Desideratum

Desideratum

A POEM

AMANDA BLOOM

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following works, authors, and publishers for permission to reprint previously published material:

"Totem" from *Totem – Totem Poem plus 40 Love Poems* by Luke Davies, copyright © 2004. Reprinted by permission of Luke Davies.

"Magnolia" from *Dirt Gems* by Anne Louise Burdett, copyright © 2024. Reprinted by permission of RP Studio, an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Thanks and acknowledgement is also made to the following works and artists for the images appearing on this book's front and back covers and chapter title pages, respectively:

"Yucca Aloifalia," watercolor and graphite on vellum by Pierre-Joseph Redouté from *Les Liliacées*, 1802-1816, Château de Malmaison, Paris, France.

"Magnolier Yulan," hand-colored steel engraving by Alphonse-Leo Noel from *La Regne Vegetal: Flore Medicale,* 1864-1871, after Edouard Maubert's botanical illustration.

SECOND EDITION PUBLISHED 2025.
Desideratum / Amanda Bloom
ISBN 979-8-218-65655-3

amandabloom.com

Dedicated to
Stefanie Clark Harris

And if every step taken is a step well-lived but a foot
towards death, every pilgrimage a circle, every flight-path
the tracing of a sphere: I will give myself over and over.
I have migrated through Carpathians of sorrow
to myself heaped happy in the corner there.

– *Luke Davies, "Totem (I)"*

DESIDERATUM

I.

THE WEEPING YEAR

In Autumn of The Weeping Year
Friend sends an oracle:

"Magnolia says, *Get ready. It is coming.*
Magnolia says, *Persevere*. Let your swollen
teary eyes radiate your tenderness, your humanity."

You have been radiating in coffee shops and libraries, on street corners and hillsides and in the dark and light of living rooms. You have been radiating as public service. You are unsure how to stop radiating. You are unsure how you have not run out of Water.

In Winter you pull yourself up and out of the East.
You bet on yourself and pull the Queen of Cups.
Your throne sits where the Land meets the Sea.
You leave court and cross the Sea to follow a deer
trail through the Forest. You fly over the Prairie.
You land on the frontier.

You drink red beer and dance with cowboys.
You weep in church, praying for those who leave
without warning and the ones they leave behind.
You cannot whisper the names aloud. You eat
the body of Christ and throw away His blood.
You are kin simply for congregating.

The Desert takes you for its lover before anyone else. Now that you know you are maybe one-third Mountain it's difficult to talk chronology. The clock back Home runs slower and 4,626 feet lower. You are closer to Heaven here but might arrive sooner.