



THE REAL LIFE

POEMS
BY TARA MOHR

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So That You Can Stand

Even in the Struggle

Cover: Muse by Shelley Lane Kommers
www.shelleykommers.com

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The Real Life



Dreaming Melissa Nucera
www.thisYearsGirl.etsy.com

Don't be greedy with the universe, she said to me.

But she didn't say it in the mean way.
She didn't say don't dream big, don't want things, don't think you deserve.

She meant: look at your life and trust it.
Notice how you have forever been given what you need.

Notice how, while you've been railing and ranting and wanting,
enoughness has gathered around you like stones around a fire,

How, while you've been making lists of what should be
wishing the set and costumes were different,
there was a whole other play happening on another stage.

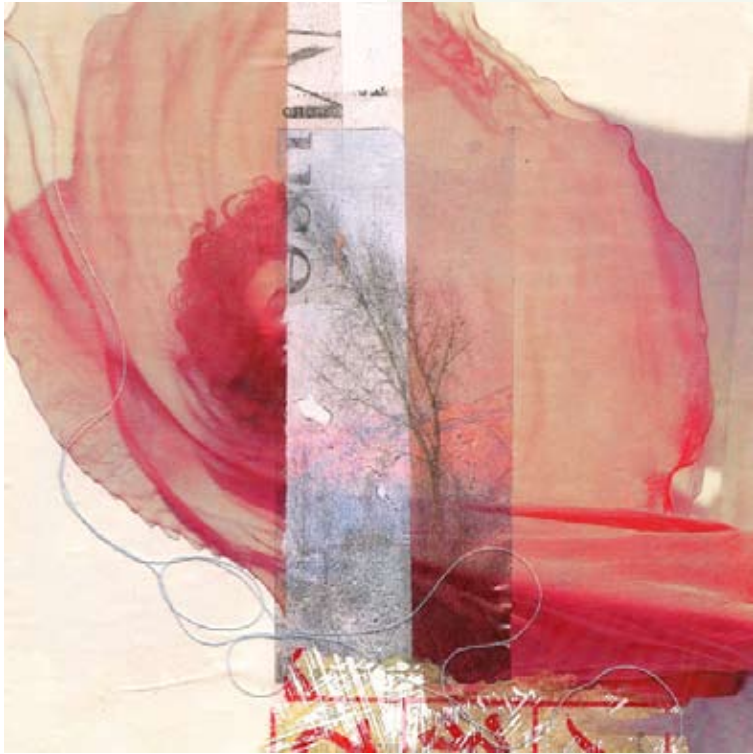
The real life.

Witnessed when you hand a dollar to the woman behind the register
in the color of an orange
in the magic laugh

Never calling, just crackling, speaking in tones —
the real life

Cup your hands and ask for it.
Start looking.
Sweetness. Honey in a bowl. Nectar.

The One Deep Inside Your Chest



Muse Shelley Lane Kommers
www.shelleykommers.com

Step back and watch your body, being a body.
Watch an arm move through space, watch an ankle turn.

Watch your body, as it likes things or doesn't,
as it gets scrapes and bruises
as the skin darkens and falls into folds.

Step back to the perimeter of the theater
and watch your body on the stage.

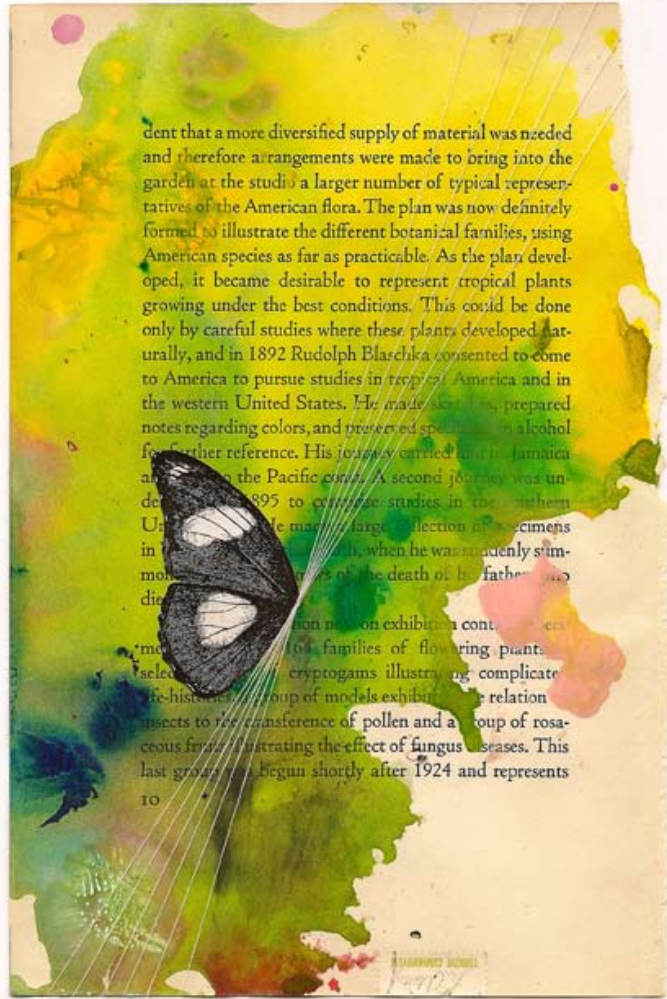
Recede to that quiet knowing:
For now, I am associated with this body –
not inside it, or one with it –
just associated, for a time.

Casing. Only casing.
Be kind to the casing if you like – put oils
on it and nourish it and move it to keep it stronger, for a time.
Never become it. There, only suffering.

Can you feel the one deep inside your chest,
who has existed forever?
Who has made a thousand journeys?
Who feels like a comet in the dark?
The inner filament?

I know, no one ever told you.
I know. It wasn't the name you learned to write at school,
but that one is you.
That one is the real you.

Things We Don't Know Yet



Pollen Shelley Lane Kommers
www.shelleykommers.com

How to create a childhood worthy of the sacredness of the child

How to forgive ourselves, entirely

How to love without projection or dependence

How to honor the strength of love alongside the strength of might

How much we are held, blessed

What we would create, if we believed we could.

We're still young, still in an early era.

The status quo is just a middle chapter.

So have compassion for this fools' world of ours

and don't be afraid

to be the one

to help us turn the page.

The Rhythm



Mandala Shelley Lane Kommers
www.shelleykommers.com

In any creative feat
(by which I mean your work, your art, your life)
there will be downtimes.

Or so it seems.
Just as the earth is busy before the harvest
and a baby grows before its birth,
there is no silence in you.
There is no time of nothingness.

What if,
during the quiet times, when the idea flow is hushed and hard to find
you trusted (and yes I mean trusted)
that the well was filling, the waters moving?

What if you trusted
that for the rest of eternity,
without prodding, without self-discipline,
without getting over being yourself,
you would be gifted every ounce of productivity you need?
What would leave you? What would open?

And what if during the quiet times you ate great meals
and leaned back to smile at the stars,
and saw them there, as they always are,
nourishing you?

There are seasons and harvest is only a fraction of one of them.
We forget this.



Mandala Shelley Lane Kommers
www.shelleykommers.com

There is the rhythm that made everything.
The next time you stand in the kitchen, leaning,
the next time a moment of silence catches you there,
hear it, that rhythm, and let it place a stone in your spine.
Let it bring you some place beautiful.

The Rhythm

You-Shaped Hole



Untitled Tricia McKellar
www.triciamckellar.com

Sometimes the world feels inhospitable.
You feel all the ways that you and it don't fit.
You see what's missing, how it all could be different.

You feel as if you weren't meant for the world, or the world wasn't
meant for you.

As if the world is "the way it is" and your discomfort with it a problem.

So you get timid. You get quiet about what you see.

But what if this? What if you are meant
to feel the world is inhospitable, unfriendly, off-track
in just the particular ways that you do?

The world has a you-shaped hole in it.
It is missing what you see.
It lacks what you know.

And so you were called into being.
To see the gap, to feel the pain of it, and to fill it.

Filling it is speaking what is missing.
Filling it is stepping into the center of the crowd, into a clearing, and
saying, here, my friends, is the future.
Filling it is being what is missing, becoming it.

You don't have to do it all, but you do have to speak it.
You have to tell your slice of the truth.
You do have to walk toward it with your choices, with your own being.



Untitled Tricia McKellar
www.triciamckellar.com

Then allies and energies will come to you like fireflies swirling around a light.

The roughness of the world, the off-track-ness, the folly that you see, these are the most precious gifts you will receive in this lifetime.

They are not here to distance you from the world, but to guide you into your contribution to it.

The world was made with a you-shaped hole in it.
In that way you are important.
In that way you are here to make the world.
In that way you are called.

You-Shaped Hole

Dream Road



Untitled Susannah Conway
www.susannahconway.com

Being on the road to our dreams means:
We've found the courage to articulate them.
We've pulled them out from being buried
in our guts and spoken them, even if only to ourselves.

Being on the road to our dreams means:
We've said: this dream is worthy.
Worthy of my time, my energy, my best effort.
I will host it, I will welcome it,
I will keep the kindlings going for the fire.

Being on the road to our dreams means:
Keeping the vision alive in our minds.
Returning, again and again, to the imagined future,
and letting its image guide us.

Being on the road to our dreams means:
We've said: I'm in. I'm in for this project.
I will try. I will work toward it.
I will be my own friend in this way.

Freedom comes when we step, with both feet,
onto the road toward our dreams
not when we reach the destination.
That's when the joy and the poignancy
and the lightness of heart arrives.

When we step, wholeheartedly
with both feet
with permission and with surrender
onto the road of our dreams.

So That You Can Stand



The World Swirls Around You Jessica Swift
www.jessicaswift.com

Radical love is still countercultural.
Compassion for all is still countercultural.

Recognizing political conflict as two kids fighting in the schoolyard writ large, and ending it accordingly? Still countercultural.
Shining your light fiercely? Still countercultural.
Brazen idealism? Still countercultural.

We do all this “work on ourselves” for this:

to unleash the original, loving self, the one blazing to heal

to birth a you who can stand to be countercultural.
Who can stand in your living room, at your child’s school, or on CNN,
wherever you are called to do it.

To birth a you that knows her mission.
To know it quietly, when you are stirring in the kitchen.
To know it when you kiss your children at night.

To know it when the moments come that ask you
to be a voice, or a messenger, or a crazywoman
for love.

Even in the Struggle



Letting Go of 2009 Tracey Clark
www.traceyclark.com

Even in the struggle, you are loved.
You are being loved not in spite of the hardship, but through it.
The thing you see as wrenching, intolerable, life's attack on you,
is an expression of love.

There is the part of us that fears and protects and defends and expects,
and has a story of the way it's supposed to turn out.
That part clenches in fear, feels abandoned and cursed.

There is another part, resting at the floor of the well within, that
understands:
this is how I am being graced, called, refined, by fire.

The secret is, it's all love.
It's all doorways to truth.
It's all opportunity to merge with what is.

Most of us don't step through the doorframe.
We stay on the known side.
We fight the door, we fight the frame, we scream and hang on.

On the other side, you are one with the earth, like the mountain.
You hum with life, like the moss.
On the other side, you are more beautiful:
wholeness in your bones, wisdom in your gaze,
the sage-self and the surrendered heart alive.

Tara Mohr is an expert on women's leadership and wellbeing, and the author of ***Playing Big: Practical Wisdom for Women Who Want to Speak Up, Create, and Lead***, named a best book of the year by Apple's iBooks. She's also the creator of the global **Playing Big leadership programs**. Tara's work has been featured on *The Today Show* and in publications ranging from *The New York Times* to *Harvard Business Review* to goop to MariaShriver.com. Her Playing Big model is now a part of leadership development programs at T-mobile, Starbucks, Bank of America, Amazon.com and many other companies, as well as in schools and universities around the world. Tara received her MBA from Stanford University, her English literature degree from Yale, and her coaching certification from the Coaches Training Institute. Tara is a lover of poetry, dance, dogs, art and mamahood.

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Want more from Tara?

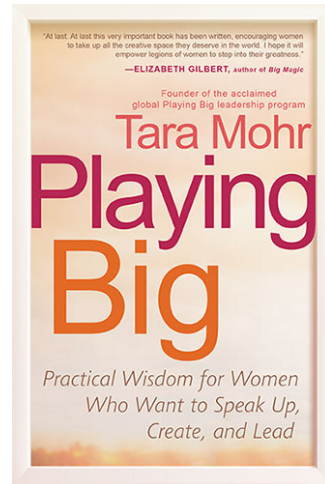
Playing Big: The Book

If you are looking to play bigger in your life and work, get the book! **Playing Big: Practical Wisdom for Women Who Want to Speak Up, Create, and Lead.**

"At last this very important book has been written, encouraging women to take up all the creative space they deserve in the world. I couldn't be happier about this publication."

– Elizabeth Gilbert, Author of *The Signature of All Things* and *Eat, Pray, Love*

"With clarity, warmth and deep wisdom, Tara shines a light on our blocks to manifesting our potential, and offers practical, well-honed strategies that move us toward fulfillment. This is a book that can transform the trajectory of your life." – Tara Brach, PhD, Author of *Radical Acceptance* and *True Refuge*



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Playing Big Online Courses

Tara is the creator of the Playing Big leadership programs for women. To learn about her **Playing Big Program**, [click here](#). To learn about the **Playing Big Facilitators Training** for coaches, therapists, leadership development professionals and other practitioners supporting women in their personal and professional growth, [click here](#).



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