



Djelloul Marbrook

August 12, 1934 - November 23, 2024

Djelloul Marbrook

b. August 12, 1934, d. November 23, 2024

Djelloul Marbrook of Germantown, NY, poet, novelist, photographer, newspaper man, sailor and Arabist scholar, died November 23 at Northern Dutchess Hospital, Rhinebeck, NY, after a four-year struggle with leukemia. He died peacefully, with his beloved daughter and a close friend at his side. He was born on August 12, 1934, in Algiers, French Algeria, to American surrealist painter Juanita Guccione, née Rice, and a Bedouin father. He grew up in New York City, West Islip, and Woodstock, NY.

Djelloul attended Columbia University and served in both the Merchant Marine and the United States Navy, where he saw action during the early armistice period in North Korea and on the deck of the USS Leyte during 1956 Suez Crisis. Among his Naval duties were that of official photographer, chief boatswain's mate and speechwriter for Vice Admiral John Madison Hoskins. After military service he worked at several newspapers as journalist, photographer and editor, including the Providence Journal, Elmira Star-Gazette, Baltimore Sun, Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, and the Washington Star.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Wanda Ratliff, and his beloved wife of

many years, Marilyn Hackett-Marbook. Together, Djelloul and Marilyn managed the art collection of his late mother, Juanita, whose works are largely housed at the Weinstein Gallery in California. They also oversaw 250 paintings by his late aunt, Irene Rice-Pereira, whose art is featured at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney and several other museums and collections across the US. For eleven years, Djelloul and Marilyn lived on a 37-foot sailboat and ventured out to sea many times. They also served together on the vestry of Christ Church in Hudson, NY, and earlier on the vestry of Saint Gregory's Episcopal Church in Woodstock.

Though he wrote poetry in his youth and into his early 30s, Djelloul stopped writing poems for several decades while continuing to love and study the craft. After the 911 attacks, he walked the streets of his old hometown, NYC, and began jotting down what he thought were mere notes, in a small notebook. Those notes became the poetry collection, *Far from Algiers* (2007), for which he won the Tom and Stan Wick Poetry Prize. A prolific writer, he subsequently published 22 books of poetry and fiction and was awarded the Literal Latté fiction prize (2008), and the International Book Award in Poetry (2010). He leaves two more books pending publication, one, a memoir (Pierian Springs Press).

Writing in the *New York Times*, United States Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye noted: "Over the years, Marbrook has mastered a warmly colloquial voice — the poems feel near and dear as an old friend speaking — delivering the philosophical ruminations of a life rich in experience and wonder."

Djelloul's work frequently explored metaphysical themes, addressing the subjects of child sex abuse—to which he fell victim—personal identity, and living as an outsider amongst racists in his own extended family and society at large. His work often conveys a sense of awe-in-the-moment, something he began to experience at an early age while selling newspapers at 46th Street

and 8th Avenue on the edge of Hell's Kitchen in New York's theater district. This outlook continued to shed light in his later verse.

For many years, Djelloul maintained a presence on social media—Facebook and Instagram—as well as his Substack, *The Prism*. A truly American poet, he leaves behind a large body of work and many admirers and friends.

Djelloul is survived by his beloved daughter, Darya Marbrook Miller of Baltimore, Maryland, a retired special education teacher; Darya's husband, Steven B. Miller, a retired Merchant Marine chief engineer; daughter Dorothy "Annie" Petty; grandsons Matthew Miller and Leon Petty; cousin-in-law, Marcia Whited of South Portland, Maine and daughter Grace Whited, of Pennsylvania; his dear friend and editor, Kevin Swanwick, as well as many close friends and peers in the world of poetry and the arts.

A memorial service will be held at Christ Church, Hudson, NY, on a later date.

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Dying? Dying, I'm dying to be dead,
to sweep red-handed half past dread,
not for the rest of it, which I can't know,
but the exquisite moment when I go.

— From *Falling Down Stairs*, by Djelloul Marbrook

Tribute Wall

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“*My oh my. I am a distant neighbor of the Marbrook's in Cheviot, Germantown, and this morning, I thought I would check in on Djelloul, having seen some work going on around his house. I am sorry to learn that he died, almost one year ago! He was a gracious, kind man, with always a twinkle in his eye. Having now read the beautiful obituary about his life, I understand that twinkle was his 'awe in the moment'. I am glad I had the opportunity to witness it!*

My main memory of both Djelloul and Marilyn is that my husband and I would bump into them, in all the towns that surround us, enjoying a cup of tea or coffee, with so much frequency that I teased them that we must be on the same biorhythm! I will always see them together, happy in each other's company.

When I learned that Marilyn was ill, I offered to make her a soft knit cap, much like someone had made for my daughter when she was undergoing chemotherapy. Marilyn not only allowed me to do it, she wrote me one of the most beautiful thank you notes I have ever received. I have it still.

I am sorry not to have taken the time to do more, to be a better neighbor, but perhaps it is enough to have such clear memories of these two, fine people, who quietly, without fanfare, left their mark on this world.

Adrienne & Don Westmore

Adrienne Westmore - November 13, 2025 at 07:47 AM