





Days Without (Sky): A Poem Tarot  
*by Judith Serin*  
*illustrated by Nikki Thompson*

Deconstructed Artichoke Press  
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## *Colophon*

Handset in Centaur 14 pt. Hand cut linoleum blocks. Printed on a Vandercook SP15 on Lenox paper.

This project is long in reaching completion, as many of you know. I want to thank my friends and family, PCBA members, and the SFCB community for all their thoughts and prayers. It's because of you that I was able to finish this project.

I began this series of poems after I had hurt my back and felt very limited. The two things I did manage to do daily, besides my teaching job, were taking a walk and writing some words each night about the day. So these tarot cards consist of images of my walks in San Francisco, of my home and work, and of pain and finding some delight despite it. Much gratitude for help with editing is due to my writing group — Gerald Fleming, who suggested making these poems into a tarot deck, Ellery Akers, and Bill Edmondson

— and writers Cathy Colman and Katia Noyes. Working with Nikki Thompson has been a joy and an inspiration. As always, thank you to my husband Herbert Yee, who helps, supports, and inspires me. These poems are dedicated to Albertine, Marcel, Wally, Babette. Quin, and Moses, who are, in the words of William Carlos Williams, “the happy genius[es] of my household.”

## *How To Use These Cards As a Tarot Deck*

We hope that you will use *Days Without (Sky)* as a tarot deck. The images on the back of the poems indicate the suits. The cracked plate is swords, the chair and pitcher is cups, the train is wands, the cat in the window is disks, the flying goose is the major arcana, and the scrubjay in the flowerpot is all other material. Since the numbers or royalty titles are on the other side with the poems, close your eyes when picking cards. We hope the poems will add to your interpretation.







I.

A cane with a crook at the top all  
roads fly from.

4.

The future is cold and the elevator  
doesn't work there. Petals replaced by  
leaves, chartreuse and ugly, too eager  
to begin.

5.

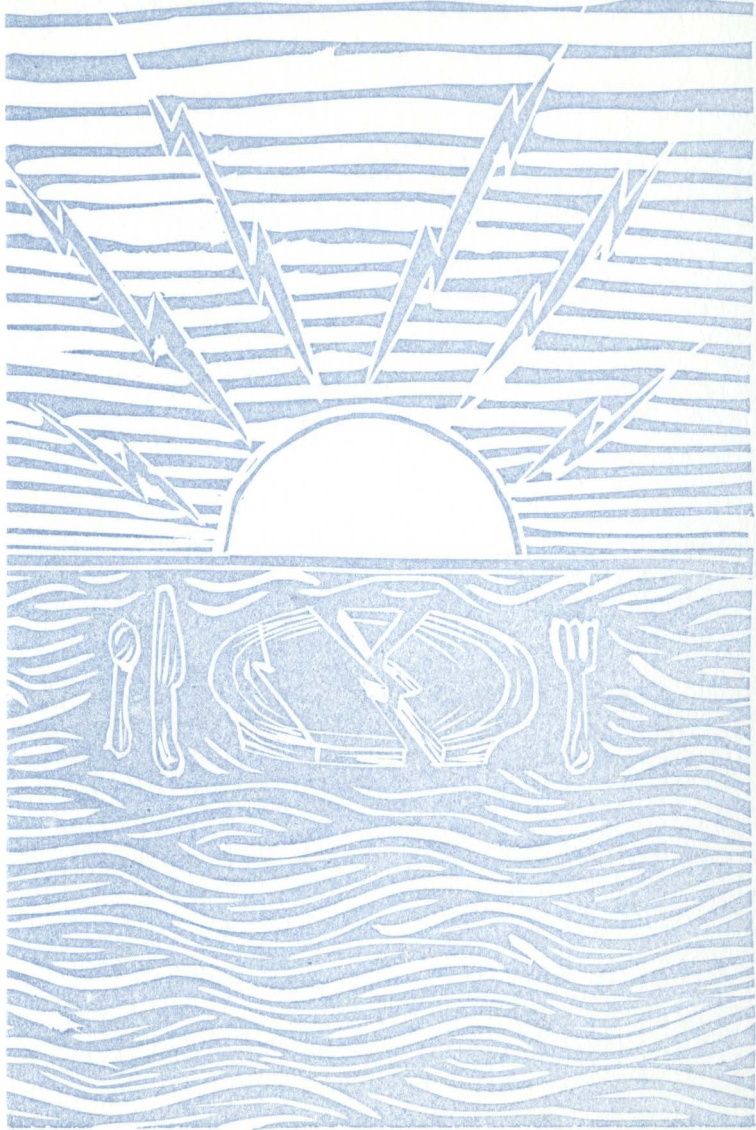
He stamps around the house  
pounding sparks into the floor

*King.*

Going up these stairs. Reclaiming the  
city leaf by leaf.

*Prince.*

In the mountains the snow blew  
sideways, the trees white candles.  
Throw snowballs for a dog.



I.

Mind an engine, worries chirping,  
trailing heavy loves.



2.

Purse left behind, a day full of  
pinprick holes and floaters in eyes.

6.

Broken: Slices served to the  
doctors.

*Princess.*

Divided in two: A cracked board  
where moss grows, lichens spread a  
dull doily.

*Prince.*

An angry day, and wind sideways  
like knives flying from the thrower's  
hand. Bad moods move into the  
neighborhood, play their car radios  
too loud, idle at the curb and eat  
breakfasts from McDonald's, throw  
the wrappers into the street.



2.

A cupcake, a compliment. Roots  
tangling, some fish, green leaves.

7.

Heavy legs. What pulls down?

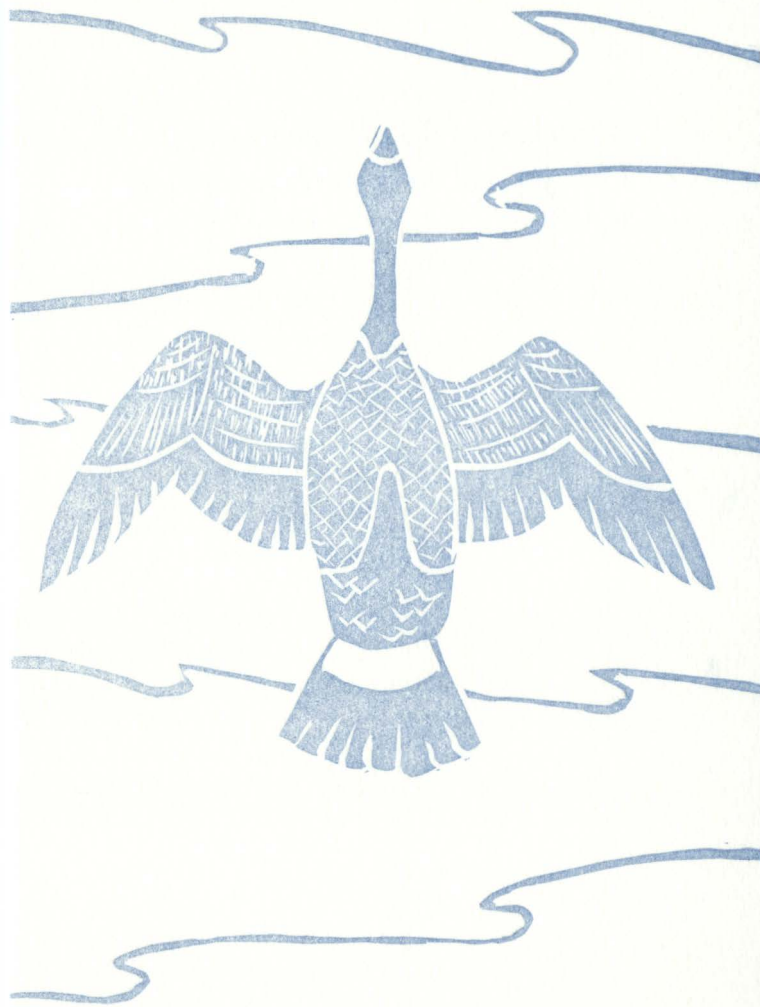
What roots? What rocks?

What sound?



10.

All day it rained, the sky soft and  
varied as petals, shivering with clouds.



1.

The sound of the rain? Footsteps?  
Birds pecking on the roof? Something  
to tell.

6.

A curl of cloud over the moon.  
So round. Like love. All these  
things.

7.

The full moon rises with its  
borrowed fire, gathers orange  
from the hills, sheds color  
slowly slipping into sky. When  
it whitens the breach between  
curtains, late, it's its own icy gift,  
rowing across the night.

8.

All day today it felt like the  
East Coast: moisture-laden air.  
Now the clouds long lazy fish  
on the horizon. Roses in bud  
just tips of color Wait for the  
moon. It doesn't come, the  
clouds thicker than they look.





6.

The saxophone's high wire. Looking  
for the unspellable syllables of cat  
sounds.



10.

Moon spend some gold. Move  
orange to white. A headlight late  
lighting up the yard. Where are  
the soldiers, stars?

*Prince.*

Creamy orange cat, soft as cashmere.  
Domestic love: The lobes of an oak  
leaf, everyday dishes, salt and  
pepper joy.

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