

# Poems by John FitzGerald

## Tooth Fairies

They come, or cross over, in measured degree  
proportionately as I ignore them  
to provide for orderly creation

Make any point possess the whole  
and understand the secret  
of the teardrop that I came from

Allow the smoke to dissipate  
the reek to wane, or rearrange  
as I was saying

All I really need  
has been revealed to me in fairy tales  
They fashion piano keys from our teeth

to produce that twinkling sound in flight  
It's a thriving trade, so they have charts  
much as butchers do for meat

Canine, molar, bicuspid  
each fetches its particular price  
But as I said, they enter in

and run around through holes in my head  
like bugs weighing my mind  
beneath my pillow as I dream

They leave as payment  
the equivalent of my aspirations  
which is always a quarter

They come only at night  
because all the world fears a human being  
and when we catch one

we tie it to strings  
and drag it behind cars at weddings  
for the musical sparks left in its wake

## Chess

*I want to be with those who know secret things or else alone.*

--Rilke

### The Game Begins

I am not as good at chess as I dream. More a poet at it.  
But the pre-beginning creates itself right after the beginning.  
It's ironic, because the beginning has to happen first,  
the former being timeless.

And it's no judgment, to call the pre-beginning timeless.  
It simply follows its own rules. Go back to when we first  
agreed to play. "Let's set up the board," we said,  
and moved the pieces into place, part of the game.

We can't just start with everyone scattered.  
Positions must be occupied. Otherwise, when can we say  
the game began? A few weeks ago when we both discovered  
we knew the rules and said we should get together?

Of course not. The game began after the pieces were set.  
That way we agree upon an official beginning.  
And if the beginning is first, the pre-beginning is zeroth,  
because it came before the first.

From *Favorite Bedtimes Stories* (Salmon Poetry, 2014)

### **BIO:**

**John FitzGerald** is a poet, writer, editor and attorney for the disabled in Los Angeles. A dual citizen of the United States and Ireland, he attended the University of West Los Angeles School of Law, where he was editor of the Law Review. His most recent book is *Favorite Bedtime Stories* (Salmon Poetry, 2014). *The Mind* was published by Salmon Poetry in 2011. His first book, *Spring Water*, was a Turning Point Books prize selection in 2005. *Telling Time by the Shadows* was released in April 2008 by Turning Point Books. As yet unpublished works include *Primate*, a novel and screenplay, and the non-fiction *Everything I Know*.

He has contributed to the anthologies *Poetry: Reading it, Writing it, Publishing it* (Salmon Poetry), *Dogs Singing: A Tribute Anthology* (Salmon Poetry), and *From the Four-Chambered Heart: In Tribute to Anais Nin* (Sybaritic Press) as well as to many literary magazines, notably *The Warwick Review*, *World Literature Today*, *Barnwood Mag*, *Askew Poetry Journal*, *Spillway*, and *Lit Bridge*.