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California poet extols the concept of listening

PITTSBURGH—Peter Everwine has been called “a poet’s poet,” a writer whom other poets read with both envy and gratitude. The University of Pittsburgh Press has just released his newest collection, *Listening Long and Late*.

“I don’t know what the experience of writing poetry is like for other people, but it seems to me that my aspect of trying to write is really about trying to listen,” Everwine once told the *Iowa Review*.

The central Californian explained the influence of the Nahuatl poetic tradition on his work. “I liked what seemed to be their way of rooting themselves into a world of simple things like birds, flowers, precious stones,” he said. “They had a vertical way of thinking. So you have a bird, but the bird is at the same time a mythic bird. And then it’s also the soul of a warrior or a king. And they could collapse all of this into one image. I found it beautiful because it wasn’t primarily visual.”

“The poems in Everwine’s *Listening Long and Late* are woven out of memory and mystery, with surprising translations from the Nahuatl and Hebrew,” praised Anne Marie Macari. “Everwine is a faithful listener, always keeping ‘one ear cocked for the unsayable.’ These elegiac poems murmur and sing and celebrate the most humble creatures among us.”

Everwine has had a multifaceted career as a poet, translator, and teacher. He is the author of seven previous poetry collections, including *From the Meadow* and *Collecting the Animals*, which won the Lamont Poetry Prize in 1972. Everwine is the recipient of numerous honors, including a Pushcart Prize, a Wallace Stegner fellowship, and fellowships from the NEA and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Emeritus professor of English at California State University-Fresno, Everwine was a senior Fulbright lecturer in American poetry at the University of Haifa, Israel, and a visiting writer at Reed College.

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