

Elegy of a Young Poet

Abhaya

“Elegy of a Young Poet” has gone through several incarnations. It was first written as a collection of poems called, “Let Me Burn”. I called them transliterations, at the time, of Rimbaud and Breton in French and Lorca in Spanish. These were poets I cared for, writing in languages I don’t read or understand well enough to translate, but the similarities in Romance languages prompted me to conjure language of my own.

Later, these poems were called “The Azure Blizzard” and then “In the Garden of Fugitive Souls.” Recently, I tried to turn them into a dialog for the stage, but their essential nature as poetry remained. In the course of re-working it, I realized it had a sensibility I wasn’t aware of when I wrote it. I was a young poet, in my early thirties, having begun to think of myself as a poet for only a few years, and I didn’t realize that not only was I accurately describing myself in my impulses, habits, and passions, I was describing the course of my life as a poet over the next thirty years. “Elegy of a Young Poet” lays out the path for my work before I knew it had a path. Still, it remains the work of a young man, mired in desire and despair, the passions of a young man. I don’t carry the same emotional attachments I did when I was thirty, but I recognize myself in the continuity of the spirit.

I call this piece of writing an elegy, because it speaks of death in many ways, especially in the sense of passing from one form to another, and from form into the formless.