POETRY

Père Lachaise

The sun rises between slivers of stone;
Crenellations through which light blinds us.
Our way made through iron gates and toward the glare
Jim is here, somewhere
And Frédéric too
Where the gallery fades and processions
Roam into view
Ramparts grown grassy yet bare
And tortuous paths once-manicured but now ill-kept
With distant Gregorian chants on a swiftly swept wind.
We came by this sequestered place
Alone, but now
hand in hand
Behind the reams of guards, they too following the chorus
As birds chirp above the medieval din
And time presses with the rising sun
Eclipsing us behind the Wilde, the Raspail
Furtive in the shadows of Molière and Lafontaine
Whose fountains now have dried.
Their eternity we have spied
In finite rectangles of stone, on crumbling pedestals
The light glints off fallen letters overgrown
By dandelions yellow and envious
I rest my elbows on the dead, captured on your eager film
You smile dancing through ornate chambers
Littered amidst flat modesty and plastic clutter
This is where I lost you despite finding my way
Where, with the sun gold in your brown eyes
You moved so nimbly among the tombstones:
above
between
beneath

Alexandre Poppe MD
Foothills Medical Centre
Calgary, Alta.

CMAJ 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.101001

©2011 Jupiterimages Corp.