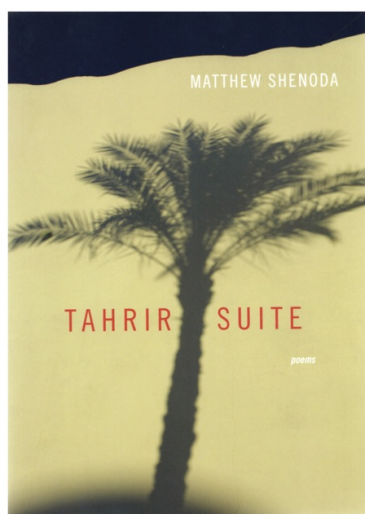


## POETRY



**Tahrir Suite** is Matthew Shenoda's third book of poetry, following on from *Seasons Of Lotus, Seasons Of Bone* (2009) and *Somewhere Else* (2005), both of which were very well received. It's a book length poem, comprising three short 'stanzas' (though that term hardly does justice to his poetics) laid out across each page and flowing through four titled sections of its epic motion. Drawing on his Coptic roots & Afro-American experience, Egyptian history ancient and utterly contemporary, Shenoda traces the migration of two figures, Tekla and Isis, in their displacement.

Though place and politics are rarely specified, the poet manages to weave specific and transnational together, allowing us to know what is not named: "There is more to this / Than a friendly mask / A dictator swallows the clouds for shade / And the people are left beneath the sun / As fire rages in their spines" (p.19), and: "We move from border to border / Make waste of our own breath" (p.32).

When reading "He wondered how tanks could rule a people / How men trained for killing can make a nation / How a nation can make men for killing" (p.55) we know the poet is alluding to more than one nation, more than one people, more than one age or system of politics, even as the poem is being pulled, and moves us, very much through our present.

Shenoda dances the migrant thought 'stanzas' of the two figures across every page in an undemonstrative but potent flow of language. This is very fine poetry, its combined stress, fluidity and spirit uncommon in contemporary English. In his acknowledgements the poet gives thanks to Chris Abani and Kwame Dawes and it's good to place his work in their company for the agility, steadiness and grace of his own language. Published by TriQuarterly Books /Northwestern University Press, Evanston, USA, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8101-3024-1, 71pp, pbk, \$16.95. Stephen Watts

**Tender Spot: Selected Poems** by Naomi Shihab Nye is an expanded edition of the book of the same title published by Bloodaxe in 2008 and reviewed with warmth and insight by Judith Kazantzis in *Banipal* 32 the same year (see [http://www.banipal.co.uk/book\\_re-](http://www.banipal.co.uk/book_re-)