

The book cover features a vertical painting of a forest in autumn. The trees have dark, slender trunks and are covered in vibrant red and orange leaves. A large, glowing yellow and orange sun or moon is positioned in the upper center, partially obscured by the branches. The background is a mix of warm colors, including reds, oranges, and yellows, with some cooler blue and purple tones. The overall style is expressive and painterly.

TRIBUTARIES

A Book of Poetry

Pamala
Ballingham

Tributaries: A Book of Poetry

Pamala Ballingham

Excerpt created for Booklife.com

Poetry is often challenged to be understood or embraced, yet Ballingham's book brings poetry to life with deep connections to grief, compassion, living well, and grace. As described by Ballingham, "Tributaries: A Book of Poetry, harnesses the power of words to reveal deep meaning in complex matters of life and death.

Inspired by the wonders of nature, I contemplate the glow of love, the ache of grief, and the beauty of wildernesses all around us. These poems offer a powerful glimpse into the otherwise inaccessible mystery of the human spirit."

WITHOUT A WORD BEING SPOKEN

For Renate

What impotent little words
can I stitch together to say
how the granite-gray mountains
settle in the bone
when I first open the morning door?

Maybe the voice of Raven,
raspy like a tooth,
says it best
when she and her kin
piece together sound bites,
bird to bird,
like they have since the first sun.

Or maybe the pine tree
murmurs it most true
as she stands there, ecstatic,
her shining wings touching the sun,
her great roots in webs of woody rivers,
communing,
running off the mountain into the valley,
winding down the dusty road
and over the threshold.

I'll light a candle
that you, so far away,
can know it
without a word being spoken.

SMALL BIRD FLEDGES

Small bird fledges,
winging through the blue-green flesh of spring,
she not a song
but a singing,
the season not a spring
but a springing—
her maiden flight
a translucent lift
into the world of wind—
a living,
silent,
floating
dream.

We widen our arms at last
to the unfolding,
we not a breath
but a breathing,
we not a ripple
but a rippling—
trepidations on ephemeral
earth-bound journeys
through realms of color
into the silent opening
of our transcendent
winging.



WHAT IF THE PEARLY MOON

What if the pearly moon
shares a communal thread with blades of grass in spring
and crickets clambering up willowy stems in summer,
with you in your autumn
and me in my winter?

What if laughter is kin to the moon,
whelk to the heart of the mountain,
and stars to leaves on the trees?

What if an essence weaves itself so completely
within and between every stripe and color,
penetrating the collective of things so seamlessly,
that we are rendered blind to see?

What if hills and valleys of this fertile thread
so weave and move within the interior of things
that we are complete as we are
and perfect in this moment,
even in the face of the fiercest wind
we perceive pains and divides us—

and if we perceived this truth,
how might we move forward
through this fragile, shining world?



Praise for Tributaries: A Book of Poetry

“Pamala Ballingham’s work makes a significant contribution to the Great Work of our time – in these poems she listens to the hidden voices of the world and sings them back in intimate and beautiful words that bring us into deeper connection with all of life.”

Lyanda Fern Lynn Haupt
Author of *Mozart’s Starling, and Crow Planet*

“Pamala Ballingham has a unique quality that allows her to join heart and mind in a way we can all resonate with. For her, mind becomes a vehicle for the heart to sing its songs in a language that penetrates to the very core of the listener. Her poems are genuine heart-to-heart communications, imbued with a deep spirituality that brings us face to face with the great mystery of Being. I find myself savoring them, digesting them, then going back for another serving!”

Upasaka Culadasa (John Yates, PhD)
Author of *The Mind Illuminated: A Complete Guide Using Buddhist Wisdom and Brain Science*, Director of Dharma Treasure Buddhist Sangha

“Pamala’s poems are tributaries in the greater stream of a poetic tradition that is deeply rooted in the natural world and informed by a spiritual understanding that places the reader in that world – the only world we have.”

Larry Robinson
Founder and producer of Rumi’s Caravan, poet, author of *Roll Away The Stone*, retired Eco-psychologist

“A lifetime of involvement with Native practices and Buddhist meditation has prepared Pamala uniquely for this calling. Can you hear it? The silence of the Sonoran desert speaks directly through her.”

Shinzen Young
Author of *The Science of Enlightenment: How Meditation Works*,
neuroscience research consultant

“Playful, powerful, perfect. The descriptions held in each beautiful piece tantalize the senses for the young and old alike.”

Pauline Wilson
Poet and educator

“Pamala Ballingham brings her years of wisdom, travel, and spirituality into this treasured collection of poetry. Her imagery at once gives you chills and makes you chuckle. The meter is so well-crafted and so playful that I find I can only read, and reread, these poems out loud.”

Tucker Peck
PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Director of
Palo Santo Psychotherapy & Wellness, and Pragmatic Dharma
Teacher

“Poignant verses delicately bridge the heart and mind in visually captivating descriptions. Pamala Ballingham skillfully connects the reader to beauty, wonder, joy and love of life through her words. There is a poem, poetic story, or haiku for everyone.”

M. Bond
Author of five books, co-author of two

“This collection of poems is an incredible feast for all the senses. Allow yourself to be taken on a magical ride of emotions, times, and places that will touch your very core.”

Theresa Landow
Author

“This engaging book of free verse, story poems and a chapter of haiku takes the reader on a spiritual journey of mystical and natural exploration. The journey begins by awakening the senses to piñon pines and places far away. These poems have undertones of grief and loss with an even greater understanding of the natural order and beauty within the circle of life.”

Shaman Vitki
NewAgeBooksReview.com

“Each page of *Tributaries* offers a magical invitation to see the world with awe. The gentleness and emotion leave me yearning for more.”

Alisha Wilson
Business owner