

## Preface

This is the first volume of a poetry series designed to be read as a dialogue among poets writing across cultures. It is an outcome of Reading Poetry in the Year 2001, a session organized by *Point of Contact* on February 1, 2001 at Syracuse University. The title, *Corresponding Voices*, imagines that in poetry such endeavors are possible and even desirable.

Are they? Aren't we seized by the urge to put the accent on what each one has in common and ignore what is different, or differing? Five notable poetic voices, Michael Jennings, Edgar Paiewonsky-Conde, Shawn Kerry Keys, Suzanne Shane, and Lila Zemborain answer our request for a common text. All they have in common is poetry. The desire for poetry. The writing of poetry. Can this alone justify the title, *Corresponding Voices*?

In a way yes. In the so-called theoretical notes, we asked the poets to write a few lines about poetry and about their ways with poetry—but this only to imply that even in discoursing about itself poetry doesn't cease to be poetry. Poetry can only explain itself in the idioms of poetry, a sort of poetic self-reference, a poet's wink of the eye.

Thus, timidly, we hope for this sort of correspondence embodying not only metaphors but each other's clues, codes—all those bridges that bring about the living correspondence which at times implies an enrichment and at other times an incursion. Still, the true test for correspondence lies not so much inside the text as outside, with the reader, the *Other* silently present in each poetic line. In this sense, poet and reader are inscribed in each other, they keep tabs on each other like the sign and what the sign is signaling.

And this goes on in a sort of solitary trial every poetic text of any time has had to undergo. Poetic meaning, by necessity, bears the mark of this solitude. And to deal with that necessary solitudē, we think, is the ultimate aim of any correspondence.

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