

## Note from the Publisher

We begin another year, and at Mutabilis Press, another poetry anthology!

For the first time, we with guest editor, poet Martha Serpas, are centering this anthology around the theme of, given our noisy marketplace of beliefs, how or where can the sacred be found? It seems a question suited for the poet, at least this is our thought. In this world opened wide by the media, Internet and cell phones, the world seems never to rest, and places and beliefs once sacred, dissected and questioned.

Defining a sacred place is often a matter of opinion. Environmentalists are visibly fighting for the preservation of our last remaining wild spaces in our voracious, commercial world. We, as poets, often feel an affinity for environmental concerns. Nature has inspired our response to it since the beginning of our consciousness as individuals living in an environment separate but integral to our existence.

Recently my husband Bob and I visited New Mexico and made yet another pilgrimage to El Santuario de Chimayo, the chapel built around 1818 on the site where miraculous healings are believed by many to have occurred.

It was late in the afternoon on December 23, our anniversary, when we arrived at El Santuario. Outside it was already becoming dark, with only a deep red-orange stain sensed between the black hills and bare trees. The chapel was outlined in white Christmas lights and luminaria. Inside the caretaker already had his keys out to lock up for the night, but we were able to stay for a few minutes. It was perfectly quiet; all the pilgrims and tourists gone for the day. Here we stood together alone in front of an altar far different than the Colonial-style Lutheran church in Michigan where we were married. Here, in the dim prayer candle light, were rough images of Christ and the Evangelists, an interior itself more like a strange, sacred cave. For a handful of minutes this place became personally sacred, and a sanctuary from the outside world. I began to cry for countless reasons, and maybe Bob did too. At the time, if I had said anything, I would have broken down, feeling the crush of all the joys and sorrows we have shared for thirty-three years.

How rare the sacred moments are, at least for me. There seems always to be those practical and often petty things to do to keep up with the fast pace and competition of the world. And the fear and anxiety, that drives us away from any sense of the sacred.

I believe there is hope. Through poetry, the act of writing and reading it, we can begin a journey toward the sacred, and possibly, we will recognize something fresh, something never before considered or anticipated as sacred.

For this anthology we are looking for that surprise. We are seeking poems with imaginative ways in which to find and define the sacred—your poems, written in the midst of this noisy marketplace, this world, with all its tragedy, wonder and beauty.

Carolyn Tourney Florek, January 29, 2011