



# When The Sky Is Gray

(a little book of poetry)

By V.A. Jeffrey

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(a little book of poetry 1990 – 2005)

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**light rain**

streets, glistening like polished mirrors  
weave and ripple like mercury pools,  
pools that gather in cracks of slick pavement  
spill down dark, dank drains to thread,  
thread down like thin silver chains, falling through  
gauzy gray sky, landing light as cats' feet.

### **Intermission**

I'm standing under chandeliers  
caught in thronging crowds  
and stunned by the white noise  
of a thousand voices.

I see him moving  
lithe and erect  
towards the barista,  
slicing through  
with the grace of an elf,  
his hair long and golden like roses,  
his red lips shaped like a longbow.

Someone leans into me  
and I start forward,  
tripping on his black shoes.  
His eyes are dark as cobalt stones.  
"Excuse me," he blushes,  
cheeks darken  
to pomegranate red.  
I open my mouth but it seems  
there is an invisible vise  
squeezing my throat.

A woman hoists her voice above the white noise  
like a belligerent and dying crow: "Craig! Craig! Over here!"  
He smiles wanly, turns and slips away.

### **Winter**

The Old Man is coming  
seeping in like a draft  
though the trees flaunt summer plumage  
and the sun's rays stream  
through their green canopies  
in pale, warm shafts.

The Old Man is coming  
sneaking in with icy fingers,  
though the frosts haven't yet arrived  
and the morning mists dissipate quickly  
in the warm afternoons.

The Old Man is coming,  
creeping in stealthily  
with the rolling fogs of autumn,  
though the grass is yet green  
and the song birds haven't yet fled.

The emerald allure, the languid pace  
and gentle thunder storms of summer have ceased,  
and upon the crisp, multicolored coat of autumn  
he clings and climbs, ready to rise.

with icy fingers and cold breath  
the Old Man is coming.

### **THE WEIRD AND THE WONDERFUL**

The nights are weird and wonderful  
when streets are still and silent  
and the black sky reveals milky arms  
arching over the horizon like celestial bridges.

The nights are weird and wonderful  
when the breeze rolls through the grass,  
picks loose the bark from tree trunks,  
shaking the morning glories 'till they twirl  
'round and 'round like windmills,  
and dew drips onto the leaves  
following silvery slug trails 'till they gather  
in tiny ponds;

and the earthworms come out to shake the dandelions so the seeds  
can fly away and root in the neighbors' gardens.

The nights are weird and wonderful  
when firefly and fairy come to envelope the northern sky,  
to glimmer and dance over lawns and streets, shimmering in the moon's light  
like soft blue halos;

and at dawn before the sun's rays poke through the tree leaves,  
the city is shrouded in the color of magic.  
In the day the air tastes fresher, the grass is still dewy and the flowers  
are bright as jewels. On that day, everyone is mirthful.

The nights are weird and wonderful  
when the moon is full and blue.

## **Andrew**

Andrew's hair is soft and curly like fleece,  
brown as portobellos  
and he likes to run his long, strong fingers through it.  
His eyes are clear,  
shaped like almonds,  
brown like dark roasted coffee,  
and fringed with long lashes  
that slap his ruddy cheeks.

Andrew has a wide smile  
framed with generous lips,  
soft and juicy.  
His skin is golden,  
but not golden like those  
who bake like cakes on the beach, no,  
but golden like the Cypriot sun  
setting in summer before it blushes  
from goldenrod to magenta.

Andrew has a strong nose,  
and his body is sinuous like tree roots,  
the air about him, his way  
is Decadence,  
his gait is Grace.

Andrew's voice is deep,  
but not deep like thunder in a storm, no,  
but deep like caramel over molasses,  
deep like the steady harmony of a viola.  
When he laughs, he laughs easily,  
and one can glimpse teeth  
white as alabaster.

Angel of the setting sun,  
your beauty surpasses that of all men  
and everyday I long to love you  
but you may never know, my love,  
for I am too shy to tell you so.

### **The Leper**

She sits in the chair by the big window,  
picking and scratching incessantly.

She rubs her arms as if to find  
underneath the scabs and scales  
the suppleness she had just a few years ago.  
She does not.

Flakes fall like snow upon the table,  
on the carpet, they get stuck in her clothes.  
Her legs are taugt and cracked like abused leather,  
her arms crusted and bumpy like lichen.

She looks outside.  
The sun is bright and cuts through the window  
and the day is frigid as it is clear.

She hates days like these.  
The phone rings but it hurts to move.

She tears a scab from her arm.  
Some days she cannot go outside  
because the wounds weep and seep.  
She must always wear long sleeves  
lest she offend those who must be near her.  
She cannot wear white because of the wounds.

Some days she aches so  
that she cannot even rise from bed.  
She rubs fiercely. The wounds on her arm begin to bleed  
and itch, mercilessly.  
She lays her head on the table and cries softly.

### **All Women Are Bitches**

It is said cavalierly among fools  
that all women are bitches  
as if to insult her  
and that is *why* they are fools;  
for she is, in fact, a thing most marvelous!  
It is the bitch who gets it done  
in spite of the fools under, above and surrounding her;  
it is the bitch who gets her way  
she is the one whom *little* men fear  
she, who stands on her own come hell or high-water,  
who flouts her passions  
and does what she wants  
whether the deed is wicked or good  
and tells *you* to fuck off!



## **Nyx**

Fear no darkness  
for it is only She  
who embodies it

Fear no nightmare -  
it is only the quest  
of the id

Fear no dream  
for it is only a message  
from the womb

Stare into the void  
and fear not the beasts  
of the shadow mind  
for your guide is Nyx  
grandmother of the night  
who bore the tribe of Dreams.

**when the sky is gray**

sometimes the sky is blue;  
blue as the petals of the morning glory,  
or blue like the snatches of the Northern Lights  
couching the sun like a jewel in a box  
so bright, so clear the day when the sky is blue.

sometimes the sky is black;  
blue-black like crows' feathers,  
full of stars with light as  
clear as glacial waters,  
a vast expanse of misty arms that  
spiral out to a glittering maw.  
the edge of forever one can see when the sky is black.

sometimes the sky is gray;  
soft gray at night in steady rain.  
the streets reflect images like highly polished mirrors.  
clouds roam the sky like herds of white buffalo.  
balls of lightening muted and soft pulse silently.  
so haunting the night when the sky is soft gray.

sometimes the sky is gray;  
steel gray at the edge of dawn.  
clouds boil and roil  
over the landscape, wild like mustangs,  
their shadows racing to cover mountains  
in unfinished quilts.  
sunlight punches through jagged cracks of sky  
bleeding streams of marigold and fuchsia.  
In a clap rain sweeps down in thick veils.  
I think it is the most beautiful time,  
when the sky is raining and gray.