

Coat of Arms

By Jim Johnstone.

The flags are flying at half-mast.
It's half-past ten and you'd think
they'd unfurled just for us,
the way we stretch, windblown,
and wrap around each other
in bed. At this hour, it's hard
to get up without acknowledging
that flying is a kind of dream,
without feeling the night air sweep
its acrylic under our bodies until
we're naked in front of our peers.
Peer in and it's just my mind.
There's nothing I know for sure
and I'm sure many will note
even that is wrong. Why would
I argue when you're the heraldry
our family bears? It doesn't
matter what I say. It's what you hear.

Jim Johnstone is a Toronto-based poet, editor and critic. His most recent books include *The King of Terrors* (Coach House, 2023) and *Bait & Switch: Essays, Reviews, Conversations, and Views on Canadian Poetry* (The Porcupine's Quill, 2024).