

The Doctrine of Fundamental Gravity

Who she was, she asked him to show her.

Asked herself to uncouple knowledge
of who she was. She asked him to show her
his open hand. His palm that so often fell

landing like a heavy benediction, a liturgy for which she
asked (herself). To uncouple knowledge
was to become a reliquary adorned with moon, gilded beams declaring
the demise of who she was. She asked him to show her
what kept his pulse beating. What she might surrender
into his open hand. His palm that so often fell
turned to close-fisted dominion, sealed her tight within its grasp.

ABOUT THE POEM

“The Doctrine of Fundamental Gravity” was built around two phrases from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1847). About the poem and the process of composing it, Kari Ann Ebert writes:

This poem uses two phrases, from the twelfth line of text on p. 144 (12 x 12) in my copy of Brontë’s novel, to form the first line (and stanza). Then, I used a version of the OuLiPo exercise called “larding” to create the rest. In this poem, “larding” is achieved by taking the first line and adding a line on the top and the bottom of it to form the second stanza. The final stanza is formed in the same way but using the three lines of the second stanza and adding lines above, between, and below them. If you include the title (which has no phrases from *Wuthering Heights*), this poem is 12 lines purely by chance. That seems lucky.



HERON TREE

11 February 2026

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