

Poems

Seymour Mayne

Ten

Of the first fright: one
of shadows breaking away
from words: Two,
of wings fluttering in the night:
three,
of books standing like angels on guard:
four—

But of the knife, five and six,
and the bully with the revolver,
seven, eight and nine,
and of the trigger-happy finger—
ten
ready to do their part
in staving off the plagues.

Jonah

How does one die?
Does it burst out like a flood
rising for a lifetime
to its level of escape?

Or does it coil
around in the cave of a dream,
shutting off the vista of light
with a sudden jerk

and the silence holds
louder than God?

Seymour Mayne is the author, editor or translator of more than forty books and monographs. His most recent collections include Carbon Filter: Poems in Dedication (Mosaic Press, 1999), and a selection of humorous and satirical poems, Light Industry (Mosaic Press, 2000). He teaches at the University of Ottawa.