

Michael R. Burch

If You Come to San Miguel

If you come to San Miguel
before the orchids fall,
we might stroll through lengthening shadows
those deserted streets
where love first bloomed ...

You might buy the same cheap musk
from that mud-spattered stall
where with furtive eyes the vendor
watched his fragrant wares
perfume your breasts ...

Where lean men mend tattered nets,
disgruntled sea gulls chide;
we might find that *cafetucho*
where through grimy panes
sunset implodes ...

Where tall cranes spin canvassed loads,
the strange aningas glide.
Green brine laps splintered moorings,
rusted iron chains grind,
weighed and anchored in the past,
held fast by luminescent tides ...
Should you come to San Miguel?
Let love decide.

Michael R. Burch's poems, translations, essays, articles and letters have appeared in *TIME*, *USA Today*, *BBC Radio 3*, Amnesty International's *Words That Burn*, *Writer's Digest—The Year's Best Writing* and hundreds of literary journals. His poems have been translated into eleven languages and set to music by the composers Mark Buller, Alexander Comitas and Seth Wright. He serves as the international poetry editor for *Better Than Starbucks*.