

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Grace Bauer: Three Poems

Grace Bauer · Wednesday, October 27th, 2021

UPDATE ON EMILY

Because Death stops for everyone
and is rarely ever kind,
she writes her letters to the world—
just a piece—for the peace—of her mind.

The world—of course—rarely replies.
Not even an email or text.
When you're a fly on the wall—a Nobody—
it's a silence you learn to expect.

Yet the letters have become a way
of life—or rather—living—
as natural to her as air—and breath—
her religion—a kind of believing.

Will her words ever dazzle?
Shine—faint light—through the cracks?
Either way—in the end—
she knows we're all—called back.

*

RETREAT

The novices led us
in prayer and solemn novenas.
Their silence and black habits
trailed the cloister's corridors.

But we were tired of the protection
of Our Lady of Hungary, and took off
with the Saint Joe's crowd,
who taught us how to inhale

Lucky Strikes, shake

aspirins into cokes for a buzz.
A senior from Perpetual Help
explained to us what *fuck* meant,

diagraming the details
on the back of her missal
during a morning High Mass.
I daydreamed through

the Offertory and the Consecration,
wanting to witness the miracle
of a boy's body doing
what I now knew men did.

When the bells chimed I lined-up
for Communion with the other girls,
though the sin I had in mind
was surely mortal. I crossed

myself as the priest
whispered *Body of Christ*.
In my unholy heart, I knew
there was no turning back.

*

MIDLIFE HEAVY METAL

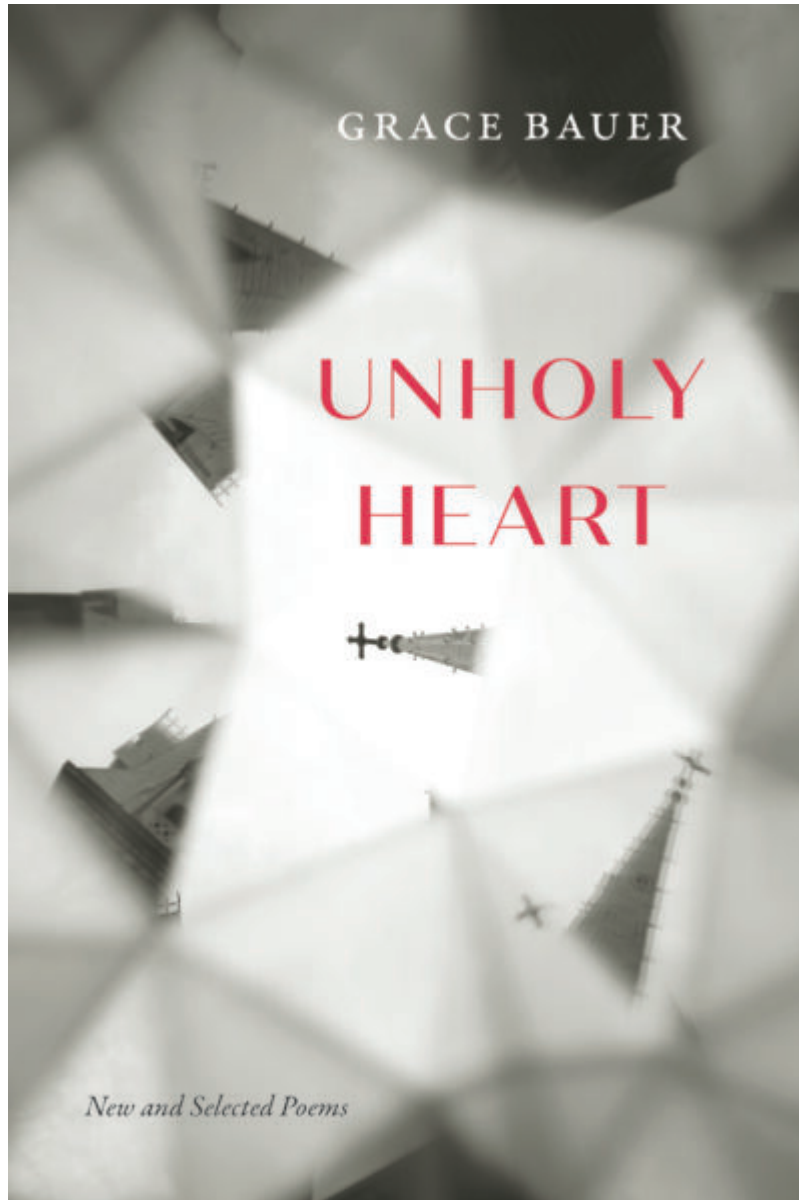
I know I'm not the only woman in the world
who spent her adolescence lusting
to a backbeat and still, in some part of herself
she has grown to deny, can't resist
a big-mouthed bad boy, surly siren
in tight pants who swaggers and snarls
and screams his heart out
in the name of Rock & Roll.

There he is on my TV screen:
older than I am and showing his age
but still strutting what stuff he's got.
He's Heathcliff with a microphone,
a long tall glass of water
spiked with acid and desire,
his hair a black mass
of styling gel and tease,
mouth a severe weather warning,
eyes an invitation to a party
we'll regret if we go to. Or not.

Oh, we know better. Or at least

we know we should. But somewhere deep
inside we still long for all the trouble
he could stir up; we want to hear every lie
we know by now his kind tells.
We want to lie back, strut our own stuff,
and be just a little bit like him —
the bad boy every good girl is inside.

[Link to buy book Unholy Heart by Grace Bauer](#)



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