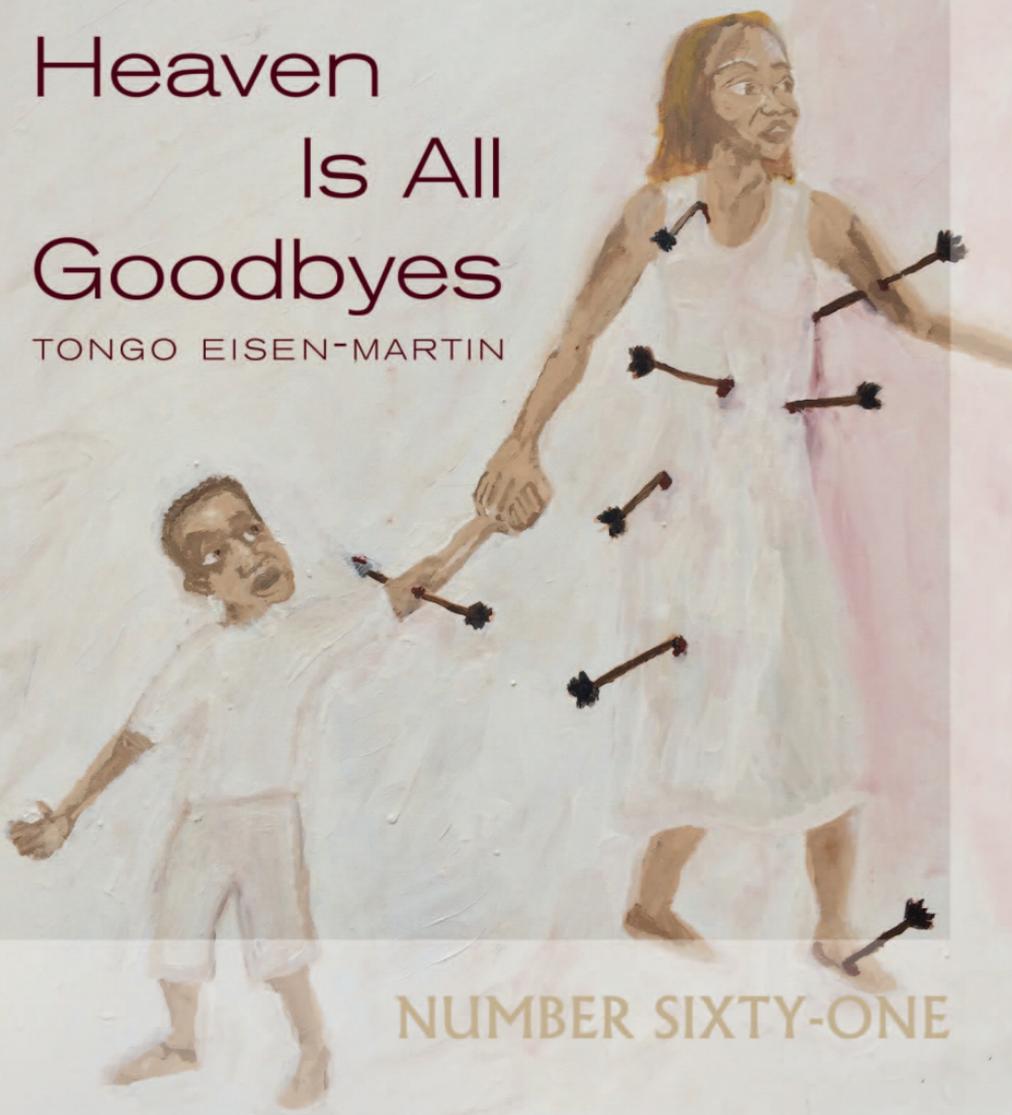


THE POCKET POETS SERIES

Heaven Is All Goodbyes

TONGO EISEN-MARTIN

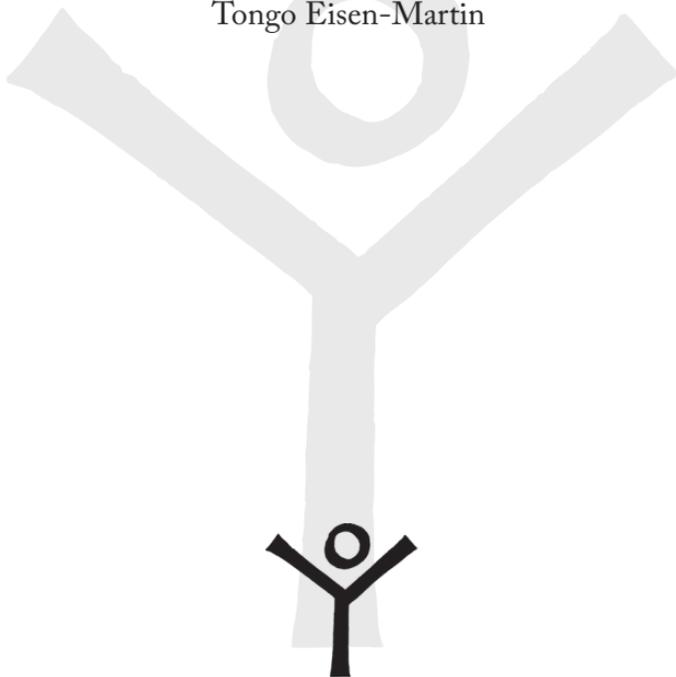


NUMBER SIXTY-ONE

CITY LIGHTS BOOKS

HEAVEN IS ALL GOODBYES

Tongo Eisen-Martin



Pocket Poets Series : Number 61
City Lights Books | San Francisco

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CITY LIGHTS

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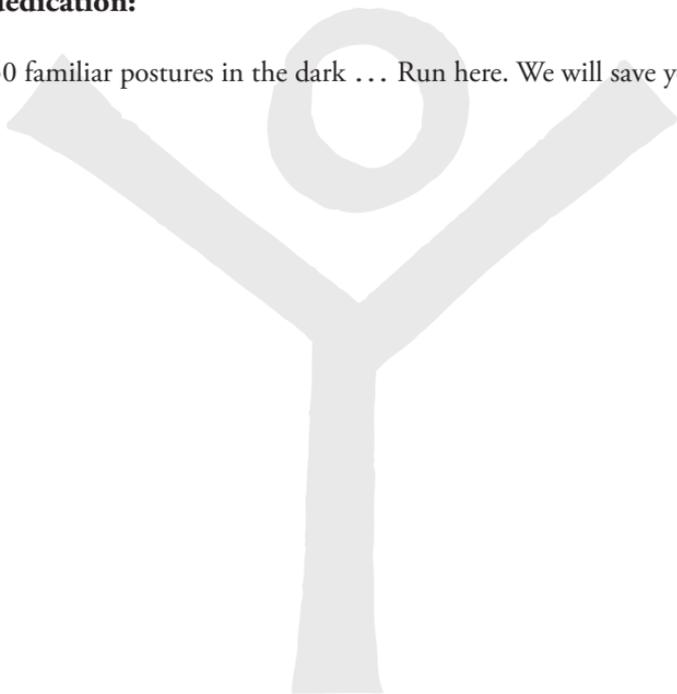
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The dedication:

Like 50 familiar postures in the dark ... Run here. We will save your life.



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Faceless

A tour guide through your robbery

He also is

Cigarette saying, “look what I did about your silence.”

Ransom water and box spring gold

—This decade is only for accent grooming, I guess

Ransom water and box spring gold

—The corner store must die

War games, I guess

All these tongues rummage junk

The start of mass destruction

Begins and ends

In restaurant bathrooms

That some people use

And other people clean

“you telling me there’s a rag in the sky?”

—waiting for you. yes—

we’ve written a scene

we’ve set a stage

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We should have fit in. Warehouse jobs are for communists. But now more corridor and hallway have walked into our lives. Now the whistling is less playful and the barbed wire is overcrowded too.

My dear, if it is not a city, it is a prison.
If it has a prison, it is a prison. Not a city.

When a courtyard talks on behalf of military issue,
all walks take place outside of the body.

Dear life to your left
Medieval painting to your right
None of this makes an impression

Crop people living in thin air
You got five minutes
to learn how to see
through this breeze

When a mask goes sideways,
Barbed wire becomes the floor
Barbed wire becomes the roof
Forty feet into the sky
becomes out of bounds

When a mask breaks in half,
mind which way the eyes go.

They've killed the world for the sake of giving everyone the same backstory

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We're watching Gary, Indiana fight itself into the sky

Old pennies for wind. For that wind feeling you get before the hood goes up and over your headache. Pennies that stick together (mocking all aspirations). Stuck together pennies was the first newspaper I ever read. Along with the storefront dwelling army that always lets us down.

Where the holy spirit favors the backroom. Souls in a situation that offer one hundred ways to remain a loser. Souls watching the clock hoping that eyes don't lie to sad people.

*“what were we talking about again?”
the narrator asked the graveyard
—ten minutes flat—
said the graveyard
—the funeral only took ten minutes—
“never tell that to anyone again,”
the narrator severely replied*

“You just going to pin the 90s on me?”

—all thirty years of them—

“Then why should I know the difference between sleep and satire?”

the pyramid of corner stores fell on our heads
—we died right away

that building wants to climb up and jump off another building
—these are downtown decisions

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somewhere on this planet, it is august 7th

and we're running down the rust thinking, "one more needs to
come with me"

"What
evaporated
on earth, so
that we could
be sent back
down?"

A conductor of minds
In a city-wide symphony
Waving souls to sing
He also is

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The Course of Meal

Apparently, too much of San Francisco was not there in the first place

This dream requires more condemned Africans

Or (put another way)

State violence rises down

Or

Still life is just getting warmed up

Or

Army life is looking for a new church and ignored all other suggestions

Or

Folk tale writers have not made up their minds as to who are going to be their friends

“this is the worst downtown yet. And I’ve borrowed a cigarette everywhere
... I’ve taken many a walk to the back of a bus that led on out the back of a
storyteller’s prison sentence, then on out the back of slave scars.”

“Though this is my comeback face.”

“I left my watch on the public bathroom sink and took the toilet with me. I threw it at the first bus I saw eating single mothers half alive. It flew through the bus line number, then on out the front of the white house”

hopefully you find comfort downtown. But if not, we’ve brought you enough cigarette filters to make a decent winter coat

a special species of handshake
lets all know who's king and what the lifespan is of uniform cloth

*this coffin needs to quit acting like those are birds singing
rusty nails have no wings
have no voice other than that of a white world dying
there are book pages in the gas pump
catchy isn't it?
the way three nooses is the rule
or the way potato sack masks go well with radio codes*

Or the way condemned Africans fought their way back to the
ocean only to find waves made of
1920s burned up piano parts
European backdoor deals
and red flowers for widows who spend all day in the
sun mumbling at San Francisco

“red flowers, but what's the color of a doctor visit?”

There are book titles in the street

Book titles like:

Hero, You'd Make A Better Zero

Fur Coat Lady, The President Is Dead

Pay Me Back In Children

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They Hung Up Their Bodies In Their Own Museums

—and other book titles pulled out of a drum solo

RUN HERE, HERO!
—lied the hiding place

all the bullets in ten precincts know where to go
there's no heaven (nor any other good ideas) in the sky
politics means: people did it and people do it.
understand that when in San Francisco
and other places that were never really there

*bet this ocean thinks it's an ocean
but it's not.
it's just 6th and mission street.*

“All know who is king. King of thin things. Like america. I'm
proud to deserve to die . . . I will eat my dinner extra slow
tonight in this
police state candy dispenser that
you all call a neighborhood . . . ”

no set of manners
goes unpunished
never mind about
a murderer's insomnia
or the tea kettle preparing everyone for police sirens

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