

Excerpts from a manuscript in progress, *The Green Archetypal Field of Poetry*, by Stephen Morrissey

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### A VISITOR FROM THE FUTURE

One fall evening back in the mid-1970s, at Véhicule Art Gallery on Ste. Catherine Street West, I was scheduled to give a reading of my poems. It was dark and rainy outside as I waited for an audience so I could begin. I remember the arrival of a bearded man as he came up the stairs from the street outside. He asked if Stephen Morrissey was giving a poetry reading and I remember speaking with him. He said he had just arrived in Montreal on a train from New York City and he had seen my name in an advertisement for the reading in a newspaper, and he had a few hours between the arrival of the train and his departure from Dorval Airport that same evening on a flight to Ireland. He wanted to know if I had any poems about being Irish and when I answered that I didn't, he turned and left. I remember being annoyed by him and thinking, as well, that whatever was meant by writing Irish poems didn't interest me. I remember that his brief appearance at the reading, before it even began, caused a stir, as others also gathered around him when he entered.

The memory of this stranger has stayed with me all of these years; indeed, I see his visit in a different light now that I have spent many years researching my Irish family history and writing what might be called Irish Poems, such as "The Colours of the Irish Flag" and "The Rock, A Short History of the Irish in Montreal". I think of this stranger as a visitor from the future, as someone who came to remind me of what I would one day be writing, of my concerns in poetry and life, poems of family, memory, the ancestors, and the knowledge that underlying everything we do is this journey we are on, this journey between being born and dying.