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# 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.

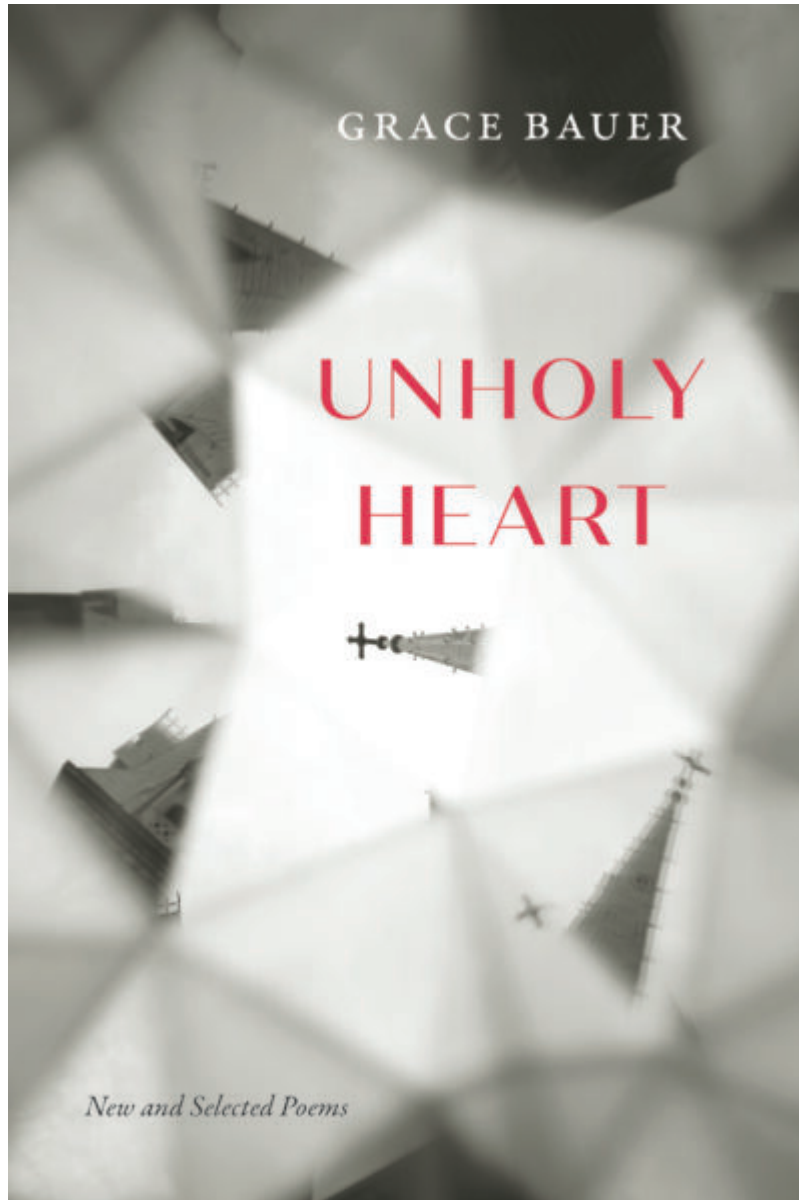
There he is on my TV screen:  
older than I am and showing his age  
but still strutting what stuff he's got.  
He's Heathcliff with a microphone,  
a long tall glass of water  
spiked with acid and desire,  
his hair a black mass  
of styling gel and tease,  
mouth a severe weather warning,  
eyes an 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.

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



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