

# New Poetry by Doris Ferleger: “Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness,” “Internal Wind,” Driving Down Old Eros Highway,” and “Summer Says”



TURNING EVERYTHING AROUND / *image*  
by Amalie Flynn

**Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness**  
*for Zea Joy, in memoriam*

Last Monday you threw yourself,

your body, dressed in red chemise,  
in front of a train.

It was your insatiable hunger  
for a more tenderhearted world,  
your husband said at Shiva.

Now no one will get to see  
what you saw from inside  
your snow globe where you lived,

shaking and shaking,  
breaking into shards  
of ungrieved grief, unanswered need.

I will remember  
how tirelessly, with your son,  
you worked to help him turn

sounds—coming through the implant  
behind his ear—into speech,  
speech into understanding.

Everyone will remember  
how you skipped across the dance floor,  
waving pastel and magenta scarves,

and prayed to angels.  
O, dear Zea, your human bones  
thin as the bones of a sparrow—

the way you could fold  
your body to fit anywhere.  
Rest now. You have succeeded.

## **INTERNAL WIND**

When you died, our son

became *my son*; I watch  
through your eyes

and mine how he lifts  
his whole body into  
a long accent à droite,

arms taut, wrists impossibly  
rotated back, fingers and toes  
also pointed back

to all the hours, years  
of practice in turning  
everything around.

~

Over the hollow  
you left, our son stretches  
his fingers across

frets and strings  
in C minor,  
Bach's Etudes

the way you taught,  
the way you closed  
your eyes, nodded, satisfied—

our son will remember.

~

Remember how  
he watched you deep-  
breathe into yoga postures?

Now his own focused flow  
heals what Western doctors call  
*tics*, quiets what Eastern doctors call

*internal wind.* Listen  
how our son calls  
to his yoga students

what he learned  
at your knee: *Effort*  
*brings the rain—*

*of grace.*

~

When our son and I argue,  
I feel homeless, divided,  
until I remember how you

and I took turns massaging  
his neck that ached from its day's  
staccato singing—

~

Sometimes I can see his tics  
as flawless, meticulous,  
a body expressing itself

with perfect diction.

## **DRIVING DOWN OLD EROS HIGHWAY**

Me, in my Q50 with its hot flashes and warning beeps,  
heading toward Sweet Desire, New Jersey, where my love,

soon 70, will woo me with mango, melt the mushy pulp  
in my mouth—or perhaps he naps.

You, CeeCee, painting the walls pink in the tiny house in  
Pullman,  
recently moved in with your old college flame, coming so

easily

against his new ceramic hip, just the friction of it. You say  
your pelvis never quite fit with anyone else, including your  
soon-to-be-

ex-husband of 30 years. Me, with a G-spot suddenly. A rainbow  
of chaos tunneling through me when his fingers find it and  
flutter.

And long live the reckless tongue. The old-fashioned clit-kind  
of climax. Like a young planet rising. Oh, how old and greedy  
I am

for that whole-body wave and chill and quiver and release.  
You, purposely avoiding that whole-body wave of shiver,

as it reminds you of your ex's dogged insistences.

For your 60th, your daughter gifted you with a mini vibrator

on a rubber ring for your index finger. A *sex-thimble*, you  
joke.

Sex over 60 seems unseemly to talk about, CeeCee,

but it seems more ungrateful to say nothing at all.

You and I speak of what our mothers couldn't give us.

Daily I pray at the temple of Venus.

## SUMMER SAYS

Pay attention to  
your heat, your survival—  
the tree rooted in your garden

is a sequined vernacular, a cashmere sweater.  
Because nothing matters in the end  
but comfort and the bending light.

Summer says, I will be the room you die in.  
You will dream, neither of regret,  
nor in the language you were born into.

A stranger will comb your existential threads.  
You had thought, for instance, humans  
were gerunds or harps bent

on playing in a diner that serves  
black coffee and hard donuts.  
You ask, *What is the past?*

*What is it all for?*

Summer says, The wound of being  
untaught. Says, hungry.

Says, the cypress is a hospice,  
says, falter, falter, falter,  
bloom bloom bloom—too soon

a pall will keep you company.