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.

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**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_.