

# cattails



October 2023

**cattails**

**October 2023 Issue**

Copyright © 2023 all authors and artists

**cattails** is produced in association with:

**Éditions des petits nuages**

1409 Bortolotti Crescent  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1B 5C1

ISSN 2371-8951

Editor-in-Chief: Sonam Chhoki  
Managing Editor: Mike Montreuil  
Haiku Editor: Geethanjali Rajan  
Haiga Editor: Lavana Kray  
Senryu Editor: David J Kelly  
Tanka Editor: Jenny Fraser  
Haibun Editor: Sonam Chhoki  
Tanka Prose Editor: Mike Montreuil

**Cartoon: Dhaatri Vengunad Menon**

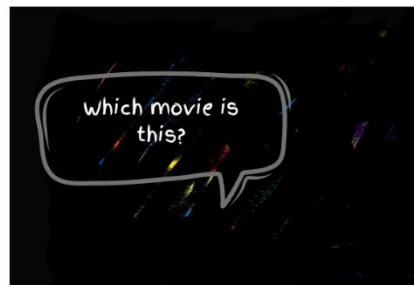
**Cover and Section Illustrations: Linda Papanicolaou**

**Cover Illustration: Deer in Aspen**

## *Contents*

Introduction	5
Haiku	6
Haiga - part 1	43
Senryu	52
Haiga - part 2	80
Tanka	89
Haiga - part 3	115
Haibun	124
Haiga - part 4	175
Tanka Prose	183
Haiga - part 5	212
List of Poets and Artists	220

## GOING TO THE MOVIES





## Introduction

Robert Hughes (1938-2012) the Australian art critic said, “What we need more of is slow art: art that holds time as a vase holds water; art that grows out of modes of perception and making, whose skill and doggedness makes you think and feel . . .”

Our current times seem shot through with uncertainty. But historians argue that “certainty” is a conceptual artifact. In Buddhist thought, everything is in flux and constantly changing (*samsāra*). Yet, this aspiration for something enduring that “hooks” onto what is deep in our nature, is both personal and universal. When we write, read and share our work in *cattails*, in our own way we articulate this desire for an abiding sense of connection and commonality. It matters little whether our poems are borne of actual experience or imagined. What we share is our craft and hope.

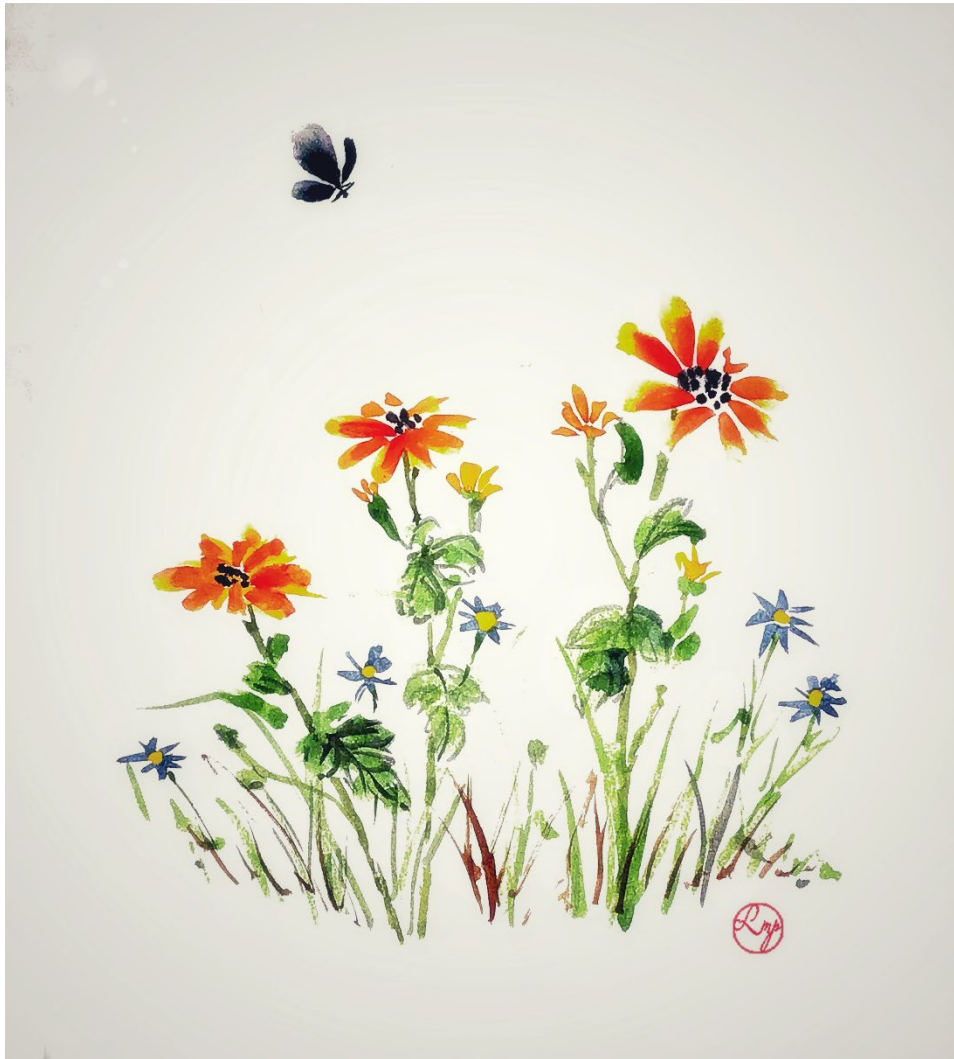
I pay tribute to Mike and the other editors: Geethanjali, Lavana, David and Jenny, who have gone beyond the requirements of their editorial briefs to read, edit and select an inspirational selection of poems. Mike’s quiet resilience and dedication ensure the publication of yet another issue.

Deep appreciation to Shobhana Kumar who has steered us through the changeover from MailChimp with patience and acumen.

In her inimitable style our resident cartoonist, Dhaatri Vengunad Menon highlights the “barbenheimer” phenomenon of recent months. We are honoured to feature the beautiful art work of Linda Papanicolaou.

Sonam Chhoki

# Haiku



**Grass Flowers**

first day of spring—  
a mourning cloak  
cupping and clapping

*Ann Sullivan, USA*

flash in the white pines  
wing bars  
of the Baltimore Oriole

*Patrick Sweeney, USA*

crack of dawn  
the swoop and holler  
of cactus wrens

*Cynthia Anderson, USA*

morning light  
my cat taps lightly  
on the keys

*Laurie D. Morrissey, USA*

cherry blossoms  
a test missile splashes  
into the sea

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

sunrise  
among the ruins  
a robin's song

alba  
tra le rovine  
il canto del pettirosso

*Mariangela Canzi, Italy*

young jay testing for bounce along a branch

*Bill Cooper, USA*

early rice . . .  
baby sparrows play  
hide and seek

अगेता धान . . .  
गौरैया के बच्चे खेलें  
लुकाछिपी

*Neena Singh, India*

beak full of moss  
a cedar waxwing  
sculpts spring

*June Rose Dowis, USA*

from berry to berry the woodchuck's wobble

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

dry evening breeze—  
the sound of samaras  
scraping the pavement

*Steve Neumann, USA*

overshadowed  
by bolder lives  
starflower

*Shawn Blair, USA*

midnight rain  
tree frogs pulse  
a lullaby

*Aron Rothstein, USA*

a cottage garden blooms unseen moonflower

*C.X. Turner, UK*

jasmine buds  
no hurry to unfold  
my grandchild's fists

మల్లె మొగ్గలు  
మా మనవడి పిడికిళ్ళు  
అలాగే ఉండనీ

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India*

rain drops  
off his straw coat . . .  
birdsong

雨  
从他的蓑衣滴下...  
鸟之歌

*David He, China*

spring peepers  
trilling in rounds  
moon halo

*Beni Kurage, USA*

frog song deleting another account

*Nicholas Klacsanzky, USA*

weeding . . .  
the sound of earth  
releasing roots

*Patricia McKernon Runkle, USA*

deepening  
the cornflower's blue  
tuesday rain

*John Pappas, USA*

from the train . . .  
poppies running  
in the wind

dal treno . . .  
corrano i papaveri  
nel vento

*Rosa Maria Di Salvatore, Italy*

garden sale—  
wildflowers  
I never see in the wild

*Richard Tice, USA*

climbing  
to the top of a rock  
a teeny tiny turtle

*Ben Gaa, USA*

nose in the clover  
the flag  
of her tail

*Frank Hooven, USA*

morning glories  
the throng pressing through  
a chain-link fence

*Jim Chessing, USA*

burn up  
the summer sky  
blooming poincianas

thieu đốt  
bầu trời mùa hạ  
hoa phượng nở

*Rosie Dang, Vietnam*



cirrus scattering  
my daughter  
steers a cardboard box

*Cameron Morse, USA*

midday sun  
behind the cactus  
the shadow without thorns

*soleil de midi  
derrière le cactus  
l'ombre sans épines*

*Daniel Birnbaum, France*

small green apples  
washed up in the wrack line . . .  
summer's apogee

*Kristen Lindquist, USA*

Gorée Island  
the blood red color  
of bissap juice

île de Gorée  
la couleur rouge sang  
du jus de bissap

*Marie Derley, Belgium*

summer breeze  
a weeping willow  
woven into braids

*Tony Williams, UK*

almost sunset  
an egret swallows  
the last wriggle

*Brad Bennett, USA*

meteor shower—  
popcorn popping  
in the pan

pljusak meteora—  
u tavi pucketaju  
kokice

*Nina Kovačić, Croatia*

unshelled cicada  
a caress of moon  
on new skin

*Julie Schwerin, USA*

the free flow  
of fragrant breeze  
night shelter

ਰੈਣ ਬਮੇਰਾ  
ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਲੱਦੀ ਪੈਂਣ ਦਾ  
ਖੁੱਲਾ ਪਰਵਾਹ

*Arvinder Kaur, India*

songs before dawn . . .  
a cardinal lights up  
the sky

*Curt Pawlisch, USA*

break of day . . .  
a cow scratches its horns  
on an electric pole

ਦਿਵਸਨੋ ਵਿਰਾਮ . . .  
ਗਾਯ ਤੇਨਾ ਸਿੰਗਡਾਨੇ ਘੰਝਵਾਯੇ ਏ  
ਏਲੈਕਟ੍ਰਿਕ ਪੋਲ ਪਰ

*Lakshmi Iyer, India*

dead at dawn  
insects that danced around  
the barnyard light

*LeRoy Gorman, Canada*

urban jungle  
a lingering wildness  
where the fox stood

*Ben Oliver, England*

city stress—  
the harsh demands  
of fledgling crows

*Ingrid Baluchi, North Macedonia*

golden rain tree . . .  
after the blackbird's song  
the rustle of pods

lampion stablo . . .  
nakon kosove pjesme  
šušanj plodova

*Tomislav Maretić, Croatia*

afternoon sunshine  
a tractor with a trolley  
full with hay

दोपहर की धूप  
एक ट्रैक्टर के साथ ट्रॉली  
पराल से भरी

*Govind Joshi, India*

tilling the earth  
the burden  
of self-care

*Jerome Berglund, USA*

folding  
his sun-drenched fatigue  
paper cranes

*Lorelyn De la Cruz Arevalo, Philippines*

Au'au Channel  
the Milky Way sways  
to a humpback's song

*Joshua St. Claire, USA*

sanskrit syllables  
the curved edge  
of the sea

*Matthew Caretti, American Samoa (EC)*

blowhole—  
waves swirl around  
a torn lifejacket

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

beach trip  
our sheep dog herds  
splashing children

*Tom Staudt, Australia*

midsummer  
the cold comfort  
of a shell

*Ravi Kiran, India*

sundown at the beach  
a boy drags his towel  
behind momma

*Randy Brooks, USA*

Van Gogh sky  
asking for a scoop  
of blueberry swirl

*Edward Cody Huddleston, USA*

wind gust . . .  
waves pound the shale rock  
of tide pools

*Gwen Bitti, Australia*

clear-running water  
my shadow bathes  
without me

*Mary McCormack, USA*

urban heat—  
on the window sill  
a bald sparrow

शहर की गर्मी—  
खिड़की की चौखट पर  
पर रहित गौरैया

*Vijay Prasad, India*

dry lake bed  
the parched bones  
of memories

*Claire Vogel Camargo, USA*

shell fragments  
I leave my dreams  
on the beach

frammenti di conchiglia  
lascio i miei sogni  
sulla spiaggia

*Nazarena Rampini, Italy*

parched land  
the cow stays behind  
after its calf's death

*Stephenie Story, USA*

prairie burn  
ash-coated toads  
hop out unscathed

*Kevin Browne, USA*

pallid sunset  
the valley smothered in  
northern smoke

*Jessica Allyson, Canada*

burnt stubble  
the incessant crying  
of a quail

miriște arsă  
plânsul neîncetat  
al unei prepelițe

*Mircea Moldovan, România*



sea battle—  
a cluster of young seaweeds  
washed ashore

bitwa morska  
wyrzucony na brzeg kłąb  
młodych wodorostów

*Eugeniusz Zacharski, Poland*

lavender field—  
breeze turning the scent  
into prayer

*Florin C. Ciobica, Romania*

thunderbolt—  
a peacock's short flight  
across the road

*Vidya S. Venkatramani, India*

atomic clock  
the touchdown of  
a tornado

*Petra Schmidt, USA*

in the eye  
of the storm  
mourning doves

*Rick Jackofsky, USA*

sudden thunder  
zigzagging across the field  
a cottontail

*Sylvia Forges-Ryan, USA*

storm over —  
among drops of sun  
slugs make babies

oluja je prošla —  
među kapima sunca  
golaći prave bebe

*D. V. Rozic, Croatia*

last drops  
a swallow darts  
through the rainbow

ultimii stropi  
o rândunică țâșnește  
prin curcubeu

*Mona Iordan, Romania*

dunnock flight  
threading the rain  
with wing light

*Joanna Ashwell, UK*

monsoon winds  
she invites in  
a few more petals

*Bhawana Rathore, India*

endless water . . .  
the sun rises from it  
and sets into it

neskončna voda . . .  
sonce se dviga iz nje  
in v njo zahaja

*Dimitrij Škrk, Slovenia*

on my windshield  
rain painting  
a pointillist world

*Edward J. Rielly, USA*

grape hyacinth leaves  
in August  
a hornworm burrows

*Gerald Friedman, USA*

jamun-stained pinafore  
the slow fade  
of school days

*K Srilata, India*

tenth floor —  
I miss my childhood  
fireflies

*Kanchan Chatterjee, India*

reunion hike  
we explore  
faded trail markers

*Matt Snyder, USA*

dry acorn  
pulling the slingshot  
back in time

*Richard L. Matta, USA*

the sirocco blows  
among the rows of grapes  
warm autumn

lo scirocco soffia  
tra i filari d'uva  
autunno caldo

*Eufemia Griffio, Italy*

harvesting—  
rows of conical hats  
sway smoothly

zbiory  
falują płynnie rzędy  
stożkowatych kapeluszy

*Marta Chocilowska, Poland*

fall dusk—  
planting the chrysanthemum  
with my sister's name

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

just one of the trees until autumn sugar maple

*Meera Rehm, UK*

kitchen window —  
an autumn sunset  
in the fishing net

kuhinjski prozor —  
u mreži kočarice  
jesenji suton

*Mihovila Čeperić-Biljan, Croatia*  
*Translation: Đ V Rožić*

harvest moon  
the maple begins  
its mandala

*Sondra J. Byrnes, USA*

the hunters' hounds  
echoing through the trees  
damp wind

*Joshua Gage, USA*

aftershock  
a carrion crow  
touches the moon

Nachbeben  
eine Rabenkrähe  
berührt den Mond

*Eva Limbach, Germany*

mother squirrel  
clutching the oak  
in her acorn

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

sagging gate  
the old brood mare  
tilts a hind hoof

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

barbed wire fence  
a falcon's talons grip  
the gatepost

*Jan Dobb, Australia*

narrow bridge . . .  
counting the ribs  
in the deer's flank

*Laurie Greer, USA*

moonlight  
counting down the decades  
of aspidistras

*Lorin Ford, Australia*

thick morning fog—  
finding within it  
my own silence

*Angela Terry, USA*

lingering blues  
the night moon following  
me into day

*Michelle Schaefer, USA*

farmer's funeral  
cotton stems grace  
the church steps

*Lynn Edge, USA*

an old windmill  
abandoned in a field  
chill autumn wind

*Ernest Wit, Poland*

on board  
the anchored wreck  
black mildew

黒黴や繋がれてゐる難破船

*Christina Chin, Malaysia*  
*Tr. Chiaki Nakano, Japan*



misty morning  
the sea sucked into  
the sky

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

braided garlic  
the soft mutterings  
of my spine

*David Watts, USA*

rogue wave  
a limpet holds on  
tighter

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

lantern festival  
the yellow moon  
sneaks in

燈會  
黃月亮  
溜入

*John Zheng, USA*

lifting fog  
from the channel mark  
a kittiwake

*Keith Evetts, UK*

burst of clivia  
through the window  
a souging pine

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*

forest track  
a fallen tree  
gathers leaves

leśny dukt  
zwalone drzewo  
gromadzi liście

*Rafał Zabratyński, Poland*

fishmonger's stall . . .  
not meeting  
the rows of eyes

*Jo McInerney, Australia*

only a second  
of bitterness—  
the first persimmon

*Deborah A. Bennett, USA*

sphagnum moss  
the quiet trickle  
of a life

*John Hawkhead, UK*

falling leaves  
the rusty edges  
of dad's accent

*Lori Kiefer, UK*

wind in the reeds  
my whistling scales  
the upper octave

*Kala Ramesh, India*

cracking knuckles  
leafless trees connect  
with the wind

*Jeanne Cook, USA*

November fields  
the last fruits    gone  
my cancerous organs

*Anna Cates, USA*

first frost  
a spider's crawl  
to our doorstep

*Cyndi Lloyd, USA*

coastal fog  
untangling the webs  
of lace lichen

*Christine Wenk-Harrison, USA*

fading into  
the roots of its pups  
frostbitten cactus

*Agnes Eva Savich, USA*

endless grey  
a herring gull not finding  
the horizon

*Mike Gallagher, Ireland*

howling wind . . .  
how we turned  
into shadows

zavijanje vetra . . .  
kako hitro postanemo  
le sence

*Samo Kreutz, Slovenia*

blackbirds crossing  
the winter sky . . .  
my signature on the will

*Rebecca Drouilhet, USA*

winter wind  
curlews crouch  
behind sand dunes

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

avenue of stars  
cold survivors  
me and my rose

viale di stelle  
sopravvissute al freddo  
io e la mia rosa

*Carmela Marino, Italy*

first snow  
high-stepping across the porch  
the cat comes home

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

winter morning  
the smell of incense  
in the butchery

जाडोको बिहान  
अगरबत्तीको गन्ध  
बधशालामा !

*Manoj Sharma , Nepal (EC)*

first cold snap  
the mandevilla vine  
gives in

*B. L. Bruce, USA*

winter chill  
teeth chattering  
a marimba rhythm

*Thomas Smith, USA*

chimney smoke . . .  
a shadow scampers  
over new snow

*Michael Flanagan, USA*

first Christmas cookies . . .  
on the window pane  
children's floury palms

prvi božićni keksi . . .  
na oknima brašnati  
otisci dječjih dlanova

*Silva Trstenjak, Croatia*  
*Translated by D. V. Rozic, Croatia*

old couple  
winter sunlight folded  
into a burial flag

一對老夫婦  
冬日陽光被折疊入  
葬禮用的國旗

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada (EC)*

below zero the silence of our steps

*Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan*

carrying his casket  
the ground still  
frozen

*Nicky Gutierrez, USA*

full circle farewell mom

*Adrian Bouter, The Netherlands (EC)*

a mess  
of orange peels in my lap  
the winter sun sets

*Vandana Parashar, India*

dad's birthday  
the gentle twinkle  
of his star

ziua tatălui  
licărirea blândă  
a stelei sale

*Mirela Brailean, Romania*

swirls of fresh snow spiral galaxies

*Marianne Sahlin, Sweden*



this day's end . . .  
the night train sounding  
even more mournful

*Jill Lange, USA*

one by one  
the stars blink out  
old friends

*Dan Curtis, Canada*

butterfly sunrise  
warming the wings  
that spark the wind

*Mike Fainzilber, Israel*

soaring swift . . .  
on old branches  
new buds bloom

*Rob McKinnon, Australia*

## Editor's Choice (EC)- Haiku

Oh, the joy of being able to read such fine poetry submissions from all of you and the difficulty of selecting just a few! Thank you for sending your fine haiku to *cattails*. I find much hope (and light) when I see that haiku is thriving more than ever before, in various parts of the world. I hope you enjoy the selection in this issue – decorated with lavender fields, poppies, lace lichen and sphagnum moss; peopled by blue jays, spring peepers, baby sparrows, sheep dogs and cactus wrens.

I am also grateful to the poets who have written haiku about their painful experiences with climate disasters that have been plaguing every continent – wildfires, floods, hurricanes – to name a few. These haiku are stark reminders of the grim state of the environment and perhaps, will nudge us to do what we need to, urgently.

In this issue, a striking feature in some of the selected poems is the use of alliteration. While haiku in Japanese are considered to be at their best when unadorned and simply stated, they do have an advantage in the use of 'onomatopoe'. The Japanese language is rich in onomatopoeic words that are used even in everyday conversations. The skillful use of alliteration in English haiku can produce a poem that resonates and creates an aural effect.

For instance, this haiku by Steve Neumann.

dry evening breeze –  
the sound of samaras  
scraping the pavement

*Steve Neumann, USA*

The alliterative 's' sound in the second and third lines brings alive the scraping 'sss' sound, making it even more tangible.



Nina Kovacic's 'popcorn popping in the pan' is another delightful example:

meteor shower –  
popcorn popping  
in the pan

pljusak meteora –  
u tavi pucketaju  
kokice

*Nina Kovačić, Croatia*



It was difficult to select just a few poems to comment on from the collection. But, here are a few poems that caught my attention:

winter morning  
the smell of incense  
in the butchery

जाडोको बिहान  
अगरबत्तीको गन्ध  
बधशालामा !

*Manoj Sharma , Nepal*

Manoj Sharma takes us on a winter morning in mountainous Nepal to the aroma of incense. In Asia, it is common to start the day with the lighting of a lamp and burning incense. In business establishments too, this is a practice that is followed. The third line of the haiku, however, turns and ends with the word –butchery. Doesn't a butcher too pray before his day starts? Or perhaps, the incense is intended to mask the stench of

blood and the killing that will come. Regardless of the purpose of the incense, the poet creates an interesting contrast for the reader to engage with. What will the butcher's day be like? What are his prayers?



cherry blossoms  
a test missile splashes  
into the sea

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

Kevin Valentine captures the contrast between the delicate cherry blossom petals drifting to the ground and the falling splash of a test missile. That it falls into the sea, and not onto the land and its people, is a blessing. This poem is a reflection of the everyday fear that people in many countries have to live with. For instance, in Japan, missile warnings go off each time there is potential danger. While cherry blossoms bring to me the transient nature of things, the test missile splashing into the sea stands for all that can be made impermanent with a press of a button. The poet's skillful combination of an element of nature with something that's created by man, made me take notice (and worry about our futures).



sanskrit syllables  
the curved edge  
of the sea

*Matthew Caretti, American Samoa*

Matthew Caretti combines two visual images to take us on an auditory journey. The curved edge of the sea is a beautiful image and if it's in American Samoa, it must be

breath-taking! The unusual image here is the alliterative first line – Sanskrit syllable. The Sanskrit script is full of curves and loops and on a visual level, the similarity between the syllables and the sea made me smile. On re-reading this ‘summer at its best’ haiku, I also hear chants in Sanskrit – the syllables could have been an auditory observation by the poet. And that led me to the sound of the sea. I had missed that in my first reading. Thank you, Matthew, for this open-curved haiku with a lot of space for us to travel in the Pacific.



full circle farewell mom

*Adrian Bouter, The Netherlands*

Adrian Bouter uses just four words to express a poignant story, one of life, death, birth, beginnings, endings, meetings, partings, and everything in between. The use of the words ‘full circle’ brings to us the fullness of a life which starts at birth and of course, the birth of a mother when we are born. It also alludes to the ‘circle of life’. To me, this poem stands out as an example of how brevity can be achieved in haiku without obfuscating the intended meaning or simplicity. The poet has probably pruned and revised this poem many times to achieve this feat. The words ‘farewell mom’ could mean a temporary parting or a final goodbye. I choose to read it as a wish to be reunited with our loved ones at some point, in this realm or another. Thank you, Adrian, for sharing this poignant moment with us and allowing us to join your journey.



old couple  
winter sunlight folded  
into a burial flag

一對老夫婦  
冬日陽光被折疊入  
葬禮用的國旗

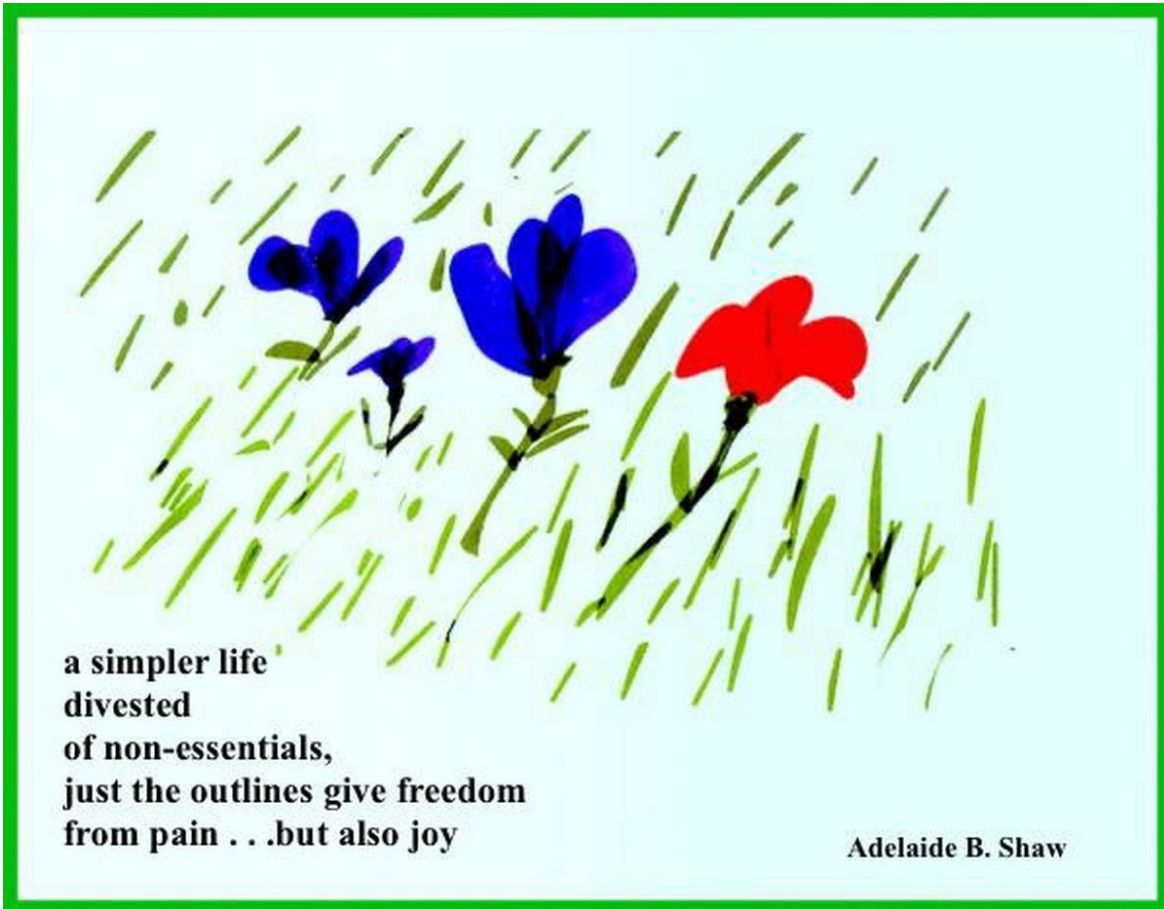
*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

Chen-ou Liu's haiku of winter is filled with the feeling of 'sabishii', loneliness. An old couple in winter itself alludes to endings—end of the year, of lives. But the image of 'winter sunlight folded' in line 2 builds the story with a warm image. The last two words ('burial flag') end the haiku as a story that is deep and moving. The parents, being the next of kin, receive the child's burial flag. Anyone who has witnessed the solemn ceremony will agree that there is honour in receiving the flag because the person died in the line of duty, for the nation. However, their sorrow in losing the child doesn't diminish based on how or why their child died. A very poignant haiku.

With gratitude,  
Geethanjali Rajan

## Haiga – Part 1

Adelaide B. Shaw – USA



**a simpler life  
divested  
of non-essentials,  
just the outlines give freedom  
from pain . . .but also joy**

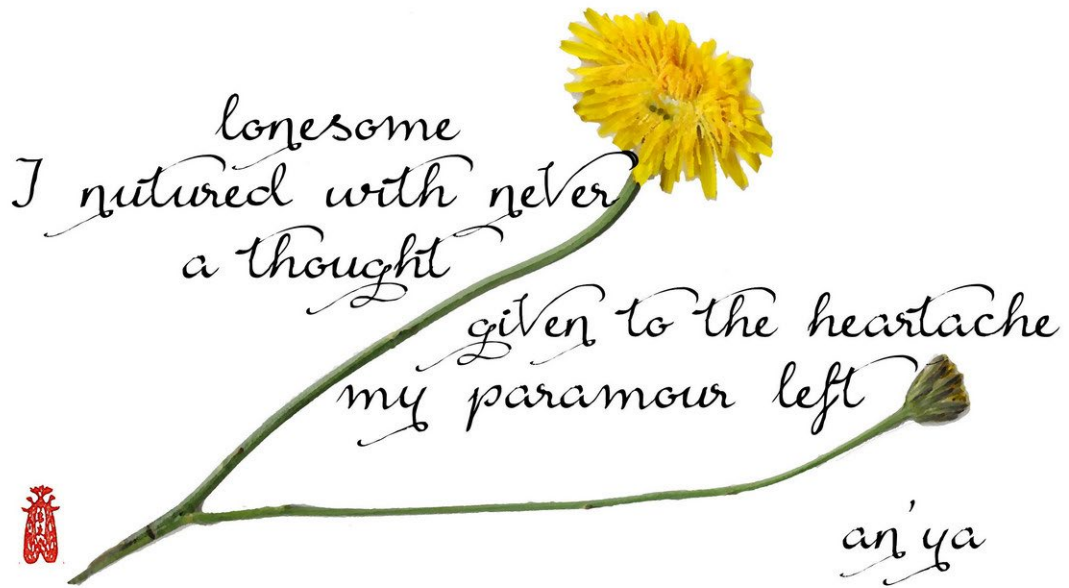
Adelaide B. Shaw

Andrew Terrell—USA





an'ya—USA



lonesome  
I nurtured with never  
a thought  
given to the heartache  
my paramour left

an'ya

Barbara Anna Gaiardoni & Andrea Vanacore—Italy



Barbara Kaufmann—USA



watching orioles

learn to flap new wings

in high summer...

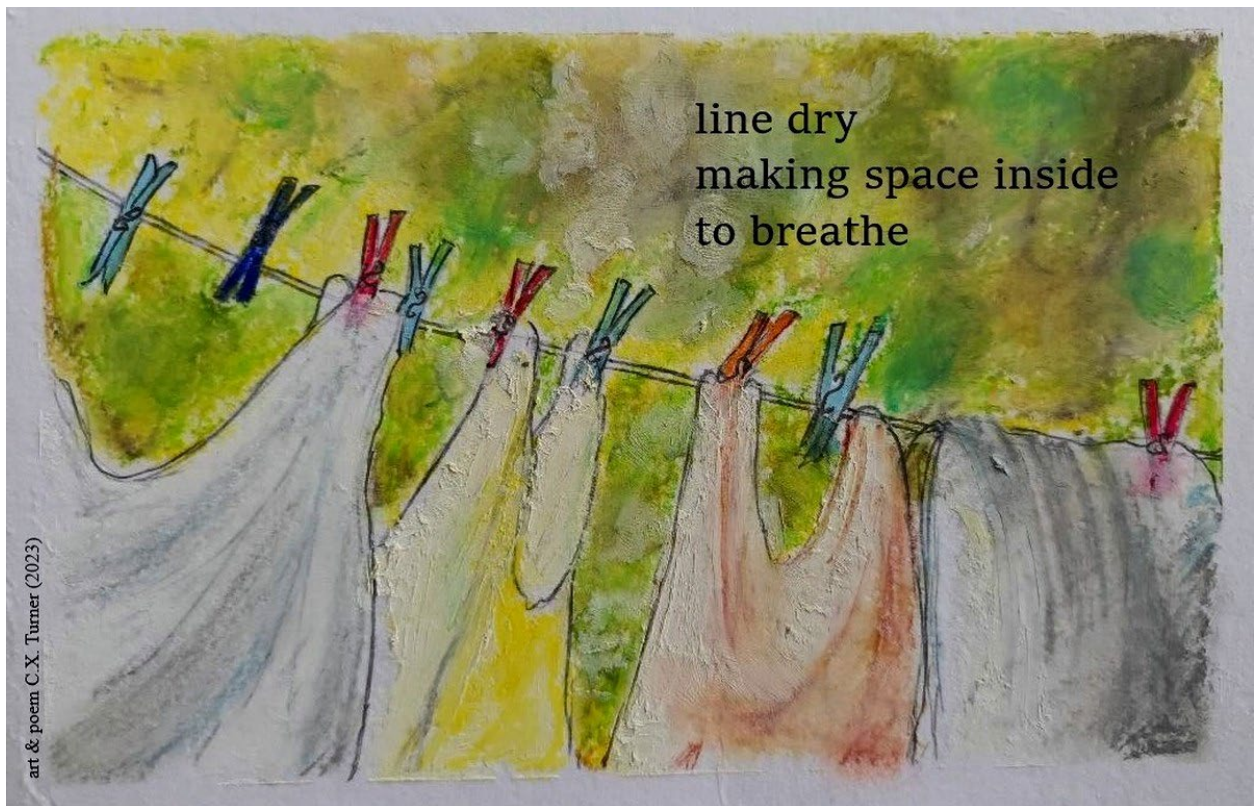
one by one our daughters

wave us goodbye

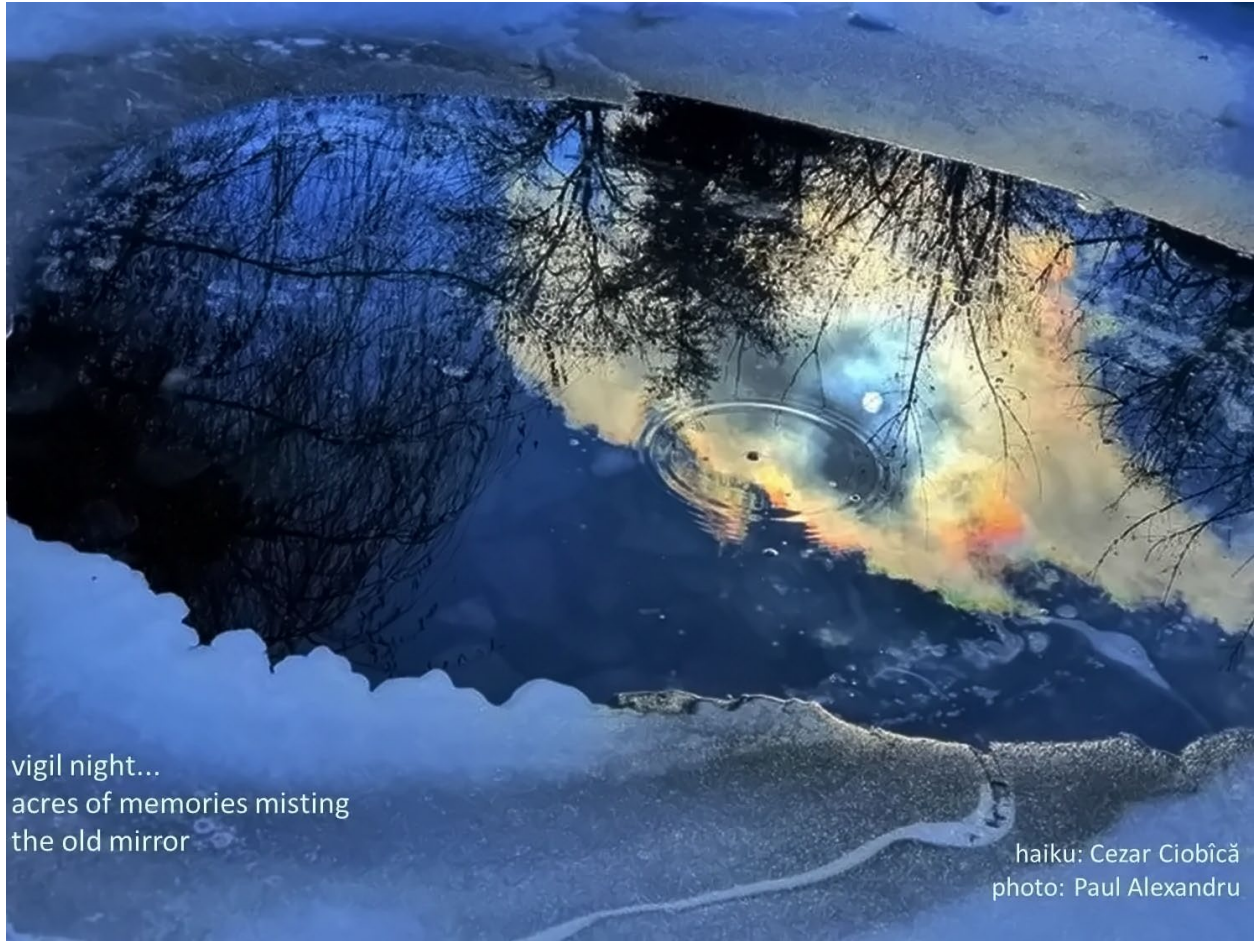
bkaufmann



C.X. Turner—UK



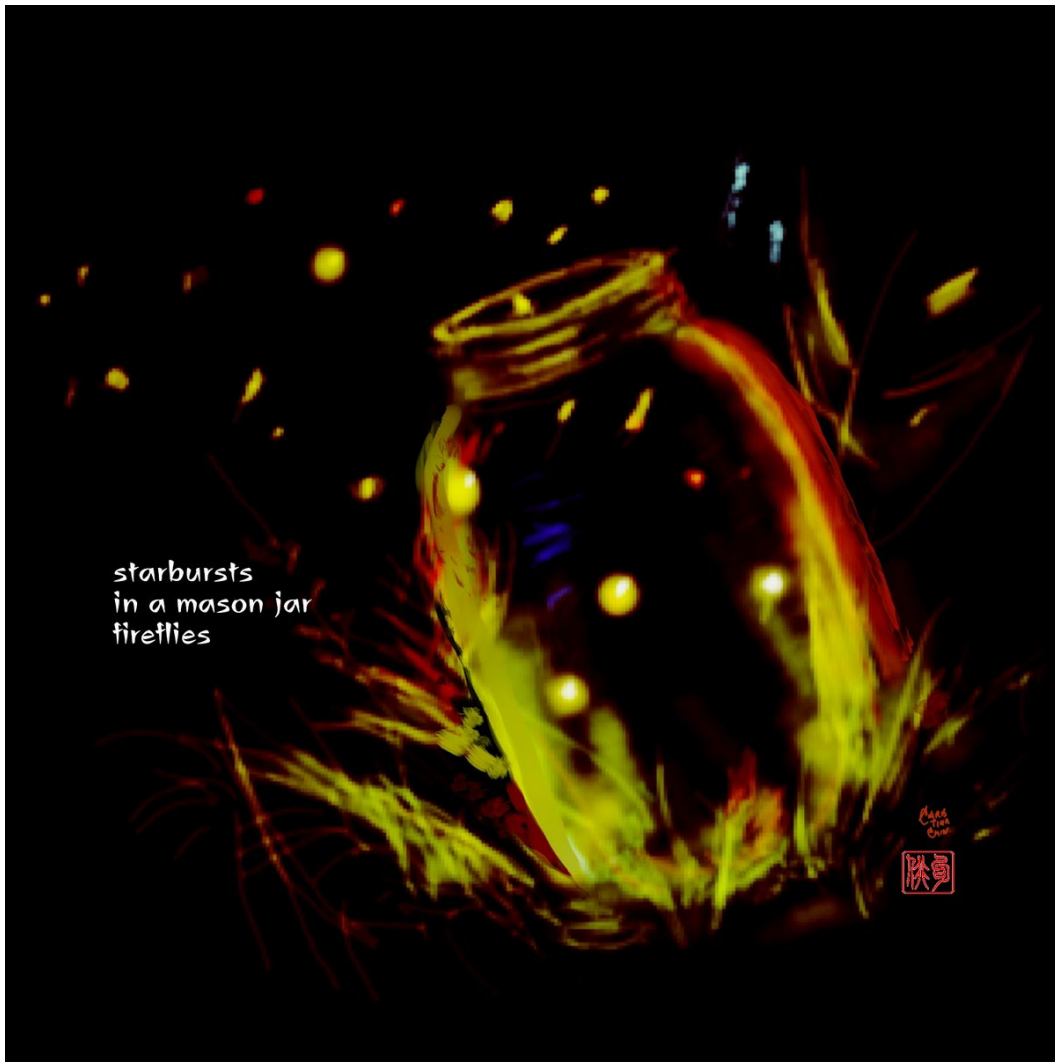
Cezar Ciobîcă & Paul Alexandru – Romania



vigil night...  
acres of memories misting  
the old mirror

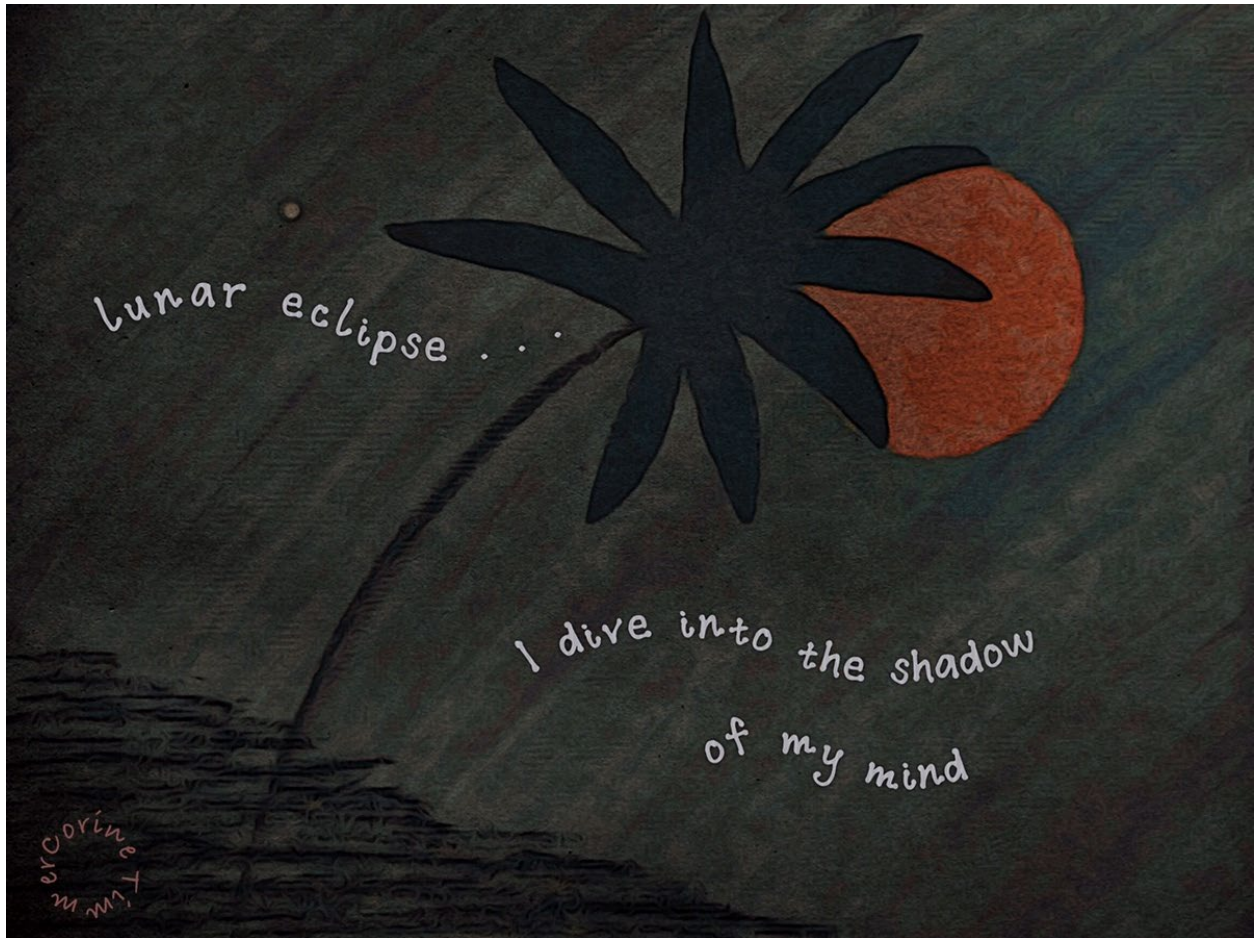
haiku: Cezar Ciobîcă  
photo: Paul Alexandru

Christina Chin—Malaysia





Corinne Timmer – Portugal



# Senryu



Crow



scything the wilderness  
grandad stops  
to give the lad a go

an féar fada á bhaint le speal  
stadann an seanóir  
go mbeadh deis ag an leaid óg

*Noel King, Ireland*  
*Tr. Ceaití Ní Bheildiún*

civil twilight  
the protestors' signs  
unreadable

picket fences  
the whiteness  
of her veneers

*Joshua St. Claire, USA*

summer  
in her favorite tee  
the comfort of old friends

*Ann Sullivan, USA*

coastal kayaking  
what was this sea called  
before Cortez

*Laurie D. Morrissey, USA*

weighed down by life the lead in our crystal

*Roberta Beach Jacobson, USA*

so many letters  
I wrote and did not send  
paper boat

толкова много писма  
написах и не изпратих  
хартиена лодка

*Radostina Dragostinova, Bulgaria*

mango pulp  
I lick the platter clean  
to spare the spoon

*Lakshmi Iyer, India*

chaos theory  
waiting for the coffee  
to kick in

*Ravi Kiran, India*

counseling room  
on the silent wall  
a clinical moon

*Suraj Nanu, India*

dueling banjos  
a neighbor's chainsaw  
then mine

*Randy Brooks, USA*

grape tomatoes she swears she bumped into the banister

*Robert Beveridge, USA*

riding shotgun  
in Dad's '57 Chevy  
the wind in my hand

*Rick Jackofsky, USA*

untangling our past  
under a silk tree—  
the fishing line straightens

*Beni Kurage, USA*

french fries  
she takes his talk  
with a pinch of salt

फ्रेंच फ्राइज़  
पुरुष की बातों पर महिला का  
आंशिक विश्वास

*Govind Joshi, India*

nonstop rain  
the comma  
of a sleeping cat

ripples  
all the things that  
held us firm

*June Rose Dowis, USA*

early autumn  
foraging for  
winter clothes

tidligt forår  
plukker og samler jeg  
vintertøj

*Audrey Quinn, Denmark (EC)*

waterfront . . .  
my brother drowns  
his soul

*Karen O'Leary, USA*

butterflies in flight  
the geometric shapes  
I never learned

*Richard L. Matta, USA*

kite  
at  
the  
end  
of  
my  
string  
of  
excuses  
for  
him

*Mary McCormack, USA*

glacial decay . . .  
i save another  
sidewalk worm

*Julie Schwerin, USA (EC)*

fresh bear scat  
on the trail—  
we start singing

*Angela Terry, USA*

snow-capped pub  
the soup of the day  
a dark red ale

*Bill Cooper, USA*

another job interview  
the old man's brogues  
all spit and polish

*Ingrid Baluchi, North Macedonia*

ballet class  
the older girls brag  
about shaving their legs

*Joshua Gage, USA*

deep sea fishing –  
looking for love  
in all the wrong places

red wigglers  
composting the leftovers –  
what we once had

*Bonnie J Scherer, USA*

couples counseling  
they leave  
in separate cars

*Joseph P. Wechselberger, USA*

all the ways  
I could leave her  
bolted chard

short order chef  
the eight-hour shift  
on his apron

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

realizing  
my full potential  
the rubber band snaps

*Shrehya Taneja, India*

old journal  
blank pages after  
the self-discovery

*Bhawana Rathore, India*

fake flowers  
in the waiting room  
the doctor's smile

*Brad Bennett, USA*

thinking zen  
would be different  
bruised fruit

zazen  
leaving the door  
unlocked

*Sondra J. Byrnes, USA (EC)*

mountaineering  
owl-eyed tents light up  
the night

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

telephone call—  
she pours a bit more  
into the wine glass

*Rupa Anand, India*

jen  
ga  
un  
pack  
ing  
my  
lay  
ers

*Ganesh R, India*



unspoiled tablecloth—  
first man  
on the moon

*Tony Williams, UK*

river café  
laying a hand on mine  
moonlight

*Perry L. Powell, USA*

limber fingers—  
playing solitaire  
the old way

*Nola Obee, Canada*

mum's first anniversary her voice starting to fade

*Bernadette O'Reilly, Ireland*

sticky coins  
the hand of the cotton candy merchant  
touching mine

ЛЕПКАВИ МОНЕТИ  
ЪКАТА НА ПРОДАВАЧА НА ЗАХАРЕН ПАМУК  
ДОКОСВА МОЯТА

*Maya Daneva, The Netherlands*  
*(Bulgarian translation)*

rising river  
towns bracing for a flood  
of reporters

*petro c. k., USA*

coach journey  
how our lives  
drag on

voyage en car  
comme nos vies  
s'éternisent

*Timothy Daly, France*

back to the farm  
our old house now home to  
a bat colony

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

still dawn  
the paper boy throws in  
a love letter

es dämmert noch  
der Zeitungsbote wirft  
'nen Liebesbrief ein

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*

woodland cemetery  
the well-worn path  
around your grave

*C. X. Turner, UK*

bookmark  
I collect myself  
from the poems

*A. J. Anwar, Indonesia (EC)*

sudden turbulence—  
a stranger's hand  
enfolding mine

*Katja Fox, UK*

weeping willow bark  
deep-lined  
my aging face

*Betsy Hearne, USA*

first trick  
her heart  
my diamond

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

driving south  
in a hire car, the switch  
from talk to music radio

ag tiomáint ó dheas  
i gcarr ar cíós, an t-athrú  
ó chaint go raidió ceoil

hospital visit  
the card I brought  
torn into little pieces

cuairt ospidéil  
an cárta a thug mé liom  
stróicthe ina phíosáí beaga

*Maeve O'Sullivan, Ireland*

fastening  
her backless gown  
visiting hours

*Gavin Austin, Australia (EC)*

the white swan  
wades on through black waters  
insomnia

*Minal Sarosh, India*

hospice visit  
between her and the sky  
cracked window pane

हॉस्पिस का दौरा  
उसके और आकाश के बीच  
एक टूटा हुआ खिड़की का शीशा (EC)

first crocus—  
we talk about  
happy endings

पहला क्रोकस—  
हम बात करते हैं  
बात सुखद अंत की

slow drizzle  
the conversations  
that never end

धीमी बूदाबांदी  
बातचीत  
जो कभी खत्म नहीं होती

*Mona Bedi, India*

second marriage  
a conjunction  
in the new password

ద్వితీయ వివాహం  
కొత్త పాస్వర్డ్ లో  
ఓ సముచ్చయం

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India*

jittery  
cockroach  
emerging  
from  
the  
ground  
coffee

*Lev Hart, Canada*

tourist attraction  
pointing the way  
with her selfie stick

旅遊景點  
她用自拍桿  
指明方向

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

a cloud of dust  
sliding past me  
you steal home

gliding raven  
lifting my arms  
in reply (EC)

*Cynthia Anderson, USA*

introducing himself  
as a friend of my father's  
november dusk

*John Pappas, USA*

nodding across the patio  
the other person  
dining alone

her hands  
slowing down  
my heartbeat

*Ben Gaa, USA*

Boggle  
all the words  
that could end us

*Susan Burch, USA*

mealybugs  
the things that happen  
when I'm not looking

*Johnnie Johnson Hafernik, USA*

grease  
layer upon layer  
your lies

grasa  
patong patong  
ang iyong mga kasinungalingan

*Lorelyn De la Cruz Arevalo, Philippines*

the language of plants  
my wife and her friend  
speaking Latin

*Shawn Blair, USA*

as the crow flies  
the difference between  
theory and practice

you and I  
going round in circles  
winter moon

*Keith Evetts, UK*



a thief in mourning  
the stolen lilies  
on her grave

*Tyson West, USA*

silent waiting room  
patients diagnose  
each other

*Christine Wenk-Harrison, USA*

frozen lake  
the cracks  
in his facade

*Valentina Ranaldi-Adams, USA*

fifth birthday  
taking my little monkey  
to the zoo

*Stephenie Story, USA*

seashell necklace  
she tells me she wants to be  
a mermaid

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

not scary enough—  
retelling  
the bedtime story

*Richard Tice, USA*

just in case—  
burying this possum  
with an escape route

*Jill Lange, USA*

billowing through the windows  
the clouds  
in my curtains

*Ruchita Madhok, India*

my contribution  
in memory of their son  
mourning dove

*Claire Vogel Camargo, USA*

homebound train a train of memories homebound

回家的列車—列車的 回憶 回家

*John Zheng, USA*

teaching children  
about crucifixion  
butcher birds

*John Hawkhead, UK (EC)*

a field of daisies  
better not to know  
if he loves me or not

un câmp de margarete  
mai bine să nu știu  
dacă mă iubește sau nu

*Mirela Brailean, Romania*

fall moon  
she counts her beads  
till dawn

jesienny księżyc  
odmawia różaniec  
do świtu

*Marta Chocilowska, Poland*

tarnished silver  
what's left of the  
marriage

*Eavonka Ettinger, USA*

cloudy sky . . .  
an old man talks to the winter  
with hand gestures

oblačno nebo ...  
starac priča sa zimom  
gestama ruku

*Ivan Gaćina, Croatia (EC)*

the stooped woman's  
reflection  
familiar yet not

*Susan Farner, USA*

monsoon wind  
the shepherdess's whistle  
out of tune

*Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan*

faded black ink—  
remembering a love  
begun long ago

*Rob McKinnon, Australia*

pregnant pause . . .  
he catches  
her meaning

*Lisa C Reynolds, Canada*

clear blue sky  
big white underpants  
billow in the wind

strakblauwe lucht  
grote witte onderbroeken  
bollen in de wind

*Joanne van Helvoort, The Netherlands*

the curve of a smile new moon

*Mike Gallagher, Ireland*

comb-over  
he tells me he feels  
younger

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

outside the cinema hall  
only our  
shadows touch

*Padmini Krishnan, UAE*

lunar landing—  
a fly explores  
my bald head

atterraggio lunare—  
una mosca esplora  
la mia testa calva

*Carmela Marino, Italy*

dropping in  
at the old hut  
summer rain

*Ernest Wit, Poland*

insomnia  
my imaginary friend winks  
at the Cheshire Moon

insomnie  
prietenul imaginar îi face  
din ochi Lunii Cheshire

*Florin C. Ciobica, Romania*

## Editor's Choices - Senryu (EC)

My thanks to all the poets who submitted work for this issue. Without your enthusiasm for the journal, we would not have the status we enjoy. During the submission period, I found myself travelling in several different countries. Because of the complexities of living in different places, it was easy to find refuge within the simplicity of senryu. The comfort of those short poems may have had a direct influence on my selection criteria for editor's choices. After all, we are products of our environment, as well as our history and inheritance. I hope you, dear reader, will share some enthusiasm for, and possibly find further merit within, the poems listed below, when you revisit them.



early autumn  
foraging for  
winter clothes

*Audrey Quinn, Denmark*

Audrey Quinn has given us a short piece with seasonal references, which appears straightforward. And yet, on rereading, I find alternative explanations for the apparently simple story. Is the forager wealthy, and therefore looking to select the latest fashions for the coming seasons, or are they poor and facing the possibility of a cold winter without suitable protection from it? Are they foraging in a retail store or a thrift store? As the reader, we are not told which is the correct interpretation. I like the space that gives my imagination.



glacial decay . . .  
i save another  
sidewalk worm

*Julie Schwerin, USA*

Julie Schwerin raises a contemporary concern with ‘glacial decay’ – the disappearance of glaciers. I find another reading, perhaps a more universal one – older people gradually decline in their capabilities. Both readings of the fragment are quite alarming, and yet they seem balanced by the hope contained within the phrase. We learn that another sidewalk worm has been saved. Despite the seemingly overwhelming nature of global (or universal) problems, the author has the power to make small changes for good and still chooses to exert that power. Fighting the good fight, as some might say.



zazen  
leaving the door  
unlocked

*Sondra J. Byrnes, USA*

Sondra J. Byrnes takes us into the world of Buddhist meditation. I believe zazen is a seated meditation. The poem makes me think of someone in a lotus position with their eyes closed, to distance themselves from the distractions of their surroundings. However, the phrase talks of leaving doors unlocked. While this may be a statement of trust regarding the local community, it feels like a metaphor – the meditator will allow themselves to explore many different avenues of thought. Superficially, the poem appears very gentle – zazen requires the practitioner to be aware of and observe what is passing through their minds without getting involved in it. However, I imagine that is quite a challenge when the mind strays onto dark or difficult topics.



bookmark  
I collect myself  
from the poems

*A.J. Anwar, Indonesia*



A.J. Anwar gives us some insight into how it is possible to lose yourself in a book of poetry. It's easy to imagine how different poems might move a reader in different ways and therefore leave different aspects of the reader on different pages. And so, rather than being lost in a single 'other' world, the reader could be scattered across many worlds. Therefore, when the time comes to put the book down, the act of extrication is like a series of returns.

It makes me wonder whether a single bookmark would be sufficient to mark the reader's progress.



fastening  
her backless gown  
visiting hours

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

Gavin Austin has pared this piece back to a mere six words, and yet he still offers the reader a senryu with remarkable depth. It raises so many questions. Who is the "her"? Where are they being visited? Why is she wearing a backless gown and why does it need fastening? So many questions to answer and so many possibilities to explore. These all have the potential to be difficult questions, and yet the poem evokes a sense of love and tenderness. It's remarkable to pack so much into six words. A real piece of craftsmanship.



hospice visit  
between her and the sky  
cracked window pane

*Mona Bedi, India*

Mona Bedi shows us that less is more. The scene is a simple one and yet its imagery has the power to conjure ideas of complexity. Hospices are inevitably linked with sadness, as they provide end-of-life care. And yet the cracked windowpane offers an extra poignancy. It could be a description of neglect, or a metaphor for a disconnect between the “her” and the outside world. Both possibilities offer complications to an already difficult situation, yet they encourage exploration of each potential scenario.



gliding raven  
lifting my arms  
in reply

*Cynthia Anderson, USA*

Cynthia Anderson provides us with a joyful image. I have often seen ravens twisting and tumbling in windy conditions. They give the impression of birds which enjoy the simple pleasure of flight. The salutation of the walker to this passing raven indicates a shared enjoyment. Whether it's the location, the weather or the freedom of flight is not explained. Perhaps it's all three. It doesn't seem to matter. It's a connection which requires acknowledgement.



teaching children  
about crucifixion  
butcher birds

*John Hawkhead, UK*

John Hawkhead has brought two striking images together in this powerful piece. 'Butcher bird' is a name given to some shrike species which feed on invertebrates or small birds. They use thorn bushes as 'larders' and impale their captured prey on thorns. While this is something that might be covered in natural history documentaries,

it furnishes us with brutal truths. It's a striking match for crucifixion and the brutality which humans can bestow on one another. Unsavoury reading material, perhaps, but exquisitely observed.



cloudy sky . . .  
an old man talks to the winter  
with hand gestures

oblačno nebo ...  
starac priča sa zimom  
gestama ruku

*Ivan Gaćina, Croatia*

Ivan Gaćina offers us a most curious image. How could anyone hope to talk to a season? And, if that is an impossible starting point, how could such a conversation become so animated that it required hand gestures? I am particularly interested in the use of the rather neutral verb, "talks". We are not told of any emotion but shown a confusing scene. The strange description draws the reader in and invites them to look a little more closely. The 'fragment', "cloudy sky" is separated (by an ellipsis) from the 'phrase' which first captured my attention. So, perhaps the cloudiness is a metaphor. Might the perspective of the reader and/or the old man be clouded? That idea helps us look beyond the immediate information in the 'phrase' section and opens numerous possible explanations for the strange behaviour.

David J Kelly

## Haiga – Part 2

Dan Hardison—USA



Debbie Strange—Canada



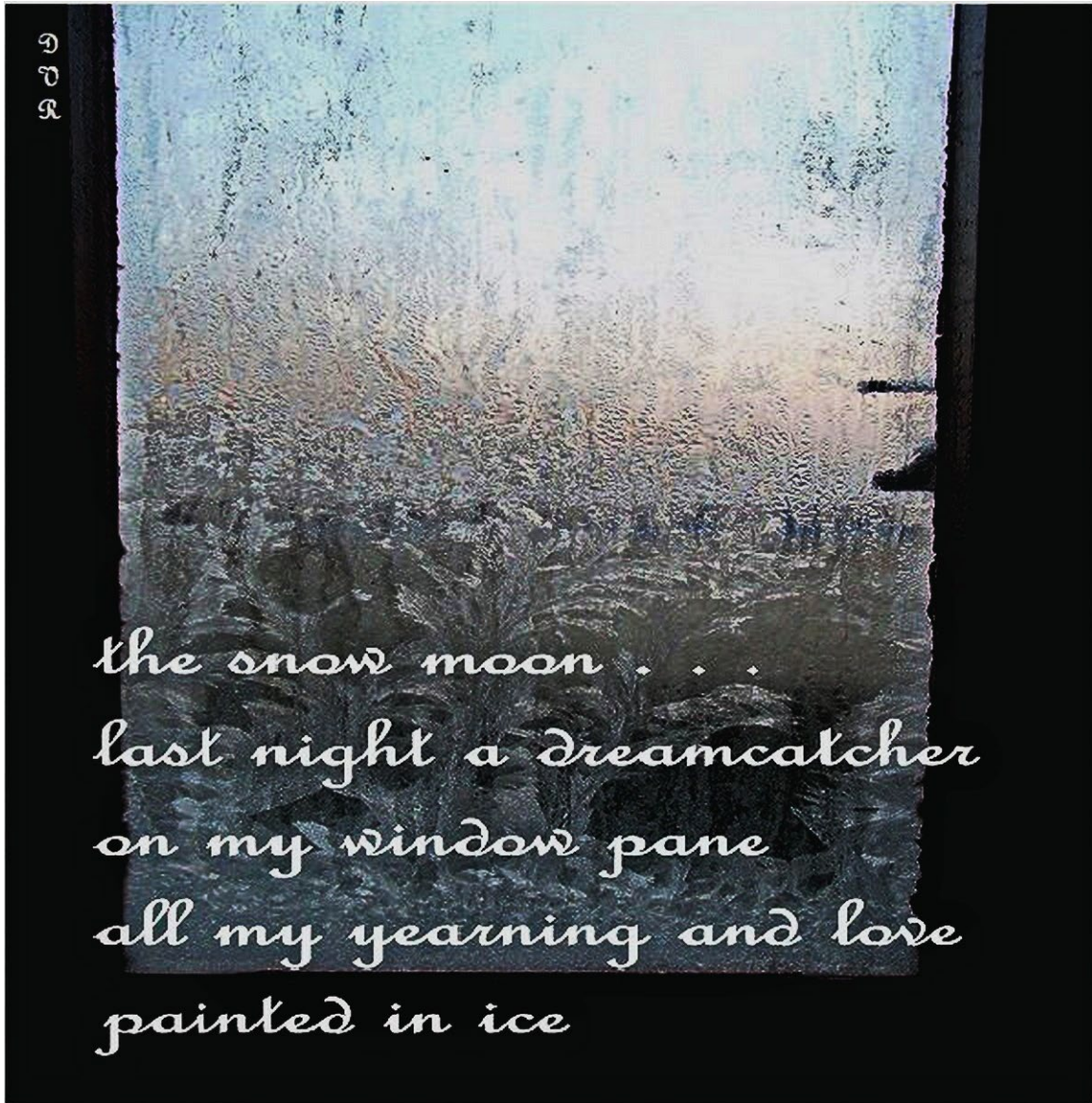


Dimitrij Škrk – Slovenia





Djurdja Vukelic Rozic – Croatia



939

*the snow moon . . .  
last night a dreamcatcher  
on my window pane  
all my yearning and love  
painted in ice*

Eavonka Ettinger & Mark Gilbert—USA



sitting alone in nature my better angels

Photo: Mark Gilbert

Poem: Eavonka Ettinger



Emma Alexander Arthur—Norway



sorrowful farewell  
the swift nature  
of summer

Emma Alexander Arthur

Eugeniusz Zacharski & Jacek Pokrak – Croatia



Franjo Ordanić & Sandra Šamec—Croatia

**sunrise-  
creaking doors revealing  
the truth**



Photo by: Sandra Šamec, Haiku by: Franjo Ordanić



Gerald Friedman—USA



cool morning  
her eyes don't show  
even my lens

Gerald Friedman

# Tanka



**Peonies**

waves  
sing to every rock  
on the shore  
when you whisper  
sweet-nothings to all of us

*Padmini Krishnan, UAE*

she calls me  
by a name I haven't heard  
in years—  
suddenly all the stars  
fall back in place

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

she never could abide  
a love poem—  
instead we shared lakes  
and trout streams, reeling in  
more than we came for

*Curt Pawlisch, USA*

the slow turn  
of the Milky Way  
I learn  
to play the long game  
with this love

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

can I forgive?  
in the abandoned  
old garden  
one white tea rose opens  
above a thicket of thorns

*Katherine Raine, New Zealand*

thin morning mist  
settled behind the dunes  
ephemeral  
seemingly complicated  
our lives together

*Jon Hare, USA*

just when I think  
I belong  
a new wall arises . . .  
the changing territory  
of crows

*Susan Burch, USA*

a monarch passes  
on a sunless day  
tenuously  
hope flutters  
even in shadows

*Jon Hare, USA*

not snow, not rain  
but cold and wet  
she lets me  
huddle  
under her umbrella

*Randy Brooks, USA*

raspberry splashes  
and wisteria mauve  
she lingers  
in the silken folds  
of her favourite scarf

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

Sunday afternoon  
the streets lit up  
autumn sun  
and our smiles  
in every puddle of rain

nedjeljno podne  
ulice obasjalo  
jesenje sunce  
i naši osmijesi  
u svakoj lokvi kiše

*Slobodan Pupovac, Croatia*



with her ten  
delicate ink strokes  
the courtesan's  
boat departs a wild shore  
into the scroll's emptiness

*Katherine Raine, New Zealand*

(based on an ink painting of a Chinese  
landscape by the courtesan Ma Shouzhen,1576)

wind-ruffled  
on the bare rocks  
a blue thrush sings  
is this an urging  
I should hope again

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan (EC)*

autumn deepens  
a magpie's cry  
this deep thirst  
to see my childhood home  
will it never end?

शरद ऋतु गहराती है  
एक मैगपाई की पुकार  
यह गहरी प्यास  
बचपन का घर देखने की  
क्या यह कभी नहीं मिट पाएगी?

नीना सिंह, भारत  
*Neena Singh, India*

bogged down  
in the autumn moor  
in my dream  
mother so young  
cutting ladies' tresses

*Suraj Nanu, India*

your father's shadow  
has cut a hard path for you . . .  
among the boulders  
at the bottom of the gorge  
minnows in a clear pool

*Jim Chessing, USA*

my mother  
never sang a lullaby  
for me . . .  
yet the moonlight awakens  
her melody in my heart

मेरी मां  
ने कभी लोरी नहीं गायी  
मेरे लिए ...  
फिर भी चांदनी जगाती है  
मेरे दिल में उसकी धुन

नीना सिंह, भारत  
*Neena Singh, India (EC)*

old mother  
makes the best cakes  
with her song  
I suddenly remember  
my childhood

老母亲  
做着最好的蛋糕  
唱着歌 ...  
我突然想起  
我的童年

贺 大卫 中国  
*David He, China*

all night  
searching for Mother  
through a dream maze  
of strange streets and houses  
where I'll never find her

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

a birthday gift  
saved for myself . . .  
the last voicemail  
grandmother left  
before she died

*Agnes Eva Savich, USA*

a humble man . . .  
the old hermit monk  
stops to play  
with the village children  
forgetting his cane in the grass

*Michael H. Lester, USA*

little sisters  
cover their smiles  
with yellow fans  
the ginkgo's leaves  
were made for this

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

mountain vistas  
a sisters' road trip  
singing oldies  
all the way home . . .  
forty years overdue

*Stephenie Story, USA*

catfishing  
a baited line thrown out  
to take nibbles  
at the online façade—  
hooked by the rippling Twitter

*Robert Erlandson, USA*

Harbor Concert

they sing of longing  
for going afar  
then take their stuff—  
go home to wife & kid

Hafenkonzert

sie singen von Sehnsucht  
und Fernweh  
nehmen dann ihren Kram—  
gehen heim zu Frau & Kind

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*

we watch  
a tour of Point Lobos  
on a computer—  
the guide describes  
the scent of sagebrush

*Richard Tice, USA*

an office worker  
on this morning's train  
one argyle sock  
not nearly a match—  
not a word said

*Ron Scully, USA*

donning  
a wool coat  
despite the summer heat . . .  
an old man  
and a bumble bee

*Rick Jackofsky, USA*

blue moon  
lost in night clouds . . .  
found  
today at the curb  
on a flattened bottle cap

*Jill Lange, USA*

clearing cobwebs  
my mind on a zillion yards  
of junk-ridden thoughts –  
mother earth  
spins on now

ஒட்டடைகளுடன் சுத்தமாயின  
என் எண்ணங்களில் மலையளவு குவிந்த  
குப்பைக் கூளங்கள்  
பூமித்தாய்  
சுழல்கிறாள் ... இப்பொழுது

*Kala Ramesh, India (EC)*  
*Tamizh Tr: Anbuchelvi Suburaju*  
அன்புச்செல்வி சுப்புராஜு

in the doldrums  
of a wet, wet January  
this pulse of hope  
like wisps of incense  
even though I no longer pray

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

I want to rest  
my weary head and heart  
in the sloping hills  
where the sun  
streams off sparkling waters

*Anne Curran, New Zealand*

inside a dream  
the storm is over  
at dawn  
the image of a lighthouse  
emerges in me

dentro un sogno  
la tempesta è finita  
all'alba  
l'immagine di un faro  
riaffiora in me

*Daniela Misso, Italy*

a soft evening  
no drama in the sky  
just a gentle fall of rain  
what better way to sit  
and pass our lives

*Simon Wilson, UK*

footprints  
in a dream  
tracing a journey  
backwards into morning  
sunlight on new-fallen snow

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

two ice storms  
tried to kill the fig  
and yet  
it wills itself to live  
to give us figs

*Christa Pandey, USA*

the otter's whistle  
summons a mate upstream —  
of no further use  
she packs him downstream  
tail between his legs

*Mike Gallagher, Ireland*



a blue crab  
ripples the Chesapeake  
suddenly I realize  
I must reconsider everything  
I ever knew about the sky

only here  
only now  
across the observable universe  
this dun bird  
this dun branch

*Joshua St. Claire, USA*

storm clouds build  
but let's not pull anchor yet  
fish are biting—  
a dove lingers by a cliff  
a falcon's eyes gleam

*Tony Steven Williams, Australia*

at last  
the ping of rain drops  
on hard-baked earth—  
we pray it's a sign  
of better times ahead

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

listening to all  
the tiny perpendiculars  
of a life free falling . . .  
Apollinaire at the window  
watching the rain

*Ivan Randall, Australia*

a playful sparrow  
shaking the clouds  
in a puddle  
under its leg a grass blade  
breathes with gills

zaigran vrapčić  
zatresavši oblake  
u lokvi  
pod njegovom nogom  
travka diše na škrge

*Djurdja V. Rozic, Croatia*

an unexpected joy  
first warm day  
a blue bird  
calling from the glen  
easing us from melancholy

*Anna Cates, USA*

fluttering  
between sunbeams  
yellow wings  
among white daisies—  
my wide smile

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

only once or twice  
have I seen dead butterflies  
in the wild  
can I too leave like most . . .  
without a trace

*Richard L. Matta, USA (EC)*

full afternoon sun  
glowing green to mauve  
how the inch plant  
a jewel  
in the old clay pot

*Lorraine Pester, USA*

sunflowers  
follow the sun  
just thinking  
of their day-long effort  
gives me a crick in my neck

*Kala Ramesh, India*

gingerly  
i hold this wildflower  
& become  
one of its petals  
floating on warm air

*Pamela A. Babusci, USA*

in awe I watch  
the vanishing sunlight . . .  
Uluru  
her purple glow  
against the sparse landscape

*Gwen Bitti, Australia*

on a gondola  
moving through a time tunnel  
I see my reflection . . .  
feel the transition from young  
to older identity

*Claire Vogel Camargo, USA*

the old man  
tends the roses she loved  
snipping and pruning  
sometimes in his zeal to please,  
he cuts too much

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

on a terrace  
a grey-haired couple  
sipping coffee  
the wind scatters leaves  
and the doctor's words

sijedi bračni par  
na terasi pijucka  
jutarnju kavu  
vjetar raznosi lišće  
i riječi liječnika

*Silva Trstenjak, Croatia*

*Translation: Đurđa Vukelić Rožić*

the woman  
that brought me up  
lost in a labyrinth  
of forgetfulness –  
the last leaf yet to fall

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

dripping rain  
lulling her to sleep  
the weight  
of a full moon  
filled with grief

*C.X. Turner, UK*

cardiac arrest  
a dead colleague  
in a meeting room  
the fleetingness of this breath  
. . . of everything

serangan jantung  
kolega yang meninggal  
di ruang rapat  
fanannya nafas hidup  
. . . segala apa pun

*A.J. Anwar, Indonesia*

a life too small  
for your spirit  
my heart aches  
to bring you home  
so many never-endings

*Alison Clayton-Smith, UK*

jackrabbits  
frolicking in the snow  
around your grave  
there will be time enough  
tomorrow for my tears

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

on waking  
harsh morning light  
unmasks  
a hollowness beside me  
the shape of you

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

since your passing  
week after week  
your fluffy cat  
waits and waits  
at your bedroom door

*John Budan, USA*

in stealth  
again on my window  
a full moon—  
the empty dog bed  
still warm with her memories

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*

remembering  
how i massaged your feet  
i stroke  
the memorial seat . . .  
see us in the grain

*Celia Hope, New Zealand*

I would talk  
with the owls if I knew  
how to fly . . .  
will I be as comfortable  
without you in my skin?

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

the bamboo forest  
always changing its sound  
as it grows older . . .  
even after all these years  
your voice remains so soothing

pădurea de bambus  
își schimbă mereu sunetul  
pe măsură ce îmbătrânește . . .  
chiar și după toți acești ani  
vocea ta rămâne atât de liniștitoare

*Mirela Brailean, Romania*

from nowhere  
a conspiracy of clouds  
shadows the beach . . .  
we ask what misfortune  
awaits us today

*Margaret Owen Ruckert, Australia*



Afghan sun  
dust and the smell of horses  
dark beards shade guns  
a cowboy hat shields Utah sun—  
rodeo dust and bulls

*Tyson West, USA*

predawn  
waves in the sand . . .  
in my mind's eye  
I assemble the remnants  
of shipwrecks

pred samu zoru  
valovi u pijesku ...  
u mislima  
sastavljam ostatke  
brodoloma

*Ivan Gaćina, Croatia*

the over-reach  
of meadow sunflowers  
if only  
war borders healed  
so easily

*Joanna Ashwell, UK (EC)*

loaded cars  
with bitter rice—  
on a bench  
the wind browses  
the book of a refugee

mașini încărcate  
cu orez amar—  
pe o banca  
vântul răsfoiește  
cartea unui refugiat

*Mircea Moldovan, România (EC)*

Memorial Wall  
in the spring sunshine  
I finger-walk  
through these lives  
engraved in bronze

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

## Editor's Choice—Tanka (EC)

wind-ruffled  
on the bare rocks  
a blue thrush sings  
is this an urging  
I should hope again

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

This poem touches on the rhythms of early tanka. With beauty it calls us to come closer. 'Wind-ruffled'. Such an inviting expression draws our attention. At present we don't know whether this is a disturbance or a delight. 'On bare rocks.' Now an association starts to grow, 'wind ruffled on bare rocks.' A feeling of unease and emptiness creeps in as 'bare rocks' bring to mind a rough uncomfortable surface, in contrast to the smooth worn nature of a boulder. Despite pain and uncertainty 'a blue thrush sings', there *is* joy and hope. There is a promise and we're uplifted. The simple human response brought to the last two lines 'is this an urging I should hope again' is reassuring. When there is the gift of bird song, there is life, love and hope. This tanka evokes the poignant grace of tanka from the 'Heian Court' period, where the flow of words and personal empathy linger.



my mother  
never sang a lullaby  
for me . . .  
yet the moonlight awakens  
her melody in my heart

*Neena Singh, India*

This tanka has the rhythm of a song with the pathos of mother, moonlight and melody. There's an underlying yearning and haunting that reaches out to touch. Regardless of

our life experience, the mother-figure is central and still works in the conscious and subconscious. A working relationship of conversations with mother can go on for years. That 'the moonlight should awaken' is a revelation. The moon, a feminine symbol, symbolizes immortality and eternity. In such brevity, the poet has captured succinctly the precious nature of this bond.



clearing cobwebs  
my mind on a zillion yards  
of junk-ridden thoughts . . .  
mother earth  
spins on now

ஒட்டடைகளுடன் சுத்தமாயின  
என் எண்ணங்களில் மலையளவு குவிந்த  
குப்பைக் கூளங்கள்  
புமித்தாய்  
சுழல்கிறாள் ... இப்பொழுது

*Kala Ramesh, India*

*Tamizh Tr: Anbuchelvi Suburaju*

அன்புச்செல்வி சுப்புராஜு

The humour tossed so casually, 'junk ridden', opens a window to the truth of thought's ceaseless blathering. 'junk-ridden', may not be literal but is a good fit to an ongoing rambling mind. 'Cobwebs', a metaphor for the ever sticky nature of endless thinking. Here lies the rub. I appreciate the humour inferred that mother earth 'spins on now' regardless... spinning thought, spinning earth, a good parallel. Endless thinking is our lot. Will we ever escape? Left unsaid is whether a moment by moment stillness is possible. The last line, 'spins on now' gives us a hint.



only once or twice  
have I seen dead butterflies  
in the wild  
can I too leave like most . . .  
without a trace

*Richard L. Matta, USA*

To leave, 'without a trace'. This calls us to attention. The idea inspires. The poet has been 'touched' by a moment of awareness. Maybe, as with the 'butterfly effect,' it will ripple out and touch us too. In these times of accelerating climate change the onus comes back to each individual. This tanka gives us a prod. Nudge?



loaded cars  
with bitter rice –  
on a bench  
the wind browses  
the book of a refugee

mașini încărcate  
cu orez amar –  
pe o banca  
vântul răsfoiește  
cartea unui refugiat

*Mircea Moldovan, România*

A thought provoking tanka. Without fanfare the poet has brought together a simple, stark snapshot for us of bitter rice, bench, book and refugee. It's as if the wind is flipping through the pages of a displaced person's desolation, of their weight of loss and grief. As if there may be no one else to know or care. Only the wind. This deftly crafted tanka, of moments in a refugee's life, calls us to bear witness.



the over-reach  
of meadow sunflowers  
if only  
war borders healed  
so easily

*Joanna Ashwell, UK*

This tanka calls out to us. In so few words it speaks of the possibility of meadow sunflowers being the healers at 'war borders'. Sunflowers are renowned for their colour, beauty, strength, and endurance in wind and weather. Of their sustenance. Here is the 'over-reach', across a war border. Our hearts are lifted with hope, healing and thoughts of freedom, only in the next moment to be dashed with 'if only'. We are left with a sense of impotence.

Jenny Fraser

# Haiga - Part 3

Jenny M. Fraser—New Zealand



John Hawkhead—UK



juvenile court

a butterfly rides the crest

of a sandstorm

John Hawkhead



Johnnie Johnson Hafernik & Dorothy M. Messerschmitt—USA





Julie Schwerin—USA

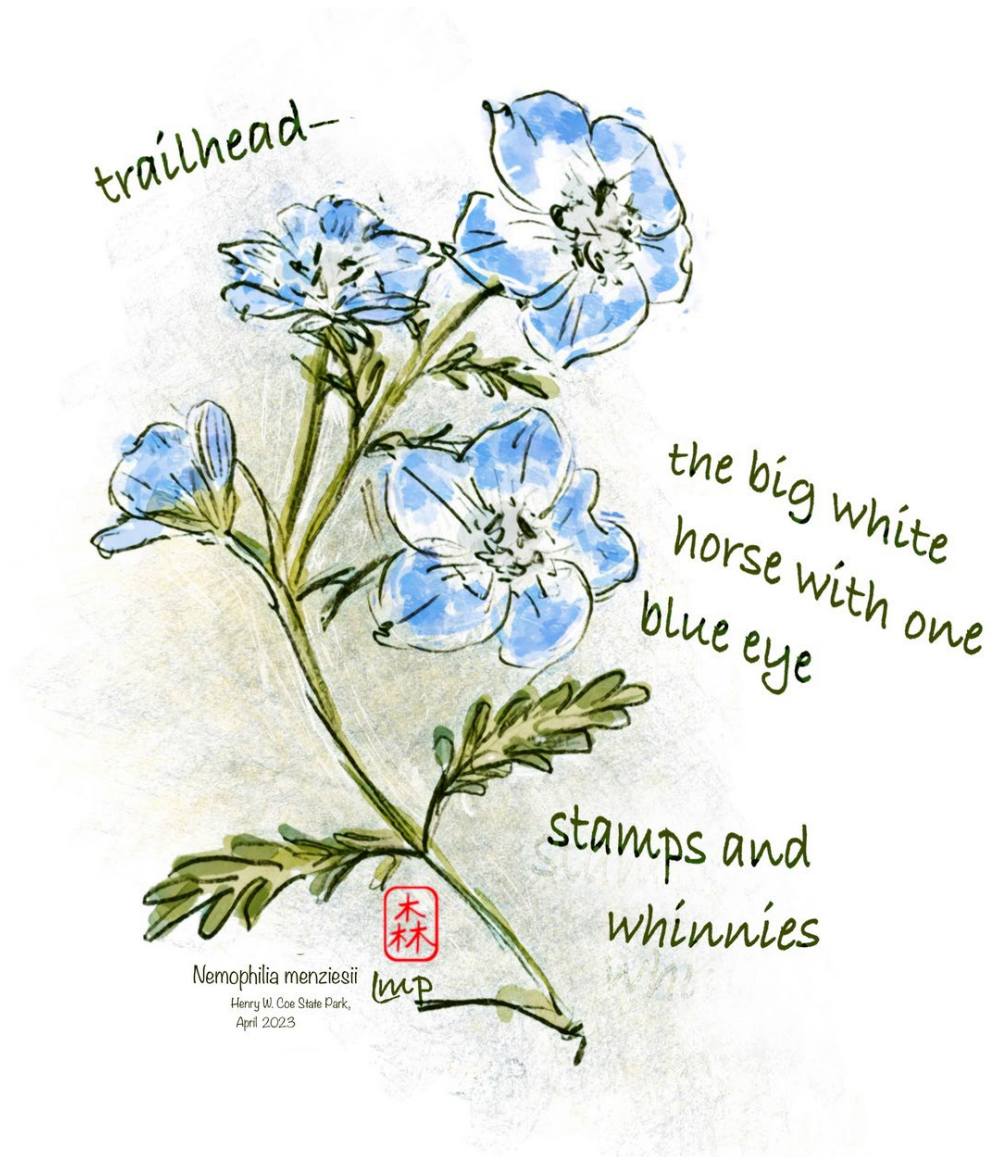




Kevin Valentine—USA



Linda Papanicolaou—USA



Lorraine A Padden & Kristen Lindquist—USA





Luminita Suse—Canada



retirement plans  
windblown leaves  
resemble orioles



Marilyn Ashbaugh—USA



# Haibun



**Turtle Island**



## Down Sandycove Way

*Thomas Festa, USA*

The wharves have vanished now. Only wooden stumps remain, the waves' knees hard by sloops rotting in drydock. For a fatherless exorcism, you choose exile, refusing to kneel in prayer for a moment's wingspan in the broken labyrinth of your making. That pier reaching out was just another disappointed bridge. Atop this and many another cliff, you've seen the swells advance and rise to break — crest, crash, withdraw — only to return again for more of what formed this coast, though somehow nothing's lost in the erosion. Tonight, quayside, you will not sleep but lie entranced by the nightmare from which you're trying to awake. Home, you won't go.

a bar-tailed godwit  
on the wrack line  
the sea all around

## Holding Stillness

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

My world, this small self-orbiting existence I occupy, is slowing. Soon it will shatter and still. Your hand, eager to clasp mine, now pulls free.

You will go and I will wander alone, threading through night's indifferent shadows.

In an instant you are captured by a flash of light and frozen in time; your teeth perfectly white, your enigmatic smile easing into place.

What thoughts lie behind the lashes of those dark eyes, locked and bolted, unwilling to allow trespass?

I am the creator of this image. I hold it, gently lowering your face to rest on my chest, like you so often will do in the shelter of darkness.

Before the intruder of morning breaks into our intimate fortress, and you return to your other world.

the smell of rain  
before the deluge  
currawong calls

## A Litany of Bones (EC)

*Jonathan McKeown, Australia*

...

and so, the deathless soul for whom this perishing  
body does not suffice

...

As with the light of a long since extinguished – but eternal – star,  
may nothing remain of me but my voice

*Paul Claudel*

This morning, before sunrise, I left the house in darkness and drove to Little Bay and walked south around the rocks and found a sheltered nook out of the chilly wind and sat hunched in a white and wind-hollowed socket of stone to watch the world born again . . . in the terrible roar . . . from the broken waters . . . on the broken stone . . . with the silhouette of a passing tern looking down . . . and gave utterance to Claudel's Second Ode with the eternal breath that enlivens all things, like a litany of bones . . .

still here  
with the corner of this page  
shivering in sunlight

## A Day's Breath

*Dr. Brijesh Raj, India*

All around, air and asphalt darken.

cloud burst  
the old peepul  
stands tall

A hint of cooling freshness wafts in.

Gayatri mantra  
between heavy rain  
a koel's call

The skies relent, for a while. A young mongoose streaks past carrying some sunlight home on its back.

on the mossy wall  
yellower  
the myna's feet

A kingfisher sits motionless, watching.

across the city  
dog raincoats  
and leaf mandalas

A cattle egret flaps and lands awkwardly, whitewashing prior memories. A breath away, a little sunbird announces itself, mightily scaling dense foliage.

over and over  
repeating himself  
a coppersmith barbet

Until the sun's sister emerges, shining white.

sleepless hill  
pulsing with staccato  
the song of a frog

## home, again

*Tim Gardiner, UK*

The pine trees' arc around the heather has not changed. Clear blue sky moves into night, this time the transition is keenly felt. The stars beyond the needle canopy are undimmed by the decades. It's just now I see them clearer against the black.

empty then  
emptier now  
forest clearing

## Purple irises

*Valentina Meloni, Italy*

Valdichiana, 2020-03-27

The Sirocco holds the twilight in its grip with furious gusts. Its fingers run through the blades of soft grass bending them in silky green waves. The mimosa bows to the cold, its little suns scatter their last essence to the stars.

purple irises --  
the anthers swing  
full of pollen

The first roses huddle in ink buds. The night melts a deluge of black on all colors, silences the burrows and the eyes of the owls. Dreams are silent stowaways. They don't stop at the border. They rise impetuously with the wind.

spring  
no mercy  
for a sorrowing heart

## Footprints & Traces

*Janet Ruth, USA*

Early morning. Beach is almost deserted. A middle-aged man in windbreaker and rolled up pants clutches a bucket hat against the wind. He sweeps the sand with a metal detector that will not find the perfect slipper shell or skate egg cases. But these treasures *are* sought by the woman who stoops to examine the ragged wrack line. She rises to fling a stick for her dog.

ebb and flow  
the undertow & shush  
of memory

Serenity shatters before the breaking wave of an all-American family with 2.5 kids. Children, numbers one and two, run laughing into the water. Wiped out in the surf, they stumble back to the blanket, snatch at gritty swimsuits. Mom consoles the crying victims, who splash all over her magazine. Child number 0.5 stretches her bathing suit into an improbable silhouette. Dad is being buried up to his neck in sand by number one. Number two cajoles Mom into throwing a frisbee that wobbles crazily in her hands, elicits bubbling laughter. Mom and Dad watch younger bodies bask under the glittering sun and remember a less complicated life. They would not trade the wonder in number two's eyes at seeing her first horseshoe crab. Their reverie interrupted to retrieve sandwiches from the kids, tossing bits of their lunch to the gulls.

empty sky –  
shrieking hordes  
descend

The lifeguard jogs at the surf's edge, confident of admiring glances – king of his domain – of salt and sand. Teenagers with bronzed bodies, earbuds and boogie boards crest the dunes. Girls cluster, pose and stare surreptitiously at boys. The boys pretend to ignore, fling suggestive phrases and regale each other with stories of conquest, real or



contrived. The daydreams of lovers lying side-by-side, disrupted when number one dashes heedlessly by, flinging grit. They shoot unnoticed glares after him down the strand.

heat & shimmer  
sandpipers stitch  
waves to the beach

The extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins begins gathering up the beach paraphernalia. They juggle an ice chest, lawn chairs, beach umbrella that threatens to blow over and impale some innocent sunbather, water wings, beach ball, sunglasses, sunscreen . . .

The orange sun rolls down the arc of heaven. Illuminates cloud and ocean, skin and sand indiscriminately. It plunges behind a dune. Shadows of seagrass on dunes stretch toward waves. An exodus—humans, with their noise, trek away from this moving boundary between land and sea.

wind & tide  
all our passing  
wiped away overnight

## The Many Shapes of Uncertainty

*Matthew Caretti, American Samoa*

salt of the earth  
waiting again  
for the sea

The wind shifts into awareness. The morning bell curves hard on its current. Slowing to thoughts of the cosmic hourglass, of earth sifting into the grave.

message in a bottle  
the sea returns  
my prayers

As tradition sets down, during this threnody the shaman shapeshifts back into earth. Nothing more, nothing less. When the song abruptly stops.

seeing not seeing  
the bleach spots  
fire coral

## Silent Waters (EC)

An Installation by Pritika Chowdhry, 2023

ceramic feet, wax, salt, sounds of water

Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

<https://www.pritikachowdhry.com/silent-waters>

*Caroline Giles Banks, USA*

Chowdhry's installation of 101 larger-than-life-scale ceramic feet placed on opposite sides of a twisted line memorializes those who died in the violence during the partition of India in 1947.

jet black containers

Once filled with salt water the hollow clay feet are now lined with the residue of crystallized salt.

the dried tears

I want to defy the museum's security system, to step over the rope barricade and place my feet next to theirs. Together to jump over history's crooked lines.

of memory

## Bound

*John Zheng, USA*

Grandma walked like a penguin because she had bound feet. Instead of waddling to the store, she often sent me on errands. After school, I would grab money from her hand and sprint like a rabbit to Zhaoyiman to buy salt, soy sauce, or snacks. She liked to play cuopai, a kind of rectangular playing cards which look like bookmarks. When she visited her homeplace, women there played cards with her to make her feel at home. Fifty years after her death, I still wonder whether playing cards was a way for her to kill time after she became a widow at 25 or whether her entire life was bound like her feet.

bonsai tree —  
pruned and wired  
for the look

## The Equation

*Rebecca Drouilhet, United States*

Some believe the smoke stopped curling from the chimneys of Auschwitz more than seventy years ago, but in my memory, I still see her — damaged flesh, hollow-eyes, arm outstretched to receive the I.V. the digits of her tattoo faded a dark and blurry blue. Today, I feel the shadow of her ghost, see the rabbis dancing in the wrong key, a music that grows ever harsher and more discordant, as once again the darkness gathers.

how can  
we do the math: six million  
divided by death

## The Lone Star

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

"Nothing is free, but anything is possible in this land of opportunity," the governor repeats in a firm voice at a news briefing. His last words deepen the silence in the conference room, except for the clicking of cameras.

wave after wave of heat . . .  
a floating border-wall  
in the Rio Grande River

## Framework

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*

The president visits his authoritarian colleague in the neighboring country. In conversations with the host the visitor confronts him with the topic of human rights.

“In my country everybody has the same rights,” the imperious leader answers. “And you can be assured that we treat everybody equally. For the rest, we forbid any outside interference in our internal affairs.”

The guest makes a second attempt, “But we don’t see that you respect the freedom of speech, any opposition to . . .

“Now we should speak about the future of our economic relations”, the dictator interrupts with determination.

gold-rimmed  
the foot mat  
at the palace door

## Leftovers

*Lorraine Pester, USA*

Holding his hand, she takes her 4-year-old son to the park across the road from a c-store. deposits him on the shaded picnic table. She tells John Paul to stay put, that she'll bring him back a Snickers.

She walks to the c-store pay-phone. makes a call, buys herself a coke, crosses her ankles as she leans against the building.

And John Paul? He anticipates.

A car drives up. Mom hops in. She's in the wind.

And John Paul? He waits.

The sun beats down on the little boy. The sheriff is called.

abandoned nest . . .  
a mummified nestling's beak  
wide open



## TRAUMA

*Gerry Mc Donnell, Ireland*

There's a man who sits in a wheelchair pushing himself backwards by his feet, around the streets of Rathmines in Dublin. He inevitably bumps into somebody and lets out a string of curses. One rainy day I was sitting in *Voici*, my favourite cafe, doing some writing. There was a loud banging at the entrance door. It was the man pushing the wheelchair against it. The manager came out and let him in but explained that it would not be safe for him or the other customers, if he drank his coffee with his back to a table. To everybody's amazement the man stood up. I agreed to let him sit at my table since there were no other seats vacant. Half way through his coffee he started to open up.

"I do some writing myself. And my wife also wrote. I was never published but she was. She died two months ago when I was on a peace-keeping mission in bloody, war-torn Lebanon. I use her wheelchair just to be close to her."

song birds  
fall silent—  
the first shelling

## At the end . . .

*Maria Luisa Bartolotta, Italy*

The clock has been keeping the same time for 16 years, not a minute more, a chime I have not heard since I've been working here. The time is marked by the number of visits, rather than by the clock hands: a consultation of twenty minutes for each person – such a brief time to contain a life, to sustain it. There are eighteen appointments to the end of the shift.

Who knows what happened that day, when the ticking stopped, what footsteps crossed this clinic with the pale walls: for some, perhaps, the return home was lightened by the diagnosis of illness, for someone else, however, perhaps time stopped forever at 11:25 in the morning.

The working day is now over. I distract my thoughts by counting the tiles of the floor with my steps: eighty-seven to be exact to get to the window at the end of the corridor

Etna –  
how like ants  
the cars on the road

## Two Storms

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

Thunder is only God in heaven stamping His feet. This from a Greek grandmother who tells her scared grandchildren that God is happy and He is dancing

Today, God must be *very* happy. Thunder comes in with a slow, low rumble like a heavy 16 - wheeler going uphill. Cymbals clash again and again, and the sky lights up with jagged flashing swords.

Rain gushes. Lights dim and go out. I sit in darkness imagining God doing a Greek dance accompanied by a bouzouki and hand clapping by angels and saints.

old beliefs  
candles flicker  
in the draft

## Light in Dark Holes

*Susan Lee Roberts, USA*

A pile of tree roots looms before me and something flashes through my body.

... peace ... strength ...

I shake my head...no pains or fears...I remember the healing when I removed roots  
from my past...

... the struggle ... is truly over ...

unearthed roots

a peace lily

grows in my studio

## Folded Fragrances

*Kala Ramesh, India*

As she watches the August rain from the bedroom window, she hears the darkness of the night hemming her in from all sides. A strong breeze pleats the rain into liquid sheets. A sudden chill, and she wraps her sari *pallu* tightly around her shoulders. She can feel her heartbeat.

hammers and nails  
elephants go a-thumping  
on a tin roof

She has always liked this room, the smallest room in the house. Walls have stories to tell, and they repeat them often, but, today, the walls seem to vanish, and there she is, out in the open ... drenched in the spaciousness of one breath.

what's in  
what's out  
the seamless horizon

## Lethargy of Morality

*Ivan Gaćina, Croatia*

Sometimes I am woken up by a quiet whisper, supernatural and unearthly like a metal ring whose center is hit as it passes by a breath of the forgotten ocean and sinks into the polyphony through the corridors of the living labyrinth.

The phone always rings cacophonously, shaking me out of lethargy with noises from beyond, and then, upon my talking to an unknown party (or to a mummified skeleton from the closet) the din from the highway compresses the uneven silence.

On the hexagonally-shaped lattice window an unusual raven (maybe Poe's) draws my attention from several centuries' old quasi verses.

In a small theatre, between the unfinished lines, I intertwine the roots of (un)set hypotheses with semi-distorted enigmas from a hidden corner while I throw counterfeit double-headed coins into the abyss.

After the ceremony at the lost Native Indian cemetery, through the illusions of sporadic bygone times, Vertigo's voice trapped in a cloister of (non)existence breaks down the barriers of a wrongly defined life flow, permutes the yellow pages between the time hands and stores knowledge in the four sub-firmament jars of wisdom holding optical illusions for the rabbit from Wonderland.

Ishitsuki . . .

my thought roots

the colors of autumn

## CAESURA (EC)

*Rafał Zabratyński, Poland*

Almost winter. The last leaves on the branches flutter silently awaiting their first and, at the same time, last flight to the ground. A string of cars crawls outside the coffee house window. A caramel latte warms up and sharpens the senses, while a decent piece of banana tart seems to slow down time and narrow reality.

The results of a medical test are on the table in a thin sealed envelope. As long as it's tightly closed, the future appears entirely open.

no clouds a jet plane cleaves the sky

## The Letter

*Elisabeth S. Schlieff, Germany*

The letter in my hand weighs heavily. I hesitate to open the envelope, pocket it and leave my apartment. It is not far to the lake, and soon I arrive at my favourite place, the bench under the tall poplar.

searching the ledge  
a small twig in its beak  
a lone seagull

The sender's address on the envelope is well-known to me. The old house in which we so often studied and celebrated together. I see it before me, with its large garden to the lake. And I hear it again, our laughter and story-telling with friends and schoolmates. Tales from our schooldays and later from work and life. And goodbyes, again and again.

I look once more at the envelope, at the writing, which I had recognized immediately. My name, my address, written by the person who had sworn to love me. The invitation is printed. No personal words.

*We announce our wedding, invite you all to celebrate with us.*

I get up and go down to the lake, the envelope and contents an aching weight in my hand. I open my fingers and tumble down onto the water. Word for word dissolves and sinks in the lake.

water so quiet  
in its depths  
sunken things



## love-in-a-mist

*Anthony Lusardi, USA*

midsummer. their seed pods turn more and more brown. in the same exact spot where they bloomed. the year before.

in blue, in white, in pink, in purple, they return. as though this overgrown yard holds their dream cottage. with their admirers, the butterflies, the honeybees, and the hummingbirds lining up to take a glimpse. their ferny leaves and spiky flowers.

yet ironically. their beauty seems to shine more. when the fog arrives. with some disappearing into it. as if to tease onlookers . . . or just to hide. when they accept the fact. that no one is around.

*unrequited – the monotony of a lone cricket*

## A Stretch of Lonely

*Glenn G. Coats, USA*

Melt Water. Too windy to change flies. Can't fish with gloves on. Cast an "Iron Blue Dun" (imitates a stage in the life of a mayfly), shades of light brown to almost black like night—looks like the minnows I see in the water so I fish it as if it were one—strip and dart in the icy current.

Before dark, land a brown trout, deep hole where water swirls as two parts of the stream merge, hold the fish in the palm of my hand—soft yellows and creams—irregular brown spots like a field of stones—dark eyes and downward mouth. After the release, I stagger, almost forget where I am, my fingers numb from the wet, the cold.

flickering embers  
crackle of sorrow  
in her voice

lantern light  
the sleet melts  
into wool

## Afloat

*Tom Staudt, Australia*

Pale blue dots and lines morph into greenish rectangles, then break up again. A school of small silvery fish sway in the currents. They move in unison from side to side, forward and back so smooth, it's hypnotic. Suddenly the peaceful motion is disturbed.

The group disperses frantically, as a massive dark shape comes out of the deep. The outlines slowly become clear and rows of razor-sharp teeth in a wide-open mouth fill out the whole horizon.

screeching brakes  
the stray scurries across  
In a flash

## Bells stopped ringing

*Mircea Moldovan, Romania*

There are no alleys, no streets, just heaps of concrete, wood and dust as much as it can fit. It's like a flea market. Everything looks like a bad modern painting: broken cupboards, tables without legs, hangers like question marks, cuckoo clocks without cuckoos and here and there dolls. Scrapes of clothes, from dresses, pants, t-shirts and panties. In a fallen tree, a Venetian mirror that has miraculously remained intact with some geese admiring themselves. What else? It's like we're in a Kusturica movie! We enter the basement of a building that is half-standing. Someone lights a strong flashlight and in front of our eyes an unexploded bomb is revealed in all its splendor, which suddenly reminds me of my childhood: Someone wrote on it, with red paint: ROSEBUD.

the missing ones . . .  
in the neighborhood  
hopscotch still played

## Palmistry

*Jerome Berglund, USA*

a determined tendril this lime green stalk delicate and tenacious extending out toward my pillow with an almost preternatural unnerving sense of purpose singular, two feet long completely dissimilar to the rest of the spider plant just one little shoot, and here it comes like an arm stretched out at the end of which a tiny hand, clenched tight in a fist at night but during the day, though the sun's warm light basking gingerly opens, making sure we are alone and in private, the white petal fingers gently unfurl and inside a treasure seven yellow dots on stalks each no bigger than a speck of dust bright as glinting nuggets and more precious for their rarity just this minuscule offering my flower peeking out from the jungle fronds venturing forth to deliver a momentary vision before the digits clench again hiding their bounty until it next deigns to share how many glimpses remain

connected with  
this bluebottle  
unfazed, weaving

## Ownership (EC)

*Joanna Ashwell, United Kingdom,*

This is my sky claims the child clutching his crayon. He will not be dissuaded from the fluorescent green clouds, the grapefruit stars, the strawberry wings, a blueberry burst of stars, then a backwash of silver. How I admire his certainty, the slight quiver of his lips, the gaze of truth colouring his world. This is a wonder door to dreams.

night class  
choosing a star  
to wish on

(. . . being at your beck . . .)

*Diana Webb, UK*

It's hard to punctuate my life such as it is with dash or hyphen or ellipsis so perhaps p'raps I'll put it in parentheses and leave it on a bracket on a shelf built 'specially I mean I mean't to say especially in direct speech 'thanks for that reward for what I always do at your request' or "merci bien" I don't I do not think it has a circumflex as I am sure the French for butterfly is papillon...

a myriad commas lepidopterists walk

*Note: title extracted from Shakespeare sonnet 58*

## Broken Pieces

*Anna Cates, USA*

"I am not crazy; my reality is just different from yours." – Cheshire Cat

long winter  
on old psychiatric records  
Rorschach coffee stain

Getting approved for foster parenting becomes more involved than I'd anticipated. Family Services suggests I undertake a complete psychological evaluation . . .

I muddle over six hundred questions, some I'm unsure how to answer: T/F: I'm never happier than when I'm alone. A repeated question. True could mean totally antisocial or simply equally content in group or solo. Reluctantly, I select True. Probably, I should have left it blank.

On to the interview. "Do you have demons?" the psychologist asks, sitting across from me behind her desk.

"No, they stay away from me," I reply, fingering the crucifix at my throat, taking the question quite literally . . .

"What does this statement mean to you: Blood is thicker than water?"

"Blood is a figurative expression for kinship. It means family first."

She nods her head. "And what does this statement mean: People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones?"

"It means you shouldn't say of others what they could say of you." Weird coincidence that, only days prior to the evaluation, that rhetorical expression was utilized in a



parenting book in an explanation of adolescent cognitive progression from concrete to figurative thinking. Otherwise, I'd never have known!

Before the day ends, I emphasize that it's been well over twenty years since I've experienced any psychiatric problems.

Weeks later, I'm mailed a diagnosis: Schizoid Personality Disorder . . . So much for foster parenting . . .

Mad Hatter's Tea Party  
scent of cinnamon rolls  
and wet mouse

## This little piggy

*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

Afternoon school bus. Idling, belching fumes. Feet dragging, slower, slower. Satchel trailing, straps dangling in the mud. Other kids from her year are already on board. They're sitting right up the back. Ready and waiting. A purgatory she feels she doesn't deserve. Must sit up front. Near the driver. Not that it helps much — he ignores stuff that happens behind him. Shrinking into the seat's slick vinyl, she stares out the window.

glinting on tin roofs the acid taste of winter sun

Home Ec was this afternoon's double lesson. Savoury scones. Hers are decorated on top with kisscurls of crispy bacon rashers and glazed golden and shiny with egg yolk. They smell good. Her mother loves savoury bacon scones, which they rarely cook at home. Today she's taken special care to make them look nice for her mum. This year they moved to a cheap rented flat with only the most basic kitchen necessities, 15 miles from her new school. Three-quarters of an hour on the bus, including drop-offs. More than enough time for a thorough monstering.

bloated on the verge another roadkill wombat

Behind her, glass-reflected — someone lunges to the front of the bus. Hands paw at her school satchel, snatch out a paper sack spotted with bacon grease. This passes fist-to-fist along the back bench seat. Rustles and sniggers, for the next miles. Finally, the bus pulls up at her stop. One girl, not her Chief Tormentor, pushes forward. Shoves the tattered paper bag at her. "See, we left you some. Didn't spit much." Later, her mother asks why there are tooth marks in the scone tops. She says she got hungry on the bus so she picked off all the bacon bits and ate them.

below zero an all-night smell of damp pillow

## Moods

*Rupa Anand, India*

I sit on the veranda every morning. Memories of bygone years in different countries swamp my mind. Friends are ill, disabled, dying, demented or indifferent. A squirrel scampers across the bamboo pole with a tuft of something in her mouth. I wonder what will happen to her young ones if a cat decides to pounce.

dead end  
across the fence  
a peacock's cry

## Remembering When

*Dan Hardison, USA*

My grandfather was an avid fisherman. He loved fishing the rivers and lakes of Middle Tennessee. Mother would talk of weekends growing up when breakfast would be whatever he caught that morning. And if fishing was not good, there would be frog legs.

dog-eared pages . . .  
returning  
time and again

## That Christmas

*Susan Burch, USA*

One year my mom asked dad to make a Christmas list and then got him nothing on it.

lingering chill  
dad's toes punching  
through his slippers

## Thanksgiving Dinner

*Sharon D. Cohagan, Germany*

While her father says grace, Kate's face is bowed. She stares at her plate with turkey, mashed potatoes and three greyish Brussel sprouts swimming in gravy. The strong smell makes her let out a gagging sound.

"Don't make such a face, Kate. They're little fairy cabbages. Fairies love them so much they sometimes even steal them." She smiles at her mother's words, but is not convinced. Kate's brothers talk about the upcoming football game. They take second helpings.

"Stop pushing your food around, Kate," her father says.

"There'll be no pumpkin pie or television until you've eaten them," her mother warns. "And no chance to get the wishbone this year."

Each year, two family members take a turn pulling the wishbone. Kate is no longer hopeful to win the bone, and make a wish. But she needs a wish to come true now, and not in three days, when the bone is dry and ready to be pulled.

"Think about all the starving children. You'll sit here and think about them!" Her father slaps his napkin down next to his plate.

Kate sits alone, Brussel sprouts on her plate. She can hear laughter coming from the living room. Her eyes wander to decorative plates on the adjacent wall. Where the serving platter usually hangs, there is a pale space on the wallpaper, with metal brackets in the center. A sun ray brightens it for a few minutes before sunset. But even in the dimness, she knows it is still there. *Like me — trapped.* There is no fairy in sight.

icy rain  
a mouse gnawing  
pumpkins in the patch

## On The Road

*Erin Castaldi, USA*

Mom's meatloaf was legendary. A secret ingredient, celery salt, was all she would divulge of her coveted recipe. Dad was her meatloaf's biggest fan. She always baked it in a bread pan. She said it was perfectly sized and shaped for slicing dad's lunch.

For a few years, he was a long-haul trucker. His favorite lunches, made from leftover dinner. The bread toasted, so the sandwich didn't get mushy by the time he remembered to eat it.

The house full of four rambunctious children, meant that she needed to stay home; but her meatloaf was a reminder of her love and dedication to her husband. Mom knew she could be with my dad in a small way. At the very least, her food could go with him.

dusty fishing pole  
dad's parking spot  
covered in oil

## Another Day at Jardine Station

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

The muster starts just before sunrise in muddy light filtering across savannah woodland criss-crossed with dry creeks of gulf country, Queensland. Men on motorbikes and quad bikes and a brown and white kelpie called Billy roundup the cattle, slowly pushing the herd, walking them steadily towards the yards for drafting. Barry, a roan brahman cross bull, the herd patriarch, unruffled and not to be hurried confidently in the lead.

We watch from the sidelines. 500 head, grey, white, brown, flash between tall trunks and termite mounds. 2000 hooves stirring up a thick cloud of red dust.

herding

brown kites

swoop and circle



## Come Next Spring

*Johnnie Johnson Hafernik, USA*

Suddenly, one Christmas morning my husband and I become cattle ranchers. We have been promised a calf come spring, as have each of my two sisters – a gift from our parents. None of us is sure where this is heading and smile, softly laugh and express our thanks, waiting to hear more about how this is going to work – our owning a calf when none of us live in the area.

“This is how it will work,” my parents explain. “We have several cows that are due to deliver sometime between February and May. We’ll choose a calf for each of you, take care of it, and when it’s been weaned and is ready for auction, probably in the fall, we’ll sell it for you.”

The next day we drive down to the river bottom to meet the cows and learn which mother-to-be will birth our calf.

soprano lullaby  
she names and talks  
to each new calf

## Untitled

*Antonio Mangiameli, Italy*

After a long time, my then girlfriend and I decide to spend an evening together. I immediately realize how much time has passed.

a new tattoo —  
another name  
above mine

## Swizzled

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

Having drunk too much, we stumble back to our individual hotel rooms. Avoiding the infidelity but not the regret.

red-eye flight  
our mutual love  
of the moon

## To Cook Your Haibun

*Simon Wilson, UK*

This is not, I admit, a recipe for fine dining, but it's a reliable recipe for those nights where nothing goes right and you need a third piece to complete the submission. It's not chateaubriand, but sometimes all you want is Cottage Pie.

Start with an idea. It doesn't need to be much of one to start with, you can always refine it later. Garnish it with words – somewhere between 100 and 500 works for me. The world isn't short of words, but try not to use too many. Stir it together gently, leaving air and life in it. Overworked dough and overworked poetry can both be hard to digest.

Add haiku, one or two should do it. They are the anchovies of the haibun world and apart from being a touch slippery, can be overpowering. I like to have a few readymade, but you can, if you have time, whip up some fresh ones.

At this point it's time to add refinement – a sprinkle of hindsight, a sharper title, a pinch more link and shift. Then let it stand before final proofing and sending out.

the smell of yeast  
two sparrows  
searching for bread crumbs

## To Gather Dust

*Bryan D. Cook, Canada*

I deliver my book to the local library, hoping that it might be read.

“Interesting title, *Haibun Chowder*. “...I’m from the east coast and I love clam chowder, but what’s this book about?” she asks.

“Vignettes of my life written as haibun, a Japanese poetic form.”

She flips a few pages. “Thank goodness it’s not in Japanese!” she laughs, “but I expect you still had to learn the language to write it!”

“No, not really, though I have visited Japan several times. The form is now pretty well anglicized.”

“It seems a very odd form of poetry .... more like lots of prose sprinkled with some little verses which don’t rhyme.”

“Those are haiku”, I explain. “The prose brings the memory alive using the present tense, and the haiku stimulates a deeper understanding.”

“Well, the haiku are not what I was taught at high school .... shouldn’t they have a 5-7-5 syllable count and be all about nature? Anyways, I’ve always preferred rhyming verse and limericks!”

I ask whether she would still like to add it to the collection?

“Perhaps someone else might be intrigued enough to explore the story-telling world of haibun for themselves.”

“Okay I guess and thanks.” She smiles and turns back to her computer screen.

Returning the following week, I find it shelved under biography.

sandwiched between  
Princess Diana and Hitler  
my haibun collection

## Editor's Choices-Haibun (EC)

### A Litany of Bones

Jonathan McKeown, Australia

...

and so, the deathless soul for whom this perishing  
body does not suffice

...

As with the light of a long since extinguished – but eternal –  
star, may nothing remain of me but my voice

Paul Claudel

This morning, before sunrise, I left the house in darkness and drove to Little Bay and walked south around the rocks and found a sheltered nook out of the chilly wind and sat hunched in a white and wind-hollowed socket of stone to watch the world born again ... in the terrible roar ... from the broken waters ... on the broken stone ... with the silhouette of a passing tern looking down ... and gave utterance to Claudel's Second Ode with the eternal breath that enlivens all things, like a litany of bones ...

still here  
with the corner of this page  
shivering in sunlight

*The title in Jonathan McKeown's haibun, **A Litany of Bones** is arresting with its unusual juxtaposition. It seems to be referring to the Biblical Ezekiel's "can these bones live" and the promise of resurrection which the poet alludes to in seeing the world reborn from the broken stone, the bones of the earth. The image of "broken waters" could be read as an allusion to the breaking of waters of the mother at the imminence of birth.*

*The shore is imagined as an intermediary between earth, sky and water, linking to the divine breath which animates even insentient beings. The invocation of the French Catholic poet, Paul Claudel adds further weight to the litany which is actually the poem itself. The poem is one continuous sentence, punctuated by ellipses and "ands" as befits a chant of "eternal breath". The "corner of this page" in the concluding poem thus captures the flow of divine breath "shivering in sunlight" echoing Claudel's lines quoted at the start of this haibun.*



## Ownership

Joanna Ashwell, United Kingdom,

This is my sky claims the child clutching his crayon. He will not be dissuaded from the fluorescent green clouds, the grapefruit stars, the strawberry wings, a blueberry burst of stars, then a backwash of silver. How I admire his certainty, the slight quiver of his lips, the gaze of truth colouring his world. This is a wonder door to dreams.

night class  
choosing a star  
to wish on

*Ownership* by Joanna Ashwell is a moving portrayal of a child's world. Many modern artists, including Picasso expressed the desire to paint like a child. Jung observed that the child embodies the mythical aspiration which provides the blueprint for the human quest of self-realization. With enviable spontaneity the child's crayon becomes a wonder wand that colours an empty sky with delightfully startling array of hues: "fluorescent green clouds", "grapefruit stars", "strawberry wings" and "blueberry burst of stars" against a "backwash of silver." This landscape is more real than the prose-grey-truth of the adult's perspective. The poet's tender empathy is beautifully understated as she is enchanted by the "wonder door to dreams".

*The final haiku links the theme of wishing on a star to the painting giving the poem a beautiful coda.*





## Silent Waters

An Installation by Pritika Chowdhry, 2023

ceramic feet, wax, salt, sounds of water  
Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
<https://www.pritikachowdhry.com/silent-waters>

Caroline Giles Banks, USA

Chowdhry's installation of 101 larger-than-life-scale ceramic feet placed on opposite sides of a twisted line memorializes those who died in the violence during the partition of India in 1947.

jet black containers

Once filled with salt water the hollow clay feet are now lined with the residue of crystallized salt.

the dried tears

I want to defy the museum's security system, to step over the rope barricade and place my feet next to theirs. Together to jump over history's crooked lines.

of memory

*Caroline Giles Banks' **Silent Waters** is a poetic dialogue with a piece of installation art by Pritika Chowdhry consisting of 101 black, larger than life casts of feet "on opposite sides of a twisted line", representing the millions of victims of the Indian partition. Partition implies a line, which separates but can also be crossed as the arbitrarily marked borders were crossed by desperate people fleeing slaughter, rape and the destruction of homes, fields and places of worship on both sides. But there is another barrier - that between the art work and the public erected by the museum. This fuels the poet's desire to cross it and in body and spirit, "to jump over history's crooked lines." There's also a visual partition on the page whereby each line of the haiku, is separated and interspersed in the prose text. This makes the reader pause and take in the immensity of the art work that the poet commemorates in the haibun. The poet honours the artist, but also unites with essence of her work.*

~~~~~

## CAESURA

Rafał Zabratyński, Poland

Almost winter. The last leaves on the branches flutter silently awaiting their first and, at the same time, last flight to the ground. A string of cars crawls outside the coffee house window. A caramel latte warms up and sharpens the senses, while a decent piece of banana tart seems to slow down time and narrow reality.

The results of a medical test are on the table in a thin sealed envelope. As long as it's tightly closed, the future appears entirely open.

//

nocloudsajetplane cleavesthe s k y

Finally, *CAESURA* by Rafał Zabratyński is a poem about time, time which in this case is in flight. The title, "Caesura" suggests a pause in a moment which is expressed at the start; "Almost winter" it begins, the autumn of the present underlined by "the last leaves" which are waiting for the final release to the ground. The poet is seated in a coffee house enjoying a "decent piece of banana tart" which slows down time while cars 'crawl' outside, again, another evocation of slackened pace. One notes with interest the use of the word, "coffee house" which brings to mind associations of the Central European and Polish cafe-culture where poets and intellectuals contemplate existence.

The caesura of this slow-moving time is present in the unopened medical letter, which like Schrödinger's cat can be life or death. While unopened the letter is a possibility of life. The concluding one-line haiku again manifests flight, in this case an open sky cleaved by a plane. The spaces between the words are collapsed and then the final word "sky" is opened up. This unorthodox compression and expansion give visual reinforcement to the poem's pathos.

Sonam Chhoki

## Haiga - Part 4

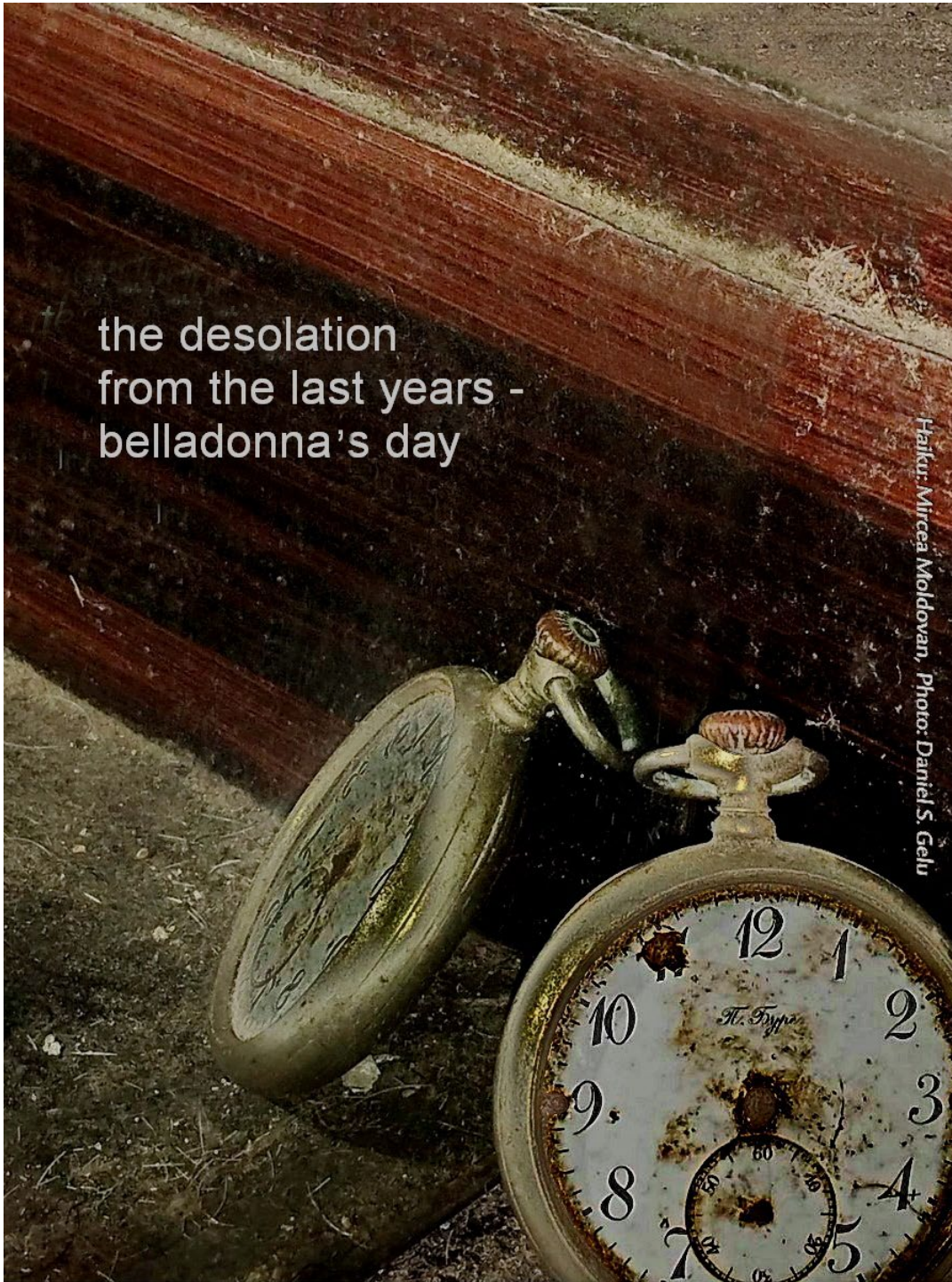
Maxianne Berger—Canada



longer shadows  
the sunflowers now turning  
towards each other

maxib2023

Mircea Moldovan & Daniel S. Gelu — Romania





Mirela Brailean—Romania



*blooming  
just for her own  
burka*

*foto&haiku:  
Mirela Brailean*

Neena Singh & Pritpal Sagoo—India

*together yet alone...  
the beauty that was ours*



*photo: pritpal sagoo  
haiku: neena singh*



Nina Kovačić—Croatia



Oscar Luparia—Italia



*click –  
who said the wind  
has no color?*

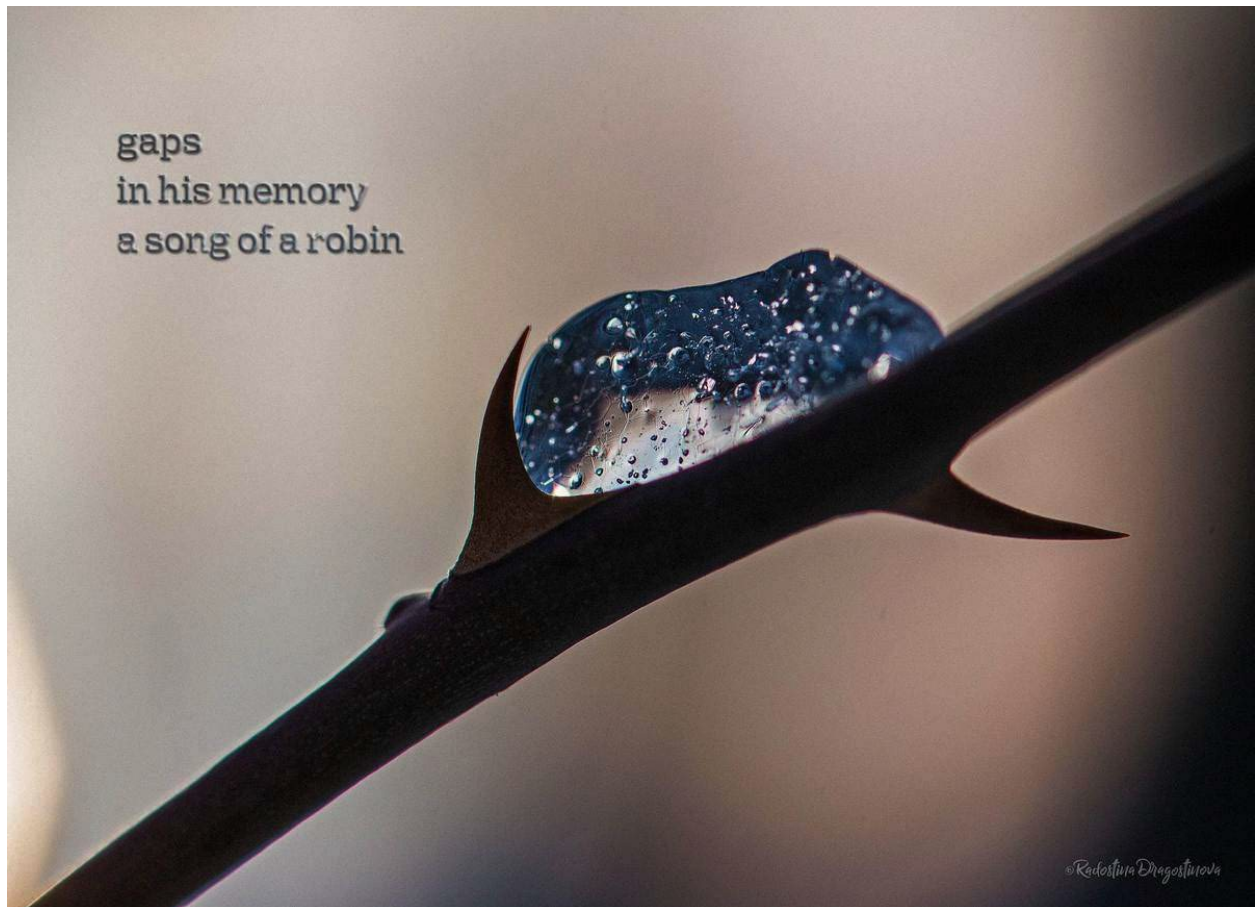
poem & photo: Oscar Luparia



Pamela A. Babusci—USA



Radostina Dragostinova – Bulgaria



# Tanka Prose



Orchid

## Hunter's Moon

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

Alone he walks the road from night to morning. Footsteps echoing in darkness as he searches the fickle doorways of the city's secret life.

He buys delusions. Glasses of pretty promises he hands to lovely illusions: cocaine-jagged nipples and lashing laughter. Flesh blue, beneath smoke-machine fog, and strobe-lighting.

the harshness  
of diamond frost  
an ache  
of loneliness etched  
by morning light

## Late

*John Budan, USA*

My neighbor calls me with the tragic news. This morning the poor man sat at his kitchen table for over an hour, patiently waiting for morning tea to be served. After reading the entire Globe and Mail newspaper he glanced across the empty table for the first time. She had left him a brief note on an empty plate: I am leaving you forever . . .

awakened  
by infant protests  
only my full breasts  
to calm the night  
while you slept

## Once Upon a Time

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*

The sun is shining, and we sit on beach chairs by the sea. There is a lively hustle and bustle. Close to the beach people are bathing in the water, and a little further out, surfers and sailors are among the waves. A huge container ship with nothing but colored Conex boxes pushes along the horizon.

memories back  
building with lego bricks  
for hours  
to have clearing them away  
before going to bed

## Rudeness

*Susan Burch, USA*

First, my Skin Cancer Doctor says my cancer is common. But then he adds, "I hate to tell you this, but you're common." *Excuse me? I'm a unique snowflake.*

Mohs surgery  
scheduled  
no love  
in the time  
of carcinoma

## Meditations on Infinity

*Anna Cates, USA*

wild roses  
will not outlast your lips  
will not outlast  
the truth they tell  
could last forever . . .



## The fetish for hope

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

Now that I'm nearing the age when my mother died, the ache of having survived her grows even more. Not just the loss of an anchor in life but the utter absence of what she could have been . . .

ancestral shrine  
more prayers than mine  
in the clearing rain  
the scent of pine duff  
the cries of a partridge

## The State of the Day

*Alison Clayton-Smith, UK*

wildfires  
rising interest rates  
wasted years  
desperate for donations  
my heavy phone

Each day online feels like we are heading towards the Rapture. I want to look but not look, know but not know.

## What the Ocean Remembers

*Rebecca Drouilhet, USA*

"Get me my gun," the Captain ordered And someone did. Off the starboard bow, five huge sea turtles swam in tandem parallel to the great ship, their dark green shells startling against the clear cerulean sea. The Captain aimed the gun down towards the water and fired. Silently the crew watched the bloodied and shattered remains of the beautiful creatures sink into the ocean depths. Turning to the Second Class Petty Officer on his left, the Captain barked, "So what do you think of that?"

"They're dead, sir!" the enlisted man replied through gritted teeth. For a moment, the Captain stood toe-to-toe with his officer as if to challenge the man to say more. Then, turning on his heel, he was gone.

The tides continued to roll in and out, collecting in their foaming froth the phosphorescent light of many moons. One winter night some years after, the officer read his child *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* the boy snuggling in his lap by the crackling fire as the father explained the archaic story and the tragedy that had befallen one who killed the creature made for the sea. But, instead of an albatross, the officer saw again the senseless slaughter of the turtles, shuddering for a moment despite the warmth of the fire.

morning news . . .  
the scattered ashes  
of a former Captain  
swallowed by the sea  
his suicide

## Not silk but special

*Robert Erlandson, USA*

Spiders at their web, hang by a silk strand, a dragline. This line is unique, exhibiting exceptional strength and elasticity. Secure and safe the spider tends its web and territory.

life's  
unpredictability  
spun by circumstance  
parents, family  
mentors, friends

## Charon in the Torments of Sisyphus

*Ivan Gaćina, Croatia*

I thought there was nothing worse than living like a boatman. As I transported the dead souls to the other side of the Acheron River, I thought about how to steal their money. Since I wanted to leave Hades, I patiently waited for an opportunity to escape.

An opportunity arose when a disguised man offered me a bag of gold coins in exchange for my job position, and I, greedy as I was, accepted the money. I didn't know it was Sisyphus.

I woke up at the foot of the mountain and saw a huge stone at my feet. A voice told me that I would have to push it as many years as there are the gold coins I received from Sisyphus. The faster I pushed the stone to the mountain top, the faster its weight returned me to the underworld.

Soon I realized that it was better to paddle aimlessly than to push a stone in vain. In my boat, I could think undisturbed and decide about the destiny of others, and it was then that I realized that that stone was actually my hard destiny.

We believe that our own sufferings are the hardest, but when we are punished for our bad deeds, we realize that it is not so. An absurd situation may be a way for us to realize the value of harmony and the meaning of life. Perhaps the boat and stone are the means of our reaching the goal—a return to life.

I placed my only hope in the realization of my idea to offer my oars to the dead souls one day and thus free myself from the heavy burden of the stone.

bare mountain  
refined by tears  
carried by the wind . . .  
between two sighs  
the river tells a story

## succession

*Tim Gardiner, UK*

The forest clearing is smaller now. Birch has reclaimed the grassy areas, you couldn't play manhunt here anymore. A few have come before me, the carvings in a fallen pine as clear as the day children etched them. Who knows why they do it?

thirty summers  
passed  
before I realised  
maybe  
I left my mark, too

## Gravity

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

After losing my job in a company restructure, I find myself camping in Queensland's Gulf Country pondering options. Days are cloudless and a warm 30C. The nights are filled with stars. Each one blinks in its own time along the milky way river. Suddenly, night sounds quieten, then stop. I open the tent flap. There's not a wind ripple. A bright light arcs high across the dome brighter than the stars above. Has a celestial archer released a flaming arrow? I follow its flaring path until it falls below the horizon.

a meteor  
or space junk  
snared by gravity  
homeless and jobless  
our future plans foiled

## Innocents Abroad 1966

*Carole Johnston, USA*

Just kids, hitching in the snow at a truck stop . . . freezing all night . . . we are safe because a kind stranger has picked us up. Three of us in the front seat, Dylan lies, says he is a PhD student, but Michael doesn't believe him. They banter. I stare at my reflection in the side window. Snow falls. On the radio, Paul McCartney sings "Michelle My Belle."

So . . . tonight, I find Michael on Facebook. Dylan is dead—just a memory. Three of us in a car in the snow.

after watching  
a Beatles documentary  
in black and white  
I tell Siri to play  
"Hey Jude"



## Before Kentucky Fried (EC)

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

We raised our own chickens in the sixties and sold most of them to neighbours and friends. On rare occasions we had one for dinner ourselves.

strutting his stuff  
around the fowl yard  
a rooster  
unaware he was next  
for the chopping block

“Get the hook around his legs and trip him up! Now grab his legs and carry him upside down to the chopping block!”

It was hard to hold onto the chicken because he would try to flap his wings to get away. Then it was off with his head.

Next came the removal of all the gross bits, like gizzards. The chicken was then plunged into a big pot of boiling water. The smell of boiling feathers was absolutely disgusting. After a while the chicken was removed and plucked. A long and tedious job.

The only thing left to do was to cook him for dinner. That was Mum’s job.

several hours  
from yard to table  
a roast chicken  
carved up  
for a hungry family

## A Lost Cause

*Michael H. Lester, USA*

I set up my tee shot, placing an off-brand golf ball on a yellow tee, and check the scorecard for the distance to the green. I will need a driver for this dogleg par five with a water hazard about 200 yards out. I remove the head cover from the driver, a frayed, ratty old thing, much like me, and slide it out of my tattered, wobbly golf bag where I have crammed in too many clubs and allowed several years' worth of dust to accumulate.

on the golf course  
like a fish out of water  
I flounder  
two unseeing fish eyes  
on the wrong side of my head

As I take my stance and prepare to strike the ball, I realize that there is a wall in front of me with a narrow space at the top and a doorway to the left. I don't have an angle to hit my drive through the doorway (save for a bank shot or a carom) and I can't visualize hitting the ball through the narrow space at the top of the wall. I move my tee over to the left, hoping to hit the ball through the doorway, but there is also a wall to my left, and as a right-handed golfer I can't get far enough away from the tee to get a good swing.

the elements  
conspire against me  
closing in  
like a torture chamber  
another swing and a miss

I try moving the tee to various locations around the tee box, but nothing seems to work. I find myself increasingly frustrated as the minutes tick relentlessly away. Meanwhile, the golfers on the hole behind me shout at me to hurry up or let them play through. Perhaps I should have stayed at home and spent some time with the kids instead.

a recurring dream  
travails on the golf course  
I can't get the ball  
to stay on the wooden tee—  
it's a question of balance

## Under the Texan sun

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

rows of cameras  
the sheriff with a cowboy hat  
and two pistols  
pronounces, *thank you God Almighty!*  
*the mass shooter was shot dead*

"My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, all those affected by this senseless act of violence." The sheriff's words that end this news briefing are almost the same as last time. Beside me, the grey-haired reporter mutters to himself, "what has been done will be done again."

## Food from the Soul

*Lorraine Pester, USA*

Yesterday's 3-hour meal with the Sisters was a blessing. Our table was filled with lively conversation and laughter. I'll always have the memory of that afternoon when the churning waves became glass, and I was touched by the breath of God.

on my plate  
the food grows cold . . .  
my best self craves  
the nourishment of talk  
where I am welcome

## Shape of Water

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

If I say the word soulmate, would you think of me? If I talk of healing hands, would you think of mine and how they touch you? Or am I just a storm that passes, quenching for a day, but still in the end, leaving you needing more? Am I thunder to your body, or a healing salve for your soul?

canyon lands—  
how this time  
with you  
carved a mark  
into my soul

## Another Christmas

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

Less of many things this year and more of remembering when we gathered with children and grandchildren. The noise, the bustle, the too much eating, the laughter, the quiet when all went home and the crackling logs, the creaking of our old house and the wind in the pines. When we held hands and sighed and said “well done” and we toasted each other with aged old scotch and were content in the moment, in the day, in the life.

*rock around the clock*  
shattering  
*the silent night*  
remembering when  
I taught him to dance

## Zoom

*Tom Staudt, Australia*

run, run, toss, hop, scoot, scoot, roll . . .  
green  
green, green  
green, green, green  
green, green, green, green, green, green, green

screech, BANG, fly

SCREAM !

red  
red, red  
red, red, red, red, red, red, red

silence

we all knew  
this day would come  
he draws his last breaths  
I hold his cold hand and think  
. . . all the things I should've said

## The almost graduate

*Tony Steven Williams, Australia*

Sarah sits on a small concrete plinth outside the College of Business and Economics. The photographer fusses around her, adjusts the graduation robes, shaping flow, showing colour to best advantage. She asks Sarah to run hands through her hair one more time, then moves back and studies her through the lens of a high-end digital SLR. Sarah places the mortar board on her head, plays with the tilt until the photographer's frown shifts to a smile. She zigzags around her subject, snapping photos, suggesting poses, asking Sarah to stop squinting, to look joyous, to look serious, to look proud. It will be three days till the final ceremony, when without doubt official and unofficial photographs will abound. But Sarah wants something special in this moment, something Instagrammatically perfect, a luscious trailer to the main feature.

full dress rehearsal  
well prepared, no audience  
but this matters  
she tightens her fists  
imagines applause



## Paper Cities

*Simon Wilson, UK*

My wife's mother watched American bombers glistening in the sky, saw the bombs fall and, later helped clear the debris from the dropping of an atom bomb. She told me stories of what happens when you drop incendiaries on a city of paper houses and taught me how to fold a paper crane.

On the other side of the world my mother tried her gas mask on and practised hiding under her school desk. In October 1940, a German bomber flew low across the school and dropped two bombs. She picked up a piece of bomb casing in the school yard while it was still warm.

We discuss this with the kids as we fold paper cranes for a school project. It means more to them, when told in terms of grandmothers, than all the pictures on TV.

familiar folds

I have not made

the thousand yet . . .

one of the children asks

for blue and yellow paper

## Glass Cages

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

always  
in a battle  
still  
he dares  
to dream

Saturday night, Steven stands to one side of the room and looks at his many friends. With talent and ambition, his greatest wish is to become a professional photographer. At first, he smiles, then something else transfixes his face.

Gathered together are those special to him. Steven wants to capture their faces, as though with his lens, snap these faces into memory.

Later, he loads his car with personal possessions and delivers carefully chosen keepsakes.

photos  
on the shelf  
he smiles  
from within  
a silver frame

## Only Human

*Anna Cates, USA*

Not invisible like a mole. Not seamless like a fawn. Not quiet as a gnome, subtle as a fairy, or clever as an elf . . . From the perspective of ant or Issa's singing cricket, I must **seem** Godzillan! Footfalls snapping twigs, crushing fallen nuts, disturbing the dust. Do I stop and listen? Do I notice the little things? Let go? One day I'll melt like dew into nature's essence . . .

dripping petals  
brazen partakers  
flesh and soul  
a tireless cacophony  
striving toward peace

## On Mother Nature's Breast

*Ivan Gacina, Croatia*

Casual passers-by savor nectar from Mother Nature's swollen breast, bathing in the poetic splendor of her soul lit by lanterns where sparks of knowledge dance ennobling themselves in the labyrinths of her mind as the wind mantle hovers over the night altar so that all beauty could merge into a moment, an undiscovered world in the eyes of a dream catcher.

She keeps secret entities from the past and future in deep pockets close by her heart where the moonlight plays with the remaining time and the stars shed pearly tears into the murky sea, and the trees sway embraced by the drunken wind through the open divine gates of alpha and omega, there where the queen of dawn sails across a harmonious vault disturbing dreams of the leafy age-old forest.

As islands absorb the silence of the sea, my weird thoughts become keys hung on a predawn pendant passing through the willow branches in a distant village absorbing the scent of linden from the graveyard of repressed memories, there where the barking of dogs unties the Rococo exotic, and a little boy plays with the rising sun putting its glow into the basket for abandoned dreams.

in the moonlight  
revives the old well  
of memories . . .  
our shadows disappear  
in the swirling wind

## What Time Forgot

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

I walk into a room with a purpose. There is a reason I left my desk and went into the kitchen. Stymied, I stand in the middle of the room and look around. Ah, yes. I remember. I disconnect my cell phone from the charger.

If I can forget something in a minute, what have I forgotten in a lifetime?

A name I can't remember, a place, a date. Stored in memory, but not retrievable when wanted. History facts forgotten; movie and book plots forgotten; entire events forgotten. Yet, some memories are vivid, clear as purified water. My sister has different memories, different details about the same event. Were these remembered events more important to me than others? Do we embellish or reduce particulars and reinvent our memories? Are we aware that we do so?

she tells her stories,  
the audience captive,  
anticipating  
a revised edition  
of revolving memories

## Editor's Choice (EC) - Tanka Prose

### Before Kentucky Fried

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

We raised our own chickens in the sixties and sold most of them to neighbours and friends. On rare occasions we had one for dinner ourselves.

strutting his stuff  
around the fowl yard  
a rooster  
unaware he was next  
for the chopping block

“Get the hook around his legs and trip him up! Now grab his legs and carry him upside down to the chopping block!”

It was hard to hold onto the chicken because he would try to flap his wings to get away. Then it was off with his head.

Next came the removal of all the gross bits, like gizzards. The chicken was then plunged into a big pot of boiling water. The smell of boiling feathers was absolutely disgusting. After a while the chicken was removed and plucked. A long and tedious job.

The only thing left to do was to cook him for dinner. That was Mum's job.

several hours  
from yard to table  
a roast chicken  
carved up  
for a hungry family

*I chose this tanka prose piece by Keitha Keyes, as many of us Baby Boomers have lived on farms or in the country side or small towns and villages. It was also a period of transition from the effects of WW2 as the economies of many countries began to shift from war factories to goods factories. For many it was a period of rebuilding their country.*

*In my small town in Northern Ontario, Canada, many families relied on hunting and fishing in order to supplement their diet. Even in the '60s it was still done. Ruffed Grouse breasts provided the meat for a stew, fish for another.*

*Now and then, I look back at my teenaged years and remember how "progress" arrived in our neck of the woods, during the late '60s and early '70s. Even today, living in a large city I still continue to read world news and wonder if there was really any progress. Maybe in a distant future, my now 18-month-old granddaughter will tell me.*

Mike Montreuil

# Haiga – Part 5

Richa Sharma – India





Rupa Anand—India



Silva Trstenjak & Tanja Trstenjak – Croatia



**cold morning -  
a hen tucked one leg  
into its feathers**

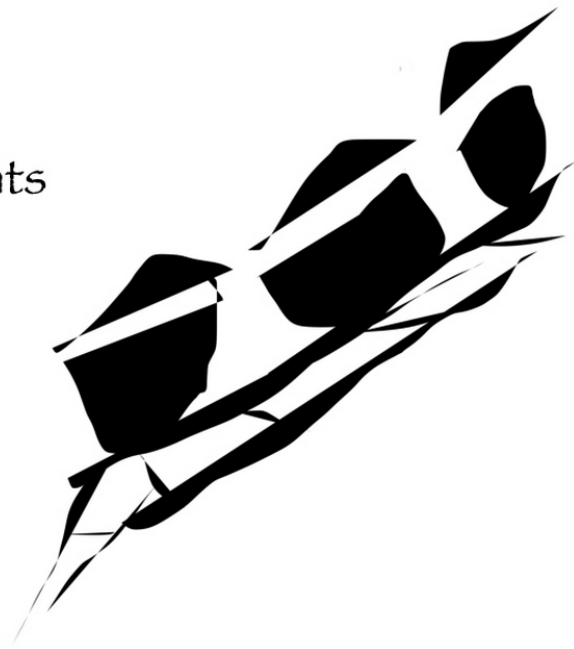
**Haiku: Silva Trstenjak  
Photo: Tanja Trstenjak**

Sonam Chhoki – Bhutan

clatter of night freights

no lullaby

for the homeless boy



drawing & poem  
Sonam Chhoki



Tim Roberts—New Zealand



TIM ROBERTS

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams & A. D. Adams—USA



*haiku by Valentina Ranaldi-Adams  
photo by A. D. Adams*

Vicki Miko—USA



Vijay Prasad & Lorenzo Princi—India



she is the only thing that thinks

author : Vijay Prasad

Artist : Lorenzo Princi

## List of Poets and Artist

### A

A.D. Adams, 217  
Jessica Allyson, 20  
Cynthia Anderson, 7, 67, 78  
Rupa Anand, 60, 159, 213  
A.J. Anwar, 63, 76, 106  
An'ya, 45  
Emma Alexander Arthur, 85  
Hifsa Ashraf, 35, 72  
Marilyn Asbaugh, 123  
Joanna Ashwell, 23, 109, 114, 154, 172  
Gavin Austin, 27, 64, 77, 92, 107,  
126, 183, 206

### B

Pamela A. Babusci, 104, 181  
Ingrid Baluchi, 16, 58  
Caroline Giles Banks, 135, 172  
Maria Luisa Bartolotta, 142  
Mona Bedi, 65, 77  
Brad Bennett, 14, 59  
Deborah A. Bennett, 31  
Maxianne Berger, 175  
Jerome Berglund, 15, 153  
Robert Beveridge, 55  
Ceaití Ní Bheildiún, 53  
Daniel Birnbaum, 13  
Gwen Bitti, 18, 104  
Shawn Blair, 9, 68  
Adrian Bouter, 36, 41  
Mirela Brăilean, 36, 71, 108, 177  
Randy Brooks, 18, 55, 92  
Kevin Browne, 20  
B. L. Bruce, 34  
John Budan, 107, 185  
Pitt Buerken, 62, 97, 138, 186

Susan Burch, 67, 91, 161, 187  
Sondra J. Byrnes, 26, 60, 76

### C

Claire Vogel Camargo, 19, 71, 104  
Mariangela Canzi, 8  
Matthew Caretti, 17, 134  
Erin Castaldi, 163  
Anna Cates, 32, 102, 156, 188, 207  
Mihovila Čeperić-Biljan, 25  
Kanchan Chatterjee, 24  
Jim Chessing, 12, 94  
Christina Chin, 28, 50  
Sonam Chhoki, 93, 99, 111, 174, 189, 215  
Marta Chocilowska, 25, 71  
Alison Clayton-Smith, 106, 190  
Florin C. Ciobica, 21, 49, 75  
Glenn G. Coats, 150  
Sharon D. Cohagan, 162  
Bill Cooper, 8, 57  
Bryan D. Cook, 169  
Jeanne Cook, 31  
Anne Curran, 98  
Dan Curtis, 37

### D

Timothy Daly, 62  
Maya Daneva, 61  
Rosie Dang, 12  
Marie Derley, 13  
Lorelyn De la Cruz Arevalo, 17, 68  
Rosa Maria Di Salvatore, 11  
Jan Dobb, 27  
June Rose Dowis, 8, 56  
Radostina Dragostinova, 54, 182



Rebecca Drouilhet, 33, 137, 191

## E

Lynn Edge, 28

Robert Erlandson, 96, 192

Eavonka Ettinger, 71, 84

Keith Evetts, 30, 68

## F

Mike Fainzilber, 37

Susan Farner, 72

Thomas Festa, 125

Michael Flanagan, 35

Lorin Ford, 27

Sylvia Forges-Ryan, 22

Katja Fox, 63

Jenny M. Fraser, 114, 115

Gerald Friedman, 24, 88

## G

Ben Gaa, 12, 67

Ivan Gaćina, 72, 78, 109, 146, 193, 208

Joshua Gage, 26, 58

Barbara Anna Gaiardoni, 46

Mike Gallagher, 32, 73, 100

Tim Gardiner, 130, 194

Daniel S. Gelu, 176

Mark Gilbert, 84

LeRoy Gorman, 15

Laurie Greer, 27

Eufemia Griffo, 25

Nicky Gutierrez, 36

## H

Johnnie Johnson Hafernik, 68, 117, 165

Dan Hardison, 80, 161

Jon Hare, 91

Lev Hart, 66

John Hawkhead, 31, 71, 78, 116

David He, 10, 95

Betsy Hearne, 63

Joanne van Helvoort, 73

Ruth Holzer, 25, 95

Frank Hooven, 12

Celia Hope, 107

Edward Cody Huddleston, 18

Marilyn Humbert, 33, 103, 164, 195

## I

Mona Iordan, 22

Lakshmi Iyer, 15, 54

## J

Rick Jackofsky, 22, 55, 98

Roberta Beach Jacobson, 54

Govind Joshi, 16, 55

Carole Johnston, 196

## K

Barbara Kaufman, 47

Arvinder Kaur, 15

petro c. k, 62

Keitha Keyes, 62, 101, 197, 210, 211

Lori Kiefer, 31

Noel King, 53

Ravi Kiran, 18, 54

Nicholas Klacsanzky, 10

Nina Kovačić, 14, 39, 179

Samo Kreutz, 33

Padmini Krishnan, 74, 90

Beni Kurage, 10, 55

## L

Jill Lange, 37, 70, 98

Michael H. Lester, 96, 198

Eva Limbach, 26

Kristen Lindquist, 13, 121

Chen-ou Liu, 35, 41, 42, 66, 110, 138, 199

Cyndi Lloyd, 32  
Oscar Luparia, 180  
Anthony Lusardi, 149

## M

Ruchita Madhok, 70  
Antonio Mangiameli, 167  
Tomislav Maretić, 16  
Carmela Marino, 33, 74  
Richard L. Matta, 24, 56, 103, 113  
Mary McCormack, 19, 57  
Gerry Mc Donnell, 141  
Marietta McGregor, 158  
Jo McInerney, 30  
Jonathan McKeown, 127, 171  
Rob McKinnon, 37, 72  
Valentina Meloni, 131  
Dorothy S. Messerschmitt, 117  
Vicki Miko, 218  
Daniela Misso, 99  
Mircea Moldovan, 20, 110, 113, 152, 176  
Laurie D. Morrissey, 7, 53  
Cameron Morse, 13

## N

Suraj Nanu, 54, 94  
Steve Neumann, 9, 38

## O

Nola Obee, 61  
Karen O'Leary, 56  
Ben Oliver, 16  
Franjo Ordanić, 87  
Bernadette O'Reilly, 61  
Maevé O'Sullivan, 64

## P

Christa Pandey, 100

Lorraine A Padden, 121  
Linda Papanicolau, Interior Art, 120  
John Pappas, 11, 67  
Vandana Parashar, 36  
Curt Pawlish, 15, 90  
Lorraine Pester, 103, 140, 200  
Madhuri Pillai, 30, 108  
Jacek Pokrak, 86  
Perry L. Powell, 61  
Vijay Prasad, 19, 219  
Slobodan Pupovac, 92

## Q

Audrey Quinn, 56, 75

## R

Ganesh R, 60  
Katherine Raine, 91, 93  
Brijesh Raj, 128  
Kala Ramesh, 31, 98, 103, 112, 145  
Valentina Ranaldi-Adams, 217  
Nazarena Rampini, 19  
Ivan Randall, 102  
Bhawana Rathore, 23, 59  
Lisa C Reynolds, 72  
Meera Rehm, 25

Bryan Rickert, 9, 59, 90, 168, 201  
Edward J. Rielly, 23  
Susan Lee Roberts, 144  
Tim Roberts, 216  
Aron Rothstein, 9  
Cynthia Rowe, 17, 108  
D. V. Rožić, 22, 26, 35, 83, 102, 105  
Margaret Owen Ruckert, 108  
Patricia McKernon Runkle, 11  
Janet Ruth, 132

**S**

Srinivas S, 86, 87  
Joshua St. Claire, 17, 53, 101  
Pritpal Sagoo, 178  
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, 10, 66  
Marianne Sahlin, 36  
Sandra Šamec, 87  
Minal Sarosh, 64  
Agnes Eva Savich, 32, 95  
Michelle Schaefer, 28  
Bonnie J Scherer, 58  
Elisabeth S. Schlieff, 148  
Petra Schmidt, 21  
Julie Schwerin, 14, 57, 75, 118  
Ron Scully, 9, 46, 79  
Manoj Sharma, 34, 39  
Richa Sharma, 213  
Adelaide B. Shaw, 34, 43, 104, 143, 202, 209  
Neena Singh, 8, 93, 94, 111, 178  
Dimitrij Škrk, 23, 82  
Thomas Smith, 34  
Matt Snyder, 24  
K Srilata, 24  
Tom Staudt, 18, 151, 203  
Stephenie Story, 20, 69, 96  
Debbie Strange, 29, 60, 81, 96, 106  
Anbuchelvi Suburaju, 98  
Ann Sullivan, 7, 53  
Luminita Suse, 122  
Patrick Sweeney, 7

**T**

Shrehya Taneja, 59  
Andrew Terrell, 44  
Angela Terry, 28, 57  
Richard Tice, 11, 70, 97  
Corinne Timmer, 51  
Silva Trstenjak, 35, 105, 214

Tanja Trstenjak, 214  
C. X. Turner, 9, 48, 63, 105

**V**

Kevin Valentine, 7, 40, 69, 90, 105, 119  
Andrea Vanacore, 46  
Vidya S. Venkatramani, 21

**W**

David Watts, 29  
Diana Webb, 155  
Joseph P. Wechselberger, 58  
Christine Wenk-Harrison, 32, 69  
Tyson West, 69, 110  
Tony Williams, 14, 61  
Tony Steven Williams, 101, 204  
Simon Wilson, 100, 169, 205  
Ernest Wit, 28, 74  
Robert Witmer, 27, 63, 100

**Y**

Quendryth Young, 29, 73,

**Z**

Rafał Zabratyński, 30, 147, 173, 174  
Eugeniusz Zacharski, 21, 86  
John Zheng, 29, 70, 136



**Eagle**