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Freedom (Poem)

Desmond Egan

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FREEDOM

All that is serious in life comes from our freedom.

—Henri Bergson

Desmond Egan

By his own admission, Irish poet Desmond Egan is well known and feared. A full-time writer, he has written 23 collections of poetry, and has published two translations of Greek plays. He is also Artistic Director of the Gerard Manley Hopkins International Festival, which takes place annually in Newbridge College, Ireland, and is now 24 years in existence.

Egan is married with two daughters, and lives near Newbridge, 25 miles from Dublin. He has been a visiting writer at Duquesne for 12 years. He has received a number of awards, and an Honorary Doctorate from Washburn University.

secondary smoke
sifts into everyone's lungs
the flutter of a butterfly here
can cause a landslide there

and as long as there is any captive
shuffling around in shackles and violent orange
I mean right this very minute
though unseen by you and me
can any of us be
fully free

as long as someone is screaming
as hate's electrodes are firmly applied
listen and smell I mean right now
though unseen by you and me
can any of us be
fully free

as long as someone is guilty
for being black or poor or different or young
or all of these together
though unseen by you and me
can any of us be
fully free

as long as rubber bullets
and canisters of gas have wings
as long as otherness is filtered
through a bloodshot eye
as long as one human soul cannot
rise into its own singing
though unseen by you and me
can any of us be
fully free

as long as the unhoping lie
starving of what they should have been
though unseen by you and me
can any of us be
fully free

