



**Marlon L. Fick** is the author of four books, *El niño de Safo* (2000); *Histerias Minimias* (2001), *Selected Poems* (2001), published by Fuentes Mortera of Mexico City, and *The River Is Wide: 20 Mexican Poets*, published by UNM Press (2005).

In 2000, he received the ConaCulta Award for the Arts (Mexico's National Endowment) for his first book, *Sappho's Child*, translated into Spanish. Later, he received support and recognition from The Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico for contributions to Latin Literature (2001). In 2005 he received the National Endowment for the Arts for the manuscript, *The Tenderness and the Wood*.

In 2007, an addition of his poems was published in Russian translation by Tatiana Puchnacheva. His poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *The New England Review*, *The Boston Review*, *The Boston Phoenix*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Antioch Review*, *Mudfish*, *Marlboro Review*, and several others. Fick was born in Olathe, Kansas. He received his BA in Philosophy from KU, his Master's in Poetics from NYU, and his PhD in English from KU.

Fick is a former professor for Kansas State University and Education Adviser to the country of Pakistan. Fick now resides in Overland Park and teaches at Johnson County Community College.

## Anniversary

This evening an indolent wind moves between us  
where you hanged yourself  
in the stars like chimes.

There is an empty space my eyes console  
where the witchgrass cripples with frost

and your prosthesis sags and sweats  
to nurse a blouse—its mums commingling  
with the lavenders and moonlight.

With what celerity the mathematicians  
count as lost, the snow  
undertakes your silences.  
The other woman's lips become to me the rim  
of your grave the snow tries to fill.

My nights are full of wind and destruction.  
I could have torn out my tongue and moaned  
over the cold months  
like wind crossing an empty bell—

I found you everywhere, the hunt  
as winter, the one  
the world prayers to  
or will undress for, the snow  
our bodies  
melt into  
flowerwater.

## (untitled)

I will be with you,  
a common thing you use everyday,  
a brush, a necklace,  
the favorite stone you hold in your hand  
when you're afraid.

I can't be more than this  
and I've grown deaf to the world  
like an old man whose thoughts  
are the white birds asleep in the stones of cathedrals,  
like the emptiness inside them.

## The Sources of Light

Mornings before dawn I rose  
and lit the kerosene latern  
and took the cane pole from a corner in the barn  
and then went down a road through the fields to a  
creek where  
it bent around behind a hedge of Osage Orange.

After setting the line  
I built a fire to keep mosquitoes away,  
and fished for an hour or two, sometimes for nothing.

I was ten and confident and I thought  
all the sources of light had a common ancestor in  
God...  
my lantern;  
the lights in the town in the valley  
where I was forbidden to go;  
flashes from firecrackers inches away from my fingers;  
the searing of lightning  
  crossing the plains on crooked legs...

I thought these held in common  
some memory of the stars  
before they were broken into a million pieces—

like the fireflies I gathered in a jar  
to read by phosphorus...  
that same light belonging to corn  
whose fuses flared more gold against black clouds,  
and more green before they died.

I don't know when I figured out how wrong I was  
or when I knew that each light  
in the valley  
had a life circling around it like a small, grey moth.

I remember  
but memory is the edge of a cliff  
where light has no where to go but out.

I tried to reach beyond that. In the middle of my life  
I tried to walk straight into that light  
that only the dying see, the one that burns in all the  
others

  and covers itself up in forever.

I stood on the edge of nothing  
in the whispering of a random present,  
pulling my hand back out of the flames  
like a child pulling it loose to freedom.

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## Puget Sound

We reach for the smallest things first:  
a wing bone from a sea gull, pieces  
of kelp that break apart easily.  
We hardly notice the afternoon  
spreading itself too thinly across the Sound,  
making the bright bones dark.  
Or maybe we notice, out there  
there is nothing beyond even our not knowing,  
feeling it in each hand,  
the dark bones in each finger  
of each hand.

I've been up late  
listening to the steady notes of a ferry  
sound and release. It holds on  
for a moment and releases, like  
your love for me.  
I'm standing on the shore, wanting  
to see between notes.  
You never made me restless.  
Perhaps you know I can't understand the waves,  
close and away.  
In this inaudible drift  
a diver surfaces, deaf  
to bring his dark bones back  
from where the sea was holding them,  
back to the surface of not knowing.

Now, watching, I'm learning that the shore  
is somehow never right  
and so  
is always shifting.  
A stone scratches a cold wind  
out of a stone. Another piece washed up  
we bend to like a promise.

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