

SARAH SARAI

I Shall Be Removed

A listless finger nudges me
into the grave

a finger on
the hand of love
goes *nudge*
nudge
and I'm under dirt

winds hark the ominous land
the script blown
page- by- page
the book of me
same-sun sung away

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“I Shall Be Removed” was created from “When the Door Closes,” a poem transcribed by Pearl Curran in the early 20th century while communicating with the spirit of Patience Worth. About the poem and the process of composing it, Sarah Sarai writes:

I hung each word of “When the Door Closes” on a clothesline while a strong breeze blew. When the breeze died, I gathered and assembled my poem, “I Shall Be Removed.” I worked with two women, both of whom are long dead. Pearl Curran was born in 1883 in the United States; Patience Worth in 1649 in Great Britain. Their manner of collaboration was superior to my partnership with them, given that I had no psychic or spiritual contact with either. Curran’s periods of “psychic discernment” began in 1913 and continued into 1937. Using a Ouija board and other psychic paraphernalia, she downloaded, or channeled, Worth’s poems. Curran became well-known, had her own news cycle. In the book *Radical Spirits*, which I read in the 1990s, Ann Braude wrote about the Spiritualist movement of 1800s America. One of Braude’s accomplishments was to convincingly establish that female Spiritualists channeled intelligent healthcare for pregnant women. A sly way to disseminate information, given patriarchal aversion to our intelligence. I suggest that Curran made use of her time with Worth to communicate insight into power imbalances, plus the usual stuff of poetry—flora, fauna, emotion. Incidentally, when I read *Heron Tree*’s call for work from the public domain, I one-two hopped on *The Public Domain Review* and one-two fell into “Ghostwriter and Ghost: The Strange Case of Pearl Curran and Patience Worth,” an essay by Ed Simon. It includes photos and methodologies and is worth a look, my one-two connection further evidence of the majesty of synchronicity.

Sarah Sarai is the author of *The Future is Happy* (BlazeVOX [books] 2009), *Geographies of Soul and Taffeta* (Indolent Books 2016), and *That Strapless Bra in Heaven* (Kelsay Books 2019). Her work has also appeared in *The Southampton Review*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *Pine Hills Review*, *DMQ Review*, *Mollyhouse*, and elsewhere. She lives in New York City and can be found online at facebook.com/farstargirl/.

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