

Kevin J.B. O'Connor

I wrote the first draft of “For an Imperfect Poetry” during the spring of 2021. At the time, I was reading copious amounts of Victorian poetry, and felt impelled (and inspired) to compose some verse of my own. Riffing on a title by Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa, I ventured into the image-centered lines that survived my revisions. Most of my poetry since the pandemic has been in sonnet form, so this aspect of the poem came relatively early. The first line—a whimsical one by most accounts—came as a kind of miniature *ars poetica*, and, in hindsight, was probably influenced by my extensive reading (and re-reading) of poets such as Wallace Stevens and Sylvia Plath. Oblique biblical references frequently populate my work. In this poem, the figs allude to both the withered fig tree cursed by Jesus in the Gospel, as well as the notion of “bearing good fruit.” However, I also intend the figs (and apples) in my poem to function as images, in the Modernist sense. My primary intention for the poem is that it be a sensory experience, one that draws the reader away from quotidian life and offers a glimpse of the unexpected, or perhaps even the unreal, in a way that is both unsettling and also strangely pleasing.