shining from shook foil'  
-Gerard Manley Hopkins

for Dr. Robert Joseph Connelly, San Antonio, in memorium

this is for the Word born whole  
for the poetry-riven sky  
for the strength to recognize a lie

for the breakable language  
unbroken still  
by the bent word

built for profit,  
not for truth.

this is my sigh in the glass blown  
air for the glass blown disappearing act of  
stars in the glasslike night

appearing,  
disarming, chiming in the wind  
that only angels bring

the pause (finally in excoriating speech  
-your very own-)  
where you collect yourself  
if not your things

from one last day at work  
or home  
picking your report card up

in June from the ghost school  
from the ghosts.

this is for cornbread heirlooms,  
for afternoons of strawberries

and cream -

for the Holy Ghost dressed in pale green  
for the whole world seen  
through stereoscopic Disney,

Christmas stenciled windows;  
the last view of small  
pink flowers bordering the front

sidewalk, goodbye...

this is for God  
who hears and sees the  
honey tinged questions'

finding fault  
so that permanent records  
continue to reflect  
your waywardness in  
never having the exact

amount of change  
this is for the second you know

you have to leave  
the home you love  
so much earlier than you planned  
with only three dresses packed  
in a

walnut, and the Lord's prayer on a dime:  
fixing the hall clock in your memory  
the jelly glasses  
and the willow-ware, the brightness of pennies

over other denominations...

repairing your chiffon shadow  
on the way with your personal sewing kit  
to honor those who raised you  
and read you fairytales

as though from great distances.

this is for  
no safe-houses on the horizon  
least of all the yellow brick one  
across the street

where children climb trees  
and eat the whole summer  
an entire orchard of homeade

peach ice cream...

this is for the deep-starred journey  
undertaken  
for the fools errands  
for the straw that will never never

ever turn into gold  
no matter how the Rumpelstiltskins scream.  
listen to me:

questionable friends  
make the journey a million times  
harder and give you the wrong  
directions to the castle so  
that you never find  
the singing bird.  
this is for trudging on alone

for crossing the border and  
not looking back even when  
the person coming with you  
changes their mind at sunrise  
and runs to tell on you.

this is for living  
like the silence of the moon  
and soon and soon

you will withdraw from a tiny shell

at the exact right moment in the interview, a  
shining like shook foil shaken-  
three dresses of compressed splendor  
kept against the rain and  
wrapped in violet tissue:

the one of vivid stars  
the one of ornate flame  
the one of cloudless cloudless blue

and, as if on cue, the opal angels move-  
scattering the inquisitors;  
settling old accounts  
in scripts of gold

with not one scintilla of  
asking anyone for permission.  
for you were watched over  
even while crocodiles wept  
my child my child at  
every nightmare's exit

by the Word unbroken:  
by music heard in the wake of angels,  
by undetainable Light...

mary angela douglas 30 june 2009 rev.7 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Song For The Last Interview (Final Version)

'it will flame out like shining from shook foil'  
-Gerard Manley Hopkins

(for Dr. Robert Joseph Connelly, UIW, San Antonio, in memoriam)

this is for the Word made whole  
for the poetry-riven skies  
for the strength to recognize a lie

for the breakable language  
unbroken still  
by the bent word

built for profit,  
not for truth.

this is my sigh in the flowering  
air for the glass blown disappearing act of  
stars in the May apple regions

appearing,  
disarming, chiming in the winds  
that only angels bring

the pause (finally, in excoriating speech,  
-your very own-)  
where you collect yourself  
if not your things

from one last day at work  
or home  
picking your report card up

in June from the ghost school;  
for the ghosts of  
cornbread heirlooms

dripping with the honeycomb;  
for afternoons of strawberries

and cream -

for the Holy Ghost dressed in pale green  
for the whole world seen  
through stereoscopic Disney,

Christmas stenciled windows;  
the least view of small  
pink flowers bordering the sidewalk

goodbye...this is for God  
who hears and sees the  
honey tinged questions'  
finding fault

so that permanent records  
continue to reflect  
your waywardness in

never having the exact  
amount of change  
this is for the second you feel

you have to leave with no reprieve  
the loved home, the iced teas  
so much earlier than you dreamed

with only three dresses packed  
in a  
walnut, the Lord's prayer on a dime:

fixing the hall clock in your memory  
the jelly glasses  
and the willow-ware, the brightness of pennies

over other denominations...the sherbets, lime  
the eventimes;  
repairing your chiffon shadow

on the way with your personal sewing kit

to honor those who raised you

and read you fairy tales  
as though from great distances.

this is for  
no safe-houses on the horizon  
least of all the yellow brick one

across the street  
where children climb trees  
and eat the whole summer

an entire orchard of homemade  
peach ice cream...  
this is for the deep-starred journey

undertaken  
for the fools' errands-  
for the straw that will never

everland turn into gold  
no matter how the Rumpelstiltskins scold

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this is for trudging on alone  
for crossing the borders on your own

not looking back even when  
the person who meant to come with you  
changes their mind at sunrise

then runs to tell on you  
like we were back in school

this is for living

like the silence on the moon  
and soon and soon

far from the living room

you will withdraw from a tiny shell  
at the exact right moment in the interview, a  
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and, as if on cue, the opal angels move-  
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even while crocodiles wept  
my child my child at

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by music heard in the wake of angels,  
by undetainable Light...

mary angela douglas 30 june 2009 rev.7 december 2016; 27 january 2018; 3  
june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Song Is A Ladder Of Diamonds

song is a ladder of diamonds  
flung into space  
we try to reach You on

every rung  
and fail

song is a web of stars  
we get lost in  
a mist a drizzle of

music half-forgotten  
when the prompting angels

fade from view

song is a difficult road  
in a drenching rain on the way to work  
and being on foot

with cars flying by  
on either side, and people yelling  
things out of the window at high speed

song is being kicked  
down so many flights of stairs  
and still, ascending

song is a place remembered  
we can almost reach

but not without You-

this is my diamond.  
song.

mary angela douglas 18 november 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Song Is Light

for Paul Simon, for all his beautiful music

song is light

don't weigh it down

or leave it orphaned on the ground

song is light

some may say oh that's not right

change the musical notation

say something wondrous to the nation

you may forget the reason you sang at all.

let them think small thoughts of you.

to your song be ever true

song is light song is light song is light.

mary angela douglas 25 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Song To Be Sung In An Overpoliticized Age

was it the silver and the shining  
a cleanness as of rainwashed air  
and we were staring at the angels

hidden in clouds never dreaming outloud  
outloud outloud...  
now all is volume turned up loud louder and

loudest

circus crowd magnified but then  
it was sweetness, light as silk shod, the  
apple blossom falling on the lawns imperceptible

as time and amenable as snows on holiday  
then it was the december rose  
watched over by caroling caroling

the shimmer of bells awakening and the glass held  
ones most pure crystalline the gold  
leaf flaking off the sun and we

catching it every mote like the Perseid  
all golden coined we were then pristine  
least note carved on the early piano

accentuated  
full of the lavish stories the ones  
where the pictures held the colours breaking

the rainbow bubble of words  
above our lullay lullay the lilacs on the  
palings of the storybook house scattering

in the cherry sprigged time then we were  
sliding down the slides in pinafores  
and dresses of a strange design ornate

as kaleidoscope shifting

we were matching our pocketbooks to  
the vivid patent leather shine  
with the least ruffle happy

and the apricot sash tied.  
and prayers and prayers with  
the angels in the air for the blue skied

and those who did not lie who merely loved.  
and now you will tell me I or mine  
must shut the book of riddles

and declaim upon the wonders of  
the political. this I will never do  
remembering the lyres breaking

out into blossom on the least picnic pretext  
under a new made sun  
and the tunafish sandwich

eaten at home as if at a royal feast  
down to each last crumb  
and the ice cream lingering, never

melting that fast our strawberry chocolate vanilla  
forevers come to pass  
and painting it all over and over again  
the sherbets the vermillions  
the sun in a vaircoloured sky  
with the watercolor box open to view  
and all the possibilities  
that we knew  
the pinks and greens of the watermelon time  
the orange rind the cupboard of the  
damson plum and rhyme  
we will not barter now or anytime;  
we did not then

mary angela douglas 1 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Song To Peripheral Saints

no one missed you there

though you left such a vivid thumbprint on the doorposts

so that angels passed over

and turned your mind inside out

emptying out all starlight in the wounding conversations

that followed. your shadows in cerise.

no one missed you. the Party went on

in silly hats and streamers on the lawn

Polichinelle, on the piano.

and the rose dawn starting up

you drift away like clouds parting from clouds

a ghost at the apex of your earthly day

and murmur goldenly to God

and carry on.

since life has come to be this way.

you are not wrong though a thousand talkers talking through

the leaves of all the ancient trees as Frost once noted on the

breeze are not enough

will never be enough

to cancel out from divine memory

the way you have come. wing tipped flame to flame

or remove you from His Name.

mary angela douglas 20 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Sour Puss Press; Give It A Rest Or Minimalism Was Ever A Dead Doornail

it's impossible, on reflection, ever to say

clearly enough merrily enough

how glad I am never to have been

featured by Sour Puss Press

which, if I were rich enough to buy it

would immediately be renamed by me

Lemon Tree Press. Then, Lemon Meringue.

There. Doesn't that sound better?

I imagine jawbreakers of the Christmas variety

lemon, lime, tangerine

the kind that last all day

the way a good poem should.

a good poem.

You know. The old neighborhood

with the lilacs over the fence.

don't wince.

It makes you feel good

when you read it, You need it.

or transported on a Christmas train.

Lord, they hate my Christmas train poetry.

Choo choo, I say

I'm coming through

with tinsel askew

and holly berries.

Make way.

Or getrun over by angels

chortling in bumper cars.

Haha. I don't care who you are.

I don't want to wear a black beret

a pencil skirt you can't even walk in.

and, oh dear, a turtleneck. industrial grey grey grey

I want to smile.

I can't help it. I can't keep it down.

my face is going to spill

like pink lady apples

all over town.

right in two

all creamery butter too

I fully intend to be

because I write with glee. wjth a quintillion adjectives.

scritch scratch.

you're not crossing out that.

not even for a prize,

your snazziest one with

a lifetime income

in pink bullion.

all heck with it, who cares.

about your market shares.

pushcart. smushcart.

and though it isn't politically wise

I'm so darn happy to be alive

singing the bluebirds out of the trees

making lemonade.

sugary as all get out.

swinging on a porch swing

in a rosy gown

with feet that don't touch the ground.

cloud bound. gold dust or bust

metaphor metaphor metaphor

image image image

frosting frosting frosting

extra icing on the side

multisequined for the bride.

ice cream sprinkles too.

on every poem

I bake for you.

mary angela douglas 26 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Space Quest, Long Ago Summer

we will do our homework on the moon,  
we promised we would, that we'd be good  
even without summer school

and drink Tang while spinning upwards  
in our pineapple upside down cakewalk;  
our green and blue hula hoops, respectively;

three scoops of strawberry, chocolate and vanilla are  
requisite in the picture books but in real  
life, it's spumoni we cry for every time!

or peppermint ice cream candy crunching pink;  
and sliding on the slip and slide is cool, oh very cool.  
do you think we can stay up late and watch

the Twilight Zone when we're grown?  
and will we wear formals, satiny and the  
colours of rare orchids and leave home?

or can we still be who we are  
and read all summer;  
swinging on the grass green swings in the yard

up to the Big Dipper;  
noting the neon orange nasturtiums  
cheering us on near the dog with the floppy ears

so very far below us then,  
barking excitedly in silvery echoes  
of our Let's Pretend.

mary angela douglas 29 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Speaking English

courting the fair lost wonder of the skies  
the ghosts of English poets stood out in the rain  
wondering what happened  
to the world edged all around in gold;

edged all around in gold,  
who bartered what for what  
and keyed it all down  
so softly, by degrees, in the pearl smudged day

we hardly noticed when the Word  
left glistening, alone  
as though it had never been  
spoken into green.

let the fairy ferns bend down their fronds through  
these wrecked dells, now out-of-the-way

and the musk roses sigh in the Borderlands  
that even light dwindles, dividing itself  
into itself and praising nothing.

O eglantine! O mild musk roses blowing...  
brief Tyrian clouds above the foaming cliffs  
were mine, but they swept by my childhood's aching

that denied-not real enough, was said.  
leaving me nothing more to say at school but  
to hobble on, ever-after with the

clipped birds from my hocked fairy tales  
their scissors sawed part-through

I'll never be  
real without them-

who wants to be baked inside a very tasty gingerbread by the witchy experts  
stealing the names that color the soul- this has always been  
oh my little little child.

pretending to grow wiser you'll escape  
even further into the woods of gold and silver embossing-

pure silence gathers stars.

and treasured there you're a better country without bitterness...  
this is the part of the story where you disappear, like a pearl  
in the pearl of mist or cloud still owned by God  
and safe from lies. It shall be so.

till the day you can come back  
with all the light-rescinded years, the hollowed out rinds of suns  
and snows, the wayward sparrows glinting in the shadows not in vogue

Oh God what's singing for  
Or speaking-  
If it isn't this:

to brand on the wasted heart incessant amazement-  
to be leased by God.  
you'll wake to wonder, too, so all- at-once to see  
each drowsing castle in familiar mists of rose:

the small house in the clearing  
brimmed with Christmas lights,  
the bright fields sown  
of the full-throated music, you did not disown-

mary angela douglas

Mary Angela Douglas

# Spectrums In Summers

oh for the taste of red gold, the violet of the plums  
as in first summers the yellow and  
the green spectrums, colours, wavering

rainbows as they run gold dimmed down the chins;  
chilled iced tang of popsicles  
or the slow noon's dish of berries, pears; of apples

in the wooden fruit bowl, the banana yellow curving over it  
like a daylit moon, a quarter-one paired with the  
cheering oranges, tangerines, tangelos, what do you know

it's nectarine singing a solo blushing like sunsets  
behind familiar trees

it's lemon please the candy that's honeysucked-  
sucked slowly, milk malted or the  
raspberry chews; the candy roll palette you choose to

carry in your pocket as sweet against the sour world  
and you understand in this, your fairy tale hour

in this world cherry equals red and lime the green  
the sweet equations seem as if they could be  
no other way and how clear it all is like pineapple yellows

translucent jellos generously whipped creamed

that you must run when the ice cream bells  
summon like Christmas chimes in deep  
midsummer with Grandfather's dime and

will it be fudgesickle this time, or the blueberry?  
thin crusts of chocolate over the ice cream bars?  
and pale pink spells flecked strawberry ice cream scooped  
or else cake roses duly noted

and it all spells birthday, birthday it's your birthday  
the sticky angels sing



forever from now on and you may dress in flower colours;  
you may in every day weather the May queens sing  
because you know, you love these things!

mary angela douglas 10 july 2015; 10 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Spelling

we learned letters so that we could spell  
and loved the spelling bees  
thinking we were the flowers spelling

honey, there in the classroom sunlight  
for a little while that seemed eternity  
breathing the colours of words, the vowels

the constantly friendly consonants  
who loved us.

the gold starred feeling too  
of spelling the list, all the way through  
and no mistakes

and matching the cake word to its picture  
in a kid dictionary what pink what custardly content  
candle by candle lent in state textbooks, owned before

until you can see it, say it, write it perfectly.  
that came later. how huge our pencils were  
so that they could be firmly grasped

in writing laboriously on pale blue  
highways of lines that made me think  
every time of summer lessons with

Grandmother, early music theory  
the only kind I could understand  
how forming the treble clef especially

seemed such a victory  
and singing the alphabet song  
and spooning alphabet soup

seemed mystically, naturally linked.  
later I thought so long learning of Helen Keller  
from a school fair paperback of her life

spelling water, and feeling the water run blindly  
over her hands  
and I thought the water of language

the language of water  
and understood alone in the wood of my thoughts then  
by the honeysuckle

what all spelling was for.

mary angela douglas 9 february 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Spelling The Things That Drift Away

spelling the things that drift away  
I learned that the  
leaves were leaving; there's

iris cold, and then,  
the apricot swish of trees  
disbanded in a sudden wind

and over again  
is the nursery tune  
with it's jack-in the box surprise

to the nerves  
though it's only you  
turning the crank

of a summer afternoon  
in watermelon pinks  
wondering with your sister:

what will become  
of our star census  
from the backyard or our

tiny metal kitchenette's  
red gingham curtains painted on  
showcasing the window's outdoor scene?

(charm subset of The Yard  
our Grandfather mows)  
when we are really far from here

and the corner snows  
of the showering azaleas  
and Christmas lights big as tulip bulbs;

you'd be leaning on a folkloric moon  
that won't hold up the sky or  
longing for the jeweled acoustics

of a song bright angels withheld from you;  
oh it seems that way to you now.  
we're etching the scratch art sky

thick with colours from  
all you dreamed of - then  
you were

watching the pasteled wax dripped down  
Forever and over the bottle green  
so candy thick as if it were

all your birthdays at the same time,  
in the pizzeria.  
the sparklers, sprinklers, neon nectars fizzing out...

kaleidoscope meshing  
this late in the day, they say-  
the angels at rest in you

mary angela douglas 4 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Spelling Your Name In Stones

spelling your name in stones  
they turn aside to conjure over  
what's next on some pretext

and you think, blinking back small tears  
maybe the stars are stone

and when they fall we all we all  
will be the brides of silence  
abiding under the Shadow

or in the school yard  
praying hard  
by the evening swings awaiting the

punishment of mimicry  
in a dress of cardinal red  
so all can see at recess

and tell later, tell and tell  
what was said

but the heart has wings  
and the green trees have  
the winds

and they are rustling then  
though they are planted firm  
as if they had angels in their boughs

instead of only birds  
and though it may turn out

that you cannot avert your face from it  
when the hailstorms hail  
somewhere there is a grace in it

though you feel terribly alone each time  
beyond the chimes of angels

when they spell your name in stones

mary angela douglas 11 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Spring At The Academy, And In A Floor Length Gown

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
And the highwayman came riding—

from The Highwayman, Alfred Noyes

from the dais the tears drop slowly if at all  
think multitudes and in their party dress at  
home watching the Awards

how nervous the shimmering ones appear  
at the gathering year after year under the sequined  
chiffoned revolving sphere is a world a world

within a world it's not projected anymore and the  
click of the threaded reel to reel isn't what I feel  
it's no circus balloon no cotton candied sun that's

setting on a blank canvas hit and run the moon in clown face  
oh you exaggerate I'm sure but what you feel  
is pure and wafts like the scent of heavy flowers

in the garden heavy with dreams with the scent of  
violet rains are we washed clean, not yet there's  
someone, I forget, Someone-

I didn't mention in my speech, accepting everything  
but the role of myself and we watch movies, movies,  
movies thinking they know something we don't, maybe

it's time to leave the camera alone for awhile, the phone, the  
contract talks, the moon floats ghostly galleon clouds tomorrow's another day I  
want to say no few words at all but something's in the

way of the viewers viewing  
God's in His castle weeping weeping weeping  
they have stripped my Spring away, the ground is covered

with blossoms everywhere you walk, but



you never see them

mary angela douglas 14 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Square Dance Dress In Pink At 12 Years Ago

square dance skirt in heavy pink cotton  
embroidered in a darker pink's small  
rosebuds and a scarf of the same material

around the neck, setting off a peasant blouse.  
this was a costume my Grandmother had made  
for me for a school play, a dance, a rondo;

picking out the fabric and pattern herself

more beautiful than skies on days when the  
skies seem stained with strawberries and  
I feel this valentine down to each subtle ruffle

on display in its tissue lined box  
(as if it were yesterday)  
and cannot say anything, being

so overcome, marveling

at the threads of love that will sustain me  
till Kingdom Come, till  
I begin to buy all my clothes at Goodwill, if ever

and eat tuna fish spaghetti regularly.

or when on sidewalks as I pass  
in an ancient winter jacket I feel  
the glances of the more than luxurious

who cannot discourage me

because of that day, heart beating fast  
to dance at the school assembly  
my Grandmother gave me

a square dance dress  
even Royalty couldn't surpass.  
not even in the aftermath

with their high High teas

when my Grandmother and I  
sat and talked and shot the breeze  
drinking our warm cokes in

the gymnasium on folding chairs till  
little stars came out to meet us  
stenciled on the school room windows

and it was time to go home.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# St. Francis All Alone Before The Canticles

I sought the consolation of the world

and found it brick-bat hard

and God said: by whom shall I comfort thee

by the little stars I said by the brooks from

rivers fed by the birds in exorbitant song

by all of these

and on my knees I cried.

knowing my lot was to be the Comforter,

and not the comforted.

mary angela douglas 30 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# St. Cecilia On Her Way At Christmas And Always

[to Sharon F. Douglas thinking of her at an early piano]

you will eat spumoni from a crystal dish  
or pick out favorites from your Grandmother's candies  
musical repertoire repertoire you sang

so happy home from college  
in your forte  
I have left these arias here

and November clouds scudding snow  
and all I know of the wind.  
could fill a thimble smiled

my sister in her musical way  
it blows the colours down  
like God's own kites and

sparkles in our doorways  
making them Christmas  
every day

I cried into my handkerchief  
embroidered with the letter 'A'  
it's for angels, anyway,

the golden apples watched over by night  
by night the angels sang in apricot concert  
in the diffident night and we said

Jesus is not dead he lives in us  
whenever we sing though everyone  
looks at us and thinks we

can't know anything anything at all  
about music.

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# St. Francis Sowed His Bluebirds

to Professor Louis Markos in gratitude for  
his work in redeeming literature

St. Francis sowed his bluebirds  
in the Sky  
when the lemon wind was never

far away and all these fables  
I have held to my heart  
as flowers freshly gathered.

now the small doves coo  
at Light's own window  
and the lavender frescoed

moments all pass by  
in every green-graced field  
I once believed in-

but I am an hourglass in His hand  
I am a bluebird in the Sky  
St. Francis,

on the lemon wind-

mary angela douglas 6 october 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Stars Have Flown Over Us And Birds

stars have flown over us and birds;  
stray angels and the unseen worlds  
while we stay here:

stargazers, seldom on our way.  
through the lens of Time we see  
oh we intuit, God.

through raindrops, clouds dissolving;  
through leaves, the green winds rustling;  
pooled in dreams a deeper blue

than blue, the clearest waters  
coming true; we live awash  
in dreams but not in schools

where we are taught  
to measure everything by one rule:  
what does it profit.

and that singing without that is

for fools.

Mary Angela Douglas 2 August 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Stars Melted In Heaven When A Child Looked Up

'...and children's faces looking up/holding wonder like a cup...'  
-Sara Teasdale ('Life Has Loveliness To Sell')

stars melted in heaven when a child looked up  
and this was the reason for so many astronomical events  
the astronomers scratched their heads over

simply put: a child looked up  
and almost sang a song to them  
the stars melted like waxy crayons

all over the place  
so that the sky was coated in many colours  
and dreamed and dreamed itself

too close to earth.

mary angela douglas 17 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Starting A Flower Garden In Your Room

starting a flower garden in your room  
you begin to water the walls then the rains come in  
to help you, small leaves grow

tomatoes glow a little surprised to be there  
have some salad! pluck a rose.  
there's more where that came from

how soft the petaled carpet feels beneath your feet  
and perfumed sleep and now the winds blow through  
and now the ceiling's blue and clearing

the small birds sing near the radiator  
and the newborn cherries.  
and you no longer get groceries

of a Saturday.

mary angela douglas 4 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Starting Gate Redux

what if we thought of ourselves at the start of the race

not in the last hour

what if we dreamed ourselves into the buds

not yet the flowers

seems like a trick of the mind a mind at play

some may say. and turn away.

I think that it might work

to tell the mind there's so much more

for you to find on earth

to see and to be

to find your place in the mystery ever shifting

ever gathering stardust in the whirlwinds.

let's try. not to rust.

or turn too early into dust.

to find ourselves again

lost in the morning skies.

mary angela douglas 17 april 2020; rev.16 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Station Break For The Guardian Angels

Mary Angela Douglas

8 mins ·

STATION BREAK FOR THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

maybe you didn't see us  
spectacularly by your side  
in the iffy classrooms

but we were there  
pulling answers out of the air  
or catching you at Christmas, on the church stairs

so that you never fell  
though you know you should have  
and paused for a moment

trying to figure out, why not?  
why didn't it happen.  
your shoelace forever untied

we never tired of making miracles  
out of that.  
and it was us in summer

swirling the rainbows in the  
watercolor glass each time  
you dipped your brush

and when you swallowed the Mercury dime  
it had to be us in the crystal windchimes  
recommending with the doctor:

cheese. cheese is the remedy.  
and when you scuffed your knee  
there was a baby wind, remember?

cooling for every scratch while  
at each latched door  
we whispered

that's not the golden one  
be on your way,  
child of clay

marked with an inward fire  
you're in your latter day and still aspire  
we like you for that

and we're still here  
adjusting the rose on your sunhat  
knocking fear out of the park

and with our sparkly sparklers  
dished up strawberry ice creams,  
secretly and silverly

cataloguing your dreams.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Stay But Don't Stay

I will stay but I will not stay  
she thought to herself in the fairy tale  
bower, in the dreaded tower

little by little I will withdraw my soul  
like the waves on waters.  
and the waves go out the picnickers

feel no qualm  
that there is anything wrong

and the sun is shining all about  
like the nursery song said  
and on the waves but do the

same waves return?  
or it something else, instead?  
no I said spinning the moon into deeper gold.

no and no.

they stay but they do not stay, the waves;  
so it is with my soul  
and winter, when it comes.

I will sing and sing the sun into shadow  
the shadow into gloom.  
I will stay but I will not stay

and they will not know the difference.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Stepping Onto The Last Continent

stepping onto the last continent  
where the small waves break over it  
and you said to yourself is this a dream

and are we drifting  
the silver ships shift out  
the sails disappear

the former years with them  
now we are here and yet  
it all dissolves and

how can you solve it  
by yourself without  
the help of God

and you are drifting  
and you cannot say in sequins  
what are the words in this language

for going away  
there is nowhere else to go  
how close the stars come down

as if you were among them  
and there was only ever the skies.

mary angela douglas 4 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Still Dreaming It All Up

how grown up we felt at our small desks  
reading The Weekly Reader hot off the press  
take one and pass it back

(with color illustrations, graphs)

the childsize news in brief;  
the smell of newsprint like a kind of faith.  
even if we weren't the hall monitors

the sugar plums in the play  
we still had our allowance  
for the book fairs in late may

like a renaissance on parade

so they seem to me, looking back  
a lavish pagentry  
or later ordering from the summer magazines

four paperbacks for a dollar choose carefully  
like holiday candy sight unseen  
but with thrilling pint sized blurbs

will you have orange, or raspberry creams?

imagine this adventure under leafy trees...  
the high seas, the treasure kidnapped  
Jane Eyre, when the lightning struck the oak

or rainsoaked on the road to who knows what...

while sipping lemonade or wearing your plastic shades  
with rhinestones purchased at the five and dime.  
could later riches ever measure up in Time

I would have thought had I been cognizant  
in percale at the jr. high graduation  
gardenias in my hair.

in a dress of cutwork percale  
still dreaming it all up.

mary angela douglas 21 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still Imbued With The Living Rose

still imbued with the living rose-  
still alive in the shearing wind-

what is broken will not be mended

what is mended will break again-

still imbued with the living rose.  
far from all glacial languages-

mary angela douglas april 2001

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still In The Present Tense I Wander Through Old Rooms

still in the present tense I wander through old rooms  
discarding what I cannot use keeping the silver buttons  
the embroidered shoes

the pack of notebook paper from another century.  
it isn't winter here or spring or fall  
it isn't anything at all:

a terminal filled with light  
where I'll remain a little while longer  
waiting for a bus a train

like you do in dreams

and you get on  
if they let you  
without knowing where

or even caring.  
I care. I say somehow deeper down  
though never bonding with the

town I'm in now and feeling it is the terminal  
in the end filling up with fog on  
any pretext.

soon I will recover from the State I'm in  
the geography that doesn't make sense  
and put the rooms to right

flick on the rose pink nightlights  
absentmindedly chew the gold doubloon wrapped  
chocolates gone too soon

the cherry vanilla stash consumed  
the ashes swept the coach arrives  
gilded with a new sunrise

and I am going there.

mary angela douglas 16 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still In The Storm He Abides

Isaiah 43: 2

I stood still when the Wave went over  
but You were even stiller.

I cannot hold onto the clouds I cried

when the skies lowered  
but You said deep inside,  
you will.

now the sea is glass.  
all this and more has come to pass  
beyond what anyone bargained for.

Yet You remain.  
the clouds, and rain.  
and we could all be washed overboard

again  
with or without our friends  
we know we know

we remember You.  
You flow under the waters too.

mary angela douglas 1 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still On The Map Of The World

still on the map of the world  
or floating off the side  
of sidereal enchantments

blooming on the tides  
o my ship of comfits, of the gold wrapped doubloons  
of the Christmas counting backwards

and the ancient runes.  
o fir tree of the magnitudes  
I am holding out

for the fireworks in the evenings  
of the banisheddoubts  
and the red gold shouts

of the angels in marine  
and the green blue fishing out  
architectures of our dreams

and the hull made out of rubies  
and the mast of opaled light  
and the journey undertaken

and the Magi's flight  
is returning and returning  
in a single teardrop life

that refracts the weeping rainbows  
and the ships gone down at night.

mary angela douglas 8 november 2018; rev.30 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still Singing

STILL SINGING

dear Christ I do not ask superfluous mansions

or the gifts of State

I will wait for you in hovels

or even at the gate, with no roof ever.

only do not sever the heart I kept for You.

what can I do knowing the longitude and latitude

of all ships as they drift.

for me the midnight shift

the candle at its wick

You alone are Light.

I do not need emergency supplies.

or to be otherwise.

or to be assured You will endure.

only surprise me with Your green

in every april seen, Spring at the door

even if I through no window look.

or turn to see in indigent liberty

only one blossom left in a desolate field,



to be the one left

still I will honor You

in the falling of the dew

in the bird with one wing reft

still singing.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2019

Crystal Towers Housing Development (under disposition)

Winston Salem, NC

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still To Be Dreaming

once in summer's sandals to be shod  
never to live then any other way  
not to nod off, still to be dreaming

anywhere, nascent incipient singing through Yeats I am  
the rose of the world by the summer gate blooming  
then all we wanted was our share of dark cherry lollipops

day to day and Mama's stories and to play or  
suddenly, to find fluttering to the floor  
from some old fashioned book she once adored

mapped on brown paper  
the way the Princess took  
from the castle.

draw the drawbridge in  
the winter is coming  
we heard at the matinees

the ones we made up, evading all homework  
the winter of centuries delayed  
and the map and the castle crumble away

dark cherries, cobblers butter rich  
the green gate swings no more  
you're in the ditch evading storms

you say whenever you say anything these days.  
in sequined Dissolve! the fading scenes fade  
and the chamomille lawns

the games of croquet  
the dairy maids singing in the jeweled grass  
when something Irish came to pass

I know we lived this once  
it's not too late

still to be dreaming

still self taught in a visionary way  
to be caught up in to the very end in this,  
the lace of the day

mary angela douglas 30 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still, The Watcher

all the words I've ever read  
all the music that I've heard  
lodges in my soul forever  
blue jay feather mocking bird.  
small steps taken in the sunlight  
by the guardian trees at home  
I still keep though home has vanished  
I am my own Rosetta stone.  
rings of trees, light caught in amber  
remnants of the honeycombed  
stowed inside in winter weather  
kept my failing heart, alone.  
snow that fell in flower cups  
frost that fell before their time  
blossom still like starlight in me  
gold and silver in my rhyme.  
asking nothing fame nor fortune  
just to walk beneath the stars  
still I watch and still the Watcher  
watches over me and mine.

mary angela douglas 19 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Still. On The Map Of The World

still on the map of the world  
or floating off the side  
of sidereal wonderments

illuminated on the tides  
o my ship of comfits of the gold wrapped doubloons  
of the Christmas counting backwards

and the ancient runes  
o fir tree of the magnitudes  
I am holding out

for the rifling through the evenings  
of the exiled doubts  
and the red gold shouts

of the angels in marine

and the green blue fishing out  
architectures of our dreams  
and the hull made out of rubies

and the mast of opaled light  
and the journey undertaken  
and the Magi's flight

is returning and returning  
in a single teardrop life  
that refracts the weeping rainbows

and the ships gone down at night.

mary angela douglas 8 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Stone Gardens

I have been where people turn to stone

dissolving into landscapes of their own

then called a gipsy I moved out

or I was thrown.

you know, it doesnt matter either way.

light comes back another day.

you look at the stars

as others did before you

knowing there is something else

if only you could find it in some book on the shelf.

no neighborhood feels familiar

countries keep changing borders

there is law and order

whatever that means.

occasionally the screen is lifted

from the Great Oz.

gold is sifted.

there's a pause

and you drink your tea

reading the signs.

and sigh, Thy Will,

not mine.

knowing the saints are looking on.

whatever happens

to right or wrong.

you only wanted to drift among the flowers

but all you see is the drive toward power.

the ones weeping in its wake.

whom God cannot forsake.

mary angela douglas 29 june 2019



Mary Angela Douglas

# Stone Upon Stone And Then, The Rose Windows

edicts of kings or councils of clerics

no wonder I looked out the classroom window

and thought of Hans Andersen instead

lining up his tin soldiers for marginal wars

and illusory dead.

stone upon stone and then, the rose windows

and coming home where it is always Christmas

the fir tree highly decorative and not cast out.

or I am looking on a world of glass not doubt

after the ice storms and everything is shining

and the Snow Queen will not last

the puzzle will be solved, the puzzle being Love,

Divine love...the Dove high flown from the Ark the

deep bells rung out from the Dark the necklaces of stars all

candlelit in every colour...fantastical, the babies coo

and clap! in the morning dew, shutters flung open

the posies in the window box will dance

once again the dreamy narrator will soothe:

the hard things were past.

it was summer, it was glorious summer

for all of them, at last.

mary angela douglas 10 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Stranded

so that evasive beauty would not leave us behind  
counting the game piece coins they gave to us for lousy compensation  
so that each would become a separate nation, country

in the soul's inner choirs, free  
we have spent everything to the last penny  
remembering these:

those who as Dickinson said died either for beauty or truth  
it being one sum, or lit the lamp for the others to come later  
leading the knight to falter on his way, to stumble but then to see:

those who died of grief without beholding the Grail  
who could not prevail where he steps now, with ease  
or those who pondered the moon, having no ladders then,

only yearning, leave.  
it comes down to this in a world of commerce. sin  
that goes on and on tearing us from home

leaving us stranded

either you stop and listen for the song of ages  
or you live abandoned and beauty flees  
and what was given you fades, and then the flame goes out

not knowing its own name  
still less, the lanes of God.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Strange Clouds Over Capetown

[to CNN for a beautiful headline]

strange clouds over Cape Town the headline read;  
and Christmas lights too early over Los Angeles  
and it seemed to me the news had become blissful

instead of dire as if they had just run out of disasters  
and turned to cloud journalism instead.  
or else, certain poets had infiltrated the news feeds

of the world so that the news from now on would  
be: POETRY POETRY POETRY on all the marquees  
or allusions to it; or perhaps the ghosts of poets

are the ghosts in the machine or is it angels, skywriting?  
however it may be I am so glad I got to make  
without being in the way on a beautiful sci fi day

a poem with the mystical title:  
Strange Clouds Over Cape Town...

mary angela douglas 9 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Strawberry Quartz, Home For A Day

oh mama come back I just found out today  
there's a stone called strawberry quartz  
and we'll eat strawberries and cream to celebrate

or watch the creeks turn the colour of moonstone  
listen to the creak of the green porch swing in the breeze  
or stay inside and read

old magazines, chivalric novels

while the rains pour  
into the gardens we could have owned  
if flowers could be.

flowers could be this instant  
floating down like their own parachutes  
from the mimosa trees in the front yard

and we too without trying too hard  
could be dressed in similar pinks and greens  
admiring the strawberry quartz mise en scene

or cutting out valentine schemes with pearlized scissors  
from left over construction paper of a rose rose red,  
paper lace doilies.

I have said  
a lot in the intervening years.  
just for your seashell ears

and questions too semi sparkling  
I've saved up...with the bone china  
and vending machine cakes, delectable!

just for this afternoon

for instance, I'd like to know  
if it's not too soon,

is Heaven built with semi precious stones  
on lesser avenues?  
here's strawberry quartz for you.

take it back in your transparent pockets

and dessert too.  
I'll go to the store  
for pink divinity...

the courts of Heaven will wait for you.

mary angela douglas april 7 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sublime Rhyme With Three Scoops Of Dream Cream, Please!

cherry fizzing, ice cream-drizzling-  
chocolate drop? oh, thanks a lot!  
fudgesicle fudgesicle barely a

nickel; bread and butter pickle,  
have another? asked my Grandmother  
marshmallow fluff fluff fluff

spread with honey on a  
crust crust crust of  
bakery flakery...

that's what I said (and, it's a word now)

oh how could you show-off  
when we're supposed to be  
supposed to be good.

yum. beef stroganoff  
with baby pearl onions...

have you had enough?  
cordially, she asked, while  
passing the cordial cherries

for supper.(we had a light lunch)

on shoestring potatoes o  
crunch of crunch.

shall we get her  
candy in the big red box  
or milk luscious bubble bath in the

real milk bottle with the lavender ribbon...  
you got to be kiddin'! ! !  
oh orange peel lolly and jam glad dollies



why would you dawdle? when candy's so bella  
well what would you do oh Cinderella  
how would you plan it if it were you

out picking presents for your Grand who's  
sure to ask if we want some too!

mary angela douglas 16 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sublimities (To Harold Bloom)

SUBLIMITIES

For Harold Bloom d. October 14 2019

sublimities of the pearl encrusted tales

mermaid like, the foam on the waves

of my disappearing, reappearing

fishtailed soul

and of the Leviathan

on the horizon of the page

the underwater of the words

murmuring almost the music of shade

the shade where the baby played

in the afternoon and was told stories

wynken and blynken the map of dreamings

the off the edge of consciousness sailing

to wake to the light spinning mobile

above the magic crib

pen nibs at New Year

water color sets and painting

sunsets and the dawns rosegold

we will never grow old we will

read the stars as if they were Braille  
time will fail us reading this yet God cannot  
help but lead us in pastures of the  
fairy chronicles the beginning not the end  
there is no end  
in happy ever after.  
in the evergreen understandings  
the snowy covenants  
up all night  
resilient and bright  
imagination's candle and  
sounding it all out till daylight till  
the first lovely sentence of my starry soul.  
mary angela douglas 23 october 2019  
Mary Angela Douglas

# Such Are The Benedictions

such are the benedictions of the bright and broken shore  
when you are leaving  
that if you stopped the music

to implore, oh, should I stay?  
there'd be no answer.  
they turned to the wall that day

not to face you. the green walls.  
the curtains drawn: wine roses on cream.  
you want to step back in time as if in dreams.

this is possible in daylight. is this possible?  
for just that moment but it slips away  
the piers vanish. the small dog in the yard.

where in the mists can I find them  
you'll wonder like everyone human before you

then you learn to say: until their alphabets fade.  
and you earn the silence you've been given;  
dropping the keys on the ocean floor,

the letters started and the half-life of the stars.  
sorting the grains of truth from the pottage of lies and  
noting the fleur de lis flowers shade the lamps

blossom by blossom in the same hours,  
these trembling skies.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2015; 9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Suffusing My Heart In Sunrise

suffusing my heart in sunrise  
colors in rosepetaled  
singing, in ardor of

arbors unabated birdsong  
like small stereoscopic  
waterfalls of

feeling from a distance,  
intuitions incarnadine:  
impanel, petal on petal the

rose of my soul

mary angela douglas 9 may 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# Suitcase

old paperbacks from school.  
a golden sprig from a cotillion  
where you fled.

Rose Red.  
no lipstick.  
a bunch of paper violets

not for a bride.  
and silver ribbon tied beside  
slippers for beginning in ballet.

all you know in a thimble.  
stray clouds shadowing snow.  
the last of the chocolate cherries.

a dress, for all occasions, pink,  
with butterfly sleeves

or for none, with a little sweater.  
a juliet cap of stars. the scent  
of trees in summer de,

sweet tea in a jar. cheese crackers.  
a program from a play; train tickets  
to who you are.

or may be.  
Someday.

mary angela douglas 6 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Summer Camp In Zinnia Yellow Or Orange With A Splash Of Fuschia Just Like In Our Backyard

here's a picture

in orange organza drinking my orangina  
in an orange grove it could have been that way  
in a garish color ad in National Geographic  
from the 1950s, but really it's just Orange Crush  
at summer camp I'm drinking

from hoarded quarters and it's not even cold.  
and I miss home in Little Rock  
where we only drink colas on ice

and are careful to eat an apple  
a day plus a Hershey bar.  
and we watch Disney's Wonderful  
World of Color fervently with  
my grandparents on Sunday nights-  
believing in living colour extravagantly  
on a black and white tv

tomorrow land's one chocolate square at a time-  
on metal tv tables white and gold  
a feast is spread:  
white bread with butter, chicken pie  
pure salad of lettuce and tomato...

tonight I'm missing the repeat episode  
of the life of Beethoven and think  
of Moonlight Sonata and want to cry.  
I never dreamed the Arkansas  
river was so yellow.

and we hate swimming, my  
sister and I to the point of  
mortal dread. we pray

to get out of it, earnestly, in the woods

behind our cabins the very first night and  
swimming lessons cease!  
it rains for two weeks straight  
at Camp Miramechee, lovely

lovely rain and we work on crafts,  
(much less scary) , star-laden  
nature walks through ferny rain-quenched  
trails when day followed sunburned day and  
we read Little Lulu comic books by moonlight-  
fresh newsprint, block by block  
happy, familiar neighborhood (almost) at last...

and that's how  
I learned that God hears  
what we say.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Summer Music, Fireworks Melting The Ice Cream

it's the colour of ice cream on the curb  
our summer moonlight we've grown fond of  
half in and out of a vanilla dream dreamed

the children.

it's lemon shading on a pale green pear  
and luscious shadows everywhere  
the little dog bit into something bright

that moved when he did.

oh it's a silver confusion happy again,  
a rose instep dancing  
it's no ambiguities murmured God's angels

of a story that knows no end sighed the  
princess and whole nations sighed  
in an ancient cinema

g  
for the light in the flickering castle.  
the fireworks flowering  
overhead

mary angela douglas 3 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Summer Rhapsody In Blue Raspberry Circa 1962

my candied appled angels smile quite stickily  
and - cartoon - bo-ing! -their curls spring out ahead  
of the rose boiled humidity of my hometown remembered.

reading lulu comics frame to frame and drinking orange soda in the rain and  
scooping up my summer books as if they were flowers I'll not rearrange, let them  
spill out of trunks, like looted jewels although I bought them at my school: for 25  
cents apiece.

it's summer rules now. and I pick all the gardenias that I can  
for the green glass vase from my great grandmother.  
oh to live in a gardenia space could anything be cooler in  
this heat.

the garden sprinkler's on and we go barefoot ballet through it  
dispensing with the sun oh now it's twilight painted on the lawn and even the  
purple gnats have come to the party  
where we drink 'fizzies' by moonlight  
from the striped jelly glasses.

mary angela douglas 22 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Summers, At The Beginning

is it ultraviolet on the colour wheel of time  
you asked, checking your Mickey Mouse watch at last  
much farther back than anyone expected;

we'll sort quartz by moonlight every summer  
and wear perfume with autumnal highlights,  
hint of the spiced rose; tangee surprises

from the variety store and glow in the dark all firefly

till goodness snows around us and it must be Christmas  
you said waking up too early, falling out of bed and I laughed  
because you thought the angels singing in the background

of old movies were coming to get you soon.  
but ultraviolet is the colour of the hour, the moon  
when the dew seep into our shoes, our summer costumes

and the clover looks so mysterious you think  
it's going to whirl from the stem when  
we'll have snow flowing upward you smiled

so satisfied with your imagination then.  
and all the days of let's pretend  
stretched out before us, never ending.

mary angela douglas 21 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Sunday Best Words Come Strolling

Sunday best words come strolling  
twirling their parasols.  
inside they are pink-cheeked with excitement

one second before Christmas  
they'll burst from a garden  
rife with mignonette  
crowded with antique roses and with hyacinths

oh we were just in the neighborhood  
coolly they'll insist.  
we thought we'd drop by with dreamy blancmange.  
how large the moon looms in their eyes  
though they pretend otherwise.

but something gives them away.  
a little silver raveling out of a pocket  
a little gold dust on the floor where they  
were standing a little out of the way  
with their velveteen shadows with

wishes suddenly coming true by the bunches.  
or there's an apricot tinge to their sky.  
a cerise valentine offered, shyly.

call me old fashioned. I like them.  
I like them a lot.  
with or without doilies.

resplendent on the Avenue.  
flared out with an extra crinoline or two.  
out racketing the bluebirds and  
it isn't even spring yet.

wearing a peach cummerbund can't you imagine it?  
their pockets stuffed with caramels double wrapped  
in jewel toned foils.  
my best friends in all the world the world

they whirl and whirl so happy on the sidewalk after Church,  
my Sunday best words...

mary angela douglas 15 march 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Swans' Tale Variation

based on the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, The Wild Swans...

I had a myth I followed for awhile  
the nettle weaving, muted tongue  
to save my brothers from the spell of  
once upon turned sour that turned them into  
swans upon the hour in doomed perpetual flight  
with barely a pinpoint haven to alight on  
thus my hands, my heart were scarred  
and all my dreams marred with their infinite cries for release  
who released not me.  
sometimes the road runs out and there's no more walking then  
when all is water  
save with Christ's hand  
over the inundated land we used to know so well.  
mary angela douglas 3 march 2020  
Mary Angela Douglas

# Tabula Rosa

[to my mother and grandmother]

oh I'm the tabula rosa perhaps she sang  
in the light opera she made up as she went along  
dusting shelves with the Queen

for they had fallen upon hard times  
and only ate from the lavender dishes  
on Sundays.

how would it seem to you she trilled  
in her calico dress when she was only twelve  
if I grow up to marry an undertaker and

become an inspiration to him in his work?  
perhaps they laughed when snows curled up  
at the doorstep and the screen door creaked.

I wasn't born yet.  
how could I know about the roses.

Mary Angela Douglas 13 August 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Take My Last Sapphire Wish To Use On

take my last sapphire wish to use on  
your best day.  
I wished to be the light around your face  
that cannot set-

the long wave returning  
not the one that forget-  
the harbor filled above

sea-level dreams.

take my last emerald wish  
to use on your worst day.  
the ocean is infinite for a reason:

it mirrors our hearts

mary angela douglas march 2008

Mary Angela Douglas



# Taken Into Account, Obscurely Dreamed

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-  
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding  
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding...

Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Windhover

taken into account, obscurely dreamed  
I caught this morning's Mourning  
in its gleam

the text of leaving green  
on the milk white skies.  
goodbye to the leaves

was scrawled on the evening wind  
I have seen this before you murmured soft  
and then

you turned to go inside  
and from the turret window, despite the  
upstair's tenants' noise, the sudden slams

a glimmering sped in the breeze

and we could not answer  
was it birds or leaves.

mary angela douglas 30 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Taking A Hammer To The Clouds

Dear everyone, everywhere,

please pray for this Living Russian Poet being treated unfairly in Russia NOW.  
These things should not be in the 'New Russia'

to Yulia Privedyannaya

taking a hammer to the clouds  
they tried to kill the snow  
but the snow fell anyway

as always, more beautiful than ever  
still snow, yet different-

mysterious happiness settled  
over the landscapes of the heart.  
as in other countries

known and unknown.  
you will not be deceived:

no one can alter  
the God-given course of poetry  
through the soul's veins

or immemorial joy  
you are not deceived

believing in poetry, in happiness,  
in, as Pushkin said,  
mysterious inner freedom

cherished and cherished

mary angela douglas 24 february 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Taking Care Of The Long Ago And Never Being A Good Fit At Work

'Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe;  
have it done by half past two.'  
'At half past two? It can't be done! '  
'Then...have it done by half past one, '

(an old, very old, children's rhyme, nursery song I listened to over and over on a yellow plastic record when I was a very little girl and which turned out to be the best job preparation I ever had. (next to the frustrating, timed game 'Go Fish! '))

-----  
they thought I was so negligent then  
in clerical tasks though I always finished  
everything. and fast, with few errors.

you're not quite here they gasped, disconcerted  
devastated the Agency sent me  
to take care of the files a short girl Friday anomalie

who wore peasant dresses, shoes from Payless  
pleasant jewelry not in style.  
send us someone else they'd plead

(after the first 15 minutes  
and I'd made the coffee...)  
on speed dial, they were that stressed.

I never got used to that, I guess  
when they'd intone: oh god, send  
us a real secretary

and once I said with a smile:  
be happy they sent someone human.  
I really did say that

making allowances,  
(I tried my best) .  
concentrating on my typing speed

and doing many little extras.

and thinking, on my happiest days  
of them quite kindly really:  
especially on snow days

when I didn't have to go in.

how could they know  
that I was lent for something  
other than they meant;

that everywhere I went  
I was taking care  
of the long ago and so:

couldn't dress  
like a stewardess;

at home with many ghosts,  
folkloric, worst of all, still free  
no matter what they said to me

and they could say a lot  
in between 8 o'clock in the morning  
and 4; 30 p.m.

I think of them sometimes  
while I'm happy making rhymes and ramen  
and free from all the files, the little wiles

long last!

the blazers and the past.  
and happy now no one ever made me  
dress for success.

when I was sworn to secrecy then  
and couldn't let them in on the secret  
that I was sent to mind the golden things

and learned to multitask with wings,  
taking care of, the long ago.

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tall Tale

finding the door behind the door  
we smiled in the garden  
and were free of the mountain passages

where the roses blew  
the clouds even cloudier than before  
and the skies grew pink from it and

wouldn't ravel and the roads weren't gravel  
they were gold as was foretold in the newspapers  
back east when the pioneers went west

and the cream never curdled and the sun  
never set in the west on the year round strawberries when  
we were dressed in our Sunday best even on Mondays

in bonnets of silk and dresses of polished

poplin, and carried baskets of mignonette  
as if we were valentines when the neighbors stopped  
in for ten layer cakes, fresh coffee from the springs

and gazed at the fields already ploughed  
when wishing was everything  
and helped us rake in the jewels while the

babies danced the highland fling  
and drank from the gourds of amethyst  
our fill and if you believe this

here are hills upon hills  
of yellow diamonds on the wide wide prairie everywhere  
and you don't even have to say your prayers

to find them

mary angela douglas 1 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Taproot

they thought I was blind music  
in my summer cathedrals  
amid the pink and the green

of odd water coloured days  
or was I white rains on  
the crackled pavements

the dissonant flute  
at their epic parades  
with not much to say;

pastel as ice creams  
uncertain as a sigh.  
I was the fern imprinted

on small stones  
who loved cool hollows  
and being alone.

the hollowed out earth  
the coolness,  
the canopy of leaves.

and peach starred fairy stories.  
any breeze  
in between shadows of the pressed flowers;

the mist of small waterfalls for hours

and more than these, the morning glories,  
the rainbows of the semiprecious.  
jewelry lent by God.

.  
you said standing in her dream  
how can she stand at all  
where the moss is slippery

and she might fall into the streams;



who would see her? strange fish,  
a mere ghost on unruled paper.

they turned laughing away at this  
as if they owned the sunshine gold.  
held daisy chain sway.

but I remember those summers,  
that they were indelible.  
my soul piled high with white violets.

mary angela douglas 13 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tasting The Mirrored Skies

beware of those the good book goes

who call sweet water sour

who believe in being dour

God knows I have spent enough time in their company

in inevitable labor in fools errands and for no gold

no peacock plumage procured

so I read poetry as far back as it goes; as it endures:

to find the source waters

and then I dip the gourd of my soul and drink

and am like a child again

tasting the mirrored skies.

mary angela douglas 28 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Teakettle Song To Anna Akhmatova

evening percolates.  
and then, the cream of small stars.  
I'm in my

imaginary cafe  
with one sweet roll left.  
savoring the poem

of yet to be  
in my kitchenette  
where the teakettle frets

and whines  
when I get a line wrong;  
cherry conspirator,

you need polishing!  
but I drift off in dreams, enshrined-  
not owned by anyone,

imagining your steam  
as reverent clouds  
at Easter.

the purples i can't banish.  
this holy Time.

mary angela douglas 29 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tears Like Rains Will Wash Away

tears like rains will wash away  
wash away the stones  
the jagged moments we

bruised our feet on those  
and could not again, then  
fly.

tears like rains will sweep by  
the boats, the little boats that foundered  
on the sea of dreams and you will

weep but it will count as silver to you  
and the coinage under the door to  
the garden where

Alice reposed  
wondering at what, o what  
had she passed through?

tears like dews on the flowers in the painting  
you will find in the corners of your eyes  
and go out into another sunrise

outside the museums where  
all Beauty lies  
before you, crowned with ribbons

of the May.  
and on the pavements  
under the stars

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tears Of Sleeping Birds

de lacrimis Christi

tears of sleeping birds this evening I heard  
from the National Geographic blurb tears of sleeping birds  
on rare occasions...

moths sip the tears of sleeping birds in Brazil.  
do they get their fill I wondered of salt,  
of the disappeared too early

it seemed so fairy tale real, disturbing  
embroideries wrung from a fanciful tree  
miraculously inferred subconsciously

the one gold leafed in an  
unsettling country  
milk and honey dried

where something dear has died  
where coral moths are sought  
and seldom caught sipping the

tears of sleeping birds

what do the birds dream then  
that there is no more sorrow  
in the world?

or the utmost burglary possible  
has been sanctioned

the heart is a lake that rises  
for the small bird fluttering in its sleep  
incapable of the grief necessary

who will deliver me now  
from the fugitive years ahead  
where nothing more can be said

but &quot;the tears of sleeping birds...

shall we quaff a thimblesworth  
for everything on earth for  
what remains in that refrain

that suddenly am I reminded of  
like a safe broken into, with all the codes  
of a trembling name or two

an exquisite residue  
dewdrop poised on a branch  
as if it were song

Nadezhda Mandelstam  
speaking of herself and Akhmatova  
after Osip had gone said,

in those days we had no tears left...  
trembling over a handful of poems

the moths, drinking their tears.  
the moths, drinking their tears.

mary angela douglas 24 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Teletype

my father gathered scripts from the teletype machines

and took us randomly to the paper my sister and I

to hear their mystical clucking to see the press run

to feel the thunder of the afternoon editions or the evening ones.

now Im far from that and so is he. and I think suddenly

what if God sent messages over the teletype what would they be

as in a dream it came to me: the words flashing on an inner sea

with wild lament:

this is what the teletype sent:

I make something beautiful and they trash it. I make something beautiful and  
they trash it. I make something beautiful and they trash it and trash it

and trash it...

Ill make something beautiful...

mary angela douglas 21 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tesserae\*

turning aside from mysterious tesserae  
you wept into a living sky

surviving without  
the murky watchers over  
the heart's too-shadowed tides.

tesserae.  
in the arch of Heaven, well-hidden  
made brigher, more angelical  
who can say how-

illumine all  
these short-circuited ways  
in a tattered script, revealed in dreams,  
it may be...

down a dream green  
corridor of trees you walked on  
almost immune  
in the frosted over

Capital  
somehow shine shine your  
inverse rays through these  
small

sunburst syllables, tesserae,  
invective is not poetry is not  
anything at all and we are suffering

under so many low ceilings.  
my magnificent falls apart-  
who can say why  
from all the sidelong arrows  
through the heart, the professional  
sizing up...  
but I've pulled up my sagging socks



thinking of Vissi d' Arte-  
as sung by Callas.  
even in spring, tesserae,  
the trees on earth  
wept flowers of gold

resembling nothing, if  
not you  
and I am withholding my

last golden turnip from  
the still watery Stone Soup  
required by those unkind;

in subzero basements my  
stoic angels stand  
this  
non-antiphonal silence:

holding fast the tilted mirrors mirroring  
my God my God

mary angela douglas 7 january 2010

\*this poem was inspired by the following passage on mosaics from the  
Encyclopedia Britannica,1983:

'The tilting of tesserae became an art in itself. In 6th-century Byzantine mosaics, there evolved a new technique whereby gold and silver tesserae were set at extremely sharp angles to enhance reflection. By pointing their mirror ends downward in the direction of the onlooker it was possible to secure maximum light effect. In Hagia Sophia at Istanbul, the enormous gold areas in the wall mosaics of the emperor Justinian are set with cubes tilted this way. In one particularly dark corner, the tesserae are not only tilted downward but are also turned slightly sideways to catch the light from a nearby window. A similar technique, based on a high degree of tilting of the gold tesserae in unlit areas, can be observed in the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (c. AD 690) .

Halos set with tilted cubes that bring out the circle of light surrounding the heads of holy figures became common in Byzantine mosaics of the 6th to 7th centuries,

as is seen in the mosaic panels dating from this period in the church of Hagios Demetrios, Thessaloniki. Striking examples of such haloes are also found among mosaics that were put up in Hagia Sophia in Istanbul in the 9th century, above all in a panel with the kneeling emperor (Leo VI?)

Effects such as those described above are unthinkable without the accumulated experience of the craftsman-artist. In the 20th century, mosaic increasingly has become an art divided between the inventor who furnishes the design and the worker who executes it. It may be that the dry character of many modern mosaics can be ascribed to the fact that the artist no longer puts his thumb on every tessera.'

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thank You God For All The Cracker Jack Prizes

thank you God for all the cracker jack prizes  
unexpected dollars in the grass  
the shade of trees on blistering afternoons

the serene tune over the loudspeakers  
that interrupts the tirade  
the unexpected parade

and double rainbows  
somewhere in the world appearing  
even while I am fearing, fearful

for the next day, next hour and cannot sleep  
for thinking what may be without my dower of gold  
and then I see your rose explosions

in the skies behind the trees  
for me? I say in deep surprise  
for me?

and You, answer me in  
shifting it all to peach.

mary angela douglas 5 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# That Angel Knowledge

that angel knowledge Shakespeare said  
knowledge angelical Aquinas bled  
on the frost of his reason  
still, in a brighter season I believe  
what are angels but the green of trees and their breezes  
as we knew them then  
and cloudlike dancing in the summer blue  
and all that I had dreamed of You  
in the first toy alphabet of time  
loving rime, the clime of it still; its inducements  
purpureal and splendid  
what are angels but the breath of storms  
calmed as our fears through years and years  
and the roseate taken to its end  
and found again, the jack=in-the-box surprise of it  
we are children splashing in the fountains  
of rain in the yard, silverly laughing, drenched in stars  
as we were at home and not at Christmas only.  
and wed to words in the story book sighing of the clock  
by which we read, and were read to.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# That Beauty Might Not Fail

to Edna St. Vincnet Millay

that beauty might not fail

perhaps she came, allusively

to stand between the tulip trees

in the early photograph

as if at the border of sound and spirit,

to linger there.

pouring sonnets from a silver pitcher

unerring, into the Golden.

to say as each moment crystallized

how could I hold this

note forever yet

light, , cannot fail

to be memorialized here;

the impassioned soul made real.

beyond scant fear scanned

a construct never to be diminished, scarred

though all we feel on earth though the heart be marred

remains unfinished

it was where we were

mary angela douglas 13 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# That Country

children will turn out with small bouquets  
in their Sunday best  
we will drink rosy punch and be festive

with the dolls  
celebrating all the small  
collecting blue marbles

with their encapsulated clouds  
see, we have the captured the clouds:  
the great expeditionary forces that we are

and we've only been reading a little while  
forming our letters in the snow languages  
bequeathed to us each Christmas

why are you writing this  
say the lost critics not finding their footing  
because of joy I pirouette and say

a Columbine's Columbine

because I like to remember old toys  
and the Golden Age, time ticked off  
with dime store watches

because I live in that country  
and that country only.

mary angela douglas 1 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# That Is The Script They Hand You

that is the script they hand you  
but this is the one you use  
please keep in mind

this distinction whenever you are

gazing over yet another precipice-

watch whose words are streaming from your mouth  
when your crenellated soul is  
so in danger of being

ironed out permanently

(that flag is the color of snow  
raised in a milky sky)  
you can't salute

what you don't see:

be careful

mary angela douglas 20 august 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# That Point In Time When We Were Part Of The Milky Way And Knew It

you will write on highway wide and pale blue lines  
and learn to love the Thorndike-Barnhardt dictionary  
its earnest illustrations;  
its faded turkey red colour  
having been used by another previously  
in the Arkansas School system  
as it was back then.  
learn the Mexican Hat Dance for assembly  
and how to play a child sized popsicle coloured xylophone  
thinking of notes as red and green, with orange thrown in;  
wear dresses picked out by your Grandmother  
sash tied at the back  
in gingham plaids, and glorious pastels  
and float on the playground as if you were a cloud  
hovering near the honeysuckle bushes  
swing on the swings  
and ride the buses with the older children  
carrying their flutophones  
in serious cases.

and jump rope every way you can think of

till the dust flies up

in the early Spring bordering on summers, home:

to be helped with homework, flash cards, the Bard

and on to the evening meal, so many chicken pies

and school nights

under eternal starlight,

in Little Rock.

mary angela douglas july 15 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# That There Should Be Flowers There

the mood of Hamlet is a winter mood-  
without the sun, or only a chilled sun.  
uncertainty. the ghost shifts through the

mists. the kingdom of mists.  
at least I thought so  
for a score of winters.

how odd, then, how unaccountable  
that there should be flowers in that landscape  
of every hue. those she wove in the end, Ophelia,  
abdicating the sweetness of her mind;

unless, they only dreamed it all  
through long midwinters-  
deep as a sleep in the suspended fairytales:  
skipping the Paegents and the Christmases

they could awake to find  
a kingdom honeyed with sunlight  
and all, as before.  
and how, with rue, heart sore  
thinking long on that story,  
I wished that this were true.

mary angela douglas 5 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Aftermath Of Stars

in the aftermath of stars would we  
have twirled like our spinning tops  
in our skirts of pure iridescence

this I leave you to decide  
when sorting out slides of  
family vacations unrealized

and hiding your tiaras in cotton wool  
your sets of amethyst and of  
forgotten jewels

nameless they shall remain.  
would we have twirled like electrons  
frozen in the textbook diagrams

but in the real world it is surmised  
they twirl in the shells of the atom invisibly...  
seashells? your mind wanders

in the chemistry classroom, painted pale green and  
the teacher is not pleased.  
what strange alchemies have these

the elements of dream  
recalled from great distances  
or they seem to be

did we leave sparkles on the trail  
so that we may be found later  
by the King of Light?

mary angela dougals 6 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Angels Discuss A Few Earthly Matters

they vote each other in  
and give each other prizes  
the angels laughed

and shrugged their white-gold shoulders  
what can you do  
they all go to the same parties

in the same party hats while we-

we celebrate in the little avenues;  
the cracks in the sidewalks where  
purple flowers take root

they haven't even named yet.  
but what will we do I cried  
who write, or sing or paint

but can't get through?  
there's nothing lost (they heralded  
in their green satin Christmas voices)

you made from the heart.  
you'd be surprised  
how anything else is dark here and-

and at the surprises in store

for the unimportant on the Earth

mary angela douglas 15 april 2015

Note on the poem: I do not mean to suggest that everyone who is famous or who has won prizes for their art is not creating from their heart but I do mean to say that there are always and there have always been many truly great artists, writers, painters, musicians, sculptors, architects and poets who have achieved neither fame nor riches nor even an audience at all who are known only to God or a very few people and who will not be forgotten in Eternity.

Like my mother said once, only half-joking, that 'Anonymous' sure wrote some good poetry!

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Angels Will Talk Among Themselves

the angels will talk among themselves;  
the angels are not exclusionary.  
it's only that, here on earth

who can speak their language?  
some poets almost hear,  
born with a crystal ear

the snowfalls of their speaking;  
and find without even seeing,  
intuitive to a fault, in a room

with no candles  
the rose gold of the sun behind

the shuttered venetian blind  
and a winter apartment's cloud.  
am I too loud I asked

the roses underground;  
sleeping, am I blind?  
I asked the wind

that I may not find you but  
only the motion of the grass,  
the treetops as you pass

through all this evergreen seeming.  
the wind swept on  
and so does Song

and high above  
Time! Time! the silvered angels sing  
in the coinage of rains and what remains:

the shadows of Poetry  
falling over me

mary angela douglas 5 december 2015



Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ash Tree Is Weeping I Said To My God

who else can I talk to about the clouds

about the reasons saints felt clouded over

though the sun within their heart

still shone from the ikon in the corner

in the Cinderella corner, shards of the golden ash

the ash trees weeps in the picture

and I have bound fast the pictures of your Heart

though they came out dim

dim are their rainbows

not their promise

who can I tell what I have found

in the grey edges of the world dissolving

the borderlands as they used to be called

your light neglected the gold of my soul

gathered not even as trash

and in the gutters of the page

where last my heart bled

the space

the miracle

where multitudes are fed

mary angela douglas 19 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Autobiography Of Small Flowers

children came across them first

pink and starred with dew

and bent down entranced

to see their reticent sparkle

as if they knew they were made

for them

lemon butterflies dart near

it is clear it was clear to me then

this was the playhouse of outdoors

the azure ceiling

the sprigged grass

the trees arching over

a lake of glass

and pine cones scattered

where nothing else mattered.

and then the picture books,

with their may apples.

and clouds would pass

like fleece of angels

time, what was time then.

coming across wild violets

on the walk from school

and the violets understood

who we were too.

in their small dignity enwrapped,

enrapturing

and perfumes.

and everything after the rains

making us silver inside

as if we were made of stars

and we were.

we are.

mary angela douglas 2 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Babies Are Read To From The Encyclopedia Of Orange

it's the orange crayon sun peeling off of the window  
sills of your first summer, lollipop gazing in-  
translucent, the country of tangerine  
you can't yet hold in your hands.

the dress your mother wears  
when she is happy (the flounced peach crepe) -  
the dog in autumnal rays

only a little mystical  
with fluffed out ears.

it's the amber held in your account  
of days and days and days  
and years and years of it  
so honey flooded oh

how could you believe our crooning?  
it's the candied flowers on the cake  
sticky, all over your face. nasturtium!  
only one glory of the Lord

but shining and shining;  
the cream between the layers  
apricot, wondered at  
even without the words

mary angela douglas 8 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Backyard Of The Iris

the backyard of the iris,  
all the stars  
the rakes the green

garden chairs  
are they still there  
we wondered moving on

no longer fitting into  
the pink seersucker dress  
or the lemon striped

the velvet nights at home.

was it a dream that I saw violets  
in the woods near school  
or stood entranced

in an April sun  
conscious of nothing, and no one  
only the breeze through the open screen.

have I wept the years away undreamed  
so that the colours of these fade  
or watercolored, wash away

worn thin?

still I recall the fingerprint instants when:  
thumbprints of blue and red and green  
on glossy paper glowed

more vivid than stained glass or Rose

and distinct angels in all the music drifting  
from my Grandmother's pianos  
past all beauty that is possible...

oh earth, earth, you turned too soon...leaving leaving

the rose beige divan in the living room  
the aqua glaze on the lamp

the apricot sash  
and the afterschool wanded  
afternoon.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Beautiful Dilapidation Of Our Saturdays

amazing beautiful dilapidation were our Saturdays  
back then with their playhouse ramifications  
their peanut butter and banana sandwiches

fixed by our Grandfather  
just for us  
the Queens of Jam

you build the house you will live in later  
when you are young  
for perhaps a long time

yes a playhouse a treehouse of the heart  
and you climb up there with all your dolls  
so that the leaves laugh and they ask

and who are all these people  
have we met yet  
you with your imaginary teas

your long perusal of the rose tinted clouds  
as if you had fallen headfirst  
into a cloud library.

how I miss the pines back then  
and the fresh wind  
and that feeling in your fifteen petticoats

the colors of all roses

as if we were already eternal  
in the beautiful dilapidation of Saturdays  
and no tests given and all chores done

and fun fun fun  
until the fading of the day  
then lullabies then

warm cocoa and the fairy tales all told

and dreams and strawberries with cream all  
put away

and dreams  
that stayed.

mary angela douglas 28 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful Heartbreak

it's the beautiful heartbreak seen from Space

when snow is driven from place to place

as if in exile once again

from the bitter winds that Winter sends

and we are sheep without a fold

or we are ships without a hold

and carry love in vagrant hands

to God our friend through shifting lands

and fall and stumble on the way

as Him who bore the Cross that day

who sees in us though we can't say

His heart live on in smaller ways

thus we draw courage from His well

though all on earth should turn to hell.

mary angela douglas 30 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful Not The Useful

remembering the days we spoke of the beautiful  
not the useful the sky the colour of forget me nots  
how could we forget

it seemed the stars never set  
and we were all edged in light  
and we said, beautiful, beautiful

God was the keeper of dreams.  
then we were not in harness  
sewing impossible seams

on the hook for crooks and crooks  
no longer denizens of the shady nooks  
but finding much comfort in books they spoke

of the beautiful not the useful  
in another world  
light's distances from here

in manifold years and years.

mary angela douglas 3 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful Things Linger

[to Addie Cheatham White my great grandmother  
who always burned the toast; and to my great grandfather (W.R.)  
who claimed he liked it best that way]

the beautiful things linger  
in the sullen air like  
burnt toast with the

remedial honey  
when it's only crumbs  
reminding you of a feast

that was there.

candles flaring slightly,  
uncertainty of the ghost  
wearching out

the childhood hours;  
the districts of flowers  
the beautiful lingers

of what you loved most  
on vacated stairways

spiraling into:  
a clouded house, another hemisphere of  
mists, old lists of things,

that can't be checked off anymore.

go to the store for...  
for what you forgot

you will not  
you have not  
and yet you have

beautiful, the things that linger

everywhere  
costing nothing

filling you up  
at the filling station of dreams...  
you, writing in an old corner

at a pigeon holed desk  
and in a green shade.

mary angela douglas 6 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful Things Not Playing Their Part

the beautiful things have arisen in my heart

they will not be quelled

nor will they play their part

on the incriminating stage

but rise with gold spotted wings

above the trembling

gilding the clouds, greening

the everglades of the stars

staining the ground

with fuschia shadows.

endlessly now.

mary angela douglas 23 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Beautiful World Has Gone We Never Said

the beautiful world has gone we never said to ourselves  
except when we were alone  
and the clouds of cold came out

of our mouths instead of the words  
lined in gold  
at the school bus stops

and in our pale galoshes  
pearl dimmed coats.  
and dimming are the rooms we knew

and the violets strewn

the remnants of our flower chains  
and classroom disdain  
grows stronger.

how will we white with frost  
begin to count the cost  
who have barely begun

counting at all.  
we are small in our cherry velvet  
said the young queen

half in and half out of the fairy wood  
I will, I will be good.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful, Not The Perfect Weather

the beautiful isn't always perfect  
I said to you where you couldn't hear me  
wishing it on the winds in a wildflower field

by the side of roads  
you weren't likely to be on.  
you will straighten your dresser drawers

with every ribbon folded in  
and turn to practice your piano  
while you still can;

the piano near the picture window  
while the pines sigh in the winds  
that come up suddenly

with the thunderstorms  
and Grandmother says,  
get away from the piano

and the windows;  
there's a storm coming in.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beautiful, Not The Useful

THE BEAUTIFUL, NOT THE USEFUL

remembering the days we spoke of the beautiful  
not the useful the sky the colour of forget me nots  
how could we forget

it seemed the stars never set  
and we were all edged in light  
and we said, beautiful, beautiful

God was the keeper of dreams.  
then we were not in harness  
sewing impossible seams

on the hook for crooks and crooks  
no longer denizens of the shady nooks  
but finding much comfort in books they spoke

of the beautiful not the useful  
in another world  
light's distances from here

in manifold years and years.

mary angela douglas 3 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Beauty Of What Is Difficult

for Tony Dagnall

the beauty of what is difficult  
flows far beynd our hands

it bubbles in streams  
where there are no fish

no container can contain it  
you don't even wish for it  
you wouldn't know what to call it  
and wishes must have names  
to be pinned like butterflies  
in a landscape where even  
the clouds can't move

oh but it's not on anyone's map  
or payroll

but descends like some green dream  
dead-center in midwinter  
and you, you were so drear

or like snow when you

thought, 'swelter'  
swift and instantaneous  
though you watched for it by  
your sad windows long

centuries  
unbidden by even

the quickest, dearest knowledge  
eluding the heart to the point of  
despair  
then doubling back the  
difficulty of what is beautiful,  
the poem, among other things, unsaid.

walking backwards into your new  
life you thought with trepidation brighter  
and better than before than

any precarious, quicksilver, late-lamented  
but do not lament or brace  
yourself for really bad news  
it's too diamond-flecked it's marigold undimmed  
this, ever after forever will be

spliced on a reel  
that we're not turning

just this beautiful  
just this difficult

my friend

mary angela douglas 24 july 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Best Book Ever

[in honor of anyone who ever felt they needed just one more book(may this imaginary book you won't find in any bookstore or library meet all the requirements and give you peace) or- maybe you should write the perfect book yourself! ]

in the beginning, golden scriptures, a bird's-eye view of Heaven with crystal ceilings- obscure fairytales  
you haven't read yet, inscribed on pond lilies; fleeting

passages like window snows at Christmas; hand stenciled-  
stained glass window pane dreamed up by shopkeepers  
and so that the soul  
says o!

angel choir illuminations lidded with tissue papers  
not to scar the heart, the heart fluttering the pages for something- something -a  
whiff of new cut grass, perhaps, deep legends, rose-leaved, carved out of ivories

made for a queen in secret,  
with pale green ribbon markers.

antique as rains, the leather; new fielded lavender with matching illustrations like  
a Spring outfit; recipes for huckleberry pies with the corresponding 'picture-  
perfect' and then it's a pop-up pie, oh my!

and it's all coming true  
and here's a slice for you!  
(with ice cold strawberries....)

mary angela douglas 24 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Best Poem Of All Is To Wake In The Sunlight

[to the poet, Shelby Stephenson in honor of another day]

the best poem of all is to wake in the Sunlight  
purple shadows like an arbor on the walls;  
cross hatchings of the little stars now

behind clouds.  
behind clouds that pass as another day will  
burning out again in gold beyond the

trees across the street.  
sometimes half waking from a dream they may  
sway cloudy like the trees of childhood;

for a moment maybe you're back there  
with the kitchen coffee meant for the grownups.  
you, you're still a high chair child yet.

drinking the sunlight in.

mary angela douglas 19 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Best Snow Ever

it's snowing words! you said in your dream, excitedly  
and you were as happy as you  
thought you would be.

it was snowing poetry.  
and then in the orchards,  
flowers. and in the uplands

the cherry cherished kind.  
time out of mind! cried the princesses  
with their new riddles for Christmas.

and this went on for hours.  
and for dream years.  
this blizzard of cream filled

language all about our ears  
and clothing everything in sight  
in light, in Utter light...

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Black Evening Gown With Its Single Rose Found

THE BLACK EVENING GOWN WITH ITS SINGLE ROSE FOUND

I see the black evening gown as a pure object  
with the familiar delight of its off the shoulder rose  
the rose being a true red, not a false one  
and layers of black tulle  
with their occasional sparkles sewn in  
oh, are they jewels? we wonder with delight  
like those sewn into the clouds when they break apart  
like the light of small small stars in the evening  
I think of the play by Maeterlinck  
and this is the costume for night  
Night in an allegory  
with its exquisite red rose  
we point it out in the picture  
see? it's the same one  
its puzzle pieces of little stars  
oh purest of gowns  
then, the costume of sheer poetry  
nightfall and the blue dusk leaving us behind  
at dreamland's dreamy edge

with the scent of violet cologne  
when my mother bends down in the old novel  
we made up for her  
kissing us before she turns to go  
leaving us with realms of Let's Pretend  
to step silkenly  
into a golden carriage.  
the one we knew was coming for her  
at the End.

mary angela douglas 19 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Blind Artist

he thought he invented angels, clouds

the colour green at rest;

the face of God

in a clouded nest;

Orion in a forest pool.

numbered among the holy fools

as if he were the only one

he painted the eclipse...

from great museums one by one

his paintings disappeared

from startling year to year

all retrospectives

honored, as in a mist

and when I think of this I cried

while watercolours all subside

dissolved on film

and in the archives

bright as snows.

the ladders to the skies.

braille, of the secret rose.

mary angela douglas 14 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Blossom That Fell From The Poetry Tree

[for Sara Teasdale]

the blossom that fell from the Poetry Tree  
I cupped in my hands: was it the colour of snow?  
was it pink like promises of roses?

was its centre of a pale, pale green?  
how can I answer you, this far from Spring?  
it was the mysteries.

it was all colours singing;  
it was none; the prism flash;  
the new dress sash of velvet.

it was the flaming out of stars

above my head, work left undone  
the arrow through the heart  
as a school project

edged with paper lace  
the ache of missing God  
under ivoried moonlight

in a city space  
and more than this,

the face of cliffs  
october like, the tang of afternoons and  
the cold of apples

in their winter dream  
the circumvented stream  
reappearing where the ice gives way

the hidden, bidden Word  
I longed to find day after day.  
and say to no one yet.

it was though petal-small,  
the whole of May.  
what flowers streaked in violet rains

leant down to pray  
in winds that have no names.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Blue Flowers Then; The Ballade

I was not thinking of the blue flowers then.

of the effect of moonlight through gauze clouds

of crystals of snow weaving through thin air

and dizzying like small tulle ballerinas.

of the curlicue frost I could make no translations

the moon in love with the white stones marking

the fairy tale way

I couldn't find the words to say for those who swept by

in particoloured dancing

you will think me vague, though I wasn't.

perhaps you were the snow child, you may have smiled.

the Princess who could not smile.

after a while I won't see through the haze

of how things were interpreted then.

I heard blue notes on a radiant piano;

I knew that it was Chopin.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Blue Skied Books Of Andrew Lang

the blue skied books of andrew lang  
I longed for as the colour of rain  
if rain were the colour of violets.

I lost my way in the bookshop  
taking the wrong turn  
but I'm still learning

the ballades of blue china: blue, bluer, bluest  
blest the book of poetry or is it the book  
of chimes, the book of bluebirds

before your lily eyes

will they fly out of it with a tissue  
frontpiece covering the stars the stars  
Andrew Lang, where are you?

are you near the lint covered sapphires  
of the years you left behind a long  
time ago as your stories

may begin so may you, again  
since they're made of may times, many times

if I surmise, correctly; where did  
they put the twilights the last  
time I was in here

if I am permitted to say, to tell you  
that, in this present age  
we need your blue kingdoms

illustrated, and with clouds  
and sighs and mystically  
alive in the extreme, they seem,

even for books of this caliber...  
the bookman says.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Book Of What Is Left

the book of what is left  
you've only just started  
please feel new

let snows descend on you  
refreshing, peppermint ensconced  
and looking glass polished

apple bright  
may you delight  
as if delight were

your first word  
in the New Year  
and you are turning

the leaves of the book  
of what is left  
and the wind rustles the

pages suddenly tinged in green  
and what is left=  
is Everything!

mary angela douglas 24 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Book Tree Forest

well, this is to Ray Bradbury again, and I just can't do anything about that

imagine a forest of book-trees.  
you just go through the woods humming whatever it is  
you were humming and you pick them like wild apples  
and no one says anything.

and the book trees are happy and don't  
grab you around the knees like those horrible trees in  
The Wizard of Oz; in fact, they lop off the books on  
their top branches so you can read them, too, especially

if, like me, you are shorter than the others and used to  
never get to the Easter eggs on the Easter egg hunt  
because you day-dreamed instead of shoving.

well, as I was saying. you are in the book forest and  
it's a perfect day. and picnics are automatically spreading themselves under the  
book trees, especially ice cream and that pink cake you always admired in the  
old Mickey Mouse cartoons; you thought it might even  
taste pure 'pink'.

you sit down and eat your cake and the wind shakes the tree above you and  
down drops the latest installment of ray bradbury's new book he's been working  
on since June of 2012 when he passed away and it's fantastic, so you keep  
reading

and Ray shows up with his wife Margie and they're both so beatific you can't  
believe it but you do because it's happening to you and they invite you  
into their cherry coloured sleigh for a trip to Mars

(just for the evening) and you realize, all of a sudden you're right in the  
middle of the happiest  
alien abduction story of all time!

mary angela douglas 24 june 2014

P.S. where he lives now, Ray has a whole extra block of houses for his story file

ideas. And a new typewriter with flashing Christmas Tree lights that looks like a cathedral organ. Really! (And when it gets to the margin, the typewriter bell goes off like a combo bicycle-ice cream truck bell and that detail proves I was really there.)

And Ray said, not to forget to tell you: Mars tastes exactly like deep-dish cherry pie with a thin buttery crust. Just a minute, I brought some back for you, if I can just remember what I did with it. Uh oh. Crumbs...

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Brocades Spilling Out From Your Bazaars O Lord

for the Irish-Belgian poet, Martin Burke

and to all the poets of Persia and Istanbul of fabled beauty remembered

to the poetry of Armenia as treasured by the poet Osip Mandelstam-

and to anyone's child peering into the rainwater puddle and thinking: there is another country there, made of the mirrored trees and clouds, of...

the brocades spilling out from your Bazaars o Lord  
delight the heart  
and we will drink coffee from golden thimbles

cried your children in disguise, like  
the grown-ups, arguing the finer points  
of Andromeda or the price of bread;

or is the candy sweet enough as  
little, native oranges?  
and will the sesame-sprung door swing wide enough then

so that we may become  
my Lord's own jewelry, forever  
where we could in long content just be

mere sparkles, prised, reveries:  
of your spiraling rainbows, Lord.  
or are the children made of

rosewater and halvah  
and everything that was said  
between starlight and starlight.

well, it must be poetry  
spilling out from your Bazaar  
as turquoise, ribboning, shimmering as

patterns of birdsong  
can ever be

or exotic roses, spun

on a single rubied thread  
said the weavers dreaming  
secretly of whole countries, coteries,

languages missing the words for tears;  
the phrase for,  
forever leaving home

mary angela douglas 16 november 2013

Note on the Poem: Andromeda in the poem is a reference to the galaxy Andromeda and its contradictions and mysteries from the point of view of astronomy and from its high visibility on moonless nights emotionally representing to me at least: one view of Poetry- it is not being used at all as an allusion to the Greek myth of Andromeda etc. which I find, at best, distressing.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Candy Emporiums And Etc.

[again, for Ray Bradbury]

the candy emporiums  
the sleight of hand shadows  
on the wine coloured hills

the amusement park thrills  
when the ferris approaches the moon  
he was gone so soon

wept our imaginations  
but has he hidden stories  
like Easter eggs in the long grasses

for us to find  
over Time  
over the red clay epochs

he was always  
leaving behind?

mary angela douglas 1 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Carol To Crystal Towers, Winston Salem, Christmas,2018

I see the downtown civilizations banned  
by those with tickets in their hands  
to all the glittering soirees

though Im not one to candle gaze  
and eat my bread as best I can  
and buttered well at God's command

and listening to his sweet leaves blow  
around the town where treetops grow  
to touch the turquoise skies they love

to boast of to the up and comers here.  
have no fear in the yellow castle, tower  
set to be banished here at any hour, disposed of.

Be filled with so much Christmas cheer  
for shepherds saw a Lovely Light on Bethlehem's plain  
and they were poor with the sheep so often in the rain

but it is right  
they saw the glory Kings could not.  
and I still know He's not forgot

the King in lowly manger born  
all those still here  
the small and worn the ones they'll move to outer space

to own the glitzy downtown space with one accord.  
He's not ignored  
who sees the smallest sparrow fall

and doesn't like the proud at all.

mary angela douglas 17 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Case For Being Made Flower Girls Instead

if we had been flower girls as we dreamed  
we would have thrown rose petals from the choir loft  
and the brides would not have complained

to our piano teacher Grandmother en masse  
that month of June she played the Wedding March  
for so many on the church organ.

or we would have done small ballets during the prelude  
in imagined waltz length dresses so pink and lavender and cream...  
pinning our corsages on each other

to the glory of Grandmother.

instead they made us the rice girls every time  
and we had heard this was for luck  
for the bride and groom

and surely we wished them that and loads of pluck  
and threw the whole lot, netting and all  
though we were small, full force

thinking the harder we threw, of course!  
the more that luck would ensue.  
and no one else knew at first

why the couple ran so fast  
to the awaiting car  
the one with cans attached

for the perfect match  
a little black and blue  
from all the rice we threw

wholeheartedly that day  
and never again the same way.

mary angela douglas 26 december 2018; rev.17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Child That Waters The Rose Tree With Her Tears

the child that waters the rose tree with her tears  
is standing with her watering can at the gate  
so those who come to see her in the belle epoch painting  
can't know they are a century too late  
to take her small hand by the shrubbery  
when a small cloud comes to hide the radiant sun  
to tell her do not cry oh Cinderella  
a magic garden waits for little ones  
for little ones who cannot understand  
the reasons they are scolded out of hand  
put in their Sunday frocks and given cakes at times  
and other times, forsaken forsaken forsaken

mary angela douglas 25 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Child You Wanted To Be

the child you wanted to be  
makes treehouses out of the blue and green nothing  
abra cadabra right in the middle of math class

is good at weaving clouds and speaking them aloud  
and silver birds with rains at summer camp  
and in-between

learns everything by heart  
fearing nothing dark  
and plays the harp

makes new myths for the constellations  
finds violets in the snows  
(and they're not frozen)

a horse caparisoned of mists

on which you ride through skies  
blue as pinwheels pink as bliss  
and dressed for the occasion

in the lace of days gone by  
you learn not to cry a little less  
every day.

and to pray standing still or  
running full force down the hills at recess  
as though the wind

was rushing through you

mary angela douglas 8 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Childhood Of Marcel Proust

'...on every morrow are we weaving  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth.'  
-Endymion, John Keats

'in the flood of remembrance  
I weep like a child  
for the past.'  
-Piano, D.H. Lawrence

your teacup brims with starry light, rich  
traceries of time - translucent as  
fresh raspberries brought

on a day by M. Swann  
heaped on fairytale plates that chime  
when the scenes shine through

somewhat berry-stained.  
bright doves float through your  
stained glass hands through

opaline rosaries of the rain and

tuned to a strange cessation  
in a dream we almost see  
the glint of (home) :

taking the madeline  
dipped in snow  
and a nectared universe...

your linden angels pause, mid-air  
cognizant of a pale green rustling  
but no one's there

just once to say:  
Good night, dream's child  
you'll sleep the steeple

out of the sky's  
late roses at Combray  
and wonder how

it all turned into  
stalactite colors overnight  
dripping down winter walls

sweet candle-wax and pure  
resurgences of rain.

but the 13th guest arrives  
mid-scene to no  
gold place setting

set with rubies  
and who can still the lime-leafed - unrestrained-  
lamentations of the rain...

your hawthorn branches  
in the dusk  
its storied snowy paths more dear

to lead you out of houses here-  
this suddenly - no longer home.  
but you're still writing when the angels come

the rose-torn chanson of the rain  
scratched out, then blooming once again;  
they wait for you to finish up

fanning themselves with their crystal haloes  
distracted by your clouds of sheer Limoges...

mixing the pink or is it blue  
tinctures of remaining skies  
you turn to ask them

just to stall:  
the peacock or mimosa?  
but God turns down the flaring wick



color by color almost  
regretfully.

the angels turn:

fiery medallions on their sleeves  
like Christmas refractions  
most intensely felt,

a silken step...  
and mama comes  
with a bunch of heliotrope

a rose-bud smile then-

'Marcel! '...

blue violet banks off creamy distances.

prevail in Heaven now  
when childhood fears are hushed  
and the holy candles lit forever

from hawthorn petals in your hands  
you clutched at the last moment,  
afraid to let go.

how would you ever leave them here  
-all your white orchards,  
where Beauty's often not revered

along the via dolorosa  
and breaks the thin importunate glaze  
on a lake of half-way frozen

lies.

and lost and lost  
where mirrors on the  
other side

can't give the keylight back  
of cherished nacre

anymore.

but the phrase in rainbow clarity appears  
through veils and veils of summer rain  
and this gardenia darkness knows that

every time the music's played,  
it rushes on...

mary angela douglas 29-31 may; 1 june 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Children Make Minor Adjustments

the children make minor adjustments

soothing the dolls when they feel frightened themselves

singing small songs to keep the fears at bay

learning what not and finally, what to say;

dreaming of snow.

the children don't know what they don't know

that on the fairy tale path the bread crumbs

will be swallowed whole

by the same small birds that sang to them at home

but they go on alone yet not alone

making their small adjustments as the days tick by

farther and father from the green trees side

oh to the soul that has long been in the city pent

my mother quoted Keats to me in one last lament

or some bright amethyst approximation

knowing I would remember

when she had gone

the nightingale, yes, and the nightingale's song.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Clown In Tears Nor Riding The Rails

[for Emmett Kelly]

I had a dream: Emmett Kelly was sweeping up the light  
and never finishing,  
staying up all night

still losing his job

or the circus in town and then it's all in flames  
and it's raining Emmett Kelly's tears  
for years and years.

give us the sad clown, the children cheer  
the American Pagliacci murmur no critics  
world weary, bleary. you're still here, The Clown of Depths?

hobo, jester skiing the rails of silence  
almost making the train  
bearing the cross again some would say

resembling the clowns of Roualt or I say  
that tale in the fairybook, remember?  
the unaccountable tossing of the golden apples

into the weeping hereafter.  
amid uncomprehending laughter  
sliding down the glass hills.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2018; rev.17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Constancy Of Snow Is Perhaps Invisible

the constancy of snow is perhaps invisible  
as are all things that melt except  
in the child's mind

the child whose pink ice cream  
is always a possibility  
of surprise on any day

or perhaps never  
who can say without a smile  
April is faithless

when every year she comes tripping  
decked all in violets.  
then there are, they say,

invisible, before the wakes  
the kingdoms of tears  
trembling at every brink

the punishments beyond definition  
when beautiful time translates its anguish  
uprooted, no longer the implorable.

beyond which,  
Heaven shines

mary angela douglas 9 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Continent Of The Heart

things that remain:

the recollection of the rain,  
the sun through the screen door.

the exhilaration of snow and more,  
the blue trace of it on the air  
the leaves when they fall

after turning to gold oh everywhere  
strange alchemies rewind  
the momentary flicker of

pink birthday candles  
and the scent of wax  
mingled with wishing

the Christmas stocking  
Orange of all oranges  
and peppermint

the waylaid Star  
the continent of the heart  
that cannot break apart

memorizing these

mary angela douglas 28 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Crows Misunderstood

Mid morning at my april desk

emerging from unsettled rest

I thought how odd that dropping

the pebble God into a poem

raises such a stir and then I thought, I heard

how that effect makes me want to whisper yet

beyond all meaning and regret

God and more God God God God God God

and suddenly I thought of crows in their tenebrae

and how they rose when I was a child in an infinite clatter and

wildness

and scuttled the sky

with caws no! It was God as they arose God God God God

through all november and no one knows we got the coding wrong of

their too brazen song



and that perhaps the raven blue black as ink guards us ever from the

brink

the flood in its plum dark beak and fused

speaking God God God into the mists and into the abyss

where we have forgotten his name and God God God summoning the rains

the stars the distance where You ARE

light as we become our winter selves again the crows

scattering bituminous diamonds half made in haste and

over our sleep. That we might remember Him.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dancer You Wish You Were (She Was)

[for Suzanne Farrell]

she breaks into flowers when she turns  
in tulle of white violet  
and Dance itself seems

spun from her sometimes  
as if it were honied Spring, only.  
it's the arc of white nights, I

softly cried; it's more than gravity defied:  
the soul, the soul countering grief  
with every instep

a rose  
that blossoms, where  
no one knows

except if you're the one  
turning into it...

mary angela douglas 20 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dark Mirror Reflects Nothing

the dark mirror reflects nothing; the quenched light.  
this have we reflected on in the dim nights,  
the nights split at the seams;

the dreams spilling their jewels onto wet pavements  
uselessly beautiful.  
beauty has no use cries the dark mirror wordlessly

to any passer by and like an impious edict,  
a tearless hound.

let the one string left hum on in the salons.  
the dark mirrors reflect nothing; the quenched light  
is the only light they understand;

those who have taken the heights from the angels  
and assumed command  
and scoff from the balustrades of the moon

it's catch as catch can all over town.  
beauty has no purpose  
until we can trample it down.

mary angela douglas 3 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Day That He Made Birds

I like to think there was a day He said  
(to Himself)and maybe a few angels  
at their ease

I think I'll make some bright coloured things  
with wings, that sing  
and then became so enchanted with his

own conception he couldn't stop  
and these were birds  
that laced the clouds with song

that called to trees  
so that the trees yearned to pull up stakes  
floating upwards in a green leafed grace

and break into singing too  
the kind made of emeralds

mary angela douglas 27 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Day Your Mother Kept For You

that day your mother kept for you  
like a present tucked away  
in starred tissue paper...

a dress of rainbow sherbet.  
a dress fit for queens on ascension  
to the throne.

the dress of Poetry.  
the little tin typewriter that really worked!

what Christmas could compare with that one  
when the Star lingered over your house for certain  
and Christmas tree lights in every colour

splashed over all the books, the  
chocolate covered cherries,  
the flowered robes,  
the rose scarves.

let's learn Endymion all over again, the first part-  
where we dream of quiet breathing  
and of beauty that will not pass away.

go back to the beginning, my Grandmother said  
when we were practicing and made mistakes  
both hands together on a piece for the first time.

dear God. can I start over where the music still chimes  
like freshly fallen snow for us, with ribbons in our hair-  
white gold bracelets blinding the sun-

and time is an ocean set before us like a star  
without a metronome

mary angela douglas 27 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Death Of Debussy Or Of Ravel

a minor discordance in the music of afternoon  
his life is ebbing  
and the colours of the trees are sobs

and diminished thirds  
and half of what he is saying  
in delirium I have never heard says the

doctor shaking his head...  
sing the birds, the birds in the trees beyond  
now he is floating, his own ship,

on the dream waters

who will call him back  
will the after mirage  
of all his music

seal the doom of all wars  
and heal the earth?  
it is the cause

it is the cause weeps the  
soul of music of my distress the song  
departing and the angelic resonances

subside...

Mary Angela Douglas 16 April 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Deepest Well

show me Father how to say this

turn the stones to flowers in their hands

that I may withstand

and the Word with me this withering world

caught in a glance, a shrug, a grouping together

at the punch table

oh God if you are able in these smallest of things

to reign, sustain me here;

where they are not gathered to hear

but to condemn.

spare me the quenching then that in every nightmare veers

early in the evening

before the dawn appears as if to shutter it;

to mutter like ravens scattering shade.

how vaulted are the heavens and everything you've made

but they have made even the sky a jail

and launch into it

to capture the sun.

I have written this down as if I were the only one.

before I drown let the Word not waver on the waves

or be dispelled by a cackling spell

consigning Beauty to the deepest well.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Diamond Wind And Where It Went

God lets his diamond face shine through  
those pinpricks in the sky we call the stars  
her mother sighed or maybe it was the wind

through the night curtains  
in the way back when of all whens  
taken into account.

rummaging in the dresser drawers  
we found the rhinestone tiara  
while the grandmother slept music

and we learned the stories of the glass mountains  
the golden apples rolling down again  
and the knights disfigured making the

attempt no more so that old candles wept their wax  
into the cornices of the moon.  
and I have gathered the lilacs and the lilac blues

and the pinks wept the princess  
and angels harvested her tears  
and this went on for years

in ink understood and bound with ribbons  
of the letters reserved and not sent back  
we found in the attic of the stars

and behind God's diamond face...  
in the beginning of sorrows.

mary angela douglas 16 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Documents The Queen Must Never See

'Je te defendrai a la derniere carriere.'\*

-Mary, Queen of Scots

the documents the queen must never see  
are locked inside a cloud that  
cannot weep

and it will take too long to  
cast off the embroidery  
that could have caused true

rescuers to come

not many ivory ships  
will sail until:  
you waken, foundered,  
in a green wood

and witnesses are called  
who have no voice-

a shimmering rush of wings:  
the tongue-cut sparrows  
lace the sky  
lace the sky

with warnings bright as tromp l'oeil patterns

through the window of  
the last cell

mary angela douglas 2 november 2005/10 november 2005  
copyright 2006

\*'I shall defend Thee while I still draw air.'

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dolls Have Preceded Us All

[to my Grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. Young  
of blessed memory

and to Kenneth Grahame (for Dream Days and The Golden Age) ]

the deep rose alabaster of the paper-weighted heart  
is missing now; the wooden apple  
streaked in gaudy yellow, green and red  
that housed an apple tree tea-set for the miniscule,

brought back from the World's Fair, happily...  
in 1964; various dolls with  
various dispositions, play explored  
from an antique base camp

have stolen my dreaming away...  
the one with the veil, the one pink-suited for a summer's day  
have wandered off into the Backyard grass never coming back.  
the one with pearl drop earrings and a gown so rare;

the one that cried real tears - the flower sprigged tribe  
I left one day, never whispering goodbye...  
the ranks scattered, carelessly smocked-  
pastel sashes untied and dragging  
stitches, raveled in the Sun.

"How could she, with a broken candy heart? "  
said Raggedy Ann, consoling the rest of them;  
she sighed a Sweet Tart sigh (or luminous Luden's cherry) -  
smoothing the baby doll's tears away

with both of her wide cloth hands...

"bid us adieu? " the French doll finished the sentence  
with her curls askew, and that was that.

do they have regrets?  
or do they wait in Heaven, trinketed-  
with an expectation frosted night-light pink

where there is no night-

criss-crossing crepe paper on the vasty  
Ceiling, Michaelangelo bluer than  
blue (they'd have wings now; they could reach it) -  
or actually consuming the candy corn

set before them by the angels,  
banging little silvery bells in the interim  
that melt into air to make it shine and  
chiming and chiming

the necklace with one sparkle only of the aurora borealis  
I shall pluck from all the others to wear, when it's untangled  
far from the jewelry box of Eternal Summer teal-  
there,

with the citrus constellations spilling over I first learned to feel  
like a braille fairytale stamped out on the heart  
in Arkansan dusk  
just when my Grandfather, gazing up- said:

There's the Big Dipper...can't you see it  
(over the swaying pine trees, just...)

he'll welcome me, I know it's true  
with a brand-new Dutch Masters cigar-box  
or the one with the Spanish lady on the lid in red, with a rose and a lace mantilla

emptied for my School Supplies  
where no one ever leaves again-  
with my Grandmother in her  
pearly crown, or, I imagine:

a peach mantilla and a Chinese fan  
pink-peony splashed on the ticketless  
Holiday that's not Pretend  
that comes to each, in turn

at the last chirring of the music box, then-

the worlds without jeweled end...

mary angela douglas 14-16 september 2012

Note: in case you never knew or have forgotten, Sweet Tarts are a doll-sized candy, very chalky pastel, sweet and sour at the same time, and Luden cherry refers to Ludens cherry cough drops the only candy we were allowed to eat in grade school classrooms though the teachers surely knew we didn't all have coughs every single day...

As I revised this poem the radio played Mahler's Resurrection Symphony the lilting part, and afterwards the announcer said welcome to this very beautiful warm Late Summer Saturday, which was entirely the mood of my poem, transfigured. Serendipitous. Did the dolls arrange it?

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dolls In The Dollhouse Dream

we will paste stars on the ceilings  
and call this Heaven or  
stare pointedly at the children

wishing they would until it happens  
and then, paper angels will come down  
and the lights will go on by themselves

the oil lamps in the parlour with no oil  
and we will think 'miracle' trying very hard  
to let someone know we are grateful

and be placed around the convincing piano  
with the hinge and the little stool that twirls  
and silently sing

while the paper angels flutter and where  
the scissors slipped, very large snowflakes  
will cover us

and we will know then with 5 golden rings  
it is Christmas  
and there is a King.

mary angela douglas 26 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Doves Of My Mind

the doves of my mind  
the angels of your fear:  
all things should

meet in light  
(they don't)

I can't sustain  
(I do)  
the flight of my

thought into  
endless  
walls of glass

mary angela douglas 13 march 1988

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Life Of Roses

to Gabriel Faure

do they remember their rose names or do  
they dream only in rose itself, no particular rose  
colour all plausible rose colours or of a shifting of petals

a slanting of rains almost sighed for  
a corral of petals shaded by green  
that comes and goes, again or is  
shattered by unexpected winds or  
are they ever expected or do they dream

of a world where winds are soft and peach  
falls silently peachlike on the ground before time lapsed and  
water like rose water lovely shining,  
never an enemy, is dripping from the eaves of  
leaves and always.

in what language do they dream  
in the various tea rose margins of a sleep  
allowed by God, so long as to be inconceivable  
so beautiful as to have no latitude at all

and of a sheen beyond the earth-bound insignias  
of what can be seen

of deep fuchsia or pale yellow or marvel of  
marvels, magenta obliquely  
Spring- the last of the ivory, the

light pink in a light chagrined with no sunrise  
to call its own but only the rose-lights haloed, fawn-  
in sweeter snows unmelting  
and are their shadows flowering too  
and do they ever awake

mary angela douglas 27 28, september 2013



Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Of Coming Back From The Eye Doctor

shadows, but light prevailing is what you see

in the scene where you are coming back from the eye doctor

and this is in a future somewhere not defined yet

the work in progress no one's ever read

your eyes are skies with clouds and all you see is Heaven

even at the grocery store while waiting at the curb for the

light to turn and you tap with a hidden cane or a shepherd's crook

the pavement and cannot see that others look at you strangely

the sun is everything now a white gold light that fully fills the frame

of the window you have opened or the one that God has opened

and you see the angels plainly now the familiar faces from home

light years ago

a pink ribbon of a sky

and then, you are gone.

mary angela douglas 14 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Of The Apples She Will Not Forsake

for Marie Foster Douglas Smith

I have seen clouded apple trees in dreams

in idealized paintings pale under moonlight

scene by scene

pink in the flush of the milk skeined skies

not wanting to depart.

my heart my heart its madrigal

of staying weeps and clings to the branches

as if I were those native birds

because I know I am bourne up by those mists

that cloudiness in the marble that is pure azure.

what good can you do to tell me in so many words

I am making this up when I sense they are

beckoning me in orchards of the Unseen

I am meant to pluck, by and by such largesse

you say I waste time dreaming, I should confess

my waywardness

but you lie.

everything is there on the underside of the leaves

and their breathing and all that green

blossoming into white, or cast into a pink shade

is Heaven to me

and whether I sleep or wake

you cannot take it from me.

mary angela dougla 27 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Of The Indigo Trails

to the Russian poets forever and ever...

these indigo trails through snow melted in the spring;  
the early spring, the thaw of their lost pages.  
what can we say who gathered them there

too many ages later  
as if they were flowers, our hands sharp with cold.  
these were their lost words their last-

written in frost

bound in no libraries-  
here beneath the frozen skies:  
last ink. snow paper;

no one coming back to rescue...

nearby the small tracks of the larks, the thrush  
beside their half dissolving shine  
as if in sympathy. Divine

mary angela douglas 10 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Of The Little Playhouse

[to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas who will know  
what I mean, intuitively! ]

why was it so endearing, enduring,  
the dream of the little playhouse?  
the secret place.

where no one would find you  
at least, not until dessert!  
when you washed your face and hands

in the crystalline stream just behind it.  
and wear rhinestones and everything  
and be the Queen of it, always.

Yes! Your Majesty.  
green shutters, no make them

pale blue; a pink roof darkening  
at sunsets only to mauve.  
you are in love from childhood

with a place that doesn't exist.  
a place you can never find  
except in your sugarplum mind

where it is always, 'fruit basket, turn over! '  
and fields of lucky clover  
with the colour wheel on the aluminum

Christmas, Christmas tree you

wanted to live near forever; the rainbow  
shifting endlessly, never dimmed in the skies.  
with the lemon drops in the entry way

in a light green jar, no make that, tangerine.  
(the candies, or the jar, we laughed in-between  
dawdling spoonfuls of our cereal)

(will the rainbows get soggy when it rains?)  
(will the grass stains ever come out?) and  
you have strawberries on your knees

from skating on the Seven Seas  
whenever they freeze over.

and all the books you could ever read  
and all the pictures come to life;

the glue on the gummed stars  
never coming off  
or the valentines, pasted on the trees.

mary angela douglas 6 january 2016

P.S. We used to call the reddened scrapes on our knees 'strawberries' I don't know where this expression comes from or if it even is a bona fide expression in the English language. Grandmother called them strawberries so we did too. It always made me feel better to hear them called that; it took the sting out of the small wound. We used to count them, like rosy red badges of honor. ('I have more strawberries than you do', etc.)

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dream Of The Novel

the dream of the novel was to  
have resembled lilac:  
fragrant, at the open page

as loved by the children as Springtime.  
the dream of the novel  
was to have snowed all day on the boulevards

along the shaded ways  
making it doubly cold or  
to fountain to fountain

words toward the skies  
and then, to cascade downwards-  
to be filled with a birthday surprise

or two, an april melange of colours,

intimations so the readers  
huddled in the kitchens,  
at the failing stoves

would not consider it firewood,  
would keep the heart aglow  
through the earth's long Winter

of forgetfulness  
of the literary climes,  
of the inward blossoming of cherry

or of lime...

so it dreamed.  
and so it was.

mary angela douglas 20 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Dream Of The Overland China

to Bess Streeter Aldrich

there should be coral rosebuds round it  
she said softly speaking of her dream-china  
that could not be carried overland.

so many things we left behind  
because we could not carry them:  
the moon with the rainbow ring

the music of the spheres and  
walled in gardens.  
the penny novel thoughts the

derring-do.  
the ochre in the trees how long  
I have longed to see dark  
honey crusted on an  
afternoon's leisurely canvas-

and plumed chivalries.

yet I have seen the green wind on the  
prairies limitlessly, the coolness of God  
in underground springs

and round as a wagon wheel, the yellow-gold  
loaves of Heaven.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dreaming Room

how did it get here we wondered  
when we first found it,  
the dreaming room  
did someone dream it here

pulling it in like a kite,  
or a scarf of Art Deco flair?

they must have dreamt strong  
because it didn't disappear  
though it abounds with blue mists  
vagrant sparkles

will we get out again  
that depends  
on so many things  
it would take a lifetime to tell

and another lifetime  
to recite it all competently  
as though you were in  
a schoolroom of dreams

aren't we  
she softly asked  
stuffing a silver knapsack full  
of sapphire sparkles,

of the Timeless;  
while I, well I lost track  
how will we ever  
find our way back

we will do well.  
wearing God like a beautiful Shell.

mary angela douglas 26 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dreams Of Departure, The Signs Of Going Away

the dreams of departure, the signs of going away  
breathed Spring in a winter forest, gold  
on a so-so day;

as though set on jeweled rails  
the time of going away, the harvest through,  
the grain under moonlight stored

in the silos of no doom  
and the bright gesture circled  
as if on a map.

and praise is due in the hour of going away  
when the train comes through  
and you, with your mysterious luggage

and still starry eyed,  
board.

mary angela douglas 16 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dreams Of Descartes On Falling Apart

mapping the planes from point to point  
and the high, Inward, vanishing:  
is this where the messenger falters

at the door, leaving the scraps behind?  
never mind. what is lost at twilight is lost.  
and there, remain; not knowing if this

is the path or that one, which?  
and the light twitches and is gone.  
and the sparks flew through the room,

the unheralded thunder; the book on the table,  
of poetry, blew open at a certain point  
and then half closed when he awoke.

take heed from this, his startled angels cried,  
what you may and then they disappeared.  
and this was years and then

what answer to the generations  
can be derived?  
dreams come. they go. and fall apart,

the gilded tissue of what is most fragile:

man, standing alone,  
or thinking he does;  
with nothing before or after.

mary angela douglas 16 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dust Lies Over All

the dust lies over all  
said a whisper in my head  
think that instead

instead of what they said  
when they thought  
you weren't around

the dust lies.  
the fountain lies when it  
springs to life on

designated holidays  
and is lit up like flowers  
and all the colours are waving their flags

and you say, hopefully, is it a parade?  
the smiles fade.  
the shunning starts.

the looking the other way.  
and all that's light has turned to dark  
but angels say, or God Himself-

be that as it may,  
and though you're stranded  
on the neighbor's lawn

while festivals go on and on..  
and you are feeling very small  
with no one no one left on whom to call-

the dust lies over all, my heart.  
the dust lies over all.

mary angela douglas 18 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Dwarf Star's Impression Of The Children Leaving Home

'Twinkle twinkle little star  
how I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high...'  
-English Nursery Rhyme Song

they didn't close the gate this time;  
their Grandmother will be sad  
and the leaves in the yard are piled up

everywhere.  
who will jump in them now  
so that they leap up almost

to where I shine?  
or swing a little harder on the swings  
trying to reach the tops of the pines.

I would light their way  
but I am small and long gone by.  
I will weep with the small white clover

in the grasses, my cousins,  
once it is summer.  
they will be far away

by then  
but I will find them.  
will they know me

viewing it all from a window  
strange to them?  
I wonder.

having been taught by them  
so long ago  
that little twinkling song

they sang  
in the back yard.

mary angela douglas 19 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Eclipse Of The Beautiful In Our Time

the eclipse of the Beautiful in our time  
a dream headline made to order  
in my mind

a summing up of stars receding  
of the need to explain the Universe  
without Him

over and over again

the eclipse of the beautiful  
and the after parties  
and children deprived

of the Beautiful and  
the stories of gold  
the trees weeping onto

the vacant avenues  
sodden leaves  
in the rain

and in the little lanes  
the absences of birds  
and roses

people striking odd poses  
the cult of the ugly  
the raucous rewarded

the look at me  
look at me  
even if

there is nothing to see  
no one to ask why

are people happy  
with the eclipse of the beautiful

and light is going away unmourned

crowning some other planet  
where sparkling  
in its myriad disguises

is welcomed.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Elephant Man Recalled

(for Joseph Carey Merrick and after the film by David Lynch)

it seemed to him that he should be

the same as others

that he should lay down his head

at Bethel and see the heavens open

the angels descend on ladders

filaments of the stars.

how hard his pillow why would it matter

if he could dream God was not far

oh from the mocked misunderstood

the misshapen vessel that he was

lumbering amid the tieraed.

flocked to by the tittering crowds.

feted and lovely the center of all praise

he knew he knew he would never be but leprous-

lonely in his days beyond all human anguish to withstand

and in his carnival life abandoned

so ridiculed the elephant man I see him

at the end on a silken pillow sink

as if to say, just once let me be like them

with a dreamlike visage, brokenness

the final snap of the knotted thread he almost sped

into the arms of the crucified Lord.

mary angela douglas 27 august 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Embroidered Pavements Of Mr. Chung Jik Woo

'The Kingdom of Heaven Is Within You.'

-Jesus

he said it is His april and the peach petaled wind  
will cast your dreams before you as you walk;  
you must keep walking

though the sky thunders and the private soldiers languish  
that it may be whatever may be still, the april of your  
dreams

or smile in the mirrors where the wars rage on  
and scatter the ship of winds so that petals form the mast  
and soon at last at last the kingdom that you dream oh  
who oh who will wrest from your hand

it is the beautiful soon he cried, all autumn  
where he stood, let the red leaves fall  
and wishing start though your heart is cut to the quick  
when the private soldiers scheme and  
nothing is won but everything is dreamed

and you walk on

mary angela douglas 17 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Evidence Of The Stars

the myriad arguments for God can fade away  
we have  
the evidence of the stars

the miracle of who you are or could be  
the starry spokes that drive  
The Carriage Invisible

in the fairy tales  
what men have dreamed in jails  
not of their own making

and coded cell to cell, communicated  
so that the Holy Ghost sang  
in the tree of night for

nothing at all well into our married dawns  
let go the silver and the gold  
and all the stories told of

the snowed in shortcuts  
to Aladdin's caves  
it is Christ who saved, who saves

who will save again  
the memories of the birth of starlight  
outside and within

the galaxies wheeling, the Axis of all feeling,  
the reeling evidence of Light  
against all odds.

mary angela douglas 3 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Faillè Snows

the faillè snows veil the ballets  
she rehearses in her sleep,  
adorn the keepers of the

frostbitten flame, the arctic names;  
the white pears in crystal gleams  
from the canvas and from the stage

they vanish into pearl  
from the wars into intaglio  
cutting the performance

short

mary angela douglas 23 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Fairies' Play Revisited

in honor of William Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*...

here the midsummer frailties shine  
and are impearled each time we read  
as the dew drops down the soul

and it is jeweled evening  
when the play unfolds  
or the twilight in between

one dream and another, tissue thin,  
Begin! and  
is it yours, this clasp on the lock of time

undone? and have all your birthdays come  
dressed in the scarlet and the fleeting,  
sweet and sweetening?

there is the fairies' entryway,  
the portal to the mysterious green  
half vanishing, banishing woods

and there the delicate unfolds  
in fabulous minstrelsy and bud  
and are you trellised with flowers?

is it understood that

these are the hidden hours  
made manifest?  
where else would we go, and if we could,

exiting from the darkling worlds  
and there unfurl fine flags  
of the nonpareil

arriving in tangerine array,  
in tiny coaches of orange peel  
to bask like summer roses far-



from the kingdoms of the real.

mary angela douglas 5 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Fairy Tale Not In The Corrected Editions

(in allusive reverence for Charles Dickens Fairy Tale &quot;The Magic Fishbone&quot;;as concerning Present Time)

ah, my bent fairy tale

who will straighten your spine

correct your magic fishbone now

dare I wonder aloud in the milk white wood

in the season of misunderstood

this harvest of weeping pearl

half murmured to no crowd at all.

yet to the singular heart, a Throne

that's recognized.

be good then and don't.

that was the quote from the godmother dressed

in peach and pale silver far from the

census of what is allowed.

I will bury your treasure

in deep snow, forgoing all roses

forgetting all else I know

standing guard in white velvet.

that the children may not wander alone

without a single glimmer

vacant flowers in their eyes.

what is bending for sighed Light but for

jewel like refraction (as in rainbows)

wishes don't grow

on the tree of coercion

measuring your shadow's height

on the executioner's wall

ah, ah, my bent fairy tale. No.

not at all.

mary angela douglas 5 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Fairytale Stories Will Emerge

the fairytale stories will emerge  
released from cameo existence  
from their backdrops of painted

moons-

with stars and islands unforgotten  
inscribed with kaleidoscopic  
joy

with silver hung high in tangled  
branches branching over

the realistic legend of our freedom

mary angela douglas 29 may 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Flight Of Ideas From Here

to Robin Williams

complexities in music are expected; yet, a fantastic flow of words, a disease  
decreed the doctors to the poets time out of mind though Light itself is scattered  
beautifully from  
quartz to quartz and this is what we call sparkling

in some quarters.

dimestore symptoms cannot ride out the storm oh spare me the diagnosis of the  
beautiful or Shakespeare's worlds on worlds when we on our best days

can launch from here balloons in every shade  
and firecrackers, rockets of the full spectrum spinning and fizzing whirling into  
tulips, and leaves and trees in colours of the oohs and aahs of Chistmases  
remembered; or split, open

to fairy tale fissuring,  
glittering with the more quiet splendors  
and, for this, we set sail to find:  
the crown jewels crowning the longing of a language

inwardly felt oh Rilke in the woods catching birdsong on his sleeve and  
harkening.  
leave the pathologists who have murdered

imagination as if they could, forgetting the multiple pathways through the woods  
of Dostoyevsky, the Joycean epiphanies or Proust's jeweled passages twined and  
intertwined with  
a passage from Faure

oh pack the saints away you will not knowing as they do  
that God spun out in myriad silken directions once the starry web that you would  
break endlessly in us:  
thinking that you do good.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Folks Back East Got Your Letter

to Stephen Crane and so many others

showboater, shilly shally  
all I want to say:  
the creek is dry;  
don't go that way.

the barn's burned down.  
the silos just melted.  
no one came to the rebuilding parties;  
stuffed with their own apples.

golden, the pick axe strays  
into the mud; in just one day  
well water scooped into our hands

evaporated. how are the children.  
say hi to the folks who stayed behind  
and don't know the virginia reel.

send orange peel and citron, maybe.  
a punch bowl ladle made from cut-glass.  
grass seed. if it pleases you to think it grows here.

and sassafras. molasses candies.  
an oistritch feather, tissue sewing patterns,  
red shoe leather,  
down country remedies for someone  
sick from greasepaint and the smell of crowds  
who don't know where they are  
staring straight at it.

send bolts of silk, . fresh underwear.  
barrels of cough syrup to us here; to us-  
you used to know  
where trees were green  
and the porch swings swung

in the minted breezes;

the afternoon sun of the  
cooling drinks and the lily hands.  
send piano strands. glad music.  
berry picking.

send prayers on angel wings  
before the next snows  
to us here, waylaid by  
the folkloric maps in the newspapers.  
pointing the way.

mary angela douglas 9 june 2014

Note on the Poem: the poem is my imaginary letter sent by pioneers to people they knew back east. Here is how I imagine the reply the folks back home posted by Western Union to the imaginary stranded pioneers: Sell golden axe. you should get something for it.

Of course another problem is the strangeness of the items requested by the sender who may be equally affected by sun stroke or sarcasm, depending on previous experience with asking for help. Or delusional. The golden axe is out of place here, like those pictures where you are instructed to find something aberrational.

A problem within a problem. A person sent on a quest with the wrong information and, as a subset of that confusion is his own propensity for fairy tales, over and above the newspaper accounts. Or. a means of survival.

The telegram reply (sell the golden axe) indicates the folks back home were literal. Which may be why the pioneer left home in the first place, being of a different disposition.

One true fact in the poem: many American pioneers in the latter part of the 19th century were misled by maps and glowing reports (possibly entirely fabricated to sell more copy) by Eastern newspapers. Their maps showed water where there was no water, mountain passes where no one could get through. And that was the least of it.

Stephen Crane is the American poet from a slightly later period of American history, who having worked for newspapers himself and seen the worst of it, wrote a very short poem on the subject (not complimentary) . This goes with the theme of the poem. It is not what I generally think of newspapers myself.

Many have uncovered truth.(but not for the pioneers!) .

Everything was not like Little House on the Prairie. It still isn't. The neighbors do not always show up to 'raise' the new barn. God bless the ones who do.

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Froggie Lays Plans The Day Before

[after the fairytale where the Princess drops the golden ball down the well and is tricked by a retrieving frog.

and to the memory of Robin Williams as the Froggie in Shelley Duvall's version ('The Tale of the Frog Prince') in her lovely Showtime series (1982-1987, Faerie Tale Theatre) .This is my version in tribute to hers! Terri Garr as the pouting Princess was impeccable. (say that twenty times fast) and you'll go far in life, too.]

you don't have to flounce out of the room  
her mother said everytime you drop your  
favorite toy down the well and no

we're not going to order you another one  
this time. this was the day before the  
tete a tete with the froggie.

so Princess Sulks in her cherry satin  
sits down tres velvetly with a thump  
and wonders why every moment in life

wasn't sugar lumps when

no one was bringing the whole rose garden to her  
with ribbons wreathed round it ahhing and ooing.

a something stirred near the potted rose tree  
but who hear, with that all that stewing.  
it was our froggie flicking up a plan and

having it well in hand (or flipper) now,  
in coming to understand  
that he could grow more Fortunate

through courting the Importunate-  
so he jounced down the palace steps  
to practice, practice, practice

looking lackadaisical, if not charming;

anything but alarming and  
waiting for Wednesday.

while the Princess waited,  
cognizant of no scheme,  
for strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries

soaked in cream o cream...

mary angela douglas 9 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Future Is Coming To Me, Did They Sing

the future is coming to me, did they sing  
the brides without veils  
to the inconstant seas

oh wrap your heart in a cloud  
and send it to me  
the skies will matter less to

you in your dreams  
you won't know then.  
the future is coming

and the lilac moon  
and the harps played out of tune  
when the singers flee

singing, now is the future coming to me?  
now will the will o' wisps turn;  
the acute conscience burn

the gold of the soul be beaten into straw?

how will we learn  
if you send no message  
if you send no message

at all

mary angela douglas march 28 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Garden Of Statues

here in the garden of statues  
one keeps watch not speaking  
until spoken to.

the roses heavy with dew  
could weep if they knew;  
whatever it is in roses knows

here nothing moves but the wind  
and the roses; all else is suspended  
under the moon

and we keep still my soul or I  
and gather witnesses  
from antique imagination

of the way things should have been  
when life meant being alive.  
but here the poses never end;

the statuary blindness.  
let blind snows begin to  
cover it all!

by the roses this I heard  
the vivid angels; Word; archangels  
Speak and breaking it all apart

at slight command  
and would the human heart  
if there were one here left to break.

others will come much later to the scene  
bringing back souvenirs  
from the ruins.

mary angela douglas 1 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ghostly Poets Gather Their Writing Supplies

to Kate Greenaway

Lucy Locket lost her pocket,

Kitty Fisher found it;

Not a penny was there in it,

Only ribbon round it.

-Old English Nursery Rhyme

when we run out of paper we will write  
on violet scraps of clouds, on autumn leaves,  
the red and gold, the earliest cherished,

last to wave good bye when the winds blew through;  
on steppingstones in brooks we lept when we were  
lily pad new or on the backs of

old eviction notices, torn off by the storm;  
in-between the cake walk music, tisket tasket,  
drop the handkerchief games we played; in the margins of

the grocery flyers advertising this week's specials:  
cubed steak, gold streaked mangoes;  
on old report cards, brought up in the fishermen's nets

by boatloads, along with the tuna  
and on the foolscap of barely inhabited libraries  
careful of their Gutenberg

illuminations with their gloved hands  
and no parties we're invited to;  
no worries, they won't hear us

clambering amidst odd land-filled sighs,  
your old Tinkertoys, inscribed  
on the unused space of medical charts; on the manifests,

and on the cargoed dark where fairytales were stored  
and on the raveling of the hem of the favorite dress  
of the Princess in exile trailing the earth in our worn-down

shoes, her silk parasol;  
with the hummingbird sewing notions  
of a ruby throated day that has gone;

on drifting bells of evensong;  
in invisible sea foam crayon on purpling hatboxes  
stacked in the afternoon's warehoused suns

the skies kept trying on while we just worked

and in the pockets of the lucy lockets and on the florists'  
cards when the yellow roses have faded  
have faded have faded away

mary angela douglas 19 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ghostly Toys

A-ticket a-tasket

A green and yellow basket

I wrote a letter to my love

And on the way I dropped it,

I dropped it,

I dropped it, ...

old children's rhyming game

(I mean, the rhyme is old, not the children, of course)

sometimes I wonder where are all the dolls

the picture books the curlicued sleds of

the long gone children

surely there must have been myriads

more than can be seen in the museums

or private collections dusted, dear-

when did they disappear

like sugar snow,

in the cereal.

where did they stash them?

in the rooms of the houses

that all fell down?

in the rings around the rosies?

while playing hide and seek

in grass stained pinafores? or did the toys watch

and then repeat (as best they could)

o tisket and tasket

of the lime and lemon basket...

only, when it came time to

run out from the hiding place-



did they just stay there?  
did they stray?

did they fall down knotholes  
rabbit holes black holes  
confusing the stars?

where are you?  
maybe the children cried at first  
missing their bears

we've looked for you Everywhere

mary angela douglas 17 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ghosts Of My Gestures Fade

THE GHOSTS OF MY GESTURES FADE

Sometimes I feel I am peering through a one way mirror  
into the faces that I see into certain gestures into time that falls  
away as petals from the flower of them as shafts of sunlight from the darkening  
trees  
I can see all these I can feel in each detail the scent of snow or sudden hail  
and yet  
there is no echo back not even a tapping on the glass.  
only the sense that I am acknowledged long enough for my answers to be copied  
onto someone else's paper'  
it baffles me. Looking out even within I think is my planet shrinking  
my orbit negligible  
or do my footprints disappear in the vast snows in advance  
of their accumulation forgoing all that  
and are my words tunneled through  
straightening their errant crowns  
heralded on another shore;  
bypassing this dimension entirely

mary angela douglas 8 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Giant Zinnia Tune Played On The Xylophone

giant zinnias were on our planet

large enough for the puppy to play with

ambushing, sunbursting, magenta

tangerine or tamarind

with a sticky loquaciousness

the colour of dark amber

fuschia. or faded strawberry.

near match to our Fanta sodas

sipped = slowly near the milkweed patch

i favored with its lily spokes speaking in small

constellations near to the oleander

giant zinnias how can I tell the sun from you

you are like great clocks

ruby fireworks rooted in fine soil.

and your fragrance is like bitter grass right under the vast

picture window of the piano studio.

hi Grandmother. we can see you from outside.

she smiles her piano smile

I want to go back in a while to the same yard in full summer's

receding tide and under a pomegranate moon

to see my Grandfather planting them again  
in his pea green jacket and his fedora.  
and sing my zinnia zither tune for him with my sister  
how majestic they were as if we lived among the first light  
flowers small queens of all the hours who  
just wandered in  
into an unalienable kingdom; we were that lucky  
and spun round till we were dizzy so that the stars came out  
early in the afternoon.  
in the same colours exactly.  
and Grandmother said, come in girls  
it's getting cool outside.

mary angela douglas 22 march 2020

1Mary Angela Douglas  
Love  
ComA

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Glass Green Ground Of Eden Slipped Away

the glass green ground of Eden slipped away;  
far from the childhood etageres we strayed and still  
the scent of new mown hay was sweet

the cloud soft air returned to us each Spring.  
why did they tell us then pure Eden failed  
when there are roses still and

Northern Lights and hidden dear  
unchanged delights.  
I never understood.

it's God in the enchanted woods  
and always will be.  
this I know by heart.

well enough to see it  
in the Dark.

mary angela douglas 16 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Gleaning

I will go and glean from the fairy tale fields  
I said to the wind when she was listening  
for the outworn stories of men, for the

sheafs bearing down and I with two small hands  
could not gather there.  
or then it was winter and in the soft snows

the raspberry skied I lost again or was lost,  
witnessed by those who pointed out mysteriously  
you're at the wrong crossroads

move further on  
for it is time the fairytale clock designed  
to chime for those we've screened

kicks on.  
I will leave you I said inwardly  
much as the wind does

making little sound  
but only what the trees can hear  
and at the end of the year

when iced bells chime  
and recognize who I am  
my hands filled with snowy blessings

my watch broken in half  
by the whisperers.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Glorious Salvage

the letters you sent into space  
disappearing without a trace or  
singed by summer clouds

the right answers erased  
before they are copied down  
from the 'this will be on

the test next Friday'  
and you're in a haze  
and can't find the things to say

the dress to wear  
the golden pear  
that makes the fairy tale puzzle complete

oh don't despair...  
there is a place, replete,  
replacing sour with sweet...

somewhere there is a merry go round,

carillon found after the Fairs are closed  
for children indisposed  
kept after school

a kind of heavenly cake walk to a  
mailbox loaded by whom? who knows?

with brightly foiled on cardstock cards  
all occasion caissoned,  
moon silk screened

just for you on hold

at the candy striped depot  
of misplaced dreams  
and missing socks amid

the tick and the tock of oblivious birthdays fraught  
with more and more seasons  
for being glad

with pockets turned inside out

for losing the things called sad  
and happy you are  
on your own private star

with beaucoups of iced  
whisks and bowls to lick

and umpteen heirloom bouquets still to pick  
that you are tagged  
in the game of not it, it

like a queen for a day  
party favored and so glad ragged  
for the unimpeachable on its way

the peach starred day  
full of delicious crumbs of this and that  
and citron glowing and the green cherries mystifying;

the sugared pineapple  
the breakfast of  
hot sauced scrapple

creamery cream dappled  
keep the fudgesicles flowing  
the caramel apples rolling

while we're extolling  
the blue birding packages piled up to the skies  
wrapped up for you in the bye and bye: the

Somewhere everything sent is acknowledged  
somewhere everything received is complete  
somewhere the handwriting is neat

in letters that swoop like sea birds



in graceful curves on floral stationary-  
with something jeweled in their beaks;

from all the shipwrecks,  
the glorious salvage

mary angela douglas 20 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Golden Spindle Lies On The Floor

the golden spindle lies on the floor  
where it was flung; whole  
civilizations sleep

and now: an old spell is  
revisited and ancient lamentations  
understood-

up such a narrow flight of  
stairs, a broad doom  
awaited-

yet I will go from room to  
room, seeking lost  
kingdoms; enacting-

every possible rose adagio-  
mary angela douglas 7 july 2003

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Goose Girl Praised

sometimes a bit of gold shines through a tattered dress

the rain has its tiaras I confess only that

and where her slippers wear clean through

the dew anoints

the princess disguised.

I would embroider in this wise

on the goose girl exiled

the vault of Heaven, her roof

the scudding clouds

with floss of forget me not blue,

little rosebuds

for she should get her due

in multifaceted lore

shooed out the door

and near to penury

you are still who you are with your bunch of violets

though they have scattered you

farther than Far

friendless yet holding the secret still

that God helps whom He will.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Green The Leaf Reverts To When Earth Forgets April

'God's name like a huge bird flew out of my breast.

Before me the thick mists swarm;

Behind me, an empty cage.'

-Osip Mandelstam

for Nadezhda Mandelstam-

and for the history of Poetry

poetry is the rain returning to the clouds  
when everything else has overflowed and there are no  
more promontories or the green

the leaf reverts to when earth forgets april;  
cast aside, still spinning gold-leafed out of  
Time from the last tower- though

princes do not come this way anymore  
nor merchants seeking roses for their daughters  
after all ships fail.

wounded flowers instead of tears  
should flow or the shadow of candles lengthen  
to engulf the world or violet horizons crash

with their hour glasses  
to the ground  
like ribbons a child forgot in the grass

and I and I -it's no longer dew pearled,  
is it? all they were born to say  
from holy dread

churned into a thin butter,  
begging bread.  
I have locked my mind with a golden key

she said velvetly, turning away,

brocading the emptiness, while  
song flew out his window into Space

and did not hear the  
deliquescing angels breaking down;  
snowing and

snowing on the healing waters  
lifting into the clouds oh is it  
forever or

only, year on year  
that canyons gape,  
losing their colours

do I only dream  
or can it be?  
the swish of rainbow roping  
rains descending...  
through the redacting languages,

begin, He said, the King of music:  
again, from the beginning...

mary angela douglas 22 june 2014

Note on the poem: redacting in the sense of censoring or obscuring something;  
also euphoniously related to reducing or making smaller...

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Handing Off Of Former Feelings As You Leave

they will hand you your feelings in a plastic bag

the ones you came here with.

but you've forgotten to be sad to be glad

it will take a while to get used to it;

maybe we'll have a trial run.

some clouds in the sky, a winter sun.

but the reasons why are different now

when you look up

it's only to measure your shadow on the ground.

does it dwindle like some black candle found

or is it used up

or will it torrentially rain

and so profane the wick

its drenched

as if it were your soul extinguished here:

why should I look straight at the light

as if to tarnish it. or assume a reasonable blindness.

or, in the sudden dazzle of daylight

to one long in the city pent as Keats in his teardrop diamond

sonnet, lament once cried while he was still alive

or on a speeding train with few goodbyes and

the train well sped from the storms with no bouquets

will God in his surprises with half the story said:

turn everything to gold and not to lead.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Haunting Of Roses, Of Gardenias In The Side Yard

the haunting of roses, of gardenias in the side yard  
we imagined in the silver rains  
and in the lanes immemorial

a stirring amid the cottage vines  
birdsong too we heard but was it there  
or was it a something in the air disguised

the aftermirage of pastel shimmering skies  
every time you closed your eyes  
to sleep a velvet sleep

the petals of unfolding sweet  
and you dream you are the haunting of roses  
the gardenias in the side yard

and it's you returning to the brick house under the pines  
where the wind whines  
like the small dog scratching to get in

and we laugh because we've scared ourselves again  
without really knowing that we could  
oh knock on wood

let Heaven be your coverlid  
as it is for the roses under the snow  
in the Christmas countdown, far to go

we've eaten our Halloween candies up  
and now the door seems different than  
it did before: and supper far away and chores:

comeuppance time Ray Bradbury chimed  
and you hear something soft outside  
and our eyes are glazed and we ask

is it you and there's no answer  
from the one you knew  
was there just a moment ago

and you think of the twilight zone  
and each of us thinks we're quite alone  
with the quilts all up to our chins

with the story we don't dare end  
pretending to think of tomorrow's lunch at school while  
contemplating the deep and the pooled

shadows of the doll on the tufty green chair  
and the glitter of something on the stair!  
it is the Spooky Bride, oh HIDE

and we try so hard not to think  
of attic sounds or the kitchen sink with its drip drop  
the looming of the kitchen mop the sudden

shaking of the ground  
and the haunting of roses outside the blinds  
or the swings we used to ride just yesterday

oh it's too much  
swinging by themselves  
when the winds are hushed just now,

and stilled...  
mary angela douglas 15 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The High Things Of The Heart

the high things of the heart  
and those who believed in them  
these things I found

in the old books not on display  
and I know that what I read there  
was no lie

that these things lived  
though not before my eyes  
when scanning the landscape

it seemed to me in vain for present evidence.  
the books piled high as the poet said  
fantastic with heraldry and dreams,

nobility, life lived for some grand thing  
and self renounced  
and in my mind I saw

as when a child

the light of Heaven bend kindly  
refracted through the stained glass  
the Christmas angels in the clouds

the powerful star.  
and in between God's face and ours  
so little remained

so little  
to keep us apart.

Mary Angela Douglas 10 August 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Hinge Of Autumn, The Rubies In The Rain

the afternoon falters and the heart beats slow  
in vapid summers one dreams of future snows  
and prescience cries, 'alone'

as the crows in autumn music seem  
the year will unfold  
its screen of rains

the candle sputter in the drizzle  
the one you were holding to see by  
the least leaves fail.

fall softly to the ground  
I whispered to the rubied trees  
fall softly

fall light, light  
before the encroaching night  
fall like rust

but only into God.

mary angela douglas 23 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The History Of Snow

were we the readers of the history of snow  
the history of melting  
or of letting go

or having that much  
farther to go  
snow blind, we read on.

and winters accumulated  
our faces worn quite through  
with all the endless snowing

that we knew  
that we trudged through  
warming our hands at the fireplace

of the old stories,  
the ones where you come in out of the rain  
to take your tea and toast

not wanting to leave again

or quiet refreshment from the holy ghost  
and somewhere in the castle  
in a room you loved the most all tucked away

you find the books that say that said from childhood  
what you longed to say  
the ones where it is suddenly made plain

that you are reading in the blizzard too  
of your own life  
and will melt soon

and your true Spring, resume.

mary angela douglas 9 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Hole In The Clouds Espied

I dont know when I started getting seasick at the mention of the word  
professional

I think it was a long time ago and I still dont walk right

I want to look out at the trees and the sky the clouds

how unprofessional the clouds are they never stay where you put them

how will they survive

but they do

the trees and the shivering leaves in brisk October winds

they have spent everything to leave on the earth

their ruby colors their ochre their disappearing lemon splendors

how wasteful they are

perhaps they should cut corners

go to seminars seek help.

ah professional world how I wish you had never been born

turning the children of the stars into bean counters

where will it all end

will you creak into Heaven

and need to be oiled

please stop leaving me messages everywhere

im going to go live in the clouds with my homemade ladder my harp

where you'll have to stop sending me invoices

where the sky turns pink for no reason.

mary angela douglas 23 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Horn's To The Hunt In This My Living Day

(for Professor Louis A. Markos, HBU)

(and to the Immortal Beauty of Poetry)

we speak in husks that the wind drives; how can poetry live  
except that it abide in every small veined leaf and in the green green groves are  
dead the modern poets said tricking the ghosts

but I looked too and I knew, I knew you lied.  
green does abide and every pulsing star  
it's you that have gone numb, blind and words with you

dear is the earth and after cleanest rains the air is fresh  
the pale bud thrives again  
and I can breathe through much of new disdain and the dust dowered

winds and call back the old, the sere my friends my friends  
the burnished annals of the years  
the penants from the battlements of gold

flung in the breezes still  
acute the will for beauty and the clarion filled  
the rose from the Heart of Rose distilled and far dimensional

the horn's to the hunt in this my living day  
the thirst for it undiminished though all else fade to grey.  
we lift the latch where none of it passed away..

mary angela douglas 13 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Huntsman Remembers The Bitter Morning

the queen surveyed her mirrors and the mirrors froze;  
whole kingdoms likewise under the burden  
of their pink spring.

the peach skies fell apart  
forgetting all their clouds.  
like silver coins the rains came

raining down, ice bound.  
ice bound we all were then,  
the huntsman said.

bring me her heart  
thundered the command.  
I could not understand and

asked her on my knees  
oh please your majesty, repeat...  
I had many children then;

what could I do  
but string my bow and seek her everywhere,  
small princess of deep snows and fair.

but something happened in the woods:  
the birds turned all to flame, the small creeks grew;  
the roses, brambled, turned against my rest

their crimsoned scent and everywhere I went  
the earth cried out.  
and then I saw her standing in a grove

surrounded by such light as took the breath  
from stars in winter's glaze enshrined.  
I went the other way.

and slew the first wild beast and took its heart away.  
her heart survived.  
that's all I have to say.

mary angela douglas 9 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ice Cream Panes Of August Melt

the ice cream panes of august melt  
i'm gazing through the isinglass  
of panoramic eggs in spring  
one frosted rose means everything

or rearranging under the Tree  
all the presents glistening and cinnamon,  
cloved the little house the dolls can't live in  
because they're too excited and their

door bell rings as if it were Gabriel.  
oh I'm afraid my sister cries haunted by  
the red and green her angelabra prayers all  
said don't be afraid I sing and sigh the angels said

now go to bed  
the earth has candles round her head

mary angela douglas 13 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Illusions Of Glass As It Shatters

the illusions of glass as it shatters:  
will it be birds now, angels?  
transparencies of God?

will it fall to earth, from a second story window  
depending on several things.  
none of them real.

the cat upsetting the coloured bottles;  
the pink glass figurines leaning out too far...  
struck with a longing for Paris, stars.

or can it feel: a heart, my heart has scattered, where? .  
whose? says the child  
picking up fragments from the sidewalk,

are these diamonds and rubies?

Mary Angela Douglas 8 May 2015; 16 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Incredible Pink Playhouse

the incredible pink playhouse rose  
into the clouds: melted strawberry  
wrapped in cream

with gleaming windows  
where the bluebirds streamed.  
why would they sing  
anywhere else?

it had peppermint towers,  
a roof of plum marzipan  
and no witch ever.

the door was a spun-sugar gate-  
spinning, you wished yourself through.

we carried pails of the coolest shade  
just to live there all summer  
drinking pink lemonade.  
and matching.

mary angela douglas 27 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ink Has Faded From The Summer Night

the ink has faded from the summer night  
where you had stenciled the stars  
in remarkable silver;

different than before,  
who can say how?  
not now,

your mother whispered  
only, sleep though light fades  
from the crib

and from the Deep  
the bough that breaks forever  
still may keep through God's rich grace

the small boat cast ahead  
into far years  
made of a music you had

glimpsed through tears and  
stenciled with the stars  
in remarkable

remarkable silver...

mary angela douglas 12 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ink On The Clouds Is Fading

the ink on the clouds is fading  
tell us what to say  
who have forgotten everything

from day to day  
who must learn by ear  
the music to relay

when the lines are down.  
God with his conch ear  
oceans hears our prayer

the sun is fading everywhere  
the moon is next in line  
and who can understand his time

cried Mandelstam alone  
on the brink of the hereafters  
far from home amid the

deprivations of the Soul  
sing from the rafters was told to

us in school  
but there was no music left then  
only the metronomes

of the high winds, lost sierras,  
freeze.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Interim

somewhere there is a golden tree  
that silver birds anoint with song  
a mist that opens on a stage  
an infinite gilding of the day  
and starbright children still at play  
and I want to go there  
winged with all wishes and I want to know  
there that God meant time for happiness  
and nothing else  
and then I will read all the books on the shelf  
so that all colours rise from the pages mingled  
the sounds of flutes and trumpets, acutely bright  
the sound of the piano in its autumn sonatas conveyed  
while the morning glories on the fence are trumpeting too  
the glory glories and we inherit all the stories  
where wrongs are righted where love is plighted  
and lives on  
where nothing and no one is missing from the feast  
and then we'll know the soul's release.  
as we know only now the tinsel in dreams

partly in the shade part light our names turned inward, questioning,  
preparing for flight.

mary angela douglas 25 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Island Of Floating Away

it's an island and it's floating away

that Blessed Isle

who could dismiss that childhood

I knew judges that did.

but what map from school could receive it now

retrieved from chalk dust days or their

hereafters at home

I don't remember.

just fractions of things.

pennies on tables. apples added together,

an alphabet of gold

and it was mine

amid rings of glass, the green or the amethyst

and after class the wind through the trees

thinking of these, the music of Debussy;

kingdoms keeping company with clouds.

Green Ginger is the name of that land

the storybook said

you can't call it on your own.

it comes and goes

but not on command.

and then sets down.

alight, for the night is coming

and the Wave

alight.

it has come to save you

and the peach sun.

your favorite one to draw.

mary angela douglas 8 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Islands Off The Lost Coast Of Monet

in the islands off the lost coast of Monet  
I culled the water lily colors  
in the water

cupping my hands in music curving back  
while in the air of wandering mirrors  
this residue of a gold-threaded azure

lifted and fell...  
it's the long-expected radiance  
you can't explain

emeshed in the fairytales  
as they're told  
like hidden angels in the picture

you don't see at first  
that have to be pointed out to you  
before they melt again:

sheer traceries richly borrowed  
from all that fondant light.

in a painting by Monet  
cream yellow floats  
edged in a tanager red...

but I am shimmering and lost  
as if in a prelude by Debussy and  
somehow in the way.

I tripped the rose-tripped light  
of a hidden evanescence  
holding the white cathedral still

only with my gaze  
and I wept with no sound at all  
into these plum-ransacked streams

smudging slightly  
their taffeta waters purling -  
crooning - to each loved thing:  
'don't disappear...'

I'm calling your endangered colors home  
and willing the unmoored prisms not to break  
let silver trumpets sound

your amethyst testaments  
by far

the last of their kind-

mary angela douglas 3-5 july 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Jackdaws Slice The Scissored Air

[to my grandparents: Milton and Lucy Young]

the jackdaws slice the scissored air  
while the beautiful stare, uncomprehending  
fixed on a crystal stair through Heaven winding into

November's thunderheads.  
and while the caw from branches overwhelms  
those in the present tense and bent and furrowed

on their way to work

the lovely live entranced  
in the memory of roses and cannot shirk  
the visions vouchsafed them

in the long ago.  
you in your sullen poses flee

you will, the early Spring  
and all and all my loves,  
my little ones

come back.  
to me

in a music that is undeterred.  
the earliest green, the softest Word.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Jeweled Way Is Gone

THE JEWELLED WAY IS GONE

maybe holy angels then inspired us

building up our defenses of beauty

against the cruelties lapping at our door

this was what the grownups called playing.

with all conceivable blocks we built the playhouse

the one we would live in evermore

when the storms came battering

the trick or treat scares,

silos for the candy corn.

Ive thought a lot about it

how the green trees made our grove

long after the leaves, even the trees

were felled.

and how the wishing wells in the picture books

looked so realistic

we believed in so much then.

now I think of little children

little children in school

day by day forced to call it the environment



when for us it was the faery woods.

what is gained I wonder

stripping the branches bare of the gold leaf

the veins of gold, the ramifications

and the ramparts too

of invisible kingdoms.

the jeweled way of measuring the worlds.

mary angela douglas 19 september2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The King Of Poetry

Your word is a flame  
your word is not a lie  
your word is a star  
your word is not a lie  
your word is not a bent arrow  
it is an arrow of gold  
I have kept  
in my heart's quiver  
it is not a lie  
there is noise everywhere  
it is not the truth  
there is the turning back of  
every tide you started  
it is not the truth  
I have stood with the water  
rising over my head  
I have been told  
'You are not drowning'  
but I was drowning  
And You knew it  
I was drowning and you  
lifted me out on dry land  
You who are not a lie.

mary angela douglas 21 october 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The King Of Small Hearts

I said hello to the king of small hearts

not thinking, he said later

what was I thinking

to address him in such a manner

he didn't like my chatter

but I wasn't chattering I said

I was dreaming aloud of lofty things, instead.

he shot always

the bird on the wing

not the bird at rest.

the bird on the wing is best

for a person like me

said playing a part

to the hilt of a tilted sunrise.

such an artist.

such a marksman I thought

of the king of small hearts.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Kingdom Of Left Behind

the kingdom of left behind grows on its own,  
stone turning into flowers;  
ferns skipping a step, forget the coal

and diamond shine and gradually the seas decline  
and a home appears with sheer curtains,  
lilacs on the winds

that blow the let's be dours away and all the  
nickering clouds have come to stay in a blue  
silk sky-coral

and you wear pastels so that that cannot say  
to you any longer- those who happen by:

with any real clarity

sunrise, sunset; which it is then  
the end or the beginning?

mary angela douglas 12 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Kingdom Of Maraschinos

o do you remember  
the kingdom of maraschinos  
and you in red velveteen

practicing for the recitals  
the waltzes from the south?  
and the roses outside

seemed complicit  
and music lit from within  
like opals, measure to measure.

I remember this,  
I think to myself on the bus,  
the houses with a thousand windows

flashing by,  
bequeathed with too many wreaths.  
and it is Christmastime

and I remember  
the kingdom of maraschinos;  
the light in the skies

above our childhoods, cherry-wise.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Kingdom Of The Cults

they would have stolen  
the mist before our eyes  
if only they had...

the moon from the night  
would we have been  
the clear sighted children

our careful mothers prayed for

instead of what we were,  
what we would become:  
captive in our own native land.

the very forgers of our own chains.

on every hand said Solzhenitsyn  
there is a door meant just for you  
in the terrible labyrinth of a fate

you have no prior knowledge of.

you stroll out in the afternoon  
not knowing you won't come back.  
then it's too late: you're caught.

who can describe the lack of something

in the air when they close the gate  
and you can no longer breathe  
as you did in childhood.

starry eyed, you feel you're just the same.

such pirates await you child  
of any Age, the same, the very same.  
guard well

the candle flare of your soul

from their encroachment.  
traps are set for you everywhere.

Beware!  
the netters of dreams.

mary angela douglas 24 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Kitchen Maid Remembers The Emperor's Nightingale

once more I stand  
before the palace wall  
my chores half-finished

to hear the nightingale singing  
as if it were  
the last time at the dim window  
and all the little griefs compounded

and the storm clouds  
above the Emperor's chamber  
turn into fields of  
white violets before my eyes.

and there is somehow a liquid  
ladder of jewels near the veranda  
I could climb to anywhere and  
no one could call me back;  
then I look down at my  
embroidered apron in surprise.

the Emperor hangs onto life,  
his every tear worth half-a-kingdom,  
and the hidden trill is everywhere now:  
it settles slightly in my heart  
as if it mattered that a  
twig could break.

color washes back into the scene  
well-played - down and down the cherry sought  
orchards on towards the riverbank of lost delights  
beyond-

the fine-edged iridescence  
of a small departure only I noticed.

I never heard music like that again

though I lived on:  
sifting the snapdragon shadows  
on gold-dimmed afternoons;

calling to God when the willow-ware dusk  
poured into porcelain skies-  
bidding the firefly angels all, goodbye-

mary angela douglas 22 october 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Lacework Of The Day Remains

the lacework of the day remains  
the curtains shine  
the apples on the table of

the still life that is mine.  
the anjou pears unwrapped  
in winter sunlight.  
I never bought-

steam rising from the coffee cup  
with scant cream.  
but there is nothing scant  
about the things I dream.

mary angela douglas 29 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Lady Of Shalott

(for Alfred Lord Tennyson)

space curves back into her embroidery

so that she sees only the work before her

and nothing directly

everything at a slant

or within a thousand veils

or mirrors refracting

shining and shining

and this is art

and where her heart must rest.

and if she strays it will be only into distress

and not the wooded path

bedecked in flowers she imagines

or time filled to the brim with charming hours

but she mistakes

one day distracted is enough to die on

the outward view for the inner

and the path of doom sets in;

the lady floating now between two worlds

receives from Lancelot merely a passing glance

a phrase in the minor key askance

she has a lovely face he muses for a little space

wedded as he is to surface as she was to depth;

irreconcilable! oh beyond mead!

she floats on a river of glass that's breaking now

oblivious toward comprehending Mercy

through Eternities.

mary angela douglas 27 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Land Of Going Away

[after the tale of Hansel and Gretel]

this is all that we have left, we said to ourselves-  
in the Land of Going Away;  
the flood waters at our feet fresh purled

still swirling-  
and up on high,  
the bridge of the sky.

this is what we will carry  
in our hands to the rainbow lands;  
the ones we've almost seen

on breaks from work  
half watching the clouds,  
the clouds that are trees,

soft green, and rippling in  
finite mirrors there; in the parking lots.  
after the rain.

someday in the woods  
the little house roofed with candy  
and no witches will appear and

bright with the raspberry shrubs.

but today today we shift our loads  
and long for home and cry at mud  
still here to stay perpetually

with breadcrumbs in our hands;  
at the party with the light refreshments;  
while the Earth beneath us fades-

and golden nights become black days in the Land of Going Away.

mary angela douglas 4 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Last Bit Of Cake

(for Eleanor Farjeon, forever)

you should have come in when your mother called you

in from the damp and the dew

in your swiss dotted dress

with the transparent sleeves, your soft cloth shoes.

now all you will have from tea is the leavings

and only the raspberry cream.

only the raspberry cream, you began to sing

making up songs out of anything

the swan's feather

honeycomb, chimney smoke spoken bluer than blue

like a hair ribbon matching your petticoat

and in a foreign wind.

in olde tales the melancholy few

in the damp and the dew

you would have died of fever

on the day it rained

fading with the dreamers

down the lane

and when the sumac yellow



and leaf like flame fell in token

of your leaving

november would reign.

but in my poem

you'll only get a scolding

and the last bit of cake.

mary angela douglas 22 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Last Blue Watercolour

my soul imprinted in the Book of Snow  
cannot seem to cast its glow  
here on earth  
though I am the glass where frost writes its summer chronicles  
icing the strawberries overnight the mystical orange groves  
and keep myself clear as moonlight  
to be so  
to be so without detection unless by God  
to speak in waterfall speech casting over its pearls  
at the end of the end of the world fresco al fresco lavish with  
stars

o like Giotto or como las fresas heladas in the Spanish mode  
the charm of that chiming, of those tones  
to be the poem and lo shine within it while we are both melting  
imperceptibly and  
as I say diamond as they say parameter  
o but I am not a business model manager template  
temporary non essential being laid off or  
fired at random

I am the book of snow itself and carry the imprint  
of rare ferns of the forgotten lanes  
of the deluge when it came  
the dropped stitches in amber  
the rings on trees forecasting it all in evergreen;  
the enameled bell recast o my soul

the crafting of the last blue watercolour wave  
and the primrose starlings, silk screened.  
and you said you said! I was not winged.

mary angela douglas 20 may 2020

## NOTE ON THE POEM:

This is part of a series of poems I am writing as a kind of myth of the artist at the end of the world who keeps creating until their last many artists, in every

genre have done throughout human in the worst of circumstances. For whom I have eternal admiration.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Last Cherry Dress

the cherry basted dress with the golden thread  
I have hemmed now, said her Grandmother.  
and the little girl drew a counterpane of snow;

a small bird's cry and the holly berry bush outside  
the window:  
outside the window of Forever, knowing fairy tales

could never have that sheen again  
they had when she was here.  
and wondering where the violet music disappeared

till wondering was no more;  
and where in God's failed paradise she would wear  
a dress, that beautiful.

Mary Angela Douglas 28 June 2014

Note on the poem: failure not from within God; failure from within Paradise.  
Also, some gifts that are given from a family that loves us can seem too precious  
for earth's use.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Latest Dulac Illustrations

to Edmund Dulac

spooning out the ambrosia of late afternoon  
for the stepsisters' snack, so  
unexpectedly  
Cinderella spilled the sunlight on  
the floor and was reprimanded.

later, in moonlight, after they'd gone,  
fluttering their rococo fans  
way off in a lavendered distance-

while sweeping up the crumbs  
of a frilled disdain that lingered...  
she heard enchantment's music rise  
turning her blue gown roseate on the instant.

spun out on a dewdrop's galaxy alone-

alone-

pure gladness danced on a bird note-call  
(bright pomegranate, after all)  
from the mystically star-showered gardens  
perfectly rendered

mary angela douglas 27 august 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Lease I Did Not Sign

to be subservient

to let you knock me down like a small clown doll

to hide in corners

to hold my tongue when there is wrong

and not to believe in my own song

I never signed these rights away

i have never agreed to be your slave

whoever you are wherever you may be now

I bow only to God

though I DO wish you well.

I wish you may know God strew our path with flowers

but the Enemy doesn't will us to know

that it was for us God chose these greens and blues

the scent of the year brand new oh April passing into May

I will not deny You I will not say that

Beauty does not call us forever along the way

though I lose title and deed

to everything the landlords promised  
from the first day.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Leaves, Dreaming It

october soon, you thought;  
throwing it all again  
into such an acute soft focus.

and the firecracker leaves  
exploding and the air  
rich with the golden lost,

the rubies flung suddenly  
at our feet in heaps.  
who are we to be walking through

the jeweled leaves; already their  
countdown has started  
and watercoloured intensively

the skies direct convincingly  
the azure arrows through the heart.

will they funnel up from the ground,  
the leaves, imploringly, under some  
tawny spell or

prayer of the pearl grey doves

as though the trees. the trees  
were still with them, like a ghosting love;  
how can we sail apart? they

sing, flying back to the branches  
that released them.  
and I could cry, as if I were

still a little girl to see them whirling,  
trying to get back-  
the twigs now, one by one unlit

and cannot be lit again.



is it their light is going backwards  
and flickering so that you almost envision:  
saints in the afternoon?

or will this be forwarded, late or soon,  
to winter's as yet, unknown address where  
we will be salvaged

asked the candid,  
raveling, raveled the cherished  
till they disappeared

into the furnace of the years.

and it's only the leaves dreaming it  
in the upward gusts of wind  
or we, who were stranded for so long.

or me, at the beginning again  
in the roundelay of this song.

mary angela douglas 20 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Letter You Write To The End Of The World

the letter you write to the end of the world:  
let it be painted in gold  
on the eyelash of a second

or carved in pink marble  
as upon an april sky;  
or in silver pointed flame,

not ever to die,  
in colours of rain,  
yet not be washed away.

or threaded through Christmas Eve

the first time you believed on earth,  
in tinsel typography sparkling and sparkling;  
collapsing the parabolas of the soul

when it wept moonlight, vanishing, remember?  
O to resemble the toy most loved in childhood  
with its rainbow rings so self-contained

or with little bells attached that someone  
may be made merry.  
or let it taste like cherries on pineapple sundaes

especially, if on a Monday, it becomes necessary  
to not show up for work; let us all shirk then  
with the angels the perfunctory, facing the sea surge,

mystically brave: the last of the strawberries sugared;

breaking out new parasols for the occasion  
leaving our antiphons half unfinished or sending it:  
the soul, the letter, the recipe on ahead of us

wrapped in a silken envelope to sail  
above all destined gales into the  
milk pearl galaxies like the necklace

mama wore once, all blue summer long,  
turning to stars  
above the lawns of God.

mary angela douglas 3,16 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Library Of One

the library of one  
where green leaves shuttled through.  
pink clouds.

the shelves reach to starlight  
out of sight when all inspectors come.  
rose-leaved, the pages turn as

though in a garden-  
cinematic to a fault.  
and dreamy.

softly the archangels quench all interruption.  
for the library of one

who went to work  
on the meanest bus  
and worked for churls

typing up their manuscripts.

mary angela douglas 4 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Little Clues

sometimes you don't pick up on the little clues

even though you watch the news

the sky darkening in the middle of the day

the tunnel of silence in birdsong

you keep moving right along

engaged in small tasks at home

the washline's out

and it's coated with rime

the bird's won't stay

not even with lime

the leaves have packed their bags at nine

and even the stars.

and you're at home without a car.

here you are then at the adding machine

keeping count of all you had seen

even the fleeting warnings in dreams

the sun peeled like an orange

from way back

the train veering off the blue track

the inside mechanism of the clock

that ticks when it's supposed to tock

and all that you held dear

vanishing up to here,

the last front porch.

and you the former and you the almost scorched

with nothing left to

compare yourself to.

in a jeweled whirlwind

hidden hidden in God.

mary angela douglas 7 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Lives Of The Artists, Certain Others

I dreamed that people underwater  
were speaking to those on dry land  
what I noticed the most was

how condescending were the people on land  
never perceiving  
what a miracle of fortitude it was

that the undersea people  
were even still capable of speech at all.  
but the fact was,

not only were they speaking,  
(literate) , as they say, speaking  
but they sang arias beside the corals

they painted watercolours  
of the undersea kingdoms where they  
had been lost for centuries

after the hardtack drifted away  
and the sharks had come to stay.

oh my! a little child thought: one day,  
they are still alive!

and it was beautiful, beautiful.  
but the people on land  
congratulated themselves

for managing to stay on land  
and gave themselves the great awards.  
and honored each other

for dining out regularly  
refined in their choice of smorgasbord  
and couldn't hear the people

they had thrown overboard.

mary angela douglas 28 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Long Goodbye To The Horse Thieves

(my sweet doves, leave the cults in droves)

{after Dante]

'the grass withers; the flower fades...the word of our God shall stand forever.'

-Isaiah, the Holy Bible

'And call no man on earth your Father.'

-Jesus

no more cattle drives, as I recount:  
I was walking too close by the edge of the sea  
that isn't anymore;

weren't you?

at least, that's what they said,  
among other things, before they shot the  
horses out from under us...

I was counting vermillion angels  
floating on silos at sunset; shining  
apple- blossom clouded,  
and listening to 'Appalachian Spring'.\*

somehow, they said, not so  
pointedly at first, making me feel at home-  
you're not enough-

how it is with all of us now,  
I couldn't say. Too much  
Stolen time...the circuitry's been changed.

who let these people in here?

do you know?  
they think I don't know.

I know enough:  
when blankness descended,  
they called it music.

they still do...

they don't like what's in your head.  
they don't like that you have a head.  
perhaps they're waiting for the headless horseman.\*

who could explain the beads they  
bartered or why they shone like jewels so long ago;  
thinking ourselves among friends, soothed by their guitars we were led away:

no rodeos left for the horseless riders.  
no lemonade poured for the thirsty, anymore.  
but there's a porch in Heaven wrapped thrice around the moon,  
tree-house balconies on pine-needed air,

where Bradbury's grandmother serves us coconut cake...\*  
(the kind with dark cherries on top) .  
where we say Grace and mean it.

you're not that far from where you were before...  
in this world, this is no small accomplishment-  
let us leave the kitchen chair pushed back from the table  
consulting the dish-cloth calendar towel-the gold edged Psalms

with the purple ribbon-marker.

scarlet sparkles on the spiced apples  
from your last summer studio day  
when you left your Coke half-finished on the piano  
thinking you'd drink it later...

and green- golden shadows guild the picture  
you leaned against the wall at a king's command,

not a king at all as some of us found out-

only a millennium later-

come help us save the world, they sing  
with periwinkle flowers in their eyes  
but it's the last you'll see of your childhood home  
and the people who raised you-

and blts made by hand, finished off in your very own Munsey toaster...\*

mimosa splendor  
ermine tears  
your thistledown sob

where are you, grandmother-  
holding my string of pearls, my  
necklace of the mustard-seed...

the gold signet ring of your favorite brother  
who died at 12-

surely God will help me find  
the dustless corner where I stashed  
the Schirmer's olive folios-  
the ivory keys scented just like snow.

the color of my eyes.

beauty wavers, losing her pleats  
looking for lost pinwheels;  
scanning the wrinkled linen of the skies-

oh, but we're still on the fairgrounds of the Free  
where the Laughing Lady's laughing just as long as  
you've got a quarter and a lime snow-cone-

and Christmas marionettes in show windows  
dressed in special plaid velveteen for this occasion  
pour and pour their Victorian tea not spilling an amber drop

all gold beribboned, glistening under - my Department Store sky.

Listen...they're moving their doll mouths:  
'It's still not too late-run away; we wish we could.'

Pink thunder sounds above the Orange plains...  
the buffalo clouds turn restive  
above old cattle-rustled friends who think en masse and not like me;

the stars are broken ornaments above their Christmas tree farms...  
I'm leaving this- dear Christ and your Christmas, tree-top Star, go with me!

I will rummage in fragrant dresser- drawers  
for the pure precognitions  
I know - were mine- before  
the spiritual carnies came to town-

selling candles and sucking out  
with borrowed straws  
the ice-cream from my soul-

content to find in confetti tissue still  
all my lost visions folded fresh  
with gardenia sachets and  
by such a kind hand....

I'd bring you the frosting rose unmelting  
from my festive birthday slice, Grandmother, remember?

I'm almost very young again: with gifts done up in glossy pink and blue-  
on 45 rpms, the music of the great composers-

In love with holy freedom with the raspberry finish of the sky  
and the blackberry night shining down and down

the blessedly pathless woods-

mary angela douglas 15-17 january 2012

\*Ray Bradbury, great American writer of real American dreams

\*Appalachian Spring - incredibly lyrical suite by Aaron Copeland, expressive of the American Heartland and Appalachia

\*The Headless Horseman, ghost story by Washington Irving early American writer who lived and worked around present-day Tarrytown, NY

\*blts - bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwiches on toast

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Lost Boys Found

[to Wendy and J.M. Barrie (by way of Peter Pan) ]

did she take up her sewing later  
going in for fine embroidery the  
more elaborate the better to forget

that once, she sewed his shadow  
back?  
and did the sound of small bells

frighten her at odd moments? though  
I don't think she told anyone why.  
and did she stand on tiptoe ever again

remembering how she was before  
before she flew,  
before he came; pre-Pan, she

whispered in the dusk  
of a room with doilies  
foreign plants, old magazines-

precincts where the stars came down  
that close, roof to roof were never found again  
except in dreams of frangipani.

that's where the words of no farewells possible  
between such friends  
will never-never gleam

through the mists, she said, however ethereal,  
my dear my dear  
they often

appeared  
to be

mary angela douglas 14 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Madrigal Bells Unrung

[on the shunning of lyrical poetry  
by later schools of thought (or thoughtlessness) ]

maybe they will shun  
your milk white doves much farther on  
on the pearl of your quest pour such

disdain. they will dislike the rose embroidery  
certainly, ships with their silver sails,  
their cargoes of wonder.

how I wonder why it must be thus  
and why they would deny themselves (and us)  
the faceted jewels, the opulent song

what do they see they think is wrong in it?  
the whole earth is embroidered still.  
the night we live in now.

our very selves.  
ah if I had a wishing well then I would wish  
the singers back who sang like this.

not live to see the madrigal bells unrung.  
raid Beauty's coffers. they just close the lid.  
pack sweets away.

and think in doing so,  
that they have won.

mary angela douglas 15 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Magician At The Close Of Day

somewhere I have never traveled gladly beyond any experience

e.e. cummings, "Somewhere I Have Never Travelled";

should I walk on perennial stilts to join the circus

keep creaming the new moons into quarters that shine

draw scarves out of the cotton candied air while being the penny

Valentine at the Fair

in my dream that opens its paper cut gate so that the bluebirds

shine hoisting the pink ribbon over the sugared landscape... or

it shuts in time like Cinderella's chime, like

cummings'poem so elegantly

on the somewhere the rose has never been seen

that delicately, that imperiled as though it were made

of snows.

evanescence is a tough act to follow.

when it is we ourselves slipping in and out of clouds

not only the copper moon

will I sleep till noon. will I understand again the language of  
birds

if I am careful never to say a bruising word or will my heart  
suddenly burst into paper flowers or fly into the furnace

all tin soldier and ballerina

flung by unrepentant winds into the forever

how can I write the arc of the story when it's me

and I know the egg timer's set and there's isn't time to pay  
respects to everything to everything that vanished

one feels when the branches are lacework against the sky  
the cross=stitch of the violets and of the Spring moon

late May has been suspended;

embroidered embroidered on an empty loom.

mary angela douglas 2 may 2020; revised 6 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Many Coloured Bear At Rest In A Variegated Light

to Mr. Perry Cordill in praise of his painting, 'Papa Bear'

a popsicle bear shrilled the little girl  
blue raspberry! where he slurped it in the grass  
while reveling in the sun smiled her mother  
(that must have been after the children dropped them  
as they'd run)

or soaked to his bear bones in the tangerine rains that come  
half butterscotch half butter rum said the miner  
a little shyly  
in the coldest creamiest Spring we've ever had  
or flat dead-center in the Northern Lights  
a rainbow sherbet bear the little girl breathed reverently  
coming close to it  
still shaggy, for all that resplendence thought  
her thoughtful maiden aunt with sensible shoes  
and cherries on her hat

a Kodiak bear at large in the paint store in a western town  
at the foot of gold mountains  
with blueberry yogurt on his muzzle

a sunrise bear it just can't be sunset

or this is how he feels at the height of summer  
all rainbow stippled, matted with orange blossom honey  
or lumbering through Forever the God of  
all rainbows at his heels  
driving him farther into total Bear Happiness  
into berry crowded thickets.  
in a lingering spectrum  
fantastical

mary angela douglas 19 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Many Coloured Horse

the many coloured horse from the carnival  
pawed the earth near the rose garden  
in the perfumed mists of day

as if he had something to say.  
we rose in our dream sleep accordingly there  
sleep walking in our flower quilted housecoats

from last Christmas and  
under an indigo sky fast becoming

shell pink. what do you think  
I dream spoke to my sister but  
she was still playing the piano

in the air, her piano of everywhere  
pale green and practicing, practicing  
while the many coloured horse stood respectfully

and listened for the silver sounds.

oh why have you come and whither have you run from  
I wanted to say in dream speech but could not find the words.  
but the dream horse, many coloured cloud horse not at all

loud horse escapee from the carnival  
heard me o  
and snuffled among the rose bushes

happy he had come home.

mary angela douglas 21 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Map In Ice Cream Colours

how fervently we wished  
that the map in ice cream colours  
had been the real map

of the World.  
the one marked for Treasure.  
and Treasure would be found

and then we would sit down  
on the checkered cloth for a picnic.  
huge cookies, all around

with molten chocolate in the sun  
when wishes were young.  
and the ice cream map melting

and we are laughing  
by infinite streams  
in the tall grasslands

and the grass, leaning upwards  
into the stars

mary angela douglas 15 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Map Is A Mist You Have To Know That

the map is a mist; you have to know that;  
frail as parasol paper could be  
in a flood.

she raised flowers in the mud  
and was happy;  
at home with paper lanterns;

peach ice tea.

are there fractures in these porcelain skies?  
I used to wonder  
walking in November,

the lake like a toy.  
the map is a mist and everywhere the same.  
the old names, too.

I cannot find them there  
with my torn out page  
from the directory of roses.

it's so multifoliate,  
the Rose, the way she thought of it  
then

no composer could compose it.  
and I have only the mists to go by.

mary angela douglas 19 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Marine Coloured Winds, The Curtains Blowing

the pastel coloured winds  
in shades of marine  
ruffle of dreams

by the water; my dream  
of the wraparound porch  
with the honeysuckle vines;

my green perfumes; my hidden signs  
disperse, webbed in gold  
on the surfaces

of things, of the waters  
in my dreams in marine colors.  
more, moire, in their thin disguise

clouds beckon me early, on the day  
they rise, in the summers before  
who could recognize

you had gathered your gardenia sighs for  
the last summer that winds  
in marine colours could shear the

curtains at the window; float  
near the waters as if  
they were sentient

sails

mary angela douglas 12 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Marmalade Measures Of The Sun

the marmalade measures of the sun  
the coloured chalkboard summer sums  
we thought were ours till kingdom come

the metronome's gaze

upon the musical page, gum starred  
and this is Where You Are, on planet earth  
the piano lid open to the neighborhood

small scars kissed new

and much imagined from the few notes graced,  
the blossoming of the keys  
when scales were young

the Dreamery of our  
Grandmother's Liebestraum  
I have kept in my box of charms

where the ballerina twirls  
in her pink bit of tulle  
and can't take arms

because of the Golden Rule

against the vanishing of iris skies  
and all the shreds of hows and whys  
we knew back then

the doll patch silk  
the chocolate milk

when every wind through the screen door  
chimed  
and anything reminds me now

that was where  
I lived somehow



the only place I ever would

though Time itself  
has long since raced me  
to the end of the block

mary angela douglas 24 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Marvelous Floating Bookshop And Virtual Ice Cream Emporium

the poem with the caramel icing  
turned out right  
though no one knew about it

and nobody ever saw  
the Marvelous Floating Bookshop and Virtual  
Ice Cream Emporium on Earth  
(except perhaps, me)

though I promise, it was there  
painted cherry vanilla  
on the little lilac lane that

only came into view  
on the left hand side of the bus  
when I was the only one looking out  
in that direction.

and you dropped the day in your merriment  
melting like a creamsicle on the busy sidewalk  
into...

and who could ever tell them from the flowers,  
night children blowing in a garden- thick in the shade  
of lime trees

and lavender blue at midnight  
every blade of grass bent toward us  
as we wandered into a strawberry feeling frothing  
the Marvelous Floating Bookshop and  
Virtual Ice Cream Emporium:

four paperbacks, 25 cents each  
wrapped in brown paper tied with a string  
and no string theory and free, free, free  
lusciously malted through and through and

I'll have a cherry phosphate stylish Rose said  
in a book I read  
crackling new  
with a papery perfume  
like a box of penny valentines just opened  
and every heart

for you at the singular page  
only you will decipher  
still and still and still

you wander or you will among coloured illustrations  
toward the drugstore racks in dreams that squeak

content is a fizzing fountain coke  
and the odes of poets never heard from on earth

mary angela douglas 8 july 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Math Of Stars, The Distances

the math of stars, the distances,  
Your fingerprinted Light I have held in my heart  
immeasurable while waiting for

the school bells at the end of galaxies to ring,  
crystalline in decembers or outside  
of classrooms in the night air

when the Rilkean winds are stirred  
and birdsong, framed from tip to opulent tip.  
and are you lost in the brush of wings,

in the thick of It,

of sudden angels as they sing and the  
velvet of Christmases falls upon you  
as a mantle.

O as the Magi  
may you be, wrapped in the purple of  
the journeys you could undertake even when learning to divide  
the Golden apples among friends

no longer with us, here, on Earth.

mary angela douglas 24 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Merchant Returns To Beauty

here is the rose that cost me everything  
he said  
if only you had asked for peacock

diamonds, castles of aftermirage-sweet  
dresses of orchid embroidery from the floss of  
hummingbird wings, Viennese

tortes for breakfast lunch and dinner-  
a brace of Firebirds  
the end of human suffering;

one more golden breath...

here is the rose red as blood  
that should not mean  
what it means now

how could you know  
what I know  
and still live

tomorrow is a rose-red ship  
breaking apart mid-  
harbor

on a calm day.  
while spectators gather

mary angela douglas 30 november 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Merely Imagined Author Writing The Life Of De La Mare

it isn't enough to go into the mists;  
you should be mist yourself  
to find him;

to think you have  
till you have dreamed  
with no parenthesis;

you won't take notes  
but freeze there in the hedges  
(only a little, he said)

and that's how music starts:  
viola, moon bright  
for the Invisible.

come in, said he, it's getting dark  
and we'll have tea  
of orange blossom, lime

perhaps with something tart  
only a little icing hinting cherries, apricots  
and will you have some more?

he inquired how the book was  
coming along or is it at all  
there? in a green silk chair

was he suddenly quiet  
hands in his pockets in and out of time  
before strange candies melting

there, like twilight, clouds  
by the China cabinet  
leads you to ask but you can't:

whose childhood is this, anyway?

of anything, vanishing-  
less like Carroll, he said kindly  
more like the Christmas Feast

once the Star near trembling, sets;  
the snowlight of these shadows flees;  
the drifts.. I was an early spring, too late

profiled near the sweet peas in an evening garden  
moonstruck to the core  
you won't forget me...?

mary angela douglas 25 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Mermaid Predictions, The Future Of Snow

the mermaid predictions, the future of snow  
is this my future thought the smallest one  
a pearl dissolving only on the surface of the seas.

I have left everything and still, I am alone...  
Hans Anderson dipped his pen in the foam  
and thought of the future of snow.

how does it feel to melt not knowing  
if anyone remembers  
the fireworks over the castle  
the whole of Denmark dancing.

am I the future of snow the poet mourned  
and tempered her future.  
she will glide on light into the chambers  
of good children.

and that, forever

mary angela douglas 18 february 2014

Note on the Poem: I went to Amazon today to see if it would be possible to order a ten pound bag of pinto beans so I won't have to think about what's for dinner for a longish time and a momentary ad for Porter Fox's Book 'DEEP: on Skiing and the Future of Snow' caught my eye - especially the incredibly poetic, evocative phrase 'the future of snow'.

The phrase did not originate with me, then, but it did trigger this poem on Hans Christian Anderson and his deep (as deep as the future of snow) fairytale on sacrificial love, The Little Mermaid... Thank you Porter Fox for such an incredible phrase.

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Ministry Of Dreams

who was in charge of the ministry of dreams  
and was there really that much paperwork  
we wondered caught in sudden gleams

unexplained except by light  
by light, by candlewick or sun  
the ministry of dreams ran on

and images were sorted as we slept  
and scenes were filed while  
other actors wept

things rolled on wheels  
and small bells pealed  
and someone paged

the revolving stage  
or played for the opposing team  
betrayed our secrets to

the ministry of dreams.

mary angela douglas 11 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Missing Detail In The Picture, The White Roses

[to the poets of World War I]

the missing detail in the picture, the white roses.  
why do the white roses  
cast no shadows

on the green grass there are other shadows  
the house has shadows, the child in the grass  
with the azure ball that cannot bounce there

the vines on the white walls of the house  
but the roses.  
white roses cast no shadows in the painting

on the green garden and where are the endings of  
the words that would have passed inspection. anywhere  
that answers cast no shadows on

the pavements in the rains, the scented gardens.  
how blinding are the roses and the  
seraphim near the old refrains the

summer children singing of the azure

then the speeding shells the  
toppled oranges in the orangeries  
frame by frame the  
azure ball blown skyward and the

white roses under all this moonlight  
still cannot find  
their shadows except in my poem. it is this nearness

I am writing about-  
so close you are standing to

the white roses the apparition of the sunset

the last bar in the music (but it isn't finished!)

the white the red the peach rose blurred and foundered

the open cannonades the canons without your names

the letters forever summoned snow on snow

departing, unanswered unstoppered like the white rose perfumes

book without pages

poem without lines

and drifting now unrecognized.

banished from earth they will bloom elsewhere

mary angela douglas 19 january 2015; 21 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Mockers Stand On Every Hill

the mockers stand on every hill  
and let their silver arrows fly  
and everything they say and do

begins with language made of lies  
in this the Kingdom You conceived  
and fashioned from the pearl bright light

but we live here suspended in  
their neighborhoods of murky night.  
the mockers stand on every hill

and let their silver arrows fly  
and every mote of our good will  
is bent and strung for cruel delight.

and yet from farther hills we hear  
the trumpets of our victory near  
and Love's own arrows burnished still

upon the higher, brighter hills  
will someday take these battlefields  
and claim the regions of our weal

when all the wounding that we feel  
will shine like gold  
where Christ has healed.

mary angela douglas 6 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Moment It All Turned To Sparkles

it's threading the point too finely  
chided the godmother  
tapping a lilac toe shoe on the pavement

where the silvered flowers blew.  
and all this under early moonlight.  
never mind the lateness of the hour-

the moonflower in blossom after  
an early frost, lost...  
you are not lost from wishing, are you?

Cinderella stared and rubbed her eyes.  
you'll make them red if you keep doing that  
if they're not already rose red from your crying.

apron starred, and twice around and singing

she commanded and the pinafore changed  
into pale light threaded with roses,  
fuschia sapphires, crystals and the effect is:

late snowfall in mid spring  
lengthened into a gown.  
oh branch out a little! complained the fairy  
to her wand, o sing arias airily

she said to the astonishing bluebirds scattering  
blue jade sparkles over their heads in  
a vortex of music

flinging the neighbors back into  
their gossipy hovels, in honied twilight-  
evening crust of bread.

mary angela douglas 24 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Moon At My Window For Free

sent on a mission to mars and afraid of heights

would I conquer my fear if not the Martians

mending my parachute year to year

having barely mastered sewing on buttons

of a silver, a milky hue like light streaming through

whatever place I was dreaming in at the time.

I practiced gliding in my room in my bright shoes

while reading the news and counting down the days.

but no one was buying it.

who am I to sell moonlight in a jar

red rocks from a distant star

but keep in mind

others went out to the gold mines on a whim

and found nothing then

but empty pockets nights of no diamond sleeping.

I hope to write no resume someday

to live on a planet where this is not required

to define why I should be paid by the hour

when I have Mystery, the moon at my window

for free and all the pearl glorias

singing inside me.

mary angela douglas 28 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Moon In My Coffee

the moon in my coffee the colour of cream  
is rising a little incredible dream  
im out on the terrace the evening is young  
and trying to study the flares on the sun  
the moon in my coffee the colour of gold  
is iced with small crystals it's starting to snow  
im starting to feel it for Heaven's sake  
the heat isnt on in here  
my mistake  
was causing the terrace to ice over blue  
a beautiful dream but Im glad it's not true.

mary angela douglas 9 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Muse In Flight Before The Approaching Armies

I hid beneath my eyelid the poem of Infinite light  
so no one could steal it.  
and in my shoe, the poem of going away.

and going away, again.  
and in my heart,  
all that could not be said-

and whether it flowered in almond branch or snow-  
of the crystal wounds, untended,  
of unwounding God.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Museum Of Sadness

and do you have a museum of sadness?  
your very own? scattering the flowers before  
you as you walk the trees may be while you

walk alone or on pavements of snow  
hand in hand so tenderly with the Holy Ghost  
the klieg lights of the moon on the lustre of the

very same marble and you know you know

the exhibits you'll want to see. the cafe across the street  
as you remember the twilight's blue.  
the angel guards with their grave faces.

you recognize the saturday sweaters, various letters.  
the dried arrangements of who knows the best  
bouquets you could have been sent at the time.

and in a frame of pearl the day you believed in  
that came and went. the little stove that cooked cheap noodles.  
the cinnamon shades are drawn.

and now, is it enshrined?  
are the shadows mauve as if they were flowers too  
in hiding from the brilliance of your sighs?

the pale green rectitudes in the scrapbooks on brown paper  
where the tape is peeling the Christmas lights unwind  
and in the corner, the things you wore  
amid fresh tuliped dreams:  
the scarves with the glittering thread

the pale dance shoes.  
the things you thought you said  
inscribed in gold  
and in your heart with the arrow drawn straight through:

a sob.

mary angela douglas 17 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Music Of Gardens Is My Soul

the music of gardens is my soul

the emerald trilling of birds

the splash of clouds and sun with shade

the pearl grey doves.

the gate as Rilke said, where wishes wait

and the mixed perfumes

of all the loveliest blooms and I will translate

them or pick the least bouquet and fling it at the stars

in remembrance of all that was taken away

on the forced marches of the world

the music of gardens is my soul

I read perhaps from a poet long ago

woven into a dream scripted manuscript:

facing ng a note for the angels

under a stone.

mary angela douglas 2 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Music Of Swans

[to Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam...]

(and for my Grandmother, Lucy White Young)

once we knew the music of swans,  
the silver scrolled.  
standing on tiptoe

you see the rose windows;  
you can almost reach them.  
you love a gardenia stillness;

it is not distilled.  
perfume of ivory.  
perfume of the palest green.

once we saw through the orchards  
in all the paintings:  
did they come to life?

we breathed our words  
falling to earth all apple blossom.  
or inscribed on the winter air, in crystal.

and in the citrus summers, in-between,  
we learned the music of swans  
so that afterwards, in the long ages,

someone would not forget them.

mary angela douglas 3 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Musicbox With The Curlicue Birds And Flowers

the musicbox with curlicue birds and flowers  
and the tune sprinkled with light  
through now, how distant hours! the

childhood forests with the slanting rays

from heaven the ladder swung down  
of sun mote gold this is what I hear  
cried the daughter of the musicales

in her pink tulle on ballet slippered afternoons  
how have we grown old I mused  
remembering the sequined tune

gardenia moment on the side lawn  
in late spring, our aprils completed

the musicbox with curlicue birds and flowers  
the bone china regencies  
and all the mysteries of faded song.

forgive the moments in the shade.  
lost in the din of the big parades  
and all we thought that we could win

left stranded somewhere  
farther back than hearts could mend

I see you by the luminous door  
as you were then  
still going out with all to win:

and then the song comes clear my friend

in music we will live again.  
in music we will live again.

mary angela douglas 18 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Names Of Things

to Ray Bradbury, looking back, or forward

the names of things we held in our heart  
when alphabets foundered and worlds came apart  
and the clouds drifted over mindless borders

and were crucified.

the names of things, the orange and the lemon  
the midnight zither and the bluebird plans

the tissue paper birthdays at a secret command  
all disappeared, their ribbons curling.  
all but the names we taught our children to revere and

year past year,  
never to split the silver from the rains,  
to refrain from negating the Soul.

and ever to stow the heirloom  
jewelry of the stars intact.  
and always to be looking back

at the green world when all its  
colours were singing  
and we were the Story and the story told

and we were the Tree,  
and the leaves of gold.

mary angela douglas 3 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Novel Is A Dollhouse

dedicated to my sister, Sharon, a great pianist and:  
the English teachers who rationed my adjectives

the novel is a dollhouse  
in which characters can be  
rearranged

they have bendable joints  
whether they are in the parlour  
with the mauve carpet

or positioned happily by the rose-  
sprigged taffeta curtains  
in the grandmother's sitting room with its

rose leaf-green  
tinted walls its  
tiny hatboxes on the topmost shelf  
its delicate tea service polished on Saturdays

and the petit-fours on display  
that somehow never get eaten  
(they're for Company)

the novel is a dollhouse  
especially on holidays

you can see:

the miniscule bubble-lit  
Christmas tree  
and forever the fairy lights  
at the frosted front-window

right between the caramel armchair  
and the table-top fleur-de-lis  
lamp  
with its circle of butter-cream light  
illuminating

just as it begins to snow.  
(will they ever open their presents?)

in the kitchen off the  
dining room stand  
the children with their

heaped up plates  
of pink divinity candy  
on a pattern of

old country roses  
(they got straight A's)  
they are bewitched  
by the poems of Walter De La Mare...

the rest of the dolls  
are downstairs watching TV  
probably 'The Wonderful  
World of Color' in black

and white or 'Brambly  
Hedges',  
getting banana  
splits and finger paints all  
over the rag rugs, playing  
with matches as best they  
can, waving the butter-knife and  
taking turns

running with the pinking shears  
slamming doors.  
helping themselves to  
the last of the spumoni-

they cheat at Candyland.

and the floppy dog runs  
in fired-up curlicued circles  
with a chicken-pie je ne sa quois  
that Raggedy Ann can't

understand, so she just keeps  
smiling, smiling, smoothing her white  
pinafore under the shade tree

by the lemonade springs.

and the furry dog flies through the  
fenced-in yard with the gate left wide open  
past the green metal garden chair

the neon nasturtiums  
and the bean stalks...

there's the charming sister in cherry-violet velvet-  
Belgian-Irish lace-

still seated at the music-box tiny gold piano

polishing off her maple-red Scarlatti,  
'An American in Paris, ' and.  
'Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer'  
simultaneously-  
forever changing music history; .

the glittering sounds are far-reaching-  
lifted over the candy-striped swing-set  
and the circus tent-

wafting over the mimosas  
straight into the Giant's castle  
(how very brave) -

while the Lily Pons doll  
-in fresh pink organza-  
thinks in arias, quickly,

how to save the stage-  
and offers her pink-ice earrings for ransom...

but it's too late

the adjective egg timer on the teacher's desk  
boils over, (not a bicycle bell) ...  
and means it

mary angela douglas rev.11 october 2011 from version of 18 august 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Nursery Of Time Explained

THE NURSERY OF TIME EXPLAINED

up the honeyed ladder of the sun

remembering by Your grace all shall be done

and knowing we are rich beyond compare

knowing you are with us everywhere

our Grandmothers sang to us in the nurseries of Time.

how shall the flower be blighted now

when petal by petal you showed us how

to dwell in comfort while the storm rages ineffectually.

i know my mother, my grandmother can see

out the windows of Heaven me

raising a flag however small waving to the God of all

I'm here I'm here just as in childhood years

knowing you are holding onto me.

mary angela douglas 5 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The One All The Caroling Was For

can I help it that I want to read books  
where children eat bowlfuls of raspberries  
with bavarian cream

in sweet little bowls with apale green glaze  
and under the trees in a matching shade  
and where there is just enough breeze

to make the summer, Spring  
can I help it if in a once upon a dream  
I manage to go back there

in the pastel tinted train and ticketless  
that used to run round the park  
oh never deliver me

from the firefly dark again  
or from lingering at the table  
over the perfection of Neapolitan ice cream

chocolate, vanilla and strawberry  
all at the same time.  
from the chime of the xylophone

at the school assembly they let me play  
and tambourines and folkloric dance costumes  
sewed by our mothers.

some things should stay  
like thick snow skies the school week before Christmas  
and the inexpressibility of sparkling and reverence

comingled in the air  
about us everywhere,  
the love of home

the deep inhalations of the fir trees  
and even alone  
the stained glassed feelings

the Christmas lights in brilliant shades  
resembling the Renaissance at its apex.  
crowned with angel or star

and the baby Jesus we loved in the small window creche  
like he was our own shy little brother  
the one all the caroling was for.

Mary Angela Douglas 21 November 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The One Who Writes In Crooked Letters

the one who writes in crooked letters  
badly spelt against the red heart,  
deeply felt-

too large, cut out from

the larger sheet painstakingly  
with mama's sewing scissors,  
is small and dressed in pink

and penciled in the margins

somewhere else I think, made fun of;  
but here at home  
a universe

like a rose unfolding

mary angela douglas 28 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The One Writing You On Lavender Stationery

the one writing you (on lavender stationery)  
exists at a remove, you muse;  
in an arcane grove;

somewhere at home  
in a previous century or two.  
and the rolltop aqua repainted desk

for summers fit, is there to remind you,  
simply, this is true.  
in vain you will go to the corner drugstore

thirsty for malts, for something raspberry cooled or

seeking boxed stationery in several colours  
with a plastic lid and the ribbon slid over it  
diagonally;

or for the requisite Christmas fountain pens.  
but you will find stamps oddly coloured, exotic  
beyond belief at a penny a roll

and will send something off:  
who knows, a dove, a drift of snow,  
the colour green as you remember it

that may, in time,  
be received.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Ones I Remember The Most, The Dove Drenched Days

the ones I remember the most, the dove drenched days  
and the pristine trees fountaining with flowers  
the gardenia evenings coming through the window

the carport, the twilight mysteries  
nothing on tv  
just family feeling

and all the lights on  
the new magazines  
the Bahaus and the Debussy

and the ivoried light keeps playing  
it over and fresh ironed dresses  
steamed for school

the February gleam of  
the pink birthday parties  
the Prang prepared art

and nightlights in the dark  
fireflies in the yard  
don't try so hard or try

a little harder to  
hold onto this  
the white clover starred

the purple down the road  
and you will remember  
whispered kind angels,

when you're old...

mary angela douglas 25 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Order In Which It Occurred To Me

the order in which it occurred to me;  
not History.  
since this is a personal essay and

I'm writing it personally.  
I hope you won't mind  
that I go back in Time

that's just my own.  
starting with home,  
the stars over our backyard,

the sidewalks when I fell too hard  
on roller skates and never caught on;  
the lawn bereft of clover.

what will the bees do we wondered.  
will there still be honey on toast?  
and the Holy Ghost is pale green

except at Christmas, when it's pine.  
and God will be my valentine  
when I grow up

no matter what happened in Eden.  
as violets are blue  
may this be true.

mary angela douglsa 27 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Original Sour

oh that all sourness in life could taste like apple green candy  
the same colour light up the skies on the  
simply marvelous Mondays.

perhaps it would in a Paradise  
perfect as raspberry vinaigrette  
concocted by raspberry sunset

or close to it (all deadlines being  
fruit-filled there)

and this is the original sour of the sourdough bread out West  
the reason the lemon puckers at the seams Cinderella  
in your jumping rope dream of a dress

not forgetting the tangerine  
the cherry popping pickling fizzling of  
the sour balls, jawbreakers and the rest

oh sometimes sour is best we could have said

in the land where the cream never curdled  
over the strawberries

Mary Angela Douglas 28 January 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Other Side Of The Story

perhaps the thirteenth fairy wept at home  
under her polka dot toadstool barely  
kept from the monsoons

bewildered and bedazzling; why she cried  
to the cloudy skies do I never get invited anywhere?  
she used her time like Cinderella, mending their socks.

putting up strawberry, elderberry jams. is that enough,  
she wondered? then she swept their stairs and tuckered out,  
though she was lighter than fluff, she slept through  
their tiptoeing out without her.

then, the Princess came and it was just too much  
to be the only one in the Kingdom not there.  
so she party crashed the christening; saw the Princess, rose-like, fair.

and thought to do her a kindness.  
sleep one hundred years she wished to their despair.  
sparing her 100 years of War.

mary angela douglas 28 november 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Pause In The Music: What It Means

there's a pause in music only one discerns  
that one must endure through blizzards  
gathering the shadows of violets

so that Spring may descend  
after long Ages  
so that children may turn

the fairy tale page in books  
saying again, with wonder lit,  
is this true?

mary angela douglas 15 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Pea Green Boat Was Leaking

[for Edward Lear]

the pea green boat is leaking  
I said in my prayers  
but we were sinking on peridot waters;

I did not despair.  
and I had lost the astrolabe  
from jeweled last year

and you had lost your wilderness  
and almost all your fears.  
we had one spoon

and made do  
and jars full of stars.  
and we stayed afloat

on musical notes

and the sea never parted.  
never parted us.  
when quince bright was the moon;

the slow rescue's

Tune.

Mary Angela Douglas 12 January 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The People Who Love The Stories Will Go On

the people who love the stories will go on

leaving the room when it comes time for explanations,

amendations, nouveau interpretations

critiques on every grid.

all they want to do is lift the lid

so the jack in the box can play

and they do so anyway

even if they are called illiterate.

how lucky they are

to follow their own star

and to read the way they want to

as if the world kept on being in picture book form.

don't raise the alarms for them

not even when they skip the lecture tours in the great museums

and head straight for the paintings

or analyze them

as to why they are doing what they are doing

they can hear the music as well as you

with your PhD or two,

even if it's Beethoven

there's nothing you can do for them

when all is said and not done

they read because they want to

till Kingdom come.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Phrase Where God Is Glad To Appear

to Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, premier violinist

(sostenuto)

looking out on the hills of glass  
the angel of yearning cried  
it is time only

we were not ready only  
holding in one hand  
the brief flare of music

in the other a cloud too  
dense with dreams

looking out on the hills of glass  
the warriors of beauty  
cried

in one eye, a tear:  
to drown the whole earth;

in the other,  
a brief flare of music  
a brief flare of music

mary angela douglas 1 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Picture Book At The End Of The World

the picture book at the end of the world  
stamped with the king's foil roses  
I breathed in:

yes, they were all there what's counting for  
if not to see-  
with their petals rare in

the picture book at the end of the world.

I saw the house I knew was mine  
with the lilac bush, pink peonies  
a fence of moonlight over Time

and there in a dress of velvet cream  
in love with the dawns by an old rope swing  
my hand is pressed to my heart

remembering: this is all  
the may-have-been of  
the cherry, cherubic Valentine

of the picture book at the end.

on a page of snow  
you'll fall asleep  
and it's so quiet in the Deep

where someone, someone sings to you  
in the picture book  
oh, are we through?

cried tearful children wondering:  
how far there was to go and,  
is Christmas near?

two pages green and one of blue  
my dear is all there's left for you.  
for you-

and one that's pink  
and full of stars  
but we won't get that far today

my mother said shifting the  
violet shadows; then-  
the picture book at the end of the-

you know! tucking us in...

mary angela douglas 22,23 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Pinafore Pink Or Blue

the pinafore pink or blue  
light green, lemon yellow,  
hung up on pegs

one for each school day  
plus Saturday, Sunday.  
another one, violet sprigged,

calico navy, the rose threaded one, with gold.  
gravy on the potatoes in the picture book.  
perfect gravy. are you sold?

the kind you never made in school.  
spiced apple rings jarred on  
the window sill like stars

all crimson there set  
shimmering.  
this is your picture perfect little house

and glimmering

with its lion's share of little golden books!  
the complete series? someone inquired.  
that must be a dream

you feel instinctively  
complete with pastel rocking chairs on a lemonade porch  
your size, and hammocks the colours of Prang;

stretched between April trees  
bordered with surprises  
picked out at the five and dime.

and instant parties pink and cream  
where the ice cream never melts;  
the coconut cake survives the scene

and the cherry on top while

the raspberry fizz keeps fizzing.

in real life  
something was always missing.

mary angela douglas 8 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Playhouse Dreamed: The One With Tuliped Curtains

the tulips on cream curtains glow  
in brilliant red, in purple, orange  
convincing you you're in Holland

and perhaps you know Van Gogh  
and are kind to him  
and he paints in your backyard

which somehow is enormous.  
and this is where the clouds stand still  
in fantastic swirls of blue

the air vibrates around the poplars  
longing for the entire spectrum

and the stars grow so huge  
that Yellow drips from the moon.  
you fix coffee for him and bread

with cheese, a little toasted.  
he paints the pear trees as if  
it were the last Spring

for the Universe.  
as if the earth were his bride.

mary angela douglas 26 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem Bird Nested In The Rafters Of Dream

the poem bird nested in the rafters of Dream  
and fluttered softly its starry wings  
and puzzled lightly as night drew on

above the land that had no Song  
that had no song.

it carried jewels within its beak  
and dropped them into the dreamless sleep  
of those who favored prose instead

and read the news as if they were dead  
and read the news.

but lately the clouds have lifted the tune  
and something musical filled the room  
for a little while we almost resumed

in golden letters or crystal shoon  
the dance we lived by when we were new  
when we were new.

oh poem bird banished  
i don't know why  
we came to prefer

a starless sky  
I wish I wish before I die  
you'll sing in the violet skies returned

and we will forget the lies we learned  
the lies we learned.

mary angela douglas 17 february 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem Confesses It's Happy It Didn't Win The Contest

I don't want to wind up in the classrooms  
hated by the children who have me for homework.  
let me be puffy clouds rejected by the little magazines

as sappy as all get out like greeting cards used to be  
slap some glitter on me, I won't mind  
a big pastel smile.

runaway candy on a spree (from the candystores) .  
with adjectives galore. and quotes to go with:  
'strew on {me} roses, roses...'

I'll be free while you're at the workshops sweating it out  
when other people watch you get up to read  
their blunt scissors sharpened.

Whee!  
watch me sommersault away  
and it's a Spring day

and I don't have any work at all  
to go back to. I'm stardust out of the jar;  
no readings for NPR.

mary angela douglas 31 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem Is At The End Of A Road

the poem is at the end of a road  
a road snowed over or do you even know;  
you carry the moon by its ivory handles

(the world has come apart this way)  
sad ship in a bottle; how did it get this way,  
no longer sailing on water.

the poem is sailing somewhere else than here.  
you hear it calling from another chamber and  
as though you were pinned in a caved in sound

crystal shattered all around (the stars,  
you hardly whispered):  
a blistering wind, the voice of friends

you saw; you felt, you thought you heard  
there, in the forest  
of dimming words.

you thought you thought  
a herd of angels is crying.

mary angela douglas 6 november 2018; rev.30 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem To Osip Regarding God's Empty Cage

the name of God you said once

getting up before a small crowd gathered

there

flew out as a Holy Name

from my ribcage

then sat down

with no other word

your widow wrote later  
in her memoir.

Mandelstam like you

but in another age

and on another page

I say the name of God

only the name

and mean the wildest bird

even stic

beyond Firebirds

the memory of music

the one with immortal plummage

the Phoenix burned

who will not burn in return  
the one we would set free  
as simply as you  
in one poem  
not even a vast one but  
in one defiant gesture  
a slight smile?  
the Word on fire  
the fire that does not consume  
no more the one of secret cherishing  
ah, the singing Bird  
the fountainhead of Song  
before the gate of doom.  
uncomfortably  
they shifted in their chairs  
hating you  
when the Bird circled back  
adoringly  
for certain they thought  
oh how he has wronged us  
or how gauche a poet

with his scraggly beard

his incorrigible delight

and their faces darkened  
revealing the Black Sun

now he is done for

they muttered in no language at all

unlatching the cage for the

the wild, the wildest name

just word signifying God

you let into the room

where no fresh breezes

bloomed.

me too

mary angela douglas 15 january 2018.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem To Thingamabobs

for Ray Bradbury in the Golden Age again

this is my poem to thingamabobs, to the newfangled, spangled

lest we forget to love and dust the bric a brac

to sneeze and then discard with these

do not, whose kingdoms you would banish

all the windmilled toys, the click and the clack

the happiness of a hundred million inventions on the track

and train whistled too

world's fair mentions, crystal palaces at end of days

all we sought in little ways and the dollhouse too, the dolls

the amazing maze of all of it all

recall, red rubber balls, jacks handled deftly on a summer porch

the siren calls of toys forever calling you

the hopeful tools that could change everything in the workshop



in one Saturday afternoon littered with

toyshop elfish clues and jiminey cricket this is quite a setup

even with one tweak one twist one game of whist

or mah jong too

one charming turn of the dial

and it's all lit up like Christmas for a while

that may be longer too

if you should choose

you so and so marvelous

was is and will be too

the charming invention and the kite flown

wings and wings of man and icarus breathes again

in all the solar winds

making the angels laugh and spin the children ever merry

oh nation of optimists, come out from the hiding place  
and catch as catch can.

mary angela douglas 10 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poem Wants To Sing About Beautiful Silences

the poem wants to sing about beautiful silences  
without breaking the surfaces  
oh sweet impossibilities it will become a child

without these distinctions in order to  
sing the silence the mother of pearl  
of it the pines whitened in the winter sun

and you are the only one that breathes  
this fragrance this green pining for things  
unseen and asks who has sent winds

of this sheen through the silence

rustling and you want to go with them the  
pine scented winds and the poem would let  
this happen if it only could

but the bough breaks over the distance between  
heaven and earth  
and you have climbed out on it too far now

into the opulent branching of silence upon silence  
into the far snows

where little twigs break off into the silver of the stars

mary angela douglas 19 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poet Dreams Of Pie

the poem a la mode  
o, the cherries jubilee  
the lattice work of pies

comprise his dreams or hers  
the cat that purrs notwithstanding  
and the sonnet, the new bonnet

trimmed with tea roses, orchid

skies, apartment wise, fresh  
wallpaper, stenciled with  
galaxies, the galahad

sighs, oh chocolate ice box...  
on a summers day, how do you  
say lemon chiffon in

the language of same old thing  
for lunch and dinner  
hard as shoe leather

pink galoshes in bad weather

oh for a tartlet and the peaches  
spilling out on the plate  
sheer buttery soaked and

a new overcoat trimmed in  
more than metaphors  
a parquet floor

a tiffany lamp  
and not this damp  
coming in at the windows

in all seasons  
let there be gelato in the parks  
and finches golden in the air

nobody staring at my shoes in disrepair  
when I'm in the  
mist and the apples frosted in the bowl

with the nectarines the proverbial

plums form the centerpiece  
but I'll sleep better  
from puddings thick with figs, not figments;

the bookcase painted  
teal.

mary angela douglas 4 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poetry Suit

you should tailor it to what you dream,  
not the other way round  
and then wear it

the wrong side out  
all the seams showing  
so all the embroidery glows

so they will know  
sometimes beauty is knotted  
but that doesn't mean

it's not.

mary angela douglas 21 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poets Behold From Heaven Their Words Ploughed Under

to James Larkin Pearson

teetering on the edge of silence,  
will we fall through a magic web  
or through the mirrors of the

only, possible?

your children forget to dream  
but they are good at science;  
if science forgets to dream...

concluding in colored chalks,  
I will never!  
and nothing needs to be proved.

teetering on the edge of silence  
we inhaled deeply  
the sharp winds

made of stars

mary angela douglas 5 august 2014

Note on the Poem: 'ploughed under' basic definition: 'to cause to vanish under something piled up' emphasis on the to cause to vanish portion, image of the plough significant in the life and poetry of James Larkin Pearson, second poet laureate of North Carolina whom Upton Sinclair called 'the cornfield Keats'-

and what you may ask are the archeological layers 'piled up' on top of the poet's words and those of his tribe: you name it. And by his tribe I mean all those rustic American poets (of which he may very well be the purest example) who were not ashamed of their heartfelt sentiment toward home, toward country, and, in Mr. Larkin's case, the earth itself.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poets Enter Heaven

will we be noisy ghosts and tramp through  
other people's rose bushes  
or rattle the branches of the venerable elms on odd Novembered eves

or sing through the eaves like a banshee wind,

the poets asked themselves at first arrival  
in the afterlands,  
no luggage in their hands;

sometimes a withered leaf or two retaining ruby red  
or ochre or the mysterious, lemony gold.  
something to remember earth by,

they explained to the angels who'd seen it all before.  
The Next Door Through, they cried stentorian like  
and trying not to laugh (at the state of their shoes)

The Poet's Hall  
and then,  
we'll see what you can do.

mary angela douglas 29 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Poets Neglected Who Gave Their Lives For Words

THE POETS NEGLECTED WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR WORDS

words with no music they lamented  
and so their words grew wings  
and so they conjured the stone  
into a heart  
and pulled from their deserts, springs  
buried in pauper's graves or cut down  
by false revolution's knaves or at a tyrant's word  
how the world would be missing  
without them. the secret world  
they saved from perishing.  
and did they beg for bread  
and did their blood turn to ink instead  
in the last chapters  
to the ink they wrote in having no other left  
on a tablet of cloud and derelict  
despised in the public squares  
did no one sigh for them but merely  
account them fools for singing?  
too many times fallen on hard times,  
swords of paper gilded to the hilt  
notwithstanding.  
I weep for their passing  
that the glad world  
did not greet them always  
nor did it understand  
they were angelic couriers  
sent to bind our wounds  
while themselves wounded  
unto death,  
unto the last breath transcribed.

mary angela douglas 16 may 2017

I DIED for beauty, but was scarce  
Adjusted in the tomb,  
When one who died for truth was lain  
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?  
'For beauty, ' I replied.  
'And I for truth, —the two are one;  
We brethren are, ' he said.  
And so, as kinsmen met a night,  
We talked between the rooms,  
Until the moss had reached our lips,  
And covered up our names.  
EMILY DICKINSON

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Poets War Against Poetry While The Amateurs Are Comforted

to Valerie Macon, poet laureate of North Carolina for just six days who resigned on July 17, 2014 because other, former poet laureates and many others in the literary community ganged up on her because she was only a 'self-published' poet (at least, that's how I and many other people see it) -

and who said in her resignation letter to everyone. don't forget to love poetry even if you haven't collected accolades...

and, we won't. As for those whose scorn for the self-published seems unbounded, if you want to drive the Muse from your own door, attacking a fellow poet, (no matter how lacking in credentials you think they are) like a pack of wild dogs - in broad daylight - should suffice.

who will He send, the angels of saffron?  
this time, the ones of sheer starlight small children  
see straight through?

the ones of green linen  
soothing the wounds. the wounded.  
once again on earth, cried the violet

shadows, poets fight poetry with their inverted shields  
their plumes upside down backwards on their horses  
running down the unqualified.

plaintive on a lute in a far away time someone strummed  
a few notes under the moonlight. thank God no one heard.  
or just a few friends. and song flowed under the doors, through

the chinks of the windows and was welcomed.  
sit down at the table, here is dark bread, our last slice  
and spring-cooled butter. jam of the summer strawberries we kept

just for you and you recited for no money at all  
the beauty of the day gone by and how the angels tread  
on clouds of rose and gold above our worst hour and children folded up their

tiny griefs and grasped with both hands the moonlight appearing at the door that  
never wanted to leave again.  
and neither, neither did we.

mary angela douglas 18 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Power Of No Words To Describe

I contemplate the homelessness of words  
depicting the homeless. who are the homeless.  
are you a homeless? am I? is it a rare species?

can it fly? at least, from tree to tree  
out of necessity. or to seem more pleasing.

is it on fire? will it expire if not looked after.  
does it flood. is it, made of mud? can it be worshipped.  
deserted?

given potions to make it well?  
can it spell?

is it a hard sell; something not to tell, a wheel with  
no spokes; a joke to indoor folks.

is it a turtle with no shell? a wish without a wishing  
well a presentless Christmas, nativity with no star.

is it a heart kept alive in a jar, outside the body, too?  
does it still beat though not so neat or is it  
shot clean through with a sociological arrow.

some Valentine.

what was it called before? a homed?  
a domed? how odd to lose your home  
and then your name at the same time;

standing in vast rains.  
let out at dawn to roam all day  
humbly near the Library steps in little bunches

because you don't deserve to stay  
as THE HOUSED do

[as pets do, don't they? given dubious lunches  
not at the outdoor cafes. chase them away! the dodgy]

they seem to say: at the agencies  
though not aloud, proud I guess  
of these distinctions. wow.

and is your soul unhoused too?  
or isn't it the same soul you always knew

when you were living inside like a cat.  
if only someone would questionnaire that.

mary angela douglas 8 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The President Of Peppermint

I will vote for the President of peppermint  
the one who can't help but be jolly;  
who carols constantly,

makes but never breaks the  
evergreen promises.  
I will elect him King

of the red and green  
of festivities proclaimed or hidden;  
of happiness unbidden in all seasons

and snows of the lacelike  
softly coming down like ice cream  
on the town.

he will be the one

who favors the Nativity  
the astonishing Star;  
who furnishes candy jars

all over the Kingdom  
and beams on endless bookshelves  
wherever we may dwell

and lets us  
keep our Dreams

to ourselves in the summer shade  
and drift in the quiet parades  
if we want to

mary angela douglas 7 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Princess Missing Poetry At The Sold Out County Fair

I hemmed the handkerchief of the moon  
and pure moon glow was in every stitch  
and smooth as a lozenge of gold or a loggia  
on moon bright waters floating,  
the perfume of it-

no ribbon.

I made quilts out of sunsets, on raw silk  
in colours of the ultraviolet and beyond it-  
fantastical threads of the neglected spectrums,  
mysterious dresses of a rose velour you would swear  
were the very rose itself and I made jam

that tasted of the shade in summer; or sorted gem starred  
berries washed in cream in layered cakes between  
the king cried for.

no ribbon.

I wonder what their contests mean,  
I mean, in the general scheme of things.  
what kind of gardeners are they?

who pick the weeds for best of show,  
and leave the orchids no token.  
and think that poetry should be

plainspoken while tossing out bright ores  
of all the unbidden languages to come-  
and those that went before.

I'm not complaining; I don't deplore  
my dresses for the everyday...

regarding the plainspoken,  
I thought that's what our



common speech was for-

who left the charlatans in charge of it

mary angela douglas 2 july 2014

Note on the poem: well, who thought all this up anyway, this way of separating out the wheat from the chaff in poetry, of sorting the major from the minor poets and the poets who are left standing with their 'recycled' manuscripts not in their hands the poetry contest runners could not even be bothered to return to them (not even if you send them a SASE) .

At least they could say they regretted not being able to return the manuscripts- knowing that, for aspiring poets, generally, no one wants their work thrown out! (what they really mean by 'recycled' as in 'all manuscripts will be recycled') .

If I ruled the poetry world everyone would get a blue ribbon for even trying to write poetry and no one would be rejected. I feel badly not only for myself but for anyone who has ever been subjected to these kinds of systems of deciding who gets published and who, not. However, I think in many ways the Internet may help in solving this.

Or maybe we can all go up in balloons with sheaves of our poems and just rain them down randomly on earth for whoever finds them and picks them up.

We need every poem and every poet, at least, I think we do. It is stupid to me that things in the arts are set up in this way that people who are probably among the most sensitive of human beings are subjected to this nonsense of contests, competitions, prizes, etc. Maybe those in charge are doing the best they can but that shouldn't block us from finding a new, happier way to proceed.

In a perfect world everyone's voice would be heard and never ridiculed. Thank God (and I do) for every person who from a sincere heart has created anything in words, plainspoken, lyrical, anything. But I take the Princess' side in the poem that there is a tendency now (at least, in the U.S.) to slam the door on the lyrical. By these kinds of rules I doubt Shakespeare could be published now.

I do believe there are whole libraries in Heaven that include the works of all the rejected poets on earth. Think of it this way (if you wish) : there are more people there (in Heaven or the afterlife) than there are on earth.

Therefore, a much larger audience. So don't be discouraged; nothing is wasted in God. If you want to sing, sing. Someone will hear you. Even if it's only the angels.

And maybe the poets only the angels hear are the purest poets of all.

Plus, there is the fun of writing anyway just to capture something for this moment as if words were bright butterflies. And you, in an endless beautiful field where they abound. Dibs on the rose butterfly with the golden spots. And the milky jade one!

And I love plain speech too like plain bread and butter and weeds as much as flowers. Don't you? But, hey, let's be inclusive of all colors, shadings, variations, poetic modes past and present or does inclusive only apply to what's here and now that fits the bill of whomever's in charge?

P.S. I am secretly grateful for every poet who does get published because at least, there's someone who got behind the lines, so to speak, and for the innocent sake of beauty, truth, and goodness, hopefully. May they flourish.

And it is so comforting to find and read the poets of the past, and so rich! And to know they all went through this, too; though some - more than others. It's not a numbers game and it's definitely not for profit. It's because the heart and mind require it and for each poet, it is a sacred endeavor.

And so much more deserving of respect for the mere attempt at it.

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Princess Recounts The History Of Roses In A Picture Book Left At Versailles

[to Isak Dinesen.  
and to the word 'roseate'  
to Poetry, itself, as it once was]

only one colour from the Palace of Versailles  
I could have lived in till I died  
requiring little else the princess cried:

intensification of the Rose  
and lavish as a last sunset  
as if all roses in the rose gardens of the world  
were swept by rains from a deluge  
of the Beautiful and something in me sad  
yearned beyond yearning itself  
for what would not return  
because we had banished it.

the arcane perfumes of it  
in the foiled spring diminishing  
crimson by Crimson's cost.  
peach by pearled peach  
furled.

all carmine lost  
and their coronas-  
as Christ was, from our sight...  
the rubied Heart still streaming  
an irreproachable Love

and so they sighed, the flowers,  
crushed velvets their flower faces  
pressed to the dust of our modernity  
though you may say it  
was only the bell haunted winds  
hunting Christmas  
in the rose legends of  
the world, the heart caught

on its own Diamond and torn, relinquishing-  
something, -  
no longer met by trains  
(or with bunches of lilies) -

unless by certain children  
who would not leave  
the opalescent mud puddle  
rainbow stained themselves,  
(lost shimmer of Chartres) , every jeweled  
thing

or the saints no longer believed in,  
their aureoles  
scuffed like old shoes  
so that otherwise, my pearl,  
only the names of roses-  
regal as they were

in old seed catalogues remained for us  
oh God, mere stem of the language  
I once loved  
worn down.  
the Crayon's stub

Mary Angela Douglas 7-8 May 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Princess Wearing Peach In The Long Ago

[to Robert Browning (and Elizabeth too, if she likes) ]

the princess wearing peach in the long-ago  
picture stood up too abruptly in the boat of my dream  
and had to swim back on her own.

wringing the frock out later for a state occasion in the afternoon  
she stepped through the charming pier glass over faceted yet  
unable to pay the rent

and found herself again at the Magic Table  
where spinach ladled itself onto Sèvres  
(the cartoon-Popeye kind)

and twinkies for dessert yum yum appeared  
with strawberries and not just a soupcon of cream  
fresh whipped, and thick as anything.

won't you stay - precociously,  
dream babies tugged her hem of pale blue lawn;  
when they blew bubbles on their own  
unnuanced in the lemony sunshine

she only smiled-

as if for an ancient portrait to be loved by countless  
later on, tromping through Private Galleries  
on their raveled way home-

in a gold dust wind from the most discerning corner of her eye,  
noting the landlady, off in the distance  
(never getting nearer)

mary angela douglas 27 september 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Princess Who Never Smiled

[an old folktale, revisited...]

they have set their nets of laughter for me  
in all the befores and afters that can be and  
they imagine that I do not know

as if I cannot see that  
from the rafters of Heaven  
God set all his riddles in motion

and named them with the stars.  
how far they are from guessing mine  
they will not find.

starlight glows, abiding time.  
and I through the window look the  
other way and live in profile

as though I were a cameo  
about to speak:  
all ivory, for the multitudes

as if I knew anything.

mary angela douglas 3 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Problem You Can Solve For Yourself

the problem you can solve for yourself  
while looking out the window  
at the trees in Spring

should be somewhere near.  
but I misplaced it, you insist, oh dear,  
emptying your pockets year after year

for all to see  
in the dream that keeps revolving regularly  
the problem you can solve

in your sleep  
the last element in the periodic chart  
or the signification of Art

to you in a glass bound kingdom  
lost in the snow globe snows  
and wondering what is next

and why are the tiny houses  
on the periphery,  
each one latched

against a darkness

that cannot come  
instead of welcoming you home?  
somewhere out there

is the problem worked out

to perfection  
its crenellated towers  
of course

because you always wanted to free  
that word from its Sentence  
you always wanted to solve it

all if only they would let you use  
the coloured chalks to do it.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Pure Contradiction

reading the rose rightly as from the first  
and petal by petal tracing it in the mind  
as on paper with spilt spatter paint

or wearing childhood's frock  
and tiny rosebuds embroidered  
on the top

with a pink sash she says

and feels like a rosebud too  
and this is reading too  
the first delight

so that the children dance rosy  
ring the rosy round and  
all fall down in the rose beds

laughing reading the rose  
and later in the book you come across  
the War of the Roses, the heraldic rose,

thinking what is that did the armies  
throw petals at one another or  
why should roses fight

then turning to the allegorical  
the Mystical, Rose the rose of  
inner light

and Jesus is the Rose  
in the Christmas night  
and Rilke's rose falls asleep

with her epitaph engraved  
after living in so many poems  
as in living waters, rose waters,

rose, &quot;oh the pure contradiction

to be no one's sleep" he dreamed

I dreamed she dreamed, they dreamed,  
they were-  
conjugations of the rose

and reverence before the rose  
I understand I have never understood  
how may there be sorrow  
in a world where roses are.?

mary angela douglas 28 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Pure Lyric, Undefined: Not Subject To Psychological Profiling Or Social Reformation

all words spoken on behalf of the  
Revolution (any Revolution)  
are suspect;

all words spoken against the  
Revolution (any Revolution)  
are suspect;

but most suspect of all by  
those on either side of the Question

are the singing irrelevant words  
spoken out of context to any  
Body Politic at all,

the singing singing words  
of the obscured Ideal the refugees  
of Beauty undefiled the diaspora

of the Good and the True faithful to  
God in His original intent the lovely  
lovely words with no agenda like

angels sent at perfect liberty from any mind-numbing  
unified field of we're all in this together  
socialized psa-fractured fractured...

crystal are the words I'm speaking of,  
pure crystal shining from God in his  
original intent soul words quenching the

soul's thirst in this programmable desert  
who would want to ever walk through to any promised land  
acknowledging

how dare they? sheer poetry you still exist!  
the pure existence of the rose, the star the

branching lilac night, the single dew-drop  
in the musical note of the nightingale the

nightingale the nightingale

mary angela douglas 7 april 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Queen Of Petals Reigns

[the fairy godmother's song to Cinderella at the beginning  
of enchantments {as I imagine it}]

is it quaint to you this braiding of  
lines lines of the silver the  
gold entwined

and you, in your cream apron  
mopping up the moonlight  
from the sills?

and eating the air for breakfast  
what do they care? oh  
you will be dressed in

finery this rare  
when the roll is called  
and marked down in ink

the colour of april leaves  
the wind stirs  
if you please

and if they don't  
you still will know  
the inner satisfaction

you have called the roses  
by extravagant names by  
all their colours in the rains

and when the petals blow  
along the pavements  
seen or unseen-

it is before you they dream  
as if you were,  
their queen

mary angela douglas 6 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Queens Of Hearts Discuss Certain Matters

when we in the faery bred furloughs from school yards dreamed  
we felt it was cream coming down when it snowed.  
and the solid red-green-blue-orange-lemon glow of

the Tree or the neighborhood eaves lined in spectrums  
made it seem as though it wasn't just Christmas but  
Heaven had come.

and butter rum life saver candies could be savored  
or crunched, it was ours to decide or to ride  
on invisible horses on the playgrounds,

the ones with the sequined bridles every Spring.  
then we were idle and that's where we begin  
the alphabet peculiarly ours: to sing-

that flowers into its own  
without remonstrance.  
and how and how

have the knaves with the red  
raspberry tarts  
absconded with this, too?

I ask you.

mary angela douglas 9 novemer 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Question Of Mercy; The Flinging Of Statues; The Whims Of Marx; The Lies Of Lenin

+with malice toward none; with charity toward all...

-ABRAHAM LINCOLN, SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

=====  
=====

mercy is greater than justice

mercy is not spoken now; a dead language

as if the constellations had gone dark

above the earth, somehow.

as if they are building a new building

this building without windows

that cannot receive light

we will be made to live in.

they think

but we will take flight. from

only a reckoning justice

only a loaded night

how will we live.

without mercy.



without God  
on the pulse of our dreams  
where will we go who will we be then;  
no balm for grief;  
in a desert with no wind.  
their new world without end  
and the well will run dry  
for the whole earth.  
you did not give us birth.  
sticks upon stones.  
you will not dance  
on the rubble of my soul. O Marx O Lenin  
you faux pilgrims, misled angels  
reckoning belongs to God.  
and mercy too.  
what cross have you bourne or new ringleaders  
with no salve no salve no salve  
that you should replace the Saviour.  
inciting those who have.

mary angela douglas 30 june 2020; revised july 3 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Radiant Bicycles On The Moon

(for Ray Bradbury)

the radiant bicycles on the moon

have interrupted my sleep three times this week already

when I wonder who is riding them and where

jostled awake by the dream pantomimes

I can't answer for there

we could be mystified by the green and blue hula hoops

in their orbits

and is the moon the substance of ice cream double scooped

without the Hershey syrup?

oh golden vanilla; blueberry stars, are there bicycle bells in

tandem with the ice cream bars the way it was once on earth

I dreamed of typewriter ampersands in gold and the quick

brown fox when we could choose from among the frozen

treats with Grandfather's dimes or when seated

in the green hosed gardens

we could be helping ourselves to desserts like Floating Island

Or Cherries Jubilee at least in the magazines.

maybe I won't sleep through the night again the child

in the sundress

but stay awake in the matinees assessing the avenues of the  
moon, oh shades of the orangeade! where there are no  
mutinies except for Beauty's sake or the toy train running  
through the platted town on either side of the rails  
the pedestrians there in parabolic colours...  
the seersuckers in pastels. forgive me when  
i drift off at the closing bell  
forgive me if I sleep past noon skipping the malteds,  
the crispy BLTs (that's bacon, lettuce and tomato  
on buttered toast points)  
and wander about the lunar surfaces in my sleep or wonder(  
if the citizens miss the turning of leaves in an emerald wind  
and won't they come home soon, because of that.

mary angela douglas 29 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rains Are Sweeping The Canyons While We're All Inside

beautiful canyons spanned the distance

but we were all at work.

at school.

in the laundry rooms.

watching tv.

what if it had been different

what if we hadnt kept our heads down

when the Perseids showered

their gold for free.

what if freedom was for beauty.

playing the mandolin

under the moon.

what if candy cane deliberations

in the Christmas drug stores

at the last minute, while the snow flew

had meant everything always.

and the Nativity.

set in the window

with its yellow bulbed star

its radiance

and the beauty

spanning the distance

had been

where we lived

instead of just

keeping our heads down.

taking someone else's word for it

taking one test in the row

and passing the rest down soundlessly

when the silver rains swept through;

motionless. registering only

all the second hand things we knew.

or were expected to.

mary angela douglas ` 12 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Range In Winter

out on the blue furred range  
we sang about in schools  
has it started to snow yet?

I always loved to wonder;  
the cows with their rolling eyes  
in the mists

the buffalos stamping out the ghost fires.  
that would be some Christmas  
with the snows piled up to God

and the little sod houses.  
we would live underground there  
cloudy with dreams and stews

among the wild onions; the strings  
of peppers from the rafters strung  
like a thousand jewels won.

and the plains going on without us outside  
to guide them.  
the frozen grasses

breaking off in the winds.  
and brittle to the touch.  
I longed for this so much:

and the skies coming down to meet us  
where the angels froze mid-air;  
singing and singing

the sleet stinging our cheeks.  
and the long, long weeks  
of the earth so trackless now shrouded and

covered in drifted linen, with the exquisite stars.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016



Mary Angela Douglas

# The Reason

it's washing out my water coloured sky  
she turned aside to cry when the rains occurred  
and the dolls seemed sympathetic to her words.

another rainy day  
the scrap of blue taffeta already sewn  
for the smallest doll

the tea trays put away, ; the little cups

and shadows are caught with the red rubber balls  
in the vents where the air comes up  
and light is a tangled thing as bliss.

it hurts to remain and yet to grow  
and see your height marked on a wall  
and candles added year by year

and tears. and all you  
know as a child  
is that you cannot tell

or find the one who disappeared before you

who will spell it out for you:  
the reason why it hurts-  
it comes from only being on the earth.

mary angela douglas 21 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Red Shoes

dancing was never like this  
and to tell the story true  
it never would have been

if she had listened to her Grandmother  
but now the toe shoes sparkled  
crimson under moonlight

and she couldn't stop turning  
so that the birds flew up  
from the trees

with their vivid dreams  
and the forest ferns glittered  
with indifferent dews

and still she floated o beautiful  
a cobweb flecked with ruby half lights  
on her own

incapable of anything else  
but breathing  
until the organ sounded

and the break of day  
resounded with the bells  
and weeping, weeping

where the steadfast angels stood  
in columns out of the deep woods  
she turned again, home.

mary angela douglas 6 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Reeds On The Outer Banks

the reeds on the outer banks  
bend into a coral light  
and ferried from sight

are small clouds  
on waters dark as ink.  
churning the clouds

like a kitchen mixer  
churning the waves:  
the boat between

the eternities

mary angela douglas 6 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Return To Singing

[to the poet, William Blake to the Pearl Poet  
to Time itself...]

I saw the milk white pearl dissolve  
that shone like gold in the mouth of God  
the hidden Word of the year to come  
the glory of the foreign tongue in translation:  
for Beauty has become foreign here.  
the letter that you wrote to God  
on both sides of the paper.  
the midnight nation tried to sleep.  
without the dream of God,  
we sighed, in rusting armor.  
the seraph sleeved departed.  
old tears have latched onto the winds,  
and it hurts most of all what  
the green glide of the Holy Ghost surmises.  
that we could have lost our only friend  
Jesu, in you.  
the Word beads jeweled in the dark  
the one He pressed into your heart  
the one that sparkles before speaking.  
oh speak me into Light I cried  
that I may trace the bride of language coronated  
through a thousand May times,  
the milk white Pearl instead of sin,  
the new made Heaven, cherubim,  
the haunting of the world  
made sane.  
the solace of the sweeping rains  
that herald exorbitant Spring.  
the page torn out of a child's notebook,  
like an angel's wing, snow-breathed into existence:  
lily of the valley sheen  
handprint in plaster, and rosied thing,  
the return to singing.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Reverie On A Vintage Lace Dress

whenever you view the veiled snows,  
vectors of moonlight falling across  
old floors maybe you think to yourself

I shouldn't update the vintage lace dress  
but wear it as it is.  
this said the princess to her closet,

to the mirrors frost.  
whenever I view the dimming snows  
I think of old stories lost

of the shirring of  
evening's swallows, I think of them-  
of the cost of sunset silks.

and how alone they were,  
the poets, badly underwritten.  
slim candles

burning down in the  
cold platter midnights,  
olive loaf sandwich.

the last deviled egg.

the former picnic fare  
7 up in a paper cup  
7 maraschino cherries in the dregs.

and when I think these things,  
of how awful it was for the  
mermaid growing legs

and then, a Soul-  
a pall comes over the kingdom.  
the foolscap crumbles to dust...

I dream of rust continually

and of the dearth of wings.

mary angela douglas 3 august 2015 rev.7 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Rising

beginning again on the green leafed path  
with the dew on the grasses, our diamonds,  
or the overhang of orchid clouds  
amazed at our looming shadows on the ground  
the alphabet,  
all the colours!  
and telling time out loud;  
telling time by what He said:  
&quot;I will make all things new.&quot;  
he said this I think, I feel,  
in golden letters.  
in the tick of the fairy tale clock,  
and I play nocturnes again  
on my Grandmother's Steinway piano  
observe the irises  
take comfort in the demitasse  
the way my Grandmother pronounces it,  
of hand painted roses, or violets;  
on a background of cream. the late strawberries.  
the view from the screen door

the sound of near bells

I implore you oh Heavens

for the calendar towel of linen in any year

with the old mill stream;

the songs my mother taught me

in a dream;

the songs without words.

the same cherished pines.

more time to remember

the way that we have come

the rising,

not the setting,

Son.

Mary Angela Douglas 19 May 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The River

I watched the river of Time  
not knowing it was mine  
and flowing day by day

to where I could not stay  
though I felt solid in my shoes  
and though I read the news

I watched the river of Time  
not knowing it was mine  
when it filled up with snow

I watched my pulses go  
a little slower moon by moon  
and those to whom I'd come

a very little one  
passed on  
and I felt smaller too

just looking at the view  
without the very few who loved me.  
I watched the river of Time

not knowing it was mine  
and thinking I was still on shore  
not knowing in an instant,

in a Cinderella chime

I'd be through the door marked mine  
to whole geographies of another kind.  
those long ago forgot

where Time is really not.  
I watched the river of Time.  
not knowing it was mine., ,

mary angela douglas 27 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The River Of Dreams From Grade School On

the river of dreams the story goes  
whose river I wonder will it have my clouds from home reflected in it  
getting in a dreamy state of mind  
rather like Alice I think  
though my blue dress doesn't fit anymore  
the pale blue the violet sprigged  
the river of dreams.  
in life I feel too overwhelmed by rivers  
though I admire them murky green glass green  
blending the recollections of trees with river bottom mud  
if I stay too long I sense floods I sense floods of  
historical proportions and that I have brought them on  
by staying too long  
and not beneficence and I am too small for floods.  
but the river in books I understand  
the river of dreams there  
Mark Twain, for instance  
The Wind In the Willows  
and rivers and terrain as mapped  
in schoolbooks with the mountains shown in relief.  
it is relief to me that I am not really there  
I think to myself at the desk that smells like peanut butter  
lost in the mountains with a map key not to scale  
stuck in the river's current on a raft and the raft pole drifting away with the day  
and the day and the day  
I prefer the river of dreams watercolours streaming together  
after the monsoons of the mind oh indigo  
all moods that were in my mood ring once upon a time  
the river  
that is clouded oh my dreams submerged in opals  
the river at dawn  
where you can wake  
after denouncing the Red Queen  
and be safe on the waking shore from rose red retaliations.  
and the pursuing soldiers, the whole deck..

mary angela douglas 30 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Roman Way Or The O. Henry Twist

I dreamed I took the wrong road into the city and

the one littered with stars with craters

it's noon and the shops are closed.

no one around. or if they are,

they stare off into distances at traffic helicopters from the parking lots

as if they were from another century

and didn't know a thing about the Wright brothers.

or in the riff raff out of the way cafes

fend off the customers from out of state

all along the parkway.

where can I turn around.

there are no signs

there were no signs

you've been here for decades now

though there was no welcoming committee to speak of

at least the ghosts could have said something audible.

and I just did.

mary angela douglas 7 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Rose And The Gold Has Lined His Mind

[to William Butler Yeats]

the rose and the gold had lined his mind  
far from the cries of human kind.  
the rose and the gold.

and twining through his verses glowed  
the hues of Beauty as she goes  
of rose, old gold, the living streams

within, without

no bartered dreams.  
oh poet of the long agos  
while here, our doorsteps fill

with snows  
through you we sing and not by rote  
the Irish summer linnet's note;

the wild myths' ocean all before  
our dreaming hearts  
that dreamed before

and will again  
if words we keep  
like angels watching

your long sleep.

Mary Angela Douglas 24 May 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Books Of Anatoly Konenko

waiting for the beautiful ship to come  
we stood on sinking continents  
our eyes flooded with meteor showers

in a compact room  
an artist sat  
making books out of dried

rosepetals

children in their sleep  
waiting for the beautiful ship to come  
might never know

the roseleaves he was turning  
at precisely the midnight  
of the world

bird shadows over the blue  
green  
melting poles could understand;  
sensing the end of all auroras

they sang only for him  
the artist arranging rose pages  
binding with flowers the...

with fine mauve stitching that  
would not come undone

rose inscriptions  
rose inscriptions  
rose inscriptions

was all that God could read

mary angela douglas 13 june 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Down Of The Sun Shall Ride

the rose down of the sun shall ride  
your ferris wheel round  
when I will take your chipped doll

dishes away and  
clear the picnic grounds.  
I have something old to say

neither borrowed nor blue;  
lace edged, it may be true  
although you turn your face to the wall

and from the mint in our Grandfather's garden.  
I remember you, your childhood Grace,  
head bowed before the multicoloured cereal;

or noonbright in your sundress  
touching the clouds on high  
from the swingset.

many things I can't forget  
like ice blue marbles in the green cut grass  
of our backyard where we played everything.

though now you turn your face to the wall  
and will not hear me call out all we used to sing,  
singing the blue dusks down

as though in an antique game of hide and seek,  
gone on too long.  
music will find you silver in the end

dressed up in cherry velvet for the angels.  
and oh, my sometime friend, what I have written,  
I have planted in the rose bright's sod

that this our childhood may not perish  
from the faerie realms ever;

mary angela douglas 13 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Garden, Green Shadows

stepping from the rose garden

did children learn to weep thistles

was their dreaming impaired

did the roses call after them in despair

in their soft rose voices everywhere

were all the toys

broken at porch swing; and my wistera...

oh did the villagers stare

and shoo them from the door for their disparity

then they slept out of doors

did the dream well run dry.

did their guardian angels cry

put on a show

with hand puppets

and show them where the berries grow

that they might not starve.

was day old day bread that hard

with pretend butter

I know but I'm not telling

or spelling it out for you

who don't so much care.

I would not on a dare

produce for you

the one crystal shoe.

sweet God who saw them through

but there is an answer somewhere.

to the hardness of heart

toward those in the dark

there is the riddle raveled

on the way from here to There

and roses, everywhere.

renewed

mary angela douglas 20 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Garden, Green Shadows (Second Version)

stepping from the rose garden

did children learn to weep thistles

was their dreaming impaired

did the roses call after them in despair

in their soft rose voices everywhere

were all the toys

broken at porch swing; and my wistera...

oh did the villagers stare

and shoo them from the door for their disparity

then they slept out of doors

did the dream well run dry.

did their guardian angels cry

put on a show

with hand puppets

and show them where the berries grow

that they might not starve.

was day old day bread that hard



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to the hardness of heart

toward those in the dark

there is the riddle raveled

on the way from here to There

and roses, everywhere.

renewed

mary angela douglas 20 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Held In The Mind Is Fairer

the rose held in the mind is fairer  
where it always shines  
and perfect from the stem

unfolds its scarlet, blush, or  
pearl, soft tangerine, but, more than these  
as the rosebush

you remember from your youngest of  
rose days when everything beautiful  
you named 'rose'

when you first learned to say:  
'rose' as if to pray in Rose  
began for you that day

and still you want to pray in roses  
speak in Rose a hidden language  
specific to only you

though all legends are beautiful in the mind  
confused, a little, except that as  
in St. Exupery

you mean every time

the rose that is mine  
and mine only.  
suffer not the sheen of this rose to depart:

heart's blood it is and fragrant forever;  
beyond all wounds its petals bloom rose light,  
beyond incursive darkness

set apart

mary angela douglas 25 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Recitals Seen In Retrospect

the rose recitals seen in retrospect  
keep their bloom irregardless: at first,  
uncertainty at the piano; then launching into

musical suspension of all else and it's the  
pianoforte now the plunging into  
evanescent waters wreathed in flower sounds of a

childhood's sweetheart semblances and  
the coloured rippling through the room  
no longer a room, an opening onto space

excused from school  
and laved in the roselights now and green  
and green as the twinings round a measureless rest

yet the rockinghorse made of stars won't stop  
as we have galloped away or lapsed into  
beauty at the rose recital and they will not

call us back from the printed programme atmosphere,  
not ever; from lime sherbet punch served up on an april  
porch as I'm wearing the pink rosebud dress with the satin

sash of immeasurable poetry and a wrist corsage of curtseys to the disappearing  
room and all the rest is altered by the

coolness of carnation skies  
when we're, dismissed-

mary angela douglas 20 march 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rose Red Sealing Wax On The Letter's Dry Now

the rose-red sealing wax on the letter's dry now  
the rose red rose white story comes to rest\*  
like the see-saw on the frozen playground  
like the rusted swings still floating in

no wind at all.

frost-emulsed are the Christmas windows  
and the glorious Holly and the Star  
we looked through to see:

the golden bears delivered  
from their worst selves  
on such a cinnamon-sequined day as this.

but I can't tell you the end of the story  
or why my cloud-shaped jigsaw piece won't fit  
(not even on Christmas morning)

in the thin sky above the little house

swept penny-bright and latched.

I went a long cold way in my scuffed shoes  
to fling a milk quartz crackly word into  
the moss green pools of something

not remembered but that shone.  
don't tell your wishes ever or  
they'll not come true was whispered  
in my every dream but

I'll tell you the Christmas angels cried:  
'Fear Not! '  
though years of speaking only  
underwater made it hard to see  
their real words on the page.

I wished God could turn

the snow-bright word my Mother packed me  
(along with her  
sandwiches of butter and sugar) -

into a language angels speak-

Mary Angela Douglas 5 October 2009

\*reference to the Grimm's fairytale 'Rose Red Rose White'

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Rosy Tea Of The Hibiscus Flower

the rosy tea of the hibiscus flower  
was poured out in a dream.  
wasn't every Spring a dream then

we were in when radiance streamed  
through the dusty windows?  
and we found violets as if

for the first time.  
I will pour hibiscus tea from a rosy teapot  
till the day I die

it's poetry, isn't it?  
sighed the child.  
and I smiled, yes...

mary angela douglas 31 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Russet Hours Return

we are the ghosts of ourselves sometimes  
haunting the precincts where God has told us  
in fragmentary gleams  
now no longer dwell oh child of light  
haunting the ruins where love took flight  
be still, the Lord has mazed the mellow moon  
in yellow splendor rising above autumnal earth  
and banished tombs  
and we would seek the richer harvests of His Light  
come away from the dimly lighted  
staring into the glass and pray;  
oh Lord for all that has passed over me like a whirlwind  
I do yet praise thee  
cancel my haunting here  
and let me see the rose dawn rising  
over the greening fields.  
and feel in the rush of stars from the skies a beautiful shearing;  
the russet hours return, when You are near.

mary angela douglas 1 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Saints Cry Out From The Kingdom Of Lies

we who are held captive in this  
the Kingdom of Lies  
require your help

oh God  
out of the mire of stars  
have we been made

and unmade still  
your own and forfeit to  
the Kingdom of Lies

in every game of chance  
we undertake  
for your sweet sake

arise again arise arise  
over the Kingdom of Lies  
and make us ladders

out of your starry light  
and free us here  
from everlasting night

look down on this our plight  
while we are plighted yours  
and grant us sight

for the long road beckoning  
the pure.

mary angela douglas 20 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Scarecrow At Dusk

he scares no one, nothing  
and that is perhaps why  
his painted smile

in a certain light  
looks wryly on the landscape  
where the crows gather

the glitter of the moonlight  
into calculating eyes.

prince of the cornfields  
could he be  
in dreams oh what a surprise

and lift his arms toward God  
but they flop down  
when the wind is still

and everything laughs then.  
someday he may fly off  
the stake which is driven into the ground

aloft among clouds  
and tumbling home.  
and lose his fadedness and then

set out to win the princess  
but for now  
his crooked grin grows

tear streaked in the rains  
knowing he must remain.

mary angela douglas 24 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Scarecrow In His Meditations

sunflowers grow in the dark  
I know he said to himself  
so why not I

without the sun  
on nights when nothing  
comes to mind but straw

and the straw filled.  
all night and day I watch  
the hills for come what may

but May doesn't come  
it is autumn pays my way  
and the tinge of the pumpkin moon

and the purple crows at noon  
and me ineffectual as ever.  
sunflowers grow in the dark

oh why not I  
and the little straw larks  
by break of day

by my breaking heart remembered,  
missing the meadows of time.

mary angela douglas 24 january 217

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Scarlet Leafed The Day Lined In Gold

the scarlet leafed the day lined in gold  
your earliest alphabet foretold  
by kind relatives

the way the leaves seemed to fall  
before you where you walked  
and you picked them up

and carried them home  
thinking you would save them;  
sad beyond the possibility now

or then to say that they would fade away  
especially the ones all red and green and  
yellow-orange melting together

October's map all there.  
or we would pick blue jay feathers  
from the ground and Grandmother would say

bird fever, be careful, but we still would prize  
them as if they floated down from Heaven  
and still I remember the mockingbirds cry

from the yard when we opened the window  
in our blue room and how it settled in me familiarly  
so that later, reading Rilke

I understood the crystal space  
the nest in my heart  
for them all

was there from the beginning

mary angela douglas 8 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sea Maid's Dream On Deck

[to Hans Christian Andersen]

far from the orchid Heavens still,  
mermaid like as I may be, swimming  
through the vastness of possible words

I don't yet understand-  
may I not be caught in the fishing lines  
of so many footnotes to the poems

of my heart; bewildered by  
words on land or gold spangled,  
tangled in

the motes that reach me here  
where it's hard, sometimes  
for the Light to get through.

baffled, I try to sing  
forgetting where I am or that  
they have taken

my voice from me...

all this was in a dream she had First Night  
in broken pearl, on deck  
when the Seas grew ragged,

violet as Spring  
with every wave murmuring, murmuring  
don't forget - don't forget me.

mary angela douglas 4 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sea Maid's Reminiscence

(to Hans Christian Andersen)

I miss sea glass, my grandmother's pearls

coral music in the whirlpools

the icebergs on the moon,

when the moon is

floating topside on the waters

the ships of doom retrieved.

ladders of angels.

most of all, I miss speaking

where I'm heard

ever my mind a bell from far

distances in the Dream Time

ever the wave's repealing improvised

and not dancing on swords;

the fragrance of the frangipangi

the simple accords

of water and light

the depths where I

am out of sight.

mary angela douglas 7 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Secret 'i'

the secret I  
likes surprise parties continually;  
the kind with little presents

wrapped up in pastel tissue paper,  
curled ribbons,  
I will not deny:

and the invitations earlier,  
crisply printed with the painted pink cake,  
the cheerful smiles, the green balloons

illuminating

the secret I who  
likes many tunes.  
and humming them all at once

and once upon times times two, or three or four or more

while the jacks spin away from the  
red rose ball  
as if they were galaxies reeling

on a childhood floor and

all that I am needing, dreaming  
wheedling from God every day  
in the thick of it or out

and bright as mist amidst the purple clover

with rice pudding with raisins for supper  
or plain bread and butter spread quite thin,  
is all delight to the secret I

who likes red delicious  
the best when we're speaking in apples,  
and orangeade sunrise-



and thinks that there's

an Eternal Festival in it,  
every minute,  
all this happy scheming:

jam by jam, careening.

mary angela douglas 13 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Secret Land

underneath our lives that seem so often  
choked with tears, with joys thwarted  
and the ice closing in on our fears

there runs a golden stream  
much further underground  
where we are healed and whole

and laughing in a multi flowered breeze that only cools  
and will never destroy us;  
no longer the toy of the fates

or the furies or the unbounded contempt  
of those who would rule over us,  
it's there we live, beyond all condemnation

in eternal spring. it's there that we grow wings  
and there we dream unceasing  
through the days

so that even under torture or its lesser,  
its everyday disguises  
we may smile,

knowing a secret Land.

mary angela douglas 11 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Seeing Heart And The Scarecrow Rendered In Charcoal

(for William Wordsworth)

there, by the Seeing Heart, and not the stream

that makes its murky way into an ancient seam

I paused and did not want to go again.

invisible world made more invisible with Time

how can I see you locked into rhyme

that falls away

made for the coffee crowd.

these ragged rocks convey what might have been

I sense in the world at large such desolation.

friendlessness

and all is scarecrow; a highway dream sign

reads: Beware.

Here there's no crossing at all.

let ravens seem rubied in the sunset air

but I know better.

this is not lark blue happiness

but a cunning stair, where the gnats

rise after long rains and  
the havens have grown over everywhere  
the cataracts bode no good.  
and where you stood once,  
in an enchanted wood  
an emerald light filtering down  
has morphed into a town foreboding;  
the scarecrow's straw tears.

mary angela douglas 7 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Seventh Dimension Of Trees

here in the ruffraff afternoon,  
the one you said you wanted to see  
come soon,

leaves fold their colours into  
the seventh dimension of trees.  
it is their particular kingdom

and we are just tourists there;  
though you stood under the tree  
letting go of all its leaves

simultaneously; the maple  
red in the way no crayon  
could ever be

except when it dreamed.  
I wonder if it was you that stashed  
the blueprints for these blue

hazed days; the ones where the starlight hides  
because it is so frightened of the speed

it is destined to travel  
and won't come out like a child  
still hide and seek.

mary angela douglas 6 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Shine On The Water

some folks take the shine from the water

the glaze from off of the snow

the air from the top of the mountains

what else, I dont know.

but when you are passing by them

you suddenly feel so cold

though you're at the zenith of summer

and the sun is buttercup gold.

the red from all the tomatoes

the heart from out of the will

dear God please keep and preserve us

from all they so slightly kill.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sign Freshly Painted

breakers of words liners of pockets

when will we see you

washed up on the shore

fleecers of hearts changers of sockets

you need to move it out of the door

we paid the ferry covered in lice

we once were merry

you are not nice

casting us farther

from God we implore

breakers of promises

come here no more.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Silence Of Lorca

to the green memory of Federico Garcia-Lorca

the green moon still in eclipse.  
a mantle breaks out into roses overnight.  
and fades. by dawn.

dawn over Spain.  
the lawns with little flowers  
little flowers suspire.

no one is there to sing.  
no one is there to sing.  
to gather the late blooming elegies

to furnish the bridge to the music long ago  
to reverse the sudden executions.  
the execution of music.

it has washed out is it lost at sea?  
who wanted a mall  
a stadium where he bled?

where he bled the last  
ribbon of moonlight; white white lead.  
and who is there left to show in colours of the limonero

what is under our eyes that breaks into flowers-  
if not, snow?

or remains behind to gather the laments  
in an emerald book  
in an emerald book and though we look and strain our hearts to hear

who can contemplate  
the silence of Lorca-  
without tears.

mary angela douglas 15 october 2014



Mary Angela Douglas

# The Silence Of Roses

the silence of roses drinking in rain  
I have held in my soul,  
my soul a bouquet,

and the fragrance drifting to Thee  
on a stellar wind and in a faraway,  
the one painted blue

and laced, with bells.  
then it seemed the rose leaves were ringing

each one such and a velvet sound  
and there was thunder all around  
and thimbles scattered

where we had been sewing the earth  
to the skies  
and Grandmother called us to dinner.

then I was in the shade  
of Your Shining  
of the long ago sun

the roses drinking in rain  
and the afternoon come and gone,  
in the garden of our backyard.

this is the garden of my heart,

the one I was used to then  
when everything was "begin";  
and then you will learn your part

the shadows of it laced with bells;  
little wishing wells glazed  
and all my wishes made

and granted as they were made  
on the instant,

all our songs a bouquet

white lilies and the first profession,

mary angela douglas 2 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Singular Dream Of The Elephant Man

[after the film by David Lynch]

consummatum est

beauty could not quite forsake  
forsake him in his dream,  
her house made of

bits of broken mirrors  
where the moons streamed  
behind clouds not unkindly and

the stream almost murmured my dear,  
my dear (the narration's not too clear)  
and he thought in his

dream if only Andromeda were  
not caught in the branches,  
I could rescue her;

I would be happy and silver. and  
restless in sleep  
he moved, distressing the pillow of Mars,

setting off the alarms: oh let my son,

his mothers prayed, along his spiky way  
sleep, sleep far from the jeering  
and the jar of ointment

broken, at his feet

mary angela douglas 15 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sky Behind You

you will be banished and you won't know why.  
relegated to corners for awhile.  
then you'll go out to play

and it will be your day again  
although a little wounded.  
wound upon wound will follow you

like the shadow  
you can't get rid of  
in the picture

even when they hand out sweets.

the one taken last summer  
and the one before that.  
you are smiling in your

blue and green  
but the sky behind you  
looks dark.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sky Is On My Heart As Crystal Etched

the sky is on my heart as crystal etched

december's not that far away

the clouds hold rumors of the snowfall

I know I am not here to stay.

I know with every breathing of the pines

frost tipped and sealing themselves away

in every murmur that the leaves must make

that I must go away.

I must go away as others have

and leave the earth to orbit on

and I must close out all the beautiful accounts

before too long.

words I have loved weep softly in pale green

poems I have sought as Magi sought the Star

wanting to arrive through purple distance

to sing with my departed ones,

the crossing of the bar.

such few pearled seconds as remain

or years will ever feel the same

time isn't enough to say

what mystery has driven us here

and kept us on our way-

but we will say it still-

believing in the music of His will.

mary angela douglas 17 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sky So Thick With Stars

the sky was so thick with stars  
it could have been star custard  
someone remarked

when dessert was brought in,  
reminiscing.  
this is how I imagine my

kingdom in better days.  
with pale green curtains  
at the castle windows

sequined green breezes  
lightly lifting them  
and when you sighed

the trees breathed out  
as if they knew your name.  
once we had names.

and the names meant  
who we are like rose  
means rose rain means

rain  
in my kingdom.  
and I remember the sky

so thick with stars  
it could have been star custard...

mary angela douglas 15 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Slamming Of Doors; Its Effect On The Soul

the slamming of doors  
the voice raised like a blindsiding dagger  
then sunk to a wounding whisper

so there will BE no witnesses

the evil clatter, even of dishes  
whatever innocuous thing is at hand  
the broken wishes from childhood on.

dear God we try to not let it matter  
but it leaves a blister on the soul.  
sometimes it shatters worlds

how long must we withstand  
the quiet insult hurled  
the faint and damning praise

the teaming mockery  
the hand in near violence raised  
the carefully withheld praise

these secret wars for which we have no defense  
that leave no bruises.  
beyond relentless and yet

without a single footnote in our History text  
while everything else is written, down  
to each detail of a King's breakfast on a day

full of pageantry and cheers of multitudes.  
the thought we rely on the most year after year  
that Father, Son and Holy Ghost

have seen it all and heard it even more  
down to the last nerve wrecking echo  
of a modulated roar

and somewhere in the vault of Heaven

Ecce Homo woman and child

is it recorded down to the least blow  
on the most mild  
in letters of searing gold

all the days that we felt small

behind the door  
behind the walls  
at work or school or home or even in the street

before indifferent strangers  
meeting our tiny Waterloos  
at the hands of so many

two-faced fools.

mary angela douglas 29 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Small Giraffe Amid The Roses, Floodtide

the small giraffe, (figurine) :  
dozed amid towering roses-  
froze in his spot and yet still wondered

in a delicate way, why would he not?  
about the dazzling scale of things.

and how it shifts at times as when  
you see the green world through a single raindrop.  
perhaps he cried as well

where none could know  
there on the mantelpiece  
(where his only motion was

when someone came to dust) :  
for the roses, out of reach.  
for the cottagers always at the beach

left him plenty of time to mourn.

or was it the rose blooms, newly watered,  
cried for him themselves  
because he was

still too little to do that  
for himself as well as all the other things.  
and they were so condescending

in the air stirred by the ceiling fan.

oh small giraffe amid their seashell pelf and  
near the walls painted ocean colours  
oh, if you can, please hear

the shoreline echoes sympathetically  
to you in all His seas...

and they, will they carry us away he queried

in his never sleeping porcelain language

longing, oh they must

some sunny Saturday should an island  
wave curls its last recorded ever

and I'll no longer be here on display  
but die, if I may, if china dies  
when the wave breaks here.

then I'll be  
drifting with the rose pots on the vivid tide.  
all this is to say the way he dreamed,

the way he stayed alive

mary angela douglas 20 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Snow Maid Dreams Of An Impressionists' Spring, A Few White Violets

I'm fading from the world, the snow maid glistened  
her words in paragraphs of clouds suspended listening.  
no more winter concerts under the nebulae.

it's not so hard to melt when you know why  
you're dwindling into pastels, in spite of everything  
I'm fading for the world so there'll be Spring

and rivulets that run by banked up flowers.  
remember me when the trees rain down white hours  
on the pavements, drifting in flowered heaps before you,

when you walk to the Great Museums.

mary angela douglas 19 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Snow Maid Tries To Think In Words

is this the sign that I should speak  
she said to herself when the peach  
blossoms shone and for one moment

only, clouds parted.  
is this the parting of ways  
she wondered in a kind of haze

how am I to know  
when no one speaks here  
the language of snow

or cares for me,  
that I come or go  
though I have diamonds in my hands

and a pearl like shadow on the landscape  
when the moon glows.

mary angela douglas 20 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Snow Queen And Other Regimes

this is how melting started in the annals  
of the world the unsmiling instructor  
began...

but this is not the beginning she thought  
inside her head where no one could hear  
her yet

the child quite small at her desk  
on wide ruled paper began to write  
not what the teacher said but

the history of melting, in colours  
of the flowers that appeared  
in dream spectrums the snow itself

a spectrum of violets of orchids  
of camellia alphabets no longer cryptic

and how it feels not to freeze anymore  
to be free of mathematics falsely applied  
to face those that lied to you with

a flower crowned head  
and to be regally happy  
no longer standing in corners

punished for enchantment,  
for buttering bread on the wrong side and-  
when you come down to it:

for withstanding even from a young age

the soul plucked out by the roots  
for today's lesson on botany.

mary angela douglas 21 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Snow Queen's Carol

[to Hans Christian Andersen, thank you wholeheartedly that the Snow Queen was defeated in your story]

bees are asleep and yet they sting  
said she all in her white winter;  
garb and glamour sustaining.

here where honey is ice;  
the flowered only a glaze;  
your eyes in a maze

when seeing becomes impossible.

of all impossible things, it is my riddle:  
bees are asleep and men asleep  
where none can weep

hiding the honey of their tears.  
and the frost sheep grazing  
and the home hearths blazing down

where the moon cries sparrow, sparrow  
is it such a little thing to sing?  
down to the heart's marrow

knitting the skeins of distances  
I shine.  
and give no light at all. fa la

mary angela douglas 9 novemer 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Snow Sledge Drives Through Lacquered Lands

the snow sledge drives through lacquered lands  
and I have lost my way again  
biting in half for sustenance

the raspberry chill of former syllables.  
Anna Akhmatova: you are in my heart

but the Snow Maid's pastel musings still  
could vanish overnight in any country where  
darkness sings, mimics light since  
beauty is always melting here on earth.

and sometimes by decree.

Anna Akhmatova, you are in my heart  
even though I am hardly Russian  
and I don't know why your

white flocks have been driven to  
my door as though seeking shelter-  
in every weather your especial Firebird gleams

fiercely above these scenes of quite human  
distress where with each fresh travesty you  
do need air to breathe and poetry

to remember who you are  
even when burned beyond recognition,  
Anna Akhmatova or  
standing in the ruins or in

the snow-clouded hands of God-

mary angela douglas 9 september 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Social History Of The Last Star

the social history of the last star

twinkled on snowy pages none had marred

at the dubious library

or on snowy leaflets sent from Mars.

all ruby red agitation.

what socioeconomic forces did it in.

how could anyone even pretend

to apply that limp theory to a star.

much less, to men.

twinkle twinkle silver silver it said

and went to sleep in God.

mary angela douglas 1 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Soul Near Her Bright Alcove Strayed

the Soul near her bright alcove strayed  
unseen by anyone  
counting the dawns,  
interlocking of children's beads

or rosaries.  
or nurseries of pink or blue  
where the treasures were stored  
before the Wars

she sang without the tune  
of familiar things said at the dinner table:  
pass the lemon yellow butter, bread as white as  
sugar snows while  
scraps of tissue paper cloud unwrap the

soft poached sun; it's tremulous pink perfection...  
let's open the window of the day:  
we're on the brink  
she said as if to no one, letting in  
the quiet winds that come,  
anyway.

have I stayed too long, she wondered  
watching the orchard greens turn red the  
metronomes tick lead...

my alchemy is gone she said.  
but God is still my gold

mary angela douglas 25 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Spain Of My Mind, The Wind Of Gold

the scent of the carnation in that country,  
ringing of bells.  
the indigo bells of elaborate welcome,

and the ochre ones for death.  
the breath of the carnation.  
only the silver child

turns on a dime.  
the terraces of night  
have their stars.

the dreaming patios  
the fireflies in jars

interior saints,  
know who you are and  
the chapel candles.

and the weary tours.  
oh if I could be, endure to be  
the scent of the carnation

on foreign winds  
at home again  
the cinnamon

not for trade.  
the windlass of the sun.

the emblem of the wishes made  
fronting the grey seas.  
the mantilla of snow and

the recent rose not for me

but the rose of fable yes  
the one unfolding of the poem  
pale green on the piano,

my weeping serenata  
and petal past petal  
the lingering afternoon

the trumpets refused  
and then, the country of carnation  
resuming, first measure,

to exist within.  
beyond the aesthetic of elusive towers  
of the carnelian,

the segovian, winds.

mary angela douglas 30 april 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Stage Sets Remain

the stage sets remain;  
the actors passed on.  
this is a feeling of

lingering this long on Earth:  
everything tilts away from you,  
even starlight.

some of the stage sets get repainted, fixed.  
and you still have vintage pictures, trunks.  
the odds and ends of kiosk scarves,

program notes, the boutique beaded.  
you could go back to the old house

or one of them if you needed  
at least to pass by  
but not with the same neighbors;

not even the same sun's slant on the carpet.  
the same geraniums.  
the t.v. that flickered when it rained.

some of the trees are gone.  
only the clouds seem the same.  
but they were always drifting

even when you first came.

mary angela douglas 9 july 2015; 10 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Starlight Leaves No Trace On Them I Think

the starlight leaves no trace on them I think  
whenever I can't understand the words they say:  
why are you saying this, this way and

what do you mean, really?  
so fraught with gold and silver, I see  
everything as if in a book of fairytales

I came to pass...  
o no they cried and not alas! in school,  
shaking their heads:

don't go into the woods today;  
it's far too silver.  
yet, I stayed, I don't know why

where every fairytale was decried;  
the crown stripped from my head.

though it was pasteboard jeweled  
with the coloured foils of endless candy wrappers saved-  
still.  
it was mine.

mary angela douglas 6 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Stars And Other Considerations

ah stars my chandeliers through wind chimes shimmering  
above the wide world banded; constellations, blueprints  
of Light, His coded love.

how long you have gleamed, seemingly gliding above me  
turned on a dial by God in charge of the crystalline, and charged with all

the prisms. we will watch for the borealis, aurora, dawn  
what often was praised at the beginning of stanzas

in prologue

my poems how will you launch into space

among the other poems shining  
not in a half life almost born  
taking your place

among the other songs.

mary angela douglas 7 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Starving Minor Poet Before He Finds Himself

sometimes half asleep random sentences flare  
like occasional fireworks firing in a dim dusk  
so much so that I wish I could go back and

insert them in an old theme, school papers  
by the ream, you know:  
the ones we had to write

using our imaginations. (groan)

things like, I met the Marquesa with the parquet floors.  
or silence came sifting down a silver shore  
and the moon was sullen.

or waxen rubies flowed down the candelabra  
while the princess remained stoic.  
what will I do with these sentences.

why can't they come to me with a little practicality

like for instance, enumerating once in a pink moon,  
the things I'll forget at the grocery store.  
tomorrow at noon: something to the tune of:

red onions, pearl onions, green  
and red peppers shone:  
tomato sauce for the meat loaf, ..

waffle cones

or Easter ham's on sale or things I could eat up:  
baked pineapple in an ice cream cup  
or eggplant, breaded with a pork chop

not, His head on a chopping block  
the Duke wished he had shown less temerity.

it's always: the queen commands you go but she won't say  
where. or sampling his own wares Simple Simon bid

the Prime Minister

go buy double cherry tarts and butterscotch custards by the score...

Ye Angels of the English language,  
what are these sentences for?

mary angela douglas 29 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Steps You Take In A Mist

the steps you take in a mist are very small  
like fine stitching she told me  
dressed in her rose red cape

and I was waiting for the bus on  
a Sunday forgetting it was Sunday  
and that the bus would never come

and so I started taking fine steps  
silken ones really on the side walks  
I had faith were there

and began to sing in a kind of snow  
speech under the heavy skies  
I am taking small steps in the mist

with no one beside  
and the ditch of extremity eludes me  
who am elusive too

they used to say  
when I was not mist  
and they still spoke to me

anyway; I am here  
and in my bridal slippers  
as it should be in a mist

carrying silvered lilies away  
into the vanishing of afternoons  
and I want too much to say if you

could catch up the snow words  
on the way with the moon  
as if they were your bouquet-

that I do not miss being There

at all.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Stories You Tell Yourself

the stories you tell yourself  
when you are sleeping;  
the strawberries in the sunshine

and you're never eating berries  
off of the vines and then  
you're in a job; you can't get leave

though the other dream  
people stream home in droves,  
you can't even find the exit.

oh, there's someone you used to know  
who somehow finds the way to say  
to you what they didn't finish saying

the last time they were rude.  
I look in vain for the fairy godmother's cue to a  
sudden appearance there;

the twinkling of wings; the pumpkin  
transformations in the garden.  
the beautiful, beautiful dress.

where are they? I could cry out loud  
but then I'd wake myself up  
never finding the answers.

mary angela douglas 18 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Story Behind The Story Keeps Unwinding

the story behind the story keeps unwinding  
still we cannot see  
what's behind the trees behind the trees

behind the trees  
is this the enchanted wood  
or is this the doom you've been led to

by the offstage voices in the ballet  
and are you dancing in your red shoes  
farther away or is it will o' the wisp a

somewhere else, another place and time where  
still you wander and try to find past  
your pricked finger on the brier,

the spinning wheel, the heart's desire,  
a sign of life to come  
or are you the only only wandering here

and will true stillness ever appear to the heart disconsolate  
I asked the falling snow but it just kept  
dtifting...

mary angela douglas 23 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Story In Which Bright Things Happen To You

the story in which bright things happen to you  
is not to be disparaged  
it is your carriage waiting

lined with green silk.  
the unspilled milk  
defiant, the flag

raised over the Poles  
after an indescribable winter.  
it is the centerpiece

that makes the table festive  
the one with little heart cut outs  
aluminum foiled mirrors

and you are the Queen of Hearts  
just getting your start  
in the world of work

mysteriously in your blue shawl  
evading questions in the file rooms

and never shirking real  
happiness at all.

mary angela douglas 2 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Storybook For Which You Were Looking

ah the storybook for which you were looking  
had lilacs spilling over the palings;  
all in a paler moonlight.

few scurvy knaves.  
roses in all the pinks  
of the princesses gowns

and fewer frowns.  
you turned the pages  
and with them, the breezes of Spring,

daydreams invisible to the Onlookers...

sweet holograms of cherry balloons,  
the late made Soon.  
the diamond window panes of

the reds and greens  
of Christmas early.  
infinitely laden you were

with little worries.  
with the school yard flurries  
hinting, Home.

the newest constellations  
with the old:  
the silver

and the gold  
with little warning.  
fortunate every morning.

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Striped Goodness Of The Candy Cane Carousels

for every child who ever wished it could be Christmas in summer, too  
(and spring, and fall...)

the striped goodness of the candy cane carousels  
cannot diminish; the horses breathing varicoloured  
fire and orbiting the part of the pasture someone earlier

declared: this is the county fair.  
set stakes and dream; the big tent is your home.  
o there's no homework there.

my taffy apples I will keep awhile.  
the fruit flavored, coloured ices in a cone  
of glacial delight. and pink spun, the mystical

sugar on the distaff of plain fun.  
here you forget it's so far to Christmas.  
and think, what if the child Jesus was born in summer?

we would have let him ride for free on everything  
when he got a little older.  
penny candies spilling from his pockets

with a strange, star-like glow.

and the shepherds winning lambs in every colour  
for their sweethearts.  
and meadow jams and flowers

of Tyrian purple and the rarer, scarlet.

mary angela douglas 21 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Study Of History As Being Out Of Place

you cannot visit the past  
it's like a strange planet  
it doesn't want you in its orbit

the locked fairy tale door.  
don't come to it with your flowers  
laid on grave

its tombs are sealed.  
we write outside it, not within.  
it is a furred flower now.

there are records  
but who knows how the recorder felt  
writing it all down.

was he distracted?  
in a bad mood  
skipping ahead a few Chapters

due to the scent of lilacs through  
an open window  
what passed for windows then

notches for necessary cannons.  
the Canon a bit suspicious  
eyeing the script.

while you rejoice in  
the sound of ancient towns  
the vino clear as

the ringing of bells.

but you don't know the codes that well  
whether the bells mean joy or woe.  
and for whom distraught in a darkened room

you will hear it both ways

and say so on your postcards home  
to the Academy.

and the necessary recorder, who is he.  
he's wondering why the leaves are so green this time of day  
and will probably become a philosopher

or major in optical effects and rainbows, lenses,  
the suspension of all belief, the tides of human grief  
though he won't yet know enough to call it that.

mary angela douglas 22 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sum Of What You Are

the voice you hear

from long ago

could be the voice

of all the snows

could be the light of all the stars

of all the feelings near or far

you felt just when

the world was new

until the sorrows

ransacked you

until the mornings cold and drear

deprived you of the voice you hear

at this late age of all the snows

of all the stars and meteor glows

of all the feelings near or far

you feel again

the door ajar

to take you from the sorrow here

that cut your heart from year to year

and lead you then through all the snows

away from all of hardship's blows

away from what you felt of fear

to One who loved you oh so dear

who made the snows who made the stars

who made the sum of what you are.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sun On The Waters, The Heavenly Chime

'must the water rhyme with the sun, ' I wandered by  
the streams that run humming to myself, 'at the  
end of every line? ' because a friend had scorned

a slighted music in my mind. from heavenly harmony  
a poet wrote so long ago yet green is the branch  
when it comes to mind how can I help it if

my words chime like a hidden shining ladder strung  
rung to rung within the lines like the water rhyming

with the sun? the rose that blossoms  
into the colour: red each time  
and still, astonishes

mary angela douglas 9 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sunset Of Words

from the sunrise of words they have stolen a little light  
here and there so that words have taken flight,  
the gleaming words

the ones you cherished in a lullaby sleep  
ah they have stolen and coin by coin  
my treasure! jeweled language

and was there none to cry out  
no one to hear  
no one to stand in guard

of all the angels o  
they have stolen the lily and the myrtle  
from out of the verse

of the past  
the moon's reflection on the waters  
the child's in a looking glass

the sighs of the least and last  
and I am held in the tower  
cried the Muse

the Muse of our lost hours  
is there none to save?  
men rave without speaking

day by day and close  
the book and say  
we have made the sunset of words

all by ourselves  
and oh, we are proud  
and will it out loud to be this way

that Beauty in tatters should go about the woods  
senseless and dumb  
in the mermaid hour



when the dagger must be flung out far  
from her  
and ah! beyond reach

flung far  
that Love should rule in the End  
even without speech.

mary angela douglas 2 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Sweet Word 'orb'

the sweet word 'orb' fell down from Heaven  
o why and  
where did all this silver come from

cried the child  
and it is melting  
a star is melting

orb, close silent witness now  
to the poets who care for you no longer,  
but orbit, orbit

is still alive  
and you, within it, fly

mary angela douglas 1 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Things I Know About The Colour Blue

last lingering crayon in the drawer  
condensing the skies  
how you have flown by in my time

like the sapphire wing of a bird  
and still can sing to me  
of then.

let the grass be blue-green  
under a plum-white moon;  
the dews blues as well

and she would sing the blue

into flowers and this  
we called dusk or twilight,  
Grandmother said.

I said,  
may it be the twilight of tears

for things that don't come back  
as year follows year  
but I'll hold onto it still

as onto a favorite dress with gauzy sleeves  
mysteriously, as if you were music.

you seem to colour it all in:  
that feeling when everything  
slips away, again and

bearing down on the paper  
a little harder each day  
before the cold sets in

then we cloud whisper,

'stay'

mary angela douglas 19 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Things That In Your Heart Hold Sway

the things that in your heart hold sway,  
the lilac branching kind of day;  
the puddles where the clouds float, stilled

except when rippled by the winds., ,  
all these you can collect and may  
like marbles in a glass half filled

until at last it overflows;  
all the silver and the gold  
of limpid lake or frosted rose

still lovely in the latter snows.  
all this is yours and to command  
even in a foreign land

where scoffers scoff at beauty still;  
sometimes, I think they always will.  
so guard your treasures well, my friend,

your happy endings point of view;  
despite the insults they can hurl,  
these still are yours and they are kin

in other worlds.  
and will comprise your Heaven.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Things They Forgot To Tell You

the things they forgot to tell you  
out of kindness  
will find you out

though you have hid yourself behind  
the thousand words for invisible  
the colors of an infinite palette

like telegrams they will arrive  
at precisely the blindsiding moment  
and of course, you will be at home

and happy in the day  
when spring turns instantly to ice  
the entire castle going under

going under you say to yourself  
making friends with the clouds too late  
goodbye to the drifting, drifting away

as it begins to thunder in Heaven

mary angela douglas 21 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Things You Read In Your Sleep

the things you read in your sleep:  
the passing of clouds  
the drifting away of kingdoms,

leaves, from the silvered bough  
infinity inscribed  
on a mercury dime

you spent on one summer day  
the snow hours and the glistening  
Christmas spray, corsage

of the candlelit wonders

May budding into flowering  
in a bridal way and petal strewn,  
inevitable Junes

enshrined with pearl

and all the time you thought you had  
when you were a girl,  
the sudden reasons to be glad

the ruby throated singing

of before  
the opening of  
an amethyst door in a mist.

and disappearing, all of this,

the birthday of the sun.  
the shutting of the earth  
for what is done.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Thirteenth Fairy Or What She Said

[a reimagined fragment from The Sleeping Beauty]

you will live among thorns.  
the thorns will smile.  
this won't make any difference to you

one way,  
or the other.  
you will swelter under the gold wrought sun

others make charm bracelets from.  
the ferns will curl in your wedding day bouquet;  
your one slipper, with its missing pearl,

will be waylaid; did grandmother say  
in the demitasse afternoons: sorrow may  
come too soon to your soirees

and on the porch steps in the backyard  
beside the nasturtiums-  
where the carriage of snows sailed away,

you will weep, quietly, rose petals,  
rose petals instead

mary angela douglas 6 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Time Of Cherries

then we were in the time of cherries  
the grandmother clock beneficent in the hall  
the rising and falling of the beautiful,

the storied hours.  
now we live among the powerful  
straining to see

above their Immensity  
one glimpse of a cloud floating free  
remembering the choir stalls

the gilding of wings.

music where have they buried you  
and you, still living  
I have gone everywhere.

they have taken the echoes from the canyons  
and stripped the lands bare so that the spiraling weeds  
overtop our crystal stairs

there once we had fairy kingdoms  
and we could say in a cherry branching way  
all this is mine.

and play each day in the sunlight  
under the guardian pines.

mary angela douglas 2 february 2019[rev.3 february 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Tinman's Christmas Dream

with the corner of her blue-green apron  
she dabbed away the tinman's tears  
how dreadful to be left alone

for years she cried  
and no one come to  
take you home.

the tinman slept, he dreamt  
of tin stars meshing in the Heavens  
and a kingdom gauzy as

Christmas lights where little children  
played for him on little tin whistles

and asked him, when he cried  
for joy?

'What makes your Heart so shiny? '

mary angela douglas 10-11 february 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Tolling Of Bells For The Strawberry Sky

the tolling of bells for the strawberry sky  
the reasons why we mourn the passing  
of the cream filled days

we have counted on our grass stained fingers  
conmingling the fingerpaint colors  
toward the last days

do you hear the bells and do you fear  
there is no salve to soothe the children  
lost this way

in the woods and far from those who cared  
I saw in a vision swinging through bright air  
the flocks of God to feed them

the wild strawberries peeking through vast snows  
the return of cream and sugar to the blue blue tables  
oh but this was a dream cried my angels

this was a dream

mary angela douglas 17 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Transfiguration Of The Crayons

[to the child Dylan Thomas refused to mourn and others]

I saw the red orange orange red suns the blue violets  
and the violet blues the green turquoise  
and the turquoise greens

and the waxy seas, the sea so singular  
and it was a dream that they had all melted  
like birthday candles left on the cake too long or

molten butterflies on a skyward spree soft blue or  
just bend down and you'll scrape your knee  
and call it a strawberry

burned down too quickly anyhow  
there's wax on the buttercream the buttercream roses  
and it seems a mistake but it's not and it comes out right

the infinite sum where you tore a hole through the paper  
because you erased it so many times and thought  
you would get marked down for being so messy

but the crayons arise and they form an arc and you  
pass through though to the other side, the next grade up!  
though no one's singing London Bridge, the snowy choirs

or ring of roses or tisket and the tasket of the yellow green  
the green yellow and we drink limeade stirred in an April shade  
so happy we're irradiated in the sudden glow of the crayon

suns all melting together and in the afterglow

we know this is Heaven  
and you can't muss your dress all made of silk here  
or spill your milk and now,

there's nothing left to cry over is there on the slate?  
however far you look it smells like clover  
under a backyard summer simmer shimmer sun

fling glitter out the window backward  
while we're riding away  
there's so much I have to tell you

in a someday language

mary angela douglas 21 august 2015

little, little ones...

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Tree Of Language And Its Canciones

the tree of language bent so silverly down  
when I was small.  
oh I'm so glad you came I said

thinking it could always be this way.  
have some of the golden deliciousness

it sighed as if from olden days.  
and there are other regions, clouds  
they said to me pink tinted

and these are yours and when the moon  
slip stitches beyond jeweled branches  
and you think she's gone, , ,

that feeling...and then,  
the Aprils...

oh words that I knew then seemed plentiful  
plucked in dreams and cherry bedight  
as if we would never grow tired of

learning them in our

sleep says the tree of language now  
and almost, lullaby, and almost  
it is near, it is near when the wind soughs,

fear not.  
fear-

not.

mary angela douglas 16 june 2015; 11 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Unit On Language Skills

to Valerie

I'm ruled paper cray pas as thick as old  
paste-with-a-brush I love so much the  
ice cream drawing paper flushed with

vanilla suns the luxury of rose red crayons  
let's make everything the colour we want to  
maybe God said to his angels on a certain

day leaving the green of trees alone awhile  
the blue of skies oh let's go paint the flowers  
all of them! the flower girl scattering sunset clouds...

I am the many hued the honey scented stars  
the winding infinite clear as clear can be invisibly  
said the child at her desk in a thousand languages

while the teachers thought  
her mind was wandering

mary angela douglas 15 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Veil

how can the mind hold everything we knew

since we first opened our eyes in the world

and saw everything through mist

and yet they say we do. why can't we recall

the colour of the grass when we were two

remember what it felt like falling down in it

why is there a veil over so many things

if scientists say yes it is true, it is all recorded

somewhere.

so many feelings. for what we have passed through.

who's keeping the photographs from us.

is it we ourselves

not wanting to be overwhelmed in a sea of gargantuan

detail oh but even the least slant of the light

on any given morning as it fell

through the kitchen window oh well

what can I say I would give a kingdom for it today

with the chance

just once to say to the

shadows on the wall

I loved you all

oh tree in the wind back then

where are you

who saw me first begin.

and I saw you begin too.

mary angela douglas 17 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Waves That Almost

the waves that almost  
reach, carry more  
of beauty

that recede before  
their colors can  
indict you.

everything turns  
from you, countering  
your understanding.

do you, reformer,  
notice the moon  
like a rose

over the darkening pier?

mary angela douglas 2 june 1985

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way It Was Put To Me

the way it was put to me  
I could not understand  
that they would command

everything in my head  
to stand still.  
so i stayed the same

and the winged things went with me everywhere  
the ones of glitter composed.  
the ones they thought

that I had left at home:  
the silence of roses  
and their effulgence.

the delicate snows.

it was only later  
when I was barred from teaching  
I saw them clear

for what they were:  
and how guarded they were,  
how sure

how insistent  
on monitoring the gates  
so that nothing purely lovely

entered the scene.  
no longer was imagination queen  
of the May

of of anything.  
rhetoric was the order of the day.  
and the dried out fossilized who and what you are

under their spectroscopes; labeled in their jars.

then beauty wept in me everywhere  
from shrouded star to star.

mary angela douglas 25 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way That You Thought Then

the way that you thought then  
as a child, not thinking, really,  
more like gliding in the blues and

the greens of the days  
intuiting starlight, shade trees;  
the way it feels in the porch swing

sipping lemonades

in the dusk and the gardenias waft  
their white perfume forever.  
time was your ocean then

sun flecked or even on a grey day,  
sparkle full. and the sound of the piano  
sifting through melodic afternoons;

the twilight zone on the black and white tv  
or fairytale children's programming.  
and time to read the summer books;

to play jacks on the back porch;  
to believe fervently: Christmas will come  
will bells, will angels, with the flame

that flickers within the heart  
so holy, ivory, and so still.

mary angela douglas 14 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way Things Looked When Set Against The Skies

the way things looked when set against the skies  
the sunset alphabets comprise  
the soul shock shot silk gold with feeling

and the amber scenes unreeling  
in the hereafters when the wind sighs  
slightly lifting the curtains

who was I then so faintly shines the soul  
when angels puffed the unmapped corners out  
or the fresh imprints of the rose gardens unscrolled

before life grew this hard  
and time spilled over spilled  
scattering all its jewels

where once you said to yourself  
or pointing it out to whoever was listening then  
by the raspberry shrubs in your summer outfit

so certain of your prize:  
'ah, there the treasure lies...'

mary angela dougas 1 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way Trees Grow In Dreams

the way trees grow in dreams

their roots out toward the stars

when the great storms come

I wanted an art song made of this

in an unwritten language.

oh I felt wistful on the looking glass side

looking back at home and its inversions missed.

I wanted to grow like trees in dreams

and so I thought of this

sending this message, waking from one.

one dream like a sigh with a faint imprint on the morning

I have left for you here.

when you are clouded

reading your lines.

when the silver shoes you've shod.

things lined in velvet disappear

roots first, defecting,

into God.

mary angela douglas 24 september 2019



Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way We Remembered It Then

THE WAY WE REMEMBERED IT THEN

For Andrei Tarkovsky, beyond Time for some time now

is Time there frozen at the heart of all roses  
the way we remembered it then  
or the pearl of the marvelous dissolved

in the intricate life of trees  
trees and their roots  
the shadows of clouds

on the ground  
in the mirror that is our Heaven  
as it was then

in the failing of flowers  
drop by drop of water  
the necessary the beautiful confounded together

in the composing mind at war, Time-  
will these diaries remain  
the inner of, flame of them

unquenched despite the obvious assaults  
how fraught was beauty to us then  
the petals slipping from the boughs

but how dreamed the child  
how does it pass  
Time in the lookingglass surveilled

when dreaming of the end; the past,  
and have you escaped all charges at last

in railing against  
the heart of all roses, frozen

mary angela douglas 6 july 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Way You Are Today

who painted the roses red  
said something in my head  
we used to know this

now all we remember is  
who gave the orders  
just like in the newspapers

came another voice  
a tea party kind of voice  
a little soothing sugarwise

and nervous with a limon edge  
no that's the tarts! came a tarter voice  
than they and it wasn't strawberries.

cherries perhaps? a Duchess queried  
milder than before and Alice  
looked down at a pinker pinafore

than she remembered having worn  
the last time  
the picnic was by the river

the river the river of dreams, it gleamed

the voice, the voice in her head that would not behave  
tomorrow we're whitewashing red roses instead  
we knew we'd get to them one day

and splended so splendid  
packed in a hamper with the little oyster sandwiches  
with the crusts removed

the rose gold napkin rings is everything

I'm not going to tell you yet  
but when you find out  
you won't be you

the way you are today

mary angela douglas 2 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The White Lane

I saw in a vision of sifting snows  
the white lane leading unto Light  
and I in the thick of it

wordless, without song.  
and then the luminous upswing  
of the fated birds breaking into

singing, Song after long wars  
the scars, diminishing.  
how long I stood

and the dream all drifted down  
as though in a globe of snow  
I had found my calling

how can I tell you  
who may not want to know anyhow  
that the hour of the white lane had

come upon me, God's hands  
being overfilled with blossoming.  
and I, no longer afraid, disabled

where the hedgerows broke  
into a rose incandescence  
never before seen or perfumed

there, at the end of my ruins.

mary angela douglas 7 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The White Ship On The Waters Of Braille

the allusive ship, the white ship vanishing  
into mists, or onto the canvas  
where the artist is disappearing

into a cameo frame

or the haunting of our years  
the ship down, the treasure  
never found

the jewels transposed into light  
and the passengers with them.  
in childhood, the ship that

sparkled on the waters,  
the waters of dream  
ah! the white ship

and you are lulled,  
thinking you are there  
or is it, as is often the case

the moonlight sheer, and sure,  
the ship made of moonbeams  
your mother sings of

and now in the harbor, the white  
ship, is it the same one there  
and you hear it when sleep is fugitive

and the sound of oars or something silvered

or is it the ship of diamond and evanescent snows  
half buried in winters long ago  
foundering at the Poles

or the ship that bore Arthur away  
that tragic king  
three lilies in his hands

on the wide white waters  
on the violet waters pale.

mary angela douglas 9 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Wind Has Caught The Tattered Rainbow Sail

to the true God, to the true Christ and to those with the courage now-  
to know the difference

the wind has caught the tattered rainbow sail  
and you are over it now.  
the interlopers banished,

left to build their nightmare realms  
all on their own;  
how will they manage

is anyone's guess.  
oh let them keep their teacups full of sand  
for someone else and let their roasted apples char

in the witless castle fires we tended without sleep.  
and witness now, the true doves flown.  
ah let the fairytale clock rewind the puerile darkening

of the golden days that lay before you  
on a long ago afternoon waylaid.  
oh God my God will recompense the jeweled time

splintered from a green beginning when  
they declaimed the dreams  
we already owned

as if they birthed them,  
crazed pickpockets of the heart, cruel  
harbingers of unparalleled sadness.

leave them there to rustle:  
blank pages in Your book of living air

mary angela douglas 31 march 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Wind Through The Roses Is Harplike Still

[to Mary O'Hara, premier Irish singer and harpist-  
this lament for banished Song]

the wind through the roses is harplike still  
though you will not credit it, I know,  
dire modernists.

the moon through the slit of clouds

causes them to glow as the soul must,  
through the body; this alters not.  
but for you, for you- bright words are

caught in your net of subterfuge  
the one for which you will become famous  
and you would bury them.

and you pretend, and tell all men

these images are rust and you pursue  
the reasons why  
we see colours, breaking it all down

for us.

but the wind through the roses is harplike still.  
the harpers return to the ruined villages  
where people make out their wills

yet have nothing to pass on by way of song.  
yet we will gather pearl like from the great distances  
wildflowers drenched with inordinate dews,

we who recall all the tunes

and the jeweled stars in their ellipses  
patient in their sparkling, disregarded.  
by what laws and byways have you come

to crate the beautiful and bolt it down  
where children can never find it again!  
and mine the language, keeping the husk

throwing the emeralds  
like discus far from the Mays  
while you tote it all up:

what's to go, what's to stay.

you would wrest Heaven from God if you could.  
and make little subdivisions out of it.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Wind Was Writing 'the Leaves, The Leaves'

the wind was writing 'the leaves, the leaves'  
in scriptures of gold the sun arose  
the rose of the rose of the rose of

the mirroring heart was closed.  
and then the snows came  
to the child at the windowpane

writing in frost is Christmas when  
the night the night descends  
having written its one

Star

mary angela douglas 14 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Wizard Speaks Of Guarantees Aloft Above Treetops To Dorothy On The Ground

this is your guaranteed balloon sweet Dorothy  
notice the cunning silks in every shade of green  
the wicker holder for the little dog

the sandbags in chartruese.  
everything has been thought of in advance  
and you've prepaid

that much is clear.  
thank you dear for slaying the witch

my nemesis.  
too bad I couldn't do the same for you.  
for you will find and not only in dreams

things are never guaranteed  
no matter which way the wind blows.  
something goes amiss

and then we cry and say  
why didn't we think of this  
and Glinda isn't always there

in her stunning pink ball gown  
and matching wand  
to make the scene go right.

mary angela douglas 28 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Word Of Brightness In A Dark Tree Perched

the word of brightness in a dark tree perched  
silverly, oblivious to gloom;  
meticulous as to rainbows, glittering,

not at all consumed.  
oh we will resume the history of music  
long before these wars have ceased:

the word of brightness leafed among leaves,  
flowered among flowers, heightened beyond, old griefs.  
was there ever any doubt, you said to yourself,

you said to yourself when all you knew  
was clinging to the bright word in the disasters  
and bartering nothing till it wore through.

and then when we went outside  
to see the world anew,  
the skies themselves lay shattered;

the friends remaining, few.

but I have heard the word of brightness  
echoing lately in the dell  
and so with the angels, bent to the task,

though few have wished me well.  
hark, say the poets before me  
who survived this hell: wait for the Light;

for the Word of lightning to dispel  
that God may provide, and Christ as well,  
this springtide overnight, this fountaining green,

this Poetry.

mary angela douglas 6 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Word Poetry Does Not Exist

the word poetry does not exist  
it is a flame  
or it is nothing

it is the flare that illumines  
the disaster  
the white stone path home

it is the moon that vast ship sailing  
through indeterminate clouds  
it is not really outloud outloud

but charged within  
it is the lightening outside the enterprise  
it is the colour green zigzaging through

the devastations  
it is apart and yet-  
it is my heart it is my heart it is my heart

mary angela douglas 9 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The World At Its Best

when God keeps juggling His coloured glass globes

to keep from thinking why don't they see Me at all

I fall into his tattered lovely pocket

and rest. and then I dream of the world at its best

newly spangled the circus arriving at midnight

with Ray Bradbury

strawberries in the morning with lemon cream

the world as scene or mise en scene in the books I love

and everything green.

I pick Him flowers and He smiles

even though He made them

as if they were something he'd never seen

and in the evenings I ask how did You choose

the fragrances, the gardenia's cream.

I wish the way I used to long ago

so many wishes I have to put them in storage

and turn and turn in the ballets all our own

the ones where we wear pink

and pretend we were roses.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# The World Is Full Of Scolding

the world is filled with scolding  
children looking down at their shoelaces  
trying to think of something gold

while they are being made to feel  
smaller and smaller until, not at all.

the sales force dreaming of their  
favorite meal berated in the  
fine room with no windows

(those green striped chairs!)

somebody open a window you  
want to scream but you just stare  
and you've got to stand there,

sit there, crouch there until  
they've finished flaying you  
with words.

I want to remind you though  
you may not feel it now,  
there are other words:

and you can fix your attention  
on them to withstand:

take 'rose' for instance  
perfumed, luxurious, rife with colours  
rich with love and velvety, velvety

or for example, 'star'  
very far, even disappeared  
yet still giving light.

oh concentrate and maybe  
you won't feel the pain  
on Light that still remains

even after it's gone.  
may this comfort you.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The World Of Trees

for them, the skies are dear,  
the wind, the unexpected rains;  
the ants trailing up the bark ways

and the children making faery  
rings of the white or speckled stones;  
the far off violet mists

with the sweet birds, flown

and the gold plated, silver plated moons;  
and winter's alterations  
autumnal glows; ,

the far off sigh of starlight,  
the myriad jeweled:  
the Christmas gleam of snows.

mary angela douglas 29 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Wright Brothers Raid The Kitchen Drawer, December 1903

using what was plausible, we didn't make much progress.  
but there was magic in the little things:  
cast off finery, multicoloured strings, the skeletons of kites

and budding gumdrop rings, the wisp of clouds reflected  
in the drains; the costume brooch without its pin  
old pencil leads on days it rained

and then: old wishes long forgot, forget me knotted up

with pennants from Arthurian Towers,  
valentine bowered, the mislaid hours  
and telegrams, and garlanded,

the autographs of friends in the long ago  
and sepia toned. Christmas gift wrap rewrapped,  
ghost ship manifests...old kitchen mop, golden

cough drop, cabinet spice

that lasted for years, the panoply  
of childhood tears with their candied rewards.  
odd things in jars, the medals from the war, the

whirligig scars, and ice cream bars...

paint from old toyshop windows, glue from gilt stars

pasted on our reports, the startle of gold leaves released  
in november winds and then blue jay feathering it  
beach day weathering it

you said to yourselves on a day  
of Christmas pageant wings and wonderings,  
oh I believe

soon we will fly like the leaves...

mary angela douglas 4 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Writer At The End Of Stories

in his later stories  
maybe his fingers froze  
down to the last candle

cutting out the final patterns  
to be sewn  
and basted down

and watching the town already  
go on without him.  
still, there is the sun on the snows

in pink pools as if rose gardens  
buried there  
almost came up for air

and there is always within him  
a sailing green starred moon  
even down to a crescent

of her former self

mary angela douglas 19 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# The Xylophone Remembrances

the xylophone remembrances  
of the hollyberried:  
the winds strike the chimes

of icicles from the eaves and  
all the blues are frozen  
in the skies

when we dream the Christ child  
didn't have to die  
and Christmas brims where they loved him

one where we decorated  
December as though it were spring

bringing our garlands.  
and the angels sang  
the King has come

the little King  
let our hearts be furnished  
with the white and the gold

the tender, the tenderest of snows  
and the holly berries ringing  
rimmed with ice on the bushes

in our side yard  
where the winter isn't hard  
as though as though

they were bells.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# The Year The Fairs Were Cancelled

the year the Fairs were cancelled  
we rode air balloons and imagined the trains unloading  
angels for the trapeze

taffy pulls, with the clouds turning into sticky candy.  
the green trees swayed anyway  
somewhere children played on the swings

and predicted their weight in jellybeans  
the weight of feather light years to come'  
we still will be the candy striped nation

in love in love with the ferrised skies

and butterflies launched their investigations.  
I remembered the Monarchs, their stained glass colour  
of orange

and orange pop in glass bottles when I was knee high  
to the cicadas  
will there be jam

I wonder to myself; wildflower honey and cheese on apple pie  
and all the children in new storybooks boosted sky high  
when their mother's turn the page and offer blueberries,

the last of the summer.

how will we gauge the maples in their red showering  
and will it really be October then  
let the pinwheels blow in the autumn winds

and we'll tape sparklers to our old bicycles  
just to show we still believe

in thinking wasn't it wonderful flowers could fly  
with the cabbage butterflies low sailing by  
the ferris will launch again our autumnal aspirations  
and we will eat the funnel cakes fried

and the caramel applies  
inside dreaming it all over again  
flower petaled in the fireworks.

mary angela douglas 5 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Then And Now

embroidering the Heavens with your dreams  
you neglect the platter to entirely clean  
but so did Jack before the magic beans

and then the story grew;  
the stalk the generations blessed him to.  
rude circumstance and head against the wind

he suffered long before the game of let's pretend  
bore fruit or rather, beans  
and tirades from his mother when he

spilled the cream  
or bartered it for air.  
and now he has a talking harp to show for it

much gold to spare!

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Then Earth Remembers You

brush strokes of swans on the mottled pond reflected;  
ache of the branch against the sky  
in the season of no leaves.

oh fly you will from the moment still  
you gazed upon a glazing universe.  
winter is here, you sang to yourself again

with your absurd little twig of holly;  
your rose mittens you keep losing.  
this is the park in winter

where you went in your twenties.  
and now the swings glide on their own  
and creak with the ice.

and the wind whispers to you and crackles  
the pine needles, sifting through  
all this silver, you murmur

through your tears;  
then earth, remembers you

mary angela douglas 19 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Then There Is No More School

[on the passing of time]

one day in the rain you turned into watercolours  
too bad, no one there to record it.  
what lovely puddles

the small child said  
splashing through your ghost  
or watching your rainbows

trickle down the drains  
too young to ask oh  
what remains.

I scorched so many things while ironing  
out the wrinkles.  
remembering the heat that rises

from the radiators too,  
midwinters, when being inside alone  
is a Christmas in itself

when you are warm  
and how this comforts you  
pressing your nose against the

frosted glass and

how old wax on the floors  
turns yellow as fried eggs  
until the pink of sunrise

filters through in even colder dawns:  
the bus honks twice then  
there is no more school.

mary angela douglas 28 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Then There Was Shining; Then There Was Music

it is a box of clouds I have opened!  
cried Pandora, suddenly grieved who  
looked for festive colors, perhaps a something  
to wear, threaded with fine gold

a pair of moon bright slippers.  
oh, beyond repair, she wept.  
and the room grew dim at noon

the bees swarmed all the colours.  
oh honeycomb day, return  
she prayed; I will be good.

and hope, flew straight:

a fairy thread suspending  
the earth like a new pearl  
on an old necklace

worn out, as a heart ill-used

and then: turning.  
then there was shining.  
then there was music

mary angela douglas 6 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# Then We Hand Coloured The Stars On Sunday Afternoons

[my Father's house, on Sunday afternoons...]

then we hand coloured the stars on Sunday afternoons  
in our Spring colouring books  
sitting at the little card table

in the living room  
while the March winds blew  
in high treetops

out the picture window.  
how glad I am to think of how high  
on a hill that house was

and of the sound of the winds poured  
out as from a cristal pitcher by God.  
and a storybook version of Heidi

on a little red record  
played over and over  
and she is singing and wreathed with flowers

in the high mountains

and the wind is singing  
oh you are well  
and all the meadows are yours

and you can colour them in  
if you want to  
whatever crayon you choose.

mary angela douglas 15 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Then, Vanishing Away

THEN, VANISHING AWAY

On the Legend of the Lady of Shalott  
her face in a dream floats on the waters  
or like nebulae among deep stars  
in a field of vision  
yet unmarred by tears  
because it is too still.  
where are you she must ask again  
of all her years or we may ask  
in her stead  
though clouds have no answer  
nor does the dusk,  
dressed in the blue of the departed hours.  
is it enough that once you were weaving  
all that the heart could sense  
from distances, from renunciations  
made gladly  
until you broke in several pieces  
the mirror and the crenallated view  
fused in that instant into a valediction  
as if all the petals that ever were had been  
blown past suddenly their aprils  
into the irretrievable.  
not even the legend was ours in the end  
in the dedicated schoolroom  
from such a delicate web unmoored  
you were  
though we cried to see  
your starlike resolution fade  
scattered dewlike on the lawns  
of all the ages  
and the vigils of dawns unnumbered  
or in the antique books  
then, vanishing away; we cannot look,  
the pages melting like snows

mary angela douglas 26 may 2017 rev.6 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Theories Of Time In The Ice Cream Shoppe

[to the twenty seven flavors I passed by and  
to my Grandfather, Milton B. Young]

I wanted to think through my theories of time  
in the ice cream shoppes (you know,  
and research there)

was it lemon stick in the Howard

Johnson's lodge, or black cherry vanilla  
vanilla and were the skies deep turquoise  
and the trees rimmed with pumpkin orange

as in a picture postcard where it all matches?  
everyone has family vacations  
says the world and the kids at school but I don't listen

I'm in my own time loop festively  
with my Grandfather when he  
asks so benignly and I'm sure

nowhere else to anyone else ever  
in any other universe;  
are you sure you want lemon stick again?

mary angela douglas 24 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Are Many Rooms

there are many rooms  
but only one soul

there are many scenes  
on your revolving stage

there is a curtain that  
blows in and out  
if you cross the room

and open the window  
looking for  
forgotten consolations

dreams rush in with the wind  
everytime and you couldn't explain  
to anyone if you were asked:  
'...the first dream or the last? '  
it's not the sequence you care about

there is your  
suspension of belief and then:  
the many-tiered music begins again

mary angela douglas 9 august 2008

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Are Some Things That You Will Know

there are some things that you will know  
painted into the corner of your age,  
your childhood home:

the apples and oranges weighed up  
in the fairy tale scales of gold;  
the presents at the time, unwrapped;

you can't look back or forwards then

nor peering down any toychest kaleidoscope  
prophetically to see beyond  
your colouring book's outlines though you

think you should be  
in between roadstops for cherry vanilla  
connecting new dots on the maps

and though you feel at times  
an unease when you think this  
musing over the paper doll wardrobes

pointing a finger  
through the childhood haze  
because it comes to you on certain days

there must be something I should know I don't  
you won't, no matter how hard you try  
and so you continue to dream

and hear  
the wind strum through the trees  
so visibly

that you forget to understand  
what can't be understood, anyway.

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is A Dollhouse In My Head

there is a dollhouse in my head  
where I can go and just be fed  
on tiny plates with cherry tarts

in shapes of hearts  
and it not even  
Valentine's day.

and only I can have the key  
into my dollhouse mystery  
and close the door

and go inside  
where books of endless joys  
abide

a tiny cat that has no need  
but just to purr upon my knee  
a chimney brave that has no smoke

but looks so real to dollish folk  
that santa claus on miniature sleigh  
is sure to come on Christmas day

and fill my tiny cottage full  
with baby oranges, golden hulls  
till penny bright I'll say goodnight

and draw the dollhouse curtains all  
and sleep my sleep and dream my dream  
until the tiny tiny Spring.

mary angela douglas 10 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# There Is A Knight On The Edge Of My Butter Knife

there is a knight on the edge of my butterknife  
I can scarcely see  
all crystal having been banished from sparkling

in the castle  
and he is charging at something.  
he is in golden armor naturally

catching the late sun surreptitiously  
so that the gold fish swim  
more frantically in the bowl

wanting to be the only gold accents in the room.  
how will the story end?  
will he charge the marmalade?

will he play the fool and turn to dusky grim?

will this upset the children?  
or will he retreat into the  
blue sugar bowl

knowing tomorrow is another  
anthill to climb.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is A Language Green As Trees

THERE WAS A LANGUAGE GREEN AS TREES

there was a language green as trees  
in summer's ease, there was a language  
in the jade of seas spelled out elegant

beyond all measure.  
the way you could speak in dreams,  
in pearls, not syllables

not knowing how it happened  
that scene flowed onto scene illuminated

of your finding keys in unlikely places  
the trace of beauty...and the myth imbued,  
imbued with music,

the pace of saints across  
the suddenly flowering fields  
and everything feeling

like home in fine detail  
down to the appling of trees  
cream lace tablecloths with little blue dishes

lilacs spilling over a pale green fence  
comprise the unalloyed gold  
the unalloyed gold and the baby soul

the cottage brocade of roses  
and no cortege  
and the floors swept clean; too

charming the windows flung open then  
(joy, at it's zenith) -  
to the clear cut pause in the fairy tale wind

where Eternity enters in with its purple cymbals  
and you all golden for awhile; in airy rooms

your children made of amber, and honey

dropped slow, the slowing down of time  
each letter budding unto stars of the milky quartz  
you found at your feet as a small child in the garden,

remember, murmured all roses  
the way they did for Hans Andersen  
you turned to greet God

not knowing what to say  
just happy in the sunlight and the bluebird finishings  
and foreign accents, beautiful and strange

the speech of the glittering reeds by the riverbanks  
after the story's end, the marginal flowers  
and the vivid heart recalled.

mary angela douglas 2 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is A Starlight Of The Mind

there is a starlight of the mind

that cannot vanish over time

but only intensify beyond all former magnitudes

variegated and refined

of the red and blue the pink and the wine the chartreuse

all strange colours over time made more and more

jewellike and laudable spilling out in little pink sapphire

glints of ice and haloed, snow misted

the Heavens crowning earth refulgent in amber.

Not city lights nor bright polluted sunrise or sunset can dim yet

their fervor in the mind since childhood twinkling

and wrought into a song we sang as if the star could hear us

over Bethlehem: provincial and healing

little as we were and loving everything that shines.

mary angela douglas 26 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is A White Silence

there is a white silence that comes over me  
whenever I see the snowfall descending  
as if I were suddenly become

the dream that moonlight has when half asleep of

the crystal air.  
through an open window  
I test my soul

that longs to step out through  
the translucence of clouds;  
the crystals whirling in the night air;

that wants to fly out into it  
as though nothing could keep me here,  
not the farmhouse in the distance,

the thought of what is dear to me

nor the silos of hidden light  
I have stored up all the years  
for the bitter days:

heaped there in plenitude is a secret gold.

and I only I white as the may flowers  
am certain now of where to go;  
no longer drifting like the snow;

am leaning now over the sill of the world

I must one day leave, unseen  
though I will still be here  
in the beauty of it, not quite vanished yet

and unable to forget.

mary angela douglas 15 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is Another Kingdom Where The Brambled Roses Breathe

there is another kingdom where the brambled roses breathe  
where fragrance from colour cannot be parted.  
winding the clock of quiet come the snows  
hallowing.

there is another kingdom where the home you left  
on fire, distressed, packing no clothes at the onrush of  
the midnight wing, packing the  
floods instead is set down in a vale

beset with lilacs, light and far far  
removed from the killing shore. you know.  
you know  
where the soul from the soul  
cannot be parted more.

mary angela douglas 16 august 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is No Condemnation

she wept into the handkerchief of the skies  
and then it rained for days  
we said, trying to explain

what couldn't be.  
or she is captive in a far tower  
and hour by hour spins

something into gold,  
but what, we do not know  
since no one told us.

all our lives we will imagine her  
this way, working a pearl shuttle  
through the stars to earn her way,

to break the spell of less  
than velvet afflictions  
that all may be well in the kingdom;

and courting the favor of those

who do not allow her to grieve,  
to leave the sting of condemnation behind.  
but we, we couldn't condemn her for suffering

from blows we knew were not imaginary.

mary angela douglas 9 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# There Is No Death But The One That We Imagine

[again, to Jesus, my kind Saviour]

green grace around no final shining hour  
you gave to us. there is no death  
but the one that we imagine

and we stand tremulous above the floods, impossibly  
on a vanished bridge and try so hard  
not to look down.

some day in the lost and found of  
the moments we can't understand  
may we take hold of your invisible hand

wounded, no more.  
before the door you stand and wait  
until our hearts anticipate and comprehend

that you are who we loved  
since infancy in the lights above the crib.  
in sunlight on the floor,

oh child of Christmas blooming for our sakes

and destitute what riches could you need  
who brought to us even without our asking  
the worlds without end; the soul

without pretenses.

mary angela douglas 29 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is No Golden Thread Running Through

there is no golden thread running through  
there is no porch of flowers-

I have stood on the banks of a river  
that does not flow

I have wept in a stream never  
full enough to run

there is no golden thread running through

mary angela douglas 20 february 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is No Rose Adagio

I lived so deeply in my  
dream how could I ever  
awake

even the clock stopped  
ticking out of respect  
the wind stopped blowing

the curtains out

the shadows on the floor  
would lengthen  
another 1000 years

mary angela douglas 29 january 1999

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Is No Wilderness

there is no wilderness  
in which he will not write  
of running streams  
or label the stars in jars  
and set them on shelves  
for future, for tender, reference  
counting the opaline his;  
every instant, an amethyst.  
you will say, perhaps,  
why must he sieve the snows;  
does he really need that many starfish?  
or to carry the roses from Here to There  
in a rundown workshop  
all chimney smoke  
and no wood...  
to an infinite garden?  
if he only could.  
beware of him the mothers cry  
clutching their infants close.  
he comes from the tribe of wishes

shining into no mirror at all  
and crystal pendants  
on foreign chandeliers;  
year on year,  
gathering prisms like moss;  
and into the great concertos  
that have not yet arrived  
he will dodge as into thickets.  
why is he alive  
at such a cost, contradiction  
of being lost and labyrinthine too  
pressing the words down carefully  
into the Spring mud  
as if they would fly away:  
the scudding clouds.  
and growing stranger day by day  
radiant and painting the sun  
in an unequal contest;  
developing the film all night  
ah he is armor bright,  
inured to all affliction

so that tomorrow,

the contract with dawn

may be renewed.

Mary Angela Douglas 26 May 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Must Have Been A Reason

there must have been a reason

the ancient artisans lived alone

carving the jade breeze

becoming the flute the breath of God

passed through

the melancholic wind chime

there the leaves turned lightly in the wind.

the thought of missing friends

and dragonflies were

violet, flitting through long afternoons

and dream poured into the wider tributaries

one lifetime wasn't enough

only to see the snowdrops flourishing

silver among

the pink hills..

mary angela douglas 18 april 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# There On The Other Side

children in antique photographs  
are living secret lives  
there! on the other side

their looking glass eyes  
glint like a moon between trees.  
and in a thin disguise,

there, the children pour tea  
with their dolls in Victorian dress  
or stand before odd window frames

fretful but good at hiding it  
uneasy near horsehair parlour sofas  
and their forbiddenness.

life goes on even if we'll never

know their names  
or understand their games  
their sober expressions.

but I am mystified at what is in the frame  
they don't seem to be children really.  
more like the fairy's changelings.

and I don't think they would answer me  
if I said, please can you tell me  
if it's Christmas yet

is your dog dead

and did cook's cake fall  
in the oven today

and were you sick for a spell  
or is it too dingy to tell?

mary angela douglas 27 october 2017



Mary Angela Douglas

# There Should Always Be A Small Door

there should always be a small door into the garden  
Alice thought afterwards  
when drifting on the river would not be the same

of course the clouds were painted on  
how else would they never arrange to move  
let us arrange never to move

from this golden spot she thought sleepily  
how hard could it be  
and we, will we always have the same

strawberries for tea, glazed the little sugar cakes  
and live like dolls in Christmas show windows  
repeating our civility

do you know your lines said the Queen  
I'm rosy red said Alice blending quite in  
but how can I stop the afternoon

from turning a different shade

mary angela douglas 20 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Should Be Faces

why is the land so green  
and yet it seems no least seed grows  
that's planted

where else are we to go  
or are the parables inverted  
we always heard

I will go  
with the first snows  
telling what I know

into God's pearl perfect ear  
and wondering  
what is it I have managed to fear

is it the zeros of the hours  
the castoffs from the uniform towers  
is the least word wasted

where You are

though it branches and flowers ceaselessly  
while I pin the patterns to an empty space,  
basting the stars.

who are you were you I whisper  
to my dissolving soul and should we hasten  
as if we know

as if it were made of candle ends

and we the surveyors on the road  
barely scavenging  
where all I say just disappears

and leaves no trace  
just a blankness where  
there should be faces

the singular lanes of angels  
and shining.

mary angela douglas 5 march 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Was A Language Before We Came

there was a language before we came  
soft gold molten as the summer rains  
and formed of mist

of the sough of branches  
on a wind burned sky  
and shadows in pre

conversation;  
whose words were snow  
and grew, opal by opal,

storied, and old  
the jewels falling out of it  
one by one

like something outworn?  
have they torn my soul  
I cried when I found it,

have they torn my page  
from the book of life  
that they have consigned my words

to the yellow flecked tides  
in exile, every one?

mary angela douglas 6 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Was A Piano That Hid The Sound Of Rains

[for Alice Herz Sommer of blessed memory]

there was a piano that hid the sound of rains  
then swept them over plains of golden arpeggios;  
that lulled the roses under their coverlids of snows

then glowed with their unfolding.  
petal by petal how that music stole the soul  
and carried it through sickness, wars;

through what cannot be spoken;

the beautiful piano that hid the sound of rains  
and fastened us to the infinite songs  
so that we would not, could not,

blow away...

mary angela douglas 27 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Was A Princess With Ebony Hair Visited By A Witch

[to my mother]

she poured tea and let it slip  
pretending to trip  
so that you were scalded

or would have been  
had the little birds not been  
your friends and distracted her.

and out of this we make  
for entertainment on a rainy day  
our song, our sweet romance our

little play when we are young  
too young to know yet  
how real these fairy tale scenes

can be.  
the apple glow infused from a poison irresistible.  
and then, the long and choric sleep.

and out of the deep so much farther down the road  
these words come back to us  
so that we may beware the poisoned combs

and braid the hair more simply.  
and fasten the shutters greening in the rains.  
and turn the lock

and pray.

mary angela douglas 19 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There Will Be A Snowfall Of Poems

there will be a snowfall of poems,  
a shower of gold;  
you won't return home, empty-handed.

the children in the forest were  
guarded by God knows who.  
in the morning they woke up:

finding their exile over-

mary angela douglas 29 january 1999

Mary Angela Douglas



# There Will Be Constant Music

[And I saw a new Heaven and a new earth...  
-Rev.: 21: 1]

there will be constant music  
excessive moonlight spilling over into  
the crystalline cups of night

and waterfalls of light  
lakes of colours in the skies  
she sighed

it will be so beautiful  
we will never leave  
and the wind rose sympathetically

(the roses to the wind)

little birds, more intensive in their song  
sang of the green leaves forever  
the flowers on the trees

never letting go  
never let go my mother sighed  
never let go

of my hand  
in the world  
or of the hand of God...

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There's A Golden Thread Through It All

there's a golden thread through it all  
was said to me once in a dream  
and if you pull it the whole

fabric of darkness  
will come unraveled so that  
only the starlight will remain.

and I was on a windswept plain  
and couldn't hear the before and afters  
of what was said or even if music

solved it, after all.  
the one thing I wanted to hear  
was what do I do now

it came to me partially  
find the golden thread you are winding  
the golden thread asleep or awake and

even just yesterday I thought I heard

you are following like a migratory bird  
and then I woke up looking around and dazed,  
eclipsing the sound

mary angela douglas 24 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# There's An Angel For Going Out

[to my father, in memorium, Robert R. Douglas]

[4 october 1924 - 7 april 2002] and to The Arkansas Gazette

there's an angel for going out

when candle flame wavers

and one for coming in,

in a shifting of scarlet leaves;

dreaming, I was that song

in jeweled octobers, all along

all garnet to the very heart...

the one that puts violet creases

in the wind: then it is Spring

and the weights are lifted

the ones balancing grief with

unexpected deployments.

the justice of well made stories.

the broadsheets corrected.

we don't often speak in headlines  
of the angels of the end;  
of endings in gold leaf  
and Sunday coloured comics  
I want to think as if  
in a blind snowstorm of thinking  
through these too humid summers  
the Pavillions at Petit Jean  
favoring the angel of the cooling winds;  
of the angel of returns, returning again  
to first beginnings and the angels of light  
in linotype scattered and snowy quiet.  
like the names of Crosett, ould..Magnolia,  
Arkansas names like gold or diamond mines on hold  
we have lost certain angels, with roses bedight  
gathering the children on rickety bridges;  
under the red clay sun and by favorite creeks or  
slipping out of our pockets at noon,on deadline;

at night the moon like a milky quartz  
in city deserts, public squares and in the cypress gloom  
of old paintings. there was a refuge I thought  
or in a Proustian bar of exquisite music.  
Macarthur park 'melting in the dark' and our  
commentary then; who leaves cakes out in the rain  
hold your horses, green icing? ?  
here is the melody and the land I lived in then  
the gardenias in the fluted vase  
when we were at home the last summer,  
amidst the emblematic mockingbird, the applebloom  
the angel of stars and staircases descending  
into the Unknown, the banishing one  
of disenchantments disabused; the cowboys in old  
movies, the cartoons...like Depression era glass  
rainbowed, the angel near the throne  
who suddenly called you: not by your newspaper name  
one crystal bell resounding

among all the railroad tracks, the small  
towns made suddenly infinite as you are leaving  
and on the waves, unedited,  
  
painted, printed on the silk screen of skies  
by cherished pines and the hidden fault lines,  
the angel of the mariners  
  
of the soldier-chroniclers of Time.

mary angela douglas 17 may 2018

- 30-

Mary Angela Douglas

# There's No Conversation Like The One You Could Possibly Have

there's no conversation like the one you could possibly  
have by yourself fabricating the fabric of it  
so that every inch shines on the loom

and you weave in and out of it your own design  
without designs on anyone else without the  
glaring meeting your Good Morning!

on those mornings where the sullen canyons  
won't even give you an echo back.  
so here's the track we run on when it

all looks bleak, our own! and every part  
of that railroad gleams and goes past  
limpid streams that turn the waterwheels

round and the children in their colorful  
outfits wave in the snow near the  
evergreens lit for perpetual Christmas.

this is the secret of playwrights cherishing  
their plays or the old men cracking wise with  
invisible friends in the fast food chains

or the angels in a dark time  
heralding pearl to pearl edged wing  
alone

no shepherds yet in view.

mary angela douglas 20 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# These April Trees

these april trees: the pink and the peach of them,  
the ivory shade  
the plum edging into shadow, heaven made,

their fragility.

who is God I wonder to make anything this way  
and the veil of them, falling like snows, and yet it's Spring

the children sing, dancing around them in the storybooks.  
who of you, you or I, could dare to make something this exquisite,  
evanescent so that the heart longs to be April always

while trembling for its demise, these kingdoms  
of such utter delicacy you would walk on clouds you vow,  
if only you could!

not to disturb their loveliness, somehow;  
the momentary flare of their petals  
scattering everywhere

in the least of the pearl breezes...

mary angela douglas 5 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# These Are The American Sonatas

"these are the american sonatas"  
I heard in a dream, in a voice stentorian.  
and a sky of glass shattered

shattered an april wind.  
and beauty was slaughtered all over again  
let the player piano roll

be broken down to a code  
where all the parties we used to have  
to celebrate small joys have foundered.

and are under investigation.

where is the music for this I asked my God  
that inner visions have been hijacked.  
that all speech has become slogans.

weep o muse of America  
weep oh falling glass and the splintered birds  
alas you pioneering angels

you saints of the rough terrain  
surely there may be a mountain pass  
as yet undiscovered

where we can recover

the dream of who we are the covenant  
and sift the gold dust anew  
and find the trail

with You.  
oh God my God.  
far from the spoilers.

mary angela douglas 28 july 2020



# These Are The Things The Former Tenants Left

these are the things the former tenants left:  
the golden nails on which they hung the rags  
they wore all summer while their children lived;

the ruby stylus and the coat with too many pockets  
to be from this century; an ebony fan.  
one stewpot. when did they have meat?

I can't remember. rent is due the first of the week;  
make sure you lock up when you leave.  
sweep with a new broom.

then she was gone, my landlady, scuffing down the hall.  
and like a ghost, I stood in my new room  
with the quaint wallpaper;

the dust of gloom unsettled  
where the piano stood.  
what griefs lived here, I mused

amidst the Christmas recipes  
in yellowing magazines.  
scant peppers from the rafters

faded red and green;  
the orange net bags of onions.  
little to go with any of it.

mary angela douglas 10 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# These Evening Shadows

these evening shadows in my rhyme  
are like the gloom in the night pines  
a pigment only, not a state of mind.

one day I hope to reach the Land of shine  
other, older children have gone by  
in their sapphire skiffs on a lucent sea

as they sing in songs, sing-song  
they sang and then the school days rang  
merry as the day was not that long,

and was that long ago?  
reading, I say, no.

their pink sands slipped through the hour glass,  
looking glass oh, alas the princess cries  
into a handkerchief of snows

no one has written on  
in best silver inscribed thread.  
jugglers step across the evening sod

losing their colours; jesters in far moonlight.  
when will the courtiers arrive;  
the angels with their Christmases

in an effervescent wrapping, unwrap sleep  
and dream and cherry bright shine till the last is  
rocked to sleep in the evening shadows

crying run sheep, run o.  
will the children know them,  
when they come to call?

asked someone small: alone  
sequined and wondering...

mary angela douglas 4 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# These Things Happened, Though You Will Not Believe

these things happened, though you will not believe.  
but I am not obligated to tell you what didn't happen.  
first, the skies turned green.

the lamps went out when the king died.  
the valentine remained unopened.  
small birds gathered and then disappeared.

also, the leaves.

these things happened, though you will never see  
them in the newspaper.  
whole kingdoms disappeared under mounds of flowers.

also the devastated.  
rains fell sideways.  
gems got tangled up in light.

then it was winter.  
then it was winter and you cannot conceive  
how long it lasted.

and we left what no longer remained.  
and the valentine remained unopened.  
and the little birds dissolved.

also, their song.

mary angela douglas 4 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# These Trees, These Yellow Poplars

these trees appear more golden when it rains  
than they were before, she said, and it makes me wonder  
going out the door: was there another door

opening then that unproverbial shower of  
fairytale gold that falls on the deserving in  
old stories; sometimes, after long trials

are over and you have been kind to  
even the ogres on the road, you know,  
and so, were the trees gold too?

partaking in the magical turn of fortune  
a bit of the glitter flung their way

that they should be so endowed  
or is it that here against the grey drizzle of a sky  
they flame out momentarily making their

own light having no other recourse  
missing the Sun more than  
tongue can tell

or faith, abide.

mary angela douglas 1 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Always Lived

[for Stephen Vincent Benet; for Walt Whitman]

they always lived filling in the blanks others left alone  
breaking from the ranks and from the dream of home, derelict.  
mad for treasure, ill fated expeditions;

never doubling back  
their hands sifting stardust,  
the twilights of violet

and skeletal lack.  
I heard them I saw them  
I knew they were out there

past Quixote's mills

and in my stillness, gathered my scant will  
in my own time to lag behind them;  
the diamond dust they had become scattering

in trackless trails, the vanishing point of rails or

in the canyons where one Echo lives  
that sieves the soul:  
&quot;you are never going back...&quot;;

then clues dropped like souvenirs into the plum darkness  
and no Christmas where I stooped down and wept  
all blue forget me not

and slept the dream they deemed worth more  
than anything even when falling as they did  
that's how it seemed

from a bent wagon under the last, vast witnessing  
of American stars and the night birds trilling;  
as though it were apple green Spring...a late love prefiguring'



with the horses' gait stumbling into delirium  
into the ravine unforeseen the dry gulch withering  
where sudden angels gleaned them.

as the snow flies, over the long, long plains  
I feel it always winter-wise, the tallowless  
heralding; their demise so compassless

and there, near the scrub pines  
painted indigo-lamentable, shadowed magenta

my grieved Star  
always, I will.

mary angela douglas 11 december 2018; rev.18 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Blocked The Roads So That We Could Not Run

they blocked the roads so that we could not run  
and so we flew, dream past dream  
and all the evening through past evensong;

the steel rivers, the unblinking dawns.  
but they, they blocked the roads  
and thought they were the stronger.

did we find detours, we were never

that sure of the way we went  
or if we went at all.  
but we were there when stars

fell into our hands  
and we could understand  
this was how it would be

whenever we did not care  
that they blocked the roads  
or that they blocked them everywhere

so that we would not roam;  
not knowing we could make our  
home an anywhere or nowhere, simply at all.

all this, despite their ears to the ground  
and them hearing no music  
because they were obstinate or

the clouds of snows as they descended  
veil upon veil  
and mind beyond mind.

within us,  
obliterating their tracks.

mary angela douglas 13 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Come No More

through her diamond windowpanes, a little recessed,  
she saw the pageantry of ghosts. alas. they come no more.

and the regalia of dreams is dead, half-dead.  
she was never that good at fractions, chalk scratched  
on an emerald slate

while longing to be somewhere else.  
longing to be somewhere else in another time and place  
is no disgrace said the Queen Mother, once.

it could prove useful by and by.  
but now I've stitched your cherry petticoat in all three places  
the royal puppy chewed at play while you were dancing

on the pond's sweet winter glaze of ice.  
and you'll look nice in your mimosa overskirt of tulle,  
organaza whatever it is that we've got left from

our last move from our last castle, stashed away.  
and the regalia of ghosts is stashed away now, too.  
they come no more.

the heart is jettisoned;  
the valentine thread  
that ruby, shone.

the pink-shored maps.  
the amber saps of trees; knights in their plumes,  
ladies to the door.  
the moonlight viewed as poetry, the sun, the sea.  
the bells clang uselessly now

from the ghost cathedrals,  
vexing the atheists.

mary angela douglas 21 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Do Not Mean The Things They Almost Say To You

they do not mean the things they almost say  
to you, sighed the wind and rippled the pond  
and branched soft snows on a winter day.

oh early or late the  
sun shone a silver medallion  
or a coin. what will I spend it on? she queried

the small birds glazing over while the moon blanched.

it is dim to remember in this white twilight,  
rose gardens, rose by rose. I will depart.  
and the wind grew cold. almost, distance itself.

rose by rose heaped up the sudden goodbyes  
not gradually at all as it had been in books.  
and you in a pale shawl, always hurrying.

they dipped, they froze like that,  
thinking they were music.  
as you crossed town

not knowing you won't come back.

through in your faded violet, in the far years  
you won't be forlorn, then,  
whispered the years.

then she was comforted.

mary angela douglas 8 may 2015; 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Gave To You A Ring Of Tin

they gave to you a ring of tin  
a shoe of stone  
no happy end

a face to shine  
on no one there  
a hill to climb

that was despair  
and who will mend  
what they will tear

and sing to you  
a lovely air  
and play and strum

when they are through  
with all the hurt  
they'll do to you

as if it never came to pass  
that you were wretched in the blast  
and had no cloak or gloves to warm

yourself when coming to such harm  
o they gave you a ring of tin  
and kept the gold for all of them

but there is One above who knows  
and He is lovely as the Rose  
and grieved for you

before you came  
and loved the beauty of your name  
my child he cried

because he knew  
each wounding thing that they would do  
and on the Cross he bled and died

that you might find the bright Spring tide  
and learn to laugh at misery's face  
and find your Home within His grace.

and so I wrote this little song  
that you might feel so free from wrong  
and feel your heart so sweet within

and live again.  
and live again.

mary angela douglas 6 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# They Had Words Quince Bright

they had words quince bright,  
or quartz humming all the night  
rainbow rimmed, rose trellised

close at hand until when  
sleight of hand Kingdoms, come!  
and us with our silky succession of scarves...

or velvet knighted and seed pearled  
one by one down the hidden passages  
the ladies in waiting in rag made curls

caroled and caroling beckoned and beckoning:

words whirled worlds toward the Raggedy Ann,  
twirled like jewel box ballerinas unmoored,  
off the table top above the dresser drawers

till the bears went plop! like furry  
raindrops thudding  
-hush! somebody's coming-

onto the floor by the pink night light.  
my sister and I swore  
later to no witnesses but God

staying up at night to see

all the toys gather secretly their jack in the box surprise  
as we kept giggling, maybe sing song praying  
please let stories have no end let toffees stay unwrapped

rather than that...or appear should we go maying

dark cherry in the cordial rhyme  
surrounded by chocolate, chocolate!  
or the drugstore giant valentine ruby box

satin ribbon sashed we'd eyed,

let that be for Christmas, next time for Mama.  
chock full of diamonds

and we'll cash play money, barter  
the Golden Delicious stash.

birthdays coming, what will words be then  
all corn bread honey and buttered or jam cut neatly  
picnic wise, pink lemonade poured all out of doors or

butter cream frosted to the hilt and slice  
with a rose on it every minute  
and we'll grow up and play the spinet

in dresses of white lawn all stars to wish upon  
or take our bikes in the dead of night

to the toy store book shop malt shop combo  
we will own  
sampling everything making our fortune fortunate,

growing up to live for music, poetry  
for pink and green houses, silver thrones  
for playing jacks till three on the summer porch...

if we want to...watching the Twilight Zone  
and making well thought out  
lists of our three wishes, six combined

for when the good fairy chimed by...

(that's why she never came, my sister opined later)

but now sheclimbed out of her cot to  
practice immediately the toy piano with the  
color coded keys, getting ready for Carnegie

that got us into trouble but it was worth it  
and we squirreled away more soundlessly than  
the french lace in the wedding gown pictures

newspaper snipped on a Sunday, saying

oh orange blossoms,  
o what is stephanotis?

till the dawn came up all roseate, roseate

the alarm clock rung  
and Grandfather called out "Rise and Shine!"  
and it was time for oatmeal

in a lake of cream.  
what did you dream our Mama beamed  
we said, laughing breathlessly:

stories, the ones we made all up.  
till giant rabbits came into our room and gobbled us up  
reflecting in the big mirror...

and she believed us, willy nilly.  
wouldn't you?  
its time for school get your book satchels ready

here's your milk money

Grandmother said in her oriental slippers  
matching robe keeping us on the train track.  
and if the rain pelted,

saying on our way out:

"You aren't sugar; you won't melt."

mary angela douglas 29 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Have Drowned Your Maytime

they have drowned your maytime  
and oh how in vain the sprigs of syringa  
from this Spring I carried then

for you  
I broke from the twig  
and the green woods echoing

echoing my breaking there.

and echoing I also said  
they have drenched your snow  
blossoming name.

days I watched to no purpose  
the quick overnighted, lightning budding of the leaves,  
of tiny flowers suddenly sparkling

of the children gathering there  
the little children.  
dread like a sea has drowned it all

until the last toll of God.  
maytime, village, stones and all  
our folkloric stores, the filtering

stained glassed suns.  
the whitened bells in the undertow  
(the open door no more no more

onto the little gardens.)  
dragging all music  
from the irised shores.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Have Strewn My Heart On The Yellow Sands

"and such as breathe out, Cruelty..."  
[from the Psalms...]

they have strewn my heart on the yellow sands  
where Don Quixote and his dubious friend once wandered  
they have strewn my heart

and I'm too small to see  
above the windmills' relentless turning that  
there was a letter in Dulcinea's hand  
sewn with stars that burned out too early.  
pale are the shadows.  
fragrant, the Escorial.

they have strewn my heart on the yellow sands  
and purple are the clouds that gather El Greco:  
It's the telling hour for the bellwether of beauty  
endlessly woven, torn out of the skies

it's the Knight of the Lost Towers coming back too soon  
It's the Knight of the Mirrors do not tell him where I am  
they have strewn my heart on the yellow sands  
and only God can find me.

mary angela douglas 11 october 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Have Whirred Into The Silent Worlds

they have whirred into the silent worlds  
where no foot falls  
those who walked beside you

on the early golden road  
small hand in large hand confided.  
and now, what abides, you cry

in the dust and looking long down that road  
or back behind you  
to where their kindness and their care

was like a wall between you  
and the outer darknesses.  
how little knowing then

they would ever depart  
you played in the side yard  
watched from a kitchen window carefully.

now you would give each day you own  
in exchange for knowing them as you did then  
in the present tense.

but they have folded all tents  
and left you here,  
the last nomad.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Say Even Molecules Change Their Behavior

they say even molecules change their behavior  
when they are watched.  
perhaps they don't want to be

butterfly board pinned down  
by those collecting data however altruistically.  
likewise, 'the poor'

sleeping out of doors  
pinpointed by the possibly  
warm hearted census takers

will hide out on the day it's  
an all out effort being made  
at giving back to that

population; at least,  
in terms of counting them.  
who is free from speculation?

calculation?

from being marked as part of  
some particular herd  
by the overweening.

and not at all seen

for the snowflake unique  
someone they feel  
themselves to be or used to feel

or never feel at all like a perpetual  
numbness in everlating snows or  
crying themselves to sleep or Death

amidst the golden keening of the angels.

are birds? free?

at least the untagged ones  
with no migrations tracked.

and do they sing more beautifully then?  
knowing they've escaped  
that kind of fate

Mary Angela Douglas 21 November 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# They Seem Afraid To Write About The Stars

in memory of John Glen...

they seem afraid to write about the stars  
in a wonderstruck way, the colour that descends  
and the leaves that stray across any footpath

carelessly rich with beauty, near decay.

why are they  
ashamed of beauty  
and of praise

I try to understand  
and find rank mockery

on every hand  
and so I learn to read  
the ancient poets, one by one

pretending that this world has run its course  
or will have soon  
and I will stay in love with the moon, the

endless illuminations night or day  
and praise the God  
that made it all this way.

mary angela douglas 16 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Seem Ashamed Of So Many Things I Am Fond Of

[for James Larkin Pearson, Shelby Stephenson and  
most of all, to Valerie Macon]

they seem ashamed of so many things I am fond of:  
words that grow wings; that have no double entendre.  
things that shine, frost on a winter window pane's

unexpected design, for instance, they decline.  
what if my ferns and flowers are ice  
and not a horticultural wilderness objectified

filled with crimes committed by the symbolists  
or a drum beat and beat and beat for the deprived?  
who still could cherish beauty if they were let alone

to enjoy it on their own and that, for free.

what if I don't even like their kind of poetry  
and wonder at it as though it were devised  
by the devil himself.

a recounting of wrongs to the point of madness.

what if I love love only words only  
for their innocence and childhoods made of snows  
and the lives of the poets

who knew this.  
what if I see the moon for its vanilla cream gleam  
and not for her mythologies in a thousand indices

overlearned by those advanced at school  
and full of such disdain for the untrained eye.  
who honor darkness

as though it were Light. and who cause much pain.  
Lord make my flight from them swift.

I wonder why they cannot be happy with pure song,

with any rainbow tinted music.  
why must they use and even abuse things

confuse things  
seeking to control and to despise;  
making a nightmare game of it

in their coteries shutting us out  
and delighting in the click of the gate  
above all other sounds;

foster children of beauty  
if at all who strip the jeweled sounds,  
the brides of irony

sniffiness even  
for those who don't comply  
and don't intend to.

who stand their poetical ground.

they grow cleverer at  
making their faintly damning praise  
ever more meticulously intellectual.

the Snow Queen's vetted vassals  
short on praise for imagination,  
feeling

and for the enchanted stream.  
oh God, for anything dreamed.

how can we be called, the same:  
by the name of 'poet'  
I ask the few green corners of earth

they have not sullied yet with  
ever devolving newsspeak, socialspeak  
population speak

and implore the Heavens

not to forget us, out of reach  
those individuals who write for love,  
not power. in this, a murky Hour-

for by my reckoning  
despite the prizes that they get  
it only makes them fret

no matter how long their resumes become  
if they've lost simple Song.  
unspeakable, the joy of merely singing.

mary angela douglas 20 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Snatched Beauty Out Of The Air

they snatched beauty out of the air

and rose above the world despair

their own cinderella lives in tatters

no coach approaching on the jeweled road

I wonder how they dreamed

and made the dream enlarge beyond all

common, miserable matters

until it eclipsed almost completely

the penury they endured,

the utter obscurity

did God in a whispered word sustain them

and walking out of pocket on the avenues

did mysterious flower laden trees

fling down their blossoms continuously before them

that they should be the Kings of spring

so that they knew Someone knew

and told the angels what they were doing

at what cost

and led all the hidden graces

to their decrepit doorways

and made them believe

against the preponderance of evidence

their beleaguered lives accumulated

they were the chosen to endure, to claim even

one lost lovely word or image

true knights forever unheralded, if need be,

in search

of the beautiful, the unmitigated grail.

mary angela douglas 16 february 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Speak Around The Edges Of Your Dreams

they speak around the edges of your dreams  
as if you weren't there.  
but it's your dream, after all,

isn't it?  
who let them in the dream door  
or did they neglect to knock and just barge through

with their snide glances, eyebrows crooked-  
unruly, in new galoshes:

so good at overlooking you  
in your own household,  
sporting your own shoes!

and passing notes to each other  
skipping you in the rows,  
the valentine kings of leapfrog

leavers of coal in the Christmas stockings  
of the deposed.

oh child of the bitter playgrounds  
find your place  
beyond this stick figured human race.

clap the erasers together until there's thunder  
in summer pools you'll not go under  
on the last day on earth

when it's you who volunteered, isn't it?  
in coloured chalks on a tear washed board  
in your very own handwriting

exactly what's written here...

mary angela douglas 11 june 2015; 12 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# They Stopped Speaking In Gold

they stopped speaking in gold  
but I did not hold my tongue  
or do what I was told  
gold is the language of God I said  
look at light.  
for this I was punished  
never sent anywhere again from the job agencies  
I will raise my shade and I will not see the complicit world  
but the one of silver and gold  
the one that kept shining in the poetry of old and though,  
they neglected it  
thus and solely, they looked the other way, the moderns  
the ones who have banished me.  
who will not greet me even on the lawn.  
one day I will enter into it the world beyond  
my fairy foot lingering on this shore  
and we will speak in gold  
forevermore

mary angela douglas 4 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Will Steal Your White Weddings

they will steal your white weddings,  
your enameled stars;  
the tickets to the movie

inside your head;  
the one with lush landscapes  
and a scalded moon.

and though the flute plays lowly,  
it's someone else's June now, and sensing this,  
the harp will be aggrieved;

the one you tuned with mother of pearl;  
the one they seized.  
and though the piano pianissimo

is softer than snowfall at the rigged auditions;

then the last whisper of the heart to itself  
before unwarranted doom and the lockdown in the final tower,  
their stolen goods will appear only

in the gossip columns from noon to hackneyed noon  
and in a braying hour with the heavens no longer fooled  
by a rhinestone Orion.

while on a God given wind your orange blossomed

days, the sheen of them whisked away on a thieving tide  
will descend, becoming more vivid on their return-  
o Bride inconsolable! -

than a new spun beginning ever could:  
you, standing in a doorway: your arms full of lilacs  
and the future.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Will Want You To Tell The Story

they will want you to tell the story  
as though it had cherries embroidered  
in every corner

as if it were spun sugar  
rosebud pink, nightlighted home.  
and you in your scarab bracelet,

your gipsy skirts for  
the school assembly.  
fifteen petticoats.

they will wait for the chime  
of every xylophone colour  
and you will oblige them.

you, with your apple blossom  
tendencies. your perfect spelling.  
but I remember distinctly

your throat full of crystal tears  
sparkling as the children say  
like diamonds; your snow bright

necklaces under Orion signifying...

we got lost  
just going to the corner store  
around the block

or if it's all the same to us-  
and it was, the weather  
turned into

rhinestones we loved as much.  
selections of cordial cherries in the drug stores.  
everything was gemmy then

the week before Christmas

so that we keep going back  
in the Holiday time machine

only to leave again.

mary angela douglas 25 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# They Would All Find Out

what if you were swinging in the playground swing  
on the very playground you were on at first  
the ghost of yourself

or the air swings the front porch swing  
as though it were made of flowers  
and it is evening and you feel

you want to sing something  
what is it  
the plum colour of the evening?

the wind swinging the blossoms?  
the birds indiscernable  
missing the moon's silver.

what can deliver you from this feeling  
as if you were suddenly made of lilacs  
and you couldn't speak of it to anyone

or break the spell

and you knew, in your flower self  
the moon had disappeared from the sky forever  
and in the morning,

they would all find out.

mary angela douglas 27 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# They'll Send You On Fool's Errands

they'll send you on fool's errands  
because they want the gold, the princess,  
everything to unfold the way they

say it will.  
so you live under the hill through sleet  
and snow and cover yourself with

the blowing leaves not knowing  
they'll deceive you endlessly,  
if you let them.

soon you'll do anything not  
to upset them.

and you'll go on  
mowing the endless lawns  
of the great estates;

waiting on fairytale banquets,  
napkin over your arm and set to serve;  
and glisten when they say to you

one foul word as if that meant anything.  
and maybe they'll crown you

jester for a day and you can put that on the mantle.  
or hold a raffle where the candy trees sway  
and give you half a bone so you won't gnaw them.

and you, when you wake up, will rue the day  
you ever ever saw them.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# They're Bringing You Flowers Beyond The Lines

'they're bringing you flowers beyond the Lines

and hoping you haven't disappeared

and hoping you still have warm socks on

and won't fall victim to your fears.

your mother is darning the hole in the sun

your father tills the moon

your sister is playing run sheep run

her tennis shoes soaked with dew.

somewhere the world with cherry pie

where plum and peach are still put by

misses you most when you sip broth and want to cry

though every tear is rationed.

some night a space in the clouds will appear

and God will thread you a ladder of light

and you'll climb out of the dungeons drear

and find fresh comfort in old delights.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2020



Mary Angela Douglas

# Things Could Be Worse

will they dole out the sky  
with separate charges for the clouds  
depending on their colours

so that we no longer have at least  
one free view and ceiling still our own  
one last perspective on the beautiful

accessible to all, under no controls.  
on what those in the past deemed  
the Heavens?

things could be worse I thought  
waking suddenly from the dream of the End.

mary angela douglas 6 december 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Think Of A Small A Lilac Cloud

think of a small a lilac cloud  
that rains down lilac presents  
tied with a silver strand or

merely iridescence.  
and will you open them?  
what will you find, then?

more lilac laughed the child.  
more lilac inside  
and then inside again

more everything raining down  
and lilac and it's Lilac's Holiday  
and we wear Easter clothes

and perfume made from rose petals  
and are happy always

mary angela douglas 14 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Think Of Your Future

think about your future  
they say to those in school;  
tell me what is the future of clouds

of blossoms in the wind  
and I will tell you then  
your future, no crystal ball

predictions, only:  
listen to the wind with pearl shelled ear  
and ask, again.

what is the future of wind  
through the wind chimes chiming or  
restless in the trees;

of storms at sea;  
of all that you could be  
without the questionnaires,

left to your own devices  
and the daydream stare  
that makes them so nervous.

what if you did without  
this harrying from here to there;  
the future of

how, when or where,  
and far beyond sucess,  
you in a rose tinted dress or

an enigmatic vest

at your looking glass, content  
with birthday wishes bobbing on the air;  
set in motion, every mysterious year.

sent long ago to God knows where

or message in a bottle,  
your soul

washed up on unseen shores,  
immutable, beyond careers.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thinking They Are Jewels

the lifespan of a poem  
who can hold in their hands  
the hummingbird width

the petal's curve on the wind.  
my friend my vanished friend  
one fragment calls

to the other  
over a gulf of centuries  
millenia

a child stoops down  
to small flowers in the grass  
thinking they are jewels

mary angela douglas 27 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# This And The Thimbles Scattered

this, and the thimbles scattered

the ones of gold

with the Princess seamstress gone gathering

small mushrooms after the rains

I remember;

we marveled at her marble cake

the bakery made

could she return?

where the traffic stilled.

the raspberry sun

upon our childish once upons.

now the moon has gathered

her ivory flowers in:

our Grandmother's folded fans

will I recognize your shadow in Heaven

so that I do not sln,

missing the cue of "Rumplestilskin; "

slipping

on polished stairs in a fine gown;

short of the railing

strawberries, cream in an opal dish

oh I wish, I wished, closing my eyes

splashing the angelic.

no one wanted to ruin The Play

to be the one at fault in The Ballet

drawing the curtains;

out of tune with the day, with singing Everywhere.

my thought is a spindle in the wind

it has that quality unwinding

this again and the thimbles scattered

no more patchwork

no more pincushion moon;

valentine saints with the arrows through

she just Was

no more the brightness of thread

which to choose

the where to begin in the musical measure

which riddle to shine

embroidered in time

she never said

when spooning the honey



on our bread.

just God is the Flower that does not fade;

be good, not clever.

in any weather.

you aren't sugar; you won't melt.

mary angela douglas 4 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# This April Branching In An Oft Trod Dream

this April branching in an oft trod dream

I seem to catch in the rushing of waters over stone

as I wander on and as the moon

lifts the latch on the house of night.

when in flight though from whom I cannot tell

I cast no magic spell but find in the petals

lifted from the trees a flower light

I know I dreamed before.

how shall I knock at the door of God

all else being starlight and I so poorly shod

when walking is weeping and I cannot tell the way

ahead from the road behind.

these questions border on the attic mind

sorting through silks and odd letters

the scent of brine though there is no sea

no inkling of the me I may have been

or was, parting the grasses on either side

as if I were a wind

still, floating on invisible tides

ruffling the surface honor of things

I cannot, will not name.

mary angela douglas 2 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Christening Hour

this christening hour so watercoloured there  
I kept through many years  
and single hearted prayer

Lord, that the beautiful may not vanish.  
and they have rocketed away,  
have pocketed the gold

that I remember from the old books, loveliest, first  
and how their gleams in realistic detail  
were to me then as lines from Heaven

I could never banish but find redress  
of even grownup woes in their borderlands  
within the shadows of imaginary snows

of tempests palest green of sights not seen  
except in dreams if there  
and illustrated, rare beyond the commonplace

cherished and given to me so long ago oh stories, stories  
to flourish now despite all men can know  
of facts, mere facts to the contrary.

Mary Angela Douglas 24 March 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Flowering Of Leaves

God will dispense with the flame throwers  
that apples of silver may not recede into pictures of gold  
or the pitcher be broken at the cistern of snows the moon  
a scrim on the well waters indisposed  
while Jesus wept and wept stars  
and they will chide me this green is deceiving  
this flowering of leaves and you are mute  
and the muted stream but I am not  
I cried with violet intensity I am not  
the speaker behind the scenes  
and the Holy Ghost drifting out to sea  
and standing still yet I am the Presence  
whenever I stand and I don't cut the whirlwinds in my hands  
and I will pray through the ink bright day in the clauses  
of the april winds  
and bend not  
nor break

though the weight of spurious language

drive me to the ground

mary angela douglas 17 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# This High Circus Life Has

this high circus life has  
its irrefutable laws

but clowns are sustained by  
clowns less wounded in a

painting by Roualt  
how it should ever be-

alas but I am here  
where clowns roll off  
the edge of the sky

and I begin to cry

since all their sawdust ways I  
can not defend

or bind, protected in  
my book of consolations  
mary angela douglas 12 august 2001/31 may 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is My Confession To The Roses

this is my confession to the roses.

I have never forgotten you since childhood's breathless sighting  
impressed you on the pink and cream of my mind;

in each succeeding year and cherished just the same

though your petals  
have blown far, far from these demesnes  
of fear, of dying for our daily bread

of wondering, wandering inside my head:

what has the world to do with you  
that still your fragrance holds  
your colours and the beauty of your opening

onto wars; within, without and everywhere  
hidden behind faux doors of gold, the merciless.  
if I forget you, kingdom of the rose

how will my soul know how to  
blossom into death?  
or recognize

the breath of God  
on waking again.

mary angela douglas 12 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# This Is Not A Consolation Prize

to Rupert Brooke

this is not a consolation prize,  
she said silverly,  
the moon in the skies so often

and the silk of clouds surrounding it;  
lacework of winter trees, sunset reveries  
and unexpected winds that rise

as you are walking by no seas.  
and earth smells after rain, all mixed  
with fern.

however hard you try you could  
never buy them, earn them, win them;  
override-

this beauty spilling out from every side  
of God's mysterious cabinets.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is The Atlas Of The Floating

this is the atlas of the floating  
and did they bind their hair with colorful ribbons  
from the five and dimes

fresh in their petticoats  
or coming from the Fair  
I praise

their cloud souvenirs  
the small teasetts carved  
and hidden in their pockets

handpainted with little red apples  
did they eat scrapple, peaches with frothing cream  
were they mise en scene

or barely spoken to  
dressed in velvet at the Christmas parties  
and with fine lace collars.

hoarding sand dollars from the sea shores  
of their inland dreams  
I cherish them

because they had no scheming ways  
nor did they drop handkerchiefs on the sidewalk  
for the cavaliers

and all the gold bitten in half  
and the shine worn off of the evening news.  
i think of them in blue taffeta

under a pale pink moon  
with wisteria nearby.  
and I believe in them

that once that really were  
the way they were  
without artifice

spooning out strawberry ice  
sleep walking under the trees  
and vowed, life-long

to Poetry.

mary angela douglas 7 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is The Map They Draw For You When You Are Far From Home

this is the map they draw for you  
when you are far from home;  
pretending that they know

much better than you

the crisp, bright elevations of  
the hills you've climbed;  
each distinct blade of grass;

the mountain passes you crawled through.

each point of interest they revise:  
how the clouds unfold  
and the scent of rains

sweeping over the plains  
and the green plateaus  
where sorrows leveled off.

they will expound and  
pound the lecturn  
where the vast crowds come

to hear them prattle on.  
but you.  
but you

moved through it all;  
the midnight squalls,  
the last minute departures.

and hold your own  
the trapdoor latched; the calico curtains closed  
in the cellar of your soul:

the prairie and the prairie rose;

the little that sustained;  
midwinter's vacant sun

above the matchless snows.  
and all that's left behind's  
a secret cherished oh,

the portals of your soul.  
and you'll remain (because

God willed it so) ,  
the Keeper of it all.

mary angela douglas 5 may 2015; 16 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is The Unit On Stars

['I heard the learned astronomer...'  
-Walt Whitman]

'this is the unit on stars.'  
and we are forced to gaze at Light  
(or its' facsimiles) ,

starlight, starbright, as though we

never would have, left to our own devices.  
you know how children are.  
and these are the distances from

where you are to where...

and someone's chalking on the blackboard-  
'please stop talking'- squeaking on the  
whiteboard, pinning to the bulletin board

the pictures that don't resemble at all

the night skies learned by heart.  
oh my heart. will they confine  
the universe to a classroom in the End

or when will the breezes blow again,  
without inspection?

mary angela douglas 9 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is The Unit On Words

this is the unit on words,  
on words that explode like stars in the mind  
like words, like stars at the end of time

this is the lesson on saying goodbye  
but not to the images of light.

this is the unit on flight

broken down to trajectories;  
broken down past the dictionary meanings

or rising above, the words like glass  
like diamond glass admired by the child  
sunlit at the window

where the glass bottles shine in their  
various their myriad colours  
or tree fall at Christmas and glistening

this is the unit on listening

on not being listened to

on the sunburst words

by midnight tried and sentenced and suddenly

this is the unit on the pure

who hedge words inside

as if they were gold and the ark itself

who understand the Word unsold

nor bartered in the business day

breaking all covenants.

this is the Word that holds sway

while pundits shatter it.

this is the unit on the words that mattered

scattershot and jeweled

that fall by the wayside dreamer

on his or her way to school



who will endure

past all units finally

past all misconstruing translated

past the rose hedges decimated

the fine castles obliterated

into

the pearl, indomitable alphabet

of God.

mary angela douglas 1 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Is What Happens

sometimes I imagine in Heaven  
a grand welcoming  
the Party to beat all parties

festooned with pink,  
all the pastels swirling  
infinite amounts of cake and drink

with ice cream  
and there at the Gate  
a glorious glittery confetti

waterfalling down  
little silver trumpets  
and lemon placecards

with curlicue writing  
accenting the raspberry just desserts  
the Christmas ponies led in

with the sun blinding bridles

and a crowning, a crown  
and it's not the paste

diamond tiara this time  
or the cereal variety  
cardboardy jeweled

and cut-out on the dotted lines  
it's the real thing  
and a mighty shout goes up

all amethyst coloured  
and then there is a stream  
as far as eye can see or peridot mind

conceive  
from all the birthstone dimensions,

directions, indirections, peri-nations  
islands and isthmuses alike  
severally and all at once

once upon

of jolly friends  
coming from everywhere  
from beyond the potted plants

in their pools of gold  
from distant hills the  
bluest of blues and bells

pealing and pealing  
no longer holding back  
and no flack

and heavenly hosts from every rill  
in a jeweled light spilling over  
budding out with the bouquets

for someone you've never seen  
and don't have even a vague memory of  
and the grey silver doves in

graceful circles braiding ribbons  
of satin to underscore the Pearled point emphatically

who is all this for  
some may ask idly  
if they've gotten

this far in the story  
and I say from the dream of Glory

this is what happens when anyone enters Heaven  
who no one had time for on earth...

mary angela douglas 5 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Orchid Day I Will Wear Forever

this orchid day I will wear forever  
I dreamed then and now, again.  
this petaled hour.

brimmed with stars, the rains  
and the coolness after in the afternoons  
I wandered in, and now, again.

greenness has not shattered in my mind.  
though some would have it so.  
though countless snows have fallen

on the gardens in my soul.  
this orchid day... I sighed and was at rest.  
the sun melting like crushed strawberries

into a cream sky.  
and the gold leaf meets the silver mist  
and I am still I.

mary angela douglas 19 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Pageant Procession Of Angels

this procession of angels  
by candlelight flickering  
and the tinsel, haloed;

the golden cardboard wings  
of little children  
may seem simple;

and even countrified.

but angels depicted in the Florentine  
manner perhaps look on,  
a little wistful

at the scene so holly bright  
and well meant,  
all around

and they-  
bow down.

mary angela douglas 30 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Prismatic Day

this prismatic day  
is spending all its colors in the sky  
soon the stars will begin to rise

in my heart-

Crystallize!  
etched against my opaque spring  
these Waterford poems are

displaying all the fairytale's  
facets

mary angela douglas 31 may 2005

Mary Angela Douglas

# This Strange And Transient Hour

(cradlesong for Titania)

this strange and transient hour

we are here

in fleece of snow or flower

that will disappear

has - Something -

lit within it like a dew drop tear-

lingering, to bear as away,

in any mysterious year.

mary angela douglas 22 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas



# Those October Winds

[to Ray Bradbury, October's harebrained child of wonder; PLEASE READ ALL HIS BOOKS WHOEVER IS READING THIS, AND HIS STORIES INNUMERABLE, GLISTENING]

and to Percy Bysshe Shelley for the Ode to the West Wind: ]

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
-excerpted from Shelley's Ode To The West Wind

-----

I stopped along a scarlet way with gold entwined  
and other shades too many and delicate to define  
the blue blue air

the chimney smoke that lingered there  
and the stare of yellow pumpkins  
from the porches everywhere.

and in a dream I saw the leaves, my leaves  
as on a living stream and they were mine,  
sent from a far off Time

and so were all the trees and Shelley rose

bent to the sudden child, the chill of those  
october winds I long I longed  
to find again

and all their colours swirled  
a world unto themselves  
of scarlet and of gold, curled with

a hint of lemon a retreating green  
a pristine world  
supremely indicating the Unseen.

mary angela douglas 29 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Though No One Pays Me To

this is the solution, the pink titration I said  
no, you never did  
a voice chimed

but I knew the words coming out were all my own  
and fleece lined in the wintertime  
and sky blue if they wanted to

or otherwise, violet.  
and something grows if left alone  
into a lovely abalone

a rainbowed shell for a greater rainbow still  
and I'll wait on my own shore then  
in a dress of cream

in a fragrant wind  
and think my own thoughts till the end  
though no one pays me to.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thread

[to Christ the Lord of Poetry as of all other realms]

my soul I said weeping, we are tensile.  
we are threaded with gold  
someone has raveled us.

something  
that hates moonlight  
that halves the waves on the shore

then quarters them  
smaller and smaller  
ploting to diffuse.

and to deny.

knowing Whom we adore oh my soul  
we will only bleed light  
and the flowers of light

on the dimming tides are vivid.  
when have we calculated  
the effect of words on the populace

and schemed and called it dreaming?  
my soul. be bright.  
rework your broken threads again.

and then.  
take flight.

mary angela douglas 8 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Three Birds Arose In A Rose Dawn

three birds arose in a rose dawn  
and I looked on, their summer witness  
as in an alternate history, dreamed;  
perhaps the only one to think  
are we on the brink of something rubied in the world  
a cusp of gold, and sonar on the wind  
never to see it, hear it again, to feel in a velvet course  
with the selfsame feeling, with hidden words conveyed  
their flight, and flickering  
I saw from my particular starting gate in life, thus far,  
a certain way I could not replicate now  
and in a green wondering, wondered  
as if in a wood on the first page of the tale  
were they the presage or the message itself;  
how could I know that day were they boon or blight  
or for that instant only, in a never repeating Universe,  
more than Light itself  
mary angela douglas 17 june 2019  
Mary Angela Douglas

# Three Bunches Of Cherries

in your cherry brocade of a story  
who would deign to live?  
sniffed the princess

amazingly picky.  
I mean, cherry brocade.  
how could she?

so let's take a look at the larder  
in a dream.  
as before, it's much

larger than in real life.  
fantastically so.  
enough cherry preserves

for an army.  
even twice on Sundays...  
Cherries again?

sniffed the princess

all winter long.  
how tiresome.  
little stars came out in the dream

and yet it wasn't really night  
you know how dreams can be.  
we make allowances for the fantastical

as if they were children.  
no one ever scolds the dreams:  
oh why don't you grow up.

except the Princess.

mary angela douglas 17 october 2015

P.S. She sniffed a lot. I would have given her my pocket handkerchief as she

always kept a cold, but it was embroidered with cherries...

Mary Angela Douglas

# Through Fine Curtains, Looking At Her Coming Up The Walk For The Last Time

'safe in their alabaster chambers'

=Emily Dickinson

for Julie Harris in her portrayal of 'The Belle of Amherst'

the sunrise of the half-risen strays  
through fitful curtains, choking the days  
that lie before-  
to summer's brim with  
whatever it is-  
they will not say to your face,

too croaking to be remembered;  
though you've brought flowers,  
whole meadows full, and buckets of Grace,  
your cherry-sprigged bonnet-  
and new mown everything.

there is no birdsong here; no wooded greens.  
faint trickling of a dried up stream-  
a ransacked drawer of odds and ends;  
a picked lock scream as suddenly, stifled:  
you rob- just yourselves.

selective invitations on cream paper,  
illegible as a dream within a dream or calling cards,  
in someone else's gilded handwriting with  
swiss-dotted 'i's'.

the tapping of a bold foot on a Sunday floor,  
clean-swept- a merry look thwarted.  
-it looks like snow, you offer;  
they contradict -it's May.  
the afternoon ravel on its way.

and if you try to speak in thick blues and greens,  
in rivulets of feeling, rose fraught gleams



above the teacup clatter, the bacon and eggs,  
the sauce pan chatter-  
to sense- bright rivers of words! breaking on the tip of a blackberried sweetness,  
mid-conversation-

they bolt and leave you speechless:

dispensing-  
whatever's left of time, in meager  
party prizes, always to someone else;  
while looking slantwise at your dress-  
their Delft-  
(as if you'd stolen it) -

handing you, your galoshes.

oh pour it all down the drain  
with your thin lipped receipts for  
raspberry vinaigrettes, peerless pimento cheeses  
in seven counties (oh, Pleiades...):

your boiling rhubarb, spoilt silk  
tea time's tipping over!

I'm like a pearl edged bird, invisible in the blizzard  
of your disparaging till I cry in a voice of yellow diamonds oh  
why-  
why have you quenched the golden

Mary Angela Douglas 9 June 2014

Note on the poem: This is how I imagine Emily Dickinson calling on the neighbors (a custom of the time) for the last time after which she went into her famous seclusion at home only seeing those who dropped by. See her beautiful poem, *The Soul Selects Her Own Society* for all we have, really, of her state of mind regarding perhaps these social moments among other things, metaphysical souvenirs of a haunting loveliness.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Through Goldenrod Years

to my sister

they've castled my castles did you cry  
to the vacant chessboard  
and this is where the gales swept through

this is where  
the crystal chessmen vanished  
the queens took cover in a dream

and the rooks quavered.

in grade school they said  
if the twisters come  
find the nearest ditch.

we'd been all over on our bicycles maybe  
or just circling the block from our mimosa trees  
in long afternoons of strawberry and vanilla

and wrapped the chocolate squares  
back in their silver foil...  
never never! cherishing all at once!

as if by King's command.

who'd ever seen a ditch on the playground  
where we'd run, pretending we were horses  
in our bright pinafores, our Greenaway dresses

or close by, home.

but we accepted the filmstrips for what they were,  
continued skipping rope till the wild dust flew  
and you flew up in the backyard swing

till I thought you'd launch into space: the unrivalled

queen of the swing set's summers blues and greens,

don't you remember? through goldenrod years,  
the worst storms never appeared.

mary angela douglas 7 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Through No Fault Of Your Own

through no fault of your own you (may) have been  
led to this spot.

so green on the map; it's where they hid the gold.

through no fault of your own you (may) have been  
told this in dreams.

and now, here you are

land locked with your favorite sand pail  
filled to the brim, your little spade.

missing a few stars...

shall we take to market, then the

fresh tomatoes, corn and okra

we might have grown

on better soil?

oh, let's pretend we can!

and that we will withstand

what blizzards may come.

the nursery rhymes have scattered on these  
blue transparent winds.

somehow, the children (may)

begin again. outpourings of rust

from a jeweled soul I can and I may.

I will pin on their gauze wings.

God will sing to them.

mary angela douglas 22 july 2015 rev.13 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Through The Stick Trees A Foil Moon Is Shining

through the stick trees a foil moon is shining  
through the stick trees in a child's drawing  
the child is rising and falling

in the snow of dreams  
in the snow of dreams through the stick trees  
the foil moon grows larger shining

a larger shining is dreams  
where the child rises and falls  
through the thick snows

the thick snows careening through  
a universe of sighs  
an ocean of wonder whys

where the lavender ships have gone down  
so that the town of childhood does not  
know this yet

so that the glass bells are not  
yet peeling, the glazed bells  
the once that slipped from our hands

with their cargo of fresh lavender  
where will flowers be found  
when we no longer carry our bouquets

and the town of childhood  
cannot be found  
if the flowers are lost at sea

and Spring cannot reach me  
cries the winter child  
in dreams

where the foil moon weeps  
'will it disappear? '

mary angela douglas 12 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Throwaway Words

throwaway words should beam sonically in space

but throwaway words just hang around this place

in all the blue and green

no conversations to be seen.

i dreamed that words were rose leaf bright

icarian mode

and not the mintage of the bought and sold

three lilies sung for the world on hold

hello goodbye or who do you know

or weathervane summer or winter pane snow

its all the same when its on with the show

o throwaway stowaway go away words

what's the latest soup you've served

will gossip save us or the herds

that bellow through and ring the bells

to tell us it's not going well

and late at night I read the classics

and wear my fleece lined winter jacket

because the heat is running low

because the only thing they know

is throwaway throwaway words.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2020

the three lilies are a reference to a song sung in Shostakovich's Symphony No.14

Mary Angela Douglas



# Throwback

## THROWBACK

someday driving into the Caledonian,  
into the mists of what is left of  
an unexpected blue

and the folkways branching like cherries  
and my heart as full of song as the pear  
branch blossoms in May

unsure of whether it be pear blossom  
or the light of uncertain stars  
uncertain stars the light of my songs

the light of what does or doesn't belong in this century  
and I a vivid ghost looking into dead mirrors  
I will not waste away

nor seek as was said by angels  
the living among the dead  
with the rains I will be, and never lost

among Caledonian hills,  
keeping the density of storm clouds  
while they live, and full of bright birds

with the unexpected lightning of rainbows  
around the Throne

and with the Holy Ghost discerning everything  
singing as I can with the surging winds  
the petals translucent as they are scattered

and as they sail;

well beyond the status quo the growth of capital;  
well you may say, well, toward  
the summits of :

God on high, Christ as he would be remembered  
and brushing aside infernal gossip.  
the need to know,

removing all its springs  
just how the music is wound.  
for the white and gold, for the white and gold;

the opaline weddings of the skies.  
and Poetry as it would be known, unto God.

mary angela douglas 14 april 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thumbelina On A Bad Day

one day you may wake up small  
and you will wonder why  
she may have fumed

on days when being tolerated as  
rose fluff, violet leaf grew stale;  
when floating from fern to fern edge

she thought really deep thoughts.  
why should it matter that her  
shadow fit into a thimble

and the ants down ant hill lane  
thought of her as one of their own?  
my poems cast tall shadows

in the rain

she sobbed into the  
handkerchief of God.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thus Had The Beautiful World Just Come To Be

thus had the beautiful world  
just come to be  
drifting in your own mind

like the second snows lifted above the first  
and veil on veil.  
delicately, almost

seen through or  
on a sea of quiet choired  
and in between,

vague memories of leaves  
their skeleton, veins in  
a partial sun

flaming upwards.  
so angels depart, the rubied wing  
having inferred the message

or the heart is sounded again,  
consoled, with the snows  
lifting and falling

lifting and falling  
repairing silver  
in the astonished air.

mary angela douglas 28 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Thy Children Cry For Bread And Angels; Cherry Boughs To Bend Down

who are we, blown by the winds

ah lacrimosa, the furtive tear in your eye

lucky enough to be alive within view of the

green proximity of trees

to have ready made for us a ceiling inlaid with stars

with clouds the colour of tearose, peacock blue,

the glazing golds the skies of mother of pearl arced over us

young or old

their echoing waters music music of fountains

and hidden trumpets language falling into us counterwise

and meteor showers snows

we to whom the Lord God had brought the perfume of all flowers

the county of everything living the moon in shade

who are we.

with our own own orbiting sometimes elliptical

practical, falling into sinkholes or poetic states of mind

learning to read the cliffs of stone and time, and time spelled backwards

the way that canyons make us feel; Christmas tinsel, orange peel

who are we, neither fern or silt nor free of guilt, bits of mica

and yet all, all of these, the mirrors of all we see we are  
born but from where to parachute from our mothers on this thin globe and torn  
descended into our luminous lifetimes, subject to anything unforeseen  
and nimbus dark realities  
clouded over with business concerns the death of small children  
all we have not earned we have not earned the glint of learning  
off in the distance far and silver all we aspire to  
paper airplane thrown or flowing  
or just in a pear bright moment lucid under the sun  
at festival and funeral feeling in the way  
wondering wondering how many days left here  
the clock of our lives you are turning winding here.  
O Lord God. our little kaleidoscopes our myriad fears  
oh please. for many more aprils, years  
allow us, please, to remain.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Time And Motion Studies In The Factories Of Light

dream heads upon the chopping blocks  
or delved into we manage in the day to day  
to hide our tears in the deluge

may the rains sweep sorrow away  
and we are the instruments of the GNP  
the case studies

in the factories of light.  
may we become proficient  
they say and they say and they say

in doing what they have for us today  
and we are measured incessantly.  
somewhere there was a pastore

where we lived, I or you  
as in the fairy tales of our wits  
making the fair trade of the one and only

cow for the magic beans  
and freeing the captive harp by degrees  
from the giant's clasp.

and this is still  
not far beyond our grasp  
if only we could leave could leave could leave

without being seen to  
or marked down for it,  
the factories of light.

the inhibitors of flight.

mary angela douglas 3 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Time At The Fairytale Threshold Cannot Pass

time at the fairytale threshold cannot pass:  
let the lime tree flower endlessly by  
the little door or suddenly turn to snow who knows

why distaff gold once spun  
is spinning yet and twelve princesses  
in rainbow raiment find 12 reasons

to be glad in their worn shoes  
where it's always twilight dancing  
that's not much further down your

dreaming mind and you will stand  
in deep midwinter by the rosebuds  
not knowing how you came;

forgetting to bloom in the snow  
and breathe the haloes  
round them, rosy-ringed

not feeling the cold at all.

oh inexplicable were the things you  
ought to know; that they remain.  
so holding the sea glass shimmer in your hand

half-waking in your room  
these tokens of light sustain  
the music of the tune that

you were there  
oh, you know you were

with your mystified heart  
your umpteen reasons to be glad  
that the waves would not depart

because you loved them



mary angela douglas 18 december 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Time Is The Picture Book You Said

Time is the picture book you said  
with the raveled edge  
but the raveled edge is gold

soft gold, after all you've told,  
been told and there are the pictures  
as you dreamed

the lilac seam  
the stitches sewn  
the apple hold in the faery ship

the rose bright way  
where winters stray now  
waiting any day

for the last page burnished  
the new House furnished.

mary angela douglas 17 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Time Itself, Regarding

because they see a blank page there  
they feel compelled to fill it up  
with poem or song or picture,

gossiping conjecture

as if they were the givers of snow on snow  
and we the dark fields and below  
would that it would snow

where they had been

covering up all tracks  
of the little they knew  
who looked on me as a blank page too

even while I wept whole diamonds  
seas and continents, kingdoms fraught  
and guarded with my soul

submerged imperiled beauty  
safe from foes  
and Time itself,

regarding them with woe.

Mary Angela Douglas 1 August 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Time's Impenetrable Span

Time's impenetrable span is not wider than  
the heart through its epochs known  
o valentine stand still you may not

for clouds arise and though  
the pink sun flows  
before the darkness sets in.

yet, it will rise again  
and so will we. my heart and I,  
beyond all these contingencies

there lies eternity's fair face  
God's grace ahead  
there where the seas are no more

and all is golden, stored  
as if a dowry for thee,  
all weddings gone

mary angela douglas 14 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To A Saint's Childhood, Rayed In Gold

your heart encased like a paperweight flower,  
like an early blossom in late winter's hour,  
God has kept like a penny in His shoe,

like bread and butter in the tower,  
a last meal cherished.  
you with your mystical bent

will almost comprehend  
while waiting for the winds to turn  
your toy boat round again on a lake as smooth as silk

that you have been preserved for something;  
not for yourself alone.  
meanwhile, you live, you love to live

in the shadow of His throne.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To A Wave On The Glassine Sea, Coming Or Going

the shore cannot hold you and so, you depart  
sometimes going out the entire day  
sometimes returning a different colour

can anyone say for sure, oh it's you?  
and you are edged in lace and pink in the sun  
or gold toward evening.

toward evening the sound of your going  
hurts me like old music suddenly remembered  
and sometimes it is more than I can take

to have such a dream in braided twilight:  
wondering more and more  
as time endures

will I return some day  
to another Shore, like you- may-  
with a strange, a beautiful intensity?

washed, the horizon, new Pearled.

and when will this happen,  
have you any word-

mary angela douglas 3 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To A Young Artist, Anywhere

and to George Herbert

fill the sky with stars,  
your very own:  
rose arias, soft green

galaxies-  
a periwinkle moon  
no matter what they say  
inlaid with a mango music

always on beneath the surface  
of your matchless dreams

believe the dark green stains  
of the moon on so much dewy grass  
you must walk barefoot in!

any weather-  
any distance-  
I tip my rose-tipped hat to you!  
through roads not strewn with moonlight  
read psalms, not tea leaves-  
don't despair-

pray in every color all the time  
survive all disrespect- tending  
the stark bright lilies of your mind

as Christ when all alone did-

flame on towards the true-hearted bier  
of your last words on the subject-  
working out the inward scarlet

drumming of your soul,  
fight your fear

as others did, before you-  
God willing  
may you rise on your own Easter day

with brand new things to say-  
in Gold-

Mary Angela Douglas 26 October 2010

Mary Angela Douglas



# To All The Children Who Wanted To Be King Or Queen

to all the children who wanted to be king or queen  
of the classroom, dayroom dramas  
of their dreams in apple green sour or mauve or anything

to thee I bring these cowslip broidered poems  
where you are free to be crowned with  
gummy stars, dimestore gems and the  
last of the aluminum foil from the

kitchen cabinet or you are home sick  
and the thought of candle wick costumes  
conjured at halloween occurs

and so you practice being princess, earl,  
all the day ringing the small bell  
at bedside anyway for more soup please

and gingerale and tell me please just  
one more fairy tale or let me breathe  
once upon instead the pine scented winds

at lane's end or feel brocaded longings  
stir for the outdoors autumn scented  
tromping back again to

school and learning the golden rule  
and knowing we're king and queen  
of everything already when we just

so apple checked off the roll call list  
sing out 'present', presentful of whims.

mary angela douglas 27 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Ancient Irish Song And Lament As Unto God

for you, Saint Patrick going back into slavery for the sake  
of the King Of heaven and to the ancient songs, to Poetry.

not stridency nor a jagged glass

have I ever heard in the words I loved

but heaven scent as if a dove

had landed in my tree of poetry

even in the blasted bud,

the singed leaf

even accounting of all grief

still the words were starlight then to me

and now

the moon disappearing through clouds

yet the cloud still luminous.

in favor or out

and rich or poor

only the Word have I adored

the poems brave the poems unsure

unlocking the crystal of the heart

forbidding it to break.

mary angela douglas 18 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Anyone Writing Now In The World (A Letter Across Time)

anyone writing now in the world  
famous or not I want to say to you  
please dont let them reduce your work to one required theme  
you know what I mean or  
to any theme at all. its your bread.  
you have the right to butter it the way you want.  
to put jam on it or not.  
to drip the honey of time on it deep amber drop by drop.  
dont let them quell a spell on you so that you are down  
to one word only and chirp woodenly like a broken bird  
politics politics politics  
what do we need with a trillion more books on one harping theme  
commanded as if by unappointed infantry.  
we dont live in politics.  
we live in our souls.  
in kingdoms within.  
in our imaginations.  
escaping to other realms  
when the world is harsh.  
it has always been this way  
until the new lawgivers came  
their mouths permanently grim  
and reduced us all to the same drab pattern.  
approved by Them.  
resist this.  
write in gold. in the sky with blue streamers.  
penning the secret lives of trees.

mary angela douglas 26 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Be Sung In White Tulle, Silver Sequined

the king mislaid his  
blueprint for the stars  
and cries at night

into his golden shadow  
lost courtiers kneel  
before the showcase cakes

little children may not eat  
no matter how long they say  
they are sorry

that the toeshoe thistledown moon  
is slipping farther everyday  
down the rimed rose campion

windows of the castle.  
but they will keep their  
diamond latchkeys safe

at this rhapsodic distance from the sun-  
from the sparklers' fizzy dreaming at the end-  
from that last summer-

and bless - and bless-

eternal lily snow on the fleeting ground

mary angela douglas 25 may 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Certain Persons, Poets Who Use Christ As A Fashion Accessory Or Throw-Away Cultural Aside

Christ is not a backdrop for anything  
much less that he should provide your pose  
a green skied background for your latest whimsy

in quoting him so negligently you show the cognescenti  
how you have moved on  
let there be applause of the milder sort,

the conferring of honors.

why the green sky perhaps you languidly ask  
in between signing autographs  
it's the colour the sky chooses to announce

a coming do sky, some say  
the winds pick up they blow the pose  
the backdrop too, Away.

what else there is to say, to do you already know  
but you won't say it will you.

mary angela douglas 7 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Certain Poets Whom I Cannot Get Out Of My Mind

the very rich, the deep brocaded heart,  
the one twining the apple blossom  
with the rubied leaf; entwined with music

irretrievably

the one where the angels  
shed tears of ochre all october long  
for what is departing, departed

and in the winter's shine  
repeats the rethreading pearls;  
the sequins of our distancing unfurled

oh flags of the poles  
belonging to no one but the snowblind  
heart in the world, unknown

and layered waxy crayon on crayon  
scratch art of the infinite, or nodding off,  
the sugarplumed winsome gleams

of the child you used to be.

the poets are not under sod as the moderns thought  
who did not mourn for them;  
who labored that they'd be forgot-

in favour of colourless things.

they are with God.  
and in my midnight room  
with the moon shining in;

the ever lilac stars.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# To Children, In Their Dreams

maybe we'll get our mail on the moon  
if all else fails I say to myself  
and God smiles somewhere

behind the clouds  
I'll dress the luna moths  
in pale green

as you would  
when you were free  
and maybe the sky will telegraph me

and maybe the sea  
or we will go and live at the poles  
and stash the snows

for summer  
when it comes  
if it comes

we will see it all  
from a ringside seat  
won't it be sweet

to rain the moondust down  
on the streets  
to children in their dreams.

Mary Angela Douglas 28 March 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Come Home

I was breathing and it was the light, the  
lightness of words, the valentines of snows  
that fell all night and the moonlight, dove sent,

gathering force so quietly and it was  
the dream unraveling so that only  
a phrase in it was remembered into

the day, a gesture a place I'd never  
seen where I was breathing anyway  
as flowers breathe and as the seas

when they are restless turning from  
diamond to turquoise and then the  
other way. did the rainbows catch

us by surprise? arcing over the  
floods that day or were we all, always  
waiting, wanting all the colours, finally,

to come home

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Come Into The World, To Leave Like Snow

to come into the world, to leave like snow  
like leaves that blow is this a thing to wish  
perhaps most devoutly

Shakespeare knew but then with rue  
returned to work the laden mines  
of his own mind

it should be enough to work with God, for God,  
for joy, and in the instants find  
no words that cloy but those that shine

and then depart from the world  
to leave like snow no imprint of its own  
but bearing the imprint of what blows

what breaks in the ice or twig like goes  
its creaturely way across vast distances:  
the soul filled up with clouds,

going away

mary angela douglas 15 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Cry Without Tears

[to pierrot, painted with tears]

they are plagiarizing your tears  
night and day night and day  
sang pierrot

not to columbine  
and the whine of their process  
distresses me sorely

he sang to his small lute  
they have stolen my tears  
from furtive moments

in secret passages made public;  
in the public square  
the thief of griefs

can only shine.

get your own!  
I cried but O  
there were no tears left

mary angela douglas 11 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Every Poet Every Day

as many times as the spectrum shatters  
and undeniable music is disbarred or  
never brought to light in the first place

by those who stuff their ears with snow  
or anything they find at hand -  
only not to hear you-

that many times and more,  
a hidden star retracts;  
your misread nebula hangs fire-

and the broken poem spins backwards-  
bone-china,  
off the shelf

you are left whispering

pure gemstone words  
in the aftershock of so much withering.

very real nightengale\*, hold on  
while hemorrhaging light-

it may be that the Emperor will live  
though signs are few and an army of  
miscreant words

is blocking the good road to the Palace.

God's state of mind and yours  
can't be that far apart  
whenever you are sifting through the rubble-  
beyond all help  
cherishing every shard as though  
it were a diamond's diamond  
in the sky or the raft of a  
language that could not fail-

oh living this jagged way,  
are you still there?  
mending the broken crockery of worlds:

again again again

mary angela douglas 14 september 2009

\*reference to Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale: The Emperor's Nightengale

Mary Angela Douglas

# To God My Father In The January Sleet Remembered

he's always branching off into leaves into little asides of flowers

momentary novas

how can he help it

try to hold a conversation with him just once

and you'll see what I mean

don't ever challenge him to a colouring contest

He's the Colour Wheel!

before you can even get the blue crayon out of the box

he's coloured Everything and added red rainbows.

take music for an example

you've got a tune in your head

he's got cathedrals full, gushing waterfalls and Messiaen

the whole works and the fourth of July too

not only Sousa and the 1812 Overture, boom boom.

He likes Charles Ives. And being Alive.

We're all fireworks to him and my friend,

he doesn't ever use stencils.

he's all the worlds fairs and all that's fair

not only in love and war;

he has the scars to prove it

and the wherewithall to be

the peddler of all peddlers

come and see

the vintage scarves over canyons, the shawls to brooches wed

the hoarding of valentines one single Iris

extended from the child with the grubby hand

treasured.

he's without overhead on luncheonettes

with banana cream pies; he likes to riddle you or I

the tiny riddles in the Bazooka wrappers, bubble gum

in pink or green. treading the boards incessantly

in every Shakespearian scene.

he's without measure, measuring sticks, clocks that tick

he doesn't need Time



or a thousand doves on his Birthday

he hasn't got one. or Mercury dimes, come to think of it.

sometimes he longs for a rose piped cake,

the frosting left in the bowl, I think so,

the little seed cakes out of Tolkien

or on the brink of snowfalls wishes for us

a thousand thousand Christmases

all at once

arriving as

we get off the bus

in a cold and sleety January

to a slightly unheated apartment.

oh he's a Department store

on every floor you'll find Him taking the escalator to...

especially the perfume aisle with his white floral notes

a hint of orange blossom, citrus, citrus, He smiles

sighing in jasmine, ruffling the coastal waters

oh sons and daughtes or look for him

out in the mists herding the clouds of mignonette

and even in this

impossible possible ent

in mirror writing.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Hans Christian Andersen's Little Fir Tree

(and to other trees the birds and I have known)

ittle tree / little silent Christmas tree / you are so little / you are more like a  
flower....

e.e. cummings

Vague dream-head lifted out of the ground,  
And thing next most diffuse to cloud,  
Tree at My Window, Robert Frost

perhaps at times a coded music sobs  
rustling the branches now invisible to the eye  
and birds flock springlike as before

and dance and dance  
perchlessly chirping  
where you were. little tree,

who dreamed of the silver and golden  
apples decking you out, of the children's  
shouts: let festivities begin you trembled;

ropes of cranberries, too...

your rubied coronations through  
you sighed and knew of a sudden,  
it was not the wind.

beginning the game of let's pretend  
entertaining the attic mice with your two stories,  
little stories, overheard.

not knowing yet;  
what happens now?

if I were a bird I would fly to your Forever  
I would sing you visible again, my tree  
with your cloud headed, wrong headed snowlike

longing for..who could name it?  
now they've left no trace of you  
beneath my tiny window looking out.

already beautiful you were.  
under peerless starlight.

disconsolate little tree.  
I loved you.

mary angela douglas 31 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Harold Bloom In The First Spring After

the angel is the text

you more or less said in your memoir

and some of us are Jacob when we read

and the night is long the outcome uncertain

if only to pull a single golden bead from it all

and then to string a necklace around The Sun

what is reading but breathing

but only to some

who with braille coding fingers

would read if they could

the snowy face of God

and be consoled.

mary angela douglas 20 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Him

He may be filled with Light with birds with maytimes.  
ultra violets, He may be tender as sudden showers  
hinting at snows before they fall and

both at the same instant. who knows.  
we know about His lightnings  
from the Films.

and from the redundant pulpits  
where out of love, they become:  
more and more inarticulate...

what of His summers?  
the colours of His orchards?  
His tangles of blackberry vines

(they may like pies He sighed, and  
cobblers: 'Let there be berries then' or

creamy valentines from the saints-  
the smiling of dogs):

His elephant remembering, lumbering,  
of the Day His dinosaurs failed  
to get off the school bus.

charcoal sketches of first-in-flights.  
of Time...of coal turned into diamonds-

sand under irritating circumstance,  
to pearl

we dream we know  
or else, we Deny.  
where else could wondering

come from? who among us dreamed  
up the brink of day-  
all the flowers! rainbows swirled in oil.

oh here on earth where we are bound to stay  
until we are not-  
where it is not permitted to see face to Face

we make do with certain artists, short of Grace.  
but tell me, you who are so certain that you know Him  
or that - you cannot-

what Michaelangelo could carve  
from any quarry here  
the rose veined marble

of His Heart?  
the weeping of His auroras...  
whenever we imagine He is far away...

or that He never was...

mary angela douglas 8 november 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Jean Redpath

and to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young-Douglas

'Fled is that music-: Do I wake or sleep? '

John Keats, Ode To A Nightingale

fled is the dream past dream on the clock of waking;  
tulip-cupped the moon where the starry snows are flaking.  
when will I awake in the rooms of before, not after.

silver, laughed the trees but they are gone  
where the sun creaks like old swings on the playgrounds.  
after song is evening, afterthought is all,

in pearl bright slippers.  
and the sunsets crowd: mere thread  
through the needle of the last hour

shadowing the pear trees in the fairy story.  
count, king by king and it's away  
sigh the milk bright; wept the sailors

lost to executions now;  
unread, wrote the poets in the frost of  
windowpanes...

I'm going door to door selling all the flowers  
out of my mind and orphaned from the business world  
and late for lunches wrapped in wax paper;

the jam smudged bread.

nebulae, almost cried the child in the crib  
with the orange coverlet;  
dream, sighed the clouds and took her home; is it too late

for conversations? they have scattered the cranberry hills  
my heart-where it's all flood tide for the  
brides with lilies in their hands:



on the cusp of lavender and in the purpling dark

you used to know.

and here they leave you and you don't know why  
where the gold and the silver leaves

have fluttered fluttered down  
leaving the fairytale branches  
that scar the skies:

skirling, the wanderer wandered  
and far from the rose red lanes.  
the voice of mists may falter:

the Song, remains.

mary angela douglas 1 september 2014; last lines in italics added september  
2,2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# To John Keats, Not Only Written On Water

you are an enamel on the wind;  
you with your bright clock ticking;  
a tangle of myrhh and extravagance

bewildering the starlight;  
dazzling past Time, infused with gold  
well beyond wondering.

bitter honour conferred

or not conferred,  
the nightingale has flown to you  
and will not depart.

mary angela douglas 8 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Kaye, Lost Among The Ice Puzzles

{(Gerda's lament, from a song cycle for The Snow Queen and with a bouquet of mignonette) }

(and To Hans Christian Andersen for his fable, The Snow Queen)

=====  
=====

how will you weep then

in such a glacial land

or will you wait for the thaw when

you will take the census of their tears

you whom I knew for years

and no longer recognize because

you do not recognize me!

though in dreams I hold the sun in my hands

till it burns quite through

beseeching you oh K.

remember when we played

the world would be always green?

and we would be king and queen

and oh the cracked mirror in your eyes

has wounded all flowers forever

K will you never never look upon summer again

without your compass with the surveyor's kit  
she gave you last Christmas breathing on the glass  
of your paralysis.

I look for roses but they are spent  
For the little balcony with the geraniums  
where we were but all all has whirled away  
losing the laughing the brightening names and the shine on the  
waters in a kingdom calculating everything down  
to the last son and daughter  
down to the bitter weeds of all regret.

Mary Angela Douglas 28 August 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Mary O'hara: Her Harp And Song

I think of her milking the cows at night  
or early while it is yet dark  
this is the sense in which the

harp sweeps over me with its pastoral love songs  
that the cream of the stars reflects  
in a pail foaming white

and it is my soul, is it

and so to the lips of song  
the air of almost dawn comes winging  
this is an ancient singing jeweled

ah while the moon and the earth  
stand still, while one can breathe;  
while we must drink our fill of dreams

till the music runs over

mary angela douglas 8 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Mary Queen Of Scots As A Child

they dressed you in rose colours perhaps  
as a child and this made it easier it may be  
to endure what came later

rose colours at the beginning of things  
as if you were a flower yourself  
or felt like one at occasional recitals

when you played the baby nocturne  
excerpts from the summer nights  
so endlessly starry how could you think

anything could go wrong  
on earth it is this way we are preserved  
by certain details

the cirrus brushstrokes in a summer sky  
the flavor of tangerines.  
the palest palest greens.

this is outside of history  
outside of the turgid news  
and the newsreels where the exiled disappear

the smoke of old trains running off the reels  
at school and the classroom darkened  
for the occasion.

you will remember aeons later  
they dressed you in colors of the rose.  
and compose yourself for the great tragedies

coiled inevitably around the thrones.

mary angela douglas 23 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Modern Psychology: Stay Off The Jeweled Grass

I wonder how it is oh most inexact and contradictory science

you could ever imagine to map the routes

Almighty God has taken through my mind

my soul, which you barely acknowledge at any time

the unexplained detours the inexplicable dazzling of the

pavements of diamond

the dizzying swaying bridge over my own

particular Amazon with its hibiscus groves

its foreign birds weeping in multicolours

and the scarlet ibis flown.

the sudden ravines, the abandoned houses

with the windows broken in where the crabapple blooms

have gotten in; where the sweet honeysuckle twines

by the playground swings. so many things you'll never

find the codes to and this sign says KEEP OUT.

do you think you can trace the circuit of the sun

before human history had begun or answer the parables put to Job

and do YOU know the storehouses of the snow

and where He keeps his springs which bubble up in me

continually and are anything but aberrant.

take your unjeweled periscopes home your clinical

all assuming stares

and leave me alone in the lemon groves with my Father of Lights

you cannot even begin to know the way we have taken

through prophetic nights and the Magi did not listen to you either

whoever you think you are blind bat or mole ferreting it all out

or if they had, they would have missed the Star.

mary angela douglas 24 may 2020

with the singular exception of the wonderful Carl Jung.

Mary Angela Douglas



# To My Mother By The Screen Door Of Heaven, Looking Out

was she in larkspur, that shade of blue  
when the wind was blue  
the awning of the house

the color of dusk  
then we were thinking it  
is really autumn, rust, majolica satin

and the gold no longer brushes the  
cream of clover on the lawn, can.  
glow over the zinnias anymore

in their spiky and sometime fuschia-  
universe;  
was she in larkspur, was she

larkspur's soul come back to the recital  
how could the children answer that  
being told not to speak

in their frail wanted to say  
not finding the right way exactly oh no  
the zinnias are in peril

but the wind speaks, you thought,  
the wind creaks and the pines know it  
just like the playground swings or

when we play too early  
the Christmas Firestone records.  
isn't the wind a child that blows

now soft, now tempestuous  
blind with flowers and  
telling all the secrets, knowing them by very heart;

or holiday managing all apart

our art of thinking it is so  
the wind, as a fairy princess

no matter what the records show;  
tossing the gold of ancient kites  
we never see.

and though we dream and dream  
the fallen stars and the mysteries  
all about our feet and silverly;

as though we were royalty  
it is of that lady disappeared  
my mama, in the strawberry myths we

braid about you, continually  
we would all primrose bright  
primarily- Sing.

mary angela douglas 27 april 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# To My Sister From The Pale Blue Toyroom

the icicle sounds of the toy piano  
break off when I think of these:  
the dolls in the antique crib

I never said goodbye to;  
the teddys by the closet door  
wistful in their florist bows

of pineapple yellow and near  
the mirror in the hall we always  
asked each other, does my slip show?

sometimes you didn't tell me until  
after school and that was a little embarrassing;  
swinging higher than me in the swing

I thought you would reach the moon  
before the astronauts.  
if I had a glass of Tang or an Instant Breakfast left,

vanilla flavored, I'd raise my glass to you  
and chew slowly remembering all the dictums  
of my Grandmother

when we lived in the Kingdom of Music.

mary angela douglas 21 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To My Sister, Sharon F. Douglas...

[to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas]

when we set sail how lilting were the notes  
of dream birds on the rim of Time  
and now the cup of dreaming deepens

and now, is it almost tipped over?  
how will we catch the kaleidoscope's  
flaring like a rose, inset with emerald leaves

when our hands are so small?  
or wave the wand where bubbles reach the sun  
before they pop

or wobble over the backyard where the red ants  
mark their highways up the bark of  
the trees who loved us?

long summers have passed.

it's the seesaw moments I recall the best  
when I was in the clouds  
and you in your winter hood laughing.

on the ground.  
I thought I would never get down.  
now I would send you ladders of stars

and linen winds of coolness

if I thought they would reach you  
where you are;  
or roomfuls of gardenias

just to soothe you.

there. like a rest in the music.  
in the pale green evenings,  
still.

mary angela douglas 9 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To One Who Considers Leaving Earth Too Early

on the day you feel like going away too early  
I hope it comes to mind that certain clouds  
still need you to be here or else (I fear) ,

they will weep themselves into the sea.  
and birds will scatter aimlessly;  
lost without your particular

tree of dreams,  
the one they are used to;  
the secret one of gold.

reconsider colours  
without you to grow old;  
at least, your childhood

favorites on a summer's garden wall

through a raindrop prism  
will tremble in their bands  
and the rings of planets

seize up in a cold  
no scientist can understand  
and certain ships so laden

with the wishes just for you  
that have come due  
oh now that you have done this

will never reach land.

mary angela douglas 20 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Our Lady Poverty

how weak were we

dining on plum blue shadows

no table mat anymore.

how odd to live behind a door with no roof.

roofless, we endured

finding a home in the pear tree

in our sprigged dresses under moonlight.

under moonlight, I counted out my change

hoping to buy another word with God.

in the morning I found

golden coins

had rained down in my sleep.

mary angela douglas 27 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Oz From An Evergreen Distance

history should have been this  
the emerald turreted  
the way toward and

homeward the silk balloon missed  
but not the waking from the dream.  
oh from seam to chartreuse seam

I would stitch you  
as if you were a heart  
and not a pincushion.

as if you were the star  
that would never go out  
not even in a daylight sky.

not even afterwards.

this is the myth of  
never saying goodbye,  
the perennial view.

and that is only one of  
all the reasons  
ozland that

we love you.

mary angela douglas 4 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# To Percy Bysshe Shelley

your cloudy parables,  
have we driven away?  
so that we can no longer

really look at the skies?  
and our angels, regretfully

decline to dip their wings

in the pearl maelstroms  
in the flood tide radiance  
of old dreams.

stay, awhile! at least when we  
reread your fire tinged music's drawing up  
of the leaves that held in the

moment before letting go of  
their particular trees (it may be)  
a far off music from the long ago

a gust of sighs that sent them  
into the whirlwinds eddying,  
precursors of the storms, the slipstreams

we no longer  
have names for.

Mary Angela Douglas 30 August 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Ray Bradbury April 2015

her eyes are drawn away from the canvas  
to the climbing starwheels in the skies  
I can't help it she'll reply as in a dream

to the teacher reprimanding her  
your thoughts would wander too  
if you saw them there

it's difficult to be stared at when you're  
wide awake in another world.  
you won't get used to it

no matter how far down the road you go  
there'll always be someone, something  
knowing you're thinking wrong

I'm not thinking at all you'll laugh inside  
and know that soon the starwheels  
will arrive and take you home

to the planet where dreaming is  
not suspect!

mary angela douglas 28 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Ray Bradbury, Six Years Gone

let me braid in forget me not blue  
fire balloons to the tune of You though  
maybe we speak of you too much

those of us who read you extravagantly  
in some dream summons to life  
with each page poured over, each page turned down still,

the magic foundry still going, tangerine glowing  
in the few years since you've been gone.  
not wanting to lose the day and fearing the night

we plunge on in beatific reminiscence  
when we should just take flight; when  
what we should do is just live

as if we were made of the sun  
that honeycombed sphere  
and the zenith still clear

and write, o write the page of gold o  
live! I seem to hear you say

as if it were ever August in brocades  
with the grass of eternities before you  
the windows far flung while the wind says

never out of breath  
come, Yea come, elusively  
berry stained and unrestrained

in the green glad praise of God,  
red clover proud and sweet.  
raspberry replat

the race before you lies, even autumn at the verge  
still incomplete  
the all out of doors rapture of: we're on our way, pounding

in fresh, unboxed tennis shoes, we ARE  
some remnant of the cloudless day,  
neon colours and the bests of

and all the marvels out there.  
and everything to love:  
don't be old, I hear you say, be

newer day by braver.  
let all the dandelion hours accrue  
into a vintage so rich the wish for time,

more time,  
comes true...

mary angela douglas 28 april 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Rose Fyleman

I want to live in a fairy dell

though others tell me

it won't go well

that I'll be gone for 300 years

and come back when

it's all disappeared.

but what care I

where it's always spring

and I can live under a

sparrow's wing

and fashion the dew drops

into bright rings

and live on berries

and never be queried

and Christmas could come

with every new sun

and snowdrops, sweet peas

whatever you please

we'll live in the past

and last and last

thinking up dreams

and heavenly schemes

to get there from here

in some other year.

mary angela douglas 27 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Sharon F. Douglas, My Sister

is heaven the marriage of white and gold;  
the pristine prisms shimmering at the windows;  
the slow cadence of silence-

the encoding that cannot be raided?  
that's music, you explained and were happy, then.  
I will stay in the house of childhood and know this

gazing at the self same stars till I die  
from being, like them, too crystalline...

and the birthday wish floated over the candles  
into a vast sky where it continued snowing Christmases.  
now we'll go back to vectors in the schoolrooms,

to the trapezoids, we laughed and turned instead  
to poetry, to Bach and your Mozart serenades;  
your Chopin, prislime, causing the clouds to weep.

and in the summer yard, the pink mimosa flowers  
waved to us and it was not so hard to leave, then:  
I swear, it was naught but sleep turned into dreams;

the buzz of the bees at their fuschia rainbows  
making purple honey and  
the new shoes still in the shoebox with old valentines.

and you will find fresh diamonds in your diamond mines

and the charms in the jewelry box. and in  
the party favors wrapped in crepe paper  
we will mind the hidden words that heal;

the tree scarred winter dawns  
when the angels stray near the azaleas and enunciate  
(as Grandmother told us to)

Be not afraid, Spring isn't so far away.

and the Star God sent standing still and evergreen  
above our once upons.

mary angela douglas 3 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# To Sharon In A Time Of Perceived Plague

I speak to the person that you were

and speak in flowers wherever I can whenever I may

as sundry teachers taught us to say, to make that

eternal distinction

and I enunciate in star minted languages

revealed in dreams because we were raised that way, quoting Keats,

weren't we?

with our baby starwheels opened on Christmas Day showing the

constellations of Spring;

almost like twins twirling the gingham skirts

Grandmother found for us with so many petticoats.

now in a time of perceived plague I think of all the days

we didnt know or imagine

we could be heir to this pantomime just for living longer.

so I think of former days of the phrase dormer windows we loved to say

on a glassed in day sugar and butter on our fairy bread

and pray you will too be keeping the former view in the vuefinder  
when we walked out in a yard full of the iris and the rose  
and you could transpose anything with your eyes shut

on a bright day with clouds  
dreaming the music out of the skies.

mary angela douglas 19 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Sleep Like Dust On The Surface Of All Things

have you been in the corridors of dream when

your luggage falls off the racks but you think it belongs

to someone else so you keep reading the airline magazine

and watch near the wing the cumulus kingdoms pass

or you're on the train and they never come to stamp your ticket

as though you are a ghost and ride the rails for free

even though you're slightly dressed for the office

or someone as you used to be trips down the path in a vague

dream town

and it's you in the blue dress you had forgotten about only this

time around

it's rose and in between

the clocks have stopped ticking as in an ancient fairy tale

where the spinning wheel dooms us all

one afternoon

to sleep like dust on the surface of all things.

mary angela douglas 13 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To St. Francis All Alone Before The Canticles

I sought the consolation of the world

and found it brick-bat hard

and God said: by whom shall I comfort thee

by the little stars I said by the brooks from

rivers fed by the birds in exorbitant song

by all of these

and on my knees I cried.

knowing my lot was to be the Comforter,

and not the comforted.

mary angela douglas 30 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Apple Green, Peach Blossomed Skies! Cried Buffalo Bill, Riding Onward

on the Western paintings of the Sonoma County California artist, Mr. Perry Cordill

and to the poet, Vachel Lindsey

'The flower-fed buffaloes of the spring  
In the days of long ago.'  
Vachel Lindsey, The Flower Fed Buffaloes

it's the code of the West parried against the  
apple green skies; in after mirage, the surprise of  
pink edging the profile of the rough explorers.  
it's tangerine haloes falling aslant of their mythical naysayers. these wranglers,  
cow-herders, outlaws of  
a mystical surmise:

trail-blazing, fresh hued and no rope-trick-  
peeling the bark of the scratch art colours  
like a stick from the Tree of Paradise

just as if, in a Heavenly gallery they are hung  
while God intensified  
old movie poster sunsets behind them  
or opened an orchid portal on the world as  
the artist, the poet, clip-clopped by to register  
these incongruities.

standing stock still amid tall grasses  
burr ridden, wearied with visions  
after hard riding, painting silk on silk their colours-  
huckleberried pie pleine aire-  
and in the cyclone's eye:

they will astonish small animals;  
the snuffling buffalo at the rainbow fed streams  
who will never be the same, once, seen in this light-

they are cast in an Eternal Spring  
by more than the virtue of the paint dried  
on the meadowlark canvases:

vivid, the angels of freedom  
have lassoed the dark steers

mary angela douglas 8 june 2014; rev.9 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Beautiful City In Waiting

I had brought no silver but the moon

no gold but the sun

I was remiss to everyone

all winter the earth wore white

beyond Labor Day

to whom shall I complain

cried the complaint to the lute

the Madrigal across time

I sang at the doll sized sink

or amid the eglantine in Keats or in

the remnants of the Beautiful City.

I was housed there

but mainly in my mind

anchored in mist

anchored in mist and God

I rose to tell you this

but you, you persisted.



banishing me again.

mary angela douglas 20 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Beautiful Kingdom Of Norway

and on an installation by the artist Ilya Kabakov, Where Is Our Place?

they'll bend down to see  
as if to pray  
it may be

the lily or the rose  
invisibly wound  
like a music box music

you'll begin to hear if you  
are careful.

it seems so hidden, out of sight-  
but it's just hidden in Easter grass-  
glistening, multicolored always

waiting to be found

and it's a candlewick's wonder,  
thread of delicate intent  
that you can't follow, yet-

beyond the baseboard's curve or Hamelin's artisan  
at floor level  
the exhibit you waited all your life to see:

the one explaining everything so high  
and yet, so low I see  
a mirrored pond in lingering blues and greens

closer to Heaven, as you go  
the very mirror's mirror on the shore-  
the one you knew they'd leave behind-  
edged in pink sapphires...

careless, cherished children

it may be hard to find the day before the day  
before white flowers at the cathedral and  
in between,

tears of the King and Queen  
am I too small?  
could I get in for free

midsommer's island's drifting out to sea  
beyond the waves in the picture  
you still might find the

children picking berries on the other side  
of a small day with no candles in it yet  
with smaller clouds floating by they

may not hear you they will find rest  
in such a patch of shade:

fitted for a petal's scar  
or to cirrus, lovely nothing at all  
no longer wounded-

having found refuge under a rose leaf  
rosebud stillness who could  
understand...

a brief flash like crystal and a  
splash 'oh no! ' you almost see  
pure fairytale sorrow

stumbling past annulled in a pale  
blue music fleeing

everything Large.

I've one doll slipper, satin-beaded,  
left with a glittering shoelace broken  
in trying to find the Museum with the

Giant's Installation: can you help me, please-

can clemency be granted to one  
so small who can't find anything at all

among small flowers hidden in the grass  
when words turn into stones  
before the unbearable

I pray in a voice you will not hear but  
you stare through in beautiful blindness

the keyhole, knothole to a deeper world  
at rest  
where gondolas drift always

upon the violet waters  
under nectarine stars.

mary angela douglas 22 july-25 july 2011

Note on the poem: the origin of this poem is the tragedy in the summer of 2011 on the island of Utoya in Tyrifjorden, Buskerud. That same day I had received in the mail a book of Ilya Kabakov's installation, *Where Is Our Place?* which impinged emotionally on the grief I felt for Norway over this event unfolding over several days as the coverage noted quite movingly the tears of the King and Queen of Norway which I also noted in my poem as a tribute.

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Blue Knight Wandering

the knight on the blue road wandering...  
and does he keep sheer distance to himself,  
who can tell?

will anyone tell anything to him  
between war and war  
or break the spell of the

blue knight on his neverland verandas;  
in his lavish confusions,  
his scalded musings, costumed?

when it's coming down with the  
scenery on a childhood stage;  
and crystal apples

in a corner room  
he never redeemed  
roll under a

scuffed bureau.

some tinted postcards,  
partly cloudy days  
from a Princess stranded

on the Glass Hill.

these artifacts you  
know so well,  
or think you do

halfway through the door  
with the warped screen  
with your fresh questionnaires:

can't you see can you see  
his lance askance  
a not so glimmering Age

totally at odds?  
oddments in his pockets with the keys;  
with the rusted bread and cheese,  
  
the twilight breviaries.  
at a loss to know what people generally feel

in these circumstances  
as they deal him out  
of their rose tiled villages

and simple merriment  
of a Saturday.

and how they don't  
know how it feels to be  
the knight at dusk

almost blending into the skies;  
the one with shorn summers.

and does he hide  
his sometime sapphire tears  
until cool winds carry them away

and are they his sweethearts  
far away, twinkling, the

small blue stars?

far away far away.  
and this is his song

I plucked out of a dream crease  
on a pink paper napkin day  
as if it were one wing.

and for  
the shimmering things

so near him, close at hand

if only he could understand.

mary angela douglas 28 september 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Bugler Falling To Earth

I dreamt I was warned in dreams

to depart another way

to stitch together the clouds

so that the sun could hide, repairing itself

out of the view of children who could cry

Look, Mama, the sun is bleeding gold

i dreamed in the violet twilights

music was no longer thwarted.

Lincoln on a ghost train

returned to fall again,

the copious weeping.

Whitman with lilac in his hands

and the lilac crumbling

oh shiloh shiloh

gettysburg again

the lilacs weeping.

the bugle falling to the ground

from the snow clad lips of the bugler

the nation not laid to rest

Lincoln returning on a ghost train



returning to fall again

the recurring nightmare...

song itself is wounded I cried

the staff of irretrievable music

the march of senseless pride

carries the day

far away from us all.

but God still hears the bugle call

falling to earth from snow clad lips

and sifts the voices.

and carries us through

when we can no longer stand.

mary angela douglas 25 june 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Desecrating Hordes

scarring the face of Mary once again  
what harm can you do to her now  
that Christ has met his end

and overcome the wounding Worm

and suffered before her eyes  
before the mocking crowd  
the baby she held against her

heart, and in her arms from every worldly dart defending.  
how would you be mending that, would you?  
her heart I mean is scarred beyond

all superficial harm you might inflict  
on her image. so there's no recompense.  
think on yourselves: what kind of heroes

let the light out of the sky

and darkness in.

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Gimlet-Eyed I Am Writing This Letter

to the gimlet-eyed, I am writing this letter  
not that I think you will read it  
but your disguise is wearing a bit thin

whenever you gather together  
to speak about someone's sin  
(of course! it's always someone else)

and you zero in  
like hawks to the target  
but you've already had lunch

in fact, by this time  
several or brunch  
in the church basement

where you delicately pray  
for so and so who is going  
astray

while outside on the lawn  
strolls the one you think so wrong!  
speaking with God

in the cool of the day...  
and hand-in-hand.

mary angela douglas 17 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Golden Age And To The King Of Heaven

I was saved by the Golden Age.

by the notion of it in the notions counter of Heaven

and as it was recorded over long centuries. millenia

sinking under an emerald sea. we cry to loveliness

come back!

what was it we couldnt remember that stirred in a dawn wind.

we couldnt remember but a faraway gleam

of something that seemed so paradisaical

and green.

something we once knew.

and each child knows knows with maypole ribbons fluttering

knew from the beginning and finds it sometimes in play

on the afternoon of something who can say what

a light appears in the sky like a birthday

from an unexpected source. and it rains down opals.

meteor showers in the daytime

or suddenly pink flowers small in the grass arrive overnight

express delivery from Whom?

and you stop to ask as you stoop down

oh who made you this beautiful.

I was saved by the golden age

by its name in every language on earth

by stories that accumulated from birth, by the old hymns

and all of the merry carols carillon ringing

by infinite singing around the house

just that suddenly you feel you are on a stage

where the curtains will rise the moon and the stars with them

and nothing bad will ever happen again.

mary angela douglas 21 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Great Poets No Longer Remembered

did words flow like vapor away from us  
perhaps they cried in their ghostly sleeves  
winter's captives, ephemera

inscribed in dews  
and then the fields cut down.  
a poem is launched and then disappears

along with the sound of it, the view  
into ionospheres in no one's Lost and Found  
a poet is not heard from.

years. centuries go by.  
epochs.  
why were they here

if we have forgotten them so soon.  
reinventing the wheel of words  
in simple tunes just to say

it all begins with us, brand new  
as though their opulence had not been.  
but every wind carries you to me

oh words of elaborate grief of  
jeweled jubilations strewn  
there in the orchards of the Other Side

you have transcended  
your demise sheer brides of language  
and the secret flowers bloom.

the inner verities still true.  
our half hatched jigsaw selves  
murmuring murmuring

we will return to you.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The King Of Simple Words, Departed (In Memory Of Alexander Bell Sr.)

[to Alexander Bell Sr., radiant Poet of the simple words  
and to his beloved family]

I'm Alexander, he said, a simple poet using simple words  
the ones they've left behind. the stranded ones I thought  
that glint like diamonds, a smile breaking into light a

rare handshake. compact he was an enemy of night, of bitterness,  
meant to be such a glistening bird in a tree of words that shone  
and flitted from twig to twig as if it could always be

only daylight. how soon how soon to leave, whatever for? -  
our slow and dawning comprehension that the light we show  
in earnest conversation is the only light sometimes we know

on earth; down the colorless hallways cold or on  
unfeeling streets in the deep freeze of words  
not really meant, he blazed.

Alexander. a king's name, well deserved,  
was struck from behind while  
loading garbage on a city truck, mid-morning on a Wednesday  
in the City of the Arts

while the sun wept, didn't it? wouldn't it?  
a week before Thanksgiving and another birthday sown.  
in stable but serious condition the newsprint bled.  
he lingered a week; then he was gone.

Linger in Heaven now where hard words  
melt before the diamond furnace, God keeps bright  
for earth's, hard winter's saints.

o find your place in the house of poets,  
house of the great who realized  
that heartfelt words and unchained joys are best



well used until worn out  
not only for Compan, y reserved for the festive occasion.  
in the language of our sighs turned into summers. Rest.

compact and brief may the grief of those who loved you  
be: surely to meet you later, unafflicted among the stars  
and still intact and vital as the sun where you:

Shine On.

mary angela douglas 5 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Lark Descending

[to the prophetic Hans Christian Andersen,  
for his fairytale: 'The Emperor's Nightingale']

[to the tune of Vaughn Williams 'The Lark Ascending' played more and more faintly...]

it's so important to cry out loud  
whenever it is you're with that crowd  
and suddenly they've come to displace

the real bird with the fake-  
though it is jeweled;  
though it knows all the variations

clockwork, on-demand and hops with one wing folded!  
giftwrapped! they'll exclaim yet you have lost  
the nightingale forever, it may be

while looking down at your shoes;  
examining the wrong clouds. or standing in line  
at the cafeteria, phrasing it another way-

just to get through your day.

gone in an instant! wept the kitchen maid;  
the goose girl in the hunting blind,  
tending the geese

while the skies turned to glass  
and then, shattered.  
this- mattered!

ah echo this, echoed this through angelic realms

so vital it is to cry out loud  
and not prevaricate  
when this much is at stake:

the life of an Emperor-

the future state of Poetry on earth...

(too late) .

the docked wings of the Soul

mary angela douglas 22 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Little Match Girl, Dreaming

(to Hans Christian Andersen (for The Little Match Girl))

the first match shows The Tree

in all its finery, loaded with apples,

sugarplums, the candles of the world

reflected in your face

and now, the second grace is struck

and there's one Star

to guide you from where you are,

frozen skylark in the snow and dreaming

of the third

with all the birds heard singing

Heaven and home to you;

no longer alone.

but spared

all worldly care.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Lord God From Only Me

You are my gold  
the honeycomb of light  
the purple deep down the darkness

the majesty of quiet  
the Rose of time  
the chimes on the wind

when I am out walking  
into distances unseen

and all my let's pretend made real.  
the sum of all I feel  
the brilliant ore

that can't be mined  
my only, only Valentine  
the incipient shore

where fitfully I rest, will rest  
while I adore.  
your child, at best.

what would I be

more?

mary angela douglas 5 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Minor Poets In A Heartless Hour, Speaking Love To Power

[to Valerie Macon, who lives for all who rose to the occasion]

in almost any poem

someone else's heart is on the line.

to think this way

is to be subject to the rejoinder

too much schmaltz.

I think, really? Is it better to ignore

as has been done before

of course, always in the name

of Higher Criticism a poet, a peon's inalienable soul?

of holding to golden literary standards

the person writing anything at all.

in their starry scrawl

as if in the dock, or in jail.

to make them feel, they failed.

is this necessary?

we are all small.

we all try to be known.

some for power.

to occupy a throne.

I am not speaking of those.

even small insects in their summer fields compose

and float up to God

their miniature hymns.

are unacknowledged poets

not as worthy as them?

mary angela douglas 8 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Moonbyrd, Wandering

we will leave amethyst candies by the night porch  
and farther, crowned with may, beyond the moon-splashed grasses stray for the  
moonbyrd who has flown high now

and lo! above the rose gardens,  
gated against our sleep-walking...  
mystic mystic moonbyrd

pecking the peridot leaves off the trees  
why have you flown  
dressed up in chalks against the

purple impenetrable  
backdrop, masquerade of our old summer night.  
didn't you like your flutter nutter sandwich?

you will be lured by our candies anyhow, back to  
your cage of light to stay  
silly moonbyrd, cousin of firebirds, trailing

pure rubied escapades, feathering the dream skies  
or emerald sonorities, someone  
else would have said.

I don't know them.

don't eat all the candy candy  
sang someone's little brother  
it's the bait but I said

it will be snowing candies, soon,  
for the moonbyrd, can't you think?  
we scanned the Christmas skies.

and it is nightfall: tennis shoes soaked  
up dew and we miss the measured moonbyrd,  
moonbyrd's blink of ancient rainbows

slowly revealed, resolved? and we sing



old railroad songs to coax you  
learned in school and listen faintly:

is it angel choirs, who must know where you are?  
and echoing you back oh listen hard for  
the parti-coloured shrieking of the gleaming moonbyrd

we stayed up late for, as if you were, Christmas.  
all by yourself oh won't you cry?  
we want you to

come home and live in our room.  
cease foraging for meteors  
by the coloured chalks scattered on

the floor and we will sing to you  
(if we can) , the sweet night through  
and feed you the candies of pure goodness

truth and beauty.  
drift in and out of sleep, my wonder.  
were you coloured by hand?

hopscotched- out of sight-  
not once demystified.  
we'll tread the angely hallways

back to sleep not tracking the mud  
from the rose beds, ever.  
dreaming, my wonder,

only you are free

mary angela douglas 6-7 april 2014; rev.29 august 2014rev.9 october 2014

Note on the Poem: I wrote this poem just minutes after seeing a lovely Academy Award (1959) cartoon entitled 'The Moonbird' by John Hubley (and then altered it nine times as if it were a costume for a Christmas pageant, you stubborn moonbyrd poem!) The soundtrack to the cartoon is comprised of his two children in the backyard talking of this and that.

And I am spelling it this way, the wrong way you maybe said but that I think is

how the moonbyrd would spell it or the children, at least, in my poem who looked for it.

Call it a variation if you want to, (variant?) spelling. who knows. haha. only the moonbyrd knows...

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The One For Whom Fell One Golden Teardrop

to the one for whom fell one golden teardrop  
the blurred inscription read-  
and then broke off,

jeweled telegram  
lettered on grade school paper.  
how wide are the lines

between us-  
like lanes, our time and theirs.  
or their time that never was or was:

the tear of before or after?  
of the latent or finished disasters?  
of the leaves that drift on-

flame on flame and then burnt sienna,  
never minding the details

and glisten in the winds that will  
never tell the name for whom was shed  
where the wild trees bled their colours-

into the cold-

one teardrop of gold

mary angela douglas 11 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The One For Whom Tears Are Useless

to the one for whom tears are useless  
this corsage of rains, this branching  
sorrow lit up like stars, fireworks,

sparks remaining among ashes  
gold among the dying out of days;  
bouquets of clouds.

to the one turning away,  
because it is not a message of your doom  
that is spelled out on sea, on land,

in any language you can understand;  
you who flee and who always have room to hide.  
you who mock the brides that linger

near the dusk of tombs  
who clutter up like beauty  
the old paintings oh, for a while

take pity, have a heart  
you who never heard of exile,  
of the coming of dark days so soon

after the verdant noons  
unless you were the one,  
the imperial one

signing off on it.

mary angela douglas 30 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Person Of Large Heart Reading The Small Poem

[to you at the open mic, proceeding]

you had to work yourself up to get here  
standing before strangers;  
your heart in your hands.

barely able to control the shaking.  
at home you were so sure the  
poem you wrote would endure

and you dreamed so joyously, if I read it  
surely people will know finally  
what shines in me

and maybe they will love me for it.  
maybe they will.  
I know they will

but now before the faces  
you've never seen before in your life  
and in the vastness

you wish you hadn't come.  
still you go on  
and your voice is shaking

and you know there's nothing  
you can do about it now;  
you, with your small poem

before the impassive crowd.

oh why you think did I ever come  
to read my poem out loud.  
but oh I wish and oh I think

you should take heart

you with sorrow trembling on the brink  
and ready to fall

and critics should just stand apart  
from judging you because  
aren't we all just children

in the dark, stuttering-  
waiting for the Angel to come?

mary angela douglas 26 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Princess Aurora After Giving It Some Thought

whose dream could last a 100 years  
and be deemed a penalty,  
even a tragedy?

aurora.  
and everything dreamed around her sympathetically:  
drenched

in the same lilac Light.  
who else in art achieved this

irreparable harmony?  
of death.  
in life.

at least a postponement  
of all the surrounding;  
castle and kingdom and woods asleep too

except for those on the outskirts gossiping,  
the clueless princes, and the one True;  
the wild defending Briar.

all else hibernating  
with Beauty struck down;  
all incapable of grieving.

.  
sleep and you dream.  
awake and the dream comes clear.  
oh, dear, cried the fairies

thinking all was lost.  
but she was at the beginning  
of Graces.

mary angela douglas 5 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Refugees Scattered Like Starlight And Weeping

watching us say goodbye perhaps the old ghosts were  
or maybe no one but God  
unable to say anything anymore in any language

no longer indoors with the heat from green radiators rising

shipped out on the trains what you will take with you  
a necklace of opals they will confiscate later  
your tears are opals too perhaps that thought will come

to you, later when they have taken everything.  
turning points in history are this way  
no one likes to talk about it really.

it seems such a normal day. the same blue sky  
you're used to, the birds in the morning.  
then suddenly it's all over turned

you werent even warned in a dream  
the stamping of boots the only music left  
the weeping soul from the other souls bereft.

mary angela douglas 4 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# To The Royal Reader Of The Days Gone By

to the royal reader of the days gone by  
it is given to know: the life of clouds pure green  
insistencies of leaves, the rose

in the ruffled shade beyond the mays,  
the grand felicitous opening and closing of spring  
shading into the numberless summers.

not a golden wand do I bring you  
or christen you near the fantastical waters  
o sons and daughters in the borderlands

between the worlds.  
stand in the drenching dreams from  
the cloudburst of His heart your

hearts entwined and this is light  
this is to stand against the  
nights of bitterness

barterless in an interior splendor  
beyond the courts of Time  
and free.

mary angela douglas 27 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Russian Poets Under Certain Conditions Unspecified

were we made of clouds, that suddenly we could not be found

or of the mist that rises from the bitter ground

were we visited by angels only

or stowed in a painting all blues and greens

by Rublev or

hard as stone in the quarry of

an unremitting cold.

who is there to respond.

to speak to us in amber

or to take on the case.

were we members of the human race.

who could spell our story.

we were poets residing in the visionary

beyond contempt.

and so, they hated us

consigning us to quarters.

we never could have imagined

were we mist were we the rains

evaporated entirely the last train out

or something else, regained

something kin to the soul

that outlasts everything.

mary angela douglas 4 november 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Secret Writing Life Of J.T. Little

[in memory of J.T. Little as beautifully profiled by Mary Guiunca in the Winston Salem Journal some years ago:

J.T., quiet friend of many, loved by his family, coworkers, secret wonderful poet and writer known only to God, died age 48 under mysterious circumstances but not more mysterious than his articulate soul]

-----

somewhere on a road off of heaven  
there's a bookstore or a library  
a little under the undergrowth

of weeds of ferns and mushrooms spiraling  
after rains their unexpected galaxies...  
that contains- behind

some chain linked fence filled with bright sparrows  
the books people meant to write;  
you know, the dream books

constructed partially on yellow tablets  
on coffee breaks, at odd moments  
in between scoldings, scary tasks

tongue lashings perhaps or bus stop drizzle;  
or simmering in summers county seat or  
beneath an overhang corrugated, rusty

a little dusty but you're not there  
but somewhere else with fresh lined paper  
ball point pen in cadillac two toned green

or some other favored colour

writing the scenes for your first play?  
rearranging the stage directions  
of a life that had

yet to open crammed to the timed to the minute

of a kindness little repaid a smile in a  
glorious daydream anchored now

in Eternity angels jostling to see  
over his beatified shoulder  
the latest lines in gold

on earth on earth,  
untold except by Mary Guiunca  
after the fact of his fortunate, unfortunate going away...

mary angela douglas 10 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Unknown Russia

before this sun of scythian gold  
were there these spires, these domes,  
dreamed of by the dreaming

yet unborn, the later to come?  
and were the bird cherries annointed  
with starlight from so far away?

it's the Russia of imagination  
long gone by that never strayed;  
the bells of endless tolling

beyond the range of suffering  
the heart forever unwon  
there is this mysterious something

glint of His kingdom come  
hidden from view  
except, for some.

this isn't true.

mary angela douglas 23 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To The Waxworks Going Down, The Soul In Flames

[for the poet-playwright, Martin Burke

when an artist dies, worlds go with him (m.d.) ]

how sorrowful we were to view his faltering stagecraft at the last  
impossible for the skies to remain as blue  
or green the waters, mirroring his catastrophe

in the Old Paintings.  
in this age, or any other, Icarus, the turning of the page  
is hard to take

so near the Sun you came  
and then burst into flame plunging beyond Time.  
and the world is waxen

and all of it is melting  
the whole great waxworks of it all.

leaving us all so small.

mary angela douglas 21 december 2018; rev.17 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Those Who Painted The Incipient Wave

to those who painted the incipient wave,  
the last foretold-  
instead of getting out of town

what prize can be given?

a deeper blue wash on a canvas, soft green;  
the starfish descending?  
the last gleam of the sky?

to those who persisted at the mouth of Floods,  
what words are there?  
only a pearl silence,

a floating pier; upended,  
the peach parasols of  
small children-

going by.

mary angela douglas 16 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas



# To Valerie Macon New Poet Laureate Of North Carolina Or: World Poetry In A Single Bound Vaults Over The Nitpickers

to Valerie Macon, new poet laureate of North Carolina, 'above the fray...' (July 12,2014-July 17,2014) a glorious though brief, reign...

poetry appeared in the bark of old trees,  
in the neighborhood you used to live in  
springing up overnight, syringa in the moonlight

cloudy cloudy stars.  
in the old rains, intensifying the lilacs.  
in the older lanes of perhaps, Fuquay-Varina.  
in the little birds hopping near the mystical puddles

in the parking lots.  
and 'whishing' in the tails of the grey squirrels

and it was curled around the baby's finger  
in the butterscotch sunlight and it never asked why, why  
has no committee come to call on me

but burbled over the white stones in the creek,  
the varicoloured,  
in a wavery sound we knew was music laughing

and the angels, brookside laughing  
fit-to-be-tied:  
'what is protocol?

does it have wings, too? '

mary angela douglas 15 july 2014

Note on the Poem: people (some) are upset that the governor of north carolina appointed the new poet laureate of North Carolina, skipping the normal protocol. All I have to say is, thank God, since He's the source of it, anyway! (of poetry, not protocol)  
I think so!

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Virginia Woolf On The Voyage Out

the distance between the words is the way you had come

the way you had been led thinking that you had time

that time was a kind of ocean that you were on

and so you floated there or were dashed by waves

or you went under only to emerge once more to the air

in a hidden mermaid music beyond despair and published

and the sunlight no longer filtering

through dark green waters

then you made ripples ripples that disappeared

and other things disappeared too, with you

leaving their imprint on your mind your heart like a spare

consciousness or on ours or on mine

your floating fleeting heart known only to God

the hidden mast who asked oh daughter of the wave

what brought you here

rippling and rippling

out of time at last.

and crowned with the flowering of language.

mary angela douglas 3 february 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# To Whom Do Words Belong

to whom do words belong I cried  
not to the prevaricating to the  
ones with mocking eyes.

words fly from lies as  
leaves in the gales we remember  
looking back.

looking back you remember  
the branching of Light  
the double rainbows

once in a while  
the nursery mirrors and  
the words springing to life

in picture books and the  
day you realized  
like Helen Keller could

oh this is water and the name  
for water  
My Lord and my living, God.

Mary Angela Douglas 20 April 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# To William Butler Yeats

as far as day is from night then

you would be tuning your harp

near the rills down to Benbulbin

or where I cannot wind

because I've never been there.

but I have been in poetry

thick as field flowers up to my chin

in it so that the gold rubs off

and I would remember clouds

and their roselit aftermaths

and so much then

that could not be said

any longer, in words.

where has the treasure gone

and who has filched it now.

who will find them again

the lost longings crystallized

the music, measure by measure recalled

the strains of immortal language

falling on the air

like thundering pearl.

and the awe of it all.

mary angela douglas 13 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Toast And Jam Spoke The Queen

I may bury the coded thread in cross stitch  
as my Lord among the Heavens buried His stars  
it is for safe keeping

He puts up the jams of Heaven  
as some do here.  
not my gift, I fear

though I admire  
the jeweled gleamings  
on the shelves and

row by row  
like children still think oh!  
don't they look like rubies,

yellow diamonds.  
see! a real poet  
said the Queen

(my mama) when she sings  
can make toast and jam  
an elaborate thing.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Today A Leaf Fell

today a leaf fell from a tree and was not on the evening news.  
this afternoon many leaves fell and there was a sharp wind.  
the sharp wind was not famous.

no one knew its name except in nursery rhymes, folktales  
an occasional illustration by a child where the clouds outlined  
in blue seem to be carried or transfixed

by a blue and stationary wind..  
I want to make paper airplanes from the news  
and send it all away

and paint the fairy tales into the foreground of

my life my life my life  
because today in a singular ray of light  
one leaf fell

and it was blazing

mary angela douglas 12 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Today The Small Birds Have Flown From My Poem

today the small birds  
have flown from my poem;  
the ones that wanted to be silver;

that kept me company  
through stolid hours.  
small leaves are weeping in the winds

the ones that wanted to be gold;

and that, forever  
whispered the girl  
on the balcony.

or merely on  
Lorca Street disowned  
and made of moonlight.

will it always be this way?  
sighed the small breezes.  
that is more than I can say,

the poet sighed;  
their sighs together: a small  
parachute of flowers...

mary angela douglas 25 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Toledo, As Painted By El Greco

on a day of tormented skies

suddenly I dreamed of Toledo

Toledo as painted by El Greco.

will music fall out of the sky?

Segovia, cease with the fountains

I think of all the small things

I learned about Spain

in school. the cape lined with rose

that taunts the soul

the beauty of the word "Escorial";

at festivals, then I wanted to weep

to prophesy:

cien mil rosas will arise

and crown everything

but time has lapsed

like the legend of Quixote

across the dread and blinding sands

and no one gives commands that mean anything

and there is a kind of grief

I don't know why the colour of cerise

reversing the preterit

as if Garcia Lorca had died again

and honey and olive mixed provide

no balm.

nor the nascent oranges chilled

in the last storm of all

the one on the way, on the winds

from the sad green towers

mary angela douglas 11 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Toll Softly For Christiane Sheer Rosepetaled Song

to Christ, the Lord.

in memory of Christiane Coste, my friend (d. february 27,1978) to be sung  
from tower to tower...

oh how could we mourn you then, Christiane,  
being blinded by the same sun.  
somewhere there must be old carols sung. chanson-

for the princess never returning home.  
and in the distance you can see  
the Griefs all silver and gold  
raised like pennants floating:

unmoored, the ships of goodness, truth  
and beauty gliding on gilt waters to retrieve

your faith displaced as mine was  
because true mandarins wished it so  
in their purple gloating.  
let there be worldwide lamentation.

or none at all when silent tears  
blur your water-coloured imprint  
bourne away on the glittering waters

since you, to a fair country returned  
to the One beyond all deception;  
the One who held in store for you  
the fairy tale gown of simple pearl.  
the unalloyed crown.

somewhere old carols must be rung

for the triumph over the world,  
over all charlatans forever-

clear focus: crystal star.

rolling from tower to tower in this,  
our brief exile.

oh lily snatched back with the laughing eyes,  
devoutness unsurpassed. my wildflower heart  
was once subdued now

tolling, tolling for the carol hid from your heart  
only for a span-  
the rose petaled scattering

of your hands

mary angela douglas 22 may 2014; rev.24 may 2014 rev.26 may 2014

=====  
=====

Note on the Poem: use of the word 'mandarin' is not used for any ethnic sense, nor is it meant as a slur, but more in the meaning of bureaucrats, court hangers-on in a kind of anamolie, fairy tale sense, as in Hans Christian Anderson's 'The Emperor's Nightingale', or 'The Emperor's New Clothes' the fawning of those who praise the wrong music instinctively or agree to see what isn't there for the sake of getting along. The circumstances of her death were surrounded by exactly this atmosphere.

It is also used to express a certain broken hearted disenchantment in a delicate way to echo the beautiful soul of the person departed (especially in contrast to her brutal murder which I have not even acknowledged in the poem for good reason as it is not paramount-when compared with the indestructibility of her soul) -

and in token of her youth. She was barely into her late twenties at the time of her death.

The rose petaled scattering of her hands refers simultaneously to her death as well as to the rose miracles of the French saint, St. Therese of Lisieux as Christiane was from France, though she died in New York City.

The entire poem musically I longed to set as a kind of antique French song from the Middle Ages, one of those mysterious songs that mirror so much beyond the power of common speech to convey.

This rose petal hands image is also to represent the fact that her body was found in a huge flower box, a detail that was left out of some newspaper accounts and which I have now 'corrected'.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Touring Angels

[to my Grandmother, Lucy]

fairy tale bread was scattered the  
birds did not eat;  
the knights of the small hills

were locked in battle-  
but here the shire's wind sighs  
the songs my mother taught me through

an open screen door-  
cornbread and strawberries are whipped creamed and  
the diamond spindles cut, as in former days,

the naive princess-  
in odd etchings,  
beautiful,

as still-

whole kingdoms shine entire...  
yet all my towers face the other way  
on leafmeal, cooler afternoons

when a gaggle of stars

drifts by and the goose girl  
(with her jewels sewn into her for  
safekeeping)

follows after them, in tears...  
these are the things I tell myself  
when God may be listening for

the shimmering years recounted,

in rosepetaled spelling blown  
and every wish as sunbright, honeysuckle clear  
as bacon and eggs at home, grape



jelly scraped on toast that  
later will seem so  
high meringued-miraculous indeed

or blue jay sapphire strung  
from tree to tree

exquisitely hinged as a raspberry summer could be  
suddenly frozen ruby solid  
overnight-

oh guard with your eyes the scarlet  
poinsettia on the piano from unstoried vandals-  
the scarlet music

wrap it in golden foil  
like a color you can use again  
if you need to.

you will need to  
you will need your  
dream cottonwool wadded

in a silver keepsake box  
in the back of the third  
dresser drawer-

the crystal perfume stopper  
and the opal-inlaid screen  
of your best mind

on the day that touring angels  
just drop by  
unscrolling the fairy tale screed

you can't ignore.  
oh step from the doorstep looking back  
at what you cannot find

anymore-

you who who knew daily how the best  
of stories must begin,  
will know it then,

forever

mary angela douglas 17 june 2011; rev.20 june 2017

### Recorriendo Los Angeles

el pan de cuento de hadas se dispenso  
que los aves no comen  
los caballeros de las colinas pequenos  
se encuentra atrepado en luchas

pero aqui canta el viento del condado-  
las canciones que mi madre me ensena  
a traves de una pantalla abierta-

pan de maiz y fresas  
con crema batida son...y  
cortan los ejes de diamante  
como en dias pasados

la princesa ingenua en aguafuertes impares,  
hermosa como sigue.  
reinos enteros brillan...

pero todos mis torres hacen frente  
a la otra manera  
en las tardes mas frescas de

'leafmeal'

cuando se aleje un monton de estrellas  
cerca de mi  
y la dama de ganso (con sus joyas  
cosido en ella para mayor seguridad) -

sigue despues de ellos, en lagrimas-

estas son las cosas que me digo a mi mismo-  
cuando Dios podria estar escuchando  
para los anos reluciantes relatado.  
en petalos de rosa otografia saltado

y cada deseo como sol brillante,  
madreselva claro  
como bacon y huevos en casa-

jalea de uva raspado en pan tostado  
que mas tarde le parecera tanto  
de hecho milagroso como alta merengue

de verdad-

exquisitamente articulado como  
un verano de frambuesa-  
repentinamente congelado rubi solido  
durante la noche por razon de los angeles  
de invierno.  
asi es.

o guarde con los ojos el Poinsetta  
escarlata en el piano de los  
vandoles, sin historias-

la musica escarlata  
lo envuelve en papel de oro como  
un color que puede utilizar de nuevo  
si necesita.

se necesita.  
Usted necesitara su algodón  
hidofilo sueño  
arrugada en una caja de recuerdos

de plata-  
en el fondo del cajón tercero del aparador-  
el tapon de cristal  
de su perfume

y las incrustaciones opalinas

de su mente mayor-  
en el día que recorre los ángeles-  
acabo de entrar

desenrollados el cuento de hadas  
que no puede ignorar...  
o pasa Ud. de la puerta-

mirando hacia atrás  
a lo que usted no puede encontrar-

Ud. que siempre supiste  
la mejor de las historias  
como deben comenzar

ahora sabrá para siempre-

Mary Angela Douglas 3 August 2011 Spanish translation of original in English

Mary Angela Douglas

# Transcribing These Doll Languages

[Thumbelina's Song]

transcribing these doll languages

I found a little freedom:

one I could fit inside a thimble;

one I could easily thread  
through a sliver of moonlight  
leaving a few scraps for the dog.

oh when you are weary how good it is  
to be small, having no cramped  
all.

and no one wants to know where you are:  
since you are insignificant as atoms, atomies  
star fluff. how would they hold you?

how little you will need  
in life: a violet's shade in summer;  
a winter ant's igloo.

sleep as a pebble on their shore.  
it's grand to be ignored  
where waves are living.

and there's a scarlet thread of meaning  
meant for you, you know it  
each break of day

when the wind puffs  
one rose petal  
just your way.

mary angela douglas 28 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Transcriptions (For The Piano)

these transcriptions of a bridal sky

where cliffs of pearl drop off into silence

and the clouds float with the moon

woven through an infinite loom

I have woven too,

in my fashion

these transcriptions

shading unto rose;

into the rose gold of a script so

calibrated, it has to be May with her gardenias

or April at the very least that it may be

music and never cease

with the treble of stars;

the sense that where you are

you will always be

nostalgic for the evenings

and the breeze itself

the souvenir now of what you felt then

passing the white flowering trees

passing the turbulence of the spring violins

at the conservatory and in the twilight practice hour

when everything has flowered and is blue

unto the perilous beauty of the Unseen;

the peridot fragments gleaming into emerald

and everything is jeweled and all at once

it's Heraclitean; it's the fairy tale in its

kaleidoscopic phase

through the grass lightly you slip

through all your days;

younger than then

in the morning, mourning dew,

the pale birds flown.

mary angela douglas 6 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Transfiguration Of The Little Mermaid

[to Hans Christian Andersen]

finding beneath the waves a different way to be  
she slept within the currents and was ill at ease  
on the surfaces

and pleased at the depths and the deepening of light.  
all that was long passed by and now  
when the last day closed around her

no one heard her sigh above the churning waters  
time there is no more time  
and plunge the knife inside

so that it wounded no others.  
oh did she die then we all asked  
not knowing what we asked at all.

she wandered for awhile  
and she was part of Light.  
we cried.

and that was all...  
and that was Everything.

mary angela douglas 23 april 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Transparencies Of The Pear Tree

[for exiles, past and present]

transparencies of the pear trees against the early skies  
I have kept for you whispered the Lord in my april ear

on the page where the tear would not be translated.  
what is an Age? an Epoch? a Year when your heart is breaking;  
all the shining realms laid waste.

I will not lose this transparent day, this hour;  
this reprieve I said to the clouds through scattered moonlight.  
they say You vanished they say many things

on holidays repeating the rules of the road  
like automatons

but I have seen transparencies of the pear trees  
against a sky inordinately blue  
and heard the crystal ring against old Christmases

foreign wings, angelic disasters  
oh Lord, make haste  
we are far from the continents of music

and the threading of your stars.

mary angela douglas 30 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Transparent

something in the fairy tale has made me transparent

or I have become the root system of the stars

not all of them

just a few on the right hand side of the mural

where the children sit in rows

and try to figure out the codes on the blackboards

in the early language of algebra.

I pretend to know them: both children and codes

the cosigns but I am resigned to the fact

that it doesn't go that well.

i can't understand why there are equations

and I can't keep up without a reason

my mind just balks.

I think of the castle again, a rose one

the blue velvet shadows of trees

when it begins to rain and the rains sweeps in

ruining the medieval furniture

and I am more transparent now

than I have ever been so that small birds do not fear me.

they fly straight through

and their music you could not imagine.

o crystalline you

even if the world turned to chalkdust

and staying after school forever,

you became the last one.

mary angela douglas 23 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Treasure Hunt

there are many things still left to find  
on this belated treasure hunt:  
the charms in the cracker jack box

the cereal prizes  
and the giftwrapped aisles  
where we sighed in toyshops

just before birthdays.  
or looking at new catalogues  
thick with wonder and glossy array

before Christmas, Christmas Day!

or the book of dancing school patterns  
my Grandmother commissioned in the Spring for  
someone else to sew in exchange

for a daughter's piano lessons:  
Chopin for chiffons beaded radiantly by  
a neighborhood's exquisite seamstress.

what shall we make today we  
wondered in our paperdoll play.  
will we cut out her dresses from the snows?

and will she whirl till midnight?  
oh make a flower print dress and colour  
it with lemon and with rose for afternoons.

a dress with princess seams,  
pure turquoise green?

and this in a shoebox, shadowbox of dreams;  
an empire kept and stowed,  
swept clean on Saturdays.

but where, old living room  
with the beige rose embroidered

sofa, did you go?

strewn with Christmas tissue  
ruses;  
or you, brown armchair in vanilla lamplight?  
where I

mused long and late toward the last of school vacations;  
where the light fell in alternating pools  
of the entire jeweled spectrum:

the colour wheel shining on the silver tree.  
I'll remember this as Heaven  
why couldn't I think then

instead of later on,  
when everyone was gone?  
because...

it seemed, already, with the Christmas  
spelling it so, an Eternity  
replete with snows

that could not vanish...  
where we would gladly, always live.  
forgive me that I couldn't think otherwise

and so, in the end, forgot goodbyes!  
I whisper now,  
to my invisible friends...

mary angela douglas 17 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Treefall

how is it that your sap runs off  
into the stars  
and the silver birds that gathered

wonder where you are  
I sense your treefall in my densest dream  
where the forests blur on a tapestried screen;

unseen, your roots, upended  
yet the sea churns,  
the moon leans at the window,

faded grace  
and you have lost your clouded face.  
oh have they dissolved

the memory of leaves,  
the green veins one by one  
that joyed in light; the light spun,

bleeding into your shadow  
in the grove  
and the winds

have no harp anymore

mary angela douglas 28 september 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Trees And Their Shadows

how could I know on the sun flecked path  
the one lit by sparklers, occasional peach ice cream  
the lacework of trees,

trees and their shadows  
you would be the first to disappear,  
all music chilled in the castles

chilled and stilled.  
the clouds headfirst, cloud horses  
into the cirrus seas.

why did I believe  
this could not come to pass  
while sharing our salt water taffy

silly in our laughter to the last  
button that needs buttoning  
that we would never lose in a seesaw tilted way

all the looking glass days;  
one on Earth remembering, keeping the account  
the other in g to forget in a new choir.

supposedly they would have told me  
if they had cared, or even enquired after  
for the gold of our you were

they never bothered to say  
all those non messengers  
with their telegrams of snow

non com angels, well I guess so.  
their silence like a stepsister dread  
futile agencies

like limbs cut off or the phone nly.  
the brush from the clearing and the legal fees  
all squared court appointed and the creditors



hankering after what was left of the play money.  
many times before, the houses we lived in  
when we were small with the guardian trees became

like colorforms someone shifted around  
like dollhouses blown down in a stiff breeze  
tiny plastic furniture

in all the wrong rooms  
or puzzles with missing game pieces  
the feelings you get when the ferris moon

can't be found from your room  
and it's all schoolwork again  
being misunderstood in the cafeteria

in your plaid dresses  
and from a new kitchen when the steam flows from the vents  
the scent of scrambled eggs makes you sick.

our rabbit shadows ticking on the wall we never heard.  
if only small birds would find me on the path now  
bringing a silver word to say

you fled with music; you were not alone.  
maybe they will someday.

mary angela douglas 21 june 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Triste

tears start at the edge of the picture  
beyond the frame  
and then they start again

where there are no witnesses  
and everything is rainbow blurry  
are you in a hurry you ask of

any passerby  
and try to explain to yourself  
in cryptic signs only God could understand

what is this land why isn't it mine  
and will it always be defined or can you say  
beyond the edge of the picture

in the Radiant weeping away.

mary angela douglas 19 november 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# True Reading Is First Reading

true reading is first reading;  
lullaby gold  
you've lost more than you know

once on a Saturday with Aladdin  
jewel like in the shining cave the soul wandered.  
and now it's graded

grade to grade  
suspected. even followed.  
evaluated.

can you remember chanticleer clear  
the princess in the picture book  
roseleaved in the rose that was her  
home?

the true test of the knights on the glass mountain.  
how you turned the page with no one making you?

no blackboard demonstration, QED.  
no diagramming even in coloured chalks  
what the heart already knows.  
from birth: the Light flows, the baby laughs.

apple green reading. crunchy  
in the attic, red delicious on  
a snow day snowing words  
fresh as evergreens, sweet peppermints  
not required!  
not core!

no book reports, just books galore.  
the report of midsummer horns  
in the Faeryland inside your head  
and no critics to get in the way.  
you and you alone opening

the antique casements

you could open on the seafoam green foam  
where it's you that sees  
with no interpreter  
the ghost ships foundering there forever  
on the reefs when you dream: only in coral.

then soldiers drilled in the counterpane hills  
and were never wounded.  
and you were not assessed

who owned the Palace where the books were stored,  
ridiculous cried the Prince. Off with their heads.  
they stormed no battlements then;  
oh beyond meed and free as the air and Blessed  
what higher Degree ah wanderer over opulent seas  
could anyone else ever give you, anywhere

mary angela douglas 4 december 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Tundra, Perhaps The Silver Forests, Somewhere, Something Said

to the poet Osip Mandelstam

'We live, not feeling the ground under our feet,  
no one hears us more than a dozen steps away...'

-Osip Mandelstam

and to Lydia Chukovskaya

the white owl whittled the silence down:  
who will comfort whom? who.  
will anyone? who.

bright feathers descend  
bright feathers descend  
but there are no angels.

I thought, for a moment,  
a foot on the snow: then I looked back:  
the crunch of the silver pathways.

I only listened.  
I did not know.  
who. who whittled the white owl

covered in mists far whiter than he  
and we're so far in the mists  
who will ever hear our speaking

mary angela douglas 8 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Turning Pink Hydrangeas Blue Or Vice Versa

turning pink hydrangeas blue the newspaper caption read,

depending on the soil (it said) ..., but in my head a childhood quandry solved for once and all

when my sister and I running out of things to do

that summer pondered the question, philosophically too:

always the pink or blue, the dress, the velvet shoe,

the ribbon in your hair

which o which to wear

that was the summer of Disney's Sleeping Beauty

remember when the seats were plush velvet

and air conditioned cool the downtown theatre in humid Arkansas

the popcorn strewn, the real Coke syrpy over ice

and expectation grew

preceded by cartoons, the Main Feature...

the fairies could not decide either!

and so, they concluded

both are best

and kept turning the dress

from blue to pink

from pink to blue

you know the rest

while she was dancing

Aurora woken from dreams.

and still it seems to me

the best solution

the pink titration or the blue

depends on whom you're talking to

perhaps a little tinted by the mood you're in

don't have to see the competition through

when blue can be changed to pink

and pink to blue. in a twinkling

whenever there is magic in your thinking.

mary angela douglas 8 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Twilight Corsage Of The King Of Heaven

I wished for you a sugared almond vision;  
wedding mints in pastel green and blue  
and pink and yellow on occasion, too;

lime sherbet floating in the cut glass bowl,  
the dress of moonlight the orange blossomed Soul  
in serene days and nights.

but everything is war-torn that I made  
except for the roses.  
except for certain roses...

especially the human heart..  
especially the human heart.

mary angela douglas 21 september 2013; rev.22 september 2013

Mary Angela Douglas



# Un Petit Cortege Minus The Rainbows

to Rupert Brooke and the others

it's just a little cortege and not white satin  
pale as a summer moon.  
she would have worn forsythia if

it were noon and violet gloves.  
it's just a little cortege.  
she's skipping geranium this season

that was for the cotillion,  
Christmas tidings, tide.  
it's just a little cortege.

a gold spray of holly  
garnet slippers crossed her mind  
a dress of infinite snow  
but not the little cortege  
stumbling into trembling sunlight-

losing the drumbeat  
all her rainbows with it:  
wartime poets-  
one by radiant one.

mary angela douglas 4 october 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Under Some Western Sky

sooner or later we'll be reborn under some western sky.  
see, there's the mud tracks of the cart moving on  
by the scraggly wildflowers; whoever knew their names

held the reigns  
on the wagon that had seen the last of the sun,

blistering dreams; that quarter melon moon heightening  
old schemes, pots and pans, hourglass sandstorms,  
dresses that are worn clear through

while we make do  
and carry the one on odd pieces of slate.  
is it too late the soul sighs or is it the winds

through prairie grasses I pretend,  
suspending all belief.

mary angela douglas july 21 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Unexpected Radiances

the tragic creeps through a different keyhole than this

said alice carefully in my half dream

that comes and goes with the roses

what if ive read the wrong directions

or if I put the key in wrong so that it halfway turns

on a dungeon song

let me think it through she implored the clouds

floating over

the ruined battlements where the violets peeked through

how does time elapse in dreams, in you

do we collapse in colours painting the living stream

ourselves or

it flits from scene to scene

dissolves with no conclusions

find the slipstream through

to the garden where the birds sing

an interrupting music you are glad for.

yet the tragic creeps through

the least crevice, cornice seeping

down to the willows river strewn

and this is my half finished tune

through the same crack could come

all glorious the morning sun

in rose and amber

could roses clamber over the stone

and we cup the iris moment in our hands,

momentously

no way said the schoolmaster to elude the gloom

in the play

when the heroes are struck down this way

but I, said alice in my alice blue gown

learned better.

it's all deceiving weather

on the darkest day

pooled in your vast dear tears

the key in the lock could

click into unexpected radiances.

mary angela douglas 22 december 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Unknown Hearts

when God traced in green the outline of His trees  
in the First Spring of the worlds  
did the birds sing ghostly,

knowing they were next?  
and the angels cried:  
there will be birdsong,

flight! and unborn children  
in a sequined light  
stirred in their coming dreams

where the silver birds flew  
and song spilled over from the trees  
cascading like the rains

and rainbows are near,

near to us whispered the freshly  
configured stars  
and unknown hearts

will love us, looking up  
the moons all aureoled.

mary angela douglas 20 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Until We Are Children Again

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!

Sir. Phillip Sidney, from *Astrophel and Stella*

the moon shakes out its dreams

could it be the astronauts will notice this time the gleams settled in

as they are

into their routine down pat now

will they drift by all cyber eyed in cold love of the logistics

on their way to staid experiments and mapping uber statistics

and leave the moon without a trace

of recognition, gold sobbing gold

futilely into the clouds. with "how slow steps..." she is

murmuring this aloud in a coded language

to interstellar winds...o how can they pretend

they do not know you, you who watched over them.

children saw you for what you were for centuries

can grown men see too, now? or do they leave with no regrets

no calling card inscribed in silver wonder. no stardust bouquets.

I wonder about you treading the night skies this interminable way  
your name locked out of post modern poetry  
suspended there like a coin out of reach out of the realm entirely now  
we can never spend  
until we are children again.

mary angela douglas 11 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Up Close

in a tangle of images blue  
butterflies mimic the sky  
who calls this poetry

yet we will  
eat ice cream the whole  
summer long

guarded by the guardian  
trees and fall down scraping  
our knees calling the small

wounds 'strawberries.'  
it is the wind the wind through  
the trees or startling the

rose bushes makes us seem  
the way we are to those who love us  
pushing off from the swings

and hoping  
to see the face  
of familiar stars

up close in daylight.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Used That Way

I would like to be treated as an individual  
and not as an anecdotal source  
written up in a magazine a journal  
of great repute reviewed by someone's peers  
making the career of someone  
far younger, even brilliant  
or shown upon the screen  
of the ultimate power point presentation Machine  
making the scene as a sliver of the pie chart  
though it's art Im sure of that, of a certain sort  
to undergird someone's mission statement  
so the voiceless can be heard and really  
when does that ever happen but snap to it  
to applaud the populations sewn in half  
and magically restored; or those who manage them;  
final theses by the score on the subject full of buzz.  
my life having furnished details on the above  
in places I myself would most likely  
not be welcome, much less hired.  
to earn another praise is perhaps the

action of saints. to use another's lifetime  
to grind out statistical reports so you can  
visit all the resorts  
I cant have any mercy for.  
or fellow feeling.  
forgive me if I am wrong.  
but all of us here not so collegially  
really don't want our anguish mined  
so you can flourish in the daily grind yourself  
while we're on parade:  
clear examples of everything  
wrong with our country  
so some say; or props of the progress you've made  
while given props for throwing shade on us  
in turning our lives around but  
in the wrong lane. forgive me if I complain.  
and may I just say, having found my own voice by myself  
we just dont want to be used that way.  
mary angela douglas 1 september 2019  
Mary Angela Douglas

# Vale Dicere Ave Maria

what if she never wanted

your pedestals of rosy clouds

the apotheosis of cornflower blue and

the gold roses at her feet, the myrtle and the lilies sweet

painted by the mystic painters.

Our Lady among cherubs

and the visionary

coronated by angels

or anunciated

amid the Italian cypresses

and the archways

in a formal view.

her name was Mary.

she bore Christ when

she was very new.

the spring tide in her heart

was God alone and she loved wildflowers,

the sun. her household.

to be the only one up at dawn.

the air after the rains.

why would she need

to be robed with such complications

to be lifted into starry names.

to become the subject of hymns.

she bore Christ.

she was there with him where he was

abandoned

to the agonies we all feel

to such a lesser degree. Rilke's angel

cried: "Thou art the Tree."

but I am the one my mother called Mary.

why would you call me queen of the sea

she would have wondered mystified

at their veneration, o Ivory tower...

mystified in the museums if

time travel had been granted her.

reticent in the cathedrals.

anywhere else instead

she would have said

I wanted to be to ponder the least thing.

why do they call me foreign names

I was only his mother.

I wanted a quiet space;

to be at home, to marvel at the small graces

at table, or sweeping the floors.

his little words at the beginning

honey on the page.

time to think what life had been or would have

without the rage of those who despised Him

who only lived for Love;

with Him so suddenly removed

and then, with John.

what did I need with the glorias

and the kingdom comes

when I was under his star.

my son, my Son.

mary angela douglas 7 october 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Valentine

aloft in a tea rose balloon or of teal striped silk  
I am the friend of clouds, aren't you?  
of winds and I want to shower down

instead of memorizing imports and exports-  
little sweets with caraway seeds  
on every country on the pink and green maps

the lavender too we watched unscrolled in school:  
a little listless or were we dreaming- even then,  
these endless valentines, violet squalls from the Indies...

ones edged in lace, of intricate design.  
with clasped hands. with lilies.  
with little doors opening onto doors

forget me not!

and inside, it's silver  
or it's ruby.  
it's ruby like a heart unopened

even on Christmas.  
it's ruby like the soul of her so  
turned away and twisted in the cords of

others' flights, never her own;  
who must make do with the rainbow shreds so ragbag  
on the storybook floor that

drifted far, down a fairy tale snow  
from a peerless, prised gown  
that's not for her

while in her head, still  
carrying the remainder-

content on a moonless night and leaving home  
with not even the pink glow glimpsed by astronauts;



just chandeliers of the ultraviolet,

one hummingbird, surreptitious sip  
of the wavering dewdrop on the  
shadow-trellised rose.

oh from our hands, the pink and the blue  
paper doves we'll scatter  
in envelopes of unmarred marigold of the sun never

finished entirely  
with shining, here on earth  
for the heart, with its fervent wishing  
it were otherwise

mary angela douglas 29 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Valentine With Doves On The Seven Last Words Of Christ

I am lost in the  
Kingdom of the Heart  
I said to no one living

since the day they felled the  
King of it all-  
seven swords run through my heart

seven swords and more  
and oh the hilts  
set with rubies

with russet diamonds  
with  
the sunset of the world.

and such a vein of  
jasper runs through  
the soul's so pleached amazement  
standing still-

that I forget the words to  
sing to you  
a last border ballad.

my soul.  
become the white dove's scar  
and anodyne of mercy-

the cleft on the curl of the  
last creamed wave  
in this senseless valentine

shadow-box, shadowed,  
shifted by unseen wires  
and winds.

the dove cries out  
there's blood on the track  
there's blood on the track

and more, look back  
to the fairytale motto  
of snow-cut

delicate drastic cameo  
and descent:

Be True.

in the version scalded  
by fairies under broken glass-  
scattering their gifts of light far

from - from the retreating henchmen  
among last things.

all swords dissolve  
with the help of God  
who is also weeping

who is also weeping  
oh dove, dove, dove

mary angela douglas 19 august 2011,1 june 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# Van Cliburn Nears Heaven, Missing Song

in music as in former countries I feel  
a blessedness he said even in Heaven  
my shoes fall apart my heart dwindles

and then flames out on a strand of  
mere sound. mere sound was everything.  
I was tuned to it; I never spurned the golden

measure fought for over countless nights.  
oh, all my angels take flight and bring me back  
my own!

the air through the windows seems like a song to  
you that can never end

I turned the page  
and I was gone

mary angela douglas 10 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Van Gogh In The Photograph Outside The Frame

[for Amanda Sullivan]

he will draw in charcoal on the evening:  
stairs, and carry an easel with him anywhere  
to capture clouds, the stars,

to trace the air  
the twilight something as it alters  
what he can hardly bear

except he tries not to think about it.  
this is the portrait I would make;  
the picture I would take of him

if only he could hold still.  
but he, like music. is distilled  
beyond our reach

and wouldn't show up in the picture  
easily or if he did, like a sunflower, prayer,  
it would be uncomfortable

for the rest of them  
with that marble blue stare.

mary angela douglas 7 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Van Gogh In The Pineapple Winds Of Heaven

(to my Grandfather, Milton B. Young with love forever...)

van gogh in the pineapple winds of Heaven

I saw painting a new yellow house

fronting the stars.

he was there on the planet of lavender

its fragrance was in waves like a sea.

little stars burst in the air like milkweed

their small parachutes beloved by dolls

and I recalled

that summer we took lessons in art

at the Art Museum and watched a film on the Monarch Butterfly

and learned to identify so tenderly

the milky quartz

while my grandfather painted pines.

or painted gourds using the burnt sienna quite freely.

while Grandmother played Liebestraum and he perhaps was dreaming

of an old hammock strung between two trees in the back yard

the fresh mint in the iced tea picked from his own garden

when life got harder for him later

and no one ever told me.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Van Gogh To His Brother, Undated Letter, Summer 1891

the yellow leaves were falling  
I could not catch them with my hands  
the yellow stars and the pastel haloes  
round them, ringing like colored glass  
and every shade, a sound:  
I was painting them mid-flight-  
rosettes, like medals pinned against  
the night, my  
Legion of Honor-  
You know, we always knew the  
time of orchards was so brief, remember?  
the pink and the mauve - the  
apricot light - the moment's lightening.

I have a new studio: the walls are iris  
touched with snow.  
I'm painting in colors we never  
dreamed existed - without haste.  
Dear Theo.  
nothing is wasted.

mary angela douglas 23 april 2009

Mary Angela Douglas



# Vanished

did we step out in Queen Anne's lace  
in flower forgotten fields  
wait until Spring evenings

when it will be raining stars  
say all the tourist guides and  
Sunday's child has far to go

because she mixes up the rhymes  
the intonations of the Sunday bills  
it's only up the jack and jill hill

to a place with peerless, perilous clouds  
and I am clouded over too  
or does she even know she is

watching the stars  
fall over into clover  
too young to go out into the blue

of flower forgotten fields  
your dreams yield nothing  
someone vaguely charges

transparently, a little offstage  
you make life too hard  
putting the stars in their cages

but the snows in Queen Anne's lace  
cover up the page of  
all lost signals

transmitting anguish  
had vanished long ago in the  
flower forgotten fields

mary angela douglas 4 march 2018



# Vanishing Languages...

'vanishing languages, reincarnated as music'  
the NYT headline read in april, ; in april you were the bride  
of language something happened to poetry

wept inside I'm

not reading the article, off in wondering  
not at the clouds, at vanishing languages.  
oh who can recall them if the poets stop

trying to see from a filmy window the filmy  
trees of april the incarnations of music residing there or  
long gone by ah poetry you are vanishing

more each day who will sweep away  
the snows of accumulating silences  
how silences have accumulated since

your reported demise, my poetry, my music

my sadness intertwined with those who went before:  
the last through the golden door till wars and bitterness  
interposed a modern rendition of the tongue cut sparrows.

my dilemma, oh wounds have no words for you but  
must make do with

this accumulation of noise, these factories of the  
prefabricated Word

oh cantatas of nothingness gathering force each day.

down to the marrow they have pared you now my apple  
my shining pear I have lost you everywhere though  
music, was, is, shall be

in the orchards so far from us still-  
still blossoming- still dreamed:  
pearled, spilling into vast steams

mary angela douglas 3 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

## Variation With Glitter

you seem to be getting your sparkle  
back, my godmother said but not  
drily, since this is not modern poetry;  
I warned you.

go out to the pumpkin patch...  
oh look, godmother, your breakfast is  
boiling over, I lied, but only because  
I was tired of bringing the pumpkins  
in all day  
after washing all those dishes.

well that could have happened  
if Charles Perrault had suddenly keeled over  
elegantly, of course,

Into his golden baguette before  
buttering it...  
back to the story.  
sparkling takes a lot of work unless

you're a star or glitter my little sister  
said having scattered it  
all over the house in her own  
personal glitter parade

the moral of the stories  
oh my dears my dears  
don't stop shining

Mary Angela Douglas 30 June 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Veering Off From Homework, Studying For The Test On Monday

the phoenix scratching in the dust may be deciphered yet  
veering off from homework to stories of E. Nesbit o  
from facts and figures we forget so merrily rowed

when we write in Tyrian purple on the Phoenician clouds  
and the gold mines are reopened, Solomon knows  
we write in book reports

the miners vindicated for their fools gold dreams  
coming back on the scene and Sutter's Mill.  
the movie version of events. we love to watch

while eating all the thin mints Girl Scout bought  
because we couldn't sell them all ourselves.  
there you shall paint in nouveau green acrylics

the blessed world again  
the banished once upons.

I with my long lost crayon  
you in your lost tiara harried on  
no more; no more from the stage door. may we

maytime restore the playhouse to the semblance  
of what it never was before...Resphigi,  
the ancient pines remembered

and the ones outside in our yard  
soft, in their summer appellations  
our fondest constellations

Segovia, strumming the red rose days  
on our record player while we affect  
Spain and the flamenco, Holy Days.

holy is that music, all we had to say:  
say, Simon Say we're all for Fizzies  
in black cherry

Time, the landable Moon is on its way  
at our profitless Stand  
sipped slowly

mary angela douglas 10 november 2018; rev.27 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Vintage

it is a terrible terrible thing I said weeping to my God

in the snows to take the valentine heart of a person

and fold it, so

and pierce it through sharply with gilded paper arrows

sharpened to a point as though it were a target

but not of love, but not of love I heard the

snow whispering, the sleet as it hit the corrugated roofs

of utility buildings nearby while I walked under a sky

neither satin nor pearl

I have fitted my foot for labor and I no longer hear

the cotillions of snow and sleet passing over the world or see

the holly berries tucked into the crevices left by the ice

storms it is a terrible thing to wound the heart even in a madrigal

she sang with the winter storm and vanished

into the long ago



the vintage winds

mary angela douglas 6 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Vivid

in memory of my grandmother, Lucy White Young

these peripheral fairy stories  
I still wind  
on a reel of gold

even if the pictures are flickering  
in this Celluloid mirror  
and the glass slipper slips to the stones  
and shatters  
before it can be found.

I still preserve like  
muscadine jam the  
soul's gilt gingerbread

it's peppermint and gemstone gumdrop  
crenellations;  
all sugar plumed, pasteled expectations;  
a panoramic view at Easter

of violet-trimmed hats  
against a primrose sky;  
the key to the heart's most  
singular libretto, a  
treble clef of stars:  
music unfolding like this fugue of far dimensions

my mother singing in a green plaid dress.

butter and sugar on enchanted bread  
the faraway Land of Green Ginger  
tomato soup, grilled cheese

fruit cocktail.

ever-closer I gather my anamolies,  
secured for the glittering denouement:

twelve fairies with their gifts,  
a summer piano's  
'Rustle of Spring',  
a bird's chilled singing in the holy rain

the spinning wheel unspun  
the last sleeve sewn.

the princess clouding capture  
with a milky quartz  
(tucked into a secret pocket

before the school bell) :

treading the springtide scriptures of a dream  
coping with wrapped enigmas,  
her tears of pearl recondite-

like everything else.  
prayers with no transliteration, heard  
even from such dim towers.

all you know.

mysteriously without the wind  
the green tree tops begin to bend  
taken up at the hem  
the cherry-glazed day arrives:

the vivid rose ensoleil in the outer snows\*

mary angela douglas 18 may 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Voice Prints Of The Angels On The Crystal Air

to my grandmother at Christmas, always

voice prints of the angels on the crystal air  
remind me of your  
rose-taffeta, Christmas smile-  
the midnight clear you taught me to sing

the three pronged golden tuning fork of  
Modern Library's Giant Walter Scott  
under the Christmas Tree

delicate painted rosebud china perfect  
for the dolls and packed in straw.  
voice prints of the angels, all the snow

expectancies I had guarded in my heart's  
white candle-flame  
flares into Christmas, waxing now, in

my small apartment  
and there you are again  
not a bit ghostly, glad and  
making ornaments from styrofoam

balls and sequins, glitter in every color  
of the spectrum (just fill one Swanson chicken pie  
pan with glue and dip, the other pan filled with spangles..., swirl)  
and I am richer than diamonds, emeralds

pearls, rubies or the sudden topaz of  
the Star  
that we believed in- I believe in still,

oh Grandmother in rose taffeta,  
made of music and tears

mary angela douglas 5 november 2013

Mary Angela Douglas

# Waiting

tonight I think of waiting.  
everyone waits.  
I wonder, did He wait too

long ago, when the world was new  
for the seed to become a star  
to illuminate

a pomegranate darkness  
did he watch ferns and shade them with his hand  
and place them near trees once they had full shade

was everything made from His waiting  
even the peacock fan  
all waiting was Love in Him.

somehow we could not wait enough  
and so, we packed it in and left Eden.  
and now everyone waits. for something.

parents wait for the dawn  
hoping their children will live on  
prisoners wait for their parole

or wonder, how can I grow old  
behind bars  
babies wait to be picked up

spinsters for the street car  
sleepy children for the end of the story

refugees wait between lands  
oh how can they  
and many wait for sustenance

in vain. for anyone to call them by their name  
not from an agency.  
to be safe again in their own homes.

for the war to end.  
and long to begin again.

so many wait alone and pray  
their pain will not be great  
when angels come to the gate

when finally they depart

and all, all wait with a broken heart  
that was in my dream...  
afraid that the boat of Heaven

will leave without them  
some shortlisted year  
that no one will know  
they were ever even here.

mary angela douglas 7 june 2019

Deuteronomy 31: 8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.&quot;

Mary Angela Douglas

# Waiting For Oz Was Too Hard

waiting for oz was too hard  
when everything came down to  
one moment

so I turned back  
not knowing you had  
already gone through the

gate

I retraced everthing:  
the storm that took me

away

the house unhinged

the miracle of a safe landing.  
and the green wish hidden

in your eyes

mary angela douglas 14 october 2007

Mary Angela Douglas



# Waiting For The Light To Change

waiting for the light to change small things occur to you  
and the bees of drizzle gather under your umbrella  
walk, flickers the ivoried, don't cross yells the sign in

poinsettia red yes you feel Christmasy instead  
of what seems to be the mood of those  
waiting for the years in review

but you're just in love with the color guards  
with all the traffic green and red punctuation

and the bees of drizzle fly away just  
as the light turns to amber;  
and the sun comes out in your soul on a winter day  
where the blue birds gather their little prisms

from the long ago  
and painters gather on the Seine  
for one lost lingering impression

perhaps before the hives of gold have hatched  
for them  
haloed, the honey of their tears

mary angela douglas 3 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Waiting For The News To Come

waiting for the news to come of where to go or why or how

is easy for no one to bear especially those who have had

their share of waiting, balancing on a beam not even there

and waiting for what, the axe or the angel

to come floating down with good tidings

warm food, the Deluge

your own door in Heaven if not on earth.

you could explore infinities while waiting

the infinitesimal worlds

in the lobbies, the gutters, the basements of the in between

you're living in a dream to keep on living at all

and you wonder

how long can this go on

how long will I my children or the ones I haven't got

at least the sky will continue

you take comfort there.

they can't evict the air.

mary angela douglas 22 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Waiting Your Turn At The Open Mic, With Light Refreshments Served

&quot;My soul, be not disturbed  
By planetary war;  
Remain securely orbed  
In this contracted star...&quot;

Elinor Wylie, Address To My Soul

it isn't that there should be rules  
only it would be good if you could stop the cymbals, noise in your head (the  
whole time someone else is reading their one poem)

of your own poetry and how nervous you feel to get up there 't worry.

all things have an end.  
this moment is itself a single star blinking.

be still

know only that you are listening  
to soul translation  
from the original

like sea music coming out of a seashell  
held close to the ear and pearlescent.  
or static from an old radio, used up

in wartime's obsolescence  
at least in part, you've only got  
as far as that poet could get the transmission

to come through, without the text  
you have to listen hard to catch it  
the quartz instances, the heart slipping

on wet stones  
then starting up, tremulous  
quaking, fish or mermen,

who can tell  
a shift in the music, a broken spell,  
the ship is freed

the icebergs brood ineffectually  
but we sail on.

what if in a huge field the poet before you  
has suddenly come upon a rare flower  
and drifting, you miss the name...

medicinal flower, the one that would have  
healed...the hidden code revealed.  
the phantom word in no dictionary at all.

there is life in the flow of words paid attention to,  
if not in homage,  
no matter how flawed

it may be the heartfelt flaw is the one beauty resplendent  
in the antiseptic reading room  
doled out by the library with a disclaimer.

where some are gathered  
and certain angels, say, are whispering there:  
by the back wall:

old speech teachers, beatific; language itself, pale  
growing paler, murmuring to a few:  
Speak louder, so they may hear you at the Poles...

you may be the last poets anywhere.  
as in the last moments of everyone on earth  
sometimes, there is gold in the last utterance

of Light  
they will say later, in Heaven, on other planets.  
referring to this event.

listen...  
what if it is, will be, the next batter up,

the last words that you hear, the numbing toll,

the last cherry glaze on consciousness itself;  
rustling of crab apple trees; indistinguishable  
from moonlight.

mary angela douglas 29 may 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Walking On The Jewels Of Your Silence

walking on the jewels of your silence  
I saw the winter sky come down  
enfolding a long-ago radiance.

a child turns the page  
and traces the angels.

you scattered amethyst on the snow  
turning my pockets overnight  
into Christmas or mother-of-pearl.

brightness, you called it:  
will it fly away?

once I was living on the fair isle  
where I learned to say:  
those must be angels coming down  
with diamonds in their hands...

there are deeper ripples in the air  
where music was before.  
my dreams are banked so high  
where could I turn to start again  
the porcelain beginning of the measure?

the first rung in the sidewalk.

my dreams are banked so high.  
my dream is leaving this way

just as the glaze begins to fall apart  
on a pale green piano piece  
not yet memorized-

mary angela douglas november 28-30 2011

Mary Angela Douglas

# Walkout

well, letters just walked off the page I was only half way reading

they were tired of forming the word 'change'

especially without any modifiers

more than sick of the word 'revolution';

where were the colours?

the months of the year

the Book of Hours

with pictures, illuminated

and 'ruminated';

can anyone hear me say this

or do they just dismiss

this regicide of words

ah, beautiful beautiful I said,

coaxing them back

and opal, and opaline

pearlescent

they began to stream, shyly, to the corner of the page

when all is said, ah, roseate, roseate

words started eating off my plate,

and it was gold



there's violet, eglantine when all is told  
they started forming little alphabet hearts  
and tuning up their strings  
when I said: clouds, wings, the moon outloud  
the shine on everything  
and kingdom, kingdom, come  
when you were young  
and naming all the beauteous,  
one by one.

mary angela douglas 28 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wanted: A Small Room

I want a small room, on the moon

or at the poles, that opens onto

the universe and endless blue terraces

a violet fold in a dress of rose

a bird that nightly sings

with iridescent wings

reminding me of many things beautiful

I want to remain and singing

and free to dream

as far as the eye can never see

and not to be remotely seen but just to be

with God's handkerchief

in His best pocket

I want a small room...

mary angela douglas 30 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

## Wanted: Any Book With These Attributes

wanted: any book with these attributes:  
a hidden wish to fly, to become invisible  
never to lie

to turn to gold at a moment's notice and  
then back again  
easy to read at sunrise, sets with the sun

in complementary colours doesn't anger  
anyone, is good company when it rains  
or when its going to snow for so many

days no one will ever be able to  
find your house  
and borrow a book again.

seems like a friend, stays where you put it  
unless you have pets, is restful, too  
with plenty of pictures

sleeps while you eat your stew  
and causes reveries but not sneezes.  
has a cherry red tendency to

make you feel like holidays at home  
when you were little and all tucked in  
with colourful covers all up to your chin

and reading a story till long past the time  
and then giving in to the fairy tale chime  
and knowing tomorrow new chapters would gleam

and this is the book that makes you dream...

mary angela douglas 9 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Was I By The Ochre Or The Rubied Trees

was I by the ochre and the rubied trees  
underneath the skies of silken grey?  
I wonder, was it real and if, in feeling

should I go back  
and hear the crackle of leaves  
beneath my feet

on a walk at evening  
near my old schools as I  
and they were then

until it is too cool to be outside

and I'll walk back  
alone as I longed to be and as I was  
latched into my own mind

and dream at my window

having read Rilke for the first time  
outside of the school assignments  
or Dante, The Paradiso, by Ciardi

with no one recommending him to me;  
perhaps, the Unseen or unseen angels  
and with the light snow falling

before the lamplight  
so that you could see  
it was snowing at night

though it had just begun  
and I or was it I  
have opened the window

entirely so that the snow decked  
winds come through,  
the few leaves remaining.

I am the only one remembering that autumn;  
I was the only one there.

mary angela douglas 18 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Washed Farther Downstream

"In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you."

-Jesus

leaving your home on the twenty-second eviction  
you turn again to the house within:  
the one with too many windows

twice as many wreaths at Christmas time  
with the bayberry sun aslant  
the roof of winter and all the lights on.

God lives upstairs in the duplex  
where it's always raining but He alone loves you  
constantly.

there's no soap to wash your clothes  
you mention shyly to the judge in  
small claims courts all over the Land

when the creditors don't show up  
to hear your story.  
only the court appointed lawyer

who says in the end, I see no reason not to sue.  
and the Judge says kindly you should go  
back to school

and I say I'd like to learn Russian which  
startles him, though I meant it  
for Beauty.

and forms to fill out for food require  
your answer twice a year  
have you committed a felony?

do you know someone who has?  
or do you eat alone.  
(No. God lives here, too I write in pencil and then don't

mail it when I think how can they ask that.)

but you're the curator of stars  
though no one says so  
assuming you lack the expertise

and thank God that they still shine so in your dreams  
as if it were sweet Bethel; it is certain  
you know how to forbear: keeping the secret still

that you're the Princess in disguise though  
like a sea-breathed myth you're lost on land  
or seem to be

as in the Hallmark film of The Seventh Stream  
you took home for free from the Library  
through tears that no one saw

later on, for that last music box scene.  
and then, it's a wild violet spring where you may  
find any moment the path lit brightly by the stones

so milky in the gloaming, mysteriously glazed-  
you piled up after school so long ago  
with a small Queen's unaccountable forethought, prescient

in the berry-threaded woods beyond your years  
for the Palace on green velvet moss you would  
make here, after years,

washed farther - downstream....

mary angela douglas 13,8-9 september 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# Waving Goodbye To Ray Bradbury Again/Hymn To God My God In My Retreats; The Little Setbacks

[waving goodbye to Ray Bradbury again; remembering my own work too: HYMN TO GOD MY GOD IN MY RETREATS; THE LITTLE SETBACKS

(waving goodbye again to Ray Bradbury, after his 100th birthday... remembering my first steps into poetry as into snow walking blind)

=====

to flowers whose names I've never known  
wildflowers in the Himalayas  
crab apple in the Milky Way  
recently christened stars, Alpha Centura or Mars  
sun flares already finished with their spectrums  
and the sunflower husks shed  
while I was waiting for the school bus. amid the maple leaves.  
let there be this understanding between us  
may there be wild orchids in the desert of my retreats  
and little setbacks:  
i still will count the opal names of God exquisitely to myself  
forgetting all else, all other names  
and remember the coolness of evening winds  
the jade winds of april  
the songs I laid down at Your feet  
when I was only fifteen.  
mary angela douglas 25 august 2020  
??

Mary Angela Douglas



# We Anchor In Mist And Dream We Sail

again, to Van Cliburn

we anchor in mist and dream we sail  
but in our hearts no winds prevail.  
we drift on images.

who could imagine the pause  
between song and song  
could alter us so

and in the mirrors  
far from grace, it shows;  
still, snows from your articulate

hands on old recordings  
starlike, the wounds of  
earlier heartbreaks

the quake in the sunrise  
and the lines of battle drawn  
in the side yards

where the winds that were  
scattered the rose bush lightly,  
and the petals set sail

mary angela douglas 11 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Are All The Petals To Come

the instant will come, and has it already  
said the child in blue tugging at my skirt  
when no one will withstand the tide of Beauty

flower falling upon flower out of the skies  
of the tree boughs arching high  
where we walk slowly, you and I entranced

let the children climb and live among the bowers

of the flowers, amid the pink and peach  
the pearl and the plum, violet violet  
let the children run fresh petaled

then will the ships come home  
and the seas churn violets themselves  
mirroring the skies

where cloud flowers mirror the earth  
and the angels sigh  
that we speak in flowers

there being no dearth of poetry

each word a flower, a bud, and trellising forever  
and this is the flower world  
and all the aprils and the mays together

and the wedding of the world  
the banquet savored  
the pink and gold cakes and the festooned

and oh said the child in blue

all the pastel moons through the trees  
all once upon!

mary angela douglas 2 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Are All Unlikely People

we are all unlikely people she half thought  
turning over the rain soaked pebbles in the road  
to reveal, she thought

the less jeweled side  
all brides at the altars of uncertainty  
paper wad hit in the classrooms

long ago  
and the desks when you put your  
head down to rest

all smelling like taffy.  
why can't we go back  
apprentices and mouseketeers

and start again some Parents' Open House Night

the notebook open at the first snowed in page  
and arrange it so  
we don't care what they say

but glory in the way  
imperfection has its beauties too  
and dreaming never minded

about that.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Are No Ones Toy Soldiers Anymore

we are no one's toy soldiers anymore

I said to the troops inside my mind

who had started to assemble once more

on the parade grounds

from now on it is Christmas time forever

Christmas leave and we are free

and we are no one's toy soldiers anymore.

I repeated, because they did not stir. or acknowledge me.

I thought they would explode with joy

throw scarlet caps into the air with golden tassels.

the troops in my mind, but they were so used

to assembling there they remained

in perfect formation never looking at the clouds.

shall I blow a trumpet into their ears

my companions of the years

my thoughts who have kept me company

and ranged themselves with a will.

they may as well be phantoms so little

they heeded me

and I was at a loss what to do now that

they could not desist from marching  
though marching orders were gone  
and marching on and on  
never looking at the marsh where the wild birds rose  
and the moss, so velvet green and the under grass  
where the shadows of peace unseen  
covered all their futile maneuvering  
where the long shadows lulled me to sleep.

mary angela douglas 29 september 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Are The Cherry Sprigged Persons

is it, it isn't too late to dream  
we are the cherry sprigged persons  
in the picture books

spooning cream with berries  
wreathed with art nouveau  
or tinted angels on the scene

and breathing home or the  
four winds with equanimity  
my new word I learned today

she exclaimed and it shines impeccably,  
penny bright may this  
be the world we never

leave behind  
where thoughts are kind  
and actions and the only art

is the glass we hold in our hands  
that will not spill a drop of magic  
but contain it carefully through

all the lies of the outer world the  
incriminating scenes the tearful leaving home  
unexpectedly

thus in my poem I leave you this small gift  
wrapped seven times round with jeweled ribands  
and the thrift of saving everything that's bright

for all my dears and the untold dears of God  
in generations succeeding  
these little stars snipped out for all oh all

your winter nights  
and grieving

mary angela douglas 9 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# We Build On A Flood (But Not Forever)

life is strange.  
we build on a flood,  
thinking ourselves snug

and the whole time, washed away.  
time is stranger

meeting ourselves at some beginnings again  
or seeming to, all ribbons maypole waving  
and there the bridge gives way,

the little sticks.

but we will build again one day;  
there where the planets wash gold to green,  
to reds and blues like gummed stars

over our pianoforte pieces used to, Shine!  
when we played well.  
who can tell when?

we'll sigh like the roses  
in the flowers beds again  
when the warmer winds come through;

exult with the backyard birds that  
winter's gone forever now, away  
while we spy on every hand

each familiar gleam beckoning us,  
pretend it's already here

through our tears fast fading  
and learn to say  
there in the peachbright morning,

ah, there's Land again, and free.

mary angela douglas 1 september 2016 rev.12 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Couldn't Be Any Happier

some people say we don't live well  
who don't think millions more are swell  
who don't frequent the cote d azur

or take each summer the Grand Tour  
but I have news to them to say  
that those who in their shadows play

enjoy the freedom of their place  
much more than those who endless chase  
and rope each rainbow after rain

and fear it may go down the drain  
while those with not much left to lose  
breathe deep the air that God imbues

and watch the gold of sunset still  
the rose unfold the robin's sill  
with wonder, any time of day

and each new season  
when we pray  
oh God we thank you for today

we couldn't be any happier.

mary angela douglas 27 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Did Not Dream Of Weddings

[in memory to Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. Young, my grandparents...  
and for Sharon F. Douglas, my sister]

we did not dream of weddings,  
but of the white gold light  
and of the pearl of the skies.

any day now it may snow  
the moon and the stars  
and we will stand entranced.

let it be lamplit,  
and the snow falling delicately before.  
let Grandmother's books

with their tissue guards unfold  
the mystical illuminations  
of the sweetheart's rose

in miniature.  
or we compose on toy pianos  
plinking on rainbow scales

the notes we'll sing  
in after years  
and lift the hidden veils

of Christmases to come:  
we knew,  
when we were young.

mary angela douglas 27 november 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Guard Our Words So Carefully

to the poets lost in World War I-  
and in all the wars

we guard our words so carefully  
like the king's sons in the pear orchards.  
the pears are truly golden and therefore someone is stealing them night after  
dew drenched night.

someone we cannot see with the footfall of violets,  
starred, but clouded over. leaving no scars.  
oh will we fall asleep again? our wandering asks us.  
finding the firebird feathers gone from the yard-

plucked out of the dark.

oh guard my sight from the beautiful plundered I prayed to God when I was  
younger with the footfall of snow angels girded for the flight over the debris field

where the winds had scattered the cherry teakettles  
and the pauses in old conversations-

sparing the shattered heart more shattering  
because:  
scratching their yellow diamond on yellow diamond-  
on the crystal meridians left to them

our poets of the younger series  
did not survive

mary angela douglas 26 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Leave At Your Door Oh Most High

we leave at your door oh Most High  
the conversations we could never have  
with anyone else because they fled  
we leave at your door instead  
this code of tears  
of the locust ridden years  
we leave  
and we leave again  
the places where we have been  
where only you could find for us the exit  
from dubious and deceitful men  
illuminated in a sudden ladder of moonlight  
rejoice oh my soul for you were found whole  
in the perfume of lilies, of many roses though  
we had been led we had been led  
where our footprints bled through a wilderness of mirrors  
scattered and broken;  
wild pretense!  
and to the edge of being nameless,  
but you said we could never be ashamed  
though we were singed though acid curled  
the edges of the last pictures taken;  
the evidence, yellowed with age.  
I hear the recording, departing angels cry:  
you did not, You do not lie.  
nor your beleaguered children.  
mary angela douglas 16 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Live Loving The Poor Or Other Boxes On The Intake Sheet

we live loving categories

as if love were addressing envelopes

licking stamps, one more chance

to be recognized for our skills

we love the poor and all their ills

and doing good for them.

throwing pennies in the kettle at Christmas

but we don't remember

the colour of their eyes. the desperation

to be recognized as a person who could be known

oh no how could we ever call them colleagues

speaking as one member of the human race to another

as someone who had a mother

we dont really use their names as we would

a friend. we look straight through and surmise

we know all about them because we know

what box they're in. or what box they're in today.

there's a poor one going about

a poor one's day shifting in the chair

in a poor sort of way. can't they at least sit up straight  
the kindest sing needs.  
wait till you drop into the file yourself.  
you'll see how awful it is to be loved as a file  
to be classified and butterfly pinned.  
like another species entirely.  
you'll see behind the strained smiles  
treating you like a case inwardly complaining  
about your sorry addition to their case load  
when all you want is a decent conversation  
that it almost feels  
like negation.  
sometimes, like hate.  
like processed cheese  
when you're in need of steak  
of feeling for just one moment  
like a normal person.  
all this charity.  
this sorrowful vulgarity.  
these ten year plans  
for shattered lifespans.



mary angela douglas 16 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Loved Old Road Maps

[to my grandfather, Milton B. Young, King of the Triple A Trip Tik]

we loved old road maps of cheerful design  
the brochure people motoring  
with wide smiles

the mother in red lipstick, an orange shirtwaist dress  
her chiffon scarf blowing in a motoring wind  
the father sure of the y hands on the wheel.

a twinkle set to go off in either eye  
as if it were Christmas on the Fourth of July.

the backseat children leaning forward  
as if expecting the world for dessert.  
or burgundy cherry ice cream at the next Howard Johnson's.

old roadmaps so waffle cone crisp in their delineations.

so perfect folded up impossible to fold back up again  
except as a magic trick.  
on any road you could find another service station

another road map, in case this one wasn't working.  
if only life had been that way. All Firestone caroled,  
the routes marked out in red and blue

and everything to scale.  
as it is.  
we are glad

there is any road at all.

mary angela douglas 15 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Meant To Wear Empire Dresses Always

we meant to wear empire dresses always  
in vivid velvet, with a single jewel.  
only, the empires faded;

the clotheslines rolled up the suns.  
now wash days come and go.  
and the sun dried wild flowers

after storms.  
and I feel torn in two at times  
like a faded paper doll

that's overused.  
thank God for the tape that mends  
I laugh and then I pretend again

I'm still in blue velvet,  
in an empire gown  
and it will be always Spring.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Move Through Space

we move through space as through  
transparencies of angels;  
through time, as though

we never had left home.  
and in the tower rooms  
sometimes, we feel neglected;

yet sometimes feel,  
we're truly not alone.  
God on the bright winged days

is living still.  
and high birdsong among  
the sheltering trees.

and all that's made of anguish  
sifts like snowfall  
beyond the mind's

imaginative seas.  
still may we write in gold  
our soul's deep journey

or linger long  
in childhood's violet wood  
or carry in our hearts

the great locked secrets  
of all that's true,  
and beautiful

and good.  
let news of the outside, rumors  
cast away

and leave us here  
as contemplation's wards.  
that God set between us and the dead-

forever vivid, each noetic Word.  
until the day  
the dream is vindicated;

accusing fact stands cowering  
near the door  
and flees into the night

that's never ending  
while we in hope depart  
for green lit shores.

mary angela douglas 24 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Never Did

it was raining gold at all the childrens' birthday parties;  
a soft gold tasting of butterscotch? sun spots? caramels  
wrapped or toffees and this stole the show

from the cake slice with it rose;  
the dish of tri striped lusciousness.  
oh strawberry chocolate and vanilla when I grow up I  
will name my children for you. I promise to.

but we never did.  
grow up, I mean.

mary angela douglas 12 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Once Heard What Cannot Be Unlearned

we built little kingdoms in the snow;  
in clover beds  
in piles of the red and gold

october's treasures and leafmold  
in fern imprinted rocks piled up  
to make a house a home

for wayward dolls.  
we heeded the trumpet calls from elfin lands  
and stinted not their amethyst echoes

flying in the afternoons of summer's berried largesse  
and in our dress up modes  
we played all the roles

in ballet too, and tutus, rhinestoned tiaras  
glinting like the crown jewels we pasted into albums.  
we sang in harmonies Christmas tide or out

and ate all the candy that we bought  
in one full swoop  
or read new paperbacks gathered from book fairs

in our fair schools on the backyard stoop  
until the weather turned so cool our  
Grandmother said

it's time to come inside now, girls.  
it's time to come inside  
I thought as well

so many years gone by;  
to sit by the fire like jane eyre  
after a rain drenched spell

and compare notes,  
each to each  
in pale green spidery writing still;

reaching out  
to what is never lost  
and easily found

in an evening's drowse  
and with the piano notes tinkling  
like ancient fairy story fountains

we once heard  
and never unlearned.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# We Remember You

oh Lord do come to our defense

when the pettiness of this world and small cruelties threaten to

engulf us;

when we are left high and dry.

when it seems there will be no more springtime on earth.

when it feels there will be no sky

and that the glacial ages will return.

oh Lord come to our defense when we are spurned,

when we are shunned.

whenever it is we deeply feel our orphaned state

and perennial exile while on You we wait

and can no longer measure the distance between

where we are seated and the door

or ascertain if there are prowlers wild coyotes

near

be with us when we quake with fear

because of the barbs and arrows that have flown our way

on many a blue skied sunny day

without us ever knowing why

for the sickness that comes to stay. be our balm.

for the killing storm, our calm.

we know you made the earth to be beautiful.

we remember Zion.

we remember the sound of the harps.

we remember You.

Oh see that we have strung our captivities together

to make a Song, a necklace of bitter stars

that you may know we know

it was never You who wronged us;

let the small tears come

and wash it all away.

mary angela douglas 16 october 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Savor Green Apple Candies

we savor green apple candies slowly  
pretending we own the world  
and dress up playing, we're dressed

for the occasion  
in some garden party frocks  
5 sizes too big that trail on the ground

their splashy flowers  
so that the backyard flowers grow confused  
and the sparkling winds pass through us

as though they too are new  
and understand us  
in all our bazooka comic bubble gum

conniptions our Tinker Toy serious constructions  
the way we cherish our dolls  
down to each separate eyelash.

why do I remember this

as though it were paint not yet dried  
on the porch railing of dreams  
the summer clouds scudding

in the lake of the sky  
and the books as yet, unread  
and endlessly rsvp'd.

mary angela douglas 4 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Started Out On A Cherry Filled Day

on a cherry filled day we started out  
and isn't that plenty to write about  
I asked myself without a doubt

my good self answered  
with angel cake smiles  
and little distress

for a long long while  
and I can go back on any dim day  
when the air is raw

and I've lost my way  
and traipse again where the wind is mild  
and be again the cherry filled child

mary angela douglas 9 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Wanted To Be Cake Topper Ballerinas

we wanted to be cake topper ballerinas  
when we grew up  
never stopping to think

how difficult it might turn out to be  
to pirouette in frosting  
or to make it seem like

part of the choreography in quite a  
natural way when we bent down perhaps  
to nibble a butter cream rose.

but in the game of let's suppose  
it isn't a rule to think of contingencies  
when you are only three, or even four

or even to parachute down logistically  
in quite an Emerald town  
with your wishes well in hand

without fainting from the sight  
of the Winged Monkeys.

as hard as we tried to hold a thought  
we'd lose the key to the castle  
by the very next day

when we would play something else  
or wake to another dream entirely:  
a trail of sequins from neglected tulle

a pink glow, a random cast off jewel  
the only evidence left on the nursery floor  
with the toys discomfited of yesterday as if to say,

perhaps to chide us, don't you remember...

when we were playing school.

mary angela douglas 9 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Wanted To Spell In Jelly Beans

we wanted to spell in jelly beans  
the names of the flowers  
of all the hours between now

and Christmas  
using the red and green  
making wreaths of cloud roses

and they drifted by us  
for that purpose;

decorative bells that never chimed  
yet accented packages gaily  
and through a frosted spy glass

we would spy innumerable goodies  
coated in caramel or butterscotch  
toffe toffee toffee sang we together

skipping rope in winter sunlight  
will you turn again with your  
pastel shadow wavering

a little indecisive with  
the curtsey before the concert  
in your pink dress

and all that music  
inside you  
spilling over

into the quiet of  
the children  
and their guests

mary angela douglas 22 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Watch The Monsters File Below

we watch the monsters file below  
from all our towers made of snow  
and know what we know.

the Sovereign God our keeper is  
the watcher o'er the sleepers Is  
and all the bubble and the fizz

of life means nothing here  
where those once friends  
can disappear

into the mire down below  
we tearless watch  
from towers of snow.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# We Went Forth In The Apple Of The Day

we went forth in the apple of the day  
the gilded coach so apricot in the sunlight  
happy learning what to say

and that our shadows lengthened,  
painted on the garden walls.  
and is that all she said;

who was the Painter?  
you are small, chirped the birds  
but you could fly away

if you tried harder  
and we played we could, remember?  
and stirred our lemonade in the shade

the way the old music plays itself out  
on the player piano in old movies.  
and this is the cinema verite

of Cinderella in the silents  
her glass shoe that blindingly crystal  
the way I saw it on the toy projector's screen and

the way the silk spools out at the end of the play  
gleaming and gleaming

mary angela douglas 28 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Were Given Little Cakes

we were given little cakes and apples

and told to be good and later there would be more

the feasting went on in the castle for days.

we had song sparrows to play with.

chinks of light through the kitchen door.

we didn't know we were ignored.

silver and china and finely worked damask

we saw going out on the trollies to the guests.

And the fleur de lis plates piled high oh everything, the best.

We made shadow puppets on the walls.

And comforted those who started to cry.

At night we dreamed the King of Heaven came down

and made us shifts of gold

mary angela douglas 19 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Were In The Blue Shade And The Deeper Shade, The Delphinium

[A flower poem from this morning that branched out of a conversation concerning the dream of visiting the gardens of the world...memories of childhood springs the feeling of that...]

we were in the blue shade and the deeper shade, the delphinium  
and in the hour of lilacs quiet, filled with the misted greens  
oh April I have loved you beyond few things on earth

were you a dream  
I pass the old warehouses  
sick of their rubbishy ghosts

the brambles where the gardens grew  
with or without their silver bells  
cockle shells came the dream floating

down again the chute of mays, remembering  
they were that pearled and I will seek  
lost orchards, the shades of lost orchards

the girl that I was then

sailing away from the dour precincts  
where I was thought employable.  
and toward the museums of Light

mary angela douglas 25 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Were Incapable Of Anything But Beauty

[to my mother, Mary Adalyn Young Douglas]

we were incapable of anything but beauty:  
striving to know, to see in the smallest thing  
its pearl snow shining, momentary; even so

we held onto clouds, veils of illusion,  
tints of the rose, the gold, the mint,  
the summertime, the cooling shade forever,

all our money spent

slipping away so that we laughed  
like children with burst bubbles  
and the soap dripping over the porch

steps, rainbow deflated.  
I have waited a lifetime to be proven otherwise  
that we weren't wise in this

though foolish in all other things  
to note the butterfly wing, the turning of the leaf  
the bud in spring; to feast on the pinkness vanishing,

brushing the tears aside  
from those who derided us  
hoping in afternoon mail.

seeking the holy grail.  
and beauty, beauty  
has not failed us.

mary angela douglas july 18 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Who Are Subject To Mirages

we who are subject to mirages  
to the fluttering of failing wings  
of the small things

so prone to disappear  
we need you near oh God  
in our tiny rooms

making do with scraps  
for curtains unable to bear  
the View.

and losing, losing, lost  
we bear the cost of our clouded  
then occluded dreams till

oh from our windows and at  
the very sills at times  
we long for some release

where somehow Beauty never ceases  
flowing in waves from ever  
your weeping hands.

then snows visit us and erase  
our solitary tracks  
when we look back

and light your Light  
comes to our cages  
and we see, oh

benign and gleaming:  
the shadows of your angels;  
not the bitter facts.

mary angela douglas 6 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Will Forswear The Contests Of The World

we will forswear the contests of the world  
since only God is gold  
and singing is its own reward

did poets feel this in a distant age  
and so their names not come down to us  
then let them be praised beyond

those that strove  
forever the laurel in their scope  
forever the contest and the one to beat

forever the sleep without dreaming

mary angela douglas 21 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Will Take Butter And Jelly On Small Sandwiches

we will take butter and jelly on small sandwiches  
and launch our paper boats  
as the legendary did, or the colours of kites,

the flower names of fireworks from China.

or fly with paper wings festooned with the gummed stars  
we bought at the dime stores  
diamond stores we said

thinking there weren't enough constellations in the sky  
to compare with the glitter of the toys there  
much less the semi precious candies in glass jars

will we go far on butter and jelly packed in wax paper  
what if the tin soldier falls out of the boat  
and must float and float

past the tissue paper sails drenched now Forever  
we will eat quickly  
savings the pink cakes for later

on the far shore.

mary angela douglas 8 january 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# We Wondered Where They Had Gone, Marveled The Keepers Of The Cabinet Des Fees

shimmering nightingales have landed on my patio  
cried the princess, all in silver  
though there was none to notice.

so she stood there rippling among the rainbow banded songs.  
they were not frightened as she fed them with wild irises  
and the light she shone on them from her own recesses

was like rose velvet to a child.  
she is not far from the land quoth she  
though their pockets are overfilled with sand.  
the quarter moon smiled

when she half-turned,  
spooning out for them the  
mother-of-pearled.

this is the twilight to which you have come,  
she murmured, the last branch on the tree.  
the beauteous banishment and the last trolley out.

let the winds blow the whole earth apart,  
rid of the myth of you.  
not missing your glissando.  
shouting as if you had never been.

while I weep crystals.  
the quarter notes sleep.  
and they bring charges for  
all we've not done wrong.

jeweled, in the cabinet of my soul,  
in opal intaglio-  
into God Himself I have carved your song.

mary angela douglas 26 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Would Give Everything We Have

we would give everything we have  
and not look back  
just to find somehow  
we were stumbling down the same  
track as you, and you up ahead  
in the purple dusk  
still seeking what was lost  
what was lost  
my God  
we all are born to find  
to live and then move on  
from what we cherished most  
oh Father  
Son  
and Holy Ghost  
what else can we know in the world  
but you  
what else could we care to.  
mary angela douglas 12 november 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We Would Rather

though the day be like a crystal fruit and the glaze on it  
of diamonds and topaz, rubies she exclaims, ready to drop into the jewel box of  
the Princess

still, we would rather have, my sister and I

strawberry shortcake, with Mama or all the ice cream in a malted shake  
on a Sunday afternoon and Grandfather asks

do you want that with Hershey's syrup?

and we look up all saucer eyed with joy and whisper yes  
still in our Sunday dresses from church. don't spill that on yourselves

our Grandmother says. in her caramel voice and we say eagerly  
oh no, of course we won't. and we dont.

though the night be splendid and woven from silk  
and the moon like buttermilk churned in a Grecian urn  
still we would rather have our allowance dug from our

Grandfather's pockets earned,  
when we get good grades

so that we can buy school paperbacks all the rage or of all the classics in our  
parade of pennies

and read away all the summer days, the piano days too (after

practicing, Grandmother) and after chores

pushing ourselves off into the swings of reading and in our scuffed shoes  
Grandfather will polish again by noon on Saturday

and when we are paper dolling it up in our blue room.

mary angela douglas 11 july 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# We, The Living Equations

we, the living equations on His board  
wonder, what it is we're up here for;  
how soon will we be

erased? and anguish in this green black space  
whole nights and days away,  
for we are variables

and cannot prove ourselves

even when written in another base.  
and some are the  $x$ ,  $y$ ,  $z$   
or the  $a$  and  $b$ , the pride of place

of the propositions and composed like this  
every May are subject to furtive visions while  
worked out in the margins on the tests

of His grace or crowded end to end  
for the astronomers manipulating Space;  
the engineers on the brink they think

where we are plotted on the graphs  
of mysterious inequities.

we think:  
we don't know what  
and so repeat ourselves

all down the alphabet Septembers  
grade by grade and wistfully conclude  
from noon to noisy noon

in polynomial gloom:  
though polyglot, we cannot  
solve ourselves.

mere fractals dreaming  
in a chalk like haze;

we're not the makers

of the Maze.

mary angela douglas 7 august 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wearing Organza To Our Made Up Parties

wearing organza to our made up parties,  
did the ghosts startle us all summer?  
coming back across dim fields they

melted by the Time  
we got back for ice cream.  
it's strawberry flavored

my sister said wistfully  
this time  
oh no I said black cherry vanilla

like a vivid snow of flowers.  
we'll cook mini marshmallows  
for the dolls and other things

for hours on our pink stove

and leave the chocolate bars  
in the sun on the back porch steps...  
they're done we'll cry

then turn around three times  
to see our mud pies from the day before  
have really amazing fruit fillings.

and the filing station just beyond  
has a grand opening too.  
you can tell by the balloons and

the multicoloured pennants fluttering

near the sail clouds, puffs of our  
favorite breezes; it's kingdom come  
where the fairy sized, yum!

pecan pies mean a lot  
unwrapped at once  
with orange pop.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2015 rev.20 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Wearing Organza To The Made Up Parties

wearing organza to the made up parties,  
did the ghosts startle us all summer?  
coming back across dim fields they

melted by the Time  
we got back for ice cream.  
it's strawberry flavored

my sister said wistfully  
this time  
oh no I said black cherry vanilla

like a vivid snow of flowers.  
we'll cook marshmallows  
for the dolls and other things

for hours in our pink stove

and leave the chocolate candies  
in the sun on the back porch steps...  
they're done we'll cry

then turn around three times  
to see our mud pies from the day before  
have really amazing fruit fillings.

and the filing station just beyond  
has a grand opening too.  
you can tell by the balloons and

the multicoloured penants raised

near the sail clouds, puffs of our  
favorite breezes; it's kingdom come  
where the fairy sized, yum!

pecan pies mean a lot  
unwrapped at once  
with orange pop.

mary angela douglas 12 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Weeping

sometimes we are weeping old tears

this is painful for a human being

to weep tears from decades ago

to weep tears one hundred years old

and the body is weeping too

we call this illness

the mind is weeping

when the mind is weeping

we call it names

that make it weep more

sometimes every cell and every tissue and every organ

and every molecule of skin is weeping and weeping

we are the wound itself the face of the wound

and when we summon Christ we see the Image of the wound

grow wings and comfort us

and only God can heal us

and keep us from the Flood of the endless

weeping.

mary angela douglas 15 march 2020a

Mary Angela Douglas

# We'll Dress Up In Bon Bon Pink

we'll dress up in bon bon pink  
and shuffle again the bird lotto cards  
or watch all the neighbors

sprinkling their yards  
the flowers drink it all in  
it's no sin on a Sunday

to watch tv  
if you're homework's done  
and you are free

to look out the picture window  
when the wind gusts through our  
Very Own Pine Trees

to eat grilled cheese from a tv tray

to pray silently.  
how easy it is in words to go back  
to fix yourself a 1960s snack

and be at ease  
remembering your please and thank you  
the color of nasturtiums

the taste  
of fried chicken Sundays  
with English peas.

and iced teas.  
pound cake,  
with peach ice cream.

mary angela douglas 30 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# We'll Wear White Like The Bride Dolls

we'll wear white like the bride dolls in that Kingdom  
this, the grass stained children dreamed  
or they exclaimed

on rainy days or when their  
emerald tears subsided  
long after Glinda glided from the scenes

of those sad flickering pictures on  
the screen  
when it looked like Home

could never return.  
how it burns the mind, even still,  
and piecemeal. hurts you

when you turn suddenly  
back from the cool afternoons  
after school

where we wandered:  
in-between Christmases.

mary angela douglas 24 may 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Were We Painting On Clouds While We Lived On Earth

'were we painting on clouds while we lived on earth...'  
I heard them sigh, 'did all that drift away? '  
in the eternal breezes down the

esplanades of Heaven  
shimmering almost sad  
where the gold leaf trees

never lose their leaves.  
are there no more autumns then?  
asked the child in me, in Paradise?

ah it will seem to you then as now  
perhaps their better angels said in sweet surmise,  
you wrought it all in vain

that the dark rains came, the darker floods  
and carried it all away.  
and yet, it is not so.

Mary Angela Douglas 28 May 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Were You

were you writing on the page of crystal  
the whole time, even without knowing  
and your eyes widening

took in too much light  
so that you overflowed?  
old stories told again are new

and fresh as each subsequent snow  
they drift inside of you  
dreaming, the apples cold,

the apples gold and stowed away  
on paper doll rainy days  
we unpacked our treasures

unfolding the theatre  
cardboard winding stairs.  
above them the painted moon

silk screened in lemon,

o Juliet, balcony fastened  
do not breathe, Briar Rose  
among the paper trees

until the evening air  
is laden with stars.

mary angela douglas 19 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Were You The Earthquake They Predicted

to Jesus Christ, the Lord, friend and saviour

were you the earthquake they predicted  
then buried alive  
but you survived

a king in no hiding  
kingdomless they said at the last minute  
were you in it

or were you somewhere else  
all the time  
communing with

what should have been  
what could have been  
with only the green leaves for friends

the waves of the sea  
walk upon the glass of our hearts  
that we might not shatter

let all that matters in the world  
slip away  
holding onto the day you

came back  
cooking us fish  
with the honey glaze.

Mary Angela Douglas 14 March 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Alice Found There, Variation No.1

the interior mirrors weeping inconsolably  
comfits in the hold  
party favors,

the party being disbanded  
and the invitation lost  
the left hand vanishing into water

the jeweled sword on the banks of memory

roses under duress  
the lands of conquest running away  
children with new suitcases

the blue silk lining of  
the sky of the mind

mary angela douglas 25 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What If I Saw Silver Stars

what if I saw silver stars breaking off from the tree of night  
would you believe me then  
if I scattered my thoughts like rosepetals

like petals of the gardenia wind the wild chrysanthemum  
and it all came raining down as if God's ceiling  
were only made of flowers?

for hours they would question me  
perhaps in the school rooms  
and in the offices where

no dreams are hatched  
or angels would come down  
and latch the door saying hush,

don't tell them any more.

and my imagination quieted would sit  
near the bay windows  
drinking hot chocolate.

and there on the window panes  
it is written in God's finest raindrops that  
the dews have vanished overnight

and I don't know where they are now

mary angela douglas 27 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What If I Slipped

what if I slipped through the net of dreams  
not returning to  
familiar scenes, consensus, anything

letting the golden slipknots slip  
from the tower or be reeled in  
with all the hours

that may have been  
and the May crownings  
and the flowers wreathed

for remember whens  
that did not breathe  
there melting like snows away

let the margins fade with the outlines  
of a face not yet come into bloom  
then let me sound retreat

telegram pocketed and  
never read aloud  
fastening fate on another cloud

afar from the pearl and the marl of it  
let the moats be closed for repairs

until further notice.  
let the snows fly,  
unconscious of their erasures of

or what would have been, the lies  
had I chosen otherwise  
it's a failing blue of the

dust of lilacs of  
the paling doves from their  
fairy tale branches rustling

that I have Lost  
to all that entrances.  
be buried deep

beyond all sleep  
the wounding that  
would not occur then.

then return, returning, returned  
the country I have heard  
in deeper and deepening music

while I learned to be  
coded with all you feel or  
could feel let the winds

take it all then  
let the only word left be away

then say it  
vanishing, on the strand.

mary angela douglas 18 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# What If Teacup Doggies Are Secretly Geniuses

what if teacup doggies are secretly geniuses

and also with halos too so that out of love

they pretend to be happy when

we throw the munchkin ball for them, the tiny chew toy

and snap to in cute puppy yips and yaps

when put in the baby choo choo

when really they can speak 25 languages

and decode emissions from Mars

while you are decorating them with frou frou

or watching them do impressions of the

children's toys

and plead for crumbs at the dining room table

especially at Sunday chicken dinner

with the pink bib tied around their almost necks

becoming somehow in the moment even fluffier

and then they get carried outside to the yard and

ruff ruff to the neighbor's dog

in quadratic equations.

and pftt with the kitty cats about

String Theory or why Oppenheimer was wrong

then patter back inside and roll their teddy bear eyes

ever so slightly at the PBS Special

on humans still teaching basic vocab to the dolphins.

mary angela douglas 27 may 2020; rev.28 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# What If The Birds Had Singing Contests?

what if the birds had singing contests?  
then only a few birds would sing.  
even in Spring.

the ones they picked.  
the other birds would mope in the trees.  
perhaps they would give up flying entirely.

even chirping.  
the little sparrows on the sidewalks  
by the rain puddles

not even hopping.  
the birds that made it would get all the worm prizes.  
juicier and fatter worms as time went on.

they would burst their seams.  
what a lot of feathers.  
how silent in April.

mary angela douglas 8 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# What If The Flowers Took Flight

what if the flowers took flight,  
the roses gliding?  
I close my eyes and

violets seek the sun;  
and where and where is  
the shade they used to love

and is the shade crying  
under the rooted trees?

they are  
dizzying as stars,  
bright parasols when it rains

closer to water now  
when it comes from the clouds.  
and in the ionosphere

their lost perfumes diffuse.  
the skies are dazzling  
holding the migrations

of so many bouquets.  
the honey bees will go mad.  
yet all things shall be well

the vivid angels sing  
in flowered arrangements newly composed:

oh rose. wild rose. I  
close my eyes on earth  
missing the flowers

in the little dells.  
wanting to call  
the Missing Flowers Department.

mary angela douglas 25 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What If We Were The Dream Of God

what if we were the dream of God

and something woke Him up

before he finished us

a star falling out of orbit

or a bird from its nest

a baby penguin that could get no rest

or the wind through the trees of Heaven.

oh please go back to sleep my little sister said

in this story

that's what I from the dream would have told Him

please leaning over the gate of dreams

and holding onto Mamas hand.

mary angela douglas 6 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Is A Poem

perhaps it is just a thing  
wishing to be made  
and then, precipitate

out of a solution  
brightness itself  
and crystallizing

like a star  
exactly  
where you are

mary angela douglas 3 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Is Impossible To Say In Words

(for Dmitri Shoshtakovich)

this is daylight then

when gold shines through the fissures;

this is the violet tide and unreturning now;

a quake of diamonds concluding

who knows how

and where you are

the dark snows little stars

and hemispheres hardly breathe;

amber beading on the sunken lawns.

what eve is this that shakes the garnet core

you cannot even form the words, your fist.

there is no birdsong left in this, but shards;

caesura.

there is a pause between worlds.

a diminshment, in music.

fountains shut off.

angels turn from the scene,

the weeping spires.

mary angela douglas 6 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Is The Location Of Your Emergency

what is the location of your emergency  
said someone on the line  
is it behind the eyes or farther back

to dream where all has virtually stopped  
in the workshop of time  
and the elves come no more because

you made them garments of the red and green  
oh no your mother whispered from the eaves  
where whispering turned to snows to sudden angels-

turn your footsteps back as in the fairy tale that day  
the children did with so much left to say  
where the moon shone illimitably

above the small path marked with stones

mary angela douglas 17 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Is The Use Of Colours Perhaps They Sighed Into Their Flasks

what is the use of colours perhaps  
they sighed into their flasks;  
some of them, anyway,

while the poets cried  
and children at their tasks:  
it is just loveliness;

you may as well ask  
the use of the wind, the grass  
the skies when they are blue

or other hues and I know I know  
it can all be explained numerically  
biologically magnetically

but oh, colours, since I knew you by name  
in my own language, I have never been the same  
and I have never wanted

to quantify you

mary angela douglas 30 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# What Ray Might Say Today If He Came Back For His 100th Birthday

for Ray Bradbury on his 100th birthday and all those who love him and his stories...forever

to live in the beauty of the story as it is unfolding is granted to only some

to fix the moment like a star, like a red leaf falling

to remember the air crisp as apples

the shadow on the stair to recreate

the sudden shaft of sunlight through the emerald trees

the snow crowning everything the wilderness rains

I tried I tried to see and be this simultaneously

to freeze all the fragile disappearing

through a lens of rose or one of amber October shearing

not only to compose the music but to live within it

singing and singing

I am alive in all the cherry red dimensions

as far as the reach of white blue space

and heaven and earth besides

right now in the honeyed cornucopia of all my days and ways

and you are alive too. darling reader

darling and ever christened ever living reader  
beyond the margins of all the stories that are  
that were, that ever will be.  
as far as the marigold eye can see.

mary angela douglas 22 august 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Rose Lipt Words Can Say The Poets Guessed

what rose lipt words can say the poets guessed  
and so, were punished for it one way or other  
especially through part time jobs;

slogging through mud slides  
to get there when the trollies passed from view.  
and then, on cue, the everyday folk in cloak and

bonnet dressed gathered to deride.  
what else have you got besides  
they said to the peddler

these ratty tat tat broadsides  
these missals embroidered  
in the poor man's hours

in anything else much better spent.

he stood in the rains and cried.  
the one poet left in all the Kingdom  
till pearls dripped from the skies

and angels themselves commiserated

and birds flew off to their nests of cherries.  
then God came along turning down the wick  
and then he slept below deck

of God's green starlit rafters  
the long bright sleep and the dream hereafter.

mary angela douglas 2 august 2015; 9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Speech Could Be In Dreams

WHAT SPEECH COULD BE IN DREAMS

God give you the train of questioning  
that may let you find  
the snowflake pattern of your mind,

the coolness after  
storms pass through

the red, unraveling heart to valentine  
bright bends in the rivers and the angels  
behind the trees

and in the seizures of the seas  
the lightning quickened, starlight fed  
we are we were but trade instead

in things that other people said  
meaning to hurt us, casting the baiting  
twisted lines so that the soul spills open:

weeping its jewels aloud

mary angela douglas 1 august 2015 rev.8 june 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# What The Meadow Dreamed

to be flower filled  
or whipperwilled  
or bright with snows

then crowned with prairie rose  
and then to laugh forget me not blue  
with children running through

a fugitive princess to  
unlock the clouds  
and the Great Winds

so that blossom and thistle  
may bow down  
suddenly

to the Flower Maker.

mary angela douglas 27 may 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# What They Said

forever finding the silver key  
to the golden door  
the right glove not the left

the piano without the middle C

it seems that way in dreams  
like there's always a dust storm  
blowing away the days

or you've caught the wrong bus

or just,  
the fare's too high.  
so walk through the debris

around the dream corner  
where the people start  
painting their houses in

neon colors instead of bisque  
taking the risk and hope  
seems possible anyway

it's a town you've never seen

and when you wake up  
you'll never remember  
what they said

mary angela douglas 28 june 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# What To Pack In An Emergency

three acorns full of sudden illumination  
three dresses to match  
a match

and a thousand candles  
the Gospel of John  
a rug to fly upon

rose seed, the King's own sealing wax  
the golden stamped insignia to go with  
a child in need of fairy tales

the fairy tales themselves  
the Book of Kells and gingerbread  
a rain cloud's wishing well, weeping

and a featherbed for sleeping  
with multicoloured quilts innumerable  
and one pea

the spell of human kindness.  
green leaves  
in case the new planet doesn't have any

a Christmas toy train that runs at all speeds  
through a welcoming village  
the radio from Cocteau's film

that only telegraphs poetry  
silver songs, indifferent swans slightly rumped

a cherry orchard  
that cannot be felled.

mary angela douglas 25 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Was It

was it the ice storm?  
or the whole Kaleidoscope shattered-  
and we're on the floes of colours

shifting apart.  
soon it will be dark, we  
crooned to the little houses

floating by and then  
the skies will leave off weeping.  
this is the kingdom down again

my friend said sleeping,  
lost in the shade.  
and lost is the white the gold

oh the Dome of very heaven  
as we wondered, growing smaller,  
out of Time:

will the vines creep round

us now or will we remember how  
to spell the right word at the  
critical moment?

or will we write in chalk on  
an unforgiving moon  
this is the tune the way we played it

little bird little bird  
in your nightfall of pearls.  
when no one heard.

mary angela douglas 7 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# What Was Said By Angels

how long ago the Star rose over my heart  
on the long plains of God  
in a cold that could not be reckoned

by the best astronomers.  
it's best to avoid detection  
traveling here

where rival kings have  
something else in mind.  
we are still fugitive

under starlight.  
the sheep around us,  
uncomprehending;

the blaze of the heart at lowest ebb  
trembling once more for  
what was said by angels

on a bus stop kind of night  
on an indifferent street  
in an unremarkable year

in the sleet, perhaps,  
that suddenly cleared

mary angela douglas 17 december 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# What We Learned In The Blue Winds

we learned the myths, that the winds swirled blue  
in picture books long before school we knew  
that there was music in the faraway

that summers could be dreamed into  
and all was cherries, raveling clues  
in folk tales where the heart was new

then mended swiftly with a golden thread  
and everything in story books was true  
because Grandmother said so

and she knew  
and played piano in late afternoons  
and Liebestraum and this was beauty

in any key to all that we seemed meant to be  
and twilight staining our driveway  
purple as arbors in the day that melted

where we would still be lingering if we could;  
leave me to remember now.

then it was evening and the stars were ours  
and we would dream into the hours  
the music of the faraway

coinage of days and Christmas laden  
and folk songs of the towered maiden  
and shadows on the flowered lawn

of flowers when they all were gone  
their perfumes diffused in garden rain.  
and through it all the green refrain

we're turning into day by day  
to God's mysterious murmur tuned  
when colouring in our pale blue room

or singing to ourselves the songs  
occurring in the winter dawns  
or in between our dimstore plays

in tinsel arrayed  
when time stood still  
in a single ray:

gleaming for us in a memorable way  
showing the soul's bright underlay,  
the music of the faraway.

mary angela douglas 15 december 2018; rev.18 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Will Seeing Be

losing your map of the constellations  
what will seeing be  
anymore?

the clocks say 'nebulae',  
'nebulae' moving  
across town

will not solve it.

like Alice on a summer day  
you're late in dreamland  
a little off guard

leaving your equations behind  
you in the summer yard.  
your notebook and the new pencils.

oh what will you say to  
them at teatime  
when they don't pass the cake.

you're on your own now.  
half way smile the cheshire cats while  
somewhere on another block

shine beyond shining the  
spring constellations  
over the baby rosebuds

'and the rich sleep of whose gardenias?  
what is all this weeping'

said the Red Queen.  
I won't have it.

mary angela douglas 19 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Words May Dream

for e.e. cummings

I am a person making typos in my sleep  
on a dream typewriter (shift key) T(unshift)  
is not that sad when the typewriter turns into

a piano and then it is my words become part  
of the history of music, the typos opening  
the faerie doors between what is perceived

as language by the bureaucrats, the shrink wrapped  
masters of concise English, into what becomes mists  
ever as you would have wished it

into the mists I gallop I am not afraid never having

really been on horseback before and we find all  
the myths and they are foaming. and my soul  
is sea green and the words are forming in

gold foil rosettes on the undiscovered manuscripts  
and these illuminations shift (shift key) I(unshift) nto, , ,  
and leave the pedal down on these sonorities

so that that the colours may be found,  
kaleidoscope fashion, sweet  
cathedrals unbound: rose window rose window rose window

(petaling into the flowery mind of God) show forth! the  
violet realities, realities of the Rose  
fresher than freshets gleam on our heraldry

and the arcing and the singing of it ah! the singing  
the moon stretched like a Harp into night itself as into clear  
light of stars we don't yet know

we don't yet know  
what language springs from  
(is it Spring?) or april imagined

we don't yet know what  
words May dreams

mary angela douglas 13 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# What Would The Pincushion Dream, Hans Andersen

what would the pincushion dream, Hans Andersen?  
to be stabbed with golden pins?  
to fall in love with a thimble.

my lady's thimble, made of garnet,  
the only one in the kingdom?  
or maybe the whole display of thread:

the Coats and Clark spectrum  
jewel like in array, the rainbow=spooled.  
dizzy with colours would the pincushion lose

its balance? would it long to be threaded with light-  
to become: oh impossible of all impossibilities  
the embroidery of the moon and stars instead?

or mantled like a king with ah!

the flowers?

mary angela douglas 28 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# What You Couldn't See In The Picture

her mind was laden with flowers richly bestowed  
trees there were, the chiefest green of the leaves  
in summer and clouds blown skyward

dreaming of children's kites.  
you do not know you do not know  
what she was thinking what the

strong gales know  
and colours ranged but not her own.  
and the shrill whistle of the trains

that left without her moaned  
then the bridge collapsed  
and the thin rains came

innundating the fields  
and where the silos stored  
rich flowers fondly bestowed;

the harvest of better years.

mary angela douglas 27 april 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# What You Need Is A Kind Of Fort

what you need is a kind of fort  
no one in the silver woods will find.  
that clouds passing over will surprise;

the flower snows.

and you've laid by spiced apple rings  
and amber butters piled up to the skies  
in mason jars;

fresh school supplies-

through the hard frosts making valentines  
and humming to the Trinity so cordially,  
dark cherry chorales...

but they, they've grown so wise

carting your playthings off to strangers.  
and they occupy their time  
being the beggar in disguise

no longer Kings

mary angela douglas 31 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Whatever Song I Know

angels with their lutes in a foreign dream  
strummed in a corner apart  
and I said my heart is made of madrigals, too

can I be here amongst the spangled?  
is it the Renaissance again?  
but all went silent as a pin

and none of them were it.  
used to the shut out I resumed  
cleaning my housing unit, little rooms

that would never look clean  
nor gemmy like those angels  
in their opulent green

their Christmas burgundies.  
so much for my time machine  
the journal entry read

the diamond light had turned to lead

I scrawled in a darker ink.  
then went back to the sink  
to try again.

from that day. some day dropped out of a cloud  
and not on the calendar with the strawberry leaves  
I sang Happy Fair over the soap bubbles

and made a fresh bargain with God  
I'll live in You there's no place else to go  
not in any century, status quo

and sing for free  
whatever song I know.

mary angela douglas 24 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# When I Stood In The Emerald Rain

when I stood in the emerald rain  
all these things came back to me

with no translator.

make the fairytale your own-  
you said to me, or meant to say-  
whenever you want to be absolved

from old distress and the knot in your stomach

this far from home.

whenever I stand in the emerald rain  
these are the words I say to myself  
when no one else is listening

but the last bird singing in the jeweled rain.

mary angela douglas 11 february 2010

Mary Angela Douglas

# When I Was Queen Of The Paper Doll Stage (My Sister Too)

when I was queen of a paper doll stage  
(my sister too)  
the one dimensional characters with tin foil crowns

we liked to move around  
in candy coloured shades from the cellophane on the footlights

(flashlight)

and weeping over the roseless briars  
my sister and I, composing angelic choirs  
duets, where we ran up and down the scales

to find the harmonies,  
cut out the tracing paper moons from Christmas stationery  
and let the light shine through-Heavenly Light, we deemed it

from the muslin curtained window on the Blue  
in our old room.  
let me remind you, we were the directors

screenplay adapters too  
sometimes mixing plays so that  
the little girl who strayed in the rose red cape

the tiny wicker basket full of elderberry jam  
homemade butter and yeast rolls our best prop  
on her rickety way

to grandmama indisposed  
quite often wound up at the castle not  
the cottage door and was suddenly The Princess.

we mixed and matched the actors in their roles  
on the cardboard stage displayed on a  
circus figured table that could also hold fresh cocoa

(with the little marshmallows)for  
never the same play twice.  
I miss those plays and how the dolls loved them

especially Raggedy Ann in her sprigged dress,  
over washed apron  
her permanently peppermint striped socks

her fixed sweet smile from the dress circle  
egging us on  
clapping like rain against the leaves

her soft padded hands.  
at our commands.

mary angela douglas 27 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# When It Gets This Way

things have fallen off a table  
and landed where there are pears,  
apples  
burnished in gold  
where we are told odd fables over breakfast  
and midas cornered,  
the mice pattern fine clothes  
allotted the miracle  
of a spot of jam  
a fallen crumb  
do I hear singing from the attic,  
remotely view  
the girl in the pier glass cracked  
in the chanson  
where the rubies gush through  
of the light allotted her  
where bluebirds fetch  
her snowy gowns?  
garlands of myrtle...



and the three lilies.

Notre Dame.

my poems burst into flame

and the toy ladders cannot reach them

weeping the violet or the rose.

I have composed it in my sleep

the thing to say

when it gets this way

but the throat of the swan

on the spun glass rivers

is braided with tears.

mary angela douglas 17 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# When It Hurts To Walk, Dream Of Clouds

when it hurts to walk. dream of clouds  
for so long floating about the Heavens  
finding it so easy

sometimes dissolving, reappearing  
multicoloured, a treat for the eye.  
and you can be clouds too

and this is perhaps  
why your feet don't work anymore,  
the first sign that something is about to change

your ankles turning inward

or stand on one note patiently  
in a vast music  
little by little

you rise  
o it won't be long  
to the whole song

mary angela douglas 20 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# When Poetry Becomes Propaganda And No One Notices

to the immortal Poets, to Immortal Poetry  
when poetry becomes propaganda  
by the time that has taken root all over the world  
I would have finished you would have finished  
they would have finished their waxen wings  
and flown into the sun  
rather than to hear one more lie disguised  
in your phoenix fleece and weeping  
ah poetry fallen archangel, wounded bird  
in the mire of gold I found you and I  
cared and lifted you above  
and remembered your former skies  
your cathedral heights soaring into God  
the one they no longer name.  
am I unwise even to write this here  
that I remember when you were  
clear sapphire through and through  
and I could see the skies  
the tops of tress fomenting only green.  
why have they taken your name and  
rammed it into a perverse flag and turned you into  
a nagging day in and out  
while beauty has fled into the wilderness without you  
where there are no more flowers.  
mary angela douglas 23 september 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# When Poppies Mantled The Skies

now poppies mantle the skies  
I've got to close my eyes,  
said Dorothy I am so tired

how can I go on  
in a pink apron;  
in my blue and white dress

oh let me rest

but something sighed  
to her a different word  
in a snowy language

she had never heard.

let me go then  
I am going home  
said Dorothy

in a largo of emeralds

hardly recognized  
by her musician friends.  
a little world depends on it.

or else, it ends.

mary angela douglas 7 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# When Snow Clouds Form

when snow clouds form in dreams about the prairie

I feel somehow reborn as if everything here

could be secretly made out of crystals

and the air itself holds so much crystal, pines

it is an amazement.

I wanted to walk for a long long time

tasting the crystal in a kind of prescient way

chill orange of the skies at mid day

I felt that bells rang out from the clouds or could or would

making it Christmas day haloed and hallowed

a glittering expectation not in a society way

not social at all

purely hushed for the soul and its reconfiguring;

invigorating so that your cheeks blushed cold

though you weren't aware of it

and you could hold the note in the song

so that the clouds chiding angels drift down

as if listening in a silver kind of way to that cantata only

with the doll like and lovely redundancies of jewel box ballerinas

implicitly on display covering delicately every fence I prayed

and the winds whistling as if from the far North

fairy tales; redundancies of the looking glass scattered

so that I remember only prisms and crowned with them then

passing the corner as I did then,

the out of date store fronts

it's all whirling I thought

there will never be anything more beautiful

mary angela douglas 24 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# When Snow Clouds Form/Dakota Snow

when snow clouds form in dreams about the prairie

I feel somehow reborn as if everything here

could be secretly made out of crystals

and the air itself holds so much crystal

it is an amazement.

I wanted to walk for a long long while

just tasting the crystal in a kind of prescient way

I felt that bells rang out from the clouds or could or would

making it Christmas day

a glittering expectation not in a society way

not social at all

purely hushed for the soul and reconfiguring

invigorating so that your cheeks blushed cold

and you could hold the note in the song

so that the clouds drifting angels bent down

as if listening in a silver kind of way

and the winds whistling as if from the far North

fairy tales

passing the corner as I did then, with them,

the out of date store fronts

it's all whirling I thought

there will never be anything more beautiful

mary angela douglas 24 september 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# When The Fever Turned

it's immaterial the witnesses said at Court  
that the jeweled nightingale breaks down  
if you just look at it.

that's what repairmen are for;  
the best to be found! let them be summoned  
that we may bow down to the uniform sound

with no interruptions.

click whir whir click and tock and tick  
I think it's fixed they marveled  
when something cried: take stock

in the eiderdown and seven layers silk  
the Emperor may drown and breathe his last...  
alas! the word rippled down to the plain nightingale,

the kitchen maid's tree by the sequined sea.  
mirrored the grey of a kingdom tottering.

oh please oh please she prayed  
oh fly, little nightingale, away.  
and so, she did, singing till daybreak

pouring a heartfelt music there.

and over the coverlids of the Emperor,  
Death stole away to his creamy white roses-  
oblique, defeated; dark tears in his eyes.

mary angela douglas 12 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# When The Past Arrives At The Station/Easter Morning

when the past arrives at the station  
where the present breaks down  
then we will sing the song about the

lemons, the oranges once more  
and all the bells in town ringing  
the dolllike brides and grooms

coming out from the steeped snows  
and cheering the confetti all around.  
when the past is suddenly, inexplicably

right now and the reindeer roofed  
bright as daylight will you recover  
your birthright, birthstone

your lily of the month  
and be offered your choice  
of the candies from two

different boxes, each with their separate ribbons  
and wear lilac socks and it is Spring  
to match the Sunday school dress.

the one you love the best

smoothing it down, your Grandmother  
searches your face  
no trace of tears young faith

is shining there  
your hair pinned back as for a crown  
with tiny white and gold flowerets entwined

it's invisible you think

the tiara from the Lord in the morning, morning  
but not to the birds my birds  
breaking into their glory

bright singing the fission of Light  
accomplished where we stand quietly  
sequined in sunlight

He is Risen

mary angela douglas 25 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# When The Swans Turned Home

it isn't fair could she have said  
to the chill in the corners:  
these impossible fairytale deadlines...

here is the room of straw.  
the task of gold.  
and not much time at all

for learning now what you should have learned,  
then. so tears begin and the question of the hour:

will winter ever set?  
and then a bargain's made  
with trolls in a bad temper.

is there any other way?  
and coach worthy pumpkins are sorted from the patch;  
rag bags fetched into gowns.

or in a room of forest green  
mute as an ancient spell  
the princess weaves seven shirts

and one with an unfinished sleeve  
that will forever be a wing  
when the swans turn home.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# When We Rented The Castle

this was when we rented the castle.  
I threw myself against the ramparts;  
You threw yourself there, with me.

and all the incoming documents  
piled to the rafters in pastel triplicate.  
I sought your fairy tale aid

your help in sorting the lentils from  
the gummed stars because our taskmasters  
were fiercer than iron

than permafrost than pig iron  
and us the ingots melted down Lord my God.  
we kept files

and sang four alphabets under our breath.  
and waited for the four o clock bus  
the sanctity of a postage stamp size home,

and the dolls well fed.

mary angela douglas 27 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# When We Set Sail How Lifting Were The Notes

[to my sister, Sharon F. Douglas]

when we set sail how lifting were the notes  
of dream birds on the rim of Time  
and now the cup of dreaming deepens

and now, is it almost tipped over?  
how will we catch the kaleidoscope's  
flaring like a rose, inset with emerald leaves

when our hands are so small?  
or wave the wand where bubbles reach the sun  
before they pop

or wobble over the backyard where the red ants  
mark their highways up the bark of  
the trees who loved us?

long summers have passed by  
the striped glasses in the cabinets.

it's the seesaw moments I recall the best  
when I was in the clouds  
and you in your winter hood laughing

on the ground.  
I thought I would never get down.  
now I would send you ladders of stars

and linen winds of coolness

if I thought they would reach you  
where you are;  
or roomfuls of gardenias

just to soothe you.

there. like a rest in the music.  
in the pale green evenings,

still.

mary angela douglas 9 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# When Will We Melt Away

who lived to write the history of roses  
the way the paper dolls looked when they were new  
complete, with outfits for any occasion

accessories too, though paper tab folded  
only on one side.

you are little they said when they addressed our souls  
in the school hallways where the lockers froze  
as if we counted for nothing

and were somebody's kites  
on a faraway string.  
and they let go.

suddenly we saw  
it was Spring  
in more than one place

on the globe  
and we were free  
to come go

like snows  
like the match girl in and out of dreams  
when will we melt away

we wondered and wondered.  
but God, said, chiming,  
Never.

mary angela douglas 12 february 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# When Words Were Lined With Roses I Was Happy

when words were lined with roses I was happy

when emeralds spoke to me from dreams and became the ballets

Balanchine was famous for, scores full of jewels

the bouquets heaped onstage

when the clocks were empty as snow, on the bell towers

when the bells rang it was Christmas every hour

and in all my clauses on blue lined paper, snow was imminent.

you may think a thumbprint on a wall is not a work of art

but all things are beloved of children when they are small

except for the ones so poorly guarded by their angels.

we could speak in diamonds if we chose to

why do we speak in nails

and make of the earth a sad sad jail

why dont we ban the word eviction

all cliques notwithstanding

and remember how we wanted to be gipsies

when we grew up.

mary angela douglas 26 march 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# When You Were Awake

even in dreams now I'm not always free

being scolded by people I don't know

standing in my own living room

who are these dream scolders

how did i let them in

how can I get them to leave

I wake up and feel that I've done wrong

but I haven't done a thing

but sleep an interrupted sleep

were there loud noises

did the world end while I was sleeping

is it the next day

or the one I was still in

when I dozed off.

some times in life

you lose your place in the scheme of things

you don't recognize faces

-how can you-

you never met

when you were awake.

mary angela douglas 10 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# When You're That Person

home no more home to me, wither must I wander?  
Robert Louis Stevenson

ah when you're that person

getting up and leaving the room  
thinking you'll return, it'll just be a moment  
the rainbows curve back on themselves but

the clouds come in  
and someone's locked the doors.  
you won't get back in

though you've worn the rugs clear through  
in your time.  
it's a gated day.

when you're this person,  
what can you say:  
open sesame?

starlight flings itself away  
needlessly on the grasses  
when there's no one left to

note it passes away.  
they won't notice at all

your shadow missing  
in the family picture.  
but somewhere, birds cry

flocking nowhere.  
somewhere the winds die down  
and it isn't Oz anymore

my grieving child,  
over the spent farms.

mary angela douglas 26 april 2015; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# When You've Had Enough Of The Blah Blah Blah

when you've had enough of the blah blah blah  
I pray they don't make you sit in the corner;  
stay after school-

stay, where they've frozen you outside:  
in the swing-a-statue play yards  
while they go back inside.

how chill were the early Aprils then,  
the see through greens.  
and you can see through

the blah blah blah,  
in these later scenes

you live where real words live;  
trembling, on the underside  
of leaves.

mary angela douglas 19 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Whenever The Lost Colonies Of The Day Before

whenever the lost colonies  
of the day before are drifting in  
your teacup, they say,

don't despair,  
the angels leftover from Christmas;  
though your mind in sending up flares

is Christmas bulbs tangled  
and only some of them brightly lit.  
may you remember their colours

when the feeling of frost has faded  
from vast windowpanes.  
and I will bring candles there as if to say

that light must be kept alive by us  
to stay

mary angela douglas 3 august 2015; 9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# Where Are The Poems Embroidered With The Moon

where are the poems embroidered with the moon  
you asked your shadows in a silver room  
when there were no replies.

and children wondered not you wondered why  
and who was then the guardian of sighs  
the story of old kingdoms locked and barred.

these schoolrooms cannot carry light much less the one  
into columns out of sight and the blackboards parry  
but they cannot spell in colours upon colours

the way that we did once on butterscotched sidealks.

these kingdoms steal away the christmas snows;  
the tinfoil crowns in the kindergarten plays and where  
are the poems embroidered with Your suns and

all the hidden amber stored for another day  
in the nectared histories of what could happen.

where are the words that could have been spun  
like honey on bread. the curtains at the window;  
the violets in her shawl where the winds blew

all the Springs away:  
when music in you fled: small rosebuds cried  
without the colour 'Red'

and penny valentine cardboards sifted  
the hurricanes

mary angela douglas 13 january 2015; 7 february 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Clouds Are

the future is not on earth;  
the future is somewhere else.  
where clouds are, thought the

children, being clouds themselves  
and happy in that way  
in the seed of the impossible

growing overnight from magic  
beans in this, their guessing game.

the present is like the  
jack-in-the-box  
they keep on cranking,

that dubious toy  
though it makes them  
uncomfortable

every time;  
the jerk in the music,  
the bad surprise:

the jerk popping up  
in its mustard outfit,  
its tricolour hat-

with its scary grin.  
but he won't win  
the future is with the angels

secretly (within) .

in the smile of the Princess,  
it's disguised.  
it's the valentine unsent

but always arriving.

mary angela douglas 17 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Is My Sister

God help the children in their kaleidoscope turning  
i said to my sister but she couldn't hear me  
did the fleece of snow cover her ears

did the bridge of light melt with her fears and she  
in her tiny satin her beribboned slippers  
why did I let go of her hand

near the blackboard with the light years figured out  
in coloured chalk

and near the persimmon tree where she played.  
let the iced tea chime in the glass  
of one normal day

at least in memory.  
I can't hear music anymore

there, where she was.  
I thought she would always be.  
one minute I turned the key

into the gingerbread lock

but she was elsewhere  
there where people take stock  
only of what they will have for lunch.

let the angels come with new crayons  
and redraw her  
let the lawyers speak above whispers

so that truth will come down  
in the form of an angel a valentine carefully constructed  
and beyond reproach

let the judge harken, harken to this  
where is my sister

so that no false word may enter the record  
and let me say to the court  
oh she is not your ragdoll.

she was my sister.  
oh God I have one token left.  
please let me through.

mary angela douglas 18 october 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Is The Beautiful Kingdom Where You Were

to Van Cliburn at the piano playing "intuitively" (July 12,1934-February 27,2013)

where is the beautiful kingdom where you were  
whenever you played music; its Niagras, at first. misted, far away?  
the secret listener knew, surprised by an inner chromatic marveling  
intensified from unseen castle to castle as you  
sorted out the battlements  
or were welling up from so many underground streams all at once-  
iridescent in the night's own studio with the windows flung wide open...  
scattering the sweet pea blossoming sounds..  
until we were as you, yourself, unwaveringly,  
solely comprised of music as the Heavens are of stars  
from then on...

this is the mystic's parade and vanishing  
the soul said softly to the Trinity, no longer mystified:  
is this how we've been breathing underwater all this time  
imagining we heard music asked the child  
and lapsed into a fairytale silence,  
the rest is happiness.

these were the heart's requirements always when  
wishing through the lens of another world  
the one we'd missed, somehow, like a cherry bright bus  
at the corner of the everyday  
that just comes once going somewhere special  
in the childhood of a Spring

that can't be cherished twice yet now we hear again  
the hue of something glimpsed, glittering that flits away  
at the corner of the eye or through the eye of sound  
Rildia would say the clarity  
that can't stop pouring out with a  
drifting loveliness that must not die  
oh searing only you, who are always listening - listening...

for the taproot of music startled into daylight's continents.  
And glistening...

now you are going away  
taking  
all this light, grieving. piano, pianissimo, sown while  
dreaming concert halls keep the glow of something

we have lost again like children in the long-ago  
thinking it's still in our pockets with the last lemon drop, small  
petal of the honeysuckle;  
too young to know that the ripples rippling out from the  
genial smile, the cadenced voice the sunlit heights  
will not return just because you asked them to.  
or how much it can cost to unlock a world.  
but where are the snipers at Beauty now?  
what have they dreamed into leaves and flowers recently  
who named your career short-lived, too little gleaned

too much too soon, too  
unassuming in intellect as if it weren't enough to  
be glad for the music in you and to give it all away.  
every time you played for anyone:  
these lustres of the  
piano moon dropping no grace notes over Texas, filling the room  
as if it were the universe.  
and it was.

dumbfounded, they would have been then and crystal faceted, themselves  
before they found the crooked mirror things to say out of envy  
when you called the beautiful  
kingdoms down delineated and delineated  
and all around us, green or snowy fragrances  
alive as L'Isle Joyeuse floated out to us on a breeze  
in the tone colours of your piano only  
or the rose of Rosina painting your music red  
crisp garnet hummingbird rubied and rubied...

as you distilled the deepening shadows of your blue gold fissions  
charming the ineffable  
wreathing, joyously near at hand  
beyond all vividness, kindness we knew to be possible in this world  
until we understood, weeping violet, -  
turreted:  
it was there within our own hearing

the tomb of buried Music emptied  
into the singing Empyrean.

mary angela douglas 13,14,15,16 march 2013

Note on poem: I loved listening to Van Cliburn very much as a child in the first and second grades and from then on when I first heard his recordings in my grandmother's piano studio.

Rildia in the poem as you may know was his mother (Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn) who taught him marvelously well from age 3 to 17 when he was under the guidance of Madame Rosina Levine who, according to the author, Howard Reich who wrote a beautiful biography of Van Cliburn, (titled only Van Cliburn, Thomas Nelson Publishers. copyright 1993) saw in his music the color red. (which I have slightly elaborated on to indicate the richness of her teaching him in the Russian style, the grand manner enhancing what he learned from Rildia Bee.

I recognize Van Cliburn meant and means much to people all over the world including his fellow Texans and the Russian people he always held in his heart by his own admission.

To me, he was the first great music I ever remember hearing (although I heard Chopin and Debussy first rather than the Tchaikovsky and Rachmoninoff) , therefore, the reference to the beautiful Debussy piece he played so well and which I listened to after he died with tears:

L'Isle Joyeuse.

Mary Angela Douglas



# Where Is The Fairytale Bread You Hid In Your Pocket

on Tanaquil LeClercq and the recent film on her life-

where is the fairy tale bread you kept in your pocket  
I sighed to my shadows between sun and sun.  
pearl, in the equipoised moment shone the dancer

but the dance was gone.  
and have you retreated, too, my angels?  
counting the crosses on the hills.

then who is there to mourn  
these gestures falling away too  
early from her heart's white valentine  
she never said or

it isn't usual my soul, slipping  
from the peach and the blue perch of it  
this way-  
to fly again.

and the vivid rose falling through Space  
in the odd dream  
dismissed at breakfast, buttering her croissants  
and laughing maybe, on a dare.

that could have been  
but who could know

wandering from one care to the next,  
had wonder fled or majesty  
from the jeweled match  
struck in the dark I said

the collapsing of images,  
could anyone explain  
on the inmost, ever.

this- shattering.

rare silver, pink and green and a violet of  
an unearthly sheen perhaps,  
the elegance of cream,  
not black and white

arise in pure trajectory

where the dancers whirled from sight-  
when the skies have turned to pearl-  
the clouds fall, the orchid distances.

mary angela douglas 22 june 2014; rev.23 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Is The Place I Try To Find

where is the place I try to find  
but if it exists, is hiding in a  
neverending game of

hide and seek  
though I weep and through my tears  
find it under the pillow, in my sleep.

laughing, I would be there

dappled and dreams queing up  
for a long, long while  
and gifts of song like apples

windfall falling in the orchards.  
how green and red and gold  
as if on perpetual holiday

springs would be then,  
aprils unemcumbered by  
the inevitable moment of

blossoms all blowing away,  
the bride trees stricken.  
and I would gather violets then-

sweet peas, posies from the  
old fashioned gardens glowing anew.  
ah, there is no ticket there, no pass

through the rose reft thickets  
though I look in the glass  
of a thousand summers

wishing it were not true.

mary angela douglas 29 december 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Larkspur Have The Purple Winds Gathered

where larkspur have the purple winds gathered  
I asked the flowers in the picture book.  
I asked the flowers.

didn't you hear me they screamed in school yards.  
in school yards near the apple trees.  
I pelted them with prisms in my sleep.

why in group pictures do you look so far-away?  
as if the snows settled only on your shoulders.  
brushing the lace away you turned to go.

and this is music

mary angela douglas 22 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Lilacs Blow

a skirmish of leaves and then  
old playmates fade from view  
their tiny candles blinking out

on a cake of snow. all jettisoned!  
and you'll refactor all, you know,  
where the katydid winds pick up;

glazing the kites where they sailed into Infinity  
or into Charlie Brown's cartoon tree,  
made of brown paper by a grandfather-

twined, to a pale green long-ago.

and do we have far to go with  
our Sunday school pocketbooks?  
white straw, cherries sewn on

in this my thousandth song  
of the purple shadows  
on the varnished floors?

said I, who tried so many doors-  
and survived by just pretending  
to go through, who will try to

tell you who won't know what I mean

how quickly tears could dry in the winds  
that shines so with departed friends  
I know I know a voice glides from the long ago,

where lilacs blow.

mary angela douglas 15 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where The Butterscotch Sun Is

they say that sky stairs in the blue  
are meant for you  
step cloud to cloud and as you go

you'll find the clearing in the thickets where  
the butterscotch sun is I don't know

I know that pale stones kept in the pockets  
scattered under moonlight so you'll know  
the path home don't always work

true magic and that  
cherry branching now  
will in a little while, turn snow

and eating one meal or half a meal a day  
can sometimes seem a feast.  
I thought the path was straight and

in a woods of gold, at very least  
with berries plentiful in season or out  
and still, I dream it so

that sky stairs in the blue will beckon me  
more dreamlike  
Than before or

what is leaving for, then

mary angela douglas 12 may 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where The Rose Is No Longer Found

where the rose is no longer found  
nor the green trees in the wind  
I have been bidden to go.

and I have packed the snows  
and the vials of the sun  
that when they come

I will have melted away.  
from gazing at the clock on the wall  
I have been freed

to dreaming there is nothing at all  
to be heeded any longer  
from those who command me to leave

though the rose petal scatter of my heart my heart  
would seem to indicate otherwise.

thus I will take up my treasure  
of the grey sky  
turning imperceptibly to opals,

of the musical complaint of the rain.  
and they will think me poor and lost or lame.

and though I seem to tilt my head  
to the letter of their law and acquiesce  
and have no rest from their harrying

laughing where they can't hear me  
I am, at your behest  
oh Lord of the jeweled ferrying.

mary angela douglas 1 april 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Where There Are No Lies

are we just ruled by thieves then

thieves of a finer light

that we must scrounge for the honeycomb

the amethyst bees in flight

are we just ruled.

it's difficult to find out

after many a marigold day

the telegram they sent you

has somehow been mislaid

embroideries that you finished

that brought the pale green rains

must now be done all over

under a watchful disdain.

I will leave the party

I will wander far

far from palace gossip

in beauty's foreign car

in a rose lined carriage

in my satin shoes

in my dress of pale bright silk

my gloves of latin hues.

far from all the scoundrels

c

and the evening news.

pitch the pennies forward

let them be of gold

I'll turn back like Whittington

my blue lined dreams unfold.

basted to a pattern

never bought or sold

in the navy evening

with a pearl whorled sound

speak with all the angels

when God is still around.

yonder is the lattice

and the garden close

there the attic of the stars

and infinite repose.

I will find it shortly

in the bridesmaid night

there I will remember

all the former flights

all the hopes of music

and the hydrangean skies

truth still like a chiming bell

where there are no lies.

mary angela douglas 20 april 2020; rev.14 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Things Turn To Gold Of Their Own Accord

I dreamed of forgotten books and cried  
that I could not carry them they slipped through  
and none to help

and I awoke looking to see  
some evidence of a way to find them awake  
alas, there was none

but me to know how tangibly they shone  
how near at hand in my dream land  
breaking apart so naturally

like clouds on an overcast day,  
or my sister's arpeggios in the long ago.  
all this was where? I hear sad scoffers say

and I reply if I may

where things turn to gold of their own accord  
and not, this striving after, this continual competition  
for the cracker jack prize

it just occurs without your thinking, you know,  
like light on the waves, or on september days  
the lemoning of leaves

and there you are.  
the books were shining too.  
the ones I couldn't rescue

the ones you never knew.

mary angela douglas 24 october 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where We Live Now

in our old attic  
Christmas bulbed or  
stacked up with old

seed catalogues from  
riotous Springs amid  
the tinsel strings of

a universe of lost and found

in the backyards on our own  
between birthdays of the pastel or

in between star and star  
of the far sighted astronomers  
at Court

in hiding from the Queen  
in the pink stuccoed mansions  
by the palms of the Unseen

of our favorite colouring books  
or paper dolled,  
wherever the children decide.

stepping on bride trains rhinestone gauzed  
or in the board game closet  
spooning the jam of persimmon or fig

passed by for the flower girl gig  
the stigmata but not the need to live for

the verses of an early Spring,  
gold spelling bees, the cloud regattas  
the riddles on the wing of

our distracted angels

in the sod block under the wild rose sky

of the prairies floating by,  
in lilac illusions gingered conclusions

in fairytale feasts and the table ware ruby set  
like a sunset kingdom should be

on our knees  
in the least sigh or silver whim of God  
toward the sparkle of The End

mary angela douglas 22 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Where Wings Collide Not

where wings collide not  
nor prisms break apart  
neverending

in the kingdom of tears  
may we  
find refuge.

but here in an evil dream  
we are washed overboard  
come back we say as we are drowning

barely forming the words

but the ship cannot hear and veers away.  
where these fears play  
on the playground of our years

send angels quickly  
lest we disappear  
en route to the candy house

without the witch

and grant that the crystal shoe  
not be smashed against a wall  
by the envious.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# While Filling Out Forms She Thinks Of Other Things

it's rhapsodic and it's built to last, my dream boat  
veering into the shoals of the deeper Past  
without apologies

oh I see said the agencies  
seeing nothing at t-  
the nothing fills out forms

and it is small  
maybe they won't call it back  
maybe they can sit on a tack it's

knowing it is not born for this.  
that nothing is me  
still in the dream of

used to be and should be now.  
and stubborn in the quest  
and fairy tale endowed;

still, the guest of God.

mary angela douglas 9 december 2018; rev.19 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# While Others Weep

I had a dream that everything I sent  
came back to me, postage unpaid;  
report cards with a missing grade

and in the eyes, a missing glint  
and jurisdictions that  
had questioned my intent

while I was merely dreaming;  
unfinished schemes and blueprints on command  
sent to me by mistake

or by some angel's hand  
of imperial warning  
knowing how I was

partial to the truth

of all the behind the scenes,  
the too sudden shifts in the scenery  
crashing down on me:

the gleam in their eyes unearned.

but we mowed down all the miracles,  
they moaned in a crafty sleep  
while God

swept through the house  
turning over their furniture:  
'all that furniture that you've accumulated.

while others weep.'

mary angela douglas 23 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# While The Music Swells

at any moment you may find  
the enchanted thimble in the cake;  
the dream right there, when you awake;

the eluding clue, just sparkling on the windowsill.  
and you may wonder, or I think you will,  
what caused them each to show up now?

were you extra good in your sleep, somehow?  
defending the village from dragons?  
don't question! just accept the fact

that you have diamonds at your back  
and the road before, with roses rung  
like bells;

while the music swells.

mary angela douglas 26 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# While The Winds

the moths of stars gather.  
is it twilight yet, we wonder  
dressed in our ghostly blue

and with fuller skirts  
than we remembered.  
petticoats to the wind

we sail,  
old jokes on the tips of our tongues  
or snows,

tasting like cherries.  
the branches sigh  
as they did once in early films

while the zither winds  
drift home

Mary Angela Douglas 6 July 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# White Buffalo Annunciation

to my one quarter Cherokee beloved adopted Grandfather, Milton Barkus Young,  
(and legal Guardian) , the only grandfather I ever knew...

(who, with my grandmother Lucy Young, raised me)

I saw the white buffalo pearl misted through the snows  
parting the winds on either side of him, come to the forefront  
through the archival blizzards: turn for a moment and stare

for that moment into the lens of my dream camera.

what can it mean I dreamed the winters away  
unable to shake his hoar frosted image, blue lavender mirage startling as if all  
the white dwarfed stars had grown suddenly large together melting

over Bethlehem and with the snow angels  
filling the entire, the entire, the universal skies  
because somewhere a stable in poor outline  
sketched itself where the holy one was born

even in white-out conditions:  
etched on the retina, one living lingering Tear  
withstands the pale

accumulation of the eidetic years  
until the first green of a new spring sprouted and the  
prairie winds were ruffled, warm and the clouds too

painted in pale longed for, never to leave.  
Long he stared seeing past us all a something impossible  
to put into words: coming from or going back into

a white eternity commensurate with  
his own purpose and yet, not belonging to him finally  
but to a Mind we could not fathom  
though we stood there forever waiting for the mystery

to resolve itself into a whiter music;

the tribes disbanded,  
streaming into the auroras

yet coming through to us, somehow from one photographic plate from the long  
ago perhaps flecked with too ancient starlight, transferred (but how?) to  
another, revealed, over Time, time lapsed to those who only heard of him

second, third hand, maybe, if at all.

how the bright suns' pall in comparison  
left their astonished planets behind when

I saw the white buffalo in the great blizzards of the past shake his head and then  
the sound of bells and the mists enveloping- and he was gone

we drift in the after sadnesses

mary angela douglas september 16 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# White Frosted Cake Viewed At Ages 6 And 7

(with a stray phrase at the end, owed to edna st. vincent millay)

white frosted (coconut) cake  
with a single cherry, or only half a cherry  
adorning your snowy single layer,

how is it that the half-cherry gleams  
like a ruby? on the kitchen cake stand  
we imagine you, baked for the queen and brought

in proudly with retainers dressed in silver lame  
or ladies in waiting in pale party dress,  
lime green chiffon at the very least  
streaming from their cone shaped hats.

later they will go  
(we are certain of it)  
to the palace carport and play

pin-the-tail on the Donkey  
just like we did, last Saturday  
till their mothers call them home.  
we know this is how it is.

and the crown jewels are  
bubble gum machine  
dispensed on your luckiest day  
at the shopping center  
beside the garden tomatoes

for only a nickel  
and you are rich, oh very  
central to the pink fairy tale  
we say to our little dog  
whirring her pom-pom tail

like the applause meter  
on Queen for a Day.  
she doesn't guess,

(or does she?)  
sniffing the tulips

as though they were roses-  
we make it all up as we go along.  
don't we? .while Grandmother plays  
on the grand piano, Through Country Gardens.  
white coconut cake with a single cherry.

making us very, very merry.

mary angela douglas 10 may 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# White Frosted Flowers And The Stenciled Stars

white frosted flowers and the stenciled stars  
I remember most of all; bright candies  
in jars, the mottled rose of the dawn

(all the flats and sharps in place for us)

clarified winter air by the bus stop  
where we made clouds  
as if we were magic, only by speaking into it.

on our way to school and we have  
learned to write, oh miracle,  
on wide ruled paper.

how lingering at home by the  
almost Christmas windows seems at times  
when I look back where the vented heat rises

the gleamingest precursor of Heaven possible.

and stronger than morning brewed deeper  
than that stillness all around before the  
sparkles come down again to make of the

front yards this sublime cream valentine-

is this feeling of beauty, once again, made real;  
the Kingdom that we dreamed of in our play-  
even on a winter day some 50 years later-

not at all, far from us.

mary angela douglas 20 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# White Jade

[translated from assorted baby languages...]

to P.L. Travers for her chapter "John and Barbera";

in Mary Poppins... (I did not forget)

he said I have a pearl-handled stillness  
to sell you, clocks with vanilla moons and  
suns inlaid.  
curious bubble-gum emerald  
no, amethyst rings in just your size;  
broken glass from the gumball machine.  
a Cracker Jack prize.  
a few chess pieces under a valentine sky  
on tracing paper;  
an eggbeater churning the colours in the clouds.  
the maps where silvered ships slipped through  
and no one drowned.  
striped candy.

a rhymed song merrily sung. and cherrily.  
peachly. plum.  
the wind through wild grasses; gift-wrapped,  
the jeweled meridians...choose.  
I said I'm in a painting by Currier and Ives;  
the sky's forever lemon, streaked with violet jam  
when what I really want is the Impressionists-

and to live in a thatched house  
arranging the lilacs forever in a pale blue vase  
that doesn't tip over.  
already the hour glass is breaking apart-

and I'm the one and only  
sifting these pink sands-  
hauling this jar of peach bright pennies home

and shaking the glass globe  
twice on Sundays  
so that snowfall

swirls, still-  
somewhere, in the world.  
and this is for the last ones in the Park  
who forgot to wave as I  
rounded their corner-

too sequined-charming or bundled up  
to know  
that some choice diamonds  
leaves and flowers go  
never snagging at all  
the glint of lilac  
in the snow child's snood...  
where are they? did they break my heart?  
or are they wreathed forever in an enchanted wood.  
there God is. He won't topple over.  
soon you may want nothing but melting, too.  
moire endpapers rose-threaded through-  
for the white jade fairytales  
you can't read yet  
(whispered my Mother filtering  
sunlight through the trees...)

mary angela douglas 15,19,21,24 june 2012

Mary Angela Douglas

# White Roads

[to Dmitri Shoshtakovich]

we would take all the white roads  
through the little villages  
and draw in crayon the sun

over the similar, the rose red roofs  
and hear the hooves of the magical horses  
who would just roam

since no one was in need of rescue,  
being home.  
and we would stroll as if

our days were already immortal  
tinged with the gold of peaches,  
of apricot mornings

with no warnings

and eat the pastries in the shop windows,  
the ones with pink icing  
and be free,

on the white roads

that reflected the sun back to itself  
that seemed more familiar with each unfolding scene  
as the dream lapsed into telescoped into

its own peculiar nesting dolls  
one after another who sang folksongs  
each more cherry sprigged than the last and

like the waters lapping  
at the edge of a long sleep

where the sound of roaring is a diminished Fifth  
and the fairy tale, this distinct melody

of the white roads.

mary angela douglas 26 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Could Be Anything Then

treated like the one who breaks the glassware,  
who will notice you leaving the room in tears.  
you could be gone for years.

you were;  
stepping off the cliff on the lower level,  
the one made of slate by the sliding doors.

how many I love yous did you write  
on slates back then  
in a game of let's pretend

while in a dress of true love blue  
you wandered every recess  
on your own.

you didn't mind it then or now  
when God sent clouds and flowers to you.  
who could be anything then

but happy?

mary angela douglas 23 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Dreamed That Coming Back To Life Would Be This Way

who dreamed that coming back to life would be this way  
pink blossoms flaring in the cold and snows flowing away  
and the trickle of Time under the ice gives way

little by little the numbness in the soul will melt as well  
and trance by trance be freed from the evil spell.  
the Princess in rose again in the garden

the birds quickening in the bird cherry tree  
and all the ships at sea and all the ships at sea  
arrive in port at the same tangerine instant:

and children are brave again with oranges in their hands

mary angela douglas 11 december 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Has The What O'clock In Fairy Tales

we heard music through a cloud  
so faintly; o finally we thought either  
we are dying or is music

unable to muster the interrogative?  
though interrogated, slightly,  
I smiled:

everything in the declarative  
or it's just unclear,  
a little windy,

my dear not my dear  
or anyone ever.  
I'm not trying to be clever;

this is how it feels  
rewinding the old reels  
and not for the show-offs.

dummkopf cried they  
in their several languages.

I heard only

the chiming of distant stars...  
where are you, I sighed...  
sowing their what-ers.

do you know if it's snowing  
or is it just a light rain I heard  
someone singing this refrain,

one sided conversations  
break  
the already broken down

on afternoons we couldn't  
go into town;

on days we saw the canyons through gauze  
and gaping holes where once there  
were grand

pianos in the rooms.  
so long, he said  
to the treble clefs,

the grace notes trembling  
on their winter's eve.  
it isn't graceful to believe

In God Here.  
yet, I do.  
where the music is flowing to:

where one day  
we'll really hear it,  
you or I,

opening all the Presents at once.

mary angela douglas 3 july 2015

Mary Angela Douglas



# Who Keeps Singing It (13th Reflection On Kabakov)

13th Reflection on Kabakov

the things you had learned

while whirring among the stars

as if in a landscape by Dore

Dante's Dore commit to a piece of paper

in the teeth of such a wind

you may later, said the angel

the one with furry wings

the one that held your gaze

and splintered in Cezanne

precisely the blues from the greens

it isnt sequestered really

where you live

expounding the clouds

making up small messages to send

welcoming the white winged things forlorn

into the winter corners on the canvas

let words fall like glass

on a stage of permanent stars

the mirror image reversed

so that we walk on skies

and have for a roof, the earth

the paper torn

in the teeth of such a wind

begin with small crayons...

in an abandoned field

someone has tossed golden apples almost everywhere

only I don't know who

keeps singing it, this way

so that I continue hearing

the music without the words

the petaling ones free falling

from the far balconies.

mary angela douglas 18 june 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Knows When

I remember the starlight retreats into silence  
the cooling wind through the night windows  
the curtains flowing as if from unseen hands

or angels, the shattering of the midnight skies  
and pouring rains outside.  
and you are quilted in

the child of lets begin oh everything before we sleep  
the scattered game pieces and the dolls  
the let's play everything as if it were Christmas morning.

does growing old tick it all away  
so that we no longer dare to say or think this way?  
let us imagine

that we have summers berry full ahead of us  
and take it all out of the closet  
round up all the dolls again

and give them rides in the driveway wagon  
over the gravel and grass to  
Who Knows When

mary angela douglas 4 march 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Wanted To Ask Why In A Thousand Colours

who wanted to ask why in a thousand colours  
chalking it in the rain

now that the arbiters of colours fix their power  
with the glue that won't wash off  
after so many washings.

after so many washings I have tried and found  
the hopscotch marring wanting.  
the chalk paintings shine like mirages

in the clouds and they live on so

that little children looking up  
if they look up  
accept the sky bourne Christmases

as if they were a birthright.  
so much washes away  
from day to day

and who am I to say  
if the poem is apropos.  
it is a soul a soul a soul

you will not speak away  
from the platform you think  
exceeds even God's whose

oceans wash themselves  
without your saying, 'it is so...'  
continually and

the brooks wash the coloured stones  
I will not throw into the ripples of  
the why of a thousand colours

in crowded rooms they ignore,  
they ignore. at the interminable parties.

mary angela douglas 3 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Was John Whiteside's Daughter?

even the bells don't sing her name:  
painted in white wash on cotton clouds.  
the geese scatter distressed by a

crystal shadow, at best;  
a girl in watercolour skirts the grounds.  
who is John Whiteside's daughter

what is an elegy without a name  
or was grief for her as weightless  
as the questions at the end of the chapter:

[can you explain? what was The Poet  
trying to say, the Poet who signed  
his name to the Poem; for sure

the Poet whose name endures]  
what is a watercolour in the rain,  
what is a watercoloured name

dissolving here in a close reading  
when parents christen even children  
dead on arrival

and etch it in stone, the christening name-  
if not in marble or the gilded monuments.  
she could have been anyone; a tiny doll soldier

in the tomb of an unknown.  
well you know, how did her mother feel about that?  
does anyone know? that's my question.

did she softly cry not wanting to make a scene  
what kind of immemorial poem is this  
for my little girl...

the angels took it away with them  
(I mean, her name)  
leaving behind the funeral train, the flowers;

departing with  
her light, her apple white hours  
where God, at least, Who knew what to call her,

[Alone, alone...the bells intone: she died alone]  
as they say in the South,  
called her home

mary angela douglas 10 december 2015

P.S. This poem is written as a response to John Crowe Ransom's poem 'Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter' which is a strange poem to me and has been for some time much as I generally love his poetry. or rather I love the poet he almost became if he hadn't been engaged in systematically killing his own lyrical tendencies in order to appear a more sophisticated, urbane poet.

I have been vaguely troubled by this poem all my life and only recently figured out what I found distressing. He wrote this poem I guess as an elegy when the young daughter of his friend John Whiteside died. But there is no real feeling of grief for the little girl that died anywhere in the poem that I can see. Maybe it was in the drafts he threw out.

There is just a pretty, generalized water colour though with lovely fairy tale impressions as he recalls seeing her from an upstairs window. That is the one saving grace note in the poem but it exists in isolation from the rest of the poem.

This poem causes me grief every time I read it because the little girl's name is never mentioned in the poem. Even colder, the poem is not even dedicated to her. This to me is going too far in using an event in actual life as a departure point for a poem. Compare the poem with Shelley's elegy for Keats 'I weep for Adonis, he is dead o weep for Adonis.' and you will see what I mean. Everyone knew he meant John Keats. John Crowe Ransom's poem is tearless. He is 'vexed' as one would be vexed by a simple everyday annoyance. What a callous word to use in the context. 'vexed' at a small life taken that can never return.

The one lovely fairytale image and I really do love that image of the little girl in a fairytale cloud and the goose speaking alas murmuring alas seems encapsulated in its own fragile bubble vaulted away from the antiseptic, clipped, brittle tone of the rest of the poem. I wish Ransom had made a different poem, one connected to the fairy tale cloud but that seems to be what he was fighting in himself, that unabashed lyricism, bringing it under steely control. Perhaps that's what being a



'Fugitive' poet was all about. Fugitive from the beautiful, freely, naturally expressed.

Her 'prim study propped' evokes the appearance of a mummy viewed at an archeological dig where certainly no one is thinking of her as someone's daughter, or even child, having been mourned, but just as a museum curio, artifact. You can almost smell the corroded linen.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Will Defend The Poetry Of Light

who will defend the poetry of Light

in a dark age

in love with dark arts, inconsistencies

come away the starlight sighs

the ivory pages yellowed into dust

you must

into a green shade

resolve dissolve from this stage

that augurs everything everything is lost

she said my ships at sea

the valentines that came to me from a vast God

the old letters fostered in the attics

we will reprieve I said and breathed

in the holy candles of the stars

as once Keats did sailing the meridians of dream

enraptured

or Yeats or Rilke

alone on the battlements facing the disaster

causing bright angels to come.

the sweet Word the forgotten Word,

strummed.

mary angela douglas 3 january 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Will Take The Song And Lead It Home

in memory of my grandfather, Milton B. Young

who will take the song  
and lead it home  
like a lost child

on paths overgrown too long  
to trace  
or will this music fade  
with no one left  
who remembers

we were sitting on  
a summer's curb  
and the ice cream truck  
went the other way

the balloon man went  
north as many poets have explained before me:  
the snow cones  
melted after a death

in the family the storybooks  
in the attic were  
no longer stored

who will take the child  
and lead her home  
like a lost song  
past a screen door slammed  
past fireflies scattered

in the dark:  
holding hands as we cross  
a street far wider than

before

we were orphans

on the curb of the universe  
incapable of choosing

left or right  
hoping to be found by nightfall  
by angels or by someone else

hearing the dogs bark into their  
bluest twilight  
the children at ghostly games;

sensing the chicken pie for  
dinner, the frosted cakes  
the important birthdays  
and the pink-bowed presents;

the Easter eggs forgotten in the grass  
where dew fell  
last

waiting, again-  
just to be called inside

mary angela douglas 24 february 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Will Teach You Now If You Don't Know

who will teach you now if you don't know  
the soul can't bear a million blows.  
the soul is made of snow.

I have heard canticles sung by the ages  
to the One who made it so  
the soul is fragile

setting out to sail, and slow  
and full of dreams and  
easily ripped apart

at the seams.  
sometimes a human face  
won't show the scars

but there they are, each one in its place  
in God's full sorrowing view  
so clear to His eye and

creased with every harrowing word  
the soul on earth resembles to Him a bird  
caught in the hunters' nets

how can it forget to grieve  
sometimes it manages a brittle smile  
for only a little while until

let fly let fly say the conspirators  
who would break it down  
before it's even been to town

before it has earned its stripes.  
oh wipe the slate clean said Christ  
while he was bowed down to the ground.

the soul is a fragile thing  
until the soul is given wings  
and that's a long time from now.

mary angela douglas 23 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Will They Put In Charge Of Vanishing She Said Aloud

who will they put in charge of vanishing?  
she said aloud looking out through grandmother's  
mother of pearl opera glasses

on a strange landscape  
and in a thin sleeved dress,  
said her grandmother, ghostly, chiding

in this weather.

how do they garner the entries?  
finding which to screen-  
which to leave on the floor-

which to ignore permanently.

outside, the larks sing.  
bluebonnets blow ungathered.  
children may look at the moon

almost in the same way,  
where they can;  
seeking freedom from old schoolwork

when they can.

oh, who will they choose?  
who who who  
twit the owls of the Far North

and the mockingbird mockingbird mockingbird  
sounds go forth through the apples trees as before  
and the pink cakes fall in the ovens when the screen doors

Slam.  
and jam gets made.  
and things to put it on.



but we don't hear from the contest owners.  
we don't hear from the juried, from the important  
ones sizing up auroras through a pinhole  
and disguised as the lovers of beauty;

in love with designer poetry, their own parties  
the brand of their zine, actually...  
don't press the pleats out, grandmother said  
and I cried not from the music, Grandmother, ever!

not a word not a word chirped the mockingbirds  
from the ones who couldn't decipher  
anything written on snow

mary angela douglas 29 july 2014; rev.30 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Who Wouldn't Have Wanted

who wouldn't have wanted  
the valentine with the bluebirds  
hoisting the pink satin ribbon

over the girl with pink flounced skirts  
carrying her basket of roses, wearing  
as well a festooned shawl

and she is a rose, the chief rose  
on the valentine  
with her picture hat

and one rose there  
near the brim  
and the light is crystal clear around her

there where there is no weeping  
but a sunny lane  
a small house

with slate blue shutters  
and it's early morning's  
faint pinkness in the skies,  
no cloud of war.

mary angela douglas 29 september 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Whose Lacework Once Again

whose lacework once again is gathered forming  
in the pewter skies erasing time making of trees  
a freezing of light and the child heard 'chimes'

but it was the ice storm 'chimes' and not the toy  
piano with the green and pink keys the orange the yellow  
and she thought music was painted and it was the skies

and all the lacework coming down and the chimes of  
angels and are they all golden? or only the pagent ones  
and is it the thread of so much silver I must draw through

my indrawn breath believing fervently, yes this is  
the kingdom of Christmas it is my Christmas I am  
living through and even at school they give us

tiny presents, sticks of the candy cane and we sang  
carols then and how soft is the haze around the coloured lights  
and the earth is fair; the china baby on a warm mat of straw

the animals standing still for this, for this hushed loveliness  
and the lacework, falling down  
it is all around my heart  
it is forever now

mary angela douglas 24 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Can't They Tell Me

why can't they tell me the way back

cathedral angels in my dreams

they should know that

but they are seamless

stationed without utterance.

oh I would travel back

with even the slightest map

through the Spring mud

to see the wild violets again

packing only bread and butter

and raspberry jam

like a fairy tale quest

anticipating once more

a golden ending.

sometimes before daybreak

I am in the old towns

all the houses are there,

the same curtains.

the willowware pitcher.

Im in the rocking chair with my Grandmother

soothing me with the old tales

and everyone is se

it's near Christmas

my sister and me and all the dolls

apple checked and learning music together.

in the metronome's glare

I see the piano in my dream, I left the lid

and then it breaks apart

ice floes over the dam

the living room table

the melting of my soul

into the irretrievable.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Does Enchantment Keep Wearing Off

why does enchantment keep wearing off,  
you wondered to yourself, becoming too visible.  
and this is the path or is not

where breakfast consists of a few rolls,  
a morsel of fine cheese;  
lukewarm coffee and the hum of bees

near the syringa.  
I must be off again  
you thought to yourself

in the bee laced breeze  
seeing your fortune  
slide into snowbanks

magically  
if action is not taken.

winter now.  
Jack will sell the cow  
for beans.

mary angela douglas 20 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Is History Almost Always

## WHY IS HISTORY ALMOST ALWAYS

why is history almost always  
taught as the history of everything terrible  
that ever happened to some or all of the people

left on the shore  
and the earthquake is coming  
the years without reprieve

the innocent seized upon  
the heart in need.  
I long to learn

the history of light  
how ferns unfurled  
the history of night

the bright emblematic  
history of the stars  
of fireflies in jars released

the history of peace  
if only for one moment;  
live, in that moment

the history of summers  
in the evening breeze  
the shade of trees.

the rock where God abides.

why can't it be  
no longer the history of lies but  
the history of fortresses that worked.

at least for a while  
the honeysuckle and the baby's smile  
the truce established.



the prayers till dawn.

the embellished stories  
the sum of our hopes  
the Christmases when we were home.

no more the barbarians at the door  
the time of drought.  
I want to find out

how the heart was singing still  
despite all evidence to the contrary  
in undisclosed kingdoms; how did they feel

the beautiful and real who held the line.  
and within the bells still yet to ring  
the dream of Spring and other things

why won't they tell us, that.  
on all the pink and green maps.

mary angela douglas 31 may 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Is It

why is it when you watch for the mail  
it never comes

when you look for a silver thing  
you find a golden thing instead  
you forgot was lost in the first place

when you read the directions twice  
for the test  
you still wonder later if you

should have changed your answer  
on Question 3  
when you think you know

how everything works  
suddenly it all stops working  
when you think you're walking

on solid ground  
you find the sink hole, the lost silver thing  
the way things used to happen

the fairytale paperback with the last page gone  
but it's free  
and you are too

to make up the ending yourself

mary angela douglas 22 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Is It Whenever We Get Up To Sing

why is it whenever we get up to sing

the library disclaimer kicks in at the Open Mic

so-called only to say this Library has no liability

for the mention of Jesus walking on the

waters of this poem but I go on

speaking about that day in the park

and I'm in the children's pool bobbing

in a little boat and happy to be afloat

in the mystical day in the swan boat

and after the snow cones, adrift in the

pond and there are my Grandparents so fond of me

as I try to conjure them back in the library storeroom but instead

and mysteriously a whiff of strawberries overhead

Arkansas's best summons us to this clear and chilled pear moment

and the audience is ing uncomfortably.

there are my grandparents smiling at me

like I'd just reached Olympus at the age of three

oh what is it my library that you disdain that

I'm speaking in vanilla plain syllables of ice cream

wondering at you your antiseptic demesne your rules

about me and my poem and Jesus in the dark

leaning over the carousels the stallions in pink and green

sparks going off every once in a while a mis en scene

and the diadem over my head

of the shekinah glory of God

and the evening then, so mild.

the moon battened down with a firefly brooch between clouds.

the poem finished; the crowd dispersed

and I'm still in love with the beauty of the earth.

mary angela dougals 17 april 2020; rev.16 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Why Your Package Isn't Going Anywhere

I can't believe I have to tell you this again  
groused the vendor in his sleep  
how do I know where your package is

somewhere in the Andes I lost track  
or maybe there's an ill wind at your back  
or maybe your mailbox got invaded by red ants

and they ate the whole thing up  
including the packing materials yum yum  
your next to last pair of pants

and now they don't feel so good in the tum  
from bright green bubble wrap (the ants)

or maybe the invite slipped through the cracks  
since you're always the last to be asked to the  
weddings and funerals and that only after its

all been done and dusted.  
or maybe you'll just grow encrusted  
you old barnacle

turned stoical through your  
long in the tooth winters  
without that Christmas overcoat showing up

or sup your sup without  
that gold limned dinnerware

what can I say  
who never handled it with care or any day  
it went out the dock door oh don't implore me

or maybe I just don't like you

said the slime affixing no label at all or  
I held it back at the last minute hehe  
or maybe I stashed it in the bracken

or tossed it into the summer sea

where the dolphins made merry with it.  
don't keep asking me please  
ask National Geographic

or maybe the mailman was sick

or maybe I'm the White Rabbit  
tick tick tick and

it's all too late in that case  
you won't be needing your package  
anyway now, will you?

mary angela douglas 4 june 2015

Note on poem: This poem is not really about package delivery. We have wonderful mail service where I live. It is about the feeling of sometimes never getting a direct, simple answer to a direct simple question, that feeling, and in the form of a dream-nightmare of the overworked person who truly is not able to answer the customer's question for reasons beyond his or her control, and in a wider sense that feeling we all have, even those who believe in God that no matter how we ask the question, sometimes there is just no answer (at least in this life) and the theories and explanations don't make emotional sense to us which is the sense that is most important, after all. Or in simpler terms, what it feels like when people don't even understand your question in the first place. I wrote this poem to get rid of this feeling which I hate to feel, don't you?

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will I Find The Angels In The Picture

will I find the hidden angels in the picture  
softly the Soul said  
speaking out of line

and it's not your turn  
murmured the stones  
or distant ones who would

have thrown them.

will I find I am disowned  
that glinting in the corners all this time  
of all the unlikely places

an irredeemable treasure,  
confederate money was  
sown to our detriment

or will I turn and say  
oh, not perishing my republics gleam  
as they were meant to and

oh dear Christ mend

all our smashing of the ornaments  
in Your shop how could we ever buy  
as if it had not been

as if we were this whole time through  
slaved and unslaved  
undistressed, beyond it all

in the Heart of all things  
still in Eden's green

mary angela douglas 3 august 2017

NOTE ON ALLUSION IN POEM: my line: Oh, not perishing my republics gleam is a reworking and reframing of the American poet Robinson Jeffers line and poem



title: Shine Perishing Republic.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will There Be A Cottage There

will there be a cottage there  
sweetpeas spilling over the palings,  
small pink roses

the ruffling breeze  
through the baby's hair  
playing in the yard

and will there really be no wars  
these were my imaginations of Heaven  
the bluebirds always near

even when soaring.  
honeysuckle glad, our tunes  
on eternal summer afternoons

children on the swings, launching off  
into beautiful things, unending;  
and the small pools rainbow clad.

and we will drop our sadness there  
as into crystal well  
said Grandmother, turning the india ink pages

or will it be, only the wind

and all of us  
feeling so emerald  
in the shade of immortal trees.

mary angela douglas 11 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will They Never Know The Looking Glass World

to Eleanor Farjeon

will they never know the Looking Glass world-  
the one that fell apart in your hands all crystal snow,  
then you cried! Spring and the butterscotch sunlight

across the floor reprimanded your Mother, softly,  
rainbow enterprised.  
why are they doomed to study only science

as if there were no wonder left to them.  
math, and the equations cut and dried  
but not as flowers were when we preserved

the memory of meadowsweet, lark and fern  
by every means possible or impossible.  
no more the pumpkin rattling coach

on the same highway makes us curious:  
what was there before when  
everything was transfigured and the night

stood still inside your heart  
hearing the wistful summons from the music.  
ah, the castle was lit bright,

music, our only language, when

asked the child unknowing,  
bereft of the dreams that spilled to us then  
so easily, even from the corners of no birthdays

from cobwebby rafters, old recipes in books  
heavy with cream and brandied fruit, trifles, jams  
of the sun spoked streams run through and

sugar spun  
cherry cobbled to the heart's content.

even our ruled paper paper airplanes  
built for flights over the varied turreted worlds unseen  
still flew, however imperfectly

we were lords of all colours then  
ladies of the May  
kings of the applesauced day.

and honey buttered.  
now the Christmas mantles slip away  
though adorned with balsam, fir and the rest.

they don't even know what dressing up is for  
or costumes with gauze wings, the vintage beads  
the iffy jewels, the pirated schemes

throw the tinfoil clutter out they sniff  
and they don't have colds  
but I keep vigil and God will not delay

where the prayers rise importuning: almost  
singing again:  
let the magical days return

for Lord, we are lost without them  
in the unconvincing worlds

mary angela douglas 20 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will They Tear You Out Of The Book

[to the poet John Donne]

[to my Lord, Jesus Christ]

will they tear you out of the book  
my Lord as though you were one page  
not knowing you are the whole Library

and in their rage crumple and burn  
so that we coming after may not learn  
you woule have been our beauty and our truth

if we had known?

then all flowering, let it fade from the world  
and the lindenwood grow pale.  
for without you there is neither song nor

sod nor soul to rail.  
let the ground not merely shift but disappear  
and all the rose crowned years each time

we add their sum  
resemble nought for  
naught have we

who You forgot.

mary angela douglas 17 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will This Be On The Test, Asked Gretel

my shelves are laden with a gum-drop sufficiency  
cackled the witch, anticipating.  
provender of peppermint, white chocolate bark

for roof repairs, from all the chewing.  
oh they'll be strewing rose petals through the woods  
I expect, on the way...or something silly

but I've whole layer cakes to make them stay, and chocolate  
cherries if it comes to it and it isn't even Christmas yet.  
and petit fours leading up to the door and more

of yummy this and that and a lake of malting cream  
all foamy pink beside the  
sticker bushes.

the meager rabbit hutches.  
and so she thought and planned her day.  
reserving a small amount of toffee

to munch on with her morning coffee.  
but something in the oven burned  
while she sat churning on her churn

and the oven door balked as if it wouldn't be opened.

putting a crease in the butterscotch grease,  
scorching the cinnamon pottage.  
foreshadowing, hinted our instructor

while we highlighted this in raspberry,  
rapidly, in our notebooks:  
an off-day

at the candy cottage...

mary angela douglas 20 june 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Will We Find Tracks Of Firebirds In The Snows

will we find the tracks of firebirds in the snows  
the snows of the mind imprinted not imposed  
with the heraldic rose or with

our embroidered losses  
sad tapestries of the bygone.

scavengers of Beauty  
of the fleece of clouds we'll  
reign, perhaps a little while

illuminated with the gold

the rose of the child,  
the moss green and violet sheens,  
saffron, where the wind

blows down corridors  
of the contemplative;  
light bells on the wind.

will God send angels  
softly you cried to the universe  
of pure beginning

nursery rabbits on the wall,  
their shadows portending

or in the corners at school,  
bending no rules at all

mary angela douglas 4 august 2017

Mary Angela Douglas



# Will You Travel With A Suitable Heart

will you travel with a suitable heart,  
one that gets along in the day to day;  
the question comes up

and you look away  
and go back to the list  
of what they want you to bring to camp:

several blouses, sky blue scarves;  
summer wear;  
no sundresses.

what will you do with the green parasol?  
the jewels from the Indies.  
never mind, you'll read comics once

you get there and use your change exuberantly  
on forbidden orange sodas,  
the ones of the ineluctable grape

that still won't exactly cure  
your homesickness  
or help you when the canoe

inevitably capsizes.  
or make up for the ones you miss;  
the stars over our backyard.

mary angela douglas 23 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Willow Oh Willow

skip the production number with the willow trees

the part where the poets swallow fire

in order to be viable in the Roman circus

several generations later.

reroute all messages to the equator

that the sun may dry them up

and implicate no one, nothing

for we are not on the same page

in any district.

And really, why would we want to be

we are not in the first grade.

how shall I sing with a throat full of sparrows

when with the first breath

the jackals will destroy them.

how will I praise like Rilke the laments

when you have sent them all away

and everyone wears the same smile the same day

in favor of the ticker tape parades

the gentlemen hoisted on the shoulders of thieves.

leave this out.

and say that the bones mended.

that fortresses were upended.

say anything you like at all

to make the populace feel small

that propaganda may go on

even if poetry doesn't.

that there may be screaming instead of song

that there may be chaos again

so that God can find the heart to start over.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# Winged Music Starts Awake In A Clouded Chamber

winged music starts awake in a clouded chamber  
at the turning of the rose stair in a dream  
we came to life or wished we could and

soared over woods like the clouds we were  
when we were small  
and all the skies seemed chalk pink

scrawled on His translucent blues  
and you wore your new patent shoes  
and it wasn't even Sunday!

winged music stayed at home and hid  
beneath the polished piano lid  
you polished yourself on Saturdays

and then went out to play.  
and whether the leaves were falling down  
like London bridge without a sound

and whether the sheen of snowfall on the way  
caught at your heart 100 x a day  
it could never be enough

the music played.

mary angela douglas 13 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Winter Accolade (To God)

[and for Rita A, Yadamec, my friend, in memorium- who loved winter best  
{because it required faith and was less obvious than Spring) ]

you brought clouds and doves.  
the grey silk linings.  
and in a ray of sun

it all turns silver.  
I cherished the winters  
you gave us.

the guardian pines are in my heart at all times  
flocked with snows and starlight,  
perpetually Christmas.

quietly you have given us  
the snows from the moons.  
the planets for children.

let me gather them here.

the clouds weeping oh sweeping  
the immeasurable Plains.  
immensities of violet light,

my midwest distances now.  
they charge my iridescences  
with crimes thinking I have

served clowns and wearing blinders  
when they read my lines so that  
my heart, is bent and almost banished.

but I am sent to love your distances.  
your chilled iridescences.  
the colour green wistfully

dreamed through the mists.  
and should not relinquish this.

mary angela douglas 22 november 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Winter Had Come To The Emerald City

the ultra linen of the snow wrinkled counties  
we set out to seek.  
would we wound them with the rubied slippers

having come too late? the snows so deep,  
and no one at the Gate.  
the poppies underground and in the sleet

making our way and half snow blind.  
the munchkins all indoors; not there to greet us.  
winter has come to the Emerald City

we sighed we sighed  
slogging, not dancing, this time.  
oh give us wings, lost Emperor in disguise

we cried, o marvelous shopkeeper!

and for the daunted lion,  
strength to war  
where old scars were.

to win again, the winsome towers.

and like an emerald tinker's cry  
through all our hours-  
that carries far beyond the Zone

through an Unseen Power  
came the reply:

new souls for old,  
new souls - for old.

mary angela douglas 10 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Winter Song From The Snow Queen

to Hans Christian Andersen

she's on her winter planet

under a fleece of stars

but I'm in a blizzard of moonlight

wondering where you are

and why it hurts to breathe here

when flowers of frost appear

and why I have this feeling

at the turning of the year.

too far to measure the distance

that floats between star and star

to undertake the journey

where the earth is diamond hard.

though holly grows under the window

that shines in sapphire blue



and all I can remember

is a little crystal shoe.

that she's on her winter planet

under a fleece of stars

and no one's left to tell me

what the riddles are.

mary angela douglas 13 october 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wish Day Or Wash Day Or Combine

hang them out in the lavendered sun ro dry  
unabashedly to wave as the train flies by.  
why not? the air is crisp linen.

the sunflowers leaning over the stars  
eclipse them, utterly.  
and then it's moonlight and the dew is

falling, my fairy tale  
let me wash the news out of your eyes;  
dusk blue is everywhere- fresh-checked,

washed in, it will not fade.

amazement's catalog burned up the afternoons,  
don't you remember? frosted over,  
six weeks before Christmas;

wish books, Mama called them then:  
those glossy catalogues brick thick with the print of  
Elysium, evergreen scented ink you lived to bre-e-athe  
turning straight to the doll section.

all my books are wish books now  
wishing on the plasticine shelves  
they're humming summers surreptitiously:  
straight from SBS in Englewood, New Jersey  
dimpling, falling over themselves  
to glow in tattered bindings

blindingly infused with the gold  
of personal illuminations,

and better than angelic...

I'm sewing up the distances now,  
they're raveling, I said to Mama  
eating strawberries and cream  
in her particular heaven.

I'm living seem to seem Now.

let's order a life-sized castle, prefab from Sear's and Roebuck:  
and pass the divinity candy if you please

here's the  
exhibition you barely have time to see  
from the Amtrak window in the breeze  
5 chintz dresses just for me  
in pink, blue, yellow, mint and dream

and head-over-heels on the clothesline,  
crowded with roses-

mary angela douglas 10 October 2013

Note to Reader: SBS in the poem refers to Scholastic Book Services. You could get paperbacks then for a long time (abridged classics for children and other children's books,4 for 25 cents apiece) . They arrived in crackling brown paper tied with string and I liked to order them not only in school from the classroom newsletter, but during the summer and have them arrive in the mail like Aladdin's paper treasure...At that time they were located in Englewood, NJ and ever since I have had an almost mystical feeling about that town.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wishing Through Windows Like Heaven

we wished to live in a Christmas show window  
with the dolls in Victorian reds and greens  
never spilling their tea

the Christmas tree with electric candles wondrously  
bedecked in little gold apples, ropes of the requisite  
cranberries and the family of dolls in exquisite

harmony; perhaps, dusted with snow, the braver  
dolls in an outdoors scene with their skates  
and ready to trip the glaze of the perfectly oval

ponds as though they were born for it.  
as if, to the stage.  
well, they were handmade;

why shouldn't they be graceful?  
and how could we help but gaze  
our noses like cherries pressed

against the glass stenciled clear ice blue  
as if we were gazing into Paradise  
and knew we would be there

and all of it, brand-new!  
any minute through the tinsel revolving doors...

mary angela douglas 2 january 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# With Almost No Rustling Sound

with almost no rustling sound  
oh golden my paper bird  
folded its paper wings

I cannot fly it whispered shyly  
only to me. I said:  
I will inscribe you!

it began to rain.  
oh why am I weeping  
wondered my paper bird

almost aloud.  
I said, half-proud,  
you have become a poem.

mary angela douglas 14 august 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Witnesses

yet whole in a storm you don't remember,  
were you fractured?  
timepiece seeming to tick but then

something chimes amiss, and this  
is the beginning, the Angel says;  
the tall one in the paintings.

with the apple green background.

lilies on both sides of you; and you stand straight  
trying to stay the se you know,  
God expects this, .and you love Him.

stylystically it means you should care  
your step on the piazza is light and in the lingering  
rains, remain unclouded  
remembering  
what you wanted to learn back there.

the air is flower filled, you dreamed

poetry is spurned now;  
weeping is spurned!  
Poetry is a golden coinage nobody

can spend so that moonlight

overflows and no one weeps for it but  
the witnessing trees.  
the rose light scarred, the last evenings.

mary angela douglas 10 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wolfie And The Conundrum/The Good Wolf

(After Aesop)

Be careful when one wolf is warning you about another wolf  
behind the bush in the picture book story  
and the warning wolf has a halo in the picture book

so that it is a reformed wolf or not a wolf at all,

oh! you say to yourself  
(having been taught well at school) :  
an evolved species! !

a tame one and now you're besties.  
besties with the can lead him around  
on a leash of rose petals, yes you can.

while he offers his paw, shyly to strangers.  
and you eat custard together in the wintertime  
at some little cafe and strawberries (turn the page)

and are convinced by the splashing tears at the corners of his tear ducts  
and the water stains they make on his refined suede and

blood red vest and he  
is softly bleating, putting your fears to rest  
and as soothing as your mother, at her best on the days

she made apple pies  
and so concerned about you or I that you will be safe

from the bush wolf who is really, by comparison,  
only a cartoon.  
remember, although childish logic may tell you earnestly

that the warning wolf is your rescuer and that the proof  
of that is how kind he is to warn you about the other one  
malingering...

that:

it is possible for one wolf who is even more ravenous  
to solicitously and with his fur combed quite down  
and extensive dental work having been done on his fangs

to whisper sentimentally to you and with blue blue violets  
with fresh honey from the hive  
about the dastardly one who is so dangerous and then

eat you alive  
before he swallows down and picking delicately at the bones  
the bushie wolf too.

mary angela douglas 30 may 2020

Mary Angela Douglas



# Word Problems

they imagined that numbers were beautiful  
and in imagination, they were  
and lines intersected the arcs of cloudy

stars and exponential were the rains.  
then the rolled up shades on the windows  
of the wall paper measured walls

came up short and we stood embarrassed at chalk boards  
the last of our kind:  
never solving the right equations

veering off into hopscotched equivalentents  
wearing all the colours at once  
and making our memories out of little stories

so we got no dessert and we had no retorts  
who weren't heading out for the Space Program;  
who had no projects for the Science Fairs

but went about the house declaiming with a dreamy stare:  
'Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter...'\*

till words huddled under no roofs and we, their vagabonds,  
gold and silver with the fairytales disdained  
tried our best to remain with no remainders

while numbers jeered or tried to lacking words:  
aw come in out of the rain.

mary angela douglas 6,14 february 2016

\*from Ode to a Grecian Urn, by John Keats.

Mary Angela Douglas

# Words

some used words like arrows  
and some made fresh bouquets  
opening onto the Rose

of better days.  
and some flew whispers  
like paper airplanes

or named the constellations in  
a summer sleep  
in rains of violets

silver heaped  
and some were glad in

crystal sounds December bound  
and some could only weep  
the weather of words away.

it has come to me in dreams lately  
that sounds are formed like a cherry o  
by choric children

in the long ago  
by poets waking up too slow  
and seeing their words depart

like jeweled ships  
over the falls  
into an embroidered dark

mary angela douglas 13 july 2017

Mary Angela Douglas

# Words Without Meaning

words without meaning  
fall into silence  
fall into silence

nothing knows  
alphabets gleaming  
can't carry feeling

far as a feeling  
has to go  
I'm leaving snowblind

their summer language  
words without meaning  
melting there

I'll go much further  
goes without saying  
heart without words still,

traces a shining-  
everywhere

mary angela douglas 24 april 2014; 17 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Workbook

in this workbook you will learn  
how to tell apples from oranges  
how to slice the pie among five

friends without offending any  
and still have pie leftover for breakfast.  
how to tell time

and the names of clouds as they dissolve  
and costume jewelry from the real thing  
and how to make anything happy

out of play doh. and small talk, small change  
while wearing complementary colours.  
how to address a valentine correctly

even if the red envelope comes back.  
to act in school plays  
in a sequined costume

as though you were the Princess for real  
gold flecks in your hair, the confetti of the kingdom,  
disappearing into a final sleep

you, who've just recently learned  
how to tie your shoelaces so they won't come undone  
and how to make biscuits

that won't fall apart.

mary angela douglas 25 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Would It Be Summer

[to my sister, near her birthday]

if I could find the colour wheels  
you must have stashed in the closet  
would it suddenly be summer then?

your Prang watercolours...school  
dresses with sashes

the board games, the rains,  
the lemonades while we watched  
Peter Ibbetson on t.v.

the refrigerator dough cookies  
we always burned on the bottom  
crispier that way.

if I could find.

one creamy clover  
or a purple one  
or the tree shade

where we played  
in our oceans of time.  
the gypsum or the eglantine

the fun filled gemmy pretense at ballet

the flecks of quartz  
the history of caves  
never knowing their names

and all the guessed at flowers...  
our fear of bees.  
the poured out honey hours

the memory of  
our shadows stretched out

on the sidewalk goblin like or

the bubbles blown and wobbling  
in our shared sunshine  
opened at Christmas time

with a happy tinge of chill  
elliptical rainbows on the windowsills of dreaming.  
the indoors pale pale blue

and the white curtains  
drawn like clouds  
at evening with its star or two

shielding us in being new.

mary angela douglas 4 august 2015; rev.9 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Would Life On Mars Be Ruby Red

would life on Mars be ruby red, we wondered  
through our summers.  
sometimes in between the

lemonade days, our butterscotched hopscotch  
a little out of sorts or bubble gum  
bazooka comic- faded out in last week's wash...

will there be porch swings?  
a slight, honeysuckle breeze?  
will there still be cinnamon toast, oh please-

well this was what Ray Bradbury partially  
came to say, apart from Green Town.  
Mars is Green Town

seen from a certain angle  
in the funhouse mirrors.  
wherever you go

your home goes with you:  
be not afraid.

mary angela douglas 7 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Wouldn't You Like?

wouldn't you like

to be God's kite?

I would!

with spots of gold,

a pale green butterfly aloft

in His sure hand

to float above his trees,

his dreams of trees

his dreams of trees themselves,

dreaming.

and it is Spring.

and you pass through pink clouds,

your colleagues.

past iridescent birds

then you remember your golden spots

turn turn on a green wind.

why not?



my friend.

mary angela douglas 16 april 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Writing You On The Edge Of The Cloud That Flies

[to God, our Father]

writing You on the edge of the cloud that flies,  
on anything I recognize as light,  
I fold my words in half

paper airplane like  
hoping they are jeweled  
knowing that you will know

past all things

I love You  
though I am small  
to fit the crevices

of the earth  
happy to observe  
the gleam of a blade of grass,

a flower's repast;  
happy enough  
waiting for the dew that falls

to fill the thirst  
of my soul

mary angela douglas 25 february 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Writing Your Name In The Upper Right Hand Corner

writing your name in the upper right hand corner  
of a page that is gone,  
the notebook less workbooks.

did winters cover them? so many winters.  
where has all the old homework gone, then?  
bonfires? out to sea?

did children overseas make paper airplanes  
from it? origami animals?  
or the younger ones cut snowflake silhouettes?

old tests, mimeographed.  
marked with a red happened to them?  
for that matter, where did they put all

the red pens? report cards! ! !  
A us making math problems.  
construction paper fiascos.

maple leaf stencils.  
tissue thin and cherished, number two pencils.  
whole kingdoms of tracing paper.

attendance rolls.  
your soul back then.  
so apple bright reading:

great expectations.  
the frost on the lawn  
when you took the bus

anticipating

so early into the school year;  
learning to disappear.

mary angela douglas 30 september 2015



# Yesterday, In A Green Garden

yesterday in a green garden  
in a green chair she wrote to you,  
under the shade trees,

of the roses and the lilies  
and signed the postcards, Lily:  
the children ate fudgesicles, creamsicles

dancing in the rain soaked gardens.  
bread is cheap, you write back;  
berries along the way;

the worlds mirrored in rain puddles.  
ah, we will go there, she telegraphed.  
I will wear my silver beaded gown,

the shoes embroidered with small flowers.  
that was in the afternoon,  
in the time of perfumes...

it won't be written anywhere,  
and we will not say in the frost coated air,  
waving goodbye to the last of the summer cherries;

our syllables, early december's frozen mist,

that there was ever  
anything wrong  
with thinking this way...

mary angela douglas 23 june 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Yevtushenko In Heaven Was Said To Have Said

for the poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko

yevtushenko in heaven was said to have said  
it's the beginning not the end of colours as we knew them  
and Anne Frank here, here where it is always April I commend

so many old friends with halos  
please tell my students this is what I meant  
all this

but here the vision fades...  
and we are left to ponder in the afternoons  
what is the life of poets after their doom is unsealed

and forgotten by God, the seventh angel or the eighth...  
they no longer tread the earth;  
their poems float pinkward, home.

mary angela douglas 6 january 2019

PLEASE READ THE POEM &quot;COLORS&quot; by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, one of  
the most beautiful poems in Russian translated into the English language. Simply  
a gorgeous poem.

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Barrel Through Your List Of Things To Do

you barrel through your lists of things to do  
feeding the ghosts of cats mysterious cream  
while life like a ticking dream moves on

and you are caught in that stream  
my heart, you ancient valentine  
no matter what you wish

or you opine  
dining on cheese and crackers to get through  
with everything by noon;

creasing the folds in the wonderland blue  
continuing to be you, you think you can  
live on till dawn task after task

brushing aside the inconvenient wings  
of colours floating in,  
from the Unseen

to fall gardenia petaled in the grass

when God keeps giving you hints  
in a starry, mixed up tense even while you sense  
the sunflower clocks are sequin weeping a

Gold that cannot last.  
not forgetting the gears of light  
the zinnias meshed

the fireworks over the parks  
in stops and starts  
all morning glory, the pier glass folds

though ever the clouds are new,  
the year freshly painted:

I dreamed that we were snow  
and were not cognizant.

I would make lists of roses, now, of aureoles  
if I could remember:  
faint, on a manifest of silver

all the names.  
or process all the claims.  
making a note in distinctive handwriting

of how it feels to bloom  
when you come late to the afternoon  
all Alice at the garden door,

remotely elegiac.  
the wrong size, always.

mary angela douglas 23 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# You Cannot Know

the cloud spent beauty of the day declines;  
the willows waft by ancient ponds  
and you peer so deeply into the wells

where a fairy skidded moon appears;  
is it the surface you ask  
but no one there

that ever catches you unaware and  
alone, compels this love of  
the froth on the wind;

the candle flame going out, again.

fasten the shutters from the inside,  
my soul;  
you cannot know this.

mary angela douglas 6 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Can't Stash The Sea In A Thimble

[to my Grandmother]

you can't stash the sea in a thimble or  
listen to everything you hear  
year after year from people who'll only use you

in the end  
have God and Christ for friend

grow wise through dreaming  
she said to me one winter soothing  
when I had tried and tried

stranded at schoolroom blackboards never  
working it out without crying  
so that the equation

would not make me ashamed.  
but that was yesterday.  
today I know freedom

from disgrace  
and that behind the face of God  
are no lies, only kindness

and all this flies in the face of reason  
they scream behind the battlelines drawn  
while I draw chalk patterns on the lawns

of my imagination  
and skip over all of that, Grandmother!  
listening to the silver refrains

and watch the small puddles and their rainbows

drain down sidewalk gutters  
and spin the wheels of the bicycles we  
had then in shades of blue

and think that all that's old is being made new  
this Easter I remember the golden thimble  
how we embroidered on small hooped towels

in a lavender living room  
with a modern sofa-  
the moon and the stars

candy in a honey coloured jar

the bluebirds ranging far  
and rows of purple flowers  
apple criss cross trees

happy the hours, scrubbing the  
kitchen floor till it gleamed (you did)  
and bars of piano music summer aspic learned

and learning, yearning  
for the Beautiful to return.

mary angela douglas 24 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Delivered Us From Evil (Gretel's Soliloquy)

the surface of the story seemed so bright

we were led into it like children lost in a wood

expecting something good, some treat.

for we were sweet.

some chance to sleep in the rose beds

guarded by angels.

this is not what happened.

though we thought it would.

though we packed everything

and were on our way.

and we were merry, under an eggshell sky.

a thousand times a day since

I've wished that I could stray

and follow the path back

and choose by knowing what I know today

a much more diffident way and been at home.

and then I think well. it happened as it did

and God still led us out by the hand in between rainstorms

and I don't understand even how that happened.

mary angela douglas 15 april 2020

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Have A Beautiful Provenance

you have a beautiful provenance rippled my grandmother  
in my dream as if she were harp strings  
and I laughed

how could I not agree  
everyone almost loves the home  
they grew up in

I would not want any other  
even the house I imagined when a child  
would come to me unexpectedly

wrapped, a little large under the Christmas Tree  
that fitted me exactly  
with shutters the colors of roses

with time at my disposal  
a tiny front yard

mary angela douglas 13 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Imagine Yourself On Dry Land Sometimes

you imagine yourself on dry land sometimes  
at least at the picnics under the trees  
the pink cake glowing and the little sandwiches

and no disease, no sudden arguments out of nowhere  
hurt the breeze, the idyll there.  
you imagine yourself free as air

for that moment and think there can be  
another moment, and another that gleams  
stitch it down and then embroider it, please

and this is Time then as it should be  
and you string the gem bedight minutes together

and wear them as a necklace  
in the workaday world ah but Cinderella  
they will break the pearls and scatter them

and they will roll under the radiator  
in your apartment under the colorful the disorderly shelves  
and then,

where is your wishing well then our princess  
caw all the crows.  
you will go to the window in a fragile state

blinking back tears when a something says  
all glimmery, Wait oh daughter of new distresses  
multiple years

then from the clouds God releases His laceworks again

and there they are shining all over the lawn  
and you feel crowned and overawed  
all at the same time

and as if your dress is silken suddenly blooming  
with all the flowers

and you will put by the blundering hours

and feel this is not the end turn the page  
there are further Wonders...

mary angela douglas 11 april 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# You May Have Forgotten The Rose Clouded Days

you may have forgotten the rose clouded days  
the autumn occlusions  
the hawthorn rich mays

the song that you sang to yourself and the way  
the page that you turned taught bright  
music to stray

through the quartz minted seconds  
that ticked in your rooms  
and the feeling it gave you

when you saw the moon  
glide softly in clouds  
and then exit in tears

when the rains came up suddenly  
showers so clear  
and you at your window

the dead of the night  
felt the ocean of time lapping soft as delight  
and much left to learn

and to dream and to be  
and now it's so little you ask  
that the key

is just to remember  
the roses were real  
and all that you gathered

and all that you feel

is recalled in the instant  
you still can believe  
that all that was given

is still yours to keep

whether you wake or  
whenever you sleep.

mary angela douglas 24 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Must Become A Kingdom That Dissolves

you must become a kingdom that dissolves  
whose diamond walls must one day  
all come down

but until then. make a  
map of another world  
with rooms of endless amber  
reconceptions-

and pray the ink  
does not take  
long to dry-

mary angela douglas 21 february 2004/8 august 2007

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Said I See The River Through The Trees

you said I see the river through the trees  
they said there is no river  
there is only a creek

when you are little it is hard to make  
those distinctions  
I see the skies you replied and rose upon rose

and rainbow sherbet layers  
where varicoloured angels flock  
at sunset casting

the partry favors  
colouring the winds

they said oh you pretend  
but Grandmother understood  
sometimes children see farther.

close reading the pear trees in the story book  
to see if they were truly gold.  
there is a land I am told

(she smiled)

kenst du das land, you know  
the song of citrus and the groves of  
let me stay there

where the inlaid breezes sway  
barely ruffling the turquoise of the bay  
but that is not to be

a distant relative at Christmas wrote  
thinking you should be more realistic  
at that age.

mary angela douglas 26 october 2017



# You Should Have Been Painted In A Lilac Mist (To Anna Akhmatova)

you should have been painted in a lilac mist  
looking out to sea yet-  
holding the sea within.

you would have stood apart  
by an open window, breathing-  
immemorial-  
the scent of pine trees where  
another poet walked-

hearing the sound of the sea  
holding the sea within,  
its dove-grey caesuras  
meted out so carefully

like the steps to the fairytale  
castle and the end of the story;  
your raspberry syllables spilling over

where there could be no decrees;  
with your friend who loved Africa  
and drew giraffes on your school  
slate, possibly, who hated raspberry

jam even then;

with your small son playing  
learning to walk in the  
pine-needed shade;

with your other friend, who loved life  
and pure delight, praising its syllables  
of true delight and small feasts managed

in distress: a tin of sardines, Armenian grapes,  
a miracle;  
banished like a real prince:

by his side, his starling wife  
hid all his poems in crummy saucepans -

and in her heart ever after

o darkened wing - o muse  
o hidden stars half-turning into fire,  
Cassandra, who is listening

like snow it all disappeared  
shining into a farther sea  
inside you  
after nothing like a Golden Age  
no one in any language

can explain.

I sit at my kitchen table in America  
as white as you were at the  
height of Terror,  
Anna Akhmatova, getting paler by  
the minute, in public housing  
with other golden refugees of a  
free nation

the kitchen radio proclaims:  
'A Great Nation deserves Great Art'  
I think sometimes

great art deserves a great nation;  
I'm

selling my books off, one-by-one, to live;  
when I get to the last book I'll go  
live under a pine tree and make  
books out of pine bark

but this morning  
you shine on my momentary wall  
the color of buttermilk  
looking for Russia, still-

looking for an open window  
for the sound of the sea  
for an undeniable clarity  
that can't be bought or sold...

Anna Akhmatova.

ask God for me  
if you don't know yourself,  
is it anywhere in the world

or only in  
the next poem

that we live-

mary angela douglas 18 july 2009

Mary Angela Douglas



# You Throw Yourself Away Or Think You Must

you throw yourself away or think you must.  
you who are made of diamond dust.  
you, His heart's own core with daylight ahead of

blossom becoming apple in the setting sun  
arrived at the terminal too early, don't!  
the cliff is glinting always there in front of you but,

oh earth smells sweet, taken in both hands,  
rich loamed.  
you throw yourself away the farther from home

the better you say;  
what's dreaming but a sleep, anyway  
but I weep, -  
'don't'...

mary angela douglas 16 august 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Want To Write

you want to write in an apple green closet  
with the snow coming down inside and  
one frosted lightbulb: (the old kind)

your secret thoughts;  
and then it rains.  
exterminators come

and you hide your notes  
and feel ashamed  
that your cubicle apartment

wasn't perfect  
when they walked in  
with their: all those books!

exclaimed; funny looks,  
exchanged, as though you were hoarding dinosaurs.

tromping in regulation boots  
they don't stay very long,  
but it doesn't feel that way:

rooting out the few skittering enemies.  
turning back with a smile, a tip of the cap and  
glad to be out of the way.

and now they've gone.  
(but not the bugs, who understand you  
as you do them) . compadres.

the snow settles in.

the lightbulb is again your friend,  
both on or off;  
on a golden chain,

yet free

mary angela douglas 13 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Were In Love With The Opal Branching Skies

to John Keats

you were in love with the opal-branching skies,  
the flowering hedge.  
your opulence was real; your fancy bred

a farther season than the one at hand  
and one, more lasting  
so vivid were the words at your command  
and unashamed of dreaming.

now the winds shift otherwise for some time, now  
and to our detriment, we sail a compromised  
sea and count ourselves lucky, some of us

such a compromise was made but why  
and where and who, the first  
men vy to say  
and claim a dubious prize.

what have we lost I cry  
even asleep  
and what will we do

with all these flowers  
heaped at our feet  
and the mellowed fruit  
on the starry branches

so beyond our reach  
and compassing...

mary angela douglas 24 september 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Were That Child

you wanted a rose red sign from God  
His signature rose  
so many times

on the way home or to and fro or the mist clearing just  
as you hit the service road to hike to the early morning  
bus with that chill air still nightfall everywhere

Orion visible, your leading star.  
remember Whose you are the predawn  
whisper of the trees

then you could feel between worlds  
and not in the workplace anymore.  
and who could make you feel small then

when everything  
came to you on the winds the star breathing winds  
prescient with snow colours pasteling in the picture books

you were that child  
seeking that kind of sign.

mary angela douglas 30 august 2018

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Will Learn

you will learn to read colours  
and the faces of clocks  
and trace the fairy rings

around the moon  
and sing to your grandparents  
in the living room

with your sister  
and you in matching sashes  
gingham taffeta

you will choose each year  
the treetop instant:  
angel or Star

and this will make you feel  
like an important person  
and eat the ice cream with

the banana appeal, the hershey's syrup  
generously spilled on vanilla  
hills in a little blue bowl

the fields of whipped cream

and it will seem  
you never can grow old  
to be held in such esteem

and then you will  
and dream one day  
it all will start again

with the bread and butter pickles  
on the sandwiches  
the rich piano sounds resounding

and the late late movies

when you got to stay up late  
because the next day wasn't school;

past your bedtime, child  
and very Christmas at the gates!

mary angela douglas 18 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Will Live In A House Neither Stone Nor Shadow

you will live in a house  
neither stone nor shadow  
nor by a running brook

and look at books  
and look at the lamplight  
blocking out the stars

but yours will be inward stars  
ever drifting sifting the gold  
from the silver ones

you will take your stand  
and vanish, no explanation given  
into a farther land, more beautiful still

and firmly planted there  
despite their whispering  
bide your time

and all the greenery will be yours  
the birds that chime.  
the lilacs.

mary angela douglas 30 march 2016

Mary Angela Douglas



# You Would Think

you would think  
an angel with a pink harp  
had come out of the woodwork

we were so happy when our birthday  
cakes had pink roses on them  
and pink matching ice cream.

then presents wrapped in blue  
tied with pink ribbons and  
the box with the doll

blue too, like skies in Spring  
with deep pink tiny roses  
criss crossed, sprinkled all over it.

I will go in the backyard now  
where we will drink in the shade orangeade  
and eat little hamburgers, gold with mustard.

and I will retrieve a good luck clover.  
and we will speak in clouds of glass blown

pink bubbles over our heads  
as in perfect comic strips  
folded tiny in

the bazooka bubble gum wrappers.  
and we will laugh at elephant jokes and our  
little dog with us running in the past

brought back to life without the leavened bread.  
and we will call this (she said solemnly)  
in a moment of whipped creamed drifted inspiration

on all the strawberries God ever made:

'Heaven.'

mary angela douglas 12 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You Would Wear Pale Yellow

for Sharon, my sister

you would wear pale yellow

and all would be silk

and we would always

drink our milk

and listen for chimes

for bells that rhyme

going up and down the scales.

for ice cream sales

for the gold stars showered

on the page we learned.

life could be that way

the drawing of the rose drapes

in the afternoon

because the studio light

is infinitely bright

and Grandmother plays the piano

on more than St. Cecilia's day  
when Mama comes to stay  
and white clover is thick all over the backyard.  
how could Heaven not be this  
grandfather under the lamplight  
reading his newspaper  
and we are all home.  
I think of this sometimes now  
whenever I'm alone how  
love, once lived, cannot disappear  
except into God.

Mary Angela Douglas 23 November 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# You, With Your Wild Strawberries, Will Never Go Far

the sword in the stone. the jewel in its setting.  
a flicker of light they lightly said through a turgid wood.  
old legends.

how can I answer when I see it all ablaze:  
all Christmas-sequined, rainbowed through the eyelash...  
they raze the least attempt at conversation.

and I'm just in the woods picking strawberries, I guess  
out of place here.  
out of place there.

between two seas:  
in love with Circassian shadows, it may be.  
it may be light is a stream of jewels

but who can listen? words glisten

and were they for us, deep snows?  
how could I tell what you meant by them  
who wanted above all things

like a child to float in on clouds of rose  
turning into the wind as though it were  
a great stage...the meadowlands of dream.

then I read Turgenev for awhile  
in a snowy dress, a paler sash.  
till someone asked sardonically: aren't you far from home?

go back! through the looking glass!

mary angela douglas 17 october 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Your Face Is A Flower

your face is a flower too often lost  
in the ribald world.  
blossoming where

in the darkening air  
and clouds pass over it,  
and streams of light

shadows of leaves, unseen  
angels.  
your face a flower between

scene and scene  
played upon by fools.  
your face with its music

not for their amusement made.  
your face a coolness  
in the shade

varies like star from star  
sways slightly on its stem.  
does not bow down

to them.

mary angela douglas 23 october 2015

Mary Angela Douglas

# Your Least Gesture In The Snow

thirty three thousand names they have given you  
but never the one at your christening...  
fate, destiny, doom, coincidence

the lifting of the gloom for an unexpected light  
and the waters divide  
and you had angels on your side

didn't you?

who knows the reasons where you go  
and when and how  
could you retrace your steps

would it all be different somehow:  
your least gesture in the snow  
and did the puzzle fit each bit forming

a stained glass view  
of the kaleidoscope "you";  
did the fairy tale come to pass

or were you shattered like glass  
or will you be  
the moment you step out the door

into Samarra and the turquoise night  
or feather floating upward  
astonished, from the ground

should we herald in gold  
Icarus, Icarus-  
the jade sea's sweeping;

guard the sound.  
the rain inside the clouds-

the weeping.

mary angela douglas 15 november 2018; rev.25 january 2019

Mary Angela Douglas



# Your Nose In A Book Or: A Kingdom Far From Here

your nose is always in a book they sneer  
in every language on earth; at you:  
who, long since have fled from them

each time you turn a page  
into sunny fields, rose tinted mountains  
like the Himalayas when everyone looks

up to see, suddenly, a sunset flush  
from peak to peak simultaneously:  
whole rose gardens- there, across the crevasse or you're on

the moors with guess who? Jane of  
course; it's raining hard; she's drawn her  
cloak about her; her bonnet, with its one small

rose is getting soggy; (a detail Charlotte left out,  
but you've just snuggily supplied) then, she's at Thornfield  
once again and Mrs. Faifax pours the tea (from the everyday

bone china) -and Jane doesn't take any cream, oh,  
maybe, just a smidge- and a currant bun, perhaps  
little cakes iced with pink? no, you think, Mr. Rochester's

too cheap- (who assuredly knew she would refuse  
those ruby scarabs from the Caribbean  
and all that snowy Chinese jade) , but you embroider

the point too finely, Charlotte complains.

and they draw near the fire and she's just  
happy to be employed and hasn't even  
seen Mr. Rochester yet- she thinks, and

so do you since you haven't gotten to that part...  
oh couldn't they just have charlotte russe, just this  
once, for Adele's sake? Charlotte laughs a little at

my joke and says not even a tiny ruche

of cherry silk on that old bonnet...  
'life is more than books, '  
they yell and whirl you back from space and

Jules Verne, and off your stool, your rickety chair,  
your divan with the stained glass afghan-  
beginning to fray- as much as their nerves

but now they're on their prosaic way  
to another part of the house, the factory,  
the dim bulbed office-

and you're with Ray Bradbury and it's home to  
Mars and someone's baking pies with perfect meringues  
and Ray says let's go in, I'm hungry and they don't look

like Martians...the screen door creaks;  
the lilacs blow against the palings-  
have a slice, won't you? chocolate silk!

that suddenly you're skating on the Zuider Zee  
in Christmas red, fresh roses in your cheeks  
(to work off all that pie) , you poor beleaguered thing

in real life, sprawled in roller rinks or holding onto  
the rails- but now,  
you sail across the winter ice

with secret gold in your heart and no sawdust  
grind from the mills that turn for you each time  
in a land so beautiful you almost feel sorry for them-

whenever they're left behind-

mary angela douglas 17 july 2014

Mary Angela Douglas

# Your Slanted Chalkboard Writing Tells The Tale

your slanted chalkboard writing tells the tale

or mirrorback, the night has lost its stars!

so children have to wander very far

from where they started from.

I strike the drum or listen for the chime

that God and I know floats as only mine

upon a wind as crystal as it's clear

your shadow's growing brighter

year to year when measured

on a birthday yardstick morning.

stop. the music's decrescendo here

and let the river Poetry go on

beyond the hills that stared at you so long

in every single place you ever knew

so that you loved the colour blue heedlessly,

until it wasn't there at all.

mary angela douglas 30 july 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# Your Three Wishes Keep

your three wishes keep  
even in your sleep  
those who seem to pray

often come to slay  
openly they smile  
full of hidden wiles

plotting all the time  
for the death knell's chime  
you will think them friends

but, ah, in the end  
they can steal away  
and turn to night your day

be careful what you say

avoid such grieving  
wish with all your heart  
and they'll be leaving

God is wise to them  
making up your sins  
He sees everywhere

them creeping on the stair.  
talk to Him instead  
and leave the dead, the dead

to bury.  
Jesus said.

mary angela douglas 19 january 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# You're Going To Have To Know Some Things

you're going to have to know some things

they all forgot to tell you

or maybe they didn't know themselves;

then how will you know the difference?

following the moss on the northern sides of trees

was that it

the native american signs of spring

the ruby red ring around the moon

is it noon yet in China

opals have fallen out of the skies

some people tell lies

always carry a compass.

be on the lookout for wild mushrooms.

hide in the tall grasses  
with the scent of wild onions

and dream the lion's dream.

carry the storybook somehow

the one with strawberries and cream.

when you get hungry,

look at the Illustration.

mary angela douglas 18 November 2019

Mary Angela Douglas

# You're The One That Wanted To Fly Out The Window

for my sister

I am the Door [Jesus Christ]

you're the one that wanted to fly out the window  
from the top bunk bed  
and when you fell out of bed instead

I asked you, in the interest of science,  
'Was it fun? '  
no, you said in a muffled eeyore tongue

but you know, you did survive the free fall;  
colour chalk it up to our imaginations  
that God had that kind of mercy then

although we always knew that He was kind  
for making the roses grow in our backyard  
and keeping the bees away from us.

and making the homework not too hard  
whenever we remembered to pray about it.  
can't you pray that now?

I wonder softly to myself  
now that you're in a grown up distress  
and we are both much farther from home

than we would care to confess

unless home is in reverse  
like in a mirror. you know  
and what appeared behind us

suddenly is Before us as in  
Christmas before snow;  
as in angels: we adore You

Christ the Lord, the very name



and with a lovely, open  
Door and the front porch light the same.

mary angela douglas 2 july 2016

Mary Angela Douglas

# Yours Is The Calla Star [carol]

yours is the calla star  
over the manger, bending

the diamond refraction  
of ultimate stillness

mere breathing causes  
the air to chime but angel feathers  
cannot quell us  
jangling childhood's mismatched bells  
we stop bewildered, at the halo round  
our footsteps in the snow and  
looking straight up

we keep forever  
all the lilies in the night sky  
all the lilies-

mary angela douglas 3 december 2009

Mary Angela Douglas

# Zeitgeist

oh, the imperiled evening with its green perfumes  
in former volumes gleaming, all the antique mays  
destined for extinction in a trending haze

since poetry must be made to pay, or what's it for.

ah, wavered the flowers by the country door, half presciently  
and the garden paths with fearful pebbles strewn.  
they will come in gloom, the future poets

on some distant afternoon  
no longer able to recount  
the stereoscopic view of the

sunset cathedrals in the clouds.

and speak in overloud voices  
every single gripe on earth and name this, Song-  
and so become a root and branch of Wrong.

but we who heard them once, in ancient schoolrooms,  
with the lilacs blowing by the windows,  
the honeysuckle tunes

o! the troubadours remember, remember now to say:  
to you, and you, half turning away  
pragmatic to your fingertip's shadow

that once. the moonlight came to stay,  
gardenias opening like stars  
and we find it hard

to live this way  
with the ghosts of the Romantics trampled  
under the MFA's.

much harder than we can say

mary angela douglas 5 february 2017

Mary Angela Douglas