

POEMS FOR ALINA

"Ennis's best-known poems are firmly rooted in the narrative tradition exemplified in Ireland by Kavanagh". Wes Davis, editor, *An Anthology of Modern Irish Poetry* (Belknap-Harvard 2010).

Poems for Alina has, at its core, a verse sequence that speaks of a personal journey of healing while in the hands of another human being. The poems are, in the main, mini-narratives cut short in the Spanish *Romance* mode, poems which traverse the contraries of life as experienced: old age and childhood, where "All God's Chillun Got Wings"; fresh dawns and inevitable twilights; the horrors of daily life and precious dream times, hope times, time to time.

The overall structure of the book comes courtesy of Gustav Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*. The book's longest prose poem is "from the free-wheelin' Yeshua". Yeshua the Healer. A quote from Mahler prefaces each section. The multi-mood persona holds the narrative thread, however ironic, self-contradictory or self-deflating, a persona whispering Mahler's own notes for his *Resurrection* "with wings I have won for myself" seeking out, in the final section, verse that is "vigorous, light, playful, *misterioso*."

Poems for Alina interrogates myth and belief. Ennis's philosophy is in the positive archetypes of life lived, those girders that hold up not only humanity but all living things, even nature herself. The verse is unashamedly anti-fundamentalist, and pro-humanist.

John Ennis has published several books with Book Hub Publishing, including 'Going Home To Wyoming. Selected Poems 2000-2020.'



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