

PREFACE

This anthology collects almost all the poems I have written after 1955 arranged chronologically. It, therefore, comprises those included in the five volumes published so far: *Remoteness* (2002), *Lontananza 2001–2016* (2016), *Chiaroscuro* (2019), *The Shade of Remembrance: Poems of Africa* (2021), *The New Garden: Bahá'í Poems* (2021) and a hundred still unpublished.

The foreword is a conversation on various aspects of my poetic production with a representative of the Italian Bahá'í Studies Association. I have placed notes on quotations (always written in italics), people, places, words, and unusual themes at the end of each collection, as in the first two anthologies of 2002 and 2016. In the three anthologies published in 2019 and 2021, since lesser-known cultural references in the West could hinder a good understanding of some verses, I have inserted all the notes of this type at the bottom of the poems. In this publication, I have marked them with an asterisk at the end of the verse to which they refer as a suggestion to the reader to consult the notes.

The anthology is completed by a series of documents that clarify its content, distributed in two chapters. The first (15.1) comprises all the paratexts, i.e., prefaces, acknowledgements, introductory notes, introductions, and afterwords, of the other published anthologies and the foreword of *Loingtaineré*, an abridged French version of *Lontananza (1955–2023)*. The second, entitled “The Poet and Poetry” (Chapter 16), comprises four documents: “A Poet’s Inner Diary” (16.1), a revised and updated version of my two afterwords to the first two anthologies of 2002 and 2016; “Shedding Light on the Hearts. Reflections on Poetry” (16.2), an article published in 2001; “Necklaces of Pearls and Coral. Reflections on Poetry” (16.3), an unpublished paper, which is a commentary on the evolution of my poetics; and “Letters (1993–2023)” (16.4), a substantial collection of my letters in which I talk about my poetry, poetry in general and the vision of life that I intend to reflect in my verses.

The Bibliography that covers the whole work; an alphabetical index of all the poems in the fourteen collections; two thematic indices, one for each collection and one for each theme; an index of published poems with their bibliographical references, and an index of unpublished poems are at the end of the text.

Finally, this work also comprises two audiovisuals: the presentation of *The New Garden* in Verona on 11 November 2021 and sixteen poems recited by the Veronese actor Tiziano Gelmetti. The poems recorded are Your Broad Halls (To Life 1.14), Enlighten Me with Thy Light (Yearning. II 1.36), Wait. I (1.66), Pure Water Flows (1.70), I Join My Hands to Thine (1.72), Upon My Heart Forever (1.76), Thy Strong Hand (2.28), Forgetful of the True Friend (3.36), Return on the Wrist of Your King (10.44), To the Poor, Astonished Heart (4.14), Where Are the Boundaries? (6.8), Western Magdalene (12.14), Mary and Martha (6.32), The Scents of the Beloved (9.58), Whose Son Am I? (14.24), Ode to Life (14.36). The audiovisuals can be accessed by opening file 18.6, “Poems read by Tiziano Gelmetti.” Here, you will find a link to the recording of the Veronese presentation and copies of all the poems read by Gelmetti, each with a hyperlink allowing you to listen to the recorded recitation.

Abbreviations: In the references to Bahá’í literature, I have used the acronyms of the titles adopted by the Bahá’í community, see p. xvi.

Glossary: Due to the frequent references to the Bahá’í Faith and its personages and institutions, I have included a short glossary at p. xviii.

Internal references to the poems in this collection: title of the poem, abbreviated for longer titles, followed by the collection and the page numbers.

Transliteration: Arabic and Persian words have been transliterated according to the method used by the Bahá’í community; see *The Transliteration System Used in Bahá’í Literature*.

ABBREVIATIONS

AHW	Bahá'u'lláh. Arabic Hidden Words
BK	Bahíyyih Khánum
BP	Bahá'í Prayers
CC	Compilation of Compilations
CDB	Bahá'u'lláh. Call of the Divine Beloved
CF	Shoghi Effendi. Citadel of Faith
CH	Blomfield. Chosen Highway
ESW	Bahá'u'lláh. Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
FV	"Four Valleys," in CDB 85–102
GWB	Bahá'u'lláh. Gleanings from the Writings
KA	Bahá'u'lláh. Kitáb-i-Aqdas
KI	Bahá'u'lláh. Kitáb-Íqán. The Book of Certitude
LoG	Lights of Guidance
MF	'Abdu'l-Bahá. Memorials of the Faithful
PHW	Bahá'u'lláh. Persian Hidden Words
PM	Bahá'u'lláh. Prayers and Meditations
PT	'Abdu'l-Bahá. Paris Talks
PUP	'Abdu'l-Bahá. Promulgation of Universal Peace
SV	"Seven Valleys," in CDB 11–53
SW	Star of the West
SAQ	'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some Answered Questions
SWAB	'Abdu'l-Bahá. Selection from the Writings
SWB	Il Báb. Selection from the Writings
TB	Bahá'u'lláh. Tablets Revealed after Kitáb-i-Aqdas
TU	Bahá'u'lláh. Tabernacle of Unity
UD	Unfolding Destiny
WOB	Shoghi Effendi. World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

GLOSSARY

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ (1844–1921). Son of Bahá’u’lláh (below), appointed by His Father as His successor to lead the Bahá’í community, authorized Interpreter of His Writings, and perfect Exemplar of the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH (1817–1892). Mírzá Ḥusayn-’Alí-i-Núrí, the Persian nobleman who founded the Bahá’í Faith.

BAHÁ’Í FAITH. The most recent of the revealed religions. Born in Persia in 1844, it has spread worldwide to such an extent that the Encyclopedia Britannica describes it as the religion with the broadest geographical distribution after Christianity. It upholds the unity of God, the unity of religions, and the unity of humankind. It aims to promote a new civilization based on these three concepts and thus upholds respect for the human rights of all people, justice, and peace. Bahá’ís all over the world are actively committed to achieving this goal. During this period, they are mainly dedicated to developing human resources, that is, to promote the spiritual, intellectual, and material development of its followers and of all those with whom they come into contact and who are willing to become involved in this effort.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY. A Council of nine believers elected annually by universal suffrage to guide, coordinate and stimulate the activities of the institutions, agencies and individual members of the Bahá’í community within the country’s borders.

SHOGHI EFFENDI (1897–1957). Great-grandson of Bahá’u’lláh, appointed by His grandfather ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as His successor to lead the Bahá’í Faith and as the interpreter of the Bahá’í Writings.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. It is the supreme administrative body ordained by Bahá’u’lláh in His book of laws, the International Governing Council of the Bahá’í Faith. The Universal House of Justice

is elected every five years at the International Bahá'í Convention, where members of the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies worldwide serve as delegates. The Universal House of Justice was first elected in 1963. Its permanent seat is on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.