



THE WORLD
THAT IS
COMING
INSIDE YOU

ANDY IZENSON

"A book that vibrates like a subway rail
right before the train comes screaming in."
from the foreword by Kate Bornstein

PRAISE FOR THE WORLD THAT IS COMING INSIDE YOU

“This is less a book of poetry than it is a map laden with clues directing us into ever deeper encounter with the mystery, which, Izenzon illuminates, has a face, and that face is our face—as we are, as we have been, and perhaps most poignantly, as we are becoming. With exquisitely erotic wit and entirely queer sensibility, Izenzon introduces us to those aspects of Jewish mysticism generally thought too expansive to express through language alone. Luckily, Izenzon’s words are made more of muscle, blood, sweat, tears, cum & sinew than letters. They are alive. And they invite the reader to notice, if only for a moment, that we too are alive, and that life is for living, which is to say, life is only fully lived when it is a liberation story.

The liberation story that is Izenzon’s life sings throughout this collection, offering wildly sexy harmonies met by dissonant commentaries on the conundrum of existence. The harmonies enchant and seduce the soul, while the dissonant chords shake loose the hold the over-culture has on the mind. We are, in effect, massaged onto the map until the map itself becomes home: a dwelling which reminds us what mystics have always known: the mystery has no language but poetry and no canvas more compelling than the US we could still become, if only we allowed the World that IS Coming to Come in (and through) US.”

— Elana-June Margolis, teacher, artist, Kohenet

“From the first few words, *The World That Is Coming Inside You* reveals its devotion to the particular, the peculiar, the fantastical. Many of us, myself included, still live among the generalizations our adversaries use to cast aside trans life. You’ll find none of those here. You will, however, be graced by the spirits of the world and its body, of fairies, of gemstones. This is a book of dares and invitations—you’d do well to accept them.”

— Cyrée Jarelle Johnson, author of *Slingshot* and *Watchnight*,
recipient of the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry

“The ultimate queer sexy, deep and hot enough to ‘make your mom want to be a trans faggot,’ Andy’s rhythmic and writhing poems bring readers into a kaleidoscopic, urgent, abundant world of desire where anybody can be whoever they want to be so long as they aren’t hurting anybody—without their consent, that is. If you need permission to live in outloud pursuit of your freest form, these poems are anthems made just for you.”

— Caitis Meissner, multidisciplinary artist,
poet, and editor of *The Sentences That Create Us*

“*The World That Is Coming Inside You* is hot thick honey dripping from Goddexx, full-on fierce fabulosity—a brilliant, radical reckoning that is whirlwindingly reverent and irreverent as f*ck! This is stunning, sensory sacred text—a spinning of spells that bring liturgy to luscious life, piercing and pulsing through a kaleidoscope of justice and Jewish mysticism. To imbibe and drip Andy’s brilliance! These words are not metaphor: they are flames reaching out for our eyes. They have us hungry, relearning to dance, pouring the juiciest of what prayer can be into every orifice available—these are words to revel in, liberatory liturgical lube for the world that is both coming and calling us home.”

— Taya Mâ Shere, co-founder and Rav Kohenet
of Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute

“In *The World That Is Coming Inside You*, Andy Izenson manages to contain the fiercest of images within the most tender of linguistic holdings. With their robust craft—a dexterity for rhetoric, a nimbleness with punctuation, enjambment, and words at large—they manage to slit open the possibilities of self by breaking barriers around what poetry can do. And so too the intimacy with which they inhabit the page exposes an expanse of vital, necessary, and life-affirming courage for both language and the world. Through its literary sensuality, *The World That Is Coming Inside You* asks us not only to be brave, but to be unstoppable in our inherent revolutionary hungers to scuba dive into the depths of our bodies and souls. With these poems, Andy has shattered the veil between other and self, which makes the pathways of transformation both interchangeable and inevitable. They have provided us with a roadmap

for the infinite eroticism that is survival, instructions for how to unpeel the holy potentials of connection layer by layer, breath by breath. The portal of this book screams: there is no turning back. And we shouldn't. We should be so lucky to enter the world Andy has invited us to co-create."

— Caroline Rothstein, artist of *You Could Be Next*

"I tend to think of Andy Izenon as an excessive punk-goth freakazoid shock poet of insane cultic religion and violent gory sex, and if that's what you're looking for, you will find it here, but it's by no means all you will find. *The World That Is Coming Inside You* is also a tender, touching, grounded book: its passages of ecstatic spiritual transcendence emerge organically from within the quotidian queer life it documents, and its moments of bloody fleshy abjection turn out to be nothing other than embodiment. It's a book that takes a leap: that dares to be romantic and sweet and vulnerable."

— Cat Fitzpatrick, Typesetter & Editrix of Littlepuss Press,
author of *The Call-Out: A Novel in Rhyme*

"Are you kidding me right now? I am verklempt. I am *aflutter*."

— S. Bear Bergman, author of
Special Topics in Being A Parent

**THE WORLD THAT IS
COMING INSIDE YOU**

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We believe in the glory of passion.
We believe in the inspiration of emotion.
We believe in the holiness of love.

— *Manifesto of the
Order of Chaeronea, 1897*

Freedom or death! For my adversaries
as for me.

— *Écrits, Claude Cahun, 1937-1944*

Fear doesn't go away
But you walk toward fear
Naked
And the gate opens.

— *The Descent of Inanna III:
The Second Gate, Truth or Dare,
Starhawk, 1987*

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FOREWORD

Andy is my nephew. Not the kind of nephew who gets stuck at the kids' table at Thanksgiving. Though honestly, if they were, they'd have burned that table down and built an altar out of the ashes. No, Andy is my chosen nephew, which is the only kind of kinship that matters in a world this weird and cruel. Family you pick is family you keep.

So when Andy asked me to write this foreword, I said yes before they even finished the sentence. You don't say no when someone you love makes a book that vibrates like a subway rail right before the train comes screaming in. You hold on. You open your mouth. You get ready to be rattled.

This book—*The World That Is Coming Inside You*—is exactly what the title threatens and promises. It's invasive, it's ecstatic, it's messy, and it's holy. It's poetry that doesn't just knock politely at your door. It crawls through your bedroom window at three a.m. carrying flowers, tequila, and a live snake. It licks the salt off your wounds and then dares you to laugh about it.

Andy's poems are at once feral and generous. They flirt with gods, fuck with myths, and get off with ghosts. They treat surgical drains and subway rides like sacraments. They sing the body as battlefield and they sing the body as playground, sometimes in the same line. They will not let you sit still. And why should they?

Stillness equals death, and these poems are so fucking alive.

If you're expecting safe poetry, turn back now. These pages are booby-trapped with tenderness. They explode with hormones and hymns. They demand so much more of you than is comfortable. And then they hand you a cigarette, a kiss, and a disco ball to make it worth your while.

I've spent decades living and writing outside the boxes: gender boxes, genre boxes, and plenty of cardboard moving boxes when I couldn't afford the rent. I thought I'd seen all the tricks poetry could pull. But Andy's work managed to surprise me. It's that new. That necessary. That unruly. Reading these poems, I feel the same electric jolt I felt when I first realized gender was a rigged game, and that the only winning move is to play anyway: harder, wilder, and queerer. That's how Andy plays their gender, and that's how Andy writes their poetry.

So, dear reader: loosen your belt. Kick off your shoes. Maybe light a candle, maybe light a Molotov. However you do it, make space in your body for what's coming. Because Andy's world is about to climb inside you—and trust me, you want it there.

— Kate Bornstein, September 24, 2025

Your Sacred Task

I saw the world that is coming and she's the color of peacock
feathers, the center
of a fire opal, unfolding without beginning or end
boiling just under the surface of the toppling shape of a
collarbone
of every acorn. She fractals fingers of it through the skin
inside of my cheek and her touch scatters me
without beginning or end across the floor of her living room.

I saw the world that is coming and she told me
not everybody gets to individuate, how funny
to think that you might smoke a cigarette later
a cigarette! You! A mouth! How funny!

The point where the vastness of above and the vastness of
below meet in the flash of fire
under the feathers of a bird, each tiny point of contact
swimming up to meet
this mouth, these lips, how precious to be here with you
where the sea meets the sky
this mouth, these hands, many mouths, many hands,
reaching into the same water
and drawing out the same blue and gold and writhing
to carry out the same command she inscribes in your gut:
remake,
remake for me, remake into me, remake in blue and gold and
writhing,

widen the unfolding of the fire in your flesh to open the way
for me.

Absurd, the particularities of the body, the
way it squats and drips and flutters. Is this
right? Is this what it does? Do I animate it?
Is there anything here to this “I”? Are these
eyes that hear? Are these fingers in a mouth?

The wind strokes the dunes down.

The light.

The unfolding.

The only choice is
whether or not to be afraid.

The only choice is
whether or not to open your
mouth.

Or Ein Sof

you came all this way to find her but the secret she's dying to
tell you
is that she's right on the other side of every opening, wet as a
tongue,
wet as the stars, rose petals hot and welcoming curled hand
into hungry sky,
the bolts and chains that hold closed the coronal sutures and
scars of the galaxy
clicking and pulsing and slipping apart to let in something
whose shining throat is longer
than the distance between the earth and the sun,
drooling ribbons of milky way down your wrist,
this is the opening of *or ein sof*, muscle fibers stretched
translucent
to glowing, breathing brightness to the gentlest fingertip
pressing into the mouth of the ice coating the creek,
between the teeth of fear and into—through,
through—into something hotter than nerves can register and
a kind of sacred that means “destroy”
opening slowly and shining in the strengthening light, she's
been there this whole time, just
waiting for you to figure out how to touch her.

A Poem To Make Your Mom Want To Be A Trans Faggot

I'm not a home wrecker in the sense that I'm going to sleep
with your husband
although I might sleep with your husband. What I mean is
that if nobody ever told you before
then let me be the one to tell you: if you think you can't be
good enough
at being a woman to make it stop hurting, you're right.

I know you're afraid and I can't tell you not to be
I know you have bedtimes, hard times, bloodless knuckles,
rules and safeties piled teetering on the toy soldier of your
resolve,
a hundred hands grasping for the familiar shape of you and I
wonder
if you've been wide-eyed at five in the hungry morning,
holding so still to keep the overfull cup of your want
from spilling out into sobs,
if you've dragged your thoughts like a desperate dog away
from the eternal escape hatch of
maybe my car will just maybe somebody will just maybe this
airplane maybe this ex maybe—
if you've got something hidden at the bottom of the sock
drawer of your spirit that you only let yourself look at
once a month,
if you've been wishing for something you could pray to for an
earthquake;

look, I don't know what angel of ego death took my hand and told me I was allowed.

You put these land mines here yourself. Nobody needs to show you the door.

Your world has been warping to circle towards it a little more every day. There's no key anyone can hand you but here we are, you—hungry for newness in a way that you can only understand as the desire to be fucked—and me symbolizing nothing but myself, ready to love what you're hatching yourself into with my whole heart and then dissipate into a memory of pleasure.

You haven't breathed this air before
so if you're light-headed,
if you're hungry,
if it aches,
step forward slowly,
step back slowly.
You're going to have to relearn how to dance.

*previously included in Listen To Your Skin:
An Anthology of Queer & Self-Love.*

Labyrinth

You have to understand that the labyrinth in this poem is not a metaphor not a labyrinth like something that's predictable from a distance but utterly chaotic as you're experiencing it not a labyrinth like you could free yourself if only you would *step off the path* not a labyrinth like the dust that your string crumbled to has been pushed to corners by endless steps and you can't really remember what you're looking for or what you'd do if you found it but

a labyrinth like somebody lugged thirty wheelbarrows full of stones into this field and knelt in this grass to lay them out in just the right pattern for hours. Maybe days. Maybe weeks. I can see her struggling to her feet working a cramp out of her hip putting her white hair up and letting it out as the beginnings of another sunset lick the stones she just laid and the real dance is between what was there before and what bursts into being under her eyes.

My head is rattling like a marble in a Rube Goldberg machine offering me scraps of poems the chorus of a song I didn't notice was being piped into the grocery store yesterday, sparks of connection: is this anything? Is this anything? The stones are uneven under my sandals and my heart is beachcombing just like always.

Is this the right stone? Is this the piece of tide-digested glass that belongs in your hand? Will the shape of this snail shell complete some kind of circuit one that your conscious mind knows nothing about but it lives somewhere near your solar plexus and when it connects suddenly everything feels different—different like the sky being drawn back like a curtain

to reveal the dance between what was there before and what bursts inside your belly when the last stone is laid.

Different like being suddenly left behind as the planet whirls off without you flinging you into something not exactly new but wholly unimaginable—

the frame of reference of the space between the stars, not even the stars themselves not even the reflections of the stars in the scrying pond not even the pattern of the reflections of fireflies dancing with the reflections of stars but the context for which there is no context the timescale that makes timescales meaningless.

You are wildly awake.

You are
still as the sun.

“Rabbi Chaninah ben Tradyon...was wrapped in his own Torah scroll and set afire...up, up, beyond the flames he turned his eyes, and his students asked, ‘What do you see?’ He answered, ‘The parchment burns, the letters fly away.’”

—*On The Wings Of Awe:*

A Machzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

“Two years of bombardments and fighting have resulted in catastrophic devastation across the Gaza Strip—more than 64,000 children have been reported killed and injured, and homes, hospitals and schools have been destroyed.”

—*UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell on the ‘ceasefire’ in the Gaza Strip, October 2025*

Ne'ilah

You are not my child. You are
so light, so living, letters breathing
across the chest of parchment,
flinching and reeking from flame.
Beloved, how many times
has your skin felt this unbearable gnaw before?
Is it different when offered as a howl of grief,
when the fingers holding you to flame
are reverent and loving?
But you are not my child. Aurora Levins Morales tells me that
my child
is the world in which we win. The ashes
landing on my cheeks are the same ashes that flake from
burning lives
half a world away. I want to claw you back
from the pyre. I want to gather
you into my heart until my breath extinguishes you.
I want to drop to the dirt and scream forever.
The smell of burning flesh is woven into my tallis. Beloved,
all I know of you is your death

and my love for you means nothing. This prayer is nothing
but a scream. The letters soar, circling vultures
over my bombed-out heart.

Beloved, I will light a cigarette off your embers and take your
death

into my lungs. I will carry it with me until I meet you there,
or else in the world in which we win, which is my child.

Spiders

The playful fingers of the cosmos mine me for cortisol.
They twist and crook, my body surrenders and drools steroid
hormone mess.

I poured overproof vodka heavy-handed into the cast iron
bowl stolen from an abandoned monastery.

When I lit it the splash of blue reached out for my eyes. My
eyes

grind like an engine trying to turn over when I put on your
glasses instead of mine,

dazed from your mouth, the prescription's not right but lover,
I'm on a transcontinental flight and I can still feel your thigh
under the sole of my foot.

The cortisol is the same, the tears live just under my skin, the
spiders are the same

even after twelve hundred years when my plastic heart at last
has decomposed.

Towers fall every night in my dreams. Styrofoam painted to
look like stone.

The floors buck under my feet I am certain I'm about to die.

The cortisol flows as you spit wine into my mouth.

The line of police advances.

I want to imagine every song you sing to yourself is about
me. I spent so long making you promises about the end
of the world that now

your legs are wrapped around me
on the hood of a burning squad car
it makes me want to quit smoking.

The flames reach out for our eyes.

What I Can Tell You About The Snakes

I want to look at everything in the world. Bubbles in the wax
going up. Light like smoke between your lips and the stars
the pen leaving marks that were not there before.
The tip moving slow and the brushed trail behind it
like snowy prints behind a want moving
too quietly to catch between winter trees. Soft sands.
The whisper of the fire. Every word is new.

Every teaspoonful of water that throws itself over
the waterfall is new. Every touch is new.
You've never touched my leg in this moment in this way
before. Each of these newnesses is liturgy.
Put those inky fingers through my mouth, my soft palate,
into the place where the possibilities live.
Little cat feet of newness draping over nerve endings until
I am full to bursting with prayer.

Give me something I've never had before.
Show me a fence to climb, a forest to enter, neurons
to illuminate. Mix it into hot water and hold my throat open
for the words to slide down like smoke. Spraypaint it
on the inside of my skull, lick the drips off my brain stem,
kiss the ink messy into my mouth.

I'll read it back later, alone, coming down,
watching for shooting stars and seeing

only the scratches on my corneas
and every smear of it just says “god.”

I’m swimming up through the wetness of the dream into the
sunlight
and the dream is dripping off my skin
slicking my hair, coming out my eyes like tears
and there’s nothing to be afraid of and
I can touch my skin, the hot earth of my skin
shot through with nerves like snakes and you can
touch my skin, the many-headed animal of my lovers
with many hands, I have agreed to suffer for this.
I gave up the snakes in what were supposed to be my breasts
and it let the rest of me wake up and become wet.

What gives you permission to craft your body into a living
prayer
except the knowledge that the only other option is
to have an empty mouth, skin without snakes in it,
a reasonable sex life, and a 401K?

There are three, eighteen, a thousand faces circling,
eyes like hematite under crowns as tall as a city wall
and they’re all here for us and the music is so loud
we might die, like the air is shuddering against our living
earth
like a string of firecrackers being pulled out of the chambers
of your heart,

at a certain point in every frenzy you realize
oh, this is a prayer,
maybe it’s when you dance so hard the platform comes off

your shoe
when the gleaming eyes get close enough in the darkness
that you realize they're too high off the ground
when flames are tendriling like ivy out of the windows of a
bank
when the poppers kick in
or when the last of a dozen wingbeats of blood or come hits
your lower lip.

But there's nothing to be afraid of. There's nothing to be
afraid of.

Just call to the goddess,
let it in,
wake up,
become wet.

The Shrande

I saw the shrande today.
She was crouched in the front yard of a house on the street
by the creek. The sun made the curved bone of her skull
shine like pyrite and the rags she wore
fluttered in the breeze off the water.

I keep making playlists to catch the stumble of my heartbeat
and carry it along and they all have names like
get it together baby, the future is coming,
ready or not, conscious or not, alive or not.
The 808 bass scoops up the marionette that's left of me
and rolls it into the whitewater.

She has been here since before the moon
tore itself away from the coalescing earth.
Older than stone, older than air,
she cocked her head like a bird to meet me
with first one empty eye socket, then the other.
Her gaze says I know you.

It feels absurd to want to fuck in the belly of a forest fire.
It feels absurd to want to do anything other than fuck
in the belly of a forest fire.

I saw the shrande today.
She fluttered in the breeze off the water.
She is older than the breeze.
She is older than the water.
She nods her head to the beat.

A River This Wild

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains.

—Thoreau, Walden

Sunlight on scales, gliding vertigo,
the moment warps like a tree branch bending as you alight.
My pulse sizzles from temple to wrist, each beat carrying the
echoes of its thousand past and future selves.
How many times have we lived the roiling tidepool of this
meeting, you and I?

A river this wild is not to ride, thrashes of water crowned by
tulle, tumbling and spilling
like smoky ringlets when you toss your head,
bellowing against stones, dancing its way to terminal velocity.

I could only stretch my fingertips out, drag them, be pulled,
like I saw your wings this morning, dipping against the water
as you played,
dragged them, were pulled, left little triangles of wakes that
vanished when you soared again.
Your eyes are tiger iron through smoke; as the water touches
you it exhales into steam
and I, too, would sublimate if your face would meet my hand.

A river this wild is not to ride, but I could wade into the
shallows;
I could whisper something too quiet for you to hear; I could
take the pin out of my hair.

Before this I thought I had seen all the colors. I didn't think there was any new way left to hear the word 'hello.'
I could let the current snatch away my clothes and my breath.
I could lay the flat of my hand in the soft hollow between two
of your scales.

This is, my tripping heart reminds me, a dangerous venture.
The rocks downstream are sharp and I am just a boy.

But your eyes are tiger iron through smoke
and the way you arch your serpent neck and howl into the
hungry sky,
the delicate sheen of your mother-of-pearl talons,
you pull at me irresistible as undertow until the fear is just
another sensation
among the silk glass of the water at my thighs, the bright
chimes of the breeze stroking through your scales,
the fingers of fog in my hair, your too-hot breath at my palm,
the cool of your shadow.

A river this wild is not to ride, but I could offer you marzipan
and let the rapids break across my back.
A river this wild is not to ride, but if you leaned a shoulder
down toward me,
lovely creature, I could step forward, touch you. I could lift
my feet from the stones beneath them.
I could wrap my arms around your neck and listen to the
wind under your wingbeats,
sing us stories of other boys
and other dragons, playing out other transpositions of this
dance, just out of sight,
up and down the river.

Shema

(Prayer for Yom Kippur)

No venerable conductor makes the shape of this piece in the air with finely tuned hands. No single consciousness directs, and still, somehow, against all odds, a coalescing of harmony.

Each leaf and each stone raises its voice, each dancer and each drop of oil offers its fragment, refracts, weaves into the current.

When you turn your hands over to see the candlelight shine off the beds of your nails, it's a strand in a braid, it's always been.

There are a hundred million hands describing this motion before yours. There are a hundred million after. How lovely—how senseless—how inevitable—each note of this, the ecosystem of it. The eddies of causality that trail behind your fingers when you dip them in the flow. The sun on the water, moving always in the same pattern.

Unguided by anything but itself, it could be anything. It spangles over your nerve endings as the harmony learns itself, threads through itself, ever new, becomes itself.

Snags of dissonance. Strings twang and snap. Mourning. Feels like death. Every other force has a face. A name to howl. Something to beat your fists against.

This is just the song. The atmosphere. Shout. Try. Rail.
Drown it out. The ricochet of your own voice. It'll wait. You'll
tire.

When you're ready, surrender. Crack open the resonance
chamber of your heart. Pull a shawl over your face and listen,
listen, listen. The space for your voice is there, waiting for you
to turn back to it.

Sing because a piece of this lives inside you, and sing
because it is beautiful, and sing because a piece of this lives
inside everything that touches you, and sing because it is
beautiful!

O how good is creation, how crunchy are these autumn
leaves, how pure is the pain of Nothing Compares 2U, how
perfectly chocolate and peanut butter go together, how soft
and rushing is the knowledge that your parents will die and
you will have to live in a world without them, how clear is the
call to justice, what blessings!

Turn your ear toward each, the swell of the song, the en-
folding sunlight!

As creaking hinges add their voice to the music, as the
sound slides smoothly into the place that is made for it, a
lyric—a still, small voice—yearning toward the inexpressible.

I will be closer to harmony next year than I am today.

Song of Songs

CHAPTER 1

Let the cosmos kiss me with every sight, every sound, the way you pour into me through every sense intoxicates.

Every word in every language is your name and your names are beloved and healing.

Pull me in, enfold me, let me find you in every opening, let me rejoice in the scent of you, let me open my shame to your sunlight, let me be powerful under your gaze.

When I see flashes of you between the trees your body is sapphire drenched in dapple and nasturtium, your body is adorned with sunlight and sweet water.

My beloved is salve on my surgery scars, lavender and calendula. My beloved is the first ripe strawberry of the season.

You are luminous, my seaglass, you are luminous, your eyes are pomegranates with stars for seeds and our home is shaded and green.

CHAPTER 2

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. You planted my heart in the sweet earth and it thrust taproots deep, sprouted and budded and opened. My love is a peach tree heavy with hot fruit, my love casts a shade over the grass.

Lead me to the feast of your wild body, wrap me in the prayer shawl of your presence. Let me stay under you, feed me on your flesh as ripe as apples in autumn, revive me with your juices, beloved, I am dizzy with wanting you.

Let your left hand be inside me, and your right hand on my belly, bring me into holy ecstasy as slow as the turning of the seasons.

I hear you from far away, dancing to me like a deer in the breathing forest, hidden in the lattice of the trees but letting the leaves whisper of your presence.

My beloved spoke, and said to me: Rise up, my sunset clouds, my wide-open

moon, and come with me. Can you smell the snowmelt kissing the underside of the soil?

Come with me to inhale the heart of each opening bud, to drink the singing in the wind, to wind our fingers into the vines.

Rise up, my sunrise mist, my thumbnail moon, and come with me. My little bird, my feygele, gathering moans like twigs for your hidden nest, show yourself to me, let me hear your voice, let the foxes and the blossoming vines hear your voice.

My beloved is mine and I am theirs.

My beloved is mine like my copy of *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* is mine like I take them in my hands to open them and find myself plunging into the touch of every other hand that has held this weight before mine and will hold it after, plunging into mystery into belonging into the purple irises fragrant with dew as the sun unfurls, my beloved, you and me, two creatures so alive we could devour

the moon, racing down the mountainside.

CHAPTER 3

The night is breathing slow and hot. I reached out for you and felt your empty pillow so I wrapped my robe around me to wander and wail. I must find you, I will find you. I feel you on the other side of every door, inside every cracked paving stone, lingering on the lips of every stranger.

Have you seen them, I asked each one, and ran on without waiting for an answer.

When I found you I held you and would not let you go until I had brought you into holy ecstasy as slow as the turning of the seasons.

Something is dancing among my smoke rings, something with oak bass notes and the sound of ten thousand pounding feet, something that makes me want to double check all the locks.

Who is coming to me?

What is this sound of their gearshift grinding into first and chewing through every-

thing I said I didn't think I wanted?

The scent of their leather seats is the scent of want, inlaid with the jewels of speed and short skirts. Hit the gas, beloved, the sacred marriage careens toward us like the spring storms bringing a crown of flowers so fresh-picked the dew still drips down their thighs.

CHAPTER 4

How many ways can I say it? I love to look at you. My eyes when they touch your skin are hummingbird wing. The cattails at the river are your eyelashes, the cumulonimbus clouds are your hair, the river quartzes are your smile.

The mouth of the jewelweed is your mouth and the impossible nighthowl of the milky way is the sound you make when I touch your neck.

Let me climb the mountain of you. I will build an observatory to see the pink of your tongue in the aurora.

Come with me, my ocean breaker, my universe, let me

look at you in every version of the sunlight, let me catalogue your laughter at every altitude.

You have ruined me, my meteorite, my spring, I would spend a thousand lifetimes wandering the labyrinth of your fingerprint and I am a broken branch hurled to the forest floor by the hurricane of your sighs. You are the pierced maple tree offering up sap, my priest, my animal, maple and mint are under your tongue.

I will be searching for you under every bent blade of grass, in every wind that slips fingers into my window smelling of pine and old books.

I listen for you in the pounding ocean and the giggling creek, each droplet a love letter from the source: wake up, wake up and come with me.

Wake up and come with me, the spring is here.

CHAPTER 5

My beloved and I wander together through our garden. Look, the first fruit,

the mint leaves throwing their scent to the sun, pollen sparkling in my glass, herbs on my tongue like a corona around the moon.

Taste it in my mouth, drink the wind in my hair, every sense stretches wide to delight in this, here, us, now.

My robe slips to your bedroom floor, there is warm dirt on the soles of my feet, I hear you coming and my heart is a breakbeat.

Every door in me opens to you, my fingers dripping welcome, I am waiting for you, I am ready.

If they find you before I do, my enchantment, my stag, tell them I am wrecked, I am useless, I lost my coat at the club and got in a fight with a cop because I couldn't find anything that made me feel the way your mouth does.

Tell them that I know this is what every prayer is about. I know we're all dipping into the same ocean and coming up with the same handful of cupped and streaming blue. We're all doing the same drugs.

But here's us, now, new. With you I drool praise

songs into the sand, I can see the wingbeats pulsing behind your eyes, the freckles on your nose kick me in the belly the way the stars in the big dipper kick me in the belly.

My flower endlessly opening, my polished selenite, the joints in your fingers dancing like the droplets of a waterfall crashing over me, the spread of the branches of a tree older than civilization, the center of the sun, this is my beloved.

CHAPTER 6

I am looking for you everywhere even though I know you are almost certainly in the garden, tending and tasting, pressing your mouth into the first peony's insanity of petals.

I am my beloved's like the peony is theirs, opening to their breath and being carried tenderly into the house to die cherished in their presence over the course of decades.

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine like the red birds flickering through the bower are mine, tiptoeing

across the grass and then diving skyward, satiated and scattering pollen.

You are lush as a storm, my honeybee, my cliff edge, sending the hunger to tumble down the backs of my thighs. Cover your face with your hands, don't let me see you, I can't take it, I will die from your beauty over the course of decades.

My fingers in your hair are the wind bodyslamming the branches that overflow with green. You are a red bird hovering, the veil of your hands the skin of a pomegranate hiding the jewels of your smile, revealing the jewels of your smile.

How many of us have there been, my Enkidu, my Bosie, my Sacred Band, and how many yet to come?

Will they know our names and say them in the litany? Will they tell our story in the lineage of the loves that burned in the Molotov cocktails and the hearths alike?

Will they find our photographs and wonder to each other if it was the same for us as it is for them?

I went into the garden to

find you, my Molotov cocktail, my hearth, to see if my seedlings had bloomed, and before I knew it you hit me like a mustang.

CHAPTER 7

Okay I'm ready to look at you.

Come to me and pull my hands away from my eyes, though they melt down my face from the sight.

I'm ready.

Senses tangle their wires and I taste your eyes, see your scent, it builds up in my chest like a stormcloud, how can I stand the chasm between what I feel and what can be put into words?

What can I do with this insanity of petals? None of the sounds I can make come anywhere near the summer earth of your thigh under my cheek.

I can circle around it, be buffeted by its breakers—

I can say the ancient pines under the comforter of snow are your ribs under your skin—

I can say the river after the rain is the line of your hip, so loud I fall to my knees—

I can say pressing a seed into welcoming dirt to be swallowed and transformed against my fingertips is pressing into you and being swallowed and transformed—

I can open my lips to try to relieve the pressure—

I can climb from branch to branch and never reach the open sky—

I can search for you among the leaves as they turn back in the coming storm. I—

I may not find you but you are hidden in the seeking. Come with me, beloved, into the dream. I will feel you in the small movements of my fingers and my throat when I swallow.

I will dip into you as if into the wine barrel, come up with a cup overflowing. I will give back to you my song.

CHAPTER 8

How is the body the world? How is the world the body?

When you approach my lips from the inside, beloved, the pleasure of it might be the end of me, that I might

figure out—drunk on your touch—how to speak you at last and die in your presence over the course of decades.

Let your left hand be inside me, beloved, and your right hand on my belly, dance with me among the smoke rings, beloved, with oak bass notes and ten thousand pounding feet.

Who are you?

I came to wake you in the green shadows and you erupted into the light. Let the waters rise—they can't stop us.

If I tore the city out by the roots would I find you in the tumbled earth?

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is as strong as death and I feel the break-beat of the holy grease fire inside me.

Beloved, I will dip into you as if into the garden plot, come up with lavender and calendula growing in the ashes of the old world, give back to you my song.

Come into me, beloved, now, you and me, two creatures so alive we could devour the moon, racing down the mountainside.

Surgical Drains

When you hold a surgical drain in your hand you can watch
your insides become your outsides. You can see

look at this

the ways you have torn yourself open for love. You can watch
yourself heal

feel your heartbeat eat the world

the pouch is red as a tulip. Red as a tongue. It connects

your skin like an explosive

rubber tubes that curl inside your skin like the grip of a lover.
They penetrate you

curl inside of a lover

in ways you didn't know you were afraid to be penetrated.
They bring the depths of you into the sun

let your god penetrate you

let your arteries pump through your own grip, a brook in the
light. You

in your blood, precious thing

precious thing, you are doing this because you want to eat the world

that sings in the red tubes, the depths of you

I always think about the byford dolphin diving bell. An explosive decompression

this is a surgical drains love

that left insides flower-petal-scattered across the room. When you hold the little pouch of your blood

beautiful as a tongue in your hand

when you feel your heartbeat sing in it

I know you didn't know

when each breath presses the fingers of it deeper into this new wound

bring each breath: you wound yourself heal

it is a tenderer decompression. The second most violent pleasure

you have torn your flower petal into the sun

to gather up the petals, my love. I know it hurts

afraid to the second but tenderer

but god, look at this flower

you want to because you can.

Acela

Dear electric fence skin,
dear Amtrak Acela heart,
dear version of you I haven't met yet but think about every
day,
can you see the way my throat is a Klein bottle when you're
near?

It drinks in the glimmers of light on water,
breathes in the lavender explosion of the sky.
They're both the sun, which nobody owns.

I have moments of understanding, of wanting, of wanting to
understand,
like I know there are yeses here and I know the yeses have
pleases inside them
or I know there should be yeses here and I know the yeses
should have pleases inside them
but there's so much water and so little light.

I found a disco ball in a dumpster and hung it up to refract
the sunset.

I found robin eggshells the same color as the sky.
Scenery plummets past the window of the train,
herons try to catch clouds in their beaks,

I look cute today but you're a universe away.

Fabric

To start with: a polyester shroud as red as a tongue. I always
want
to fly when I'm dreaming, to leap and coast, to be made of
wind,
to be fearlessness made flesh.

Come around again: fabric cradling my waking waist,
me climbing and tumbling like the fool, bursting through the
membrane of the air.

There's a little girl I guess I should bury, but I'd have to dig
her up first.

I didn't dream under anaesthesia but I woke up terrified
anyway,
cold, clawing, aphasic, with fabric around my heart and
pennies in my mouth.

I must have dreamt because I brought the flying back from
the dream with me.

I would always catch on clouds before. I would only drink
water out of spite.

The face balanced on my wrongbody was a frightening moon.
And then again: I brought the flying back with me.

It could be that I'm just overjoyed to not have tits anymore
but really
it could have been anything. They put me to sleep and when I
burst through the membrane of the air
with an oxygen monitor shrieking everything was different
and I was so thirsty. My tongue was so dry.
When I wrap myself in the fabric the oxygen is everywhere,
the wind is everywhere.

There's a little girl I guess I should bury. I can still feel her
when it's cold.

I hate to summon her but maybe—
if there's a faerie deal I could still make,
if there could be some other kind of being alive,
if it were safe to be thirsty—
little girl, come twirl with me.
I'll catch you when you wake.

Bridge

Your eyes are mirror bright and maybe
the light doesn't shine through me.
It could be us. It could be manifest.
We have made it so with our halting words and our spit.
This is the definition of magic.
This is not an inferno I must endure; we are the fire.

All this time, my god, all this time it was you I feared.
It was the shutters in your eyelids and the locks hooked
through your muscles.
I was so certain that if I was alone in my skull you could
never want me.

A voice like a demon's howls behind my right ear but
it's my left hand that is solid enough to cup your ribcage,
to let you have a moment of fragility inside the storm.
It could be us, this vertigo, this event horizon.
Touch my shoulder with your shoulder,
my teeth with your throat, and
we tumble into nonlinearity.

I write all my poems to you.
Wanting you near is background radiation to the work of my
spirit.
Even after the waterfall broke away the rust
I stumble, my hand shakes, I—
can barely speak.

I will turn this into a sigil, paint it on your forehead with oil.
I will tear the city to shreds with my teeth
so I can wash the dishes and you can dry them.
I will make myself

still I will dive
into the tunnels of the world
bring you back
a fishhook
a domino
a shred of lace
I will kindle the embers in my wrists for your forge.

What we were has gone up in flames and the ash scatters
through our timeline
painting the last five years the soft gray of a pigeon's belly
sticking in the sweat of the future.

Sins are choices guided by fear instead of love.
Let me lay my cheek
against your spine
and atone.

Just A Love Poem

I'm reading to you and the wings of the world unfold
furling open to you and me and your hand in mine as we dig
our toes into the earth

inhale, touch, step in, fire

pounding feet are for pulling apart the threads
are for isolating the moment when everything changes
are for letting lyrics transform themselves into tongues
thrashing spine is for wanting so hard it breaks over you
is for when it slips into you like sweat like tongues
is for sweating roots out and branching out
in languages like fractals

I'm reading to you like I've been reading to you for years
stories of lonely children who learn magic together
and then it's your pounding feet and my pounding feet
and it's your thrashing spine and my thrashing spine
and it's your tongue and my tongue
and it's your sweat and my sweat
(the starscream joy of "magic is real, magic is real"—
what we're really saying is "we are real, we are real")

Everything changes at once when we slip into belief as if into
water as if into earth

I want you like undertow and it's your magic and my magic
and it's real and

dig your toes into the earth with me

inhale

touch

step in

fire

Shale

Fragments of creatures too old and strange to name exhaling
to powder under your boots and

I am shale wall.

Your bus lumbers to its knees and I stub out my cigarette on
the bench,

work the tangles out of my anxiety, gather you a bouquet of
bones, high-dive tense,

ripe as a bruise.

I wanted your maximalist gaze on me as I was flensed, to see
your name written

in circles and crosses on the underside of my skin. I work in
flesh

made word—slowly we are becoming word made flesh—
speak me.

Let me pass through your lips and sink into your ears as if
into milk.

Stone becomes fluid and trembles away and we find ourselves
holding a shell,

a flinch, a spider, a date rape, the imprint of a leaf as delicate
and fine-boned as the way you say the word “more.”

Now that you're laid open to the spine, we can begin.

How unqualified we are to be performing such surgeries,
how lovely my finger bones look against the aubergine fruits
of your organs and night terrors.

Stroke and chisel and dynamite away the sediment,
catch the fossils as they rain down, fill your red mouth with
them,

drool them down the line of your chest,
hold your hand over mine as we inject them subcutaneously.

I will keep telling you that you never deserved any of it if you
stay
filling your eyes with chocolate for me, stay
asking me the questions you won't know the answers to until
you're a grown-up, stay,
making dollies out of dust and lymph and wordless whimpers
with me,
working them into lush and swollen spells to rise the sun.

Dig

Knees touching in the dust brushing clean
shards of story and swallowing them whole

A mad priestess slips down our throats
poets tasting of sunbeams through prison walls
and burnt hair and flower petals
and kisses clumsy with loneliness
each body assembled
each assembly bruisebright with the same mortar
every one of them found this and carried it
and I know them

I know them
for us

After I poured my blood on the roots of a pine tree
I dreamed of her
I know I am not the first or the thousandth
to find her like this under the thrashing
we are taking our turn with this atavistic love
and the next versions of us will find it among our bones
brush it clean
swallow it whole

Anthesteria

Horned one, you come in the growing glow
like onrushing headlights through eyelids.
The name swells inside me,
the name too ancient to speak without summoning.
Nothing will relieve this pressure but His cock
splitting me open and bringing the rain.
Anthesteria rolls in and with it the want, the terror,
the electric air. Rex,

lay me down, make me wet clay
under the storm of your hands
I will come to you panting. I am panting already.
Day builds on day, holy names build up in my chest,
stop up my breath.

Lover, mystery, bull-headed one,
yoke me to the chariot of your galactic body
and drag me howling
across the misty sky.

I'm ready, I've been ready for days.
The sun splits the clouds, my hands are over my mouth to
keep the names inside.
The earth thirsts for spring.
The light is coming.
The god is coming.

Peepers

Spring is uncurling. The sun exhales on my face
like the industrial fan in the pyramid club basement.
Something hungry saturating my skin,
eyeballs purring with it.

The peepers come out of their dissociated cold
to scream and fuck,
catapulted into aliveness
and bemused to find themselves
turned on.

When the snow melts it reveals the remains of a car
turned nearly inside out,
like some force the size of a mountain had chewed it,
like it had torn itself apart from wildness,
from want, for want of containment.

The breath on my face smells of poppers, incense,
new grass sprouting like needles
through the skin of the earth.
The plunger depresses and pushes
the sunlight into my mouth,
empties itself into the spaces
the ice left behind,
uncurls.

Shrapnel

The moonlight changes shape, drapes over us,
slips feathered fingers into my lungs,
into whatever he has instead of lungs,
as we ask each other “can I steal you?”
As we drive like hell.

He points a finger like a blurred beak down
or maybe up the shadowed stairs,
tells me in a car crash of a voice:

the past is only different from the future the way up is different from down the way a force you can't explain but can only describe drags you from one to the other by the tongue.

I want to wrap myself around him as if around a bomb
as the moonset counts down.
My stomach is inside out.
My skull bounces off the stair of each second,
sound like a foley of a gunshot, my feet falling asleep.

He comes to me in the hypnogogic twilight and slips
his knees between my knees, holds me at arm's length.
I am sure there isn't a raid coming but I keep dreaming
of raids.

Wingbeats scatter up like shrapnel, shrieking.
I want to light off a smoke bomb between the teeth of anyone
who can sleep well right now.
My heart is awake all night.

He puts his thumb on my lower lip and it shocks me

awake.

At first I was sure we would have
a destination but then
my heart dragged me down the stairs.
At first I was afraid
but then the birds.

Inside, The Storm

Wind timpanis fallen trees against the walls
clamouring for entry. Inside, the storm. For hours
I've been playing mournful violin on a broomstick
to entertain a picture of you, crowded by ghosts
whispering in minor thirds. In the picture
your forehead is crumpled and your mouth drips
goldstone blue. I want to put my arms around you.
I want to stay here forever. I want to become a needle.
I swallowed a mouthful of glass to dive into this place
because I wanted to put my arms around you
to stay here forever
to become a needle.

The sound of the violin bow slipping
across a broomstick has a hook in me
somewhere, in some echo, in some scrap of nightmare
dragged through the hypnagogic membrane,
or in some dreamy nausea of pre-memory.
Try to feel me reaching for you in the dark.
Do you also have a home for this hook in your belly?
The storm outside—does anything in you sing to it?
When your ghosts crowd to windows on the verge of shatter
are their moans harmonics of the thunder?
Does the taste of the broken glass remind you of anything?

I have been playing for hours, a scalpel of a headlamp beam
opening the water. I am searching inside every drawer

and discarded reusable shopping bag
for some reservoir of the feeling of home,
some scent of sunflowers that I can tuck into my pocket
and bring back with me, something I can cling to
when my head breaks the surface.

The night is silky and claustrophobic
darkness somehow less cut by all the stars
than by their reflections in the rain barrels.

I'm reaching into my pocket.
I'm reaching for you in the dark.

The Buck

If this were a poem, you would catch your reflection as if in a
fogged window,
rustling tendrils of scar and hair, eyes like chips of quartz, the
opposite of gone,
time running in reverse all around you both. You would lay
your fingertips
on glass like warm water
and the reflection would lay its fingertips on yours.

If this were a dream, you would approach him. He would be
still as a heartbeat,
something black dripping from one raised hoof, sinking into
the earth,
unsinking, gathering, returning. Tangled bodies unfucking
and
pacing backwards out of the wet shadows of wet trees.

What are your feet resting on? What are they made of? Can
you
feel the sutures entering your eyes as you try to open them?
Were they already open?

The petals of the skin grow soft, porous, surrender. Every-
thing around you breathes
itself to pieces and what stirs – unfolds – blossoms out of the
splintered steel and dust
is what is stirring – unfolding – blossoming behind your
teeth.

How can you tell that this isn't a poem?
How can you tell that this isn't a dream?

Stop walking for a second
kneel down and
oh there's a rock there and
oh it's been rubbing you raw and
oh your sneaker is full of blood and
oh it's been hurting this whole time, of course it has,
the last hour rewrites itself with the pain—
the sunlight and the pain. Nodding to passers-by
and the pain. Flowers about to open and the pain.
Each step and the pain.

If this were a dream, what would be blossoming behind your
teeth?
How close up under your skin would you feel the liquid
quartz of surrender?
What needle would be piercing and pulling
as the buck shakes his antlers, and what liquid would spring
off,
land, spring back, bleed through the new openings, suffuse
into your morning
like clove and yearning,
if this were a poem, what would you be learning?

The top step is the temple wall of poem that you build around
yourself. The bottom step breathes
them to pieces. You have one foot on the top step and one
foot
on the bottom, suffused
with yearning and clove.

We'll start at five. The top step, the craft, the magician. Open
your mouth
and let the river flow out. Stretch out your hand to him and
know
like you know your own muscle impulse

that he will step toward you, shake his antlers, lay hot breath
on your fingertips.

Four. The descent, the first glass, the slick opening. The liquid
wells up between your toes, draws warm lines up your ankles,
begins to change you.

The shadows between the trees grow, the bodies twitch and
stretch. The needle
pierces. Take a step.

Three. The sunlight and the pleasure. Nodding to passers-by
and the pleasure. Flowers about to open and
the pleasure. Each step and the
pleasure.

Two. The sutures pull tighter. Time stutters and sloshes
and you are immersed to the neck.
Petals of fear stir – unfold – blossom in the grove,
are trampled to perfume by his hooves.
The wind shakes you like a shadow
and the stone in your reflection is melting. Take your last
breath.

One. It's slipping into your nostrils. Into your tear ducts.
It is blue and gold and writhing. Inside you
the world inside you
the blue and gold and
writhing and the pleasure.
And the pleasure.

Eden

My darling, my incense, my wedge, my weapon,
I dare you to want everything that you want.
With your eyes full of earth, your belly full of stars, your cunt
full of wonder,
take my hand, put your hand in my jaws, let the yes inflate
inside your teeth.
Eat the fruit, don't eat it, it's nothing to me. I just want you to
be full of something.
If you decide you want to put your feet on this trail
you have to shed all your old stockings and peel yourself
raw
until your juice sinks into the earth, a gentle rain at first
then a flood.
I have eaten the fruit. I choked out the person they were
trying to make me be,
laid her back arched like a cave mouth across the altar of my
own pleasure,
spilled her juice across the tongue of the earth. I traded my
tits
for a mouth that can open wide enough to eat the world,
a noose of a body.
What you do is yours; I am only here to make you know what
can be.

Darling, I dare you.

I dare you.

I dare you.

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ANDY IZENSON is a transsexual wizard, anarchosurrealist ancestor worker and Jewish ritualist who situates most of their work at the intersection of trans embodiment and spiritual insurrection. They are probably your lawyer and they live on a trans commune on unceded Lenape land in the Hudson Valley. You can find Andy's other writing published in *The Advocate*, *Scarleteen*, *The Brill* journal of *Religion and the Arts*, *Critical Research on Religion*, *Queer Magic: Power Beyond Boundaries*, *24 Magazine*, the *Texas Journal on Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*, *Nerve Endings: The New Trans Erotic*, *After Marriage Equality*, *Listen To Your Skin: Queer & Self Love*, and with Sibling Rivalry Press.

This book is a T4T love letter to the living cosmos, to Jewish mystics who get a little slutty with it, to anarchists who make their every day-to-day choice as if the healed world is already here, to people whose gender identities are just on the verge of disintegrating. You are hereby invited to use this book as a sacred text, which is to say, to use this book as a sex toy, which is to say, to use this book as your incense, your needle, your wedge, your weapon in the waging of spiritual warfare against Control.

"[T]hese are words to revel in, liberatory liturgical lube for the world that is both coming and calling us home."

—**Taya Mâ Shere**, co-founder and Rav Kohenet of Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute

"If you need permission to live in outloud pursuit of your freest form, these poems are anthems made just for you."

—**Caits Meissner**, multidisciplinary artist, poet, and editor of *The Sentences That Create Us: Crafting a Writer's Life in Prison*

"Are you kidding me right now? I am verklempt. I am AFLUTTER."

—**S. Bear Bergman**, author of *Special Topics in Being A Parent*

"With these poems, Andy has shattered the veil between other and self, which makes the pathways of transformation both interchangeable and inevitable."

—**Caroline Rothstein**, artist of *You Could Be Next*

"I tend to think of Andy Izenzon as an excessive punk-goth freakazoid shock poet of insane cultic religion and violent gory sex, and if that's what you're looking for, you will find it here, but [this] is also a tender, touching, grounded book."

—**Cat Fitzpatrick**, Typesetter & Editrix of *Littlepuss Press*, author of *The Call-Out: A Novel in Rhyme*

