

The Peoples Republic of Poetry

Herb Garfield

Somewhere north of Chile
Where Pablo Neruda makes his home,
There is a mountainous region
Where poets eat for free,
And can receive a free airlift
out of the country at any time
just for reciting a poem at the airport.

Where, once a year, leaflets
Are dropped by dirigible
over the Royal Palace ...
Scribbled messages -

“Toward the One,
The perfection of love, harmony, and beauty.
The only Being. united
with all the illuminated
souls, the spirit of guidance.”

and other such unfettered aspirations
drop like snowdrifts
on the broad paropleted shoulders
of the heads of state,
While church bells sound
an hour among hours -
like waves caressing some distant shore
on the quiet land beneath.