

Poems shared on Sunday October 22, 2023

What I do in the war

Amir Peter O'Loughlin

Because I cannot carry your dead child,
I sweep the deck of my friend
and fling the dry pine needles
to the messenger breeze, and the strike
of my broom down the steps to the sea
is the shovel for digging the grave
and the birdsong is the keening
of your family and clinging companions
Instead of joining you to claw the rubble
in search of your buried mother,
I will bring bread to my neighbour
who will serve it to her children,
and I chant your name in rhythm
to the shouts and earth movers
with the warm loaf in my hand
and the autumn air gripping my chest
I will serve tea to this welcome company
and offer a fragrant, poignant
impotent wish for peace,
an as-salaam aleikum with each
touch of the cup to silent lips,
while you grip your phone for news
and prepare to sleep on dark roads,
upon carpets that once had homes
Nothing in me can help you know
if your daughter is alive or dead,
or which of those is worse,
so I will whisper b'shalom b'shalom
with each step up this mountain
from where my strength comes
and where my cries are left
and where the eagles loft and lift
You cannot bear witness to my sorrow

for those I love whom I do not know
so I will ring the Japanese garden bell
to reach all those unjustly taken away
I will listen to its resounding song
which ears hear for ten slow breaths
but which trees hear forever
and I pledge to each of you who suffers now
a place in its vibrating prayer
Mayne Island, B.C. October 14, 2023

A Rainy Sunday
by Ruby Archer

I love a rainy Sunday,
With all the world away;
The cozy hearth intensified
By gloom of outer day.
In silken gown fantastic,
I let my hair go free,
And idle in and out of books,
Or weave a melody.
The rain beyond the window
Chants on in monotone;
I muse among my household gods,
And laugh—to be alone.
The family is drowsy,
The very cat asleep;
And naught comes nigh my revery,
Growing in silence deep.
My books are dear companions,
My pictures well-loved friends,
My brown divan with Orient grace
A dreamy languor lends.
Come often, rainy Sundays,
Forbidding me to roam—
Come often, shut the world without,
And me within my home.

Sacramento
by Sally Worthing

For a time I roamed
Homesick for the Sea.

Smug, I did not
Expect to love this place.
This sold land place.
This river and tree place.
This Sunday picnic and baseball kind of place.
Real summers here.

Shiny wet streets after a rain.
The Communion of land
and sky uninterrupted.
All 'round

Gentle curve of dark earth,
A sapphire wink through Trees hints at the glory
If you come on through

Cold blue river
Moving wide
Like a diamond brooch on a plain and sturdy woman.
It sparkles real good.

Spilled tomatoes and peppers line the roads,
Like so many old Christmas lights
Come late summer.

Bold crows hop and dart.
Recklessly along the highways
The highways of home.

Fall Song
by Joy Harjo

It is a dark fall day.
The earth is slightly damp with rain.
I hear a jay.
The cry is blue.
I have found you in the story again.
Is there another word for "divine"?
I need a song that will keep sky open in my mind.
If I think behind me, I might break.
If I think forward, I lose now.
Forever will be a day like this
Strung perfectly on the necklace of days.
Slightly overcast
Yellow leaves
Your jacket hanging in the hallway
Next to mine.