

A brief commentary on the work that appears in the *Notre Dame Review*.

These sonnets stumbled out of a darkly chaotic period in my life, when I'd lost my way in a difficult relationship and struggled to recover. The feeling of loss seemed magnified because the playful curiosity that takes over in the beginning of a relationship seemed somehow to soften the loss of divorce and mitigate the possibility of living life alone, as a single parent. I found myself largely alone, without most of the friendships I'd relied on, and unable to function properly as a parent without making all sorts of mistakes while trying to hide my new, grown-up life from my son.

Ravaged emotionally, I fell into the only thing that had ever intrigued, engaged, or consoled me: language. In a fit, over the course of one summer, I produced 15 hard-driving sonnets that embodied some of the pain and conflict. The poems refracted that remembered relationship-reality through the scaffold of the sonnet, stiff enough to encage unbearable feelings while letting loose, with language, rhythms, and pacing within. I'm a big fan of Gerard Manley Hopkins style, John Donne's Holy Sonnets, and Seamus Heaney's Glanmore Sonnets. This series riffs off Donne's Holy Sonnets, love-arguments about his struggles to have faith, and be faithful intellectually, to God. I read Donne and Heaney, in particular, over and over during this time. I fell into some of their jagged and surprising rhythms. They kept me on my toes, and took that craziness I was feeling and helped me manipulate it into sonnets. That series brought me to the other side of the disaster of feeling that I found myself in, and reminded me who I was again.