

Enough

Poems by

Kris Bigalk

NYQ Books™

The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.
Beacon, New York

NYQ Books™ is an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.

The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.
P. O. Box 470
Beacon, NY 12508

www.nyq.org

Copyright © 2019 by Kris Bigalk

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the author except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. This is a work of literature.

First Edition

Set in New Baskerville

Layout and Design by Raymond P. Hammond

Front Cover Photo by Elizabeth Barnwell

Author Photograph by Elizabeth Barnwell

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019947952

ISBN: 978-1-63045-062-5

CONTENTS

1.

What Your Hands Held Before They Held Me.....	13
Slow Dancing.....	14
Our Language.....	15
Star Gazing.....	16
No Words.....	17
Lucidity.....	18
If I touch your back.....	19
Two Seconds.....	20
Ravenous.....	21
Walking With You on Granville Island.....	22
On Minnehaha Creek in May.....	23
What We Expect From Each Other.....	24
False Spring.....	25
Heaven.....	26
Love Letter.....	27
The snow floated.....	28

2.

Nothing Floats Forever.....	31
My Narcissus.....	32
What I saw when I looked in the silver pool—.....	33
Looking Glass.....	34
First Wives.....	35
Before We Met.....	36
Miscarriage.....	37
Every Great Man.....	38
Cognac.....	39
Day One.....	40
Not Waiting Up.....	41
Enough.....	42
Narcissus in Winter.....	43

3.

Echo's Valentine.....	47
Doors.....	48
Metamorphosis.....	49
After Eden.....	50
Aubade.....	51
The crabapple tree,	52
Everything I say is a lie.....	53
Reflections on a Marriage.....	54
Stones and Stars.....	55
The Worm.....	56
Low Tide.....	57
Missing.....	58
Crow Pose.....	59
The First Day I Un-Loved You.....	60
Questions are Like Keys	61
No More Wondering.....	62
Wolf Moon	63

4.

If it wasn't for the child.....	67
Where the Light Shines Through.....	68
When the mirror stops reflecting.....	69
The Speed of Light.....	70
Origami: Lines for Joe.....	71
Sunrise in Winter.....	72
This morning, the park.....	73
A Dissection of Faith.....	74
My Narcissus.....	75
What I Didn't Hate About You.....	76
After Two Months.....	77
When I Had Time.....	78
Notes From After.....	79
Singular.....	80
Dawn, Thanksgiving Day.....	81
My Narcissus.....	82

Two Seconds

In the small
of my back
a door
the size of
a fingerprint

a man grazes
his fingers
against it
and I open
like a lily

he covers it
with his palm
and my breath
ignites, a caught
match.

Reflections on a Marriage

I remember us spreading the layer
of sand, arranging the stones carefully,
like puzzle pieces, sweeping the cracks
with gravel. How we marveled at the
cold geometric grayness hiding
the lumpy black dirt that had invited
weeds, stuck to the soles of our shoes.

Now no one asks what is under the stones
next to the tumble of blooms, a tangle
of flower roots thrust under and between
seeking the strength to heave
or buckle the paved present,
go back to wildness.

While you nap in a lawn chair
this afternoon, I notice the moss
creeping along the widening cracks,
fuzzy green lines.

I think of the flower roots content
in the damp underground. Is this why
we cut them off at the stems and offer
them to each other, because
we fear the naked, dirt-caked center
of ourselves? Or is it because
we can't bear to rip out
their beating hearts, leaving them
instead to die softly, alone,
under the stones?

The First Day I Un-Loved You

I sat naked on the couch and put my feet up on the ottoman. I ate Doritos and let the crumbs fall between the cushions, scatter on the carpet.

I did not check my phone for hours. I turned off the notifications, lay it face down on the table, a punishment, tied and gagged.

I turned on the television and watched couples argue in front of sarcastic judges. I watched unattractive people win cars. I watched detectives find the truth. I watched the bad guys die.

I put all of the cheap florist vases in the recycling bin, threw out the stale chocolates, emptied the bottle of Chanel down the sink.

I took a long, hot shower, didn't shave my legs, or wax my bikini line. In the steam of the mirror, I saw myself as you saw me: a blurry outline of curves in a cloud, a flesh-colored silence.

I did not wear my purple sweater dress, the one that slides across my chest, hugs my hips, drapes down just above my knees, where you liked to set your hand, so your thumb rested on my kneecap.

My Narcissus

My narcissus was a gift, a raw round heart encased in paper-brown skin that flaked off in my hands. He slept in my palm, nestled into the dark space as my thumb closed around him.

After I put him into his bed, covered with cold earth, I waited, and he opened his fist, reached up through the soil with his three fingered hand.

You know the rest of the story, how he became lost in himself, drowned in his idea of himself.

All that's left now is his withered body, cut off, turning to dirt, the snow slowly burying him. But his heart, the one I loved first, beats underground.

Dawn, Thanksgiving Day

Clouds cover most of the stars,
though Libra straddles the half-moon
behind a gray-wisp curtain, and Scorpio
grasps at the gibbous with his claws,
the creep of atmosphere gradual as
a thickening cataract, until the blindness
seems like it's always been there, a speck
that grows to a spot, slowly collects
into a frost pattern, edging
the window-glass like a frame.

The clouds pink, then blanch—
snow soon, its breath invisible, a heavy
clean scent. One chickadee at the feeder,
trees deserted of leaves, save for a sloppy
squirrel nest. This, my one hour of silence,
this window-staring flight from a coffee-
stained to-do list. We stay where we
survive, don't we, where the landscape claims
us, where the rest of our kind wait
for us, perched on treetops or
on wires, singing a tune
we've known all our lives.