



## Poems of Snowshoe (1988-2005)

### About Snowshoe

Snowshoe could not keep the promise she made in *Passages*. She was moved two years before her death to a home outside the city, long after I had left town.

She influenced and was influenced by many contemporaries, including Thunder and Mandy, as well as nearby squirrels, birds, and strays. Her personal relationships with these other animals were often adversarial.

In the early drafts of *Passages*, the poem revealed a remote, even formalistic view of death. As Snowshoe aged, this perspective changed into one rooted in tangible smells and sensations.

*Transformations* underwent so many drafts that its language and ideas appear to morph into entirely different poems. To read them one after the other is like studying crystals in a time-lapse film.

## Passages

I have outgrown the place  
you could never find,  
stashed the sock I kept beneath your bed  
beneath the porch.

In the strawberry patch  
I learned to snap wasps from the air,  
flip beetles onto their backs,  
chase crows into  
a sky now I wish to lure them from.  
I am the one who hunted up that stray's litter  
for you.

Even if I had passed these white paws to kittens  
one day you would bury them  
and theirs. In your life, how many  
will arch their backs into your fingertips?  
Is it lonely to love so many?

In my last hour I promise  
I will bring you a fallen chick or that squirrel.  
I will knead my grave and lick my nose  
to better smell  
the perfumes of the worms and the ants  
and all the space I filled will empty.