



**LOVE IN THE
CHTHULUCENE
(CTHULHUCENE)**

NATALEE CAPLE

**LOVE IN THE
CHTHULUCENE
(CTHULHUCENE)**

NATALEE CAPLE



© Natalee Caple, 2019

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written consent of the publisher or a license from the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright). For an Access Copyright license, visit www.accesscopyright.ca or call toll free to 1-800-893-5777.

James Street North Books is an imprint of Wolsak and Wynn Publishers.

Cover design: Rachel Rosen

Interior design: Leigh Kotsilidis

Cover image: *Density* by Shane Gross

Author photograph: Julie Anne Gagne

Typeset in Avenir Next Condensed Demi Bold & Libre Caslon Display

Printed by Coach House Printing Company Toronto, Canada

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Canada

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Canada.

James Street North Books
280 James Street North
Hamilton, ON
Canada L8R 2L3

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Love in the chthulucene (cthulucene) / Natalee Caple.

Names: Caple, Natalee, 1970- author.

Description: Poems.

Identifiers: Canadiana 20190059893 | ISBN 9781928088790 (softcover)

Classification: LCC PS8555.A5583 L68 2019 | DDC C811/.54—dc23

For Noelle Allen, potent mind-haver, and Priscila Uppal, beloved.



Living-with and dying-with each other potently in the Chthulucene
can be a fierce reply to the dictates of both Anthropos and Capital.

– Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*

Think of it this way. If a tree grew in your yard & the fruit of that
tree had a balm to heal wounds. Would you hoard it or share it?

#metoo

– Tarana Burke, Twitter, October 19, 2017

CONTENTS

15	I Try Not to Think Too Much
16	But what if we all
17	Worlding
18	Song for Molly
19	All Nature Is Foreign
20	Stages
21	We
22	We Camp above the Sea
24	Instructions for the Wind:
25	You Just Wish
26	Let Us Compare Ecologies
27	Wilderness Tips
28	Wildness
29	Perfectus Explicandum
30	"Me Too"
31	Dialogue
32	Moot
33	Travel Light
34	Sonnet for Sonnet
35	Thunder
37	<i>It's plastic, Sachiko; keep it</i> , I said
38	Motions of Confession
39	Packing for the Weekend
40	Summer Storm
41	Mayhem Sonnet
42	Mayhem Remix

- 44 les tigres circulent dans les couloirs
45 Symbols of Love or Trauma
47 44 Things to Throw Away and Instantly Improve Your Life
49 By Design
50 Response-ability
52 They Will Take My Island
53 Sleep No More
54 Burying the Sons
55 I built a muscle
56 Rehtaeh
58 King of the Land
59 Echo Re-echo
60 Sandy
61 K
62 Grateful
63 911
64 Love Letter
65 3,000
66 And this is my first true speech
69 Fireflies Stardust
70 Let the Memory of Love Alone
71 “We only ever have one language.’ Let us take it through
one more round. Let us make it say what it does not
know how to mean to say, and let us allow it to say
something else.” – Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of
the Other*, trans. Patrick Mensah
72 Love in the Chthulucene (Cthulhucene)
84 So Far

85	Children Are Figuratively Learning “Cups” in Tears Before the Talent Show
87	Let’s Start All Over
88	Beauty in Truth
89	Life of Gary
91	Symbiopoesis
93	Psalm for Molly
94	For You
95	Taliesin Thinks upon Himself
96	Be Lenient with Me
97	Compassion
98	Song of Rapes Gone By
99	Goodbye Baby
100	Last Words in the Dictionary
101	The appetites of tiny hands
102	Accidental Poem by Casey
103	Morning in the Chthulucene
105	Acknowledgements
106	Notes

PICTURE-POEMS

- 5 Priscila Uppal
- 27 Wilderness Tips
- 28 Wildness (Pat Lowther)
- 33 Travel Light (Diana Fitzgerald Bryden)
- 44 les tigres circulent dans les couloirs (Larissa Lai)
- 61 K (Karis Shearer)
- Love in the Chthulucene (Cthulhucene)
- 73 rob mclennan and Rose
- 74 Weyman Chan
- 75 Helen Guri
- 76 kevin mepheron eckhoff, by Imogen, age 7
- 77 Lolo and I, the night we had to say goodbye
- 78 For Jessica Smith
- 79 Liz Howard
- 80 Ann Shin and Sonnet L'Abbé
- 81 Lillian Allen
- 82 Lucia Lorenzi
- 83 Klyde Broox
- 111 Natalee Caple, by Imogen, age 6

I TRY NOT TO THINK TOO MUCH

You are your mind
you know your mind
no two know the same mind
each of us knows one mind
in our minds we know what we mean by *mind*
I say, hey you, Mind-haver!
do flowers have minds?
mind is that which matters
not mind over matter
speak to my dog's mind!
things in the garbage have no mind
they do not mind
we might endow mind
but we cannot transfer mind
your house does not know your mind
God is a kind of mind
but morals hurt minds
though morals may only be minds
when I say, do you mind?
I mean, I mind something unkind



But what if we all
were women crossing time on
paper no exits

WORLDING

First came the dissolution of religious houses and the libraries bereft
began to wander sometimes books passed along touch again on a
shelf sense of recognition like a match lit in the wilderness
hopestruck humans are hard to see through smoke under low roofs
what did I do? says the book except ignore time before Cromwell
castles rags oil fire thrown arcing into the library legends curl and
shatter your legends you stupid Joneses this fragment: war on slaves
consider what could have caused them to go? assemble a draft from
floating ash words want to be read however foolish human cities
burn a Tiresian energy rises from the spark that strikes free thought

Little blue light
a synapse

You could never keep the world illiterate the word was the end

SONG FOR MOLLY

In the morning you lean on my shoulder
I leave before you see me go but I love you

I leave for the forest it will be a long time of missing you
before I reach the mountain build a little house

I will have nothing and know nothing of where your body lies
chopping wood I'll cut my hand and

in the night I'll sleep as if you might arrive these little
promises are all my wealth

I am not a man to rescue you
come to the woods anyway and be my bride

ALL NATURE IS FOREIGN

even the king's perineum
fought for in the town centre
flanks and rear
facing angry hazelnut trees

STAGES

sea gooseberries and comb jellies are
small and colonial intersections
borders
between
intimacy and repulsion
assemblage of encounters
swimming by grasping with long tentacles
phylum with no fossil record
eighty years spent resisting
oceanic poetics marooned
wanting wanting
ways of being under water under
wanting
acts of flight
into confederation
smaller organisms than we
refuse to see
any body battered

WE are for draining the sun
For extinguishing light
For craning for pleasure
For looking directly into release
For coming
For tugging robins through exits
For the now-world
For sci-fi films and Paradise
For shopping with magic animals
For painting embarrassing objects red
For children in general and those in the wheat field
For liberating the cuckoo from the clock
For hooks but not in eyes
For gallows in public squares
For splitting the atom apple
For living in madness

WE CAMP ABOVE THE SEA

Blue churn of the ocean
when the breakers choked her
in seawater green water
skin was water
sweetwater mouth
of scars and ocean
know what's in deeper water
in sunstruck water
out of the Red Sea
in the pool at night
opens the deep ravine
certain rivers
at the edge of the pungent sage
raw-silver lake
river that divides two nations
and at the river laughing women
rise black out of the water
in a green deluge to the sea
from heaven not water
waterfalls spilling
a mouth wet with bitter water
drowned by soldiers in the lake
flood of blood in seams
song of steady rain
skiff on a reef
dirty stream where you

never enter the water
never swim in the sea
all the untouchable water

Blue churn of the sea
when the breakers choked her

all the untouchable water
never swim in the water
never enter the water
dirty stream where you
skiff on a reef
song of steady rain
flood of blood in seams
drowned by soldiers in the lake
a mouth wet with bitter water
waterfalls spilling
from heaven not water
in a green deluge to the sea
rise black out of the water
and at the river laughing women