

The Porch Poems



J.R. Solonche

Books by J.R. Solonche

For All I Know

Enjoy Yourself

To Say the Least

The Time of Your Life

The Jewish Dancing Master

In A Public Place

True Enough

If You Should See Me Walking on the Road

Tomorrow, Today, and Yesterday, Deerbrook Editions

In Short Order

I, Emily Dickinson & Other Found Poems, Deerbrook Editions

Invisible

Won't Be Long, Deerbrook Editions

The Black Birch

Beautiful Day, Deerbrook Editions

Peach Girl: Poems for a Chinese Daughter (with Joan I. Siegel)

The Porch Poems

J.R. Solonche

DEERBROOK EDITIONS

PUBLISHED BY

Deerbrook Editions
P.O. Box 542
Cumberland, ME 04021
www.deerbrookeditions.com
www.issuu.com/deerbrookeditions

FIRST EDITION

© 2020 by J.R. Solonche
All Rights reserved
ISBN: 978-1-7343884-2-8

Book design by Jeffrey Haste
Author photo by Emily Solonche

Table of Contents

There's Something to Be Said	11
Sign	12
My Mind at Present	13
Small Pleasures	14
The Drying Rack	15
Memory	16
The Family	17
At the End of June	18
I Met a Young Man	19
My Neighbors Are Woodchucks	20
The Flowers at Night	21
When I Saw It on the Ground	22
The Odor of Lilies	23
Monosyllabic	24
Twenty-Nine One-Liners on Death	25
Prospero	27
Mistake	28
Warning to a Young Poet	29
Jehovah's Witnesses	30
Clouds	31
Reading Li Po	32
Two Lilacs in Early May	33
Memorial Day	34
Three Part Cricket Poem	35
Paradise	36
The Stars	38
Day Lilies	39
I Want to Write about What I Do Not Know	40
I Am Tired of Faces	41
Poem for Myself on Rimbaud's Birthday	42
How Poets Ruin Zen	43
To My Left Hand	44
Part Two	
While the Woman Sleeps after Making Love and the Man Cannot	47

Part Three

I Learned How to Write Poetry	59
Cooking	60
There Were So Many Crows	61
Deer in the Yard	62
On the Birthday of John Keats	63
Owls	64
I Heard a Bird	65
Imagine	66
When the Rain Stopped, I Stepped Outside	67
Skunk	68
Reality	69
<i>Nothing</i> Ghazal	70
<i>Gold</i> Ghazal	71
<i>River</i> Ghazal	72
<i>Shadow</i> Ghazal	73
<i>Wind</i> Ghazal	74
Emily Dickinson's Dog	75
6:05 PM	76
A Noise	77
Because	78
I Don't Know	79
When I Saw the Hawk	80
My Neighbor	81
The Perfect Poem	82
That Word	83
Going Back To The Bullshit Shit-Ass War	84
Mother-in-Law Rose	85
Half a Hundred Years Ago	86
Eight Questions I Would Like to Have Asked the Buddha	87
When a Poet Reaches a Certain Age	88
Abu Nuwas	89
Improvisation on a Line by Wallace Stevens	91
Three Carpenters	92
My Favorite Tree	93
The Empty Stool	94
Give Me Time and I Will Give You WHAT	95
The Terror Comes with the Territory	96
When I Awake	97
I Want to Write a Poem	98
On My Afternoon Walk	99
Early Morning Poem	100

I Am Tired of Owning Things	101
I Want a Fireman's Funeral	102
Acknowledgments; About the Author	105

Part One

There's Something To Be Said

There's something to be said
for a town where

the tallest building
is a church.

Sign

God loves you.

No exceptions.

That's the sign in
front of the church.

I would like to meet
this god. I would like
to meet this god face
to face, this god that
loves us one and all,
this god that makes no
exceptions, not even
for Hitler, I presume.

I would like to meet this
god, this goddamned god,
who loves the murderer
of millions of children.

My Mind At Present

Two Yuengling Black &
Tans followed by four
glasses of Mellini Chianti &
I still have the presence
of mind to put the empties
into the recycling container &
not the trash container.
I must be wary. Soon
I will be bragging about it.

Small Pleasures

What a pleasurable
perversity it is to sit

in the rocking chair
without rocking it.

The Drying Rack

in the sunny corner
is the skeleton

of the bath mat,
the beach towel,

the dish rag. Or
sunlight's skeleton.

No matter.
The most frightening

of skeletons.
The skeleton of nothing.

Memory

King of the Gypsies,
what do you do with them all?

Where do you take them?
All the stolen ones,

the ones you scoop up from
their cradles and beds

in the middle of the night,
while they sleep your sleep for you,

while they dream your dreams for you?
What do you do with them, all the children of the dead?

The Family

across the street
lives in a big beautiful
Victorian. So far, I've
seen two daughters and
two dogs. I have not
seen the mother and
father. I hope I never
see them. I have seen
all I need to see. Two
daughters. Two dogs.

At The End Of June

At the end of June,
the rhododendron

now without its blooms,
is still the rhododendron,

but I'm having a more
difficult time spelling it.

I Met A Young Man

today who said he named
his cat Socrates. He was
about 20 or so. I told him
about the philosopher
after whom he named his cat,
and ancient Athens, and
how he was accused of
corrupting the youth of Athens,
20-somethings like himself,
and how he was found guilty
and sentenced to death
and how he drank hemlock
and died. He didn't know
what I was talking about,
so I asked him why he
named his cat Socrates,
and he said it was a cool
name, and I had to agree.
It was a cool name.

My Neighbors Are Woodchucks

My neighbors are woodchucks.
One big, one small.
I'm guessing momma and cub,
or pup, or kit, or whatever
small woodchucks are called.
I put a bowl of water on the porch
for them. I don't know why.
I knew they wouldn't come
for it even though it's so hot.
Fraternal instinct on my part?
Woodchuck instinct on theirs?
Fear of porches? Fear of fathers?
Fear of anything remotely human?
They keep their distance. And they
know what distance to keep exactly.
Unlike you and me. Oh, the bowl?
It's empty. Evaporated into thick air.

The Flowers At Night

The flowers at night are all the same.
And at night, the trees are all the same.
So too are the clouds at night the same.
Only the wind at night is different,
so different as it moans its secrets
to the unwilling who cannot turn away.

When I Saw It On The Ground

When I saw it on the ground,
struggling to get up,
the yellow wings beating so hard
against the earth I swear I could hear them,
I said a little prayer,
and in a heartbeat,
we both were blessed with what we wanted.
For me, it was the only prayer ever answered.
For the monarch, it was the only ever sky.