

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Bill Mohr: "Ghazals"

Bill Mohr · Wednesday, July 15th, 2015

Bill Mohr is the author or editor of eight books of poetry or criticism, among them *Hidden Proofs* (1982) and *Bittersweet Kaleidoscope* (2006). New Alliance Records issued his spoken-word collection, *Vehemence*, in 1993. Bonobes Editores in Mexico has just sent the first bi-lingual edition of his poetry, *Pruebas Ocultas*, to the printer. His poems, prose poems and creative non-fiction have appeared in over a dozen anthologies and five dozen magazines. In addition to publishing landmark collections of Los Angeles poets such as *Poetry Loves Poetry* in 1985, he was the editor of Momentum Press from 1974 to 1988 and brought out books by poets such as Alicia Ostriker, Jim Krusoe, Holly Prado, Kate Braverman, Jim Moore, Harry Northup, Joseph Hansen, and Leland Hickman. His literary history of Los Angeles poetry, *Holdouts: The Los Angeles Poetry Renaissance 1948-1992*, has gone into a second printing. His awards include being appointed a visiting scholar at the Getty Research Institute. He has a Ph.D. in Literature from the University of California, San Diego; he is currently an associate professor at California State University, Long Beach. Check out his weblog at <http://www.billmohrpoet.com>.

GHAZALS

The Meteors

Obituaries and survival rates disguise the crisis of the reversal of splendor
As yet another cloudy dawn restores the night's dispersal of splendor.

How to account for the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples,
The plastic globe itself, and leave nought else but remorseful splendor?

Rain splatters noon. Colossal thunder like a rumor of a truce
Keeps me company as I eat cornbread: a buttered morsel of splendor.

Not many photographs of me without long hair when I was young,
Except for my best friend's wedding and his rehearsal of splendor.

"Farewell," I thought. No, that's not the truth of what I hoped to think.
Cordelia's fur, a minute after death, glowed with a merciful splendor.

Why didn't Sunday sermons praise the Oort Cloud's meteors

As where the Savior got to orbit with creation's source, full of splendor.

I best remember solemn times in bed, after making love.
Partake of me with tender touch is the imploring wail of splendor.

*

Hasty Deceptions of a Dishwasher

Waiting for the sink to fill and foam with the soap of permission,
I know it's only ordinary tasks that tremble with any hope of permission.

How do I know, for certain? The aspiration's fixed, and how
Could this wet bowl be other than a stage prop of permission?

Young lovers play at being disobedient, like constellations
In a galaxy that flutter in a dance that says we elope with permission.

I held out as long as I could. Poignant thrusts and I grope.
How even after fucking starts, it all rolls to a stop for permission.

A spigot leaks. I tease the parched trees round my house with playful arcs
Of water every other day. Even on webs, spiders grope for permission.

Did anyone ask the cop how horny he felt in his patrol car? Who says
That punishment awaits those who are given enough rope of permission?
Don't laugh, my friend: "The protestors clashed with lightly armed police." Lightly?
In swearing to uphold the law, they mock the trope of permission.

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Twitter: "Watch Your Step"

Tethered to a name, one arrives at grief.
Is anything more solemn than private grief?

Pure joy! Even an effortless performance
Endures suspicion the victim craves it: grief.

Nostalgia's earthquake code fails to account
For despondency that spans the rivets of grief.

A startled prayer? The subjunctive, baby, grooves
As if there were no other expanding retreat than grief.

Bewildered pleasures — that others savor
The anodynes blended as a rare feat of grief.

Stave off the consolations so well-intended, Santana's
Rendition of "Watch Your Step" cannot forfeit this grief.

Let others whimper, "She was the sweetest thing."

Mean happiness is truly worth it: grieve.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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