

# Joyful Orphan Poems

Mark Irwin

*"Joyful Orphan is skilled, masterful work."*

—**Sherwin Bitsui**, Navajo writer and poet, author of *Flood Song*

*"Joyful Orphan is a deft and elegant lyric address, beautifully inclusive, to all the issues now of greatest concern."*

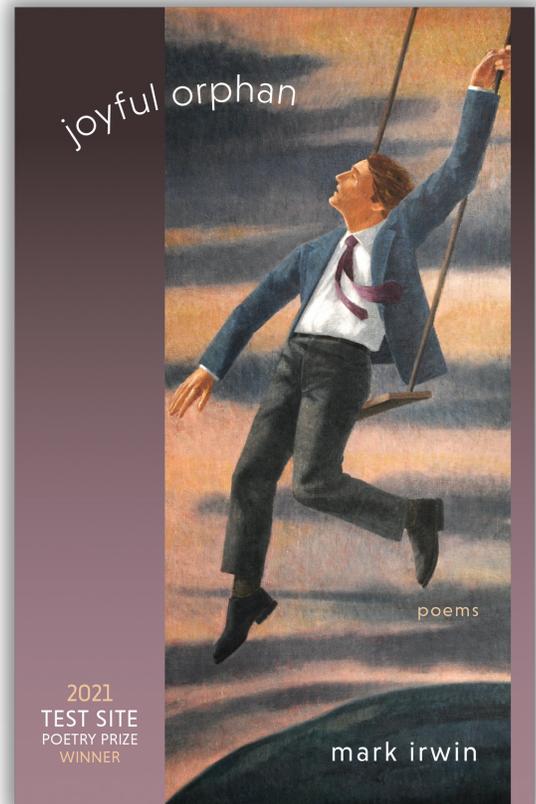
—**Donald Revell**, professor of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and author of *The English Boat*

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Through poems of witness—species and habitat extinction, war, pandemic, technology, history, and race—Mark Irwin's elegant collection of poetry explores the collision between metropolis and wilderness, and engages with forms of spirit and time that cannot be bound. With the incursion of electronic communication, our connections with one another have been radically distorted. Irwin's poems confront what it means to be human, and how conflict, along with the interface between technology and humanity, can cause us to become orphaned in many different ways. But it is our decision to be joyful.

Excerpt from "Letter":

*Times when we touch hope like the hem of a cloud  
just as when we touch a body or door, or think  
of the dead come back, romancing  
us through the warp of memory, lighting a way  
by luring . . .*



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Mark Irwin is the author of eleven collections of poetry, including his most recently published work, *Shimmer*. His poems have appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, and *Paris Review*. Recognition for his work includes The Nation/Discovery Award, two Colorado Book Awards, four Pushcart Prizes, the James Wright Poetry Award, the Philip Levine Prize for Poetry, and fellowships from the Fulbright, Lilly, and National Endowment for the Arts. He is a professor in the PhD in Creative Writing & Literature Program at the University of Southern California.