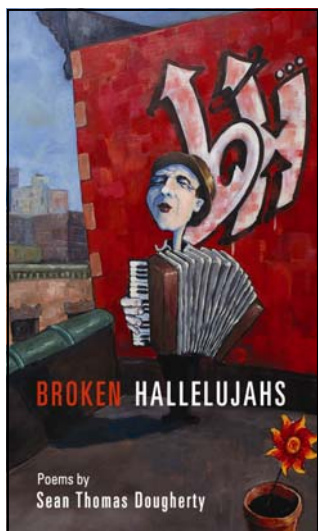


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Sean Thomas Dougherty

## BROKEN HALLELUJAHS

Poems by

Sean Thomas Dougherty

Sean Thomas Dougherty was raised in an interracial family with an African-American step-father, and a mother whose grandparents were Jewish immigrants from Budapest and the Ukraine. Issues of identity and the complexities of history are central in his work. In *Broken Hallelujahs*, Dougherty uses a variety of experimental and traditional forms including canzone, prose poem, metered and elliptical poems. These aesthetic devices structure his themes of personal and historical fissure and the reconnection of such fissures.

American and African-American musical poems push against a narrative describing Dougherty's journey to Budapest to walk the streets of his great grandmother. As his multiple ancestries are interwoven across time and space, Dougherty's family, the power of memory, and the need to not forget in the face of historical atrocity, provide a safe passageway, to "Sing across time and space the names of our living, and our dead."

"The poems of Sean Thomas Dougherty are full of intelligence and energy, myth and music, moving in surreal, jagged streams. There is a remarkable range of references here, from Edith Piaf to Biggie Smalls, from Jackson Pollock to Killer Kowalski. Above all, however, there is empathy, that essential element of poetry and humanity, for a dying grandfather, for the insomniacs of the city, for all the forgotten histories the poet cannot forget. To him I say: Keep singing."

—Martin Espada

### About the Poet

Sean Thomas Dougherty was born in 1965. He is the author of nine books including *Nightshift Belonging to Lorca*, a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize and *Except by Falling* winner of the 2000 Pinyon Press Poetry Prize from Mesa State College. His awards include two Pennsylvania Council for the Arts Fellowships in Poetry. Known for his electrifying performances, he has toured extensively across North America and Europe. He received an MFA in poetry from Syracuse University and lives in Erie, PA where he teaches in the BFA Program for Creative Writing at Penn State Erie.

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