

Love Letters to Presence: Three Poems by Mícheál 'Moley' Ó Súilleabháin.

My name is Mícheál 'Moley' Ó Súilleabháin. I am a poet from Ireland. These three poems are love letters to presence. That presence we feel when we are close to the source of this life. Gratitude, Wisdom, Determination, and Belief. All three are excerpted from my poetry book, 'Early Music' (Many Rivers Press).

The first poem, Turas d'Anam, means 'journey of your soul' in the Irish language. This piece is an invitation to grant permission to yourself. To experience a deeper sense of meaning in this life. It reimagines set backs, or conscious retreat, as a strengthening tool. This poem is an invitation to realise the restorative power of rest...and the often agonizing wisdom of hindsight.

Turas d'Anam

Often times

the step backward

lets the soul catch up.

So that all our happy

hindsight's harmonise

and wisdom builds.

Share your luck.

Be miserly only

with misfortune.

In each seismic

shudder we learn

to trust the ground
again, humble again,
knowingly broken,
unrepentantly wounded,
proud to bare pain.

Laying claim to
the joy factory
of your body.

No more tariffs, or sanctions.
Wage cuts and glass ceilings.
Conventions, expenses paid, nor
lanyards or company position.

Often times,
this way you can live
in ways others simply
will not, develop sides
of you others simply
would not.

So feel the rhythm
beyond the beat.
Begin with a break,
and let your soul
catch up.

This next poem, 'What To Hand On', hopes to inspire your aspiration. To spy the playful, and often impossible, standards we place on ourself. This poem is a prayer to naivety and is meant to reclaim our power of intentionality in the face of that which we cannot control (which is almost everything!).

What To Hand On

I'd wish to grow wise,
through gears of existence.
To read the gradient
in each phase of life
just to coast down the slopes
beyond travelling times.

To know the right hat
for the right company, and
rhythm of each interaction,
chiming in from the periphery
to read the grain
of every conversation.

To fall in love
in the prime of life, seeds
sown of deathbed smiles.

Waves of wellbeing
lap at low tide, imploring

your reluctant side to break,
even one cycle, learned
as a child.

For wisdom knows
what to hold, and
what to hand on.

Which to give and
what to keep.

Where to dig and
what to bury.

When to wake, and
how to sleep.

Our wish for wisdom
still a whisper,
the source of which
still buried deep.

So, soul brother, and
soul sister, are we changed
by what we meet.

The third poem 'This Is My Prayer Room' is an account of my first time praying with my Hindu mother-in-law, Maya. She invited me to sit for her daily Puja at her home in New Jersey when we first met. Maya emigrated to America when my wife was just 6 months old... I am from Ireland, so this was my first taste of Hindu prayer ritual. I was so inspired by the similarities between my own mother's love for daily prayer and the palpable joy in my Maya's prayer life. This poem recounts parts of that ritual at her personal mandir, from her perspective, while mixing some imagery from my own Catholic background.

This Is My Prayer Room

(For Maya)

This is my prayer room,

no one comes in.

I anoint icons here

with sandalwood and

pour milk over deity's,

chanting a throaty mantra.

I sat cross legged

till I could no more

but don't worry,

my god already knows

my aches and pains.

This altar holds my trinkets

of faith, the tools of prayer,

instruments of hope

and rag offerings

to my elephant god.

If you wish to pray I'll let you,

turning halfway through

my rosary making sure

your comfortable.

Tuesday's prayers are slightly longer,
you see.

The incense will rise for you and I,
for there is peace in worship
at the foot of a virgin mother
and a blue skinned baby.

The gurus and martyrs,
the saints and angels.

And when I hand you
the bell, ring it.

Not once, but
keep ringing till I tell you.

Pray with me, say the words,
ring the bell, we're almost there.

This part is my favourite,
it's where god feels the closest.

So ask for mercy, or for help,
or forgiveness, no need to tell.

For my story is your story,
is every body's story.

Let the bell stop ringing now.

We've prayed well today,

thank you for your silence.

I know my god is pleased

to meet you, sees your sad

eyes and sweet spirit

and knows you

have much more

to do.