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JULY 2024



TERRY MCDONAGH

I Write Because...

COVER ARTWORK 'HEART CHAKRA'
BY IRISH ARTIST EMMA BARONE



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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor

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JULY 2024

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TERRY MCDONAGH I WRITE BECAUSE...

In the words of W. H. Auden, “poets hang around words the way bikers do around street corners.” But poets are not alone in trying to make use of the magic in words, are they? In another life I had a job as a salesman and met very successful colleagues who knew a lot about words and used them very successfully. Hang around any pub and you'll find very proficient storytellers who, in their own words might find poetry and poets colourless, tedious – even irksome and of little importance but some of these people know how to use words and the audience listen.

What, then, is poetry? The poet, Michael Longley said “If I knew where poetry came from, I'd go there.” Perhaps these few words could be the beginning of an attempt to make sense of the impulse to choose some words rather than others when trying to piece a poem together. We are into the realm of mystery – a spiritual diary which is very personal but public in its own way. I find it fascinating to look back to my first poetry collection, *The Road Out* – published in 1992 – to my most recent collection, *Two Notes for Home* – 2022. They are light years apart and all the other books and publications, in between, are a line of ants on a bramble. These poems are my social, spiritual and emotional history – my diary in progress. Again, I quote Auden: “Man is a history-making creature who can neither repeat his past nor leave it behind.” We can only write what we know or believe we know. For me, here lies the mystery and wonder in poetry. It is something intangible – delving into tiring limbs, fingerprints on the surface of the universe, wavering sun in long grass or happy and unhappy memories.



TWO NOTES FOR HOME. A Bilingual Evening of Poetry and Conversation with poet, Terry McDonagh and his son, actor Sean McDonagh in FWT theatre, Cologne. Sean is a well-known TV and theatre actor in Germany. He's an Ensemble member of Schauspiel Koeln and is moving to the famous Burgtheater in Vienna in the next few months. (Zentralbuero - Agentur fuer Schauspieler).

I work a lot with young people and am often asked, *why do you write?* I remember one young boy asking me, *when will you have made enough money to be able to give up this poetry stuff?* His question prompted me to jot down reason why I write:

I Write Because...

I write because
I'm on a train from home to here.
I write because
I see black sheep dotting mystery on a landscape.
I write because
I see children tussle with childhood.
I write because
I hear a Chihuahua doing battle in a handbag.
I write because
I hear a badger barking in my head.
I write because
I feel the urge to dislike words like outsider.
I write because
I feel a pen and anger in my hand.
I write because
I taste a lily-livered sun.
I write because
I taste angry salt on the swirling wind.
I write because
I smell smirking garlic in a sandwich.
I write because
I smell perfume before I see it.
I write because
I gallop into a gale with wild horses.
I write because
I can never trust a Mona Lisa smile.
I write because
I'm unravelling lines of light between trees.

I write because
I'm in a day that won't come back to me.
I write because
I write.

I try to write what's in me – what I know. Popular trends, political opinions, freak winds and social justice issues find expression in poetry as well. They come and go but I try to listen the internal mutterings of my heart and soul for inspiration. I'm quite sure I'm not alone when I say I need to avoid silly noises that take me away from rich streets, rivers, mountains and clouds – when I should stop and wait for myself to catch up – to allow time to write what's just under the skin. Writing has been good to me. I have published more than a dozen poetry collections, travelled quite a lot and met lots very interesting people. I met and had a long conversation with Philip in Broken Hill, an Australian town.

Philip

Philip out of Sydney
is sixty-two and sedentary.
He's had a family. Here
in Broken Hill, he's
the wise Englishman
who knows everything, but
how to avoid beer-halls
and dice. He's got a pension
out of narrowing arteries
for church dinners and
a hostel bed. One morning
he took me for a walk,
showed me a little wound
and told me of his children.
Behind a church, he turned
his pockets out. They were full
of cuttings from the past.

When I look through my most recent, collection, *Two Notes for Home*, I can see myself in the process of leaving Hamburg after more than thirty years to return to a much-changed Ireland. It is a journey of discovery. In Hamburg I learned to speak – not just a new language but I felt I could speak my mind as an adult for the first time. It was exhilarating.

The Right to Speak

I'm not muddled nor am I without sleep when I say
I came to Hamburg in the eighties like a
half-baked alien full of mischief and light-headedness.

I'd wanted to slip in and out of my own ego – be
in a storybook – get lost and tangle about like
a fistful of feathers in a vortex of my own making.

It was about discovery – no longing, no life. Shoots
pop up when you least expect. John Lennon said:
I was born in Liverpool but grew up in Hamburg...

I'm back on Home Ground and feeling free and positive in a much-changed Ireland.

Home Ground

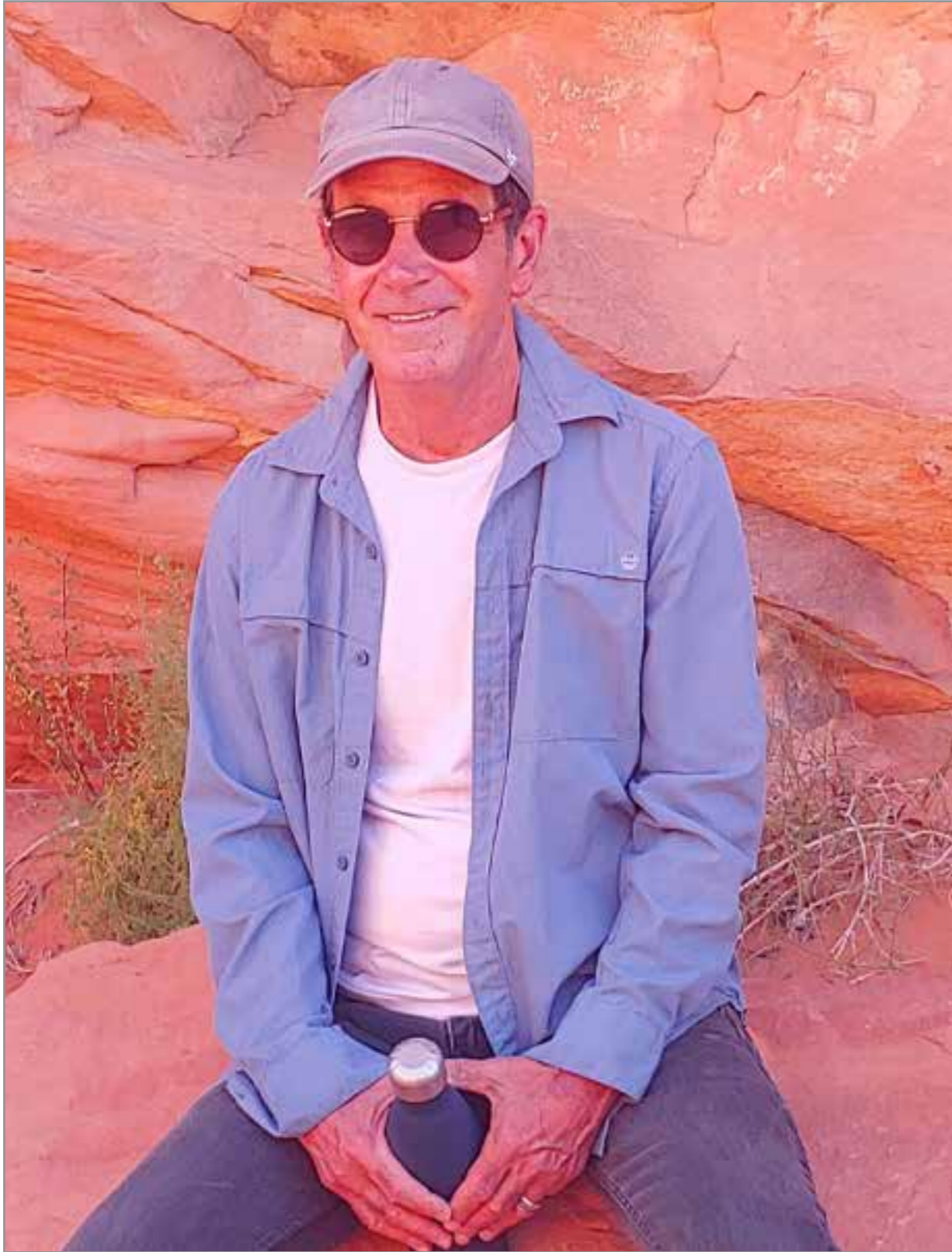
I'm back on home ground
where, these days, farmers
flaunt and preen in shorts
without fear of ridicule.
Daughters study Agriculture
and rock up on tractors while

partners and others drink carrot juice
or cappuccinos in convivial company
discussing wellness, bargains,
divorce options and good settlements.

It didn't used to be this way.
There were forms of incarceration
and torture that included
till death do us part, listening
to sermons on Sundays
or doing time in demon-black-bogs....

In this piece, I've tried to talk about language – about words, and I've only got words to say what I want to say. There is so much unspoken, suggested and expressed in music, body language – visual arts speak volumes but, here, I've only got words to have my say. Patrick Kavanagh said, "Poetry made me a sort of outcast and I became abnormally normal." I can only hope I will always be a little abnormal – as a poet around words like a biker on a street corner because I like to talk and need to talk – to write and write because I need to write.

Michael Hettich has published over a dozen books of poetry, the most recent of which, *The Halo of Bees: New and Selected Poems, 1990-2022*, published in May, 2023, won the Brockman-Campbell Award from the North Carolina Poetry Society. A new book, *The Poet Speaks*, a collection of his interviews with poets, is forthcoming from Hole in the Head Press. His awards include The Tampa Review Prize in Poetry, The Hudson-Fowler Prize, The Lena M. Shull Prize in Poetry and a Florida Book Award. He lives in Black Mountain, North Carolina.



THE PRAYER

Lost, driving through the night woods, though mist
that made the road almost
impossible to see,

you came to a break in the trees; the mist
opened to a meadow
where horses grazed

off in the darkness. You pulled yourself out
of the car, walked to the fence to sing
softly across the meadow, and felt

you were nothing at all but song: you seemed
to disappear into the smells of the grass
and breeze as the massive, almost invisible

creatures moved toward your voice
and outstretched hand through the darkness.

Michael Hettich

WEREWOLVES

Sometimes when I walk around the house singing
in my musical-theatre style
of willful jollity, my wife becomes annoyed,
as I would be annoyed if she did the same, which
she doesn't. So for a while I shut up
when I hear myself rising to the chorus of "Hello
Dolly," though before long, despite
my best intentions, I forget myself and start
singing that old chestnut I just heard at the supermarket.
In truth, most of what I do or think
is at least half unconscious. I rarely notice
the owl swooping silently across our back yard
to grab the squirrel as I doze and read my book.
Deer step from the woods into the sun
of our garden unnoticed, until I yawn
and they run off in a blur. Even then I'm half-asleep.
When my brother was deaf and living alone
in the apartment he died in, that looked out across
the Hudson to the Palisades, I decided I deserved
to sleep late, after all. I needed to let myself
relax and wake to a big old-style breakfast
instead of flying north to be with him a little while.
He loved watching seagulls and pigeons from his window
and he loved to converse, in his wild disjointed way,
with the neighbors in his building, though they mostly tried
to avoid him: he was lonely and wanted just to keep
talking on and on while they stood patiently
having to pee, or holding bags of groceries.
It was hard to understand what he was saying
about sailboats, stray cats, or waking with his brother
in the middle of a summer night, to walk across the cold grass
and look up at the full moon, hugging his older brother
to keep warm, and talking about werewolves.

RADIATION

A man and woman, not old but deeply
tired, walk down a basement hallway,
holding each other with breath and being,
both of them frightened, the woman in pain,
walking erect, as the nurse opens
a door, ushers them in, and asks
if they might need a blanket or a glass
of water—anything at all. She smiles
and begins to ask questions. As she writes,
she stops to look into the woman's eyes.
Then she leans out and gently touches the woman
on the arm, pats it softly, and smiles.
She looks right into this frightened woman's
face, whispers *be well*, and smiles
again, as the doctor walks in, nods
to them all, sits down, and begins to explain,
slowly, so they fully understand
what is to come, and how it will change things
in the short run and the long. Then he too
smiles and nods as they thank him, turns
and leads them back into the hall, and out
into the huge bright world, where they stand
blinking and dazed for a moment. Then
they get in their car and drive home.

Jonathan Cant is a Sydney-based writer, poet, and musician. He won the 2023 Banjo Paterson Writing Awards for Contemporary Poetry, was Longlisted for the 2023 Fish Poetry Prize, and the 2022 Flying Islands Poetry Manuscript Prize, Commended in the W. B. Yeats Poetry Prize, Highly Commended in the South Coast Writers Centre Poetry Awards, and twice selected for the Ros Spencer Anthology *Brushstrokes*. Jonathan's poems have appeared in *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Otoliths*, and Booranga Writers' Centre's *fourW thirty-four*.



PLOVER

You're the warbird from my youth.
Phantom-faced you graced
the grassy fields and wastes,
black and white and yellow tipped,
taupe torpedo from above,
armoured beak and mid-wing spur,
machine-gun shriek and for your
fragile, freckled eggs,
the fiercest kind of love.

Jonathan Cant

THE SIREN

after The Bridge by Hart Crane

The Sea Cliff Bridge rises from the Pacific Ocean
like the tentacle of a giant kraken caressing the contours
of the Illawarra coast. She's no creature of Nature,
but rather the result of necessity, engineered by mortal

grand design. Deco in her elegance, yet Jetson-esque
in her audacity. Like a lovestruck seafarer, my eyes,
ears, and heart crane upwards from the wave-smashed
rocks to hear her siren song, the ode of a road—stilettoed—

along the foreshore. Six hundred and sixty-six serpentine
metres long, she towers like a leggy supermodel—this striding
autostrada—with her smooth, cantilevered curves. Function
and form are wed as she hugs the terrain and transports

her visitors. At the edge of the tidal rock shelf, tourists take
happy snaps with her in the gaps between rogue waves. Perfectly
posed, she stars in car ads. Cameras zoom in to show the smug
faces of drivers who nod like know-alls who've purchased well.

*

From up on the bridge, I hear the siren wail its way down
the coast. Getting closer. Louder. Higher pitched. Then the
Doppler shift as the ambulance passes. It stops at the top
of the walkway. A small group has gathered on a disused road

at the foot of the cliff. A policeman examines something
on the ground behind the bushes. He shakes his head and
signals to paramedics by dragging his hand across his throat.
The stretcher is casually removed from the ambulance.

Forty metres above, backpackers and influencers continue
their quest for the best angle of the view below. They vie
for the riskiest-looking spot and that money shot to blow
their followers away. Websites say this is the region's

most popular photo op. How-to tips guide the curious—
like moths to a flame or Internet fame—up a steep, hidden,
overgrown path to reach Immortality. Or Death by Selfie.
Beauty and Vanity, we're all just dying to meet You.

Ian Watson is originally from Belfast but lives in Bremen, Germany. He is the author of two poetry collections in English, the latest being *Granny's Interpreter* (Salmon Poetry 2016); a further collection, *Somewhere, Far Away, a Radio*, is forthcoming. His recent German-language non-fiction includes *Spielfelder: eine Fußballmigration*, on football and identity, and *Bremen erlesen*, a literary and cultural guide to his second-home city in Germany (both with Edition Falkenberg). He also publishes translations of poetry from and into German and English. He has worked regularly for radio and also made the film *Cool to be Celtic* for German and French television (arte 1999). He is a steering committee member of the Literaturhaus Bremen. Bremen is now a UNESCO City of Literature.



EISVOGEL

Jogging in July, we pause to cool and take a breather
on a bridge on the tiny winding Wümme.
Look, cries Jürgen, *Schnell! Eisvogel!*
I hurtle to the parapet, smack knuckle on brick,

and in a shutter click it's gone:
a multicoloured laser ball with a dagger beak,
an iridescent heartbeat streak –
under the bridge and out the other side.

Why *ice*? It's *eisan*, an old word for *gleam*;
a shimmer bird in red iron and cobalt –
that tiny flying jewel, that burning day.

Ian Watson

HALFWAY HOUSE

Who wouldn't want to glide like cranes in the fall?
The long flat take-off, the slapped runway splashing;
they rise from their fenland hotel and sail
wide-winged in unison, stately and strong.
Four thousand clicks from Helsinki to Tunis,
two hundred miles a day.

Our German marshes are but a staging post,
where they meet to rest and chatter and argue;
feeding, breeding, gossiping, sleeping.
They dance into love, act out disputes,
shrieking and flapping in the stubble fields.
For a while we feel they belong to us.

We watch entranced at a distance
till the shimmering spectacle takes to the air,
when the time arrives and the journey south
beckons and pulls them out to the flightpath
beyond the marshes and the river mouth
on the age-old routes to their warm sandy winter.

They rise in hundreds and squawk out their blessing:
Au revoir! Good luck! Long life!

SHALLOW WATERS

1

The oystercatchers
smell lunch on the turn-tide shore:
a school of whitebait.

They shimmer silver
like pennies on the surface.
A cormorant dives.

A coven of gulls,
attracted by the flutter,
swoop and dive, then grab.

Stuka lightning strike,
bursts of thrashing silver fish:
frenzy of tern feed.

2

On the fine white strand
like blue ink-stroke initials:
shreds of nylon rope.

Rainbows on the sand
that the child pokes with her stick:
just sky earthed in oil.

Exploring for crabs
in the unruffled rock pool,
I descry your face.

Outmanoeuvred by
surf, I snap for breath like those
thrashing silver fish.

Michael Minassian lives with his wife in New England. He is a Contributing Editor for Verse-Virtual, an online poetry journal. His poetry collections *Time is Not a River*, *Morning Calm*, and *A Matter of Timing* as well as a chapbook, *Jack Pays a Visit*, are all available on Amazon. For more information: <https://michaelminassian.com>



Michael Minassian

THE MORNING AFTER

I woke up alone
one cold morning.

On days like this
even when there is no wind
there is wind.

Writing a long poem
with short words,
it rusts on my tongue
like derelict cars.

Checking the index
for archaic terms,
several stanzas ensue:
abandoned, forgotten,
or indecipherable,
reaching for something Biblical,
stumbling over myths
and superstition,
serpents and angels.

Gods hidden by clouds and fear—
the metaphor of the garden
and forbidden fruit

I wonder why it is that
knowledge was forbidden.

What can you say about innocence
when there's nothing to compare it with?

One day you think you know
the answers to your questions,
the next day you're kicked
out of Paradise.

THE TRAVEL AGENT'S POSTER

Last night, I walked along Main Street
past boarded-up store fronts
and abandoned shops,
and paused at the travel agent,
the one who closed for good.

In the window hung a poster
of Botticelli's Venus.

She was still on the clamshell
covering one breast
and her pubic bone
with strands of her hair.

I suppose the poster
meant to evoke Italy
and new beginnings.

But Venus looks pensive, even sad,
caught by surprise by the winds,
two blustery figures with wings
(never a good sign)
and a woman offering a cloak
covered with flowers
resembling spiders.

No wonder Venus looks down
and away, as if she knew
how beauty could be stolen,
how winter always crushes spring.

EVEN IN SILENCE

There's a quiet noise
inside silence,
an architecture of sound.

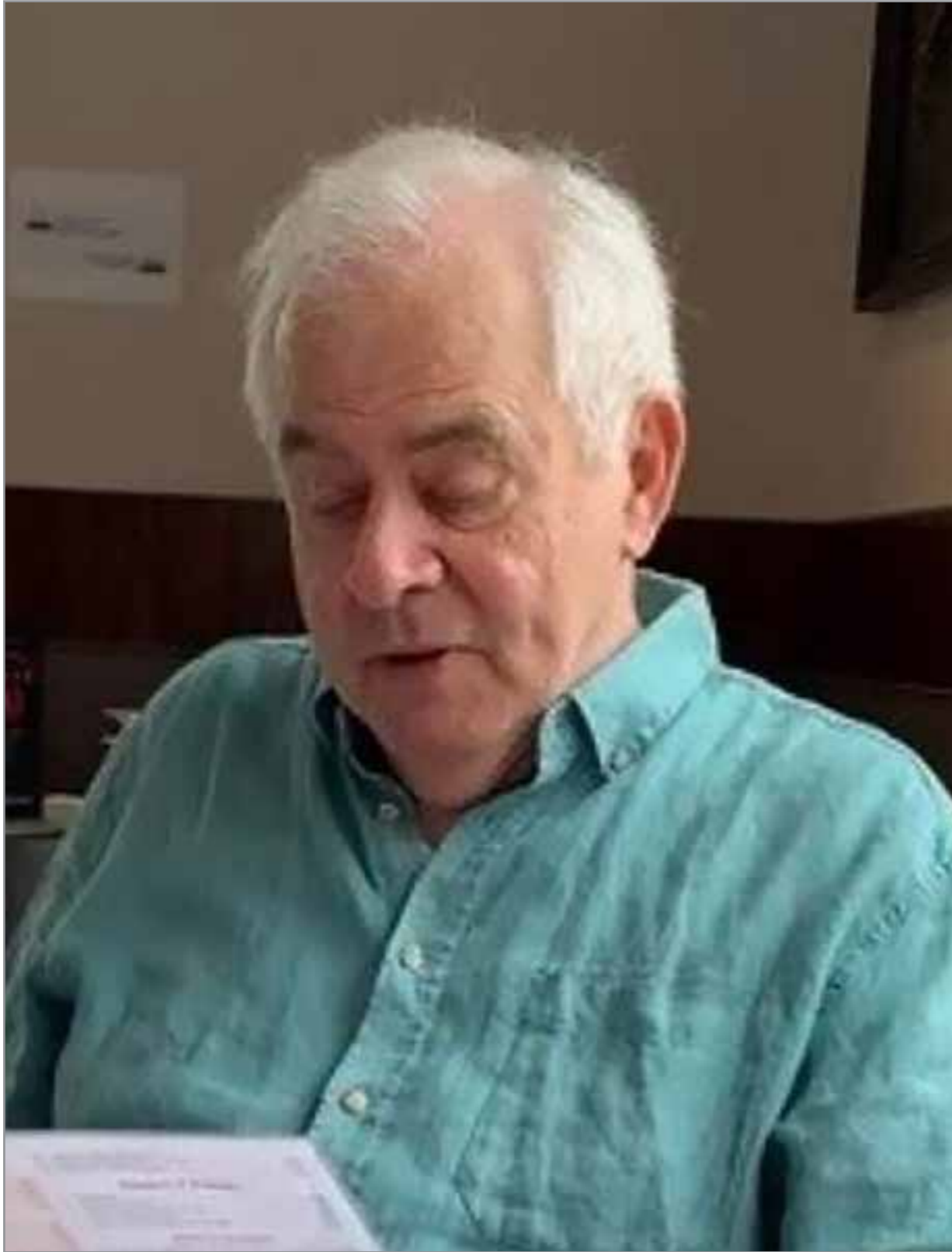
The trees in the woods
nod their leafy branches
as if every word I speak

is in a language
we both can understand—
that and the wind.

Sometimes in a knot of wood
you can see a face,
a mouth about to flutter

like eyelashes on a fawn—
a moth's wings on fire
light fading, then gone.

Richard W. Halperin holds dual U.S-Irish nationality and lives in Paris. His poetry is published by Salmon/Cliffs of Moher (four collections) and by Lapwing/Belfast (sixteen shorter collections). In Autumn 2024, Salmon will bring out *Selected & New Poems*, Introduction by Joseph Woods.



BEIGE BEACH

A watercolour and collage
'Barrow Harbour, Co. Kerry'
by Mona Lawless.

The sand is beige.
The sea is beige.
The rocks are beige.
The washed-up seaweed is beige.

The light is grey.

The low hills
which encircle the harbour
are brown
but thanks to the artist

they seem dark beige
which takes some of the terror off them.

Richard W. Halperin. Photo credit: Bertrand A.

BEAUTIFUL ARTISTS

Arleen Auger singing Mozart under Bernstein.
Bernstein was always at his best in Mozart.
Vivien Leigh as the tubercular wife in
Chekhov's *Ivanov*. She spoiled every other
stage performance I have ever seen.

Beautiful artists. Some of them sign one's soul.

WHERE HOME IS

A bell struck once, which summons people
from their houses to assemble in a public place
in hopes of something marvellous: *ekklésia*.

Then the bell – copper? iron? – is struck
again and the assembly disperses.
I disperse, something leading me lightly –

as in *Sailing to Hokkaido* by Joseph Woods –
to what, if it ever was attached, can only be
thought of as sadly, lightly. Where home is.

TELLER OF STORIES

Am I really a teller of stories?
I have come to think that I am,
because any poem is a story.
Every poem begins 'And now,
my best beloved.' A poem
can be a question, since
questions are stories, as in
Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's
'What Happened Next?'
in *The Map of the World*.
'An' or 'the' can be a story.
If one is alone and the wind
is blowing outside and one
is so afraid one cannot breathe,
'And now, my best beloved, the'
is a very good story.

IN MEMORY

I have come to think that it is odd
to put 'in memory' after the name
of someone departed. Memory is
different from the past and has nothing
to do with the past. Love is memory.
The face of Garbo in so many films
is memory. Lakes are memory and here
they are. Did I do wrong by putting
'in memory' in some of my poems?
I don't know, and not knowing is part
of memory. Outside the kitchen window
a deer in the garden. I look at it,
it looks at me or at something else.
That also is memory.

THE OUTLINE OF A LEAF

By a neighbourhood bus stop: the outline of a leaf imprinted on the surface of the footpath, obviously by the leaf itself over time. Dark grey against the lighter grey. How long did the leaf lay there before it blew away? Why only the outline and not the imprint of the whole leaf? A strange osmosis. Why only one leaf, on a street in which there are always dead leaves blowing about? When one sees an outline – a triangle or a square, for example, on a piece of paper – *is there a content?* Nothing does not exist. In this case, the memory of the leaf that was. Its veins, its colours, its solidity. And its weight. It had to have weight to fall in the first place and to stick for a while. Did the outline help the footpath remember the leaf? I don't think footpaths need help remembering. Nor do I, my dear, in remembering you.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Dr Arthur Broomfield is a poet, short story writer and Beckett scholar from County Laois, Ireland. His current collection is *At Home in Ireland : new and selected poem*. Arthur is Poetry Ireland Poet Laureate of Mountmellick.



AFTER FRANCIS BACON'S PARTY ON CROMWELL PLACE, THE CRUCIFIXION, AND OTHERS.

The was and will be hovers
over the night of the last rave,
shapes dots and semi-colons,
warmed to waves, into blood-red lipstick,
boot polish for the hair,
the collar and tie of the conformed.

Your dots waltzed round the walls of Jericho,
and saved the harlot, her hall door
marked by a hanging thread.

In a flash you'll show among them,
a species plant on garden leave,
flesh dancing to the beat
of a found poem.

Hot to primrose posies and dewy May,
holiday brochures, Torquay, San Tropez,
bikinis and tattoos,
swallows that fly north -
one shits on someone's head -
fast fading violets, hawthorn, blushing red,
the reaction of cattle born
for meat hooks in the Fall,
and blind to tones of cool blue greys
and the darker drapes,
coordinates to your robes
for the moonless nights,

Dr. Arthur Broomfield

continued overleaf...

the children of Rahab -
the pipe smoking socialite.
her pal in pink and puce,
the corporeal bird
picking her ethereal hand,
she laid too long in
that sun-scorched little while,
the séance that huddles
round the chock-a-block bier,
wait for the roulette wheel
to brand the cursed names.

Among the stokers
who tend the embers,
here in the wastewash of the artist's
last dip, behind you,
you drag a chair.

In the death-drops of the snag's last stand,
they bathe, shave,
pay their toilet dues, frown
at the dowager maid
(you take it all down).
Flies in cloisters on an express train,
they hoist the black flag of denial.



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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Kate Maxwell grew up in the Australian bush. Now a city dweller, her interests include film, wine, and sleeping. Her work has been published and awarded in many Australian and International literary magazines such as *Cordite*, *Books Ireland*, and *The Galway Review*. She's published two anthologies: *Never Good at Maths* (2021) and *Down the Rabbit Hole* (2023). Find her at <https://kateswritingplace.com/>



WHAT I HARBOUR

The worst thing
 about living near the harbour
 if a first-world worst must be set
 against a backdrop of comfort
 and sparkling vista
 isn't the fat gutter rats
 that sometimes sneak across the road
 at midday, funk of seaweed
 and sewage on a humid day
 the timber rot, rust of bicycle
 chains, lack of parking, over-priced
 restaurants, or even the gloom
 of svelte black bats
 soaring from the botanical gardens
 at dusk to feed in wide fig trees.
 No. The worst thing
 about living near the harbour
 is that horrendous ship horn song
 of the 'Love Boat' chorus
 honking through a peaceful afternoon
 but thrilling the cocktail-holding crowds
 cruising out to sea, ready for
 their promised buffet feasts
 casinos and imagined serendipity.

Kate Maxwell

MAN BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN

In the old world
 when his breath seared strong
 yet not enough to burn
 a city he still wore skin bled crimson
 for his pain and walked among us.

Now in times uncertain
 emerald eye scouring all
 he rolls a boulder—huge, hermetic—
 cross the entrance to his mountain
 lair claws atop his hoard

of gleam and glory exhales
 a final smoky sigh sweeps third eye-lid
 clean of glint and shimmer
 before he takes his rest.
 Servants stationed at the gates

to warn of any fortress breach
 while outside
 storms and mortal howls
 become mere whispers on the breeze
 he's trapped inside

his vast and air-conditioned halls.
 Eyes closed tight he still sees
 moves through memory well-paid soldiers
 fortifying loopholes
 sealing tunnels watertight

with labyrinths of legal machinations
 all to preserve his mythological
 might for, there's always some
 deluded knight who tries to wake
 the sleeping giant.

But legends don't lose sleep
 over casual incineration.
 Outside we warm work-hardened
 hands around small fires
 share tales of struggle

 dark days of need
 and wish for saviours.
 His power—wings that span our world
 in shadows—could build restore
 and yet he reaps and reaps.

Michael Durack lives in County Tipperary, Ireland. His poems have appeared in a wide range of publications in Ireland and abroad as well as airing on local and national radio. He is the author of a memoir in prose and poems, *Saved to Memory: Lost to View* (2016) and three poetry collections, *Where It Began* (2017), *Flip Sides* (2020) and *This Deluge of Words* (2023) published by Revival Press.



SECOND PLACE

Someone must settle for second place,
be considered first loser or best of the rest.
Losing with honour is surely no disgrace.

At the final whistle or the end of the race
so many dreams of glory gone west.
Someone must settle for second place.

Hide your disappointment behind a poker face,
step on the podium serene and self-possessed.
Losing with honour is surely no disgrace.

You can accept defeat, go and embrace
your fate or make your heartbreak manifest
but someone must settle for second place.

We can't all be champions, all be ace;
without the runners-up there's no contest.
Losing with honour is surely no disgrace.

So relish the taking part, the giving chase.
Don't hang your head, go puff out your chest.
Someone must settle for second place.
Losing with honour is surely no disgrace.

Michael Durack

FIVE DAYS IN NOVEMBER

The Grim Reaper working overtime.
 Fresh from mowing down Robert Stroud,
 pimp, psychopath and ornithologist, his final sentence
 served in a medical centre in Springfield, Missouri,
 he harvests the scholar, lay theologian, novelist
 and chronicler of Narnia, C.S. Lewis
 in his Oxford home amid the Dreaming Spires;
 before summoning Aldous Huxley, philosopher and pacifist,
 conducting him with the aid of an LSD shot
 to his Brave New World of the afterlife.
 Dallas, Texas also on the itinerary where war hero, senator
 and charismatic president John Fitzgerald Kennedy
 swings into the sights of an assassin's rifle on Dealey Plaza.
 Damage collateral, J.D. Tippit, patrolman and war veteran
 targeted at a junction on North Patton Avenue.
 The assassin Oswald, ex-marine, factory worker,
 kinsman of Theodore Roosevelt and Robert E. Lee,
 agitator/patsy. in turn, snuffed out by a handgun point blank.

The Brits by tradition tardy in dispensing with their dead
 but in America a busy Monday for pastors and funeral directors
 committing those mortal remains to dust
 with varying degrees of pomp and circumspection.
 The Birdman of Alcatraz unfussily planted in Metropolis, Illinois,
 Tippit accompanied by police outriders and TV cameras
 to a place of honour at Laurel Land Memorial Park.
 Lee Harvey Oswald smuggled into a Fort Worth cemetery,
 a reluctant pastor mouthing reluctant prayers
 and pressmen doubling as grudging pallbearers.
 A horse-drawn caisson carried Kennedy to The Capitol
 a Cardinal led his Requiem Mass; at the graveside
 Irish cadets performed their Queen Anne Drill
 in Arlington, Virginia where his flame still burns eternal.

LIGHTFOOT DRIFTERS

in memory of Gordon Lightfoot

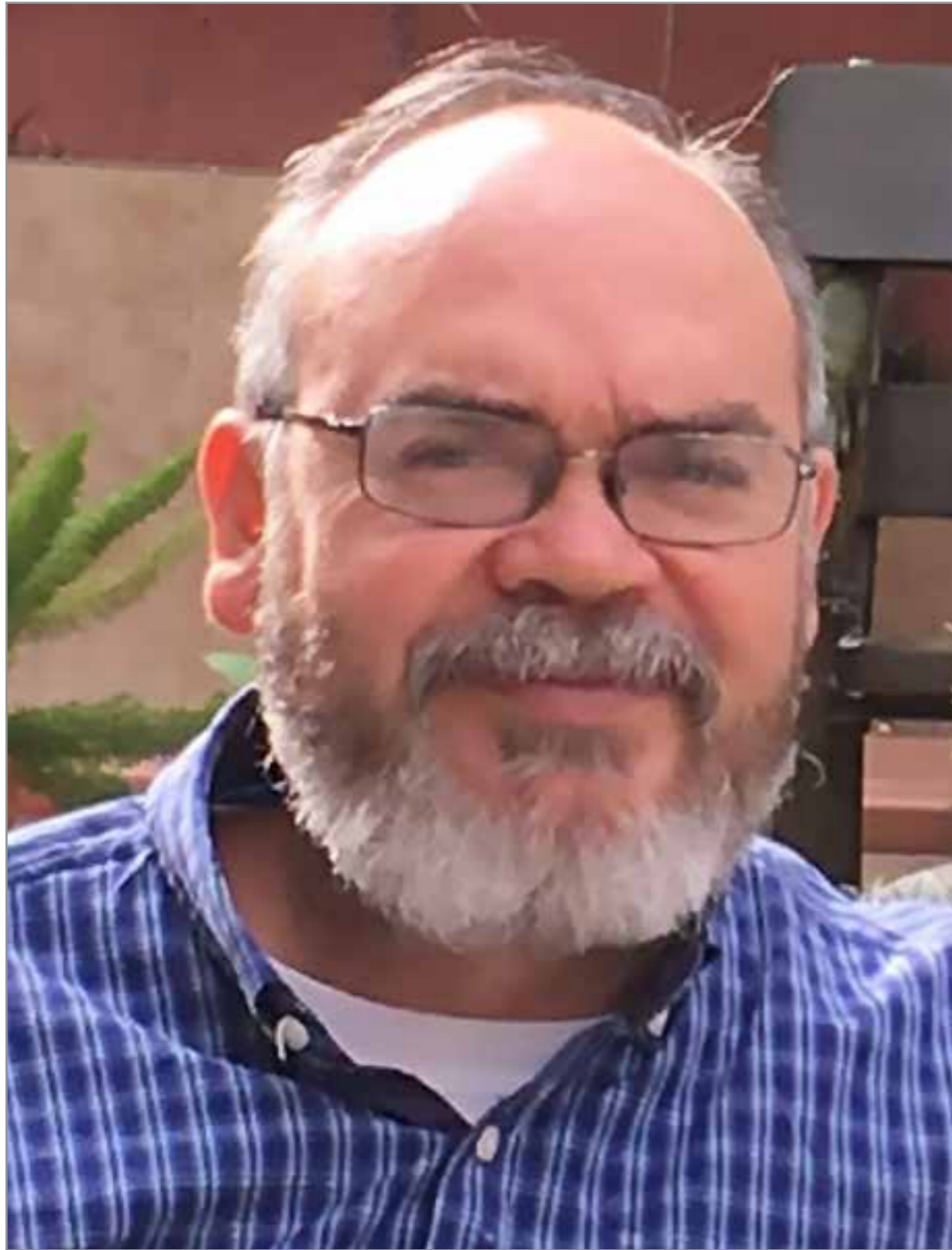
Footloose but heavy-hearted,
 those Lightfoot drifters down on their luck,
 the homesick, the lovesick, the gamblers, the forsaken.

A washed-up minstrel on the hard shoulder
 in Boulder, Colorado (ten degrees and getting colder).
 A Go-Go dancer in love with someone who doesn't care,
 alone upon the sidewalks of despair.

A hitchhiker on the West Coast
 (from California to the Oregon border),
 aching for love in North Ontario;
 a broken heart seven hours in a seven-Pullman train
 seeking oblivion in a cabin among the pines,
 sixteen miles from Seven Lakes.

By broad highways and big steel rails,
 snowed under or airport-grounded,
 on winter nights and in early morning rain,
 Lightfoot drifters, the world on their shoulders.

Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozábal, born in Mexico, lives in California and works in Los Angeles in the mental health field. He is the author of *Raw Materials* (Pygmy Forest Press), *Before and Well After Midnight* (Deadbeat Press), *Peering into the Sun* (Poet's Democracy), *Songs for Oblivion* (Alternating Current Press/Propaganda Press), and *Make the Water Laugh* (Rogue Wolf Press). Kendra Steiner Editions has published 8 of his chapbooks, the latest one, *Make the Light Mine*. Luis graduated from Cal Poly Pomona, earning a degree in Finance, Real Estate, and Law. He earned his Master's degree in Public Administration from Cal State Northridge University.



Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozábal

THE DEAD RETURN

The dead return
to reason with us.
Like them we are,
living in sadness.

Years and blood lost
in houses we
grew up in, where
stars shine above.

Nothing happens
in parks, in streets
filled with loss and
anxious days.

Children we are
who never grew to
our potential.
Lost in a war

of oblivion,
of fractured lives.
The dead return
with a message.

We are like them,
always struggling,
intoxicated
with tears and pain.

Life retreats within.
The dead return
to take us where
silence awaits.

TRUTHFULLY

I make the street my friend.
I strike up a conversation
with the lamppost. Truthfully,
it is all small talk, nonsense
really, but the closer I get to
it, the larger is our friendship.
I like the lamppost's light,
the moths that find their way
to its warm light, I like them too.
If I was a moth, I would turn
to its light as well. It is its small
talk I find so intoxicating. In
the street, I move my feet with
purpose. Mostly, I go to speak
to the lamppost which has become
my best friend. It is always kind
to me. It is such a good listener.
Truthfully, I have no one else to
confide in. I am forced to lie to
doctors, who only want to prescribe
medication for madness, which is
what they have diagnosed me with.

TO POETRY

I sought you out.
I called your name.
On a winter's night
I felt your cold touch.
I heard all your voices,
your words of silence.
I saw you in the street.
I shivered that night.
Suddenly, there were
fires that aroused me.
I was home alone.
You called out to me.
You were faceless.

I called you poetry.
That was your name.
You took my eyes.
You took my soul.
You gave me fever.
I was all alone.
I started to burn.
I wrote something
I felt was pure.
It was absurdity.
It lacked wisdom.
I know nothing.
I saw you as a bird.
You ruled the skies
and all the planets.
I felt you pulsing through
my veins. Your pierced
my heart. I felt the fire.
I shivered that night.
I felt so small.
I was so drunk.
The constellations
and my words became
a mystery. I fell
into the abyss.
My head was spinning.
You pierced my heart.

Joe Kidd is a working, award winning, poet/songwriter from Detroit. In 2020, published *The Invisible Waterhole*, a collection of spiritual and sensual verse. Awarded by the Michigan Governor's Office and the United States House of Representatives. Joe is the current Beat Poet Laureate State of Michigan, and Official Poet of the Government of Birland North Africa. He holds an Honorary Doctorate from International Union Peace Federation. With partner Sheila Burke he has toured Europe, North America, & Caribbean Islands, featured in international anthologies, magazines, websites, festivals with personal appearances in 33 states and 14 countries. Joe is a member of National & International Beat Poet Foundation, 100 Thousand Poets For Change, Society of Classical Poets, Michigan Rock & Roll Legends Hall Of Fame, much more. Author Page: <https://www.amazon.com/Joe-Kidd/e/B089QYDXSM>
Face Book Page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063704010587> Official Website: www.joekiddandshelaburke.com



LOVE

Even when its hard to love, love with all that you might render
for this is what the world will see when you are no longer
hear to speak of all the love you had to share
but held within despite the pain of carrying such a burden alone
with all beloved souls aligned and caressing a common grief.

Born to grow with a heart of gold and diamonds that fall
from ruby lips, given every treasured smile, every accolade and praise
until a tear became a flood to wash away the haunting fear
that someone may not wish to hear the sound of love between
two worlds.

A castle filled with silver tongues beyond the limits of naked eyes
beneath the roar of glorious fury, thoughts erupting and spilling out
into the molten mind of destiny, a hand that clutches all that moves
and dwells upon volcanic soil to breed and sing and disappear.

Let it be to happen in peace, this fate awaits all men of honor
to clear the path and plant the seed for a future that blindly
follows suit, and remember every act that never happened
all the words that could not be spoken, then love them all
as the book is written the pages turned and the cover closed.

The blood that flows into the chalice, the sacrifice that all
surrender, its value in a limitless realm is all the proof
that nature needs to find its twin, the super child that lies within
the mirrored shade of one who knows beyond all faith and all belief
when flesh and bone falls and the spirit calls, it is love that will rise
to answer all.

Joe Kidd

Momen Samir (1975) is an Egyptian poet and writer, belonging to the modern Egyptian poetry generation of the nineties. He has published 34 books encompassing poetry, theater, critical articles, translations, and autobiographies.

Translated from Arabic by Dr. Salwa Gouda. She is an Egyptian literary translator, critic, and academic at the English Language and Literature Department at Ain-Shams University. She holds a PhD in English literature and criticism. She received her education at Ain-Shams University and California State University in San Bernardino. She has published several academic books, including "Lectures in English Poetry, and "Introduction to Modern Literary Criticism" and others. She has also contributed to the translation of "The Arab Encyclopedia for Pioneers," which includes poets and their poetry, philosophers, historians, and men of letters, under the supervision of UNESCO. Additionally, her poetry translations have been published in various international magazines.



TWO GODS OF SILENCE

The hefty building guard
 Has been wandering a lot these days...
 We say he sketches the face of his kind hero
 As he records our tales,
 And we say our tales burden his dreams like stones...
 As for the other, he is my father...
 The guardian of our passage's souls
 And our fading voices
 Who has returned to wander a lot
 In his image on the wall...
 Perhaps the enigma in his gaze
 Suggests that he has finally captured
 A skilled storyteller...
 And perhaps the tales
 After losing their age
 Do not wish to be recounted...

Momen Samir

CLOUDS ON THE TRAIN WINDOW

They are not just severed arms
It is a smell that used to walk in her body
And dig channels and canals
And hunt the sun with precision of a finger
It is not just a carpet
It is a profound embrace
The princess wrapped herself in
After the last trap
We are not just dolls
We are shadows
We are stories.



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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Abdul Rahman Maqlad (1986) is an Egyptian poet and journalist. He published five poetry collections. Moreover, he won several poetry awards, most notably the State Award in Poetry. He also participated in poetry events in Egypt and abroad.

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MARIA

What if, Maria,
 You were the ruler of this universe
 You chose "the doll" as the commander
 And "the fish" in charge of the navy forces
 And "the puppeteers" the head of the guard
 And "the frog" as the war marshal
 What if you gave the soldiers bead rifles
 And we played cosmic games
 Here in the room
 And led the battle
 We threw towards the enemies
 Gum grenades
 And water bullets
 And we pushed "the duck" to the front line
 And the paper plane flock fell
 What if the enemies surrendered
 And gave up
 And we fell when they returned the ball
 We held our breath
 And laughed quietly
 So they could celebrate the victory
 And the constant sadness
 In your father's heart would break.

Abdul Rahman Maqlad

continued overleaf...

If you were the ruler of the universe
 And called out the poets from the window
 So we could all join in the celebration
 And the room filled with song
 For instance
 We would hear Al-Mutanabbi's
 Verses of praise in your eyes
 And Rimbaud would bless
 Your joyful vessel
 Baudelaire would comfort us with
 A different bouquet of flowers
 What if, my sweet girl
 This happiness never ended
 And I stayed strong and healthy
 Inside the house
 For the days to come
 I didn't step out to face harsh glances
 Nor the rushing carriages
 What if the room became my entire world
 And I waited for death for the longest time
 Just to keep watching you
 And play with the strands of your yellow hair
 I run like a cat
 Imitate the sounds of the rooster
 I hug your doll
 And complain to her
 And lament
 And set a trap
 I fall like a disappointed hunter in it
 And never learn each time.



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Basheer Refat (1972) is an Egyptian poet and translator. He obtained a Doctorate in Modern Arabic Literature and Criticism in 2013. He has published six collections of poetry. He also translated and published selections of poetry by the American poet (Mark Strand). He received many international and local awards, most notably the "Innovators" Award from the Emirates 2004, and the Egyptian Writers Union Award in Poetry 2018.

Translated from Arabic by Dr. Salwa Gouda. She is an Egyptian literary translator, critic, and academic at the English Language and Literature Department at Ain-Shams University. She holds a PhD in English literature and criticism. She received her education at Ain-Shams University and California State University in San Bernardino. She has published several academic books, including "Lectures in English Poetry, and "Introduction to Modern Literary Criticism" and others. She has also contributed to the translation of "The Arab Encyclopedia for Pioneers," which includes poets and their poetry, philosophers, historians, and men of letters, under the supervision of UNESCO. Additionally, her poetry translations have been published in various international magazines.



HEMINGWAY'S PLIGHT

He dreamed of being
 In the position of the old man
 So, he created the old man
 To teach him the lesson of age
 And the dream that grew
 For the sake of a valuable catch.

The old man taught him to be patient
 And to embrace the night
 To catch the sun.

The old man learned
 So he caught the fish
 And the teacher failed
 So he shot himself.

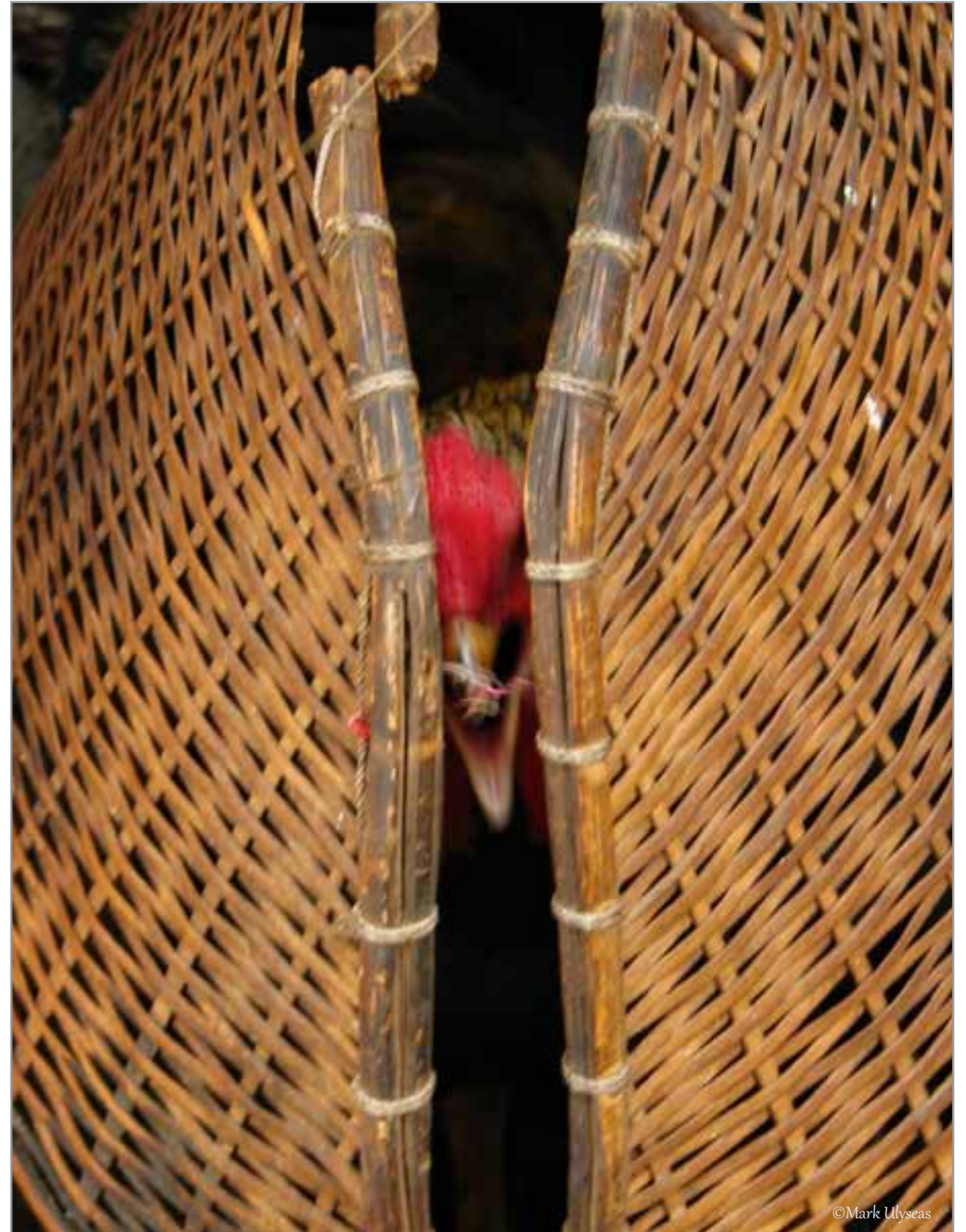
Basheer Refat

NOTHING IS INSIGNIFICANT

A small latch
Ensures the safety of the sleeping house
And the kernel thrown in the road
Is a date palm's seed in the unseen.

The bird
Doesn't build its nest on the ground
Or under the tree
But above it
To welcome the sun
Before it touches the soil
That's how it shapes its tomorrow from today
And makes a home for the sky from the straw.

Nothing is insignificant
The key that delves into your pocket
Is the sole master of the house
Allowing you to leave early
And return late
Or suddenly return
To discover a notable betrayal.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Abdel-Hakam Al-Allami (1962) is an Egyptian poet and critic who holds a doctorate in Arabic literature. He has published several collections of poetry and critical studies. Additionally, he is a winner of the Writers' Union Award in Literary Criticism and a member and founder of many literary circles.

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SOME TIME AGO

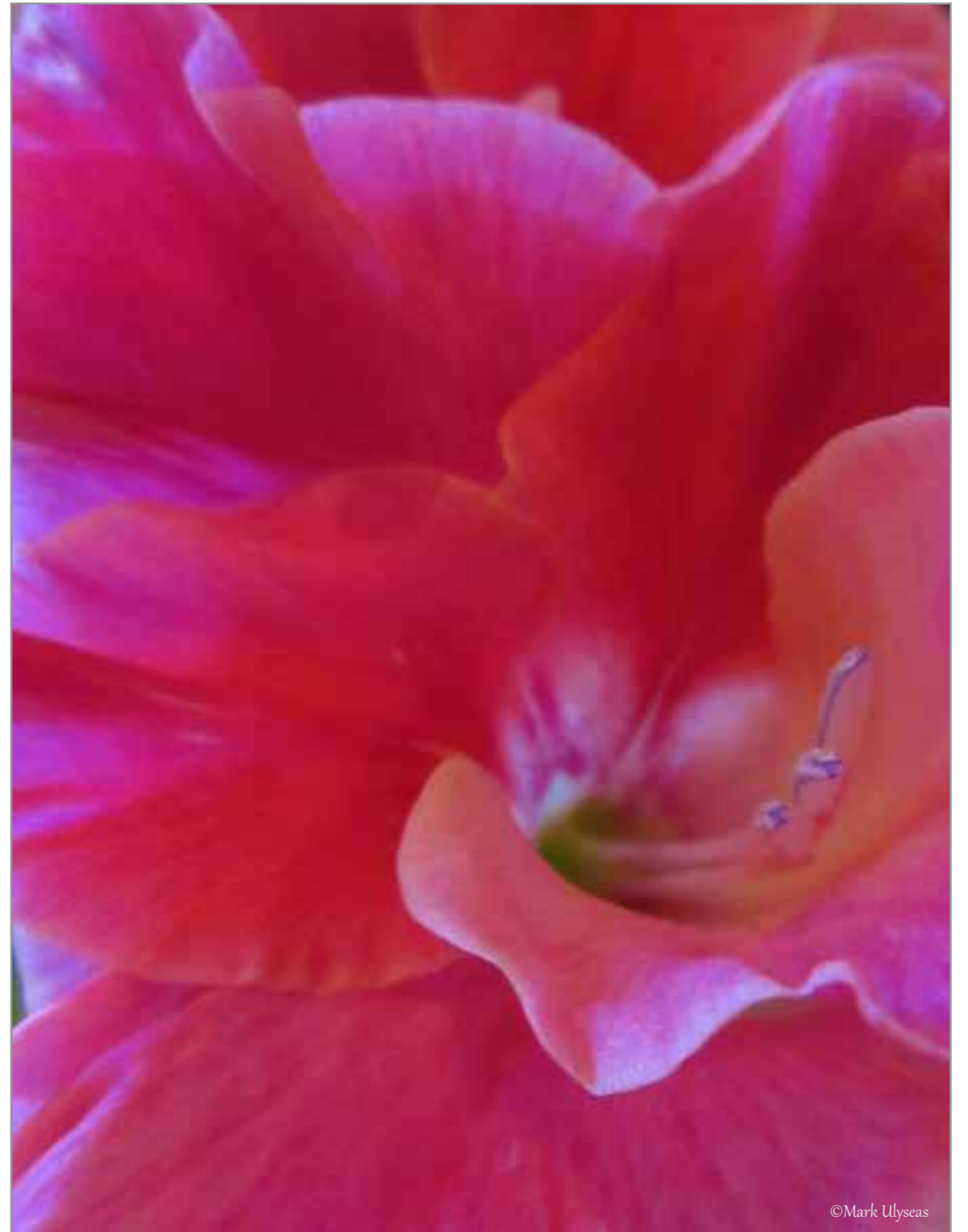
Listen!
 Since you arrived here
 You are stuck
 Dealing with
 The game of time:
 It slowly wears you down
 Steals your joy
 Disturbs your peace
 And plucks away
 Your cherished moments:
 One by one
 Leaving you
 In this state:
 A mere memory
 Unnoticed by the weeping
 Unfolding beyond
 The boundaries of companionship
 Leaving nothing
 But deserted farewells
 Left behind by mourners
 And remnants of memories
 Awaited by the birds
 While the crows circle above!
 Perhaps you need another perspective
 To break free from this standstill
 But...

Abdel-Hakam Al-Allami

continued overleaf...

I am here for you
For both times:
The one you're trapped in
And the one you seek
They are essentially
One and the same!
How could a time you thought
Was divided into two:
One against you
And the other
For you
Split in such a way?
Certainly not
You'll remain in this limbo
Between your illusions
And the stark reality
Until the last moment arrives!

So, take it easy
And I will grant you:
Adornment
And brilliance
And magnificence!
And for you, beyond
The toils!



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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Abdelaziz Gwaida (1961) is a well-known Egyptian poet. He has published more than twelve poetry collections and most of his works have been translated into English.

Translated from Arabic by Dr. Salwa Gouda. She is an Egyptian literary translator, critic, and academic at the English Language and Literature Department at Ain-Shams University. She holds a PhD in English literature and criticism. She received her education at Ain-Shams University and California State University in San Bernardino. She has published several academic books, including "Lectures in English Poetry, and "Introduction to Modern Literary Criticism" and others. She has also contributed to the translation of "The Arab Encyclopedia for Pioneers," which includes poets and their poetry, philosophers, historians, and men of letters, under the supervision of UNESCO. Additionally, her poetry translations have been published in various international magazines.



HALFWAY

I have lived hating halfway
 All my life
 And I have no middle
 I am an extreme lover
 And my love is impossible to stop
 Don't ask the flood in its revolutions
 How many bridges it demolished on the way here
 And how many it destroyed
 Don't ask the hurricane in its rotation
 What it shattered or broke when it swept
 What a pity!
 All my history is a series of compulsion
 All my days are filled with passion
 My death in your eyes was the greatest pursuit
 I fought wars and won them
 I won honor
 I am that Sufi starting my journey
 I am a lover but in a different way
 I am a monk praying
 In the shadow of my sanctuary
 So when I reach the pinnacle of love after the end
 My heart played...

Abdelaziz Gwaida

THIS IS A FAREWELL IN LOVE

I have lived hating halfway
All my life
And I have no middle
I am an extreme lover
And my love is impossible to stop
Don't ask the flood in its revolutions
How many bridges it demolished on the way here
And how many it destroyed
Don't ask the hurricane in its rotation
What it shattered or broke when it swept
What a pity!
All my history is a series of compulsion
All my days are filled with passion
My death in your eyes was the greatest pursuit
I fought wars and won them
I won honor
I am that Sufi starting my journey
I am a lover but in a different way
I am a monk praying
In the shadow of my sanctuary
So when I reach the pinnacle of love after the end
My heart played...

So direct your words towards them
In every single letter of the alphabet
Repeat and get lost in love like a parrot
The feelings of femininity always differ
And they can smell sincerity from miles away
She may follow someone for a time
And then exposes him
At any time if she wants
The knowledge of femininity is vast
But the allure of love can tempt the foolish
You who want to catch a gazelle
From a well of water
Wipe your tears and pay attention to me once
After praying for all the prophets
How many have been killed in the name of love
They did what you hoped to do
They were all killed without exception
Do not trust a gazelle in her love or hatred
And see here, because of her love
How many are drowning in the water.

2010 - 2024



POETRY & WRITING

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