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James Vladimir Gill Tribute
Peter Johnson

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JAMES VLADIMIR GILL
(1927 - 1995)

In April, I was informed by his family that James Vladimir Gill, a contributing editor of *The Prose Poem: An International Journal*, died suddenly at his home in Lausanne, Switzerland. I never met James, but we had a rewarding correspondence over the last four years. He was a gifted poet, novelist and essayist, and for many years, he edited the influential literary magazine *2PLUS2*. Above all, he was a gentleman. He agreed to become a contributing editor of a little-known journal, and the poets he directed my way have helped to give it stature. Moreover, he offered me invaluable advice, and never asked for anything in return. At times, to be quite frank, I have felt like giving up this magazine, overwhelmed by the work it involves. At one of those times, I wrote James, asking him if it was all worth it. He wrote back, "Everything in our delicately balanced little life is worth it if it is worthwhile, if one can affect even in the smallest way a reader's perception beyond the prosaic, the flamboyant, the commercial, and let him touch the fleeting magic of the ineffable." He was, of course, right.

I accepted James' poem, "Words Found Above A Swinging Gate," in January, thinking how perfectly it probed that "ineffable" zone he so often spoke of. And so I want to begin Volume 4 of *The Prose Poem: An International Journal* with this poem. It says more about James' life and vision than anything I can think of.