Some of the participants outside the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation and Museum in Ramallah, Palestine, for the Mamilla International Poetry Festival (poems in English and Arabic languages) held in association with ARCH (Alliance to Restore Cultural Heritage in the Holy City of Jerusalem) Campaign to Preserve Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery (Photo: Maryvelma O’Neill). The cemetery’s name, Mamilla, may originate from zaytun al-milla, Arabic for ‘the olive trees of the religion’, or Ma’man Illah, What is from God, or perhaps Bab Illah (gate to God).

Participating poets came from many countries including Palestine, Jordan, Armenia, India, Ireland, Switzerland, England, Scotland, the USA, Egypt, Cyprus, Austria and Canada.

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Poems For Mamilla

The English Language Poems from The Mamilla International Poetry Festival, Ramallah, October 25-27, 2013

&

POEMS EXCHANGED, JANUARY, 2014

Compiled & edited by Seamus Cashman

An Otherworld Press Pamphlet
in association with ARCH
Above: Poster (design: Katéri O’Neil). Right: The domed Kabakiyya (1289) at Mamilla where prince ‘Ala’edīn al-Kabaki, a Mamluk military commander, was buried.
Below: Welcoming the poets to the Mahmoud Darwish Museum for the festival.
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The English Language Poems
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in association with ARCH
Festival Organisers
Mahmoud Darwish Foundation and Museum, Ramallah, Palestine
in association with ARCH (Alliance to Restore Cultural Heritage in the Holy City of Jerusalem)

Acknowledgment
The Mamilla International Poetry Festival at Ramallah in 2013, provided poets, writing in Arabic or in English, with an extended opportunity to participate in readings and literary discussion with poets from Palestine and from across the world. We received the warm welcome of Palestinian hospitality and shared in the support of the Festival organisers and administrators. We remembered Mamilla and all who bide there in poems read, in literary and cultural discussion; in making friendships and crossing boundaries. We absorbed the rhythms of Palestinian song and music, and tasted the fruits of the soil.
I am delighted to have facilitated this anthology of the English language poems from the Festival, and hope a companion publication of the Arabic poems will also come to fruition. SC.

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Preface
Maryvelma O’Neil, ARCH

Mamilla Cemetery is one of the oldest in the world, taking its name from the church and cemetery that were established at the end of the Byzantine era. Mamilla was then designated an Islamic burial site as early as the 7th century, when the remains of the very first Muslims—the Sahabah, companions of the Prophet Muhammad—were reputedly laid to rest in its sacred soil. Aside from a brief period as a Christian cemetery during the Crusades, Mamilla served as a Muslim burial ground without interruption over the course of a 1,400 year-period of Islamic rule over Jerusalem.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947) specified that “existing rights in respect of Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall not be denied or impaired,” and that “Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall be preserved. No act shall be permitted which may in any way impair their sacred character.”

Mamilla Cemetery, in West Jerusalem, has been encroached upon since 1948 by roads, buildings, parking lots and parks. Today only eight percent of its original surface area and five percent of the tombs remain. Although it has been tragically diminished, the cemetery stands out in Jerusalem, not only as a stirring symbol and remarkable vestige of Palestinian—and Muslim—religious and cultural heritage, but also as a demonstration of respect for Jerusalem’s shared heritage that must not be lost.

In 2004 the Simon Wiesenthal Centre initiated plans for the so-called “Center for Human Dignity – Museum of Tolerance,” with the support of the Israeli government. This has resulted in the
undignified disinterment and disposal of several hundred graves and human remains, the exact amount and whereabouts of which are currently unknown. This desecration, in breach of international law, has met with ongoing opposition spearheaded by the Campaign to Save Mamilla; it includes numerous rabbinic groups, distinguished archaeologists throughout the world and international NGOs. http://www.mamillacampaign.org/

In defense of Mamilla, ARCH joined with the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation and Museum in Ramallah to host a ground-breaking international poetry festival from 25-27 October 2013. We called forth poets from around the world to celebrate Mamilla in a dialogue with memory, both in English and in Arabic. Inspired by Seamus Heaney’s claim that every poet has double citizenship—one of locality, one of conscience—we also invited poets to reflect upon locality in order to explore universal themes that transcend geographical boundaries. These poems appear in Part I of this document.

Following the festival, jury member and poet, Seamus Cashman, invited the English-language poets to Mamilla to continue the dialogue initiated in Ramallah through a poetic exchange which the reader will find in Part II of this document.
PART I

A DIALOGUE WITH MEMORY

Poems
from the Mamilla International Poetry Festival
Walls
CRISTINA ARCHETTI

I’ve walked along paths of stone,
petrified veins across an ancient body
that embraces the horizon
and two seas.
I listened to the voices
of the walls I encountered
across valleys dug by ice
and scorched Middle Eastern plains.
Murmurs from the past
resounded with surprise
that anyone would want to listen
to long forgotten stories.
Mistrust and fear of otherness
still echoed in my head
when I crossed Alpine meadows
below a peak called Allalin.
There medieval churches
oriented towards Mecca
whispered in my ears
of lost trading routes,
salt, spices, silk and furs.
Beyond Teutonic forests
in dark now empty rooms
I could still hear cries,
see terror scraped on paint,
threaded along barbed wire.
The lava walls of Sicily
spoke of blood, water and sweat
spilled by Greeks, Saracens, Normans
who gave the land, each, a different name
—to the lizards, orange groves and stones
they sounded all the same.
When I crossed the Mediterranean waves
blinded by the white light of midday
I breathed the dusty pavements
I had ran on myself
just elsewhere
on bare feet.
On my way to Jerusalem
I climbed brown hills
that looked like Scottish moors
on a dry summer spell;
as I entered an old cemetery in ruins
only few words were left to tell.
If like a stone from a crumbling wall
I fall and rolling come to rest
in a place I have not chosen to be
don’t walk away but pick me up,
take me back where I belong
and stand with me.
What there is
For Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery
SEAMUS CASHMAN

If there is nothing to forget
what do stones remember?

When memory is drowning
who is calling out?

Whose voices murmur—leave us be?

Great are the oceans we ferried on...
And, see: the sands blow from our feet.

As the stars pierce the sky’s taut arc,
their lights foment into song.

We sing too.

Silence dilates its pores
to absorb and to leach.

Stone slabs autograph our apogee.
The hard ground embeds.
Here at Mamilla
(For Maryvelma & ARCH)
DebJani Chatterjee

This is a place of many messages
in tongues that salaam through the centuries.
Its memorials are so many tomes
striving for semi-immortality.
This space is owned by Ozymandias;
a timeless reminder that our heroes
are defaced statues, defunct postage stamps.
In this ancient land, it hovers between
past and present as a silent witness;
each grain of arid dust calls out to us,
the very air holds strange aspirations
surfacing with every breath and sunset
frees a cornucopia of spectres.

Rocked in sleep, St Mamilla’s worshippers,
the Prophet’s Sahabah, Sufis, soldiers
of Saladin, crusaders, high and low,
Lie equal in the rhythm of history.
This place preserves all dreams; here they survive
the onslaught of ages. This space reminds
that it is a sacred sanctuary
from time, that the dead are all around us,
outnumbering the living. Ignore them
now at your peril. If you drag it down
in desecration, however disguised,
it is still a violent thuggery,
domination-sanctioned vandalism.

So we come in homage to its story,
remember this place and live its lessons.
Christian and Muslim, who once briefly fought,
now lie like brothers in eternity.
Once proud names have mingled in Mamilla
and mellowed here in anonymity;
shorn of adornments, they meet our maker.
So, our salaams at this holy crossroads.
Our peace too depends on their middle ground.
Mamilla’s messages are yours and mine.
All its departed are our family;
passions abated, their dry bones bless us.
May they rest in peace here at Mamilla.

Shelley’s sonnet ‘Ozymandias’, inspired by an inscription on a
statue of Ramesses II, is about the inevitable decline of mighty
rulers and empires.
Mamilla Speaks
CARLOS ANDRÉS GÓMEZ

They scatter ash when they walk, fasten medals over their hearts and shroud each step with its own perfume. They tame dragons that take greedy bites of soil.

Mouthfuls, until my flesh is a gaping wound, a war-tattered quilt they leave like a dirty dish.

But I am still here. I am breathing beneath the piled concrete and wreckage. Beneath the whispers carved silent, I am still heaving, gasping towards a hot and familiar sun.

Thousands of hollow-named children still cry for my lullaby, their skeletons scattered like litter. Their spirits still wander the streets, huddle like razor wire in the shade closest to my walls. I am a defiant song that they hum just beneath the noses of soldiers who would kill them twice if they had the choice. But they are still here too. So I stretch out...
my arms from the shadows of trees as the dawn paints my form into the gravel of a new day.

I am an orphan waiting to be born again, to elders who are the youngest of my kin. I am waiting for this new life to begin. Where I might be birthed into a wading pool of calm. Relish the sweet taste of noon, my bones finally laid to rest. My story proudly unfolded like a map so that each of my children might trace the lines of my scars and return to my shelter, forever.
The Flesh will not Rise
by David Groulx

The flesh will not rise
the dead will remain
entombed
this
Uriel’s\(^1\) heap
is all that remains of me

My last breathe is food for Narakāsura\(^2\)
Tartarus\(^3\) will not
raise
its iron mouth
for me

Niflheim\(^4\) will
not reveal it’s
root
to my hands

Sheol\(^5\)
I will lay my
desire at
your deepest pit
your door of misery
Babo\(^6\)

---

1 An angel said to be “over the world and over Tartarus.”
   Enoch 20:2
2 Hindu. A monster.
3 In Greek mythology, the lowest hell, below Hades.
4 Norse mythology. Idea of hell.
5 Early Jewish mythology conception of an afterlife.
6 Bosnian for father.
The edacious hound
and the great gobbler\textsuperscript{7}
that gnar
that only Azrael’s\textsuperscript{8} touch
can sever what withers
what was and what will be
no more

\textit{Know that I too}
\textit{was once in love}
\textit{and was loved}
\textit{that I had hope}
\textit{and prayed}
\textit{the sunrise}

\textit{That I sang and}
\textit{danced}
\textit{drank the ale & lager}
\textit{and all life}
\textit{came to the god of nothing}

\textit{Know that I was}
\textit{young once}
\textit{and paraded}
\textit{like a peacock}
\textit{grew old}
\textit{grew wise}
\textit{and became foolish}
\textit{in my old age}\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7} Norse myth, Geri-Greedy and Freki-Gobbler; two wolves that sat at Odin’s feet
\textsuperscript{8} The angel of death in both the Jewish and Islamic religions
\textsuperscript{9} The narration is a philosophy based on the teachings of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, 341-270 BC.
Now
give to Mot\textsuperscript{10}
what is his

Now I become the earth
and am no more

\textit{II Dysphonias Catatonia}

Here I gather the dead
I kissed their faces
I light fires for them

look for los desaparecidos\textsuperscript{11}
the broken peace
and the days of fresh rain
and clay

the spring will bring
It’s corpses

\textsuperscript{10} Ancient Syrian god of death.
\textsuperscript{11} Spanish-“The disappeared ones”. In Argentina from 1976-83, thousands of people were abducted under the military led government; killed and secretly buried.
I name what is lost
my fire
leads away
what was living
my ashes sustain
the pale horse
and the pale rider\textsuperscript{12}

My
love
is forever

\textbf{III God Is A Machine}

\emph{Now you have given me Leah}
her mouth of the southern fish\textsuperscript{13}
She goes away
She goes away from me
and all of her become birds

I believe in a universe that is breathing
\textit{it is breathing}

The universe dreams you to me

pyrrhic devotion

beguiling is the tyranny of
God
His anger follows the poor across the world

\textsuperscript{12} Biblical, \textit{The book of Revelation}.
\textsuperscript{13} Alpha Piscis Austrini in the constellation Piscis Austrinus.
for what have they done
but been born
by his blood

Ahura Mazda\textsuperscript{14} adores the wicked
his fire pours on the weak
and the feeble

Here
we
the many
we, the abyss
food
for Machine

pile up the gauche clay of the klepht\textsuperscript{15}
Caiaphas\textsuperscript{16}
pile up
the hills of heaven

We cry
out
"The cranes of Ibycus!"\textsuperscript{17}
Come
come to us who are lonely

us
the ugly wretched republic
our emancipated bodies lying in

\textsuperscript{14} Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity in Zoroastrianism.
\textsuperscript{15} Greek outlaw, known for role in the Greek war of liberation 1821-29.
\textsuperscript{16} Jewish priest known for his role in the trial of Jesus Christ.
\textsuperscript{17} A reference to justice from the legend of the Greek poet Ibycus.
Long Kesh\textsuperscript{18} proved we loved our country
our miserable country
crooked and dammed
the unwashed hands of Saro-Wiwa\textsuperscript{19}
even now
we
swear to burst
break
we erupt
we relinquish nothing
Our vulgar
teeth
unbound

Now we will remember
Miklós Radnóti\textsuperscript{20}
Dennis Brutus\textsuperscript{21}
and God’s brutality to us

\textsuperscript{18} Her Majesty’s prison Maze where Bobby Sands & nine others died while on a hunger strike in 1981
\textsuperscript{19} Ken Saro-Wiwa, (1941-95) poet & novelist, executed by the Nigerian government.
\textsuperscript{20} Hungarian poet murdered by Hungarian National Socialists.
\textsuperscript{21} S. African poet,(1924-2009) imprisoned for his stand against apartheid.
Does the Land Remember Me?

In memory of Aziz Shihab

Persis Karim

Across the world a bullet
breaks open
the window of silence.
In your country, people hold their eyes
to keep back the endless tears
and the wind-blown dust
that sings the song
of never-forgetting.

In the groves of olives
your name will be spoken
and your spirit will fly
among branches to claim
what you left behind
in the ruins of war.

You will find the door your mother kissed
when you fled with nothing
but the iron skeleton key
hanging on the kitchen wall
in your home in Jerusalem.
Turn it in the keyhole, slowly,
until it clicks and opens the fragile
gates of yesterday.
Go climb the fig trees,
smell the wheat that pushes
itself through the cracked earth
and kiss the children who have grown
taller than you.

Your tired heart, broken
and soft from caring,
will never grow hard.

Sit down with the ghosts of your story
and sip your Arabic coffee.
Someone will read your fortune—
recite the beauty you’ve given.

And when you pass the old broom-maker
don’t forget to tip your red fez
and greet the woman who sells oranges
in the way you always do,
saying, “Hello, my friend!”
even if you buy nothing.

Don’t worry; the land will never forget
your hands or your story. And here
we will think of your smile
and always remember
Palestine.
Envoy to Palestine
YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA

I’ve come to this one grassy hill
in Ramallah, off Tokyo Street,
to place a few red anemones
& a sheaf of wheat on Darwish’s grave.
A borrowed line transported me beneath
a Babylonian moon & I found myself
lucky to have the shadow of a coat
as warmth, listening to a poet’s song
of Jerusalem, the hum of a red string
Caesar stole off Gilgamesh’s lute.
I know a prison of sunlight on the skin.
The land I come from they also dreamt
before they arrived in towering ships
battered by the hard Atlantic winds.
Crows followed me from my home.
My coyote heart is an old runagate
redskin, a noble savage, still Lakota,
& I knew the bow before the arch.
I feel the wildflowers, all the grasses
& insects singing to me. My sacred dead
is the dust of restless plains I come from,
& I love when it gets into my eyes & mouth
telling me of the roads behind & ahead.
I go back to broken treaties & smallpox,
the irony of barbed wire. Your envoy
could be a reprobate whose inheritance is no more than a swig of firewater.
The sun made a temple of the bones of my tribe. I know a dried-up riverbed & extinct animals live in your nightmares sharp as shark teeth from my mountains strung into this brave necklace around my neck. I hear Chief Standing Bear saying to Judge Dundy, “I am a man,” & now I know why I’d rather die a poet than a warrior, tattoo & tomahawk.
The Two Anis
*To the memory of Ara Nuyujukian*

LOLA KOUNDAKJIAN

On the table
Clay pieces from ancient ANI*

Waiting for centuries for Armenian hands
to gather them and bring them to these shores...

I hold them for the first time and lo’
News from afar

Another Ani stands orphaned and courageous.

* This was the capital of Armenia, around 1000 AD. It sits near
  the current Armenia/Turkish border. It is also used as a
  female personal name in modern Armenian. (English
  translation by the author. From *The Accidental Observer, 2011*)
Lost Song

Pippa Little

Mamilla, you hold your beloveds lightly,
sifted a thousand years by cypress shadow
in the chafe of nightfall,
stone islands weight us, wanderers
whose names you tell in multitude,
sung by the dusty grass in low sea-whispers –
here in the dusk and there, like small observatories,
Mamluk domes undim before ancestral stars –
in your nest we have been consoled,
frail as crane-flies our skulls that cannot bear light
or encroachment of morning’s
hate-scratches and bulldozers,
even our bone-music
rises like a praying
memorised by the wind.
lairs o mamilla
ANDREW McCALLUM

o their house nocht abides
buit the grummel o a breuken waa

o the mony wha war sib ti me
nocht abides – no even thon

buit in ma mynd nae stane is tint
this roupit toun is ma hert

Transliteration from the Scots

mamilla cemetery/resting-place

of their house nothing remains
except the rubble of a demolished wall

of the many who were my kindred*
nothing remains – not even that

but not a single gravestone is lost to my memory
this plundered settlement is my heart

*sib’ = (1) related by blood, of the same kindred or lineage; but also (2) bound by affection, familiarity or similar ties.
Tata Bahiyeh
For that generation
Lisa Suhair Majaj

Tata Bahiyeh was light
in the bones and older
than anyone: hands stained
with brown spots, flesh
so dry it folded
in ridges. Her touch
was like jasmine
flowering at night,
secret life slow
through the tough brown vine.

Bahiyeh loved apricots,
sun’s fruit, rivulets
sweet down her storied
skin. The pits she spat
in her palm were a promise,
not to be wasted. Cracked,
you could eat the firm
white heart within. Planted,
seed pledged to grow.

Bahiyeh was like all
the old ones, longing
for earth and the light
off Al-Aqsa, olive trees
rooted on hills — prayers
under breathing. Their eyes
were pathways, marked out
and empty: at least to be buried there, earth cradling bones in a final planting. Like all of them, she tucked packets of tissue-wrapped seeds (each with its story) in drawers, behind clocks, on shelves: to plant in the better time, insha’allah. Meanwhile, travelers eastward brought cuttings, sprigs in the luggage: olive and plum, bitter orange and sweet black grape.

* She didn’t want much in death, just a place to rest. She was lucky, had the papers, could cross. But when Bahiyeh died, the soldiers dumped her body without ceremony on the concrete floor, probed roughly into sheltered crevices
of her stiffened corpse.
They expected contraband,
money, munitions,
anything but death.
They found
what they should
have expected.
What light
remained in her bones
still beyond desecrating hands
shone hidden
and private.

*
When you look,
you find seeds, dusty
and shriveled,
brown shells fragile
like ancient bones.
You remember
how to lay kernels
in earth, pour water,
wait for the green
shoot thrusting,
amazed how seeds
harbor their light
within. Bahiyeh’s bones
lie buried in girlhood
soil. You watch for
that steady emanation
of light. You learn
how to wait
after planting.
From A Concordance of Leaves
(on the occasion of my sister’s wedding in Palestine)
PHILIP METRES

ورق

(& this is the cemetery, where the father
of his father’s father’s father’s father’s

father’s father’s father’s father’s father’s
buried, bodies marked by broken stone incisors

among neighbors we sip sage tea, maramia—
named after the mother of God—for sage slaked her

desert tongue & now a cousin comes, footfalls
white explosions of dust, from the mouth

of that abandoned quarry, its jurassic cranes
& rusted conveyers hauling nothing now:)
ورق

(sister soon you will be written
alongside your future

husband in the book of books
& though our father’s passport held aloft

will not stop the Sabra tank
from blocking the road

you will find another way
back & soon new sisters will inscribe

your body with henna
ink your feet & open your hands

32
ورق

( 
If to Bethlehem we must pass through Wadi Nar
( 
If your license plates are painted blue & black
( 
If your permit permits no passage across bypass highways
( 
If from a distance the road carves alephs or alifs
( 
If no man’s land is where men live who have no land
( 
If you lower your sunshield & block the hilltop settlement
( 
If Wadi Nar is the Valley of Fire
( 
If we must travel beneath the level of our eventual grave
( 
If we arrive & they ask how are you, we are to say thank God
ورق

(  
you my sister you my brother
outside the walls / in the wind
(  
if Aristophanes was right
& we walk the world
(  
in search of, a split-infinitive of to love, if two
(  
outside the walls / in the wind
should find in each other more
(  
than mirror, then we should sing
outside the walls / in the wind
(  
you my sister you my brother
that tree & stone may answer
(  
outside the walls / in the wind
& let our echo ring:
Cities
RALPH NAZARETH

My grandfather’s village is now a city.
My father’s village is nearly a town
and will soon turn into a city.
My children’s town will no doubt become a city
and when it does, it will be assumed into space
and there it will float
alongside other villages and towns turned cities,
peaceful and detached,
turning slowly to the sun,
then again slowly to the moon,
and our children will take little space walks
to visit one another, their relatives and forebears,
and the darkness will heal behind them
or the leeward light fuse in their shimmering wake
and they’ll talk about their own little pockets of
weather
and trace their genealogies on these islands in space
and wonder how we could ever have been so
hopeless,
make the black predictions we were once so used to
making.

And we will also wonder at ourselves
and, fumbling for an answer, reach backward in
time,
and the swelling glass of distance
will shatter in our hands,
and our memory will spill in every direction
and be scattered like dead little suns
in a shining blind web,
and there won’t be much left to chew on
or wad into an egg, an eye, an earth with a familiar pulse,
in a sac or a socket, in membranes of water and air,
and we’ll turn back to them and ask, “Children, what was it all about?”
or admit, “We have the facts but have somehow lost the meaning.”

But look at our cities. They are rooted in rock, like stakes driven into the earth,
mired among the reeds like tall abandoned vessels. They aren’t going anywhere if we can help it.
We know it’s not over until it’s over. Our supreme fear is not yet a fact,
not unless our imagination bolts away from its appointed places,
forgetting we hold in our hands the tools for the making of memory, the keeping, the sharing, the nursing of memory.

And we the namers of names will go about naming our world
a thousand times over so nothing will be forgotten,
stockpiles of names enough to keep us going until the end when time breaks off like a rotten old branch and falls on a new and wide receiving earth
and everything will stand forth in its grossest of bodies, in the quiver of all its million nuances

and the naming will take ages of days and ages of nights
until we’ll have named the very neurons that move our organs of speech, of thought, of memory. Named will be the seat of memory, the power and steering, the gliding and grinding, the shift of memory, the high beams and brakes, the rearview mirrors of memory, speeding backward and forward, backward and backward and forward and backward, a time shuttle flying up and around, up and around with trails of memory that will have no loose ends to come unraveled, chip by lightning chip, dazzling circuits of silver sand, memory of memory, set, fired or frozen into a grand organ which belts out the whole of our presence, our sea days, our tree time, our god roots.

And not a thing will be forgotten or allowed to slip our dead grasp—the look of love and the look of hate the birth of our children, the death of our mothers the incredible series of misunderstandings the fear of the night, the peace of the moon, the suns of every morning and the breezes, the view from tops of mountains, parades, expectations, balloons—all things fresh, wonderful and spare, the tree-lined path to the quiet motel, a parting kiss at a street corner, rain, the crow caught on the edge of the ice, sun,
voices of children falling like bells on the pavement.

And there will be room enough and time
to stash away the interminable memories
of the friend whose cancer has metastasized,
of a friend who cannot sleep,
of a friend whose father haunts him with a plea for
worldly recognition,
of the one who barely survived a crash
and another who visits his daughter in the mental ward but won’t be seen by her,
yet another and another and another, the bad ones
and the good ones,
the look on the face of the lottery winner,
the positive reply to an urgent letter,
the unsuspecting letting up of longstanding pressure,
the headache fading gradually, making the body feel
new, and new is all of life for the moment,
love that is simply given,
all those who have moved beyond keeping count,
all those who were blessed with the art of forgiveness.

Layer on layer, I can, as you can, heap up these memories
and make of this world a story so tall
it would be nearly beyond all reasonable belief
though true to the last grain of its every rising inch.

And we will not have finished for there’s no way to stop,
no place that says here you must stop.
And sometimes we will repeat grief more than anything else.
Why is it so hard to recall moments of pleasure?
Why does grief take over like a loud neighbor?

So we will remember the Indians stopped in mid-leap, hacked in flight,
Blacks reduced, the Jews forever pursued by god and man,
and someone will admonish us to keep asking, “Whatever happened to the Hittites?”
and vivid on our screens will flash the dark-skinned people in a Philippino jungle who see a metal bird rip their ancient sky and are in their tracks petrified and keen away their lives looking for a needle to mend their once seamless household firmament and never forget the words of Lieut. Anatoly Gevorkian as he orders Pvt. Oleg Sotnik to kill a young Afghan boy with a knife: “Now then, Sotnik, here is the knife. Stick it into this young man. They tell me you’re afraid of blood. You must get used to killing in cold blood, like I do.”

Flow on,
water down or add and stiffen memories,
intermingling of naked bodies,
ashes to be scattered over the ocean or among the scrub high in the dry mountains, never letting go,
like the outraged voices of the bereaved:
There’s no hiding on the Pacific
for you, Elkin, B. J. Elkin
Come out of there, you bastard
Don’t look for help in the Sierras
It’s just a matter of time, Elkin
Did you mix them all up?
Just nine thousand pots of ashes?
What are numbers?
Have we forgotten the past,
public baths, communal weddings of the dead?
No, but we’re going to get you, B. J. Elkin
this is not the same,
can never be

the same memory twice or body earth life
its own thing and rising so huge
this dump of memory heart or dome
circumscribing the globe eyes of memory
catch-all ears in walls of memory
this never-ending track, this terrible circle
holding under a spell all welcome tangents
of lapses and forgetfulness, relief from memory
this awesome tree this dubious fruit
these prodigious artichokes of memory
these sky-high, corpulent cities of memories

Now to scale them down, how to
scale them down tough
leaf by leaf, story by dizzy story
filled with memory
down down to the bare white heart
where the light is soft and sweet the blindness
or at least down to a human scale
close enough to the ground
to be lost in cities
holding hands without fully knowing why
or caring to quite remember,
secretly joyful
of the countless openings into being now
where we have come to stay.

Say we are here to stay, and the cities,
these last extensions of our selves,
lost or found, are here to stay,
all of them—
these dwellings, imprints of our earthly morning
housing signatures of our late-night sojourn,
the misty cities in the arms of bays,
the clear desert cities, the open,
the closed, the booming pitiless cities,
thoracic cities, cities of the heart
shaped by minding matter on rock
or at the fork of meeting rivers,
cities named inside and out,
cities named with thoughts of consolation,
spreading on this ancient bed of earth
as if asleep under a net of air,
warm in memory, breathless, breathing.
Here lies Palestine

(an internal monologue at Mamilla cemetery)

EVA PILIPP

Roaming around the cemetery at dusk
contemplating the mall’s emerging lights
like dots piercing through imaginary skulls
on this half cemetery and half building ground
of a future yet to be fought for
by people in control of school book’s printing houses
They say:
The one who controls history controls the dead
but in between excavated graves extending their throats
towards our fear
I see centuries passing filled with people who keep
moving
wailing to be reburied
for a final rest so long denied

A Memory

Is a clock that stopped for no reason
A memory is like a barrel full of milky dreams, modified
realities, denied incidents
A memory is an absentminded storage room
A memory is a boulevard of fantasies walking backwards
A memory is written and passed-on history shaped by
political traumas
A mother crying over the loss of her grave while coloring
her lips from red to grey
A scar speaking in its foreign accent to us
The hegemony of a dream hunts our identities
At the graveyard: remembrance gives us strength
A truth commission in its own legacy
turning its face to the moonlight

Reactivating memory
Years passing
Placing a soothing balm on infernal wounds
Not healing, but enough to forget
wounds which are like open graves after earth was thrown on them
to cover nothingness
Do wounds and graves cover the same bones
in life and death and the face of abyss?
Have we forgotten how to forget?

Beyond Memory
A lost world of souls tied together by death
Roused by bulldozers
Eased by spring’s desperate almond blossoms
Punished by indifferent glares
Forgotten by the bible of centuries
 Destroyed by a notion of tolerance
while digging deep beyond memory

Within Memory
A maze of epochs passed within minutes
while reading in history books, coffee-stained on every second page
epochs: meaningless now
but once they meant the world for some forgotten shades
for a change
would someone defend the dead
or was it springs ago
when the cemetery’s last flower rose

*Against Memory*
Stolen history of spent lives
Of seared almond blossoms
False promises
History belongs to whom?
A fake narrative of what happened makes us feel lost
Time in the early morning and night follows its own rules of conscience
A desperate attempt to fill an empty space
of marble colored houses filled with decayed consumption
the deceased against the void

*Towards Memory*
A lonely place
Desperate for company of any kind
Longing for palm leaves and seedlings
Stories brought back from amnesia of time
Longing to hold hands despite melancholy
for dogs’ subtle moaning against the wind of decay
we finally knew everything that was not true

*Again, a Memory*

We need to plant a daffodil next to the trash bin
to honor the place
Pulling up a flag with the embroidered word
“memory”
Walking the line between two worlds
And ten centuries
And 400 brave soldiers
And a rotten apple
Against despair.
On Liberty and Church Streets in Lower Manhattan
for the 3,025 dead, how I listen to their absence.
JAMES RAGAN

Long after nightfall crawls beyond the Park Street pier where the rain drift of ash now tints the asphalt, and where at dawn the long rope of sunlight no longer swings from one tall wall to another, a moon rides up the light’s twin beams to where the shore has called the memory to harbor,

and while there are no lawns of campion, larch, or yarrow,
no flowerings to root, no words to borrow back the long deep breath of a city’s soft wind whistle, those who first heard the sun’s laughter in the skylight stutter then stop to let the world go dark—all who wondered, thinking of the goodness in themselves, and the godness,

will not remember how they stared shock-still, at something heaved out of the sky, white as the sun exploding or the lambent shears of lightning that ripped the chaos of illusion from their eyes. For months I could not walk to see the steel crane spooning forth
the bones’ debris against the moon’s translucence. I could not hear the voices in the buried fire candle up to be extinguished. I could not listen to their absence.

b

Once along the streets of Liberty and Church, I saw the girder’s grid of steel leaning out like a meshed screen sculpture, to where the digging must have wanted union with the souls’ debris in some communal citizenry of sky. If I could join their flight, I would be a citizen of the leaves and fall greening skyward, lean as the stems of stars.

I would be a citizen of water if I could bathe each window’s reflection of the ground grave below with the image of a thousand repeating spires. I would be a citizen of air to watch the wind’s breath settle, if I could spare the flights of souls their pluraled fall onto the spears of metal.

c

But I have taken the lean bridge to darkness, walked like a thigh-stilted spoonbill across the knuckle bones of faith to cross a world of centuried indifference, and I have searched the avenues of alphabets
to exorcise a concept, as if the word, zero,
nullifies the sanctity of souls and the ground they
inhabit.

And while I have watched the floating crush of a
tower’s will,
and seen, from Washington to Pennsylvania fields,
how with the future there comes a birthing
of remembrance so profound the voices rise
like crofts of swallows in a riot of flight.

If I could seed these words into the language of choirs,
I would be a citizen of the earth and crawl the moon’s
lit path
to join a universe of hands in weeding out all
boundaries.
I would roil the lamps on all the curbs of Manhattan,
to light the streets we cross, at Church and Liberty,
on whose ground I find my peace, a footing I could
not learn or teach
until I listened to their absence, and feared the loss of
each.
The Gravediggers
PADRAIG ROONEY

What drew us was the sound of spade on stone:
two indentured labourers in coolie hats
were busy washing the small bones
of children, laying them again into

cheap red plywood coffins
to be taken away under cover of darkness;
and when they’d sluiced the basins
out over the remaining graves

and cleaned their spades,
one rolled a furtive cigarette under an obelisk,
the other picked his nails with a sliver of bamboo.
Smoke drifted through the cemetery

where small quick lizards played
in and out of cracks in the masonry;
then the men weighed the coffin lids with stones
against marauding dogs.
The bus conductor thunders, “Haaji Ali,” above the muezzin’s pitch, above cymbals clashing around the corner by the jasmine vendors.

I wait among garish women on a ribbon of road at the head of the bay, where double-decker buses hurtling into town, the dome rising behind me, white and gleaming at low tide. Crows and gulls wing about, searching. On the floor of the bay, a path moves steadily to Allah’s heart.

I think of Muhammad describing to Meccans the light he had seen above the seventh tier of the mountain—it was bright, you know, like... but couldn’t find metaphors to paint the image that stunned him.

The singing on the cliff mingles with the muezzin’s prayer. Both loud, their long syllables wind down the water’s edge, rise among the birds, dip low, lift, and circle mosque and temple.
Nudged from one random thought to another, I wait for the right bus.

"Do you know if 47 comes here? It’s new," asks a woman in green.

I shrug, "I’m new."

One stops; a call pierces the heat, "Mahalakshmi":
Different names for the same stop,
different names for God.
PART II

POEMS EXCHANGED, JANUARY 2014

following the Mamilla International Poetry Festival
Foreigner
CRISTINA ARCHETTI

I am a face,
I am a name.
I am a knot of feeling and experience,
the smell of a lake,
lust, pain and resilience.

I am the survivor
who crumbles today,
but will get up
to fight next.

I am all the people I’ve met
and all the places I’ve been.
I am the eternal stranger
who never fits entirely in.

I have died a dozen deaths,
picked up my pieces,
rearranged them every time
among the dust
of hasty reconstructions.

Condemned to be the observer,
ever the judge.
I am free to follow questions,
but what is their price?
In the enormity of silence
SEAMUS CASHMAN

I thrive in the enormity of silence
my radio tuned out—tasks suspended.
Momentarily, a floating thought pan-flips
in my brain and it cannot be recovered.
My eyes see without me,
they float directionless, sensible
but unaware. I am core hard, protected.
Walnut, in a glass laboratory.

On reset, and without expectation,
groin warmth, eyelid flicker, a breathing in.
Light spaces the surround and you are not here.
The world still clamours for its fill
And those anger shadows I had fled
sit up alert as hares do in meadows.
A tribute to Mahmoud Darwish
(after visiting his tomb and museum, 26 October 2013)
DEBJANI CHATTERJEE

It was a brave thing you did, Mahmoud, though a simple word. You said: ‘I am an Arab’. Millions kissed you on both cheeks.

It was a hard way to live, Mahmoud, though a noble hope. You said: ‘We are both human’. Billions hold you in their hearts.
She asks if I am from here – points to the ground beneath her feet, our bus straddling the line between existing and not.

I have just visited the birthplace of the Jesus she asks me if I have accepted. He is the way, she tells me, says I look Palestinian, then apologizes and giggles when I am not, laughs full-throated as hijab-crowned grandmothers and thick eyebrowed fathers scatter out the doors like glass shards, their chins heavy with time but eyes still floodlights.

They are not looking for us, she says, pointing to the guards.

Her cadence is suddenly Cape Town. I remember a Mercedes framed by the garbage ash of Khayelitsha, how the wires spider webbed the sky to hijack power from telephone cables and the sun.

Survival is a magic trick Midwest missionaries and people like me have never been forced to learn.

The IDF soldier in front of me looks like he
started shaving this morning. The stoic barrel of his M16 winks shrapnel graffiti at my temple, adolescent mug scoffing at the blue husk of my passport.

He is a casting mistake – overacting in a made-for-TV movie about Soweto, 1976. Channeling the good ole boy cop he saw in the documentary on Montgomery in fifth grade. I feel more amused, horrified, and threatened on this bus than I have felt since I arrived.

Despite what the red signs tell me – I am more at home in the embrace of Khaled as I say goodbye than anywhere that has called me its own. This man I just met. His grace, his open-armed grace, it feels like something I have spent a lifetime in search of.

Finally, the IDF soldier returns the crumpled paper stub that proves I exist while huddled rows of parents and children wander back on like ghosts, as my oblivious, Evangelical seatmate asks me if I plan on going to heaven or hell.
Checkpoint Bethlehem  
_for all those detained at checkpoints_  
PERSIS M. KARIM  

When the soldier boards the bus in your land, bearing an AK-47 you move toward the front. He herds women and children, the old and finally, young men, off into the cold metal structure that is your prison and your freedom.

The bars and gates, horizontal and vertical, red light and surveillance camera, strip you to nothing. Another eighteen-year-old boy in fatigues behind glass stares. But no eyes meet. He locks onto the monitor scanning your body for evidence of weapons, beyond being merely Palestinian.

At 65, you still cannot accept this. How a boy, barking at you in Hebrew
can render a woman, a professor invisible—and conspicuous.

His voice like a man scolding a dog: *remove watch and belt, place your purse on conveyor belt!* You stand frozen waiting for green light and then push the turnstile with everything you have. Getting back on the bus to Jerusalem where you’ll apply for a visa to visit your brother in America becomes an exercise in resistance and hope.

On this Sunday while most in Bethlehem sit in church, you attend this other ritual of faith. The boy-soldier with his feet on the table, waves you past the gate until you stand before him, silent.

When you shove your black ID in the slot beneath the window he says nothing. He turns and waves to another soldier—a young woman with short braids and too-tight pants.

They quietly exchange words and she rests her hands on his shoulders, begins to massage him, leaning into his ear to giggle and whisper.

You wait again, imagining
fifteen or twenty minutes pass while you stare hard at the floor. This touching and flirtation—a hostage-taking.

These two could be your students, your grandchildren, even. But you arrest your rage, knowing that to protest will only prolong your wait. And getting to Jerusalem on your five-hour permit is the only relief.
Encounter
LOLA KOUNDAKJIAN

She sat on the Number 7 train westbound mouthing words, reading a Korean *hangul* text eyes shut with concentration.

I sat next to her, our hipbones touching on the crowded train.

With an overnight bag next to her, I wondered what the note represented—a Biblical passage? a speech perhaps?

As travelers descended, we were left alone in the car.

I finally dared to ask her what she was reading.

“I am coming from my voice lesson” she said, and proceeded to sing an Italian aria to an audience of one.
In the Crosshair
for Khirbet Jinba

PIPPA LITTLE

Over fifteen years battalions in black masks
wave guns and stun grenades. Again the roofs
must be replaced. Return, rebuild.
Outside the schoolroom, a swing
shines brightest yellow. This is home

and across the baked grey hills, so many others.
Wires twist and arc from bulldozed rooms
ransacked identically,
power lines and water pipes are hacked and die.
Ibrahim Jabarin, four years old,
in the soldiers’ way, gets beaten. This was
documented.

Firing Zone 918 is a ghost country, shimmers
hundreds of miles, its dead light
stirred only by rotors and ordnance,
vulture-calls of machine-gun fire. It is life
hanging by a thread that paints a metal swing,
sows wheat through drought, sets stone
again on stone and says return, rebuild.

Palestinian villages such as Khirbet Jinba have withstood
recurring attack and harassment by Israeli forces who want to
turn this huge area of South Hebron into a firing range.
an on this brod / and on this table
ANDREW McCallum

an on this brod
anither chaunce –

breid whase corn was meldert
this past hairst

the yirth clave appen
cauld
groun brickle as bane

meat frae a lamm
wairm wins
ane hecht mair

an aiblins it’s eneuch –

skyre
slaw
ane fing’r raxes oot ti spell oor names
saft
i the yit-wairm crummle
on the wuiden brod that
mids the chaumer

an altar craikin wi flesh an wine
an that ane wuird –

the lamm cam back
the brod haill aince mair
grouin leafs e’en nou
an fluidin the chaumer wi
lift an beuchs
that rax til aa the airts

***

and on this table
another chance –
bread whose grain was milled
last harvest

the earth split open
cold
grown brittle as bone

meat from a lamb
warm winds
one more promise

and perhaps it’s enough –
with a pure clarity
slowly

65
a finger stretches out to spell our names
in the still warm crumbs
on the wooden table
around which the room is centred

*an altar groaning with flesh and wine*
*and that one word –*
the lamb returned
the table healed
already growing leaves
and filling the room with
sky and boughs
that stretch everywhere
Traveler’s Mercy
LISA SUHAIR MAJAJ

Yesterday I found myself trudging an arid road beneath a barren sky.

Is it possible to live in this world and not feel sorrow?

Like every traveler I had my reasons for walking.

I wanted a song but there were no birds in sight,

and my head was bowed by the weight of memory.

It’s an old story, what grief does to the soul.

But when life bends your head, you might as well look at the ground.

Sure enough, amid the clods of rough brown earth grew a wind-whipped poppy, a small rag of color
struggling from a bent green stem.
I touched its petals lightly,

listened for its story.
The poppy spoke back.

Then I resumed my road,
the poppy alive behind me.

Today I’m plodding
across the lonely fields

I’ve known since childhood.
But in my heart

flares that wisp of crimson,
that beacon breaking

from rough dry soil:
that traveler’s mercy.
The Iraqi Curator’s PowerPoint

PHILIP METRES

You can see the footprints around the hole the Iraqi Curator said. They smashed the head because they could not lift it from its base, this statue of Nike. It’s still missing. And this is Umma Al-Ghareb, my dig site. The Mother of Scorpions, it means. Y’anni, next slide: more damage by looters. If the eyes are gems, they will be made into holes. If the skin is gold, goodbye. Now this is a sight: the bodies too heavy, so they took the heads of these terracotta lions. A slide is missing here. What I ask you is this: base what you believe on what you can almost see. For example: you hear the dogs bay from the outskirts of the city. They head wherever they smell flesh. My eyes still see buildings that now are holes. What you see is not what is missing. Next slide. I’d heard that Etana, missing for years, was in Damascus. Then in Beirut. Then, I got a call from an art friend, a whole continent away. Does it have a scratch at the base of his hand and along his chest I said he said yes
of course I said and it is headless
and writing on the shoulder beneath no head
and he said yes and yes the right arm missing
and I said my God I said John take my eyes
and let me see. I was blind and now had sight
though I could not see it. This is the basis
of art, sadiki. There’s something beyond the hole
which each must face. Missile sites. Army bases.
The hole in the ground where thousands climbed
into sky. Missing heads of state. Eyes.
Aperture
RALPH NAZARETH

If you and I cannot live together
is there hope for the world?

If you and I cannot love each other
will the foundations hold?

Let the mystery bloom within
with the slow eager opening of cyclamen,
spell letter by letter the death I must die
so I may live in you, my darling.

***

They reached across the wadi
in full spate after the night storm—
which side of the bank will host
two flowers on one stem?—hand
to trembling hand, shaky foothold

landing in the raucous flood
laughter mingling
with the frolic of the water dance
at a hidden bend in the stream
A crow scouting for a fish head
would have seen in the distant clearing
amid the tangle of grapevine two houses
about to torch each other in ancient quarrel.

You wish I would not
repeat the age old song of love and loss
and invent a new beginning, a surprise ending

Qohelet, my teacher, asks Is there anything
of which you may say, See, this has never been?
Is there anything new under the sun?

Yet the ones bundled in love
in the middle of the raging stream
touch each other’s face as if

and the earth palpitates
as it has never done before
here in this slit of land that flows
in the aperture of my dream
Statues
MARYVELMA O’NEIL

From childhood games,
we learned,
to command form.
We small,

wobbly figures on the dunes,
cast for twitchy seconds,
as “statues” –
by the “Curator”,
whose shaky keep,
was up for grabs.
For when she turned her back,
we raced quick as,
sand crabs fighting over hiding hole,
to tag,
and thereby to assume her role.

Our trustees sat nearby –
at wooden picnic table,
stained candy apple red.
They drank from smoky,
cone-shaped glasses,
careful not to down green olives,

blood oozing from their eyes.

We “statues” with big ears heard,
their strange talk,
and as they pointed at us,
and laughed,
I heard some funny names,
that didn’t sound American:
Ap Ollo and Daf Knee,
Cupid (rhymed with stupid)
and Piss Ikey (maybe the old President’s nick name).
And there was even a man who owned a parking lot –
his wife got turned into a salt pillar,
forever,
which seemed a very, very long time,
when you were a quivering statue,
on the pounce.

Meantime the guardians,
seemed to crumble,
like sandcastles,
at high tide,
and tossed chewed olive pits,
into the churning sea.

That childhood game of “statues”,
returned like boomerang to me,
As I waded out just after dawn,
in the emerald Andaman Sea,
of Thailand,
at Krabi.
Where ancient myth tells of
a vengeful serpent god: 
Denied his promised bride, 
he cast a spell upon her wedding party, 
al all present transformed, 
as stony islands, 
in splendid isolation.

As was the secluded Ao Nang Cove: 
Guarded by lichenous shoreline stones, 
Where cave bats swooped, 
monkeys whooped and gibbered, 
and the nok gaw wow cried its onomatopoeia – 
the only bird song that sinks me low, 
even in recollection. 
All sounds softened by gauzy veil of vapor 
and pellucid waters, 
pooled at bay.

Against the towering limestone karsts, 
Were a dozen tiny Muslim women, 
veiled, 
in floral sarongs 
and their wrinkled menfolk, 
teeth like broken seashells. 
They all struck me as, 
posed for giant croquet – 
some like wickets; 
others straight as mallets.
No game,  
no artifice,  
no anthropology.  
This their daily work – *bang wan,*  
as foragers of the sea.  
Subsistence economy,  
of slow, immutable rhythms.

One rounded carapace,  
a bitty letter “r”,  
reflected in larger font on,  
low tide’s gooey glue.  
A sedimental sleuth,  
she locked eyes as she spied:  
salt shaker siphons.  
With rusted knife she hacked,  
into the doughy mud,  
and silently assembled  
lunchtime’s siZZling  
*Hoy lai ped.*

She tossed them.  
into a mallet’s netted sack,  
Weighted, mired –  
his outline cast by morning light,  
dress maker’s wet pattern,  
its contours runny.

All sorts of clams,  
were bagged together.
They seemed like families,
whose rifts are
deeply burrowed,
who when occasion,
tossed together,
hard shell speak.

We have tried to reconcile,
through words,
but clams,
must be steamed,
opened,
by kindled flame,
and when that wound began to smart,
the nok gaw wow cried plaintively –
for the clam burrowed deep,
so deep in me.

When high-tide slowly filled that sheltering cove to knee,
those matted gray reflections ceased to be,
Those gentle Muslims digging mollusks in the early morn;
replaced at 10:00 by Renoir bodies – foreign born.

Memories arise,
endless, wavelike,
until their forms recede,
within that tranquil cranial cove,
where floating words,
with aqueous forms,
commingle.
The stage: a case with god
EVA PILIPP

First scene
He offers lust-flowers which will melt between her fingers
Satan, the most beautiful of angels collects these flowers for his veranda dreams while his inner artist is getting too intimate with the audience of mobs and thinkers or was it thinkers and mobs licking the last drops of wine before applauding their own opera of the senses

Why did you come to the opera? To think of new vocabulary of how not to mention emotions by name the ones he wishes to sprinkle like rose water amongst his audience before burning them with words a last kiss, so beauty can sleep forever

There are wolves too in the audience hall and a moonlight-lit caterpillar Soft integration of their presence took place years ago
even before the theatre was build

The velvet curtain, not scarlet but white
is being dropped on the darkness of the stage

Second scene
A moment of genuine poetry as being anticipated by
the audience cannot be attracted by the same
emotion happening twice: “It is hardly so…”
certain members of the distinguished audience
mumble

A child’s singing:
Not welcomed at any time
A woman, very feminine
A willow tree, willowish at last
And the stage – stage-like in its features
A clock ticking backwards to look for memories, just in
case
a spider wants to coil back up her delicate web like a
ball of wool
Actors bowing before entering the stage
in total absence of applause

The orchestra’s conductor places berry-sized pianos
around each chair
small enough to step on
big enough to disturbingly crack under a precisely
aimed high-heel
For those remaining unbroken at the end of the play:
carefully collected to be taken home as children’s toys
for the children’s room
where everything is right again after this eternal stage
as in to proof:
the case against god is complete already.
The Plain of Jars
PADRAIG ROONEY

I was a bat out late last night
with only this sonar for guide,
flyng over the Plain of Jars

half-sunken in moonlight,
their dark cambered chambers
hewn from stone, strewn, cracked

and holding handfuls of dust
and rippled pools of rainwater
like some enormous potter’s field

in the gloaming. Had I died,
had they fallen with moonshine
or been shaped round emptiness

by long-gone armies of coolies
dragooned into sculpture
and buried inside their work?
Madiba

Pramila Venkateswaran

A song in the dark,
a light among the threat of steel.
The fist of peace unhinges a stubborn neck.

Peace is not an invention,
it is the seed of our being twinned with unrest.
“I put red and yellow on the canvas
to bring out the fire in his belly,”
said an artist painting Nelson.
Now when I look at myself
I’m not just a brown-skinned woman,
I’m red and yellow bringing out the fire in my belly.

Madiba, Madiba, each calls to the great soul.

Rain saturates the ground he walked,
skies weep with joy “Madiba,”
fierce shadows whip the earth,
a percussion in the trees.

A hemisphere away, snow at the feet of holly
crumpled brown leaves like letters
to spirits carrying our offering,
our yearnings for peace and justice. (2)
Madiba, Madiba, each calls to the great soul. (2)
Madiba, Madiba, the earth resounds among galaxies.
(2)

Madiba, Madiba. (2)
Contributors

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JAMES RAGAN, an award-winning poet and playwright translated into 12 languages, has authored eight books of poetry. Honors include three Fulbright Professorships, two Honorary Doctorates, the Emerson Poetry Prize, eight Pushcart Prize nominations, a PSA Citation, and the Swan Humanitarian Award. He’s the subject of the documentary “Flowers and Roots” (Arinafilms).

PADRAIG ROONEY has published one novel and three collections of poetry, the last *The fever wards* (Salt, 2010). He is the 2012 winner of the Listowel Single Poem Award. He lives in Switzerland.

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Above: Poster (design: Katéri O’Neil). Right: The domed Kabakiyya (1289) at Mamilla where prince ‘Ala’edīn al-Kabaki, a Mamluk military commander, was buried. Below: Welcoming the poets to the Mahmoud Darwish Museum for the festival.
Some of the participants outside the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation and Museum in Ramallah, Palestine, for the Mamilla International Poetry Festival (poems in English and Arabic languages) held in association with ARCH (Alliance to Restore Cultural Heritage in the Holy City of Jerusalem) Campaign to Preserve Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery (Photo: Maryvelma O’Neil). The cemetery’s name, Mamilla, may originate from zaytun al-milla, Arabic for ‘the olive trees of the religion’, or Ma’man Illah, What is from God, or perhaps Bab Illah (gate to God).

Participating poets came from many countries including Palestine, Jordan, Armenia, India, Ireland, Switzerland, England, Scotland, the USA, Egypt, Cyprus, Austria and Canada.

Poems For Mamilla


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