Book of the Month

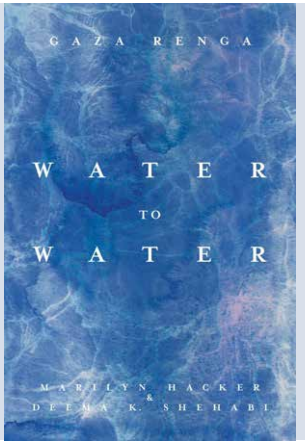
Water to Water

Gaza Renga

By Marilyn Hacker and Deema K. Shehab

Interlink Books, Fall 2025, paperback, 141 pages





Water to Water: Gaza Renga is a poetry collaboration in the call-and-response form of Renga by two award-winning poets during the genocide in Gaza. In 2009, prompted by the Israeli siege of Gaza, poets Marilyn Hacker and Deema Shehabi started a correspondence. It took the form of responding to each other's poems. They resumed their poetic dialogue by email after Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza in October 2023.

Their project involved an alternate call-and-response between them in the tradition of the Japanese Renga form, each poet picking up a word, phrase, or image from the preceding poem. The result is a fascinating poetic conversation. The two poetic voices are beautifully meshed together, so that it actually reads as one long poem.

The poetry is very rich in imagery, and these images stay with you, as do the feelings that the poems generate, for example, of unrest, of being in exile. Television and social media show you the pictures in the streets; this poetry takes you into the homes and minds of people. You can read it very much between the lines, and therefore it seems to speak to people about their own experiences.

Water to Water: Gaza Renga is a dignified celebration of humanity in and among atrocities. Although triggered by events in Gaza, it weaves in other conflicts past and present.

Marilyn Hacker is the author of twenty-one books of poems, including three collaborative books, and twenty-two collections of translations from the French language. Over the course of her career, she has received numerous honors, including the National Book Award, the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation, the PEN/Voelcker Award, the Argana International Poetry Prize, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. She served as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, editor of the *Kenyon Review*, and editor of the French literary journal *Siècle 21*. Marilyn lives between Paris and New York.

Deema K. Shehabi is a Palestinian American poet and editor. She is the author of *Thirteen Departures from the Moon* and the co-editor (with Beau Beausoleil) of *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*, for which she received NCBRâ€™s recognition award. Deema is also the winner of the 8102 Nazim Hikmet Poetry Prize and was nominated for the 2021 Best of the Net award and has received several Pushcart Prize nominations. Her poems have been widely published in literary journals, and her work has been translated into Arabic, French, and Farsi.

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