



# Summoning Silence

Poetry by Carolyn Lee Boyd

**Carolyn Lee Boyd**

# **Summoning Silence**

Copyright © 2000 - 2020 Carolyn Lee Boyd. All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever.

Parts of this book are works of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Published by Goddess in a Teapot press.  
[www.goddessinateapot.com](http://www.goddessinateapot.com)

All photographs by Carolyn Lee Boyd

# Poems

**Summoning Silence**

**Hands Baking Bread**

**Sunrise at Goodwater**

**Mantra of the Joy Moon**

**Samhain: A Poetic Ritual at My Mother's  
Graveside**

**The Well of Remembrance**

**Imbolc: Through Goddess Eyes**

**The Delphyne Dreams**

**Goddess of the Grapevine**

**Make Me a Pond Lily**

**Wild Mint**

**The Emerald Spider**

**The Hawk and Squirrel in the Garden**



# Summoning Silence

When the shell of life cracks  
Crushing speech and song into rattles  
and gasps  
Infusing cold shock into your bones  
In time, your wounds close and elude  
Until, one day, drinking a glass of  
water,  
or sweeping the floor, or walking  
through woods  
The voices of those who were lost  
while you survived come unto you



A breath whisper seeping from a rock fissure  
A strangled word hidden in a bird's chirping  
A staccato heartbeat measured in a train's thunder  
Cries you cannot hear with your ears and that do not come  
from you.

Those who can no longer speak  
Find a voice in the Spirit of Silence  
She follows us until we can finally listen for her mercy  
In those noises we wish we had never heard.  
We cannot choose between our lives before  
or our lives after the crack  
For both dwell within us.

She settles on your back and  
When you are ready, you return to the place  
of the execution of your illusions.  
Now you seek the wail that would not let you lie,

The deepest harmony of the song of the Spirit of Silence.  
It is how you live in truth  
It is how you make yourself bud and bloom again,  
It is, ultimately, how you will finish what  
You first came to that place of rebirth to do.

# Hands Baking Bread



When my hands bake bread, I  
knead  
Ocean, rock, the flesh of  
beasts and flora then  
Draw down honey moonlight  
for alchemy's fire.

My frail, mortal fingers unite all that was to create all that  
will be and

I embed within each loaf this woman's power of touch  
That can halt the most merciless onslaughts with a caress  
That can melt centuries of isolation with a warm stroke.

My hands give away the bread,  
Nourishment for body and tinder spark for soul.  
Across a hostile desert, a woman's desiccated hands  
accept my gift  
In an act of graceful courage.  
Once she eats  
Her fingers tingle in an awakening of the  
Sweet, invincible bond between women,  
The body of that connection between every element of  
the universe,  
We have created over and over, since ancient days,  
In the shared ritual of mixing, kneading, waiting, baking.

Each receiver of bread returns to her oven and bakes a  
fresh loaf

The aromas rise, restoring the power of our touch  
Molecule by molecule, to all women who breathe in air  
Making of us one and also many, each stronger in herself  
for  
Being with one another, like grains of wheat or flecks of  
herbs in a loaf.  
Such a simple act, baking bread, a daily chore.  
Women's hands roiling earth and sky together, one with  
another,  
Recreating ourselves as floury bakers of that force that  
spins every atom  
Binding us in joy with yeast and wheat  
Feeding each other the miracle of one more day in each  
other's lives.

*First published in Moondance, December, 2005 - March, 2006*

# Sunrise at Goodwater

Newest daughter  
born last night  
with help from no one but me  
We are far too high on the mountain  
for midwives or witches.

The youngest of a long line of family  
who came from Scotland to Pennsylvania to Georgia  
to Alabama  
Always hoping to be able to tell the next generation  
You will always have food on the table  
You and your children and grandchildren will live long  
lives.  
No one will ever take your home.  
You will always live in peace.

Newest daughter  
born last night  
with help from no one but me  
I cannot promise you that  
You will always have food on the table.  
You and your children and grandchildren will live long  
lives.  
No one will ever take your home.  
You will always live in peace.

But I can give you this moment of quiet before the dawn  
And this song to remind you

Of your first morning with the stars and the Earth and  
the sun.

They are all you or anyone will ever truly have.

Always remember their loving sound when all around  
you is cacophony.

And that they are magnificent.





# Mantra of The Joy Moon

Once I stood in stone, captive  
without past or future  
No windows to welcome a  
suncast loving sanctuary  
In hidden whispers spoken to no  
one, yet



Heard by She Who Gathers All  
Voices to Herself, I cried  
"I am mud-stained with my world's reproach  
Carry me, please, to where I am no longer who I am."

Instead, She sent me the Joy Moon, an unseen chariot  
circling my year  
Illuminating here or there a leaf, a word, an instant  
Drawing us like tides to the truths we spoke ourselves  
once but have now forgotten.

The Joy Moon is new, below ground, dead to day, yet  
stirring  
I was born into my body twice, first with newborn legs  
that could not walk  
Then, at three, liberated from a cocoon of casts and steel  
I learned to dance and walk in the same moment and so  
grew knowing that  
Living in flesh made me a vessel of beauty's joyful  
dominion.  
I found my brace and remembered, and now I never  
move forward without pirouetting a little to the side.

The Joy Moon waxes, bursting all beings into eons of meanings.

I once saved a thistle from a pebbled walkway and planted it

A poppy bloomed, a single scarlet mystery, a doorway  
Had I planted the thistle in one world and plucked the poppy in another?

Now when I hold a bean, or a pebble, or a clod of soil I marvel,

What wonders within will unfold if I only wait long enough?

Full Joy Moon, igniting the ember inside each of us to flame

Every year, I made one crimson sunburn on my shoulders to mark me,

Holding fast the light, even in pain, yet never penetrating.

Even as the cold came, the Joy Moon shone bright

Kindling the contentment of one or two days of gentle, glorious warmth.

"See," she said, "I even stop the winter to remind you that Summer's joyful glow without merely reflects the hearthfire within."

The waning Joy Moon, a last glimpse of her as she sails home

To the place we cannot see but where She created us.

She scatters the season's first snowflakes like laughter, like cherry blossom petals.

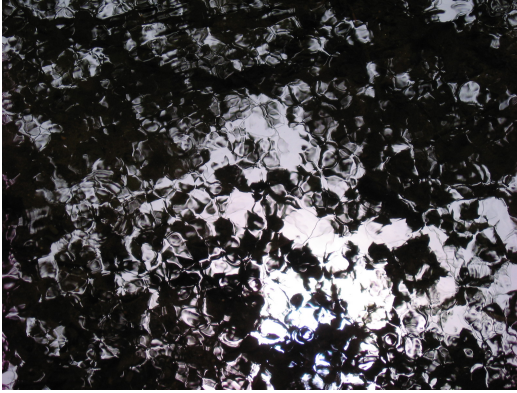
I catch one and exalt in its momentary uniqueness.

They are abundance given at Her whim, their beauty is the stuff of our very being.

I lick the snowflake and we become one.

As the moon rounds away from me, She sings "Live each day knowing that you are created out of My joy and you cannot help but rebirth yourself and your world."

# Samhain: A Poetic Ritual at My Mother's Graveside



At this moment of  
gathering death's  
blessings  
into the breast that  
succored me;  
As your eyes stare  
into the Mother's  
Mystery  
where I cannot  
follow;

Remember how my solid hands caressed your face  
Though the Mother of All in her tenderness smoothed  
the wrinkles

I shovel the skin of our Mother onto your box  
Embracing you with Her  
I alone among the mourners rejoice  
Knowing that my salt water tears will  
gestate the sacred space of rebirth  
Just as you carried me into my holy body  
I rise up chanting, circling  
conjuring one moment of Mother communion  
to last my lifetime.

The Mystery of two Mothers become One  
Come forth from the stone  
Let me hear your wisdom each morning in the wind  
tonings

of the oak outside my bedroom window  
Let me honor you each evening as the sky bleeds then  
deepens to  
the unknowable well of endings and beginnings  
I rise up chanting, circling  
conjuring a lifetime of Mother communion  
to last a moment.

# The Well of Remembrance



Come to the Well of Remembrance  
Here have women sacrificed the memories that overflow  
In both mourning and joy  
In all times and places.

Now it is your turn to pour into it your libations—  
A grandmother's feathery hair  
A daughter's pink-painted toenails  
Fierce years of labor wasted and  
Angry seconds of agony pain.  
The Well is constructed of millennia of  
Hands held around sacred groves, quilting bees,  
birthing stools, and teal Formica kitchen tables.  
It can hold all you offer to it.

Now it is your turn to take from it what you need—  
All the water that has flowed from women's  
Eyes, mouths, wombs  
Has saturated to the Earth's bones,  
Has seethed next to our planet's molten core,  
Has evaporated and risen, then fallen again into



Your cupped hands as cool rain.  
Taste one tear from each of your ancestresses.  
It is their wish that you drink deeply and  
be as mighty as all their memories  
distilled into one swallow.

*Originally published in the We'Moon Calendar, 2004.*

# Imbolc: Through Goddess Eyes



In times past,  
Creation's Winter  
cupped me in her  
icy hand of  
sanctuary  
Gathered in, I  
sucked dormant  
life, and slumbered  
Till Earth's  
rebirthing groans  
awakened my new

body

Now the fingers part and the killing cool seeps in  
Rendering my next year's seed lifeless and brittle.

Now I must shake myself into consciousness  
My seed's opaque, blinding hull disintegrates and  
Bodyless, I can see through Goddess eyes  
I ache as my blood paints each flower petal  
I spin the whirlwind that cannot stop creating abundance  
I push the seasons through the year  
that mortals believe revolve of their own accord.

Through Goddess eyes I can see me,  
I inhabit Winter's hand as my own.  
I make the cold to slow creation of outside of me  
To gather the seed into fertile stillness within.  
That burgeons in my own time.

# The Delphyne Dreams

In times past, the Earth  
whispered to me in a voice  
both plain and strong  
Tidings of such succulent  
truths could only be held  
close,  
Silently, spoken to myself,  
While I uttered gibberish  
about play-acted battles  
and reigns



To emperors and priests whose treasures  
Never reflected the gold of the sunset.

Over the millennia, my body has been reborn  
As soil, sky, water, over and over. I am now Earth  
And it is my turn to breathe oracles into your ears.  
Do you hear what I am saying, women of the world, my  
daughters,  
Now that what could only be hidden before must now be  
spoken?

All the unstoppable morning glory blossoms,  
Snowflakes in flight, and watery glaciers, goring bulls  
And suckling cubs are my sacred prophecies of joy,  
But also my desperate pleas as my body becomes  
A place where my creations can no longer find succor.  
Not emperors, not priests, not only high-born queens do I  
call.

Every human woman is my beloved delphyne. I created  
You to hear and heal my cries of the world.

*Delphynes were the women who would breathe in the fumes at the  
Oracle of Delphi and make prophecies that had to be interpreted by  
priests and frequently related to battles, emperors, and other such  
subjects.*

# The Goddess of the Grapevine



The Goddess of the grapevine  
snakes her tiny, spiral fingers  
Around all, binding together a web of eons.  
At Her bidding, the Vintner of Time, we await for five  
years  
a single grape on an infant vine. Our thirst  
Swells for the ecstasy of one juicy splatter.

Over seasons the vine is the voice of Goddess abundance  
The women devour Her, gavotte on Her, rub Her into  
themselves  
Till Time stops, meanders from its  
Onward rush and fills in a still puddle for the women to  
bathe the  
Fruit blood from their skin and make themselves anew.

A century passes and the vine is brittle, broken, lifeless.  
The women pass out of Time, beyond the reign of the  
Grape Goddess.  
Women keen and no one hears, no one rescues.  
Till they rise again, like the dormant vine shoot  
ascending through the soil  
To once again join one to another, to dance ecstasy, to be  
reborn.

# Make Me a Pond Lily

Ever the eye in the center of  
the universe

The lily in the pond opens,  
one of millions of

Ordinary blooms in  
thousands of wild places.

I hold it in my muddy hands  
and let seep into me

Its moon hues, its human-soft petals, its sun-light  
expanded

Boundaries, floating in the calm, life-giving waters.



To begin, choose anything – a speck of dirt, a galaxy, a  
lily.

Witness it with love and no expectations.

Within a second, it will grow beyond everything you think  
you know,

And speak, and heal, and make peace.

Real life is like that, like a universe full of all

We need if we will just let it find asylum in our hands.

While all Creation expands, we retreat beneath our  
surface,

Close our petals, hide from what we truly seek.

May the lily's center be our stillpoint.

May we stop there, turn around, and join all that is in an  
infinite

Openness, like our hands when we meet a beloved.

May all the universe be our beloved.



# Wild Mint

Wild mint, freed from Olympus' rule by  
your  
Holy disobedience. You hugged the  
Earth,  
Crawled into the womb of the soil  
where  
The sandaled feet of the gods refused to  
go, and  
Willingly gave your body to heal and delight over all the  
planet.



Wild mint, as I sip my tea, I consume your leafy soul.  
Imprisoned, spurned, called unworthy,  
We women, too, conjure brazen wandering in our bones,  
Our entangled roots also reach across the globe, making  
Unrepentant love into our own regeneration.

Wild women, may your healing spread to every kitchen,  
Every garden, every day of being forever.  
Your independence from the old gods is your medicine,  
Celebrated for millennia after your tormenters are  
forgotten.  
Like wild mint, all the world is yours.

*According to Greek mythology, Menthe was punished by being  
turned into the mint plant for her love relationship with Hades.*

# The Emerald Spider



Nothingness now teems in the space that had embraced  
your living.

Once our feet relentlessly walked Fate's wheel  
Till a Greater Hand snatched you before your crone's  
reward.

Never would I have contemplated escape  
while we so contentedly, so naively, held hands.  
Now, see, a tiny emerald spider scurries away. I follow.

The sun reflects the spider's back of fertile green and  
changeless stone.

She binds the worlds, conjuring hope.  
She slips into the river whose churning water above and  
peaceful undercurrent below  
Power the wheel. I pursue.

The spider emerges on an island. It is you.  
You arise and join your timeless sisters  
In your new work of reweaving the broken threads of  
living souls.  
Your stronger bonds gently disentangle Fate's chokehold.

"Our fibers," you cry, "are your sadness at our leaving,  
our healing hands,  
and our love for those we have left behind."

When you have delivered to me my rewoven self  
I descend into the river and swim back to the wheel  
But others have seized our places and we are cast off.  
I walk my own two feet past Fate, through Destiny.  
You perch like a jeweled brooch on my shoulder.  
All lying before me is unknown,  
and still my destination is beyond the unknown.



# The Hawk and Squirrel in the Garden

A summer snowfall of white feathers  
A dragon sleeping on a perfect square of suburb  
A cloudlike portal to a parallel mythic realm above  
heaven,

Such were the ponderings of the weekend Gardener,  
The Divinely appointed caretaker of this tiny speck of  
soil,  
As she first spotted, while walking home from her office  
job,  
The mystery, the creature overspreading  
Half the grass leading up to her yellow-painted,  
Picket-fenced so ordinary house.

What could it be?  
It was, in the Gardener's eyes, so immense with its wings  
spread  
Appearing several times its actual size due to its creation  
Of a protective realm of sovereignty around itself

Maybe an ancient shapeshifting fantasy  
So out of place  
She thought  
In her own homely and unconsecrated place and time.

It was a hawk who rose from the grass and beneath,  
In its claws, a squirrel struggled.  
The Gardener witnessed the small being's last few breaths  
While captive high above the Garden  
She had made in her backyard of fragrant herbs and  
flowers for smelling,  
Berries and nuts for feasting, soft beds of leaves for  
sleeping  
To entice through the gate  
Squirrels and chipmunks and woodchucks.

Now thirty feet in the air and soaring to the west  
The hawk and its prey disappeared in the pastel blue sky.

What the Gardener calls her Garden was once covered  
by glaciers  
Which receded, leaving an Arctic tundra  
That warmed and, at least 10,000 years ago,  
According to artifacts still emerging at just the right  
moment  
To tell the stories that need to be heard,  
Humans set their feet upon the ground to dwell,  
To live, to be birthed and give birth, to make stories and  
sing, and to die.  
First the land was hunted and fished  
Just enough to feed the First People who lived here.  
Then it was ripped open by European plows

And planted with only apple trees, the animals, birds,  
insects, grasses  
Shut out by wire and wood fence, poisons and grasping  
tools.

Finally, a century ago, after the house was built,  
The land was lovingly cultivated by  
Generations of women who each made it her own vision  
of paradise.  
The last in this line of women, the Gardener,  
Envisions the land to be a calm, peaceful, lovely place  
That embraces neither the fierce, majesty of the hawk  
Nor the violent death of the squirrel.

I am the Spirit of this land, Holder of both the  
Gardener's everyday realm  
And the almost infinitely complex world of the Garden's  
Real nature and all the beings who live in it  
From bacteria to humans, from fern spores to maple trees  
three feet in diameter, from sparrows to owls.

Propelled by the sight of the hawk and squirrel  
Into an instant of understanding that the Garden was not  
only  
What she had created and conceived it to be  
But also a place much more than she could imagine  
And all she had ever desired,  
I levitated the Gardener's soul into the air  
And she saw her Garden with the eyes of the hawk.

She witnessed, in her orderly beds,  
The native and storebought flowers and herbs planted by  
her own hand.



And, amongst them, with wild abundance,  
More species than are known to human science  
Grown from seeds dropped from traveling birds or on the breeze  
Snakelike runners under the ground, roots burrowed deep in the soil  
Coming to life now that they are welcome.  
Woodchucks, foxes and cubs, squirrels, chipmunks, coyotes, and  
Millions of dragonflies, butterflies, mosquitoes, grubs, ladybugs  
Billions of one celled beings that are part of the  
Massive ecosystems that are plants and animals.  
All connected to hundreds or thousands of other beings  
by chemical communication  
By sound, taste, smell, and instinct and intuition.  
By my Spirit.

The taking of the squirrel was just one of millions of interactions  
Exchanges of life and death that happen everyday so that  
The entire web may exist in balance and well being.  
Birth, growth, life, and decay, the dance that enlivenes the universe  
Within that one-eighth acre landscape.

She closed her eyes and began to truly listen  
To the cacophony of all the beings in that small area of ground  
Each with its own voice and its own rhythm  
Seemingly, each struggling to make itself heard  
Amongst the chaos of so many other beings.

But then she listened even more deeply  
A united song began to emerge  
That of the Spirit of the Land itself.  
My Voice.

All the rhythms and melodies of all the beings  
As well as the soil, air, sun, and water that call the Land  
home  
Emerged into one rhythm and melody.  
“I can hear it!” the Gardener exclaimed,  
“With my own ears, I can hear it!”  
She had heard it every day since she had moved into the  
house  
But never perceived it because  
She had been taught that no realm existed  
In the world of daily human life  
Where such a song could make galaxies far away  
reverberate.

Then she heard her own voice  
And it was clearly a part of this symphony  
An essential element of the music and without it  
The Land’s song would be not just different  
But incomplete, not fully alive.  
She began to sing with her throat  
So anyone walking down the sidewalk  
On their way home from work or school could hear.  
She sang to the land, sang to it a love song and a lullaby  
A chant of praise and thanksgiving.  
She told the Land of her longing to be part of its true  
being for so long  
And all the while she had never been apart from it.  
The Land, My voice, listened and responded,

altering its song to harmonize even more closely with hers.

At that moment she knew what the Spirit of the Land was,

Who I was.

I am the relationship between all the living beings,

I am that eternal aspect of them all, including the

Gardener,

That exists beyond physical birth, life, and death.

I am the web that connects all.

And so the Gardener came to know what I had sent the hawk to tell her.

She is never alone in her garden or anywhere else on Earth.

So many times she had come instinctively to the Garden

When in mourning, in depression, when feeling all was lost.

Even without being able to speak it, she had always known that

In that place she is of a loving, vital community

That is as real as the bond which connects the hawk and the squirrel.

She plants the herbs, she eat the herbs

She nourishes the trees with water and compost

That shade her in summer and delight her eyes and soul in winter.

The Land gives back to her physical life

But also the very Divinity that makes life meaningful and real.

She is the Gardener, but also the Healer,

She began singing to the Land  
Every morning. Embracing me with her voice.  
Her voice which is also My Voice.

She blames herself for how generations before her  
Laid waste to the Land,  
Believing that she will be the last generation to feel the  
gentle sun on her skin,  
Taste the sweetness of the Earth's bounty, run against the  
gravity that connects  
Her flesh to the soil and might of the ground.

But I know her spirit is true, she and all those of her time  
have been born to  
Sing their place among all beings to make the Earth  
whole again,  
Even if only one small patch at a time.  
With the power and sureness of the hawk and  
The industry and perseverance of the squirrel  
They will do what they must do. They will sing with their  
voices,  
Their actions, their determination and their passion  
So that life will continue.  
And never again will they believe they are alone for they  
will  
Always and forever sing with Me the Song  
That We have sung in all times so that there will Always  
be a Forever.

# About the Author



For about 40 years, I have written stories, poems, memoirs, features, reviews and other pieces for a variety of women's literary, art, and spirituality publications. My work has appeared in *The Goddess Pages*, *Feminism and Religion*, *SageWoman*, *Moondance*, the *We'Moon* calendars, *Matrifocus*, *The Beltane Papers*, and *Women Artists News*, and in a number of book anthologies, among others. I have also given readings and workshops. I see my

writing as a bridge between everyday life now and a world where all people believe that they and all other beings are sacred, everyone is respected for who they are, love is unconditional, and creativity is an everyday occurrence. I am also a student jazz/rock/funk/you-name-it drummer and plan to intertwine that with my writing in the future. For 30 years, I was a public health and social services professional working with vulnerable people in urban, suburban and rural areas, an experience which has greatly influenced my thinking and writing. I grew up in Michigan, but now live in New England. To contact me or see more of my writings, go to [www.goddessinateapot.com](http://www.goddessinateapot.com).