

# THE WRITE METAPHOR

A Chapbook

Thomas Mallouk

Tom Mallouk's refreshing book *The Write Metaphor* reveals what it means to fully live the life of a poet. The voice is honest, and compassionate with a fine measure of humor. Mallouk reminds us of the *rush of new love* of the first draft, inevitably followed by the next morning's *cold snap of embarrassment* that ultimately sparks revision, a *pruning away of each excessive syllable*. He invites us to read slowly, to taste poetry, "each word a savored morsel." Mallouk calls us to believe *poetry can save a life* even as he pays exquisite tribute to a poet friend whose life could not be saved. *From beyond the self where few have gone before her voice calls out like a desolate gull...* The speaker is brave enough to say, *for what is a poet but one who wants their words to be heard?* And also wise enough to declare *Since God created everything/to appreciate anything is a kind of prayer*. I believe Tom Mallouk's *The Write Metaphor* is a glorious prayer for his life as a poet, for poetry itself, and for the world he illuminates through appreciating *each ordinary thing*.

—Doris Ferleger, poet laureate emeritus of Montgomery County PA, and winner of the *New Millennium Poetry Prize*, has published five books of poetry, among them are "Big Silences in a Year of Rain" and "As for the Kiss."

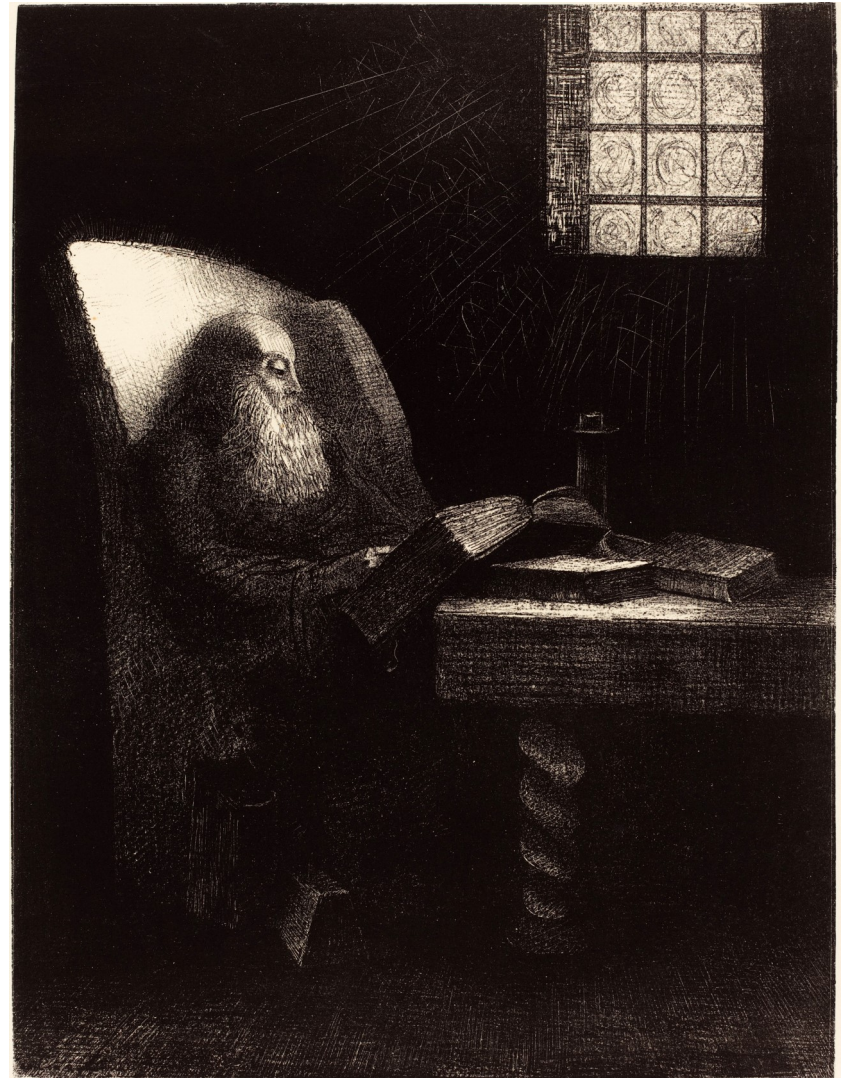
*The Write Metaphor* is a fitting name for Tom Mallouk's poetry collection as it demonstrates one of poetry's best and most difficult acrobatic skills—it reveals the mind in motion, unpacking memories, probing ideas, trying to find a way to "hold the unspoken" while saying it for us. Poetry is often the subject of the works in this book, but only so much as it's a stand-in for the processes we all work through, the ways we seek understanding, solace and fulfillment. The beauty of lines like "the harmonics/of wind through reeds" are perfect vessels for the insights they carry. This is a book that will speak to poets about their shared joys and struggles, and to curious non-poets who find it the right metaphor for life.

—Grant Clauser, author of *Muddy Dragon on the Road to Heaven*

In Tom Mallouk's poems "the quotidian routines and objects in everyday life become subjects of contemplation, drawing the reader to see closely the nerves that tug the human heart. At all times, the poems are attempting to 'tell the truth.' Every word... attempts to open the door. The poems confess to no certainty but of the asymmetric hope found in human connection: wounding and being wounded. They linger in the body like secrets we are invited to overhear."

—From the comments of Tsering Wangmo Dhompa, judge of the 2022 Bucks County Poet Laureate competition.

# THE WRITE METAPHOR



Thomas Mallouk