

# MÉ IÓNA

## I AM JONAH

A bilingual haiku sequence by Gabriel Rosenstock



*The Prophet Jonah* by Michelangelo (1511)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/michelangelo/the-prophet-jonah-1511>

1

**Is mé Ióna mac Aimití  
cloisim guthanna  
guthanna ón duibheagán**

**I am Jonah son of Amittai  
I hear voices  
voices from the deep**

2

laistigh díom is lasmuigh  
atá na guthanna sin  
aithním is ní aithním iad

these voices are within  
and without  
familiar and strange

3

guthanna uisciúla ag glaoch  
teangacha guairneáin  
istigh ionam – beo!

watery voices calling  
swirling tongues  
alive – inside me

4

tostanna  
nár bh eol dom cheana  
ag leathnú amach go fíor na spéire i gcéin

silences  
never known before  
extending to the far horizon

5

de chine eile mé  
dá réir sin  
caithfear amach mé

of another race am I  
and therefore  
I shall be cast out

6

cé hé an Tiarna  
a chruthaigh na farraigí  
agus an talamh tirim

who is the Lord  
who made the seas  
and dry land

7

guth faoileáin  
ag gearradh tríom –  
scréach bhreithe mo mháthar

the voice of a seagull  
rips through me –  
my mother's birth cry

8

mise mise mise  
faoi ndeara an stoirm mhór seo  
mise amháin

it is I I I  
I am the cause of this great storm  
I alone

9

mise amháin a shuaimhneodh í  
trí thumadh go domhain  
i gcroí an dorchadais

only I can quieten it  
diving deep  
into the heart of darkness

10

táim ag dul i laige  
le giorra anála –  
leanfad orm ag canadh

I grow weak  
short of breath –  
must go on singing

11

an dorchadas seo  
cad é féin  
an é m'athair é?

this darkness  
what is it  
is it my father?

12

an mise an dorchadas  
an dorcha atáimse  
cá bhfuil colmán geal m'ainme

am I this darkness too  
am I dark  
where is the bright dove of my name

13

cad faoi ndeara don mhíol mór seo  
trua a ghlacadh dom  
is mé a shlogadh

why does this whale  
take pity on me  
and swallow me

14

an bolg seo      an míol mór seo  
cad . . . cé thú féin  
an tú mo mháthair

this belly      this whale  
what . . . who are you  
are you my mother

15

a mháithrín  
mise atá ann – Ióna –  
do choilmín

dear mother  
it is I – Jonah –  
your little dove

16

an eitleoidh mé dhuit  
a mháithrín dhil  
an eitleoidh mé uait

shall I fly for you  
dearest little mother  
shall I fly away

17

féach, a mháithrín  
táim ag eitilt  
do mhíle súil ag breathnú orm

look, mother  
I am flying  
your thousand eyes watching me

18

tiarna na smugairlí róin  
cad is ainm dó  
a mháithrín, an eol duit

the lord of jellyfishes  
what is his name  
mother do you know it

19

an cuimhin leat, a mháithrín  
mé ag snámh ionat  
mo smig os cionn an aigéin chosmaigh

do you remember, mother  
I swam in you  
my chin above the cosmic ocean

20

cá bhfuilir anois  
i measc na réalt  
an léir duit mé led' mhíle súil

where are you now  
among stars  
can you see me with a thousand eyes

21

cloisim thú  
im' bhuille croí féinig:  
*a Ióna a cholmáin, ar sé*

I hear you  
in my own heartbeat:  
*Jonah little dove, it says*



22

fiú má éagann an ghrian  
m'ainm á rá aige  
m'ainm á rá

even though the sun may die  
it says my name  
says my name

23

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I hear voices  
voices from the deep**



*La Barque de Jonas* by Marc Chagall (1977)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/marc-chagall/a-jonah-s-boat-1977>