

AN EASY PLACE /  
TO DIE

poems by

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Baltimore, Maryland

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Nurturing the culture of literature.

*Dedicated to the memories of Alfred, Amelia,  
and Philomena Cellucci and Jowena Conte*



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# I. URUK—CRADLE CASKET



## If said reader approaches said poem as a mountain lion

*Instead of your bringing the Flood, let lions rise up and  
diminish the people.*

Gilgamesh, (XI, iv) Gardner

temptation *gives*  
slip back into soothing rituals or a pair of boots  
(one of my best friends  
staring at the crucifix again)  
re-read that favorite novel this time defying  
the protagonist  
is *empathy* hunting  
younger now promenade in the begonia garden that sits in nana's lap  
than we'll ever be again move back to your favorite waste land  
this time sans control  
replace: *create*  
rediscover our orbits and train moons to retain  
reclaim a lighter to re-align with Prometheus  
the longer this line the Father I defy gravity inhale toxic fretless flight  
(worth skipping a breath or two)  
half the fire requires we  
smother light spans dark twins  
ask the maenad why the skeletons bite epitasias offends husbands  
and never offers black dye  
suspect the expected  
let's not and say we died—  
snow taming time

**let**

Helios begin again—  
share the armrest

Loadada and Loadmama  
make universe  
dance whenever they get horizontal

sun cries witness  
between kernels of popcorn  
and swigs of sprites

bare parents  
nature rear:

*Mountain down my child*  
*Moon up son*  
*Act like a lake little lady*

adolescent orbits speed  
earth parents  
no choice but to let—

inertia thrusts more  
than all the world's pelvises

gravity attracts us like magnets  
underworld

## **Partial**

*una*

I'm not Christ  
I don't think clearly

some days  
I walk  
in the rain I relate

trudging  
through  
the pack passing sweat  
laying on  
alms  
beads  
drop on transparent hairs  
ejected from the bicep  
not resurrecting  
posthumous hides  
vestiges moribund

that chorus  
    seized us  
apostles cannibals

earth lulls  
longer than we hear



dead up  
not his face up up  
magnolia limbs kept reaching

Right now I suspect  
anyone with any sense  
or them same eyes  
pleading for help  
so many years ago  
dusk pinched her  
kept her



## Kind Gardens, April 1957

To Ruth Ann Robinson<sup>1</sup>

Spring is coming. Soon it will be here.  
March 21 is the first day of Spring. Easter  
comes in springs. We get new suits  
for Easters and good hats too.

I like springs when the birds come. Don't they sings  
pretty songs? The robins lay eggs. The eggs  
are blues. Best of all  
my birthday comes then.

I like springs because there are blues birds  
on my feeders. They eat seeds. When Spotty  
the dog comes out all the birds fly away.  
Baseball teams come back too.

We have lots of flowers in our backyard. I asked  
mother if I could have some for school. I wanted  
a daffodil. So we took some dirt and put  
it in a pot. Then we dug up the daffodils  
and planted them. We put white paper  
around the flower pot and took it to school.  
We are going to watch it bloom. Water comes every day.

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<sup>1</sup> This poem utilizes verses from Room 202 of the Philadelphia Kindergarten (J. H. Brown) class my mother attended. Ruth Ann Robinson seemed an apt symbolic name of the American time period that gestated this work. Ruth Ann began the first stanza; my mother's stanza is the last.