

# Two Poems for Ela

by [Paul Martin Freeman](#) (September 2024)



Hummingbird and Passionflowers (Martin Johnson Heade,  
1875-85)

### **Ela's Tattoos**

Two tiny hummingbirds that never meet  
But ever for each other yearn in vain;  
Forever on their own and incomplete,  
Fulfilment fated never to attain.

Each one upon an arm rotates its wings  
Intent on union with its soulmate there.  
Alas, of thwarted hopes alone it sings  
In timeless silent anguish and despair.

What sadness is there can compare with this:  
Denied the joy all living things desire?  
For never will these lovers taste a kiss,  
Nor feel within that wondrous sacred fire.

### **Staying sane**

She sprays the tables; gives a careful wipe  
And looks around the cafe now and then.  
Another lot today had had a gripe  
And Ela had to bite her tongue again.

It may be cleaning tables isn't much:  
Removing sticky bits of someone's meal;  
But when she works she somehow feels in touch  
With something in herself she knows is real.

The world's a puzzle, Ela's come to see—  
*It's full of customers who just complain!*  
But doing this, her mind can wander free,  
And cleaning's Ela's way of staying sane.

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**Paul Martin Freeman** is a former art dealer. *Two poems for Ela* is from his unpublished work, *The Bus Poems*. His book of whimsical verse, *A Chocolate Box Menagerie*, is published by New English Review Press and is available [here](#).

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