



A writer and artist all her life, Jill Evans Petzall began to publish her poetry at the age of 77 in response to a recurrence of the cancer she'd survived twice before. In this collection, she explores themes of mortality, love, and joy.

For The Time. Being.

By Jill Evans Petzall

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An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The colors are diverse, including deep blues, vibrant greens, earthy browns, and hints of red and purple. The brushstrokes are visible and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall composition is non-representational, focusing on color and form.

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First Edition

FOR THE TIME. BEING.

A rattlesnake inside
my insides
jerks me around
tongue flickering at odd moments
it samples its direction, tastes all
the secret substances
it wants
of me
buries itself behind my flesh
for years
sucks up my time.
It slithers
shedding skin
slicing paths along the corridors
of the viaduct that I am
looking for
a bolus of its own kind to belong to –
to cluster, to nuzzle
to grow wilder
and wait it out so that
I cannot flee when its feral tail begins
to quiver
so far
this serpent gives no warning
how it wakes
when it winces
what it wants. And where?
I grow cold-blooded in its silence.
Each time it finds a fresh position
I flinch, newly pregnant
with my mortality. It believes
it belongs
to me forever.

For The Time. Being.

That's the only certainty
about your own birth
and death.

You don't know
what you're getting into
from either direction.

Except
there's no going
backward.

For the time. Being.

That's how it lies
in wait
killing time
a someday away

mouth open wide

it feasts, grows fat

stutters

on that further edge

while it promises

to use

the only thing

it has

to save its own life.

Mine.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jill Evans Petzall was a writer, photographer, and filmmaker. She holds a BA in Philosophy and English Literature (Magna cum Laude) and an MA in Philosophy from Washington University in St. Louis. Known for casting a balanced light on social issues and subjects not often represented in mainstream media, she wrote and produced over forty award-winning documentaries that offer poetic and uncommon insights about human beings speaking within the grip of their daily lives. Always a strong supporter of causes that benefit women and children, she served as the chairwoman of the Square One Foundation.

Jill modeled a fierce independence and courage to build a life according to one's own vision. She was a photographer who found visual stories in the laundry of India and the mannequins of Southeast Asia. She was a jewelry maker who created dazzling pieces of wearable art. Her synesthesia meant she saw words and sounds as colors on the page. She played a mean hand of poker. She was one of few people in the world who loved anchovies on IMO's pizza. She was "allergic" to parsley and the color red.

After a crippling cancer recurrence, Jill began to publish years of her poems at the age of 77. She passed away in 2024 at the age of 82.



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