

A Poet's Voice

Elka Enola

Elka Enola is interested in all the performing and visual arts, as well as in history, other cultures, photography, travel, architecture and food. Her poetry has been published and translated nationally and internationally. She is the Coordinator of the Oakville Literary Alliance, The Ontario Poetry Society (Oakville) and Founder of The Poetry Café. She is the Founding Past President of the Halton-Peel Humanist Community and past Coordinator of the Humanist Association of Toronto. She is currently working on a book about The Silk Road based on her journey through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China.

Author's Statement Coming from an a-cultural and illiterate home, I remember being in grade 5 and, for the first time, seeing a book of poetry. Many years later, when driving through Kicking Horse Pass in the Rockies, I leapt from the car and proceeded to declare, at the top of my voice, the poem "Kicking Horse Pass", published in that book of long ago. A successful work of art, no matter what the medium, should have an immediate and profound connection with the viewer/listener/reader. Many of my poems are based on my photographs which accompany the poem.



Napoleon's Tomb, Paris, France

Beneath the cross
the spire

the gilded dome
beneath the captured enemy banners
beneath the nave

Within the beautifully polished
wood sarcophagus
within six matrushkah coffins
lies
whatever is left
of
Napoleon

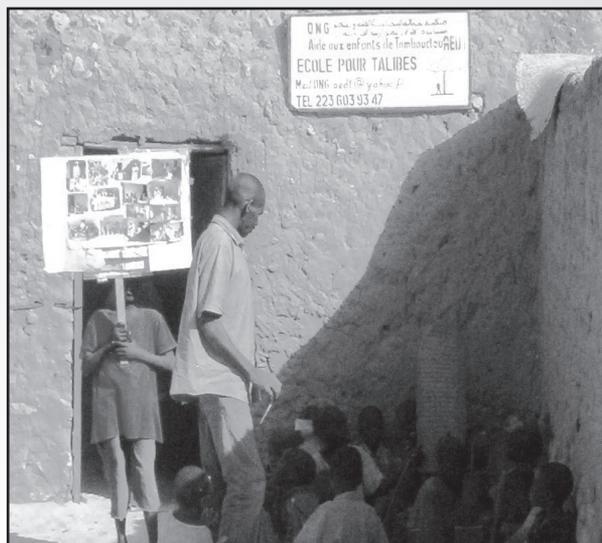
Godless

God doesn't speak to me
In fact
no gods
ever did

"I have the Truth, the only Truth,"
declared the Pope
to the multi child families
in the poorest places
and to millions of children
orphaned by AIDS.
His Truth is not much different than
the Imam's
sending yet another
bomb laden youth
to end the lives
of people drinking coffee
or choosing socks
or celebrating a wedding

My truth
without capitals
is the multifaceted world
of greed and hate
fuelled mostly by religions
and infested with power

It's a major skill
to embrace Truth
even when it hurts



Ecole Pour Talibes, Timbuctu, Mali

At first you don't see them
 against the wall
 in the shade of the mosque
 with a future
 as empty as their begging cans

Their sisters are
 long gone
 sold to other men
 for other uses

These boys
 orphaned by death
 or by choice
 delivered to a Marabout
 no questions asked

In the early morning, they
 study the Koran
 only the Koran
 using clay tablets
 wood tablets
 pasted photographs
 and then
 late morning
 when school's out,
 they hit the streets
 to beg
 for food and water and clothes
 and money
 for without money
 they dare not return

Only those paying their way
 get night shelter
 with their Marabout

African Art In Africa (Dakar, Senegal)

I come to Africa
 looking for authentic Africa
 The guts from the past
 the gauze from the future.
 Something I cannot see or buy
 back home

I come to Africa
 searching for art
 reflection of truth
 of the people of Africa

I find instead
 the blindfold of Christianity
 the gag of Islam

Together they squelch
 the African rhythm
 blind the artists
 and clothe
 the naked statues



Head and Hand, Church of St Eustache Paris, France

Hollow head
 church obedient
 filled with relentless fear
 preposterous promises

Eternal yearning for understanding
 not found here
 not near any church

Hand held out
 pleads for more