

ON POETRY COLLECTIONS

I am aware that there are poets who are comfortable with the idea of programming collections of poetry. I am one of those poets who write poems without thinking about what poetry collection they may fall into in the future. I know, too, that business schools emphasize the importance of forward planning, the benefits brought about by careful and realistic budgeting, and the need to draw up a predetermined level of capital expenditures for any ongoing business concern. These are matters that can spell great profitability, plain survival, or bankruptcy for a firm. Nevertheless, what can prove essential for a business concern may not work as well for poetry writing. While some poets—especially those who may have some background in business—could find foreseeing an idea for a poetry collection and consequently writing poetry on the basis of that vision a truly attractive proposition, I sincerely think this is not the usual fare for most poets.

For me—and I suspect for many other poets as well—coming up with an idea for a collection of poetry is mainly an *a posteriori* event, something that comes naturally after having reviewed a series of poems written during a period of time. In my particular case, the realization that there is a theme or mindset or even a prejudice that runs through several poems I have written always comes. The poetry collection, then, is for me not usually something predetermined or programmed. It simply *happens*.

I would like to think of poetry writing as something similar to travelling. The traveller goes through several legs or stages of his trip before he reaches his destination. During the time he spends travelling, he can focus on the landscape that comes to view, his fellow passengers and perhaps his interaction with them, or his own thoughts and reflections while remaining in the bus, the train, or the plane on which he travels. If he manages to write poems with those different focal points, they can indeed constitute—*a posteriori*—the main themes of different poetry collections.

Marciano Malvar Guzman