

THE POET & THE CROWD

After Pushkin

I fling the alphabet
to reach the semblance of a crowd
I pretend into existence
only to hear their questions rocket back.
“What’s the meaning of your song?
Free as the wind but where’s the gain?”

Another poet long ago –
before he was shot in a lovers’ duel –
dispatched his throng
with scorn: *Away with you*
you mindless crew! Dear Pushkin
why defame a mob of your creation?

Poems can’t stop wars or lovers’ quarrels
and Lord knows there is no monetary gain in songs
of harmony and prayer. Nor is there choice.
I can’t deny the impulse to create them.
My longing voice, my keyboard
make a noise as profane as the wind.