



**I Do Not Know If Things That  
Happen Can Be Said To Come  
To Pass Or Only Happen**

*Susan Musgrave*

(from *Cocktails at the Mausoleum*,  
McClelland & Stewart Ltd.)

But another year has passed  
and the change is marked.  
Right from the start my life stopped  
making sense

At the core there was only terror,  
a compass of blood in the heart's  
wreckage and blood and more blood  
in every direction.

It spilled out of me,  
there was no reason.  
As a child I buried everything  
I loved, buried it down deep  
and seemed pleased.

Years later the doctors  
dragged it up,  
opened me inside and cut the  
stubborn mother from my womb.

My father rocked in his chair  
unable to share his last breath  
with anyone.  
That was years ago when we  
thought he wouldn't live much longer.  
He still drives down the highway  
to see me.

Ten years ago I spent Christmas  
in a locked ward.  
Some of my best friends  
had already committed suicide.

I tried too but it wasn't in me.  
The terror went deeper  
where nothing could reach me.  
I fell in love easily  
and for no reason.  
I still think, even now, I could be  
more discriminating.

Another year has passed,  
a decade  
Walking on New Year's Day  
with friends who have survived  
like me, by accident  
—there is something to be said  
for having such friends—  
I think of the choices we made  
along the way, how things  
came to pass, or happened,  
what brings us finally together.

The ten years will make sense of it.  
Deeper into the shadows  
where the patient trees endure  
and grow, a small bird rises up  
out of our silence, crying  
shy and wild towards open water.