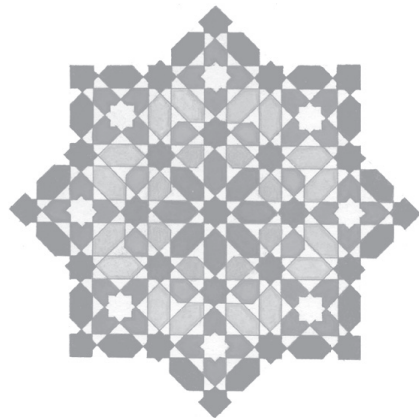


The principal objective of THE MATHESON TRUST is to promote the study of comparative religion from the point of view of the underlying harmony of the great religious and philosophical traditions of the world. This objective is being pursued through such means as audio-visual media, the support and sponsorship of lecture series and conferences, the creation of a website, collaboration with film production companies and publishing companies as well as the Trust's own series of publications.

The Matheson Monographs cover a wide range of themes within the field of comparative religion: scriptural exegesis in different religious traditions; the modalities of spiritual and contemplative life; in-depth mystical studies of particular religious traditions; broad comparative analyses taking in a series of religious forms; studies of traditional arts, crafts and cosmological science; and contemporary scholarly expositions of religious philosophy and metaphysics. The monographs also comprise translations of both classical and contemporary texts, as well as transcriptions of lectures by, and interviews with, spiritual and scholarly authorities from different religious and philosophical traditions.

NO OTHER WORD



NO OTHER WORD

New and Selected Poems

by

Barry McDonald



THE MATHESON TRUST
For the Study of Comparative Religion

© Barry McDonald, 2020

This first English edition published by

The Matheson Trust
PO Box 336
56 Gloucester Road
London SW7 4UB, UK
www.themathesontrust.org

ISBN: 978-1-908092-21-2

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior written permission of the Publisher.*

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

Typesetting, cover art and design by Susana Marín

CONTENTS

Preface	xv
1. No Other Word	I
No Other Word	3
The Poor in God.	4
The Shore.	5
The Vow.	6
The Oasis.	7
The Icon	8
The Refuge.	9
These Words.	10
Winter Stars	11
The Treasure.	12
No Other Art	13
The Wise	14
2. Inquiry.	15
Inquiry.	17
The Return.	18
Say <i>Allah</i>	19
Sandcastles	20
Like Sunlight	21
Like Sunlit Clouds	22
The Eagle	23
The Mind.	24
For Thomas Yellowtail	25
The Alchemy	26
On Far Horizons	27
Always New	28

3. The Vintage	29
The Vintage	31
Prayer.	32
Eden's Gold	33
The Necessary Word.	34
Till We Depart.	35
Vigil.	36
Like Ancient Rivers	37
The Road	38
Remembrance	39
The Bells	40
The Highest Ground	41
4. The Compass	43
The Compass	45
The World	46
Kali	47
Benares.	48
Shri Lalla	49
The Silence.	50
Sanctuary	51
The Echo	52
The Star	53
The Chord	54
The Garden	55
Flowers.	56
Each Morning	57
No Higher Ground	58
The Shell	59
The Loom	60
The Wheel	61
Standing Alone.	62
5. The Bridge	63
Gnosis.	65
The Question	66
The Search	67

No Frontier	68
No Other Path	69
The Ring	70
Reality	71
Travelers	72
Sophia	73
The Palace	74
In Time	75
A Falling Star	76
The Bridge	77
The Golden Hours	78
The Promised Land	79
About the Author	83
Index of First Lines	85

In Memory of Frithjof Schuon
Infinite Gratitude

“Say ‘yes’ to God, God will say ‘yes’ to thee;
This is to Heaven’s gate the golden key.
About my earthly road I do not care;
It may be long; short is God’s road to me.”



“O thou who seekest me, do never ask
Which is my homeland, nor what is my name;
The Universe is made of Light and Love,
And from this Light and from this Love I came.”

—from *Road to the Heart* by Frithjof Schuon

For friends who travel in God
And, with eternal love, for Batinah

PREFACE

POETRY IS SACRED; consequently, the purpose of these poems is to affirm the Truth and Beauty of the Real, and to turn attention to the necessity for the remembrance of God:

*The only story that does not deceive
Is telling how the soul returns to God.*



*Under the witness of the rising sun
One tale, holding all history, is true:
The wisdom of the heart has always known
From God to God the world is passing through.*

All who seek the Real are travelers on what Frithjof Schuon has termed ‘The Road to the Heart’.

Composed according to canons of traditional prosody, the defining thought at the heart of this book is the Oneness and the Totality of God:

*In consciousness of God our work is done
Each thought leads from the many to the One.*



*No longer caught in time, its spell undone,
And every thought returning to the One.*

These words echo the metaphysical vision of the saints and sages, That which is discerned by the vision of ‘the eye of the heart’ as the most enduring subject matter for poetry. Such poems should arise from the center of the soul; in that center resides the theomorphic

NO OTHER WORD

Substance, the Reality of who we are in God. In a distillation of silence and word, we seek to realize an expression which is direct, clear, exact, simple and harmonious; devoid of casual and conversational speech. No straining for 'originality'; rather, repose in the Origin.

These are songs of spiritual wayfaring:

*Arriving where the soul and Spirit rhyme
Deep in the heart the bells of Heaven chime.*



*Why are they passing through the here-below?
To know the Truth, and be the Truth they know.*

Founded upon the defining ternary of the *Religio Perennis*—Truth, Prayer and Virtue, this book is a meditation on metaphysical Truth and the remembrance of God. In consciousness where 'Only the Absolute is always new', these verses flow into a single voice, singing in praise of the all-encompassing Reality of the One.

NO OTHER WORD



NO OTHER WORD

Because the Truth is all that it may tell,
The heart unceasingly repeats *Allah*.
No other word will have the final say,
The fate of darkness is to fade away.

In silent cloisters of the here and now
Our freedom is perfected when we bow;
We shall let go of all that is not true,
In prayer we learn all we need to do.

The sun pours down its radiance of gold;
The beauty of the light does not grow old.
The heart illumined by God's Name reveals
No vision but the vision of the Real.

THE POOR IN GOD

The poor in God are beacons of the age
And quiet words of prayer are all they own.
Through every state of soul they travel on—
The invocation is their pilgrimage.

What is there left for them to see or do?
They find their happiness while passing through.
The ego like a wave rolls on the sea,
But there is something deeper they would be:

A single voice, older than Abraham,
Weaves consciousness through flesh to say *I am*.

THE SHORE

Although men say there is no Absolute,
The sun stands like a prophet in the sky.
Thinking the truth is that there is no Truth,
The mind sinks root into the deepest lie.

While shadows of opinion rule the night
A few souls on the shore of morning meet.
There God still sings Himself into the light
And from the heart of silence wise men speak—

And in the moment time is passing through
The oldest prayer remains forever new.

THE VOW

Like rising stars that blossom in the night
The souls invoking God are steeped in light.
Their knowledge centers on one certainty:
He is with you wherever you may be.

The vow they made, taking the Master's hand,
Requires all that they are to understand
The whole they seek is found in every part.
Drinking a wine that's flowing from the heart

They touch the nakedness the Truth reveals,
Till emptied of themselves they taste the Real.

THE OASIS

The true oasis in the soul's mirage;
It's there they learn what traveling is for.

The miracle of consciousness sees far
And in the heart they build a hermitage.

And as the flowers of Remembrance bloom
They wait in peace to blossom in the tomb.
What knowledge plunges them in deep delight?
What treasure buried in the ground of night?

They do not fear the fading tracks of time;
The Name of God makes earth and Heaven rhyme.

THE ICON

The poor in God must learn to travel light;
A prayer is all they carry on the way.
Why fear the time that chips away at life
When from the here and now they never stray?

They see creation is by beauty lit:
The world's an icon of the Infinite.
All parts, in perfect equilibrium,
Reveal the Self-Disclosure of the Sum.

And since the Oneness of the Real holds claim
There's nothing that does not repeat God's Name.

THE REFUGE

Say *la ilaha illa 'Llah* and find
The knowledge at the center of the mind.
More than a testament of piety,
These words are threads that weave Reality.

The refuge of the consciousness of God
Is where all travelers on the way are led.
And there the labor of this life is done
Till all they are submits before the One.

Let time erode the things their eyes can see—
A man who dies before he dies is free.
In all they know, affirming the Divine,
The Spirit through the soul begins to shine.

THESE WORDS

Say *la ilaha illa 'Llah* and find
The diamond of Truth deep in the mind.
These Words, like *Mantra* and *Upanishad*,
Unveil the Wisdom from the Heart of God.

Invoking *Allah* underneath our breath,
This Word can liberate the soul at death.
No matter where we go in time and space,
No home is found except in God's Embrace.

WINTER STARS

The Orison we carry to world's end
In every trial will be a constant friend.
We suffer dreams men write into the frost,
But calling on God's Name we're never lost.

Though *Kali-Yuga* darkens points of view,
What's false serves only to reveal the true;
And since there is no god but God alone,
And every road from God to God leads home

We watch the stars that rule the winter night;
Their message is the victory of light.

THE TREASURE

Setting a ring-stone is a jeweler's work,
But wise men place the Truth in every word.

Not rubies nested in the finest gold,
Their treasure is the consciousness of God.

A midnight bell rings at the end of time,
But through the darkness wisdom is revealed.

A few wise men pass round a cup of wine,
And praise the naked beauty of the Real.

NO OTHER ART

Our pride and passion, idols made of clay,
We here and now completely cast away;
Remembering the Real, no other art,
No fading dream disturbs a waking heart.

No longer caught in time, its spell undone,
And every thought returning to the One;
Ideas that do not help us transcend,
We leave them in the dust and say *amen*.

Absorbed in God, let ego's temple fall;
The naked man owns nothing but the All.

THE WISE

Among men or alone on mountaintops
The wise live in the Presence of the King.
Because they see the deep nature of things,
Through them a stream of prayer never stops.

Down through the centuries in every place
The saints remember God both day and night.
Some of them are like eagles in full flight
And others leave the world without a trace.

But while they live they own a single theme:
In silence and in song they hear His Name.
In different words their message is the same—
Because the world is more than just a dream
Their certitude shines like the summer sun
And they see through the many to the One.