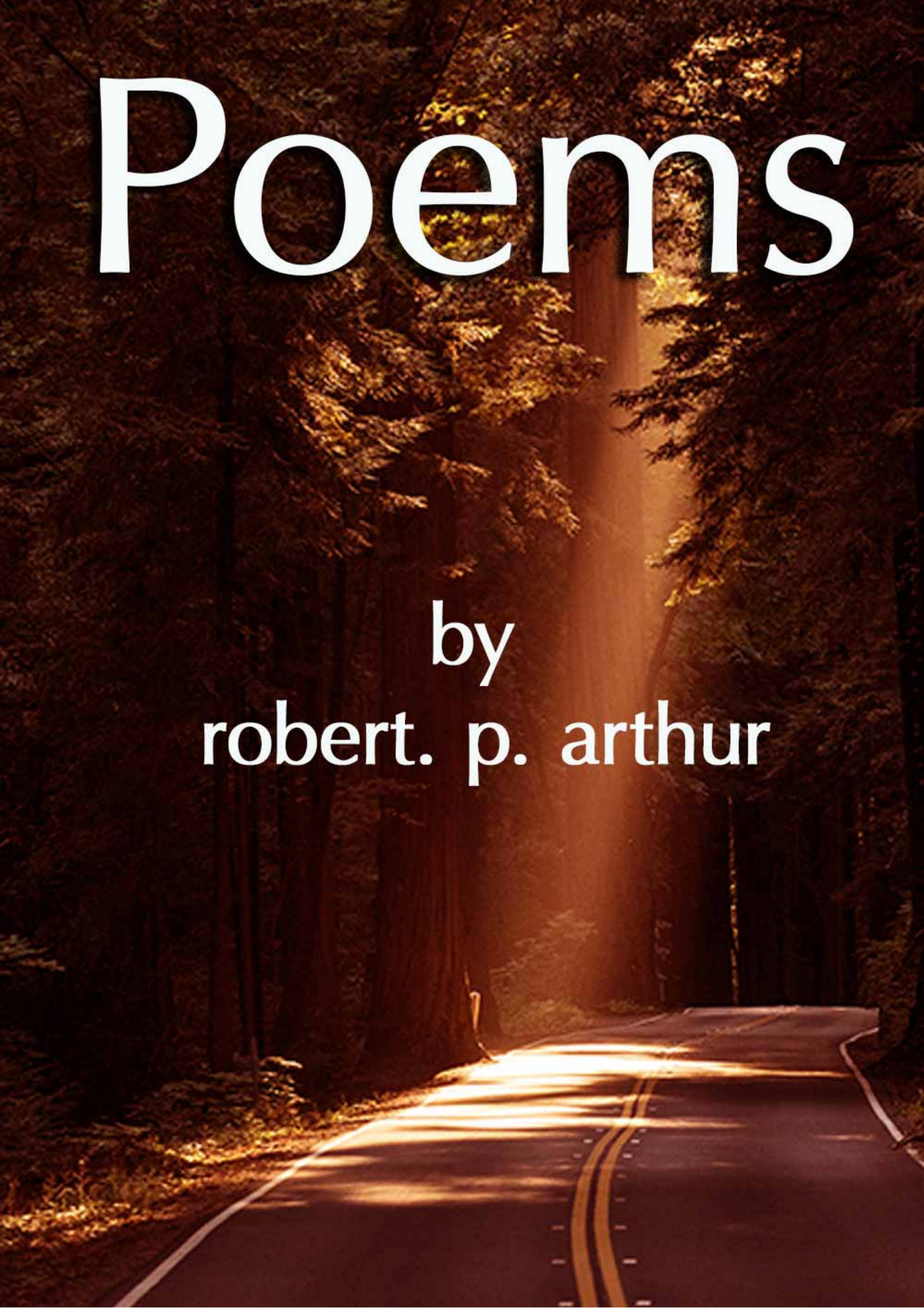


Poems

by
robert. p. arthur



Where do the crabs go?

Where do the crabs go

leaving their shadows behind them

What presses their return from

the autumnal reef

In the winter I shall row with a

stranger beside me

Call him an old hand, ready with the sail

Let the stranger spend his knowledge

of all things passing

The fiery sun that blushes to be born

The stirrings in the cottages

and demarcations of the gull

I shall row from the darkness of my

brain to where charts have no meaning

And my friends of the air cannot see one another

And should you move with me sidereally
beyond the shallows
Your petticoats behind you
And the tide at an oar

We may hope to discover no eddying
of days, or hands, or shoals
Only ourselves---ghosts of light
and tireless travelers
Some fisherman on the bay will look
up from his catch and say
with a blue sook listening
I am a living thing

I breathe and I am dying

But that is not what we'll whisper
with our voices of shelled things
In our skins of water

Recollection

last ladder backed chair taken to the truck
if only you hadn't been wearing that clean white dress
too much of me bleeding on the kitchen floor
weeping isolate

decades of pain, now racing back to where your shadow
reaches out.

from a quartic sea and stings again
all that I know and knew of love, numbered vast

(As all the world may guess, this is how you shamed me)
when did the whole god-damned sky become wolf

how so soon after re-birth
did events half forgot shuffle in my brain
random quirks of
pastiche, melange of clowns
hatred of self and disgust

but if you should die...?

if you should ever die...

If you should die and cease your search for other men
Would I not wail and pound the earth

Whoseover Loveth

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Night creeps in from the windows
You drop me to my thoughts
Bend Street is easy with traffic beyond the old bridge
In your eyes, dull rain
It is too often like this
In shadow
You are in your blankets sleeping
Not caring
If I loved you I would leave you
{afterthought}
And climb to the top of the Bend Street bridge
My heart lifting to the winds of love that rush out
to the edge of waking

Dementia

I am not on the list somewhere
of humans who think they are hats
being thrown out of windows

though I might think so

such is not madness
but rather mistakes of interpretation
in regard to
visual signals
and/or other errors

still, one finds angels in piles
of wet white towels
breathing

white walls rolling into ceilings
Charles Olson's notion:

And now let all the ship's come in/
pity and love the Return the Flower/

becoming the most beautiful
thing in the world

:the gift and the alligator catches/ -- and the mind go
forth
to the end of the world

to wit: to wit

I am probably mistaken in believing that you are so
beautiful,
that you are love
at my window,
sparrows in sunshine and unexpected gifts of snow,
but you have taken on the aspect of gentleness

and I love you,
knowing I'm probably wrong about everything I know

Aswim in Gaea (2020)

Aye, the soul losing love knows neither time nor place

blood sun
half a moon of silver
water spiked with fish

my jailers,
the sea, my enclosure
and I am ragged, a puffed sail

held by bones, my halyards
bags of winds at the throat, loosening

moons, erupting,
how many leaves of spirit
and stars like wounds of light
remembered now

a full cold moon, breaking
strawberry moon,
shining in silver,

behind an angry web

of branches frosted

remembered

thus spake the earth by sky

at night

none are forgot, ever, not even when
thought to be ghosts

the ship does not shove

aside the stings of sea— what slap of wave
is forgiven, none

thus spake the earth by sky
at night

thus speaks souls in death

the mass does not shrug
away thrusts of light— what poke of hole
is forgiven, none

moons

are breaking, falling,

cold crescent

mead moon, hay, flower, blue

provisionally winter

my clocks

running backward and forward,

places changing place

no dock, no lamp, no map, no council

indeed, ships asleep, even at harbor
dream a love garment

to take from us

this moonlight to take from us
this gilded thing
this armor

to take from us

Jeff
my brother

this bark of heart

calling out from

nets of night

black water

Written in reaction to Jeff Hewitt. the most beloved poet, musician, graphic artist, photographer, friend and publisher in Norfolk, Virginia, being lost to a motorcycle crash, 2020.

Motorcyclist

... pain clings to my shadow
its hands lock around my waist
the better to throw me

there appears to be ice in the sun
oh no, not in the sun
in collusion with wounds
just as the moon disappears

the bridge the bridge

If there is a town just ahead
I'll discover it's currents
(come like dogs with sticks in their mouths)

and speak to the populace

of how the road rushes to my wheel
and then slides under it

Ode to Women

(Song)

*Annie Erin, the thrush wakes with the sun
Where the woodlands lay frosted by dew
How the cloud drifts blue oceans of sky
And the rose climbs the briar for you*

*There you lay with your head on my knee
And the world settled down for us there
How the light came through darkness and the rain
Like a crown for your raven black hair*

Oh Crazy Beloved

Oh Star child falling from a second-story window

Oh tarn of my heart/soul imagining, holy

Scented gift of wild wet blown grasses, deuteriums of
evening

Let your skirt go now, blessed
Like an umbrella unfolding
That your legs might open

Oh goddess of flowers, sweet angel descending
Oh pinwheel of joy

Stem of the Fibonacci cradle
Oh small sprig of being

from you births slide forth new galaxies,
Star Shine, of compelling symmetry
of lines, laws, and angles embryos of, beaded, Zion
in nectar, where the Milky Way's curl and cloud
depose wisps of fairy light like softened feathers
to disambiguate our longing
for long, eternal wakefulness to bring choirs and rest

Oh bless thy proportions

Thy cane, thy crook, thy cymbal
of the Byzantines
chick chattering through the ages

in the ricks that hide in tawny reeds
in the humming fly and perching sun
in stars that wing to the hunters eye
in the time of bees

Spring Spring Spring

Extract of bird in everything

