

Poet Nicole Cooley Comments on *Eye to Eye*, National Arts Club Book Launch, 6/4/14

The poet WB Yeats wrote, “Man is in love and loves what vanishes, what more is there to say?” and it is this love of the world and its vanishing that Maria Terrone’s new *Eye To Eye* explores. Rooted in a range of landscapes—from Italy to Buenos Aires to Orient Point to the Bronx—Maria’s poems are passionate engagements with home and exile, with the living and the dead. We travel in time and space throughout the book. Ghosts return, people step in and out of centuries.

Most of all—it strikes me—these poems continually explore what lies beneath the surface, what might at first appear to be invisible. Beneath a buried volcano, inside a jewelry box, on the label of a piece of clothing, at the edge of a tatted handkerchief. Sometimes shifting our angle of vision—this book teaches us--can offer a new perspective on the world and give us access to the invisible. As Maria writes in the poem “From Where I Sit,” “it’s possible to move an inch to the right /and see what lies beyond.”

Again and again, this book pays tribute to sight and vision and asks us as readers and viewers to see beyond the world we live in. In the brilliant title poem, “Eye to Eye,” the speaker studies a glass case full of eye jewelry which she describes as “like the small, still centers/ of a hundred hurricanes gathering force, glaring / from pins, pendants, lockers, rings, brooches/ framed in gold, encrusted in amethysts / and seed pearls. staring me down.” The poem ends with an image of Lazarus “emerging / from the cave” and asks us to consider what his life became with “all those eyes /riveted on him, wondering what he had seen.”

These poems bear witness to the invisible, demand that we listen, and teach us lessons about what will sustain us. This is an unforgettable collection.