

# cattails



April 2017

# **cattails: The Official Journal of the United Haiku and Tanka Society**

## **April 2017 Issue**

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# *Table of Contents*

Introduction	4
In Memoriam Maya Lyubenova	5
Section 1 Haiku	13
Section 2 Senryu	39
Section 3 Tanka	55
Section 4 Haibun	72
Section 5 Youth Corner	103

# Introduction

When an'ya asked me in late summer 2016 to set up a new UHTS and cattails team, it did seem at times, whether I, wide-eyed and bushy-tailed, would in a million moons be able to do it. Yet, here we are.

This first issue of cattails in 2017 is a tribute to the vision of the founders, an'ya and PeterB. It is also a testimony to the generosity and dedication of Mike Montreuil and Ray Rasmussen, who designed the new cattails journal website that permits the readers to read a PDF version of the journal, whether on screen or as a download. Also, there is the unstinted hard work and passion of the editors, David Terelinck, Geethanjali Rajan, Gautam Nadkarni and Kala Ramesh. For the first time, Kala has coaxed the poets in the Youth Corner to try their hand at tanka and haibun. The artists, Rebecca Cragg, Cindy Lommasson and Paresh Tiwari give the re-launched cattails its distinctive look.

Deep appreciation and gratitude to the UHTS team: Alan Summers, Neal Whitman, Iliyana Stoyanova, Marianna Monaco, Paresh Tiwari and Cindy Lommasson for their unwavering support and encouragement.

It is with great sadness that we carry a tribute to Maya Lyubenova, who was a regular contributor to cattails.

Finally, sincere thanks to the poets who have supported us, and a warm welcome to those, who have joined us, in this new phase.

Sonam Chhoki

## In Memoriam Maya Lyubenova

(12 September 1956 – 30 December 2016)



Our dear friend Maya left this world after a long and hard battle with the big C. A beloved mother and sister, a talented poet, translator and photographer, she will be missed not only in the Bulgarian haiku community but worldwide.

Maya wrote poetry in both Bulgarian and English, and published free verse, visual poems, haiku and haiga in various journals, magazines and anthologies: Frogpond, The World Haiku Review, Shamrock Haiku Journal, Moonset, Haigaonline, Sketchbook, A Hundred Gourds, Under the Basho, Simply Haiku, Lynx, La Ville, Aha The Anthology, Naad Anunaad etc.

In 2009 she won the WHA Haiga Contest and was declared a Master Haiga Artist of the World Haiku Association. In 2010 she published a bilingual haiku collection called 'Flecks of Blue / Парченца синьо', Ars Publishing House, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. Although Maya left us with a rich collection of publications, photographs and haiga, her biggest legacy would have to be her mentoring and her participation in the translation of Jane Reichhold's 'Bare Bones School of Haiku' into Bulgarian in 2012. **This incredible amount of work** proved to be an invaluable source of information for many Bulgarian writers – both beginners and more advanced in their haiku journey.

So with this little tribute we would like to say 'Good-bye, Maya' and thank you for letting us into your haiku universe!

*Iliyana Stoyanova and Maya's friends from the Shoshin haiku group*

## Haiku for Maya

шепа трохи  
след снежната буря . . .  
първи синигер

a handful of crumbs  
after the snowstorm . . .  
first tit

*Радка Миндова/Radka Mindova*

Колко много птици  
в зимното небе  
И все гарвани

so many birds  
in the winter sky  
all of them crows

*Илиана Илиева/Iliana Ilieva*

парченца синьо  
ми сочат посоката . . .  
първи стъпки

flecks of blue  
show me the way . . .  
first steps

*Ценка Цачева/Tsenka Tsacheva*

изгубено синьо мънисто . . .  
чашата срещу мен  
недокосната

a lost blue bead . . .  
the glass opposite me  
untouched

*Антоанета Богданова/Antoaneta Bogdanova*

водно огледало —  
бръчките по лицето ѝ  
незабележими

water mirror —  
the wrinkles on her face  
unnoticeable

*Станка Парушева/Stanka Parusheva*

нова четка  
птиците най-накрая  
полетяха

new brush  
finally the birds  
are flying

*Детелина Тихолова/Detelina Tiholova*

безкраен път  
следвам полета  
на бяла пеперуда

endless road  
I follow the flight  
of a white butterfly

*Петя Атанасова/Petya Atanasova*

край на годината  
една ледунка искри  
в синьо

end of the year  
one icicle sparkles  
in blue

*Илияна Стоянова/Iliyana Stoyanova*

падаща звезда . . .  
желание трудно за  
сбъждане

shooting star . . .  
a wish hard  
to come true

*Алекс Костов/Alex Kostov*

хорър хайку  
избухваме в смях  
на финала

horror haiku  
we burst out laughing  
at the end

*Весислава Сабова/Vessislava Savova*

високо, високо . . .  
шум от лебедови криле  
между мъглата

higher and higher . . .  
the flapping of swan wings  
through the mist

*Христина Панджаридис/Hristina Pandjaridis*

скреж  
опитвам се да следвам  
оставените следи

frost  
I try to follow  
the left traces

*Весислава Сабова/Vessislava Savova*



дървена стълба . . .  
само едно стъпало  
до луната

wooden ladder . . .  
just one more step  
to the moon

*Милена Велева/Milena Veleva*

виелица  
прегръща ме шалът  
който ти ми подари

blizzard  
the embrace of the scarf  
you gave me

*Гергана Янинска/Gergana Yaninska*

вените на снега  
изчезнаха . . .  
залез

the snow veins  
disappeared . . .  
sunset

*Детелина Тихолова/Detelina Tiholova*

звезди в локвите —  
в краката ни  
толкова светове

stars in the puddles —  
so many worlds  
at our feet

*Людмила Христова/Ljudmila Hristova*

в окото на гарвана  
белият сняг  
завинаги отразен

in the raven's eye  
the white snow  
forever reflected

*Явор Цанев/Yavor Tsanev*

зимен здрач  
парченца синьо  
разпръскват мъглата

winter dusk  
flecks of blue  
scatter the mist

*Илияна Стоянова/Iliyana Stoyanova*

снежно поле  
всички пътища водят  
към небето

snow field  
all roads lead  
to the sky

*Людмила Христова/Ljudmila Hristova*

завръщане в Котел –  
чувам стъпките ти  
до моите

returning to Kotel –  
I hear your steps  
next to me

*Гергана Янинска/Gergana Yaninska*

толкова много цветя  
пеперудата  
... на бодил

so many flowers  
the butterfly  
... on a thistle

*Мария Георгиева/María Gueorguieva*

минзухари в снега  
запалвам още една свещ  
в памет на Мая

crocuses in the snow  
I light another candle  
for Maya

*Зорница Харизанова/Zornitza Harizanova*



## Section 1 – haiku



on the island  
where seabirds summer —  
prison walls

*Barnabas I. Adeleke, Nigeria*

a charred martyr —  
the scarecrow after the passing  
of forest fire

*Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana*

colloquio a scuola —  
sembrano più profonde  
le impronte sulla neve

meeting the teachers —  
footprints in the snow  
seem deeper

*Elisa Allo, Italy/ Switzerland*

a breakaway cloud —  
the muster of sheep  
on the hilltop

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

coming of age  
at juvenile hall  
plum blossoms

*Johnny Baranski, USA (EC)*

sweeping the dojo . . .  
the silent bell  
of sensei's hakama

*Sheila K. Barksdale, England*

first snowfall  
after his memorial  
the sound of crows

*Gabriel Bates, USA*

mirno veče  
u zaljevu usidren  
srebrn mjesec

still evening  
in the bay anchored  
silver moon

*Dubravka Boric, Croatia*  
*Translated into English by D.V. Rožić*

evening deepens . . .  
a flight of curlews  
stirs the sky

*Adrian Bouter, Netherlands*

equinox  
. . . the sun  
rolls over

*Helen Buckingham, England*

warm flannel pocket —  
the candy corn colors  
of autumn

*Anna Cates, USA*

almond blossom  
the stillness  
after love

*Paul Chambers, Wales*



cold snap —  
my hurried greeting  
doesn't sound like me

*James Chessing, USA*

powrót z morza —  
ptak ze złamanym skrzydłem  
w sieci rybackiej

return from the sea —  
a bird with a broken wing  
in the fishing net

*Marta Chocilowska, Poland*

deserted beach —  
seagulls redo  
their footprints

*Rosa Clement, Brazil*

again and again  
to the smallest leaf  
a zebra longwing

*Bill Cooper, USA*

harbor hues —  
dusk in the bellies  
of dead fish

*Lamart Cooper, USA*

Shirazi wine —  
the deep red hats  
of whirling dervishes

*Angelee Deodhar, India*

minus forty —  
even the clouds  
refuse to move

*Edward Dewar, Canada*

inky hills —  
the sky still colouring-in  
a sunset

*Jan Dobb, Australia*

buio mattino —  
una pioggia sottile  
cammina con me

dark morning —  
a fine drizzle  
walking with me

*Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo,  
Netherlands*

will this be the year  
I stop counting them . . .  
autumn stars

*Rebecca Drouilhet, USA (EC)*

a polar bear  
swims in search of ice —  
New Year's 2017

*Garry Eaton, Canada*

hill path —  
a cow leads her calf  
into clouds

*Jeffrey Ferrara, USA*

incorniciata  
dal vento la luna  
di un gabbiano

framed  
by the wind  
a seagull moon

*Lucia Fontana, Italy*

still bustling  
with noisy goldeneye –  
disused jetty

*Tim Gardiner, UK (EC)*

blowing  
in all directions . . .  
east wind

*Pat Geyer, USA*

gazza ladra  
nel suo becco  
un pezzo della mia vita

magpie –  
one part of my life  
in its beak

*Eufemia Griffio, Italy*

jewelling  
the mountain path—  
glints of mica

*Simon Hanson, Australia*

desert song . . .  
the wildflowers  
in my head

*C.R. Harper, USA*

whispers  
from the old marsh  
winter reeds

*John Hawkhead, UK*

dry petals  
of a cyclamen—  
her odd uniform

*David He, China*

Long Night Moon –  
I unclasp  
my necklace of pearls

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

sharing news  
around banksia blossoms  
lorikeets

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

All Souls' Day –  
grandpa shows me  
his dad's grave

*Vishnu P Kapoor, India*

breakfast granola –  
sorting through superfoods  
black-capped chickadee

*David J Kelly, Ireland*

frail apple tree  
the closest thing we have  
to a scarecrow

*Nicholas Klacsanzky, Ukraine*

pomi înfloriți —  
retușez data nașterii  
pe cripta mea

blooming trees —  
repainting my birth date  
on the gravestone

*Lavana Kray, Romania*

twilight —  
a part of me too  
with the honking geese

*Jill Lange, USA*

winter dawn —  
the scarlet firethorn  
huddles closer

*Eva Limbach, Germany (EC)*

floating world . . .  
this childhood river  
of summer stars

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

a hummer's wings —  
the softer sounds of your words  
fluttering in my ear

*Cyndi Lloyd, USA*

scattered snowflakes —  
here in a breath  
gone in a breath

*Eric Lohman, USA*

thin ice  
prelude to spring  
the first robin

*Joyce Joslin Lorensen, USA*

cold moon —  
moss covers his name  
on the gravestone

*Martha Magenta, England*



ripples . . .  
under the lily pad  
a turtle's breath

*Ann Magyar, USA*

last stanza  
open to interpretation  
the butterfly

*Susan Mallernee, USA*

church archways  
whispering with swallows —  
spring vespers

*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

laying her head  
on the fresh snow  
January moon

*Andy McLellan, UK*

farm pond —  
the way the heron  
fills it

*Ben Moeller-Gaa, USA*



riding a wave  
of buffalo grass  
the killdeer's call

*Ken Olson, USA*

February thaw  
the tinkling chimes  
of falling icicles

*Dottie Piet, USA*

homeward bound  
silently ploughing the dusk  
two corvine birds

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*

moonwater . . .  
the shadows of reeds  
teasing dawn

*Sandi Pray, USA*

pumpkin fest —  
the village full  
of sunsets

*Anthony Q. Rabang, Philippines*

poderane cipele —  
malo svježeg zraka  
na vrućem asfaltu

torn shoes —  
some fresh air  
on hot asphalt

*Ljubomir Radovančević, Croatia*  
*Translated into English by D.V.Rozić*

Buson's Day —  
the kettle's whistle  
becomes bird song

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

autumn dusk  
mother's tea  
in a cracked cup

*Edward J. Rielly, USA*

fading traces  
of the way I've come . . .  
autumn dew

*Aron Rothstein, USA*

in remission —  
a heron spreads  
the stars

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

svjež snijeg —  
svraka stigla prva  
na igralište

fresh snow —  
magpie first  
at the playground

*Stjepan Rožić, Croatia*  
*Translated into English by D.V. Rožić*

snažan vjetar  
on susjedovu hrastu  
moje rublje

a strong wind  
on the neighbor's oak  
my laundry

*Djurdja Vukelic Rožić (EC)*  
*Croatia*

snow flurries . . .  
the last race  
of carousel horses

*Tom Sacramona, USA (EC)*

long after  
I let the branch go —  
lilacs

*Agnes Eva Savich, USA*

prognosis  
on the first warm day  
spotting a robin

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

in the end  
only you and I remain —  
winter moon

*Christina Sng, Singapore*

the curve  
of an avocet's bill . . .  
sickle moon

*Debbie Strange, Canada (EC)*

snow-filled nest  
the depth of silence  
before spring

*Rachel Sutcliffe, UK*

icy night . . .  
on father's birth certificate  
a swastika

*Dietmar Tauchner, Austria (EC)*

icy moon—  
an unknown abruptness  
in your voice

*Barbara A. Taylor, Australia*

her ankles . . .  
a path into mist's  
endlessness

*Hansha Teki, New Zealand (EC)*

autumn song . . .  
the shadows hidden  
in minor chords

*Angela Terry, USA*

pierwsza wspólna noc  
cicho spadają  
płatki dzikiej wiśni

first night together  
silently falling  
wild cherry's petals

*Zuzanna Truchlewska, Poland*

solstizio d'inverno —  
quel calore nella tua voce  
che non sento più

winter solstice —  
the warmth in your voice  
I no longer hear

*Maria Laura Valente, Italy*



spring peeper . . .  
the hermit opens  
a window

*Julie Warther, USA*

in the middle  
of meditation—  
two blossoms fall

*Neal Whitman, USA*

thin ice on the pond  
how close I am  
to breaking

*Scott Wiggerman, USA*

cemetery footpath  
the colors of autumn  
trode black

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

forest wind—  
the squeal of branches  
thrust together

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

## Editor's Choices (EC) Haiku

My gratitude to all the poets who sent in haiku submissions to this issue of cattails. We received a phenomenal number of poems. I chose the haiku that stood out for me over several readings. It has been an enjoyable and enriching experience. It was a daunting task to make the Editor's Choices from haiku of such fine quality. I have commented on a delightful few.

Geethanjali Rajan

---

her ankles . . .  
a path into mist's  
endlessness

*Hansha Teki, New Zealand*

Hansha Teki's beautiful haiku catches the reader's imagination and attention with the first line and holds it as a lingering image with the use of ellipsis.

her ankles . . .

Where could this be leading? The poet leads us onto a path and the haiku effortlessly moves forward into the mist and beyond. The skilful use of the last word 'endlessly', leaves the reader with endless opportunities to interpret the poem in myriad ways. An open haiku with ample space for the reader to step in. Is it the mist of spring or is it the mist of autumn? Again, it is left to us, the readers.

---

still bustling  
with noisy goldeneye —  
disused jetty

*Tim Gardiner, UK*

The haiku which starts with an emotion of activity, bustles with life and then, quietens to an image of stillness in a disused jetty. The poet effortlessly juxtaposes nature and human life without mentioning the latter. In what could be a simple observation of life at a disused jetty, lies a commentary of how human beings move away from and maybe, even abandon things that are no more of use; but not so, the noisy goldeneye. The movement from activity to disuse triggers an emotion of quiet/loneliness (*sabishii*) in the reader.

---

coming of age  
at juvenile hall  
plum blossoms

*Johnny Baranski, USA*

This spring haiku with plum blossoms is a beautifully written haiku. Layered well, the haiku could be a happy haiku, but is it? A gentle image of spring juxtaposed with juvenile hall leaves the reader delving deeper and reading the haiku again. Could it be the observation of a person at a distance or is it the observation of someone deep within the system? The spring *kigo* in the last line could mean hope and a celebration of life. But yet, it leaves us with a lingering sense of the unknown. A very well written haiku balancing images and emotions.

---

will this be the year  
I stop counting them . . .  
autumn stars

*Rebecca Drouilhet, USA*

A deeply personal moment is shared by the poet with a haiku that starts with a question and ends with a concrete image. Very poignant is the question that implies 'how much longer'. The beauty of the haiku is that the poet's question will remain unanswered, as is the case with most of our existential doubts and queries. The poet too may be aware of it but nonetheless, asks the question on behalf of the reader. The use

of the ellipsis to hold the question in our minds a little longer is skilful. It is difficult to pass by the beauty and melancholy of the final image – the night sky in Autumn.

---

winter dawn—  
the scarlet firethorn  
huddles closer

*Eva Limbach, Germany*

On a cold winter dawn, all one would want is some comfort by huddling close to a source of warmth. The poet skilfully speaks through the scarlet firethorn that seems to huddle closer on a winter morning. A beautiful image that would find a great deal of resonance with the reader.

---

snow flurries . . .  
the last race  
of carousel horses

*Tom Sacramona, USA*

This haiku, set in winter, talks of the last race, an end. The winter kigo is by itself beautiful – snow flurries. The second line leads us to the last of the races and the final line provides the surprise – of carousel horses! Two concrete images, juxtaposed to give us a delightful haiku, open-ended enough to let us ponder and wonder why it is the last race.

---

the curve  
of an avocet's bill ...  
sickle moon

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

Avocets are from the genus *Recurvirostra*, meaning 'bill curved backwards'. These striking waders can be distinguished easily by their bills. The poet juxtaposes the beautiful image of the upward curve of an avocet's bill with the sickle moon. A skilful use of two concrete images to create an unusual association in the mind of the reader.

---

snažan vjetar  
on susjedovu hrastu  
moje rublje

a strong wind  
on the neighbor's oak  
my laundry

*Djurdja Vukelic Rožić*  
*Croatia*

In times when haiku is melancholy, sad and very deep in meaning, this haiku brings a smile in its childlike observation of one's laundry on the neighbour's oak. Or is the poet thinking of her laundry when there is a strong wind observed on her neighbour's oak? Either way, the strength of this haiku is the lightness of the observation.

---

icy night . . .  
on father's birth certificate  
a swastika

*Dietmar Tauchner, Austria*

On an icy night, the poet discovers his father's birth certificate. The last word leaves the reader feeling the shock of the poet. The poem itself is written in a way that links the swastika back to the first line. This haiku builds on the power of symbolism to create the reader response. And the response is not just an emotion; one feels the chill of the icy night!

## Section 2 -Senryu



now a celebrity  
everyone in the neighbourhood  
calls me brother

*Barnabas Adeleke, Nigeria*

office flirt  
the added benefit  
of working in pairs

*Kwaku Feni Adow, Ghana*

top honours –  
my name under  
someone's haiku

*Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana*

waiting room  
together we knit  
our brows

*Debbi Antebi, UK*



writing class  
students hide behind  
pronouns

*Debbi Antebi, UK*

airport coffee  
she leaves behind  
a scarlet kiss

hospital ward  
the levelling quality  
of backless gowns

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

old sitcoms  
I cringe at the laughter  
of dead people

*Gabriel Bates, USA*

diabetic  
now my toothless grandpa  
brushes twice a day

*Rohan Kevin Broach, India*

road closures  
swapping breakup stories  
with the Uber driver

*Lamart Cooper, USA*

spring vacation  
all the children indoors  
playing school

expressway flirt  
the old man's turn light  
winking...winking

*Patricia Daharsh, USA*

moonlight  
he croons to me  
out of tune

*Charlotte Digregorio, USA*

baby asleep  
at last the coffee-maker  
gurgles awake

collecting acorns  
my grandson declares  
his big ambitions

*Jan Dobb, Australia*

whipped cream  
my diet plan goes down  
in a mouthful

going in circles i know the world is round

*Shivapriya Ganapathy, India*

co-worker  
her desk  
too orderly

*Bernard Gieske, USA*



sports bar  
everybody's  
a player

neither a skater  
they fall  
for each other

*LeRoy Gorman, Canada*

Diwali lamps  
burn out long before  
the gambling ends

*Rohini Gupta, India*

old sweater  
so many holes left  
now he's gone

*Hazel Hall, Australia*

seaside cafe  
photos of fish  
that didn't get away

*Simon Hanson, Australia*

border control —  
for the old lady  
a full body search

a single stake  
on the lakeshore —  
stumbling over it

*Ruth Holzer, USA (EC)*

jogger passes me  
on the path  
again

*Terrie Jacks, USA*

daughter's recital  
I dance  
on the tips of her toes

*Phyllis Lee, USA*

my sore finger –  
suddenly everything  
is in its way

*Michael H Lester, USA*

bubbles of spit  
frothing from his mouth...  
divorce talk

gala dinner  
the new mayor talks  
of the have-nots

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada (EC)*

geometry class  
...and the angle at which  
our eyes meet

wad of notes...  
I grandly drop a coin  
in the donation box

*Vandana Parashar, India*

dirty fingernails  
my car mechanic washes  
the windshield

February thaw  
my ex sends me  
a valentine

*Dottie Piet, USA (EC)*

local council election  
the doorbell rings  
more than usual

long distance dispute  
the email inbox  
clogged up

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*

2 AM  
my son and I meet  
in the kitchen

*Djurdja Vukelic Rozic, Croatia*



family reunion  
the widest smile  
the counsellor's

chain saw  
the strident wail  
of falling trees

*Brijesh Raj, India*

loud bar  
repeating my order  
she whispers in my ear

her tank top  
we go to bed  
making war

*Tom Sacramona, USA*

turning fifty  
the depth of her smile  
in smile lines

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India*

a new pain  
helping me forget  
the old one

rained out vacation  
seeing all the sights  
in the hotel

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

disasters  
never imagined before  
insurance man

the comfort  
of being alone  
together

*Nancy Shires, USA*

solid results  
a month of laxatives  
fail

*Barbara A. Taylor, Australia*

origami class  
the beautiful folds  
of our elders

old documents  
the things we forgot  
we knew

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

high school reunion  
everyone wearing  
rose tinted glasses

family reunion  
we wear our best  
fake smiles

*Rachel Sutcliffe, UK*

a better mousetrap —  
the cheese  
a triple-cream brie

*Angela Terry, USA*

to first class  
from the back of the plane  
bananas on a tray

carefully planned wedding off without a hitch

*Julie Warther, USA*

too much Christmas cheer  
I labour to unwrap  
another resolution

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

sick spouse  
the roller coaster  
of role-changing

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

## Editor's Choices (EC) Senryu

---

February thaw  
my ex sends me  
a valentine

*Dottie Piet, USA*

Despite the presence of 2 kigo [seasonal references] in it – ‘February thaw’ and ‘Valentine’ – this poem is a senryu in its sensibility. It is not enough that the poem deals with human beings, for so do a large number of haiku. Here the focus or focal point is the valentine which is a human invention, not part of the natural world.

An ex who has been out of her life returns by way of a Valentine: an act that would otherwise have been considered as worthy of ridicule, has been treated with kindness and humour. How silly and yet how warm and human! As I see it, this poem is a parody on a certain stereotype haiku dealing with ‘thaw’. The play on words makes this poem special.

This senryu is one that sticks in the reader’s mind and is remembered long afterwards whenever thaw or Valentine is mentioned, with a quiet chuckle.

---

gala dinner  
the new mayor talks  
of the have-nots

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

The poem first gives the setting, a gala dinner, presumably to celebrate the new mayor's appointment. Against this setting the mayor talks about the have-nots even as he quaffs champagne and stuffs his mouth with caviar. The irony of the situation makes one boil with indignation and smile at the same time. The poet has phrased the poem extremely well, painting the picture and leaving it to the reader to judge or conclude as he/she will, without in any way being judgemental himself.

---

a single stake  
on the lakeshore —  
stumbling over it

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

This poem made me laugh out loud and small wonder: how utterly, utterly human to stumble over the only stake at the lakeshore!!

Once again, this senryu makes no judgement at all by itself; the judgement or response arises in the readers' minds. The simplicity and economy of words used in the phrasing makes for a very effective senryu; nothing has been overstated or overdone. As if to say, this is the situation as I saw it folks, make of it what you will. The technique of showing without telling, much touted in the world of haiku, is equally effective in senryu, and this poem is a very sound example of it. A word more, or a word less, could have destroyed the fabric of the poem or at least reduced its effectiveness and impact.

Gautam Nadkarni

## Section 3 TANKA



winnowed  
to the last leaf  
a woman  
and a willow oak  
wrapped in a blue silk sky

outward signs  
of an inward grace . . .  
with cold seawater  
a thousand hands anoint  
the stranded whales at Farewell Spit

*Jenny Ward Angyal, USA*

freeing his hand  
she picks shells  
along the shoreline . . .  
against surf and sky  
her deep sighs go unheard

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

why is it  
we only notice the hole  
in the dinghy  
once we reach  
deep seas?

*Anna Cates, USA*



a stooped woman  
pushes her shopping cart  
against the light  
the young man's photograph  
fixed to its side

leaden skies  
leafless trees lining  
an empty boulevard  
your note in purple ink  
with all its loops & swirls

*James Chessing, USA*

on the backs  
of our mothers  
cracks  
in the glass ceiling  
not yet shattered

*Marilyn Fleming, USA (EC)*

year end  
household sale  
early birds welcome  
everything must go  
furniture, wife . . . kids

*Al Fogel, USA*

bundled letters  
hand-scribed on scented paper  
hint at the essence  
of a person long-passed –  
plink of the i-Pad screen

brown paper and string . . .  
a poet from The Bush  
brings me kites  
fashioned for my grandchildren  
the way he learned as a lad

*Beverley George, Australia*

the shell  
of a cicada clings  
to the bark  
but what of us  
after our journey

*Bernard Gieske, USA*

our friendship rattles  
this way and that  
the scraping  
of a rusty gate  
in an autumn wind

*Hazel Hall, Australia*



day breaks  
with a piped chorale . . .  
I choose  
a setting by Byrd  
for the Sunday psalm

*Hazel Hall, Australia*

I know I'm no good  
for friendship's cozy hours  
instead, give me  
a common jumbled wildwood  
to match my errant ways

losing the lift  
of warm air beneath my wings  
perhaps it's time  
to learn a different song  
and sing it close to home

*Michele L. Harvey, USA*

in freezing wind  
a sparrow hops  
beside the barn  
an old beggar  
at his prayers

*David He, China*

unpacking  
the heirloom crystal  
in a new kitchen —  
your brandy snifter  
streaked with dust

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

in twilight  
stained cardinal red  
I search  
through clouds of ash  
for a star in the east

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

phone silent  
family and friends busy  
on the porch  
a breeze  
stirs the wind chimes

*Terrie Jacks, USA*

in spite of these  
black and white days . . .  
kittens  
scented lilacs, skylarks  
the sun peeking through fog

raven hair  
frames her sky-blue eyes  
a sketch  
of this little girl  
who lives in my dreams

*Carol Judkins, USA*

a journey  
from outer space  
to inner space  
and back again  
with each breath

funfair  
the look on the palm-reader's face  
as that child's life line  
drowned in a river  
of chocolate ice cream

*David J Kelly, Ireland*

instead of  
a bunch of red roses  
I'd love  
just one sunflower  
to smile back at me

Christmas —  
dredging up  
leftovers  
from the fridge  
and gossip from the past

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

hard to settle  
I turn the radio on  
off-on again . . .  
you whistle under your breath  
no particular reason

the more waves  
crash ashore, the deeper  
swallows swoop  
only to rise again . . .  
what if we had done the same

*Kathy Kituai, Australia*

alone outside  
the abortion clinic . . .  
a teenager  
stretches her hand to catch  
falling rose petals

first night  
of deportation . . .  
a child  
looking at the grass  
covered with frost

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

whistle blasts  
from a train crossing  
the channel —  
all the signals I ignored  
'til it was too late

*Thelma Mariano, Canada*

out first  
the yellow pollen catkins  
of the hazelnut tree  
i can't imagine  
not being here

*Giselle Maya, France*



calligraphy  
of the moon—  
in and out of  
my dreams  
a blue heron drifts

*Precious Oboh, Nigeria*

evening  
brings a thunderstorm  
very quickly it seems  
you have changed  
your mind about me

it began like this,  
a dead pixel on the screen  
a tiny thing –  
the evening star  
slowly dropping out of sight

*Claire Rosilda Norman, England*

a lone myna  
high in the sky  
the kite  
descends on its weight  
holding the silent wind

*Pravat Kumar Padhy, India*

stirring sugar  
in the evening tea  
I wish  
I could have known him  
to a lesser extent

*Aparna Pathak, India (EC)*

hearing the wind  
sipping the leaves  
how can spring  
be so jealous of the flowers  
on your pillow

සුළගේ හඬ  
කොළ මත සැපෙන විට  
කෙලෙසද වැසිත්ත සමය  
ඔබේ යහන මත ඇති  
මල් වලට ආශා කරන්නේ

*Malintha Perera, Sri Lanka*

on this night  
I add rosemary  
to the polenta  
and we cha-cha-cha  
into the dawning

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

New York  
is too impatient  
for the stroke of midnight  
Cinderella can happen  
at any given time

*Natalia L. Rudychev, USA*

new fur coat  
she slides a hand down the sleeve  
relishing the feel  
“Of course,” she says when asked,  
“I support animal rights.”

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

in the shower  
water dripping  
from my hair . . .  
all the blessings  
have I wasted

lights  
on the *Exit* sign  
burnt out . . .  
what if there's nothing  
on the other side

*Kenneth Slaughter, USA (EC)*

river stones  
polished to a soft sheen . . .  
in sharing  
the weight of our worries  
we each become light

my dreams  
wander in and out  
of yours . . .  
rabbit warrens  
in the bluebell woods

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

early sunlight  
on my savaged garden  
I listen  
to frost-white voices  
silenced long ago

*Helga Stania, Switzerland*

## Editor's Choices (EC) Tanka

Thank you to everyone who submitted tanka for the current issue of *cattails*, and my first as the new tanka editor. Your support is greatly appreciated.

In selecting tanka for this edition, I looked for poems that employed fresh and unusual metaphors, treated traditional themes in new ways, had lyrical and poetic writing, were well constructed with dreaming room, and that I felt promoted quality writing within the genre.

---

I kept returning to Marilyn Fleming's tanka again and again:

on the backs  
of our mothers  
cracks  
in the glass ceiling  
not yet shattered

As I relayed to Marilyn, this is a tanka, given the current social climate, that deserves to be heard far and wide. For too long women have been marginalized and often treated as second-class citizens simply because of gender. And it had seemed, over the past decades, that the pendulum had begun to swing the other way to rectify this imbalance. Sadly though, we have recently seen these gains eroded, and negative stereotypes reinforced, in political circles due to cabinet appointments, executive orders, and chauvinistic comments.

This tanka by Marilyn takes an established metaphor and employs it in an effective and contemporary manner. It is an excellent example of tanka that, when well written, can provide important social commentary without the need to preach or proselytize.

---

I have long-appreciated the work of Kenneth Slaughter and the following tanka is a striking example of saying just enough and not spelling out what the tanka is really about:

lights  
on the *Exit* sign  
burnt out . . .  
what if there's nothing  
on the other side

There comes a point in the life of everyone when we must pause to examine our views on what lies on the other side of death's door. This is a strong metaphor that does not tell us what to feel, but evokes many emotions about ageing, spiritual/religious beliefs, and death. And there is the added subtle layer of the person in the palliative care ward whose own lights are dimming as they approach their own end and their ultimate exit from this world. The rhetorical question in the final two lines leaves much room for the reader to ponder their own answer.

---

My last editor's choice for this issue goes to Aparna Pathak:

stirring sugar  
in the evening tea  
I wish  
I could have known him  
to a lesser extent

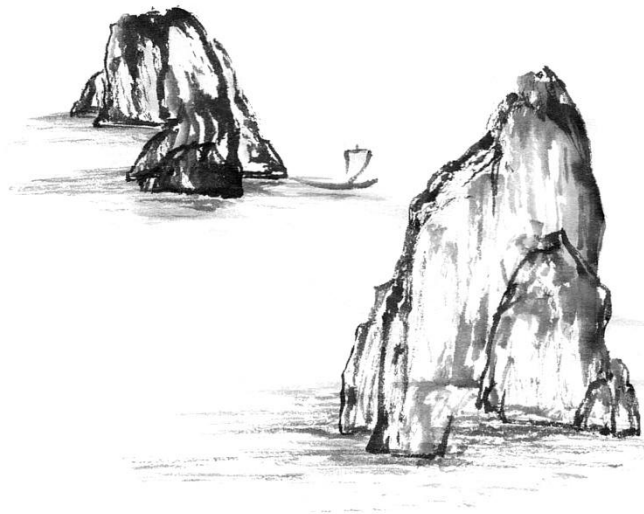
I enjoyed the way this tanka raised so many questions for me. Who is this stirring the evening tea? Who is the person that the narrator wants to know less well? And the

biggest question of all . . . why? What did this person do or say? There is a wonderful metaphor at work here where the poet uses the sweetening of tea to echo the sweetening of a memory that is tinged with sourness. But despite each spoonful of sugar, there is an essence of bitterness that creeps through. A very gentle tanka, but with hidden depths and a subtle strength.

I look forward to submissions from tanka poets for the next issue of *cattails* later this year.

David Terelinck

## Section 4 HAIBUN





## **"Just Married"**

*Anna Cates, USA*

After attending a community ice cream social, I drop by Dollar Tree to buy green tea. On the way home, an Amish-style buggy slows me down. Now, I know Ohio has overtaken Pennsylvania in numbers of Amish, but I hadn't noticed any settling near my hometown of Wilmington. I draw closer to the carriage. Peacock feathers cover it, and it sports a "Just Married" sign. A passing glimpse of bride and groom: both men in clean white shirts. "Gee," I say to myself in feigned ignorance, "Maybe they're Quakers."

June dusk  
a horse whip lashing  
full honey moon

## Smoke and Ash

*Glenn G. Coats, U.S.A.*

There is little to go by. No sheet music to study, no recordings of her voice. Only a piece of paper that was torn from a notebook. Light green, faded like a husk of corn. Most of the words are written in ink – a few added in pencil. Arrows point to an additional verse. A sketch of her right hand has a number on each fingertip. The numbers correlate to a right hand picking-pattern. The words “to light your way” and “no hurt” repeat throughout the stanzas. “Arpeggio” is scribbled at the bottom.

Forty years have passed since I heard Lisa sing the song. She is gone now. I cradle my guitar and try to remember the melody; it is like trying to hear again the flutter of wet wings or the sound of a wave as it breaks. I can’t. No matter how long I stare at the page, I can’t bring her back.

dusk –  
scent of tomato vines  
on skin

## Wichitas Funeral

*Seth Tyler Copeland, U.S.A.*

Five cars crouch under the shade at Boulder. June is already fat with heat. Hot bodies like sweating souls hike the root-runged steps to the Narrows, that hungry valley tucked beyond the panting dogwoods and toasted grooves of granite. A discus of moss shakes loose, a porcupine made nervous by the scrape and pat of shoed feet. Air in the blue-gray shadow drops to a cool musk, balms the beaded mourners with its meadow garlic breath.

sun fades the sky  
two canyon wrens  
crossing wingspans

Slicked hands reach into a brown bag wrinkly as old leather, lift out a white sleeve. On a boulder overlooking the creek, still and brackish for a million years, chalky grit flumes out in the still air. Childhood dreams, teenage faux pas, weathered young stumbles reduce to fine gray stars binding with oxygen and blood. A cross-legged pallbearer in the back cups his hands, breathes out harmonica notes sleek and smooth as slits of fern brushing his sore, grieving feet.

prairie larkspur soughs  
a corn snake  
silvering the sand

## **Beethoven's Ninth**

*Angelee Deodhar, India*

Rain- swollen clouds scud across the full moon. In the study, I listen to Beethoven and remember the night you got married: the heady scent of marigold, rose and tuberose, the dancing, the chanting of Vedic hymns, the walk around the fire, and the sprinkling of rice. Tonight, on your ninth wedding anniversary, while you are out for dinner, I raise a toast to you both.

champagne –  
rising to the "Ode to Joy"  
a golden moon

## Lessons Unlearned

*Ignatius Fay, Canada*

Take that out of your mouth! How many times must I tell you not to put anything but food in your mouth? You don't know where that's been or what kind of germs are on it.

Remember your mother saying that to you? You may even have heard yourself saying it to your own kids. Me, too. That lesson is among my earliest memories.

Strange how things work out. My paleontological research is based on fieldwork to collect and examine fossils. That first visual examination in the field is extremely important.

Guess the simplest and quickest way to gather the maximum information from a sample? Yep. Lick it! Obscure details suddenly snap into focus. It's incredible. Mom still thinks it's disgusting.

low spring tide  
from a much older ocean  
fossil clams

**57 (EC)**

*Susan Beth Furst, U.S.A.*

East Street  
early morning deep freeze  
a donut shop  
the only light  
half a cigarette  
between bare fingers  
warm bear claws  
in a paper bag  
a thin line of red  
and smoke  
from the Heinz stack  
above  
the slow moving river  
the sound of  
footsteps  
on the bridge . . .

skyscrapers  
in the rising sun  
the bag lady's cart

## The Haikuist (EC)

*Tim Gardiner, United Kingdom*

We meet at the door along the alley, pleasantries exchanged on the steps. Inside, we are led into a small room lit by a light dangling above the table. There are curtains behind us; what they conceal is a mystery. A train passes by, rattling the books and records on the shelves. He proudly shows us the line of haiku books he's translated: a lifetime's work. Our conversation moves on to the mechanics of haiku composition; I'm surprised to learn that the syllable count is rigorously enforced among his disciples, a book of season words used for the kigo.

discussing haiku . . .  
I remember when all mine  
were five seven five

The debate crosses to other matters such as the tango dancing days of his youth and the state of public conveniences in China backed up with photographic evidence. I sense a sadness when he speaks of family but I don't enquire further. To round off a convivial morning, the haikuist displays a considerable talent for playing the harmonica.

deep breath . . .  
just for a few seconds  
I hear a young man

## Everything

*For Dennis Bumstead, 1945-2014*

*Bill Gottlieb, U.S.A.*

The dead body has a slight, peaceful, happy smile, like a child contentedly eating a cookie, or an old man dining on endless helpings of pure light. My friend was brave, trusting the Lord – not to cure his cancer, but to accompany him everywhere, *ever-present, never absent*. He accepted the shape of his cause-carved destiny with wit and commitment, wanting to live, willing to die. And now the cramped man has stepped out of his egg and flown, the shabby shell covered with an orange shawl on which the Lord's many names intone themselves, like a cluster of flowering lovers letting him know he's alright, he's awake, the long night of weary days over, gravity vanished, bliss bubbling up from the deepest spring, bliss descending from above like the rain outside – rain as strange in this dry season as the sun rising at midnight.

I sit in the simplified room and read aloud the "Summary Instructions." *Hold to the center*, says the Lord. *Hold to the upward attraction. Let go of everything*. I read those same words to my wife right after she died of cancer, kneeling by her body, stoppering my tears, purposed to her release, ease, glorious trajectory. *Be drawn straight like an arrow into the brilliant white light . . .*

*Let go of everything* – and yet I hold her here in my heart like a candle I don't want to go out, cradling wavering memory. Maybe someday I'll wing like a new bird into a world welcoming as a song – *There is a sound that can be heard high above* – and she'll be there, waiting for me, gowned in ardor. "What took you so long?" she'll say with a sweet, teasing smile, her lips soft as clouds, her eyes like my own constellation, her brow unlined as the sky. "Everything," I'll reply, as I'm transported toward her. "Darling, it was everything."

waiting for her  
year after year  
evergreens



## Baking Day

*Hazel Hall, Australia*

kids' scrabble  
I grab another  
G&T

Just a few to get behind the washing, cooking, screaming . . .

cleaning day  
the web in the corner  
still intact

. . . and Jack fighting to save what's been owned by family for years. Now it's slipping through our fingers like dust. He's been that tense, snapping at us. Can't blame him. The neighbours made placards and we tried to protest. Then we went to see our local member. That man's got his arse on the velvet. What does he care? All the rest have sold but Jack won't give in. And the ground, crisp as a piecrust.

land of mine  
yesterday's pastures  
where cattle grazed

Now the house is quiet of the lot of them, I've baked cupcakes. Ate every one. Won't bother with another batch . . .

still warm  
it seems natural  
the gas oven

## **Richmond Park**

*Ruth Holzer, U.S.A.*

Only a few miles out of London, this is another world, a great peaceful expanse of meadow and forest. As though by enchantment, I seem to be alone there when I hear for the first time the cuckoo's clear call. A royal stag emerges silently from a thicket, head high, his flanks dappled with sunlight.

cool grass  
on bare feet  
swan droppings

## Missing

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

This December morning, a smudge on the northern horizon oozes until the sky is black. More water is dumped than has been seen in months. Gutters and creeks become torrents, stampeding through streets, houses and paddocks.

Sirens wail. A helicopter's thud, thud passes overhead.

through the mist  
soft glow of lights —  
this waking dream

a child found  
among flood debris  
summer storm

## Coming Home

*David J. Kelly, Ireland*

On a ferry, crossing back from east to west. A sullen sky sheds its tears on the shimmering surface of the sea. The wind and the waves pull me slowly from left to right to left. Those gentle oscillations seem to reflect my most recent trip – responding to a tug I could not resist. While my body has circumnavigated the globe, spending a full calendar year in four different countries, it has lost its homing instinct. Home no longer needs to be familiar in its physical appearance; furniture, wallpaper, books, gizmos and gadgets no longer make the difference they once did. Mentally, psychologically, home is a feeling, calmness, in head and heart and spirit. How curious, having travelled so far, to realise that the home I wish to return to is not a place after all.

losing myself  
with each step  
finding peace

## **Silk Road**

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

When I was about nine a boy gave me some silkworms in a shoebox with holes in the lid so that they could breathe. And every day on my way home from school I'd stop at his place to get fresh mulberry leaves for them to eat. I wondered how much silk they'd spin for me. Would I get rich?

Then one day the boy moved away. He sent me a postcard but I wasn't allowed to write back to him. My silkworms shrivelled and died.

growing up . . .  
adrift in the river's bend  
a gum blossom

## **A Part of me**

*Padmini Krishnan, Singapore*

I watch my green and white office bus from the park. A year ago I used to travel in that bus, but now, I am a new mother. I recall the office lunch and group discussions, strolling leisurely to the food court for a cup of tea, spending hours in the library and drafting short stories on my blog. If only I could get a couple of hours to myself now! All of a sudden, my daughter smiles and I find myself returning the smile effortlessly.

sunny morning  
on every window of the bus  
I see my face

## **Hard Labor**

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

Sunlight slants through the window in bars of gold, collecting in a pool around my feet. Shrouded in her own darkness, my muse moans and screams. At her side, I keep yelling, "Push baby, push . . ." The final few words have clung to the walls of her womb for hours.

last remnants  
of afternoon light . . .  
half-finished poem

## **A Fjord in Italy: Lake Como**

*Charlotte Mandel, U.S.A.*

Mountains like a series of open fans form a backdrop to the long span of gray-blue undulating water. A snow-covered peak picks up the sun, brilliant fire on white. Fog remnants travel lazily, like clouds disconnected from earth or lake surface.

All are shades of blue — mountains, mist, water — deepest blue seen through a cutwork of openings left by evaporating clouds.

Rose afterglow tints the clouds, darkening their reflections on the lake. The peaks sparkle, lustrous.

dawn glow granite transforms to opal



## Living each day

*Giselle Maya, France*

The quinces are plentiful this year  
*fées de neige* blossom again  
a poet whose work I like is coming to visit  
the wind is gentle; the cat naps on my lap  
my daughter after her long travels seen again  
learning to breathe after the heat of summer  
yellow and purple asters grow in the meadow  
the sky painted blue chicory blossoms

white clematis in bud  
Wind-bells ripple in the breeze  
with leaves of poplar

## **Around the Neighbourhood**

*Mike Montreuil, Canada*

Monday morning blues  
different week  
same dirty laundry

Two crows, perching across from each other on light standards, begin to caw. I can only imagine what they are saying . . .

"Ya, Bill decided to go south for the winter; said he needed a new experience. And something along the lines that humans will change the world and leave it to the vultures and ravens."

"He said that?" asks Buddo.

"Yup. Just last week, before I led everyone to the uncovered corn field beside the new subdivision that the humans built on the old swamp."

"But Buddy, do you think any of the humans saw us congregating on the field?"

Buddy thinks for a second and replies, "I'm sure one of their so-called biologists spotted us. We were close to 150. Humans can only take so much of those black clouds of starlings."

"True," agrees Buddo. "By the way, is there any news about Sheila?"

"Ya, but everyone has a different take on what happened on her last day. In the end, it wasn't pretty. She was caught mid-flight by a hawk released by one of those humans. But, she had West Nile disease, and so I imagine she gave it to the bird."

"Serves it right!" caws Buddo.

"I suppose . . . Time to go, though. The garbage trucks are on time,  
today!"

time capsule  
a shaman leaves  
a tale feather

## **Autumn Ballad**

*Slobodan Pupovac , Croatia*

Thick autumn fog trails through a grove of trees on a small hill dragging behind an uncomfortable cold. On a twig of the old oak a yellow leaf trembles in fear of its uncertain fate.

This spring when the flowers peeped from their buds, the whole world seemed to smile. Oh, how they rejoiced in the morning sunshine and light breeze that brought this awakening to the birds' proclamations of love. They entranced the butterflies with fragile wings and the old oak burst into life.

Early one morning the autumn wind came and took the leaves into its arms in a tango of oblivion, leaving the last few to be trodden by an old mushroom picker.

black clouds —  
first snowflakes settle  
on yellow leaves

## **JESENJA BALADA**

Gusta jesenja magla provlači se kroz šumarak na malenom brežuljku vukući za sobom neugodnu hladnoću. Na grančici starog hrasta žuti list drhti u strahu od njegove neizvjesne sudbine.

Proljetos kada je cvijeće provirilo iz svojih pupoljaka, cijeli svijet kao da mu se nasmiješio – i on njemu. Oh, kako se je radovao jutarnjem suncu i laganom povjetarcu koji je donosio buđenje uz ljubavni pjev ptica. Oduševljavao se leptirima s krhkim krilima i starim hrastom buknuvši u život.

Ranim jutrom došao je jesenji vjetar, te uzeo list u svoje naručje i zaplesao s njim tango zaborava. Na posljednji počinak odnesao ga je don poderane cipele starog gljivara.

crni oblaci —  
prve pahulje sjele  
na žuto lišće

## **The Remains**

*Brijesh Raj, India*

From reminders to excuses, we have traversed and left far behind the brooding waters of collective expectation. Like withered rose petals from a pilgrimage long done. I am left with the ghost of your ring on my finger and thieving memories in the charnel house of my heart. You walk away leaving even the guilt to me.

how radiant  
the glow of innocence . . .  
sepia photograph

## **Red Card**

*Dave Read, Canada*

Year after year, I was cut from division 1 soccer. The coach didn't like me even though I outplayed the other kids. Members of the team, including his own son, said he screwed up. Eventually, my frustration led me to quit.

I heard he passed away a few years ago. And I regret it. Not his short life. But that I never got to say "I hate you."

Sunday school  
the theory of  
forgiveness

**Toronto, October 21, 2016**

*Albert Schepers, Canada*

Walking Toronto's streets to the Eaton Center, a cathedral of commerce  
that shadows Trinity Church spires, I pass a makeshift homeless shelter of  
carts and tarps and bags that hugs a corner of Trinity's walls.

in the shadow  
of stone buttresses  
an empty bowl

## **Tinsel Town**

*Adelaide B. Shaw, U.S.A.*

She is a devout Catholic, transplanted from a small town from somewhere in the mid-west to Los Angeles. Here is where she'll find excitement, glamour, stimulation. And... love.

When I meet her, she is thirty-two years old. I am only eighteen, the youngest member of the church club. She isn't the only woman member over thirty, just the plainest, the quietest. She is the one who is most likely to remain forever unmarried. Forever a spinster. Forever an old maid.

After several months, I drop out of the club, but return a year later.

"We're chipping in for a bassinet for Irene's baby."

"Sure, I'll give," I say. "I didn't know she was married."

"She isn't."

tinsel town—  
another glorious day  
before the rain



## Auction (EC)

*Jeff Streeby, U.S.A.*

heat and horses  
that burned smell of snack bar coffee  
West Texas sale barn

Well, you know, I can spot those guys almost every time. The way I learned, twenty years ago when I was living down on the Border, see, there was this one guy who came to the horse sale every couple of months. A Mexican ranchero, Hernan. Had him a little hacienda right across the Rio Grande just outside Ciudad Juarez. Anyhow, every month or so he'd hire him a couple of cowboys, and they'd sneak across the river on a moon light night and gather up feral horses off the Fort Bliss army reservation. Then, whatever bunch of wild cast-off crowbait he could keep together, they'd run them back across to Mexico and he'd feed them up for a while — put a little finish of fat on them — out at his place. And no, you probably shouldn't ask how I'd know that.

song dogs calling  
the only night music  
in the breaks

A couple of days before the sale, his vaqueros would forefoot them all, throw them down, and saddle them with old worn-out saddles. Then they'd turn them back into the feedlot. The afternoon of the sale, his hired hands would swim the bunch back across the river and drive them to a little acreage he rented just down the road from the auction barn, all of them still wearing those old raggedy kacks. Once they got there, the boys they'd unsaddle them and haul them ratty old hulls over to the sale barn and log them into the tack sale for prices nobody in their right mind would ever pay. If somebody did buy one, Hernan he made out like a bandit. If the reserves weren't met, he took his saddles home and used them again the next time.

Mesquite bog  
year in and year out  
pale green catkins

Hernan was a regular trader there and he knew all the barn hands, the auctioneers, and the Brand Inspectors on a first-name basis, and so when he filed his “self inspection” paperwork, he always fixed it up with his friends so his horses would come into the sale ring late, about 11:00 pm usually, after the good horses had set the top and the kill buyers had set the floor for the prices. Hernan, he’d run them fuzztails through the ring in small lots, two, three at a time. Of course, they all had saddle marks, so the bidders at the end of the night, mostly green hobby horse men looking for good deals, all figured the horses were broke to ride. So Hernan had him a racket. For only his sweat equity, a little corn, and the poor cowboy wages he paid, he cleared two or three hundred dollars apiece on fifteen, twenty, sometimes thirty head of useless, rank chaparral nags which he had got himself for practically nothing. I am a quick study, so since those days, I have sometimes managed to make a pretty penny or two myself like that, “buying sheep and selling deer”.

Half moon —  
between seeing and knowing  
the frontier of belief

## Editor's Choices (EC) Haibun

*WB Yeats (1865 –1939) famously said, “Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric; out of the quarrel with ourselves we make poetry.” In the current climate of wounding rhetoric and uncertainty, it seems more important than ever to appreciate the universal and integrating power of poetry. Each of the poets here shows how haibun with its combination of narrative and poem is ideally suited to articulate a sensibility that transcends boundaries. The poets write from their own personal location and experience and yet touch the reader deeply and open up what Yves Bonnefoy, the French poet (1923-2016) calls the “hinterland” or “Arrière-Pays”, a place of “plenitude”, which both embraces and releases the human spirit.*

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***Auction** by Jeff Streeby starts **in medias res** and plunges the reader straight into the descriptions of the Mexican ranchero, Hernan and his hacienda "right across the Rio Grande just outside Ciudad Juarez." The poet uses local patois effectively to give a palpable sense of Hernan and his "racket" of catching "feral horses" and breaking them and "fixing" their sale. The haibun is replete with wonderful details, which transport the reader to the place and the "auction". A reader who has never visited this part of the world still feels as if one were present as the event unfolds. To quote an example:*

"... So Hernan had him a racket. For only his sweat equity, a little corn, and the poor cowboy wages he paid, he cleared two or three hundred dollars apiece on fifteen, twenty, sometimes thirty head of useless, rank chaparral nags which he had got himself for practically nothing. . . ."

*The poet's even tone with an undercurrent of humour enhances the telling of the story in the haibun. The interspersed haiku accentuate the narrative and the evocation of details like "song dog" and "Mesquite bog catkins" strengthen the link and shift between the two. I found this engrossing and rewarding with each reading.*

*Susan Beth Furst, U.S.A.*

East Street  
 early morning deep freeze  
 a donut shop  
 the only light  
 half a cigarette  
 between bare fingers  
 warm bear claws  
 in a paper bag  
 a thin line of red  
 and smoke  
 from the Heinz stack  
 above  
 the slow moving river  
 the sound of  
 footsteps  
 on the bridge . . .

skyscrapers  
 in the rising sun  
 the bag lady's cart

*This haibun **by Susan Beth Furst**, who is new to the form, also has a strong, engaging narrative. The poet uses certain choice details like “East Street”, “warm bear claws” and “the Heinz stack” to convey an intimate sense of location, while at the same time, opening up the evocation to readers who are not familiar with the place. In just a few words, she conjures vividly the smells, visuals and the sounds of the city.*

*The capping haiku delivers a punch line in the unexpected image of the “bag lady’s cart”. The main narrative is not laid out in the conventional manner of a prose passage but there is fluidity in the way it unfolds and I commend how the haiku leads the reader back into the narrative to appreciate the many facets of the city.*

## **The Haikuist**

*Tim Gardiner, United Kingdom*

We meet at the door along the alley, pleasantries exchanged on the steps. Inside, we are led into a small room lit by a light dangling above the table. There are curtains behind us; what they conceal is a mystery. A train passes by, rattling the books and records on the shelves. He proudly shows us the line of haiku books he's translated: a lifetime's work. Our conversation moves on to the mechanics of haiku composition; I'm surprised to learn that the syllable count is rigorously enforced among his disciples, a book of season words used for the kigo.

discussing haiku...  
I remember when all mine  
were five seven five

The debate crosses to other matters such as the tango dancing days of his youth and the state of public conveniences in China backed up with photographic evidence. I sense a sadness when he speaks of family but I don't enquire further. To round off a convivial morning, the haikuist displays a considerable talent for playing the harmonica.

deep breath...  
just for a few seconds  
I hear a young man

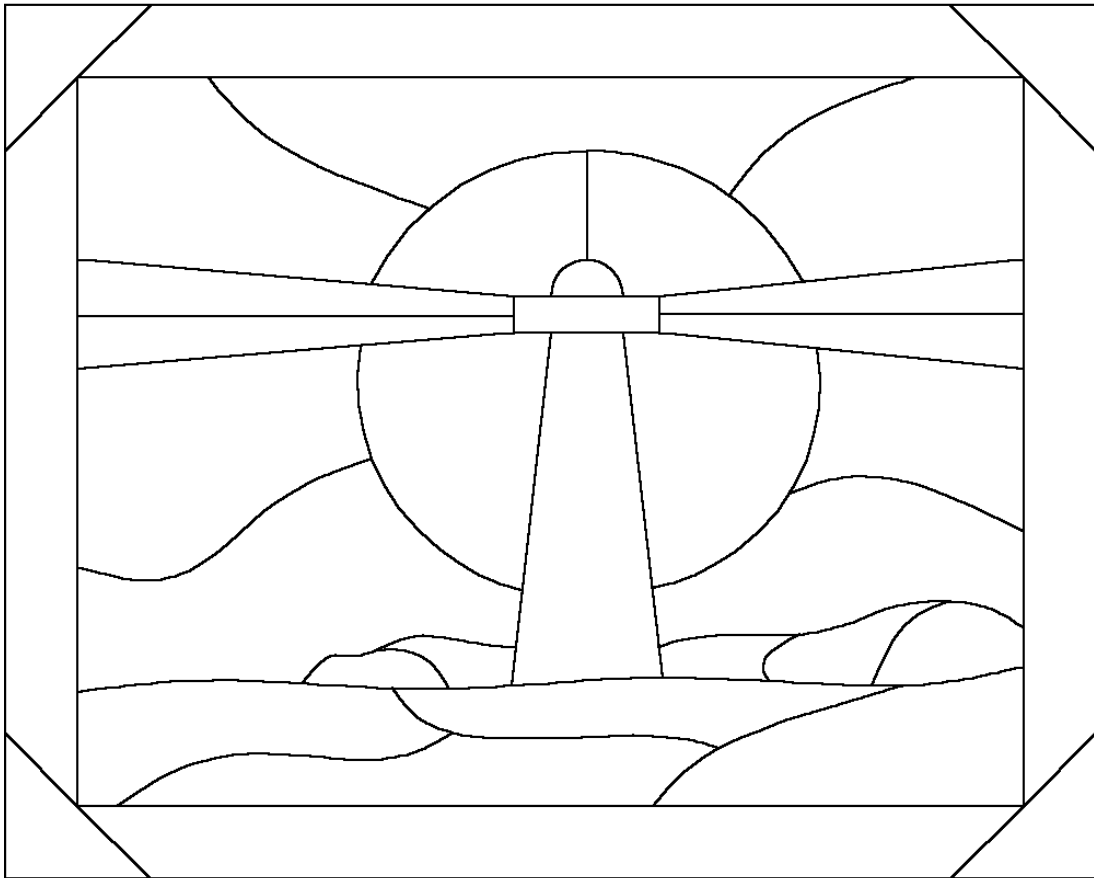
*In a few keystrokes Tim Gardiner describes an encounter with "The Haikuist". We are not told specifically who the "Haikuist" is but with deftness and lightness of touch, the poet sketches a full and sympathetic portrait. I like the way the haibun opens with the present setting of the home and life of the "Haikuist" and follows through with a reflective passage harking back to the earlier days and experiences of the poet.*

*The haibun covers a whole gamut of emotions ranging from the delight and awe of the narrator at meeting a well-known practitioner of his own art to a more poignant reckoning in this line: "I sense a sadness when he speaks of family but I don't enquire further."*

*I wondered if the two haiku could have made more of a shift from the preceding passages. However, the poet uses an understated tone with skill and we are left with an appealing and memorable account.*

**Sonam Chhoki**

## Section 5 Youth Corner



Welcome to the April 2017 edition of *cattails* "Youth Corner."

We have something a little topsy-turvy for you this time! More than just haiku, this issue also includes tanka, haibun and a critical appreciation of a one-line ku written by a contemporary haiku poet — all written by children up to the age of 18 years. These kids have grasped art forms new to them, which I hope will make adults sit up and take note! In *Illusions*, Richard Bach says, *The original sin is to limit the Is. Don't.* — Children are capable of so much if we open the windows and doors for them.

Kala Ramesh

In the 60-hour haiku module I conduct for undergrads at the Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts Pune, I assign an assessment paper called 'Critical Appreciation.' I give my class around 10 to 12 haiku and ask them to choose one that relates to them and write about it, using all they've been exposed to in the way of haiku aesthetics and tools.

**The Tejas Award** (*Tejas* in Sanskrit means "fire" and/or "brilliance") goes to **Azade Aria**, for her delineation of this one-line concrete ku.

**jampackedelevatoreverybuttonpushed**

John Stevenson, USA

I chose this haiku because it is a strange one; one that is very different from the standard form of a haiku. It has to do with human nature rather than the nature around us and therefore is a senryu rather than a traditional haiku. For obvious reasons it can be seen that this is a one-line ku and therefore doesn't follow a short long short format.

The words have been written without any spaces. This is actually a positive point for this particular ku since it emphasises the meaning behind it. From what can be inferred it shows how full the elevator is that the buttons for the floors are either all pushed because of the people pressed up against it or because there is at least one person for every floor. So this ku is therefore interpretable in two ways.



Another positive point of this ku is that it is a completely concrete poem. This ku produces a very vivid image that can not only be imagined or pictured but can actually be drawn on paper. This makes the horizontal axis strong.

On the other hand the vertical axis has many interpretations. My interpretation is the following; the “jam packed elevator” is not restricted to just an elevator, it can be extended to the world. In my opinion it explains the concept of population explosion; how the population has increased so vastly and so rapidly that the world’s resources are depleting faster and faster. The concept of “every button pushed” refers to the stress of the burden of 7 billion people that the Earth has to withstand. Every resource is being pushed to its limit and one day they will run out and the people on this Earth won’t be able to survive.

There is very little “ma” and “karumi” in this ku but I think that lends to the emphasising of the message behind this ku. Also, this ku does not have a distinct cut or “kire” or even any “kireji” or punctuation; however, this being far from a traditional ku lends to the effect produced by it. It consists of eleven syllables alone.

The image appeals to me and I feel would appeal to several of the readers because it can be experienced in regular day-to-day life. The way in which the poet has put down the ku has brought out the extraordinary from the ordinary. The poet could have simply stated that he was stuck in an elevator full of people, but the format and the words used bring a smile to my face because I immediately see myself surrounded by people in our college elevator; a whole mix of people from different walks of life.

Hence, I like this ku and chose it because of its unique features. While it does not use the regular tools and aesthetics that traditional ku do, it appeals to the modern man and hence is relevant and relatable with the people today.

*Azade Aria, (age 18)*

*India*

In Oct 2016, I was asked to teach two Regional Creative Writer's Workshops for Katha.org in collaboration with the Central Board of Secondary Education [CBSE] for their school children. Since it was a two-day workshop, I decided to expose them to haibun in addition to haiku and senryu. For lack of space, I've selected just one of the many haibun the kids wrote.

As adults, we know that it is tricky in haibun to accomplish the *link and shift* between prose and poetry. So how does one teach such subtle nuances in such a short time to school kids only one day into haiku? I'm very happy with the way children open up to learning new art forms and boldly venture into unknown lands!

### **Crooked Window**

The brilliant smell of the petrichor entered my nostrils as I walked through the deserted street. The evening advanced into the night as clouds drifted away to expose the gorgeous white of the moon. The zephyr gently caressed my face carrying the tears away with it.

A smile slowly spread over my visage and I had this inchoate idea of dancing in the middle of the street. In that moment, however brief, I was me.

drifting clouds -  
sunrays enter through  
a crooked window

*Pratishtha Kharbanda (age 17)*  
*India*

**Tanka**, a part of the 60-hour module was taught last to the undergrads since it is different from haiku, senryu, haibun and even renku. I was pleasantly surprised when students did well.

she loved him  
but he married another girl –  
her grave  
held the words,  
*I'm still waiting . . .*

*Nayaneeka Choudhury (age 18)*  
*India*

I retune  
the strings of my guitar . . .  
chafed fingers  
    tell the story  
of a thousand melodies

*Hana Suhail Masood (age 18)*  
*India*

## **HAIKU :**

There will be no editor's choice because each of these haiku, chosen from among more than forty, is special and written in such a beautiful way.

new life  
a baby plant  
on a dead tree

*Jack Foo, (age 10), Singapore*

снежен човек —  
врабче кацва  
на носа му

snowman —  
a sparrow alights  
on its nose

*Petar Ang., (age 13)*  
*Bulgaria*

малка танцьорка  
пада от небето —  
снежинка

a little dancing girl  
falls from the sky —  
a snowflake

*Ahmed Ahm., (age 13)*  
*Bulgaria*

мама прави  
джинджифилови човечета . . .  
незабравима Коледа

my mum makes  
gingerbread men . . .  
unforgettable Christmas

*Elis Er., (age 13)*  
*Bulgaria*

early morning . . .  
a kite in between clouds  
without any strings

*Jeet Ratadia (age 13)*  
*India*

hitting the ball  
over the fence  
the car alarm wails

*Amit Kamma (age 12)*  
*USA*

loud music —  
leaves rustle under  
my footsteps

*Jeet Ratadia (age 13)*  
*India*

dark night —  
a gush of wind takes  
fallen leaves with it

*Ekjot Kau, (age 12)*  
*India*

dead leaves  
they lowered the coffin  
to the ground

*Hiranshi Mistry (age 17)*  
*Muscat*

seashells  
moonlight reflecting  
in the salty waters

*Elise Hamrick (age 13)*  
*USA*

## *Index of Poets*

- Adeleke, Barnabas I., 14, 40  
Adow, Kwaku Feni, 40  
Agyei-Baah, Adjei, 14, 40  
Ahm., Ahmed, 108  
Allo, Elisa, 14  
Ang., Petar, 108  
Angyal, Jenny Ward, 56  
Antebi, Debbi, 40, 41  
Aria, Azade, 105  
Atanasova, Petya, 7  
Austin, Gavin, 14, 41, 56  
Baranski, Johnny, 15, 35  
Barksdale, Sheila K., 15  
Bates, Gabriel, 15, 41  
Bogdanova, Antoaneta, 6  
Boric, Dubravka, 15  
Bouter, Adrian, 16  
Broach, Rohan Kevin, 41  
Buckingham, Helen, 16  
Cates, Anna, 16, 56, 73  
Chambers, Paul, 16  
Chessing, James, 17, 57  
Chocilowska, Marta, 17  
Choudhury, Nayaneeka, 107  
Clement, Rosa, 17  
Coats, Glenn G., 74  
Cooper, Bill, 17  
Cooper, Lamart, 18, 42  
Copeland, Seth Tyler, 75  
Daharsh, Patricia, 42  
Deodhar, Angelee, 18, 76  
Dewar, Edward, 18  
Digregorio, Charlotte, 42  
Dobb, Jan, 18, 43  
Domburg-Sancristoforo, Anna Maria, 19  
Drouilhet, Rebecca, 19, 35  
Eaton, Garry, 19  
Er., Elis, 108  
Fay, Ignatius, 77  
Ferrara, Jeffrey, 19  
Fleming, Marilyn, 57, 69  
Fogel, Al, 57  
Fontana, Lucia, 20  
Foo, Jack, 107  
Furst, Susan Beth, 78, 101  
Ganapathy, Shivapriya, 43  
Gardiner, Tim, 20, 34, 79, 102  
George, Beverley, 58  
Geyer, Pat, 20  
Gieske, Bernard, 43, 58  
Gorman, LeRoy, 45  
Gottlieb, Bill, 80  
Griffo, Eufemia, 20  
Gueorguieva, María, 11  
Gupta, Rohini, 45  
Hall, Hazel, 45, 58, 60, 81  
Hamrick, Elise, 110  
Hanson, Simon, 21, 46  
Harizanova, Zornitza, 11  
Harper, C.R., 21  
Harvey, Michele L., 60  
Hawkhead, John, 21  
He, David, 21  
Holzer, Ruth, 22, 46, 54, 61, 82  
Hristova, Ljudmila, 9, 10  
Humbert, Marilyn, 22, 61, 83  
Ilieva, Iliana, 6  
Jacks, Terrie, 46, 61  
Judkins, Carol, 62  
Kamma, Amit, 109  
Kapoor, Vishnu P., 22  
Kau, Ekjot, 109  
Kelly, David J., 22, 62, 84  
Keyes, Keitha, 63, 85

Kharbanda, Pratishtha, 106  
 Kituai, Kathy, 63  
 Klacsanzky, Nicholas, 23  
 Kostov, Alex, 8  
 Kray, Lavana, 23  
 Krishnan, Padmini, 86  
 Lange, Jill, 23  
 Lee, Phyllis, 46  
 Lester, Michael H., 47  
 Limbach, Eva, 23, 36  
 Liu, Chen-ou, 24, 47, 53, 64, 67  
 Lloyd, Cyndi, 24  
 Lohman, Eric, 24  
 Lorensen, Joyce Joslin, 24  
 Magenta, Martha, 24  
 Magyar, Ann, 25  
 Mallernee, Susan, 25  
 Mandel, Charlotte, 88  
 Mariano, Thelma, 64  
 Masood, Hana Suhail, 107  
 Maya, Giselle, 64, 89  
 McGregor, Marietta, 25  
 McLellan, Andy, 25  
 Mindova, Radka, 6  
 Mistry, Hiranshi, 110  
 Moeller-Gaa, Ben, 25  
 Montreuil, Mike, 90  
 Norman, Claire Rosilda, 65  
 Oboh, Precious, 65  
 Olson, Ken, 27  
 Padhy, Pravat Kumar, 65  
 Pandjaridis, Hristina, 8  
 Parashar, Vandana, 47  
 Parusheva, Stanka, 7  
 Pathak, Aparna, 66, 70  
 Perera, Malintha, 66  
 Piet, Dottie, 27, 48, 53  
 Pillai, Madhuri, 27, 48  
 Pray, Sandi, 27  
 Pupovac, Slobodan, 92  
 Rabang, Anthony Q., 28

Radovančević, Ljubomir, 28  
 Raj, Brijesh, 49, 93  
 Ratadia, Jeet, 109  
 Read, Dave, 94  
 Rickert, Bryan, 28  
 Rielly, Edward J., 28  
 Rothstein, Aron, 29  
 Rowe, Cynthia, 29, 66  
 Rožić, Stjepan, 29  
 Rožić, Djurdja Vukelic, 15, 28, 29, 37  
 Rudychev, Natalia L., 67  
 Sacramona, Tom, 30, 36, 49  
 Sambangi, Srinivasa Rao, 49  
 Savich, Agnes Eva, 30  
 Savova, Vessislava, 8  
 Schepers, Albert, 95  
 Shaw, Adelaide B., 30, 50, 67, 80, 96  
 Shires, Nancy, 50  
 Slaughter, Kenneth, 67, 70  
 Sng, Christina, 30  
 Stania, Helga, 68  
 Stoyanova, Iliyana, 5, 7, 10  
 Strange, Debbie, 30, 37, 51, 68  
 Streeby, Jeff, 97, 99  
 Sutcliffe, Rachel, 31, 51  
 Tauchner, Dietmar, 31, 37  
 Taylor, Barbara A., 31, 50  
 Teki, Hansha, 31, 34  
 Terry, Angela, 32, 51  
 Tiholova, Detelina, 9  
 Truchlewska, Zuzanna, 32  
 Tsacheva, Tsenka, 6  
 Tsanev, Yavor, 10  
 Valente, Maria Laura, 32  
 Veleva, Milena, 9  
 Warther, Julie, 33, 52  
 Whitman, Neal, 33  
 Wiggerman, Scott, 33  
 Witmer, Robert, 33, 52  
 Yaninska, Gergana, 9, 10  
 Young, Quendryth, 33, 52



