

# **A TRILLION TINY AWAKENINGS**

**Candy Royale** was one of Australia's most prominent performing writers. She was a multi-award winning storyteller, activist, educator, singer and vulnerability advocate who shared confronting, political, human and heart-wrenching narratives to audiences all over Australia and the world. She performed at many folk, music, writers and arts festivals globally. Her work and opinion pieces have been featured in *Fairfax*, *The Guardian*, *Overland Literary Journal Online*, *SBS*, *ABC*, *Runway*, *Art Almanac* and many other outlets. She will be remembered by her family and friends as well as the arts, activism and LGBTQIA+ communities for her talent, strength, conviction, passion and firm belief in the power of love to bring about change.

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Candy Royalle



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*i will dance and resist and dance and persist.  
this heartbeat is louder than death...*

*Suheir Hammad*



*Mum, I learnt strength and survival from you  
Baba, you taught me to question everything  
Bro, we have lived the definition of unconditional love  
I live for the three of you*



## FOREWORD

Ali Cobby Eckermann

// It's a requirement / of the successful artist / to forget what it  
is / to be humble / so / she's immortal in the mortified kind of  
way / in the way Eve is / retold over and over / until everyone  
believes it //

Powerful words from a humble poet: the feminist, queer,  
daughter of migrants, justice-seeker, the tyrant to the tyrannical,  
unapologetic, strong in the faith of the oppressed. In this fine  
collection of poetry, the words of Candy Royalle resound off the  
page, beyond her living years cut short by a sickness that refused to  
loosen its grip.

// Come take these stories out of her mouth / relieve her of the  
swelling / come be a witness / remove the regrets / from that  
empty loving / she's making progress / moving away from the  
constant excesses / compassion and forgiveness / she's the other  
coming / until those colours suffocate / she's walking the streets /  
near enough to be here / just keep watching her suffer //

These poems are the mark of that ongoing battle. Candy's  
words are an ocean attempting to smash any walls that confine,  
the activist and her complete love for woman churning inward and  
out until in the still of night, there is only an ebb. *A Trillion Tiny  
Awakenings* contains the tide of her to fill us with the memory of  
her that cannot recede.

Each one of us has a need to be loved. It is a basic human right refused to many. The verses written here are an ongoing plea for intimacy across the world, an intimacy for the self and the selfless. Candy's words amplify her needs, the desire for love on the front line of a war that has a capacity to harden the softest of hearts, to cut out what was once there, to belittle the beloved.

This isn't another love poem  
emptied as I've been by the world's ache  
every atlas a tome of violent suffering

Despite her illness Candy remained devout to her passions. Personal love becomes a reflection for her need for a righteous world. Her words throw a challenge to the capacity of the oppressor, to understand the beauty of the other, the beguiling strength of the oppressed. Candy saw the world in all its forms, and through her eyes her wonder of creativity is a gift to us all.

I will leave heavier in the knowledge  
that what I sought  
and thought I'd found  
I have lost again

These words come at a cost to my heart. My friend has died, and I write these words in the absence of her. The love we shared was harnessed by our words, the passion we shared for our views of fairness and for justice to be heard, both loudly on and off the page. Our friendship did not waver from that sharing of respect. And now in her passing it remains so.

## CONTENTS

Foreword	ix
vanquished	1
the edge of 36	5
That house	7
// Let's call it art //	14
she said	16
the i I was	21
Tangled	22
Braying beasts	27
I will be a God without you	31
Sariñena: an ending, for now	35
Our new language (Maria the first)	42
loss like you and she	47
Citadel of Sighs	50
love might be	53
there is no poetry left in me today	55
Impermanent	56
X	58
Without it almost nothing	60
what this is	62
safety is this	63
incensed	66
not another love poem	67
we have become a museum of intangible things	70

livinthefinite	72
tag	76
Julian(n)	77
Well, know this	79
This is my wish	82
prohibited	85
I can't just switch it off	88
I tread this coastal path	92
Edge Sky Self	94
revoke	98
the wanting	101
Draw Breath	106
exposed	111
the eventuality of the path they walk	114
Our hearts	117
stick to the left wall and run	119
Ancestral Homage	121
Break Me	129
inner/e/scape	134
arrhythmic nocturne	137
Guatemalan waters	142
don't look down	145
dance it all away	147
Pregnant	149
Afterword	155
Acknowledgements	161
Notes	162

# vanquished

your pale skin beneath me  
veins feint scrawled blue lines  
written in a rush

told you I was colonising you  
my form of resistance:  
sleeping with white women

you laughed  
grinding harder against me  
I was

decolonising my tongue  
against your cunt  
resisting occupation

by pushing inside you  
created countries  
divided up your body arbitrarily

13 days later  
you loved me enough  
to invade

crossed continents  
occupied my bed  
no treaties

just an unravelling  
your troops threading  
across me

you and clenched fingers  
blue grey eyes  
dammed water

as you whispered  
the sacredness of our  
fucking

I gathered your wants  
twisted those vines  
round an aorta

pumping against your mouth  
my hearth thrummed  
against your lips

fucking is a violence  
we're all versed in  
a hammering

you fucked me  
in ways I couldn't fuck you  
my violence was

fist in mouth  
in ears  
no

pummelled into  
a mess so enormous  
you fled

you weren't gone  
until 10,000 air miles  
were between us

an autonomous withdrawal  
me pleading for you  
to rebuild your settlements

that was your triumph:  
I was Fiji  
inviting your invasion

you weren't laughing anymore  
skypewhatsappfacetime cold war  
we have to speak in skin

I can't reach you  
with ones and zeros  
spinning grim

come back  
you and your  
cock and bull troops

come back  
these peace talks  
are transparent time-killing

you seek another outpost  
to plant your flag  
I'm a nation

at war with itself  
tearing cells from particles  
from meat

matter dissolving in nuclear  
explosions  
this is on you

you pulled out too soon  
all you ever cared about  
was the incursion

once the capture  
was complete  
you instigated your retreat

...