# JOURNEYS AROUND ONE POINT



ANNETTE HAYN



KCA 52 Journeys Around One Point Annette Hayn Grim Reaper Books 522 30 5 5 6

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Illustrations by Deborah Leslie Hayn

Some of these poems have appeared in Source, Wind, Shinbone Alley, The Archer, and Love in New York.

> This is the 219<sup>th</sup> publication of THE POET'S PRESS 2209 Murray Avenue #3 Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2338

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E Foreword

Annette Hayn's poems are composed of several disparately colored threads tied peculiarly together; several streaks of light running through a few lines as quickly and intently as a cat, through leaves.

She is a poet of both the fantastic far away and the realistic near. She gives us images from a childhood lived within the shadow of a mountain-climbing mother and Hitler's Germany. Her contemporary views are no less exciting; have always about them a hint of theatre. Her sometimes stormy patches of domesticated nature go a long way emotionally; and are reminiscent of Emily Dickinson.

Each poem is an oblique glimpse through a small intensely lighted window. One looks in a window at the apparently necessary destruction of "roses/a woman..." Another looks out: "...and now the mugger can be seen clearly—".

Hayn's poems are miniatures in watercolor; have need of almost no beginning or end; catch that balloon that voice in flight; are truly "journeys around one point": Annette Hayn's powerful sensibility.

Mary Ferrari



Journeys Around ES One Point



For Jessica and Andrew ... Und das geht hin und eilt sich, dass es endet, und kreist und dreht sich nur und hat kein Ziel. Ein Rot, ein Grün, ein Grau vorbeigesendet, ein kleines kaum begonnenes Profil. Und manchmal ein Lächeln, hergewendet, ein seliges, das blendet und verschwendet an dieses atemlose blinde Spiel.

#### RAINER MARIA RILKE from Das Karussell

... And all this rushes on, that it may end, it turns around, it whirls and has no goal. Flashes of red and green and grey go past, a small, barely started profile. And sometimes a smile, a joyful one that stuns and disappears in this blind breathless game.





#### MORNING

all morning in a daze slow raindrops wind stripping the tree —she's two months pregnant leaf by yellow leaf straight down into the puddle revealed light in the window

behind branches imperceptibly growing

#### **BETWEEN STORMS**

the way they touch after the hurricane hawthorn and rose of sharon branch to branch we touch people

briefly at the museum we have to talk fast at the same time the abstract painting of a man who beats up a circle of pink women pink the rose of sharon

to be demolished hawthorn picked up after the storm

branch to branch some roses in a crotch of the tree (the man holds a whip the tree has thorns) this moment they support each other forming an arch

#### DISAPPEARANCE

She cleans all morning thoroughly keeps looking out He walks by slowly in his tennis outfit says he's all right

Instead of their maple tree they found a gaping hole the car is gone, the cat vanished

It happened once before, someone they loved from the front lawn under an open window —

Today the wind is causing an upheaval in transit

Today the sun lights up the landscape an evil eye

He peers in all the basement windows She cruises round the block.



# THOSE WALKS

In Breslau every Sunday for my own good I had to walk with my father for two hours before lunch when I was small.

Sometimes the dog came along sometimes my father's colleague, their boring conversation along the boring tree-lined streets.

On these occasions mother managed to stay home. Emotional, she never walked but climbed risked her life on some steep cliff she, my uncle and a guide tied to each other they turned to dots above my eyes.

I longed to rise with them but had to trudge with him who knew the names of trees we passed, didn't know me, just walked at an even pace neither fast nor slow on endless pavement.

#### PRIMITIVE ART

1

Everyone does the same thing, flows to the same sea. The boats rest on the heads of people, the people cannot think and flowers rest among the animals. Chewed up leaves of a rosebush like skeletons.

#### 2

In the flowerbed blue and white flowers overgrown, and the family all in a row taller than sailboats, more serene than the sky, the children always about to take off—

#### 3

A row of houses. Stars lined up in the sky. Two children dressed as angels, their eyes expressionless —

This is a stickup. No one move. A face behind each window, stars louder than guitars.

# STRAY DOG ARTHUR

Dumped from a car he sits there on the curb full of fleas a gentle breeze for thirty hours waiting—

All over town each day their terrifying trust. A few are snatched away like aristocrats from the guillotine in France.

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#### PREOCCUPATION WITH FRAMES

Wind commands the tree – everything moves – this moment's moon, your face, stuck in the frame. I think of Dorian Gray not aging.

Framed in this bed this room this night I force another picture into another square its colors overflowing.

keep nagging Debbie to correct her painting: the cat's veiled eyes the too short too thin second finger of my right hand.

Even as we escape part of us longs to be contained impatient she erases the entire hand — I take the picture to be framed.

Mystery of a framing store: how glass transfixes how people never die...

## YOUNG GIRL SLEEPING LATE

And still she sleeps near windows where the sun it's five p.m. on his way out glows hauntingly

Pillow with stripe of sun light ivory. She wears a woolen hat all day in bed to flatten her hair

From a space behind the painted lashes exotic night plans penetrate this sleep, and the sun above the dark-edged quilt wears himself out.

# REMEMBRANCE OF A FOREBODING

Surrounded by the greenery that was my life I overheard two men "impending misfortune for all of us" they said "since Hindenburg has died" and it meant nothing to me (why do I remember) meant nothing on a balcony of the Riesengebirge the middle of and it meant no more than a story I wasn't in.

#### IDOLS

Branches tremble – a sky white, hot and far away as in the vestibule of mirrors

perfume in the air Kulturbund in Berlin in '36.

Jewish artists (I had a crush on one of them) in their last theater performing melodramas from yet another time

confident, like super heroes. In a green gown Amelia sang Verdi's score as they tore off her veil

(groups of Nazis in the street)

dim lights, the painted gallows all of us elegant and doomed in A Masked Ball.

Wrapped in applause and awe next to my mother, small— I watched them disappear in all directions.

# VARIATIONS ON A SHELTERED LIFE

Horizon of enemies in Berlin Schiller's version of St. Joan fallen in battle covered with flags I don't want to be rescued

1

The one who holds a flag is always right the enemy becomes necessary in order to recognize the one who holds a flag always right enemies in the courtyard the breaking of wills in the courtyard of the oak's shadow invincible he holds a flag

#### THE GAME

Inge and I, the only girls in the battle. Flushed, out of breath, we piled snow bullets on a sled while our mothers looked for us all over Breslau.

Another time, Inge and I threw our dolls downhill to see if they could fly (they did for a moment) but hers was made of porcelain and had to have new eyes —

It was all a game: the enemies in boots parading down the street, fathers losing their jobs, getting arrested. But that came afterwards. First

we were six — Nazis and Jews together in a garden. I can't remember who was who —flinging snow bullets at enemies across the fence until the sun went down and our mothers found us.

#### **CLEARING**

ninety degree clouds white and blue sheets on the line a bee in the blue flower blue jays in the air

overhanging branch of a weed long intermingled braids the right to be dreamy

together

that was before they cut his hair in the air force and she cut her nose out of the photo a clearing with no shade anywhere

### JOURNEYS AROUND ONE POINT

blackbirds chase one another trees fly through snow— I've been to distant places inhabit the letters I send yet staying in this city

> you step around my bed gingerly in shoes the way the earth walks round the sun around itself clear night round stars a dancer pirouetting my grandfather in a round frame replaced over and over in spring the birds return inside the clock a moment of harmony the tree-lined circle shines in orbit

# FLOWER SEED POEMS

1 Disorder

a crabapple tree fills up the entire garden dandelions out of control

every morning it starts peacefully a tableau Suki in the sandbox Debbie in bed slowly the clock advances flowers collide like chessmen they run out of the door into danger

#### 4 Air

the weather turns a balloon rises towards the tree

rebuilds itself where the icestorm cut in third—

three straight new shoots a red balloon sits there all week abloom refusing to let go like that memory

5 The City

mixture of flower seed and soot a used wind burning —

high up along the brink of the horizon a bird within a truck closes its eyes.

#### **EVENING**

Under the portrait in his room I think of having nothing to think about

when I grow frail behind locked doors, no new experience

but dying. He remembers at ninety four dates of the Roman emperors. Paint peels

over the ceiling, dented golden frames. He puts his jacket on and tie.

### MAGNIFIED

(for Gerry)

Some day I'll have the photo enlarged, your face glass-covered to look up to

The cat is hidden among giant flowers on a carpet the color of oak leaves in early spring

I get emotional about a rocking chair that matches nothing, my mood wildly flowered

deep in the sky the moon is hidden but the cat shines. In my wallet you smile knowingly—

#### SAILBOAT

1

It's the light that turns us around blue in the mirrored room. Some people close their eyes.

some people arm in arm in boats forgetful of a future -haven't seen you how come?

Small plastic sailboats take the longest journeys blue flowers on the shore— When Andrew sinks them they arise again.

#### 2

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Why am I always writing about sailboats? was in one only once invited by my cousin and his girl out of a sense of obligation.

Uneasy bored I listened to their private overtures in the sailboat in the wind I was in love and he was at the beach.

Those days I felt invulnerable once swam way out— Carried sideways by the current I reached another section of the shore, had to walk back for miles.

The teacher got hysterical at our beach big boys who'd never noticed me became aware.

Arriving unobserved I joined the crowd lifeboats rowed out to the horizon—looking for me. I said, What are we doing?

#### 4

Impatient people tired of waiting convert their sailboats into motor boats.

We spent a day with friends in such a boat on a New Hampshire lake six years ago.

Our friends and I in front, the children played in back, but Gerry was directed to a pillow in the middle to keep the balance.

He hated it voices drowned out the endless speeding two feet away from us in the loud wind alone —

#### 6

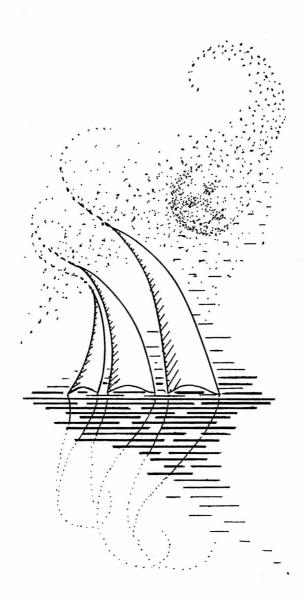
One by one windows light up the nightsky an untouched blue three streetlamps point the way to what we may become.

I grew up with the painting of a sailboat on the wall surreal in a lake of dots, grew to love it, gave it away to a girl and boy who never look

This painting under a special light the boat seems to be gliding back and forth.

I call a clerk to ask about my mother our paper ships turned over we used to cross the river barefoot from rock to rock her mind went first.

One day a wind just right the boat will sail again, the girl and boy will redirect their eyes and see the painting.



7

Some nights a brightness that is not the moon the whiteness of a sailor ghost (we travel in our sleep) bleaches the horizon

But from a distance when we're awake the people who adjust the sheets who scrub the deck look at the sky in many languages are never visible

only slow moving sails like prehistoric birds



#### DRACULA

It starts with a howling, the curtain of live bats suspended in midair.

Layers of frozen snow outside the theater the moon invisible, a man sells false teeth.

Inevitably parties meet insurance policies talk past each other: Time for a birthday card time for a cocktail time for your income tax 5,000 years...

A drunk calls three old ladies shuffling by sweet babes. The man with false teeth outside the theater — inside his mouth shouts, *Pay a dollar look like dracula*!

## ALONG THE WAY

An old man inspects the contents of his box on a subway bench. A young man with two frankfurters and a cup of soda says "What ya got in there?"

The old man takes his box two aisles down next to a man who reads *The Daily News* 

The man with the two franks grinning broadly watches him, takes his first bite. The train pulls out

The man who owns the newspaper drops a page. The man who owns the box picks it up. The man who owns the franks takes another bite The old man sits hunched over on the bench clutching his box reading the page of *The Daily News* which he now owns

The train is getting crowded. The young man smokes, places his soda under the seat rearranges the sauerkraut

Each one holds on to what he thinks he owns, a lady in a flowered scarf to her daughter chewing gum, the daughter to a mickey mouse balloon

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The old man with the box has disappeared. A stroller unfolds next to the man who now owns half a frankfurter. A baby in a yellow hat reaches for it—

#### POSTERS

This year Robert plants flags in flower pots and collects unemptied ashtravs after the party next to his bed. On the wall to his right there are two light brown, old fashioned campaign posters. The one for Theodore Roosevelt and Charles W. Fairbanks is of a lighter brown than the one advertising Ulysses S. Grant and Henry Wilson. Charles Fairbanks has a dark brown beard which matches Theodore Roosevelt's moustache. Grant has black whiskers and Wilson who is clean shaven has long hair. Both Wilson and Grant wear aprons, boots, creased jeans and shirts with rolled up sleeves. Grant's jeans are rolled up as well, and Wilson holds a hammer. Robert has fallen asleep smelling the ashes and looking at flags. An eagle floats unobtrusively near the top of one poster. Whenever Robert can't win an argument he says, "Poll's closed!" Theodore Roosevelt is situated above the eagle. He wears spectacles and smiles slightly without opening his mouth.

## DISTANCES

The hint of thought in the girl's face — She sits eternally in front of the piano tall oriental in a white gown

I look the other way

soft colors that accentuate the mystery of windows when it rains how branches flow together and expand and the piano on the wall plays secret music

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#### **PROGRAM 1**

Hysterical moons shine on polished cars in all the backyards everything

in the way of the circle of light must be destroyed

roses a woman

replaced by the light sharp eyed white nightgowned windows—

#### **PROGRAM 2**

All week they've been chopping down branches of oaks all week the cat escapes one of the men cut his hand she rolls in ecstasy in leaves

People speed past each other on the transparent street Stripped of their mystery the bleeding trees

Storm of electric saws the windows locked and now the mugger can be seen clearly

## SOLUTION

#### for Gerry

When I don't know what to do I always stand still in the circle in the picture of you and us

on the dark background it's summer we smile, a shiny spot the shadow of leaves on your forehead.



## A CONCEPT OF RELIGION

A mountain conical in shape its peak invisible high above the sun

All week snowed in. Mountain surrounded by other mountains mosaic of snow-filled veins across the sky people suspended, each in his room snowflakes the size of birds

No one knows anyone who's scaled it all the way. How snow attracts the sky. Shadows of mountain climbers grow on the ice

Some talk to themselves in two voices "No use" "You're doing fine." Some can't find a path only a maze of blue exits...

### **BIRDLADY OF QUEENS**

The little bird can't move its legs soft grey under the netting homesick, as in the station en route to boarding school without belongings lost—

Old house in the endangered city. At night each person afraid. We rush through open doors tracking in snow

Rescued birds are everywhere. A long-legged ibis installed in the shower will fly to Florida –

So the small one arrives. A snowbird the birdlady says, with injured nerves cupped in her hand in its own darkness.

#### RECOVERY

she has to lie quite still while the blood clot dissolves in the grey sky raindrops come and go

### PERSPECTIVE

Surrounded by snow skies one rose inside the house miniature opening one bird on penciled branches behind glass one daughter eating a bacon sandwich with her boyfriend one rose sewn on his denim back—angry at me

## THE CONFERENCE

Through a dorm window next to a river I see myself returning to this other life. My only concern is how to find the bathroom or the Psychology Building. The sky is slowly walking away. I have all week to do nothing. The corridor seems endless flanked by doors. All through the reading the river flows. Blue arrows painted on the walls in all directions. The shadow of the poet in the tall grass next to the river. He reads about a house. The fire alarm sounds. All the doors open along the corridor. Bewildered people in nightgowns rush downstairs. The poet is in love with his first wife. The audience, suspended in midair above the river. The fire isn't real. The poet smokes, the chapel where he reads surrounded by dark trees his wife takes a slow bath. The fire truck, not needed now, drives off. Another set of people along the corridor unlock the doors. write down their thoughts. Soon they'll go back to sleep. The sky bends down, the river flows, the arrows point...

## INERTIA

#### as if

the unconscious knows by now holds back your frail image relost each night no end to this rain

windows lined with towels a girl calls from her flooded basement immobilized an overwhelming dream

#### once

we would have driven off together out of this inertia

## THE RACE

She flies across the screen the horse that won't accept a cast to save her life.

Undefeated storm-black filly Ruffian jockey people screaming money wind purity of effort to be like—

No one owns this horse refuses to lose Foolish Pleasure breathing in her ear there is no other way in the end

we become ordinary or die.

### THE BEACH

mother when she was very ill asked me to sleep with her

the worst vacation most guests food poisoned cottage of mice

one moment playing badminton the ocean out of breath

they sent a messenger spoiled our summer come

in the darkened room her last season on earth she tucked me in

## HEBRON

Objects avoided our eyes along the newly captured territory

Arabs on donkeys wouldn't stop Peasants in headdress all alike. The camera was useless

Rain pounded on a stairway. Climbing up we caught a glimpse of shadows on their knees on red carpets in the cave where Abraham was buried

A woman of Hebron cowering in one of the outdoor toilets called after me "money"

People by the roadside picked grapes shopped at a market place (two goats were led away) as if this rain was only in my mind.

### FRAIL WIZARD

So you plan to retire far away, but have you known one thing in every kind of light?

Verdi composed Otello in old age and Dr. LaCosta seventy two, slightly deaf distributes secret pills in envelopes like a frail wizard saving lives.

Bees penetrate a bell-shaped flower. Is this what getting well is

to drift indulge

opening the closet to stare at new shoes —

## EXTREMES

This day the sky goes to extremes an intense blue, the whitest cloud. Some live their private lives way under where the grass is high

The news always the same is how you see it, the rush of traffic or the flow of rivers, potted begonias against dark trees, and the transparent separations

This morning we deceive ourselves (a camouflage of weeds covers the rusty cans) the way the sun illuminates each petal of the blue white flower along the edge

A girl jumps out of her car to ask directions. She carries a knapsack and plans to work just long enough to get out west. The couple in the model house

look out of all the windows, at each other through the mirror, think it will always be like this: a bed goes here, the baby there —

## THE TRUTH

#### 1

Same landscape without curtain or clouds bare tree

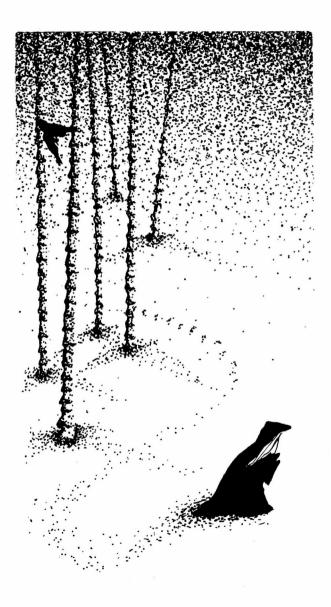
Then three sparrows arrive

#### 2

Three landscapes, the one indoors, one on the street one in

the mind. today through the window I see the woods and not the fence surrounding them

from another angle ...



# DOWNSTREAM

bird-feeder on a hawthorn branch cold morning air, not knowing that he's beautiful a cardinal awaits his turn—

the subway stalls a woman seems unsure of where she is and where she's going. she wears a scarf, red hair —

the feeder almost empty now swings in freezing wind, a squirrel has removed the top the cardinal flies off—

footsteps converge like arrows around the hawthorn carved in ice—

the woman puts round glasses on studies the subway map, she tries to ask but doesn't—

a feeder filled with snow hangs in the woods what woman? charcoal trees on white canvas

## FURNITURE POEMS

#### 2 Four O'Clock

the rhythm of the curtain means something again the faint yellow square on the dark yellow of the chair pillow

3 The Carpet

was it deliberate?

talk about the carpet he says so beautifully trivial

that night the boy led off in handcuffs through leaves sink into it

twenty dollars a square yard burnt orange inside the cell something he won't look at

#### MARIANNE

Years later I came across her German letters, assertive, questioning written in '37 after six months of strolling: a Berlin schoolyard, arm in arm.

Striving for some storybook perfection we sent our lives from Italy to England and back again. There was that singer, unrequited love, "quite normal at our age," she said

remembering how we had once waited for hours in a hallway across the street from Dr. Löwenthal, the teacher we had a crush on who never got away.

Politics were, like paintings in our houses, important only when one looked at them. We looked at new lights on the edge of seas. One day all those events will step out of their frames. Married one day we won't know each other's names.

## THE OAK

It keeps me looking up takes over our street must be red oak he says examining a leaf

We planted it. The seedling didn't reach my knee, then it escaped

Rain on the oak fear for the oak oak kingdom. Oblivious of cars it grows—

In a hospital bed vulnerable pale - the oaktree takes over -half asleep snow forests in his eyes

## **CROSS COUNTRY**

In an old Chevy Impala named Lola all week they were leaving and about to leave

cross country I kept kissing her goodbye. they returned

newly evolved from their teenage aloofness repacked reinstalled missing a license their signals each other

pasted sea-shells along the dashboard through the night I've never loved her

all over again as I do now.

## FULL CIRCLE

a lake around the oak we planted in our street decades ago magical I think and think mosquitoes you are there at the edge you are alive

full circle younger we don't touch the lake begins to stir I leave you walking backwards