

cattails



October 2019

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**October 2019 Issue**

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## Introduction

The texts of the Tibetan Buddhist Nying-ma tradition allude to a hidden land, "beyül". The exact geographical location of beyül is not delineated but the idea of a sanctuary that transcends political boundaries is appealing. Pema Ling-pa (1450-1521), the Bhutanese tantric master described it as a "place where people of many different races come" seeking peace and where conflicts are discouraged. It would not be amiss to see our world of writing as such a refuge, where we meet as fellow spirits to articulate and share our heartfelt thoughts and imaginings.

This issue of *cattails* reflects how Geethanjali, Gautam, Mike, Kathy and Lavana have strenuously pursued excellence in showcasing both new and established poetical voices. Tim Gardiner has given the Youth Corner his own unique touch. As technical editor, Mike is tireless in delivering a distinctive layout and design. For this issue, we are featuring the work of artist Heather MacDonald from Ottawa, Canada.

I cannot emphasize enough how Alan, Neal, Iliyana and Marianna help and support throughout the year. No matter what their own commitments, they always respond and reach out with kindness and good humor.

We have made changes for shorter submission periods for *cattails* as well as the UHTS contests in 2020. Here are the links:

*cattails*: <http://www.cattailsjournal.com/submissions.html>

UHTS contests: <http://unitedhaikuandtankasociety.com/contest-submission-guidelines>

Sonam Chhoki

# Haiku



first jonquils  
a neighbour's tomcat  
comes to spray

*Lorin Ford, Australia*

love affair  
with the scent of spring  
a robin's song

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

ensō  
a child paints dandelions  
with ink

ensō  
dziecko maluje tuszem  
dmuchawce

*Zuzanna Truchlewska, Poland (EC)*

the sweetness  
of homegrown strawberries –  
goodbye kiss

*John McManus, England*

Valentine's Day –  
the fading rainbow  
reappears

*Amanda Bell, Ireland*

doves cooing  
in his back yard –  
we say our good-byes

*Anne Curran, New Zealand*

*crown shyness*  
the space we make  
for each other

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

meandering path –  
lured ahead by the music  
of a wood thrush

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

the taste  
of wild blackberries –  
sunlight on water

*Jenny Ward Angyal, USA*

basking koi . . .  
I dip my finger  
in the sun

*Fractled, USA*

colourful rock and roll  
a woodpecker drumming  
at an oak trunk

šareni rok i rol  
djetlić bubnja  
po hrastu

*Djurdja Vukelic Rozic, Croatia*

valley road  
the rippling tide  
of ferns

*Gavin Austin, Australia*

balcony mynah  
the proprietary air  
of its strut

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*



on the road  
a copperhead  
coiled in warmth

*Bernard Gieske, USA*

learning to walk  
the treaded path—  
a black panther

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India*

treasure hunt  
under a muddy ledge  
a little world of glow worms

*Simon Hanson, Australia*

the red admiral  
swallowed by a frog  
blue lake silence

*Ernest Wit, Poland*

cloudless skies  
the earth tightens  
around the roots

*Barbara Snow, USA*

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dry spell  
the pitter-patter  
of leaves

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

heat haze . . .  
a sand martin skims  
a dry river

*Paul Chambers, Wales*

ghost peppers  
the lingering heat  
of September

*Julie Warther, USA*

keening  
that same old song  
summer wind

*Scott Wiggerman, USA*

unspoiled days  
holding them tight  
wild flowers

*Ernesto P. Santiago, Philippines*

jungle trail –  
Sal trees latticed  
with sunlight

*Ashish Narain, Philippines*

in all the nooks  
and crannies –  
cicada song

*Marilyn Fleming, USA*

sun shower –  
white petals cling to  
the razor wire

*Nathalie Buckland, Australia*

the tang  
of orange sherbet . . .  
sunset in the clouds

*Cyndi Lloyd, USA*

dried up brushes  
the summer sunset  
painting itself

*Adrian Bouter,  
The Netherlands*

meandering clouds  
how do I still  
my mind

*Meera Rehm, UK*

new watercolors  
the first drop  
that starts a river

*Agnes Eva Savich, USA*

childhood laughter  
lost in the woods  
the river

*Ron Scully, USA*

slow bend in the stream  
the water vole's whiskers  
stirring ripples

*John Hawkhead, UK*

the dip and lift  
of a kayaker's paddle  
vernal equinox

*Alan S. Bridges, USA*

a silver canoe  
against the wind  
an egret's wings

*Sandi Pray, USA*

white gardenia  
our summers end  
too soon

*Marilyn Ward, UK*

charred trunks  
the sequoia trees drop their seeds  
into the ashes

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*

with the tree  
the sparrows  
no longer singing

*Robert Kingston Pitt, UK*

breathless  
the empty fields  
at dusk

*Mark E. Brager, USA*

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beyond hope  
floodwater floats  
the clouds

*LeRoy Gorman, Canada*

early persimmons  
another taste  
of chemo

*Gregory Longenecker, USA*

autumn sun  
some shadows have  
sharper edges

*Brad Bennett, USA*

radio silence  
when I'm gone the tulips  
will know it

*Robert Epstein, USA*

vigil  
the calm verse  
of a moonbeam

*Helga Stania, Switzerland*

cold rain  
a child's tears  
on an unfilled grave

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

prairie lands  
the windblown edges  
of tombstones

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

lingering silence  
in front of the old folks' home  
a single weed

*Eva Limbach, Germany*

full moon  
a spark of recognition  
in grandma's eyes

*Christina Sng, Singapore*

his life gone  
clouds  
holding the sun

*Jenny Fraser, New Zealand*

lichen on stone  
the stillness  
of a deer carcass

*James Chessing, USA*

migrating geese  
how light  
the journey

*Jessica Malone Latham, USA*

on one leg  
into a stretching sock –  
the heron steps

*Mira Walker, Australia*

blue heron?  
only the fog  
knows for sure

*Mike Montreuil, Canada*

foggy morning  
passing over the bridge  
a monk's orange

*Nola Obee, Canada*



rain forecast  
the eye  
of the currawong

*Pearl Kline, Australia*

the morning sky  
folding and unfolding –  
swallowtail

*Andy McLellan, UK*

rainy Monday  
sunny mountain meadow  
on my home screen

*Craig Kittner, USA*

downpour  
a butterfly flies through  
the lattice

ливень  
пролетает сквозь решётку  
бабочка

*Nikolay Grankin, Russia*

church steeple  
the wings of a white dove  
lift the sun

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

morning rainbow  
in the month of Vesak  
Buddha's halo

*Ashoka Weerakkody, Sri Lanka*

just as  
the sutra chant begins . . .  
a cuckoo's call

*Kanchan Chatterjee, India*

glancing upward . . .  
a bald eagle welcomes me  
to morning prayers

*Edward J. Rielly, USA*

a soaring hymn  
circling the churchyard  
a curlew

*Mike Gallagher, Ireland*

autumn twilight . . .  
the golden dust  
of ancient temples

crepuscolo d'autunno . . .  
il pulviscolo dorato  
d'antichi templi

*Stefano d'Andrea, Italy*

the sun descends  
behind a distant ship . . .  
our different horizons

*Robert Witmer, Japan*

dusk  
above winter reeds  
a shimmer of starlings

*Ingrid Baluchi, Macedonia*

withered vines  
the sun sets  
on a ruined pergola

*Jay Friedenbergl, USA*

lights out  
one more song  
from the house cricket

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

rock pool  
a beetle zigzags across  
the milky way

*Bill Cooper, USA*

hidden rills  
the waterfalls splashing  
moonlight

*Gary Hittmeyer, USA*

quiet cove  
a full moon  
tops the mast

*Carol Raisfeld, USA*

b flat minor  
inside a night breeze  
winnowing snipe

*Marietta McGregor, Australia (EC)*

night sky  
a thousand dreams  
into the clouds

रात्रि - आकाश  
बादल संग उड़ै  
हजार सपना !

*Manoj Sharma, Nepal*

in the middle  
of her story –  
full pink moon

*robyn brooks, USA*

autumn wind  
the smell of chestnuts  
wherever I go

vento d'autunno  
profumo di castagne  
ovunque io vada

*Eufemia Griffio, Italy*

by the gourds  
not alone  
smiling buddha

*Guliz Mutlu, Turkey*

autumn breeze  
finding myself in  
grandma's diary

*Ben Moeller-Gaa, USA*

jangling the masts  
of the harboured sailboats –  
westerly wind

*Maeve O'Sullivan, Ireland*

moonlight  
silvers the blinds . . .  
Mum's cradle song

*David He, China*

lullaby . . .  
even the wind  
breathing softly

*Angela Terry, USA*

waiting for the dawn  
the glitter of moon light  
in my child's eye

*Michael Flanagan, USA*

Pleiades –  
a new pattern of age spots  
on my forearm

*Eric A. Lohman, USA*

milky way  
somewhere out there  
my childhood

*Elisa Theriana, Indonesia*

midwinter –  
one loud flock of geese  
joins another

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

leaving my heart  
a long way behind  
ice moon

*Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo  
The Netherlands*

winter train . . .  
I travel home with  
a distant cloud

*Adjei Agyei-Baah  
Ghana/New Zealand*

on thin ice  
our breath the color  
of starlight

*Michael Henry Lee, USA*

on a frozen branch  
no leaves to twirl in winter  
a dove and her song

*Gillena Cox, Trinidad*

deep winter –  
candle glow reflected  
in the baby's eyes

*Ellen Compton, USA*

winter's end –  
an ice-coated lake  
full of stars

*Goran Gatalica, Croatia*

first light  
laughing with me  
pond geese

*Matthew Caretti, USA*



## Editor's Choice (EC) - Haiku

Thank you, dear haijin, for the flood of submissions to this issue of *cattails*. It made the selection process very enjoyable but challenging, with so many lovely haiku to choose from.

In this issue our poets brought to you—love in Spring, journeys in Summer, maturity in Autumn, loneliness in Winter. I hope you enjoyed your time in the gentle breeze, stormy night, through a moonlit cove, woods and forests, rills and streams. For company, you may have found a panther, copperhead, swallowtail, sand martin or winnowing snipe. Or maybe, you walked alone, mesmerised by a sunset or the Milky Way.

It was difficult to pick from so many engaging haiku. I have chosen two for you to engage with:

ensō  
a child paints dandelions  
with ink

ensō  
dziecko maluje tuzzem  
dmuchawce

*Zuzanna Truchlewska, Poland (EC)*

A deceptively simple haiku that places an ensō, the Japanese symbol of Zen, in the same breath as a dandelion and a child. The ensō itself could mean the universe or nothingness in Buddhism, a symbol of a philosophy that monks strive to learn and understand their whole lives. The ensō, it is said, is the creation of the artist at that moment and represents a complete acceptance of the inner self. The haiku uses the ensō to look at a moment when the child uses ink and creates dandelions—life is simple, if we wish it to be. Be the child, be the ensō, be haiku.

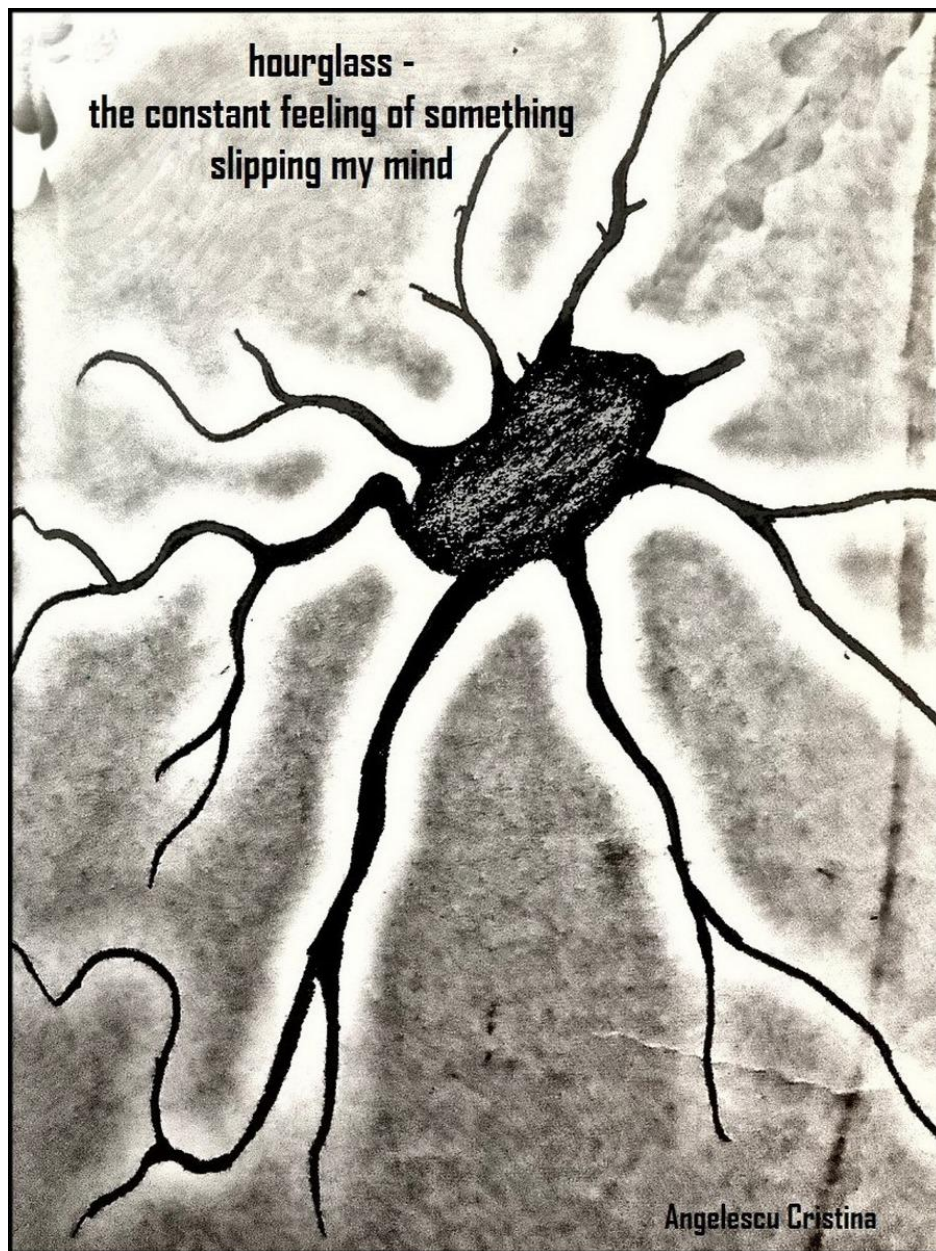


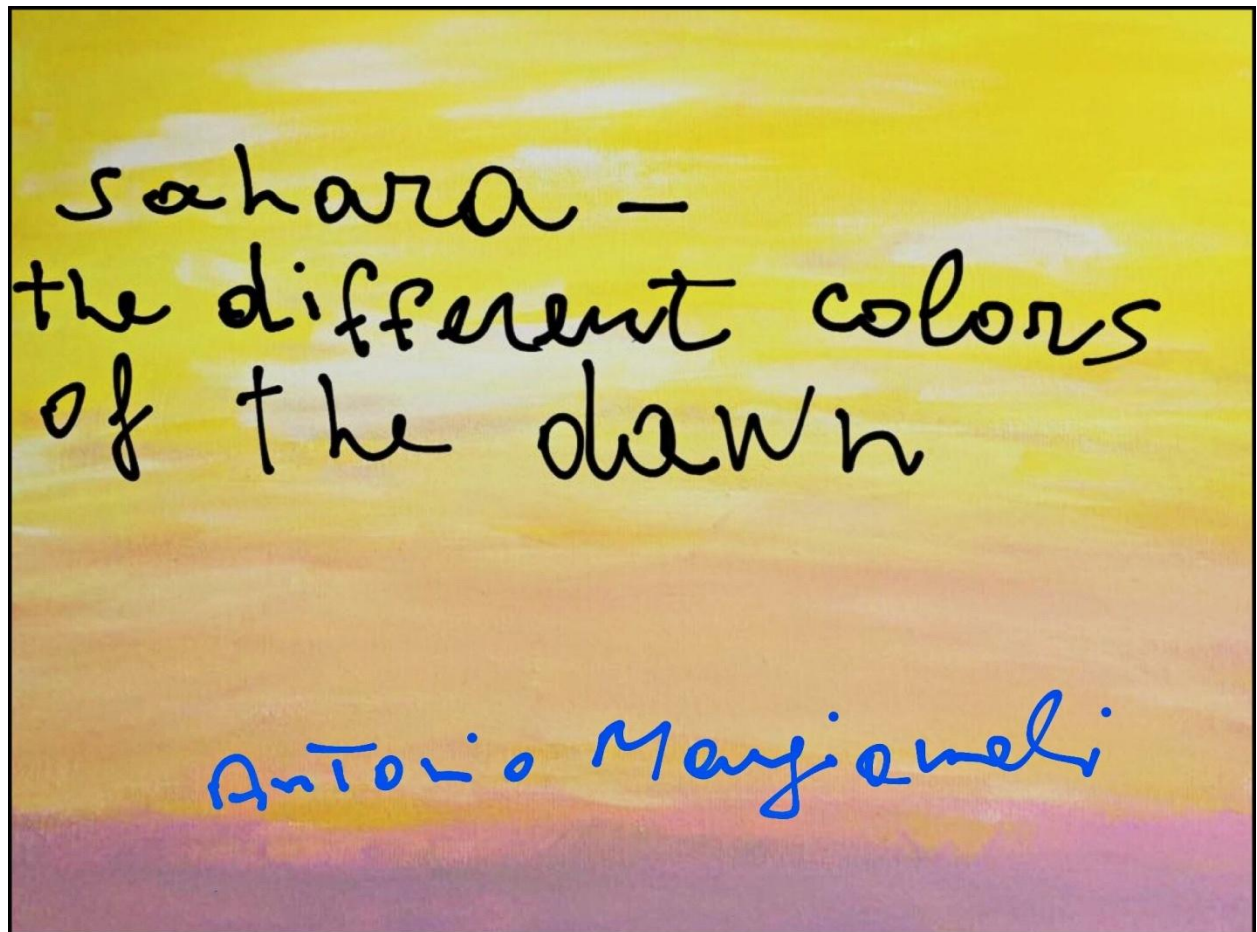
b flat minor  
inside a night breeze  
winnowing snipe

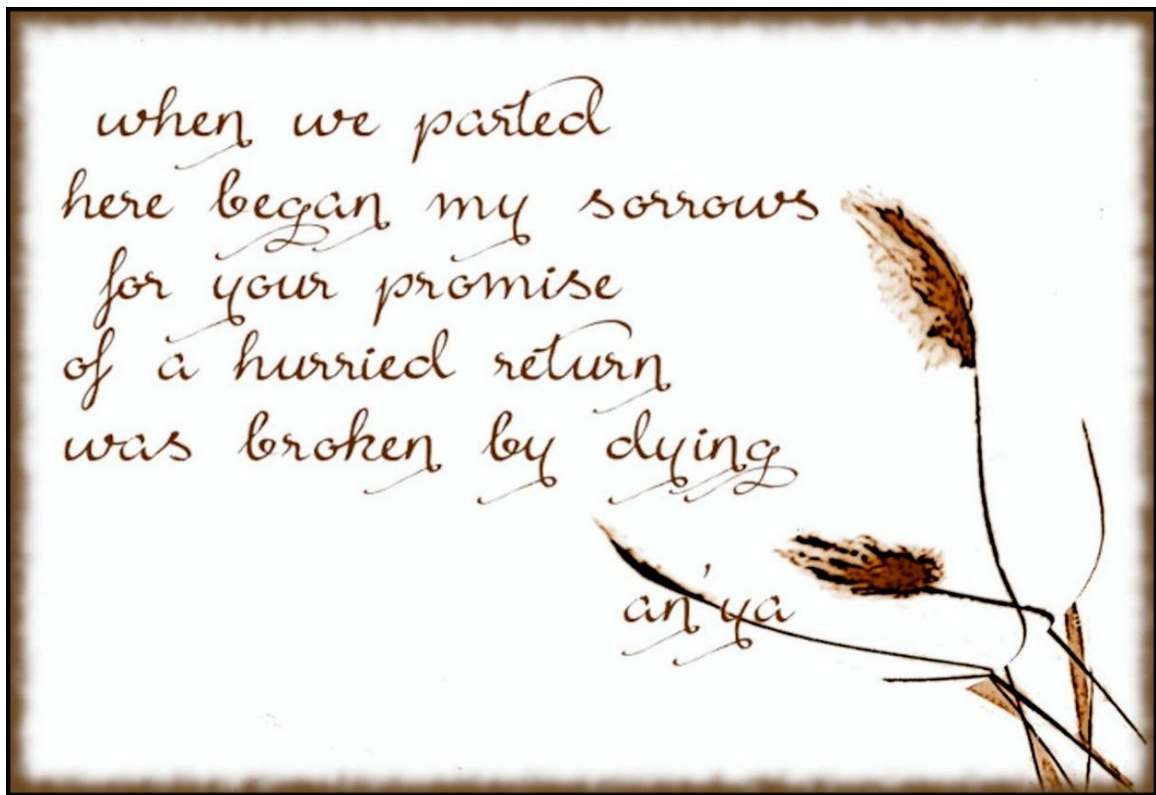
*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

All at once, this haiku deftly weaves in music and action, sight, sound and touch. For me, this haiku also brings in the season of breeding and evokes a picture of a marsh or wetland, by using one word—winnowing (Winnowing refers to the whirring sound of a snipe when it dives or circles—not music from the vocal cords but from the feathers). The poet also places the haiku within the reference of night time. An excellent example of a well-constructed haiku in its economy of words. These 3 lines lead into the scene and then, allows for further development in the mind of the reader—the b flat minor in the night breeze.

Geethanjali Rajan









old house -  
on the front porch  
childhood

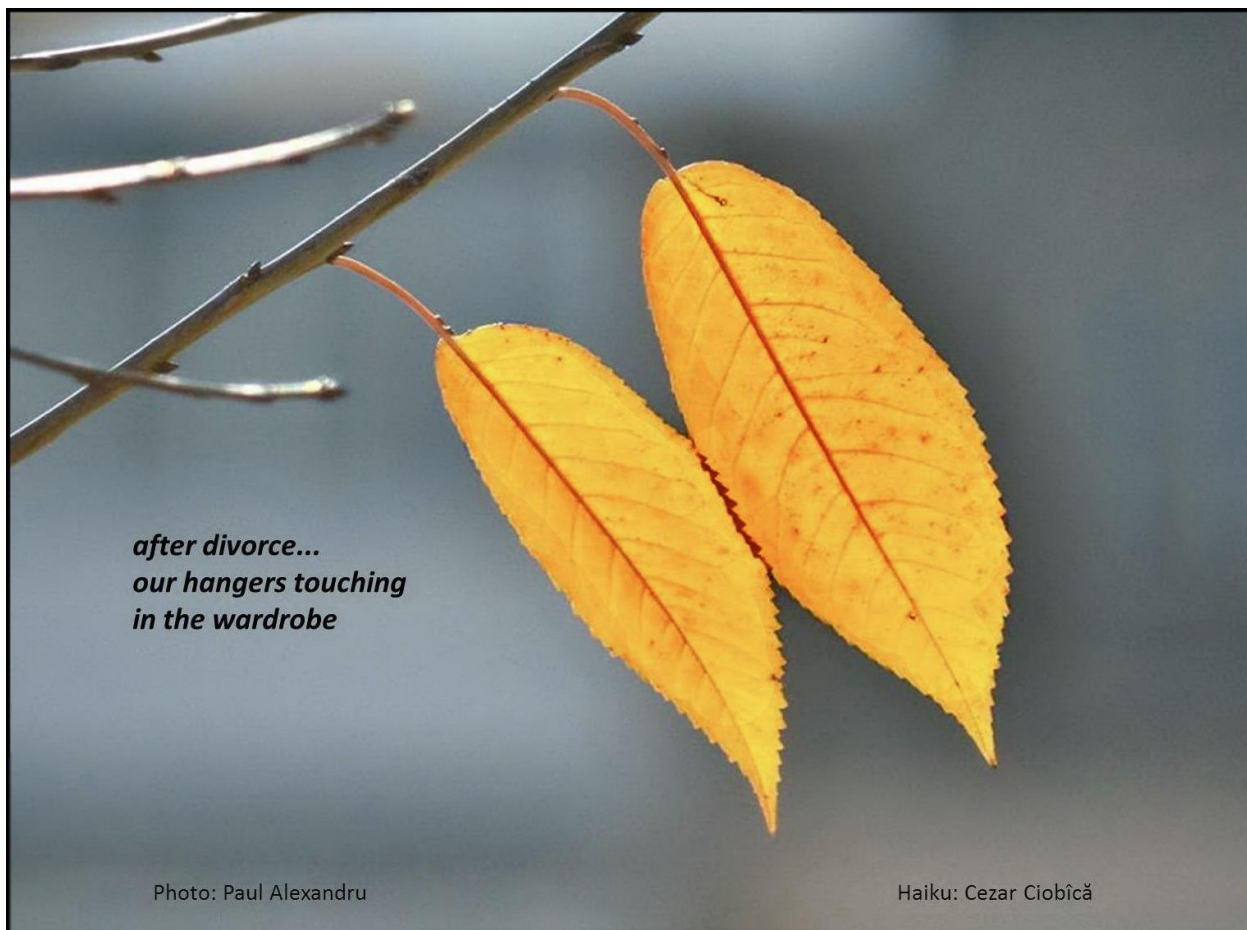
Capotă Danieala Lacrămioara

Photographer Capotă Codrin



winter chill –  
the sound of the sea  
beyond the dunes

carol raisfeld  
photo & words



*after divorce...  
our hangers touching  
in the wardrobe*

Photo: Paul Alexandru

Haiku: Cezar Ciobîcă



# Senryu



now

hair loss treatment  
the unknown places  
it takes me to

*Robert Epstein, USA*

late night show –  
talking umbrellas  
wait for the last bus

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

summer vacation –  
a dress in the lining  
of her purse

*Goran Gatalica, Croatia*

therapy . . .  
returning home  
separately

*Ivan Gacina, Croatia*

nude beach –  
everyone wearing a hat  
and flip flops

*Angela Terry, USA (EC)*

local competition  
Mrs Smith awarding  
Mr Smith

*Irina Guliaeva, Russia*

a tough divorce –  
mother-in-law's tongue  
in full flower

*Djurdja Vukelic Rozic, Croatia*

her smile is the kind  
that follows you home  
and forgets to knock

*Rp Verlaine, USA*

after a nightmare  
giving the sleep mask  
a scrubbing

*Lori Becherer, USA*

rehab –  
I fall over  
the rowing machine

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

last flight  
of the evening  
half price sandwiches

*Roger Watson, UK*

telephone call . . .  
I enter the circle  
of press-a-number

*Hazel Hall, Australia*

ice plant  
one slippery slope simply  
leads to another

*Michael Henry Lee, USA*

breaking drought . . .  
a cotton reaper curses  
the farmer's prayer

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

old love letters  
the lack of ceremony  
in a delete

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

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Saturday morning  
all I plan  
not to do

*Mike Montreuil, Canada*

full peach basket  
the many jars of jam  
still to be made

*Adelaide Shaw, USA*

interstate terminal  
the chatter  
of shared journeys

*Simon Hanson, Australia*

I squash the spider  
with my best slipper  
apologies Issa

*Gary Hittmeyer, USA*

graduation speech  
she remembers  
to remember

*Brad Bennett, USA*

Halloween ball  
a jack-o-lantern  
chats me up

*Lucy Whitehead, UK*

antique cars  
two men compare  
rotator cuffs

*Bill Cooper, USA*

end of debate –  
a chunk of red herring  
lands on my food

*Fractled, USA*

divorced at last –  
doing what I shouldn't  
more than I should

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

small town flood  
everyone turns out  
to see the Governor

*Edward J Rielly, USA*

one more weed through the sidewalk crack poem

*Julie Warther, USA*

yawns travel  
from gate to gate  
flights delayed

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

loose tile  
a fresh fracas  
with my landlord

*Adjei Agyei-Baah,  
Ghana/New Zealand*

radiotherapy . . .  
finally a good excuse  
for Dad's baldness

*Valentina Meloni, Italy*

this winter too  
the boots hiding  
my wife's hairy legs

*Franjo Ordanic, Croatia*

folded hands  
right thumb over left—  
I learn to pray

*Marilyn Fleming, USA*

algebra class  
we wait one more day  
for y

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India (EC)*

marital status  
Mother lets out  
a deep sigh

*Richa Sharma, India*

bland dinner  
she looks at my salt  
and pepper hair

*Ernest Wit, Poland*

counting stars  
another hair  
turning white

*Elisa Theriana, Indonesia*

family meeting  
nobody notices  
me leaving

*Pitt Buerken, Germany*



computer addiction  
he downloads an app  
to block himself

*Bruce H. Feingold, USA*

Sunday roast  
the teenager drops  
his hot potato

*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

fortune teller  
a tall dark stranger  
takes my cash

*John Hawkhead, UK*

black-out  
the moth on the porch light  
returns to the moon

*Alvah Allen, USA*

adored pet  
the time it takes  
to train a human

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*

kids-eat-free  
Dad unfastens  
his wallet

*Gregory Wright, USA*

monitor lizard  
the watchful eye  
of my camera lens

*Louise Hopewell, Australia*

war movie  
a cat marching  
on my stomach

*Tomislav Sjekloca, Montenegro*

my neighbor's garden  
her tomatoes ripen  
before mine

*Bernard Gieske, USA*

emojis  
my girlfriend and I  
face to face

*Tom Sacramona, USA*

family picture –  
Grandma tries  
my new lip gloss

*Bhawana Rathore, India*

secret love –  
slinking through my backyard  
neighbour's tomcat

*Eva Limbach, Germany*

dissipated fog  
the time it takes to find  
the right emoji

*Mary Stevens, USA*

family photos . . .  
Mom sweeps back  
my mop of hair

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

childhood home  
the endless corridor  
in three steps

*Debbi Antebi, UK (EC)*

archery target  
the berry  
she sat on

*Barbara Snow, USA*

family reunion . . .  
I lose each time  
in the card game

*Kinshuk Gupta, India*

all the junk  
they kept for this  
moving sale

*Leroy Gorman, Canada*

bullies at the dog park  
remembering why  
I hated recess

*Leslie Bamford, Canada*

bitter melon  
the old man spits out  
a new swear word

*Theresa Okafor, Nigeria*

whetstone . . .  
discussing the divorce  
she sharpens her words

*Kevin Valentine, USA*

reading the obits . . .  
Grandma trying to find out  
who is single again

*Carol Raisfeld, USA*

All Soul's Day –  
a good time  
to be dead

*Marilyn Fleming, USA*

weight room . . .  
a coach slowly lifts  
a cup of coffee

*Ivan Gacina, Croatia (EC)*

mud puddles  
to splash in  
the toddler's world expands

*Angela Terry, USA*

crumbles for doves  
I wish my vacuum cleaner  
worked like that

*Irina Guliaeva, Russia*

identifying the corpse  
now the fight over the will  
can begin

*Rp Verlaine, USA*

recalling a dream  
and then trying  
not to

*Lori Becherer, USA*

D-Day ceremony –  
storming the beach  
with hot air

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

another broken tooth  
dying  
one piece at a time

*Roger Watson, UK*

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pharmacy . . .  
all the complaints  
I don't have

*Quendryth Young, Australia*

city park  
police sirens enter  
my poetry

*Bryan Rickert, USA*

morning commute  
no one passes  
the police car

*Adelaide Shaw, USA*

after the row  
a crack in my  
Wonder Woman mug

*Lucy Whitehead, UK*

older now  
no longer lusting  
after the red sports car

*Carol Raisfeld, USA*

rainstorm at night  
we argue over the use  
of a flavored condom

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

drunkard song  
the barking of dogs  
in counterpoint

*Valentina Meloni, Italy*

Workers' Day parade  
I release my dad's breath  
from the balloon

*Ernest Wit, Poland*

wiping their feet  
as they enter the house  
forensics team

*John Hawkhead, UK*

colonoscopy  
the doctor lays bare  
the procedure

*Madhuri Pillai, Australia*



botanic garden  
all the plants lined up  
behind name tags

*Debbi Antebi, UK*

climate change  
theorists go  
with the floe

*LeRoy Gorman, Canada*

carving meat . . .  
the butcher's eyes trained  
on his customer's cleavage

*Theresa Okafor, Nigeria*

## Editor's Choice (EC) - Senryu

There were several good submissions this time but the following 4 senryu tickled me pink.

weight room . . .  
a coach slowly lifts  
a cup of coffee

*Ivan Gacina, Croatia*

A wonderful senryu, the first two lines had me wondering what weighty burden the coach could be lifting on Line 3. The anticlimax had me in stitches. And it is all very normal with no contrivances whatsoever. Perhaps the coach was very exhausted. Contrary to popular belief coaches are human.



nude beach—  
everyone wearing a hat  
and flip flops

*Angela Terry, USA*

The first line sets you up. The following two lines tell you precisely what the denizens of the beach are wearing; not what they are not. And why a bunch of people in their birthday suits would even bother with hats and flip flops leaves you gasping. One does get breathless laughing one's head off, you know



algebra class  
we wait one more day  
for y

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, India*

Mathematics is a bore. This much is a universal fact. There couldn't possibly be two opinions about it. And especially algebra. The first line readies the reader for dudgeon. Don't say I didn't warn you, the poet appears to be saying. Then he lets you have it. After learning how to solve equations with a single variable  $x$ , just as you thought it was over at last, they introduce another torture device. That's right, the second variable  $y$ . A commonplace situation is presented so hilariously. You almost want to forgive your math teachers.

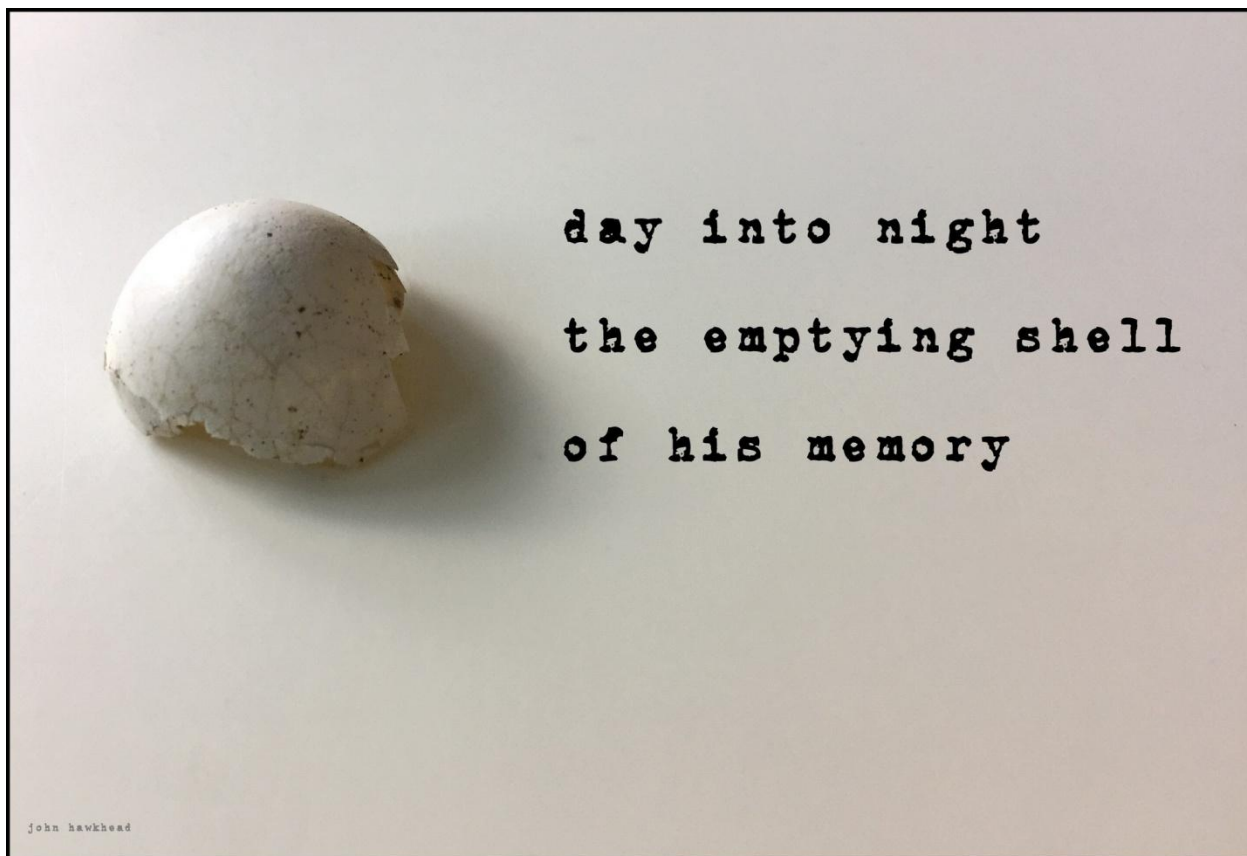


childhood home  
the endless corridor  
in three steps

*Debbi Antebi, UK*

All of us recall our childhood traumas. Like for instance that seemingly endless corridor which took an age to cover with our tiny limbs. And now, to our utter amazement, as adults we discover that it can be covered in just three steps. The joy of discovering that perhaps things were not so bad after all is captured by the poet with a twinkle in her eyes.

Gautam Nadkarni

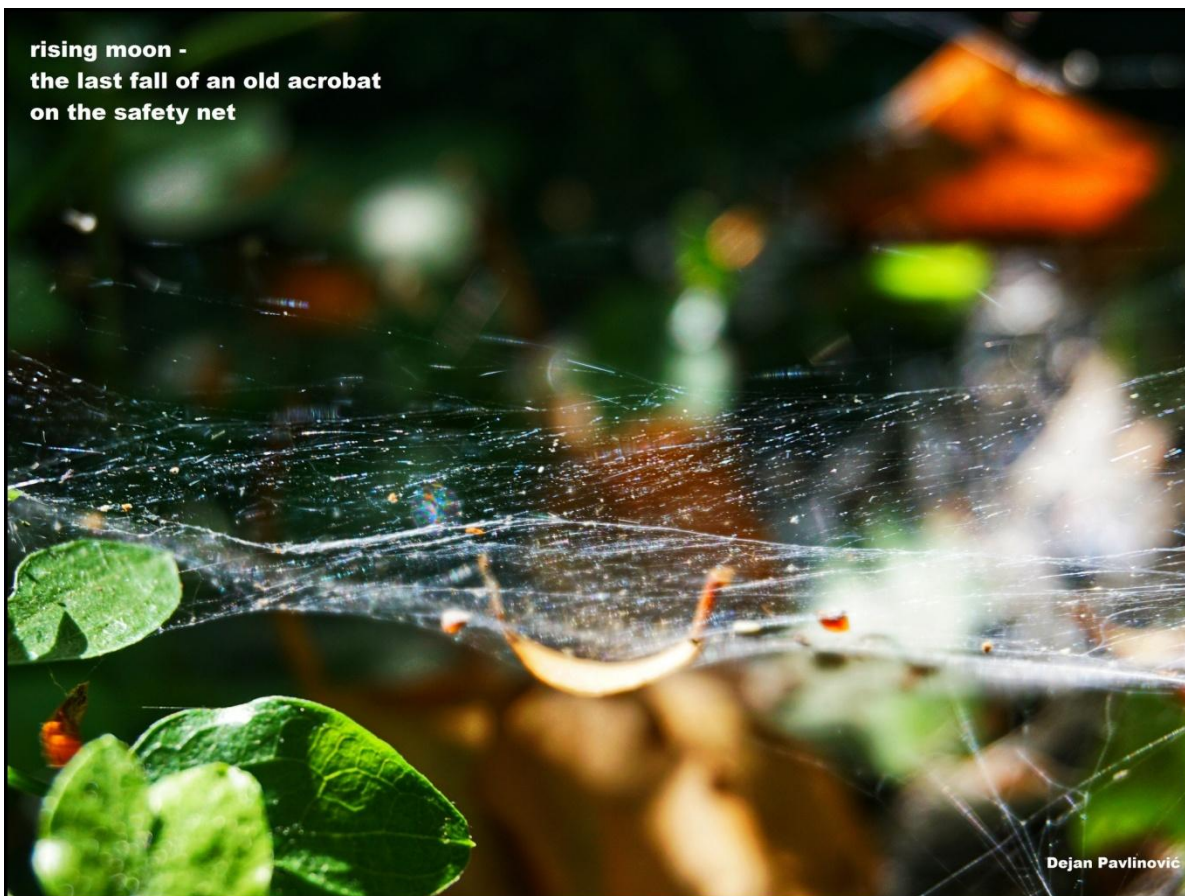


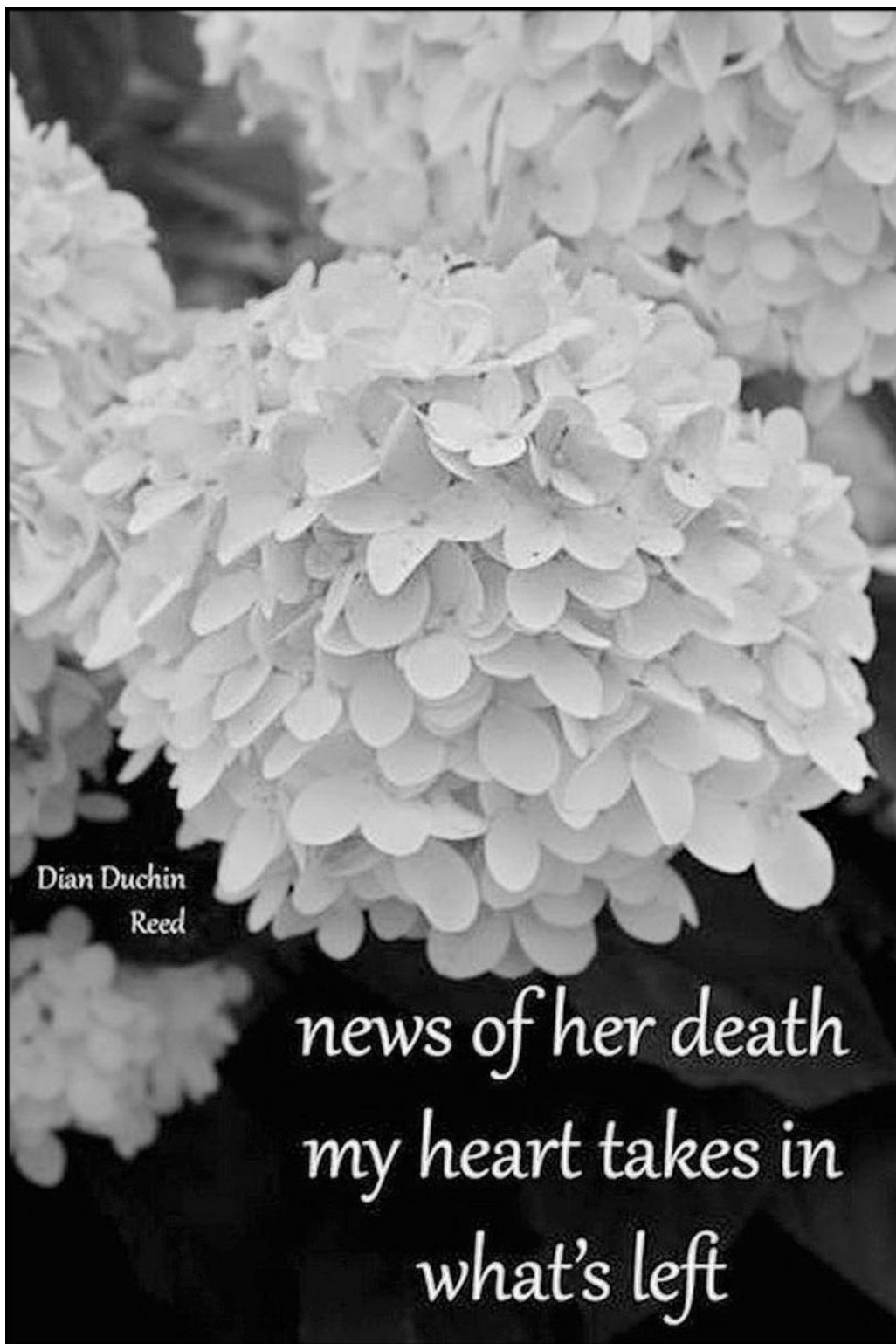
john hawkhead

burn ward . . .  
the pink blossoming  
of new skin



words/image©DStrange





Dian Duchin  
Reed

news of her death  
my heart takes in  
what's left







# Tanka



in and out  
of the rain clouds  
a black eagle glides  
I wake up tethered  
to the intravenous tubes

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

each day now  
I think about myself  
in the third person  
. . . that woman  
with breast cancer

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

an old man alone  
at an empty baseball field  
with his memories  
I waver on the line between  
looking forward and looking back

*Thelma Mariano, Canada*

a charm  
of rufous hummingbirds  
sipping nectar . . .  
wings blur the edges  
between darkness and light

*Debbie Strange Canada (EC)*

outsiders  
somewhere between  
not quite fitting  
into the confines –  
I'll meet you there

*Joanna Ashwell, UK*

ancestor's grave  
the words  
of the family  
telling him how they  
wished he'd been

*Tony Beyer, New Zealand*

putting  
your best face  
forward  
the smiling photos  
in the obituaries

*Marianne Paul, Canada`*

westerly wind  
off the Florida coast  
a watermelon sky  
draws our keening sailboat  
towards Gauguin's bliss

*Pris Campbell, USA (EC)*

a Picasso print  
catches the evening light  
after sixty years  
the colours of our youth  
fade to a mottled grey

*Susan Constable, Canada (EC)*

below the outlook  
a curve capturing  
scant last light  
when I turn, your smile still  
dancing with sun-warmth

*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

our hesitant touch  
has managed to find a bowl  
in a lump of clay  
now taking its chances  
in the kiln

*James Chessing, USA*

delicate petals  
tossing in the wind  
white tea rose  
seeming so fragile  
yet not one has fallen

*Jan Foster, Australia*

snare drum of rain  
on limp leaves  
not yet dropped  
gray wet dreary weeks  
until the beauty of snow

*B.A. France, USA*

counting all my  
stars and success  
I failed  
to record sacrifices  
grandmother patiently bore

*Sarma Radhamari, India*

discarded clothes  
of my rich neighbour  
I wore in secrecy –  
till he knocked on my door  
to share more

*Adjei Agyei-Baah,  
Ghana, New Zealand*

things some deem clutter  
are the treasures of my life  
grandma's prism  
a wooden box of letters  
and two thousand books

*Beverley George, Australia*

I measure  
my horse at his withers . . .  
these hands  
know how to gentle  
everything but you

*Debbie Strange, Canada*

this praying mantas  
did he see it coming—  
I learn  
about our breakup  
from her Twitter feed.

*David Terelinck, Australia*

brain fog  
shunts my poems  
into an endless  
sack of gobbledygook . . .  
this weight of broken words

*Mary Davila, USA*

darkening agent  
this old time ingredient . . .  
my mom always added  
Kitchen Bouquet  
to her brown gravy

*Pat Geyer, USA*

more chill and damp  
I seek spring in garden books,  
seed catalogues  
and find in my kitchen  
the first ant

*Adelaide B Shaw, USA*

something tells me  
we've got visitors coming . . .  
the house is tidy  
the tablecloth is on  
and Mum's stuck in the kitchen

*Keitha Keyes, Australia*

fireflies and moon  
in the ancient words  
of a fairy tale  
Grandma and her grandchildren  
on the same deckchair

*Margherita Petricclone, Italy*

the floor  
in this old house creaks  
at long last  
my aging bones  
have a friend

*Mike Montreuil, Canada*



a steeple crashes  
shrouded in smoke  
the people of Paris  
share the in-breath and out-breath  
of centuries

*Linda Jeannette Ward, USA*

a harbor seal  
sinks beneath the waves  
on a moonlit night  
I dream of you searching  
for one more breath

*Susan Constable, Canada*

the bright orange  
of tiger lilies in bloom  
years later  
I remember how much  
she loved the wildflowers

*Thelma Mariano, Canada*

bonsai  
trained, pruned  
and repotted regularly  
that good job  
in a big company

*Robert Eriandson, USA*

a jute sack  
stuffed with poverty pamphlets  
on his back  
he carries the burden  
of an endless war

*Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan*

the bunny I tamed  
caught beneath the hawk's talons  
– the border closes  
on the child torn from the back  
of her migrant mother

*Linda Jeannette Ward USA*

at sundown  
the child feeds wrigglers  
to an eel  
his joy in nurturing  
this refugee from the sea

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

at the café  
there is room for all –  
elephants  
and gazelles gather  
around the waterhole

*Tony Williams, Australia*

heads in a line  
on our camp-pillow  
Ossie dog  
snores in time  
with his master

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

clutched  
by the sleeping child  
two toy bears  
birthday gifts for him  
and his brother

*Hazel Hall, Australia*

handsel of honey  
fresh from the hive  
unexpected  
the gift of your love  
this late in my life

*Kate King, Australia*  
(handsel: an inaugural gift)

the vibrant twists  
of a blue-nosed dolphin  
the lingering  
sunset of our romance  
that refuses to fade

*Cynthia Rowe, Australia*

playground gate ajar . . .  
shall we climb the monkey bar  
together  
or unwind our years  
on the merry-go-round?

*Michelle Brock, Australia*

ebb tide walk . . .  
pigtails flying, a young child  
leaps along the sand  
fitting each small footprint  
inside those her father made

*Beverley George, Australia*

my steps leave  
a scattering of broken twigs  
bent blades of grass  
if only I could move  
like the moon on water

*Mark Sterling, USA*

paw prints  
under a winter moon  
curling  
into a cardboard box  
this homeless veteran

*Mary Davila, USA*

sitting in the shade  
muscles and joints out of whack  
my old cat  
feigns indifference  
toward an impudent jay

*James Chessing, USA*

pulling open  
the curtains to let  
in the sun  
the creative ways  
I find to use my cane

*Marianne Paul, Canada*

sometimes  
the door swings  
open with an urgency  
only you had  
all paws and flair

*Joanna Ashwell, UK*

stop the clock  
between tick and tock  
I sweep  
my hand along the back  
of the purring cat

*Michelle Brock, Australia*

fiddleheads  
on bracken fern  
unfurling  
leaflets in early light –  
my newborn's open fist

*Marilyn Humbert, Australia*

separated  
by half a hand's  
shadow –  
were we always close  
for as long as we lasted

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

dragon boats  
drumming on the lake . . .  
our hearts  
not always in unison  
but moving forward

*Tony Williams, Australia*

sea shells  
constantly shift  
with incoming waves  
some words I don't want to say  
still in my mind

*Bernard Gieske, USA*

how difficult  
love can be –  
sun's rays  
on icicles hanging  
from the windowsill

*Dianna Teneva, Bulgaria*

why did  
no one warn it would end  
badly  
that lost girl who lured  
nomads to lie by her side

*Ruth Holzer, USA*

the slow burn  
of cheap whisky & blues  
just one song  
away from proving  
her mother was right

*David Terelinck, Australia*

alone  
at the attic window  
seeing, not seeing –  
these winter rain clouds  
the shape of my thoughts

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

butterfly  
on a long turbulent flight path  
making progress  
she once told me one must  
navigate on your own

*B.A. France, USA*

a year  
living as a widow  
my life in my hands  
I search memories  
for his wise advice

*Adelaide B Shaw, USA*

moles dig  
underground, heads  
in darkness –  
I plod along as if  
I know where I'm going

*Bernard Gieske, USA*

monks sit  
in the temple  
incense rising –  
wisdom needs  
no words

*David He, China*



distilled  
in the late summer breeze  
the scent of musk rose  
what need for incense  
to the ancestral gods

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

the weight  
of this moment  
alone  
a red leaf  
zigzags to the ground

*Chen-ou Liu, Canada*

## Editor's Choices (EC) - tanka

Thank you once again to all who submitted tanka for this issue of *Cattails*. It's always a privilege to read and if possible, include your work.

One of the biggest challenges (and the most enjoyable even though your heart is in your mouth as you set about achieving this) is the collation of everyone's work into a sequence so that this-goes-with-that, and once linked, shifts to another subject, or way of seeing the same thing. A lot has been written about the pivot line, and the way it separates a tanka into two haiku-like sections yet remains as a whole, and melds deeper conceptions into it, but seldom about how similar the collation of tanka is to this when linked together in sequences or a collection of poetry in journals.

I was taken by two of the tanka (see the Editor's Choice) in this section.

What I appreciate most of all is the chance to sit with your tanka longer and the reminder to do this when reading selections elsewhere, and sink further into the subtleties each one offers because of the time spent time with them.



What would you do if there are two tanka that talk to each other to such an extent, they seem to go together when choosing a *Cattails Editor's Choice*—these tanka for instance?

westerly wind  
off the Florida coast  
a watermelon sky  
draws our keening sailboat  
towards Gauguin's bliss

*Pris Campbell, USA*

a Picasso print  
catches the evening light  
after sixty years  
the colours of our youth  
fade to a mottled grey

*Susan Constable, Canada*

While it's *not* normal to award two tanka together (as one) because they are on such good speaking terms, I do so for several reasons—not only for the compatibility between them. Nonetheless, both feature renowned visual artists (Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso), have a pivot line ('a watermelon sky' and 'after sixty years') and alliteration ('westerly wind' and 'a Picasso print') on the first line.

Pris Campbell draws our attention to a tropical sky Gauguin would quite possibly have been moved to blissfully paint, having lived and worked in Tahiti. Likewise, Susan focuses on the evening light in the way an artist would, and both highlight the use of colour that leads to a metaphorical reflection that deepens understanding. Even though side-by-side these tanka enhance the other, each of them catches the eye for their individual skill and sentiment.

I was struck by Pris' word use 'keening', for instance, which is an Irish word for 'wailing' and with wind in its sails, how well this describe the sound of a sailboat blustering along in the breeze. Gauguin was unhappy if away from Tahiti. Easy to imagine he keened when leaving its shores.

Susan's subtle sentiment is equally unusual and arresting. The light she sites is no ordinary light, it is the 'evening light' that occurs at the end of the day and highlights Picasso's print in such a way, we take a second look, view it quite differently. So too youthfulness doesn't appeal in quite the same way for many of us as we age even though cherished at the time and revered in this day and age. Growing older myself, and living more mindfully than I was capable in my younger days, it's charm . . . 'fades to a mottled grey'. Picasso's youthful, life-like drawings morphed into abstraction, as he grew older. It's this work that gained the most attention.



a charm  
of rufous hummingbirds  
sipping nectar  
wings blur the edges  
between darkness and light

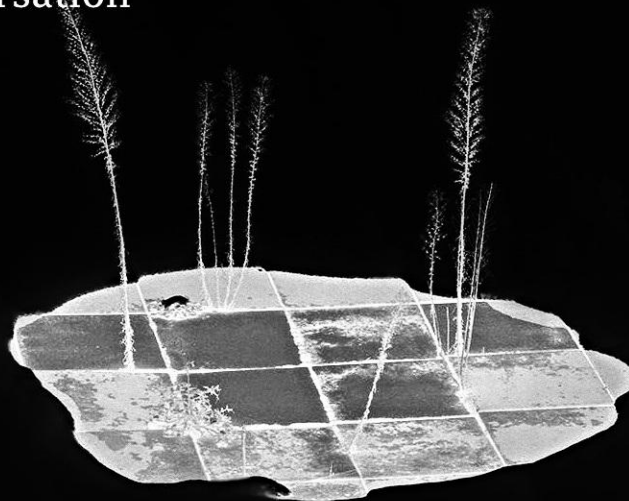
*Debbie Strange, Canada*

What stands out again is this poet's unusual use of language in her tanka. Instead of writing 'a flock' of rufous humming birds', Debbie penned 'a charm'. And charming they are, for who has not been spellbound by these birds suspended mid-air, wings a-blur as they sink their beaks into its the center of blooms, their reddish-brown countenance glowing. While the simplest of language works best in tanka and affords more dreaming room, so too creative use of words that affords multiple understanding, a poetic device Debbie has mastered in a many a tanka.

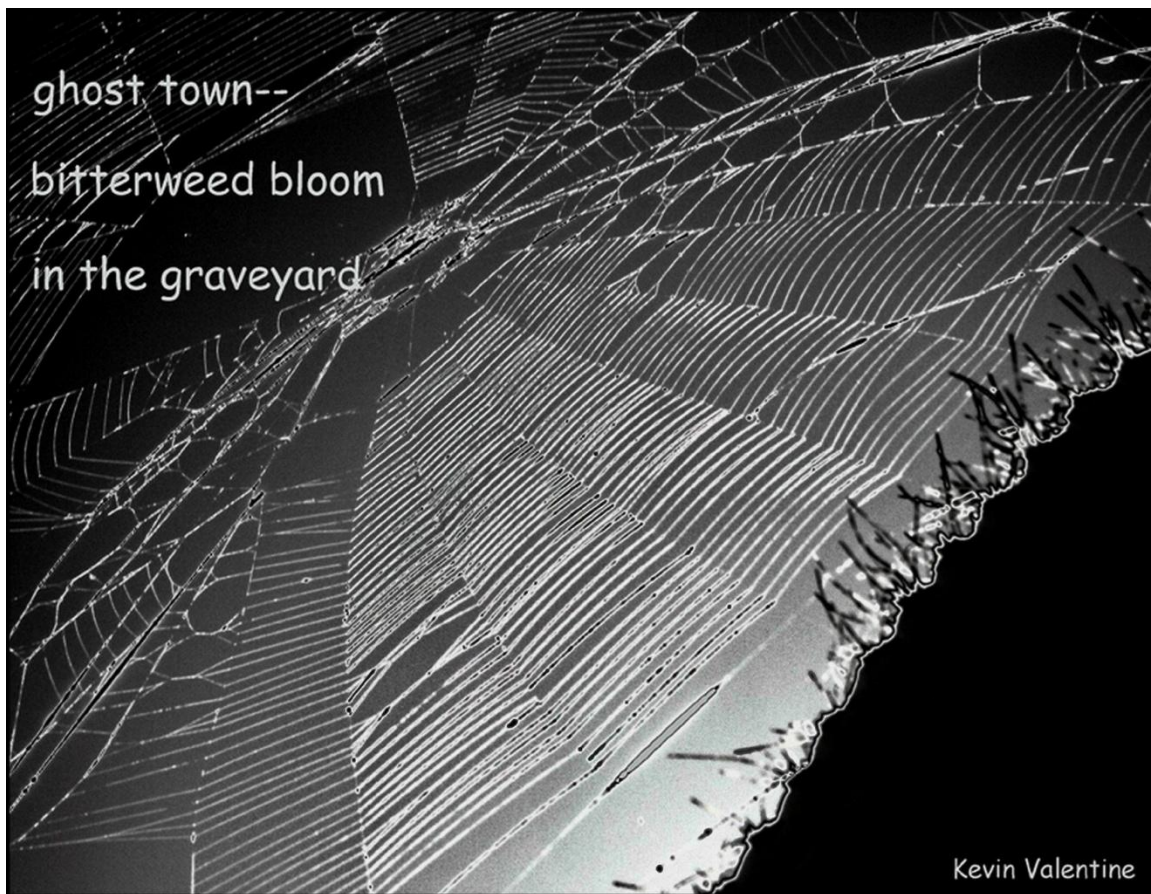
This tanka is a 'charm' in in itself.

Kathy Kituai

dementia...  
my mother's words melt  
in our conversation

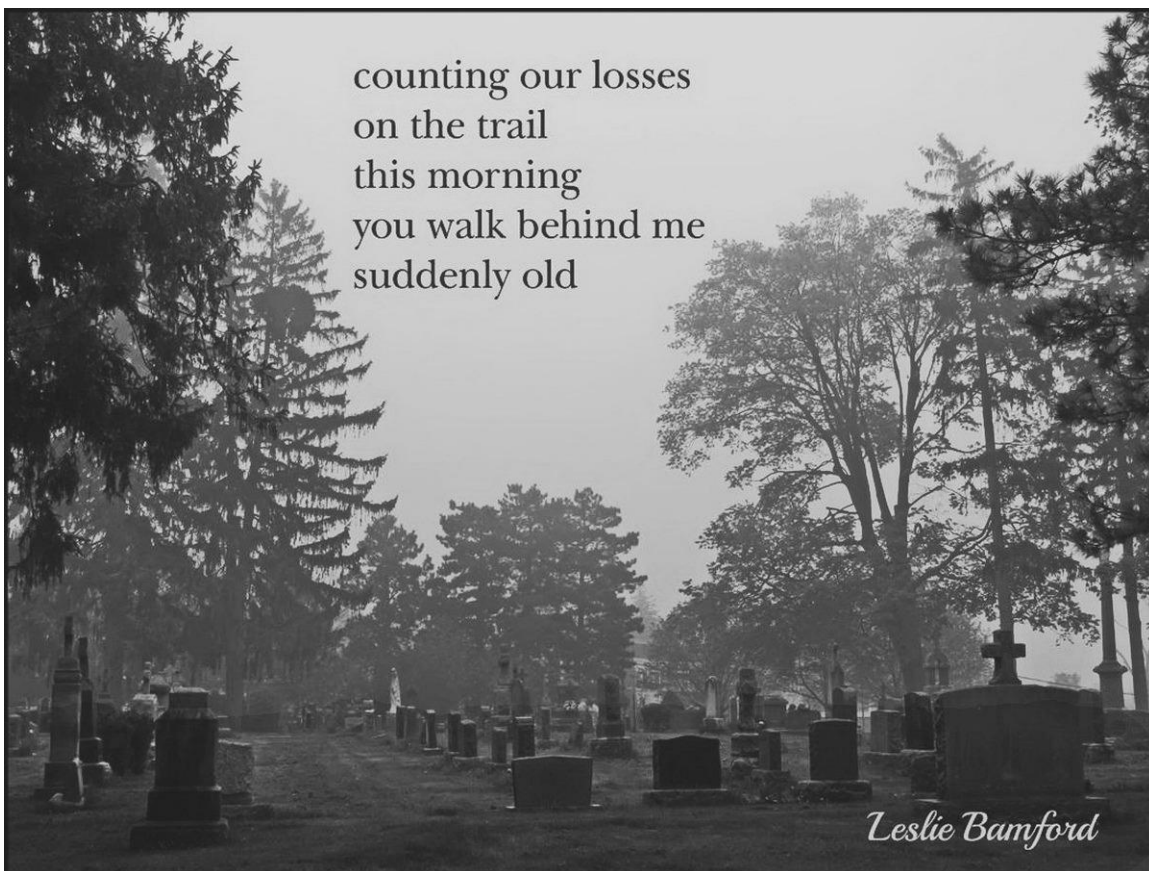


Goran Gatalica, haiku  
Tomislav Veić, photography



ghost town--  
bitterweed bloom  
in the graveyard

Kevin Valentine



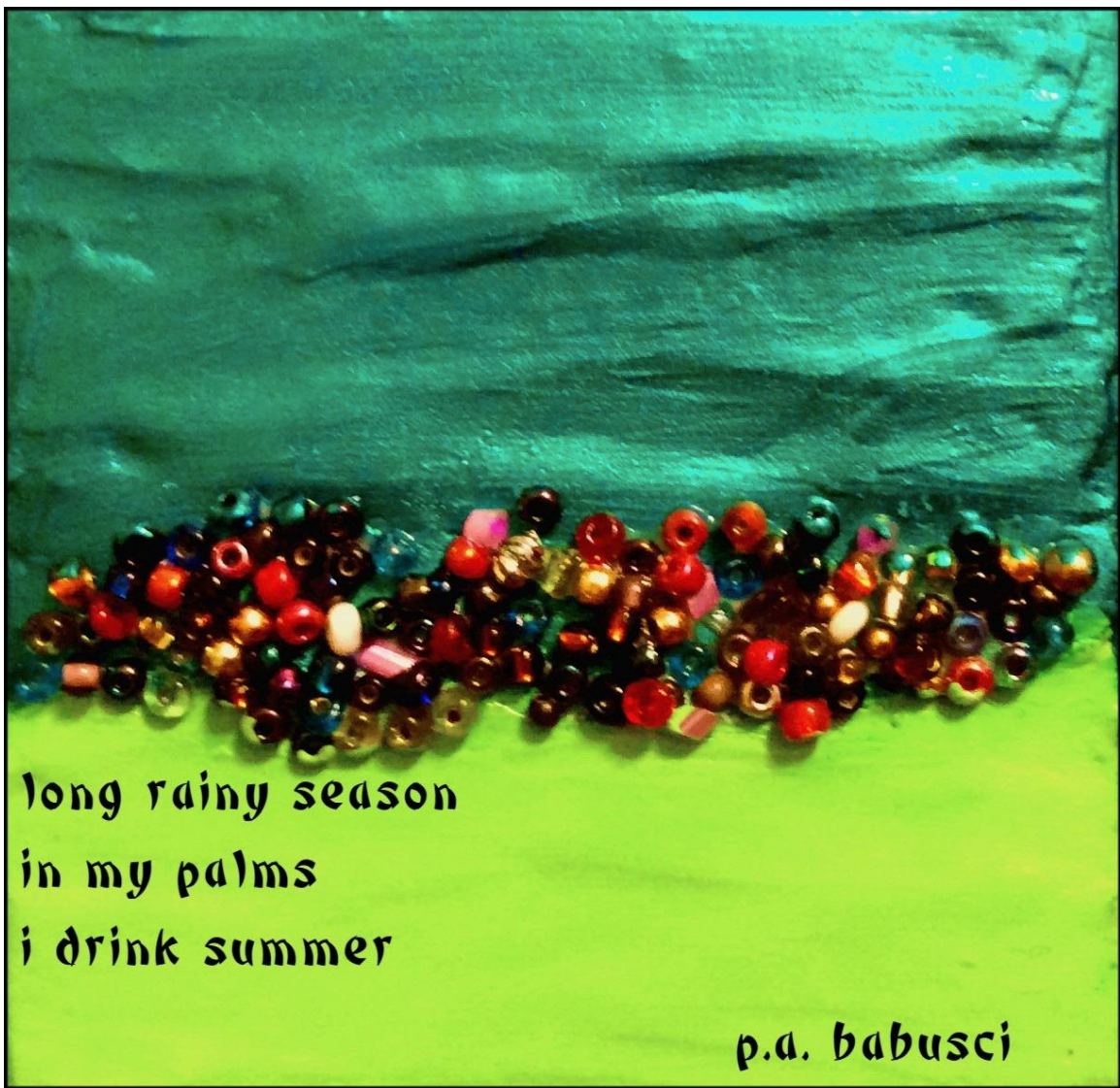
counting our losses  
on the trail  
this morning  
you walk behind me  
suddenly old

*Leslie Bamford*









long rainy season  
in my palms  
i drink summer

p.a. babusci

# Haibun



mountain

## Retirement

*Barnabas I. Adeleke, Nigeria*

Father's love for children suddenly became prominent after he retired from his exacting government job. As the de facto head of the large extended family as well as the most educated, he would remind any relative who came to pay their respects how much he missed seeing their children.

“How tall is Tólá now? What class is Yétúndé in? Can Bíólá read yet?” Father asked Bóyè, his stepbrother, the village tinker and a notorious political goon.

“Let them come spend the weekends with me. It's important I supervise how they're getting along in their education.”

hardly stopping  
to regard the cuckoo . . .  
daily commuter

## **Morning Prayer**

*Marilyn Ashbaugh, USA*

A huge wooden rosary encircles her waist and the ends disappear in the folds of her long black robe. In the back of her classroom, she wraps one end around her hand, using the wooden cross and beads as improvised nunchucks. The backs of my head and hands are her favorite targets: one for being too noisy in class, another for being too quiet.

playground tag  
cottonwood fluff  
caresses my face

## **Abiku**

*Taofeek Ayeyemi, Nigeria*

I'm in the sitting room of the wise man waiting for my turn to be called into the inner room. All the seats are occupied, so I lean on the back of a sofa. His voice rings out of the bedchamber, "She has come the fourth time. By this I mean you've given birth to her four times. She keeps dying and coming back – to cause you grief – she's an Abiku. If she dies again, she'll no longer return and you may remain barren, for life. So, she must stay. And for her to stay, you'll take her placenta with these voodoo and bury them either in a dunghill or at a crossroad or in a dead path once frequented. And this particular one, you'll take it to the Iroko tree by 3:00 AM to appease the spirits. If she stays, you'll conceive afterwards, and give birth to two boys. Go! You have a few hours to do this."

For the past two hours, it has been scary (but almost certainly true) news from the wise man. It seems the movement of the sun today is towards an awful sphere. It's better I leave and come back on a better day; sometimes, it's good to behave like the Abikus.

the cry  
of two fledglings . . .  
a fallen nest

Abiku: children born to die; children that die and are reborn; the spirits of children who die before reaching puberty.

## **Discalculia**

*Amanda Bell, Ireland*

I like to think lying down, but it's impossible to sustain a train of thought in the scanner. All it will allow for is flashes: what if I swallow my tongue? What if I choke? Twenty minutes in, and I find I can quell the panic by counting. Your mother taught us to say 'Mississippi' after each short number to make it last for one second. I wonder how many seconds there are in the remaining twenty minutes. I keep counting, struggle to keep track. I wonder will the results show a cold, hard stone lodged in my brain: something to explain the way I feel about you now. And then it's over. They eject me from the tube, unbuckle the restraint, and I leave. The results arrive three days later. There are no significant abnormalities.

still struggling  
to make the figures add up—  
the phone rings out

**Life**

*John Budan, USA*

The young woman keeps her head pressed against the tinted window and nobody says a word during the entire ride. At the final intersection a child plays with a dog on the lawn of a home bordered with lilacs. Images of a former life drift by, trees, telephone poles, stores, cars, a bicycle, all the images she will never see again. We make a sharp turn into a checkpoint and enter a grey building without windows. I sign some documents while the deputies take off the shackles. Our cargo delivered, she never looked up and we said no goodbyes.

on a narrow path  
someone walked  
so long ago



## **Hazardous Duty**

*Andy Burkhart, USA*

After 33 years of carrying the mail, I've encountered most of the hazards that a mailman will confront. I've been cursed out by customers, I've been attacked by dogs, cats and birds, I've been sunburned and frostbitten, I've worked in 105 degree summers and 20 below zero winters, I've worked in torrential downpours and huddled on porches during severe lightning and labored through 18 inches of snow, I've been pooped on by birds and stepped in piles of dog poop, I've had bugs fly into every facial orifice, I've walked face first into spider webs (you wouldn't believe how difficult it is to get spider web off your face and glasses), I've been stung by wasps and bees, I've pepper-sprayed a pit bull and been cornered by a chihuahua (no wait that was the other way around). But nothing has raised the hair on the back of my neck like almost stepping on a snake. It's summer and I'm crossing the yard to the next house which has a knee-high stone wall bordering the walk up to the house. I step over the wall, look down and see that I am about 6 inches from stepping square onto a 2 foot snake warming itself on the walk. To this day I don't know how I avoided stepping on that snake, but I think I levitated.

lilac season  
I share a blossom  
with a bumblebee

**She Goes On . . .**

*Matthew Caretti, USA*

. . . through the mud and the grass and the puddle onto the sidewalk never thinking of the fire ants or the rusted nail or the shard of smoked glass.

her bare feet

. . . to the hardwood porch and the carpet and the cool marble now thinking only of the chipping paint and darkened stains and cracked edges.

the whole wide world

. . . to remember what has been forgotten, painted over in the making of her life, removing her worn shoes and stepping again onto the Earth's spring lawn.

of wonder

## **A Door Left Ajar . . .**

*Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan*

There's a tremor in Bida's voice on the phone. I know immediately there has been another incident. "I'll be on the first bus," she says.

Bida is a neighbour in my ancestral village, married to a retired teacher, who has drunken bouts. She frequently comes to stay at my place, following what I imagine, are fierce and violent quarrels with her husband. She once arrived with a deep gash on a markedly swollen right arm and at the city hospital maintained she had injured herself while cutting wood.

The thought of seeking help doesn't appeal to her. "You don't have to put up with him." I plead. All she divulges is a heartfelt, "I haven't told him where I am. Let's see how he manages without me." Sometimes, it is a passionate outcry, "He is so selfish!"

My attempts to talk about her husband are fielded with breathtaking adroitness. "You need a new altar cloth," she announces removing the offering bowls and butter lamps and proceeding to dust and polish the cabinets and drawers. Ignoring my embarrassment at her generosity, she spreads out a richly embroidered raw silk piece and says, "I made it for this altar."

I observe her quietly. She is in stitches when my daughter shows her memes on the smart phone and poses for Selfies with aplomb. To my surprise, Bida faces no objection when she chides my daughter for throwing her washed and unwashed clothes in an indistinguishable heap on the floor. With calm determination Bida resolves my misgivings about what she will do while we are at work and my daughter is in school. Over the course of her sojourn she finds curtains to mend, tends to my meagre collection of plants in the garden and without any flourish prepares mouth-watering dishes with ingredients conjured out of her large cloth bag - smoked tamarillos, chanterelle, morel, Sichuan pepper and yak cheese. The aroma fills every nook and cranny of the house.

“She does know, doesn’t she, that we *can* get *food* here in the shops?” my husband jokes. I watch in amazement as he later eats his words relishing the various delicious preparations Bida makes.

I have learned not to suggest trips to the shopping mall or eating out of an evening. But Bida has a certain weakness for Korean soap operas. She often makes a large bowl of steamed soya beans sprinkled with chili flakes and coarse salt and settles down to the latest episodes. I treat her to a video of Train to Busan, which both enthral and appalls her in equal measure. “Look how clean and swift their trains are!” she exclaims. Willing the protagonist and his young daughter to outwit the zombies she intones, “Om̐ Āḥ Hūṃ Vajra Guru Padma Siddhi Hūṃ,” the Padmasam-bhava mantra. Her eyes light up when my husband brings tubs of her favourite ice cream - chocolate mint and pistachio.

She announces her departure casually. “He called. I am leaving tomorrow on the first bus.”

Her presence like the aroma of her food lingers in our home.

late summer woods  
somewhere in the fog  
repeated calls of a Sāmbhar

tracery of trees  
shadows gather  
in the grey gloaming

tang of smoke  
a moth’s blurred flight  
into the butter lamp

## **Belonging to the Dark**

*Glenn Coats, USA*

Some nights, if the wind is right, I drift in my rowboat down past the Marina and I can hear the voices of people around campfires. Their language is one I have never heard before. I drift deeper into the cove where the water is shallow and dense with lily pads. I cast my fishing line through spaces between them; hop my plug like a frog and listen for a splash. I look up at the trees in the distance and there's a dragon's head in the sky with a twisted mouth and wide eyes. In the morning, I row back to the very same spot and there is just a row of ragged pines bent from years of wind and ice.

low country  
the fog fades  
into deer

## **Ladybugs**

*Colleen M. Farrelly, USA*

The red picket wall is gone, and we dangle our feet over the edge. You're wearing a tutu; I'm in boy shorts. We dangle our feet over the edge. You jabber about the swing set and merry-go-round, your curls almost white in the waning afternoon light. I watch and listen, wondering what would happen if I kicked off a shoe while Mom pulls the wagon, finally without the red guardrail. Embracing the new freedom as grown-up preschoolers, we dangle our feet over the edge.

two ladybugs  
perched on your knee –  
one falls off

## **By A Thread**

*Ignatius Fay, Canada*

Dad and I are at the kitchen table when mom comes up from the basement. The heaviness of her tread warns us.

She storms into the kitchen, her favorite and most expensive angora sweater in her hands. A stickler about how her laundry is done, she does her own delicates by hand and lays them out flat for drying. Tonight she put her hand-wash in the dryer by mistake, and the sweater will now barely fit one of my sister's dolls. Mom has no one to blame, an irritation all on its own.

To make matters worse, Dad and I start to laugh. Well, it's funny! This stiff, inflexible miniature, until recently a soft, warm sweater. Somehow, the humor is lost on mom.

clothesline downed  
in the spring wind storm  
underwear sale

**The Game (EC)**

*Marilyn Humbert – Australia*

It's a sell-out. Marshalls have closed the gates. Spectators are restless, chanting for the game to begin.

On the roof above the grandstand, he waits for the sun to rise above his sightline.

abattoir . . .  
stockyards  
tightly packed



## Remains

*Alex Jankiewicz, USA*

Sometimes, there are voices from the past that keep me up at night...

When I was a kid, I once stayed with my aunt and uncle on their farm during my summer vacation. He was my favorite uncle. Over the weeks there, he became my idol.

On the day before my parents came to pick me, he handed me a .22 rifle and told me to go out and find some rabbits.

I found one and had it in range but couldn't pull the trigger. I whispered to it to run. I begged it. It just sat there. I prayed for it to escape before I took the shot. I lowered the rifle knowing my uncle would probably be disappointed in me.

After walking back to the house, I told my uncle about what had happened. He only said one word to me, "Stupid," and then walked away with the rifle.

I can still see the scornful look on his face.

Our relationship was never the same after that day, but I never understood why. After a while, we just lost contact.

Years later, at his wake, my aunt tells me how he never took that rifle off the wall again after that day, and how he never forgave himself for what he had done.

My aunt then gave me an old photograph. She took it on the first day of my visit that summer. It was a picture of my uncle and me. I read what was written on the back:

*To my favorite nephew,  
I'm Sorry.  
Your Uncle.*

“He kept it in his wallet all those years,” she explained.

moonlight  
on a gravestone –  
faded words

## **Raindrops**

*Eric A. Lohman, USA*

I was sort-of shopping downtown one day – really just staring at shelves and side-stepping slowly, with my mind elsewhere. I heard a small shuffling noise at my side and when I turned a little, thinking I might be in someone’s way, there she was next to me, doing the same thing. The first thing I noticed, as soon as I recognized her, was the lack of a smell. She was dressed in clean clothes and had bathed and combed her hair. I thought about the times I had seen her in the ER, writhing and twitching on a stretcher, the crack cocaine still wearing off and I wondered at the effort and time it must have taken her community team and caregivers working together, to get her looking and functioning this good.

I began to feel a swell of pride at the thought that I had played some role in winning this small victory. Turning to greet her, I wore my biggest smile.

“Fuck you!” she said matter-of-factly and turned to hobble off on her cane, muttering more curses under her breath.

mono no aware . . .  
raindrops wiped away  
the second they land

## **Parrot Pie**

*Marietta McGregor, Australia*

One hot day uncle Eric asks me if I'll help him in the orchard. Rosellas are into his nectarines. He says he'll give me a sugared almond if I will. He gets his shotgun. We walk along the path behind the woodshed. He lost an eye at Gallipoli so his aim is poor. He shows me what to do. Above us, a troop of brightly-plumaged birds feeds steadily, raining scraps and occasionally whole fruit into the tall summer grass. He rests the shotgun along my pointing arm. There's a tremendous bang beside my left ear and I jump. The flock flies off into the pines, leaving a scatter of feathers in the grass, pretty, but I don't want to touch them. The noise fades into an angry bee buzz that doesn't go away when I shake my head. We walk back to the house. Uncle Eric gives me some pink and white sweets, then goes to his bedroom for a nap. He'll take out his glass eye as he always does. I'm not allowed to see him then. I imagine a ragged black hole in his face, like those in the parrots.

high summer  
the different hues  
as blood dries

## **Shadows**

*Robert B McNeill, USA*

Last year (2018) was the wettest on record in Hampshire County, West Virginia. Even more rain in early 2019 has further impacted outdoor work, to say the least. Indeed, one farmer from there stated that if it quit raining tomorrow, it would be eight weeks before he could drive a tractor across his field.

groundhog day  
our neighbor's duck  
sees his shadow

## **Pulling Up Short**

*Gautam Nadkarni, India*

I had always prided myself as a math wizard. I had a way with numbers. I never could understand why Dad objected to my getting zero in the term exams. Ah! The romance and intrigue of the number zero! Ask any mathematician.

The numerologist at the street corner advised me that zero was my lucky number. So accordingly, while buying myself a lottery ticket for a prize of ten million rupees, after sifting through a thick pile, I zeroed in on one with the maximum number of zeroes. Of course I was confident of winning. What bothered me was how to spend the swag.

Friends suggested that I invest the money wisely for my old age. I had a horse laugh. I felt that nothing could be more ridiculous. I had other plans. More pragmatic and realistic. I wondered whether to purchase a yacht or a private jet. Having always had my feet firmly planted on terra firma I decided on the yacht.

I imagined myself in a Hawaiian shirt and Bermuda shorts, a straw hat placed at a rakish angle atop my head, and a Cuban cigar clenched between my teeth. I strutted about on the deck cockily and was rudely brought back to the present when the lottery ticket vendor announced that the results of the draw had been declared. I was counting the currency notes already as I dashed forth to buy the printed results.

When I saw the results everything I'd heard about corruption in high places came flooding into my mind. Watergate and the Bofors scam fr'instance. Why else would I not win a Paisa.

I had to thank my lucky stars I hadn't gone in for the Hawaiian shirt and the Bermudas.

newspaper headlines . . .  
the pickpocket clicks his tongue  
at the corruption

## **Conception of Love**

*Veronika Novak, Canada*

My father became so enraged when she told him; he beat her bloody with the intent of making her miscarry. A trip to the hospital confirmed a broken nose, but it didn't matter. She still had me in her womb.

Spewing incessant threats that he would take her life, she appeased my father and agreed to go to the abortion clinic to terminate the pregnancy.

At the abortion clinic, safe behind closed doors, my mother broke down to the attending nurse, making it very clear that she did not want to terminate the pregnancy, but rather her husband was forcing her. Empathetic to my mother's plea for help, the nurse gave her the address of a shelter for abused women and ushered her out the back door. My mother ran.

cusps of autumn  
I return to my  
first breath

## **Briars**

*Eduard Schmidt-Zorner, Ireland*

I had to clear the rhododendron in the back garden from blackberry briars. They grow through the shrubs, protrude into a void, stretching into emptiness, looking for the first rays of the sun. Later I see blood droplets on my arms. The thorns of the briars scratched me, subtly, imperceptibly.

A memory of the liberation from suffocating, constricting, weaving ropes. A memory of veracity. Briars protect the blackberry; do I penetrate into their sphere? Uninvited?

In the late summer, they offer me dark blue blackberries. Am I ungrateful?

Briars hold me by the jacket like a woman. "Wait. But wait". - "Oh, leave me. Just leave me".

Thin arms, like the arms of an abandoned consumptive lover, who does not want to accept a decision, a destiny.

The rhododendron seems to be freed, able to reach up, to stretch itself, to expand. Probably because its horizon has increased, it is no longer held down, the picture has been decluttered, cleaned out, no, cleared up.

The first bee flies in fast circles. Have I prevented those early blossoms from developing, those blossoms the bee needs as first nourishment?

My way is unobstructed to stroll freely among bushes and shrubs.

I rest and look to the mountains. There is still snow on top.

Freedom. Freedom of movement. Unimpeded growth.

At the bottom, unspectacular, a wild pansy, asks for attention, like a fruit, which is not



yet ripe or a letter, which is not yet finished, has not yet a satisfactory end, no concluding sentence.

Does the tree know when the fruit is ripe? No, it is the gardener.

It is not a perfect garden, which I desire. I just take corrective action and take a side.

traces of past time

a broken fence

lost in brambles

## **Cruising in the Rain**

*Adelaide B. Shaw, USA*

It comes in a swoosh, no sprinkles, no gentle drops just swoosh, the opening of sluice gates, a dam giving way, the spilling of Niagara.

The aloneness is what shakes me, what builds fear and uncertainty. No more the easy cruising of two together.

Anxiety slithers down my spine, through every bone, nerve, muscle, sinew. In the three second clearing between wiper swings. I squint to see ahead.

The click, click, click across the glass intoxicates, and somewhere in the rhythm I hear your voice, the sure confidence in tone and timbre.

Be patient. Keep your eyes on the road, your mind focused. Each turn of the wheels moves you forward, a mile, a yard, a foot. Don't measure. Don't count. Go with the tide.

a smooth day  
river gulls ride the rails  
of a cruise ship

## **Vinyl**

*John Soules, Canada*

there's something about listening to old albums

the way they hiss and pop

the way the tone arm rises, swings over, then pauses to let the needle float down to the surface

the way the grooves release ghosts of old friends and lovers in smoke-filled basements and rented rooms

winter skies  
the skeletons  
of trees

## Learning Curves

*Ashoka Weerakkody, Sri Lanka*

A nostalgic moment as they all gathered around at length relating the already known stories of school days long gone but still well and alive albeit wanting a shot of vitamin once in a while like what was presently on the table in tall glasses.

One old boy was talking about his European experience learning medicine, spelling out the big names of doctors he studied under and acquainted with which made others feel somewhat inadequate and unimportant.

The old girl sitting separately from the menfolk talked savouring her journalistic journeys that took her to the top of each and every famous tower from Empire State through Burj Khalifa.

As the evening wore on all of them joined in with their success stories of life thus far and finally it was the turn of the man with a bald head and wearing dark glasses looking less of a "celebrity" than others.

He smiled kindly and said, "My best years were spent carrying out orders and instructions of people much below me." As the others looked sympathetically at him he explained that he yearned not to be above but remain level with such people as soon as possible for safety's sake.

And he finally said, "When at last I reach the tarmac, they then remain several feet above me . . . in the Tower!"

childhood dream

written on my very first pen

a Pilot

**It (EC)**

*Ernest Wit – Poland*

It eschews both cheap and expensive effects. It doesn't stick out or give interviews or appear on TV. It doesn't want publicity. It doesn't wish to be noticed. Invisible and inaudible, it's been in progress for a while.

living  
in the moment of it  
lavender swallowtails

## Editor's Choices (EC) – haibun

### It

*Ernest Wit – Poland*

It eschews both cheap and expensive effects. It doesn't stick out or give interviews or appear on TV. It doesn't want publicity. It doesn't wish to be noticed. Invisible and inaudible, it's been in progress for a while.

living  
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The concept of "It" is not new. Its origins could be traced to a book by Groddeck called, "The Book of It". Freud used this to describe the Id.

I first came across "It" during my high school years in the 1970s. It was in a song called "It" written and performed by the progressive rock group Genesis and was the final song of their 1974 album "The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway." My teenaged take was that "It" was life. As I grew older, "It" became much more. As we read Ernest Wit's haibun, there is a sense that the concept of "Id" is not present.

Wit reminds us that "It" is still around us. And, "It" seems to be wary of our 21<sup>st</sup> century, even if, "It" is the moment we experience in our haiku world.



## The Game

*Marilyn Humbert – Australia*

It's a sell-out. Marshalls have closed the gates. Spectators are restless, chanting for the game to begin.

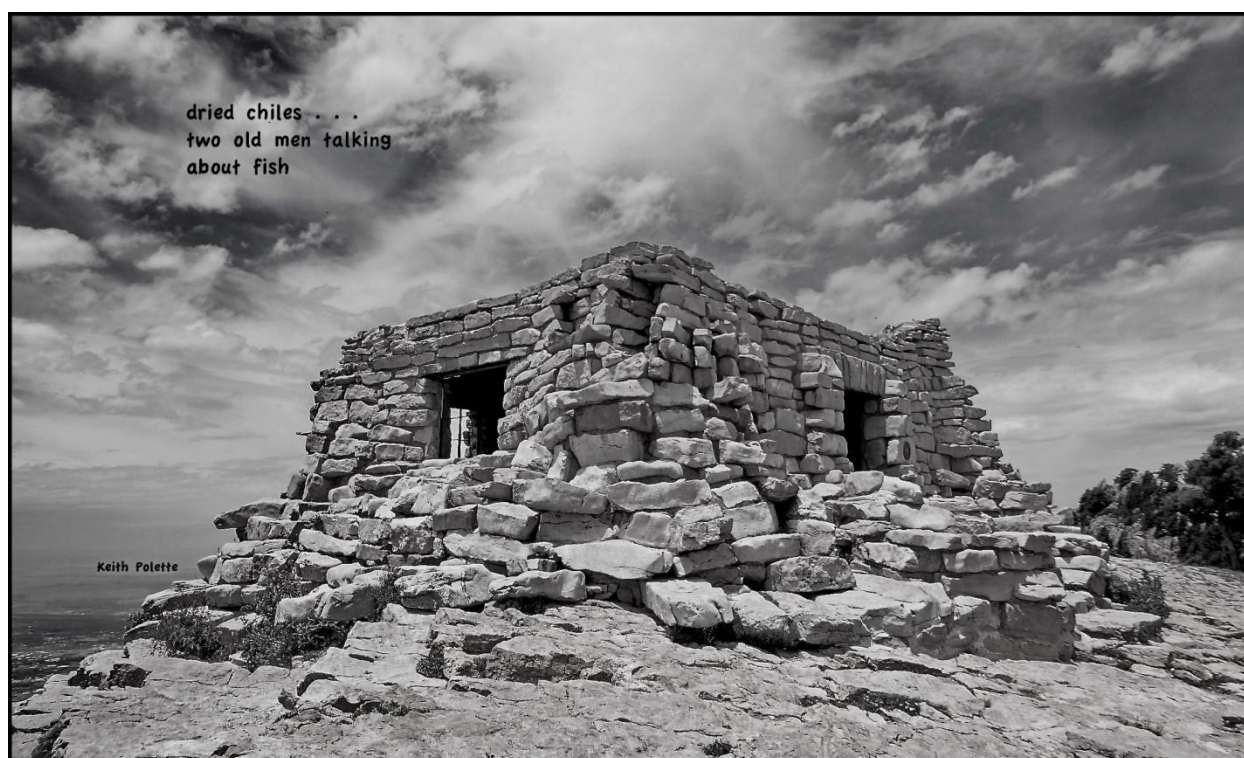
On the roof above the grandstand, he waits for the sun to rise above his sightline.

abattoir . . .  
stockyards  
tightly packed

This short haibun by Marilyn Humbert, begins by casually describing the pre-game activities one sees at a sporting event. It doesn't matter what type of game. At first read, we assume the man is a policeman hired to "work" the game. But, is he?

The metaphor of the abattoir haiku is perfect. Tens of thousands of sports fans waiting.

Mike Montreuil







faint music  
drifts from next door  
in my heart  
after a quarter century  
of bed-bound I still dance

photo: joanne  
yarborough

tanka: pris campbell ell



Valentine's day  
chained memories  
love long gone

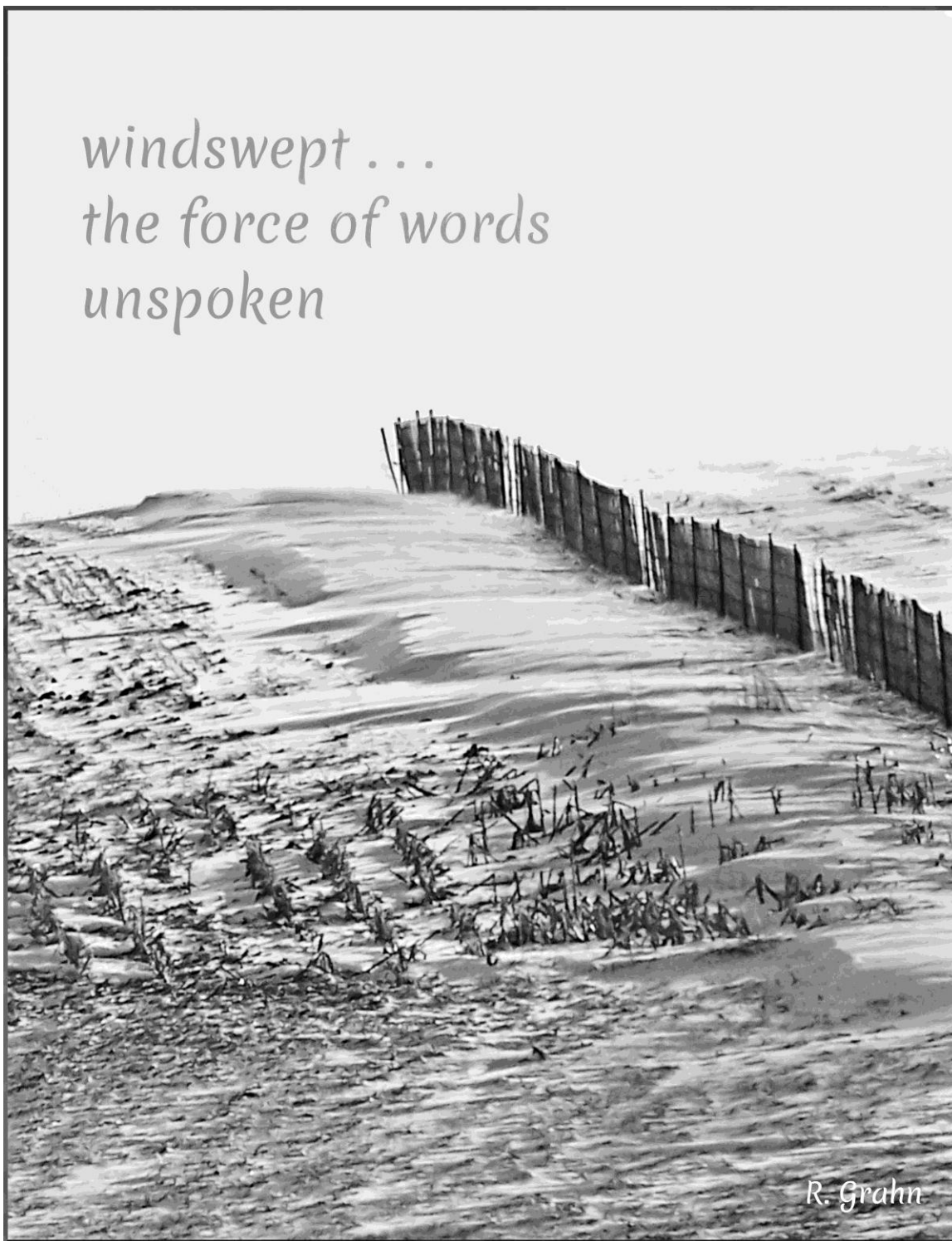
Authors: Franjo Ordanić (Haiku), Sandra Šamec (Photo)



her freckles  
he draws a map  
of his escape

Radostiņa Dragostinova

windswept . . .  
the force of words  
unspoken



R. Grahn

# Youth



## Youth Corner – tears in rain

When kindly invited by Kala Ramesh to compile the Youth Corner, I started to think about the capturing of moments in haiku. The late Rutger Hauer in his classic Blade Runner monologue, hints at the fleeting nature of existence:

*I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain . . .*

The distinctiveness of each poet's experience, even when looking at the same scene or object, means that there are seemingly endless interpretations of nature and the human experience. For me, the things I've seen that you people wouldn't believe are:

*Shooting stars on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched sunbeams glitter on the waves near the Oshima Gate.*

That visit to Matsushima Bay in 2018, inspired by Basho's travels, was an experience in living completely in the moment. Watching the night sky and sunrise over the Bay was the closest thing to nirvana I will experience. I felt at peace for the first time in my life. Long live crepuscular rays!



When teaching students about haiku, I get them to look at the commonplace with a fresh eye and interpret what they see in a haiku. The results are often quite astounding as they capture the moment in a new way. Here are the winners of the Year 7 Haiku Competition (age 11), with poems created during my workshops on Wednesday 18 October 2018 as part of the Woodbridge Youth Poetry Festival organised by poet and English teacher, Alexandra Davis.

### 1st Place - James H

damp green grass  
summer stampedes  
my way

A simply superb haiku with clear juxtaposition of seasons and wonderful second line alliteration. The upbeat nature of the poem is also redolent of summer days and when read aloud, it has such a gentle rhythm.

**2nd Place - Ellen H**

shape of glass  
buried in the ground  
filled with filth

I'm always looking for poems that stand out from the rest and dare to be different. Ellen's haiku takes a simple image (buried bottle) and makes it mysterious (shape of glass) before the lovely alliteration in the final line. The word "filth" really conjures up the image of dirt and grime: perhaps a strong metaphor for something else? Whatever the meaning, the poem has terrific rhythm read aloud and clever use of words.

**3rd Place - William B**

the country roads call my childhood

Few students attempted a one-line haiku. William's evocatively conjures up a rather sad narrative in just a few syllables. The poem has a clear kireji (cutting word – roads) even if it lacks a seasonal reference (kigo). William's haiku is reminiscent of John Denver's hit, *Take Me Home, Country Roads*. He builds a poem around this song and makes the words his own.

**The commended poems are:**

Enzo J

the soft grass  
waiting to be walked on –  
bathing in the sun

Great second line and rhythm.

Bruce B

weeping willows  
on the ground  
dewy grass

Very compact haiku with a lovely link between 'weeping willow' and 'dewy grass.'

Violetta S

dry leaves lying in the sun  
gasping for a drop of water

Lovely two line haiku with a good contrast between both parts.

Millie J

an empty shell –  
lines and smooth  
scarred on the outside

Fantastic description of an acorn, which could be a strong metaphor.

Samson F

prickling brambles –  
a solid wall  
blocking my way

Interesting use of long, short, long lines plus a deeper meaning.

Oscar W

fallen conkers  
far from the tree –  
squirrel scuttling through

Good use of alliteration in a surprising final line.

Hugh M

sat on the warm grass  
watching the barley  
majestically dance



I can see the barley waving in the warm wind. Beautiful image and the use of 'majestically' gives some haiku added interest.

Tolly Y

pile of autumn leaves –  
stacked above one another  
by the living meadows

Long lines, but wonderful contrast between death and life.

Phoebe Adams

a wise old oak  
waiting for years  
to be discovered

A real *Lord of the Rings* feel to this one with maturity far beyond the age of the poet.

Ollie J

nature's breath  
curling trees  
likes witches' fingers

stretching up  
reaching down  
the sorrows of the weeping willow

poison ivy  
surrounds the tree  
a loner in a world of fear

I've included three of Ollie's poems due to their interesting structure and quite profound final lines which work despite their length.



A workshop at Edward Worlledge Ormiston Academy in Great Yarmouth in 2019 encouraged Year 6 students (age 10) to create haiku poems inspired by the town's heritage. I worked with the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, specifically Carol Desborough and Rachel Harrison. Their project on the historic Yarmouth Rows (narrow medieval walkways between buildings) seeks to raise awareness of the town's past, particularly with young people. In the workshop, students were shown maps and photos of the Rows and given basic training on how to write a short, haiku-like poem.

**These are the ten best:**

Sophie

smoky sky  
black clouds filling my lungs  
fading behind the sun

Great first line reflecting the black and white photo she was inspired by. A sad final line hinting at the decline of the coastal town.

Summer

screaming out for help  
the eerie silhouettes approaching

A bold two line haiku with a distinctly gothic feel.

Robert

rats  
down the row  
I hate the smell

Simple haiku bringing a different sense into play.

Damian

claustrophobic stench  
flowing through the row

It was great to see so many students use their judgement as to the likely aroma of the Rows. The first line is magnificent.

Tyler

colours of spring  
brighten my day  
with the texture on the walls

Tyler focused on the texture of the walls, likening it to the colours of spring in this optimistic poem.

Adam

cracked path  
don't step near it

The superstitious nature of the young poet coming to the fore here. Short, simple and effective.

Jessica

the chimney smoke  
makes the flowers fade  
moss covers the floor

Good descriptive three line haiku, with the central theme of a declining town based around the Rows.

Megan

people running  
I drag my troll cart through  
the thick smoke

I'm so pleased that a student included the famous Great Yarmouth troll cart in their haiku. This narrow cart would have been essential for getting supplies up and down the narrow streets. Megan's poem is suitably gothic and has a hint of melancholy.

Jack

in the depth of the row,  
the lonely shadows,  
my heart beats faster and faster

Jack's short poem feels like a gothic ghost story where the silent killer stalks the streets. Wonderful storytelling in just three lines.

Isatou

dark rises high  
doors close quite tightly  
and lights glow bright

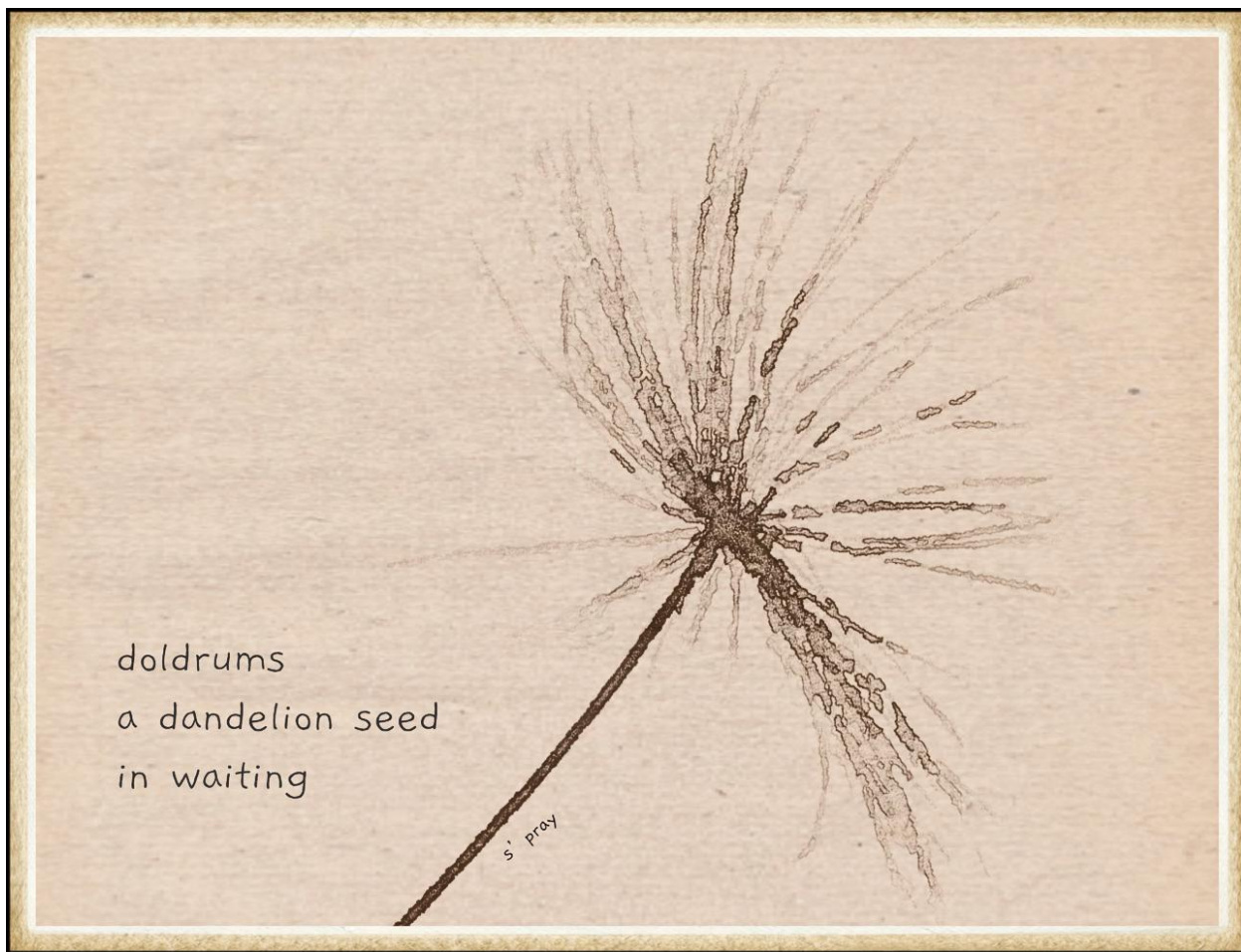
Good first and second lines suggest that closed doors hide a terrible secret.

Tim Gardiner



dry soil -  
here's where the winds placed us  
together

*R Erlandson*



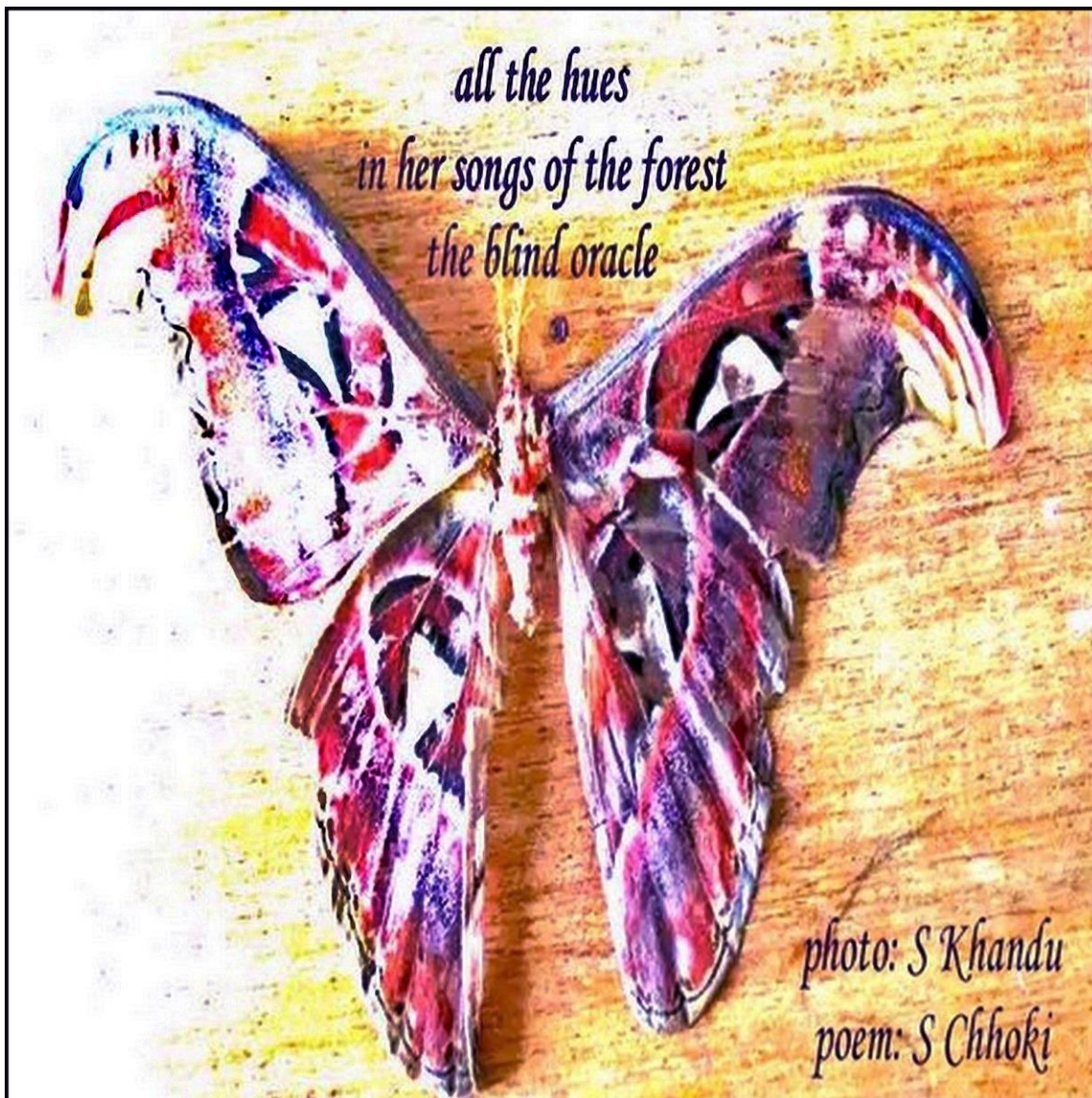


grown up daughter  
the sunflowers turn  
their heads



haiga: Radka Mindova photo: Neli Nikova





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