



## **John Michael Simon**

### **All These Things**

I blow with the breeze  
shriek with the storm  
fury in the flame  
mire in the mud

I am a feather  
a lost child  
a soldier  
a ransacker  
a prisoner of war

I am all things  
granite, greatness,  
ashes  
fireflies  
inquisitions

I am strung  
a cello string  
a steel spring  
my skin burns with lashes  
I am too sensitive  
too porous

I burn  
a scrap of ash escapes  
a few words  
charred  
unrecognizable

I am the last note  
of an adagio  
heard by an old man  
on the stair

### **Madame Tabac**

Seductive lady of languor  
I undress you with my eyes  
your skin a Virginia leaf  
your golden hair Perique  
your matted Turkish desire  
a hint of figs

Wrapped and rolled  
curling to blue cloud  
skirt sheathed silver see-through  
cellophane  
your flavor locked in

Your vibrant colors  
once decorated windows  
tempting and beckoning  
foolish men like myself

Your promise now stripped  
from your body  
discarded, crushed underfoot  
your empty shell exposed  
messages in mud:  
disease  
impotence  
Death!

And fool that I am  
I still desire  
your searing caress!

## **In an Irish Cemetery**

Breathing rain clouds into mud  
grave stones in St. Mary's stand awash,  
six thousand drenching days have cleansed  
the dust and blood stains from her son's engraved  
name and still she comes each Monday  
when traffic sweeps its way towards  
the town, shopkeepers unveil merchandise  
and elevators rise packed with a new day's  
busyness, cheer and hopes

Forget, forgive the days, they seem to say  
as orders and accounts rush through the  
corridors and streets. Schoolgirls long-skirted  
tumble laughing from a yellow bus towards  
the new day, hand-in-hand oblivious  
of the enmity that yesterday lurked here

But she cannot. Head bowed, creased mother,  
each Monday she brings her bunch of flowers  
arranges the little lamp, the candles, the photograph  
in its blurred Perspex frame. Returning home  
she sits beside the empty hearth, pens a poem.  
Hundreds of poems scratched with this bitter nib  
engrave the letters of his loss  
no drenching peace can wash away

**Johnmichael Simon** was born in England in 1938. He grew up in South Africa and has lived in Israel since 1963. He has been writing poetry seriously since retiring from his technical writing career. He has published several books of poems as well as two collections in collaboration with partner Helen Bar-Lev. His poems have been published in numerous journals and websites. Johnmichael has been awarded several prizes in international poetry competitions: first and third places in the Reuben Rose, first place in the Margaret Reid, third place in the Tom Howard plus numerous honorable mentions in other contests. His short stories have won several honorable mentions. He is the chief editor of Cyclamens and Swords Publishing.