

Frank McGuinness

Three poems from
The Wedding Breakfast

Translated by Fiorenzo Fantaccini



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Three poems from *The Wedding Breakfast*

Frank McGuinness

Translated by Fiorenzo Fantaccini

“Kites”¹

After forty years
embracing tonight
I reach and touch
air between us.

Your body flees,
free as a kite,
a vein of flesh,
string tied to dust

“Aquiloni”

Dopo quarant’anni
di abbracci stanotte
raggiungo e tocco
l’aria fra noi.

Il tuo corpo fugge,
libero come un aquilone,
una vena di carne,
corda legata alla polvere.

¹ The poems by Frank McGuinness, originally published in *The Wedding Breakfast* (2019), and their translations appear by kind permission of the author and The Gallery Press (<www.gallerypress.com>).

“Lucrezia Borgia”

I broke a mirror across my lover's head.
Who was it poured milk in his mercury?

He dressed me in leaves of mulberry trees.
He placed on my face a mask cut from lead.

“Lucrezia Borgia”

Ho rotto uno specchio sulla testa del mio amante
Chi è stato a versar latte nel suo mercurio?

Mi ha vestito con foglie di gelso.
Ha posto sul mio volto una maschera tagliata nel piombo.

“Easter in Venice”

in memory of Constance Hayes Hadfield

The day they dragged me from my mother’s paws
 the doge committed original sin –
 shoes on the table, the flowering haw.
 Miracles happen each day in Venice.

Bricks in the bridge carouse the Rialto.
 The lagoon waters turn our ships to stone.
 Lie in the street, demolish fiascos.
 A blast from your lips of ‘Molly Malone’.

Venetian first, Christian second.
 Who do we celebrate this Easter Day?
 Emperor, sultan? The fat of the land?
 Nothing is simple in Venice, we say.

“Pasqua a Venezia”

in memoria di Constance Hayes Hadfield

Il giorno in cui mi strapparono dalle zampe di mia madre
 il doge commise il peccato originale –
 scarpe sul tavolo, il biancospino in fiore,
 A Venezia i miracoli accadono ogni giorno.

I mattoni del ponte scuotono il Rialto.
 Le acque della laguna mutano in pietra le nostre navi.
 Sdraiarsi per strada, dimenticare i fallimenti.
 Dalle tue labbra scoppia ‘Molly Malone’.

Prima veneziana, poi cristiana.
 Questa Pasqua chi celebriamo?
 Un imperatore, un sultano? I migliori prodotti della terra?
 A Venezia niente è semplice, diciamo.

