

cattails – October 2018

cattails



October 2018

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October 2018 Issue

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Introduction

The poet Paul Celan (1920 -1970) envisaged a poem to be “essentially dialogue.” He wrote, “A poem may be a letter in a bottle thrown out to the sea with the – surely not always strong – hope that it may somehow wash up somewhere, perhaps on the shoreline of the heart.”

Rest assured, your poems have reached “the shoreline of the heart” of our dedicated editors. Lavana, who has joined us as haiga editor, says of her selection, ‘I do it with love.’ Kathy pursues excellence working with poets to realise the full potential of their tanka. Geethanjali enthuses, ‘I love the way various poets write diverse but such poignant haiku.’ Gautam enjoys the creative engagement with the poets. Mike is unstinting in his search for the original in haibun. He is also unflappable in putting each issue together. Under the aegis of Kala Ramesh, the Youth Corner continues to showcase new young haijin voices from around the world.

With his considerable reputation Alan tirelessly enthuses poets to explore *cattails*. Neal Whitman rallies us with his wonderful poems. No matter how busy she is with her own work, Iliyana unfailingly records new members and sends out memos notifying us of the contests and submissions. Marianna organizes the three annual UHTS contests with dedication and proficiency.

After a short hiatus *cattails* once again features haiga in this issue. In addition Lavana and Iliyana have provided delightful photographs of European birds.

Paresh Tiwari is taking a break from his Cat Tales series. He hopes to return when he has more time and ideas for the haiku adventures of Meter and Jux.

Once more with great sadness we carry tributes to two fellow poets, Angelee Deodhar and Thomas James Martin, in this issue.

Sonam Chhoki

In Memory of Angelee Deodhar (1947 - 2018)



Angelee Deodhar with her grandson Aryan

Angelee Deodhar was a Charter member of UHTS and a regular contributor to *cattails* since its inception.

She was born into a family of medics in the Indian Armed Forces and she herself qualified as an eye surgeon. She married Shridhar D. Deodhar, the Head of Internal Medicine, when she joined the PGI, a leading medical research institute in Chandigarh. However, her medical career ended due to a severe lung infection and later, DVT (deep vein thrombosis). This was to be a turning point for her as she discovered writing. At a time when little was known of haiku in India, Angelee studied classical and modern texts on the Japanese short forms with the same concentration she once applied to her medical textbooks and procedures. She considered William Higginson her sensei and she worked devotedly to make haiku and haibun better known in India by mentoring aspiring haiku poets, editing ("Journeys, Journeys 2015, Journeys 2017, and Journeys 2018"), along with publishing multiple volumes of haiku translations (English-Hindi).

Her contribution was widely recognized and she was invited to the judging panel of the Genjuan International Haibun Competition in 2017.

Haiku became the lens through which she saw the larger questions of life as well as the quotidian. This is reflected in the motifs in her writing - episodes in her family life, visits to places, both overseas and nearer home, experiences in hospital and letters exchanged with friends and family.

Angelee developed breathing problems early on the morning of 28th June and died before she could be taken to the hospital. She was cremated according to the Hindu tradition on the same day. Her ashes were immersed in the Ganges at Haridwar. Just before she died, Angelee and her son, Ananth completed the cover for Journeys 2018, the final volume of her anthologies of International English-language haibun showcasing 160 haibun by 35 poets. Ananth is working on the final edits to Journeys 2018 which will soon be available on Amazon.

One of her last photographs was in her study with Aryan, her grandson to whom Angelee was devoted.

Tribute prepared with Ananth and Raveesh Varma, a close friend.

Here are some of Angelee's haibun and haiku published in *cattails*.

Trailmix (EC)

Yesterday from Torrey Pines past myriads of greens of the Golf course, into the scent of eucalyptus we walked on the Guy Fleming trail to a point where we could see the ocean, the lacy waves restless on the beach, spume on the rocks, people walking, paddle boating and fishing.

On this trail, once the only road to Los Angeles, from 1941 to 1945 there was a training camp for soldiers, now in the distance there is a busy freeway. Here we walk past the Mojave yucca against yellow sandstone, grey brown brush, tiny desert flowers, different cacti, scrub pines from which one blue jay emerges then another, the call of crows. After sitting on a wooden bench on which I trace the weathered design, which is

like the waves, we walk slowly, reluctantly leaving behind arroyo, mesa, and the trail.
A father carrying his child in a body sling passes us with a smile and a wave . . .

freshman year –
hiding in the tide pool
a shy lobster

May 2014



Endless Path

Before my kidney stone surgery the doctors advise me not to move about. To allay my fears of one more operation, my tenth, I think of Santoka and imagine the weather-beaten face of an itinerant monk with a large sedge hat. I see the green mountains and from this hospital bed, tied to an I.V. line I go wandering on the eighty- eight temples' pilgrimage of Shikoku Island.

In Matsuyama, my friends and I walked to Santoka's small cottage just below a dense, purple bamboo grove towering over yellow flowers that rippled down the stone embankment through shape-shifting leaf shadows.

The doctors can't stop me . . . they won't even know.

summer clouds
sliced by twin jet contrails –
a shrike's staccato cry

May 2015



Tablature

The war forgotten, my father's colleagues of the RAMC*, went swinging to Count Basie's One o'clock Jump and April in Paris or to Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman,

Woody Herman, and Glenn Miller's In the Mood. On YouTube I hear and learn about the swing era of the twenties, thirties and forties.

Did my Dad, as a prisoner-of-war, listen to these alien rhythms? Did he understand the swing time medium of fast tempos, or did he long for his own string and drum music, while a native instrumental jugalbandi^{***}reverberated in his soul? They were so different from the frenetic beats of the congas and stringed instruments and the trombones.

I remember how moved he was each time he heard Taps ^{***}

from the train
a blur of poppies amidst
ripening wheat

*RAMC: My father joined The British Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) as a doctor. He was captured by the Japanese and kept as a prisoner-of-war in Malaya, now Malaysia.

**A jugalbandi is a performance in Indian classical music, that features a duet of two solo musicians. It can be either vocal or instrumental.

***Taps is a musical piece played at dusk, and performed during flag ceremonies and funerals, generally on bugle or trumpet

September 2015



Moksha*

White waters of the Alakananda and Bhagirathi mingle, rushing over, under and around rocks through underground caverns, disappearing to reappear once again far from where they began. The ashram is close to the Ganga, which can be crossed at this point as the water is slow moving, to go to a small shrine on the other side.

A swollen ankle does not allow me down that rocky slope to bathe in the holy waters... the only journey I will make to the holiest of rivers will be my last, when my ashes mix with the elements. My adventurous friends bring me flowers found growing in the

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rocky river bed, almost springing from the stones. They are tiny, in hues of blue, dusky grey, lilac, white, yellow and pink with the mild musky fragrance of wild flowers

satsang questions –
the little girl's bald doll
has all the answers

*Moksha in Hinduism is emancipation, liberation or release. It connotes freedom from Saṃsāra, the cycle of death and rebirth. Satsang in Indian philosophy means sharing the "highest truth."

January 2016



Shirazi wine –
the deep red hats
of whirling dervishes

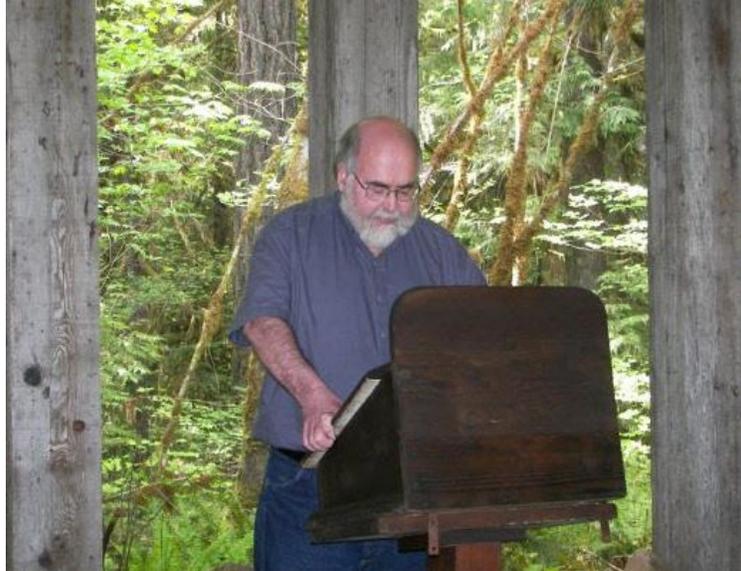
April 2017

slow progress –
ahead of the lawn mower
a toddler picking snails

October 2017

In Memory of Thomas James Martin (1944 - 2018)

Thomas James Martin, a member of various beloved Haiki/Haibun/Tanka groups passed away peacefully and comfortably after a long illness, on August 12, 2018, a day before his 74th birthday.



Tom's obituary can be found at http://www.autumn-funerals-cremation.com/obituaries/obituary/2277_Thomas_James_Martin

Tom loved perfecting different styles of Japanese poetry. He wrote poetry until the very end.

Before Tom died he was in the process of completing 2 books: one of Tanka and the other of Haibun. The content is all available; only editing needs to be completed. This will be done in the near future



Several of his poems, published in cattails, are republished on the next two pages.

moonbow . . .
a luna moth clings
to the porch light

starry night
a child swings higher
into Cassiopeia

cabbage whites
waving summer all around
the garden

Sept 2015

retirement
the mountain cherry
still in bloom

January 2016

earbuds off
she looks up in surprise . . .
stars

May 2016

old barn
the fence dripping
honeysuckle

April 2018

thanksgiving,
our latest argument
to eat in or out –
the way blue-shrouded mountains
cradle the sunset

October 2017



Sometimes you like people better as you grow older . . .

I considered my aunt, Sally, a gossip and a person consumed with envy. She liked to make fun of people, like she did when I cried after she gave my beloved hobby-horse to her daughter, Mary.

Years later she befriended my mother after the death of my father. They became inseparable . . .

a blue dragonfly
circling my aunt's farm pond
alights on mother's hand

September 2015



Clear Water

After meditating for a few years, it dawned on me why going with my grandfather to clean our pasture spring was such a strong memory.

spring's edge
hanging from the willow
an old felt hat

As we cleaned out the brown leaves and small branches, I dimly understood that this was a kind of truth.

Cleaning the spring I realized was similar to clearing the detritus from consciousness to experience the clarity.

breathing bubbles
in cold clear water
red salamanders

September 2016



Haiku



Hadimbu Monastery, Iasi, Romania

white azaleas –
all the clustering clouds
of spring

Perry L. Powell, USA

breaking through
the overcast afternoon –
dandelions

Nancy Shires, USA

after four hours in the car roadside fuchsia

*Maeve O'Sullivan,
Ireland*

almost Fall
the tree stump alive
with trumpet flowers

Carol Raisfeld, USA

August heat . . .
foxtail barley fans
the breeze

Cyndi Lloyd, USA

following
the bag lady
cherry blossoms

Mike Montreuil, Canada

stepping outside
for the evening news . . .
moonlit blossoms

Julie Warther, USA

stinging nettles –
each passing year
I miss you more

brandnetelprikken –
ieder jaar opnieuw
mis ik je meer

*Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo,
The Netherlands*

convolvulus
around the station railings –
heat-drunk summer night

Quentin S. Crisp, Britain

rosebud –
a damselfly sips
the morning dew

Barbara Tate, USA

morning glories –
I find another way
of speaking

Jessica Malone Latham, USA

through the sockets
of the deer skull –
spring larkspur

Ruth Holzer, USA (EC)

deep coma –
the first buds
of an almond tree

coma profondo –
la prima fioritura
di un mandorlo

Margherita Petriccione, Italy

entering the woods –
a doormat made from
briers

ulazim u šumu –
otirač od
trnja

D.V.Rozic, Croatia

gloomy forest –
sunlight carried down
on a leaf

Quendryth Young, Australia

the pattern
of someone's laughter
redwood branches

Agnes Eva Savich, USA

tuning fork . . .
the sound of the wind
among the bare trees

diapason . . .
il suono del vento
tra gli alberi nudi

Stefano d'Andrea, Italy

starless night . . .
her murmurings
to her late husband

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

patchwork sky
the moon tucked inside
a fold

Michael Henry Lee, USA

how otherly
do you live
half moon

Bill Gottlieb, USA

Ramadan fast –
the sickle moon gaining
size

Barnabas I. Adeleke, Nigeria

summer love
how the moon moves
on water

Matthew Caretti, Lesotho

partial eclipse –
a lantern darkens
with moth flutter

Jann Wright, USA

coastal dawn –
the tang of wood smoke
wafts over the sea

Ingrid Baluchi, Macedonia

ebb tide –
tiny snails commute
between beach puddles

Jay Friedenbergl, USA

seaside evening stroll –
in the little boy's hair
moon silences

plimbare de seară pe plajă –
în părul băiețelului
tăceri de lună

Steliana Cristina Voicu, Romania

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moonlight seeps
through the bamboo
a robin's song

David He, China

twilight
by the red-covered bridge
a frozen blackbird

Anna Cates, USA

dawn serenity . . .
my neighbor sweeps
into birds' song

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

robin song uncurling ribbons of sunset

Barbara Snow, USA

not a ripple . . .
the river tern swoops
into my reverie

sanjuktaa asopa, India

tai chi at the pond . . .
a white crane and I
spread our wings

Carol Ann Palomba, USA

wild geese migrating –
my evening walk
comes to a standstill

Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, India

smoky wind . . .
snow geese where
the grain was

Debbie Strange, Canada

Uluru dawn –
budgerigars shimmer
against red rock

Kate King, Australia

myna hatchlings –
the neem tree drips
gentle rain

Ashish Narain, India

hanging upside down
drunk on nectar
– rainbow lorikeets

Jan Foster, Australia

returning trawlers –
a black cormorant
dries his wings

Eva Limbach, Germany

morning mist . . .
wild turkeys sipping
river water

Brad Bennett, USA

fall's amber sunset
in the field's stubble
a pheasant pair

Nola Obee, Canada

morning drizzle
the wren shakes off
a yew's colors

Paul Cordeiro, USA

all summer long
your reassuring voice
rain goose

David J Kelly, Ireland



Common Chaffinch, Bahlui River, Iasi, Romania

house sparrow –
death of a neighbour
no one spoke to

Martha Magenta, UK

summer swelter
in the motionless blueness
a sparrow hawk circles

Летње презнојавање.
У непомичном плаветнилу
кружи кобац

Zoran Doderovic, Serbia

summer's end
the distant shadow
of migrating geese

fine dell'estate
l'ombra lontana
delle oche migratrici

Eufemia Griffio, Italy

black swan
the beauty
in difference

Mary Kendall, USA

shaping itself
to the heron's cry
midwinter cold

Paul Chambers, Wales

frayed crow feather
I comb through
a past life

Nicholas Klacsanzky, Ukraine

rainstorm –
the way she throws dirt
at dad's coffin

Fractled, USA

first month of rain
under wet hay stacks
wild mushrooms

Basant Kumar Das, India

loosening rain
from a nimbus cloud
chinook wind

Alan S. Bridges, USA

echoing over
an unyielding landscape
cloud songs

Angela Terry, USA

crosswalk
the stop and start
of rain

Ben Moeller-Gaa, USA

lightning storm
my childhood retreating
to the cellar

Edward J. Rielly, USA

raging storm –
the ink runs off
the court order

Jennifer Hambrick, USA

high winds –
cirrus horses
swept into wisps

Simon Hanson, Australia

dream traces . . .
the night rain's song
in swollen rills

Aron Rothstein, USA

ferry ghat—
an anchor unwinds
the morning

Sudebi Singha, India

autumn freshet
a glissando
of river song

Marietta McGregor, Australia

camping alone . . .
up all night
with the river

Thomas Martin, USA

spring equinox—
attaching the sulky
to the harness

Bill Cooper, USA

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conversations
about the light –
the rabbit's pink ears

Mark Gilbert, UK

whirling leaves –
the eyes of a hare
from left to right

Adrian Bouter, The Netherlands

raccoon tracks –
the scruff of wind-swept
peach pits

Lamart Cooper, USA

shaded pond . . .
a koi's mouth
breaks the surface

Gavin Austin, Australia

a doe
full with fawn –
spring thaw

Tia Haynes, USA

picking persimmons
the frost grabs
my hands

сбор хурмы
хватает за руки
лёгкий морозец

Nikolay Grankin, Russia

berry harvest
the blue taste
of fog

Kristen Lindquist, USA

last of the cherries . . .
shaking a mothball
from my jumper

Nathalie Buckland, Australia

late frost –
a punnet of whatever
you left me

Cynthia Rowe, Australia (EC)

falling star –
how I wish to hold
time

Gurpreet Dutt, India

ripe figs . . .
all the bitterness
of an absence

fichi maturi . . .
tutta l'amarezza
della sua assenza

Lucia Cardillo, Italy

the stories that take us
deep into the night . . .
asterisms

Mary Hanrahan, USA

winter solitude –
going deeper
to listen to the stars

Ellen Compton, USA

shooting stars –
in the hospital corridor
baby's first cry

spadające gwiazdy –
w szpitalnym korytarzu
pierwszy krzyk dziecka

Zuzanna Truchlewska, Poland

first light . . .
your eyes open
to mine

Terrie Jacks, USA

mountain path . . .
far from the peak
a cicada's song

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India

dog day afternoon
the symphony of crickets
reaches a crescendo

vruće popodne
simfonija cvrčaka
u krešendu

Nina Kovačić, Croatia
(Translated by D V Rozic)

autumn equinox . . .
sunset casts a glow
on the headstones

Lorin Ford, Australia

remembering why we're here cemetery fog

Bryan Rickert, USA

day at the cemetery
the muted conversations
between two worlds

Theresa Okafor, Nigeria

little grave –
the dark banding
of a dragonfly

Helga Stania, Switzerland

at sea
the wind takes possession
of his ashes

Robert Witmer, Japan

graveyard waste pile –
discarded flowers adorn
broken tombstones

Tyson West, USA

winter rain
drenching his family –
village graveyard

Mary Gunn, Ireland

heat wave a shepherd touches a letter on the grave

Michael O'Brien, Scotland

a slow walk
through the old churchyard
advancing autumn

Ernest Wit, Poland

winter twilight . . .
the verbs changing
to past tense

Mark E. Brager, USA (EC)

blue hour –
tracing her late sister's face
from memory

robyn brooks, USA

night bakery . . .
between warm loaves of bread
the scent of silence

noćna pekara . . .
između toplog kruha
miris tišine

Ivan Gaćina, Croatia

late sunset –
the paint still drying
since dawn

C.R. Harper, USA

hot air balloons . . .
just enough sun
this wintry morning

Madhuri Pillai, Australia

Circling the pond
nothing to do
or be

David H. Rosen, USA

first flakes
the tattooist
looks up

LeRoy Gorman, Canada

soundlessly
they become dusk . . .
white sails

Sandi Pray, USA

Editor's Choice (EC)

My gratitude to the poets who sent in their best haiku to cattails, making this a really wonderful edition. A journal is as good as the submissions it gets and I must thank you for making my task of selecting poems, very enjoyable. The haiku section takes us on a journey through the bounties of nature, its various avatars, and through our own emotions that find expression in these little interactions with nature. It reaffirms the need to stop and watch the clouds, listen to the river, feel the rain, smell the wet earth and perhaps, taste the berries!

Here are three haiku from this issue of cattails for you to engage with:

winter twilight . . .
the verbs changing
to past tense

Mark E. Brager, USA

This poignant haiku takes us to the end of many things. The day's ending in twilight, the end of a year in winter, and finally, to what was. The poet wistfully captures the transience of life and the change-over from what is to what was, with an observation on the change in the tense of verbs! Perhaps, it is a moment of recollection of the year that was, or a more sombre memorial service celebrating the life of a dear one, or in the mature years, of one's own life. Again, the poet does not tell us what to feel and leaves it open enough for us to step in.



late frost–
a punnet of whatever
you left me

Cynthia Rowe, Australia

The poet captures the gardener's dreaded late frost (that threatens to ruin the most cherished potential harvest) in line 1. And what happens next, thankfully, is not total

destruction. Something survives - a punnet of produce. Is that enough? Again, this is a layered haiku that can be read in many ways. Is the poet addressing the late frost? Perhaps, chiding it for leaving her with little. On the more human level, after a lifetime of effort, struggle and perseverance, sometimes all we are left with is a punnet full of memories.

The use of the word 'punnet' is far more concrete and effective than using a more common word (for instance, handful) and deepens the image of harvest, fruit-picking and hence, links back to the late frost.

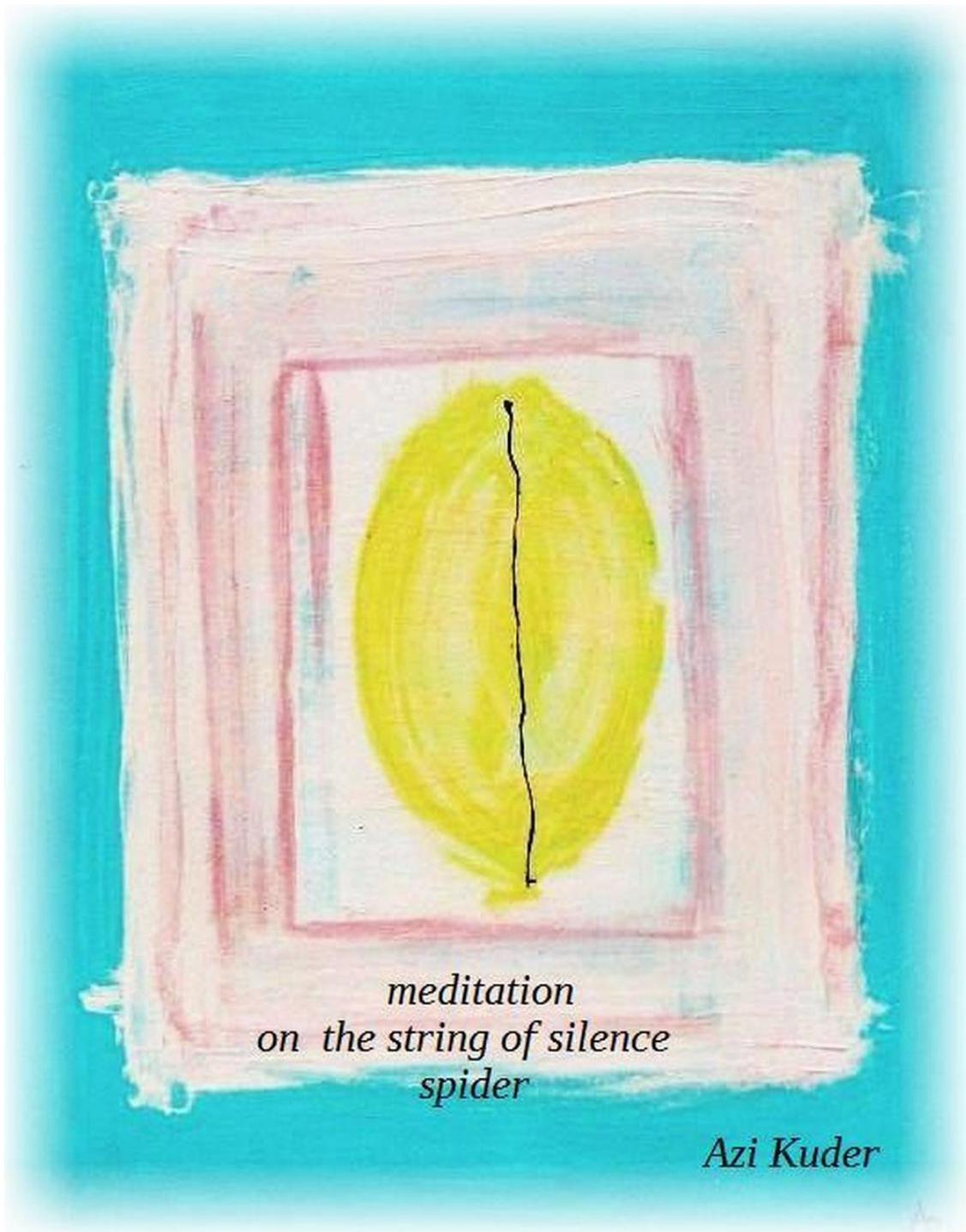


through the sockets
of the deer skull –
spring larkspur

Ruth Holzer, USA

This haiku captures an offering of nature without the poet intruding on the scene. It shows us an image of a deer's skull through which larkspur blossoms have grown. The scene is vivid and the images are concrete with a kigo to show us the season. Yet, it is a layered haiku and on another layer, the haiku takes us through the cycle of life, and death. And, even in death, there is hope. The solemn remnant of a once alive deer, its skull, is not just a reminder of its end. It is an affirmation of life. In this case, it is a substrate for blossoms and beauty. Many questions ran through my mind: Where was the skull found? How did the deer die? All these open-ended questions bring readers deeper into the haiku and leave them to engage subjectively with the poem.

Geethanjali Rajan

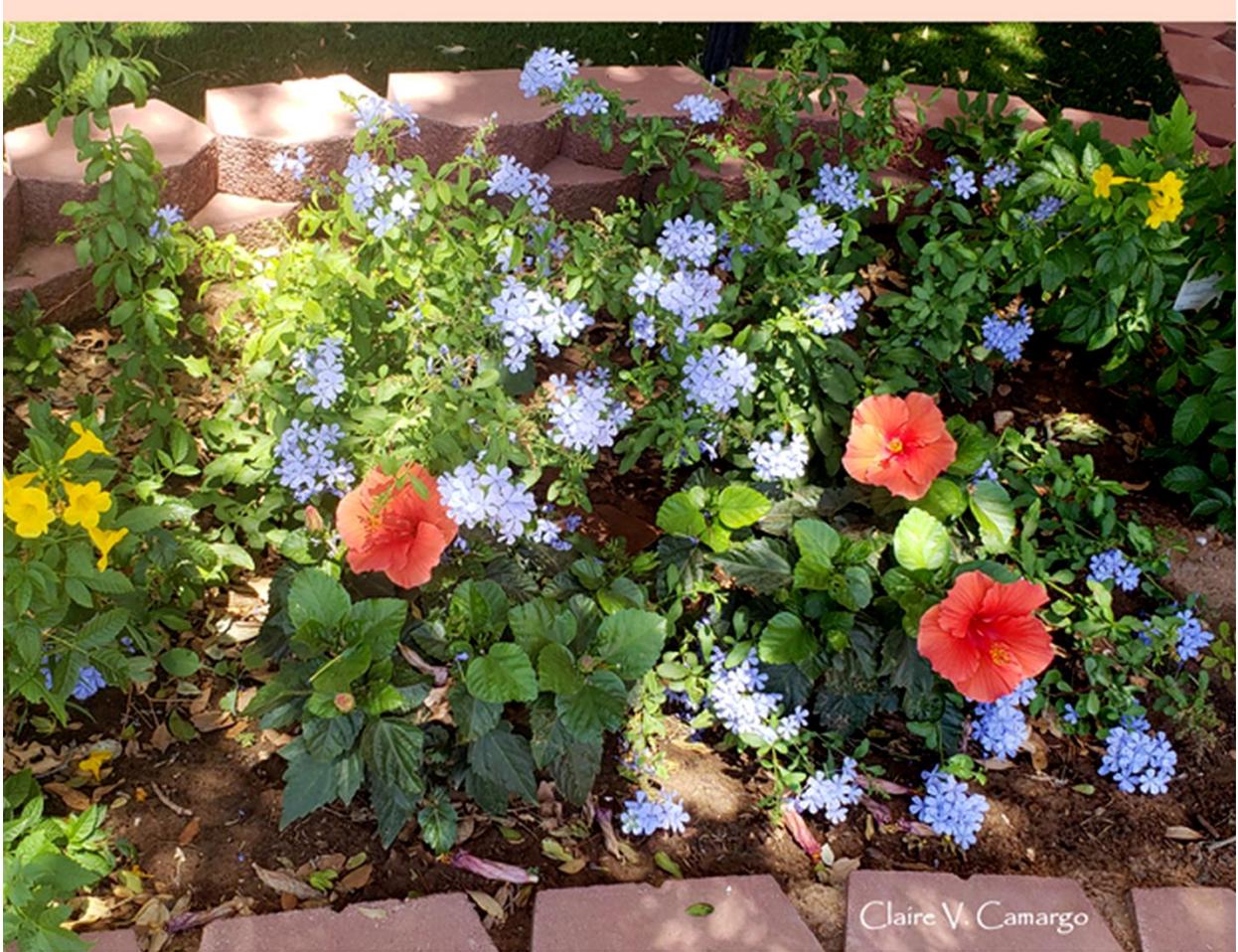




*Doris?
weren't we together
in another life?*

carol raisfeld

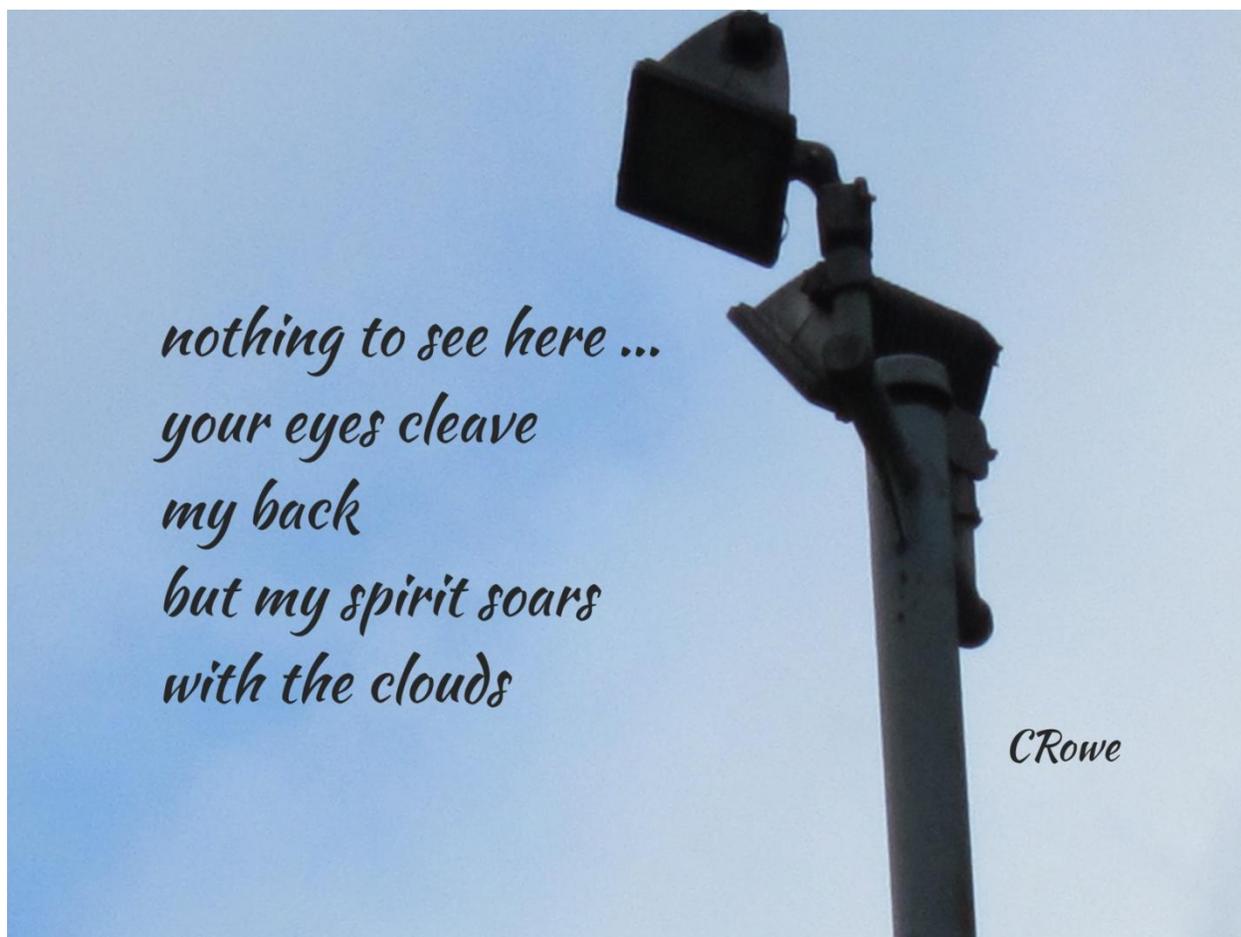




assimilating

into senior living

mom



*nothing to see here ...
your eyes cleave
my back
but my spirit soars
with the clouds*

CRowe

Senryu



Sandhill Crane, Lagos Zoo, Portugal

gym workout
trying to shape up
my senryu

Brad Bennett, USA

next to
the welcome sign
shark topiary

Dian Duchin Reed, USA

alibi
the scent of her perfume
on his shirt

Barbara Tate, USA

he succeeds
to shut her up finally
– root canal

Vandana Parashar, India

up . . .
the down escalator
some things never change

Johnnie Johnson Hafernik, USA

Winter Olympics
my family's more dysfunctional
than yours

Louise Hopewell, Australia

haiku workshop
a debate erupts
over a comma

Debbi Antebi, UK

pugilist
just one good sock
to his name

C R Harper, USA

antique shop
the oldest thing, she says,
is her

Nancy Shires, USA (EC)

rainy season
the doctor assures me it comes
with age

Michael Henry Lee, USA

dental check up
the waiting room fish
open mouthed

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

her spring green shirt
he unfastens the first clasp
in his mind

Anna Cates, USA

in love
her feelings just
a click away

Fractled, USA (EC)

happy hour . . .
again he breaks
his promise

Indra Neil Mekala, India

another world
on the wrong side
of the ocean

Bernard Gieske, USA

showing my age
to a toddler – I run out
of digits

Julie Warther, USA

high heels
two steps forward one step back
at the first date

Vessislava Savova, Bugaria

department meeting –
my secretary reads
the Kama Sutra

Goran Gatalica, Croatia

first kiss
the suddenness
of porch lights

Bryan Rickert, USA

cherry slice
the waitress brings me
her cleavage

Bee Jay, Australia

drunk again finally the truth comes out

Gabriel Bates, USA

statue
the king's hands
full of guano

Antonio Mangiameli, Italy

hospice ward
the slow but steady decline
of cut flowers

David J Kelly, Ireland

bedtime story
a thousand and one
bites

Helen Buckingham, UK

oils on canvas
her tears
never drying

Gavin Austin, Australia

flu season
waiting room patients
spaced out

Barbara Snow, USA

dementia . . .
all the memories
we wish she had

Debbie Strange, Canada

the street vendor
selling old vegetables
with new gossip

Rashmi Vesa, India

steam room
I join the people
of the mist

Garry Eaton, Canada

sun –
the snowman's nose
runny

Antonio Mangiameli, Italy

remembrance Sunday
the old veteran at attention
in his wheelchair

John Hawkhead, UK (EC)

snowball fight . . .
on the same side for once
Dad and I

William Scott Galasso, USA

original Starbucks
a thirsty tourist tweaks
the mermaid's nipple

Kelly Sauvage Angel, USA

mini skirt
the pursed lips
of an old lady

Nikolay Grankin, Russia

coffee break
his breath louder than
the point of view

Fractled, USA



Eurasian jay, Baltatesti, Neamt, Romania

road rage
all those asterisks
from the driver's mouth

Indra Neil Mekala, India

by the time
I figure out the shower
it's time to leave

Ruth Holzer, USA

making a molehill
out of a mountain
river song

Angela Terry, USA

conquering the new world
my husband stops
for a sip of tea

Lucy Whitehead, UK

a heated argument
the length of the quiet car –
in sign language

Marita Gargiulo, USA

dramatics club
that headache when visiting
in-laws

Vandana Parashar, India

game over an argument in sign language

Bill Cooper, USA

pounding waves
the endless in and out
of our arguing

Louise Hopewell, Australia

the argument –
he apologizes
to her hair flip

Carol Raisfeld, USA

ghost train
unnerved by the empty seat
next to mine

Simon Hanson, Australia

finally
everyone's all settled down
cemetery

Jennifer Hambrick, USA

newly divorced
my dog sleeps on her side
of this bed

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

violin duet
we can barely string
two words together

Ernest Wit, Poland

gas leak
street vendors relocate
an argument

Lamart Cooper, USA

digging weeds
the metallic clunk
of angry words

Marietta McGregor, Australia

faulty clasp
I come undone
again

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

bonded labour . . .
he still waits for his life
to begin

Shreya Narang, India

planetarium –
a child
lost in the stars

Ruth Holzer, USA

past perfect –
her face
in the mirror

Angela Terry, USA

class reunion
the most likely to succeed
begs for a ride home

Barnabas I. Adeleke, Nigeria (EC)

summer solstice
spending more time
with my shadow

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

first communion
dismayed at feeling
nothing

Quendryth Young, Australia

cold tea
the double meaning
of farewell

Nika, Canada

wig heist . . .
police combing
the area for clues

Carol Raisfeld, USA

after you're gone
the change jar
almost full

Perry Lee Powell, USA

deep winter
I dump warm laundry
up to your smile

Brad Bennett, USA

cliff side theatre
everyone's watching
the dolphins

Lucy Whitehead, UK

old photos . . .
here's the one in which
you still smile

Vessislava Savova, Bulgaria

broken baby gate
I tumble into
my second childhood

Jennifer Hambrick, USA

narrow envelope window
I prune my identity

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India

Labor Day
the neighbor's music working
overtime

Bill Gottlieb, USA

new car
driving the same
old ways

Terrie Jacks, USA

floating soap bubble
I bump
into my childhood

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

hotel amenities
everything listed
but a clean room

Ronald K Craig, USA

construction crew
demolishing
lunch

Bill Gottlieb, USA

summer beach
the shadow of an urchin
joins couple for lunch

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

evening prayer
the rise and fall
of rosary beads

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

backyard pool
a confident man dives
into the conversation

Bee Jay, Australia

Friday evening
table for two
me and my cell phone

Ronald K Craig, USA

family reunion
dishing out
last year's arguments

Claudette Russell, USA

anniversary
your empty seat
at the diner

Susan Beth Furst, USA

hovering
all day
the compliment

Laurel Astle, Australia

beach house
relatives visit
in waves

Claudette Russell, USA

hot air balloon . . . soapbox preacher

Helen Buckingham, UK

peeling onions
layer by layer
her never ending story

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

gizmos, doodads –
the many names
I'll never learn

Scott Wiggerman, USA

busy bistro
the waiter clears all
we left unsaid

Gavin Austin, Australia

pruned fig tree –
the questions
I never asked

Sarah Paul, UK

garage sale bargains
lady in a mink coat
offers fifty cents less

Christine Goodnough, Canada

new computer
I put on fresh lipstick
for the boot-up

Marietta McGregor, Australia

candlelit dinner
a young couple smiling
at their iphones

Debbi Antebi, UK

new year
the truck drives away
last year's garbage

Zoran Doderovic, Serbia

creaky wheel –
are we there yet
are we there yet

Marilyn Humbert, Australia

evening haze
the hobo's guitar drifts
out of tune

Nika, Canada

Editor's Choice (EC) - Senryu

Hullo and welcome again to the Editor's Choice of senryu from among those published in this issue. I have given below four senryu which tickled me or touched me deeply.

antique shop
the oldest thing, she says,
is her

Nancy Shires, USA

This senryu says a lot more than it appears to at first reading. Antique shops, as anyone who has been fleeced will agree, are notorious for their fakes. The items, highly priced by virtue of their historical value, are seldom older than a few months. Under the circumstances it is no surprise that the shop attendant is older than the oldest antique available there. Nancy Shires has expressed all this in just nine words in three lines. Truly a poem of our times where nothing can be taken at face value.



in love
her feelings just
a click away

Fractled, USA

Yet another sign of our times. Social media has made it so easy for lovebirds to express their deepest emotions and sentiments. Gone are the days when a girl in love would chew her pen thinking of the precise word to express her feelings. Now in this age of laptops and smartphones all she has to do is select an appropriate emoticon, click on it and voila!



class reunion
the most likely to succeed
begs for a ride home

Barnabas I. Adeleke, Nigeria

How often we have heard this tale. The class topper, favourite of all the teachers, projected by everybody as 'the most likely to succeed' – Nay! His success is a foregone conclusion – ends up finally somewhere at the bottom of the social barrel. And secretly everyone is glad. Except of course for the topper.



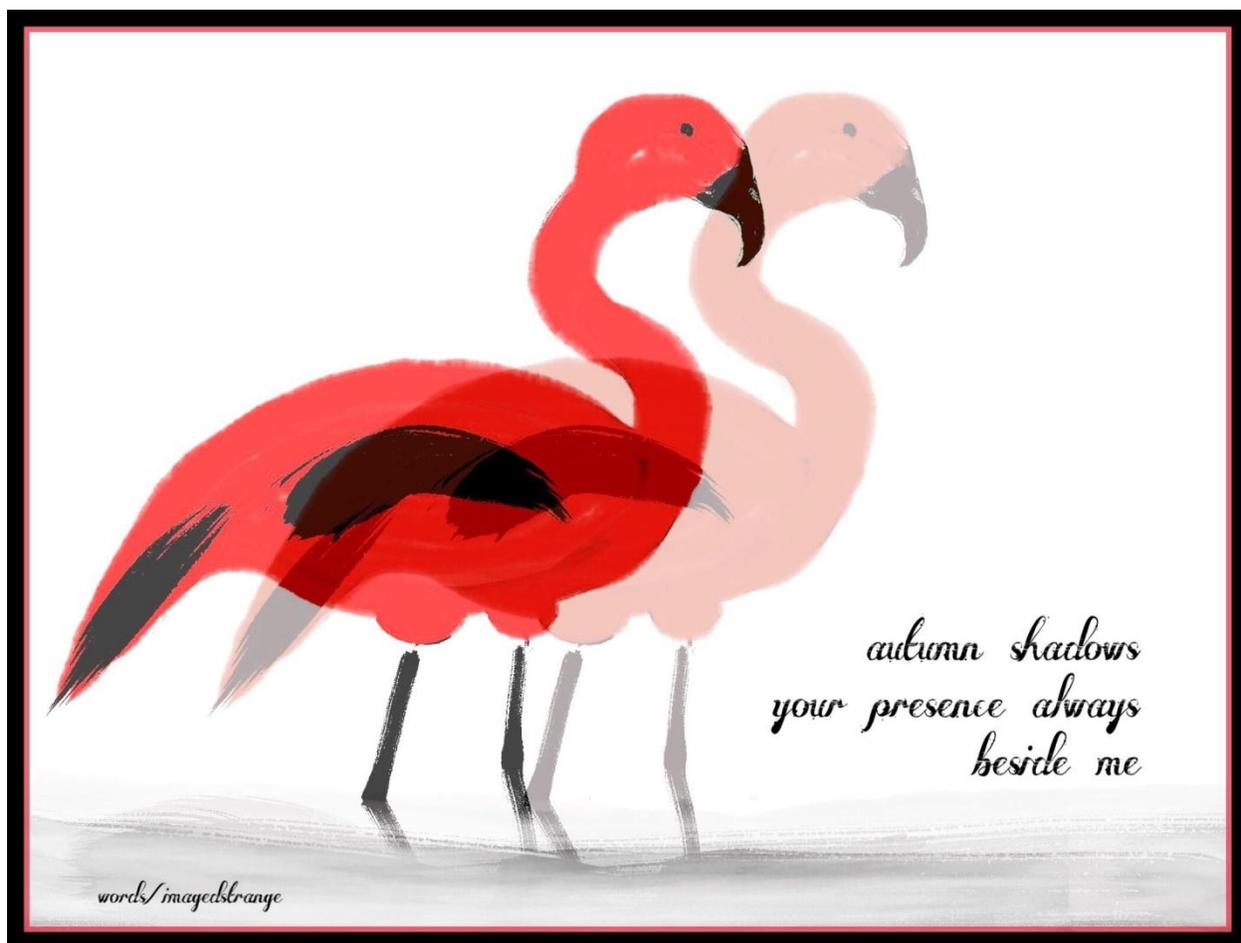
Remembrance Sunday
the old veteran at attention
in his wheelchair

John Hawkhead, UK

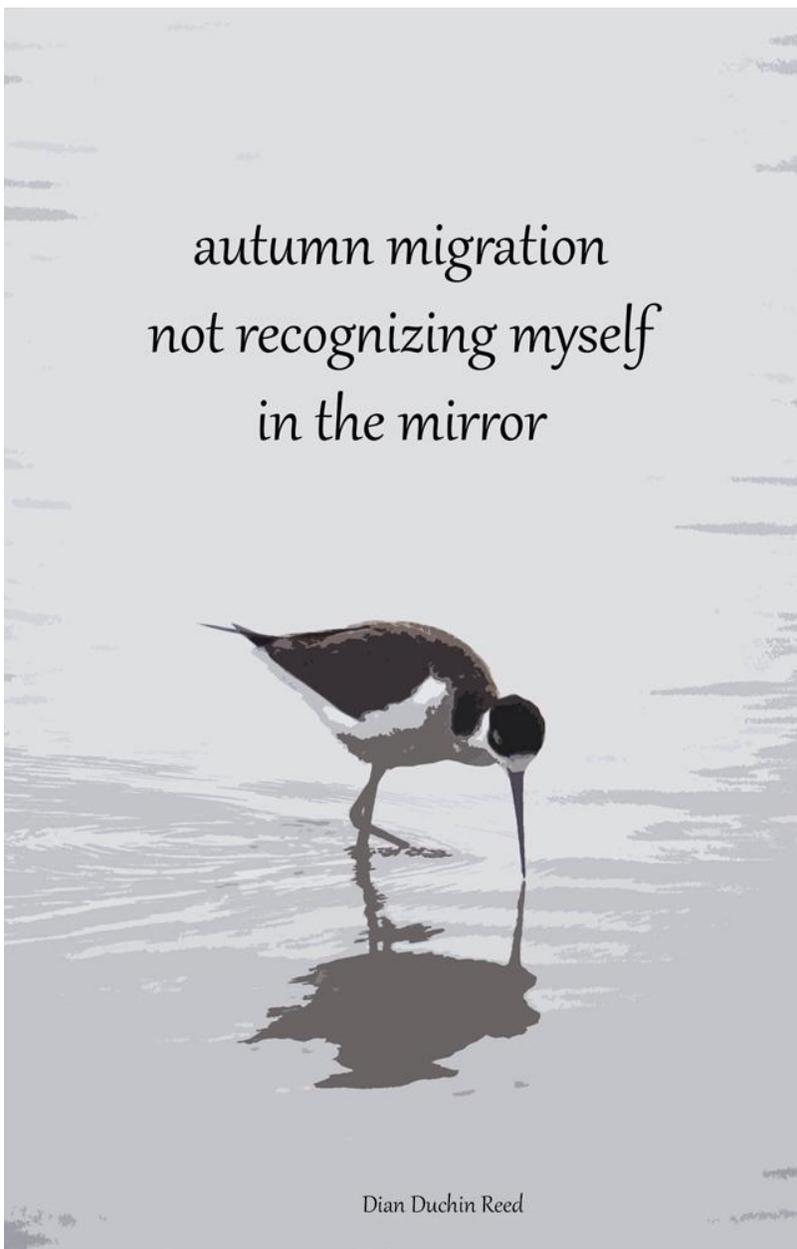
The first two lines of this senryu set you up for something downright ordinary and mundane in the third line. What comes therefore catches you off guard and stuns you into silence. The futility of war, of soldiers out there on the battlefield killing each other simply so that a handful of politicians in power can wield that power to their own ends . . . Thoughts, like these, spring to mind and leave you full of regret and sorrow. It touches you very deeply.

Gautam Nadkarni

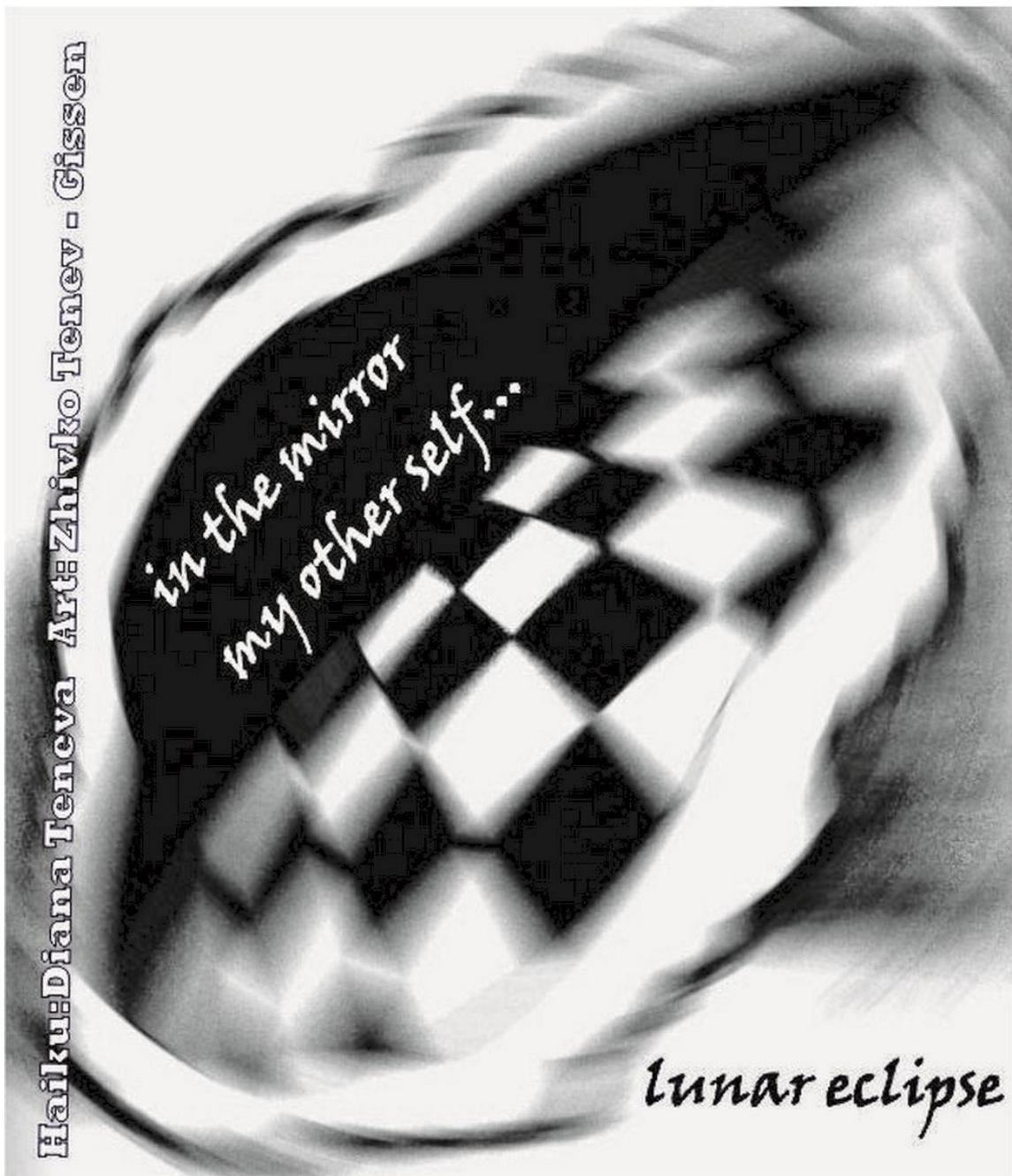




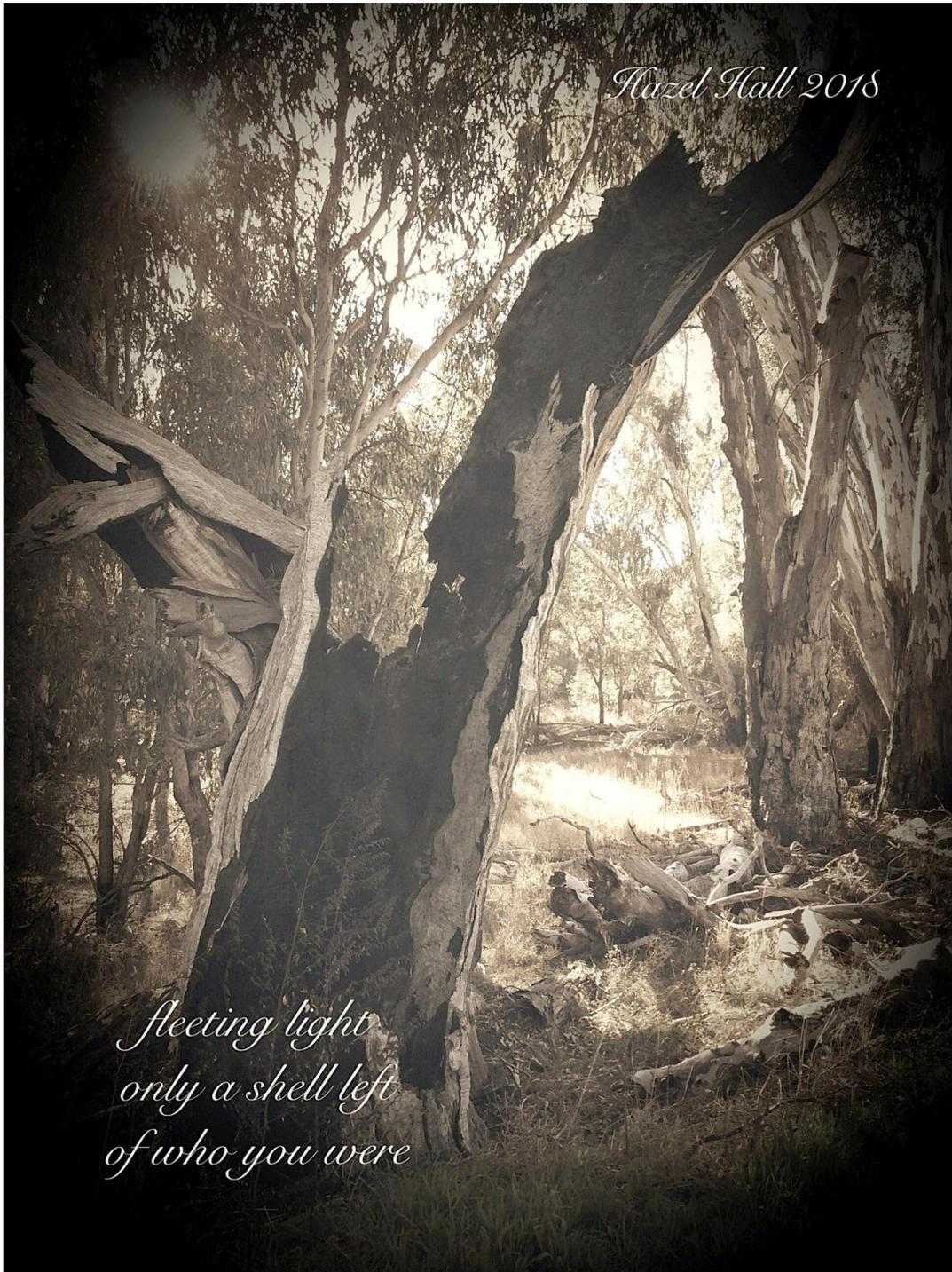
autumn migration
not recognizing myself
in the mirror



Dian Duchin Reed



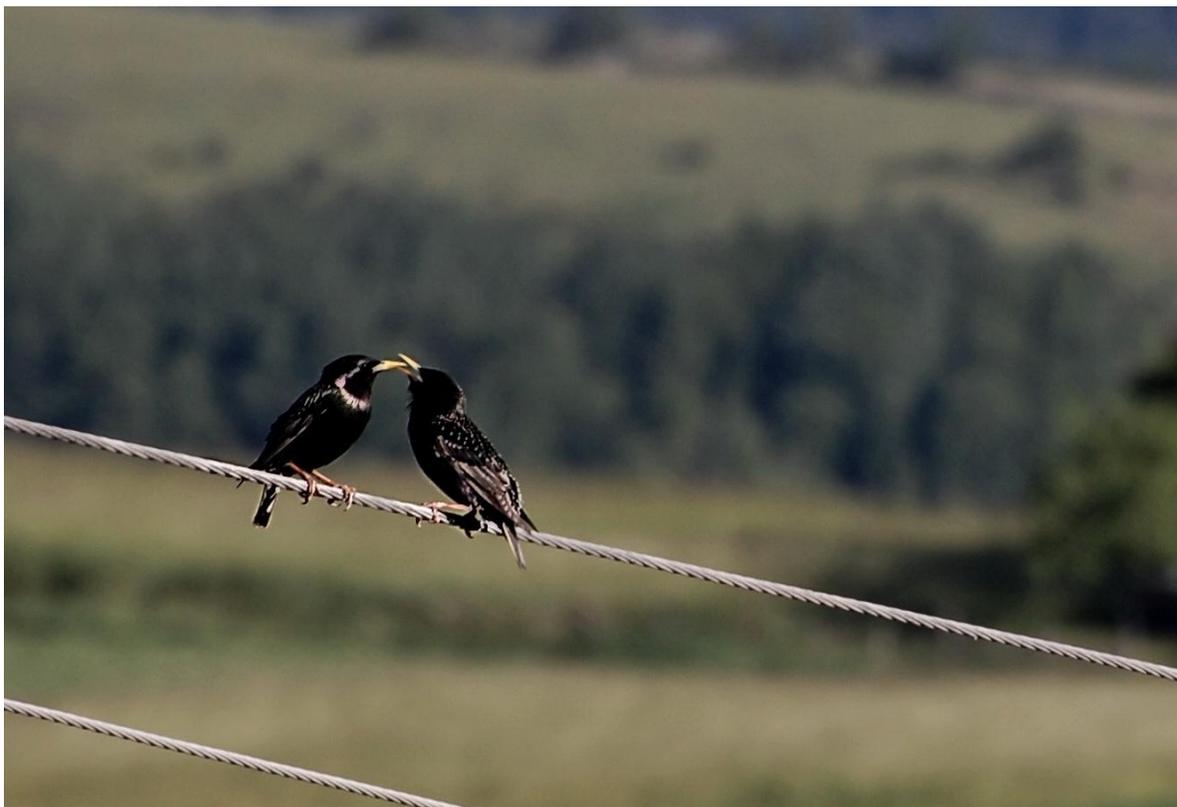




Hazel Hall 2018

*fleeting light
only a shell left
of who you were*

Tanka



Starlings, Iasi, Romania

dry topic
at today's curator talk –
two currawongs
on the ledge outside
decide to leave early

Carmel Summers, Australia

the temptation
to say what I think
leaves a dotted line
across my tongue
fold, don't cut

Susan Constable, Canada

tropical rain . . .
a myriad of mosquitoes
buzzing around us
all the half-truths
in your tittle-tattle

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde, Australia

family reunion
a fly hovers around
the dining table
it's time to ignore things
that do not matter at all

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

a heavy snow
weighing down saplings . . .
who will marvel
at the crooked trunks
of these mighty firs?

Aron Rothstein, USA (EC)

poppy
in the rain . . .
on the bus ride home
my red umbrella
left behind

Jill Lange, USA

a wild daisy
in the beggar's bowl
the only scent
lingering
on this autumn day

David He Zhuanglang, China

the sunlight
diluted by thin cloud
& scudding rain
today I'll make jam
from the dark fruits of fall

David Terelinck, Australia

cattails – October 2018

all those years
tending plants and shrubs
at their graves
now the fragrance of lilacs
permeate the hills

Thelma Mariano, Canada

grey moth
clinging to dead wood
invisible
to the casual glance
this grief of mine

Kate King, Australia

the recent storm
upended the plum tree
you planted . . .
once more my heart
is laid bare to grief

Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan

no moon,
shadows conceal
crouching cougar
my Bangladeshi friend walks
the night in fear of tigers

Inanna, USA

wuthering wind
a beggar snores
in the snow
a blind dog plays
among falling leaves

David He Zhuanglang, China

a joey
waits close by the trail
as I pass . . .
the charm yet the danger
of trusting so young

Jan Dobb, Australia

told not to tell
or be a bother
a child soon finds
a world of her own
silence

Mary Kendall, USA

the face
of a child refugee
staring
into the camera
at us . . . at death

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

deep and cold
as the bullets
that pierced his daughter
the hole in his heart
after the school slaughter

Linda Jeanette Ward, USA

morning news
women slain at the market
another bomber –
I bury my nose
in the woodsmoke of your coat

Carmel Summers, Australia

puffs of cloud
shift in an uneven line
across the sky
as if they too shudder
in the sudden chill

Thelma Mariano, Canada

a patch of blue
above the tiny plot
he sighs
and harnesses his oxen
after the tsunami

Hazel Hall, ACT Australia

reserved parking –
off to one side
near the edge
in a small crack
a violet

Elinor Hugget, USA

a flashback
to those bedtime tales
of Hercules
a beetle in our birdbath
labours hard for shore

Jan Dobb, Australia

when I was six
oh, the little door at the back
of Gran's mantelpiece clock
moving cogs and springs
in the mantel mirror

Simon Hanson, Australia

turn the clocks back
reschedule my daily swim
post-salary life
responds to quiet rhythms
. . . and the peace of dusk

Julie Thorndyke, Australia

a bike brake creaks
the postman's shrill whistle . . .
an envelope
scripted in copperplate
in the tin letterbox

Beverley George, Australia (EC)

dad's old shed
flickers and glows
into the night
his grandson is arc-welding
making something new

Simon Hanson, Australia

by the time
we circle the sanctuary,
bonsai near
the front entrance
look new again

Christopher Costabile, USA

moons that spin
in retrograde orbit
you ask again
if I'll still love you
with only one breast

David Terelinck, Australia



Storks, Bulgaria

my friend
keeps her warm-heart
under cover
the moon hides the sun
in a solar eclipse

Marilyn Humbert, Australia

your skin
even softer
than I
remember
your silence

Mark Gilbert, UK

a shrine
I keep by my bed
the bookcase you made
emptied of years-old books
that never really mattered

Linda Jeannette Ward, USA

all her study
and volunteering
over years
they say the wheelchair
makes no difference

Hazel Hall, Australia

new water tank
arrives in the winter drought –
what other follies
have we been saving
for our retirement

Michelle Brock, Australia

all the rain here
falls as drifting snow flakes
on the southern alps
leaving the parched land with
skinny sheep on brown suede

Margaret Grace, Australia

differences
in their marriage . . .
the creek bed
filled with cracks
in morning light

Gavin Austin, Australia

branches
reflected in the glass
of an abstract painting
he talks again
about learning the violin

Owen Bullock, Australia

the chantey
of sea glass held to the light
a bottle song
to fill the white space
of this empty page

Autumn Noelle Hall, USA

opera
in the arboretum
at dusk
only the magpies dare
vie with the soprano

Beverley George, Australia

wet woods
ringing with frogsong,
I map my way
by moss and music,
a wanderer coming home

Jenny Ward Angyal, USA

picking blackberries
down the narrow path
to the water
we reach the river's mouth
empty handed

Susan Constable, Canada

this prairie
cradles the bones
of my sister . . .
I sing her a song
about magpies and wind

Debbie Strange, Canada

it takes
more courage
than I have
to sing in the city . . .
how I envy the magpie

Keitha Keyes, Australia

from the pine tree
a noisy butcher bird flies
in and out of spring
how spontaneous it seems
no need for fly-buy points

Margaret Grace, Australia

both cove
and river deep in ice
birds gone south . . .
ads for tropic travels
warm the cushioned couch

Kirtsy Karkow, USA

a man
dances through the park
filming himself . . .
his fiancé in Greece
doesn't want to leave her homeland

Owen Bullock, Australia

I follow
a trail of clothes
on the floor . . .
more evidence
my son is back home

Keitha Keyes, Australia

his face
familiar in the crowd
I turn away
leave time for his name
to trip down my tongue

Kate King, Australia

she remembers
the daisies
how her life was spent
in chains
of one sort or another

Tracy Davidson, UK

he did his time
in a windowless cell –
now back home
those boarded windows
show what Time's done to him

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

a lynx falls shy
of her snowshoe hare
suffering hunger
how hard to watch others
hitting their marks

Autumn Noelle Hall, USA

trying hard
to convince myself
it's okay
just a little taste
to take off the edge

Gabriel Bates, USA

coils
of toad eggs
glistening
in sunlit shallows
each dark spot a life

Jenny Ward Angyal, USA

a bouquet
on a white tablecloth,
by an empty chair
breadcrumbs near
an unopened bottle of wine

odložen šop rož
na mizi z belim prtom
ob njej prazen stol -
zaprta steklenica vina
in nekaj kruhovih drobtin

Dimitrij Skrk, Slovenia

first golden buds
of wattle blossoms
on brittle stems
the promises we hold tight
through winter drought

Michelle Brock, Australia

trying
to count stars
among
delphinium . . .
rising moon

încercând
să număr stele
printre florile
de nemțisor . . .
crește luna

Steliana Cristina Voicu, Romania

the dark sky
above this mountain
a haven
for orphaned stars,
lost among neon lights

Debbie Strange, Canada

that hour of the night
when the cat is resigned
to her empty bowl . . .
love, turn out the light
and come to bed

Claire Everett, UK

slumped
across the desk
holding a pen
last poem left unfinished
that's the way I want to go

Ivan Randall, Australia

Editor's Choices (EC) - tanka

Thank you once again everyone who submitted to *Cattails*. I am privileged to have read your work. Please do not be discouraged if your tanka did not make it this issue. We are all beginners, and *beginner's mind* is a good thing to keep on board during our tanka journey. It took many attempts at tanka and lots of feedback from one particular editor before I published my first. I keep in mind that Masaoka Shiki composed 10,000 haiku, 2,000 tanka, and 2 journals (*Juxtapositions; Masaoka Shiki and the Origins of Shasei*) during his life time as an example of what it takes to become a master. In hindsight I'm forever grateful my first attempts didn't get published.

Nonetheless, it's a joy each issue to pick the *Editor's Choice*. To do so, a lot of time is spent sitting longer than it takes to read journals for pleasure or to check if your favourite poets are published again (am I the only one guilty of this?). The challenge, however, is that poets chosen last issue are likely to have submitted high quality tanka again, tanka you would choose for the *Editors Choice* award had they not won the *Editors Choice* last issue. It was also a pleasure to feature tanka from poets mastering the genre (though they're not likely to admit to it) like David Terelinck, Beverley George, David He, Chen-ou Liu, Susan Constable, Claire Everett, Julie Thorndyke and Autumn Noelle Hall and I could name many more. The two poets chosen for the *Editors Choice* award applied *surplus meaning*, both for different reasons and by doing so, demonstrate two ways of applying it to tanka.



a bike brake creaks
the postman's shrill whistle . . .
an envelope
scripted in copperplate
in the tin letterbox

Beverley George, Australia

This tanka is an elegant and fine example of *shasei*, 'a sketch of life', the approach Shiki fostered above other ways of writing tanka, tanka in which the poet describes 'What is',

yet never states their point of view. Visual artists do this all the time. Shiki was influenced by visual art.

If, however, what is noted is nothing more than a pleasant scene, it seems hardly worth the effort. Nonetheless, tanka that take us into the present moment so that the reader experiences this and understands what moved the poet, are worthy. Although Beverly's tanka does not include her thoughts about things she mentions, it's written in such a way we are sensitive to what is *not* said. She describes nothing more than a postman's bike, whistle, a hand-written address on an envelope and a letterbox, yet, we know something intriguing has been brought to our attention? Why? By not stating what the poet feels in what they describe, readers plunge into their own story and complete the tanka for themselves. Is this also what Shiki had in mind? Basho has been known to say (words to the effect) that unless a poem contains 'surplus meaning' (dreaming room as it's known today) it's not worth writing. When judging literary competitions, this was his requirement.

There are several shasei in this issue. However, this one stands apart. Our five senses are triggered by the sound of the bike -- once heard never forgotten -- the shrill of the whistle and the sight of neat handwriting, copperplate, a dying art. We are back in time where we were taught to write neatly in school and everyday occurrences like mail delivery by a postman were the norm that no longer takes place since the advent of email, and is not likely to happen again. Beverly has captured the past. This alone is valuable today in an era where a generation of children have no idea that postmen rode a bike, house to house not so long ago. How can they experience the excitement of running to the letterbox to discover who had written to them in careful copperplate writing if not written about today? Most of us write on electric keyboards. However, would you agree this has been expressed in the gentleness of ways -- no lecture -- a true sketch of life, yet how deeply it captures recollections of the past.



a heavy snow
weighing down saplings . . .
who will marvel
at the crooked trunks
of these mighty firs?

Aron Rothstein, USA

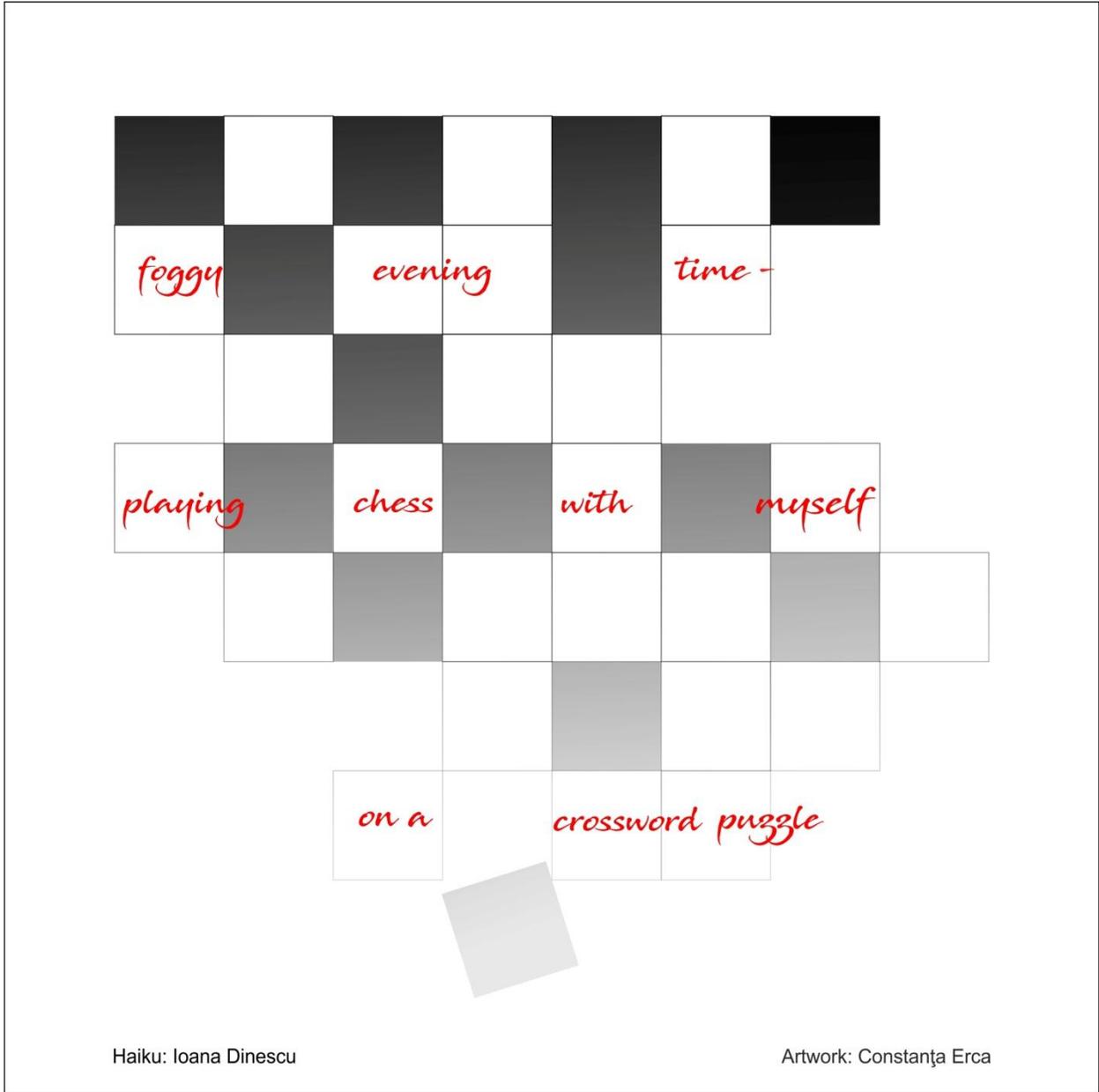
Who indeed will marvel at the shape of firs distorted by the weight of snow; those who grasp the depth and understanding that true beauty is not physical, things that really matter are not seen by those who dismiss 'crooked trunks' as nothing more than saplings, ugly stunted specimens at that. Yet, what will they wonder about?

However, is this only a question about firs? Might it also be a metaphorical statement about those of us who bear the burden of illness, mental ill-health, the devastating after-effects of war and in indeed any one thing in the full spectrum of life's challenges that bring us to our knees? Saplings are fed through the root system of elder trees planted close by. But what of our younger generation who will not only bear the weight of climate change, they will experience snowstorms greater in force than we experience today? As elders, what has been done to take care of them? Tanka of this quality connect us to a higher perception of nature than we might not have along with trials humanity faces, and is a fine example of surplus meaning.

I avoid adjectives or adverbs, especially in Japanese short forms. However, 'heavy', 'crooked' and 'mighty' are just the right touch for this tanka.

Kathy Kituai





Haiku: Ioana Dinescu

Artwork: Constanța Erca



summer moon

floating into the haze

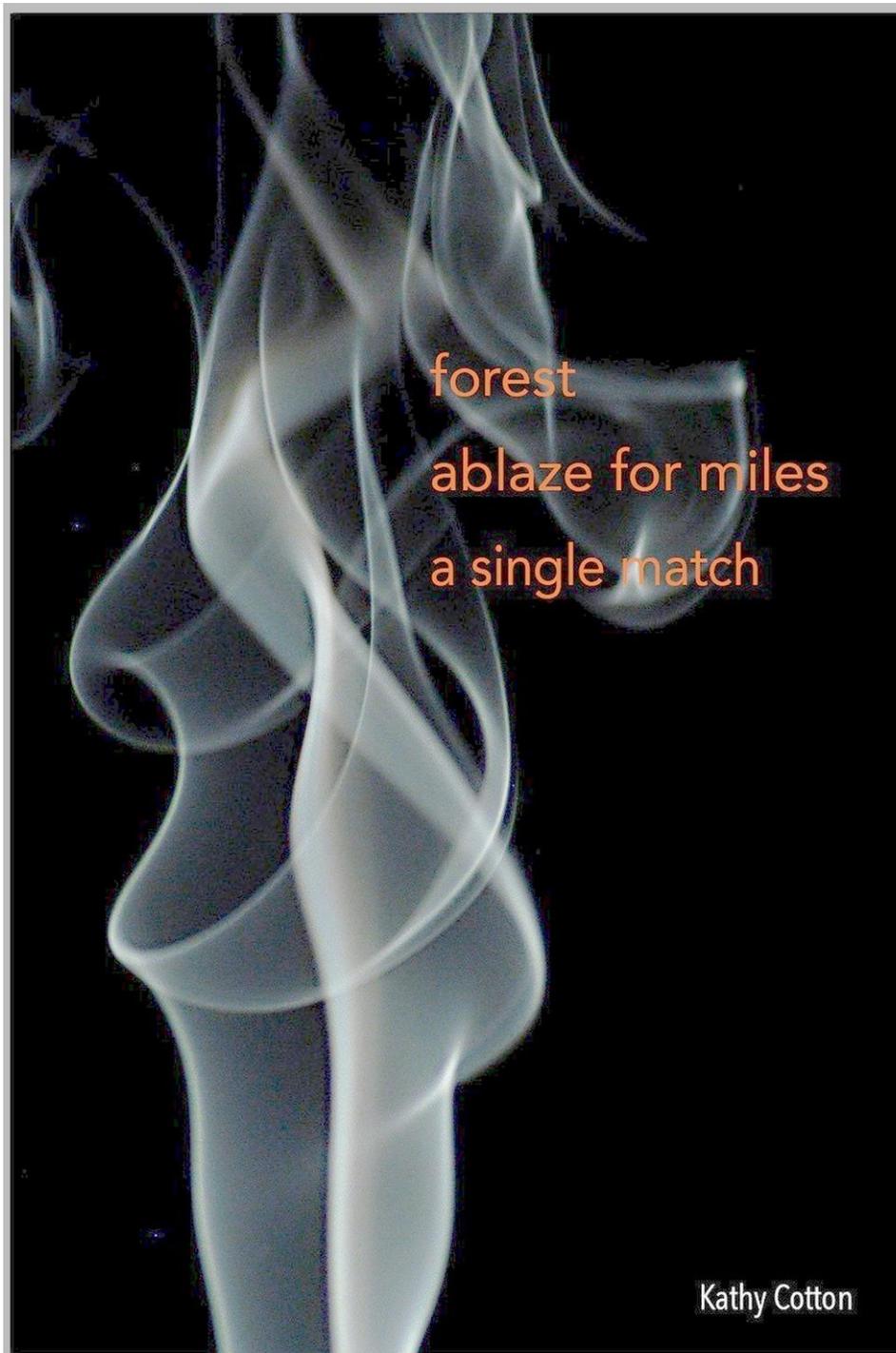
my heart on her string

John Hawkhead



waiting
: always
waiting
:
death row

By Karen O'Leary



Haibun



African Geese, Iasi, Romania

End of the Month

Gabriel Bates, USA

She's always been able to make something from nothing. I watch as she laughs herself breathless, although she never stops stirring. I can't help but do the same.

a pot of beans
warming the kitchen
my mother's smile

Flight Path

Amanda Bell, Ireland

I read that most airplane fatalities occur on the runway, and you'd like to give yourself a fighting chance, so I always book an exit seat just in case. This is a big plane, but the legroom isn't great – makes me glad I'm not any taller. I'd hoped to pace myself, sleep as much as possible, but have only just dozed off when breakfast is served, ovo-vegetarian as requested. Proper cutlery is a nice touch. I'm not going to watch a film – the screen is too close for comfortable viewing. It's interesting to watch the route, though – you can toggle between the camera at the front of the plane or the one underneath. I needn't have bothered with this neck pillow – it pushes my head forward too much, but still, I could do with a nap. We're already over the Eastern Mediterranean.

waves lap golden sand –
sun strikes a washed-up bundle
so neatly clothed

I'm stiff when I wake up – take a walk around the plane, do some hamstring stretches while I queue for the lavatory. When my turn comes, I wash and dry the basin as the sign requests. There's a little turbulence now – when the light comes on I return to my seat and fasten my seatbelt. It's just an hour or so till we touchdown for the onward connection. Modern aviation is so efficient.

a new crater
where the corner shop stood
nothing but dust

Wheezer

John Budan, USA

I am the real Wheezer from The Little Rascals, I think I am, I know I am, I hope I am. There are many imposters like the fake who pretended to be Alfalfa on that late night talk show. And there were Chubby and Buckwheat look-alikes who rode in the Rose Parade. I refuse to answer questions about Wheezer being killed in World War 2; that was some guy named Bobby, I'm pretty sure. I miss the old days of silent films.

nursing home visit
a clock on the wall
years of his life

Triple Refuge

Matthew Caretti, Lesotho

The week becomes weekend. A chance to move beyond the walls of the orphanage.
Ponder the wide-open spaces. The ancient mountains.

first church
tilt of Morija
in the winter sky

Then another trip. Sunday to the capital. But before the main road, the rutted path and
village farms. The toil of subsistence. They watch. We go. And shop.

drawn
by mules
an old Ford

Some semblance of Ubuntu. Are we here to save or to serve? Ourselves or others? I am
because we are. We are what?

Maseru
stretching the kopje
the shanties

Back on campus. The children smile and wave. Some press palms. Bow. I wonder how
we've confused them. Who is Buddha? What is Dharma? Where is Sangha?

three-legged pot
the blackening
of sundown mountains

BIO 101 (EC)

Anna Cates, USA

Phylogeny recapitulates ontogeny. The gill slips of embryology. Heart beating forward into life. And sometimes I, too, feel a tad vestigial. My own heart caged like a rat in ribs. A tetrapod, loping from Walmart aisle to aisle, lunging for a musk melon with my interlocking spinal spurs like a T-Rex, probing the fish tank of what-I-once-was with my five-digit frog hands, fogging up the glass, and when I'm out of gas? Primate pelvis holding together my *umph*, I galumph on over to the lounge chair, triumphant with my cherry passion fruit iced tea – One limb draped (ooh-la-la!) over the arm rest – One bone on top and two below like the flipper of a cetacean. I breathe through two nostrils – I'm not a crustacean. I scuttle like a lizard beneath the red dawn and sigh, hissing *yessssss* like a (my tetrapod brother) snake.

DNA results
in a monkey flower
troglodyte ancestors

Inventing the Alien

Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan

The peeling white of its windows is the first thing one notices in the drizzle and mist. Stained with patches of ochre the blinds hang slightly aslant. Sometimes, puff-by-puff, smoke comes out the lichen-coated chimney, as if the old house has taken up smoking on a whim. It is built in the old style with a wooden shingle roof and teak-panelled walls. The neighbours living in newer concrete buildings look at it with envy and distrust.

'It costs a fortune to build a place like that entirely of wood,' they mutter and shake their heads.

The house stands on a spur higher than the rest of the village sprawled below. No one has spoken to the inhabitant of the house but come a wedding, a wake or the New Year celebrations and the conversation invariably turns to 'the widow on the hill' as they call her.

'She has lived on her own ever since her old man died,' they whisper.

The length of her widowhood changes with the amount of ara imbibed. They cannot agree either on what she does.

'She never visits the shops.'

'What does she live on?'

'Does she have any children?'

'Doesn't anyone visit her?'

The questions elicit much tut-tutting but nothing else. From the haze of the alcohol-fuelled exchanges a spectre of 'the widow on the hill' emerges.

'Do you know what she does when the moon is full?'

'Oh, I've heard that one.'

'She stands outside facing the peaks.'

'She wears dark glasses.'

'I believe her head is covered in a yellow shroud.'

That summer the earthquake felled most of the concrete buildings to the ground. The old wooden house of 'the widow on the hill' alone is unscathed.

as if in defiance
of the late snow
the almond in full bloom

a buzzard calls
drifting in the summer forest
citrine smoke of pine pollen

Tree Shadows

Claire Everett, UK

Click on the link, it says. The 1939 register is now online. The Domesday Book of a populace who had just tipped over the brink of war. Goodness knows what your great grandma Violet would have thought of the internet, let alone social media. She pooh-poohed the very notion of men on the moon . . . Let's see if we can find the old streets.

Two different sides of the family tree before the sap mingled through matrimony. There's comfort in reading the names of those who lived quietly. Were it not for my scant knowledge of the details, along with a gap-toothed smile here, and a little point on an ear there - just *there!* - they would be all but lost.

The Boyle household in Green Lane. A tied cottage long gone, back in the day when everyone knew everyone and there was never a need to lock the door. And, a few miles away, the Prices of Jubilee Avenue. I can fair see Violet red-leading the front step, proud of this portal to her world. Hoping no shadow will darken it but that of the rent man, she works the polish into the stone as if it were a charm.

twilit firs . . .
the before and after
of roe deer

9/11

Colleen Farrelly, USA

fat dew drops
frozen on the windshield –
flashbulb memories

It's an unseasonably cold but sunny morning in Southeastern Wisconsin. A night of restlessness coupled with a 4 AM morning coffee session involving *The Poe Reader* has left me groggy during my 8 AM German lecture. The morning run hasn't helped. Genitive forms run laps around me until we're dismissed.

I walk to the arts studio; N. catches up with me on the sidewalk, spilling pens and books as she grabs the strap of my backpack. Terrorist attack. New York. I laugh. She's a writer with such a vivid imagination, fresh from her creative writing class. I tell her to submit the story to a literary journal.

We walk into the studio, and I plop my bag in my usual corner. The radio sits next to my easel, stuck on a long commercial spouting something akin to H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. J. looks up from his desert sunset painting and motions for me to follow him to the kiln room. I set aside my half-finished, pointillist mushroom cloud and oblige.

janitor sweeping
clay and dust from the floor –
White Sands' cloud rising

J. glances out the window, hesitating. I tell him to spit it out. Terrorist attack. New York. Planes raining from the sky like last week's deluge. Deployments are likely. Do I have a go-bag packed?

old pond, same frog –
sploosh! boom!
new bomb

Decamped

Bill Gottlieb, USA

C.'s brother K departed last week, from a tent in a homeless encampment under a freeway – icon of destinations, of going someplace better, someplace worse. C. called the other brothers to let them know, one born again, one dead set, both doddering down decline. *Serves him right*, said F. *Is that right?* said T. Yet they cried graveside, exchanging fluids with the past, the waste that inclination can't wash away.

front hall

faded photos

footfalls

Crafted Consciousness

Praniti Gulyani, India

Life is so much more than crossword puzzles and coffee mugs. There comes a time when one has to figure out what's between the crossword puzzle and coffee mug. Maybe that is actually what they call consciousness.

Like every other morning, I sit at the dining table, thinking. My hands are clasped together, and on my right lies the steaming coffee mug and on my left, is the unfinished crossword puzzle. Beneath my clasped hands, is our bottle green folder with our divorce papers. Like every other morning, I re-read these papers thoroughly.

I don't know why I do so. I remember the times when coffee would display a oneness with my taste buds, and not just hover around them so vaguely.

Maybe between the lines and sentences in our divorce papers, somewhere around the words and phrases, lingering between paragraphs is the name of the Nescafe you would buy . . .

early morning . . .
the stove still smells
of last night's dinner

fugue state

David J Kelly, Ireland

Death is omnipresent. It surrounds us, like life, although it gets much more media coverage. How many births did you hear about in the last news bulletin? I can't believe death is more important. Surely new beginnings are more worthy of celebration than endings? Isn't that where hope lies? I gave in to despair, once, frightened I didn't know what would happen next. That's the problem with rough terrain, you can't see what's round the next corner.

a ragged tear
in the night's storm clouds
dawn bleeding through

My Grandmother's Bible

Kris Lindbeck, USA

If we were Muslim, we would bury it in a cemetery, or burn it as a last resort. If we were Jewish, we would give it to a synagogue to store. Catholics probably have a procedure, but what do two Protestants do, holding a bible that crumbles in our hands? My mother, ninety years old, said burn it (I thought) in the old steel barrel. But the weather then was far too dry, even for her regular trash incineration. I planned the kindling, plain paper and dry twigs, no garbage.

When it rained, I found I had misheard, or Mom had changed her mind. It still sits on a shelf, too fragile to open, inscribed by Grammy a century ago with her maiden name.

In my mind, the pages still crumple and darken in imaginary flames.

burning trash
the trees beyond shimmering
in rising heat

A Book of Poetry Yet to Be Published

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

In my recurring dream, a man shaped like a Henry Moore sculpture lies at the foot of the Toronto skyline. Red and black slashes cut the sky above him. The title, *A Meeting Place of Minds*, is printed at the top of the book. My signatures, Chinese and English, scrawl across a water-stained map of Taiwan at the bottom.

Pacific shore . . .
one poem after another
folded into boats

Cuba Libre

Marietta McGregor, Australia

As the heavy door shuts behind us a funky pong grips my throat. This few square feet of dark Havana slum is jam-packed with a humid press of summer-clothed bodies. An overheated baby grizzles damply in a playpen in the corner. A big-bodied woman glides between us and the exit. Cigars are brought out, box after box. Fat stogies, slim cigarillos. I stonewall: “Sorry, just arrived . . . no pesos.”

The imposing Cubana, who says she works in a cigar factory, ignores me. She shoves another cedar box under my nose. The colourful label looks authentic. My British uncle smoked them – Churchill’s brand. Others in the room crane nearer, watching us. The air closes in, tighter. Anxious to get out, I swap a wad of Cuban convertible pesos – tourist-only currency I can’t afford – for 25 Romeo y Julietas. The woman who led us here on the pretext of seeing a Cuban band to rival the Buena Vista Social Club, demands milk for the howling toddler.

Back at our hotel I say: “I beat them down.” You’re brutal, as usual: “Fakes, you idiot. We shouldn’t have followed her!” Right then I realise I wasn’t given the necessary export permit. The cigars are illegal, they can’t leave Cuba. I pitch the cedar box with its pretty label into the trash. That night we eat in the hotel. Over daiquiris in the Ernest H. Bar, we bicker about what to do on day two in Old Havana.

twilit plaza
the sweaty growl
of a solo horn

Motionless

Gautam Nadkarni, India

As a youngster of fourteen I had only one burning ambition: to watch a movie for over-16s. Without of course waiting to become over-16. Where's the fun in watching over-16 movies as an over-16.

So when Mom, Dad and Sis decided to go watch Cleopatra with Elizabeth Taylor in the lead role I perked up my ears. I plotted and schemed. And schemed and plotted. Then I sidled up to Dad and asked him to take me along. Father must have had a good day at the office because he beamed, patted me on the back and acquiesced. I was so excited I almost turned cartwheels.

Come show time I stood in line with the rest and entered the auditorium without incident. I was bubbling over as I took my seat and a few minutes later the movie started.

To be honest I couldn't follow a word of the dialogue and being firmly convinced that romance was for the birds I concentrated instead on my popcorn with cheese. Finally, the film was over and Mom shook me awake.

Next day at school I boasted to my gawping classmates about my adventure. But the high light of the narrative was my startling revelation that at over-16 movies the popcorn sold is no different.

mystery film –
still wondering which way
to the loo

Montcalm's Lost Man

Ruth Powell, Canada

Suddenly it was the long weekend and I had no plans. I'd been on call so much and working so hard that I'd lost track of my friends. Not wanting to be pathetic and spend Thanksgiving alone in Halifax feeling sorry for myself, I threw some gear into my backpack and caught the train to Quebec City

In the old city I registered at the Youth Hostel and went out to wander the cobbled streets. On a little bridge I stopped to rest and admire the view. You came up and started telling me about the old city, you with your matted hair, shabby backpack and those eyes. I probably should have walked away then. But you weren't drunk or psychotic or angry, and I recognized another lost soul.

Abraham's plains
the ghost of Montcalm
leads me to you

We wandered for a few hours, your English better than my French, but still. You mentioned something about having a sickness, and maybe going to the clinic to see the Sisters the next day. It was time for me to get back to the hostel before the doors were locked for the night. I didn't ask where you would sleep, picturing a cot at the Men's Shelter or a sleeping bag under a bridge. How could I say that I couldn't help? Our meeting place would be near the bridge in the morning.

drifting closer
to the falls
flotsam

Rescue, for me, came at breakfast. A happy, outgoing woman from New Zealand wanted to see the famous Quebec maples and was looking for company. We took the bus to Chicoutimi, then on to Tadoussac for the night. The hostel in Tadoussac was amazing. We were invited to get up before dawn and join a group for a hike through

the bush to a lake. With the sun rising we watched beavers at work and cooked our breakfast over a campfire.

As our bus rolled back into the old city late in the day, I caught a glimpse of you through the window, still walking. That look of no expectations. Those eyes that had seen such darkness.

a jury of crows
reads the verdict
guilty

more than two
solitudes
no fixed address

Radcliffe Line

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan, India

In the mud they dug out for the bunker last year, they found a child's chappal. I wonder where the other is. Does it too wonder where its partner is? Is it on the other side, fallen off in the chaos of partition? Where did that child go . . . did she even make it past childhood?

across the line
the answer to a titar's
mating call

The metal wires vibrate ever so gently in the breeze. The old ones, taken down with wire-cutters, rust away slowly into the yellow brown soil, lying beside the new ones, shiny and unrolled, in the Punjab sun. I wonder what they think of it all.

stray *patang*
target practice
from both sides

The BSF jawans wipe away their sweat as they go about fixing fences; I watch from a bunker from a distance, with heavily armed men looking for the slightest movement they can fire at. They are almost always on a hair trigger. I wonder what they think too.

mustard fields
redrawing the map
with a blunt nib

look

Vessislava Savova, Bulgaria

i look directly at the sun hidden but not completely behind the clouds that promise a storm of those spring ones warm fast and in a hurry to leave i look again up and i find a cross with a hole in the middle was it not enough that we crucified Him but we also penetrated His Cross hosanna

in the suburbs
a priest with a new
motorbike

Figures

Ernest Wit, Poland

In the evening, you press your ear lobe for one minute, thinking about what's going to change in your life. Is it wrong to keep milk in the fridge door? After supper, while he's choosing a TV-set, scrolling through a list of fifty models, you read about five things about food you'd prefer not to know. And then seven mistakes you make in the shower. Gliding your fingers over your soapy skin, you feel for changes that should arouse vigilance.

swallowing
wads of cotton wool
pastel summer

Editor's Choices (EC) – haibun

BIO 101

Anna Cates, USA

Phylogeny recapitulates ontogeny. The gill slips of embryology. Heart beating forward into life. And sometimes I, too, feel a tad vestigial. My own heart caged like a rat in ribs. A tetrapod, loping from Walmart aisle to aisle, lunging for a musk melon with my interlocking spinal spurs like a T-Rex, probing the fish tank of what-I-once-was with my five-digit frog hands, fogging up the glass, and when I'm out of gas? Primate pelvis holding together my *umph*, I galumph on over to the lounge chair, triumphant with my cherry passion fruit iced tea – One limb draped (ooh-la-la!) over the arm rest – One bone on top and two below like the flipper of a cetacean. I breathe through two nostrils – I'm not a crustacean. I scuttle like a lizard beneath the red dawn and sigh, hissing *yesssssss* like a (my tetrapod brother) snake.

DNA results
in a monkey flower
troglodyte ancestors



It's not every day when you can have a good laugh reading a haibun. Anna Cates' BIO 101 made me do it. The haibun is a great romp through modern biology and anthropology. Where did we evolve from? It's all there . . .

Now can anyone tell me what is the percentage of DNA we share with our elected snakes?

Mike Montreuil

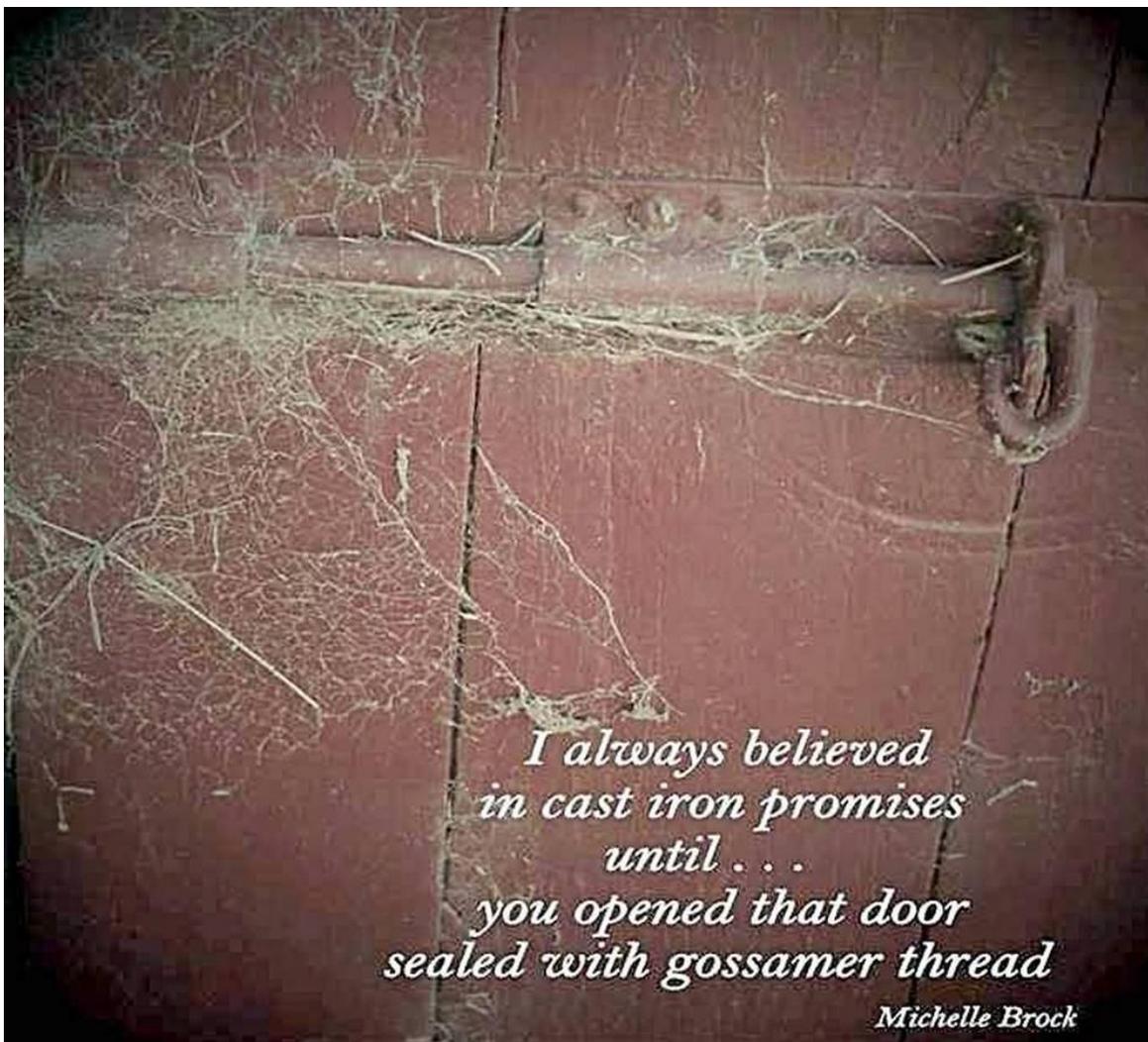
dark memories
from distant lands
the choices we make

Maria Castejon













Haiku: Pravat Kumar Padhy

Photograph: Smita Padhy

Youth



European Turtle Dove Chicks, Iasi, Romania

Welcome to the October, 2018, edition of *cattails* "Youth"

The focus of this issue's *Youth* is on: *Young students' reach, with haiku and haibun edging them forward in their academics!*

August featured school and college students and the budding poets are jubilant. Some have told me that this appearance on the Cornell University Library's MANN DAILY HAIKU website <https://haiku.mannlib.cornell.edu/category/author/kala-ramesh-haikuyouth/> will go in their resume to help them get into a good college abroad for higher studies.

The undergrads – especially those in their fourth year – are happy that they can mention the published haiku to boost their chances of getting a better job placement.

Iqra Raza (a regular in *cattails Youth*) rang me a month ago to say she got into the Master's program at St Stephen's College – mainly because she spoke about *haiku* for 15 minutes at her interview. Out of 7000 applicants only 70 get a seat for the English Master's, and from those only the very best get into St Stephen's College. When she wrote that her research topic for her Master's thesis would be 'haiku,' I was clean floored. Iqra wrote, "*my probable topic for research would be 'Modernising a tradition: The aesthetisation of pain in haiku'. So, I would need your help ma'am, as always :)*"

Praniti Gulyani wrote to me that "*my second prize in Mainichi Haiku Contest 2018 was the reason behind my getting the much coveted Red Tie for Excellence in Creative Writing for the year 2017-2018.*" The Red Tie is a co-curricular accolade presented by Delhi Public School to students who win positions at the international level.

Coming back to the present issue of '*Youth*' – this time I received a massive submission from Tom Painting. A trillion thanks to Tom for sending his students' haiku to us and, more importantly, for exposing so many school kids to contemporary haiku as its practised all over the world today.

Kala Ramesh

The Tejas Award (*Tejas* in Sanskrit means “fire” and/or “brilliance”) goes to: *Amit Kamma, 14 yrs, USA; and Preet Acharya, 10 yrs, India* for:

rainy afternoon
five-thousand jigsaw pieces
litter the table

*Amit Kamma, 14 yrs
USA*

What fun. It reminds me of the huge jigsaw puzzle my family put together when we were kids. L 1 is classic, and adds so much mystery to the lines that follow. Did the child/children/family abandon the puzzle to watch the rain . . . or was it the continuous rain that compelled them to stay in a pursuit that bound them as a whole?

rainbow –
the places i have
never been to

*Preet Acharya, 10 yrs
India*

I find this haiku absolutely amazing. I think Preet is very sharp to understand this simple yet complicated art form.

I face a difficult decision when adults submit haiku written by their grandchildren or their students. How can I know the submitted haiku wasn't edited or prompted by the adults?

One such case was Preet Acharya – just 10 years old, but in her poems the spirit of haiku is evident! I was puzzled because the poem was sent by Preet's mentor, Anupama Dalmia Barnwal, who teaches creative writing. She was unknown to me and I was curious to know how Preet got exposed to haiku. When I learned that Akila G. gave a haiku workshop at Anupama Barnwal's creating writing centre, the puzzle was resolved, for Akila is a published haiku and haibun poet.

Considering this was the first exposure to haiku for most of these young poets, every single poem 'showcased' here can be considered an *Editor's Choice!*

ladybugs
one on its back
flailing its legs

Luca Horn-Morawa, 13 yrs
USA

air tinted purple
with the scent of spices
my grandparent's church

Lulu Javelona, 13 yrs
USA

atop the pile
of stolen goods
a gray cat

Phillip Salzinger, 13 yrs
USA

New Year
time to leave
myself behind

James Russell, 13 yrs
USA

shattering
the brand-new window
an old ball

Victoria Ellis, 13 yrs
USA

dawn mist
a crescent moon
cradles the clouds

Elizabeth Martin, 13 yrs
USA

summer morning
drops of dew
wet my ankles

Luca Horn-Morawa, 13 yrs
USA

third grade band
under the cacophony
a shred of song

Phillip Salzinger, 13 yrs
USA

once crisp
leaves beneath my boot –
autumn rain

Phillip Salzinger, 13 yrs
USA

the mountain
littered with trees
cradles an owl

Jamie Propst, 13 yrs
USA

funeral
the hearse held up
in traffic

Nick Clark, 13 yrs
USA

valley fog
the mailman drives his route
one last time

Amit Kamma, 14 yrs
USA

mountain
I stand on top
of the clouds

Zamir Norry, 14 yrs
USA

late morning
the moon
just a memory

Isabel Seward, 14 yrs
USA

lily pad to lily pad
a frog hops
into spring

Juliana Margolis, 15 yrs
USA

rain taps my window
I no longer
cry alone

Daisy Solomon, 15 yrs
USA

summer passes leaves drift away

Joseph Gardiner, 8 yrs
USA

first summer rain –
checking the salt
on my tongue

Preet Acharya, 10 yrs
India

stormy night
a silence within
crushed dreams

Bhoomi, 14 yrs
India

horror movie . . .
the grey drops off
grandma's hair

Praniti Gulyani, 15 yrs
India

strawberry harvest . . .
listening to the sound
of red

Praniti Gulyani, 15 yrs
India

winter fireplace –
their gazes meet under
the crackling heat

Aditi Chowdhury, 15 yrs
India

New Year 's Eve –
he shifts a little
on the hospital bed

Aditi Chowdhury, 15 yrs
India

busy weekend –
pale skinny feet dip into
clear water

Aditi Chowdhury, 15 yrs
India

convocation
... mother's caterpillar
turns into a butterfly

Shreya Narang, 18 yrs
India

silent world ...
he asks what he
sounds like

Shreya Narang, 18 yrs
India

waiting room ...
an ant traces
my feet

Aashna Goyal, 17 yrs
India

sundown ...
all the shadows
merge as one

Aashna Goyal, 17 yrs
India

HAIBUN

Bootless

The place where I come from, a writer is considered to be one of the most useless persons. It is thought that writing is a job for those who are incapable of becoming a doctor, an engineer, a C.A. or any job that indicates that you are a brainy fellow.

I don't think so. It is nothing about how difficult words you choose or how fancy you make it look. I would rather say that it is about how deep you feel, how much confident you are about your thoughts and your determination to deliver them to the world. It is about something that you observed and now you put it in your words. Something which is so common and becomes so rare just with the way you say it.

A writer holds a great responsibility on his shoulders to write something so true, so real that it has the power to bring a change, that it has all the positivity you need to fight all the negativity in the world. It is about being what you think you are and what you should be.

But yes! You are right. They are mere words.

war front . . .

I chose a pen instead
of a sword

Shreya Narang, 18 yrs
India

Creased Crescents

My Dear Miss Muffet,

Teach me how to make curd and whey. I mean, I'm not asking you for much. Teach me how to make thick, creamy curd. Teach me how to make milky whey.

I am a girl, and girls should know how to cook.

Teach me how to stir whey, and how to hold the spoon, and also tell me the measure of the angle between my elbow and the bowl. I don't want to reveal much of my arm. I shouldn't, in fact.

I am a girl, and girls should know how to cover.

Teach me how to shake the bowl, or rather, how perfect the gesture should be. You know, so that the cream settles. Also tell me how vigorously I should shake the bowl.

I am a girl, and girls shouldn't look violent.

Teach me how to scream when the spider comes. I mean, I'm not scared of spiders. Spiders are beautiful creatures, with glassy webs, so translucent and delicate . . . They're harmless creatures.

But, teach me how to scream, and when to scream.

I am a girl, and girls should be terrified easily.

art and craft . . .
noticing how she avoids
black paper

Praniti Gulyani, 15 yrs
India

Our winners at the International Haiku Contests 2018 for youth:

Students of Tom Painting:

United Nations International School Haiku Contest 2018 winner, Junior High Division

hot day
the sweet excuse
for a milkshake

James Russell, 13 yrs
USA

winter at the pool
snow piles up
on the tarp

Amit Kamma, 14 yrs
USA

Nicholas Virgilio Memorial Haiku Contest 2018 Winners:

sewing sky
to sea
the horizon

Jamie Propst, 13 yrs
USA

power outage
my imagination
comes to life

James Russell, 13 yrs
USA

Students of Kala Ramesh:

2nd Prize Winners at the Children's International Category, Mainichi Haiku Contest 2017 (results were declared in April 2018).

flying aeroplane
on the white carpet of clouds
far-off houses

Lakshay Gandotra, 13 yrs
India

雲の白いカーペットの上を
飛行機が飛んでゆく
家々の立ち並ぶ果てを

— ラクシャイ・ガンドルタ 13歳 (インド)

dishwashing
she shelves her dreams
with glass plates

Praniti Gulyani, 15 yrs
India

皿洗いをする
女の子は自分の夢を
ガラスのお皿一枚ごとに棚にのせてゆく

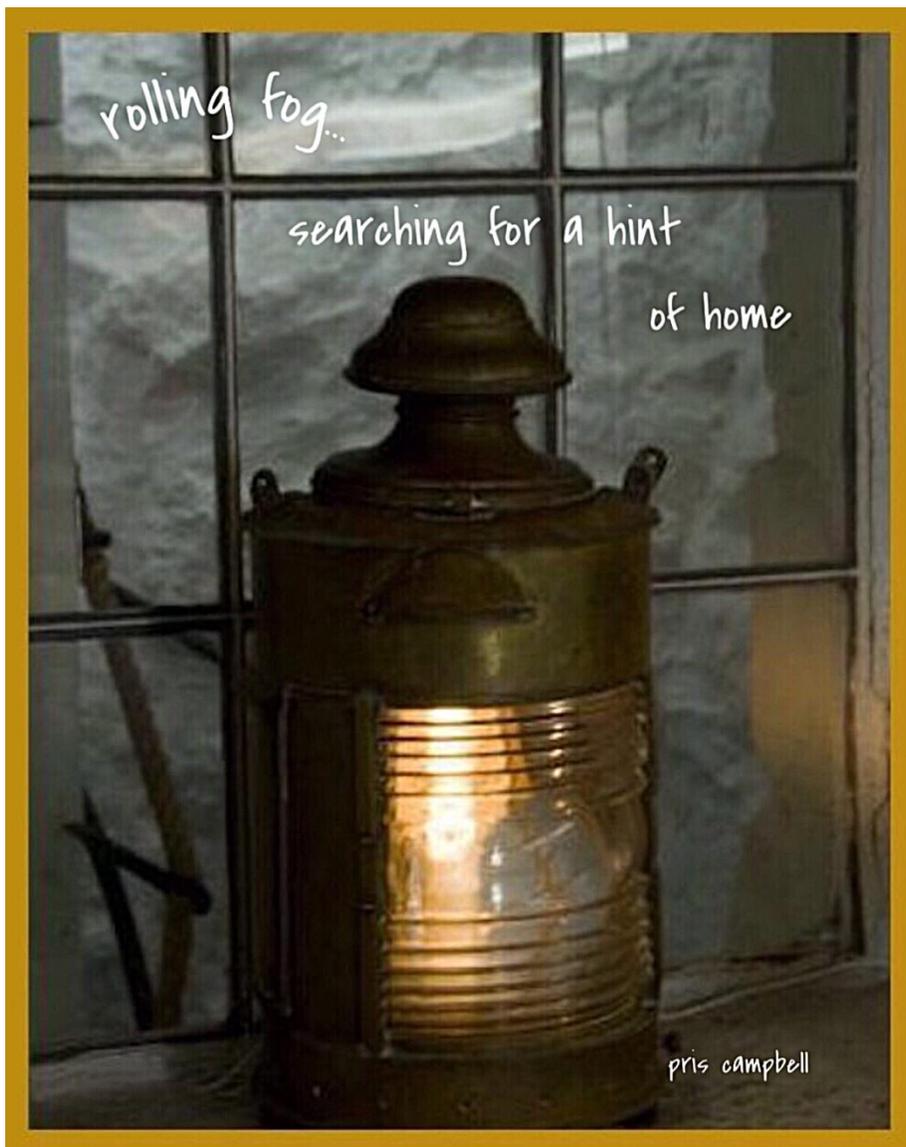
— プラティニ・グリヤニ 15歳 (インド)

a whisper of monsoon ...
the washerman's wife
has just given birth

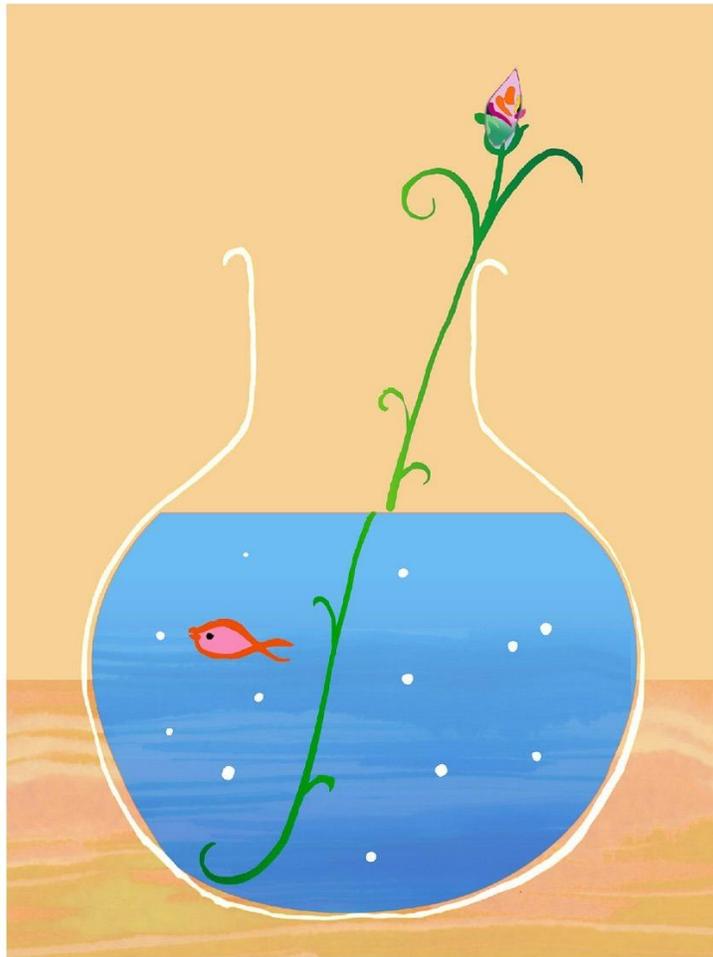
Praniti Gulyani, 15 yrs
India

モンスーンの近づく声か
洗濯屋のおばさんが
ちょうど赤んぼを生んだ

— プラティニ・グリヤニ 15歳 (インド)



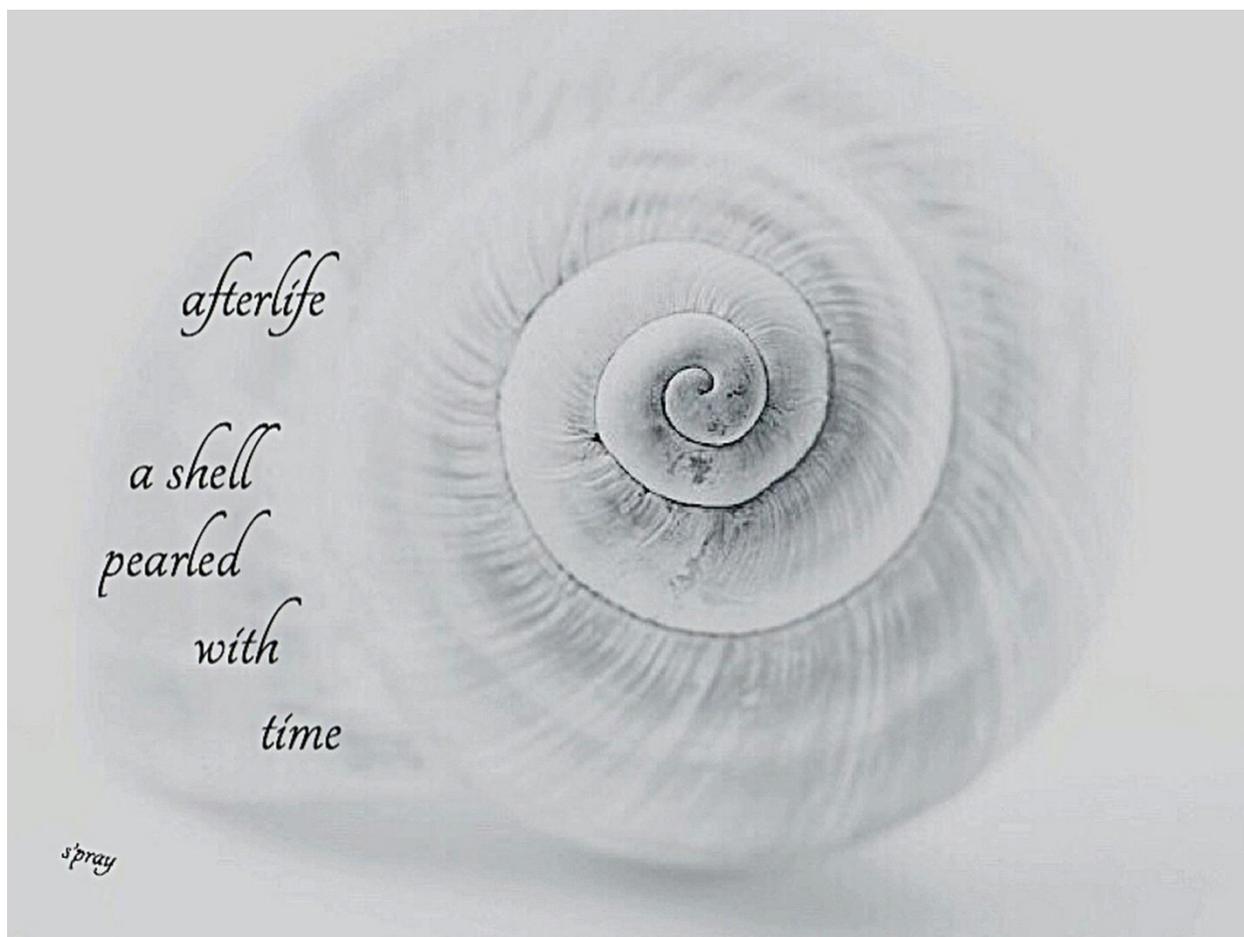


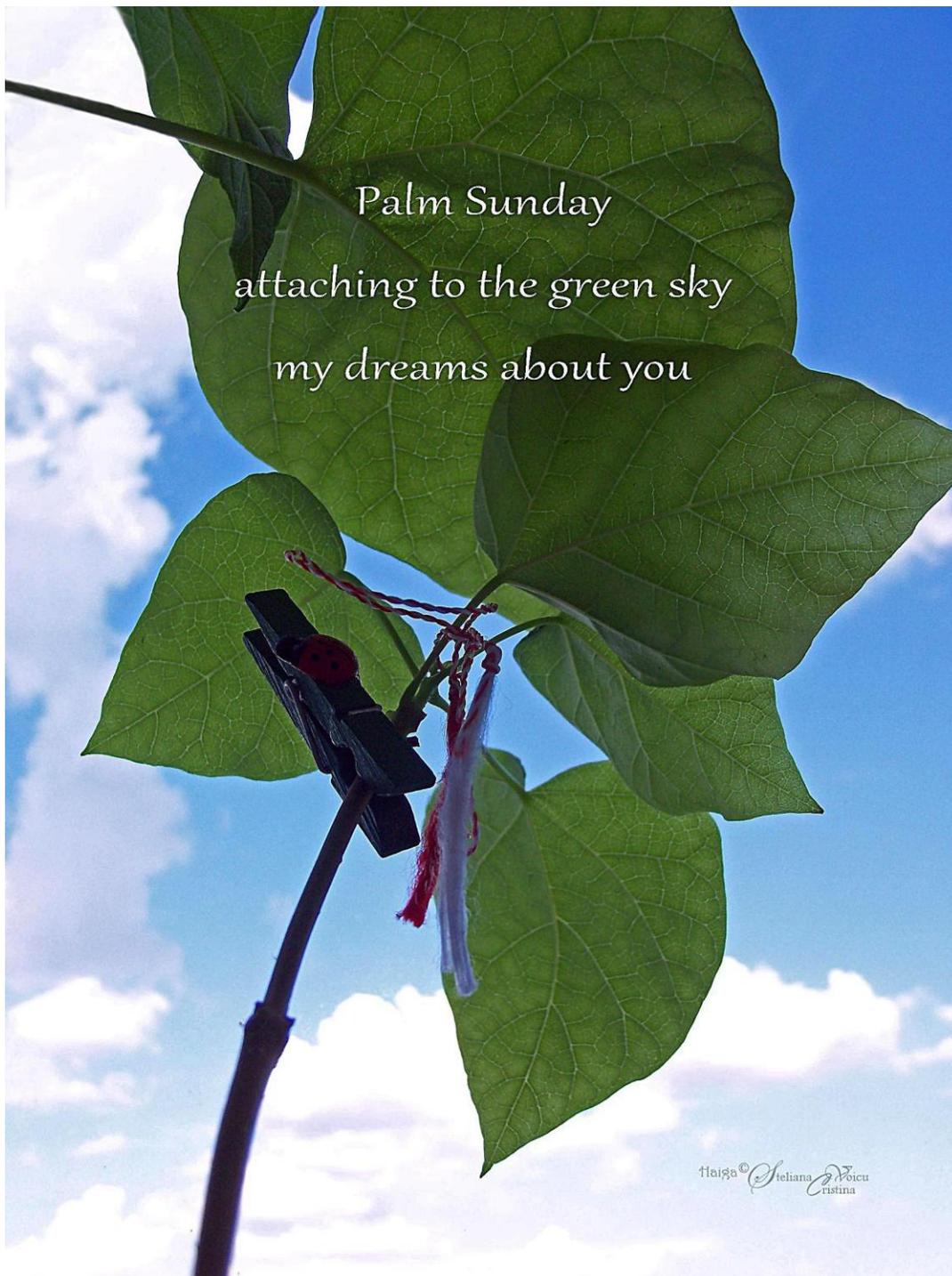


buds swell
into blossom
her belly warm with child

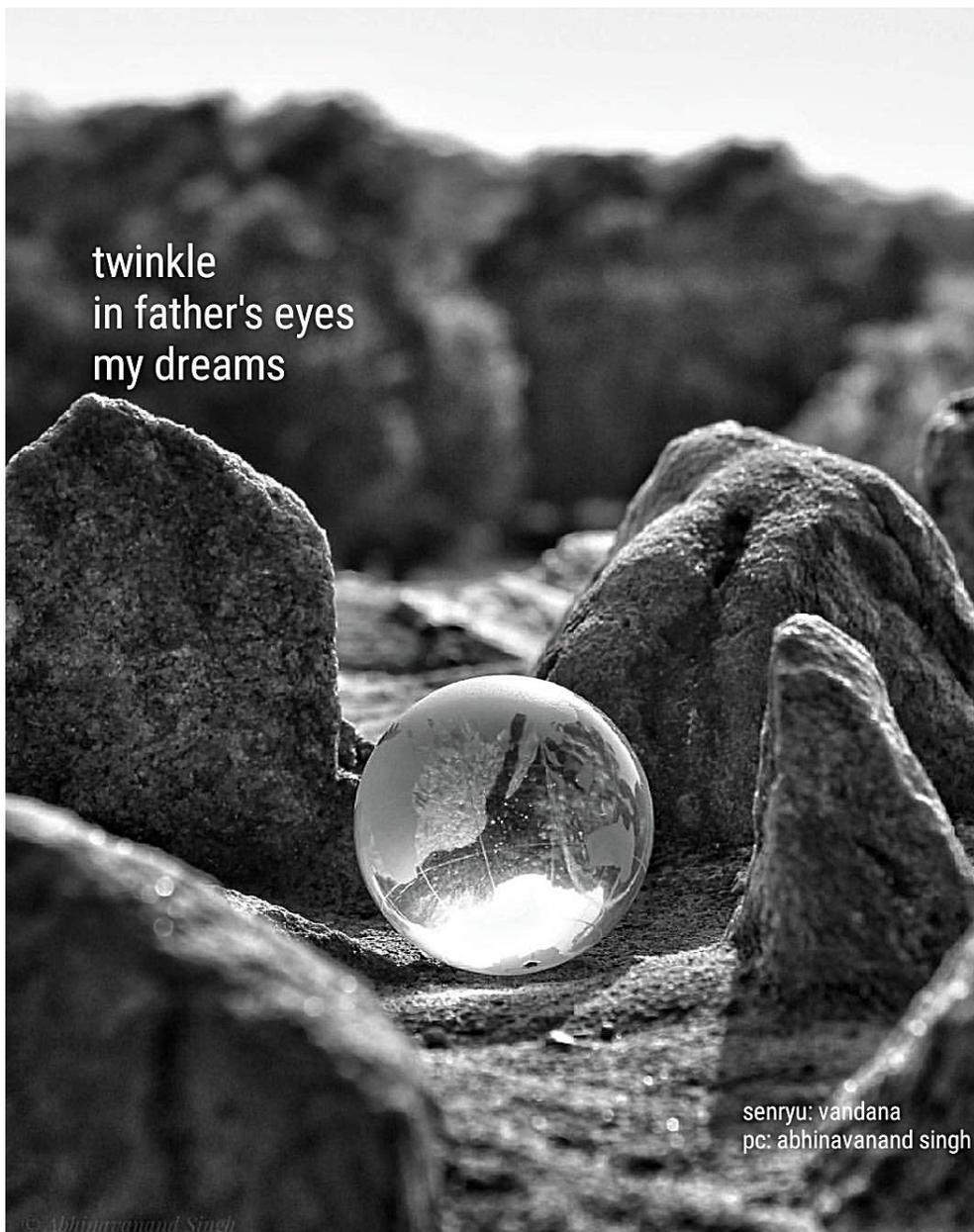
蕾ふくぶくお腹の子温々と

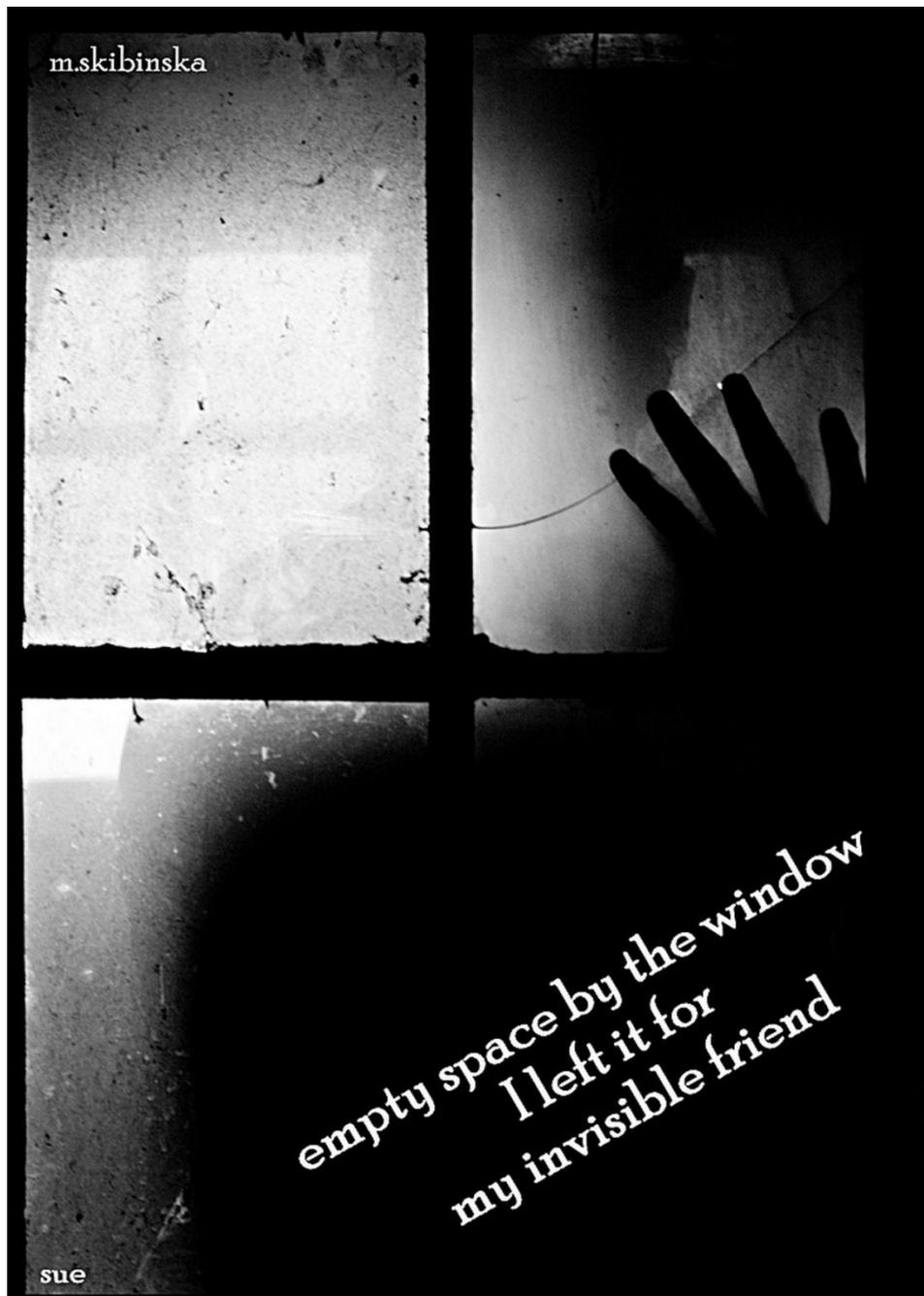
haiku by Robert Witmer artwork by Kuni Shimizu











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