

Laura Tohe

Published: "Japanese Garden." Poets.org. Nov. 11, 2019

Japanese Garden
(After a stone and sand exhibit in Portland)

A man is leading the animals.

A man is leading the ones that float on water.

A man is leading the winged ones.

A man is leading the ones that swim.

Maybe he's St. Francis,

the long-robed man who calls the animals to him now.

Maybe he's Noah,

the one who gathered the animals

and sailed away with the, they say.

Who was there to witness their leaving?

To sing a song for their journey?

Where are they going?

their faces turned northward,

taking their songs,

taking their maps,

taking their languages.

Are they leaving with joy in their hearts?

Or is sadness eating at their star hearts?

In the wake of their leaving a small wind

stirs the empty hands of the tree branches above us.

What I will remember—

footsteps left like dinosaur tracks

pressed between Sky Woman and Mother Earth.

When they leave,

I will weep.

I will weep.

“Japanese Garden.” Poets.org. Nov. 11, 2019