

Until it happens to you

Mayra Porrata

Until it happens to you, 2nd edition
by Mayra Porrata
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PUBLISHING

For my daughters, Serena & Camille

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Dear Reader,

If you're reading this, thank you. I can't promise you're going to love every single poem, but I suspect there may be one or two that you do—and some that will invite you to simply reflect.

The poems from the first edition have been gently revised. Written over the course of 20+ years, they documented my early career and adulthood, my first-born daughter's illness, and her death.

For many years prior to publication, I had the cover image and title "*Until it happens to you*" set aside as 'something I would eventually write,' but not really knowing what the "*it*" was—I had no clue.

Then, in January 2019, six months after my daughter's passing, I heard her voice: "*get up, we're finishing that book today--- we know the "it" -- you know what that is now.*" That was January 30 — my birthday. It felt as if my daughter was saying—"*enough, stop your grieving—move--- now---look at your pain----create something from it--- NOW.*" And I did. Not perfectly, nor elegantly, but I did. I vowed to release the book around her birthday that same year. I did.

In many ways, the publication of the first edition was a grief response—but it was also a heartfelt reporting of the insights and awareness that moving *through* that period of profound sorrow illuminated for me.

The family members, friends, and colleagues who were with me during those painful and gut-wrenching months-- who reviewed the book, helped with its publication, and continued to encourage me through this lengthy and complex recovery, are and will forever be living angels.

In the years that followed, as our world and lives were collectively fractured by the pandemic, millions experienced complex emotions as lifestyles and livelihoods were threatened. In essence, we were cumulatively summoned to enter the realm of grief----to cry, scream, bargain, debate, feel, and to befriend our greatest fears so that we could learn to navigate new terrain and lives—our new normal. The 18 new poems indexed in “Part II” were written during those years (2020- 2022).

It’s my sincere hope these poems, words, and the energy of this book encourages your own journey towards clarity, inner-peace and regeneration. May you realize your own benevolence and embrace the goodness of your own heart.

Mayra

November 22, 2022

Until it happens to you

Until your heart is broken-open,
and your tears begin to flow.
Until truth challenges knowledge
and opinions you outgrow.

Until your body is harshly shaken,
and awakened from the dream.
Until your wounds meet open daylight
and you fall to your knees and scream.

Until disillusionment is no longer a stranger
and your sorrow becomes known.
Until defeats are humbly treasured
and you see the world's suffering as your own.

Until the water you drink becomes sacred,
and the sound of your breath, your guide.
Until you allow life to live you,
because you take everything in stride.

Until sitting in silence is cherished
and you're fed by Mother Earth.
Until you see coherence in everything
and with each death, a birth--
you have not truly lived.

DNA

Unraveling the strands
that bind the body-
generational mainframe of
blatant strife-
we carry the wounds of ancestors,
we carry the promise of life.

Downloading the code
of humanity's promise
of patience and kindness
and infinite grace--
in word and in deed
we build the foundation
of who we'll become
in this place.

There is no one there

Hey, you,
who's waiting to be rescued,
who's waiting for salvation,
a way through to awaken
or to hasten
the suffering and strife--
a comforter, a healer,
a partner, a teacher
to help you weave your life?

There is no one there, you see,
no one there to rake the fallen leaves,
or take out the day's trash.

No one to sit with at dinner
or to hold hands in the middle of the night.

No one to hear your hopeful prayers
or your tearful breath.

No one to make it right
or to make things true...
there is no one there but you.

Fall

Stay there,
don't get up.
Don't look up.
Lay so still, the woods hardly know
you're breathing.
Lay so low, the others don't trip over you.

Close your eyes so you can see--
your bloody knees,
your broken heart barely beating,
the bruised ribs that enclose the contusions
of your second-guessed life.

Don't get up,
just lay there.
Cry and weep until you're done--
and then pick yourself up
and hold yourself gently,
and stay there.
Don't look up.

When you silence a woman

When you silence a woman
with your labels and names,
and patriarchal judgments
and patriotic claims...

...about who she is--
about her own pain
about her experience
and who she should blame...
about her life choices
and her worldview
about her philosophy
and what she holds true...

I hope you will hear
the deafening sound
of the heartbreak that opened
the voice you just drowned.

I was wrong, too

For the merging of our journeys
and the confusion that got us here.
For delusions dissolved by presence,
and awareness blessed by tears.

For pain mutually inflicted,
for my bleeding hurting you--
it's obvious, but bears stating,
that I was wrong, too.

For forcing my adaptation,
for forcing me to fight....
for my dormant spirit awakened
grateful freedom, open flight....

For the fire you lit around me,
which you thought you would control,
was my wake-up call to rising
like a phoenix, fully whole.

Winter of my mind

There are many winters
in a lifetime...
times of great stillness,
of darkness and pain
that take over
like a fierce front
from parts known and unknown
to linger and force
sheer adaptation.

To breathe takes effort.
To move hurts
the ligaments,
of life
yet without motion
there is only stagnation.

Suspended and frozen;
in this inhospitable winter of mind
my dormant heart awaits
for the comfort of my spring.

Between inhale and exile

Sensing the grace
in the stillness
of the space
between inhale and exile
and the infinite power
of life's divine mystery...

As you walk in this world
with sweet, gentle steps--
your eyes focused on the light
you embody within,
that is the space
we're invited to dwell.

Lesson Plans

Joyful inquiry, my sweet companion
are you sick of me yet?
How many times have I asked the same question,
and how many times have I forgotten what you said?

I'm a playful child in this busy place
laughing and giggling
in the hallways of my life
looking for my friends
and to compare notes
of life and loves lost
and of lessons
twice learned.

Artificial Intelligence

My hard drive is at capacity,
error codes fill my disk,
running software that's outdated,
system integrity, at risk.

My artificial intelligence
the one I held so dear,
has been rendered obsolete,
now nothing seems clear.

Perhaps a gentle upgrade,
will remedy this threat.
Perhaps a soulful reboot,
will help my mind reset.

Slush Pile

I was thrown into a slush pile,
discarded like an old part,
tossed into a graveyard--
economic purgatory,
my sentence and crime.

Funny thing is that the slush pile
is richer than the other side,
the wealth that's nurtured here
cannot be monetized.

The ones who threw us here,
may they be lucky, someday
to join us in the slush pile
we throw no one away.

Crisis

It seems we're building a fortress
with bricks of delusion stacked high
to align schooling with what's needed
job security, the new lie.

A living wage they argue,
is the result of preparation--
how do they explain all the educated
who lack adequate compensation?

The technical skills they're teaching,
will be obsolete before schooling's done--
so, who will provide paychecks
when a new crisis is spawned?

Please listen to yourselves, leaders,
and your manufactured stress
more jobs are not the answer,
loving people, yes.

When money is free

One day my daughter Serena asked: "why can't money be free?" --And so I began to wonder and imagine such a world...

We know wealth is created
and currently serves,
the forceful in power
which our system preserves.

So we fight for our share,
we strive for success
we're mesmerized by power
we glamorize stress.

But what is true wealth,
with so many enslaved
in the prisons of progress,
we've collectively paved?

When money is free
each will have what they need
our decisions made from love
not from fear or greed.

When money is free
new systems we'll birth---
to support one another
to create peace on Earth.

Institutionalized

One by one we walk away
from the illusion of security
which we traded
for soul enslavement;
the time we hid our own light
so low we could hardly see it.

Through endless days and working nights
in corporate purgatory--
perpetuating fear, wiping away tears...
Our souls converging -- hidden behind the knowing
and the polite smiles
we gave one another.

Engagement

Remember the lessons,
so you don't use them, too.
Monetized. Standardized. Scrutinized.
That's the price we pay
for believing the want ads
that others design for you.

Sweet purveyor of goodness
How are you different from them?
Pay attention to what you're thinking
and to what you sell.
Forget about engagement,
forget about the clicks,
Forget about convincing
stop using all the tricks....

There are new expansive projects
and adventures in store,
the most essential things
must now come into accord
engage with your heart,
and do nothing more.

Writer

String your words together
like precious beads of light
that amplify hope and soften
the sharp corners of our life;
words of love and joy and truth
words that hold the broken-hearted,
write the words that soothe.

The days that remind me

Consumed by worries
beyond reason's reach
hijacked by demons
that don't even exist...
those were the days that reminded me
of who I used to be--
those were the days that forced me
to surrender and to weep—
those were the days that birthed
who I was meant to be.

Open

May my body be the dwelling place
of love's deep desires...
and to open up
with ease
to the fire
of this life;
and to share this with another
who can sustain my wildness
and be himself
fully naked before me,
sweetly imbued in the certainty
he is love
personified.

Chronic

The pain and anguish
like anvils they bind
the body, stricken
the mind, twined

Cells asleep,
or in hibernation
fearful of movement
preferring stagnation

A quantum leap
is only one breath
repeated in silence
embracing one's death.

Soul fragmentation

Noble role you chose, my girl
embodied miasm,
selfless being
you were and still are.

Luminous angel of heaven
on Earth...

remembering
debating
frustrating
activating
enabling
uniting what is.

Anguished

There's nothing you can say
that I want to hear.
Nothing.
Don't try.
Save your energy for yourself.
Thank you.

Broken-open.
Heart-seared.
Brain-rewired.

No, there is nothing wrong with me,
but I can't explain it to you
because I need to listen
and my talking to you is distracting me
from hearing my daughter's sweet voice.

Waging a life

To earn a living wage—that's what so many think and worry about---to earn enough for our homes, for food, for health care, for travel, for life.

This striving often kills. I've seen it with my own eyes.

Are we slaves? Why not choose to wage a life *you love* instead of one you fight to earn?

Becoming

Memory flashes
we each gleam
in graceful moments
and in dreams...

Veils that fall
reduce our plight
beckoning, welcoming
our soul's light.

What I give to the world

What I give to the world
is not dependent on conditions
superstition
exhibition
supposition
nor ambition.
I give from my own volition,
my being and doing
are intertwined.

Letting the day get through me

Mastery, I've learned
is listening, observing, and discerning
for what's asking to be loved.

Dirty piles of dishes and dirty floors
become my teachers,
when I had not realized the depth
of my lack of self-respect.

Whether jagged, jangled, or hideous
disturbing events or people,
sometimes even myself,
I quietly tend to
my own bleeding
and my heart's pleading
to let life be.

Sometimes I linger

In the space between
the ideas and ideals,
and constructs
and glossy promises
of stories from forceful humans...

whether in compelling interviews,
or articles, or graphics peppered with data,
and layered with “evidence-based” facts,
from minds,
who want to convince ours---
I stop and breathe.

Seductive, it is,
at times, blunting my own vision,
But I close my eyes, gently sigh, and linger
in the space
between the words.

Good grief

Escorting the humble
through valleys and summits,
exhausting and burning
the fumes of your mind,
reducing the need for regular senses
it is you, grief has come to find...

The kind that distills
the willing to kindness-
the kind that disorients
and revolts the heart-
the kind that transforms
the newly forsaken,
the kind that turns pain
into art.

All the things that said no

Meandering like a round river,
circulating, hiking, leading, planting
the gardens of my dreams,
which I began to build, long ago,
I gently inventory all the things that said no;
all the things that redirected my soul.

Condolences accepted
and released for their own blessing,
simpler gardens I dreamed up.

My daughters were with me- seeds and watering cans in
hand, they planted and watered with me.

Farmers of life, we were and still are, intimately knowing
the rhythm of things and the storms that yank or test our
Spanish roots.

The gift of all the things that said no,
is one beyond earthly price or measure--
gratefully beholding the wealth of our harvest,
we only say yes to ourselves.

How the story goes

First, you're the victim, then you're the hero, then the director, then the producer. Then, the investor and then the observer from the seats.

Then, you become the writer. Then, you become the story.

Then one day you drop the story, because even that powerful story is just a tiny preamble – a virtual experience for the intelligence that lives through you.

I'm leaving a little trail

I'm leaving a little trail
of words, and deeds,
and books telling stories
of dreams that became nightmares,
and nightmares that became grace.

Filled with understanding and thanksgiving
redemption and care giving,
collapse and disillusionment
and how I came to be free.

Little heart-crumbs, I have dropped
on digital trails and solid places
to support the flourishing
of our beloved human race.

Flourishing

When life dissolves illusion,
and you choose joy over misery
and illumination over starvation
that's the beginning of truth.

Baptized by fire and the burning away
of everything that didn't belong,
gutted, humbled, and awed
you'll arrive,
like a living stream
intimately knowing
what diverts or stagnates,
you're now the one who says no.

No, to the eddies and whirlpools attempting to reshape
you into their turbulent likeness.

Yes, to new senses emerging
bringing to you proper nourishment
for this next phase of your life.

With new seeing,
your new fluid yet coherent existence
you gently navigate
solidly grounded in the groundless,
quietly whispering love's name.

PART II

Our Mother

Our Mother, womb of all Life,
Caregiver of sorrows,
Healer of darkness,
Nurture my Light.

Infuse your loving Spirit
Guide my every step
Awaken my divinity
Grace my every breath.

May I see through your eyes.
May I work through your hands.
May I know my own heart.

Silver Ray of Creation,
Holy Spirit of God,
Breathe your Divine Love,
through me--

Help me co-create God's Heaven,
with all our Brothers and Sisters
Right here and now,
Amen.

Ordinary

I wanted to be ordinary;
to immerse myself into Midwest life--
of production, and seasons, and calculated reasons—
to prove that I mattered, somehow.

Weaving in treasured memories,
with the grief and persistence
during long, harsh winters
that taught me how to die,
I became so ordinary,
I could no longer remember
the blue hues
of my Caribbean skies.

Now embracing all the shades of my living
confirming what many already know:
there's nothing ordinary
about any of us.

I am that

I am that which sees and senses
the tender spaces
of the human heart;
beauty-loving, life-observing,
world-belonging, justice-serving,
I am that.

I am that which rides life rapids
and jumps off places
saying yes to every fall;
soul-affirming, health-preserving,
truth-confirming, love-deserving,
I am that.

I am that which photographs the sunrise,
noticing the mundane and the glorious,
embracing dark in every light;
memory-making, art-creating, community-nurturing,
light-embracing,
I am that.

I am that which knows true wealth
and that every failure is a breakthrough--
I am that which sees herself in you.

Diaspora

Dispersed, we have been
for decades, perhaps lifetimes
searching for everything
we *thought* we lost.

Seeking sense and meaning making,
longing for birthplaces
and peaceful spaces of belonging
and love...

Broken-open, our wounds we nurse
through all the heartbreaks that remind us;
what is whole cannot be dispersed.

Friends

Be not dismayed or resentful
of the friends who did not help you
while you were bleeding,
and desperately pleading--
they could not hear your call.

For in silence there's an answer
and in space there is healing,
for everyone is living
their own sacred fall.

Hardship

Whenever you notice,
in your own life,
or in the challenged life of another...
an unfairness, an unkind fate,
an unfathomable injustice,
an illness, a death,
walk up to it and
breathe it in as if it were
the freshest air in this world.

Then, repeat until your lungs are saturated
with the uncommon knowledge
underneath it all;

and then you will know
the rhyme and reason
for every human hardship on Earth,
and then you will know
that the only anecdote for suffering
is love.

Reel in

Stop casting lines
into dead and over-fished waters
looking for life below.

Your life is above
Already risen, like a star
illuminated, and awaiting
on your cosmic shore.

Fire of faith

Let it all go,
allow all that's not for you
to be wholly engulfed,
consumed,
by the fire of faith
until nothing remains
but the awareness
of your living power--
until nothing remains
but your loving breath.

We all take turns

Falling, rising.
Failing, learning.
Punishing, forgiving.
Attaching, releasing.

Weeping, consoling.
Losing, winning.
Hiding, performing.
Crying, laughing.

Shaming, honoring.
Judging, flowing.
Blaming, owning.
Rejecting, accepting.

Loving, withholding.
Breathing, gasping.
Expanding, contracting.
Creating, dying.

False labor

I once endured a night of unproductive pain - pain so immense, it seemed without end.

Induced--
by fear and collective consensus,
stretching me beyond ordinary senses,
I questioned myself:

*Why did I put myself through such misery and sorrow?
What exactly was I wanting to see?*

Sometimes, we must close our eyes to see
what we already know:
any kind of forced labor
can never produce
sustainable life or love.

Soul contract

Who are you to think you know
of the sacred agreement
that God and each soul make
before their first breath,
to become flesh and blood?

We cannot know--
we can only guess and speculate
with compassionate curiosity
the deeper reasons of another's life.

Better to accept what you cannot tolerate.
Better to accept that you cannot know.
Better to love our brother or sister in their bliss or
misery,
than to think you have any clue
about their journey or their path.

Better to look within
and read the fine print.
Better to review
the contract you created
when you entered this world
with your own sacred pact.

Apology

When someone is sorry
they don't continue to
promise and speak
empty words, unmoored
from the reality of life...

When someone is truly sorry
they become very quiet
and correct their own course,
grounded and guided
by the truth that has no words.

What is here

What is here is everything--
everything you imagined
to be worthy of you,
in this moment in time
for you to relish your creation
and to observe, through the mind of God
what serves or destroys
the harmony within, so that you
may wisely choose
what is here, now,
again and again.

Turning stones

At the beginning,
it's important to honor and explore,
whether painful or pleasurable
each recurring curiosity
that speaks your name
and asks for the impossible--

so that you may rise
from your own shadow,
and transmute the dark
into Light...

Until all stones have been turned,
only then can you rest assured
that each living thing
undergoes this sublime journey--
of turning over illusions
until they're affirmed
there are none.

Quarantine

It's always best to stay inside
to tend to high-grade fears.

Until you befriend the virus you still carry --
the one that divides and splits you,
the one that insists you are not whole,
the only proper medicine
is for you to remain at home.

Make some tea, journal.
Drink water, breathe.
Rest until you're centered and calm.

Until you've wrestled every demon
you've ever imagined,
and ponder and argue why your way is
right and *they* are wrong,
it's just best to stay home.

Solidarity

I'll tell you where I stand...

I'm here to help heal our separation,

to gently open hearts,

to inspire peace in those who crave it

to shine light where it is dark.

I stand here before you

at the threshold of nowhere,

I know what's possible

and can sense what is true.

I'm a sister to every pain

that needs belonging

and every injustice longing

until there are none in you.

The richest woman I know

The richest woman I know didn't have a degree, or a driver's license, or even a paying job--- but she worked every day.

She worked to learn.

She worked to speak a new language.

She worked to stand on her own two feet.

She worked to heal again and again.

She worked to pray.

She worked to nourish her family.

She worked to understand her grief.

She worked to make sense of her life.

She worked to help her family.

She worked to love—everything and everyone.

She worked on this every day.

She learned this from her mother, and her mother's sisters—from her own sisters, too.

That woman, my mother
is the richest woman I know.

My baby is home

I know your heart,
my precious girl.
I've seen what it can do.
You have a way of connecting and caring--
of showing others what is true.

Always working
from your wisdom and conviction
from all that you lived and cannot unsee
you bless the earth with your power and spirit---
because you came here
just for this.

Precious girl
you're a cosmic work of art
grounded in the earth that held your falling
a guest for a few decades of sorrow,
you are now
finally home.

With infinite gratitude

To my precious daughters, Serena and Camille;
your love is magical—you are magical—on Earth as it is
in heaven.

To my parents: I love and honor you.

To my family: for your kindness and generosity through
our shared life.

To my soul friends, colleagues, and teachers, both
formal and informal: thank you for activating my
understanding –for helping me see what I needed to
see.

To life. To God. To all that is.

Other works by Mayra

60 ways to know love

Honoring your grief

All my mistakes

52 weeks

Gratitude Yearbooks
(2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023)

The intelligence of love

My true feelings

Essence Glossary™

The Workbook of Human Superpowers

GRATEFUL | 30-day self-care journal

People are like flowers

Emotional Intelligence: making sense of your
emotional data

A Nighttime Trip to Planet NUF

Soul Friends

Wake Up Beautiful Girl

Lilly's Life

About Mayra

In her journey through life, Mayra Porrata, the granddaughter of Spanish immigrants from Oviedo, Spain, has traversed diverse cultural landscapes. Born in Puerto Rico, she experienced a pivotal transition at age 11 when her family relocated to Munroe Falls, Ohio. This shift thrust her into a profound valley of cultural, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual exploration—a space where she grappled with the complexities of identity, language, and belonging.

Across the decades of her ordinary yet inspiring life journey, Mayra encountered a myriad of experiences, from moments of triumph to periods of loss and confusion. Along the way, she forged deep connections with a spectrum of individuals, from kindred spirits to challenging adversaries, each contributing to her growth and understanding.

In her professional endeavors, Mayra has engaged with diverse sectors, including entrepreneurship, non-profit organizations, public service, and corporate environments. Armed with a bachelor's degree in business management and minors in Spanish, communications, and marketing, she embarked on a journey of higher education, earning a master's degree in community health education from Kent State University (KSU) in 2007. Following her academic pursuits, Mayra dedicated a decade to teaching in the School of Health Sciences at KSU, sharing her knowledge and passion for improving community health and wellbeing.

Additionally, she extended her expertise to the realm of marketing management, teaching at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. However, her academic career took a poignant turn in the summer of 2018, marked by the profound loss of her daughter to cystic fibrosis—an event that reshaped her perspective on life and purpose.

In 2016, Mayra founded SEE, LLC with a mission to inspire holistic health and wellbeing. Little did she realize then that true wellbeing necessitates inner peace—a realization underscored by her own journey through grief and mourning.

In 2024, SEE, LLC transitioned into SOLARA PUBLISHING, marking a significant evolution in Mayra's work in health education & health communications. Today, she continues to explore the intersections of health and personal leadership through spiritual intelligence and personal regeneration, offering powerful insights into our innate benevolence and potential for true prosperity and peace.

