

Poetry in the Cut:
Harvests of Loss and Consolation in the Poetry of Jane Kenyon

*“The juncture of twig and branch,
Scarred with lichen, is a gate
We might enter, singing.”*
Jane Kenyon, “Things”¹

Poetry is an act of looking, of intense and resonant perception. Through the intensity of this gate of perception, this linguistically delineated space-between, the world and the self are known, are drawn into a sphere of mutual articulation and illumination. However, as the Lacanian notion of the mirror stage suggests,² with its emphasis upon the possibilities of two-way seeing, in order to perceive an other, one must first see the self as bounded, limited, and as constituted by a foundational experience of schism and lack which haunts and informs any provisional subject position. In this vital sense, the poem derives from and extends the losses and the possibilities inherent within the mirror stage, calling the reader to look intently not only at the view of a contingent self which is offered, but at the world of exteriority which reflects, sustains, is both intimately connected to and separate from the point of perception. To enter into such a transitional and transformational space of perception is to simultaneously look at the other and to turn the mirror upon one’s self – thereby recognising the fracturing of light and loss in which self and other are formulated. The refracting yet focalising mirror of the poetic thus offers us the inter-dependent possibilities of shape and future, as well as the shades of lack and grief.

We live in the cut, the lurch and fall between imagined and desired perfection and the inevitable collisions with the wounding shards of the partial, the fissures between the possibilities of self and other. In this sense, confrontation with loss marks the human condition: how we negotiate the experience of this cut, whether we pass through the gate of change singing or raging will, in large part, determine both our individual emotional well-being and the possibilities of ethical relationship. Through reference to three of American Jane Kenyon’s lyric poems, “Twilight: After Haying,” “Things” and “Let Evening Come,” this paper will offer an account of the ways in which the luminous specificity of the poetic image, as a concentrated pivot of perception, can facilitate and even enact the life-affirming, at least partially consoling, work of mourning – by which I mean that difficult, repetitive, incremental business of grieving the impermanence of the object in time, and of finding an integrated acknowledgment of loss which neither denies its capacity for unsignifiable trauma, nor is overwhelmed by its death-bearing tides of melancholia. As the poet Mary Oliver puts it, “Oh, to love what is lovely, and will not last!”³ Poetry has the capacity to offer us the luminosity of the beautiful, the image which refracts, challenges, inspires us to see in a different way. Such seeing will always involve a recognition on some level of limit and impending loss, making the poem a site of entwined mourning and celebration, of delight in the specificity of the image in the full knowledge of its transience.

In this discussion I use the term “mourning” to describe this activity of negotiating such a cut, of building good-enough bridges across the aporia of loss. As first articulated by Freud,⁴ mourning is not just uncontrollable lament, but rather, a series of acts produced by conscious as well as unconscious desires, which are predicated upon psychic responses to loss and which seek symbolisation. Such acts, or constellated events of mourning, recognise the past and the pain which it has occasioned, yet also work to draw it into possible and productive relation with the present and the future. Mourning is also the process by which the grieving self strives to disentangle from melancholic identifications and, repeatedly and incrementally, to come to an acceptance of lack within an always provisional subjectivity.

To enquire into the nature of grief and mourning is thus to enquire both into the question of individual subjectivity as well as the fundamental nature and relation of self and other as the underlying ethics upon which any notion of the *polis*, or indeed *communitas*, is constructed. The self which mourns loss - which recognises both the persistent ties of attachment and the inevitability of the tearing of those ties, the visceral wounds which come about as a consequence of the abrasion of those shared surfaces - that mourning self is beginning, with difficulty, and tentatively, to understand itself in the terms of its intimate and ultimately painful relationship with the other/s which defines and delimits it. In confronting loss in the form of alterity, we come to recognise the same aporia, the same speechless hole which informs our own most hopeful edifice of subjectivity. Thus, while to grieve is to adopt an ethical position in relation to the other, it is also to reflexively consider the position of subjectivity itself, of the inextricable relation of the self to the other and the extent to which that bond is characterised by the blend of ambivalence, anxiety, compassion, need and demand which we know as “love.”⁵

To mourn then is to be engaged in a starkly realist while also profoundly creative and restorative activity. In this sense, mourning is a protracted labour which operates at both conscious and unconscious levels, involving the subject, always incipiently destabilised by grief, in a potentially cathartic, dialectical movement between present and past, between the wounded self and the other which it experiences as torn from it. Akin to the process of physiological pregnancy and childbirth, the labours of mourning can be seen as a *productive* form of pain, a work in which an other is produced, differentiated, finally both adhered to and lost. Here I will argue that the language of poetry, predicated upon association, evocation, and what Kenyon refers to as the “engine” of metaphor,⁶ provides an enabling frame across which such labours can be partially brought into the field of signification, one which allows for suggestion and possibility but which generally resists the violence of classification and definition. Poetry is a discourse which is itself a gateway and a bridge, a language paradoxically studded with the multiple possibilities of silence, as well as a web of silence invariably punctuated with the possibilities of articulation.

One of the key ways in which mourning can be enacted, or facilitated, is through the repetitive, often ritualistic uses of language - in so doing, we visit, and re-visit the sites of loss and pain, each time surveying that fearful yet inevitable territory, each time, at least ideally, accepting and understanding their significance a little more. Like the child with the cotton reel in the *fort-da* game, our use of language operates to some extent as a complex way of chronicling change, and our responses to it, as well as at least apparently re-gaining some degree of the agency which trauma had stripped from us. To speak, to find the words to respond and to articulate the aporia of loss, the silence of shock and absence, is to trace the pattern of what is implicitly there, as it is also to shape, to creatively map our selves into the fabric of the world around us. With its emphasis upon association and metaphor, upon the shimmering suggestiveness of the image, poetry is, I argue, a linguistic mode which is particularly amenable to these kinds of complex, multi-directional articulations of loss. Indeed, it could be claimed that poetry is the proto-typical language of mourning, the language which best suggests mourning’s journey through the ambivalent fields of silence and speech, the enmeshed conflicts between the desire to continue in life in spite of the cruel experience of loss and the desire to identify with that which is lost, to take the drear path down, and into depressive silence and death. Also, rather than attempting to exhaustively document what is lost, the precise nature of the catastrophic rupture of an apparently intact world, poetic language instead offers an “encirclement of trauma,”⁸ a linguistic mode which suggestively delineates or evokes a space of unspeakability, of that which cannot be signified within consciousness and discourse, without attempting such appropriation. This space of unspeakability is potentially characterised by a complex of emotions: by longing for an idealised lost place or loved one (or One), by an anger fuelled by dependence on that loved other, by the meagre circumstances of a life “fallen” from its ideal, by a profound anxiety about abandonment and death, by the contradictory impulses toward silence and the impulse to sing, to make a Kaddish of acceptance. Such a “singing” of the lyric poem - its aesthetic approximations of the rhythm and pitch of the emotions, its semiotic traces - is not only an acknowledgement of loss, but importantly is an offering of consolation. In the act of con-soling the poem stands with, and beside the experience of loss

– a marker which hauls the asymbolia of trauma into the sound of a word. Like the incarcerated monkeys which Kenyon describes in the poem “Cages,” consolation may be partial, but it’s all we have. We may imagine that the other has some kind of supreme power to comfort, but in fact what is available is the proximity of body to body, the sharing of the constrained experience of limitation and desire:

And one lies in the lap of another.
They look like Mary and Jesus
in the Pietà, one searching for fleas
or lice on the other, for succour
on the body of the other –
some particle of comfort, some
consolation for being in this life.
(*CP*, p. 39)

Poetic language is a powerful and highly appropriate mode for these kinds of explorations and externalisations – for the hoped-for transformation of the unarticulateable tidal waves of grief and trauma into the more structured and consciously modified labours of mourning and the concomitant possibilities of consolation. Poetry arises within the crises of longing, in an experience of the self which is dislocated from some real or imagined point of home or origin. In this sense, it is a mode which speaks of what is only partially available to articulation, moving bi-directionally and ambiguously both toward and away from the site of limit and lack, and thereby producing a speech which is profoundly redolent with the silences which underpin it.

Jane Kenyon’s poems “Twilight: After Haying,” “Things” and “Let Evening Come,” use the evocativeness of the image - the “art of the “luminous particular,” as Donald Hall put it¹⁰ - to take the reader to that site of bi-directionality, the place of mourning which is characterised by Eliot’s dialectic of “memory and desire.”¹⁰ In “Twilight: After Haying,” Kenyon evokes not only the liminal sphere of twilight itself, where the world shifts - gently or violently - from the delineations of the light into whatever it is that the darkness might represent, but also the transitional season of autumn. As has been noted, “Twilight: After Haying” (*CP*, p.135), explicitly echoes the harvest poems of the Romantics, in particular Keats’ “To Autumn,” or even Rilke’s later “Autumn Day,” in its evocation of the season which speaks of both plenty and of closure, of a drawing in of the fruits of labour in a way which takes account of both what has gone before, what is lost, and what is to come and must be prepared for:

Yes, long shadows go out
from the bales; and yes, the soul
must part from the body:
what else could it do?

The men sprawl near the baler,
too tired to leave the field.
They talk and smoke,
and the tips of their cigarettes
blaze like small roses
in the night air. (It arrived
and settled among them
before they were aware.)

The moon comes
to count the bales,
and the dispossessed –
Whip-poor-will, Whip-poor-will
- sings from the dusty stubble.

These things happen...the soul’s bliss
and suffering are bound together

like the grasses...

The last, sweet exhalations
of timothy and vetch
go out with the song of the bird;
the ravaged field
grows wet with dew.

The poem is, according to Roberta White, “a singing in the face of dispossession, in which the tension is between acceptance of change and loss and our natural inclination to defy them, between clinging to life and letting go.”¹¹ “Twilight: After Haying” is a poem about the nature of the relation between presence and absence, between an object and its shadow, a day’s labour in the grasses and a quiet moment in the “night air,” growing “wet with dew,” where the men’s “cigarettes/blaze like small roses.” It is also clearly, like Keats’ poem, both about the nature of poetic endeavour – the paying attention to the small details of the world through the mechanisms of the poetic image - together with a recognition that such a stitching together of images of perception, like the gathering of the grasses, constitutes a labour of mourning, where the shadows of death and grieving are bundled together with the sheaves of plenty. There is an element of explicit grieving in this poem – “the soul / must part from the body” – yet there is also a strong sense of acceptance, of acquiescence: “what else could it do/....These things happen.” Indeed the hiatus of this twilight, after the bales have been gathered and bound, is almost rendered as a sphere of enchantment which, like tales of fairy rings, operates ambiguously, offering ecstatic visions of alterity which are nevertheless implicitly metonymic of death, coming with the risk of failure to ever return from the night and re-inhabit the preciousness of our ordinary lives. Even the poem’s title emphasizes this forward and backward facing movement which is characteristic of the work of mourning – the twilight that grieves what is left behind and lost, and the haying which emblematises a future which is constructed, made artifice, forged from the very materials of transience and loss.

There is also an evocation of the night air as akin to that something which “breaks in upon” – “(It arrived/and settled among them/before they were aware.)” Like the wings of a bat or an angel, even like the coming of the Holy Spirit, a grace of alterity and of perception and acceptance settles among these harvesters like the sweet darkness of the night air. It certainly brings dispossession – no more in the light of summer and of life - and even violent loss as the field is “ravaged,” despoiled by the very seasonality which is both its shadow and its promise of continuity; yet it also recognizes such cyclical change as part of the business of being in the world. The “last sweet exhalations/of timothy and vetch” will lead to a field “wet with dew,” and all the promise that only loss and change can bring.

Kenyon’s earlier poem “Things” (*CP*, p. 139), offers a powerful articulation of the central paradox of self and other, life and death, as it is seen throughout Kenyon’s poetic in the interplay of imagery of light and dark – here, once again in the context of the specific image, the “things” which are perceived as outside the self, yet which are drawn into intimate relation with that self through the process of being seen, delineated as image. As White comments, this poem’s attention to the cascade of specificity beginning in a chook-yard inevitably echoes Williams’ “The Red Wheelbarrow” in its evocative elaboration of cyclic dependency - “dependencies involving nature, time, beauty, art, and the way things are.”¹² Indeed, both poems draw attention to a fundamental question regarding the nature of poetry itself, taking us explicitly to that forward and backward facing gateway of perception: when does image depend upon looking, when does looking, and its subsequent makings, depend upon the object, or upon the possibilities of the imagination? Kenyon’s poem also echoes Ecclesiastes’ celebration of acceptance and fittingness where, for everything in the human and temporal sphere, there must be a season, a beginning, a moment, an inevitable limit:

The hen flings a single pebble aside
with her yellow, reptilian foot.
Never in eternity the same sound –
a small stone falling on a red leaf.

The juncture of twig and branch,
scarred with lichen, is a gate
we might enter, singing.

The mouse pulls batting
from a hundred-year-old quilt.
She chewed a hole in a blue star
to get it, and now she thrives...
Now is her time to thrive.

Things: simply lasting, then
Failing to last: water, a blue heron's
eye, and the light passing
between them: into light all things
must fall, glad at last to have fallen.

This "juncture of twig and branch,/scarred with lichen" is indeed paradigmatically "a gate" – that point of intense perception, transition and integration that becomes available to the reader through the concentration of the poetic image. "Look! Look *here!*" it calls us, if we are paying attention. It is the specificity of the image which will offer us a way through the miasma of loss, which has, by means of its aesthetic and emotional distillation, the capacity both to refract and to hold the schisms which it delineates – the self who perceives and the "things," the other which is perceived; the movements and losses of the past, implicit in the limitations of the "now," the transitory moment in which "to thrive"; the light which clarifies yet which is also subject to dimming, to the inevitable absorptions of "falling."

As critic Brett Dolenc has argued, this is a poem not only about the self-reflexive makings of poetry, about the minutiae of the natural image which constitute the creative perceptions and shaping of the poet; it is also a poem about finding a peace and an acceptance of death, of the inevitability of endings:

...in "Things," amidst the inevitable chaos and turmoil of life [Kenyon] is ready to lay down the weight. The mouse in the second stanza has its season to thrive, but it will be glad, like the bird and the poet, to have fallen at last. The cycle continues...and if we ask, 'Fallen where to?' we find it is into the light, Kenyon's final place of quiet.¹³

In the poem "Notes from the Other Side" (*CP*, p.267), in an ironic strategy reminiscent of Emily Dickinson's "I heard a fly buzz when I died," Kenyon also adopts a persona who speaks from the far shore of death. From such a perspective, relief is possible - "now there is no more catching/one's own eye in the mirror,/there are no bad books, no plastic" – in addition to the comfort of ontological certainty, the fulfilment of a promise only glimpsed in the physical world: "and God, as promised, proves/to be mercy clothed in light." Light may always function within Kenyon's poetry as such a trace of transcendence, of ultimate rest, of a final falling into the white light of what is both oblivion and perfect clarity.¹⁴ However, as the images in her poetry make us repeatedly aware, we do only have our embodied perspective, no matter what else we may hope or have faith in. And in our physical lives, our embodied experiences within the cycles of loss and resurgence which characterize the natural world, light is linked always with darkness; indeed the flecked possibilities of the light are readable only through their interplay and contrast with the shadows which sustain and facilitate them.

In the poem "Afternoon at MacDowell" (*CP*, p. 287), Kenyon writes poignantly at a time when Hall himself was struggling with cancer¹⁵:

I believe in the miracles of art, but what
prodigy will keep you safe beside me

The art of poetry offers both Kenyon and her readers such "miracles" of comfort: of attention to the beauty of the image, those threads of light and of looking which locate and shape our sustainable position in the world; as well as the possibilities of connection, of

profound emotional and linguistic communication with another body in this fallen and falling life of light and shadow. It is a comfort which must nevertheless negotiate the fissures of absolute loss – Hall may have died, become the “sarcophagus” which she feared in “Pharaoh” (*CP*, p. 265), just as Kenyon herself was so soon and unexpectedly to die, to move out of and/or into a world of light. While the ecstatic thrush in the poem “Having It Out With Melancholy” may, for a medicated moment appear to have a “bright unequivocal eye” (*CP*, p. 231), every “thing” which the poet perceives can be only in the world of equivocation, where light can offer clarity and the blinding glare of death, and where the “black air,” as in the poem “For the Night,” can suggest darkness, loss, transition, as well as a risky falling into “vision.”

The passage from daylight into night, as a luminous image of bi-directional transition which metonymises the poem’s role in a labour of mourning, is also famously rendered in Kenyon’s prayer-like poem of acceptance and of the consolations of art, “Let Evening Come” (*CP*, p.213). As Molly Peacock notes, it is a poem which brings the reader to a position of stillness by means of its multiple emphases upon steady rhythm, repetitions of sounds and phrases, as well as focus upon the shimmering centrality of images of ordinariness and continuity:

Sound...carries emotion in a poem in a nearly kinesthetic way. How the poem feels to your tongue and teeth – the consonants, the vowels, the loudness and softness of syllables – is the embodiment of the feelings that sounds evoke. We think poems are about life in language, but they are, as importantly, about nonlanguage, the preverbal experience of emotion, of being.¹⁶

Here the effects of sound and image combine to generate an acceptance which operates on the level of the extra-rational as well as the rational - the emotional and the visceral responses of embodiment. It implicitly acknowledges that there will be grief at this passing of the light, but the effect of the poem’s structure is to draw attention to the liminal site of late afternoon into evening as being one of change, collapse and possibility - as each thing closes another will open, and the promise of another time and season feeds upon the demise of this day.

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through the chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

As already suggested in “Twilight: After Haying,” the poet exhorts her reader to choose not to rage against this movement, this inevitable changing of the light and of the temporal which it symbolizes – “Let it come,” repeats the voice of compassion, with a wisdom that perhaps arises from an experience of chafing and raging but which now urges a kind of integration into these greater patterns of life and death, shadow and light, which “arrive[]/and settle[] among [us]” (*CP*, p.135). The poem is not a plea for passivity and resignation – but rather calls for an engagement of the imagination, for the perception which sees the change from light to dark as potential synapse, as a focusing of creative energy, rather than as an abyss, a configuration of emptiness. As “a woman takes up her needles/and her yarn,” so too does the poem enact a creative poesis, a making which threads the perceptions of the ordinary into the fabric of life’s infinite possibilities. There is much that can be done, the poem suggests, just as there is much which must exceed us, which requires close observation rather than fighting against:

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.

Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

This active voice of the imagination is reinforced by the variation in the second last stanza – the poet nominates the objects of the ordinary world as being as much a part of these patterns of light and darkness, hope and loss, as is the implied reader. Evening comes like a gift, like a deep filling of the lungs with the air that sustains, emphasising again that the thing which gives is also the thing which takes away, and that which comes in on the flow of the temporal will also go out:

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Peacock notes how the poem's patterns of comfort, built upon repetitions and the invocation of "Let" are varied, and thus challenged, in its final stanzas: "When I come to the penultimate stanza...I feel how Kenyon quickens the language, growing the poem off the trellis of its language...She quietly shows that there must be a shift from pattern to conclusion, an opening into what is beyond the scaffolding that repetition makes yet can be discovered only because limits are set: the sudden perspective of grace."¹⁷ And while the final stanza may seem like a conclusion of comfort or consolation, an affirmation that "God" will not "leave us comfortless," the enjambment of the second last line also asserts the very possibility of desertion. In other words, it may be that the very God who has seemed manifest in every leaf and path and emotional connection between humans, and who is thus invoked in the perceptions of the poem, will in fact leave us, with or without any substitutes to distract or comfort us. It is an abandonment which haunts even the plenitude of "Let Evening Come," as a prayer of faith; it is a nightmare possibility that Kenyon also confronts explicitly in her late poem "Woman, Why Are You Weeping," after witnessing the scale of human suffering in India, and her subsequent loss of confidence in her own western concepts of spirituality and religion. At the image of the body of a girl child floating in the Ganges, she anguishes:

"What shall we do about this?" I asked
my God, who even then was leaving me. The reply
was scorching wind, lapping of water, pull
of the black oarsmen on the oars...
(*CP*, p.296)

The voice in "Let Evening Come" is perhaps not so antithetically opposed to this horror of meaninglessness and silence as it may seem. Even in an affirmation of faith – of emotional trust in the beneficence of what lies beyond the narrow barn of the self – there must be, in almost equal part, a fear of falling into a darkness of irredeemable desolation. "Don't /be afraid," the poem soothes itself and its reader, knowing painfully how much there is to be afraid of. And yet as the final lines affirm, we are not left "comfortless," even if that comfort is again only partial, a thin membrane to draw across a pall of darkness. Even in the fall into black air, there will still be the comforts of the image, the visceral sounds of the body, the pulse of the emotions, which can be woven into the harvest of the poem – "so let evening come."

In these poems, Jane Kenyon offers an ethics for living as well as for the production of poetry. According to this view, poetry is a key mode which enables us to look and to listen to the precision of complex images, and to the possibilities of renewal implicit in the cycles of the natural world. Focusing the attention of the reader down to the precision and the luminous beauty of the specific image, Kenyon's poetry pivots upon the small voices of perception which reveal, always only partially and momentarily, the productive nexus of spring and fall, light and dark, loss and consolation – both acknowledging and seeking to

avoid the ever-beckoning ravines of loss, the fall into the melancholic cut.

Poetry such as Kenyon's takes us to the "juncture of twig and branch," a place of personal transition and of entry into the richness and the constraints of the social. To stand at that crucial gate, to look out upon the "things" of the world and to draw them into the images and significations of the poem, is to place the self in articulated and dynamic relation to the other. The poem reflects that act of listening, of paying humble attention to what lies beyond us, as it also an act of speaking and interpreting, of mourning and thus shaping the complex and always fractured relation between self and the world of alterity.

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Footnotes

- [1](#) Jane Kenyon, "Things," *Collected Poems*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2005, p.139. Abbreviated as *CP*.
- [2](#) Cf Jacques Lacan, (1949), (trans.) Alan Sheridan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience," *Ecrits: A Selection*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1977, pp. 1-7.
- [3](#) Mary Oliver, "Snow Geese," *New and Selected Poems, Volume Two*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005, p. 82.
- [4](#) Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1915), James Strachey (trans.) *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis, Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 11. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984, pp. 245-268.
- [5](#) Cf Melanie Klein's description of the complexity of the emotion we call "love," with its disturbing proximity to dependence, resentment, guilt, and greed, in "Love, Guilt and Reparation," (1936), Klein and Joan Riviere, *Love, Hate and Reparation*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1964, pp.57-119.
- [6](#) Jane Kenyon, "Everything I Know About Writing Poetry," *A Hundred White Daffodils: Essays, Interviews, The Akhmatova Translations, Newspaper Columns and One Poem*. (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1999), p.139.
- [7](#) Cf Freud's well-known discussion of this game as: a desperate response to loss, involving repetition rather than cathartic recollection; an attempt to gain apparent mastery over the vulnerabilities of loss by a repetition which enacts and enables, rather than merely responds; revenge upon the abandoning parent; a comfort which arises out of the production of art/artifice as a creative way of managing the inevitable experience of lack. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," (1920), *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 283-287.
- [8](#) Slavoj Zizek. *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London, Verso, 1991.
- [9](#) Donald Hall, "Introduction," *A Hundred White Daffodils*, p. x.
- [10](#) T.S. Eliot, "The Wasteland" (1922), *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. London: Faber and Faber, 1963, p. 63.
- [11](#) Roberta White, "It could be for beauty...': Poetics in *The Boat of Quiet Hours*," *Bright Unequivocal Eye': Poems, Papers, and Remembrances from the First Jane Kenyon Conference*. (ed.) Bert G. Hornbeck. (New York: Peter Lang, 2000),p. 52.
- [12](#) Roberta White, "It could be for beauty," *Bright Unequivocal Eye*, p. 50.
- [13](#) Brett Dolenc, "Emphasis: The Placement of 'Killing the Plants' in *The Book of Quiet Hours*," *Bright Unequivocal Eye*, p.117.
- [14](#) Cf Gwen Harwood's reference to the "world of light" in her poem "Heronsgate," with its echo of Vaughan's use of it as signifying both life and death; *Collected Poems 1943-1995*, Gregory Kratzmann and Alison Hoddinott (eds.) St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 2003, p. 481; and Henry Vaughan, "They Are All Gone into the World of Light," *Seventeenth Century Poetry: The Schools of Donne and Jonson* (ed. Hugh Kenner). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, p.268.
- [15](#) Ironically, these lines, written by Kenyon for Hall, are now inscribed on her own tombstone.
- [16](#) Molly Peacock, from "A Comfort Poem," *Simply Lasting: Writers on Jane Kenyon*, (ed.)

Joyce Peseroff, (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2005), p.186.

[17](#) Ibid., p. 190.