

American Psalm, World Psalm

Nicholas Samaras

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The Lord is my muse, I shall not want.

Green pastures, still waters, paths of righteousness, walks through the valley of the shadow of death—Thou anointest my head with poetry; my pen runneth over.

The biblical Psalms, in all their praise, stand as the greatest poetry ever written, arguably. They are perfect.

So what manner of burning bush lit a fire under Nicholas Samaras's ass and inspired him to reimagine all 150 Psalms into contemporary language, with a back beat of blues, jazz, folk, hip hop, and world music? A touch of poet as thief of fire, perhaps? Chutzpah? Who cares, he nailed it!

A National Endowment for the Arts and Lilly Endowment Foundation fellowship award winner, Samaras's poems have appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, and numerous other publications.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Fall 2014)

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