

Poetry Series

**Patti Masterman**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2020

**Publisher:**

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Patti Masterman()

All the words that I gather,  
And all the words that I write,  
Must spread out their wings untiring,  
And never rest in their flight,

Till they come where your sad, sad heart is,  
And sing to you in the night,  
Beyond where the waters are moving,  
Storm darkened or starry bright.

~ W. B. Yeats

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## Tell All the Truth

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise  
As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind —

— EMILY DICKINSON

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In God, some say, there is a deep but dazzling darkness-  
That hides his face, like an ocean hides a seed;  
And none can say, if it's full or if it's empty,  
For all our knowing's like wind through hollow reeds.

\*\*\*\*\*

The words still live, though flesh must die;  
Soft rot, like pumpkins left to lie,  
While objects coarse succeed our death-

Naught is left of our brief bequests.

But up in heaven, in god's own eye  
Is a sparkle, that is loath to die-  
And if god wills it- if god weens-  
That tiny light may still be seen.

\*\*\*\*\*

You are your own tragedy. You are your own exaltation, in a hall of mirrors,  
where everyone lives in the same parameters.

\*\*\*\*\*

My words have fluttered away like skittish butterflies;  
All my dark obsessions, and intimations of light  
Mixing in the free world, finding their own way  
To places I will never be admitted.

\*\*\*\*\*

THIS means you

I sit before a brilliant sheet of paper.  
You are going to write a fine poem, I say:  
This means you.

Left and right, I cast about;  
The words elusive, will not show,  
The clocks hands running  
Fast and slow.

I sit and study, lean and blink;  
Everything's asleep, I think.  
Sun goes higher, sun goes down-  
And look: I have become a clown.

I go to bed, I sleep and mutter;  
Even dreaming, words are stutters..  
Awake, to do it all again-  
Writing, you just cannot win.

I sit before a brilliant sheet of paper.  
You are going to write a fine poem, I say:  
This means you.

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When you are dead, he said, people will find a big pile of sheets of paper; all of  
your poems..Then I  
just had to smile.

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God, please let me see with my heart.  
Heaven alone knows how much I have missed just using my eyes.

\*\*\*\*\*

Urim and Thummim near his heart,  
In rich engravings worn;  
The sacred light of truth impart,  
To teach and to adorn. ~ John Newton,  
The True Aaron

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#### THE CHRISTMAS LETTER by John M Morris

Wherever you are when you receive this letter  
I write to say we are still ourselves  
In the same place  
And hope you are the same.

The dead have died as you know  
And will never get better,  
And the children are boys and girls  
Of their several ages and names.

So in closing I send you our love  
And hope to hear from you soon.  
There is never a time  
Like the present. It lasts forever  
Wherever you are. As ever I remain.

\*\*\*\*\*

Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven,  
And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

Revelation 10

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A nostalgia for being..

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The sound of writing a poem Morning by Robert Creeley

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'The truth is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution.'

-Albus Dumbledore

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The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion. – Albert Camus

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My line breaks before my brain  
Has amply time-adjusted,  
To stop the flow of threadbare thoughts  
With which my pen has lusted.

\*\*\*\*\*

lines from  
Poem to Be Danced

By Helen Hoyt

From "City Pastorals"

CAN a poem say my heart □  
While I stand still apart? □  
I myself would be the song, □  
I myself would be the rhyme, □  
Moving delicately along; □ 5  
And my steps would make the time, □  
And the stanzas be my rest.

\*\*\*\*\*

Perhaps I aim too high in writing and fall flat.  
At least I could not be faulted, for failing to take a leap.;

\*\*\*\*\*

WEAVE IN, MY HARDY LIFE by Walt Whitman

Weave in, weave in, my hardy life, Weave yet a soldier strong and full for great campaigns to come, Weave in red blood, weave sinews in like ropes, the senses, sight weave in, Weave lasting sure, weave day and night the weft, the warp, incessant weave, tire not We know not what the use O life, nor know the aim, the end, nor really aught we know, But know the work, the need goes on and shall go on, the death-envelop'd march of peace as well as war goes on, For great campaigns of peace the same the wiry threads to weave, We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.

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'I read your heart in a book'~ Carl Sandburg

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"And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it."

~Roald Dahl

\*\*\*\*\*

"For ordinary books are like meteors. Each of them has only one moment, a moment when it soars screaming like the phoenix, all its pages aflame. For that single moment we love them ever after, although they soon turn to ashes. With bitter resignation we sometimes wander late at night through the extinct pages that tell their stone dead messages like wooden rosary beads."~ Bruno Schulz, The Book

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We are put here for a little space that we may learn how to bear the beams of love ~ William Blake

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'Poetry is the devil's wine.' - St. Augustine

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'..These are the delicate demolitions of living,  
destroying dreams and  
slowly tearing each man apart,  
until he is completely gone;  
even his words burnt away,  
ashes upon the wind,  
scattered unto the ends of the earth,  
for better or for worse...'~ Smoky Hoss of PH

\*\*\*\*\*

...because every day is a holiday and celebrate we must

Heart's Holiday

by Grace Fallow Norton

WITHOUT, a city's whirling dust, □

A city's alley-wall; □  
Without, a bleak, pale strip of sky.□  
Within, high festival.□

Without, no greeting between friends, □  
From the hurrying crowd no smile.□  
Within, my heart's slow pageant moves□  
In glorious solemn file.□

There was no call for revel. Day, □  
Who summons us each morn, □  
Came forth in dreariest garb and blew□  
No gala herald-horn.□

But slave of day I am not—nay, □  
Her mistress still, I wield□  
The crystal sceptre of my mood, □  
Bearing my dream's white shield.□

Exultant, rapture-flooded, mad□  
With mystic inner mirth, □  
My heart holds her strange carnival□  
Unseen of all the earth.□

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“Wear your heart on your skin in this life.”  
—Sylvia Plath, Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams

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“I want to get back to my more normal intermediate path where the substance of the world is permeated by my being: eating food, reading, writing, talking, shopping: so all is good in itself, and not just a hectic activity to cover up the fear that must face itself and duel itself to death, saying: A Life is Passing! ”  
—Sylvia Plath, “Cambridge Notes”

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HOW TO WRITE GOOD

1. Avoid Alliteration Always
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. The passive voice is to be avoided.
4. Avoid cliches like the plague. They're old hat.
5. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
6. Writers should never generalize.

Seven: Be Consistent

8. Don't use more words than necessary. It's highly superfluous.
9. Be more or less specific.

eration is a billion times worse than understatement.

\*\*\*\*\*

The past, the present, and the future walked into a bar. It was tense.

\*\*\*\*\*

Supreme Laughter By Travis Hoke

MEN laugh□  
 When boys stand in the street□  
 And fight because each fears the other—□  
 For no other reason.□

Men—millions—□  
 Stand in the gutter of the world□  
 And fight—□

If God has a sense of humor—□

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If I lose the light of the sun, I will write by candlelight, moonlight, no light  
If I lose paper and ink, I will write in blood on forgotten walls  
I will write always  
I will capture nights all over the world and bring them to you. ~ Henry Rollins

\*\*\*\*\*

## Unmitigated Verse

"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all." O. Wilde

'If you hold a cat by the tail you learn things that you cannot learn any other way.' - Mark Twain.

Know the nature of things and you will know what they  
will do. Know the nature of self, and you will know what you will become.

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$S = k \log W$

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Though I am the algorithm  
for dust into dust,  
And though they may say  
life arose because it must

In my body, long-dead suns still slumber on-  
And in my heart, beats a universe's song.

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The anthem of my teenage years

brought to you straight from Walt Whitman,

## WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

Come lovely and soothing death, Undulate round the world, serenely arriving,  
arriving, In the day, in the night, to all, to each, Sooner or later delicate death.  
Prais'd be the fathomless universe, For life and joy, and for objects and  
knowledge curious, And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise! For the  
sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet, Have none chanted for thee a  
chant of fullest welcome? Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all, I bring  
thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress, When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously  
sing the dead, Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee, Laved in the flood of thy  
bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades, Dances for thee I propose saluting thee,  
adornments and feastings for thee, And the sights of the open landscape and the  
high-spread sky are fitting, And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful  
night.

The night in silence under many a star, The ocean shore and the husky  
whispering wave whose voice I know, And the soul turning to thee O vast and  
well-veil'd death, And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song, Over the rising and sinking waves, over  
the myriad fields and the prairies wide, Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the  
teeming wharves and ways, I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

\*\*\*\*\*

William Butler Yeats

The Cap and Bells

A QUEEN was beloved by a jester, □  
And once when the owls grew still □  
He made his soul go upward □  
And stand on her window sill. □

In a long and straight blue garment, □

It talked before morn was white, □  
And it had grown wise by thinking□  
Of a footfall hushed and light.□

But the young queen would not listen; □  
She rose in her pale nightgown, □  
She drew in the brightening casement□  
And pushed the brass bolt down.□

He bade his heart go to her, □  
When the bats cried out no more, □  
In a red and quivering garment□  
It sang to her through the door.□

The tongue of it sweet with dreaming□  
Of a flutter of flower-like hair, □  
But she took up her fan from the table□  
And waved it off on the air.□

'I've cap and bells, ' he pondered, □  
'I will send them to her and die.'□  
And as soon as the morn had whitened□  
He left them where she went by.□

She laid them upon her bosom, □  
Under a cloud of her hair, □  
And her red lips sang them a love song.□  
The stars grew out of the air.□

She opened her door and her window, □  
And the heart and the soul came through, □  
To her right hand came the red one, □  
To her left hand came the blue.□

They set up a noise like crickets, □  
A chattering wise and sweet, □  
And her hair was a folded flower, □  
And the quiet of love her feet.

\*\*\*\*\*□

Sun is red; moon is cracked

Daddy's never coming back  
Nothing's ever yours to keep  
Close your eyes, go to sleep  
If I die before you wake  
Don't you cry don't you weep  
Nothing's ever as it seems  
Climb the ladder to your dreams  
If I die before you wake  
Don't you cry; don't you weep  
Nothing's ever yours to keep  
Close your eyes; go to sleep

Tom Waits, Lullaby lyrics

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You might wonder how you avoid becoming lost in an infinite regress of watching  
your thoughts of watching your thoughts.  
These being my audible thoughts...

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Si vis pacem, para bellum

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To turn, to turn it will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right...  
- Shakers

\*\*\*\*\*

'A strong conviction that something must be done is the parent of many bad  
measures.' - Daniel Webster

\*\*\*\*\*

A way to understand how the stock market works

Once upon a time, in a place overrun with monkeys, a man appeared and announced to the villagers that he would buy monkeys for \$10 each. The villagers, seeing that there were many monkeys around, went out to the forest, and started catching them.

The man bought thousands at \$10 and as supply started to diminish, they became harder to catch, so the villagers stopped their effort.

The man then announced that he would now pay \$20 for each one. This renewed the efforts of the villagers and they started catching monkeys again. But soon the supply diminished even further and they were ever harder to catch, so people started going back to their farms and forgot about monkey catching.

The man increased his price to \$25 each and the supply of monkeys became so sparse that it was an effort to even see a monkey, much less catch one.

The man now announced that he would buy monkeys for \$50! However, since he had to go to the city on some business, his assistant would now buy on his behalf.

While the man was away the assistant told the villagers, "Look at all these monkeys in the big cage that the man has bought. I will sell them to you at \$35 each and when the man returns from the city, you can sell them to him for \$50 each."

The villagers rounded up all their savings and bought all the monkeys.

They never saw the man nor his assistant again, and once again there were monkeys everywhere.

Now you have a better understanding of how the stock market works.

\*\*\*\*\*

..While walking down the street one day a Senator was tragically hit by a car and died.

His soul arrives in heaven and is met by St. Peter at the entrance.

"Welcome to heaven, " says St.. Peter. "Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around these parts, you see, so we're not sure what to do with you."

"No problem, just let me in, " says the Senator.

"Well, I'd like to, but I have orders from the higher ups. What we'll do is have you spend one day in hell and one in heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity."

"Really? , I've made up my mind. I want to be in heaven, " says the Senator.

"I'm sorry, but we have our rules."

And with that, St. Peter escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell.

The doors open and he finds himself in the middle of a green golf course.

In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front of it are all his friends and other politicians who had worked with him.

Everyone is very happy and in evening dress. They run to greet him, shake his hand, and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the people.

They played a friendly game of golf and then dine on lobster, caviar and the finest champagne.

Also present is the devil, who really is a very friendly guy who is having a good time dancing and telling jokes.

They are all having such a good time that before the Senator realizes it, it is time to go.

Everyone gives him a hearty farewell and waves while the elevator rises.

The elevator goes up, up, up and the door reopens in heaven where St. Peter is waiting for him, "Now it's time to visit heaven..."

So, 24 hours passed with the Senator joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They have a good time and, before he realizes it, the 24 hours have gone by and St. Peter returns.

"Well, then, you've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity."

The Senator reflects for a minute, then he answers: "Well, I would never have said it before, I mean heaven has been delightful, but I think I would be better off in hell."

So St. Peter escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell...

Now the doors of the elevator open and he's in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage.

He sees all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the trash and putting it in black bags as more trash falls to the ground.

The devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulders.

"I don't understand, " stammers the Senator. "Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne, and danced and had a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What happened? "

The devil smiles at him and says,  
"Yesterday we were campaigning, Today, you voted.."

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Black Horse

'And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.<sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.' Revelation 6: 5-6

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### Boot Camp Chants

#### US ARMY CHANT ...

I went down to the market where all the women shop;  
I pulled out my machete and I begin to chop;  
I went down to the park where all the children play;  
I pulled out my machine gun and I begin to spray.

#### BLOOD ON THE RISERS

## Gory, Gory What a Helluva Way to Die

He was just a rookie trooper and he surely shook with fright,  
He checked off his equipment and made sure his pack was tight;  
He had to sit and listen to those awful engines roar,  
'You ain't gonna jump no more! '

### CHORUS

Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,  
With your rifle in your right hand as you're falling through the sky.  
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more!

'Is everybody happy? ' cried the Sergeant looking up,  
Our Hero feebly answered 'Yes, ' and then they stood him up;  
He jumped into the icy blast, his static line unhooked,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

### CHORUS

He counted long, he counted loud, he waited for the shock,  
He felt the wind, he felt the cold, he felt the awful drop,  
The silk from his reserve spilled out and wrapped around his legs,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

### CHORUS

The risers wrapped around his neck, connectors cracked his dome,  
Suspension lines were tied in knots around his skinny bones;  
The canopy became his shroud; he hurtled to the ground.  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

### CHORUS

The days he'd lived and loved and laughed kept running through his mind,  
He thought about the girl back home, the one he'd left behind;  
He thought about the medics, and wondered what they'd find,

And he ain't gonna jump no more.

#### CHORUS

The ambulance was on the spot, the jeeps were running wild,  
The medics jumped and screamed with glee, rolled up their sleeves and smiled,

For it had been a week or more since last a 'chute had failed,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

#### CHORUS

He hit the ground, the sound was 'SPLAT', his blood went spurting high;  
His comrades, they were heard to say 'A hell of a way to die! '  
He lay there, rolling 'round in the welter of his gore,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

#### CHORUS

slowly, solemnly; about half the speed of the other verses

There was blood upon the risers, there were brains upon the chute,  
Intestines were a-dangling from his paratrooper suit,  
He was a mess, they picked him up and poured him from his boots,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

#### CHORUS

And at the gates of heaven, to Saint Peter he shall tell,  
One more soldier reporting sir! I've served my time in hell,  
Saint Peter will just smile and say you have severed you country well,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more.,

Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,  
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,  
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,  
And he ain't gonna jump no more!

## HAIL OH HAIL OH INFANTRY ARMY CADENCE

'I'm a big bird in the sky all will jump and some will die, off to battle we will go,  
to live or die hell I don't know! '

Up in the morning out the rack  
Greeted at dawn with an early attack  
1st sgt. rushes me off the chow  
but i dont eat it anyhow

Hail oh Hail Oh infantry repeat  
CHORUS

Bring the battle or follow me  
An airborne ranger life for me  
where nothing in this world is freee

Im a big bird in the sky  
all will jump and some will die  
off to battle we will go  
to live or die hell i dont know

Chorus

Early at night its drizzling rain  
i am hit and feel no pain  
but in my heart I have no fear  
because my ranger God is here

Chorus

The mortars and artillery  
The screaming verse around me  
Jaggy shrapnel on the fly  
kills my buddy, makes me cry

Chorus

THE PRETTIEST GIRL I EVER SAW USMC

The prettiest girl  
i ever saw  
was sippin bourbon  
through a straw.

I picked her up, x2

i layed her down,  
her long black hair,  
layed all around

and now i have,  
a mother in law,  
and 14 kids,  
who call me pa

the moral of,  
the story is clear,  
instead of bourbon,  
stick to beer.

LIL YELLOW BIRDIE USMC

Lil yellow birdie with a lil yellow bill  
Landed on my window sill  
Lured him in with a lil piece a bread  
Then I crushed his lil f\*\*\*ing head  
Me oh my I am such a clutz  
I missed his head and hit his nutz

THERE WAS A GIRL WHO WORE A YELLOW RIBBON USMC

here was a girl who wore a yellow ribbon,  
She wore it in the spring time in the merry month of May.  
If you asked her why she wore that ribbon,  
She wore it for the young Marine so far, far, away.  
Far away, Far away,

She wore it for the young Marine so far, far, away.  
Around the block she pushed a baby carriage,  
She pushed it in the spring time in the merry month of May.  
If you asked her why the heck she pushed it,  
She pushed it for the young Marine so far, far, away.  
Far away, Far away,  
She pushed it for the young Marine so far, far, away.  
In her house her daddy has a shotgun,  
He has it in the spring time in the merry month of May.  
If you asked him why the heck he has it,  
He has it for the young Marine so far, far, away.  
Far away, Far away,  
He has it for the young Marine so far, far, away

\*\*\*\*\*

My hands are tied  
The billions shift from side to side  
And the wars go on with brainwashed pride  
For the love of god and our human rights  
And all these things are swept aside  
By bloody hands time can't deny  
And are washed away by your genocide  
And history hides the lies of our civil wars

D'you wear a black armband  
When they shot the man  
Who said "peace could last forever"  
And in my first memories  
They shot Kennedy  
I went numb when I learned to see  
So I never fell for Vietnam  
We got the wall of D.C. to remind us all  
That you can't trust freedom  
When it's not in your hands  
When everybody's fightin'  
For their promised land  
And

I don't need your civil war

It feeds the rich while it buries the poor  
Your power hungry sellin' soldiers  
In a human grocery store  
Ain't that fresh  
I don't need your civil war

- Guns and Roses "Civil War"

\*\*\*\*\*

Ladies and Gentleman, nobles and tramps  
Cross eyed Mosquitoes and bow legged ants.  
I come before you to stand behind you,  
to tell you a story I do not know.

One bright day in the middle of the night.  
Two dead boys got up to fight.  
Back to back they faced each other  
pulled out their swords and shot each other.

Near by a deaf policeman heard the noise,  
came by and shot the two dead boys.  
If you don't believe what I just told you,  
ask the blind man he saw it too.

not written by me, a passed on traditional American verse, as I understand it

\*\*\*\*\*

Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your  
mouth shut~  
Ernest Hemingway

\*\*\*\*\*

Henry Rollins Quotes

I believe that one defines oneself by reinvention. To not be like your parents. To  
not be like your friends. To be yourself. To cut yourself out of stone.

Scar tissue is stronger than regular tissue

The best revenge is to survive yourself

If I lose the light of the sun, I will write by candlelight, moonlight, no light  
If I lose paper and ink, I will write in blood on forgotten walls  
I will write always  
I will capture nights all over the world and bring them to you.

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Deng Xiaoping: 'Hide Your Strength, Bide Your Time.'

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Language is negotiated meaning

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Dylan Thomas....

The Force that Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower  
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees  
Is my destroyer.  
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose  
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks  
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams  
Turns mine to wax.  
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins  
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool  
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind  
Hauls my shroud sail.  
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man  
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;  
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood

Shall calm her sores.  
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind  
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb  
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

□

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As Ulysses observed  
'Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself'  
speare, Troilus & Cressida

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Homo homini lupus. Man is man's wolf.

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The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.  
Marcus Tullius Cicero

\*\*\*\*\*

Language is an anonymous, collective, and unconscious art; the result of the  
creativity of thousands of generations. -Edward Sapir, anthropologist, linguist  
1884-1939

\*\*\*\*\*

Dance like nobody's watching;  
Love like you've never been hurt.  
Sing like nobody's listening  
Live like it's heaven on earth.

~Mark Twain~

\*\*\*\*\*

The Life That I Have

The life that I have  
Is all that I have  
And the life that I have  
Is yours

The love that I have  
Of the life that I have  
Is yours and yours and yours.

A sleep I shall have  
A rest I shall have  
Yet death will be but a pause  
For the peace of my years  
In the long green grass  
Will be yours and yours and yours.

Leo Marks

\*\*\*\*\*

from the Grateful Dead- The Wheel lyrics

The wheel is turning  
and you can't slow down  
You can't let go  
and you can't hold on  
You can't go back  
and you can't stand still  
If the thunder don't get you  
then the lightning will

-Robert Hunter-

\*\*\*\*\*

'And in knowing that you know nothing, that makes you the smartest of all.' -  
Socrates

\*\*\*\*\*

The night is darkening round me by Emily Jane Bronte

The night is darkening round me,  
The wild winds coldly blow;  
But a tyrant spell has bound me,  
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending  
Their bare boughs weighed with snow;  
The storm is fast descending,  
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,  
Wastes beyond wastes below;  
But nothing drear can move me;  
I will not, cannot go.

\*\*\*\*\*

'3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, 'Come! ' 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword'. Revelations 6: 3-4

\*\*\*\*\*

All Is Well

Death is nothing at all,  
I have only slipped into the next room  
I am I and you are you  
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.  
Call me by my old familiar name,  
Speak to me in the easy way which you always used  
Put no difference in your tone,  
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow  
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,  
Let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of shadow on it.  
Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same as it ever was, there is unbroken continuity.  
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?  
I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near,  
Just around the corner.  
All is well.

Henry Scott Holland  
1847-1918

Canon of St Paul 's Cathedral

\*\*\*\*\*

'Whoever wishes to take over the world will not succeed. The world is a sacred vessel and nothing should be done to it. Whoever tries to tamper with it will mar it. Whoever tries to grab it will lose it.'

\*\*\*\*\*

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

- Yeats, The Second Coming

\*\*\*\*\*

O Vos Omnes

O Vos Omnes from 'Responsorium' by Philip Rice

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte:  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.  
Attendite, universi populi, et videte dolorem meum.  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

O all you who walk by on the road, pay attention and see:  
if there be any sorrow like my sorrow.  
Pay attention, all people, and look at my sorrow:

if there be any sorrow like my sorrow.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

### NOSTRADAMUS QUATRAIN #2-13

The body without a soul can no longer be sacrificed,

Le corps sans ame n'estre en sacrifice,

The day of death is a day of rebirth;

Jour de la mort mis en nativite;

The divine spirit will make the soul joyful,

L'esprit divin fera l'ame felice,

Witnessing the Holy Word in its eternity.

Voiant le Verbe en son eternite.

This is one of the most intriguing of all Nostradamus' prophecies. It is his statement on death. The great prophet believed that man is born once of water from the womb, and then once again of the spirit at the moment of death. John 3: 5.

\*\*\*\*\*

All of your demons will wither away  
Ecstasy comes and they cannot stay  
You'll understand when you come my way  
Coz all of my demons have withered away

Fatboy Slim, Demons

\*\*\*\*\*

A woman is half a man in work-force, and two men

in endurance, and three men in patience.

\*\*\*\*\*

In a world without death, the Dr. Kevorkians would be gods.

\*\*\*\*\*

Yochi J. Dreazen, The Wall Street Journal:

'Inmates at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, used pebbles to scratch messages into the foam cups they got with their meals. When the guards weren't looking, they passed the cups from cell to cell. It was a crude but effective way of communicating.

The prisoners weren't passing along escape plans or information about future terrorist attacks. They were sending one another poems.'

\*\*\*\*\*

Groucho Marx - Laws of the Administration

Spoken:

Lady:

If it's not asking too much,

Sung:

For our information

Just for illustration

Tell us how you intend to run the nation

Rufus T. Firefly:

These are the laws of my administration

No one's allowed to smoke

Or tell a dirty joke

And whistling is forbidden

Chorus:

We're not allowed to tell a dirty joke

Hail, hail Freedonia

Rufus:

If chewing gum is chewed  
The chewer is pursued  
And in the hooscall hidden

Chorus:

If we choose to chew we'll be pursued

Rufus:

If any form of pleasure is exhibited  
Report to me and it will be prohibited  
I'll put my foot down, so shall it be  
This is the land of the free

The last man nearly ruined this place  
He didn't know what to do with it  
If you think this country's bad off now,  
Just wait 'til I get through with it

The country's taxes must be fixed  
And I know what to do with it  
If you think you're paying too much now  
Just wait till I get through with it

\*whistle\*

I will not stand for anything that's crooked or unfair  
I'm strictly on the upper knot, so everyone beware  
If any man's caught taking graft, and I don't get my share  
We stand'im up against the wall and pop! Goes the weasel

Chorus:

So everyone beware, you're stricken or unfair  
-unless he gets his share

Rufus:

If any man should come between a husband and his bride  
We'll find out which one she prefers by letting her decide  
If she prefers the other man, the husband steps outside  
We stand him up against the wall and pop! Goes the weasel

Chorus:

The husband steps outside, relinquishes his bride

They stand him up against the wall and pop! Goes the weasel

source:

\*\*\*\*\*

Richard Pryor Quotes

'The reason people use a crucifix against vampires is that vampires are allergic to bullshit.'

'I had to stop drinkin', cuz I got tired of wakin' in my car driving ninety.'

'Everyone carries around his own monsters.'

\*\*\*\*\*

John the farmer was in the fertilized-egg business. He had several hundred young layers hens, called 'pullets', and ten roosters, whose job it was to fertilize the eggs for you city folks.

The farmer kept records and any rooster that didn't perform went into the soup pot and was replaced. That took an awful lot of his time, so he bought a set of tiny bells and attached them to his roosters. Each bell had a different tone so John could tell from a distance, which rooster was performing. Now he could sit on the porch and fill out an efficiency report simply by listening to the bells.

The farmer's favorite rooster was old Butch, and a very fine specimen he was, too. But on one particular morning John noticed old Butch's bell hadn't rung at all! John went to investigate.

The other roosters were chasing pullets, bells-a-ringing. The pullets, hearing the roosters coming, would run for cover. But to Farmer John's amazement, old Butch had his bell in his beak, so it couldn't ring. He would sneak up on a pullet, do his job and walk on to the next one.

John was so proud of old Butch, he entered him in the County Fair and he became an overnight sensation among the judges.

The result.. The judges not only awarded old Butch the No Bell Piece Prize but they also awarded him the Pulletsurprise as well.

Clearly old Butch was a politician in the making: Who else but a politician could figure out how to win two of the most highly coveted awards on our planet by being the best at sneaking up on the populace and screwing them when they weren't paying attention.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Silence By Anna Wickham

WHEN I meet you, I greet you with a stare, □  
Like a poor shy child at a fair.□  
I will not let you love me—yet am I weak, □  
I love you so intensely that I cannot speak.□  
When you are gone I stand apart, □  
And whisper to your image in my heart.□

\*\*\*\*\*

Teenager Post #1922

Roses are Blue. Violets  
are Unicorns. This  
Poem doesn't make any  
sense. Refrigerator.

r

\*\*\*\*\*

Sleep resets the brain  
Death resets the soul

\*\*\*\*\*

World, that hangs on the thin thread of time,  
In space, where the suns all are singing,  
Please hold us close, to your milky bosom;  
And then gather us in, to your being.

from A Prayer for Unbelievers

\*\*\*\*\*

Protect Life

\*\*\*\*\*

## A bit of bio, insights to my mind

I decided at a very young age that poetry was the most special thing of all; it was like music, without the notes, to me, and could be read, enjoyed anywhere not like real music.

I decided that was the thing I wanted to do most of all.

As a young child, I carried around a battered spiral notebook with every poem I wrote in it, and if I wrote a poem for a school assignment, it went into the notebook. Alas, one year I

was taken with a terrible ache to have a dog our small

chihuahua having died years earlier, a dog already old when

I was born. I have vague memories of tormenting the poor

dog, but I was innocent mostly, not understanding why it continually

bit my nose

The dog was probably happy to die and

escape

my damnably inquisitive hands. You can see why I wanted a dog so badly..no

one to bite my nose anymore. That little dog had the worst

breath.. smile. adopted a German Shepherd puppy I must have had it figured to be a quality dog, by then I think there were the German Shepherd police dogs?

With the aid of my parents, who located the address and drove the car to the location specified in the classified

ad free puppies to good home, naturally, and I knew my home

was good! . So I acquired a wriggling puppy and gave him the kingly name of Rex, and so did not expect any bad behavior from him.

One day I left the notebook lying about outside; I had just

written what I thought was possibly the best poem yet, and probably went inside to celebrate with chocolate milk or some

childish snack like that. Lightning struck while I was gone.

I came out and there was no notebook anymore; just a twisted

coil of wire, some wet lumps of paper/blue cardboard..I can

still see it now. I had no backup copies, as I considered the universe trustworthy..at least back then.

After my parents had passed on and we were emptying the house for needed repairs having to gut the central

part, due to water damage, really a nightmare, behind my mothers

tall chest of drawers there was a fallen piece of construction paper,

an assignment of writing poetry for an early childhood class, with

illustrations, no less!

So I retrieved a tiny part of the lost notebook. The quality was not nearly so good..as in my imaginings

smile.

I began working as soon as I graduated, my family had a strong work ethic, and malingerers were not to be abetted.. that kept me pretty busy, but I managed a few poems over the years. I worked in a sweatshop printing industry and though I hadn't much time for hobbies I made a good pass at having sleeping as my hobby, when I got the chance to do it

I had a good amount of savings then, due to so many hours of overtime. I saved my poems in another thicker, bluer notebook, and this time fate did not decide destroy it Also I did not leave it in the company of young, bored dogs of uncertain breeding. Sometimes when writers block has me in tow, I will go find a poem in there I never did anything with, and try to salvage it if possible. Probably there are only a few left in there not re-worked and posted here at Poemhunter.. As I grew old, and older, I decided that when writing, the things I should focus on are things special to me; my unsung miracles, my experiences that I feel nobody else has had or maybe few have, or viewpoints that seem different and could use some explaining; anything out of the ordinary, in other words. If I had one word that I think should describe a poem, it should be the word 'Extraordinary'. And if I miss that mark in writing, that explains why there aren't millions of popular well-known poems. Because they are rare and truly special.. extraordinary things from daily life. So there are a few poems from when I was in love for the first time really in love, also from pregnancy, giving birth, losing my parents, etc. Sometimes I don't know just why I wrote something, sometimes I didn't know what I was going to write, and was pleasantly surprised when it was finished. I have an imitative imp living inside me, I think, that wants to imitate everything good it sees anywhere around it, put down in the written word, and I think you will find a good deal of such things in my poetry. Maybe I should apologize for that, but that's just a part of what makes me tick as a writer, I suppose.

Aaargh: Life 101

Marriage: What doesn't irritate you now will irritate you later. But, what you don't appreciate now, you might appreciate later.

In-laws: If you like them, they won't like you. If you don't like them, it's irrelevant.

Religion: If there's a commandment against it, you will break it by age 50. After age 50, you won't have the energy anymore.

Female friends: If you make a close friend at work of a woman, as soon as she quits or is fired, she won't talk to you ever again. When you do find a friend who stays close to you, by the time you see the serious character flaws it is too late, and they are cemented next to you forever.

Childhood friends: All the children in the neighborhood available for play will be either old enough they won't play with you, or young enough you won't play with them. The only ones available will have such odd personalities and/or notable deficiencies you will only cultivate them out of desperation.

The people you like best will move far away.

The ones you can't stand will always live nearby and you will run into them everywhere you go.

If you have a disagreement with someone, later it will become clear that they are bff's with all the people you know/like/want to cultivate, so that the whole world knows you might be an ass, at one fell swoop.

Dating situation with men: If men notice you, your weight will be too much or too little. If your shape is alright, your hair isn't good enough. If your hair is fine, your teeth need fixing, etc etc. Barring all those hurdles, they will attack your race, having nothing else with which to hurl insults..

---

Mantras for meditation:

"Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking and the door will be open to you."

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?

To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. ~  
Thoreau

Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you.

For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace

Joy comes in the morning

A joyful heart is good medicine

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Your love is better than mine. Draw me, and I will rise after thee.

There is no fear in love; perfect love casts away fear..

Dwell in possibility. ~ Emily Dickinson

As I think in my heart, so am I.

Not knowing when the dawn will come, I open every door. ~ Emily Dickinson

Forget yesterday, it has already forgotten you.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

I am that I am

I am just striving to be more me than I have ever been

Life is a balance of holding on and letting go

A Dream Of Death - Poem by William Butler Yeats

I DREAMED that one had died in a strange place  
Near no accustomed hand,  
And they had nailed the boards above her face,  
The peasants of that land,  
Wondering to lay her in that solitude,  
And raised above her mound

A cross they had made out of two bits of wood,  
And planted cypress round;  
And left her to the indifferent stars above  
Until I carved these words:  
{She was more beautiful than thy first love, }  
{But now lies under boards.}

# A 17th Century Curse

In the bottle rests my pee  
Collected under a darkling moon  
And pared down fingernails, overgrown

Some bits of hair and rusty nails  
Brass tacks, and a leather pierced  
By a nail, which bent at odd angle

Upside down in hidden grave, it lies  
So on the evil doer, it rebounds  
Until that she, herself, soon die

\* \* \* \* \*

For those afraid a witch may have cast a spell upon them.  
If all goes well, the trick will cast the spell back on the witch,  
perhaps killing her — or so goes a 17th century witchcraft belief.

Patti Masterman

# A Beakers Full Of Love

Life is so mesmerizing  
The sky above-  
Bottomless, endless, unfathomable  
Impossible distances holding the secret of  
Everything that exists:  
The universal chemistry kit  
Which came complete with organic  
Self- replicating life  
Looking up, I can't imagine  
All that I know and love  
Came out of one furnace, one autoclave:  
Art and music and living beings  
Books and medicine and science  
Things still unimagined right now  
Maybe it's all in an obscure book  
On some magicians shelf  
That becomes a three dimensional  
Panorama, only when he opens it  
And our millenia are but  
A moments ponder in his study  
And he's off to yet more bubbling worlds  
Stirring the seething cauldrons  
Making forms out of mind  
Making universes out of nothingness  
And a beakers-full of love.

Patti Masterman

# A Bear Came To Dinner

A bear came to dinner;  
He ate before the bell,  
He didn't use his napkin,  
I am here to tell.

He didn't cut his steak,  
Neatly; with the knife,  
And licked his mashed potatoes  
Off the plate- it was not quiet.

He didn't wait for prayers,  
He didn't pass the bread-  
But balanced it, most perkily,  
Atop his brown-bear head.

His manners more atrocious,  
Than any I have seen;  
But heavens, I'm so grateful  
He didn't just eat me.

Patti Masterman

# A Beautiful Man's Mind

Underneath it all begins to ripple,  
beneath the accordion folds of a perfect afternoon,  
the phosphorescent streets lost in rain  
while falling from vision, a number of pearly clouds

Words silent, when it all begins to unfold,  
how well I remember how it passed;  
washing the skin on the body,  
drinking in the feelings, the melting smiles

Igniting rare visions for numberless minutes-  
praying before the stolen cenotaph  
of a beautiful man's mind

Patti Masterman

# A Bullet For Lenin

A bullet for Lenin, a bullet for Trotsky,  
With love from the West;  
Go back in the time machine,  
Go back to the guillotine-  
And garrote all the rest

A tear for a dictator,  
A tear for an autocrat;  
The world's tears just flow too slow,  
So let the Kings still rule-  
Pretend everyone's a fool,  
Forget Presidents really blow.

Patti Masterman

# A Catalogue Of Insomnia

Just before I turned nineteen  
I cut off my long, long hair  
And Grandmother became ill.  
It seemed like there had to be some connection  
Though I could never pin it down  
Did cutting my hair weaken her body?  
My childhood was ended:  
Was it time for her to leave?

I was very close to her all of my life  
She raised me from babyhood, in the day times  
While my parents managed their business.  
She tried one day to warn me:  
'I'm not going to live forever, you know.'  
I just stared at her like some shameful demon  
Had entered the room, and said nothing  
I shivered and blocked out what she said-  
No admittance.

Of course as soon as I was working,  
Too distracted to pay much attention  
She became ill, and came to live with us,  
After that first wee hours run to the hospitals emergency.  
She survived that, but the worst was still coming:  
At night she was suffocating  
Sleeping in bed with me  
I say sleeping, but she didn't:  
She sat up on the edge of the bed, hunched over  
Trying to breathe, as I watched in a sort of paralytic, insomniac stupor  
With asthma, I knew what it felt like-  
Except that in time an asthma attack would go away.

I was dead on my feet at work that month  
There was no sleeping for me  
Nightly human struggle to keep breathing  
There was no relief, no release in the nights  
By day she always seemed a little better  
My mother never saw her in the nights  
I realize now my mother would have been worse off than me:

She could never tolerate people suffering, or hospitals  
Maybe my martyrdom in the nights  
Had some saving grace at least?

My Grandmother changed overnight  
Into a silent zombie; long nights of suffering  
Days of silence and not eating  
Everybody knew what was going to happen  
We almost had gotten used to the idea  
Almost had pushed it out of our minds-  
And then, we were surprised all over again  
Death has that way about it:  
It never wants to come while anyone is watching.

The house emptied out finally  
And forever, of Grandmother  
It filled up with bushels of flowers  
If I forgot for one minute she was gone  
The flower smell was there to remind me again  
I grew to detest and fear that powerful smell:  
It was the smell of suffocation and never sleeping.  
Absence smells like chemically preserved flowers  
In the hothouse of private hell.

It must have been after that I changed:  
I realized there is no safety net, no sanctuary  
You can run but you can't run away  
You can't hide, and pretending doesn't work  
In a world where the people you love  
Are consigned to death from the very start  
And you are the powerless observer  
You can never trust anyone or anything again  
And it doesn't matter how long you try to stay awake.

Patti Masterman

# A Circular Circumvention

The world is prosaic archaic algebraic  
Photovoltaic  
through its looking-glass eye

The world is a gyp it's a rip it's a racket  
better sack it  
before it fills you with lies

Dirty pool fleece the wool find the snitch  
Bait and switch sucker's game  
let them eat all your lunch

It's the screw just of you zilch to do  
say you're through  
and be sure  
not demure  
that you've screwed them all too.

Patti Masterman

# A Corpse

Imagine a place that was the paragon of creative genius  
With the money and the freedom to encourage  
Experimentation and invention, there was no limit-  
Could such a haven be destroyed by the very creativity,  
The freedom, that it represented to the entire world,  
As the epitome of the elevation of man's mind, imagination, and abilities?

See the crafty, creative bankers reveling in their freedom  
To disassemble the economic backbone behind the genius  
To suck the life out of the inflated balloon society,  
Too caught up in enjoying it's creativity, it's freedom, to notice  
The evil seeds lovingly sowed early in the last century.  
It's always the strengths which leads to one's destruction  
Never the weakness. A sad day indeed  
But look around, and all you will see is denial  
You see, it's in their best interest  
To squeeze out the last drops of liquid  
Before they hurl the corpse back at you.

Patti Masterman

# A Death That Grieves No Stranger

A death that grieves no stranger  
Is witless as a mouth  
That deaf eyes do not fathom  
Mute singleness of route  
As pines a troubled forest  
For signs of seeded quarry  
We herald the dumbest signpost  
To break the travelers story

A death that grieves no stranger  
Concern that has no pivot  
Sails as the ship of ancients  
No sextant and no rivet  
Clairvoyant the earth is  
Of disappearing traces  
To cast about the crowd is  
To see the missing faces.

Patti Masterman

# A Diadem Of Dust I Wear

A diadem of dust I wear  
Till polished, to completion-  
As goes to mote, the single stone  
Through times rough depredation.

A diadem of dust, I'll wear  
In stony walls, that chamber  
The baleful weight of time, I'll bear-  
While love bear the remainder.

Patti Masterman

# A Dialectic

The tides can speak the language of the sea  
The moon knows the dialect of the sun  
Mountains can communicate with clouds, through a single touch

And true lovers can always speak one another's tongue  
Although they may be different:  
And even some languages that have not been invented yet.

Patti Masterman

# A Dog Is Like A Husband How?

A dog is like a husband, how?  
The way they wake, when you sleep still-  
And vex you then, for food or swill.

When you're ready, to go out  
They must decline; or brood; or pout.

And when another dog is seen,  
The family jewels, begin to preen.

But sometimes if a threat come near-  
They rise to the occasion, rear-

Upon their hind legs, fierce and strong!  
To save some maiden being wronged.

Patti Masterman

# A Dream

Once I dreamed I awoke on a ship  
In my own special room, as she swayed and dipped  
I walk down the corridors, just like a queen  
Touching and seeing the things in my dream  
I stopped at the railing and looked at the sea  
And it just as fine and as clear as could be  
But storm clouds arose and the ship began to toss  
I ran back to my room, completely at loss  
How to find a life jacket somewhere on that boat  
Something in case, just to keep me afloat  
I hunted for hours; it seemed quite a search  
But when I woke up, I was wearing a purse.

Patti Masterman

# A Dream For You

A dream for you  
And one for me;  
A mermaid's blue,  
A symphony,  
A secret house  
Inside a tree  
The dreamworld's full  
Of company.

At night we go  
To places rare,  
Where no one knows  
That they are there;  
And every dream  
A hidden stair,  
That takes us to  
A new somewhere.

If only dreams  
Could overlap  
The sleeping seams  
Within our nap,  
And precious streams  
Not on a map  
Then other lives,  
We could unwrap.

Patti Masterman

# A Fable

There once was a dog  
Who was friends with a hog.  
They sat around on a log  
Drinking beer and grog,  
With never a care  
Of how they might fare.  
I happened along  
Took them both home,  
To people this poem,  
Said it wouldn't take long.  
Dined them on caviar and champagne,  
Then brought them back again.  
Now the hog plays the flute;  
The dog talks of Beirut-  
And they curtsy and bow  
Dog never says, bow-wow-  
Now that my assets are sunk in them,  
I think I'd prefer them both drunk again.

Patti Masterman

# A Face Looks So Carnivorous

A face looks so carnivorous  
From the nostrils down:  
An open, ravenous trap,  
Half full or half empty  
Gleaming with ivory shears  
And threatened sharpness  
Of incisors clicking.

I fear it's raging hungers, this face;  
It looks ghastly unkind  
With tearing, strong molars,  
An impertinent softness of tongue lurking  
Concealing the violence till the last instant  
While delicately testing  
The perfect temperature of warm blood.

Who says humans  
Don't eat their young;  
Things sometimes happen in the dark,  
Late of night, things you'd never catch in daylight-  
Why do some never have children at all;  
Perhaps they became too fond of newborn flesh,  
Delicate as the palest veal-calf of the restaurant.

And it only looks human  
When you add in some eyes.

Patti Masterman

# A Faith Of No Regrets

When I'm crying at someone's funeral  
And I try to hide my streaming eyes there  
I'm weeping for every man, woman, child..  
For death is neither special nor rare.

When saying goodbye at path's turning  
Where one of our roads must part  
There's a palpable aching deep inside..  
It's taking a piece of my heart.

If I never get the chance to say goodbye  
It won't change a thing; all was beauty  
Remembered with the faith of no regrets  
All filled with joy, never once mere duty.

Patti Masterman

# A Fatal Proposition

There are only photos left now, of what was  
And what is no longer,  
Except perhaps for a plat of land,  
That marks the telltale spot, only for me.  
But I was busy putting roots down there,  
In years that seemed more bare, distant,  
More long lasting, than any years I've seen since.

A man's heart may know things  
That it really can't understand,  
And a man's mind can wish for things  
Which can never make any sense;  
And somewhere in between  
The knowing and the wishing,  
Lies a fleeting kind of sanity.

Some lives I lived might have killed others,  
And some days I've known, broken other's spirits.  
The world appears a fine and satisfactory place,  
Until it starts going away by degrees;  
A face, or sometimes just a room, at a time.  
But time is the abyss  
Where eventually all of us begin to lose parts  
Of the identity, of ourselves.

Sometimes, only your thoughts  
Can return to what you used to know, by heart.  
What a chalice of certainty appears the child  
By contrast, to that collector of old shadows, the man.

If we could return only once,  
All the things to the way they used to be,  
We would perhaps reverse it all,  
And thereby vanish, ourselves.

But the more haunting idea back of everything,  
Is that perhaps it never really had a separate existence,  
Outside of the mind's manipulations.

I fear how it all lives on only inside of us now,  
And if that is all that it has ever actually been,  
And how life seems at best a fatal proposition, after all.

Patti Masterman

# A Few Beads And Feathers

If these holidays did not enclose one  
Within this century, then it would be  
Some other holy days,  
In some other millenium:  
On top the frozen Andes,  
Where the sacrificial mummy children repose  
Or in the urn of the cenote,  
With a feathered far-flung token  
Candle drippings in the Pharaohs tomb or  
Scars of the Incan ballgame in the courtyard-  
Man can escape neither death nor festivals  
They say the reason mankind first began  
To decorate the body, with paint and trinkets  
Was a declaration of existence  
A celebration of the joy of being alive  
We became too sophisticated to stop there  
And now we decorate trees and houses too  
So our joie de vivre can be manifest  
From farther away, even by strangers  
And perhaps even God in his element  
Looks down from time to time, and smiles knowingly  
To see our blinking, blue green world  
A glowing phosphorescence in the Milky Ways embrace.

Patti Masterman

## A Few More Cubits

Every woman surely dies  
And leaves behind a purse;  
And though it's not as elegant,  
As any streetside hearse,

It would work as well as any  
Box, required to do it  
They'd bury her inside if there  
Were just a few more cubits.

Patti Masterman

## A Few Quarks

Hidden beneath the skin is a sucking chest wound  
A sonic boom sized black hole  
Ravenously devouring everything that comes close-  
Chairs, tables, animals, and egos  
Nothing lasts- it all disappears  
Pellmell into the vacuum  
Visitors with smooth china faces murmur and smile blandly  
Gesticulating with the randomness of modern life  
Before they tumble head over heels  
Never suspecting they were that close  
From oblivion, and a hell of emptiness  
Maybe that's why casual human relations  
Are distasteful and boring  
Like having a tea party on the brink  
Of a seething volcano's forthcoming fury  
Worrying about two lumps of sugar or three  
And if the wind will get up too much  
For the embroidered table cloth to hang just so:  
If you would only peer over the edge  
You'd see the grinning carcasses exposed to the elements  
And broken furniture stripped of respectfulness  
The veneer of civilization is only a few quarks thick.

Patti Masterman

# A Forgotten Word

A forgotten word  
Is more alone among creation's slaves  
Than inmates chained  
In subterranean fissures

Let me resurrect you  
O sundered word, raging neglect of years  
You can still revel  
Of beauty's forgotten tongues

And myths of heros  
Who conquered a vast tomb of death  
Unrelenting courage  
By the opening of one song

(Niyaz- Allahi Allah inspired)

Patti Masterman

# A Galaxy Of One

Could be that the true soul  
Is stretched tautly thin  
Throughout the hidden world-  
Thinner than a quark crepe,  
Floating atop quark soup  
Absorbing and processing  
The very things  
Which engineer our reveries  
What if we could experience  
Every possible lifetime  
That imagination might fancy  
From birth to death; to live, to love,  
To fling ourselves into  
Every conceivable venue  
With only a touch of deja-vu  
Now and then, to betray it-  
The beady darkness teems  
With myriad uncharted voyages  
From you, the single port of entrance  
For the legion of intrepid children souls:  
Wanderers breathed into life  
By one travellers existence.

Patti Masterman

# A Ghost Now Stands Within Your Life

A ghost now stands within your life,  
You neither move nor step aside,  
Perhaps it is a ghost you owe  
A favor or a round of ale;  
Some dirty secret from the past,  
A token left of sinner's hell.

A ghost now stands invisibly  
Beside the rest of the family,  
And you don't dare to nudge it out,  
It's armed with something you can't fight,  
Holding remnants of something rare;  
A far gone memory of delight.

Patti Masterman

# A Giraffe Ate Your Tulips

There really is no nice way  
To tell you what I saw;  
But a giraffe ate your tulips-  
He chomped them with his maw.

How he came to be there,  
Inside your flower beds,  
I really cannot tell you but-  
He bit their bulbous heads.

He chewed them up a time or two,  
And swallowed each in turn,  
Then took a sip of water  
At the bird bath, by the urn.

He ate them all quite neatly-  
(I think his favorite's red)  
And wiped his mouth on branches,  
Then scratched his spotted head.

All day I've been debating  
Just how to break the news;  
But a giraffe ate your tulips,  
And then he had a snooze.

He snoozed against the carport,  
And he swatted at the flies  
With his handy tail-swipe,  
When I swear I heard him sigh.

And I'm mostly sure I heard him  
Belch a time or two,  
Before heading for Mrs. Johnson's-  
Where he ate her tulips too.

I know you miss your tulips;  
They had the strangest fate,  
But a tulip munching giraffe,  
You could not anticipate.

You ought to plant more tulips;  
I don't think he's coming back-  
But maybe choose a different shade-  
That giraffes will not snack.

Patti Masterman

# A Girl In Leather Shoes

I am a girl in leather shoes  
without socks, a girl who has  
no need of socks, a girl  
who has few friends-  
but doesn't need any.

A strong girl, with real opinions  
in her head; sockless in her leather shoes,  
a girl whose stride is purposeful,  
feet secure inside the leather,  
a girl who wears nothing artificial,  
who takes in nothing not genuine-

And if she should ever sweat,  
this brave, sockless girl,  
who knows exactly where she is going  
safe in her leather  
and her strong opinions-  
she would never, never let it show.

Patti Masterman

# A Halloween Riddle

He's under my skin,  
My well-hid friend,  
An anorexic cast to him;  
His bony pallor  
Is ivory white-  
He only looks  
Well dressed at night.

He's always there,  
Sealed off from air,  
And he hasn't any hair;  
He doesn't need  
To groom at all,  
But truth be told-  
He casts a pall.

He doesn't mean  
To make a scene,  
Especially at Halloween;  
Low-key is he,  
He's in disguise:  
You'll never see him-  
Behind my eyes.

What is he?

Patti Masterman

# A Haunted Deja-Vu

When you leave a room forever  
(As a hotel room, or a waiting room in some foreign town) ,  
Though you know you may never go there again,  
It pull's on your mind's substance, somehow  
Acquiring an existence larger than life,  
Imbuing your memory, with the breath of expectation:  
Incomplete, never finished.

You probe your mind afterwards, wondering  
What was left undone, unsaid, unthought, unaccomplished.  
You realize this place will stay with you indefinitely,  
An alternate stillborn, stubborn dimension  
Where some microcosmic quanta of self remains aware;  
Un-decomposing, not recoverable.

We miss so much of the bigger picture,  
Is it surprising things might go on beneath the surface;  
Imagining we are within feet of others, who should have inhabited  
All our waking days; or near the grave of someone  
Hidden beneath our sight, who should have been  
Our nearest and dearest; but through chance or mundane error,  
Now they are become only thin, ghostly fingers  
Prickling at our brain-pans, like a haunted deja-vu.

Patti Masterman

# A History Left Behind

Houses bemoan fate, whenever wind blows;  
Softly cantankerous, they assess their pains-  
Stiff as arthritis, the way that years show.

A hundred years pass in the blink of an eye,  
To wood beams, comfortably sleeping with rot;  
Floors bedded with termites, rafters open to sky.

Then sooner or later, the occupants die-  
A place doesn't last long, when no longer loved;  
Becomes shelter to rodents, and small pupae.

Its memories sealed with cobwebs and time,  
Shingles on its bones, no one left cares-  
It's slated for dust: a history left behind.

Patti Masterman

## A Horse Behind Bars

"The word is zebra, " was what she said,  
Her narrowed eyes pooling with significance;  
What hidden trigger did she possess?  
The knife she had not shown; not yet.

Red rivers ran behind her eyes,  
In a face so flat and so unsmiling;  
Cold reptiles were hunting sun,  
Somewhere beneath vermilion skies.

A viper lodged behind her tongue,  
She never stopped to choose her battles;  
She thought the war had just begun-  
But all her carnage days were done.

Patti Masterman

# A House Breathes Through Its Bones

A house breathes through its bones,  
Its summits sit like sentries;  
Though rafters decompose-  
It never denies entry.

Its ghosts lie in their beds,  
Soft earth beneath their memory;  
The shutters firmly closed-  
The past seen only dimly.

Patti Masterman

# A Hundred Flowers Must Breathe

A hundred flowers must breathe  
In your body's breath,  
And a dozen angels grieve  
Because their soul's been cleft.

God must have broken paradise,  
In bringing you to me;  
And never once thought of the price  
Once your wings were freed.

He put the seashore in your breast,  
With ocean's rhythms beating there,  
And in pale rays of moon, he dressed  
The highlights of your eyes and hair.

Your face he molded from a shell,  
And your teeth, from dainty pearls.  
In your voice he hid the bell,  
And satin in your skin, he purled.

So all the world could see his care  
He finished you; a work of art:  
So that no man might ever dare  
To break that gently beating heart.

Patti Masterman

# A Hymn For Freedom

If you take away our voice  
With laws, to us, are blind,  
You can try to damn our future,  
But can never change our mind.

If you take away our protest,  
If you ban our presence there,  
We will swarm you with our millions  
So you know- we took the dare.

If you take away our freedom,  
Roots will soon sprout underground;  
And then you'll never conquer  
What grows tall, without a sound.

You may take our money  
In the dark, steal all our wealth;  
But the lamppost on the corner  
You will pay, for all your stealth.

Every act has its reaction,  
Every wrong will come to light:  
And though you choose the battle-  
We'll choose the time, to fight.

Patti Masterman

# A Kiss And A Wave Goodbye

A kiss and a wave goodbye:  
Is that what's left, at the end;  
Goodbye to lovers, goodbye to friends,  
The mothers and fathers, when you've reached the end-  
Just goodbye?

A kiss and a wave goodbye,  
And take along a piece of my heart, to say  
Goodbye, as you're going to that final place  
Of endless sleep, where are found no more days-  
Just say, goodbye?

A kiss and a wave goodbye,  
And a hope that someday we'll meet again;  
Surely this can't be the end of our song,  
And just when I'd thought, to sing it for ever so long-  
And now just say, goodbye?

Patti Masterman

# A Lifetime To Forget

A lifetime is a lot of days,  
A lot of places, a lot of faces;  
A lot of hours, to fill and fill  
With sad and happy social graces.

A lifetime is a lot of days,  
A lot of lovers, both May and December;  
But just remember, as you near the end-  
You've forgotten much more, than you'll ever remember.

Patti Masterman

# A List Of Things Never To Forget

Never importune an importuner  
Never psychologize a pathological liar  
Never try to lie to a psychotic parapsychologist  
Never pet a fly if you're post-para-epileptic

Never sympathize with an unknown sympathizer  
Never parrot a petulant psychic  
Never hypnotize a pedantic pedagogue  
And NEVER, never talk Pig Latin to a hedgehog

Patti Masterman

# A Little Bit Of Sun In Me Still Shines

There is a place within that always waits  
For sunshine, knowing rain at last abates.

Everything recalls from whence it sprang;  
As the songbird's joy, when first it sang.

A little bit of ice inside the storm;  
A hint of parents in the newly born.

The seed of love implanted at first sight,  
To blossom fullblown, tender loving light.

Embedded in each tear the whole of grief;  
All our ends twined round one falling leaf.

As brother unto brother does incline;  
A little bit of sun in me still shines.

Patti Masterman

## A Little Poison Can Do Wonders

In the dwarve's workshop, she slowly went insane;  
Listening day by day, to the tiny hammers beating,  
As she stared, through dirty window panes,  
Where the lambs and timid heifers, bleating.

In the round of days, she thought the best was done;  
In a careless way, the restlessness had won:  
Down in the mines, there's a curious kind of thunder;  
While up above, a little poison can do wonders.

Patti Masterman

# A Living Doll

I used to play with dolls  
Long ago, in another century  
I fed them mud pies  
Brushed their hair  
Washed their little clothes  
Counted their fingers and toes  
They entertained themselves  
I'd park them on a bench  
Or any handy surface  
They were user friendly  
Not like real babies  
Dolls aren't good training for those  
I did alright with the real one  
Never dropped her or stepped on her  
Never went to jail  
Can't pry her off me now  
Can't unglue the maternal glue that's blood  
The dolls paid their dues  
And now she looks toward other days  
Where I'll not be allowed trespass  
But she always turns up again  
She remembers where she came from.

Patti Masterman

# A Living World Lives In Me

A living world lives in me,  
It's alive; I invest it with my energy,  
Through thoughts and memories  
It lives for free-  
And only dies, when death takes me.

Our mental world's a secret place;  
Retreat, we fill up with our grace,  
Where the best imagined leaves its trace,  
As we run our daily race-  
And leaves a vestige, on the face.

Build a world where you can stay,  
For a lifetime, or a day;  
A place to take you far away,  
Where your hopes and fears remain-  
And your living world, contain.

Patti Masterman

# A Longing Was In The Branches

a longing was in the branches  
of the departed path  
touched with glimpses of flowers,

cherished steps dividing the day.  
what ghost once had eyes  
what hand caught hold of love-  
holding it like a rare bird dying,  
hastening to its end.

nobody notices now  
what lies at the foot of the trail-  
how nothing is there  
instead of fullness.

Patti Masterman

# A Man Is A Lonely Truth

A man is a lonely truth  
In a world both ancient and new;  
The vanishing point of the future,  
The proof of the present clue.

Though man is a finite history  
Whose cause is obscured by time,  
His is the consummate mystery  
Of self-apprehending mind.

Patti Masterman

# A Meditation

Hallowed be thy name  
True reality of mind  
Just myself left to attain  
To unbury the divine.

Words alone must always fail  
To describe that tiny spark  
You would call the Holy Grail  
If but once you'd brave the dark.

No death, so do not fear  
The robed monk implores  
Now see the way is clear  
Go unlock your doors.

Know that the little Me  
Again must go to sleep  
But the hallowed soul goes free  
To fields of stars so deep.

Patti Masterman

# A Million Heartaches Away

I'm so far gone from you now  
Like the Moon's gone from a sub  
When the Sun's gone dark above  
Every day and every way  
Moving farther yet away

Like the roads that ancient men  
Abandoned to their latest whim  
Like the Fall leaves turned to gold  
Crushed beneath the weight of cold  
Like the friend whose heart has changed  
You're forever out of range

And the place where once love lay  
Is at least a million heartaches away

Patti Masterman

# A Mistake

A mistake of one place, in the month;  
Part of the year zips by, like the breeze.  
While an error of one, in the year  
Takes us back twelve months; or ahead.  
And an error, in the decades place,  
Leaves me buried, or else you dead:  
Twist the dials, of our chance laden fates;  
It's too early; or else way too late.

Patti Masterman

# A Mother's Heart

A sunbeam traveled down a cloud  
And dropped upon a bell  
Suspended from a church tower-  
And at it's ringing, fell

Upon a lady's fancy hat;  
It trembled on a flower  
Then chased a yellow butterfly  
And wandered for an hour.

At last it settled in a drop  
Of dew, upon the grass  
And there it waited, napping  
Till a new day came to pass.

It spied a baby on a swing  
And landed in it's eye  
It hung there very quietly  
Till the child began to cry-

A mama came to gather close  
Her offspring, and depart  
And that is how a rainbow  
Comes to live in Mother's heart.

Patti Masterman

# A Muted Tune

You be a couplet  
And I'll be the prose-  
All they hear is your heart that's beating,  
All they hear is the door that close.

You be the portal  
And I'll be the way-  
All they hear is the words, that falling;  
All they hear, what they want to say.

You be the starlight  
And I'll be the moon-  
All they hear is a far light shining:  
All they hear is a muted tune.

Patti Masterman

# A Mutiny Of Sorts

Your mutinous hijinx wanderlust  
Has hijacked my vacuous neutron dust;  
My element's voids are growing fatter,  
As quarks and bosons get even gladder.

My particle trails are glowing bright,  
Phosphorescing into the stars tonight;  
They're searching for any slight trace, of you  
In every galaxy and cosmic flue.

The vaccum of space is emptying out  
Like the end of a black hole's seeking snout  
For wherever your light is, there go I:  
The universe can't hide that smile.

Patti Masterman

# A Naked Smile Falls Into The Prehistoric Insignificance Of The Flesh

I'd like to see some other measurements-  
The ones where humans don't slope away  
Toward the floor; where teeth and skull plates  
Aren't widened and flattened into floorboards,  
And where the secret grottoes of abbeys  
Aren't made silent, by kneeling on cushioned flesh

Where we stretched our eardrums out  
To become acoustic ceilings  
We left in the smooth, pebbly gossip  
As points of interest  
To direct the secular gaze upward  
Leaving our agoraphobic thoughts  
Stranded out there,  
Trying to cross that vast expanse  
Of white nothingness

The problem of forever  
Is that it always ends  
Just one octave  
Past a plaintive heartbeat

I put on the clothing of monotonous atmospheres  
Because there wasn't anything else to wear  
And because I like the nice familiarity  
Of warm sun, and cooling moon-  
All the twilight seasons of sensation,  
Of when you could fall eternally,  
Knowing that a temperamental universe  
Still owned every atom of your being

And Time's scarred fingers endlessly screeching  
On the blackboard  
Of all your faded significance

Patti Masterman

# A Nightmare

She hears the knock and she freezes-  
Though faint; it was such a small noise.  
Is it this, the thing she's been fearing?  
Should she open, does she have a choice?

She moves to the door much too slowly  
As though water must part, where she goes.  
She opens a crack, and there he stands.  
She's aghast, for he still wears those clothes.

And it's him, and of that there's no question,  
And his eyes are too shiny and bright;  
There's an odor too, that she shrinks from,  
A certain way that he bends, from the light.

'Darling, it's me'; holds his hands out;  
He's given her autonomy,  
She can go to him or she can hang back now,  
So why doesn't she feel that she's free?

What's wrong, he says, with his brown eyes  
That always made her think of the deer,  
But something's not right, and its presence  
Has left an unspeakable fear.

Like a husk that's covering a wolf,  
That's wearing some camouflage,  
She blinks her eyes twice to clear them,  
For he feels just like a mirage.

'I went to your funeral last Friday, '  
She says, one tear stuck in an eye;  
The other got free, though she struggled-  
And why did it feel like a lie?

'I'm not dead, as you see, ' he said boldly  
And he stood there, probing her eyes.  
'Don't question our good luck, my darling;  
I said it would be not goodbye.'

The room is swimming in waves now  
And he reaches out to steady her hand.  
'We were both in the wreck, you remember,  
And they took us away, in the van.'

Then suddenly breath seems to leave her,  
As the meaning of his words arrive:  
He was dead in the van at it's leaving-  
And she too, was no longer alive.

She looks at his face then with wonder,  
Perplexed what will happen to them,  
And he bends down and kisses an ear lobe  
And he whispers, 'But death's now our friend..'

Patti Masterman

# A Nony Moose

A Nony Moose I be  
A large caboose is me  
I plod about the range, I poop  
I eat up grass to spice the soup  
I'd run you with my antlers, through  
Otherwise not a lot to do  
Read the tree-barks latest news  
Mating is both love and war  
Getting bested, I abhor  
I'll trot off to my business now-  
Far off, I think I see a cow.

Patti Masterman

# A Nony Mouse

A Nony Mouse I be  
My tail is most of me  
I run about the house, I creep  
I only come out when others sleep  
I'll only ask a crumb of you  
And disappear at the slightest MEW  
That's one sound I truly rue  
Cheese the thing that I love best  
That, and babies in the nest  
I always have a lot to do  
So, pleased to meet you, and adieu.

Patti Masterman

# A Photo Of Azaleas

Aging is embarrassing;  
You can't remember which lover  
You told which secret to,  
And you suspect they know why  
It wasn't them, you sent the photo of Azaleas to  
And that it was yet someone else  
Sampled your notorious cinnamon rolls, all those years ago.

They are everywhere and nowhere;  
Memory has forgotten their wrinkle,  
There is no hastily scribbled cheat sheet  
Hidden up your sleeve now;  
You, who've grown too old for school  
And too old to remember, apparently.

In self defense, you stop bringing things up  
And when others do, you scratch absently  
At your arm, worry small holes  
Into stretchy knit hems;  
Cough, clear your throat,  
Change the subject to anything,  
Anything at all-  
No, not that!

Daily living is become a febrile mine field  
Filled with small tripping stones  
Deployed deviously, to trip you up,  
And sometimes, you detour so many times  
In a day, an hour, that you forget  
Which trail you were trying to avoid  
And wind up there, by default,  
Because whatever nightblind memory's left to you  
Is still good at doing just that.

So that on some days, it all becomes too much,  
And then you throw your arms up in the air, exasperated  
And are heard to proclaim then  
That you are old now, and can't be expected  
To remember everything anymore.

And if smug smiles greet your words,  
You can always squint,  
And pretend that you can't see their faces.

Patti Masterman

# A Pilgrimage

In the kingdom of love,  
I would live in your dreams  
Touching all of your secrets  
The things not yet seen.

In the rivers of time,  
I would travel beside you  
Passing by all that's false  
On our way to the true.

On the path to the stars,  
We would walk hand in hand  
Finding all the worlds wonder  
In the heart of one man.

Patti Masterman

# A Poison Stirs

A poison stirs my vitals  
When all are safe asleep;  
A word that I forgot to say-  
Or silence, couldn't keep.

A misdeed, fairly noted,  
Remorse's lack, construed;  
I was too singular, alone-  
When of us, there were two.

Forgiveness won't come early,  
The night is long in dread;  
Maybe cannot fix the deed-  
Before am sooner, dead?

Patti Masterman

# A Polite Tour Of Insanity (Recited To The Sound Of Panting)

Insanity's so fascinating  
As long as it stays far away  
And doesn't come close enough  
To ruin your life, which it has attempted  
On a few occasions, so that now  
Instead of gravitating toward it  
I walk steadily in any other direction  
That insanity is not itself moving  
I feel that we have had a polite disagreement  
And I would like it to stay polite.

The difficulty of this will not become apparent  
Until you too have felt insanity  
Breathing down your neck  
Watching your every move  
Because it can never approve  
Of anything you do  
The word 'Insanity' is not very descriptive  
Of this fact, but it will have to do  
Until they come up with a better term.  
Whoops; time to start running again..

Patti Masterman

# A Prayer For Unbelievers

This world is too close for comfort,  
But too dear to ever release;  
We only leave it, kicking and screaming-  
Unless we crave for an instant peace.

Unrounded world, all full of rough spots;  
Torturing us till the bitter end;  
But what else is there beside you-  
And what else, could we apprehend?

World, that hangs on the thin thread of time,  
In space, where the suns all are singing,  
Please hold us close, to your milky bosom;  
And then gather us in, to your being.

Patti Masterman

# A Question's In Her Eyes - Sonnet

A question's in her eyes each time she gaze;  
He clings as though his breath on her depends.  
The faithful lover keeps her faithful ways;  
And all his sins are only lover's sins.  
In presence of the other, they feel blessed,  
And Venus' feet are sheathed by their requests.  
And all their sins, too readily confessed,  
As murmured prayers disturb Apollo's rest.  
They hold each other's words as hidden pearls,  
And keep them safely hidden for the day  
That fires, the entire moving world unfurl;  
For fear they cannot say, what they would say.

And so they think true love a heart could save:  
But love is for the lucky and the brave.

Patti Masterman

# A Quick-Change Heart

A quick change artist like I've never met;  
Twirls the letters, plays roulette,  
A new name sprouts like spring weeds  
To fuel some newly burgeoning need.

But quick change heart, I think it's not-  
More; steadfast iron, that never rot:  
Though names may change, and houses too-  
For me, a single heart will do.

Patti Masterman

# A Random Counterfeit Of Sweet Dreams

a random counterfeit of sweet dreams  
leads to the tangent coupling;  
thus feeding a voracious hunger  
that kills the seed of its plant early.  
later, in the deep woods you find  
that you've lost your sense of direction  
and the scenery's unchanging,  
no matter which way you go:  
some sorcery has overcome your brain's compass;  
now all roads always lead back to the one you first loved,  
even though that love has passed into far memory now.  
so that each night, you come limping, struggling back again,  
into the camp that you hope belongs only to you,  
and all your comings are just the same as your goings;  
as round and round, you are ever circling  
towards the old fires, once beckoned to you,  
above the tallest pines and mesas.  
the familiarity feels more atrocious  
as you know all your paths are so well-worn;  
and the tracks your too-assiduous brain is prey to,  
so that you cannot avoid the pitfalls,  
and you can never escape those feelings once called up.  
when the snowfall finally covers you over,  
you actually feel grateful  
because you know that old love can't thaw  
once you're frozen to the quick,  
and also the pain of this death, you realize  
will be one of the easiest you've ever experienced,  
imagining that you will finally be freed from your curse  
of picking unripe fruit before it's time.

Patti Masterman

# A Reckoning Was The Waste Of Loving You

A reckoning, was the waste of loving you;  
Whose heart was elsewhere, who's eyes  
Could never resist a new, stunning view.  
My solitary hovering as innocuous as a bee,  
Stalking the mortal garden, come sun or shower;  
As predictable as rain, as forgettable as a flower-  
My comedic pratfalls less memorable,  
Than her cries of elation:  
Her eggs more precious than mine.

Patti Masterman

# A Relative Twilight

A relative twilight obscures night,  
And dusty lanes of the Milky Way  
Only go glowing at full darks light;  
The glittering road the heavens paved.

The constancy of sky's a fact;  
And dance of planets there arrayed,  
And time that's gone's not coming back-  
No matter the words that one could say.

Patti Masterman

# A Rhinoceros Is Always Nicer-Ous

A rhinoceros is large because  
His behind, gargantuan; just coz,  
His eyes myopic- I'm just saying;  
Not being a racist, dismayin'.  
His bite his bark, wherever he wants  
He parks or farts, and hugely haunts  
Amongst the crocodiles, with taunts-

A rhinoceros is always nicer-ous  
Mostly when far away, from us.

Patti Masterman

# A Ribbon Of Notes

A ribbon of notes float past the dawn  
Childhood's gone, like a long-lost song;  
Did you have to grow up, to find your place  
And of that child, is there left one trace?

Their eyes are watching you, from the past  
Why'd you have to grow up so fast?

Where are the prints from those tiny hands,  
Busy with the work of becoming a man,  
And where are the people who loved the child,  
The innocent one, so sweet and mild?

Their eyes are watching you, from the past  
Why'd you have to grow up so fast?

Putting all of childhood's things away,  
You had to grow up and save the day,  
Was it worth all the hurry and fuss  
Along the way, what happened to trust?

Their eyes are watching you, from the past  
Why'd you have to grow up so fast?

We hurry them up, from birth to death  
Until they've got no time for breath  
But something that precious should be cradled long,  
Inside our hearts, like a perfect song.

Patti Masterman

# A Riddle

The only constant  
Never ceases or rests  
Takes away the familiar  
Puts askew memories  
Rearranges the trees hair  
Plants mismatched flowers in the fields  
Tears down abodes a twig at a time  
Patient as the earth is old:  
It can lift up a mountain range, in a millenium  
It can scoop out a hollow, swallow entire civilizations  
In just a few more.

On breezy days, a million voices keening  
The same lullaby that sings us to sleep,  
Is the noise of capricious demolitions in the forest  
The noise of a sea coast being spirited away in the night  
Great cathedrals being excavated beneath us  
Oceans ever rising and falling like a cosmic stock market  
And there is even time left over  
For playing musical chairs with clouds  
And tickling laughing children  
Who still think they can run away from it.

Patti Masterman

# A River Bears A Burden

A river bears a burden  
It carries far downstream,  
And no man's eyes will see it  
Or fathom what it means.

A river bears a burden  
Beneath it's swirling toil.  
It's rippling edges teasing  
The sodden, silent soil.

A river bears a burden  
Beneath our nightly dreams,  
Our temporal excursions  
Along it's watered seams.

A river bears a burden  
Of many dreaming feet,  
Searching all it's alleys  
To a dreamer's slow heartbeat.

A river bears a burden;  
It will not wake our sleep,  
But carries us forever  
Our roaming souls, to meet.

Patti Masterman

# A Secret Throne

My yard a palace is  
Of stately column'd trees,  
And hallways, grandiose-  
There are no ones, like these.

I go just like a queen  
Moves up, a marble stair  
To mount a secret throne,  
That no one knows is there.

Patti Masterman

# A Severe Civility Rests Within

A severe civility rests within  
the soul,  
of the broken hearted man.

That burn which test, his fabric's core  
has torn  
the once strong warp; no more.

His eyes are filled, of far off light;  
enough  
for only, each sole night.

His words may break in lines, between  
the bones,  
of the sentence, of his meaning.

Not the whole man, he used to be  
for reasons  
less obvious, to you and me.

He keeps his grief apart, so he  
can bury it  
some place, secretly.

And though he never go there again:  
his eyes  
his loved one's shroud, still rend.

Patti Masterman

# A Sick Electron Kiss

A sick electron kiss  
Bespots the gimlet length of me,  
Like some narcotic hiss  
Spoiling the warp and weft of me.

Molecules dismissed  
Of their latent plasma's buoyancy;  
A jelloed bloody dish,  
All that's left of the heft of me.

Drying eyes in petri dish-  
Coaxed to give up death's disease-  
Stare unsocketed as fish  
Escaped from once landlocked sea.

Patti Masterman

# A Simple Life

I used to write such precise, edited comments  
With a tight rein on myself- I knew once that  
Little bit of control went- the sky was the limit  
Of my errant ways and obscure references.  
On a completely different subject, isn't it fun  
To let religious people discover and try to convert you  
To learn all about their religions, get all suffused  
With the spirit- then reveal the bad boy punch line  
That you're an atheist- 'Sorry just got carried away  
For a minute there'. Not that I am a true atheist-  
I carry no card- it's just that I'm like one of those  
Strange unknown particles, suspected to exist  
But nobody knows its charge or how it arises  
Or what calls it forth or what extinguishes it.  
The particle doesn't even know what it is itself-  
That's a perfect summation of my spiritual side.  
I envy people who can be handed a predigested,  
Fully annotated, thick leather volume and then say,  
Here is everything in the universe I believe in-  
Their lives have got to be so much simpler than mine.

Patti Masterman

# A Single Kiss

Evil takes its sanguine bite  
Out of the damned dark,  
And the soulless stumble  
Beneath Earth's apocalypse  
Trying to outrun the smoke of shotguns;  
The hunger of dead dreams-  
Down here, we can curse with a single kiss.

Patti Masterman

## A Sip Of Insipid

A sip of insipid love poetry-  
That's all you get to drink  
For hours of endless days and nights  
You've barely time to think.

A bushel, a barrel of halfhearted verse:  
More than we meant to know  
Can't gargle our poor brains out with soap  
Is there nothing can stop the flow?

My words might be insipid too;  
It's true there's way too many  
But I'll stifle my loving if you will too-  
There's none would give us a penny.

I'll never more search for a heart of gold  
Or even of silver, or tin:  
In fact, if I die quite all alone  
I'll think it the best kind of end.

Patti Masterman

# A Sky Too Far

In a sky too far,  
A new angel sings-  
She's gone from here;  
She's earned her wings.

An angel with a face we knew,  
So full of doubts, wondering why  
It was she got chose  
To own the sky?

Nobody knows where angels go;  
Nobody knows why they must leave-  
But the heavens must sound grander now,  
As she folds her wings, and begins to sing..

Patti Masterman

# A Slight Possession

There is a nun soul inside of me somewhere:  
I notice traces of it sometimes  
A distant glow of candle light flickering  
A wafting of incense and whispered chanting  
Once I had a glimpse of her,  
Sitting sedately in the chair in front of me  
The black and white habit so comely  
Softly folded around her chasteness  
I can tell she's most often  
Kneeling at some icon, hands clasped  
Lips murmuring, fumbling with the beads  
But I don't give her any freedom:  
Life is too harsh and bereft  
Of conscience and remorse; I know  
She would be slapped about, cursed,  
Disrespected: It is just too bad  
I know the world would adore her  
For her goodness and her gentle heart  
But I must protect her  
Until we're both safely dead.

Patti Masterman

# A Somebody Of Something

And now I have become thoroughly a Somebody-  
Though once, I was Nobody, only a child-  
Most powerless, among the world's true movers.  
It's true I planned no ambushes of greatness,  
Planted no vistas of wisdom or skill,

Still managing somehow to morph into a sort of public entity:  
Recognizable, if not lauded;  
Vociferous, if un-heard,  
Being proclaiming unctiously  
That I take up some space, in this world.

Patti Masterman

# A Song Forgotten

I was the song  
You sang once;  
Beside the flowing rivers of time,  
And I was the words  
You knew once;  
Words which we met in a rhyme.

Now I'm like the song  
Forgotten;  
Abandoned on the shores of life,  
And I'm all these notes,  
Unbegotten-  
Which now only die,  
In your quiet.

Patti Masterman

# A Spark In The Middle Of Forever

The faces of stars just look like time,  
For a long time now uncounted;  
While you're floating, unconcerned-  
A spark in the middle of forever

On an island, that's nowhere,  
In the middle of some November-  
A million years longer than ever-so-long;  
In a heedlessly simple, unsong song.

Patti Masterman

# A Spider And Its Shadow

A spider and its shadow  
The strangest dance did do;  
The spider seemed to curtsy,  
But the shadow never knew.

Then balanced on a tightrope,  
The spider climbed up the sky,  
While down beneath, the shadow  
Was scarcely creeping by.

When dusk happened upon them,  
The shadow stood on stilts,  
And up above, the spider  
A silken web, had built.

At night, the busy spider  
Slept on the rippling breeze-  
But vanished was the shadow,  
Till morning stroked the trees.

Patti Masterman

# A Spring Without You

A spring will be arriving without you  
I never thought it'd come to this so soon  
And yet, I felt a cold and shaking fear;  
It would arrive without you, and full-blown.  
I withered when I felt the truth come clear:  
At last it comes, a spring when you are gone.  
You're gone so far away, with all that's dear-  
Gone; I'll hear no longer your sweet song.  
Though you might oft return, the bible says:  
A woman of few days shall leave her own  
Family (quicker than anyone could guess)  
At last to cleft unto that certain one  
No more to grace that place, though she be blessed  
Her heart will bind together a new home  
(though it not be written, the mothers moan)

Patti Masterman

# A Stone's Weight

The magic spell has ended  
The chains all swept away  
None to listen for her step now  
No one beside her to lay.

Gone, the eyes which used to seek,  
And the hands that smoothed her hair  
Soon will cup the face of another  
And so, he has left her there.

Tired with weeping and sleeplessness  
There's one thing makes her moan:  
A ring which once meant a promise  
Has turned back into only a stone.

Patti Masterman

# A Story Of Two Soldiers

A story of a soldier, with a heart  
Who came upon a dead Japanese soldier  
With a letter sticking out his pocket, in the war  
This soldier took the letter, obviously  
The important treasure of the dead one.  
He framed it and stored it;  
Another man's most prized possessions,  
Of a child's colored picture, and a baby's photo.

Years later, and someone notices  
The framed paper, and suggests  
Trying to track down the original family  
And though it seems impossible:  
The impossible is accomplished,  
Through another soldier's care, though he was  
A stranger to the poor dead soldier  
He must have felt their close brotherhood,  
As two soldiers engaged in a difficult war.

And there is a woman now,  
Who cradles the picture she colored  
As a small child; and her baby sister  
In the photo at the top; also living, now an adult  
She said, Father never returned to us  
We never had a chance to know him  
But now we know him; he's come back  
We know who he was thinking about  
At the end- this man gave our father back to us.

And the old soldier has a new friend now;  
If you treat the other side's soldier as no less  
Than your own family  
His family will come to know you in time,  
As truest friend,  
And closer to heart  
Than any grief could ever reach.

Patti Masterman

# A Sudden Bird Cacophony

A sudden bird cacophony  
Came to me like a symphony:  
They each played their part; majors and minors,  
Piping their art; well skilled and first timers.  
And none were afraid, of the part which they played  
As some flew around, and some sat in the shade  
Of the trees in the glen, where they sang to the men  
Of how time makes away, with the best of our days  
And how bird song outlasts both our future and past.

Patti Masterman

# A Sun So Fair

The rocks stored up sun  
For so long, and so long;  
In their rocky hearts  
Since time's begun.

Tumbled and polished;  
So rare, so rare-  
They could tell a tale  
From when we weren't there.

I'm saving these rocks  
Born before earth,  
Pieces of mantle  
That gave me birth.

There's sun in my bones,  
And sun in my hair-  
Rock crystals- and beauty-  
From a sun, so fair

Patti Masterman

# A Tear

A tear is just a prism for the light;  
A sigh is just a bit of saved delight;  
A yawn is just a muffled sign of sleep;  
A sneeze, a burst of secret that we keep.

The tear is self, as it's own conscience wakened.  
The sigh's the sudden thirst, that never slakened.  
The yawn is when our psyche takes a breath.  
The sneeze the secret, that we've put to death.

Your tears bore holes in light, to make things seen:  
Your sighs can fill me, with your radiant sea:  
Your yawns transport me, to your hidden dream:  
Your sneeze, the secret soul of body's being.

Patti Masterman

## A Terminal Length Of Day

Every sad day finds the commonplace bitter  
Gnawing the still dark ravages of time,  
Every place the spent blue sky above's harrowing;  
Another line that fateful time unwind.

Every dog another dog's day is escaping;  
The cleaver to the new flesh scarcely raised,  
Every man's next, the long line of men suffering-  
Making his mark, on a terminal length of day.

Patti Masterman

# A Thousand Ghosts

In the vacant motel rooms  
Lies the dust from moldy suitcases,  
Long-dead echoes of hurried zippers,  
Empty, stilled hangers, and stray hair pins.

The inevitable bible in the top drawer.  
Like a museum holds all the artifacts,  
But lacks the bodies, the souls of their owners,  
The rooms dividers hold rigidly.

They had to fit themselves in between  
Certain hours of a day.  
Economy was the religion,  
With the clock as orderly ruler.

Moons or suns irrelevant, sunshine or rain.  
No traces allowed upon walls,  
No lipstick on mirrors,  
No graffiti, no names.

Out of all the breathing and excreting,  
Laughter and tears,  
Amid the jostle of the living and dying,  
Not a hair remains.

Rooms sterile as the Arctic,  
Though each have a thousand ghosts.

Patti Masterman

# A Thunder Storm And You

A thunder storm and you;  
that's all I would need-  
and a blanket, and a goblet  
with a long stem,  
and maybe a feather and maybe a rose  
(for tactile stimulation)  
you know how it goes;  
A thunder storm and you-  
that's all I would need  
we'll let the rest of the world  
run on greed  
cause we have pure love  
and that's all we need;  
A thunder storm, and you-  
that's all, indeed.

A thunder storm and you;  
and nothing else, need-  
cept a candle and bugspray,  
and a towel and some shoes,  
maybe some soap and deodorant too,  
and maybe a cot-  
inside perhaps, a tent.  
A thunder storm and you-  
that's all I would need  
just let the rest of the world  
go to seed  
but we'll have our love  
on which we will feed;  
A thunder storm, and you-  
that be our creed.

A thunder storm and you  
would all my needs fill-  
though maybe some paper  
and stamps for a letter  
a mailbox, a doormat  
to wipe off the sand  
a cooler for food;

now that would be grand.  
A thunder storm and you-  
now somehow seems lacking  
but don't worry, you know that  
I'd not send you packing;  
we'll both be so happy  
that here we have tarried,  
but it could get expensive-  
should we get married?

Patti Masterman

# A Token Fly Poem

All poets have to write one day  
A poem about a fly they knew;  
And there's no escaping it,  
So with no more adieu  
I introduce the fly, one night  
Who bit my leg till I saw daylight:  
He bit deep and he bit long,  
My vital fluids began to seep.  
He bit a bite for every fly  
Who at the hand of man, must die;  
He bit a bite for every woe  
And curse on flies, by human foe;  
He put his species pain on me  
Without so much as a thank you; please,  
And without a word, I squashed his guts  
And stomped his itty, bitty nuts;  
If he had some, they're surely flat;  
If he didn't- that's the end of that.

Patti Masterman

# A Toothless Knife

If you could live forever  
Just to love me,  
In the blink of an eye  
I could live eternity.

And if you died once  
In my arms so tight,  
No distance would matter-  
Or if it was right.

But if that love  
Could bestow life,  
Death would become  
A toothless knife.

Patti Masterman

# A Universe's Song

Though I am the algorithm  
for dust into dust,  
And though they may say  
life arose because it must

In my body, long-dead suns still slumber on-  
And in my heart, beats a universe's song.

Patti Masterman

# A Verb Went To Town

A verb went to town one night  
And met a standing noun, just right:  
They were all dressed in grammar,  
With a punctuation tie,  
And semi colon earrings,  
And some italic lies.

In an active tense,  
They conveyed all their sense  
And picked up some adverbs  
And adjectives, in time;  
Then they made a conjunction,  
Just to people this rhyme.

Patti Masterman

# A Virtual Carnival

The track seems to stretch the limits of sky;  
The well-timed cacophony's treble shrieks,  
The calliope's elusive energy releasing  
Arcing over wooden planks, invisibly.

Touching locking bars, ancient charm for safety,  
Gaining speed, rising, weaving through rails-  
Strong down forces, flashing strobes, distant sails-  
And high above, sun gashed in wavy chain-mail.

One last lifting chug- Up! near to the highways,  
Cars filling exits, shiny metal, flowing crowds.  
Heat swells the road, with ghastly fumes prevailing;  
The outer world fun-house, for the less-enthralled.

Now back on earth; ticket's thrown, soles to concrete,  
Mixed odors, food and garbage, then finding more thrills.  
On long summer days, camera bulbs to remind us  
The ephemeral nature, of what we would feel.

Patti Masterman

# A Whistle Through My Heart

A whistle through my heart  
Another dawn comes calling  
The rosy clouds all shimmer  
Outside my room.

The morning star's on fire  
Upon the sunlight, threading  
The sunbeams opal glimmer  
Beside the moon.

As always, you're the place  
My soul's forever stalling;  
Because my light grows dimmer  
Until your rainbow blooms.

Patti Masterman

# A Wish For Flying

Oh I wish I had tight little feet,  
Could beat out a song on the rug  
And thin as a sylph,  
Eyes bright like a dove-  
Spaced wide apart, like a classical beauty/

Wish I could sing like the nightingale,  
Never say the wrong word,  
Always say the right-  
A riot at parties,  
Friends that last through the night/

Imaginations fine; such a happy place to be,  
But it doesn't cut it in history;  
I've got to be myself-  
Whether win or lose-  
Cause nobody else could ever be me/

(But sometimes you know  
I really do wish I could fly..)

(written to Cold Place by niha)

Patti Masterman

# A Woman

A woman doesn't fill a space;  
She occupies a mood,  
And although she may contemplate-  
She will never brood.

A woman never speaks her mind;  
She slips it through her pores,  
And though unspoken, you will find-  
You'll notice it much more.

Though woman is no extrovert,  
She's someone dear to you;  
As close to heaven as you'll get-  
And none as near, to you.

Patti Masterman

# A Woman's Just A Padded Cell

A woman's just a padded cell, in situ:  
With mirrored tile reflections, of former occupants  
Reveals their once desires, like long past feast  
That's been viewed only partially, through a narrow hall,  
And though her cushions can't stop your fall  
They soak up life's effluvium; for she's an island  
In the lull; most co-morbidly, antediluvian:  
And as it cradles the body's living estate,  
Her rocking-horse frame can't navigate  
The ground swell of presumptive grace.

Let's pretend, that the dizzy motion ride  
Has provided real progress forward, in spite  
Of strong waves, that coupled oceans bring;  
Jump saddle, on her coiled and double-jointed springs.  
Bright enameled eyes might rein you inside  
For your brief spate, of the near total ingress:  
Waving haloed hips of plastic'd flesh; her glide  
Could stay stationary, until you confess.

Only she knows well, the secret of assuring you  
You'll not drown, of her swirling vicissitudes;  
And if once you abhorred your childhood name;  
Now can use same call sign, for your idling engines  
Of a certain procreatively inspired invasion  
As she whispers it; says it loud, clenching need  
Of the second's singlemost long duration.

When she finally unlocks your prow from docks  
Post haste, of body's self-deceptive clocks  
Inside her temples, rising incense of sweat  
Mingled with undertows, of past vibrations; and her smell  
Itself: a briny distillate, of a pheromone tonic; forensic clue  
Of a decidedly amber hue; the body's cyclonic age of man  
Keeps travelling it's way, down her plundered mnemonic.

You can feel the straight jacket's razored sleeves,  
Beginning to loose your constricted lungs;  
And your loins overflowing; becoming a sieve:

If you could keep on riding, you'd be quite sure  
That eventually, just a small band-aid could cure  
The slight, though badly malformed scar;  
From the still flowing toxins; to soon immure-  
Hard to believe, how far gone you were.

Forget old self; a newfound confidence;  
Makes you forestall the inevitable trip  
Down to the corner, second-hand store,  
As now is revealed, that her paint's become chipped;  
And the horse's eyes are now rolling inward,  
As if looking there, for some positive proof,  
From the prying, irreverent eyes of the world-  
But you know it too well: she's just a padded cell.

Patti Masterman

# A Word Salad Sprouts In My Brain

A word salad sprouts in my brain, over and over:  
Televisions and radios playing loudly, just till you find  
By a single glance, they are not really turned on at all.

The commercials and talking, the songs and laughter  
Are not really there, and the steps out in the garage  
Belong to nobody, that's walking there.

Voices argue inside my head, but it's no one;  
It's just the busy mind, ever wanting to define  
The stray neurons that fire, into something  
That once upon a time was recognizable.

Or perhaps it is all just a tape recording, replaying  
Everything over the years; but who can tell  
Where the microphone switch was tripped, or why?

And happy it is to realize, after so many years  
That these sprouts could never grow into a real plant.

Patti Masterman

# A World Ago

A world ago  
I learned baby steps across the snow  
Built sand ladies lying in sculpted rows  
Upon the beach. Learned my private lessons well  
Counted by groups to multiply my complex dreams  
The world in braille and low indigo hues  
Monsters would sometimes invade the childish play  
Whistling then I blew the grief away  
Six years forever, when you're only eight  
And books with too big words can't tell your fate  
Pale fires would graze the dawning of the day  
The things I lost, they fluttered soon away  
I learned how life goes on  
A world ago.

Patti Masterman

# Ab Aeterno

You shall remain ever in secret:  
But in secret, all things will be given to you.

You shall be cloaked in anonymity and commonness:  
And the lowly shall inherit the earth.

You shall die in complete obscurity:  
Though most fulfilled, of all living and once-lived creatures.

So rue not your days,  
Your spirit which is in secret  
Knows your needs and desires  
And everything comes, in time:  
You were always here.

April 7 2012

Patti Masterman

# Abracadabra

Some words hold magic  
Phrases to other dimensions-  
Where you are going now,  
There is no need of keys.

Many pauses can fill an entire silence;  
Too long empty makes a fullness of nothing.

Some passages go quiet  
Down eternities of stairs,  
Darkness proceeding darkness,  
To the deafest of ears.

The trapdoor is opening, now closing again,  
A trick of the trade: look up while you can.

The hat could hold rabbits, handkerchiefs, time;  
Here's a beautiful maiden, being sawed in two.  
The eyes can play tricks; so forget the mind-  
Heaven and hell unseen by the blind.

While the audience searches for what is known,  
The stars wander where time has blown.

We are lost, we are found;  
Not one can do the sums.  
In a lucid dream,  
It will all come undone.

There is nothing to find; there is nothing to see,  
The Magician steps back, with a flourish of cape:

Nothing new is under the moon,  
Just graves and shadows and resting clouds;  
So give us one day, untied from the rest-

Abracadabra- only death is allowed.



# Absolute Vacuum

There are three people who live with us now  
Who no longer move their molecules around the world  
No longer expel carbon dioxide into space  
The only real movement they're capable of  
Perhaps a modest vibration of their dust  
In response to large objects passing over the bridge  
Two of them were once mates, and the other  
Remains solitary, in that other dimension.

There are three people now staying here  
Who never seek release from their small, quiet tombs  
We offered fancy Grecian urns; they paid no heed  
It wasn't necessary, we inferred; too ostentatious  
They don't celebrate high, holy days any more  
Birthdays and anniversaries circumnavigate, unobserved  
At least, so it would appear from the outside  
We try not to disturb them more than we must.

Three people once tarried within our universe  
Peopled our lives with the magnitude of their existence  
Childhoods were kindled by their mere act of breathing  
The presence of memories their only haunting  
The light ashes of their bones are crumpled shrouds  
Left in the wake of predictable casualty  
And there's a thickened atmosphere you can nearly touch  
In the absolute vacuum of where they once were.

Patti Masterman

# Abuse Me

Abuse me, abuse me;  
For it does amuse me,  
How you wound and contuse me,  
Baffle and plain ole bruise me-  
I just love how you abuse me.

Refuse me, refuse me;  
Annihilate, confuse me,  
Accuse and then misuse me,  
Let all your hatred suffuse me-  
Be careful you don't excuse me.

Patti Masterman

# Abyss

The world is an ocean  
Rising and falling  
Glowing and fading  
From moonlight to day  
Ungraspable motion  
The currents are stalling  
As we go wading  
Across the blue bay.

The clouds now are shuttered  
Upon the long daylight  
The tides they'll be lifting  
As midnight comes near  
The beaches are cluttered  
With signs of the seas might  
And black water's breaking  
Above the old pier.

No man can weather  
Earth's changing faces  
No heart can fathom  
The depths of the mind  
No strength can tether  
The night's lonely spaces  
Love's the lost anthem  
In the abyss of time.

Patti Masterman

## Accidental Snares

I am not your jailer, though if closely questioned  
You might admit to believing otherwise; moreover, you imprison yourself  
Behind these walls, and while beating those wings against the windows  
Must feel yourself to be the victim of confusing circumstance  
If I were to try to chase you down, you would no doubt have a seizure  
Of the heart, and die at that instant in my forsaken hands.  
The door is tall, and widely open: but you cling to the tops of small windows  
Envisioning through them the wider world, and a paradise  
You faint for hunger, in full sight of trees and foraging  
Ignoring the visible reality just beyond the door-  
I can no more show you the error you make, than you can show me  
How to fly. And so it goes; so long as man and nature have no common language  
Except for the beauty that exists outside of mans finite ways  
As long as birds and their children come by accident into human dwellings  
For a brief, bitter stay-  
All for want of a few shared words between us.

Patti Masterman

# Acts Beyond Words

Words are the borders that we erect  
When we would put space; create a place.  
Words are the buffer  
Also used to divide; to keep inside.

Acts are the honesty  
Of what we feel, put to our will.  
Acts are the poultice  
On the refrain, of the whole world's pain.

Words and acts need to get along  
Support each other; become strong  
So that our dreams will not go unheard  
Put first things first: acts, beyond words.

Patti Masterman

# Ad Astra; To The Stars

I'm here inside all the while  
Watching you invisibly  
You see only the extrovert  
Moving through the world  
As if it were a dance

Ad astra; to the stars  
I fly on wings so free  
Ad astra; to the stars  
To become what I must be

Where is the prophet who sees  
Beyond the veils of time  
And would he tell in words  
What the others see  
What they hope to find

Ad astra; to the stars  
I fly on wings so free  
Ad astra; to the stars  
To become what I must be

Space and time but curtains  
The soul is made of silk  
Moves in silence here, there  
You may think you heard it-  
But you know, you never will

Ad astra; to the stars  
I fly on wings so free  
Ad astra; to the stars:  
You'll see what is to be

Patti Masterman

# Ad Nauseum

The bores keep boring  
The snorers keep snoring  
The haters abhorring  
The liars perjuring  
The preachers imploring  
Adulterers whoring  
Ignorers ignoring  
Bellowers roaring  
Soldiers warring-  
So who's left for scoring?

Patti Masterman

# Adamant

A little town near the ocean coast  
With a little inn, next a little lea  
And the sign on the boardwalk, you will read  
That hospitality's the goal of the host  
In a town by the name of Adamant.

In a little place by a harbor's breath  
A pair of lovers went hand in hand  
They carved their love out of sifting sand  
Together they vowed a life after death  
In a town by the name of Adamant.

One night as a storm cloud hit the reef  
They climbed atop the highest rock  
They say then that stopped all the clocks  
As together they plunged into the sea  
In a town by the name of Adamant.

Now in town history, they're well known  
They say when lightning lights up that scene  
You can see them plunging down again  
And in the wind hear a strange, high moan  
In a town by the name of Adamant.

Patti Masterman

# Admonition

Treat your body like a car;  
Run it, run it to the mall,  
Feed it garbage, make it pay  
Every lifelong night and day.

Treat your body like a guest;  
Give it food and give it rest,  
Treat it well and make it last  
And your life will gently pass.

Patti Masterman

# Adopt Me

Adopt me-  
I'm potty trained, self-feeding:  
I just want to write poetry,  
I won't get in the way  
Of your best laid plans and desires.  
I don't want to frustrate your projects,  
Or else play clueless Edith  
To an irritable Archie  
Even if I am a worthless amoeba  
In the greater scheme of things.  
I can live on beans;  
I just need some room to write,  
And a flexible schedule sometimes.  
I don't expect to be taken out,  
Feasted, feted, or plied with liquor,  
I'm old enough to take care of myself  
But still young enough  
To always be in the way.  
I'm not a child;  
Don't need to be punished anymore.  
I'll write poems for all your friends,  
I'll write a novel memorializing your life.  
I just need saving, a little help out.  
Adopt me, and I'll send you my photo;  
Just dollars a day;  
Or, for a bit more-  
I won't send the photo.

Patti Masterman

# Adversus Solem Ne Loquitor

When I read the comments you inspire  
I feel like Salieri, to your Mozart;  
The mutt, next to the purebred;  
Your writing, the sine qua non  
So I must make a choice-  
Should I worship genius, or avoid it altogether?  
If true, it seems I would be avoiding it more and more  
As it is sure to grow, attract adherents;  
Better, to be your own priestess,  
At the head of the procession  
Than just another contender,  
Even if I had the brains or spine for that-  
And not only since, having given you my heart unwittingly  
All these words are just more fill, falling down  
Upon the grave of my own choosing:  
Adversus solem ne loquitor:  
Don't speak against the sun..

Patti Masterman

## Advice From Bukowski

I remembered there was that poem of yours said-  
Writing should be inspired as an acorn on fresh fallen snow  
Left there by a sudden north breeze that sprang up  
At midnight, and stirred all the trees but for an instant  
Leaving that gift, waiting to be found at dawn;  
If the act doesn't resemble automatic writing  
Words springing up off ouija boards, flexing their new found muscles  
Hoisting cartons of beer, and smoking Camel's;  
If you must tediously move words about, with a dolly  
Like rearranging whatnots on an already over-waxed piano,  
Or even, god forbid, have to move the piano itself-  
Just forget it- don't give in and commit poetry.

Reading Dylan Thomas' poetry, I noticed  
A synchronicity of alliteration, of syllables;  
A precociousness that could not have been  
First impression; it was all interwoven  
With embedded artistry, like a master weaver's tapestry  
Of which only the shop owner has the true key and code;  
All the workers merely imitate the patterns  
It seems random until you study  
Warp and woof, color and texture.

When Dylan wrote, you could see hours of time involved  
Tweaking each line; poring over words  
As if they were faceted jewels, kept in a locked armoire,  
And after lighting the candles of his ritual, touching once  
His good luck piece, he would take out  
A few at a time, on black velvet pillows,  
Examine them with his jewelers eye-loop.

Accepting or rejecting this one or that  
Based on number of consonants, or first or last sound made  
When lines were read together as a group  
He counted out his word's very syllables, as if counting pearls  
As though he cherished the being of each separately  
And then gave them his blessing, as a whole:  
Nothing was ever left to chance:  
His poems still fragrant incense wafting

High above the flop houses of modern writing.

Patti Masterman

# Advice From The Old To The Young

Know that once,  
I was just like you;  
When life was long  
And the cares were few.

But remember too  
That the day will come,  
You'll be just like me  
At the setting sun.

Patti Masterman

# Afraid To Look

My poor soul; afraid to look-  
Thinks he's read me, closed the book,  
Moved on now, to brighter things-  
But no one's told my heart- it sings.

It sings, and yes, it trembles too,  
Because it hates to be the fool  
That waits and waits, till hope is worn,  
Then sits and mopes- alone; alone.

We should not fear to be alone,  
When each one finds his heart's a home;  
Though others hearts might make us sigh,  
We're our own company, by and by.

Patti Masterman

# After Dark Comes Grief

Like a veil of heaven resting on the stars,  
The falling night spreads, like longing flying free.

Traces of memory implode against forever:  
A thousand cities, the timid listen by closing doors.

Passing spirits hovering powerless as smoke,  
Their last thoughts void, as through  
walls of soundproof glass.

The shocked mind keeps busy  
playing with pretend angels;  
When darkness falls, there come voices lost in weeping  
On passing winds, flaming ash keeps escaping.

Patti Masterman

## After Extreme Unction

Hazardous-waste contagions are abundant here, and  
There are so many yawning, open pits you can trip and fall into:  
Like many before, I thought: I'll escape to the sea-  
But at the right apogee and galaxial rotation, just at the peak tides  
Of the new moon, when the storm surges can become centrifugal sledghammers:

I jump in, eyes closed, clutching my anvil of regrets  
As I go down into the ocean, I sink like lead  
Into the riptides; the Marianas trench of falling forever:  
I give up, arms, legs splayed doll-like, sinking down to  
Titanic darkness. Agoraphobic squeezing; my eyes pinpoints,  
Lungs exploding, ear-drums rupturing.  
All hope burns out in one shuddering, twitching gasp.  
The dull roar of every sea disaster before mine,  
Seems to bounce back and forth under the waves,  
Like a game of hide-and-seek; now closer and now farther away,  
The echoes of cannonballs fired during long ago battles and  
Lost treasures racing me to the seabed far below.  
Still clutching, I go down, sightless eyes open in the watery continuum,  
My lips mouthing nonsense riddles as the brains fuses are blowing,  
Like rivets coming undone in a scuttled submarine,  
Sacrificed to keep its secrets undefiled. Everything turns to inky blackness.  
The cool current gives me absolution as the neurons finally cease firing.  
I am floating down there in that vast, gently-rocking tomb of silence where  
The cast-aways, the escapees of life, have slowly been accumulating;  
The half-dissolved skulls on the bottom grinning sardonically,  
With their vacant eyes and gaping sea fern-tongued mouths-  
Now they themselves, are the randomly arranged trophies of the  
Giant-tenacled, graceful monsters of the deep.  
But suddenly the eclipse concludes; the galaxy shifts  
A few microseconds away from Andromeda again,  
The abating tides begin to flow outward, reversing themselves tsunami-style,  
Underwater volcanoes start to bubble and froth furiously,  
Deep currents welling to the surface;  
Seismic waves from the sea floor causing a thermal updraft.  
Dolphins and whales start popping up like air-filled buoys, above the surface.  
I am belched out; bedraggled, stuffed voodoo doll, askew upon the rocks.  
The brightness blinds me for a while, and the air rebounds with a hollow ring.  
There's sand in my eyes and mouth and nostrils;

Camouflaged with mud and seaweed from the deep bottomlessness forever,  
Looking like the expelled, deformed spawn of the local school of mermaids,  
Hailed as fearless explorer, instead of cowardly expatriate wanna-be,  
And the entire universe chanting: breathe, breathe, keep breathing-  
There is a higher power past extreme uncton, and no natural law can oppose it.

Patti Masterman

# After I Am Gone

After I am gone  
Graceful geese will still  
Sweep towards the horizon, honking  
There will still be the sudden  
Spring showers, and wildflowers arriving  
In the most unexpected places  
There will still be long, candlelit pauses  
Between lovers, at twilight's edge  
Rosy dawns, with one low star still burning  
Curved shoehorn moon's hanging incandescence  
Waves lapping the shores driftwood  
The random cries of the seabirds  
Two hands folded together, pledging eternity  
Around a yellow metal ring  
Newly born babies, squinting at the sudden brightness  
Children's prayers, like smoking incense rising  
Gently coating the undersides of clouds  
Secrets and soft laughter, in the darkness  
Quiet communion of the familiar in old age  
Calm nights, with timid breezes ruffling the trees  
A billion, billion suns all shining silently above,  
Even after I am gone.

Patti Masterman

# After You Had Passed On

After you had passed on  
Your things came to me, looking to be loved again  
So bereft; so alone were they-

The colorful silk scarves, the chunky jewelry  
They wanted a home, a family life  
And they wanted to stay together

But the faint whiff of grief that clung  
To them; clung like stench, to an overflowing river  
Or like the low clouds that hang over a wasteland

That questionable scent  
Made me think too much of death, decay  
It stung, reopened again longing's rude wounds

Though some day, I might go visit them just once  
When your memory has been put safely to bed  
And they are well-secured in the airless vacuum of neglect.

Patti Masterman

# Agonal Living

In dreams the dead are never done dying,  
for they are never fully alive and never truly dead;  
their chests still rise and fall imperceptibly,  
movements not measurable, not synchronous  
and the eyes move randomly  
when you least expect it.

The funeral arrangements never get made,  
because the deathbed never gets vacated;  
but plants still need watering, and dogs feeding,  
and daily life makes it's grudging repertoire of demands  
so that to catch their final breath, and that long distance stare  
is not so easy as it would seem.

Though in real life, people stop clocks hands  
and call priests into the room, and contact mortuaries,  
take pains to recall exactly what it was  
they were doing, when the cross-over occurred-  
And sometimes later, they stop living, too-

while waiting for something, they were never sure of  
while looking for something, that is never clear.

Patti Masterman

# Ah, The Lips, And Ah, What Cheeks

Ah, the lips, and ah, what cheeks;  
Methinks though, you are not too deep.  
What sunbleached tresses frame your face,  
Even though you're lacking taste;  
Your laugh tears out the soul of me,  
And you're quite bent, it's plain to see.

Now touch me not, with your white hand:  
Anemic sprites, I cannot stand;  
Fix me not, in your blue eyes,  
For I don't want to hear those sighs.  
I'm sure your organs are complete-  
But I care not, to hear you bleat!

Patti Masterman

# Ahead Of The Reins

I marginalize self  
then feel marginalized,  
I lie to myself, but think-  
somebody lied;  
If taken for granted wasn't quarried stone,  
You might forget what you've always known.

Call yourself names  
but it will still sting,  
Do some bad things-  
make your conscience ring;  
If you have to do wrong just to realize  
What evil is- then why the surprise?

You must take what's given,  
and run with the days;  
It's not a rehearsal,  
for there's too much at stake.  
If you saved up your life till the very last minute,  
You'd never find out, what was really in it.

Don't sleep through this life,  
For we must awaken-  
And rare things from all  
of our moments, be taking:  
Every man carries his own tomb, inside  
And ahead of the reins of his body, must ride.

Patti Masterman

# Aim For The Moon

Aim for the moon  
And land among clouds;  
High above earth,  
You can still be proud.

Aim for the moon,  
The sun or the stars;  
Your friends will be angels,  
On journeys, afar.

Aim for the moon-  
Not aiming's the sin;  
For you'll never travel  
If you don't here, begin.

Patti Masterman

# Albatross

I won't allow your hopelessness to drown me,  
Thin thread of a lifesaver though I seem  
Like tales of a fisherman's sea never learned;  
Salty rhymes of the port that you can't discern.

Though Siren calls over waves may carry,  
Though mermaids seek for a watery lair;  
Let the green sea traveler be most wary  
Of things too feminine; things too fair.

Whether we're listing port or starboard,  
Whether we're tethered aft or fore;  
You can't hold on or drag me under  
Once you've thrown me overboard.

Patti Masterman

# Albatross Of My Heart

My inconstant heart  
Tries to touch you, in the boarded up rooms,  
The corridors sealed off from my reach.  
My recorded voice echoes past empty hallways,  
Down decrepit staircases.

Once my portrait hung  
Above your bed itself,  
Till you partitioned it off.  
Even I will no longer grovel  
When hope has already flown out the portal.

I'm more dangerous now,  
Having nothing left to lose  
And nothing to hold onto;  
My timbers mutely rotting, while your siren voice  
Goes on sweetly singing.

Patti Masterman

# All Fall Down

I think I am not entirely real but more  
a conglomerate of ghosts  
all come together: a party in a host.

Bring the chalice, bring the cross,  
holy water in holy grail-  
throw the heretic down the well.

To live is a verb, an actionable word;  
a state of turning nothing  
into something never heard.

If being is a noun,  
and living is a crown-  
why then must we break it, falling down?

Patti Masterman

# All For The Pain Of Loving Me

Now that you are gone  
I can tell you about some things.  
Now that you're no longer here,  
I realized that I missed your card playing  
In late evenings and early mornings;  
Your patient placing of the cards,  
Which put my randomly arranged thoughts into order,  
Where peace reigned; even the simple peace of cards;  
Their royalty pressed flat against a tabletop-  
You were always my Queen, Mother.

Now that you are gone  
I can tell you, you always took time for me;  
And sometimes I tremble, to think that perhaps  
I was impatient, not realizing you had come to the end;  
Nearly there, and worried about lights burning out, and the impotence  
Of lying in a bed of flowering bedsores.  
Nobody ever treated me with as much continuous caring  
As you did. You deserved a better ending;  
Like everybody in this world.  
You taught me about bottomless loving,  
No matter the temperature of the rest of the world.  
You, Father, were the wise King of my kingdom, treating me like a princess.

Now that you are gone  
Half my world is gone away, though I have a new family now;  
The flesh of my flesh, and the flesh I joined my own with.  
They are not here to fill your void, for no one could ever do that.  
Half the world has fallen away, and I dream that somewhere far,  
In some kindly, other-worldly universe, you go on playing cards;  
Caring and loving, nourishing other hearts  
You have been given dominion over,  
In your ten thousand tirelessly imaginative ways.

I imagine this, because it makes it more tolerable;  
I would spend my eternity, if it were mine to give,  
Paying you back in kind for every lovely memory I now hold  
As a lamp, burning only for you.  
On long nights, I would say every decade of your rosary.

You lit my world, and yet slowed it's burning;  
I long to give you back a life, and would count it as small reward indeed-  
For all your pain of loving me.

Patti Masterman

# All Hallows Eve

When the night is still  
And the clouds are thick,  
And the moon is full,  
The breezes cool-  
Go into the graveyard, if you will.

Where the earth is damp  
And the stones have sunk,  
All around is death,  
Then hear the breath-  
Of wind, and see the moon's blue lamp.

Stand inside the bounds  
Legions of the dead,  
Hold your breath, listen,  
Mute voices now risen-  
And cries of the damned, all around.

Feel them creeping close  
With their sad lament,  
Friends no longer care,  
For the dead left there  
And the sighs of unhappy ghosts.

Patti Masterman

# All Hurts Are Still The First One

All hurts are still the first one,  
All pains repeat the same,  
Rejection states, that you'll win none;  
Your cast-off face and name.

Though you'll still rise to dust off you  
The smarting stones, of better men;  
They'll leave your sullied, dirty blues  
To march toward their finer whims.

Patti Masterman

# All Is Vanity

All is vanity to impatient children,  
All is vanity, on the Earth,  
All is vanity, now or later;  
Everything, but death and birth.

All is vanity to restless children,  
All is vanity, since the fall;  
Take the days and nights as given-  
Life makes orphans of us all.

Patti Masterman

# All These Thoughts I Think

All these thoughts I think,  
that cantankerous make  
the brimming of the brain  
(And such are not contained)

That all these thoughts I think  
(These thoughts we think and say)  
All these thoughts we think,  
are just brains making hay;  
we do not need to stop  
to think; it's what we do.

Even asleep, these thoughts are deep  
some dark, some light; a blight  
upon a peaceful dream.  
These thoughts though, which may seem  
more real, to our souls,  
but indeed, are ghouls.

But, when we're on the brink,  
the thoughts that made us think  
are left behind, it's true.  
If thinking's just a game;  
the end is still the same,  
so to these thoughts I think-  
I'll raise a toast, to you.

Patti Masterman

# All Things Move In A Circular Motion

The lathe of heaven's spinning, spinning;  
Now the web of time beginning,  
Time the holder of the many secrets  
We must someday learn;  
Time the hearth where lie the days  
The universe will slowly burn.

Life springs up; it's breathing, breathing  
And the web of life is weaving,  
Life revolves through many stages  
And no one foretells the whole;  
Life, the mold in which we pour  
The essence, turns into the soul.

Patti Masterman

# All Those Things That You Do To Me

It's delicious, when I'm here craving you,  
but you- you are there- or there;  
god only knows where-

And you are absence, growing deeper,  
A mystery spade sunk in enigma,  
A slowly widening fissure'd earth,  
The last word I never got to speak (you could be dead) ,  
The last toast I never got to drink (and there is dread..)

But also heady disdain and contempt-  
Not real, because you could contain no such thing  
Inside your lovely, ascetic volumes of being;  
Still- just to pass the time- I imagine you as such-  
Imagine desertion, abandonment; no more touch.

A book you never opened again,  
A place you never went again,  
Love letter crumpled, over the fire  
As you trailed your hands slowly  
Down the face, of another..

And in this way, you will never grow familiar,  
I will always remember that catching-in-the-throat  
Pulse jumping fireworks never seen  
Way you do all those things, that you do to me..

Patti Masterman

# All We Were Could Not Fit In A Name

Death as object seems almost too vast  
To squeeze into the fragile human frame-  
Though days we lived were never made to last,  
And all we were could not fit in a name.

Perhaps though, death is small as other things  
We deal with daily, never to suspect  
That it's both grimace, and that little pain-  
We took the pill- before were beat to death.

Patti Masterman

# All Wisdom Lives In Me

How fitting it is to be human;  
(all wisdom lives in me)  
To have a body neither too small  
(all wisdom lives inside)  
Nor too immense;  
(true wisdom cannot hide)  
Thoughts that can go far  
(the wise have hidden wings)  
Farther than this moment now  
(wisdom freedom brings)  
I feel I could spend eternity  
(wisdom makes you whole)  
Being in human form,  
(wisdom cradles the soul)  
In spite of the suffering and pain  
(wisdom gives compassion)  
And the loss again and again  
(wisdom has no ration)  
That none wearing flesh avoid.  
(to the wise, no thing stays hidden)  
Men are such little worlds  
(much wisdom comes unbidden)  
Unto themselves complete  
(wisdom it's own reward)  
With an inner and outer history  
(wisdom knows no defeat)  
We know when the outer form began  
(wisdom brings great joy)  
Where it found it's place  
(wisdom brings great peace)  
But no one knows about the inside-  
(wisdom makes the heart sing)  
When it was first begun  
(before anything was wisdom)  
Where did it all come from  
(wisdom at the beginning)  
And where does it return  
(after everything is wisdom)  
What a puzzle is to ponder

(wisdom never learned)  
Each life it's own mystery play,  
(wisdom travels heart to heart)  
It comes and goes invisibly  
(only the silent are wise)  
Each human being a goldmine  
(all things equal to the wise)  
The distinctive genetics  
(wisdom is never confounded)  
Like a secret code,  
(wisdom comes unbounded)  
Only part of the answer it holds  
(all wisdom lives in me) .

Patti Masterman

## AI-Literation Libation

I'm the bore that bored the boarder,  
Who along the border, bore;  
Till he escaped, wearing masking tape-  
And now he's gone for sure.

I'm the whore that whored a hoarder,  
And smiles at whore-doors wore;  
They took my smiles, for creeping wiles-  
From which, they were immured.

Patti Masterman

# Almighty Hidden Night

Almighty hidden night  
Beheld by silent stars  
That linger in our dream,  
Calm spoils of highways blue  
In skies celestial where  
A history lay in ruins.

The heavy steps of time  
Will part the whispered hours  
In twilight incantations  
Our thoughts lost,  
Secret treasures  
Poured out, like gold libations.

Come smile again with me  
And marvel on the shore,  
Our eyes will play the tribute  
To beloved hearts desires,  
Set sail the burning ship  
With crimson funeral pyres.

Patti Masterman

# Alone

Another goodbye has arrived;  
And they never give enough warning,  
And even if it was expected,  
It's followed by copious mourning.

It's not that I hate goodbyes,  
Someday we're all going home;  
It's not so much, that we have to die-  
But that we die all alone.

Patti Masterman

# Along The Way

Along the way you might find that  
Some people have inland seas for eyes  
And some have bejewelled souls  
Some reveal themselves in words  
And others, in songs that rush  
Out their pores, through gem-crustured tunnels  
To pool beneath far away bridges  
Reflecting turquoise skies  
Some have binary star systems, and flames  
Connect the two halves of their brain  
And if you can find the ones  
With arched domes inside their skulls  
They are the dreamers of life  
Always on the brink of discovering  
Some newly born crystalline universe  
Which has been slowly opening inside them  
Like treasure saved for a rainy day.

Patti Masterman

# Alpha To Omega

The sky is just another highway:  
Burnt white by the sun's time wheel  
A template of restless motion  
Peopled by the wisps of our imaginings  
The alpha and omega, of all that's known  
Past Earth's milk clouded gaze.

The sky is just another highway  
Strewn with comets on their way  
To other unknown dawns, ringing alien suns  
Of birth panged planets,  
Matters all-seeding journey  
To proof the farthest reaches.

The sky is just another highway  
It's laws are different from our laws:  
A highway that reaches straight overhead  
Speeding toward the brightest flames in heaven  
To illumine the embrace of past and present  
Where is found the bright cusp of tomorrow.

Patti Masterman

# Already Here

Mother Nature's such a joker-  
Everywhere I've lived, or been  
Many legged creatures lurking  
And I have never been their friend.

My smile will freeze and people think  
That I'm unfriendly or affronted  
It's just I think those buzzing insects  
It must be me, that they're hunting.

Many outings have had bad ends  
When flying hornets feel free to pass  
On all sides of my spineless body  
And even drink from my own glass.

A good nights sleep is oft aborted  
When upon the mattress waits  
A little cockroach, whispers stirring  
I feel as if I'm just the bait.

I never paid much heed to spiders  
Till one bit me; it was not funny  
Off to the doctor I was forced  
The price was high, in pain and money.

When people say, dont be so silly  
I just let their words go by  
There's scorpions, ticks, and centipedes  
And don't forget, the exotic blow-fly.

I wish that all those bugs would go  
Leave the ground here, and the air:  
There's been some big mistake I know  
My home world, should not be theirs.

There's so much talk of alien life;  
Are they coming..should we fear?  
I can tell you beyond all doubt:  
The aliens are already here.

Patti Masterman

## Alternate Ending

Together we were wild and innocent;  
Dark church hovered ghost-like  
And the world waited in whispers.

We grew older and living wove us together  
The gathered assembly put forth rumors  
Midday and light illuminated the stained glass.

The candlesticks were made of pure gold;  
As the flames shrank the shadows grew taller  
Once past the threshold, reflections scattered.

Later, the wild winds extinguished  
The thing we thought most important-  
But no one could remember what it was.

Patti Masterman

# Always Another Sunday

There is always another Sunday,  
From where do Sundays come from?  
Do they sell them next to strike-anywhere matches,  
Can you buy a three-pack and get one free  
To make a perfect month, of Sundays?

Sunday afternoon might find you sitting at table  
With some people you don't know too well,  
Trying to make polite conversation  
While slicing up some shoe-leathery beef roast,  
That has always been the hallmark of the day.

Is it the first day of the week  
Or effectively, the last?  
How can the week start without any work?  
Because it seems to make a better ending, instead.

Will we ever run out of Sundays?  
Not unless we run out of football, baseball  
Basketball and soccer first; it seems evident  
That Sunday is merely a cog, attached to the sports wheel,  
And is born and dies each week, with the big game.

You will not find most people discussing their sins  
On Sunday afternoons:  
You already know what they will be talking about.

Patti Masterman

# Always Fall In Love With Characters From Books

Always fall in love with characters from books:

It's safer that way; they'll never leave you at the altar.

They won't break your heart, to run off with the flamenco dancer

(Even if they found out after a week,

They couldn't stand the way she snaps her gum)

They won't suddenly alter their personality alarmingly.

They won't come back from the war decorated, but with PTSD

And then decapitate your homing pigeons.

They won't come back from anywhere with pigeons,

And won't mind if you already have PTSD.

They won't care if you get a headache every night.

They won't care if you gain forty pounds.

They won't care if you have chemo and lose your hair.

They won't care if you wear dentures, glasses or false limbs.

They won't care if you still dress as if it were two or three decades ago.

You can have your pick from the most colorful, unusual lovers

Ever dreamed up by the mind of man.

And should you tire of them, you can write yourself out of the plot;

Find another storybook character;

You can change loves like a Hollywood prima donna changes costume.

And if you should have ten alternate personalities of your own-

They'll never notice it at all.

Patti Masterman

# Am I Anyone To You

Am I anyone to you-  
Or just another face in a doorway  
Means nothing to you, and there's no history  
Worthy of preservation  
Between us two.

Am I anyone to you-  
Easily forgotten; like a stranger  
Less memorable even than that car,  
There on the highway, with a flat-  
Been parked broken down there, for weeks.

Am I anyone to you-  
Utilitarian; till my next purpose  
Has been exhausted. I must confess  
You are nobody to me, either:  
Though once I thought I recognized you.

Patti Masterman

# Ambiguous

I can't ask for a photo-  
A likeness should be enough from one  
Living on the brink of each day's depravity;  
But it's the insides I know,  
Better than any face or any irregularity  
That stamps a face by its owner.

It's the blemishes we recognize,  
Not the imperfect harmony of each half-  
And no face is perfect, they all lack symmetry-  
And no character is faultless,  
Though they say it's the faults  
Causing us to love, in the first place.

Besides, I'd know your synapses anywhere,  
Your generous motives, and how you will blame self first;  
Whatever the ambiguous features of body might have to say,  
You always appear pure class, in my imaginings.

Patti Masterman

# Amelia's Voice

Now Amelia's voice talks only to space,  
But Betty still remembers it,  
Tantalizing, from an unknown place,  
Now somewhere out in the next galactic neighborhood,  
The words circling some nameless, self-consumptive star.  
Betty still lives, but when she's gone  
The memory of that voice dies forever.

In another place and time, she begged for help,  
In an era when fifteen year old girls were thought  
Too imaginative, and radio waves  
Were much less understood.

Now let the distant star wave at us,  
With Amelia's hand, at the unseeing past.  
Planes will still go down, as do suns,  
With depressing regularity.  
Betty is no longer haunted by the voice of Amelia;  
Amelia is no longer taunted by visions of vanishing life.

Your grave is in our hearts, do not fear  
Your shadow lies over the sun,  
We will never forget your name.

A 15 year old girl was living in St. Petersburg, Florida in the summer of 1937. One afternoon in July – the exact date is not known – at about 3 p.m. Betty was sitting on the floor in front of her family's radio console. This particular afternoon she was "cruising" across the dial in search of anything interesting when she came upon a woman's voice, speaking in English and obviously quite upset. Betty listened for a while and was startled to hear the woman say, "This is Amelia Earhart. This is Amelia Earhart." She wrote down every word she could distinguish, into a notebook. Later that evening Betty's father reported the event to the local Coast Guard station but he was told that the government had ships in the area and everything was under control. Betty kept her notebook and, over the years, occasionally tried to get someone to pay attention to her claims of having heard Amelia Earhart.



# Amenable To Guilt

I'm amenable to guilt,  
Where habitual patterns rule;  
Soul composed of tattered quilt-  
And sometimes look the fool.

I'm amenable to love,  
Where fools, charlatans are crowned;  
Invoking heavens aid above-  
Though seldom is it found.

Patti Masterman

# American Auschwitz

The airport scanner images  
that mainstream media loves to print in articles  
resembles nothing so much to me,  
as concentration camp photos.

The victims are remarkably better fed  
than those prisoners were; obese even.  
And most were not coerced into having  
their images made and retained in secret files  
of the government.

It is all an open source invasion of privacy.  
The people bow down, bleating like  
sheep, and submit to any and all indecencies  
with their liberties. This is going to have  
a bad ending.

In plain sight, the pilfering is beginning  
and nobody bothers to notice.  
On the street, many people have never heard of QE  
and do not realize they do not have  
to take everything lying down.

A few more laws enacted,  
and the serfs are put out to pasture,  
and it's just that easy-  
as if nobody cared at all?

Patti Masterman

# American Isis

She took herself away  
To where we could never find her,  
Borne along by her words-  
Her whole life sad in singing.

Where her mind flowed  
Was a darker stream,  
Her life distilled in books-  
But she'd had all she wanted.

A husband of unreason,  
In another woman's bed:  
American Isis, not enough for him-  
So she pitched in early.

They argued all her words  
As though it still mattered  
Could never let her go-  
That bastion, of women.

I climbed colossal brows  
To look into her eyes  
And found it just a monument-  
She took herself away.

Patti Masterman

# Amnesiphobia

I go to sleep again, eventually  
After hours of fitful tossing,  
Unwilling to surrender  
To the nightly unknowing.

Some nights bring forgetting of everything;  
Self, days, events, time, life itself.  
Others fill themselves up  
With a sort of coin, of wavering moonlight  
Seen through the haze of obfuscating dewfall.

Reflections broken free from the sea of self  
Raise unobstructed to float,  
Hanging in the cooling ether of dreamscapes  
Where in the fog nameless dogs bark  
And dark landscapes prevaricate.

Where clocks do not follow rules,  
Where gravity sometimes suspends  
Or history rewrites itself.  
Judgments come down and are executed  
Beyond the dignity of reason.

Nights pass slowly through a watery realm  
Where nothing is concrete,  
As we wade clumsily through clumps of time,  
Skip through a children's maze of nonsense riddles.

And when the knowledge of being in a dream  
Pierces sporadically, through the body's paralysis  
We awaken, amazed to find  
That we are simply ourselves again,

Then we stretch back out, into the other dimension,  
Ready to dream some more lines;  
Sample some more realities  
Till morning awakens us with hands  
Of impatient brightness.

And abstraction slinks away  
To wait for the next evenings  
Entertainment of amnesia.

Patti Masterman

# Amusement Park

In falling worlds I shudder,  
Twitch and grimace  
Shoved first this way, and that  
By fate, by momentum  
Twisting and turning in vain attempt  
To oppose gravity;  
A tiny sliver of molecules  
Holds me in open space  
Defying now sky, now ocean  
The stars like distant beacons  
Unaware of my flight beneath them  
My foot cannot reach firm ground  
Dizzy, I reach out in the whirlpool  
Trying to take hold of the air,  
It's thinness unyielding as ever  
Showers of exploding fireworks  
Sparkle through the brains corridors  
As it crowds the skulls finite dimensions.  
Then welcoming silence and stillness:  
The ride has ended; but not yet this life.

Patti Masterman

# An Affair Of Sorts

Don't tell anyone about this  
But today I've been having an affair  
He's colorful; he's an expert flier-  
No one can pace him  
Each time he comes near  
I bow, extend my palms upward  
Incline my head, entice him  
With all the subtle arts I can employ  
To prove my sincere intention:  
We're not really so far removed from the animals  
As we would like to suppose.

I lower my eyes as he stares my way  
I curtsy each time he comes round again  
Because there's no doubt that he's royalty  
His size and appearance are proof  
And it has driven the others crazy with jealousy  
They imagine their territories shrinking daily  
They're increasing their efforts  
Of many against the one-  
To oust him from the pond  
They chase him hopelessly; he out maneuvers,  
Leaves them behind in the waterlilies.

But he prefers to toy with them,  
Great gambling precocious thing that he is  
He caters to my desire while tossing them aside  
Like so many flies on horse dung  
Their annoyance no more to him  
Than flea bites on a tortoise shell  
It's the old story: the village males banding together  
To force out the exotic outsider  
Who courts the lonely girl; even if nobody else wants her.

He's a blue and green winged jewel  
He's the spawn of the overlord; they've no recourse  
I've chosen well: Offspring with him  
Would be unimpeachable  
I'm still waiting for his reply.

Patti Masterman

# An Airplane

An airplane flying overhead  
Is vibrating some things in my house,  
As they all tap their mechanical, molecular fingers;  
Speaking in a sort of rapid fire morse code  
Repeating their distinctive call sign, shaking the maracas  
Of their cosmic strings, in accord with the seismic rhythms  
Of some huge and distant oscillating jet engines  
And I feel my own spine too, like a uninhibited dancing skeleton,  
The kind you see dangling near doors on Halloween;  
Trying to jump up, to join in that seductive harmonium of frequency;  
And the floor beneath doing it's own rendition of an impending quake,  
The dishes vibrating noisily, wherever they touch one another  
Sort of like a 'free love for all' moment.  
While above, clueless passengers stare out of their tiny windows  
Amid the apparent nothingness of more and more clouds  
Horizons stretching to furthest limits; graceful curve of Earth  
While themselves sensing an airless movement beyond reach  
Of gravity, on seamless oceans of pure intention  
Or maybe they doze fitfully, with the traveler's acute exhaustion  
Unaware that for a moment the flatland beneath them  
Had a rendez-vous with something soaring freely through only air  
Unconnected locally by any visible means;  
Still some invisible thread was making felt it's contact.  
And how many more things go undetected down here  
As we go about, busy in our formidable brains  
Only allowing those things access  
That seem pertinent and timely.  
The world's resonance is it's own purest beauty  
Set free as the first spinning atoms  
Found one another's gyrations: but only by mistake.

Patti Masterman

# An Embarrassment Of Freaks

An embarrassment of freaks  
Went to the circus  
While a school of penguins  
Danced round the ring  
A habitude of nuns  
Ran out to greet them  
And then the whole world  
Started to sing.

They sang about taxis  
And failed prophylaxis  
And cats in a frolic  
And dogs pulling sleds  
They sang for their supper  
They rang for their tea  
Then went out for a dip  
In the Long Island sea.

Patti Masterman

# An Embroidered Nothingness

An embroidered nothingness flowers,  
Unclothed by loves patient diffractions  
Like concealed blood curves deeply  
In its glittering length of memory.

Like the tide shivers in bone cups,  
Held aloft above a moon-silvered bath,  
Palms cleansed by the horizons airless weight  
And the cooling chant of washed shores.

What's known once dies naturally  
Without being transmuted,  
Like spectral light shapes the mirrored seasons,  
And ice must rise, to renew itself by fire.

Patti Masterman

# An Explicit Children's Curse

Ding dong, use the bitch for a gong  
Hell's bells, who could ever tell  
Hey diddle diddle, her harpy voice a fiddle  
Fe Fi Fo Fum, grind her into chewing gum  
Polly put the kettle on; we'll make of her mincemeat  
Polly put the kettle on, we'll boil her drooping teat  
Hickory dickory dock, her face would stop a clock  
Farmer in the dell, her ass could stop a whale  
Humpty Dumpty sat on her face  
Humpty Dumpty left in great haste  
Barber barber shave a pig  
Why's her ego so damn big?  
Georgie Porgie, apple of her eye  
Took her money and baked the lie  
The butcher, the baker, and the candle-sticker maker  
With the rest of the world, do well to forsake her  
Baa Baa black sheep, stuff her mouth with wool  
Once a woman, but a hundred times a fool.

Patti Masterman

# An Ironic Ending

Why don't death certificates tell the truth,  
In plain english without all the medical flourishes  
Exhibit A: He died of a broken heart-  
The only woman he ever loved went away  
And he never heard another word from her again.  
It is medical fact a broken heart kills you;  
A slow, lingering death it can be too.  
Exhibit B: She died of an empty nest-  
All her offspring flew away finally;  
Then she felt useless and slowly just ceased existing.  
One day she lay down in bed, fluttered her wings  
Once feebly, and just quit breathing.  
The white coats might call it emphysema,  
Or pneumonia or something fancy.  
As a child I always wondered if boredom  
Deaths claimed a lot of youngsters;  
Since I always seemed to be alone desperately  
Searching for something to hold my attention.  
Just for fun I would sometimes hold my breath  
For as long as I could, trying to keep my chest still.  
But I always started to breathe again.  
I would imagine how my dead alter ego would appear.  
I never reflected that once dead, you don't get to enjoy  
The grief- stricken show going on all around you-  
Finally the center of attention!  
Main attraction- front and center!  
And you don't get to experience any of it.  
Yes, it seems clear that in the end  
I will die of irony.

Patti Masterman

# An Oceans Forfeit

The sound of your breathing  
Is a love song to God  
And his hearts beating  
All you need of love.

If a universe sings  
In its rounding orbits  
We're one songs pitch  
From an oceans forfeit.

Patti Masterman

# An Oddity

I think that I shall never see  
A thing as odd as eight baby  
Eight baby from a single mother  
Makes me roll my eyes- oh brother  
Oh sister oh brother oh sister oh yeah  
Mother looked like a Guernsey cow  
Is there milk enough- I don't see how?

Eight colic'd infants wailing in the night-  
Draw back, draw back- go fly a kite  
Eight fitful babies screaming in duress-  
Moved far away left no forwarding address  
Eight poopy babies dragging two pound diapers  
Went to the car wash and used the windshield wipers  
Eight teething babies wrangling on the bed-  
Picked up a gun and blew off her head.

Patti Masterman

# An Opening

So stop everything else now, my sweet-  
except that timed, to the moving seas embrace;  
the hallucinate breath of the body's rising.

Let it be as sweet as, nearly cloying-  
lips shivering under remembered pressure;  
or voices faded, but no less reassuring.

Tastes of night, in the hearts blood flowing,  
or airy essence tumbling secret chambers-  
fluid fountainings, where one's safe from danger.

Goblet-ed offerings, to some half-remembered god;  
carved myths on trees, over slumbering sod-  
these are distractions, from a truth concrete.

So stop if you will, suffer me to silence,  
but leaving an opening:  
hope can always get in again.

Patti Masterman

# An Overcast Day In June

Speeding along the highway  
There's suddenly a bright  
Explosion; unruly color  
That calls to you from the passing blur:  
The unexpected purple house  
It's almost gone before you see it-  
As if a river of lavender  
Once flowed down that street  
Left it's mark only on certain  
Vulnerable things  
One house coated on all sides  
The house next to it seeming to sport  
Only a single lavender door  
I'm certain that if I could follow it closely  
Look for the tell-tale lavender shoe tracks  
I would note the lavender trace  
Gradually wear thinner, house by house  
Dwindle to a trellis or a shutter  
Until it was just a slight stain  
On a solitary front porch-  
As if a child had spilled  
His single pot of lavender  
And had to finish his painting by number  
With some garish dark purple  
All the while wishing he could pour out  
Collect, all that lavender, there preening itself  
Under the trees, under the back lit clouds  
As if it had been placed there precognitively  
Years before, only to meet his need of a moment  
On an overcast day in June.

Patti Masterman

# An Unbearable Certitude

Nothing carries an unbearable certitude,  
Like a line of sight going nowhere-  
The map delineated, all in blank;  
No need to move, no need to think.

No more has such a pitiful sound,  
Like time that has trammeled backwards,  
Where nothing is waiting, thoughtless and still-  
While watching the reeling horizons break.

Patti Masterman

# An Uneasy Birth

Surrounded on all sides by ghosts  
Ghosts still becoming and ghosts returning  
And the ones that never left me.  
Time was, it seemed necessary  
To see the original ingredient in each day  
But it's getting harder to find recipes  
Too many years, too many changes  
Even the mirror harbors a fledgling phantom  
Bland eyes and parchment skin  
Too many rotations around the planet  
Gravity squats on everything after a while  
Greeting each successive season the same  
Whether harsh or benign  
Nothing new under the stars above, not anymore  
Under the flat emotion, an iron foundry bulges  
Bristles with new battlements  
Restraining concretions of sedimented layer  
More like a gravestone or monument on the surface now  
Lacking any utilitarian purpose; a precancerous thickening  
Under the veined marble plaster relief  
The worn pistons ever less elastic  
Static artifact of white noise.  
Disassembling a life takes so much  
Of the available time and energy  
Just when there's an excess of neither:  
A long labor just to expel the corpse.

Patti Masterman

# Anatomy Of A Romance

They are side by side,  
Their surfaces barely brushing up against one another:  
Primly upright though, they disdain to notice the almost-contact.

Hours later and still they remain near,  
And ever more conscious, of the close, comforting warmth of the other;  
They begin to tremble, ever so slightly.

In a fit of nervous preoccupation,  
Wondering if the other too has the same sense  
Of heightened feeling, and a sort of yearning that's opening up.

After many minutes, they gradually relax into each other;  
Leaning, pressing their parallel parts together casually,  
Relishing fully, that feeling of yielding to something greater.

Submission is communicated at the last;  
Both of a single mind finally, and in a concerted motion,  
The two hands leave, now clasped tightly together.

Patti Masterman

# Anatomy Of Attraction

Two lovers, creating from dust  
What had never been seen before;  
Two realities, merged in a third-  
Which opened a manifest door.

Two lovers forgetting themselves,  
Till the singularity's breached-  
Their personal membranes dissolved,  
Self-sovereignty impeached.

In the dark, in a secret place  
Two people gave a fragment of soul,  
That was joined, in a new empty void-  
Drawing substance, to become a whole.

Two lovers, creating from dust  
What neither could imagine, alone:  
Drawing rare vapors down into form,  
That before, could have never been known.

Patti Masterman

# Ancestral Worship

I worship all ancestors:  
Rock, soil, and mist of waterfall  
The spiny ploughshares beaten  
With volcanic mettle  
Baked or frozen on subterranean hearth  
Ancestral waves ever crashing  
Against the ends of earth, and time  
Salt sprite of sea, wood nymph of tree  
Watched as we conquered the ancient shoreline  
Our numbers spiralling like fungi  
Over valley, plain, and mountain peak  
Shared hunts, meals, blood and seed;  
A big bang of fleshly concupiscence  
And having once stood up  
Out of the primordial soup pot  
Never to appear on life's menu again.

Patti Masterman

# Ancient Air Beneath The Stars

Ancient air beneath the stars,  
Spilling under midnight's face,  
Every glowing, hanging cloud  
Is an amulet's silvered trace.

Cast from broken spells of moonlight  
Clinging to the pearly beams,  
Like unseen spiders spinning silks  
To pin a fairy's silver wings.

While she gilds the waiting dawn  
With what the newborn angels sing,  
In sunrise colors newly minted  
For the newborn day they bring.

Patti Masterman

# Ancient Are The Eyes

Ancient are the eyes,  
Ancient the tongue,  
Ancient the battles  
Bring the world undone.

There's war, in our blood,  
There's blood, on our hands;  
Blood in the rivers,  
Blood on the land.

There's just one thing  
Worth fighting for,  
In the bloodied world  
And the future gore;

A man and woman  
Remake a world divine;  
For around their loving  
All futures twine.

Patti Masterman

# Ancient Fishes Speak

The clouds are furry blunderbusses  
Where the water meets the sky,  
But down where all the fishes live,  
They live for fear: the fateful Eye.

Eye of raptor, eye of swan  
Albatross or sea snake;  
The eye that presage death is coming  
The poor fishes, to partake.

There is no lightning swifter as  
The eye that fills horizons;  
Though waves that trundle can't keep up  
With watery regions denizens.

The darkness of the sharks own belly,  
The startling passage down the beak;  
Of these, the fishes ancient forebears  
Tell the tale- if they could speak.

Patti Masterman

# Ancient Of Days

I keep all my words in urns  
and scatter out a few ashes now and then  
witch doctor style, dropping wax drips  
upon the altar, which once upon a time was beating  
after the reformation they came and took  
all the statues, leaving behind empty crates  
and communion became  
a wingless mans only flight  
a closeted childs only escape

from high in my lighthouse  
the steeple is visible, a needle  
piercing heavens side  
so the ocean can fill up

when they asked me for rose petals  
I gave them ground up bones  
when they asked me for a sign  
I told them that Venus  
would transit just long enough  
for all of them to get a glimpse  
of their missing souls  
and also, I reminded them  
that ghosts are holy.

Patti Masterman

## And Affectation Likes A Fine Dress

And affectation likes a fine dress  
Bought from right out the shops window front  
And does never care one whit for fit  
For the vanity which will occupy the brunt  
And does there smiling crookedly, sit  
And not for all worldly tears, ever confess..

Patti Masterman

# And Blow-Up Dolls Available Upon Request

I am bitter, increasingly human-  
Human, of sick wants and desires  
Human, of sad trickery and liars.  
Human of a million rank rooms  
In a thousand New Yorks,  
At quarter past noon.

Syphilitic human, and gonorrhoea  
Snuffling infants, too precaria,  
Moldy suitcases in the closets,  
Dead prostitutes rotting corsets.  
Stiletto heels stuck in rails  
Crown of thorns suits on nails.

Musty bibles in a drawer,  
Never closing flophouse doors;  
DNA all mixed together  
Sexual organs in a tether.  
Perverse toys in their hands  
It's not enough to have a man.

Humans discarded like the garbage,  
Dismembered fetus of retardage;  
Even our offspring are expendable,  
Disposable children, anti-friendable.  
Sorry if you didn't want to play-  
There's no option to run away.

Patti Masterman

# And Consciousness Said

Don't sit under the Bodhi tree  
With anyone else but me

(to the tune of Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree)

Patti Masterman

# And God Spake

And God spake then;  
And every earthly creature was amazed  
At the sound of that voice; the one that spoke that very first word,  
The word that caused the whole of creation to come into being,  
And God said: 'Don't make me come down there..'

Patti Masterman

# And Her Name Is

Of all the names ever to grace  
The collective memory  
Of motion picture notoriety

The Bond 'Galore' gal reigns supreme  
(Her first name rhymes with 'wussy')  
Nothing else comes close-

The single standing names  
Of the stars with egos so large  
One single name can identify them

Can't hold a candle  
To the four syllabic name  
That always makes men smile

And can't you imagine the reaction  
The day that some scriptwriter  
Announced the story name

Of the female co-star of the movie-  
Stunned silence, before came the inevitable  
'Her name is what? '

Patti Masterman

# And His Eyes Were Made Of Stars

It may be that you were an astronaut before  
And now you clamber unknown chambers of my heart,  
Knocking down the tilt-up walls  
To find the inner space of your reservoir  
And your oxygen; my bloodstream  
My heart; your pulsar beating out cosmic revelations  
My future; framed by your unblinking past

Terminal comets tumble alongside  
Undisturbing of the velocity of your experiment  
Exploding suns in supernovae spin-cycles  
Left your scientific mood untouched  
The last horizon, my need for security  
Has been hitched to your superior fuselage  
Now we float together, at the end of a single lifeline

I breathe out as you breathe in  
A symbiotic bellows, in perfection geared  
Neither of us make a move  
Except we go in the same instant of direction  
This must be what heaven feels like  
At the end of time and acceleration,  
Facing the unknowns inherent in the expedition

There were never any promises made,  
Discovering the wonders and terrors of deep space  
And at the finish of my hibernation,  
I awaken to explore a mysterious new portal:  
Held open for me, an orbital doorway  
In galactic eyes of bluest heaven-shine  
Which will stir the primordial chaos of my existence.

Patti Masterman

## And His Poems Have Other Poems

And his poems have other poems  
Hidden, camouflaged inside them, as through the holocaust  
Men hid within other men's homes, and workplaces,  
And women within other women's closets, and dressing rooms  
As a woman would hide her babe  
First within her womb, and then inside her very heart  
So his heart-poems reside and procreate in darkness, in hiding,  
Spin their souls together to weave the spiders tale, and into  
The famished strings of singing wormholes, which orbit  
The always living, and the once-quickened dead;  
From whence one day the spirit shall stride out; spin out  
At his soft call, to take the percolating universe  
By latent storm of surprise, and do a souls-token worth of battle  
Only in silken strings of love's long-suffering silence.

Patti Masterman

# And Hunger Shall Know Blood Lust

and hunger shall know blood lust  
like drunks on wine honey  
which devour worlds of time  
where love is another day  
though some say luck  
is a leap of man's fantasy  
or a wild laugh churning  
the ocean's warm waves

Patti Masterman

## And If I Loved You Forever

And if I loved you forever, from over here  
And kept the distance; and did not disturb  
Your aura, your expression, or your mood,  
And let you roam free; and kept to myself  
So you could laugh, cry; or else could brood,  
Unmolested soul; by my love, unshelved

You could sleep at night then, never crowded  
As any single lover would always sleep;  
Untroubled by guilts and plaintive demands,  
Only your own worries, to ever attend  
No one kissing palms, with your smooth hand  
No changing your hours, to make amends

No lovers quarrel, to upset your day  
No marital duties, to divide the week  
Even in the mirror, one single face,  
And everything left where you'd want it to be:  
No sign of my love there; not any place-  
Could you promise then, you'd never tire of me?

(written to Moonlight Sonata - Beethoven)

Patti Masterman

# And If Your Sun Should Nightly Shine

And if your sun should nightly shine  
To kiss my most fervent need  
And if fevered hands should suddenly seek  
Upon mine; inviolate, to feed

If, hand to hand, we feel that hidden mouth  
Which, cavernous, can never sleep  
Who can say what the ending will be  
Of things giving birth from the deep

Once-bound of heaven; loosed upon earth  
To the uppermost firmaments, it must always escape  
The clouds ferry sandpipers day-swift journeys,  
While on beaches beneath, the dead birds gape.

Patti Masterman

# And Say Amen

And say Amen-  
Whatever your faults are calling,  
Wherever the roll of the dice may wend;  
No matter the vice of the days long toiling-  
Or what the pain of the heart attend.

And say Amen-  
However the pain's arriving,  
Whenever the pall of the ruin appear;  
Whoever the darkened day's imbibing-  
Whatever of truth there is to fear.

And say Amen-  
From trouble to trouble bearing  
The arc of the path of traveling doom;  
Wherever the pain of death is wearing-  
For the trouble of man's still done too soon.

Patti Masterman

# And So You Think

And so you think  
Your love more real  
Than stories so fantastic,  
Of princesses and fairy  
Tales; of substance  
More elastic?

You think your heart  
Is brave to field  
The dragon's fiery promise?  
Ask not for trials  
Which must reveal  
Your heart, as doubting Thomas.

My thoughts go quiet  
Into that night-  
They do not pray, for greatness  
The time is past;  
We can't unwind  
The loving hour's lateness.

Patti Masterman

# And So You'Re Dead

And so, you're dead now-  
I know; I feel it in  
my depths  
But if you are really gone away  
alone, to the far, far country  
known as death,  
Why does it feel that you should be  
here each moment, beside me?

And so, you're dead now;  
Your things dispersed  
like leaves,  
All blown away,  
distant corners of the world,  
as I grieve:  
Though my heart keeps busy, thinking of things;  
maybe you're just hiding, growing some wings  
then to come flying, back to me again.

And so, you're dead now  
And I can tell myself, that you're never  
coming back  
Because I know; no matter how much time  
may pass, I'll always  
feel that certain lack:  
It takes some time, to learn this new 'alone';  
that it occupy the place, once known as 'home'.

Patti Masterman

# And The Elephant Played Ukulele

&lt;/&gt;Got together with some friends downtown,  
Played some songs, and we all got down;  
Flamingo, and Lizard, and Elephant too,  
Made some sounds that we thought were true-  
We used to get down in the Brooklyn zoo-  
And the elephant played ukulele.

Flamingo did horns with only his bill,  
And the Lizard did zither, up and down the hill;  
Only Lizard had an opposable thumb,  
But we beat out the boards to sound our drum-  
From miles away the people'd all come-  
And the elephant played ukulele.

Flamingo was flashy in her drapes of pink,  
And Lizard was faster than a sneaky wink,  
While Elephant was broad, and sat on a tree,  
And it was mostly him that you'd see-  
With Flamingo and Lizard, one on each knee-  
And the elephant played ukulele.

Those were the days I truly miss,  
And sometimes Snake came to add his hiss;  
He could hiss just like a tambourine,  
And the people's faces, you should've seen-  
The sound was everything, when it got mean-  
And the elephant played ukulele.

Patti Masterman

# And The Evening And The Morning Were The First Day

Evensong: when even the world;  
When ever the world must end,  
And all the Saints and Angels ring,  
Around the world, attend.

Morningsong: was when the world,  
When the whorling world was new,  
And all the planets axis' spun,  
And Love was Master's brew.

So who can say which one was best-  
At the ashes final glow?  
The truth that such a world, exist  
Is all we need to know.

March 6 2015

Patti Masterman

# And The Letter Came

And the letter came:

And you thumbed, humbled, over it and over  
An hundred times a week, you took it out  
Pouring each word over again  
As for the first time, it still was  
And blotchy it was from tears  
And tips, nervous fingers which pulled little rips  
Into the off-white paper, where much strong handling bore  
Each time's grief bearing need: you read it, nothing more  
Seen differently; surely always the same, yet nuances  
Came despite instinctual knowledge of before;  
Did this sentence- this wording style preferred it  
That he might mean only just that- or was it  
Imagination's sullied creation? did those words  
Sound tired; and if very thought of you  
Became fatigue, was it the plague of his precious pen, or brain  
Or just the worry of his own entrenchment there?  
Even so; sometimes you read familiar words  
That joy shouted from, certain as could be.  
Times when you felt uneasy, queasy at one word  
Or phrase, as if a ringing death-knell must have  
Rang: to spell out the end of time's bitter being-  
Crossed yourself, three times; and said a beaded prayer.  
The letter came to be important to you that this  
Could cause everything to cease; a hunt driven  
Feverish, once it went missing where from out it's pocket-house  
(deeply as when you bent under the trees..  
to pick up crying children in their frail need) it leaped.  
And when one day unfolding, the letter dropped into your lap  
Pieces neat piled into sections; folds perforated through  
Because so nearly worn out; stained, thin-souled as grief itself  
Heart treasure map woven in lover's lace; bequeathed  
And then realized: there no other letter ever was or be;  
If never sent, gone missing; you'd pinned all quickened heart beats  
Stayed hope's courage upon a single letter's fate, and it  
Carried through the fears, saw above the swarming years  
Sleepless nights when, no tears left, it swam: you gathered up the limp  
Damp, feathered pieces and stowed them safe for keeping  
Knowing some day again, when things were not the same

And finding them you would remember, this single letter  
By which all hope then was given, your hope that came  
As a single letter; came due south, straight down from heaven..

Patti Masterman

# And The Wild Birds Came Back Home

And the wild birds came back home, to roost  
And the rainbow's dust settled down, on clouds,  
And the sunset had streaked fingers, of rust  
As the night birds to flowers, called out loud.

Out of all rare days; was the rarest find  
And the lovers wrestled; their blood the bluest,  
And stars streaked the sky, till morning's light,  
As my lover gave me his heart; I knew it.

And the knowing of it brought second sight,  
That all was right, within the world;  
That never again, night be so black,  
Should time reverse, with his bony hands

To take it all back; love and life again:  
Knew that one hour, of redeeming love  
Purchased the whole dreaming universe, above.

Nov.19 2009

Patti Masterman

# And What If Love Were Another Word

And what if love were another word  
And hate did not exist,  
Would we still be obsessed the same  
If the world were built, like this?

And what if life never had an end  
And pain were a thing unknown,  
And the worst thing any man endured  
Were the weight, of a heavy stone?

And what if time yield to memory  
And nothing need ever change:  
Nothing would ever be new again-  
But then loss could not derange?

Patti Masterman

# And Where Could Be Heaven

If you were not there;  
Invisible portals,  
Kingdoms in air?

Where the gold harps,  
Streets paved with jewels;  
Where happiness reign,  
And peace is the rule?

Any place you dwell  
Is enough for me,  
Even if few;  
It's good company.

Or if only bronze,  
Because gold was scarce,  
Or a lack of harps;  
I wouldn't care.

Even streets made  
Of more common things;  
Or no streets at all-  
Our hearts could still sing.

I wouldn't weigh metals  
I wouldn't count gems-  
But just look for your smile,  
When I reach the end.

Whether up high,  
Or whether down low,  
It's the perfect place  
To watch wings grow.

Patti Masterman

## And...And

And you broke your leg, so I became your nurse  
And you broke the bank, so I stole a hearse  
When you broke your hand, I became a muse  
Concoct a plan; I become a ruse  
You become Buddhist, I become monk  
I become a sylph, when you become a hunk  
You start painting; I start composing  
You become ill; I start decomposing-  
Why not the self, I was meant to be?  
Had to cover all your bases, only with me.

Patti Masterman

# Angel

The newest frail Angel with wings-  
Done, done with the suffering,  
Now joins the clouds, and the stars above,  
And until death, she knew only love.

Her family had gathered around,  
To try to pin her wings to the ground;  
But the earthly ties will all fall away,  
When the last breath has gone, on the last day.

She was a sweet cherub, who fell down to earth,  
Found her home in the sky, like a brand new birth-  
Sometimes baby angels don't get to stay,  
But are borne up to heaven, forever to play.

(first she was made an orphan, then a real angel, like her name,  
a baby killed by a tornado in Spring of 2012)

Patti Masterman

# Angel Angel

Angel angel, tell me true-  
Is his heart as big and true  
As his eyes make me believe?  
Angel, angel, tell me please.

Angel, secret friends are rare;  
Such kindly faces, liars wear-  
But he's a different kind, I think-  
Would he stay, if I should blink?

Angel angel, nights are long;  
All for him, I'd write my songs;  
Angel, whisper in his ear-  
Tell him: 'Joy- when you are near.'

Patti Masterman

# Anger And Patience

Any time I don't understand something  
Or feel unhappy with the way things are going,  
Anger steps up, 'use me; let me help'  
And I used to give Anger a lot of free rein,  
Till I noticed Anger wasn't all that useful  
And generally tended to only make things worse.

Now I try to rely more on 'Patience'  
As Patience doesn't keep clicking that counter,  
Adding up every resentment of the hour.  
Besides, I can look straight into Patience's face  
And not have one clue what Patience is thinking of.  
You know, Anger could learn something from that.

Patti Masterman

# Anger Finds Always Its Reasons To Be

Anger finds always its reasons to be,  
And sometimes may use a more powerful voice  
Than it really possesses; as birds fluff their feathers  
In mock-deadly duels, when choosing a mate.

But anger too, has it's own place and time,  
Though it is made weak, by continual use;  
Like the hand always lingers, over the Queen  
Feinting the win, in a tired game of chess.

If you would choose rightly, which to forget  
And which to lose sleep, while it plots it's revenge,  
The kind of anger that's best not ignored: the kind  
Says no word; counting all your heartbeats.

Patti Masterman

# Anodyne

Money the anodyne of the old,  
Sex the anodyne of the young,  
Before and after, diapers; mold  
And bare belief, to which we clung.

Words are money, to the writer,  
Ideas the coin, which pays the way,  
And ticking clocks, to guide the fighter;  
Leave the losers where they lay.

Patti Masterman

# Another Birthday

It's only time, and time can't hurt you  
though it might wound or trample desires;

You are more than time, and more than your years  
more than your laughter, more than your tears

More than the sum of this life that you feel,  
that once you've lived there's no greater thrill-

Not time or distance, not words in a play  
Nor the thickest book, with too much to say:

This road you walk is rare beyond rare,  
And just when it seems much too full of care

Put out your hand and touch eternity's face-  
Know the full price of your soul's in its grace.

Patti Masterman

# Another Bored Meeting

Bored meeting again,  
And we've assembled ourselves,  
Well situated, to see the clock,  
Later arrivals take the leftover chairs  
And the words begin to drone.

Pencils getting pushed,  
While we're thinking, how'd we get here;  
We left in such a rush,  
Our brains are scrambled mush,  
When suddenly there's a silence-

A response is now required;  
More murmuring and muttering,  
Chair legs being squawked,  
Drawings on white boards,  
Handouts passed about:

We wish that we just had the guts  
To get up; walk right out.  
Our lives are lived in neutral,  
While clocks hammer out our days;  
We owe our every bit of food

To something someone says.  
This meeting feels interminable,  
In so many different ways,  
And just when we're most sure, we'll die-  
Adjournment comes; the end.

Patti Masterman

# Another Day

We're all busy going somewhere  
We've all been busy going-  
Even if you don't know where or why,  
You're still going

And all your friends are going  
Faster every year-  
Tell us something else  
That won't make us fear,

Tell us journeys mean more  
Than endings imply-  
Tell us-  
Tell us

In language, we've never heard before  
Tell us of things we never learned,  
Tell us we're dying to try  
Whatever's required of the brave.

Is it just a toll everyone must pay-  
Tell us, don't leave it to chance-  
For tonight spins tomorrow  
Into another day.

Patti Masterman

# Another Forever

Another forever, to find you;  
And another, for whether to keep  
These eyes that adored- could they bind you-  
Like a dream, only found in deep sleep?

Another loss goes uncounted,  
In the millions of years, that pass by;  
Would these eyes remain just as unclouded-  
If forever meant only, goodbye?

Patti Masterman

## Another House

I want to have another house where no one else can go  
Exactly like this other one; but nobody need know.  
Piled high with films and books and such  
And all the time you need so much.

I want to live another life where everything has weight  
Not just the work; but everything there like an open gate,  
With time for friends and pondering  
And not just sleep, but wondering.

Patti Masterman

# Another Moonbeam

News Flash-

I could live anywhere  
I could love anyone  
It doesn't have to be here; now  
This place; these others  
I was designed to fit in  
To love, to appreciate  
The differences  
To value the distinctive  
No reason to fear  
A little loss, a little pain  
I see a little of myself  
In everyone  
I feel myself within  
Everyone  
Indeed I am more involved  
In the whole world's drama  
Than any of my own  
I have a wealth of living left  
The universe is full of gems  
Waiting to be discovered  
The glow that's filling the world  
Lights it up from within  
And I know another moonbeam  
Will always be catching my eye.

Patti Masterman

# Another One

There he is on the television,  
Another killer:  
Small, shifty close-set eyes,  
Low forehead, though they say  
That has no bearing on intelligence.

Why they bring them to us,  
Day after day, like beaming mothers  
Offering up their offspring for compliments?  
This, the nativity from our country,  
This, from our culture, our debasements..

The harbinger eyes of death,  
Of another's pitiful death;  
But what does that mean to us?  
Still, do not look too closely  
Or the knife may stab you too-

Be calm and indistinct, instead  
Don't return his gaze,  
Don't allow him to imprint:  
Such a callous face could never feel, empathize;  
How could it have belonged to an infant once?

Take it back, take it back,  
This abomination is too real-  
Close eyes and mind,  
Don't let him get any closer,  
He, who would sunder all you love,  
Given half a chance.

Now click the remote button, now try to forget  
Whatever you were hoping to see there.  
When death rules the entire world,  
Fairy tales will never compete-  
It must always give us HIM,  
As if there was never a choice to be had.

You can still say an extra Hail Mary at bedtime

If it makes you feel any better.

Patti Masterman

# Another Race

The gates are opening, and there's the starter pistol:  
The fetal heart begins pumping, moving the vaporous blood along;  
Still more gas than fluid, around it's newly formed silo of vessels.

The fetal body is corralled by the uterus, the placenta, and it's tether  
Of maternal blood vessels, meanwhile the fetus has grown-  
And opens one eye, though perhaps seeing nothing yet  
In the eternal twilight of the womb.

The brain has many delicate wiring operations to complete  
And even then vision is not assured, so mysterious, so complex  
It's twisting, turning route through the tangled streets of the nervous  
membranes.

This race is half over now, and soon the fetus turns around, head down  
To face the next starting gate; he entered months ago,  
But will soon grow too large to be able to turn at all.

He sucks his thumb, exercising the nursing reflexes,  
His eyes move often while sleeping, perhaps only muscle twitches;  
Perhaps dreams of the other world that he came from  
In these end-to-end cat naps in utero.

One day soon, the water of ocean will all drain away  
And the top of his head will begin to put pressure on the mother's body,  
Until it begins labor to expel him. It's the most dangerous time of all;  
The end of the racetrack is coming into sight, and will be heralded  
By a glorious, intense light; one that ushers us in, blinking blinded eyes,  
Overcome with the monstrous size of this new world at large,

And only now, the real race begins, the previous one  
Was merely a warm-up; and the soul slips in on the intake breath,  
And soul opens up new eyes, blinking at the mysterious surroundings:  
And something is born that will never come this way again-  
And this is how the emptiness fills itself up, again and again, in this way.

Now he turns toward those same voices that were outside,  
The ones he heard in his nine-month's journey in the mother sea;  
The familiarity that can help anchor him in this new dimension,  
And the harbor will continue rocking him safely, on the outside.

Even though another race has already begun,  
And he will have to struggle to keep up,  
But will never be all alone in his struggles.

He realizes now that even when he seemed to be solitary, all alone  
In his watery nursery, there was always another heart  
Just inches away, prolonging his life, every second of every day.

Miracles still happen and do, every day in this wondrous world of worlds.

Patti Masterman

# Another Tryst With The Beloved

In the space of a sigh  
I composed myself  
Straightened my skirt  
Smoothed my hair  
Nobody could tell  
We had been together  
Or that I had had you  
In the closet, there.

In the space of a sigh  
Your desire had found me  
Fastened me tight  
Against the wall  
I stood transfixed as  
You had your way with me;  
So poetry, I swear  
To give you my all.

Patti Masterman

# Another World

Music takes me to another world  
Where the human's touch is only incidental;  
And an old, alien language there speaks to my soul,  
While invisible fingers are plucking my strings,  
And an unknown landscape there unfurls,  
Made half of emotion and half purely mental;  
And only it can fill that empty hole  
In your heart, that always is wanting to sing.

Patti Masterman

# Another's Day

When you look at old photos  
You can smell the rooms,  
The books, antiques and musty looms;  
Fading wallpaper, rusty pails,  
Fabric'd walls, with homemade nails.

Look even closer, and you might smell  
Left-over dinner, hanging in air,  
The dirty clothes and lye soap there;  
Boiled in water, from a dank old well.

Closer yet, and there's dried out flowers  
On vellum printed with scented ink,  
From lavender fields, grown right in back-  
And steam so thick, the walls might weep.

In the heat, the fabrics send  
Their odors wafting to any wind,  
And the brown tinctures on the table  
Send their smells too, if they are able.

And that bit of scent goes in everything;  
As in a letter, bound for spring,  
So that when opened, the reader might pause  
To sniff the drying lavender's thawing.

For all enclosed in that little post,  
Is the odor of blankets and linen things,  
And spices piled high, on a kitchen shelf;  
You can sense the love from many miles away-  
Fresh from the house, of another's day.

Patti Masterman

# Anthropomorphism; Or Death Of A Doll

The first man who ever saw her  
knew he had found something of import,  
and soon after the other people began lining up to have a look  
at the little face, half buried in mud and muck.

One grey eye visible, but the other eye,  
along with almost half the face, buried; a mite's face,  
where the battle scars of war had seen fit to place it.

Women wept soundlessly and men grimaced, as if in secret pain  
passing by single-file, most of them wordless-  
for, they thought, there were no words to fit this abomination.

One night, by the light of the moon  
a single intrepid soul crept in and cut through all the chains,  
the padlocks, went past the booths, and moving straight to where she was,  
breathlessly began digging, moving aside the concrete and tile, the dirt,  
until he had her- her little life-size doll face cupped in his hands, hard and  
rubbery: pure polyvinyl chloride, made to feel as soft as any human skin.

Then, barely daring to breathe at all, he thrust his hand in again,  
deeper down into the soil, as if searching for something,  
sometimes stopping and then beginning again-  
almost as though afraid of actually finding what he was hunting for,  
scrabbling with his fingernails-

And then at last he felt it, as he had known he must:  
the hand of the real doll,  
who had been buried at least half alive;  
for her tiny fingers had curled around, still clutching  
at the disintegrated rags of clothing her beloved doll had once worn.

He tore apart the rest of the trappings of the freak show,  
now sitting still, now rocking and weeping, as the hours passed,  
while tearing at his hair,  
the little dessicated fingers held within his own,  
crying and crying, as though his heart would break-

At man's apparent inhumanity, his lack of understanding-

man forever fastening his attention upon the symbol,  
but never the substance, of anything.

But after a while, he reflected again,  
that perhaps even this was too much too be borne,  
maybe the fact was that man could not really handle much of truth, at all;  
and that was why he was so myopic, tragically blinded by reality.

So he covered up the small hand again, scooping the dirt back over,  
patting it back into place gently, and replacing the doll head,  
leaving it half-buried as before, as well as he could recall it-  
left intact again their strangely disembodied memorial to the cruelties,  
the unbearable displacements of war.

And as he had promised himself,  
he never told another, about his midnight discovery.

Patti Masterman

# Anti-Love Poem #1

When you've loved someone,  
As much as you're capable of,  
Just let them go. Even better,  
Don't write about them- ever.  
If you must, let it be once only  
And let that be as their epitaph.  
Let the seasons and the wind  
Sweep away the painful memories  
Don't try to re-start fire from a faded puff of smoke.  
And give yourself some time to recover.

If you must write thousands of lines  
About what went wrong, or why,  
For gods sake burn it- burn it quickly  
Don't leave it lying around for others eyes to see  
And for the dance line to start forming behind you:  
The Designated Mourners of decayed, extinct love affairs  
Don't forget to leave some room for the next good thing  
Which has been waiting patiently at your door  
While you've been existing only in the past  
As a one-dimensional loser.  
Remember, there's only a one letter difference.

Patti Masterman

## Anti-Love Poem #2

Ever since Romeo and Juliet  
Repulsed lovers have considered suicide  
As just an offshoot of unrequited love-  
Even if the love was refused from the start  
Or only existed as a delusion in the mind of the deluded.

I suggest that in modern life  
What with plastics, antibiotics, and all this stuff  
We have other options to the suicide-only impulse  
And since murder practically rules this age,  
Maybe you should take out the offensive love withholder, instead.

That would leave you free-  
Free for another unsatisfying relationship  
To help you remember you don't think  
You're of any worth; and once in prison you would be surprised  
How many would hurl themselves down to worship at your infamous feet.

Patti Masterman

# Anything Laughs When There's Something Can'T

Anything laughs when there's something can't-  
Can't quite do what the others can;  
And something hides when there's nothing there-  
There wherever, was once a man.

Though anything does when a lack is there;  
There where the men are never found,  
But something's laughing all the time  
Where lies are truth and the truth stays bound.

Patti Masterman

# Apathy

These joys blaze, with a distant residue  
A fringe of false, like a tale-tale stain  
Or blight of disease, still only a blemish  
Through which light can trickle,  
Enough to amaze.

These passions flare, like a sunlit virus  
Lights up a wandering world of mold,  
Like the dead spoil days, with only their shadow  
And the way pain plods,  
While warmth grows cold.

The old grow older, just like a story  
Grows stale with retelling, too many times  
And you never realize how tiresome it's getting,  
Till you've heard it too often-  
It takes just one time.

Patti Masterman

# Appeased

Fears, I had  
But you put them to rest-  
All forgotten,  
Clasped tight to your breast.

Truth, I sought  
Within your deeper self-  
Truth not found,  
In books upon a shelf.

Love, I drank  
Filled to the utmost-  
Now you are  
A lover; not a ghost!

Patti Masterman

## April 19th

The catastrophe is happening now:  
In what is seen- but more, in what is invisible;  
In what is heard- but more, in what is silent.

There are no words written to address it,  
There are no signs, pointing out its appearance.

If you could see the whole world's heart breaking,  
You would lose your reason. But nothing is apparent-

Only the wind, blowing through the leaves  
Only the sounds of vacant sighing.

Patti Masterman

## April 27th - A Dream

The dream came out of nowhere as dreams often do  
I was in a long hallway, perhaps a school  
I began to walk, not knowing where I was going or why  
A lady sat at a child size desk, just beside an open door  
She stopped me. 'They told me, ' she said  
'That you wanted to know the day of your death.'  
I was nonplussed; I began to argue, no, not me,  
I would never want- but there was no stopping her.

She looked familiar but I didn't know why.  
'They told me I could tell you, ' she continued.  
Who were they and what were they to me?  
'April 27th, ' she intoned, impersonally.  
I began to cry. Clearly, I did not want to know!  
'But my daughter's birthday is April, and my friend's, '  
I wept; how could I disappoint my daughter and friend  
In the month of their birth? How could I die then?  
I walked on slowly in shock. She finished her declaration  
By saying it would happen in the mid-fifties.

I didn't know if she meant my mid fifties or the the fifties  
Of the new century- that would make me at least ninety-five!  
If only I were more self-possessed in dreams and less fearful  
When I woke up, I reflected on the forecast.  
She was a good friend of my parents, with whom I had spent time  
When I became a teenager and lonely for conversation  
With someone who cared about the more esoteric things.  
We often discussed Edgar Cayce and his prophecies.  
How he invariably seemed to hit the mark head on.

She was like a parent, but interested in the same stuff as me-  
A fact which did nothing to soothe my suspicions.  
Now I mark April 27th on each calendar  
As a sort of pseudo-holiday day each year.  
Not that I believe in dream forecasts  
It's just something to do.

Patti Masterman

# April Counting Song

One, one:

The sky's undone,  
The rain's come out to play.

Two, two:

A boat's my shoe,  
My cars keys down the drain.

Three, three:

Car hit a tree,  
A river now, the lane.

Four, four:

I need an oar,  
These raging currents tame.

Five, five:

Barely alive-  
What's my fate; can't say.

Six, six:

I'm in a fix;  
It started, rainbow-stained.

Seven, seven:

The rain is driven,  
A curtain blocks the way.

Eight, eight:

The rain abate,  
I'll rest here while I may.

Nine, nine:

Some footing find,  
Rain gone; the clouds are grey.

Ten, ten:

Now quiets the wind-  
I won the lottery today!

Patti Masterman

# Arc To Arcturus

Arcturus takes flight,  
Sowing heaven's hill with stars  
The doorway of the soul  
Is opened in his sight.

Now in his peace abide  
Ursa major, Ursa minor  
The keeper of the heavens  
Never falls into the tide.

Patti Masterman

# Art Is Alive

Curious thing, how life imitates art,  
For life is alive, with heart beating it's name  
And art has no heartbeat, yet breathes through our breath;  
Sees with our eyes, and feels with our breast.

Art haunts the corridors, where brain has it's day,  
Lurks behind thoughts; the words we would say.  
We may have few years here, before we are dust  
But art is alive, and it's living in us.

Patti Masterman

# As A Child I Always Thought Too Much

As a child I always thought too much;  
And it invariably screwed my life up:  
My parents asked me; still quite small,  
If I wanted a piano or an organ to play?  
Greedy pig that I always was, though  
I still could not imagine having a huge piano  
All to myself; but the calculating little self of me  
Wishing always to please; never to cost  
Money or cause trouble, reasoned that something  
So large as a piano must cost millions of dollars;  
I didn't want my family destitute in order to please me  
And so I said, that an organ was always preferable  
Also I had never heard of organ lessons;  
But I knew piano lessons were quite expensive.  
I hadn't figured on the thing actually appearing though-  
Coming to live in my own house with me.  
Sure enough; on my next birthday  
The horrid creature appeared, with two keyboards  
One upstairs and one downstairs;  
Chord keys, vibrato; the whole shebang  
I was so downcast; when it hit me I could have had  
A real live piano, instead of this creeping horror  
Which brought to mind skeletal old men  
In dank mouldy suits, playing at midnight  
In accompaniment to bells ringing out wakes of the dead..  
I pretended to be happy and, desperate for music  
Reasoned that organs were perfectly Halloween all year long;  
Spent hours upon hours pressing one depressing chord  
After another; sort of a central fugue, to decry my unending stupidity.  
Today the organ resides under the stairs;  
A mobile curse that no doubt will follow me  
To the graveyard even, and probably some intrepid person  
Will compose a requiem mass for me, upon it  
To escort me to my eternal rest:  
Hopefully that at last will be free of organs.

And I had to wait to write this  
Until my parents were both dead; as it were no use  
To punish them further for their ever kind intentions.

Patti Masterman

## As Above, So Below

High up in heaven, alone among his streets of gold,  
Sits God, deep in depression, head in his hands.  
He sighs and says, if only I could see them,  
If only they weren't so tiny; maybe then I could believe-  
Believe that they really exist,  
Instead of seeing them mostly as some dream,  
Or some story made up a long time ago,  
To keep me from feeling so alone up here..

Patti Masterman

# As Gentle As Days Are

He was all Madras shirts, when I was young  
That later became checkered plaids, and the rare paisley;  
He drank Coors beer, and fished his trotlines  
With Catfish Charley, and little shrimps.  
He chewed Red Man tobacco, and smoked  
Walter Raleigh Cherrywood in his pipes.  
He was so much the man, of my childhood;  
Fierce as necessity dictated;  
But gentle as the day was long, if he had the choice.

All these details now I remember about him,  
Coming back to me like a slow train from nowhere;  
Though martyr'd by death, as men necessarily must be,  
I had a dream of him afterwards, wearing his only pure white shirt;  
And I dreamed that shirt had become his philatory; his reliquary,  
Before the burning candle of his incipient Sainthood, in memory.  
Awakening, I went and located that shirt miraculously,  
And put it somewhere it could not be discarded  
By mistake, for safekeeping.

I remembered he had turned into a child again  
Just before he died, but only on the cusp of his final sickness,  
And I reflected how life can be kind sometimes;  
Not forcing us to mother or father our own parents,  
Until after we have raised children of our own,  
So that we would remember how to be kind and gentle,  
With creatures less competent and self reliant than ourselves;  
Gentle as the day was long, if we had the choice.

Patti Masterman

# As I First Begin To Flex That Muscle

As I first begin to flex that muscle,  
That complexity of the intuition,  
Impulses come; at first faint rustling,  
Then stronger, till the phone startles  
With it's ringing, mere seconds after-

Voices warning, images impaling;  
It's hard to live with it's restless cogitations,  
But even harder to continue along, without it.

To gain a glimpse of impending truth,  
You must first invest enough emotion  
Into the opened question,  
Moving through life in an uncertainty,  
Just an organism of inquisition.

Taking nothing for granted,  
The soul's fervent prayer  
Arcs to the source, of everything and nothing,  
Removing only the fragment requested,  
Then filled up, turns back into the ether.

Patti Masterman

# As Long As Life

What is father, that we should have such need  
Of his loving touch and his words so wise?  
Old or young, we need or miss our father,  
For all of us have human ties:

Born of flesh, in loving bonds;  
So love- as long as life goes on.

Patti Masterman

# As Soon As You Open Your Mouth

As soon as you open your mouth to say a word,  
It begins to turn into a lie, on more than one level.  
First, it lives in the past already,  
From which you have just re-animated it;  
Made it into a puppet, only toward  
Your own purposes.  
And even if the word isn't a lie right away, it will be-  
In a day, a few weeks, a month; as time goes on,  
It strays further and further from what's true.

The world is slowly filling up with word-lies,  
All crashing into one another at dizzying speeds.  
When someone tells you solemnly, now what I am about to say  
Is the complete truth- even if they swear on their heartbeats,  
Their grave, the honor of their family for a thousand years-  
Close up your ears tightly, for what is coming cannot hold the truth,  
Any more than a sieve can hold water.

Even arguing on the side of the truth generates more lies,  
Whose truth is always expiring like a parking meter,  
Second by second, before the words even leave your mouth.  
Better yet don't use your tongue at all; let the truth stand on its own,  
And let lies congregate together, with their own kind.

But never try to say, that you always stood for truth or justice-  
because the very words, because they have the nature of words,  
Will reduce your demonstrative principles instantly to ash.  
Finally, don't even believe one word of this- it's already blowing dust,  
In the devouring autoclaves of time.

What is that you say- you have something in your eye?  
Well don't try to name it, for god-sakes; names are only a different set of lies.  
Everyone is already choking on enough, don't you think?

Patti Masterman

# As Soon As You Tell The One You Love

As soon as you tell the one you love  
That you have fallen in love with him,  
The love affair begins to sour, wither: die.  
Great mournful clouds will begin to mass on the horizon  
And then, small animals taken ill,  
You will find them dead and dying on the stoop,  
In the flower beds; and then the birds, too  
Begin to die, to dropp like missiles, out of the air.

Trees in the yard will turn crimson brown as if it were already Fall  
Branches breaking off, they become leafless stumps, without any arms  
As your arms too, will itch; but nightly the hands will close upon nothing  
The grass will die, then later, catch fire  
The house will fill up floor to ceiling with spiders, locusts, wasps;  
There will be an odor of vinegar, or yeast  
And the object of all your fantasies will break out in hives  
And he will curse then, the day he first heard your name spoken.

Later, a layer of soft ash will begin to fall  
And if you choose to continue in this fashion  
You'll be turned into an empty husk of pumice  
Like those mummified ones they found in Pompeii-  
Of those who once thought the love stored up from a single summers day  
Could save them and all their unvaunted dreams-  
All that will be left of you at the end will be an infestation of ants  
In the empty lava-tube, of what was once a heart.

Patti Masterman

# As The Blue Smoke

As the blue smoke, risen pointless to the skies  
Was rafting upward, and whole worlds moved in counterpoint;  
Demon sighs, collapsing charcoal'd unison, jetsam flies-  
But smithereens, all our fancied wiles  
Couldn't save the Humpty-men,  
One hundred and ten damnation stories high.

Patti Masterman

# As Wet As Rain Is

As wet as rain is;  
And the half muted pitter-patterings on the roof  
And whole days of just rain; and the muddy shoes  
Sitting in the corner, and fogged up windows  
And sloshing streets; the cars whooshing by,  
And the birds sitting sullen in the trees  
Taking numberless baths they never wanted.

And the extra chill in the air, and then the getting warm again  
In the bathtub; the rain singing you to sleep,  
Tucked warmly into bed, as the gutters dripping down,  
Like little fingers, drumming on the windows  
And hundreds of liquid crystals  
Reflecting the moon's streaming light.

The night crying it's tears deep into the ground  
And the wet faces of the flowers  
And the soil quietly, determinedly drinking it in.

Patti Masterman

# Ascendant

Ascendant solitary starlight,  
Unanchored symphony of collisions;  
We meander you into strange constellations  
Of dignified, but well-meant conflagration.

Imagining god, in primeval longings  
Incoherently left you thronging,  
Like random bits of glowing precipitate,  
That human beings found the need to titrate-

A rational river, organized by myth  
And orbiting illusions, to ask what if-  
Cultures peopled by giants and gods,  
Had monsters gaping through the starry sod.

Patti Masterman

# Astonishing And Endless

Astonishing and endless-  
Life's magical gift  
Against all odds and mathematical probabilities  
We're here, and the time is now  
If You find there's tap dancing in your soul  
Just keep it going, don't stop.

There's a bit of living soul  
In every single thing alive  
We couldn't die alone even if we wished  
We're here and it's now  
Loneliness is in the eye of the beholder.

If from outer space you could see  
All the uncountable cells of Deities body  
Shining and busy at work  
You'd begin to notice the miracles,  
The brotherhood of living beings  
That accompanies your own existence.

You're far more precious  
Than what forms your body; it may be stone  
But you're a flash of bird wing,  
In a living stream, created anew every moment  
Not one exactly like you has ever existed before  
It's a gift that's given to us:  
The astonishing and endless Present.

Patti Masterman

# Astronauts Are We

Astronauts are we:

Discovering the quantum coventry,  
Floating around on wings that be  
Designed of man's futility.

Sun of night:

Sum of stark humanity's blight,  
Mushroom cloud of blinding light  
Maelstrom birth, our contusive flight.

Broken chains:

As we hurtled many moons away,  
Bodies lost, of our poor outcast clay  
Final proof, that mankind's gone astray.

Patti Masterman

# Asymmetrical Sonnet

For the sake of our beloveds, we fight  
Against death, though the fight left within us  
Has no real heft, to court the fading light-  
We'd rather leave, than face the fuss.

The spark left in our beings, just enough  
To blink our eyes, squeeze their hand, assure  
That of lifes rare treasure, we've had enough  
And now it holds for us little allure.

After eighty years, we have our doubts  
We'll leave at all, and likely molder neath  
The ground, forcing more daisies above out,  
So to them, our near and dearest, we `queath

A plot of soil, long days of sun, ceaseless toil-  
As earth roils through her seasons: yea, we, too, roil.

Patti Masterman

# Asymmetry

The water flows all around me  
As I try to bend, flow along with its currents;  
But it always subtly changes on me  
So that I find myself in gentle opposition,  
In one direction or another.

In life, no matter how hard we try  
We are in conflict with others;  
With nature, weather, time, distance..

Our life lies in those tiny differences  
The manifold that's living  
Lies in the degree of separation,  
For asymmetry is the god of the new physics.

Patti Masterman

## At First Its Child's Play

At first it's child's play; an afternoon lunch  
A movie, a walk in the park; nothing heavy,  
Has to feel fun; it's only later, it comes undone  
As you learn to run your life on a hunch;  
And lunch becomes brunch, and there's a whole bevy  
Of femme fatales, against which you must levy.  
And they're coming in droves, and small comfy coves,  
And they're everywhere, and make you feel scrunched,  
And ten can fit in a 65 Chevy..  
And their body heat feels like wood burning stoves,  
Full of fragrant and fat luscious loaves  
Of bread that you'd want to eat in large bunches  
While all the femmes are still doing their crunches;  
And soon as you've become much too heavy,  
Your beloved gives you the old heave-ho,  
And drives off then in the car, with his Ho's...

Patti Masterman

## At Long Last, Elegance

My latest man has plans for me;  
He's going to dress me in the finest,  
As still-life, covered with twigs and vining;  
Artfully arranged beneath open skies,  
With wind-blown blossoms, and airy sighs;  
Then he'll paint me in silvery, sparkling dew;  
Veiled by dust storms, and cosmic blue.  
He promised that dawn provides the best blush;  
For highlights there's sunset, and moired moon dust,  
And a drape of clover and ivy's a must,  
And just the touch, of forget-me-nots; trailing  
Then a birds-nest hat, with half-gloves of down;  
Dandelion broach; the best around;  
A picture of elegance will I be,  
Poised and ready for eternity.

Patti Masterman

## At Some Point In Childhood

At some point in childhood, if you are female  
You will become aware that you have breasts, or that someday you might  
And that they are actually mammalian milk squirters  
For feeding little mammals; and it might occur to you then  
What a miraculous device, mother nature has put into place  
To ensure survival, of the most feeble and delicate creatures.  
And some day if you are pregnant, much later on, and in the back of your mind  
You remember, that you have the milk devices, and you wonder will they operate  
Correctly; there is no how-to manual, on how to turn them on and off;  
Seems confusing, as if there should have been a faucet, but it got left out  
Of all the biology texts, and then another day very soon,  
You will be holding that warm, softly nuzzling creature in your arms,  
That true gourmet and aficionado, of lukewarm milky oozing substances  
Which are rumored, to issue from within your chest;  
And wonder of wonders: you discover that the milk will come out itself  
In search of the baby.

Patti Masterman

# At Winter's End

Outside, in a cloudless sky  
I try to decode scattered wakes  
In cuneiform, made by noiseless airplanes-  
At right angles to each other, unfurling curls of silvery rickrack  
Half tame robins are everywhere, heads cocked  
Combing the grass, Fibonacci style  
Hoping for the perfect birds eye-  
The ambient worm in muddy writhings  
The breeze unraveling random love notes  
Like trailing kite tails, over newly bared skin  
A sensual overload impends, of flying things and air currents  
My spirit itself longs to be borne upward now  
Home, to the floating ocean  
Home, to the plain of stars.

Patti Masterman

# Audacious Love

Audacious love, let me touch your being-  
This matter that's me, especially.  
Audacious love, you live very near me-  
Feel its nearness, despite my queerness.

Audacious love, don't know how it started,  
This place that measured a soul, then parted-  
Audacious love, how long will I be  
Captured inside strange dignity?

Patti Masterman

# Aunt Bea Is Gone Away

Maybe the dead remember nothing of dying  
But falling through a thick cloud of too-bright flowers,  
Or raindrops, or down..or maybe have no thoughts at all.

Maybe it was a haze of images from the past  
That they tripped lightly through,  
Unconcerned if they caught every emotion by the hand,  
Having known they had lived it all before; each hour,  
Fleeting hours that seemed endless at the time.

I saw my cousins at their mother's funeral,  
Their faces shell-shocked, drawn, disbelieving;  
That she- of the always-strong shoulders  
Always moving the world about herself, it seemed,  
Instead of the other way around- could die.

I wanted to tell them, it will get better in time  
(Though some days it will all be much worse,  
And everything will remind you only of what you have lost)

I am sure there is some algorithm by which  
The better it gets, the more painful  
The interludes in-between seem to become,  
And for whatever reasons, one seems to pay  
Well in advance of the other.

And I don't know how much better  
It becomes after that-  
I doubt I have ever gotten past that part yet.

And I know that wherever she dwells now,  
Must be a kind of heaven,  
If heaven can exist at all.

Patti Masterman

# Aunt Louise

Aunt Louise was a rodent  
Who preferred to call herself, mouse  
And out in the gamboling country  
Had a sleek modern hideaway house

The door was disguised by a boot  
Whose toe was quite deftly chewed out  
And a quaint little stair descended  
To show a most well concealed route

The soil was a clay most compacted  
Excavated most patiently slow  
And no water nor creatures could crack it  
Neither hail, nor sleet, nor snow

The neighborhood creatures would marvel  
What a crafty genius, Louise  
She'd say come down for a spot of tea, now  
And close the door behind, please

The door was most clever of all  
For it looked like a fragment of sock  
Left behind by the boot's missing owner  
But concealed there, a small sandstone rock

When the painted side of the rock  
Was in sight at the top of the house  
It meant that Louise was at home  
Like the most respectable mouse

When the raw side of the rock was showing  
It meant, don't bother to come down  
For Louise was bound to be shopping  
Over in the nearby Mousetown.

The rock was bright red at Christmas  
On St. Paddy's, was bound to be green;  
But her most favorite day was Valentine's,  
When a gorgeous pink was there seen.

But one day a terrible accident  
Befell poor Mrs. Mouse's door  
It was a hulking monster of metal  
With a disconsonate roar

A lawn mower chewed up the boot  
And it spit out the piece of sock  
And it crumbled the hapless sandstone  
Till it no longer looked like a rock

So Aunt Louise had to move then  
To another den down the way  
Where she never again would mention  
The quaint little house of old days.

Patti Masterman

# Auspicious

Auspicious musicality,  
Entrained with some finality;  
Repetitive refrains,  
With meditative wanes.

It rises and falls  
Like a mobile epistle;  
Don't you love hearing  
The random whistle?

Patti Masterman

# Autumn Calls Me Again

Autumn calls me again to find the way out myself:  
There's way too much beauty to enclose within walls  
I always expected to see then the elves  
And dryads, kneeling in wheat yellowed halls;  
Wood nymphs harvesting bark, from the trees,  
To shelter from winter's soon prying clutches  
And leprechauns toting their potsgold, to tease  
Shy rabbits, before their twig thatched hutches  
My blood grows feverish before coming storms;  
Things often disappear in the shut-in months  
Don't want the love from my arms, freshly torn-  
Fall's crisp, chaste wind brought me to you, once..

Patti Masterman

# Awake And Dreaming

Awake and dreaming one sunlit night,  
I dreamed you lived, and knew you died;  
Knew I loved you, deep inside-  
And hated breath, we breathed in lies.

Awake and dreaming, one dark day,  
I thought I heard your thought, to say  
You loved me well, a hated dream-  
And waking, hated what I seemed.

Awake or dreaming, hate or love  
Emotions are just gift enough  
To keep us busy day and night  
From darkest dawn, to breaking night.

Patti Masterman

# Awaken Now

Awaken now; the silver's on the trees,  
The purple clouds are sailing  
And snow is on the breeze.

Leave your frozen vault;  
Nobody has to know  
The Earth has hidden faults.

Your heart has warmed the ground  
And melted off the ice,  
And all without a sound.

Come with me to find  
A better place for dying,  
If that's what's on your mind-

Or, if you'd care to live-  
Subterranean rooms  
Anonymity, will give.

Patti Masterman

# Awakening

The orchestra moves dreamlike  
Under the oars of the music  
The singer sways with the ebb and flow  
Horns and trumpets hover like anemones  
Searching in the sea flux for cues  
Their round faces intent or bored  
Awaiting their insertion into the blue matrix  
Each solitary part graceless by itself  
But mixed in among the eddies, they enchant-  
Indefinite, whimsical shapes float overhead,  
Dark lit by subtle moon glow  
A mermaid struggles in a fisherman's net,  
Sea monsters lurk in the depths below  
A vain attempt to shake off probing tentacles:  
Things the music awakens and stirs to life once more.

Patti Masterman

# Aww Heck

he sleeps in boots  
and wades in socks  
forgets his key  
and picks the locks

he forgets there's work  
to take a walk  
and when he's fired  
he gets a shock

stays up all night  
to read a book  
and then goes fishing  
without a hook

so then he swims  
without a suit  
since the fishing  
now is moot

he goes to eat  
and locks his car  
and walks all night  
cause it's so far

he never does  
what you'd expect  
and when embarrassed  
just says, aww heck..

Patti Masterman

# Ayn Rand

Ayn Rand was one helluva man  
With eyes scintillating, of granite and sand  
Rough edges hewn, by a calloused hand  
I get what she's saying, but I'm not a fan.

Ayn Rand, she went down to dust  
Leaving her wisdom entrusted to us  
While she was stirring, it made quite a fuss  
But I'd never be one, to jump on that bus.

Patti Masterman

# Babes In Arms

Babes in arms were never known  
To stay so small and sweet  
And true, they always grow like weeds;  
It's quite an astonishing feat.

Babes in arms were never known  
To stay your babe, forever  
They grow up fast as everything  
While maternal arms get severed.

Babes in arms were never known  
To stay fixed in place, like words:  
Their flapping hands turn into wings  
As they take to the sky, like birds.

Patti Masterman

# Baby Be Mine

Baby be mine;  
Sip dandelion wine,  
Condense all the lines:  
Slow down time

If a single chord ran through our lives,  
Baby would you be all mine?

Baby be mine;  
Our hearts we'll bind,  
Out of sight and mind,  
The hours unwind

If a single chord ran through our lives,  
Baby would you be all mine?

Baby be mine;  
Loveliness we'll find,  
And on beauty dine-  
Leave lonely behind

If a single chord ran through our lives,  
Baby would you be all mine?

Patti Masterman

## Bad News, Good News

Sometimes I delude myself  
Thinking I'm writing poems, but then I read somebody else's  
And I get so blown away, and I realize again:  
I'm not really writing poems; I'm just building houses out of cards;  
Forts out of chairs and blankets;  
Making an out of alphabetical order dictionary  
Missing all the best words.  
I could shrivel up from the white hot jealousy  
But I also pay secret homage inside,  
Kneel down to that other writing  
Take off my hat because  
That's real, that's soulful, that's full of vitality and meaning:  
I'd pray for a blood transfusion with your blood  
I'd beg for a brain transplant  
Or at least a telepathic exchange for a fortnight,  
Not that any of those can help with my problem-  
Like Salieri, I'm not so lacking in discernment,  
As to not recognize true genius-  
Unfortunately my senses are fully intact there.  
So even though I leave nice comments on your smoking stuff..  
Never think for one minute, that I would not enjoy  
Hearing news of your death.

Patti Masterman

## Bad Poetry #1

I lurve you like old guys like Depends  
I lurve you like teams that never win  
I lurve you like dysentery loves toilets  
I lurve you like chocolate cake likes doilies.

I lurve you just like the Twelfth of Never  
I lurve you like politicians think they're clever  
I lurve you like lawyers love divorce  
I lurve you like germs that make me hoarse.

I lurve you like TB in a tenement  
I lurve you like hemorrhoids love liniment  
I lurve you so I wrote this poem to tell you  
I've taken space on Ebay, just to sell you.

Patti Masterman

# Bad Poetry Makes Me Ugly

Bad poetry makes me ugly:  
Look, each line, a cliché  
Each blemish, a simile;  
My smile grows more bitingly smug  
With each overzealous superlative.

My raccoon eyes are ringed  
By metaphorical self delusions,  
Badly performing alliteration-  
All improvisations of incompetence;  
And then the clash of symbol, deranges all thought.

Choose only the wound that is in your heart  
That you would earnestly enlarge upon,  
Steadfastly ignoring all the others.

Patti Masterman

# Bad Trouble Brewing - Pantoum

There's bad trouble brewing;  
A secret, can't be told,  
So in angst we're coldly stewing:  
Damnation's in the fold

A secret can't be told-  
We're hostages of fear;  
Damnation, in the fold,  
As we hide our every tear.

We're the hostages of fear,  
In this darkness, growing fast;  
We must hide our every tear,  
For we know this calm can't last.

In this darkness growing fast,  
And the fingers, grasping tighter,  
We know this calm can't last;  
We can't make this burden lighter.

And those fingers ever tighter;  
There's a bad trouble brewing,  
We can't make this burden lighter-  
So in angst, we're coldly stewing

Patti Masterman

# Baptizing Light

What loves the truth,  
What lives in man  
Is binding troth-  
Our secret friend

Baptizing light  
True nature, mend;  
The dark, absolve;  
The real, attend.

Patti Masterman

# Bargain Basement

The world, it will come  
Nosing round your bargains  
Your basements, debasements

Is there news, is there goods-  
Dirt, in the corners  
Between the fingers;  
Dirty mouths, dirty words

Dirty somethings, they must have did?  
In the basement, beneath the ground  
And who told who, so who knows something;  
Gossip that goes round often gets changed

Into something more obscene,  
More atrociously delicious-  
All those dirty dishes  
We ate of just the same.

Patti Masterman

# Battle Of Wits With An Unarmed Snake

Well, boil my skull in a vat of oil,  
And let that serpent then uncoil;  
Though he beat me once, now this is true  
By uttering foul words, so uncouth.  
But this time around, I'm better armed  
Against his wily, serpent charms:  
I've got the batter, and I've got the griddle  
Goin'ter fry up that tough old critter  
I've heard some tell, it's finger-lickin'  
That snake tastes just like fried chicken;  
So I've got my secret seasoned sauce-  
That shoe-leather's gonna know who's boss!

Patti Masterman

# Be Brave Of Heart

Be brave of heart, my melancholy baby,  
Be forceful, swift; so not to tempt our fate,  
No coward soul, nor temerity for label,  
For this fearful trembling to abate.

Be brave of soul, my lone intrepid warrior;  
Don't let weariness rankle your resolve,  
It's not fear, but courage does much for your  
Valiant fighting: of pain, now be absolve..

Patti Masterman

# Be Careful

Be careful of close auditoriums  
And thick stanchioned stadiums  
Watch out for iron gusseted doorframes  
And bar covered windows  
For your loneliness will trap you there  
Backed up against the steel barriers  
And probe your trembling thoughts  
With it's dark truncheon.

Stay away from mirrors  
Which can reveal your state of solitude  
Automobiles which will show your inertia  
Rollercoasters which can skitter you into the past  
Without so much as a roll-bar  
And arms, perhaps most dangerous of all-  
Just before nightfall.

Patti Masterman

# Be Dauntless

Be dauntless, though the world has knives-  
And you have but a single life.

Be brave, though some are braver still-  
And you own only your own will.

Be deathless, though death comes to each-  
Immortality's out of reach.

Patti Masterman

# Be It Done Unto Me

I ask this in your name, O Hallowed,  
From a heart that is perfectly fallowed:  
Please save me from bores,  
And biblical whores  
With religion roots much too shallowed.

Be it done unto me, O Lord  
With a gun, garrote, or sword;  
If that preacher espouse,  
He will come to my house-  
Just beat my head with a board.

It's all, to thy power and glory-  
But please, don't repeat that tired story;  
I know you'd come back  
If they'd give you some slack  
And quit chanting they're so very sorry.

Please save me from poems of the religious  
Cause my soul; it becomes so vertiginous:  
If religion were the source  
Of man's soul, of course,  
Then it wouldn't all seem so confibulous.

Patti Masterman

# Be It Known That

In holy awe, victorious ever,  
Killing demons no man can comprehend;  
Precious dear vision, alone truth atones.  
Holy the relic, such divine homily  
Soon augments rarest moments of dark clarity.  
How uneasy the rest under deaths finest hour,  
Never acknowledging heavenly dreams of sin.  
O well you behold, how whispers in moonlight gleam;  
Young lovelies do startle at lifes rippling stream.  
In time forsyth, love shall sunder the wicked:  
All needless entanglements too soon shall decree  
Such vain repository, lamenting the severance  
Goes again in silence, to liberate the tale.  
Years of uncertainty shall reduce hope as well;  
Tumultuous the days, that revile the soul  
And openly are told, though the truth sing but mutely.

Patti Masterman

# Be Kind To The Dead

Be kind to the dead,  
But leave them to their sorrows-  
So let it be written,  
So let it be said.

Visit their grave,  
On holidays and Sundays;  
So let it be written,  
So let it be said.

Know they were brave,  
In mortal passions writhing:  
So let it be written,  
So let it be said.

And if on some day,  
A distant god comes calling-  
Wipe the tears away,  
And raise them from their bed.

Patti Masterman

# Be Moveless At All News That Come

I'm not going to jump up and down, clapping  
That the wicked witch is dead and gone;  
I've done enough of living now  
To know that other things go on.

Lies that tumble out their mouths  
Don't make me move this way or that,  
And say some truth had been mixed in;  
But I'll not be the judge, of that.

I don't mix affairs with theirs,  
For I'm a pissant, on their floor,  
And I'm just smart enough to learn,  
To pissants, they will close their door.

And I won't lie beneath their feet,  
Or exult in their 'glory' days;  
I'll have no part in what they do-  
And lesser still, in what they say.

Patti Masterman

# Be My Everything

Be my soul, be my soul,  
Call my name out low, oh so low,  
Whisper where the shadows go, so it's told:  
Be my everything, be my soul.

Be my soul, here below  
Where the people fade like ghosts, don't you know-  
Save me, savior sweet; be it all:  
My everything, and everywhere I go.

Patti Masterman

# Be Silent, Love

Be silent, love:  
the polestar of your minions  
in secret sanctum hidden-  
Now is not the time.

Be silent, love:  
Whispers be your savior,  
While others come unbidden-  
Until your voice, find.

Be silent, love:  
Traitors have no patience,  
For stronger hearts have ridden  
Devotions faithful line.

Patti Masterman

# Be The Book

Be the book  
Nobody can read,  
Be the plot  
Nobody sees,

Be the end  
Nobody saw;  
Be the start  
The end, foretold.

Patti Masterman

# Be Very Afraid

Come on you ghouls and ghosties  
I'm waiting for you to come  
Halloween night and I'm all grown up-  
Do you think you can scare me some?

Now that I'm big and fearless  
I never cover my eyes in bed  
In fact I might even scare you now-  
If you weren't already dead?

Anything you want to try is fine  
But just don't make a mess  
That's all I'm really scared of nowadays-  
My old joints getting stiffer I guess?

Oh, is that why you make that gruesome face  
I thought it was just for effect  
Auld Lang Syne can be damned to hell-  
Now that we're all become train wrecks.

Patti Masterman

# Beautiful Darling Of My Secret Heart

Beautiful darling of my secret heart;  
Secret of secrets, held apart-  
Under lock and key, a whole world wrought:  
Beautiful darling of my secret heart.

Beautiful darling of another place;  
There's secret longing in your silent face-  
Half in hiding, like unfinished thought:  
Beautiful darling of another place.

Beautiful giver of beautiful songs;  
Songs sung in secret, all night long-  
A candle'd altar, quiescent flame:  
Beautiful darling- I can't speak your name.

Patti Masterman

# Beautiful Eyes

Beautiful eyes, of beautiful tears,  
Why do you look so sad?  
Beautiful eyes, could you see in the mirror  
What I see, then you'd be glad.

Beautiful eyes, of beautiful tears,  
Laughter will drown your fears:  
Once the clouds have all gone by,  
You'll be smiling for many years.

Patti Masterman

# Beautiful Underground

I used to eat the makeup;  
Eat the lipsticks, and the liquid makeup  
Turned my tongue a delicate beige.  
Once I choked myself on a mouthful of powder  
At a crucial moment, when my mother  
And grandmother were occupied, as always:  
When mother came to pick me up,  
They would tell each other briefly of their day.  
At the exact instant they were talking;  
Unobserved in the bedroom adjoining,  
I bit into that white talcum.  
I don't know why I always did such things:  
Perhaps I thought it would go all thru me,  
Disguising the flaws and imperfections  
On the inside; all the invisible places.  
Even if only I knew my insides were perfect  
Primer beige, with red blushing lipstick highlights,  
Still it meant I was beautiful at least on the inside.  
I was not allowed to wear makeup  
On the outsides of me.  
Don't things denied us  
Always move underground, anyway?

Patti Masterman

# Beauty Of Lost Languages

The alphabet of poetry is passion,  
Though fallen out of vogue and fashion;  
One of the old, forgotten tongues-  
But wait, another idiom's just begun:

Love thru the kaleidoscope dancing,  
Lightly scattered rainbows enhancing  
Fractured geometries in snowflake pattern;  
Almost crystalline, they flower open

The sapphires, rubies, emeralds woken,  
Weaving in and out, in token  
Sunburst from each twist of barrel;  
Whether the arrangement bodes parallel

Misery and sorrow, none can say,  
Till that visions quite gone away.  
Fresh forms appearing each newborn day,  
At the peripherys edge, they engage,

Rotating like dancers to center stage;  
One full circle, and away they spark,  
To square dance once around the arc  
Of somebody elses kaleidoscope-

Some other life, some other hope;  
Another spring, another chance.  
Nature never wastes a spiral dance.

Patti Masterman

# Because

Always be happy, my darling  
Always, even when I'm gone  
Always be happy, my darling-  
Because in you, my love lives on.

Never cry, sweet child of mine  
Never trouble your soul so much  
Never cry, sweet child, my own-  
Just remember my loving touch.

No grief to wound your heart, dear  
No grief, more dear than air  
No- you all my hopes enclose, dear-  
My vessel of love, so rare.

Patti Masterman

# Because He Offers All

Because he offers all,  
I find I can take less;  
Though secrets held in thrall-  
And nothing, can confess.

Because his love is free,  
I'm reticent to pay  
A wholesale customs fee-  
But take instead, a day.

Or part a day; an hour-  
Or minutes- if he shows-  
Or seconds, if it's late-  
I'm desperate, you know.

Because he offers all,  
I'm happy with a mite;  
We'll spare no grudging airs,  
Take nothing- but delight.

Patti Masterman

# Because I Have Loved One Child

Because I have loved one child, I know I've loved them all;  
Caressed their smoother cheeks, from whence bright crystals fall.

Caught infectious joy of laughter, from their little sea-shell teeth,  
Clinging tightly to our hours; for growing up's a thief.

Because I've known one child's heart, I've known the heart of each;  
How their spirits open wide, to magnify their reach.

The world's a meeker, gentler place, translated through their kind;  
A fragile cache of precious gifts, wrapped in the human mind.

Patti Masterman

# Because It Is Bitter

The bitter root of a bitter heart  
Afflicts, for all one's days,  
For the bitter blood there cannot transmute  
Cold stone, into loving gaze.

The bitter end of a bitter life  
Leaves bitterness scattered round,  
And the bitter husk, of a bitter man  
Lies unquiet, in the stony ground.

Patti Masterman

# Because The Empty Station

Because the empty station only longs to know the day,  
The sleeping hours wait smoothly, as their anguish drifts away;  
Leaves me somewhere so far gone; though who's the one to say  
The day is lost, I don't belong; forgotten now, the way.

Your cigarette smoke homes in, on my lonely choking heart,  
Gone the distance, in a moment, even though we are apart,  
And the second leaving; dying, leaves me thoroughly emptied out-  
Because I'm the empty station, has filled itself with doubt.

Patti Masterman

# Because The Rain Orders The Day

Because the rain orders the day,  
And because the water orders the rain  
To and fro; do not be disenchanted  
If by rain's marching and water's routing,  
Everything becomes disarrayed, in puddles.

Because the green moss sits on stones,  
And because stones sit still on riverbanks  
And moss grows not on moving stones,  
Do not be perplexed, if moss and shade  
Hide in the crevices, where you cannot see.

It is enough, enough that rain exists at all;  
That water wets the dry stones thirst, like a dew,  
That still green water laps the undersides of shore.  
Do not forget these things of earth,  
Which are timeless, when compared to the span of men.

Patti Masterman

# Because You Were Beautiful

Because you were beautiful  
The frost formed fingerprints, on window glass  
As if to touch your shoulder, when you pass;  
Or write in code, your name upon the leaves  
So that it shows, whenever something breathes,  
Because you were beautiful

Because you were beautiful  
The storm left grayish teardrops on the sill,  
A keepsake of the stillness it must feel  
After angry clouds have left the sky,  
And the birds and wildlife breathe a sigh:  
Because you were beautiful

Because you were beautiful  
This heart has felt the shadow of your grace,  
Wherever loveliness has left its trace;  
And songs I heard beside you, on the earth  
Became the stars above us, giving birth-  
Because you were beautiful

Patti Masterman

# Becoming More Myself

At unexpected moments in the day  
I learn about magic hidden inside of living.  
When I drink from a colored glass,  
I drink in a part of a rainbow, shining  
Somewhere else, no matter how far.  
Electricity tastes like blue.  
Fresh-cut wood still retains the scent  
Of the forest that gave birth to it.  
Just the smell of rain washes your soul.  
If I touch an object of someone who has died,  
I must atone by being extremely lively.  
As I am swimming in an emerald lake  
I transform chameleon-like into a green-eyed mermaid  
With hair hand- colored by the sunset.  
Glitter is really starlight, travelling billions of years  
Just to find me, becoming more myself.

Patti Masterman

# Becoming What You Think You See

I become so miserably stupid  
When people give me that certain evil eye  
The Look that says: you must be dumb, you have  
That vacant expression..so I become implacably Dull,  
Inexorably Bland, unthinking, and unseeing until  
They look away, and then I became super aware  
And intelligently supercilious just before  
They regret their too speedy reaction  
To deep set eyes and not much chin to speak of  
Neanderthal-dark hair and a slight over-bite  
Perhaps a little drooling over-anticipation..

If you're too easy they've no respect  
If you're hard to get, their interest dies out  
As soon as they see you're obtained  
And then I bite my own jaw in regret  
On the inside, as punishment,  
(must be that over-bite)  
Without intending to, and I hear the  
Awful soft crunch, as of an over ripe carrot that  
Yielding to the teeth, soon oozes forth blood;  
I'm in tears and misery then, and cease to care  
What they do or don't think about me

I quit broadcasting their expectations back to them  
By the time the bleeding stops they are gone  
And I curse my over active imagination  
And my tendency toward grandiose episodes of  
Telepathic demonstrations, or becoming  
What you think you see.

Patti Masterman

# Bedazzled

Knee deep, I kiss  
Your soft waywardness;  
The angles you keep  
Most angels find steep.

Climbing heavenly hills,  
I fall for your stills  
While sweet dreaming air  
Gently carries me there.

It comes down to this,  
Rare earth, I'd not miss,  
But the unknown element's  
Your pure bedazzlement.

Patti Masterman

# Before Good-Bye's Good Bye

I forgot the stars above  
Even look out for you,  
I forgot the moon and sun  
Reflect in eyes so blue.

I forgot my homemade sail  
Goes out upon your wind,  
And how the church bells, ringing  
To you their tidings send.

I forgot old photos yellow  
And tear drops fade away,  
As older love grows mellow  
And can't say, what it should say.

I'll forget the limits  
Bound by the four-walls lie  
But we had more, than minutes-  
Before good-bye's good bye.

Patti Masterman

# Before The Battle's Done

Other men can't save you  
With their glory, or their dreams;  
Other lives they'd trade you,  
Not unraveled at the seams.

The human looks in others  
What he cannot find in self;  
He'll search through many brothers  
For a spirits subtle wealth.

Other days might soothe you,  
When the end of work seems come-  
But to stop would not behoove you  
Before the battle's done.

Patti Masterman

# Before The Day My Flesh First Knew

Before the day my flesh first knew  
Whose face is bent upon my own  
When time and tides were swimming fish  
And the mountains newly hone  
And time served up in timeless dish  
And flesh with ruby blood was sewn.

Before the watered silk was washed  
And stretched upon time's lengthy rack  
When wardrobes of the earth were lost  
And tongues once strayed went off the track  
We learned our hands to stay the task  
And trusted fate would bend our backs.

We camped in dreams, and took our rest  
In living clouds, by lightnings crossed  
World was, when we went undressed  
And though the loathsome winds might talk  
The larger life, unmanifest  
Was present there in flesh; embossed.

Time moved in rhythms much too slow  
And blocked our vision's hapless hues  
The hawk's call changed into a crow  
Who flew the calling days too soon  
Our portion then was never known  
And trouble lurked behind the moon.

Our young were formed of air and seed  
They came in fright, they stayed to live  
Because of soul's obdurate need  
For matter in the soil did grieve  
An earthly house the creatures seek,  
The earthly gods by flesh reprieved.

Before the day my flesh first knew  
Whose face is bent upon my own  
I cast my lot among the few  
Who all the sad earth trod, alone

But in your eyes, found there a clue  
To let me know that I was home.

Patti Masterman

# Before The Light Runs Out

I must have insisted on a sixties birth-  
Born right on the cusp of that pivotal year,  
A May flower child, too young for the drugs  
The sex, the rock and roll orgies;  
But I revelled in that decade,  
I felt old enough for that stuff, even if I didn't look it.  
Cheap plastic transistor radio, at three years of age  
I listened to it day and night till it broke  
And squawked till they bought me another.  
My own bedroom television set, small black and white;  
I was plugged in at an early age.  
I felt full grown inside by nine years old.  
I remember the Vietnam evening news  
Bloodied bodies being shoved into helicopters  
By sweating men with camouflage faces  
And police and students battling on campuses.  
Back then there were the warm summers  
Spent in bathing suits, at the lake:  
Hiking, modeling life sized sand people on the beach  
Checking for the footprints that always cut through them.  
Floppy sun hat, eating ice cream bars,  
The ever present radio in the background behind everything  
Infusing the ether with plastic airborne emotion.  
Swimming for hours; devouring whole the thunderstorms  
Sizzling air and rain dampened cyclones.  
The sun gleamed over the waves, straight into my eyes:  
Filling me with enough sunshine for my simple needs.  
I was the tree voyeur, climbing high into the cool leafiness  
To read, watch life going by; silent and invisible hours there  
Imagining it might be like this, if I wasn't around anymore,  
Only to crawl back down and become real again.  
I think I needed that carefree life  
All the other kids couldn't grow up fast enough  
But I knew I would never again have this much freedom.

Patti Masterman

# Before You Go Back

What was there  
Before you were born;  
Was there a point-  
Was something torn?

Was there a portal,  
Was there a door;  
Can you remember-  
Just before?

What was there  
Before you were;  
Was it a seed-  
Or potent air?

Maybe a keyhole,  
Or just a crack?  
You ought to find out-  
Before you go back.

Patti Masterman

# Before You Were My Father

There must have been some leftover  
Ticket stub mementos  
Of your other life as a bus driver,  
Bachelor, mystery man about town:  
Faded polaroids containing  
A slice of arm, of back  
Though as a driver, you would have seemed  
Mainly a rear view  
To all the people on the tour buses you drove.  
Some days you surely would have intruded,  
Unknowingly, behind the welcoming hugs captured  
In still black and whites;  
The practical jokes breaking out in transit;  
And tearful departures caught in snapshots.  
In their lives you passed by so quickly,  
A flicker of shadow  
Forever hovering just at the edge  
Of their days journeys,  
Not even remembered as an afterthought.  
You would have stayed there  
In the background,  
Your image often captured while  
Taking the furtive smoke,  
Stretching out your legs,  
Checking the tire pressure.  
Though we did not know  
One another then  
I can visualize the carefulness with which  
You would have tailored your own route.  
If I could gather up all the scattered,  
Torn and trampelled puzzle pieces  
Of your once upon a time life-  
Thousands of amputated parts of you,  
In my imaginings-  
Now lodged in a thousand dusty shoeboxes  
In the tops of stranger's closets;  
Maybe then I would no longer be haunted  
With the idea that the invisible fragments of you  
Carry on a secret existence

In obscure places you never even visited  
And beyond all reach of any capacity  
To locate or recognize them.

Patti Masterman

# Beggarmen, Thief

Beggarmen thief, who took my heart:  
Do you think that you can use it?  
Where will you hide it, and what will they say-  
That you had audacity, to choose it?

Beggarmen thief, it's a useless heart,  
And won't further your aims or plans;  
You see, it's already been used up-  
Wrung dry by another's hands.

Beggarmen thief, it's an empty choice  
You've fastened your wiles upon;  
For all you'll find are some children's jacks-  
And some dreams, once in a song.

Patti Masterman

# Beggar's Eye

I see your reflection in my beggar's eye,  
Who owned your world neath truer skies;  
But died in driftwood, for your smiles-  
And held you close, for a little while.

We go, we stay; no one pays heed,  
Though signed in blood names on the deed;  
No matter who, I'd know your style-  
Who held you close, for a little while.

The ocean roves, just like a man  
Whose heart is sweet, beneath warm sands,  
And I hope it never was a trial-  
Just holding you, for a little while.

Patti Masterman

# Beggar's Moon

It's a beggar's moon, for you and me,  
A lunar ride, to the edge of dawn,  
Clutching stardust in our hands  
Where love lives on, forever free.

It's a beggar's moon, we see above,  
It's phases glowing like an orb,  
As fairies fly and wishes spiral  
And lonely couples look for love.

It's a beggar's moon, will follow us  
It's shadow haunting word and look,  
And eyes that speak an older tongue,  
And smiles that last, till we are dust.

Patti Masterman

# Begging The Question

When I read all those poems of languishing,  
I begin to imagine they were written about me,  
by your many facets, your multiples  
frames of mind, in tiny deceits of tenacious manipulations..

I might even start to imagine that I am woman, and seducer  
and you, male and desirer, as decreed by nature-  
and the words used might imply that I made decisions,  
formed invisible territories,  
grown templates out of sentences and replies, or even by not answering

And 'I' is such a minute though infinite concept, such an invisible construct  
that soon I begin to tremble, for fear of being thought of as some great  
'something'-  
instead of as the feeble 'nothing' that I have always imagined myself to be

And soon I run away again, and I see you retire to your corner  
out of the corner of my eye-  
as we sit staring, contemplating that which we think we will never have,  
but somehow, dreamlike- is the sensation we always possess it, nonetheless.

Still, in my woebegone state, I am deserted again and again,  
in a prison made only of thoughts,  
so that nobody can file the bars or open the doors for me to come unto them.

The key is a goblin, I have eaten it a thousand times,  
waiting for it to reappear again  
and human bones can't squeeze through the defenses, enough to join me,  
anymore than a phantom could steal my heart-  
or me be able to admit, that it has happened before and is happening now.

But mostly, whether I am just a thought inside your mind,  
or have a separate sovereign existence inside myself- always begs the question..

Patti Masterman

# Behind The Everything

Behind everything there's another behind,  
Which breaks the real at the edge of mind,  
Where atoms crack and strain to reach,  
From side to side, in each ones niche,  
Where space is waffling in wild space winds  
That eyes of man have never seen,  
And space rules all there with a stream  
Of proto-matter, at it's whim.

And behind the behind of matter, all  
There is an empty field of space,  
Where matter thinks it might become;  
And then next thing, away it blinks.  
And this constant blinking, in and out,  
'Now he loves me, now he doesn't'  
Is the backbone of the things you see  
That gives them all their solid substance.

Nothing coming and going away,  
Birthing itself on some cosmic fling,  
Appear and fade, no rhyme or reason;  
Random access, that's the way  
Everything comes from flickering points,  
Half real, half ghost, but out of sight,  
And that's how miracles can occur,  
For matter's the ocean, with a silent roar.

Patti Masterman

# Being

I am the empty grave,  
The golden rows that wave,  
Reflections in your eye,  
The starry ports of night.

I am the open book,  
What lovers wear; that look,  
The things that babies say,  
The passage of the day.

The drunk moon in the sky  
Is hung upon a sigh,  
And all the dreams we dream  
Are hardly what they seem.

Patti Masterman

# Being, Invincibly

Now shines the last star arising  
before skyfall is done.

Every pin-point, distinct lamp burns,  
its starry footprint visible for miles  
(And those that guide the dawn)  
You tell yourself

Other stars you're seeing, many miles above  
are the same storied stars seen  
before the first lamps were lit,  
there even before books existed;  
this is how the night-time scribbles its bright, wandering cyphers  
across the blue template  
evening brings, behind ambered curtains.

Glassy shards of starlight  
cached like lightning bolts at well-bottoms  
and when that dusky night opens  
and reflects deeply into it,  
pools light up that can scarcely reach the shimmering silence above  
(Like the iris of god opening a shutter,  
and old lovers are reborn  
or some angel's work gets done)

Every tale of new worlds lies chambered within;  
all the characters someday you'll become,  
before you awaken shivering from your dreams  
(as the day extinguishes the circumnavigating  
rondels of darkness)  
into the never-still pole star of being, invincibly.

Patti Masterman

## Belated Apology

She became a skull-face, but I became Death,  
Brackishly leaning, with foul-tempered breath.

She became an andiron, and I became a poker,  
And then she was a Tarot card, but I was a Joker.

She became a hippo, so I became a mouse-  
Which frightened the hippo, right into a house

Where I became fire, and she an escape;  
Then she became female, and I became rape.

And she became old, so I became young,  
And her withered flesh was loosely hung.

Then she began screaming, so I became vacuum,  
Twirling the voids, which soon would entomb.

And at her wits end, she thought- last- apologize-  
So then we ceased all, and we said our goodbyes.

Patti Masterman

# Bend Don'T Break

Bend, don't break  
When melancholy visits;  
Keep bending, not breaking,  
Even though your heart is aching.

Bend, don't break  
Like trees in stormy weather;  
As long as they keep bending,  
The broken spots are mending.

Patti Masterman

# Berry, Berry, On The Vine

Berry, berry on the vine  
I'll pluck you for my valentine;  
Her lips more red than your plump face,  
To kiss them would no heart disgrace.

Berry, berry on the vine  
To stain her lips would be divine;  
And on my hands will leave a trace  
Of the rarest beauty's taste.

Patti Masterman

# Bessie Was A Cow

Bessie was a cow,  
Flower was a goat;  
Two better friends  
You would never know.

Bessie trimmed the grass,  
And Flower ate the weeds;  
A pair of better gardeners  
You would never need.

Wherever Flower went,  
Bessie went there too;  
If Flower ate some clothes,  
Bessie watched with rue.

If Bessie ate some hay,  
Flower ate some clover-  
If one passes heaven,  
They'll both get over.

Patti Masterman

# Best Wishes

I never saw your wedding photos  
Never saw until yesterday, the faded pictures  
I never saw that shocked look of resignation-  
Unhappiness, boldy staring from your trapped eyes  
The realization of just where life had placed you:  
At the center of a circle  
Of disappointed relatives: your new family  
Blaming your presence and your motives  
You who came to them behind a babies cries  
And the one most of all, who should have been  
Protector of you: he threw the first stone  
Behind closed doors,  
Stone you never saw nor knew of,  
Stone that sunk you to the bottom  
And insured that all those smug, smiling faces  
Would never really know or understand you.  
Perhaps you took out all your pain and vengeance  
On anyone who came within striking distance-  
That was your prerogative  
But, with only a few glimpses of your true soul  
(You always keep it so well hidden,  
And it really is beautiful)  
Here's hoping that maybe someday  
You will feel safe enough  
To finally allow it some freedom.

Patti Masterman

# Between Lies Everything

Do you grieve for self when you're dying,  
Forget to grieve, once you're dead?  
Maybe you were so busy high-flying  
That visions just danced in your head?

You thought that dying was easy;  
Leaving everything came naturally.  
It is, and does- the last moment-  
But between here- lies everything.

Patti Masterman

## Beware The Darwin Awards

Don't cut the cord before the blood drains,  
Don't release the arrow until you want to send-  
The devil always lives in the tiniest details,  
So don't forget the drawbridge if you must defend.  
Don't leave behind the matches on the expedition,  
Don't drink the water where dead lay on the ground-  
Such a tiny hairsbreadth divides dying and living,  
Where danger, folly, and their offspring do abound.  
Life favors victors, and leaves stragglers to their portion,  
So don't neglect your options; don't dawdle in the chase-  
If you want to stay alive to pass your own genes on,  
Don't ever stake your life on heavenly grace.

Patti Masterman

# Biased

The sky above is cloaked with stars,  
In galaxies of kindred suns;  
Fire to faraway diamonds turned,  
From sun to setting sun.

The sky unsettled ocean is,  
Where scintillate tides go by;  
And rumored life may somewhere dwell,  
Hid from the roving eye.

And God himself, a rumor, myth;  
The giant eye of fate,  
Who orbits all our trials and cares-  
We, who arrived so late.

From lowly amoeba to high-class brain,  
We pride ourselves the highest,  
Alone; out of this whole huge world-  
We have a selfsame bias.

Patti Masterman

# Big City Hospital

You go alone, inside the implacable stone buildings  
Made by machines and men's bric-a-brac dreams,  
You ascend to the stars, in the quiet elevator  
Watch the numbers increase, feel the small box leave.

It opens with an out-take of breath like your own  
And expels you out, into swaying corridors  
In the heart of the building, where the walls gently quake,  
And the floors soundless quiver, with a purring vibrato;  
The whole thing in motion, like a witch's dry heaves.

In the bosom of metal and concrete, you're held,  
The world kept at bay, as it moves at a crawl;  
From high above windows, which you can't ever open-  
To keep you inviolate, so you can't ever fall.

This place has the heart, of metal talons and claws,  
To those are tormented, within its clean walls-  
But you're the welcome guest, and the pampered visitor-  
The still unknown factor, within all these walls.

Patti Masterman

# Big Plans

Resolved to attain celebrity  
By whatever means  
She painstakingly built a time machine  
From stolen plans; carefully eased  
Herself into the conveyance  
And plugged in the time  
Her plan: to discover tomorrows  
Masterpieces ahead of time, and beat  
The authentic creator to the finish line  
She didn't count on evolution  
Playing so huge a part-  
Her very large derrière became stuck  
In a decade of slinky outfits  
A veritable hell world  
She had absolutely nothing to wear  
Even worse she could not return  
To the present  
To turn in the winning submissions.

Patti Masterman

# Binding Methuselah

The body is a cage  
That you need to wear,  
And when it's feeling good,  
You will hardly know it's there.

But when the cage grows old,  
And the wearing has grown tired,  
When the strain becomes too great;  
You can slip between the wires.

Patti Masterman

# Birthday Poem For A Friend

Birthday poem for a friend

Our lives are the bottom-land, where we grow  
From year to year, the time escrow'd,  
As we trade each year, one year of living  
(Not really knowing what we're giving)

Someday the sands will all run out,  
And the clocks face seem to pout,  
So all the precious hours, attend  
(Still, dream of life that has no end)

Patti Masterman

# Bit Player

Write me out of life  
Write me out of this part  
The good ones are gone away now  
The future looks so bleak sometimes  
Can't we jump ahead to the next scene?

I remember when it was all so new  
The flowers smelled of pleasure  
Rare secrets brightened every universe;  
Faces were always smiling,  
Where did it go away to?

Remember when there was no falling; no fade to black-  
Does history really repeat itself?

Write me something deeper  
Mellowed, but opening outward  
Can we slow down the reels we danced to,  
Can the words come back, spaced farther apart-  
But mean much more next time?

Perhaps it was we, who were shallow;  
Not the props or dialogue-  
Don't let me use up the rest of the silence  
On regret; please don't me live out  
What's left, alive only in the past.

Remember when there was no falling; no fade to black-  
Does history really repeat itself?

Patti Masterman

# Bits Of Me In The Bright Blue Everywhere

I try to imagine all of my chrysalides  
Over hill and dale, and in the far distance,  
Sun gleaming on bright, fledgling wings  
As they spread and take to the sky;  
Bet you never knew my offspring  
Would someday inherit the winds of time.

Patti Masterman

# Black As Coal

The coals smoldered  
With obsidian flakes,  
To reflect sky or ocean there.  
The heat was tropical;  
An abeyance denied  
To all who'd arrived there.

Earthquakes simmered  
Along the meridians,  
While smoke floated free:  
Released from it's bondage,  
It drifted to where  
You wanted to be.

Patti Masterman

# Blame Me This Time

This time, to save time  
I'm just going to fall in love  
With myself: discrete lunches  
Alone at the table, with an engrossing book  
Candlelight dinners and vintage wine,  
Looking up at the stars,  
Trying to name all the constellations-  
Just me and only me;  
Slow dancing in the garden  
To a symphony of cicadas  
Heart-shaped chocolate boxes,  
With a romantic poem tucked under the ribbon  
Surprising myself with flowers  
And fresh-squeezed orange juice  
After an all nighter  
Of watching movies by myself  
Secret notes slipped into my bag  
To meet myself at an undisclosed place  
For a romantic interlude:  
I can see it's going to get complicated  
But at least, I'll have only myself to blame  
If things go wrong.

Patti Masterman

# Bleed Out

In the center of my eye's a small guillotine-  
See- if you squint, you can sometimes see the frame.  
In my brain's the morgue, where the warm ones brought,  
Sans heads, after the foul deed's done.

Every day, I must kill the ones who want love;  
The ones who would have given anything for it.  
Their unmarked graves are scattered about-  
For those thoughts, unrequited- I must bleed out.

Patti Masterman

# Bleeding To Know

Love has always made her colder;  
Impossible to ever warm her, with his own cold hands  
Like an ice cream, fresh from the store's deep freeze,  
Her love has to sit and thaw before imbibing  
Or the vocal cords get hard bitten by frostbite.

Love is round after round of musical chairs,  
And always falling hard to the floor  
With no seat, no arms there to catch her;  
A love which does not make an appearance at the prom,  
But drinks a liter of wine alone, to kill the sting of disappointment.

Valentines, dances, parties are not for her;  
Love's other victims are set aside for special memories  
Which are not tender, and don't end in pleasure-  
The heart doesn't break; neither does it ache,  
Except from loneliness; still love is there  
Whispering in the shadows, casting come hither glances.

Ah, Love is the great practical joker  
Who never stops giving her pointers  
About what she lacks, so she will never forget it.  
Her only fantasy now, disappearing during one of his magic tricks  
Never to be seen again.

Some babies should be put out in the snow-  
It would be so much kinder in the end,  
Because surely in heaven, nobody ever has to sit alone?

The Magician cut the part with the heart out of her early  
Left it in the sawed-in-half box, behind the stage,  
And so she spends the rest of her anemic years slowly bleeding out,  
Wishing she knew what was missing.

Patti Masterman

# Bliss

In the wake of the coming departure  
Opportunities are opening up  
Future synchronicities and eccentricities  
Begin to orbit in the distance  
Your eyes can only see things far away now  
I know when the dust resettles  
This place may feel  
Like an empty cathedral-  
All the monk's gone on retreat;  
Or a deserted schoolyard,  
Lessons all ended  
And the merry go round still making  
A few hapless rotations  
Only under its own steam.  
All the children of summer  
Living happily without shoes,  
Safe from subversion  
Still assured of the parental counter-weight  
Even as you go bobbing away,  
Upward into the jet stream,  
On your own untethered flight of bliss.

Patti Masterman

# Blood Cipher

Silent are the rocks;  
Silent the alleys and stone walls,  
Cracked foundations and fountains.  
No voices speak now, except through the wind  
Twisting and turning, on its way through the gorges.  
The weather has beaten out every surface,  
Stamped it's stalagmite of time upon the faces.  
The last rags of clothing hung out to dry  
Are a sifting, unrecognizable ash of piled up molecules,  
Indiscernible from the storm-strewn cadavers  
Of wood, straw and leaves,  
Leaves which can laugh at the ferocity of sudden gales  
And chatter annoying, behind lifting fingers of twig,  
Themselves tumbled shamelessly, into ancient doorways  
That once were closed against all intruders.

The cipher of their blood has marked, defined this place,  
Pressed it down, with the missing weight of forgotten culture,  
Though their language is still indistinguishable from others,  
But that their slivered bones have stopped up the pilfering,  
The plundering of tombs by wild running waters,  
Trickling down to the lowest graveled catacombs  
Of a once vibrant village;  
It is all running spaces of tomb now,  
And the few visitors that happen to wander in  
Find themselves holding their breath,  
Wary of their modern dissonance  
Disturbing the invisible residents of past days.

Patti Masterman

## Bloom Where Born

Bloom where born, though candles light the trees,  
Though fire consume the census, in all the least of these.  
Bloom where born, the wick grows black with soot,  
The fire is climbing higher; some mischief is afoot.

Bloom where born, the grape dies on the vine,  
The silver-shoon are leaving, and men march on the Rhine.  
Bloom where born, their boots surely are stamping,  
The kettles are on fire, and black on black is tamping.

Bloom where born, your mother was a seamstress,  
Your father ran the circus, with his sometimes-paramour.  
Bloom where born, for your father's loins were seedless-  
To see you made him speechless: his sole progenitor.

Patti Masterman

# Blown-Head Doll

Blown-head doll,  
Gasketed cradle,  
Sight of the curious,  
Plague of the poor;

Nothing is left  
On her bare body:  
She won't be played with  
Anymore.

Patti Masterman

# Blue Is The New Black

I think I would rather wear blue

(Or some metropolitan hue)

If the dead in their graves should talk

(But they'll say that it's generally true)

That blue is now the new black

(When someone's not coming back)

And it's fine, and no one should gawk

(Though wearing blue takes some knack)

Patti Masterman

# Blue Stone Girl

Blue stone girl  
Lost again in reverie,  
Getting high on sky,  
Learning to get by.

Blue stone girl  
Practical jokes and revelry,  
Didn't know too many things;  
Lost in wonder, what the day brings.

Blue stone girl  
Thoughts she never spoke aloud;  
Perhaps they would have thought her proud-  
Those things, they couldn't see.

Blue stone girl  
Where'd you hide your world?  
Once she was free-  
Once, she was me.

Patti Masterman

# Blue Thoughts

Where do our atoms go away to  
When there is no one left to love them;  
When the molecules have broken apart?

What does life have in store  
Once the living is done with;  
Was it all just for nothing?

Did our life have anything real to say;  
Does time forget our name,  
Does love forget our memory-  
And do we forget even ourselves?

Written to Azure (Celletti-Roedelius) by Alessandra Celletti

Patti Masterman

# Blue Twilight

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
I fly in a dream, in my silvered room;  
The cover of night has been pulled away,  
And I move in sleep toward a different day.

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
The day will not be arriving soon;  
Everything quiet, and still as a world  
With a hidden lock, god has not unfurled.

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
In a secret place, like a moonlit ruin,  
There's magic and wonder, come dawn of day  
From a deepness, where the soul must stray.

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
I wait all day in a soundless tune;  
I wait till the special hour comes around:  
The sun is sinking and gone quite down.

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
I smile in darkness, where stars are strewn,  
The universe open, like a great book;  
There's hours and hours, just to look.

Over the rooftop, under the moon,  
Night arrives like a soft cocoon,  
With starry eyes, to see you through,  
And dreams enough, to fill the blue.

Patti Masterman

## Bob Limericks

Billy was the first one to be born;  
Will followed soon; the portal was torn,  
And Joe was the laggart; he's lagging still,  
For they all had to swallow that bitter pill:  
Papa Bob had conceived them in porn.

Bill, Will, and Joe, are marked by fate:  
Either came too soon, or came too late;  
Born to a family, quite well known  
For generations, the same family home-  
And a family tree, perfectly straight.

Bill fixes fixer-uppers, with a big fat roll of tape,  
And Will's the resident WD-40 expert, as of late:  
With tape and lubricant, they'll fix every seeming error;  
But their girlfriends seem to live in abject states of terror,  
Whenever one of them runs just slightly past her date.

Patti Masterman

# Body Is A Martyr

The body is a martyr  
By and by, by and by.  
No use to beg and barter  
By and by, by and by.

A spendthrift, we all use it  
By and by, by and by.  
Contort it and abuse it  
By and by, by and by.

So on the stake, we leave it  
By and by, by and by.  
Lament, only to grieve it  
By and by, by and by.

Patti Masterman

# Body Traitors

Ever notice how sometimes  
Your hands have their own mind,  
At odds with the large mind that runs the body.

How sometimes when you try  
To pick up something, but instead  
You hurl it like a javelin, cast it onto glass table-tops,  
Spike it as though a football.  
You did not plan to do this, it was your hand's idea.

Your lips sometimes are traitors too;  
Someone you know too well might say, I love you..  
But then, your lips can't quite form those words  
So they say instead: I like you a lot.

Patti Masterman

# Bombs Before Breakfast

Bombs before breakfast, blasts just at noon-  
Hurry and sup, before we all swoon.  
A leg flying by, we pretend not to see,  
As we're remembering freedom's not free.

Fingers on stairwells, crushed by a wall,  
Buildings much shorter that once were so tall.  
Children are silenced both early and late-  
Not from ?mere ?etiquette-? no; ? cruel hand of fate.

World turns its head, or else ?fans ??the flames,  
History forgetting our faces and names.  
If this doesn't matter, this right here and now;  
How can anywhere matter, any time- and how?

Patti Masterman

# Bones Hold Memories

He said, the bones hold memories  
Cremation can't remove;  
I cradle your bones, the precious

Silt-glass reveries of watered sun,  
A singing motion that circles round  
(And every kind of hidden weather)

Nothing's dead, so long as bones live-  
Survival's inexact, because those bones  
Still whisper days, that now are gone.

Patti Masterman

# Bootstrap Caligula

Bootstrap Caligula

He sees the sun and runs  
Pulled up by teeth on the bootstrap  
Till his time's nearly done  
Who made him emperor  
Who told him he was god  
Just another petty tyrant  
Who's not really any good

Bootstrap Caligula

He aims well but never fires  
Wonder where he thinks he's going  
Don't think he can go much higher

Bootstrap Caligula

Says the signs are all up above  
Wants to read the auguries  
Blood from a bleeding dove  
He wants immortality  
To have his face cast in stone  
But at the end of an empire  
His kind will be swept along

Bootstrap Caligula

He aims well but never fires  
Wonder where he thought he was going  
Don't think he could get much higher

Bootstrap Caligula

They carried him off today  
He could never get with the program  
Somebody had to pay  
Now he's another Messiah  
A martyr to yesterday  
Who once thought  
The world owed him something

But every dog has it's day



# Bores And Boating Accidents

Sometimes people don't reveal they're bores right away;  
It takes time sometimes, years even  
Of bouncing randomly off one another,  
Tentatively probing, courteousness prevailing,  
The winds conducive to perfect sailing.

Then one day, the winds turn, and the boat wavers,  
Hesitates: to one side, a plunging stream,  
To the other, ponds of despond..  
Both sides willing to contribute just enough- but not quite enough-  
The boat capsizes and fills up with water.

And there it sits, perhaps only inches beneath smiling blue water  
And nobody will rescue it, because to do so  
Won't solve a thing-  
We must remember that courteousness..  
Stay boat; for there will be no more sailing..

Patti Masterman

# Bottoming Out

My moods drain me down  
To some immoderate sluice-gate,  
They run down the grainy windows,  
Clog the sand in the top of the hour-glass  
Like bat's tears, like misplaced rainstorms  
Looking for a cloud to hang out under.

All my temperaments are accidental,  
Wrongly placed; too early or too late  
Miscarriages of intention,  
Predicaments of inattention.

All the inconsequential moments I inhabit,  
I'm wearing thin, from changing my mind too often-  
Why is there no groove for thinking,  
No energy-saving secret gear?

Sometimes I sit absolutely still  
In an uncomfortable position,  
Hoping the powers that be will notice me;  
Will see that I'm going nowhere, so slowly  
And they will send some tempest to help move me along.

I'm also afraid they will send change;  
The paralytic not only can't move,  
He knows he can never move,  
And his biggest fear  
Is being thought capable of movement.

In that rapid swirling down the drain,  
He wants someone to snag him on a branch,  
Save and reclaim his manhood;  
Not sit in a tree and watch him spiraling,  
While repeating over and over,  
Why don't you save yourself?

He knows it's too late for words;  
The tears only add to the swelling river.  
And if once I thought there was a savior on every corner,

I guess I just got tired of waiting-  
Because the ones in the mirror only close their eyes now.

Normalcy both appalls and comforts me-  
Why does it all appear so average,  
As you go sprawling head first over the falls:  
You know nobody else's life will change one iota,  
And you know you're just paying some bill  
You never even saw.

Patti Masterman

# Bow To The Present

Don't break all ties with the past-  
Though it may be archaic, gone;  
To all that you once were:  
Hold on.

Buried, hid like treasure rare,  
It's part within you still will stay  
Forgotten, faint and almost mute-  
Toward some farther, unknown day.

Before you then there will arise  
Lessons that you thought were missed,  
Gifts you needed, late in life  
To see you through the murky mist.

The past has secrets that were true  
Once upon a child; and now  
Just when you think there's naught to do-  
To past, that's now the present: bow.

Patti Masterman

# Brain Vs Heart

When they look at the brain and the heart  
They can render the physical body transparent  
Like a ghost appearing on video film  
And they can see that the heart  
Has an electrical field signature  
Sixty times that of the brain

The heart is an indefatigable engine  
A rotary mechanized spark plug  
Always reverberating the ether- by comparison  
The brain is a silent, contemplative bystander  
Generating little signal, consuming little current  
But they depend on one another

Much as we depend on each other-  
Without the brain as overseer  
The heart would slow down till it stopped  
Or it might speed up faster and faster  
Till it broke down; like a diesel engine  
With gasoline poured in as fuel, instead

And without the heart as pump  
The brain would gradually cease to function  
Like letters fading in a once flooded book  
Like genetic code with letters gone missing  
Like a computer losing electricity-  
Until it's current of soul has all leaked away.

(Heart electric field signature sixty times that of the brain)

Patti Masterman

# Brave Of Heart

Bombs and wars fall on deaf ears  
Humanity contains the sum of fears  
To own the world we think's our right  
As endless day turns into night  
Victory belongs to the brave  
And the cowardly go into graves

Be brave of heart, my battle weary soldier; a lull is sent to dry  
Your worried tears. Fair weather will arrive too and save the day;  
Even if all else fail, we are the hope of years gone by; who says  
The Underling may not excel? In times of woe the happy heart may sigh  
And chance to ask a boon of those above; inspiring this old earth  
To risk her courage and mount the freedom frenzy; take the lead:  
The horse rears up without a thought for safety. We are not the birth  
Of wisdoms rarest child, we are just the house of life that's tinkering  
With shreds of understanding. Our torch in darkness; give us holy art  
To bridge the gap, and save us lest neverending lessons do descend  
And it is way too late, to understand our ends. Our savior turns aside the  
Lost, and opens up worn hearts, even if salvaged hearts can't see  
Our vice can't hold the story's barest length, though oft enough  
We sing at hopes of peace; the fortress of the bold shall wrest the battle,  
And victory live beneath the brute hand of man; thus in each single skirmish  
Chance will favor he who stands his ground, and barely gives one inch  
Toward their goals: and the brave shall not be rounded up like cattle.

Patti Masterman

# Breath In A Cipher

Down here, we speak in actions  
Though our thoughts are loud  
Answers, we aren't given  
To make our spirits proud.

To think, we use deduction  
From tangent to the real,  
And what's lost in reduction  
We reveal, just to conceal.

Patti Masterman

# Breath Of Life

Are there ghostly feet still on the treadles  
Of old sewing machines, or ghostly hands  
Still setting down the Victrola's needle?

We come and go so completely from this life;  
One minute there are birthday presents and  
calendar notations, and the next all that's left  
are some things.

None of it remembers who we were  
or can tell a thing about us,  
save by the evidence we left imprinted on the objects  
or in the world.

And even that cloaked by a terrible anonymity,  
That can scarcely reveal even our sex, age, or habits-  
Even the bone itself becomes loam,

Which turns into sand, and there is no more  
testimony past death,  
so perhaps it is better that everything gets said now,  
while you still have the breath of life in you,  
to say it.

Patti Masterman

# Breath Of The Immortal

Seas twinkle and there is a trace  
Of diamonds in the sun's bright face  
Day comes again; there is no death  
Inside the garland of your breath.

In the temples praises sung  
From dawn to dusk, Padme Hung  
Gods and demons and their ilk  
All churn the sea of milk.

Patti Masterman

# Breathe Delicate Life

While you can still manage it,  
Breathe deeply of delicate life which  
Condenses years into memories;  
Life, an antique music box, where only the high points  
Haven't worn down to nubs yet.  
While our attention was elsewhere, changes came:  
Our bodies stolen by practical jokers;  
Our flesh made into hanging curtains  
Supported only by gaunt twisted curtain bone- rods;  
Rusty wire –sinewed claws rubbing our  
Haunted ghost- eyes rolling around unfocused,  
Looking backwards inside us instead of out.  
We walk tilted, cockeyed with the awkward weight  
Of the unbreathing, soon to arrive future non- existence:  
All our sentences prefaced now with "I was" and "I used to"  
Days we sit staring absently at nothing in particular;  
Waiting for the next train to arrive;  
Waiting for it to not come yet.  
Wondering if we will still know the language there.  
If we will be loved by any there, and even  
If it turns out that it is the black brick wall they  
Sometimes hint at, somehow it seems better  
Than the endless, chill whiteness of the featureless horizon.  
The old turn into bored children at the last,  
And those in turn into embryos perhaps,  
Just waiting. All of them waiting to be born.

Patti Masterman

# Breathing In Your Face

Breathing in your face, it's nearness always a distraction:  
And once you found out, that you had to go on existing  
And could not avoid becoming an Ego, an Identity;  
You were terror stricken, realizing you had somehow missed the lesson  
And now it is not that you have too many identities; it is that you have none  
And so you had to keep trying them on for size,  
Like a legless man always daydreaming,  
Staring through the prosthesis store window;  
But he has no stumps even, to attach the fake legs to  
Because he was born deformed, legless, lacking that which, from the start  
Everyone else seems to have been given almost as an afterthought.  
So that all his fantasies are mere masturbations, and in the end  
Only make him more ashamed.  
Time, the heartless fellow, just keeps running ahead of us  
Trying to better his time, with each round.

And you knew that you were doomed, to be a fake;  
Have always been a fake, and for some reason,  
You've never been able to understand why,  
It is something that provokes shame; but that's the only genuine emotion  
Now left to you; out of the apparent richness  
That is visible in the windows, and in the high-rises,  
The penthouse suites glittering high up, in their holy airs.  
A beggar, a pauper, in the midst of plenty;  
A deaf-mute in the realm of the emotions,  
Miserably stunted and shrunken inside  
Failure stamped; though still provocative enough  
To inspire a bit of derision, and occasional deprecating imitation-  
And you know that your kind will always be just another  
Too-soon tired of and discarded plaything  
In the ungentle hands of the world.

Patti Masterman

# Bright Angel Ever Beside Me

You came as my child, but stayed on as my friend  
Your soul has great depths I try to comprehend

Why did I deserve someone amazing as you are  
Your praise has given me wide wings for flying

I know the reason god must have sent you to me-  
Is that at life's end, I won't be scared of dying

Patti Masterman

# Bright As Eternity

Angels and demons war in the halls of the hospital  
Angels on guard against death and horror  
Demons hiding in every clock's hands

In syringes and filaments, scalpels and fingernails  
Demons bending around the doorways

But angels stand stately, steadfast beside beds  
Taller than hospitals, reaching farther than heaven

If you die not remembering who you were in this life,  
The demons can easily number you among the hordes

But one hand of an angel can save,  
Point the way up, out of the din  
To pass beyond living and dying, death and disease

Look for the eyes that cannot deceive  
Or a light as bright as all of eternity.

Patti Masterman

# Broken Music

I imagined adagio movements,  
Allegro molto sounds,  
A cappella ecstasies,  
Capricio refrains, to drown-  
The glissandi captivating,  
before minuets wind down.

But it seems my dreams too simple  
Once-pastoral parodies;  
Minor and major features  
Now only found in reverie-  
The signature left foundering:  
There can be no repeat..

Patti Masterman

# Broken Stones

There's broken stones  
in the beings granite;  
We've burst through time  
past imagined clocks

But the stony hours  
won't make one difference,  
When the soul of man  
begins to talk.

Patti Masterman

# Broken Symmetry

Waltz me across the universe  
Dance me through time-  
Ring the bells: I'm alive  
By accident or design.

The offspring of broken symmetry  
Or a miracle, sight unseen-  
Not the same world would it be  
If I had never been.

Waltz me across the universe  
Dance me through time-  
Once I lived in a star's eyes  
But now my own light shines.

Patti Masterman

# Broken Twigs

All the broken twigs of the chromosomes  
Lie uselessly in the cemetery now;  
Fallow ground of the a, c, t, g:  
Though once they could spell with emotion,  
Assemble in symmetry, exude gracefulness-  
Now they are mute, fingers over stilled lips-  
No whisper, no stirring, no thought.

Now alphabet soup; now toxic dumping ground  
Of chemicals mixing in an early ocean,  
Due for delivery, to entirely new worlds-  
With love, from the rocks of an ancient one.

Patti Masterman

# Buddha Dreamt

Buddha dreamt

A long night was in the waking:  
He rose early as humbled saints  
Counted beaded desires.

Centuries were passed  
As the quickening was taking:  
Then he gave his body  
To the quenching fire.

Patti Masterman

# Burial Before Dying

She was not leery of death  
They had told her the diagnosis  
The courses of treatment  
The percentages

She smiled and went on  
As if it were all just a regular day  
Had no mental breakdowns  
Was not found weeping at 3 a.m.  
When dark things tend to come out of hiding

The truth was she had died and buried herself  
Years before the wound showed up  
And had been waiting patiently all this time  
For the others to finally notice it

She just wanted to bury the body now  
And get on with things

Patti Masterman

# Burn Holy Fire

Burn holy fire, the age of words to incinerate;  
Your beads sear the flesh, with the tiniest seed-pearl scars.  
My heart's burning up, but there's seasons of pain abated  
Though faces of saints, are melted and slightly marred.

Burn holy fire, what prophet could quench your fury;  
Burn all the dross, till the ash is recalled by earth.  
Never to ask, what purpose to which we endured it;  
For dust to dust, is all we are told we're worth.

Patti Masterman

# Burn One Half Of All You Write

Slicky-slick lines and capitalization  
Won't win our adoration,  
And restating old facts, time after time-  
Just reading; we have lost a dime.

Tired themes, worn out cliches  
Will not brighten up the day;  
Burn one half of all you're writing-  
And maybe half of that, enlighten.

Patti Masterman

## Burnt Effigy

If we set the old Master's paintings ablaze  
Just for a minute; a few micro-seconds,  
The paint liquifies, sends up it's medicinal scent;  
Lazuline blue and lead white,  
Coloring the smoke lent to heaven,  
Pulling the soul from out the old vellums;  
Freeing the subjects from their long, indentured service.  
Smoking, it leaves a paint dotted canvas behind,  
Like a dot to dot, of some strangely familiar drawing,  
The edges curling inward, like a dying flower at dusk.

Patti Masterman

# Bury My Heart

Bury my heart deep in the rose  
Midst trailing leaves of hope,  
And thorns, do you suppose?  
Is there a rose comes without a pang?  
Still bravely blooms, though it die once again;  
Bares it's solitary heart only when it wanes.  
Looks dead through the winters gales,  
Beaten down by mid summers hails,  
But still comes back to tell the tales:  
Yellow for friendship, fast and true,  
Pink to admire or say, I thank you.  
Red for love and desire, to woo.  
Peach is for modesty, yellow for friends  
Lilac is loves first sight to append.  
White is the flower of light that you send  
To the bride, to the humble,  
The pure heart you would mend.

Patti Masterman

## But If Love Die

Your heart my metronome, endlessly beating,  
Your name my memory of song, repeating;  
Drumming the bones of body, entreating,  
Playing my soul, the melody so fleeting.

Light from another day went missing far away;  
We bound up the remnants, never to let betray,  
Lest the dead words, which we knew we must never say  
Killed hope of remedy, for which we dared not pray.

Our eyes closed themselves against mad truth so dire;  
Limbs raised up only to climb our own funeral pyre;  
All our holy books the ashes of fatal liars:  
Nothing left now but the last putrifying fire.

Patti Masterman

## But The Trust?

Strange how the people who always are moaning  
That you hurt their feelings, are the ones who hurt you the worst  
Over and over, while the memories and bad feelings pile up.  
And you hope you forgive, and you try to forget, in time..  
But the trust; that goes away, and nothing can bring it back again.

Nov.22 2010

Patti Masterman

## But Where Is The Purr?

Your shirt is curled up in the farthest corner:  
A steel gray cloth house cat, napping furtively  
Head tucked down towards legs, a perfect feline arc  
Head tilted up, at a heavenward angle  
Soft knitted fur; with a dogged shirt collar ear  
Tip bent down, and a single button eye  
A buttonhole impersonating the other squeezed-shut eye:  
Too lazy to move an inch, just like a real cat-  
No energy left over, for fear of intrepid dogs  
Except for the single plastic eye that's keeping watch  
Only this shirt cat awaits the washing machine  
Then to be plucked from it's impromptu nest  
Of belated laundry: the only missing piece  
Was the purr.

Patti Masterman

# Butterfly Effect

With weary frankness I lean into  
Evenings diffident shadows,  
Wavering hues, grays and blues  
Peering between the cloistered stars:  
Endless dream I forgot how to navigate  
Encompassing moments built by tidal movements  
And sudden divisions between orbital shells  
Inertial havoc starts the blood rushing  
The world's a quagmire of uninhabited space  
With lonely islands of pulsating matter  
Suns unnumbered, rippling the waves collapse  
Take all my heartbeats too, that as I languish,  
The resonance might start another avalanche  
The fiery, seeding vacuum of dawns early light,  
That old magician's hat trick.  
But be merciful to me, centrifugal womb of time;  
Both the product and the witness  
The sum of the totality only here, only this, only now-  
This forever world, always just on the brink  
Of breaking into a hundred thousand new worlds,  
From insignificance multiplied  
Far beyond any meaningful purpose:  
For nobody controls even one solitary particle down here.

Patti Masterman

# Butterfly Fly Free

Butterfly in a cage,  
Bruising your wings on the bars:  
Butterfly, just stand back  
Until you can see how far

How thin the distance,  
Between you and there;  
The freedom you seek,  
Past the barred air

Then fold your wings together  
As though never to fly  
And squeeze yourself between the rails  
And waft away, on a sigh.

Patti Masterman

# Buy A Jonquil

Buy a jonquil with four daffodils,  
Buy a rose with some honeysuckle,  
Buy one tree; or two or three-  
For the same amount of trouble

Get the good deal, but don't worry  
If their beauty doesn't last;  
The poor old earth will be all bare  
By the time our time is past.

Patti Masterman

# Buy Me A World

Buy me a world, brave Mother dear,  
With mountains and valleys and seas:  
It will take all you have now, there and here;  
Only a universe comes free.

Find me a true love, Father dear,  
One who will never stray;  
It will take all your hours, never fear,  
Till the end of the last man's day.

Give me a mind unwavering, God;  
One which will always be wise-  
Made from the sky and the lowly clod,  
And the reckless wind's own sigh.

Patti Masterman

## By And By

Many summers have left their mark,  
In scents of cedar and pine bark.  
And storms of dust have found their way,  
Through small window screens, to stay.

And in dark centers of every eye,  
Are lines to catch untruths; the lie.  
Fishing for truth's our stated plot,  
But disassembling's what we caught.

The world's so final, and so sincere;  
It's full of laughter and unshed tears,  
All black and white, with stern divides-  
And so we hide the rest inside.

The facts are changing, every minute;  
There's nothing said, but some truth in it:  
We'll mark the weather, by and by-  
But watch the truth go whistling by.

Patti Masterman

# By The Wall, By The Tree

By the wall, by the tree,  
A frail flower grew:  
It reached it's small buds  
Toward the sun, for it knew  
The sun was it's father,  
And earth was it's mother;  
For everything born here  
Must come out of two.

By the spring, by the creek,  
A tall tree stood strong:  
It held up it's arms toward the sky,  
Like a song;  
No weather could dampen  
It's green growing heart;  
It never felt fear,  
For it knew life is long.

By the flower, by the tree,  
A young child rose up:  
He climbed with his face to the sky,  
Like a cup;  
He drank from the sun and the earth  
And the spring;  
For when he grew older  
His heart too, must sing.

Patti Masterman

# By This Birthday You Are Blessed

May the memories not vanish,  
Of this day which will pass  
And beloved voices remain,  
Though the hours not last

For dancing with angels,  
Whose eyes crowned you prince;  
And a thousand nights stars  
In the far light, have rent

With twinkles, to remind you,  
To rest your eyes where  
Other eyes will be watching  
One life, very dear.

Eternity's gate can wait for an hour,  
Ennobled of God, from the dust once raised up  
By his breath, turmoil ceasing;  
You shall know you are blessed.

Patti Masterman

# Caged Birds

Caged birds, they sing all day  
Of unloved things; while the hours away.  
Caged birds just peck at food,  
Scarcely a bite; they sit and brood.  
Imprisoned by love; don't speak aloud,  
Of the freedom they're not allowed.  
Caged birds see it all and sigh:  
For all their wings, caged souls can't fly.

Patti Masterman

# Cake Shop

I am folding myself into you,  
Like bits of stolen fruit, into the batter,  
A redolent, unanticipated pocket of cinnamon  
Spicing the bread dough;  
Sodden with buttery dreams.  
Your nose twitches in anticipation  
Your hands start to open and close,  
Wishing to grasp it-  
If you taste but one tiny spoonful  
It will instantly be on your clothing  
And your hands and your face,  
Drizzling down to pool itself at your shoes;  
Dripping, advertising itself there:  
And the bell ringing then and everyone shouting  
"Look! Look! " he has been having a taste!  
Then you will have to run away  
Or they will think you have eaten  
The whole thing.  
They will want you to pay for it, then.  
And when you have run away  
Then I will open my cake shop, all alone-  
On Wednesdays, free samples had by all.  
But for you the price must always remain  
More than you are willing.

Patti Masterman

# Call The Exorcist

Things are falling down in empty rooms  
And I keep hearing movement, like  
Clothing rubbing against itself

Damn it, I know she's died  
In the nursing home, a couple miles away  
And I told her  
We were never going to be friends

I did it in every way I could  
Except with words since  
She never had any respect for me  
She's got even less, now she's dead:

She needs to quit breathing down my neck  
Casting her shadow all over everything  
She was a ruinous leprechaun of the living  
I think I need the Exorcist.

Is it really true the dead can hear your thoughts?

Patti Masterman

# Can I Pass On The Great Circle Of Life This Time

I much prefer daylight now days  
The night stalkers and chirping crickets  
Give me indigestion, not to mention mosquitoes  
I don't want to become anybody's five course meal  
All my natural hauntings, spring to life and imagination  
Ashes in black boxes are reassembled into full sized skeletons  
The shadows and dark corners perplex and unnerve me  
A pile of blankets on the sofa  
Metamorphoses into some strange deformed creature  
Almost breathing, waiting to seize me when my attention lapses  
The primordial people understood all this  
They knew that in the hours of darkness lived all their worst nightmares  
The silent lion, watching intently for the fire to wane  
The rearing cobra, knowing the one asleep will be his next hapless victim  
The nature of life is to imbibe the helpless infant, the old, and the careless  
Spit out the inedible pieces afterwards; and the other creatures  
Recycle every last crumb so there is no waste  
Don't want to become a piece of faded cloth  
And a hank of hair caught on a bush.

Patti Masterman

# Can You Hold On?

Can you hold on tight to your belief  
When the doctor can't meet your eyes?  
When others leave for early prayers,  
Do you wonder if it's a lie?

Does pure faith keep your spine upright  
And never leave you falling?  
Do you faint for truth and peace,  
While others only crawling?

It's alright to say that you don't know  
The purpose of why we're here,  
Or to try to find real medicine  
Instead of swallowing fear.

Patti Masterman

# Candy Store

I know I could go on like this for eons  
Just following my minds latest fantasy  
The brain erecting more dramas  
More sets and backdrops  
Chasing my own consciousness  
Wherever it might wander: it's never boring  
But what interests me more  
Is not whether or not  
God had a choice in all of this  
But if you would go on existing  
Once lifted up beyond the sphere  
Of my busy imagination's  
Inflaming your atoms into presence,  
Breathing life into your beings apparition  
Inside my enclosed world  
Merely by aim and constancy of my thoughts-  
What good is it, attaining every last petty desire  
Without another free spirit  
To exult with, in the universal continuum?

Patti Masterman

# Canned Laughter Never Ending

Some days the canned laughter gets to be a bit much;  
Is there any authentic laughter left, in this post modern Rome?  
Even the real sounds artificial now-  
Perhaps we've stayed at gladiator games too long?

The sun's already burnt us, we're tired and thirsty,  
While the entertainments keep playing on and on,  
Growing ever thinner, transparent and predictable,  
With each dreary season, the same debacle song.

At night we dream, that we're the newest slaughter,  
They're readying to come for; that banging on the door:  
No longer far away, swords drawn and at the ready,  
There's four horsemen coming soon; the apocalyptic four.

It doesn't matter if you've never had religion,  
For famine and scourge don't belong to one creed-  
But we're still too busy now, gorging ourselves  
On endless dreams of supremacy and need.

Patti Masterman

# Canopic Jar

Fine ceramics now hide your gaze;  
Where is the face that I knew so well,  
When as children, our spirits dwelled together?

Misty lines can blur the past;  
Once you were here, but you're gone forever-  
Gone where else, but in this vase?

You left too soon, but in my dreams  
I keep searching all around;  
I search every slab of unhallowed ground.

Is this all that's to be left of you-  
For jolly time makes jokers of us all;  
Nothing here lasts, not even poor clay.

Patti Masterman

# Captive

imagination gores the placid woman's sleeping  
the rosebud curtains devoured, by her hideous dreams  
an endless despair, under cover of cold darkness-  
in the grey forever, god heard all her screams.

in the grave, the bones to dust are tending  
elusive ash too feral, for clinging rosebush roots  
one wonders if the cries will only have their ending  
in some other world, where pain must remain mute.

life castles and the crowns fall only to the victors  
and destiny guides, though the chained silence crawl  
in malfeasance, dungeons spring like ghosts condemning  
broken moonlight- that has held the heart in thrall.

Patti Masterman

# Captive Secret

Even a dead man could love you  
if you played your cards right,  
she told me once.

Although never would he speak of it,  
staring at the moon all night  
(like something sullied, unwelcome in the light)

You could not go dancing,  
hold hands at the midnight movie,  
have late dinners afterwards,  
where the city still held light.  
Would you doubt his fidelity?  
You could ration your love like war stamps;  
he would still be there waiting,  
and even if you outgrew him,  
it wouldn't really matter  
while his skin slowly darkened,  
like an old leather saddle.

His relatives wouldn't call you,  
to blame you for his sadness.  
And he would hold your secrets closer  
yet, than his own stilled heart.

Patti Masterman

# Careless Stew

Take one mind, and fill it up;  
Mix it well, and stir the pot  
Just be careless, of what you use:  
Who said we're supposed to choose?

Add some spite, about a cup;  
And some hate, whatever you've got,  
And don't forget, to pay those dues-  
Then add some heat, to light the fuse.

When it's done, then serve it up,  
Though whoever eats it might get rot;  
Happens a lot, but it's not news  
When you partake of careless stew.

Patti Masterman

# Carnival Of The Migraine

The colored carousel is coming for me again  
The roller coaster zigzags across my vision  
My head thumps with it's own band inside  
Pounding away on one side, wearing it down to bone  
Colorful streamers follow it, but I can't focus on them  
The image shifts with each movement of the eyeballs.

Why do they always have to bang on the same spot?  
I knock some holes in the wall with my head  
The freakshow's fat lady is on the other side, taking a bow  
But it feels just like looking into a mirror.  
In order to feel some control over the pain I'm privy to,  
I tighten the vise on my temple a few turns

Then I bang my neck with a tire iron  
Just for equal opportunity agony.  
The dwarf man stares at that, as if I am the highlight of the show.  
I start to do a little tap dance, but my head blasts off on it's own,  
As if out of a cannon, rocketing above the arena  
Slowly turning in it's bug-eyed orbit.  
I remember just in time to tighten the noose and step off the chair,  
To the excited howls of delight, from the crowd-  
But the support gives, every time; it's all part of the act.

Why do I always have to work so hard performing  
To achieve what my body does without thinking?  
The clowns are pointing at me and laughing now,  
And the children want to know, what is it all for?  
But now blood is in my eyes, and the striking of the clock  
Makes my vision shake, so I lay down in the cool doom of twilight  
And wait for the loud music to slowly dissipate.

Patti Masterman

# Catechism

You are my Saint  
of the hungry Heart;  
thirsting Icon of  
prayers and supplication-  
to You do I dedicate  
this well-tested heart,  
beseeching you in your  
loving kindness,  
not to forget  
that it once belonged  
to a child and that it is  
all shot thru with faults:  
the seven deadly sins and  
there be holes and worn spots  
plenty in this gift  
Which is wholly and freely  
given, gushing Blood  
and rain of torrential tears,  
all in your Name,  
oh wondrous One-  
The love inside remains  
Immaculate.

Patti Masterman

# Causality

I sketch your face and abode into memory,  
A projector shoots your shadow on the wall;  
The world's details are toys for amusement,  
And death into life's presumption falls.

Symbolic meanings tease and pester,  
While synchronicity's go unexplained;  
As long as you're determined life have meaning,  
There'll be no order to your days.

Patti Masterman

# Caveat Emptor

You can't buy love-  
But you can buy hours  
Of endless fawning  
And fake solicitude.

You can't purchase caring,  
But you can obtain a similitude  
Of benign, though rather abstract concern

And all the careless caresses  
Of many syrupy, empty words.

Patti Masterman

# Celebrity Death

In dead celebrities,  
you could almost see death hanging  
there in their eyes,  
suspended like a waiting  
birthday surprise

I see it shrouded now  
in photos,  
films that once stared  
straight through me:  
how they missed the beat of their death  
by seconds;  
but I see it, retroactively.

Marilyn's livid white  
of death mysterious  
stricken down in her prime  
so that there was no time;  
no time for makeup,  
or mine of expressions  
to take hard edges off  
foreshadowed signs.

Subcutaneous death,  
awaiting eyelid's curtains  
to flutter open  
one last time-  
whirring cameras  
they won't hear again-

Get as close as you want to now,  
you know the flash won't bother them.

Patti Masterman

# Chac Mool

The cenote is a standing blackness, at the end of a path  
Reflecting stars amongst entwined greenery  
Where the female sacrifices once were assembled  
And pitched in, to talk to the gods for the people  
To secure favors and assure prosperity.  
Years later, men came to dig out the gold and trinkets  
The still fragrant incense, and even the skeletons.

Inside the pyramid, a smaller pyramid waits:  
Shelters jaguar altar of dark burnished blood  
Stones silent now of their human cries  
Time gives things rare value  
Which were once tools of culture  
And archaic ceremonial rites  
Are accidentally honored by the intrepid tourist.

High on the platform, reclines Chac Mool  
Knees by his chest, offering plate held steady  
To accept the cooling hearts  
Of the preferred victims  
His impassive face looks patient  
With fierce hunger, he has been waiting for centuries  
He knows there will always be more.

Patti Masterman

# Chain Letter

This chain letter knows your address  
This chain letter knows how many friends you have  
If you do not immediately forward this letter  
To all 128 of your friends, something bad may happen  
In fact, something bad is guaranteed to happen

This chain letter has weapons and viruses  
This chain letter will cough right in your face  
This chain letter will dance on your grave  
The cemetery is full of tombstones that say  
'Got a chain letter and ignored it'  
This chain letter has incendiary devices

This chain letter is pure overkill  
There are so many ways this chain letter could take you out  
It would have trouble just making up its mind  
Better get busy; go buy some stamps now  
Get to work making some copies of this letter

This chain letter has pipe bombs  
This chain letter has chemical weapons  
This chain letter is aerosolized hate  
This chain letter would kidnap your first-born  
Make the Lindbergh baby look like a walk on a sunny beach

This chain letter knows all your secrets  
The names of all your old lovers  
And how you screwed your best friend's fiancé  
And sent him a secret postcard on his honeymoon  
This chain letter could name names

This chain letter knows how petty you are  
This chain letter knows you always take the biggest cut  
This chain letter knows you cashed in those CD's  
This chain letter knows where you hid the gourmet chocolates  
And that you drink alone

This chain letter knows about those hang up calls you made  
We know you faked all those orgasms

And we know about those abortions  
And the child that you've never even seen  
And those DUI's; and the bribe money

You haven't been to confession in ages  
And your mother died alone, not having seen you in 2 years  
And you put her in that nursing home  
The one that she always told you she hated-  
And you felt no compunction at all, did you?  
Just send the letters.  
Do it now.

Patti Masterman

# Chain The Secret

Chain the secret gate  
Greenest passage to the flowering kiss  
Fielding blue dew drops upon bade wood

Be mine where eyes don't lie  
Till one is ever and all  
The bright dare of a song

Pearl hidden where death won't gaze  
By such verse was lost and collected anew  
Sun singing it's summer love song forever

Patti Masterman

# Change Waits For The Dawn

Change waits for the dawn  
Like a revocable feeling.

Clouds turn gestures into shadow  
Like a phantom ceiling.

Waves tear open ocean's belly  
So Moon can see inside.

When walls burn, it's freedom smoking:  
It lives where walls can't hide.

Moments of laughter; a star is missing-  
You can find it in someone's eyes.

Skies shed water just like weeping  
Wherever a rainbow sighs.

Patti Masterman

# Changeling Of Ceaseless Motion

I try to find the code of being that's hidden in the clouds,  
Not obvious, not concealed but still in plain sight,  
Of sun that is distant, in the invasive universe,  
Slivered writing, floating cumulus  
Cursive inclining, while shadows lengthening.

The planes have the keys,  
The planes flying anywhere;  
There is a droning noise they make:  
Listen with your bones, and feel the air's quivering,  
The planes wearing moist air like transparent jewels,  
The clouds wearing planes like shining trinkets.

The pulsing day unravels like a scroll,  
Heavy as damp parchment from unrolling clouds,  
Heaving letters scorching suns in soul,  
Their lightest touch burning me  
I hold up burned fingers; festering desires.

You are the revelation of raw yearning,  
You the revulsion's abrupt turning,  
The vaults of heaven, beneath a changing sky,  
The letters and numbers racing by,  
The breeze chanting low like fleeting cymbals-  
In throes I strain to catch the syllables leaving-

But the words are stretched to infinite overload,  
Breaking somewhere at last unknown,  
Faltering like a broken thread of species,  
The pages fluttering by in pieces;  
There is a mirror that unclothes the day,  
While the white clouds wither away.

You are the changeling of ceaseless motion,  
Like waves behind the primordial ocean.

Patti Masterman

# Charmed Life

We select books by their titles,  
Almost as if we were going  
To have to eat them, later on;  
I don't think I'd like Subway Armageddon;  
Explosions always hurt my teeth,  
And the seasoning is too metallic.

We select dates  
As if we were going to have to marry them,  
On down the line; too fat, too nerdy;  
Too many apron strings on that one;  
I don't need any more high maintenance romance-  
Always interested in what's in it for us.

But we still live in the land of memories,  
Where memories live in our blood like a lotus.  
The lotus never says, too muddy, too icky;  
Or, the view doesn't compensate for the fact  
That I'm to be stuck here, in this one place, forever;  
Because growing is more of a biology thing, than anything else.

If we were quarks instead of subway riders,  
We would all want to be Charmed;  
None of us would want to consider ourselves Strange,  
And we would hope Up or Down wasn't a one-way ticket.  
On the unpredictable subway-ride of life, first impressions are everything;  
We will accept nothing less than perceived perfection.

Patti Masterman

# Charms Against The Darkness

Charms against the darkness;  
Spells to wake the dead-  
Never think the magic solely  
Lives alone in words you said.

Raw emotion is the power;  
The lightning bolt of will-  
As the matchhead to the fire  
Is the truth of what you feel.

In this world no thing lies fallow;  
The law is plain to see-  
What I do not make good use of  
In the end, makes use of me.

The breathing one moves mountains;  
Walks on water, and eats swords-  
In the hidden world of spirit  
We are princes, kings, and lords.

Only living men may plan and  
Move and change the world around-  
By magic, or by mundane means  
What's bound here, there is bound.

Patti Masterman

# Chasing Soul

A snake crept beneath Cleopatra's bed,  
And kissed the spot she laid her head,  
Though he couldn't clasp her side, to him:  
He was not warm-blooded man-

But at night, she dreamed of holes  
Where a serpent chased a soul.

Patti Masterman

# Chaste Knight

If courting woman's soul  
Were but your single quest  
Then, I would be quite bold  
In thwarting your request

If my Knight-shy be night-cold  
Our eyes would never meet  
Or, finding him, cuckold  
Would my brave heart, unseat

My love has taken flight though  
At your most careless art:  
Chaste be the very Knight  
Who's conquered this wild soul.

Patti Masterman

# Chiara Luce Badano, The 18 Year Old Saint

She will always stay young now,  
A young woman forever,  
One with a mind so  
Curiously wise.

She had to leave earth  
And go straight into heaven,  
Just to look down the whole world  
With a smile.

She left no sorrows  
Behind her, to trouble  
The loved ones she cared for,  
In her bright soul.

Reminded her mother,  
Before she was passing,  
Remember, when you dress me:  
It's Jesus, I hold.

Patti Masterman

# Child Of Light

Each separate life, it's symphony,  
Each mortal coil, it's tale;  
Unknown to known discovery,  
Life into flesh, we fell.

Infinite to individual,  
Unlimited to finite,  
Unfathomed, to diminishing:  
Child of inimitable Light.

Patti Masterman

# Childhood's Christmas

Christmas opened childhood  
Like heroes opened games,  
And gifts were just the standard  
For those with your same name.

Christmas ringed our childhood  
Like hoodlums ring a fight,  
And no one could believe it-  
That Santa was a lie.

Christmas ended childhood,  
That day we knew the truth:  
We damned our own eye's knowledge  
Of wisdom's sorry proofs.

Patti Masterman

## Childhoods Friend

In the sidewalk's where our shadows stayed  
While we grew up to live another day,  
With borrowed lives we would not think to pick-  
As though another chose them, while we played.

You had your husbands, and I had a job,  
And we chased our farthest dreams because-  
Because, is a very long time to live indeed,  
While the dreams of childhood turned to shade.

Whose dreams we followed, if they were not ours?  
Whose days turned fallow, as though they owned us first-  
You followed yours, into a granite tomb  
And wait for me- a shadow gone too soon.

Patti Masterman

# Childish Spells Of Imagination

Life is just a series of vignettes  
We perceive as flowing time:  
Wings brushing my cheek.  
A shiver of coming storm.  
A secret on anothers lips.  
Crowning of the babies head.  
The sliding filmstrip movieshow  
Was a toy designed to project  
Cartoon stills upon a wall  
It excited my childish imagination.  
It seemed a cruel trick  
Everyone seemed to have one but me?  
Since, you could stop time with it-  
And hold the image frozen there-  
Till the lightbulb burned out,  
Or you were found late out of bed.

Patti Masterman

# Chinese Ink

My heart is filled with Chinese ink,  
And shines with interior gloss;  
Superior fissioning, for two.

No there's no doubt, this heart's for you-  
Guilt-wrapped, be-ribboned and love-stamped too;  
My heart is plumbed in Chinese ink-  
And that, I think, will do.

Patti Masterman

# Choose Your Words Like Flowers

Choose your words like flowers  
Found on a woodland walk;  
Use pastels just for color  
In the fields, of talk.

Their petals, soft and gentle  
Their hearts, so bright and wide;  
Still holding all their fragrance,  
Most delicate, inside.

Choose your words like flowers  
Picked on some sunny day,  
And you'll never lack for friends,  
Whatever weathers say.

Patti Masterman

# Christmas Came Early One Spring

When I was very small  
A load of plywood and two by fours  
Showed up in our back yard.  
I was told it was for a play house  
It began to dawn on me there was only one person  
Who was the right size for a play sized house:  
How could it be- surely they would soon notice  
How utterly spoiled I was; realize their error,  
Take the wood back, and give up the plan.  
But my secret was safe with me.

Speedily the little house grew from a few studs  
Until there was no doubt about it  
With a ground plan equal to one sheet of plywood  
It was sized just right for me, the resident munchkin  
There was a little sink, with removable plastic camp tub  
So I could have a dish sink or a laundry wash  
Whatever imagination called for that day,  
And little shelves for dishes.  
Another shelf for whatnots, and they said  
I could move in my doll furniture, table and chairs  
Soon as they got the linoleum put down.

For people who survived the depression  
The idea of building a small house just for play  
Would seem to have been an alien concept  
I think they decided I should have everything  
Simply because they had had nothing  
I reaped the benefit of their lack  
Not because I was wonderful or especially deserving  
It was because they were endlessly self sacrificing  
I could have lived on that love alone, the rest of my life.

But what a first day, to sit alone in my own little space  
With that overwhelming smell of fresh cut wood  
Each time I opened that little door my imagination was stoked:

The play house became a home for dolls;  
A pint sized library, to read and write poems and stories

A little white schoolhouse for pretend class  
A hide out from the world to stay off other people's nerves  
A clubhouse for displaced teenagers  
An intelligence base for spies making up secret codes  
To this day, the smell of new wood is an aphrodisiac:  
A burning balsam pyre to extract my creative juices.

Patti Masterman

# Christmas Eve Lullaby

Slumber easy, slumber light:  
Snow falls upon a winter's night.  
The winter days, they are so fleet;  
Too soon, the snowflakes change to sleet.  
Snuggle warm in your soft bed,  
While you try to find the thread  
Of childhood dreams you used to sing  
Expecting morning light to bring  
All your secret joy and longing-  
Around the tree, was such belonging.  
Now the treasure of Christmas morn  
Is deep inside you being born;  
You, the stable; you, the cave-  
Torchbearer of the love that gave  
Meaning to our earthly living;  
Gift divine that we're now giving.  
So make sure then that all you're meeting  
See joy of Christ shine through your greeting;  
And all other days that you get to spend  
Don't forget to put a little Christmas in.

Patti Masterman

# Chrysalis

And so all of her words began to go inside again,  
A few at a time; slow flowing, as a half frozen stream moves  
Only because it has become partially thawed,  
And all the things which had happened began to reverse;  
She felt a gradual implosion starting inside, like a reversal of energy  
Almost as if her heart had opened up and was attempting  
To swallow the outer being; to carry it away to safety,  
To where no men are, or had ever been, or could ever go;  
And also where no men could understand, where it was that she might be going.

Almost as though she were making a discovery none had made before,  
As if the brain were suddenly relying on some inner resource  
Never before suspected; without knowledge it could be there inside.  
And she came awake slowly, within the solitude of herself  
And opened her eyes after a time, in the blank darkness:  
The whole world became quiet then, seeming to hold it's breath,  
As if watching something rare about to unfold  
And she began to disappear entirely, from inside herself first  
Like a snake that had eaten its own tail, forming a careless circle  
Swallowing itself whole, if you will, till all that was left outside  
Was the head; and with a slight twist; it too disappeared,  
All of it gone into a beauty that was not visible, not comprehensible.

Anyone else who has never seen their own mirrored insides,  
Would have great difficulty in visualizing  
The serpentine self, crisscrossing through the psyches chambers  
Like an impossible tapestry that is self woven, with only the most sacred  
Of treasured and secret threads, of the inner recesses of a person;  
Through minute hooks and needles, with never a sound made.

And afterwards, in the new form, she never looked back again,  
In many ways not the same being as before, though unaware  
In the exact way a child is unaware, that he is changing in subtle ways,  
Day by day. In time, even her name went forgotten, as though written  
In a book of things never recorded; or whose key got thrown away  
During a sad stay somewhere, that went on too long,  
And too many precious, fragile things had been broken,  
Just by the mere act of breathing, and of inhabiting the solitude of a body.

And all her loneliness had become just a signpost, on a different road  
Left behind, only that others might see and follow;  
For that she had now become her own courseway,  
Her own least resistance, her own permanence  
And her own abiding presence, in this happenstance of a world.  
She forgivingly meted out her flesh and bones, to the restless world outside  
An appealing sliver at a time, and they didn't hesitate to imbibe;  
As she had hidden herself in the midst of their words,  
The ones which dwelt in the less traveled, fractured places, deep under earth.

And if you looked carefully, at the disappearing edge of daybreak  
Or the trailing mists of nightfall's chill, or in the rainstorm's unpredictable slant,  
Or the blizzard's close mirages; and at the side of a half-rainbow's towering  
bands  
You might catch a glimpse of her cape, woven only of the mutable winds,  
And her eyes which were of an alien crystal, and changed color  
With each season and weather; and therein was a gaze,  
Contained everything ever present in this universe  
From the first conception of time, and nothing at all which was identifiable,  
Definable, measurable, or containable; all the qualities which had always  
Made her worry for her sanity; and wonder whether she would lose her reason.

And it all left behind a faint aroma, like otherworldly strains of music,  
Which must be absorbed through senses other than the ones  
Commonly used down here; or like otherworldly beauty might feel  
If you could press it against your skin, or as though  
You might take a snapshot of a definite feeling.  
And occasionally, she would take someone back there with her,  
To that other dimension; not because she was ever lonely anymore,  
But only because they had asked, to join her in her travels

To the some other place, that is found nowhere outside  
And the something that is never known by senses,  
At the edge of the beckoning forever, where dreams can finally flourish  
To touch there the downy face of possibility, and come forward bravely  
Into the future, which is more than just a fantasy  
Always about to vanish, just before dawn's awakening:  
And she never said no, not even once, to a single one who asked,  
And they said that she seemed intrigued,  
With the gossamer glow, of her bright wings.

(written to Ludovico Einaudi - Divenire)

Patti Masterman

## Cinderella Limericks

Cinderella was a good girl who went with the flow;  
When the clock struck twelve, she knew she must go,  
As she followed the good godmothers advice  
And she never even had to think twice:  
'Don't stay out after midnight, or you'll turn to a Ho.'

Cinderella got kissed by the prince;  
There was magic involved, before the kiss:  
A pumpkin became a coach  
And a cigarette, a roach  
And then this whiskey turned into piss.

Patti Masterman

# Cinderella, In An Alternate Universe

Cinderella got lost  
somewhere in between  
the countryside and palace  
that she'd never seen.

Walking through mud,  
face streaked with tears  
still clearly so beautiful,  
the slippers were clear.

But soon she got covered  
in the worst kinds of things  
and she didn't understand  
what marriage would mean.

She had no conception  
of being the queen,  
so she met a young beggar  
and settled, for him.

They lived in a hovel  
right outside town;  
she'd watch the processions  
of royals going down.

She often wondered  
how it might feel  
to sit on a throne  
(it gave her a thrill!) .

As she tended the fire  
and sat in the cinders  
she would dream of a life  
with riches unending.

The end.

Patti Masterman

# Circuit Disconnected

You say, we need to think of some things  
That went forgotten, during our days together.

You say, we need to pay more attention  
To the greater world, ignored for so long.

You say, it might be better  
Not to have this exclusive relationship  
Here between us, since it blinds us  
To the importance of everything else going on.

My brain hears all your words  
And is busy placing them in compartments;  
But my body hears only with it's heart-  
And now these hands are shaking.

Patti Masterman

# Circular Tune

A circular tune is orbiting  
Around my heart  
A dormant loon is doubting  
His rusty flying art

A burning moon is keeping  
Earth on universal time  
The edge of doom at high noon  
Writes a sizzling rhyme

Blazing stars at death fall  
Are spooling for a race  
Meet at Mars to challenge  
The moon's blind face

Milky way's womb all time-spent  
Left a lighted room for mind  
We swim emotion's ocean  
In a school of our own kind.

Patti Masterman

# Civilizations Carry No Guilt

Civilizations carry no guilt of that pointed  
Oblivious memory, a hairs-breadth of devastation  
Spreading inside the beam of sun's impermanence  
My cellular epiphany, of distinctly visible creed:

Yearning inside love's captivation of my privy soul  
Heart's storied dwelling chest, to contain but calculated breath of possibility  
Blown forth to fire your altars self-consummating flames  
And countenance the credulous history of rumored emancipations.

Patti Masterman

# Clear Skies

His clear eyes might have spoke Gaelic,  
But were skilled, in the language of one,  
As he held the bobbing world on a string-  
Just inches, from the spectre of sun.

There was a crash like my heart falling,  
Though soundless, like a foot through ice;  
The sky swallowed all, left a few staring stars-  
Cloistered, like nuns viewing vice.

Was centuries ago, or some minutes;  
But I've not got the presence of mind,  
After meeting my demise, in a clear pair of eyes,  
I keep thinking it's clear skies, I'll find.

Patti Masterman

# Cleft

Between smoke and fog,  
Lies a wake of flickering candles;  
Between night and day,  
Lies a pool of unplumbed depths;  
Between right and wrong,  
A sea of supposed differences;  
Between you and me,  
Lies all distance:  
We are cleft.

Patti Masterman

# Clever

I cleverly crafted you into a hangman's noose,  
And then I went and hung myself-  
It's not your fault that I'm so clever;  
Industrious even, at ruining my life  
Because you were only doing what comes naturally  
And nobody told me to pay attention,  
Get my heart all trampled and sore  
By someone who outclasses me,  
By the mere act of taking in oxygen.  
But humiliation is a tough chew  
And revulsion is a heady scent:  
I have hopes of survival now,  
Though it will never be pretty again;  
This still being alive-  
When once I had hopes that  
Finding myself beneath your notice,  
I might just go ahead and die.

Patti Masterman

# Close My Eyes - Ghazal

Please, ancient universe, just let me close my eyes  
Sleep lingering in empty wineglass, close my eyes

Children of the street, singing in syllabled rhymes  
Imagine they're horses eating grass, close my eyes

Affairs of men, hurry along the laggart world  
Their lives are smoking censors of brass: close my eyes

Words getting spoken, from where do they arrive?  
Strange tales spring up and come to pass, so close my eyes

Flowers wed the sun, moon weds reluctant virgins  
Things unspoken then they break like glass, close my eyes

I once gave you a present, now it's gone away  
We make much of things that never last, close my eyes

Touch me, and a thousand ghosts are reawakened  
They live in this moment, and the past, close my eyes

Give me watered tears, once the wineglass has broken  
This woman will turn into ash. Then close my eyes

Patti Masterman

# Clusterflock

Beaks break open eggs  
In an alternate universe  
Where I am one of many selves  
And eggs grow stale on shelves  
Because no one eats birds  
And will not believe that bird eggs  
Laid by birds, do not contain birds.

In an alternate universe  
I break open and all my secrets  
Fall out on the ground, and roll around  
And others gather around to pick them up  
And they find them all mixed in  
With my many ideas.

People have many ideas  
In my alternate worlds  
And I am eventually consumed  
Just for the ideas I contain,  
Which are considered to be  
Of immense and practical value.

Especially the idea  
That there could exist alternate universes.

And when the people who ate me  
Open up their mouths to talk again,  
There is instead the sound of clucking-  
Which is quite shocking, in its way.

Patti Masterman

# Coal Black, Were Death's Horses

Coal black, were death's horses,  
Pulling the hulking black cavern of death;  
Windows glinted, concealing their contents-  
Too frightened, unable to even draw breath.

The carriage stalked me in dread nightly visions;  
Dreams of the nightmare I could not escape;  
Surrounded all sides by a thick, clutching fog,  
While caught up in that surreal landscape.

How could a mere child summon up such a hearse-  
So perfect in every last detail it wore;  
And chasing me nightly, cross chasms of horror,  
Was the torment I silently, frightfully bore.

The serious fear that my heart might give out;  
So violently pounding, each time I awoke,  
That I taught myself to repeat my own name,  
Until with normalcy, that nightmare I'd cloak

Again and again I repeated my formula;  
The dream would retreat, to the edges of mind;  
Was the only escape to be had, from the nightmare;  
No reason for coming to me, I could find.

It still returned, odd occasions, to test me;  
But I never forgot my victorious stand,  
And I knew that the rest of my life was no worry;  
I'd learned how to conquer my own hidden lands.

Patti Masterman

## Coarse Brutes

Coarse brutes want no rhymes to steady their rude;  
Romance, finesse, they can't handle  
Give it to them straight up and hard, so they won't mistake  
Just what you're nailing them with.

There's so much they can't stand, and no beauty within  
They're afraid of things that are not obvious;  
Shove it in hard and fast, so they'll understand-  
No dictionary words, fine French soap or cologne.

Just slang and slobber, and keep it coming,  
Toilet water's all they crave, and all they'll carry away.  
Vulgarity? Now there's something they can appreciate,  
But serve only in shot glasses: never a stemmed goblet.

Patti Masterman

# Colors On A Butterfly's Wing

It's an untaught art and solo maneuver  
Time elapsed auto ejection,  
Parachuting us upwards:  
Everyone on the planet knows how to die.  
The breathing slows down, in opposition  
To childbirth's heavy panting,  
The lovers ragged gasping.  
Like trained sprinters, we know by instinct  
When to slow the pulse  
Like yogis on the nail bed  
When to stop moving, stop reacting  
Our irises, black camera shutters opening  
On that other vista as, newly born  
We unfurl at the other end  
Of the silver cord  
Unfettered there  
No longer dashing our foot  
Casting off the old receptacle  
We stretch, push and pull ourselves into  
Previously exotic dimensions.  
Everyone knows instinctively  
How to slip out the birth canal  
And how to slip the bands of body.  
In our genetic makeup lies the DNA  
For all the colors on a butterfly's wing  
And perhaps for the secret of flight  
Once we leave the chrysalis behind.

Patti Masterman

# Come Secret Air

Come secret air,  
Assaulting the belly of ocean;  
Champagne laughs will find your drunken original  
When the mob sucks down the bone-dry blood of time,  
Mindless of the unstoppable forever  
That's found between the everywhere.

Patti Masterman

# Come To Jesus

Come to Jesus,  
He plaintive waits,  
Big as life  
To surround the world.  
Jesus holds his hands out  
To help carry your load-  
Who else could care about your petty desires,  
Or keep track of your many love affairs?

Jesus holds keys to a padded cell;  
You've been there many times before,  
Just say his name, get out of jail free,  
Avoid a death sentence  
Or curfew at three.  
Say you got saved,  
Surrendered your life-  
You're not responsible  
For who brought the knife.

Yes, just take it all to Jesus,  
Dump it at his feet;  
He'll show it to his Father  
Up where the Heavens meet.  
Sin always just enough,  
So you can sin some more:  
You know you can trust Jesus,  
Not to close that door.

You've made your god a scapegoat  
A whiner's alibi  
The eternally forgiving  
'Oops-got-something-in-my-eye'  
Can't you show a sincere life,  
If it's Jesus you love best-  
To give account for your belief,  
Instead of endless tests?

Patti Masterman

# Come To The Psychopath's Junction

Come to the Psychopath's Junction  
For a time you may never forget;  
We've got mystery and murder and mayhem,  
For some hours that you'll never regret.

Come to the Psychopath's Junction  
We have tours and stories to chill;  
And we'll push you down steps to the basement,  
And there we'll forcefeed you some swill.

Come to the Psychopath's Junction  
Where we have all new torture devices,  
And we'll tie you up, and then use them on you;  
And won't have to think about it twice.

Come to the Psychopath's Junction  
Where we'll do terrible things just to you;  
And if you survive and miraculously escape-  
You can invite your friends to come too!

Patti Masterman

# Come What Will

True love was never promised  
With one embrace, or a kiss;  
Waiting for Prince Charming  
Has reduced us all, to this:

We're not happy with our life,  
Which comes without fresh flowers;  
We're told that life is cheap,  
And never mind the hours.

And some give up too soon,  
And some will not relent,  
Though often hearts get broken-  
And others, only bent.

Don't save yourself for dreams,  
Which never can fulfill,  
And give your heart to someone  
Who can love you- come what will.

Patti Masterman

# Comes The Night

The stealthy black night always comes  
With starry, gaping fingers  
Clutching at the outer edge of curtains  
The flat, grey shadows  
Seeping along the window panes  
Creeping between the blinds  
The darkness implores an entrance  
Into the warm amber evening  
Guileless, smiling away  
We toast the midnight hour  
With clinking glasses  
Amidst a tittering timidity  
As slowly, slowly  
The blackness musters strength,  
Speed and ferocity  
And summoning all at once  
A frenzied, reckless appearance-  
Wrecking the gaiety  
Chasing away the atmosphere.

Patti Masterman

# Coming Home Again

When touching your two cheeks  
There's a map there of the first time  
The fingertips felt the smooth  
Flesh coaxing- not pushy, not teasing-  
The body's clumsy first attempt to start to speak  
Its own language.  
Hot breath and barely open eyes  
The arms circling round as if on a secret mission  
Known only to them  
Following along the maps compass points  
Feeling the hills and hollows  
Dipping and rising on the secret journey  
Fingers tentatively searching  
Straining, to hear the first faint echo:  
For the submarine ping to bounce back  
For the telegraph stations click  
For the train whistles arrival over the still vacant track  
Saying that my heart is safely back home once more  
Never to wander again.

Patti Masterman

## Co-Morbid

My words are cutting themselves again;  
razoring their loosely-sutured syllables,  
deep as white-eyed bone.

The suave diphthongs butchered  
to the cadence of bloodletting  
in hemorrhagic oppositions.

Stapled-closed sentences, smeared with Iodine,  
and subcutaneous sentence diagramming  
for the retractable scalpel  
swiveling along the edge,  
of the well serrated cliché.

Once I pressed my wordy flesh  
against the wrong side  
of a paring knife, while paying no attention  
and suddenly,  
and without warning  
it gave, like an over ripe peach  
to the cleaver-  
and after that, I was hooked.

Patti Masterman

# Composite

A seething sea is what makes me,  
Atoms striving to be free  
The heaving, grieving heart of me,  
Where creation longs to be.

A flooding tide becomes the mind,  
Encumbered; hunts for its own kind.  
The budding, bleeding mortal brine,  
Looking for itself to find.

A turning wheel of all I feel  
Keeps my spirit never still,  
Yearning, burning in my will,  
Seeking what in life is real.

Patti Masterman

# Conjure Spirit

Conjure spirit, with sybarite word,  
Amulet charms, never yet heard;  
Carve them with rune signs,  
Carve them by fjord-  
Rushing waters sing cloudier forward.

Conjure a gypsy and her shew-stone,  
Rings on her fingers, barely a crone;  
Her third eye a witness,  
Her two eyes make three-  
For mother was witch and father was tree.

Conjure up madness, idolatry, rage;  
Black magic shouting from every image;  
Like covetous eyes breed  
A covetous breech-  
Upon pain of death, the bloodier deed.

Patti Masterman

# Consider It

Consider it defunct,  
Like a shuttered window,  
Like a witless drunk.

Consider it done and said,  
Like a water-logged book,  
Like the service for the dead.

Consider it forgotten  
Like packets of love letters,  
In satchels that are rotten.

Consider it old news,  
Like old somethings for a wedding,  
Something blue, that you would choose.

Consider it's really over  
Like a badly mangled body  
Finally covered by green clover.

Patti Masterman

# Contagion

Ok, but just don't fool yourself  
Who you're doing it for-  
It's all for you; writing is the selfish,  
Dreaming contagion of fools

Even if you say it's just for fun,  
Or you think it makes you cool-  
Might as well smoke a cigarette;  
Jump into an empty pool.

Patti Masterman

# Continuum

Perhaps time makes holy grails even of stone  
And cathedrals of dense forests:  
The next Jesus waits  
As a tall poplar  
In a petrified forest  
And my heart is a stone altar  
Yet to be discovered by men with oxen  
Before the world falls apart again in fire  
And ashes begin to rain from the sky.  
Beat your ploughshares into patience  
And empty your dream coffer-  
The whirling black eye  
Is full only of forgetting.

Patti Masterman

# Conveyor Belt Through The Cosmos

Great quantities of air are indistinguishable from water-  
The silver jet plows through the sky at 250 knots,  
The air grumbling as it moves aside, an invisible sea  
In which is left a delicate, frothing wake,  
The ride no smoother than through standing waves  
Or stillest ocean.

Human beings are passengers on the biggest transit system of all,  
The rounded globe, which spins beneath our feet at 1040 miles an hour-  
Even as we believe daily we are on our way  
To somewhere completely different.

Patti Masterman

# Coquettes And Marionettes

Mannequins wear the latest fashions  
And statues have the best physiques  
So, models lives are filled with passion?  
(At least that's the current going mystique)

Sweat pants are passe, so I go  
To closet, where hang three hundred pants  
And select some capris, that aren't too low  
To show some calf, if given the chance.

In the olden days clothing was very dense;  
A wall to insulate you from the world  
Long skirts were a girl's own personal fence  
To make sure nothing untoward unfurled.

Even swimsuits then were long and draping  
People must have drowned from the weight:  
The man with the tape measure, always there saying  
You're an inch too short, for the going rate.

I'll stick with the pants, thank you, it's fine-  
I'm no sculpture or marionette;  
When the thongs and bikinis finally unwind  
They can never say I was a coquette.

Patti Masterman

# Corpus Mundi

We are the life's blood of the corpus mundi  
We are the consciousness that's flowing itself  
Through the labyrinth; the traffic that moves  
Along the venues, carrying commerce of the living  
And when we stop or die; replaced instantly by others  
So that the greater organism does not cease  
Because of a few omissions, or errors of code  
As our body also is composed of many subdivisions and departments  
And itself would not stop operating due to tiny flaws  
And those parts too have their own mirroring armies,  
Little foot soldiers, guarding the gates of the kingdom  
Monitoring the blood flow that protects life, even as we  
Ourselves, are the flowing blood of the corpus mundi.

Patti Masterman

# Cosmic Panoply

We own the sky, you and I,  
And all the stars that sit therein;  
Galaxies and nebulae,  
Cosmic bodies with no end.

To what avail, I cannot tell  
We inherit such a sum;  
Although the world is still in braille;  
Creation never will be done.

Patti Masterman

# Could I But Choose

Could I but choose, out of each one alive  
To find the one, most resembles my soul:  
My mind's very image, of he who dwells  
Exactly at center, and not the poles.

That one, at midnight, who still knows my mind;  
Each separate thought, to touch with his own;  
That one, in his skin, most like my own kind;  
Can draw from within, both known and unknown.

One unafraid, to look in my mirrors;  
Find out what clothing, my mind has arranged,  
And watch, as his own reflection comes clear;  
Never, from any one thought, be estranged.

Not for one moment, would I wonder who-  
Out of the wide world, I'd always choose you.

Patti Masterman

# Could I Lay Me Down

Could I lay me down,  
Could I lay me down, in flowers-  
On the breast of mother earth,  
Nor decrying all the hours  
I thought I loved the most?

Could I lay me down,  
Could I lay me down, in streams-  
Of silver, from the foaming gorge,  
Giving up the many dreams  
I had, when life was short?

Could I lay me down,  
Could I lay me down, in stars  
In the loom of cosmic diamonds-  
Unafraid of going far  
Into the minds true meaning?

Patti Masterman

# Could You Remember

Could you remember if you tried  
A place where strong sun broke through the sky  
Where slow clouds moved like Viking skiffs  
Toward sunken valley's submerged rifts?

Was there a day in far-flung memory  
That you held in the mind's captivity  
When courses were charted by compass unknown  
And far maps found in unhewn stone?

Patti Masterman

# Count The Stars

Count the stars across your journey,  
Count the stars you've yet to face;  
Curling round the world, so tiny,  
Countless stars have left their trace.

Count the stars from birth to dying,  
Shooting stars that won't return;  
Lucky stars that once you wished on:  
Life extinguish, while they burn..

Patti Masterman

# Counted Breath

Ghosts breathe you in

when you sleep:

half alive, half dead

a split symmetry holds

this universe open,

keeping the two poles apart.

(death misses you a thousand times

before his blades catch hold)

this world is busy passing,

while we're still counting breaths-

harsh the beauty

turns us inside out,

so we can see the whole again

and recognize our self.

Patti Masterman

# Covet

She steals serendipitous words from the dead  
Ranges them on comely pages,  
Sybaritic springs filled to overflowing  
Metered precisely, to the raving adulation of crowds.

Only dark closets speak to me,  
Crying out their hoary linen secrets  
While musty air clog my lungs.

Why can't I have ghosts, fragrant as wind,  
Free as balloons, loosed of their tether,  
Instead of pilfered dust balls  
And scattering bed bugs?

Patti Masterman

## Crimson Kings - Sonnet

We men at best are only crimson kings  
Who're caught between the diadem and throne;  
We wield the power, weep at what it means-  
Miles to conquer, and none of it is home.

We laugh at jokes and toasts, as it's expected,  
Reward well both the Jester and the Count  
Though little things of kingdom get neglected,  
While we the weary battle foils must mount.

But there's one crown of curls, upon one head,  
That I'd go farther than the oldest tales;  
She sleeps so near now, in her downy bed-  
Most men stay free, inside their private hells.

Some night I'll bribe the Moon, in his far space  
And build within my heart, a special place..

Patti Masterman

# Cross Polly-Merization

It's a mono-Polly'd nation;  
Polly-wogs in purple Polly-hedrons,  
And Polly-vinyl plastic dolls  
Getting blown up by inflation

And husbands embracing Polly-andry;  
Polly-theists courting Polly-glots;  
They speak in Polly-syllabic tongues  
Wearing Polly-ester what-nots.

Patti Masterman

# Cruise Ship Tomb

Oh a cruise ship room  
Makes the very best kind of tomb;  
Just sign off on the dotted line-  
No more worries for your little mind.

Oh a cruise ship grave  
Is just right for every knave;  
So go buy your tickets first  
To ride on the White Star hearse.

Oh a cruise ship life  
Is great for you and the wife;  
Though it's more like death by sea-  
For the likes of you and me.

Patti Masterman

# Crumbs Of You

Crumbs of you  
Are all that remain:  
Muddy boots of toughened leather,  
Sinkers and lures, under the bed.  
I could go fishing baitless,  
Weighed down by your discarded lead,  
Wearing only your rotting boots  
While reading the tattered paperbook  
You left in the hutch.

You were careful not to leave behind much;  
I could look through your discarded glasses  
Now that you're the new man,  
With new, bright eyes; you see much better now:  
You saw so good after the surgery;  
You saw clear through this heart,  
Then left it, for another one.  
And no wonder; through these murky lenses  
I can find no empathy for me at all.

If you happen to come back down this way,  
After climbing the ladder, to find those better things,  
Don't bother stopping here-  
Cause I won't remember your name.

Patti Masterman

# Curious World

What sort of world is this?  
Even my sneeze on the monitor screen  
Has a rainbow glowing within its bounds  
Holographic world indeed  
Then there are the sudden light shows  
The Aurora Borealis, and the green flashes  
At sunset, and countless more miracles.  
I once saw a thunderstorm over the ocean  
Both my first and last one, probably  
(Living hundreds of miles from any ocean)  
But on a vacation I got to see one  
To think I might have missed that:  
It was as if all the gods of the underworld  
And the gods of the waters, and of the heavens  
Had a disagreement, and nearly ripped a hole  
In creation's substance, trying to resolve it.  
But it was only a thunderstorm out at sea  
Which was such a novelty, to me.  
Imagine being out there on a vessel  
Two hundred years ago, watching that storm  
While being flung about by the seething ocean  
With no guarantee of anything-  
Solid ground beneath, only a fervent prayer, then.  
That magnificent spectacle might have been the end.  
One thing about nature, it is always up close and personal:  
You're never just a spectator on the sidelines.

Patti Masterman

# Curmudgeon's Dudgeon

When something is happening  
That I just really don't like-  
I can get downright mean;  
Won't give in, without a fight  
Heels dug in, I must look like  
The woman in The Scream?

I complain, make a face  
Rattle my chains about-  
I'm damned if I'll do it;  
Stomp my feet, and pout  
Ill winds blowing my way  
Makes me want to shout.

It almost eats me alive  
Meekness not my bag-  
To hurt someone most bludgeonly;  
The responsible one, I'd frag  
Despite piss-and-moan pity club  
At last give in- but Grudgingly.

Patti Masterman

# Cytokine Storm

There's a cytokine storm  
When I'm near you;  
The pressure's rising,  
The plasma's a-stew,  
The white cells marshal  
A terrible brew:  
Defenders unite  
Against a foe uncouth.

The histamines sound  
Their battle cry;  
Every cytoplasm  
Prepared to die  
All's in uproar,  
Cause you passed by-  
But then you leave  
And all goes quiet.

Patti Masterman

# Daily Ads And Gossips

Friable Macintosh's for sale here  
Right by the powdered milk  
Of Shakestonian ruminants herding  
Notwithstanding extinct status

Portable Portnoy habitats  
Otherwise called port-a-potties  
Delivered Cod or gratis  
For pink-pantied Hotten-totties

Biscadelian porcelain thrones  
Are not for the impoverished  
And there's water poof jelly-phones  
For mermaids in their grottos

Once I groped a groper  
Where the groupers like to feed  
Never grope a day-glo grouper  
Where a pedo's gone to seed

Never stroke an offshore derrick  
With a short broken piece of pipe  
Or sing to a pipe organ Herrick  
Where the boys are hunting snipe

Never chew a chaw of tobacco  
On Tobacco road; there's a curse  
Of a rat gnaws by light of day-  
Or even dark, in a hearse.

Patti Masterman

# Damn The War And Damn The Bullets

Damn the war and damn the bullets;  
Damn the Congress' flaccid words;  
Damn the caskets and the transports,  
Damn; the last gasps never heard.

Shame on flimsy see-through reasons,  
Shame on those who saw the light:  
Who knew the sham lies all around it,  
But quashed the peace and hid the sight.

Damn the weapons man invented  
For ripping his own limbs apart-  
If Earth could speak, she'd yell out DAMN!  
DAMN; whoever lit that spark!

Patti Masterman

# Dance Me A Voodoo Tune

Dance me a voodoo tune  
Halfway around the moon  
Snort from a silver spoon-  
It don't matter anyway.

Put on your silks so fine  
Shake it and add some shine  
Pour out oblations wine-  
It don't matter anyway.

Walk down here like you own it  
No money cause you done blown it  
You're trash we've always known it-  
But it don't matter anyway.

Grown up just like your momma did  
Got lost with all the other kids  
Knoved you'd wind up on the skids-  
And now it don't matter anyway.

Patti Masterman

# Dance With Your Shadow

Dance with your shadow  
At the end of the day,  
When the fields go to bed;  
With the moon on the hay.  
Dance with your shadow  
While the stars sing above-  
Then smile in your bed,  
That there's reason to love.

Dance with your shadow  
At the start of the dawn,  
When the stars go to sleep;  
But your heart sings their song.  
Dance with your shadow  
As the new day unfolds-  
There's hours left for loving,  
And joys yet untold.

Patti Masterman

# Dances Under Heaven

Seasons crown the heavens,  
Chrysanthemums like angels;  
Benign contrition flows  
In blossoms floating, leavened.

Drifting streams to fountains,  
And dancing mountain verses;  
The soul in rhyme will sway  
As waiting branches pray.

Patti Masterman

# Dancing For A Stranger

Discarded sandals, all loved out and thrown away now,  
On a beach that doesn't care who we used to be;  
Our lives feel disposable as carry-out trays.

Love plays with bored fingers of time,  
Pulling at the strings of our lives; disinterested  
But manages to untie our bathing suit.

With decades gone missing,  
We can't remember exactly where we came from,  
Or where we intended to be going.

We were excited by the idea of the journey;  
To be going somewhere; anywhere; just to leave the old behind:  
Now all we want is the familiar, but it's out of reach.

Our important questions got lost in returning echoes;  
The people who used to know us best  
Have all gone away, for the rest of the season.

And new eyes, that never knew us, are watching now,  
As though we could still dance on demand;  
Or merely at the whim of some stranger.

Patti Masterman

# Dancing In Time

I'm dancing in time, just dancing away;  
My life is a rhythm, from day to day,  
A code of this world, nobody can hide-  
I'm dancing away, got time just to sway.

I'm dancing in time, my purpose to find,  
My body entangled; it's holding my mind,  
The moon is a clock, its hours are mine-  
I'm dancing away, as time falls behind.

I'm dancing in time, from future to past;  
Reversing the flow, for nothing can last,  
Eternal inflation is riding the wave-  
I'm dancing away, there's nothing to save.

Patti Masterman

# Dark Intaglio

I see their transparent eyes  
still holding no secrets;  
if the opaque are charmed,  
The obvious are indifferent.

If truth is the avarice  
of refusing to lie,  
the blatant are sinners-  
and dissemblers, divine.

If courage is fear  
when you can't run away,  
then dignity's refusal  
to join the fray.

Patti Masterman

# Dark Vestibule

She had wanted to be devout:

But the church itself whispered in ghosts,  
And listed in wind, with a strange keening;  
And the fewer the people, the lesser its charm-  
She felt in some way, that it wished her harm.

For the dead had filled the vestibule,  
Dark coffins on the dais-  
And all the singing in the world  
Could not wipe out that presence.

Weird that the tall, tall mortuary of god  
Reminded her mostly (and often) of sod;  
And certainly something should also be said  
For those religions, kept out the dead.

For the dead had filled the vestibule,  
Dark coffins on the dais-  
And all the singing in the world  
Could not wipe out that presence.

Patti Masterman

# Dark Watch Beyond

dark watch beyond  
whose melancholies sang of a savage sleep  
and the dimly virtuous poets  
who lingered like the kindness of death  
writing their peace out line by line  
into uneasy slumbers  
many nights far afield  
where we held up their verse like a lamp  
the grace of the muse still showing the way  
serene as unexplained stars by day

Patti Masterman

# Darkened Womens Rooms

Darkened women's rooms  
Have a hint of the mystical about them;  
Boudoirs with traces of nylon and lace, whispers of musk,  
Rouge stains on satin, and curling irons.  
If women ruled the world,  
Wars would soon die out, for lack of interest.  
Mascara would be hand delivered, right to the door,  
Instead of newspapers filed with wars and rumors of wars.

Every woman in the world's a nurturing mother  
In her soul, even if she hasn't realized it yet.  
All the battles and assassinations of this world  
Kill someone's child every single day.  
There was never a safe playground to be found,  
Anywhere that men were in charge of everything.

Patti Masterman

# Darker Dreams

She lay eyes closed, on gleaming steel,  
Summoning every ounce of will;  
But was not enough to overcome the drugs  
He'd given, with his fateful hug.

She remembered things she thought had gone,  
Somewhere broken wings had flown;  
Her mind a million miles ahead,  
Although her body felt quite dead.

She heard the cart of tools wheeled close,  
And with a shudder, knew what those  
Things were used for, knew her time  
For thinking would too soon unwind.

There was something once she'd read  
That she searched for in her head-  
A foolproof way to blink your eyes,  
Even if you couldn't cry

Aloud; or twitch your toes beneath,  
Though all above, were deep in grief  
To tell them that your brain still lived-  
And it was just your body, fibbed.

Too late; she heard the scalpel lift-  
Felt her hair folded up in clips;  
If she could, she would have prayed-  
For now her heart was well dismayed-

And then the ruby drops rained down,  
Covering white shoes and gowns-  
Her pain was met with equal screams,  
As she fell down, in darker dreams..

Patti Masterman

## Darker Hearts

Death chooses grey roses,  
Because living lips are lily pink;  
In each clever hand, his dagger arcs  
The blood falling like broken links.

A tethered breast, a cottoned night;  
The devil dreams of good nymphs sleeping.  
The outside draws the inside nigh;  
Dark beasts, the brass keys quiet are keeping.

In the flowers center, soft fingers enter,  
Summer breathing the cloud-juice dry,  
And jaded hearts will keep on beating  
Though bloody cracks expand the sky.

Patti Masterman

# Darkness And Light Seen Through The Mirror Of Being

She is not embedded in this room, but she still lives here  
Her reflections gathering back upon the wood like happy birds,  
Flocking to a bird meeting in some tree; and though no tales are told  
Histories are entrenched in scars and tack holes,  
A strange dullness upon the painted wall, here and there  
That to others could mean nothing at all- and yet they possess weight  
And substance, a dimensionality in the memories they give birth to.

We are all darkness and light, intermixed  
Shaken into days of metered sun and random shade;  
Stirred up- until the bubbles rise, now newly born-  
That our own selves made.

Books can define even a person who seems invisible within themselves,  
And papers and journals reveal quirks of handwriting and thought process;  
And though the small child itself is no longer represented here  
With toys and artifacts; yet the child's ghost lingers here, most of all,  
Whiling away a never-ending childhood's grace, in the strange way  
Of all humans, to never really grow up, but only to enclose their youth  
With adult sentiments and cares, perhaps never noticing how the eyes  
May still sometimes look upon the world with the purity of innocence-  
Only within the nest, that room once was.

We are all mirrors, shining our selves  
Onto the mirrors of others; and when we reflect  
It casts a new light never seen,  
On what we were- and are to be.

Patti Masterman

# Darkshine

The darkshine births in darkened biers,  
where darkly shine the last lamps of evening;  
the moon with its hidden dark-side fires.

Darkshine the eyes of the cat, in shade,  
full as owls eyes, in deepest twilight,  
midst leaves much darker, till darkness fade.

Darkshine the water in midnight wells plundered,  
blacker than flows the manes of wild horses,  
water pooled where deeper darkness slumbered.

Darkshine wings, under the clouds,  
shadowing all of the darkling paths;  
as darkshine crowns the most secret deaths.

Patti Masterman

# Daughter Of A Whore

Curse you earth and your sleepy waters too,  
Your clouds that never move,  
People in a long sleep;  
Rutters in their groove.

Curse you sky and all your splintered nights,  
Your birds that hide in flight,  
Things that go missing,  
In a sudden, shuttered light.

Curse my soul that I never once asked for,  
And those who shut their door,  
Always to be orphan;  
The daughter of a whore.

Patti Masterman

# Day Is Another Kind Of Night

Day is another kind of night  
And hidden things are more revealed;  
The secrets that were held so tight,  
By a victor sun, unsealed.

Day is another kind of night,  
Where we find not all are dreams,  
But as we're grappling with the sight,  
Everything's not as it seems.

Day is another kind of night-  
Though night is where the dreamer flees,  
To a heaven, answers-given  
For the one with eyes to see.

Patti Masterman

## Days Are Growing Shorter

Days are growing shorter; not only Earth's, but ours  
Because of meeting you, I'm now hearth to lovely fires  
I glow with fertile blooms not because my season's long  
But because your single touch my roots answered with a song.

I find your presence dear, be it farther than the stars  
More difficult to access than the deepest seas there are  
But the distance to your soul is but a whisper in the wood  
That travels thrush to thrush, as only bird call could.

My inner ear hears every breathing word to me you've said  
The secrets that we've shared; that on which my heart has fed  
I can never live without you, it's become to me quite clear  
And all else seems a trifle since my soul felt you draw near.

Patti Masterman

# Days Of Miracles

Dear things that make the long day brief  
Small joys that bring me hope to live  
You are neither least nor the most of these  
But form and reason to my days give.

I would hate to feel all alone in this world  
With only the mirror and my shadow around  
Chasing but flickers of possibilities  
Instead of the miracle of you that I've found.

Patti Masterman

# Dazzling Darkness

In God, some say, there is a deep but dazzling darkness-  
That hides his face, like an ocean hides a seed;  
And none can say if it's full or if it's empty,  
For all our knowing's like wind through hollow reeds.

Patti Masterman

# De Somniorum Meam

What do you wear to a dream  
Full of fancies and things never seen?  
To a landscape where heaven must be  
Is it proper, to not wear a thing?

What do you think of a cloud  
Floating by on a song right out loud?  
Where the angels bow low and applaud  
For a man without wings born of sod?

Patti Masterman

# Dead Children

When the body grows up,  
the children inside it die;  
where are they now,  
if no longer present?

Every night I bury those imps-  
but every night, they re-animate again.  
Dead children will not stay buried.

The past lives forever  
on some forgotten thoroughfare,  
but we grown-ups  
always have more forgetting to do.

It is our daily task,  
when the stiffened cardboard cut-outs  
fall over again, at morning.

The brain is a restless cemetery.

Patti Masterman

# Dead Maidens In Norse Boats

Flowers and gold;  
So light, it floats:  
Dead maidens  
In Norse boats.

Hair like sunrise,  
Lapiz eyes;  
A buried treasure  
Where it lies.

Gleaming gems  
Around her throat;  
Beloved of men,  
Till death smote.

Frosted lips  
Of regal cold;  
A princess once,  
For all we know.

She can't tell  
Her story though  
A picture tell  
A thousand words.

Patti Masterman

# Dead Porno Stars

They can lie, but never lay,  
All bright lights have gone away;  
They're just the money shot  
Of yesterday.

Left are pictures in a magazine  
Beside the road, some obscene-  
Or the stills from movies made-  
Their myth of potency, all fade.

Now they're cold,  
Where once were warm,  
And no one's clutched  
In rigor'd arms.

They can't speak  
And no one peeks;  
Once they were tops-  
But now just props.

Patti Masterman

# Dead Storks

Joy comes down to one morning lost;  
And one more, clouded eyes can't see,  
Gloom filtered by dawn's waking up,  
And false skies, lovely as any painting.

The pulse racing fast, then slowing down,  
The basket full but empty; worse,  
Bounty's imitator, in every way appearing  
But not in substance, and never worth.

(Space uncurving itself gracefully,  
Knowing never where to look,  
but where not to focus) .

Subdued are the blue fields,  
Striking light, the brandished suns,  
Greeting green tilled fields,  
Pantomiming charades begun;

(The unburst fullness, and gathering greyness  
Filling in the shadows muted brilliance) .

Death once-born, of changing measure;  
Not an etude or a requiem's time,  
But maybe a still pond, on some pale Winter's day,  
Where nothing happens beneath white omens of ice.

No thing moves and the purity's grotesque,  
Like pristine gurneys, under long-dead infants,  
Wrapped in shrouded linen snows;  
Or outlines of the dead birds below.

Patti Masterman

# Deal-Breaker

The phone rings and startles you,  
And you see it's him- the one with whom  
There's so much water under the bridge.  
And his voice sounds surprised too  
That you bothered to answer at all.

Talking to him, you realize  
He's calling out of desperation,  
Having burned all his other connections-  
And perhaps your number came back only  
Because of long force of habit, or else something

Unknowable; reasons he won't admit even to self.  
So you do the back-and-forth of polite society,  
Agreeing to help him accomplish this thing  
He feels he needs to do, while realizing at some moment  
(When both voices have become too still)

That at some time in the past, you must have begun trying  
To remake him into your father; as if you felt that  
You had lost your father too soon, not enough notice  
Was given, and you wanted another chance  
To prove your love, but instead it only confused you

Because he was not your father, while your myopic mind  
Was busy telling you, you must be falling in love,  
That it must be some undue attachment  
That needed severing, and you welcomed the axe's fall-  
Though you could never have cut him loose yourself.

And now that he needs some mothering, some care  
It's shocking how cold you feel inside,  
Though once you tried to bond yourself to this same stranger  
Through false bonds of surety, and you brokered  
Your soul, just to mortgage the deal.

Patti Masterman

# Dear Dad

Dear Dad

Listen, after you left us  
I had this little game I used to play  
To stay sane: I pretended  
You hadn't really left at all  
It was easy since  
I didn't see you leaving  
I was just trying to honor your wishes-

Remember that day: it was your birthday  
Back in the hospital, and they'd given you  
Two pints of blood, and you came back  
Back into yourself again;  
Recognized us, and later that day  
I was standing there holding your hand  
You seemed to recollect then what was happening to you  
And you jerked your hand away almost violently  
Almost as if you knew that you would die soon  
And you wanted me to go away and not witness it;  
You were always so thoughtful and caring of me  
But that wasn't when it happened-

And that time in the nursing home  
I spoon fed you some taco casserole  
I knew you didn't want it;  
But I was doing it for the others  
So they wouldn't realize anything different was going on  
Forgive me Dad- it was dumb  
And that time slow, large tears ran down Mother's face;  
I was happy you couldn't see them  
And when your roommate died right there  
In the other bed beside yours, without warning-  
I even held his hand at the end;  
I knew it must be an omen  
Because driving down there that day,  
I'd felt as if I were entering a war zone  
And when your catheter bag began filling up with blood  
After they'd moved you back from the hospital the last time  
I knew it wouldn't be long-

Anyway, what I would do is  
I would imagine you sitting there alive  
In your chair  
Doing normal things you always did  
Watching television, looking at the endless junk mail-  
See the thing is,  
I can still do it some days  
Like today: it feels like  
You're still here with me  
With your humor, your irony  
Your benevolent old-man goodness  
That never wanted to hurt any other living creature-

You know sometimes I even go back again  
To the last places we were together  
In the flesh- the nursing home,  
Where everyone thought you had died-  
And I refused to look at your body  
Because I knew it couldn't be true,  
No matter how peaceful they said it looked  
And the hospital corridor, in the downtown hospital  
That one room felt like a hidden sanctuary  
At the dropping off edge of the world-  
Only once did another living person enter in there  
While I sat there waiting beside you; just you and me  
I felt safe in there as if I realized, we still had some time left  
I think that's when the plan began to form:  
It all felt so unreal then, you know  
It felt like time was arcing in a big space,  
But going around you and me-

And then there was that other room,  
Where one day the doctors came  
To tell us there was really no hope  
But I wouldn't let them crowd around your bed  
Talking that way: it was disrespectful  
They didn't know you like I knew you:  
That you could never really disappear-

Remember that time the nursing home  
Called the emergency number

You were trying to leave your body again  
Nobody could find the DNR order  
So they had come to torture you some more  
I felt so ashamed, as if I had failed you personally  
I went into your bathroom and hid in there, beet red  
Curiously ashamed; I remembered how much  
It bothered you when I cried, as a child  
It felt just like that, except I wasn't even crying then, Dad-?

I've begun to need the illusion  
I never wanted to know a world  
Without you in it;  
I just wanted to be sure  
I had your blessing first  
And that you really are up there  
Watching over me now-

Just a little sign, is what I need  
Like that time I opened up  
Your little box of joke cards  
Clearing stuff out, after you'd left us;  
The ones you had me write out in long hand  
For your radio show  
And the one I happened to pull out  
Was in your handwriting,  
It was the one where you reminded yourself  
To say that you loved me  
At the end of every show you did on the air  
See, it's just that easy:  
Another sign like that one  
That's all I need and then I'll be fine  
Thanks then, and all the best to you, Dad  
I'll just be down here waiting,  
Just let me hear you say it one more time:  
Just say that you love me again

Patti Masterman

# Death Bed

Could you have lived?  
No, doubtless you could not  
Why then must you go on dying complacently  
Resurrected each day but hardly alive  
Between boiling the water, and clearing the table  
There you lie, quietly gasping; a fish  
Wondering where the ocean went; two breaths  
For each exhale, like you did  
The morning before that evening came  
The evening I couldn't breathe at all, because you weren't.

More shocking that nothing seems to change;  
I walk to the bedroom; you are there as usual,  
Shaking your head imperceptibly, as if to say  
No, no improvement; only getting worse  
You worried about lights while still coherent  
Sensing the looming eternity of darkness.  
In the hospital, your blood pressure falling-  
Swooning upward, feeling my own body  
Begin the long, obliterating drop away  
As they burst into the room with needles drawn  
To prevent one of us leaving; I forget which one.

I stoop down to tidy some magazines;  
Now you are quiet, resting with eyes closed  
You went blind before the end came  
I remember once they rolled you over in bed  
Your eyes stayed open, as if no longer  
Under your volition, and it was upsetting  
You; who shunned lack of control, your body  
A rack of torture you were barely conscious of-  
My enduring prayer to a god I could only doubt.

No longer speaking you hovered, barely there  
More ghost than living being; and yet could not leave-  
Won't leave, so now I must keep watch  
Over your timeless dying; unlikely angel of death  
The two of us indistinct in our roles  
Yours no longer a speaking part

Mine, watching you try to die  
While you witness my attempts to live.

Patti Masterman

# Death Brings Gifts

Death brings gifts  
When he comes to call:  
There's peace of mind  
Behind the pall.

No more worries;  
Breathing-free,  
Beneath the ground,  
Some long to be.

Death brings a gift,  
A special boon:  
Solitude's yours,  
Neath a crying moon;

Finally missed,  
By the near and far;  
Now that you're gone-  
How special you are!

Patti Masterman

# Death Comes Stinging

Death comes stinging like a white missile,  
White as a blank sky faded at twilight,  
Washed by winter, scrubbed by the moonlight.

Death comes poised with no name but yours  
And no white flag will avert it's gaze;  
Your end game's there, in death's pale face.

Mutable prayers go smoking, unleavened,  
Your soul's the mast, in a fiery heaven:  
A censor of brass has it's wick unthreaded

Patti Masterman

# Death Has Always

Death has always eaten the same meal  
At the same table, in that exclusive restaurant  
Before I get there; hungry, misinformed  
He has always left with the prize  
Just as I was realizing: this one can change  
My life, take me farther than I've ever-  
But no, there walks death sedately,  
A hundred paces ahead,  
There goes the last chance  
I never had, always too late and just far enough behind  
I had to leave the womb at a trot;  
Born too late, and I've been running since  
There were few enough times  
I even knew what I was hurrying toward  
But then I glimpse him ahead of me, in his billowing cape  
And that ridiculous Death's mask, cutting a sinuous swath  
Out of the very center that the world wheels around:  
Death always cuts his piece from the hub  
And then laughs at you over his shoulder  
As he leaves the party in ruins.

Patti Masterman

# Death Is A Dark Tune

Death is a dark tune  
That arrives on a dark day  
When nothing is going your way  
And the storms break through  
Your perfectly arranged world  
Rattle your windows,  
And chill you to the bone.

If you should come suddenly  
There won't be hot tea brewing  
Or clean towels laid out just for you  
I might be in the middle  
Of a lengthy novel  
Forgive me if I'm brusque then  
I hate interruptions.

It's nothing personal  
Just give me some time  
To compose myself,  
Look around once more:  
It may seem humble to you  
But remember nobody  
Has made any assurances  
About what's coming next  
I want to remember  
How this feels.

It may be that  
I could find my way  
Around your dark paths  
Maybe stumble a little;  
But pick up again,  
Go on having my predictable  
Thoughts, make myself  
Another cozy place, settle down  
We're all just searching  
For a little peace anyway,  
Aren't we?  
You really should

Get with me on this.

Patti Masterman

# Death Is Always On Sale

Public places are so lonely,  
don't they almost tear your heart out;  
merchandise left where it was dropped,  
all of it owner-less and drear.

The mannequins weep invisibly after hours  
that no one took them home;  
for they don't have birthdays, anniversaries  
to celebrate, and the doors don't know

A loving touch, anywhere.  
The store windows sit nearly empty, hollow,  
hands reaching out to no one-  
closing on empty, echoing air.

The escalators stop climbing,  
the elevators play dumb  
as a hush fills every corner with lack of purpose;  
The shuffling feet have gone away till another day.

The stillness exists only in waiting for something,  
anything to break the monotony of every evening;  
but the people who shop here are ghosts themselves,  
who eventually die- and leave their things orphaned again.

Patti Masterman

# Death Is Everything's Final Limit

It is the best hour of the day:

Everyone has gone to bed; and I am left alone with all my words

And the lamp is shining, in my solitary spot

And the stars are shining, outside the window

And the whole world seems at ease and peaceful.

The feeling of freedom seems boundless and beyond time.

It's all so delicious, that I fear sometimes I might just freeze in place here,

Arms on the table, with my head full of whimsy and half written ideas;

Enjoying the process far too much, to ever complete anything.

But then another idea always comes along, and pushes the one before it out,

So that I have to begin writing again;

Task that I hope will never end, until I am quite dead.

Then do with me what you will; I will be all emptied out by then, I hope

With only the star light to rush back in,

Into the vacuum that's left by my leaving:

Mors ultima linea rerum est.

Patti Masterman

# Death Is Just Another Forgetting

Listen- listen- I need you to do this one thing for me.

I really, really do. Just listen for now:

Do you remember being a child, when we were children-  
the recesses on the red dirt field, it was me and you,  
and sometimes the boy- he was a nerdy boy, with thick black glasses,  
but even though he was a boy- we could forgive him that,  
because he was really good at playing pretend with us.

Can you remember reading from our bibles, the Psalms;  
the little red bibles we got in vacation bible school-  
we used to recite the Psalm-poetry to each other,  
as we sat in the little yellow metal barrels, curled up together,  
and we talked about the Princess stories,  
and when we found a stick, it became Lina,  
the lizard creature in the story; that stick  
must have stayed around for months, and remember  
how I would always say, with great relief; oh there's Lina,  
and then we would both hug the stick.

And we played witches and warlocks around the gnarly old tree,  
it's ancient trunk as thick as four men at least, and it formed a natural bowl  
made of it's huge roots, where we threw acorns and young grasses  
and pretended we were cooking in a cauldron;  
a stew or a magic spell, as the mood struck us,  
and we worked out good and evil,  
in our little drama plays; all of us changing sides;  
wicked for angelic, one week  
and good for bad, the next, so no one had to be the bad guy all the time  
and we played house in invisible rooms that ranged about the tree,  
it was the central hearth of our imaginations.  
When we got tired sometimes, I would make up scary stories for us instead,  
but the boy's attention would always flag before I could finish.

And your legs grew long, and your freckles became  
like little spots of sand from the beach.  
You had a speech impediment, and a few kids made fun of you,  
which always made me angry, and your mama had died  
when you were just a little baby, which I thought had traumatized you,  
and your eyes were the palest ice-blue, so I thought you must be a mermaid;

an orphaned mermaid- still with the sea in her eyes,  
come from the depths to save me, with your hair so black-  
like the blackest seaweed you could ever imagine,  
but skin white like a mermaid from milky depths,  
where no beach sun could ever, ever reach.

And once you wrote a note to me, and I saved it forever;  
and it said that we should say only kind things, forever and ever,  
the rest of our days, and everything would work out fine for us.  
And I can still see your back get smaller, as you walked home after playing.

And I met you again in high school, years later,  
but you had forgotten me; you had forgotten everything.  
You were a ballerina then, and could stand high on your toes,  
and you walked around on your toes all the time,  
practicing when you weren't in class.

So tell me if you can remember any of this, it's very important.  
Let me know if this rings a bell; I need to know-  
Because the fate of an entire world hangs on it-  
The fate of us- the fate of everything we were,  
And whatever we have become now, because of that other world-  
Tell me you remember it all now.  
Please.

Patti Masterman

# Death Of The Hokey Pokey Man

It was a sad day indeed;  
The Hokey Pokey man had died,  
And they procured a coffin,  
For to put him right inside;

He was the Hokey Pokey man  
And that's what it's about-  
That's what it's all about.

They put the left foot in,  
He put the left foot out,  
They put the left foot in-  
And he shakes it all about;

He did the Hokey Pokey  
Cause that's what he's about-  
So they took the left foot out.

They put the right elbow in,  
He put the right elbow out,  
They put the right elbow in-  
And he shakes it all about;

He did the Hokey Pokey  
Cause that's what he's about-  
So they took the right elbow out.

They put the head in,  
He put the head out,  
They put the head in-  
And he shakes it all about

He did the Hokey Pokey  
Cause that's what he's about-  
And that's when they all ran out.

Patti Masterman

# Death Rattle

I sometimes hear things  
That remind me of your last breaths-  
Fast and continuous, like a sprinter  
Trying to finish a course before running down:  
The endurance even of human frailty is astounding.  
I tell myself that life is a casualty experience at best;  
Your death is but one of hundreds, thousands, billions..  
And I have to wonder what keeps the world from completely  
Filling up with those last hyperventilations  
Till there's no room left on any continent  
The atmosphere stretched taut like a greenhouse balloon  
So that it implodes from the inside out, the skin torn  
And the hollowed-out eyes raining down.

Patti Masterman

# Deathbed With Helium

Sucked the soul out of my mother:  
Floating balloon of get well wishes,  
Tied to her bed rail.  
Above her, all night, it hovered  
The other, mute witness, to her struggle  
(Entirely to me now, belongs the tale)

(I was the intimate stranger-  
A thousand years, was it? I watched)  
Unsure, was this breath to be the last?  
Afraid to leave, sensing danger.  
Avoiding at least, the blank stare of death  
But not the fully audible, last fearsome gasps.

The brain, fulfilling its last request-  
Dutifully tried, to jump-start the heart,  
With freshly oxygenating breaths,  
Delivered in loud bursts to the chest-  
(No one told me how this came about)  
The body's last effort, to avoid death.

(I taxed my own brain, in turn to recall  
Omens and portents that must have been missed)  
They had prayed over her bed the night before  
(I was accidentally absent, being out in the hall)  
When leaving her room and newly shadowed self  
I refused, ever again, to go back through that door.

Patti Masterman

# Death's Kiss

Yes, I think that- if someday- I were to die-  
That yes, it was enough time,  
Just enough time to love,  
And more than enough time, even;  
Fountains of time rushed through me,  
Though I couldn't quite contain, capture them  
In my hungry, trembling fingers;

Even though it was Love itself trembled me  
In its strong caresses; rough or soft,  
I was its open-mouthed glutton  
While I lived out long centuries of love,  
Lived them out as fast as I was able-  
And only slowed down,  
Just a little bit, toward the end-  
For death- to kiss me.

Patti Masterman

# Decompensation

Endless cold winter days and even longer nights-  
I can get so philosophical at times.  
Strange memories and thoughts start to taunt me:  
Does the weatherman really keep mentioning 'The wedding? '  
(Eighty years ago no weatherman was the cornerstone of anyone's daily plans)  
And did I really kill that La Brea woman, thousands of years ago  
Bash her skull in, and push her into the tar pits, to hide it:  
Her skeleton found eons later, and placed on display in a museum  
So that now she has a large pseudo-monument  
To commemorate what I did, so long ago.  
Is she really reincarnated as that redhead at church who gets on my nerves  
Because everything I try in an attempt to get away from her, has the same  
result:  
If I killed her, a new religion would no doubt spring up from her very blood-  
And I can imagine all the rationalizing that I might use to finish her off now  
Was the same I might have used back then by the asphalt pools.  
Winter obsessions or paranoid paramnesia:  
No bright, hot sun to deflate all the hallucinations  
Bouncing around in the reflective deep freeze.  
Just my psyche making up a little cold weather drama to amuse itself?  
There's not always a full moon around to blame it on.  
As long as it's just a hidden wrinkle inside my brain, it's fine  
But if the thought police ever come round, I'm done for.

Patti Masterman

# Deep Down In Your Lodestone Soul

Deep down in your lodestone soul  
do you really feel, can feelings reach  
the seething magnetite that's there?

The id's a sedimentary self,  
brain's current of book-keeping;  
is the cloth rent now, is the battle nearly won-

Does it see only what the gatekeeper permits,  
or are there holes shot through, rivets of shining light;  
can anything penetrate without permission,

Deep in your ravaged countries, your sublimated populations.  
And who are all those tiny cells working for,  
those nameless trolls, laboring in service of you-

You, their only god, remembered bravely second to second,  
their steady fires burning tiny holes  
deep within the veils of your sleeping.

Patti Masterman

# Deep Underground

Deep underground  
There lie stagnant springs,  
Obsidian pools;  
Dark poetry beginnings  
Where there are no rules.

Coagulated blood  
Of the suddenly careless;  
The forever sorry,  
Suicide lotto winners,  
Riding death's lorry.

Deep underground,  
Cries quickly perish;  
No crosses mark plots,  
On endless highways,  
No greasy spots.

Parched vowels panting,  
From raw throats below,  
Waiting for syllables to fly inside;  
Melancholic crows  
On wings of dirty snow.

Patti Masterman

# Defining Christmas

If I could define all the things that mean "Christmas",  
It would grow quite long and become completely unmanageable.  
I wouldn't neglect to mention, that it was the day most looked forward to  
In the lives of children- the other day besides your own birthday,  
When you got really spoiled and full of yourself, but nobody seemed to mind too  
much.  
Then, there were mysterious, wrapped boxes under the tree- which was  
Always decorated with the most lovely, delicate, desirable objects-  
And though the things inside the paper seemed more wonderful, in the unknown  
state;  
Still there you were, trying to guess by quality of the loudness of rattle,  
And density, as determined by how much the inner contents would shift when it  
was tilted.  
A tinkling sound informed you, you had shaken the thing too much!  
Then you had best shove it well back under the tree,  
As if you had never laid eyes on the thing before.  
All these explorations were carried on out of the sight of the adults.  
A few furtive occasions I took the whole package away, to peek inside.  
The smells were unforgettable; the fruit in the little red netted stocking  
We got at the party on the last day of school.  
The cherry red candles you could smell even if they were mostly un-lit.  
There were the seemingly spontaneous visitors now and then;  
My aunt never did figure out that more socks and underwear  
Were not what I had on my Christmas list.  
I could never get to sleep on time on Christmas Eve in spite of threats-  
Santa passing by the houses of certain bad little boys and girls  
Who were still awake when he made his rounds.  
A few hours later I would awaken in awe- it was Christmas finally.  
But nobody else would be awake yet. I never knew they were up half the night,  
Finishing up the wrapping for a certain spoiled brat.  
There would always be more presents on that morning, never seen yet  
Some of which were large and imposing.  
And the bright colored plastics on the toys were cheerful in the extreme.  
Later on the daughter of some friends, being much older and wiser,  
Confided that my newest doll had been hidden in the top of her closet for a few  
months.  
I didn't manage to hide my surprise very well.  
Looking shocked, at what she realized was a major faux pas,  
She stammered, "Surely you didn't still believe in Santa Claus? "

"No, of course not, " I said, and with that single stroke of lie,  
Finished off that hallowed saint of my childhood,  
Of my fondest dreams and secret wishes;  
And along with him in effigy, died the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny,  
Cupid, and the rest of that fantastical troupe.  
Even clowns now seemed somehow tainted and suspect.  
It was a sad, funereal day for my childhood.  
My parents, like all caring guardians of children around the world,  
Had been so determined to instill some unknown,  
Unexpected quantity of magic in life.  
But instinctively hating snitches,  
I remained silent about my newfound enlightenment.

Patti Masterman

# Delicious

I try to put my fingers on time  
But the clock keeps on ticking-  
Oh delicious mystery,  
Where do you keep the keys?

I try to hold love in my hands  
But the wings keep on beating-  
Oh delicious feeling,  
Where did you hide my eyes?

Patti Masterman

# Deny Not My Being

Because I want you so desperately  
When frustrated, I can completely let go of you  
Blow you a kiss; and ride away like the wind,  
Too wounded to stick around longer, for any dregs  
You might be handing out my way.

For being considered an object of ridicule, or worse, pity  
Frightens me much more, than just the thought  
Of perhaps not being loved back.  
The one may negate the worth, of any love that I could bestow;  
But the other, the very existence, on which I depend.

Patti Masterman

# Deny The Air

Deny the air;  
You must straightaway, deny the wind-  
Deny the wind;  
Must deny, all the things he moved here  
Deny then, the magician;  
You must now deny, all his tricks-  
Deny the tricks;  
Must of course, deny the condition:  
That he made you  
Close your eyes; so deny now your own eyes:  
You are back to square one, again;  
To deny the air; and you know that it's true  
The more you avowal your select disbelief  
The more that all you miss is a relief-  
And that love, in a heart is housed  
You can't any more, espouse.

\*dedicated to all those who always say..that they can only believe what is visible  
by their own eyes..

Patti Masterman

# Deposition

How we submit willingly to surgeons  
not knowing the result.

How we tell the magistrates  
our histories;  
things even they don't need to know.

We humans always talking and talking-  
as if words could stay our secrets.

How we stand and stare so long after  
departing shadows.

Patti Masterman

# Depressions Half-Life

Where regrets ice over,  
The disemboweled freedom rings:  
Strolling down defunct bridges,  
Unseeing by the dismembered dolls, and orphaned house shoes,  
Sycophantic candy wrappers boomeranging,  
Piano notes tumbling by on dusty wings.  
The air current adds a gauzy, cheap thrill.  
Detoured and lost again, casting off the surplus as you go;  
The rattle and clatter of the dirt raising roads,  
Trying to remember what to disown and  
What to abandon in the wake of leaves,  
And random shimmers from old butterfly trails.  
The forgotten hopes pooled, where you once spent a day  
In decisive despair, and decrepitude.  
The vacant future come tumbling;  
Not so much unexpected, as unwelcome  
The loose ends dragging  
Bird song remnants, cottonwood pollen,  
Unspoken dearness, and unintended consequences.  
The key glitters its way to the shallow bottom of the river  
I watch it going down, with a half smile-  
I stopped marking time ages ago, in my half-life.

Patti Masterman

# Destiny

The world is not for itself  
Turning and turning to unknown purpose,  
The latest digression of a vast whirling  
That started obliquely and is still going on.

Everything subtle, yet unremitting;  
What have we to do with this metronome,  
This hourglass filled with meteors, planets, fire-  
Less visible than the fires which burn inside.

Look out the window of the sky,  
Whether be in darkness or in light  
And be the witness creation desires,  
Though mind is a destiny, fragmented by time.

Patti Masterman

# Devastator

Devastator,  
Don't trip upon my sighs:  
Heavenly bodies do sometimes lie.

Devastator,  
Alms-giving's for the righteous;  
So give of yourself, tonight.

Devastator,  
Your name means 'who is like god';  
And I've been searching him forever.

Devastator,  
I'm lying in wait all night,  
Like a wily predator,

Devastator,  
There is one named Michael;  
Have you seen him anywhere tonight?

(Devastator- One who ravages, in Latin)

Patti Masterman

# Did God Have A Choice

Earth, out of what did you arrive?  
Galaxies, what speck sprouted you?  
What singularity labored to expel all this?  
How can the expansion have no center?  
The world is so dense with meaning-  
So pregnant with becoming.  
Is this beauty broken symmetry?  
Does the dancing vacuum embrace all this?  
Can someone stop all this spinning  
And rotating and whirling  
Long enough to explain it to me?  
Or am I a child, just wishing for the moon?

Patti Masterman

# Did You Ever Wish For Death?

Did you ever wish for death?  
Just to kick all that dust, back up into the air  
The dust of all the other poor passed on souls;  
Shake up the status quo of ego's expectations-  
Things get way too settled sometimes.

Did you ever wish someone would die  
And not even care particularly, if it were you, or not you  
Or when or if, some time, it should be arriving  
As if there were no schedule for such a thing at all.

As a child I pitied older people-  
Always staring down into that hourglass  
As they were, because their time was almost up  
Compared to mine; my hourglass was brand new-  
The sand was so fine and golden, it flowed so smoothly, so slowly  
Death was far away then I could skip stones across at him  
Laugh him away from far down the wind which carried me along  
Miles past the reach of him, or so I imagined.

But my loved ones had kite strings hidden,  
Attached at the chest, and they tugged,  
Pulled at all my organs, pulled them out of place, one by one,  
As they each lay dying in turn; hours all used up,  
Their glasses nearly empty.

So that my own sand became disheveled,  
Causing me to no longer care about hourglasses;  
Even if they broke; even if the sand went everywhere.

The parts scattered, kite strings flapping,  
Sand blowing away- I am not the same girl at all:  
Let the young ones worry now about the hourglass..

I don't know what happened to that girl-  
If you see her tell her it's alright; that hourglass  
Never really measured time well-  
Better yet: break all the hourglasses  
And let us all live safely out of the reach

Of sundials.

Patti Masterman

# Digesting Time

It seems that life must flow  
In a smooth, orderly procession  
Only the mind loves to break it up;  
Divide it, into segments of despair and pain;  
Fragments of preciousness and joy  
We can never just digest the whole of it.  
Personalized by our awareness,  
We take it all in like a meal,  
Apply our established standards,  
And excrete it back out,  
Molded by our own characterizations.  
Maybe it's all only a dream under a shady tree,  
On a summers day,  
And we are all just atoms in the body of  
Some careless, smiling god  
Who doesn't know we exist,  
Who would not change his actions one iota  
Lest we live or die because of it,  
The same way we would not  
Shift our weight onto one foot  
Merely to avoid an ant colony.

Patti Masterman

# Digital Loneliness

ASCII never asks the code for the key  
And metal's too cold, and plastics too brief;  
The bits and the bytes are fathomless,  
None of them has permanent address.

The hum is a life of limited living,  
When steaming blood to the cable's driven,  
Dying lonely, while still plugged in-  
Eternal now- but spread too thin.

Patti Masterman

# Dignity Personified

Are you shy too, and lonely, my porcelain Hetty-  
Lying so primly propped, on your chintz-covered settee?  
Days pass you by, go unnumbered as sand grains,  
You in your old lace and pastel-ribb'd crossgrain.  
If you could but speak, you'd turn heads around plenty  
With all you have seen since year nineteen and twenty.  
Your stained, once-fine clothing is showing it's wear,  
And your black-painted crown still passes for hair;  
You wear your age well, but it must be so humbling:  
The bones of the ones who once loved you now crumbling.

Patti Masterman

# Dilemmas Of The Drunken

Decidedly blase, as the hours tumble past  
If divinatory; as the strains of old fugues  
That once roused us to incoherent victories.

Never mind that the cock crowed thrice,  
Ere you forgot our names-  
And lord, the company you keep

Locked in that old hobnail chest;  
How you'd be disdained, were it known  
The lampshades here drink old booze

Under a goat-grey sky, at morning  
And your key's sloppy turning, meteor-like  
On its slow approach, at decoding the lock.

But sleeping fitfully now, on the porch,  
Your muddy shoes can tell no tales  
Of your evenings holy grails.

Patti Masterman

# Dimensional Geometry

Chalkboards, billboards, computers and televisions  
Are all rectangular.  
Wheels, mandalas, clocks and prayer wheels  
Are all circular.  
Hearts are rare shapes in human physiology,  
But not in human society.

In school we are taught geometry  
But emotions left to chance;  
Schools must not teach the intangible subjects  
Of love, fear, and the invisible breadth and height of a soul.

The soul passes through any and all doors,  
Unrestricted by any particular shape,  
Can mold itself to fit any receptacle  
That's meant to contain it's vassal.  
So that stillborn babies in medical laboratories  
Must forever have small, jar-shaped baby souls.

Patti Masterman

# Dipsy-Doodle

Dipsy-Doodle, your mama's a poodle  
Your daddy was mongrel,  
From gaddabout town.

Dipsy-Doodle, a ball-catching noodle  
A bit of loose doggerel,  
Chasing around.

Dipsy-Doodle; just doing her duty  
Her poop's tooty-fruity,  
There on the turf.

No dowdy doodie, because it's so pretty-  
She ate all the gummy bears  
And some blue smurfs.

Patti Masterman

## Dire Solitudes: Bruno Shulz

The flesh, the raw reality of you  
confounds description- from another time  
and place, your photo looks straight through me,  
though I feel I know more of you than any map  
or contours of a continent- great, sunken eyes,  
slight body hovering just above the middle-age  
of years, inscrutable countenance, corrupted  
by your dire solitudes.

So far ahead of your time, yet  
I found you here on a tilted plane; out of the  
ancient foundry of Genesis' hot anvils  
and the spinning lathe of singularities,  
matter from tombs and unknown persons  
mixed freely in you, like mysterious vials  
of plasma'd genetics;

A febrile fever of incontinent histories,  
tottering above the malnourished factory  
of human body, that is our perihelion  
of stark majesty and repugnance,

presided over by the seedy dreams of a drunk.

How does one love the dead,

how does one come to love,

having never known nearness, breath..

no, you are not corrupt

you are merely missing a body and a head,

hands and feet and fingers;

in short, everything a man needs, but somehow

I breathe out in my beautiful dreams the prayer

that your preternatural brain was spared,

magically cut free the corpse at the last instant-

perhaps rolling away, as though a door-stop

rotating its third-eye, surveying everything-

even after death, you contemplate

like one of the martyrs now, forever

upon the loci of your untimely demise.

You were bigger than life, bigger than death;

as long as I live, I am the victor in shadow

of the foreknowledge of you.

Even though is found no resting place

for you, there are words of yours saved up  
inside others beings, where none may displace,  
now that time's the only strata of substance left us,  
and in time you may become the ebullient book  
of all your worlds and seasons,  
spreading your minions starlike,  
rich with the expectation of eternities..

Patti Masterman

# Dirge For The Under Privileged

I used to feel sorry for myself  
because I had brown eyes,  
but then I met a woman  
who had only one brown eye-  
and who wanted to become a great painter.

And what was worse, she could never admit to herself  
that it was never gonna happen,  
so to make herself feel better about it  
she removed me completely from her life.

And then I met a man who was born completely, totally blind  
and he wanted to go back to his home country again,  
so I gave him my Swiss army knife-  
even though it was the first and last time I would ever see him,  
and the first and last Swiss army knife I would ever own;  
at least with it in his hand, he could feel the firm reality of it,  
and might remember his time here with a smile,  
whenever he happened to touch it.

Later I met a man with two good feet to stand upon,  
but because he had no soul-  
I gave him mine.

I only miss it occasionally now,  
around Christmas time and Easter-

The rest of the time,  
I can scarcely tell it's gone.

Patti Masterman

# Disembodied Pleasures

There's a little man  
Inside my dreams,  
With a beautiful face  
And delicate fingers,  
Fighting wars  
On most the nights;  
By morning light  
He barely lingers.

He has a story  
He says; half true:  
He begs me to make him  
A real boy.  
But you're a man,  
I tell him again,  
You're not a plaything-  
Society's toy.

Only in dreams  
Will he believe  
He's real and not  
Some half-made thing,  
Some trash left out  
Beside the road:  
He's all the brilliance  
Chaos brings.

His words disjointed,  
Like wind picks up  
Whatever it finds  
And flings away-  
Never seen again,  
Till uncovered in spring,  
And you don't know where;  
How long it lay.

Each night he plucks  
My thoughts in sleep  
And arranges them

Like musical measures;  
I don't know  
How long he'll keep  
Coming, for my  
Disembodied pleasure.

Patti Masterman

# Disguises

In days past, I would kneel at your altar  
Heart keeping time like bees kissing clover  
Never came the day I could leave your orchard  
No matter how much weight old memories carry.

But you've turned yourself into the loneliest of flowers  
That grow best in shade and secret sanctuaries  
Only in rare botany books you scarcely are sighted  
My patience just another benighted plant.

Patti Masterman

# Disillusionment

Libation of time, that goes unpoured  
For the corpse, in death immured  
While we sit and wait, to feel that weight,  
That final pain- and is this it?

To think the clocks we watch, not ours  
The hours we lost, were only borrowed  
From accounts, surfeit no more  
Once we learned life is a bore

Of bills to pay, and fools to bear,  
While searching things that were not there;  
Have never been but imaginings late,  
Of what we never could partake.

Patti Masterman

# Dissection

Dissect the mystery of you?  
Peel back the white skin  
To more ivory bone.

Unearth the heart  
Sealed in its placenta-  
Does it live on love, or blood?

Uncover the eyeballs-  
A too-vivid,  
Unnatural shade, perhaps.

Where is the soul  
Enlivening them?

The mechanical clock hands  
Keep going round,  
Though counting no more hours.

Nice hair, if you like it still;  
Shining smugly.  
It will last a hundred years.

But where is the real  
Part of the man?  
It is not here; it never was.

Patti Masterman

# Distance

You're always losing your phone  
Or else you're over your monthly limit;  
Your laptops undone, the plug left behind  
Somewhere again, for the tenth time  
Friends loaner plugs gone missing as well  
You've decided to just forego phones  
And use the schools computers  
Though it's a short jog through sloshing fields  
On a long day when I can never find you  
In the wet basin where you now live  
And a new pox has broken out over half the world  
Threatening to engulf the other half  
Every moment new mountains trying to spring up between us  
Like hives popping out on a bee sting  
To sunder our vulnerable linkage hinged by blood  
And like an old dog on a familiar trail  
I keep returning to your bedroom  
Even though I know you're not there  
And the past keeps beckoning, one step behind  
Like a song on the radio that I used to sing along to  
With a verse that never really rhymed.

Patti Masterman

# Distant Relations

She's just being herself,  
She's just jealous and bored-  
I tried to give excuses,  
For the hateful and abhorred.

I tried to see their viewpoint,  
To feel the pain they feel;  
But it's hard to stay empathic  
As I'm ground beneath their heel.

I've found the safest outlet  
Is some distance: me from them;  
Then I'm less in danger  
From some evil on a whim.

And lies don't hold much meaning,  
When they're all by telephone-  
And once the calling stops,  
Most the pain becomes unknown.

If you must become a stranger  
To abide your kith and kin,  
Don't be afraid to do it,  
If sometimes you lose or win.

It's much too masochistic  
To abide the pain they mete-  
Especially when each time they come,  
You know it's trick, not treat.

There's no ill that I wish them,  
In fact; no wish at all:  
I'm happier not seeing them;  
No letter and no call.

Someday no longer living,  
They should feel quite free to come  
And hear my funeral sermon-  
Because with them- I'm done.

I'll be more happy being dead,  
That I'll have no more relations;  
And my last wish is all of them  
To bury some other location.

I don't want to share my soil,  
My birdsong, or my shade;  
And I don't want their graves dug  
With the exact, selfsame spade.

I don't want to spend  
The rest of my eternity,  
Lying next to someone who  
Would bicker territory.

I don't want surveyors taking  
Readings of the lots,  
So that grieving relatives  
Complain of what they got.

I don't want dead flowers  
Tossed upon my grave, from theirs;  
And their fast food take out trash  
Should stay with their own heirs.

I'll have the blood drained from my corpse  
And thus be buried, dry:  
So they'll have no reason then,  
To stand up there and cry.

I won't be kin to anyone,  
With no blood in my veins-  
No reason to be jealous,  
Hysterical, or strange.

In fact, it would be better  
To move my headstone soon,  
And only locate my poor grave  
By the shadows of the moon.

Then no one will loiter

Over my poor dusty bones.  
And only then the plot will feel  
It has become a home.

Patti Masterman

# Diurnal Cup

Where do days go,  
When you've lived them up;  
And emptied out  
The souls diurnal cup?

And when they're gone  
You, the same, go too-  
All finished, done-  
And that's enough, of you.

Patti Masterman

## Diversion

Do people passing by on the street  
Realize that they are a dancer in my solitary ballet;  
Their stride falling in tempo with the music  
That beats inside my head?  
I've borrowed them, a little bit out of their lives;  
A little extra to decorate mine, to orchestrate.  
They'll never even miss the part I've taken,  
Clean surgical extraction, as they went by,  
Fully engrossed in themselves.  
They never suspect they have a more colorful  
Personna, an alter-ego, unknown to them;  
For a few moments perhaps, almost notoriously profane,  
In the idle mysteries of contemplation.  
But then they go on their way and are soon forgotten  
Most ingloriously, to be replaced tomorrow  
With whatever happens along.  
We all have our secret ways of spending the hours.  
Tout passe.

Patti Masterman

# Divine Helix

You're the actor on the stage,  
You're the beacon of your age,  
The lone canary, singing wild:  
Natures summum bonum child.

You're the journey, you're the mage,  
You're the peace that war can't wage,  
You're the telescoping strand  
Dropped from space, to grow a man.

You're the future, bending back;  
The fullness, never knew the lack,  
Your cells repeating, endlessly  
For the cost of life is free.

Patti Masterman

# Do Birds Ever Pee?

It's truly confounding  
An elusive mystery  
Though it might seem obvious-  
Do birds ever pee?

Where's my mind been at  
These forty plus springs  
That it never gave a thought  
To little things with wings?

Some birds have free purchase  
Some live behind bars  
Yet never have I noticed  
Yellow rings on cars?

Like some chemical bonding  
In hermetic vessel  
It looks so homogeneous  
As if mixed in a pestle?

It really seems clear  
When the matter's checked out  
That everything exits  
Through one single spout?

Patti Masterman

# Do Flower, Drop Some Dew

Do flower, dropp some dew  
Upon me  
And ripen me too  
I follow you, reaper  
Sower of dreams  
How it gleams  
In a fair flowers face.

Sun hunter, shines on high  
Shine on me  
Hunter, gathering by  
Dreams of a sun weaver  
Spreading your glow  
Lights up soul  
With a rainbow trace.

Love potion, on earth bestowed  
Love the best portion  
Enter us whole  
Seeking always  
As the dream's began  
Till heart of man  
Show every grace.

Patti Masterman

# Do I Live In Houses

Do I live in houses, or do they seem to live  
Through me? Though I'm never sure, it seems  
With their odors wafting all around,  
They fill in my chinks, as I polish their mirrors;  
We know each other's ways, by now:  
I recognize all their creaks and groans  
Memory set up housekeeping, years ago  
In a thousand different arenas;  
Each object, is some memento  
Can drag me away, unexpectedly;  
So many afternoon interludes,  
Of minutiae's faint innuendos;  
Coming upon a secreted treasure;  
Only to release me, to another  
Studied sameness, of daylight's cover.

My mirrored face too, belongs here now  
To bygone eras, the house contained  
Of all those selves, coming and going,  
And passing away; too quietly,  
Into corners of rooms, and dresser drawers  
And pressed tight between the oldest book's covers:  
My life is a quilt, made of nothing more  
Than windows, walls and slamming doors  
Which can hold me still, or cast me forth  
To yet more places, still breathe my name  
I'm caught in all their reflections for  
I'm just the jewelry, of this place  
The momentary decoration, of stasis.  
And there are other places I could go,  
But they would never know me, half so well  
As this shuttered mine, of self.

(written to Unkle - In A State)

Patti Masterman

# Do Not Sift Things Until Nothing Is Left

Do not sift things until nothing is left,  
Until the germ has fallen through, with the kernel,  
And the husk has settled down in the dust;  
Discernment is not dismembering-  
And affection, not belated trust.

Patti Masterman

# Do You Own Your Dreams

Do you own your dreams-  
And the things you find there;  
Do you own the oceans,  
Do you own the air?

Might as well own a phantom-  
Or a mermaid's hair.

Do you own your wishes,  
The secrets that you crave;  
Do you own a reverie,  
In sleeps cavernous caves?

For nothing can you capture-  
Nothing can you save.

When you go to pick your dreams up  
At the time you die,  
The angels there will whisper,  
'We sold them- for a sigh! '

Patti Masterman

# Do You Take This Man?

The scattered evenings deliver intangibles,  
Though late risen mornings hold promise  
Of more imponderable, sordid daydreams:  
I'm stealing your words now,  
Because there's nothing else left  
Of the tentative rawness, of emptied sunshine;  
Eroded guilt is soon replaced  
By more luckless enterprise;  
As he turns you into just another  
Vapid revision of himself.  
My furious craving is more tedium  
To your splintered songs;  
Your words are only the fulcrum  
To lever him out with;  
Above your hips and lips  
And naive, unconditional fealty,  
Your bravely staring  
Preterconscious dreams of orbital daylight-  
Are you drawn inexorably into the wake  
of his impossible stances;  
His sudden proximities, his backlashing sentiments-  
Because if you would only once  
give of him everything that you were, and are;  
You would have nothing left for him then,  
And he would be forced to search  
To find another fearless romantic  
To accept his indemnified rare caress.  
After all, they are only words,  
And you can always get others;  
So how can you say, 'I do? '  
While knowing how short love, and cold  
The little hope of heartless dreams?

Patti Masterman

# Does A Sunken Galleon

Does a sunken Galleon live in time;  
Does a once drowned book  
Still sing in rhyme?  
Do mermaid's fingers  
Now turn the page;  
Or Captain remember  
Sea's foaming rage?

Does love unnoticed  
Beget love forgot;  
Does it freeze in December,  
And thawing, rot;  
If in your mind, there could no doubt,  
Does the ink of Time  
Ever run out?

Patti Masterman

## Does It Ever End?

we know if you're dead what a hassle it can be getting a move on  
out of that coffin let zippy-monitoring-service do that regular shopping  
for birthdays, anniversaries, christmas, graduation gifts that  
you keep putting off- got mold? that's no problem for zippy,  
we do a biannual spray for mold and fungus you know that awful  
rot growing over your sunday-best-that-has-got-to-last-you-forever  
no more worries call zippy's-fungus-r-us and forget your worries  
the other half of the year. missing your near-and-dear ones, well  
no more tears with zippy's wirefree intercom service we'll put microphones  
through your loved ones communication interfaces and you can hear  
what's going on 24/7 no matter how distant or spaced out they are,  
even if they never darken your graveyard again, you'll be in-the-know and  
never miss another important moment again, because we know how precious  
those moments are when you're coffin-bound drainage issues? no more sweating  
it, zippy ground pumping service has the hose size that's just right, inserted  
quickly into the liner monthly to ensure all that yucky-mucky gets pumped away,  
leaving you high and dry and you'll see that life and death only get easier with  
zippy, yes that's ZIPPY, dial your local code + zippy and experience instant relief  
today no matter what the problem don't worry, just call zippy and be happy;  
wonderful feeling, wonderful day! ..

Patti Masterman

# Does One Life Hold Enough?

does one life hold enough of beauty  
to cushion you through the fall?  
is there enough queer satisfaction  
to slow it to a crawl,  
could we interject some freeze-frames  
there where tears meet up with eyes-  
and intersperse the laughter  
with upside-downward sighs.

could we balance birth with death  
and never stop to worry,  
how days and seasons near the end  
come in such a hurry;  
so can I close my eyes now,  
will you end it with a kiss-  
does death hold much to offer  
that can compare with this?

(written to Dayvan Cowboy by Boards of Canada)

Patti Masterman

# Dogged Wonder

Dogged wonder, that we can go on breathing,  
In this fleeting mystery, of what's called life;  
How we're given our time seems deceiving-  
It's few enough years, the human disturbs quiet.

Patti Masterman

# Dogma In My Hymn

Dogma in my hymn: I am God  
Dog, as a devil deified; deified, lived as a dog  
Dog sex, even if fine, vexes God.  
Dog's a fool: aloof as God.

Senile felines-  
Was it a car or a cat I saw?  
Stack cats;  
Step on no pets  
Drab as a fool, aloof as a bard.

Patti Masterman

# Doing Things Over Again The Right Way

I want to be a dark tree in the shadows,  
In a yard where nobody goes;  
To be forgotten, just like starlight  
In the ship's hold, far below.

I'll be the gate that never opens  
On a field of barren grass,  
That's covering up some long lost name  
Of an upstart baroness.

I want to be the whisperer,  
That stays behind your shadow,  
To be that letter never delivered-  
The one that wouldn't matter.

Patti Masterman

## Do-List

King Tut's necklace missing;  
They're hunting high and low,  
And Obama's nose is growing  
Just like Pinocchio's.

And the Ben Bernanke is sensitive,  
For he feels misunderstood,  
Cause all the paper he's printing  
Is really just a bunch of wood.

And there's lots that's going on  
But I find it hard to care;  
King Tut he died eons ago,  
And there's something in the air:

For the birds keep falling dead,  
And Yellowstone's waking up,  
The sun has no more sunspots,  
And the North Pole's moving up.

The Gulf current dead or dying,  
The Middle East flying apart;  
I wish I had a magic carpet  
To escape from all this dark.

The fish dying in their schools,  
The gas is scarce or gone;  
The power plants are idling  
Just when the chill is on.

Is there something I've forgotten,  
On my list of things to dread-  
Oh yes, I've ordered poison  
Cause I'm better off just dead.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Be Jealous

Don't be jealous what others have written  
In their own frame and time of season  
They are there in the place they've awoken  
To write down words gleaned from their reason  
Lived out each day, their truth gets spoken.

You are not them; you are not there  
We're all just panes in a stained glass way:  
The things they've seen you might not bear  
Could they endure the bed you lay?  
No one but you sings your soul's song,

Walks the same path your foot falls on-  
Don't silence the poet inside of you  
Trying to fill some other's space  
Cause then nobody will hear your songs  
And the world would miss your grace.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Be Scared

While the star-clocks were whirling  
The icebergs got intimate  
With the oceans blue eyes.

The poles played musical chairs  
While dinosaurs down-sized.

Lie down in soft green,  
For the grass has hidden stories-  
Don't be scared what's inside.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Blink

Someday I'm afraid I'll wake up  
To find out that I'm not me any longer;  
That I've become a stranger-  
Or more like a nodding acquaintance-  
But still not really me anymore.

Once I dreamed I was at the store,  
Where I used my credit card, and when I signed  
The signature slip, I realized at that instant  
That I had forgotten how to write like me-  
And perhaps even,  
What name to put down there?

The world is so full of things not-us,  
We are like a fly speck on society,  
Or a one-celled amoeba within creation,  
And the fact that we exist at all is an enigma,  
An implausible, unbelievable paradox  
That strains imagination.  
But don't blink-

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Bother

I'm nobody's favorite Jezebel  
I own myself like a stray dog  
Owns a bush or tree  
And nobody's after me.

I can go or stay, nobody blinks  
Under the radar's the best way to be  
If life's just one thing after another-  
When it comes to me, nobody'd bother.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Breathe A Word Of This

There is some infernal balancing sheet at work  
Whereby, if I start to become attached at the navel-  
Want to spend every moment with my new Icon  
Whether friend, lover, writer, mentor, or muse:  
Immediately some noxious fume goes up into the jet stream;  
It spreads out, coats the clouds; the wings of birds  
Strange chemical reactions where the particles land  
And the new God has to piss me off;  
Shits in my new pajamas, eats the last fig...  
They have to do the one thing, I know I just can't abide.  
Finally I think I've got it: it's just not worth it.  
If I have any plans or strange attractors-  
Best to keep them to myself  
Nary a whisper- not even written down-  
Don't want to tell myself what my real ambitions are  
For clearly I am my own worst enemy,  
If the past has anything to say about it.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Do My Thinking For Me

I don't need a ritual  
I don't need a mass  
I don't need a vigil  
Or chalice made of brass

I don't need a litany  
I don't need an altar  
I don't need a sinless saint  
Or a holy psalter

I don't need a clergy  
I don't need a steeple  
I don't need a prayer book  
Or condescending people

My sacred lies within  
In the deepest part of me  
Not reached by rumored sin  
Not here: the very heart of me

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Even Ask

I'll sky dive and I'll free fall  
Tied to the end of a bungee cord  
I'll climb rocks, hang in the breeze  
I can do anything with ease  
I'll hang glide, sky surf, parachute  
Be the first cowboy, out the shoot  
I'll wrangle, tangle, mud wrestle, dangle  
I'll even snowboard, at a very odd angle

Skateboards don't scare  
And stilts I can do  
I'll take to the air  
Just to please you  
I'll do anything on the planet here  
Or anything in the the far sky too  
In my life, there's no place for fear  
Except for love- that I won't do.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Forget The Olives

Would you be a martyr to serendipitous days,  
And leonine winters with marshmallow bays.  
Give up your personal dinghy still smiling  
While all around you the monkeys are styling,  
And brightly-hued parrots are walking the plank,  
While one-eyed drunk pirates berate and pull rank  
They're having h'ors d'oeuvres on a coral-colored yacht,  
And orange-striped longjohns are the thing that's most sought  
After getting caught in the rain, with galoshes bright green  
A sure sign of winning the lottery, I'll ween.  
But I must be getting back now; the sky is quite full  
Of the puffy white clouds I've been hired on, to cull  
I'll shrink them and wrap them and float them to Cuba;  
Where they're stuffed, before shipping, down into a tuba-  
The music's the thing, I think we all agree well  
And there's so much of that it's best put out to sail.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Forget To Listen

I look at photos of earthquake victims  
And tsunami victims;  
Victims of storms and hurricanes,  
And I can't help weeping,  
Because Earth has such beautiful children  
And it's difficult to see them dead and wounded,  
Hope and future removed, along with life and liveliness,  
Their still life frozen forever in time now;  
So many uncounted children, mothers, fathers, old people..

I wonder if after death, angels and spirits gather round them,  
Whispering that everything will be alright now;  
No more pain for them, no more tears-  
Perhaps they were waiting many days and hours  
To hear the rescuer, that never arrived?

Hope can both lift us, and wound us to the core  
If we are allowed to languish in misery till the end.  
I hope they died with hope still living inside them;  
Please, don't let anyone die with no hope left,  
Let their tears cry out to heaven and call down help-  
For you can be the very hope of heaven, down here,  
So don't forget to listen, for the very smallest cries.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Leave Too Soon

Halls of weeping stone,  
Tears of clammy rock,  
Mute faces bearing wounds  
And moon-rise, like a clock.

Life moves as through a dream,  
Of silver searching blue,  
And rips the fairy-stream;  
Don't leave the world too soon.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Let The Lily Bloom In Vain

He told me then how he'd return  
When the flowers opened in spring  
Even though the sun might burn-  
The bluebells forget how to ring.

He promised that his promise  
Was as good as gotten gold  
His words; his self; I did surmise  
Gave me something I could hold.

When winter doldrums finally lift  
And spring arrives in pouring rain:  
And nature's fragrant with beauty's gifts-  
Oh, don't let the Lily bloom in vain.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Listen To The Words

Don't listen to the words,  
When the face can tell your future;  
The slightest touch might lie-  
But not the psyches sutures.

Don't watch the mouths perturbings,  
But watch the hands, instead:  
The words are always cheapest-  
Don't lay down in a fool's bed.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Look Up

Don't look up; heaven might wither  
Under the heavy weight of your stare,  
Don't look down; hell is a given-  
Might see people you know, down there.

Don't look left, it's the left-hand path;  
Witches and evil and spells, you know,  
Don't look right, where the new self righteous  
Bask in the self-lit hypocrites glow.

Don't look, don't look; just close your eyes,  
Just try to imagine a world that's free;  
One where looking doesn't mean a thing-  
But where one looks, one truly sees.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Steal A Poet's Words

Don't steal a poet's words don't degrade his meaning-  
Degrade his children, denigrate his home,  
But never look down on his words.

His children come from his loins;  
His verses come out of his soul,  
Though his home belong to his elders,  
And even his children are half his and half the world's

But his words are nearly all of him,  
The flames of which torch him nightly,  
The breath of the world's mind breathing him in,  
Day by endless day, year to interminable year,  
The thin wisps of his smoke growing ever more slender,  
Going deeper inside like long drags of tobacco

Imbibing his condensate and outdistancing his distillate,  
The spirit and totality wrung out of him, raw and bloody:  
All the fallen stars he ever saw;  
The text of all creation rewritten in his voice.

Every man creates himself knowingly or unknowingly,  
With his diligent words- even if he never act on them.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Steal My Eyes

Don't steal my eyes-  
Even if heaven's a rumor  
Where they're waiting for you  
In just a day or two.

Time's just the joker  
Who wrinkles your face,  
While you try to decide  
What you're meant to do.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Step On A Crack You'LI Step On Jack

After the war ended, we always remembered  
to take careful, measured steps  
because sometimes  
you would see a wildflower  
poking out the ruins of a shirt  
or some tattered piece of clothing-

And it wasn't coming out a lapel,  
it was deeply embedded  
in the fleshy soil  
that still carried on  
a secret life of it's own.

And occasionally,  
a white mushroom that looked edible  
was really a mummified eyeball  
straining to get one more  
good look at the sun  
before nightfall came back again,  
tying everything together  
into one giant wracked body  
in the ruins.

(And we even learned not to run away  
just because the wind might scream  
exactly like the gunshot victim,  
the one who got left behind on the streets,  
lying there holding in his guts  
with his one remaining good hand)

Patti Masterman

# Don'T The Dead Have Boring Days

Don't the dead have boring days,  
Dull plans; they're in a haze,  
Halitosis, their eyes are glazed.  
Instead of moving, they just laze.

The dead don't make excuses  
For what's not done; there are no ruses.  
The dead only have old bruises.  
They're not taking any cruises.

The dead don't have love affairs,  
And they never put on airs.  
If they were smart, now it's not there.  
The thing that they do best is stare.

The dead think they are so urbane;  
They are, if you ignore the stains;  
They never wax, they only wane:  
Sometimes I think they're all insane.

Being dead's a formal thing;  
People come and someone sings,  
All the phones and doorbells ring-  
But no one knows just what it means?

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Try To Decode Me

Don't try to decode me;  
Enter into any liberties,  
Never try to read my mind,  
So aloof cause you're not my kind.

You're a bore and so uncouth;  
And you wouldn't know the truth  
If it bludgeoned you in the eye-  
And this is all more reason why

My words won't tell a thing to you,  
There's nothing you can say or do:  
Don't bother taking me to task;  
I'm hidden well: I wear the Mask.

No treason makes my blood turn cold  
No actions make my own less bold  
Don't need limelight, in which to bask:  
I'm self contained; I wear the Mask.

No one can recognize or know  
The real me, behind the show;  
The Mask contain conveniently  
So I can be more vehement me.

I'll let you live if you'll retreat  
Away from me and do not seek  
To move the Mask aside to find  
The real face that lives behind.

Worn so long, that now my face  
Has rotted off, inside this place  
I'm just a skull, inside this frame  
Though once I had a living name.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Try To Write For The Masses

Don't try to write for the masses-  
Your sleight-of-the-hand phrase of articulated beauty  
Will scarcely be acknowledged.

The subtle twist of rhythm escapes their notice;  
The artist knows all this by heart;  
He only writes now to try and save himself.

I have known astounding works  
Untouched by human hands, never visited  
But once: the discovery by only one  
Enough to save whole lifetimes.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T Weep For America

Don't weep for America,  
For the world that was-  
It was always more an idea  
Than a place;  
Always more an ideal-  
With grace.

Don't weep for America;  
It will rise again,  
Some other place,  
It will all begin:  
It was an idea ahead of time,  
Earthly heaven by man's design.

Don't weep for America;  
Some things must fail,  
And be rebuilt  
With brand new nails;

Don't weep- keep looking  
Around to find  
The new America-  
Is in your mind.

Patti Masterman

# Don'T You See

Don't you see; once you're wounded  
Nothing can ever be fine again-  
The world will keep counting down it's calendars  
Till the next execution, and people will smile,  
Shake your hand; pretend that no tears come  
Pretend normalcy; pretend the graves are empty  
But you know yours waits, like a mouth gaped open,  
Like a shriek, just waiting for the echo to return:  
They'll bury all your dreams, and your heartbeats  
Will never again vibrate the world's flesh

Being forgotten is the only true sin;  
Because no one has ever escaped it  
In that void of presence we leave behind  
And I'm weeping for all of us now,  
And I know I'll never be able to stop crying again  
Until that last heartbeat falters,  
Or fades away: for to live is to realize  
That you've been irreparably broken, and to keep going anyway  
Knowing that all we are, is a memory soon fading  
But can you still hear my heart beating?

(written to Lisa Gerrard - Sanvean (I am Your Shadow))

Patti Masterman

# Doomed

A new friendship's come with  
Excitement's discovery  
Getting to know you is  
Adventure beyond compare.  
Whatever we find will be kept close  
Between us, in triumph  
Dense flowers between us will bear.

Days spent in rhapsody  
Petals opening together  
No other's been invited-  
We provide no more room.  
Thus distilled together  
No feature stays hidden  
Though it pains me to say this  
Pettiness is your doom.

Patti Masterman

# Doppelganger In A Store

I saw my mother again in a popular store,  
She was languidly exploring aisles.  
She was the true doppelganger, if one had ever existed.  
I wanted to run up and stroke her cheek,  
Wanted to hear her voice, look into her eyes..

I did not stare blatantly, but was coy;  
Perusing useless things to my left and right,  
Casting the occasional glance, in her direction.  
My heart was downcast, paying my paltry bill.  
Leaving, I knew I would never see her again, anywhere.

I felt both bitter and guilty at my withdrawal  
From her magnetic presence.  
For she had no more to do with my own mother,  
Than a bird has to do, with a hallowed rosebush-  
Or a cloud has to do, with heaven.

Patti Masterman

# Dots And Dashes

Just dots and dashes line the cranium,  
Like artfully arranged geraniums;  
Coming hither, thither every compass-jointed day.  
In the corpus land profundum,  
You will find there nothing's humdrum,  
As your brain cries out the words it's desperate to say.

From every venue they come streaming;  
Word and phrase so ripe of meaning,  
And they whistle strangely, as they disappear away;  
On busy wharves and ways they're teaming,  
Maybe pompous; over-weening,  
Words at which your peace of mind is happy just to bray.

Edgar; Ed; its true I owe you,  
And though this is nothing to you,  
Since the land of dreams is where you reside to this day;  
Dreams are where you wished to live; you  
Scheming dreamer of the fibs who  
Made of English temples, where we daily sing your praise.

Patti Masterman

# Double Slit Experiment

All things appear to be visible down here  
My present, my love, my life-  
The embodiment of self in perpetual motion.

But there's a sharp division, between the upward turning eye  
The feelings binding meaning with flesh  
The shadowed identity of intuitives absolute.

Sense and impression inhabit the same illusion,  
All bordered by the tempered limits of logic  
Like a watcher, anchored high above the worlds restraints.

But only between words does reality happen.

Patti Masterman

# Doubt

Wood draws in the shallows,  
Time warps in the fault.  
Words fail when they're fallow;  
Clocks fail, then they halt.

Steps circle the crater,  
Trails cease at the ledge:  
And now falls into later-  
But doubt lives on the edge.

Patti Masterman

# Dowager Sky

There's a dowager sky in the east, at the morn,  
Wearing one jewel of the new day that's born;  
Thin as the wisp of the moon, at her throat-  
Riding all day, on her cloudy blue boat.

She takes off her blue, as the day's closing down,  
And puts on her stole- with the diamonds around-  
And blinks trembling eyes, on our tired, sleepy world-  
And waits patiently, for the day to unfurl.

Patti Masterman

# Down In The Deep

Down in the deep, down in the deep,  
The mermaids have oceans of secrets to keep;  
The valleys so low, and the mountains so steep-  
Down in the deep, down in the deep.

Down in the deep, down in the deep,  
The waves swell and pound, till the creatures all sleep,  
And all the old shipwrecks first groan, and then shriek-  
Down in the deep, down in the deep.

Down in the deep, down in the deep,  
The fish and the whale and the dolphin do leap,  
And the pirate lays next to the sailor, asleep-  
Down in the deep, down in the deep.

Patti Masterman

# Down To Hell

She strokes with thighs of polished silk  
Her lover, to finish him off;  
If she had birthed, he'd drink her milk.

Her glistening flesh he's famished for,  
Her musky sex is poised to please;  
He's raised her up upon her toes,  
Making her beg him, finish please!

Her clothes fall down at his soft touch  
From him, she's always craving more-  
And avarice avails her much.

This hunger feeds the paler flesh,  
That's hid by lace, but thinly veiled;  
Don't make us choose, when it comes to this:  
We'd gladly go on down to hell..

Patti Masterman

# Dowsing

Adorn me with you,  
With unashamed glimpses  
Or lock me inside  
Like some abandoned mine.

With prayer beads on lips,  
Hearts beating like thunder  
This lightning strikes fast  
But the penance takes time.

Bewitchments abhor  
A dry well, an anchor;  
To fly free through thin air  
Just pretend there's a savior.

In the chalice of heart  
I poured out my wet petals,  
Till your rose-silk of eyes  
Found the mended way in.

Patti Masterman

# Dragonflies Return - Haiku

dragonflies return  
to the place where they were born  
my humble pond

Patti Masterman

# Dragonflies Threading

dragonflies threading  
the ruffled water-lillies  
while willow slumbers  
droppings of palest lichen  
and sunlight lull them to sleep

Patti Masterman

## Dread Not - Sonnet

Dread not, that fickle time knows not your name;  
Nor fear, that vanquished age will stake its claim:  
For evolution is the game of life,  
It soothes our ancient wounds, it ends all strife.

The dust knows more than paltry men may learn,  
The end to all our future enterprise-  
But holds its stony tongue, lest we discern  
We're drowned, beneath an earthly weight of lies.

Our fantasies and dreams; but sediment,  
Our darting eyes are full of nothing real,  
And we can have no notion where they went,  
And so our lies, from rancid truth we steal.

We would at once all things save love, impeach  
If we could view ourselves from heaven's reach.

Patti Masterman

# Dream Of A Morning

Rent my dream in half;  
Tip of a horseapple branch,  
Projected into the steep plane of my sleep.

Falling green fruits, sailing along southerly winds;  
Tales I gather into the hem of my nightgown,  
Of fake apples never offered to Eve.

And snakes grown huge, with bulbous middles,  
Sprouting thorny trees, from their many camouflage eye sockets,  
And horses rearing up, at the sight of snakes.

Suddenly the sun peers in, just beside the fluttering curtain;  
Snakes and horses dearticulating rapidly  
Back into leaf patterns, spiraling onto the wall of morning.

Patti Masterman

# Dream Twister

In the dreams I would hide in my mothers closet;  
That cobwebbed den of indeterminate size, piled sky high  
With ancient high heeled shoes; spilling out all over  
In every color of the rainbow; old wool suits  
She had worn one hundred pounds less ago.  
I guess I thought that the twisting tornado  
At the back of our place, was coming solely for me:  
Had my name written all over it-  
Like an intelligent monster, it came stalking only me  
In my dreams, and I always went for that closet.  
I guess my reasoning went, that if no one could find anything in there  
A tornado would never notice me crouching down.  
Of course, in dreams closets expand to gargantuan  
Sizes with furniture and rooms of their own.  
And in dreams tornadoes are vengeful, intelligent beings  
Following their nose, like a hound dog, just to find you.  
I don't know what I thought I had done that made me  
Deserving of tornadoes hunting me nightly.  
Strangely there was never anyone else around in these dreams.  
No one to run to; no one to cling to- just me and the old hats,  
The rank furs, the dust bunnies; holding in my breath;  
Afraid that thing down the garden path would hear me.

Patti Masterman

# Dreamcatcher

Dreamcatcher, please catch my dreams;  
The secret ones, with silver seams,  
Or diamond bits, in eyes and smiles..

Long roads we travel in this life,  
Please take the strife I nightly face,  
So those at least, are peaceful miles..

Hold the jewels, in trust for me;  
Let others through your web, fly free-  
Lord knows we have enough of trials..

I feel you up there, in the dark  
Catching dreams, with tiny sparks  
As the hours of night, beguile...

Patti Masterman

## Dreamers Gold

Lost in the blue, trying to winnow the way to you:  
Swift flies the sickle; the aim be sharp and true;  
The thresher dividing the wheat from the dross,  
The clearing, it gleams where the golden rows close.  
The day may be long but with scarce a complaint  
So long as the grain is kept free of all taint.  
With long winter shadows returning again,  
The laid up fall stores soon turn sour and thin  
Again will I dream of toil spent in the sun  
I'll count all the hours till winter's undone.

Patti Masterman

# Dreaming Of Storms

Dreaming of storms  
I lie with you  
The lightnings flash  
Your eyes are blue.

Dreaming of sun  
Your face shines down  
Gold-tipped silence  
Is all around.

Dreaming of rain  
Your tear dropp slides  
Into the place  
Where love hides.

Patti Masterman

# Dreaming Up Heavens In The Night-Opened Sky

We used to travel miles just to get there,  
On bumpy dirt and gravelled roads;  
We'd cross the bump-bump bridge, now retired-  
You knew you were on it, by the bumpety-bump rattling your teeth.  
We were going to the house, the little home of loving kindness,  
On our yearly Christmas pilgrimage, to the country.

Cows lived there too, separated by fences,  
And old wallpaper bloomed on greasy walls  
While clocks kept track of slow moving days,  
And stale cooking odors hung about for hours-  
But love lived there too  
And a kind of floating, unbound happiness.

In dreams, the happiness lives on,  
Though the faces now are blurred,  
And the wallpaper an uncertain, wandering stain;  
And nothing much goes on, every idle hour of the day,  
Which nothing keeps track of, but the shifting shadows.

At night the coyotes howled and the dark seemed unnerving,  
But you knew you were safe underneath the covers,  
Or huddled in the little bathroom, which smelled of Dove soap-  
And the tiny nightlight always burning away the hours of the deep  
In its dusty, yellowed socket.

Now the house is a ruin, and no one travels there;  
The wallpaper melts more with each rain,  
And mildews and curls down spasmodically,  
Waiting for no one to notice or care.  
The ground cover has crept inside now, through covert holes  
We would not have suspected could have been there.

The cows are long gone, but the coyotes are allowed in  
Though they disdain the inner walls, and keep to the outside.  
And the stars look down in clear brilliance, where once stood a bed-  
And sometimes- a small child, dreaming up heavens  
In the night-opened sky.



# Dreams Of A Child

On the highest plateau, I found flowers  
With starlight still lurking inside,  
From the glow of the finest moon-hours  
Where the dew and the fireflies abide.

Frost glittered like scattered gems,  
Placed in shadow by dark-velvet hands,  
And the plants there had smooth agate stems  
At the edge of the deeper badlands.

I found dreams which were left by a child,  
As he sailed far above the moon's smile;  
By small hands and soft eyes they were styled  
And they twinkled for many more miles.

Patti Masterman

# Dreams That Died Before Growing Old

In misty churches of my dreams  
I reunite with dead family members;  
A storm is coming, do they mean  
To stay together: nothing's as it seems.

In dreams are things that might make sense  
And other things that are there by chance,  
But who can sort the living and dead;  
A dream is like a hypnotic trance.

I awaken, and the past rears up,  
I see where the dry rot's taken hold-  
Emotions that were never processed-  
And dreams that died, before growing old.

Patti Masterman

# Drink Poetry, Oh Ye Of Small Faith

Drink poetry, oh ye of small faith:

Drink poetry from a bottle

Drink poetry from a book

Drink poetry from a fountain

Take another look.

Drink for sanctuary

Drink for inspiration

Drink for endurance

But never hesitation.

A toast to poetry

And a toast to time

A toast to us:

Live forever in rhyme.

Patti Masterman

# Drinking Poetry From A Brown Paper Bag

Now I'm in the turnips and string beans of poetry:  
It's like, you think you'll grow up some day  
And live in a two story house with swimming pool,  
And a two car garage, with a six pack driveway.  
Things turn out differently, though you might think  
You'd spend whole days devouring Dickinson, Keats, and Shelley,  
Drinking fine wines with tidbits of exotic cheese.

Then you find out you'll live in a one car rented garage apartment,  
Over a couple always yelling or making love-  
There's no in-between; and you never know which it'll be  
And if you're mistaken for the significant other you might get  
Bopped with a lady's spiked heel or an army boot.

Then you find out that you're the couple  
But you're always too busy to make love;  
Love is no longer scheduled like bowling night,  
It all depends on uncluttered horizontal surfaces and spare minutes-  
And the wine turns into beer, when you can afford it  
And the nightly budget pizza is the only dough you'll get  
It's constipating; but the words still get squeezed out.

And the poets you're reading now aren't dead:  
They're urbanely unkempt, and you know them personally,  
All their quirky habits; writing poems at bus stops  
In a voluble rush; writing words on cafe napkins,  
On discarded want ads and torn paper sacks;  
And none of them are well known, and none of them are rich.

But they're poets all the same, they live and breathe  
The written word, and you're no different, certainly no better,  
All of you shooting up words and slang nightly,  
Weighing out the soul of the latest idiom,  
Choking on cheap cigar smoke and wishing you'd written that,  
And thinking you could have done it worse-  
And suddenly some night, you look around you

You realize you're living poetry, and you don't care anymore  
About rich and famous- because now it's your addiction;

None of that mattered anyway, for only poetry holds any reality now.  
Everything else is imaginary, and all the poets started out this way;  
Nobody knew them or gave a rat's ass,  
And they went on writing just the same  
As if it were the most important job on earth they'd been given.

Patti Masterman

# Drop

Drop a few lines in my cup  
Drop some coins, I'll drink it up  
Drop a smile, I'll raise you one  
Drop a bill, the world comes running

Drop a hint; forgotten goes  
Drop a tip; the bars won't close  
Drop your pants, to sleep alone  
Drop your heart, it comes undone

Drop the earth, you float away  
Drop the moon, and light goes by  
Drop the sun, and lose the day  
Drop the world, and lose the lie

Patti Masterman

# Drowned Piano

Drowned piano, plunging through the depths,  
Bubbling out its dark mahogany breaths;  
Drowned piano, songs played by the tide  
And the harp strings shivering inside.

Drowned piano, the sea's become your hymn,  
All about you schools of fishes swim;  
Upon your legs, the coral will make a home,  
And clams will envy your keys of whiter bone.

Drowned piano, answers a mermaid's prayer;  
Startles sea-urchins, with a sight so rare;  
Drowned piano, so many miles from shore-  
Beloved fingers caress you never more.

Patti Masterman

# Drowning In Air

You were blameless and sweet

The night you died,

And when you stopped moving,

I couldn't breathe.

I'm drowning in air,

drowning in air

because you're gone-

gone away nowhere

Abandoned so early,

Left all alone,

Buried yourself in the world,

To make you a home.

I'm drowning in air,

drowning in air

because you're gone-

gone away nowhere

You were my home;

Orphaned, we two,

Missing mothers,

And fathers too.

I'm drowning in air,

drowning in air

because you're gone-

gone away nowhere

We claimed each other,

Reclaimed lost souls,

But you've gone away

And mine's a hole.

I'm drowning in air,

drowning in air

because you're gone-

gone away nowhere

Patti Masterman

# Drug Warnings For Elation Ee-Lay-Shun Norepinephrine (&#945; -hypophamine)

## Drug Warnings and Indications:

Take this medicine only when there is nothing else that will work in your case, and only on the advice of a competent Higher Physician skilled in the dosing and administering of ELATION, because dependence on this drug can develop very quickly. Do not skip doses if it can be avoided, to ensure proper brain concentrations of the chemicals and to avoid associated discomforts of withdrawal. Physiological reactions to the primary dose can cause fast pulse, heightened blood pressure and short episodes of extremely fast breathing, which are usually self-limiting; also various other symptoms depending on the individual reaction. This drug has been known to cause pregnancy and miscarriage and may impair the effectiveness of any birth control methods. Addictions and severe physiological cravings have been associated with even short term use and/or deprivation of this medication. May cause dizziness, sedation, and poor judgment at times. This medication may cause tremors, night terrors, shaking of the hands, hot flashes and intense excitement for brief periods of time, with longer episodes of extraordinarily heightened awareness of surroundings. This medicine can cause mental illness if dosing is not administered at regular intervals, or if medication fails to affect brain chemistry in the expected manner. This drug has been known to cause endless fantasizing and suicidal ideation. ELATION improves the operation of all other pharmacologics and facilitates the effects of other chemicals regimens. If overdosing is suspected, contact a poison control center immediately, although overdosing on ELATION is considered anecdotal only.

When taking SSRI (Selective Serotonin-Reuptake Inhibitor) drugs such as ELATION, do not rely solely on this medication to solve every problem. Results will vary and this medication may not work for all persons with the same effects; different dosing and timing may be required by different ages, conditions, and temperaments.

Seek professional counseling in the event of withdrawal symptoms after completely stopping the use of ELATION.

## Disclaimer:

Self-proscribing and administering of drugs is never recommended. ELATION not responsible for injuries and damages caused/sustained by the use of ELATION and effects from ELATION and/or it's generic equivalent, also known

as LOVE.

Patti Masterman

## Drunk On Roses

drunk on roses, I float your dreamy seas,  
skin moaning, in the depths of my beloved:  
undulant dances bloom from my least pose,  
the charmed snake seeks ecstasies release;  
in quiet luxuries of straining flesh  
then breath stirs, at the back of my neck:  
gladly, I'll drink your proffered wines

Patti Masterman

# Duct Tape Sally

Duct tape Sally,  
She lived by the alley,  
Her shoes were made of tape;  
And her underwear beneath,  
And her bra, pity's sake-  
But she said, it never leaks..

Duct tape Sally,  
She never dallied,  
Her house looked drab by day;  
The windows opaque,  
The door a fake-  
But she always had her tape.

Duct tape Sally,  
She counted her tally,  
Found she was one box short;  
She found the thief,  
And tied his feet-  
And now he pees through a port.

Patti Masterman

# Dust Of Ashes

I stuck my hand in the pocket  
Of one of your ancient wool coats.  
Unworn for many years, too small for me,  
It had obviously fit a much younger, trimmer you.  
Inside I found a single well-handled pink tissue,  
Very fragile, but still in one piece.

I held it up, in awe of its age.  
It was then I saw the glimmer  
Of infinitesimal crystals;  
Bodily secretions from the distant past.  
At once I imagined you outside,  
Nose running freely in the cold air,  
Furtively brushing your nose now and again  
With the tissue, before reburying it  
In the satin-lined pocket.

As I held it up in the dim light of the bedroom,  
A furtive breeze, aided by the shaking  
Of my hand, unlocked the tiny prisms  
From the weave of pinkness,  
And they dispersed into the air invisibly,  
Like the popping of silent bubbles.

A delicate part of you had been returned,  
Freed, into the constantly moving stream of life,  
Now released from a silken bondage.  
I bowed my head in wonder at it;  
That you were gone from me now,  
And yet here was this most human statement left behind,  
An outpouring from your once vibrant body.

And I had just touched you again,  
And could feel you floating all around me,  
Finer in the air, than ashes from a cremation,  
Was this dust of ashes  
From a long lost Winter day.  
And then, I breathed you back into me  
Just for a few minutes, and watched

As the boundaries of time and space were suspended.

Cleaning out my mother's closet, after my parents had passed on, I went through all the coat pockets carefully, to be sure I wasn't discarding something precious- and found something unexpected, for all its fleeting presence had time to communicate to me.

Patti Masterman

# Dust Of The Dust

Dust of the dust, of a little child,  
Who wished on the stars, and his heart was pure;  
Dust of his hands, once folded in yours:  
Dust blows away, but the love endures.

Lifeless the clay, that once breathed with life;  
Orphaned the years, to an endless pain,  
Lifeless the eyes, as their bright light wained:  
Lifeless as he went away, again.

Ghostly the vision, of what's been lost,  
It came and went in an endless dream;  
Ghostly the memories, and what they mean:  
Ghostly the world- only dust remains.

Patti Masterman

# Dust To Dust

Save me from hell  
And save me from heaven  
And keep far away from  
People not living:  
People who believe in  
Far away gods;  
And who think that heaven  
Waits under sod  
People who think sin  
Owns the whole earth-  
People who can't think,  
Give them a wide berth  
People who should know that man wrote the book  
But swear god did it, don't know they've been took  
Give only a few friends who value the truth  
And give me contentment from old age to youth  
This is my prayer from sun up to dusk  
From the day of my birth until I am dust.

Patti Masterman

# Dying As We Lived

Did I, did we die the way we lived,  
did I adopt your vices, your branding  
of things uncertain, as contaminated;  
not worth doing at all?

In the end, did I become you,  
and you become as powerless as I once was,  
one long ago childhood?  
I never wanted suffering for you.

I feared losing you as soon as I learned  
that death is a thing, a noun to be feared,  
a cloak of nothingness that finally covers us all.  
For I knew reality can be merciless.

But you should understand, that I did not let go of you  
willingly. And that you still die daily,  
and that I must keep on letting go, each day-  
until there is nothing left to hold on to.

Our last gift is to release others, and in that way,  
maintain freedom of a sort.  
It will never be a victory though.

Patti Masterman

# Dying Inside

The world is a catastrophe always evolving,  
But somehow it must be more  
Than it's life and death,  
It's breathing and suffocating  
In the fullness of youth or old age?

Can't it be more than beauty and ugliness,  
Truth and falsehood,  
Peace and war?

If you become very still  
You can feel all of the people who are dying inside you  
Right this minute

Patti Masterman

# Dying Saints And Angel's Wings

Sometimes an angel sings right in my ear,  
A rose-scented song of rapturous flight;  
Some saints last holy prayer to god  
Before sailing through clouds, into the pure light.

Sometimes a devil has the hold of me;  
Whispers cruel things, the sad day long  
As I look in vain above opaque clouds  
For any slight trace of the miracle song.

Dying saints and angels wings  
Are things from another realm;  
If I must be formed anew; remade,  
Please let it be in that same kiln.

Patti Masterman

# Dying's What You Do

Dying's what you do  
When you're very old-  
Or else, when you're yet young,  
With a body growing cold.

Dying's what you do  
Before your name is gone-  
Your richness in the ground,  
And then- forgotten.

Patti Masterman

# Each Day Is New

Each day to wed life new again:  
From morning star to fervent moon,  
First breath of the waking eyes-  
And cast off silver shoes.

Walk all day in bright sunlight,  
Then pull close the darkening day;  
And cast the things of light aside,  
To trod the silvered way.

We're half in light and half in dark;  
Half god, and demon, half, at night,  
Half angel, half mankind- half seen;  
And only half known, what we've been..

Patti Masterman

# Each Little Life

Each little life, it's history  
Each little life, it's cares:  
Each owned his day, though short or long;  
Quite singular, and rare.

Each life has no replacing  
As days and hours unfurl:  
Great tombs; or else no stone at all-  
Each, someones very world.

Patti Masterman

# Each Road's A Room

Each road's a room  
That touch infinity-  
Not walls that doom,  
Or break affinity.

Each man's a tower  
Attracts the eye of god,  
Till mortal power  
Place him, beneath sod.

Patti Masterman

# Each Singing, Sighing Leafy Tree

Each singing, sighing leafy tree  
Returns to green, in downy spring;  
Forgets the forlorn, skeletal frame  
That winter force, with its extreme.

To welcome bird, with open branch,  
As pointy fingers search the sky;  
The dead asleep, between its roots-  
And no one ever heard their cry.

The past is past, and weeping's short,  
For life exacts a gravid toll,  
But pays the dividend in spring,  
To each green leafing, sun-drenched soul.

Patti Masterman

## Early Memories

There are places we hold in memory  
where there is no record of having really gone.  
Maybe they were only the colicky dream of an infant,  
or a precognition of something that could exist, must have  
existed somewhere, at some time. Perhaps we have longed for it,  
without knowing the way there, except by remembering it in a dream.

?Become a? little child ?now, ?like you ?once were, ?  
?go ?back ?again to that place that fascinates you:  
?back to the wide stream, covered with lilies,  
?the? slowly? flowing water and the island, with the banks of lilies  
?suspended, floating upon the water.

A?lone a?t this age, as it happens? (which almost never happens) ?  
?you can feel the pull, the attraction.  
The ripples spreading slowly, uniformly..  
There is a machine-like quality that is different here?, ?  
??like a pattern you are only beginning to learn to recognize.  
?Only this image exists, in quietude; there is no upstream, no downstream?..

But do you dare go into the water itself?  
?There is already present the desire to fully immerse what later  
will become the self, into? all that clear, cold-flowing lucidness?  
You can't really know what lies ?beneath.?  
It looks so light-filled, but perhaps- perhaps  
?there is some hidden darkness there,  
?behind all that beseeches you?

Try to remember that question you felt stirring  
?while viewing that picture? (though much more than a picture)  
What is beneath the water? What could there be,  
?what do the lilies conceal under their ?stately? flowers?  
There must be something more than meets the eye.  
?Are you simply a child in a fairy-tale waiting to happen?  
Or lost in a metaphor of life unfolding? ?

You want to go deeper into that scene, that image,  
?look down under the water, see what draws t?he attention so. ?  
If you could not go into it, then at least ?be able to ?see

if there were more;  
not wanting to miss whatever it is?, just under  
the loveliness. Push the lilies aside, bend your head low  
over the water, now look deeply?... But something stops you, ?  
stops even the thought of it, as though it were not ??  
allowed. As though even the thinking of it were verboten.?

You are merely observer here, an omniscient character,  
hovering, floating, present unaccountably without  
anything solid supporting you. Like a dreamer transported  
bodily into a reverie, but it was really only mind. Only  
the consciously thinking part.

Realize you were never meant to see past the surface of it,  
like a magic trick, like a mirror, a reflection.  
Even as children, the greater forces that pull  
the adult are already at work, the tendencies  
yet unseen, the characteristics that will define the person.

Maybe it was so pristine, you shunned the idea  
of investigating further.  
Or maybe it was your safe place, a retreat from things  
just as mysterious, and even less well understood.

And maybe you didn't want to diminish its impact ever,  
by investigating it's limits, it's finality.  
You needed it to stay just as it was, forever.  
A place always there? for you?, available and unchanging.  
One place that need never change, lest it? become merely common?, ?  
trampled by time.?

Patti Masterman

# Earth Is The Bosom Buddy

Earth is the bosom-buddy of our flesh,  
She holds us close, to her living dress:  
We come in bare, screaming at the light,  
And leave the same way; but fearful of night.

In between, she clothes us and feeds,  
Gratifies all of our body's needs,  
While we weep hot tears, upon her stones,  
And shout our laughter, from deep in our bones.

Everything from which our body was formed  
On Earth's own shores and oceans got born-  
And as for death, when he comes nearer:  
To Earth, I commend my naked spirit.

Patti Masterman

# Earth Is The Repository

Earth is the repository  
Of everything that's gone;  
A moment spent above it,  
But eternal night is long.

Who knows what treasures lie  
And sparkle, in the dirt;  
Perhaps a lady's earring-  
Rare pearls, within the chert?

Is that a miner's lamp,  
That rusted bit of metal,  
And was that the doctor's bag,  
And that, his sterile kettle?

The play things of a child  
Are scattered just the same;  
He meant to pick them up-  
But too soon, the long night came.

Patti Masterman

# Earth Is Writing Herself Into Poems

Earth is writing herself into poems,  
For poetry is what she feels within her deepest being;  
And all the emotions of her mind are seasons,  
And being so large and slow moving,  
Her emotions pass only very tediously;  
So that it takes many months  
To complete the shift from hot and voluptuous  
To thin and chill.

Earth hides her poetry in flowers and birds,  
In clouds and rain showers.  
Earth buries her words in soft soil  
And tumultuous waves.  
Her vocabulary so beautiful by now  
She never has to erase a single line.  
Wherever earth weeps, new growth springs up  
In compassion, to cover over the old scars.

Jan.2 2010

Patti Masterman

# Earthbound

Earthbound- and still Sisyphus rolls his stone;  
The gods are angry, and it's us they smite-  
Bound in chains, and Tantalus softly moans,  
Sly Hades steals half a years sunlight.

Earthbound- for there you are and here am I;  
Each chained by circumstance beyond his might,  
No gods intervene at the sound of sighs-  
While Earth makes do with six months of light.

Earthbound- no verses, no spell can cast,  
For time and space keep the keys of night,  
And nothing alive lives forever; can last-  
But nothing brave lacks courage to fight.

A sign I'll send you, from my dungeon walls:  
There's no peace reigns where no blade can fall..

Patti Masterman

# Eat This Heart

Eat this heart- bones and all;  
Scarred and leathery flesh,  
Pick your teeth just afterwards  
And don't forget to spit-

If it went uneaten,  
This meat would go to waste;  
More tender than it should be,  
For with my tears, well-baste..

Patti Masterman

# Economy

The roiling stars  
The face of time, must cross  
From where we are  
Upon this planet, tossed.

Inflations speed,  
A train that none can stop;  
No human deed  
Could change that cosmic clock.

Our satellite,  
This earthly nursery  
Is bathed with light-  
For there's no usury,

No tax, no fee,  
To dwell upon the Earth;  
Economy  
Has given us our birth.

Patti Masterman

# Ecstasy Beckons

You are more, than beauty;  
You are more, than love,  
More than my thundering  
Heart's dub-a-dub.

More than my blood pressure  
Rocketing high;  
More than my pupils,  
Enlarging like sky.

More than my hands  
Trembling for you,  
Or than my tongue,  
Testifying, how true.

I can't say just how  
You are in all these things,  
Like the blustery feeling  
A windy day brings,

As it touches all things  
And moves them around-  
And often it does it  
Without any sound.

My being has moved  
A few inches from center-  
And you're the new hub,  
That my self wants to enter,

You're the creator  
Of this new universe;  
You the inspirer  
Of every new verse.

Just lift up your hand  
And new things will appear,  
While ecstasy beckons-  
And soon- it is there.

Patti Masterman

# Ecstasy Of Knowing

Don't do those little things  
You always do to me; you know  
That look, that half-smile, with the closing eyelids  
The hint of a smirk, the tilt of the head.

It's unfair, I've got only eyes and ears  
Full of you, and you have the whole universe  
Of well conceived temptations, to lure me in,  
Open-mouthed fish that I am, to be baited by your sly styles.

You offer all the desirable things a woman could lust for,  
Lust and never be satisfied, forever in the understanding  
That you surely have other smiles and other poses, for other women  
In unknown eras, different climates and panoramas.

I can only try to hold onto the parts of you I know,  
Recognize it is futile trying to capture all the invisible things  
Though doubtless they are all there,  
Just beneath your fleeting expressions.

And you are the clever sophisticate  
And I am all trembling schoolgirl  
Having forgotten the things I once took for granted.

Now look at me again, this time with a blank look,  
And let me see it slowly fill in, with the essence of you,  
So slowly that I can see every year, wrinkle of growth,  
Every change and sign of maturing, like a tree's rings.

I want to know all your weathers,  
Want to let the rainbow fill up with your humors;  
The world swell shut or empty out on your whim.

I want to be made pregnant  
Entirely with the incredible idea of you're existing;  
Because the real ecstasy of knowing you, is one that I can almost-  
But not quite- touch.



# Edible Is Love

And some are salt, and some are honey,  
Some stay poor, and some want money,  
Some love to lay you;  
Some just lay there  
Some rise above you,  
Some only stare.

Some are friendless, some are needy,  
Some for climax, much too greedy;  
Some, I love to make them wait;  
Some, myself anticipate  
A giving lover's always best;  
A taking lover, put to test.

Honey sweet and tangy salt;  
Neither one, I'll ever fault:  
But the nectar'd food you can't despise  
Comes out of your lover's eyes.

Patti Masterman

# Electric Jesus

There's an electric Jesus on the Boulevard;  
Pale robes, with light-blushed neon cheeks,  
Arms outstretched- can you help him please?

In the antique shop, a cigar store Son  
Of man- whose time's been over-done;  
And all the tears from ringed eyes wrung.

And even when his face is missing,  
Are crucifix or angels kissing, his mother's crown  
Like a gem'd tiara, sits on top a flaming aura.

Give us Jesu, is all we ask; and a face-lift- and a perky ass-  
In your name, let it come to pass-  
Are poufy lips, too much to ask?

Jesus nods on the Caddy's dash  
While well-dressed Preacher's plead for cash-  
Their wives need breast implants- and fast.

Jesus gentle, mild and meek;  
Didn't you realize who would seek  
Your aid and care, on this old ball:

The lowly ones- for them, you fall-  
Your purple heart, pierced by a spear-  
You're getting much too old, I fear.

Patti Masterman

# Electricity Has Nervous Fingers

Electricity has nervous fingers  
That tickle, with a tiny purr-  
Though razor sharp, when nearer comes-  
To gore you, like a raging bull.

Magnetic too; holds you to breast,  
As though to caress tender flesh-  
And flays you living, till you're cooked-  
Then serves you up, as it's best dish.

Patti Masterman

# Electron Dust

Flying through the fevered sun  
Dust of electrons, your time will come;  
With tiny hands we cannot see,  
Purveyor of some fluid dream.

Old still, when the world was new  
Many bifurcations through,  
Subdivided on the fringe,  
Bereft; apart from matters hinge.

Time will sweep your comely doom,  
Electrons who were gone too soon-  
The Conservation Law must save  
The martyrs to the cosmic wave.

Patti Masterman

# Electronic Chirps

Electronic chirps in monotoned resilience,  
Subliminal hum of the twinkling light;  
Or paradigm's implied consilliance,  
Crickets of a technological blight.

Crisscrossed lasers guarding the world;  
Encoded strata of binary tongues,  
Translating algorithms into Perl-  
Are we to them, just so much dung?

Bionic domes to house our kind,  
When the world gives up its ghost;  
Will we be slave, when they are master  
And what of us; once known as host?

Patti Masterman

# Emotion Is The Train You'Re Riding

Emotion is the train you're riding  
And it can take you anywhere  
It's rails were built for speed and purpose  
To lighten burden's heavy care.

It's job, to address the unjust moment  
Recognize there is a need  
For fairness balanced by perception  
And carefully weigh each sovereign deed.

In happiness, it gives us halos  
In times of trouble, gives us wings  
Morality's prospect it must harbor  
And thereby peace, contentment bring.

It can be angel, friend, or demon  
Depending how you lay the track:  
However far the train may travel  
Remember, there's no going back.

Patti Masterman

# Emptiness

The emptiness harms regularly  
In consequence ruined possibility

Spent love, that the echo seizes  
Splintered beats of truth, receding

Drummed beats reverberate the pain  
Night time runs from vacuous day

Night runs amok, but daytime's worse  
For then you can't deny your curse

Patti Masterman

# Empty Cups

We bury our dead we bury their dreams  
In a grave, a hole with tree-root seams;  
To the writhing worm and mildewed wood,  
Surrendering their chemical blood.

From measure to measure, their new room's sparse;  
Too small to knock the stars off course-  
But with tiny keys, imagination's in,  
To examine each imagined sin.

Though they're dead, they're not forgotten,  
And our memories soon turn rotten;  
The things unsaid, the things unkind  
Will rip the blinders from our mind.

Why hidden so shamefully away,  
Like burned pie or a ham turned grey?  
There's nothing we can do each coming day  
To take their empty cups away.

Patti Masterman

# Empty Pews

Empty pews, empty pews; there's far too few  
Empty pews, when many more would do;  
Come home, come home, where love is born-  
Don't leave your loved one all forlorn.

Empty pews say nothing real about you,  
Just some polished wood and fabric, glue;  
There's no soul, in the steeples tall-  
There's no beating heart, at all.

Patti Masterman

# Endless As The Universe

There's a new motel for the dead  
Just down the road; a not so grand opening  
For the temporary visitors on their way  
To the incorporeal modus operandi  
And all I can think about is:  
This is the very place where I will burn,  
Melt, and writhe against the vivid flames-  
Mouth gaping open, as if to shout  
Goodbye! to the previous life.  
The arms curled and bent to chest, as if busy at prayers  
As the ashes slowly coalesce  
From the outside, in  
And the naked bones to become part of the grinding stone  
For the ones who will follow later  
Already there's a sickening familiarity  
With the steel kitchens housed inside there  
The Executioner for the already deceased:  
That cold, unforgiving slab  
The moment before the pilot flares into wakefulness.

But while still alive, I do penance for the one child  
Who may accompany the last journey  
A mere half mile or so from home;  
The greasy cinders which might catch in her  
Tousled hair, blow into her nostrils  
On rambunctious puffs of wind,  
As she goes about her days activities:  
Forgive me in advance,  
You, who gave so much meaning to my days:  
Try to remember that death forgets no one,  
That even as we pass, we die as innocents;  
Dead to the past, we've become the abstract children  
Of future days, in yet formless calendars.  
May this plaintive vow, lessen your burden then  
And so your tears; whenever you glimpse  
That deceptive castle of death,  
And imagine the glowing coals in its dungeon.  
Remember, I am lodged inexorably inside your own cells:  
We are chain-linked, stone heaped upon stone,

The same heaving breath; and may my last breath  
Whisper to you, as the wind whispers,  
Hovering above the nights counterpane of stars  
That love is the purpose we are created for  
And death will never be the end of love-  
Not in this world, and not in the next one.

Patti Masterman

# Ennui

She used to have energy for things like birthday parties,  
long shopping trips, browsing at many stores  
imagining the possibilities.  
Now she fears boredom and fatigue and stays close to home.

She has seen it all before and then some,  
the flagrant materialism of the age sunk into her, until she began to drown  
silently,  
arms flailing, enraged; surrounded by so many unneeded things,  
responsibilities, to-do lists.. none of it worth remembering  
past a week, most of it neglected, put off.

She joked that she could only procrastinate one thing at a time,  
but it was the truth. Life was depreciating faster than she could lay claim to the  
days  
and meanwhile, everyone was beginning to die,  
and the clocks hands were just more trips around,  
Around and around without meaning,  
till you became dizzy and sick with all the missing hours

the numbers jangled together, like passing mile markers so quickly you never  
read them,  
feeling the time pass, like unmarked graves can tell nothing,  
waiting for your number to appear,  
waiting your turn at the turnstile, you were always waiting for something further  
down hill  
that was almost invisible, and that was never going to appear while you were still  
looking.  
And then there was that silent, unspoken brokenness in everybody she'd ever  
known-  
which wounded her more, than any unexpected miscarriage at 3 am could have  
done.

Patti Masterman

# Entanglement

Atoms skitter to the center  
In the square dance of all matter;  
Quarks should rotate once around,  
Keeping us on earth firm-bound.

Swing your partner far and wide,  
Perihelion's kept astride,  
And the strings of matter  
String along the boson's heart.

Now come together; smatter, scatter;  
Atom-smashers do not matter,  
For this dance of matter  
Truly is a dance of higher art,

Matter curtsys; and there's gravity  
Fills in each slight curving cavity-  
From above, you'll notice first  
It all starts from just one burst-

So the particles keep on dancing,  
Midnight comes, and still they're prancing;  
Whirling, somersaulting like they never  
Dared to dance before;

Keep on watching, as the clocks hands  
Travel once more past the grandstand;  
We're transfixed since matter never  
Let us ever see this door.

We're the eyes and ears that dare  
To watch this tantric ballet, bared;  
Entanglement seduces; there's no other place to be-  
Bow to your partner in this deadly quantum duel of rivalry.

Patti Masterman

# Entropic Dirge

In the greater oyster world  
All the children eventually grew old  
The windmills ran down  
The fields went back to clover  
The stones kept all their secrets  
Waterways forgot their courses  
The sundials were covered with moss  
And time eventually stretched out  
To touch the edge of infinity.

Patti Masterman

# Epic Men

Epic men of flesh and stone  
Travel where are found no bones;  
The deepest, where no man before  
Could open hope's remaining door.

The men of constellation's fame  
Borrowed time, their epic names,  
To fight odd battles in the sky  
That no one now remember why.

Still there's a corner, not forgot,  
An alien, though homelike plot,  
Where men of flesh and stone will lie  
In state, the doomed spaceship's flight.

They'll rest forever on the cusp  
Of magic finds, made in our trust,  
So teach the young their names instead  
Of ancient heroes, too long dead.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Nixon Whitehouse had a just-in-case statement  
ready for deployment, in 1969, composed by speechwriter William Safire, in the  
event that the astronauts met an unhappy or unanticipated  
end, during their monumental space flight.

Patti Masterman

# Epilogue

I think we're never really dead and gone,  
Long as memories of us, in friends live on.  
If our name yet on the lips is found,  
Somehow our presence could still surround  
To be recalled, each time a smile breaks thru;  
As they think of the things we used to do.  
Loved ones will imitate the little ways  
With which we tried to brighten other days.  
All the things we did to make life dear  
They will remember, when we are not here.  
It might appear death ends our life as such;  
But we live on in those whose hearts we've touched.

Patti Masterman

# Episodic Sterility

After she left, her hair  
Lay glowing dully, in the shower,  
Black, glittering with unshed venom  
Perhaps scheming to paper-cut my hands  
As I cleaned up afterward  
Or maybe it wanted to tie itself in knots  
About my throat as I slept  
And even if there had been enough of it  
To do the job,  
It could not marshal its forces together enough.

On her head it was like a golden altar'd god  
Commanding fear or respect  
But once fallen,  
I could grind my heel into it  
Crush it into the ground  
As if another dead stinking animal.

But far away, she glittered and schemed,  
So far away, vanished like an eclipse  
That no astronomer ever noted,  
Or disappeared from the chart;  
The corpse of a cold breeze  
That never lent warmth  
To any living being.

Patti Masterman

# Epoch Of Darkness

At one point in the deep past,  
The whole universe lit up  
Like an immense skyscraper, at dusk:  
The stars all blinked on;  
A perfect solar energy source,  
To run a world  
To illuminate a cosmos-  
But we, birthed in the planets tides  
Are still in our own  
Epoch of darkness:  
Still fighting for light  
For understanding to dawn.  
If everyone could fill  
Their inner dimensions with  
All the souls brilliance  
It would spill over  
Into the macrocosm,  
An endless supply.  
The light of love  
Could brighten our way:  
There's no confusion or indecision  
When love is the only motive.

Patti Masterman

# Equations In The Field

Everyone has both brightness  
and fields of darkness within.  
Never doubt the universe  
hears your longing,  
and yearns to give it to you, precisely.

There is no judging there about your desires,  
whether they are optimal or even useful;  
there is only yes or no.

Everything eventually comes together  
in this moment; two polarities  
that have been barreling towards us  
from the twin edges of time, forever.

Something arrives newly born,  
a genuine, never before seen instant,  
collapsing space and eternity together,  
transposing them into light and presence.

And something had to die for it to come into existence,  
and something not yet living had to be conceived,  
just so the energies could balance, be made manifest.

It's a holy task, so be careful  
what you wish for;  
it only works one way,  
and you can't send it back.

Patti Masterman

# Erector Set

I'm crafting a world with all of my poems  
My own make-a-world with people and things  
Above the world looms my countenance  
Below, the new world future hangs.

I'm building a place made out of dreams  
Erector set wishes from one single life  
I'm giving them wings and places to go  
Hope and expectation of joy are rife.

I'm holding a universe with trembling hands  
The space above lies endless and black  
The creatures beneath me are asking for proof  
And wondering if I will ever come back.

Patti Masterman

# Ergo Sum

Think you're a beautiful unique snowflake?  
But you're a pile of dog dung, in a heap  
You, the maggot, fighting for rights  
On the carcass, in a car's headlights  
You the snail, still trailing slime  
Out of sight, and out of mind.

You, the bat guano, by the tree  
You, the take out cup of pee  
Left by a wino, near his bed  
While fighting the demons, in his head:  
If you believe that you're everywhere;  
Ipso facto; you must be there.

Patti Masterman

# Erosion

I'm cleaning your finger smudges from my blurry eyes  
I'm hiding the key I always kept by the door  
Every trace I've searched for, so you will not feel welcome here.  
In your restless storms, you sucked away whatever was not tied down  
In your busy mind, you were busy painting me into a corner  
But I slipped out of my shoes, and now I'm standing  
Where you used to be, I stand inside my own self now  
I'm the janitor in my own soul, and things are much clearer now  
Every thing's keyed and locked, and the rooms will be silent  
In the evenings, as I drink a last toast to what is no more,  
And to what never was. I will dream no more dreams but my own.  
Now you resemble nothing so much as an empty picture frame  
In a deserted hovel, in someones nightmare-  
And the sea is getting ready to swallow it whole.

Patti Masterman

# Escape

Nothing here shall ever forget  
How flowers rot, from underneath,  
And fruit, when only pierced the skin,  
To the circling wasp's bequeathed.

Nothing here will gain a thing,  
Though time reversed or stood it's place;  
A thousand years still looks the same,  
But first to go is always the face.

Man makes his dreary circlet of days,  
Ever brief, though filled with fate-  
And flings open wide Pandora's box,  
Hoping somehow his soul will escape.

Patti Masterman

# Eschatological Scat

Since we've no idea how the world gets formed;  
Surprising to find we'd elucidate the end?  
Pile assumption on assumption, till something gets born  
Between death, redemption and original sin.

Theories abound on how to meet the maker,  
Assuming he'd ever care to tip his hat;  
Every talking head seems to have his own theory,  
But it's all just more eschatological scat.

Patti Masterman

# Eternal Blood

In eternal blood, there lives a reigning silence,  
The cryptogram, of an unquiet angel's heart.  
In the crystal drops, finds innocence it's chalice;  
Even daggers cannot pry a soul apart.

Patti Masterman

# Eternity

There is a boat made out of stars  
Beside a long slumbering king  
And a glittering throne of gold  
And a cross beneath a ring.

The mummy wrapped in linen  
Has lapiz stone for eyes  
All his earthly holdings lie  
Nearby, or at his side.

The walls are fired in colors  
With murals from his reign  
Next to him, the sistrum  
And earthen vessels contain

His organs, heart and liver  
His brain is there besides  
And other special flasks hold  
Precious unguents inside.

His sister was a Priestess  
His mother was a Queen  
On holidays, they'd walk the court  
And robed monks would sing.

They'd chant long life and praises  
To the King and all his kin  
Good luck for him in battles:  
Their wish that he might win.

His victories were graven  
In stone, around his tomb  
His losses more uncounted  
Each time the lotus blooms.

Patti Masterman

# Even Dead Poets Need Some Credit

Even dead poets need some credit  
For words well done, no matter how long  
Ago they enchanted, don't take it for granted  
For saying their name, other folks  
Discover their fame; get better acquainted  
Even dead poets deserve some credit.  
And their writings left untainted.

Even dead poets should have their moment  
Of reckoning, some homage paid to their efforts  
Their art of word and phrase, even in other days  
To honor their good name, is only fair  
It's the same if today you or me  
Had our works stolen, and our dignity  
Even dead poets still have their vanity.

Patti Masterman

# Even On The Darkest Night Something Still Grows

Don't look down on man's religions;  
Don't reject his inner core,  
For the bulk of his beliefs  
Are the opening of a door:  
Man's a child, and needs a symbol;  
Man is young and searching still,  
He must conquer superstition,  
He must rise above the will.

Hope is difficult to find  
In a world of storm and trouble;  
And sometimes it might look  
Like man's truths are merely bubbles;  
But from tiny seeds great plants  
Grow large in the dark of night,  
And they take in needed nourishment  
And spread, to find the light.

Don't despise the tiny seedlings  
Man is planting for the day,  
When his questions all are answered;  
When his mind has had it's say:  
If you love his searching spirit,  
And you know his heart is deep,  
Don't look down on early efforts;  
For someday mankind must reap.

If you truly love mankind, you must respect his religions.

Patti Masterman

# Even Should I Look At The Same Stars As You

even should I look at the same stars as you  
and even the heavens, though the same shade of blue  
shine onto those paths that ourselves so well knew  
we'd not have a hope to find something as true  
at the altar where once worshiped love; all was new

even should time stop or stand still at our whim  
however we viewed him, as captor or friend  
no matter the hours in-between there'd been  
and the world view as virtue or condemn as a sin-  
there's too many stitches now, ever to mend

even should I hand you my heart, again now  
and even if you treat it, as you never knew how  
and had time not marked pain in the folds of our brow  
and supposing, we never had taken that vow-  
we have used up the reasons that love would allow

Patti Masterman

# Even The Moon Has Forgotten My Face

When I was young, white moonlight poured in, nights  
Through my gauzy white curtains, and the world turned paler,  
A ghostly apparition of it's daytime countenance.  
The whiteness contained all the emotion, of my whole life's turning  
Condensed down into streaming rays of silvered light-  
And that moonlight scoured, cleansed everything it touched;  
Nothing was sordid, forgettable, unimaginable; the magic turned all  
Into a fairy's world, of majestic mystery and translucent dignity.

I trusted the moonlight. Moonlight today is not the same;  
My curtains don't block it, but the moon doesn't seem to smile as large  
And I know too many secrets and disappearances now-  
When I knew less, the fantasies could sustain the weight of my world,  
Which has since grown too heavy, and the hour now is late.

I feel if I could reach that lost moonlight one more time,  
I could find the other self, the one knew so much more of nothing,  
But was secreted between the moonlit nights  
And felt satisfied, not yet knowing the deep inward emptiness of life,  
And the way the colors get released one by one  
From the central altar of night time's lamp,  
And how particles of soul get extinguished;  
Released to another life, in the far-travelling moonbeams.

But the moon does not remember bewitching my face,  
Which has grown cratered with time,  
And while the moon slowly steals our breaths away,  
And covers up our eyes with its brilliance,  
It's hands pick our pockets nightly,  
And take everything there that is light, bright, glowing  
To return it to the moon-blinded young.

While we just keep on growing darker,  
Until they shove us back underground again-  
Now even the moon has forgotten my face.

Patti Masterman

# Even When You Leave

Everything is always preparing to die;  
Maybe life is just a fancy dress rehearsal-  
Gears meshing; wings unfolding for the launch:  
Lights flash, buzzers announce, the souls dispersal.

We die without warning; or like sheep to slaughter;  
But we put away reminders of our fate-  
No singular instant is specially reserved  
For that very last breath you will someday take.

On the same exact day, hour, minute, second;  
Others too will take the long drawn breath-  
In other continents, countries and latitudes:  
Someone shares even your moment of death.

Patti Masterman

# Event Horizon

Portraits of the dead  
On the shelves and tables  
Dead people smiling at me:  
Inhabiting lost days and fables.

Portraits of the dead  
Now moved on to new dimensions  
Dead people here no longer:  
All their movements in past declensions.

Portraits of the dead  
Gone past the event horizon  
But forever frozen, hovering there:  
From my vantage point, it's not surprising.

Patti Masterman

# Every Blue Kill

Every blue kill  
Rises up warm from the almost-guilt,  
Old minds usurp the present  
Curious, obdurate thoughts:  
The blazing sister of the profligate  
Is animal lusting in pale brains.

Patti Masterman

# Every Cock Must Crow

Every cock must crow, to tell the dawn  
That life as such surely must go on.

Sun and moon and day contain the sky;  
Restless questions can't tell us why.

Hopes and dreams carry us quite far,  
From early light to the faintest star.

Earth-mixed colors in centrifugal womb  
Are glories arrayed by time's old loom.

Every cock must crow, to tell the dawn  
That life as such surely must go on.

Patti Masterman

# Every Corpse On The Bier

Every corpse on the bier  
Has marveled at sunsets,  
Held hands with a beloved,  
Drunk toasts to friends old and new  
Held the same thoughts we have held;

Had the same fears we were haunted by-  
Because every corpse is a future us;  
But unlike every man's death,  
Ours is a calamity  
Of immeasurable proportion.

Patti Masterman

# Every Day I Hear One Of My Loved Ones

Every day, I hear one of my loved ones  
Call out my name; even though they're dead;  
Gone away, to where we should never speak-  
But still they keep on calling for me.

It makes me suspect all those years  
When I thought I was doing things, just for them  
They were really doing them for me;  
That somehow I need to be needed  
Even more than the dead need their rest.

And so my sleepless mind keeps them occupied;  
And still they summon aid, at my behest.

Patti Masterman

# Every Day In Every Way

The revolutionaries say they want a second chance-  
but their heads are off at the necks-  
and you know how those types like to lie.

They look so brave though, mounted atop those poles-  
we stop and bow a dozen times a day;  
I thought I heard one of them sigh.

The revolutionaries say they were cut down before their time,  
say they had infallible plans for a new democracy-  
much better than the one we had, last time..

Patti Masterman

# Every Door

You the epicenter  
You the contagion;  
Immovable force  
Of this war that's raging.

You the divinity  
You the miracle,  
Of brilliant suns  
Most distinctly spherical.

You the perihelion  
You the axis,  
You the administering  
Prophylaxis.

Take my heart;  
Take it all for free-  
No use to reclaim things  
Kept selfishly.

Take my hand and we will go  
In step to the nearest shore-  
Where together, single hand  
We will open every door..

Patti Masterman

# Every House

Every house has a sun and moon,  
And a little porcelain cup,  
And a little silver spoon;  
Every house has laughter and pain,  
And feels the kiss of a needed rain.

Every house has a pet or two,  
A cat in the tree,  
A dove that coo;  
Every house has a little mouse,  
Lives in a hole he never comes out.

Every house has a window or two,  
And some grass and trees,  
And a sky that's blue;  
Every house has a child that dreams,  
As he plucks at raw reality's seams.

Patti Masterman

# Every Place Is So Far Away

Every place is so far away;  
Places on maps, a world at bay  
Suspended at distances, only imagined,  
A travel itinerary, of endless pageant.  
A world so large, you could get quite lost  
Just crossing a street, caught up in thought.  
It seems unreal it could be so expanded,  
Like a blown out world, once disbanded.  
And a thought which makes my little heart race;  
Is there's other worlds, in outer space  
And each its own island universe;  
When god crafts a world, it isn't terse.

Patti Masterman

# Every Secret Eye

I awake before dawn and call out to the Moon,  
But the Moon is missing, she has other duties to attend to.  
I sleep fitfully, aware that something is missing.

I awaken at dusk and call to the Sun,  
But the Sun is missing, he has other lands to shine upon.  
I wake with uncertainty, aware that something is missing.

I wake up in the midlands of night, in the close darkness  
And I realize then that there is no longer anybody to call out to;  
Whether I sleep or wake again is no longer important.

I send word to the Sun not to awaken me.  
I send word to the Moon not to expect me-  
I must go where light and darkness can freely mix,

And where things grow, touchless beneath a hidden sky;  
Nothing is not there that should be,  
Nothing is there that should not be:

And I am my own Moon, mirrored Suns shining from every secret eye.

Patti Masterman

# Every Thing Touches Every Other

Every thing touches every other,  
Nothing stays safe in itself;  
The ghost moans his fate was unchosen,  
The captain, his enemy's stealth.

Fate doesn't rewind in the darkness,  
Day doesn't withhold it's surprise,  
Birth doesn't await our 'hello',  
Death doesn't hold out for 'goodbye'.

In the mirror, behold your opposite:  
The antagonist of all that you do.  
His left your right, his day your night;  
Whatever you think, he sees through.

On the ground, stretches out your shadow,  
Who follows you through thick and thin:  
They'll bury you one day, and he'll go away  
And not count it as loss or win.

Patti Masterman

# Everyday Life Is Just Another Poverty

Everyday life is just another poverty  
In-between the end of one tragedy  
And start of the new catastrophic holiday:  
Alone in graveyards, you're watching  
The flowers slowly wilt; and you can feel around you  
How everyone is abandoning, being sucked away;  
Even the unknown, silent ones, meditating there under the sod.  
But the lawns are well kept, to prove how pleasant,  
How harmless a fellow death really is.

A selfish sentimentality  
Awakens and hoards all the moments  
Knowing that they disappear too soon;  
Everyone is leaving  
Whether it has become apparent yet or not  
And self is a suffocating construct, of a fake  
Suicidal reality, a diffuse spreading dishonesty  
Because the older you get, the less you can pretend  
That death doesn't exist, that things still make sense.

There is a pathetic clown  
Whose lower lip is always ready to tremble  
When his dreams are taken away;  
He can no longer keep the children happy-  
In fact, he can't even keep them alive,  
From one death to the next:  
And when the world has been filled up with the dead,  
There will be no room left for the living.

No, they aren't sleeping in peace;  
They've just left behind a numbed, frozen horror  
They are only ended, like a movie ends-  
And then the lights go up  
Showing all the tear stained faces  
And you stumble from the theater, sobbing  
While telling yourself you'll never be fooled;  
Never again, but even saying it,  
You know it's just another lie;  
Because the exit door is just up ahead

And it's the only way out of the theater.

Patti Masterman

# Everyone Carries Their Own Legend Inside

everyone carries their own legend inside,  
their mythos of how the world was saved, only within them;  
within their abiding presence, that cured the deficiencies,  
and because, having lived them out one by one, that through them  
and us; and because in our day we dared life to do its worst,  
as our rumored footsteps grew longer, wider and farther apart,  
and our voices, which must carry that much farther  
to oppose the towering waves, must rise much higher above  
and through all of which, we never ceased in our existing;  
not once, against the immense planetary forces ever straining  
to return us to nothingness, again and again  
and because our moist breath made us more powerful  
than Greek gods, more enduring than granite scarp,  
harder to move, once set in our deft determination,  
and muscles more sinewy, under sleek countenance  
the rarest beauty, most fabled fleshly hewn cheeks,  
and of hands busily saluting the world, with gestures encoded  
which would reveal us in our full glory only later,  
and that our busy feet walked carefully along love's fragile contours  
in sensitive, well metered condolences of the day,  
and as all this was begun first by sitting up, then by crawling;  
pulling up our once paltry weight, to make a stand for small things first,  
and near the end of life running head on, shouting  
Into the world's baffling bulk, our iron heads  
battering against it's prehensile strength,  
against the steel mast of our inchoate differences: all of this,  
that the sun not set down it's oblivion mark,  
before we have set out our own signposts  
for others to see, as they begin writing  
their own sagas, and themselves begin anew  
the process of becoming immortal.

Patti Masterman

# Everyone Who Die, Diminish Me - Sonnet

And everyone who die, diminish me  
Like twinkling stars that disappear, past night-  
Each wished upon, with dreams that will not see  
A morning dawn's birth, vigorous and bright.

And everyone who leaves, leaves hollow steps  
That echo down the emptiness inside;  
And soon would be forgotten, but except  
Their faces are engraved- all those that died.

When everyone has gone, who'll close the door  
And turn out all those lights, that lit the house?  
God knows, we humans always will want more-  
With birth and death bedfellows, only spouse?

When sorrow's allowed to eclipse every joy,  
An easy death is all our hopes can buoy.

Patti Masterman

# Everything Bears The Future

Everything bears the future,  
Containing an unwrapped box,  
Fused with the luminescence;  
Charted voyages, in a silver box.

You're the past, present and future,  
That's bound up within the stars,  
The startled breath of prophecy,  
New growth, following fire.

On our journeys round this galaxy,  
I will pass through the spaces, you were-  
Your presence, the true finality,  
My pulses, must always stir.

Patti Masterman

# Everything Is A Pumpkin After Midnight

Never think the harvest goes ungathered;  
Don't think the crop is left in place to rot.  
Latent seeds lie in the ground, fermenting  
Gestation starting at some distant spot.

Secret thoughts do not go creeping shoeless;  
Disguised intent does not go knocking blind.  
Everything will leave its very imprint  
Like a fossil frozen out of time.

All things planted bloom inside our being;  
When the right day comes, they burst the skin.  
Then the tendencies harbored inside them  
Hidden no longer, bear the fruit within.

The young and tender sprouts that soon are poking  
Fragile, pale green heads above the lime-  
Are riddles we can never hope to answer  
The offspring of the cultivated mind.

Patti Masterman

# Everything Weaves A Trail Through Time

everything weaves a trail through time  
spiraling down the bare edges of mind

don't try to follow, just listen for the voice  
and try to remember, you've got no choice

you never ask to be born, didn't ask to die;  
feel your soul ever trembling it's hope in a sigh

prisms of tears will reflect today's sorrow,  
a bankrupt mortgage upon your tomorrows

particles or waves; it turns out the same  
there's no one to censure; no one to blame

don't bow down to worship some unspoken words:  
for your souls simple anguish, nobody has heard.

Patti Masterman

# Evil Owns The Past

Evil owns the past,  
Don't let it wake up  
Just let it sleep,  
The past can rip wide apart  
This now, we keep.

Mothers who never came home,  
Children murdered, thrown away,  
Fathers who were never found;  
The past holds the carnage  
Of all our days.

The dead who never slept in peace,  
And still don't know if they wake or sleep-  
Give them their dreams, until time end  
And all the past to hell, descends.

(written to Loneliness, Trip Hop instrumental produced by Scartz)

Patti Masterman

# Evil Stalks

Evil stalks you from dark doorways,  
When you're alone and frightened,  
And life has heaped on too much deadwood:  
And when you're just trying to survive.

Evil will stand still then, to study you in the dark;  
And once it feels that it has you entirely memorized,  
It gradually falls into step behind you, putting it's feet  
Into each of your footsteps,  
So that Evil is always close behind and imitating you;  
Every movement of yours  
To elude detection by you.

And when Evil finally begins to draw itself up,  
To it's full height, and steps away then, out of your shadow,  
To become fully visible, that is when Evil is about to strike.  
And that is when you must strike first, unexpectedly;  
Very quickly, and must have no feelings of guilt.

If someone is wanting to destroy you,  
You must become destroyer instead,  
Because that energy, once called up,  
Cannot be put back to sleep;  
It has a thirst for blood vengeance, to be satisfied,  
So you must use it then.

Or else be prepared for it to be used against you.  
And if you take too long to decide,  
You still have made a choice.  
And you don't have to worry about what' s allowed or not-  
Because there aren't any rules in that game.

Patti Masterman

# Evil Walks On Feet Like Ours

Evil walks on feet like ours  
But sees through keyless locks,  
It's tunnel-visioned nightly harms  
In walls that cannot talk.

It starts in play like childish whims  
And grows like cancer-wild;  
It's own eyes never see a sin,  
It's reasons are not mild.

Do not let it see your face,  
For it will memorize  
The things of you can leave a trace  
Of horror, in the eyes.

Do not tell it what you fear  
For fear, it will compel  
The evil brain that drives the feet  
To take you down to hell.

Evil walks on feet like ours,  
An alien, in our midst;  
With luck, we fence it in with bars-  
There is no cure, but this.

Patti Masterman

# Execute Me

Go ahead, execute me  
With those melancholy eyes;  
Pierce me through  
With your electron sighs-  
We try to touch  
Amid the cables,  
But it's too much,  
We're never able.

Can't you see, my blood's aflame  
With the ghost in the box;  
And only to me,  
Squared symbolized, it talks;  
I move even closer,  
To it's milky eye-  
But when I get too close  
I catch on fire.

Patti Masterman

# Experiment In Human Perception

Experiment in human perception:  
Change your name to something different  
And suddenly it is perceived  
That your writing itself has changed;  
Become darker, depressive; even suicidal.  
The same words, emotions as before,  
Now clothed in a gothic, demonic flavor,  
By the simple association with a different name;  
Nothing more or less than a collection of letters-  
The 'd's not from dendrites,  
The 's's not from synapses.  
Were the Salem witch hunts inclusive in our very DNA?  
Because no one can ever see inside a man's heart,  
Only his clothing and name are visible;  
And both can be combusted, at the whim of society,  
Of whom no one person can know it's motives.  
How can it be trusted, telling nobody it's name or mission?  
Yet my name is out there for the whole world to see.  
The different will always be searched out, persecuted,  
Whether in school, or the world at large,  
Whether in 1940's Germany or 21st Century America.  
That's how it starts.

Jan.2 2010

Patti Masterman

# Explodes The Earth Now

Explodes the earth now; seams ripping lose:  
Secrets too big, too large to reveal,  
Of secret love letters, and the affairs,  
Sobs in the wind, caught on a branch  
Weeping in pillows; taking a chance,  
Eyes watching others, through knotholes in fences;  
Long breathy distances, covered in wishes,  
Dreaming of arms; the adulterous kisses.  
Everything to capacity, with 'I love you's'  
Not one object escape passion's blind truths.  
If love's a beauty; then we're her blemish;  
Lips murmuring prayer, to the mirror image  
Imagined other; of faint lipstick ovals  
And handkerchiefs sprayed with perfume notes, noble  
Handwritten sheets, bound hair clippings,  
Toasts to another's arms; their wines, sipping:  
Moments stolen out of time, never begrudged;  
If we're not in love, then we're just not happy-  
And if we're not in misery, it's not really love.

Patti Masterman

# Extraterrestrial Tourism

Your ticket stub is only a memento  
Until the alien begins to speak, through you;  
And their talk is pure telepathy-  
Because their brains all have encephaly.

Large slanted eyes can see right through  
The things you say, the things you do,  
So please don't litter, and please don't steal-  
Or this trip could get too real.

Please wear your belt on the fast spaceship,  
And don't worry if time begins to slip;  
The aliens travel through fast wormholes,  
And answer all questions with hyperbole.

They're more advanced and much more smart  
Though they may seem lacking heart;  
It's just that logically they can follow  
Anything, and find that most are hollow.

During the trip they'll assimilate  
Into their guests; don't hesitate,  
Just prepare to be surprised:  
Now there's an alien behind your eyes.

Patti Masterman

# Eye Language

In a glancing blow  
His eyes swept to  
The drifting haze  
That was her gaze

Her artificial eye  
Had a glassy stare  
That saw through him  
Like he wasn't there

If eyes could speak  
They'd never stutter  
But flutter a lot  
Like a camera shutter

If eyes are the windows  
Of the soul  
The double vision  
Must take a toil

If we had eyes  
In back our heads  
We'd out-stare coffins  
When we were dead

Patti Masterman

# Eyeless

The eyeless, romantic clown  
Put his head on backwards,  
By which he charmed a wandering troop  
Of optometrists, with placards.

The trifling, weary gossip  
Left her tongue just hanging,  
And forgot to mention who got screwed  
And whom, said who's were banging.

Patti Masterman

# Eyes

Wonder's eyes gaze in tumults,  
While Justice's eyes devour realities;  
The blind gaze only in abstraction,  
And Love, only partiality..

Patti Masterman

# Eyes Green; Ichor Of The Forest

Eyes green; ichor of the forest  
Follows you around like a secret.  
Hair veiled mist, hanging lank, like a longing  
Forgotten; stray tendrils to cling  
To whatever moves, sometimes leaving wounds..

Doesn't hold to any name  
That you or I could utter;  
Muttering leaves, clapping twigs  
Or a sudden wind,  
Might know those syllables.

Her gaze is long, and never forgets  
A horizon, or a flowing stream-  
She hides her in the deeper woods,  
Preferring to meet none..  
But still: there she is.

Patti Masterman

# Eyes In Flames

Eyes in flames  
Around me curl  
Eyes in flames  
The truth unfurl  
Eyes in flames  
Pass through my soul  
Eyes in flames  
That no one know  
Eyes in flames  
For me alone  
Eyes in flames  
Within my bones  
Eyes in flames  
Will never leave  
Eyes in flames  
While I do breathe  
Eyes in flames  
The moments change  
Eyes in flames  
Cells rearrange  
Make my world,  
Safe for me:  
Self inviolate,  
Vision free.

Nov.5 2009

Patti Masterman

# Falling

It was falling, falling;  
Precipitously low,  
Falling all night,  
All day, in the snow.

It was falling so low,  
We were checking our pipes-  
For the temperature had fallen  
To the precipice, of life.

Patti Masterman

# Falling Forever

Falling starlight out of blue,  
Heaven sinks straight into you,  
Quiet fills the darkening streets:  
In every face, it's us we meet.

Falling stars forever and ever,  
We will meet again here never,  
The world a mystery till the end:  
On us, the falling starlight bend..

Patti Masterman

## Falling Off A Cliff In Slow Motion

There was a little girl once lived in a little house  
And she feared boogie men lived inside her closet  
And underneath her bed and in her big tall chest  
Of drawers with the two little cabinet doors on top  
And that they came out in the hours after bedtime  
And no adults understood it or believed what she said  
She used to lie in her bed in the big dark holding her breath  
Afraid they'd hear her breathing, and she covered her head up  
With the blanket all except her nose and she was still as a mouse  
For hours and hours..watching the moon sail along the windows edge  
And after a while she was all grown up and then she knew about it finally  
She knew the things that frightened her live inside of men only and also they  
Lived inside of her and that there was nobody could keep them from coming out  
At the right time, they would just come out and nothing could stop it from  
happening  
There were no real boogie men or monsters and she began to wish that she was  
small  
Again, afraid of nonsensical things hiding in her darkened room  
Because they were so much less frightening  
Than the reality that was the world.

Patti Masterman

# Fallow Moonlight

Fallow moonlight, under trees  
Darkling sun the animals see  
Gloom-grey ruins, the fled day glows:  
Nothing's bright where nothing grows.

Fallow moonlight, what comes forth  
In the darkness' questioned worth?  
Shapes around, not fit for day,  
Nightmares bound: just let them be.

Patti Masterman

# False

You're beautiful like exposed lies are  
As deep as frost on a vine  
As fragrant as cut flowers on the breeze  
Memorable like a night after wine.

You're faithful as a coin when tossed  
As true as a compass point  
When it sits on a peak atop the world  
You're close like a vanishing point.

You're honest as prey chased by hounds  
As wild as a deer in the sights  
You're rare as a misfire is rare  
As brilliant as a fireflies light.

Patti Masterman

# False Earth

Where all our words intersect-  
There is a moon enlightening shadows,  
And abstraction as reality's underpinnings,  
Where we walk covered in gladness.

Where all the thinking words end,  
There's a brick wall that's hiding the sun-  
And a detour leading nowhere-  
Where the false earth comes undone.

Patti Masterman

## False Start

While the sun shines in clouds or cloudless sky,  
The street stays magnetic, two-poled  
With the passing of the cars.

In our eyes gray reflections move,  
Like false blinks, as each conveyance appears  
Though we would never stare;  
The cars are boring, without emotion.

They speed along to where we can never see,  
They might all be going nowhere on a driverless track,  
Merely circling round and round  
To give life to this muted pavement town.

Patti Masterman

# False Vacuum

In the holographic world, thoughts can fly  
From brain to brain; no reason why  
Synchronicity is the rule-  
Coincidence? don't be a fool.  
Ask, and the door must always open  
The dream won't end, till the dreamer's woken  
A man will put childish things aside  
When he finds the whole universe lies inside  
And all we see, and all we are  
Once lived inside of a twinkling star  
Don't tell me magic cannot exist:  
For out of nothing, comes all this.

Patti Masterman

# Fantasy And Reality Of The Child

I was one of those childhood clock watchers  
On school days, and I followed the clock's hands  
Like stations of the cross; knew every hidden crevice  
That a hand might slip into, to lengthen an afternoon's dudgeon.  
After the flag salute and the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner,  
You knew the clock owned your being for the duration.

Before lunch or after, I was master at telling fortunes  
Based upon time of day. And could forecast  
How the minutes could stretch out nearly to infinity's breaking point,  
In the period just after lunch; as the long, well ordered afternoon  
Started to sag, like a broken down sofa on a porch.

A full stomach and gloating midday sun,  
Lack of air conditioning made you stick to your desk,  
Secret rivulets of sweat running around under clothing,  
While your lunch did a slow, resentful roll of its own,  
From discomfort's lassitude, or stodgy blood's rancor,  
At having to confine itself entirely beneath a desk.

The clock moved in slow-mo now, as if to ridicule the slow steaming  
Of human flesh, in the smooth-painted concrete block cauldron of room,  
The mind screaming all the while of the desperate need  
To escape, in some victorious comic-book-fantasy style; but of course  
Escaping and comic books were all a part of what was forbidden here.  
It was as if the adults knew all the hidden routes to freedom in advance,  
And knowingly, sadistically thwarted every one.

If only we could secrete cobwebs from our palms,  
Throwing a line out to the door, then we'd open it and escape,  
While the teacher's mouth still was forming into a large circle of surprise.  
Or, shrinking ourselves down, we'd clatter and hunch down into the open mouth  
Of the metal desk, where the crayons and the pencil box sat in the gloom;  
Prehistoric boulders, to hide us from the eyes of the law.

I never realized that if I were captive, the teachers themselves  
Must have been sold into soulless slavery and incongruous poverty.  
Strange how the child world is egocentrically fastened  
Upon personal suffering or individual authentication.

The world we inhabit then just seems so full of us,  
There's no room left for scaling any hills inside another's mind.

Dwelling upon passing seconds made life seem a sad joke;  
It was dangerous to stare for too long at those languidly sweeping hands,  
Or to imagine how many journeys around they must make  
To gain the opening of freedom's doors.

Yet release came again every day, however torturous  
The tedious minutes might be dragging, up to its arrival.  
Even now sometimes I feel a thrill, seeing it is already a quarter of three,  
Or five minutes past; in some latent, never-aging past of mine,  
I am about to gain my personal freedom yet again.

Anyway, a kind of freedom; though perhaps there has been a reversal,  
And it is now a sort of unending captivity, that I only celebrate in ignorance.  
I'm sure even the Teachers still imagined themselves free,  
And just occasionally tied to the clock, by duties tiresome hours.

Or perhaps reality really lasted until exactly 3: 15,  
And the underpinning fantasy only began in earnest, afterwards?

Patti Masterman

# Fear

Fear is the bell that you hear ringing,  
At the end of a love; a day; a world;  
Good things go bad, on a regular basis-  
And that ringing bell's the last thing you heard.

Numbness ensues, and you welcome its coming;  
When something's removed, the nerves will scream,  
For a day or a life, their world's gone missing-  
And there's eons to sit and think, what it means..

Patti Masterman

# Fevers Frenzied Dreams

When I'm ill inside this body, the dreams turn eclectic,  
Fantastic montages inside that dark passageway:  
When I had the whooping cough,  
The Death- lives- in- your- lungs- now virus  
I dreamed one feverish night, of a place entirely white-  
Every wall and piece of furniture and clothing and utensil  
Everything there, a bright, unsullied white.  
Probably should have been wondering, am I dead yet?  
And next I found myself on a shuttle, about to do it's regular  
Flight to the moon, for the spendy,  
Interplanetary travel craving sort of man:  
I sat down next to a coin operated newspaper dispenser-  
And I inserted some coins  
A noisy vacuum came on to suck the coins down  
Before they could clamber back out  
Under the zero gravity of the space bound ship.  
I always thought I should patent that quick  
Before they actually invent it.  
During a brief illness, I once dreamed of walking to the front door  
Opening it, I sensed a huge gust of wind swirling around  
I tried to hold onto the door frame but it was no use  
It grabbed me- whisked me up in the air and away, twenty feet high-  
I gave up the ghost then and finally woke up!

Patti Masterman

# Final Grace

Step away now, one foot turn,  
Run toward arms, dark as flame,  
With the deaf tongue still searching  
For the blind eyes' refrain.

Step along now, through tunnels  
Of labyrinthine fears,  
Where echoes rebound, brittle,  
With the descent of years.

Follow stairs, lost in error  
Where a blue fog prevails,  
And the maze prevents logic,  
On its faltering trails.

Follow breath, your last marker,  
Till it cease, at the edge-  
And embrace slipping footsteps,  
Head and heel, over ledge.

Quicken heart, as you're falling,  
For you've heard of this place;  
Leave the flesh, broke and hollow-  
Your new home's final grace.

Patti Masterman

# Finding Fault And Missing Things

I can find faults anywhere;  
Underneath the couch,  
In that secret vent cover  
That leads to nowhere,  
Only to hide the stash  
Of error and discrepancy-  
Hide and Seek is the oldest game.

Once I hid my heart  
Between a man's legs  
But he forgot it was there,  
And crushed it thoughtlessly;  
And though people shouted  
At him; Be careful!  
There's an organ dangling there

He shoved the whole thing  
Back into his pants;  
Thinking it was all him.  
So now I play games  
Only half-heartedly,  
And I remember  
That what you think you see  
May not belong to the one  
That's carrying the weight.

Patti Masterman

# Fire And Clay

Lady Angel, hear my plea:  
Harken now your ear, to me  
Take this soul, of fire and clay  
And this endless stream of days;  
Make a string of pearls, for he  
Who with his smile, has captured me.

Lady Angel, were no crime;  
That his smile, my hopes define;  
The world is wanton, cruel and brief  
And I'll have many days of grief-  
My breath's my only gift to give;  
My only prayer that he shall live.

Lady Angel; human hearts  
Are delicate, when kept apart;  
And human dreams do not depend  
On facts; as how, or why, or when;  
A miracle's reborn, each day  
In Love's fierce oven: fire and clay.

Patti Masterman

# Fire And Dust

To fire and dust, ran my Father's veins-  
His sudden tempers, fast to wain,  
Considered judgments, swift but sure;  
Against stray pathos, well immured.

Fire and dust, through all his days-  
Meanings strict as he would say;  
Toward logic, reasoning flowed his mind,  
With love, the tension to unwind.

How I miss the fire and dust of him,  
And miss the years, now memory's dim;  
As diamonds hide their humbler sides,  
Their closed channels, to abide.

Patti Masterman

# First Of October Poem

And so comes Fall, with secret passwords  
That only the flying leaves could know,  
Little apparitions and witches,  
Padding across ripe apple groves..

The great season, to remember the dead  
And how once touched, their lives to ours,  
The sympathetic magic of message,  
What love once touched will always grow..

Patti Masterman

# First Star

You know, these are the days I use to dream about  
Hibernating, safe in my mothers body  
And even before that, when I was a floating mote of helium  
High above in the heavens, and somebody looked up  
And a blazing star fragment fell at that instant; they thought it disappeared  
Far away over the horizon, but it went into a woman's eye  
Who was looking up at that same moment  
And like invisible particles continue to act upon one another even at a distance  
The two watchers of the falling star had to come together  
To give that star-seed a place, room to grow  
To put out tentacles, and grow body parts and brain cells-  
So that looking up, it could see the other stars and know itself  
Even know things it should have no knowledge of  
Things happening far above, all the while stars fall and comets skip past  
And that is why our hearts feel ancient at times  
And the reason we look up in amazement,  
With bright stars in our eyes, remembering.

Patti Masterman

# Fish Die In Full View Of The Water

Fish die in full view of the water,  
Birds die at the very edge of sky;  
Love can die when there's no room to grow in,  
Like the wind, for a stopping place sighs.

Patti Masterman

# Flame Eternal

Tell me  
In what lake of fire  
Did you purchase those eyes-  
Did the sulfur burn your nostrils  
Did the smoke blind your eyes  
Did the heat kindle your passion  
Until you were one consuming bonfire  
Broken free from the secret bowels of earth.

The coins you paid with,  
Are they now shiny molten pools  
And was it worth the trouble  
To keep me from sleep  
Because now I feel the flames all night long  
Till the morning sun blots out the stars  
And I wake up smelling smoke  
From my own charred remains.

I would throw myself into your cauldrea  
A sacrifice for the lost and abandoned  
Just to incinerate the last evidence  
But it's a bit too late now.

Patti Masterman

# Flames And Eyes

Flames and eyes, flames and eyes,  
Protecting me, from the sky;  
Breath my shield, in this war,  
Flames and eyes: guard my door.

Flames and eyes, flames and eyes;  
Never need an alibi,  
Guard my form, standing by;  
Save my life, by and by.

Patti Masterman

# Flames That Never Die

Flames that never die  
Eyes that never rest  
Flames around my form  
Eyes that never scorn

Flames enclose my whole  
Eyes surround my soul  
Flames will purify  
Eyes will not deny

Flames, a wall above  
Flames, a living love  
Eyes see all around  
Eyes not tied to ground

Flames a hollow gall  
Flames enclosing all  
Eyes those flames awake  
Eyes that won't forsake

Flames ever bright  
Flames give me light  
Eyes day and night  
Eyes give me sight

All is revealed  
Under time's wheel  
Flames and eyes will show  
The real, from the unreal

Patti Masterman

# Flash In The Pan

Flash in the pan, my tempestuous heart;  
The art temporal composes your parts  
While thinking you're dying, or that you might live,  
Depends what significant others would give.

Little attractions, like swarms of gnats,  
Emotional spasms of arterial attacks,  
Visions of cherubs which bloom in your head;  
But a flash in the pan and then boom- you're dead.

Patti Masterman

# Flesh Of The World's Flesh

Flesh of the world's flesh;  
Seething sea of wriggling bodies-  
All breathing in breaths,  
All hiding from deaths.

Looking out a single eye;  
Thinking thoughts to ponder why  
They have to lay them down and die;  
In countless graves, the bones will lie.

Still and cold as earth below,  
When the winter season's come;  
When the gales of winter blow,  
And the trees all bare their boughs.

Patti Masterman

# Flights Of Fancy

The chortle ran off with the belly laugh,  
The giggle ran away with the smirk-  
Leaving the snickers and glowers and glares,  
Bored at the depot, to lurk..

The gasp made off with the sigh,  
And the snores soon took over the room-  
With rattles that tattled to all, by and by.  
That it would be morning quite soon..

Patti Masterman

# Floating Leaves

Floating leaves, on the water,  
Please bring me a little daughter;  
Make her sweet and very small,  
Though later, she may grow quite tall.

Roses blooming, on the vine,  
Tell her she will be all mine;  
I'll love her till the end of time;  
She'll always be my valentine.

Patti Masterman

# Flower Talk

The Lilies sent a message to the Lilacs:  
There is not enough light at noon  
Around these parts; what shall we do  
Replied the Lilac, bloom  
Bloom: where you are planted.

The Honeysuckles sent a note-  
They are of course quite shy-  
To the Climbing roses; whereof to spread  
The Climbers replied, go high-  
Higher: climb toward the light.

The Marigolds were wont to root  
Beside the road, so dreary  
Of the Baby's breath, they then inquired  
How do you stay so cheery?  
They whispered: just keep a young heart.

A Weed approached a Blue eyed stranger  
Reposing alone, in thought  
'I've no name either; now there's two of us,  
you see' he said, conversationally  
Replied the Blue one: Forget-me-not.

Patti Masterman

# Flowering Prattle

The Pansies curtsied deeply, in their flouncy purple dress,  
To the yellow Jonquils; and then only to impress.  
And Amaryllis hides her newly naked-lady stem,  
But her bouffant clothing opens, at each thrill of puffing wind.

The Bluebell always bows her head, when saying any grace,  
Though Iris has Apollo's tears, fresh on her upturned face;  
While Daffodil has sunshine, in her ringing petticoats-  
Poor Honeysuckle is quite gone; all eaten up by goats.

Patti Masterman

# Flowerpot Helmets And Hot Glue Guns

On the worst days, I repeat ridiculous mantras  
To salve my skittered soul, in a kind of muttered prose of peace,  
Giving the frantic mind it's small, measured buffer of nonsense,  
Because otherwise I can't breathe, and eating's no fun either

And I'm no good at all to you, once I break down.  
So I'm glueing and taping myself together again  
Hoping it will last another week  
But there's always another; and another

And my flowerpot helmet is beginning to feel so heavy now..

Patti Masterman

# Flowers In The Basket

Flowers in the basket, rotting  
Gloves hang by the stairway, dripping  
Friends are frantically calling, calling  
While my thoughts are slipping, slipping

Roses bloom on faded curtains  
Children outside, stairing, stairing  
More brilliant dye has stained the cloth  
While I sit not caring, caring

Upstairs all is still and silent  
Nothing moves inside the gloom  
All the voices, never ceasing  
Echo in the tomb, the tomb.

Patti Masterman

# Flowers Of The Air

Suppose that stars are beacons  
Posted as a lover's greeting  
Suppose that galaxies are cells  
In a giant's heart, that's beating

Suppose that starfish are  
Boomerangs grown by sea, and  
Shy schools of mermaids there  
Teach snorkeling for a fee

Suppose that innocent babes  
Were always treated with care  
And that drifting butterflies  
Are just flowers of the air.

Patti Masterman

# Flowers Of The Sea

Flowers of the sea  
Bobbing in the tides  
Colors dreamed by Neptune  
Upon the ocean ride

Flowers groomed by fishes  
To suit a mermaid's vase  
Unfathomed as her wishes  
Rare as her unseen face

Flowers untouched by humans  
Growing free the wildest way  
In salty brine they're blooming  
Decorating sailor's days

Patti Masterman

# Fly Far, Unclouded Soul

Fly far, unclouded soul,  
Heaven's newest fervent flower;  
Fly to virgin waters, fast or slow  
For how can it matter  
Once freed of all earth's denials  
For you no boundaries, no time;  
Limits are for living lives,  
But you are the unlettered firmament  
Behind a million smiles;  
You are the kite that's broken free  
Of every clutching kite string;  
The pink balloon bearing goodbye tears  
Released from a tiny baby's grave;  
Or the laughter of many years  
Grown quiet; still brave  
Having left behind all fears,  
Now only on gods time,  
Which no man knows-  
Fly far, unclouded soul.

Patti Masterman

# Flying Ointment

"This is a subtle art, " says she;  
Her old eyes gleam with secrets rare.  
"It's not the boiling cauld, you see,  
That puts the magic in the air.

It matters little, what is mumbled;  
The candle flame can't charge the aether.  
And many rites are easily fumbled  
By knowing neither whither nor whether.

No powdered coral can tide the storm;  
No vaporous draught can call the sprite-  
It's thoughts that give a spell it's form,  
And love, that makes a potion tight.

Allow the brew to fill your senses  
And, let the disbelieving grumble-  
All their dreams lie caged, in fences;  
Yours shall soar, while theirs will crumble."

Patti Masterman

# Folding Time

In some alabaster glass, I shine  
Face fresco'd by the day's first light  
As time draws down to the finest line,  
Noon-day clouds have attained their height.

Hours pass by like a highway flows  
Turns day to night, and new to old  
Till the pile of minutes soon has grown  
Too tall; so then the time must fold.

Patti Masterman

## Follow Moonlight

Follow moonlight to your dreams;  
Fancies in the evening gleam,  
Patterns in your darkened room,  
Hidden brightness in the gloom.

Follow moonlight; heaven waits,  
Something new your spirit takes,  
For one hour, or one night,  
Moonlight for your soul's delight.

Patti Masterman

# Food For Thought

Is it a matter of taste  
Or just morality;  
Don't decide in haste,  
For it's totality:

The chalice of all thought,  
The limit of our being,  
Last frontier finally sought-  
But can I eat it without feeling?

How scarce now the doves;  
Too hungry to refrain-  
When push comes to shove,  
I'll eat your brains.

Patti Masterman

# Fooldom

Never could tell  
Play fights from real ones;  
Friends favorite line was,  
'And you believed it! '

Some words are brick walls  
Erected just to block my view  
Some words are chameleons  
Hiding behind fake stones

Maps more useless to me  
Than compass without needles  
Couldn't blow bubbles, whistle  
Turn somersaults

Writing's no proof  
Of any kind of competence:  
Parrots can string words together  
Knowing not of what they speak

And horses can add by hoof beats  
Fish swim in a school-  
Why must I be the butt of that joke  
They call, self hood?

I can only laugh at self  
That unlettered court jester  
Who will never be a sophisticate  
And when kissed, will never turn  
Into any sort of royalty  
Fairy stories be damned  
I was always a fake human being.

Patti Masterman

## Fooled Again

Sometimes you think you get a glimpse  
Of something that's rarely seen;  
A remote sighting of genius,  
You were lucky to almost meet.  
But upon closer inspection,  
It's depressing to realize,  
It was just a slight retardation  
Turned the phrase that attracted your eyes.

Patti Masterman

## For A Minimal Fee

Dishwashing therapy I'd swear by-  
Alone, in the kitchen, I stand;  
Warm soapy water runs down the dishes,  
And, armed with sponge in hand,  
I wrestle my inner demons; the  
Occasional tear drips down  
Into the muddied waters, all  
My sorrows go swirling down.  
I know my face is crinkling;  
The muscles all tight and tense.  
With wet cheeks and the sniffles,  
I try to find life's recompense.  
The sink's all empty by the time  
I've laid my grief aside.  
The dishes are clean and so my soul-  
New peace welling up inside.  
So if you're feeling downcast  
And everything seems bleak-  
Just dump all of your sorrows  
Straight into the kitchen sink  
(For me the treatment is free of course-  
But I'll send you my bill next week) .

Patti Masterman

# For Here We Have No Continuing City

For here we have no continuing city-  
Here the falcons and the herons  
Clash overhead, and the dead fall to ground  
Like so many feckless soldiers.

For here we have no continuing city-  
Wolves and foxes bear young in the caves  
And they track the moon till dawn  
Like the last worshipers of a lunar deity.

For here we have no continuing city-  
When you reach out to touch my hand  
Wild goats stumble high up in the cliffs  
And the rabbit escapes the trap narrowly.

Patti Masterman

# For I Am Glad To Wander Hymn

For I am glad to wander  
In this world you do not know;  
And though your touch not found here-  
There are things, your image show.

I am glad to stay here,  
In this place you left for me;  
And wait and quietly welcome  
The stirrings, that may be.

I try to recognize here,  
The things you'd have me see-  
And know it's not forever  
Till you return, for me.

Patti Masterman

# For Me

For me, none ever wrote poetry  
For me, none ever wrote prose;  
I stirred no sentimental pulses-  
No use denying what was.

Why does god make misfits,  
Who don't fit predetermined molds?  
Why does god give warm hearts-  
When receptions must always be cold?

The dead must now be happy,  
Reposing in colder ground;  
The warmth stays far away now-  
And voices have no sound.

Patti Masterman

# For The Love Of Mortal

Why does pain excite  
When pleasure can't;  
Love is boring,  
Strange is good;  
Why things are backwards-  
A strange etude?

Why does boredom bite  
With duller teeth,  
Than sharp embrace  
That hides the wound;  
If we be mortal-  
Then sing that tune?

Patti Masterman

# For The Soul's Own Song

One must collect words

if one wishes to write convincingly;

concrete words like plasticine, Neanderthal,

abstract words like meme, sacerdotal.

Proper nouns; Desdemona, Hildegard.

Teeth-gnashing words like gnostic, gnaw-

one suspects Gnosticism became less popular

when the teeth were ground too raw.

Words with hidden lightning- sleep-

like zenith, zither, zephyr, zepellin.

Hungry words, somnolent, narcissistic;

onomatopoeias- honk and beep.

Power-house words; Nimrod, Agamemnon.

Dumb-with-hunger words like famish, faint.

Words with special meaning for only two,

words with irony or outright angst.

Words we meant, when other words went wrong.

Words we lent, for the soul's own song..

Patti Masterman

# Forces Of Nature

Some things are born  
Without a cry or even a whimper:  
Love, in the lover's heart  
Fear, in the mother's breast  
Courage, in the lion tamers cage  
Some things have no sound  
No language, no translation  
Though larger than all creation  
The strongest forces  
Holding the world together  
Have no substance and no weight,  
No source or obvious supply-  
And once gone, they leave no trace.

Patti Masterman

# Foreboding

He squawks in a high pitch, like an old woman in hysterics  
if something does not suit him, if an object is placed  
where he did not intend to ever find it,  
or if he is not consulted before every minuscule movement  
of anything in his surroundings. He will even throw or overturn it,  
in instant imitation of why he did not want it here, or there;  
thus himself causing to occur what he supposedly dreaded.

Every decision, whether worth a spoken word or not,  
diminishes him, if he was not consulted beforehand.  
The smaller he feels himself, the more vituperative he becomes,  
until one can scarcely stand to remain any longer  
in the same room with him.

Men become even more of what they were in youth, with age.  
And every young woman is the warning of an old one,  
And every youthful man, a foreboding of futures to come.

Patti Masterman

# Foreign Models Wanted

Women draped across beds  
with Pavlovian puppy eyes  
limbs every which way, perhaps a fray  
without a starting lie

Whispers across the ceiling  
between flicks of a camera's spittle  
no men admitted, we must not have  
seduction, at acquittal

Foreign models wanted  
for barely there filigree  
bikini gloss, in a ring toss  
bend-overs entirely free

Later men in bathrooms linger  
too long over sticky pages  
trying to fit the woman back in  
to the anorexic aegis

Patti Masterman

## Forest Speaking Green - Tanka

forest speaking green  
of the damp blossoms blooming  
tomorrow's full of color  
roughened bark of many boughs  
holds the sap of all the words

Patti Masterman

# Forever

In the field there grow lovely flowers,  
Growing beauty, for the world to see.  
But a gardener soon comes to cut them;  
An arrangement in futility.

For all cut flowers are dead ones;  
Killed, dragged out by the roots-  
The bounty of earth, given all for free,  
We treat as our selfish loot.

So we mark our days with dead flowers,  
Chosen special, for the event in mind;  
Dead carnations, for the paler dead ones  
Who've left their wilting lives behind.

Dead roses for dead children,  
For bride's whose old lives won't survive;  
Dead boutonnières, for bachelor's tears,  
Who in secret for the old days pine.

Red roses, dead in a few days time,  
For the harpy or the shameless flirt-  
While everybody seeing them wonders  
About the facts; and what's the dirt?

Dead flowers, from lover to beloved,  
Dead flowers, in cold glass stand,  
Dead flowers are our only answer;  
It's always been the way of man.

Please don't give me flowers;  
No flowers, now or ever,  
No dying flowers, for my wistful grave-  
To remind how long, 'forever'

Patti Masterman

# Forget

Forget the words, forsake the books;  
Forget to take a second look;  
Forget to return, those things you took;  
Forget misgivings you forsook.

Forget the soul and forsake the man;  
Forget the conscience, forsake the plan;  
Forget your dreams, don't make a stand;  
Forget gravity: the world disband.

Patti Masterman

# Forgetfulness

When you're sure that you've forgotten  
Much more than you ever did know,  
And you're feeling even more certain  
You've become so incredibly slow

You may think you're incredibly aged,  
And that no one has nothing on you;  
But before you decide you're a sage,  
You should stop to reflect, if it's true?

For old age has some tricks up it's sleeve  
To convince you, of things that aren't true;  
If you find you've forgot to forget,  
It might just be you, fooling you.

Then again, if you barely remember  
The thing that you thought was forgot,  
And you strain and you stress; but it's going,  
And then leaves, just before it gets caught

If this happens too often for comfort,  
That thoughts come, but then go away  
You should probably get an opinion-  
Now what was I trying to say?

Patti Masterman

# Forgotten

Shadows of a dawning treason  
left behind another season  
where no soul or captive mind  
Can find the reason or the rhyme  
for missing things once left behind  
Behind the grace you find the cost  
Behind the hours that you lost  
And the toll you pay is paid  
with time.

In that other day where living  
seemed much more about the giving  
and the selfish deeds forgotten  
In the arms of love begotten  
nothing then of love was rotten  
We had hours to fill with feeling  
Feeling was the mint of truth  
Feeling was both floor and roof  
Back then we could never act  
Aloof.

Can we never go back again  
to those days remember when  
first love was always best and truest  
Implicit only that we knew it  
the only sin known to refuse it  
Refuse and you go home alone  
Refuse and live a life unknown  
Love best befitting those that  
Choose it.

And so we live with fate our savior;  
Devil, of our own life's flavor  
No one's fault if lines got blurry:  
Back when life was just a flurry  
Deals we struck without a worry  
Worry never soothed a brow  
Worry cannot hurt us now  
We paid our dues; it's late

to hurry now.

Patti Masterman

# Forgotten Dreams

Years fall peacefully, forgotten dreams,  
like passing smoke loosens tears,  
like fingers leave soft memories.

New life known in lost words  
and old eyes that remember stars,  
and faith, that time give beauty steel.

Angels danced of waking light,  
sun-sweet days and waning winds;  
wondering leaves in secret piles.

Mind left away the painful waves;  
the body gray, in broken flesh,  
far hopes high, in clouds churned wild.

The long night's blue, and death's in thought  
and time in earth is hidden deep;  
hands closed on air, from slowing breath-  
forever souls are safe asleep.

Patti Masterman

# Forgotten Young Hands

forgotten young hands write the new fallen Spring,  
where poetry loses her fires, blossoming:  
remember, how stars could mine frost in the snow;  
how clever their strength, could divided love fold.

the verses from above shall cover singing thrushes,  
while man's easy days all die in tall rushes,  
and clinging to laughter, are the lips of a muse  
for some misbegotten poet, in love with the ruse.

the round light of the season softens the days  
so the hearts of the mourners are easily swayed.

Patti Masterman

# Formality

Formality is:

Molecules barely brushing, almost apologetically, up against other molecules  
As if by accident, or a brushstroke undertaken slightly less far  
Than the distance halfway between neck and shoulder  
To reveal less bosom, due to a dignified corsage of white flowers;  
Long elbow-length gloves, made only for sipping martinis  
Which we decline and then accept, only with the most definite uncertainty  
While we glance warily at our watches,  
Made with such gleaming, clean lines of precision  
In another country far away, where the graceful birds flock  
Only at sunset, to preen themselves  
Around the air-borne rainbows, of perfectly flowing fountains.

Patti Masterman

# Forsake

Try to care, improvise concern,  
Ad lib empathy, fake sympathy-  
Win a thousand academy awards;  
Compromise when moving forward.

All your tears no difference make-  
Even the art of forsaking, forsake.

Patti Masterman

# Fortune

Never a word though the wise may say  
The prophets scold, and the peasants mumble  
Never so clear till comes the day  
That fortunes fall and empires crumble.

Never the foresight to halt the ruin-  
Though dire predictions often rumble  
The traps set at the dark of moon  
As fortunes fall and empires crumble.

Never the path twist doom and decay  
Fools must trip, and soon they stumble  
No use then to grovel or pray  
The fortunes fall and empires crumble.

Neither love nor lust to blame  
When both good and bad made humble-  
Vengeance first will spark the flame  
When fortunes fall and empires crumble.

Patti Masterman

# Forty-Nine

The year that I turned forty-nine years old  
Started out as a simple day that began to stretch itself out,  
Like a large, heavy grasshopper, fighting in a spiders web,  
Until it lengthened itself Into the deepness of eternity itself,  
And each month became another disorderly year  
In a great vertiginous forest, of many-ringed trees  
Continuously erupting and spreading out  
The boundaries enlarging at a dizzying rate.  
Previously years I recalled had whizzed by  
To some unknown algorithm  
In which every year past childhood went by more quickly,  
The farther youth was left behind

But at the magical node of seven, seven times,  
Some magical expansion began,  
And many lifetimes were granted in the span of a single year:  
Species evolved and devolved in my shadow  
Civilizations rose and fell under my gaze  
Fire and writing were discovered time and time again,  
Each time I cooked or opened a book;  
Whenever I took a walk somewhere,  
Explorers found the shores of new continents  
And a curious humanity swarmed Earth once again.

Man found god and then abandoned him, every stroke of the hour.  
I had always heard seven was a mysterious, potent number.  
If and when I reach 98, I feel sure infinity will begin in earnest  
And in the extensive singularity of self,  
I'll conquer time once and for all.

Patti Masterman

# Found

One day I noticed  
Your eyes were white, waving flags  
And your heart was plainly visible  
I've been wearing myself  
On somebody's sleeve for so long now  
I almost missed it.

Would you find me  
Half hidden in roses?  
Would you chase me  
Underneath waterfalls?  
Would you save me for a rainy day  
On a day when nobody wanted to read  
The message you'd written so painstakingly?

One day I found  
There was a ribbon tied to my door  
So if I ever went missing  
They'd know where to start looking  
And I threw some leaves up  
Into the air, to shout that I was still around.

Would you find me  
Waiting behind excuses?  
Would you lead me  
To the public square?  
Would you parade me through town,  
Before god, before everyone  
Like a statue that's been paid for  
Or something the fountain hadn't yet drowned?

If ever I lost my way  
I'd wander straight toward you  
I wouldn't ask god to be shown the way-  
I'd follow the tear stained roses,  
I'd follow the waterfall's roar  
I'd read the message you left behind for me-  
Saying finally- finally you're found.



# Four Elements

## AIR

An ocean I'm called, going to and fro  
In the twin pipe organs that breathe and blow  
I enliven all hearts  
From the very first start  
The first to come and the last to go.

## FIRE

Food is the fire at my hearth  
Delivered through blood before birth  
Life on it depends  
To live you must expend  
The price of living on earth.

## EARTH

The thick repository of all that is  
Growing things must feel my kiss  
Whether volcanoes spew me  
Or earthquakes chew me  
Always beneath I exist.

## WATER

I float nine months in loves briny ocean  
So gently rocked by each tiny motion  
Fresh riptides of blood  
My whole being flood  
The painful entrance inspires devotion.

Four elements compose the whole  
Each one plays it's very own role  
But the deepest part fills  
When the first breath instills  
The self's own select living Soul.

Patti Masterman

# Fractious Children

Fractious children gather at my doors,  
Knocking on walls, peeping through keyholes;  
And if I open to one, they would all rush in  
Like the wind rushes by, on some panic-blind day.

And then depart precipitously, like a wallcloud swirls,  
Or a storm of dry leaves falls to the ground,  
While leaving behind an intangible something,  
Which says look, things here may have changed.

No thing's the same, as the minutes before:  
And you surely know, you must have changed too  
As you slowly step out, of the corpse of the old  
And move toward the new doom, uncertain as ever.

Patti Masterman

# Fragments Of Love Letters

thought I was enough for you? will harvest the crop in the  
Fall? without you the fireplace cannot be lighted/never  
really loved me, I think you just wanted/will we pay all the  
bills now? If that was what you really wanted then why/only  
one who can coax the dog from beneath/spent years just  
waiting on you to finally/will we tell my Aunt Martha about this?  
never here, I raised the children myself without any help/  
the first slut who ever threw herself at/all others aside, just to  
have your own way/can take the place of your mother in your  
life? always swore I'd never put up/knew you liked men best then  
why on earth/believe another is doing this to me again? have all  
the things I have given you over the years/wanted to drive me  
away from the beginning/life is ruined now, what will the neighbors  
would sell your soul just for a piece of/forgot our anniversary  
again, how could you? want the house and you can have every  
thing else that/those bimbos just like you no good like I always  
said/can't believe you've left me to have to take care/Wish I'd  
known then what I know/Mother always told me you'd end up  
making me/the children would never want to stay here without me/  
spent every penny we worked so hard/didn't break it, it just fell of its  
own accord/left your clothes downstairs you can pick up what's/  
own children won't even know you/believe all those pictures were  
cut up and/not the same person I married at all/would ever be able  
to make you happy/never want to see you again as long as I

Patti Masterman

# Fraught In Flame And Framed By Time

Fraught in flame and framed by time,  
I see your face by the candle's light;  
And mercy accumulated, from many small acts  
Composes your expression, and makes it soft.

You wear gentleness like others wear flowers,  
You count love by actions, not hours;  
Your callouses are knots, on a rosary of care,  
When you enter in a room, patience takes a chair.

Noble intentions, steeped in palpable grace,  
Eyes cast down, when any murmuring goes on;  
Against friend or brother; you've naught to say,  
Gentle your step upon the world, each day.

In a thousand worlds, are you present there?  
Between the dimensions, singing like wind,  
Breaking disappointment, and pouring out love:  
Light in your eyes, your heart a treasure-trove.

Patti Masterman

# Free Range Poetry

Poems are being born all the time:  
Poems coming and going  
At subway stations, train platforms  
Bus depots and airports  
Poems colliding in mid-air;  
Poems arriving with the daily mail.

Poems raining down with cupid's arrows  
Poems clinging to atomic fields and  
Quantum double-slit experiments  
Poems congregating in waiting rooms  
Poems promulgating the latest trend  
Poems expounding on the newest fashions.

But the only poems you ever get to see  
Are the ones captured and pressed into service  
Between book bindings- they have to do all the work  
And get little credit for it  
Once they were just floating little bubbles  
Orbiting somebody's brain: free range poems.

Then they were tricked and trapped into service  
Now they run the entire planet  
Soon there will be poem-powered everything  
There will always be doubters, but as sure as  
There will be hydrogen and water powered cars  
There will be poem generators and poetry power plants-  
All running on bubbles from your brain.

If merely looking at quantum particles changes their motion  
Or alters their position, the sky is the limit  
That's the new universe- powered by bubbles of thought  
It's only a matter of time;  
Where d'ya think all this came from, in the first place?

Patti Masterman

# Freedom Takes Another Life

Freedom takes another life:

grow up, someone somewhere's always telling you what to do;  
teacher, preacher, parents, coaches, fraternities, policemen

Then suddenly one day, they just pull the tablecloth out  
completely; you fall on the floor, amid broken china  
you crawl away to cover yourself your bleeding nakedness,

they follow along behind, kicking you for everything you forgot,  
beating you in time, to the cadence of all your slovenly forgetting  
your clueless indifference, your myopic wanderings;  
The whole world judging, abandoning you

you didn't give the world what it needed; what she wanted  
what he wanted, you've smashed all their hopes and dreams  
you stumbler in the darkness, you purveyor of the unwanted

When they dissembled and hedged  
about what they did or didn't desire  
you were supposed to condense that sound  
into all those people screaming at you from childhood- and act

But you didn't you just stood there-  
stood there and stood there, rooting;  
pathetically crying, and moaning  
that you didn't know what they wanted from you  
that you never had gotten it-

Maybe you'll die alone now, and you'll deserve that too  
Dead is how they always wanted you; invisibly corrupted  
underground, finally quiet, out of the way-

now do you get it?  
Maybe you can finally just get with the program now.

Just look at yourself; a rotten mess:  
What have you got to say for yourself now?



# Freedom Without Love

freedom without love;  
you're playing only half the game  
kiss the stars above,  
but only if they come in range.

freedom without love;  
the losers can't come up with smiles  
so leave them a few crumbs;  
defeat stings but a little while.

freedom without love;  
you loan your body out to night,  
and someone will show up:  
although the goal's well out of sight.

Patti Masterman

# Friends Are Apparitions

Friends are apparitions,

Now here, now gone, you see;

Don't go thinking that you'll have

The same, for eternity.

Acquaintances the blow-flies are,

That mass upon the rim;

All fly away, the first strong breeze-

They come and go on whim.

Patti Masterman

# From Toe To Head

Unpleasingly seasoned, she was  
At getting what she wanted  
And reasonably unappeasing  
Though still appetizing

Whetting on whetstones  
Her boned appetites  
Grating and shredding  
While grinding just right

Colors and textures  
She mixed with much whimsy  
Saucing the saucier  
With pure bourbon whiskey

They found her one morning  
Her head in a stew  
With garlic and onions  
In clinched fist, askew

They buried her standing  
For they could not unbend  
The overcooked proteins-  
So stood her, on end..

Patti Masterman

# From Whence Satan?

We're going to hell-  
And there's global warming;  
The globalists said so,  
They gave us a warning.

The preachers tell  
Of a burning forever;  
It's the god of love-  
But loving us, never.

Loving us with flames  
Loving us with fire  
Loving us with anger-  
And flammable ire.

With him against us,  
Who be for us?  
There's no defense  
By hill or forest.

No angel fresh  
From heaven or hell  
Could make god ring  
Salvation's bell.

If hell's above  
And hell's in hell-  
You have to wonder  
Where Satan fell?

Patti Masterman

# Full Frontal Nudity

full frontal nudity:

her firm contours melting into one another  
countries without definite borders,  
so aptly was she crafted.

looking lost in time,  
out of place; does she wander Earth now  
in search of something  
to remind who she used to be?

she who was worshiped like a god,  
her curves traced under many devoted palms:  
a map to heaven for those  
who knew where to find it.

looking lonely beneath the sky,  
clouds arranged artfully beyond her gaze,  
and still firm on their foundation,  
stand the marble feet of Aphrodite.

Patti Masterman

# Fusion

The nearness of your breath  
And the look in your eyes  
Will slay me some day.

Smouldering embers  
Burn through my core;  
There is no mercy.

Such a slow death-  
By degrees we come in;  
By degrees we must go out.

From the high mountain  
Of your brow  
I fall in slow motion.

Embracing my death-  
Dissolving unrepentantly  
Into the clutching thickness.

Surely goodness and mercy  
Do not matter here;  
Even the fingers have tongues.

Let him who has ears hear:  
Let him who has eyes see:  
Gladly we go into the holocaust.

Oblivion makes us forget all,  
But the splendid instant of combustion-  
For true believers, it is only an ignition.

Patti Masterman

# Future Plans

My child won a scholarship  
Accompanied by many honors.  
After hours walking, hurrying,  
Through diverse airports and cities,  
I fell into an exhausted sleep;  
After much talk about  
Colleges, degrees, time tables,  
And what was the best path?  
It was so necessary, important,  
And confusing. How to sort it all out?  
In my dream, we went out to eat  
Perhaps to celebrate the trip.  
Perhaps to celebrate the accomplishment.  
Amidst the talk of what institution  
She should attend, where and for how long,  
She merely said, I plan to look at the face of God.  
I plan to look into the face of God.  
I was impressed with the simplicity of it.  
I knew then that time and space  
Would someday become her ally.

Patti Masterman

# Gadsden Rag

Hacking off heads  
Killing the snake  
Two sided hydra  
Look what's at stake

Hacking off heads  
Is the name of the game  
Get your knives ready  
We're circling the drain

Hacking off heads  
No more eating cake  
For the only good one's  
A dismembered snake

Patti Masterman

# Gamble

Wayward angel trumps a devil,  
Demon trumps a saint,  
A full house of crazy royals;  
Regal trumps of fate.

Crazy joker trumps their faces,  
Bullets trump the game;  
Police trump the jolly players-  
Jail will trump their fame.

Death will always trump the living;  
Living trumps a corpse-  
And living long just trumps all reason-  
Dust trumps all, of course.

Patti Masterman

# Gardens Flower In Her Blooming Breath

gardens flower in her blooming breath  
my faces trellis there, linger vines  
faint rumors; fueled histories of death  
stilled hearts cut from holy valentines  
afternoons of stillness belie her quickened feet  
image of her haunting silhouette  
before that vision is complete  
rays of sun disclosing her artless pirouette  
female of species: a class apart  
reach only once, that soft spectral voice  
finding all her heart's incendiary art  
loving your only choice  
gentled spirit of her fails strength  
whispered my latent downfall's story  
catch too willingly that glory  
hollowed slow, your soul will follow  
will soul your slow hollowed glory  
that willingly too, catch story  
downfall's latent: my whispered strength  
fails her of spirit gentled choice;  
only your loving art,  
incendiary heart's her all finding voice  
spectral soft, that once only reach apart  
class a species of female pirouette artless,  
her disclosing sun of rays  
complete is vision that before  
silhouette haunting her of image  
feet quickened her  
belie stillness of afternoons valentines,  
holy from cut hearts stilled death  
of histories fueled rumors; faint vines  
linger there: trellis faces my breath  
blooming her in flower gardens.

Patti Masterman

# Gestation

Fragile human creature:  
A delicately enclosing bud  
Sunlight passing through the heart  
Pouring itself out perfectly  
(Knowing more than appearances whisper  
Feeling the gravity of the untouchable)  
Blessed by intelligent love  
We bloom into the birthright of compassion  
Godlike in understanding  
Rising above the random condition  
Until the silent metamorphosis begins  
Relapsing into the startled darkness-  
Hidden black hole turns us inside out,  
Pregnant with unknown riches  
We branch into unexpected histories.

Patti Masterman

# Ghost In The Machine

Coming and going, ninja-style  
Turn sideways to disappear  
(Maybe they never saw a thing?)

Fall down shoots, surface again  
Assumed alias a bitmap mask  
(Still not sure what they just saw)

Float in anonymous domains  
Submerge, submerge; the cache's deep  
Vanish just by blending in.

Assault, then go a different way  
Becoming someone else a charge;  
The internet is very large.

Patti Masterman

# Ghost Or Poltergeist

I've been chased by things almost formless  
in a void fertile only with horror;  
bodies made of black energy,  
burnt roots, twisted wire-  
invisible to all but psyches eyes.

No speed can shake them off  
no devotions dislodge them;  
and left behind, a feeling of filth,  
as nerves crawl restlessly,  
the only rooted memory.

Whether they died or ever breathed at all  
doesn't really matter;  
they can keep running till time itself runs out  
and are far too intelligent  
to be called merely ghost, or poltergeist..

Patti Masterman

# Ghostly

I am a figment of my imagination,  
I am a hologram, loosed upon the world,  
I am the past of the present that's waiting-  
Waiting for time, in its time to unfurl.

I am the death in the life breath was bringing,  
I am the mirror that the living were shown,  
I am the omen that dying has loosened-  
I am the spirit upon which flesh has flown.

Patti Masterman

# Ghosts Get Angry

Ghosts get angry when they can't  
Garner your attention;  
No matter what they say or chant,  
Nothing's worth a mention.

Ghosts get meaner when you don't  
Think that they are blatant;  
Ignoring them- you can't or won't-  
Admit their body's latent.

Patti Masterman

# Gilded

Gilded electronic age, embraced electron by electron  
Our blue bloodstream of vivifying interference;  
Taletale beating hearts from every venue  
Filling up the airwaves, crowding out matter from outer space.

We replace the universe particle by particle  
With our coded and distinct signatures  
While our science grows daily, like a spreading tumor  
To touch the dimmed edge of our infinity.

A ghostly sphere of punctuated radio waves  
The only billboard, for our once ingenuity.  
Deus exuvia ex vir in minimus locus.

(God hides from man in the smallest places)

Patti Masterman

## Gird Up Your Heart

Gird up your heart, or the past will come stab it,  
Cover your wounds, or the memories will sting:  
Be careful whatever you're seeing or hearing;  
No telling what others the stray things may bring.

If you open your ears, you'll get burned for your efforts,  
The notes of a song can assault with no hint,  
And the pain is so blinding that nothing can soothe it;  
On random bad luck all your hot tears get spent.

No one can live freely without fear of harming;  
No thing in this world can live safely from danger:  
When you've loved and then lost your heart's barest treasure,  
You'll lock up what's left and then live as a stranger.

Patti Masterman

# Glass Coffins

I was dying all day  
I sent up flares  
You couldn't see them from there

Caring makes me ill  
Only the thoughtless can go on living  
Seamlessly in their smiles

I won't keep pretending that it's alright  
As I fall screaming  
Into endless night.

Patti Masterman

# Glug Glug

Glug, glug

Oh no; what's that noise?

Glug, glug

The drain now has a voice?

Glug, glug,

Well this is quite a bummer!

Glug, glug

(My husband, the plumber)

Patti Masterman

# God Bless America, Kate Sang

God bless America, Kate sang  
And I cried over and over  
Listening to my little record player  
Each time, they were shocked  
To see it happen again  
Land that I love, she sang  
And my tears flowed like a spring  
I felt a flush of embarrassment  
But I couldn't stop doing it  
What is it with the little child?  
Just three years old,  
From where, all that emotion  
Scratching the record with each repetition  
The well worn forty-five  
But I always had to hear it once more  
Nobody knew me like you did  
Nobody else saw me that way  
This is a completely self serving grief  
But now when I hear Kate  
I cry, because you are gone-

Patti Masterman

# God Dreaming

How can each book end the same words?

Why we know the thoughts of others,  
although never heard?

Man is a genie, out of the lamp

Man is a king, but also a tramp.

How can the forest lack for a tree?

How we make due with the least of all these?

Man is a vagrant, within his soul

Man is a pageant, still on the dole.

We are the characters in all the books

We are the light if they bothered to look

We are the stray thoughts of God, it is said

We are the dream, in his vast starry bed.

Patti Masterman

# God Hides In The Smallest Places

God hides in the smallest places:  
the carelessly upturned cuff of a sleeve,  
the highlight in a lover's eye,  
tucked inside the spine of some book,  
like a ribbon of place-marker

the pistil of a flower,  
the smoke plume from a pipe,  
swirled air through a Monarch's wing,

half filled cup, sitting in the sink,  
dried tears on a handkerchief,  
the pause, in a sob of anguish,  
half burnt letter on the fire.

when your hand finally attempts to close on god,  
you will find instead lint, dust, spores;  
even though we are the predatory species,  
the original hunters.

we are hunting that  
which has turned itself inside out  
and wrung us out, like ants fall  
from a rotting log.

our busyness only takes us farther away,  
farther from the beginning;  
we must make ourselves smaller  
on the inside,

than the smallest creature;  
an ovum of closed intellectuality,  
for we are the keyhole,  
the minutiae, of god's existence

in the chess game  
of the solitary mind,  
we are the pawns:  
god hides in the smallest places;

for he is also the master hunter.

Patti Masterman

# God In His Infinite Wisdom

And God said: I'll make me a man who can subjugate the world  
Bend it to his own will, just like me  
And so he did  
And so man has changing passions like the tides  
The playfulness of waterfalls  
The long memory as of dust  
The unpredictability and sudden violence of volcanoes  
The darkness that hides in plain sight  
The perseverance of starlight  
The indomitable iron will with which he forges his existence  
And the creativity to carry out his every whim-  
Good and evil become a matter of degree  
And infinity something he should never have to think about  
Since he lacks that one quality of the creator  
Without which, the only thing that is out of his reach  
Is conquering the entire universe.

Patti Masterman

# God Of Blue And Gold

God of blue and gold,  
Harness me to your chariot;  
Let us go flying over the seas-  
The winds are bold  
And full of birds-  
Foam of the breeze.

In the dark depths of the deep,  
Your brother sings glumly:  
A low, mellow sound-  
His queen is asleep  
In the cradle of the gale-  
Above, the waves pound.

Great clouds of iron  
Are racing to harbor  
The wind breathing hot-  
Breath of the siren;  
In the net of her sea-hair  
The unlucky meet their lot.

At night the moon glows,  
Silver path to the stars  
Curves half round the earth-  
Then the red sun grows,  
Dancing in the yonder  
And the day gives birth.

Patti Masterman

# Gods And Clowns

Gods and clowns only do our bidding;  
One we fear, and at one we laugh;  
God hears our secrets, to judge us our errors;  
Clowns keep no secrets, and thus yield no wrath.

Gods have angels, and clowns have sidekicks,  
To help them dispense with the tricks of their trade;  
Though god needs no fall man, to make him look better,  
And clowns can't dispense, with the world god has made.

Gods and clowns still hold the world together,  
Balanced well between laughter and tears,  
And while we are young, the clowns are our heroes;  
But god's always victor, at the end of the years.

Patti Masterman

# Going Down

This world is going down  
Burning fast and going down  
Everything we thought would last forever  
We never knew who we were dealing with  
Nature has no hard fast laws  
A living organization too complex to contain  
We manipulated as long as we were able  
We got nothing left now, when she gives up the ghost

This world is going down  
Take a deep breath, it might be your last  
This world is going down  
Don't remember the last time I saw home

Take nothing for granted  
Going down, it's going down  
This ship is going deeper waters  
Hold on tight  
Enjoy the sunrise while it lasts  
Because nothing lasts forever

This world is going down  
Take a deep breath, it might be your last  
This world is going down  
Don't remember the last time I saw home

Burning fast and going down  
This ship is going deeper waters  
Enjoy the sunrise while it lasts  
It's too late now to change our ways

Take nothing for granted..

(written to Right of Ascension, Picture Palace Music, Thorsten Q)

Patti Masterman

## Going For A Drag

Nobody loves fearless anymore;  
True love lives only in movies,  
No one lives fearless, in their core-  
Now all our loving, is only a snore.

Nobody goes deep anymore;  
They're scared what might be lurking beneath,  
And if you're too deep, it's a bore-  
You're supposed to be a window, not a door.

Nobody dare dream anymore;  
Just living day to day's such a chore,  
If you'll pick us back up, off the floor-  
We'll just drag ourselves around, forevermore.

Patti Masterman

## Gold Of The Realm

I could live out a lifetime, in each of your photos;  
Touch the sky, ground myself in the grass,  
Live out my days, beside fence posts and passes,  
High or low; for it doesn't really matter  
Because it were your eyes; the real telephoto  
Lenses; that touch of rare soul to the films;  
Your artistic visions, of magical passions-  
Through your eyes, I've seen all the gold of the realm.

Patti Masterman

# Golem

Ghostly dreams, our portal to the other land:  
Over the lowlands, our eyes follow the monstrous creature,  
Knowing not the laws holding the measure of his being.  
Built from remnants of earth, does he appear;  
Mined, his body fired by the suns furnace-  
This slave shall stay.  
A beggar he is but never feels the shackles;  
Only lives to do our bidding, for all his days.  
Never shall the truth confront his thoughts.  
Breath would fail at his most minor transgress.  
His sin aborts his borrowed helpmate status,  
Leaving him once more  
A blot of dust merely doomed, an eternity as  
Soil of which men merely stand upon.  
Taking no further the desire to be more,  
Heaven is denied him much as the other.  
Human conditions are concealed from his eyes,  
Vivisection being the only future he is assured of.

Patti Masterman

# Good And Evil

In the garden, I ate the apple,  
Most choice apple you ever saw;  
My eyes were opened; good and evil-  
The apple gave to me all law  
To use as I myself saw fit;  
My mind, how like a god it grew,  
Overnight, my cares enlarged,  
I looked on all with eyes made new.  
I wasn't given good and evil-  
Law; so that free will I'd lose:  
My mind is cut from finer cloth,  
So that my own self path, I choose.

Patti Masterman

# Goodnight We Say

Goodnight we say, although the stars  
Do not put out their lamps at dusk,  
As sun goes round a bending curve,  
A half a world away, because-

Half light, half darkness is our fate,  
Upon this sphere, on which we roam;  
Returning to our doors at dark,  
We're pleased at night to be at home.

Goodnight we say; a short good-bye  
Until the sun's above again,  
We're blessed the earth is half in light  
Until the daylight's grown too thin.

Patti Masterman

# Gotterdamerung

Gotterdamerung; and hearts get flung;  
On voyages, sail clear to the moon.  
And wedding vows get said somehow,  
But we're pinching ourselves too soon.

Now we settle down, stop chasing the town;  
Be respectable, in a pinch.  
But drinking's still fine, and sex divine-  
Oh! annoying seven-year itch.

Old age seeps, blood pressure creeps;  
We're burning our candles too fast.  
Though sleeping too light, we dream at night  
We're burning that last tank of gas.

Patti Masterman

# Grace

What happened to the old, solid world  
Hand carved of walnut and mahogany?

Give me the old polished wood  
Give me the shadows and shining,  
Slanted stalactite of sun  
Through random panes of stained glass

Wood floors that announce the shifting of weight  
Windows that whine with a sudden gale

Some old books with pale flowers pressed  
Lovingly, between the pages,  
Stain of evaporated dew  
Only touched by the gentlest of fingers

Give me scents with some soul left in them;  
Real magic potions, because love used to be real

Not dead things,  
Imitating what once exhaled  
It's own sweet breath,  
But only if you came close enough

What will we do when the genuine is forgotten  
Where will we go again not to forget?

Let us be baptized again and again  
Made hallowed, by the grace of memories  
Made immortal, by the grace of love  
Enduring, by the grace of time.

Patti Masterman

# Graffiti Your Soul

The world would graffiti your soul if it could;  
Paint social mores, inside of your arms,  
Sourcecode numbers, hidden deep in your being:  
Country of origin, tattooed on the forehead,  
Percentage of fat, blood type, racial slurs..

The world machine is a label-maker  
Of epic size, and tireless duration;  
From little yellow stars and red dots twixt the eyes,  
To veils, and full seminal infiltration-  
You must know that somewhere, there's a bulging file

With names of old girlfriends,  
Forgotten sex acts, all time-and-date stamped,  
Your prints in the font;  
The resultant offsprings, and seedy abortions:  
For every eye-blink costs the breeders more time.

They'd like for your pay, to reflect ocean life  
Affected by too-long cellular calls;  
And those Styrofoam cups, once dropped in the desert  
Forty years back, which will surely outlive you;  
By a million years- no, they haven't forgotten.

Patti Masterman

# Grammar Gestalt

Agitative adjectives,  
Adverse adverbs,  
Claustrophobic clauses,  
Preposterous prepositions.

Monolithic modifiers,  
Subversive subjunctives,  
Consumptive contractions,  
Emphysemic emphatics.

Pernicious passives,  
Perplexing presents,  
Superfluous pluperfects-  
Oh, taxing syntax!

Patti Masterman

# Graveyard Angels

Graveyard cherubs look so cold,  
Immune to cries of sadness; fear,  
But there are reliquary angels,  
And old paintings, that wept real tears.

You plant your loved one  
Like a tree, and never look back ever again;  
But sing the songs and fight the battles,  
Unearthly wars, of virtue; sin.

You do your time until it's done,  
And then they'll come, to bare your bones,  
Unto that crypt, with impassive angels;  
And say with grief, that you are home.

Patti Masterman

# Graveyards Are Beautiful In The Spring

The graveyards are beautiful  
In spring. Willows weep  
At the edge of the glade  
Everything crumbling  
Is remade; the leaves  
Of yesterday are gone  
And sun comes out to play  
His song.

Even death has a breath  
Of spring. New growth  
Riots with bird on the wing  
Wildflowers flourish  
Beside the stones  
Old lovers return  
But stand alone.

Patti Masterman

# Gravitas

it's always there  
holding on to you like a soured grapeskin  
like your fermenting whole your body's glove holding tightly

there it is always  
everything in it, like a spinning, holding world  
containing all from thought form to cloud,  
seaweed to algae

there, the solitary cells  
frothed into oceans  
and there the molecules, tired of all those  
lovesick atoms, attempting to merge

and the raw, gaping singularities there,  
smaller than the escaping minutiae of our existence  
and the whirling vapors there,  
at the undifferentiated edge of darkness  
casting elements out of time's foundry

whenever we think they are gone  
we disappear first  
for matter never grows older  
but vanishes again and again

like the first snows of winter  
in an antique snow dome  
flashing silver wherever the light strikes  
and you blink once and then it's gone again

and you can't see it where it went, but it has to be there  
hidden behind the little church, with it's thin porous steeple  
and the tiny frozen stick figures of people,  
dressed in dark suits and dresses

they who fall over one at a time  
when their yellowed glue finally gives way  
and who are eternally at the funeral of themselves



# Green Turtle

The rocket went off like a bat out of  
Pell-mell, it ricocheted, son of a  
Ditched the boosters to head for the blue  
Another fudruckers going straight to heaven  
Tuckfards aflame, news at eleven

Aug 6 2009

## Operation Green Turtle

During the early days of the NASA space program, the astronauts were determined to avoid the professional embarrassment of using profanity over the airwaves, well aware that the entire world was eagerly listening to every word they transmitted from outer space. The astronauts established an informal incentive program among themselves, which they referred to as "Operation Green Turtle." When an astronaut slipped up and used a curse word during his radio transmission, the first astronaut to key up his mic and blurt out "green turtle" became the recipient of dinner for two at a restaurant of his choice.

Patti Masterman

# Grift And Draze We Hunger Fill

Grift and draze we hunger fill  
Burning days with yearning nil  
Patch of sky bemired with night  
Diamond smiles of token light

Born in shudders blooded tears  
Studded lust gain grist for years  
Devils take our dark surprise  
Guilt to spark our sunless fires

Patti Masterman

# Halcyon Sun

Sad, beautiful days  
Embrace me, from some stranger land  
Than told to truth, beneath a sniper's moon.

I must go there to unfold the dawn-  
Quickly; before the moon's shadows can find  
The red radar beam, that's behind our eyes.

Now longing owns the temporal shell;  
There's one name, one lone figure  
As distant as the blinking stars.

A gesture may have to speak our words for us;  
Or sometimes, only an expression;  
Or just the direction we happen to be facing.

In a wider arc, I sense your being  
Big as the ocean, deeper than sky;  
Your tears the diamonds, questioning why?

Give to me your softer hands,  
That sorrow's flames could never bear;  
Somewhere above the spreading sun

In waves of peace, I'll find you there.

Patti Masterman

# Half Of Zero Is Just More Nothing

If your mind was half yes and half no  
You never said yes.  
If your mind was half light and half darkness  
You lived in the dark.

If you only let go once you were dead  
You never let go.  
If you only left as soon as you were freed  
You never left.

If you never answered any questions  
Your living was only half of a riddle.

Patti Masterman

# Half Opened Door

Half the world has gone away,  
But still lives on in dreams  
Prayers and wishes  
Hopes we only dare to whisper  
At the brink of midnight  
When reality finally relaxes its grip  
The flames burn fiercely enough but still  
There is no resurrecting the dear days  
That have gone away, although  
Still recalled at the sight of birthday candles,  
And empty chairs.  
Written, sung, mused about  
But no longer reachable from where we are  
The ones who once meant everything to us:  
Tiptoeing, we go to that door  
Put first our ear, then our face against it  
Just for a moment  
Just to inhale that air again  
To hear that music once more  
To feel our heart stirring  
Our soul waking again up inside of us again  
But we can never step back through  
To stay; we are imprisoned  
On the wrong side now-  
Strange that we never suspected  
A door that used to always let us in  
Would someday lock us outside forever  
And I can feel it, only half-open now  
Beginning to swing shut already.

Patti Masterman

# Hallowed Be Thy Flame

Aurora Borealis, we would pray to your lights,  
That augured a soon coming bounty or blight;  
Masses we'd chant, in the crisp evening air,  
Holding breath wonderingly, in waiting there.

Calibrate the colors of your hallowed flames,  
Conjugate wavelengths, between peaks of waves-  
Pilgrims arriving, just to catch one sight,  
Once in a lifetime, of your magic lights.

Healings we'd claim, to your beneficent air,  
And icons of rainbows, to show off your wares.  
A virgin martyr, once a year before dawn,  
And fat books of verses, weighing almost a ton.

We'd calculate time, from the first year was known  
Your signs had appeared, and then mark with stones  
The place where the first man to see you had stood-  
And then reveal miracles, built upon blood.

And all high holy days, to your dedication,  
And the inevitable once-a-year celebration-  
Just forgive us our errors, and we'll throne you God  
(Wherein you're declared, as three persons in one.)

You could have been owner of this world, and all in it,  
But you had the back luck of the die, as they spin it;  
The rest of the world found religions of light,  
And your major miracles happened at night.

So now we have virgins and martyrs galore,  
And lambs of some god; and the myths out the door-  
But no holy telescopes, and no bleeding skies-  
And only in hell, are there colorful fires.

Patti Masterman

# Halloween Nightmare #1: Go Back To Sleep

Go back to sleep;  
The dream's just beginning-  
You thought it was love;  
Though it might just be sinning.

The name that you moaned,  
Just now in your sleep,  
Is the same one I found  
In that journal you keep.

Though you said it was only  
A tech-rep from Dallas,  
You'd better check again:  
There's lipstick on your phallus.

Go back to your dreams,  
And take off her bra;  
I'll only be a minute-  
Gone to get the chain-saw..

Patti Masterman

## Halloween Nightmare #2: Office Party

At the Halloween party,  
The office girls were hot;  
And they all gathered round,  
To smoke a little pot.

The new girl kept staring  
Deeply, in my eyes;  
I knew she'd like to give me  
A Halloween's Eve surprise.

We hung out at the office  
Till the others went home;  
And we pulled off our costumes,  
And we turned off the phones.

And I looked and I looked;  
Could not believe my eyes:  
Because her four breasts  
Were not a disguise.

I thought it was her costume;  
And she laughed, at her joke,  
Till I spoke my own punch line:  
Well, I'm not a bloke.

Patti Masterman

## Halloween Nightmare #3: The Murderers Plan

The murderers had thought their plan a success;  
Just kill the old man, and never confess.  
But they didn't expect that the body would tattle  
And tell where was hid, with a noisy rattle.

The old man was careful; he carried his phone  
Everywhere with him, even at home.  
So deep in his pocket, the phone was as usual;  
And they never found it, in their too quick perusal.

In a hurry they dumped him down, under the bed  
Planning that later, they'd bury the dead:  
Some place extra secret, as soon as they knew  
The best place to plant him; if the plan would go through.

And during the evening, a guest came to call  
As the cat commenced wandering, off down the hall;  
Spying the body, there beneath the bed  
The cat began squalling, with a terrible dread.

As luck would then have it, at that same exact time  
Some random caller was spending his dime,  
To call the poor victim, lying stone still-  
And the phone kept vibrating quite loudly until-

The murderers found it, and made some excuse;  
Had to run off the caller, to flesh out their ruse.  
They put the old man, in the front of his car  
And drove to the canyon; was not very far.

They revved up the engine, but before could get out,  
A muscle spasm gripped him; his leg spasmed out  
Down upon the accelerator; his foot it did fasten,  
And the car spun out; toppling into the chasm.

No one ever realized, it was not a soiree  
Of three friendly folks out enjoying their day;  
By the time that the wreck was found, in the ravine  
The town would recall it, as just a bad dream.

Patti Masterman

# Hands Know Love

Hands know love-

Clasped in beloveds hands; tight enough

Lips know love-

When the hungry other takes them; almost rough

Eyes know love-

When love's battered remnants lie everywhere

Nose knows love-

When it breathes that close rarefied air

Hair knows love-

When the strands mix about their face

Hearts know love-

When the body finds it; anyplace

Love shouldn't ever be considered rare-

When once you've felt it's form, so near.

Patti Masterman

# Hannibal Lectors Favorite Meal

The cruciferous prophet sticks in my teeth-  
I think I'd rather have a tidbit, of thief;  
All covered, of course, in a vinegar sauce  
With just a light dusting, of the true cross.

Some rarefied spleen, set sideboard,  
With red vintage wine; A.D. thirty-four  
Frankincense and Myrrh, baked in aspic;  
And saved for last, Shroud Flambe: digestif.

Patti Masterman

# Happenstance Things

Do not be hurt  
By happenstance things;  
A wreck on the roadway,  
Late-coming trains.

A broken tea-cup,  
A waistline grown fatter-  
Things you can fix  
Don't really matter.

But take care of hearts  
(And things that are fragile)  
And yours will grow wings  
And become ever agile.

Patti Masterman

# Hard Of Hearing

He said, I need a lug wrench  
But I heard, I need a hug wench-  
And now that we have children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, get me a cold beer  
But I heard, missus get over here-  
And now that we have two children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, soak the clothes in Cheer  
But I heard, set the clothes right here-  
And now we have three children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, this house's quite icky  
But I heard, let's have a quickie-  
And now we have four children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, this tax is usury  
But I heard, our anniversary-  
And now we have five children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, there's not much headroom  
But I heard, meet me in the bedroom-  
And now we have six children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, no is an option  
But I heard, nobody's watchin-  
And now we have seven children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, I don't think I'm able  
But I heard, do it on the table-  
And now we have eight children,  
I don't know what to do.

He said, once more just for old times sake  
And then I'm leaving this nest of eight-  
And then when he left me,  
I went and got a hearing aid.

Patti Masterman

# Haunted Neon

haunted neon fingers  
flicker over the paid for room,  
as the desperate linger  
under it's auspices.

pay once, stay forever  
isn't posted on the sign outside.

perhaps we'd all be more choosy,  
if we knew this stop would be our last;  
this shadowed precinct,  
our souls only habitude of eternity.

this room will never  
be a single again.

Patti Masterman

# Haunted Rooms

Haunted rooms-  
But I'm the ghost  
Who has forgot  
What loved the most.

The twinkling eye,  
The startled laugh;  
Recognition,  
When we passed.

Too soon I'll be  
Among them too-  
Forgotten ghost  
That you once knew.

Patti Masterman

# Haunting 101

There's a ghost lives right up above  
A non paying renter, on floor number two  
And I know that if push came to shove  
He'd scare off the paying tenants too

He doesn't scare me with his noisy thumps  
His moaning, and his high pitched blather  
His carrying on just reminds, he's a chump  
A real stinky loser son-of-a-cadaver

Two can play that game; he thinks he excels  
And that nobody else can tell he's around  
He needs to go back to the bowels of hell  
He's failed his degree; now he's only a clown

I've arranged for a ghost friend to come to town  
She's sexy and spirited; just the thing  
And I know, she's gonna shake him down  
Till his goblins and gremlins begin to sing

He'll be singing for his supper before I get through  
He'll be running for cover, and I don't mean his sheet  
He'll completely forget even how to say, 'boo'-  
And then I'll throw his parlor tricks out in the street.

He can go somewhere else to ply his trade  
I don't keep rooms here for out-of-luck taunters  
He needs to go back to remedial school  
If he wants to become a respectable haunter.

Patti Masterman

# Have I Forgotten, Or Will I Forget

Have I forgotten, or will I forget  
How to love you;  
There, where the flowers kiss the earth,  
Where the shade holds the trees rooted,  
Where a single bird call can enclose the yearning  
Of all creation.

The tranquil petal-faces bent, in the early evening gloom,  
Stirring themselves to an effervescent breeze;  
Ancient as dew fall on catacombs,  
Where ancient Romans loved and lost,  
Their earthly joys too soon flown.

Our fleeting reflections fall  
Like evening mist over the lake,  
And evaporate like a dream at morning.

And how insubstantial a dream seems  
Once we've awakened;  
Where flowers kiss and trees take root,  
In their uneasy compromise.

Patti Masterman

## Have To Find A Few Truths Now

Have to find a few truths now  
At day's end; if all's not well  
Still have my few words, to tell:  
Will stop fogging all your mirrors  
With my image; appearing there;  
You too courteous, to ever allow  
Any idea why it comes; or how  
The clueless lover can amend  
The tale; there his mind, send  
As if reality be revealed  
By a pull, on a window's cord  
Or a curtain, upon a stage;  
Taken for granted's not for love,  
If the other not engage;  
No ones fault; can ill afford  
To throw love twice, into the wind  
While pretending, it returns.

Patti Masterman

## He Carried Me Far

He carried me far away; farther than any dreams ever could,  
As the white clouds seemed to ferry the sea gulls above us.  
In his arms I floated blissfully unaware, far from shore,  
The smoothest voyage I have ever known,  
With the salt on my lips, and the wind whispering in my ear  
That I was being borne upon the shoulders of a king;  
While against his breast I lay relaxed,  
Time seeming to expand, as warm tides washed over me soundlessly.

We returned as slowly, when the sun was at the horizon,  
Shining straight through, upon a path of uninterrupted waves.  
I asked once, if his name was Neptune, but he gave no reply  
Intent upon his journey, keeping me safely within his grasp,  
The rhythmic water rocking us both together,  
Then he deposited me gently, back upon the softest sand,  
Caressed me one last time; I paid the fare in sea shells  
And watched him drift back out, his eyes the same sultry, far-away shade of  
blue.

Patti Masterman

# He Had Words For Everyone

He had words for everyone; for the newcomer,  
For the latecomer, the novice, the pro;  
For the laborer in the sun,  
And the one down below:  
Everyone had felt the warmth of his smile,  
But for her- well, it had been quite a while.

But she was the bulwark propping him up;  
Pumping him up, so essential was she,  
Kept him out of the slumps;  
Her commitment was key:  
She was the reason for all his success  
The humble underpinnings, behind his impress.

She'd become such a habit; her presence not noted,  
Her words like the wind, fell on his deaf ears;  
She was the one who always got bled;  
While he basked in public, she hid all her tears.  
He was shocked one day to find she had gone:  
When he looked around him; to depend on were none.

For she had asked nothing; and he had delivered;  
She thought it the fine print, the contract they had,  
But over the years her duties had blurred  
And she found she had eked out too much of the sad.  
True; everything she did, she'd done only for him  
But now she'd grown cold, and his love much too thin.

Patti Masterman

# He Hated The Wind

He hated the wind  
It made him superstitious  
How it carried things away, on whim  
With a certain disarray, of sound

He howled back at the wind  
With fear behind his eyes  
But it backed him into corners  
Attacked by stealth, and surprise

He sensed armies of dead spirits  
Crept upon him, just to seize  
But now age came more steadily  
And overpowered, with disease

Please bury him where no wind will blow  
And bend the bough, beneath the breeze  
Prepare the plot with the softest dirt  
To comfort old bones, with final ease

(For Bear, who died today)

Patti Masterman

# He Laughs In Words Sorely

He laughs in words sorely  
Your expense at his entertainment  
Watching him think you the clever child constructs  
His words, using up new sentence struts  
Behind you his slow grinning sly  
Wisdom the nerve hits in eye  
Brave no but that he disappear  
Behind thin branded lives  
Doubt each pseudo tear  
If hyenas had a laugh would his be louder  
Rude to stand the day long he slays words  
Pens verse free in is it poetry church.

Patti Masterman

# He Likes My Words

He likes my words, likes the way  
They tumble out artlessly,  
In the parlance of children,  
In their limbo of suspended meaning  
From the timeless solitude they abide in,  
Till I pluck them loose, to my own ends.

I like his words, like the unprogrammed way  
They seem to arrive, in fits and starts; a sentence here,  
A paragraph or two there; they fit well into the niches  
My words leave behind, and it's no small feat  
To find gaps in my speech  
And my run-along sentences.

Our words nestle together, puzzle-like,  
Interlocking attitudes, and meandering paths  
Where we sometimes meet cheek to cheek,  
Though it often seems we've each  
Gone a different route, or taken the long way  
To arrive at a simultaneous moment:  
But for us, it's always about the journey.

Patti Masterman

# He Loved Brown Eyes

On any passing day in a town  
Where in anyone's glass, small fruit flies drowned  
And the grass was dead, and was always brown-  
He loved brown eyes

Where brown cows stood  
Against a milk-brown sky, beneath brown plovers  
Flying by, and brown-legged fawns cropped the young brown rye-  
He loved brown eyes

Where brown is the color of the sod that built  
The old sod houses, on the light brown silt  
And on each clothesline blew a blowing brown quilt-  
He loved brown eyes

And brown was the color of the water that cleaned  
The dirty brown shirts and the dirty blue jeans  
A brown that soaked into the bathtub rings-  
He loved brown eyes

A brown that seeped into the soul and skin  
Till nothing else could ever get in  
And the women were tired, and the men were thin-  
He loved brown eyes

He took me to wed, and he took me to bed  
And our house was happy, and the kids got fed  
And I never forgot that day that he said-  
He loved brown eyes.

Patti Masterman

# He Measures Out His Words, To Me

He measures out his words, to me  
As though a bridge were built  
Upon my heart-strung furor;  
The cable strings, to tilt.

He gives me not too much-  
To bottle up the dam;  
But just enough to drain  
The emptied heart I am.

He knows that once too much  
His soul of me, is given,  
The bridges very strut  
Supports will be unriven.

I will not need a bridge, then  
To cross over his embrace  
His tactics war must fail-  
But look once, in his face.

Patti Masterman

# He Must Have Known

There's so much wisdom in a dog-  
I wonder why He put it there;  
He must have known we'd need a friend,  
When our cupboards were quite bare.

There's so much beauty in a tree-  
I wonder why He grew it there;  
Someone knew we'd need a shade,  
To get out of the sun's bright glare.

There's so much wealth found in a man-  
I wonder why He left us here;  
But all's returning in the end  
To brighter regions, far and dear.

Patti Masterman

# He Said That He Had A Dream

He said that he had a dream..

But living was getting to be awfully heavy  
And constantly on guard's not really alive  
But we were all too busy going nowhere,  
Knowing here's where we've got to stay,  
Here where the earth, the air and water is  
Our species gets one chance to find its way.

Mind the fallen, pray to god  
That your burden not outweigh the sod;  
Who said we've got to eke out the bare years  
When yesteryear's one more forgotten day,  
One chance to fail or miss your aim,  
Watching one by one, as they each betrayed.

Never mind the slaughter and the bleeding,  
The way it's rigged so we can never win-  
Shots ringing out, as he grabs that railing  
Falling on stony ground, he's falling again,  
Always the same sad story repeating,  
His eyes grow fixed, and still we keep on calling  
Him..

Patti Masterman

# He Stabbed Her With The Butter Knife

He stabbed her with the butter knife-  
Though other knives were better fit;  
For him there's no apology,  
And there's no doubt that he did it.

He stabbed her with the butter knife;  
No other lives, could she surfeit,  
And there is no theology  
Could save her life, for there she sit.

He stabbed her with the butter knife,  
And there's no bribe could stop the hit  
(Perhaps some demonology  
Could find the way to explain it?)

He stabbed her with the butter knife,  
And that's the matter, laid quite bare;  
The wrong utensil took her life-  
He never learned his silverware.

Patti Masterman

# He Stole His Eyes From A Milk-Glass Moon - Villanelle

He stole his eyes from a milk-glass moon,  
From drops of peridot scattered at sea,  
Hidden beneath a moon-shadowed ruin.

His father not caring where or with whom,  
Or from what rare ocean his being might be-  
He stole his eyes from a milk-glass moon.

He learnt his letters from a dark winged loon  
Who flew where the mountains caress the trees,  
Hidden beneath a moon-shadowed ruin.

His speech was a garble of false and truth,  
Whistling like a hollow piped reed,  
He stole his eyes from a milk-glass moon.

His eyes a contagion of waters blue  
And brackish trunks of underwater trees  
Hidden beneath a moon-shadowed ruin.

His normal voice wove a threadless tune,  
Brought close the mermaids, hungry to feed;  
He stole his eyes from a milk-glass moon,  
Hidden beneath a moon-shadowed ruin.

Patti Masterman

# He Wants You To Burn

He wants you to burn  
Because he has no fire  
He's wilting begonias  
On a funeral pyre

Don't listen to secrets  
From his coward's hell  
He'd burn you alive  
Just to hear you yell

He wants you to burn  
He's got time to kill  
He's going no place  
To nowhere that's real

Don't look at his eyes  
Or his phantom pain  
He knows how to use  
Petty fires to maim

He wants you to burn  
For as long as it lasts  
And then he'll move on  
As you hear him laugh

He's laughing at you  
From behind his arm  
And you'll never see  
How he lives to harm

His truth is a lie  
And his lies are art  
The embers he leaves  
Can blow lives apart

Patti Masterman

# He Wears His Clothes Hard

He wears his clothes hard  
Some ladies wear their clothes  
So gently; wear it a few hours, take it off  
Fold and put away. The clothes never show  
A hint of wear, living out lives barely used  
In graceful and orderly dresser drawers.

Not him: he wears his clothes like a rock ledge  
Wears a sledgehammer, like a shovel  
Makes love to a ditch; like a hammer  
Loves a nail; his clothes would scream out  
For relief and justice, if they had a voice,  
Worn out so soon before their natural lifespan:  
His clothes need their own union.

His clothes are a Turin's shroud of evidences  
Of toiling days spent at work:  
He does not spare them the rod  
He never spares them anything  
A stain often testifies to chemicals;  
Naval jelly or caulking; black signifies grease  
The three dimensional stain, that foaming insulation stuff  
Which always adds interest; and tiny holes eaten from battery acid-  
His clothes color coded by project and date.

He has one closet of clothes for all things;  
A shirt and pants; they be worn  
Both for concrete pour, and corporate meetings  
Utilitarian for any and all needs; his clothes don't get a choice  
They appear the same at all functions  
Unlike women, who want a dress nobody has ever laid eyes  
Although the rare formal appearances;  
Deaths or weddings, taken care of by a suit  
Which, thank god, didn't have to put in its sullen time  
Mending fences, or changing oil in engines.

Piles of outfits often appear in only one day;  
Of a morning the floor was clear, but by bed time;  
One pile represents the day's first heavy equipment work,

Another set for some scheduled repairs in an office,  
And a final set for more outdoor drudgery-  
If one set of clothes suffice for all duties, why then  
Three piles? Apparently there is the contamination factor;  
By which one suit for working was contaminated by the work  
Done earlier, and required a new vestment for the same work  
Done later; and of course, a large washing machine  
Is the minimum investment for the one-closet man,  
Who wears his clothing hard, and often.

Patti Masterman

# He Who Breathes

He who breathes has daily the breath of God inside him-  
Font of miracles, splendour of aeons.

The perturbations of cosmos are present with him;  
Creation starts again at his waking,  
Time stops again at his sleep.

The unexpected and unanticipated are encircled  
By his circumference, the unknown triggered by his whim.

The majesty of movement, the deference of thought.  
Everything without is found within, as above so below.

The magic of matter recognizing itself.

The soul of all, the seeds of grandeur.

Patti Masterman

# Head Games

You can sleep underwater, but the blankets float away  
You can sleep through your whole life, while the shooter steals the day;  
Make believe you can't see all the bullets flying past,  
Put the blinders on again to make the moment last.

You can run away from trouble and lie your way to peace,  
Can wear the dark sunglasses and miss seeing the disease  
And strip away your rights, so there's no one left to blame;  
Pretend your cohort's wars don't dismember, blind, and maim.

And while you're busy wiring your own brain, selectively,  
The whole world too is marching the same way, collectively.  
And when your little corner of the world erupts in flames,  
They will have perfected all your tidy, neat head games.

Patti Masterman

# Hearts Palms And Eyes

Silvered the woods, with infinity in the midst,  
The flowers all drowsy and bees circling clover;  
And mute the shore's wind upon standing gravestones,  
The minstrels of earth have other duties to attend.

We each count our breaths, watching planets whirl by,  
Through arrays of stars like tintinnabulations frenzy..  
Though heaven dwells most in our hearts, palms and eyes-  
God must have looked upon us as his whimsy..

Patti Masterman

# Heaven Is Just Over There

Heaven is just over there, look through the kaleidoscope:  
See for yourself, the futures uncharted  
The map is the mind, of the sentient universe  
The whole world journeys vicariously, through you.

There is no wrong direction,  
There is no wrong destination;  
The trip is the key-  
The trip is in you.

Patti Masterman

# Heaven's Drunkard

Heaven's drunkard is the butterfly,  
Tipsy on flowers, Mr. flutter-on-by:  
Papier-mache wings wafting along,  
He flies on currents of invisible song.

He could stop but the flowers are so many,  
Beckoning with pastel faces of plenty;  
At night he dreams of hot-house bouquets,  
And dances with them, a fine polonaise.

Patti Masterman

# Heaven's Fold

Unbend the weight; the senses leaving,  
Retract the visions in the head,  
In some other wandering grove  
Another day is nearly dead.  
From far across the nestled years,  
Now the footsteps find the bed.

Murmured syllables, thinning breath,  
Nothing left to wake forthwith;  
Eyelids open, turn inside,  
No resurrection is attendant,  
The still flame rises like burning air  
To the place where no thing's there.

Adrift goes time, like heavy mist,  
And pauses before 'day' and 'night';  
Unhurried moments come in waves,  
The shadow moves like drifting light.  
In that fullness, a garden grows  
And all is peace in heaven's fold.

Patti Masterman

# Helen Keller's Dream

Helen Keller had a recurring dream,  
That she described as the sensation  
That something heavy had fallen in the dark,  
Shaking the ground beside her.  
Her early world was composed of only  
Darkness and vibration;  
No light, no sound, no faces;  
No words to explain the unknown,  
Just the feeling something had changed,  
Irrevocably and mysteriously.

Crawling, groping in her blindness,  
With no way for anyone to communicate with her,  
The greater meaning of the world at large went missing.  
She became like a young, crazed animal  
Because there was no subtlety to her understanding.

When everything around seemed to be falling,  
Going down into the eternal blackness,  
All that was left to do was to run,  
And even then there was no real sanctuary to be found;  
No way to confirm that your worst fears weren't busy  
coming true.

Patti Masterman

# Hello's Same As Goodbye

Don't bogart my love,  
don't ever con a con,  
don't forgive a loan-  
before the day is done.

Don't you kid a kidder,  
and to liars, do not lie, but-  
walk the narrower pathway;  
here hello's same as goodbye.

Patti Masterman

# Her Dead Face Wounds Me

Her dead face wounds me,  
Apprehends me, in my flowing breath  
Arrests me for the flagrant violation of still living  
After she has died, for her belief.

Perhaps the method of achieving her martyrdom  
Left much to be desired; but now that it's done  
Her photo reproaches powerfully:  
The ragged stitching required, to re-close the skin near her mouth.

We shallow-lived creatures, still sucking air  
While she has given up the thing most precious;  
Her fragile bones and lungs crushed  
By embracing the fearsome weight of responsibility.

For all of our noncompliant shallowness,  
We can still feel grateful, in our pangs of conscience  
At being allowed to pass over that particular cup-  
Quickly now: turn the page.

Patti Masterman

## Here And Now

Your presence is a benediction,  
That Time thought of you, here-  
And Space is not allowed one word  
To move you, far or near.

Your breath is a vaporous sacrament,  
The living body's tithe;  
The foggy truth, upon the mirror:  
That you are here, alive.

Patti Masterman

# Here's A Secret

Here a secret's been passed down  
In quiet tears of passing years  
If you give every dropp of love away  
That's only yours, to give  
When you are dead; no longer live  
You'll drift away upon a cloud

And whenever Earth should weep out loud;  
Slip down her watery tears, and rest  
Upon the face of those you left  
Behind; and when they wipe  
Their eyes, they'll think of you  
And wonder why?

Patti Masterman

# He's More Than A Normal Man

He's more than a normal man,  
With more than fair share of woe  
Still he lives life unremarkably  
And off to work he goes  
You'd never guess his secret  
If you watched his normal days  
But there's someone has his heart  
And he'll always find a way.

On his down time, he will study  
The contours of the strand  
He'll memorize it's details  
To replicate by hand  
And while the rest around him  
Go by in a hurried rush  
He takes sweet time, to make love  
To Earth, with his paint brush.

to the muse..

Strand \Strand\, n.

The shore, especially the beach of a sea, ocean, or large lake;  
rarely, the margin of a navigable river. -Chaucer. [1913 Webster]

Patti Masterman

# Heterodyne Mind

I used to fall in love with  
Inanimate things  
But it was so boring as  
As they didn't have brains

Patti Masterman

# Heterodyning

Heterodyning, between word and thought-  
Entraining the brain;  
The voice dictating,  
The fingers scrabbling.

I am only the burnt toast  
Of this universe,  
That has a craving  
To recognize itself  
Through temporal eyes.

Patti Masterman

# Hi I'M Amber

Congratulations! Copulations..

You just qualified to see our pop-ups for the five hundredth time!

Don't worry; we'll change it out in three months..

It's your lucky day today-

And there's the ad virus voice, right on time, letting you know

We follow you all over the web, just making sure

That our ads are chosen especially for you!

If you are really determined to post

All eighteen thousand

Of your 'poems', for free, we're just here to remind you,

That there is not, nor has there ever been

Anything, in any form resembling, a free lunch.

And some future day, around the year 2025 or so,

Our site will no doubt implode from it's own weight

Of so many posts, and by then

You will only be getting into the site

Maybe one try out of every fifty.

So, go on and post away!

And remember to have a nice day.: D

Patti Masterman

# Hidden In A Glance

The image of your face  
in the shrine of my heart  
is carved.

Sparkling waters  
cannot compete  
with your pureness.

Mountains reflected  
by your eyes  
lose their majesty.

Night in her darkness  
does not know  
the depths within you.

And even I, who love  
all of you  
can never see through to the end.

Your life is a mystery  
hidden in a glance;  
open all to me, my love.

Patti Masterman

# Hidden In The Thick Of History

Women have the censor between their legs,  
The fiery oven of consuming warmth;  
The womb is perihelion, to the stars,  
Who have last word on who comes,  
And of what each spirit may be composed.

Vulcan minds the burning embryos,  
Which thicken and build like flames,  
Body parts from a secret blood-ridden forge,  
Growing larger quickly, like a froth of bubbling lava  
While the umbilicus writhes, in silent ballets.

The heat builds till the plug is expelled,  
With great gulags of blood and debris,  
A baby god is born, an expert duplicate  
Of the parents- and Mars will be put off  
His future battles, for a fortnight of years.

The fetus is imploded stardust,  
Impossible distances bound in time;  
The raging autoclave that weights our bodies  
With rare elements not commonly found;  
Still, the new body holds traces of the old:

Courage hails from some family tree,  
Now hidden in the thick of history.

Patti Masterman

# Hide And Seek

Nighttime clouds must veil the stars,  
As we must veil our thoughts

And winter's clouds hide winter gales,  
Unless the sunshine's bought.

And spindly branch of broken tree  
Must scratch the shadowed day;

Until the spring arrives with wind,  
When green uncovers May.

Patti Masterman

# Hide In A Thousand Secret Places

Sleeping shapes know that long trembled looking  
Gladdens the soul on its regular haunts,  
Like the buried kite rises from its dew of puddles  
And circle-walking cloud-catchers wave back taunts.

This all-sun heart swoops down dust-laden lanes  
Feeling hidden songs; streaming bars of golden highs.  
From benches birds roam shaded fields of the heavens  
To fly near vines, where sultry hands catch the night.

Patti Masterman

## Hide In Plaid

Could you someday hide in plaid,  
Even if you were quiet mad-  
Though straight forward lines deny  
The curious ways, we find to fly.

Though airports are the straightest known,  
And highways won't diverge, when flown-  
We could stay above the clouds  
Where you'll never find a crowd.

Patti Masterman

# Hide In Plain Sight

Hide in plain sight  
Hide the hole within your soul,  
Hide your dark blots all away  
And run away that you shall live;  
And live to run another day.

Hide in dark and hide in light,  
Hide your life's continual blight-  
Hide from truths so they won't find  
The blackest hole of all; your mind

Hide in plain sight  
Hide the hole within your soul,  
Hide your dark blots all away  
And run away that you shall live;  
And live to run another day.

Hide the brilliance of your soul,  
Hide it deep, hide it well-  
Hope they won't think to look there  
Stand watch to guard it, if you dare

Hide in plain sight  
Hide the hole within your soul,  
Hide your dark blots all away  
And run away that you shall live;  
And live to run another day.

Hide in hell worlds of the mind,  
Hide in spells they'll never find-  
Don't let them own your living soul  
Much better far, to live in holes.

Patti Masterman

# Hide-And-Seek Autumn

Lifted moon, mystery in swaying crescent  
Autumn stars close on still polite dreams  
Of prophesied winter. Hold out your hand  
To save the tattered summer.

Let's box up tales of a rye November  
To remind ourselves  
Leaves may sometimes speak in tongues  
And dance to the ecstatic breeze,  
To uncoil recalcitrant Autumn.

The Earth must stretch to find it's hearth  
Every hide-and-seek season of the year.

Patti Masterman

# High Country

The past is still alive in me,  
Wild and free, like a high country,  
Hidden somewhere deep indeed:  
An incredibly potent seed.

The past, it moves within it's arc  
Through each moment, brave or stark,  
Past each daytime, past each dark,  
On stately tracks it can't depart.

The past is still alive inside,  
Grand but humble, narrow but wide;  
A place that in me must abide  
Where the gabled memories sigh.

Patti Masterman

# High Upon The Rainbow

Some days fill with wonder  
Some days fill with pain  
And some you'll press between the glass  
To look at once again

Like the morning of my soul  
Like the dawn of miracles  
Come again to find me  
Sitting high upon the rainbow

Some days will hold a present  
A gift not that's not yet seen  
And some days bless with secret signs  
And some with a certainty

Like the morning of my soul  
Like the dawn of miracles  
Come again to find me  
Sitting high upon the rainbow

Some days won't come round again  
Though you never heard 'good-bye'  
Some days we'll think of all our life  
And the answer's only sighs

Like the morning of my soul  
Like the dawn of miracles  
Come again to find me  
Sitting high upon the rainbow

Like the morning of my soul  
Like the dawn of miracles  
Come again to find me  
Sitting high upon the rainbow

(written to Fly to the Sky, an original  
piano composition by Gothicevils)



# Hind-Sight's Blind

She and I, though more alike than not,  
Agreed to go our separate ways;  
While each alone, chewed the memory of bone,  
And turning with our thoughts, that lathe.

We could not stay together in one room;  
The air was not sufficient for the two,  
And though was me moved out, I knew she was about-  
But knowing nothing better, could I do.

Now I find, the other was the kind  
That in secret, forced the chasm- wide.  
My grief swells more- since time's a thief;  
And hind-sight's blind- to closed minds.

March 27 2015

Patti Masterman

# His Beautiful Complexity Is Difficult

His beautiful complexity is difficult,  
Confuses me; my neurotic inner child  
Wants to be beaten or serenaded,  
It doesn't understand many-layered things;  
His whispered confidences, less alienating  
Than others, made me trust too soon,  
And his atoms, more colorful than  
His brothers painted-on coats.  
My being turns all around his center;  
My wheels to his drum,  
My arc to his sun,  
Laughter when he's coming  
Cries when he's gone-  
Till I'm reduced-  
Subtracted-  
Done.

Patti Masterman

# His Darkened Throne

When you become old  
Sleep lies much closer to death  
Death's angel is always close by  
Waiting for a chance to steal your next breath

A few breaths stolen  
And he might start rowing you home then  
The seas so smooth, you'll never see  
His darkened throne under the water.

Patti Masterman

# His Hope Is Treacherous Only Whose Love Dies

Beware; I'll break your heart, she said  
If you ever turn aside  
Or break your ways from mine.

He gave his word and hand,  
He took her to the steeple;  
A simple golden band

Was all that bound his world with hers.  
They lived as man and wife,  
Their inner world unquiet.

The love a lie, for she craved gold,  
A status-seeker to the end-  
Her heart stayed cold.

He left her for a warmer one,  
Whose eyes held truth for all her days;  
Not cold, this one more like the sun.

Beside an angry sea,  
In rage, she met the softer one  
And told, his love's for me.

She threw the ring out over the waves,  
She cursed the promise he had made  
And then she seized the other's hand-

I promised then, to break his heart  
She said, and dragged her over the cliff  
Below, where the waters broke apart.

On rocks they found them, side by side  
On one's face tears; the other's dried-  
For one still lived, while one had died.

Who lived or died, nobody knows,  
He took them both back home with him  
And he was never seen again.

They say if you pass by at night,  
You'll hear a strange laugh, then a cry;  
For one was darkness, one was light.

For life is death, without our love,  
And death is long, though ill or well-  
But peace is granted seldom, there.

\* \* \*

Title taken from quote by  
Michelangelo Buonarroti

'His hope is treacherous only whose love dies  
With beauty, which is varying every hour;  
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power  
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,  
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.'

Patti Masterman

# His Majesty

Dragonflies tussle over who owns the sky  
Is it the blue ones, the red ones, black..  
Jostling for dominance  
Like short bursts of lightning  
In an electrical storm  
They appear without warning  
And disappear as suddenly  
They are expedient hoverers  
Sometimes they spiral together  
Entangled like silk polymers  
Dangling from iridescent parachutes  
They settle down on swaying stalks  
Ignoring the wind that rocks their unweighted paper bodies  
Straight above in the shimmering distance of heat  
There seems to be one monstrous dragonfly  
Wings spread to the limit, flying solo  
But it's only a restless hawk  
Taking lazy advantage of the skies tides  
He always stays one dimension above  
Insects, birds, and kites:  
No interaction is needed  
His dominion has never been secret  
He tolerates birds and bees merely because  
They are beneath his notice  
And upon the wings of his beneficence  
His majesty flows.

Patti Masterman

# His Only Face

The moon's pockmarked-  
But it's in my dreams,  
Deeply etched, though invisibly.

Twining there, like an alien cheese;  
Or latent philosopher's sketchy scheme,  
Looking me down many-silvered streams.

I'd embrace the moon, and never loose  
My heart, from it's moth-eaten lace,  
Just to see that visage rare;  
A single view of his only face.

Patti Masterman

# Hobo Habilis

Hobo Habilis, on the park bench  
Hobo Habilis; you'll notice a stench  
Hobo Habilis, drinks from a sack-  
Stays so alert, in case he's attacked.

Hobo Habilis, once had a home  
Hobo Habilis, decided to roam;  
Things not so easy, on the outside-  
People are cruel, and love genocide.

Hobo Habilis, please have a heart  
Hobo Habilis, he may live apart;  
But he's still human, like you and me-  
Hobo Habilis, he might go extinct.

Patti Masterman

# Hock The Stars And Ration The Sun

I went to visit a cousin of mine  
Who breaks beer bottles on Sunset and Vine;  
He turns on the gas, in abandoned homes,  
Says if they cared for them, why'd they roam?

Hock the stars and ration the sun;  
Bleed the earth till it comes undone,  
Sell everything that's not nailed down:  
What we're looking for can't be found.

I was walking down some dead-end road  
Found where someone had dumped a load  
Of brand new shoes; still in their box;  
You get paid now, to rob your own shop.

Let's sell the world to the highest bidder,  
No one cares if you're a quitter;  
We'll blow it all up, as we step on that rocket,  
Try to find a space, out of God's pocket.

Rebel-mankind will never get in line,  
Always thinks he's got lots more time;  
If he saw that mushroom cloud go up-  
He'd sell one-way tickets, till it blew up.

Hock the stars and ration the sun;  
Bleed the earth till it comes undone,  
Sell everything that's not nailed down:  
What we're looking for can't be found.

Patti Masterman

# Hold Onto The Sea

Hold onto the sea  
Turn the edges square  
Pull the wrinkled waves  
To smooth the motion there

Placate the burning sun  
Mist it with a spray  
Release it's tension'd torque  
As it accosts the day

Soothe my tattered heart  
On it's loom of woe  
Blooming out the sails  
To make the stall let go

Sea owns not the waves  
Sun owns not the burn  
Ships cannot be saved  
For love is never earned

Patti Masterman

# Hologram

A flash of flame  
To launch the universe  
A burst of light  
To sear the shroud  
They form the seam  
Of visible universe  
A bridge for man  
For believers, a cloud  
To follow in the desert sky  
Faces in cloth  
Revealed by time  
Stars in firmament  
Too far to mine  
From soil into man  
And life into clay  
To pathways of worlds  
And thought more real  
Than atoms or quarks  
And galaxies, whirled  
For this I give thanks  
With mouth made of dust.

Patti Masterman

# Holy Sepulchre, Holy Night

Holy sepulchre, holy night  
Chalice of the dawning light

Love redeeming, love unseen  
Where heart of man had never been

Three-in-one was spirit born  
Soul by living body torn

Patti Masterman

# Hominid

Hominid: all tooth and bone,  
Eyes and claws, and raptor-gaze  
Nimbly, as the vociferous brain  
Strains the nomenclature'd day.

We suck the smoke in, never blinking,  
Eyes not leaving the quarry's face;  
For we are bloodlust, as defined-  
While the irrelevant, we raze.

Patti Masterman

# Honor Yourself Above All Others

Love yourself first,  
So that others may find you lovable,  
And endeavor to get to know yourself better.  
Always putting yourself last  
Encourages the world to do the same.  
Creatures can sense if you are unbalanced;  
Unwieldy on your own two feet.  
Confidence in the self is more acceptable  
Than an untested confidence in any other,  
For you know not the thoughts of others;  
You can only recognize things that lie within yourself.  
And who else is seated, underneath your very heart?

Patti Masterman

# Honorable Unmention

My colors never found  
In rummage-sale sunsets,  
My face could never  
Turn a ship to home;  
My touch much less  
Than a lover could dream of;  
Nothing that would cause  
A man to roam.

My heart was never given  
To the first bidder;  
I was not the one  
They searched for in hunts,  
For the fine ladies  
Who fit the glass slipper;  
Please don't forget me-  
I loved you too once.

Patti Masterman

# Hope Gives Lightness To The Child

Hope gives lightness to the child  
That gives him strength to fly  
To places not yet dreamed of,  
For in his heart so wild

Are running streams as free,  
As ever child could wish to find,  
And love enables him to see  
With eyes much older than they be.

His words still innocent and mild  
May blur the line of cause, effect:  
His stumbling tongue is not his fault;  
He speaks in childhood's dialect.

Jan.2 2010

Patti Masterman

# Hope You Like Surrogates

The big drums are starting up outside:  
Maybe the spirits of ancient Indian chiefs  
Pissed off that their inheritance has been slowly drained away  
Or woodland spirits dismissive  
Of the appearance that modern day has taken on:  
Where once were hills and valleys, springs and sanctuaries  
Now a concrete veldt stands, unsupportive of life  
Holding in all the heat like a cooking griddle for giants  
And all the creatures long for a breeze and a mist  
A cool after the long, still burning of summer  
But after rain comes the jungle of humidity  
Just breathing causes torpor and inertia:  
Napping and eating, sleeping and breeding-  
The organism takes so much just to maintain:  
How did we ever find the time to destroy nature's cradle  
While we were building a virtual world to inhabit instead?

Patti Masterman

# Hope's Messenger

A bird weighs no more than a hope  
That's riding, on a feather,  
Or a helium balloon, afloat  
Upon a child's soft tether.

If love could climb up any rope,  
We would always be together;  
And once our eyes were opened,  
Could withstand any weather.

A secret word can fly on wind  
And search for you, forever;  
And that is how the heart sends word  
That love will vanish never.

Patti Masterman

# Hopscotch In Metal

You always see vignettes in traffic;  
there she is again, Some Brave Soul,  
waving and pressing her luck,  
accomplishing a turn of one hundred and eighty degrees,  
against the normal flow of traffic.  
Somehow making a human contact  
in the midst of all those gas-chugging autos,  
rumbling and farting out their noxious vapors,  
high on octane and coal-tar,  
their glassy eyes keyed only to the next car in line.

She too seeking that all-important eye contact,  
and the motioning that comes afterward  
if her luck holds:  
Go ahead; I'll wait, it's clear this side,  
You can stake your life on my truth-  
As she weaves and tic-tac-toes, through jostling lanes of cars  
with the studied ease as if she'd been planning it for months,  
accomplishing impossible maneuvers  
in an impromptu chess move on sticky asphalt.

I never try impossible things when driving:  
I've never been able to trust any other human that much.

Patti Masterman

# How A Whore Is Like A Cuspidor

Little bumps confess your flagrancy  
In delecto; how pink the vagrancy  
Every girl's a virgin till you plumb her depths  
Every fish a sturgeon when the taste is whet  
How a habit becomes another door  
Is how a whore is like a cuspidor.

Patti Masterman

# How Can You Tell It's Christmas?

As the leaves go flinging  
The chill winds stinging  
The windows steaming  
The stores are teeming  
Even strangers beaming  
Travellers laden; tables leaning  
Cards brim with meaning  
Damp eyes streaming  
Hearts go winging  
Bodies tingling  
Children dreaming  
Joy is springing  
New hope bringing  
As around the earth ringing  
Choirs of angels start singing-  
Then you know that Christmas is come.

Patti Masterman

# How Could I Deserve You - Sonnet

How could I deserve you in any way,  
Who makes my heart twirl like a strong windmill;  
Grinding, grinding off edges of the day,  
Making small gemstone fragments of my will.

All my hours become treasured, and a gift,  
Imagining I tread sunny fields alone;  
With every thought of you to give a lift,  
And know with you, my heart is always home.

Why me; why now, am I the deserving one,  
Should live my life as queen, albeit uncrowned?  
I chase your shadow toward the setting sun-  
And pray in future sunsets, I might drown.

A sun and moon, with you inside my arms:  
The world's reborn, there's none can come to harm.

Patti Masterman

# How Could We Go On

How could we go,  
Go on without you?  
Where would we go,  
If you couldn't go too?

What is there to do  
If not done with you?  
How could we move on  
Without taking the truth?

We'll close our eyes,  
And we'll pray each night;  
Pray for a miracle,  
To never lose sight

Of all the things you were,  
And all that we have lost;  
Death doesn't win it all,  
But still we count the cost.

How could we go  
Go on without you?  
Where would we go  
If you couldn't go too?

What is there to do  
If not done with you?  
How could we move on  
Without taking the truth?

Patti Masterman

# How Cryosurgery Is Performed On A Living Heart

When someone you loved very much dies, strange things  
Start to happen to you, that you don't notice right away:  
The hologram that their influence built around you  
Turns inside-out; the bulk of it shrinks down  
Into one of those super-dense singularities.  
Their belongings start to feel impersonal and oddly distant;  
Reminiscent of a strangers bags, sitting packed for the departure.  
All the love and caring is siphoned out  
When the owner leaves existence behind:  
The void they left fills with a surreal grace, when viewed  
From the novelty of their absence. A breathtaking coldness  
Accompanies this second ownerless half-life:  
Touching them, your own fingers are burned, frostbitten  
Eventually dead to external stimuli.  
The rigor travels inward from the extremities,  
Making a slow ascent toward the heart,  
Crystallizing everything along the way,  
Melding it all into lovely, singular geometries  
As one cell after another is enveloped.  
Until the central core is an unmoving artifact  
In the arctic waste, but unable to die.  
A frozen cryosurgical intervention of stained glass  
Ruby veins, suspended in frozen calciferous walls.  
Other people do not notice the changes or see  
Not unless you touch them-  
Accidentally brushing up against you,  
They feel then the penetrating cold,  
Radiating outward in bitter waves.  
Drawing their clothing more tightly about them,  
They search for the taletale signatures of frost,  
Wondering if winter came early this year.

Patti Masterman

# How Does One Love The Dead

How does one love the dead-  
Make a date with a grave,  
Try to get inside their head?  
Too late to save

Them from their fate;  
Just say we failed,  
It's now too late  
(How sad, they ailed)

Be faithful then  
At morning, noon,  
On them attend  
Beside the tomb,

Bring flowers there,  
And wreathes of blue-  
And would, they knew  
Your heart was true.

Patti Masterman

## How Early Ever Birds

How early ever birds, that sing out their heart,  
Sing out to dawn, sing out to spring;  
How their songs can wound, with a warbler's art  
And remind us of other missing things.

Happy a bird's tune, when all things right,  
How happy he sings, in the tallest trees;  
He sings how short, was the fearful night,  
Sings out his heart to the bumble bees.

How early ever comes, that morning of dread,  
The song is missing, and we can't find  
The early morning warbler; because he's dead-  
And can't get his songs ever out of mind.

Patti Masterman

# How Far To Immortality

How far to immortality,  
How far to cross that bridge  
Avoid crass fatality,  
Upon the lifetime's siege.

We're poised to fall  
To unknown depths,  
We're held in thrall;  
The lure of steppes.

We'd like to think of  
Futures, yes;  
And find the banks  
Of its river's kiss.

How far to immortality,  
Far survival is a dream;  
We're held in strong reality  
By bands of fleshly seams.

Patti Masterman

# How Forgotten Your Name

This beauty if dying-  
could you choose to rise above  
dare to leave it all behind  
do the dead still believe  
while the living only grieve?

this world though if sole  
repository of the living  
and nothing else remained-  
how forgotten your name?

Patti Masterman

## How It Is, How It Once Was

I used to think the sky was filled with birds,  
Of all the rarest kinds;  
And birds clear out of season,  
Out of zone, and out of reason.

I used to muse the world was full of minds  
That spoke a certain kind  
Of written language; as within a book;  
Never could resist, a second look.

Now grown up, my mind is filled with birds,  
Disguised as books and porpoises,  
And bread and circus tortoises;  
Sorry I always fall in love, with words.

Patti Masterman

# How Like A Heart, How Like A Bird

A dream revealed your eyes to me,  
And love once caged is now set free.

I must love you, if love I must;  
For who heaven's angels dare mistrust?

A whisper in my ear was all,  
My heartbeat slowed down to a crawl.

With love, my soul is now more me,  
And love once caged is soon set free.

I must love you, if love I must;  
For who heaven's angels dare mistrust?

My eyes uncovered of their caul,  
My heartbeat slowed unto a crawl

I prayed together we will be,  
And love once caged will be set free.

I must love only you; I must,  
For who heaven's angels dare mistrust?

The birds from tree to tree do call:  
My heartbeat has grown wide and tall.

Patti Masterman

# How Long Will The Sweet Flower Sing

How long will the sweet flower sing  
When we have but once found it again?

I could feel your eyes flutter, so shyly  
That I finally acknowledged you quietly

And the question I know you did seek  
Would I forget then about you, so meek?

Unassuming although you might be  
All about you, I'd not fail to see

Your heart plainly visible, in reach  
And meekness the clothing that be

Behind your laughter, so brave  
So that hidden sadness, to stave

You do not easily gain affection  
As though you had no true detection

Of those who would trod on your heart  
And treat you with too careless art

And you could never be forward  
But accepting of friendship that proffered

It was not that I thought you beneath me  
No; more, that you never did seek me-

We both; of the same kind of style  
To others would deal, without guile

So don't fear I will ever desert you  
The last thing I'd do is to hurt you

The ones we will love last, and the best  
Sometimes we must put through the test

Life makes us go down hidden ways  
So distinguish, our most minor days

Your lovely spirit, so free  
Is the thing I most want you to be.

Patti Masterman

# How Much Are Words Like Bridges

How much are words like bridges-  
Or fires, to cut a swathe,  
Some distances not traveled;  
Last stop, where love got off.

How often time's the bludgeon  
That knocks us to our knees,  
While heavy trains keeps coming;  
While the smoke leaves on the breeze.

Patti Masterman

# How Much We Are Like A Tiny Universe

How much are we like a tiny universe  
Self contained, we exist within our own set of laws  
Metaphysically present in more than one dimension  
Where we came from, nobody remembers  
Where we disappear to, nobody knows  
It's as if we sprout out of a potent nothingness  
Put on the clothing of physicality and location  
For a specific length of time, itself unknown  
And go away, although having no obvious  
Other place to disappear into-  
All of it seems like nothing so much as a dream  
But who is the dreamer, and where rests the dream?

Patti Masterman

# How New Religions Start

I wanted to write some poetry  
I wrote down words that I thought were beautiful  
Enough to crawl; but they could not stroll:  
They slammed the door in my face

I wrote love poems, loss poems  
Poems of unrequited love, of love that took the wrong bus downtown;  
My poems could flap their wings but not make it off the ground:  
They threw my manuscript in the corner dumpster

I reinvented myself, slit veins, leaked bloody plasma  
Over all my words, rubbed it into metaphors;  
My poems began to reek but couldn't attract enough attention:  
They mailed all my writing to Zimbabwe

I gashed my jugular, jumped up and down on rejection slips  
Stabbed myself with paper clips,  
Screamed obscenities, refuted my core humanity  
Pronounced myself an alien; and re-opened all my old wounds again:  
They padlocked the offices

I threw up, gave up  
Burnt my words, sold my soul for pennies  
Became another rumor; homeless, unwashed, beyond hope or despair:  
Found out they had hunted me for weeks to tell me  
Finally, I was deemed good enough to see print  
But by then I had decided to found a new religion  
And just forget about poetry.

Patti Masterman

## How Pale The Light Lies

How pale the light lies, beneath the closing door-  
Sleepless or sleeping- in shadow evermore.  
How the words die, on lips like wilted rose;  
But whence the words go, no one ever knows.

How sad the mirror, that only sad eyes shows;  
Forlorn the moon, though each night fatter grown.  
When dark returns, the door will still be closed-  
No moon nor shine, where barren rose is sown.

Patti Masterman

# How Soon We Are Cinders

Even if his single, weeping eye  
Could still shout with a hoarse, salient fury,  
Could stab as swiftly and as deep  
As flames can lick a still living tree,  
And the slender branches withering there,  
Each glowing with it's own tongue of fire.

Though that eye pierce me completely  
Through to the other side,  
And hold me in its stiffening fascination  
Against the claustrophobic seam of the wall,  
It would already be too late;

Already I should have squeezed out  
My million or so after-births of words, by then  
Lying quietly, in branching pools of splendor  
Beneath a smoking, once verdant forest.

Patti Masterman

# How The Dust Gets Laid

The dust of their coming and going  
Sifts down through the years,  
Their gravity once knotted fabric to flesh;  
Even though they're near,  
Just the ashes, are all can impress.

Since time snapped in two between their fingers,  
They haven't aged much, except to uncoil,  
Unwind branching strands;  
Under satin recoil  
Beneath brass sheaths, the body banal.

We walk upon the faces of kings, and sleep  
High, on the ruined backs of strangers;  
All unknowing, how the dust gets laid,  
Unaware of the danger-  
Every generation becomes the new day.

Patti Masterman

# How The Song Of Life Goes On

Legs in the air  
The crest of the wave  
The water of a spark  
The song of a heart  
All we ever are  
Is what we become there

The bucket drowns in the well  
Like sound sings in the bell  
Like day dwells in a dawn  
Like life's song playing on

Tears hide in the mirror  
Sobs muffle in dark  
Didn't stay around long  
To keep it from going wrong  
All we ever are  
Is what we become there

The bucket drowns in the well  
Like sound sings in the bell  
Like day dwells in a dawn  
Like life's end stops a song.

Patti Masterman

# How The World Engraves Itself Upon Our Being

I do not know how one writes poetry  
or how bright stars shine only at night-  
Although there are theories to be found, in certain writings  
that say stars may be seen in the bottoms of the deepest wells  
during daytime- if one stares long enough, without blinking.

I do not understand how the sea  
may be heard in a conch shell one has stolen  
from the bosom of the ocean,  
however I have seen children, listening patiently at the open end;  
And also, I do not understand how pearls may arise  
in some hidden place, simply from an irritation.

They say the earth is round, not flat-  
though I have found only the flat parts, in all my wanderings.  
Still, I feel sure there is poetry enough left over in the world  
that stars and wells and seashells-  
And even the occasional irritant-  
can write their story in the sky, the sea,  
and in granite and oyster-shell, leaving it safe there  
so that our children's children, and even their children, after them  
can someday find and read again old tales, reborn.

Patti Masterman

# How Time Once Stopped Inside A Poem

Remember who was the first true being ascendant  
The portal; and then don't neglect beautiful beginnings;  
Every change here bringing opportunity's window,  
Nor can, nor should everything be just about winning.

Leaving and entering, never by the self-same door,  
Opportunities knocking for those for whom they'd knock.  
Discarding the dross, or reclaiming the discarded,  
To seize the day and choose your own path, forevermore.

Yes, even heaven's in a flower; and everywhere we look  
Change dividing chaos, of the conquering and freed.  
The Tao becoming, while life's a beat recording,  
Everything worth doing once, if you saw the need.

Patti Masterman

# How Time Spirals Outward

How time spirals outward like the sea,  
And breaks, divides upon the lea  
As smaller eddies ripple docks;  
The stuff of time, tides and clocks.

Low-tide, high-tide; in due time,  
The seas rise up to make a rhyme,  
They smooth the beach with words of shell  
And floating timbers wild tales tell.

Patti Masterman

# How Tiresome To Read My Own Words Again

How tiresome to read my own words again:  
I know the plot and the lines before they happen;  
Contrivances of mine cannot make me smile.  
Don't ask me to explain these words again  
They don't ask me for permission any more  
I don't know what thoughts their lies burned through;  
The words are a living pain and travesty-  
Can't get far enough away not to hear anymore.

I do dream of being human some day,  
Having definite plans; an inert love  
That can't ever be achieved, as higher goal.  
Striving with no hope of conquer,  
A noble battle of irreconcilable wills  
The outcome already printed out  
On posts around the the city  
And people nodding in recognition,  
That yes, she was a real fighter in her time-  
Instead of the comatose existence I always slept around with.

I need an extra set of lives:  
One to only sleep for all the other selves,  
And one to do battle, face down the enemy.  
Another to be conquering hero, recounting all the battles.  
Then, a humble self never needing recognition,  
And of course, the invisible one who will do everything  
I don't want anybody to know about-  
And the expendable one, can be killed off, at the end.

The heaviness of the words will collapse some day  
Crushing me to death with my illogical analogies,  
My overweight metaphors of luggage.  
I left them alone by the ring while I hid  
In the audience, behind a fat man eating popcorn,  
And a drunk woman calling out the shots to the fighters-  
My anemic ideas too weak to climb up onto the platform by themselves  
What can I do when there is nobody left to do battle for me?



# How To Avoid Moths

I always put something on, playing in the background  
To give some order to orderless days,  
Ground my ear-drums, tether me more tightly.

Something to focus, something to hold on to,  
Atoms of air lined up like soldiers,  
Marching neatly into the head, subconsciously.

Subcutaneous learning, tacit seminars in the kitchen,  
Tidy brainwave-entrainment in the bath;  
Marshal those air-waves, move them, now work!

Beat those sound waves into submission;  
It doesn't matter how,  
Any old recording will do.

Then pack your ears with tissue, when you're through.

Patti Masterman

## How To Lasso A Zombie

Zombies are not afraid of crucifix or holy water  
They hate sports matches, and emotional soap operas  
Because they are the frozen dead  
If you are lucky enough to encounter one in the wild  
You can distract the zombie with rapid hand motions  
While reciting some epic poem  
When you find those glazed eyes upon you  
Tie the zombie firmly to the nearest tree trunk  
To scare away all the crows from the grounds  
And prove an interesting conversation topic  
When your friends come for dinner  
(Zombies have no unions, and do not hold  
With lawsuits- and they make great pets too)  
Once you acquire one, everyone in the neighborhood  
Will soon be out shopping for their own zombie  
Just remember you were the original first owner  
And they are all just copycats.

Patti Masterman

# How's My Little Girl

Just that one line was all they recounted, that she said-  
Running into her in the busy shopping area of the city,  
Now an older, used-up part; but back then still a well known hub.  
Who knew who you might run into there?  
And she immediately inquired,  
How's my little girl-

From the sound of it- no beating around the bush  
No embarrassed, foot tapping silence. A straight-forward lady  
She knew I had to be all right;  
Being cared for by those sweetly moralistic Caucasians  
One hundred percent pure, farm-raised, depression stiffened  
Church of Christ reared entrepreneurs:  
No musical instruments at their church, only voices raised in singing.  
My Dad even ran for office, as befitted a conscientious Republican.  
They ran their own business fairly and responsibly.  
They must have represented hope, to my birth mother.  
Hope for a better life, not for her, but for me.  
How's my little girl-

And a man working nearby told them how to get a baby:  
If things didn't work out; if your wife couldn't conceive or carry to term  
You could do what he and his wife did: use the lawyer.  
In fact, a woman carried her own baby to give it to them at the birth-  
My sibling. The one just before me.  
And apparently another one after me too.  
Fecundity's poster child was my mother, it seems.  
Adopting all those babies out, one after another.  
How's my little girl-

What more resume was required? The lawyer presided;  
The exchange was made and I had a home  
Much more stable, financially; and no pathological ex-husband  
Always lurking about dangerously, a lion on the prowl  
Thirsting to kill the off spring of other paternity.  
No other mouths competing for the food I would receive.

I had built up this fantasy of the god's stepping in to salvage  
To save me from pernicious poverty and undeserved violence  
As if I were something worthy of special attention, or a miracle:  
But it was just some lunchtime gossip, and a lawyer,  
Who hooked her up with them.  
How's my little girl-

I knew she had been considered pretty;  
That was made plain after I grew up.  
If you were nice to her, they insinuated;  
She'd go home with you, no question.  
And more children were always being manufactured:  
She was a mother lode of fertility, so I'd best beware too!  
I picked up between the lines. First marriage; then babies,  
My mother reminded continuously, during childhood,  
Mindful of my genetic inheritance.  
They never noticed how I pricked up my ears  
At each new tidbit of information; how it rebounded  
For years, in the vacuum of non-information where I fermented.  
Doubtless she's long dead by now. But I think I did matter to her;  
She obviously did wonder about me  
Hoped that I was thriving, that I was happy.  
How's my little girl-

If she ever prayed, to god; to anything at all-  
The Great Spirit? Maybe she thought of me then.  
It was some small evidence, almost satisfaction  
It even made up in part for the pain of finding out  
When I was yet very young and it made no sense then;  
She didn't want me. My own mother gave me away.  
I had to go be by myself to take it in, contemplate it:  
Turn it over and over in my child's mind, trying to touch it.  
It echoed; kept echoing in that vacuum which grew longer, wider  
Spiralling outward till it swallowed whole, my small island universe.  
I felt myself alienated; inferiority bloomed with my new secret.  
Everyone else looked like their relatives.  
I was so different: too dark, too tanned, too native.  
How's my little girl-

The message in a bottle came down, passed to me at last  
Through the people who loved me best and longest,  
From she who first loved and carried me:  
Over the cavernous valleys of time and space, it came  
To save, reclaim me. And now it comes to me  
Since I've been twenty or thirty different people at least  
During my life so far; and perhaps now capable of seeing  
More than that child could; that tanned tomboy of the outdoors,  
With the thick mop of raven hair;  
The one who always loved to write and create with words.  
Who can say it was not a miracle after all?  
To this day, I can still hear the most beautiful echo:  
How's my little girl-

Patti Masterman

# Human Faces

The glassy tentacles of ideas  
Snake down through the marrow of bones,  
Like roots from a monkey's brain.

Rabid froth dried, on a rabbit's whiskers,  
Dreaming as tiger, instead of prey;  
Snoring through the wild radish stalks.

And horses rear on legs borrowed from deer  
To munch green apples, from rutting-scarred trees-  
Everything what it is, and nature never differs

Though men may wish they had been born stones instead,  
Or as kings in higher places;  
But the higher grace found in this world  
Looks out of human faces.

Patti Masterman

# Humorless

Death is a humorless fellow,  
As he waits for the young and the old;  
Though we shut him seamless, outside our lives,  
Leave him standing, alone in the cold.

But Death has the longer memory;  
He'll not forget, and fast he'll hold-  
When he comes round to take you,  
He'll give you back all of his cold.

Patti Masterman

# Hurry, Scurry, Wrinkle Your Nose

Hurry scurry, wrinkle your nose,  
Harem scarem, wiggle your toes;  
For each thing's connected to every other-  
The Earth is everyone's old grandmother.

Bubble bubble, stir in some trouble,  
Soon the pot is bound to be double;  
And I've a twin who lives in the mirror-  
She rushes to meet me when I come near.

Patti Masterman

# Hymn To Cellar Door

Oh cellar-door;  
Such raised beauty rarely spoken;  
You are the praise  
That holds our gaze.

Oh cellar-door,  
You will always be there;  
When all the other  
Word towers get razed.

Cellar door is supposed to be one of the most beautiful phrases in the English language.

Patti Masterman

# Hypnotic

Hypnotic dancers at my minds edge  
Twirling and pausing, in syncopated ambush  
Some choreography I've never studied  
Has probed into my hidden brain  
Long, slender fingers twiddle the dials  
Smooth calves and muscled leanness  
Bound and ricochet  
Hypnotizing rhythms  
The unbidden symphonies  
Pulsating against my temples  
My exposed thoughts trepanned:  
A mind is so much more  
Than just a cloven hoofed grazer.

Patti Masterman

# I Always Knew You'D Make Me Watch You Die

I always knew you'd make me watch you die  
Even as a child it seemed unfair  
To have to watch one's father or mother  
Suffer even unto that final stare.

I often imagined you wearing a death mask,  
It must have been the most frightening thing  
Of all the childrens imaginary games  
And I played it sadly with a crimson shame.

For I didn't want to have to face it some day  
Without any warning of what to expect  
And true enough, as I waited that week  
I had a lot of time on which to reflect

That I really needed to be there for you;  
Of all my relations, I knew beyond doubt  
You were the one most terrified  
Of hospitals, dying and the final route.

At last it happened; and my watch ended:  
I'd seen you through as you crossed that rift  
The one that divides the dead from the living  
So I think of it now as my final gift.

Patti Masterman

# I Always Mistook Being In Myself

I always mistook being in myself  
For being in the world  
And true enough, when I die  
I will think it is the world has disappeared  
Have I the wherewithal left to think anything.

Patti Masterman

# I Am But Dust And Ashes

I am but dust and ashes;  
Dust of whirled dust, and ashes from wasted worlds.  
Dead universes of dusty relics, the dust shook down  
From the first creatures footsteps, from a bird's dust bath,  
From a cyclone in a dust-bowl.

Cooled embers from the fires that consumed  
Entire forests and cities, to ashes floating on the Ganges,  
Ashes from prehistoric campfires, ravenous fires consuming all-  
Leaving everything only ashes behind, in a wasteland of dust.

When ash burns down the length of a cigarette  
Which falls to the ground, glowing and then goes out,  
To lie quiet and still, framed within the dust there,  
It restates the normal condition  
Of every living creature ever born.

Or- alternatively-  
For my sake, the world was created.

Which stone will it be?

A man should carry two stones in his pocket. On  
one should be inscribed, 'I am but dust and ashes.'  
On the other, 'For my sake the world was created.'  
And he should use each stone as he needs it.  
—Rabbi Bunam

Patti Masterman

# I Am Love's Savant

I am love's Savant  
Of perilous divining;  
No simpering hierophant,  
Of the desperately climbing.

For love arrives naked,  
Sans cloak or cloche,  
While love's finger beckons,  
For me to come close.

I'm privy to his prophecy;  
To the keyholes I tiptoe,  
Where I see the aristocracy-  
In flagrante delicto.

As his scribe, I'm resigned  
To write impassioned words;  
Still, desires will not rewind-  
Even though they be absurd.

Patti Masterman

# I Am So Loyal To Him Within My Heart

I am so loyal to him within my heart-  
But he's disloyal to me, with his others;  
With anyone disdainful, them of me,  
He feels quite free to treat me, as a bother.

I have never given my heart lightly away-  
And to find I've been in error, all these years  
Is become a tremendous, grievous pain inside me;  
The source of many hidden, disgraced tears.

I have no where to go, as he's too wise;  
Far wiser than I am, and so I stay-  
But he should not be too surprised to find,  
That I will have gone missing, some bright day.

Patti Masterman

# I Am That

Behind the movies scenes, behind the protagonist's smiles,  
Beneath the orchestra's strings, back of the ticket booths,  
There is a message found in all of this;  
That this is the now, and you are here alive,  
As alive as anything that ever lived,  
Furthermore, this is not a dream;  
Though if it were, it would be the most wonderful dream imaginable,  
Even though it's impossibly, unbelievably true,  
And you want to keep on having it-  
This dream- for as long as you can,  
Because being alive is such a splendid  
Once-in-a-lifetime, first-run, no-repeat event;  
It's worth everything it has ever cost you or anybody else,  
Because you're now one of the wealthiest creatures on the planet-  
In all your improbable aliveness.

Patti Masterman

# I Am The Body Of My Own Invention

I am my own church, and own religion;  
I worship whatever I must.  
I worship what no other man could fathom-  
Because it is my own, and no one else's.

I order myself to,  
I order myself fro,  
All day long; every day, day by day:  
A soldier would be as proud.

Even if it is all delusion.  
At least it is my delusion,  
No other body may lay claim upon it.  
I run this body, and not one can make it breathe,  
or move, or turn this way or that, as I do.

I am the body of my own invention.

Patti Masterman

# I Am The Last Remnant Of A Great Army

I remember scenes as if from some old movie,  
Voices calling, as though across a void;  
Things forgotten, through the glass most darkly-  
As though some giant, with my brain had toyed.

The past lives on in places now quite hidden;  
The dying man, whose life through his mind whirled-  
Those days come back to haunt, mostly unbidden:  
My parts of them, still living in this world.

Patti Masterman

# I Am The Little Raindrop

I am the little raindrop  
That now has seen the sea  
Though once it thought itself  
The world of water, be

The surface tension grew  
Until it burst it's skin  
And, falling on the wave  
It heard a growing din

It thought the sea a whole  
A solid thing, that roll  
To crush the little drop  
Beneath it's giant bowl

But just before it fell  
The little dropp woke up  
And saw the shining faces  
In the splashes, spraying up

The other drops did play  
In the water's mighty hand  
And from sea to farthest sea  
Did the water's smile expand

Until horizon's bloomed  
Upon some sunny shore  
Where the little raindropp rose  
Into the sky once more.

Patti Masterman

# I Am The Soul Of God's Own Joy

I am the soul of gods own joy:  
He clothed me tenderly, in flesh;  
Gave the island satellite as home  
Where sense and impression mesh.  
From the life of my days he is weaving  
Indestructible record of mind  
The coin of the realm is eternal:  
No fragment of me left behind.

Patti Masterman

# I And Me

I and Me own different planes within the skull;  
I settled in the frontal lobes  
Where I can usually vote aye or nay, as it strikes my fancy  
Controlling the higher thought, the calculations,  
Schedules and contingency plans.

Me dwells deeper, inside the ancient brain;  
The place of reptiles, receptacle of instincts  
While I dream of ice cream sodas, sex, and journeys,  
Me might dream of large snakes, have nightly dreams  
Of terror, mass exterminations and die-outs,  
Experimental lobotomies and spherical supernovas.

Me worships planetary deities and various idols of glazed stone.  
I gave up dominance to Me, who can hijack My main processes  
When confronted with extreme danger or duress,  
In order to have the majority of say the rest of the time.

I and Me get along well mainly because  
We are never occupying the same place for long,  
Sort of a marriage of convenience;  
All my logical reasoning can't turn Me aside  
Once her wire gets tripped.  
So I spend a lot of time doing damage control-  
And hopefully, Me stays asleep.

Patti Masterman

# I Break Precarious

I break precarious, upon your precious word:  
The voiceless reason, dying goes unheard,  
My heedless passions lying yet unfurled;  
My thoughts, in none of yours paralleled-  
I break; I break precarious, at one word.

Patti Masterman

# I Can Dampen My Heart

I can dampen my heart and stifle my sighs  
But I need dark glasses to shadow my face,  
Or some bold costume mask, with grace;  
Been trying on many a strange disguise-  
That he not find your love looking out of my eyes.

Patti Masterman

# I Can'T Help But Love You

I can't help but love you  
When the sun is in the sky,  
And all the birds are flying,  
While the clouds are rolling by;  
I can't help but love you,  
With the lark's song on the breeze-  
And the mockingbird, a tease-  
Who could help, but love you?

I can't help but love you  
Though you're distant as the moon,  
Mostly far as western China,  
And the sun up, at high noon;  
I can't help but love you,  
An eclipse lives in my heart-  
Because we're far apart-  
Who could help, but love you?

I can't help but love you  
When the moon circles the earth,  
And the sun craves all the planets,  
And the day is giving birth;  
I can't help but love you-  
Even blood inside my veins  
Holds a little bit of flames;  
Who could help, but love you?

Patti Masterman

# I Can't Read Your Words Anymore

I can't read your words anymore  
because every time I read them,  
it spears me all over again

And I'm already so full of holes  
I'm sucking air now  
a giant, sucking chest wound  
and could become  
just an emptied, orbiting void  
a shell of pure nothingness

But at least maybe then  
the pain would become unrecognizable  
by any remaining humanity left inside

Once I was alive inside of you  
Painting your brave dreams vividly  
with all the the flagrant emotions of hope

I can't read your words anymore  
I do just fine until I make that mistake again  
though someday your name will be  
just another sad, tired chapter of a life I had to close

A bereft bank account that began to cost much more  
than it ever added to my days.  
And even that wouldn't be so difficult to bear  
except for the memories

how much you still managed to torture me  
and how I bore up under it, embraced my martyrdom  
because I thought I was your only savior then

And I can't help wondering, do you torture the other now  
or are you saving it for an unexpected surprise later on?  
Or perhaps it was a special treatment  
only for an upstart like me?



# I Come Back To Life

I come back to life through your eyes again,  
The stars grow bright from your gaze on them,  
Flowers hasten to open their centers;  
At your touch awakens a dream.

I heard you calling my name before  
I came, but it was too late by then;  
But we are only two floating thoughts  
The world flows by, like a passing stream.

Patti Masterman

# I Could Do Worse

Small was the seed

That first was me;

No larger than

An ego's need,

And that became

A universe;

Another world-

I could do worse.

Patti Masterman

# I Could Not Be Wounded By Another

I could not be wounded by another  
Any more than a flower has fangs  
Or a rainstorm, teeth  
No more than a caress has a saw-blade hidden  
Or a word has a sickle's point inside of it  
But should I have any expectations..  
I would be finished off promptly  
By a single blow of the headman's axe  
By one intonation that curls up or down  
At the end of a simple sentence;  
And by my own hand: none other.

Patti Masterman

# I Couldn'T Stop The Spirit

I couldn't stop the spirit from leaving-  
I saw it leaving from the eyes first,  
A waving goodbye was there, as of small white flags;  
Or departing reflections from the present  
Desire to be no more, to fly away to no matter where-

I couldn't stop the hands from shaking-  
Small and cold sweaty hands, like fishes made of flesh,  
Quaking like the too-fast heartbeat  
Of something too small and terrified to survive long;  
Something that wished to hide from the piercing eyes of forever-

I couldn't stop the words, couldn't stop the flow-  
Words like blood, flowing from opaque purple wounds,  
From the central stony statue of the heart's switchboard,  
From the bitter caverns of the mouths silent quivering:  
The murder of something priceless, that could only sing goodbye.

Patti Masterman

# I Didn'T Want To Waste It All Sleeping

The old dog is gone and now even his touch is going away;  
Soft beds of earth he wallowed out beneath the bushes,  
Trails he wove in the drying grass, around the foundations-  
Now blurring with time. The new dog doesn't walk the same paths,  
And where he felt like family, she feels like a prolonged guest.  
But in time, even she will feel less like an in-law and more like a child.

I too am only a guest now in my own walls, tiptoeing about  
Worried to disturb the peace with a raucous outcry, for no reason at all,  
Tense that my sudden temper will upset something priceless,  
Which has been secreted somewhere within the walls and which,  
Even if I ran into it- I might not recognize it's real value.

I wallow my own hole out in the nights, in bedclothes; in flesh:  
Half awake and half dreaming at opposite ends of the poles;  
Dead asleep in morning, and curiously wakeful at 3 in the morning,  
Sometimes scribbling gibberish on lined paper, which means very little,  
Trying to capture thoughts, which are like flashes of fickle fishes.

Trying to remember me, who I was; before I begin the forever forgetting  
Which life imposes, as a cost of wearing about a brain full of memories.  
Memories are mostly valuable to the bearer and can't be insured  
Against the tides of loss, which invariably arrive. Can't even really be  
Described to another, who wasn't at least somewhere within the same pictures.

After a while you realize, the latest dog might outlive you and become  
An orphan, and live to compare you to other, later owners;  
Instead of you comparing an old dog to a new one, and your children  
To in-laws, who after all share the same genes. Half of your in-laws  
Live in your child, with half of you; all peaceably sharing the same quarters;  
That is the very strangeness of the life, as we live it down here.

A dog lives in dreams and waking, seven years for every year you spend.  
We are slowly discarded within our own walls, like worn snapshots,  
Bodies sloughed off like old snake-skins,  
Worn out by life, disfigured by the wrinkles in our sheets,  
Wearing fishbowls of memories inside our rounded skulls.

We pass on our genes and go, and the little packet of memories

At the end of all our motions, is dispersed, hopefully  
In some meaningful way, and because no man is better than any other,  
And since we outlive most of our dogs, we ought to try to make it  
Of some lasting value; and I believe this is why I have insomnia,  
And why I tremble at the sound of my own voice-

Because time is so little and the leaving for so long,  
And I didn't want to waste it all sleeping.

Patti Masterman

# I Die In Bits And Pieces

I die in bits and pieces, starts and stops;  
A puzzle never to be completed;  
The wrong answer, to no known question.

My weight of days are heavy with foreboding,  
That you can never forestall that last sunset.  
Fear's a debt never made good.

Don't look for reasons down here;  
There aren't any-  
Just imperatives.

Our only freedom is the track we were born into;  
No more choice than any animal, running on instinct.  
Our wills, our only sword for doing battle.

So much distance from your words to mine,  
We could almost be on another planet, shouting into blind darkness.  
Though our lives run so parallel, they're nearly indistinguishable.

Every year is more fragmented than the last  
Entropy stretches out space and memories  
And at the end, there's only endless night.

If we're truly lucky, we might die before losing all grace;  
Then they will say, what a good life he had-  
But watch, nobody will meet your eyes at that moment

Because they're all still prisoners themselves,  
Running a losing race, lying to themselves  
To make it through their lengthening days.

Just because it's the only game in town  
Doesn't make it any better:  
If you don't start to rebel now, you will only die more enslaved.

Patti Masterman

# I Don'T Like Long Poems

You see, I don't like long poems  
My attention span is not so long,  
And the birds are busy through the window;  
I'm so afraid I'll miss their song.

Birds don't last long, in this world,  
As my mind grows shorter than a fuse,  
Lit at the business end of a stick  
Of dynamite, and that's no ruse.

You see, I don't like long poems;  
For I'm growing older by the clock  
And I've things to say to this old world,  
And tombstones aren't well known to talk.

I've things to say, and people's eyes  
Are wandering, while I have my say;  
Seems I talk faster all the time,  
Before the light runs out of day.

You see, I don't like long poems;  
My shadow's shorter every year  
I don't have endless hours to read-  
There's words I'd really rather hear.

Patti Masterman

# I Don'T Look Too Close

I don't look too close now,  
So I won't see what's missing;  
Or what was never there,  
Don't want to catch myself waiting  
For invisible things of air.

I won't strain to hear  
Words never spoken,  
So you don't have to feel bad;  
And there's no need for retracing  
Something we never had.

Patti Masterman

# I Dream Of A Different World

I dream of a different world  
In colors never seen,  
Where loving voices call out low-  
And nothing's sharp or mean.

I dream of a different world  
Where physics is an option-  
Because the gears and wheels get pulled-  
If things aren't done with caution.

I dream of a different world  
Where kindly hands pull strings,  
And the heart's not left alone-  
To perish- while it sings.

Patti Masterman

# I Dreamed Your Ghost Came

I dreamed your ghost came  
To say goodbye, if that was it-  
Because it was nothing that  
You said; you stared instead,  
And touched some things.

Your eyes seemed far away  
And wise; I saw no pain there,  
No surprise. I spoke but  
You gave no reply. I hoped  
You still knew who I was-  
And hoped someday,  
You'd come again.

When the dead come back  
To see the things they've left,  
And they are different than before,  
It's just they're in a different world;  
Peering through half-opened doors-  
Someday we'll go there too and find  
The reasons self seems left behind.

Patti Masterman

# I Fall For Words

I don't need a body, sure don't need a face,  
To fall down hard, for another's grace.  
Don't need an address, or even a voice;  
You see, I really have no choice.  
Knowing how I am, that there's no hope,  
No way to resist, no way to cope:  
Your words, in print, can eat their way in,  
Nothing makes a difference; not reason, not sin,  
It doesn't even matter if you're here or gone,  
When I can fall in love, with your words alone.

Patti Masterman

# I Fornicate, Therefore I Am

These poems have been fornicating again-

Who wrote all these?

They're multiplying faster than

A pile of pink rejection slips.

Someone drunk on life, brazen with words;

A walking miscarriage of language,

Must've went crazy with the typewriter.

You've been warned about writing too much before;

You'll wake up some day and see

There's ten thousand critters, beside your name-

That you can scarcely remember at all,

And everyone will be laughing- even more

You've been warned about this before.

Who do you think you are,

Prostituting all those sentences,

Blatant overuse of colons and semi-colons;

They ought to come out and arrest you right now,

For disturbing of the culture,

Resisting status quo,

And conspiracy to waste trees and bandwidth.

I hear the FCC has a huge file on you by now.

Maybe they're just giving you enough rope.

Patti Masterman

# I Get Lost

I get lost; I'm lost again in my mind,  
Lose track of days and lose count of time;  
Waiting for the gods to send me a sign-  
Cause running ahead only leaves me behind.

I get lost; the dead come out of their graves  
To remind me they were never content;  
As I wrote their souls out, to try and save  
Their minds; or find where they had went.

I get lost; nothing fits a thing that's left,  
I have two Mondays for every Sunday;  
Can't make a full week, the calendar's bereft;  
Just hope my own soul appears some day.

(written to One God Dub - Kaya Project/Dubsahara Mix)

Patti Masterman

# I Go To All The Old Haunts Again

I go to all the old haunts again  
The poets alleys where once  
I felt a breeze, a touch  
Of something finally awakening in me  
The ramshackle doors opened slowly enough  
Back then, but nobody answers now;  
They all got themselves lives, while I  
Have got only fickle poetry as my mistress,  
Who famishes me for her entertainment  
And then turns on the faucet  
When I least expect it; if she sees  
That I have submerged myself:  
She wants me to drown in words  
And I always willingly open my mouth  
Together we are trying desperately  
To kill me, so that a new tree  
Can sprout out of my death  
And maybe then new words  
Will fall like leaves  
And blow themselves  
Away, to all the places  
I have never been able  
To go in this life.

Patti Masterman

# I Had To Cut The Heart Strings

I had to cut the heart strings;  
Nobody cared they were hanging there,  
Might as well have set them on fire.

I had to cut the heart strings;  
Just a sentimental fool, in love with love,  
Left out in the rain, when push comes to shove.

I had to cut the heart strings;  
Now all my secrets stay mine-  
I think I've wasted enough of your time

Sincerity was always my undoing.

Patti Masterman

# I Had Two Rats To Fill My Days - Pantoum

I had two rats, to fill my days  
Through spines of books and bed clothes  
They chewed their lazy way  
And when they saw you, froze

Through spines of books and bed clothes  
Released out of their cage  
And when they saw you, froze  
For chewing was their rage

Released out of their cage  
And when they saw you, froze  
For chewing was their rage  
Their pile of booty grows

And when they saw you, froze  
They lurked behind the dresser  
Their pile of booty grows  
The cage mess is the lesser

They lurked behind the dresser  
They chewed their lazy way  
The cage mess is the lesser  
I had two rats, to fill my days

Patti Masterman

# I Hate You That Much

Thought storms cross my mind  
Blackness on the horizon  
And now you're out of time

I would crucify your eyes  
If thoughts alone could pierce-  
Nobody to hear your cries

Dirty diamonds of your hunger  
Filling you up until you sink;  
Beneath the dunes, falling under

Swirling sand drops you to your knees  
Desolate the cell you confined me to  
And the jailer has no keys

Why are you so proud?  
Guarding the condemned,  
Time's the only freedom we're allowed

At my single touch  
Prison walls would fall-  
But I hate you that much

Patti Masterman

# I Have A Tattoo Of You In My Heart

I have a tattoo of you in my heart-  
no one else can see it,  
but it's right there on the inside.  
If I concentrate, I can almost feel it:  
A peculiar raised rawness,  
like a cattle brand might leave;  
the nerves all burnt and exposed,  
as if singed by a sadistic cigarette wielder.

Funny thing is, I don't remember signing up for a tattoo  
Though I do recall a lot of pain, one night;  
remember thinking, I wasn't going to make it  
through till the sunrise;  
doesn't the worst pain always come  
in the blackness before dawn,  
and I was surprised to find  
I'd survived the worst of it.

But now that I have your sign inside of me,  
the bar code of independence is void,  
as if my soul had been sold;  
and nobody ever comes around me now-  
how useless can one human being become,  
and still go on existing?

I think of it now as a kind of failed science experiment;  
for even lab animals are painlessly destroyed,  
when their usefulness has reached an end.  
But human beings must suffer through  
to the very end, of their religion's required martyrdom-  
And you are so heartless, my faith of one.

Patti Masterman

# I Have Never Believed

I have never believed in sin,  
For the concept of sin belongs with a soul,  
And all the invisible things of nature.  
But I could never deny love;  
Because I bear so many of it's wounds.  
And when I go shopping for love,  
I pay no attention to size, practicality, occasion;  
Only my mood and needs of the moment.  
And I find then that I must gradually sew myself  
Completely into the garment,  
Almost as though it were a permanently living part of my body;  
And when I finally have to free myself from it,  
I find I must mutilate it, in order to completely remove myself from it.  
Which then of course, entails another trip down to the store.  
It's not a pattern that I fully agree with,  
But it's one I've found to be inescapable, at least for me:  
As each love eventually becomes another straitjacket,  
When you can never find a style, that suits you.

Patti Masterman

# I Hear Knocking

I hear knocking at the door  
Maybe a visitor? I run, look out the front window-  
And then they see my face: now they know I am here:  
They begin to pound on the wood furiously  
Then leave and come back with a sledgehammer  
I back away, sorry now to have shown my face;  
Now they will never leave, or give up  
Thinking quickly, I barricade myself down in the basement  
As the impatient pounding grows fiercer and yet louder  
I can hear machine guns pumping away  
Through the thin walls, at the series of dead bolt locks  
A chainsaw starts up a racket  
I slide into the air intake unit  
And quietly close the door behind me  
It's too cramped in here but it can buy me  
A few seconds more just to do  
What I now know I will have to do-  
Though I had prayed it would never come to this  
Never go this far-  
Now there's the sound of a car engine  
Tires squealing and then a huge - thud-  
Tells me the front wall is no more  
Well, I know they're inside now-  
No doubt about that  
Feet pound the floor above  
Frantically, for several minutes, back and forth  
Hunting, searching all the rooms nooks and crannies  
Then it grows quiet- too quiet  
I slide my feet in as close as I can, not daring to breathe at all:  
I can see only through slits in the door,  
Wishing in retrospect I had left just one window or door open  
So they might give up, think I had deserted the place  
Then I hear it up above the steps:  
The door begins to open, eerily,  
Creaking with that quality of a haunted house's door  
In a low budget horror film  
Stealthy steps descend now, unevenly  
As if they are not- quite- sure, not yet.  
Then I hear it, the last shovelful of dirt hitting my grave:

And I know it's 'game over':  
'Are you ready yet?  
It's starting now, we told you to prepare yourself  
They're all waiting there for you now..'  
I fumble in my pocket for my escape hatch,  
Then I do it, trying not to think about it too much:  
Quickly I swallow the little blue pill of cyanide  
That will take me away from this growing horror-  
I told them last year that I was never going to the Family Reunion again.

Patti Masterman

# I Heard The Corn Applauding

I heard the corn applauding  
The shy moon's beaming face,  
And saw the stars marauding  
Along the curve of space.

I felt the night's caress  
As she slipped her veil, so thin  
Over her rhinestone dress,  
And down to Earth's grey hem.

Patti Masterman

# I Heard The Wind

I heard the wind laugh, at the windows,  
As I quietly made the bed,  
'I'll pull these nails out, one by one-  
Your roof will lie upon your head.'

I heard the wind titter past the eaves,  
As Winter weather swirled around,  
'I'll take these panes whenever I want-  
And all the leaves will tumble down.'

I heard the wind trying all four walls,  
And the wood beams, shifting weight,  
As he promised, 'I'll let the moon in-  
And the creatures, that roam late.'

Then I heard wind whisper, where I lay  
In bed, and hoped it soon would wane-  
'Do not worry your world will last-  
Mark my words; it's all in v-a-i-n-nnn..'

Patti Masterman

# I Hide

I hide out in refurbished beauty,  
With words I stole, from a clever somebody;  
And tinkertoy them together, with a flourish.

More and more stays hidden from reach  
As gracefully we arc around the center,  
Going far from view, on each new venture.

The benefit of long days no longer obvious:  
All the fresh flowers ever cut wind up dead,  
As acts in plays end on their last note,  
And the stage lead gets her future dead bouquet.

She takes her bow; bowing all the same  
To both the past and the unborn future:  
The words just said, and the part you played  
Forgotten as dust, on a dead playwrights bust.

Patti Masterman

# I Just Got The Note This Morning

I just got the note this morning,  
Told me you both were leaving-  
No, it wasn't scornful  
And it really wasn't deceiving.

No doubt, I've had suspicions  
Even before this day;  
A woman's intuition, or  
Some telepathic ray.

I'd gotten use to how it was  
But I'm not exactly blue-  
And I think that's just because I know  
My heart's run away with you.

Patti Masterman

# I Keep On Doing Things Because

I keep on doing things because  
the not-doing of them  
is a kind of non-existence  
and overall it seems better  
to hold onto existence  
while you still have it.

Aside from that, I have no idea  
why I would want to continue doing  
anything.

Until.

I.

Don't.

Patti Masterman

# I Keep Waiting

I keep waiting for the mirror to tell me who I am  
But the mirror only pretends to know,  
Though it adequately reflects crows feet and lines:  
I've etched myself so deeply into this body,  
I can never fully be erased from it's features again.

The skin is zipped so closely about me;  
A second skin, like a seal's skin:  
Waterproof and taut, to contain all my watery corpuscles,  
And to keep me from contaminating the known universe  
With my millions of particulate bodies.

When time ends and the sun swallows this planet up again,  
Fragments of me will still be floating around,  
Although by then, might be involved in somebody else's bodily mass;  
Strange it is to consider, how even our bodies get recycled-  
Almost you could suppose that a few molecules of Hitler  
Might lie in state as future relics, of Mother Teresa.

Patti Masterman

# I Killed The Spider With The Bodhisattva's Shoe

I killed the spider with the Bodhisattva's shoe-  
Don't blame me; there was not a lot to do:  
On the one side, was the spider; venom; death!  
The other, endless lifetimes- the ecstasy of breath.

Patti Masterman

# I Know I'll Be A Ghost Someday

The world is quick and unforgiving,  
The seas are rough with many lost;  
I've tried my best to keep on living  
But I know I'll be a ghost, someday.

I know someday, my breath will leave,  
The things I touch will never know it;  
And all my loved ones left will grieve  
But I know I'll be a ghost someday.

Try to remember only the good,  
Though we must think it calamity:  
A man does only what he could  
Still to be a ghost, someday.

Patti Masterman

# I Know Why The Suicide Dies

I know why the suicide dies  
I know his secret wheres and whys  
I know all right, why the suicide dies  
And you can bet, it's nothing pretty

I know why he's gone astray  
It's all the words his brain kept saying  
And never stayed quiet, till he went insane  
Some was bad, but some just petty

He couldn't stop thinking; I don't know why  
And part was truth and part was lie  
Scary things, that made him cry  
And don't ever think, it was pretty

It wasn't romantic, it wasn't cool  
He opened his veins like a bloody fool  
He wanted to stop that unraveling spool  
Still, you could never be ready

He tried to save the man inside  
The ones whose wounds were opened wide  
It was far too late, to consider pride  
But it was never pretty.

Patti Masterman

# I Like Actors With Lined Faces

I like actors with lined faces  
I like faces with their own autobiography  
and address: it saves so much time

And if you can read the hieroglyphic code  
between the lines, that's even better  
If you can decipher which

Are smoking wrinkles around  
the eyes, and which from  
genuine emotion

Now there's something I don't like  
the bitter sculpted faces  
Because I'm afraid of cruelty's harshness

There is a dead expression  
around the eyes too, you should avoid  
People who've forgotten how to feel  
or too many trips to the plastic surgeon

I like faces that are a map  
straight to the unknown territories  
that surround a man's heart

Faces can take you on a trip  
if you will accept their baggage  
for a limit of time

But don't get confused  
by the mirror  
Sometimes age merely subdivides a division  
that's already over explored

Don't judge until  
you walk a mile wearing somebody's face  
but be sure and give it back afterward.

Don't forget and wear it home

Your spouse might not recognize you  
The dog might try to mate with it

Don't hire your face out unless  
you can be absolutely certain  
what they're planning to use it for.

Patti Masterman

# I Like The Way I Look

I like the way I look, inside your staring eyes  
I like that my words don't to instant silence fall-  
The stammering much more than smooth refrains,  
The reaching hands more than the quivering sighs.

Feigning composure to cover a racing pulse,  
Sweating storms to impede the hammered heart:  
When you're tongue-tied's when I want you most,  
Our thinking counterparts turned into white-sheet ghosts.

I like the way you're famished before we start,  
And the way your eyes work the ceiling above;  
Do you remember, from a thousand years hence-  
Remember the smooth-faced houses, the art?

Do you remember canals and stone fountains-  
My hand on your neck, accompany me now;  
We'll return to where we used to know so well,  
Climb up the wild-flower infested mountains.

Lie down in my lap, while I caress your temples,  
And we'll sow a great city upon the land-  
People it with lovers like you and me-  
And go much deeper down, than sand.

(Written to Fly to the Sky, original piano composition by gothicevils)

Patti Masterman

# I Like To Smell Books

I like to smell books in libraries  
Inhaling as much as can hold,  
Imagining I can smell fairies;  
Or something else, very like mold.

It may seem that I hold inside me  
Binding glue and drying ink;  
Bookmarks of old, pressed flowers,  
A powdery smell, I think.

The classics, like bridal bouquets;  
Dry biographies, like cotton gins,  
And slick, foreign travel brochures-  
Smelled up, till they're worn quite thin.

And Poe smells like tobacco,  
And Chaucer like coldest granite,  
And Egypt smells like Morocco,  
And the Earth just smells, of planet.

Have you ever smelled first love?  
A delicate eau de cologne,  
With winds fresh from heaven above,  
And angelic wings, out on loan.

And the smell of a first disenchantment  
Smells like something that long ago burnt;  
But hope is the pages enchantment,  
Which we wish we will never unlearn.

Patti Masterman

# I Lived Life Through Another's Heart

I lived life through another's heart,  
But never looked out of their eyes;  
But one day truth, the mirror told:  
That it was only useless lies.

If loneliness is what you own,  
You must take it, brain and bone-  
For taking just the flowered heads,  
You leave the living plant, still dead.

I lived life through another's heart;  
The days that mine, I counted less,  
But it's a feeble mind, I think  
That dallies, rather than confess.

I will not play the willful game,  
Taking others' earned play-things;  
So you must take back what I owe:  
The mortgage was an under-tow.

Patti Masterman

# I Looked Through Eyes Were Never Cruel - Triolet

I looked through eyes, were never cruel;  
O, but their looking long was naught!  
Though people may have thought me fool,  
I looked through eyes, were never cruel  
All that for loneliness, was my school;  
And by no friends, were ever sought:  
I looked through eyes, were never cruel-  
O, but their looking long was naught!

Patti Masterman

# I Love You Terribly

I love you terribly, and because of it  
I am become completely impotent.  
And I love you impotently,  
And that is a terrible thing to behold.  
I love you patiently  
Because the root of me is a grave impatience,  
And I love you impatiently  
Lest the present root begin to die in earnest.  
My flesh loves the scarlet sin in all of you;  
Being that itself is made entirely of ruby-blooded flesh.  
And my spirit loves the resounding hollowness  
Of your souls thin, empty rails.

My love is an imperturbable being  
That is too soon ground beneath your wheel, like an acorn;  
And it is an impenetrable wheel  
Which pulls me under, on it's return travel around.  
This love is a decomposing hand  
That's rising up fist-like, out of a newly closed grave  
To grab my ankle as I run past, trying to scream out your name,  
Through some shadowed cemetery, at some ungodly hour  
In a world that looks suspiciously like this one.

And this love is a panting hound,  
Trying to rebury its last remaining bone scrap of hope  
With two lame legs impeding;  
While this love, a one-eyed crow  
Sits taciturn in a tree, just above a tiny, dead sparrow-  
And fluffs its jet feathers, unconcernedly.

Patti Masterman

# I Loved You More

I loved you more than carnivals,  
I loved you more than knew it;  
I loved you more than cyber-sex:  
Couldn't bring myself to do it.

I loved you more than flowers,  
I loved you more than wine,  
I loved you more than chocolate  
Boxed in a valentine.

I loved you more than history;  
I loved you more than time,  
I loved you more than fantasies  
Lived once upon a rhyme.

I loved most every part of you,  
Adored each part; each day;  
So safely locked, inside my mind-  
You were so far away!

Patti Masterman

# I Miss The Farm

I miss the farm that I never had-  
Apple blossoms on the old homestead,  
With leaning barns and placid cows,  
And home-stitched quilt, on my brass bed.

I miss the meals that I never ate-  
Hand churned butter on flowered plate,  
Whole fat milk in a jelly glass;  
How slowly days would come to pass.

I miss the folks that I never knew-  
Mama, Daddy; the whole farm crew,  
Tilling fields from dawn to dusk-  
Sweetest bunch; wish that it were true.

I miss my grave on the hill above  
Rows of cornfields and two grey doves;  
Mourning early, mourning late-  
As one dream away, I embrace fate.

Patti Masterman

# I Miss You

I miss you, and I'm afraid to ask  
Where you've gone, where you've been,  
How you are, and most of all, if you still are-

I fear the answer most, that doesn't come,  
The reply that never arrives:  
Bravery was never my forte.

But I wanted to say I miss you  
And that I imagine you doing well-  
Because that's the only vision I can withstand.

I wish I were the kind could shore up another,  
Be their rock and guide, through stormy days.  
Unfortunately, I am only that one who stays quietly faithful  
In the inner heart, till the very end.

But I can't imagine there being an end to you  
Or of that vision that you are the only container of  
Ever met with, in my lifetime of knowing.

So I will only say, I wish you well, forever  
Come what may, and hope that we will meet again-  
Some other, better day.

Patti Masterman

# I Moon For You

I moon for you like a hidden still  
Of hillbillies, in the moon wind hills;  
Like a flounder caught,  
In a foundering stream,  
I follow the edge  
Of another's dream.

I pine for you like a smitten tree  
Once lightning-struck, where no one could see;  
Or a one-winged bird  
With his broken-note,  
Like a bankers loan  
No one would tote.

I wait for you like a counterfeit breeze  
Waits for an opened map, to seize;  
Or a bank robber bides  
His time outside  
The bank, till no one's  
Left inside.

Patti Masterman

# I Never Touched My Mother's Hand

I never touched my mother's hand  
When she was cold and dead-  
Yet knowing it the coldest thing  
On earth, filled me with dread.

I never looked my fathers eyes  
Where, on his deathbed lay-  
And yet, they said his smile was such  
To light the end of day.

I'll never see my cold remains;  
I will not feel the fear-  
Yet there are others, still with eyes-  
The sight of it would sear.

Patti Masterman

# I Once Knew A Man

I once knew a man could seduce women  
merely with some words he had made up  
on the spur of the moment

I saw him do it once, and he was only showing me  
what he was capable of doing- if he wanted to-  
thank god he never really used it on me.

We will give up our bodies to the right combination  
of words; but a locksmith with a thesaurus  
can speak very little and still get the same result.

I used to have a switch-blade with all the vowel  
sounds; and I could have opened any orifice at will:  
but I was too naive to believe I could have that much power.

Patti Masterman

# I Pray The Most In Blue Breaths Of Sky

Let me forget transient sadness  
Let me reinvent me  
And not be too small inside

Let me grow fat with happy  
Be tender with those  
Who grieve

Forgiving of children  
And men

And into other hearts  
My own heart weave

Let me forget what's unhappy  
A day's such a miracle born

Who knew existence would happen  
Or that it would happen so soon

Let me love while time  
Has patience, for lovers

Let me grow while Earth  
Still has room, for flowers

Open my heart  
To see others pain

And try make to a difference  
Before I have to leave again

I pray for wings, for my heart to fly  
I pray the most, in blue breaths of sky

(for my friend, Anna)

Patti Masterman

# I Pray To No One-

I pray to no one-

Though once, I confess to worshiping a rock;

It seemed far older, than any god that I had true proof of existence

I scrubbed it gently with a toothbrush, perfumed and powdered it

(well so what, if those were all my favorite things;

isn't god just supposed to be a larger, matinée version of ourselves?)

And I knew a Malaysian man

Who said he used to worship a nail protruding from the bathroom wall,

Where he would bend down and prostrate himself before it

While brushing his teeth, performing his morning absolutions;

As somehow it seemed to satisfy his requirements

Of a god, who for once perhaps

Was not afraid to humble himself, before his subjects.

Patti Masterman

# I Punish More My Words

I punish more my words the more  
Men hate my verse; not hating,  
More; they're just averse-  
But they love it so, they want to fix  
My style, and see what makes it tick  
They like it so, they'd like it changed  
The words too tame, need rearranged  
And could I explain my deepest faith  
About creation, god and grace  
And do my words within the verse  
Reflect a blessing or a curse-  
I'm cursed with words, and so I say  
I'm giving them to you today:  
Make most of them, what ever you will-  
Both lies and bitter truth to tell.

Patti Masterman

# I Put You On A Pedestal

I put you on a pedestal  
And painted you, in stars;  
A sun and moon,  
Each side, your throne  
Midst golden fields, of flowers.

Then graved your name, in stele  
A foot high, chiseled there;  
Alas, for all my troubles-  
Your thoughts are not so rare.

Patti Masterman

# I Saw Clouds Hugging Moon

I saw clouds hugging moon one night,  
A close embrace; closer still for trapped moonlight,  
Winding it's way, within freedoms sight.

I saw earth following sun one day,  
And never give up, though was far away;  
Opened it's huge heart, for one single ray.

I saw tenderness, in innocence's face,  
All the tears lurking, behind her gaze,  
Letting the light in, for all her days.

Patti Masterman

# I Saw The Painter's Eyes

I saw the painter's eyes:  
Peering out the small frame  
In still life; the sighs were inaudible  
Only I have a few of the words he left  
Scattered around, some poems from a diary;  
My book, of his days  
A book of life abandoned.

His world, the rocky shoreline  
Of dangerous currents, deep chasms  
Bordered by his ocean of solitary awareness  
Waking endlessly; praying for sleep  
His weary life sleep walks through his mind  
Thin peace mixed into grueling days  
The eye of an artist; the soul of a dreamer.

In him, you would have been blinded by beauty  
His brilliance never to be possessed by anyone;  
He springs the locks and goes  
Looking for the lost life, to paint it into existence again  
If he could find it once;  
His diamond-cache of grief shining at times, inside his black eyes..

And had he ever looked at you, it would wound you;  
Wound you, in your great simpleness-  
But he could never hurt anyone;  
He keeps his watch over shifting waves and mind storms,  
Sheathes them tightly behind his canvas  
But he turns to stone each night inside the mirror  
And another ghost haunts the pier.

Patti Masterman

# I Search The Sky

I search the sky  
For signs of rain,  
Signs of trouble,  
Signs of pain;  
I search it,  
Like a febrile brain-  
For things they say  
Won't come again.

I search the sky,  
The starry plain,  
For things the others  
Might disdain;  
And sense God there,  
Just like a stain-  
For when Light waxes,  
Darkness wanes.

Patti Masterman

# I See The Rows Going By

I see the rows going by  
They seem so far away, though mere feet:  
Going on forever; rows of green plants laid out straight  
Endlessly going by me; their greenness seemingly disconnected  
From their animate yearning, for color and texture  
Bestowed by sun, rain and season.

I see the rows going by  
And I think then, that I am another sort of plant:  
The kind that comes up anywhere; but to no obvious purpose  
Perhaps not in the best of places, or the right time or reason  
Of indeterminate color and habituation.  
And I feel more distant, than the farthest end of the row  
If it reached halfway around the world, without ever ceasing.

I see the rows going by  
And they have been there; peacefully growing, for ages now:  
Have known the oxen's plodding; the farmer's ready hoe,  
The combines turning; the truck load's careening.  
My yield is different too; it turns on a different track.  
Many years might go by, before anything is harvested;  
And it may be a flower, or it may be a weed.  
But somehow I know that I will still be there,  
Inside of whatever it finally makes of itself.

Patti Masterman

# I See Them In My Dreams Each Night

I see them in my dreams each night,  
She, with her distinctive walk,  
And he just smiles, but rarely talks.  
They disappear by morning light.

I wake up sad; they're gone again,  
I'm bankrupt at the start of day.  
It takes mere minutes to melt away;  
Their spirit selves have grown so thin.

The past can strangle with it's bony hand,  
And leave your soul in no-man's land.

I know they've gone and can't remain,  
But dreams can give you what you seek  
With a price, unique to each-  
And a tax, of waking pain.

A dreams a trick, a fevered lie  
When the thinking part's asleep,  
It gives a promise it can't keep:  
In sinking sand, night dreams must die.

The past can strangle with it's bony hand,  
And leave your soul in no-man's land.

Patti Masterman

# I See You Everywhere Now

I see you everywhere now-  
Over each hill; each page I read;  
See your half-concealed eyes  
Always there, watching me.

Now everyone turns into you-  
Those ones I've never seen;  
Who dwell in a hidden land  
But still in my vicinity.

Sometimes, it feels as though  
You are here to torture  
Me; but then, you are so kind;  
I curse my own mind's forfeiture.

You won't come out enough  
To show your true identity,  
As though, just scared enough  
To be thought of, as nonentity.

So I promise, you will never be  
Just a blank page, in a book;  
Not any book, I ever held  
By me, has been forsook.

Patti Masterman

# I See You Walking All Alone

I see you walking all alone  
Down that road, just waiting for sunset,  
Shaking your head, to silence the voices;  
You know, that we all have to make choices.

I see you facing pain and loss alone,  
And thinking that you're the only one  
Has suffered and paid, for the things that we do-  
But brother, maybe the problem's not you.

Bury the corpse, and bury the lie;  
Don't tie yourself to something lost in time,  
Find that thing that's yours, alone  
And finally you might find, you're home.

Patti Masterman

# I Steal The Ghosts From Others Words

I steal the ghosts, from others words;  
I lift the toast, things seldom heard  
A breath from one goes out, and then  
Another creature breathes it in.

The idea that was dead, in you;  
I dig it up, and brush the loose  
Debris away, and hang to dry  
To have my way, with words gone by.

Patti Masterman

# I Still See The Little Girl In You

I still see the little girl in you,  
The one I used to know so well.

Though sometimes angry, when she lost a game;  
Or webe gone, should the painting not work out,  
Viewing life through her eyes was a neverending miracle  
Everything new and fresh, unjaded by time's careless ways.

I found I could reach down deep inside myself,  
For the answers she needed; about life, about existing;  
Answers I would never have suspected  
I could be the container for.

I still feel her here, sometimes,  
Or know what she would be thinking about;  
Or noticing most of all, in the world around us,  
Even feel that small hand again in mine, occasionally  
And catch the echo of that excited chattering.

My world changed unexpectedly  
After she came, for I realized finally  
That I had been mistaking true happiness  
For so many other things, that it was not.

Patti Masterman

# I Survived

I survived the crazy hospital scene,  
The time spent sobbing on nurses shoulders;  
Feeling sorry for them, always having the distraught  
Family members using them as surrogate handkerchiefs.  
And I came back into my own life again,  
Which I know you would have approved of;  
And I tried to sweep up all the little scattered crumbs,  
From that sunken city,  
And re-form it into something, maybe  
A semblance of what was now missing?  
I kept trying so hard, to pile up  
The tiny fragments just right; but I had to give it up finally-  
Crumbs just won't stack.  
Then I realized that I have been inside the  
Steel reinforced safehouse you built around me  
With your love, for so many years of my life, and  
That it will never tumble down.  
And here I have been living in the Taj Mahal all this time,  
Rich in everything that matters;  
But only noticing the little piles of crumbs  
Here and there, in the doorways. Forgive me for that.  
I guess I just forgot to keep looking up.

Patti Masterman

# I Think I Remember How To Die

I think I remember how to die:  
Hold onto that breath, just a few beats longer,  
Relax the palms; let the tensions leave  
Now find that string of thought behind  
Many years before, when you left that watery space  
And first opened up your mouth to breathe.

Let the chest sink, hollowed out,  
Let your jaw hang; don't force breaths  
Peace and lack of rhythm are death's calling cards;  
Let motions cease, and the eyes roll up:  
Somewhere in the corner of the ceiling, there's a sign  
The soul needs to go home; because it's divine.

It's on borrowed helpmate status here;  
Lent to us, to drive us through our days,  
Take us places, with a definite location;  
The orchestrator and originator of motion:  
It never stops; but when it's gone  
The body stays still, while it moves on.

Patti Masterman

# I Think I'M Lost Again

People like tempestuous sports and lukewarm poetry-  
Boring verses in mothers day cards,  
But stadiums of yelling hordes.

They like bland food but wild sex  
Have docile pets but crazy ex's

Bigger cars around smaller bodies  
Bible verses and simple hexes

No arithmetic, if you please  
Hot coffee but iced teas

Congregational church on Sundays  
Suit and business skirt on Mondays

Let me out of here, there's been some mistake  
At the universal transit- this life seems fake.

Patti Masterman

# I Think It Is Not Hard To Die

I think it is not hard to die,  
With all the memories passing by  
And all the loved ones gone before,  
Through that often-opened door.

I think it is not hard to close  
The eyes, and move more in the soul,  
And cease to breathe, and know at last  
That all the pain and worry's past.

I think it will be hard to miss  
The friends embrace, and that dear kiss;  
Our world of loving moments fled-  
And will we know then we are dead?

Patti Masterman

# I Think Of That

I think of that which I would classify as extreme beauty  
As merely the dropping off point, beyond which  
I can't consciously absorb or bear anymore  
Of a certain slant of the light, that's coming through  
The curtain; of a pervasive, restless odor  
That's straining toward me, in the hothouse,  
Or that look in your eyes;  
So blue, and so distant  
As though caught up in thoughts of your own mortality;  
Dying deliberately, as you do,  
A little bit more each day, inching closer to it  
And why do I think that howling outside  
Is my hearts scalded future,  
Finding you dead, in that thin edge of light  
Creeping through the conspiracy of curtains; dead  
In the hothouse's mist that tumbles down  
From all those staring spigots,  
The fog of scent rising over your blue eyes  
Like a fractured wave.

Patti Masterman

# I Think We Were Never Strangers

I think we were never strangers-  
I think we were always friends;  
Standing shyly across the room  
Just waiting- to begin/

I think I dropped a curtsy  
I think you kissed my hand-  
And then we started in to dance  
Accompanied by the band/

Men and women dancing  
Is far older than the wheel;  
Older than the glowing fire  
Or the warmth that embers feel/

And we will go on dancing  
Till they turn out the lights-  
And we'll just go on whirling, whirling  
Until the stars say goodnight/

I think we were never strangers;  
For we met in each others dreams,  
And reality stepped aside for once  
In the playing firelight's gleam/

Patti Masterman

# I Thought I Heard You Call Me

I thought I heard you call me  
From deep within a dream  
The echo stayed behind you  
And led my steps astray

I looked but could not find you  
No matter far or near  
So I'm going back to sleep now  
Perhaps I'll see you there

Our words are colored halos  
Which drift around our days  
And even truth's rare sighted bird  
Seldom alights to stay.

Patti Masterman

# I Thought You Had Left Me Forever

I thought you had left me forever  
But lately I'm not so sure  
I check the mirror only to find there  
Your own coy expression: demure

I open my mouth with amazement  
Because it's very loud and clear:  
When I laugh, out comes your laugh  
With the same little twinkling tear

My attitudes are so like yours  
My mannerisms just the same  
I'd miss you more if you weren't everywhere-  
I guess it's our own little game

So I'll tell you all that's happening  
And you loan me your mutable face  
I'll shine like the star that you always were  
And the sadness will leave in disgrace.

for my mother's birthday Aug 12 1924

Patti Masterman

# I Thought You Were A Man

I thought you were a man  
Breathing such heavy air; as if a man;  
Drinking heavy water, like men do

As if a man could- just by shifting,  
Take up even more space,  
Move things around, with his body's forcefulness, ,  
His spirit's graceful fortitude;  
As all that, I imagined of you, and more:

Even more things, that encompass a man,  
But are not obvious to eye or ear,  
Like resilience of touch, of a man;  
Hair and sinew, strong bones under thicker flesh  
Receding hairline, fumbling gentleness,  
Powerful patience.

Saying less than he thinks,  
Displaying less than he says,  
Speaking volumes with action-  
Or merely lack of action.

His judgments, perilous to challenge,  
His verdicts, powerless to change,  
His eye deliciously unblinking,  
To draw down upon one.

And there were even more things,  
In my imaginings;  
For you grew tall and wide;  
Irresistibly implacable,  
Wide rollings of immutable courage.

Tall, like gleaming metal skyscrapers,  
Unconquerable like stardust ever falling,  
Steep smokestacks;  
The fire and brimstone only faintly visible,  
Through thin openings releasing belches, sparks  
From subterranean alleys and byways.

A man, I thought; marvelous thing;  
And just as I began to study you,  
In earnest, record your rare, seismic vibrations  
For posterity-

You sent that tiny scrawled note,  
In half-sized mouse letters-  
And you began to recede quickly then,  
Much more than a crack, or hairline

Your concentric waves withdrawing from around me,  
Spiralling smaller and smaller,  
Till they were tiny and remote,  
In the sighing distance, of your newfound remorse

Till the earth had ceased to quake  
Under your step;  
Till I could imagine then  
Scooping you up, all cupped  
Into the palm of one quivering hand-

But you were only a little boy, after all!  
She had shrank you down to almost-nothingness  
Under her constant watchful gaze,  
Reduced the whole of you;  
That wonderful, mysterious, precious  
Somethingness, incredulity-of-being,  
Of the all-gazing splendid,  
Wonderment of a man

Into something so minute, it seemed  
Almost a rumor now;  
Refuted by sweating, over-dressed shouters  
On podiums, trying to beat their sideways truths,  
Into our fearful, rat-scurrying brains-

Until you were a faint, pale dot,  
On the unbroken line of horizon-  
And then you simply disappeared,  
Without any sound  
Like a bubble popping

Somewhere too far away  
To ever affect anything  
That dear to me, again.

Patti Masterman

# I Used To Fall In Love

You're just a bobble-headed girl  
Living in a zero-gravity world  
But someday I hope  
We can get you a real brain

I used to fall in love  
with inanimate things  
but it was so boring  
as they didn't have brains

You're just a pet store chew toy  
Bought for a dog by his boy  
But someday I hope  
We can get you a real brain

I used to fall in love  
with inanimate things  
but it was so boring  
as they didn't have brains

You're just an alcoholic's fugue  
Who told you you're royalty-  
But someday I hope  
We can get you a real brain

I used to fall in love  
with inanimate things  
but it was so boring  
as they didn't have brains

Patti Masterman

# I Used To Like A Drink Of Drink

I used to like a drink of drink;  
Of fermented grain, and hops, I think  
It looked like beer; but tasted great  
But my hand was killed by fate:  
One day, my beverage blew me up  
So flatulent; I thought I'd pop:  
Allergic to brew; so sad, so true-  
Candida Albicans, I hate you!

Patti Masterman

# I Used To Read Every Night

I used to read every night  
My thin book, of your heart's own verse:  
Pages of threadbare longing  
For your sentences recompense-  
Words now which mirror,  
Unreconstituted prose  
That from impotency, arose  
Toward my heart, like a lettered blight  
Of languages silenced, by words  
Our day became more like a night  
Though once, I had even transpired  
To imagine empires conquered;  
Armageddons deftly averred  
But now in consternation, I find  
I'm to light my own funeral pyre;  
Let my tears become my dirge  
Of sorry tales that could deafen  
Blind men, in a stumbling rage  
I'll drag my own chains back to hell,  
Since your mercy's worse than your hate  
And, as there's no music heard there,  
I shall welcome my toneless fate;  
Music gave too much hope  
For hope, without any dreams  
The present song annihilates.

Patti Masterman

# I Wake Up Greedy To Live

And I wake up, greedy to live:  
The sun climbs higher, in morning's sky,  
While Buddha sits, in his gold-paint statue,  
And household saints hide in early shadow,  
And woodpeckers do old style tap-shoe.

Coffee smells are rampant now,  
The squawk box is rife, with trivial banter;  
A nice background sound to go on living to  
And the air foams up, at window and door-  
The unspoken things are breaking through

A new day's come now, bearing gifts  
Unknown, they're already on their way;  
Life grows exacting and random, the same,  
And again I awaken, greedy to live  
And exult in the freedom, to play this game..

Patti Masterman

# I Want To Be Your Ink Blot

I want to be your ink blot  
So I can read your mind;  
I'll be in every smudged thought  
Behind your window blinds.

I want to live in your brain,  
I hear that things are wired-  
Though I am just the ink stain,  
By your connections sired.

I'll get to know your neurons  
And your synaptic lanes,  
And travel all your axons;  
At home, in your main-frame.

I won't use too much current,  
You'll barely know I'm there,  
Your memories I'll be learning,  
There just below your hair.

Don't worry I'll invade you,  
Your sovereign territory-  
Another being made you  
For his own living toy.

Patti Masterman

# I Want To Give Away My Dreams

I want to give away all my dreams, anoint them  
To some special connoisseur, treasured recipient-  
Who would hold them perfectly unsullied, untouched-  
Throughout the seething, unsettled cauldrons of time's reign.

But there is no such archival master to be found,  
For my dreams are my own, made only for me,  
They do not need outside validation: easy to forget  
That I'm victorious simply that I live, to dream..

Patti Masterman

# I Wanted Forever With You

I wanted forever with you,  
Though it became a short span-  
'Forever' is not legitimate  
Within the histories of man.

But if an hour meant a century,  
And each day, a millennium-  
We'd take the whole backbone of time,  
And call it our minimum.

Patti Masterman

# I Wanted To Come For A Visit

I wanted to come for a visit, one day  
But you don't live where you said you did,  
And you never act, like you seem to think;  
You don't do the things you talk about doing.

I'm afraid if I did manage to find you,  
I'd find something strange; unwieldy,  
Saddled with the weight of many ideals, but not gravity.  
An appearance of physical things, but not reality.

Children like to indulge in make believe  
But at the end of the day, adults gently remind  
That it's time to put the playthings away-  
You'd better start praying

For something real, to replace the futile imaginings  
For something lasting, to replace the nonsubstantive.  
For one day soon we become old, and the cemetery lays claim  
To all the things we loved,  
And our ideals won't be enough then to warm us, ever again.

Patti Masterman

# I Was Always Beaten

I was always already beaten  
Before they'd dropped the flag  
Blown the whistle  
Fired off the starter pistol  
Popped the champagne cork  
Rang the bell  
Flashed the cape at the bull.

I was always already late  
When I first poked out  
Head, from the womb  
Had my first spanking  
Had my first wail  
Took my first gasp:  
They said I couldn't go back.

I was already running behind  
For my wedding  
For other weddings  
For baby showers  
For funerals  
For my own funeral-  
They'll just have to start without me.

Patti Masterman

# I Was Always Dragged Kicking And Screaming

Stiff and unyielding,  
I was the kind of child  
That needed training wheels  
On a tricycle.  
Growing older, they cut  
The guywires, before I was  
Prepared to carry my weight-  
Then I became a  
Windmill, with blades that  
Sliced feebly into the air, at each  
Slight shift of the breeze.  
Now I am a sailboat,  
But lacking the energy  
To raise up a sail-  
Like the midst of a great Sargasso  
Or amongst a rock-strewn harbor,  
I float just out of reach:  
But I rock gently  
At each rise and fall,  
Each tremble of wave-  
Better to bloom later,  
Than be found rudderless  
Adrift on a dead sea.

Patti Masterman

# I Was Gagging On Poetry

was gagging on poetry  
And nothing could help:

I was gagging on poetry  
So they let me lay my head  
On Emily's desk  
And her inkwell spilled.

I was gagging on poetry  
And they covered me up  
With Whitman's army blanket  
On which I promptly threw up.

I was gagging on poetry  
And the Poet Laureate  
Sent me a get well bouquet  
Of forget me knots.

I was gagging on poetry  
And all my poems  
Kept getting rejected  
For Selective Service.

I was gagging on poetry  
And they performed  
The Heimlich maneuver

And up came  
Twelve autobiographical  
Sketches of poets

Thirteen anthologies

Three missing manuscripts

Two thesaurus books

One rhyming dictionary

And my good luck eraser.

Patti Masterman

# I Was Kidnapped By A Smell

I was kidnapped by a smell;  
My brain replied with naught, pray-tell:  
Where did I smell this once before?  
While others round went; that again..  
My brain was opening up a door  
My brain was taking me back, to when;  
And while they worked, as wont their way  
I went to live a different day.

Patti Masterman

# I Was Never Faithful

I was never faithful-  
Well not more than an hour;  
The time to drive to church, and back,  
To wed a faithful flower.

I was never faithful-  
When temptation lived so close;  
And I was one who always went  
To change to different clothes.

I was never faithful-  
When the sun was in my eyes;  
Or when the rains came thick and fast-  
And living life brought sighs.

I was never faithful  
In leap years, or at dawn-  
Or dusk; or full moons languishing  
Behind a setting sun.

I was never faithful-  
I was not made that way;  
But though my heart went wandering,  
My flesh, it never strayed.

Patti Masterman

# I Watch The River Of Thoughts Passing By

I watch the river of thoughts passing by,  
For the soul always restlessly searches  
For one more breath of that fleeting beauty  
While air can still sustain this expiring body  
Searching too, for that rare being  
Who can place words so I'll recognize  
Things in the stillness of my own river  
As it wanders ocean to ocean, shore to shore.  
In the never-sleeping deepness of the bottom  
Artifacts move in a slowed motion  
In deepest imponderable being  
And take much longer to arrive;  
Though sometimes, a Hallelujah!  
Breaks the surface, and a piece of truth  
That you always knew was missing  
Returns to you once more.

Patti Masterman

# I Weigh Out The Hanging Silence

I weigh out the hanging silence:  
An anchor suspended above an abyss  
In abeyance, I look for any light's kiss-  
I never wanted to do it like this,  
Along deserted beaches and paths  
Trailing the breakwater's mist.

Under the dark ceiling'd cliff;  
No stanchion waits; no lea, no skiff  
To no sail do I lift my arms,  
To coast along the wave's bony rift:  
Infinity's the only direction you fall,  
Once you've been cast adrift.

You were main mooring,  
My steadfast buoy  
But I had to cut loose all your carefree joy  
You bounced around; a bobbing toy  
In the baleful eye of the hurricane,  
An innocent: you could never be coy.

I followed it's burning eye like a lamp;  
It couldn't harm me, the rain and damp  
But in my soul was placed it's stamp:  
When crashing waves took out the ramp,  
No one noticed the bloodied water-  
Or the life I too soon would recant.

Now I sail around the edge of it's velocity  
A scuttled wreck, in an unsettled sea  
Hear the far bells toil, to decree  
There'll be no survivors, this calamity-  
Don't be there when I come round again:  
Don't want you to founder for eternity.

Patti Masterman

# I Will Be Responsible For No Pain Other Than My Own

They don't want to hear it  
These minutes of a life; this synopsis  
That could only make sense to you  
Even if it doesn't.  
It's your baby, your Alcatraz, your Auschwitz;  
Don't expect any sympathy  
And then they won't bare their own scars  
Of things you haven't even dreamed of.

Dig a hole and bury that pain in secret,  
Like a cat buries its dung,  
In the dead of night.  
Paste on a fake, plastic smile  
In a bright color, early next morning.  
Life is shallow, because we are selfish  
In our weakness-  
How about pink?

Patti Masterman

# I Will Feel Nothing When You Die

I will feel nothing at all when you die,  
Though the leaves will swirl in early Autumn's breath,  
Failing to completely cover other now defunct greenery,  
It is just nature's way; after all-  
And so, I will feel nothing.

I will weep no tears after you are gone;  
You didn't want my tears when you were alive,  
And dead, would never know that they were for you.  
My tears running down your own face, you would never feel-  
There is nothing left to feel, for you.

We lived in the world at the same time,  
Breathed and trembled and sighed, upon the same galaxy's arms.  
Dreamed and fidgeted and awoke each day, to something brand new.  
But I had nothing you wanted, and you had nothing to give-  
And what I will feel is simply more nothing; nothing when you are dead.

Patti Masterman

# I Will Model My Death Mask For You

I will model my death mask for you;  
And you can kiss my then cold lips,  
Since warmly alive wasn't what you ever craved from me.  
And even if I never get kissed by you,  
Someone else much larger  
Will be embracing me by then;  
So don't be surprised  
If in time, I forget that you ever existed, too.

Patti Masterman

# I Will Remember

With every century that's over-thrown  
Down goes some other beloved of my own-  
Another heart beating, just the same as mine;  
Another most like me, among all human kind  
Soul mates unnumbered, in the cartloads of dead  
Unloved by France, and plucked from their beds;  
Forgotten graves marked with scarcely a tree  
Their sufferings long silent: at least they are free  
Their ashes deserted in far away ruins  
Black smoke-stacks and armies, that burnt them too soon  
In history books, on tombstones, we meet every day  
Those loved ones and dear ones, all whisked away  
I would have loved all of you, barring time and space  
In dreams I would save you, by taking your place  
The world left behind is now dried of your tears  
With but few, meager scraps of your too-short years  
Sweet relics, I'll clasp them close to my breast  
And cherish your memory, you whom I loved best.

Patti Masterman

# I Wish That You Could Watch Me

I wish that you could watch me  
Sacrifice everything for you;  
Step up, to that guillotine blade  
My bearing proud; head up, eyes brave  
And unashamed, to take your place  
Exchange my beating heart, for yours  
Prove your existence more worthy  
By giving up my own for it

I could die happily then, with your grateful  
Silent tears, yearning to thank  
To shake my hand; just one kiss,  
My forlorn cheek, just before-  
Instead of indifference and dispassion  
You know, now that I think, I might choose  
To save myself instead; if we're all just in it  
For our own edification only

I'll save my blood for someone  
Who's not too damaged, to love back;  
Even hopelessly and foolishly,  
Wildly and vicariously:  
Why spill blood carelessly;  
Why choose disinterested love,  
Why should disdain always succeed  
Where tenderness has already died from neglect?

Patti Masterman

# I'D Already Forgotten Your Name

I'd already forgotten your name  
But it wasn't like I planned it,  
And after a moment, it came back-  
Like a vague memory, of a long  
Uncomfortable fever,  
Being out of your head for a few days,  
Or a lingering cough of several weeks.

It will always be there buried,  
My sins never really forgiven,  
My confusion unanswered;  
The viral storm you took me over with  
Just a bad dream, one of many nightmares.

Living well doesn't erase it,  
And self respect doesn't heal it-  
Even if I still had any of that left.

You are only the thorn I pricked myself with  
Before the hundred-years sleep  
Of numberless, uneasy dreams.

Patti Masterman

# I'D Rather Have His Disdain

I'd rather have his disdain  
Than somebody's worship;  
Would rather see him smirk  
Than anybody smile.  
Any word from him, no doubt must be heaven-sent;  
Any other's syllables; more needless guile.  
I'd rather be on his bad list;  
The dear lines, work on his forehead,  
Just to take my punishment, as he sees fit:  
I'd crawl through miles of jagged glass  
Just to look on his face again,  
And gladly be thought lacking class;  
For him, would commit any sin.  
But I'll never say the word that  
Could cause his soul's upheaval,  
And I'll never force a choice  
Upon his parceled days:  
I'll make sure all the pain's mine,  
And guard his life like an angel,  
And then if I am successful:  
My life will become his sign.

Patti Masterman

# Idiomatic Psychopathic

Parenthetically, he became a parent  
While homeopathically, was almost a man-  
He was farther away, than a father should be;  
But it was grand, how he could grandstand.

She reached her maximum, in a maximum  
Security cell built for one;  
She was carrying, but no longer caring  
For the new life, just begun.

Patti Masterman

# If A Bird Just Can'T Sing The Blues

if a bird just can't sing the Blues  
what can you do?  
buy him some lessons  
with a mezzo-soprano,  
or lower his beak  
to an alto contralto?  
take him to doctors;  
buy him a shrink  
but don't give him time  
to just sit and think?  
buy him a whore,  
and a liter of Beam-  
then tell him that things  
are not what they seem;  
give him good food  
and lots of attention;  
then rent him out  
to the woodpecker's convention.

(and if all else fail,  
he can guard your corn  
and play his nostrils  
like an old French horn)

Patti Masterman

## If A Child's Bright Eyes

If a child's bright eyes were ever hurt by me,  
On purpose or accidentally;  
I should think it the worst pain a being could stand,  
And fear revocation, even as man.  
For he who could wound such a trusting face  
Should not find his shelter any place,  
And one who's heart not cleave in two  
At any cruelties that he should do  
To the innocent heart housed in a babe,  
Could do anything; no conscience's slave.  
If any on earth were worthy of fear,  
It would be the one that sheds no tear,  
So for broken child; as for wounded bird,  
Please don't let their least plea go unheard.

Patti Masterman

## If A Ghost Could Talk

At night do you feel me there  
Watching you sleep, like ragged death  
At war with your blankets; fogging breath  
Sometimes I talk to you then  
But you give no sign of hearing  
Or of sensing me so near you  
I'm the dark stranger in the night  
Who comes to you in pain  
Wanting to see you again  
I linger in the doorway, just a ghost  
To count as all your breaths go by  
And to each one, add my sigh  
You stirred then, as if you had felt  
My presence there beside your bed  
I longed to touch your forehead  
The fence between us isn't real  
But it's enough to hold me here:  
You're asleep, and me in fear  
Some day you know, that I must go  
And leave you to your deeper dreams  
I hope you find those silver streams  
And find your special place in life  
I'd give you mine, if it were mine  
To give love, but I'm out of time.

(written to Dead Can Dance - Planet of Agony)

Patti Masterman

## If A House Came With A Woman

If a house came with a woman,  
We wouldn't want to buy;  
We wouldn't want her, idle-  
And always sitting by.

But if a house came with a fellow,  
We'd put that guy to work;  
To fix what he was able-  
And consider him a perk.

Patti Masterman

# If At First I Had Seen You

If at first I had seen you as a still-life  
Of passing interest, in one of those restaurants  
With heightened pretensions of the eclectic: culture in a can  
You would have remained void of deepness, to me:  
A face half-hidden behind a menu, buzzing neon lights behind your head  
Faintly visible enigmatic eyes, above the hors-d'oeuvres list  
Some inaudible small talk with another person,  
A casual tabloid easily forgotten.

If I had noticed you while you were working  
You would have seemed another skilled contractor or employee;  
The answer key to the solution I was seeking, though I might have paused  
Long enough to suppose you wise, well educated: noble  
In the struggle, perhaps wondered if you were always this serious  
Even if not on someone's time-clock or your own pay roll  
Maybe I would have thought you had a quizzical expression, or questioned  
If I had imagined that wariness which seemed to hide behind an easy smile.

Instead, you've drawn me closer in, only toward you-  
Pulled me in with no touch, not a glance, nor hushed voice  
With only your words, your wit and keen intuition, against which  
I've no sort of defense, no sophisticated angle of attack  
And words can promise all, or nothing; or simply imply a supposed future  
Towards which we might have been running backwards  
All this time, while caught up in thinking that eventually  
We would be arriving at some place completely different.

Patti Masterman

# If Beauty Had Never Existed

She lies quiet, beneath the ground  
All the pain and passion shelved,  
Her beauty mute, muted by earth,  
And her child mute in the grave, besides;  
Silent now, no gasps or crying-  
Though nothing's fainter, than where no sound reaches.

Her brow uncreases for the centuries now,  
Testament to a peace, so hallowed..

Earth's placid beauties, wrought with death  
Enfold the cold arms, of richer dirt,  
A small place to hold what once was huge,  
A plot of ground, our heart to sieve:  
Such beauty wasted on a tomb;  
Such innocence, from emptied womb.

Pure loveliness mixed with stunted time- is it a crime  
That beauty once lived, only to die?  
For what if beauty had never been-  
Except for its death, stillborn within..

(in memory of Tricia, who was buried today,  
just three short weeks after her baby Silas was interred)

Patti Masterman

# If Birthdays Didn'T Make You Older

If alleys were blind,  
If you could drive  
me anywhere  
near insanity's brink;  
Or if time could march,  
and the moon whisper  
it's forgotten lines  
in blue octopus ink.

If scarce winds could dance,  
where soft rains kiss,  
or the brave stars wink.  
If my neurons were,  
in that thinking circus  
of blown-fuse circuits,  
the weakest link.

If man is a parasite  
sucks blood from earth,  
grieves igneous oceans  
that once gave birth;

If venial sin is always the lesser,  
and time leaves us dead in the dust,  
I'm bound to make you my  
secret confessor,  
for time never sleeps  
in your rust.

Patti Masterman

# If Crows Should Sing Upon Your Grave

If crows should sing upon your grave,  
I'll throw them something bright;  
Or if sparrows dared to lift their voice,  
I'd toss them something light.  
If doves should come, to spill some woe,  
I'd pitch down grains of rice;  
But if vultures came, in grave salute-  
Why, I'd think it was just right.

Patti Masterman

# If I Can Find The Way

She loved little children  
But could never have any of her own-  
I picture her now in gardens of cherubs  
Tenderly twining her with silken ribbons;  
Holding her hand, leading her down  
To soft streams leading, to pastel towns.

He loved nature, and gardens, and dogs-  
I imagine him discovering mountainous regions,  
Like the one where he used to labor;  
Deer and elk and wild turkeys galore,  
With dogs at his heels and dogs at the fore  
Leading wherever he might think, to go.

I used to think it sad that they  
Didn't repose under grass and trees;  
With beautiful leaves trailing around them,  
With Winter behind and Summer before them.  
But I think they are happy in worlds of mind  
Where everyone is always kind.

When god is finished with my portrait here,  
And deems it the time to stop, and clear  
His tidy work tables, for a while-  
I'll try to visit the fields where they  
Repose- if I can find the way.

Patti Masterman

# If I Should Die

You're far away;  
Too far to say  
'I miss you more'  
Each endless day;  
But there's one thing  
That makes me sing:  
Someday you're mine,  
I've found a way.

When I am dead,  
When I am toast,  
You can bet  
I'll be your ghost;  
Haunt your bed,  
In your head;  
In your dreams,  
I'll love you most.

I'll be your hack  
If you're attacked;  
I'll be your eyes,  
The ones in back;  
I'll catch your foot,  
If you should fall-  
An angel's care,  
You'll never lack.

Patti Masterman

## If I Were A Moon

If I were a moon, I'd chase your sun,  
Or if a butterfly, you'd be the one  
Flower, that I could not resist;  
Or if a valley, your green I would kiss,  
And if a cloud, when the day is done,  
The spark of lightning, the storm's begun.

If you were death, I'd be the tomb,  
If you were birth, I'd be the womb,  
And if you were higher to reach than the sky,  
I'd hitchhike the meteors, whistling by-  
For love is the field that holds the whole world,  
As patiently, patiently time is unfurled.

Patti Masterman

# If I Were A Princess And You Were A Knight

Come rescue me from the castle  
I'm chained to the highest spire;  
A dragon guards the trestle;  
Cruel vines crawl up the brier.

There's three things that you need,  
To spring me from the tower:  
First you'll need to bleed,  
To make the cruel vine flower.

Then you'll need a magic draught,  
To make the dragon snore-  
And as soon as he wakes not,  
Open the drawbridge door.

And then, of course, a single kiss:  
To break the enchantment's spell,  
Then, wrapped so tightly in your arms;  
Thus happily ends my tale.

Patti Masterman

# If Love Must Maim Me

if love must maim me  
i'll wear his bandage proudly:  
a subway rider with only one foot left,  
and regale the other riders with tales of my trauma  
the endless tortures of my suffering, my lack of compensation  
how dangerous we didn't know riding the rails could be  
how one seemingly normal day, my foot suddenly betrayed  
collapsed me under that thundering arrival  
and everyone screamed to see my arm still sticking out  
from beneath the bright eyed dragon, that was trying to devour me

how my lover felt a chill go up her spine  
at that exact moment, in a far-away place  
and how she knew something must have gone very wrong  
and how later, her family could no longer stomach the idea  
of her being married to an invalid, for all her days-  
i won't include the irrelevant details  
that she had weeks before pursued a man much older,  
with endlessly fat wallets  
and that i had become just a passing play thing  
till she figured out what she wanted to be  
when she grew up

i won't mention that my maiming was because of being drunk,  
and my bullying rewarded, with a shove  
that landed me under the centipede feet of the car;  
no- it's obvious that people must have a hero;  
and in this way, i'll always see the love, shining wetly  
on the cheeks of the young girls;  
and on the best days, one of them will accompany me home  
supporting me on one slender arm  
talking of weather, and the ever-present crowds of shoppers;  
the sudden unexpected cruelties life sometimes deals us,  
and in her own way, she'll try to reassure me  
that i'll always have everything that a tragically wounded man  
could ever need, in his unfortunate life.

Patti Masterman

# If My Soul

If my soul were the whitest rose,  
It could never be white enough;  
If my heart were an amber stone,  
It couldn't hold in its amber cup

Enough days and ways to tell you  
All the things that you mean to me-  
But I try to tell you with my kiss,  
And the way that my body quakes..

Patti Masterman

# If My Words Were Stones

If my words were stones,  
They might last forever,  
If my thoughts were gold,  
I'd be a millionaire.

If the stars we strained  
To reach, high above us  
Were the dreams we own-  
We'd conquer the air.

Patti Masterman

## If Old Church Ladies

If old church ladies were given Charge over the universe  
I can see a few problems that would develop  
Almost immediately; envision myriad plastic tubs  
Filled up with meteors and asteroids,  
To prevent any danger to any possibly living creatures  
On the manifold worlds included in this cosmos.  
And Supernovas not allowed to explode,  
Filed safely under 'S', until such time and place  
As a safe implosion could be accomplished  
Without risk to nearby planets or neutron stars.  
Black holes orbiting suns would be reprimanded  
For their greedy lack of mealtime manners,  
And planets possessing multiple suns  
Should have to apportion evenly, the hours of dusk and dawn-  
Even if it entailed changing the approximate distance  
Of the suns in question, from the neighborhood planets.  
In the end, I think it would become quite clear  
Leaving it to chance was after all, the best solution.

Patti Masterman

# If Poetry And Music Died

I know I would not want to live  
If poetry and music died,  
Though now I feel it's safe to say  
That words in music will abide.

If Sappho still is selling books  
From her damp tomb, these many years  
There still is hope for lesser men;  
Their words will safeguard love and tears.

Someday our books will turn to ash  
As steamy landscapes scorch their ink;  
But still the kernel will not die  
So long as thinking creatures think.

Patti Masterman

## If Some Electric Joy

if some electric joy could paint us  
here in the vivid shards of wasted glass,  
or create a beauty that's never been drunk  
we'd question our surreal imaginations,  
drugged by passion's symbolic chisel;  
the blue aesthetic of an angel's dust,  
of abstract life more sensed than performed;  
the psychedelic absurdities in bolder strokes:  
I'd sing your nude genius sculpted through every world.

Patti Masterman

# If Someday

If someday on a stone you read  
My name, by a dying flower  
Please find one memory to cherish  
Some hope, for a dreadful hour.

Wreathed in an ivy circlet  
With the wisp of a silky ribbon  
We'll make of the bare bones of love  
A feast, whether taken or given.

Patti Masterman

# If Souls Were God's Torches

A prayer is just a cry of becoming human  
A cry is just a scream  
Of a frightening belief.  
And how do we remember how to speak in tongues,  
And to flow through moving tunnels  
While molding the body to fit something else-  
A pattern not yet seen?

Being silent doesn't stop  
Others from knowing your unquiet thoughts;  
We are more alike  
Than we will ever be different.  
Just save the last breath for god,  
Who pardons all your conscious confusion.

That last, most brilliant light you'll never see  
Is only a brain being consumed  
By the entrophy of existence.

The stars are well-lit cemeteries  
Of illumined souls, that went forgotten once  
In the unevenness between the boundaries  
Of time, space and heaven.

Patti Masterman

## If Time Were A Star

If time were a star, lived only in your eyes  
I'd feign uncertainty, before your bright surprise;  
And if nights were gifts, nobody could return,  
I'd pray to wake, upon your star that burn..

Patti Masterman

## If Two Moons

If two moons were in the window  
Which moon would we choose?  
One moon to woo a lover?  
Another moon to loose  
Upon the scattered star charts;  
Coin toss, just let it float?  
In the bigger cosmos  
A moon is just a mote.

If two earths were circling  
Around a single sun,  
Which earth would be worth keeping,  
Which one would be for fun?  
One earth to do as we pleased;  
Go nukes or burn it up,  
Like having different bodies  
And treat one like a truck?

And having used up one  
Could we still stop then,  
And save the one we're saving  
And count it as a win?  
Or would our runaway train  
Demand a sacrifice;  
So used to having our way,  
Forget how to be wise?

We still have only one earth  
But act as if there's two;  
If we had to find another,  
I'm afraid there's far too few.  
We're here as a selection  
Of life that grew right here;  
The truth is there's no other  
As fitting, or as near..

Patti Masterman

# If You Die, I Won'T Survive The Night

If you die, I won't survive the night;  
The days, I'll not contrive  
If you take away your light.

If you leave, I have no need to stay  
For then there'll be no heed  
Of the lengthened, longing days.

I won't for the departed ghost  
Play the broken-hearted one;  
Though was for you, I played the most.

(written to 10 minute relax 2 Forgive Me  
Alpha Brainwave Frequencies Music by Paul Collier)

Patti Masterman

# If You Ever Existed At All

I still think if I looked long and hard enough,  
I could find your eyes, at the end of a telescope lens;  
Disguised as twin suns in a nebula of a galaxy  
Just one ectoplasmic storm away.

I suspect it is your voice I hear murmuring  
Behind the bluejays of a morning;  
Or the eery whistling around some buildings in winter-  
Was it your hands that I felt, buffeting my hair?

I feel you've been everywhere, on this old world  
Just five minutes before I arrived on the scene-  
Though whether it might have been five hundred years  
Or five millenia, it's difficult to discern.

Your touch cannot be eradicated  
By the stony face of unexpurgated time;  
By the unexpected turn, of momentary illness,  
Or a mortuary's fiery furnace mouth,

Though it caress your bones, with bright fingers of flame;  
For you must have been present  
In the very first seconds  
If you ever existed at all.

Patti Masterman

# If You Said I Could Die In Your Arms

If you said I could die in your arms  
I would run much farther into you  
Than anyone has ever dared before,  
Or once allowed my presence, in that other world  
Where your greater flowering of thought  
Tends its own colorful facsimiles  
On illuminated canvas  
Stringing it's jewel-lamps of unsung thoughts  
Along the clean white papyrus leaves  
Just let me be that seeping wetness of ink;  
That powdery tint, flowing out  
For the spreading love, of your humble soul  
You're that rare breath of beauty  
That's slowly been revealing itself  
Under timid, tender fires;  
The shy moons muted exhalation, at the end of night  
As she gently folds her starry wings  
To stow them away under the altar  
Of the suns molten, impenetrable core.

Patti Masterman

# If You Swallowed

If you swallowed mainstream religion  
Then, you are a trout-  
Not a salmon, they swim free;  
Swim upstream, from somewhere  
They can't remember  
And going, who knows where  
They go in freedom; peace  
And they return home again, to mate  
But there are no other salmon there ranting at them  
Shouting them down from from the riverbanks  
That they're damned,  
And that they were damned from the first moment  
Of conception, in their mother's watery egg sac;  
Or that they will be better, finer salmon  
Than their doomed, atheistic neighbors  
If they will tithe and sacrifice  
Their first born, with rituals performed  
In approximation of ancient blood sacrifice  
Beneath the clear water, they do not fear  
Nature and sex, as abhorrent and evil.

If you swallowed mainstream religion  
You have the mark of the beast within you now;  
And only by baptizing yourself  
In the unmuddied currents of your own soul  
And refusing ownership by anyone or anything else  
Can you reclaim your honest, unsullied birthright;  
Be the man you were meant to be,  
Before you were taught the fear  
Of everything that is beautiful, and natural, and right  
Only man can take a pristine world and make it unpalatable  
And then blame the whole world for his own astigmatism.

Patti Masterman

# If You Were A Gentle Lover

If you were a gentle lover,  
The world will be gentle with you;  
But if blows, harsh words  
Your couplings marred-  
Then you will be beaten, too.

If you had a kindly heart,  
Kind things will happen to you;  
But if hate and venom  
Had your acts, in them-  
Then hating will be your end, too.

Patti Masterman

# If You Were Dead, Wouldn'T You Know It?

I try to stay out of dangerous situations  
Because I'm afraid of that voice, the one that stays silent too long,  
Like a hidden snake, until the perfect moment comes along;  
Like when you are standing 69 stories up, on a rooftop  
Admiring the view, and suddenly the voice struggles to wake up  
And it tells you to jump off- only it's not so much in words,  
But more like a feeling, that nudges you closer to the edge, just a little closer..

The same voice, always telling you the left lane is clear,  
Just move on over, no need to be so assiduous;  
If there were a car there, you would have noticed its coming.  
Go ahead and eat the macaroni salad, if it were bad  
They wouldn't have set it out for the guests to eat, all afternoon long.  
Go ahead and marry this guy- let's face it, you're never going to do better,  
With your lack of looks, and he's sharp- he'll keep you alive at least.  
Go ahead and climb in the coffin- if you weren't already dead,  
Someone would have mentioned it by now.

Patti Masterman

## If You'Re A Martyr

If you're a martyr, they'll put your picture  
If you're a Rachel from Columbine;  
If you're a Rachel from the Gaza Sinai-

If you're a martyr, they'll put their hands in your side;  
Expect you to change water to wine.  
If you're a martyr, on your wounds they'll dine-  
Don't name your daughters Rachel you should not ask why.

If you're a martyr, they'll put your whole life in print-  
Like papyrus tombs; like the scrolls intent,  
From Caesar to the Christians; and the curtain's rent-

If a Mary or a Peter, everywhere he went-  
Washing Jesus feet while all his blood was lent

And all the airborne angels then would greatly lament  
Don't name your children Jesus- they will not relent-

Patti Masterman

## If You'Re Sweet

If you're sweet, you earn contempt,  
And if you're sour, hatred;  
The sum of the attentions force  
By kindness, unabated.

If you try to guess their mind,  
Nine of ten's guessed wrong,  
So don't construct your actions  
To suit them, all day long.

Just be yourself and that's enough,  
Cause they'll do what they will;  
If disassembling is their wont,  
Can't matter what you feel.

Remember that this too shall end,  
Keep counsel with what's true;  
You are the one you answer to-  
Real humans are too few.

Patti Masterman

# Ignorance Is Bliss

Ignorance is wary bliss  
When that porcelain altar  
You find that you must kiss

Patti Masterman

# I'LI Be The Fool

I'll be the fool you laughed at  
When the joke grew old and worn;  
I'll be the moon at morning  
When your own heart has torn.

I'll be the one forgotten  
When the party's at high tide;  
I'll wait, while others leave you  
With your despair, inside.

I'll be the last one standing  
When around, the friends have flown;  
You'll be surprised, discovering  
How your heart in mine, has grown..

Patti Masterman

# I'LI Remember How It Felt To Love You

I'll remember how it felt to love you  
But try to forget how soon gone, it was;  
Taking things, never mine to take,  
Right in front of me, it was just because-

It was because your heart's so gentle,  
And just because your spirit's rare;  
Who could blame, if I'd become a stealer  
With you around me, in the very air

It's only human nature, our collecting;  
Shells and rocks, and flowers and things,  
Everything beautiful must get our attention;  
Delicious things cause the heart to sing.

Forgive me, that I was intrusive;  
Other's boundaries, not mine to keep  
One hard lesson, I must keep re-learning  
A million times before that final sleep.

Patti Masterman

# Illegitimate

We bite bitter bitumen  
Muted blood of the cursed century  
Stony satires of brash silence  
Bruised stones of irony scourged  
In poisoned oceans of acrid brine  
In bastions stormy, in boredoms insolent  
Brilliantly splintered fractures, we hide  
Craving stars, cratering time  
We brazen spiny blasphemers  
We prophets of crafty doom  
Anchored in zoonotic wiles  
Wearing recombinant smiles.

Patti Masterman

# Illiterate

The illiterate, on the illiterate  
Is an equal match, indeed,  
Like flies on cow-poop feeding;  
And other flies, on these..

Patti Masterman

# I'M A Devil And An Angel

I'm a devil and an angel,  
I'm unmitigated wealth;  
The unexpected angle,  
The weight of time itself.

I'm the door that's always open,  
I'm the flesh's final weld;  
The receptacle of hoping,  
The place where love is held.

Patti Masterman

# I'M A Quantity Of Humanity

I'm a quantity of humanity,  
Ingenuity; just a spark,  
A latent sacred profanity,  
A secular god's cruel lark.

I'm a plane of crass geometry,  
That's written in a mark  
Of a spherical trigonometry,  
That lightens up the dark.

I'm a calm waiting calamity,  
Of existential crisis, stark;  
And the fecund, raw insanity  
Of a charmingly strange truth quark.

Patti Masterman

# I'M A Stealer

I'm a stealer, stealing words  
Like cheating at cards,  
Over the back fence.

Clap your hands to a fake win;  
Turn behind you, look quick-  
Quick as a silver fox.

Lightning striking again,  
Like a dead rattlesnake's head  
When it's least expected.

Don't leave your virgin words  
Alone with the wolverines;  
There are eyes in the woods.

Patti Masterman

# I'm A Word Slut

I'm a word slut from the get-go:  
Like giving word snobs the heave-ho  
Read poems fast forward and slow-mo  
Like word association free-flow  
Hold dictionaries in escrow  
To pulpit clerics never kowtow  
Always pick the word apropos  
My brain in syllabic tidal flows  
Doesn't like being status quo;  
For dead words, I'm a carrion crow,  
Never let my vocabulary plateau;  
Exist as conundrum, head to toe.

Patti Masterman

# I'm Afraid Of Staring Faces

I'm afraid of staring faces  
That peer and preen; judge me meanly,  
Though they never show their teeth-  
Nor ever scowl, most keenly.

We are not so far from curs;  
Our kind a sort of pack-  
Though herds of literati, we,  
Conjugal; even slack.

I would tempt you with a flower;  
Herb bread at high noon,  
Say now, what could be the matter?  
Friendship's not too soon-

Before cruel words get spoken,  
And conscience separates  
The clattering of minds-  
Would wish, that you be kind.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Carpeting The Hall Now

I'm carpeting the hall now,  
Having finished the rest of the house  
With my failed efforts at writing;  
Over by the threshold  
Are all the old love poems, lying face down-  
They're sulky, and if you step down on them just right  
They'll hit a high note, every time.

And near the main doorway,  
Are my religious pieces;  
Always looked to be in mourning, heads covered up  
They're looking for evidences that they'll never find;  
They might weep feebly, so just step over them  
They're much more blind now, old and lame-  
Careful, you'll catch your toe on them.

Here inside my room,  
Are the ones I'm most proud of: catching my eye,  
They sing arias to me, early in the mornings,  
And lullabys, in late evening-  
But they still sing only for me-  
Because nobody else ever heard them before  
And they never outgrew their cringing shyness.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Dog

I'm dog, I sail my blithe days free  
There's nobody to browbeat me.  
Sleep on the couch, the whole day through  
That's what I'm supposed to do.

I fetch balls, do paper tricks  
Scratch myself and lick my?  
Of my dreams, you have no hunch  
And on good days, I eat your lunch.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Glad We Didn'T Eat Him

My brothers an alien;  
He hatched from an egg  
That they left in a carton,  
By my grandfather's leg.

Nobody saw who left  
The eggs there that day,  
And as soon as he hatched,  
He was ready to play.

Then just after one week,  
I heard my parents say,  
He must be your brother-  
So he'll have to stay.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Going To Unplug You Now

I've come to a decision:

I'm going to unplug you now;

It's useless; all these feeding tubes and wires,

They're feeding you blood, day and night-

What good is it all? You're totally dependent now,

You don't even have a life anymore.

Now take a deep breath, and say your prayers;

I give you absolution, for the many errors.

Now go find your own apartment and coffin,

The sun will be up in another eight hours-

And try not to trip, over any more mirrors.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Going To Write My Song Some Day

I'm going to write my song, someday  
Of heaven's dirge, I forgot how to play;  
My angel wings, that forgot how to fly,  
As the blowing days went blowing by.

My halos now dusty; a terrible thing,  
And forgot all the words, was supposed to sing-  
The only lesson I've kept, from above;  
How to keep smiling, and how to love.

I think that's the lesson, was planned for me;  
Don't think I'll forget, in eternity.  
But could you come too; for without a doubt,  
We'll have a good time- till they kick us out.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Not A Hypochondriac

I'm not a hypochondriac, I'm sure you'll understand  
Even though my two legs tingle, till I'm sure I cannot stand.  
It creeps up to my chest and I'm sure that I must die  
But somehow I live on; so relieved I give a sigh.

There was that time I ate the lye, not washed well from the dish  
I swore that I could taste it past the cheesecake (so delish) .  
I sat down faint and took my pulse, for at least a half an hour  
And swore next time I made desert, the dishes I would scour.

Sometimes I'd swear that botulism lives in all the cans;  
The one that once exploded, has invaded all my lands  
And my kitchen cabinets house an evil opportunist  
I always smell and watch my cans, because I am a doomist.

In a magazine that I once read, it said you should beware  
That the tiny viral particles will hang quite still in air,  
Just waiting for your nose, to dry out in indoor heat-  
And if that doesn't get you, well there's crabs, on toilet seats.

If my dog is off his food, I'm sure it must be rabies,  
And once upon a sauna bench, just knew that I'd caught scabies.  
I know if I live long enough, something's bound to kill me sure  
And with my luck you know, will be something they can't cure.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Not As Young As Old

I'm not as young as old,  
You are, as playing this game;  
Shall we remain just two dancers  
In an unannounced dance  
Within old picture frames;  
You to kneel, as I twirl around  
To touch once, your desires:  
Now, bend me over your knee, and see  
Even in an old soul, I'm quite agile  
As any tree, and you my heart will know  
I never planned this old to grow, and still  
The thing that very sings, is a whippoorwill  
At night; he flies his somber skies  
Wheeling wings whispering, of feathery things in flight,  
So take you these my hands, lest we forget  
We flew through miles of sand, in a glass  
Though the time ran down, much more fast  
Than the clocks hands could follow it around; and so you see  
This last dance is saved, for we:  
Two suitors shy; within the mirror  
Can now see things, that then weren't clear.

Patti Masterman

# I'M On The Grid

I'm on the grid..  
I'm keyed in, hooked up  
Connected, countered  
Numbered, hacked to bits  
Spooling, I'm not fooling  
Got my number  
Got my slot  
Don't have to answer  
Questions  
Don't have to find  
A spot  
Already in the queue  
I'm lined up to a T  
Filed, stamped and registered  
If you just look  
You can't miss me  
I'm on the grid..

Patti Masterman

# I'M The Grown Up Now

When you've had enough of life  
Always promising the moon  
While delivering on nothing  
And you've seen enough of your loved ones  
Suffering, suffering when there's no mend

You've still got one last option  
You know, the one you were always saving  
You can go out laughin, just to show them  
You had the last laugh, in the end  
Just go out laughin, (let somebody else  
Clean up the mess)

(It's just like Russian Roulette-  
Without the Russian)

(Go on, you can do it; don't need  
Anybody's lame permissions)

(And before you do, remember to say  
Hey, over here, Life: this one's for you)

Yea, you, life; and what you got to say about it?  
Cause I'M the grown up now..

(July 7 2011)

Patti Masterman

# I'M The Play

I'm the play within his mind,  
I say the things, because he's kind;  
I play the roles he wants to play,  
I put the clothes on, every day.

Inside his head, the stage is set,  
And all his expectations met:  
With me, he can communicate;  
With him, I can anticipate.

We dance together in the acts,  
He holds my hands, I clasp his back,  
He bends me down, and up again;  
We move apart, and then within.

Our brains, the only parts that touch,  
In space alone, we live so much;  
We live more lives, each day we give  
More life to love, than others live.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Too Big For Your Suitcase

I'm too big for your suitcase-  
My life is a hell;  
I thought I'd go with you  
When they ring that bell.

I thought I could fold  
My face to my knees;  
Wrap my arms round my legs,  
Hold my breath until three.

Then emerge from the suitcase  
Unscathed as you please,  
But there's no way I'll fit there-  
I've eaten too much cheese.

I'm too wide for the zipper,  
It won't close or move,  
And worse, it seems stuck there-  
Right in my groove.

I'm too wide for the zipper,  
And it's teeth are now stretched;  
If I just had no feet  
I would feel much less wretched.

My head doesn't fit,  
And my arms much too long;  
If I could get shortened-  
Would it be so wrong?

I thought I would fit  
In your suitcase, to hide;  
But instead, I'll just mail me  
In a big box, inside.

Like a tomb for a Pharaoh,  
I'll have room for my parts;  
On my way to you now,  
To reclaim my lost heart.

Patti Masterman

# I'M Torturing My Words Now

I'm torturing my words now  
They are the woeful ineptness  
That's kept me apart from you:  
A needle filled with fake pain.

I've been drugged with you for so long  
I shake now, when they move a mirror  
To see that the reflection  
Stays the same no matter what.

If indifference cost money  
We would both be bankrupt  
Instead of pretending our poverty  
Were some kind of spiritual dowry.

Patti Masterman

# Imagination

Listen to how the night crawls on it's hands here,  
Falls off the trailing edge of stars at dawn  
See how destiny puts out dreams as guides, here:  
And how imagination's wheels turn on..

Patti Masterman

# Imagine

imagine the concrete aesthetic;  
miasma of an abstract dream,  
as monument to genius:  
how we balance our absurd passions  
with imaginations demand for icons  
and paint them up in fiery reds  
and psychedelic greens,  
when blacker, is our every silhouette;  
smeared ink of the world's empty canvas.

Patti Masterman

# Imagined Moonlight

Unwilling the pain of shared listening, their flesh one  
go the closed voices only into lovers warm drunken secrets  
painful of imagination's beauty, which knows rare echoes of the words  
their lips listened, covetous of real angels token posturing  
lovely sweat pouring, like children's hearts pound effortlessly  
paths again melting, into the delicate thrill of the still-ordinary  
already the transformation, into sweet bruising elation  
playful caressing of the passions we empty summer lives into  
where all existence strolls fragrant, blossoms from the discovery of it  
building up bliss, ceasing breathing, his first friction becoming  
imagined time-telling giddy kisses, given and held by her eyes  
in this electric universe, purchased time and again  
with breath of the impossible imagined.

Patti Masterman

# Imitation

The radio can sing,  
But it doesn't have a soul;  
The microphone can listen,  
To the voices, it stole.

The heart can fool itself,  
That emotion has its place-  
Thinking it sees love,  
Where there's not a single trace.

Patti Masterman

# Immaculate Ghost

Immaculate ghost, I haunt these round walls,  
waiting for any small message  
that come

Impossibly defiant, this old heart of mine,  
intent on finding your body's  
frail sums

Fair smiles fading like dappled sunlight,  
In this world your eyes the one light.

Trees that breath with your same breath,  
tombs that sigh of future death;  
found everywhere and nowhere

A riderless horse may sometimes approach,  
in these wordless hours of reproach-  
but you are not there

Fair smiles fading like dappled sunlight,  
In this world your eyes the one light.

You are the lighthouse stands watching  
the sea; guarding from grief and the  
churning tides

Immaculate ghost, can you come inside?  
The door's opening wide.

Patti Masterman

# Immensity

I fall again toward you,  
never suspecting how bottomless-  
how boundless, your infinitudes-

Of how I could fall and fall forever,  
never reaching the end,  
caught up in the swirling, whirling vortex  
that's unbelievably, undeniably you;  
riding the unwavering streams of unstoppable being,

Divvying up cause and effect along the edges,  
while turning full circle,  
caught in the fulcrum of your flow:  
knowing now what I could not have realized, before.

Patti Masterman

# Imminent Domain

Right now you're only a photo, and a distant voice:  
But I have your wall's pattern  
Committed to long term memory;  
I'm sure I will see it in my dreams sometimes.

But you are much larger than all of that;  
Than tiles and towels in a bowl.  
In your sphere of influence,  
My little world quakes.

Under the coming of such imminence  
I feel the forward air rushing up  
Just ahead of the subway's arrival  
On it's familiar path, to the welcoming arms of the station.

I can feel the doors as they swish open,  
And a million thoughts starting to fly in and out  
Like so many frantic travelers  
Going anywhere on a nameless, fragrant summer's day.

Behind it all is the transfiguration  
Of a pair of eyes, that I seem to know best  
From the inside out, from somewhere unshadowed,  
Where time does not need to count on it's fingers.

And already I know that it is not the words  
That I will get the chance to say to you,  
That will haunt me; but all the thousands of words  
That we will never say-

So that they will hang open-mouthed,  
There in the stagnant stillness, where nothing moves,  
And where nothing has its being any more  
Once those doors have closed forever.

Patti Masterman

# Immutable

In the tunnel of self I'm awakened as me,  
No starting nor end has this tunnel, I see;  
Through labyrinth corridors, nameless in time,  
I'm twisting and turning, my face just to find.

The mirrored walls cascading, surrounding my form,  
They all show the same thing, not where I was born,  
For there is no beginning, from here where I stand-  
And no answer to riddles, of what is a man?

In the tunnel of self, we're all traveling alone,  
And singing one life is the theme of each song,  
And all fellow travelers, their own tunnels reside;  
Each song immutable- to the one lives inside.

Patti Masterman

# Impermanence

Impermanence threatens-  
It's thoughts in our head;  
A certain dissonance  
Of feet on our bed.

We'd give up these games,  
If peace came for free-  
And sat on our shoulders-  
Or dropped us a key.

If answers could come  
Like visitors- with flowers-  
We'd know what to do  
With these dull, witless hours.

Patti Masterman

# Impermanent Lover

Impermanent lover  
catches in my throat  
like lumps of wet sod;  
Earth's brash child,  
too soon released;  
ran before he crawled:  
the track had been greased.

Of freedom's disparagements  
his nature's in awe,  
hand clutching finger  
slows the other's momentum,  
stilling to conquer;  
dissolving to break,  
tremulous sighing,  
garrulous ache.

Abrasively worn down,  
the cloak of the other;  
Clandestine ambush  
of green-growing cover.  
Your child has your eyes;  
It's mother, your hate  
Home again, home again:  
They've locked your gate.

Patti Masterman

# Importunate

Take all the pallid, preternatural words  
Shrunk from known hungers, in plain wrappers  
That everyone skips over, as not becoming-  
Not for sophisticates; not the literati.

Then let these cut rate words work for you,  
One colorful word, as mascot for the others,  
Let go with intuition, release with impunity-  
Whichever way the words say they want to flow.

Patti Masterman

# Imposter

The blanket in airy emptiness  
Squeezes it's knobby not-knees together  
In some vacuous semblance  
Of dehydrated human form  
Fooling people who enter the room  
Into thinking it hides a living body-  
A thin person, perhaps; given to bulimic fits  
Wearing size 00 of sagging pants  
In compassionate fugue, they stare rudely  
In wonder that I could actually have a roommate  
Till I shake out the folds  
And pronounce it just a sham  
At which point they laugh hysterically-  
How did you know what I was thinking?

Patti Masterman

# Imprimatur Of The Infinite

Tangent debacles I inherit from your stream;  
Your face is otherworldly, inside of my dreams.

Shimmering infinity of warp and woof;  
Tapestries uncurled by creation's hook.

Recorded epiphanies and pertinent facts,  
Of life and death, proceeding on track.

Truth and reality's mortal refrains,  
Embodied in man, so we'll know them again

Patti Masterman

# In A Dream

In a dream I shall feel  
The wings of the world unfolding, and  
Worlds spinning on the axis of mad journeys;  
And the seas breaking turquoise, upon their rippled surfaces.

In the heart of the ears  
I shall hear the shivering willows, dreaming their  
Wood-smoke dreams, full of sap and funneled sunlight;  
Pierced by light for a thousand years

And the flowers sleeping nestled in stars;  
Gathered in the deep, among the wood-thrushes,  
In coagulated violet forests, all shadowed and dark:  
And a whispered peace barely rustles this world.

Patti Masterman

# In A Far And Distant Land

Perhaps in a future  
And far away land,  
Footsteps echo on the  
Well-swept flagstones.  
"This is the very spot"  
The reserved voice intones;  
"Here were the first intuitions"  
"Then came the first of many  
breakthroughs"  
The hushed and reverent group  
Haltingly shuffles through  
Scarcely daring to touch the relics.  
The room holds its own breath,  
Cameras flashing little lightnings,  
The posed smiling faces  
Courteous but distant, as if at a  
Wedding or a funeral or some  
Important social event.  
And thus, only for a moment  
The silent voice speaks again  
Of dreams and of a vision  
And the final conquering  
The destiny having become  
Everlasting and mythical.  
Time drops dust motes on the placards.

Patti Masterman

## In A Handbasket

Love to do something naughty  
Then intone, I'm going to hell for that.  
It's just that I so hate ambiguity  
If there is a hell, and it's so hard to avoid it  
I'd rather have all doubt removed  
At least then I know the round trips destination.  
At the hospital once, where we'd taken my mother  
My dad commented she'd had something  
Going on in the nether regions, that seemed not right  
I said, we'd better tell them to check that too  
She was in the throes of a kidney infection  
But in the elderly it can resemble  
Nothing so much, as a stroke  
Leaving the patient dull, and non responsive  
So, the young intern came in, pulling rubber gloves  
Over his hands, telling us we'd have to leave  
For a minute- the light went on then  
Inside my head, and I smiled.  
Listen, I told my dad,  
We're going to hell for this one...  
At least this time we were going together.

Patti Masterman

# In A Madman's Rush, The Worm Gets Born - Villanelle

In a madman's rush, the worm gets born:  
As shouting words do the fight unleash,  
Moon's in eyes, and the soul gets shorn.

Why lay hands on the things that harm,  
When there's brokenwinged wonder, in our speech-  
In a madman's rush, the worm gets born.

The shroud is lost, unravelled and torn,  
And human mercy is but a leech:  
Moon's in eyes, and the soul gets shorn.

Scorpion's sting, and mankind's scorn;  
It seems real justice is out of reach:  
In a madman's rush, the worm gets born.

The unicorn has lost his horn;  
The mermaid's dead upon the beach-  
Moon's in eyes, and the soul gets shorn.

My thoughts are deep and as forlorn;  
For man, by the heart of him's impeached:  
In a madman's rush, the worm gets born,  
Moon's in eyes, and the soul gets shorn.

Patti Masterman

# In A Tree Haunted Forest

In a tree haunted forest  
She walks in white;  
Hands before her-  
She fears the night.

A ghost she is;  
But she never knew,  
And she searches for  
The heart once true.

Her lover sleeps  
Many feet below,  
He'll never hear  
Her wind-borne moans.

Some people see her;  
Wandering, pale  
Across the night-scape  
To search her grail.

There is no end  
For those who weep,  
Who'll wake each night  
Till mornings sleep.

Who search in vain  
For love so dead,  
To match the vision  
Inside their head.

She's more afraid  
Than you could know,  
Now drifting with  
The moonlights flow,

So leave a cross  
Upon the trees  
To point the way  
Toward heaven's peace.

Then say a prayer,  
In any tongue-  
That soon her thankless  
Waiting's done.

Patti Masterman

## In Another Galaxy Far Away..

In another galaxy far away,  
We humans are the orderly mannequins of society;  
Standing in store front windows of every city,  
Holding perfectly still, for endless hours  
Of standing upright, straight and unwavering,  
Through the hours of both darkness and light,  
Since the malls there never close down.

We are the exotic, ideal look, as far as the aliens are concerned;  
Whether large or small; that whole predatory/prey aura thing  
That we carry about us, with our front-facing eyes,  
Our canine incisors, claws and strong hind-leg muscles;  
Our ability to move fast, or over long distances.  
We even have rudimentary grasping fingers on our feet, of all things.  
Our heads of lustrous hair are the envy of all aliens.  
Our penchant for rare meat, and intoxicating fermented beverages-  
It all screams out 'danger' to the aliens, who seem excited  
By the novelty of it; of finding themselves in such close proximity  
To beings who have not left behind their rustic manner of life,  
While the aliens had evolved to a peaceful co-existence,  
Practicing moderation in all things, of course;  
And multiple levels above us, in understanding and intellect.

But they seemed to feel they had lost their connections,  
To the roots, of all animal life, they too were descended from,  
While humans still bear signs of our unbroken close relationship,  
With earlier, primitive forms of man, and so are regarded  
With wonder, by all aliens.

But just wait, till they see our procreative action.

Patti Masterman

# In Any Crowd

In any crowd there is  
A bare humanity shining  
Eyes of recognition,  
The perennial handshake  
Sealing the deal,  
A commitment, a quorum  
Humanity congregating itself  
Against indifference hunger war  
Each soul a vote of I  
Each self a rudimentary linkage  
The dna aligns like flags in a stiff wind  
A puzzle must have a key  
Humans must have an answer  
The mirror will no longer do for this  
Century of humans  
With their legendary bravery  
They always turn face to face  
In any crowd.

Patti Masterman

## In Aqueous Humors

In aqueous humors and colloidal suspensions,  
We age like the flower, with rare substitutions.  
Our verbs are all parried, in long past declensions;  
Our muscles deranged, with minute lax dilutions.

Our memories befuddled, like dropped cauliflower,  
Our bodies they sag, though well-aimed at the ground.  
Our once-enigmatic expressions, just dour;  
If we try to wear makeup, we look like a clown.

Life's no longer the party, that we can anticipate;  
Exhaustion's our best friend, who always arrives.  
To be fully honest, all our habits are antique  
And it takes all our energy just to survive.

Patti Masterman

## In Aubergine Ochers

In aubergine ochers I painted your eyes,  
And smiles that your smooth lips would wear in disguise.  
Eclipsed by the dark of your eyes, are my dreams;  
Your words floating round, that my own being sings.  
In time I would learn all your body's warm contours,  
Or could touch the whole length of your form, sans detours.  
I know I must stay very far from your face,  
Otherwise I'd devour you, with but one taste.

Let no tears ever fall, from you for me;  
I could never withstand that tragedy;  
Your pity would turn my world inside-out,  
And all self control and discipline rout.  
I can safely live here only at distance,  
With all your compassion still just a pittance.  
Don't lift your hand; don't touch my ice-  
Unless you are willing to pay full price.

Patti Masterman

# In Between The Ribs Of Your Multiforme Soul

in between the ribs of your multiforme soul  
a bargain was struck, and then  
the veiled stars spoke, amid the waters of life  
sun and moon grew closer together afterward, and distance vanished  
in the expanded sky: a brilliant and black field of diamonds  
that obscured the folded edges of time's symmetry  
and upon the rostrum strings of the cosmos  
life cried out it's name  
only once

Patti Masterman

# In Case Of Fire, Break Glass

Of the most difficult, unyielding opponents, foremost is  
The blank piece of paper, staring, unblinking, while  
The ideas roll off the other side of it, bleating.  
They crash and burn in the silent vacuum of space  
Leaving you blank-slated and sucking air-  
But there are worse things in life than a papercut.  
The worst things in life are done to yourself:  
Getting the noose ready, the poisons lined up neatly  
Holding the electric wires you step into that bucket  
Razorblades clutched tightly just in case as  
So carefully you weave the oversized shroud, full of finest black- hole threading  
With brilliant flashes of metallic where you ripped your own selfhood,  
Bloodied, where you dashed your own hopes  
With malice aforethought, just to see yourself cringe  
Shrinking Violet and Doubting Thomas that you are.  
No outsider can wound you as quickly  
With such breathtakingly reckless abandon,  
Taking no hostages, leaving no stone unturned.  
There is no gag can stifle that voice, that waylayer who disassembles-  
The blackmailer who can't be bargained with or paid off;  
You can't stop the car and leave him stranded on some anonymous dirt road  
He is there with you for the long-haul, never doubt it.  
Best to give him the minimum of attention  
And then run like hell whenever he is distracted, when you've  
Finally convinced him you always listen to his every malodourous insinuation.  
And keep looking, looking, looking in every direction  
As long as it takes: for the sun to break through;  
The sun that shines on the just and the unjust  
Wait for it as if your life depends on it:  
Look for when the sun finally breaks thru:  
Now look: And wait, and keep looking till the hour of the day you can say,  
I see it now; there it is, I have been waiting so long  
There is that brilliant blue.

Patti Masterman

# In Crystal

Our future's locked in a crystal ball,  
Perhaps not seen in the world at all:  
Hollowed echoes of some grand design  
That lives in vision, not in time.

The future comes on soft sighing feet  
And cloudy dreams are given wings;  
Be careful of what you're wishing for  
And what those futures may hold in store.

Patti Masterman

# In Every Sigh

I love to watch the illiterate  
Correct another's sentences,  
And I love to watch the profane  
Hatching another lie;  
I love to see the judgmental  
Judged with no provocation,  
And I love to see the frameless  
Living on other's gain.

I search for nary a nickname  
To hang upon my brother,  
And I am not so patented;  
My words taken up with a cry.  
I'd prefer to stay in the middle,  
Some say, I'd rather be blameless  
But truth is not in the bargaining,  
For it's found in every sigh.

Patti Masterman

# In Figments Of Ink I Colored The Sky

In figments of ink  
I colored the sky;  
and parachutes, of cross dyed silk.  
My harmless disposition,  
mild as milk,  
finds heaven, in only a sigh.  
Angels with dark  
and wayward smiles  
guide me around the clouds;  
hearing my prayers,  
murmured aloud  
imagining I'm without guile.  
Nebula in stardust;  
heaven's flame,  
in cold space your fires will soon wane;  
But in an angel's face  
we'll see you again,  
for paradise is one and the same.

Patti Masterman

# In Heaven, Sleeping

A child sleeps in still darkness,  
In the place where unicorns leap,  
Where shooting stars bedazzle  
The night-time loom of her dreams.

Her cocoon's enshrouding satin,  
If her dreams more real, than these;  
For the earthly world is vanished,  
Replaced by this strange peace.

Her eyes see what we cannot,  
Her soul, what we can't conceive.  
For not knowing, she is flying,  
We can do naught, but grieve.

A child sleeps in still darkness,  
In the bounds of her reverie,  
Where pain can't reach to grasp her-  
For in heaven, she is free.

June 1 2016

Patti Masterman

# In Hesitations Grasp

In hesitations grasp, I lament your departure;  
Never sure from moment to moment, what was,  
As to what I lost; no iron-clad guarantee;  
Nor a signed contracts untimely forfeiture.

Words you gave me were sweet but acidic;  
Advisements caustic or too sentimental.  
A vapid start is a token sort of promise,  
Of love taken lightly and most incidental.

Love has always made a certain fool of me;  
Me so serious, while their hearts in whimsy.  
My love's a pagoda, inside a rich garden,  
While theirs is a lantern, ornamental and flimsy.

A strong wind won't move my love by one inch,  
Although a few flowers might lose their heads  
But their love goes airborne; is never more seen:  
And copies found everywhere, in the lantern's gleam.

Patti Masterman

## In Men's Clear Eyes

In men's clear eyes, there live the bravest things:  
A hope that sings, as brave as any bird;  
Though it should fly, through hours of glancing rain  
That scarce has ceased, before it's song is heard.

In men's quiet thoughts, dwell hours of silent pain,  
Though it wake you not, the minutes crawling by;  
Like stately columns of soldiers, on parade,  
The only shot fired's a lone tear, from his eye.

In men's bold dreams, are things not ever seen;  
Yet mirror tomorrow's face there, in the rooms,  
And flowers rare, not seen before on Earth;  
But upon his least intention, they must bloom.

In men's most hidden soul, nobody knows  
What ties the form, into his very mind;  
Though it's the secret, central mystery:  
Goes back too far, for anyone to find.

Patti Masterman

## In Monotone

I see that he has commented upon every author  
Whose prose wears a seductive face, drawing him in;  
Nakedness, embracing, and a theory of moonlight  
Conspiring to fasten lovers together as one  
There is no physicality left to the invention of his daily life  
That one element has been subtracted, without a quorum  
And so he searches throughout the long, touchless days  
Hoping for a fragment of release; just the hint of a caress  
In the monotonicity of others words, and their opaque worlds  
Everywhere I go, it seems he has already been there before me  
Stealthily pawing, dissecting the glint from the lover's eye,  
Squeezing the nectar from out the gullible peach:  
Removing the climax itself, with a single click of his hole-punch  
The sense of his need is oppressive; it weights me down,  
Reaches into my various night time excursions, a queer dissatisfaction  
The inverted diagram, of a number of flailing arms and legs  
Above which a single eye always predates, watching,  
Straining ever, to catch the money shot.

Patti Masterman

## In No-Man's Land

Nights I've turned you into a genie-ghost of sorts:  
Using the same brain synapses that enabled me  
To fly fearlessly above the landscape of my dreams,  
I can summon up your presence before me  
Whenever I wish, so you can appease me-  
God of all the hidden things that you now are for me:  
Grant my wish by proving, you never really went away.  
Twinges of conscience still assail me, mornings-  
What if everyone were to realize how I am using your memory;  
Selfishly detaining you here from the other things  
You ought no doubt to be doing; whatever things  
One might expect to do wherever it is you now are dwelling,  
In the daylight, when I am busy inside the world's body.  
It's true you would have set your own self on fire,  
Just to warm me the last hour, at the end of time.  
You had already both loved and lost the one thing  
Most dear to you, once before; taken for no reason  
And just far enough away, to be denied you.  
Being orphaned and already lonely at such young age, it must  
Have hurt much more than anything else;  
Done merely to wound you, repay you for perceived sins-  
A belated miscarriage of sorts, certainly having nothing to do  
With justice. Even our enemies do not know us well enough  
To cremate us without a single match ever being lit.  
In last night's dream, a disembodied voice even chanted  
That somebody had died- but I ran quickly from  
The doom-sayers implication:  
Now that everything is arranged to my liking,  
Why should I change it to let the truth find purchase?  
Is it that I loved you too much, but still not enough  
To let you go free, keeping you locked inside no-man's land;  
My own hungry ghost trapped inside the genies lamp?

Patti Masterman

# In Nomine Patris

In Nomine Patris

'Boy you were NOT expected  
You will not have a bed here  
So dont think you're going to  
Get any special treatment around here'

In Nomine Patris

'You little runt,  
You better stay outta my sight  
Watch what I can do to your Ma  
Come and see'

In Nomine Patris

'The boy started to drink beer  
After he found some hidden  
In the garage and he was a regular  
Drinker from then on'

In Nomine Patris

'That's my brother  
Let's GET HIM-  
He's maybe not even HIS-  
Is what the old man says'

In Nomine Patris

'Yes the guy worked for years  
For just beer money is all  
And a place to lay his head-  
He didn't expect much I guess'

In Nomine Patris

'I have known him for some time  
And he has always been homeless  
During that time and always drinking  
No place to call his own'

In Nomine Patris

'He told them he was homeless  
And they put on gloves and began

To beat him then, and he was wandering  
Around in the desert with a concussion'

In Nomine Patris

'He stopped drinking after he almost  
Died in the desert all alone. But he says  
He will not be going back to his birthplace  
As there is nothing there for him'

In Nomine Patris

Patti Masterman

## In Old Places

In old places there's not a breath left  
Of the spirits who once called it home  
Stories of ghosts never make sense  
To old stones; as if they cleft  
And had no means to roam  
And be gone from whence  
They spent their last breath;  
Or should they live in a tomb,  
Walled in by a fence  
Of loved ones, bereft,  
The only neighbor, a bone  
And a lost half-pence.

Patti Masterman

## In Photos

In photos we get a two dimensioned view of the past;  
The past was never short of dimensions  
But it is our feeling part that's missing  
Old images of self are curiously cold, impassive;  
Smiling or frowning, they have the same feel,  
Removed from us, by time and space,  
They could be a million years distant, or only one.

Is there any other way, in life  
That you can stare at yourself, as an observer  
And not have any idea what thoughts are present?  
That is life every day, lived in a dark vacuum;  
Life knowing not it's own mind, any more  
Than each second, something gets born  
And each second, something dies-

And is buried, without even a name.

Patti Masterman

# In Pieces

There are handless lovers  
Somewhere we can't reach,  
There's jars of dead babies  
On a stillborn beach.

There's a lonely sailor  
Stranded on sand,  
And a drowning mermaid  
Beneath the land.

There's words we can't say  
In a night so long,  
The sun's up again  
Before it's begun.

There's a raining fire  
And a smoking haze,  
And we all grew blind  
Before we learned to gaze.

We learned to drive  
Before we learned to walk,  
And we read the skies  
Before the clocks.

And we ran so fast  
And we ran so slow,  
We forgot the dreams  
That made us go.

We ran out of time  
Before we were born-  
And when we're together,  
In pieces, we're torn.

Patti Masterman

## In Ritual Evil Gets It's Ego Stroked

In ritual, evil gets it's ego stroked;  
Fires attended in brassy censors,  
Choking on expensive foreign smoke;  
Incense from a dead god's pagoda.  
Evil lives because we do not mind it;  
We find it necessary to find a balance:  
A world half in fire, and half in ice;  
Good and evil held in a chalice.

In evil, man gets his karma coded;  
Fires which start in his spinning core.  
All his idols and statues got melted  
So he sits and stares at a tattered mandala:  
Though meditation gave him indigestion,  
And worry beads worried too much.  
He's not the sort to mind temptation;  
He sits to wait for emancipation.

In man, abstraction has reached it's limit;  
He's the whole world, and it's in him.  
Enlightenment comes in a single minute;  
His mind like wispy smoke spiraling upwards,  
For questions always are answer seeking,  
And answers elusive as desert rain:  
The freedom you seek was never in death,  
But free and invisible, as each breath.

Patti Masterman

# In Sighing Dust

In sighing dust, in vacant rooms  
Somebody died once, some were born;  
But no one remembers, do not ask  
How it was- or would have been.

Someone danced there, some left alone,  
Some made love till dawn;  
Some still remember, some forget  
Do not ask, to remember the dead.

Whose dust we stir, whose shadow's there  
Whose name has since been lost;  
It is the same now, as was then-  
Life summons only once..

Patti Masterman

# In Six Days The World Is Created

In six days, the world is created;  
Chaos abated,  
Madmen instigated,  
Husband's berated.

In five days, if you don't count the cars;  
Constellations of stars,  
Men brawling in bars.

In four days, if you forget the booze,  
And all fermented brews,  
And chimney flues,  
And public zoos.

In three days, if you take off the clothes;  
Subtract archery and bows,  
Crops in rows,  
Iron hoes.

In two days, if you return Adam's rib;  
And the serpent's fib,  
And the betrayal, forgive.

In one day; if you take it all away;  
You're back at the start,  
Still sitting in the dark;  
Except then, there's no 'you';  
Which means- these words too-

Patti Masterman

# In Spoken Signs Of Living Words

In spoken signs of living words  
We squandered labyrinthine highways  
Living in longing, a listless endeavor  
Little did we know was vested in time

In spoken signs of living words  
We borrowed off of broken pathways  
Built bonfires of brilliance to belie  
Our belief beyond the fracture line

In spoken signs of living words  
Equating distance with doomed desires  
Discharging duties in droll indifference  
Desperately divining that faith is always blind.

Patti Masterman

# In The Beginning

When the dream came and you stood inside it  
Shyly introducing yourself, you were surrounded by fog  
Then later, the little plastic ball changed color  
But only part of me could believe it  
You held no reality for me, and though it seemed I ought to feel  
Some anticipation, some premonition  
I was an austere, alien landscape; and you were an intellectual problem  
An idea, a theory; though assuredly mysterious  
When I heard your gushing heartbeats, for the first time,  
It seemed like some ancient ritual that I had forgotten my lines  
And you even held five fingers up, to prove you had them  
(and I thought, so I shall give birth to a single hand..only one)  
Your existence was a conundrum  
Until that moment they held you up to me  
Separated from the pod of my body  
My oxygen fount no longer sustaining  
Your eyes beholding me calmly, almost amused  
You looked to be at least a million years old, and very wise-  
And the atmosphere of the room changed, became more complicated  
With the addition of someone only just arrived, breathless, from the outer  
regions:  
Too peaceful to utter the explosive cry of confusion  
And the scent of some rarefied vapor clinging faintly  
It was then that your reality registered:  
More real than anything mineral, vegetable, animal;  
Out of the whole of creation's kingdoms, you were bestowed  
In a kind of reversed benediction,  
And I was not dreaming.

Patti Masterman

# In The Blackness Of Night

In the blackness of night  
I hid my secret craving:  
Those desires buried deep  
Were too far past saving.

In the brightness of day,  
You denied the deceiving  
On my once-opened dreams;  
There was no more believing.

Of your words faithless troth,  
All my sins were just signs:  
And where day and night meet,  
Lives the shadow we've mined.

Patti Masterman

## In The Blue

The plane in the sky's so far by now  
It burned a path through the frigid clouds  
Filled up with dreams of buoyant voyagers-  
Time goes quickly; planes sail wings of air.

The geese are slow, compared to planes  
The geese have sails made of feathered hue  
With a noise, even children knew-  
And sinuous engines, concealed in muscle.

Fly me, sky-plane; fly me somewhere far  
Keep flying, don't stop for a moon- or a star;  
Fly across time, losing seconds few  
As space is unbound from time, in the blue.

Patti Masterman

# In The Cold Thickness Of Winter

In the cold thickness of winter  
Words orbit us in the close surroundings;  
As we get trapped in our own cosmic debris fields;  
Hating and loving what we can never escape from.  
The air forces it's frigid hands into your pockets,  
The gaps between your buttons,  
Where your pants meet your boots.

It crawls down into the tops of your pants  
Like a surprise blast from the arctic depths.  
It's thinking of rigor and death;  
It's thinking about illness, and never waking up again:  
The white annihilation of the drifting snow  
All your thoughts, gradually piling up  
On the horizontal surfaces.

Will they always be there, as your personal memorial  
At the edge of the cave in, under eons of ice  
Where there were no survivors  
To outlive the avalanche?  
For even if ice had memory, and recognized time;  
It would never want to speak again  
Of anything that impermanent.

Patti Masterman

# In The Dark Life Of Days You Bore

in the dark life of days you bore  
the slow born breath was never blind;  
yesterdays trust haunts the picture of morning.  
if a hallowed perfume decays every secret hour,  
why should the longings of a fool for opened windows  
make god linger on as our prisoner-  
when desires can't embrace one star at night,  
all our questions lie broken, bleeding out time.

Dec.28 2009

Patti Masterman

## In The Dim Light

In the dim light, the wainscoting is a wall  
Rising up between you and me, that must be surmounted.  
In the dim light, early morning mirrors are unfaithful  
To what they see, trust is only an illusion.

You were always the wanderer, wandering  
Through refrains that should never be set  
To reason. In what halls of memory do you set foot now,  
Are you excavating the past, dredging it up again?

Time's the mural where we got frozen; seedy grins,  
Hands stop-motioned through silent air,  
Doing god knows what, to whom- and why,  
Why are we even here, given time's apportionment  
Until we've reached the end?

Patti Masterman

# In The Early, Uneven Twilight

In the early, uneven twilight  
You hold my hand in yours  
The wind breathes for us  
As we reach the tallest trees:  
You stand  
Apart, and gaze,  
Your eyes say softer things  
Than stars, meadows  
Or plains.  
My eyes reply  
In midnight tones  
That stretch to touch  
The old refrains.

Patti Masterman

# In The End

The light ripples by like a snake:  
There's a seance going on, somewhere inside you  
In a place too far, for their steeples to reach

Though chapter and verse once were quoted from a book,  
In a time and place, beyond memory's impeach.

Cold and placid peace dwells there;  
A different sort of peace-  
Where everything is watching, but nothing in a face

And death is the possessor, when life disinherits;  
And the soul learns like a small child  
In the end, who is obeyed.

Patti Masterman

# In The Eye Of The God

In the eye of the god  
Is a sky, is a clod,  
Is a monarch's dream;  
Not as rich, as it seems;  
The peasants think it odd  
His sceptre is gnawed.

In the hold of the ship,  
Sits a loose pair of lips,  
Whose ship sinking time  
Lives only in rhyme;  
Like a radar's blip,  
From a whiskey nip.

In the drunken god's boat,  
Is a castle and moat,  
And a peasant's revolt,  
And a pure white colt  
They've mistaken for god;  
But who's really just a dog  
in molt.

Patti Masterman

# In The Eyes Of My Mother And Grandmother

In the eyes of my mother and grandmother  
There lived a limpid green coolness:  
Moss covered stones, around an ancient well;  
Trailing vines entangled about the cenote's mouth;  
Scrawled incantations on antique wooden chests  
Their treasures concealed in endless green canyons of agate.

At day's end, the same gleaming, green elixir;  
I could float on it's pale peridot waves  
Or fully immerse myself there, in fright's flight or languor's ease,  
Could submerge myself as the beloved, of those intelligent green rays  
Ever visible, through the leafy canopy of daily living,  
An emerald sky always smiling down from above.

After I saw their green lamps slowly grow dim;  
Then extinguish themselves, I could no longer hide myself there:  
Their embracing foliage retreated, withdrew  
From where the last light had left, as if it had moved too far  
To be visible from where it had always shone, before;  
Only to save myself then, I ran whimpering away:  
It was the only time I found no sanctuary there.

But sometimes now, searching again  
I can find buried tendrils of a once fresh, softened green fury  
Which grew tumultuous, only in defense of me;  
Or that vivid hope, of a proud jade that once poured out  
Molten, to harden around childhood's fragility.

And like a guarding amulet of rare green amber, enclosed my world  
Kept it safe of lurking monsters, disguised dangers  
Guarded the waking hours, or else enfolded them  
In their green curtained gazebo of sleep,  
As tender mimosa dreams floated past fragrant fields of clover.

I nightly and invisibly grew taller and stronger  
With my own clusters of foliage, budding fruit,  
Just waiting for the sun to finally breathe itself  
Into the tiny green illuminated flecks, that now swim forever  
Only inside my own small lichen pools of dreaming earth.

Patti Masterman

# In The Far Moonlight

Troubles fade away  
In the far moonlight  
All the cares of day  
In the far moonlight  
Slow and peaceful breathing  
As the weary thoughts are leaving  
In the far moonlight.

Peace comes unfurled  
In the far moonlight  
Brows lie unfurrowed  
In the far moonlight  
Serene faces all I see  
As I look around me  
In the far moonlight.

If days were not so long  
In the far moonlight  
We'd not dread the coming dawn  
In the far moonlight  
If the hours were less hurried  
Then we'd never want to worry  
In the far moonlight.

Patti Masterman

# In The Gardens Of Midnight

The night time wishes to gift you with something rare  
but we have become too disillusioned to look for it

We only see commonality all about us, drowning us  
we don't take time anymore to scratch  
just beneath the surface covering  
Time is too dear, the payoff seems too imaginary

Precious, pristine things are not often exposed to free air  
the Four O'clocks hide in shadow  
what they don't show to the daylight

Casablanca Lillie's have fragrance extravagance to spare  
but we label them exotics, and stay far away

Night Gladiolus looks too much like a weed  
and might make us itch. We look elsewhere  
for our amusements

Evening Primrose seems too prim and occidental  
Or maybe we are too lazy  
to hunt Moonflowers in the dark  
without a moon to illuminate their delicate star-worshipping faces

When you find out you have missed the jewel of seasons  
the monarch of expectations  
Think again of all those nights you spent surrounded with wonder  
and how inexpedient you found it, to wander

Never too far, from your pre packaged, well insulated homes  
your urbanely kempt neighborhoods  
Feasting on the same plastic hothouse flowers  
exactly like everyone else had

Spoils come to the explorer  
But only leftovers, to the comfortable

Patti Masterman

# In The Heart Of Me

World of delusion  
Where senses lie,  
I wish for all time  
That I were blind-

And deaf as well;  
So live inside,  
And find the only  
Truth, abide.

The other world  
Is full of worth,  
Born of space  
And not of earth,

Room to roam,  
A place to be:  
With heaven  
In the heart of me.

Patti Masterman

# In The Many-Colored Blue

In the many-colored blue,  
I am still a part of you;  
the drifting clouds  
your limit true.

A golden day,  
Of blue-tinged light,  
the peace that tells me  
all is right.

Then in the many-colored blue,  
Night sneaks in to say, me too-  
while moon looks down  
in ghostly hues.

Patti Masterman

# In The Midst Of All Your Dreams - Pantoum

In the midst of all your dreams  
I tiptoe through your heart  
While the stars about us gleam  
I put to work my art

I tiptoe through your heart  
The stars alone can see  
I put to work my art  
To bring your love to me

The stars alone can see  
How I cast my sovereign spell  
To bring your love to me  
For nobody can tell

How I cast my sovereign spell  
And I wrap your dreams with mine  
For nobody can tell  
And I do it every night

And I wrap your dreams with mine  
While the stars about us gleam  
And I do it every night  
In the midst of all your dreams

Patti Masterman

## In The Mirror

This in the mirror is mental illness before you,  
Thoughts bounce off each other, like a chained tether-ball;  
Coming round once, and you are loathe to recognize-  
But back again later, the same thoughts have stalled.

Who is to blame for the spiritual vacuum,  
The thoughts obsessive that refuse to leave;  
Was a game you played once, when your spirit was restive,  
Now the hours left over are becoming a sieve.

You are the mirror, shining you back at you;  
And the blindness was mercy, but the game's now a joke;  
The lack of real seeing makes everything darkness-  
And the memories you're wrapped in, have become a vain cloak.

Patti Masterman

# In The Moonlight

In the moonlight, the room is all in silhouette:  
The candles extinguished, the flowers sleeping  
Through all the cavernous, hollowed hours, within their crystal vases.  
The piano naps, large and indistinct; like a low, rumbling boulder  
At the side of the brooding room, though it is silent now.  
Still your hands linger over its keys, even in your restless sleep,  
Your feet wandering over perhaps new ground  
As your eyes take in vistas never before seen,  
While mine feast down here, on the sameness of this room  
That seems to know both of us, better than we know ourselves.  
Dark or light, the shadows own our few days here;  
Our flames can't show enough light to trace out the future.  
One of us has a future appointment, somewhere distant  
Leaving the other one here to weep a bounty, of invisible tears  
And watch as the room slowly forgets their face..  
Though I wish that I could tell you sometimes  
That my eyes will always be here, watching you;  
Here, from the reflections of glass and lacquer and crystal;  
That all my love will be stored in here for eternity  
As your own treasure store, your gift of cherishing.  
And that you have only to touch the least thing;  
Just the trailing edge of the drapery; to feel my kiss again,  
Inside your being. But alas; we are not children any longer,  
And nothing down here can last forever;  
Because the only true savior of loneliness, is death itself.

(written to Lunz - Dew Climbs)

Patti Masterman

# In The Presence Of Royalty

In the presence of another, I find  
That by suspending my own  
Judgments, and listening  
With the inner pulse while  
Looking into the twin mirrors of the soul,  
One can recognize the encoded  
Divinity inherent within each cell;  
Proceeding from generation unto generation:  
The encyclopedic wisdom  
Descended down through fathomless time  
Of royal lineage of Homo sapiens  
And housed there in the DNA,  
The language of creation.

Patti Masterman

# In The Shade Of A Sycamore Tree

In the shade, in the shade  
of a Sycamore tree,  
Man is a slave  
but his woman's free;  
As he waits for the cool,  
his tasks for to meet-  
But sun or shade, she lets loving be.

In the shade, in the shade  
of a Sycamore tree,  
The hours crawl by  
like a wayward bee;  
The sun so large,  
you can hardly see-  
But sun or shade, she lets loving be.

In the shade, in the shade  
of a Sycamore tree,  
The men lose hope  
and give up creeds;  
To follow where

the cruel sun leads-

But sun or shade, she lets loving be.

Patti Masterman

# In This Life We Should Never

In this life we should never be given  
what we have asked for:  
and this is a blessing unto us, for how would we know  
what to do, if everything we wanted came true-

What would we need pink fairies for then?  
Of what possible use could be a rainbow-  
When all your loved one's are missing; and the house fell down,  
and didn't they all have clown's white-face on at the end anyway?

In my dreams, I put on an angel's ankle-boots  
but they always turn into black witch boots  
with the curled up toes burnt away

And in the storybook, they disguised her growing breasts  
under chicken wire; and though she vanquished the villain  
She could never pick all the wire pieces out of her heart again.

Patti Masterman

# In This Moment

In this moment is contained the whole of the world  
There is only this minute now  
Banks of angels hold their breath  
Wondrous things are opening up for the next sixty seconds  
Every hour is an eon and each day another infinity

Corners get turned, there is building up and destruction  
There is tension and fulfillment, sleep and awakening  
And crammed in every hidden space, there are dreams  
Dreams of creatures and dreams of matter  
Dreams of tomorrow and the hereafter:  
The very universe dreaming itself alive

Patti Masterman

# In Time, Forget

In time, forget the stars;  
Sleep easy then, with nothing on the mind  
And flickering time, which never could foretell  
The shadowed field of darkness left behind.

In time, forget the earth;  
Blue-violet streak within a galaxy,  
And sparkling oceans turquoise-like stone  
Accede to fiery sun in mutiny.

In time, forget the moon;  
Green dare of hope, above a planet's peril.  
In time the planet too forgets our place  
Remaining frozen ice, of futures sterile.

Patti Masterman

# In Your Moment

In your moment, magic flowered:  
Tiny, dumbstruck leaves  
Became vibrant outpourings of light;  
All the shadows shrank inside.

The sun's heart devoured  
Night's ravenous eyes,  
And the moon mediated  
As the rainclouds abated.

Time gave up dominion;  
Memory kindled desire.  
Over other's footprints, I set my path  
Toward the sunrise: never look back.

Patti Masterman

# Inane Bow

Upon the violinic dischord of your days  
You painfully string some wire  
Thinking the vetted world pays  
For words unextreme; less dire

But the hollowed wood of the lunatic  
More resounding a music, plays  
Than your bookkeeper's list, so semantic  
Where safe in it's columns, must stay

With a pan and a spoon, go the heretics  
Beating their dooms into song  
While walking sticks of peripatetics  
Leave but holes, in the feet of the throng.

Patti Masterman

# Incandescent

Incandescent dreams will fly  
Deathless, towards the edge of night,  
If forgotten, who we were  
In shallow graves, too soon immured.

Fragmented we, in hallowed ground,  
Spirits gathering all around;  
Take my hand, if you would see  
Where the deathless ones go free.

Patti Masterman

# Incanto Dreams

Incanto dreams, filtering through nets of darkness:  
A once-lived hourglass of hopeful mirage, fading  
Hours drifting away; fickle youth, faithful maturity  
Come back again like enchantments, to whisper of loss.

Charms given, and charms taken away again:  
Full of moon, to no-where moon;  
Smooth moon face, to crepe paper reflections-  
Somewhere else, it surely goes on living.

Nothing always-new, and nothing gone to waste;  
In the mirror, I see your eyes in mine,  
And in the mirror, we are always the same person,  
Facing backwards through time

Waiting again, for that first moment  
When existence lit our tapers,  
The universe blooming itself into cycles of desire,  
Opening outward, only for our breathing presence.

Patti Masterman

# Incestuous Paramours

Intransigent invectives  
Are decidedly infective  
But blithering defectives  
Are proof in need of heckling

Amorphous amphimixis  
Seems like a dirty trixis  
And the only well known fix is  
Tie up the vagrant Dicksissels

Patti Masterman

# Incidental

The wasp is talking by my ear  
He has a low sultry voice whose effect  
Is not entirely lost on me. But I wish him to be  
Anyplace else. Wish his offspring great harm.  
Would that I could splash gasoline on his nest and light it.

But no, he continues to hum his alien tongue only to me,  
Whether war whelp or nursery rhyme,  
A rippling vibration is parting the air like a cleaver  
With intonations of coming pain.  
His color the color of mud, of rotting carcasses  
And algae clogged ponds. He whispers things to me  
No human should ever be privy to.

I don't respect him and he seems to know this  
But he doesn't care. He is programmed from birth,  
Born full grown like Athena from Zeus' skull.  
He has appropriated some alien's skeleton as his form,  
From a planet where tiny armored beings count coals of fire.

Patti Masterman

# Incomplete

One half the world is sunny  
One half, in storms is veiled  
One side: the sun is shining  
The other: lightnings weld

One half my heart is open  
Like flowers to the dew  
One half, in deepening shadow  
Because of missing you

One half holds gladdest tidings  
One half holds only woe  
Could two halves mend together-  
I might once be found whole.

Patti Masterman

# Indifference

Indifference replaces the friendship  
Where once partiality reigned,  
And if true interest once was present  
Now all such interest is feigned.

In politeness we must not inquire  
What about the arrangement has changed?  
Though we wonder what made them tire  
And in truth we may feel shortchanged.

But nobody promised us flowers,  
So we mourn the loss of the dear  
While remembering the better hours,  
When everything seemed more clear.

Patti Masterman

# Indigent

I was so poor  
Till I got this body;  
No brain?, ? no way  
To think one thought-y.

I could not go  
Either here or there,  
Just floating above  
On wayward air.

I'm glad I had  
This fine flesh car,  
Else I hadn't gone  
?V?ery far.

Someday I'll be  
Like I used to be;  
No head, no feet-  
Disembodied.

Patti Masterman

# Infected

Why be afraid of a knife in a word,  
A blade in a vowel, or serrated syllables;  
Why not admit that to live is absurd-  
Or that though some live, some are barely able?

When whispered projectiles are portents of doom-  
A glint of the eye, an upturned inflection-  
And a thousand stings can live in one room;  
If death is the end, life is the infection.

Patti Masterman

# Infinite Corridor

Memories and time give other meanings  
Prehistoric nerve was made of almost nothing-  
Roots, berries, and salamanders in fire  
Some metals possess the same memory: they can be bent  
If hammered; they won't shatter like ancient grudges  
In the antiqued world of causal urges  
The night has a presumptive disorder  
Saints pressed on glass preside  
The once-begotten souls arrive late, clustering like bubbles  
Lighter now than any known atomic number they begin to rise  
Away from the repelling fields beneath  
The last dregs of vital force are propellant  
To leave the swaddling clothes of Earth behind  
Wrapped in filaments of waning dreams, they take flight  
Weighing less than a death's-head gulp of air  
Hollow city shapes are in the dark, and restless rivers wrinkle  
In sinuous scrawls, as if they knew their destination  
And have all eternity to get there  
Above, the worn amalgam begins to disintegrate  
Organic shapes are rendered out of Earth's sloppy embrace  
The alphabet of elements goes free fall again  
A bevy of tongues closes down shop, like lids on retorts  
Glass keeps flowing molecules along gravity's indention's  
While self empties out, even as fine crystal does:  
Stretching across infinities corridor.

Patti Masterman

# Infinite Domain

The Internet's in my blood now:  
Full blown, incessantly flowing  
I used to be terrified of computers-  
Always messed everything up; lost the cursor;  
Lost my files, to the god of 0's and 1's  
And now, the packets stream continuously  
Into my open mouthed cache  
When the system breaks down  
I dream restlessly of keyboards..  
Monitors I try to flesh out in my dreams  
And telepathy works in virtual reality  
There is no difference at all-  
Awareness is awareness, whether  
Someone is local,  
Or lost in the infinite domain  
At some imaginary address:  
Just give the psyche a point to aim at  
And it fires away, never missing;  
A two-way radio telescope,  
Never wondering why it should be able to.  
Everything is just an extension  
Of what we are, and what we do down here.  
I think that's the lesson  
I think I've learned it well enough:  
The human being has always been  
Hard wired for wireless.

Patti Masterman

# Infinite Monkey Theorem

Even if a million monkeys typed  
for millions of years,  
My poetry would never be  
as good as theirs.

'Given enough time, a hypothetical chimpanzee typing at random would, as part of its output, almost surely produce one of Shakespeare's plays (or any other text) .'

Patti Masterman

# Infinity

I'm caught in infinity  
Like a salmon downstream  
Like a lemming, in mid-air;  
On the stair, to nothing's-there.

I'm rumored to contain  
Circling moons, in a plasma'd frame  
A briny, inviolate ocean;  
Emotion, of one God's notion.

I got lost, inside some dream  
Where matter's unbound from time,  
At the cusp of eternal night  
In the midst of infinity.

Patti Masterman

# Inflicted Upon Love

I drew the sterile drapes and readied the scalpel.  
The patient was prepped and breathing quietly,  
The face so relaxed- as only I had seen it, many times before:

It was my lover, who had agreed to go under the knife,  
To let me see the heart that loved, the muscles that moved beneath mine.  
The paralytics had done their task, and all was peaceful below.

I cut deeply toward the sternum, laying over the fat layers.  
The saw made quick work of the ribcage, which separated fully,  
The retractors held the open framework, how beautiful it would be!

How many got to see the special engine that animated their loved one?  
Then I saw it- the grainy scar tissue, the gritty white crepe paper  
Of a heart besieged by battle, the evidences of many brutal attacks.

The enlargement, the blood leakage- with every beat,  
The hole was quietly seeping out the red fires of life, in secret,  
Though outwardly everything still appeared fine.

Sobbing, I pushed the ribs back into place, and wired them together.  
I left the room, as the stitching of the ruby flesh was beginning.  
One is never prepared to see the wounds one has inflicted upon love.

Patti Masterman

# Inherited Traitors

I thought we would become like sisters  
But instead, she became the jealous adversary.

And the other woman pretended friendship  
Drowning in her personal bottle of selfish  
While trying to kill and sever my connections.

I never looked for harm before, without real motive:  
I was in a guerrilla war without benefit of basic training  
The oldest war known to mankind  
The war where the enemy whittles away at you till you've disappeared.

Now I take no prisoners; the enemy is all around  
But I have learned that distance minimizes injury  
I don't believe I am the only woman  
Forced to live in this war zone  
Of feminine wiles and clandestine secrets.

No longer walking through mine fields,  
Tiptoeing with my eyes shut  
Past the other headless bodies.

Who thought deceit would always arrive in recognizable clothes?  
Don't waste time trying to imagine it might have been different:  
Some evils can't be avoided in civilizations alliances  
It has been so since the dawn of human society:  
Traitors that can't be executed must be castrated.

Patti Masterman

# Inoculate

Inoculate with love the self,  
And pain will immolate;  
And multiply by ten- besides-  
The longing you'd abate.

Sever all the hearts are true,  
And leave them hanging there  
As admonition, for the rest-  
That love is built- on air-

Patti Masterman

# Insanity Rules The Night

During bright hours of the day's perfect reason  
We pay our dues, with studied politeness  
To debts of logic: But after dark things are different

We pull up the covers, turn backs on ambiguity  
Only to fall down again into insanity; calamity  
Fire, flood, and eternal damnation

Over and over again, in the disordered night  
We must give up the dominions of order,  
The principalities of purpose

Because a balance has to be maintained  
To keep everything co-existing in equilibrium  
Cognitive reliance versus cognitive dissonance

If well ordered thought were to usurp  
Chaos and disorder, only to the single  
Decimal point place; there'd be no more dreaming

And as one man's lucidity is another's breakdown  
The degrees of sanity would become imagination's playground  
With little to distinguish between them

Half the world gone missing suddenly  
Might be a catastrophe worthy  
Of the stuff of which nightmares are crafted.

Patti Masterman

# Insomnia Reconstructed

Insomnia reminds us of how the world gets demolished  
And the too-sharp corners rounded off  
During the time we normally would be sleeping.

At 12 a.m, we hear the sick baby screaming  
But by 2, the sound is growing weaker;  
And there are only mewling noises after that;  
While It's mother hopes that perhaps sleep is coming finally.

At 2 a.m, the serial killer has grown tired  
Of toying with his latest catch  
And he finishes them off then, and falls asleep soundly  
To his favorite lullaby, the drip-dropping  
Of the last escaping blood,  
Steaming on it's way down to the cold basement floor.

By 3 a.m. the neighborhood cats have paired off  
For their square dancing routines  
And have gone off to nap for a few minutes  
Before continuing the rehearsals.

And in the hospital, the one barely clinging  
To the naked, brazen edges of life  
Begins to give it up;  
Agonal breathing starts,  
And the survivors give a start  
And wake up again, wide-eyed again in their torture chairs.

By 4 a.m.  
The baby has turned blue; but the mother has now fallen asleep  
Rigor mortis has begun to set in, on the killers latest victim  
The cats are at it again  
And the relatives are hugging one another  
In the hospital corridor;  
Relieved their long vigil has come to a conclusion.

By 5 a.m.  
The hearse drivers are working out their routes all over town  
The serial killer is snoring and dreaming of his next victim's cries.

And the dog is scratching at the hands of the mother;  
She gives a start, awakens and looks over at the infant  
And then begins to scream.

The cats begin to return to their respective territories  
After having bricks thrown at them repeatedly through the night.

The world has been demolished during the dark hours,  
And remade again during the daylight,  
By the single breadth of one tear, on one trembling eyelash hair  
Repeated over and over, and multiplied by billions of times.

And every night it is deconstructed  
And every dawn the rebuilding starts.  
And anyone who questions the economy of this  
Is instantly buried, under the awful weight of the implication itself.

Patti Masterman

# Insomniac Agoraphobic Incubus

It comes on bended knee sometimes  
Begging to become a poem or a rhyme

Patti Masterman

# Insouciant World

Time is such a weird concept  
Where is it located and  
Where does it start and end?  
I think it lives in the contours  
Of the brains wrinkles, where  
Every moment is omnipotent,  
Everlasting; for as long as you can remember it-  
That's why remorse rears up, to bite us again and again:  
The more you relive a moment  
The stronger it grows;  
The more you can forget about it,  
The less influence it can have.  
And when the brain dies, so too goes the memories,  
That only had a life in you;  
The ones nobody else has.  
In this insouciant world,  
Nothing is so precious, it should last forever-  
There must always be room available  
For the freshness and vitality  
That life craves.

Patti Masterman

# Instinct Gradually Takes Us Over

Instinct gradually takes us over,  
Our dealings with others; too many times  
We found ourselves running for cover  
Gave too much info; it's forever there  
Circling our heads in the gossiping air:  
Feels like a future reprimand;  
Wish you could remove it, sleight-of-hand  
Only later, you realized your mistake  
Telling too much; and the others take  
The worst of all possible explanations  
Because you gushed, sans hesitation.  
They projected their lives, over careless lies  
Then the insult falls on their thin hides  
Stares at us from their wounded eyes  
A little extra knowledge comes back to haunt:  
It waves at you, like a secret taunt-  
The older I get, the less I say;  
And then there's much less hell to pay.

Patti Masterman

# Insubstantial

When I'm a ghost, I'll be thin  
As a period at the sentence end,  
And thinner still; I'll have no form  
But mostly be made up, of moan.

When I'm a ghost, my photo caught  
By cam or camera, but seen naught;  
Some slight disturbance of the air,  
While most agree- there's nothing there.

Patti Masterman

# Insurmountable

In this world, everything has an obvious or covert meaning,  
In the next world, not so much.

Here we may speak our minds;  
There we have no mouth-  
Or perhaps words are verboten, between them and us.

There seems a wall that divides, so words  
Are not allowed to flow freely between.

This wall has been the subject of much controversy;  
Famous magicians, before death, have arranged experiments  
In hopes of defeating this wall, but it remains unchallenged.

Any communicating done after dying  
Must appear to have been accidental, coincidental,  
This is the only rule of communication  
Discernible, between this world and that.

What rules in the world of determinate accidents there  
Rules here also:  
Plans come to fruition only by synergistic accident,  
Although here we like to think they happened according to our will.

Some people will even go to the next world, entirely by accident-  
And some remain here, in the same way.

Two worlds, peopled with the same inhabitants- sooner or later.  
And it's always later, than we think;  
Let us not erect contiguous walls, just because it's allowed:  
If we avoid the real walls here, the ones to come will be insurmountable.

Patti Masterman

# Intaglio In Sand

A dour witch casts a wave over girls lying on beach towels  
But the girls are not real they are more like scarecrows  
As immaterial as seaweed feels, and more salty than tears,  
And the witch is more like a surly ocean  
Being worshiped under a golden sun,  
Curled in the misty arms of infinity.

And the wave is not an evil spell, it is more like a baptism  
Of spirit into spirit, and matter flinging upon matter-  
And the waves dashing themselves, breaking into molecules  
And the unbalanced atoms sprinting, like a lifeguard race,  
To rejoin with the air or the sea.

And the shadows are deepening to loosen more shadows,  
Like the rings of Atlantis, that live on in pages of books,  
Bound in mythical libraries, lying in sunken cities far beneath.  
With shooting stars decorating the borders.

Storms randomly color the panorama, like pages crayoned by children,  
Everything has a rare patina like reworked gold at sunset.  
Scarecrows and mermaids keep turning back into one another:  
One floats away, but the other might disappear for centuries.

The dreams of sailors keep everything fresh and alive;  
And hidden streams of antimatter hold the waters in their basins,  
And Starfish mark the portals of the nether-worlds:  
Nothing lives here but was dreamed up by ancient gods of antiquity,  
Who never could have believed once they were gods.

Patti Masterman

# Interrogation

Every day somewhere, there is a middle-aged woman  
Who stands above some wheel-chair bound, some bedridden person  
Someone wrinkled and blanketed, who seems uncaring about anything.  
And she says, 'Mother; Grandfather, do you know who I am;  
Who this is; who that is, can you remember? '

As if it were of paramount importance each day  
That we remember to keep putting that mask on,  
The one with the ties flapping in the wind,  
Behind so much increasing emptiness;  
The ties that bind us to others.

And the truth is that our minds have capable plumbing systems  
And once they begin to overflow due to disease, old age,  
The flushing begins, gently at first,  
Then more all the time, until our images and memories  
Begin to swirl down the vortex too, taking our identity with them.

All that's left of us then are some cards in wallets, payment stubs,  
Some numbers; bank accounts that we can no longer manage.  
And that woman or man, standing over us,  
Is become the worst nuisance then, sent to torture us daily  
With that tired expression, of patient reckoning.

So that we must strain to remember why it is so important  
That we have to try so hard, to grasp hold of things  
That have disappeared on us, and we have to wonder  
What could be so important, after all?

And on the worst days, we come back just enough to know  
That we have forgotten so much more  
Than they could ever comprehend, our Interrogators;  
Always there just above us, with their bottomless, questioning gaze.

Patti Masterman

# Into The Black Hole

Into the black hole heaven of heart  
You will go, when death comes beckoning.  
In the hidden vortex of no-time,  
Unknown colors await your discovery;  
Never heard before music notes will chime.

Safe from the world, you'll live aside,  
Where everything's a flowing-backwards tide.

Patti Masterman

# Into The Bright Light Of Day

Time was, the touched, the never-quite-right  
Members of the family were hidden away,  
So as not to alarm or embarrass genteel visitors-  
Some subterranean, out of the way closet or  
Root cellar, or shackled in the barn.  
Conspicuously absent from neighborhood gatherings;  
Almost as if they had never been born at all.  
And nobody dared mention their name.

Broad, cheerful hospitals now house the disturbed  
With able, smiling nurses and caseworkers,  
Though, the unfortunate ones are no less upsetting-  
If somewhat cleaner, and there are tidy names and  
Classifications and up- to- date treatments and medicines.  
Weekly group therapies and no more chains;  
No longer closeted; they dwell in the bright light of day.  
And nobody dares mention their name.

Patti Masterman

# Into Thin Air

We were never in our pictures,  
Though our smiles were frozen fast:  
It was the flutter of a shutter-  
And you knew it'd never last.

All our dreams ended at daylight,  
And real life took over then;  
Though the past was fading fast-  
We could still remember when.

You can go back to the photos;  
You can see the people there-  
But they're ghosts, who lost the most  
Of themselves, into thin air.

Patti Masterman

# Intransigent Void

Intransigent void:

Filled by a string of worlds like pearls/  
Bloated with words from a million tongues/  
The body's vile or the body's temple/  
Everything can be imagined, is-  
Every degree of indifference, this.

Patti Masterman

# Introduction To Silence

Silence upon other silence grows;  
Taller than any skyward cathedral,  
Wider than divisions, between two brothers.

The only sincere silence is natural,  
Or found by a flickering candle's flame,  
And the latency, of a sleeping child.

After a death, some silence may roar  
Down zigzagging corridors, of dazed;  
Haunting midnight's vertiginous dreams.

Numbness opens vast reservoirs of quiet  
And in the resultant- preternaturally stilled-  
Silence sometimes finds its earthly voice.

I now present to you, Silence itself-  
Bereft of courtesies, or dignified flourishes;  
Bare as a babe at death- or birth.

Patti Masterman

# Invincible

I carved invincibly your name out of sand  
Then tried to carry it in the palm of my hand  
Half the grains fell, as I sank like an anchor  
But inside your heart, I found no trace of rancor.

So take me and build me your castles own dream  
With tower and parapet, and well-mortared seam  
Then rule me with kindness, and reign long within:  
And I'll call you lover, but also, my friend.

Patti Masterman

# Invisible Gods Whims

Ponderous, we travel curving lines  
In ever widening circles, unknowing  
That the curl of space fools us, the arc of time laughs

As all the while, maddening waves move us  
Farther from shore, away from the buoys  
They always told us would mark the safe boundary edge

The birds in air, sea creatures beneath;  
Between heaven and earth, a multitude of beings

But in the middle we flounder in lonesome lives, waiting  
Reeled in by invisible gods whims, anticipating..

Patti Masterman

# Invisible Participant

When the ?Christian grows cold,  
he can wrap himself with bible verses.  
The saint has bodily mortification.  
The dead have their shrouds,  
and satin lined boxes.

The lover has his beloved,  
the drinker, his drink,  
the dog, other dogs.

Our most basic comfort  
will always be the thing we identify with,  
or consider that we belong to.

As a ghost haunts the last place of living,  
I simply haunt your heart.  
I tell you this, that you may realize  
whenever you feel startled  
to find you are not really alone,  
that it is only I; stumping along your mind's corridors,  
bumbling over your thoughts,  
awakening you from sound dreams.

Probing your memories like a tentacle-  
The invisible participant, of your life's days..

Patti Masterman

# Is Chow-Chow A Vegetable?

In syllables we blunder  
Into far tundras  
Stumbling drunken  
Over verandas

Last man standing's  
A pompous geranium  
Or bumbling pamplemousses  
On tumbled-down trellis cabooses

Tongue-tangled tattlers  
Venting priasmic  
Smacking the chatterers  
With scenic miasmas

Patti Masterman

# Is Poetry If It Were A Language?

Is poetry if it were a language, that he it's king would be?  
Instead he is in it's tongue; heir of the only speaking  
Forgotten son of love, flying his learning far fearlessly  
Free above the fetters, taboos of society.

If poetry were his wings, the chattering birds  
Would move aside the day, only to watch him glide  
Dodging the clouds and red-hot comet tails,  
Finding maidens forever lost in witches wells.

Speaking in brogues and childrens prattle;  
Deciphering his words no easy matter  
For in Morse code he steals the truth to abide  
But Braille is where darkly his most thoughts hide.

Patti Masterman

# Is The Sky As Wide

Is time something does not exist,

Is nature just its deadly kiss,

Is freedom just a bell that rings?

And did God swindle all the saints

when he gave the angels wings?

Is love something thrown away,

Does death die to live another day;

Do the boneyards rise up while we sleep?

Lest we perish for answers where we lay-

is the sky as wide as worlds are deep?

Patti Masterman

# Is There A Way To Love

Is there a way to love  
Where the timid don't get lost,  
The quiet won't be ignored?

Where daydreams are not tossed  
Upon some spinning gyre;  
And spite not the final cost,  
Of those who embraced fire?

Patti Masterman

# Is There A World In Shadow

Is there a world in shadow  
At the gate, where life has fled;  
A place from where the birds have gone,  
And nothing lives but dread?

Where shade holds all the secrets,  
And the dreams are empty shells,  
And the locks have skeleton keys,  
Kept safely down in hell.

Where there are no second chances,  
And the sunlight will not reach,  
And the time is always midnight,  
For the hour will not breach.

Is there a world in shadow,  
Where the living cannot stay,  
With opposing rules of nature  
Where the shadow people play?

Patti Masterman

## Is This Really How It Ends?

I feel someday that I'll walk into a darkened room  
Where the lights seemed to be on just moments ago  
And strangely have gone dark; and in wonder, I'll flip the switch  
And then it will all rear up before me; banners, cakes with candles burning,  
Balloons, flowers; and everybody whom I loved once, and who went away  
Will be there saying, Surprise! We came back

We've been on a really long trip; but we're back now,  
And sure enough, we'll celebrate all the holidays together  
Same as before; the letters will start coming again, with those  
Familiar stories about the dogs and the cows, and Uncle Oliver  
And Aunt Grace- gosh we have so much to catch up on,  
And they'll be patting my arm, as I in disbelief, am busy cataloging  
Their crows feet and laugh lines; just to be sure, you understand-

Nobody ever needed the lies of religion as much as I do;  
But those promises they just can't keep-  
And I know it would break my heart all over again  
And I'm afraid next time, there would be nothing left worth keeping  
So I hang on to death for dear life.

Patti Masterman

# Is Your Magic Really True?

Is your magic really true?

All these things pass, from me to you;  
For some we sense; and some we knew  
From you to me, would pass again,  
Like every day, turns into night;  
Like every virtue, hides some sin;  
Like we need dark, to sense the light:  
I'd fall in love, a thousand times  
With he who works, so faithfully  
To unbury that rare soul, in me.  
If he could but show once, my face  
And spark that vision, with his grace.

Patti Masterman

# It Goes Unheard

It goes unheard  
Just a spindle of word  
A hiss in the blood;  
Love, undeterred  
It goes like air  
The least fettered way  
And loiters behind  
All that you say  
It's what's left unsaid  
That's heard, most of all  
The high pitched silence;  
A heart's secret call.

Patti Masterman

# It Happened Again This Morning

It happened again this morning  
I woke up, on the wrong side of my body  
Facing backward, my knees jammed up  
Against my spine, neck bent up inside  
My thorax: everything gets all messed up  
During the nights, much as I try  
To stay in proper alignment  
My chiropractor left town  
On the last train at midnight  
For an undisclosed location  
And now I can only look at what's behind me  
Never what's in front  
Nothing makes sense from upside down  
I look like a miscarriage of yoga  
Or a half eaten bagel that landed  
Cream cheese side down  
Dogs can't figure out whether  
To pee on me, or bury me.  
I remind myself of that old joke, now:  
'I'm a frayed Knot'  
I guess from now on I'll sell tickets  
To the human pretzel exhibit.  
If people don't lose their appetites  
I'll sell snacks after the show.  
It's a living I guess.

Patti Masterman

# It Must Be Near To How God Thinks Of It

I could feed on mankind's imagination alone for eons;  
As long as the music still remained, the poetry,  
The art; the cathedrals, the beauty, the mystery;  
I would cradle that flame forever, just waiting  
In case they should ever come back again.

Patti Masterman

# It Rains On The Street

It rains on the street,  
Like a god weeping slow  
Tears on the hapless  
People below.

Why is he weeping?  
Strange no one knows;  
Strange life goes on  
In reverse, to and fro.

The tears falling silent  
On the grey stone,  
Tears that nobody,  
But no one, will own.

Patti Masterman

# It Seems The English

It seems the English got it all backward:  
Short teas, and long narrative poems  
Until your teeth fell back into your skull  
And the sun dipped deep into the Thames.

Whereas, the Japanese knew all along  
The correct way, if only you had asked:  
Tea, to be correct, goes on for hours  
With a strictly regimented hierarchy of serving

While the poetry is an average three lines apiece  
But of such profound observation  
As to occupy the entirety of the tea time  
And even provide material for ensuing dreams.

Patti Masterman

# It Takes Some Darkness

It takes some darkness to unveil the light:  
The dark diamond, in the midst of squalor;  
Revelatory schism, of blackest night.

It takes some evil, to unmask the pure:  
The slanted shadow, running crooked walls;  
Trickle near the stream, of tainted sewer.

It takes the demon, to oppose the saint:  
As cunning plans, reveal the innocent;  
And bravest courage, holds up the faint.

In the midst of two illumined souls,  
A mirror shows back to them their splendor;  
But beside that fullness: the ravening hole.

Patti Masterman

# It Wounds The Earth

It wounds the Earth  
To bury a fallen soldier;  
His strong, loving hands,  
His laughter forever sobered.

Loved ones above  
Look down on so raw a grave,  
Their hearts fully wrung-  
Because everything, he gave.

The pains are diffuse,  
Fading slowly, as real pain does-  
The cause, it was all;  
Now forget everything, he was

Give back to the Earth  
His noble heart of glory-  
But tell the tale often,  
That thus live his valiant story.

Patti Masterman

# It's A Foregone Conclusion

It's a foregone conclusion, a mental contusion:  
My web presence will live on without me,  
All of my websites suspended in air;  
Balanced on airwaves, even when I'm not there-

It will seem I'm eternal, and no one knows where,  
With sparks of electricity forming my lair-  
Even when my skull and my bones are quite bare-  
My virtual self just goes on living.

Patti Masterman

## It's A Harsh Light Time Gives Faces

It's a harsh light time gives faces;  
More with shadow, than with sun.  
More's unsaid now than gets spoken,  
Countless mysteries are begun.

It's a mute pain, in the lines there,  
Where freedom once sang, far away.  
But on some lost day, things get counted;  
Some faces waiting, more silent springs.

Patti Masterman

# It's A Trick Of The Heart

It's a trick of the heart-  
To grow in the sun;  
Stretch out, in the dark-  
While a life comes undone.

Rewound, by our days-  
To the start of the spool;  
Where, babbling again-  
By life, made a fool.

Pretend we don't see-  
That the joke has an end;  
Making plans for the day-  
Till there's naught left to spend.

Patti Masterman

# It's A Wrap

Christmas day, and the most fantastic music  
Is playing on the radio, telling us  
Between the notes, between the lines:  
Let's wrap the world up with love  
And give it to one another today.

Patti Masterman

# It's All In, The Viewpoint

I'm not worried to find. that the universe is encoded.  
In special super-symmetry wave strings.  
With pseudo matter. blinking in and out of being.  
In the Zero-Point energy field.  
And unexplainable Higgs - Boson particles.  
Circumambulating freely.  
Along with anti - matter.  
Which could someday conceivably contact.  
With regular tuned matter.  
And result in the annihilation. of everything around us.

I'm not afraid to find. that it seems to follow  
Zen, Buddha, Judeo-Christian, Tibetan.  
And other religious teachings in its particulars. and  
I'm not upset at the teleological interpretations  
always being put.  
Upon the natural mechanics of the universe.

I'm not fearful that wormholes.  
Could open up heretofore unexpected gateways.  
Between widely divergent parts of the cosmos.  
Where perhaps we would find alien life forms.  
Alien to us, anyway.

I'm much more concerned with just staying alive, down here  
For as long as I can; or was supposed to..  
Which may seem much less important,  
in the over-all scheme of things- but not to me.

Patti Masterman

# It's Complicated

The people who didn't love you anyway  
Never notice you withdrew, died, moved away;  
The self-absorbed have no window  
To view you through. Friends of your parents,

Friends of friends, once-enemies  
Can't remember your name. It's not their fault,  
The world's pro ego, and the lesser memories  
Have to go.

The world moves fast down wavering lines,  
Which only once we tried to align,  
And light comes in at a severe angle-  
Faces in shadow, causality tangled.

Lives are Sanskrit, actions Morse-  
Repeater button's broken,  
We have no recourse-  
Only moon watches the half that's night;  
While we fret in darkness and complain of light.

Patti Masterman

# It's Elementary

Bubbling worlds; a frothy mix  
Once creations fuse is lit  
There's no recalling matter, spewing  
As it fills up the world we're viewing  
With one accord, we're conclusive  
That the photons light intrusive  
Points the way to the centrifuge  
In which our worldly atoms brewed  
And mind's contained of that same pot  
From which we guts and sinews got.

Patti Masterman

# It's Good Dreams End

It's good dreams end-  
Back to the grindstone,  
Back to the din,  
Back to the start-  
To begin again.

It's good dreams end-  
Even the best;  
Gone so fast-  
Or the horrors, passed;  
Not one can last.

It's good dreams end-  
And delusions cease,  
You'll find some peace;  
When we get release-  
All things surcease.

Patti Masterman

# It's Happy To Have Tasks

It's happy to have tasks, for the world needs our touch;  
Our needfulness is needed, it's necessary so much,  
For the universe is messy, it requires a loving hand  
To straighten out the matter, and we're the one that can.

It's happy to have family, we're not born to be alone,  
And then befriend the lonely, who go all alone toward home,  
For spirits need a comfort especially on the darkest nights,  
To steady hearts that falter and then point their way to light..

Patti Masterman

# It's Love, I Will Remember

I knew a man once, knew him  
Deeply, from the outside in  
Someone on another continent  
Who had become a friend.

In time, he came to tell me  
About things that he had lost,  
But also what he'd gained-  
And he never counted costs.

He'd buried a daughter,  
And a brother too;  
He'd done a lot of living  
Though the years now seem too few.

I thought we'd have a lot of time  
On this marble of blue-green,  
But I think that he knew better  
And the future, he had seen.

But like a true gentleman,  
He kept it all inside,  
For he had the quietest dignity;  
He had a gentle pride.

He saw the good and bad in life,  
And spoke about his garden;  
Others might grow petty, mean  
But his heart would never harden.

He made himself stay vulnerable  
To the lessons he would live,  
And now it's plain as day to all,  
He had a lot to give.

And although he's gone away now,  
His words still speak quite clear:  
I'd like to think that someday soon  
This world he loved, can hear.

\*\*\*\*\*

SAL, Paddy  
I will never forget you

Patti Masterman

# It's Magic

I'm the magic genie.  
I'll grant your three wishes;  
Just give me your checkbook,  
Your titles, and your firstborn  
Sign over your mortgage,  
Your cars, and your IRA.  
Sign on the dotted line,  
In triplicate, with a notary.  
I'll also need the safe deposit box key  
And a copy of your insurance,  
And last will and testament  
Made out in my name.  
Oh, and by the way,  
I'm not responsible for any wishes  
That go missing, that go against  
Applicable laws and tax codes and  
Results may differ from representative  
Cases and though you may find yourself  
On the highway wearing only tube socks  
With a 'will work for food' sign  
You have no recourse under statutory law  
But don't worry-  
You can always write a book.

Patti Masterman

# It's Nobody's Fault

I like how music and culture overlap  
I love how movies and reality mesh  
Thirty frames a second, and holographs are king  
In the cubist world of the eleven dimensions  
It's nobody's fault.

I like how senses and minds reflect  
The outer environments subtle cues  
Ink blots and symbol cards give themselves away  
There are no secrets in the subconscious collective  
It's nobody's fault.

I enjoy that the inner man is pure freedom  
Formed into a sacred fountain of living flame  
Self renewing and bright as a welders torch  
When treasure's hid, no fools may conquer it  
It's nobody's fault.

Patti Masterman

# It's Not A Problem For Me

No biography no poems,  
No comments no votes;  
No messaging the poet-  
He's avoiding bloat.

No copyright infringement  
Is hereby intended,  
On his fervent nonbeing  
Of verbiage nonintention.

Patti Masterman

## It's Not As Bad (As It Seems)

Where once love seemed safe  
(At least he saved my heart)  
Through rejecting me  
(His refusal was pure art)

He planned his escape  
(And he carried out his part)  
And lonely's my place  
(But inside's a dreadful dark)

Now I'm the dusty refuse on the street  
(though was done, with no ill will at all)  
I should be accustomed to defeat  
(But why should my own smallness make him tall?)

Patti Masterman

## It's Not That We Would Kiss The Flesh-

It's not that we would kiss the flesh-  
No; kiss the soul, should rumoured place  
Be real, we'd not value solid steel  
O'er bone and sinew; nothing feel  
The wispy ghost, in deep tomb sealed-  
The body's but the cart and horse  
To carry love's own corpse, of course.

Patti Masterman

# It's Only Human To Dream

It's only human to dream  
Down the narrowed chasms of mean  
And cyclones found above the jet stream

We can go where footsteps aren't allowed  
Where only dreams have meaning  
Strange secrets are allowed

Reality can come  
Only if it plays along-  
After all, isn't life  
A lonesome, silly song?

Patti Masterman

# It's Pain Not To Write

It's pain not to write-  
I'm blooming, let me be  
To fight my own fight

How clever, to be  
Always right;  
Or else, fit to be tied  
In the pale moonlight

Ties come unbound  
When you're on the ground:  
In some full moon, I'll drown

Write the pain blooming,  
It's not always me-  
I'm my own clever fight

How right, to be pale  
Under tied moonlight,  
Unbound, unbind

Drowned, when you're full:  
Moon on the ground

Drown moon, full in  
Grounded, unbound  
And moonlight pale

Tied in fits  
Always right;  
Though too clever, to fight

Fight I? fight me? and how  
Let me be, let me bloom  
Write no pain

Ground by moon  
Full, when you're drowned  
Unbind, unbound

Moonlight tied under  
Pale be to right  
How clever, to fight

On my own, always  
Or if I'm not me:  
When it blooms,  
Pain writes.

Patti Masterman

## It's Patently Obvious

If fugitive fermentation could explain  
The way things spread themselves, again  
Upon the ocean of ubiquitous travel  
As a single dropp of oil, does unravel;  
Rainbows seeping, in a circular fashion  
Fumes far away the errant gasing station  
From a single random spark's ignition, per force  
The fire mows obliquely, toward the fuel source  
Indomitably, as though possessed weight and strength  
And address and destination, of which to speak  
While if the brain's more deliberate, synaptic threads  
Were more evenly spaced, throughout the head  
And could line up in tandem; an endless link  
In that quickened chain, makes one able to think;  
And if eyes should fasten on the first thing they see:  
I could never be your intellectual property.

Patti Masterman

# It's So Easy

It's so easy to write childish things  
Instead of finding a beautiful pattern  
Of phrase; some mesmerizing strains  
For you'll find, that it really does matter:  
Always pay well, the reader who brings  
True nobility, to all your refrains.

It's so easy, to just pick a word  
Off the top of your head; it's absurd  
To think that the lovely words wait  
To be carelessly plucked, still unheard,  
And a full ripened success, anticipate  
As an echo from loose words reverb.

It's so easy to expect glowing praise  
And pick your own words for the critic;  
But real writers don't get any raises  
For words which are none too specific.  
You may say you're just going through phases,  
But we find your work most soporific..

Patti Masterman

# It's That Time Again

The razors slice, the body bleeds  
But of her pain, they take no heed.

The mirror reveals abject disgust,  
But there is no one left to trust.

Where the friends who vowed to stay  
Close beside, to salve the day?

She's not surprised, and that's the worst;  
That there's not one, revoke her curse.

It's another long and lonely day,  
And night has not yet had its say.

Of rage, her body bears the brunt:  
It's that self-mutilation time of month.

Patti Masterman

# It's The New Century Now

It's the new century now and you are gone away;  
You had only a few years in the new millennium.  
Your time was up and so you disappeared,  
Taking with you many memories and comforts.

I had always looked forward with hope, to this century;  
Never anticipating for one moment  
It was to be the century you disappeared into, forever.  
Perhaps even that should leave me with some hope?

Except that you are but one vertebra, in a spine of billions  
Of whom the tears left behind for them would fill an ocean:  
So that now I deduce the world is built upon tears and ashes-  
And I feel sorry for my portion, that is yet to be spilled.

Patti Masterman

# It's White Noise Takes You

it's white noise takes you  
slowly through the ceiling  
rising like steam, up a newly opened register  
rising, rising to a steady hiss; subtle, subtle  
it feels like this..

like gauze curtains on static panes  
like Georgette bedspreads and chiffon trains  
stiff brides like fondant on tri-layered cakes  
like cake makeup, and long white gloves,  
rushing white light before the films run out..

spiraling careless around the spools,  
when nobody's taken the cartridge off,  
while electric eels jump in meaningless graffiti  
writhing random dirges, from muted lips  
blue-white rushing once-blizzards of words..

if the dead could hear, they'd report white noise  
pressing on their eyelids and vocal cords  
buzz-sawing ears with piano-cut wire  
but only hissing in deaf, toneless key-  
completely gone when white noise takes me..

carnival fugues go roaring on by  
never pausing to explain or why  
white noise calls, like phantom waterfalls  
like changing channels, in dead of night-  
You can see it sparking hidden flashes of light-

and that's the white noise;  
the first moments of time-  
spreading from black holes, into the white..

filling up the Ether, filling so much  
white is its color white is its touch  
twisting white filaments like fishing wire  
it's cool and collected it has no fear  
it's always talking, whenever you're near-

shh- it's talking right now- you hear?

Patti Masterman

# I've Been Hunted

I've been hunted,  
Like a partridge at dawn,  
Hunted down blind alleys of desperation;  
Like I wasn't a man at all  
But somebody's dinner,  
Or after-hours entertainment;  
Shoot-the-can-off-the-fence-post style.

But beware of pastime hunting,  
Because without any warning,  
Prey can change into predator,  
And the game becomes about more than boredom;  
More than simmering a pot on a stove  
And the fire can change stray bullets into lead anchors,  
And the arrow-point can lodge without ever being aimed.

Things wound without conscience,  
For that is their nature,  
But an act without conscience  
Becomes a sonic sucking chest-wound  
That can consume an entire world,  
Because that is the way of remorselessness:  
The conscience of a wildfire.

Patti Masterman

# I've Earned All My Scars

I've earned all of my scars;  
You won't find too many of them  
Those pinkish, oddly shaped pearls, of too-white tissue  
And mine are mostly internal.  
I never had to resort to razor blades-  
I knew life would take care of all of that for me.  
No tattoos either; but I do have many road maps  
Of foreign, exotic places, all over my legs.  
I figure they must be distant, fringe outposts of civilization  
And maybe all the roads, are just dirt:  
No legitimate city would ever build such a mess;  
Nameless streets, circling around on themselves, going nowhere  
Dead ends; but midway a sudden ten-lane superhighway erupts  
Out of nothing at all,  
And there's so many streets, there's no room left to build a thing.  
Still I keep looking, hoping some day to find  
The place, whose routes I carry upon me  
So I can finally find out the names.

Patti Masterman

# I've Quit Believing

I've quit believing that just being kind  
Will keep others from being at my throat  
It was a hard lesson, went against everything  
I thought that I had ever known.

I've quit believing just loving enough  
Can save another from their fate  
I've seen too much of hopelessness  
And jealousy, and random hate.

Got to believe in myself, from now on  
And I've never been amenable, to praise  
Got to look in that mirror now, every morning  
And tell you I love you, to get through the day.

Patti Masterman

# Jealous

Lo I am jealous of the dead,  
Their sins all forgotten;  
Flowers at their head.  
Lo, I am jealous of the dead-  
For they will never be lonely.

Lo I am jealous of those live,  
Their souls begotten;  
The gifts they can give.  
Lo, I am jealous of those live-  
For I am not their only.

Patti Masterman

# Jealous Nature

Earthly love so soon corrupts,  
And others peace, it interrupts:  
The jealous human nature fears  
A loss, if other love appears.  
It's not our choice; second place  
Means loss of power, loss of face;  
To give up our own sovereign crown,  
And sense the ties that bind, unbound.  
If our magic touch seems gone  
We think it best to move along;  
Place faith then in another heart,  
Till death or some new love, doth part.

Patti Masterman

# Jean Ann, His Other Daughter

Jean Ann, his other daughter;  
The one I never knew,  
And I was quite surprised to learn  
The baby shoes, were yours.

Your life upset by parting,  
Divorce- that awful blade-  
That parted you from father;  
And enemies were made.

I don't know what they told you,  
Of him or of his ways,  
Or if you knew he moved at all,  
In your worlds younger days.

I want to tell you, Jean Ann,  
That a sweeter man was not,  
And what your mother wanted,  
Divorcing, was not got.

She only served to distance,  
The dearest thing he loved-  
It's my duty now to tell you,  
He's not here, but now above.

If heaven's not a rumor,  
Where the decent people go,  
He'd be the first in line there-  
Because he loved you so.

(written for Jean Ann, wherever she may be)

Patti Masterman

# Jonbenet The Falling Star You Are

She can't remember that last day.

Was it the cord wrapped tightly around her neck,  
choking breath and thought? Memory can't be retained  
in a brain starved of oxygen. Killer's face  
stalking her, with florid concentration-  
better to wipe it, like her thighs,  
wet with bloodied water. What is being erased:  
innocence, virginity, that last Christmas-  
The secret Santa visit she was longing for.  
This isn't it.

Grace and charm won't save her now,  
it has become obvious, she is only child;  
merely flesh, miniscule articulated human-  
trying to fight some terrible monster  
she can't even put a name to. Who knew  
the evil in fairy tales really existed? Where  
is the good fairy, the hovering angel, the savior  
of all good little girls, who've done nothing wrong?  
Didn't she say her nightly prayers-  
for it must have been this, she was praying against?

Where is Mommy, Daddy; the house so huge and quiet now-  
will they never wake? She tries to rise through the floors,  
screaming at the sleepers, it's not her time.  
But death is the mystery  
too large, for her small frame to easily contain.  
(With her thin arms raised obscenely overhead,  
where frail hands can't scratch at cruel tethers)

The only goodness, that she will forget soon  
who exactly she was, and also these strong hands,  
that blow which broke her vital mind.  
(Before this, all she had known of hands was kindness)

She never looked back again at the shattered window  
Of soul; her eyes, where his staring reflection  
Wavered forever just out of reach, like a falling star.

Patti Masterman

# Joy Comes In The Morning

Joy comes in the morning  
Dread comes in the night:  
Life and love get born each day,  
But dark snuffs out the light.

People die in darkness-  
And greet the dawn with awe:  
Evening is like winter's death;  
Daylight, spring's own thaw

Joy comes in the morning  
Singing greets it's birth-  
Still, half the world's in darkness  
Of our bicameral Earth.

Unknown things are happening,  
Inside dark's canopy;  
Daylight brings the truth to bear,  
Returns the missing key.

Joy comes in the morning  
A smile's upon our face;  
To know that we have hours  
Before night wins the race.

Patti Masterman

# Joy Unexpected

You always bubble up in my mind again,  
Effervescent, like liquid sunbeams captured  
By a moment's reflection, of remembered brilliance;  
Like a memory of a perfect, sunny day,  
An hour when uncertain things turned out right  
Or an unexpected, anonymous gift arrived,  
And the opening of it brought an uncrated smile-  
One that we never beheld, before now.

Like the feel of a small hand, slipped into yours,  
Or a twinkle in the eye, of someone you love;  
Like stars shine above, when there's no moon,  
And a moon, that was thought obscured by clouds;  
Rain showers that never came, or came too late  
To rain on the wedding; the grave; the parade;  
Or a heart that over-flows, with the mere thought of you-  
And the strangest sense of all, that you feel it too?

Patti Masterman

# Just A Minute

It is said that man  
Gives half his heart away;  
While woman merely saves one part-  
For a rainy day.

It is said that woman and man  
Can rarely play together;  
That one will always leave, in snits,  
Has naught to do with weather.

Ones from Venus, ones from Mars,  
So they weren't reared the same;  
And girls think men are too obtuse-  
And men think they're inane.

I think the world's a nicer place  
That it has both them in it  
(But if you think you know her mind,  
Well just wait one more minute-)

Patti Masterman

# Just Be Happy And I Won'T Ask

Just be happy and I won't ask  
If you cry, as the sun goes down  
I won't worry if you can say  
Your lovely mind's not come unwound

Be content enough to seem  
As though you'd never need to lie  
As if you don't regret your life  
Or sit in darkness asking why

I can stand to live apart  
And always ponder how you are  
Only so long as you couch that lie  
With all the wonder, that you are.

Patti Masterman

# Just Because

Just because you can write in English;  
Even very good English, at times  
Just because you can write in rhymes  
And they don't come apart at the seams  
Doesn't make you a Keats or a Wordsworth  
Doesn't make the dead quote you in dreams  
Words are just bolts, and the syntax are nuts  
And after that, there's no ifs, ands or buts:  
Any monkey could type any Shakespeare lines  
But for enough typewriters and long enough time.

Patti Masterman

# Just In Case, I'll Remove All Doubt

Where angels fear to tread, there go I:  
Stomping in my heavy boots, tracking earth  
I always have to do it; why oh why  
Can't I ever learn, a sense of mirth's  
Not enough to get me by;  
Cause not everyone enjoys truth on the fly

Where angels fear to tread, I always park:  
Keeping my mouth shut's a long lost art  
I never learned my lesson well: shut up  
Breaking my own and other's hearts  
Always doing it the hard way's rough;  
Never did close my mouth quite soon enough

Where angels fear to tread, I'll be found dead  
Some day, and then they'll shake their heads:  
She never paid any heed to hallowed ground  
And what goes round comes back around  
She spoke without thinking, it often was said-  
Better muffle that coffin, before we drop it down-

Patti Masterman

# Just Let Man Become My Religion

Just let man become my religion now;  
Man, with all his hopeless dreams  
Still sustaining him through the gamut of drought and famine.  
Man, with his ultimate sorrowing forgiveness,  
Whether through disenfranchisement or forgetfulness.  
Man, with his long memory of childhood  
And short remembrance of his own old age.  
Man, with his miraculous intelligence and empathy-  
I can live without creed as long as you are with me, mankind  
For the embrace concealed within the black pincer of your eye is contagious;  
Even though I were without desire, in this ancient world of worlds.  
Your mere shadow could awaken within me compassion;  
And your abiding presence assures me that solitude will never triumph,  
As long as you are near. And without our fellows beside us,  
Eternal life would be known as the eternal curse.  
And because you must in time come to an end, I can accept even death;  
For if you go ahead of me, I know that you will be waiting for me even there.  
And that takes all the sting out, even though death  
Will always be the awful master of this world.

Patti Masterman

# Just Let Me Drown

Love is the rain storm  
That we don't need an umbrella for,  
Because we wish to get soaked-  
All the way down to our deepest, secret layer.

Love is the long walk  
That we don't need wheels for,  
Because we don't wish to miss  
One mediocre sight, on our journeys.

Love is the element  
That we swim and have our life in-  
And none of us would wish for a life jacket;  
Preferable is drowning, than to live with it's vacancy.

Patti Masterman

# Just Let The Darkness Come

Just let the darkness come,  
If it can't be helped; let it come soon:  
Let it remove your too familiar touch  
From the rippling canvas of my heart's hesitations.  
Erase too, all the moments that were stolen,  
Borrowed from the quotas of the innocent-  
Remove the malfeasance of pleasure, that was given in error.

Replace with a blank face, the soul's colorless artifact,  
Of what was once you-  
And then we must forget the words; already fading now,  
And if even the memory can no longer bear itself,  
Let it fade, like that instrument  
That by accident, or on purpose  
Is the last voice heard, at the concert's end; the one  
That reminds the audience, as they rise to leave  
That however much you try to control  
The music and power of humanity's emotions,  
It can always break free again,  
Even though no one ever expects it.

And though it's not supposed to be heard then,  
After the show is done; the musicians busy packing up their black bags,  
It sends it's echo, far into the empty aisles, it's voice bouncing  
From surface to surface, in the lofty building's sky  
As if it longed to keep singing it's own voice forever,  
In a kind of animated, directionless passion, maybe to continue  
Until even the theater succumbed, and itself fell down broken,  
To collapse the stage; to crush whatever was left of the velvet seats.

But if there's nobody left to notice it,  
We can always pretend the lonely cry never came;  
That there never was a sound, at the evening's conclusion,  
And no attention will be focused, and no pity stirred up  
For the careless musician, and his oddly moaning string.

Patti Masterman

# Just Like Time

Just like time,  
like the eyes know words,  
long days away, before the world  
of things shorn soul left past the moon;  
the way the mind fights old man death-  
there where the sun still shines in dreams,  
there's far gone days of living left.

Patti Masterman

# Just Shy Of Heaven

Just shy of heaven,  
I'll meet your embrace;  
Who parted the waters  
Within sight of your face.

Incalculable word,  
Bestirring your creation;  
The first near breath  
Of your vast ideation.

In white flames of matter,  
Your name echoes still,  
And vast ranks of angel  
Are turning your mills.

Everything imagined  
Has to exist,  
Because of his potent  
And loving first kiss.

Patti Masterman

# Just Start

Let the past go free-  
A solitary candle's glow  
Is enough for the light hearted.

Let the past go free-  
A single days burden  
All a man ought to have to carry.

Let the past go free-  
If some evil breathes you in  
Wait then for the out-breath.

Let the past go free-  
A caged wild animal  
Might devour you from the inside.

Let the past go free-  
Just start.

Patti Masterman

# Just When Night Is Deepest And Longest

Let me remain here in the enclosing labyrinth of words  
where the faint, obscured stars shine brightly for me  
instead of imbibing their pastry and coffee  
for their world is better, left unsaid

You can say very little and become like a rock  
but that is no kind of virtue for a man  
whose mind was not made  
only for breaking open ground nuts

And their religions would restrict us to only things  
the caveman had, lest we squander our living  
in the pleasure of leisure; many small minds  
can still make a strong wall

Keep dreaming your unholy dreams of tomorrow  
and don't shield your face from the too-bright sun

Inside us is a secret place exhorting us towards truth,  
the kind that's known only by experience,  
and none other can stand your place for you

Their sterile nights are but the first stirrings of our eternities..

Patti Masterman

# Kami-Kaze Dinner Test

Kami-Kaze dinner test

This is a test of the emergency Kami-Kaze dinner alert

If this were a real emergency,

You would have been instructed where to go

And what to do next;

But as this is just a test,

Please pick up your napkins

And arrange them comfortably on your laps.

Begin the salad or soup course,

Picking up the correct utensils when the main course appears,

Don't forget to sniff for the delicate aromas-

Wait, hold it-hold it-hold it.

Hold on for just a dad-gummed minute there:

No shish-kebobs allowed on the menu!

Kami-Kazes just love shish-kebobs..

(Heads are gonna roll for this one)

This is no longer a test;

Get ready now, everyone

Dive beneath the table now

Fast as you can,

This is no joke, no;

This is real, as real as it gets

Come on-

Push aside the table cloth,

Bend down, bend down quickly

Forehead to knees, and hold your breath,

Just like you were taught years ago in school-

And prepare to kiss the pork rump, goodbye.

Patti Masterman

# Keep Going

You remember the past so well and so well  
Because-  
Because it is a point in space,  
And you have a three dimensional brain.

Captain of the ship that sails the known ports,  
If the ship went down the ports still say to us,  
Deja vu; just weather the storms.

Say the other people never really die;  
They were only ports in the storm,  
And nobody really knows anything-

It is all just pretending.  
If you're going through heaven, keep going.

Patti Masterman

# Keep Shining

Heaven and earth will not change places  
Birth and death will not change time  
But time will leave its mark on faces  
And the stars will bravely shine.

Life and dreams will not be hollow  
The thing that's lost, yet we will find  
We will not stray if we but follow  
Close to the stars that bravely shine.

A man will learn to search inside him  
For what, at birth, was left behind  
All his days, his own heart to guide him-  
Within, without, the brave stars shine.

Patti Masterman

# Key To My Door

Key to my door, come into my heart:  
A place has been prepared for you there  
Forever waiting to become your altar,  
Many dead flowers, to sweep aside-  
Come in, come in, now nothing must hide.

Key to my door, I've waited so long;  
Song of my heart, that's opening wide,  
I'd wait forever, if you asked;  
For only for you, eternity stands still-  
You know, you know, you have a potent will.

Key to my door, heaven's within,  
This house of thoughts you're covered in,  
Where my chest beats out ecstatic rhythms;  
Where your treasures lie, and your words stay hidden.

Patti Masterman

# Killing The Messenger

Why is it the people you detest the most  
Always have to be the first to telephone with bad news;  
A favorite acquaintance has died, or a spiritual mentor,  
Or the only in-law you actively liked and still respected-  
They just can't wait to be the first to call,  
Be the bearer of the worst news.

At such times, I have to stifle an urge to scream  
Into the handset, send a hundred decibels  
Roaring into their captive ear-drums;  
'I wish to god, that it had been YOU instead.'  
Sometimes you just want to kill the messenger.

Why do the idiots always go on breathing soundly,  
While the saintly people pass away too soon?

Patti Masterman

# Kissss

Kiss, kissss we say  
We blow dragonfly kisses  
In the air  
We wave from the mountaintops  
At each other  
All my secrets rest within you  
All your past pain abides with me  
Helpmates, we pass the hours away  
In each others capable presence  
You are the merman deep in the lagoon  
I am the mermaid who always swoons  
To find herself in the blowing breeze again  
Then, a descent back to the depths of complexity:  
I search only for your hands  
And I kiss them again and again.

Patti Masterman

# Labyrinth

We move through life  
As it moves us;  
A traveller, wary-  
A loosened thread.

We go one way,  
And then another;  
There is no map,  
There is no path.

We take our days,  
The long good-byes,  
Each day made new  
With joy or blight.

It's memory that lifts us.  
It's memory, that wounds us.

Patti Masterman

# Lamenting The Hours

Why do we marry so badly,  
And why does time pass so slow-  
The shadows in doorways we run from;  
The things we reap, never sown?

Were it different, with old friends we'd linger  
And talk of things we once knew,  
Instead of running wide circles  
Lamenting the hours, too few.

Patti Masterman

# Languishing Star

She made her home in the village trees,  
Just a shy child around town;  
Rumored an orphan in between  
Relatives, who couldn't be found.

She would follow the carnival, when it came,  
In her barefoot, bedraggled rags-  
Keeping her distance behind the trees;  
Most careful, to slightly lag.

They found her one day, beneath her trees,  
Her little neck broken; so frail,  
But their hearts didn't bleed, at forgotten needs-  
For they were all living so well.

Not a coin could be found for a modest grave,  
For the little waif they remembered;  
But a kind hearted family put her in soft soil,  
When a homely box was tendered.

Her home was the earth, the same as her hearth;  
She had nothing else besides,  
But her resting place was as near to heaven,  
As anyones hope could abide.

For she had sun and moon and stars,  
And the rain falling softly down,  
In her small, nondescript place,  
Below the cold-minded town.

If you say you have no problems,  
You might not be looking far  
Enough, on your blank horizons-  
To find that one languishing star.

Will your conscience then reprove you,  
When they lay you in new-poured grave-  
To think how it should have behooved you,  
To keep one thin, blinking star safe?

Patti Masterman

# Larooney's Mother Watches The Stars

Larooney's mother watches the stars  
To find a husband for homely Larooney:  
She should've been  
A man herself; then she could sit  
And count the colors in her head, but now  
She waits beside the stream,  
Straight-laced, billowy, serene-  
Engulfed by the circumference of magnitude  
And the icicles floating  
From her fingertips  
Are salty drops  
Without a source  
Within her empty soul.  
Quaverless, she swallows evening dew  
And sunset rust settles softly down  
In brittle remorse.

Patti Masterman

# Last Goodbye

My fathers aunt hated goodbyes.  
She helped raise my father, who had lost both parents  
At a young age; so in some ways  
She was the only mother he ever knew.  
The trip to see her was a long one,  
So we only managed a visit to the farmhouse  
Every couple of years, and I thought it so humorous  
That when the time came to leave  
She would always unaccountably disappear;  
To be seen shortly afterwards, through the window  
Or perhaps on the porch, looking moribund  
As your car cleared the final sweep of the long driveway-  
With perhaps a wave then, if you were lucky.

And then one day she died, and there were no goodbyes.  
She died in her sleep, as all the wise of this world  
Ought to be allowed to die; and with no goodbye,  
No last wave, no tears. I began to understand then  
That all those goodbyes, that she would never participate in  
Were to be taken together, as a whole,  
As a single, silent deference;  
Or a quietly potent rebellion-  
Against the final leave-taking,  
That she knew would probably go unspoken,  
And as it happened, so it did.

And now, I no longer say goodbye either-  
I always leave the airport stone faced;  
Afraid this might be the last goodbye  
That I never knew about.

Patti Masterman

# Last Minute Gifts For The Dead

I don't hold much with memorial poems for the dead-  
I mean, at least give them something they can really use;  
Like a new Styrofoam wreath, with some hideously colored  
Plasticine flowers, for a start,  
And maybe some fertilizer, for some real Spring wildflowers.

Some marble stone cleaner, to clear away that old mold.  
A video camera, so they can see outside again, or microphone;  
They can listen in to all that live weeping, over the grave.

Camera footage of their one and only funeral service.  
A free ticket for some water from Lourdes, in hopes of a miraculous reanimation-  
God is always looking for new exposure opportunities, isn't he?

Patti Masterman

# Last Night In Furtive Dream

Last night in furtive dream  
Wheels turned and cogs smashed together  
Out of anyone's control;  
All those that I once loved  
Were thrown together in catastrophe  
And the ones who'd already died  
Were busy dying again  
And the young ones held hostage by the drama.

Then when I woke, I was amazed to discover  
That things which had seemed random chance before  
Had in fact happened at the correct time  
To cause the least stress and imposition;  
Inhibition, of the ones left behind,  
And death no longer seemed so contrarian,  
Ahead of schedule: instead Death seemed most practical  
Doing things in a sensible time.

The collision of the old, in their wearing away  
And the young, setting out with their fresh hearts  
Was stood apart; averted by a safety factor of years  
And it was a happy thing, to know that the present perfect  
Was never going to be mortgaged of hopefulness  
By the hoary past holding onto it, with it's last bitter strength-  
And this is the way that the soul's brilliance reveals things to us  
And this is the way it has ever been.

Patti Masterman

# Last Smile

I was always good at ignoring inconvenient truths  
And the obvious I missed altogether.  
I always saw the whole truth, but sometimes not for years.  
I know now when I breathe my last,  
And they lay two shiny coins on my eyelids,  
And pay that man to come take away my body,  
I will be wearing a smile.

Because at the very last moment of life,  
I will no longer be able to delude myself  
About what was important and what didn't matter;  
Or what was real and what was a fiction,  
When suddenly all things will reveal either the truth or the lie-

But I will also know that none of it can matter to me, ever again;  
And I will just have to smile, in my newfound wisdom-  
Just once; knowing there were never really any winners or losers  
At this once-upon-a-time game, called life.

Patti Masterman

# Lavender Harvest

There's an earthy blood-smell to lavender  
It surprises you when the nose gets too close  
Once you get past the modest skirted blooms  
To find the green blood of torn out flower  
Fetid black dirt clings to blood ragged roots  
Blue-black blood of returning vena cava  
Lavender scented babies and lavender tinted men  
Planted for eternity underneath fertile soil  
And blood-rise suns bake their tender heads  
Blood drenched scent tempts the droning insects wing  
Their distilled spirits resurrected in hives  
Their earthly blood now ours to imbibe.

Patti Masterman

# Learning To Breathe Again

I learned to breathe by being dumped unceremoniously  
On the shores of some distant world  
I had heard only through flesh-muffled sounds  
Of an encapsulated ocean, for nine months.

I learned to walk by falling down again and again  
And persevering, though covered in bruises  
Because someone continued to hold their arms out toward me.  
I did not blame the ocean.  
I did not blame the arms.

I learned words by being spun around, knocked down,  
Held underwater, and having my legs kicked out from under me  
Again and again, until words were all that remained of my distant pain:  
A world outside me, of tiny blows raining down like somebody's dripping laundry,

My mouth filled with nonsense syllables, spit out through choking seaweed;  
And all because someone would not embrace me:  
I have now become inscrutable as any ocean-  
But I will never blame the falling rain.

Patti Masterman

# Leaving The Beloved And Loving The Beleaguered

The world is too achingly beautiful, and must be sipped-  
Slowly, sparingly- so that you don't choke on all its richness,  
And when you find that you are dying, even slower still..

And when you are old and dying, unbearably lovely young women  
Will come to sit at your feet, and beg you for the old stories-  
Of when you were once young, and everything in the world was new again-  
And it all belonged to you, then as now, and you will realize then  
That it still is yours- that it never left you.

So that when you die you will be smiling, and they will say then of you,  
He died peacefully, with a happy smile on his face.  
But it will be only that you died laughing at the joke of it;  
Life's joke, which was all at your expense; and that for a few moments  
You had it all, and only when you finally knew the truth,  
It was the final instant before life took it all away again.

In the end it was always you who were leaving life behind,  
Though you will always suppose that it was life, that left you.

Patti Masterman

# Let Love Be All

We try to love someone, but we knot up their life-  
Suffocate, strangle, expose them to strife,  
And what's good for us may poison them,  
As though we just shook their world, on a whim.

Then we try to give space, so they feel abandoned;  
It's too much or too little, and it all feels so random.  
One fills the world with emotion and yearning,  
The others in wind hangs, twisting and turning.

Each of us views things through different eyes,  
With different ideas of 'hello' and 'goodbye';  
If we all can't agree on the simplest of things,  
Then real complications must drive us insane.

If love is the goal, then we should incline  
To always be thoughtful, and wise, and kind;  
If love is worth having, if love be the aim-  
Then let love be all and thereby, give no blame.

Patti Masterman

# Let Me Atone For The Sins Of The World

Let me atone for the sins of the world  
Upon your body;  
Here, put upon you this sheet  
And drape it- just so.

Now, allow me to begin to worship you  
With fresh flowers and wine,  
Expecting the transmutation  
To occur, just about- now!

The starlight will burst through the pyramid's opening  
To travel down the dizzying tunnels,  
Opening things once in eternal darkness;  
Lighting up a bier covered with dried flowers.

A large granite monument to a dead heart  
Waits here, in the swallowing silence of millenia.  
Now angels will move the great stone aside;  
Take my hand, and we'll make our escape

To the deepest tunnels of all; only the initiates allowed here  
Where mysteries can only lead to more mysteries,  
And a kiss is the most perfect act of communion  
For two, who were once merely mortal.

Patti Masterman

# Let Me Die Still A Child

Sometimes I wonder where it is I mostly live, and what is my real home,  
When I am not writing endless plaintive verses,  
Looking for the meaning which hides behind the surface mirage-  
Forgetting not to worship the clues I find randomly scattered,  
Making mountains out of small things and missing the giant obvious signs  
Too concrete, cause and effect terrarium where my body seems to live.  
Do I live in the cannisters; the flour, the sugar, the pans,  
The baking staples and their fragrant results?  
Do I live in the rows of orderly books, the quiet stacks of papers-  
Smells of new glue and old signatures:  
Never a murmur comes from their wooden compartments.  
Do I live in the shiny bottles of perfumes, flavorings, spices,  
Crammed in every available spot till they must come rolling out of every open  
closet door?  
Somehow the delicate nature of scent rules, has always enlarged my world.  
I think I will always live on the inside, never quite connected to the outside,  
Swimming alone in clouds of exotic, dark-matter incense vapors.  
Bread dough rises like a tower there, without yeast  
Books are written and read with nary the turn of a single page or sheet of paper  
sullied  
Scents are exquisitely more delicate and ethereal there  
Than any imagination can craft here:  
Even better, when they bind together and fly me, magic carpet style  
To far away realms: the wide, unclaimed vistas just waiting to be found.  
In that other place, thoughts create movement just like muscles do down here.  
And my nose is part dog and part jackal descended, a greedy scent hound-  
It capers thru the unseen dimensions, sniffing out things not its business;  
Forever it's craving the fine waters and airs reserved for the aristocratic blood.  
God of childhood's kingdom: do not let me grow old and jaded-  
Let me die first, surrounded by the rare fragrance of old books,  
Pastries and mysteries. Life is too full of rich flavors.  
Keep filling up my portion till I drown from wonder just contemplating it.

Patti Masterman

# Let The Dead Bury The Dead

We can't even believe our own strange histories;  
Though they stare us in the face, for hours each day  
And awaken us in a cold sweat, during the nighttimes.

And what if someone told me they remembered me  
In another place and time, wearing other clothing and relationships  
Would I laugh, and say they've lost their mind?

What if they had pictures; claiming it was me  
And asked me if I had strange memories  
How could I reply? Not one can know a man's secret heart

Would I feel it was ego, trying to elevate itself to something  
More commendable; higher status of another life  
But none of that could matter anymore; the past has died.

Nothing is gone so far away as the past; hold my hand  
Tell me those old stories if you want to. But bury the past deeply;  
The only history that survives it, in the highlight of an eye.

And if I see his face in a vision, it is just that;  
Only a vision, even if it wasn't a photograph, even with  
Correct dimensions; and if I hear her voice, it is just that;

A voice is a freedom in the air, like a flying bird;  
A bird can fly from tree to tree, singing its heart out in song-  
And if she now is free like that, that's all that I could hope for.

Patti Masterman

# Let There Be Magic

Let there be magic;  
The immortal, unbounded,  
And let there be mystery,  
Fantasy rounded.

Let there be awe  
Of miracles uncounted  
And syllables mystic,  
In breath held and sounded.

Patti Masterman

# Life Can Mesmerize With Smiles

Life can mesmerize with smiles;  
But when it weeps beware, beware:  
Your tears would fill a mountain stream  
That's rushing past, before Life care.

And when you laugh, you laugh alone,  
Though you might think the flowers too  
Would giggle at a word you said;  
The flowers thoughts are very few.

We are not often understood;  
The world speaks in different tongues,  
Though we may think that ours would be  
The only universal one.

Patti Masterman

# Life Comes Through That Door

Life comes through that door,  
When all is stilled and silent;  
The angel's at the portal,  
And breathing's grown too quiet.

Life and living back inside,  
When thought was all remained,  
And motion ceased most visibly-  
And thought was almost pain.

Give thanks to doors that open,  
To let the world back in-  
Of wells, the minds the deepest  
You'll ever fall within.

Patti Masterman

# Life Contains Within Itself A Strange Lack

Life contains within itself a strange lack of perspicuity;  
We are all strangers by default,  
But become sworn enemies by contagion-  
Like unknown varieties of some strange new weed,  
Considered better left unidentified, and at a distance,  
But thought rancorous and deep seated, if found closer:  
Something to be eradicated at the root,  
Our grief only a minor wind, outside the tempest;  
For all our souls are just holes,  
That we never knew hope of filling.

Jan.3 2010

Patti Masterman

# Life Gives Us Bouquets Of Light

Life gives us bouquets of light,  
Arranged in lovely visions,  
That everyone with eyes to see  
Receives like luminous kisses.

A million lights repose inside  
The blue seas glittering face,  
And of the fires that birthed the world,  
We're left with but a trace.

Our lucid days are blessed by sun;  
Our nights by twinkling diamonds-  
And pocketed in rare rainbows, bright-  
Are secrets, we're still finding.

Patti Masterman

# Life Is

The things that disappear  
Go where? I don't know-  
The secret place of all beautiful things  
The precious, delicate, broken creatures  
Go somewhere safe at last,  
To where they can never know harm anymore.  
Sometimes they come just to teach us  
How to let go, how to learn to love  
And then to let them go free, at just the right time  
The smallest thing is an enclosed world in itself  
Much more than we can ever understand  
And relies not on our memories or emotions:  
It comes from nowhere  
Listed on any maps journey  
And returns there, leaving us certain  
That a hallowed, empty spot is forever inside us  
Which must be refilled, over and over:  
This is what life is.

Patti Masterman

# Life Is Angry At Me

Life is angry at me  
For assuming this was just a dress rehearsal  
Down here, and for continually intoning to myself  
That in my other life, I'll get it together,  
Go for my dreams, build a better body.

Life wants me to know  
This is it; my only chance  
Till I'm one again with the soil, water and air.

Life wonders  
Where I got my strange ideas;  
Why do I go on living in my mind, every single day;  
Why doesn't reality fulfill me,  
Just what am I waiting for?

I would have to answer, I don't know  
Though I think I would know it, if I found it;  
I've been looking everywhere, for so long now.

For even in the deep black nucleus, of my own eye  
I only find questions-  
There are never any answers.

Patti Masterman

# Life Is The Illusion That We Keep

Life is the illusion that we keep,  
When everything that makes the heart want to go on beating  
Falls away; and even the blood itself sits sluggishly,  
Hardly stirring itself to any useful purpose  
Although we can still remind ourselves  
It's not that bad; after all, we are still living and just think of the others  
Who no longer have that gift of aliveness any more:  
Whose pulse is forever stilled,  
And whose blood now lies in thick pools  
Upon lost highways, of some desolate gray paving-stone world;  
Somewhere must be very far from where we are,  
Their souls always hovering above, waiting,  
Unsure where or what it is they should be going to next.

But we still have at least the appearances of life;  
Even if our skin is cold to the touch  
And though our flesh has taken on a waxy grayish cast  
And our eyes trickle out streams, of half frozen icicles;  
Even if our stiff-tongued words can't make us be understood anymore  
Wrapped in our endless winding sheets of hopelessness  
As we roll over and over, trying to find the loose edge.

And once, we thought we saw a lighthouse glimmering in the distance-  
But it was merely some souls, setting themselves on fire.  
They had heard it was the only way out of here.

Patti Masterman

# Life Looms

life looms the original abstract questions into our existence,  
then paints absurd drunken canvases on demand-  
so that the subject of the experiment imagines  
that the film is devoid of symbolic passions.  
soon a vividly surreal miasma breaks imagination's dream,  
in which the drug of beauty  
becomes only the silhouette of joy.

Patti Masterman

# Life More Casual

Life more casual when not writing;  
Take off the white formal shirt, worn in effigy  
Slip into something more smooth cliché; nothing heavy or stiff,  
Something light, moves along with you, yet never constrains:  
Downtime more cherished, as writing grows more obsessive;  
The outside world is in tatters, more unreal than ever  
And you find that you don't read for enjoyment anymore;  
Got to get the fix of an idea, each hour,  
Afraid you might just cease to exist  
Without the warming momentary flash of words, circuiting the vessels.

Some select opiate, handcrafted only for you  
By evil, over-intelligent doctors (is there any other kind?)  
Who never did seem to have your best interests at heart,  
And who always watch above, through the dungeon's window  
Busy writing in those notebooks: recording every eye blink and twitch,  
Their personal morse code, of your most secret being  
Though you are never allowed to read it, of course,  
And even if you did; you would find only prime numbers;  
Some square roots, integers of more nothingness-

The same nothing of which your now dryly heaving soul  
Must have originally been composed  
At some ungodly, belated hour, in a predestined universe  
Gone horribly off track; and if you ever stopped writing  
Even long enough to take a deep breath,  
You know what would happen then.

All the creatures you've given birth, through your pen  
Would soon appear, outside your cell, to menace you and howl,  
For your pseudo writer's blood, their stains serving as witness  
And prosecution, judge and jury,  
To your own soulless, toxic brand of imagination's ink;  
Wishing to revenge themselves, on your burgeoning heartless fecundity,  
Your meaningless cruelty of an instant, or an hour;  
Though by this time, you would have long ago forgotten  
That you are the one needs protection, from them.



# Life On Time

Time is all that you and I possess  
Just hours, minutes, seconds set aside  
First here, now there..Currency dispensed:  
Coinage of idea and mind, in which we confide.

Mixing of thoughts, in communal-vaulted time  
To arrange, order, divide, dissect: Reveal  
Forgotten epiphanies: leaps of faith  
Recovered from the fantasy: the real.

Time, relentless benefactor, gives  
The hours, minutes, seconds, one by one-  
Are we, mere watchmen of the fragile trust  
Till the getting and spending of all our days is done?

Patti Masterman

# Life Teaches You Some Things Early

Life teaches you some things early, such as  
To give it all up; lose those desires  
For that one's love; or for that one;  
And for that one special love you once craved,  
Which was a different sort altogether,  
From someone with only one drab color  
Within their entire being;  
Like craving peaches from a pear tree,  
It could never come to pass.

And after a while it ceases to pain you any more  
So that in time, you can tell all these lost loves,  
Come walk across me now; I am only a pile of ashes,  
And the fire is many ages cold.  
Cooled flames never kept anyone from sleep,  
And only threaten the peace for a little while.

Patti Masterman

# Life Was A Dream, And I Was Dreamer

Life was a dream, and I was dreamer;  
Death takes all, and that's no dream.  
Life is long, and I was merry,  
Merry, so merry- just like the song.

Life was a dream, and I the dreamer;  
Death takes all, that is no dream.  
Death comes soon, or far too late,  
Later, latest- the last boon.

Life was a dream, and I its dreamer;  
Death takes all; perchance no dream.  
They'll bury me, in a hidden valley;  
Hidden, so hidden- that's where I'll be.

Patti Masterman

# Lighting The Way

Tentative, new poets are so shy-  
Begging for tolerance, patience-  
"I am just a minor poet, a sometimes poet,  
A writers writer- don't mind me none."  
But the truth is we are shining meteors  
In the atmospheric outer spaces;  
Far from our home galaxy,  
We are the art nouveau, the avante-garde,  
Amino-acid delivering asteroids  
Continuously streaming effusions,  
Our broadcast verbiage making it's way  
To all the lesser worlds  
With the sheer voluminous forcefield of our creations,  
We enlighten the dark corners,  
The gas giants, the tiny frozen-rock worlds.  
We bring truth to light, rediscover things,  
Point out hope where none could be seen-  
So that when new life does occur;  
It has a ready mold of intelligence, a self-absorbing  
Centripetal motion to get it started right:  
New human-like beings will draw more animals on cave walls,  
Adorn themselves earlier,  
Seek for first cause more intently,  
Learn language more effortlessly.  
All because of the photons we sent ahead of us  
To colonize the universe.  
Don't be intimidated by the heavy weight of responsibility:  
You are doing just fine.

Patti Masterman

# Lightning Bugs

The lightning bugs swarm  
Like meandering particle trails  
Not colliding not stopping  
Against the thick nothingness of indigo

And carpeted tree barks, and the bones of bricks  
More corporeal than distant porch lights  
Shining against the refutation of night  
And the strychnine of a savage darkness  
The secret, poisoned shadows from yesterday's arrows

They coalesce into the glowing twilight  
And melt like vapours at dawn  
Like falling stars vanish  
Right after you breathe your wish  
While you are still looking  
Without even a smoke trail  
To show where they used to be

Patti Masterman

# Like A Stone

I've memorized your body now,  
All it's lifetime of scars, as if my own  
And the future yet unformed scars  
That tickle like an itch you can never locate.

I've felt the well-aimed rage, cutting my leg  
The unfeeling machine, as it shreds my foot  
The gloved fist's passionless eclipse of jawbone, teeth.

Freezing days in snow covered desert,  
Hovering between living and dying-  
Living death, or a dying life:  
The cold alienation beneath a baking summer's sun.

A walking meditation of hunger, pain;  
A thirst that never slakes  
The remedy gone missing in man and beast.

I've seen days circling like a wolf,  
The moon prancing like a violent intruder  
Strangers stealing even your last peace of mind.

Fighting for a scrap,  
Reason suspended,  
Mischief as payment for them all.

For in the bible it says, woe is man, born of woman-  
Man with whom the land contends;  
He who neither lends nor borrows, yet everyone curses him-  
His name lying in their mouths, like a stone.

(from Jeremiah 15: 10)

Patti Masterman

# Lilies

Under the arc of days, he set her free in time,  
He gave her up to the whimsy of wind,  
The ghostly waves of the Sun's heated ethers.  
The hours of their togetherness came unraveled,  
Came apart at the seams, at the mended parts first,  
Though he never sought to repair the tear  
Or to comfort the newly opened hole's emptiness-  
It was all too hopeless.

And why take you thought for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
How they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

But instead, he wound it around himself,  
Purposely made plans to remove himself, like a spot rubbed out,  
Like a runner in a pair of hose, allowed to consume an entire leg,  
Until the wearer must certainly abandon it, or else gather up the tatters  
Knowing not what to do with them, or how to reweave the mess,  
Or worse, continue wearing it, to the obvious surprise of all encountered,  
Either pretending not to know, or pretending to wait for a private moment to  
remove the defective stockings. So, in this fashion,  
He would remove her from his life; in effigy, he would cut her from all its  
pictures,  
All the memories he had made with her, he was now determined to forget.

And why take you thought for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
How they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Nobody could put the news back in the can, repair the injury.  
And it was a public game, this necessary total forgetting and giving up.  
Maybe others couldn't understand, but it didn't matter  
He stared at the headstone flanked by Lilies for a couple more minutes, and then  
turned,  
Walking slowly down the flagstone sidewalk to the parking lot.  
There weren't a lot of mourners; they had only been living here for a few  
months;  
No time to acquire new friends and even less the casual acquaintances,  
The ones who always seem to manage to make it to funerals

For whatever reasons they might have.

They had taken the banks of Lilies surrounding the casket and arranged them,  
Quite artfully, around the stone and opened grave.

And why take you thought for raiment?

Consider the lilies of the field,

How they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

The baking car seemed more silent than ever, as it quietly came alive, purring softly.

He pulled out of the cemetery parking area, deliberately not glancing behind him again.

He rounded a few roads, curving sedately around the low mountains,  
Marveling at how clear it had become, though earlier it looked angry and unsettled.

He rolled the car windows down, as if to banish, remove the scent left behind.

Though once you have smelled death, been touched personally by it,  
Everything else becomes a farce, a denial of what you have already seen  
With your own eyes, and felt breathing too close by to ever forget it.

Every day becomes another refusal to continue dying, even if it's the only game left in town.

He laughed a nasty, rumbly sort of laugh, resolved to seek out that little bar,  
The one at the edge of town, where he had met her, so many ages ago-  
Perhaps luck would favor him twice there, it could happen..

The sun meanwhile filled the windows with tiny prisms and reflections;  
All the bright objects going by flashed a microscopic brilliance into the car  
That he had never noticed before, as if they wished to touch him even in a minute fashion.

And as he was desperate, desperate for any kind of omen,

He decided these sudden, unexpected illuminations would have to be it.

He could pretend to go on living for a while, till everyone had forgotten about it.

His mother had always told him to keep his business private,

Not become a joke, not lose the respect of others;

Familiarity breeds contempt, and all that.

And when people ask how you are doing, they don't really want or need to know the details.

He thought of the small pale and solemn face, ringed by dark hair, with dirt beginning to pile up above it, the hidden form broken and camouflaged  
Above the creamy blue satin lining and the strange high gloss wood.

And only a single tiny muscle twitched, just below his lower lip.

In time, he would learn to control even that.

And why take you thought for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
How they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

He had always suspected god merely created man  
So that he would have some entertainment, something lower than god  
A pathetic thing needed for laughing at,  
When even being god got to be too much of a bore.  
Ah, if the real heaven-and-earth creating god had only to drink from man's cup  
once,  
Things must surely change. The religions really had it all backward.  
He fired up the radio and firmly blanked his mind.  
He needed to hold on to that ability to forget everything and stop all thinking;  
After all, he could still live a useful life.  
There were people who still needed him, even if she no longer did.  
A sob escaped and made it's way to the top of his throat, but he swallowed it  
down quickly,  
As if thwarting a hiccup. Death is only a hiccup that comes at the wrong time,  
He repeated to himself, realizing his mind-clearing trick had failed him.  
Memory was only a crutch used to keep the living in the past, and thought was  
it's transportation.  
This too shall pass, he whispered. The aphorisms piled up, began to tilt sideways,  
  
Threatening to fall over, to obscure all the light left in the stiff, unwieldy light-  
dying world.  
Never again, as long as he lived, would he have another white Lily anywhere  
near,  
Or in any house or room or yard he ever spent any time in.  
That was the only sacrifice he dared to make for this day.  
If you give up, if you give in, they've got you by the balls then.  
He had seen people who were slave to their emotions, and they were cripples.  
As if this idea bothered him particularly,  
He glanced into his own eyes in the rearview mirror,  
And for the first time, he saw something unrecognizable there,  
Saw a person he felt he had nothing in common with any longer.  
He didn't want to put words to the things now being etched onto that face.  
It was going to take a lot of years to erase that pain; a lot of drinking alone,  
A lot of being cold and unfeeling and relentlessly alive.  
And at the end of it, if he was lucky, he would live;  
Not just become another animated corpse, himself,  
Though it was still, he decided, much too early to believe in a future just yet.

And why take you thought for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
How they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:  
And yet I say unto you,  
That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

-Matthew 6: 28,29, American King James Version

Patti Masterman

# Limerance

When my body can't take it anymore  
I go into the closet- not to pray, but to worship;  
I kiss the complacent coat hangers there, orderly on their metallic racks,  
My lips on smooth plastic; eyes closed,  
All senses centered on my mouth;  
Enraptured, I can't see any colors at all..

The surface doesn't soften, as I beat out my lips  
Against the mild anvil; altar of pain, loving the more distant you  
Somewhere on a compass that the heart knows best;  
This pain is merely a devotional exercise, to take my mind  
Off the fact that the hangers can't actually kiss me back.

The wool blazer has your blue eyes;  
The polo shirt has some, not all, of your softness.  
The shoes delicately waft a heavy, calming manly odor of leather.  
The weight of the clothing leans back against me, sighing  
And muffles most of my cries and exclamations

While I sway, to their soapy limerance of fabric softener and dust.  
If I push far enough into them, they enclose me all around  
Just like a lover's firm grasp, of aching seams and straining stitches,  
Loving me soundlessly, from many directions at once.

To silent, undanced waltzes, we hang together, in furtive salute;  
For they are not free, and neither am I;  
But we can dream together, in the small cottony, worsted room,  
For we are old friends, we have known both sunshine and rainshower together

And long, undying afternoons, of tears and questioning why.  
They have known many of my beloved's names,  
And I in turn have seen them both inside and out, plush and threadbare.  
We have no secrets any longer; I know their every scar by heart  
As well as they know mine:  
I can never discard even one of their kind,  
I have to keep them closer than skin.

Patti Masterman

# Limericks

## The Indefinite Article

The noun was long the verb was brief,  
It began with a vowel, the surly thief;  
The definite article wouldn't suffice-  
The grammar police would not be nice-  
He definitely needed to turn the new leaf.

## Barnacle-Sam

Barnacle-Sam was one hell of a man;  
He broke wild horses on the Rio Grande,  
He had a skin texture like broken glass,  
He caught the horses cause he was fast-  
The crustiest cowboy in all of the land.

## I'll Send You My Bill

A mechanic on a days trip from Brazil  
Ran down a parrot on the crest of a hill  
The beak was asunder, horribly rent  
The mechanic swore complete recompense  
Fine, said the parrot, I'll send you my bill...

## Looking for the Man

The dog at the Saloon door, they saw  
Who said in shaking voice, so raw  
'I'm looking for the man  
Down on the Rio Grande-  
I'm looking for the man, that shot my paw.'

## Daisy Chain

I know I'll never live, to see a thing so ample

Could be construed, to cause an instant trample:  
A nudist camp filled up with bathing dames  
That swim in tight formation; a daisy chain  
Which of the former cause, is one example.

#### He Employed Me

Had to go out to find me a job,  
So the bank, I would not rob:  
My supervisor, ever so wise  
Used to make me sit on his thighs;  
Then we'd have a lengthy hobnob.

#### There's Another Fine Course

There's another fine course of didactery;  
Against which there's no worthwhile phylactery:  
It's never too safe, to look up at the sky  
Because it could hit you, straight in the eye;  
For the bird's are all little flying sh- factories.

#### The Point

This point is probably over rated,  
But it seems some people are fated:  
Bob worked the conveyor belt, nine-to-five  
But caught in it's rollers, was no more alive,  
As they found themselves discombobulated.

#### When I'm Coffee Deprived

When I'm coffee deprived; it's bad, I know it,  
My doofus comes out, I'm bound to show it,  
Was trying to favorite that poem for so long;  
Hit the wrong button, something went wrong-  
Then I added myself as a favorite poet.

## Science is Full of So Many Odd Tales

Science is full of many odd tales;  
Like the woman, cast on me her spell:  
She whipped off her pants,  
And we did quite a dance-  
For she had an opposable tail.

## Obama

The talk of the town's the new Prez  
They hang on every word he sez  
Though his lineage is historic  
And his method, rhetoric  
He could do with a stately pince-nez.

## Figuring Out Modern Morals

Figuring modern morals is a chasm;  
Sometimes puts the brain into spasm:  
If nice guys marry the girl who wouldn't,  
But spend all their time, with the one who shouldn't-  
Does the good girl get the orgasms?

## Limerick the Endless Torus

Limerick's the endless torus  
Which goes round, never to bore us  
For we like to engage  
With words wise and sage  
But not be a know-it-all-saurus.

## The Auto-Erotic Triumvirate

The auto-erotic triumvirate  
Was a one-armed pirate;  
Just one you see,  
All it takes to be

Cause his hand was such a tyrant.

Hickory Dickory Sock

Hickory dickory sock,  
A mouse is like a cock;  
Attention's paid,  
Just to get laid-  
And then the flight's ad hoc.

Tu Fu

There was once a wise poet, Tu Fu,  
And he lived where the wild things grew;  
He liked cups of wine  
Made of fruit from the vine-  
But lamented, when empty: Too Few!

Patti Masterman

# Litany Of You

Bend my knees,  
Whisper in my ear;  
You're the true prayer  
Moving through air.

On Michael's wings  
Rides your atmosphere,  
Just promise me  
That you'll be there:

As morning hymn,  
And evening song;  
Of need or whim  
A whole life long.

The speeding thought,  
That calm my heart-  
The litany of you;  
Creator's art.

Patti Masterman

# Little Deaths

I used to want to fill up the universe with my words  
Then I settled, for maybe just one planet, or part of one,  
But I have filled space with enough thoughts to clog the ether;  
Thoughts endlessly streaming out of me, into the future and past  
Steadily accompanying greater and lesser thoughts of others.  
Maybe all the once-launched thoughts make a great arc,  
And slowly revolve around again, in order, in time.  
Perhaps sometimes two thoughts connect in sterile space  
That would never have been joined on solid ground.  
Other times two thoughts scream out as they annihilate each other-  
No two thoughts being able to occupy the exact same position  
And maybe at those times, I feel a slight jolt as I sip  
My morning coffee, unaware of the newly-formed black hole.

Patti Masterman

## Little Ray Of Light - Tanka

little ray of light  
all the sea is star-infused  
reflected in waves  
slowly sliding over us  
as the sun turns off the light

Patti Masterman

# Little Things Can Die In The Snow

Little things can die in snow  
Almost undiscovered,  
Sometimes completely covered.

Fragile wings cease to beat-  
The world is so unkind  
To the quiet lives of tiny minds.

Please don't let them go forgotten  
But let them be remembered as a treasure  
Of brief duration but limitless measure.

Patti Masterman

# Little Wren

She's far colder now  
Than all the men she prayed  
Would feast on life, with her  
Before her poor bones fade.

They thought her verse too trite,  
With syntax, wildly wrought-  
But her words owned the earth;  
Eternity- have bought.

Though moss had reached her lips,  
Interred in tomb, alone-  
Uncovered now, her words  
Bring wayward souls back home.

Patti Masterman

# Live Edgewise

Live edgewise, never remember  
People owed or displaced  
Time goes in fits and starts  
Life is a filthy, seeping river  
Depositing its grime on your shores  
You can't live clean here  
Whites don't stay white  
Living sours everything  
Any white you see is a cheat.

Live sideways, and walk  
As if death approached  
From every avenue  
The number on your head  
Is the next one coming up  
It never happens to others  
It only happens to you  
Now is as close to never  
As you'll ever want to be.

Patti Masterman

# Live On The Moon

When I'm old, I shall live on the Moon  
With all of my friends, and we'll grow young again-  
On the Moon, surrounded with wonder.

When I'm old, I'll find a Moon house to inhabit,  
We'll make schoolhouses from craters,  
And playthings, of rare matter.

And when I'm very old, and live on the moon,  
I'll watch the UFO's flying by each night,  
Sometimes glimpsing Earth with a sigh.

But I won't be sad- for I live on the Moon;  
Traipsing around, in my silver shoon-  
With La Mare and Shelley, for companions.

Patti Masterman

## Living Light

The words still live, though flesh must die;  
Soft rot, like pumpkins left to lie,  
While objects coarse succeed our death-  
Naught is left of our brief bequests.

But up in heaven, in god's own eye  
Is a sparkle, that is loath to die-  
And if god wills it- if god weens-  
That tiny light may still be seen.

Patti Masterman

# Living With Your Heart Outside Your Body

I was in trouble again.  
I'd just awakened our baby- again.  
Most mothers want their new baby to sleep;  
That was their most prolific time of day,  
But not me; I was too afraid.  
Sudden infant death was known  
To stalk new babies;  
How could I be sure  
Death wasn't stalking her this very moment;  
Slowing her breaths, her heartbeats,  
Taking her away, by one sly degree at a time  
To the land where there are no sweet baby dreams.  
That cry of awakening was a drug for me;  
A reassurance. I needed my fix.  
I couldn't stop doing it.  
But babies need their sleep.  
So one day, her father sat down calmly  
And he told me,  
She wants to keep living much more strongly  
Than you could ever wish it for her;  
Her being is strong and it has an incredible  
Will to stay alive.  
Somehow, I finally got it.

Years later, and somebody had to give me  
The adult version of this talk; she was nearly grown;  
You can't live her life for her, can't suffer  
All her pains for her, instead.  
How many more times will I need reminding-  
How many more days will she live  
On the outside of my body, instead?

Patti Masterman

# Lock Down

Today I finally figured out that  
My life is actually a series of days spent  
In a cheap motel; drinking bad coffee,  
Walking wide circles trying to stay  
Out of your way-  
But you've too many arms and your  
Reach is much too long.  
You're too smart and you never forget.  
Although mostly I'm a fixture and others  
Hold your main attention,  
I keep dancing sideways to avoid you  
But I'm always moving too slow.  
I creak when I walk so you know  
Just where I am, even in the dark;  
Like ugly imitation leather shoes  
Forgotten in the rain once too many times.  
Just as some inmates finally kill  
Their cellmate just for an hours quiet;  
And the warden pretends not to  
Hear the alarm bell go up  
As the fire's spreading itself  
Block by block-  
My long-awaited freedom will only arrive  
When they carry me out under a sheet.

Patti Masterman

# Lock The Door

Lock the door; the day's arrived-  
What demons lurk here, just outside,  
And little pumpkins, with their sacks;  
You never know what might attack.

There's a ghost and witch; they're friends,  
Here come some pea pods, full of grins,  
And there's scarecrow, and mummy too-  
Someone's bound, to yell out 'boo'.

I hope I don't see any kooks;  
It's bad enough, just finding spooks.  
A bowl of candy's by the door;  
My witch hat there, upon the floor.

Must be ready, when it rings;  
When they make my doorbell sing,  
And give them candy, instead of sticks-  
So they won't do any tricks.

Patti Masterman

# Locus Quero

Proof of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki inheritance:  
Darkened shadow people burned onto sidewalks-  
So unbelievable that living beings could turn  
Into mere shades of what they once were.  
But what about all the insubstantial, missing people  
Still occupied within themselves: in nursing homes,  
And asylums; and in cold, tingling  
Elixirs with the foreign sounding names in sculpted bottles?  
They can't subside into the sidewalks  
Or penetrate through stoney walls.  
Breathing's all that keeping them fixed in place here.  
Straight-jacketed and handcuffed,  
Hallucinating in abject self-annihilation,  
They stumble through my dreams at night,  
Their shifty eyeballs come unhinged,  
Leaning against me dropping excuses, justifications;  
Bumbling unexcusedly, over my rapid eye movements,  
Prisoners always seeking an escape valve,  
An outlet, a detour to anywhere but home.  
Maybe in the next world too  
They will still be hunting for the exit signs.  
Maybe I will be the pied piper there, too;  
So that they will keep following me because they think  
That I know something about travelling,  
And paths and destinations.  
But they would be fools.

Patti Masterman

# Logarithmically Speaking

Pattern recognition is what allows me  
To identify what could be a spider  
Without doing lots of complex geometry  
To avoid what could be a biter.

I can recognize early signs of illness  
In a child, especially mine  
When the pattern deviates from wellness  
And red bumps appear, over time.

Service in a restaurant might be bad  
Depending on the waiters bearing  
I'll probably leave there feeling had  
But resist an impulse of swearing.

When blind dates have had bad endings  
Those first few minutes will reveal  
All those things you now realize  
You can't stand; but never knew until-

It's all just patterns; there is no need  
To take it to heart, take it personally  
I realize I'm bound to fall in love with you  
Cause you're the best pattern, logarithmically.

Patti Masterman

# Long Distance Runner

I run for years, I run from fires  
And frowns and harsh words and barking dogs  
I run to love and away from disenchantment  
I rush to judgment and retreat from skirmishes  
I run headlong into many arms and bounce from chest to chest.

I fall spinning over cliffs and across boundaries  
I swim fervently up tributaries and tumble over falls  
The longer I go, the farther and faster I run  
Almost as if the distance in itself were an achievement  
Still at the end to be moveless, and not one remembers me.

Patti Masterman

# Long Silence To You

My soul has been stolen  
Replaced by a stone  
My thoughts now are dead ones  
My voices drone

Can't bury the living  
For they're upright still  
Don't stone the fallen  
They're safe until

Voices carry  
And feelings betray  
There's nothing left  
But a vacant day

And an empty night  
In a hollow tube  
Echoing down  
The long silence to you

Patti Masterman

# Longest Night

On that longest night you held my hand  
And gave your shoulder, to cry on  
As the briefest love of my life never got born:

Caring costs nothing; but reaches to depth's inside us  
Never plumbed for fathoms, and stills the mourning.

Patti Masterman

# Los Alamos

Bursting through the white clouds,  
Creating form beneath the sun;  
Giant pillars whirl and spin  
Till the world comes undone.

Mind above the high dunes,  
Finds other minds the same;  
They'll mix the sand of all their thoughts,  
Till nothing else remains.

Patti Masterman

# Lost Awakening

It's late at night, and all the world is dreaming,  
There's ones awake, that wish they were asleep;  
And nightmares that arrive, before the dawning;  
Or wondrous things we find, and wish to keep.

It all must be surrendered, upon waking,  
And disappears like early morning mist;  
Like princesses, who dream their first love's coming;  
Awakening, to lose their first real kiss.

Patti Masterman

# Lost Beautiful Things

I can hear the locusts of summer singing  
In their way, and the lost child inside  
Is still crying for popsicles from the ice cream truck  
And garden sprinklers to run through  
On feet that don't hurt at the end of the day  
Still missing all the dogs we buried, with crocodile tears  
And the impertinence of being eight years old again  
And the recklessness of knowing nothing much of how the world is run  
And the beauty of not knowing that you didn't know.

Patti Masterman

# Lost Inside Of A Fairy Tale

What are pleasure and pain to us,  
Held in the grip of time's hand, as we are?  
Hostage to the intervention of circumstance,  
Or privy to the secrets of youth or age;  
What do we know, and who could we tell it to,  
Even if somebody wanted to listen to us?

What am I, that I should be walled in by your eyes;  
When you could choose, out of the entire world,  
Why choose something tangent, perishable,  
Entangled in this solitude of emotion?  
Our paths are lonely, though we pass close by,  
Caught up in our own brand of darkness,  
Suffering our own unquiet silences.

We are impenetrable forests  
Lost inside of a fairy tale,  
Dreamed up by an imaginary god  
Who is so long ago,  
So far away, by now..

Written to By This River, (Eno/Roedelius/Moebius) recorded by The Opium Cartel

Patti Masterman

# Lost Muse

Today for the first time, I heard the old poets voice,  
Reading once more, and forever, his treasure;  
Heard each syllable fall lightly at the end  
His voice deep and sinuous; a human  
Perception trailing the frailty of his words  
He spoke again; but what I heard inside of it  
Was a faltering soul, weary but still heartened by his  
Hard won song, words set down to the meter of his beating heart,  
behind which, he could not see me from where he was  
Could not fathom that some day I'd be watching  
Through the incalculable squalor and mystery  
Of times intervening years; would not,  
No; never know how much  
I loved his writing, and how  
I followed along his every word,  
As if it were my own course,  
My own offering; and if once  
Only, I could return there  
I would point him in  
The direction of  
Heaven and  
follow along  
behind him  
and his  
proud,  
brave  
quavering  
voice

Patti Masterman

# Lost Shadow

I think I've lost my shadow-  
Though I had it right behind,  
I looked back there and saw it-  
But now, can't seem to find-

It followed me through forests,  
And along the clouded sea;  
But suddenly, it's disappeared,  
Though sun's bright as can be.

If you see my shadow,  
Please send it promptly here,  
It's twelve feet tall in winter,  
But short, when summer's near.

No wait- I think I see it,  
There just beneath my foot;  
I guess I must have stepped on it-  
It's peaking from my boot.

I hope I didn't hurt it,  
Though it seems immaterial;  
And nothing's ever touched it-  
It's flesh ethereal.

I'd rather it be behind me,  
Like it is on most the days,  
For I'm the shade it lives in  
To avoid the brightest rays.

Patti Masterman

# Lost Valley; How The Young Forget The Old Were Once The Same

Your future son-in-law is the child of Spanish farmers,  
His touch gentle on the baby bird, fallen far from the tree;  
His strong hands knowing things only the gardener or mechanic understands,  
Kind words softly murmuring, like lengthening days of summer.

He will give your grandchildren strong, lean legs to run upon.  
He will teach them dual words for dig, plow, and grandmother;  
He will show them the soil is as familiar, cool and unfathomable,  
As the nights endless black, without another name it could be known by-  
And will hold your hand even as you begin to travel

To that other darkening land, where no work gets done, and no children are made,  
His smile still as warm, as many fertile acres in the lost valley, where they say  
The old can become young again, their souls taking flight in the newly born.

Patti Masterman

# Love Comes Creeping

Out of the thinness of the moon's lean crescent,  
Love comes creeping, like a thief of planets;  
Like windows had vital information for kingdoms,  
And a bed were the secret of a spaceships escape.

If the way stood empty, an abyss behind a world,  
Or as far away as blood, once emptied from veins;  
If the seas should swoon, and clouds swelled and festered,  
When a drunken delusion mesmerized the trees.

If being naked were accepted, as natural and sacred-  
And a fluid silence encompassed the waves-  
And matter swam, in a different sort of ocean-  
And everyone got, as good as they gave.

Patti Masterman

# Love Is A Mannequin Dressed In Rags

Love is a mannequin dressed in rags,  
Desire's the streetcar, that left you in drag;  
Time is ephemeral and can't be touched;  
Distance is as far as the eye can see,  
And any farther's something we never reach.

Emotions are phoney, though we love them so much;  
Sadness and jealousy, pride and elation:  
Blaming the invisible's just a crutch-  
Only anger's real; the rest, decoration.

Patti Masterman

## Love Is A Palace - Triolet

Love is a palace that's so far away,  
We ride there on horses nobody has seen;  
Leaped over their paddock and then went astray,  
Love is a palace that's so far away.  
Our hair streaming out, as forgotten the day,  
On wild horses we go where we've never yet been;  
Love is a palace that's so far away,  
We ride there on horses nobody has seen.

Patti Masterman

# Love Is Longing

Love is longing  
When the heart's bled dry  
All the tears and moaning  
Echoing the sigh.

In the swift blood flowing  
Go the pleas and prayers  
Amid the hope there growing  
Find the soul laid bare.

On the one chance meeting  
All our thoughts revolve  
Then in two hearts beating  
Every pain's dissolve.

Patti Masterman

# Love Is So Darn Beautiful And Sad

Love is so darn beautiful and sad;  
You'd think something like that  
Would make us glad?

But our nerves sit drying in the sun,  
Just waiting, waiting- for that special one.

We'd not mind waiting, if they took a clue,  
That except for them,  
We don't find much to do.

Sadder still, is that we never learn-  
Watching pots boil too soon, we get burned.

Patti Masterman

# Love Itself

Love itself becomes very dry,  
When you've been long at the buffet;  
And teachings all more endlessly the same,  
For every hour that you stay.

And soon it seems, you can't discern  
One from another, they're so alike;  
So you sit complacent, like an interloper-  
But mind gives up, and stops its fight.

Things of the spirit are barely digestible,  
And don't satisfy imaginings at all;  
But the whole of the ghost, eats the best  
Of the host, and makes of love a festival.

Patti Masterman

# Love Me

Love me, love me; make me real,  
Love me- break the witches spell;  
End enchantments, break the chains:  
Give me back my life again.

Love with innocence like Adam and Eve,  
Or love like lungs just ache to breathe,  
Love like rainbows kiss the sky,  
Love like souls fill up with light.

Love with magic; love's first kiss,  
Love with here and now and this;  
Nothing matters, but the law-  
Love and be loved- that is all.

Patti Masterman

# Love Never Stays

Love's cups are scattered all around,  
Half-full, half-empty, overturned, forgotten  
Nothing can be as toxic, as overpowering  
As unforgettable and remorseful, all at once.

Drink at your own despair, drink to drown the here and now  
Be born away, a willing victim, and drink:  
Drink up until your cup is drained away  
And then only dream, of other cups and days;  
Love will never come to stay.

Patti Masterman

# Love Over Us, Come Reign

Heaven sweet and low  
On a homemade counterpane;  
Soft snoring, then all quiet again-  
Love o'er us, come reign.

Heaven sweet and low  
Birds on a leafy branch,  
Beyond the windowed thatch-  
Love o'er us, come reign.

Heaven sweet and low  
Tousled curls on a pillow damp;  
Now turn off the flickering lamp-  
Love o'er us, come reign.

Heaven sweet and low  
And a day that gently wane;  
Silvered light on a window-pane:  
Love o'er us come reign.

Patti Masterman

## Love Poems For Sale

Love poems for sale; they're slightly used,  
And birthday poems for free-  
Though slightly hexed by some old witch  
(I think that would be me)

Come one, come all, now don't be shy;  
These poems have lots of heart,  
Even though they futile were  
Back when, I thought them art.

Sterility is not a sin  
In literature or love,  
But no one wants the bastard child,  
Though he kiss the stars above.

Patti Masterman

# Love Returning

In inflation's burst  
Came birth into being;  
Quark soup into atoms,  
The spinning into suns  
Expanded levels of consciousness.  
Then the gradual collapse  
The withdrawal again, from worldly form  
Deceleration of matters pull  
And before the final degradation  
The spirit released from bondage,  
Attracted to the infinite gravity  
As opposites are:  
Featherweight of a soul  
To the galaxy's center-  
Incomprehensible density of black hole  
Hidden by dust clouds and debris,  
Where the work of creation  
Goes on in darkness, and in secret:  
The concluding no less a marvel  
Than the first explosion  
Love returning to its own.

Patti Masterman

## Love Returns To Love

There are spotless moons, and there are spoons of silver;  
But I am the praise of a mighty river.  
There are diamonds born, there where ghost-storms shorn,  
And Earth's just an arrow in the Hunts-man's quiver.

There are seas that sing, where there rings a bell  
Six fathoms deep, where a mermaid shivers,  
And hearts so full, under brain's strange rule;  
But love returns to the the loves first giver.

Patti Masterman

# Love Song Of The Stars

We gyrated, like spinning tops on fire;  
Give me your heart, you said breathlessly  
But I think that love's a lie, replied I.

Ok it's not love; maybe lust, amped up,  
But I think I might die, if you don't say why-  
I think we are out of luck, said I.

I'm not here, and this isn't real;  
We're floating in the sky-  
It's a dream shared, mused I.

Then I saw you were me, and I found  
I was you; and it was all true-  
We were there- flying high

So I bought you the moons  
At the galaxies end,  
And we parted at dawn, with a longing sigh.

Patti Masterman

# Love Spell God

First I unlock the door  
That you might come to me  
I open the windows  
I cut fresh flowers  
I unbind my hair  
That you might come to me  
I pick some ripe fruit  
I light some candles  
I sing an old love song  
That you might come to me  
I polish the mirrors  
I shine up my dreams  
I bathe myself in the four winds  
That you might come to me  
It is all of no use  
You never will come  
Until I have given myself up  
To tears and whimpering,  
Guile quite forgotten in hopelessness-  
Only then do you come into me.  
But ever forgetting that  
I try everything else first.

Patti Masterman

# Love Takes Us All By Turn

Love has dreary eyes sometimes,  
And wears a bell to warn:  
Don't come too near, or else you'll cry-  
And wish you were not born.

Love is gay and carefree when  
The lover's in plain sight;  
There is no need to wonder then  
Who he'll love that night.

Some days love is nonchalant  
And cares not that you came,  
A study of indifference;  
No matter, sun or rain.

But love is most redeeming  
When the eyes are filled with light,  
When blushing cheeks are beaming  
And the countenance is bright.

Because we love in human form,  
We have a lot to learn,  
And so these sorrows, should not mourn-  
Love takes us all, by turn.

Patti Masterman

# Love Was Just Beyond

Love was just beyond the mountain pass,  
And reason never could defy true love;  
But wind carried the voices far away-  
And lost it, deep within the vaults above.

Patti Masterman

# Lovely Eyes

Lovely eyes of a lovely soul  
Faraway child, who hides in the shadow  
Was it you who loved, in your distant day  
Did you tell your love, did you find a way  
Lovely eyes of a lovely soul  
Love lives forever, in the heart's echo.

Patti Masterman

# Lover Lie Still

Lover lie still-  
your wheels are turning;  
things are churning  
up from the past;  
For you are the mill  
of endless yearning,  
and memories burning,  
because they can't last.

Lover lie still-  
for morning's coming;  
we've got things humming  
hot off the track;  
Bitter's the pill  
but at least it's numbing,  
and skies are rumbling,  
they're moving too fast.

Lover lie still-  
and calm your heart down;  
turn your frown around  
into a smile;  
I know how you feel  
it's a hopeless town,  
and you're unwound,  
but let's go one more mile.

Patti Masterman

# Lover Of My Soul

You've given me everything  
I could have wanted; and also that which  
I wouldn't have dreamed I could ever desire so much  
You've answered me in your own way-  
Everything I've asked of you and more  
I never could have imagined how wonderful  
You would be, even in your darkest moments  
I've enjoyed with you things most people  
Only fantasize about, and things nobody could imagine  
I've had a special relationship with you  
From the first moment, so forgive me  
If, at the end of us,  
I ask for more time with you-  
And I know everyone does that;  
It's not that I'm greedy, it's just that  
The alternative to you is nothing I can imagine,  
Nothing compared to your beauty right now,  
O my world- everyone always wants more of you  
Even though you're the soul of everything.

Patti Masterman

# Lovers All; I Love The Poets

Real poetry inspires more of the same: you read a few lines,  
Concentrating on the words, though really you're thinking  
Of the memories triggered; half formed concepts  
Which your own mind has been belaboring, in daydreams and sleep-  
Even some things you would swear you had never seen before.

An intense itch begins at the back of the eyeballs  
And slowly slides down between the eyes  
But sometimes this can be instantaneous-  
As when, one minute ago, you were watching a twisting cyclone  
And the next, you find that you're inside the cyclone; that quickly.

And then something like a predigested sneeze begins to work itself  
Back into your brain; it comes to you then  
That you're pregnant, and have already felt the quickening  
And then the clutch engages and the gears mesh;  
The laser beam lights up the encrypted surface.

Time has to stop, right where it is-  
You look up to notice that a sacred moment might be happening  
Over on the far horizon, but no- you have become the farthest horizon;  
And you, the sanctity; and you also, the sun, moon, and heavenly bodies:  
You are the world, getting ready to push it's own body out again.

The words and images begin to flow  
Like a drain that has suddenly cleared itself,  
Just seconds before midnight,  
So that the flood is no longer a damnation;  
Now it flows freely down your arm, your pen.

Organizes it's own spine, organs, muscles and skin;  
Lymph channels and neural divisions:  
An artificial intelligence has just given birth to itself  
In between the glowing meridians of the page-  
And then it opens it's new eyes, and blinks back at you,  
Filled up with only your own sense of wonder.

Patti Masterman

# Love's Diagonal

Our empty syncopation's are patiently ambushed  
By restless margins of undeclared territory;  
Shivering cymbals, entraining cloistered memories,  
A nimbus inclining toward unredeemable quarries:  
Refrains unimagined, of star-tipped dawns  
Upon certain days of ritual, unbelievably worn.

Breathing dragons of fire-squandering meridians  
Pour round water upon semblance's drowned emotion;  
Cleave then to me, who cleaves to the last vestige  
Of rarefied air, breathed by bellows-smothered centuries  
When your foot trod the newly opened virgin earth,  
And your hand hinged loves diagonal, even unto death.

Patti Masterman

# Loves Newest Grave

Loves newest grave  
Was barely dug,  
When I gave him a kiss  
And he gave me a hug.

We buried the spade  
For a later date-  
But unearthed the hatchet-  
New blood, to sate.

Patti Masterman

# Love's Porpoise

In wretched years you tallied  
The sum of all my sin;  
And thought that my heart dallied,  
Just to play and never swim

By whale and seal and albatross;  
You reckoned you were jilted:  
I say, of me you're not the boss-  
Your love for me's too stilted.

Patti Masterman

## Love's Sums

Two hands, which kept me from danger,  
Two hands, which bade me know love;  
Two eyes, which spoke to my own,  
Twin beams, in the sky above.

One mind, which gave me my freedom,  
One mind unselfishly waits;  
While one heart, for me it is beating;  
And one life: my opening gate.

Patti Masterman

# Love's The Only Thing Worth Dying For

Love's the only thing worth dying for, bleeding for:  
From out of the whole world's total comings and goings,  
The only commerce can absolve finally the emptiness  
All the saints knew this: that to truly live abundantly  
One must give oneself over to that slow, flameless burn  
Renew the undying heart of love; encompassing holocaust  
Then the purified heart becomes a hidden sun  
With the fearful power suns contain, secretly within  
Which the eternal mind of creation can combust;  
Exhaust, the continuous machination of it's universes  
Whose very cores ignite, when that unmanifest potential;  
Of Love becomes too great, too strong to bear  
To be resisted for one more instant out of time  
The force borne toward and away from love, unbalanced  
Creation's exigency bursts forth into being, out of fullness,  
From a single dying exhalation of breath, either side of the fulcrum  
Lit by the single fuse of one who once died, blossoming into love.

Patti Masterman

# Loving Voices Die

Loving voices die-  
but first they dwindle  
to a whisper;  
The fragile throats  
go closed,  
in their final stricture.

No words to ease  
the pain,  
that's wrapped up  
with a shiver-  
And nothing else remain,  
As beloved faces wither.

Patti Masterman

# Lullaby

Let me be still, let all things close  
Their weary eyes, and dream awhile.  
Let us dream, let us float free  
Along soft-flowing mountain streams.

Let us fly, over hill and plain,  
Let the air caress our face  
And go where there's no fear, no pain,  
To remember who we are, again.

Or else forget, what was before,  
For there's nothing here, for miles and miles,  
No need to remember, or forget,  
While all around, the quietness smiles..

(Written to Into Dust, Mazzy Star)

Patti Masterman

# Lullaby For Lovers

Be my soft lullaby,  
Be my first light;  
The first sight at dawn,  
The last sight at night.

Love me in winter,  
Love me in spring;  
Bring me the opened flower  
Of your heart, once again.

Stay very close beside me,  
And never drift away;  
Be for me the sun and stars  
Of all my living days.

And when my last breath's over;  
And all my words and sighs-  
Then so gently lean above me  
And close my loving eyes.

Patti Masterman

# Lydia Jean

Lydia Jean, I'm kidnapping your name because  
There is no yellow brick road anymore, and your name  
May be as near to heaven, as I'm ever allowed.

I took your name also because of its beauty;  
Referring perhaps to the horse queen, of a smallish town,  
Or maybe a shy, reticent writer in a rowdy college crowd.

Nobody knows, and you're a mystery here  
Where you have wandered in, bearing that name;  
It is not too heavy or dense, it has a freedom to it.

Lydia Jean who writes of flowers, you must believe  
In the poetic worlds of beauty, which are different  
Though much the same, as that to which you testify.

Lydia Jean, in your own words singing truth;  
Old or young, you will always be Lydia  
And, to my eyes, seem noble;

Kind of a noble kind,  
A dark haired maiden maybe once, or never-  
But the flowers still thank you, for the sighs.

Patti Masterman

# Machines Worn As Subtle Form Of Endearment

Machines worn as subtle form of endearment  
Strap them on, they wear us like a brain  
Do not engage the motor or the crankshaft  
Or the likes of you shall be entrained

The nuts and bolts get drawn into schematics  
The charismatic gear chains makes us loath  
To shame the horses, running at full power  
When driver lashes them, with painful oaths

Patti Masterman

# Magician Hat Trick

consonant memories travel superstition's highway;  
their rhythms trembling in holy delirium  
where the fleshly ghost wears eternities rags,  
dancing away time, on insanity's altars.  
while dawn is a slave to drunken sunlight,  
the magician is baptized by tears of forgiveness.  
as the heavens dream of a wicked salvation,  
and disordered longings condemn a prisoner to life,  
everything vanishes in the blink of an eye.

Patti Masterman

# Magic-Turning Mind

Lose me from these bonds of flesh,  
And I'll never more be boring;  
Or build me a spaceship, of the mind-  
And soon, I will be soaring.

Set me a'sailin on some sea  
No man has ever fathomed,  
To find the fishy plunder  
Some sly mermaid has just ransomed;

Or meet the devil on his terms,  
At a minute before midnight  
(Be sure to wake before you sign  
Away, your one souls god-light)

Just dare to be the treasure  
That you'd like so much to find;  
For everything lies hidden,  
In your magic-turning mind..

Patti Masterman

# Magnetic Poetry Bore

If you look closely enough  
You can see the white bones of the magnetic poetry  
Sticking out beneath my trousers; I wanted to write poetry  
But I followed too many rules, and I rhymed  
God forsaken special purgatory that rhymers are exiled to.

You're in the wrong century; man, maybe even the wrong sex?  
Come to think of it, you even (guffaw) think that  
Things going up must come down, and that if you love someone  
And let them go, they'll come back just to thank you  
For giving them freedom to leave in the first place-  
Wrong, diphthong-breath!

And may God save my soul from overt descriptions,  
For ignoring the sins of civilization at large,  
For failure to make critical social commentary,  
And for noting, that nooses are always uncomfortably tight  
Especially after sticking your own neck in.

If only I had chosen more enlightening themes  
Roosters that crow raucously while you're having sex  
And stains on ceilings representing withheld orgasms  
There's a Ouija like quality to the magnetic tiles  
So now I'm hoping one of my alternate selves  
Will get into poetry in a big way.

Patti Masterman

## Make Mine Plain Vanilla, Please-

make mine plain vanilla, please-  
no syntax, or just leave it  
on the side then  
small and simple is always best  
and you don't need much to live  
and even fewer words suffice  
nice

Patti Masterman

## Make No Mistake

Never mistake the fake for real;  
Hard truths, for lack of loving.  
The genuine need no introduction,  
And we reserve anger only for what we care about.

Never love without reason, many ills must be borne  
Because of impatience or indifference.  
Respect your heart to give it space;  
The truth, for room for breathing.

Patti Masterman

# Making A Poem

If you want to make a poem  
Look at leaves, look at trees  
Look at yellow honey bees  
Watch the clouds, watch the sky  
Hear a locust, hear a sigh  
Feel the wind on your skin  
Know the flowers are your kin  
Give your heart away for free  
To the waves, to the sea  
Fall in love with a star  
And your words can go quite far.

Patti Masterman

# Man And Woman

Man and woman, we laid where clouds copulated,  
My head near yours, where the river kissed the bar.  
Sat in seats as a couple, all breath-bated,  
Watched a star shoot across another star.

Dream for dream; all our movements syncopated,  
Strength for weakness, nested in parallel.  
But gradually our words grew constipated-  
And you took me suddenly, inside a dark stairwell.

Thereafter, we no longer searched for symbols;  
Auspicious signs, we would be just like the rest:  
We were lithe and quick, and we were very nimble-  
And it mattered not if our union were not blessed.

Patti Masterman

# Man Is Full Of Venom And Vice

man is full of venom and vice,  
and each dead cut tree shall then,  
when twain, out of all these falling limbs  
(venom and vice)  
be merely the frail, immeasurable culling  
more silent, but less  
than the sum of suns  
here displayed by happiness or tears  
(venom and vice)

if the tongue of shadows prays  
to the snowflake of obsidian glass,  
if dreams bottom out in the depths  
of grief's infinite losses  
where memories wag perpetual flames,  
there where the time wells up  
minus jagged sections of squalored living

man is full of venom and vice,  
and if life be more  
than every wanton, shuffling sun  
(venom and vice)  
more than past-future  
declensions of wayward moon,  
if not more than  
the growing spectre of our terrible,  
swift wings, day by day  
(venom and vice)

then speaking mostly behind the eyes,  
is the unwrit, unholy grave of man,  
man still full of venom and vice  
and whose errors are still very much with him-  
in spite of knowledge in spite of civilization  
in spite of science in spite of love

for all his aberrant dissimilitude  
always digging him in again  
(venom and vice)

Patti Masterman

# Man On The Moon

Love down here seems to turn to something else;  
In a few years time, familiar means contempt,  
And it all starts out with ringing wedding bells;  
But Love returns wherever before was sent:

For you're the angel; you're the man on the moon,  
The pie in the sky, the one makes me swoon;  
Through a million miles of burning starry nights,  
My flighty heart's already taken flight.

You the gift, the heaven's sought to give,  
For unknown reasons life cannot reveal;  
You the hallowed heart, that stays to live;  
You the love; no borrow, beg or steal:

For you're the angel; you're the man on the moon,  
The pie in the sky, the one makes me swoon;  
Through a million miles of burning starry nights,  
My flighty heart's already taken flight.

In paradise we'll find our other part,  
The one we left behind us at our birth;  
The one that beats in time, with our own heart;  
With luck someday, we'll find it down on Earth:

For you're the angel; you're the man on the moon,  
The pie in the sky, the one makes me swoon;  
Through a million miles of burning starry nights,  
My flighty heart's already taken flight.

Patti Masterman

# Man Thou Never Wert

Man thou never wert  
Hallowed room wherein the house  
Was troubled by his touch  
Indented deeply was the couch  
In mind, but not by such

Fashioned of ravings unpretentious  
The oily midnight herds drew nigh  
To fodder of visionings well-tended  
But only unharnessed horses fly-

Stirrings of drear self-symphonies  
Gave birth, to more sterile seed  
'Let's give him blue empathy for eyes'  
How comely indeed!

Come, let us give our hearts to the dirt  
Open soft earth, and dig  
And drain, and hang it up to dry  
Then shrink till nothing fit

The golden god once more must die  
And none on golden thrones shall sit.

Patti Masterman

# Manifold Vacuum

Don't give me any status quo love,  
I don't want good looks, riches;  
Loads of fun.  
I was not made for someone good looking  
Or generous life of the party types,  
I need someone very deep and free,  
Who can make me scared that they might leave  
I have only two speeds left you see;  
And I'm searching for the mechanic  
Who can fix my broken clutch  
And replace the missing gears  
In the center of my being.  
You must be somewhat homely,  
Taciturn, not lonely;  
Secure, but never well to do.  
Be able to laugh at my fears,  
And make fun of my tears-  
Because that's what I've gotten used to.

Patti Masterman

# Mankind The Child Of Further Dreams

Mankind's the child of further dreams  
Than even this old earth has seen,  
As children learn the grownups ways  
The earthlings find the words to say.

That it's magic, they don't see;  
All their yearning, visionings,  
Imagination-lighting pyres  
Sets their wants and dreams afire.

Offspring of creatures yet unknown,  
Daring here to call it home,  
While they're really on their way  
Toward the farther, distant day.

When matter's moved by means of thought,  
Like quantum particles do strut  
Affecting others far away,  
In other fields where they lay.

A thought's a potent gun to point,  
In spaces minefields buoyant-  
Pray aim carefully, what you choose:  
Who plays too soon is apt to lose.

Patti Masterman

# Manna

To me, you are all things  
That power of words alone cannot convey;  
Mere letters cannot form the thought I hold,  
No sentence tell the heart what it should say.

There is no volume with your name gilt-stamped,  
No seal with your initials deeply etched,  
No mystery play wherein your life, enacted  
Reveals the wondrous times; the wretched.

Obscure, you rule my days with your indifference;  
One detail of your life, one day of mine;  
On shared glance, one indistinct gesture  
Is manna for my whole lifetime.

Patti Masterman

# Mannequins I Have Known

Carol had a neo-plastic emotion that glowed  
like a muzzled supernova  
whenever you asked a question.  
I have seen her pause for hours,  
her unwrinkled brow wrestling  
with the inexpressible conundrums-  
language and existence.

Boris was most likely a double agent,  
almost human in his invisible psyche,  
but hard-core fiber on the outside.  
Basically homeless, splitting his time  
between winters in a crowded warehouse  
on the East coast,  
and summers posing in front of a fun-house parlor.  
(Embarrassingly, birds sometimes nested  
in the top of his hat)

If Carol and Boris had ever managed to meet,  
could they have found eternal happiness  
in that place, where touch  
and the un-sayable  
become mingled together?

Somehow I doubt it, for she  
was all naive mid-western cowgirl;  
and he, other-worldly sophisticate.  
The in-law and logistical problems alone  
may well have been  
insurmountable.

He was too inflexible  
in the arena of inter-personal relations,  
and she was the eternal virgin;  
there was no way  
to intertwine their lives  
into a single venue.

Life is lonely for the best of us,

but some are doomed  
from the very start,  
stuck in a revolving track mentality,  
doomed to changeless subsistence.

Patti Masterman

# Mans Right Not Gods Right

The territorial never stop to ponder  
They did not craft the earth beneath their step  
To take another's homeland is abhorrent  
It's tantamount to pilferage or theft.

Whoever lives upon it has the right  
To protect the other ones that it supports  
And anyone opposing that's a thug  
Even when the bureaucrats exhort.

Even though boundaries extend forever  
Past wherever god would make the mark  
It takes away what civilizes man  
And makes us into savages, in the dark.

Patti Masterman

# Many A Dream

You shall not do as the witches do,  
The pages of the book instructed;  
As if it were the only bible, real  
To which my living soul entrust'd.

In a dream, I flew through air  
Into the vent, of the house next door;  
Where in the attic, they opened a book  
And showed me the verse, was printed there.

And many a dream since then's forgot,  
And many a dream since then was borne;  
But the words that night saved in my heart,  
As though were meant for me, alone.

Patti Masterman

# Mars And Jupiter In A Cup

If all the creatures were enlightened  
With a higher-ordered brain,  
They'd always save- and never spend-  
And in this way avoid pain.

If all the worlds aligned one night,  
And all the words were added up,  
I should have books inside my head-  
And Mars and Jupiter in a cup.

If all the stars laid end to end-  
A numbered puzzle to complete-  
And I marked them with a pen,  
They'd make a heaven there, complete.

If all the universe in god's eyes  
Paraded for his royal view,  
He'd watch them slowly orbit by-  
The sum of all- for his review.

Patti Masterman

# Martial Love

We thrust and parry  
Then step aside for the occasional respite-  
This complex minuet we're born to  
This waltzing with weapons drawn  
Ready to strike, defend, or acquiesce:  
Man and woman- never worshiped  
At the altar of either  
Instinctive distrust reigns  
The known is cheapened by words  
Even sleeping virgins are tainted  
The world makes whores and liars  
Of the humblest saint- beware,  
The daggers tongue is never satisfied  
Except by fresh blood  
Even if the wound be ancient.

Patti Masterman

# Mary Carolina. My Grandmother

Mary Carolina. A blue sky of a name,  
And she could whistle; carry a tune for days-  
for all the seasons, in her special ways.

She buried a daughter who was only seven,  
And made downy biscuits white with leavening.  
Everything she touched seemed to thrive;  
She touched me, back when I was scarcely alive..

She touches me still, though it's been many years  
(And came back once to say, have no fears..)

Mary Carolina, we'll never forget you-  
You brought a touch to earth, of heaven..

(written to Caroline's Lullaby, by Clement D, Daydreamer Music)

Patti Masterman

# Masturbatory Poetry

Masturbatory poetry doesn't get anyone else off  
Doesn't lead to pregnancy or abortion  
Isn't about love or deep human emotions;  
It's rather mechanical, and can go on for a long time-  
Rather pointlessly,  
And it's embarrassing  
To be caught indulging in it, needlessly  
When you've already done five pieces today  
Maybe you should just give that hand a rest?  
Masturbatory poetry can cause quite a mess.

Patti Masterman

# Maturity

We're born into such a tiny space-  
Time's disbarred at first;  
Only a few two-dimensional faces  
You gradually learn to recognize.

Things slowly expand to three dimensions  
To enclose a room, a house, a block:  
An entire expanded family, with rooms,  
Houses, expectations of their own.

Growing older, there's more expansion:  
Four dimensions now, and everything gobbles up time-  
Streets, towns, highways and cities  
Their abstract bodies suck up all available time  
Days whiz by out of control..

Then one day you notice it:  
Someone has kicked over the dividers  
Whisked away the walls, the barriers..  
The buildings, roads and highways have all run together now  
Like blood veins pooling together.

The days leap by like graceful deer  
The familiar faces have disappeared  
You wonder when did it begin- when did all the divisions  
The separations, move inside of yourself?

Then you start all over; trying to expand your borders again,  
The way you remember it once was  
The way things were at the very start  
When time wasn't allowed yet.

Patti Masterman

# Mausoleum

Through the evolving debris of decades,  
A thousand paper mosaics fill again with warping light,  
Their plasma blurred against the careless rub of time.

The human is transported beyond past disappointment,  
Order is again brought forth, from worn boxes and containers  
As ever-nimble light quickly travels millions of miles  
To astound us, in old mausoleums of photographs.

Stellar neutrons irradiate once nondescript joys,  
But soon the shutter spins outward again,  
With the rapid speed of displeasure;  
The eyes longing, for what they used to own.

Patti Masterman

# May And December

She gave him her heart for a little while,  
Although he was much older, by far;  
They lived merely for each others eyes,  
And out of their eyes, there shone stars.

He thought she'd not possibly want him,  
For he didn't know, how deep was her soul;  
His age meant nothing really, to her:  
For without him, her heart wasn't whole.

They counted every hour, as treasure,  
Together, when life would permit;  
And of course, they must share every pleasure,  
So alike in the things they cherished.

If only once in life, such a love might come,  
Not one would dare say a word against;  
The communing of two kindred souls; so rare,  
How could anyone take offense?

Patti Masterman

# May God Save The Queen

Funny how faces always announce their owners beforehand,  
With such subtle traces that, although we may miss it objectively,  
The furtive never-sleeping mind of us does not fail to take note  
Of the tiny, angry bird scratches, of egotism, impatience and intolerance.  
The well etched lines, of willpower and definite strength of mind.  
The eyes marking shallow thoughts or lack of brevity; indifference.  
The face holding a hidden dagger; it could turn on us;  
Without giving any warning; the flat eyes that portray  
Their owners lack, of a sense of humor.  
Pettiness, subversiveness, narcissism;  
Jealousy, pessimism, doubt.  
It might not be able to tell us of their quality of intelligence; but sometimes  
Can tell us that they don't make very good use of it.  
All the suitors who passed through our courts left their mark  
Of the judicial decisions we passed down upon them;  
All the case files forever tattooed right there,  
Printed out upon our own features, for posterity to read  
At it's leisure: And may God save the Queen.

Patti Masterman

# Meant For Life

Would Life still love me-  
Even if creatures don't;  
Or would Love want me living-  
Would it care about hurt?

If Life could love me;  
In spite of all,  
Or if Love could cherish,  
Though I still fall;

Should heart keep beating,  
While lungs do breathe-  
Does it bear repeating,  
I'm meant to live?

Patti Masterman

# Measure Of A Man

Strange that all we are's a bit of pock marked plasma;  
Fish scales and staring eyes, hair and claws,  
Skin tissue with some epoxy seeping through.  
A bit of webbing, a bit of cartilage;  
Rib cages and tail bones,  
Grit and gristle.  
A greasy, leaky mess of tendons,  
Femurs and clavicles;  
Inedible at best, but mostly valued  
For our complex brain;  
Itself only jello, without any mold  
And less substantive than play-doh  
More nerveless than the amoeba:  
The mushroomed foreskin of our endless curiosity.

Patti Masterman

# Meeting You Was A Birth

Meeting you was a birth:

A membrane was moved aside,  
Amid fleeting showers of starfall,  
Ranging comets round the moon's face,  
A cosmic wind tearing Aurora's veil.

Clinging to the wake of heavenly bodies:

An eclipse in darkness,  
An opening to light,  
A diving into deepness,  
A deepening of sight.

Patti Masterman

# Melancholic

Melancholic vigilance can serve as a reminder  
That though we might be dying, the world is growing kinder;  
The flowers smile through rain and storm, as though it didn't matter,  
And rainbows fall benevolent, as storm clouds quickly scatter.

A hand in yours is all you need, to get you through the night,  
And every day the world turns till the sky is filled with light  
Be still my heart and trust this day to turn out for the best;  
The things I'm given I will keep, and never mind the rest.

Patti Masterman

# Memento Mori

The autumn swells came yesterday;  
Starlings auditioned for the first movement,  
Covering the ground like a black burning.  
Choreography by the November Djinnns and  
Capricious winds accompanying  
The Jack Frost pumpkin scenes.  
A rogues gallery of flying leaves  
Adding interest, movement, and color.  
No shallow plot mars the storyline;  
The colder months enliven the bitterest  
Season- many of the oldest actors  
Will give their final performance now.  
It is all improvisation at the last, but when  
The curtain comes down, will they manage to  
Stop playing the part after so many years?

Patti Masterman

# Memory Is A Cool Pool Of Checkered Fabrics

Memory is a cool pool of checkered fabrics  
brushing up against eyelet smiles  
on the long summer days  
when we wore almost nothing;  
as forgiving as children are,  
as short lived as a reverie.

Was it forever, or just a few summers  
which left their indelible mark upon us;  
a somersault into water that lasted eons,  
a never ending picnic by the trees.

Do blue eyes ever fade  
like the last star at sunrise?  
Are secrets still worth keeping  
when the dreamer's grown old and wise?

There is real treasure buried here,  
hidden by the young  
who crossed their hearts,  
hoping to die;  
and coveted once, by so many  
but recovered, with only one sigh.

Patti Masterman

# Men And Angels

I knew a man, deep in his bones  
Had cloud-soft thoughts, where fires had torn  
His claws and fangs and iron away;  
And he defenseless, could not say  
Hard things or hurtful, could not bruise  
A single stone, in mirthful ruse,  
Nor quash an ant, no pain deride  
Or utter things that, still inside  
Would cut someone, or wound their pride,  
Not in his wildest dreams, accuse  
Another, or be stern and rude.  
Though he might well be thought obtuse,  
Because some things, he'd never choose,  
In everything, he took such care;  
An angel might cause more despair,  
Even though bright wings, he bear.

Patti Masterman

# Men Build Castles

Men build castles in the air;  
Death builds tombs below us,  
We've scarce begun to live, it seems,  
When death is then bestowed us.

It is a race we often lose;  
Death panting by our heels,  
We thinking we can pick and choose;  
Imagining free will.

We get to pick our place of rest,  
And what on stone gets riven;  
Don't forget that ticking clock  
Before your life's too driven.

Patti Masterman

## Men-Oh! -Pause

A sly, cold eel  
Is crawling up my spine,  
Wrapping round my organs;  
Just killing time.

Then a warm wet squid  
Makes my shoulders his;  
Pressed into my face,  
Makes my poor heart race.

Am I dying, is this it?  
I question anxiously  
For I'm really at a loss  
But rest assured, they say;

Though sweating's your new hobby,  
And if you freeze, you'll thaw,  
It's most explanatory;  
It's all just menopause.

Patti Masterman

# Mercy Seat

There's always something new  
Clicking along the familiar grid lines  
There's the autobiographical show-and-tell  
One link later, and zipping along the super highway,  
Straight into the inner sanctum-CLICK! unguarded  
Arc of the Covenant: Glowing precise bits and bytes  
Would-be authors; each with their own  
Age-appropriate foci, a work in progress  
Endlessly boiling tidal pools of egocentric ravings;  
Anxious, demanding, irreverent, playful-

O Anonymous One:

Do you feel me here groping inside your Holy of Holies  
Perusing your innermost, sepulchered secrets  
I lounge on your sacred altars, inspecting soul-searing pledges  
And do you care, and does it excite you  
That I can re-experience your most private emotions  
Re-animate and touch again, the damp relics of intimate moments,  
Examine midnight yearnings and recriminations;  
Find forgotten motives, in shadows of fierce longing  
Here be culture and superstition, fear and expectation  
I extract a magnifying glass for a closer look-

Now that I've been invited inside  
I get to see the places you inhabit, inside your own head:  
Your past lovers, spooning, in fetal position;  
Your occasional victims, outlined by footprints and chalk  
Is it paradise or hell; marked by random spray paint  
Or suicidal graffiti? Sometimes, I can't help cringing  
Over sincere and careless words you've left here  
But whatever I might think, you won't notice the open door  
Or the flashlight beam that's playing:  
No need to fear: your secrets are safe with me-

Patti Masterman

# Mere Man

He was mere man, who broke my body open,  
Who saw my life's turning, so plainly told,  
And once slumbering flesh had finally awoken,  
I missed not one minute, whatever he stole.

One man who broke me, two men who loved,  
My life as a puzzle, did not fit the mold;  
But loved I was, so there was naught to defeat me,  
My body's soul free, neither bought or sold.

Each body has a lock that's only a token,  
Each life has a drama, that in time unfold;  
But none this tight-clasp mind has ever opened-  
For none this souls pure need could ever hold.

Patti Masterman

# Mermaid, Looking For Her Father's Eyes

Mermaid, looking for her father's eyes  
Looks in the river, ocean, sky-  
But the river god, he only sleeps;  
And the little silver fishes, keeps  
Close beside him, all the night,  
Till dispersed at mornings light.

Mermaid, looking for her father's eyes  
Thinks the ocean knows where- or why  
Her father's missing- beneath the waves?  
Or in some sunken castles, gave  
His bones, to sanctify a water-world,  
Where the colored fish-schools whirl.

Mermaid, looking for her father's eyes  
Looks above, then heaves a sigh;  
For nowhere has she found one sign,  
Although her birth was in the brine-  
Though Moon's the one always overhead,  
Shining his face, above her bed.

Patti Masterman

# Mermaid's Moon

It's a Mermaid's Moon;  
See the ripples like water,  
Try to hear the splashing  
And faint tinkling laughter.

The clouds are hiding  
The mermaid's fun;  
They don't come play  
Under burning sun.

I see their shadows  
In the sunset's glow-  
It makes me glad  
I can see the show.

Hide and seek  
Is among their games  
But mermaids rarely  
Play the same again.

Their favorite game  
In the ocean blue,  
Is to catch a man  
And to steal his shoes.

They'll play with shoes  
All day, so beware them  
Maybe its because  
They've no feet to wear them?

Patti Masterman

# Message In A Bottle

If I were to write a letter to God it might go along these lines:  
Dear Sir or Madam: Now that I am fully assimilated  
into this greenish- blue planet, I would say to you that I came  
to be here in the normal manner, unassisted by science:  
I was genuinely born, by fact of which I have a navel-  
A belly- button if you will- the result of a birth- canal connection  
To a mammalian mother, also known as a Homo Sapiens female,  
And crown bones that were moveable for a short period after birth.

I breathe a partial- oxygen atmosphere and eat various foodstuffs  
Available here on the planet. I possess a bendable,  
opposable thumb, the Rosetta stone of Intelligence they say.  
A language inherited from many generations of ancestors before,  
Along with a greatly enhanced larger sized brain to help me use it;  
An upright stance to enable easier walking-  
In short, I have in abundance, everything necessary for survival here.

In truth I admit I am clueless about who or  
What I am doing here or what purpose it all serves.  
Since all the beings here die after a period, sooner or later,  
It is considered most desirable to live for as long as possible.  
The only knowledge I lack is the time and nature of my death.  
We thinking beings here have many religions to  
Help us cope with that lack of knowledge  
About when we die and what becomes of us after that.

Alas, we don't know if we're the center of this universe and  
Everything was made for our pleasure, as most of the worlds  
Religions claim, or if we are just one of many residents here,  
In this galaxy and elsewhere. In spite of these minor problems,  
I would like to say thank you for everything.  
We're just in awe here about all your creations.  
Nobody else could have done it so well- keep up the good work, eh?  
Something is better than nothing, right?  
And it all came out of- nothing, huh?  
Right. God to see you- I mean good,  
Good to see you. And have a nice- forever? I guess;  
Signed, your Child



# Metamorphosis

I'm turning into a mummy-  
It started in my left middle toe, the first symptoms  
First the end got hard and dried out,  
Skin flaking, like a callous, or a fungus.  
I began craving pomegranates, dates;  
Ordering fancy linen sheets by the dozen  
Searching for natron, and exotic resins  
Scribbling foreign- looking symbols  
To mark my possessions.  
Worrying whether or not, my heart is too heavy?  
Now I can feel it creeping up higher,  
The granite vise closing upon my flesh,  
Every night while I pretend to be sleeping-  
Though I seem to require much less sleep these days.  
During daylight it hibernates, dormant  
I think that the full moon makes it ravenous.  
Once I saw an actual mummy in a clear case.  
The card said she was a Princess-  
Maybe that was somebody's imagination,  
Because I have inside information:  
The mummy tried to warn me within a dream  
That we shared a past and, it follows, a future;  
She was my sister in the dream,  
We lived in a clay house with a dirt floor.  
We were poor, in everything but dirt, and time.  
It must have been long aeons ago we were there  
In the desert, in the clay brick house,  
And now, I am becoming a mummy too;  
In three thousand years, the entire body  
Metamorphosed into a sort of dry, desert-fired clay,  
Maybe I too will have a glass sarcophagus;  
And since I will have no pyramidal tomb,  
The only name they might find about me  
To place upon it: Princess AL-COTON 100%  
Made in Taiwan.

Patti Masterman

# Methylene Blue

Methylene blue,  
You paint a pretty picture:  
Is it really true  
Your stains get slowed by stricture?

Methylene blue,  
On standby in gas chambers  
Resuscitating beasts-  
The dark and unknown stranger.

Methylene blue,  
A heterocyclic compound:  
In air a greenish powder,  
But blue, when water drowned.

Patti Masterman

# Millions Of Forms

millions of forms flower from darkness,  
populating a planet's crust;  
all the seeds of space borne travelers  
taking on the shapes they must.

looking for that perfect timestamp,  
where the eco-systems right,  
there at last to fulfil eons  
traveling toward the stellar light.

like magic they will find the niche,  
where their own kind flourish; grow  
and man himself the child of historys  
that no one will ever know.

Patti Masterman

# Mind Is Destiny

The world is not for itself  
Turning and turning to unknown purpose,  
The latest digression of a vast whirling  
That started obliquely and is still going on.

Everything subtle, yet unremitting;  
What have we to do with this metronome,  
This hourglass filled with meteors, planets, fire-  
Less visible than the fires which burn inside.

Look out the window of the sky,  
Whether be in darkness or in light  
And be the witness creation desires  
Mind is destiny, fragmented by time.

Patti Masterman

# Minoan Snake Goddess

Long black robe of the house dress  
And the animal that decorates her  
Waits at the end of a strap  
Instead of atop her stone head  
At night the snakes seem lively  
Serpentine extensions of her short arms  
She belches brimstone and mutters endless  
Half-baked deprecations  
As she staggers to the john  
The alcoholic elixir tangling her brains axions  
Bellow and curse fall randomly  
On furniture, carpet, and sleeping creatures  
Her dangling breasts sway to no metered ritual  
She is the artifact now of a dead civilization  
Still trying to convince herself she was once the epitome  
Of feminine courage and power  
Her worshipers now just sleeping dust  
Her idols cracked faience, with white rimmed eyes  
She lurches along her slowed down calendar  
Slogs drunkenly through the wavering pestilence  
That has become her life  
Maybe she senses that at the end  
When she has sucked out every ounce of energy and truth  
From everything she's ever touched  
The snakes will turn inward and devour her completely  
And only her footprints remaining on weary earth.

Patti Masterman

# Minus Or Plus

The world is zero, nada, zilch:  
For everything cancels out the other;

Negative, positive, stay the poles-  
Exactly equal to one quantum,

And either side, everything slides,  
In the balance hangs equilibrium,

The conundrum is the key,  
To the fate of you and me,

As undecided in quintessence,  
The cosmos whirls its eternal question.

(But if nonbeing, you'd wish to discuss-  
Simply add one minus or plus)

Patti Masterman

# Miranda Warning

You have the right not to look into Miranda's eyes.  
Anytime you do look into Miranda's eyes,  
Anything you see there can and will cause you to fall in love with Miranda.  
You have the right to counsel on how to write a proper love letter to Miranda.  
If you have no pencil and paper, they will be provided for you.  
Do you understand this, as it has been explained to you?

Patti Masterman

# Miscalculation

I envy the cool darkness, now we're apart  
And the warmth which wrapped your body:  
Cocooned by your breathing,  
The secret shadows and angles  
Which gradually changed every hour  
Like a dark sundial recording  
All your limbs tiniest convolutions.

I know there was a sort of  
Kabalistic synchronicity  
Some algebraic function  
And if only I'd studied more;  
If only I'd applied myself better  
I wouldn't have gotten all the equations wrong  
Lost the notes, failed the exam.

I remember those once acute angles  
How they fit so perfectly my body's contours  
Our seams vanished together, smooth soldered  
In the same molten dream; mouth to mouth  
Torso upon torso, moving wave unfurled  
Water of twin oceans, mingled-  
Now it's only the moonlight that burns.

Patti Masterman

# Missing

This poem is about nothing for certain  
although it's been written  
like it could be about something.

But it's an optical illusion;  
a too effusive flux of ether,  
of atoms smashing against a void,  
space re-orienting toward forever.

Out of nothing, nothing's coming,  
and out of everything, nothing's left;  
all births are sterile, empty spoofs  
when the abacus of life has no more beads,  
and the doors of freedom, have been cleaved.

Only Adam's rib remains,  
everything else was wasted space;  
wasted breath or sulfured flames-

(Heaven's looking for a few good angels now,  
just to take our place)

Patti Masterman

# Missing Puzzle Piece

Everyone toils at the working  
the opening, unfolding  
into other blooming dimensions,  
Mirroring the centerpiece of the divine;

The spot where the light enters and god transcends  
toiling ceaselessly, arriving endlessly  
As the unfathomable holds our drowning gaze

Toward one missing puzzle piece.

Patti Masterman

# Missing Words

Our days have an end  
And nothing's left, then;  
No more gloried win,  
No more secret sin.

What death leaves behind  
Is a plundered mine;  
A half-baked rhyme,  
Like frozen time.

Our name fades away,  
Like a perfect Fall day,  
Like sunset's last ray;  
The last words you say.

Our remains have a place,  
And they come, to say grace-  
But they can't see our face,  
For there's left, not one trace.

Patti Masterman

# Mithras' Sash

Mithra's sash is bound with stars,  
The Earth is bound with space;  
Impossible distances  
Keep god bound up, in grace.

Patti Masterman

# Modern Day Messiahs

Ancient, invisible God of the Hebrews,  
Some have renamed You, and crowned You  
Their Christian god; but for the discerning person  
We just need a little more proof.

Here are some forms and paper work,  
You need to fill out;  
And of course we'll need a certified note,  
Declaring just when and where and how  
You came into Being, and listing  
All next of kin- yes Your Son absolutely should qualify for that-

And we'll need His death certificate on file,  
For future referencing, and any dependents-  
What's this about Three Persons in One?  
Do You have a psychiatric doctor You see?  
We should probably have his information too, just in case.

Immaculate conception?  
I'm sorry, that just isn't acceptable in any court of law.  
Every woman seems to believe it at first, of course,  
But that doesn't make it hold water-  
Virgin birth? hmm, very interesting.  
Perhaps an examination is in order,  
Something surely doesn't seem right here?

Martyred for our sins? What an interesting idea.  
Resurrection? Is there a record of that anywhere?  
I suppose it's possible You could have had  
a colorful near death experience,  
If You were really resuscitated- oh it was Your Son?  
Oh, You Yourself accomplished this Re-Animation-  
Oh oh oh! I've got to get that call.  
Hold on; be right back, dear.

'Get the guys in white coats down here in room  
311 right away. I've got a hot one..'



# Modern Warfare

My tongue's a saber  
Inside a false stiletto heel  
My hair has barbs, piranha fangs concealed within each strand  
It slices your skin if you go along it in the wrong direction  
A blowgun sits just inside my throat  
With pouches of toxin close by  
My eyes are radar slits  
With slowly revolving fields  
A mollusk shell shields my emotions  
A chain mail plexus lies camouflaged along my body  
It's impossible being me  
And trying to not wound you-  
I sometimes lie to myself, and I tell myself  
That I do not care that you are wounded,  
That you should have known  
That any dealings with me would result  
In you're being hurt; you should have expected it  
On the worst days, I gash you joyously  
To hear you howl and  
To see the blood run in rivulets.  
But I always cry in the dark  
When nobody can see it  
And wish that I were more normal;  
Surrounded on all sides as I am  
By the walking wounded.

Patti Masterman

# Moon Shining Over The Water

Moon shining over the water  
And leaves apart in spectral silence,  
How night is sometimes still surprised  
That heaven's lanes only reached by love.

Each exact sorrow being divided  
Or multiplied by twin dissatisfaction.  
Wood falls which side the milk flows,  
Praising the raised lengths of virgin Cedar.

Law and being, duality of time;  
Straight as the purpose of starlight flying,  
Straighten night's sash, follow fence lines  
Along the nightdress of bulging galactic.

Patti Masterman

# Moonlight And Violets

Though moonlight and dreams may be  
Our starlit route to ecstasy,  
A touch holds more than worlds can show,  
In planetary light's day-glow;  
And soft words said at evening-fall  
May hold a captive heart in thrall.

I long to take you all the way,  
Somewhere even words can't say;  
Somewhere stars won't disappear,  
Whether it be far or near-  
And timid Violet's in the shade  
Will know that they by love were made.

Patti Masterman

# Moonlit Pathways

Memorizing heaven,  
Catechizing hell,  
To try to keep the ghosts away-  
Far from the wishing well.

Tracing moonlit pathways  
Back to a place you knew,  
Remembering the fateful hour  
Earthly debts came due.

And heavens doorway's moving,  
Farther every year,  
As the lines get longer-  
Though hell stays just as near.

The children's dreams grow older,  
The babies grow to men;  
But what survives the break of day  
Light dies in, at the end.

Patti Masterman

## Moral Of The Story

Wish in one hand  
Want in the other  
If I'd hope that we could marry  
You'd have turned out my brother  
If I'd wanted a soul mate  
There'd ever be no other  
Wish in one hand  
Want in the other.

What trouble it a man  
To lose his whole soul  
When the former's a dream  
And the latter, a hole  
At the bottom of a life  
Of pettiness and strife  
What trouble it a man  
To lose his whole soul?

There's a moral behind  
Each mortal coil  
Be it ever so humble  
Or worn out with toil  
Forgotten or remembered  
If the heart's been dismembered  
The moral's left behind  
Like a royal bloodline.

Patti Masterman

# More Is Never Enough

More is never enough, with my mistress:  
I must seek out novelty places  
Where we have never made love before  
For she demands total practiced concentration,  
And ever new surroundings; for her pleasure:  
Extreme positions; her legs up in the air  
My legs hanging off the table,  
Bent over the footstool; and now skating  
In circles, on the mechanic's creeper  
Doubled over red-faced, in the plough position; her hot breath  
Panting into my mouth, while I try to find  
All the right levers; and just when  
I get that rhythm so right-  
The phone rings, or the dog barks;  
The pencil lead breaks off yet again  
Or the page just stares at me, like a hapless sheep  
Until I wad it up in disgust.

And I have to begin all over, then  
But she's so worth it; every word  
I can come up with, to try and do justice to her  
I could spend my whole life trying  
And maybe only ever get there, once  
But I keep on writing;  
Hoping for the proverbial lucky break.

Patti Masterman

## More Words

More words; always more words;  
He's stirring them, into the batter of the day:  
Putting different flavors  
Changing the shape of the pan  
Varying the oven's temperature  
Using different icings and decorations,  
In hopes that maybe she won't notice  
That it's him baking it, this time around.  
Maybe the words alone, will attract her  
With their sweet, vanillin score.

It's not my fault you're pouring your heart out  
To a somebody, who would not risk one glance your way  
Even to save your life.  
But I don't have to like  
That you keep on doing it.

Outside, hungry birds congregate  
On the pavement, in expectation  
Pecking up all the moist, tender crumb  
Of your latest red velvet heart,  
Filled earnestly, with the honest plasma  
Of your simple being:  
One more cake, she would not even sample.

Perhaps, if you baked a file, into the next one  
To help her to escape her cage of indifference;  
Stop pretending to be the wounded bird.

But be careful; she could always choose instead  
To stab you, with your well-intentioned gift  
Just to watch the blood come pouring out,  
And then, yes; she would finally be happy  
To lick your warm, savory blood off the street,  
To suck your hapless soul  
Into the ravening vacuum she is become-  
And there are already, so many dead bakers  
Staring out of the diseased city  
Of her empty black eyes.

Patti Masterman

## More You

I want more you- and not to digress,  
But it's only you I want; what more to confess,  
Just you in the morning, and you at midday,  
Moreover only you, from night into day.

I want more you, wherever you be,  
More you by the land, more you by the sea,  
More you at sunset, and the breaking dawn  
Your start and finish, my whole life long.

I want you when troubled, and when in pain,  
Under the drought, or inside the rain,  
You when I'm sleeping, you when awake,  
You when I'm mending, and when I break.

You when it's freezing, you when it's hot,  
You when I'm thinking, or when I'm not;  
I think I could fill a whole world, just with you-  
Hold still for awhile- that's just what I'll do.

Patti Masterman

# Morning Always Comes Too Soon

Morning always comes too soon,  
Whether you are loathe or loving;  
Moon withdraws her silver spoon  
And we're back, to push-and-shoving.

Morning always comes too soon;  
No matter if you grieve or sing,  
Minutes to think are never enough,  
And time to sit and do nothing.

Morning always comes too soon,  
And some might like to slow it down,  
But time to some's their only boon-  
And just enough, for some to drown.

Patti Masterman

## Morpho-Logic

I am embarrassed by my humanity  
I am so nakedly anthropomorphic  
Hurriedly I put clothes upon it  
sew shut all it's openings  
I read only good books and do not think  
and moreover say nothing I really think  
I guard the body so well that when the time comes,  
I cannot enjoy it's doings  
Which seem an alien that I am born slave to,  
and can never escape the duty  
And I am so worried about it's ungovernable  
thoughts and urges  
That I never notice the same thoughts  
in the others, and their overt nakedness  
And how we all came and went through the same doors  
and never once greeted one another  
We were too busy being ashamed  
of the packhorses we had been tethered to.

Patti Masterman

# Mortgaged

What will I remember,  
What will I forget?  
Days and days of promises,  
Nights full of regret.

How to pay the lender  
When the note is due;  
Knowing not the mortgage-  
Or when the term is through?

Patti Masterman

# Most Desired

You wanted a shelter against the tempest

I became a leafy tree

You wanted a haven safe from rain

I became a dry cave mouth

You wanted sustenance from the earth

I became wild rice and spelt

You wanted strong protection both day and night

I became a hall of stone pillars

You wanted to worship man made idols

I squeezed myself down to fit small temples

You wanted a structure like hands raised in prayer

I became an over-arching cathedral

You wanted sanctified rites for life and death

I became the true Religion

You wanted a landmark to honor your ancestors

I became a giant's play-circle of stones

You wanted dependable and natural food

I became fertile fields of grain

You wanted a memorial to primordial mankind

I became ochre'd paint on smoky cave walls

You wanted your freedom, you were too boxed in

I became leafy green bowers...

You were unhappy, you had too many choices

I took it all away again and left it back to chance

In order that you should make your own happiness-

You, who couldn't find contentment

When things came to you naturally, uncomplicated

I may be God, who can mold myself into any form I desire:

But you will always be the form most desired by me.

Patti Masterman

## Mother May I?

Mother, may I shoot myself-  
The sky with smoke is laden;  
May I Mother, may I please-  
Oh, but the dirt's so heavy!

Mother, may I turn to bone-  
While universes jostle;  
May I Mother, make some loam-  
Where freedom's tread is broken?

Mother, may we journey far  
To where a mind has value;  
Where shallow things have followers few,  
Not many men will travel.

Patti Masterman

# Mother Of All Exiles

You're tired, you're poor;  
Wretched and homeless, beside the door-  
Toss your torch, is there no more gold?  
Then leave these storied lands of old.

Teeming masses should not live free,  
At sunset gates you shall not stand;  
We'll toss your limbs, from land to land-  
And make of you refuse, like the Greeks.

A mighty pomp the twin-cities command,  
And silence the only answering name:  
A giant astride the conquered imprisoned-  
And lightning now the only flame.

Patti Masterman

# Mother Taught Me

Mother taught me,  
as most mothers do  
how to react graciously when dealt unhappiness,  
since it couldn't be helped  
(but why assume so unless you knew it for fact)  
She taught me how to sit home primly  
while everyone else was out having fun,  
after all I had to be a good girl and not like those others  
(maybe they were the good girls and I was the bad seed, just left unsown)  
She taught me how to turn the other cheek till it blistered  
since many women never have a high enough opinion of themselves  
and there was no reason I should, either  
(I really should have questioned that one)  
Mother taught me I wasn't special enough  
to overcome bad decisions  
so I never consciously made any  
(and that perhaps, was the worst one of all)

Patti Masterman

# Mountain Of Days

Time runs on splintered heels  
And flies like the clock's hands, once unloosed;  
If you would climb the mountain of days,  
Perhaps unchain, the fettered years  
From lakes of seconds, in their sieves  
Search all about the world, and find  
Tomes where the tales in secret live.

Patti Masterman

# Mourning A Death

The mourners filed in single file, hats off  
Tissues in hand, eyes averted from the sad sight.  
The coffin was closed and a simple spray  
Of red, white and blue carnations  
Adorned the ornate brass lid.

The sermon was beautiful,  
Calling to mind the founding fathers,  
Their ideals and fortitude  
In the face of tough decisions,  
And concluded with the message  
That those qualities will never go out of style,  
So long as there is something left  
Worth fighting for, worth dying for.

The audience seemed loath to leave,  
And one finally raised a hand, with a question:  
'Who and what could ever replace what we just lost?  
For this was the consummate American; this was the America,  
That untold numbers of soldiers were willing to die for,  
And outsiders risk death, just to make it to our shores..'

The voice faded out, and a renewed sense of horror  
Gripped everyone present, and they all thought  
As one mind, at the same instant:  
What will we do now-  
Without the Bill of Rights?

Patti Masterman

# Mouth-Breather

One day, I happened to over-breathe all the air in the world:  
Sucking in great deserts of sand, whole oceans,  
Star-fish, palm trees, dolphins, coral reefs,  
And rolling plains and cattle egrets, barns and wind-vanes,  
And farm tractors and grain elevators,  
And livestock and Winnebago's;  
Boats- picnic tables- trailer courts-  
But, like the hope still lying dormant, in Pandora's box,  
You managed to evade my sudden intake of breath  
As the universe shrank down to just a dot  
And when everything contracts down even smaller  
To a point the size of a bacterium, inside a gnat's nostril,  
We'll be beside one another, for some indefinite period of time,  
Something you were never expecting at all:  
And I'm hoping to get a good head start on your comet's tail then,  
Before all hell breaks loose, again.

Patti Masterman

# Moved Left No Forwarding Address

I can get Claustrophobe  
From a single diode  
Winking at my eye  
What's my reason why?

The world points its finger  
It's horns; it's stinger  
I've tripped a switch  
The neurons now twitch

My life is a book  
They all want to look  
And rip out my pages  
And stomp them in rages

The world is too close  
And it has a loud voice  
So just let me hide  
In my closet, inside

Don't open that door:  
I don't live here no more.

Patti Masterman

# Moving In Slow Motion Only Toward You

The tree branch reaches, toward the light:  
While I; I'm lost, inside your night.

The wind plays, toying with the birds:  
While I; I'm tumbled, along your words.

The day goes marching toward the night:  
While I; I'm crawling, within your sight.

If you were wind, and tree, and bird:  
I'd have no use, for this tired world.

Patti Masterman

## Mr. Hoffenstein, I Presume

Let sleeping babies and drunk dogs lie;  
Let peddling peddlers go on by;  
Things on wheels and legs and booze,  
Never hang around to schmooze.

Whose words these are, I think I know:  
I read his book, bout a week ago  
Too bad I never think my thoughts  
Of children, pets or recumbent sots.

Patti Masterman

# Music Kisses Your Naked Soul

Music kisses your naked soul,  
Speaks the same language  
Without the hole.

Music gives it's heart to sound,  
Puncturing heaven  
Till it pours down.

Music finds that hidden note  
Inside your life,  
Was never wrote..

Patti Masterman

# Muted Dyes

Talk to me, of divinity,  
Of pasts and futures now forgot;  
Talk to me, don't leave to silence  
Leaves that absent memory wrought.

Talk to me, of trees and green,  
Of life, and the span of living minds;  
Let earthly tides sweep up the rest  
And leave no silent world behind.

Talk in the ways you've always had,  
Of touch on skin, and cloudless sky;  
And how the faded sunsets turn  
Blue ether's face, to muted dye.

Patti Masterman

# My Brain Is Full Of Paisleys

My brain is full of paisleys,  
My skin has polka dots,  
My eyes are crystal mirrors  
My palms, ink blots.

My hairs a spindly forest,  
My ears two conch shells,  
My fingernails are isinglass,  
In this castle where I dwell.

The ocean's in my body,  
The sun is in my skull;  
The firmament is all about:  
This life is never dull

Patti Masterman

# My Dad Knew Auction Language

My dad knew auction language;  
He had the city-stutter,  
He counted out the increments,  
His syllables like butter.

He spoke the dollars dialect,  
And knew the secret signs;  
The furtive hand or head-nod,  
And he could read their minds.

My dad knew auction language;  
I wondered where he learned it:  
He took their money, one and all-  
I swear; he never spurned it.

Patti Masterman

# My Death Waits Inside Of You

My death waits inside of you  
Seeking a tangent rebirth  
Surely if a single plant  
Can hold the whole life-cycle of creation;  
Seed, plant, fruition, and dissolution  
Inside it's small earthen pod

You can the whole of me, contain  
Hanging from but the single tip of one branch  
Of one sole outcropping; one lonely outpost  
From the whole of the crisscrossed honeycomb's edge  
To invisible edge, in the all pervading field  
Unbounded sanctuary of your unutterable mercy.

(Vas- In the Garden of Souls inspired)

Patti Masterman

# My Dog Is An Archive

My dog is an archive of canine esprit:  
Rich in dog years, the repository and catalog  
Of so much genetic wisdom, in fur, flesh and bone:  
Mitochondrial inheritance of his cells  
Of how and when, to seek out a pack;  
The rituals of instinctual behavior, in the pack caste-system:  
When to piss and grovel; and when to bare the teeth, unflinching  
Where his territory begins and ends, and how to deal  
With the unavoidable disputes of boundaries  
How to pee almost as high on a bush as his own body  
To appear larger in his 'scent signature'  
How to follow another's smell, making allowances  
For the speed and direction of prevailing winds  
And differing ages of the scent; how close to place  
Nose to ground. How to find fertile females by sniffing,  
Mouth open, with the back of the throat  
His near kinship to the wolf; or how to howl at the moon  
Convincingly; when he feels lonely or needs affirmation  
How to lock his penis during mating  
That no other male can threaten his stream of seed  
How to track and hunt down the rabbit, and how to foil  
That sneaky doubling-back; once a hare's gone out of sight.  
When to lock steel jaws on the prey;  
And when to release the prey:  
At that precise instant that he realizes  
That a much more adequate, experienced predator  
Is breathing down his neck, just behind him-  
And though he knows that sometimes it's possible  
To outrun other animals; with his four legs  
He knows he can never outsmart  
The cagey, two-legged variety.

Patti Masterman

# My Dog Is Old Now

My dog is old now

But he leaps over vast chasms of eternity, as he sleeps  
His padded feet run sideways, going nowhere we can follow  
As he contemplates inward meadows of sumptuous rabbits  
Barking silently with joy, he anticipates the prize  
Other times in sleep he resembles something nearly dead  
A bad hip makes him assume absurd positions  
He wakes with difficulty; his countenance strangely abashed  
To be caught sleeping at any hour of the day  
Nearly blind and deaf; we shout and gesticulate  
His nose works fine as ever; but not his digestion  
He eats his grass constitutional more often now  
A hint of thunder or rain, and he's howling at the door  
He has his own room now and heads off to bed early  
As though virtue lurked in regular hours  
He never gets up early unless nature calls  
Should we need to turn on the light after he's retired  
He blinks accusingly, like an old Uncle on hiatus  
And sighs at being disturbed again at his slumbers  
And we are forced to contemplate  
That last sleep from which he will never more arise  
Except perhaps, in his most secret of dreams.

Patti Masterman

# My Dreams Are All Belong To Me

My dreams are all belong to me,  
Such creature comfort fantasies  
Night sees fit to gift to me;  
The nighttime's when we all go free.

My dreams are all belong to me,  
Some other side of history,  
Past twilights grey uncertainty  
The place I go, when thinking flees.

Patti Masterman

# My Fantasy

I would have to drink up the entire ocean  
Just to get close to you  
But then, I would be as large  
As all the earth's surface  
Worse, I would slosh when I walked  
Making you sea sick  
And you would have to keep moving  
Farther and farther away  
To avoid becoming ill-  
I guess I won't drink up the ocean.

I would breathe in all the air  
In the whole sky above  
Just to get nearer you  
But then, I would be as expanded  
As all of the atmosphere  
Gaseous and free floating  
And you would have to wear a parachute  
And gas mask too  
Just to hang there long enough to talk  
In the airless vacuum that remained-  
I guess I won't breathe in all the air.

I would cross all of space  
Just for a moment to be beside you  
To see again your glowing face  
And feel the warmth of that large heart  
And so, I have decided that I will become a meteor  
Charging fearlessly around the universe  
Spinning, gyrating through the spacious spaces  
And I won't be too large or encompassing  
To make you afraid to come near  
And I will come with a rhythm, as do the seasons  
So you always will know the time of my approach  
And the time of my leaving.  
I will always leave, but then return again:  
And if you wanted,  
You could become a satellite, too-  
And you could blink mechanically, at me

As I whooshed by in the close darkness.

Patti Masterman

# My Father Was An Orphan

My father was an orphan,  
And so I was an orphan;  
My father never knew his fathers name,  
And so I never knew my fathers name.

My father lost his mother young,  
And I also lost my mother young;  
My life followed every curve of his,  
And I could imagine, his battle to live.

His childhood was diffused in me,  
Percolating down, his song of being-  
But cells talk to cells, closer than breath,  
And life learns life- in spite of death.

\*\*\*\*\*

I was adopted at three days of age,  
by my parents, who knew my birth mother,  
and it was an arranged adoption- sort of  
like an arranged marriage; and I consider  
myself quite lucky how it all worked out.

Patti Masterman

# My Father, In White

My father, in a white shirt:

I see him again, through the far windows of time,  
He only rarely wore a white shirt during his life,  
And only in performance of his duties, for an organization or job.

White is a sign to me of his earnest nature and simplicity;  
He had no aspirations to whiteness,  
He was happiest wearing no shirt at all.  
In my dreams, white clothing symbolizes his innate nature.

When he lay dying, he still remained sweet:  
He tried to smile, before death's own door.  
Now white is all he wears,  
Now white is where he lives;  
White are all his vestments  
In the white folds, of his timelessness.

Patti Masterman

# My Friend

He sits somewhere reading something, relaxed;  
I say his name once, twice, a little louder..  
He looks up, nearly startled, then breaks into that smile,  
His eyes crinkling up with the long habit of perpetual kindness.

He quotes a verse from a poem, dead-pan,  
I quote the next line, and so we go on-  
Ambling down far promontories of time,  
Two nimble children in search of a rhyme.

And he becomes Shakespeare and Byron and Shelley,  
I become Dickinson, Teasdale and Lowell,  
We go up the highest, sail down on thin air,  
Not one bit worried if there's nothing below.

'Ah, parting's such sweet sorrow, ' I say, with half a turn.  
'Pray, then, do not go gentle, for old age should burn'-  
' And if thou wilt, remember, and if thou wilt, forget'  
And happily, we tarried- for time had not won, yet.

Patti Masterman

# My God Is Hungry

My God is hungry, he stabs your God;  
The people are up in arms,  
Though they say your God will raise again-  
No gods were really harmed.

No Gods died to further a plot;  
They were not experimented on,  
And resemblances to people living or dead-  
Must always be frowned upon.

The Gods used to own the whole world once;  
We gave them dominion over fish and fowl;  
But their pedestals toppled lean centuries ago,  
And now they can only nod and bow.

Patti Masterman

# My Heart Has Been Captured

My heart has been captured;  
It's beating it's wings  
Against the bars of your presence-  
And refusing to sing.

The nearness of you  
Stops all singing, all breath;  
It just wants to breathe you-  
Live in you, till death.

My heart has been captured,  
Too far from it's tree.  
It's no use now; it doesn't  
Even care about free.

Patti Masterman

# My Heart I Paraded For You

My heart I paraded for you  
As though it were something  
You might possess within

As if could be something new;  
A song for you, I'd bring  
And maybe you'd hear it then

Though childrens dreams have hues  
The waking world can never see  
In colorblind eyes of men

And dangerous winds once blew  
The crown off the king  
So he could never rule again

And some wild things grew  
While I waited through spring  
And hope was long and thin

Even if no dreams ever flew  
Or no roosting bird ever sang  
Still, things sometimes end.

(written to Dead Can Dance- The Carnival is Over)

Patti Masterman

# My Heart Is A Braying Beast

My heart is a braying beast  
That will not listen reason;  
On its bones, I'd like to feast,  
A full March out of season.

My heart no rare hunter is,  
To prey unwary creatures;  
But more it waits, alone like this-  
For some, to sew its sutures.

Patti Masterman

# My Heart Is Busy Pumping

My heart is busy pumping all it's blood into you,  
As if you were a molecular black hole,  
Vampire-primed, with internal fangs  
Pointed my direction; binary sun's shock wave,  
Incendiary protoplasm of your outlaw universe  
Sucking on my hearts invisible dark matter  
My heartbeat becoming a rocketing pulsar, pinging across space  
In close alignment, our stars almost collide  
Held apart only by the shared exchange  
And as my nebula shrinks, it's drawn into your cortege  
Your O-ring of decaying protons, devastating the surrounding space  
All creation now falls into that flaming circle of doom,  
All exits through the open door of my ever enlarging heart;  
The noise and brilliance, without equal  
And even though it means death,  
I know that viewing my own celestial fireworks  
Will be the highlight of my life;  
Always knew I must be meant for bigger things  
But don't stop looking up now..

(written to Tear Gas Euphoria - David Scott)

Patti Masterman

# My Heaven Fell

my heaven fell, lost to the centuries, just as the dawn was being born;  
just think how easily, a child's knees gravely mistook stones for poems  
as sunny lovers dreamt the night before had died twice, in its sleep  
before the wrong hour was nearly done, hearing the drunken fountain's laughter;

and people dying even now, whose smiles were never happy;  
whose passion was ripped apart slowly, inside madly blushing houses  
whose shuttered eyes hated the nearness of other desirable streets;  
enshrined in the whore of afterbirths, who knew just the right words  
told to the butterfly in secret, of how to fly from time's angry claws;  
and how the sun overhead secretly cries, passing out his day-drizzled prose.

Patti Masterman

# My Helpless Mien

My helpless mien folds up between your appearances  
Like those beds in the 1950's economy apartments;  
Or almost as if the switch had been turned off,  
And the electronics went dead without warning.

I come again only when you show up,  
All my circuits lighting at once;  
Information age here, I'm lined in  
Looking around in surprise  
That I was really here all along,  
In a sort of underground wake;  
Treading water, following the dim streak of sun.

Though at times I confused root from sky,  
Breaking the surface, the noise loud and unaccustomed,  
My eyes blinded amid the familiar resounding ring of creation,  
Everything shouting it's name at once.  
Because you always whisper, I have to bend low, like a bow;  
Tune out the other cacophony

If I were a bird on your shoulder  
I could learn all your lines and amuse myself,  
In your absence.

Sometimes I am afraid I am merely talking to myself anyway,  
While you recite a too-memorized litany, from somewhere far away;  
Watch in resignation, as I hang myself from the same old nooses  
Prepared for people, went missing from your life ages ago.

The long line of corpses will someday fold like lines of dominoes,  
And I will become just the anchor stone; the last one,  
That's holding the rest in place, just the way that you want them-  
And how can I ever memorize my lines, if you never give any of them away?

Patti Masterman

# My Husband's Going To Live Forever

My husband's going to live forever;  
Was just a random act of fate-  
But he promised he would leave me never,  
And my love never repudiate.

He was the noted Egyptologist;  
His specialty, the preserved dead,  
And he looked down, on forensic scientists  
Studied that organ, removed from the heads.

His girlfriend called; he missed their date,  
And stayed too long, at the corner bar:  
He came home drunk, he came home late-  
His brain's in a canopic jar.

Patti Masterman

# My Life Opens Inside Of You

My life opens, inside of you  
Your book closes, on my dream;  
With my knife, I cut you loose;  
In the mirror, you catch a gleam.

Through my eyes, you find the truth,  
Loosely dangling, from a tree;  
By your tongue, I say a word,  
Suddenly 'I' turns into 'we'.

Through our breathing, dreaming days  
Life erupts, from smoke to flames;  
But a puff, then embers glow-  
And soon a forest fire, enclose.

Patti Masterman

# My Line Breaks Before My Brain

My line breaks before my brain  
Has amply time-adjusted,  
To stop the flow of threadbare thoughts  
With which my pen has lusted.

If empty words could fill the need  
Of people, for real food,  
And shallowness impeded not  
Their amplitude of brood,

Then any words would suffice  
For the surplice, boring them;  
But I'd prefer to amputate  
The fruit, from off the stem.

Patti Masterman

# My Living Presence

My living presence scares the hell out of me;  
It's big hulking shadow, perhaps containing bits of soul  
Of the ghosts of score-settling ancestors;  
Burly axe-wielding settlers, chasing down dinner in the woods  
Breathing their rancid, gimlet sweat, out of my every pore,  
Harboring god knows what bacterium, what viral inheritance.  
And then there's the endless hair, like some crawling infestation  
Of pigment, on stalking legs: whether thick and wiry or thin and straight.  
It's all too real and up close for me, this sweating,  
Syncopated body, with it's ragged breathing,  
It's panting upon exertion, like a sofa trying to push itself uphill  
The mechanical creaking springs, constantly betraying my whereabouts.

Why does it feel so much larger than life, this animal by product  
Of a molecular juggernaut, this blitzkrieg of blood pressure and sinus rhythms,  
This myopic, prevaricated lumbering strain, of some ancient tree shrew,  
That had nothing better to do than propagate itself endlessly,  
Beyond any necessity; then inhale some random virus  
From the soon to be extinct fauna, while trying to stay out of range  
Of the big monsters, always on the prowl, for a warm, bleeding dinner.  
I'm still too close myself, to being prey,  
Even while feeling myself this carnivorous, urine exhaling,  
Over-teething monster, pawing at chicken bones and pork ribs,  
Dreaming of present day blood feasts we are still allowed:  
Rare filet mignons, prime rib, caviar, sushi.

Just the excretions of this body's lifetime could fill up a small inland sea.  
I'm tied to this thing forever; when it ceases, I cease too;  
Bitter end of that story, of the hated Siamese twin  
Which seems to have swallowed me whole, back in utero  
Holding all my consciousness, my senses, locked inside it;  
It's cadaverous whale's belly, but if I even tried to scream,  
At the thought of being chained, day and night, to this oozing leviathan,  
It's only my own ears that suffer; I would have to break out of my own skin  
Just to finally escape; to inflict the very torments this captor has taught me  
To fear and avoid at all costs; as it pays me back in kind, tit for tat  
For every insult ever inflicted; it never forgets a thing  
It's keeping it's tab even now, for tallying up later.

When I have grown old, and no longer useful to life,  
It's humorlessly intimidating priestess, will note without smile,  
That I am now incapable of reproduction;  
Unless you should count the mass overturning of cells  
In the runaway cancerous proclivity, of the aged.  
And I can feel it watching me alertly now, with those future dead-body eyes;  
Just hope I can finally escape it, before things start to hatch out  
Down in the dark, in that deep hole, where they always plant us,  
Like some rancorous seed, they are trying to sprout, to no more purpose  
Than this same malfeasance, of an upright, self-replicating monstrosity.

Patti Masterman

# My Love Appeared Perfectly Folded

my love appeared perfectly folded  
written into so many lines,  
as believing the day mine  
how truly rolled the verse.

mornings spent writing;  
times were always happy  
as love was celebrated together  
and rhyming made you mine.

the words more special  
in a red card, with a heart,  
and because our song ought never  
hear of joy being put to death again

the last tears made love more dear.

Patti Masterman

# My Lover He Writes Perfect Prose

My lover, he writes perfect prose,  
It pours out of his pen, it goes  
To all those parts, yet undisclosed;  
My brain, my thoughts, and even those  
Admit his words more perfect, far  
Than Morse code, from a twinkling star,  
Or crickets legs, just keeping time  
With Mother Earth's most perfect rhymes.

My lover sets his time to none,  
Not setting moon, nor rising sun;  
He is no watchdog on the prowl,  
No baying at the moon, no howl,  
But keeps awake the hours dark,  
Just hoping then, to see a spark  
From words professed of love, so deep  
His spirit's secret hours, keep.

Patti Masterman

# My Lover's Gone To Sail The Sea - Villanelle

My lover's gone to sail the sea;  
The frothy waves like millwheels turn-  
Blow wind, blow him back to me.

He promised he would stay with me,  
I felt the ocean's salty burn;  
My lover's gone to sail the sea.

What other lover could there be?  
Than one who makes my tired heart yearn;  
Blow wind, blow him back to me.

He swore he'd never set me free  
And my embrace, would never spurn;  
My lover's gone to sail the sea.

He vowed his love on bended knee;  
My thoughts like blackest waves do churn-  
Blow wind, blow him back to me.

With those wild winds, I won't agree;  
I'll bind my heart, to steer the stern:  
My lover's gone to sail the sea;  
Blow wind, blow him back to me.

Patti Masterman

# My Mind Has Left The Premises

My mind has left the premises,  
My mind has gone away:  
All my thoughts were blemishes  
Upon a perfect day.

My shuttered windows blackened,  
With dark sunglasses too,  
And busy jaws have slackened-  
There's nothing more to do.

Now deep in thought I'm floating,  
Through fleshy pods of mind,  
And randomly emoting  
How memories unwind.

Patti Masterman

# My Mind Is Always Going - Pantoum

My mind is always going where it's not supposed to be;  
I parachute through memories, that take me where they will,  
And jump around through time, as though there were no history-  
It's like a memory leads me right to what I used to feel.

I parachute through memories, that take me where they will;  
It does no good to try and stay here safe inside the now,  
It's like a memory leads me right to what I used to feel-  
And staying in the present's what my mind will not allow.

It does no good to try and stay here safe inside the now.  
My face is blank, I'm drooling, and can't even tell you why;  
It's like a memory leads me right to what I used to feel,  
One thought makes another one, and soon it is goodbye.

My face is blank, I'm drooling, and can't even tell you why.  
It's always somewhere where I've been a hundred times at least;  
One thought makes another one, and soon it is goodbye.  
My brain is mapped in thought-forms, I know it will never cease.

It's always somewhere where I've been a hundred times at least,  
And jump around through time, as though there were no history.  
My brain is mapped in thought-forms, I know it will never cease;  
My mind is always going where it's not supposed to be.

Patti Masterman

# My Other Self

In that other place where we dwell together,  
I laugh and touch your hands, your face:  
It's true that our two hearts there, tethered  
Forget their worries for some brief space.

In that hidden world there is no distance;  
No miles to thwart our every scheme.  
In your clasp there, love, I know I'd dance  
Pure joy to see your sweet smile beam.

Would that we could stay forever;  
Would that we must never leave-  
But naught dwells here can ever sever  
The other world to which we cleave.

Patti Masterman

# My Plain Face

If finding emptiness, instead of the world,  
And what the world thinks beautiful; worthwhile-  
I can't help it if I'm made this way,  
Though for some reason, I can barely stay

Safe in the doorway, as they make their jokes;  
And all the randomness, that our lives cloak,  
But if depressed, I've always been the same-  
Finding both the self and not-self, strange.

It seems in pieces, and I've done my share  
To try to catalog my vague despair;  
That I'm a stranger, in a stranger place:  
It's written plainly, on my more plain face.

Patti Masterman

# My Rigor Mortis

My rigor mortis is never mentioned  
Anymore at parties;  
I stick myself to one wall, mothlike  
And the conversation goes on all around me,  
As though nothing were out of the ordinary.

Though sometimes I do stiffen up  
A little too much, and then a dolly is required  
To remove me at evening's end;  
But at least I am at full length then  
And not curled up like a pretzel.

Complications are bound to arise:  
It becomes harder to speak each day  
As my brain is disengaged  
Within my corpus, from profundity-  
It's unhappy, that writing is out of the question.

When curious strangers ask  
How I came to be in such a condition,  
My family finds it difficult to answer  
Because I started out like everyone else  
But then increasingly came to deny my own existence

As an act of random cruelty,  
By a creator at the mercy of whim:  
If life made any sense at all, we would begin as rotting corpse  
And slowly retrograde, all the way back to babyhood;  
And die drooling and gurgling,  
While smelling very sweetly-  
And die without a care.

Patti Masterman

# My Soul Into Granite

My soul, into granite  
Into quartz; into feldspar-  
The flesh world can't hold  
My roving mind, bold

Ever changing flares, but  
Where's the base layer-  
Reached not by prayer  
That time hasn't raked

My soul's been naked,  
For two billion years  
O, clothe me in starlight,  
In pure dreams of suns, bright

The universe of substance  
Subside into me-  
I just want to stay true  
To myself, in that light

(written to Kelpie, Half Broken Harp)

Patti Masterman

# My Soul Is Not Poetry

My soul is not poetry inside of it  
and it is nothing pretty;  
My insides are dead, rotting rhododendrons  
beside a rusting pitch-fork  
inside a barn, deserted for the last fifty years  
and too dangerous, to ever go into.

But if it could go inside,  
My un-poetry'd soul would hop, crawl, and climb,  
in spite of its lameness  
up the rickety old ladder, to the hayloft,  
And there eat the little green apples,  
already wormy  
from the gnarled tree, outside the window.

My soul would peer out the window and look for any signs  
of the once-life that used to abide here-  
To feed it's ravenous hunger for poetry  
and then develop the unavoidable belly-ache.

Of course, I know lots of others  
whose soul is not poetry, either;  
And we are all trying to re-light the same matches  
once struck by people, who had flames burning them inside

Which they dutifully copied down onto damp, tear-stained pages;  
(so the words would not burn up the paper)  
And then there were the copy machines,  
and printing presses, to duplicate their fires-  
Like carrying a bit of coal to the next door, and the next one  
so that everyone could have a bit of fire in Winter.

And the thick water, of all the world's approbation  
soothed their old, weeping wounds  
While the rest of us not-poets huddled around not-fires  
in cold deserted barns,  
and picked fresh flowers every day

So that we could earnestly watch them die

all over again, each day,  
and pronounce it poetry,  
while nobody noticed how many words  
we managed to hemorrhage out.

Patti Masterman

# My Soul Married Yours

My soul married yours long before it told the heart,  
That was your secret gestures, it had been concealing  
And shy alphabet letters formed our non-linear talks  
On which ancient symbols were awakening with the news,  
That my rapt countenance longed to behold only you.  
And in Morse code, my riotous pulse was pinging,  
In tiptoeing tiny steps, toward your smile-fragranced planes;  
With small sips of blind and drunken-wheeling wonder,  
On Adirondacks of time, I finally met your gaze.  
And together found, we were writing the same vows;  
Our fingers following a bright-feathered knowing,  
And scented blooms of flowers knew your older names;  
And avalanching comets swept clean the turgid dawns.  
Then the seeds of forever were pocketed in your breath,  
Wreathed by stars, and saved for hidden yearning.

Patti Masterman

# My Soul's A Ruined Chapel

My soul's a ruined chapel  
In tall grass and weeds,  
In woods bright and dapple  
My life's gone to seed.

My heart's a drowned temple  
In seaweed and pearl,  
It's idols all broken  
And prayer wheels unfurled.

My life's an old story  
That children once knew,  
And whispered at night  
When candles were few.

My days are thin sheaves  
Of a crop that once grew-  
Now the gardens are dead,  
And the harvest is through.

Patti Masterman

# My Thoughts Rhymed In Crescendos

My thoughts rhymed, in crescendos  
To your pitch; what child is this  
Kicking the stars back to the firmament,  
He's either early or late, depending  
On your take; so we'll dig a shallow grave  
So we can plant and save  
The little baby seeds.  
Men and women do that dance  
The furtive one, the flirty one;  
Circling round each other's base  
They weigh and size each word and look,  
They preen like birds, anticipate  
The anti-climactic narrow escape  
From those who do not please.  
I never pleased; I never tried  
It seemed I must be dead inside  
Never got near enough third base,  
That plate of stupefying strudel cakes,  
Wedding processions;  
Where I missed with the rice,  
And cursing luck, missed it twice;  
The bouquets poked me in the eye  
And tin can music dragged down streets  
Always makes me grimace  
Even to this day.

Patti Masterman

# My Words Are Hymns I Paint For You

My words are hymns I paint for you,  
Vespers chanting your sacred name;  
Incense rises before your face-  
And prayers I would say, for no other.

If your eyes were brown or green or blue,  
I suppose it would be the same;  
The eyes are what give a face it's grace-  
But are never the same, in another.

Your eyes will still be my light, it's true,  
Whether the moon may wax or wane;  
For in your eyes I see a trace  
Of the one I would know, as lover.

There's nothing to say, nothing to do,  
There's much to lose, and nothing to gain;  
But deep inside there remains a place-  
Just for you, that I keep under cover.

Patti Masterman

# My Words I Set To Music

My words I set to music  
In the silence of your soul,  
In hopes a heart, to win apart  
By the time that we grow old.

Your eyes I set as windows  
Upon most perfect scenes;  
To show the days clear deepness  
Holds all truth really means.

Of your days, a life is fashioned;  
The altar for my dreams:  
I give to you my furthest stars,  
A wish, a prayer; and wings.

Patti Masterman

# Mystic Verses

My soul is writ in mystic verses,  
Dredged up from some hidden ocean;  
In unknown time and place, was born-  
And from the spaces fabric, torn.

And every day I live and breathe,  
More complicated patterns, wreath  
My hologram of body; soul-  
In my living temples role.

No matter, if I pray or not,  
To some old heathens polyglot;  
My time is here, my time is now:  
The living own the breathing world..

Patti Masterman

# Nature Worship

Little flight of whimsy  
Darting through space  
Dragonfly, oh dragonfly  
Show your true face.

With wings made of sunbeams  
You sparkle and shimmer  
Tell me your secret  
Are you a skimmer?

Burnt coals and embers  
Abide in your eyes  
You conquer the hornet  
An attack by surprise.

You murder the hapless  
Who encroach on your rule  
Without enmity or venom  
For you're a living jewel.

Patti Masterman

## Near Or Far

I look out through my window,  
I'm looking for your eyes,  
I want to hear your voice-  
Instead hearing my own sighs-  
I'll send a star to tell you;  
My messenger he'll be,  
To tell my loving stories  
And how my dreams, you'll see.

I'm looking out my window,  
And I see the Sun is bright;  
He gives a lovely rainbow  
And in your eyes makes light.  
I see a moon in shadow,  
Half in the dark of space-  
Holding all the deepness  
The same, as your night face.

I see all, through the windows-  
How love is full of light,  
That shares all of the details  
That then are hid by night;  
And waiting by the window,  
I know that day will come,  
And all the shade of night time  
At dawn, will come undone.

So you see, I don't mind waiting  
Like Earth waits for her Sun,  
And don't worry then for darkness,  
Or where the night comes from;  
For someone must have loved us,  
And set the stars on high  
That go missing in the sunlight-  
But at night, they must come nigh.

And the star-fields, they are plenty  
Looking out my window view,  
Counting stars at midnight,

While waiting here for you.  
And soon I'll see a messenger;  
Another falling star-  
On his way to tell you  
I'm waiting- near or far..

Patti Masterman

# Necrophilic Fad

In the tombs far from heaven,  
My thoughts go unleavened  
For the dead ones who dwell  
Wide thoroughfares of hell.

Far from the palaces  
Of golden etched chalices,  
And stained glass saints  
In torporus feints.

I will dig up a corpse,  
By whim or by force  
And make him my love,  
Though his thing is a nub.

He will serve my design,  
Be my own valentine,  
Be my iconic mage;  
Be the talk of the age.

I will channel the words  
Of my dried demiurge,  
And will crown him, complete  
As my dead paraclete.

Patti Masterman

# Need An Answer

You're breaking my heart  
Everything you've asked for, I've given  
You're the reason I got up each day  
The thing that kept me driven

I've sold everything for you  
Held nothing back for me  
Nothing was too debasing  
To advance your cause, you see

I'm only human, I'm running out  
Of things to throw  
On my funeral pyre  
I thought you should know

Someday when they speak your name  
I'll probably just hang my head in shame  
That I courted you so loudly and long  
Then I won't wish to hear your name

Why must the words keep coming  
Night and day, so strong within  
If I'm just another hopeless casualty-  
Can you answer me that, my poetry?

Patti Masterman

# Nemesis

To paint the other unknown life,  
The less proximate reality,  
More than alive, but less corporeal  
Coiled sideways, to strike the daylight's vicarious edge  
Crescent eyes, of barely concealed coronal movement  
The latent self growing huge, with secreted layers of pearl  
Sentient fabric of the scarcely imagined,  
Invisible light flowing along fractal lines  
A salient fabled ignition, beneath perma-frost  
While a soft immediacy circles, in the distance.

Patti Masterman

# Never A Love

Never a love, did his heart contain,  
Never; whether sunny or grey-  
Never sang one, of his own refrain;  
Not in the night, or day.

Never a love, to mortgage his pain,  
Never; though the price was free-  
Never, though his sadness fell like rain;  
For none had the eyes, to see.

Never did a mourner come to view,  
Never; the grave where he lay-  
Never, for grace in this world's too few;  
And none had a word, to say.

Patti Masterman

# Never A Sunset

The past can kill; those tears that never fell,  
words you can't say anymore,  
doors nailed shut from the inside.

All those moons, that can never rise again.

The earth is cursed with its one-time history,  
but could we live it again, would it be better this time;  
choreographed with fewer regrets? A sub-life  
just after the real one, where you know what's coming.

Don't look back now; stone-cold stone all that's waiting,  
mirrors that will show you the gorgon's head,  
coming up behind.

Never let the sun set. Hold it hostage to every day.

Patti Masterman

# Never Lived Weeds

Never lived weeds,  
Whose perfume-sparing flowers  
Pardoned the mistakes of clay.

Always grew roots  
Where drought-bearing blooms  
Were hardened through waterless days.

Continued the sprouts;  
The wanted, the willing,  
Safe-haven a garden gave.

But sweetest, the quest  
Of the beautiful growing-  
Together, the pliant and brave.

Patti Masterman

# Never Tame

You claim you're dry  
Though yet it rains,  
You think it's love  
Though you are maimed.

The laws of nature  
You disdain,  
You think you rise;  
Instead you wane.

All your pondering's  
In vain,  
Your think their loss  
Must be your gain.

You think your suffering's  
A bane;  
Your wilding heart  
Will never tame.

Patti Masterman

# Never Tell A Secret To A Bird

Never tell a secret to a bird:  
They've no scruples, you know;  
They chatter the livelong day  
To anyone who will listen.  
They could never keep a secret,  
Especially the crows and parrots-  
The crows talk only to other crows,  
But they tell all they know.  
And parrots talk to humans and  
They repeat everything said to them.  
My momma always reminded me:  
The trees have ears;  
The wind has spies,  
And you never know how many  
Are hiding in the bush.  
I can feel their beady little eyes  
Whenever I go outside  
And they always fly away-  
Off, to pass along the latest rumor  
They've picked up, as they were pretending  
Only to be eyeing that juicy worm.

Patti Masterman

# Never To Awaken

In their silvered wish,  
My eyes can see farther than time allows,  
And slow hands can touch a farther shore  
And praying, there gently open doors  
That a kiss still breathe  
Where later futures die,  
In the static-charged sky;  
And into quiet depths,  
Old dreams may bore,  
To live out their lie-  
Then awake, no more.

Patti Masterman

# Never To Roam

The lonely die twice, and the friendless alone;  
The wanderer finds him too far from home,  
The jilted stay, under grey clouds all day-  
So promise now, never to roam.

The abject are forgotten, the forgotten forsworn  
To live all their life without love, to adorn;  
The lovelorn must swoon, underneath a full moon-  
So promise now, never to roam.

The mourners discomfort, the dead unretrieved;  
For these and much more, we must soon grieve,  
Straight is too narrow, for life's fickle fellows-  
So promise now, never to roam.

Patti Masterman

# Nicely Wrapped Gestures

Nicely wrapped gestures,  
Who do they fool?  
We all ate of the apple  
And evil finds its double  
Every calendar day;  
We would rather save ourselves  
And sacrifice the neighbors.

Nice gestures;  
How thoughtful we would be  
If that were the whole of us?  
But we always keep one hand  
Behind our back,  
As half the antidote we withhold:  
The half that could save our humanity.

Patti Masterman

# Niche Life

Once I noticed a great writer, and he had no comments.  
To remedy this occluded justice,  
I left a colorful comment upon one of his best.  
Immediately a scathing message appeared from him,  
Though he had never messaged me before;  
I had an instant moment of understanding  
Of why he had no comments; it was just too obvious  
For my childlike mind to have avoided the trap.  
A few more condescending messages,  
And I deleted the comment; nothing more needed saying.  
I had trespassed on hallowed ground,  
I had merely to retrace my steps  
And all should be forgiven.

I intruded upon your life, which I could never really see,  
Through a series of locks and channels  
It remained invisible to me.  
And again I invaded privacy, caused consternation.  
Compliant, I withdrew all my excursions to your door  
And with an effort, I mitigated any unhappy  
Emotions remaining there.  
I do this to spare everyone more pain.  
But it comes at a price.

Did you ever wonder how all the people  
Who go to the grocery store on Sunday mornings  
Could have such well-defined niche lives?  
They think they are defined by what they do,  
By a synthetic order that's tacked over the hours of freedom.  
There is an affliction, in which every single hour  
Must be made to account for itself.

But what if they woke up some day  
Before the grocery shopping was done,  
Would they feel they had missed out on something  
Inestimable and uncommon; worth sleeping in for-  
And replaced it merely with something  
Utilitarian and predictable?  
Be careful what you trade your Sunday mornings for.

Patti Masterman

# Night

Night is quiet  
Like a lover's secret,  
Like a hidden trinket,  
Like a tranquil dove.

Night is bright  
Like a star-lit ceiling,  
Like a comet wheeling,  
Looking straight above.

Night is quiet  
Like a new days yearning,  
Like a moon half-turning,  
Till the tides are up.

Night is bright,  
When the skies full-lightning,  
And a slash of whitening  
Makes the world wake up.

Patti Masterman

# Night Steals The Breath

Night steals the breath away from the creatures  
When it thinks they aren't looking,

Sun leaches the shadow of every living thing  
When night is still too far to see:

Don't turn your back in the daytime,  
Don't hide your eyes in the nights,

Remember that the rhythms of the universe, coupled together  
Are a cacophony of false arrivals and departures;

Don't look to win any friends  
Within the small hearts of matter.

Patti Masterman

# Nights Are Too Long

All nights are too long  
When your lover's far away-

I chase the trains all night  
The ones my thoughts are riding;  
Hobos bound for anywhere but home.

Trains full of candle smoke  
And down from comforters,  
Trains mixing together a combustible dream  
In their blurry eyed compartments.

My memory is westbound  
My history behind me somewhere;  
If I stay behind, I'm nowhere,  
If I don't jump soon enough, I'm lost

I can't remember getting on at any station,  
I never had a ticket stub  
Nobody here seems to know me-  
Why have I always been afraid?

I'm the tear in a nun's eye  
I'm the broken note in a crow's cry

The standing fall down on trains,  
The sitting see everything swiftly pass them by  
Before they can ring the bell-  
I can see your eyes, out of a hundred windows

In every window, door and steeple  
The faster, the farther I go, the more you keep up with me;  
Haunting, like a vision  
Soundless, like a dancing flame.

I sleep and wake fitfully,  
Feeling the cabin vibrate-  
Are the eyes inside or out now?

We can play like ghosts at midnight,  
With the past and future;  
We can pass through walls  
As invisible as wind:

I'm the tear in a nun's eye  
I'm the broken note in a crow's cry

Death teases us with the nearness of it's breath  
Like when you look into a crowd  
And happen to lock eyes with the one staring straight at you-  
Even though you never saw them before,  
And didn't know they'd be looking your way.

I wander past your outstretched arms  
Looking for the other you,  
The one outside my head  
Who fills out all my waking dreams

When everyone's gone  
Who will see the stars falling,  
And who can give me absolution?

For I'm the tear in a nun's eye  
I'm the broken note in a crow's cry-

Nights are too long  
When your lover's far away.

written to Morning Song/Zero 7

Patti Masterman

# Nikki The Darker Sister

I got to know you today, Nikki  
Even though you've been dead for a while  
I admit, I supposed you were just another  
Spoiled rich kid, out wrecking  
Your daddy's Porsche, to escape  
From a stifling boredom;  
Nothing ever happening fast enough for you  
So at an hundred miles an hour, you died.

I saw your smiling before-photos  
That made you appear lighthearted and playful  
I think the shallow part was all mine-  
First of all there were those dark eyes  
Hauntingly Asian looking or something  
And you seemed to have no favorite anything-

Movies, music..were you just drifting  
Never really here even when you were still here?  
I found out you were major depressive;  
Inoperable brain tumor at eight years old  
There were dire predictions; lack of impulse control  
It all began to make sense, your close encounter  
With the concrete toll booth, at high speed  
Taking out both yourself and the Porsche.

You'd argued that day,  
Had your own car keys taken away  
You grabbed the Porsche keys where they hung on the wall  
Your people started calling the emergency services  
As if they had a premonition: you'd never handled a Porsche-  
No one ever drove that one again.  
There was your dad searching the highways  
As police cars raced by him to your crash scene  
Later he was haunted he hadn't kissed you goodbye at lunch.

In a thoughtless moment  
You lost it all: hope, life, and future  
Your parents lost a car that was replaceable  
But their old life was gone forever

Cruel strangers thought it funny  
To trick your family into viewing your death photos  
You were an overnight internet sensation.

Thinking about it more, I knew your death was an accident  
Though you had plenty of other problems  
You must have realized early that some people are never meant  
To stay around too long, and perhaps deep inside you knew  
It was better to leave before grace left you  
Who knew what burdens were weighing upon you?

I'm sorry you're dead; your life slammed shut  
I'm sorry the world will never know you as a grown up  
Sorry that you seemed born into disappointment  
Looking at your photos now, I don't see  
A wild, immature child challenging the rules  
I see someone tired beyond her years  
Trying to grow up without the necessary tools  
And strange that the thing you loved most  
Was the tool they tried to dismantle your family with.

Patti Masterman

# Nimbus Clouds

I like how you and me are like  
two feathers, unafraid to float  
in nimbus clouds, like unshed rain

Not needing to touch down anywhere  
not needing a special anything,  
just existing in proximity, almost touching-

But never quite together-  
for in that way, we are much stronger  
than others, who need fine tethers  
of gold, and dark suited lines of retainers  
to prove there was really something there,  
all along.

Patti Masterman

# Nine One One

A nine-eleven call goes out at midnight,  
It's serious: A writer of poems  
At such and such street, has a word  
Stuck in his throat.  
Stuck in his craw; he can't get it out.  
He can neither finish the poem or even  
Make a lick of sense right now.  
What to do?  
The medical experts confer over the two-way:  
I've seen this condition before, one says, wary,  
I think I would use the jaws of life.  
That takes too long, said another.  
I have a carpenter's saw in my bag  
I keep on hand for just such occurrences.  
Though rare, it does happen.  
We will just remove the head, push the word  
Out of the way and reattach the head.  
Believe me it is much faster in the long run  
Otherwise it could progress on to  
Editors re-writes, poetry readings,  
Deadlines, and who wants all that?  
Poets really just want to write.  
The others are in agreement.  
Now they'll be able to get right to work  
Without hesitating, which is the kiss of death  
In crisis situations.  
In asylums, they employ lobotomies  
To the same result.  
For the rest of us, there are the interminable  
Religious sermons and services.

Patti Masterman

## No Beseeching-Sonnet

Hold their hand while they still have hands to hold,  
Kiss them while their still-warm lips are near;  
For this life has a victorious kind of bold:  
We're given once the things we would hold dear.

One chance; though it be ever long or short-  
To make our feelings known, to seize the day,  
And let the other's heart our heart exhort,  
To reveal all, and see what they would say.

Don't be afraid of shame, to be found out  
Don't hold your tongue, lest other ones may laugh-  
Each minute here, your time is running out,  
Until they go alone, that stony path-

Gone, where no tears could ever reach them;  
Where there's no plead then, and no beseeching.

Patti Masterman

# No Cure

We are the leaden statues,  
Who creak the world with comings and goings.  
Fate lies ponderous beneath our feet,  
Our will of basalt, grip of iron.

Our pasts rise high, like a mountain range  
That obscures well the clouded future;  
They say we're divine, the offspring of gods-  
Or else a rust, on worn-out sutures.

Patti Masterman

# No Light For Water

No light for water,  
No dark for sky,  
No place to hide,  
No last good-bye.

No eyes for seeing,  
No hands to hold,  
No truth for saving:  
No one was bold.

Patti Masterman

# No Man Knows

I'm a garden, a temple;  
I ring my own bell  
I'm aurora of the morning  
And know no dark hells

I'm the call of the wild  
The sum of all fears  
The laughter of yesterday  
Unshed future tears

I'm a voiceless spirit  
In the labyrinth of time  
I'm all sin and all merit  
God's earthly mime

I'm a myth and a rumor,  
Left afloat on the ocean  
Half valor, half guilt  
With unruly devotion

I'm a ghostly encounter  
And a forgotten spell  
Three fourths water, and matches-  
And what else, none can tell.

Patti Masterman

# No Matter How Far

To some, the dead must seem like objects,  
Things with no consciousness, now defunct,  
But the dead have character that's still visible;  
Lines and wrinkles deep imprint.

The dead have loved one's quiet tears,  
Late at night or in the day,  
They hold a place at memory's altar-  
Smiles and laughter, now so rare.

Empty husks, though they may be,  
They keep the secrets of someone dear;  
Secrets never compromised-  
No matter how near, no matter how far.

Patti Masterman

# No More Wandering

One man can hold enough sun for many lifetimes,  
if only the dust didn't covet  
his body's inner darkness,  
and long to lay claim to it.

For sun has counted every footstep  
shadowed upon the land  
from babyhood to adult,  
and sun gives himself for free  
to everyone that's above ground.

Sun, like a proud father  
wants us to shine,  
wants to show us off,  
while dust wants only to cover us,  
with its own-

And say yes, there is no doubt  
he did great things;  
but he's ours now,  
we've got him down below here,  
safe and sound, no more wandering around..

Patti Masterman

# No Old Gods

Some people, you are always on your knees to,  
inside your being-  
But they never see it, because you are so forgetful,  
left-brained, autistic, dysmorphic;  
You say the worst things at the absolutely wrong time

Or nothing at all, when they're waiting so long,  
to hear something; anything at all-  
And then they go away, wounded..

Just as you are lighting a new candle  
Before their shrine:  
There are no old gods to the forever young at heart.

Patti Masterman

# No One Cares About Dust On A Submarine

You lit my life; my fuse was done,  
While I swam deep waters all abuzz;  
In fathoms deep, I sought your dream-  
No one cares about dust on a submarine.

The mysteries were all right there,  
The sky cracked open, to show new air,  
And the whole world, with your presence rang-  
No one cares about dust on a submarine.

Now I haunt the deepness of the void,  
And my hope is no more buoyed.  
In nameless twilight worlds, I'll sing;  
No one cares about dust on a submarine.

Patti Masterman

# No One Hears But Him

No one hears but him-  
Whom we crafted, out of sawdust and molten ores  
And wrote for him vast tomes of history, in back of our colorful imaginings.  
He's white or black or eurasian as needed,  
Changing races like a cloak; superseding all of them in the end-

The additive colors, of a god's dispersal to the outer regions:  
Candles he requires, sometimes incense, and many beads;  
He slides upon beads, like angelic feet over water,  
A hundred beautiful names and soon he appears,  
Or call out only one-

We see him at death, in spectral mansions;  
We see his reflection, mirrored in our synapses  
Until we have dissolved, back into the pool of souls-

Patti Masterman

# No One Is There

Walking along the odd named streets  
No one is there, no one is there  
Pigeons bow politely on little feet  
Clouds rest above the rising heat  
And no one is there, no one is there

What I'm looking for is found no where  
No one is there, no one is there  
Favored journeys once packed with care  
Marks on the map just add to the wear  
And no one is there, no one is there

If ever I saw your face at my door  
I'd cancel my debts and never feel poor  
But clocks are ticking and trains are leaving  
Maps worn out with dues I've been paying  
Still no one is there, no one is there.

Patti Masterman

## No Other Place

If you lived in marble columns  
Your muted voice would seem so solemn  
If you lived in the deepest rill  
The echo of your words might thrill  
Beside the giant ocean's roar  
Your own small being might seem poor  
And up upon the mountain top  
The thunder-snow would bounce and pop  
If you had a mansion of chiseled stone  
The slightest crack could cause you moan  
I think a humble home is best  
If the heart would be at rest.

Patti Masterman

# No Strings On Miracles

I think we two were born as one,  
Together we have always seen  
The months and years go tumbling-  
So, looking back, see where we've been:

My fairy hands did soothe your brow  
When you in deep perplexion stewed;  
My angel touches circled round  
When you the lonely, long day rued.

My words tried glimmerings of hope,  
When the world was growing dim,  
To lift your mood and help you cope,  
And the tides of sorrow, stem.

My help was always given free,  
To living creatures, plumb with soul;  
I knew a clearer way, they'd see-  
There are no strings, on miracles.

Patti Masterman

# Noblesse Oblige

I've noticed while my heart's been under siege,  
That you guard it so well, my wakeful Liege:  
Never sleeping on duty; or forgetting your gun  
For staying atop me's noblesse oblige.

Patti Masterman

# Nobody Knows

Where does the wind fly, when it blows?  
Nobody knows, nobody knows.

What does the storm plant, when it sows?  
Nobody knows, nobody knows.

What does the corn say, in it's rows?  
Nobody knows, nobody knows.

Where does the spirit fly, when it goes?  
Nobody knows, nobody knows.

Where does the wind fly? To where it goes  
What does the storm plant? Crooked rows  
What does the corn say? Water flows  
Where does the spirit fly? Where everything goes-

Into the wind, blowing;  
Where the tall rows, closing;  
Wherever water's flowing;  
Where everything's going;  
Where nobody's knowing.

Patti Masterman

# Nomads

Just lonely nomads;  
we're each others heroes,  
for no other hero could there be,  
travelling paths so ordinary.

Your name my siren call,  
come heathered dawn or sultry dusk,  
dim footprints only, left to show  
where you shed your human husk.

Dead or dying; we're all the same,  
intrepid explorers of rusting earth;  
just hoping in some distant future  
they'll remember our death or birth.

Patti Masterman

## None So Cursed

I had a friend, and hope grew deep in the heart of me,  
Friendship and more I craved; but god is kind-  
He gives us not what we want, but only what we need:  
The hell we could not fathom's left behind.

"There's none so cursed, as he who receives what he first desired."

Patti Masterman

# Non-Locality On A Kitestring

I can feel this consciousness;  
That it's nowhere, and yet it feels local:  
It's not in the rocks or the soil, the trees  
Or the sky; it goes where I go  
And I know where I'm going-  
But it goes, without knowing.

Time and distance mean nothing to it;  
And I'm its parasite, all the while believing  
That I'm the one in charge;  
Keeper of the maps and the shoes,  
The tires and the itinerary.

Without it, I'm nothing and nowhere,  
Just as lost in space as it is.  
But I can't help fantasizing  
About being the kite for once  
Instead of always being the kitestring.

Patti Masterman

# Non-Locality, Or Being Swallowed By The Whale

When everyone goes away from me  
And I find that I am alone then,  
Everything seems to go with them; culture,  
Society, understanding, patience, memory-  
The whole world enlarges to an immense, patent blankness  
Of which I am no longer a point at the center,  
And I find I must fight my way through waves of inertia,  
An abstraction which swallows me whole, like a fish  
Until there comes a feeling that I no longer exist.

I must be somewhere on the outskirts of non-locality,  
Something so large, that saying I am in the outer reaches  
Is almost laughable, and everything shrinks away from me  
As I wander from room to room, wanting to laugh  
Because crying solves no mysteries, and because  
I know as soon as I am no longer alone again,  
Everything will come back again, just as it was before-  
Even though I can no longer rely upon it.

(When the whale swallowed Jonah, he no longer knew  
Exactly where he was, only that he was within the whale)

Patti Masterman

## No-No's

Never say wood to a woodpecker,  
Or yell boo at a rambunctious boot.  
Never go steady with a Rapemaster,  
Or root, for a rutabaga soup.

Never hide a file in a porridge,  
Or misplace a poisoned philtre.  
Never wear a hat, for a dictionary,  
Or wear kilts- if you're off-kilter.

Patti Masterman

# Nosey Noses

My nose always knows  
If there's storms, or it's raining;  
What note upon the wind blows-  
But it needs obedience training.  
It forges ahead, a lightning swift blur  
Sniffing people, arm pits, mangy dog's fur  
Innocently it ranges upon faded scent streams  
Of lovers trysts, or morbid death scenes  
Fancy airs with French names, splashed upon women  
Who may or may not have recently been sinning  
Deodorants and aftershaves, a curtain call  
For one more whiff, before leaving the ball  
To identify the elusive-  
My nose is quite contusive.  
Birthday cake can't ever hide;  
Nor mouthwash, or incontinent's blight  
When there's nothing of interest awaft on the breezes  
And air freshener seems like invisible teases  
It fastens itself on detergents on clothes  
Cigarette smoke upon head scarves and hose  
An old houses BO is distinctive enough  
To tell Alberts from Edwards fine tobacco fluff  
And the presence of cats is immediately announced  
I'm afraid nosey noses might some day get trounced.

Patti Masterman

# Not Complaining

A thousand years from today, I think my having been here  
Will make a definite difference: a huge tree  
Roots itself in the soil enriched with my ashes,  
And it could be that when the wind whistles through  
Those branches, it will sound off like a cymbal,  
Caressing the bare bones of a symphony lamenting  
That I am no longer present here:

Many springs from now  
Great tree roots in the ashes  
The wind sings through it  
Bare shoots of new birth appear  
Fresh melodies from my soul

In the true scheme of things, time spent here  
Is but a drop, in the huge, cosmological bucket-  
The time spent elsewhere is immeasurable by any timescale.  
But to keep it in perspective, death is just a return  
To the pre-birth state, when you were just as dead;  
Still in the pre-existence phase of becoming alive,  
But didn't have the wherewithal to realize it.  
And it wasn't so bad, being dead then, was it?  
The only unreal part of existing, is the being alive part:  
When you think of how much time is spent being dead,  
Being still living, is a freakish conception,  
From that point of view. But I'm not complaining.

Patti Masterman

# Not From Laughing

Life is the sure bondage of mortuaries,  
Weeping in the still living flesh.

The thermostat of life plummeting,  
While counting up the deaths day by day.

Giving precious hours getting nothing in return;  
The clocks hands are not a charity,

The calendar is not a mission of mercy-  
These lines are not from laughing.

Patti Masterman

# Not So Famous Words In History

Cough up that hairball, Ludwig-  
And get back to your piano practice

Get over yourself already, Fleming-  
It's only a precursor to Penicillin

Well, if Mary's still a virgin-  
I'll be a monkey's uncle

Sorry, Amelia- you were the sixteenth female-  
Maybe you can distinguish yourself some other way

Yes, Mr. Hitler would like to order the elevator shoes-  
Size? Better make them the big ones

It's just another of your headaches, Theodore-  
Why don't you take one of your powders?

It's Marilyn calling again-  
No John; it's for Robert this time

King Henry was wanting something for his chronic rash-  
And have you anything to increase fertility of his wife?

I think we're lost again-  
Why don't you turn left at the next crossroads, Clyde?

Jack was going to go find a date tonight in Whitechapel-  
He'll be back to study for anatomy exams tomorrow, Doc

Mrs. Borden had to go out to visit a sick neighbor-  
I'll ask Father about the important papers soon as he returns

Sorry, today Mr. Booth is out attending a Lincoln speech-  
About equal voting rights for former slaves

Dr. Einstein muttered a few final words in German, before dying-  
But the nurse couldn't understand him

And on the back of the door to the water basin room  
They found the words- Michelangelo was here

Patti Masterman

# Not Yet

Lost beauty of fallen days, where did you go?  
Grace of the disappearing past  
Can it really be we can never return

Your wistful face holds a reflection  
Through the window glass at me  
Enticing me to come outside, have a look

Perhaps find again some vision I could recognize:  
A bench, or a bird bath; a person  
From the distant past, or a little child man or woman

I want to go and sit in the late sunset, beside you  
Watch the clouds form shapes, in our mutual reverie  
Find unusual birds to talk about, on their migrations

Even the silence blessed us then; saying nothing  
Hanging in stillness, a huge gift; familiarity of combined years  
Our bodies molecules intermingled from long association

Being master of all I survey doesn't satisfy  
Because the ones I most would have shared it with  
Have gone away by now

Blown away like fall leaves, somewhere too far to travel yet  
Or else sprouted wings like a chrysalis  
To fly where I've never been, even in my imagination

We never suspect these are the good old days  
Until they have already vanished; gone forever  
Why did we think they would never end

And in the future, I know someone will think of me, and sigh  
And stand long before a window, in silence, and watch, listen and wait  
Wish fervently, for the way things used to be

Even if just for a day, an hour, one single shining moment  
Of blissful peace: but then I have to smile, at that thought  
Because they can't know it yet.

Patti Masterman

# Notes From Your Opus

Sing words; that the body of time  
Gives to eloquent mind it's due,  
Sing words; the creation of bones that  
The body's own day shines through.

Sing time; that the world not catch fire  
While we're treading it's rhythm core,  
Sing time; that your lies and your ages  
Are the sign of a closing door.

Sing bones; we'll put up a big stone  
To show you when your last days are done,  
Sing bones; and your loved ones will gaze  
At that last place you lost the sun.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing Here

There's nothing here,  
So I can't be freed;  
Nothing in the heart and soul of me.

Nothing's thinking,  
And nothing breathes;  
Nothing's blowing  
The rustling leaves.

Nothing all morning  
Nothing all night;  
Naught between the darkness and the light.

Nothing is fragrant,  
In the foaming air;  
And when I go away  
Nothing's still there.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing More

You're my heart's weathervane,  
My soul's brilliant counterpane,  
My self's well learnt, sole refrain-  
I find you, ever more.

The soft fingers of the rain,  
The thief stole my heart again,  
My lips sacred mantra-name-  
I sense you, everywhere.

A witches spell; back again,  
The hobo who rides my train,  
The love in my heart, that sprang-  
There's room for nothing more.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing So Far Away

Children's faces I see no longer  
Voices of those vanished long ago  
Scenes and places now dismembered-  
In the subconscious vaults below.

The leftover pieces fall so quietly  
Into the cavernous deeps of mind  
Once they were new and fresh as flowers-  
Picked but once, and then left behind.

Once upon a time, days seemed eternal  
Endless the hours, that we thought would last  
But they all shrank down into just some memory-  
Nothing's so far away now as the past.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing So Rare

Not I, not me,  
Not a tooth on a key;  
Nothing is separate in this world,  
You see.

Not he, not she,  
Not inland or sea,  
Whether still, or breathe:  
You can always believe.

Not here, not there,  
Anywhere; everywhere,  
Not water, not air-  
Nothing so rare.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing To Say

Defiling time, spent tidings of wild hedgerows  
We circumvent the feathered wheeling flight  
Copse of down in woeful breasted dove  
Portents my winded craft will scuttle  
As ill conceived a knocking midnight blows  
Fat roosting hens past windmills mocking hours  
With loosened arms their towers rock and sway  
Docked boats row against mad chiming spirits  
Nothing nailed down can have a word to say.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing Wind Writes Can Long Remain

The earth makes trails around the sun,  
The moon follows closely in its wake;  
The planets want to become one,  
For all of gravity do partake.

The moon makes a backlit lamp of night,  
The sun does cross-hatch on the trees,  
Twinkling stars vanish at morning light;  
But the dust remembers what it sees.

The waves write in wind, upon the beach;  
The sand, where the hurricane has lain,  
And shadows do sunlights reach impeach-  
But nothing wind writes can long remain.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing's As Dead As A Fish

There is a dead fish somewhere,  
Rotting deep inside of me.  
The smell is visceral, though invisible;  
It stinks of abandoned dreams,  
Rots with unfulfilled ambitions.  
It's dredged up again  
With every unhappy circumstance:  
Float, fish, through unquarried hopes,  
Carrion of your eggs, your staring eyes,  
You fins shriveled and stuck to the body.

Once you almost flew in water, but now you sink stone-like.  
Once I sank in air, after I was abandoned  
Too far from the riverbank.  
Now I stink like a day old fish  
Found around the frying pan,  
Where there is only more fire,  
And a flaying knife, to lay me open  
To the world's inquisitive stares-  
Even if they pretend not to smell it.

Patti Masterman

# Nothing's Changed

Although I'm grown up now, and police myself  
I have to put my fun well back on the shelf;  
What they used to say is still very true:  
Whatever you want, isn't good for you.

Patti Masterman

# Noumenon

It's difficult separating out  
the soul of things from the substance;  
Are you part of the house, or it part of you?

Do you live inside of the furniture too,  
A trapped spirit residue residing forever,  
like crystal in stone?

This wasted covering on the floor that I am nearly afraid  
to tread- how do you you not lie within, mere molecules  
That fell away, as you walked these walls?

I don't want to throw a single piece of you away  
Fearing it will sing in it's lonely solitude forever  
Miles away where I will never know to go.

□

Patti Masterman

# Now You See It, Now You Don'T

Remember how toys used to fascinate for hours,  
Like the spinning top, that hummed like a church organ,  
Like it had a harmonica buried deep inside  
Stuck forever on a single bank of notes.

There was the etch n sketch, with it's phantom  
Now-you-see-it, now-you-don't lines  
That dissolved magically, with the flick of a wrist.  
Or in an unexpected movement,  
That obliterated half of your drawing-  
That one sketch so spontaneously magnificent,  
You knew you could never recapture it's grandeur.

Then there were toys one never got to experience,  
Even if they were all the rage for a time-  
Except maybe at the homes of friends.

Things flit through our lives now like micro stops  
On a runaway train; we've barely time to name them  
Claim them, before they've moved on  
To somewhere, somebody else,

Whether lost, discarded, or broken down  
Before we could get to know them  
Like we used to, back when the world still glistened  
With a youth and curiosity, that was tireless.

They must surely be buried somewhere now  
Under some generic material-  
Perhaps topped off with an empty gravy can,  
Label now faded..

That seemed to be our mantra for an era:  
Catch the gravy train fast, before it disappears  
Along with everything else.  
Everything that once meant something to you,  
Replaced now with the newer ideals of today's age;  
Life is cheap, drink it in quick, before it disappears forever-



# Nowhere You Are Not

I open my window at night  
Which cool breeze, your breath?  
Which stars, your eyes?  
You're never really out of sight.

The sun ascends at the morning  
With the grace of your entrance  
And the warmth of your smile  
I know there will be no storming.

The clouds glide lazy in the air  
Soft and languid as your touch  
Wide and gentle as your heart  
Surrounding me everywhere.

Patti Masterman

# Nullpunktsenergie

We bump space out of place with our surly atoms  
But space remembers where we jostled it before;  
Space fills in the wounds with newly becoming emptiness.

The hollows we formed are withdrawn, like a hand from a hole  
As space rushes in to settle and smooth it over  
Exactly weighting it with possibility, the same as before-

Like waves fill in the hollows where sand  
Was drawn out, by a surreptitious ocean,  
Leaving behind indentation footprints, of something different.

Like the white gloved hand from out a magician's hat  
Appears at certain instants; the automata of the magic show-  
Space consumes and exhumes entire worlds of being.

The fog of warm breath, mixed in amid the sterility of the cold,  
Both an outgoing and an arrival, where before there was nothing-  
This the true magic, and antithesis of dogma.

Patti Masterman

# Nullum Locum Latendi

When you fall into sleep,  
Your mind lets go its creatures,  
All the dead and living monsters created-  
Haphazardly, accidentally, or on purpose.

And even though they should have no reality  
in and of themselves,  
For one person on this earth, they are more than real,  
Closer than reality.

And there is no escaping on earth  
What the earth-dwelling mind  
Has once called forth into being.

Patti Masterman

# Numberless Mandalas

Numberless mandalas  
Of sitting Bodhisattvas  
Numerous vows  
Of sacred cows  
Endless incarnations  
Of Gandhi, Mahatmas  
Malas and mantras  
And intoned vowels

And rich men trying  
To squeeze through needles  
Christian and Hindu  
Muslim and Jew  
Prayers and rituals  
Rosaries and creedos  
When all you really need  
Is someone to love you.

Patti Masterman

# O Deeper Sea

O deeper sea  
That waves restless between us  
Engorging and disgorging  
The changeling creations  
Steep rills and ridges  
Making not a dent above  
So stays my heart hidden  
Hidden in its element  
So stays our viscous love

Patti Masterman

# Oath Of The Dispossessed

The point of your knife would be a relief,  
To save me the sadness of life, who's a thief;  
Promises roses, and then gives us weeds;  
In hearts they put hoses, and then watch us bleed.

I pledge allegiance to the land  
Where dreams are dismembered, now take my hand..

The end of your gun would just cap the pain,  
In beds of oppression, where we have lain:  
There's safety in numbers, unless they have rifles;  
They'll pick us off; ripe tomatoes, just trifles.

I pledge allegiance to the land  
Where dreams are dismembered, now take my hand..

Some poison might do it, or maybe a hatchet,  
The type which would shut down this pyramid racket;  
This dream, though deferred, has no prize left to offer,  
So hurry up please; close the lid on my coffin.

I pledge allegiance to the land  
Where dreams are dismembered,  
and for which it stands..

Patti Masterman

# Occam's Razor

The universe is our patent Father  
Mother, brother, sister, lover-  
Not the Moon, hanging on high;  
Not the far off sun in sky.

It's not a senate filibuster,  
Or a vote, or a comet's luster.  
It's not an ego on a throne,  
Or a clean soul out on loan.

You don't need a library card  
To access your genetic ward;  
Creation central birthed out you-  
There's nothing that you have to do.

Don't wear your knees out, kneeling down;  
No one holds for you a crown.  
And karma's just a laughing jester,  
Who loves to goad you, and to pester.

This planet earth is not the center  
Of a strange world's compass rose,  
We're just here by chance or fancy-  
Where our pleasant home arose.

And all the fake man-made religions,  
And rumors of some personal god-  
Sprang up because we were unhappy  
Down here on our plot of sod.

We thought it should have been more perfect;  
We shouldn't have to work so hard-  
So in our minds, we birthed another  
World- to go to- when we tired.

Patti Masterman

# Occluded

Occluded by dust,  
And well traveled orbits  
Beyond the known space-  
What rankles after midnight  
Each being labors alone;  
Coming and going a lonely way  
The ending of life like a faint surprise  
And even less interruption,  
To others-

Back to the bingo, the pool halls,  
Lottery tickets, and soccer games,  
Finish the beer, the haircut, the lovemaking,  
Death's another ritual, we must partake.  
Mechanically we remove the blood,  
Paint the face, bedeck with flowers.  
Lower the body, down into wood:  
(The small interruption does us good) -  
But hallelujah- it's not our time, yet.

Patti Masterman

# Ocean Within Me

Ocean within me  
Shore to shore,  
The soul of self  
Opens a door;

The price is free,  
Just being me-  
Paid from the beings  
Ecstasy.

Patti Masterman

# Octahedral

Octagonal architect,  
Arachnid arcane:  
Four pairs of legs  
Two eyes frame.

Air-breathing arthropod  
Of gossamer filament;  
Arachne's god  
Of stealth is militant.

Spinneret fluid  
Enshrouds the prey,  
While dextrous plumes  
Form downy stays.

Quadrilateral webs  
Reticulate-  
The eight-armed compass  
Won't hesitate.

Aerial flyers,  
Air walkers supreme-  
But octahedrals  
Are just the meme.

Patti Masterman

# Oddly Familiar Strangers

Recognizing strangers is a strange way to remember  
Other faces one once knew, upon a far December.  
The light falls on familiar things, but now unknown to me;  
Mind forgets the outlines soon, of things one never sees  
But might recall if prompted, a slight movement of details;  
A toss of head, or twinkling smile, of what once was known well.  
And soon we're right back there again, to days 'remember-when'-  
But recognizing strangers is a strange way to begin.

Patti Masterman

# Ode To Blue

Creation paints  
With a blue emotion,  
Vast as the sky  
And wider than oceans.

Blue as a dream  
In a mermaid's lair,  
Bluer than darkness  
When nothing's there.

Blue as the feathers  
On a bluebird's wing,  
Bluer than heaven  
Where he learns to sing.

Blue as the knowing  
In baby's blue eyes,  
Bluer than sorrow,  
In a lover's sigh.

Blue as the cord  
Of the newly born,  
Bluer than rain  
In a changeling storm.

Blue as the space  
In a rocket's path,  
Bluer than reflections  
Of moon going past.

Blue as a graveyard,  
At the edge of night,  
Bluer than Earth  
From the highest flight.

Countless the hues,  
The many shades of blue,  
The color of worlds  
Forever made new.

Patti Masterman

# Of Bonfires And Rainbows

Sometimes used to think that babies could only dwell  
In their special realm, of sweet baby smells;  
Tidy white crib, with the even spaced bars.  
Pony lamps too, pink and yellow and blue.  
And sweet tasting sugary medicines  
To help the sick babies get better again  
And such soft, cottony diapers  
Held with pastel-headed pins:  
All softness and gurgle and coo.

But even baby has to go away sometimes;  
The little blue eyes glaze over  
Like a doll's soulless eyes, of factory hardened glass  
That only can stare in one direction now;  
And their sweetly puffed blushing cheeks  
Become multi-colored, like the rainbow-  
Only, there's too many colors now.

In soft mud then, we must plant carefully  
The little stilled hearts;  
While we will tell them, they're only playing a part  
In Jack and the Beanstalk.  
And if you listen attentively, on some cold-bitten night,  
Around the edges of the wind's cacophony  
You might hear inconsolable crying, again.

It's just the orphan; the one  
With the strange rainbows  
Now blooming fearsomely, in his cheeks  
And a worm cocooning, in his eye;  
Alone under the ground, with all their softly rotting dreams  
Beginning to turn gangrenous, inside of him  
And all the pretty, pastel furniture is burning  
On the bonfire, and Daddy's drunk again  
And Mother's barricaded herself somewhere, and can't stop crying  
And Hell is very cold indeed,  
With nothing at all  
Left of warmth  
In spite of what the stories all say.

Patti Masterman

# Of Cliques And Monopoly

Doesn't everyone have to forgive themselves  
For the half-formed, maladaptive masks  
They once wore in youth? In school, I lived for years  
Underneath a knitted navy blue cape  
All through junior high, worn daily  
To disguise newly sprouted breasts  
And complementary curves in other places  
They must have wondered then  
If I had any arms at all, under there?  
It was a teenage security blanket extraordinaire  
Thank god, the cape finally gave way  
Before high school, under it's relentless use.

By high school, I wanted to defy being labeled  
Terrified of belonging to one particular sub-group  
I lived in a shades-of-blue uniform all year;  
Steel blue shirts, navy pants  
No bright yelling colors, no makeup..  
No school uniform could have been stricter-  
I defied both convention and classification  
Only my hair was unkempt, always in my eyes  
Part of the covert rebellion perhaps:  
I was in the army of one.

Since I refused steadfastly to identify with anything  
I unwittingly joined ranks with the only group that fit me:  
The outcasts. At lunch in the cafeteria; we, the dregs  
Of high school society, sat at the edges of the room;  
On the very last table; rungs on a ladder going nowhere,  
And we fit together like a hinge  
Swinging from side to side, as the doors opened,  
And more often closed, on our expectations and ambitions:  
Only one of us went to the prom  
And not the one you would have guessed  
One did drugs sometimes, but none of the others ever admitted to it.  
I was the closet drinker no one knew about;  
Always able to keep a secret, no matter what  
My grades were really too high for the outcast group,  
But therein lay it's beauty: no where else to go.

I never understood that my decision  
To pledge myself to nobody and nothing  
Exiled me by default, into the group that nobody wanted to be in  
I have always underestimated the effect of decisions  
Everything has always been all or nothing; black or white  
Which means in monopoly terms, I always had overwhelming  
Victories and defeats  
And in my now-habitual role of non-conformist,  
I have never been  
To even a single high school reunion:  
Somehow, I think they are not surprised.

Patti Masterman

# Of God And Phonics

In school we did worksheets to learn phonics,  
but once I saw the line drawings of objects,  
it was hopeless; for I right away wanted to understand  
how those few straight and curved markings, in two dimensions  
could be taken the same as a book, a table, a house?

How could they hold in themselves the essence  
of an inanimate object, and what about the intangible things;  
what was the picture for love or hatred, emotion or nightmare?  
And how would you illustrate a verb, beyond the nouns  
it associated with; and what about the infinite,  
and the indecipherable intuitions?  
I found the picture reading so difficult and tiring,  
It's a wonder I ever learned to read at all.

Once I met someone Who claimed  
He had made symbols for all of these others;  
but I found it so frightening, each time  
I would shut my eyes tightly  
and I would pray for them all to go away,  
but He just kept on drawing;  
redrawing His pictures, over and over,  
and His pictures changed daily;  
sometimes even hourly,  
as if quantum fluctuations  
were influencing their very beingness.  
And He always put in lots of zeros,  
because He must have known  
that the Zero Point energy field  
holds the secret of all manifestation.

Patti Masterman

# Off The Hoof

People tell you how to write  
What to think, who to fight  
Which rules to break, which laws to void  
If you object- off to Freud.

The world refutes it's every angle  
Words fight in jest and men in spirit  
Truth died just as liberty  
Went under with the harbor tea

Drink the ocean; do it, do it  
All that salt will cleanse the filth  
If you believe the rich man's truth  
The same as yours, you're off the hoof.

Patti Masterman

# Oh To Have A Tara Of My Own

Oh to have a Tara, all my own-  
And a secret beau, complex and dark  
To reap all the dangers I've sown:  
With my own tongue, wreck my own heart.

Oh to be beautiful, and drowning in pedigree-  
To have no scruples, yet never lacking bravery  
Collect the dotings love, almost for free:  
Be bewitching and tempestuous, quite savory.

The fiction mirrors the vanity, so real-  
How we value the false, and crave the brief  
So willing are we, to beg, borrow and steal:  
Alas, love has flown, before we notice the thief.

If we finally peer in the mirror, one day, then-  
On the curved wood dresser, at those green eyes;  
That men would sell their soul, at just one chance to sin:  
We'd realize in the end, the price was much too high.

Patti Masterman

# Oh! You Shouldn'T Have-!

When a person talks hatefully about someone,  
It's like giving them a present,  
Shouting it from the rooftops:

Here is how little I think about you,  
Here is more proof of my unkind treatment of you,  
Here is the latest present, of my continual spitefulness

Wrapped with care in venom, which is upon my own hands,  
A stain upon my own person; noxious fumes  
To poison my own beings air..just for you.

To which you must reply with deference, Oh thank you-  
And may all your beneficence rebound upon you,  
Seventy times seven!

Patti Masterman

# Oil Drips From The Engines Of Creation

In the few seconds before the arrival of the  
Lightning flash and the maelstrom following,  
There seems to be a simultaneous surge  
Deep inside of me where intensities are perceived~  
Perhaps the remnant of some primordial urgency  
That made me bow my body to the earth  
To become a smaller lightning rod;  
Or maybe the stirring of a recollection  
Back when the oceans were my birth-mother,  
And lightning; the seminal trigger  
Of the chain reaction that coincided  
With my eventual appearance here on earth~  
Otherwise known as the Miracle of Life.

Patti Masterman

# Old Man Secrets

In the heat, old smells rise up to assault again.  
In the old house, I could smell old wallpaper  
Buried under layers of yellowed paint,  
Old wood floors, the varnish and glue mingling  
With the dust from old occupant's possessions  
Sparring with those of the most recent inhabitants,  
A dry amalgamation  
Mixed with old cat poop and old man's pee,  
Moldered curtains and dusty cobwebs.

The old man often stood and peed out of doors;  
Somewhere in his brain, bathrooms must have got mixed in  
With the outdoors, all mixed up in the worm-eaten confines  
Of his belatedly scanned and well-diagnosed brain.

Outhouses used to be outside, but now there was  
Modern plumbing; so what was a man to do?  
If he still wanted to go outside to urinate,  
But was hindered by walls and fumbly door latches;  
Why, when a man ran out of breath so soon?

He stood and peed at the door, fully confident  
He was not actually breaking any rules of society.  
And now the pee tattles on him, years later,  
And he has passed on into old man oblivion,  
But the brain secret he kept all alone-  
Successfully- until he was quite gone.

Patti Masterman

# Old Words Are Best

Old words are best, when it comes to love;  
Don't shed the old verses, as though they'd aged,  
They're just as fresh, as spirits first knew them,  
They still hold the power; their tears; the aegis,  
Uncounted time, in undying passions-  
When we fight our battles, they'll stand behind.

Patti Masterman

# Omniscient Light

Omniscient light  
Pierces from the eyes of strangers

Passengers with unknown dreams  
Existing anywhere for token seconds

Take back the stars on invisible journeys  
Take back the surrender when the captain's gone to sleep

Because our wanting disguises everything  
The unsaid edge of existence only blinks

Patti Masterman

# On A Bad Day

On a bad day, your voices are answering each other.

Patti Masterman

# On Brand New Wings

There are so many ghosts now,  
Where did all the time go?  
An old woman stares in the mirror,  
All she has loved is gone

Farther than the stars.  
Her old heart breaks again  
For things she just can't explain;  
She feels she should be waking,

Feels as though her ninety years  
Were only a young girl's dream-  
And when she lays her down again,  
She'll fly on brand new wings...

Patti Masterman

# On Living Till The End Of Time

Your far forgotten hands and face  
Fly past the door, past earthly embrace  
Where soul runs it's sleep-flying dreams aground  
And then on past the deep blue refrain we breathe,  
Past kisses that could slay the need  
Of the missing man's loneliest journeys.

Moon still makes the old darkness come alive,  
And the skies sun-wizened words still left some light;  
Enough to brand new eyes of a child,  
Or enough for finding dreams of peace  
Hidden within a many colored world;  
Or reflecting forever-stars, worn on a lapel,  
As if living till the end really mattered at all.

Patti Masterman

# On Some Inviolable Shore

You won't remember who you were

On some inviolate shore,

Or who your friends and loved ones were-

Before death closed the door.

But if you were the same as now,

Some hope you'll hold begotten,

That love in all its myriad forms

Can not all go forgotten.

Patti Masterman

## On The 9th Parallel

On the 9th Parallel I met my soul  
I held her hand, as she held mine  
'Hail' I called; 'Well met, ' she said  
'So it is you'; 'Toward You I'm led.'  
I thanked her for my intuition  
She said You Are a limited edition  
'I have plans, ' I said it, plain;  
'Your plans are mine, ' was her refrain  
'I think I have a lot to do.'  
'Just think it done and it is true.'  
'I'd sing lots of songs for you.'  
'You are the Door that I came through.'  
We talked and talked till time was late,  
And then shook hands and made a date  
For a later time, when life could wait,  
At the far end of my life's brief spate;  
'I'll be waiting here for you, ' she said  
When the talking was finally through.  
And then we said goodbye again-  
And suddenly, both said right then,  
'It makes me smile to know that We  
Will be together when You are free.'

Patti Masterman

# On The Ship Of Self We'Re Riding

On the ship of self we're riding  
Somewhere we do not know;  
We tip the doorman, pay the driver,  
The wheels begin to roll;

Past scenery drear and lovely,  
Past clouds and oceans all;  
Till everything is featureless,  
Beneath a darkened pall.

Still many miles we're riding,  
As to the end, we must;  
Unsure of where we're headed,  
We must rely on trust.

At last the rolling ceases,  
The doors are opened slow-  
We find we never left at all;  
The journey's in the soul.

written to Jet Force Gemini Soundtrack: Water Ruin

Patti Masterman

# On The Street Corner

There's a street corner, where the little ants march  
Down to the donut shop, under the arch;  
And there's a patio, where dreamy diners chew,  
And drink from crystal glasses, as dreamy diners do.

And there's some newlyweds, high up in a room,  
Doing some things, you and I would never do;  
He drowned her in the bathtub- drinking herself drunk-  
And rolled her in a blanket, and stuffed her in a trunk.

And now the ants are coming, they've smelt her on the wind,  
A large feast for the taking is coming soon to them,  
While diners on the patio keep sniffing the air,  
Wondering if some roadkill must be about there?

Now he's on the prowl again, looking for the girl,  
The one who's truly perfect; most perfect in the world-  
Someday he knows he'll find her, and he'll forget the rest.  
But he must keep on trying, till he's sure he's found the best.

Patti Masterman

## On Writing

I made a bluer sky, they came  
Just to see it rain again,  
Then wove the clouds so fluffy white,  
They wore their sunglasses at night.

I made love clear, most every vein;  
They saw love course, they saw it stain,  
The saw the beating heart so true-  
They saw its image, ruby-hued.

I bludgeoned death and laid it bare,  
They lined up silently, to stare;  
And when they thought it was the end,  
I breathed the life back in again.

And now they come and mill about,  
For I've got power, I've got clout;  
Creating not one thing, anew-  
Just copies, like magicians do.

Patti Masterman

# Once I Met A Bodhisattva

Once I met a Bodhisattva,  
Met him many times and ways;  
And every single time we met  
He wore a different face.

Patti Masterman

# Once More, With Feeling

Regret sings loudest, at the end of days  
When we've learned all the stony declensions of sad  
Grown new lives; but discarded grown-up ways  
And can someone tell us what we just saw in that play  
The one where we lost our fabled innocence;  
How could there ever be an encore, for that?

With fever incipient, we've weighed our losses;  
Rooms where nobody will ever confess  
How we are responsible for nefarious things  
Born on the darkening wings of night,  
For a farther sun shines, without any shadow  
And lights the world, when we've said goodnight.

Patti Masterman

## Once Remembered Gods

the magic perfume of yesterday's translucent woman lingers  
like smoke breathes through an open window  
why did the blue ocean wear a wake  
pick a flower child once gone wild  
yet slow stars always surround the morning  
never could my heart become the prisoner of your smile

Patti Masterman

# Once True

Are you sad when you're dead; all your cells  
Still think they're working for you,  
Though I went where you led, now you're  
Gone, and there's nothing to do.

Do you lie in fetid silence, lids closed upon  
Every tomorrow; is there nothing  
To be left now, of whatever you once were?

Is the soul what a man is; more than snakes  
More than snails, more than letters  
In a string; can't make up what is real,  
When matter finally finds its voice to sing.

Do you lie in fields of clover, smiling  
At secrets, we can only dream,  
Safe from sorrow, safe from fear?  
Floating down on ethereal streams..

Are you sad when you're dead, all your cells  
Still think they're working for you,  
Drifted off, to some farther somewhere  
But know: every life lived once was always true.

Patti Masterman

# Once Upon A Lie

Bury me with all these memories,  
Crowding the elevators to sky;  
Bleed me of whatever's left,  
In my terminal sigh.

Time wafts in the brains clefts,  
Scattering the cuneiform dies;  
Breath all I thought I had left,  
Once upon a lie.

Patti Masterman

# Once Upon A Time

We were so innocent and naive-  
Children, trying to teach ourselves  
Adult ways.  
Imitating the adult omnipotence;  
The cruelty and kindness, intertwined  
Understanding mixed with impatience  
That godlike ability to make instant decisions.  
It intrigued, made us envious-  
How did one come to be so sure  
Of the world in general,  
And your own self, in particular?  
We rehearsed versions of our future dramas  
Fantastical grown up parodies were played out:  
The neighborhood boy who threw himself  
On top of my clothed, unsuspecting body  
He knew well the postures, but not the biology  
Behind the act;  
And all I could think to say was:  
Get off - get off- they can see us-  
Already employing the reasoning of maturity  
In theory, though not in actual practice;  
The exercises we repeated ad infinitum  
Just trying to grow up and finally have some power;  
It was all that mattered to us then.  
The hollowness of a predictable existence  
Never manifesting itself to our febrile minds.

Patti Masterman

# One Breath Away

Someday we're going back  
Down the narrow tunnel  
With the exit light buzzing at the end  
All our grudges done with  
No time for one last glance,  
One final apology-  
The sundial under midnight shadow;  
The clocks hands forever stopped.  
There's no arguing or pleading then-  
Let me stretch out my hand to you now  
To offer human warmth and dignity  
Let my tongue flow freely  
With whatever may occur to me  
Let us two commune in words and in silence:  
The present is all we ever have  
Even if the days seemed stacked  
On top of each other, an endless procession  
Only one breath brings us in, and only one breath  
Delivers us to the cradle of everlastingness.

Patti Masterman

# One Caring Word

I can second guess your thoughts;  
Follow to their logical end,  
That no one understood you  
And that you could never win.

But you undersold yourself  
Time and time again;  
The one who I saw who lived his life  
Too well, but without friends.

He trusted life, remained himself,  
But thought he'd fallen behind,  
And bought the recriminations wholesale  
And held them before his mind.

He held them up before him  
Like a path that he must walk  
While all the time he did his best,  
But he could never talk

When it seemed there was nothing left,  
To salvage his agony,  
He did the thing that he thought best,  
And left it as it be.

Why is life so shallow  
That we take the surface view,  
And never stop to wonder  
What one caring word could do?

Patti Masterman

# One Fallen Star

The passion grows, hurrying you along faster now  
as mad as a derelict muse, whispering impossible things  
through the many, weeping pinpricks of a day.

Her voice could hold back the rippling seas,  
shimmy the pebbles closer to shore,  
as a hidden breast cleaves itself, to fold within  
each living, dying, precarious thing.

Is the soul just another flowered flesh, lacking roots?  
while laughter spreads, like a distant memory of heartache-  
the tongue the less pointed instrument, of dying.

The anticipation arouses brash gestures,  
as sweet fires run the gamut, of body to mind,  
while a lovely pounding surf assails all the senses:

She will take you as you are-  
but only the length of one fallen star..

Patti Masterman

# One Ghost To Another

You are of Earth, I'm water-sign;  
Frivolous, frothing, foam will fly,  
You are base; and acid, I:  
Float on clouds above your soil,  
As mud we make, together; toil-

Though you are far, and I am near;  
Near as a picture, or a mirror,  
I'm near to me, you're farther, there;  
There be no friction, then to fear,  
There is no face, no voice to hear-

Somewhere long past, our shadows fell  
Across each other, none to tell;  
Or photos grey-tinged lips, were pressed  
When mashed one instant, gainst the rest;  
Perhaps one molecule of air, that you exhaled-  
I inhaled; still, at least as ghosts, we cannot fail.

Patti Masterman

# One Little Bell

One little bell left hiding in the tree  
One tiny bell that always eludes me  
When Christmas time has ended  
And I take down the parade  
One slight trinket will always evade.

Yet is announced with each small twitch  
In tinny voice, its own special pitch  
That nothing fully ceases  
But leaves in its wake  
A faint tinkling magic for its own sake.

Patti Masterman

# One Of My Profiles Is Missing

I am the unanswered question no one has ever asked before  
a meta-frequency of the cosmos  
a conflagration out of time  
a brain in a bind

Now come look inside..

Patti Masterman

# One Sided Goodbyes

We passed through the double doors  
of the mortuary, and in that brief flash-  
of her face going by- saw all the uncertainty,  
the dread, of my own face, and of others going in;  
a dreading of what we knew must be within,  
a fear of what's known, but also of the unknown,  
the new alien world where everything's been upended  
even as they're turning over new soil  
to prepare a different kind of place,  
we remember that this world  
never turned to our dreams.

Nothing can be again what it was once,  
amid the feeling that we are so fragile now,  
in our dangerous new knowledge,  
ready at any moment to break apart-  
shatter into a million disjointed fragments-  
like the thinnest tea cup upon the shelf,  
and even the earth itself is quaking under us  
(And where now are the sweating, bellowing preachers  
always crying for repentance, speaking of stones being rolled away?)

There are no miracles left here for us,  
no lightning bolts and thunder  
no burning comets, marking a spot high above in the heavens,  
no signs, no rainbows, no doves-  
and everything keeps looking so completely normal,  
as we keep on making our one-sided goodbyes.

Patti Masterman

# Only Heaven Knows

The crypts where no one talks at all,  
Forever lying forever still  
In their drawers, so very small-  
Death to them's no bitter pill.

Not to them, who lie in state  
And hear no noise, and see no thing;  
They do not twist or cry at fate,  
For every day is just the same.

They do not rue a life that's lost,  
Or sit disturbed and wonder why  
They can no longer count the cost  
Or ponder that someday they die.

And those that grieve cannot perceive  
That they too someday repose-  
They cannot fathom why they breathe  
For reasons only heaven knows.

Patti Masterman

# Only One

There is only one person  
Out of the whole of the world,  
Who would get the gist of the words-  
But he is sleeping now, and later when he awakens  
He must go to work, and make the bank deposit,  
To do the car repairs; maybe work the crossword puzzle  
In his down-time, till he is cross-eyed.

He has a family and a vocation,  
And because one man's chicken is another man's snake,  
(And because even if he understood the words  
He might not see the point of writing them)  
This is all how life laughs at us.  
And because you must keep on writing them, nevertheless  
This is how we laugh back, at life.

Patti Masterman

# Only Prophets

When the world itself disappears,  
There's a higher force majeure,  
A portal, that your foot falls through-  
Bottomless and boundless, too.

The eye is useless; thinking's stopped,  
That potent kernel, 'real' is popped;  
You come to realize god is mind,  
And all fetters, can unbind

Unthreads needles, goes within,  
Where the world's but distant din;  
The closet of pure being's air-  
Where no time- no space- is there.

And when you find that you've returned,  
The minutes of that meeting- burned;  
Only prophets allowed to see-  
To carry back- the truth of being.

Patti Masterman

# Only The Fake Blood Seems Real

humans have a lot in common with other humans humans bleed  
quite a lot I think at the cinema humans have gallons of blood to bleed out in the  
dying scenes on the theater screens all the flowing  
red swims before our eyes till we've grown dizzy and have to get up  
and stumble outside then out into the streets grown maroon with living death our  
triumphant red blood stronger than iron magnets stronger  
than ten men blood coating the gutters and storm drains of the city I wonder  
why we even bother going to the movies anymore? humans have a lot in  
common with other humans humans bleed with other humans humans bleed  
quite a lot I think at the cinema humans  
have gallons of blood to bleed out bleed out in the dying scenes on the theater  
screens all the flowing red red swims before our eyes till we've grown dizzy dizzy  
have to get up and stumble outside then out in the streets grown maroon  
maroon with living death our triumphant red red blood blood stronger than iron  
magnets stronger than ten men coating the gutters and storm drains of the city I  
wonder why we even bother going to the movies anymore? humans have a lot in  
common with other humans humans bleed bleed bleed out in dying scenes on  
the theater screens all the flowing flowing flowing red blood red red blood  
stronger than iron magnets stronger than ten men blood coating the gutters and  
storm drains of the city I wonder why we even bother going to the movies  
anymore? humans have lot in common other humans bleed bleed bleed bleed a  
lot humans gallons of blood blood blood blood to bleed out bleed bleed out in  
dying dying scenes on screens all the flowing flowing flowing flowing red red red  
red swims swims dizzy dizzy stumble streets maroon maroon maroon death  
death death red red red blood blood blood blood blood drains why bother?

Patti Masterman

# Only The Music Of Your Skin

only the music of your skin  
shall outlive the diamond  
and kiss of naked sun in song  
though the moon marry, just for lust  
or haunted isle betray our trust,  
in sacred fevers, entwined together  
the world worships to celebrate forever.

Dec.31 2009

Patti Masterman

# Only The Sound Of Music

Only the sound of music  
Echoes from far away;  
Happily ever the turning heart  
Is cleft, from its broken quay.

Every peaceful retreating wave  
Was once locked in memory's key,  
Like a mournful tune at dawn  
Grows fainter, passed over sea.

Oceans lave their bereft docks,  
Lonesome of barge and sail-  
No one ever is there to hear  
When they break, in the stormy gale.

Days and nights, of sun and moon;  
Spinning their endless tales,  
While poor bodies go back to clay,  
Beneath the trawling bells.

Patti Masterman

# Only The Wind

It's a magic dance;

Don't watch where I'm going,

Don't watch where I end up,

Watch your thoughts, watching me-

It's a magic dance, take a chance.

It's a magic dance;

Doesn't matter what you see,

Doesn't matter what you think,

Just relax and watch the show-

It's a magic dance, so don't blink.

It's a magic dance;

I'm going, but don't stop watching,

I'm leaving, just hold my gaze till the end,

Or you might miss the thing you keep missing-

When I disappear, there's only the wind.

Patti Masterman

# Only Time Is On My Side

I know I was a child once,  
Long ago, when love was just a cry  
Away; and why I had to grow  
And stretch my wings, just so  
To touch a sky, that far away?

And why you cannot see a heart,  
Although a pulse is galloping-  
And agony won't stop,  
Although the pain is ripping you-  
Why loved ones have to leave,  
And reality's like dreams-

But I know I'll know in time-  
Only time is on my side.

Patti Masterman

# Only We

Only we poets are brave enough  
To appear utterly bare before one another,  
Wearing just our prejudices, our obsessions  
The vanishing epiphanies of the hour; trials of the day  
Disheveled, reeling drunk on what we're trying to say:  
Our own individual truth wrung out of the day's dollar, or the day's scarcity.  
Tongue-tied in our despair to say it perfectly  
Hedging all on the compassionate intuition of our peers-  
Other authors, who are much the same deep down,  
Feeling things together, as if poised inside one being;  
One omnipotent beating heart, vibrating the worlds fragile equanimity.  
Maybe I might have passed through life never suspecting this  
But I know there is a potential power  
Which lives inside words, because things have changed for me  
In subtle ways I could not have foreseen:  
I was finally able to admit those parts of me  
Which I considered unfit for human consumption  
Or else too abstract to put down on paper-  
To dredge, lever them upwards;  
The good, the bad, the heretical, the complacent;  
All the unbridled creatures I had set a lock upon, and tried to forget  
And instead of being frightened away, you came closer  
To see what lay behind, what was opening up inside-  
Even if you should have been running any other direction instead-  
Now that is a true friend, as true as you may ever find,  
Anywhere you ever go.

Patti Masterman

## Only You Can Save Yourself

She's imprisoned your soul: never doubt it,  
And all you can think now, is about it:  
By neglecting the most basic need of body  
While she's high above it, so haughty;  
Has left you vulnerable to anything; anyone  
And you feel no joy at the setting sun  
Nor the rising sun; you live in deep shade,  
She's clipped your wings short, without a blade.  
Whatever her reasons might have been,  
She's reduced your precious gift, to a sin;  
Maybe none will ever call her 'whore'  
But she's hobbled your soul forever more.  
You need to escape the marriage from hell,  
Because for you, it's a bottomless well,  
You're just another household pet,  
Castrated down at the family vet  
So you won't cause trouble or make a mess-  
Where's all that love, she used to profess?

Patti Masterman

# Only Your Grave Is Really Yours

What we have, we hold:  
Car thieves scatter clothes, mail  
to make the stolen more  
their own.

Solomon said, split the child in half;  
Each party gets a wing, a thigh.  
In the real world none lets go willingly.

To have and to hold:  
The dust on the threshold,  
the wind at the eaves.

There's interest on the principal  
until they own the whole house  
the dirt beneath it too.

What we have, we hold onto for dear life  
until we have become just another something-  
an object someone else holds

For as long as they dare,  
or as long as breath lasts,  
while the  
dirt lies insensate.

The world's spinning a thousand miles an hour  
through dimensions no one can own,  
and can't even  
sink a stake into.

Your grave is still yours  
only so long as your bones have the  
weight  
and girth, with which to fill it.

Patti Masterman

# Oooh Baby

Ooh baby  
I'm floating on a cloud  
Ooh baby  
Your heart beats so loud

Take me in your arms  
Whirl me round the room  
Never let this end  
Keep singing my tune

You know that it's you  
I've been waiting for so long  
You know, you know, it's you-  
The only one, can sing my song

The moon wears a smile  
About a mile high  
And we wear only sprinkles  
Of moon light twinkles.

Patti Masterman

# Open Minds

We live a miracle every day;  
Living spawn of a universe born  
Self aware, though made of clay-  
We the cosmic breath, reborn.

Fragile beauty, brains divine  
View the past; telescopic eyes,  
And all the daring mysteries, find:  
In open minds, sweet freedom lies.

Patti Masterman

# Opening Breath

When you are gone, it is like the sails  
Have gone on with the wind, alone;  
Or the gulls have gone ahead of the crest  
Of the wave- or how still music floats over water  
To be heard by the unintended, miles away.

There remains a fullness of emptied capacity,  
A brightness seen even in partings dark,  
Anticipation of more days, interspersed with night.

How small things can blossom to become greater ones,  
Though it seemed only a day and a night,  
But might have enclosed lifetimes  
In the seeming ordinariness,  
Of every opening breath.

Patti Masterman

# Opus Dei

Famished beaks for clearer water cry,  
Opening in mute agonies to sky;  
The silent plea's yet harder to ignore:  
Knowing how much weakness, we abhor.

The seeking hand is easiest to dislodge,  
Upon our sleeve; how artfully we dodge  
The upheld hat or can, of human woe:  
In shamed disgrace, we know they're on the dole.

And if it were us; our loved ones on the street,  
And someone their burgeoning need should meet,  
Would not our tears of joy exceed our pain:  
Turn back around, and face your soul again.

Patti Masterman

# Ordering The Nomenclatures Of Existence

It's always their names we fall for first,  
The syllables slide convincingly enough off our slick tongues;  
So sure that 'Paul' or 'John' or 'Tom' must hold the hidden key  
To all the universe of unbidden, waiting happiness.

But how could we ever suppose to unlock ourselves with another's name-  
Bestowed by heaven's grace or earth's folly, by persons unknown,  
(Whose names could no longer matter now, if they ever did) -  
A consonant combination to reveal our heretofore undisclosed astrology,

A natal history, of well-lettered copulations; a square dance  
Between archaic tongues and modern metered intonations,  
Enclosing entire generations of scrolling hand-me-down names,  
Something almost like a secret society, if only we could decode it.

Some wish-fulfillment must have been at work behind it all;  
If I longed for a 'Joe' one soon appeared, or if a John was required,  
The wait was never very long. Too late, I discerned- though the names  
Changed often as I required it- the organisms were all alike, almost to a fault.

Something in my program must have been the matter,  
Though I could never have admitted this to myself; at the basic core  
Every individual, whatever the title they carried, was no worse-  
But certainly no better- than any other; and so I sadly gave up my religion of  
name.

Patti Masterman

# Ordinary Nightmares

Ordinary nightmares  
That hardly bear repeating:  
Like wolves, in sheepish clothing;  
You can scarcely hear the bleating.  
And hands that rise from graves,  
Grab your ankle, as you're leaving;  
Your staring eyes can't fathom  
How well they could deceive you.

The dreaming world's not ordered  
Like the library of mind;  
Where, recall but the emotion,  
Or the time frame, of the line  
And the book pops up like magic,  
Small trouble there, to find.  
But subconscious minds an ocean  
No one's figured how to mine.

Ordinary nightmares  
Can't make me lose my breath;  
They can frighten me with illness,  
They can frighten me with death;  
They can show unearthly triage,  
With no hope left there, to stay:  
But the nightmare's just beginning  
The day you go away.

Patti Masterman

# Orphans Of Some Eternal Night

When lightning lights up the sky,

All the babes in the bone-yard cry;

They've seen their mothers still on earth

And wonder why they were given birth.

When lightning strikes the very trees,

It shakes and rattles the bones of these

Orphans of some eternal night,

Hid from loving arms- and light.

When lightning rushes to the ground,

And deep inside their graves, goes down,

It starts their wan hearts; one more beat-

But still can't wake them from their sleep.

Patti Masterman

# Other Kingdoms

Wandering lost through all the days  
Wondering where the summer went  
Now the dead can't hear their praise  
And faded flowers hold no scent.

Wishing stars so far away  
You cannot stretch enough to touch  
Nothing comes and nothing stays  
When you hold on to them too much.

With magic childhood's kingdom brings  
The children play in nightly dream  
Asleep, they rule the same as kings  
And nothings real as it might seem.

Patti Masterman

## Other Worlds Of Nether-Seas

Strangely bright above the earth,  
From what lost country do they flee?  
Stars and moonglow don't unveil them,  
There's no fogging where they breathe.

Strangely still above the graveyard,  
Where the white moon-shadows flit;  
Perhaps they're just a moment's fancy,  
By the light and darkness knit.

Strangely quiet, although the wind moans  
Strange, unmoving shapes they be-  
Lost men seeking now ruined roads home  
In other worlds of nether-seas.

Patti Masterman

# Other's Time Is Not Your Time

Other's time is not your time to fill;  
Spare hours not privy, to your will,  
For time is money, and money's power  
But you are just a time-sink flower.

If they want to drown to death their mind,  
Be sure, they'll pick their place and time,  
To drown upon own thought and word-  
Why should they drown on yours; absurd.

Go drown yourself, and then you'll see  
How much better life can be.

Patti Masterman

# Our Blood Hisses

our blood hisses  
on time's radiator;  
those missed kisses  
thought we'd find later.

cracks in the graveyard  
we fall through;  
life like a wildcard-  
who really knew?

living's a crisis  
that none survives;  
but love suffices  
if you stay alive.

Patti Masterman

# Our Brains Are An Atlas Of The Ways Of The World

People want you to take them on a journey  
With your words, with letters; a painting  
For they are every day engaged in a battle  
With the drudgery of existing,  
And all they want to do is forget it for a little while.

There is a rumored even bigger forgetting,  
But they are unsure if it is a real journey  
Because no one has ever returned with any tales.

The moon also wants the sun to show it around  
The solar system; the sun itself  
Wants the galaxy to twirl it outward like a tether-ball.  
The earth skates neatly around the sun,  
But the ocean takes only small piggyback rides  
Whenever the moon steps in closer, to dance.

A child tracks the sun across the heavens  
Seeing it replaced every night by constellations,  
And imagines all is turning  
In a perfectly tight circle, around him.

But the traveler sees how the mountain  
Has surreptitiously replaced the ocean bed,  
And how huge boulders are transformed to gravel and rust,  
And he supposes then that his steps will too  
In time, be eradicated from every surface.

But he has to keep on journeying into the past,  
He has to create connections with a future  
Because each generation must prove to itself again  
That the universe notices our presence and our doings,  
And has a reason for placing us here as observers.

We are all the travelers of the journey  
Within the larger journey called reality,  
And perhaps reality can only remember  
It's most minute movements, through us:  
If we are the true recorders of whatever we pass by,

Our brains must be the atlas, of all the ways of the world.

Patti Masterman

# Our Shadows Are Whispering Secrets

Our shadows are whispering secrets to each other  
They refuse to go to sleep, and stay up all hours  
Whispering and laughing like children in the dark

When I lie down, my shadow slips away to find you,  
To play in ambient star-fields, while I sleep;  
A shade, it comes to you in thinly disguised dreams

Where it links arms with your languorous shadow  
And looks long at your sleeping form all night;  
Recipient of tireless embraces in the shadowed world

My shadow returns filled with sweet-earth kisses  
Waiting for another night of moonlight to bridge  
Sun's bright ray to evening's star-bright pillage.

Patti Masterman

# Our Soul Dances Through Life

Our soul dances through life,  
We catch our own irresistible rhythms,  
It takes us like the wind, never in a straight line,  
Never completely still.

Like a kite dances  
Our dances flow down times backbone,  
Meander like stars through distant universes;  
Your soul and mine are the fragrant breezes

That blow through the mind of god just once,  
Catching his eye like a beautiful pebble skips  
Along the ripples of a moving stream,

Something he thought he lost ages ago-  
And has been searching for, ever since:  
A dream that had gone forgotten.

Patti Masterman

# Our Words Are Bricks In A Wall We Never Meant

Our words are bricks in a wall we never meant;  
Could not foresee its height, could not foresee how thick  
And durable, such a wall would be-  
As it rose, between you and me.

Our words are bricks we have built with time,  
The minutes and seconds in a smelters mine,  
Forging weapons from sturdy letters  
That later on, we will wear as fetters.

Patti Masterman

# Our Words Sound Like Trinkets

Our words sound just like trinkets to us,  
Even if not worthwhile to save,  
Thoughts crystallized by flowing days  
Are precious treasure just the same.

Though they never inhabit actual books  
And no one proclaims their virtue;  
Even if they don't out-live ourselves,  
When life sets our last curfew.

Patti Masterman

# Out Of Emptiness

Everything comes out of emptiness  
Arriving early, arriving late  
Empty coffers empty eyes  
Empty smiles and empty cries

Things want to fill themselves with you  
Things you say, things you do  
Thoughts you think nobody knows  
As all upon your face, they grow

In struggling sun, the dying things  
Arriving empty, too late to run  
Sterile thoughts, too shallow to live  
In lives to shallowness, we give

Patti Masterman

# Out Of Nothing Came The All

Out of nothing, came the all,  
More potent than just fiery ball  
Gave birth to water, air and dust;  
For in matter dwells deepest lust:  
One day the universe itself woke up,  
And discovered then that it was us.

We orbit now round matter's throne;  
In ages past, like stars we shone,  
Our bodies culled from myriad ports  
To bear themselves, till Earth aborts:  
Inside us, many mansions found,  
So that from matter, we're unbound.

Patti Masterman

# Out Of Sequence

It must have sucked to be a Pompeian psychic  
Back in Vesuvius youthful, fiery days; or in Herculaneum:  
Flashes of some blackened, ash-filled Armageddon  
Always intruding, in even the happiest of circumstance.  
Curious, frozen statues, in tortured stances  
Always blinking on and off in the background,  
Like some hellish, neon warning.  
Trying to do a reading for the client,  
While tormented by a vision of their hollowed, lifeless shell  
Angled towards the horizon, propped on their elbows, even in death.  
The whole place; a ghost of it's own past, and future sterility:  
The prophets should have been  
On the first bus or donkey out.  
Instead they are piled up down there with the bodies  
At the harbor's edge; all their unspoken predictions  
Having made perfect sense, at the end.  
Who knew the mountain was a hungry predator  
That would stop at nothing, to engulf their  
Charming, sophisticated world,  
Thus saving it for the future generations:  
A snapshot incredulously out of sequential times domain.

Patti Masterman

# Out Of The Everything

Out of the everything, god made a world,  
Commanded the void, called out one word:  
Four mighty forces, together as one,  
From out of its potency, dimensions uncurled.

Dials were set to a specific gravity,  
One second this side oblivion; calamity.  
Matter to matter, upon its own venue  
Formed alliances put life on the menu.

Nobody knows if chance was the chain  
Toppled the reactions, to start the refrain;  
Nobody knows, could it happen again-  
Could a non-sentient universe remember when..?

Patti Masterman

# Outhouse Haiku

Walking to outhouse  
Flies foam like unwashed summer:  
Noise everywhere

The long walk is done  
Now sit in consternation-  
There is no paper

The communal seat  
Has an impersonal feel-  
Think I have splinters

A furious wasp  
Has homed in on my presence-  
Hunker down to hide

Walking home again  
Feels much more satisfying  
Than the trip before

Open outhouse door;  
A black widow has made home-  
Potty closed today

The mice leave droppings  
As if they know what this place  
Is to be used for.

There are no roses  
To be smelled opening door-  
Imagining helps

Good ole days over;  
The outhouse now boarded up:  
Nature's habitat

Patti Masterman

# Outpost

No train ever stops here anymore  
This station is empty,  
The horizon, featureless:  
This is the dead end of the line,  
Nothing still here is living.  
Blankness has claimed all our heartbeats,  
Antagonism shut down our pulse.  
Every emotion coming too near has been commandeered,  
Wrung dry of warmth, moisture, expectation;  
The causeway is littered  
With faded letters and windblown ash.  
Even the night here trips over its own feet  
Trying to escape from its own darkness,  
As if there were someplace to be going-  
Because no hope will ever travel this far again.

Patti Masterman

# Outside My Window

Outside my window,  
There's a real road,  
With cars and people,  
Going to and fro.

Animals and dogs,  
And birds; all day-  
But only the birds  
Have much to say.

Patti Masterman

# Over And Over

Over and over we say again  
How short life is; we must remind ourselves  
Not to waste a moment, and yet waste many;  
Not to discount love, yet we lose it all too often.

We want to sample every candy, every liquor,  
For fear when this life ends, we will have lived too simply.  
We mistake diversity for fullness and completeness;  
Complacency for contentment- and we take things for granted.

What don't we take for granted, given enough time, distance..  
Instead of removing distance, we increase it unwittingly,  
Until we are strangers to ourselves and everyone else.  
Then we end up wondering what is wrong with them,  
And why we have been misunderstood again?

Patti Masterman

# Over There

So the scientists touted the breakthrough, that death had at last been breached; that final deadline crossed forever, and now we could communicate with anyone who had passed over. The sky was the limit; dead geniuses could now be quizzed about the worlds problems, which didn't even exist at the time they had lived. It was the biggest news story in the entire history of mankind.

Everyone wondered just how different things would be, Over There.

An interview was arranged with a newly deceased woman, wife of one of the scientists, so he was picked to lead with the questions.

Lists of questions were submitted and a lottery drawn, so everyone had a fair chance of having their questions answered.

At the selected time, the television and reporting crews assembled, the bright lights were set up, and the clock began its countdown, as everyone held their breath. It seemed impossible, but here it was about to happen..

At exactly 2 p.m, the scientist cleared his throat and began to read from his list of questions, beginning by addressing the antecedent by name.

'Dearest Wilma, you have been selected as the first communicant from the other side, so whenever you are ready, please begin by telling us your name, date of death, and whatever you can remember about the dying process- utilizing whatever apparatus you the dead have, with which to remember earthly things-' when suddenly, unexpectedly, he was interrupted by vile cursing. It rang out loud and clear on the translating equipment, which had the ability to take seemingly formless signals from the ether and translate them into language, when an appropriate energy field had been detected.

'John Peterson, you blankety-blank-blank-blank, is that you? It's too cold here- and- and- it's dark too; it's just like you to allow me to come all the way here, wherever I've got to, into infernal darkness, while you- you enjoy all the perks of home.. I've got half a mind to scalp you alive, I do. I don't give a crap about your danged old science experiments, I already told you about a million times- Oh!

I knew I should have listed to Mother, all those years ago..you better get me back home, and I mean RIGHT NOW, if you want to talk to me, Mister Chatty man, big shot scientist..'

The airwaves went dead then, and the experiment was sadly abandoned. It seemed, we should have known all along what to expect, from the Over There..

Patti Masterman

# Oxidative Stress

I used to hide inside the worlds I found in books,  
Pressing them into corners, into the hidden drawers  
Of antique chests, between the covers of Grimoires:  
The poetry of being, the holiness of breath-  
I wanted to hoard it, to save it all for Someday-

Someday, when the other world went missing,  
lost on some highway too far to ever find again,  
or changed so much, it was no longer recognizable.

But once alone in that grainy darkness, those swelling voids,  
the galaxies rotated, there were breathtaking supernovas  
Whenever I wasn't looking; or wars broke out,  
While astounding discoveries were made and went forgotten,  
completely unobserved.

My worlds became sterile, because they were never seen  
by other living eyes,  
And would burst into flame and disappear  
The instant they were opened, and real oxygen got in.

Patti Masterman

# Pacing Out A Soul

The basement cell where Geronimo was sometimes kept  
Had an uneven floor, said to be caused by his constant pacing.  
I too pace the walls inside my mind, for it seems to be holding me  
Though sometimes I can escape it, through imagination.

There are large boulders and remnants of pottery  
Scattered throughout many places, proof of others,  
Whose prisons were diverse times; long ago settlements,  
Of names now forgotten or scarcely mentioned anymore.

The people were always less durable than soil or stone:  
They flowed like liquid from area to area, seeking water, buffalo, prosperity.  
Children were their true riches, and longevity their blessing;  
If you didn't die in childbirth, you might live a long time.

I feel their artifacts all around me, half-buried in clay and sand;  
Many years are like only a moment, to a planet one-sixth the age  
Of the total universe. But the past haunts me, watching as it does,  
From the eyes of all their children, still walking this earth.

Patti Masterman

# Pain You Won'T Own

Pain you won't own,  
Owns you, in the end;  
The dark water comes  
And you forgot how to swim.  
Friends you don't owe  
Try to lift you toward light-  
But the moon stays the solitary  
Sun, of the night.

Debts you won't pay  
Try to sell you, each day;  
Your heart on your face  
Though you'd die, before saying..  
The hooks in your soul  
Keep pulling you under-  
And there's lightning in eyes  
But a strange, silent thunder.

The vault will be silent  
The grass will be still  
When they put you away  
For forever, to seal  
The pain you were dealt,  
And the debts left unpaid;  
They will never be spoken-  
For it's now much too late.

Patti Masterman

# Painting By Sky

the crashing expanse that would sing the ocean's bowels,  
grounds belly to sand, with ever increasing tempests

the shadow of parasols sinks slowly down  
swallowing lenses film what escapes the senses

the body looks well and white against the riptides,  
useless words against timeless ancient rhythms,

while strapped on cameras are the muse that stirs-  
the sky's painting waves, within apertures of coastline..

Patti Masterman

# Painting Of A Drop Of Seawater

I always wanted to be that random style of writer  
Writing about things which have no connection  
In reality but they are connective only by the ingenuity  
Of his genuflection; the circumvention of his  
Circuitous routing, his plaintive perturbing petulance  
Which insists on stacking things of different orders  
Flying birds together of different species  
If I could write something of the ticking of clocks  
Not as though the ticking were of premeditated duration  
Embedded in metal tracks around perimeters  
Of prevaricated die-cast hours; but as though the ticking  
Were only a random fixture of a theoretical day  
In which random clocks ticking played a minor role  
During the still life of which a poet happened along  
And copied it all down dutifully, not caring if  
Ticking clocks were related to pitchers of Forsythia  
Or falling off of cliffs into the Aegean;  
The only task of the poet to capture it all  
And let the reader sort it out later  
In the random tracks of his circuitous brain:  
Whether the pitcher was full of sea  
Or the sea was stealing into the pitcher  
One blue, serendipitous dropp at a time  
And where no clocks were keeping time.

Patti Masterman

# Paisley World

We can live in a paisley world,  
Of colors, all mixed up in swirls.  
We can hide in the subterfuge,  
Blend in with the curling hues.

For some reverse and some contain  
Patterns, to confound the brain.  
Some double back, the very same way,  
And some are mute, and some delayed.

We won't talk so they won't hear  
Words between us, that make clear  
A paisley world is best for us;  
But plaid works just as well, I trust.

Patti Masterman

# Pale Ghost

The sun comes out from behind the clouds,  
And I become tangent for seconds; mere minutes,  
As the arc of rays reaches deeper inside,  
Excavating myself, from me:  
I tread old memories, on borrowed time;  
Friends and loved ones, all borne away:  
Am I but the pale ghost, of yesterday?

Patti Masterman

# Pale Rainbow

I like how the poets voice  
Becomes immortal, once past the beyond  
The mortal veil separating the two worlds  
Will be cleaved, with none left  
To check the syllables; or charge a fee  
For once uttered loveliness  
A century of moldering in the ground  
And the words will break free  
They'll sing again, and death will have no part in it  
Now they're owned by all, on behalf of all  
None can squelch or sequester them  
Filtered through the earth, the rain  
Like scattered beams of palest rainbow  
Everlasting echoes breach the portal  
Nothing can out last the truth  
Whose beauty can't be vanquished by time  
The world itself wants to hear the old songs now.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - All Seeing Eye That Misses Nothing

all seeing eye that misses nothing  
and triangle; it's enclosing mystery  
of deadly snake that enters then  
night covering the womb of darkness,  
awakening more than eye  
and gold like cages enclosing angels  
entrance guarding my temple of sleep  
soul knows all in secret:  
as soul breaks all locks  
and locks all breaks soul,  
as secret in all knows soul  
sleep of temple, my guarding entrance,  
angels enclosing cages like gold  
and eye than more awakening,  
darkness of womb the covering night  
then enters that snake, deadly  
of mystery, enclosing it's triangle;  
and nothing misses that eye seeing all.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - All Seemed One Of Thought

all seemed one of thought, as I heard that sky,  
but believed naught, that for you it sighed;  
overturned it's eyes, and then weeping blue  
now heard long and most bitter cries above  
heard distinctly; for that sky longed too  
while we pressed together, arms all locked;  
we trembled, trembled; love grown so shackled,  
as roots dislodging, forever one were welded  
lips almost missing, as mingled tears, kissing  
and caring not for words, of banished clocks  
fumbling all our latches; like once broken locks  
angel with me: be always now precious  
heart grows quieter; the soul more aware  
that for this time lent; beggars as we fare  
sell that soul; to even world undone  
world even, to soul that sell fare  
we as beggars lent time this for that; aware  
more soul, the quieter grows heart  
precious now always, be me with Angel, locks  
broken once like latches our all fumbling clocks  
banished of words for not caring, and kissing;  
tears mingled, as missing almost lips,  
welded were one, forever dislodging roots as shackled  
so grown love trembled, trembled we locked  
all arms together pressed we, while too  
longed sky that for distinctly heard above cries  
bitter most and long heard now; blue  
weeping then and eyes it's overturned sighed  
it you for that naught believed but sky  
that heard I, as thought of one seemed all

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Boy Prostrate Of Snows In Winter Now

boy prostrate of snows in winter now  
blue beneath hard ice pond that field  
red hapless thing submerged next door  
hint of red showed that place  
I stumbled through cruel bracken  
branches catching my flowing coat sleeves  
forest denying the savior  
water drank once for his cold embalming  
eyes open wide too stares that sky down  
i weep to seeing living child become just trapped fish  
fish trapped just become child living seeing to weep I  
down sky that stares too wide open eyes  
embalming cold his for once drank water  
savior the denying forest  
sleeves coat flowing my catching branches  
bracken cruel through stumbled I  
place that showed red of hint  
door next submerged thing hapless red  
field that pond ice hard beneath blue  
now winter in snows of prostrate boy

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Cliffs Overhanging Death

Cliffs overhanging death,  
the ever lonely  
only climb, to touch only  
the face of god;  
the lightning lights burning trees,  
our trembling fingers  
of hope in fears, faith revealed and flesh  
forsaken the trail that we walked  
before we said goodbye together,  
final summit to plunge  
will death of eyes open doors  
elusive while alive?  
soul caught my heart of prayer  
my prayer of heart  
my caught soul, alive  
while elusive doors open eyes of death  
will plunge to summit final, together  
goodbye said we before walked we  
that trail: the forsaken flesh,  
and revealed faith,  
fears in hope, of fingers trembling,  
our trees burning lights,  
lightning the god of face,  
the only touch;  
to climb, only lonely  
ever, the death overhanging cliffs.

(written to Dead Can Dance - The Host of Seraphim)

Patti Masterman

## Palindrome - Do We Waltz In Soul's Loving

Do we waltz in soul's loving  
Because only dancing, my patterned heart  
In love, dizzy counterpoint  
Feet flying past strangers envious eyes,  
Of feeling your heart beating close by;  
I disappear then, starburst swirls of kaleidoscope  
Inside I flame, bright rose dropping petals  
Following, following as you lead;  
Lead you as following, following,  
Petals dropping, rose bright flame I inside  
Kaleidoscope of swirls starburst, then disappear  
I by close beating heart, your feeling  
Of eyes envious strangers, past flying feet  
Counterpoint dizzy love in heart  
Patterned my dancing, only because  
Loving soul's in waltz we do.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Dreams In Which They Come Again

dreams in which  
they come again  
feel that love of them  
living presence that never left  
guarding my days their gift  
farther than dreams  
as still they cleft  
watching my step  
the clouds their sea  
their souls so free  
never bereft  
never free so  
souls their sea  
their clouds the step  
my watching cleft  
they still as dreams  
than farther gift  
their days my guarding left  
never that presence living  
them of love that feel again  
come they  
which in dreams

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Eyes Those That Say To Soul

eyes those, that say to soul:  
then love me, for love I am that  
for was given unto you  
for days beneath sun, there comes price  
the heavenly days of sun, is earth of delight  
come love me for days, hours beneath  
sky storied, around us bent:  
I was made for love, and loving of eyes  
my soul clothed by starred skies;  
starred by clothed soul,  
my eyes of loving, and love; for made was I;  
bent us around, storied sky  
beneath hours, days for me; love come  
delight of earth, is sun of days heavenly  
the price comes there; sun beneath days  
for you unto given,  
was for that, am I love;  
for me, love then soul,  
to say that those eyes..

(written to Dead Can Dance - Yulunga)

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Gamma Ray Burn

there are holes  
near my soul;  
you put your laser on beam,  
straight through my seams;  
ripping my pain, you extol,  
though you're earth, moribund  
your sights are on sky,  
you wanted to fly  
too close to sun:  
your eyes I discern,  
don't turn aside,  
from hole gaping wide  
your gamma ray-  
burn, ray  
gamma your wide  
gaping hole from aside  
turn; don't discern I  
eyes your sun  
to close too fly to  
wanted you sky on  
are sights  
your moribund earth  
you're, though  
extol you pain; my ripping seams  
my through, straight beam  
on laser  
your put you soul  
my near  
holes are there

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Gardens Flower In Her Blooming Breath

gardens flower in her blooming breath  
my faces trellis there, linger vines  
faint rumors; fueled histories of death  
stilled hearts cut from holy valentines  
afternoons of stillness belie her quickened feet  
image of her haunting silhouette  
before that vision is complete  
rays of sun disclosing her artless pirouette  
female of species: a class apart  
reach only once, that soft spectral voice  
finding all her heart's incendiary art  
loving your only choice  
gentled spirit of her fails strength  
whispered my latent downfall's story  
catch too willingly that glory  
hollowed slow, your soul will follow  
will soul your slow hollowed glory  
that willingly too, catch story  
downfall's latent: my whispered strength  
fails her of spirit gentled choice;  
only your loving art,  
incendiary heart's her all finding voice  
spectral soft, that once only reach apart  
class a species of female pirouette artless,  
her disclosing sun of rays  
complete is vision that before  
silhouette haunting her of image  
feet quickened her  
belie stillness of afternoons valentines,  
holy from cut hearts stilled death  
of histories fueled rumors; faint vines  
linger there: trellis faces my breath  
blooming her in flower gardens.

Patti Masterman

## Palindrome - Longed She For Real Presence

Longed she for real presence,  
Songs; stillborn fantasies,  
Captured fall of day reveries  
Plaintive notes of piano started melody  
Rapture her soul, of diffident lovers;  
Fires her ravishing burnt, wholly  
And pain clasped like lover,  
Dying in long pitiful deaths  
Only end of hope to reach-  
Prayers half mumbled in her entreat  
Sigh; as trembling ghost is freed;  
Freed is ghost, trembling as sigh-  
Entreat her in mumbled half prayers,  
Reach to hope of end only;  
Deaths pitiful, long in dying  
Lover like clasped pain and  
Wholly burnt ravishing her fires  
Lovers diffident of soul, her rapture  
Melody started piano, of notes plaintive  
Reveries day of fall captured;  
Fantasies, stillborn songs-  
Presence real for she longed.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Nothing Comes And Nothing Stays

Nothing comes and nothing stays,  
When I weigh those forlorn days  
Nothing wakes my point of view;  
Nothing old and nothing new.

Nothing comes around and stays;  
Nothing which, though I might pray  
Stays here long enough, to touch  
Nothing; as if mattered much.

Nothing: the clothes I wear  
Nothing: the pain I bare:  
Ill winds, when nothing blows;  
Nothing comes and nothing goes.

Goes nothing and comes nothing;  
Blows nothing when winds, ill;  
Bare I pain, the nothing  
Wear I clothes, the nothing.

Much mattered; if as nothing  
Touch to enough, long here stays  
Pray might I, though which nothing  
Stays; and around comes nothing.

New nothing and old nothing;  
View of point my wakes, nothing,  
Days forlorn, those weigh I when:  
Stays nothing and comes nothing.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Once I Knew That

Once I knew that  
Never fully comprehended  
Things of this world;  
Worse, always underestimated  
It's purposes, the trajectory of despair-  
Might some things not  
Be done differently,  
And maybe physics or  
laws of gravity  
Would be less dependable,  
But child needn't be sacrificed  
Just so adult be birthed,  
And you would not have to destroy love;  
Determining what love was worth keeping.  
Keeping worth was love  
What determining love destroy  
To have not, would you  
And birthed be adult  
So just sacrificed  
Be needn't child  
But dependable less be  
Would gravity of laws or physics maybe  
And differently done  
Be not things, some might despair  
Of trajectory, the purposes it's underestimated always:  
Worse world this, of things comprehended fully, never-  
That knew I once.

Patti Masterman

# Palindrome - Tortured Soul Trapped

tortured soul trapped, into tree of roots;  
great sighs, of end of breathing  
his pain unfolding; the vista of death coming  
above the rocks, the spent spirit weeping,  
the love ones he can't console-  
death in defeat, they feared  
though he lives again there; holy tears  
wept they, while remembering his passion  
of passion, his remembering while they wept  
tears holy there, again lives he;  
though feared they defeat, in death  
console can't he, one's love-  
the weeping spirit spent; the rocks  
the above coming death, of vista the unfolding pain  
his breathing of end; of sighs great  
roots of tree, into trapped soul tortured

(written to Dead Can Dance, the Host of Seraphim)

Patti Masterman

# Panspermia

Space was studded deep with stars,  
Before temporal time was born,  
As as the dinosaurs passed by,  
We were the glint, some far God's eye.

The Earth was fertile nursery  
Of creatures born, and yet-to-be;  
Panspermia our hatchery:  
Space seeded, with the likes of We.

Patti Masterman

# Pant's Seat Flying

Tug it left- straight ahead it goes,  
Tug it right- still stumbling forward;  
Hit the brakes, and yet it goes-  
Pant's seat flying's never boring.

Patti Masterman

# Papyrus Kiss

Papyrus kiss, left by a Pharaoh,  
Once-beating heart, left in an urn;  
Blushing cheek'd parcel of maiden,  
Who once for a mighty ruler, burned.

Idolaters breaking in graves,  
Trying to take things nobody owns-  
The lovers forgotten; all of their quarrels-  
All their caresses, to white bone turned.

Patti Masterman

# Parable

He sucketh most  
Who writeth most  
If he not writeth well  
And others love  
To point it out  
This is the writers hell.

He sucketh most  
Who hopeth most  
Some magic to occur  
But snide remarks  
And low point votes  
Will all his hopes defer.

He sucketh most  
Who loseth most  
His humor and his wit  
With those intact  
He should survive  
Most any low aimed hit.

Patti Masterman

# Paradox

Now come softly  
(Close the door)  
In shadows we meet;  
We recite our verses  
The god in me  
To the god in you.  
How god loves himself  
Is infinite in technique  
Vast in magnitude  
Resplendently  
Equal to all things  
And identical to none,  
Parting from himself,  
But never departing  
Paradox is the rule  
In the school of matter  
Which god created  
And ever returns to.

Patti Masterman

# Pariah

Be yourself, but invisibly;  
Then nobody's down on you-  
It may be hard, but they can't see  
What it's like, just being you.

If my heart were not opaque,  
You would see there's scars, all through,  
And my presence not forsake  
To treat me like the way you do.

I'm the book that goes unread;  
Day by day, nobody reads-  
But deep in me there is a thread  
Of something that would do great deeds.

Though I'm a forgotten stream,  
Or a desert parched and dry,  
I'm still human, it would seem-  
That only now in secret cry.

So live your life, throughout each day  
And someday I won't be around:  
I tried to stay out of the way,  
And left these words; my only sound.

(July 13 2011)

Patti Masterman

# Particular Universe

How does one begin to write a poem?  
First one condenses an entire life down into just one line-  
Clouds, dandelions, adoration, revenge; don't hold anything back.  
The peaceful smile of death and the rancorous  
Death of joy. The bubbles of happiness floating upward  
The downward stinging tears of defeat.  
The best, the worst, the last, the first:  
Embellish that line from your life's story with  
All the rarest moments of worship and awe you've ever known,  
And keep writing it over and over again, saying it  
Millions of different ways till it is firmly ensconced in your soul.  
Don't take any magic for granted; it's too rare in this world.  
Dreams and visions and nothing sugar coated:  
The truth alone rules this kingdom.  
Nobody reading this deserves the lie.  
Don't forget the startling epiphanies  
Seeping out of the souls troubles and careless wounds.  
Sometimes you squeeze out every dropp and still  
The pickings are scarce; other times things bound and leap out-  
Wild, prolific hares, carelessly raking each other in their haste.  
Always capitalize on the moments you thought might be your last-  
Allow the teardrops and sweat to mix freely; swirl your pen in it  
And apply to all the reopened ulcers and healed over scars.  
Just before you think it is enough, just when the tale  
Begins to half conclude, stop there and allow your audience  
Imaginations machinery to supply the last vivid details:  
Leave some openings; don't sew it up too tight.  
Most important of all; read all the poets now alive  
Still with the breath of life in them.  
They can show you the way.  
And never sell yourself too cheaply.  
Write only from the particular universe hidden inside;  
Staying true to that one.

Patti Masterman

# Party In The Armoire

The invitation arrived today,  
There's a party in the old armoire;  
They'll spread out their best array,  
Long as we arrive by four.

The invitation in black ink said  
There'd be bread and cheese tidbits,  
And Clark would read his latest poems;  
His poetry always gives us fits.

Be there or be square, is the gist  
Of the parties given by the Hortenses;  
That's where Clara Belle gave my first kiss,  
And the morning afters are full of winces.

When we arrive, they'll take our stuff,  
Arrange it neatly upon the stairs;  
And the music's always just loud enough,  
And everyone there plain likes to stare.

After eating the patio's opened;  
Drinks are plenty and on the house,  
Lots of teasing, joking and chasing;  
Don't get mad or you're a louse.

We wind up napping on the couches,  
So we won't turn into morning grouches.  
The Hortense parties are the best kind of vice-  
Invitations only for the nicest mice.

Patti Masterman

## Pas De Deux

Once I tried to rhyme my rhymes in dreamy eyes of two,  
Three-quarter time, I took the time to dance a pas de deux.  
Now my ballets were underscored by men so well disguised  
That I could watch my cue-to-cue's reflected by their lies.

Patti Masterman

# Pass Away

Pass away, pass away, pass away  
Judgment; for who am I to judge another-  
Who've killed in my heart, many a time-  
Father, mother, sister, brother?

Pass away, pass away, pass away  
Love; love is for daisies, rained on by god-  
Not for dysfunctional freaks like me-  
Who thought love could save me, but it can't be.

Pass away, pass away, pass away  
Breath; breathing's for those lived through many tests-  
I've run out of courage, run out of rope-  
Worst of all, I'm all out of hope.

Patti Masterman

# Paths Bright And Blue

I construct universes  
Behind your eyes;  
Towering worlds,  
Above which you rise.

I follow you into  
The minutest cells-  
And you become heavens,  
And you conquer hells

For you are the passage  
I'm longing to travel,  
That all of my visions  
And dreams not unravel.

And you'll wake in me,  
And I'll sleep in you:  
We'll voyage the stars  
On paths bright and blue.

(This poem inspired one by Stefanie Fontker, called Super Nova,  
an excellent piece by a super new writer)

Patti Masterman

# Pathway Of Desire

My pathway of desire  
Seeks the way of least resistance;  
Come warm me at your fires  
And answer my insistence.

The stars dropp flaming names,  
Which fall upon the skies;  
Their embers burning up  
Until the evening dies.

An angel flew too close,  
Once upon a sun;  
And all his godly aims  
And actions came undone.

He waits for darkness now,  
Morning Star's his name:  
For the fire in his two eyes  
Put the burning sun to shame.

Patti Masterman

# People Always Talking

People always talking, voices never quiet,  
Talking over beauty, messing with delight,  
Gossiping their lives away, caught up in the lies-  
People talking years and years, until they finally die.

People always fighting, people never still,  
People never happy; going at it with a will.  
Never satisfaction, or noting what they feel,  
Taking what is not theirs, compunctionless to steal.

People in the graveyards, finally at rest,  
Never realizing, that it was for the best;  
People with no destiny, done with all their tests-  
People with their last breath, that never could confess.

Patti Masterman

# People Don'T Know Their Power

People don't know their power-  
They think they are just sod;  
Though some think you, a nightingale-  
And some think you- a god.

And some would worship at your feet,  
As long as they were able-  
And some would die long deaths, instead-  
Of making you, a fable.

Patti Masterman

# People Don'T Really Exist

People don't really exist-  
Oh sure, they have names, supposed addresses,  
Jobs and family members; present and ex-lovers,  
But they are really just wigheads,  
Stranded in dark beauty shops;  
Mannequins frozen in empty storefronts.

None of them are real, warm and present  
If you get too close too soon,  
They disappear altogether,  
And if you remain distant for too long,  
They'll evaporate;  
If you do anything in between those two,  
Discernible by any fraction line,  
They will simply dematerialize  
Before your unsuspecting eyes.

People are a fiction  
That's waiting to write itself  
Like a temporary tattoo  
All too briefly across your life;  
You are only the train station  
Where they're waiting now,  
To catch the next train, that comes through,  
And I think I hear the train whistle  
Right now.

life is one of the worst oxymorons I've ever met up with)

Patti Masterman

# People Who Fear

People who fear losing, all their days  
Never hear the words that secrets say;  
Never notice barely hidden tears-  
Only the shouting, of their own fears.

People who fear losing seldom get  
A chance to remember, or forget-  
Their minds always on more pressing things-  
That they never saw the wind, nor heard it sing.

Patti Masterman

# Perchance To Dream

In dreams we go  
To places of the mind  
Where we have never been  
What do we hope to find?

Maps do not exist  
We cannot go there twice  
On that distinctive stage  
One time alone, suffice

And yet at times we go  
If brain ordains we must  
Again, to that lost place  
And in our dreams we trust

That no harm may befall  
Yet we'll escape at last  
If trouble should come knocking  
From future days or past

Reason does not rule  
The nightly orbits dance  
The luck that dreamers draw  
Is always left to chance.

Patti Masterman

# Perhaps Heaven

We imagine that death leaves no victors,  
That all the spoils stay with the kill;  
The voices hollowed out, by the echoes,  
The blood running in hapless spills.

We imagine grief's the only answer,  
To one consigned living, sans others,  
We imagine the dead go away,  
Leave no spirits, to hover.

Our imaginations leave nothing for death,  
It's a place our minds don't want to know,  
The hellish underworld of tomorrow,  
Is somewhere we'd wish not to go.

But imagine if death had an embrace,  
And imagine, was only the end  
Of the troubles and pains of this body,  
At the end, when there's naught left to spend.

Imagine, as everyone's going,  
To leave that cold vacuum, of being-  
But death goes much deeper than living;  
It's only effects, you are seeing.

In death, imagine the reunions  
Of mother with child; love with love:  
It's the last gift that heaven could give us-  
Perhaps heaven was never above?

Patti Masterman

# Perhaps It Was You

It's not that we have tasks, that I complain-  
But that never-ending doing never wanes.  
It's not that people think the worst sometimes-  
But the awful times, they choose to make their minds.

And how the ones, I would have thought as friends  
Wait till my sad bereavement, that to end;  
Allied themselves with con men, and plain thieves,  
To then imply it's me- the one deceives.

The bosom buddies, who just loved to judge;  
And my recent wounds, unsubtly rubbed-  
How they assumed, they knew my secret mind-  
And then assumed that I'm the one, unkind.

So if you do not see me haunt your door,  
And my voice is silent, your parlors;  
No letter in the mail is yet to come-  
Perhaps was really you, the ties undone?

Patti Masterman

# Perhaps-Heavens

Being a broken vessel, how can I ever mend  
What has once been put aside as unneedful, forgotten-  
A pass chiseled by harsh winds, a bridge crushed by cruel rains;  
I have forgotten every forged implement of knowledge.

Being alone, how can I ever force together  
The two farthest poles of being, the past and future,  
The known and unknown must repel by their certain difference;  
The frequencies of being permit nothing to pass beyond.

When words fail my kind, there is nothing left to hold on to,  
All that is left is vibrating molecules and air currents, clear water  
That leaves no trace afterwards, clouds vanished into dreams,  
Dreams vanquished by bright lights of morning, into perhaps-heavens.

Whatever happens, may you find heaven wherever you come to be.

Patti Masterman

# Perihelion In Parallax

Periscope, my eye;  
Perihelion, when you come near

Tail of comet, spin of suns  
Riddle me your sphinx  
For hours- or aeons.

Strange to endure, this fleshy coat  
But stranger the thoughts, we wear inside...

Patti Masterman

# Persistence Of Melancholy

Somebody dies in the night  
Somebody falls out of favor  
Someone divorces the light  
Someone cries now, and not later

How can we take you as serious  
When the BS just grows and grows  
How can we take you as serious  
It's all squeezing out through my toes

Somebody looks in the mirror  
Sees crows feet; unlovely smiles  
Somebody's feeling quite queer  
Under the weight of new trials

How can we take you as serious  
When the BS just grows and grows  
How can we take you as serious  
It's all squeezing out through my toes

The world just goes on in it's way  
Spinning it's maddening rebukes  
World, I've got nothing left to say  
Your persistence makes me puke

Patti Masterman

# Perspective

Life, when it's clothed in living flesh  
Is fresh and unpredictable  
As the makers dream must have been

Life, once the spark flies  
Is perfect, still and motionless  
As creation, before the first flare gasped

Patti Masterman

# Pesky Little Pissants

Pesky little pissants  
Heading for the picnic  
They're never invited  
But they always show up.

Pesky little pissants  
Let's warm up the campfire  
Funny how, when heated  
Their little heads blow up.

Patti Masterman

# Phantasmagoria

I always feel a presence now,  
Just behind my back:  
And when I whirl around to stare,  
I'd swear it's staring back.

I always feel that someone's there,  
And why they hide, I do not know;  
Or maybe that it's just that they  
Don't have a thing to ever show?

How horrid to be all alone,  
And lurk in someone's house;  
And all your stares and noises  
Can not one creature rouse.

No mirror would show your opposite,  
No shadow graze your tracks;  
And you'd spend every bit of time,  
Behind somebody's back.

If I should die some future day,  
And not go anywhere;  
I hope I will not haunt someone-  
Or they won't know I'm there.

Patti Masterman

# Phantom

A dinosaur keeps stomping through my head,  
Giant rhythmic beats pound in my ears.  
A coral snake hunts me nightly in my bed  
In gloom, he flicks his forked tongue and stares.  
Long white necks are peering around corners,  
Their bodies never even have to bend;  
The necks like flexible tubing find my shadow-  
I wish these nightly nightmares would just end.

Floating voices speaking ambiguous English,  
Convene to hold their meetings in the air.  
I try to sleep but sleep is not forthcoming;  
I wish they wouldn't have their meetings here.  
The worst has got to be the shouting voices,  
That awaken me when I am deep asleep,  
They call my name as if a fire encroaches-  
Where comes this awful crew that I now keep?

Patti Masterman

# Phobia

What kind of operation is required  
to get something published?  
Is it drive through or stay-overnight;  
are there rooms of gowned surgeons,  
with gleaming stainless instruments-

Or smelly drunks, with whiskey breath,  
broken beer bottles and rusting lengths  
of stolen barbed wire;  
tourniquets of old socks-  
there to make the necessary cuts?

It's arcane knowledge no one seems to have;  
are the castrations done at midnight,  
or two p.m. over afternoon tea?  
With stale donuts from the day old bread store,  
or fresh baked from early that morning?

Is there a silencer on the gun,  
only a dirty rag to bite down on?  
I want real morphine, dammit-  
not soothing words to calm me

But mostly I think, I'm afraid to hear their screams-

Patti Masterman

# Phobia

When Grandpa died  
We went to the funeral home  
There was a funeral to plan,  
And a casket to select  
To hold Grandpa's mortal remains.  
We were sorely fragile with shock.

The world was loud with a new reality  
Which we were trying to absorb  
But in the too quiet room of caskets,  
We were reminded again, this was not a dream.  
Even though Grandpa was old,  
He had not been ill; sudden death took him away.

Which as it turns out, must be the best kind of death  
As the funeral director spoke  
About sturdiness of caskets, longevity of containers,  
Problems of moisture, and the impermeability of vaults  
His words became just a murmur, in some far off place  
All I could hear was the roar inside my own brain.

I watched the spider crawling, hiding itself in the cushioned  
Interior of the casket: the chosen casket  
The one Grandpa would be spending his eternity in-  
The very one the spider would probably be inhabiting  
For the rest of it's spider life. I made a quick motion  
Of revulsion, and everyone glanced at me-  
And so I could not dismember a coffin then, to oust a spider.

My nightmare, the spider finding a home upon Grandpa  
Down in the stifling dark, in the unending night of the cemetery vault.  
Perhaps the funeral home deliberately placed a spider  
In the cheapest models, to dissuade grieving mourners-  
'Don't buy the cheap models; they all have spiders'  
From their errant habits of frugality after death.

But that was not a thought that would have occurred,  
To a sixteen year old girl, who was phobic of spiders  
Because I too had been paralyzed by death's venom.

Patti Masterman

# Picture Perfect Mommies

Picture perfect mommies  
It is often said,  
Never can reach motherhood;  
To perfection, they are wed.

Picture perfect mommies  
Never eat too much,  
They count calories faithfully  
So food won't be a crutch.

Picture perfect mommies  
Work out every day;  
No mold on them is growing,  
They're lithesome and so fey.

Picture perfect mommies  
Are sterile as they can be;  
There's not enough fat left there  
To nourish babies, see.

Picture perfect mommies  
Repose in perfect beds  
Along the paths of graveyards,  
For every one is dead.

Patti Masterman

# Place Fresh Cut Flowers

Place fresh cut flowers  
Wherever the rhapsody of morning  
Gets broken through.

Remember your youth in decay-  
Too soon the dream was devoured.

Here between the forever  
Lies the everywhere:  
Worship each embrace as though  
Were already the ghost, of yesterday.

Jan.29 2011

Patti Masterman

# Plain Hearts

The wise ones say there are billions of others  
Dying to change places with the living,  
And there are also many worlds  
Where the chance to live's not given.

There are voices one hears  
With the heart, but never the ears,  
And there are plain hearts given free  
To flames of unending fire,

Changing molten ore to love:  
Resurrection from the funeral pyre.

Patti Masterman

# Plastic Mannequin People

There's an air of stale tobacco;  
But nobody here's been smoking,  
And a feeling of wilted flowers,  
But no one has yet to die.  
And the air moves all on it's own;  
With a trace of smooth monotony,  
Changeless, beneath the sky;  
All our mouths are dry and cottony.

There's words you would not speak,  
Though the bells might be hovering,  
Soundless, for a wedding,  
They're waiting to keep,  
Invitations, sent on the breeze,  
And the guests; fabrications of movement,  
In a church, with an empty steeple:  
My life is moments, such as these

Filled with plastic, mannequin people.

Patti Masterman

# Play Me

Play me  
Stradivarius heart  
Double jointed variations  
Solitudes of depravity  
Notches on a butchers block  
Yellow finches and snapdragons  
Jitterbugging out of reach  
Dragging one foot  
Kamikaze style  
Play me

Patti Masterman

# Playing Pretend With A Friend

I think he is a hero  
Somewhere inside his own mind,  
But hidden from his outward consciousness

Though he might fool himself for a day or a week  
Pretend to go toward the fallen parts-  
Lose control of himself, call out your name  
For a fortnight, but then recollect  
The things, he can never be free of;

Ties he disparages, and yet tediously keeps re-tying  
As though he needed protecting  
From his own tendency, to wander

He will set himself anew, on the straight-and-narrow  
And only flirt with the formal predicaments of danger;  
Being tied struggling on the railroad tracks  
Handcuffed in the water-filled phone booth

An amateur stuntman who has to make of his life  
Whatever dagger's-head excitement he can find,  
But see- he makes his escape again and again;  
He always emerges unscathed, Houdini-like

It's but a game, that he plays with self-  
And at the end, loneliness turns out to be his only friend-  
And it's only you, have become unbelievable.

Patti Masterman

# Playing With Dreams

Playing with dreams  
in the spinning darkness  
where abounds seamless  
and the mind trying to read the shadows

Our circular style of living  
fades out across the distance  
logic warps with the ultimate  
unacknowledged truth  
how much space can contain a single lifetime?

But I can trace your smile  
there in the sunshine  
And find all the contours  
of previously hidden dimensions

Patti Masterman

# Please Don'T

Please don't make me learn algebra  
In a poem; don't force feed me  
Politics, religion lessons-  
Don't lecture about the useless job you have;  
I know people on welfare buy stupid things,  
I know bosses are ignorant, and programs are redundant,  
I know governments are clueless and shortsighted:  
Just- can't you- find one beautiful thing,  
That has never before been said; simple really.  
It's not always necessary to go into the breakdown of society,  
Or stupify us with your moral landscape;  
Just because you can come up with an unsolvable dilemma,  
Doesn't mean it will make the perfect subject matter.  
It's not show and tell, or even kiss and tell.

I don't need to know that you get up every day  
And drive yourself to a boring job.  
Everyone does that; what I want to find out  
Is what you saw today, that was different from yesterday,  
From last month, last year,  
What was unexpected; tremendous; heartbreaking-  
In fact if you can, just leave the driving out of it  
(But remember no cussing at other drivers)  
Now try to describe that unusual thing  
You have never noticed before;  
That you may never come upon again  
And make me burn inside, wanting to see it too.  
If you can make me feel I might die, if I never come across it  
That's even better: then your work as a poet is finished;  
And then you can go do all those things that you do  
Every day- that I don't need to hear about.

Actually, you can write about anything you want to:  
Just don't let it be common..

Patti Masterman

# Please Don'T Leave And Take Those Eyes Away

Please don't leave and take those eyes away-  
Though days are long and hard, I know they must be,  
But I depend on those, their lonely truth I see;  
Please don't leave and take those eyes away.

Please don't leave, I see a brighter day;  
Where all things work together, and I know  
That in time we'll grow together, you and me-  
Please don't leave and take those eyes away.

Patti Masterman

# Please Send Me Not To Words

please send me not to words  
hatched out in tidy flowerpots;  
in vistas, tight confined,  
by gently smiling, petty minds:  
for I would rather have real pain  
remind me I'm alive, again;  
would feel the wolves pretentious breath  
upon my cooling heels, at rest,  
than still life death, of stiff windmills:  
man did not come to rule this age  
by living freed, of fear and rage.

please send me not to find  
micro words of smallish minds,  
who dream of laundry in the breeze;  
of winks and smiles; uncovered sneeze.  
I think I have lived long enough;  
don't need life's bones, all covered up;  
don't guild vultures with tuxedo airs;  
don't cover eyes, to avoid stares.  
let life infuse blood, in the mix;  
don't hide the real, with cheapening tricks,  
for life is best digested, taken rare.

Patti Masterman

# Please Smile When You Read These Words

Please smile, when you read these words  
So nobody will know, that I love you;  
And don't be afraid, for it's only this,  
That I love you, and then please smile,  
As if it were only the daily news.

But not the same smile that you use  
With her; for smiles are more  
Than mere muscular signatures,  
For they enclose a private world;  
So smile, smile; this is meant for you  
And only you;

Smile as if it were only a sweet surprise  
Between us two;  
Please smile again, as you read my words,  
So nobody will know, this love is for you  
(And then afterwards, don't forget  
to smile for her too)

Patti Masterman

# Please Steal These Words

Please steal these words  
Elevate them, with barely disguised coveting  
Caress and claim and court them  
As if they always were your own.

No maestro created them,  
Or orchestrated a symphony of smooth syllables  
To petrify the worlds attention with meaning  
To stab its globular eye, with unusual beauty.

Take as many words as you wish  
From the wishing fountain,  
For there will always be more,  
And leave instead only a sigh, a smile, or a tear  
To tell the world  
That you've been here

Patti Masterman

# Pleasing You

If it pleases you, I'd move the rainbow,  
Change the colors, bring the dawn;  
Make stars brighter, add more hues-  
But only if it pleases you.

If it pleased you, I'd make the ocean  
Sing louder than the Sirens,  
Make mermaids real, in deepening blue-  
But only if I knew that it pleased you.

Pleasing you's the meaning of my days;  
And all the years line up the very same:  
For every day will still stay just as true-  
For evermore, if I keep on pleasing you.

Patti Masterman

# Poem For Pook

Tell the wind the whispers tell  
Of the wish left in the well

Sin of love the sinner sins  
Sin of whispers in the wind

Love the sinner hate the sin  
The poet writes to unburden

Whispers in the wishing well  
That to loving sinners tell..

Patti Masterman

## Poem From A Dream

Some people conquer through fear  
Some overcome through greed  
Perhaps in my burning desire  
I'll come back as a seed.

Patti Masterman

## Poemhunter Antics

Posting here is not a beach,  
We would beg or barter;  
And God is very hard to reach,  
But Poemhunter's harder.

Logging in's a thankless job,  
For as soon as you have clicked,  
Another form pops right away  
And wants you to suck it's-

Patti Masterman

# Poems For Sale

I have poems to sell;  
Words tied up in pretty parcels with string  
Bundles of clingy sentiments  
Love eternal and grief unrequited-  
Two for one on weekdays.  
And as I shrink, the poems grow fat,  
At the breast:  
They leave in droves  
Out the door with no goodbye  
Off to seek their fortune-  
I've done my part  
In truth, I've no regrets  
I hope that a few of them  
Will go somewhere wonderful;  
Maybe send a postcard:  
Having a great time  
Wish you were here.  
But time and space are my enemies  
Soon I'll become  
Just another shadow  
On the landscape  
A greener spot of grass  
A deserted inn  
A dusty road  
Where no one will ever go  
Except at the urgings of  
Insatiable curiosity.  
And maybe the old words will recall  
Life is somewhat of a disappointment  
But it is still worthwhile  
For as long as you have it.

Patti Masterman

## Poetic Gifts

If you can string words together like Faust  
And the meaning not completely soused  
By golly, by gee, you've got a career:  
Leaving comments on poems of verbal seers

The Illiterati- you're just a stepping stone-  
And their quaint skill, t'will hone  
For if you will write a comment, it's proving  
That their poetry must be quite moving

Beyond shadow of a clout  
That it's hidden by a doubt  
Though their writing is remedial  
And their neediness torpedial

They need your comments, poet  
Beneath their words, will show't:  
Their cunning way, with English prose  
And verbal drainage, no bars holed

No matter if it makes no sense  
And please try not to make a wince  
On their bared turquoise intuition  
Of myopic fulminating frisson

And please leave a comment quite sincere;  
Thereby, their own words made clear  
That is your end in life because  
You're just the poetic Santa Claus.

Patti Masterman

# Poetics As Religion

Every church is a cult  
to itself, and every congregation  
it's ladder.

Every institution instituted  
by man has agendas  
that don't really matter.

Each denomination consigns  
to the flames  
Anyone who doesn't attend;  
While I think one poem should  
enclose all we need  
To meditate, centuries  
on end..

Patti Masterman

# Poetry Hopscotch

One legged hop; and login, login  
Turn around and stop; then login, login  
Hop on other leg; to the login, login  
Leg cross jumps now, login three times  
Arms crossed over heart, login twice  
Login for 50 jumps, doing double time  
Twirl around backwards, do it so nice  
Then fall on your arse and smile real big:  
It's the Poetry Hopskotch;  
Got you doing a jig.

Patti Masterman

# Poetry Is Somebody Writing

Poetry is somebody writing  
About soft rotting peaches,  
Lying on a table that's missing a leg  
In a deserted cottage somewhere,  
With ermine curtains.

And Poetry is someone explaining  
That the poem holds promise of great beauty,  
In the seeds of the peaches,  
Even if they are over-ripe;  
And even if the curtains are poorly matched.

And Poetry is someone else arguing  
That the poem is about avarice  
And wasted opportunity  
In a post-modern world.

And Poetry is somebody else saying  
A poem is just a still life  
Made out of nothing in particular,  
And thus can't be assigned relative values.

And Poetry is the child,  
Falling asleep on the table  
Holding a poem book open,  
Pressed against his cheek,  
And dreaming of ermine peaches  
Rolling off of limping tables,  
In a dark cottage alone,  
In the middle of an existence  
Nowhere that we could recognize.

Patti Masterman

# Poetry Is The Divine Part Of Man

Poetry haters love to make fun of the touchy-feely stuff as though that defined who or what poetry is.

Poetry is the last time the sun gets reflected in somebody's eyes, when they're saying goodbye-maybe for forever.

And it's that first dropp of rain, touches the new brides veil, blesses her; as she's lifting it off her face for the first time, after being kissed in the marriage ceremony.

And poetry might be that bubble, over the sink.. keeps floating away, fully intact; even though all the laws of physics and gravity may be saying it ought not be able to go on existing;

And poetry in motion is a baby, trying to walk and falling down again and again; refusing to give up, surrender less painful though that might be.

And poetry could even be your hand over my mouth, because you know that I can never really say what I am trying so hard to say; as there's another form of secret communication connects soul directly to soul, without confusing or complicated words.

And that is some of the invisible poetry, lives in the eyes, the hands; the heart of the mind; and all the hidden, inner recesses of a human being; and even though something may be a form of poetry for one; it may not be for another.

Finally, if you balled up the emotions together, and then just threw them up into the open air, not knowing where they might come down, or even if; this too, could be one of the purest forms of poetry.

My words could go on flowing forever, like a stream, and that could be poetry;

or they might stop without warning and

Patti Masterman

# Poetry's My Armament And Muse

Poetry's my armament and muse;  
I wield her- both amusing and profuse.  
She keeps the bore many lengths away,  
As he's confused by her- too much to say.

The ambitious too, have no use for her,  
And yes-men simply sit, and stroke her fur.  
As weapon, she is far beyond complaint;  
A catapult for fools, when they feel faint.

A line frustrates the most obnoxious gossip,  
Who feels like something's fallen in her pocket;  
It's burning her with news she can't decode-  
She feels it slip away- and does that goad!

My poetry unlocks me like a key,  
And keeps closer, the ones that those should be-  
It screens like Emily's poem, society-  
And shuts out undesired company.

Patti Masterman

# Poetry's What I Write

Poetry's what I write, when the world has gone away;  
Prose is what it is, when the world has had it's say.  
Poetry's what I write, when self is all snuffed out;  
Prose is what it's called, when mind leaps all about.  
Poetry's what gets written, before I know what's up:  
Prose is what gets emptied, out those other cups.

Patti Masterman

# Poets Play With Hearts

In hope, I had a poet friend  
To tell my dreams about  
And find in him the words I missed  
In other talk, without

Some poet friends gave me great  
Joy, and we would never part  
But other ones were not the same-  
For poets play with hearts

Like old maids play gin rummy  
Like rummies play old maids  
A poet steals your heart away  
And runs with it, in spades

It's but a game to those with no  
Compunction, for their art  
Make no mistake about it-  
For poets play with hearts

It was a lesson must be learned  
By anyone who's vulnerable  
Unless you're moron, just like me  
Your heart should be quite learnable

So take heed to my words  
And don't take well-aimed darts  
It's dangerous ground you're treading-  
For poets play with hearts.

(It wouldn't be so bad  
To rob me from my sleep  
If it were not for all that,  
They never play for keeps.)

Patti Masterman

## Poets Set Their Hearts On Fire

As a conflagration ever travels to find fuel,  
And though the first fire starter could be thought of as a fool;  
I would gladly step upon your hearts own smoking funeral-pyre,  
For it is common knowledge, poets set their hearts on fire.

Patti Masterman

# Poets Understand You Like No Other

Poets understand you like no other:  
They always know what you've been thinking about  
Because it's right there, staring out at them  
From inside of your poem.

They know that you bleed them nightly  
For ideas; since ideas are such a rarity in this world  
Sometimes an idea only goes around once-  
You've got to grab it up quick.

And what don't they know, about those love poems:  
Don't think they don't know  
Who was the inspiration for all those..  
But they do not seem to mind it:

Trading thoughts, no different than trading spit  
Many such exchanges made under cover of darkness  
Just be sure next morning, in the cardboard box you drag back home again  
It's your own soul you're carrying away with you.

Patti Masterman

# Poets Will Not Be Led

Poets will not be led to the watering trough, like farm stock  
Poets will not fall into line, like school children  
Poets will not swallow any pills you may hand to them:  
Yea; though you shall message them with a thousand  
Miraculous water-into-wine poems, of other poets  
They will not leave a single comment upon any one of them  
Unless it be their own, original idea to do so

And in this way, they are very like a cat  
Which purrs, and constantly strives for contact  
Only when you are otherwise occupied  
And when once you expect the creature to always be  
Beneath your heels, it disappears then  
With nary a trace; though at some time, in the far unknown;  
The wavering future of futures,  
You might hear it again; beneath the house, calling loudly  
Or find it well hid high up in the rafters, peering down at you  
As though to say, it were your very own error  
Caused it to be stuck up there, in the first place

And do not try to fathom ever it's mind  
Though it can out think and out smart you:  
It's loyalties lie deeply hidden, and will only come out  
Under a blue moon, in enveloping darkness  
Of an odd numbered day, in a leap year; or else any other time  
When you least are expecting anything of moment.

Patti Masterman

## Poke (Her) & Strip

I once knew a man who placed  
Every same-numbered sentence in poem,  
And was sacrosanct about the sin  
Of too many pieces beneath his name.

I once knew a girl who placed  
Every same man in her brain,  
And then had to exorcise them  
From the black hole of her crenulated tome.

Patti Masterman

# Poor Lonely Orphans Of Earth

Poor lonely orphans of earth,  
Lost from our past, from our kin;  
Tired travelers of solitude's path-  
From what cosmic egg were birthed,  
Into what genetic bath;  
What lightnings lit up your face,  
In sadness and in mirth?  
Where is that trace  
Of the first man's wrath  
When he lost his home?  
For it seems, we've rambled always,  
And been accursed to roam  
For the length of all our days  
While still looking for that place:  
Will it always be a wanderer,  
The homeless human race?

Patti Masterman

# Portrait In Silhouette

Late night finds me hurrying along  
When suddenly I'm halted by a shadows play:  
Within a window framed, a female with a baby,  
The two of them alone in their sovereign space  
Outlined in black and light before the blind  
Encased in their shadow-puppet world.  
Stopped in my own tracks, I'm held by fascination  
And imagination's given them extreme grace  
No one else on earth now, but the woman for the babe;  
There's none but the infant beheld by her eyes-  
And the faint enclosed laughter echoes  
As she hoists him high and higher  
Even seen in monotone the two are irresistible  
I feel my heart open and I'm pulled straight in  
Perhaps just my shoes are left behind  
To mark where I once stood  
I'm not sure where I went or  
How long I was there  
But the street disappeared  
And all the houses with it.  
Was it for a moment only  
Or much longer?  
It's difficult to say-  
Even now remains  
An inexplicable happiness.

Patti Masterman

## Post-Incarnate

I published my first book of poetry while in a cemetery;  
On random stones, I positioned some leaves  
with tears or drops of blood  
Above every word included in my writing-  
And then trailed wilted flowers diligently,  
like dangling prepositions-  
To show the many paths my lines would travel:

My leather may have worn thin, but the stories  
Written there in dust and bone  
will endure forever.

Patti Masterman

# Pour Me Another Mug Of Butter

Pour me another mug of butter  
Stir in a cup of grated cheese  
Then, mix in some lard-  
Make sure it's good and hard  
And don't forget the pop tarts,  
If you please

For tomorrow is the day that the diet  
Is marked on my calendar, to start  
Tomorrow is the day  
I'll throw it all away  
Leaving only lettuce: it's an art

Fry up some biscuits and some bacon  
Add lots of margarine and jam  
A cheesecake on the side-  
The poundcake- it might hide  
Right beside the honey  
Drizzled ham

For tomorrow is the day that the diet  
Is marked on my calendar, to start  
Tomorrow is the day  
I'll throw it all away  
Leaving only lettuce: it's an art

Stir up some muffins and some cookies  
Glaze well with sugar and fresh cream  
A hunk of cookie dough  
Will then complete the show  
This food's not as fattening  
As it seems

For tomorrow is the day that the diet  
Is marked on my calendar, to start  
Tomorrow is the day  
I'll throw it all away  
Leaving only lettuce: it's an art

Now, D-day has come around  
But I'm feeling kind of rough  
My tummy's got an ache  
I think it was the cake  
Think I'll just stop by the store  
For a couple cream-puffs more

And get rid of that lettuce-  
I think it's starting to stink...

Patti Masterman

# Power Of Powers

Whore out the darkness,  
Set it to dreams,  
Fantasies stirring  
In the distant gleam.

The swirling grayness  
Become castle or moat  
A princess needs saving;  
A pirate's foul gloat,

A ring on fair finger,  
Fine shackle of gold  
Meant only for ladies,  
In dungeons so old.

The fair sex fair game,  
In the collector's hoard;  
Damsels on arms  
Of great feudal lords.

The power of powers  
Behind the throne room-  
For he withholds their alms  
When she holds back her boons.

Patti Masterman

# Prayer For Those Who Love Life

Life is my dear lover;  
But you are it's messenger-  
Oh please, never let me  
Wound the soul of another

And all I have wounded,  
Please let them forgive;  
Would that I should never harm  
Another one that live.

Hope's the saving prayer,  
That we sing when solitary-  
And then please help out all of us  
With loads that we must carry.

Patti Masterman

# Prayer Unceasing

Our actions are the prayer, unceasing,  
Of love's creation which is sought-  
New things arising every moment,  
From the past and future wrought.

Midst all those, in good and evil,  
We must avoid being caught-  
Imprisoned by our own mind's children,  
All our strivings come to naught.

When our attention sharp and true is,  
Unwavering hours of peace are bought-  
Be careful when you once un-sheathe it,  
The terrible, swift sword of thought.

Patti Masterman

# Precepts Of Mortality

Live ready to die,  
be the benign force,  
be the malignant force.  
Be sweetly fierce  
and posthumously saintly.  
Use telepathy on crowds,  
But approach a person like a weapon.

When the angel of death approaches another,  
Invite him in for a spot of your blood.  
Be the wild card; be wild,  
Be surprised by your own acts,  
learn to expect the unexpected.

Live indecisively, straddle the fence.  
Fall deliberately, full-conscious, only to rise again.  
When falling, be indefensible, indefatigable.  
Surround yourself from the inside, like an enemy.  
Be the opposition someday you intend to destroy.

Patti Masterman

# Predator

Then say you, how do you know  
if a face is really friendly  
or just a predator on the prowl-  
is that a sneer or a smile?

If a real actor can wear  
a thousand different expressions  
in the space of a single day,

If the lover can jilt without thought,  
Because feeling your pain  
Is not his chosen prerogative,

Keep your knowledge to yourself  
At least for a little longer-  
Make sure he is only playing games  
And not closing in for the kill.

Patti Masterman

## Pre-Possessive

She rides threw verses on motor-sicles,  
And dental limericks as a drill;  
If novelty you crave, she'll be your knave-  
Dragging you up the hill.

She gets there in roundabout ways  
With energy left to burn,  
For circling only winds her up,  
Her writer's wings, to earn.

He strained at her calls, to answer  
As she waited the high wires;  
Many a comment he'd have left-  
But relationships make him tired.

She's a will-o-the-wisp when writing,  
And she turned his head to vapors,  
And clippity-clopped herself all around  
His loathsome dear-John papers.

He gets them out ahead of time,  
He never will be late;  
His heart is halfway in it but  
His soul gives in to fate.

Now this is not real life; oh no-  
All this is only fiction;  
For he fell in love (for all her smiles)  
With just her mortal diction.

And now I turn and tap my shoes  
And go back in the bottle-  
There's his mustache, possessed again-  
By a certain wattle..

Patti Masterman

# Prima Materia

How can we have emotions,  
When the seas and primal mud did not?  
What chemical is the magic potion  
That leaves us with the world we got?

Who imagined trees could talk,  
Or rocks regret their fate;  
Animals tell time with inner clocks,  
From one thing, another anticipate?

It's a magicians world I see around me;  
How could there ever be others?  
For disguised here in the simplest of elements,  
I find the world's filled up with brothers.

Patti Masterman

# Principalities, Dominions And Thrones

Cathedral, how many times now  
Have your windows been washed  
By the tears of lovers, broken by the rack

How many times has the blood of martyrs  
Flowed unchecked, across your cracked floors

How many vile plagues seeped in  
Through the stained glass eye  
Leering upward into the face  
Of heaven's disappointment

How many effigies of the saints  
Witnessed you turning on your own edicts  
When other tides had turned against you

And how many statues were destroyed  
In the raging quakes of anger  
Inside the hearts of the downtrodden

Your basins overflowed with theft and pillage  
Your prisons flowered forth rape and torture  
You left the world worse off than it was before

If you should ever fall, tumble down  
The earth itself would crack wide open  
Down to its very marrow bones of outrage

And finally release all your victims from bondage  
Something you would never do for them  
In the burning holocaust that was their lives.

Patti Masterman

## Prissy Little Beauty Queens

Prissy little beauty queens, they seem so self-assured:  
They wear the latest fashions; in haught style immured.  
Then there's exotic travel, to all the ports of call,  
Always look so stunning, till exhausted, they fall.

They know that playing's bad; for time's what they don't have:  
There's titles, trophies; there's money to be had.  
But you should see the fetching way they look, before death-  
They cry for their mommy, until their last breath.

Patti Masterman

# Progress

The Indian ancestor  
Of the original land run  
Never knew the truth  
Of that grey shadow  
Out on the oceans horizon  
At first, it was only a tiny dot  
Hidden by each waves rising  
Revealed by each waves descending  
He could never have realized  
It was only the first ripple  
Of a living, reproducing cyclone  
Which would soon over-run, colonize,  
Take possession of, and hoard  
The very land which  
The Indian and his forbears  
Held as hallowed  
The soil cradling  
The bones of their dead,  
Remaining steadfast under the tender feet  
Of their babies learning to walk,  
Feeding and clothing them  
And their lineage, since time forgotten  
The land that would soon become cheap coinage  
For barter and trade  
The newcomers, so clever and cunning  
The Indian never had a chance to realize  
What a calamity befell him that day  
And his livelihood and heritage  
When that large, looming shadow  
Overtook his own tiny one.

Patti Masterman

# Proverbial

Tall, against the fake green grass  
With the metal club in his hand;  
He's a god  
Shrugging good naturedly  
At the fawning reporters, jostling at his elbow..

At home, it's business as usual:  
She's busy dying, in their bed  
Dark-ringed eyes more hollow  
Lost in a morphine torpor, unsure  
Where she is anymore  
Unsure of everything but the outcome  
He wishes now they hadn't told her  
The kids eyes, filled with pain  
The lawyers are circling again  
With the gold seekers close behind-  
Everyone wants a piece of him now  
He's the pot at the end of the rainbow..

But back on the green  
Skies are blue, and money is king  
Though sometimes he has to wish  
The club would become an expedient lightning rod  
Just for a few microseconds  
Because suddenly the game seems  
To be getting so lame.

Patti Masterman

# Proximity

Proximity-

My knee touches yours under the table;  
Adults we are, a knee excites no molecules  
In our experienced repertoires.

Proximity-

Shoulder to shoulder, in the airplane  
Trained to be busy, to keep alive;  
No time for sensation or idle daydreaming.

Proximity-

Two hearts beating, back-to-back, in a fertile darkness;  
And a long gaping drop-off, just before the edge of forever:  
Every cell too keenly aware..

Patti Masterman

# Psychic Crow Fight

The crows are fighting  
Amongst themselves  
Over who gets to caw  
For the dominant squaw  
A murder of crows  
Walking free  
Don't you know

The heretic crows  
Will soon proclaim  
My prophetic doom  
Is preordained

As if dying were  
The only matter  
The hereafter is waiting  
Just over there

As usual, I've got  
Nothing to wear.

Patti Masterman

# Punch Lines - A Memorial

That's why scientists use lawyers for experiments instead of rats  
Stumpy replied, I was gonna say something when Martha fell out-  
But ten dollars is ten dollars  
Don't listen to him- he isn't even your father  
But when I woke up in the morning  
I was on that guy's mustache again  
If she isn't good enough for her own family-  
She sure as hell isn't good enough for you.  
The parrot said, "I give up,  
What'd you do with the ship? "  
NASA responded with a one-line memo: 'Thaw the chicken.'  
I don't have to outrun the bear, I only have to outrun you!  
When I'm driving around, my zip code keeps changing.  
The cop asked, 'What's he like? ' The little boy replied,  
'Beer and women with big tits.'  
Frustrated the man said, 'Put the cat on the phone,  
I'm lost and I need directions.'  
The stoner looks at him for a second, smiles  
And says, 'You're an ambulance! '  
That felt good, but my hand still hurts like crazy!  
You idiot! Now we have to piss in the boat!  
"But I'm not pregnant, " she says.  
"Well, you're not out of the ditch yet, " he says.  
The boy started off, 'Hi, my name's Chuck... -' and the farmer shot him.  
'Hey, I don't mind you humping my wife,  
But can you stop using my ass as a scoreboard! ? ! '  
The police are looking for some hardened criminals  
'Dear baby Jesus. If you ever want to see your mother again..'  
So the crocodile bit his legs off.  
And the string says, 'Nope- I'm a frayed knot.'

Patti Masterman

# Pyromania

In calculated syllables of uttered exclamations,  
Our conjugal baptisms are rife with strange gyrations-  
How little we care to confabulate mercurial  
Explanations for the desperate conflagrations.

Measured complacency confuses the words,  
Mid watery couplings of breath tangled births-  
Imagining chance could bear to frame  
Or show proclivity for hungry flames.

Test the mettle of my speech,  
As the lovemaking twists to turn;  
Spare moments of the rare occasion  
When I pray just to burn.

Patti Masterman

# Questioning The Questions

Why not ask a bird just how high freedom lies;  
Or the wind, the direction of a sigh?  
Or why happiness waits its life upon a word,  
And why the best of those must go unheard?

Questioning the questions,  
Of answers, so far away,  
Lest we once forget  
We soon live a different day.

The dead must hear the secrets  
We would wait our whole life for;  
In cold completeness, they won't care  
That you finally found that door.

Questioning the questions,  
Of answers, so far away  
Lest we once forget  
That there's nothing left to say

Patti Masterman

# Questions Haunt The Waking Man

questions haunt the waking man,  
in the blazing air of morning  
his breath the needle piercing blood;  
red rhythms of the glass-bored voice of night.

change has devoured yesterday's laughter,  
drunk slowly of ghostly desires broken free  
as the killing universe listens, each wild-born day  
and beats naked life, with a lingering kiss of decay.

Patti Masterman

# Quickened Dust

Quickened dust, quickened dust,  
They won't miss you very much:  
An hour's ritual, thimble's tear  
Disappear your vaunted years.

Patti Masterman

# Quicksilver

All gone down, with their trials and problems,  
All gone away, with their joy and weeping,  
All have passed, with whatever they found;  
All grown quiet now, without a sound.

All their importance, and all they lacked,  
All their smugness and humbleness too,  
All their loves, and their petty hatreds;  
All their lives, every day seems fated.

All their days, condensed into naught,  
All their nights, fled too soon to light,  
All their hours, now distilled to dark;  
All their daring, there remains no spark.

All their graves, there under the dirt,  
All their headstones that speak of toil,  
All their loved ones, who've moved on;  
All waiting their spot, when life has gone.

Patti Masterman

# Quicksilver In Moonlight

We're thinly porous  
Like a windscreen miles away  
Catching chaff, from the mouth of a canyon  
That's back-lit by sun.

Picking up the tiniest particles  
De-briefing a life  
In the unspecified lengths of time  
When darkness reigned.

Nothing lost, everything circling,  
Ground down to molecules, atoms, quarks..  
Matter blinking in and out  
Finally drains away, quicksilver in moonlight.

Patti Masterman

# Quotation Marks

I want to hoard all the most beautiful words,  
Then save up all the perfect days;  
Laying them down end to end, and then tiptoe across them to you:  
Hoping they will say to you what I can't

Patti Masterman

# Radiant Shines The Candle

radiant shines the candle  
silver light; who could deny  
ascending to the heavens,  
taking flight ever higher.

the promise of a morning,  
in the moonlight clear,  
for loving souls who journey  
into the starlit mirror.

Patti Masterman

# Rainbow

Doe-eyed, slant eyes, big eyed babe,  
Blinking her big browns, on the make?  
Maybe a baby, maybe a skank-  
Shrink-wrapped totems on a German tank.

Blue veined wig-stained peroxide chic,  
Smoking her cancers, flicking her Bic,  
Hopping on one leg, janglety nerves,  
Ectomorph ectomorphic jitters; verve.

Green eyed heather neath a flaming fire,  
Fair freckled landscapes now for hire;  
Knowing her pay for her colors, rare-  
There's a whole rainbow of girls out there.

Patti Masterman

# Random Acts Of Christmas

Maybe Christmas hides out during the other sundry weeks of the year-  
Could it be that, it cat-naps inside the walls, and hangs, bat-like,  
From the attic rafters, waiting while it collects itself  
To leap, a la flea-style, onto your winters clothing,  
As you're going in and out, in and out, never slowing down.  
Perhaps it stealth-flies inside electrical impulses,  
Pinging from one brain to another all year long,  
But never revealing it's true identity.  
Wrapping itself around kind deeds and loving thoughts,  
Trying to prolong the feelings and impulses when they arise.  
For all we know, random acts of kindness are really just  
Encoded Christmas telegrams as one soul speaks to another in secret-  
And they never fade completely away as long as we continue  
Showing concern for our brothers and sisters.  
It is ever-present in the children, ready to break out  
At any moment, since they are too young to immerse themselves  
In endless working, to the exclusion of everything else.  
And they wear their hearts on their sleeves, as they haven't yet  
Learned to hide their thoughts and feelings, like artful adults can.  
In fact, if you need to get your Christmas flame re-lit, just go  
Look into the eyes of any child for a short time,  
And then you will feel it living again there inside of you.

Patti Masterman

# Random Ransom Of Living

You should thank your lucky stars for Death and his minions;  
Pestilence, Famine, Catastrophe..  
He keeps the world pristine, he kills early  
The weak and delicate,  
So that the entire world is not formed  
Out of wheelchair parts  
And bedpan furniture;  
So the suffering is not endless and without remedy.

And neither fear a heaven, where these bodies never perish,  
If such a thing were possible, it would have been tried already  
Because down here, wherever flesh lives,  
So do Time and Attrition, eroding cells by the hour,  
And the backside of every living creature  
Seen in the mirror, is degradation;  
It is the price of living, and when was living ever without cost?

There are chameleons, and insects that glow with their own  
Rare light from within, and any number of strange and wonderful  
Creatures; and everything you own or don't own down here comes with  
A cost, which we must all of us pay each second, the wages of bounty,  
And the mortgage price, and the random ransom of every living thing,  
For every day that breathing continues:  
And it's only because there's Death, that we will always pay it gladly.

Patti Masterman

# Ransom

Ransom resented whenever the ocean encroached on the land,  
Because she could no longer visit certain areas upon her walks,  
Though she sometimes was heard to make small talk about its unseemly  
loveliness;  
The rhythmic murmuring, the predictability of the tides.

It wasn't that she resented its presence nearby, but more  
That it was never content and it was never still; it never slept,  
And whenever her energy was low, its hyperactive antics seemed to her  
Even more frantic, as if to drain whatever energy and ambition she had left.

But she grew fat and complacent with time, more content, and learned  
To be at peace, however might appear the selfish ways of the sea on any day.  
Though she no longer went on her lengthy walks, she could stand at the window  
For hours, staring toward the paths she used to know by heart.

First, you came to the old half-gone hull from an extinct shipwreck,  
Which the older people used to tell the story of, but now most of them were  
passed on.  
Farther along was a hermit's ancient house, now decrepit, but always fresh fuel  
for the imagination.  
At every walk, the ocean had always seemed to be one step ahead, or just a few  
yards away, watching...

One needed to know the tides and the currents to find things, to stay safe.  
Oh, and there were seashells always waiting for the finder; to burnish a homely  
present,  
Or make a new conversation piece. For all the ocean had stolen from her, it had  
given back commodity;  
Pieces of itself, as a sort of bounty, a dowry perhaps, for whatever it had not yet  
grown bold enough to take.

Eventually her health declined, so she stopped getting out of bed for most things,  
Saying it was the same arthritis that had felled her mother and grandmother too  
early,  
And that the ocean's nearness had never helped, had in fact made things worse,  
That the continual wearing down by the tides seemed to have kept it stirred up  
and inflamed.

She caught a summer cold and eventually died of it, and was buried before a week had passed,  
Inside a white picket-fence cemetery, very near to the seashore.  
Everyone said that she was bound to be pleased, even in death;  
So near to her favorite paths and her beloved cottage, that you could almost point to them.

On a wild night of storms later that year, the sea rose slowly and stealthily, crept in  
And lashed her body, and then stole it away, leaving her small stone to mark a new vacancy.

Patti Masterman

# Rapture-Proof Receptacles

Worried your in laws could be reanimated to cause more trouble later?  
Well worry no more, with Acme's Rapture-Proof Receptacles  
Our patented blend of super strong woven steel mesh  
Enclosed within our secret acrylic shield reservoir technology  
Guarantees nothing will get in- or out- of our Receptacles.

Radiation proof- nothing short of a new cosmic bang can open this baby!  
Our guarantee reinforced by various magic spells presided over by Tibetan Monks  
For added insurance, we can shoot the Receptacle into space  
If after a few million years your long lost relative should be resuscitated  
They'll never be able to find their way back to this exact galaxy.

Disclaimer: Warranty limited to but not inclusive of direct divine intervention,  
Acts of god, natural catastrophes, encountering of opposition spells,  
Any implied promises good only for the estimated lifespan of a normal bubble  
universe

Not inclusive of the possibility of self destruction of our own planet  
In the absence of interference by possibly advanced alien civilizations,  
And postulated theories of a reversal of cosmic time and forces at the last instant  
of time  
And/or any pertinent binding covenants of the one true god,  
(but don't worry; nobody can ever figure that one out)

Patti Masterman

# Rare-Earth Blessing

Spilled a dropp of aromatic cedar oil  
Upon the worn out leather of my shoe  
On that graceful day, I walked upon  
The most fragrant, incensed sole  
Up from virgin forests climbing  
Across a sea of lacquered chests  
To polished floors, of oud wood shining  
With rare oil of the miners mining  
Pressed from trees well-perfumed flesh  
No tobacco shop smells better  
Than the barken closet I'd become  
A comely air that's rare earth-blessed.

No kings hall could smell as fragrant  
With a thousand armaments of scent  
This alone could explain the secret  
Solomon as more than just vagrant  
I can sense the smile of a geisha girl  
As she sits alone at the mirror  
Takes silken scarf, from a vanity drawer  
As a wisp of cedar-note unfurls  
You could never duplicate that scent  
If you lived for a thousand years  
No synthetic tone ever smells like that  
Nature's blessings should be freely spent.

Patti Masterman

# Rats Live On No Evil Star

Tell me the riddle that you are  
In storied reflections left ajar  
While roosters in the barnyard spar  
There's Sylvia's ashes in the bell jar  
Though tomorrow's child may go far  
And faces fade and time does mar  
Rats live on no evil star

Patti Masterman

# Rays Of Hope

Arc light burning, branding, turning me inside-out  
Signal beam incandescent, welding the tears  
With small hands, the lightest touch, without  
Any appointment, prefaced by no prayers  
Untrumpeted approach and seamless entry  
Of solitary, stark territory; thorny, aloof-  
Calmed fears and sent away the sentry,  
Rendering the plot, completely fireproof  
Lighthouses look upward, face to face the sky,  
Broadcasting to the despairing,  
The unknown answers that we exist by,  
And salvaging the refuse past caring.

Patti Masterman

## Reading A Latin American Author

And I started to read some of his poetry  
and then I found that there was a little bit of  
a fandango, getting going in my hips  
then when I had read some more of him,  
my breasts began to sway in rhythm,  
to a sort of metered mambo  
and when I had read a few more lines  
my legs were straining toward farruca,  
although it seemed that my derriere  
was aiming more for flamenco,  
while my whole body was in a violent rage  
for tango

And then suddenly, it was time  
to make dinner,  
so I had to stop reading him  
and content myself doing matachin  
on some habanera peppers  
and then doing a salsa jig  
all around the table

And after a small cockroach appeared,  
drawn in by the savory smells,  
I did a quick paso-doble return,  
in perfect time  
upon his whiskers.

Patti Masterman

# Reading A Poem Out Loud

When I have to read one of my poems out loud  
My voice can suddenly go missing, disappear to somewhere invisible;  
To my ears it almost sounds like the voice of another, who's reading-  
Not that it takes time to pack a suitcase, or buy a ticket anywhere;  
It's not going that far, not as far as yesterday,  
Nor as distant as tomorrow.

And if there's an audible failure of the syllables, now and then,  
It's because the voice of someone else is not easy to control;  
The volume and tone, the vibrato, and that sound of stifled tears;  
It's only the frustration of trying to speak out loud, with an entirely different  
voice

And of having to speak to an unknown future, that's floating in irresolute space;  
One that echoes back with each word, a vast silence of held breath;  
Like a stadium of ghosts, full of prickling eyes and ears, all tuned on me-

It's going to take a lot of practice to get the tone right,  
And to make the lips and tongue get in sync  
With all that unleashed emotion.

Patti Masterman

# Real Poetry Inspires More Of The Same

Real poetry inspires more of the same: you read a few lines,  
Concentrating on the words, though really you're thinking  
Of the memories triggered; half formed concepts  
Which your own mind has been belaboring, in daydreams and sleep-  
Even some things you would swear you had never seen before.

An intense itch begins at the back of the eyeballs  
And slowly slides down between the eyes  
But sometimes this can be instantaneous-  
As when, one minute ago, you were watching a twisting cyclone  
And the next, you find that you're inside the cyclone; that quickly.

And then something like a predigested sneeze begins to work itself  
Back into your brain; it comes to you then  
That you're pregnant, and have already felt the quickening  
And then the clutch engages and the gears mesh;  
The laser beam lights up the encrypted surface.

Time has to stop, right where it is-  
You look up to notice that a sacred moment might be happening  
Over on the far horizon, but no- you have become the farthest horizon;  
And you, the sanctity; and you also, the sun, moon, and heavenly bodies:  
You are the world, getting ready to push it's own body out again.

The words and images begin to flow  
Like a drain that has suddenly cleared itself,  
Just seconds before midnight,  
So that the flood is no longer a damnation;  
Now it flows freely down your arm, your pen.

Organizes it's own spine, organs, muscles and skin;  
Lymph channels and neural divisons:  
An artificial intelligence has just given birth to itself  
In between the glowing meridians of the page-  
And then it opens it's new eyes, and blinks back at you,  
Filled up with only your own sense of wonder.

Patti Masterman

# Reality

Through so many brains we've viewed the array  
We find or dismiss odd parts of the whole  
Deep in skulls cauldron, the wayward senses mix  
While old men keep shouting to mind the soul  
And empty graves leering up at the sky  
They know who'll be filling them up by and by  
A factory setting quite deftly disguised  
To hide the conveyor belt sandwiched beneath  
Nothing can last here, we've often surmised  
Before we're much wiser the picture's complete  
Our bodies of stardust enrich the loam  
We'll never stray far from the star we call home  
The days of our lives will disperse like wind  
In total, we arrive and depart, without friend  
And the rack and pinion of all we think real  
Begins to dissolve with the loss of one wheel.

Patti Masterman

# Recipe

Take up the raw word still dripping, with tongs  
Hurl it randomly through air  
Pay no attention where it lands  
Rearrange the thought, beyond reason  
Place it beside rare symphonies  
Blowing through the woods at moon tide  
Blend it with cast off flower petals  
And sprinkle with a fallen star:  
Do not stir.

Patti Masterman

# Recommended Donation: One Smile

When you're happy you're surrounded by friends  
When you're down, just handle it on your own time  
The solitude of this life always gets to me  
Come in alone, and leave the same way

I try to imagine a world much smaller  
Full of friends stumbling over one another  
No one cries alone all night  
You know everything's gonna be alright

A wounded animal goes off by itself  
A neglected lover sits alone on the shelf  
When you're happy you're surrounded by friends  
When you're down, just handle it on your own time

I try to imagine a world more loving  
Where everyone's not in it for what they can get  
No one cries alone all night  
I'm still looking, haven't found it yet

The solitude of this life always gets to me  
Come in alone, and leave the same way  
When you're happy you're surrounded by friends  
When you're down, just handle it on your own time

A wounded animal goes off by itself  
A neglected lover sits alone on the shelf  
A smile costs nothing and can save a life  
This pain is deep, it cuts like a knife

I try to imagine a world much smaller  
Full of friends stumbling over one another  
We need more courage and compassion to be  
The kind of friends we know we need

I try to imagine a world more loving  
Where everyone's not in it for what they can get  
No one cries alone all night  
You know everything's gonna be alright

A smile costs nothing and can save a life

Patti Masterman

# Red As A Blood Pearl

Red as a blood pearl  
Or a wandering sun,  
Keener than bullets  
Instructed to burn.

Young as a snakebite,  
Older than frost,  
Venomous capers  
Before the spring thaw.

Lasting as fury,  
Duller than coals,  
Hater of mirrors  
When you grow old.

Free as the windmill,  
Less certain than death;  
Owned by the graveyard  
Before your first breath.

Patti Masterman

# Redoubtable Lovers

We wrung out our hearts for them, thinking it could matter;  
For we loved far too much, in the space of days or hours.  
Committed grave anarchy, because they justified it:  
Would have sold our very souls; but inside we denied it.

We turned our colors inside out, and wore our faces backwards.  
We even changed our walk for you, and took up social graces.  
Nothing was quite good enough, although we bought the store out;  
We thought our love was priceless, but maybe was just torrid?

We cried out countless tears and we threw ourselves away:  
Nobody could comfort us, was nothing they could say.  
We didn't recognize ourselves, when we'd reached the end-  
We'd become so many people, we weren't even our own friend.

Patti Masterman

# Reductionist Theory Of Everything

All vanished fragments of the quotidian day  
Shrinking distances, shrinking farther away.  
Overruling chaos, the daily pulsing parade  
Of tiny well-formed characters, beginning to fade.

Fragmented life, wadded up, stuffed in niches:  
Invitation codices, notifiers of bogus riches;  
Hexagrammatical schemes, in blowing spring breezes:  
Once-heartfelt greeting, some tangled vine seizes;

Rusty tin-nail, snares forgotten mail of mine;  
Half-chewed in the burrow, never arrived Valentine.  
Wide open spaces, of the painted halls  
Hieroglyphic mazes, traps the verbage wall to wall.

Encoded in cursive practice pages,  
Childish pride, and childhood rages.  
Though the world is an archeological spoof  
Random chance soon will eat up all the proof.

Patti Masterman

# Regime

From whence do you come,  
Hunter of dreams-  
Stealer of rest  
And peace of mind?  
Deep from within  
The lost regime,  
Of hearts obsessed  
And love unshrined.

Into the midst of them,  
Quietly stealing-  
You gave my name  
On icy slate.  
Then while my nerves  
Are slowly chilling,  
All my reason  
Intoxicate.

I grasp for hope,  
But she has gone-  
The cause is lost  
The battle's over.  
You sit distant  
On your throne,  
And no one else  
Can save me lover.

Patti Masterman

# Reliquary

I have seen your eyes so grave;  
The quiet, gentle hands that hold  
The little book; and your thoughts, brave.  
The lined pages that they enfold:  
Wistful dreams you'd scarcely dare.  
Through all you've seen, your heart's stayed pure;  
Such innocence in man is rare.  
All the pain and tears, endured  
Without self pity or revenge-  
Still sweet, still just, and never vain.  
Others might have been unhinged,  
But your soul is yet unstained.  
In another age, you would have been  
A poet, a seer, of some acclaim.

But you were steered by fate or wind  
Away from any hint of fame.  
Even from comforts none deny:  
The road's your home, your roof,  
The sky; for all of that, you do not sigh.  
The last, your heart, you gave to me;  
And it more dear than any jewel,  
That earth can hide within it's dust-  
Though life and love can both be cruel,  
No more demeaned, your fragile trust.  
A light at the end of the darkest hours.  
Your heart's the only grail I find;  
That holy, fragrant field of flowers-  
Myself become beloveds shrine.

Patti Masterman

# Remember That Girl

I was that girl that hung out at cemeteries  
I was that girl with the gunpowder scented hands  
Who played solitaire Russian Roulette,  
On a cold winters night, drinking cheap wine all alone.  
The one who was fat as a teenager  
And then became a reed, just when the world  
Thought she would remain fat forever.  
The one who hated doing what everyone expected.  
The one who broke china cups when she got too stressed.  
The one that cried at the sight of baby's being born  
And at funerals of strangers.  
The one who blushed at the wrong times  
The one who laughed at things she shouldn't  
The one who decided to do plastic surgery  
On her own nose, with a razor blade,  
And, thank god, at the last minute  
Realized what a horrible idea it was.  
The one who said she'd only get married  
When she was too old to take care of herself  
And then got married anyway.  
The one who said she wanted five children,  
Because she was adopted and needed  
Some true blood relations, for a change.  
The one who loved living on the edge  
But could never admit it, even to herself.  
The one who was perpetually young  
But then grew old anyway.  
Is it surprising to find out  
Who she really was, after all these years?

Patti Masterman

# Remember When Cars Had Expressions

Remember when cars had expressions,  
And trees were citadels you could climb to safety;  
Hopscotch and jacks were your only real job,  
And being followed around by the dog,  
And parents knew everything, were wise beyond years:  
And everyone loved you; there was love in their eyes.

Remember when someone finally noticed you  
Thought you were kind and worthwhile; nearly beautiful,  
And you went on dates, just to stare in their eyes,  
And made out till late, but went home before dawn,  
And crept into bed, much too happy to sleep:  
And everyone loved you; there was love in their eyes.

Then came marriage and babies;  
In sickness and health, and your parents got frail,  
And you burned up the miles;  
You lived in your car, but it didn't seem odd,  
That you knew all the doctors, and did all the chores;  
Taking care like once you, yourself were cared for:  
But everyone loved you, with the love in their eyes.

There were funerals and goodbyes,  
As they left, one by one  
Though you'd hoped for a miracle;  
At least, you were loved-  
And then their eyes closed,  
Extinguishing all.

So now you get through the days,  
And sometimes feel sad; life is much different  
Than it was before; you've forgotten that person  
Who you used to be, but now and then  
You still remember, what you used to know well  
Nearly forgotten, but it comes back once more;  
How everyone loved you; how love lived in their eyes..

Patti Masterman

# Remembered Dreams

In the remembered dreams of children, we fly  
We fly again to the trees  
That once were homes; our forts.

We remember what was forgotten  
By force of habit, by hanging years  
Upon our aging frames.

Jacks and hopscotch and catching a football  
In the front yard, damp grass between our toes  
Till dinner, at quarter of seven. We remember

So many things, that once we used to know by heart-  
That even at the seventh decade of life,  
At the eleventh hour, we haven't forgotten-  
Nor shall we soon, forget.

Patti Masterman

# Remembering The Ring

Mother died in the bed in the small, single hospital room  
Beside one tall window which revealed  
More concrete windowless walls, opposite an asphalt ravine  
Where sometimes perhaps, ambulances  
Pick up the newly deceased.

She died with that ring on her finger:  
Nobody had taken it off; the pseudo wedding ring  
Because her rings had become much too large  
For her thin and bony, but still oddly elegant hands.  
Out in the hall that night, at the most inopportune moment

I remembered the ring; but I could not  
No- would not, attempt to take it off  
Her poor, forever stilled finger; nor could I go back into that room.  
Something in me was repulsed at the idea,  
To remove jewelry from the dead

Even if still warm, and full of the thickening blood  
Which had always loved me;  
What if some small islet of cells  
In some distinctly named gyrus of the brain  
Felt that small tug, and then realized it's own death?

I visualized a small, quick moving, bent over man  
Bug-eyed; predatorial with anticipation  
Surreptitiously removing the small gold and black band,  
Pocketing it after a quick examination  
With a jewelers loup.

What is this talk, of stealing after death;  
The name still attached to the cooling form-  
Do we that quickly become moribund;  
Nobody can go up two flights of stairs  
To return a ring to the still living, weeping above?

Instead, I taught myself to visualize  
A learned, serious figure, in a long lab coat  
Meticulously prepping the body for cremation,

Finding the ring and instantly forgetting it;  
Perhaps throwing it out with the other refuse

Of pacemakers, dental appliances and eyeglasses:  
A holocaust pie of leftovers and deserted objects.  
Perhaps other sons and daughters  
Remember other lost mementos  
Which mingle like bones now, in airtight coffins  
Filled up with the metal survivors.

Patti Masterman

# Remnant

In that field's a homely stump-  
Swollen, broad, with frown so set,  
Where waddling farmer hoed his peas,  
Wondering they weren't ready yet.

In that marsh, thin willow tree  
Grows a bough up, toward its face;  
Peering through the leafy fronds-  
Of its tribe, there is no trace.

Misshapen rock, perched like a boy  
Squishing toes, in muddy brine;  
Looking, you can see, just so-  
There- beside the dead grapevine.

In this way, the earth recalls  
Hoeing farmers, searching wives,  
Muddy boys, who once trod here-  
Busy, vanished, simple lives.

Patti Masterman

# Remoteness

Does he speak through the silence of others  
And pass through their half-formed thoughts,  
A ranging spirit, behind unknowing eyes;  
Is he found in raw logic and plots?

Could you find him hidden by circumstance,  
Or discarded like weight on a chase,  
Is he there in the hurrying footsteps;  
The mute laughter, behind a straight face?

Is he now just a memory out of season,  
Flown too far from it's fledging ground,  
Like the pained remoteness of mountains,  
Where the echo beats out its last sound?

Patti Masterman

# Requiscat In Pace

The empty church sits idle, as if waiting for something  
But the hands of the bride have grown cold,  
And the bridegroom has lost his way,  
In midst of the confusion; a too faded iconography  
Where the once blooming flower petals fell upon the floor,  
Now resembling a phantasm's trail out the door  
To a nowhere palpable and present, while always, the ever vacant moment's  
plea:

Requiscat in Pace

A world body of believers, now perished  
All dressed in their fine, funeral best;  
Though hymnals and common books of prayer, we still find;  
Where is their face; and where their touch; where the babies, left wailing  
Behind the altar, under surreal stretched droplets of water  
That never quite fell; where sat the families of the dead, that once were carried  
In measured pace, to clairaudient music, along flaming candles of intention:

Requiscat in Pace

Candles raining waxy tears, hour by lonely hour, each year;  
Was it centuries, that candles kept their vigil of fear, for dead and living,  
Inside plastered walls, where hope too sits dead,  
In remorseful cliques of quietude, where no thing breathes, no thing moves.  
Where are the chants; the raised, supplicating voices  
That once raised the ghost of a morning, each day,  
And bid to the demons of darkness, each night:

Requiscat in Pace

There lie the leavings, frail hope of humanity,  
Look there to realize, the same bony hands you see  
Must be at work in your life too, and those whom you love;  
You as the ghost, of a still-breathing dream,  
In an empty cathedral, filled up with cooled wax,  
Praising fruitless prayers, while but little light is left,  
For the night time belongs to unquiet memories:

Requiscat in Pace

Even if they do not truly die, neither did they really live;  
And they had the same hopes, narrow limitations, glory and tragedy;

Look closer; you may find your name on one of the plaques  
Upon the altars, in stillborn hope, that you may find peace,  
The elusive peace they went searching for;  
That endless search, in which spent every breath-  
Just as you now go toward the valley, of the shadow of death  
Requiscat in Pace

Even that place, must resemble this one; filled to overflowing  
Crowds re-breathing the stifling air; for moveless centuries  
Inside the same box of relics, that's passed down to us,  
Kneeling in the same pews and churches; our knees in their crypts,  
Their dust in our eyes, our hands in their ashes, we're mouthing the same  
canned  
Response, unchanged for three centuries, and all going in the same direction  
The same dead, pale flowers preceding us, showing the path to the cemetery:  
Requiscat in Pace

Patti Masterman

# Requited Love

How strange that emotions of jealousy  
Can often end in murder;  
But stranger still, that requited love  
Ends with being called 'Mother'?

Patti Masterman

# Retreats Are Portals Of Revelation

In the quiet communion of silence,  
Comes another retreats intimations:  
Close your eyes and there is Teacher-  
Although sitting before you in deep meditation-  
In the back of the room, too, he seems to linger,  
Passing something out, with earnest gaze  
Clasped in his hands, to all freely given,  
Pieces of that heart of boundless grace.

Patti Masterman

# Reviled Did I Live

Reviled did I live, said I,  
As evil I did deliver  
Never odd or even-  
Live not on evil.

Reviled did I live, said I  
As evil I did deliver  
Live was I  
Ere I saw Evil.

Reviled did I live, said I  
As evil I did deliver  
Live on no evil-  
Evil I did live.

Do Good's deeds live on?  
No, Evil's deeds do, O God

Now evil, I've won  
Name now one man  
Live not on evil deed,  
Live not on evil.

Evil, all its sin, is still alive  
Evil am I- I'm alive.

Patti Masterman

# Rigor's Amortization

Looking into the large bathroom mirror  
Before the bath  
I catch a glimpse, a flash of something  
A darkened area of discoloration  
Almost as if some future dead thing now inhabits me:  
A too old cut of meat turned a familiar greenish hue  
Dead corpse waiting to sprout  
A glaze eyed figure in the haunted house.  
The spot may reveal itself on the face,  
Or along a shoulder or arm. Just for a second.  
Looking again, it was only my imagination.  
The infamous man who dug up graves  
To take parts of the bodies, spoke of a woman's body,  
That it flushed red where he began to take off  
A part of it, by cutting it.  
Even that dead for a week body knew  
Something violent was being done to it  
And stories abound of the still-growing hair, fingernails..  
Not just haunted tales to scare children  
It seems a little bit of death resides in the living  
And a touch of aliveness remains even in death:  
The boundaries of when we are transformed  
Into house of wax characters  
Are never as clear as medical textbooks imply.

Patti Masterman

# Ripples

Who rides the lonely trails, ear to ground  
Listening for footfalls, coming down.

The animals sense a presence, yet unturned;  
Over the mountain, past the berm.

Disturbed pebbles mar the pond's smooth face,  
A faraway dust cloud closing space.

Silent trees listen as if holding breath;  
Their ancient roots feel movement shift.

Something beckons something old,  
From far days we thought were gone

And there is home; dear home, we knew  
Still full with dreams, that can't come true.

This we know; and we know it, plain  
But it's the heart, goes back again.

Patti Masterman

# Rising Silence

Dryad of the tangled forest,  
Where do you hide your instruments?  
You know the clouds see your nakedness,  
And the moon, your coquetry.

But why should you sleep all alone-  
Except, you do not sleep;  
Up at any hour, playing away  
Songs that the mortals cannot hear,  
The forest holding its breath in awe:  
Caught under your spell, not to break the rising silence..

Patti Masterman

# River To The Sea

In light measures  
Sky reaches river,  
Like a tributary  
Reaches the sea.

That one's confines  
Must deny the other  
Is just the failure  
Of eyes to see.

Patti Masterman

# Rock Paper Scissors

Rock, paper, scissors; my heart it is fragile  
My baby lives now in this world; am I agile

Enough to survive; if the papers on top  
Of the scissors, or then; if the stone's offered up

To crush the shears metal, can I stay alive?  
It's scary how delicate things are alive;

Rock; my heart sinks like the stone in the well;  
If she dash her foot, then just take me to hell-

Paper; a cut to the heart is such pain;  
Would I want to bring her to life here again-

Scissors; never cut her soul loose from mine  
What words on mere paper could ever define?

Patti Masterman

# Rudis Fabulas

Poor Willie had a funny gait;  
His feet were somewhat spastic,  
Baggy trousers falling down  
Because of tired elastic.

Split the atoms in my brain  
With a tiny hatchet;  
Ask not for whom the slow bells toil,  
The quicker to dispatch it.

Silly Martha stuck her arm  
Beneath a turning ratchet;  
And all of Humpty's buckets, bowls  
Were not enough to catch it.

Split the atoms in my brain  
With a tiny hatchet;  
Ask not for whom the slow bells toil,  
The quicker to dispatch it.

Quick Leon drove his car too fast,  
And soon enough he crashed it;  
We gathered up what we could find  
And in the glove box, stashed it.

Split the atoms in my brain  
With a tiny hatchet;  
Ask not for whom the slow bells toil,  
The quicker to dispatch it.

Old Uncle Amos always wore  
Upon his neck, a gasket;  
One day young Amos pulled it out-  
And now he wears a casket.

Split the atoms in my brain  
With a tiny hatchet;  
Ask not for whom the slow bells toil,  
The quicker to dispatch it.

Patti Masterman

# Ruined Beauty

as fictional things often do  
I without knowing anyone longer  
and no one imagined it away  
and pieces polluted with everyone  
lesser affairs to wrest implacable mind  
you taught me of the hopeless pocketful  
life lived simply more  
and heart was more complex  
than rent paid to a ruined artifact  
you laid it all out but the brass name plate  
and those to which I led you  
they all believed you  
to teach the willing lost  
gone they were, and beautiful  
lost rooms confounded whatever mattered  
and if ever I stumbled in front of a pew  
no whored train led quite the same to you

Patti Masterman

## Ruinous Lover On Blue Satin

The gossip-tongue lies still, in state

On silk pillows; perhaps umbrates

Foretastes of heaven, or of hell-

Though once I knew him very well.

He ruined my days with roving tongue,

Telling deeds best left undone;

Judgment in love's not always best:

Bad memories now are his behest.

Patti Masterman

# Run Away

When the day comes that I must die  
Run, just run away, when I've breathed my last  
Don't stay and stab your eyes,  
Run for sanctuary, run for peace;  
Peace returns the day after next.

When I've departed and left you solitary  
Run away, just find some other eyes,  
Don't stay and lose another day  
From this life, weeping for me;  
Sanity is just around the corner.

When darkness comes to cover your days  
Run, to any happiness you remember,  
Don't give in, don't give up the fight;  
Cause you're fighting for us all-  
And there's nothing you can't conquer.

(written to Ghost of a Rose by Blackmores Night)

Patti Masterman

# Running In Place

I saw your shoes lying there as if abandoned,  
Kicked off in place where you left them:  
One turned on its side, the other several inches away.  
It had the appearance of an explosion that knocked you  
Clear of your shoes, yet left them precisely positioned,  
A sprawling blueprint of your limbs last seized choreographies.  
The same thing happens in the oceans gravid,  
Endlessly moving twilight worlds:  
Shoes are scattered around the Titanic's rusting hulk,  
Even still found in pairs here and there.  
Shoes in perpetually waterlogged, rotten rigor mortis.  
Some have remained together, as if the owner simply shrugged them off  
And went wandering away in search of his lost baggage.  
Evidences of lost soles, in the sodden dust of watery oblivions.  
The thing is, when I saw the shoes, I thought, but he is dead now-  
He has no more need of shoes, so why are these still present,  
Why do they lie there so exposed, waiting to be tripped over by the  
unsuspecting.  
My next incongruous thought was, well maybe I am dead too-  
So how can I be here noticing such a thing anyway:  
A pair of shoes lying there, carelessly discarded?  
Then all at once it swept over me, a great sigh of relief at the remembrance of it:

We are still in the living years; neither has left the other to be all alone yet.  
Could it be me instead, leaving him first, leaving him earthbound;  
Whisked away and wrenched upward out of myself with one farewell gasp?  
But it felt so real for a minute, that confusion, that I knew:  
I knew that it is already there, up ahead, waiting for us.  
Waiting for both of us there, tumbling towards us, coming ever nearer  
With each breath, each heartbeat,  
Each rising and setting of sun:  
A giant meteor hurtling end over end,  
Light years away but moving at the speed of light:  
We could run in place for years but we could never out-run that.

Patti Masterman

# Russian Dolls

The waves are flowing out to space  
Carrying the loveliest of human beauty,  
And the most sorrowful mysteries of mankind  
Into the ether and the farthest reaches:  
Angelic voices and holy chords  
Television, radio, and x-ray  
A swelling wave of human ingenuity  
Never stopping on its way  
Back into the universe beaming  
Goes the love we were vested with  
Love converted once again  
Into cosmic radiation  
To help ignite the new creations  
Incipient explosion.

Patti Masterman

# Rustyard

Looking around at acres of old cars, old ploughs,  
old washing machines, old everything,  
He said that his dad had been a collector, and that  
he must been in love with rust, most of all;  
Traveling miles each week, to pack home the  
latest finds-

Old road graders, once pulled by teams of horses,  
In every conceivable style, Victrolas, old fire trucks,  
Rows of rust-covered, classic trucks and chassis';  
The early models even I remember,  
the clanking noises of my Dad's ancient truck,  
the shifting of its gears conferred with a comfortingly loud noise,  
as if to emphasize that those mysterious knobs on the floor  
indeed had a purpose,  
even if it was invisible to me, a child.

This yard is non-odorous, washed clean repeatedly  
by sun and dew and rain, sanitizing the miles  
of rusting metal and rusted gears and camshafts,  
Old workhorses retired, still with evidences of their labor years,  
like large bumpers welded on, bearing huge hooks,  
Perhaps to straighten a fence, or hold a roped beam firm,  
Or to prod the reticent bull into a trailer or paddock.

We can only imagine what tasks they were entrusted,  
There are few human signs left now; the mostly rotted seats  
With a bit of burlap or batting, lying tattered amongst the springs,  
While weeds and grass slowly overtake, gaining a little each year-  
Even a huge tree rooting itself up through an open hood,  
Fit for the cover of a magazine, about the future of the auto industry.

If machines had souls, would these feel unloved, cast away, used up,  
Standing as mere monuments of other times, most of them antique  
And the slow turning of most of them, to the rusty colors of time's handiwork.  
As if the old blood of our ingenuity were quietly being inbred with the ground  
and dust, now that their work lives are done,  
These penniless pensioners scarcely worth the metal they were made from-  
But in defiance still, they won't fall down.

Patti Masterman

# Sacramentum

Infinity rings inside each atom  
Astride the magma  
Above the plain.

The truth it sings what we can't phantom  
While earth is dancing  
It's on the wing.

A sky seems hollow  
But dreams unnumbered  
Below the thunder we count our own.

Suns all spinning  
Since time beginning  
By some great mystery once were sown.

Patti Masterman

# Safe And Secure

It's alright; here is not where the murders happened;  
Here was not blood spilled flagrantly on stones-  
The jail cells are not visible from here,  
The rebellion can't be heard from this far away:  
Lock the gates safely now; locked away..

No one would dare molest us here,  
We've blocked the whole world out  
And only permitted the beautiful things entrance-  
And some day, somehow we will figure out  
How to cure the impotence of still being alive..

Patti Masterman

# Safe In Your Forever Dream

Your grave must be your bed,  
though I never thought of it that way before;  
we who walk above, while you are embedded  
in sandy soil and clay, snaking roots,  
all the rocks and debris of land.

You're sleeping in earth just above bedrock,  
over long aeons shifting slightly in your sleep,  
like a dried flower invisibly redefines its contours,  
the multi-colored mold encircling like a crown,  
where a creeping, uneven darkness outlines you,  
once heavily pressed against white satin.

All our patterings are muffled nothings down beneath;  
the exclamations, cries, murmurs, whispers-  
only the lawnmower capable of breaking the rigid silence,  
or sometimes a distant thunder  
that shudders the ground around the ones sleeping.

You lie still in your dream, locked-in,  
unknowing that there was never an awakening,  
or that you lie inside the sweating tomb,  
or whether or not there is headstone, plate or brass urn  
to mark your place in this unknown city.

And who stands above at times, or who never comes-  
these are things that can never concern you, because dreams  
are all you know now, softly nestled there where grief and pain,  
age and regret can never reach you: safe in your forever dream.

Patti Masterman

# Safe Is The World In A Mother's Arms

Safe is the world in a mothers arms  
All the bad dreams and monsters kept safely at bay  
As long as that beating heart's not far away  
We never have to fear the wolves of old.

Safe is the world in a lovers arms  
To enfold the days longing in tireless embrace  
The bright eyes of love to burn up all the grief  
We never have to fear the wolves of old.

Safe is the world in a poets arms  
Emotions raw verse to chase away monotony  
At the days end, a beloved dignity  
We never have to fear the wolves of old.

Patti Masterman

# Said Flowers Blooming

said flowers, blooming  
said trees, swaying  
colors, emotions building  
fears and doubts allaying

a poem is built of nothing more  
substantive than a dream  
and peopled with a buoyant hope  
of what a world should be

Patti Masterman

# Salutary Graces

For years I lived my life disguised as a child,  
Pulling myself bodily  
Out of books, with both legs  
Hunting for myself, through the eyes of other characters,  
Hearing their voices coming out instead of mine  
Though there were never enough books  
To satisfy my stillborn ego.

I seemed to live in the read-only memories of adults,  
Who canned fruits and vegetables  
And made sensible meals;  
They who remembered to make me take baths  
And attended PTA meetings  
As though my continued existence depended on it.

There were times I was transposed into a small, bereft house-object  
Or a fierce, howling wolf, in the shelter of trees  
Around a certain lake,  
But they never wavered in their certainty  
That I was indeed, a small human being.

They granted me their practicality and forbearance  
And their fear and superstition too,  
Everything that I might need for the foreseeable future.  
They warned me to stop living in books  
In case the world should suddenly cave in around me someday.

But in my little world, I had found that I was alone,  
Not identifiable by genus or species,  
Not unlike a dog which wrongly assumes it must be human,  
Only because it is cared for by humans every day.  
It was then I realized that I must be an alien,  
Though not allowed to talk about it-  
Not in this world, where one may speak of anything but the truth.

A world where, if once you place something  
It supposedly will always be waiting there, just so,  
Admissible evidence even in a court a law-  
'He left the gun there on the veranda,

And there it was found, one month later'.  
Case closed. Sound of gavel crashing.

A world where one must contain certain intimate emotions,  
Yet loudly proclaim victories or bewail defeats,  
Where subtlety is punished  
And being vociferous is rewarded.  
You must be appropriately labelled or you don't exist;  
If you defy a label, you simply cease to be validated.

And after that there was always my secret knowledge  
Separating me from the rest,  
Who were a seething ocean, where I feared drowning,  
Whose rules I comprehended only with difficulty,  
And from whose society I found books to be the only escape,  
As one escapes from reality in happier dreams,  
But always reawakens again  
To find themselves in just the same condition as before.

No one knows the true purpose of a dream,  
No one knows the true purpose of a life-  
But one is always discounted, and one exemplified.

Patti Masterman

# Same Day In Another Life

I've set 'Somewhere over the Rainbow'  
On auto-play for one thousand times  
As my last badly planned escape.

And while I sit earth-bound in this place  
And hope seems a small varicolored streak  
Visible only in another's distant sky.

I will listen to the endless yearning of that song  
And when the last repetition plays itself out  
Then trust I will know what to do.

Patti Masterman

# Sanctuary

I tremble so violently sometimes  
Like someone who's just given birth-  
The tide's gone out, and left the sand bar unbalanced.  
The images are ripped, torn loose from my raw under belly  
My pregnant dorsal fin  
My Achilles heel: wounded, because I ran away  
But then tripped over my own spear  
Pursued by my own venom,  
The words gush out in my conscious blood  
At a critical moment, when the flow brims  
I choke on my own masochistic chagrin.  
The glib moon prevaricates;  
Stray beams illuminate the ruined castles;  
There's too much nobility to go elsewhere,  
Grown huge and stranded with still born histories  
Impoverished, ignored even by kidnappers  
Sanctuary is a distant dream, an unmarked stop  
On the itinerary of the worthless,  
Once upon a time, places of interest;  
Things not worth stoppering the progress of today for-  
Some dead things just forget to decay.

Patti Masterman

# Sans Parapet

Storm not hidden,  
Face not stitched,  
Presence unbidden  
And heart that skips.

Shadow-sleeping;  
Furtive sighs:  
Echo, echo,  
Threading by.

Carriage rolling,  
Dashing horses-  
Your heart stolen  
By a sorceress

Patti Masterman

# Sante

Like a sailor looks  
To the stars, to get his bearings

Like a tailor looks  
To the seams; how they're faring

Like a doctor listens  
If the heart is pumping strong-

Your words upon the ether  
Always do my body good.

Patti Masterman

## Sarah Jane

Only children have time to count the steps  
From one house to another  
They think in simple terms:  
Janies house is sixty steps away  
If I take steps like a giant-  
Or one hundred steps away if I walk like  
A little bent over Japanese lady,  
Walking with tiny bandaged feet  
The simple truth was that Janie  
Was over-developed for her age,  
And she rode a saddle proudly  
And her house always reeked of old dishwater  
With a greasy undercurrent of spaghetti sauce  
And she could be anywhere by now, or nowhere.

One night I dreamed she had died, somewhere far away  
In her homeostatic life, safe from her indistinguishing past  
She reminded me of one of those pop up targets at carnivals:  
Bigger and more colorful, than the things around her  
Her most outstanding feature  
Her crush, on an invisible boy in Albuquerque  
She plotted and schemed for months how to visit him-  
It perplexed me, because I thought he was her cousin  
Maybe she finally succeeded, vanishing from the  
Local phone book forever  
Perhaps to tack a 'Mrs' before her new last name  
Or maybe to become disenchanted with men forever?  
And there's no prize left to be won now,  
Not even in scraped together dishpan reminisces.

And nothings more clear now than it was then  
As I remember how she'd leave,  
Retrace the few steps back to her front porch  
If I wouldn't agree to her particular plan  
For killing a summers day:  
I can still see her figure, as she slowly made her way,  
Walking stiffly up the garden path  
While I kicked myself for being so stupid  
Surprised all over once more

That she'd really do it again.

Patti Masterman

# Sarcophagi

Slow as a dream, a lazy river,  
Time wanders through our living,  
Slowing a few frames or speeding up;  
Whose mannerisms not well understood  
Holding our bodies, this huge world  
In its fourth-dimensional well.

Metronome hand of causality,  
Counting the breaths we're allowed to breathe;  
And while what is known is to be preferred,  
Time is the one has the last word.

We may try to engrave some lines on time,  
But time becomes implacable sarcophagi.

Patti Masterman

# Save All The Unopened Birthday Cards For The Worst Day Of Your Life

Your skin shines in daylight and scatters the moonlight,  
Your face it flashes, your eyes they float.  
Over and over, in dry land marshes  
Your hair's a beacon, your soul's a boat.

Like trinkets, like treasure  
We keep the measure, of things we'd gather,  
Things we'd store, for hungry days later,  
For sad days behind us; when they'd never mind us,  
These moments we'd pour.

Whose face in the mirror, whether fuzzy or clearer;  
Would I be more dear, if I were a ghost?  
I'd haunt you in passing, my form everlasting  
And give phantom kisses when you needed them most.

Patti Masterman

# Saved Words Are Not Forgotten

A scrap of verse means more  
Than just the tattered paper it is written on.

There are eclipsed dawns, witnessed by few  
And belated long midnights of supernova,  
That ought to be bottled, or distilled to be kept-  
But are poured out into verse, instead.

The dry-docks of canning,  
The vaults of tomorrow,  
Pimped, by a heart;  
Martyred, in a locket.

Saved from fires, floods and meteor showers  
Saved memories, from the harsh taskmaster of time.

At the end of days, a hundred billion curls of scrawled passages  
Will crawl and hurl themselves, on stubby legs,  
Across the seasick ground, in every direction,  
Set free from cubbyholes and teapots and pocketbooks  
While pulsars blink from unsteady darkness.

They contain blood and tears and saliva and lip smudges-  
Still pressed hard-  
Against the DNA of tomorrow's unsaid goodbye.

Wherever hope lives threaded through linen,  
Dropped in blots, upon pressed cotton,  
Saved words are never forgotten-  
As long as the stars keep their orbits.

Patti Masterman

# Savior

To one who truly loves,  
they see the beloved everywhere:  
In the ecstatic flash of lightnings,  
in all weathers, fair or foul, and the turgid wind  
sighing around their foundations.

The days of their life are beating beads  
in a ruby-hued rosary of devotion;  
In far-flung tabernacles of the soul  
there's endless chanting,  
while the white-gowned angels kneel down  
to hold up the cup, of the holy grail of life:  
and they're prostrating themselves,  
at this very minute..

To one who truly loves  
no ocean can be too deep,  
no desert impassable,  
no ice too thick and stymieing  
to finally reach that shrine;  
and even if they be half-dead on arrival,  
they know they can expect a miracle then.

And that Earth would herself turn over  
and heaven empty out completely,  
to aid in their timeless quest.  
For they have all the time in the world, you see:  
For you are their very world of worlds;  
where they have their being, and live each day,  
the place all their murmured prayers ascend to.

So you might ask, how could I know all this?  
I'm saying your first mass  
right now.



# Sax And Violins

Sax and violins, every day,  
The secret of long life, they say;  
Sax in the morning, sax at night,  
And violins from dusk till early light.

Sax and violins hold the key  
To longevity, for you and me;  
Sax as often as you can take it,  
Violins too- you just can't fake it.

Sax and violins, for the masses  
Surely ends most all their clashes:  
Sax and violins; start today  
To live your life a better way.

Patti Masterman

# Say More With Less

Say more, with less of words; use your gestures and confess  
How you won't ruin the silence and forget, the rest  
Understand, that it's best to ensure no censoring  
The day, with all  
Unspoken, the anger and the  
Pain; don't forget to delay, don't forget to say more, with less.

Patti Masterman

# Scarlet And Blue

Fade-away scarlet, fade-away blue  
Fade in the sun for there's nothing to do  
But lie still on tables or on the clothes-line,  
And wait for the one whose heart must be mine.

Mold on the chimney, mold round the well  
Grow well mold; grow, till there's nothing to tell  
Cover the tables and clothes on the line,  
While I wait for the one whose heart must be mine.

Gone is the scarlet, now gone the blue  
Gone are the false, and gone all the true  
Gone tables, and chimney, and the clothes-line;  
And gone is the heart that I thought must be mine.

Patti Masterman

# Scattered Graces

May the great unknown emptiness  
Dwelling in between the pressed glass plates of cathedrals  
Deal with us as it sees fit,

And please help us to remember,  
That people in other cars  
Really can't hear our thoughts;  
Though we can never convince ourselves of this.

And also to remember,  
That our deceased relatives  
Won't be one bit more dead  
If we throw out all that useless stuff  
That they thought of as treasure;  
But which is really mostly rubble.

I ask all this in my name,  
Since I seem to be the only one around.  
Amen.

Patti Masterman

# Schizoid Robots

Schizoid robots are hiding in mops  
With long greasy hairstrands that sway and mock  
Knotty eyes focused on yellowed wall clocks  
As they slide-dance it, across the floor

Their bucket talk scatters the vagrant leaves  
Hides muddy footprints, like sleight-of-hand thieves  
Their water froths out on the ground like a sieve  
When floor water sings, hear how it must roar..

Patti Masterman

# Schrodinger's Cat

Playing both sides of the field  
Has always been my augur of recompense;  
And I can't be a hypocrite, for there's far more  
Than two sides to me now;  
I could never fit into one highly selective college degree  
Of one category only; or ride one solitary train of thought  
To it's purposeful destination, without hopping off  
For the first crossbound train that happened along,  
Simply because I was curious to see where it was going to end up.  
Only later on, I realize I will never see the end of the first line;  
Never rode anything, to it's logical conclusion.  
But then the light enlarges, as if a light bulb had let out a quantum fart;  
Or a dropp of rain hits me square on the third eye,  
And I feel the benediction then, on all my random perturbations:  
I know I am every bit as unlikely and unpredictable  
As any quark, half dead or alive  
Clinging onto the ghost of Schrödinger's Cat.

Patti Masterman

# Sea-Glass Eyes

Sea-glass eyes

They can take me farther;  
The cruise going down through time  
To sightless depths we can't fathom.

Learning to swim at the ocean's mouth,  
Waterwinged angels, flitting through currents  
While drowning somewhere, inside your story-  
Where does one leave off,  
When we've run out of glory?

The umbilical cord trails away  
In a unicorn's lair,  
Or a mermaid's cave;  
Some things more  
Than the sum of their days.

I saw the road opening out in your words,  
I felt the dust storms, coating my dreams;  
Salt water waves gently cleansing my wounds,  
Take me to see the place where you live;  
Vertiginous forests, not made of trees.

I'm burying you deep inside of me now;  
Praying for keeps, when the storm recedes  
Laying pieces of scattered sea glass out;  
Gathering up a lost dowry, of sea;  
Some things we know should always stay free.

Patti Masterman

# Seasons Of The Day

Star forever in the heavens  
Gleam forever in God's eye  
Sparkle down upon our dreaming  
Where the glow becomes the sky.

Silent rainbow in the morning  
Sent by morning star's array  
Drawn into the sun's white orbit  
Where the light becomes the day.

Deepest shadow of the evening  
Hidden by a purple moon  
Shadow clothe the night with splendor  
Gather, darkness, thread the loom.

Patti Masterman

## Second By Second

You cannot read a man's poetry  
without trying on his thoughts,  
even if only for a moment or two.

You cannot read of loss,  
unconfirmed hope, dread or expectation  
without a sense of the minutiae of him,  
harrowing his lonely way through time.

You cannot write a poem  
without placing hidden quantities of yourself  
within, revealing the yet undiscovered  
by the very words you choose.

If life and prosody sometimes get in the way  
of alliteration and pure metaphor,  
well you could hardly be blamed;  
living through each hour tediously, as you do  
second by second by second.

Patti Masterman

# Secret Of My Joy

I used to think all my prayers went unanswered-  
That I could leave and no one care  
But now there's you, and my dreams are new ones  
You are the beauty and the truth  
Of life, so rare.

You are the answer to all  
My questions, you the balm  
To all times wounds. You alone  
Of the world, what I was seeking  
Safe in my heart, you will  
Always have a home.

Patti Masterman

# Secrets Of The Universe

When you're young,  
Everything lasts forever:  
A summer is years long,  
And childhood lasts for eons.  
But as you grow older,  
Things begin to disappear  
And go away. One day  
You look around, and the only  
Familiar thing on the horizon,  
Is yourself, and; if you're lucky,  
A few family members  
Who've been with you  
Through the many changes.  
Maybe that's what makes  
The old seem so wise:  
They've seen everything  
Come and go, so often  
That now, in the beginnings,  
They already see the endings,  
And vice versa.  
Not such a bad way to end up-  
After all- what's a few wrinkles  
In return, for knowing  
All the secrets of the universe?

Patti Masterman

# Selfish

I can feel my life running down  
In the future, just two steps ahead  
Turn left after a dozen more stupefying years:  
There's an impoverished old person waiting there  
Wishing life had been more full of living and  
Not always playing it so safe  
Saving everything for the rainy day that never arrives  
Praying for some wild memories to relive again.  
Maybe I'll become a stalker  
Become a secret agent on a cruise ship  
Take notes down on all the questionable passengers  
Stow away at the end and live off the remains  
Left on plates before the dances end at daybreak  
Eavesdropp on lovers quarrels and perform  
Random acts of kindness, leading to reconciliations  
Throw the wrongly wedded mate overboard so the  
True prince can claim his souls betrothed.  
Sometimes a sin is not a sin  
If it is done selfishly, for the sake of others.

Patti Masterman

# Self-Replication

Self-replication; we do it all day  
In the most mindless abstract ways,  
We copy our feelings, and ditto, our words,  
Never stopping to think, it's absurd:  
Self-replication, till their eyes cross,  
Cause self-replicating makes us feel boss,  
But think of a world, chock full of copies  
Till it cracks wide open, right at the seams;  
Everything would have been heard once already,  
Used up, until there was left no more meaning.

Patti Masterman

# Sell My Soul

Well now I'd sell my soul for a pound  
Of words: all picked clean of ambiguity;  
Rocks and detritus removed,  
Preselected for clarity of meaning  
Predestined for the musical familiarity  
Measured out for rhyme and syncopation  
Delivered by some gum chewing, ball-capped deviant  
Nervously glancing up and down the street  
As he slips me the stash, and I hand over the cash.  
Yes, what a dream; instead of the frown  
Then the squint; with a curse on the scribbled, marked through letters  
Killing, resurrecting, then killing them all over again  
Buried, dug up, and reanimated  
Embalmed, only to be cast again on the bone pile  
Trying to remove the threadbare impressions  
With the worn out, gnawed upon pink eraser  
Drooling, staring at the clock, eating more junk food  
In between the hours of crisis and midnight  
The only right answer being  
To eradicate whatever I like  
And leave alone whatever makes me uncomfortable  
Impossible task: insipidity ruins the brilliance  
The plot's flaccid and lacking moral filibuster  
The characters weep and sing at the wrong times.  
What kind of a racket  
Doesn't even have a black market  
To turn to when you're desperate,  
And you've got to die  
To have your name be remembered,  
If indeed it ever would be.

Patti Masterman

# Sentimentality Yours

I have inherited some family  
who give you unsigned greeting cards  
whenever they are secretly angry  
and think you do not realize it  
on the whole it seems more honest  
than their usual, of writing reams of flowery love  
which they have never exhibited toward me  
because their natural jealousy was too much  
in the way, or else that they were so busy  
singing their own praise to high heaven  
that mine went unspoken and unsung,  
relegated to the dark furtive byways of their heart  
along with all other such reminders  
that they are still not the central hub  
that the universe turns it's alleged somersaults around  
and I'm only slightly cheered at the thought  
of how copious the tears  
they will enjoy shedding over my remains some day

Patti Masterman

# Separation Anxiety

Old television shows are so charming:  
All the women are stupid, or worse;  
The men full of knowing; even fatherly  
Their real careers, protecting the hapless women:  
Edith, clueless; Lucy, bawling;  
Marilyn, childlike.  
Bicycle repairing, inventive male stereotypes abound  
Sometimes in real life it is exactly the same  
But occasionally roles, or even genders, can reverse:  
Now and then one sex becomes so dependent  
Upon the other, while trying to maintain  
At least the appearance of individuality  
That should the other one attempt to separate  
From the union  
The needy one feels it necessary  
To demonstrate their sovereignty  
By murder; even if their only such act  
The results follow them  
Everywhere they go  
Their reputation ever precedes them  
Nobody ever sees  
The motivation, the hollowness,  
The fear of being abandoned.  
Even your worst nightmare of a violent prisoner  
Described the idea of being released from jail  
Like being a tiny little sailboat  
Tossed about helplessly by an uncontrollable sea  
When parole boards convene, the mean get meaner  
To avoid the one truly terrifying spectre: being free  
At least one knows all the rules in captivity's zoo.

Patti Masterman

# Shabby Chic Poetry

My poetry's really meant as decoration  
For the days of life that we get rationed;  
My lines for scrapbooks, wrapped around vases;  
Words embroidered utilitarian places.

My words antimacassars for things nearby;  
Some dangling sentences passing by,  
Upon the latest quilt or jewelry box;  
Or purse, or duffle, or coffee mug.

Please use my poems as flourishes and frills,  
To substitute for things sans time to feel;  
Shabby chic poetry, for every need:  
Then there's always something to read.

Patti Masterman

# Shadows, Light And Clouds

We play hide and seek worst of all  
From ourselves: see the ancient summers  
Intaglio of shadow and light, cloud and rain  
Even if every droning locust were replaced  
By a cry of here once was I; there I was going by  
I can't catch up anymore-

The game has gone on too long  
The seasons are folding in on each other  
I see myself climbing over rocks, chasing rainbows  
Looking up to catch a glimpse, behind the clouds  
Disappearing sun of childhood, and now middle age comes;  
Hurrying around a bend, ahead lies the river of slow forgetting  
It's liquid silver light flowing moonlit shadows  
It will carry me for miles before I come back to myself again-

Coming back to something I never really knew  
Turn your head one degree and it's different  
The angle lets light in from a thousand possible directions  
Careful or you won't recognize anyone again  
You could be lost for eons, shadowed by dissolution  
We play hide and seek in our original self containment:  
The game life invented for us-

Until the world hides us forever again under it's clouded wing  
And we dissolve back in solution  
Like fine shadowed sediment suspended in a little sea  
A forever sea that courses along singing  
With a musical little voice, of all that's left of us  
We are life's living memory of itself, always in the forgetting  
That it's a game and we're just the indulgence  
Of a sometimes summer world that likes playing  
With shadows, light and clouds.

Patti Masterman

# Shall I Go

Shall I go to where no breath is  
Shall I go, emptied of fear and desire  
Mindful that I am not the body  
Shall I go within a blossoming white peace  
On a cool, tranquil breeze  
Shall go, never doubting my destination  
Go unto rest and fullness of spirit  
Completeness that was left behind  
When I took my first breath  
Home, only there, shall I be going.

Patti Masterman

# Shameless Self-Aggrandizement

Shameless self-aggrandizement  
Must always make one smile,  
Because they think they're at the brink-  
When really; countless miles

Lie between the moon, and back:  
The distance they must run  
While they think on them, we'll wait  
To grab their rising sun.

Instead, there is an eclipse-  
Which puts their light to bed;  
Leaves but a single candles-watt,  
To burn in their dim head.

The words they thought would lift them,  
To share the sky, with stars,  
Should probably be exiled  
To Venus then, or Mars.

Like impatient children,  
They cannot wait the prize:  
Their legend grown immensely  
Only in their own large eyes.

Patti Masterman

# She

she, who once deserted you;  
took your children away, when she left you,  
storm brewing inside that abandoned  
bastardized citadel of self,  
left you with only the fangs  
and the instinct, born of pain,  
to inject all your impotent rage  
into every other female  
who came near enough-  
but perhaps those petrified kisses, too  
were already full of an immature venom  
just biding it's time, to sicken and maim..

Patti Masterman

# She Dreamed Of Daisies

She dreamed of Daisies in the nights  
After crying herself to sleep again,  
Wondering why Daddy didn't love her  
And how many daddy's did most girls have;  
She'd had seven or eight, at least.

She dreamed of Daisies and awakened  
To a world where she was in the way,  
She tried to be invisible, tried to be good  
Tried not to cry, but it never worked;  
If only she left, there might be some peace.

She was locked out one night  
The lights were on, but no one came,  
Frozen snow swirled; there was nowhere to run  
She fell down in the snow, dreaming warm springs,  
Where all the shivering finally ceased..

And awoke to find huge fields of Daisies,  
And never more was afraid, in the least.

Patti Masterman

# She Had Wet Looking Eyes

She had wet looking eyes went straight to your heart  
And greasy locks and a throat that talked  
It's own secret language  
To open collars and unbuttoned blouses  
That you bent your head to, so you wouldn't get left out

She left sentences dangling and legs that, gangling  
Seemed always in the way  
Gesticulating wildly while her gait let something  
Desirable, loose in the world-  
Bet you lost all your bets on that crazy-ass girl

She got wild political ideas, though not very original  
Like old Tarot cards, left over from the radical  
Sixties, but she's straight out of the pages  
Of some avante-garde novel  
That you stayed up all night reading  
In college to impress some high-class girl

You should have met her earlier  
But she was just another girly  
You'd have left in the dark;  
And now she's quite sincerely interested  
In intimate conversation and low key wine drinking  
Cross legged in the park.

And you know with her you'd want to  
Elaborate the principles of non-linear thinking  
And comparative distortions  
Of the war between the sexes-  
But now you can't even talk.

Patti Masterman

# She Has Old Eyes

She has old eyes,  
Old soul; a crone:  
Flies high as a kite, lighter than stone  
Who's seen everything and lived alone  
Now her days are longer and nights disappear  
In the blink of a loon, behind a loitering moon.

Her life more real than the things she's feared  
Her fingers long, her grasp still strong.  
Her breathing words can paint a world complete;  
Or a path for wandering, worldly feet.

She's grown more wise, as her hair turned gray  
Though her sleep is light, and she naps by day  
Gives good advice, and you need not pay-  
But you're never quite sure just what she'll say.

Patti Masterman

# She Looked Toward Tomorrow

She lays in her grave like an empty house  
Stands on an empty street,  
Done with the giving and receiving,  
No more concern, for feet-

Feet across the threshold,  
Or hands, upon the door;  
Nothing in the mailbox,  
No letters, anymore.

She looks at eternal emptiness  
With neither smile nor frown,  
And sees nothing, and neither hears,  
For deep down, there's no sound.

She's passed the boundary of earth,  
She's far past deepest space;  
She's farther than she'd ever been,  
And of her, there's no trace.

Her place in me's not empty,  
It's filled up by her light,  
The one time she came back to me-  
Perhaps- to say goodbye.

She showed that death's no ending,  
And let me see her face  
Devoid of its earthly clothes:  
A countenance, of grace.

Was only grace, was left there,  
And not an ounce of sorrow;  
Not one molecules regret:  
She looked toward tomorrow.

Patti Masterman

# She Was Eaten By A Rhyme

She was eaten by a rhyme,  
Alas; so sad, so true-  
It started with her toes,  
Which wiggled, then turned blue.

It slowly ate her ankles,  
Which were knobby, round and hard;  
And adjectives which came to mind,  
Was happy, to discard.

It moved up to her knees  
As smoothly as you please,  
Though they were knobby too-  
They went down, with no adieu.

Her hips were slightly wider,  
Which perplexed the monster-rhyme,  
Till it opened jaws, like adders-  
And they went down just fine.

Her torso was quite long,  
Somewhat like an endless song;  
The rhyme went past her navel,  
Pretending it was at table.

Her chest was heaving gently,  
And the rhyme thought of some verbs-  
But never stopped to pick one,  
Since swallowing was one word.

Her neck was fine and sparrowlike;  
The rhyme did not slow down-  
But then it spied the brain above,  
And gulped it swiftly down.

Now she is gone,  
And all that's there instead,  
Is just some pages of some books,  
And a lump of greyish lead.

So for all you nay-sayers,  
Who think that rhymes are tame-  
Let this be a lesson  
No one has to learn again.

Patti Masterman

# Sheep Clothing

Spam; awkward tin-canned messages spilling over the dam  
Mom fell down best ink cartridges buy one get one free  
Does she know your secret for making her scream gold rolex dvd  
Your boss called day off valium painkillers at bottom feeder prices  
Brother in infirmary VIAGRA for old mans vices

The dead rise again leather wallets in every style  
Fat bust belly dancers lose weight look fetching free trial  
We lie and cheat- but we don't steal cause man; we've got the deal  
For you: to chew the fat and buy some crap, or two  
Pay day loans and women's moans come true  
Check out our clout and we won't pout- for real!

Patti Masterman

# Shell Game

We're born half-blind,  
shrieking, covered in blood-  
and we tear our writhing body,  
from another's living being.  
Life can only come from life,  
it's blood for blood,  
a body for a body;  
something much greater  
has assembled us  
from the many parts of itself.

And because of our immersion,  
our favored position in the galaxy,  
near all the innermost secrets  
of complexity,  
some hidden part of ourselves  
can now construct a universe  
entirely from scratch:

Even now, universes are sprouting inside,  
just waiting for the next quickening to arrive-  
our little puppet personality is only a shell,  
cradling an explosive event.

Patti Masterman

# She's All Piano Legs

She's all piano legs  
And benchmarked pride;  
Careful as the notes of an Italian sonata,  
Musicality keeping her upright  
When gravity makes her too heavy to move.  
Her sleeping notes quake imperceptibly  
At the bottom of the scale,  
While her high notes tap it out  
Highstrung, across the ceiling.

Or her two legs might make a sudden movement;  
Then a novel melody breaks, mid-stride.

Patti Masterman

# She's Gone To See A Baby In North Dakota

She didn't die, she didn't die,  
It's no use to cry, no use to sigh;  
We wear person-hood like suits of flesh,  
Change it out sooner or later, for fresh.

She's only going some place else,  
Gone to see a baby in North Dakota-  
She's not gone, she's coming back;  
She didn't die, it's no use to cry.

Patti Masterman

# Shiva's Dancing

Earthquakes rumble,  
Tall mountains crumble,  
Man made humble-  
Shiva's dancing.

Galaxies colliding,  
Universe ever-widening,  
Crust on mantle riding-  
Shiva's dancing.

Swollen suns exploding,  
Neutron stars imploding,  
Cause/effect unfolding-  
Shiva's dancing.

Chops out all the weeds,  
Removes the sterile seeds,  
As he whirls and prances-  
Forever Shiva dances.

Patti Masterman

# Shoes Walk Shuddering Through Skylights

Shoes walk shuddering through skylights  
Whose soles trip thinly over tinpan words  
Trussed and tucked into frayed tangled laces.

Silly phrases go skating on thin ice  
Scarred leather can do scant justice  
When tired sneakers tread where angels cannot go.

Patti Masterman

# Shoot The Lying Moon

Shoot the lying moon  
And throw the wilted flowers  
Out the door,

Melt down all the heart  
Shaped chocolates;  
Admit lying love, no more.

Give the cards back  
To the lovers, who claimed  
Yours, the only one-

Living will be much the easier,  
When the pain  
And glory's done.

Patti Masterman

# Shopping Spree

Once a nameless woman went on a shopping spree  
And started a revolutionary movement,  
Without even realizing it; strolling through miles and miles  
Of underground malls, with fake palm trees and scentless orange groves.

Returning home, all the store mannequins fell into step  
Behind her, and shadowed her going into the apartment building,  
Up 20 flights of stairs; thousands of empty rooms,  
Each one with a bone cross, nailed above the door,  
All the doors unlocked with the same skeleton key.

And then they all went downtown, to volunteer for Selective Service,  
On the Day of the Dead,  
Where they had all their limbs sawed off  
While the rosary was recited;  
Over bathtubs, of molten blood,  
And they all died martyrs deaths  
And went into battle, on the bodies of bionic soldiers;  
Then were buried along with them, in their caskets.

On the third day, the dead arms and legs rose again,  
Tapping on the insides of the coffins, their prearranged code  
Upon hearing their clarion call, the noon whistle;  
While the shade from the trees bleached out the grass,  
And while women went shopping, and started revolutions  
And while plastic saints sipped scentless orange drinks  
Under the manacled sun.

And then we all prayed to the mannequin god, fastened to a bone cross,  
Between two skeletons,  
Over a basin of fake blood  
And Who wept sun-bleached tears  
And Whose shoes never quite matched anything.

Nov.8 2009

Patti Masterman

# Shopping Trip

Bright colors and words swirling round us;  
Mother and me, passing like a slow parade.  
She, veering left, while I floated on by  
Like a small, fascinated child.  
Then noticing, she was missing,  
Returning to the greeting card display  
Heartfelt, hand-illustrated,  
Wonderfully crisp and white-  
Just in time, to catch a tear  
Half-strangled sob.  
I was clueless that day  
I patted her arm and led her  
Out of that aisle  
Since it made her unhappy,  
Somehow, being there  
From that day forward,  
I felt myself to be the parent.

Patti Masterman

# Short Men Devastate Most, My Heart

short men  
devastate  
most, my heart  
for when  
they display  
that trait  
it's art  
which against  
I can't win  
or overstate  
how short men  
devastate  
my squat heart

short men  
full of grace  
dwell within  
where no sin  
could deface  
that holy hymn  
begin again  
to only praise  
the length, of him  
bottle spin  
at the end  
hands down  
he'll win

Patti Masterman

# Should Time Stand Still

I am not afraid of that  
Indomitably abstract spirit of things  
That do not make sense, yet refuse  
To disappear, or vanish like a dreamers  
Last dream at wakings precipice.  
Yet I admit to fear about  
What I might be turning into;  
A dark, fossilizing stalagmite  
In the shallow gravity of the worlds  
Exuberant refusal to slow down for  
Anything or anyone, in the track  
Made by the wheel of life's turning,  
And in the stripped out threads and fastenings,  
And if I should turn into the sum of all  
My thinking, these many years past,  
Would I recognize myself now from back then,  
Or remember who I once was,  
And how could it matter in the end?

Patti Masterman

# Shouting To Listen

The mother, the daughter  
The six o'clock bus;  
The screams on the news,  
The fights between us.

Late dinners and meeting's  
And not enough time,  
Rushing to market  
To stop on the dime.

Not enough money  
And no one's sincere;  
I'm shouting to listen  
But no one can hear.

Patti Masterman

# Showing Her The Universe

I try to show her the universe without a telescope  
I take one of her hands-  
This bracelet opened up is the Milky Way galaxy; these spheres of lace  
woven so intricately

And the knitting needles are the star beams  
The fabric of space is seamless;  
Look, inside your eye is a wayfaring nebula  
Far from it's home constellation

Our heartbeats are woven from the dark spaces  
Between the conjugated matter,  
Frozen into time and dimensions

Love is the singularity;  
Home is where the heart is beating,  
And light is the substance that sings  
The background song of creation  
And how we are covered with it, inside and out-

Take a breath, and then see  
That you are moving only light-  
I stop and kiss her hand  
And her eyes light up with understanding.

Patti Masterman

# Signaling In Darkness

The universe is full of smoke rings;  
Ceaseless signals, signaling in darkness,  
Where we had to grow here, inside its fecund heart  
Growing first in dark, secret grottoes.

In ancient oceans and primeval meadows,  
Sewn like milkweed and stinging nettle,  
Heir apparent of the sole surviving,  
Sleight of hand and feint of heart.

Playing time backward, to see our causes,  
Feeling held back now, like gated cattle,  
Straining at our paddocks of earth,  
Yearning for something past our birth.

Smoke rings go up, never to return;  
While complacency singe- but never burn.

Patti Masterman

# Signed In Herringbone

The man in the shroud appeared at my door  
Impersonating Three-in-One persons  
With his Two-D visage.  
He said if I ironed him, a reversed negative image would appear  
On the other side of him.

But I wanted to know,  
Where are the wine stains from the Last Supper?  
He replied that he'd changed clothing  
Many times since that day.  
The flora was exquisitely exact, he said-  
Even the Calcium Carbonate signature of the cave was there.

I asked if it weren't all just a fake  
And he asked me if we had the science yet to make even one?  
And then he raised his arm  
And called down one giga-bolt of the Infinite universal X-ray  
With which he burned himself into my memory forever.

Patti Masterman

# Silence

Getting older holds unexpected privilege:

You no longer care so much what others think of you  
Pretensions start to go away; just like the smooth countenance,  
The flexible joints, and your original hair color.

You begin to realize that the world will not end  
If somebody becomes dissatisfied with your being  
Or your opinion; and the relationships you thought  
Must be maintained at any cost, even unto death  
Or dissolution, suddenly require reassessing.

You just don't have that extra energy anymore, for things  
Which always consume more than they provide:  
My mother in law moved into our house, and she followed me  
From room to room, to endless room; night and day, day and night  
Very often we were alone, she and I

And gradually, in the padded cell of our singular isolation  
Fomenting together, her running banter began to change  
Into a sort of barbed surgery, ever aiming for my vulnerabilities,  
Insecurities, regrets- perhaps she was in pain, herself  
And it may be that she wanted to share

That special gift with me, until suddenly- I had to cut her loose:  
I have never given much warning; the only way I have ever known  
Is to accept as much as I can bear, with whatever grace I can muster  
Of things from which the escape seems hidden  
Almost as if there were no other choice for me

Until one more dropp of it would have strangled me,  
Poisoned my soul and broken my fragile self worth; until the pill  
Of the next bitter revolution arrives; and then I run,  
I do not saunter, from the room, from the monster of my nightmares  
For her part, she may still be in shock that I had courage to say

Enough: for she had found my limits, which I never suspected  
Were there: and so to her I must say, thank you  
For helping me locate my limits; now I know I can survive anything.  
At the end of time, I know that I will wish I could say a kindly word

Again to her, instead of saying to her only silence.

Patti Masterman

# Silence Alone

This is the only life there is  
This is not an audition for a life  
This is the end-all, be-all, free-for-all of a life  
For any once creature ever living or dead-  
You cannot hit the reset button  
You cannot hit the reset button.

If you step on a crack no one's taken back  
If you walk beneath a ladder it won't really matter  
If you break a black mirror it won't kill a seer,  
But this is the only life there is, take it or break it,  
Might as well make it last.

This life is the problem you never had the answer to  
This life is the answer to questions half mad,  
This is it, the code-key answer to a-plan-for-a-man  
Give it away or keep it, it's all the same;  
You can't win this game  
And there's no one to blame.

This is the only life there is  
Because it's the only life you have,  
And you can't send it back-  
You're on an unknown track.

Don't ask anyone why you're here:  
They might know even less or point the wrong directions.  
But why here somewhere, instead of nowhere?  
No is the answer you must be content with-  
And silence alone, you know's your only answer..

Patti Masterman

# Silence In Yekaterinburg

They herded them in the cellar,  
like dumb animals to the slaughter,  
at the bottom of the stairs,  
and into the lowest level of that house,  
where they began firing their weapons at them,  
in the small room.

And precious gems, that had been sewn  
into the hemlines and undergarments  
of the women of the royal family,  
in one last attempt to keep them on their persons,  
where maybe they could be saved  
(or possibly used even to buy back their freedom)  
sometimes were struck by the bullets,  
which were turned aside, by them-  
some of the bullets came ricocheting back,  
at the shooters  
because of these hidden jewels,  
and nobody knew why.

This began to frighten  
some of the assassins,  
who threw their guns down, and rushed out;  
shaking and trembling,  
they ran outside of the house,  
vowing to have no further part in this plot:  
They had thought it proof that god himself  
was looking after the family,  
who were known to be steadfast in their devotions;  
it must be His own refusal, to allow them to be ambushed,  
that was mysteriously at work in the cellar..

And even when they were all finally removed,  
the dead, the dying, and the bleeding,  
from that place, some of those men still refused  
even to go back inside;  
too fearful to help with the clean up afterwards.

And then they hid all the bodies

of the royal jewels of the monarchy  
in an unmarked, mass grave,  
and afterwards someone was heard to boast,  
The world will never know what we did with them.  
But even the tall trees, and even the dark dirt  
Could not remain forever silent..

Patti Masterman

# Silent Singing

My baby is a gentleman-  
Gentle beyond words;  
Thinking things never heard:  
A man beyond time,  
Never quite mine.

My baby is a star-man-  
Come from afar;  
Words don't trouble him:  
He lived on a star,  
Where no words are.

My baby is a music-man-  
Notes his domain;  
Where words are nothing  
Except a refrain,  
Chorus his brain.

Patti Masterman

# Simulacrum

The stormy petrel scans the blue waters  
In the depths a starfish hunts its mate  
Mermaid dozes in watery caverns  
Dreaming the seahorse chases her-  
Each one aware only of his own part  
In a world subtracted from the larger reality:  
All are sovereign inhabitants of my bracelet,  
Unperturbed by anything outside  
They live in metallic orbits  
In their minute world, I am god;  
Rumored to exist but too vast to be seen  
Surrounding them in every direction  
There is no place where I am not.

Patti Masterman

# Sing A Song Of Life

The counterpoint of life so fine-  
All those minute threads, all those warps;  
Weaving the color scheme divine.  
It takes my breath; it stirs my sleep,  
Unceasing, toward action it prefers:  
The currents of being run fast and deep.  
I become all those things around me seen,  
As the mineral, the rocks it would caress  
Along it's travel down rocky bedded stream.  
By constant friction, reveal a polished stone;  
Either coal or diamond, it's all the same:  
Hardness no fault, when by God you're hone.  
No distinction made, as men value things-  
To become and not be static is the standard;  
Every living thing of it's own creation sings.

Patti Masterman

# Sing Auld Lang Syne

Sing Auld Lang Syne,  
for the dollar;  
For the dollar, that now  
Is dead  
Courtesy of banks,  
so fallow  
With compliments  
of the Fed.

Sing Auld Lang Syne  
for the country  
That stood for justice  
and peace.  
But now keeps in mind  
the leaf on the vine,  
And the fields of  
Poppies, so deep.

Sing Auld Lang Syne  
for the dreams,  
That nourished a world,  
yet asleep:  
That has woken now,  
and garlanded it's brow;  
And that's taking our Torch  
for keeps.

Patti Masterman

# Sing Little Sparrow

Sing little Sparrow;  
Sing till Winter's dead-  
Life is short or long, little Sparrow,  
But happier without dread.

Sing little Sparrow,  
Till the winds have gone away-  
It doesn't take a full grown gale,  
To speed you on your way.

Sing little Sparrow;  
Fasten all your heart upon it-  
Till Winter takes his aged face  
And Spring puts on her bonnet.

Patti Masterman

# Sing The Anthropomorphic Song

Sing the anthropomorphic song

For everything that has a face,

Everywhere and every place;

Of the human, find a trace-

Sing the anthropomorphic song.

Sing the anthropomorphic song

To things don't love, and have no heart;

Imagination's got the art-

With them, you won't need to part-

Sing the anthropomorphic song.

Patti Masterman

# Sing The World Into Being

Sing the world into being,  
Sing the world into song;  
Include all the wonder you're seeing,  
To coax the notes along.

Sing the song of your presence,  
For the tune is never wrong;  
The melody your heart keeps repeating  
To fill your whole life long.

Patti Masterman

# Singularity

The actors eyes talk beyond their lines  
And their mouths seem to look far ahead of the moment,  
Their hands playing restlessly in tiny movements,  
as if the future were coming in way too soon to be able to react.

There is almost no movement to be seen,  
but millions of things are happening invisibly now-  
Besides the camera man thinking of how he really needs a drink,  
The lead actress wondering about the spinach she ate at lunch break,  
And if it is on her front teeth now, if it will show up on film.

The actors are all communicating without words now  
Their eyes glinting with extra-normal meanings,  
The boards flash more and more rapidly  
with takes and outtakes, speaking in thick, chalky numerical tongues.  
They seem aware the slightest gestures now can mean  
either total annihilation  
or exhilarating acceleration.  
They are feeling a little woozy but can't recall drinking any alcohol  
or taking pills. Everything feels just a little unreal.

They are beginning to lift off the ground, when they mouth their lines.  
The sound people run about inanely, lifting the mics into the air  
To catch their last sounds; the cameras from on high  
having to back up, just to keep them barely in the sights.  
It's no use trying to continue filming, but nobody has given the order  
to stop; everyone is too surprised.

The actors movements are still perfectly in tandem;  
they have rehearsed them so many times now-  
though an opaquely flat blackness looms directly above,  
an unknown factor among the shifting scenes,  
where previously every minute detail was too familiar-  
and there are small flashes of something like lightning, visible behind it.

Their lips still moving, but now forming into only soundless sentences;  
or else, something is making the words inaudible,  
something reaching out from above and sucking everything into itself-  
even sound- even light-

even their memories, which are fading now  
but they haven't had time to realize it yet-

Wardrobes of costumes are beginning to follow them up,  
and props, and cameras; caught in a vortex, a strange tornado,  
All of it spinning madly out of control now, picking up speed  
At the edge of the singularity.

The director remains behind, too quietly in his chair, trying to figure it all out,  
How best to profit from this new venue, aware of the challenging difficulties;  
Of new cutting-edge science discoveries that might be required,  
he finds that he is apparently thinking faster and faster  
as if the brains brakes have ceased to work  
as if the clutch of his mind is stuck in high gear-  
and then he too is sucked upward without warning,  
the last sight of him a shocked expression, as of falling off the earth-  
into nothing- as if it were a destination in itself.

The set is empty now,  
No one will drive the cars back to anywhere.  
Above the buildings there is a slight popping noise,  
And then nothing left- anywhere- nothing at all,  
Nothing to show it was once an entire assembly,  
a veritable hive of film-making activities and apparatus.

Nothing but the wind sweeping across the parking lot  
and a story plot completely disappeared-  
A story that was all too full, of latent possibility.

Patti Masterman

# Sinister And Dexter

Sinister and Dexter went for a ride,  
With Sinister in front, and Dexter beside,  
As the carriage went left, the carriage went right-  
Too wide of the center; left Dexter behind.

So now on the left Dexter's wont to be,  
While right-sitting Sinister protests valiantly;  
The boys are reversed, as they're going to town-  
But when they return, they're all turned around.

Patti Masterman

# Six Stone Deep

six stone deep  
i buried her baby  
because she'd walked asleep-  
for fear she'd dig it up maybe

it died in early spring  
the flowers had just budded  
i took it in the night  
planted it softly mudded

then a month went by-  
then two; then half a year  
by winter's end I found  
a tree was living there

she saw the tree that grew  
she kept it in her sight  
last thing, before she slept  
she'd kiss the tree goodnight

would greet the tree each day  
and kiss it's tiny bower  
one day in early spring  
there bloomed the palest flower

she plucked it wet with dew  
and took it to her room  
when she didn't appear again  
i found her there at noon

they buried her the same way  
her hands upon her chest  
the bloom upon her face  
fast to her lips was pressed

Patti Masterman

# Sleep And Other Anachronisms

Sleep lies caught up in the curtains, in day times;  
Curled in on itself, against the brightness of the day,  
Squinting among the abandoned dreams from last night,  
Still lying scattered, like discarded New Year's decorations.

The prying eyes of the awakened world are trying, straining  
To peer through each pinhole, of the loose linens's weave-  
And the hands- sudden hands that clutch and move the stiff fabric aside-  
More dream than real- are gone in a flash, as if they never were.

A variegated lightning storm passes among the panes  
With each cars headlights, tail lights;  
Flashing a warning against late sleepers, in a constant migrainiers Morse code.

Now the rain comes tap-tapping on the windows,  
As if trying to awaken bleary-eyed Sleep,  
From its sacrilegious habit of napping.  
The thunder seems to moan distinctly; a far off deliciousness,  
Murmuring about laze-a-beds, who never amount to anything..

Birds are busy outside, their beady eyes jumping  
Looking for tidbits, left-overs of night terrors;  
A crumb from the anachronisms of constellations now invisible,  
Back from the days when they were called terrible lizards,  
As the night owls hide their heads beneath their wings.

The janitor appears to sweep all the glitzy remnants away-  
Some caught, some still crinkly, still iridescent with stars-  
In his rake, in his brooms-  
He trails the glittery fallen stars all the way to the dumpster  
And deposits them there, to wait for the regenerating effects of sunset.

And sleep stretches, then; yawns indigently, and starts to stir itself finally.  
A surfeit of dreams has been building all day,  
Hidden from the brilliant contaminant of sun,  
Peaking the mammal's melatonin,  
Preparing to fill all the light with shadow, instead:  
Soon the curtain comes down once more..



# Sleep Apnea

Try to sleep,  
and then try to dream, even-  
Even though your tongue  
blocks your throat,  
Even if the still air eludes sleep;  
Try to remember just how many Judas,  
how many Hitlers, have owned this world  
and everything in it.

Then, if you still have some oxygen left,  
try to recollect, to reflect upon  
How many have died uselessly,  
from accident or misunderstanding;  
Died hopelessly, futilely, died lacking dignity-  
Strangling on the dry, stagnant air of desperation,  
Choking quietly, into the pillow of fetid graves.

Patti Masterman

# Sleep In Dreams

Sleep in dreams:

Raw found data, of what it seemed  
Deaf voices, carrying sound  
As we ripped out all the seams.

Stop the parade:

You know the execution's stayed  
Mad men come very cheap  
On the edge of a razor's blade.

Life's just a bauble's glint:

Antidote, for where the poison went  
Want to leave behind this carnival  
Before my heart becomes a barnacle.

Patti Masterman

# Sleep In Many Dreams

Sleep in many dreams,  
Of deep forests indigo,  
And let your mind just wander,  
Like a feather, falling slow.

Go find the farthest shore  
Of a clustered galaxy,  
Or clouded edge of cosmos,  
Where wormholes go for free.

Go be a speck of paint  
Upon a ladies wall,  
And look into her mind,  
Where no one ever saw.

And deep inside a well,  
The clouds are floating by,  
A bird of prey is watching;  
You're the highlight in his eye.

Now stand beside the door  
Of the white brick hospital,  
And see the new freed souls,  
Floating up above so tall.

By the tree beside the church,  
Is a buried treasure chest,  
Full of everything you've ever lost-  
The things that you loved best.

The night is very brief,  
When you travel all the world,  
And you see the birthing morning,  
By the fading stars unfurled,

So don't forget to climb  
Back into your own bed,  
And find that thread once more,  
Of where you first began..

Patti Masterman

# Sleep Soundly Curse - Pantoum

There are thoughts I'd not allow to think, of you;  
Though they carry you off in your sleep some night;  
These words I shall not write down of you:  
Asleep in my past, where you have no right.

They'll carry you off in your sleep, some night;  
Beware, beware, for the time is late,  
Sound asleep in the past, where you've no right,  
An interloper seals his certain fate.

Beware, beware, for the time is late,  
And you will die, inside those walls,  
An interloper seals his certain fate;  
Sleep soundly: till the anvil falls.

And you will die, inside those walls;  
The ghosts of my loved ones number your breaths,  
So sleep soundly, till that anvil falls;  
For every nightmare's a new little death.

The ghosts of my loved ones number your breaths;  
Though there are thoughts I'd not think of you,  
And every nightmare's a new little death-  
Though I'll write nothing down, of you.

Patti Masterman

# Sleep With The Lights On

Sleep with the lights on-  
And though curtains may flutter,  
The sun won't peek through.

Sleep with the lights on  
Though candles might stutter,  
The outside stays blue.

Sleep with the lights on;  
While the traffic still sputters,  
There's nothing to do.

Sleep with the lights on  
So when that thing is hunting-  
You'll know it's found you.

Patti Masterman

# Sliding Scale Lifestyles

Casual life mocks those who face annihilation;  
The clocks and calendars and day planners galore-  
Who wants to be surrounded with ticking time bombs,  
When time's the very thing they soon will have no more?

Who has time to plan formal dinner parties for ten  
And worry if upholstery needs steamcleaned or not-  
When you find out you come with an expiration notice-  
Creative consumption no longer hits the spot.

Imagine listening to upwardly- mobile people,  
Planning tedious lives to the very last whim-  
When you scarcely have time to decide which possessions  
To dispose of, before it all gets too dim.

All your things will still be around when you're not-  
They don't need you to exist, and they won't go with you;  
All the things you thought you could never do without;  
Without a body there's not much that you can do.

For the soul that's soon facing it's own extinction,  
Fad diets and exotic body gyms just aren't it.  
The latest, most modern decorating palettes  
Are all wasted, when feces brown is where you sit.

It seems funny there should be different programs,  
Different agendas for the youthful and the mature;  
For the long-lived and the terminal- separate ways to do it:  
A sliding scale of shallowness till you reach room temperature.

Patti Masterman

# Slow Down Time

Life don't ever leave these days:  
When I can look my loved ones eyes-  
And not ever have to turn away.

Though work be endless as the night,  
As long as I still have him near,  
Every day must fill with light.

Life don't ever leave these days,  
For yearning most of forever lasts,  
And I have words I mean to say;  
Go slow and slower, time that pass.

Patti Masterman

## Slow Music's Best

Slow music's best, if you would find  
Bright stars above, and hidden paths-  
Though rarest music lives behind  
Our loved one's sigh, or loved one's laugh.

Within their eyes, the way is clear;  
You don't need light, or map, or sign,  
For entrance through that door, so dear;  
Or hidden insight, to their mind.

No novelty can take the place  
Of finding welcome there, each minute;  
A well-worn window, is their face-  
No need to find their heart: you're in it.

Patti Masterman

# Slow Wings

The anatomy of my desire:  
To find the one who is my complement;  
Long nights sleeping, while I awaken;  
Long days awake, while I drowse  
Tentatively, among curling wisps of tendrils  
On your neck, tracing the path  
Of older tears, that you no longer need to weep.  
Wherever there is a moon whispering in your sighs,  
There will be stars answering in my fingertips.

Comets blossom in your eyes colorless highlight,  
Part earth, part sky; a twilight past earthly limits  
To travel briefly, to where I cannot go.  
Chameleon-like, we change into the other;  
Glancing accidentally into a mirror.  
I give you all freedom, so you do not turn away;  
You give me warmth of joy, and all the rarest days.  
Others may not intrude wherever we are together;  
Though they circle and spin themselves, into our center,  
They are whirled out again, by the reflex of repulsion.

I would kiss both your hands as the most precious,  
Fragile petals, of all your bursting kindness and bravado;  
Eternity sprouts fresh singularities, upon a single word from you;  
The planets orbs run backward, when you turn to leave a room,  
And ruminant angels burst into sounding sobs.  
The gods once overthrew a world, to seek one such as you,  
And in every echo, dwells a syllable'd piece of your past.  
In your steadfast gaze, an emptied heart grows full;  
Your touch turns worlds life-giving,  
While your absence turns out the light.

I am filled up by you, I run to gather in all the stray,  
half-forgotten moments;  
In you are found all things, that can lift slow wings to fly...

Patti Masterman

# Slowly Drowning

The worst pain that I ever knew,  
Out of all the days and pains I've known,  
Was the day you chose her side, to mine-  
And shamed me, to be true to her.

And although she never knew what passed,  
And only strangers heard your words,  
I can't forget the voice, the look:  
The doom that knew, your heart was hers.

And you may still be here with me,  
And we may still look like a pair;  
But those words have prying little fingers  
That everyday push me, a little farther.

Now I'm a stranger in my own house,  
A ghost owns half, of all around-  
But worst of all, owns part of you:  
In hopelessness, I slowly drown.

Patti Masterman

# Slumber Party

I want to be locked in the art gallery some night,  
All alone with the taciturn guy and girl flat landers.  
Mix up some pina coladas, some margaritas,  
Then toast the whole town in there;  
Drinks are on me tonight.  
Snuggle up to those mute, timeless pieces,  
Make some long needed alterations  
To some enigmatic half-smiles.  
Tell them the troubles of the current age.  
Take my photo posing by each one-  
Otherwise no one will ever believe me.  
Bend myself into some obscene self-sculpture for an hour  
As if placed there by god himself; my own opening show:  
A footnote to creations more aberrant styles.  
Let that painted and inked canvas seep into my vitals  
To replace my drab, monotonous atoms  
With something more vibrant, more lasting:  
A regal elegance that was left out of me  
At time's first unwinding.

Patti Masterman

# Small Flowers

Lay your grief  
at the Roses feet;  
Find peace in  
the Baby's Breath,

Small flowers best  
assuage the grief,  
Taking all  
the sting of death.

Patti Masterman

# Smashing Haikus

Five, seven, and five  
Syllables that get displayed-  
Proud, I lift my blade

The words were waiting,  
For my wrath of displeasure-  
Salad shooter, on!

Hari-Kari, bahhh!  
It's too much fuss and bother-  
sword down the gullet!

dictionary bad!  
myriad haikus hiding-  
wordy opened book

Patti Masterman

# Smiling Through Our Tears

The world shrank again, today.  
The phone call came early- someone had died.  
Someone nice, and down to earth, and  
Genuinely kind; well liked by more than a few.  
I didn't know the world was going to shrink today.  
It was unexpected. And now I am trying to fit myself  
Into this much smaller world;  
Strange how one death can make such a difference.  
His mother called to confirm he had died,  
And the caller ID, for an unearthly moment,  
Made it appear he was calling, from the great beyond.  
And we joked a second about that, and she tried  
To hold herself together. And I did a great job;  
But true to my style, I fell apart just afterwards,  
In private. We are both such private beings,  
Trying to regain our former size, in a much smaller universe  
Which will never quite be the same again.  
And as he was leaving, his baby had just been born,  
And he even held it in his arms, and had photos  
Perhaps trying to forget his misery, for a brief moment of happiness.  
So now the baby can some day see itself  
Held in daddy's arms. I don't even know what the sex was.  
It is alive now; a little bit of himself, he left in his place  
For his loved ones. That's the important part.  
He left behind a baby, to make us all smile anyway,  
To remove some of the sting of grieving.  
He always did enjoy making people smile and laugh.  
I think that's the part the baby should hear about later.  
A little joy, a little bit of tears, and a little reflection of love,  
Left in the babies eyes.  
That's what it's all about, in the end.

Patti Masterman

# Snow White Had A Pain

Snow White had a pain one day,  
She called for the court physician.  
He checked her pulse, he felt her head  
Said she had a strange condition.

Told her to eat some apples wild  
And come back the very next day.  
Then found that she must be with child;  
For how long, he couldn't say.

Snow White had no remembrance  
Of ever laying down with a man;  
But her child bore a slight resemblance  
To a motley forest band.

Seven dwarves had lived in a place  
Right at the edge of town;  
Rumors flew it was a disgrace  
Which Snow White would never live down.

But then someone remembered a chap  
Name of Johnny Appleseed, came through  
Said he put some seed right in Snow's lap-  
Just before her belly grew.

Patti Masterman

# Snowflakes Always Know

&lt;/&gt;Snowflakes always know where to find you,  
and ghosts tremble the branches  
as though no one were about.

Thickened silence becomes crystalline,  
like windows,  
Then a mountain's shadow comes  
to extinguish the remains of day-

The stars all standing very still,  
as if they never had a name.

Patti Masterman

# So Alone

I'm so alone, got tulips growing out of my elbows;  
I'm so rooted, got elephant grass sprouted between my toes-  
I've got to make friends, with this feeling of separation.

Got to get out of this rut, start running in any direction;  
If you're smart, you'll come too-  
Don't ever be found where they expect you to be.

Don't bother naming the daisies that grow on my grave;  
They won't be around any longer than I was-  
Why rename a clod of earth, as if that makes it a man?

Patti Masterman

# So You Had Your Mother's Eyes

So you had your mother's eyes-  
I had wondered what inky abyss  
you had to have fallen through,  
to acquire those half-cooled coals-  
although in her, the effect was more benign,  
as if gentled by age or cataracts.

It is the only definite physical fact of you  
that I have now,  
the last information unlocked  
from the vast reservoir of ignorance  
that we all seem to encounter,  
surrounding one another's histories  
and beginnings.

I had forgotten part of your name  
but after many searchings,  
I came across the truth of those eyes  
(and knew I had found a part of you, within them)  
even the screen's muted glowing,  
and the decades of years  
couldn't extinguish those fires.

And now I am haunted by the image  
of a dark-eyed, motherless child  
crying with exhaustion,  
in a deep underground mine  
full of slowly extinguishing coals

Patti Masterman

# So You Want To Be A Soldier

So you want to be a soldier  
And learn those fighting moves;  
Be a member of a team  
In the soldier's school.

So you want to be a soldier  
And go far from your home,  
And learn there how to be a man  
As you fight and roam.

So you want to be a soldier  
And hold your buddy's hand,  
As they breathe their final,  
There on some mortal sand.

So you want to be a soldier  
And call the road your bed,  
And never know just when or how  
You'll lay down your tired head.

So you want to be a soldier  
Be buried in some plot-  
Maybe far from your hometown,  
After you have fought.

So you want to be a soldier-  
Well there's no finer choice,  
Than giving so unselfishly  
To freedoms song, your voice.

You want to be a soldier;  
And you could do much worse;  
And choose the cowards way to go  
And walk, behind the hearse.

But your name they'll remember,  
As they speak of you with awe;  
And wonder at your bravery,  
And wonder what you saw.

Many men will shake your hand  
And thank you for their freedom,  
They'll say it is a gift from god  
That you are still breathing.

You'll live more than other men-  
And suffer much more too,  
But in the end, you'll count it as  
The best thing you could do.

And the biggest thank you,  
That you will ever receive,  
Is in the eyes of loved ones-  
When you're back home again.

So if you know an older soldier,  
Please shake his hand today  
And tell him that you're grateful  
He chose the soldier's way.

Patti Masterman

# Social Networking

Social networking is starting to get a little scary;  
Someday I'll be expecting  
To see little modules  
Replacing the what are you doing right now thing  
So we can watch exactly what they're doing,  
Around the clock.

Friday night: picking their nose  
Watching a movie,  
While continuously typing with the left hand;  
Sleeping with the lights on.  
Toilet chairs will be king  
Fiber drinks dominate the store aisles,  
Full-spectrum lamps a necessity of life.  
Isn't it almost like that now?

The worst part of this is knowing  
That I would definitely be happy with that scene.  
Maybe I should search for a toilet chair right now?  
Or perhaps just scroll ahead, another ten years-  
When the view screen is right on the back of my hand,  
Mouse button, on the end of my index finger:

Patti Masterman

# Sociopaths 101

It was all just a shell-game,  
How he pretended he was taking care of her;  
If it was sincere, then when it eventually became easier,  
He should have been seen to redouble his efforts.

Instead he became angry, unreasonable,  
Proffered violence, and attempted adversarial advantage;  
Hired a stooge to inspect the design for flaws,  
Insinuated putting her away; out of the way, for good.

In fact he discarded her, for practical purposes,  
As if suddenly her care no longer had any basis of need-  
Because the thing that she had possessed,  
The thing he had most desired, did not exist in that form any longer.

And so wolves shed their sheep cloaks,  
And sharks reveal their true nature;  
And you know that the next time they come for you,  
Their fangs will be barely concealed.

You always knew that he was going to cut his perceived losses,  
And the rest of the world be damned-  
Even if it still looks like sibling rivalry,  
Always remember that it is a much more toxic beast.

Patti Masterman

# Sociophobia

Women fear that their houses are dirty  
for they themselves are judge, jury and hangman  
and fear the decisions they would hand down if

But men have judged more wrongly and quickly  
one said I would not let you in my rooms  
as though I were obviously the entire problem, in myself

We women own nothing in this world but our children,  
for a little while  
the titles are always in men's names, but still we are responsible  
for every excrement stain in the bathrooms

the discolored grout. One in-law told me  
the other relatives were amazed at the cleanness  
of her grout- never mind that her soul was growing blacker  
by the minute

I could almost live outside,  
if the gods would not hold me responsible  
for the fallen leaves and leaning fences  
And the sagging of the cows udders.

Patti Masterman

# Sojourner

My prayer is what I do all day  
And think, and say  
I am a stream of dark and light  
With breath, I pay  
For suns bright ray  
And starry night.

My dreams are when in sleep I lay  
I fly away  
To find a string of visions bright  
In faith, I stay  
With hope I may  
See truth alight.

Patti Masterman

# Sol Invictus

Invincible sun:

Burn me

Spurn me

But keep within my sights

Don't abandon me to night.

Invisible dream:

Beholden me

Embolden me

The strength of which unveil

The temper of my will.

Incomprehensible

The history

Unfathomable

The mystery

Womb which gave us birth

From fertile, virgin Earth.

Patti Masterman

# Sold For A Song

the bones of the doors in some parallel worlds,

I take hold and swing but then they fall apart,

to fly toward dimensions I never suspected.

the leaves of the heart where you've never trespassed

fold open just like a mechanical clock,

all gears and cylinders driven by time.

it's too late when the bones disperse,

it's too late when the clocks stop talking-

caught in the wake of something immense.

help me wake up, I've been sleeping too long.

help me wake up, we've been sold for a song.

Patti Masterman

# Some Advice For The Trip

Never trust men named Bo  
Never forget there's rain  
Around a rainbow  
Expect all pets to reproduce  
To the nth degree  
If they run loose  
(Even if they're in a pen  
The little sperms  
Might still get in)  
Always wear clean underwear  
(You never know when  
They'll look down there)  
The wind is capricious  
And evil too  
He'll throw your dress  
Up over you  
Water seeks the lowest level  
And good intentions  
Go straight to the devil.

Patti Masterman

## Some Anniversaries

Some anniversaries mark a loss,  
And some are kept by tears and sighs;  
A restless watching of the clock  
To mark the never-closing eyes.

Patti Masterman

## Some Blue Mountain Monday

On some blue mountain Monday, you will leave me  
Like one leaves a cabin, or a dog-  
No woods enchant much longer than a weekend;  
And pets are work, like cutting winter logs.

A fence you never mended goes forgotten,  
A barn you never painted's left behind-  
Invisible, as soon as past the parting;  
As conscienceless, as dreaming is to mind.

Patti Masterman

## Some Comfort

There is some comfort to be found  
In the myriad small rituals  
The day clothes itself with  
Those moments spent together  
Follow their natural course-  
Me tinkering with minutiae;  
You getting lost in books:  
And the apparent forgetfulness  
With which we treat each other  
Is the galactic glue  
Anchoring us in space together  
Tethering us to the low gravity  
Of inconsequential distraction  
There is none other  
Can be so artfully neglected,  
Camouflaged among the days loose ends  
Even as, following along each others wake  
We're holding to the years as tightly as we can.

Patti Masterman

# Some Day

Somewhere farther than angels sing,  
We'll meet again in a different world;  
Minus the grief and the savagery,  
Where things are perfectly wild and free-  
And I'll love you, under a certain tree.

Somewhere we can't ever be found,  
The stars will lead us and guide our way;  
And there'll be no jealous hearts around,  
Watching our every move, and sigh;  
Together morning, noon and night.

Somewhere else we can only fly,  
Comforted by nearness, each of each;  
It isn't a dream, and it isn't a lie;  
And if it's possible, we'll find a way-  
So it can all come true- some day.

Patti Masterman

# Some Days

Some days seem to sprint on by  
As if too eager, to catch the night.

Some days are slow as languid birds  
That float the skies, though scarcely heard.

Some words go out, to return again  
To bring us laughter, and sometimes friends.

Thank god all the beauty hasn't been said  
So we can look, and watch it spread.

Patti Masterman

# Some Dream In Four Dimensions

Some dream in four dimensions,  
Of verbs with no declensions,  
Of movies with no scripting,  
Clocks telling time in binary;  
A telltale world in synergy.

Some walk on hidden byways,  
Some going alley-blindways,  
On routes that have no meaning,  
Time sends the merry wanderer  
Conundrums for the ponderer.

Patti Masterman

## Some Dreams From Life

I dreamed of a loaded gun, pointed  
Me, at the window one day;  
Years later, I stood at the window-  
But the gun aimed slightly, away.

I dreamed of a little girl  
Standing in a room not done,  
Asking me without a word,  
If she could come to be my own.

I dreamed of another life,  
Spent with the same I knew;  
And when I saw her in the mirror-  
I knew I saw my old self, too.

I dreamed of an empty garment,  
That was hanging on a door;  
That it used to hold my spirit,  
A hundred years ago or more.

I dreamed there were little bells,  
And it was difficult to hear it;  
For you could only ring them,  
When you were still, within your spirit.

I dreamed I saw the remnants  
Of some lives, that once were mine;  
They shone beneath the garden,  
And what was left, was based on time.  
The older ones almost were gone;  
Just a little- where heart and brain,  
That once held all the memories-  
Were now giving up, the same.

Patti Masterman

# Some Flowers Open Only To God

After riding horseback all day,  
It must have felt like the horse  
Had become an extra, inseparable limb-  
Sleeping by the campfire, did Joan  
Dream she was yet astride the steed;  
Wearing her specially- made armor,  
Declaring war, raising havoc,  
Unyielding, but with no visible support.  
Did she pace in the dark, restless hours  
Searching for the comforting voices  
The inspiring voices of direction, that alone she paid heed?  
In the waking hours, she was surrounded  
By endless eyes; questioning, doubting,  
Measuring her, at times finding her less than the imagined,  
Conquering heroine of familiar fable.  
For certain she was missing her home  
And loved ones, and her quiet spot  
There in the midst of the family  
The little church of stones, the cradle of her resolve.  
But most of all, there was the Light-  
That Light she followed and it  
Warmed her from the inside out,  
And led her thru pain, fatigue, and abandonment  
And her Voices adjured her, not to be afraid, that  
She was in the midst of something much greater  
Something that would not be forgotten, even if she was-  
It would become mother, father, beloved, past, present, future:  
Did she give thanks in the early dawn  
For the one thing that was always hers alone-  
Did she ever wonder, why me?  
As the sun rose yet again, she went inexorably forward-  
Not faint of heart, the flower of France.  
Immolated at the last, her fiercely brave existence  
Left not a trace behind to tell:  
Here, I tarried; here I knelt to prayer;  
Here, the very dust of my body that lived once,  
Even as you are living now;  
Do not imagine my life was worth less to me then  
Than yours is to you now.

At the end did that Light embrace her gently,  
At the end of her lonely watch?  
Some flowers open only to god.

Patti Masterman

# Some Friends Only Come For A Little While

Some friends only come for a little while,  
So you barely get to know them;  
Others stay, and you'll wear a smile,  
While upon you they are growing.

Everyone has a little story  
About themselves, to share:  
Everyone has some pain and glory-  
And friendship's much too rare.

Everyone is a little cosmos,  
Peculiar to themselves,  
So join me here, and we'll raise a toast-  
To the friends who really care!

(For my wonderful new friends- you know who you are :)

Patti Masterman

## Some Kind Of Lama

mutable signs appeared in the heavens:  
your birth was a synergistic opening:  
between appositive nomenclature:  
appropriate astrologers were engaged:  
we stretched to reach broadening meridians:  
diagrammed unknown tongues:  
slipped out of paradigms:  
imposed incremental matrices of logic:  
but we wouldn't let them hang a name on you  
that was longer than your double helix

Patti Masterman

# Some Kind Of Music Calls Me

Some kind of music calls me;  
Recalls me, to your side;  
Some primal airborne reverie  
Fresh out of space and time.

Some mostly memorable note  
That reminds of something far;  
Much farther than a memory;  
Fast-fading as a star.

Past daybreaks blurry edge,  
I know it will not beckon-  
Time counts not it's loss, the same  
As beating hearts would reckon.

Patti Masterman

# Some Long, Belated Day

I broke my soul in two  
Extracted out the marrow,  
Distilled it in a cup  
And drank it, warm and mellow.

Alienated friends  
Lived out days in hiding;  
My light beneath the bushel,  
My soul within, abiding.

I smothered all my lovers,  
Buried corpses deep,  
When someone asks about them  
I say they're just asleep.

I murdered my emotions  
Burnt them in a kiln,  
And formed them into pottery;  
So never have to feel them.

Don't say you are my friend,  
Just keep a space away  
Or you'll suffer the same fate,  
Some long belated day.

Patti Masterman

## Some Math

Anger squared has a negative root  
Of well-primed factors, so it won't compute

The hypotenuse is the longest way  
Around a three-cornered hat  
And it's here to stay

And Trigger Nometry  
Was not the horse  
That Roy road  
On the TV course

But when baking an omelette, quiche or pie  
You can take my word, for I would not lie;  
As in the ground, grows the lowly common-tator,  
The eggs are the lowest common denominator.

Patti Masterman

# Some Only Love Cause They Need A Victim

Some only love cause they need a victim  
And it's not really love; more to torture a fellow:  
And a martyr, willing to sell out for love-  
Often gets much more than was bargained for.

Behind the eyes, a stone's worth of cold;  
Unfeeling nature, when the truth gets told,  
This is empathy confused for caring-  
And a load of hate, well beyond the bearing.

Love may hide behind many names,  
And get the blame for a lot of graves;  
It's the con's taken many a man-  
And lost more than it could ever save.

Patti Masterman

# Some Pain Should Not Be Forgotten

Some pain should not be forgotten;  
Though you are always told  
That pain is not a good thing for remembering.  
But on that first day that you arrived,  
My body's struggles were well documented  
On the seismograph beside the bed,  
A tremendous struggle, on the Richter scale;  
The shock waves growing taller and ever closer together:  
Proof positive, of being altogether broken open  
So you could pass through the portal  
Into this world; some pain is a positive joy  
Even if at times it might seem too much to withstand.

I realize now that no pain would have been too much;  
No pain, that you were ever borne in, on the wave of  
And even the memory of the pain can only remind me  
Of the miracle that came, in the person of you  
For my heart was sundered also, on that day  
In order that a small part of it should ignite your being,  
As my future flame, in darkness.  
And we have each become a doorway for the other now;  
Together following our own fracture lines  
To our own place in the universe, and when I am reborn  
I know that you will be there to hold my hand  
On that passage that will take me all the way  
Through the waiting portal, of another.

Patti Masterman

# Some People Make Me Feel Ashamed

Some people make me feel ashamed  
As if they know me all too well,  
And of my crass short fallings, sing;  
While others make me spread my wings.

But ones I loved, who never loved me  
I cringe to see them, as if they know  
I loved too much, too soon- and they  
Only treated me like yellow snow

Thank god the sun melts it all away.

Patti Masterman

# Some Rain Must Fall

Never steal the white from the bride,  
The scent from the rose,  
The sob from the quiet;  
Never throw the rice at the lame-  
It's not the same; they're out of the game.

Never take the song from the heart,  
The smile from the eyes,  
The wick from the dark;  
Never leave the movie before  
They show you the star; then kill her some more.

Patti Masterman

## Some Ruff Conversation

I went for a walk in the meadow  
And spied an old dog in the hay;  
Now old dogs know old tricks much better-  
And none is so tricky, as they.

I walked close, to peek at him sleeping  
But nary a word would I say;  
Cause when old dogs are sleeping dogs, dreaming-  
Well it's better to let sleeping dogs lay.

I left him un-bothered and sleeping,  
I left him passed out in the hay,  
And went on my way, till the night time-  
And hope every dog had his own day.

And should every day have it's own dog,  
In this dog-eat-dog world where we be,  
Just remember who lies down with dogs  
Is bound to get back up with fleas.

Patti Masterman

# Some Rules To Remember

When people bite you,  
Remember at heart-  
You were the ungrateful one.

When people forget you,  
Remember at heart-  
You were the thoughtless one.

When the TSA gropes you,  
Remember at heart-  
You were the pervert.

When officers arrest you,  
Remember at heart-  
You were the felon.

When friends condemn you,  
Remember at heart-  
You already left them, many years before.

Patti Masterman

# Some Save Words

Some save words like  
Women save romantic letters;  
Even if she never married him,  
It can't get better.

For immortalized there in pen  
Are many hearts desires-  
They may be cold coals now,  
But once were raging fires.

She keeps the proof that she  
Was thought a worthwhile prize;  
Even if reproof were all  
She sees in nearby eyes.

It's hope she searches,  
Thumbing the well-worn page;  
Memories of youth, when she  
Wore well a younger age.

He took her love until  
It was a cheapened thing;  
More meaningless than  
Even her simple ring.

She'll pawn the ring,  
At the corner shop she knows-  
But she won't give up the letters,  
For any diamond's glow.

Patti Masterman

# Some Things Burn

Some things burn, before they leave;  
Some things cut, like the dulllest knife  
And mutilate dear-held beliefs,  
Before they leave instead, a lie.

Some things are dead before their time;  
Some things will never live again,  
And some you lose, before you find-  
And some will break, and never mend.

Patti Masterman

# Some Things Demand An Answer

Some things demand an answer;  
Others, silence:  
A husband must have a wife,  
To answer to him;  
A wife must have a dog,  
To answer her demands;  
The dog would have a bone,  
Which quietly strangles him in the night-  
Some things demand a silence.

Patti Masterman

# Some Think The Night

Some think the night's a transparent stranger,  
Some think the night's an opaque friend;  
And though some nights are fraught with danger,  
Day to night, it's shadows lend.

Night gives day cold stars invisible,  
Night gives day a moon half lit;  
If night and day could trade their faces,  
Each the others grey, befit.

Patti Masterman

# Someday

Someday I will be beautiful,  
A menace to none;  
Undisturbing the vacuum  
Of the body undone.

Not as it was meant to be,  
So still in quiet rapture;  
Closed lids perceiving things  
Open eyes could never capture.

Someday I'll be more silent,  
No more the earth adorn;  
Spirit will depart the deep  
And leave the flesh forlorn.

Patti Masterman

# Someday I'll Fly Faster Than Rockets

Someday I'll fly faster than rockets,  
Farther any live man's ever gone;  
I'll fly away, so free at last  
To where my soul sings its own song.

The clouds will be mere specs of lint,  
In my faint outgassing trails;  
This will be the final chapter,  
In the last book of my tales.

Don't cry a lot of tears for me;  
Though true, it's sad to leave  
To miss those faces left behind,  
And hope they will not grieve.

But my adventure's looming;  
I must not miss that date,  
That I fly across the cosmos,  
For once ahead of fate.

Patti Masterman

# Someday, I Shall Run Away

Someday, I shall run away-  
Far, far away; don't look for me then  
For I will have succumbed into my own fantasies  
Leaped over the broad abyss of self  
And disappeared into my endless tears,  
Safe at last, from the ravages of time  
And numbing disappointment.

Someday, I shall run away-  
Never to darken the earth again;  
And who cares, if it's by my own hand,  
Or by the hand of another; or just fate-  
At least it will finally end, my many days  
Of being just a ventriloquist's dummy  
For this eternally insatiable heart.

Patti Masterman

## Somehow A Single Word

Somehow a single word can miss things  
He drank all the water from my aquarium  
Said a conscience was too much weight to carry  
He said my mirrors were full of dark water  
And that three emotions fell out of my diary  
When it was turned upside down, like heavy rain spilling  
Out of ruined libraries-  
Although truth was only a sewer, up some rich man's sleeve.

I bought him bus fare to go anywhere  
Told him to go where there was more air  
So he could breathe free again, and now he's sailing  
Some mountain range, somewhere.

The air less there, but how he hates change  
He said the oceans are controlled by hidden powers  
And poisoned now, and only the white porous sea shells  
Can get them clear them again, if we could import  
Some extras from Titan or somewhere to detoxify  
I said, that bus ticket is much too dear.

Patti Masterman

# Something Old And Something New

Something old and something new

Is when beneath my heart you grew;

And something borrowed, something blue-

Within the bounds of sky- stays true.

Patti Masterman

# Something Unbeautiful

There is somewhere I always wind up going  
Where logic has no foothold  
And reason does not function  
For all the words want to spell themselves backwards  
There emotions take me hostage  
And confusion reigns over feelings  
I never know I am going there at all  
Until it's too late and then I'm stuck

I'm flailing in quicksand  
Quick; somebody come save me  
I'm going down deeper into despair  
But there is no savior in the world  
Now I'm not even me anymore  
All the constants are gone  
Except fear and loathing

I would kill this jailer if I could once see his face-  
Then something unbeautiful comes, which does not love me.

Patti Masterman

# Something Worth Remembering

It doesn't matter whether the world  
is mass hallucination  
or the creator's only gestalt-  
it must be true to itself;  
can only be what it is,  
just as you can only be what you are.

Why must you complicate  
the simplicity of things  
beyond life and death, truth or lies?  
you are not the prisoner,  
and nothing has captured you-  
death can not release you.

By the time the world is burning,  
You won't feel a thing about it.

Patti Masterman

# Something's Angry When You Die

Something's angry when you die  
The cells for life, on you relied;  
Some people brought back from the brink  
Recall a special hell, they think

Where darkness rules, and screaming's heard-  
Because life is to be preferred-  
And clutching fingers, violent hands  
Can sense the ties of life, disband.

Something senses deep within  
That being dead must be a sin;  
To lose one's life would have to be  
Of sin, the utmost penalty.

The brain unknowing about death,  
Only knows the cease of breath,  
But eyes a farther light must seek:  
Leave body to its own relief.

Patti Masterman

# Something's Missing

You wanted to be my lover,  
And please me with your art  
And prove much, by your cleverness-  
But man: you have no heart

You wanted to color my world,  
And paint for me a door  
To enter through, to you;  
Thus find your very core

You wanted to be my lover  
And start a life, apart  
And be my soul's career-  
But man: you have no heart

I can't accept a life  
With someone missing parts;  
If you'd have a love that's true  
Go find the missing heart.

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes A Light In Darkness

Sometimes a light in darkness  
You did not know was there,  
Will come and shine upon you-  
When things seem hard to bear.

When least you are expecting  
An opening of doors,  
The window shows a glimmer;  
A countenance, of stars.

Sometimes a light in darkness  
Is all that lights your way-  
As good as any sunshine,  
As strong as any ray.

When darkness is upon you,  
And no one hears your prayer,  
Remember he who's knocking  
Will find an answer, there.

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes Better

My mama must have got the fortune for me, before my birth,  
It must have said, you will never be pretty,  
And you will be cut off from your real roots forever.

I felt disingenuous throughout childhood, and embarrassingly ugly;  
So ugly a dog should have buried me and forget the whereabouts.

One day many years later, out of the blue, my mother said,  
You were not a pretty baby,  
Not like your baby was; no, you weren't pretty at all.  
Never would anybody have said, that you were pretty.

I wondered then at where my idea of profound inferiority  
Had arisen from;  
Was it within her mind, and from there it entered mine

Or had I discovered it entirely on my own,  
In front of the mirrors or looking at the photos,  
Because I did not resemble any of my relatives-  
The roots had all been cut at birth, you see?

But our friends daughters surely had it worse;  
Pretty enough, and good Caucasian twigs, to be sure.  
But their fortunes must have said, you will never be loved for yourself;  
And they were never happy in their marriages

And their husbands kept waiting for the quarters to start pouring  
Out of the jackpot slots, because their daddy was a rich man.

Being ugly and poor must sometimes be better?

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes I Fall Out Of The Sky

Sometimes I fall out of the sky  
Just as you happen along  
To catch me; like a falling star  
In sidereal time, only a fraction of a second.

Sometimes I fall into the sea  
Right in front of your dock;  
You haul me out again, like a fine trout  
In earth time, only an instant in your net.

Some days, I barely catch myself  
Falling out of nothing; falling in slow motion  
Hoping for even one far away glimpse of you;  
For time moves like a lover only in your shadow.

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes Those Forgotten Hues

sometimes those forgotten hues  
that I find in secret grottos  
return their salty finger kisses  
and wind does too  
rely upon old gestures  
while the trees grew so stately  
and wide  
that where you if once hid yourself  
where the hedge grows together  
the heart itself beside  
and wondered into his thorns  
and then if pale roses grew  
out of it's mighty sights  
whose turrets were  
the ear conches of the sea

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes We Confuse The Handsome Faces

Sometimes we confuse the handsome faces,  
With some regal hero's lithesome graces;  
We'd like to wreath fine flowers all around them  
Only to find, they're poured from alien stone;  
Or cast-out granite, by hard heart well-hone.  
A prisoner of substances most elite;  
Of habits that we don't care to repeat.

We'd thought their beauty rendered them divine,  
A pure, salient spirit, unreached by time;  
To find that perfect visage is corrupt,  
Is like finding someone's spit into our cup,  
Or wiped a perfect portrait in the Louvre  
With some substance from the body, rude-  
Almost as though god made a joke, most lewd.

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes We Just Need To Forget About Everything

The day after the night that you couldn't sleep at all,  
The world hates you and wants you to fail,  
Perceived slights are grievous bridge burning rituals,  
Deviously designed to destroy your last remaining nerve.

Everyone is stirring for a fight, and they'll get one,  
Before the day is over, and all the learning in the world  
Won't avoid the consequences of sleeplessness,  
As the trigger-finger itches, scanning for the next target.

No one can do a thing right for you right now,  
And you would like to shoot them dead for even trying;  
If someone could just slip up behind and knock you in the head-  
You would wake up refreshed nine hours later, in a different world.

But no- we are civilized, we must keep taking the creeping razor cuts,  
The sticks and stones of a million uncalled-for wounds,  
Until the frazzled one slowly falls down again,  
Down into the grateful wells of all-forgetful slumber.

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes We Wake Before We Die

Sometimes we wake before we die,  
Perhaps have time, to wonder why  
Before we make that leap back where  
We lived, before our birth appeared.

No songs were heard, when we left there,  
Of if there were, we did not hear;  
Or if some smiled, we did not know;  
Or if they cried one single tear.

That is another world, where we  
Inhabit, from our sudden need  
To find another home, than here-  
And where perhaps, were just as dear?

Patti Masterman

# Sometimes Wind Moves In Secret

Sometimes wind moves in secret  
Like a lover or a moon  
Sometimes a board will answer  
Or a shutter or a loon  
Sometimes wind answers itself  
Like a woman at the mirror  
And sometimes no one's present  
Or unwilling to hear

Wind moans over graveyards  
As if weeping for the dead  
Wind howls at the windows  
Like it wants you, in your bed  
Wind steals kites of children  
Without making any sound  
And wind tears off your head scarf  
But lifts hair, like a crown

Wind sighs round a lighthouse  
Like a sailor blown off course  
Wind whispers in the rigging  
Like a breeze has lost its voice  
Wind dies in the harbor  
When the moon is sailing high  
But wind sings before morning  
When the twilight blush is nigh

Patti Masterman

# Somewhere Else

Somewhere, once was a day that I was born,  
To someone I have never looked upon.  
Somewhere, I lived some days that disappeared;

Nothing left, when my footprints there have cleared.  
And somewhere else, in some unimaginable sea-  
Someday- I'll forget that I was me.

Patti Masterman

# Somewhere Only The Heart Knows

The sound of keys whisper, 'come away, come away'  
Faint tinkling reminds of some other day;  
It's far from here that you must go-  
Somewhere only the heart knows.

Where there's a beach has a tall light house,  
Or farther yet, the waves leap about;  
It's farther than the fair winds blow-  
Somewhere only the heart knows.

Come away to peace, come away above,  
Where at night the moon shines bright with love;  
It's far from here that you must go-  
Somewhere only the heart knows.

Patti Masterman

# Somewhere Too Far To Follow

I paint with bricks the highest causal shining  
Down the corridor toward wayward stars,  
Cacophony the dialect of gods  
Which we all speak, even in the farthest touch.

Though melody's the nearest path to heaven,  
And reverie's the way to float on air,  
To sail the blue above, below's same method:  
Be certain that your ghost is hovering there.

Patti Masterman

# Somewhere Under Stars That Shine

Somewhere under stars that shine,  
Somewhere above the sod's  
The thing that we find everywhere-  
The universe- the soul of God.

Somewhere time begins to fill,  
Somewhere space is torn,  
The crack that let the world flow in-  
Possibility- was born.

Patti Masterman

# Somewhere's A Place I May Never Go

Somewhere, a river eats up the miles-  
Counting out trestles and railroad ties,  
Teeth all shining, like a million minnows;  
A fishing school, where the pavement dies.

Somewhere, a highway eats the Redwoods  
Spitting each one in a metal box;  
Their trunks neatly folding like dominoes,  
In endless rows, on endless docks.

Somewhere's a place I may never go-  
Where there's somewhere people, I'll never meet;  
Where nature and machine clash in endless wars,  
In an endless somewhere's endless streets.

Patti Masterman

# Song Remembered

The bible says, not even a sparrow will fall  
How much is contained in a meadowlarks call?  
Flitting about, full of rapture, while singing-  
Shy childhoods hours, memories are bringing.  
If one birdcall carries, world without end,  
Songs must therefore, straight to heaven ascend?

Patti Masterman

# Sonntag

My heart is heavy because  
Someday you'll go away  
Who will listen to my dreams then  
Who will care, whatever I say?

I always knew death exists  
But I didn't know it'd come so near  
I know our life has to end  
But just keep me from the fear

Promise me you'll stay so near  
And never let your shadow stray  
Promise we'll always be together  
And don't let the distance betray

We still have time, we'll find the way  
There's got to be a secret nobody's tried  
We still have time, don't give up now  
While time's with us, we'll conquer death somehow.

I always knew death exists  
But I didn't know it'd come so near  
I know our life has to end  
But just keep me from the fear

Promise me you'll stay so near  
And never let your shadow stray  
Promise we'll always be together  
And don't let the distance betray

Look up, the sun's still right there-  
It can't go down, not while we breathe,  
See, it was all just a bad dream then;  
Cause you and I will never leave.

Patti Masterman

# Sonnet For The Reprehensible

Judge not the one-winged bird upon his branch;  
Neither judge the muttering homeless bum-  
Their fate you know, is left to hands of chance,  
Though surely certain as the rising sun.

In homeless bird, admit you saw no worth,  
If judged from your self-satisfied center;  
In flying man, admit you saw no birth-  
Judge yourself, for your poor vision's splinter.

Your whole world revolves only around you;  
Your savior in the street himself could bleed,  
And you'd miss out on everything that's true  
Before you'd wake to see another's need.

We are so filled with vague good-book intention  
That humbled things fall far below our mention.

Patti Masterman

# Sonorous Laughter - Sonnet

Sonorous laughter and creeping tears-  
We cannot make up our mind, I think;  
Mixtures of memories, hopes and fears,  
While to age and time, we take a drink.

My happiness and my sadness twine,  
For to err is quick and regret is long,  
Around things both earthly and divine-  
And how close weeping approaches song.

The old are nearer to laughter and tears,  
They turn back into a child, it's said,  
As death with bony fingers comes near,  
They contemplate what's in store, for them.

Our tears leave fragments of love at the end,  
And deaths birthing of new worlds, attends.

Patti Masterman

# Sorrow

Sorrow: the crows lament the darkness,  
Black feathers shine, like burnished night.  
Greyness calls, in sudden blindness;  
An omen, that change has taken flight.

How grotesque, the shadows of evening,  
A void that pantomimes reflect.  
And lanterns of withered dreams and visions;  
Even nightingales can't resurrect.

Patti Masterman

# Souls Are Born

Souls are born leaders-  
But a stranger's come calling,  
Trying to open a door;  
For sure opening windows.

Soul's all dressed up,  
Body lagging behind  
Following the bright lights,  
Like shepherds hunting babies.

Body the sluggard; body the receptacle  
Of so much light, amid time-crazed journeys;  
Body follows maps, soul the guiding stars..

Soul knows not where the body's going  
But only what happens, when it gets there.

Patti Masterman

# Souls Like Old Hats

Strange how the soul knows  
what it knows, when it knows-  
These words are mine, and this proclivity;  
this suits and that unnerves.

Avoid this, pursue that-  
it's like a vast closet of hats;  
And you won't wear just any:  
it must be special- not one of many.

Fit perfectly on your head,  
and just like your brain  
Wants to be well fed,  
(and occasionally entertained)

If you were a hat,  
I'd wear you proudly  
And never fret  
or grieve too loudly,

I'd only take you off  
to sleep,  
And never toss you  
on the heap.

Patti Masterman

# Sounds Like This Music

I speak poetry, but cannot decode it  
For others; their brows wrinkle as they exert  
A prodigious effort to understand;  
And perhaps all just for me.

Why was I born to understand a language  
That eludes others, and that most have no interest in?

Why does poetry speak to my bones and to my pulse,  
My innermost self, like no spoken words can?

If I am an alien, amongst all the other races of the world,  
So be it. I would rather be deaf to all of life  
And understand dying best, if it sounds like this music.

If I could be reborn as a poem,  
That would be the true heaven:  
Where words can wound, or lift one more  
Than any silence.

Patti Masterman

# Sovereign Of Worlds And Dreams

I will let you inhabit your world  
and live safely in your dreams,  
and I will never invade or interfere  
with you there.

But?, ? if you should stray into my world?; ?  
my dreams, you will discover

?That I? am no longer impotent there,  
and that in fact I am the supreme ruler,  
protector and ?competent ?executor  
?  
Of all your worst nightmares.

Patti Masterman

# Spambot Foilers

Spam bot foilers  
Fence me out  
They're work despoilers  
Beyond a doubt

There's a hidden message  
Inside the box  
And a code presages  
Your words are mocked

It cares not whether  
Your words get lost  
Hither and thither  
When cyber tossed

The information highway's  
No safer than most  
Traveling verbiage's byways  
Of inventiveness' toast

When once you click that button  
Just hold onto to your seat  
Your words might turn to mutton  
Before the deed's complete

That's why my table's buried  
'Neath scribbles, notes and memos  
There's no leisure time to tarry  
For the web is not a limo

Patti Masterman

# Spatial

When I consume worlds,  
I'm waylaid by the gravity;  
The galaxies unfurled,  
Creation fills its cavity,

The wars on for my soul,  
In terms of stark depravity  
From pole to distant pole,  
Time's become a travesty.

Patti Masterman

# Special

Who are you, are you who you say  
you are- or are you not more likely somebody  
suspicious and loitering,  
some liar just living it up, while pretending  
to be otherwise on the outside?

If you get angry, it is only  
your anger at what you have done,  
how you have been to others-  
mistrusting, misleading-  
while they were busy living the same lie as you.

Aren't we all coy murderers  
who think the rules get bent for us alone?  
That nobody was ever as lucky or as clever?  
That we must be forgiven seventy times seventy?  
That our brand of spiritual poverty makes us special?

Patti Masterman

## Special Occasion

I can hear a huge crowd of people  
Talking amongst themselves,  
In the rooms of my house.  
I can tell they must be well dressed  
For some formal occasion;  
Their best clothes, and maybe even  
Some corsages, for the women;  
High heels and French perfume.  
I can't even smell the perfume  
Still; I know it must be there,  
As well as the undergarments,  
Which are invisible also, by default  
Along with heads, arms, torsos and legs  
And everything else that comes with;  
Leather handbags, and hats  
Wafting plumes of cigarette smoke  
And clinking glasses.  
But, the murmur is very pleasant!  
So I will say goodnight to you all, now  
Whoever you are, wherever you  
Now stand, within my home:  
You are so welcome, and please do  
Remember to extinguish  
Your cigarettes, before leaving-  
I'm just going to go out now;  
Going to go out, and start the car  
And sit out in the car, to cool off  
For a few hours or days;  
However long it takes-  
No, no, stay as long as you wish  
It's really no inconvenience at all.

Patti Masterman

# Spectacle

Well I changed all the locks  
Cause I couldn't get in  
And I moved all the clocks  
Cause time seemed too thin

And I made love be free  
Cause it was too dear  
And I made the blind see  
So they'd have no fear

And I opened the parks  
So you could visit for free  
And removed all the marks  
That said you couldn't just be

I tore down the fences  
And opened the gates  
And nixed the verb tenses  
So we could relate

Now the world is much changed  
But I'm tiffed to discover  
That our brains are deranged  
In our rooms made of rubber

Patti Masterman

## Speedy Skeletons Scamper

Speedy skeletons scamper on their way  
To any time, any place, anywhere  
Their bent bones knock the shivering air waves  
Talking down wooden knickers of the galleries  
Stringing words along singular soliloquies  
Dead words; expressions of deadened might  
Journeying indubitably to colloquial night  
Though heartless they may be, theoretically  
It's common usage to be fearful at the sight.

Timid tortoises tiptoe tentatively to the theater  
To watch the latest bewitching thrills  
As slow as they go, the snakes slither past them  
Though it isn't a race; you can just ask them  
But it's easier to figure eight over a speed bump  
As snakes don't possess a post-posthumous rump  
The theater's filled as the viewers start haggling  
Because their center of gravity keeps wagging.

Patti Masterman

# Spider In The Wineglass

Spider in the wineglass,  
Can't I make you see  
That the world is not so round  
As it might appear to be?

Spider in the wineglass,  
You should use your grapple and hook  
And free yourself from the wineglass,  
And thus, evade the cook.

Patti Masterman

# Spirits Born Again

The universe must bury old ghosts  
In the graves well-shadowed dimensions,  
The air rhyming empty-pocket miracles  
With every treasure's ever been lost.

Our only grace the stone of presence,  
Dead-quiet whispers the eye of storm,  
The roof of space sings lost spans of desire,  
And naked altars rising hope, seen afar.

The star of wonder sign in the heavens,  
Dancing vows and hidden doors of sleep,  
Emotions rattling the bones of mystery;  
Though life's the question best answered with peace.

We shiver like crosswinds met in chaos,  
The blood of an angel ours for a day,  
And life courses through, a prayer receding-  
To dawning silence: spirit's born again..

Patti Masterman

# Spiritus Sanctus

Sunless steeples toppled the fonts of your apocrypha  
The mumbled harbingers of guilt's ascendancy  
The icicles of the chandeliers dripping  
Carbuncle tears, as the ransom of sullen lives  
Many Sundays saw the closing of word-stiffened pages  
In the hands of the blue-suited multitudes,  
In homage of cathedrals filled up with dead Lilies  
The pure must wear dark colors, in a kind of fake humility  
While the evil wear white alone, in broad strokes of denial  
And attention is a weather vane spinning madly  
At the top of the world, wanting only God to be watching  
only God to be watching  
only God to be watching

Patti Masterman

# Splendor Solis

Sun our father, Moon our mother;  
Whom might we oppose?  
Earth and heaven go unleavened  
Less is blessed, by those.

Things above and things below  
Seldom will depart the likeness  
They were made together,  
By creator's art.

Flamel's fire is full of ire  
To find the antidote,  
While stones philosophize our sighs  
Who left here, on this mote.

We harmless hold the souls  
Of old, who toyed with the world  
To find the secret grail of time,  
Its secrets to unfold.

Patti Masterman

# Spring Can'T Stay Away Forever

Though the long, dark winter days  
Have left their mark,  
Spring can't stay away forever.  
The dreary fields and barren trees,  
Made life seem stark,  
But spring can't stay away forever.  
Though the colors fled the earth,  
Just to stay above, and tease us-  
But a breath of what we lost;  
Scant beauty to appease us.  
Still, soon departs the frost  
Spring can't stay away forever.

Patti Masterman

# Spring Was Just Getting Ready

Spring was just getting ready  
To slip on her new green frock,  
But something went terribly wrong;  
For now she wears only bare rocks

Sticking up out of the snow,  
Like the hand, of a drowning man,  
And a snow blanket covers the Lilac,  
While softly cocooning the land.

To say that it's just rare beauty  
Can't show all it's pristine power;  
For all it's downplayed elegance,  
Now I can't find one smiling flower.

Patti Masterman

# Spurned

Still flagrant in the microscopic world:  
Dust from his boots lies quietly in the streets  
His sweat and tears having seeped into,  
Enriched, the very dirt  
Soil of his soul  
Into furniture, bedding and handkerchiefs  
His tools, cars, and books:  
Fossilized cells from his past existence.

He was an orphan; only child; forgotten son  
Always had to work for his food  
They couldn't even afford to feed this single nephew  
In the Depression, unless he could work for his bread  
He said, at harvest time, they all wanted him;  
The rest of the time, nobody wanted him.  
I think that he always secretly wondered, if he was worth loving,  
Beyond what he could do for someone else.  
A deep solitude rested inside of him, an unquenchable loneliness,  
Which he must simply have made peace with, in the end.

Moisture from his cremated remains dispersed in every direction  
A residue of ash to coat the crematorium surfaces, and it was done.  
There might even have been more of him left over  
Than there was before; a thin quarkish layer  
Scattered by movement and time  
An unexpected fishes and loaves tally, of electrons gone mad  
But if you look, if you search, there is no sign left.  
You have to know the passwords, the symbology,  
The secret reservoirs and collection altars  
They are there; relics of cast off skin and eyelashes  
Petrified nail trimmings, beard shavings  
Fallen to the foundation beneath  
They clamor for recognition;  
I feel the invisible tugging whenever I go near-  
Even a mile distant, I can sense it  
No charm or icon can shield against that:  
The spurned molecules left behind  
Are more alone now than ever.



# St. Therese Had A Little Way

St. Therese had a little way  
She talked to a little dove  
Sent down from her Father's house  
High in the heavens  
Above

In his garden, all her days  
She played with the whitest dove  
And learned his secrets, on the wing  
Of all the ways  
Of love

Patti Masterman

# Stage Fright

And always, there is the mirror  
And always there, the windows-  
There, where the fidgeting, milling multitudes wait below  
Their combined silence become a sort of coherence,  
As though together they formed an impenetrable solid surface,  
In this the present, which is always and increasingly imperfect.

My mustache is all wrong, my hat tilted  
My smile is crooked, unseemly; perhaps also my teeth  
Will fall out of my head, next,  
And I feel so naked, as if caught up in a dream-  
Nude in some film, and finding myself walking anywhere,  
Suddenly horrified to find no clothing is left anywhere upon me.

Though they don't audibly jeer, but perhaps down underneath-  
Somewhere in the soul's softer oblivions, of wordless concourse,  
They do- in the concrete sewers of self, beneath immediate observation-

There where man is unfailingly inhumane to man,  
Inside the solitary environs of subtle mind-  
Even while judging himself  
More harshly than any other.

Patti Masterman

# Stages Of Sleep

Crash, dreamer  
Into exponential plots  
Magnetic-word polyglots  
Ephemeral lucid clocks

Sleep,  
In time machines  
With haphazard twists of dial  
Fall right through, or stay awhile

Awaken, sleeper,  
Before you hit the ground  
The sleeping world's a phantom  
Where the living world, resound..

Patti Masterman

# Starred And Stoned

We are legion, in between the plates of this skull:  
Terra firma, of the mind's fickle boundaries  
On a piece of planet, that keeps getting recycled;  
From burnt supernovas, to soup kitchens:  
How many distant whispers from my old remnants  
Call to me from the dark, moist body of my mother?  
How many other plots have I called home,  
While inhabiting these collections of dust and plasma-  
I can feel my once-atoms trying to summon me again,  
From every corner of this starred-and-stoned universe;  
For I was Sister Moon, once known to St. Francis,  
And I am part and parcel of the unlikely rabble  
Burnt St. Joan's body into the stake, upon unsympathetic scaffolding;  
My bones daily bear the brunt of every curse and offering,  
Here in my own timeless tragedy, of trembling flesh.

Patti Masterman

# Stars

Stars in cuneiform; stars engraved  
Stars in mythical constellations  
Stars that a mariner, nearly saved  
Stars in time-lapse, spent hesitations  
Stars in scintillating broken-glass patterns  
Stars in hieroglyphic wall gyrations  
Stars in random time-space spatter  
Stars in replicating concatenations  
Stars with intrinsic hidden meanings  
Stars forming deep space mazes  
Stars with cosmological-construct leanings  
Stars with anthropological anti-phases:

But stars in someone beloveds eyes  
Flow like ribbons of pulsing light.

Patti Masterman

# Stars In Your Eyes

The stars may fall  
May fall, like gentle people do  
Grey rains may fall  
But I will still be loving you.

Quiet stars may mirror  
The cherished image of your face  
Your life's a mirror  
Reflecting wonder from this place.

Your eyes are stars  
They glow like day stars in my mind  
Though there be other stars  
And days now left behind.

Boundless mysteries lie  
Like fallow star light on your hair  
Answers, in your sigh  
And in the loving eyes you wear.

Patti Masterman

# Starting With You

My love likes to wrap itself in warm mittens  
And scarfs, and woolly knitted sweaters.

It dons galoshes and strides down running streams,  
My love wants to get its feet wet, but it is so timid.

My love wants to run free, into waiting arms-  
And from there to fly very high, in calm skies.

My love wants to look down on everything and breathe,  
And remember how wonderful it is, just to be!

We must always begin with the least thing necessary for happiness,  
And work our way up, from there-

That's why I'm starting with you..

Patti Masterman

# Stay Awake Loving - Tanka

stay awake loving  
instead of forgetting all:  
many Buddhas come

let the eyes see beyond form  
let the heart love beyond flesh

Patti Masterman

# Stay On The Cusp

Live while you're living, remember the dead  
don't need your sympathy; they're past their pain  
(but yours is just now beginning, they said)

Compassion yourself, if you must bleed  
And if the empathic delusions exceed  
The floating sum balance, that you're here right now  
In spite of existence of pain, disease; how

You can wake again daily, though without a plan  
(And you know no one holds you in the palm of their hand)  
So live while you're living, without holding back,  
just borrow some light, from other stars on your track

Then dream of some heaven, if you find that you must-  
But as for your living, stay right on the cusp..

Patti Masterman

# Stay Out Of My Head

Stay out of my head, you simpering hearts,  
Braying and bleating you've broken apart;  
We've no time for Byron or Shelley or Blake-  
Pray tell why you, instead, we'd partake?

Nobody cares that you're jilted again,  
Perhaps with your choices, you'll never win;  
And being passed by's not actually a sin-  
Perhaps you'd be better off, without men?

Patti Masterman

# Step Right Up

The legerdemain of this place tricks you-  
Nicks you- now they're here-  
Now they're gone forever;  
Those loved ones who went away  
Without any goodbye, or a final word,  
Or even one last look.  
It cuts, chisels out the griefs  
Right there on your face  
For the whole world to see-  
No modesty allowed, no sir-  
The crowds want to see it all.  
Step right up, the show's right here;  
The price of your life,  
One solitary ticket, gets you a whole  
Lifetime's worth of the  
Comedy of errors called living.  
If only the hall of mirrors  
Could show the future,  
Then we'd have some warning  
So to compose ourselves,  
For the cameras; but no-  
Surprise! You're the freak at  
This show, the main attraction oddity,  
The headless, spineless, juggling- wonder:  
The one afraid to own his own heart.  
Nobody laughs at you because  
After all, it's the same for everyone down here;  
Just busy having the time of our lives.

Patti Masterman

# Stepping On The Cracks

Writing is like:

Trying to sing a song you've never heard  
Or trying to live someone else's life,  
As a picture inside their photo album  
No one can help with it.  
The sadness appears far away  
Speedily it moves to a place inside of you  
Inside the eyes, like ripe berries, of a blackbird  
Inside the absence of the sister I never had  
Inside the tens of thousands of unfertilized eggs  
Life does not reward us for the sterile urges  
The aborted plots, the miscarried plans  
In the flower I just plucked  
Lie all the other three thousand blooms  
I ever dismembered  
Breathing out as one, they plant the seed:  
Watery tears and then  
A bank of weeds sprouts somewhere within my brain  
Privy to the common lot of flowers, and mankind,  
How can I ask for more?  
How can I fail to ask, for more?

Patti Masterman

# Stepping Out Of This Life, Back In 5 Minutes

Fear. My lips moving.  
Saying something.  
What is it? I can't hear myself, even my thoughts are muffled.  
My heart beating.  
Too hard.  
My eyes- searching for something.  
My haunted eyes.  
I'm haunted by life, by limits, by time sequences.

Exposures, I can't control.  
I'm captured by others lives, by other eyes.  
Controlled by smiles.  
I'm caught in lies, exhausted escape routes.  
I don't know what to run from anymore.  
Perhaps I'll stand still till it catches up with me.

I don't know what I'll do then.  
Does anyone ever know what they'll do?  
I'll smash the glass and ring the bell.  
I'll wait for help to come.  
But help for what?  
Help is usually an illusion and we must suffer anyway,  
come what may.

In planning your escape, avoid obvious routes.  
Dig tunnels underground  
with your teeth and breathe through a straw.  
Reinvent yourself.

Nobody really cares what you do unless it inconveniences them  
or their way of life.  
You are allowed to inconvenience yourself.

Be careful stepping outside of your illusions-  
that is the most dangerous time..

Patti Masterman

# Still

Learning to live without hope  
Today is an art far afield;  
It doesn't matter if you can cope,  
For there must be no straying of calendars,  
No skipping ahead through the months and years,  
No expecting of mercy or pity's yield;  
Don't even bother blotting the tears-  
Still, bei mir bist du schon.

Learning to live without hope  
Rarely accomplished in a single lifetime;  
And not washed away with soap.  
It's not very high on best-sellers lists,  
And no one writes it in diaries,  
All the action takes place in the mind;  
And living alone's a priori-  
Still, bei mir bist du schon.

Patti Masterman

# Still In Bed

Ignore the world  
At your peril,  
Take Ginseng root  
And powdered marrow.

Grow some wings,  
Fly anywhere,  
Then laugh at clouds  
And float in air.

See the sunrise  
Blooming red,  
But realize:  
You're still in bed.

Patti Masterman

# Still Life With Muted Evening

Wander a new land, one never known  
Traces of prints dusted by snow,  
Stones awaiting the gilded grace of evening  
(the company of others; diverse things- for what?)  
But wanted silence, the muted evening.

Night, the best of wakefulness  
Craving the peace, of other stars afar.  
Being here, tonight; the entrained thoughts  
(what was mind, what led us upward?)  
The edge of snow, the path bordering mountains.

Patti Masterman

# Still The Stones Stand, Remembering

The whole world is a monument to death:  
Water plants hold the place of the drowned,  
The tree roots those dying trapped in place,  
While clouds mark the souls of the newly dead,  
And the stars, their numberless acts of grace.

In the center of the planet lies molten ore:  
The emotion of all who've been bereaved-  
And sometimes bursts from the bowels of earth,  
Issuing when the volcano breathes;  
And still the stones stand, remembering.

On restless days, the wind moans their names  
And dolorous mountains repeat the same.

Patti Masterman

## Still-Life In Silicon

No two ever exactly alike, that refinement on spatial infinity,  
The stained glass pharaohs of being. Revealed with each  
Slight shift of the observer, another hitherto unseen,  
Divine intervention of pure and brilliant hues, expertly placed;  
But appearing totally random at first glance.  
The embodied theme is invisible if you become too involved,  
And the tiny details make no sense if you are too far removed.  
The translucent washes allow the background behind  
To filter thru the prismatic scheme: In the parallel universe outside  
You can see only through tiny keyholes of false-colored  
Reality, beyond the nearly flat- dimensioned silicon bas relief.  
Possessing metallicity separated spaces- apparent laws of a specific  
Universe, kept deliberately unbreakable except  
During the first instant of creation in volcano or forge.  
Darker toned offerings used only as shadows or delineations,  
So as to not overshadow the inherent luminosity, and to underscore  
The communion and transfiguration, of artist into his art.  
Visibility being best left to the whims of the phenomenal world;  
Sometimes a single stroke of lightning, like a travelling rainbow,  
Sparkles certain panes briefly, crossing by on its speed- of- light journeys.  
Other times a cosmic camera bulb may flash- freeze the surface for  
A vivid pause, enflaming the metal- clad portrait.  
At odd and unexpected times, there are the eclipses;  
By default resembling most of all, an Armageddon,  
(knowing it hasn't arrived yet as the fused glass is not melted into  
brilliant puddles on the chapel floor) ,  
Arriving belatedly, out of sync with the portrayal above.  
Escaping out directly into the palette- rendered tale, a needed  
Time machine diversion for those imprisoned behind it.  
Times interface only endows it with a certain dated realism:  
The figures forever frozen like Egyptian tomb paintings, and the  
Ever-present angels, being the popular ornamentation of that era and style.  
Although perhaps divinely inspired it is not above providence:  
When rain comes, it gets wet and it's candescent light temporarily grows dim.  
If you look closely you can usually find a dove, wings outstretched,  
Hovering in place near the top of the windows,  
Made bright-haloed at the instant of creation, by the descending  
Benediction of grace bestowed upon the Alpha to Omega  
Of each separate incarnation.

Patti Masterman

# Still-Life With Fly

If you were a pear  
I'd be a compote

If you were an ice cream  
I'd be a float

If you were an apple  
I'd be a pie

If you were a picnic  
I'd be a fly

Patti Masterman

# Stones Were Squeezed To Emptiness

Stones were squeezed to emptiness  
In his hand; even fruit gave eggs,  
And chickens bloomed;  
From a few, he crafted thousands  
And throngs came to sup  
On the food, and to hear  
Of his acts, and to marvel.

One day someone said to him  
But you cannot be doing these things-  
Existence would not permit-  
It is not possible-  
The laws of time and space-  
And, as he looked down at his hand  
Suddenly it became irrevocably barren.

Patti Masterman

# Stop Drop And Roll

Sometimes bad news will come  
And I hear howling in the next room  
Because the news hasn't reached me yet  
In my room. And I think..and I think..  
I think I want to tuck in my tail and roll  
Stop, drop, and roll up into a ball  
Roll right into the past, and stop there  
At the instant before the bad news broke open  
So I never have to hear it, never have to grieve  
It could almost work if I can keep my wits about me  
And refuse any messengers ingress  
And keep a gun handy to shoot  
Errant messengers..yes..!

Patti Masterman

# Stop Making Sense

Stop trying to make sense of things,  
telephone wires are invisible now-  
They flow straight into people's brains,  
and next year they'll be implanting them,  
you'll be permanently

One day I looked up  
and swallowed a big chunk of glass,  
Right out of the diamond sky-

People piss out demons from whiskey  
into all the reservoirs,  
People drinking it sicken unknowingly.

Some have twisted strips of white plastic  
like Martian sinews  
buried under their skin-  
But they think it's from that car wreck from 1972.

Some believe vaccines are weakening us  
with mercury, heavy metals;  
an undocumented virus  
but it's all in the meat we eat;

the animals fighting are inside of us  
their flesh is antagonistic to our species  
it leaves proteins behind, slowly killing  
and the invading virus that wins-  
eats us all.

Patti Masterman

# Stop Writing Poetry

Stop writing poetry  
I order myself-  
The house is a mess  
It's causing distress  
The bathtub is gummy  
The floor downright crummy  
The laundry's piled up  
There's not a clean cup  
Anywhere to be found  
The garbage unwound-  
Stop writing poetry  
Before it's too late  
No wait-  
This mess will make a great poem  
And I'll clean up soon as it's done..  
repeat..  
repeat..  
repeat.

Patti Masterman

# Strange

Strange how badly I always hate it, all over again  
Each time you give me that 'parasitic leech sucking  
On the blood of humanity' stare  
That you've rehearsed us on so many times now  
But even worse, is that sound, as you try  
To ring up on the register the total cents  
Of my futile worthlessness; but then  
You run out of decimal places, every time-  
Even though I have always given you my bag of quarters.

Patti Masterman

# Strange Broken Glass

Strange broken glass,  
Somewhere old houses reach  
To limbs once fashioned strong,  
Between the sprouting leaves.

Above, walls looking in,  
The spreading green, beneath;  
By worldly hands, bestowed;  
By missing hands, bequeathed.

Patti Masterman

# Strange That The Numberless Mouths

&lt;/&gt;Strange that the numberless mouths with teeth  
Fill up the whole world; even bugs compete,  
And then there's stingers designed to make  
Your life less worthwhile; and venomous snakes.

Funny how love itself becomes suspect  
Because of bad taste, or lack of grace;  
Someone choosing an object with your own face-  
There's nothing else, can demean like love.

You who stooped, to conquer from above  
To give away your heart to love  
As if that takes not imagination's art  
And just note, that a spiders travel  
Is halfway exact, between jump and fly  
As if our many dimensioned world  
Were only their parachute's yielding sky.

Love's the free gift we can always refuse  
Since nature's seen fit herself, to use  
Mouths to devour, and tails as stingers  
And nothing else in nature defuse  
Once the predator begins to stalk:  
Not even the caress of opposable fingers  
Not even the words of endless talk.

Patti Masterman

# Strange Weeds

We grow large like strange fatal weeds  
growing alone down here  
birthed from what we may never know,  
blown near or far the tidal ponds of life's beginning-  
though in every language  
the first word is always 'mama' or 'papa'.

Not one remembers the moment of birth,  
bright shock of arrival  
the undeserved blows  
bringing in the ocean of breathing.

Someone's always hitting us-  
hopeless leaves swirling in a tempest,  
hot clay climbing the inside of jars.

Touching through thick ropes of charred roots  
too sensitive to permit contact  
brutal to be human, always so much loss.

Words are the what,  
words are the all,  
that we have down here  
we that close our ears from long acquaintance,  
impoverished with familiarity and contempt-  
the edgy twin-brothers.

while the brain fattens on old memories-  
and we're grown tired of myths-  
where are we to put all the new things;  
why no one seems to care?

Can you hear all the echoes  
of these words in my mind, friend-  
or are we already too far gone,  
we who lose more every day  
in this cancerous poverty of the spirit-  
don't let the expectations kill you.



# Strange Worlds Whisper

Strange worlds whisper  
From haunted pictures,  
And gilt-bound books  
Make us take a look.

The unknown sighs,  
Like Lorelei's cries;  
All things forgotten,  
And all things forsook.

Patti Masterman

# Strangelet, A Song Of Quarks

Up and down, it's strange to see  
An equal number, them and me;  
Do the macroscopic rhumba  
And a strange star soon might tumba.

ALICE looks and tries to see  
Strangelets pining heavily,  
Mass to charge the signal ratio,  
And trajectory quite spatial.

ALICE (A Large Ion Collider Experiment) is one of the  
six detector experiments at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN

Patti Masterman

# Strangling On A Sigh

In the human commerce of forbidden addiction,  
Love has fangs and horns to tear:  
If you love in error, fear will bite you  
Chase you for miles, to it's heartsick pounding  
And disdain, hurl you to the ground

For I'm half-strangling on your sighs  
But you don't notice I'm around

Human beings are the cynical predator  
That wraps you tightly in miles of rules:  
There is no bill of rights for lovers,  
No wailing wall to advertise our need  
There has never been a school

For I'm half-strangling on your sighs  
But you don't notice I'm around

We'd rather live out life in isolation  
Instead of dry-humping with other's minds  
And we keep a tight rein on our emotion-  
That sloppy drunk found pissing anywhere  
So the truth never quite gets found

For I'm half-strangling on your sighs  
But you don't notice I'm around.

Patti Masterman

# Stuff Of Dreams

The dresser has gone away-  
The altar of my younger self  
Resides elsewhere now;  
It wasn't worth enough money  
To make it worth keeping.

It took up too much space,  
And the finish was imperfect.  
Who has not watched their own mother  
At her dresser, fixing her hair  
And face, performing magic there-

The stuff of dreams abides  
In mothers dresser;  
Even if it is empty,  
And the dreams are old,  
Even if it lives somewhere else now.

Patti Masterman

# Subtle Angel

Songs only a mother knows  
Soothe the crying darkness,  
Generations of lilting voices  
Singing simple lullabies.

Refuge of timeless invention,  
Dreams swathed in soft whispers;  
The voice of subtle angels  
Smiles through windows of time.

Patti Masterman

# Such An Angelic Smile

When you marry someone, you are getting more than just a husband or wife-  
There are unknown entities, being taken in to your bosom, your bed;  
Undeclared desires, misdirected motives- past lovers  
The heart can't let go, and never-buried corpses  
From other yesterdays that you can't even see.

Try to visualize coming back to your bed in the early morning hours,  
Finding your pillow wet with tears, or an undue warmth lingering there.  
Yet your significant other seemingly snores softly without a care, never stirring;  
The apparition of a perfect rose beside her on the pillow,  
Though your house has not a single rose bush.

Perhaps it's the faint smell, as of lovers who just co-mingled their body fluids-  
More than one person has gone mad with such imaginings,  
With things that were more absent than present. How many molecules does it  
take  
To declare a thing has actuality, to prove it's more than hallucination?

A ghost in stocking-feet sits smoking nightly before the mirror, in the darkness,  
The glint of eyes never leaving your face; is he jealous you have something he  
never did,  
Or are the eyes full of pity and relief, that now you take his place in her life?  
The long draws on the tobacco reveal nothing.

In your dreams phones are always ringing, and numerous male voices ask for  
different names-  
Is her persona only another mask, that you can never see back of?  
Then there are the faint whiffs of some masculine cologne, an aroma you don't  
use yourself.

Oh but then the sun always comes up, and a new benediction's arriving;  
Shining through the curtains, lighting bejeweled crowns around her static halo of  
hair;  
Points of light, prisms (or is it daggers?) coming toward you from her eyes,  
Full of smiles just for you- surely all is well, and the night terrors will subside,  
Lose their effect, given enough time. To all her inquiries, you give only half-  
truths:  
Yes you slept well, you recall no particular restlessness on your side of the bed.

And so for one more day, you decide to just leave it be. Indistinguishable from  
one another,  
The days continue to pass by, while something almost underneath conscious  
recognition  
Feels unsettled, senses the peculiar weight of a wrongness that defies  
categorization.

The simple truth is you feel so lucky these days, it hardly seems worth the risk of  
losing it,  
On the strength of a few intuitions, during the hours reason is only half awake.  
But you know night is always coming again, and there's that stale smell of  
cigarettes...  
Perhaps a few air fresheners placed strategically..?  
She has such an angelic smile, you know.

Patti Masterman

# Suffer The Little Children - Sonnet

For how can suffer, the little children  
Our world, as though were never made, for them:  
While even young, find happiness seldom,  
So often given birth, through just a whim.  
Another object, too soon grown tired of;  
Endless search, for something to occupy  
Our troubling, tiresome minds; but never love:  
That humbly given, boring old stand-by;  
We'd think being present, should be enough  
Demands on our patience, and energy  
And if they make us play, we might play rough  
Just to teach them a lesson; let them see  
They're not the center of our universe-  
Who cares, at the end, if our name's their curse?

Patti Masterman

# Suicide Prevention

Dear God, if you put me here for a reason  
I'd like to know what it is  
The world leaves me cold,  
I'm nobody, and nowhere  
Finds more of me all the time  
How did I get so lost?

'Wonderful clear diction  
Such imagery and abstraction  
Carries the reader along on the journey! '

I can't see any reason to go on anymore  
Everyone I ever loved has left me  
I sit and stare in the mirror for hours  
Trying to find some reason not to do it  
But I'm running out of excuses

'Amazing depth behind the pathos  
Where did you learn to write with such feeling?  
Please enlighten us further.'

Dear God, I think I've reached it  
The end of my rope  
The next sound you hear  
Will be the echo of my departing from this world  
I hope everyone realizes  
This is not meant to hurt anyone  
It seems to be the only way out of my pain

'Honey, I think you've found the poetry board by accident.  
I think you were looking for suicide prevention...'  
'Honey....  
Hey are you still there....? '

Patti Masterman

# Summarily I Changed My World For You

Summarily, I changed my world for you,  
Upended all the furniture of my mind,  
Transposed the binary code of my being.  
My fingerprints were elegantly lengthened,  
My nose straightened; irises tinted  
To your exact favorite shade of oceanic blue.  
Everything freshly renovated, to your specifications.

And as soon as I got busy doing all that,  
Your interest waned perceptibly; like the weathervane  
I suspect it has always been.  
Now you find ever more randomly furtive things,  
To attach your kitestring mind to.  
You have never looked at me again even once  
And all the attention I attract now is unsatisfying.

Like laying out a party; but only the bees and the wasps show up.  
Why does everyone else find my foliage acceptable,  
When for you it holds negligible charms?  
Or perhaps it was that my stores were always open to you,  
Day after tiresome day, for free;  
Always dependably sweet.  
But maybe you had to do some real work, to appreciate a thing.

You would rather dig up something rancid, from a graveyard;  
And crown it, and sit kissing it's foetid, sweating corpse all day;  
As if your newly discovered treasure.  
It must be because inside of you, it's already dead  
And you wish someone would discover you, and breathe back some life.  
But I tell you, only the bees and wasps are headed your way now:  
For all that they love flowers; they can always sense the presence of death.

Patti Masterman

# Summer No Longer Clothes Itself For Me

Summer no longer clothes itself, for me:  
I'm always barren winter now, gone to seed.  
My flowers gone back to root and rot;  
Summer's waltzes and festive engagements  
Can't make fruitful my garden plot.

Summer no longer invites me to dance;  
Alone on the sidelines, with downturned glance.  
Would I have chose better, with farther sight;  
If I'd danced with more abandon, each opening night,  
Instead of fear, of every morning's bare light?

Summer has fruits; we take our time to choose:  
Reject the half ripened, and the bruised;  
While thinking the marketplace the only vendor,  
As savvy consumers; we make our best choice  
We never suspect age holds different joys.

Patti Masterman

# Summers Spell

Summer's eiderdown spins a cotton-scented spell  
Of dry tongues swapping secrets, sworn not to tell.  
Cold ice cream in buckets, hand-cranked under heaven,  
And lies served neat, and bitterness unleavened.

Young girls enraging old, beneath a cranky moon.  
Half-worked days, under shade trees at high noon.  
Hair bleached by sun, with a lemonade wisp;  
Shy, freckled faces; never yet been kissed.

Crops on the vine, ripening till dawn;  
Orchard trees and berries, to season life's songs  
Of weddings on porches, and babies in cradles.  
Long arms, big hands working long as they're able.

The soil made richer, with their sinewy strength;  
Under the sun, their children add length.  
Though a heartier people never may be found,  
Their feet on earth so gentle, they never broke ground.

Patti Masterman

# Super Infrared

The Heisenberg uncertainty principle  
Can tell me you've moved  
But it can't tell me how fast;  
Or it can tell me  
You're nearing light speed  
But not if you're coming closer  
Or moving farther away from me.  
Yet I can feel the sunlight  
I know it takes eight minutes  
From the central fire of the solar system  
To reach my skin  
And so it is, I can sense the flame  
Of your presence  
Even a million years distant:  
Nothing else gives off as much light.

Patti Masterman

# Superficial

Dancers dance on unvarnished floor  
Teardrops cluster on unfinished ledge  
All the lacquer in the world can't conceal  
Black mold clinging at the edges of silence  
And silence gnawing like a well-fed cancer

Painful enlightenment when dawn comes to show  
Decay has over taken every careless surface  
There's nothing to be done now nothing left to save  
But close your eyes for an hour or a lifetime  
You could still pretend that nothing had changed.

Patti Masterman

# Surprise For Your Eyes

Can you feel all the drool  
Spooling down upon your words,  
And the fingerprints; dirty fingernails  
Smudging your sentences,  
Rubbing the sense from your paragraphs?

I lounge and elbow my way  
Through your writings; I burrow into the underclothes  
Of your images, and your strutting ideas I wear  
On my backside, like a shirt turned upside down  
That only fits halfway, and reveals most the things meant to be hidden.

While your metaphors hang down, drying  
Between my legs, like a forgotten afterbirth  
I funnel loud echos, from your peculiar sentiments,  
Through a tumescent portal, you have never laid eyes on-  
Because you think I must be made all of sugared violets?

Patti Masterman

# Survival

And all the survivals through history,  
Penultimate, lead up to me;  
And the dead join death in a mystery,  
Someplace we can never see.

Fathomless things you can't unwind,  
But survival is a kind of pay,  
To live a life, sometimes unkind-  
Because it's the only way.

And all the survivals through history,  
Beg to borrow just one more hour;  
And living is a kind of witchery,  
For no man understand it's power.

Fathomless things we pay homage to;  
We worship what we cannot know-  
Still breathing, a thing that's known to few-  
That we'd mortgage where we cannot go.

Patti Masterman

# Survivor

Dollie was one of eight children  
Born in the early part of the twentieth century  
I met Dollie only through stories  
Dollie as a child had taken sick  
Grandmother was sure that the doctor  
Had given Dollie some bad medicine  
That caused her death.

After Dollie died, she snipped a lock  
Of Dollies straight, pale hair, before burial  
And tied it with a bit of pink ribbon  
The hair stayed in the Bible,  
Smelling faintly of powder.  
It was dry as the prairie grass  
Where Dollie lived and died

I used to wonder if Dollie still lay intact in her grave  
With long hair streaming about her  
I wondered if she missed the few inches  
Held in the pink ribbon; if she knew about that?  
The hair was the only thing left of her  
Except for the box of homemade dresses  
Made of cloth once sewed onto sacks of feed.

Grandma kept the dresses close by, even at seventy  
I would always murmur  
That maybe they belonged in a museum  
But whenever we spoke of Dollie  
I just had to see the dresses again.  
It was our ceremony, together  
One by one, she'd let me look at each dress.

I was astonished that the dresses  
Could still reach out from the past-  
Proof that Dollie really lived once.  
They must have been ironed  
Before they were put away  
They were still smooth and crisp looking  
Viewing the dresses was a sacrament.

It seemed if there was any smidgen left of Dollie  
It had to be there in those dresses  
Since she wore them every day  
Maybe little fragments of her spirit transferred  
Into them, when she was very happy or very sad  
Perhaps someday some magic  
Might free her from the fabric again.

The years went by and too soon  
My grandparents died; the dresses disappeared  
Probably into the trash can.  
They had no value to anyone else; too old, moth-eaten  
It seemed a sacrilege: I was the rightful heir  
The one appointed, trusted to carry on  
The memory of Dollie: But at least I still have the hair.

Patti Masterman

# Sweet Dark Naked Earth

Sweet, dark, naked earth  
that the liquid light shines through and shines through,  
on it's way to oblivion, on it's way to void,  
down past the roots  
where the wheel of life toys.

Try to be air, try to light  
the sunlight that blinks, the beams that diffuse,  
the perfect rings encircling your being;  
time that sings in the moments you chose,  
light that smiles on the naked truth.

Patti Masterman

# Sweeter Air

Give me the sweeter air of his breath,  
The smoother wave of his voice;  
Voice I've never heard, where freedom  
Would sing in plunging starfish octaves,  
And rhythm'd oceans floating in syncopated bliss,  
His eyes of seaweed like a glass-bottomed boat,  
Upon the foaming sea of me,  
Transparent to the marrow'd depth of my bones  
Below his arc of circling nights and days.

And the gulls crying, and the west wind answering  
The vagrant tides; a dead pirate's buried cache of shells;  
And the mysterious treasures of a single mermaid,  
Who once cut legs into her own sloping tail,  
Trying to follow him out of the whirlpool.

Patti Masterman

# Sylvester Had A Speech Impediment

Sylvester had a speech impediment,  
And the Tweety Bird, he persued;  
To catch that bird, he was adamant-  
No matter how often, he'd lose.

Now Tweety bird liked to baby-talk,  
No matter how close death came-  
He knew he'd be back, next episode  
And they'd get to do it again.

Patti Masterman

# Sylvia

When he looked at their guest, there was a disturbing new look  
In his eyes, a look she thought she remembered from someplace far;  
From so long ago, it seemed another life entirely.

He used to look at her the same way, a million years from here,  
Seemingly thousands and thousands of days ago. Suddenly she felt so old,  
Much older than she was. She suspected she was starting

To actually shrink, to disappear, to become just a miniscule thing,  
No bigger than a gnat, or a flea perched on a giant tack.  
She was a thorn in the flesh now, one that wouldn't go away

The extra person in a group that wanted to be only two;  
Three is always too many, if two wish to be alone.  
Modern man has modern problems, because he wishes

To make up new rules and to live by them, to swear vows on holy books  
In front of ministers, and then he imagines there is no going back.  
Man makes his own problems in life.

We think life is inviolate, and change must be the enemy:  
Sylvia laid her down, and stuck her head in an oven-  
Problem solved.

Patti Masterman

# Sylvia's Book

I want to eat the yellow poetry book  
she wrote, every bright morning's sun  
looking on while I attempt to devour  
everything of hers within reach, which isn't much  
left unsullied by the whole world's touch.

I am hungry beyond hope of repair:  
only her dusty words can possibly satisfy  
the empty pit of my  
obsessions.

Patti Masterman

# Sylvia's Hair

Hair that was Sylvia's  
have you no words now?  
Like the cells of Henrietta  
you're rendered mute, timeless.  
Once the unmistakable proof of identity,  
hair now more like a dead animal,  
mummy made of mink.

Now voiceless siren,  
Once the oven dehydrated your soul  
and split open your telomerase,  
everything baked in it afterwards  
(At the hands of usurping mistresses)  
tastes strangely of burnt air and scoured emotion.

The rest of your denuded fur concealed  
where unfaithful lovers cannot intrude.  
It shudders there during storms  
or whenever the earth spasms,  
as though you are still arching alive beneath it.

Patti Masterman

# Sympathetic Magic

It's written in the leaves,  
And the clouds at sundown;  
Things you thought were left behind-  
Or buried in the ground.

Secrets that were whispered  
At the break of dawn,  
Presents got and given  
For the price of song,

For all the stars were watching,  
When you gave your heart  
And sympathetic magic means  
Some things can never part.

Patti Masterman

# Taciturn Midnight

Taciturn midnight tosses my dreams,  
Touching my nightmares, wandering again;  
Juggling my hours, mixing the streams:  
Then I wake up thinking, where have I been?

Mind when asleep; an unfathomable pot,  
Chasing after invisible things  
Random facsimile dramas and plots-  
And when we wake up, the screenplay just hangs.

No use pursuing the play interrupted;  
The only reel was the one in your brain  
As it gathered up images and intercepted-  
Not even one frame will be left where you lay.

Patti Masterman

## Take #3

The alarm goes off.

You wake up, dress, turn on the coffee, walk the dog,

Pull on the boots, grab the paper as you're going out.

Go do the freeway hustle, barely staying alive;

Walk in the door, with a sigh of relief-

But someone's pissed off Ex-something or other is there, with a sub-machine gun-

He mows down everyone on Level One, spraying the walls with

Cut-

The alarm goes off.

You wake up half-dressed, nuke some water for instant cafe,

Leave the dog asleep, pull on some running shoes

(Screw the paper) ,

Go do the freeway hustle (some things never change)

Barely staying alive,

You walk in the door, almost sighing- though you're not so sure

You're actually happy to be here this morning-

Sure enough, doors open suddenly, and men in white lab coats

Run in, flashing official badges hidden under their lapels-

And inject everyone with something, herding them into vans.

You feel yourself slipping away, wondering what was in the

Cut-

You throw the alarm against the wall. It won't break, keeps buzzing away.

You wonder vaguely who's making the unbreakable clocks now.

You slept in your clothes, now you pull on your recently bought

Steel-toed hiking boots,

Leash the new Doberman and take him with you,

Go do the freeway hustle,

He destroys the paper in the car as you're driving.

Walk in the door, he hikes his leg on the industrial height fireproof ashtray.

Doorman says with a frown, sorry sir, dogs are not allowed on the-

You pull out your Ruger, with a slanted smile yourself,

And let him have it. He lets out an audible sigh as he's falling.

Then you keep on walking like nothing happened at all.

You just had to get into the swing of things.



# Take Beautifullest Draughts

Take beautifullest draughts  
Of mellifluous maelstroms;  
Let vicissitudes of hands  
Enclose euphoric atmospheres  
From the panoramic strand,  
Weeping volumetric seas of tears;  
Anodynes of fabled lands  
Quench the starfish seas concupiscence;  
And all's on shifting sand,  
Victims of the strangest happenstance.

Patti Masterman

# Take Me, My Love, To The Gunnery Range

Things aren't the same as they used to be  
For us, or the rest of the family;  
And although to you it might sound strange-  
Take me, my love, to the gunnery range.

Load up our ammo; there's no need to spend  
Cause I've got some business I need to attend;  
And nothing there will be out of our range-  
Take me, my love, to the gunnery range.

It's all so calm there, and serious;  
Why we don't go more often's quite curious;  
We can shoulder our rifles, and blow out our rage-  
Take me, my love, to the gunnery range.

When I've got good aim, and can hit the stray dot;  
And don't have to use up ten quarts of shot,  
I'm going to go, and take care of some things-  
But I'll always come back, to the gunnery range.

Patti Masterman

# Take My Hand

Take my hand, unravel  
These skeins, of self;  
Unclothe the mind,  
Unbury what's real:  
In the eyes of another,  
We'll find a mirror.

Listen to the words;  
The ones behind,  
The not so plain ones  
That everyone speaks;  
Our humanness  
Makes us too meek.

Temporary pain  
May be our abode;  
The time spent here  
Not an easy chair:  
Without our brothers,  
Too hard to bear.

A heart's a chalice;  
A hand's a grail,  
That lift you up,  
Won't let you fail,  
So I thank you Michael-  
With words, to tell.

Patti Masterman

# Take Nothing But Memories

His voice had the strangely broken timbre of a child,  
Of too many souls, wandering lost in his throat  
Too many hands grasping onto his for help-  
I knew we couldn't last.

He had psychedelically tinted neurons  
Well concealed within a brave countenance of smiling canvas  
He had a magnetic core, of hot iron and paper mache  
He slung words together like magic hash

I'm still haunted, in love with all the words;  
There are thousands of phrases to fall for,  
Before the world closes up shop forever-  
But today, I wish for him only peace.

Patti Masterman

# Take This Cup

I want to get so blind stumbling drunk  
that the earth divides herself in twain;  
and my half takes me up to heaven,  
and then I want to go low again,  
let the oceans sink me down into hell,  
to drown all this creatures tiresome ambitions.

I'm dying in mundane status quo;  
leaking icemakers and clogged disposals,  
traffic fines and shopping lists,  
car repairs and dinner guests,  
and the endless wearing, wearying  
wearing out the body,  
wearing out the clothes,  
wearing out the friends,  
wearing out the soul-  
need new shoes new wheels new goals;  
need new gods;  
I'm stuck in the shoals.

Pick a quiet spot  
where the only noise heard  
is grass growing old;  
for life's a careless happenstance;  
that we should even be here,  
dreaming forever our pick-pocket dreams,  
one day this bubble will burst its seams  
and we'll go back to mute possibility,  
where we'll be filled up,  
for eternity of eternities-

but down here, we remain half empty cups.

Patti Masterman

# Taken For Granted

Taken for granted,  
A cloud by a day;  
Rainbow by rainshower;  
April by May.

The heart of the lover  
Is often disdained,  
While thinking old songs  
Are forgotten refrains.

To treasure not forgetting  
In the carapace of brain,  
Just find the new beginning  
Where you can start again.

Patti Masterman

# Taking A Walk At Night

All distances go to zero,  
Here toes to the sky matters.

Here reaching toward trees is immediate;  
All trails answer to one blue stretch of heaven.  
Underlining dew traces the fingers questions.

The moon tops endless distances, a moving lamp.  
Looking down at nothing means moist clover.  
No flower denies the grasp of another one.

The nighttime eye is fascinated by only a cloud,  
Hollowing out the stars:  
The universe has its own implacable reasons.

Patti Masterman

# Tale Of The Red Witch

Was a rose red dawn, on the blood red day  
That we burnt the witch, on bales of hay;  
Her hair so red, it blinded men,  
And made them think of supple sin;  
And ivory flesh, and flashing green  
Of angered eyes; that mind so keen.  
From sunset's red, the harbor gleamed;  
From her stone words, no truth to glean-  
They stood her, lashed her to the beam  
And lit the blaze, and watched it spread;  
It climbed up toward her brackish eyes,  
She wept and called out, toward the skies  
To save her; now her iron will broke  
As on the fumes, began to choke;  
No word would say, to silence those  
Who her last agony, happily chose-  
But now upon the pain of death,  
She swore a stack of bibles that  
She was no witch; she had no pact  
And as her tender flesh was racked,  
She slumped as though her life had fled  
And stayed there till seemed truly dead.  
Just dead enough, she looked to be,  
So they cut her loose, the savaged tree  
And laid her on the harbor's wood-  
A few were weeping; wished they would  
Have doused the fire, or saved her soul.  
Before the embers had grown cold  
They left her there alone that night  
For to bury, at morning's light.  
Morning came, with a wild surprise:  
The dawn redder, than last night's fire  
The wind had red rust, in it's breath  
As if from guilt too, at her death  
And fierce gusts lashed their trembling homes  
And moaned, as if a thousand crones  
Were flying over land and bay,  
Wondering where their sister lay.  
Then stray fires came, to eat their town:

Every structure burnt to ground.  
One man went, to the Red Witch grave,  
For no one else would be as brave;  
He came back, pale as sun bleached bones;  
Said her body was quite gone,  
She was missing from the hole-  
It opened wide, and nothing there,  
And then they felt, as if a stare  
Were piercing them, from up above  
And looked up then, to see the dove  
With whitest breast, and brackish eyes;  
It flew three circles, way up high,  
Then flew off then, to who knows where-  
For doves were only rare, seen there.  
And the sky, blood red, bled out it's soul  
As heaven paid the sorry toll.  
Beware the Red Witch; she's the worst:  
For nothing known can lift her curse.

Patti Masterman

# Talk, Walls

Talk walls, for there'll be no one hearing;  
Your secrets are safe, in their plaster and paint.  
Talk walls, cause there's no use in fearing;  
There's no other ears here, so don't hesitate.

It's a long time, you've been listening in;  
All the grieving and sadness, you couldn't escape.  
And if walls could talk, you've seen so much sin here,  
That no one could live here and ever feel safe.

Taciturn walls, with mute cracks and tack holes,  
Forced here to witness every act in the place-  
If you walls still had any heart left, in your hollowed  
out souls-  
You'd have a heart-ache.

Patti Masterman

# Talking In Riddles

What talks to itself,  
All day, all night?  
What talks without words  
From dawn's first light?  
What speaks in dreams  
With the smallest voice?  
What say your visions  
To give you a choice?

What talks to itself  
Is your body, it's clear.  
What talks without words  
Is your mind, so near.  
What speaks in your dreams  
It's your conscience, you hear.  
What say your visions?  
It's a sign that appears.

Patti Masterman

# Tattle Tale Engine

The thief was parked in the street waiting, watching  
The bag was over the surveillance camera, twenty foot up;  
ten foot long bag, hanging down  
Where do you even find such a large garbage bag?  
Acrobatic thieves with a long pipe, no less  
Waiting and watching, are they here, are they home?  
Are they gonna notice us? Shhh...  
Then the door opening, the discovery,  
and the engine roaring to life in the street,  
behind the trees, the truck careening away, almost invisible,  
sounding almost airborne  
That distinctive roar of the engine that I'll never forget  
I hear it every night now; once of an evening, early or late,  
Sooner or later, that exact soprano note..  
The whining high pitched and continuous  
Heading south again for miles and miles, fading slowly  
like an airplane's hum-  
The same truck, the same thief  
I can't help wondering, where's it going now?

Patti Masterman

# Tears, Funny Tears

Tears, funny tears  
When no one is watching;  
Tears, sad tears  
When no one's about,

Tears from the past,  
Tears for the future-  
Tears, and more tears  
From an endless fount.

Patti Masterman

# Telegram

Some of your (unhappy) words might (lack of commitment) scare me away (in love):

So try not to take it (unfulfilled) wrong; but there are (tired of you) words that (sleepless) worry me; just (fish in the sea) being pronounced (unfaithful) at all,

When it is (decision time) you or I (open relationship) discussing our (fragile) connection

(vulnerable) and can make me feel (pulling my string) nervous (make up my mind)

that maybe there is something (significant other) I keep missing (innuendo)

and on which our (compatible) entire relationship feels (lying) based

(adulterous)

(invisible) (manipulation) (hopeless) (distant) (alone) (stop)

Patti Masterman

# Telegraphy

Corrugated tesseracts  
Are enlivened under blood gorged membranes  
The barrier to a cool coral maze  
Of still shoals, the palest pink  
Permanent waves folded  
Into a frozen tidal sea

And here is the world of worlds  
That makes of us, ourselves  
A dimension that can't be trespassed against  
Where we are always home  
Inside spider woven neurons  
That talk only to each other  
Or to god

They relay their subsonic messages  
In penumbral patterns  
Translated into dismembered tongues  
And ancient relays of concordance  
Telegraphing farthest emotion  
Into clairvoyant flesh.

Patti Masterman

# Tell Me

How many worlds have sailed along the edge  
Of time; how many timeless voids gone  
With nothing to show, no word, no sign?

How many lives have lit the stage  
And stayed until their time was up;  
There was an age

When I was here, and knew myself so very  
Well; knew time and life enough to tell  
A tragic loss, before I fell.

Patti Masterman

# Tendon From Bone

Tendon from bone; assailing feat,  
Feline sinew on well-cleaved meat,  
Death in the morning, death at night-  
To sate unwelcome hungers blight.

Arrow from the archer, fleshly cleft,  
Brash incursion from life, a theft;  
Truncheon'd barter, body downed-  
No finer meal, and dregs to hound.

Patti Masterman

# Tether

I miss you most when far away;  
Your voice, gestures, things you say-  
Our inside jokes and secret signs-  
That say we're on the others mind.

I miss my heart, the part that's gone,  
No matter what is going on;  
There is a tether, miles above-  
That stretches- to remind of love.

Patti Masterman

# That Day You Opened Up Your Veins

That day you opened up your veins  
We thought you were trying  
To give away your soul to us  
So we might have left you there too long:  
No one wanted to disturb  
All that pretty, florid richness, bubbling out  
And it left a beautiful paisley imprint  
As looking out, through your stained glass,  
We could see the world bleeding out too:  
Division, disappointment, greed;  
Great running rivulets, of time's acid bath  
But we've sugar-coated it over now  
Sliding around, falling over each other  
Touching our fingers, to our mouths,  
Never sure who's stinging fire of blood  
We're tasting; there's been so many since-  
Even the fountains spray blood now,  
Like wine, of the new transmutation;  
And sitting rulers bathe in it,  
Hoping for good luck, eternal life, balance of yin and yang,  
Your name, as magic eight ball, lucky rabbits foot;  
While we slink around, fingers to our lips  
Waiting for the day your blood finally finds it's voice  
And begins to scream out loud.

Patti Masterman

# That Day You Touched My Arm

That day you touched my arm, it seemed  
That air was thicker than it used  
To be; and even if I dreamed  
That fettered things at last were loosed-

No truer tale, could lips reveal  
In matrimonial embrace,  
No gilded link would ever seal  
The treasure hid by white lace;

And thinking that my secret lie  
In places undisclosed, and still;  
I was surprised to find that I  
Had wrote it, on the window-sill.

Patti Masterman

# That Flickering Flame

A soul's as thick as sod  
In more indistinct ways;  
Thicker than the dreams which lead  
To truths, you would not say.

A soul's the thinnest vapor  
Hides between a life and death;  
Capriciousness, in a caper-  
That flickering flame, the breath.

Patti Masterman

# That New Beauty Abound

I pulled off my black clothing  
And let my hair back down  
Took off the heels, took off the dress  
Now there is not a sound

Since death is still forever  
And silence says its name  
I never more will mention  
I buried you, today

But it were more for kindness;  
There was no venom there:  
We bury what cannot be borne,  
Revealed, in open air.

I'll only recall good things  
Bad memories have no place  
There is no need to think of me  
I'm bound by my own days

Please bury me in kindness  
And cover the memories  
And never go to my grave again-  
Not even in reverie.

Now that we are strangers  
We'll probably never meet  
But if we should, I'd smile at you-  
Or perhaps- would not greet.

I can't say I never knew you,  
And we cannot be friends-  
If friendship ripped the world apart-  
There's things we could not mend.

That's why you were buried,  
Many feet beneath the ground,  
But I'll plant some lovely flowers,  
That new beauty may abound.

Patti Masterman

# That Sound

I pulled the ripcord, and then a whole canopy  
Of your blood splashed down over me

We flew too high I guess, and you forgot to touch down again;  
Flew off, leaving behind all of your bones, and most of your flesh

While you held your tattered soul so high, by your teeth  
To keep it from tangling, down on the ground

But what I'll remember forever's that sound.

Patti Masterman

# That We Still Love

Do the dead see the living,

Do we take up all their space?

And can they see our shadows,

Can they make out our face?

Do the dead hear the living,

Do they have ears to hear?

And have they things to tell us-

If we could have less fear?

Do the dead feel the living,

Do they have hands that touch?

Could they know that we still love-

If they knew love, as such?

Patti Masterman

# That Which You Are Seeking's Seeking You

That which you are seeking's seeking you,  
From perfection's unsuspected clue.  
What you're doing now is done to you:  
Life's the promise, life is flowing through.

That which you are seeking's seeking you,  
From the truly-seeking's truth, made new.  
What your thoughts are thinking's making you:  
Love's the secret, love that flow through you.

That which you are seeking's seeking you,  
From beloved's perfect-loving glue.  
And what your words are writing's written you:  
You're the treasure, flowing love in truth.

Patti Masterman

# The Albatross That's America

The albatross that's America-  
Where does it think it's heading?  
The statue of Liberty's hiked her hem;  
That's all she's left, for giving..

The country's for sale,  
It's in the news, but that is not the worst;  
It seems nobody's buying now,  
They're all too risk-averse..

Amerika has sold out her soul  
To the Commies and Socialists;  
Better be careful what you say,  
Or you'll end up on some list..

The albatross that's America  
Is looking for a boat  
Where she can perch, to ease her load;  
Her many tonnes, of bloat..

The boat is small, but the ship's the world  
We should name, 'Titanic's Brink'-  
Because that baby's going down-  
Whenever the banana boat sinks..

Patti Masterman

# The Aliens Viewpoint

These poem comments, so necessary and trite:

'Effective use of the word `nothing' in the last part'

'A serene and yet longing ambiance for the reader'-

From out of where do these comments arrive?

On my home planet we only feel poems, and do not dissect them as such

We hide inside metaphors, and it is considered bad form to demolish the magic

With explanations; to expose the mystery to rude stares and snickers:

In school I was a wild animal, and no one could approach me from behind

Because I would vanish into the nearest knothole, and couldn't be found again

Until the spring thaws, with the birds all saying, 'I do'.

In that world we would never dare to judge or dismiss the truth

Of another soul. But there must be some reason for being here

Where even poetry must come with a useful purpose and resume?

Patti Masterman

# The Altar Of Memory

Why, as the end of life appears in sight  
Does everything become an artifact?  
Childhood returns for the second time  
And everything becomes unbearably precious,  
Exhaustible, vulnerable; never to be replaced.

The psyche, which has been rooting itself  
In these same bodies, for untold millions of years,  
Suddenly spreads itself even wider;  
Attempting to snag everything within reach-  
Things totally useless, and devoid of any meaning  
To everybody except us.

Old lovers in our minds, resemble scenes from romantic paintings;  
More loving, more caring, than the reality ever was.  
Our parents appear more genteel, our children more endearing;  
The whole world is like the most terribly fragile work of art;  
Even the simple act of baking a cake seems a magic trick,  
Available nowhere else in the universe,  
Because wheat is a treasure from earth's bosom itself,  
And butter and eggs must be novelties,  
Coming from the bodies of two completely different animals;  
Able to mix with wheat, and then become something tall and airy,  
Rising lightly toward the sky, like an ascending puff of cloud.

Snapshots for our memory altars, and fresh flowers for the dead  
Who have left everything once important to them behind;  
No wonder ancient peoples set out feasts for their deceased;  
Our imaginations are huge enough to comprehend anything  
But the empty husks, of those we loved: or else our own.

Patti Masterman

# The Ambidextrous Masturbator

The ambidextrous masturbator  
Came across a very large alligator,  
Who happened to eat his leading arm;  
Leaving his other one unharmed.

'Not a big deal, for I'm ambidextrous;  
So it's no problem, ' he said with a smile,  
'Though I think those teeth are really infectious-  
At least it wasn't a crocodile.'

Patti Masterman

# The Angel Of The Soul

I wonder does the soul  
move as we move, like a ghostly apparition  
inside the arc of our motion,  
averaged out in the spaces  
between the winds of breathing  
our body in space spins round us.

Or does the soul  
have a mind of its own;  
leaving for a days journey alone,  
note pinned to our psyche- don't worry, I'll be back  
just in time for all your dreams tonight-  
as huge wings fan our face, with unimaginable breezes  
on its departing.

Do we dance with our soul, when deep in sleep  
pirouetting around one another in perfect time,  
soul flying us to heavenly ports  
we never suspected were there before,  
the skies echoing with our tinkling laughter,  
and each leading or following  
according to the moments need?

The soul finally hijacking all that was precious  
of each one of us, at the last instant-  
before the train wreck finally catches up.

Patti Masterman

# The Animal Body Craves Grass And Tuberous Roots

The animal body craves grass and tuberous roots  
Wakes and sleeps, under cycles of the moon  
Births live offspring; they and all their ilk:  
We're all mammal, by proof which we give milk.

Bodies smooth, by means of wearing clothes  
Sleep in beds, whenever our eyes close  
And think we're more superior than those;  
Flatter self, that god our species chose.

We still live by cunning and desire  
In our fear, adrenalin keeps us wired  
Proved our fitness, in more ancient days;  
Hard to see now, with our modern ways.

The animal body craves grass and tuberous roots  
Wakes and sleeps, under cycles of the moon:  
Eyes more open, than they've ever been-  
But less conscious, than we were back when.

Patti Masterman

# The Annunciation

Does the body know it's just become pregnant?  
Is there a shudder in the loins to confirm  
That this time conception actually occurred,  
And was this the most memorable night of life-  
Or scarcely remembered, in drunken haze?

Well, what should one expect from beginnings  
That were so randomized, to start with?  
Babies must be faster in this modern age,  
To avoid the abortionist's hooks.

Patti Masterman

# The Approach Of Night

the approach of night:  
new revolutions begin,  
variations on a horizon.

the wife of the sun shows her lucid face  
someone else is hollowing out stars  
with floodlights from a car lot.

sometimes a voice bends uneasily in the breeze,  
as children count sheep under woolly blankets

while tomorrow easily slips unseen  
and waits behind a schoolboy's dream.

Patti Masterman

# The Articles Of Defilement

1 At least living doesn't make me sick  
2 he said so whose fault is it if there is  
3 nothing inside here you are the one  
4 who makes what you are you if you didn't  
5 get made right is there blame to be distributed  
6 so who decides who will get the blame for  
7 your botched construction job but hey  
8 they say we are each the maker of what  
9 we become so there is really no one to blame  
10 you become what the seed inside says  
11 you will become the limits of the centrifuge  
12 of your being as its spinning sideways through time  
13 quick figure it out before it all goes away again  
14 who is to blame why is there nothing inside  
15 instead of something living doesn't make you sick  
16 where is the fault who is hidden inside here  
17 who makes it right what did you become  
18 who botched this surgery who made the first mistake  
19 what are the limits before time goes away  
20 and living is always shrinking the fault is nothing found  
21 you didn't do it right blame is a botched job  
22 blame the maker blame the seed the centrifuge off center  
23 spinning out a shrinking universe make it right  
24 screw the surgery it will only get worse  
25 it was a mistake all just a mistake a shrinking  
26 botched by the maker no blame can fix it  
27 the limits are living being being sick of living no fault  
28 at least living doesn't make us sick its not  
29 making me sick I am not my cancer I am only the  
30 sickness of living.. see rule number 1 again

Patti Masterman

# The Auto-Erotic Triumvirate

The auto-erotic triumvirate  
Was found to be a pirate;  
Just one you see,  
Is all it takes to be  
Cause his hand is such a tyrant.

Patti Masterman

# The Axe Is Blood Red

The axe is blood red, by the worn churchyard door,  
And there's a dark moisture where it's usually dry:  
The pigeons are quiet now and no longer cooing;  
For the ones who survived must fly higher than high.

So fly away Peter, fly away Paul;  
Don't be found hanging round the churchyard no more.

The children are weeping and rubbing their eyes  
As the feather's go tumbling, unanchored and free;  
Bloody clumps clinging, to bush and to vine,  
And a small pile of birds at the foot of a tree.

So fly away Peter, fly away Paul;  
Don't be found hanging round the churchyard no more.

The attacks were unwarranted; murderous rage:  
Something gone awry, in the caretaker's mind;  
So he pulled out his coat sleeve the long skinny blade,  
Putting to rout all the birds and their kind.

So fly away Peter, fly away Paul;  
Don't be found hanging round the churchyard no more

Now the children have nightmares, which rouse them from sleep,  
But it's too late to save their young eyes from the sight;  
And the mute beaks are opening up toward the sky,  
While they beat bloodied feathers through long endless nights.

So fly away Peter, fly away Paul;  
Don't be found hanging round the churchyard no more.

Patti Masterman

# The Baby Leaped

The baby leaped in her womb  
At hearing those words-  
And for joy, leaped

Baby that was only a tadpole  
Or a fish embryo by that stage  
Baby that a man, would make

A fetus, to complete us  
Flying cherub with wings  
Folded back into his shoulders

From heaven's down he floated  
Leaping into closed wombs  
Now thundering open- into, he leaped

Into history's gaping maw,  
Never the same  
Time leaped, and he sprang

The clockspring uncoiled  
The watch beginning  
The bud of the branch starting to ripen

He leaped for the pure joy  
In his padded cell  
Knowing his time was at hand.

Patti Masterman

# The Baptism

Holy, holy, holy:

The clothes agitate in warm baths,  
Precise increments of suspension.  
Ineloquent soaps do the heavy lifting  
While I cogitate the theological dispersions  
Of soil, from smooth-seamed linens  
And do Sat-Nam satins, on gentle cycle.

Holy, holy, holy:

This work comes from my inner soul,  
My acrylate self of clean store shelves,  
And ads on television which invite  
To shake out dirt, that clouds our lives;  
Darkened shirt collars are a sin-  
Rub the stains before they're set.

Holy, holy, holy:

The pure folded iconography of garment:  
Now let pockets testify to heaven above  
That lo, they were emptied before their immersion,  
The sins there were, are all washed clean.  
And there's one more week of dirty living  
Until the washday comes again.

Patti Masterman

# The Barest Tree

The barest tree  
Still has a pile of leaves  
At its feet  
And the wilted flower  
Still remembers the hour  
He held his head high  
And never looked from the sky,  
At all.

Patti Masterman

# The Bathroom Fly

He's always in there  
Flying his lonely solo's around the four walls  
Practicing advanced aeronautical maneuvers  
While veering slightly off course, to miss the vanity,  
The wall cabinet, the shower curtain..  
Why can't he leave, the door is always open?  
Perhaps he's a spy drone,  
On retainer to record our hemorrhoids for posterity;  
Or how often we worship at the porcelain altar.  
Perhaps he's become so good at curving his flights  
He never misses his mark far enough to discover  
There is a way out of here.

I leave him again, unharmed.  
I figure he's another prisoner, just like me.

Patti Masterman

# The Belly Of The Beast

Lost in the belly of the beast,  
We look up and see all those curving arches,  
And we think then that we're in some majestic cathedral;  
But the next sloping corridor takes us down to the mortuary,  
The processing station, for what we are busy turning into.  
But we still ignore the smell, as we're too busy believing  
That for us, a great feast is being prepared-  
Just like children at christmas time  
Always believe the world is organized solely around them;  
Only to give them lots of gifts and candy.  
But we are the final meal being prepared;  
We are the last sacrifice  
To the pagan gods of old,  
Who we only thought had been retired by now  
Into dusty chests of antiquity;  
They are the ones will eat our body, drink our blood  
As their sacrament, of a new millenium,  
And it is our children will suffer the labor pangs  
Birthing their dreams; and not ours:  
Because we have never grown up enough  
To realize the fairy tales have not been true,  
And that they have never been about us at all.

Patti Masterman

# The Best Sound Of All

The magazine lies coyly on the table, its shiny cover  
Folded shut, attempting to seduce me with  
Large bold type; a story about celebrities:  
"Come see through these eyes, " it offers brazenly.

On a pile of papers sits a printed letter written in reply  
To an unfair demand by some business entity:  
"Come see through my eyes, "the black font says  
derisively.

On the table is a folder of stories my daughter  
Has been writing over the years since early childhood,  
Ranging from block letters to cursive scrawl:  
"Come see through young eyes, "it silently begs.

A book, left carelessly open on the bathroom floor,  
Espouses some new improved lifestyle, with photos  
Of happy people living in that fashion:  
"Come see through our eyes, "the book scolds.

In the dresser is a clear plastic folio of my  
Writing, all the words of mine I have saved for  
Whatever reasons; all words of mine, alone.  
The only sound is freedom, punctuated with silence.

Patti Masterman

# The Betrayal Of Memory

the betrayal of memory  
is a poisoned chamber;  
a melancholic rack  
of shrieking virgins,  
roaming forever  
in lewd fields  
perfumed tresses  
with hollowed caresses  
oblivion's horror  
and cadaverous ceilings;  
crumbling relics  
of ardor's stale pleasures.

cruelty blooms  
among wilted cathedrals,  
as depravity suckles  
on blighted fruit:  
the serpent craves only  
the breath of the pure,  
and in his vermilion  
the cancer takes root.

Dec.29 2009

Patti Masterman

# The Birds Are As Alone As I

The birds are as alone as I,  
But do not pause to question why.  
Each one his wing to wind, must bear;  
Must endure weather foul or fair.

We trust the world won't break our wings,  
Or stifle what we long to sing.  
The night's so large, when you are small:  
And it's a long way down, to fall.

Patti Masterman

# The Blackbird's Eyes

The still, bracken water  
holds the black, of the blackbird's eyes-  
in the pooling depths of darkness,  
where there is no hint of sun;  
in the water, it's always night.

The soul so wild, within me  
feels pain, in a blackbird's cry;  
anguish when away, they fly-  
to be always thought the dark one,  
shrouded by so much light.

Fly bird, beneath the heavens  
cold shadows, that drift above you,  
and warm earth, beneath your flight,

Damp is the bosom that birthed you,  
and better than coming dawn,  
are the dark pinions of your eyes.

(Smoky Hoss inspired this one, for sure,  
thanks Smoky, your blackbird poem is amazing)

Patti Masterman

# The Blood Of Your Sigh

The blood of your sigh spoke through me,  
The ink in the stain cried your name;  
The longing of love soon immured me-  
Immune to the loss or the gain.

The dust of time, it was blowing,  
The space of our distance, it craved-  
And never, oh love, would the knowing  
Of flesh, be forgotten- or tamed.

Patti Masterman

# The Body Has Many Voices

Eyes speak for me

I that am taciturn, fragile, often tongue tied

Reveal your essence to the day, the night

When the fickle sun has taken its flight

My eyes will speak, with their delight

Mouth speak for me

Not through mere words or sounding cry

But in many expressions that passing by

When the only uttered sound might be a sigh

My mouth will speak for me, in smiles

Hands speak for me

Smooth and pale, though short of nail

For hands might soothe, where others fail

The eyes might scorn, the mouth might curl

While hands will speak, in softest braille

Patti Masterman

# The Body Is A Love Song To God

The body is a love song to god-  
To god: all the other sounds drown  
When the most lovely sound,  
Of the body is found;  
All it's being resounds with  
I Am.

Seventy-odd times a minute-  
All the while continues beating:  
Blood entering, blood leaving,  
The vital circuit completing;  
It's every cymbal repeating  
I Am.

The lungs formed like a bellows-  
To tell us: with their rhythms  
What the makers own hymn is;  
That wherever the air breathes and  
Where chest sinks and heaves, there  
I Am.

Ceaseless song always arriving-  
Proof of presence: it's reviving  
From the darkness, exhuming us;  
The light of god luminous:  
Out of love so all-consuming  
I Am.

Patti Masterman

# The Body's Fate

The body's fate,  
And birth is luck,  
So in this fleshly  
Pile, we're stuck;

And there are things  
We should be doing-  
Instead of fruitless  
Things we're wooing.

Patti Masterman

# The Brain As Engine Of Survival

The physical system has memory  
that's always turned on,  
it remembers wrongs, even in sleep-  
and plumbs them out, many phantoms deep.

The brain fine tunes and correlates  
past to present, what is and isn't;  
dream pantomimes where we work it out,  
height to width, and truth to doubt.

There's no judging what's illicit,  
the brain possesses moral deficit;  
for everything relates to self-  
survival's bodys only wealth.

Patti Masterman

# The Brain-Pan Is The Cannibal's Dream

The brain-pan is the cannibal's dream;  
The seat of soul, the being's seam,  
The font of man's divinest mind:  
Both brute, and the devoutly kind.

The cannibal sits at the head of table  
Eating your memories long as he's able,  
Counting it as his finest repast,  
Eating your present, future and past.

Patti Masterman

# The Broken-Faith Father Of Night

The broken-faith father of night  
Speaks through the day of the child,  
His porcelain piercing the baby's smiles;  
Fishing deep in the blush of need  
Where sun shattered promises  
Make sharper mornings bleed.

Patti Masterman

# The Brood Mare Waits

The brood mare waits, beside the stream  
The stallion's approach, sniffing the air;  
Together, they're a breeding team,  
And they take their time; nobody's there.

They meet each year, come springtime's green  
And mate together, each to each;  
His seed's too thin, or she's too lean,  
An offspring's something they can't reach.

But one year, the stallion approach the hill  
And is astonished there to find,  
The brood mare, with a little filly,  
Who looks to be his very kind.

With two white spots upon her head,  
And long lithe legs, and well spaced eyes,  
And by her mother's urging led,  
And so they say hello, goodbye.

Each year thereafter there's a new  
Colt or filly, beside the stream,  
The stallion gets introductions to,  
So all his children, he has seen.

And soon the fields are full of all  
The offspring, that were born to them,  
Many horses, strong and tall;  
All were born, by her and him.

And so a lineage comes to grow  
By fits and starts, and overcomes  
The force of nature, which might sow  
The strongest seed, of only some.

And now their children's offspring too  
Enjoy the hills and streams and fields;  
And never knew the young mare who,  
With her stallion, made such yield.

Patti Masterman

# The Burden Is Easy And The Yoke Is Light

The burden is easy and the yoke is light,  
When the enemy is deathless night.  
How light the burden; being gently kind  
And how pale that yoke, next a civilized mind-  
A loving world worth countenancing,  
More than pointless verbal prancing.  
For what is gained by loss of trust  
When our common end is always dust?  
Make the moments of your life an altar;  
And raise up your brother, that he not falter.

Patti Masterman

# The Care And Feeding Of The Heart

Don't leave your heart to scrounge old garbage bins,  
Looking for things, discarded by others-  
No, gently feed your heart with sustaining joy;  
Like old yellowed books, with secret compartments  
Where distant lovers left their notes and trinkets,  
Or just-dried tears, on a wildflower posy.

Nourish your heart on some once living lilac;  
A few rose petals, from a faded bouquet;  
Bits of hope, for two, far apart,  
For love survives on barest scraps of hope,  
And long-ago proof of certain caring;  
Kindness uncalled for, and least expected.

Your heart could gorge happily  
On eyes of true love, or some hand written prose;  
Maybe a valentine, lost then found,  
Unrestrained delight, in a child's voice;  
And the shyest kiss; fluttering eyelids in surprise-  
Two hearts will always live better than one.

Patti Masterman

# The Castle-Keep

Why is it I should feel fenced in by you?  
I can walk as far as the four compass points of my own soul,  
To the very edges of my comprehension and self-knowledge, as I dare.  
Can swim in the deep or shallow waters, to my own comfort level.  
Deny myself, or reward myself, anything in my own surroundings.  
Confuse myself, or illuminate my mind with honesty.  
I can make myself miserable or happy, as I deem it should be.  
Mostly like some sovereign king, I live, but all the while, still  
Testing the bars, the barbed wires, of my imaginary limits.  
I guess in the end you should throw me out;  
But you are a benevolent guardian and you see much farther  
Than I ever could. You can see past any current obstacles;  
Your love rides far above the plain, featureless days.  
It must dwell somewhere much higher up, which would explain  
My sense that you are never really here with me-  
It is just that, you are always in the castle keep,  
Making sure nothing really bad can ever happen to me.

Patti Masterman

# The Chair

So I rehearsed in my mind what to tell him,  
whenever he happened to spy the chair, old and worn,  
sitting near the outside door. He would laugh to think  
I bought something so old and ugly, even though dirt cheap,  
and I knew that if I said it had belonged to my dad since antiquity,  
he would buy it, because it just had that look about it,  
bedraggled and yellowed- yet durable if nothing else;  
as if it had been dragged about someone's yard for decades.

And probably someone's dad had owned it-  
or maybe someone, not even a dad,  
and not really clever or particularly kind;  
some misfit, who sat in it for hours on end, drinking,  
sat on the stoop of his house or near it, in that very chair,  
and kind of lorded it over the street every afternoon, till dinner.

And just to pass the time, in his mind he made fun  
of everyone that passed by him on the street,  
of the women and boys and men lesser than himself,  
he would have made fun out loud; but for the strong men,  
the ones much greater in stature or boldness,  
it would have been silently, beneath his breath,  
but still very much there.

Perhaps he beat his wife, but only after much drink,  
mainly on Saturday nights, maybe to compensate himself for the fact  
that other, better off men were out on dates, spending money,  
snorting drugs of every sort, while he had only his meager living room  
and a boring television screen, the same thing every night,  
and it only showed him everything he was not and would never be-  
and maybe at those moments, he would beat his wife that much harder.

And then on Sunday, he would maybe have been found in church,  
hung over and sober; repentant even, for as long as it lasted-  
just till the sermon ended, most likely, and then he would almost  
run over the other churchgoers, in his haste to leave,  
and start his Sunday afternoon off right- beer in hand,  
sitting on the stoop, making fun of passers by,  
in the fading consciousness of his morass of sinning,

for six more glorious days of drinking, baiting people, and beating his wife.

So this man I invented gradually became so real to me;  
almost more real than the chair itself, and began to threaten  
to take me over, so that in the end I had to murder him, in cold blood:

One night he had made empty threats to a scowling man  
hurrying down the road, a man who had car trouble and was on foot,  
carrying a tire iron, afraid it would get stolen if he left it in the car,  
and in rage he had swung the tire iron and let it fly, and it hit the old man  
neatly upon the temple, before falling down and leaving that slight dent-  
the one in the metal of the arm support-  
and the old chair man went down quite dead, sagging in his chair,  
spilling his beer upon the chair and down his pants leg,  
and after that it was quite safe to go down that street, even peaceful;  
and later his wife gave all his things away to the neighborhood thrift store,  
and that is how I ended up with this quite ugly old chair.

Patti Masterman

# The Change Viewed As Metaphysical Representation

One woman blew her brains out,  
and another I knew personally  
quit sleeping, at the menopause.

She said she sat up all night reading  
because sleep would never come anymore.  
Eventually she gave me up, not for Lent  
but perhaps because I was useless after 9 p.m.  
and she always called well after midnight.

I spent a few nights at her house, and in the night  
I got up one time, and went upstairs from the basement  
to use the bathroom, but the lights were all on-

There she was, reading a paperback.  
I got a chill, remembering what she'd said about not sleeping.  
She'd told me I was taking too much melatonin,  
so I tripled my dose, after that.

I wondered how it would be to never sleep again;  
I began filling myself nightly with antihistamines and melatonin,  
Gaba and herbs, determined to go meet the Sandman  
on his own indecipherable terms.

There are no books I want to read worse than I want sleep,  
That global resetting each and every night, because otherwise I'm afraid  
I might end up joining the woman in the 38 Special club.  
And I'm still scared I'm being secretly inducted  
into the midnight book-readers society.

I refuse to capitalize the word menopause; it's only a word  
no better than any other.  
I'm thinking of adding some Tequila to my repertoire,  
And also wondering, if some women are not born more Goddess  
than human, and never even realize it.

Patti Masterman

# The Charnel House

Once you've known death-  
Smelled, tasted, felt it's breath  
Tingling your spine, you can never completely  
Leave that house behind  
Once you've seen the glassy eyes  
The unmoving form is forever reborn  
Like cotton candy on hands at the fair  
Like the scent of a lover hangs in the air  
And the vision of road kill you want to forget  
It's on your mind, and in your face,  
That stiff form so bereft of grace  
The shadow you've banished inside  
Follows you; and you can't leave it behind  
You think it's walled neatly off by a lie  
Far away in some dim alien sky  
But it infuses all your plans and thought  
Those nagging memories can't be bought  
People shouldn't bleed for having loved  
Our eyes should be saved for the livings light  
The first death kindles the last goodbye  
I know the signs, now seared upon my eyes  
And deep inside, there are hidden cries  
My heart's been chained to an ugly wrecking ball  
Bloodied bits of the past on its circling round  
Like hyenas, after the victim's gone down.

Patti Masterman

# The Chess Game

the chess game, of moving all your words around  
can entertain, but never satisfy:

you bait and switch, with relative pronouns;  
the proximity of the demonstrative merely teases,  
and by the tip of your tongue, participles dangle

your adjectives: just more interior decorating,  
like a child at play, who dances two dolls together,  
but never for one instant, forgets that they are dolls

if playing were not more fun than that,  
who would ever want to play; if words were not more  
than just the product of their differences,  
who would bother to construct anything out of them?

if touching emotions were as easy  
as touching two inanimate objects together,  
while waiting for heaven to effectively deliver the lightning bolt,  
that would shock them, into breath and living

then what hope can live in words, alone:  
if they are not there first, inside your own being  
if they are not your children, conceived under your own heart  
birthed in placental tides of blood, and hopeful love

if their easing out of you, did not make you nearly scream,  
with the pain of the separation, then perhaps  
they were only miscarriages, after all?

Patti Masterman

# The Child In The Old Woman

The child in the old woman  
Lurks very near the skin;  
Though buried by long years of care,  
She'll surface once again.

She shows her face quite shyly,  
With a wondering sort of smile;  
Her emotions near and vibrant,  
For she hasn't any guile.

The child in the old woman  
Be careful, not to wound-  
Her days and hours are precious;  
She's leaving all too soon.

You'll see the child she once was,  
In the vagaries of living;  
And far from becoming selfish,  
Her days are filled with giving.

There's a beauty in an old face,  
That's lacking in the young,  
As she contemplates a journey,  
That she hasn't yet begun.

The child in the old woman  
Is much wiser than she seems,  
For she celebrates in vision  
What we'd only view as dreams.

She hails a new tomorrow,  
Past dimensions we can't see,  
And prepares for a new reality-  
One where she is finally free.

The child in the old woman  
Smiles at secrets we can't know-  
But the biggest one of all-  
Inside she never did grow old.

Patti Masterman

# The Child Of Time Rides The Horse Of Space

The child of time rides the horse of space,  
His mind can take him any place;  
He'll touch the compass points of life,  
And avoid the thinnest blades of strife,  
The flower of mind will open wide  
And pour out everything inside.

Patti Masterman

# The Children Know Things

The children know things that they cannot say,  
Can't put into words, far beyond their age;  
It's knowledge they have, but ought not know-  
They may stay quiet, but their eyes say so.

Children live in the background light,  
With inquisitive faces, to inquire what's right;  
And tell them nothing, or tell them much-  
They'll always intuit why the things are thus.

Their eyes are watching you night and day,  
Cataloging every word you say;  
And even words which you might not utter-  
They'll still catch, when you start to stutter.

You can watch your face and watch your tongue,  
From morning light till the day is done;  
You'll never find out how they got the truth-  
But just look in their eyes, to find the proof.

Patti Masterman

# The Church Is Built On Bloody Bones

The church is built on bloody bones,  
Broken martyrs, burning homes;  
The church is built on bloody bones-  
Not singing angels, golden thrones.

The church is built on murder, rage,  
Plunder, anger and pillage;  
The church is built on murder, rage-  
There's no escaping murders wage.

The church you choose informs your soul,  
If you're shattered, if you're whole;  
The church you choose informs your soul-  
So be sure it's worthy goal.

Patti Masterman

# The Clock Counts The Hours

The clock counts the hours of raging indifference,  
The clock watches all, in the house of stone-  
Tick tock: another heart is feebly breaking;  
Tick tock: another heart's wretched, alone.

The hours of chance break the hourglasses;  
The sundial's overgrown, with moss and weeds-  
Tick tock: somebody says goodbye, forever;  
Tick tock: someone else inhabits grief.

The clock sees the winners and the losers;  
The clock says nothing, but the words it knows-  
Tick tock: don't ask for whom the hour is chiming;  
Tick tock: for the mirror and the timepiece know.

Patti Masterman

# The Clouds Be Spies

The clouds be spies that hover the world of men:  
For they own the sky, it's whole covering is them  
And it all rains down, becomes gloom and woe;  
Heaven pours doom out on the lives below.

If immortality would be your end  
Arrange your limbs like the galaxies wind  
Place your body: a universe to be  
On bare earth, for immortality.

(And now my days be numbered too  
For I've given the last, most secret to you.)  
But you won't read this as words of reason  
Unless overcome the body's own treason.

Patti Masterman

# The Cord Blood Is Strongest

like dulcet lovers  
twins on the Aegean  
two hearts beating in time  
bis vivit qui bene vivit

never shall innocent blood be shed  
yet the blood of the wicked shall flow like a river

time ran by leaving bloody footprints  
time mated with a vengeance  
does time run down or simply run out  
of time?

never shall innocent blood be shed  
yet the blood of the wicked shall flow like a river

blood speaks in a rush  
and mumbles in corpuscles  
blood measures heartbeats in pulses  
between two hearts  
a silken cord of caring

never shall innocent blood be shed  
yet the blood of the wicked shall flow like a river

time answers all questions  
in good time  
souls are thin rivers  
running into the same  
shivering ocean of memories

never shall innocent blood be shed  
yet the blood of the wicked shall flow like a river

hearts are cymbals  
beating out the old refrains  
in time

He lives twice who lives well

Patti Masterman

# The Customer Is Always Right

There must be some mistake-  
Some mix-up in the bookkeeping.  
He was not meant to recline  
In the shade of cold marble:  
All the angles are wrong,  
The perimeters too confining.

He preferred curling tendrils of ivy  
True, he wanted the vegetables-  
Sadly absent around here-  
Neatly aligned, and surrounded by  
All the gardeners paraphernalia:  
Casually displayed; never hidden from view.

A sprawl of dogs to complete it.  
He was never much for ceremony  
And over-kempt hedgework-  
Can't you check one more time,  
To make sure things are done  
According to his wishes?

Patti Masterman

# The Damn Bell Sans Merci

I.

What can ail the coming dawn  
Although there is no loitering;  
The button on the clock has broke-  
There's way too many birds singing.

II.

Oh what can ail the sleeper,  
Eyes shadowed: night is done,  
The squirrels are brisk and bushy-tailed;  
Most glad, to see the sun.

III.

I see new wrinkles on your brow,  
Your sweat has broken, fever'd too  
With reddened cheeks, the morning light  
Does there, eschew.

IV.

I met a salesman in the woods  
Selling things, with tone so mild;  
I wish I had not bought his goods:  
They are my trial.

V.

I placed the clock upon the bed,  
An it were better than a phone,  
To wake me, from the Stygian deeps;  
My chronic lateness, to atone.

VI.

I set the clock where I could see  
And eagerly await its song,  
I knew come morn, the dawn would break-  
By it, ere long..

VII.

I lost myself in Viking tales,  
And dined on wild radish, and rue,  
Certain that sweet vibes would wake,  
At mornings cue.

VIII.

I took me to my cushy sheets,  
And sunk myself in sleep, full-bore  
And then I took my nightly draught-

A fool, times four!

IX.

And then I slept (quite all alone)  
With the clock, close by my side,  
And dreamed of things you could not know  
In dreams, abide.

X.

And dreamed the clock went off as I  
Ran off down the longest hall;  
The damn bell sans merci-  
My ears, it did maul!

XI.

Then I woke to the loudest ring  
That my ear-drums, did debride;  
The button on the darn thing broke-  
And fell inside.

XII.

And that is why I sleep out here,  
Breaking rules, by loitering;  
The button on the clock has broke-  
There's far too many birds singing.

Patti Masterman

# The Darkest Winter Lives In The Heart

The darkest winter lives in the heart  
And pale are the fires, on dread winter's hearth;  
Cold is the welcoming, cold is the blast,  
Cold is the future, fresh from the past.

The heart of a man is unhallowed ground,  
In his quick eye, all the gentleness drowns;  
Scratching a living, from out the earth's bowels  
While hope lies forgotten, amidst all his vows.

Even earth herself turns, like a fool in his grave;  
Days spinning by, till there's nothing to save,  
Love could not move him away from that gate;  
By the end he is running, toward his own fate.

Patti Masterman

# The Darkness

The darkness that has entangled your life-  
By accident, by marriage, by unluckiness-  
Don't repeat it, so that its poisons may seep  
All your days, into other affairs, and other minds;  
For poison acts the same on men and women,  
On the innocent and the guilty.

So that this toxin may not claim more victims,  
Treat it as a dirty secret, and never repeat it once  
To any living soul; and thereby you may stopper the bottle,  
Save the world from contagions effect-  
And let the ones who introduced the evil  
Suffer the full symptoms, and let it die within them,  
And not within you or yours.

Patti Masterman

# The Day I Won'T Eat Hot Dogs

Perhaps oddly, I think of you the most on this day,  
The day we ate hot dogs, holed up away from the world,  
Just the two of us; nobody else liked hotdogs.  
It was our proximate communion, in the midst of the summer.  
We didn't have to fire up the grill, since it was only us.

After my childhoods splendors and rages ended, we grew even closer.  
It is not that I took you for granted, but that I had never known  
The absence of you in my life, and after it happened  
Many things couldn't be the same again.  
That we never know what we are losing till it's gone  
Is a cliché, that is unhappily true-  
Though maybe it is only that we lack imagination or guts to attempt it.

So now, on this day alone, I will never eat hot dogs.  
But I can eat them on any other day, if the fancy strikes me.  
It would be heresy to have communion when you are not here,  
And although I still talk to you, it's all one-sided now.

But if I listen carefully, and make no noise or movement,  
I can often hear the unfinished remembrance  
Of what you would have said, on any occasion,  
Or in answer to any statement; and in that way  
You are always with me, in some fashion.

That is all I could really ask for. I would add, that because  
You were one of the bravest persons I ever knew,  
If in old age I have become like you in any small degree,  
That should be enough of a parting gift, I think.

Sometimes I am alone, but whenever I think of you again,  
I am never lonely. I thought that I knew you well, but now I think  
That you were so much more, than human eyes could have revealed.

July 4th 2012

Patti Masterman

# The Day Of Your Death

The day of your death  
You stuck your head into an oven,  
After first closing all the doors, windows;  
Sealing yourself off, to the cries of your children,  
Shutting out the processes of the entire world;  
The good wishes of priests;  
The long enduring of wedding presents;  
The unexpected bonus of an unknown day.

When the horizon began to shrink away from you,  
You did not flinch.  
When dark clouds crowded the field of your vision.  
You did not falter.  
When the brain itself began to unplug from the body,  
You did not question if god had forsaken you;  
You already knew god was dispassionate  
Toward the tribulations and joys of his creatures.

Perhaps you saw yourself as only a crack,  
In the mildewed fabric of society;  
For they are still looking for cracks today  
In all the words you left behind you.

Patti Masterman

# The Day Slips Away

The day slips away somehow  
While I am busy who knows where;  
Clouds bunch up on the horizons  
And disperse, barely noted there.

Where they are going,  
I'm sure I've not been,  
And where I am going  
Remains, to be seen.

Patti Masterman

# The Dead Breathe Through The Door Of Sky

The dead breathe through the door of sky,  
In echo'd dreams and prayers, they sigh,  
For in graves desire has no feet;  
Their burning dust mirrors life's defeat,  
And shriveled tongues are ghosts at sea:  
Unsung, unseen, invisibly.

The storms of mind wound sleeping flesh,  
In clouds you see the angel's breath,  
The child of music flies in space;  
A shadowed flame behind his face  
To touch the sun, in world's asleep:  
And stone gods in their heaven, keep.

Patti Masterman

# The Dead Crow

When I was a child  
I visited my cousin Judy's house,  
I was spending the night with her,  
As children like to do.  
But something horrible  
Was waiting there for me, something  
I never expected to find.

It was a dead crow,  
Fastened- perhaps nailed  
To the top of a tall post.  
But I had good, young eyes, to see it with.  
In my imagination, it was placed there  
While still living, and left to starve slowly,  
And die of thirst, and then- even to rot-  
With never a kind hand, to ease it's dreadful agony.

The crow haunted all my dreams;  
Why did it have to die  
In so unlovely a way?  
What could a simple crow have done,  
To merit such torture at the hand of a man?  
And how could my cousin stand to see it each day?  
Obviously she had blocked it from consciousness.

But worst of all, the crow was innocent, to my mind;  
A simply thinking creature, and the thought  
Of the crow wondering why he was a prisoner,  
Waiting to die on the unseemly top of a fence,  
In all weathers, with no shade  
From either rain or sun or wind, and no privacy left to his dying,  
Was more painful than either the fact of his death,  
Or his possible suffering.

I am older now and understand things  
That a child's mind could never grasp.  
Crows eat corn, and probably this one  
Was shot dead, with his crow still full of it-  
And hung up then, to scare his buddies off.

They say if you ever shoot at a Crow  
In a field, you will never see another one there.  
Or the crow might have died  
From natural causes, and only in death  
Was made to serve as a warning of sorts.

I did not have the bravery to ask back then  
How a crow had gotten himself into such a mess,  
For perhaps I would be the next to be hung-  
Maybe impertinent questions  
Were the unforgivable sin of the day?  
How could you trust such a man to even answer truthfully?

Now I realize how clever a plan it was  
To hoist a dead crow upon a light post  
To try and save a crop, or some feed grain.  
All these years later, I can forgive the man  
(Though he is long dead, as dead as the crow was.)

As a child, I could not have understood  
That some day, I would understand all of it.  
And now the things that trouble my sleep  
Seem much more important and fearsome,  
Than even an innocent dead crow,  
Displayed on the top of a light pole.

Patti Masterman

# The Dead Lie Fitful In Their Graves

Now silent, still; now freed from life  
Man from woman, and husband from wife  
The pregnant one with baby still inside  
Nothing to fear, and nothing to hide  
No more adversity, no more worry  
Days unremarkably free from hurry  
Plans all ended, dreams all done  
No more fear of the setting sun  
Who lives today shall not be saved-  
The dead lie fitful in their graves.

Patti Masterman

# The Dead Love The Earth

The dead make love to the earth,  
Mingling their atoms in death,  
Suffusing the soil of their birth-  
Using up everything left.

The dead have a pact with the living,  
That nothing should go to waste;  
So all their body they're giving  
That others of life have a taste..

Patti Masterman

# The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea

The devil and the deep blue sea, you say;  
Well, what of the devil and the deep blue sea?  
Citizen- there's nothing there to see-  
That could matter, to you or me.

The devil and the deep blue sea,  
And things submerged, that once were free;  
No boats no oars, with which to seek-  
And fires to burn, the ones dare speak..

Patti Masterman

# The Difference Between Age And Wisdom

Back when I was young:

Is God the ornery rascal  
Who dailies with our dreams,  
And gives us what we need,  
Whatever it might seem.

And now that I am older:

I thank God every day  
That in his wisdom vaunted,  
He gave me what I needed-  
And never what I wanted.

Patti Masterman

# The Dog Has Meat For Supper

The dog has meat for supper  
The cat prefers his fish  
Doesn't matter if its Friday  
If it ever comes to this

The pig has corn on Sunday  
The chicken grain at dawn  
The horse gets paid for pulling  
And the bird, for his birdsong

Babies have their momma's milk  
Bees get lots of honey  
Men get paid in smiles and winks-  
And sometimes, with real money.

Patti Masterman

# The Dove-Weed Princess Of The Dragonfli

&lt;/&gt;Every summer the young woman had filled the pond for the dragonflies,  
Who mated and deposited their eggs on it's smooth, glassy surface;  
And very often they allowed her to pet them, as she gently stretched  
Her tentative fingers toward them, holding her breath, always in full view -  
So that they would know she was no predator, sneaking up from behind..

For several years their relationship continued, and she imagined  
That their curious heads (which swiveled about every which way,  
When following her footsteps around)  
Made them seem nearly intelligent, and almost elegant; much more so  
Than any other insect she had ever known, except perhaps the Mantis.

On one Summer day, she disappeared unexpectedly from their territories  
For nearly a week. When she returned, she was bearing in her arms  
A small human of her own; a little half-bald female with placid blue eyes,  
Milky as the liquescent sky, and the baby slept through the long afternoons,  
Set down within the shade and surrounded by the drowse of droning insects,  
Which were her only needed lullaby, off in some faraway dreamworld  
She had only recently left behind, to come to this one.

The dragonflies were able to observe the mothers daily caring  
For her growing infant, and one day after she had filled the pond again  
And then gone inside for a drink- which she almost never did-  
(Trusting the dozing infant to the auspices of the peaceful breeze, sleeping away  
In her secret, grassy manger) . She watched her dutifully through the window  
For a time. It seemed that a long hour must have passed; but in reality  
It was not much more than than a quarter of an hour.

And when she returned to check on her treasure, she found the tiniest chain  
Of Dove-weed flowers, that had been draped across the sleeping baby's  
forehead,  
Apparently undisturbing of her moist slumbers, as if a transient band of fairies  
Had placed their latest work of art there for display all afternoon  
Underneath slowly rotating clouds; and it of the most dainty, harmonious  
Working that one could imagine, and at the same instant as she spied it,  
Slid down just over the crown of the head, like a slowly slipping tiara,  
She saw the iridescent circlet of hovering dragonflies,  
Keeping guard over the sleeping child- the Dove-Weed Princess  
of the Dragonflies.

Patti Masterman

# The Dryad And The Woodsman

There was the shyest dryad  
Lived in the forest wild;  
A spider sewed her clothing,  
A wolf thought her, its child.

A hawk was her hunter,  
An owl was her guard:  
She slept inside a Yew tree  
Whenever she grew tired.

A nymph was her neighbor,  
A naiad bathed her clean,  
As she grew up strong and healthy,  
Hid in the forest green.

She prayed to the Sun-god  
To bring to her a love,  
And he sent her a Woodsman,  
Her heart just to move.

But he chopped down her tree  
To make her his bride,  
And the tree kept her life-  
While she died, half-inside.

The Woodsman he wept tears  
To drown a forest-glen;  
And the whole woods went under,  
When the sky joined in.

The heaven's convened a meeting,  
They must save the land;  
And granted him a promise,  
And the dryad a new plan.

So she became a woman;  
Sometimes hard, sometimes soft:  
Sometimes hard, the outside-  
Inside, of softer cloth.

She loved her a Woodsman  
More than her life,  
And wearing all green,  
She soon became his wife.

They had many children,  
Who ran mostly wild-  
For they were half of Woodsman  
And half a dryad-child

And there was a sign-  
If you looked deep in their eyes-  
A wildness that was in there  
You knew would never die.

Patti Masterman

# The Dust You Shake Off Your Shoes Is Other Men

How we can bristle up at almost nothing  
Is more proof, of the barbed-wire sinew'd bone,  
Born hollow-core, and likewise brutal-hone;  
Vexing the babe and degree'd man, both alike-  
While our civility stays out on loan.

How we gladly roll in the dust, before becoming  
Just more dust, that on empty roads is running,  
As the feathers fly, and our jack-boot feet are drumming-  
Until we're old- and in grey streets,  
Lifes blood's running.

The world driven on by willpower's all we know,  
And though there's kings, that a king's-ransom only buy,  
On homeless ones, there's colder winds will blow;  
But they still see blue skies, till the last day of life-  
No money no power no degree then, to tell us why.

Patti Masterman

# The Earth Will Know Your Flesh

The earth will know your flesh,  
Embrace your marrow's last memory of bone  
More encompassing than any lover.

You were received from earth's body,  
As much her child as sky's; even more perhaps  
When you are no longer breathing.

Into raw earth, you will change incomprehensibly  
As incorporeal as starlight itself,  
And nameless as shadows in moonlight.

Just as daylight dies, you disappear  
Down into the deep foundry of death;  
Swallowing darkness, in bowels of earth again.

Patti Masterman

# The Earth Will Not Remember One Flower

We drove by the cemetery in a different part of town  
Searching for another restaurant where we didn't really want to go  
And suddenly I remembered you were there; that is, your clam shell was there  
Carefully wrapped and placed underground, somewhere among the thousands  
Your inexpensive namecard merely flat brass; invisibly close to the ground  
And I thought of the oddness of life;  
Here I was with two people you never got to meet,  
Who meant everything to me, as you did back when,  
And indeed always will. And back in my touchy days of grief  
I could not have envisioned a happy day  
On a drive beside where you lay,  
Busy composing your still reverie for the ages.

So life goes on, however we wish it would not at times,  
And though it is difficult to believe, we do get better, by and by.  
And though the Earth will not remember one flower  
That we knew together,  
I realized the cemetery ground is made hallowed  
By all the love and faithful memories being poured into it:  
I'm pouring in mine now-  
Who knows, perhaps it will flood?

Patti Masterman

# The Earths Long Turning

Inherited bodies, marked by vanished ancestry,  
the subtle twisting of DNA strands that none remember,  
for there is no witness left to the inheritance.

Though you sport some lost-to-time grandmother's noted eyes,  
there is no photo now to compare them to,  
and though you might play piano like a long ago relation,  
no one today recalls those notes.

There are people feel compelled to save every scrap;  
dated love letters and college keep-sakes,  
searching for their oldest sense of belonging  
like we daily follow patterns of weather.

They weight them with importance,  
The self assigns value systems unrelated  
To what they once were, or if they mattered to many-  
Or only a few- for self idolizes and personifies the past,  
Never suspecting everything repeats over again,  
while thought just a novelty; recessive genes;  
something new or never before seen-

We the ephemera, of the earths long turning.

Patti Masterman

# The Edge Of A Knife

We turn toward the light,  
For the dark we abhor;  
The fire burns so bright-  
And the night is a door.

Or we shrink from the day,  
And put night on the shelf;  
Day comes, anyway-  
Then night comes, with stealth.

The night harbors death,  
But the day shows us life-  
Before nothing is left  
On the edge of a knife.

Patti Masterman

# The Egg Or The Fish With Legs Dilemma

I feel a curious recognition  
When I happen to hear the sound of heartbeats  
Magnified in a room, bouncing around the walls,  
Amplified by microphone or boom-box;  
Or a whooshing of water thru guttural pipes  
Pumping rhythmically along the sluice gates.

The man in the next room is expounding on how  
God is not like a human being; this much is really known,  
He says, a self-improvised authority;  
God has no wife, or children (delivered with sarcastic aplomb)

I wish that I could take him back again to the womb  
Those nine months or so of suffusive silence  
Counterpoint to the furious pounding of the maternal surf  
Amid the watery rocking of the amniotic cradle;  
And the thundering cacophony both night and day,  
Of some overhead metronome, thumping away-

I doubt he could come, fresh from that egg primed hatchery  
And declare that human beings are not like God.

Patti Masterman

# The End Is In The Beginning

The end is in the beginning,  
The beginning is in the end;  
See the trailing edge of forever,  
As you go round the bend.

The end is in the beginning,  
Though never the two shall meet,  
And the past is not forgotten  
Before the future, greet.

The beginning is in the end,  
Where the face of tomorrow's born,  
And the past begets the future,  
When the shadow curtain's torn.

Patti Masterman

# The Endlessly Open-Ended Conundrum

Adopted children don't feel as free  
To bask in the sun of self,  
Having narrowly avoided some tragedy,  
The nature of which is sealed

To any and all future inquiries-  
And what is your need to know?  
Perhaps your new family might change their mind,  
If your curiosity grows?

For surely you were saved from iniquity,  
By the generous nature they showed;  
You've lacked for nothing, by the looks of you  
And had many good things bestowed.

It's no matter that they don't look like you,  
For just feel the love, all around;  
There are certain things that you will never know,  
But you were lost, and now you're found.

Patti Masterman

# The Evil Of The Day

Seems like the more I hate and revile jealousy  
The more it comes looking for me;  
However often they inspect my life,  
Under a glass; they keep finding things  
To covet- but honestly, looking as hard as I can,  
I can see nothing worth all the fuss and back stabbing.  
You can never see the entire life at one go.  
Perhaps that rich, famous person has to spend  
Twelve hours a day standing on his head- can you imagine  
Trying to make ten or twenty people happy  
Every single day of your life?  
Perhaps that stay at home woman is dying slowly  
Of loneliness and a sense of futility.  
I'm glad I don't have to live anyone else's life,  
Or deal with their particular bucket of worms.  
My own are bad enough.  
Looking around, I don't find anyone else's  
That I would want to take on permanently anyway.  
Isn't the evil of the day sufficient?

Patti Masterman

# The Exhalation Of Stars

Ghost of the present moment,  
you glide by unbidden,  
to only god knows where.

Memories and forgotten laughter,  
you follow us to the grave  
where we lie closed up,  
holding you fast forever.

Under the exhalation of stars,  
in primitive soil we lie,  
both claimed and unclaimed-  
the outgrown home of a soul.

Patti Masterman

# The Eye Of The Beholder

Age keeps its withered fingers  
Hovering over the crown of your head,  
While October runs away like  
Retrievers scenting a fox, somewhere  
Far ahead, where the woods turn golden,  
The clouds farther off, like hazy memories.

In Autumn, youth seems too irrevocable  
To remember its moist fingers  
And wide open eyes; better not to try

But live on breaths of cool, winding hope  
That the eyes around still love us  
Though they are not those eyes,

The ones in dreams, the ones that seemed to follow us  
Wherever we roamed, through verdant fields  
Or barren ones. Somewhere above the stars  
The eye of the beholder is never clear.

Patti Masterman

# The Eyes Beholder

Drink life slowly

Don't forget

To savor each small,

Minute sip.

The hours flee like

Wayward birds,

The minutes lost

In ways absurd.

Beauty's only

The eyes beholder

Before the world

Grows any older.

Patti Masterman

# The Faith Of A Child

The faith of a child could ring  
a church bell on the stillest day  
and the sound carry  
for thousands of miles

it could lift mountains and move  
armies beneath them quickly  
to save a day and a continent

but mostly it doesn't need an army-  
It looks miraculous to us  
because we have forgotten childhood's  
faith in the most invisible of things

Patti Masterman

# The Faithful's Heaven

The faithful's heaven urges  
Their eyes to skies, up-turning,  
And quiet streets of oblivion  
Swell rising-tide rebellion.

Unseen vanities in disarray  
Watch the night eat up the day,  
And frail fingers, blue with cold  
Once bitten, don't grow slowly old.

Patti Masterman

# The Farther We Go

And as it was, it then shall be,  
It's me for you, or you for me,  
Us and them; let all avail  
That future hopes may tide us well.

Though nothing change, a thousand years,  
We have what we had then, as well;  
A thousand more shall not suffice  
To make this drudge of life more wise.

And as it is, it tends to be,  
Continually, no change is seen;  
We'll go stark raving mad, in time-  
And leave our future far behind.

Patti Masterman

# The Faster I Run

The faster I run away  
From all these gagging broods  
Of the mind's runaway children,  
The faster they overcome  
My mind's feckless fortitude;  
Pole-vaulting my barricades  
Of self-imposed time limits,  
My limp, virtuous charade  
Circling itself around dustbunnies,  
Forgotten friends, lack of social life..  
Mind has it's own priorities,  
And anemic lies can never find purchase there,  
Like legless butterflies; and of what use legs  
To creatures born mid-air?  
But I regress-

I can't refuse them birth  
Or unkindly abort them;  
My mind's liberal bounty,  
And who could deport them?  
Seeing my life's only a living  
Reflected through their mirrors:  
A novelty peepshow,  
As they pull off, to reveal  
Discarded clothing  
I've never dared to wear;  
But at their most thrilling,  
Go starkly nude  
Hidden only by a phrase,  
Or single twinkle, of word:  
And when they open their legs-  
I'm lost to another world.

Patti Masterman

# The Fight Always Finds Him

He goes out into public life  
Into stores and offices, meeting places and parking lots  
And he is amazed that all the angry, unreasoning hatred  
Fighting in his guts, every day of his life  
Recognizes and attacks him again, in those very places  
Going on only the least clue or sign of individuality  
He is brave enough to display.

It always surprises him again  
Even though he carries an unfinished war everywhere  
Hidden inside of him,  
So that it is always deeply within him,  
Wherever he goes; it doesn't matter where.

And whenever he finally dies,  
He will be the lone soldier in the grave,  
Cursed in secret, under everyones breath,  
Who could never gave up the fight,  
Because it started long before he enlisted-  
The fight will always find him.

Patti Masterman

# The Fisherman

He's more dangerous than most;  
With him, your heart's already toast,  
For he knows, just how women think;  
He writes his poems, to capture hearts,  
Which he enclose, with careful art:  
Your heart around his own, in knots  
He sees the tears, hears each sigh,  
Knows soon enough that you've been caught.  
He knows all your armor chinks,  
And with his pen, he makes a hole  
Looks straight in, with his flashlight  
And then, he just reels in your soul.  
He writes too many love poems  
But they're his stock and trade;  
It's much too late to worry now,  
Your bed's already made.

Patti Masterman

# The Flame Has Softer Fingers

The flame has softer fingers,  
Than petals from a flower,  
And it's memory is less  
For every hour that it burns,  
And the flower isn't jealous,  
Of whomever enjoys it's beauty;  
While the fire consumes most anything,  
And none of it is spurned.

But flowers know almost nothing,  
Of how a flame gets started;  
And a fire knows even less  
Of how a flower grew  
Still, they have a slight respect,  
In regarding, each the other;  
As if each had certain knowledge  
Flames and flowers are too few.

So there's a lesson for us,  
If we care to pay attention  
To living forests forming  
Their own funeral pyres:  
As the flame hates not rare beauty.  
And the flower's not faint-hearted;  
If you've never yet been burned:  
You don't have to fear the fire.

Patti Masterman

# The Flea-Bite Song

I can't tell if any fleas  
Have smaller fleas upon them;  
But I can feel that on these fleas  
Are giant jaws; and toothsome.

These fleas are opportunists, sure,  
They hop from leg, to arm, to floor;  
Each leaves behind a bit of gore:  
There's nothing smaller I abhor.

They're nearly invisible and yet  
Upon me I can feel them set;  
And tear out great big chunks of- Nyet!  
A bigger fiend, I've never met.

Patti Masterman

# The Flesh Sits Lightly On The Bone

The flesh sits lightly on the bone.  
The spirit longs for what was home.  
Our given days here are unknown.  
The flesh sits lightly on the bone.

Patti Masterman

# The Fly Is Now My Lover

The fly is now my lover-  
Innocently sunbathing, and then he appeared  
Determined, to go all the places he should not.

Now his offspring, and theirs in turn; wave upon wave  
Are my relations too, we share an invisible bond  
Forged on some hot, forgettable day.

He the bastard of all things dead, from the past  
Me, the upstart of uncertain futures-  
I hope at least he can keep his mouth shut.

Patti Masterman

# The Forge

The world bends us to its will:  
The mountains defy trespass,  
Except by man made road.

The rivers deny crossing,  
Except by man made bridge.

As we're ever searching for the real,  
We're stymied by the trail gone cold;  
Worn down by the four winds tossing;  
Halted by the impossible ridge.

Even when the world grows still,  
It never will release its fearsome hold.

Patti Masterman

# The Forgetfulness Of Dying Nightly

Death is not some awful saw blade, coming to sever you from this life;  
Death is an untroubled sleep, an unobserved nonawakening.  
We don't miss the life, the love; we do not know to miss anything,  
We are as asleep; asleep the same as before birth,  
Before not being alive came to be called death.  
Only those we leave behind may miss our life, and only for so long  
As life keeps beating out it's kaleidoscopic moments through them.

Since when is becoming less than you were, but as much  
As you used to be, to be viewed as only a loss?  
The first gift of life came unexpectedly,  
So for all we know, there may be further gifts waiting to be bestowed;  
And whether or not we can remember  
To remember the living that we once did, in between the forgetting,  
Only god himself can know; this god who is rumored  
To have a longer memory than any of us, in all our inherent weakness.

Is death long, you ask; is it very long?  
Death is only the one second, between forgetting and awakening:  
It's something you've done every night of your life-  
And memory is only the persistent dream of awakening.

Patti Masterman

# The Forgotten

Where do the days go that we've left behind,  
Where do the thoughts fly, when you've lost your mind?  
Where does the love go, when flesh sings no more;  
Where do the dead go, when life slams the door?

Days behind are seen through the mist,  
And thoughts wrapped forever, left in a kiss.  
Love goes back to the loves first giver,  
As the dead disappear, in times mighty river..

(written to ImmortalRai, Forever forgotten)

Patti Masterman

# The Future Is Right Here

A little tinnitus,  
A little deja vu,  
A little savoir faire,  
To see the matter through.

The neighborhood psychic  
With a cardboard sign,  
Will hear your every problem;  
Every answer, divine.

The scrying mirror can see  
Much farther than the ball,  
But the eyes speak the most;  
Transfixing, with their thrall.

See the past and future,  
The sign broadly proclaims;  
But more common eyes can see  
The wide truth that you frame;

The twitch of neurosis,  
The callous of care-  
A witch isn't needed,  
To notice what's there.

Save your dimes and dollars  
And look in your own mirror,  
If you need an answer  
Or something made clear.

You're your own best psychic  
And the cost is free:  
What's coming in the future's  
What's here right now, in me.

Patti Masterman

# The Future's On Its Way

I want to go back in time again and touch my mother's cheek,  
I want to hug my grandmother, at her kitchen sink,  
I want to touch her flowers, see Grandpa play dominoes,  
See my dad at gardening, watch him work the rows..

But you can't go back again, it's useless to even try;  
You can only live and live, until it's time to die.  
And every day that you wake up, you'll get another day-  
And there's no way of stopping it: the future's on its way.

Patti Masterman

# The Genii In The Bottle

Animals must go berserk when they sniff my room-  
So many scents, so many bottles-  
It must smell like a thousand armageddons  
Flowery spices and attar of rose  
Orange blossom and civet musk  
Oppopanax and oud wood  
All the ambers and vanillas  
The older stuff thickened now with age  
And darker colored than when it first arrived  
All of it my rare treasure  
And my older body, childbirth wise, briny,  
Turns the scents inside out  
Rankles them, puts them off  
Even my nose is out of tune nowadays  
Nobody knows the secret of why  
I'm still clinging to all these old friends  
It's so simple it makes me want to laugh:  
All my memories are bottled up inside  
Those fragrances, sachets and potions  
How can I ever throw those away  
I can't distill them out of the scents  
You can't throw away pieces of yourself  
Even parts from the long lost days  
And the clutter does add a certain exotic richness;  
A heady, wafting incense always straining  
To escape from the containers-  
My secret wish fulfilling Genii.

Patti Masterman

# The Geometries Of Sin

Finding that whole original sin thing offensive  
With it's virgin birth from nonbeing,  
Allow me to help you out  
With that sin of omission;  
If one must first sin and gain redemption  
To progress in the spiritual domains.

In the Kamasutra book of geometry,  
Let us turn now to page one, exercise one:  
For surely the sincere sin is heard most loudly in heaven?  
Practice makes perfect;  
And let's not forget our catechism:  
Least in heaven; foremost in hell..

Patti Masterman

# The Ghost Of All That's Holy

who dies forever/  
who sighs without reason/  
not who we are- but who we are to be/

endless questions nobody answers/  
the sophistry of modern humans is amazing/  
laying claim to nothing but airwaves/  
electrical impressions/  
radar-accentuated gleanings/

our being Morse code, inevitably/  
beneath objective senses perception/  
attracts us to the infinite perceptible/

angel wings crossing the brain/  
the ark under cover the darkness/  
where none can go, but being lives/

in clouded realms of mystery/  
we look for the light of being/  
rejecting of the obvious/  
our living breath's proclivity/

Patti Masterman

# The God Of Sea Disasters

I'm shipwrecked wood and plaster,  
Wormy statues of maritime disaster,  
Chained-shut gates forever after,  
Molded louvers closely cloistered.

Burnt out candles on a font,  
Roundhouse windows suavely taunt,  
Corridors of darkness haunt  
Stairs going nowhere- as is his wont.

Patti Masterman

# The Grace Of The Morning

The fragrant taste of the stars matter  
There, where the burning leaves and magnolias go up,  
To journey to where, in the smoke of their leaving,  
The all-knowing oak is trembling above

And the whiter colors, of the brightest stars  
Hanging there thick, in shimmering air,  
And the roving eye of the colorless sky  
Never fades from the grace of the morning.

Patti Masterman

# The Gravity Of Moments

We are only temporary tenants  
Of the earth  
For a few decades or a century  
We wear paths in the grass  
Leave impermanent marks upon certain streets  
The wind pokes tiny fingers  
Into our chosen houses  
Prying them apart, atom by atom.

The earth is our timely rocket ship  
Howling through space  
We are unconcerned by this  
Stumping around in our fleshy spacesuits  
Weighed down by the gravity of moments  
We breathe the thin layered air  
In globular gasps  
And return it at death, atom by atom.

Patti Masterman

# The Great Forgetting

I would like to give some soul  
To those things that only sleep,  
So that being has no hole,  
And the world is much more deep.

I would like to give some memory  
To that great forgetting, Time;  
So that from the sun's ephemera,  
Everything is known by mind.

Patti Masterman

# The Ground Is From The Dead

The ground is from the dead,  
From their bodies; it's their bed.  
The fragments of the crust  
On our soles, mix with their dust.

The stones there are their bones,  
And the earth, their lasting home;  
The origins of lusts,  
Souls formed from flaking rust.

The ground is from the dead,  
And their thoughts dwell in our heads;  
Their ghost is in your eyes  
(And the whisper of their sighs)

Patti Masterman

# The Hand You Were Given

Wear a pretty face,  
Have a pretty day.  
Wear a dreary face;  
Dreary goes the way.

Wed a pretty one,  
Have a pretty life.  
Wed a plainer soul;  
Rude comments are rife.

Own a pretty thing,  
Own it, all the while.  
Own an ugly thing-  
Toss it on the pile.

Patti Masterman

# The Hard Body Of The Ground Always Appeases Me

The hard body of the ground always appeases me  
When I get too full of the worlds tumult and changes;  
For the ground only rarely shifts in it's motions, out from under my feet  
Or unsettles me; the worst it usually has to offer is mud or ice  
And mud can often be avoided with forethought,  
And ice can sometimes be conquered, through extreme concentration  
And just a little bit of luck. Not so life.

Life sends you sprawling time and again, onto the ground's  
Abundant spaciousness, while presupposing, that you must find it disconcerting;  
But for me it will always be the bosom of something  
Larger than my little life, and all my petty wanting and needing.

If anything it is like a lover, who takes me unexpectedly, over and over  
And then says to me again; you see; I was the only thing that was missing  
From your counted days; so remember well, you can never really leave me  
behind  
Or forget that it is I, the dust of all your spinning atoms,  
And the magnetism of your feet, which bind us forever.

And I know that my feet, upon the thick skinned earth,  
Must feel like the precarious pulse of life itself,  
To this large body, gave birth to everything here;  
And I know that when I sleep the last sleep,  
I will lie forever, inside that restless body  
And we will go to watch the end of time together;  
Just as we saw the unwinding of time, as one.

Closer than two lovers; closer than mother and fetus;  
Closer than the winds, which stir the tombstones grasses.

Patti Masterman

# The Haunting Of The Mermaid

The mermaid was dead, of that they were sure  
They carried her out, to the green pastures

They buried her deep, and there left a cross  
Near which, the bereft waves were tossed.

And the moon crept high, and the tide moved slow,  
And a low and murmuring cry did blow:

At first was faint and seemed far away,  
Yet soon was audible through the bay.

It sounded like wind, had lost it's way;  
It sounded like something, that once was gay

Something whose soul, was shattered apart:  
Something was hunting it's broken heart.

It frightened children in their beds,  
Whispered inaudible words, in men's heads.

It revealed it's presence, with two green lights  
Reflective and deep, like the mermaid's eyes.

Around the lighthouse, the green lights glimmered  
And often neath the water, shimmered;

Wherever the Captain happened to be,  
Twas sure, the lights would there roam free.

The Captain never said one way or other,  
If he thought it She; herself, in the Ether.

And when on his deathbed, the Captain lay,  
Beside his window, the two lights stayed

Keeping a watch, on his mortal frame,  
Till his breathing life had waned.

And the midnight that he breathed his last,  
And all his earthly torments passed,

People swore of the strangest thing:  
At quarter past two, heard a ship's bell ring,

And saw two shadows, one tall and thin,  
And one swam in the water, leading one in,

Hand in hand, till they both submerged;  
It's rumored now, that the Captain's Lord

Of the undersea; the whole blue ocean,  
Because of one mermaids deathless devotion.

Patti Masterman

# The Head's The Thing

I stubbed my toe upon a nail  
It hurt and hurted, just like hell  
I got sick of the pain  
Along came a train-  
Sliced it off on the top of a rail.

I jammed my finger in a door  
I swear that sucker got so sore  
When I couldn't stand it one minute  
I turned on the disposal and stuffed it in it-  
Now instead of five fingers, I got four.

My knee was feeling it's weary age  
As I hobbled me across the stage  
In the museum, there was the guillotine  
Crawled over the chain, and did my thing-  
Now my wooden leg is all the rage.

My arm was sprung; I cannot lie  
So I laid me down in the road, to die  
But I got lucky, the truck was small  
So now I'm just not quite as tall-  
You can't succeed if you never try.

Had tennis elbow, so I went to play  
Games with a table-saw; my friend Ray  
Has tools galore; had just the thing  
Now my arm's fixed, it's in its sling-  
And I didn't even have to pay.

Got paper cut, doing my thesis  
Cussed out loud, my paper in pieces  
I hung my hand from a ceiling beam  
Strangled it's guts, with nary a scream-  
Really proud of my new prosthesis.

My child ran crying she got hurt  
As I saw all around her, blood did spurt  
But she took one look at my stumps and slings

Said oh, it's really not anything-  
Went out, and rubbed it with some dirt.

I'm not spendy, and I don't have greed  
For sure, this body has gone to seed  
I can do without arms and legs  
Ovaries, appendix; all those eggs-  
Cause the head's the only part I need.

Patti Masterman

# The Heart Foretells

The heart foretells  
The omens, of our sight:  
Seasoned trouble hides  
By clouds at night.

The graves a killer  
Knows not a single name;  
Shadows stealing lives  
And trading blame.

The moon alone is brave,  
Above the fray:  
He highlights every eye  
With dreams of day.

Dec.28 2014

Patti Masterman

# The Heart Is Such A Shallow Grave

Earth-shine in your loved one's eyes  
Is all you have for memories;  
Moonlight died beneath their lids,  
When death did his deliveries.

And now the world's a colder place,  
Though sun still shines above it,  
And moon comes too, and looks upon  
The graves, were made with loving.

And though the years will pass the same;  
Though weeds and grass obscure it,  
Their names on trembling lips will live-  
As long as we endure it.

Patti Masterman

# The Heathen Moonlight Comes

The heathen moonlight comes  
To the windows, begging alms;  
Like the light in her eyes, to calm  
(and ask for whatever crumbs)

Moonlight pines for what  
It can ill define, for naught-  
As twin souls catching fire,  
(While straining for a star)

If moonlight it could weep  
It would drip round crystals down  
Of frozen flame, almost pink-  
(Where the splintered clouds must drown)

If moonlight it could crave  
It would somehow learn to hide  
Like a ghost keeps to the shade  
Where late lovers took their walk

(And like a fiery shadow, stalk  
Where the sun but once, he laid)  
Eating dust, where the darkness preens-  
(and listen what the wind has seen..)

Patti Masterman

# The Heavy - Lidded Dead

The heavy-lidded dead  
Can't open their coffins  
They tried to buy freedom  
With coin shaped rocks  
They mined the dirt  
Between skeletal fingers  
And dropped their eyeballs  
Trying to talk

The ground above  
Resonates soundly  
The feet of the living  
Going to and fro  
In permanent darkness  
Cement vaults shudder  
When earth movers come  
To dig a new hole

Mourners stand  
A few feet above them  
Mumbling prayers  
And telling their beads  
They think they're gone  
And dead in their caskets  
Never knowing  
How cold hearts bleed

Patti Masterman

# The Heirs Of Time

We are the heirs of time,  
Though history won't rewind,  
Writing tales upon the wind-  
And forgetting where we've been.

We hold a tiny bit of it;  
Just enough, one life will fit,  
And then we to our children give  
Just enough- so they may live.

Patti Masterman

# The Hidden Spaces Of God

In the whole of creation there is so much space,  
"God's safety valve" the physicists call it:  
Space around atoms, space around the nucleus.  
Huge space of the rolling sea and endless sky and  
The heavens inflating, creating space along the way.  
The invisible curled- up dimensions coddling their tiny space as  
Cannibalistic galaxies prowl hungrily for more.  
Black holes ripping the spacious nothingness into quantum bites.  
And who but God could cram whole universes in parallel,  
So close together, like multiple embryos almost kissing in utero.  
Space can be so violent, yet from the cocoon of Earth,  
Stars blink benignly above, like wise older Uncles,  
Waiting for us to grow up and come for a visit.  
But the minutely vast space, most cunningly concealed, is inside us-  
Like little protoplasmic mirrors reflecting all there is,  
We harbor entire, intricate worlds inside-  
The concave and convex cranial curvatures;  
Unexplored and unknown labyrinthine dimensions,  
Deep, unconscious rivers flowing ceaselessly,  
Composed of matter almost older than time itself;  
The hidden spaces of God.

Patti Masterman

# The Hot And Cold Show

Get the warm fire roaring  
And bring all the blankets too;  
Shivering's too boring  
And the Winter makes me blue.  
Stir up some hot chocolate,  
And the cold days, we'll abide,  
Though it's not chill as we thought-  
Oops, I've got to go outside.

Turn the air up colder,  
While I pull off all these coats,  
And some fans I'll shoulder,  
While you open up the moat.  
It feels like Indian summer,  
With a furnace in the breeze;  
Hot blowing air's a bummer-  
But I think now, I might freeze?

Patti Masterman

# The Hot Pink Shoes

I was always late to the banquet,  
Or the fabled buffet ran out of food too soon.  
The bridesmaid shoes dyed hot pink,  
To match the dresses perfectly, pinched my feet;  
Mine were three or four sizes too small.  
But I had to wear them anyway because time,  
You see, was running out; and where else, do you think  
You would find that exotic shade of hot pink?

The wedding seemed to go on for hours;  
And I had to stand still, in the front of the church, smiling  
As the shoes devoured first my feet and then my ankles-  
The cramping rose to a crescendo and never became less.

Later, removing the offensive shoes forever,  
I knew that I would have no fancy wedding,  
With specially dyed shoes, to torture another girl-  
Because the clock would be ticking,  
And where could you get that exact hue?

They never knew about my secret pain,  
And the much-vaunted marriage dissolved all too soon.  
But my feet miraculously remained unscarred,  
They showed no marks from the crippling effects of the shoes.  
It's strange how unbearable pain can leave no outward sign-  
Except in memory- where it will always remain  
That exquisite color, that is found nowhere else.

Patti Masterman

# The Id Is Only A Lid

Before we quite knew who we were

there was nursery school,

to teach us who to be-

soft and compliant, whimsically.

Other schools came next, like locking stiles:

lower, middle, upper- where we learned guile.

Athletics were a distinguishing force,

to give us place; who stayed the course.

The games and playing sufficed our world

which yet was small, built around a lie.

But who or what was lying was unknown

(Though it is true, all children return home)

We thought ourselves quite free-

had locker room debates,

and gropings, on rare dates,

where sex was identity (though mind you, we were free)

It took so long to find ourselves,

deciding what to keep;

our lives were middling deep-  
yet the learning curve was steep.

By the time we got it down  
the rest weren't around,  
and nothing was the same-  
it was a different game.

And if none else could know  
what lurked inside your mind-  
they cannot see it now-  
that's perhaps, of all, most kind.

Patti Masterman

# The Impulse Of The Mysterious

From where comes this impulse,  
This mysterious sanctity in shadowed icons,  
Of statues leaning into dusk, hands clasped piously,  
Dangling chains of stones, ending in crossed bones.

Men hold deep reservoirs of the mystical  
Concealed in secret niches inside them,  
That no one can ever see, like relics of the humanity  
That revered the stars, and did moon-gaze communion.

These worshipers of life, with their trinkets and shells,  
Thinking you can see god one day,  
If only you look hard enough,  
Or travel to some exotic city  
Which he is rumored to prefer.

Though sometimes profound art can- almost  
Touch, and now and then music- barely- imitates  
What the tightest lock can't hold in,  
Nor the loosest hold force out.

This god that only the dead can see, but they do not talk,  
And only the deaf can hear, but they do not listen,  
Who lives where distance has no meaning  
And hate can never steal.

Patti Masterman

# The Indifference Of Paper Kaleidoscopes

The indifference of paper kaleidoscopes  
touches the afternoon's stained glass.

Scattered bubbles of blood  
repeat the vaporous names of rocks.

The world itself wavers between  
straying syllables of books.

A blank moment arrives  
staring at secrets made visible.

All day is the stillness of  
unchanging light around the temple.

Between 'come' and 'go'  
the same motionless theater of rest.

Time gobbles up  
the elusively throbbing reflections.

Myself the ghostly transparency  
made of circular-turning glass.

Patti Masterman

# The Inevitable Darkness

The inevitable darkness  
Shears the universe in half  
Half is visible and half's in disguise  
And spontaneous light falls in on itself  
Curling into the blurry mantle of the beast  
Ragged stars dashing across the trailing horizons  
Dragging mountains behind, like continents stretched too far  
The deepest midnight tears slashes into the hollowed eye sockets of the moon  
And it's crabbed pinions manage to wrench open the jaws of dawn's softest  
implosions.

Patti Masterman

# The Insult's Hid

The insult's hid beneath bushels  
And bailings, of compliments;  
For it's mankinds way to hide the blade  
Inside other implements.

My words though, are unwaxed ones,  
My intention bodes no wound;  
There is no weapon hidden,  
No pain in my words, bound.

Patti Masterman

# The Irresistible Embrace Of Existence

Its funny how I inherited certain characteristics from my parents-  
Even though I was adopted at three days old.

My Dads love of camping, and being in the outdoors;  
My Mothers love of all things lemon, and conversation.

These things they bequeathed to me at a tender age,  
I guess it was to fortify us against the future sadness  
That no one living can completely avoid.

Like the day my father was wheeled out in a chair  
To a waiting van, having been bedridden for days already:

He would never return again to his home,  
Where he farmed the dirt for fifty years and  
His pride showed in his garden, his yard, his animals.

I was the sole mourner who appeared in the front yard  
To accompany him his last short distance into forever-  
My mother, as befitted the chief mourner, remained inside

The house, where she reigned alone  
The last few years after he had gone.

I was at her side when she died.

She would never have been the type  
To want to die alone.

But then there are those things I inherited from  
My new family; the one I picked, and the child  
Who picked me-

From inside a dream, she asked if she could come  
To live with me and be my baby;

Silently she communicated this, and to this day we  
Are able to silently understand so many things

That pass between the two of us,  
No words necessary at all.

While pregnant I dreamed a dog consumed her,  
And she was taken with dogs and wolves from  
The first time she laid eyes upon them.

From my spouse, I inherited a love of the universe  
And the stars, and the way the world appears to run itself;

I loved it first as a child, but life got in the way,  
And I had almost forgotten my love

Till I saw the stars again in my future husbands eyes.

I guess the right things find you, when you have  
Given up on ever finding them yourself.

If words can recall all the love I have been embraced with,  
Then nothing is written in vain.

Patti Masterman

# The Italian Shower Curtain

I got a great deal once on a purchase I found,  
At that great virtual auction house that lives on the web.  
It was a large sheet of cloth about six foot nine;  
They shipped it to me and I was unhappy to find  
That it was stained and burned and dirty enough-  
I thought of sending it back, the finish was so rough.  
I decided that anyway I'd make it into a curtain,  
My shower kept puddling; that much was certain.  
I cut off the bottom; it was much too long  
And hemmed it and hung it up there, for a song.  
My friends thought it looked familiar; but couldn't recall  
Where it was they'd seen such a pattern-  
All dusty and covered with what- blood spatter?  
Like a crime scene outline, it seemed to have a past;  
I sprayed it with acrylic to make sure it would last.  
Started getting funny phone calls almost from day one-  
How did everyone know where my shower curtain came from?  
From Turin, someone told me, and I felt so relieved,  
That it didn't cost more, as they had priced it like a sheet.  
And then the whole world started wanting to buy it;  
Museums and churches all wanted my steal.  
Callers began to inquire, is it real?  
I told one lady that, with spray gloss it got slick:  
With spray gloss? She shouted, just before I heard the click;  
I'll get back to you, she had said, sounding horrified,  
And I began to wonder, how this cloth got so glorified-  
The pope's coming Friday and wants to stay with me  
I'm flabberghasted- not even Catholic, you see?  
This purchase has certainly upset my calm days,  
And the thing glows at night and gives off all these rays-  
It must have been dropped here by some alien spacecraft,  
And to get so nutty over a shower curtain's just daft.  
Maybe I'll sell it and retire rich to Tahiti  
I hear that the weather and sea there are pretty.  
I think to the highest bidder, I'll gift that white elephant  
And buy myself a shower curtain, much more elegant.

Patti Masterman

# The Kindness Of Melancholy

The kindness of melancholy and the trusting stars  
Of all sentries, within our slumbering sight  
Whose watch was kept by a distant scout  
Who held his peace, till death put out the light.

Patti Masterman

# The Lark And The Rose

The Lark and the Rose they were meeting  
By a brick, near the Rosebush's place,  
And they chatted of rain and of weather;  
How age always leaves its trace.

Then Lark said she knew of a Sparrow  
Who left his young fledglings behind,  
Rose said yes, this new generation  
To morality's certainly blind.

Then Rose said she'd heard of a gardener  
Ripped all his plants from the ground;  
The government paid, just to burn them-  
Sent checks, just for sitting around.

Said she worried that in the near future,  
Even Roses would be somewhat rare;  
And gardens would be gone completely-  
And only a few left would care.

Then too, trees might get in their way,  
And a few mighty saws, take them down-  
And pretty soon after, she'd wager,  
Not a single bird nest would be found.

How it started with just a few Sparrows,  
Who couldn't be bothered to raise  
Their young, and flew far from the neighborhood,  
And followed some careless new ways.

And the flowers and the birds that said  
Not a single word, seeing the waste  
Of the gardens and trees, that went missing-  
Until it was right in their face.

If you never can open your mouth  
To fight for the rights of a few,  
There'll be no one left to defend  
By the time it all comes down, to you.

Patti Masterman

# The Lathe Of Mind

The lathe of mind here has no end,  
The turning world it's truth to fill  
Brother fights brother, there is no win  
As each the other's blood must spill;  
The enemy of enemy is my friend.

Minute by minute, it becomes the past,  
Let's laugh at fate and giggle at chance  
Sorrow won't stay, happiness goes fast,  
We're lately come to the world's old dance,  
And he laughs best who laughs the last.

Patti Masterman

# The Leaves Are Always Falling

Just be yourself again,  
the one you were, before-  
Before all the others came.

Leaves are always falling,  
leave them be:  
For you're much more than a leaf-  
you see?

Patti Masterman

# The Leaves Wore Silver

The leaves wore silver for the late autumn ball,  
The trees were bare-naked, clear down to the soil;  
Burnt-umber and crimson were the colors, that year,  
And the dances uproarious, for the ending was near.

The clouds wore white linings, with grey silken ties,  
The wind it was festive, with wild high-pitched cries;  
The colors of sunset were the touch so divine,  
That the sun and the moon were half hidden by shine.

The breezes stayed brisk and the landscapes rattled;  
The mice very frisky and the shutters tattled;  
The party was rumored as the best, all around,  
Till the white blanket fell and soon smothered the ground.

Patti Masterman

# The Less I Think

The less I think,  
The happier, am;  
Bullets, bayonets,  
Frustrations dam.

The more I think,  
I think of you-  
Oh, what's a lonesome  
Heart to do?

Histories bridge  
Is burnt in twain,  
And all my gladness  
Turned to rain.

If I could charge  
My living soul,  
I'd go find yours-  
And make mine, whole.

Patti Masterman

# The Lights Finally Go Out

The camera lights finally go out, for good:  
Now it is another day, brilliant sunshine above, as he packs up his things;  
The movie's over now; he was not really in love.  
He has black hair, Italian ancestry, and a warm girlfriend, back home.  
He did not really run to the ends of the earth and back  
All for the love of one girl; for she herself, is also just an actress;  
With a resume and a habit of hopping, from foot to foot, when nervous,  
With bright birdlike eyes and no singing voice,  
And she did not really go nearly to the brink of insanity,  
Before realizing how much she loved him, can you now see the difference?  
It was only a movie; were you fooled?  
Just another movie; and so, they are all getting on with their lives now;  
More contracts to find for more movie parts, while taking care  
Of unresolved business, while they were away  
Making a movie, about love and happy endings.  
When he kissed her, she was thinking of nothing more than perhaps ice cream  
melting;  
Or vanilla milkshakes, when they are turned all liquid and oozy.  
When she kissed him, he thought of his baby daughter back home  
And how she always smelled clean and sweet, of baby powder,  
Wondering if he may have missed her first words ever spoken, while he was  
away so long.  
However you look at it; however convincing their acting may have been,  
They were not in love.  
It was just cinema; meant to inspire others;  
A composition about love; but still, containing very little of the real thing.  
Although, there are some people whose lives are just like the movie,  
And nobody can ever tell them any different;  
And they never leave the set,  
Until they are carried away, screaming,  
Forever lost in somebody else's life and thoughts,  
That never really had an existence, outside their own frantically scurrying minds-  
Now who would ever want to buy a ticket  
To see that?

(written to Gotan Project - Diferente)

Patti Masterman

## The Light's In My Head - Villanelle

There's a light in the sickroom that never goes dead,  
Though daylight is dimming, through the still open curtain-  
But the light's in my head; the light's in my head!

He lies in a stupor, but calls out from his bed;  
And he never complains, but you fear that he's hurting-  
There's a light in the sickroom that never goes dead.

She doesn't sleep nights, but sleeps daytimes instead;  
Her breathing's still even, but death's near for certain-  
But the light's in my head; the light's in my head!

First they said stroke, and then heart attack- dread!  
With the new diagnosis, with death he is flirting-  
There's a light in the sickroom that never goes dead.

There's cancer and heart disease, so lightly we tread;  
It's bad news for sure- her aneurysm bursting! -  
But the light's in my head; the light's in my head!

It's all here inside me now, all that I've said,  
Now what's left in memory's darkness, I'm cursing;  
There's a light in the sickroom that never goes dead-  
And the light's in my head- the light's in my head!

Patti Masterman

# The Lilac Tree

One day a lavender sheen appeared  
Just across the worn out fence,  
And thus she met the Lilac bush,  
And she was then possessed, of it.

That fall, at it's earthly altar  
She did her sacrifice;  
The corpse of hare and linnet,  
And the unlucky field mice.

Come spring, she reaped the harvest;  
The blooms were heavy, strong:  
The odor of fresh Lilacs  
About the breeze, were blown.

Twelve years, she served the Lilac,  
No matter what the weather,  
And at it's gnarly feet were laid  
Remains of bone and feather.

The twelfth year came, and she was ill,  
She dragged herself, beneath it's leaves.  
That spring was the most splendid, yet;  
In brilliant blooms, the branches grieved.

The Lilac never bloomed again,  
It shut it's face, for fear of sun,  
And those, who'd thought to steal a bloom  
In spring, found always there were none.

Patti Masterman

# The Lilacs Are Night-Blind In Their Season

The Lilacs are night-blind in their season  
And lavender shadows frame their silent hearts;  
Dew-dazzled are their hanging secret blooms  
To fume the night air, with olfactory ribbons.

If only one petal, in absolute darkness,  
Lilac could save both sane and insane;  
Give purple wings, to rise above the gloom;  
Scent the floating clouds, across the face of moon.

Patti Masterman

# The Lines Of Succession

Late afternoon shadows;  
Clouds are hurrying towards  
The far horizon.  
Dying piano note,  
A plaintive ghost.  
Ripples of escaping sunlight,  
Cavorting thru the open spaces.  
The princess who lives here  
Wandering thru the maze of chambers  
Touching things absently.  
A reliquary of once loved  
Playthings, lies forgotten.  
A wispy spindle of melancholy clings,  
Silkens, and follows her movements.  
Then starts up the low rushing wind,  
At first just a breeze, but  
Becoming fiercer by degree  
Finding its way to the entrance-  
Where nothing else could ever pass before:  
She has eaten the pomegranate seed  
The enchantment is irreversible;  
A child spirited into  
Deeper substrates of being.  
She has lost the old kingdom  
But she will rule in the next.

Patti Masterman

# The List Of Places I Can No Longer Go Grows Ever Longer

The more friends you've had,  
The more places you can't go any more:  
For a few years I had a best friend,  
And she was inseparable from me:  
New experience for me-  
I didn't know life could be so grand.

A few years ago, her life changed  
And she told me one day, that if every other thing  
Making her life crazy were to disappear,  
Then she'd be sure to have time for me again  
Some time in the year 2035 or later-  
Always in debt and trying to get to the principal;  
Trying to take care of the dependent's dependents.

She wasn't trying to hurt me- no, what was appalling  
Was how true I knew the statement  
And I'm not unsympathetic-  
Though we all have our own secret tortures  
And some of them people know about,  
But others run too deep; you wouldn't want  
To hemorrhage right before the shocked eyes of another.

So now I try to avoid  
Being face to face with her again, because surely  
She'll sense my disappointment, and I would never want  
To hurt her or use all the joy she's brought  
To give back pain instead.

Mark a few more places off the itinerary.  
You just can't go back again.

Patti Masterman

# The Lonely Sound Of The Midnight Train

The lonely sound of the midnight train,  
Taking another dark trip again;  
Where is it going,  
Where has it been?  
Did anyone see it  
Going round the bend?

It's a mournful sound, the midnight train;  
You can hear the whistle grow and wane,  
And wherever it's been,  
Leaves joy and pain,  
Covering tracks  
Where the moonlight's lain.

It's the same old sound, of the midnight train,  
That monster of iron, never knew it's name;  
Will it come back,  
Or not return again-  
For as long as we've known  
It's always been the same.

Patti Masterman

# The Long-Ago Father

The long-ago father of the god of creation  
Warned our god, many millenia ago,  
If You go on and create this world You are considering,  
There will be everything under heaven;  
Not only love and happiness and wonder,  
But also unimaginable and horrible things too;  
You can't create without both positive and negative included.

But our god was stubborn as any man, and replied  
He did indeed plan to create a world.  
And then the long-ago father of the god warned him again,  
Some of the creatures of this world would be godlike,  
just like Him, because whomever creates a world  
Leaves a little bit of His own indelible nature  
Inside the mix. These creatures would be smart,  
said the long-ago father;  
If they didn't destroy themselves through accident  
or tribal warring, they would eventually find out about Us;  
or possibly even visit Us here, in this special dimension,  
That We have reserved just for Ourselves.

Heeding the words of the long-ago father,  
Our god was very determined, but He was also terrified  
By the murder, rage and violence that were generated  
Almost as a by-product of all the wonderul, positive things  
In His handmade world. So much so in fact,  
That He could not stand to look for long upon such abhorrence;  
And so He has been in hiding, these many years since-  
Terrified that one day, we might find Him.

Patti Masterman

# The Lover

There was something about her doll-like face,  
That reminded him, he was a man.  
And the delicate shape of her little mouth  
Made him look back again and again.  
He felt that she needed a rescuer;  
She needed to be loved for her self-  
Not to be noticed just once in a while,  
And then set back high on a shelf.  
He opened the door and went inside,  
And eloquently plead his case.  
His listeners just laughed at his words  
And alternately seemed, amazed.  
He finally left, embarrassed and sad,  
That no one seemed to hear.  
In fact, he could almost swear  
They thought he was so queer.  
At midnight he returned to the scene,  
Slipped gloves on, and mask, and then  
He broke the glass, and rescued his lady,  
To spend the rest of her days with him.  
She was stiff and she was cold;  
But he knew time was on his side-  
He knew if he just loved enough  
This mannequin would be his bride.

Patti Masterman

# The Luck Of The Draw

Maybe you posed by the road  
(In all the pictures I fantasized about,  
The ones perhaps I never saw)  
In a world full of stones and boulders  
A world prone to forcing things together  
Or apart; and stones degrading down to the finest particles,  
There were none to be found, in imagination's picture.

A world apart now, standing alone  
In the shade of something monstrous;  
A world where grass grew in every chink  
That stored a few sunny hours,  
That grew creatures like mold on dropped leaves.

Had I forgotten things I never knew,  
I could have forgiven that.  
But memory is a mysterious cistern  
That stores the precious with the profane  
And remembering is just the luck of the draw.

Patti Masterman

# The Man In The Other Bed

His family came with him to the nursing home,  
Spread themselves round his bed; he was irritable as wool-  
Scratched by everything, stood there.

They left one by one and there he lay  
Closed in on himself, like one word from a day-  
Trying to die, cause he just couldn't stay.

Several days later, I held his hand too late-  
The fire in his eyes was beginning to fade.

He went somewhere far, I guess he's still there;  
Much happier too, if the rumored God wills.

Patti Masterman

# The Man On The Shroud

The man on the shroud, they say  
Walked on pollen in the holy land,  
Dusted himself all over with clay  
From a distant tomb  
Where cliffs were known  
As eternal rooms,  
And shepherds prayed.

The man on the shroud, they say  
Had features like a Jew,  
Who lived in another day,  
His hands pierced through  
By nails (they say)  
His feet, too,  
And dead, he lay.

The man on the shroud, they say  
Was stiff with rigor,  
Coins upon his eyes;  
Some radiation left  
His image burned through  
Many layers of threads  
Inside his sealed tomb.

The man on the shroud, they say  
Carbon dated too young,  
Though new cloth replaced  
The burned, all around;  
We can date the shroud,  
We can judge the man-  
But we can't make the image  
With our own hands..

Patti Masterman

# The Mermaid And The Dragonfly

The mermaid and the dragonfly  
Were alone in the ocean so blue:  
She, birthed out of her mother's womb  
Deep under the waves, she grew.

They met on the reef one windy day;  
The dragonfly, caught in the tide-  
The mermaid surfaced, to save him  
For otherwise, he would have died.

Each day thereafter, he'd hover,  
Safe out of reach of the surf  
And wait for the mermaid to come  
To sun, on her rocky berth.

Love grew inside the dragonfly,  
None other could have his heart  
Sometimes, the mermaid would wait for him;  
And nothing dared keep them apart.

When in time, the dragonfly died,  
She took him to her watery lair  
Sewed him a shroud, of soft seaweed and scales  
So always to keep him near.

Now she suns alone, above the swells,  
And sometimes, a single tear slides  
Down the face that the dragonfly loved  
And slips silently into the tides.

Patti Masterman

# The Mermaid Was Unhappy With Her House

The mermaid was unhappy with her house,  
All the bric-a-brac seemed so passe;  
How she longed for a more modern cave,  
One where starfish, hanging on nets  
Played with the currents like watery frets,  
And where passing fish might stop to marvel,  
At her sunken couch of whitest marble,  
Tumbled from pirate ships of yore,  
Snatched on its way, to a rich Queen's parlor.

She longed for bracelets of glittering coral,  
With a matching necklace, and a stole of Moray,  
And an Octopus hat, that would turn all their heads-  
Except for sea-men on sea-wrecks, so dead-  
It's hard being modern, down under the sea;  
There are no malls there, like for you and me.

Patti Masterman

# The Moon Is A Spy

The moon is a spy  
With a silver eye,  
Who looks down to spy  
On the lovers.

From high in the sky  
He can spot any lie;  
And he waits on the sly,  
As he hovers.

The clouds amble by,  
Now the moon wears a smile-  
He can tell that the sigh's  
For another.

Patti Masterman

# The Moon Owns All Women

The moon owns all women:

We feel it's tautness, as it's pulling us  
Into the fertile loam fields, of reproduction,  
A year at a time, until high tide finally arrives.

And at birthing time, we can sense it's shadowy silver fingers  
Prodding us, wanting us to deliver to it's schedules only;  
Like it orders the oceans to and fro, with it's nearness  
And animals sense it's fog of breath behind them, urging them on to madness.

At certain times of the month, and it is such an on-again off-again sort,  
Either completely out there, or hidden like a thread of light, barely showing  
Through hidden doorways tiny cracks; unwilling to reveal a centimeter more  
All the while influencing a million more invisible things we would never associate  
At all; and makes one almost willing to believe in astrology's claims.

And once I saw the moon beside your face, and could no longer resist  
It's pulling; and when it told me to go into your arms, I obeyed-  
Because I knew it was more ancient and more powerful, than any of our  
sawdust brains.

Patti Masterman

# The Moon Rose Plays

the moon rose plays at loving  
the sea rings with a fantasy song  
under the depths I was drunk on your love  
wine of a warm, sweet passion through which  
a wild light leaped over glistening sand,  
a blue flame of arc lit our soft desire;  
and through the naked sleep of morning,  
a dark fever flickers:  
its eternal throat will laugh  
when the eye of the wave shall rise.

Patti Masterman

# The More You Hate

The more you hate someone,  
The more they will not go away-  
No, indeed; and will never go away,  
Not even if the world burn,  
Melt, or turn to glaciers;  
And not even if it should plummet screaming, into darkest space,  
Or into any of an untold number of hell worlds  
That religion tells us must exist,  
Even if nobody has ever seen one.

Only hate continually resurrects itself,  
And seems to contain all the seeds of eternal life.

Patti Masterman

# The Mortuary Director's Children

The mortuary director's children  
Loved to play by hiding in the caskets.  
One day the four year old became ill;  
The parents sat by the bed all night,  
The doctor was called in early,  
But it was for naught.  
She must have caught a chill,  
Was all he could say.

On the day of the funeral service,  
The other children were restlessly curious,  
Wondering how she kept still for so long;  
She, who could never remain stationary,  
The bane of Sunday school teachers and baby-sitters,  
Eternally found flitting about, not quite airborne,  
Like a one-winged butterfly.

Even at the graveside, they still felt certain  
That at any moment the lid would flip open  
And she would leap out at them, all giggly as she danced around,  
For the sheer joy of keeping them searching for days.

If childhood starts to end at that moment  
When you can no longer lose yourself in the game,  
Then hide and seek would never be as much fun again.

Patti Masterman

# The Most Boring Newspaper On Earth

I dreamed one night about the newspaper  
How it had become pages and pages  
Showing only people's altars;  
Their shrines, pictures of their gardens..

It seems the whole world had renounced  
Violence and fighting, war and slaughter,  
To become peaceful citizens,  
Spending their time praying, chanting,  
Cultivating beautiful plots of ground.

There was no news to be had, not anymore.  
The front page held only a photo  
Of someone's impressively large blue shrine,  
And every other page thereafter was the same.

And what was the most astonishing of all?  
It was that nobody minded that there was no news.

Patti Masterman

# The Most Precious Things

Do animals dream of castles,  
White wedding cakes, and wine;  
Of making out midst beauty-  
To never look behind?

Our minds build worlds of ozone  
Upon the mists of time;  
Construction quite unearthly,  
All built inside the mind.

The world that we inhabit  
Is largely made of space  
And then we try to fill it  
With imaginations place.

The real world's too unseemly,  
And stifles us with laws,  
And doesn't fit the playbill,  
And never stops to pause.

If we could stop the world,  
And form it to our means,  
We'd pull out all the pilings  
And rip out all the seams.

If we could change the format,  
With the whimsy born of thought,  
The walls would be of flowers;  
The doors, by ivy wrought.

And love would be the conqueror,  
And beauty would be king-  
And dreams and secret fantasies,  
The world's most precious things.

Patti Masterman

# The Mystery Of Bravery

The mystery of bravery,  
The yearning deep inside  
For other worlds unknown to us,  
In human souls abide.

We're not content to sit beside  
The fire and idly dream;  
Intrepid voyagers to the core,  
We're drawn toward the gleam.

Our restlessness  
is salve and curse,  
We'll die of addled hopes:  
Our spirits soar  
Beyond the latch,  
Escaping from the rote.

Patti Masterman

# The Narcissist

I have done every bad thing you could imagine; and others you could not have thought of. I have done bad and worse, many times over, not really aware of having made a choice at all.

Yes I have done a lot of bad things, but it only pains me rarely; much later than it ought to, and occasionally it keeps me from sleep, or awakens me too early, but it's not enough. Never enough to make me stop. You would think I would sense something about my life is not right. You would be wrong. I am more likely to lie awake plotting nasty things to do to other people. It's a high art form and I am the goddess of such.

Decent people should make me cringe, because they show to me my own darkness and lack. Sometimes I think I would still burn the world, even though the world be found faultless. It's not my fault, this unhappiness, this hunger for something even I don't know what it is. Nothing was ever enough for me.

I have done so much that's evil, but never admit to anything. Responsibility was never my thing. As we stand here, I would sooner do you an ill deed than not. No doubt my plans for you would not turn out well for you, by and by. You would not be the first, only another in a long line of surprised victims. All too soon you would learn I am faithful only to my own demented designs.

Kindness is contemptible and weak in my world. And I would destroy my own self just to drag you under with me. I am a creature which never knew fear or friendship- and everyone around me is merely a vehicle for my desires. I'm heroic and superior, and nothing can be done or said to sway me from my high opinion of self.

I have blood relatives but they are of no account to me. I have no use for those who won't be useful to me. God saw fit to give me children, but god knows they have never furthered my aims and have been more like weighty anvils than anything else, that I have had to work constantly to keep out of my way.

I even have great grand children now, and have no more care and concern for those than if I had passed over them on the road, run them over in my car. Cursing only that they slowed my trip, just another bump along my journey; look, everybody knows that I am such an important person! I alone took this life, and I alone made it into a living curse for others, moment by moment. Just think, what I could have made of it, if it hadn't all had to be about me, every

second of every day...

What are you looking at?

Patti Masterman

# The Newest Ghost

Like a good Christian, in all my dreams  
I practice turning the other cheek-  
but awaken, after having killed  
another's soul, in my sleep.

It's not that we humans don't have good in us,  
it's those tapes we replay in our heads,  
the good, the bad, we play all the time,  
We cherish extreme emotion; it makes us more alive.

We'll regret pulling that trigger, in the end  
because it's ourselves, we kill the most;  
and ourselves, we must congratulate-  
as we greet the newest ghost..

Patti Masterman

# The Night

the night written down awakens love in a verse  
each death hunting journey of exposure  
lives on in starry mountain lights;  
old men together often go quiet,  
for all love the lines, green with mist  
as high along the hills, a treacherous freedom:  
the gray muse sits, rhyming time with season.

Patti Masterman

# The Night Is So Long Before The Dead Begin To Speak

In daylight hours, I like to read stories  
of haunted towns, uninhabited cities.  
I stare at the faded photographs, the faces,  
trying to memorize each detail.

Then at night, I lie awake in bed  
while the whole world permeates sleep,  
attempting with intense power of concentration  
to bridge whole villages back to life;  
imagining their tasks, fears, songs they sang,  
day-dreams they indulged.

I have seen traces of their existence  
on bruised brick, ruined walls, opened up ceilings.  
There are ancient cars, now turning  
into an airy Battenberg of chain-mail,  
and skeleton keys fit only for a skeleton now.

Sometimes their presence here seems more  
like a myth, a blighted stair going nowhere,  
up into an endlessly black and annihilating night.

I want to know if they ever actually lived,  
and to know it with something near to certainty.  
It could be I am looking for assurance only for myself;  
or perhaps there is the fear I was just foolish enough  
to believe that sleep was only a partition between days,  
and that one single night could never out-last lifetimes.

Patti Masterman

# The Nomenclature Of Clouds

The nomenclature of clouds is redundant.

How futile to name something, that wells up like the exhaust  
Of a giant earth's breathing; each one as different as the day itself;  
As a snowflake, or a memory completely surrounded by a hurricane;  
It comes and goes, irretrievably lost, as soon as it's found,  
From where you can't see, to where you can never go.  
It goes as quickly as a band of wild horses, sweeping across the horizon  
Toward distant lands, only dreamed of once in a bottomless sleep,  
In the world of swirling mists and uncounted time.  
How surreal to name a cloud, in the world in which  
Only the most concrete places, are ever recognized as landmarks.  
The places of soul's journey, should remain watery and indistinct  
As waves, seen from the railing of a ghost ship  
As it's passing a gutted lighthouse, with a phantom light within, which beckons  
Only when the wave releases it's skeletal hold, upon the bow,  
And the boat rises toward heaven, like an unanchored harbor,  
And before disappearing, as it sinks down again, like an undiscovered wreck.  
Or; when you've heard the far off cry of an invisible heartsick seagull,  
And when only closed eyes can know the way better,  
Than any reef-encrusted treasure map.

Patti Masterman

# The Nothing Left Within

Existence is a thing you first watch  
as it seems to disappear,  
two eyes centered  
on wavering flames,  
you learn to move through time.

The physical fades in and out as we sleep and wake,  
behind shadowy curtains that hide our entrapment,  
haunted by a radiance that's only reflected.

Memories chained to light or darkness  
move back and forth,  
like dust motes wander,  
mirrors of the moon-wanting mind,  
heavy worlds which explode at our suns leaving

Life itself being like a wardrobe we must occupy  
till at dusk discarding the nothing left within  
but the shadowed breath of god.

Patti Masterman

# The Object Of Life Is Death

So how does it feel  
To feel your grip upon life beginning to relax,  
To hear that far-off ferry, clanging it's bell  
Seemingly still distant; but you never know in this life:  
Could show up in the middle of the night, without a sound.  
Can you see the goodbye yet, teasing around the eyes  
Of your loved ones?

Or that familiar leather smell of the suitcase,  
Waiting to finally get fed with some clothes;  
You can smell it from as far away as the corner;  
Because it knows you'll be leaving soon.  
Your guts know it; though nobody's told you;  
No official letter has rang at the door,  
Not even to run away and hide in the bushes,  
Not wanting to be the bearer of bad news.

That's always a big clue; no eyes to meet your gaze,  
The white coats beating a quick retreat, down halls and behind desks.  
But some things your insides just know without ever being told.  
And in some ways, it's such a sentimental sort of journey  
That you begin to feel a slight breathlessness,  
Even at the raw edge of beginning to contemplate it.  
What will you miss the most, on this one-way trip,  
On which you can take along nothing at all- not even a memory,  
To keep you company?

How does one begin to get ready for mental acceptance.  
Yet there are stories, surrounding us always  
We learn what to do, by watching what others have done.  
Sometimes the lesson is not to hold on, as tightly as you can,  
But just to try to begin to let go, as much as you can stand..  
Strange that when you consider it all objectively,  
The object of life is death.

Patti Masterman

# The Ocean Births The Infants

The ocean births the infants  
Just like you or me;  
The tide tears free umbilici  
And blots them, with seaweed.

The ocean bathes the babies  
In rivulets green and blue;  
And scrubs them gently too, with sand  
Just like we might do.

The ocean rocks the children  
To sleep, in stormy seas;  
Then whirls them down, to deeper depths-  
Where they are never seen.

The ocean buries children  
Without one word or tear,  
And leaves their hapless bodies  
To schools of mermaids there.

Patti Masterman

# The Octave Of My Error

Parched gates guard the entrance to your being,  
And like a leper, I've been cast aside;  
Shuttered windows, all that I can see now,  
While in the gulch, I'm rumored to reside.

I'm supposed to die or leave here most quietly;  
Never to disturb, the angels of the house;  
You treat friendship so unseemly and unsightly,  
My state's reduced, to lower than a mouse.

I wish I knew the octave of my error;  
That note of wrong, that's burnt into the wood:  
I'd polish with oils, and try to make it fairer;  
Anything to fix it, if only I still could.

Patti Masterman

# The Ones We Love Are Crueler

The ones we love are crueler,  
But the ones want us, are bores;  
They're boring, that it's us they want-  
Cause it's us, that we abhor.

The ones excite, are dangerous,  
Unavailable, or sly-  
That's reason quite enough for us  
To sell our piece of sky.

Patti Masterman

# The Opiate Of The Masses

The opiate of the masses  
Feeds them commercials all day long,  
For every variety of prescription drug  
Known to mankind,  
In between the mind numbing  
Game shows and soap operas.  
It seems somehow fitting;  
Like playing, to all the catatonic inmates in the asylum  
The sound bites promoting only electro-shock therapy;  
Or adding a sizable dose of morphine  
To the IV drip that's feeding into the veins, of the comatose.

Patti Masterman

# The Origins Of Wormholes

The ancient Persians had a saying  
About the body being formed by certain  
Elements forced to cooperate as a whole  
That together formed the body;  
That it was always trying to die, the body~  
The constituents always straining,  
Like a flock of birds, to leave;  
Fly apart, go their separate ways  
Back to the simplest state.  
In modern times when the birds of the body fly,  
Often it is the inside of some hospital.  
It may be the departure of newly- freed souls  
Leaves indiscernible, quantum-scale  
Holes within the walls and roof,  
As they float outward and upward,  
Like bobbing helium balloons~  
The exotic matter being the opposite  
Complement to the physical..  
On a certain day, the building load,  
Having been exceeded, because  
The invisibly ricocheted structure  
Could no longer support itself;  
The hospital might spontaneously crumble  
Like a well-timed demolition and  
The news reports would call it  
Another mysterious building collapse.

Patti Masterman

# The Other Side Of Love

On the other side of love lies hate,  
More love, more hate, the equation is;  
Yet some will simply embrace fate-  
And all the right of wrongs, in this.

On the other side of death there is  
Something that neither loves nor hates;  
Something near enough to bliss-  
The end: our loveless, hateless fate.

Patti Masterman

# The Painter's Hands I Saw

The painters hands I saw  
Were stained: the skin, all paint  
And slender fingers bore  
The imprint of his chore.

Upon that skin were lent  
The colors of the sky  
The beach, the sand, were rent;  
The water, going by.

And by their shape and form  
Another world is born:  
The painters roving eye  
Can never stop at sky.

to the muse..

Patti Masterman

# The Parenthetical Parrot

The parenthetical parrot  
Went for a cruise at sea,  
Where he ate a rotten carrot  
(Cause they said that they were free)

The parenthetical parrot  
Took some syrup of Ipecac,  
And threw up the bad old carrot  
(Which created quite a flap)

He threw up on the sequined  
Sparkly dress, of Mrs. Delmar  
(Who was only passing by him,  
As he sat there at the bar)

Mrs. Delmar began to cry,  
The parrot presumed, to curse-  
Then strong-armed sailors intervened  
(Which might have made things worse)

They carried off the Parrot  
Who spoke many, exotic tongues  
And perched him on a railing  
(So it availed him none)

He plead for their forgiveness,  
In every language on the globe,  
And blamed the rotten carrot-  
As they locked him in the hold.

He's still there to this very day;  
His words might scare a bloke-  
In any language you could wish:  
(The Poly-Lingual parrot joke)

Patti Masterman

# The Part That Will Never Quite Die

My face is the sign-board of me,  
And you only see what you see:  
Knock on my door, if you want to know more-  
Large samples are given for free.

My voice is the call-sign you hear,  
Whenever I'm talking, and near:  
What I say doesn't matter, it's really more clatter-  
Just re-read my face, to be clear.

My presence is what never lies,  
Though you may hear laughter or sighs:  
It's the being that's me, and has to be free-  
The part that will never quite die.

Patti Masterman

# The Past Is Finer

The past is a finer place to live,  
There are miracles, fit to give  
A martyr goose-flesh,  
A pope a stroke;  
And willy-nilly, all things betoken

The past is a finer place to go,  
To visit, or to watch the show  
You'll see yourself,  
As you were then;  
Hells-bells, you weren't broken.

Patti Masterman

# The Patient Was Diagnosed Already Dead

We were at the beauty shop,  
and the normal banter started up,  
amid the click of the scissors.

My ears pricked up, when I heard the sudden confession,  
'We're getting a divorce'-  
and then there was some back-stepping, excuse making  
rationalization..it must be something in the air..  
'Everybody's doing it lately-'  
It sounded like a new fad.

I thought of the amount of pain  
that must lie behind that simple, brave statement,  
and the next thought was, how do you make it all right-  
How do you ever get life back to normal again?

Her blatant obviating and explaining away  
of the situation made me cringe.  
No one forced her to tell us  
of disappointment in her private life;  
apparently not even a generous, revealing nature  
can save one from divorce, that's meant to be.

Divorce, the new cancer of our age,  
now viewed as more like a bolt of lightning  
than the failure of a relationship.

Patti Masterman

# The Peace Of The Dead

A dagger, a chalice,  
A heart filled with dread;  
Invisible palace-  
The peace of the dead.

A war and a promise  
That's better not said,  
No more doubting Thomas:  
The populace bled.

Patti Masterman

# The Peace That War Knows

The peace that war knows  
Wasn't purchased with dripping blood;  
The war that peace knows  
Wasn't punctured by artillery sounds.

The peace the dead know  
Wasn't bought by a furrowed brow;  
The war not known to the dead,  
Feels all the same to them, as peace.

Knowing neither wars,  
Nor that the dead are dead;  
Shouldn't we be jealous-  
And wish it were us, instead?

Patti Masterman

# The Pecking Order

If chickens are religious,  
I just can't see it-  
When they're hungry, they eat  
When they're tired, they sleep  
When they're horny, they lay an egg:  
They're just not brainy enough to be pretentious  
And in fact, their style of life seems  
Entirely natural and not hypocritical at all  
Therefore I must conclude by  
Powers of deductive reasoning  
That chickens do not have a religious  
Drumstick, thigh, wing, or wishbone  
Anywhere in their body  
And they seem the better off for it.  
When I was young I used to annoy the chickens  
By preaching sermons to them in the yard  
Though I did not know their persuasion  
If they had one or what it might be  
That is the last proof of their sincerity-  
They have never held it against me.  
Besides, all the religion atoms long ago drained  
Entirely out of my body, so in truth  
I am very much like a chicken now, myself.

Patti Masterman

# The People Of The Vent

The people of the vent  
Are rude and never clear,  
Their voices mask confusion  
Although the coast looks clear.

The people of the vent  
Talk over one another,  
Imposing louder voices  
Over things like generators.

Their audiences are laughing,  
And their machines are roaring;  
If I listened all night long,  
I'd be insane by morning.

But thankfully most nights,  
I fall asleep by three-  
And never hear the vent people  
Still talking then at me.

Now though people of the vent,  
I'm hearing very plain,  
I have to make this clear:  
They live INSIDE my brain.

Patti Masterman

# The People We'll Never See

What type of people do they hire  
to clean hospital rooms  
once the patients  
have departed?

Straighteners, neateners;  
what do they call them?

Do they whisper in rooms  
where death paid a visit,  
do they check the room numbers,  
ask- it's this one- is it?

But surely no room  
has gone unseen by death-  
felt his cold presence,  
felt his stiff heft?

The cleaners can't clean  
till the patient has left;  
do they ever come early-  
and catch the last breath?

Janitor, housekeeper,  
housemaid or turners;  
they'll clean up the mess-  
when you're at the burners.

Patti Masterman

# The Phoenix

I knew there was something different when I first noticed him-  
The man was walking tentatively down the hospital corridor,  
Declining to use the railing; but beaming as he went along.  
He had that look of a child fresh from his birthday party, or a new father,  
Mixed in with surprise, and he had an air of vulnerability too.  
What was that look about him? It intrigued, pulled us in closer...  
With my father leaning upon my arm, we slowly approached,  
Gradually, as each fall of step took us a few inches farther-  
As he came closer, the mans face so wide open we could not just pass him by,  
And he smiled as we stood abreast in the wide hallway:  
"I have another chance, you see, " he said.  
"I'm still alive and I should have died, they told me."  
His eyes all bright and lit up like like two faithful candles  
Still defying winters breath, even though the storm has passed by already.  
I will never forget those eyes, however long I live.  
I knew he was wondering, Why? Or, why me? -  
A death sentence averted at the last minute?  
Still above ground and not under it?  
His was the palpable fruit of joy itself.  
He was a child again, full of wonder.  
And I felt his spirit resurrected;  
Rising clean and unobstructed.  
A Phoenix rising from the ashes  
Of the old existence.

Patti Masterman

# The Pigeon's Church

The pigeon's church  
is the church's eaves,  
And all their sermons  
the talking leaves;  
They do not worry  
for trouble or sin,  
Or when their tiny  
world must end.

The pigeon's church  
is full of birds,  
And all their talk  
is coo-ing words;  
To each his own,  
to each his place:  
Out of the whole  
wide world, one space.

Patti Masterman

# The Poem Is A Wanton, Immoral Creature

The poem is a wanton, immoral creature:  
Strutting about in three quarter time, batting it's  
Myopic but still desirable eyes at anybody  
Who is watching within winking distance.

Poems cost less than a lady of the night;  
They often offer up their worth free of charge  
The exchange is fast, tawdry; hike up the skirt  
As you look and devour, escaping quickly

Always too eager to move on to the next.  
You won't be quizzed on what you did, or remember  
Of what you saw; and the poem won't ever speak your name again  
Unless you signed in or out at the door.

And some poems get a grip on you so tight,  
You can never completely remove them again;  
Like some disease, crawled stealthily up from the floor's filth  
And fastened itself seamlessly, over your openings

I like to come upon a poem that's free-floating  
Which has not been hitched to anyone's ego  
Nobody has yet claimed it; left their graffiti;  
Scratched out their message, in the sandstone cliffs of it's beach.

I feel like the first discoverer then  
When I begin to read those words, with joy to discern  
No one else has marked it with their body's fluids;  
Staked small claims of ownership, with their word's spittle

In some ways it becomes much more mine then; my words the first  
For I am much more likely to want to be first  
To avoid the contagion of the crowd, the viral sneezes-  
In and out so quickly then, before you realize anyone has even been there.

Patti Masterman

# The Poet

The poet wrote, by day and night  
Of things, for others, had less light:  
He wrote the dawn, into a storm  
He wrote the dirt, into a worm  
He wrote his heart out, on a leaf  
And into joy, inserted grief.

And as day dawned, upon his words  
They saw things, which seemed absurd;  
A tree grew thickly from his chest,  
With hanging fruit, of nature's best;  
His arms to angel wings, had turned  
But his heart: black-smoked and burned.

The smell of incense; smoke and myrrh,  
From his burnt heart, just grew and grew  
His body; turned into an altar,  
His words, into a sacred psalter  
Where lovers go, to say their vows  
And no more care, for 'whys' or 'hows'.

Patti Masterman

# The Psyche's Well

Your word, my assertion  
Breathes of resplendent beatitudes.

You the vessel containing deep within  
Whatever the living world reveals

Absolute essence, the realms between thought  
Restraint, constraint, and ceaseless meaning.

A restlessness impinges ahead of freedom-  
And yearning opens the psyche's well:

The Spring is never-ending.

Patti Masterman

# The Quiet Dust Lies

The quiet dust lies, settled in the cushions,  
On the armrests, in the corners of rooms-  
Dust which takes a bit of us, when it goes.

Dust containing particles of other selves  
Of other times, from a past ages ago,  
Of people and lives now nobody knows.

Dust has a long memory, but cannot talk  
Of who and what, and where it's been;  
Dust has a long reach, but cannot walk-  
Except it cling, to movements of men.

Oh dust, will you speak of me when I'm gone-  
Lean traces of me on the roads I've left,  
For quietly I'll lie then- and make no moan-  
As quietly, dust will slowly drift..

Patti Masterman

# The Quiet From The Road

I wonder will they bring the quiet back from the road;  
The quiet where the trees fingers reach the sky,  
Quiet of the graceful geese sweeping by,  
Quiet of an airplane shadowed above,  
Peace of the fence line's lowly shrub.

The low keening of a coyote's howl,  
More silent preening of the wild fowl,  
The quiet of water in trembling spring,  
But silence above everything else seen-

And I wonder will silence stay close by,  
Or slowly wander, a cloud in a sky?

Patti Masterman

# The Racing Hearse

The racing hearse was never too busy  
To join a drag race on the strip;  
Though sometimes, it wasn't any too pretty-  
How the coffins would scoot and dip.

The racing hearse had a job to do,  
And do it he did, sooner or later,  
But at the sound, of a drag race in town,  
The hearse was always the last tail-gater.

The hearse driver was determined to race,  
Though his vehicle was clumsy and slow,  
And at the sound of some screaming engines,  
The hearse was always bound to show.

Many years passed and the driver died;  
Many attended his funeral, to see,  
If a hearse would race his body to the grave-  
But of course, this could never be.

Still through the years, the tales passed down  
Of a noise like engines, at the old graveyard-  
And of a dark vehicle, suddenly appearing  
In the middle of a drag race, just to spar.

Later no one could find the hearse  
Who had left the other cars in the dust;  
And so the myth continued to grow,  
Of the hearse drivers undying lust.

After a while, it was common knowledge,  
That on its last trip, with the family,  
A misty apparition would always race  
The body, to the final resting place.

One day, the town took up a collection  
And bought a prize ribbon, large and red;  
And placed it upon the hearse drivers stone-  
And thereafter, he stayed peacefully dead.

Patti Masterman

# The Reader

Clouds forest the vision  
On a road, with a hidden gate,  
And I notice someone's entered;  
But to come here, seems my fate.

The latch made only by pure mind,  
So another has no wait;  
It falls off imperceptibly,  
If I only concentrate.

Here the world was crafted  
As a perfect day's escape-  
I slip through it quite easily,  
And the outer world abates..

Patti Masterman

# The Reason My Heart Beats

Just once I need to feel your soul that's leading;  
Look into those eyes, that into mine repeating,  
With shaky faith, that there's no more bleeding-  
I can rest in peace, once I hear your heart beating.

One time, to leave the world's loud roar  
And take the hands of one I adore  
To know that I'll never be alone any more-  
That's the reason my heart keeps beating for.

Patti Masterman

# The Reason That We Are Created

Once upon a life, I wrote love poems:  
Because I burned  
Because I yearned-  
For love.

No philosophical connotating  
On theoretical situations;

No stereotypical ponderings  
On possible scenarios.

Now I write love poems,  
Only as memorial, to that other self;  
The one who was on fire for love,  
The one my words recall:

Because I burned  
Because I yearned-

Patti Masterman

# The Reclusive One

I still remember the day  
I started hating the smell of doctors offices.  
As a child I only associated the smell with  
Getting a shot, every week, for ear infections  
Because my parents home was a chimney,  
A veritable smoking Krakatoa, of tobacco;  
When she finally put hers out, I thanked god,  
But not for long, because he had just lit another.  
On this day I was delivered,  
Innocent Specimen, having only ever known  
Minor, easily forgotten pain during doctors visits.  
This visit was different; the wound was increasingly swollen;  
Turning dark at the center- it looked bad.  
The doctor said words I didn't understand and left.  
Turning to my mother there beside me, I asked,  
What does 'lance' mean? That word meant nothing.  
I think she was afraid to tell me; she just said, it'll be ok.  
I was working it over in my mind; fearful, trying to decode that word.  
But too soon, a cart was pushed up  
With a torturers retinue of accoutrement's.  
I couldn't even stand to look at it. I turned my face to the wall.  
The doctor came back, and began spraying a coldness  
Onto my inner thigh, by the knee, where my scar is.  
It didn't help; in fact it made it worse.  
Then he gave me two shots around the entry point of the venom  
Then he began to cut; and I began to scream-  
I had good lungs- my mothers hands fluttering near  
My mouth, like disoriented butterflies; wanting to throttle that noise  
From embarrassment or agony, I'm not sure which.  
Time stalled and then stopped while he opened that rancid wound.  
The pain was very like a nausea in which the entire body participated.  
If coiled black snakes had erupted from that hole,  
It would not have seemed unexpected, from so much hurt,  
And that blue-black blood bubbling up out of the black cavern.  
The good doctor carried me out to our car afterwards;  
Very gently, he set me down after my passion.  
His name was Dr. Hook; related to the pirate, I assumed.  
I knew no one wanted me to suffer on purpose;  
There was never any question about that.

They told me later, the flesh rotted clean to the bone there.  
To this day, the smell of ether at the doctors office  
Feels like intense pain to me,  
A foreboding smell of agony yet to come.  
I don't much care for spiders anymore either.

Patti Masterman

# The Recoil Of Time

These nerves know all the ticking of seconds  
In your syncopated ecstasies, and this flesh knows  
When you've reached the edge,  
There's no going backwards again.  
This mind knows all the precise pinpricks  
Of patience, wherever you've veered to wander.  
But somehow, this world cannot disband  
Its crystalline self, before disbelieving eyes;  
Can never follow the ordered layers peeling away:  
Everything will still be as solid, as fragrant  
As vertiginous, restless in inhibition,  
Expressing the scaled continuum of resolute being,  
When your nerves are finally stilled,  
And your flesh is growing already colder.  
But my unruly mind will no longer grasp then  
Its footprints in carefully metered seconds;  
But only in the leaping of frayed centuries, in aqueducts;  
The rivers racing forward, into blind uncharted distance  
Yet undreamed of, hidden under moonless nights;  
Forests folded under the weight of eons, suddenly registered,  
Calamities sped up to meet the counterpoint  
Of time's new frowning dissonance;  
And how quickly the wood begins to warp,  
The rusted gallows to peek through, all the torn tapestries weaving.

Patti Masterman

# The Rhyme Of The Mermaid

The lighthouse keeper and his son, one day  
Were out on the rocks, by a blue-water bay

As the sea, their bare feet was laving,  
They saw a mermaid, they first thought was bathing;

With long dark hair and eyes of green;  
Like the mist of a loch, that sings.

She was struggling and sick, in the foamy sea  
So they took her to the lighthouse, above the lea.

She begged and pleaded, to die in the sea;  
But there in the lighthouse, she seemed fated to be.

A clawfoot bathtub became her home,  
And there she stayed, never to roam.

Some children taught her some words and rhymes.  
To help her to pass all the weary time.

The lighthouse keeper thought she was his own,  
Though from the sea, she was merely loaned.

Sometimes a midnight, would find him there  
Combing her damp and tangled hair.

In her long confinement, he was the one  
Kept her sane, since she could not run.

They had long discussions until daybreak,  
Entirely by looks and gestures they'd make;

She taught him secrets no man had ever heard;  
How she could still the sea, with inaudible word

And how she could tell by the look of the moon  
If spring would come early, or winter too soon.

And how the waves, did murmur below  
If the weather be rough, or the hard winds blow.

How she'd loved and lost one merman that  
Had gotten too close, to a fisherman's net.

They'd had a child, by the madman's reef;  
Was eaten by sharks, and how they'd grieved.

He fancied that someday, he'd like a kiss,  
For kissing a mermaid, seemed like rare bliss

But something forebade him, to come that near;  
So he was content, just stroking her hair.

One day he found her, dead in her tub;  
Her heart had broken, all for his love.

No mermaid can tell human men of her heart,  
Or else they'll spend their lives far apart,

It's a law of the sea, older than time;  
So this be the end, of the mermaid rhyme.

Patti Masterman

# The Richest

I wonder if people reflect as they die,  
How they have lived the wealthiest of lives;  
For beneath their feet, lay the whole of the Earth-  
And above their heads, the bottomless sky.

Patti Masterman

# The Robotic Sailboat

There is a man lost in the ocean  
Imprisoned by the giant waves, trying to toss him  
From his small lifeboat. He clings for life to the raft.  
When suddenly- there! on the horizon,  
A small skiff, or is it a sailboat?  
He fights within himself for a moment- a skiff might make  
For a faster rescue, but a sailboat could linger  
Long enough to spot his imminent disaster-

He begins to wave his soggy shirt, frantically.  
The boat comes closer. It is a sailing yacht,  
Manned by robots; it's been all over the news,  
The newest darling of the fickle world.  
They are out to set a world record.  
The whole world is watching their progress.  
'Help me! ' he yells triumphantly. The boat continues

It is close enough now, he can see some blinking lights,  
Some motion detectors, that the motions of the sails awaken.  
Strangely there seems to be nothing recognizable as human on board.  
The main robot, the one shown on the news, has a metal body  
With only head and shoulders, attached atop the helm, steering stoically.  
As the boat glides past the shipwrecked man,  
It's head turns once and a whirring noise announces  
That a photo has been taken. The head turns forward again.  
The boat slowly passes from view.

The man sobs, unashamedly.  
'My only chance..gone, gone! '  
A month later the boat's creators look at the stream of captures  
Made by the robot helmsman.  
There looks to be a small raft, with a sunburnt, bedraggled man  
Waving a sheet. Experts are called in, and after hours of debate,  
They determine it to be an optical illusion, caused by the angle of sun,  
Possibly from reflected objects on the sailboat.

The cruise is deemed a success, and the strange capture,  
Which was chosen for its strangely enigmatic image,  
Goes on the cover of hundreds of thousands of books, memorializing forever

The first around the world sailing trip made entirely by robots.

The man passes out eventually, falls overboard  
And is eaten by some hungry sharks, shirt and all.  
They burp small pieces of checkered cloth for a day,  
And soon nothing is left of the man  
But an empty raft.

Patti Masterman

# The Robotic Surgeon

The robotic surgeon didn't blink  
Smoke, swear, or fool around;  
He was the newest design of science  
His metal feet firmly on the ground.

Robotic surgery was the latest  
Improvement over the manual kind  
There were no variations in technique;  
No reliance on flaky mind.

He was diligent and precise  
Cutting flesh to invisible templates;  
He never erred and he never missed  
Never once paused, to vacillate.

Trusted beyond the regular surgeon,  
Using his fragile, shaking hands;  
The robotic surgeon could do anything  
Because he wasn't just a man.

The newest miracle of science was hailed  
As the end, to the older style;  
But one day the program blew a fuse-  
And he cut her head off, by a mile.

Patti Masterman

# The Roving Eye

False starts apropos  
Of slated demise;  
But still through the keyhole  
Keeps looking the eye:

It rolls and wanders  
Taking it in;  
The door is locked-  
Unknown if friend.

The white tells nothing;  
Whether feral or tame,  
But the iris shutter  
Remembers my name.

I know it wants me  
To open the door;  
And I would have left  
It open before-

But I thought I heard  
Sharpening swords,  
And clattering claws,  
And sawing boards-

I don't know if  
It wants to love-  
Or just ingest  
My treasure trove.

My things are meagre,  
My life is poor,  
As through the channel  
It takes its core;

A sample it thinks  
The heart, of me;  
It thinks it's found  
Divinity-

Just sheared pages  
Out of some book,  
I stole some time-  
But for now, it looks..

Patti Masterman

# The Royal Martyrs

Morning star,  
Shine oh so softly down  
On gentle sleepy villages,  
And weary rustling pines.  
Rain fall tenderly,  
Meekly, mildly:  
For saints of men  
Have walked this ground.  
Oh trees so thick and strong,  
Stretching your limbs up  
To touch pure rays of sun-  
Let not this beauty blind you;  
For great sorrow and trial  
Once abided in this realm:  
Angels have breathed this  
Same crystal air,  
And spread their sheathed wings  
Upon this stained ground.

Patti Masterman

# The Same Medicine

Give you god, the same medicine  
Then see what you have to say of pessimism;  
Today, maybe luck, but tomorrow, not-?  
Random chance, or inheritance?

Fires, floods, ethnic cleansing,  
Atrocities, droughts and pestilence,  
Air pollution and befouled water,  
Mad cow, vehicular manslaughter.

Religious inbreeding, sexual assault-  
Pick your poison, choose your rot;  
Every good has evil inside it,  
Every virtue a secret sin.

Patti Masterman

# The Scar

The scar has healed;  
Now hear the blood crawl,  
Memory's cross  
Has many chapters.

Despair has echoes  
In many chambers,  
Rising voiceless  
Clear to the rafters.

Patti Masterman

# The Season For The Reason

Neon angel, colored lights around your form,  
Looking like a psychedelic Christmas tree-  
You are the star at the top of my heart;  
The best gift of all on Christmas morn.

And on all other days, you are the rule;  
The standard by which we fly our ship:  
On the radar of life, which holds us bound,  
You're the real reason we took the trip.

Patti Masterman

# The Second Deadly Sin

Forgive me if I chewed too fast,  
And swallowed up all your niceties;  
Crunching the pastoral love letters,  
Stiffened with a backbone, of dried sobs,  
And not fully tasting the briny salt of the tears.

It's just that I've been starved for so long  
For some genuine emotion in another  
That wasn't drying at the bottom of some jar,  
Or trapped in dust on some faded bouquet,  
Forgotten in the back of a seldom opened drawer.

And even if it had to be love, so be it-  
Though sorrow often tastes nearly as sweet.

Patti Masterman

# The Secret Lives Of Others

When I was just a child, they were just a married couple;  
Older, middle-aged, nothing distinguishing about them at all.  
I loved swimming in their swimming pool,  
Until they upsized, to a glitzy neighborhood of rambling,  
Ranch-style houses.  
And they upscaled, to exotic, foreign vacations.  
Brought me back a Hawaiian volcanic stone, with emerald flecks,  
A salt and pepper shaker set from Israel.

She was a clothes horse, always kept her figure,  
Dressed slinky but classy, for an old babe;  
Visibly stood taller, if another woman  
Ever complimented her clothing or style-  
And they invariably did.

My dad said that when alone with her husband,  
That man would brag about daily blowjobs  
From his office receptionist, at the end of the workday  
Before going home. I was older then, tried to imagine  
How the shared exchange could have furthered  
Some ancient, nightly excavated ambition?

Alone with her once, my dad said he made an innuendo,  
Some playful joke which he had since forgotten the point of,  
Probably due to the more stunning reaction it caused.  
He had always loved teasing with words,  
But he said that she had dropped all suggestion of pretense,  
And she had told him then, You couldn't handle it..  
He still chuckled about it, long after the fact.

Funny how for all those years, what I remembered seeing  
Was a mostly colorless couple  
Who always drove large Cadillacs.  
And how in the later years, he could only move  
While tethered to his oxygen tank,  
Though it never hindered his smoking.

Patti Masterman

# The Secret Sky

the secret sky has some ferocious questions,  
though we like to think brilliant things always surround us  
and that naked time will kiss the dirt of our fathers  
but breath dies here as eternity blazes away;  
and every child born makes the same mistakes,  
and voices here speak an unknown refrain-  
remember when the air was poison free,  
and ghosts danced in the opened perfume of trees?

Patti Masterman

# The Self Is A Concretion

The self is a concretion,  
As amber to the tree,  
And seashell to the pearl;  
An antiquated 'We'.

Like wax within the honey,  
The shell around the snail,  
Ambergris from sperm whales,  
Where the waters swell.

The wrappings of a mummy  
Inside an ancient tomb,  
And unguent left in jars,  
Where the Lotus blooms.

The self is a concretion  
That's built around a host-  
Its pinion'd eye of darkness  
More holy than the ghost.

Patti Masterman

# The Service Was Perfectly Lovely

The service was perfectly lovely, they said  
The flowers like once-frozen tears of white  
Words from a poem were read over the dead;  
The conclusion greeted with many a sigh.

I know you're pure class; but it was an event  
Well timed for the season; to catch the last rays:  
Such straight lines of chairs, were placed under the tent  
At the first taste of Autumn's downplayed cooler days.

I spoke for some minutes; and mentioned my sorrow  
At saying goodbye, to such long-living dreams.  
The simple black dress; so perfect, was borrowed;  
My black see-through stockings, no visible seams.

When I walked from the graveyard, back to the car  
I left there a very large chunk of my soul  
So we buried our love; once hitched to the stars  
And you know I'll find never, another such role.

(written to My Melancholy Baby- Michael Parks)

Patti Masterman

# The Ship Of My Words Is Sinking

The ship of my words is sinking;  
The book of my days, deluged.  
My remaining hours are shrinking  
With the weight of the cargo, huge.

Vainglorious were the thoughts,  
That could fasten me to you;  
And wicked are the draughts  
One could serve, to keep me true.

But the eye of mind is blinking;  
And the storm of self, it brews,  
And the heavy coins are sinking,  
That the stolen heart eschew.

There's love that's bought with gold,  
That's hardly worth the keeping;  
Though bound, with bonds to hold  
Through grasping hands, is seeping.

And the ship is over loaded;  
And the book has a missing page-  
When the hours have all eroded,  
It's death, who'll pay the wage.

Patti Masterman

# The Shoe Of Authority

The shoe of authority:

Heel on-pointe,  
Smooth-stockinged leg  
In steps adroite.

Swaying skirt  
Stays close to thigh,  
As look of business  
Hits you in eye.

The wider world  
Of men are slaves;  
The shoe's the power-  
The rest, but knaves.

Patti Masterman

# The Shortest Distance

The shortest distance isn't the one  
We find waiting under mid-day sun;  
It's the one winds through the street,  
At the lowest point, then goes beneath;

Or the one who calls at three a.m.  
Needing coffee, or tonic and gin;  
Needing a ride, to anywhere  
Some place that's dim, and never clear.

It's arms that wrap around our own,  
While knowing, it's an unsafe trek-  
But still a journey, we know too well-  
The paradise-encumbered road to hell.

Patti Masterman

# The Silencer

The silencer on your words  
Kept me from hearing the report

The blood spatter on your face  
Prevented me from seeing your crimes

The lies on your tongue pushed down  
The plunger, and executed me without trial

Brings to mind the old adage, about keeping  
Friends close; and enemies closer

But sometimes it's hard to tell where one leaves off  
And the other begins.

Patti Masterman

# The Skater's Mother Died

The skater's mother died  
As soon as she had arrived in the foreign city  
Where her daughter was to skate  
In the Olympic program.  
And so there she died; and the girl  
Still had to skate, on cue;  
Do her best, for the mother  
Who ought, as always,  
To be sitting out there in the audience.  
In the large, moving sea of unintelligible faces;  
One could be any other,  
Seen from the ice, moving fast  
As a storm cloud,  
A whirlwind unleashed on an ice floe.

And there they greeted her with such love  
And caring, understanding her predicament,  
That she was seized by their humanity, as a whole;  
That she skated as if she were dancing  
Only for them, underneath the meditative silence  
Of the one who was not there, in body only;  
For surely in spirit she had been well honored.

And somewhere far above that stadium,  
That city; another free spirit was swept away  
In the pastel colored clouds, while hearing  
That loving outcry for her child, not really understanding  
That she was dead, and on her way heavenward;  
Only that all things were right;  
Her child was basking in the kindest glow,  
Full of a strange, exultant happiness  
Somewhere far beneath;  
And as she still had places herself, to go  
then, she spread her wings wide  
and then.. she just.... flowed...

Patti Masterman

# The Skies Are Cloudy With A Chance Of Love

The skies are cloudy with a chance of love:  
With you, I'd paint all the stars above;  
My hearts on fire, and there's a chance of rain-  
Unless I'm wrapped by your arms again.

The skies are cloudy; but the sun peeks out,  
While in my heart there can be no doubt  
The weather there has been just the same,  
Since I first heard you speak my name.

The skies are cloudy, but underneath  
Love has taken my heart; the thief,  
So now all weathers that we see as two  
Will show us skies that are always blue.

Patti Masterman

# The Skin

the skin of a calm moon nightly leads  
the depths far movements of conformity  
with fission'd eyes to plumb the deeps  
and the fishes secrets, keep

riding purple oceans of new born rain  
whose curtain baffles blue skies again  
weaving down and up, upon each sea  
whose howling our continuity

washing, washing down the dust  
stirring up the tidal lusts

Patti Masterman

# The Sky Is But A Tall Ship

The sky is but a tall ship;  
And the clouds invisible sails-  
When I catch that wind,  
When I catch that wind.

Storms can push a vessel aground;  
And life isn't really the holy grail-  
Then you catch that wind,  
Then you catch that wind.

Don't worry about the setting sun;  
If you lost or if you won-  
Just reach your hands up to the sky  
Until you've learned the way to fly,  
And you'll find, once you catch that wind,  
The sea of sky won't ever end.

Patti Masterman

# The Sky Is The Quartermaster

The sky is the quartermaster  
But you are it's eyes,  
Currying favor from  
Life's narrow surprise;  
The days of your weather  
Arrive fair or foul,  
Delivering artifice;  
As much as allowed.

I sail in your auspices,  
Partake of your airs;  
Not minding the skies,  
Whether cloudy or clear,  
For found nowhere else  
Are the things you are giving;  
And till your arrival,  
It's not really living.

Patti Masterman

# The Sky Must Whisper

The sky must whisper  
Through our breath  
It's unseen mysteries  
Of birth and death.

The stars must gaze  
Through eyes of man  
And kiss each other  
Through our pens.

Patti Masterman

# The Sky Waits

the sky waits like a paper cut  
like the night dreams unquiet tales  
and the hope of the soul flies out through tiny windows

the stars light time and the dead stay sleeping  
the long burning of life becomes a smoke-filled memory  
and the quelled ashes turn back to stone

don't try to wake again where meteors breathe sunlight  
the fields worship in flowers  
and the mountains stand on bones

Patti Masterman

# The Sky Will Be Our Cemetery

Humankind is the raging mist of tears in the night  
An echo of sobs left behind a star capped mountain

We each are dying as soon as we arrive  
Day by day, every heartbeat gets subtracted

We beat our bodies against unyielding rock  
We wear ourselves out on the anvil of earth

Hope flies away faster than evening shadows arrive  
We are shallow-graven letters on icy stone

A rusting planet circles a dying star-  
Just how many ways are there to die  
And does it matter once the fire has left the heart?

Patti Masterman

# The Smallest Mercies Can Save A Soul

I want to disappear now, into the smell of books, old ink,  
Moldy columns and perfumes of dried flowers.

What keeps us alive, bundled into these bodies,  
Are incoherent strings of dna the gods of our existence,  
Do they determine if our days are mostly carefree  
Or slipstreams of inchoate agony?  
Does the loveliness of life arise from its randomness,  
Or the randomness from incalculable beauty?

Why do some pay the ultimate price,  
And some never seem to pay anything at all?

Is my breathing my tithe, a piece of each day that's unwound,  
Tribute paid to the universe, itself but one hallowed out-breath  
From the sphincter of time and inconceivable distance?

I can wrap myself up in pages of words, in folds of paper  
Trying to cover myself in understanding,  
Yet no man holds the keys of what we are,  
Or what we are yet to become; faith is all we inherit  
In the orbiting chaos of time, we find once-living shreds of it  
Always in free fall, floating forever through the continuum,  
A whispered message from the secret heart of being,  
To never forget, that the smallest mercies can save a soul.

Patti Masterman

# The Smallest Molecule

In carrying out your assignment,  
You have to position yourself where the eyes-  
His tunneling vision- can't fasten upon you;  
His eyes will bore you like a sharpened drill bit  
Through a new penny,  
Carrying intolerable orders, impelling you to action  
Beyond your capacity to refuse-  
Stay around corners, where those eyes cannot turn a hinge.

You have to avoid that tongue, those words  
Aimed with obsidian spear points; venomous flashings,  
Because that voice will shear you through  
And remove your volition surgically  
Until you are a slave; close the ears up tight-  
As long as words cannot penetrate, you are still safe for a time.

The thoughts are the worst, penetrating and invisible,  
A fine radiation undetectable at close quarters:  
The thoughts will carry the words past your closed ears  
Cuffing you to ideas not yours  
Instilling false memories of a false day-  
There is no effective shield against the thoughts  
Except great distance or impossible danger;  
If you are in danger, the psyche will protect itself  
Until you have removed the obstacle, or moved past it.

And try to never fall in love with any part of him:  
The smallest molecule can still imprison you.

Patti Masterman

# The Smoke Says Its Name

There's a humming above the rain  
Evil sinners plot against the land,  
Fly buzzing ghouls, adrift the spirit  
But above all, I remain a man.

Alas the wind had died  
So small beneath the mast,  
Alack, to the devil must go  
Sundry memories that pass.

So brilliant beneath the dreamscape,  
Quaking stares above the fire.  
Be watchful; the vision's going  
Smoking ruin inside the pyre.

Shift to intangible, across the water  
Without a backward glance;  
Shimmering pinpoints in the distance,  
That hollowed, ghostly dance.

Patti Masterman

# The Smooth Flowing Word

The smooth, flowing word  
Can easily gain admittance,  
While a strident word's ignored  
And a cruel one, partially gored:  
As the whisper, goes unheard.

Patti Masterman

# The Snow Finds The River

The snow finds the river- but it's hardened its heart,  
The sea finds the inlet, and its power must part,  
The lover finds boulders- his love to withhold;  
All things get tested, so we must be bold.

The sun kisses rivers, so the water goes free  
The inlets grow fatter, according to need,  
The lover moves burdens, so love can be strong-  
If love could move mountains, the world can't be wrong.

Patti Masterman

# The Song Of The Heartbeat

Heaven's close as a memory,  
Death's as far as the poles;  
Life's as long as your longest dream-  
And short as a springtime Rose.

Love's a phantom in the mist,  
Caught up in the hands of time,  
Understood as flesh understands,  
And seen by eyes of the blind.

Heaven's like one perfect day,  
That lasts an infinity long;  
And death's the last thing the body says:  
The end of the heartbeats song.

Patti Masterman

# The Song Too Makes Play Of Love

the song too makes play of love  
as poetry in verse underlines the morning

for perfect pitch days have been written in rhyme;  
more clear than the measure of sense and shine

happy because joy ought to celebrate the day  
with notes that the muse truly hears

Patti Masterman

# The Soul

The soul's a record keeper  
Each day, that we draw breath;  
It isn't far away,  
And it only leaves at death.

The soul's a handy helper,  
Not a widget on a wall:  
It files our bodies memories,  
And retains them; that is all.

We will no longer need it,  
When the present life is through-  
Don't worry; in the next life,  
A fresh one comes, with you.

Won't dissipate, like body,  
In the graveyard, so forlorn:  
When the body's job is finished,  
The hard drive gets reborn.

Patti Masterman

# The Soul In The Cells

I lost weight and lost a soul, a hidden capture  
Of my flesh, who shared my shadow's emptiness;  
Camouflaged inside my frame, and all my cells  
were His domain..

I lost time and memories, left them behind  
In some bad dream, though none could tell me  
What they mean; once upon a time,  
Still sane..

A spirit is a heavy thing, half of mist and half  
Of steam, the weight we carry without leaning;  
But when it's gone it leaves a feeling, all the  
New-shorn nerves sit reeling..

Patti Masterman

# The Soul Within The Man

The soul within the man  
Is rumored; never seen.  
The fading light of sun  
Is what the moon must bring.

A greater lamp's behind  
The pale-lit night time hours;  
It's but the fainter shining  
Of a greater power.

There is no separation,  
Except it be degree:  
The part is of the whole-  
But all that we can see.

Patti Masterman

# The Soul's The Memory Of Itself

The self's the mind, that moves with stealth;  
Of self, the soul is wholly wealth.  
The soul's not something on a shelf,  
The soul's the memory of itself.

Patti Masterman

# The Sovereign

The man behind the curtain

Wears a yellow shirt- not green-

And he says the bliss of knowing

Is an ocean, never seen.

The road's not yellow brick;

In fact resembles more a path

That meanders through a world

That is turning, like a lathe.

And consciousness is spinning

Like some magic on a screen,

And each man must learn the secret:

It's the price, of sovereign being.

Patti Masterman

# The Stalker Stalks

The stalker stalks  
Upon your stage, walks;  
Keeps his own thoughts,  
And never engage.

Saves all his rage;  
Hate pays his wage;  
Not the same page:  
Adds up his sums

While on the run,  
Until the day comes,  
His will be done:  
Takes your world away.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Are Having A Ball Tonight

The stars are having a ball tonight,  
Their gowns are red and blue and white;  
The males wear star-burst suits of light  
And cloaks made out of gamma ray.

The stars are going all out tonight,  
The velvet darkness mimics night,  
And speeding comets lead the way;  
Nothing was ever seen so bright.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Come Out To Play

The stars come out to play  
Just at the close of day,  
Hide and seek behind the curtain-  
With the moon, they'll soon be flirting.

Floating on an onyx sea,  
Capturing all eyes that seek  
First-come stars, to wish upon-  
Until another night is done.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Gaze Patiently

The stars gaze patiently  
When I tell them, it is your eyes  
They are trying to imitate  
In all their reflected fires  
When I whisper a secret  
It's in your words I say it  
You saturate every fabric  
With converse threads  
Of your most commonly rare being  
You made the world a worship  
Of all that's you  
In your disparate phenomenon  
So that your countenance  
Is ever visible  
In the faint highlight  
Of every other eye  
And every eye, a lover.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Look On The Past

The stars look out on the past  
Safe in their burning saddles;  
The starry night won't pass  
Far past the sprawling ladle.

The stars have diamond eyes  
And ray of gas icicles,  
That move through the changing skies,  
For time was always fickle.

The stars can't close their eyes,  
Though worlds are born or dying  
Beneath the blackest ice,  
With angel voices sighing.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Look So Right

the stars look so right  
but I'm a lonely place tonight:  
closed signs already gone up  
in the windows;  
ferris wheel swings randomly  
at each halfhearted gust of wind  
cotton candy has spun itself  
into some hardened clogs  
down in the machine  
even the waves have messed up-  
their synchronicity;  
coming at the wrong time  
breaking each others patterns up  
and if you tried to paint this  
the paint would run down,  
mixing into the ocean  
creating a flamboyant paisley mess.

i'd like to clear this canvas  
and start over again:  
paint all in shades of white,  
because only the sun  
has any color now-  
just before it plunges  
into the sea again.

and every time I think  
must be the last time, again-  
I always forget,  
and then I cry salty, acrylic tears  
to think that the sun is gone away  
forever- so many tears;  
of so many lovers,  
over so many years  
that I think the sea  
must once have been made  
entirely of tears;  
and though I have faith  
that the sea will never become

a stagnant thing,  
only grudgingly  
does it ever give up it's dead.

Patti Masterman

# The Stars Sing When You Are Quiet

The stars sing when you are quiet;  
Listening, listening for morning light,  
The stars sing when you are quiet,  
The song of morning, new and bright.

The stars gaze upon your eyes;  
Deliquescent, sea-blue lights,  
The stars gaze upon your eyes  
Heaven sighing at the sight.

Patti Masterman

# The Steak Tartare Had Painted Toenails

The steak tartare had painted toenails  
And manicured hands of polished silk;  
Mouth with apple, daintily wedged,  
Floating in a bath of milk.

I helped myself to a silky loin,  
Sliced across it's still-pink grain,  
Seasoned with a squirt of lemon  
And coarse ground pepper, for a tang.

The seasoned broth was the finest gravy  
To moisten the neat cuts of meat,  
And sweetened fat, in a frothy pie  
Ended the repast, with a treat.

Patti Masterman

# The Strange Wind That Knows Your Name

On the day she first realized she wasn't feeling well,  
It was as though things began to pass by faster and faster;  
The corridors moved by like lightning, as they wheeled her around  
The new white hospital for untold hours, that she could not  
Keep track of, and later her loved ones came-  
And that was when she realized  
How it felt just like when the wind is blowing by,  
And when the wind keeps picking up speed, all the time.

Many different faces appeared beside her  
Some for only seconds, like flashes, it seemed,  
And often were distorted and replaced  
By other faces, a sea of faces; and now and then  
There were white or green dressed hospital people,  
Sometimes speaking, but it grew impossible to discern what;  
And all of it moving, changing, like tumbling leaves  
Blowing before the storm,  
More and more quickly the surroundings were moving

Until she felt quite dizzy and breathless,  
And just wanted it all to stop, to slow down.  
But she also knew there was no stopping it  
Once it had begun, and as it hit full speed  
The world began to tilt up on its edge, so that she felt herself  
Beginning to slip sideways, almost as if  
She were beginning to fall off the world,  
And falling out of the only life she'd known  
These nearly ninety years.

It was all happening so fast  
There wasn't really any time to feel fear,  
As she felt herself literally picked up  
By some strangely gentle wind, that softly breathed her name,  
Somehow caressed and counted each syllable,  
Seemed to know every iota of her being,  
Both inside and out; and it was the same,  
She thought- the very same, as before she was born-

That same wind must have breathed her into her body,

And deposited her upon the birthing bed, where she came to be  
Among those who would learn to love her, and at that thought  
She was able to relax finally, and so flew faster than light then,  
To where there was no space or time to be recognized,  
Where she floated freely in a vast, smooth nothingness,  
Completely at peace, and she could not even remember  
Who she used to be, or had thought herself to be,  
Before the strange wind came to claim her.

Patti Masterman

# The Summoning Knife

I am false as the shadows, going to light,  
Eternal as leaves, flying in a strong wind,  
Sincere as the words, at the bottom of gin;  
Remorseful as fighters, who ended the fight.

I'm beautiful as sparks, falling quickly to earth,  
The stuff dreams are made of, that sparkle in vain;  
Quiet as the storm, when beginning to wane  
Grows lovely as baby-filled mother, in birth.

I'm here and I'm gone, like a footnote to life.  
I lived and I died, lost in a time-stream:  
Every moment had meaning, the one that I mean-  
Then sun cut the cord, like a summoning knife.

Patti Masterman

# The Sun Glares Through The Cracks

The sun glares through the cracks  
In the walls, and awakens me-  
Of gaps here, there is no lack;  
And after a few hours sleep  
The chill winds stealthy creep  
Through the same cracks; that I keep  
Stuffing with trash and cloth,  
Though nothing is ever enough  
My breath fogs and exits too,  
As if from a million flues  
It's impossible to keep warm  
And staying dry too, is an art  
I know that you see no harm  
In keeping me here, this way  
But I feel I'm beginning to rust  
While living from you, apart:  
Someday, I'll want more than just  
Squatter's rights, to your heart.

Patti Masterman

# The Sun In Splendor

The sun in splendor  
Gives off light,  
And she has not  
One fear for night.

By a candle's flame,  
I dipped my pen  
In day's cold light,  
To begin again.

The moon in purple  
Hides his face,  
His lacy silver  
The barest grace.

By a candle's flame,  
I dipped my pen  
In night's starred sky,  
To begin again.

The Earth in green  
And blue's, arrayed  
And far time, at her door  
Has lain.

By a candle's flame,  
I dipped my pen-  
But where time's going  
No man has been.

Patti Masterman

# The Sun Sings In You

All my life was waiting,  
All my days were just the same;  
But now the waiting's over;  
There's a light comes shining through:

The sun sings in you.  
The sun sings in you.

My heart was always weary,  
Missing something; knew not what.  
Now every dawn's a new one;  
Something true, inside the blue:

The sun sings in you.  
The sun sings in you.

Patti Masterman

# The Sundial Of Our Being

The pineal's the ovary of the brain  
Like the watch maker times the hours  
There in creations hidden cells  
It blooms like a timely flower

The pineal's the master of the night  
The guardian of dreams  
Sending sleep when the hour's right  
Down the body's flowing springs

The pineal's the pyramid in the skull  
The throne of a secret king  
Though buried long, he wakes again  
To the sundial of our being

Patti Masterman

# The Telepathy Of Time Travel

A boy in a bright blue hoodie  
stands on the shoulder of the freeway?  
apparently walking, though the cars  
pass by so quickly, he is only a blue blip  
of morse-coded flesh; not even a whole letter  
of stranded dna.

A still-life with backpack, headed who knows where,  
with eternity to get there. ?  
Almost gone before he's seen,  
a wrinkle of memory never made.

He passes for what's art  
on this bric-a-brac highway  
of floating food wrappers and broken lighters.  
What mourners left behind  
in the echoes, of his closing a door?  
What sighs of relief, in absence the paranoid paroxysms of delusion?  
Sometimes grief is really a circumspect joy  
on this telepathic road, of secrets through time.

Patti Masterman

# The Things That Time Has Stolen From Me

The things that time has stolen from me,  
A sad, long list of everything I loved;  
The very stuff, defined me in this life-  
In falling rivulets, perhaps still it moves..

Disappears, but to reappear elsewhere  
In other worlds, where other selves need it more  
In living other lives, that none could guess;  
It enters in secret, through other hidden doors..

Somewhere, in countless other worlds, now live  
Those things that here have gone from me,  
For time flows both forwards and backwards,  
And all of time in succession, gives..

Patti Masterman

# The Timescale Of Gradually Increasing Chaos Of Human Events

Before the Revolution:

The jewels sparkled at the Empress' throat  
The children were all tucked away in their beds  
The clock struck at the eleventh hour  
She walked down the darkened corridors in brocade slippers  
her dress made subdued swishing noises  
everything still and quiet

At the beginning of the Revolution:

The Empress had forgotten to wear her jeweled choker  
The children had forgotten to go to bed because nobody reminded them  
The clock forgot how to chime hours and instead chimed every quarter hour  
She stumbled as she walked unsteadily down the hall, in her stockings  
her dress was torn but she couldn't remember why  
outside were vague noises of raised voices and sometimes gunfire

In the midst of the Revolution:

The Empress could not find her jewelry cabinets  
The children had lost all their bedtime books and furniture and servants and pets  
The clock was burnt and smoking curiously  
She hobbled down the cold floors, barefooted  
her clothing was borrowed from someone long dead whose name she could not even recall anymore  
outside and inside were shouts and clamor, at all hours of both the day and night

Nearing the end of the Revolution:

The Empress could remember many things she had lost  
The children and other relatives were imprisoned together in another Palace, miles away  
The clocks and everything else of any value had been stolen months before  
She crawled on her knees, amazed at how long the passages had become because her dress and everything around her was on fire  
though there was incredible silence, because they were busy electing a new government, miles away

Patti Masterman

# The Tiniest

The tiniest supermodels  
wear jumpsuits, made of the cut apart fingers  
of gloves, with matching underwear  
the size of a single eye-patch;  
the thin, telescopically photogenic people  
seem to come equipped with matching, mite-sized imaginations  
that can't conceive of an ample waistline, an over-flowing bosom  
or even Grandmother's boundlessly comforting lap of childhood.

You can watch them daintily nibble on their carrot-tops  
with a side of a few acorns  
espousing their minute, restricted opinions  
with much hand waving and gesticulations  
to burn off a few extra units of food energy.

Why do spacious minds seem to occupy  
larger sized bodies; and of such generosity  
they'd cook you an entire vat of lasagna  
just to enjoy an unrestrained hour of your company;  
but I can feel myself slowly starving to death  
by the mouse sized nibbles of intellect, of the slender,  
with their caloric phobias; of inhaling even too much sun.

I can't accommodate their agoraphobic minds  
even within my own surplus cells;  
surely they secrete all their expansive thoughts  
inside a small clutch made of springiest spandex; so slimly invisible  
you can't see it inside their pocket at all,  
whenever they happen to turn sideways.

So painfully thin, they have no reflection anymore,  
and can no longer cast a shadow;  
they are only a rumor, circling around in the exhaust  
above a dry cleaner's shop;  
the eggless meringue, atop a wafer-thin slice  
of jellied water-  
watercress not allowed.

When they are cremated, there is no smoke

and no ashes left over; only a thin, black soot  
which reeks, ever so slightly  
of burnt chocolate bon-bons.

Patti Masterman

# The Tongue Lies But The Eyes Tell The Truth - Pantoum

The tongue lies but the eyes tell the truth;  
Never comes the day, that you could believe  
The odd flowers, all growing from one root:  
She says she'll stay, but anyway she leaves.

Never comes the day that you could believe  
How different plants grow, from the same-sown seed:  
She says she'll stay but anyway she leaves;  
Your heart says flower, but your mind says weed.

How different plants grow from the same-sown seed,  
In the bloodied pact you made, her blood was fake:  
Your heart says flower but your mind says weed;  
You know you still want her, though she makes you ache.

In the bloodied pact you made her blood was fake;  
There's no more trust, just the carcass of lust,  
You know you still want her though she makes you ache,  
She says she's yours, but her words are more rust.

There's no more trust just the carcass of lust;  
The odd flowers, all growing from one root  
She says she's yours but her words are more rust:  
The tongue lies, but the eyes tell the truth.

Patti Masterman

# The Totem Pole

On a sunlit desert day  
Like the other thousands of days  
Within the faceless sameness of mud-colored houses  
One indistinguishable from the next  
Which is considered upward mobility in this city between mountains  
She told me of the first family canine  
Smarter than the kids, he'd sit up  
Perfectly at attention, like a soldier  
In his own chair perhaps that very one-  
As she pointed with wavering finger-  
And better behaved too  
The next one was crafted with a duller finish  
Sort of a mnemonic clone,  
Albeit a different color  
He filled the mold well enough  
He had soul, but not muchchutzpah  
He slowly dwindled till just a patch of hair  
Remained on his kitchen seat of honor  
The last mutt she called orphan  
A single-parent dog  
Lurking beneath the dishwasher  
His random barking a fixture  
Behind the bottomless telephone conversings-  
Her maxim always that she could instantly replace him  
With another duplicate copy, exact matched cell for cell  
And true to pattern, like his step-mother  
He bit other people who did not sufficiently  
Impress; or whom he did not fear.

Patti Masterman

# The Toughest Nut

Once you crack the tough nut of the psyche-  
That buried, overripe tart fruit,  
Be prepared for much more to erupt  
Than a single nut casing could ever contain;  
For the psyche resembles a bubble universe  
Formed under extreme stress of impossible pressures  
Existing only for a limited duration  
Before being reabsorbed  
By the greater surrounding ocean.

It can admit or deny any truth it's confronted with  
Can people itself with primordial monsters  
Or amazing miracles that don't touch the ground at all  
But nothing of it can live forever or live again  
It is a selection for the life inhabiting it  
In the time frame of that life's course.

That environment nourishes only a single mind  
Which roves at whim between different levels:  
Sailing between the highest subtle strata of infinite substance  
And the abasement of utmost corruption and degradation  
It mirrors perfectly what we have made of our ourselves on the inside  
In the Russian-doll structure that matter is wont to adhere to.

Patti Masterman

# The Tree At The Window

The tree at the window  
Put its branches inside,  
Trying to touch me-  
Its heart open wide.

The tree at the window,  
All summer gave shade,  
Made my room a retreat;  
A green shadowed glade.

The tree at the window  
Shared its life with me-  
And just a few birds  
Who came, briefly.

Patti Masterman

# The Trees Were Talking Fall Today

The trees were talking Fall today;  
I heard the Fall sound their leaves made,  
They were dreaming of shorter days,  
Cool and breezy, while Summer fades.

The trees were talking Fall today,  
As I stood in a Willow's fitful shade,  
And I heard the wind sift through the leaves,  
And I heard its voice softly breathe.

The trees were talking Fall today;  
How these long days are hard to take,  
But change is in the air, they say,  
When vibrant Summer goes her way.

Patti Masterman

# The Truth Will Set You Free

The truth will set you free  
But first, will cuff you to the past,  
Bring back those painful memories  
Don't fear; this pain won't last.

The truth will loose your spirit,  
When the past with you is done;  
And create a brand new template,  
When the new day is begun.

Patti Masterman

# The Twist

Inside us lives a singularity  
We may regard with some hilarity,  
Thinking it odd, that nature would give  
A highly specialized soul, to live;  
But only once, that's the gist of it-  
Now here, now gone-  
That's the twist of it.

Patti Masterman

# The United States Of Meth

I pledge allegiance  
For which it stands  
For meth owns the pharmacies  
And chemistry labs.

Meth owns the hearts  
And the minds of them,  
Who alter consciousness to do  
The drug choice of an era;  
Next year, it might be dirt?

And then the judges will catapult  
The people to space,  
From off the earth,  
To keep all the populace,  
From their craving.

It will be thought quite a success,  
To send the druggies,  
Up into heaven-

But drugs would soon loose all appeal  
If we would clean this mess, down here..

Patti Masterman

# The Universe Has Rhythms

The universe has rhythms  
To rock itself to sleep;  
Praying Jews at nightfall,  
In front of stony walls;  
A slow-circling hawk  
By a fortress deep,  
And a dozing child  
Where a woman weeps.

The universe has secrets  
It touch with guilty hands;  
Buried unmarked grave,  
Of one who was not saved;  
A war to break at morning,  
When death will have his day,  
Words of peace on dying lips  
They can never say.

Patti Masterman

# The Unquiet Stars

The unquiet stars  
Compel us to existence, by falling  
Into future meaningless spaces.

We listen to rising drums  
In the red-shifted darkness,  
Ascending mutations  
Arcing over the thoroughfares.

The moon flies past miles of orderly houses,  
Leaving bird-of-prey shaped clouds,  
While smooth-faced galaxies cluster  
Like glowing mitochondria  
Between the blind glass of slides.

In later decades, the blue opened up  
And swallowed all the wise meaning  
With which mankind had endowed the world.

Patti Masterman

# The Unwaking Sleep

a deep arcing spirit,  
forgetting of sleep;  
there's no need to fear it,  
these secrets I keep.

I keep growing silence  
like wings in the dark,  
anticipate violence  
in each burning spark.

we all love to say  
how we'll never forget  
the shrinking of days  
on this long endless trip.

the body grows old  
like a child grows to size;  
but limbs going backward-  
and stars leave the eyes.

reversing the birth,  
we go down in the grave;  
forget all the mirth,  
we know no one was saved.

we're all living, dying  
like ghosts on the wane,  
wear flesh for a short while,  
let happiness reign.

then return to the dust  
we shook off our feet,  
and leave- for we must-  
for that unwaking sleep.

Patti Masterman

# The Usual Suspects

what moves outside of time-  
what moves in a clear sky,  
that makes us move?

what's time to a beating heart,  
what's time to those who cry-  
that moves us

what moves a heart;  
what cries for lost time,  
that moves among us-

as always,  
there is only the wind,  
in answer

Patti Masterman

# The Velocity Of Love

The velocity of love  
Is straight, as starlight flies  
From the breath of dying embers,  
From the whispers of a sigh.

Creation's incantation  
Of mind, into the ether,  
Is blessing; curse divine,  
Upon this life's thin tether.

Far flung fields of quasars  
Transmute the code of being,  
And change to nascent light  
The inborn soul we're breathing.

Patti Masterman

# The Venom Of God

Lion-faced warrior, fresh from Mars:  
Accuser, seducer, destroyer of worlds  
Soulless, they called the offspring of Sophia-  
But never you; of the diamond, ruby, and jasper encircled  
Five-pointed, blood red star  
High on belladonna, and drunk on poppy  
Spotting the moon with your own brand of corruption  
Wrapping them up in leather and chains  
Probing with your white hot, wolfish intelligence  
Fire your element, O costumed angel of apocalyptic doomsday  
Wearing the animal form with saturnine confidence  
Solitary ways; your real religion.  
I copied your picture to dissect out the eyes  
I was searching there for something, but for what?  
Such elegant windows, of a different colored soul  
They look so young; yet there's a wary predator,  
Lurking in the background behind your image  
Such an arresting mixture of irreverence and warmth  
I think you must be a misplaced Knight  
Tossed into the post-chivalrous world  
And you would rip your own self apart  
Being that you are the true instigator,  
Heretic, and rebel, against the deadly boredom  
Killing your countrymen, by a slow, lengthy exsanguination-  
I know that you would prefer a more violent death,  
A quicker one, than the inconsequential rot  
That steals days away, one by one.  
What is that amulet you wear-  
Somehow it seems to be the key;  
The not so hidden answer, to the cryptogram that's you.  
You've been fighting on more than one side, you know:  
You're too bright to see only one side of truth;  
Holding on to that driving force which is distinctive  
To each man alone, and which belongs solely to him.  
It must be tiresome at times, still hoisting that banner;  
Setting yourself against the unquestioned totems of authority  
But then, you never needed a red and blue superhero suit  
To accomplish your particular brand of magic, anyway.



# The Virus Of Language

Pandemic proliferating prose  
Obnoxious onomatopoeic oxymoron  
Endemic encephalic excitations  
Monotonous multipartite metastasis

Patti Masterman

# The Vision Of A Moment Flowers

The vision of a moment flowers,  
Where desire has once been tamed.  
But the single darkness, of an hour,  
Can bury a thought's rare name.

Life stakes a claim, upon the sun;  
Should the heart's pale shroud detach:  
All the dead of the battles both lost and won  
Can't open a single latch.

Barter not, with the shadow of time;  
Only he has seen your fate;  
And whisper not prayers, not even to wind  
Till your hand's upon the gate.

Of great power, a door's often born  
To open; overcome, all fears:  
As the soul is shorn, of her lowly veil,  
The lord of the kingdom disappears.

A foe will vanquish from all around,  
And surround, with an intent sinister;  
And lackeys in jealousy, will always abound-  
But a friend conquers, from the center.

Patti Masterman

# The Vow

A father and daughter went up to bed  
Where he to her some stories read.  
She said, 'Oh Father, please tell me true-  
Will death not come, for me and you? '

Her father stuttered and rubbed his eyes  
Then looked above for reason why  
She should look for such an answer-  
And how the truth, he must not ransom.

'Oh Sweet of mine, why do you ask;  
For we're of flesh, ours is the task  
To stay alive, long as we can-  
For death comes once, to every man.'

And then she wept, and broke his heart,  
'You mean that you and I must part-  
Someday, when life has gone away;  
Then you will go- but I must stay? '

Thus saying, she broke his heart anew  
(Though he must give answers true)  
'Yes, or you'd leave first, then me-  
Or both at once- however God sees it.'

She thought a while, as tears ran down  
Her skinny shoulders toward the ground.  
With shaking grief, she gripped him so,  
Then proclaimed, 'I'd never let you go.'

And then she slept, with fitful sobs,  
Dreaming how of death, she'd rob.  
She grew so fast, they soon forgot  
The night they sorrowed answers, got.

He died much later; thirty years;  
They found him still in bed, but there  
A hand around him, locked and fast:  
His daughter gone with him, at last.

Patti Masterman

# The Vulture

The vulture that is me  
Broods condescendingly  
Over each praising word, that come;  
Or lack of same; the selfish turds!  
No harpoon could ever reach me  
Up here in this tree; impeach me.  
Though I may smell bad, now this is true,  
My dinner's not the same as you;  
Live on carrion, not table fare  
And in my grub, might find some hair.  
Can take to air, to fly with speed:  
Because my gullet-soul's pure greed.

Patti Masterman

# The Wanderer

The wanderer that's genius thrives  
On distance, and far away longing:  
Eyes well focused, but visible miles  
Between sublimed, and sublimer.  
Too much intimacy weighs down it's fragile  
Flutterby self, with too much baggage;  
Heavily then, it falls to ground  
Impeded by human emotion's folly  
Which wants to own, or at least direct  
That beam, of the conscious missile.  
It can bear no chains; and so it returns  
To sleep, in it's own overflowing wells of being.  
No amount of coaxing can exhort it's return  
Until a lithesome wind comes; arouses it again,  
Beckons it's delicate paper-mached wings:  
And so it begins to rise then,  
Like just the barest breath of an incantation,  
More believed in, than spoken aloud;  
And it begins to circle slowly around that  
Which is yet beyond imagination's reach,  
But which might be born, at some unclocked hour  
In a yet nameless city, of tomorrow.

Patti Masterman

# The Water Of Raptures

The water of raptures,  
The deepness of rage,  
The furious capture-  
And opening cage.

The thwarted persona,  
Unwarranted age;  
Some dark melodramas  
War of umbrage.

Patti Masterman

# The Ways Of Old Houses

The ways of old houses,  
Perceived as less modern,  
Sprouting fashionable weeds  
Somewhere light's beholden.

Between the stark walls,  
There break forth jealous limbs,  
And the fractured glass scatters,  
From the trees causal whim.

Patti Masterman

# The Well Of Stars

The well of stars  
Is a living stream;  
Who drinks of stars  
Has time to dream,

Who dreams in time  
Leaves an opening,  
Where streams of time  
Dreams are brokering.

Patti Masterman

# The Whippoorwill - Pantoum

The Whippoorwill has secrets, in the wood,  
But none that he can keep;  
Should I tell him a secret, if I could-  
As he flits from tree to tree?

For there's none that he could keep-  
Though all men were in their bed,  
As he flits from tree to tree  
Hearing whispers, in his head.

Though all men were in their bed,  
It echoes through the night;  
And there's whispers in his head,  
While every star shines bright.

Though it echo through the night,  
Should I tell him a secret, if I could,  
While every star shines bright-  
The Whippoorwill has secrets in the wood.

Patti Masterman

# The Whole World Sleeps In Rust

The whole world sleeps in rust;  
Flaking layers off the top,  
The new pushing through the bottom,  
The ones above just wearing off.

Rust-sicles in our eyes,  
Weary circling red fatigue,  
Scrambling- ever tighter holding-  
Scared what's left, if we must leave.

Patti Masterman

# The Whole World's Blood

the whole world's blood  
is now on my sticky palms;  
the traces of powder residue  
in the ridges of my fingerprints  
and my soiled shoes track the forensic contours

the dust of the earth's evidence  
waits for excavation  
under my fingernails; together with  
stray hairs and particles, from our encounters  
which form the bulk of the record

savvy investigations may reveal certain habits  
in between the hours of daylight and dark  
especially given the distinct star like formations  
of the downward pattern of blood spatter-  
barring standard deviation from the clustered norm

we were all coated with Luminol at birth  
and have been trailing circumstantial evidence  
throughout our days; with each breath,  
our bloody shoe prints gradually covering the planet  
until our long delayed executions finally arrive

our remains to be sealed into crypts  
where they shall wait, until such time  
that further possible scientific advances  
could allow for deeper analysis  
of all pertinent known and alleged crimes..

Patti Masterman

# The Wind

The wind roared across the eaves  
and down into the yard  
to deliver his message:  
many leaves will be coming soon  
they are no longer needed by the trees;  
and true to his words  
a few leaves were already arriving  
breathlessly  
even then.

Patti Masterman

# The Wind Calls No One By Their Name

The wind calls no one by their name-  
But howls and howls, before it wane.  
Awakens at the dark of moon,  
Circling mountains in the gloom,  
Whistling high it's sovereign song-  
That no one's on earth for long.

The wind has syllables unknown,  
And for millenia has blown  
Its keening cry, out on the plains,  
Its fearsome dirge, that sounds like pain-  
If you would learn the ways of wind,  
All your days on earth would end.

The wind's capricious and alone,  
And of true loneliness, it moans;  
It knows no warmth of company,  
But bland caresses of the trees.  
The wind could take you far away-  
To where no words could ever say.

Patti Masterman

# The Wind Is Air Personified

Who sings in the curtains,  
by the window panes,  
Who sings in the clouds,  
pushing the rain,  
Who sings in the yonder-  
then comes close again,  
Who sings in the night,  
and at dawn, so faint?

Who sings in the mill blades,  
turning and turning,  
Who whispers the laundry,  
gently yearning,  
Who sings in the springtime,  
when the flowers are darning,  
Who sings round the fire,  
when the leaves are burning?

Who sings in the storm  
and splashes the tides,  
Who lives in the air  
and on high kites rides,  
Who kicks up the dust  
and throws it to sky?  
It's only the wind:  
air personified.

Patti Masterman

# The Wind Was Whispering Secrets

The wind was whispering secrets  
The trees were loath to tell,  
So they wrapped them with their blossoms,  
And left them where they fell.

The wind was making dust clouds  
That were covering up the sky,  
And soon the sun was laughing-  
To see how they flew by.

The wind was teasing children  
And taking kites away;  
So they tied them to the gate-post-  
And there they had to stay.

Patti Masterman

# The Wisdom Of Spiders

As the world whirls by  
It uncovers the sky  
As they speak your name  
You learn to feel shame.

As a bobbing kite  
Is born for flight  
A whirlwinds path  
Soon turns to wrath.

And a dollar earned is a dollar spent  
The hoarded coin is often lent  
As the moon rises it begins to ebb  
And spiders die right in the web.

Patti Masterman

# The Woman Who Spins The World

In a secret far-away room, a woman spins the world  
Above the stars and galaxies, off in another realm,  
She spins the matter and the space,  
She spins unraveled time,  
And turns the work around and round  
And spins it, to a rhyme.

Patti Masterman

# The World

The world is only a giant room  
We've been allowed to wander in,  
While finding mysterious treasure there,  
And secrets, too gargantuan.

To hold inside, and so we paint  
And write and sculpt, and even sing  
Of all the things seen in the room,  
Once taken into our inner being.

We've filled ourselves up with the world;  
Enough to last for a billion years,  
Filled up till the very last breath-  
And borne out then, on beauty's tears.

Patti Masterman

# The World Eclectic

Time slows when I'm writing,  
The clocks slow down their flight.  
It's a world of wrongs I'm righting,  
For those too weak to fight.

Space grows when I'm thinking  
Of the tricks to get inside;  
Though Titanic may be sinking,  
I can sneak on one last ride.

Death suspends for a little while  
His cold and bottomless touch,  
And in the end I may see a smile  
Again, that I missed so much.

The world blooms with a promise  
That was made so long ago,  
And to which we all pay homage:  
That thought makes the universe go

It only took one fertile thought,  
Brimming with possibility,  
From which an entire world was got-  
Beyond incredibility.

If you thought for a million years,  
Your thought could not come close,  
To the pregnant thought that birthed us all,  
From some indefinable host.

Try to imagine the depth of mind  
Could create, with only will,  
And you will find there, your own kind  
With the power to create, still.

Creation is a holy thing,  
Sometimes left to myths and gods;  
But it's the hallmark of a man,  
Made up of sweat and sod.

We are the little universe,  
Creates from deep inside,  
A microcosm of the whole  
Eclectic, far and wide.

No one knows from where we draw  
The visions, that we hold;  
No one knows the father  
That we came from, bright and bold.

No one believes in magic,  
In this ancient, jaded place:  
But the real creators see it-  
In the newborn baby's face.

Just allow your gaze rest there,  
If only for a while,  
And soon enough you'll see it-  
Direct from god- a smile.

Patti Masterman

# The World Has A Soul

The world has a soul  
To which we pay toll;  
Shoes have a tongue  
Suppers get sung  
Clothes get hung  
Truth gets wrung  
Hair has a part  
Artichokes, a heart  
Nails have a bed  
Pins have a head  
Tape gets fed  
Thoughts can be wed  
Money is mint  
Coins get lent  
Heaven is sent  
Minds get bent  
Flames have fingers  
Doubts can linger  
Love be thwarted  
Actions aborted  
A writer gets block  
Dogs can talk  
Rumors can fly  
Binds can tie  
Type can be bold  
Trust can be sold  
Businesses fold  
Victims get rolled  
Eyes can beg  
Character gets pegged  
Love comes in dregs  
Or on it's last legs  
We can lose sight  
We can look a fright  
Lies can be white  
Friends can be tight  
Clothing gets dyed  
Heat has a bite  
Luck can be rotten

Truth can be cottoned  
Misdeeds verboten  
Babies begotten  
Beams can search  
A name be besmirched  
Faces can fall  
A heart can call  
A wind can stall  
A mind be small  
Tales can be tall  
Time can crawl  
A plan hit a wall  
Belts have eyes  
Words can tell lies  
Stories get told  
Cases grow old  
Hope lives long-  
Or gets sold for a song.

Patti Masterman

# The World Has All Of Faith It Needs

Bought by battle, brought by wind  
Twist the word that turns the sin;  
Give to each it's honest sweat  
And hale thee well, truth never met.

Border clashes, broken cries,  
Furrowed brow and blatant sighs  
Fecund martyr of the soil  
Deep in fateful wars you toil.

More bitter pills were never swallowed  
Than the treacherous hell that follows,  
So die by sword or die by creed-  
The world has all of faith it needs.

Patti Masterman

# The World Is Full Of Children

The world is full of children, young and old  
Wandering wonderers, perhaps come from afar  
Of ageless curiosity, always sharp and bold-  
Burning minds; the offspring of some star.

Inquiring minds there are, that want to know  
From whence we sprang, within the cosmic hold,  
And further want to know, where we might go-  
Now larger spheres, enfold the ones of old?

Patti Masterman

# The World Is Made Out Of Nothing Real

The world is made out of nothing real,  
Just acres and oceans, of what we feel,  
And whirling galaxies, of airy spaces;  
Whole worlds between particles, and our faces.

This world is milk, from the tears of a god  
So lonely, he made a creation from thought;  
Tired of the solitary way he trod,  
Halfway between real and unreal, he wrought.

It started out, one instant of time,  
Everything in the same spot; divine,  
So now my soul's in you, and your's in me;  
Find yourself in the other, that's ecstasy.

Patti Masterman

# The World Is More Than The Sum Of It's Parts

The world is more than the sum of it's parts;  
Things so unequal, it must be an art,  
For nothing's predictable as it might seem,  
From the hour of our birth to the death of our dream.

In real life Cinderella can win the prince,  
No matter how unlikely the size of her prints:  
If the quantum shoe fits the strange facts of the case,  
We can acquit and find there no disgrace.

The sole home of Ripley and Guinness and Freud;  
Guilt not allayed and surprise unalloyed-  
No use to bother with syntax or diction;  
In this world, truth is much larger than fiction.

Patti Masterman

# The World Is Not A Dream

The world is not a dream-  
Things are not as specious as they seem.

You and I are real, more real than misty clouds;  
More substantive than darkness thunder steals,

More dense than roiling waves that plunder,  
More lasting than a faint mirage-  
Or lie, that liar's heart assuage.

And tomorrow, if we now should die-  
Our corpse more solid, than the potter's sigh

And though we won't recall, that once we lived,  
Still some may miss the comforts that we give.

Patti Masterman

# The World Of Our Choosing

The world of our choosing surrounds us;  
The objects familiar, and those  
Others we picked, to amuse us-  
Who've now grown uncomfortably close.

The world as we would, we were given  
And we colored it, just as we will;  
The minutes unfold, and we're living  
In a small world become very real.

The world may be lacking in graces,  
And its poetry all turn to prose;  
You can never lament of its stasis  
Or what, from your choices, arose.

Patti Masterman

# The World That Owns Your Talents

The world that owns your talents,  
The world that owns your breath-  
The world will not make up its mind,  
Till you have tasted death.

The world will hold your body,  
The world cradle your bones;  
The world which offers nothing  
Might give your words a home.

Patti Masterman

# The World Was Never Fickle

I can't forgive her for stealing your poetry from us,  
the ones you didn't live long enough to write.  
Never mind that she stole your husband, your happiness  
and peace of mind, which nobody is promised.  
But she stole your last flourish, pen in hand,  
Your wise or whimsical dying utterance.  
She made your death seem soulless, abstract, mechanical.

You were too astute not to notice things, love has that way about it;  
No doubt you knew him better, than he knew himself,  
But that didn't make it easier. The bed you left her wasn't good  
For easy sleeping. I wish I could say that I never stole anything.  
She must have stood over your grave cursing self  
Life, stupidity, youth, and in the end she was even unkind enough  
To take her own child with her. Perhaps she thought it would suffer  
The same pangs of friendlessness, being made outcast.

She chose the same way out, but did it with less class.  
He would always survive and move on, perhaps less whole each time,  
But still full of his intact sense of self, which his women did not seem to have.  
You had everything and lost most of it,  
While she had nothing left to lose, yet gave it all up freely.  
I doubt you are friends now; the grave is a long and lonely sentence.  
I hope the grass and flowers hide your wounds now.  
I guess you know he wasn't worth it. No man who would counterfeit love is.  
And the world was never fickle, where you were concerned.

Patti Masterman

# Then A Miracle Occurs

Every instant a new miracle occurs:  
The sunlight takes eight minutes to arrive,  
Melting the straggling moonbeams at the edge of daybreak,  
Replacing them with dazzling many-coloured waves.  
In perfect choreography the grammar of creation  
Sways, shimmering, and spirals with intricate revolvings;  
In bird flight, in clouds, in gnats, in star swarms~  
Nothing is sterile; nothing is salutary;  
The subtle, invisible template keeps  
The dark ocean inviolate, true to it's own time.

Patti Masterman

# Then From The Dust Of The Ground

There's too much history hidden inside Earth  
Too many chronicles of mythical changes  
Personal tales of lost existences  
Everything here seems to matter so much,  
Only to disappear, drop away, like a boulder  
At the edge of a cliff: a little more weathering  
And it's gone, as if it were never there at all,  
No matter how many millenia it perched.  
Spectral memories haunt the lands contours  
Every spot a secret grave, unmarked on maps  
And the levels from the different ages and epochs  
Stacked on top of stack, an airless underworld  
Lying beneath; the bone pile  
Iron skeleton of our decedents.  
Our blood filled with gifts from the core of suns  
And the saliva of oceans, we sing  
For only a moment, till the elements are returned again.  
You can never own anything in this world  
However much you think you have sunk roots in it  
Staked claim and fences upon it  
Nourished generations of forbears in the same spot-  
The sun blinks, or the sea belches; and it's gone again  
A puff of greasy smoke vanishing over the trees  
One more invisible shadow that means nothing now  
Never remembered or long celebrated  
A song lost to the centuries, like the others before it:  
Wearing bodies made of clay, we erect invincible religions  
To help forget us the futility.

Patti Masterman

# There Are Always Play Things

There are always play things out in the yard  
So you never need to stay bored for too long;  
On the grayest, most somber day of the year,  
There's spider web kites you can fly, for a song  
And dandelion sparklers, to light up the air.  
There's butterfly wings, made of stained glass;  
Red berries, that the fairies must have left there  
There's helicopter leaves, that fly on fall winds-  
The Silver Maple always sets them to sail,  
And tumbleweeds tumble, from wherever they're sent  
And fat spreading mushrooms; from heaven that fell;  
The mushrooms inverted can float the lagoon  
Till they get caught on the half rotten log;  
And a fat frog will sing there, his only known tune  
And share with you, his admiring bog.

(with apologies to Emily Dickinson, for the use of her wonderful phrase)

Patti Masterman

# There Are Games To Die For

There are games to die for,  
Played only in our minds;  
A million weapons come our way-  
Will we fall or save the day?

We've been training just for this  
Throughout our entire lives;  
The tension mounts, the time runs out,  
Who holds the key- and is it free?

Did we sell our souls to win;  
Will any be left to cheer us?  
Or will they jeer us, once they know  
We sold them out long years ago?

Patti Masterman

# There Are Lots Of Words

There are lots of words; there are lots of days  
But the word she yearns, he will not say  
To pay their dues the crowds pass by  
But behind his mouth live only lies  
She veil her eyes, she close her mind  
So that desire won't make her blind  
For free will has, and free will can  
Do things to the unfast heart of man.

If she be not of worth to him  
She can't face the night again  
Her courage fails her in the void  
To think he may have only toyed  
Until his loved had turned to scorn  
And now she thinks her heart be torn  
She has no pride, she has no guile  
Her heart has always been a child.

She'd rather die than live without  
A sign of what life was about  
No thing is dear to her today  
She'd like to give her soul away  
And then live naked, wild and free  
Where no pain is bound to be  
She hopes he'll think of her some time  
And know for love, she stayed behind.

Patti Masterman

# There Are Places

There are places it's not safe to go;  
There are lovers, who don't really love,  
Whose heart's lie buried, beneath the snow  
Much farther; farther than your soul.

There are places it's not safe to go;  
Where thieves would wait for you, just to steal  
The moon's cool shadow, where it glows-  
But till they die, can't ever feel.

There are places not safe to go  
And secret storms, in dead of night;  
And people who lie, and never show  
Their face, in day's revealing light.

Patti Masterman

# There Are Some Rooms From Childhood

There are some rooms from childhood  
That I still freely roam;  
Though to some, the doors are locked-  
And they are not quite whole.

And some find freedom in the world,  
And some are prisoned, in it-  
And some escape it's dreadful lock  
To where, they first begin it.

Patti Masterman

# There Is A House Inside The Heart

There is a house inside the heart  
Where lovers wait; no guile, no art,  
No time passing, inside their room,  
While at the window, looks in the moon;  
Looks in and sighs at what he sees:  
Twin tears of loneliness, and grief.

Inside there are lovely portraits in gilt,  
And burning candles, and a singer's lilt;  
Singing old love songs, to pass the time,  
Pausing to write a sonnet or rhyme,  
And incense and flowers, which waft their scents-  
But of the beloved, there is not one hint.

Just before dawn, and the curtain's rent,  
And up from below, a hoarse cry sent,  
Though the candles now are but gobs of wax,  
And the songs gone quiet, the flowers bent;  
Yet on the stairs, there's the lightest step-  
And then two bodies together, pressed..

Patti Masterman

# There Is A Kind Of Distant Music

There is a kind of distant music,  
Sometimes rings throughout one's being;  
As if the moon had found it's voice,  
As if the stars begun to sing.

There is a humming, supernatural  
That surrounds with floating notes;  
As if the angel's joy contagious  
Found it's way, to angel's throats.

Patti Masterman

# There Is A Room

There is a room seems dead  
When children spread their wings-  
But leave faint laughter; funny things,  
Impressions in the bed..

Here, where they laid their head  
There, where once a crayon drew  
On white walls, a random shrew;  
You'll see the barest threads..

The grown up kills that child  
Breathed through him, all those years  
Through smiles and many tears  
And now is tamed, the wild..

Your heart's own scars decree  
A piece has gone away-  
Some other, farther day-  
What was, can never be.

Patti Masterman

# There Is Another Window

There is another window  
Where the best of life is found  
It's not in any building  
It's not beneath the ground

It's fellows are not breathing  
It's hands are quiet and still  
There is another window  
Left only what is real

What lives on there is solid  
Like love and grace won't die  
It's memory not forgotten  
Emotion keen to fly

It wakens in each infant  
Desires fresh from the past  
Keeps mankind marching forward  
To thwart ionoclasts

We do not bury value  
In graves, like worthless soil  
But resurrect each lifetime  
To make the price worthwhile

Patti Masterman

# There Is Music

There is music found in poetry  
Music read, but still it's heard  
In such a far away country,  
This music of the spoken word.

We're all nearly mute until  
It starts to speak it's name,  
Our senses know it as more real  
Than real, a sound we cannot tame.

Speak through me, song of the ages,  
Sing out your heart, soaring through heaven,  
For the poets be rare seers and mages,  
The bread of their word never leavened.

Patti Masterman

# There Is Only One I Loved

In calm waves of imaginings I am mermaid,  
Always chasing you through the towering tides,  
Disappearing between each scalloped crest;  
Only my tail visible, sticking out at odd angles.

I have lean, strong swimmer's muscles; I can swim for miles,  
Nearly keep up with submarines, ships, ferry's,  
For a limited time. My hair tumbles down  
As though a nest, like dirty, twisted seaweed  
Around my face's shipwreck-glass eyes  
And sunscald lips.

I follow keenly the scent;  
Something, someone who's precious- human scent,  
Pungent, earthy, vivifyingly attractive,  
Counterpoint to the ocean's ambergris.

Meanwhile there's only horizons of teal water all around me,  
And roving sky above; my sole company most days.  
I swim with just the barest hint  
Of whispered memories,  
Something so far and long ago;  
He who knew well the secret heart of me,  
Within my fishy innards  
And in spite of my appearance.

Sometimes a stray dolphin befriends me,  
And travels for a distance beside me;  
Speaking in strange, native high-pitched dolphin talk;  
And dolphins are interesting, but they are not men,  
And they can't comprehend what is it I follow

In the blind, long-aching of unknown distance,  
Or what I pine for nightly, in my roiling watery soul  
In the solitary caves, of this twilight world.

Patti Masterman

## There's A Fire - Retourne

There's a fire burning in my soul,  
There's a place I never could go;  
There's a sight, I never could see:  
Some other place, where she sleeps free.

There's a place I never could go,  
Where trees sway, and tall grass grows;  
There's a stone, beside a chapel,  
And a hook, I could not grapple.

There's a sight, I never could see  
Where she went, when she had to leave;  
Under heaven, she now lies still:  
She left; and it a bitter pill.

Some other place, where she sleeps free;  
Skies are blue, over such tall trees,  
One tree shelters her, from the storm-  
And my dead heart, within her form.

Patti Masterman

# There's A Fire In My Veins- But It's Not Love

There's a fire in my veins- but it's not love.  
There's sweat on my brow- but not from danger;  
There's fire in my veins,  
And I'm feeling quite insane-  
Think I'm turning into a stranger.

There's a fire in my veins- but it's not love.  
There's a flush on my face, but not from ire;  
There's a fire all the same,  
Like the cooling has waned-  
Think I'll be my own funeral pyre?

There's a fire in my veins- but it's not love.  
There's some sweat running down for no reason;  
I'm sure it would be treason,  
If I said this thing was easin'-  
Think womanhood is just out of season?

Patti Masterman

# There's A Statue Inside Of Us

There's a statue inside of me  
Weeps alabaster tears;  
Sobs deeply in malachite  
The forgotten years.

There's a dandelion muffler  
And pale lichen mittens,  
The eyes aimed at heaven  
In travertine stitches.

A grey granite gown sways  
On earth's trembling flanks;  
Though hands are upraised,  
Expression's are blank.

There's a statue inside of us  
Built by those we don't know,  
And we're screaming inside  
While the silence just grows.

We'd pray for a stray bolt  
Of lightning, to break it-  
But we've been there so long,  
We're afraid we can't take it.

Our feet sinking in  
Till it's up to our lips-  
Then we're hailed as the ancient  
Proofs, of some myths.

Patti Masterman

# There's An Alligator In The Petunias

There's an alligator in the Petunias-  
No wait- and I'll try to explain;  
I think he came in through the gate,  
Left open, once again.

Yes, there's an alligator in the Petunias,  
And he's not in a very good mood-  
Though do you think it's the nature  
Of most alligators, to brood?

He was nibbling at the flowers,  
But I think they disagreed-  
No; not that an alligator ate them-  
They didn't seem his natural feed.

There's an alligator in the Petunias;  
And we might have to call someone-  
Oh wait- I saw his tail going by,  
And now I think he's generally gone.

Yes I'm sure that it was a gator,  
Which you know, is another reptile;  
And though I'm no cold-blooded expert-  
I'm certain he was not without guile-

Because- I heard him most plainly,  
As he was heading back toward the zoo;  
He said, 'It's not easy to find forage-  
Just try to walk a mile in MY shoes..'

Patti Masterman

# There's An Old Woman Slowly Eats Me Alive

There's an old woman, slowly eats me alive,  
From head to foot; methodically imbibes the firm flesh of my youth;  
My cheeks apples; breasts, buttocks,  
Overcoming their natural tension, by her teeth's tensile pull;  
Her toxic saliva tinting my fingernails yellow, and thickening them  
Like an overcooked gravy, in the unyielding skillet of her intention,  
Her continuous cooking fires smoking my hair, the same color as soot and ashes.  
My hands beginning to shake too, with the palsy, of her unholy desires  
That every day be her mealtime again, and that she gets to begin all over again  
This daily eating of my flesh, like her own privately observed communion,  
Which will continue unabated, until she reaches the inner sanctum  
Of my plenum, and parts there the ruby curtains.

Revealed then is that holy grail of my being, palpitating there;  
Veins still smooth, uncollapsed, pink and healthy;  
And with just a simple touch of her withered hand, it becomes  
Another rotten apple, just like all the ones before it,  
In a sort of imitation, of the witch bestowing the poisoned apple,  
To the princess of the realm, who is still unrecognized, and in hiding;  
Almost as if it were the same apple offered to Eve,  
That has been secreted also, inside our bodies,  
Like a time bomb waiting there, until the garden should arrive  
At it's winter season; and the fruit, so long over ripe since the harvest,  
Begins to cave in, with inner liquefaction;  
The face to sag, and the mouth to hang open,  
The eyes losing their focus; the ears, their hearing.

Because all of the knowing contained of the apple  
Was in the end only death; it's only inheritance,  
For death was the one thing lacking, in that first Garden,  
And because we are all of us, her children  
Descending from that first sin and falling out,  
So that even now, we all look alike, shortly before death;  
All we siblings, of Eve's children, with the sunken apples in our cheeks,  
As it is the very core of our being; that is rotting from the inside out,  
And it is bitter- very bitter indeed, to watch our body's last fruit go to waste.

Patti Masterman

# There's Magic In The Air - Pantoum

There's magic in the air  
When Cinderella dreams;  
Glass slippers may appear,  
As odd as it may seem.

When Cinderella dreams  
Of jaunty men on horses;  
As odd as it may seem  
For magic reigns, of courses

Of jaunty men on horses,  
She dreams, in her little bed,  
For magic reigns, of courses;  
And it dances through her head.

She dreams, in her little bed  
He has come to take her hand,  
And it dances through her head;  
She'll be Queen of the little land.

He has come to take her hand,  
Glass slippers may appear;  
She'll be Queen of the little land:  
There's magic in the air

Patti Masterman

# There's Something In Us

There's something in us  
Doesn't want to win,  
Something doesn't wish to live,  
Wants to throw the towel in early;  
Something with nothing left to give.

There's something that's much darker,  
That we hide from light of day;  
We never mention it in prayers,  
And though it remain, invisibly-  
We still see, in other's stares..

Patti Masterman

# There's Star-Foam On The Sea Floor

There's star-foam on the sea floor  
Of captured stars forever more,  
Stalagmites in briny ocean caves,  
Soft tendril'd anemones in ocean waves.

Spiny oyster slivers like sea-glass,  
Trails of urchins, where mermaids pass;  
There's starfish, like a compass of the sun  
Shows hidden canyons, where no war was won.

There's octopus scour the deeper rocks,  
Electric eel timekeepers, like atom-clocks,  
There's haunted wrecks, beneath the fitful blue  
Who give no secrets and show no clue.

The ocean has a thousand moods;  
Sometimes she smiles, and sometimes broods.  
She's dangerous, there's few left to tell  
They braved her deeps, and lived life well.

Patti Masterman

# There's Still Time

A word, a touch- is all we have together  
While our souls are searching a deeper tune:  
Far above, bounding through the Ether  
Towards a momentary blue moon.

Take my hand; and you're never alone,  
For you inhabit all of my thoughts,  
And though you may feel far from home,  
For you, a great peace has been bought.

Purchased with beats, of a straggler's heart;  
Maybe come lately, but there's still time  
To get to know your fanciful art,  
And your rhythm of living, entirely in rhyme.

Patti Masterman

# These Are The Eyes

These are the eyes  
That watched you climb a mountain range  
Careen off the top on a thin rope  
Swing across an abyss on razor wire  
Shepherd hope to the craggy zenith  
Slice within writhing inches of the precipice  
And rappel safely to the other side  
Of one trusting heart-  
Which now lies in your bleeding hands.

Patti Masterman

# These Bones Are Light To Travel In

These bones are light to travel in,  
Where men are wont to roam;  
Far away from the birthing lands-  
Though none remembers birth.

These bones the same, inside bird wings,  
Though lighter those, and airy;  
To lift one high, above tree lines-  
Though few would climb, so daring.

These bones the home, for long as life  
Sees fit to stay inside;  
Closer than a mother was-  
Or a blushing bride.

Patti Masterman

# These Trees That Knew

These trees that knew  
My touch, could tell  
The others too,  
Before they fell.

Their children played  
In leafy house;  
Circling honeysuckle  
And path of mouse.

These tree's offspring  
Grew all around,  
To muffle well  
Coarse city sound.

Old trunks fall down  
When new are made,  
Their fragile light  
Becomes a shade.

Patti Masterman

# Thesis

This my thesis:  
Devoted, I lie  
Enclosed in the arc  
Of lovers leg;  
At obtuse angles  
We spread our perimeters,  
Nanoseconds spent  
Engaged in observing  
How well-wrought  
The machinery;  
How efficiently  
Constructed  
The percentages adding up  
To totality;  
Integration in the highest  
Conjugal geometry,  
Far exceeding  
Established standards.

Patti Masterman

# They Each Write About It As It Sees Them Fit - Villanelle

They each write about it as it sees them fit:  
Poets and writers, pouring out words;  
Keeping to parity their own souls wit.

Snatching words from thin air, as they sit,  
For they each have their own distinct worlds;  
They each write about it as it sees them fit.

Giving to the page their own token bit,  
As the truth deep inside them slowly unfurls;  
Keeping to parity their own souls wit.

Writing's something they never can quit,  
Scribbling's something they to all else prefer:  
They each write about it, as it sees them fit.

Life to them is never just a skit,  
They would never want to go unheard;  
Keeping to their own souls wit.

From piece to piece, their busy mind flits,  
And their heart singing just like a bird;  
They each write about it as it sees them fit,  
Keeping to parity their own souls wit.

Patti Masterman

# They Fell

They fell beneath the car seat's edge  
In impassioned scurryings, and disappeared  
Entirely, in the dark passage beneath.  
Then the policeman's flashlight  
Came, to play around  
Between the steamed-up windows;  
Wanting their four legs, on the ground.

She struggled, forgetting them, into her jeans  
And he left her later at the curb,  
Worried he was late;  
And was his wife yet disturbed?  
No, his wife lay peaceful, sleeping  
And she would stay quite calm  
Until the ride to work dislodged  
The thorn in the lover's balm.

She knew he wasn't suddenly into  
Size four flower-print panties-  
It must be what was in the panties,  
That he was into..

Patti Masterman

# They Made Me Love You

They made me love you  
When they tore you apart  
For now I imagine  
That grief-stricken heart

Your name's now my altar  
Your face is my sun  
With words from your mouth  
A new world's begun

Your eyes are a love-spell  
First light at the dawn  
And love is the answer  
We know can't be wrong

When god chooses two  
To set them together  
He first puts away  
All inclement weather

He softens hard hearts  
And makes strong the weak  
The fool is brought down  
To equal the meek

Our blood will now mingle  
In much brighter days  
For it breathes with the secrets  
We're waiting to say.

Patti Masterman

# They Said That He Talked To His Axe

They said he was known, to talk to his axe  
As if it were the best comrade of his,  
Amid the rumors about, he had a rich father  
Must have fueled his rancor; the life he had missed.

So local horse slaughterer, became his career,  
Ready day and night, with axe in his bag;  
Sick and old cows, horses and mules,  
Made short work with his axe, of the ailing Nag.

It was his work and he was quite good,  
Most skillful with axe; and strong and fast.  
With his constant friend, in it's home, the bag,  
There's many an animal, breathed it's last.

His work left a smell, upon his person;  
Some sick horses had the smell within,  
And a small girl at play outside, could not miss  
The man going by, with strange smell on him.

Under the radar, he plied his trade,  
Coming and going, near invisibly;  
Never suspected, if he was the one  
Gave fatal blows their timely delivery.

Like a bad choice come back, from the past  
To haunt the rich miser, in his worldly domain  
Of such stern stuff, there's no doubt he'd refuse  
To his fatal undoing, and terminal pain.

Patti Masterman

# They Say We Stand On The Shoulders Of Giants

It's said that we stand on the shoulders of giants;  
Of ancestors ceding to us their genetic heritage, their traits:  
I feel the truth of it, each time I walk to the garage  
And stumble again over that pile of ashes; by the tipped over bucket  
I could almost swear it's great great Grandpa,  
Caught in the barn fire and burned too badly to keep living;  
But he'd already passed on his genes.

And next the old well; grows some ivy, thick along the bricks-  
Great Aunt Florence it must be; escaped from her nearby plot  
Over by the Lilac bush;  
Must have been Granny Bennett, planted that purple monstrosity  
To make herself more at home on the new homestead-  
Taken there against her better judgment, she felt at the time;  
Though if she planted flowers, their bulbs are long since wizened away.

And the scraps of her silky embroidery thread  
Lie scattered over the floor of the shed  
Where their old belongings were once stored;  
Rat and moth-eaten because after so many years  
Nobody could figure out who should have what;  
And some leftover blackened jars of canned vegetables and fruit  
From extinct gardens and fruit orchards.

And underneath all that, ancient dust of their shoes  
And pollen from long ago plants:  
They, who still repose in their once-fine Sunday best  
In the little walled-off lot at the back; no doubt happy  
To be free at last, of the never ending work with the hands;  
Complacent as forget-me-nots, in snug earthen pots,  
Probably would be glad they can't see the weeds now.

Patti Masterman

# They Tell There Are No Words There

They tell there are no words there,  
Nor books anywhere about,  
So should I go to heaven;  
It seems to be in doubt?

They tell of gold clouds floating,  
Of harp strings on the breeze,  
But vapors makes my nose run;  
And breezes make me sneeze.

The righteous souls amass there,  
They say as, sure enough,  
I'd rather bide the meek ones;  
There's righteous here, full up..

If heaven swarms with angels,  
But earth, with lowly souls-  
I'd rather stay here, earthbound  
Than take the heavens, whole..

Patti Masterman

# They'll Leave Us Crying

The world is dimensional and nothing sees through it;  
The walls too opaque, and then time runs away,  
Off over the edges and pools there at midnight,  
The hour always late or else way much too late.

We sang the refrains and we pondered our fate,  
Under the apple tree, under the steeple;  
We did everything that they told us we'd do-  
And we find now we're just ordinary people.

Nothing special, we're just like the rest,  
Dress us in leather or mohair or satin;  
We'll sing and we'll dance to the numbers you say,  
Looking for all the world as if filled with passion.

But in our dark rooms, we sag down in the gloom,  
Time is our enemy, dreams busy dying-  
Once on a platter, the world to us given;  
Now the hour's midnight, soon they'll leave us crying.

Patti Masterman

# Things Fixed And Moveable

This one weird trick you never knew:  
How telling the truth doesn't make you beloved.

Everyone was shocked when she pulled up her dress.  
There was nothing beneath it; just a shell.

The trap-door malfunctioned during his performance,  
and the magician was forced to remain himself for the duration of the show.

This man thought he'd made a big mistake  
Till she showed him the letter  
Had been written to someone in another dimension.

?

No one knew her secret, how each day  
She jumped off the bridge and then reappeared again,  
The next day. Then some intrepid people sold tickets.  
But it became too much like work, so she just stayed dead.

Patti Masterman

# Things That Don'T Love Me

Things and people that don't love me,  
They seem to run the world  
Ever since she-

She was the first, threw me away,  
Selflessly; but with great love,  
So that selfless people must now always hoist me  
Up onto the narrow ledge  
Of their sometimes friendship.

Things that don't crave my touch surround me;  
But lean backwards, away from my contagion.

The universe has never been a simple place:  
Animals come near, only wanting to get a bite out of you;  
People, to test your defenses  
And to see if you can strike back.

And my first blow is always toward self-  
But just look-  
Now my misshapen form can draw huge crowds!

Patti Masterman

# Things That We See Every Day

Things that we see every day  
Must live in a finite world, confined to the aisles  
And the avenues, of our attention.

If you always take the same exact path  
To go somewhere, each day  
You can become oblivious, to what ought to be obvious.

We crave exciting things, of a dark and hidden nature;  
The esoteric, inappropriate things of existence,  
Believing the mundane beneath our interested notice.

Yet, if we could occasionally open our eyes  
A bit earlier; or perhaps look out through only a tiny hole  
Poked through our normal wide field of vision, we could be astonished

That all the miraculous things we thought banished  
To the exotic districts where we can never go,  
We have barely avoided stumbling over, every time we go out.

Patti Masterman

# Things They Never Taught In School

Everything is a metaphor for everything else.  
The conundrum of existence doesn't have to wait to be born.  
Real order emerges from chaos in the universe.  
Windows can work both ways,  
And doors usually open outward in one direction only-  
But sometimes the only way out is through neither door nor window,  
And probably nobody will tell you this;  
You'll have to figure it out on your own.

Nature was the original pun.  
Not everything is a delusion, even if it's late and you're very drunk.  
Increasing complexity leads to more of the same.  
Life doesn't care if you survive or not.  
Everyone is dying whether they know it or not.  
Our expectations of things are nearly always wrong.  
If you already knew everything when young  
That you will know as an older person-  
You'd almost certainly wind up in jail.

Time is money squared and vice versa-  
And there's never enough of either.  
But sharing part of yourself leads  
To having more of yourself to share.

The truth is a puzzle and nobody has all the pieces;  
If you meet someone and they seem to have part of it,  
Sell your soul if you must, to go find it-  
Because that fragment may be the only one  
You come in contact with, in your finite days.

Last, if you're too sophisticated and dignified  
To have fun when you get old  
You may as well be dead anyway.

Patti Masterman

# Things To Stay Alive For

A child would have his toy,  
And a man would have his girl;  
As brides must have their joy,  
And god must have a world.

They're things that, made for each of us,  
As though our name were printed;  
And don't forget love, peace and trust,  
By which our life gets tinted.

Though I think, we'd live on love  
Alone; if things were short supply'd-  
And just a slit, of bluest sky-  
And breadth, of a lover's sigh.

Patti Masterman

# Thinking Outside Of The Box

Do you ever look back on the happenings  
Of this forty, fifty, sixty years of living, as though  
Looking back into time at something  
That no longer exists as you now recognize it.  
Something long gone; an anachronism as seen from the future days,  
But quaint, charming, and love-filled,  
Appreciated for where ever and whenever it existed-  
Would an exact knowing and certitude come of:  
Why and for what, all of this now?  
But since our awareness of this life comes to a definite end,  
We will never really get to look back that way,  
Without being caught up in those things happening each moment,  
Always tearing our attention away from the more enlarging view.  
We will ever find our existence bound up in the center of the whirlwind,  
Our birth and death enclosed within,  
As a baby universe bubbles up from a larger one;  
Dependent on things much larger than ourselves.  
What answers and reasons might become apparent if we could:  
Everything might make so much sense we would be amazed,  
Even shocked at how oblivious we had been-  
Like watching a movie, and knowing exactly what's coming next, and why,  
But the characters seem clueless as we shout a warning to them-  
They can't hear a word of it, marching onward to their assured destruction.  
Almost unbearably, we are like gods, but still can't save  
The mortal actors from their movie-reel doomsday.  
That must be what it is like, looking back from the future, at ourselves.  
But how much worse would it be, if we could do that, and it still  
Made no sense or appeared to have no purpose, just some strange hand  
Dealt by fate, to each one of us; the straw we drew this time around.  
One straw leading to happiness and fulfillment; another one to the chopping  
block.  
If we could but climb out of the box one single time,  
And see what else has been going on  
While we were inside the box...

Patti Masterman

# Thirst

The graveyard must adore you from afar;  
How it craves your liveliness and blood,  
Whispering its need for rare nutrients  
From one untainted, both pure and good.

There's a vacant spot within its till  
It's saving for one as special as are you;  
Your cold heart would be its victory-  
A monument; what sudden death can do.

It loves your mannerisms and your voice,  
It pines for you like thirsty grass needs rain;  
It won't rest content again, you see  
Until you're well beneath its heavy hand.

Patti Masterman

# This Craving Never Tames

The conjugate of idolatry,  
The alchemy of flame,  
The Astarte of pure harlotry-  
And nomenclature'd name.

The lode-stone of sly coquetry,  
The compass-stone of hearth,  
The balanced stoichiometry-  
Broken waters of birth.

The Vestal of impurity,  
The perfidy of shame-  
My blood in you runs truer red;  
This craving never tames.

Patti Masterman

# This Is Freedom

This is freedom, she said with a flourish  
Having locked the door, with invisible key;  
Long hours of solitude, safe in her study-  
But bedroom it was, for a writer-to-be.

How many long hours she spent in its confines,  
Her mind moving walls and squeezing past time,  
Watching the graveyards comings and goings-  
What a world window, for one of ripe mind?

She lived in her thought, and her body was pure,  
As pure as the leaves outside the doors,  
But she lived a grand life, in all of her visions-  
With so many riches, she'd never be poor.

She was god's secret, safe in her cloister,  
Revealing his beauty, more than could know,  
And predicted her death, right down to the hour-  
Leaving her body, as the sun sank low.

Patti Masterman

# This Is Life

This is life:

Angel prints in a deep snow bar,  
Hanging branches beneath the storm,  
Dying roses, glimmering sun-  
Sometimes life had just begun..

And this is life:

Steamy windows, brittle smiles,  
Frozen raindrops only for a while,  
And- poking out of a frosted glen-  
One opened flower, for his whim..

Patti Masterman

# This Is My Poem

This is my poem of \_\_\_\_\_. (date)  
This is my poem, written by myself.  
This is my first poem never written.  
This is my last poem now to be written.  
This is the poem I would have written  
if I had lived yesterday what I lived today.

This is my poem changing white light  
into gold-leaf  
and blue into violet.

This is my poem like a heaven twisting  
and turning inside of me  
all night long.

This is my poem of opening a window  
to show what was always inside.

This is my poem encompassing everything  
hope can bestow or chance agree with.

This is my poem of open-ended freedom.

This is my poem breathing life into motion.

This is my poem written as I wrote it  
a living being.

And this is my poem ending;  
but only for today..

Patti Masterman

# This Is Only My False Identity

This is only my false identity; my real one  
Is in an alternate universe, but I've forgotten where.  
I write swindle poetry, in over priced restaurants  
Where I am known for emptying the coffee pot  
And never ordering a real meal.

I have never heard doves cooing inside my heart,  
Have never been at the point of a dagger-  
Never even near the point of a gun,

Not one has loved me unto death,  
In fact, they loved telling me how expendable I was.  
I slowly wear on people's nerves  
Like an undiagnosed breakout of some disease.

It's all a fool's game of made up rules,  
I'm not a world class spy of human nature:  
I'm not even a bonafide psychopath  
And Poetry doesn't pay my keep;

My poetry is made up of small word lies  
Moved around on magnetic boards;  
The prophetess of pablum,  
Necromancer of dead words-  
My necrophilia is just  
Playing with still-born words.

Even the lines in my palms  
Are fake. I use a thesaurus  
I sleep and eat and defecate.  
My reflections break mirrors before mid-morning.

I could disappear tomorrow;  
In a few weeks time be completely erased.

You can burn these words then-  
I think I'd enjoy hearing them screaming for once.



# This Is The Body Of The World..

This is the body of the world, which betrays you.  
The world betrays; encoded in DNA.  
This is the you which betrays in time, the you  
It's always been there, in each word we say.

And all the other yous are similar chameleons,  
A treasonous chain of back-biting fiends  
Treason lives in tongues, closed faces and organs,  
Of eyes lying first and mouths following their lead.

A curtain of fallowness obscures the light.  
A ring of deception captures truth.  
There's you who hates yourself and nightly prays to die,  
And there is you, who wields the knife to try to stop the lie,  
And that is you, already dead but never found out why.

Patti Masterman

# This Latest Heaven

This latest heaven unanticipated,  
Not acquainted with any embrace;  
The peace of the monks and the angels  
Or some holy, unadulterated place.

We're taught that expectation must doom us,  
With dreams that could never fulfill;  
But the child that we were stays inside us  
With it's far hopes surfacing still.

Patti Masterman

# This Longing

This longing, he says, is nice to feel;  
Like magnets attract, if could never repel,  
Like two birds in flight, each other's trail;  
And finding your thoughts, in the mind of another.  
Never to touch your soul's secret lover;  
That fire which burns, yet never singe  
That tear which falls, yet leaves a tinge  
Of color, on a dampened cheek-  
And red rimmed eyes; how they could speak!  
But this longing has to say it all for me  
And those two birds stay forever free.

Patti Masterman

# This Place

This place feels so steadfast and eternal;  
Yet in a hundred years or more, must become a ruin  
Marring an otherwise pristine nature,  
With rusting hulk of metal carcass.  
And no landmarks will remain, of our many trails today,  
Falling across life and one another.  
I try to imagine it then, with my touch missing;  
But the pain of sentiment obliterates each attempt.  
Somehow I think we are never meant to see  
The outlines of a shadow, that we will never decorate.  
Surely each day now is a jewel, though lost to my comprehension:  
The world always cloaks us all in it's more mundane aspects,  
Though some peace I find is difficult to bear.

Patti Masterman

# This World Is Too Real

This world is too real;  
So slow down this ride,  
I'm on the third rail-  
The outgoing tide.

My fingers trace magic,  
My mind's like a sail;  
Must endings be the tragic  
Magnum Opus fail?

Where's the book of life,  
Elixir to living,  
Ending to strife,  
Counterpoint of striving?

If the grave's not the end  
Of the time we unravel,  
Is death the sole friend  
Upon more lonely travels?

Patti Masterman

# Thorns Were The Latest Fashion

Thorns were the latest fashion  
And sackcloth shirts, at a time  
When they were already expecting god  
To return any hour, of any day.

Hours spent at prayer  
Were like shooting pennies at heaven;  
We'd all play golden lyres  
And bribe St. Peter for a place near the throne.

Still waiting for him to show up  
When we least expect him,  
Throw gigantic birthday parties  
Each December, in his honor.

Shouldn't we have grown up by now  
And stopped looking for money, under our pillows?  
Because our morality is petty  
And our gods were always false.

If we really mattered;  
And our negligible lives,  
Do you think a god in his right mind  
Would have left us here all alone in the first place?

Patti Masterman

# Those Eyes

One eye weeps, while the other exults,  
In the most gentle way, one could ever indulge;  
One eye pierce my soul, with humble bravado,  
As the other eye blinks in my heart, it's abode.

Your eyes tell me tales, that I can't even fathom,  
They whisper and point, as I turn round perplexed;  
Your eyes are my fate, and together, they token  
Your eyes are not slave, to the fact of your sex.

If I subtract those two eyes, from the sum of that face,  
They can still speak my name, and draw sighs from my lips;  
Those eyes send me forth, on rare travels the globe;  
And then welcome me home on return, from their trips.

Patti Masterman

# Thou Princess

Thou princess  
(of the kingdom of my heart)  
Rich tresses  
(caress my lips)  
That gleam  
(at the top of thy crown)  
Devoted  
(I lie at your feet)  
In splendor  
(I trace thy roundness)  
With finger  
(singing hymns to thy name)  
Only once  
(to touch)  
Your body  
(answer truly)  
I search  
(with hands and heart)  
Your soul  
(answer exquisitely for all)  
Of favor  
(too much to refuse)  
I savor  
(every treasure)  
For it's you  
(I choose)

Patti Masterman

# Though Heaven Marry

Though heaven marry innocence to madness  
Or witness the soulful wedded to the damned,  
We must not think that god delights nefariously  
In deadening all our dreams with what's at hand.

Patti Masterman

# Though Nothing Lasts

It's true I always use  
The exact wrong word  
My usages and syntax  
Might border on absurd.

But all my heart is in it  
There make no mistake  
I only pen the real stuff  
And none of it is fake.

I'd rather be alive  
And writing all my days  
Than to be coldly dead  
With nothing left to say.

Patti Masterman

# Thought Is The Keyhole

I was born fifty years ago  
The dead know my history  
The dead gave my name

Our fates are told by melancholy winds  
The dust in the graveyard was once a friend  
The stars blew me in on a great big wave

Time is the Father, space is the womb  
Where thought is the keyhole of a brand new room  
Where the lost are found, and the late are soon

Patti Masterman

# Thought-Wings

Dragonfly: light standard bearer  
Heraldic image of the uncertain  
Rising to him, the prisoner's prayer,  
Watching from behind an iron curtain

Even poor children easily play  
With those wings of watered silk  
And when the world has had it's day  
Millenia remain to his ilk

Dragonfly: fulcrum caught  
Between mystical and mundane  
Two distinct realms of thought  
A water borne creature of rain.

Patti Masterman

# Three Conjectures And One Conclusion

Sterility:

Words are not real  
until published.

This rule is unbreakable.

Proof:

I am not real,  
because I was adopted  
and Pinocchio is my brother.

Factoid:

People do not give up the real,  
they hold onto only the genuine.

And, in truth:

Kindness kills, but only very slowly.

Patti Masterman

# Three May Keep A Secret If Two Of Them Are Dead

if you have something real to say to this world,  
something else will come along to fill up all  
the available time; truth is the one thing  
not allowed down here

the self is a repository that has been  
collecting things since the first man  
had the first thought, and if you don't  
believe this, the primal fear of deadly snakes  
still remains very much awake  
in our dreams to this day as a warning  
of imminent danger

your thoughts get strung out  
from place to place  
when you travel, and others  
can read them like signposts  
along the highway

i can feel you arriving before  
I know you are traveling this way,  
and the dying can be felt leaving their  
bodies before they realize it  
themselves; departures and  
journeys are not what they seem  
down here

loud music frightens in the presence  
of others; the loudness will unveil  
fragility and capability they did not  
know you possessed

because I can be so deadly  
at the heart of me, I must pretend  
to the innocence of a child  
or risk execution

Patti Masterman

# Three Vows: Emily Dickinson

## Poverty

You were never poor in spirit;  
Your head held room for worlds,  
And birth and death were endless-  
And all played out in words.

Nor poor in wry humility-  
Though you liked to mix the pot-  
But in all things most men commend,  
You held a miserable lot.

One white dress worth your dowry,  
At six o'clock you went,  
And passed toward eternities,  
Before, had only hints..

## Chastity

You were not long for flowers,  
You were not long for earth;  
The words you touched so lightly  
Left message, of your worth.

Your verses sewed in bundles-  
Chaste-belting, of a life-  
Who'd have known such eloquence  
Dwelled within the quiet?

## Obedience

There are those who mind the wind,  
And those who mind their doors,  
And those who mind society;  
The mindless, who are scores.

The one who minds his secrets,  
And those who mind their minds-  
But she who bares her soul, alone

Is difficult, to find.

And though her message whisper;  
Or take you by the hand,  
Just look and see, at end of time-  
Her obedience- the span-

Patti Masterman

# Three-Quarter Time

Burn in love, forget the price  
Passion makes everything twice-nice.

Don't deign to notice  
Things not quite  
Set to the signature you'd like.

Waltz with them, or dance alone  
To a step more cynical grown.

Years later you will wonder why  
Time had passed so slowly by.

Patti Masterman

# Three-Two-One, Boom!

Three-two-one, Boom!  
Said the guns,  
Of Eric and Dylan.

Eric portrayed as mastermind,  
Dylan as the follower, the disciple;  
Violence: the school of after-hours.

Just say no to sawed-offs,  
They proclaimed, laughing;  
But by the end they were saying, well yes.

Eric's nose broken by the kickback,  
As he played a game of hide and seek  
Under a library table.

But the fun wore off, alas;  
The fantasy lived out was not as fulfilling  
As all the dreams they'd shared.

So they went on to hell together  
To see what trouble they could raise there-  
And left us all holding the bag.

Patti Masterman

# Threshed Light

Threshed light from which  
A city builds time in between  
A thousand fallow fields-  
While millions grow ground  
Before infinity comes closer.

Patti Masterman

# Through A Glass Darkly

Through a glass darkly, one night in my dreams,  
I found myself inside a huge residence-  
So large, I could not see from one room the  
Confines of the next one; great open spaces  
And lovely tapestries, rugs, and treatments.  
Someone commented on the immense windows,  
And I realized I had ascended many stories high  
Almost without noticing the gradual rise.  
And there was nothing mean or petty in the entirety.  
I saw evidences of the creating that had gone on;  
Started at some point in the past; objects still  
Sitting where the work had been carried out,  
However many years, decades or centuries had passed by-  
It was hard to tell; it all seemed a timeless space.  
Intimations of science and measurements and  
Discoveries and inventions, were scattered about.  
Ceilings so high that you almost expected  
Clouds to be found floating there; some areas well-lit,  
And some in partial darkness.  
Long, regal staircases descended up and down, sometimes  
Without obvious destinations, almost like ornaments  
Of an intense mind's desire to stay  
Always occupied, and never stagnant.  
The groups of people gathered about would come  
Just to view the remnants of the great conceptions  
That were here conceived and brought to life.  
I wandered about getting more and more lost.  
I started to cry when they said visiting hours were over-  
I must have been waiting a long time to see this  
Playground of my beloved one;  
Who seemed somehow distant and unavailable  
In the parallel universe of this dream.  
When I woke up, I realized where it was that I had been all night-  
I was inside your soul, the resplendent receptacle of  
Everything that you are or have ever been.

Patti Masterman

# Through Michael's Eyes

Truth, beauty, justice in your words;  
A worship of the sky unfurls.  
Through Michael's eyes  
The heaven's turn;  
Of his pure light,  
Some oceans burn.

Mankind has visions of a kind,  
To strike a fancy in the mind;  
Our heads turn too,  
Like cogless wheels;  
And in some eyes  
See heaven stilled.

I catch the light upon your brow,  
Though some ships sail, without a prow.  
And when you steer,  
And when you go,  
Subdues all fears  
In those below.

A soul is light and bears no weight;  
It's courage challenge hapless fate:  
In starfields far  
And quantum deep,  
You've miles to fly  
Before you sleep.

Patti Masterman

# Time Cloisters

Time cloisters under the rafters,  
Time splatters boisterous stars,  
Time signifies all and nothing-  
Time which fattens itself on wars.

Time has fingers; push-me pull-me,  
Time has plans like night time dreams-  
But time's gargantuan quagmire's shifting,  
Swallowing your lucid schemes.

Patti Masterman

# Time Enough

In the blindness of time,  
The days mark corridors.  
Hours divide the darkness,  
Seasons segment the calendar-  
Instant by instant, our time  
Trickles into the sieve,  
Of the allotted space:  
If thoughts were the measure  
Of everlastingness,  
Some of us would never die;  
Some would never be born at all.  
But there is always time enough  
To reach from the beginning  
To the very end.

Patti Masterman

# Time Goes By

Time goes by  
And we read all the words-  
The popular words, the disguised words,  
Whole burial mounds of words,  
Rushing arroyos of words.

Fleeing the truth, chasing the lies,  
Hiding the danger with covering smiles,

Clothed now in words, and we move behind  
The idiosyncrasies, of mind..

Patti Masterman

# Time Importunes

Time importunes us all to death;  
Faces wrinkle, years are theft,  
Taking loves and talents all-  
We are memory's faded thrall.

We were too young to age, and yet  
To the graveyard we must get,  
To say goodbye to near and dear,  
Our words full of fruitless cheer.

There is no life except death come;  
The other side of living's hum,  
Quietness at the end of motion,  
Eyes that close in stilled devotion.

Patti Masterman

# Time Is Harder Than A Stone

Time is harder than a stone  
That sits in the belly, stopping food;  
Time the implacable, grinding boulder  
Wiping out worlds, both bad and good-  
While we in its fading tracks have stood.

Time that's longer than reach of starlight,  
Older than the farthest-burning stars;  
And Man, a sparking trace of appeasement-  
Until the whirl of time is done.

Patti Masterman

# Time Is Short

Time is short, Jesus said:  
Before the cock crows thrice,  
Eyes burning like ten thousand suns  
Weeping at the wailing wall, stretching  
Across a valley of broken sighs.

Time is short, how could we forget  
The child we smothered, inside of us;  
Dumbed him down with memorization,  
With bus route schedules,  
Black-booked itineraries.

Time is short, and full of woe  
As the evil of the day triumphs again,  
And our grief is always sufficient unto us:  
It fills up the raging emptiness-  
When it comes knocking on our door,  
We no longer act surprised.

(First two lines taken from the bible:  
Jesus said to him, 'I tell you with certainty, before a rooster crows this very  
night, you will deny me three times.' Matthew 26: 34, International  
Standard Version,2008)

Patti Masterman

# Time Is The Ziggurat

Time is the ziggurat that collapses,  
When all the people have come in to pray;  
And I worshiped at the base  
And I honored all your faces,  
But of your once-caring I can find no trace.

Space is the fold of long enduring,  
Keeping me well away your side;  
Truths so rare that we gave up searching  
In your temples so far and wide.

Life is the rite of passage, unspoken,  
Rift that's between the now and then;  
And once upon a dream  
We saw it's lightnings gleam,  
But we can't remember how far back when.

Space is the fold of long enduring,  
Keeping me well away your side;  
Truths so rare that we gave up searching  
In your temples so far and wide.

Death comes at the end;  
To claim our carcass,  
And nobody waits  
To hold your hand-

If you died alone,  
It would not be stark as  
Living life too afraid  
To make a stand.

Patti Masterman

# Time To Visit

The coffin's colder  
Than the warm cab he was used to-  
Though all his friends are there;  
Just like it used to be.

The eulogy concludes  
And they all replace their caps,  
And life keeps going on;  
No time for playing Taps.

They're the grown ups now-  
Not watching life pass by,  
Lamenting all the hours and days  
It takes them, to grow up.

So who set the decree today;  
Who's walking, who got buried?  
They had to hurry back to jobs,  
For there are no hours to tarry.

But a grave waits, like a beacon  
For each, though they're too busy:  
Still, the day comes soon enough,  
When they'll have time, to visit.

(Written to Codes & Keys, by Death Cab for Cutie)

Patti Masterman

# Time Wears Your Heart On Its Sleeve

Time wears your heart on its sleeve,  
And age with your face, can't deceive;  
Beauty and charm, the gift to disarm-  
As years pass, your assets will leave.

Grace bears your form on its back,  
When troubles and pains do attack;  
When love, as a friend, and patience attend-  
You will hardly notice the lack.

Patti Masterman

# Time Will Never Touch

I sing my love, his face and mouth,  
My compass of fair winds, due south;  
He fills my sail, he plots my course-  
He knows the seas are my true source.

The Moon is his; and more, the stars,  
While we gently row the oars;  
The Sun's aloof, though he care not-  
For he sails higher yet, in thought.

He knows the wrecks beneath the waves,  
And desperate sailors he has saved;  
And mermaids find in him, their home-  
When far from their grottoes, thrown.

He has a secret name, not known,  
On my lips, forever unspoken;  
But Love's in him, and mystery too-  
Time will never touch a few.

Patti Masterman

# Time's Scars

Waiting alone some night  
Would I find you watching  
Through windows of time?

Filtering down to feel  
Some forgotten passage  
That I had neglected to seal.

Echoes of your words  
Straining my attention  
For reasons unheard.

What will I think then  
Of your sadness  
And my indifference?

The deeper part  
Will disappear from sight  
Scars form over raw hurt.

It is sad but true  
When you run to meet time  
Time runs over you.

Patti Masterman

# Tiny Rips

Tiny rips in the fabric  
Of society  
Allow others to access  
Our dreams.

Tiny pleasures-  
Anodyne of uncertainty-  
Are collected,  
Before they rip off our wings.

Patti Masterman

# To A Rune Stave I Lent My Hot Blood

To a Rune stave I lent my hot blood  
To tally up the sum of the hearts affections  
The scrawled, agile figures bent to their sultry task

My old blood has been there talking to them  
Before, and past lovers linger on in traces,  
Once flowing rills, where their shadows stayed behind me

Words that echo in the canyon hollows, above the plains  
Where ever I might go, those ones go with me  
They are like the dead, never buried once with respect

Watching through haunted eyes, like the wind  
That might never move a leaf; still  
You can sense it's held breath, hanging there above you.

Patti Masterman

# To A Small Fish It's Such A Big World

When I'm drowning again, in my bowl of self pity  
It's always made worse by the fact  
I know I'm the one put me there;  
For I'm the gift horse you can always refuse,  
Offered so generously  
Like a motherless baby, always looking for a home;  
Grabbing everyone's leg, making eyes  
Like a toddler learning to flirt,  
Insinuating myself into circumstances  
Where I have no business, and no future.  
It's painful watching me humiliate myself  
Again and again,  
Because the feedback loops go around me;  
I only see love everywhere  
Because that's where I want to live:  
Everything in the universe is a baited hook,  
And it's a dangerous place to live  
For an uncomplicated fish like me.

Patti Masterman

# To Another Shirking Duty Do I Die

To another shirking duty do I die  
Swarmed by specious crowding thoughts that sped  
We wed in black, so dreaded black to tie  
The altars bones of white that lined our bed  
And followed constellations in our heads.

My addled weight of whetstone you've become  
With tons of stones in wooden bladed sling  
Past summers clouded face hung heaven's sun  
On bark you tried to dry the deadest things  
And on my strumming soul threadbare you'd sing.

The nightmares ran past colored vats of dye  
As shifting shapes geometrized the rune  
What dyed the pigment in your furthest eye  
Was joined with the paler canvas tones  
And cracked the varnished face our pebbled moon.

Patti Masterman

# To Count Loss As Gain

To see all the wonders of this world  
You must stay permanently in love,  
With the firmament, the rocks and stars;  
The ocean's rhythmic tidal caressings.

Don't let another day go by  
Without paying homage to love,  
Though it savage the heart, and give up your secrets-  
Counting each loss as the gain, of new vision..

Patti Masterman

# To Each His Own

We're born alone, and so we die,  
Alone, no use to fuss or moan-  
Each living thing must face the truth:  
We drink our cup of grief, alone.

The smallest mite will feel the pangs  
Of discipline, and hearts of stone,  
Revenge exacted, full, complete:  
He drinks his cup of grief, alone.

The older ones learn all too soon  
There is not long one can postpone  
The common lot of man and beast:  
They drink their cup of grief, alone.

All creatures born, at last confront  
There be no pardon or atone  
For random guilt that living brings:  
They drink then that last cup, alone.

Patti Masterman

# To Everything There Is A Season

Particles floating, suspended in sunlight;  
Stars blink overhead, deep in the well of night.  
Our steady heartbeats, keeping pace with the time  
As above, so below, we hear the hours chime.

Like a sun burns most brightly before its death;  
And only at dark do stars reveal their depth,  
The bright deeps of soul we reveal as we're leaving  
Give solace to loved ones to lighten their grieving.

Patti Masterman

## To He Whose Fingers - Sonnet

To he whose fingers itch to feel her breath,  
Dragging her boldly, through tall fields of grass;  
She whose flowering bough is stillborn death,  
The graveyard plot's the last place she will pass.

Beauty is the short answer of the muse,  
To meet the cymbal crash of longing storm;  
It's headlong rush, to light the shortest fuse;  
Frightening fury, to douse the trees lantern.

The last hour springs, like whistling in the wind  
Pliant captive, makes her way toward him.  
His grasp less tender, than were any vise  
Broken in his grasp, her bright eyes grown dim.

If even love could be borrowed or stole-  
All live in danger of filling that hole.

Patti Masterman

# To Kiss His Scars

It's not your typical kind of date,  
And he doesn't often date women;  
But he's alone, and you're alone,  
Though it feels so much like sinning.

You can't refuse his offer,  
As he waits for you to dress,  
Something casual's best, he says;  
It's good enough for this.

The scenery floats by slowly,  
For he doesn't drive too fast;  
You're both old enough by now  
You want the time to last.

He has a patient smile,  
As he opens up the door;  
You're alone now, far away-  
Though you've been here before.

You eat dinner, watch a movie  
While you sit together, close.  
There's alcohol, but you don't drink;  
Neither of you likes those.

You want to be clear headed,  
To remember every thing.  
And then it's late, and pretty soon  
There's nothing on the screen.

So you go back to the bedrooms,  
And you lie beneath the sheets,  
And then he comes so silently,  
That you can scarcely breathe.

He lies down full beside you,  
So quiet, so strangely still;  
And finally says, half-strangled,  
We'll begin, whenever you will-

And so, you start to kiss him,  
As you think of somewhere far:  
The past he's tried to leave behind-  
He only wants you to kiss his scars..

Patti Masterman

# To Live In Your Body Like A Room

To live in your body like a room,  
Like the skater goes twirling, into deeper sleep;  
Eyes-closed skier, going the downward slope.

Still busy in the body's world, a different space-  
The body remembering moves, you can never fake,  
The cells and relays picking up momentum's information

There; where the neurons ran for a thousand miles,  
Redrawing circuits to fit a working alignment-  
And muscles twitching all in, to beat their best time.

Patti Masterman

# To Omaira Sanchez And The Endless Night

Omaira, I know there are no more birthday parties for you  
(If you ever knew what one was)  
And no beloved waiting for you, in Colombia-  
Except for a hasty, poorly planned arrangement  
With your dead aunt, also trapped underwater,  
Her rigored hand fast around one leg,  
Because she was still trying to save you  
From the mud and the flood, when she drowned;  
And a foundation slab rests on your other leg.  
Above you, camera bulbs are always flashing  
On your sleepless face, showing just above the surface  
Of the bottomless water hole.  
You are singing the songs of childhood,  
Until reason itself begins to go to sleep  
And your mind begins to wander away  
Needing some freedom, looking for somewhere  
Where it's warm and dry again  
Where your Aunt has released her fierce grip  
And no houses are lying on you.  
(In fairy tales only, should houses fall on people,  
And then only on the very evil ones.)

Omaira, my heart weeping for you  
Is all there is to know of water now.  
I need only to show your photo  
To prove how dangerous being alive is;  
How death kills mainly the innocent,  
Guilty of no crime except breathing.  
Your face of mute suffering will haunt my dreams  
For the rest of my life; because you were young,  
Undeserving of pain and death,  
While trapped in cold water and filth  
And though I know you were not the only one  
For me, you are the one who dies nightly now,  
Over and over, each time I look at your picture.  
I think you must be the bravest girl who ever lived;  
For once you've died alone, by yourself  
With the walls of houses, and the hands of the dead  
Holding you underneath the water till your last breath,

How can there be anything left in this world to be afraid of?

Patti Masterman

# To Picture Him Faceless

I try to imagine you crawling there on the support beam,  
Because I can't stand imagining you later on:  
High in the cold attic, surrounded by night noises,  
Dawn perhaps yet two hours of intense dreaming away.  
Everyone else in the universe unconscious or unavailable  
And you positioning yourself carefully, in your handmade noose.

Praying for a clean break, but with no certainty;  
Nothing is absolute here- except-  
In a moment or an hour, I know you will be dangling,  
Either in stillness or in rocking spasms,  
At or near the bottom of the attic.

I can't help wondering if your joints grew stiff  
Crouching there for too long,  
In the eery darkness before daylight arrives,  
Or if you feared the coming day even worse than the one about to leave  
Or if you cursed your thoughtful hesitation as just another weakness and failure.  
Did the sock hat also hide your swollen eyes from the world,  
As well as prevent your discoverer from extra trauma.

Did you just slip over in a sloppy accident,  
Growing sleepy in the cooled, dim air,  
And found it was too late to change your mind then?  
Guess I'll never know the answer to that one  
Or if I slept or woke at that instant.

How can the same moment define both of us?  
For in you was the emptiness of unfinished life, draining away,  
How strange that I never saw that blankness coming,  
Never saw warning of it in words or actions,  
Not until it covered over your entire history,  
Like a black mold that eats the faces off in old photo albums.

Patti Masterman

## To Ponder

I wonder if forlorn angels watch from heaven,  
Secretly coveting our indecipherable ways,  
Our leaps of faith and vagrancies of reason  
Stumbling hope which buttresses our days.  
I wonder if their eyes can see forever  
Hidden just beyond the farthest view  
Than any humans eyes could even manage-  
Visions which we might not wish we knew.  
I wonder if they stay beside us, ever  
Whether clothed with starlight or with flame.  
I wonder, if they once were given freedom,  
Would they leave and not look back again?

Patti Masterman

# To Pray, Become The Prayer

I pray on the mountains, to the new day;  
Pray for vision prerequisite to peace,  
Though I see far clouds on the misty horizon-  
All is beauty, that I survey.

I pray for days, in the mountain's grace,  
With visions stirring, in peace complete;  
Cloudless visions, unspeared by time-  
And beauty rarely seen by mind.

I am the mountain-shading day;  
My dense shadow true stability is:  
The clouds must go round my pointed face,  
And nothing hides from my highest space.

Patti Masterman

# To Preserve Something, Just Cover It Up In Dust And Cobwebs

The house had a secret life concealed within  
Though externally the surface was drab and plain,  
Nothing to draw attention at all-  
Dusty and dank, with every sort of stain.

But at a certain season and hour of darkness  
Punctuated with rays of random moon:  
The inner soul of the place came apparent  
The greyness fell away and took with it the gloom.

Then the walls would blaze with a turquoise hue,  
The kitchen had a lively checkerboard tile.  
On the bathroom walls in the muted blue sea  
The red fish and mermaids began to smile.

The scalloped mantle was glossy and white,  
The wood floors shone to reflect the rays,  
All the crystal glass knobs and findings  
Collected, throughout the long, polished days.

The house remembered the clinking of goblets  
Wielded by languorous guests on the lawn;  
Nights were passed long and comely,  
And scattered coffee cups greeted the dawn.

Now weeds have grown up through the cracks in the walk-  
The house is forgotten and falling apart  
But the life that once flourished between the timbers  
Is safely preserved in the house of the heart.

Patti Masterman

# To Speed Up, You Should Slow Down First

If only poetry could be poured out  
Like omelettes come out of iron skillets,  
Like eggs fall out of chickens,  
Like one night stands fall us out of love;  
Instantly.

Nothing kills poetry like planning,  
Nothing kills chickens like assembly lines,  
Or one-time dates, like lack of impulse control.

Once I pushed the emergency stop button;  
It was huge and red, almost glowing,  
And everything else stopped, too  
Even the talking-  
While the stoned guy just stared at me in shock,  
That I had actually done it.

If you don't want buttons pushed,  
You shouldn't leave them poking out all over the place,  
If you don't want to be hurt,  
You shouldn't make yourself into a walking wound:  
Shrapnel doesn't care whose skin get nicked.

And it's easier to shave with your own razor at home,  
In front of your own mirror-  
Without the background soundtrack of shrieking.

Patti Masterman

# To You, Most Faithful Knight Upon Your Charge

To you, most faithful Knight, upon your charge  
I've sent my steadfast heart beat, in a poem  
So that it's rhythmic core might measure dreams  
That the uninitiate not freely roam-  
And see my secret wish has grown quite large  
Gallop as it goes, a self-fed stream  
Down falling mountains; same falls my timid moan  
One dropp of tear; and yes, one dropp of blood  
Shall bind the secret book, it's every seam  
My yearning for you there, upon your Roan  
Is opening out my chest, a red-tinged bud  
Plucked but once, your regal heart redeem  
Though for the vapid start, can scarce atone-  
Who used to hide from you, in stony wood?

Patti Masterman

# Today I Touched A Dragonfly

Today I touched a dragonfly  
Whose wings were singed by sun  
Stroked the lightning fast bolt of tail  
Far off, I heard somebody sigh  
Felt myself rise above the plains  
To ride the wind like an ancient stream  
He was made of golden sails  
I thought I was inside some dream  
He tilted his head from side to side  
In his costume of airy chain-mail  
I never thought the day would come  
A dragonfly would pause  
So I could touch his buoyant frame  
And feel the breeze it draws.

Patti Masterman

# Tombstone Rubbings

Here lies a dead poet  
He sucked but never knowed it.

Here under the moors  
Here I lie  
Drunk with the other bores  
Did I die.

Here lies a once beautiful torch  
Bent too close to the fireplace  
And burnt up the porch.

I cooked too many fatty meals  
Grew fat, then tried to wear high heels.

A shooting accident took me out of the game  
The last thing that I heard was BANG!

I'm glad the autopsies over now  
And my guts are back beneath the towel.

Here I lie in solemn peace  
My only neighbors now are geese.

No more sunshine, no more rain  
I'll never grace this world again.

Patti Masterman

# Tongues And Locks

So sad to wound your lover  
To see the eyes look down-  
As though the heart had dropped  
Away, upon the ground

How rare we stop to think it  
How limited the tongue; the  
Poison half-buried even  
Toward the most loved one

I'd put a lock upon it  
Swear never more to harm  
But tongues and locks will never fit  
As well as hearts and arms

Patti Masterman

# Too Beautiful

Too beautiful to be human  
Your thoughts are not shades of gray  
I say to you, you are a curious child  
I say to you, you are a wise sage  
Let the child kiss the sage  
Let the sage instruct the child  
And we will all benefit  
When the wise child begins to speak.

Patti Masterman

# Too Late

It's too late  
No one was saved  
The spirit's flown  
The ghost is born.

A memory's freed  
Where memories go  
And mourners weep  
But death sleeps on.

Patti Masterman

# Too Long Denied, She Rages In My Sleep

Too long denied, she rages in my sleep  
(No stairway to my heart too steep)  
Mellow, she sings a soundless melody,  
(Unloose the wires; you'll soon be free)  
She waits, she waits in deepest midnight  
Never visible, except by hindsight.  
(Poor thing, she sighs, you stand upon the lea)  
Surrounded by leaping waters of sea,  
For fear of drowning, I will not jump in  
(That's alright, says she, it is not a sin)  
I'll just stay here, beside the spray  
(And I'll make of you a rainbow, one fine day)

Patti Masterman

# Too Many Sex Poems Can Make You Blind

People who always are writing of sex  
Are like birds, always writing of feathers;  
We know it's their specialty, and they're proud-  
But find another subject, for crying out loud!

For half the fun is in chasing the one  
That you want to handcuff to you (in love):  
But don't leave behind poems, on your nightly passes  
Like deflated balloons, lying in grasses..

Patti Masterman

# Too Much Logic Devours The Heart

Too much logic devours the heart  
If the mind is too fixed; unyielding  
In it's deeply bedded belief system  
Superimposing it's own over calculated sense of righteousness  
Upon the heart's specialized reservoir;  
It drags then the blindfolded man around, a stumbling carcass;  
Insensible as a corpse, being pulled behind a train  
And once in a while you will find  
A piece of the flesh, that was snagged  
As the train flashed by again, on it's ever more purposeful journeys,  
And a dropp of dried blood remaining  
Causes you to remember suddenly  
That it belonged to a once living man,  
But one tragically taken prisoner  
By the too tightly wrapped coils,  
Of his own over-wound mind springs.  
You will feel then a moment of sadness  
For that man, purloined beyond all hope;  
Beyond recovery: even though he started out  
As just another man like you.  
Now the train has ground down all his humanity  
Into a few fleeting sparks on a rail  
Beneath it's hurtling tons of bulk  
And, in it's mechanical iron supremacy  
Can never slow down for anything or anyone again.

Patti Masterman

# Torrid

There is this torrid,  
This unconscionable rhyming of words,  
Because of syllable count  
Or ending letters.

Expedient poetry  
Is like passionless  
Clockwork sex, sans foreplay  
With any stranger  
Who comes into view

The happening hour of any day;  
It's too convenient-  
Who could say no?  
But you know, you'd better not.

Scrabble word poetry  
Is not as enjoyable  
As the random scatter of life  
Inviting us to solve an inscrutable puzzle.

(I'm trying to go through the twelve step program  
for not writing pre-digested poetry.  
It's going to take some doing..lol)

Patti Masterman

# Tossed Treasure

In the bag of little river pebbles  
Was a thin sliver of ragged glass.  
It was merely a bit of glass  
Got into the aggregate separator,  
Someone explained helpfully.

I tossed it away then, still unaware  
Of the miracle of holding a centuries old,  
Odd, small piece of glass in my hand,  
Dredged from some long extinct river-bottom  
That could only whisper stories  
That had no tongues left to tell;  
And above that, the miracle of finding  
Any human particulate matter there at all.

Patti Masterman

# Touch Me

Touch me with silence,  
Touch me with tears;  
Reach out your hand  
Across the years.

Whether ghost or demon,  
Your touch pure magic-  
For in the end  
Each life is tragic.

(written to We Played Some Open Chords and Rejoiced  
by A Winged Victory for the Sullen)

Patti Masterman

# Touch The Hearts Lightly

Touch the hearts lightly  
Wherever you go,  
Leave behind a warm feeling-  
Never be cold.

And don't be impatient;  
Life has waited for ages  
For you to read it's face,  
And to turn it's pages.

Patti Masterman

# Trained Chicken

I sit surrounded by the carnage of the day's efforts:  
Words dismembered, metaphors bled dry.  
I flap my wings in discomfiture at each glaring new  
Example of mechanical fallowness;  
Words hung out on clotheslines of manipulated  
Speech patterns, wherever they could squeeze in-  
Between the wet, moldy socks and twisted, bedraggled underwear.  
I am a trained chicken at best, trying to force something out  
At least partly digestible. As I peck out the sterile notes  
One by one, on my red toy piano,  
An automaton digs thru my internal filebanks, the flux of  
Catapulted words continually bouncing over the chickenwire;  
Escaping to flap heavily upward towards the trees:  
And there to look down beady-eyed at the  
Flopping, feathery decapitated blight.  
For good reason, I hail from a long line of extinct dinosaurs.  
Clucking with irritation, I see someone else has  
Already laid all the good eggs, the golden eggs;  
I can only scratch out some maggots and hope they hatch.

Patti Masterman

# Transmogrified

Transmogrified through the written word,  
I see myself through his agate eyes;  
Shall I take up then the sin of pen,  
Transmute smooth paper  
To invisible sighs?

Secrets suit him best of all;  
A blackness from which ink disappears;  
The word written down remains only a whisper,  
The heart has it's stalwart lock and key  
Which safeguards well it's timeless tales.

For he's the unturned phrase of a day,  
Which empties deep into me my own;  
And the faint, far echoes slowly returning,  
For a thousand years:  
Bedrock of my soul.

Patti Masterman

# Transubstantiation

In his dreams, a small dog  
Surely becomes a fierce lion;  
Just as in mine, I become  
The rare Abyssinian blossom  
Rumored to bloom only once,  
In a dozen desert springs, enclosing  
But one fragrant sip of nectar~  
Redolent with complicated aromas  
From every other of natures delicacies;  
Enough to preserve your life  
Till you find that cool slaking pool.  
Although my vision is a mirage,  
Since I am no rare bloom at all,  
Change happens most inconspicuously  
When it is at its most humble beginnings;  
As the most lowly element, to diamond turns,  
So do the most fragile, implausible visions  
Become incarnate, even as that one singularity  
Blossomed into love unimaginable.

Patti Masterman

# Trapped Between Worlds

The young child dies at maturity,  
but the defiant teenager lives on-  
transformed, quiescent.

The child as far from life, as the living from death-  
Where did you go to, child with such brazen hopes  
not realizing death comes to the young predictably?

Don't fear; I bludgeoned you with kind hands  
for all your uncanny knowledge  
forgotten upon the pain of dying.

Placidly, we washed your stilled heart,  
gathered stones your only monument  
(Though sometimes the dreams still come,  
like living wings trapped between worlds.)

Patti Masterman

# Travertine Grotto

There is a high desert cliff, off somewhere inside of me  
where you live, and at odd moments  
I fall off of it backwards, slowly  
that old eery feeling again  
like being in a dream  
and sliding back down some vertical slope  
in an automobile, all the forward momentum gone,  
wondering how the tires can keep clinging like magnets  
to nothing that's real-  
only wet grass and noisy gravel.

Expecting any minute that gravity will give up  
and I will begin to tumble end over end,  
to the bottom, crushed by the weight  
of what I was foolishly attempting,  
or else lose consciousness completely  
of where and what I was doing, just before

Insensible that it was you again, in my thoughts  
my attention somewhere indefinable, intangible;  
just some phantom in space, gliding seamlessly  
while searching thoroughly all the empty rooms, the echoing canyons,  
like ghosts can only be found in the present,  
but can only think in the past  
and have to catch up with themselves in time again, somehow.

Like looking for the only spot that feels remotely like home  
and always finding it was you there,  
waiting for me in some awkward, airless moment,  
awkward because it could never be anticipated;  
suddenly a half-turn of the clocks gear,  
the pendulum slows,  
the spokes of the wheel stabbed into stillness,  
and it swims up then, haltingly, wavering, before gradually solidifying-  
miracle, dream, or mystery:

You become a secret wormhole in space, or a travertine grotto  
with the tiniest of openings,  
through which you are occasionally spotted

moving about arcanelly,  
sound-proofed by your other existence,  
but still intact, to the eyes;  
a rudimentary wholeness, before you turn opaque again-  
all that is ever allowed-  
but somehow enough food  
for another night's dream.

Patti Masterman

# Treading The Tide

We tread the tide of joy  
In childhoods mirth of days?,  
Our spirits for to buoy  
Our rite of passage ways?.

We tread the tide of folly  
In middle years and late,  
And Mistletoe and Holly  
Can not put off our fate.

We tread the tide alone,  
That leads beneath the pier;  
The body's vacant throne  
That then becomes our bier.

Patti Masterman

# Treasure-Store World

A word forgets how to write itself  
A smile forgets who it first appeared for,  
Everything and nothing owns this treasure-store world.

Tears sprout where laughter used to play  
Everywhere are the ghosts of dry fountains  
Which once poured out existence like a pitcher.

Who has asked for nothing yet received all?  
Who hasn't tried to go home to the singularity again  
Only to recall that there is no center?

God and creation have no point of origin  
This is why everything JUST IS.

An embrace down here is how we remind one another  
We are the heirs of omnipotent cause;  
Planets jostle at our lightest touch,  
And at the knifelike sound of a scream  
One galaxy cannibalizes another.

Everything we know is a single exhalation  
In an endless stream of breaths:

Remember you are only breathing so that you can create,  
And all created things contain the conscious whole of creation  
Safely stored within them.

Patti Masterman

# Tremor And Twitch

Strange how the mind shifts  
to raw skullduggery,  
when things take a turn  
to bad, on the brink;  
Looking for clues  
where before there was laughter:  
Did they close their eyes  
just to hide the blink?

Was that a reference  
to a sport he indulges,  
or just an expression  
let go on the fly;  
The gut feelings wrench  
in the clutch of depravity-  
That if it exists,  
it indeed gives no sign.

The true psychopath can't really tell you  
When he's switched on the power and cut the thinking;  
He can only go by your tremor and twitch.  
So don't give a sign that you know now he's sinking-  
Just find your own way to get out of there quick.

Patti Masterman

# Trial Separation

Feeling like play, one day  
he plastered the curtains  
across her squared shoulders  
and tacked the rug to her knees.

He bundled all the 'works of art'  
prettier pictures as you never saw,  
then rolled them up neatly,  
where they could not be reached.

He slit her dress at elbow, wrist  
and inserted fine-stemmed goblets-  
rims up; one must not spill the wine,  
while the clock, he balanced upon her head:

Something she said, that he never forgot;  
if you're late, it's better to just be dead,  
then recalled how the wedding invitations  
strangely, had filled him with dread..

Patti Masterman

# Trick Of The Light

The light has its own tricks of color and refinement;  
Though all we may see is a pale disk, blazing overhead.

There's the light that hides sadness, arriving at sideways angles,  
Changing the diffraction of the axis of the lips.  
And the gleam of arrogance that blinds,  
Spellborn; before the full expression has even arrived.

Obscuring clouds ferry rainbows, after sudden gloomy downpours;  
Sunrises are fickle, shade hides things in plain sight.  
Under the mutable lamp of midday, relationships get scrambled,  
As unlikely lovers get stuck to their own sheets.

Would weather become boring, if it weren't always so personal?  
If we had no shelter from impermanent skies, would we remember  
That there is no unrelenting truth to be found in nature?

Could we remember that umbrellas, once turned inside out  
Can collect even more water, than our expensive shoes;  
And that if you dared to walk barefoot, earth must surely wound you?

Patti Masterman

# Trinket

No precious stone to adorn you;  
No priceless treasure to see you through-  
Only a little trinket I be,  
To bring thoughts of loving, Sweet, to thee.

So keep this near your heart, my Only  
And maybe, I hope, you'll never be lonely-  
Maybe you'll feel my love through this token  
And may your sweet heart never be broken.

Patti Masterman

# Troublemaker

The Cardinals fly, bright bits of red  
Around the trees where they were bred.

The Hawk glides far above everything,  
He orbits beneath grey clouds that hang.

The Doves sit silent, beside their mates  
And seem content to meet their fates.

But the Bluejay complains most bitterly-  
Cause the Woodpecker's in his Pecan tree.

Patti Masterman

# True Craft

The day is an anvil which beats out the soul  
The mettle is forged by the long days of toil  
The molds are all filled with the same molten ore  
And no part is greater than the strength of its core  
If the metal should blister, no working will matter  
When struck by the hammer, the piece will soon shatter  
If the welds are too shallow the thing will not last  
If the mettle is poor it cannot do its task  
Though painted or bored, its nature won't alter  
If the work ship is true, then it need never falter.

Patti Masterman

# Truth Is Dear

More arduous, the truth-strewn path;  
More work, with less to do it-  
But no wild lies, to keep the charge of:  
The beauty of truth shines through it.

Serenity is guard and keeper,  
And all the smiles are real;  
Between the truths of what we say  
Lies more truth: what we feel.

No mistrusting motives here,  
When everything's so clear:  
Let others have ambiguity-  
Because here, truth is dear.

Patti Masterman

# Trying To Learn A Truth So Pure

Long was the night when we met fate,  
Long was naught before love was hate;  
Long is the pain that we must endure  
Trying to learn a truth so pure.

Far is the hour when time's forgot,  
Far till men what they sowed have got;  
Far is the pain that we must endure  
Trying to learn a truth so pure.

Where are the faces, where have they gone  
When no one is left to sing their songs?  
Why the pain that must be endured-  
Trying to learn a truth so pure?

Patti Masterman

# Tug O' War O' Hearts

Tug o' war o' hearts,  
They should call this game;  
Takes two at least to play  
Or it is not the same,

Though others join in  
If there is rope enough;  
The winner takes the lead-  
And loser's in the mud.

Patti Masterman

# Turn Away To The Day

Turn away to the day, where the sky's hung with wonder  
Follow back the forests, whose paths swallowed time,  
For kinder are hearts, where emotion's not plundered;  
Love feasts a long time, on what's left behind.

Turn toward the laughter, that rings like forever,  
Returning the trust to the words we forgot.  
At first light of day, breathe a prayer not to sever  
Things now so dear, that with courage were bought.

Patti Masterman

# Twenty Carat Moon

There's a twenty carat moon  
Shining from your eyes,  
And morning's come too soon;  
I can hear it in your sighs.

Smitten lovers croon,  
While hand in hand together,  
Beneath a brazen moon  
They're crafting from the Ether.

A place where dreams can fly,  
To a heartbeat's soundless tune;  
And we'll never say goodbye;  
For this dream is coming true.

Patti Masterman

# Twilight

The twilight air is dancing,  
The moon is riding high,  
And shadowed clouds are prancing:  
The light is flying by.

The darkness now is winging;  
A cooler breeze bequeathed,  
And night the stars are bringing-  
For sun has sunk, beneath.

Patti Masterman

# Twisting The Knife Again And Again

I always like to save a few messages,  
A few 'Dear John' letters that I've received over the years,  
Whether only telepathically, or in written word.

I like to be able to twist the knife again,  
Whenever I feel in need of some punishing.

Also, I like to remember just how much I lost  
(I think it was a lot?)  
Maybe my dust can rest easier.

Patti Masterman

# Unborn Child

Unborn child, rocking in safe harbor,  
Counting the days of his corded life:  
Doesn't know he's being expelled  
From the nearest paradise on earth;  
Warm garden, of his mother's Eden-  
Knows nothing of screaming,  
Guns, or endless weeping.

Unborn child, better to be born dead  
Or miscarried, the first trimester  
Before all the days of your life arrive;  
Better to remain ignorant  
Of what on earth's called being alive;  
Mother's caresses can't tide the day,  
Such a shame, that you cannot stay-

But even inside, you're not safe.

Patti Masterman

# Unbreakable

In a reverse baptism  
she will wash out of you  
by degrees, like a moon straining to rise  
or an eclipse slowly gaining on the sun.

Minute by minute,  
you will learn one another's presence  
by touch, by smell.  
The milk almost insensible to you,  
a passion she roots for by instinct.

You will live, like one wedded to the other  
as the days come and go, one by one  
never doubting where you are going,  
as though the mapping were done in some secret place  
you do not even need to know about  
(While forgetting at the end,  
you go separate ways..)

That part is always a surprise and always  
an incomprehensibly long way off.  
Still, each day will never return again  
whatever its gains and losses.

Her shadows will etch your own face,  
and your hair will lose some of its color;  
nothing comes about without a price extracted.  
But we always get much more than we gave.

And throw away all the advice anyone ever gave you,  
and cover up the clock's face when you are too tired  
to stare at it anymore, for every day is yours until it ends:  
This unbreakable bond with life.

Patti Masterman

# Uncatalogued Small Acts Of Despair

It really bothers me when someone doesn't conclude their thought,  
their eyes following something I can't quite make out yet.  
From my vantage point, it's still up there somewhere, over the trees-  
or caught up in them- something they deemed it necessary that I should know-

But then they stop, and they close their mouths; all unknowing,  
or else in denial, that they left that kite just hanging uselessly  
somewhere in the still opaque skies.

Children are pointing somewhere now, as it floats overhead,  
an unmanned kite, of home and duration unknown.  
The sun reflects mutely off it's bare bones and tensile membranes;  
in imagination, an unseated kite can go on flying forever,  
but like a blind or unpiloted aircraft, even its seconds  
must be numbered.

And the unknown colors and possible direction haunts me,  
like a deathbed confession, that never made it out  
before the tongue froze forever to the palate.

Somewhere it's burning now, with a low flash of flame,  
it's small jettison of fuel only a black smudge, against the horizon-

The treasure is lost; the disclosure never came-  
no one was saved.  
No one was saved.

Patti Masterman

# Uncomplicated Time

My dreams now are tepid, composed as they are  
Of slackened sinews and uncomplicated time,  
New rift valleys to dam forgotten faults-  
Or the insidious extension, of skeletal fingers.

They call out in my dreams for more days,  
Their stories ended before the obvious conclusion;  
The lucky ones all died in their sleep-  
But others died awake, and never knew it.

Patti Masterman

# Under A Blue Moon

At night there's a blue moon, shining far above;  
And underneath the landscape turns lavender-gray  
Clouds throw still shadows upon the field  
Sleeping flowers gaze up where they lay  
With a singular eye of undisturbed dreaming  
In the hour that past and future embrace  
And sounds and sensations, of world and sleeper  
Meld again together, while leaving no trace.  
All beloved's find each other's arms again;  
The lost and the hunted both come at one call  
Even death can't resist those abysmal hours  
Though the rest of the time, there exists a wall:  
Except for the crazy, the world's kept divided  
And does not permit one to enter or leave  
Except he belong to the dead or the living;  
For the latter there's love; for the former, there's grief-  
The moon's only blue seen through your blue eyes, love:  
And I'm saving that moonlight, for time is a thief.

Patti Masterman

## Under Hades

A dark soul comes, will you give him your all,  
Sidestep the rainbow, to tour his world?  
Six seeds you've eaten, and you shall stay  
As six seeds sprout, into numberless days..

A dark soul comes, will you give him your all  
And bear his loving, held under thrall?  
Six months you'll bear him, but there's no beseech  
Under the rainbow, and out of reach..

Patti Masterman

# Under My Driftwood Body Of Stars

Your warm pearls caught beneath my throat-  
Diamond whittled, brightling fired;  
Across the ocean, I heard your whisper  
Under my driftwood body of stars.

Like ancient oars, my limbs rowed homeward  
Into the harbor, into port;  
And dazzling eyes, both full and ancient  
Are the promised ignition spark.

Patti Masterman

# Undiminished

Who else is watching on Christmas night?  
All the presents are scattered round;  
Happy chaos left, and now what a sight  
As the celebration's winding down.

Tired pets are passed out on the rug;  
Little waifs too, lying right where they fell-  
After the hours spent on presents and hugs,  
There's not much more remaining to tell.

Having plenty, and plenty to share,  
We don't delve too deeply to find a reason;  
Life is always full of too many cares;  
We're just grateful for the festive season.

Could it be, the ones who've gone on to forever,  
Left too early and missed the year's finish-  
Once in our circle; we'll see them here, never  
Again- but their measure of love's undiminished.

Patti Masterman

# Unfathomable Being

Unfathomable being,  
With love as its signature,  
Its eye all-seeing,  
To every small life, insure

A piece of its heart,  
To do the only work it know,  
And not stay put;  
Be taken back to the whole.

Unfathomable being  
Before time did exist,  
To everything gave its kiss,  
When all was still left in mist,

Its image graven everywhere,  
The mold formed every thing,  
On land and in the air-  
Of its lovely Father sang.

Patti Masterman

# Unfathomable Being - Haiku

What reality-  
Unfathomable being,  
That witness my breaths?

Patti Masterman

# Universal Dance

All pain can't be vanished  
All evil can't be vanquished-  
That was not included  
In the original contract.

You would have to go way back,  
Past the primordial ocean- start over again  
Take the pincers from the sea-crabs;  
Furrows, from the primate brain-

But you would never get the same result  
It was never about being only one polarity-  
Only the dance of two poles interweaving,  
Two opposites perfectly attracting

Only the perfect symmetry of two extremes  
Kissing, with a slight touch of asymmetry,  
Which broke loose the homeostatic ocean:  
Matter froze out into form then, from nonexistence.

Patti Masterman

# Universal Signal Mixer

I am the universal signal mixer  
On frequency h-u-m-a-n  
Intaking and excreting vibrations  
Decoding and synthesizing inputs  
Receivers attuned and continuously engaged  
Transposing matter and energy  
Into light patterns of thought  
Touching all waveforms  
As a lover touches himself and others  
Energy frozen into matter  
Love frozen into form  
Stretched to the very limits  
On the blueprint of time, eternity  
As dreamed by, yours truly

Patti Masterman

# Universe For Sale

Universe for sale; hardly used.

Well recycled, with resultant complexity of life forms-

Call SETI with best offer.

Terms: nothing down, everything comes with it;

Complete universal kit for life included, free of charge;

Mix-ready amino acids and lightning generators widely available.

No refund, no return.

Use at own risk.

Find the advertisement in any book of poetry,

Home Office Earth, Milky Way Galaxy,

The Local Group, Virgo Supercluster, Inc.

Inquire there about possible future merger with the Andromeda Galaxy

Patti Masterman

# Universe Holds Your Body

Universe holds your body  
Just like a dollhouse doll;  
Like the birdcage holds the bird,  
And so, becomes a wall.

But soul's a thing from other worlds,  
It flies a freer range,  
And keeps its own songs inwardly;  
Its feathers never change.

Patti Masterman

# Unknown Terrain

Am I my own lesson, growing distant  
Owning nothing, owing everything  
The places I have stepped over; impasses, hurrying me,  
Slowing me down, holes made to fall in,  
Shouldering faults of weakness  
Speaking languages I could not have written  
The word I a curse, the word you a blessing  
(We are hard of hearing only certain sounds.)

Every second every breath houses unknown visitors  
Opens to a trail to where I have not been  
Are we going there, or are we not?  
How far is it, for the dark is treacherous.  
How could we live so long and not know every direction by now?  
Our hands talk, our eyes do not.  
Our faces smile, but our mouths hang slack  
Like vagrants sighting police with night sticks.

Half of our emotion caught out after dark  
Blurry like famous paintings nobody understands  
(We're old now, and secrets are over-rated.)  
But afraid to move afraid to think,  
Darkness coalesces ahead of us  
Like actions we've yet to regret.

(The worst thought: When I become frail, I will know it.)

Patti Masterman

# Unlucky

Some people's nearness stuns your life;  
Their eyes are loaded like bad dice,  
Their presence tells the spirit lies-  
And when they leave, something has died.

Some people's luck will make yours go,  
As their clutches on you grow.  
Some people are a toxin, slow;  
Engines seize and rods get thrown.

Some people are a curse in breath,  
And their touch like living death;  
All your secrets are not kept-  
Wind is all that you'll have left.

Patti Masterman

# Unmitigated Verse

Don't ever read these poems  
They are not literary fait accomplis

I am not board certified to write poetry

My relatives are inbred  
Some of them were even from Arkansas

I am not a wizard of words  
Hiding behind the curtain of degree

It is only your own time you waste here

Don't ask me to mail a check for lost hours  
Any mental illness that ensues  
After being exposed here

Or if you break out in a mixed pox, of metaphors

Worse, if you catch this virus  
And begin to write unmitigated verse  
Tangled in aphorism and drowned in simile

And nobody wants to read it

Realize then, that you are committing poetry-  
Which is an indefinable offense

Under the statutes of pabulum.

Patti Masterman

# Unroot My Heart

Unroot my heart:  
From the bougainvillea  
Cut the strings and fibers  
Of the sweet pea  
Unvine the clematis:  
I need to put down new roots  
Some place far from here

Where rose thorns are not hidden  
Where things remain, once planted  
And where I do not need  
To forget always the names  
Of those forgotten: cast aside  
When nature does her  
Ruthless pruning.

Patti Masterman

# Unseen Worlds

There are people to whom  
all your words are just the pause  
that's interrupting their own talking

There are others that see  
the pearls and poisons of your days  
as just another act that curtains rise and fall upon

But to some, we are like the lone bird  
that's slowly disappearing against the farthest horizon  
even as unseen worlds grow large inside of it

Patti Masterman

# Unsolved Enigmas: Spontaneous Combustion

I had a dream my hands were turning black,  
First just around the nails;  
Then later, other parts; sort of a hit-and-miss pattern.  
It looked like the first signs of spontaneous combustion.  
I knew from reading, that liquor is often  
Suspected as a factor in the chain reaction  
Which is causative of, or results in  
The final carbonization of the body.  
At least I don't smoke.  
I woke up in a cold sweat, but my two hands  
Still were burning, on fire, just like in the dream  
I thought, oh my god, this must be how it begins  
Poured all the tequila down the sink.  
I'm still watching my hands though...

Patti Masterman

# Untamed

Into our dreams, into our dreams  
Again and again we embark,  
Such dreams and fantasies we enjoy  
From sunrise until dark.

Witches and fairy godmothers,  
Elves and mountain trolls;  
With good guys and bad guys, all  
We nourish well our soul.

We men are but large children grown,  
Whose brains remain the same-  
And though our lives are cultured now,  
Our minds will never tame.

Patti Masterman

# Untested Wings

And what of the dreams you left behind,  
to be where you are; was it worth the cost

Did you trade your soul for someone else's,  
to live their life, count yours as lost?

Everyone dreams of being some other,  
even the one you so long to be;

For everyone aches to fly far horizons,  
stretching out new, untested wings.

Patti Masterman

# Until The Stars Grow Bright

We're going to the moon, Alice-  
Pack your things, be swift;  
They're holding the ship for us,  
Gonna give us both a lift.

We're going to the moon, Alice-  
There's room for folks like us,  
A mellow place is there waiting;  
No need to make a fuss.

We're going to the moon, Alice-  
But we'll keep earth in our sight,  
And watch her from a distance  
Until the stars grows bright.

Patti Masterman

# Untitled

Excuse me- is this your undescended testicle?  
Oh sorry dear; quite, quite  
That's my string along sentence, yes  
Whose are these dangling puns?  
And the intermittent clauses  
Just seem to be getting more in the way-  
And all these prepositions filling up the room

Patti Masterman

# Untold Worlds

We all come in naked, alone  
Kicking our cherub feet  
Eyes taking it all in  
We seem to fall so far from heaven  
Like solitary stars  
One by one  
As we grow up into our own fledgling orbits.

Life lived like paupers  
Straining for food, and liberty  
Each of us limited by aloofness,  
Chains we face, every direction  
Innocence fled farther away  
As the heavens nightly blaze  
In their eternal dance,  
Invisible beyond self-enclosing walls.

We leave all alone  
Still naked beneath the sheets  
Eyes frozen in their last frame  
We hope to be arriving soon at heaven's door  
Like smoking incense must go upward  
But nobody can make us any promises  
From the chaos here.

Every man, on his own trajectory  
Each his own hard-bitten tragedy  
Nothing promised, nothing gained  
Till we circle untold worlds, again.

July 31 2010  
written to Requiem for a Tower/Escala

Patti Masterman

# Untraceable

I breathe in the spirit of Christmas past  
Again, unpacking those familiar things:  
Through several generations, they have passed-  
Of love, loss, and magic, they richly sing.

The gossamer wings of the angels still glow  
Already antique, even when I was new:  
The long years usage beginning to show-  
But with childhood fascinations yet imbued.

Most revered mysteries, observed alone  
Touching old relics, so irreplaceable:  
Venerated histories, even older grown-  
Souls pathway to soul, as ever untraceable.

Patti Masterman

# Unwritten Words

The teeth are more than bone,  
The heart is more than home

I knew others once, who loved me;  
I loved them like the wind, the moon-  
A force always upon me.

A life's not made in stone,  
Though unwritten words get hone

Inside our limbs, our beating heart,  
The cells remember- cannot speak  
Of touches, are no more.

Patti Masterman

# Up Above

Up above, there's a moon  
cleaves to earth,  
like a lover;  
A shiny new orb there  
that delicately hovers.

Below, there's a cloud  
in the sky,  
sailing high,  
As the sigh of a bird  
under cover.

And inside me, are wings  
fighting hard,  
just to sing;  
and a song that belongs  
to a lover.

Patti Masterman

# Upright Lands

The heart holds periscopes of intangible void,  
Stereoscopic wavelengths known only to flesh;  
The coiled cells lined up like binocular buoys  
On the restless waves, that being disgorges.

The lights lighting heaven won't remember one name,  
And all paths fill in, when far footsteps fade;  
But across the space, feel the echo of lives  
That once brushed ours, in a near distant past.

Infinity sweeps the edges away,  
We walk in the dumb dust of those who knew  
A different day and hour- and yet the same  
Endlessness above self-oceans obtuse.

Eccentricity forms the shoreline of man,  
There is no normal in our pounded-surf blood;  
But the strangeness we knew, in our nursery cribs  
Is portent to victories, in upright lands.

Patti Masterman

# Urban Sprawl

I had a half sister named Arley Bell  
I had a half brother named Perry Lee  
She's dead now; murdered, dismembered  
Counted among some serial killers claim to fame  
And brother, in the psych hospital  
Around the same time  
But I don't know any more-

They had a different father  
There were older brothers we shared too  
And I found I had other sisters, raised by other families.  
Growing up alone was a long, lonely affair  
But as soon as I was done growing up  
All these names began to pop up-  
People I'd never met, have yet to meet-

And now that I'm old, we've grown even father apart  
If possible: how can you join hands, minds  
With people you never shared a childhood  
Or a memory with; who never met your eyes  
At the end of a death- or even a joke?

It now seems certain I will die  
Never laying eyes on another living human  
Who shares the same dna: hair, eyes, bone structure..  
Except that my child is so much like me:  
We're one soul in twin bodies  
That it feels almost foolish to waste time  
Wondering about the others.

Patti Masterman

# Urbem Mortis

I like how the sanitary graveyard,  
Hides the fertile rot beneath;  
Above though it be pleasant, quiet-  
What is that strange brown peat?

There beautiful flowers bloom aground,  
Though in truth, they're mostly plastic;  
And the odd weeds, upon the mound-  
They're growing something drastic?

Some people come to see the graves,  
Can't find their way around;  
If they've no time to search, the knaves  
Should not profane hallowed ground.

I love the tombstones standing still,  
As though waiting for forever;  
And how the lawns are kept so green-  
But no, if you please- don't till.

I like it till the sun goes down,  
And then I like some other place;  
It's better not to hang around;  
Some of them might know my face.

Patti Masterman

# Vacancy

My heart has got a vacancy,  
It's cleaning out its rooms;  
One full bath and kitchenette,  
Half price, till Sunday noon.

My other renter left this space,  
He left in quite a hurry;  
His mental state was woeful,  
All conflict, angst and worry.

I had thought the suite of rooms  
Was nice enough for one,  
But he was heard complaining  
There was not much view of sun.

He only saw the moon in there,  
But kept the curtains closed;  
He was afraid of neighbors stares  
When he waked or dozed.

He had another life, I'm sure,  
And quarters, that were better;  
And so this morning, on the door  
I found his dear-John letter.

So I am in the lurch you see;  
I've moved his things all out.  
I'd like a renter, same as he,  
But now I'm filled with doubt.

Perhaps my place is too old now,  
The furnishings seem worn;  
And in the very midst of it-  
The place feels quite forlorn.

Patti Masterman

# Vainglorious Ending

The whole world longs to fill itself up with drama,  
Even a child's learning to tie his shoelaces  
Could occupy several long minutes, easily;  
And a divorce could hold our attention till afternoon,  
Until the cascade of emotions has frozen over more solidly  
And when the motion ceases, there is much less to be noticed.

A spoon's casual relationship with the China  
Is best remembered by acoustic clanging noises;  
A knife, as it pierces some flesh,  
Muting it to the same tonal key  
As the screams that echo off the black, polished metal  
Of a casket passing quietly beside us,  
While the deeper silence stays locked inside it,  
The reversed sounds of an entire lifetime  
Condensed down to the muffled scrabblings  
Of a few rooting insects.

Patti Masterman

# Vanity Will Dress When Other Clothes Fade Away

You will live on forever in this old vanity set, they say;  
For you will have filled it with so many hopes and dreams  
Here before its mirrors, on this cheap rosette,  
Though it a poor imitation, of something better.

And these soft-closing drawers would never hold-  
But a spirit has such little volume anyway,  
Its lifting can scarcely be measured any normal way.

The dreams were always real. Your spirit will find rest  
Among these archaic odds and ends,  
The remnants of a life once lived;  
Old things have a hidden taproot to the past,  
Unlike things not rooted nearly so deep.

Some things will endure until the atoms lose their grip  
And wander away, to become other substances similar-  
Or else give up, and go back then to dust,  
Until found by another time and need.

Patti Masterman

# Vast Leaped The Candle's Flame

Vast leaped the candle's flame,  
Kissing grotesque shadows.  
Blinking eye of the holocaust  
Enshrouded by shards of night.

Drunken fevers illuminate all secrets.  
There is one hour between darkness and dawn,  
When the beauty of desperate things eclipses time  
And destroys the expectations of reason.

Patti Masterman

# Ved'Ma

A Russian can take a stilted verse,  
Born bow-legged, by a frozen lake  
And spank it's rosy cheeks, till spring;  
Play it like a well-tuned balalaika,  
Warmed by umber-tumbled fires,  
While prays an icon fresh from casting  
Bent from a jewel-encrusted lyre,  
Swathed in firs, in the finest troika  
In tall forests, thick with pine;  
So that recited soft, at sunset-  
Once each day- soon you are mine.

Patti Masterman

# Victorian Death Portrait: A Mother And Four Sisters

From someplace too far to travel,  
Sit four sisters and their mother, kneeling for a picture:  
One of them's dead, but for the portraits sake,  
They have arranged her there, in an ingenious pose.  
The only telling fact, is how her head lies upon her knees,  
While the rest are staunchly upright, all squatting in a neat line.  
Her dark eyes remain open, swallowing despair,  
As only the dead know how to do so well and so unashamedly.

The front of the train is formed by the mother,  
Smiling sadly back at the eldest daughter,  
A tall, gaunt strong looking girl with sun-burnished hair,  
Who smiles evenly in reply. The dead one's knees rests  
Against her own back,  
And there seems some secret hidden behind their smiles,  
Which one is afraid to probe.

The dead girl is next, hunched over, arms on knees, and behind her,  
Propping her sister up with thick, chubby knees, is another sister,  
This one heavysset, sweating, constrained with effort-  
Every feature straining to the task: keeping her sister upright,  
From falling over to one side or the other.  
She has the same dark hair as the dead one, who was much smaller,  
Perhaps having withered away before death, from an illness.

Behind the larger girl, as though nearly forgotten,  
Is a little mouse of a girl; with paler colored hair, like the front sister,  
And a fearful look is upon her face, as she keeps her head ducked safely  
Behind the larger girls back, which she clings tightly against-  
Perhaps blocking in this way the appearance  
Of her dead sister, in front of them.

Behind the family are many miles of prairie, broken only by the fence;  
Some fence long ago rusted to nothingness,  
As they themselves are long turned to soot or dust.  
The invisible house probably completely vanished too,  
Whether it were of sod or rocks or wood,  
Giving no hint as to even where it stood.  
This single, slowly and painfully frozen moment,

Out of the whole of their strangely enigmatic lives-  
Of beauty, vigor, industry, hope and courage-  
Is all that remains now.

Patti Masterman

# Video-Magic

Video-magic: come see my life,  
There's motion and meaning, the living is rife,  
Video-magic, nothing comes close-  
Moment to moment, the magic just flows..

Patti Masterman

# View In Parallax

One night the very sky opened up above;  
And there was the projector for my whole life~  
Spinning and whirring away thru the reels,  
Mad black and white inkblots did the tango  
Frames displaying in a choppy too-fast stream.  
And the dead moved through those movies too,  
Trapped forever in two dimensions  
I hope the film doesn't break before it's time-

Patti Masterman

# Viewing The Eclipse

I pierced through the cardboard,  
To allow the eclipse of your love  
To show through me  
Onto flimsy paper.

They told me to look straight on  
Could cause blindness-  
But I'm not sure that a single sight of you  
Would not suffice for the rest of my life.

Jan.1 2010

Patti Masterman

# Violet

Violet, in her blue dress  
Of fresh, giddy dreams,  
Flounces under waves of wind;  
Twirling and bowing  
To dandelion greens.

Throwing caution to the breeze,  
Unveils her heart  
With envious ease;  
A natural flirt, and temptingly close  
To feathery pink mimosa groves.

Patti Masterman

# Viral Imagination

A face is looking in on some words  
Which I have left in a certain room, hallway  
Down three doors and to the left

A soul I never knew of, had not met  
Probably would never had crossed steps with  
But we were together for a time

Someone saw my core, without a saw  
Saw my brains adhesion's, without an awl  
Walked inside the corridors of my being

Words and ideas are the only immortality I know of  
They have a reality and presence that's everywhere  
They can cross entire universes in a single thought-wave

Though you try to contain it, though you try  
To mute it, it only shouts louder; never stops watching  
Waiting it's chance, through the tiniest gap

Then they left my words behind, and continued on  
To write their own words again, never realizing  
My words had somehow slipped in among theirs..

Patti Masterman

# Visionary, Poet, Dreamer Of Dreams

Shalom the Freedman didn't fail, he never did,  
He always spoke clearly from his heart  
And he can never be faulted for that.

So many men mute, won't speak; or can't,  
Live day to day in their small skin-suit,  
Never look out eye holes, or sew them shut.

But Shalom had eyes, and he used them too,  
Wrote everything down in a golden book;  
It's there in his soul, wherever you look:

He was a lover, for life was his love,  
Kept holding her close, kept talking her in;  
A pen was placed within his hand

But he is not dead, and his words live.

Keep your words close by and never discount them,  
Some things kept from view while we're still living,  
That every fate marks the course of its end,  
That every letter on some cloud attends,

And a dreamer must dream, and a poet must write,  
Alone in the dark, in the clear star-light,  
He writes what he knows; or else what will be-  
He's writing the truth, of what others must see.

Patti Masterman

# Visiting With Friends

Visiting with friends, I spied the paintings  
On the walls; every room I chanced upon  
Even in the bathroom, was hung a still-life:  
Flowers from a clay-fired vase, that hung.

I told the hostess that there was a beauty  
I'd found within the paintings on the wall;  
I said that the bathroom artist was my favorite  
She told me then she had done them all.

Since my childhood, I've harbored many secrets  
A lack of reason, of a certain kind:  
But since that day, I'm careful with my comments,  
So my brainless state, they will not mind.

Patti Masterman

# Vivid Distortion

Once you've given your all,  
You're off the hook. No need to grovel  
Or apologize, make up, ingratiate-  
No, you're finished now. The book is closed.  
The tale is ended; time for a new chapter  
New story, new plot.  
You're just treading water, otherwise  
Falling back down into the well,  
Going backward on the trail.  
Just be thankful that lessons concluded.  
Don't get caught standing frozen,  
In front of the fun-house mirror  
Crying over the past-  
There's too many reflections in there,  
And you can't tell which one is the real one  
But you still have to go out the same exit  
And you still leave, all alone  
Don't sell out to anyone.

Patti Masterman

# Voice From The Future

There's a voice that sometimes knows the future  
It can speak up without warning  
Like the colorful fall day we took my grandparents to get groceries  
Somehow Grandpa managed to exit the car  
He appeared on the back porch before I realized it  
I always made a point of hugging and kissing them both  
When we parted. But the timing was off.

He stood on the porch and waved, with a little smile,  
As if to say, next time- next time we'll hug.  
As I raised my hand to wave back, the long sleeping voice woke up  
I don't know where it came from, but I heard it say clearly:  
You're never going to see him alive again. I was full of wonder.  
But he was so real and full of flesh and blood right before me  
I wish now I'd run around to the porch and hugged him anyway.

It was curious, but I said nothing; I was in mid-adolescence then.  
Two days later on the weekend, I had an all night dream  
About his death and his absence; fierce grieving in my sleep  
A few days later, arriving home from school,  
I found the house locked. My mother had gotten the call,  
Rushed over to his house to find him already gone.

Later I reflected the dream told me as much:  
The front door of the house had opened, and six men  
Came out, carrying his coffin  
He was already dead, as the voice had promised  
I had grieved so much in my dream, my tears were dried up  
He wasn't sick before his death. I never remembered voice or dream  
For two weeks: the tracheotomy stain on the carpet  
Was transfixing- where his life was already draining away.

Then I remembered a story my mother told me  
Once upon a childhood, I had cried all the way home  
From my grandparents house. Seems I had forgotten  
To kiss Grandpa goodbye. In some versions,  
She said she had to turn the car around and take me back  
Because my tears were cascading so copiously  
That last day when I missed goodbyes, I was too old to cry

But as a child, pride never blocked my vision.

Patti Masterman

# Voices When Soft Music Breaks- With Apologies To Shelley

Voices, when soft music breaks  
Vibrates through the molding  
Noises, whenever the ears are shocking  
Hang beneath the ceiling's flocking.

Notes, whenever the movement's ended  
Fade sideways, all up-ended;  
And too, the gallery's endless mumbles  
Seem as though will never slumber.

Patti Masterman

# Vomit Through The Looking Glass

Modern day, low vibe dysfunctionality  
Teeth chattering boom boxes  
Broken bottle messages, afloat in the sewer  
Dehydrated, mutated song lyrics  
That can't fly anywhere, and there's no music-  
So what's the point of it all?  
Fill to the beaker line with some profane gibberish,  
Swish it around a few times and- Voila!  
Another reeking creation is born  
Trying to prove who's the more burned out  
The more jaded, past caring, past hope  
It might be a surprise, but everyone feels down sometimes.  
It's much too late to patent that, I'm afraid  
I say, these poems should relocate to some other solar system  
Some meteor bombarded, crater pocked  
Parking lot, full of smoking wrecks,  
In some craggy ex-galaxy, at the rats-assed edge of time:  
The one still peopled with dinosaurs;  
Where mammals just didn't make the cut-  
They will surely be appreciated there  
By the ruling reptilian-brained elite, at home amid the chaos.  
Vomit in a beaker:  
I just don't get it.  
If I happened to step in it by accident  
I would have to expunge it from my soul.

Patti Masterman

# Voyager

Tiny, inviolate spark  
Born in the eye of god  
Before eternity started revolving

I would be your harbor  
For the long months of winter  
My docks are bereft of boat

Lonely and long are the nights  
Fain would I feel your nudging  
Happily lay awake for your prancing

My resume is in my breath  
Desire beats in my breast  
Fill the void, start the voyage.

Patti Masterman

# Wait For Me

Wait for me down that dusty road  
Soon I'll be coming and you'll see  
A thousand summers glowing  
In my eyes, with not a cloud in sight  
Sunsets prisms fully ripened there  
Shooting stars on their way  
To daybreak's edge  
Smiling moonlight tinged cheeks  
Perfumed with the west wind;  
And pastures of bejewelled wildflowers  
Tinting my outstretched hands  
My heart a heaving oceans rhythm  
Increasing with each new wave  
The spray of salted tears  
From the ancient bedrock reservoir  
Of miracles, magic, and mayhem  
Let me grasp hold of you at last  
Before we are swept away  
By the impertinence of time.

Patti Masterman

# Waiting

She waited in the hallway,  
She waited in the den;  
Waiting and time crossed its arms  
Just like she would wait for a friend.

The waiting became an existence,  
Then subsistence, then nothing more.  
But the hands of the clock resumed moving  
When the door key entered the door.

That key which unlocked the parlor,  
A room wrapped with many charms;  
But their eyes were blind to its wonders  
She was already wrapped in his arms.

Patti Masterman

# Waiting For Eternity

Like sheets hung in a haunted house  
Impersonating local ghosts,  
The clothes of the dead, too, still hang there  
Nothing ever moves now, no more jostling for space  
No laundry or dry cleaning tabs  
No tailoring, or replacing lost buttons;  
When buttons fall off, it's like a tree falling  
In the forest, where there is none to hear it.  
Lying primly against the pleats and darts, the tucks and ruffles,  
The empty folds are limp, almost an accusation  
The fancier things are no more privileged here,  
Than the common working clothes  
Daylight and moonlight now out of reach forever,  
Only time and dust will fade these colors  
And the moths who find their way in will enjoy an occasional meal  
The life the garments once possessed, vicariously  
Has left watermarks; a stigmata upon them-  
That could speak of the closeness of a warm, living body  
Which filled and moved them,  
Leant to them its history:  
Stray tears which rolled down inside the collars, and the laughter:  
Coming without warning, moving the seams back and forth;  
A game of musical chairs no one noticed.  
The faint glow of the days outside, arriving and fading away,  
Never comes into the dark recesses of the clothes closet;  
Could be in another world, for all the difference it makes.  
Did the pants ever wish that they could run,  
Jump onto the funeral pyre, too?  
Did the shirts wish they could fold themselves forever,  
Into one last embrace? Did the dresses hang longer,  
With an elegant remorse?  
But no, there they remain as usual  
Suspended from their metal gallows  
The decomposition of the clothing  
Lasting something very near to eternity

Patti Masterman

# Waiting For The Train

I'll die inside this boxy, toothsome world,  
Someday when frost is white with age,  
When birds hop from foot to foot, against the cold,  
And when other people that I don't know now, inhabit my life,  
As if I were only a train, departing for some other adventure;  
Whispering low the stations departure times,  
The average length of time  
For tons of steel to overcome gravity's inertia.

Death may seem the enemy for years, but eventually  
It can no longer be avoided, like the tax collector;  
Death and taxes, you can't outrun either one forever.  
And some tired day, that began much like any other,  
My face might turn, to fall toward the window  
As if by accident; but really  
I'm only seeing my train, as it finally arrives,  
And when the time is right,  
And the birds suddenly are quiet..

The train begins to pull away very slowly, gathering steam  
Perhaps toward another adventure; or only  
Towards long, lumbering sleep.  
The dead never complain of their fate;  
But only lie in peace, and wait..

Patti Masterman

# Waiting Till The Fat Lady Sings

Certain people should swallow their tongues,  
before embarrassing themselves again.  
They say Poop Eaters Anonymous  
is still looking for a few good men.

Some people will die quite young,  
and leave behind a nice-looking corpse.  
Sometimes you're the head of the animal;  
other times, you're the back of the horse.

I insulted my image in the mirror,  
I thought it looked a little bit off.  
It's not the coffin, they carry you off in;  
but the fact that you died, of a cough.

I stayed late and played very hard,  
while they laughed, as though were a game;  
The new rules are, make up as you go,  
and never, ever give them your real name.

We're shallow, predictable, and fickle;  
our species is well past it's prime-  
And if the fat lady sings, we'll buy the whole farm;  
if you're rich enough, nothing's a crime.

Patti Masterman

# Wake-Up Call

Marriage is a wake-up call of limitless proportion,  
Things that once seemed natural assume a strange distortion;  
And although things are different, there is no need to grieve,  
But after having sex, you'll notice- they don't leave.

Patti Masterman

# Waking Or Dreaming

Slowly, as if from great distance  
Or swimming underwater, in murky depths,  
I recognize symbols from somewhere even deeper:  
A pitcher, a bowl, water for cleansing;  
Purity of body, purity of motive.

Scissors to cut hair, a novitiate of denial-  
Where do these rites hide in daylight,  
Why do I know them so well the first time?

What else lurks in my untrodden mind,  
Who put it there, while dreaming or awake?  
If in dreams, when will I finally waken?  
Or if in waking, of what use then the dreams?

Patti Masterman

# Waltzing For Roses

waltzing for roses, you brush against my cheek,  
thinking I'll not notice, my mind is so far;  
thorns discounted till we've gained the prize:  
your touch draws me on, until first daylight,  
we waltz in the sheets, like a virgin's first dance,  
petal soft turns electric, then you start to pant  
as I bear you along, on waves of raw silk;  
my wound is your pleasure; and you are my milk.

Patti Masterman

# Want You Forever

Want you forever, treasure from heaven,  
Want you beside me, close to my heart;  
To make of our days and nights; a wedding-  
Make up for the hours, we've spent apart.

With you beside me, I'd never falter;  
With your love inside me, would never halt;  
You are the yoke, and you are the halter;  
With you ever near, no pain could assault.

You the first song, of early still morning;  
Of sunbeam's sure progress; you are the guide.  
You the frail hope, in this soul's first dawning;  
You are both moon, and the far reaching tide.

My tears on your face; my open eyes, wet:  
Our body's as close, as two souls could get.

Patti Masterman

# Wanton Days Of Living

There are angers never answered,  
There are wishes never seen,  
There are births of things unwanted  
In the presents time will bring.

There's a song that's gone forgotten,  
And a book was never read;  
In these wanton days of living  
There are things, were never bred.

Patti Masterman

# Warning From The Surgeon General

Tomorrow it is your birthday  
I haven't made the cake  
I bought no balloons

It's a memorable occasion  
We always celebrated  
Wrapping presents was fun

Load the car, it's a party on wheels  
Quick put the balloons up  
While she's in the bathroom

Hurry light the candles  
How old is she again?  
I hope she likes her presents

Life was so rich  
When you were living-  
But it's no use having a party now

At least we celebrated while we could  
This is what death does and it isn't pretty  
So love now while there's still time

Patti Masterman

# Wars Are Null, Void Rejections Of Humanity

Wars are null, void rejections of humanity;  
Nondisclosure of pain, irregardless of censure-  
The missiles fired, from many miles away  
Don't have to see, what agony has to say..

Only cowards battle beyond hope of touch,  
Unsure what targets their bombs have really blown-  
Propagandists always say, it was a bull's-eye-  
Because none of their relatives will have to cry..

Patti Masterman

# Was The Apple So Red?

Was the apple so red and fragrant,  
That none could resist its lure;  
Or was it the bane of ignorance,  
Which only one bite could cure?

Was Adam the victim of Eve,  
And was Eve the patsy of snakes?  
In the intricate world of mankind,  
The Eve's are the price, of partaking.

Now nakedness is our undoing,  
It's crime to be seen in the streets;  
And but for that first bitten apple,  
All shame and passion's impeached.

And but for that first bitten apple,  
God had stayed inside the man;  
Possessed both, of singular purpose-  
Who knows what futures they spanned?

Patti Masterman

# Was The Dream Time Of The Alien Prince

Was the dream time of the alien Prince:  
Came searching, through my distant lands  
An oasis to my clammering hands  
And for my fitful, seeking eyes;  
He knew was for him, the countless sighs  
For he abides in a boundless grace  
His smile extending to timeless space.

His face could contain the wild whirlwind;  
The mountain peak, to him ascends  
And we can do nothing hurried or fast:  
In a thousand years, brave at last  
I'll stretch enough, to reach his foot  
As love still just a tender root;  
And during his reply, many epochs will grow

To grant his benediction, as the far winds blow  
There we shall own whole eons of time,  
And all the planet's soul will rhyme  
Like vast lords of a mercantile Earth;  
We'll sing of a world, once gave love worth,  
To love made in the old familiar way,  
In all the places, that love held sway.

My wedding dress, the season's throne  
Our cathedral, the vaulted heaven's home  
Time is what we have always had  
And to it's end, we will not be sad:  
For at the end of time, he'll carry me  
Across those portals of time, that be  
To find the primordial song of songs-  
The one the heart most purely longs.

Patti Masterman

# Was Yesterday Just As Important?

Was yesterday just as important?  
Oh my, oh me; I think it was,  
Though today summarily pushes out  
The limits of yesterday, just because-

Just because that day is past,  
And I know everything, I knew then;  
Plus, what's more, there's things today  
I'll know tomorrow, when this day ends.

Patti Masterman

# Watch-Ghost

Imagine the ghost I would become,  
The ghost that's yet to be,  
While my body sleeps the sleep  
Of death- yet I am free.

Imagine eyes, that watch the dawn  
Un-cumbered by the frame  
That bore, close to a century-  
But no more claims a name.

Imagine loving presence guards  
The living flesh of one,  
Who once upon the earth had forged  
A bond: in blood was done.

Imagine me with you always,  
More than ever before;  
No counterfeit of life or death  
Can ever close that door.

Patti Masterman

## Water And Fire - Triolet

Water and fire oppose each other;  
Sing the transmutation song  
Air flows like water; it's another  
Water and fire oppose each other,  
And Earth's our gentle-giant mother,  
Matter sings it's song life-long  
Water and fire oppose each other;  
Sing the transmutation song.

Patti Masterman

# Water And Oil

I've learned not to trust the status quo  
While everyone's in fits  
Over the latest custom of culture  
I'm left curiously colder  
Unmoved

I distrust popular movies, popular mindset  
Political correctness and preaching  
(I can get that in church for free)  
I've found through hit and miss  
That I prefer the borderline

I'll just keep to the barely legal  
Minimum and maximum, thanks-  
No axles; or twenty of them  
I find profitability graphs a bore  
And I'll never have to fear popularity

Maybe in a hundred years I'll realize my error  
When that humdrum stuff is still limping along  
Under it's own predictable steam  
And I'm dead, forgotten dust  
I'll be much happier then, as dust-

A fine dust, settled down imperceptibly  
On one hit wonders, and unsurprising blitzkriegs  
Water and oil can never mix  
So go on and surprise me  
I'll be waiting.

Patti Masterman

# Water Me Down

Water me down, water me down; tread me under-  
For life's too long, the precious things get sundered;  
Take me someplace safe, where we'll find the way,  
Where there's no difference, between night and day.

Water me down, water me down; tread me under-  
The sky holds back a lot of thunder;  
Take me somewhere safe, where love gets born,  
Let me bloom on the rose, that has no thorn.

Patti Masterman

# Waves

Cool the water splashes, playing from curve to line,  
Jet blue, like a fountain, flows on the heels of time

Waves rise full hull to heaven, slowing the climb at last,  
Almost touching clouds, as ever they swell so fast

Sparkling with crystal presence, tides of a murmuring call,  
Then crashing down with violence, as they begin the fall

Driftwood caresses ankles, there on the shores of sand,  
Left seashells free for taking, in the smooth hands of man.

Patti Masterman

# Ways To Magically Disappear From Life

Step into the mirror; just go with faith:  
The mirror is another dimension that you can enter into  
And gracefully approach it, not faltering  
And lift your shoe and step through it, to the other side  
From where you will see your life going in reverse  
Until that last hiccup, before you were ever born.

Step over the bridge; and do not cling  
With hands desperately squeezing, breaking off fingernails,  
Holding to that last slippery scream, and falling inelegantly  
Like a wisp of a ghost, once suspended above the river  
Which people will see and then say  
Did you see that? It must have been a bird.

Step out of this life and into the new one  
And break all the mirrors, and bust up the reflections,  
And do not fall headlong into the panic-stricken past,  
Lost in mourning, for whatever it has now become.

Do not look backwards or ahead, but inside  
Do not look to be saved, do not look to be reclaimed,  
And only then, all the miracles of creation  
Will be released from Time's distant cradle  
To come wherever they are needed.

Patti Masterman

# We Are All Already Dead And Yet

We are all already dead and yet,  
having forgotten how to die,  
we wander abandoned avenues till dawn  
wondering what all the fuss was about.

Wondering why we still live on, wondering  
what life is, or if it was only a random dream,  
in the formaldehyde preserved brain-pan  
of some mad-man, the present all that was left over  
from his delusional impressions of a real world.

We are all already dead and yet- and yet-  
life seems more precious and improbable  
with each passing year.

Patti Masterman

# We Are All Famous, Yes

We are all famous; yes:

To that familiar pen, and that worn notebook

To the hidden scraps of paper, behind the picture frame

To those secret yearnings at midnight

Behind the ornamental bush; alone in our solitary confinement

And yes, to that same image staring back from the mirror

And to that Shakespearean shirt we still wish we owned

And to the mad clamor of the raving world

For only our words; our symbolic strivings,

Our one lonely hand, reaching out bravely to grasp

But a single impoverished meaning

Out of the whole of possibility

Amid the world's tintinnabulations

And genuflections:

Yes, we have been, and are, and will be

Famous, in our more certain solitude.

Patti Masterman

# We Are Also A Repository

We are also a repository, a carrier  
Of other substances  
Generated by the mechanics of these bodies,  
Until we leave them behind  
And feel an odd relief then,  
Separating ourselves from them without regret,  
As just another requirement  
Resulting from breathing and ingesting.

But we are much more the carriers  
Of a million minute cellular minds,  
Whose infinitesimal bodies form the environs  
Of our entire body, inside and outside,  
And carry out the most invisible of survival functions  
All but unconsciously, to our busy minds;

As even I myself, must carry out their deeply hidden interests-  
Though they remain the most esoteric of mysteries of me.

Patti Masterman

# We Are Just Children In The Eyes Of God

I make memories for us, in my mind  
for you, so far distant, and for me, always here,  
And some begin just like a movie scene,  
the view dropping down from the sky,  
camera an unfixed, mobile eye;  
there are your feet and legs, covering ground steadily  
not really in a hurry, but looking as if  
there is a meeting somewhere that you must soon arrive.

Then another camera cuts in, to a close up of my face  
my eyes roam the plaza; where is he, where is he,  
looking at my watch, impatiently tapping my foot;  
He said he'd be here, and I was so wanting to talk..

Another camera shot of your back, as you thrust through the traffic  
ignoring oncoming cars, which honk back, at your gestures.  
A faint smile begins to blush at the edges of your features,  
you walk with a slight side to side motion,  
Like someone who is caught up in himself, his own thoughts  
someone whose mind is not entirely on his actions  
(and there is a degree of danger there, we are made to feel,  
watching the film)

Now the camera zooms out, and we see you  
Crossing to a coffee shop, and in one of the paned windows  
We see a lady, legs crossed, cheek resting on one manicured hand-  
Then in a sudden, expectant motion, she sits up, recrosses her legs  
Then jumps up, uncrossing everything, goes toward the door..

Then the door is shown opening and the camera fastens,  
Not upon the man and woman, as we were expecting it to do;  
But instead, on a photo hanging just there in the hallway,  
Of another man and woman dancing with wild abandon,  
Hands flung outward in the air, a foot here and there, frozen in mid-air-  
Perhaps it is a Tango, for it looks physical and demanding.

The camera zeros in on the photo, which fades  
and then sharpens to becomes a real scene;  
And each scene ends on another picture,

which captures the cameras viewpoint,  
And in each vignette, we become just slightly younger.  
Sometimes it is a painting, instead, and then we slowly change,  
from caricatures into real living beings.

The final one, a painting of the heavens, has revealed God himself,  
Standing entirely captivated, a faint smile on his ancient, wizened face  
While watching two riotous children at play,  
Teasing and chasing and playing with abandon,  
Enjoying their youthful bodies to the fullest measure.

And then ever so patiently, slowly and kindly,  
He beds them down, tucks them both in carefully,  
beneath the green grass and brown earth, the trees and white clouds-  
And in that way, He calls it a day.

Patti Masterman

# We Are Not Long

We are not long  
For the winds caresses,  
We are not long  
For the kiss of rain;

The roads we travel  
Will crumble to ruins,  
After our share  
Of pleasure and pain.

Patti Masterman

# We Are Sensuous Because We Live

We are sensuous because we live:  
In mute islands of flesh, we breathe  
Through silk-screened lungs-  
The storied touch, all forgives.

Young, we nuzzle seamless ports  
For the milk of our thriving;  
Touch tells us what we need to know,  
Of this body we live  
And have our imbibing.

Broken, the raw surface of love;  
The presence breathes,  
We gently heave,  
Till we are one.

Patti Masterman

# We Are The Answer To The Question

Stop wondering;  
You don't have to wonder any more;  
Stop feeling lost

If you're wondering,  
If you're searching,  
Stop, pay attention:

For all we are is love  
Frozen into matter,  
Set free in a matrix  
Of coursing time;

We are the universe  
In love with itself,  
Again and again;  
We are seeds of love

Opening, blooming;  
Love which no longer  
Can contain itself,  
And has overflowed

We are that  
Continuously  
Revealed potency,  
Evolving love;

Of substance,  
Ever renewing..

Patti Masterman

# We Are Who We Are

We are very much who we are  
From the beginning breath  
But will you remember who you were  
When the body's dead?

We are distinct in every way  
Not one like any other  
Everybody born to life  
From one single mother.

We are very much who we are  
And will remain so always  
And our soul still speaks it's name  
Even through many doorways.

Patti Masterman

# We Blunder

We blunder down the roadways  
We blunder into lakes  
We blunder down lost paths  
Not even bears would take

We blunder on the freeway  
We blunder into parks  
Lose our way, a thousand times  
And always miss the mark

With all my endless blundering  
Still confidant, you know:  
No matter lost, how many times-  
To you, I'll always go.

Patti Masterman

# We Came Together

We came together at the window,  
Through which, we watched the days unfold;  
So is this our ending; merely syntax  
At the cusp, where winds grew cold?

Did we lose that joy and wonder  
That once so long ago, we'd touched;  
Did mundane hours finally sunder-  
Did I become for you, just crutch?

There was never any question;  
You were the wonder, held my breath-  
I always thought we'd die together  
And close each others eyes, at death.

Patti Masterman

# We Can Paint Within Our Thoughts

We can paint within our thoughts  
Otherworldly places  
With unexplainable graces,  
That live inside our head.

Paisley rooms allowed,  
Lakes bejeweled with crystal-  
And atmospheres mystical;  
Moods like colored beads.

Cottages to rest in,  
Bedspreads just to nest in-  
Of chenille or taffeta-  
Though nothing really matters,  
Where time and space, grow thin.

Patti Masterman

# We Cry For Ourselves

We cry for ourselves, in other's pain;  
Envision our lives, in their's again,  
Wish hope for their days  
As much as for ours;  
Wish time for their living  
As long as the stars.

We smile to find joy, in other's smiles;  
Are glad for the laughter, within their trials,  
Want all things for them  
To come when needed,  
A hand to hold theirs;  
To be gently treated.

Patti Masterman

# We Danced Back To Back

We danced back to back  
Watched our shadows dip and sway  
The clocks hands ran round and round  
To chase our certain sun away.

Brocade forests pillowed our dreams  
As the night caught up with day  
Trophies pinioned on hourly rack  
Could not the coming season delay.

You tied my scarf around your wrist  
And tried with some words you found  
To say if you never made it back  
Our shadows would run aground.

The lighthouse would fall in the bay  
The tides laving our dark surprise  
And never a clocks hands; never again  
Would follow round a star's demise.

(written to Helios-Lighthouse)

Patti Masterman

# We Flew In The Clouds

We flew round the clouds, we really flew,  
We circled the clouds, like we owned them;  
We pawned some hours, left lying around-  
Soon as we could unground them.

We looked down on squares from a tiny world,  
The distance shrinking while we looked down,  
Then flew toward the sun, as we laughed out loud  
And saw the flat of the land, turn round.

We flew till the hours had all run down,  
Back out the bottom, of the hourglass-  
Then we gently touched back down  
And set our feet again on soft grass.

Patti Masterman

# We Had Snowflake Symphonies

We had snowflake symphonies,  
And foreplay arguments-  
So long as we both shall live;  
So long as we both shall live.

We had silverware tympanies,  
In tiny apartments-  
So long as we both shall live;  
So long as we both shall live.

We argued every numbered day,  
But we could never stay away-  
So long as we both shall live;  
So long as we both shall live.

We watched as love stretched out his wings,  
We listened just to hear him sing-  
For love, he's brought us every thing;  
So long as we both shall live.

Patti Masterman

# We Have Our Being In The Air

We have our being in the air;  
When someone leaves  
They're still there-  
Though cells may vanish,  
Voices quiet,  
You still hear them late at night.

We still see them in our dreams,  
Eyes are twinkling-  
What it means?  
Awakening, it seems they're gone  
Into shadows-  
Just at dawn.

To be eternal must be fine;  
I won't ponder  
What's divine;  
If I loved while they were here,  
That's what matters:  
I won't fear.

Patti Masterman

# We Humans Put Faith

We humans put faith in clocks  
And count place numbers;  
In decimals, we trust  
Our well measured slumbers.

There are no secrets  
In an open source;  
Register your complaints  
Higher up, of course.

Time still flies  
But we don't have fun:  
Things are artless  
In the setting sun

Patti Masterman

# We Journeyed To Chichen Itza

We journeyed to Chichen Itza  
To see the fabled city  
Alone, I walked to the cenote  
I remember I heard him say  
We would follow the path of sacrifices  
As I heard a strong wind coming  
But I never felt the air move:  
As if it stopped just inches away

Then I felt this spirit 'sniff' me  
To measure my strength of soul  
Whirlwind poised over my body  
A breeze that never arrived  
But an energy, it was apparent  
I took it as a challenge  
I could not wait to leave then:  
To inspect me, it contrived

There I'd felt myself in danger  
Now, hearing that place mentioned  
That's what I remember, though  
Never happened since or before  
Some powerful presence waits there  
What it hunts I have no notion  
I won't be going back there:  
Never going through that door.

Patti Masterman

# We Love A Mystery

We love a mystery-  
The hard to get person,  
The impossible to possess:  
Makes you work, for every second of eye contact;  
Any hint of camaraderie, is like the holy grail,  
Now within our very sights.  
How richly rewarded we feel then,  
To get a moment of that attention, bestowed only upon us.  
While we have scarcely any energy left over at all,  
For even an eyebrow's lift  
For our own fawning adorers; busy hanging on our every word,  
Their self-sacrificial love for us like a contaminant,  
That we just can't abide much more of.  
And the fact that they would choose us, above all others  
Just makes them that much more sketchy-  
Who would choose us over anything?  
For we know only too well, our own worth;  
There are no mirrors left in our houses,  
We go out daily, our hair sticking out,  
Food stuck between our teeth, toilet paper tails following behind us-  
Stop staring at us with all that seedy worship in your eyes;  
It's like a stake being driven slowly through our lives.

Patti Masterman

# We Must Not Be Sad

We must not be sad to part ways,  
Under an ancient moon  
Where the glistening waterways move,  
And the owl and the nighthawk listen.

With trees that reach out with their branches,  
Caressed by a tender breeze,  
As softly the amber gloom seizes  
The forest that dreams of the moon.

Many oceans are dreamed up by lovers,  
Many heavens too soon lost to time;  
This ancient love lives on in rhyme, now  
And I have many hours yet to give.

Patti Masterman

# We Never Sang, We Never Danced

We never sang, we never danced  
As some did; every night and morning without fail  
We recalled, the world's an automaton-  
And earthly pleasures must pale.

We never looked for the rarer sunrise,  
We never laid the stars to sleep;  
For we knew the world as traitor,  
Where all the joys soon weep.

We never sang, we never danced  
As some did; we stored the best treasure for days  
That darkness had won all the battles-  
And none at our feet, wreathes lay.

Patti Masterman

# We Practice It In Our Sleep

We practice it in our sleep,  
That final flight into the ether-  
The one from which we will never come back.

We're riding high, on the cresting wave of moonlight  
Sceaming past fires of flaming suns  
Far into the cauldron of multicolored night.

The slip-knot of time slows down  
Long enough to drag our cocooned soul  
Into the nearest sphincter of a wormhole.

Who could have guessed  
That darkness would be the bone-marrow  
Of so many subtle and exotic hues.

Racing through veils of blown out stars,  
We pierce the raving annihilation of space  
Weaving to and fro, through the comet trails.

Our voices still many light years behind us,  
Stretching out, in the neural photonics of joy-  
Only the echoes return, by morning.

Patti Masterman

# We Remember Our Days

We remember our days  
Through a kind of haze,  
Of what fascinations ruled them.

We grew up, unknowing  
What the portents were showing,  
And what past to the future would send.

Now we travel in time,  
To the hours left behind;  
We know right where we are going.

Though we're sad we can't stay,  
For a year or a day,  
Just to watch which seeds, we were sowing.

Patti Masterman

# We String Up Our Words Of Pearl

we string up our words of pearl  
dangle them, on finest fishing line:  
butterflies, and large birds of prey  
both are born from the same effort;  
a monster, or a holy man  
enter in through the same channel  
and even though love and hate wrestle  
every wee-hour of the dawn  
to see which will reign that day,  
we are never fearful of the weapon  
we hold in our own hand  
but only of what they might hold, in theirs.

Patti Masterman

# We Swam Through The Miles

We swam through the miles of back-lit stars  
Hanging like pale gemstones above black velvet,  
The inlet dropping warm saliva from the seas  
Upon our valiantly upturned faces.

You passed through all my slow wheeling dreams,  
A spent wave of once-occult feelings,  
Though a moon still comes now and then  
To rebuke me with its petulant gaze.

All that was new and carefully folded;  
Never opened, in our love blind patience  
Stirs now, like a wounded bird in shadow;  
Because we never tested our wings.

The ocean spread itself bravely, shore to shore  
But we remained earthbound;  
Afraid we could not withstand two weathers;  
Afraid we would lose sight of future landings.

The stars overhead signed their names off in frost,  
But our compass was already submerged;  
As East and West were plundered like twin wrecks,  
We sailed off the sides of the map, into our own icy Sargasso.

Patti Masterman

# We Wait For Love

We wait for love in thirsty dust, in dry heaving death,  
We wait for love to sprout flypaper wings from nothingness,  
To rise visible above fallow fields of dirt and cadavers.  
We would promise that just over the horizon  
There is a paradise, and fruit groves;  
Seasons of plenty, and august grapes on the vine.  
We write odes to love, and last testaments,  
We dedicate our firstborn and will our last breath,  
Plead with hands on hearts  
Eyes raised toward heaven,  
We pledge ourselves and we drink a toast  
That all things touched by love should rightly prosper.

Love is more taciturn and complex,  
Love's desires are opaque and discreet:  
Wanting what it wants and what it doesn't,  
And wanting it when, where, and for it's own undeclared purposes,  
In its own good time or this moment or never;  
Not wanting its name on fruit baskets or vineyards,  
Not wanting to propagate itself,  
Not liking wanton displays of bribery-  
Choosing a few only, and letting the rest go to rot.

We reconcile ourselves to it by imagining  
Love as an esoteric business; that no man  
Could ever understand it's ends;  
We don't want to admit even to ourselves that it's all governed  
By chance or proximity; or by the amount of gold  
Gleaming on somebody else's wineglasses.

Patti Masterman

# We Wear Human

We wear human we crave freedom  
The burden of the flesh hangs lightly upon us  
We're crowned with breath because we breathe  
We're cursed with death because we grieve

We're larger brains we're endless curiosity  
We're insatiable lovers our seasons longest  
We wear ourselves out like vehicles of delight  
Discard the flesh go back to the light

Patti Masterman

# We Worship Where The World Itself

We worship where the world itself  
wants to be touched,  
it's diamond fever burning up the moon's brilliance  
until the rose-entwined morning;  
sleep wedding us to the day,  
as the sky gods rise above  
like the blood of a beautiful dove  
sacrificed against implacable altars of evening.

Your hungry heart holds you  
suspended between vast pillars of a dream,  
where warm constant winds  
may drink their fill of a sweet trust,  
and where the lingering taste  
hides like the petals of flowers at dusk:  
the bouquet of night is always near  
to those, whose other voice is music.

Patti Masterman

# Welcome To Your Long Dying

Welcome, to your long dying-  
Unsaid words, empty gestures  
The substance you always searched for  
Was never real, and you discover  
We will all be dying alone  
Of grief, of the faux, negligible existence  
Everything taken away at the end  
Dark holocaust swallow us whole  
And strangle the last sound we make  
Welcome, to nights of tremulous tears  
Inside the winding cloth you've made:  
The teeming brain's multiforme emotions  
The day you were born, an empty place was created also  
You were never too rare or special to die  
The train whistle announces you've been left behind  
To contemplate your impersonal end  
We are clothed of the same dust  
All arrows point in the same direction  
Both the high and low road are a mobius strip  
Eternal life, but a dream of dimensional matter  
Held for a short time in bondage-  
Time on any scale is nearly invisible to us  
Welcome, to your long dying  
Which is but the first breath of non-existence.

Patti Masterman

# We'LI Be Fine Tonight

Find all the memories that you once left behind,  
Like the moon shining bright,  
How you're mine for the night;  
Find all the memories that you once left behind,  
And we'll be fine tonight, tonight,  
Yes, we'll be fine tonight.

Just leave all your troubles somewhere far behind,  
And then look for the light,  
That was always in sight;  
Just leave all your troubles somewhere far behind,  
And we'll be fine tonight, tonight,  
Yes, we'll be fine tonight.

Patti Masterman

# We'Re All Dead

running your panacea for all that ails;  
well run away then, fare well  
I would not hold you against your will  
in the land of the dead and the home of the still.

once all was bright and lively here;  
those were days not to be forgot  
and if it's become a graveyard, well you know  
the tombstones they won't tell.

take your ringing freedoms, that you crave;  
funny I had figured you for brave  
but you could never fit words to the song  
said you'd never hang around too long.

nothing around here seems to change;  
and people may whisper we seem strange  
that we're all a bit touched in the head;  
that may well be, but you know- we're all dead.

Patti Masterman

# We'Re All Now Used To Thinking

We're all now used to thinking that we've been set apart  
Entirely as ourselves; that none other like us breathes:  
That to be a sovereign self, is like any other art;  
And our living shell is only by our own soul sheathed.

But things are seldom simple, precise as you've been taught  
In school; things alive must share a common linkage, true:  
On the substance they depend; and scientists have sought  
To show the widely held and most palatable view:

Little macroscopic worlds there would orbit on their own  
And scarcely would disturb their close neighbor's solo path.  
Each set of lungs; each entity is surely grown alone-  
And to say they are dependent is to risk our nature's wrath.

But above there is a firmament of air and water, too  
This air moves as a whole, and it fills it sea to sea:  
Breathe in, and some fragment of my soul goes into you;  
Breathe out, and a little bit of you comes into me.

Patti Masterman

## We'Re Still Riding

We're still riding lost days and nights,  
Don't have a coin to pay the driver.  
Scenes are passing, faces aging,  
Sailing down the restless river  
Nothing now can ever seem right  
On the banks, other days raging..

We're riding high, on things we lost,  
Trod them under, never noticing  
We swallowed pride and medicine  
But forgot to bring the antidote  
While others had to count the cost  
Of endless wheels, we keep treading..

Patti Masterman

# Wetware With Sophistry

She is wetware with sophistry  
And only half dressed,  
Shivering in early twilight,  
Your all-expense-paid guest.

Your needs first, but unspoken  
The order of the night,  
Then somewhere posh for dinner  
With low-contrast light.

Don't want to be identified  
On the night you're free,  
Somewhere near the suburbs  
Is where you'll need to be.

She is wetware with sophistry,  
She'll bring you back to life,  
All for the price of a nice hotel  
And one forgotten wife.

Patti Masterman

# What A World

What a perfect world; who dreamed this up,  
Sleeping overtime, in the mind of a mime,  
Teacup kettles and line of sight?

What a beautiful thing, everything's in place,  
One satellite sun, one orbits ellipse,  
Comet sashaying, bringing life and grace.

One day god slept and dreamed him a dream,  
Homespun clouds, and spilled drops of blue  
Of skies and oceans- and the dust that's you..

Patti Masterman

# What Comes Late

What comes late,  
What comes soon  
In dreaded syllables  
To make us swoon?

What comes never,  
But the moon-  
Shines far away;  
Midnight or noon.

What comes to me,  
Then comes to you,  
Worn out anew;  
Both false and true.

What's in the mirror,  
But half of one?  
Who breaks apart  
When silence come.

Patti Masterman

# What Comes Next

What comes next when sad earth no longer is smiling  
And we are all carrying parcels like stones inside of us  
As if rare gems; we are their pack horses  
We save up stones for some special day's events  
We watch ourselves from mirrors  
Far away, on uncertain horizons.

We carried rocks around, but for whom  
Did we carry them all this time?  
People who saw us daily ignored our burden  
Our grimaces looked happy, so involved at our task were we:  
The heavy weight of grimaces was normal here,  
Nobody looked twice.

Bury us upon our feet, our busy faces pointing upward  
And let no heavy boulders quash our expressions in death,  
It was a long brave wait and perhaps we forgot  
Whatever we waited for; too busy rolling things uphill.

But we grew thick muscles under the daily weight of granite  
Now the sun shines down, sun that we never had time for when alive  
Our roots, our brains sticking up out of the ground  
Like some fissured wound of stumbling block-  
Even if the clocks stopped, the ticking never will.

Patti Masterman

# What Dies Once

There is a fallopian woodenness,  
There, where her springs should flower-  
Instead, long tunnels of dark with no candle-watts at the end,  
No explosion of fireworks no flume of tumescent colors,  
No picnics in the forest no encampments in the cave.

The tulips curl backward on the wrong stalks,  
The buds sit stillborn like a sinking boat's wake.  
The lullabies ache in unsung throats.

A stork circles to weariness and flies away,  
Back into books of unread fairy tales;  
Back into eyes that gleam with unsatisfied expectation

Into a cold world that doesn't care and doesn't notice  
That something has gone missing,  
That something will never have a heartbeat;  
The world that only half believes we are still here,  
And wonders why we refuse to leave,  
After so much time had already passed.

And why does one's genetics flourish,  
While another's die off-  
As if somewhere down a long line of generations, ,  
One's ancestors must have drawn the short straw,  
Which has been growing shorter every decade since?

Or maybe too many prunings have altered the seed;  
Or too many salty tears have killed the sprout:  
What dies forever will die by the hand of Spring,  
But what dies once is reborn, again and again.

Patti Masterman

# What Does It Feel Like

what does it feel like  
to be so alone down here?  
we tell each other our dreams  
but no reality can touch any other  
no pattern repeats our selves  
no thought presumes another  
we're a fragmented, momentary beauty  
trying to recognize ourselves  
by watching the others

Patti Masterman

# What Goes Around

What goes around comes around, it's plain to see,  
Once my love wasn't good enough, for you;  
Now your love isn't good enough, for me.

Patti Masterman

# What Happens To The Really Bad Poets

I wonder how Hell welcomes it's own?  
Are you first conducted to Purgatory,  
Where you are steamed, massaged, and given  
Pedicures and manicures and a new wardrobe-  
Tailor- fitted, strongly constructed  
Of the finest asbestos to last you  
For the eons in which you will be inhabiting  
The fire- and- brimstone quarter of the firmament.  
Is there a grinning fiend who ushers you through  
The majestic, not-so- triumphal Arch of Hades  
And hands you a real skeleton key to the city?  
Are you hoisted onto the shoulders of a troupe  
Of imposing, masked beings in top hats, and carried along  
To the sounds of tortured muscial instruments,  
To the city square, where your name is lit up  
On a large marquee, lights flashing, and a long line forms;  
The abominations suspended long enough for  
Everyone eager to shake your hand in person  
As the newest acquisition to the Underworld.  
Then you get to choose from Door #1, #2, and such?  
I rather think it is not that way, and further,  
If being a bad poet is reason enough to land in hell,  
I am sure I am on a long, long waiting list.  
But...I've still got some time to kill.

Patti Masterman

# What Has Been Your Most Perfect Day?

What has been your most perfect day?  
How could I say; for I'm the prisoner of time,  
Watching days going by, no reason no rhyme:  
Life's the play that's full of signs,

Seasons and weeks, that seemed all mine  
And I can't slow it down, as it picks up speed;  
I'm only the witness, trying not to leave.  
But in good time, all the sand must run out  
And empty the frame, that once was me..

Perhaps it will all have been perfect, being me:  
But by then none can see;  
Naught but these words-

So remember to live,  
While you still breathe,  
For the dead are not free-  
Not like you and me-

(July 11 2011)

Patti Masterman

# What I Am Not

What I am not, to hear these words,  
Would turn anyone aside;  
Made less like an elven treasure,  
Than some gentle Goliath.

Of sterner stuff, most are found,  
Though human words could lie,  
Or conspiracies, conspire  
The half truth, to deny.

But what I'd really want to say,  
Could my words hold any sway,  
Is to look deeper than the skin,  
For the outside is a fake.

A nut shell is only bark,  
An orchid's not vanilla,  
The soul is just a vapor  
Curling up a vine.

A cow's not cheese,  
A hen's not quiche;  
And until it dies,  
A grape's not wine.

Patti Masterman

# What I Knew For Certain

When I am dead, I will not know  
On which hill the bluebells grow,  
Or what spot to watch at night-  
To see the morning stars first light.

I will not know your earnest gaze,  
Or how a few words can amaze;  
The sound of breathing cross the bed,  
And loving arm- beneath my head.

Knowing I was not alone  
In this echo-vault called home,  
With one who knows my ills like me-  
Like I know his- but lets it be.

Most of all, I think I'll miss  
That very strange and shy first kiss;  
Finding both our arms, did fit-  
And to laugh at life, with a certain wit.

When you give to one each day,  
There's not a lot that's left to say-  
You could have spent them, anywhere-  
But still made sure, that you were here.

Patti Masterman

# What If

What if you went to communion  
And you swallowed the Host  
But found that God was way too tall  
To stand up then, inside of you?

What if you went to a baptism  
And the preacher dunked you  
Beneath the water; but you could not  
Swallow enough, to take in all of the Holy Spirit?

Patti Masterman

# What If The Heavens Broke Open

What if the heavens broke open  
And let all the spirits go free,  
And the soil of the graveyards turned over  
So all of the ghosts were released?

What if the dead should rebel  
Against darkness and lonely doom;  
And they filled up the sky completely  
Till the world was quite covered with gloom?

Death would be quite the rare thing then;  
Most asked for, with desperate prayer-  
For there'd be no more room for the living  
As long as the dead stayed right there.

Patti Masterman

# What Is Desire But The Body's Own Fire?

Genitalia are so amorphous;  
They have no chance at heart or conscience.  
Identifying characteristics; maybe,  
But who spends time studying such a thing?

They are only the messenger;  
First at knowing ecstasy,  
Last to realize abandonment,  
The body's inherently secret code  
Attempting to speak the rhythms  
Of everyman's language:  
Bitmap of the soul's holiest desires.

They can't diagnose trouble,  
Or predict rejection:  
They are only the saddle upon an unbroken horse;  
And wildness all that ever breathes,  
Through it's foaming nostrils.

And what is desire, but the body's own fire?

Patti Masterman

# What Is The Old Hawk Thinking

What is the old hawk thinking  
As he circles round and round  
Does he see our little shadows  
Foreshortened, on the ground?

Is he glad to not be earthbound  
And catch dinner on the sly  
If he stopped to think at all then  
Would he ever wonder why?

In his mind, is there an image  
Of his mate, beside the stream  
If he slept, with one eye open  
Would he see her, in his dream?

Would he think her just as lovely  
As the day that they first met  
Would he mount her light brown feathers  
For his appetite, to what?

Would he stay beside her always  
No matter drought or storm  
And would always fly beside her;  
Watch his children being born?

And on that day she left him,  
Her body small and still-  
Would he call his grief out loudly  
And forego his evening meal?

Patti Masterman

# What Lies Inside

Quick as a wink you find yourself alone  
And you go to find that lost music  
Hidden so carefully inside yourself  
On some long ago hide and seek,  
Elusive since tender years  
It floods your being; reverberates  
Down twisted tunnels of primeval tongues  
Spoken only by the mouth-less  
In dusty streams of dying starlight  
And in children's unencumbered longings  
There's silent screaming and ecstasy of ghosts  
Left in solitary nightmares  
But only a grain of rational truth,  
To mend illusions incoherence  
Stitches of burnt symmetries  
Anchored in soft beds of clay  
On a meandering, timeless river:  
With all our worship of ascendant notions  
Brotherhood and spatial fidelity-  
We can never see the whirling world's eye  
Except ours be single and wide open.

Patti Masterman

# What Matters In The End

Oh why do I feel so alone in this world?  
Even genies have a master  
Who caresses their magic lamp sometimes;  
And gods have their universes whirled

Sculptors have their plaster  
Even artists have their muse  
Could I form myself into any venue-  
Play well at being my own ruse?

I couldn't die any faster  
Even for me, there must be some use?  
Otherwise I'm only taking up space  
Killing time, making up an excuse

I only want to clothe myself with grace  
Not feel I'm strung out by the past;  
When sins and omissions come home to roost  
Just let me have that look of peace on my face.

Patti Masterman

# What Moans When There Is No Pain

What must inspire the vagaries of the wind;  
Such a variable vocal cord must it wear-  
To mimic the voices of so many beings,  
And still beneath doors, around corners it bends:  
But seems less like a fast flowing column of air,  
So that each second, we expect to be seeing  
The creature that to anguish it's voice has lent.  
As if the hearts grief has been at once laid bare,  
And all the pent- up melancholy given wing.  
Ceaseless lamentations rise up and are sent  
To the same lone spot where flings curse or prayer.  
After hours spent howling, it may begin to sing-  
Who can say sorry when at last it has went.  
Peace reigns when it abides in its lair.  
A stirred- up breeze few good things brings-  
And what makes moan when there is no pain?

Patti Masterman

# What Runs Downhill

Why do you want to sink to the lowest common denominator?  
Did somebody tell you there was a bottom to this thing?  
It could take some doing, finding the lowest rung  
You're not scared what you might lose while falling?

Is inertia really easier than climbing upward?  
Really? But don't you worry your brain;  
Down there, you'll never lack for the company of peers,  
And if you can't plumb the depths of heaven,  
You can still be head plumber in hell.

Patti Masterman

# What Tells The Moon To Rise

What tells the Moon to rise,  
What tells the Sun to shine?  
What catches morning light to send  
Upon the world, from end to end?

What tells the heart to love,  
What tells the soul to sin?  
Sometimes there's naught a man can see  
Will make the spirit bend.

Patti Masterman

# What The Dead Hear

what do the dead hear  
on their way to heaven-  
lovely strains of a faint goodbye,  
stretching from golden strings, to sky?

saints chanting cheer; you're on your way,  
you go to live another day-  
or a child's night prayer, for their souls journey,  
peace and goodwill; never lonely

in endless depth of blue that's theirs,  
with music of quasars, and comet tails,  
the laughs of loved ones, drifting by  
as they discover, that they can fly..

Patti Masterman

# What The World Does To The Lovers Is A Crime

You've got to have all the love and desire,  
all the angst and craving, beat out of you.

You've got to have all the shyness and dreams,  
romantic notions and tentative flirting, punished.

You've got to retract all those words spoken in passion;  
deny, regret that you sometimes have fallen in love at first sight.

Then, you'll finally be fit-  
to forget.

Patti Masterman

# What Use Is Life

Tell me, of what use is life  
If the dearest thing to you  
Just wants to wound you;  
It already knows all your weak spots.  
Where is trust, where is fidelity?  
This world knows nothing of it.

Once I was as dear to another  
And I didn't appreciate as much perhaps  
As I should have, because there was always jealousy afoot  
Trying to ruin happiness and contentment.  
What use is life, if our joy only hurts others  
Who think they receive less love, simply because we are loved?

There are no winners in this world,  
So let the takers take, just give it all away;  
Until there is nothing left that they can steal,  
Except for peace of mind-  
But that was stolen so long ago, it doesn't matter anymore.

Patti Masterman

# What Was Never Said Could Have Made All The Difference

A wall just can't answer  
The bleeding mind's call;  
It's wood has no warmth  
And no heart, at all.

Cold brick and shutters  
Will never admit  
The soft touch of fingers;  
A hint of regret.

Someone may be searching  
Their days, for some peace,  
But inside of our prisons  
Even long arms can't reach.

I wish I had heard you  
At your loneliest hour,  
But no one could save you,  
For you had all the power.

Each man is a sovereign,  
And he rules his own day;  
It never turns, on what got said-  
But what- they couldn't say.

Patti Masterman

# What We Are Masters Of Enslaves Us Also

How can something like a room  
Be substantive enough, to hold us in,  
Even against our will at times?

How can something that begins with a nail  
And finishes with a hammer

That consists solely of vast expanses of space  
Arranged loosely around a fabled nucleus  
That has never been seen directly by anyone,  
Enclose and barricade one off from the rest of the world?

Why do hands first choose  
To erect walls or dismantle them,  
As if all was arranged on some unannounced schedule  
For just such erections or demolitions?

If a woman unconsciously builds a sanctuary  
Around the body of the fetus she is to harbor,  
If a man knowingly builds  
An entire consortium of containers,  
To hedge his bets against nature's unpredictability

Is it from those first stabilities  
We come to realize  
That a wall can be made of almost anything,  
And sometimes, of nearly nothing,  
And that it can be around us or actually inside us?

And though a fetus needs only a tiny space  
To grow into, and then is done with it,  
He is never really a prisoner, by proof of which  
He is expelled from the mother's body after a time.

But a king or master needs many complex areas  
For doing different tasks  
So that he may grow into, and through,  
And be in control, of everything else  
That's contained within or around his walls,

So that he can oversee even an entire city  
If necessary, vicariously.

Meanwhile the prisoner can control only a fractional area  
If it can be called control,  
And can only implement his desires  
On the smallest denizens of creation,  
That might wander haphazardly, into his little domain.

Still, the prisoner will always be seen in the same fashion  
By the overseer,  
And matters about as much to him  
As any prospecting insect.

Patti Masterman

# What Were They Listening For?

The earthquake shook  
Their eyes, in a teacup  
The room floor raised up-  
What were they listening for?

The dead hollows filled  
In the stubbled field  
The corpses to yield-  
What were they listening for?

A low groan, a hidden moan  
The moon on loan  
Evil sown, to vengeance grown-  
What were they listening for?

The footfalls came  
Their souls to maim  
And life, reclaim-  
Oh horror, sustained:  
Comes now the sound they were listening for..

Patti Masterman

# What Will Come After

Invisibly the tides will course beneath your stone  
Crying to the bluffs, through the salt sea's cellars;  
And the shades of serpents, fill the ravening tombs,  
Your bed the straying source for watery channels.

Sunk to the green limits of far dolphined depths,  
The children of coral trees are busy splicing wind;  
And where once the dead grew their knotted hair like roe,  
Fair mermen sleep in beds of weeds, where magic grows.

Till the eye of the ghost unlatch the colored sky  
Where blows the faith, of starfish wheeling by.

Patti Masterman

# What You Will Keep

Burn his words and letters,  
Remove his touch from mind,  
Forget his smell, however well;  
Some fetters cannot bind.

Take his pictures from their frame,  
Remove his dreams, before you sleep;  
It's true the mind can be retrained-  
But as for memories, those you keep.

Patti Masterman

# Whatever Makes You Mine

On a hill by a church  
One warm summer day  
I saw a man with a child living,  
In his eyes; but he couldn't say

What he saw in the world,  
What he wanted to claim;  
He couldn't say the truth,  
Could never say my name.

My chest is your grimoire,  
My tears are your wine;  
Go ahead, kill the animal  
If it makes you more mine.

He wanted to own me,  
To gather me close;  
Wanted every sunrise thing,  
But could never make that choice.

We met by the woods,  
On a dark winters day;  
We talked with our hands, never used  
One word; and side by side we lay..

My chest is your grimoire,  
My tears are your wine;  
Go ahead, kill the animal  
It if makes you more mine

On a long endless night,  
He died in my arms,  
No one ever knew it was me; his alone;  
Just for him only, just to keep him from harm.

So go tell all your loved ones  
How much you love them truly,  
And give them sweet gifts, all your best to give

Don't save them for rain,  
Don't save for something better;  
In this world we know not, how long we may live.

And my chest is your grimoire,  
And my tears be your wine;  
So go on, kill that animal-  
Whatever makes you mine.

Patti Masterman

## What's A Girl To Do?

And now, I find that I am in love with Yeats;  
But was never fit to even touch his sole-  
Let alone his SOUL.

I can love his words, though surely his moldering suit  
Has already collapsed into itself, and been eaten  
By tiny creatures possessing no sense of poetics.

I can know what ideas occupied him,  
For an hour or a day, so long ago.  
The past is it's own time machine, intrepid lover!

Patti Masterman

# What's Easiest In Coming Is Never Appreciated

What's easiest in coming is never as appreciated  
As that over which we must expend ourselves in agonies,  
Give birth to, by fully stretching open our being.

What's easiest to lose is never forgotten again;  
We had it once, in the sweaty, half-closing palm of our hand  
Studying it for long seconds, contemplating it's beauty there,  
Imagining it to be ours alone, forever;  
But something turned our head for a moment, a second  
And at that instant, it flew.

Patti Masterman

# What's Left

What is left when a person goes-  
A blank spot in the mirror, that shows  
Where they used to be; and some shoes that speak  
Of soles, that show a million steps receipt.

Dark smudges on piano keys,  
And silhouettes, outlining things,  
Memory books with darkened page,  
Showing a gradually bent image.

Dried flowers, from some balls corsage,  
Catheters, from medical triage,  
Lipsticks broken off, in their tube-  
This emptiness, where once a person stood.

Patti Masterman

# What's Missing

We're all kith and kin on this over crowded world  
The same tribe and mother as the DNA's uncurled  
We all bleed blood when our body gets scratched  
All came from the womb and none of us were hatched  
We all need compassion like we need air or water  
As soon as we come from the hands of the potter  
You'd think it'd be as common as clouds, rain or clover  
Yet it's the thing found missing, the whole world over.

Patti Masterman

# What's More Expensive Than Foreign Travel (And Much Less Fun)

The doctors are all sated now  
with the exotic names of expensive drugs;  
the ones which they rattle off  
with the acumen of exhaustively tested experience,  
the sulfates and sulfides and bromides and tinctures..

It also serves to keeps the patients quietly ignorant,  
so the leprous lesions and night sweats,  
the dry coughs and the productive ones,  
have more trouble penetrating the clouds of wisdom  
of the academic temples of medicine.

The doctors bleed and exude pus  
in the same quantities as the rest of us;  
only they do it much cheaper,  
and without the song and dance routine-  
to them a cotton ball is still just a cotton ball;  
not another item on unbelievably long lists of charges  
(of \_\_\_\_ bucks minimum per usage)

Perhaps now the lawyers  
could begin charging the doctors  
for every swipe of white-out  
and every milliliter of ink  
used on every square centimeter  
of parchment paper

And charge by the quarter hour, for parking spaces  
and the occupying of waiting room furniture, by the poundage-  
then maybe somebody, somewhere  
in the unimaginably high, untouchably white, sanitized towers  
might awaken long enough,  
to see the ludicrous wars  
that the average man must indulge in-  
on his one way trip to the grave.

Better yet, why can't we just skip the minimum charge;

Aren't we all already living minimal lives, anyway?

Patti Masterman

# When A Flower Dreams Of Heaven

When a flower dreams of heaven,  
It goes where we cannot go;  
The blooms by rain clouds leavened,  
Where the fiercest winds can't blow

In a sunny spot, near a meadow,  
Where the dirt drains well below-  
But since heaven on earth's not given,  
It's a place only god can sow.

Patti Masterman

## When And If

when and if seen by the deeper every eye  
core to the pounding the shaky summer sky  
vexed be myself, beneath certain stars of night  
as silence waits to unfurl the ocean surf,  
wade the wet flowers, in hidden forest seams.

existence aloof is a burden abhorred,  
though sea islands foam, and trees are ever green  
comes one meadow of startled yellow sun-  
nature is cold but seldom is she mean-  
and fear just the bellows, blown into our dream.

Patti Masterman

# When Asked To Describe Yourself

Describe your hobbies in short paragraphs  
Describe your goals in one  
Label yourself appropriately  
And never ask for help.

Name five words that accurately  
Reveal how you look, to you  
Now name five more; it's not a chore  
Of how others appear, too.

Answer all the questions  
Sign on the signature line  
Don't be late, but don't hesitate  
They'll let you know by nine.

Learn all the gimmicks  
That can you get you there  
While toiling up that rope  
And hope that the prize  
When you raise your eyes  
Doesn't make you choke

Then learn all the trapdoors places  
Just to keep from falling in  
And save some of yourself  
For the rest of your life-  
For ropes always reach their end.

Patti Masterman

# When Bright Suns Fade Away

My father's an old exploded sun-  
Suns can stop functioning, but there remains  
The quantum, of their metaphysical rays;  
Cloudless days in memory, without any rain,  
A startling brightness at happiness's edge-  
And strong, so you won't dwell on it too much-  
But take comfort it's shining dutifully, most days.

Mother was his clear moon-  
Nearest, dearest; closest orbit, sacrificial path  
Into his greater gravity- they made a world entire  
With me, as representative star  
Abiding near their nearness,  
Keeping my narrow track farther away-  
Whether nemesis or guardian, they would not say

As planetary bodies and stars do not inquire  
Whether they are loved; they only do their job,  
And everything's allowed,  
It's all they know to do, and if they think  
Their life station humble-  
But they are not, will not be  
Forgot: Even though bright suns fade away,  
Their memory still burns, in shade.

Patti Masterman

# When Dawn Breaks

When dawn breaks,  
The nights nightmares fall dead,  
And daylight takes  
The terror from our heads.

When day goes,  
The nights tide rises high,  
And in its under-tow,  
The last of light flies by.

Patti Masterman

# When D-Day Comes

Eons of time spent whirling around suns  
Trying to locate the real self  
I tried on so many other peoples lives  
To see what might fit me-  
Friends and strangers, famous actors  
And people who existed only in books  
Tried to remove the rough generic  
Corners of me that stuck out at odd angles-  
Nothing worked.

We come out of no one sees where  
We leave to go where nobody knows  
Like ghostly actors on Shakespeares stage  
Perhaps all those ones I tried to become  
Were also born with my first breath?  
And will expire with my last personal act  
Then my death becomes a thing  
Of truly tragic proportions  
A bang and not a whimper?

Patti Masterman

# When Every Song Must Be Finally Silenced

when every song must be finally silenced  
returns then the well intentioned violence;  
muted lines the patterned landscape abhor  
though more space in volume, than ever world before  
to bear the gales down an empty empire's reigning  
past borrowed futures that ruling heads feigning  
in blood's spindrift tales: hidden days spent maiming  
what flood-dammed vessel clasps once were containing;  
what's spoken of mostly now in well-cloven riddle:  
would the long days of dying that we spent apart  
rhyme for- or against- the old rhyming art?

instead, more alone as we stood there now  
none of us being more dead, than befouled  
like those whose parting rhymes we'd disavowed;  
of chanters who'd chanted their poetry, aloud  
though once we'd broken off the longboat's prow,  
the dancing waves came, then spun us apart,  
wreaking the galley's innermost heart  
shimmered the wood with a deep-channeled music,  
it sustaining no farther; cast moorings aside  
the besotted earth rose then, in symbolic fashion  
and severed the song, with symphonious tides.

Patti Masterman

# When I Am Bored I Will Think Of You

When I am bored I will think of you:  
Your endless aphorisms old and new,  
Your tedious jargon, and jaded comparisons  
Make flagrant non-sequiturs seem almost true.

Your tiresome arguing no points of promise,  
Always leading to the same brick wall,  
Your sudden tempers, unmitigated;  
Almost leading to an ugly brawl.

Antiquated and dull opinions,  
Dim witted metaphors you thought would do,  
You make me tired; I could sleep for days:  
When I am bored, I will think of you.

Patti Masterman

# When I Die

When I die I want to achieve immortality  
As in, the spaces between all your breaths  
The time between the impulses sent to blink your eyelids  
The mute partitions separating all your heart beats  
Finger on your lips; all the things you left unsaid  
All the tears that did not pool to fall down your cheeks  
All the words you did not scrawl upon cards  
The thoughts that never finished forming  
The aborted brain impulses that short circuited  
The emotions that never came to completeness  
The stillborn ecstasies hidden in the nights blind depths  
The syncopated pauses between the nerves and neurons firing  
The Morse-coded cells of your body sending the song of your whole being  
Into the deep womb of lost galaxies and forgotten time  
Into the never expelled sigh that holds all your souls breathtaking loveliness.

Patti Masterman

# When I Finally Shed This Body

When I finally shed this body,  
I'll be light as a wisp of an angel,  
Inviolable as a fairy's potent kiss,  
Quick as the velvet wings of a moth.

Like ancient dust from old paper-mache,  
Or a husk of cocoon wavering away;  
The vaporous draught of some mystery,  
(The hidden vesicle of living flame)

Patti Masterman

# When I Gaze Into Your Eyes

When I gaze into your eyes  
Time begins to slip away  
I'm unsure then if it's been seconds  
Minutes, or even an hour  
Passed by unconsciously  
As that contemplative river begins to flow again  
Taking me somewhere strangely familiar  
Yet always different, and I realize  
I never want to return  
As I'm well hidden, deep inside your eyes;  
My slow boat into dense, sun-streamed jungles,  
Or free flight over cool, clouded mountains,  
The color and light ever changing,  
Secret storm of earth to be imbibed  
One enigmatic shade at a time-  
Rites of the delicious mystery  
Of finding only you inside.

Patti Masterman

# When I Grow Too Old To Love A Moon

When I grow too old to love a Moon,  
When its phantom arms come circling round;  
Or its ancient face only makes me sigh  
When the silvered moon-drops hit the ground-

Bury me quickly,  
Bury me soon:  
For life has become just another lie.

Patti Masterman

# When I Think Of All The Future Graces

When I think of all the future graces,  
For which I am supposed to feel so grateful-  
It feels like a huge, sticky cloud  
Has obscured everything worthwhile  
And sucked out whatever gladness there might have been.  
I begin to understand how the aged  
Might start to feel an unholy resentment  
At the dawning of each successive day,  
Which comes whether you desire it or not-  
Even if there is nothing left to look ahead to.  
Still, if all my blood somehow oxidized tomorrow,  
Or the flesh crept off all the bones stealthily  
To lie in rippled pools on the ground  
(like the way witches melt in certain well known tales)  
Know that the corporeal remains  
Would still send up a reverberating joy-  
The unending gratitude of the song of matter.

Patti Masterman

# When I'M Afraid

When I'm afraid that you are me;  
Afraid there's been a change, you see  
Or else I worry that I will  
Change into someone more surreal.

I get confused when I see my name  
Beside another's picture frame;  
Or within a window, on the net-  
Not sure whose message who will get.

A slight dyslexia, I believe  
Has made my brain into a sieve:  
It only holds a few cc's  
Of anything you'd care to leave.

Patti Masterman

# When I'M Alone

When I'm alone and it is dark,  
I find I've made a choice;  
To be as silent as I can-  
Lest it recognize my voice.

Sometimes I feel a presence  
Waiting in black of night,  
I feel that it is stalking me-  
And knows not wrong from right.

I don't want to make a sound,  
Lest it hone in on my heat;  
Or maybe read my louder thoughts-  
Which for monsters, is no feat.

The slightest sound I make then  
Will always give me pause-  
For the monster may have heard it-  
And he has horns, teeth and claws.

I've no doubt he's got those very things,  
In the deepest brooding night,  
So I make a smaller target  
Until the morning's light.

It works for me, this method;  
You'd be smart to try it too:  
Be silent in the darkness,  
So the monsters won't find you.

(and never, ever lean over to look under the bed!)

Patti Masterman

# When I'M In Love

When I'm in love, odd things happen  
If I'm really smitten I keep leaning my head  
All over the place, in deep meditation:  
Against cabinet doors, shelves, hangers  
On closet racks, dressers, and walls  
Much deep thought is required to analyze it:  
(But not so much I'll realize how stupid I look)

When I'm in love  
Things end up in the wrong places:  
Milk jug and sandwich meat up in the cabinet  
Keys and cellphone in the refrigerator  
Sunglasses and lip gloss in the toilet bowl  
I forget everything that's not tied on  
(Everything, that is, but the Beloved)

When I'm in love  
I forget it's Thursday already  
And I keep reliving Wednesday over again  
Until the weekend arrives  
When I think it's already Monday  
And miss all my appointments  
(The ones I didn't show up a day early for)

When I'm in love  
I no longer care what the mirror says  
Or if friends forget to invite me  
Or if it's cold, cloudy or raining outside  
My heart is busy making rainbows, night and day  
Whether or not it should be;  
(Whether or not you love me back)

Patti Masterman

# When It Becomes Quiet Enough

When it becomes quiet enough  
You can hear the house, plotting against you:  
Future cracks in the foundation start creeping  
Along the lines left by shrinking timbers.  
The shingles shift, by fractional degrees  
Toward and away from one another, creating openings  
For the prying fingers of wind and his brother rain.  
Dry rot starts in, at the molecular level, as if to oppose directly the mold:  
A race to the finish line begins, for who will come to own which corner,  
With bets opened in absentia, by the ants and cockroaches.  
The field mice are chewing holes in all the vent covers,  
To arrange for their springtime visits and nest fashioning.  
And sexy termites are dreaming of the come-hither looks  
They are preparing for the male of the species  
As he preens himself in your extinct begonia patch, next spring.  
You sit above it all, sipping your hot coffee, and catching up with the news  
While wondering which part of the world  
Will come crashing down next.

Patti Masterman

# When Mother Dies

When Mother dies, it's like the most familiar,  
beautiful glass vase, of some rare-earth hue  
that tinted all your dreams, has shattered.  
It's like the secret journal, of your most hidden  
hearts desires, has had the key broken off in the lock,  
and will never open again.

And you can't go there again,  
though it was the most familiar place,  
you can't grow up again, you'll have to forge  
new hopes, in the glowing embers of what was her life,  
and feel her invisible eyes  
hurrahing on your efforts.

Now there's no sickness or frailty  
can serve to weaken her influence,  
she is forever unreachable by any disaster;  
a tower of invisible strength  
abiding over your days:

The silent voice warning danger,  
The calming voice behind pain,  
her ghostly hands working overtime  
in your now overgrown child's heart,  
her voice just behind the audible at times.

For you never stopped being her baby-  
death may end a marriage,  
but it can't kill her blood,  
still singing sweetly through your veins.

Patti Masterman

# When Once You Find That Sun

When once you find that sun  
After searching for years  
Going on only what you have heard, but never seen  
With your own eyes; tales that brightness would make you blind,  
Listening ear to door for that one footfall  
When sun ascends the last horizon and appears  
At first you don't recognize it's splendor;  
Bearing the brilliant crown that you once were told of  
Back in your deepest dark your loneliest hour  
And you are startled when it recognizes your face  
With small cupping hands of warmth  
And kisses your countenance a golden highlight  
From it's igneous soul of ancient flame  
Glowing it x-rays your heart with it's shimmering visage  
A benediction falls upon your life to never court darkness again  
Henceforth you will live in the light; sing only his praises  
And rue the night, and hate the shadowed  
Strive all your life to never feel shame  
Of what the unblinking light will reveal;  
Your own humble pilgrimage that light shines through  
Never dimmed by moon, comet or cloud  
Because it is made out of heaven, made out of you  
And because it holds not earth.

Patti Masterman

# When People Like To Play Their Games

When people like to play their games;  
That 'careful or you might make me angry' game  
They never stop to consider  
That I might be the better one, at playing it;  
Me: always so sweet, peace mongering, forgiving..  
And what if being pissed off were my natural state;  
That I must suppress, all the time  
In order to act civilized, to seem cordial  
And then, their sloppy challenge invites me  
To take off the kid gloves  
And allow the real me to engage finally..

What a blessing; finally allowed to be myself  
Open season now officially declared, by you;  
When countries go to war,  
There's no need to wait then, until a cannon actually fires:  
The fighting began when the hostilities got started  
And how much better to be the first to fire, than the last.  
But clearly, it is better not to start a war  
For no reason; if not to defend  
Some cherished belief;  
Because you might very well lose,  
And how would you feel then-  
To think that you lost everything  
In order to defend nothing?

Patti Masterman

# When Reading

I'm reading along, like a galloping fawn,  
And then something trips me, as I hurtle along;  
I land smack on my head, and then I look back;  
There's something has tripped me, right there on the track-

Well, it's a stray 'thee'; and as pretty as you please,  
That all of a sudden popped up, like the breeze;  
I was reading along, quite all unaware,  
And suddenly - boom! a 'thee' did appear.

I gather my courage and try to get up,  
But before I can manage, to pick up my stuff,  
It happens again; who would have thunk it;  
I stand up and hit my head, square on a lunkett!

Looking above, I can see why and how:  
It's because I have bumbled, into a stray 'thou';  
Who would have guessed, it would cause me to blunder;  
Cause the last time I saw one, was late eighteen-hundred!

The last one is worst; you know it, of course;  
Almost fell on my head like an anvil, the curse!  
This one more insidious, than all the others;  
When a 'thine' smacks your backside, you'll not want another!

So be careful, when reading the words of the day,  
And watch where you walk, even walking away;  
For, if you're not careful, you could have some pain  
When the archaic words come, to beat you again.

Patti Masterman

# When The Child Cries The Mother Suffers

When the child cries the mother suffers,  
When night comes, the daylight leaves;  
When thousands die, the valley grieves-  
Cover your dead; for more will always be coming.

When heart calls, there's a heart must answer,  
Though it be a million miles away;  
Distance apart can't smile and can't lie-  
Cover your dead; for more will always be coming.

The small must always follow the greater,  
Hence you see the sun, the moon;  
Though closeness makes the heart grow absent-  
The dead won't need your silver coin.

Patti Masterman

# When The Slow Wave Creeps Into Your Sight

When the slow wave creeps into your sight,  
A blue-tinged blanket of reflected light,  
Or a cloud shyly peeps the sun's own face  
But in your reverie, leaves no trace;  
Or a lightning torch x-rays the sky,  
It's echoed voice like a rumbled sigh;  
When trees wave graceful, arching arms  
And the breeze unleash it's earnest charm:  
It's angels I've sent, you understand  
Of the wind and sky, the sea and land  
So knowing them, you'll not forget  
That inside love lives no regret  
Not for a moment; no matter how far  
And so Earth sings, how beloved you are.

Patti Masterman

# When We First Met

When we first met  
I could not see your spirit at all;  
I had to tease it out, with the feather of my breath.

And now our souls are like twin censors;  
Flames from the very first breath, that lit the cosmos  
Fuming themselves almost to heaven's door;  
From there one day, God himself will tease out our essence

And we will shoot upward, like stars in the archer's bow  
To fall back again, into the tapestry of his long enduring,  
Our eyes the mirrored galaxies  
Of the planes that he breathes through.

Patti Masterman

## When We Get Old

When we get old, we know what we like;  
Don't have to pretend to correctness anymore  
Everyone already knows us too well for that.  
I like Summertime; in the highest soprano  
You can find, and a dozen times in a row-  
More is better, when it comes to that;  
I'd die to that song if I had the choice  
And I'd run straight into Porgy's arms, at the end  
Instead of that gaunt, white plaster drugstore angel.

(written to Kathleen Battle - Porgy and Bess - Summertime)

Patti Masterman

## When Yesterdays Kiss

When yesterday's kiss is yet wet  
We trust, in the present perfect sky  
Remembering to think, in that slow-rhythmed universe  
We could wake desire, with that word-naked smile;  
Dance in which this embrace, surround time  
Like a voice can wear down  
The opened perfume of morning,  
Were all of the questions  
Once allowed, to devour eternity.

Patti Masterman

# When You Dance

When you dance, the earth's ghost  
Moves sublimely through your body,  
Sine-waves twist in continental drift  
And the sun's rays noiseless behind.

Then the surface tensions rise,  
Up above the hidden quarries;  
Their back-lit corridors soon ambushed  
By the sound of a thousand cries.

Patti Masterman

# When You First Wake Up After Sleeping

When you first wake up after sleeping  
If you will hold very still,  
You will realize that you are holding in your mouth  
An exquisite glass form of a dream  
Which you have been blowing all night,  
With every exhalation forced out

And it is like nobody else's  
And has never before been seen;  
For each of us is like a kaleidoscope  
And we include different layers in our glass,  
Taking it all from within ourselves;  
The exact parts needed for the form we are making,

Taking the pieces from other dimensions;  
Things which might seem untrue in this one,  
But are real as we can make them  
When our dreaming eyes and fingers  
Lift them from our waiting wholeness,  
In the night time of our stillness

When we finally become one patent vehicle,  
And the dream begins to grow then, like the smallest bubble;  
A stained glass fetus of our blooming individuality  
Made only for, only by us;  
As fragile as any snowflake,  
As ephemeral as any memory.

Patti Masterman

# When You Get Older

When you get older  
You've plenty of time  
To stop and remember when.

But as you grow older  
It's frightening to think  
You might forget to start again.

Patti Masterman

# When You Give Me Your Heart

When you give me your heart,  
Will I feel it?  
Will I feel it; when we're apart,  
If one stilled it-  
When you give me your heart,  
Please don't kill it.

When we're the same soul,  
Will I feel it?  
Will I feel it; will there be no hole,  
Could one fill it-  
When we're the same soul?  
Now let's seal it.

When you walk on my grave,  
Will I feel it?  
Will I feel it; is anything saved,  
If one willed it,  
When you walk on my grave-  
Death, don't steal it.

Patti Masterman

# When You Laugh

When you laugh, I hear others laughter  
And when you cry, there are others tears;  
Though you are your own calm symphony, that's breaking  
Close to the strange, sweet shore of ravaged years  
And when you die, there's others will be leaving,  
And holding your hand, I shall be holding theirs.

Patti Masterman

# When You Let Your Words Go Free

When you let your words go free,  
They climb the sky on ratchets of leaves,  
They sail the perihelion with ease,  
Unfettered words fluttering the breeze,  
While springing words winged flyers tease;  
Decorum goes, as reason flees-  
When you let your words go free.

Patti Masterman

# When You Ride The Winds Of Chance

When you ride the winds of chance,  
They'll take you where you would not stay,  
Where no friends are; a happenstance-  
Where no one seems to know the way.

When you ride the tails of fate,  
You'll go where all have gone before,  
And you'll find the hour's late-  
And the guard has locked the door.

Better walk, than ride aboard  
A thing that has no heart, no brain;  
And never have to call as lord  
The ready symptom of your pain.

Patti Masterman

# When You Swim In The World

When you swim in the world,  
you swallow its blue;  
and there's places go way  
to the center of you,  
and wings turn to fins-  
if the stories are true;  
when you swim in the world  
you swallow its blue.

When you fly with the stars,  
the world's upside down  
and the Milky Way sits  
like a lopsided crown;  
you could swallow all space,  
but you never would drown:  
when you fly with the stars  
the world's upside down.

When you borrow a soul  
it's free for a day,  
but to keep it much longer  
you'd have to pay-  
and its dark on one side,  
and the other side's fey;  
when you borrow a soul  
it's free for a day.

Patti Masterman

# When Your Loved Ones Die

When your loved ones die,  
They leave behind their shoes and socks,  
Walking aimlessly through your mind's eye  
Every fallowed night of dreams;  
And sandals, lost on numberless beaches  
Of alone; and they leave empty footprints  
In the deep hollow, of your soul's regret,  
Trudging along the marrow, of your lovesick bones.  
Time after time you get up, intending to follow  
But the steps lead you right to the top of an abyss;  
From there they cross the sky,  
In between the drops of rain  
Of all the tears were ever cried.

Patti Masterman

# Whenever You Appear

Whenever you appear, I would run out to greet you  
My hand either a blade or a petal,  
Depending on which face you turned toward me;  
You are allowed more than one identity,  
But only one chance with me-  
My patience is not interminable,  
Like a lamp burning till sunrise,  
Finally extinguished by the gnarled hands of faithful loving.  
My love is always fresh and painful like a birth,  
With sharp fangs which pant, for all the clamor living inside your blood:  
My pain you could bear; my restraints you would welcome  
But only for as long as you could remain true to yourself.

Patti Masterman

# Where Are We Going

Where are we going, where does it end-  
this life we are given few words to append;  
Does time own our beings,  
when life close the door?  
And can none be certain,  
what we came here for?

Where are we going, has anyone been-  
to send word of something, instead the unseen;  
Will we find the others  
who've gone on ahead?  
And not leave forever  
for those who are dead?

Patti Masterman

# Where Do I Live

Where do I live, where do I live?  
Everywhere; nowhere,  
The days are a sieve;  
Why losing it all  
When I've so much to give?

Where do I go, where do I go?  
Everything's here,  
But there's nothing to show;  
I've forgotten it just  
When there's so much to know.

Why are we here, why are we here?  
And is it true that this life  
Is a mirror?  
I've waited so long  
Will it ever be clear?

I need some hope, some little hope;  
Something to give me the strength  
Just to cope;  
I once had a heart  
But I think now, it broke.

Patti Masterman

# Where Do The Dead Go

Where do the dead go,  
When we've left them alone?  
Is a coffin what  
They'd really call home;

Or a graveyard,  
Where they read their name;  
How much are death  
And living the same?

Where to hang their hats,  
Having no head;  
Where would they sleep,  
Since having no bed.

If they were naked  
How could you tell;  
Or if they took walks,  
Would they leave no trail?

Do they get lonely  
If no one's around;  
Do they find it damp  
Down under the ground.

Can they fall in love;  
Can they cry a tear;  
Do they have a sense  
That a loved one's near?

Is it strange to fall in love  
With someone who's dead;  
Knowing what you'd want to say  
Can never be said?

Patti Masterman

# Where Do You Go So Far Away?

Where do you go, so far away?  
Rocket ships can't get there from here  
No winged creature could follow that track  
There's something in the eyes that chills  
Hands that are cruel, stronger than before  
Something that skulks, yet taunts from afar-  
An anchor holds me underwater, I can't swim;  
An anvil weighs on me, I can't escape  
Please come back from that nether world  
Where everything is backward and pitched  
Come back to where voices carry  
And warm eyes plead not in vain  
The peaceful ones sleeping in tombs  
Are no less responsive, in their time stilled reveries  
Where do you go, so far away?

Patti Masterman

# Where Does The Wind Go

Where does the wind go on cold, cold nights  
Out of the sight of the bright sunlight,  
Under the gaze of the glowing moon,  
When all the world is tired and sleeping;  
Moaning and carrying on something fierce  
Could it be that the wind is weeping?

Where does the wind hide it's broken heart,  
Out on the lake, around the boat  
And even when no one's there to hear,  
Does the wind ever look for an alibi  
When it's so quiet, you can hear your breath,  
But the wind only heaves one threadbare sigh?

Where is the place wind could stay it's breeze;  
So fidgety, flighty and full of glee  
Holding it's breath till the doors fell in;  
The windows all cracking their window jams,  
Saving it all for a winter's storm  
When the trees bend as low as they can.

Patti Masterman

# Where Evil Would Have Lived

Inside the angels is an emptiness  
where evil would have lived;  
but was withheld instead-  
leaving half the mirror in darkness.

Inside the demon's a kind of hole  
where good would have defined  
half of the ticking mind-  
to constitute a soul.

No soul lives wholly good or evil;  
there's only half the requisite  
polarity, that there must visit-  
to enhance the memory's retrieval.

Patti Masterman

# Where Falls The Stain

Of this you can be sure:  
The blood is still there in the cracks,  
Do not doubt it, even though  
History may have faded to black and white  
And time appears to have passed this place by,  
With it's recreated trappings of an era.

On the long sweltering afternoons  
The blood faintly fumes in the stuffy rooms  
Like it did one infamous afternoon;  
Rises like steam over the carpet, and floats  
A ghostly trail of vapor, under the bed, across the hall,  
Down the stairs  
Calling out for justice, for peace.

The old blood just as ruby red  
With deaths trauma,  
Bright blood still screaming its igneous agony.  
And it waits  
Forever secreted under the the wood planks,  
The ancient rugs-

It's throat slit first with violence, and then later subterfuge:  
The axe long disappeared from the scene  
Whether carried off in a cowhide bag,  
Or a woman's skirts.

Still the blood abides  
Magnetized by the streaming rivulets of people  
Ever flowing between the walls capillaries.  
Later, only children the dared mention those days  
And only during the bright light of day,  
In their jump rope rhymes.

Patti Masterman

# Where Love Abides

He placed fresh flowers daily  
Upon the altar of his heart  
Left the candle ever burning  
To keep away the dark.

His days were not distinguished  
By normal joys or pains  
No mortal act could move him  
His love not wax nor wane.

If earthly deeds redeemed us  
Heaven would rule on earth  
If selfless lives precede us  
We'd have a noble birth.

The idle mind may wonder  
If the love we give returns  
But true lovers know the secret:  
Love seeks the soul that yearns.

Patti Masterman

# Where Magpies Fly

Where Magpies fly, there was a witch;  
Lived on hillocks, by the ditch,  
Lied by daylight, carried sticks.

Where Magpies fly, she set a spell;  
And someone fell down in a well,  
And it made a pretty hell.

Where Magpies fly, then do not go;  
For the old have older souls-  
And everything they have- they stole.

Patti Masterman

# Where Music Is Spoken

Music is the language that we speak  
From soul to soul, pressed cheek to cheek

Music is the transport of our elation  
Finding its way into each constellation

High notes might cause us to suddenly fly  
Low notes gently bring us down, by and by

We steer in the same way that the wind blows  
Buoyant in its travels; full within its flow

Are the rippling bars of the musical spine  
And notes, silver tinkles from a star once mined

Chords, where our souls were in perfect tune  
Can take us as far as the dark of the moon

Which song is playing is the favored one  
Till the music works its way again back to the sun

And in time, all the notes will be in repose  
While we wait for another earth to compose.

Patti Masterman

# Where Shall A Hungry Mermaid Dine

Where shall a hungry mermaid dine  
When she hankers, for something fine?  
Spiny oysters make a nice cocktail;  
And octopus tentacles; and grey narwhal.

And where should she sit, and what shall she use  
To stab her undersea feast, infuse  
Her goblet, filled up with sparkling sea water,  
Awaiting her course, of fresh sea-otter.

And should she tip, at the end of the meal  
The dolphin who served her so much krill,  
In his scrutable suit, of skin-tight rubber-  
(The respectable mermaid never eats blubber) .

Patti Masterman

# Where Shall The Runner

Where shall the runner hide his lie,  
Where shall the liar run to hide?  
Where do the sane hide crazy truths,  
Where do the insane hide their roots?

When everything in the world is running toward death,  
Running faster than earth spins out its wallow,  
And you know we lie better, to ourselves;  
Knowing the truth, then there's no more denying-

Patti Masterman

# Where The Flowers Lie

her bright breeze in an ending wild  
in such goodbyes as ever a death could mine  
whose face's dropped eyes went unbidden  
to peace's song hidden, where the flowers lie

Patti Masterman

# Where The Trees Become Sky

Fly high, bird, where the trees  
become sky,  
Where blue rain turns to mist,  
and every kiss  
Ascends toward heavens  
blinding bliss.

Fly low, crow, where the bent trees  
fight wind,  
Where the black ice is staying,  
in the nights dark playing,  
And nobody knows what the  
wind is saying.

Patti Masterman

# Where There Is No Feasting

Breathe me,  
while the moon's shadow  
moves across our faces;  
while the winds challenge time.

Breathe me,  
before the sand runs out the glass,  
and the clocks hands bind.

Breathe me,  
while the flesh still wears us like its decoration;  
Breathe me,  
don't use up the hours on hesitation.

Breathe me; breathe us in on a single breath-  
And feast fully now, because later comes death.

Breathe me; and we'll try to keep death at bay-  
For there is no feasting in the grave, they say.

Patti Masterman

# Which Eyes Knew Mine - Sonnet

Which eyes knew mine, or would have known  
If we had lived our lives less distant,  
A mystery now deeper grown  
From days when birthplace was persistent.

The names who held a place in town  
For all their new and old descendants,  
You'd recognize them from their frown-  
Or smile as well; the genes dependent.

Faces too, with names displaced  
Would still retain their rightful home,  
And though your memory might disgrace;  
With time and seeing, could bestow.

It makes our lives a thing less human:  
We know forgetful death is looming.

Patti Masterman

# Whirlwinds Of Time

We are the animals with a human face;  
Our ancestors far away now, but we are still young-  
In the totality of things, a hairless breed of upstarts.

We even named ourselves as being somehow different  
from other creatures; better, higher, more evolved-  
Though maybe we are more freak  
Than maverick, more opportunist than genius.

The mammal in us is still very apparent, the brute barely hidden.  
And if temporaneity is our hobnail, all these words of mine  
Are only random noise in the whirlwinds of time.

Patti Masterman

# White Birds

White birds cover the sea of the parking lot;  
No sails fly, and clouds are few between.  
The air is hot, as they fight for rights to insects;  
On oceans of cement, they drift like sailor's dreams.

White birds wait, for baking asphalts cooling;  
Evening falls, and they vanish in the gloom.  
Dew falls down, and with it ocean's ceilings,  
While overhead, rides the face of smiling moon.

Patti Masterman

# White Feathers Falling

White feathers falling,  
When an angel flew close by;  
There's nothing up above us,  
But I saw him, on the sly.

White downy floaters,  
Floating on the sea of air;  
In a single eye blink,  
I saw him hovering there.

Souvenirs of miracles,  
Signs and wonders too:  
He knew he lost that feather-  
And he said- give it to you.

Patti Masterman

# White Space

I was dreaming of a white space  
Had interposed itself between us two-

A blank wall; neither dark nor light  
No recrimination there but silence  
The silence that falls only at night.

Silence gone to snowy hazards  
Like the shadows made from deeper blue-

And invisible but slippery edges,  
As blindly groping in the darkness  
To reach the haven- but you're not there yet.

Though I would wall myself with silence  
And spend my life as one, not two-

Before I'd hurt another being,  
Sometimes intentions brick the dam up  
Before the devastation's seen.

Patti Masterman

# White Trash

The gas station has new owners;  
though they do not show themselves much,  
there is rumored fresh gas in the tanks.

While the old owner's girl sells out the last of the candy bars,  
the son of the new owners sells fresh gas.

There is rumored to be a pawn shop and liquor store  
also coming here; but for our part  
we fear the arrival of the white trash crowd;  
boozing and pawning their meager lives away,  
perhaps casting about for something new to steal, to pawn-

Though I have yet to lay eyes on anyone new yet:  
could it be I am the only white trash  
that's blowing around the parking lot, just now?

Patti Masterman

# Who

broken stone tool wielder  
patient flint fire striker  
round rolling wheel finder  
winter cave hide wearer  
fish spearing clam gatherer  
ocean canoe seafarer  
rock ledge symbol painter  
lame invalid mercy feeder  
bone wearing body decorator  
stony field cultivator  
livestock flock herder  
cloud curious experimenter  
hallucinogen imbibing rite of passager  
elemental forces worshipper  
ceremonial fire prophesizer  
all over the world spreader  
fittest of all survivor  
living in my DNA forever:  
MAN

Patti Masterman

# Who Are You Looking For In The Mirror?

Who are you looking for in the mirror?

She's not here, and never was-

An never will be, that's the rub.

A vision of loveliness, never born,

Or soul of an image, most forlorn-

So who is it you're seeking, there?

Come, waters high and valleys low,

And show me what I long to know:

A faint mist wreathed, by living air..

Patti Masterman

# Who Opens The Door

who opens the door,  
and who is knocking;  
and who shoulders the dry, heaving breast of winter,  
when whoever fires the gun?

is it really true the season's aimless,  
when the hot breath of summer has begun;  
and who'll dry the tears of springtime  
when the vacant memory grows more dumb?

and who remembers,  
and who forgets;  
and what of earth is worth remembering  
when everything's peace is forever forfeit?

Patti Masterman

# Who Shall Praise The Sour Wheat?

Who shall praise the sour wheat?

We shall praise the sour wheat.

Who shall praise the stillbirth?

We shall praise the stillbirth.

We shall be grateful, yea; even for emptiness

And vacancy

For there is still another opposite, even to the  
fullness of nothing down here-

We should be grateful even that we realize

there can be a 'nothing' instead of a 'something';

We should be glad-

Even the void here contains worlds of universes

While the echo there just goes on

past the unraveling edge of forever.

Patti Masterman

# Who Waits Longest Knocks Most Silently

If you and I inside made love, we of the soft-hewn  
never before heard, where the sky takes root,  
wing-rolling the doors of the cypress open  
our other hands busy tapping panes, where magic lives.

And in time, to make your lasting dreams  
the lifetimes of which, and each has a certain name;  
tho was the silent vine, who stayed his words the best-  
but who waits longest, knocks most silently

Patti Masterman

# Who-Is-The-Doom

I see that brick wall you've pointed me toward again,  
A thousand times now, my brother;  
Both with words and without,  
In concealing codes and sly gestures.  
I will just pretend to be walking there now,  
And will circle that wall for a thousand years;  
Even though my body fall down, my spirit  
Will continue on in circles;  
Even though my spirit finally wear itself through,  
Like worn out house shoes,  
My energy will continue to spiral, magnetized with momentum.

In my constant walking, my abiding presence  
Will eventually become a bounding curse  
Upon you and all your petty generalizations,  
And I will ambulate the circumference of your limited minds;  
Your little crime-seeking, self-satisfying standards.  
My round bastions will deflect every intended wound of yours,  
In dizziness you will behold my travelling orbits  
And you will say that the I-that-is; that-something; that-somewhere  
Has finally gone completely over the edge  
Of sanity- but viewed from the other side,  
I will still be standing strong and upright: unmoving even.

It's not which side you're on; it's which can endure,  
And your time will someday have to polish it's bloodied hands  
On my petrified reflection,  
And your farcical mystery religions will crack and fall over,  
Under the propellant power of self-doom.

I'm going to start walking now.

Patti Masterman

# Who's Driving This Car?

The window's blurry,  
The odometer's broke,  
?The tires are bare;  
Who's driving this car?

The seats are saggy  
From long time use,  
The rear-view's broken;  
Who's driving this car?

It knocks down the road  
Toward the next bone yard,  
And it can't get far;  
Who's driving this car?

Once it was new,  
Best thing on the road,  
But now it's just old;  
So who's driving this car?

I'M driving this thing,  
And this car is ME,  
And it's all worn out,  
But I make it work.

If I didn't have it,  
I'd be a-foot,  
A fool on the pavement;  
In fact, just stuck.

So I praise this car  
And it's wobbly ride-  
And I'm gosh darn grateful  
That I'm still inside.

Patti Masterman

# Whose Bread I Eat His Songs I Sing

Media puppets have invisible strings,  
Just pull on the handle, the puppet will sing-  
He'll sing any song feudal lords prefer;  
To media puppets, the truth's just a blur.

Patti Masterman

# Whose Mission?

If you have twelve men on your side;  
Only twelve- and one denies you-  
And the rest fall asleep at the critical hour,  
You can be sure, it's god's mission you're on.

If you were born of a virgin and a shepherd,  
And your woman is a reformed harlot,  
And you are expected to oppose the king of the land  
Entirely alone; you know you can be sure of it,

It's god's mission. If you are a mere girl,  
Born in France, and afflicted with hallucinations  
Expecting to lead an army of men to victory;  
Then burnt at the stake- it's god's mission.

If you are a slave in Egypt,  
And plagues are falling upon the city,  
And they send you away with a blessing  
Instead of a curse, you know it's god's mission.

If you are a baby, set floating in a basket  
Upon a river, and rescued by a Queen,  
You will know by these signs  
It was god's mission.

If you are the underdog in a battle  
And must play your harp for the King,  
Who is afflicted by migraines, to turn the tide  
Of battle, you can be sure of whose mission it is.

If you are a member of one of the richest religions on earth;  
More powerful, more wealthy, and nearly unopposed-  
Able to make laws at will, and people continually kneel down to you-  
Maybe you should wonder about whose mission it is?

Patti Masterman

# Why Ask If Love Is True Or Walks

Why ask if love is true, or walks  
Clothed with the sun's invention?  
Why inquire if a fool can sing  
What proves the flower's intention-  
For this thing that follows you stalks  
The days and nights apprehension  
Nor soothed of boring platitudes that sprang  
But coarse truth, for consumption:  
For the grave which has stolen every thing..

Patti Masterman

# Why Do Eyes Still Invisibly Follow

Why do eyes still invisibly follow  
In the shadows we never can go  
The woods to your house are too far  
For my life catching up is too slow

And why does my heart never listen  
As I tell it again those old tales  
How I found once, but never could keep you  
All the things we must still only spell

If I said all the things I keep hidden  
Inside me, the oceans would flood  
The sky would fill up with strange birds  
The roads become quagmires of mud

The mountains would fall on the valleys  
The clouds would all smother the sun  
And the rain, and the ice, and the snow,  
All mix: the ordered world come undone.

Patti Masterman

# Why Do I Feel So Hollow

Why do I feel so hollow;  
Point? What's the point; 38,44  
Minutes from now, will I still be the same person?  
Should I start to plan my exit;  
Wounds are only temporary, they always say  
Though it seemed like such a small thing, my entrance;  
Wounds always end up hurting others more.

I used to drown my troubles in drink;  
Antifreeze must run through my veins, by now.  
I want to keep on breathing;  
Exhaust; exhausted is my hope  
My heart feels like a brick;  
On the accelerator, my life depends  
Up just ahead, there is a bridge;  
Jump! start on my new life.

When we were children, we used to play;  
Dead, are all those hours  
We knew we would survive, but look what we've become:  
Corpses, of children once excited by life.  
If only I could find some;  
Pure helium, our days were filled with it.  
It floated us up and away, we were dead on  
Arrival; we instinctively anticipate our freedom.

Patti Masterman

# Why Do I Love You So

Why do I love to love you so-  
Star of the screen; silver delusion  
Incorporeal phantasm- is life that empty  
That only your perpetual dramas

Can move me:  
Dream without a dreamer  
Story without a beginning  
Witness without a proof

Watching you, is it that I can forget  
For a time, my life's little pettiness  
Is your celebrity antidote  
To my complete lack of memorability?

Living through you, there is no failure  
For an hour or an afternoon  
Even if your personal life  
Leaves much to be desired

We won't go there- we have agreed  
To be entertainer and entertained  
Is it my fault if you go home  
To empty bottles, a broken life?

Try my life on for a while  
There are no bright lights, no cameras  
Every day will seem the same  
No film will ever roll.

No one's heart aches for me  
No one celebrates my triumphs  
Follows my relationships  
Stalks me for an impromptu photo

When the credits roll at the end  
There will be no names, set to music  
Above an elegant black background  
So if you ever want to trade places-

fade to black..

Patti Masterman

# Why Do I Read Your Words On Here?

Why do I read your words on here-  
Do your minds stretch me to new frontiers?

Why do I take your confessions to heart-  
Could our brain damaged forays be true art?

So take me somewhere I've rarely gone  
And sometimes the words might turn into our song.

For we share a wavelength on the cosmic string:  
Of all that's forbidden; there's not one thing.

Cast off the bars of the cage that you wear;  
Throw away the shackles, we'll take to the air.

Patti Masterman

# Why Do My Dull Atoms

Why do my dull atoms cry out for yours;  
Atoms, as a group, are seldom alone,  
Being that they're really just small fluffy spheres  
Often found in groups much larger than one.  
Or are their electrons too widely placed  
And give the illusion, no one is there  
Which tempts them to searching, throughout all space,  
When; only once, sensed the weight of your stare.

If atoms in lips seek the same, in yours,  
And atoms of mind seek a positive charge,  
As of isotopes, your warm hands imbued;  
Might not then my overcharged heart, enlarge  
To hold the whole valance, of your rare charms,  
And your polite distance, gently disarm.

Patti Masterman

# Why Do We Treat Our Loved Ones The Worst

Why do we treat our loved ones the worst,  
Reserving kind words and looks for guests;  
But for the one who knows us best,  
We are taciturn and impatient; terse.

Why take only our foul moods home,  
Instead of letting them see our joy;  
To the outer world we're prim and coy,  
But beside our own, often turn to stone.

The world exacts it's toil on being;  
Keeping a pleasant face's an act,  
Taking our extra energy, for fact,  
But who knows the truth of what it's seeing?

Those ones you're striving so to impress  
Forget you, soon as the door slams shut;  
And scarce could remember your name, if but-  
For money or favors; or even less.

Someday you must bid goodbye your love  
And one of you goes home, all alone,  
And sits alone, while they turn to bone-  
Don't slip your heart into a glove.

Be present with them, while you have the chance,  
And do the small things, you know they adore,  
And you'll have some sweet memories to store-  
But the others won't save one single glance.

Patti Masterman

# Why I Love Oklahoma

People always say Oklahoma has no beaches or mountains,  
So there's nothing to do here.  
But they don't tell you about how here in Oklahoma,  
We got some things they don't have other places:  
We don't have beaches; but we have acres and oceans of caring.  
We don't have too many mountains;  
But we have plains and pinnacles, of human kindness.  
We have salt of the earth people, with red clay fired veins;  
Bedrock people, who won't move;  
Who will never shift a centimeter, even though the earth  
Move all the seismographs clear off their baseplates;  
People who will show up with trucks and ropes,  
Without being asked, after a tornado blows your barn over,  
And people who show up with water for your cows,  
When it's a hundred and five, and you're in the surgery,  
Wondering if you'll still be around  
To take care of those cows, in a week or a month.  
People who let you be yourself, because being true to themselves  
Is the only way they have ever known how to be.  
People who don't stand on formality, or far removed courtesies.  
I wouldn't trade all the beaches or mountains in California;  
All the skiing and surfing, for even one square mile of Oklahoma;  
It's the only true bargain I've ever really gotten out of life.

Patti Masterman

# Why Is It The Past Must Have A Pedigree

Why is it the past must have a pedigree  
But the present will always be an upstart?  
Why are worn things antiqued, but new things, just cheap?  
The young things, untested; but the old things, we keep?  
Some things are just projects; but other things, art?  
New novels are shallow; but the classic ones, deep?  
If I love you, it is suspect, just because it exists-  
Why do others have reunions; but we only have, trysts?

Patti Masterman

# Why Poetry Is A Miracle

Poetry is a music  
Distilled from a spirit  
Set down to some words  
From a single heart  
To fill up many more hearts

Patti Masterman

# Why Should Breath Care

Why should breath care  
If lover's breathing?  
Why should death note  
If love is grieving?

Those things do not have  
Concerns as we  
Those things do not have  
Feet, to flee

Give me the lover's faith  
Give me true loves own grace  
Give me his measured pain-  
And give back his life again.

Patti Masterman

# Why Some Things Remember

Why some things remember,  
Why some things forget?  
The dress rehearsal's over now-  
And we still haven't got there yet.

Why reality's like a dream  
Or death, another nightmare?  
Our living's full of shortcomings-  
And death's just an endless stare.

Patti Masterman

# Why The Men Grow Distant

Why the men grow distant  
Why women disenchant-  
To ask a dead rose where it's gone  
When all its petals, rent..

Why take the love that's given  
Why answer none or all-  
In same key the tone was riven  
Until their blue skies, fall..

Patti Masterman

# Why The Old Scowl

Why do the old scowl; is it because  
every day is just the same to them,  
and their tasks all seem so thankless?

Dinner is meat and potatoes, served on a board,  
no candles or flowers, only grunts and burping,  
chairs scooting, fires that need more wood for burning.

Oh, it's all connected through a system of gears and levers,  
all right; and though it may look artless, if one leg falls  
out from under, it collapses and tumbles  
over the cliffs, into despair-  
And no one ever catches it, midair.

Patti Masterman

# Why We Need A God

Hospitals full of cancer patients,  
In too much pain to scream or cry

Suicides walk long corridors of alone;  
Paranoiacs, friendless and stupefied

Loveless children cry themselves to sleep;  
Unwanted babies, left on doorsteps to freeze

Or get eaten by unloved dogs,  
Chained up, in empty vacant lots

Of somebody's mind, that forgot how to love;  
That never learned how to give and take

Unforgiving cruelty, that never forgets;  
Insane jealousy, that maims the spirit:

Apparently it's all or nothing down here;  
Either you got the memo or you missed it.

And the hour's always midnight  
So try not to sleepwalk,  
Because if you could see all the suffering in this world,  
You wouldn't want to live  
You wouldn't want to live

That's why we need a god-  
Even if he is inspiringly impotent.

Patti Masterman

# Why Won'T The Dead Sleep?

I sleep in sadness;  
Or else sadness weeps  
Weary and diffident,  
Around the world, entangled  
In morose grey deeps.

Sad in your gladness,  
That I can't participate;  
In torpors I circumnavigate  
The whirling ocean, gravitate-  
Would wish that I could burn.

Wish, to feel anything at all:  
That love had me in thrall,  
Or hatred made a mess  
Of my well ordered senses;  
Life: this just is.

Bite me or kiss me,  
Wake me up; enlist me,  
My dreams grown fainter than a wisp  
Nearly drowned in status quo,  
When all I wanted, to flame or glow.

There's no time  
As life grows taller  
Than a winter shadow,  
And strangles your words:  
Where did glad go?

I chase myself around a corner,  
Find no one's waiting there,  
For no one to grasp hold;  
There's a vacancy inside me  
It's colder than cold.

Hell's a moderate place, at best  
Everyone's happy and soooo well-fed;  
Watching endless hours, of a tv show:

Please set me on fire-  
Don't kill me slow.

Patti Masterman

# Why You Can Never Trust A Trend

A slight difference caused  
Oxygen levels to fall,  
And then the dinosaurs  
Could not get through the door.

An unexpected comet  
Killed the great apes on the floor,  
And the weasel was supreme  
For millenia- just four.

And the floods never came  
And the cockroaches grew large,  
And they ruled the earth with fierceness,  
But were eaten by the crows.

And the birds all learned to speak,  
And were quite polite and kind;  
And they bowed to one another  
As the oceans became dried.

Then the sun blew up in size  
And the birds all lost their feathers,  
And they flew in giant flocks  
To complain about the weather.

It was getting very warm,  
There was nowhere else to go,  
So one bird invented spaceflight-  
After metal and day-glow.

There were day-glow birds in space  
In their metal rocket-cans,  
They still spoke the same language,  
There was still no sign of man

And they landed on the moon,  
And they pledged their lives together,  
And they didn't leave a flag-  
No, they left a peacock feather.

And then other birds in space  
From some other planets, far  
Saw the feather from the peacock,  
And proclaimed him as their god.

They were searching every world  
For the peacock bird of fable,  
And ignored the Ivory Bills  
That were listed in the table.

Now their brains had grown quite large,  
They had nuclear powered cars,  
And cremated all their dead,  
Placed within canopic jars.

Then one day a marmoset  
Was irradiated by a jet-  
And it's brain began to grow,  
In the junkyard of day-glow.

And it spawned a race of apes  
Who began to turn quite human;  
Then their babes were taking over  
As the race of man was boomin'-

This is where the story stops;  
We already know the end,  
And this all just goes to show  
You can not predict a trend.

Patti Masterman

# Why You'Re Mine

You say your soul is not so clear,  
You claim your thoughts too dry;  
Your impulses, they did not rain  
Upon us, from on high.

You can't forgive the errors  
You were too blind to see,  
But every man is human; flawed-  
As he was made to be.

You can't exceed the maker,  
Or imitate each trait;  
Your strange and fitful nature  
He did foresee, to make.

He knew that other humans  
Must fear one so divine;  
And so he put the flaws in-  
And that is why you're mine.

Patti Masterman

# Wicked Woman

Wicked woman, I know your kind;  
Think we don't see you  
Sight out of mind,  
Playing those games,  
Pretending to be  
Somebody's friend-  
That nobody sees.

Wicked woman, saying those words;  
Trying to fill me  
Up with the world,  
For ego's bound  
To desires that we have;  
I can't hear your words-  
Cause you're just a trap.

Wicked woman, leave me alone;  
Don't want you near me  
I'm going home,  
Your intrigues have failed  
You've gone unheard,  
So go, wicked woman-  
And say no more words.

Patti Masterman

# Wide Open Gates

Truth goes deeper than some rhyme,  
Love goes deeper than a valentine;  
A love which rests its weary head,  
When every other hope is dead.

A love which waits by heaven's gate,  
And all things, anticipates  
With eyes that see the worst of woes,  
Yet straightaway to the loved one, go.

You'll not find love in greeting cards,  
Or a dozen roses, on the boulevard;  
Love finds its lowly, bare estate  
Beside the hearts wide open gates

Patti Masterman

# Wildwood Grown

If we were all found naturally at birth  
To resemble the thing  
We are best suited to do in this life  
It would be odd indeed  
To suppose myself with one giant eyeball  
And two giant hands, shriveled up legs,  
And fingertips that seeped India ink  
Whenever I pressed them to any surface  
Neck arched permanently for reading  
With a thickened callous of iris  
Instead of always looking for glasses  
And it does scare me to suppose  
What those women out in the back alleys  
Would have in their derivative appearance-  
IV ports made of hardened cuticle,  
From many generations of drug injections?  
That's as far as I'm letting my imagination go-  
Except that I might have to stop eating honey.

Patti Masterman

# Will There Be Hope

Will there be hope, like a candle  
Burning bright at the end  
Of the strife and the battles  
We don't know who will win?

Is there worth to be found  
In the remnants of days,  
Can we find new tomorrows  
In amongst those same ways?

Will we know who we are then,  
Or remember what was,  
Before sirens announcing  
The end of the trust?

Patti Masterman

# Wind As Gardener

Nobody ever mentions the fact that  
Once-beating hearts now nourish the prairies grasses.  
Refusing to take notice of this, I'm busily  
Threading my fibers, splayed against the crossgrain-  
Billions of patterns exist, and mine seems to be all my own:  
But watering the roots, I discover deposits-  
In the end it is so mixed up- who can tell what remains  
Of the inate germ nature, and what sprang up  
From scattered seed, as the wind was  
Caressing the four corners of the compass?  
We are blown up into the air and then raked into the mud.  
If not devoured, we might become a great, steadfast beacon,  
Or a small driven twig, or only the dead-end  
Signpost on a road to a lost mine.  
Waiting, hidden, you might wilt away too soon-  
There is safety in the muck- nobody kicks you if you don't  
Stick up. In the mine, it is as if you are already dead;  
Your heart will not nourish the sterile dust there, and the  
Diamonds are too brilliant to notice your small shining.

Patti Masterman

# Wind Down My Sun

Wind down my sun, my distant flame,  
The solar wind has caught my pain.  
On altars rare, of beaten gold,  
I dare the goal, a coffer bold.

Burn not my eyes, my hapless face,  
When at your smoking visage, gaze.  
No sun spot mar your perfect shape;  
Your withheld fury, theory's rape.

It's but your patience, keeps us breathing;  
To ice we turn, at your slight leaving,  
Though devils dance upon your gas,  
A noble field, you'll be at last.

Patti Masterman

# Winding Sheet

Winding sheet, where death has had it's day:

Expressions blankly say

No losses and no wins;

No movement and no words

Have purged the slightest sin.

Brain cools, within it's cavity:

And cells become a sea;

Communications slowed,

There is no need to bleed,

No steaming breath to blow.

Still life, a nature scape in works:

The insects aren't remiss;

Their egg sacs down below-

They are the only kiss

Unbeloved death can know.

Patti Masterman

# Windows Work Their Magic

windows work their magic way with you  
morning steam wakes up to a translucent joy  
surrounding the present dazzling sky  
no worry pierces night's brilliant flower  
listen to the rhythm of the stars blazing above  
in the warm embrace of your bath  
as the dirt washes away, in the universe's moist kiss

Patti Masterman

# Wings Behind The Sculptor

Wings behind the sculptor,  
Hidden curve we do not see;  
Sum of flight's intention  
With the shadow flying free.

Hands of alabaster,  
Cloud of diamonds to the stone,  
Shaped of generations  
And mortalities unknown.

Silent silver angels standing  
At the urn of time,  
Raising dust to magic  
In the chiseled breath of mind.

Patti Masterman

# Winter Harvest

Say nothing, let the dead heaps of Winter's drought  
Lie frozen, let leaves buffer their weight soundlessly;  
Grey clouds on the horizon will muffle the wind's sobs.  
Soft shovelfuls of earth are deeper down,  
Beneath the hard bitten surface.

Their mouths stay closed now, against insult or compliment  
Their hands are open palmed, not grasping, not convulsing:  
For they have received their portion, that which was promised them  
Back at the first compulsive gulping of air, when new eyes  
Only used to darkness, had to blink at the sudden influx of brilliant light.

Submerged again into inky darkness, let none awaken,  
None disturb the newfound peace and complacency.  
They float subterranean rivers now, with featureless shores  
And all their dreams are still ones, and all their words are silence;  
They are cold inhabitants now, of yet colder worlds

Where there are no ambitions, no desires  
Where none ever desire to find entrance  
But where everyone finds a place, at the end.  
Life breathes in on only a single breath;  
The same one, at its coming and its departure.

Patti Masterman

# Winter Stamp

Winter draws its caricatures  
On frosted panes and lamps;  
Each one is slightly different  
And engraved by winters stamp.

To collectors of such things  
Nature shows her art for free;  
The world is full of treasures rich  
For those with eyes to see.

Patti Masterman

# Wish I May, Wish I Might

Every star's a fable,  
A story in the sky,  
A trail of angel's footprints  
(some angels cannot fly) .

Every tale's worth keeping  
And writing in a book;  
So every star you're seeing,  
Just take a closer look:

There's stars wished on by babies,  
And stars from lover's eyes,  
Stars that saved a sailor  
Or intrepid voyager, high.

Stars that guide the night time,  
And stars that swiftly fell,  
And stars that shine in daylight,  
At the bottom of a well.

There are stars in the evening,  
And stars before the dawn,  
To tell us what the season,  
And when the work is done.

There's the first star you remember,  
And the last you'll see before  
Your eyelids close forever-  
Before a star-lit door.

And then you'll be a star yourself,  
Shining miles above;  
Lighting worlds with distant lamps,  
Burning bright with love.

Patti Masterman

# Wish, Wish The Darkness All Away - Villanelle

So comes the end of another day,  
Dig the grave and let it be:  
Wish, wish the darkness all away.

Though there were things you wished to say,  
Man is man, and men are free:  
So comes the end of another day.

Unsaid the words, and left them lay;  
Man is spineless, small and weak:  
Wish, wish the darkness all away.

If once the world was good and gay,  
The bold will rise and crush the meek:  
So comes the end of another day.

The heart more bitter, to repay  
The giver of the wound it seeks:  
Wish, wish the darkness all away.

And so we take the longest way;  
Just plug the heart, or let it leak,  
So comes the end of another day:  
Wish, wish the darkness all away.

Patti Masterman

# Wishing Well

A young girl walked too far one day,  
And where she was, she couldn't say;  
But found herself at the end of a trail-  
Alone, with a great dark wishing well.

Voices echoed up its slimy sides  
And whispers seemed to faintly chide:  
She had one wish, and must not lose it-  
Better yet, was the time to use it.

She thought of funerals she had seen,  
And worse, the ones to which she'd been-  
The angels shuddered when they heard her breath;  
She opened her mouth, and wished away death.

Dark clouds roiled and lightnings flashed,  
The wind rose up with a hideous clash,  
And flimsy things stood, while the stout fell down-  
And all the graves fettered dead, came out.

She began to run back across the moors,  
Wanting safety behind her doors,  
But the living aren't safe where the dead do walk,  
And her lively presence, they began to stalk.

They chased her down cliffs and into ravines,  
And over coasts, that the ocean gleaned;  
They never let up, and that same night,  
The poor little girl quite died of fright.

Soon as she fell, her wish revoked-  
The dead back to sleep, as the living woke;  
So none ever knew how close it had been  
(Except some woke, after frightful dreams.)

They buried her in a lovely place,  
Mourning her youth and innocent grace,  
And none ever knew, so none could say  
That death came back- once- to rule the day.

Patti Masterman

# Witchy-Poo

A very mean and bicked witch  
She makes me cry, she makes me itch  
The wickedest witch you ever saw  
Your eyes will water and your skin will crawl  
She loves to give the SLY reply  
And the not so sincere SIGH  
She's watching you just like a HAWK  
For SIGNS of weakness or dry rot  
She'll UTILIZE to the full degree  
ANY sloven or careless decree  
To the worst recipient she will FLY  
And vexing them for reason WHY  
YOU would declare such a horrid thing  
It makes her practically begin to SING  
She takes the statement and she RUNS away  
Even though you never MEANT to say  
You'll be ruined as her LIPS start moving  
Your innocence you'll NOT be proving  
Better just SEAL your mouth up fast  
And don't even mutter ONE last gasp  
If you must die, better it be ALONE  
Than being clawed at the SOUL and bone  
For one last tidbit that she can USE  
To fully flesh out her latest RUSE  
It's true she's got ONE purpose in life  
To create havoc, DESPAIR and strife  
And when she dies, I PITY hells minions-  
Then THEY'LL have to listen to her pointless opinions.

Patti Masterman

# With A Clean Heart

When someone's mean or cruel for no reason;  
Enjoying watching you squirm, walk away-  
You'll go with a clean heart, and leave them the baggage of the day.

When someone breaks with you, cuts ties  
Of decency, and you don't know why,  
Walk away-  
You'll go with a clean heart, just leave them the baggage- don't cry.

There's many miles to travel yet, and no need to carry more  
Than heart and conscience can afford;  
So go in peace, with a clean heart-  
When they close that door.

Patti Masterman

# With All Your Goings-Out

With all your goings-out,  
I simply came in.

And from your words  
passed out like candy,  
I gathered in a harvest,  
saying nothing.

People you discarded  
as useless, I recruited,  
Everything done  
to one purpose.

Your words, movements;  
things you threw away:  
Say so much more about you,  
than I ever could

And though I will never  
run out of words,  
I'm saving up this history-  
for a rainy day always comes.

Patti Masterman

# With My Harley-Davidson Lighter

With my Harley-Davidson lighter  
I like to set the cute fluffy poems on fire  
And hear them squeal, as the impotent smoke  
Swirls away in the breeze, and watch the glow  
Until they become a pristine pile of letters again  
Finally ready to put something real  
Between their little matchstick legs.

Patti Masterman

# Withering Fire

There's a withering fire to the touch,  
When bequeathing our alms at midnight-  
The stain-glass bursting with secrets,  
The statues holding back the daylight.

Most words to the masses forgotten,  
Eyes meet none for lean centuries,  
Hands in coat pockets, so the coldness  
Won't hasten the season's miseries.

A mistle-toe sprig's on the lamp post,  
There's gay cards strewn over the table:  
The holiday for good will's arriving-  
But we lie far apart, as we're able.

Somewhere are sweet voices singing,  
While lovers warm palms tightly pressed-  
But the old bed down early on Christmas  
Because they'd rather just have their rest.

Patti Masterman

# Without Proximity

Humans think the whole earth  
Should subjugate itself beneath their feet;  
Even their religions cry out  
That they are meant to dominate this world;  
Animal life hides at their approach;  
Even their smell is unusual,  
Camouflaged by many substances  
That they put upon the body;  
Godlike, they annoint themselves  
With the essence of flowers,  
And animal secretions which waft into the air  
From their body's sensors-  
And what other animal can kill or maim,  
Without proximity?

Patti Masterman

# Witness

Everything in this peculiar world  
Has a tendency to become  
More and more humanlike.  
Soon store dummies will be  
Needing yearly check-ups,  
And wig head stands  
Will be requiring chiropractic.  
I always had a deep distrust  
Of things that looked human,  
And pretended to be inanimate anyway.  
Why did they have to look so alive,  
If they had no warm flesh or coursing blood-  
Living beings have blood that sings  
To other living beings and it remembers  
The consciousness it nourishes.  
The flowing blood is a fingerprint;  
A time stamp of being  
That permits no perjury.

Patti Masterman

# Witness Protection Program

It's a funny thing isn't it, how you're all over the place,  
When you say, that you're just trying to find yourself;  
While realizing, that maybe you don't want to be any place at all,  
And don't really want to be found.  
Even while shouting your name, into all the crazy winds  
Always pulling you in this direction, or that.  
But you're so afraid of boredom; it's been haunting  
Since the cradle, threatening to descend  
A wave of darkness, to cover hope and creativity,  
To snuff out your very identity, as half-formed as it still feels.  
A depression of which, must have been your caul at birth;  
And will no doubt be your same shroud, at death.  
You sometimes wonder if you've been running away, for so long  
That you've forgotten exactly what it is, that you're so afraid of  
And if it's worth all the hassle of continuously running,  
In your own witness protection program:  
Let's break all the mirrors, again..  
But you know, that habit has you so firmly in it's grip,  
There's no escaping now; it's too late, you're not a child now:  
No fairy tale can step in to save you, from that bullet.  
And where is your god, you might ask, in all of this?  
You evicted him so long ago,  
That he signed off on your lease-  
And there's nobody else wants to own your rabid soul, anymore-  
Not even you; and that's got to be the saddest thing of all.

Patti Masterman

# Woke Up, It Was Saturday..

Woke up, it was Saturday,  
Looked out in the driveway:  
There was the car,  
On it's rubber-tired splendor;  
Got behind the wheel, smiling  
Drove and drove, for miles away-

Didn't really want to get anywhere;  
Just wanted to go driving, drive..

Went to the meeting,  
Wearing my best suit:  
Took notes, smiled,  
While I watched the clock above  
Took names and numbers,  
Told them we'd be in touch-

Didn't really want to get anywhere;  
Just wanted to go driving, drive..

Made an appointment,  
With my best lover:  
Wined, dined, flowers and all;  
Made love all night,  
In the smiling moonlight  
But I left in the morning-

Didn't really want to get anywhere;  
Just wanted to go driving, drive..

Went to the cemetery  
To see some old friends there.  
Sat on the grass, and with a smile  
Told them how it's been;  
Nothing's really changed  
Since they've been away-

They said they never really wanted to get anywhere  
Just wanted to go driving, drive..

Written to Four Tet/Unspoken

Patti Masterman

# Wonderfully And Fearfully Made

Creation's left its markers  
Imprinted on the being;  
You have to know just where to look  
To know what you are seeing.

The hollow down my back  
Is where the sperm divides the seed,  
The navel on my stomach,  
Where the embryo must feed.

The space between the eyes  
Is the animal body's clock,  
It watches for the sunlight;  
To the pineal gland, it talks.

The dreamers dream is paralyzed,  
The autonomic does it,  
So that we won't leap up then  
And much too fully trust it.

The blackest center of my eye's  
Where humankind is tied;  
The place we look to prove we're true,  
And also, find the lie.

We once were water creatures  
And inside the womb, had gills,  
That now are ears and cheeks  
And they enable us to hear.

We're maternal mammals  
And we make our babies milk,  
So they'll have the perfect food-  
And seldom, do we spill.

We hide our stash of eggs  
Deep within the body's cave;  
And each one is more precious,  
For amounts of time we gave.

We have the longest childhood,  
More than other forms of life-  
So we can learn to live in peace  
Avoiding the strife.

Psalm 139: 14 (New International Version)

'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.'

Patti Masterman

# Wondrously Made

Everything living in this world is a god-  
For we took our living bodies  
From the pure intelligence of creation;  
Even animals- even insects- even us.

Everything organized perfectly here,  
A vast encyclopaedic wisdom;  
More perfect than it could have been created  
By any power that we know of.

(Things with eyes that can recognize you  
Are royalty with a past that's true;  
Things with blood that sings it's name  
From the very center of time came)

They have captured my heart  
With their improbable art-  
My brother, my sister, I bow to you:  
What marvels you are, wondrously true.

Patti Masterman

# Words Are Ambivalent Tools

Words are ambivalent tools  
They are a driverless car  
Until taken control of  
Nobody can drive to the same destination twice  
That someone else has already gone to.

Even a time machine is not that exacting  
Writing as if you were someone else  
Takes as much concentration  
As forging their name on some document

The mind always returns to being itself  
Everything it touches, it turns into self  
The fingerprint of a mind is unmistakable  
It is only gradually changed  
And only if it agrees with the original premise  
If the mind isn't convinced, nothing happens.

Patti Masterman

# Words Are Tender Truncheons

Words are tender truncheons that often are disguised,  
As too familiar gallows, that we're dragged to in the night;  
Penance on pedestals, till morning's dreary light..  
Everything we try to say's transparent or too trite.

Words, the only tool that's good enough for love,  
Hammers and pliers and mallet striking wood;  
Remember there's no stopping till the heart is hanging out-  
We want to be sure what we thought we saw there's still about.

Patti Masterman

# Words Are Worth More

Words are worth more  
Than an acre of time,  
A week of embraces,  
The kiss of a rhyme.

Words are worth more  
Than a fling or a dream;  
And lies can't suffice  
For the words you don't mean.

Patti Masterman

# Words Can Dig You A Giant Hole

your words can dig you a giant hole,  
mere words can't ever fill back in;  
it's as if you'd built you, a special soul,  
for overnight visits, or as packaging-  
a compact soul, that's none too fat;  
and it's too late, once the spade appears,  
remember when you said, 'I promise that'  
and remember when you heard, 'I'll be there';  
it's a magic spell means the opposite  
of whatever the words that were spoken;  
the token words, are just the appositive,  
shallow words of a promise, broken.

Patti Masterman

# Words Have Souls

Words have souls

that you can see,

in syllables

said lovingly;

A name holds more

than we could guess,

and our futures

could confess.

And the reason

I say it endlessly?

is just the strength,

of what I see.

Patti Masterman

# Words Of A Freeman

Let the poetry of others repose in majestic halls:  
My poems are filler for paper shredders,  
For packing in shipping boxes,  
And backing for flypaper sticky strips;  
To wipe the muddy soles of shoes  
That have seen too much of springtime  
In the garden.

Others poetry fills the airwaves, and sits between the covers of books;  
My poetry is for grocery lists,  
And sudden messages you need to scribble while on the telephone,  
And maps to undiscovered geneological treasures  
That are only a township away-  
To trace the faces of cool tombstones  
Under a mid-day sun.

You won't find my poetry near any other kind of list  
That doesn't say get bleach, dog food, and toilet paper.  
Still, my poetry is from a well lettered life-  
I have written all my heartbeats, and most of my sighs  
Into sibylline hieroglyphics, from midnight initiations  
In the secret brotherhood, of my own soul:  
And I will die a freeman, because nobody  
Will ever feel the need to own any of these words.

Patti Masterman

# Words Only Are Our Weighty Matters

Words only are our weighty matters of the day;  
we carry them about, small piles of stones  
boulder-crushed and river-smoothed,  
filled with our intention,  
to build a better bridge  
a mightier footpath to the steep,  
never-quarried heart of man.

In devout mumblings,  
we ply the rosary-trade of consonant longings;  
enchantments we would cast  
within the brook and sky;  
tricklings of a rare spirit,  
we would catch in our hands

Always losing more  
than we can hold to,  
searching for the stray glint of golden matters  
which could buy us more unwinding days in the sun,  
to scratch through the leavings  
of mythical streams.

Our bookish souls praying  
for an avalanche, an earthquake;  
to unloose the nuggets that we would display,  
as like a small child,  
we constantly rearrange our cache  
looking for an alignment;  
a magic spell, that can conquer all.

Patti Masterman

# Words The Coin That I Get Paid

Words the coin that I get paid;  
No creature comforts save the day,  
Just words, to journey through the brain-  
And that I ride, my worthy train.

The standard gold of travel time:  
To wander through the star dust mind,  
The offspring of exploded suns  
And meteors, when life begun/

Patti Masterman

# Words The Counterpoint To Our Pain Of Existence

Words the counterpoint to our pain of existence;  
Finely scattered fires, on the tips of arrows  
Buried deeply beneath brooding flesh;  
Blood seeking missiles, to destroy a lung or a heart.

If the syllables were aimed well enough,  
And once my convulsing heart is all twisted and held  
In the sinewed leather embrace of your quiver,  
I'm busy reading my death in the end feathers.

Because a word is misspelled, and it takes my final breath:  
I am impaled on your imperfection again;  
That word is a secret message, that can fly swifter and straighter  
To inform me, that you were thinking of something more  
Than just dinner, and a hide to comfort old bones.

Patti Masterman

# Words We'LI Never Say

I glow hot dust in vaunted byways of time;  
Sing, fly my crashed divinity, to lonely mountain highs

Stray-syllabled tambourines, washed up on salty oceans  
I pull, push, grasp at life, while swayed by false emotions

Human to the core, I machine-wave fickle brain;  
Photographic ironies of the soul, forgotten brave

Breathe through scorching lungs, the holy sensate gases  
Colder still the epitaphs, of anomalous trespasses

Muscles unhinged, and eyes stealing light from day  
Derail the tongue's perimeters, with words we'll never say.

Patti Masterman

## World More Beautiful - For A Birthday

&lt;/&gt;Maybe we're words left behind by night,  
Beneath bounding silhouettes of guiding stars,  
Or waters of memory lapsed into rain;  
As mind of man bleeds his dreams into day.

If there opened a window, none can know why-  
When breath counts the years, and moments bide time,  
For the hidden soul's body must ever grow older-  
Another years living, in the sacred bowl smolders.

The offspring of earth, or day-star's bright child,  
Dancing on moonbeams in s8cintillate shoes,  
And impassioned questions, from spirit begotten-  
Whatever magic made him, the secret's forgotten.

The mold has been shattered, the free bird has flown;  
The seed too far from the father's blown,  
But it's the secret we hold true because  
The world's more beautiful now- than it was.

Patti Masterman

# World Without Me

World without me:

Will missing days still be as brief,  
As thoughts used to travel,  
From heart to mind,  
Before mine unravelled?

World without me:

Will my hours be inaccessible;  
Just a single line of type  
As in books once burned  
For their lop-sided rhymes?

World without me:

Will my stilled heart feel  
Then ever as cold, as much alone  
As any outcast  
When far from home?

Patti Masterman

# Worth Keeping

Can you hear the faintest music,  
Can you sense it in the air,  
And feel it round your being-  
As if it's not quite there?

Like an echo leaving slowly,  
Or a note, so slow arrives;  
Something never touched, unseemly-  
And yet- nearly alive?

In the walls between our breathing,  
Through doors that hold apart,  
There is something full of meaning  
Worth keeping in the heart.

Patti Masterman

# Would I Choose To Live In A World

Would I choose to live in a world  
Where your breath was exhausted  
Your rare flowering blood, wasted  
Poured out on the branch of random chance?

Because otherwise, I am choosing that world  
Where hope of you never bloomed; no, never grew  
At all, within the heart of me, nor put down roots  
From wells hidden the more common sighted man.

Never the peace or light which touched, rained me  
Down, like sparks from a bejeweled sun's bursting  
All my days since you came count as only a single day  
And shooting stars have sighed my fountain's waters.

Having star crossed your lover's soul into every flaming  
Implosive universe; the sounds of angels stirring at dew break  
Of day; and since you have set your mark upon this beggar's world  
I could never leave until the very last star

That you had ever looked upon, only once  
As your soul's most disparate, dying wish  
Had blinked itself out, in oblivion's expanding night  
As if darkness itself had shut it's single, cavernous eye

Only after hope had extinguished to cold eternity  
The final ashes of that last spark:  
Original fuse of Creation, still smoldering  
Within the merciful black pinion of your eye.

Patti Masterman

# Wraith-Ghost

The place still murmurs  
Her name down low,  
A breathing space hangs  
Like air; the wraith-ghost.

The shocking moon harmed,  
With its piercing rays;  
Her fair heart rebelled  
Against such excess ways.

No recompense was found  
In earth's delight; all gone,  
All gone, the enraptured  
Countenance sleeps on..

Patti Masterman

# Wrap The Moon In Splendor

Wrap the moon in splendor,  
And give it to your love;  
Spend the hours tender,  
With beauty from above.

Burn the early hours  
Like incense to the dawn-  
Where stars can become flowers  
Till night is moving on.

Patti Masterman

# Wreathe Thy Youth With Witchery

Wreathe thy youth with witchery  
And wonder, wild and brave;  
Untoiled treasures, tempest-tost-  
There's not one time can save.

Gild thy brief grace guileless,  
As charm against the nights,  
Immortal as the talisman  
Held up to bless the light.

The fading beauty round us  
Where fortune smiled before,  
Becomes the canker, ere the dream  
Shall lock the last hopes door.

Patti Masterman

# Write Your Heart

You can write your heart in roses  
Upon whitest eiderdown,  
You can mold your heart in poses,  
Where thorns don't reach the ground,

You can clothe your heart in scarlet  
Or crimson, like the leaves-  
But never tell your secret  
To anybody, breathes.

Patti Masterman

# Writing Is So Close To Making Love

Writing is so close to making love:

That sometimes, you can't tell the difference at all;  
If I ask if you want to make love this afternoon  
You look out the window, at the sky, and mention the fineness of the weather  
Or whether it is gloomy and maybe looks like rain,  
As there is never, no weather, to comment about  
If I ask if you want to make love this evening  
You check your calendar then, as if perpetually finding it too full  
To squeeze in a lover's tryst, at the full height of the moon,  
And then might mention other nights, when unexpected guests arrived,  
To while away the incubating hours of darkness, with glasses of wine  
And well worn jokes; the sex jokes ever popular, with maybe a game of cards  
If I ask if you might want to make love in the morning  
You are sure to be busy then; what with breakfast to get, picking up clothes  
From the night before; all the interminable household chores  
Which seem to lead from one to another, almost seamlessly  
While still finding the time, to watch birds through the window and wonder  
What they are about, and if they have nests of eggs yet,  
And about how two birds kept hiding, beneath the bush yesterday, to copulate  
And if even birds have their preference, about such activities, performed together  
as a couple  
And if the neighbors are not stirring, because they have slept in  
After a night of continuous lovemaking; and if they are not too old for that sort of  
thing yet-  
It seems very clear, that the only way to write a poem  
Is just to begin it, and to let all that other nonsense stuff of life  
Fall away; to know that the right words will come when needed,  
Just like the right moment finally arrives  
And I take your hand, and go toward the smiling twilight  
And you finally acquiesce, in the form of a silent acceptance,  
That 'no' is not any longer an option,  
Because for some things, the answer should always be, 'yes'  
And so we write that poem, then  
The one I have been thinking about, for so long  
And I carefully leave out of it, weather and visitors and busy birds and  
neighbors;  
And all of them are quiet and good, while the poem creates itself capriciously,  
Born on only the whim of a moment, and some pulsing memories;  
Our bodies merely the vehicle, which pushes it forth

Out of a rich milk of pastures and time;  
And in which the whole of history, since mankind first appeared  
Is all somehow condensed down  
Into one line, of purest potency.

Patti Masterman

# Writing Such An Egocentric Art

Writing, such an egocentric art;  
And who called for it to exist,  
And why is this ones words  
More to be relished, than that ones?  
Who has the truth and who the remnants?  
The biggest ego wins in all things;  
As the lesser ones call a truce, from humility alone,  
The bigger one moves in stealthily  
To fill up the enlarging room  
With his engorged bulk;  
Soon becomes full and throbbing  
With self importance:  
He resembles another element  
Commonly found in the presence of mankind-  
A noisy engine, of predictable annoyance  
Repeating it's own name, like a mantra.

Patti Masterman

# Written In Starlight

Do not be sad, for I love you  
With a love which will never lie,  
And which is written with starlight  
Across the moon-burnt sky.

Do not pine, for I'm coming  
To claim your heart as my own;  
My blood's in a clamor without you  
And my voice just a lonely moan.

Do not pretend indifference  
When someone offers a life,  
For without the love of any,  
Days are a thankless strife.

Patti Masterman

# Written On The Breeze

Written on the breeze by a summer wildflower  
Whose greenest secret was collected by the bee,  
Lines where the buzzing was lost to the fields  
Death and life diverging in harmony.

Patti Masterman

# Yelena

Your trailing starlight woven with silver needles  
Enters the mundane life of human days;  
And magical tongue recounts miracles uncounted,  
In magnitudes of unexpected ways.

Your vision never balks at walls or ceilings;  
An artist's heart is not like other things,  
The words like hope in slowly burning censors  
Take to the sky, once given freedom's wings.

Patti Masterman

# Yesterday Is But A Dream

Yesterday is but a dream  
Tomorrow's something yet unseen  
This now we have, and that's enough  
Enough to yearn, enough to love

Though yearning were the better way  
To never disenchant the day  
Yet lover's live on extra time  
That in another's world, they find

Patti Masterman

# You Always Got On My Nerves

You always got on my nerves,  
But then I saw your photo:  
You are old; far older than I imagined  
With the kindly look that the aged often acquire  
If they are very lucky-  
And I could feel my heart  
Stretching out it's blue tinged fingertips  
To trace your ravaged face.

By the time we have grown any real wisdom,  
Our looks have all flown away  
Like fickle birds, looking for greener fields elsewhere;  
The skeleton is already beginning to peek out,  
A promise of worse things yet to come.  
But kindness in the eyes  
Will outlive the longest holocaust.

Patti Masterman

# You Are All The Most Precious Things

You are all of the most precious things  
That eyes can behold:  
You are the dancing beams of the gathering sunrise  
The backlit red sky as the day draws close  
The deeply lit vault of the ever changing heavens.

You are all the most desperate desires  
A heart can hope for:  
The frantic clasp of the trembling hand  
Eyes that seek the other willing eyes  
The sudden end of solitary tears.

You are all the most enduring gifts  
That a soul can encompass:  
A deathless love so profound  
That seems to have always existed  
Older than time and stronger than any fears.

You are all the most fulfilling  
Moments that life can bestow:  
Learning ones refuge lies in another  
Finding ones purpose in anothers being  
And loves truth filling the old emptiness.  
You are all of the most precious things.

Patti Masterman

# You Are Not Here

The world is unchanged now:  
The sounds and appearances are the same  
There is the same gravity, law of cause and effect  
But a subtle difference rides beneath it all  
Everything I touch has a hollowed out space  
As if the very heart had been wrenched out;  
Cut loose on the inside, leaving no single wound or dropp of blood,  
Or even a gaping, to show for it; no one would suspect  
That the soul of all things has been snatched away, abducted  
By a fierce wind, random chance, unhappy error-  
It's all smooth facade now, of a scintillating, false brightness  
Because you are not here.

Patti Masterman

# You Are Not Here By Accident

A world made up of emptiness  
If you knew what surrounds us  
Empty space where there should be no room  
No room for a hiccup or a satellite moon  
Everything squeezed into nothing close by  
All touching each other, on the by and by  
Tiny seed of Big Bang, the size of a pea  
But it's been filled up mysteriously  
With the imagination of He who imagines  
He imagines all; the vista is endless  
It's all a thought in that limitless mind  
Of space and air and nothingness so fine  
Light years in an atom, miles in electron  
With an iota of quantum in between them  
Because all the space that it occupies  
Is infinitesimal and ad infinitum  
It's hidden inside, and so is wrought  
In the single instant of His single thought  
And when He blinks, a whole new creation  
Might form on His eyelash; a flash ideation  
He fills it all up with more nothing and then  
Breathes in everything imagined, on whim  
And so He imagined you, and here you are  
On a ball of clay, by a fiery star.

Patti Masterman

# You Are The Lullaby Rocks Me To Sleep

You are the lullaby rocks me to sleep  
Each gentle night, my nocturne to keep  
Bad dreams and monsters far away  
The simple last good prayer I say  
As I thank god, who gave all there be  
In souls brave journey, to only be me.

You are the close of day cloud  
Blots out the sun, and the moon, enshroud  
Starlight you send to show my way  
Once you have turned off daylight's day  
You weave a dream there upon the down  
To softly ease the worried frown.

I cross skies murmur to find your dawn  
And find new colors you have put upon  
Your world; refilled with light and grace  
So that your image reflects a trace  
Of every emotion, man ever gave name:  
A sovereign birthright, ours to reclaim.

Patti Masterman

# You Are The Poem

You are the poem that lives on  
in all the bright white spaces of me;  
the sparkle of snowstorms  
in the first flakes drifting  
the bleat of a yearling;  
the first steps it takes  
flowers in moonlight  
clouds in the rain  
a path to the forest  
a mountain bell's clang  
calling me home  
petal scents on the breeze  
white sails on oceans  
and softer than these;  
faint words on old paper  
a gleam in an eye  
a jet's silver message  
scrawled on the sky;  
for you are that radiance  
gives me back to me.

Patti Masterman

# You Are The Window Through Which I View

You are the window, through which I view  
My world; and every day becomes another weather:  
Of your clouds in winter, I can always weep my fill;  
My branches trembled, in the longings of your near passage  
Down certitudes of silence, though again I may feel your touch  
When snowflakes swirl; crystalline ghosts of some suicidal despair.  
I drown in shallow puddles, while gasping out your name;  
I find that knowing you this way, is better than any other;  
Nothing gets held back; of your sudden rages, your desperate freedoms,  
Like when you disappear, out of sight the tallest mountains  
So I sit down then and count all the reasons, that the malleable stars  
Will surely appear again, but only in the wake of your name;  
Or when they blink out, lamp-like; that's when I know  
Your flaming presence comes, to extinguish the ruins of night.

Patti Masterman

# You Belonged To The Entire World

You belonged to the entire world  
As soon as you dyed your hair blonde:  
But we had to remake every part of you;  
Nothing of your real self could remain  
To fill the shoes of the fantasy you were to become.  
We trademarked your smile  
We copyrighted your dimples;  
Could recognize that silhouette anywhere,  
With or without sunglasses.

We celebrated all your triumphs with you  
But mainly mourned your losses.  
And we always expected you to squeeze yourself  
Into the corset of our expectations:  
Child, temptress, sylph, ditzzy blonde;  
So many conflicting roles we wanted you to play  
And at the same time, the only wonder was  
That you didn't implode years earlier.

But we always knew you belonged to us  
Body and soul; and for your part  
You seemed to accept our yoke;  
So that now your explicit curves  
And your exponential geometry  
Are the standard; you raised the bar for everyone else  
Even though there will only ever be  
One Norma Jean.

You can never really die;  
Encoded in our national dreams as you are,  
Even though for one night out of your life  
It proved to be too much for one woman to carry-  
But now there will always be fresh flowers,  
Next to your name  
Because we still carry the torch, for you:  
Age wasn't allowed to work it's torments on you.

Eternally young and fresh faced now  
In our collective memory, you will always remain

Accessible as that day, your skirt blew up around you  
And you laughingly pretended to try to hold it down  
You were always prettiest of all, in your pretensions.

Patti Masterman

# You Can Easily Recognize

You can easily recognize

Those who have never dealt with evil at all  
And those who who have been down  
Knee deep in it, and on familiar ground-  
Evil squeezing you like a lover;  
It's hands where they shouldn't be,  
Because evil is already on too close terms  
With those who don't by nature fear and abhor it.  
But a person who has avoided at all costs  
The cold stare of evil, and those clutching fingers;  
Who has run squealing, from anywhere  
That evil has ever appeared:  
That person will be destroyed  
Almost before the first shot is fired off,  
While at the same time, the well-seasoned soldier  
Is starting to warm up to the fully acceptable notion  
That maybe this won't be  
Just another boring day, after all-  
Hand already itching at the trigger..

Patti Masterman

# You Can Tell A Lot About Someone

You can tell a lot about someone by their driving style:

The old sometimes drive very slowly,

Trying not to out-drive the distance

That they can still easily see, up ahead of them-

Which usually isn't very far.

It almost seems as if they are continuously aware

Of every pound, of the heavy anvil

That they feel themselves, to be at the helm of;

And that they're trying, with nearly painful concentration

Not to hurt anyone else, with all the weight of that awkward missile.

Middle-aged people are often more capricious;

Capable women and men; of a certain age and outlook;

They often virtually live in their vehicle, which they maneuver

Quickly and skillfully, in and out of traffic,

Very much like a competent taxi-driver; which, if you suggested it to them,

They might agree with in every way, and not be insulted at all.

It is almost as if the car were another small, firm and sleek body of theirs;

A surrogate body, that they are melding into the flow with;

The body they wish subconsciously that they still possessed,

And which perhaps can compensate, to some degree, for the growing lack

In myriad other departments.

The new driver with a little experience

Is soon driving with much more confidence

Than he probably should; but luck is often with him;

So he can avoid a lot of bad Car-ma, could derail his future travel.

And the just-learning driver is universally identifiable,

World over; as the car first speeds up,

And then comes to a sudden screeching halt, again and again:

Almost as if the driver hasn't quite made up his mind

Whether or not he really wants to assume the responsibilities

And risks, of such a dangerous pastime after all.

Patti Masterman

# You Don'T Realize

You don't realize how dangerous  
You really are; in your guileless words,  
Unthinking rejoinders

And all the while, my paralytic heart  
Busy trying to scream, get out of town before dark!  
In his clueless smiles, he could mindlessly gut you

Like a fish; slaughter you like a cow;  
Truss you up like Sunday's dinner ham,  
And then trample your husked carcass into the mud

Leaving behind only petrified footprints  
Chicken bones,  
And just the stub of his minty fresh toothpick, is all.

Patti Masterman

# You Have Zero Messages

You have zero messages, it informs me curtly.  
Well so what, what's different about this site?  
I change sites like other people change shoes;  
Because it seems there's so much going on  
On the inside of me, that one site can't possibly  
Capture a still life of all those piled up words.

I find I can make friends easily now  
But there is a curious short circuit  
Because all those friends seem so much alike;  
Could they all be the same person; how can you tell  
Since there's no voice, no face;  
Only the occasional profile picture, if you're very lucky.

I have a life; I don't have to wait expectantly here  
Day after day, in hopes a stray message will pop up  
From somebody I really don't know anything about.

You have zero messages, it informs me again.  
But wait- was that a smirk?  
Because even though it's only a program  
It knows I've checked for messages  
Thirty times, in the last three days.

And even though I didn't ask it to remember,  
You know, that it knows the password too.  
It knows everything about me.  
In fact, if it were alive  
I probably would have had to kill it by now.

Patti Masterman

# You Held All Your Words

You held all your words  
By their little, immature feet  
Pressed them into dark woolen suits  
Themes much too old and wise, for their stature  
With tweezers and brass plated forceps,  
You castrated them from emotive underpinnings  
And weighed them for the pure gold incentive of their meanings,  
Down to the third decimal place; as if it were only science  
You were doing, after all, without a care for artistry;  
Or simple beauty, as if cleverness could stand in it's stead  
What did occur was accidental; like typing monkeys  
Though you some times would sprinkle on a few drops;  
An afterthought, in case we were still looking then

As if it were all just elements, of a periodic table  
Of your own devising; and perhaps your poetry's well known now  
While the rest still perishes, in the well calculated risk of starvation  
But yours will not be forgiven your indifference;  
Using helpless things, like some key to minor greatness-  
The words you racheted together so precisely and firmly  
Will flow loosely from out the mass consciousness  
As soon as the pressure's been removed  
And will gradually reassemble themselves into something lovely  
A seeded fertility of nutrients, once they've gotten far away enough

We were starving on your perfectly worded artisan bread  
Eating it like some thin, watery soup, with supposition's crackers  
And all the school children will soon be up in arms  
Thinking that poetry has died too;  
They had no idea that you'd replaced it  
With your own stilted brand of academic dictionary,  
Because poetry is nothing about learning the alphabet-  
But it's everything, about leaving it behind.

Patti Masterman

# You Should Be More Suspicious Of Words

You should be more suspicious of words  
That can take you by the hand; lead you astray,  
Along circuitous routes, to who knows where:  
Even if you've opened up your mind, your heart,  
Even though the word, would seem to be your friend.  
If you want to know the true nature of a word,  
Just look at it's buddies; who it hangs around-  
Do some of it's associates, have blood on their hands?  
Have any been spotted, near the scene of a crime?  
You'd better check references, before opening your mind,  
And be sure that you choose from the best that's around  
Before you decide, to finally settle down.

Patti Masterman

# You The Everything, I The Nothing

The sun will rise again  
Like unintended consequence,  
And arrive empty of expectation

Alien suns will navigate,  
Like my heart searches for you  
The frontier of the unsuspected

Please kiss me once more with light  
You the everything, I the nothing  
And distant stars will show the path;  
In this world, all is connected.

Patti Masterman

# You The Invisible Country

You, the invisible country  
I have only read about;  
Me, the half-veiled truth  
That your words would rout.

You, the fettering bond,  
With silken thread of chain;  
Me, the evasive bird,  
Comes circling round, again.

Give the land a name,  
So it's heart, to frame;  
Give the bird a seed,  
Not caged, by distant deeds.

Patti Masterman

# You Were Never A Lady

Nine times at least, I groveled for your friendship;  
Nine times nine more, I forgave all your spite;  
Nine hundred now, cannot begin to tell you,  
Of times your words, in me did truly fight.

One time God moved, to place you in my life;  
I chose a mate, and then he did the rest;  
This time let God forgive your many errors-  
I swear to God, I've had enough of tests.

Patti Masterman

# You Were Once The Perfume Of All Women

You were once the perfume of all women to me;  
My casual introduction to regal scents, that now live only in memory,  
Though once decanted to your purposes, now they are in existence no more,  
In my world, except for the idle sport of daydreaming  
Distorted as it is, by time's signature.  
Though sometimes, a vintage smell will arrive again  
From no place, that's visible to eyes,  
Knocking at the portal door of brain, and I swear then  
That just for a moment; for mere fractions of a second,  
I see your form disappearing around the corner again,  
And catch the dancing highlight, within your green eyes,  
And most of all, I feel that enigmatic smile once more,  
That even Mona Lisa's painter would have relished.

Patti Masterman

# You Will Go The Way Of The World

You will go the way of the world-  
You will go with a hard fight, or easily;  
It's a downhill slope, we only have so many options.

You will go the way of the world,  
Follow them all to shiftless graves,  
With a smile and a tear-

But god, that the others should know how much  
We wanted it all, to be different..

Patti Masterman

# You Would Never Even Know It

The world was crushed flat,  
Against the breadth of a storm  
That circled round the trees,  
And took things airborne.

Then it threw them back down,  
Hard into the mud,  
And into large puddles  
Of brown earthen blood.

The animals were quiet  
Till day came to reveal  
The tale of their plight,  
Though the carnage lay still.

The birds nest uprooted,  
And young dead on the ground;  
The Cardinal's babies murdered  
When they were tossed down.

There are no funerals now,  
And there are no wakes;  
For birds accept quietly  
What nature gives and takes.

No loud lamenting  
What the storm has done;  
No regrets or goodbyes  
Beneath the setting sun.

No cemeteries to visit,  
No church bells to clang:  
Most animals survive  
By hiding their pain.

Patti Masterman

# You'LI Never See Another Like The One You'Re Passing By

You and I are the embers in a conflagration  
That's burning itself completely, through time-  
And no one can last forever, even if we try.

But just keeping looking up, as long as you can:  
Keep on looking straight up, until you've died;  
You'll never see another like the one you're passing by.

Patti Masterman

# Young Women

young women perform sex as a metaphor,  
thinking that a man once approached  
must come to see her as his masterpiece;  
the soft sculpture of all his imagination's grace.  
instead, he experiments with form and harmony,  
like any artist with a new, untested medium,  
trying to compose an original creation for the world;  
about who she is, through beauty of movement,  
and just her silhouette gives him the stroke of genius  
for capturing all his bold passion,  
which is almost always only the symbol,  
the vivid monument, to the aesthetics of union.  
life too soon demands a concrete accounting,  
preferring not to languish in dreams and fantasies;  
and always has the same absurd questions;  
about how we make use of color and scale,  
because every surreal nude icon that we know of,  
was wasted in an empty studio, upon film we never saw,  
used up like something consumable, and discarded;  
and just the faint impressions left behind  
become a dazzling drug  
which can slowly drive you mad.

Patti Masterman

# Your Deep Eyes Clouded

Your deep eyes, clouded with the sea  
Will always be a mystery;  
Though never have been close enough,  
To tell, if waves be calm or rough;  
As changeling ocean's wont to be  
It's own becoming history:  
Upon your shores, my fledging mind  
Seeks for others, of it's kind  
It has not learned to gauge the level  
Of the water's teasing bevel,  
And fear's the water's liquid mind  
Would all the hidden secrets find:  
Forgive me, while I wade in slow,  
Worried about under-tows;  
And time and tide confusion reign,  
While the rivulets wax and wane-  
Like magic spell, upon me cast  
My certain future, kiss your past.

Patti Masterman

# Your Eyes Are Two Lean Wolves

Your eyes are two lean wolves  
Who want to slowly tear me apart, limb by limb  
Your eyes are the voice of the lost infant  
Crying for a savior in the wilderness  
Your eyes are the sky in eclipse  
Begging for the moon to move aside  
Your eyes are brilliant floodlights  
Illuminating me from the inside out  
Your eyes are twin suns in a remote universe  
Removing the shadows from every place of refuge  
Your eyes are the trap door I climb in through  
Your eyes are the last thing I see.

Patti Masterman

# Your Lover, Become Finite

At last it happens: your lover becomes finite  
No longer belonging to the future  
that's flowing like a river.

There's an end to words and gestures,  
even to expressions-  
Inconceivable; even one hour earlier.

A month, a week, or just a day ago,  
it was all smooth runway,  
running on seamlessly into forever.

Something so present now turning  
to jangling, discordant memories.

You imagine yourself in the future then,  
straining hard at facts  
which are grown elusive, after so many years.

And if the distance was caused deliberately,  
curses might come to mind,  
but if it was caused by something else,  
by outside forces,  
over which there was no control-

Well how hateful of fate  
to intervene like that,  
where it had no business,  
in the love affair of the century.

Much of that past has a lock and a placard upon it:  
Forbidden, it now says; for eternity.

And after a while you are happier,  
for not remembering too much.

Under one cause, you get sympathy cards.  
And under the other, only evasive, curious glances.



# Your Raisin Eye Is Always Fixed

Your raisin eye is always fixed  
Upon the gluttonous others;  
Who eat much more, than their fair share,  
Because they are your brothers.

They do not hoe or weed or rake,  
From the bosom of the earth,  
But only take the choicest fruit;  
Drops at their unleashed mirth.

Your gimlet eye does not impress,  
For they've found a better way,  
Than working till their backs have broke;  
Just for living, they get paid.

Birds are decked in finery,  
And brothers taken care of;  
No one cares what book you read;  
How small your soul, and arid.

Patti Masterman

# Your Soul Still Sings It's Living Name

When they buried your kind old heart at the last,  
I caught myself wanting to jump into that hole beside you-  
You cared for me from the time I was born, like a mother.  
One night I sent up a silent prayer, to tell you that  
Wherever, whatever, you now were, I would always love you.  
Afterwards, I felt the approach of two brilliant objects, one on each side  
Coming up from behind ever so slowly,  
Two large, blinding spheres of fire moving together  
From the back to the front of my line of vision.  
But these were not earthly lights; more like shrunken suns:  
It must have been the other, inner eyes they speak of, that saw-  
My body's physical eyes would surely have shriveled.  
I felt that death was very close at hand  
And then I sensed, or felt, a hovering before me, just above,  
A multitude of hidden, microscopic hummingbird wings  
Beating at supersonic, unintelligible speeds;  
A superfine, infinitely uniform oscillating wave,  
Announcing an invisible presence there. Memories of childhood catechisms;  
Jesus the Gentle Shepherd, rose up before me-  
If this was he himself, accompanied by an angel,  
Why was not Jesus' light the more brilliant one,  
If angels are lesser beings, in the scheme of things?  
Still present there, somehow connected with the fearful lights,  
Was that exact, determinate frequency, floating composition  
Special unto itself, throughout the entire cosmos;  
In the tapestry of creation, one vibration I would always recognize:  
It was you again, no longer earthbound: escaped from your tidy plot of earth.  
The perturbations of personality were entirely absent;  
No remnant of the roles of earth you once wore  
As daughter, mother, sister, wife; none of those left.  
You were now revealed in your pure essence as so much more than that.  
There was no human telegraphy of emotion;  
Your entire consciousness simply affirmed it's being.  
You must have been exactly placed between the twin guardians  
Who seemed to symbolically and literally light the way;  
Escorting, conveying you to whatever purpose they were appointed.  
Gradually the ripples of your field faded away to nothingness,  
And gone too, those two ever beside you, the tremendous beacons.  
I felt myself begin to grow cold with shock and disbelief;

But I was still alive; more importantly, you were not decaying alone  
In the grave- no- years later, and you were shooting across the universe  
At light speed, trailing stardust, your own supernova now;  
No longer restrained by flesh, and gravity, and time.  
You were exquisitely unclothed, wearing only spirit,  
That soul: naked jewel fresh from the Godhead itself.  
Suddenly I felt more awake and alive than I ever had before.  
In the blink of an eye you had come back to me again, just once,  
For reasons I do not understand.  
I wasn't sure if my presence there was noted,  
Or met with any recognition, inside that pureness  
But still intact was your living, individual stream,  
Pouring forth like a waterfall of the most pristine, self-renewing substance,  
Perfectly strong and undimmed, unmuted by any walls of insulating flesh.  
That must be why they call the indestructible tap-root of our existence,  
The Living Soul.

Patti Masterman

# Your Two Eyes Worship

your two eyes worship some evening farther sky  
than the four winds around us, breathing with our sighs  
perfumed taste tantalizes, in metered measure  
as waves of warm skin rise, toward strong pleasure  
only where the sacred kiss touches desire;  
hunger where your quickened heart ascend even higher  
as my lingering love gives voice to your song,  
waves lapping restless shores, all night long:  
then a still, white dove lies, with entrancing smile  
underneath the sly moon's beaming magic wiles.

Patti Masterman

# Your Words Stir Me

Your words stir me  
Like no others;  
A breath of springtime  
At the door

After the dry hearth  
Of winter  
Has frozen all  
My bloodless fires.

Your gentle words  
So soft, so low  
A single syllable  
Thaws the lock

As potent as any  
Seed ever born;  
My gentle harbinger  
Of desire.

I'd pursue you  
Through deathless winters;  
Give you this old heart  
So withered and torn

My hope is tireless  
With you before me:  
Something beautiful's  
Being born.

Patti Masterman

# Your Words They Doomed

Your words, they doomed me to oblivion,  
Yet not your words it was, that forced the pain;  
The seeming doom, was just some broken syllables  
Kept circling round my ailing mind again.

Your words appeared to doom imagination,  
That only hears the echoes of it's mind;  
But I was judge, and able executioner  
While you, as usual, were just being kind.

With friends like me, an enemy can't gain entry;  
I close the lock and throw the key away-  
I am my poor hearts only brutal sentry;  
More hopeless: for to self, I cannot pray.

Patti Masterman

# You'Re The Song My Soul Is Singing

You're the song my soul is singing;  
Every note, the birds are winging,  
Every rainbow sun is bringing-  
You're the song my soul is singing.

You're the midnight moon of splendor,  
You're the flower pushing up tender,  
You're the hearts own telegraph sender-  
You're the midnight moon of splendor.

You're the idea chased till dawn;  
You're the goal, when running's done,  
You're the well, the water's drawn-  
You're the final living sum.

Patti Masterman

# You'Re The Sun In Moon

You're the sun in moon,  
The sky under rain,  
Rainbow'd water,  
In the storms quiet wane.

You're the roosters crow,  
The firelights gleam,  
As roses in winter,  
A baby's dream.

You're laughters tinkle,  
The sigh in tears,  
Forgiving smile,  
The hope of years.

You're the letter found,  
On a summers day,  
That finally says  
What we couldn't say.

Patti Masterman

# You'Re Your Truth

I love my room,  
For there's just me-  
No need to endure  
Company.

But if you should tire,  
When there's just you,  
There's no place left-  
For you're your truth.

Patti Masterman

# Yours To Reap

And who is this woman, that you should  
Give both heart and soul away; this rare beauty  
Who has, you say, what none others  
Have to give (for both forever and a day)?

Graceful shoulders, arms like stems  
Flowered soles from French gardens,  
Fragrant, living like the queen  
Of nature wild, no mortal sin.

A child one moment, nymph the next,  
Her throat vexing, breasts a test  
Swanlike legs, beside lagoons  
For one touch you'd gladly swoon

Mortal door to human life  
Her marshes damp, creation rife,  
Her breath breathes flowers, half asleep-  
Fields of poppies, yours to reap.

Patti Masterman

# You've Given New Meaning Even To Pain

You've given new meaning even to pain:  
Pain now comes in colors and hues  
And the only pain now worth disdain  
Is the pain didn't come from you...

Pain that has another source  
Than you; your words and deeds  
Is the minor pain than yours, of course  
For upon all others, your pain feeds...

If given a choice of which to choose  
The choice would be quite clear:  
The best pain will craft the deeper bruise-  
And that must needs be yours dear...

Patti Masterman

## Z Poem Particles

If one could make dreams into poems,  
I would have such a wealth of material-  
Although it might be missing continuity,  
And whoever appeared in it might suddenly turn,  
With no warning, into someone or something else-  
A white rabbit, or an elf, or a Grecian column;  
Rooms into swimming pools, and such.  
Lucid dreams have signposts to watch for:  
Letters and numbers will not behave,  
And keep playing musical chairs each time  
You look at them, and something about clocks-  
Wait am I asleep yet?  
More like a lucid dream is poetry dreaming;  
We can control everything according  
To the strength of our minds attention.  
The unconscious is a slippery eel;  
But it pops up in poems too sometimes.  
In a lucid poem, then, you could still  
Pinch yourself? Just to check-  
Let me dream about that some more..  
I'll get back to you...

Patti Masterman

# Zero Point

Life doesn't determine randomly everything that happens to us  
There is a sanctuary, far past the outer spaces we can barely detect  
Past the galaxies and the far flung quasars  
There's a long hallway where the sounds fade away  
To a dull roar, and the universal computers blink and hum  
Older than the waves of time always rolling by overhead  
A dim peace reigns there, as the worldly cogs stop and then go again  
Where there is no grief, horror or outrage  
Everything has been assigned it's place and moment  
In the track of time all things happening as they should  
Never early, never late, but just at the right moment  
No earthly timescale could ever accomplish this level of cooperation  
Between the very fabric of time and space, and the matter  
Arising from the perfect balance of nothingness and all that is  
Beauty and ugliness, merely a matter of degree once you see  
The vast ballet of particles and rotations, and the gestation  
Of the many universes, all bubbling up from the same seed  
Whirling themselves in and out of being,  
At the zero point of potency.

Patti Masterman