for this we pray

aya natalia karpińska spring 2007

PRAYER FOR IMMIGRANTS

let my tongue not stumble

let there be others with clothes and skin roughly similar to mine, that i might not stand out

if they cannot feel pride, keep my children free from embarrassment

may this isolation turn to refuge.

PRAYER BEFORE A MEAL

thank you for the organic market.

for this salmon i fished from the refridgerated aisle, this imported chablis.

thank you for the planes and shipping containers that bring this food to our table.

let me eat when i am hungry, and not to smother boredom.

PRAYER OF GOOD INTENTIONS

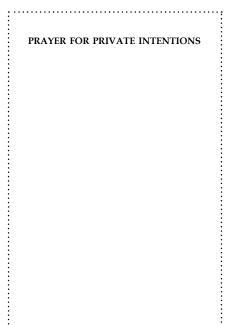
if i could send fireflies via parcel post and have them blink upon arrival, i would capture several:

for my mother, and father.

for the kid who wrote "te amo Nintendo" on the Valentine's Day mural in the mall.

for my brother, far from hope.

for the dead man i danced with at my wedding.



BUY ONE PRAYER GET MORE FREE

after growing up in the shadow of her golden sister, i think my mother was determined to love us equally. thank you, mama.

next to graffiti reading:
SOCIETY ISNT REALITY

someone else had written:

I ♥LIFE

when it's not working, and you even tried to blow on it but it still won't light up or whirr or do what you want, don't cry—just look up at the ceiling, and make a new noise you've never made before. softly repeat until you calm down

PRAYER FOR THE PARTY PEOPLE

blessed be the open heart and tongue that gives and receives.

blessed is the knowledge of the line that divides enough and too much.

blessed be this wine, that it may sing me to sleep but not cloud the morrow.

PRAYER FOR ONE WHO HAS DIED

i didn't get to show you that i really do know the step, it's just that i was too tired for salsa after all day in those red shoes. several of my toes went on strike for weeks i had made an effort to learn, taking lessons a month ahead of time from a short and sweet Jamaican with liquid hips. i wanted you to ask me to dance earlier that day, after the cake. by two in the morning my body couldn't keep a beat, we had to

couldn't keep a beat, we had to pause twice to pick it up where i had dropped it. with the dance unfinished, there is for you to go in my memory.

PRAYER TO SHARE THE ROAD

hey taxi man, hey cycle kids, pedestrians with or without cellphones glued to skulls, jaywalkers, out at five o'clock crowd, delivery boy, truck driver, bus driver, larger than necessary vehicle driver, policewoman, jogger, blade runner, skip-child, hand-held child, child on a leash, child with double-slow grandparents, dog-wielding flotilla of best friends forever,

arm-in-arm lovers, homeless

let's make room.

man,

PRAYER FOR THE BODY

dear body, it's time to smooth some anti-bacterial cream over your troubled relationship with my head and observe the litany of what-i-must:

sit up straight, knees together; walk like i'm not afraid, like the shoes don't hurt; look and see without distortion; maintain ease and grace in all motions.

above all, not be fussy about where my beautiful meat ends and the world begins.

PRAYER FOR IMAGINARY BEINGS

protect the people who don't exist, who are made of nothing but words and fictional beliefs —keep them from invisible harm and threats not present, comfort them if the love they receive isn't real.

watch over all the bedtime shadows on the wall, little rabbits and dogs abandoned around the same time as "let's pretend."

don't disappoint them, don't let them dry out until empty.

PRAYER FOR CREATIVE TYPES, I	

thank you

i have an idea –

PRAYER FOR CREATIVE TYPES, II

please

i need inspiration –

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

it was my fault. i didn't mean to. i should have ______, but i neglected to do so and you

just weren't on my horizon of things to consider. i'm not proud of it. i crossed the line, i did wrong. it was an ugly thing to do. i should have said

line, i did wrong. it was an ugly thing to do. i should have said something earlier. i can't change what happened. i sincerely regret what happened. i know that i've hurt you from the

inside out. i won't fail you again.

PRAYER AGAINST SPEED

i'd like to be aware of the moment when it's time to slow down, catch it before it plods off in the opposite direction from accelerate.

when we slow down, we will all be encouraged to stand still. slowing down will deliver us from distraction. and we will know that we may take more time than is strictly necessary.

PRAYER FOR MY SISTER NOT TO HATE ME NO MORE

glory be to something we had before.

when i turned seven you woke up early when i did to open the presents, and read the first chapter of Bambi to me. it is still my favorite book.

when i turned twenty-eight i checked my phone every time it beeped but the text messages weren't from you. you never called that day.

give me a tender conscience; let's have a drink, open our hearts.

PRAYER FOR THE DISPERSION OF NEGATIVITY

let's picture ourselves wearing a dress or suit of mirrored tiles. i saw a woman at an art opening wearing a gown and shoes she made just like this, so i know it's possible. ok, you see it? all the mirrors will reflect any nasty comments, mean faces, or vicious attitudes. any light the mirrors pick up will break up and scatter,

will break up and scatter, confusing those who do not love us; we'll be like ten thousand points of light. radiant.

PRAYER FOR A FAVORITE THING

if anything happens to the apartment while i'm out, if a fire, if a thief, if a recreational aircraft crashes, please make it so i am wearing the brown leather boots (the Italian ones my mother bought in Rome 1981), keep those boots safe. on my feet.

PRAYER

what does it take to be heard?