

cattails



October 2017

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October 2017 Issue

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Introduction

Amidst the current political and natural tempest, one feels like Banquo on the heath asking the three witches:

“... If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not, ...”

(Macbeth Act 1, Scene 3)

Although lacking any powers of prophecy, I can, however, say that the “grain” of *cattails*, nurtured in hope, in aspiration to reach out and above all, to create and celebrate the best in human spirit, has once again borne bountiful fruit. With dedication and discernment our editors, David Terelinck, Geethanjali Rajan, Gautam Nadkarni and Mike Montreuil have read, mulled over and selected the poems for this issue. Kala Ramesh in the Youth Corner continues to push boundaries in her mentoring and showcasing of young poets.

Rohini Gupta (Mumbai) and Johannes Manjrekar (Vadodara) have generously contributed photos of Indian water birds to illustrate the journal. We also have two cartoons by Paresh Tiwari.

Once again, all this would have been impossible without the unstinting commitment and hard work of Mike Montreuil. Iliyana Stoyanova, has been indefatigable in her efforts to promote the journal on Facebook and other platforms. Alan Summers, Neal Whitman and Marianna Monaco have rallied around and provided vital guidance and support.

Finally, to all the poets, who submit, and read the journal: in the “seeds of time” your “grain” of poems will keep cattails growing.

Sonam Chhoki



YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES



I FEEL KINDA UNDER APPRECIATED

I KNOW, YOU SEE ME



AS THIS WISECRACKING, KNOW-IT-ALL

I ALWAYS GET
THE LAST
SAY

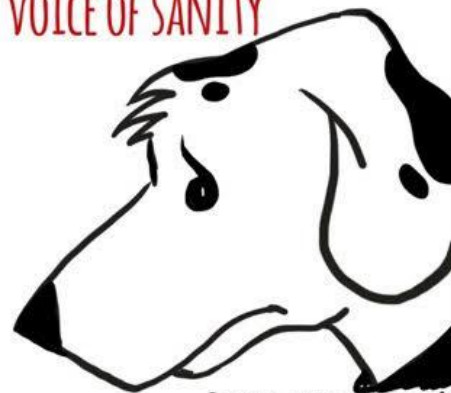


BUT MOSTLY I AM . . .

*Interested in
chasing my
own tail!*



I WAS GOING FOR
VOICE OF SANITY



BUT WHATEVER!

Section 1. Haiku



Heron - Vadodara, Gujarat, Western India

morning streetlight—
the shed wings of termites
carpet the ground

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

falling asleep
with the singing of cicadas
... another book

addormentarsi
con il canto delle cicale
... un altro libro

Elisa Allo, Italy/ Switzerland

fly ash
of my unread books
south wind

Yumino Aoiro, Japan

white noise . . .
a dragonfly hovers
over the lake

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

circling bushfire —
the slow death
of daylight

Gavin Austin, Australia

disappearing
everywhere I go
ghost moon

Gabriel Bates, USA

spring equinox —
half the traffic lights
are green

Brad Bennett, USA

late frost —
shadows of seagulls
far from the sea

Mark E. Brager, USA

one leg
attached to the marsh—
blue heron

Alan S. Bridges, USA

between
two thorns—
slug siesta

Helen Buckingham, UK

falling acorns—
a woodpecker strums
an old hickory

Anna Cates, USA

firefly—
a glow around the head
of Daruma

Kanchan Chatterjee, India

heat shimmer —
the unwavering gaze
of the blue macaw

Lysa Collins, Canada

wing beats —
whisking the eggs
con brio

Ellen Compton, USA

the legato swirl
of drum brushes —
this setting sun

Bill Cooper, USA

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

Angelee Deodhar, India

holding on
to his words—
open fan

Ana Drobot, Romania

dandelion clock
from one spent blossom
a hundred wishes

** after Chiyo-ni*

Rebecca Drouilhet, USA (EC)

offshore
the sea coexists
with the body bag

Garry Eaton, Canada

thick clouds —
a glint from the sun
on the *kashi* leaves

Diarmuid Fitzgerald, Ireland

cattail fluff . . .
a very muddy fairy
waves her wand

Lorin Ford, Australia (EC)

full nest . . .
the wait for parents
who never return

Fractled, USA

the patterning
of staccato gusts —
desert wind

Jay Friedenberg, USA

a few precious steps . . .
the muscle memory
of dancehall days

William Scott Galasso, USA

train station —
the jagged edges of mist
gone with dawn

Goran Gatalica, Croatia

mom's recipe
yellow now with age . . .
tarta de maize

Pat Geyer, USA

windy night
the front lawn growing
plastic bags

Bernard Gieske, USA

Milky Way . . .
drawing the lifelines
into my palm

Via lattea
tracciando le linee della vita
sul palmo della mia mano

Eufemia Griffio, Italy



Purple Heron - Bharatpur bird sanctuary, India

moonbeams . . .
the gills of each fish
in rhythm

Hazel Hall, Australia

day of the dead—
the west wind ripples
a scarecrow's sleeve

Jennifer Hambrick, USA

silver moon . . .
barely a ripple
around the hull

Simon Hanson, Australia

drifting snow
the silence between
an old man's steps

David He, China

sunrise
over the canal —
frozen gray light

Ruth Holzer, USA

swooping
into our car's path —
kamikaze galahs

Marilyn Humbert, Australia

losing you ~
a wash of deep blue
across the sky

Mary Kendall, USA (EC)

Sunday morning
the woodpecker
hard at work

Nicholas Klacsanzky, USA

broken sandglass -
I knot by crochet
the length of time

clepsidră spartă -
înnod lungimi de timp
cu croșetul

Lavana Kray, Romania

star-peppered sky -
some of them
extinct already

*osutim nebom
svjetlucaju zvijezde
neke već ugasle*

Nina Kovačić, Croatia

English translation by Đurđa Vukelić Rožić

twilight . . .
how it carries
the robin's song

Jill Lange, USA

late freeze
things at the bird bath
come to a standstill

Michael Henry Lee, USA

starlight ...
the warmth of her breath
on my neck

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

begonia blooms . . .
summer sunsets cupped
in a child's hands

Cyndi Lloyd, USA

date palms
heavy with fruit –
Ramadan

Bob Lucky, Saudi Arabia

churchyard lichen
the living and dead
in symbiosis

Martha Magenta, UK (EC)

sultry morning –
the suddenness
of a red-winged blackbird

Ann Magyar, USA

morning wind –
a sway in the climb
of sweet peas

Susan Mallernee, USA

a snail's trail
tracking the silver
clear full moon

Marietta Jane McGregor, Australia

somewhere
on the radio
summer afternoon

Andy McLellan, UK

hiving the last
of late summer light . . .
cicada husk

Mark Miller, Australia

fireflies . . .
the darkness
of trees

Ben Moeller-Gaa, USA

harvest moon . . .
the long walk home
from the food bank

Joanne Morcom, Canada

sheet lightning
three generations
on the stairs

Lee Nash, France

the song
of the loon . . .
summer rain

Nancy Nitrio, USA

late autumn . . .
a stillness
in the canyon

Aparna Pathak, India

old love movie -
the light of summer woods
in my mother's eyes

vecchio film d'amore -
riflesso di un bosco estivo
negli occhi di mia madre

Margherita Petriccione, Italy (EC)

remembering her . . .
the cyclamen
gets an extra feed

Madhuri Pillai, Australia

wet seaweed . . .
feeling the coldness
in a dying child's palm

Justice Joseph Prah, Ghana

mountain top . . .
the stars remain
the same

Dave Read, Canada

crematorium—
all those years clouding
in my eyes

Duncan Richardson, Australia

music lessons–
the syncopation
of geese in flight

Bryan Rickert, USA

sea fog . . .
the crunch of shells
underfoot

Elaine Riddell, New Zealand

spring thaw –
recycling
the obituary page

Edward J. Rielly, USA

tidewater . . .
my thoughts drift
with the moon

Aron Rothstein, USA

stone Buddha —
all the blows
that made him

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India

rain shower
the applause
of leaves

Agnes Eva Savich, USA

first light . . .
the neighborhood birds
audition their songs

Adelaide B. Shaw, USA

ancient sea —
the weight
of low voices

Helga Stania, Switzerland

polliwogs . . .
the ripple effect
of music

Debbie Strange, Canada

atlas —
all the life
I once had

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

crescent moon —
so many dreams
turned sideways

Angela Terry, USA

jasmine tobacco —
the moon decorating
paper lanterns

regina nopții —
luna decorează
lanterne de hârtie

Steliana Cristina Voicu, Romania

the nightingale . . .
how can you photograph
its song

Marilyn Ward, UK

the thoughts
he shares . . .
wild raspberries

Julie Warther, USA

snowflakes
in moonlight
grandmother's lullaby

Robert Witmer, Japan

tea on the terrace —
a miner bird forages
bloom to bloom

Quendryth Young, Australia

Editor's Choice (EC) – Haiku

My gratitude to all the poets who sent in their haiku to cattails. This time too, we had a large number of submissions that made the task of selection rather difficult. I enjoyed reading your beautiful poems and hope that you continue sending in your best work to us.

Thank you!
Geethanjali Rajan

cattail fluff . . .
a very muddy fairy
waves her wand

Lorin Ford, Australia

This haiku starts with cattail fluff and holds the image with the fine use of ellipsis. Cattails are associated with ponds, mud and marsh. Hence, the second line flows smoothly with “a very muddy” but takes a swift turn with the last word – ‘fairy’. And then comes the third line, the wand-waving. We are transported instantaneously to a scene of childlike enjoyment of the moment. The use of alliteration - ‘wave’/‘wand’ and fluff/fairy and the near rhyme of very and fairy gives the haiku a musical effect. On a visual level, we are drawn towards the juxtaposing of the fairy with the fluff and the muddy with the cattail itself.

This is a fine example of the spirit of lightness and spontaneity in haiku, combined with a skillful use of the words that make the poem. Lorin Ford’s endearing haiku brings on a smile with every wave of the fairy’s wand!



dandelion clock
from one spent blossom
a hundred wishes

* after Chiyo-ni

Rebecca Drouilhet, USA

Rebecca Drouilhet writes a tribute to Chiyo-ni's haiku from the 1700s, which has now become one of the more popular poems of the Edo jidai.

The haiku starts with the image of a dandelion clock, the sphere that is the seed head of a dandelion. This fluffy, downy ball is what arrives from the blossom that has lived its life. The spherical seed head also releases hundreds of feathery seeds that find their way to different places and start their own journey and eventually, blossom.

In the first two lines that the poet presents the dandelion clock from a spent blossom, the reader is taken on a deeper journey of the cycles and circles of life. What happens to the blossom in its journey to give life to many offspring? What are the trials that are faced in that journey? All we know is that in the end, the blossom is done and withered. Then comes the third line – a hundred wishes. The poem is taken to another plane by bringing in folklore and the dimension of granting wishes or carrying across our dreams to fruition. Do these wishes remain unfulfilled like the lives of many who toil to let their offspring thrive? Or are the endless wishes fulfilled, bringing smiles to the faces of children, like the dandelions themselves do?

The use of the second line as pivot adds to the wonder of the moment. A spent blossom gives us the magical-looking puffball (but a weed, nonetheless). The spent blossom also results in a hundred wishes, and perhaps, hope!



old love movie -
the light of summer woods
in my mother's eyes

vecchio film d'amore -
riflesso di un bosco estivo
negli occhi di mia madre

Margherita Petriccione, Italy

Margherita Petriccione's poem talks of an old romance movie that the poet and her mother are watching, perhaps together. And suddenly, her mother's eyes light up watching a scene. She compares the light to that of summer woods. A beautiful image. The haiku gently brings out the sentiment and nostalgia through mother's lit up eyes. What is Mother's life like now? It is left to the reader to imagine.



losing you ~
a wash of deep blue
across the sky

Mary Kendall, USA

Mary Kendall's haiku is an example of the concept - less is more. Her personal loss is juxtaposed with the colour of the sky. Without saying much, this haiku takes us across the valleys of loss and dealing with emotions through the association with one colour - blue. The last two lines brought to mind a water colour painting in progress. To me, a wash of deep blue is an image that associates with sadness and helplessness. There is no way other than to deal with it, in time. All of this is implied and not stated.

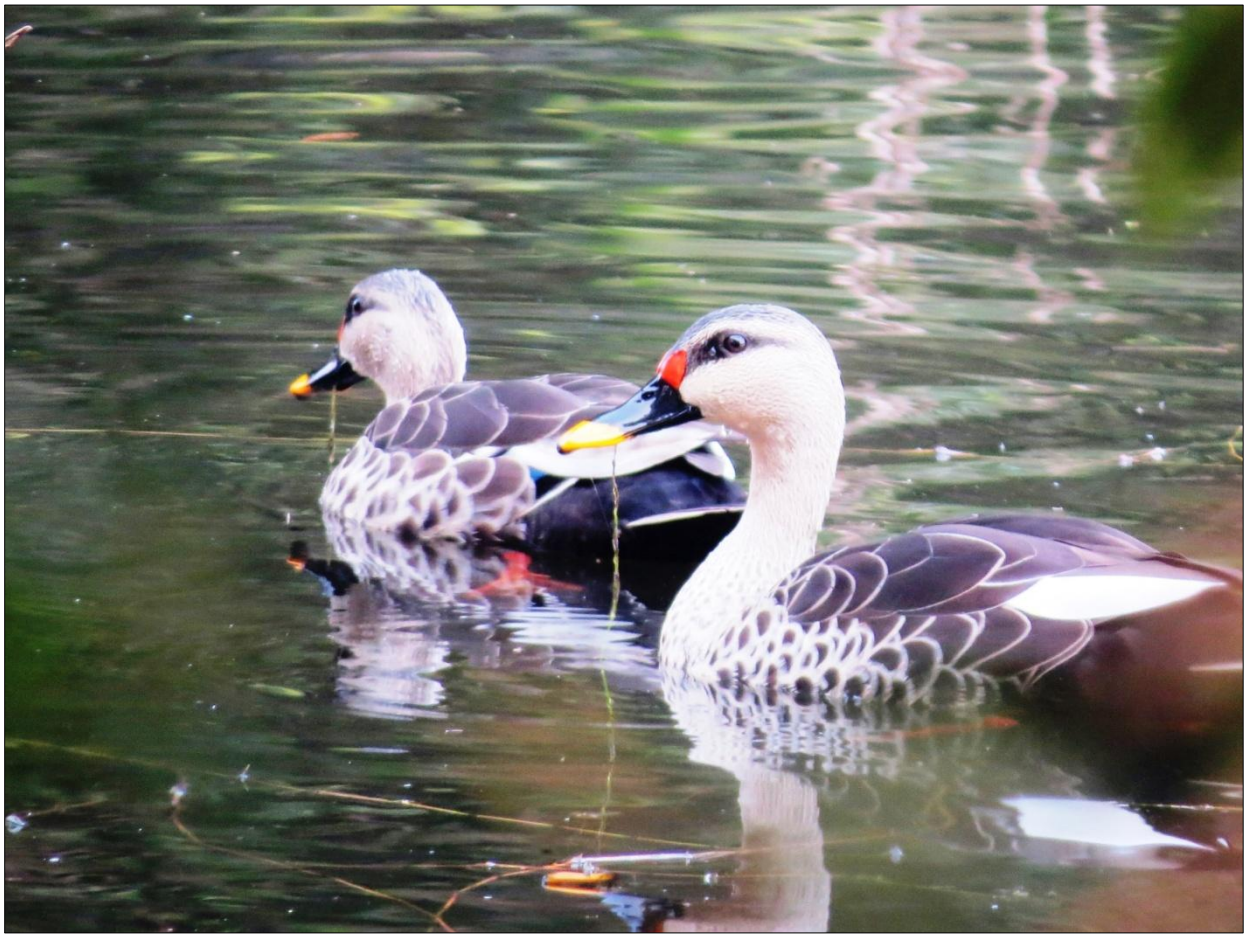


churchyard lichen
the living and dead
in symbiosis

Martha Magenta, UK

Martha Magenta's haiku balances many things and the first line itself is indicative of that. Lichens are a symbol of life and symbiosis between organisms, and are intriguing in their appearance. The churchyard is normally associated with the dead. These two images in the first line provide tautness to the haiku. Lines two and three turn the concept of symbiosis around – the mutually beneficial relationship of the living and the dead. The haiku is layered and each reading gave me new insight. Many images flash – of the living visiting the dead in the churchyard, of the hues and shapes of moss, of lichen growing in an environment that is nourished by the dead. The symbiosis in the last line links back to the images in the first line, especially the lichen. To me, this haiku also suggests an acceptance of the dead and death, just as we accept life and the living.

Section 2. Senryu



Spot-billed Ducks, Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, India

church harvest
the church gate beggar
returns his coins

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

Facebook group
. . . the butterfly effect
of a wrong post

Elisa Allo, Italy/Switzerland

home from work
meeting me at the door
my slippers

Debbi Antebi, UK

blind beggar...
he prays
after the clink

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

alarm
I fall from
the unfinished dream

Gavin Austin, Australia

cockroach
before the Buddha
I hesitate

Gabriel Bates, USA (EC)

winter thaw
the reclusive neighbour
brings cookies

Lori Becherer, USA

break room
everyone operating
a device

Lori Becherer, USA

old carousel
the girl holds on
to the goat's beard

Brad Bennett, USA

hearing aid in
Mom still shouts
her whispers

Brad Bennett, USA (EC)

'big school'
not knowing
where to turn

Helen Buckingham, UK

poetry read
an old woman breaks wind
describing roses

Anna Cates, USA (EC)

new arrival
the broadening community
of the cemetery

Kwaku Feni, Ghana

Father's Day
an uninvited guest...
and it's Dad

'Fractled', USA

work meeting
important decisions made
in the bathroom

'Fractled', USA

late
for the funeral
her grand entrance

Susan Beth Furst, USA

bar hopping---
another anecdote
for the cabby

Enrique Garrovillo, Philipinnes

wi-fi password---
the way I remember
my last girlfriend

Goran Gatalica, Croatia

tall man
the toddler looks up
and up and up

Rohini Gupta, India

courting trouble
she blows pink bubble gum
into his beard

John Hawkhead, UK

sticking
to my hips---
the once slinky dress

Ruth Holzer, USA

copperhead sunning---
my arthritic knees
shift into overdrive

Mary Kendall, USA

after the dinner
I polish my reflection
in a dishwasher

Nina Kovacic, Croatia

retirement gift
the Harry Potter series
in large print

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

after breakup sex
the moonlight moves to her side
of the bed

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

sex scene---
everything covered
in pollen

Eric A. Lohman, USA

after the port tasting
finding the courage to say
I prefer beer

Bob Lucky, Saudi Arabia (EC)

high noon
the ghost town tour guide
disappears

Bob Lucky, Saudi Arabia

car crash—
a body extracted
from the hearse

Antonio Mangiameli, Italy

mosquito—
the space of a gel
between us

Antonio Mangiameli, Italy

cyber ransom note
another night without
bed-time stories

Marietta Jane McGregor, Australia

holiday brochures
their cat reminds them
it's not that easy

Marietta Jane McGregor, Australia



Moorhen, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

fancy dress party
three wonder women
have the dance floor

Timothy Murphy, Spain

spring cleaning
New Year resolutions
overthrown

Timothy Murphy, Spain

we look through the dark
to the place where Mount Fuji
is supposed to be

Maeve O'Sullivan, Ireland

after my world trip
my aunt cautions me
crossing her road

Maeve O'Sullivan, Ireland

chicken soup
I keep stirring
trouble

Vandana Parashar, India

lengthy silence
the time it takes to admit
he's wrong

Dottie Piet, USA

ballpoint pens
chained to the table
bank security

Dottie Piet, USA

solitude . . .
the time she shares
with her dog

Madhuri Pillai, Australia

mistletoe by the door
your kiss
somewhere else

Perry Lee Powell, USA

me and my cat
entangled
in string theory

Perry Lee Powell, USA

uncut grass . . .
the cyclist races
a wasp

Dave Read, Canada

beach day . . .
he strips down
to his tattoos

Dave Read, Canada

crowd watching
the peacock's eyed-tail
crowd watching

Tom Sacramona, USA

snail's pace traffic
now and then
faster texting

Srinivas Rao Sambangi, India

no computer
the earth spins
without my help

Adelaide B. Shaw, USA

Mom's apple pie---
dare I tell her
mine's better

Adelaide B. Shaw, USA

group therapy
I place a 6-pack
on the table

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz, USA

heated argument
my curls refuse
to straighten

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz, USA

this isn't the life
he looked forward to
ctrl-alt-del

Nancy Shires, USA

quite a spectacle
searching for the glasses
atop my head

Michael Stinson, USA

guitar lick
the dog teaches me
a new one

Debbie Strange, Canada

coffee machine
I pour more caffeine
into Monday

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

family Christmas
opening our presents
on Skype

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

flea market
my dog stays home

Barbara Tate, USA

yard sale
grandma's canary free
cage included

Barbara Tate, USA

Friday fish fingers---
another memory
smelling a bit off

Angela Terry, USA

crosswinds
finding new ways
to not say what I can't

Julie Warther, USA

woman preacher
pronounces the young couple
wife and husband

Tyson West, USA

Editor's Choices (EC) –Senryu

Hello and welcome to the Editor's Choices of Senryu among those in this issue. It was truly so difficult to select 4 of the very best from among so many excellent senryu. Sometimes one wondered whether the criteria chosen for selecting the best ones were in fact the 'right' criteria. However, I decided to take the plunge and the result is given below:

Gautam Nadkarni

after the port tasting
finding the courage to say
I prefer beer

Bob Lucky, Saudi Arabia

Most of us will relate with this delightful senryu by Bob Lucky. How often we are forced to taste or experience something exotic and then forced into a corner where the appropriate thing to do would be to make appreciative sounds, when in reality nothing could possibly be ghastlier. Reminds me of the time in my teens when an older uncle gave me my first [and hopefully last!] taste of caviar. I was too bashful to say it tasted positively awful...to my unconditioned tongue.

~~~~~

hearing aid in  
Mom still shouts  
her whispers

*Brad Bennett, USA*

So many of us have elderly members in our families who are hard of hearing. What a common and familiar experience it is to have this older relative wearing a hearing aid which is perhaps not quite adjusted, resulting in his or her shouting out something confidential and private under the mistaken impression that he/she is actually whispering. Even as we laugh at this senryu the awful thought arises in our minds that tomorrow, or the day after, this could be me!

~~~~~


cockroach
before the Buddha
I hesitate

Gabriel Bates, USA

After reading this poem I'm quite sure the poet would not hesitate in crushing that annoying cockroach, but the possibility exists. Imagine, if a mere idol of the Buddha could have such a daunting effect on the would-be cockroach crusher, what price the original flesh-and-blood Buddha! Would He have cast a censorious eye on cockroach crushers? One shudders at the thought.



poetry read
an old woman breaks wind
describing roses

Anna Cates, USA

The irony of the situation strikes one like.....a bad smell? This poem is so close to home for most of us who live with elderly family members and relatives and have learnt to take these things in our stride. Even as we chuckle at the senryu, we are already seeing in it an elderly aunt, or even a grandfather --- for breaking wind is not the prerogative of aunts alone.



Section 3. Tanka



Egrets -Vadodara, Gujarat, Western India

evening monsoon
and a paper boat drifts
in a puddle . . .
this unfolding story
of my lonely childhood

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

a random breeze
sets the jasmine fluttering
above the birdbath ...
does she gamble once more
with her trusting heart

Gavin Austin, Australia

a late change
suddenly stirring
autumn leaves ...
she's begun to wear lipstick
when she leaves to meet him

Gavin Austin, Australia

ankle deep
in swift-flowing water
I take a stand
at the edge of what was
and what's to come

Susan Constable, Canada

paper thin
the distance between
telling the truth
and hurting your feelings –
this hazy moon

Susan Constable, Canada

my heart
a kite string
between continents . . .
but first and last
the tug of home

Anne Curran, New Zealand

endlessly
she mops the same floor
for unseen dirt . . .
this need for her
to be constantly right

Amanda Dcosta, UAE

ebony railings
twisting to the left
those years
I held on to you
for support

Amanda Dcosta, UAE

the liquid maths
of big band music
and summer rain . . .
the bounce on the surface
before the ripples begin

Rebecca Drouilhet, USA

the hole in the sky
where dreams slip in
grows wider . . .
I gather a basket of stars,
harvest the moon

Rebecca Drouilhet, USA

born of stones
sand and goat dung
the silk road
unfurls its wares
from coast to coast

Marilyn Fleming, USA

Himalayan
wild blue poppies –
how to find
the best climate
to fully blossom

Marilyn Fleming, USA

a laden barge
steers the narrow canal
I struggle
to navigate a passage
through your moods

Jan Foster, Australia

each wave
muscles others aside
to slap the sand
– the whole world
seems angry

Jan Foster, Australia (EC)

below the nest
a robin's egg cooling,
still whole
those dreams that end
before they begin

Bernard Gieske, USA

her degree
in microbiology
from Nepal
how carefully she cleans
hospital bathrooms

Hazel Hall, Australia (EC)

another twist
to the bible story
our father's
forgotten Muscat
slowly turns to water

Hazel Hall, Australia

sunrays sweeping
the remaining stars
from the sky
the fading dreams
of my son's last cry

太阳光线
从天空中
扫除了余星
消退了我儿子
那最后哭声的梦境

David He, China

mid-afternoon
I'm the only person
here in Mattressland
with wave upon slow wave
of boredom washing over

Ruth Holzer, USA

I do not mourn
your loss as much
as that
of the time and the place
and the self that loved you

Ruth Holzer, USA

this journey
across wide gibber plains
bruises my feet
– every word
I've spoken in anger

Marilyn Humbert, Australia

a dewdrop
glistens on a leaf –
our son
takes his first
and only breath

Marilyn Humbert, Australia

birch limbs –
long thin fingers
of an ancient hand,
wrinkled and pale,
lured by the sun

Terrie Jacks, USA

on the mantel
a quirky jardinière-
this black sheep
from a potter's shed
is brimming with bluebells

Carol Judkins, USA

long dead stars
in his indigo world-
how to be
that alchemist
who sparkles the sky

Carol Judkins, USA

folding away
all the colors and scents
of summer, I pack
a satchel full
of winter longing

Mary Kendall, USA

a stone cairn
in the river shallows
where a dipper feeds . . .
how quickly we question
the motives of others

Mary Kendall, USA

tonight
a new moon –
this sliver
of hope
is all that I need

Keitha Keyes, Australia

visitors gone
after the wake
we sink
into the vacuum
of our private grief

Keitha Keyes, Australia

not a hint
of evening breeze . . .
her long stare
at the candlelit dinner
for her married boss

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

he used to talk
like a Russian novel . . .
now the silence
between winter rains
between Father and me

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

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

Thomas Martin, USA

threshing
the crop with flail
she stretches
the sleeves of her blouse
to hide her wounds

Aparna Pathak, India

I have been
that last leaf holding,
defying wind –
releasing her ashes
to an outgoing tide

Robert Henry Poulin, USA

spring afternoon
on a cobblestone street
to an unmarked cafe . . .
a stranger's contagious smile
draws me to break the rules

Carol Raisfeld, USA

in a cove
dozing to the sound
of halyards ...
once we were children
who could sail forever

Carol Raisfeld, USA

a patchwork quilt
made with many hands
passed down to me
all I know of these women
is their stitches holding tight

Adelaide B. Shaw, USA

after the rain
the footpath
overrun by weeds –
finding my way through
your long-winded chatter

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde, Australia

nor a call
nor a letter
but today
a fragrant greeting
from the hackberry

Helga Stania, Switzerland

and I saw
a lapwing's courtship
heard the water
flow through the moor
the sea beyond my lids

Helga Stania, Switzerland

brush strokes
of wings against
blank skies . . .
how can I write
these words to you

Debbie Strange, Canada

pancake ice
on the lake's surface . . .
stepping stones
to some other life,
on some other shore

Debbie Strange, Canada

Editor's Choice (EC) – Tanka

each wave
muscles others aside
to slap the sand
– the whole world
seems angry

Jan Foster, Australia

I doubt there is a tanka reader out there today who is not impassioned to at least some of the war, strife, and crisis that exists in the world today. It is inescapable in the news from Syria & Iraq, to the Sudan and the Congo. Afghanistan, the Ukraine, and Yemen remain countries torn by civil unrest. The antics of Kim Jong-un in North Korea are causing increasing global alarm and retaliatory fear. And closer to home for cattails readers in the US, there is a constant state of tension in the wake of the Trump presidential election. In Australia, brother and sister are at loggerheads over the same sex marriage debate.

Jan Foster's tanka sums that position up for us with a wonderful metaphor from nature. How adeptly she shows this human anger with waves muscling others aside and slapping the sand. We have seen this most recently in the protest clash between right-wing white supremacists and anti-racism protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia. A peace protester was killed as a man, filled with anger, drove his car into the crowd of peace protesters. And many others were physically wounded. And the psychological scars of this are likely to last a lifetime.

Jan Foster's tanka takes us to a place of peaceful mediation – the beach. But she sharply reminds us, in her closing brace of lines, that our thoughts today are never far from the next conflagration and insurrection around us, be it personal or global. That perhaps nature is a mirror for the human condition.

More and more we are seeing this anger come to the fore in the natural world . . . tsunami, tornado, hurricane and flooding, bushfire and drought. Perhaps Mother Nature herself has simply had enough. Perhaps she is now so infected with human anger that she is striking back just as we do? Could be she is annoyed with us for slapping her around with global warming, deforestation, coal mining, and pollution.

This is a powerful tanka that speaks of the constant internal and external battles we are all faced with. To coexist peacefully, or exert our authority or opinion over others (including nature itself). It is a tight and well-constructed poem with just 18 syllables across 14 words. The brevity of this poem is very much in keeping with the imagery.

I am not usually an editor or reader who is drawn to tanka that overtly state an emotion. But the use of "angry" as the final word in this tanka is actually a very clever signpost by the poet. It sends the reader on a wider search to consider the current (and past) world events that illustrate the angry society we live in. It doesn't end the tanka for me, but actually opens up entirely new ways of seeing, and expands the value of this tanka each time I sit with it.

Well done to Jan Foster on an exceptional tanka that will stay with me for a long time to come.

her degree
in microbiology
from Nepal
how carefully she cleans
hospital bathrooms

Hazel Hall, Australia

This tanka by Hazel Hall brings up so many emotions. It is sad and poignant, heartfelt. It aches with unfulfilled dreams. Yet it is also full of simple pride. The poem contains so much dignity and self-respect. All of these feelings can be found in this tanka, but they are never stated. Hazel expertly shows these through action, word choice and structure.

It is an unassuming tanka that says so much about resilience and cross-border qualifications. About how we see ourselves. How we see others. Through Hazel's words we can visualise this woman, feel her values, and be physically moved by her plight.

Hazel has structured this tanka to include a very effective pivot in line 3. And the tanka builds, line by line, to paint a vivid scene where we can empathise with this woman. The tanka flows gently, is unhurried, careful to unfold in due course. Much like the careful and unhurried approach this woman has to her cleaning. She takes care not to rush, to ensure it is done to the best of her ability. How "carefully" she cleans because she understands the nature of infection

through her education. How carefully Hazel structures her poem because she understands the sensibilities of tanka.

This is another outstanding tanka from the current issue that will linger with each reading.

Section 4. Haibun



Sandpiper at dawn, Mumbai, India

IOWA

By Anna Cates, USA

The voices in her head told her to drive out to Oregon. So she did.

pig manure stench —
a booted farmer turns toward
the factory farm . . .

A Flower in December

by Tim Gardiner, UK

The pain in my shoulder is still there post-operation, all those years after escorting Emperor Hirohito through the ruins of Hiroshima on 7th December, 1947. The day was bitterly cold, the mountains surrounding the city shrouded in low cloud. I vividly recall the charred trees and streets lined by torched telegraph poles. Remarkably, some buildings remained standing, their windows blown through by the blast. The cry of a scarred child, cradled by its despairing mother, is not easily forgotten.

tiny flower
growing in the rubble
its name escapes me

In memory of the Very Reverend Raymond Renowden (1923-2000) who accompanied Emperor Hirohito on a visit to Hiroshima in 1947.

Constructions

by Bill Gottlieb, USA

One week away from my birthday, five days from the 15th month anniversary of my wife's death, those fast final blunt breaths, blowing out the accumulations of her life. This morning I dreamt someone died: me, my fiancé, someone we know...I don't know; and I stayed in bed, trying to remember the identity of a memory of the imagery of a story of fear and desire. On the other side of the curtain crows call, emblems of the end. Maybe there's recent roadkill, scenting spring with its pinned sauces of sustenance, animation tamed to element, element made animation on a dark road of appetite, a road of rodents and crows. Maybe they're telling me to get up, crap on the past, play in today, bond with my new old lady below the blue. A garbage truck grouches down the hill, hauling last week to the landfill. A dozer—I was a closed-eye dozer a moment ago, crawling in the crush of my constructions—will bury the disposed in shallow ground.

at her house
behind the fence
greening grass

Passage

by Hazel Hall, Australia

almost evening
the scent of jasmine
and ashes

We sit in a small shop in a narrow lane eating delicious saffron and pistachio lassi
served in throw-away clay pots with wooden spoons.

Every ten minutes solemn chanting is heard. First the wood-bearers hurry past. Then
a procession. On the shoulders of four men is a mat attached to bamboo poles.

The precious bundle is gilded with tinsel and marigolds. Behind comes a group of mourners,
more logs and a cow that just happens to be ambling nearby.

They pass. So close you could touch them. Then they've gone.

that second
before emptiness
a light breeze

We dispose of our remains in the recycling pit. Time to look for transport home.

charcoal sky
ending the journey
before last light

Crushoa

by Ruth Holzer, USA

I walked there from Kinvara, through a landscape of scrubby grass and drystone walls, on a promised visit to my London landlady's older sister. She had stayed in her County Galway birthplace and married a local farmer. As soon as I appeared at the door, she hurried to feed me, tossing more chunks of turf on the fire and boiling a fat brown egg in a tin can hanging over the hearth. She set out warm homemade bread and butter, and frothy fresh cream for the tea. Pictures of the Pope, the Sacred Heart and President Kennedy decorated the whitewashed walls.

twilight –
the blue smoke
of prayers

Since their sons had emigrated, the two of them managed on their own, raising barley and potatoes and keeping a few cows, sheep and chickens. While we talked, she packed her husband's lunch: a round white loaf and a quart jug of tea. The neighbor's little girl came over to carry it to the field. She hugged me when I left and wished me *slán abhaile*, safe home.

on and on
in all weathers
donkey cart

Lying

by David J Kelly, Ireland

I am a guest of honour. I am staying in the headman's house. The ceiling of my room is an old political campaign poster. The face of a politician with high ambition stares in my general direction. His practised smile shows just enough white teeth, without revealing they are crooked. At close quarters he has a glazed expression, suggesting this was not the first picture the photographer took. The edges of his clothes are impossibly straight. The photo editors spent their time making him look smart, rather than beautiful. This clearly isn't Hollywood.

two minutes hate
all the things one can say
without meaning them

À la Mode

by Keitha Keyes, Australia

I first tasted escargots in Sydney in the 70's. The challenge was to grasp the snails with tongs in one hand and dig out the flesh with an implement in the other hand. I was surprised that they weren't slippery like oysters.

I tried them again on a holiday in Boston. As a result, I got food poisoning and spent several hours in a hospital.

Since then I have sought revenge. I know that escargots are not ordinary garden snails but that doesn't matter. I am determined to destroy any snail that comes my way. No mercy.

sophistication —
sometimes the price
is too high.

The Saint

by Padmini Krishnan, Singapore

The saint walks with caution, avoiding ants or tiny insects that are crawling in his path. He preaches humanity and kindness to his disciples. Counting them, he abruptly stops his sermon and steps in front of a tree. Hiding behind the tree is an adolescent, listening to music. The saint snatches the youth's iPod and smashes it to the ground, while abusing him for being weak. After the students disperse, the holy man receives a call in his shiny, new tablet. He answers the latest ringtone in his soft voice.

twilight
a lone hawk pounces
on a flock of pigeons

You are my sunshine

by Chen-ou Liu, Canada

At her first White House briefing, the new press secretary reads aloud a letter from a nine-year-old boy, "You're my favorite president. I like you so much that I had a birthday about you. My cake was the shape of your hat..." After she finishes reading the letter, an awkward silence envelops the room.

America First sign
in my new neighbor's front yard
the rooster puffs up

What Falls

by Charlotte Mandel, USA

This maple leaf, the color of pinot noir, lies like a five-pointed star on green lawn. Underside, the leaf raises a central vein. Four smaller veins branch out like capillaries at evenly spaced intervals. Through the tree's inner pipeline, the leaf in summer drinks water traveling from the roots and, in turn, feeds hormones for growth. Each vein plays a part in nurture of the tree.

my daughter and I
bend to the crib
first grandchild

The fallen leaf grows drier, more brittle. On my palm, it begins to curl.

my father's hand
holding mine
last visit

Hollow Trees

by Giselle Maya, France

for the birds
so many sweet homes
hollow trees

a fine surprise on the limestone cliff, just so, mandarin moon bright and still

jewels
in shades of green
peony buds

from the forest the cuckoo calls his mate over and over, nightingales sing among willow
catkins

a moon kite
swims among clouds
rite of spring

I am back again out of winter's reach in this garden where blue columbines are about to bloom

The Panhandler

by Dave Read, Canada

He's not very old. Maybe 17. Too young to vote, drink, own a gun, go to war. But old enough to have been tossed aside, thrown into the world to manage on his own. So far, he hasn't done a good job of it.

I've only got a \$50 which I think is too much money. I decide I'll give him a few dollars after I finish in the store. But when I return, he's already gone: whisked away by impulse, the wind, or the police.

morning shade
the child who's chosen
last

Nut Crunch

by Adelaide B. Shaw, USA

It's a damp day in February. Not the best weather for making nut crunch, but I have a craving for some. It's not difficult. Two ingredients: sugar and nuts. I take a bowl of unshelled walnuts, a bag for trash, a nut cracker and sit by the window where I can watch a squirrel doing gymnastics at the bird feeder.

Valentine candy
savoring the sweetness
of his company

The Avukana Buddha

by Ashoka Weerakkody, Sri Lanka

The centuries old statue of the Buddha, carved in solid rock, stands taller than the palms swaying in the wind. Against a bright mid-morning sun and black as granite rock can be, the Buddha shows the signs of being weathered in sun and rain of a few hundred years of history. We cast our awe-inspired gazes with wide-eyed reverence while standing under the inadequate roof of the tea kiosk.

The lake below the rock face and the forest cover brings a peace of mind as we treat ourselves to a refreshing drink of "beli mal" buds. The fragrance and bitter sweet warmth inspires us so memorably in body and mind, at long last.

Reluctantly though, we take leave of this wonderful little adventure, while picking a precious few healing buds of beli mal, the natural herbal we enjoyed amidst all the serenity so deeply felt in its embrace.

I dwelt happy in the belief that we can re-live the joy back at home.

The next morning I made the drink, hoping the beli mal buds simmering in hot water dissolve the aroma and taste and indeed the color of yesterday's memory.

But alas, the brew only burns my lips and tongue for full measure! What went wrong I lament in silent thought.

And then I know the answer! The radiant Avukana Buddha, left far behind in the ancient kingdom. From there we could only bring only the memory and not the moment of existence in spite of the beli mal buds we brought home from the forest by the lake, under the blue skies of heritage and history.

beli mal at Avukana
warm and refreshing
Buddha's halo.

cherishing the rock statue
his compassion
between cup and lip

(Avukana is a place name in Sri Lanka meaning "sun bathed" named after the Buddha statue in standing pose open to elements of nature)

Section 5. Youth Corner



Red Wattled Lapwing, Jodhpur

One of the best definitions of English-language haiku (ELH) ever attempted is from Haruo Shirane's essay, 'Beyond the Haiku Moment' published in *Modern Haiku*, XXXI:1 (2000): "I would say, echoing the spirit of Basho's own poetry, that haiku in English is a short poem, usually written in one to three lines, that seeks out new and revealing perspectives on the human and physical condition, focusing on the immediate physical world around us, particularly that of nature, and on the workings of the human imagination, memory, literature and history." [1]

It would be appropriate here to add that this definition sits well not just with English-language Haiku (ELH) but for haiku attempted in all languages too.

I would like to bring into focus these words and what they mean: *the workings of the human imagination*. Ever since I came into haiku around a decade back, we have eschewed imagination completely . . . and yet the beautiful 'ku we have most admired are the ones that have used imagination. If haiku is to be considered as an art form then imagination and craft will play a part and we need to know how to play them.

Children just know the knack.

I won't talk or explain more – their poems showcased below are such beautiful examples. There were nine other adults (all excellent and you'll soon be hearing their names) who will vouch that these haiku were written by these youngsters at the workshop and come untouched and unedited for you!

Veerangana (a 13-years-old school girl) and Laieh Jwella (a 13-year-old school boy) were two out of the 11 participants who gathered to check out what haiku is all about in the seven-hour long workshop – "**The Short and Long of Haiku**" –which I conducted at the prestigious India Habitat Centre at Delhi this June.

Let's move on to reading the children's haiku.

Kala Ramesh,
UHTS cattails Youth Corner Editor

The Tejas Award (*Tejas* in Sanskrit means “fire” and/or “brilliance”) naturally is going to be shared by Veerangana and Laieh Jwella for their brilliant and nuanced understanding of this 400-year-old art form which has foxed many authors and poets. Congratulations Veerangana and Laieh! It was absolutely lovely to have you both join us on 24 & 25 June, 2017.

When it comes to children’s work I find it hard and pointless to grade them, so here are all the best haiku that were submitted to me for this issue as Honourable Mentions, in no particular order.

Note: Please see the imagination and craft and how well these two kids weave them so seamlessly after just a three-hour exposure to haiku. I’m clean bowled ... *aren’t you?*

5 Haiku by Laieh Jwella, India (13 years)

musty cave
a sonorous clap
isn't met with an answer

the sea slowly
dissipates into the sand
magenta waves

forgotten attic . . .
a pest-infested guitar
to be rediscovered

dead bodies
shirts with bullet holes
a red rose

foggy breaths
a rejuvenating sip
of hot chocolate



5 Haiku by Veerangana, India (13 years)

abandoned baby
open lips
drinking starlight

my mother's womb
stretches and bleeds . . .
a cry

castle top . . .
a glowing turret
hooks the moon

soft snow
an embedded branch
holds a leaf

darkened insides
in Mama's saucepan
the moon fries



I received an e-mail from Nancy Nitrio containing a haiku written by her granddaughter, Aaliyah Rose Saleem. It is a very sweet one.

dreams
get lost
in Autumn leaves

Aaliyah Rose Saleem, USA (8 years)



Then a surprise submission from Jitesh Tandon, who said he is from the Katha Utsav 2014 batch! The beauty is that after attending Katha's two-day haiku workshop a few years ago, Jitesh remembers haiku, and the kire, the kireji and the kigo word ...

dense forests:
sunlight doesn't reach
my eyes

huge car showroom —
I can't buy
even a pen

Jitesh Tandon, India (16 years)

a stick in her hand
to cross the road . . .
speeding car

Lakshay Gandotra, India (13 years)

black canvas . . .
a lake of stars
in the sky

Aashna Goyal, India (16 years)

father's
stolen cigarette . . .
teenage rebellion

Harleen Osahan, Muscat, Oman (18 yrs)

train whistle ...
promises of tomorrow
hang in the air

Shreya Narang, India (16 years)



HAIBUN

Veerangana tried out haibun after the India Habitat Center workshop '*The Long and Short of Haiku*.' After several attempts, 'A Glimpse' with some minor edits has found a place in this edition of Youth Corner.

A Glimpse

I'm standing under the thick foliage of eucalyptus trees. The sun had left its scorching imprints on the dusky sky. I duck behind a tangled bush for a glimpse of a koala. The laser light of my camera dances around the dewy leaves as I wait.

Hours pass . . . my focus shifts to a piece of wrinkled bark. I touch its rough edges and a bit of sap oozes out. I can imagine koala bears cuddling against the bark . . . scratching it with their growing claws, and going off to sleep under its comforting shadow.

baby's voice —
I flip the pages
of our family album

Veerangana, India (13 yrs)



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Flamingos at dawn – Mumbai, India