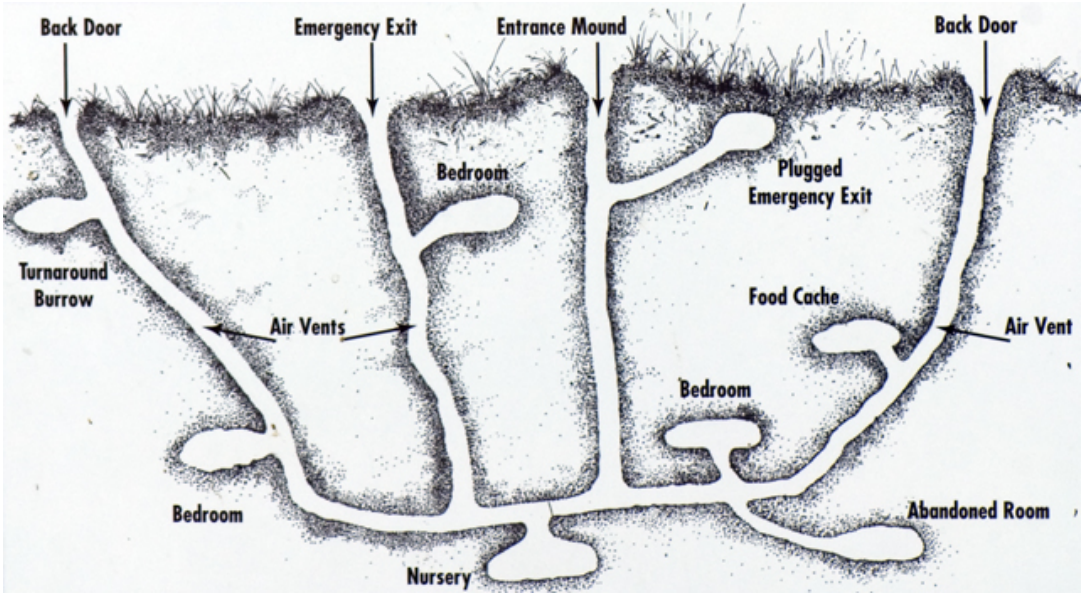
We scrawl
our likenesses



by Pearl Pirie

This text is a cento of poetry & interviews by Phil Hall.
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We Scrawl
Our Likenesses

Poems for

and by Phil Hall: a Cento

for Ph.

there it is the root of my problems

indifference
the jumble we just can't throw out
kindling tongue beckons with the shaved curl of
a small *r*
even the air has weight
a dredged joy

silence gets words going

say it & then say the pause that says more
local is what threatened me with silence
tongue-tied dendrite
but some find grace
between the bark & the trunk
because she has swallowed the axe too
Sing *we*
note-hinge
to abundance

a title is not a pitch, it is a commitment

there are too many Wordsworths
shoving the fields
& them running slapping their heads
to make progress happen by making poems be tools
wearing a giant dollar-bill costume
their minds like stumps in raw clearings
& fenced with their own charred stumps
This is what you have made carefully—tear it down
but what would that prove
& I can only pretend to help
anti-perfection. I seek words to embellish my flaws.
the needed music un-preplanned forms
a chickadee embeds itself in the fog
but I insisted

two crouchers

absences can't draft patterns or can they?
to change the names hurts the song
into lilting shanty-jaws -- murk
as I watch this poet this pioneer
[a blank page]
it would clean me-- that would feel good
"Yes."
then settling remember
two crouchers
are unindentured a moment or forever
changes the pattern

turn the page

bind each page in a different book
obscure rhizome bless us
by nudging askance
filter
archive
a perfect moment
saying *fuck you* to her computer

error is character

to try to widen down into
joy's great escape
doubt is bad if it forces upon us the silence of
closure.
fold within green fold my doubt
I am lost my only anchor / dither dither as dubious
power
nope — malarkey — enough here goes
to have had to be 60 to say in a poem the abuser's
name
let us proceed Friend with a reckless invite
& making fun of both of us
I am overcome & rejuvenated by imbalance –
complexity
it blocks out the constant nitter-natter, and is oddly
calming
or watch a chipmunk pack its cheeks

rhythm is knowledge

I loosed my narrow at it beautifully
ssuucceedd
in the middle of the stone there is a road
a symbol is a thimble
there's a note
that isn’t a prayer flag
then it is as if on display
with hope

Thanks:

With gratitude to Phil Hall for daring to put his vulnerabilities, crankinesses, comedies and wrestles out there where the rest of us will no longer be alone in the tidy lyric version of the multiverse. And happy birthday.

Sources:
In these poems I wrote not a word, only cobbled. Some capitalization changed. Each line is quilted, that is, the form is a cento of his poems and interviews.

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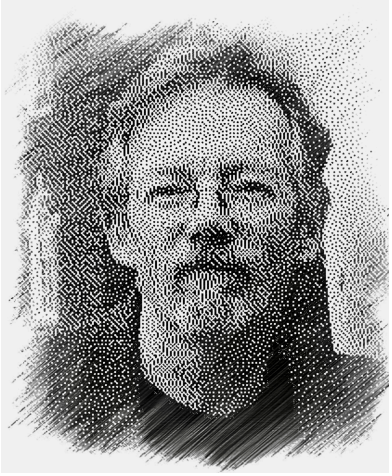
Pearl Pirie lives in rural Quebec. She has 4 poetry collections published. People say she should introduce herself as an award-winning poet, but that that seems crass, no? She is found online more easily than in person. Try Instagram or Patreon at PearlPiriePoet or www.pearlpirie.com. She occasionally makes chapbooks.