

ATLAS  
POETICA  
*A Journal of World Tanka*

Number 27

M. Kei, editor  
toki, editorial assistant

2017  
Keibooks, Perryville, Maryland, USA

KEIBOOKS  
P O Box 516  
Perryville, Maryland, USA 21903  
AtlasPoetica.org

Atlas Poetica  
A Journal of World Tanka

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*Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka*, an organic print and e-journal published at least three times a year. *Atlas Poetica* is dedicated to publishing and promoting world tanka literature, including tanka, kyoka, gogyoshi, tanka prose, tanka sequences, shaped tanka, sedoka, mondo, cherita, zuihitsu, ryuka, and other variations and innovations in the field of tanka. We do not publish haiku, except as incidental to a tanka collage or other mixed form work.

*Atlas Poetica* is interested in all verse of high quality, but our preference is for tanka literature that is authentic to the environment and experience of the poet. While we will consider tanka in the classical Japanese style, our preference is for fresh, forward-looking tanka that engages with the world as it is. We are willing to consider experiments and explorations as well as traditional approaches.

In addition to verse, *Atlas Poetica* publishes articles, essays, reviews, interviews, letters to the editor, etc., related to tanka literature. Tanka in translation from around the world are welcome in the journal.

Published by Keibooks

ISBN-13: 978-1543299953

ISBN-10: 1543299954

Also available for Kindle

AtlasPoetica.org

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## Cherita and Pirates

Cherita! And so many of them! When I announced that this issue would focus on cherita, I expected to get a few more than we usually receive, but I was overwhelmed by the response. You will find nearly four hundred cherita in this issue, making it the single largest collection of cherita currently in existence. It grew out of a conversation I had with ai li, the inventor of cherita. Since *Atlas Poetica* publishes cherita along with other tanka-related forms, I suggested she do a special feature for the website (you can find it at [http://AtlasPoetica.org/?page\\_id=136](http://AtlasPoetica.org/?page_id=136)). She fretted that she might not find enough poets to fill out the ‘twenty-five poets, one poem each’ format that is standard for the ATPO special features. I assured her that we would, and told her I’d do a focus on cherita in the journal.

The cherita came. And they kept coming. Experienced cherita poets. Novice cherita poets. People who expressed skepticism, and then got hooked. Famous names sent cherita. People I’d never heard of sent cherita. We even have cherita in translation: Tanja Julija Trček’s cherita are the first Slovenian cherita, and they are fine examples of the form in any language. Of course we include a generous sample of ai li’s cherita to illustrate her vision for the form, and also non-fiction articles about cherita, including one by ai li and another by Penélope O’Meara. ai li also provides us with a bibliography of cherita. As you can see, quite a lot has been published in the last twenty years.

The cherita doesn’t end there. Two new cherita venues have been announced. Poets on Site has added a Cherita Poets on Site <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1023743904417735/> and *the cherita, your storybook journal*, is seeking submissions <http://www.thecherita.com/submissions.html>.

So much cherita appears in the journal that for this issue, tanka is in the minority, but that doesn’t mean that it is forgotten or unimportant. We have several items in translation, including Serbian tanka by Mira N. Mataric and some Dutch kyoka by Paul Mercken, both of whom are familiar to readers of *Atlas Poetica*.

The really striking translation item in this issue is an important contribution by Ryoh Honda who has been enlightening us on so many tanka topics in recent issues. This time he translates several tanka written by Japanese pirates: the Murakami Suigun. As far as I am aware, none of their work has been translated into English before, so seeing previously untranslated Japanese poets in English is a treat, but these are special. The Murakami Suigun were waterborne samurai. At the time, they were just as powerful on water in western Japan as the more famous land-based samurai were in eastern Japan. These Japanese samurai adventurers traveled widely throughout eastern and southeastern Asia to trade, smuggle, and raid. They established strongholds in various places, even serving as bodyguards (and the power behind the throne) to the king of Burma (now Myanmar) on the Indian Ocean. Today a colorful festival on the Inland Sea commemorates this aspect of Japanese history that is little known outside of Japan. Information about the 2015 festival is available in English at <http://suigun.net/en> complete with an eight minute video of the music, dance, and events.

With so much extraordinary material in the issue, don’t forget to read our regular features, including book reviews, articles, and announcements. *Atlas Poetica* is truly a journal of world tanka that embraces traditional and experimental work from around the globe in tanka and related forms.

~K~

M. Kei  
*Editor, Atlas Poetica*

*The Rock House Fire’s effect on the land of southwestern Texas, USA, as seen from a satellite.*

*Cover Image courtesy of Earth Observatory, NASA.*  
[eoimages.gsfc.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords/50000/50431/rockhouse\\_ast\\_2011121\\_lrg.jpg](http://eoimages.gsfc.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords/50000/50431/rockhouse_ast_2011121_lrg.jpg)



# cherita kenang-kenangan\*

ai li

a mirror

was left  
in empty space

in empty space  
a mirror  
was left

after supper

after washing up  
for one

i let  
your letters  
miss me again

to be alone

in the darkness  
of the wee hours

the scent of you  
on a distant train  
of memory

desert sand

the salamander  
and its slow crawl

our shadows  
in tandem  
oasis bound

losing the light

we  
are in silhouette

i see your breath  
before i hear it  
giving up on me

i walk into fog

there is no one  
no sound

i turn the corner  
in my wet shoes  
touch the night

finding you this late

the tint in my hair  
another black

do i have the years  
to give you love  
and grace?

dark dark night

no stars  
no moon

i learn  
that your fingers  
read braille

find me wanting

find me fair  
in a marilyn wig

the copy of travilla's  
pleated white dress  
with no underwear

the light is soft

and i am coming in  
from your garden

there are voices here  
in the old orchard  
begging me to stay

arthritic hip

arthritic fingers  
and shoulder

when the sun shines  
and day is hot  
you can move mountains

they say you're missing

i fold your clothes  
into the night

talk  
to your pillow  
with my tears

in the garden of remembrance

after rain after we  
scatter your remains

i turn to go  
and reluctantly leave you  
to the mercy of the north wind

sitting by the river

the breeze in my hair  
my eyes closed

i was happy here  
hearing the flow, the language  
of its source

looking out for rain

my window  
open

when it arrives  
i hear winehouse  
on my headphones

family heirloom

there's dead skin  
in the drawers

if you look closely  
family dna that's  
not in the graveyard

burial at sea

november afternoon  
the sea choppy

i remember the chocolate digestives  
the hot mugs of tea  
and wreaths that won't drown

the sleep of the innocent

i close the door quietly  
as i leave the room

you need to sleep  
after the deaths of your parents  
for you to go home

a picnic by the waterfall

building sandcastles  
a handkerchief cap on my head

those were quiet days  
before the drownings, the suicides  
and the exodus of dreams

i lose myself in the jigsaw

finding another piece  
to colour the gaps

do you hear me  
in the night  
touching space?

*\* kenang-kenangan is remembrance in malay*

*~London, England / Singapore*

cherita sayang\*

ai li

back road

passing only  
one car

as leaves fall  
and more colours  
tell me to forget

torch song

from the diva  
in a red sequined gown

her mascara starts to run  
as she gets to the part  
that says he is leaving

tanka blues

before  
ink dries

i add  
a sixth line  
and tell another story

at the columbarium

a vegetarian feast  
for the ancestors

i light candles and joss  
to guide them through  
to my dark

reading a ghost story

did i lock the back door?  
is the alarm set?

worrying over nothing  
i put another log on the fire  
for my dead cat

that winter feeling

painting it blue  
with sinatra

behind closed doors  
the sound of crying  
the beginning of night rain

love strays

this year  
the missing valentine

i open the box  
of cards  
i never received

all is not lost

there's still a breeze  
where it matters

in her drawer of mementos  
an old white feather  
going home

in the shadows

i see you disrobe  
in shared moonlight

the clock stops  
the hands not touching  
for a decade

when you sleep

i inherit your dreams  
in my wilderness

i go nowhere  
and everywhere  
my feet bare

a body on the tracks

someone leaves flowers  
by her outline

night comes  
i hear her train  
and cover my ears

death poem

using black ink  
to make a point

who will read my words  
if it isn't found  
this piece of rice paper

weekend bolt hole

the fire lit  
giving my cat shadow

outside  
snow is falling  
and there are no footprints

i miss your hugs

the way your breath  
moves my earring

those were loving nights  
the moon in our attic window  
being faithful

dance hostess

the spitting image  
of your daughter

you ask her her age  
she whispers tongue  
in your ear

a white lie

is that only for virgins  
she asked ?

straw  
in her blonde hair  
her lipstick smudged

second honeymoon

the orient express  
new louis vuitton luggage

he is slower  
she is more impatient  
a full moon over the bosphorus

a rose

from you to me  
but there are thorns

the late nights  
those scented trips abroad  
our bed my morgue

*can't buy me love*

over rooftops  
with a crescent moon

the cartier bracelet  
i had on earlier  
winking diamonds

a stranger calls

with your face  
and smile

but i've been there before  
he brings candy & flowers  
and eyes that bleed

*~London, England / Singapore*

*\*sayang is love in malay*

*ai li is a Straits Chinese poet who lives in London and Singapore. She writes about Life, Love and Loss bringing healing and prayer to her poems. Besides being the founding editor and publisher of still, moving into breath and dew-on-line and the creator of cherita, she is an evidential spiritualist medium, an urban photographer, and a surrealist collage painter. Find the quiet of her inner rooms at: <[https://www.amazon.com/ai-li/e/B0080X6ROC/ref=sr\\_tc\\_2\\_0?qid=1469884842&sr=1-2-ent](https://www.amazon.com/ai-li/e/B0080X6ROC/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1469884842&sr=1-2-ent)>.*

# Cherita

## Alegria Imperial

where foundling winds birth

and roost in my heart  
as hummingbirds

one day I woke  
air stilled in frost  
folded on wings

through grey lace

the fawn stares  
as my sorrows slough off

will we meet again or  
must I hang on  
to what's unspoken?

rain clouds

their dance of longing  
sweeps edge of skies

only the white sound  
of water persists  
with distant castanets

feather against sunlight . . .

who senses like the blind  
what hearts catch between beats?

before dawn the un-striated glow  
of a human moon . . . as if lured, I walk  
into the infinite reach of tears

first meeting

the opal smoothness  
of a handshake

a diamond stud  
rooting on her chin  
muted air

her eyes

the emerald display case  
a mid-sea calm

on her breast  
the gentle rocking of waves  
higher and higher

haloed light

grandfather's sighs  
swathe the darkness

candle drippings  
like a beard stretch  
farther and farther

ghost wafting on shore

summers the sea  
spilled over to my lips

no peak or forest remains  
just foam riding  
blue winds

~*Vancouver, Canada*

*Alegria Imperial has been writing haiku, tanka and haibun, some of which have been published, and a few awarded. But exploring cherita, for her, seems to be a perfect fit for her voice.*

# Ghosts

Alexandra Davis & *Tim Gardiner*

## Hamlet

in his clean hand  
a stone smooth skull  
flesh pared away . . .  
soon all doubts  
will dissolve

*a glow-worm's fire  
cold to human touch . . .  
my father's ghost  
unrecognisable at first  
still haunts these chambers*

## Macbeth

before intention cools  
the dagger is swift  
makes gold of flesh . . .  
sleep lies dead  
on this lonely summit

*an untrue spot  
stains her little hand . . .  
along dark corridors  
a candlestick comforts  
the motherless mind*

## King Lear

as edges crumble  
reason means nothing  
destruction seems a gift . . .  
this piece of earth  
was mine, was me

*her cold gaze  
hidden by the impotence  
of plucked eyes . . .  
the centaur's realm  
from the waist down*

*~United Kingdom*

*Dr Tim Gardiner is an ecologist and poet from Manningtree in Essex, UK. His haiku and tanka have been published in literary magazines including Acorn, Bliethe Spirit, Frogpond and Skylark while longer poems have appeared in Poetry Quarterly and The Seventh Quarry. His first collection of poetry, Wilderness, was published by Brambleby Books in 2015. He has published many scientific papers on natural history and several books, including one about glow-worms.*

*Alexandra Davis is an English teacher and poet from Felixstowe in Suffolk, UK. Her poems have been published in literary magazines including Agenda and Twelve Rivers and anthologies such as Slow Things by the The Emma Press. She has performed at the Suffolk Poetry Festival and is a regular reader at Felixstowe Café Poets.*

## Andy McCall

my mind  
is like a dark room  
black covers  
the pictures I try to see  
I pray for dawn

standing on the hill  
bones buried beneath me  
I talk to souls at rest—  
did your life give you peace  
or did eternity bring it?

*~Norwich, England*

*Andy McCall lives with his wife Joy in Norwich, England. He works for the local council. He loves nature and motorbikes and coming home.*

## Little Treat

Alexis Rotella

The stories  
she tells  
that aren't true  
yet in her mind  
they are

*Wash off that pickle*  
she admonishes  
*shall I dip it*  
*in Clorox too*  
I laugh

I give it to her  
the cashmere hoodie  
I will miss  
as she strokes it gently  
with ancient hands

Before I leave  
I butter toast  
the rye from Russia  
I drove fifty miles to buy  
to give Aunt Mary a little treat

*~Maryland, USA*

Alexis Rotella

As he takes me  
in his arms  
I point to the lake  
as blue as  
a Cezanne

*~Maryland, USA*

*Alexis Rotella practices Oriental medicine in Arnold, Md. Her latest book of haiku, Between Waves, is available from RedMoonPress.com*

## Cherita

Alayne Alison

“Farewell my granddaughter”

Wrinkled, cynical, feisty  
She repeated, year after year

“This is the last time I'll see you”

Eleven years later  
The 102-year-old was right

*~London, England*

*Alayne Alison was born in Seattle, Washington. She studied Science and Fine Arts at the University of Washington, USA. She exhibited her kinetic artwork before settling in London in 2003. Alayne currently works as a manager in healthcare and is a member of the Royal Society of Medicine. She is a patented inventor as well as a member of a Spanish singing ukulele band.*

## Cherita

Allyson Chen

breathe in, minced garlic

with my sharpened knife  
paused on the chopping block

breathe out, audible sigh  
the aroma of everything you've done  
weighs in

*~Los Angeles, California, USA*

*Allyson Chen was born in Canada and now lives with her husband and two children near Los Angeles, California. She enjoys career paths in several disciplines including engineering, Chinese medicine, and functional medicine.*

# Cherita

André Surridge

party at a friend's

as usual I hover  
by the food table

that's when I meet you  
and suddenly the nibbles  
lose their attraction

rain, rain and more rain

I wonder when it will stop  
the forecast is poor

it's rained each day since  
we found a gold-bellied frog  
on the bowling green

browsing at the mall

couldn't resist the tee-shirt  
with bright blue airplanes

when he hears a plane  
my young grandson runs outside  
to scan the whole sky

yet I stay hopeful

though it be cold and the road  
hard and uneven

somewhere ahead  
I believe there is a warm  
bed and fine brandy

what to leave behind

that will be lasting, useful  
there must be something

maybe one poem  
that's all I can think of now  
and how to write it

my dear son-in-law

he is dying of cancer  
there's nothing more that can

be done except to  
ease the pathway from this life  
to whatever's next

the end so near now

one might as well believe that  
somehow, yes, somehow

this pinprick of hope  
there is a hereafter  
& love conquers all

dogwood bloom

the open palm of a hand  
feels each drop of rain

but cannot hold them  
some raindrops maybe, not all  
& some memories

scarlet oak

hanging onto leaves until  
the new leaves come

a cautious approach  
which I wholeheartedly  
identify with

she's gone, she's gone, gone

all that's left in the wardrobe  
is a short blue dress

one I bought for her  
our sixth anniversary  
one she never wore

~Hamilton, New Zealand

*André Surridge was born in Hull, England and lives in the city of Hamilton, New Zealand. He is the winner of several national and international writing awards. Writing cherita is his latest challenge.*

## Cherita

Anne-France Stevenson

spring walk

hands in pockets  
with holes

smelling  
listening  
to nature

~Los Angeles, California, USA

*Anne-France has had a true cosmopolitan life, living in both Los Angeles, California and Paris, France. She has created a one-woman business catering to high-end travelers to France. She has been awarded with a Gold Medal by the French Ambassador both here in Los Angeles and in Paris.*

## Cherita

Autumn Noelle Hall

*God is Red*

she studies  
by firelight

coyote cries  
awakening inside  
a beating drum

~Yellowstone National Park, USA

deep breathing

dialing down  
my shutter speed

I am water falling  
like white silk  
from the weaver's hand

~Yellowstone National Park, USA

at last, an elk's tooth

buff colored and burnished  
against rough granite scree

who knew how much  
disappointment could fit  
in one spit pistachio shell

~Mueller State Park, Colorado, USA

tornado sirens

the dank basement of childhood  
osage orange and spider smell

even here in dry mountains  
I still cannot weather  
the wind

*~Davenport, Iowa/Green Mountain Falls, Colorado,  
USA*

more than skin deep

the bone marrow scan  
tells it like it is

each time she denied  
that we looked alike —  
turns out mom was right

*~Iowa City, Iowa, USA*

in the palm of my hand

speckled and spiraled  
with his birthday wishes

a purple heart  
stone-weighted against  
future wounding

*~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA*

## Cherita

Bill Waters

don't be mad!

a tentative smile  
a shy glance

a tiny golden weed-flower  
you offer  
between finger and thumb

I was just a kid

I knew a lot less  
than I thought I did

about life, and I spurned  
love that did not suit me  
to my later regret

in the deep of the night

I hear a cat  
playing in the hall —

pouncing, pouncing,  
and then bouncing down the stairs  
a plastic ball

*~Pennington, New Jersey, USA*

*Bill Waters lives in Pennington, New Jersey, U.S.A., with his  
wonderful wife and their two amazing cats. More of his work can be  
found at [billwatershaiku.wordpress.com](http://billwatershaiku.wordpress.com).*

## Cherita

### Bob Lucky

a scattering of coins

the dust on the dresser  
thick as memory

everything  
she wanted she left  
where it was

warm sangria

children on the merry-go-round  
squealing

chickens on a spit  
our offering to gods  
we no longer recall

cold tile floor

pacing the length  
of the night

one truth  
makes you  
hungry for another

*~Jubail, Saudi Arabia*

*Bob Lucky is the content editor at Contemporary Haibun Online and the author of Ethiopian Time. He lives in Jubail, Saudi Arabia.*

## Bruce England

So many thoughts now  
of things we didn't do  
letting her  
shift the gears  
as I drove

If I should die  
in a car wreck, may I have  
Van Morrison and  
(early) Poi Dog Pondering  
on my tape deck

Does it end this way?  
her hands no longer visit  
my back pocket  
kisses shorter, shallower  
no leaning in as we walk

For some workers  
in Silicon Valley, the view  
of the mountains  
from their workplace  
is a daily mirage

You could fire  
an AR-15 in a crowd  
of Valley workers  
and not kill anyone  
with military service

Her skin is clear  
her exquisite tattoos  
are hidden  
inside her  
panties and bra

Before going  
to our reunion  
I ask my friend  
are you single  
tonight?

Due to a lack  
of trumpeters  
the end  
of the world  
will not be announced

~California, USA

## Sedoka

### Bruce England

Cajun store owner  
told my mom to place the cans  
back on the shelves as they were  
her customers  
don't read and won't recognize  
them, facing some other way

I don't much care  
for beaches anymore  
the rotting seaweed  
the salty air  
the foggy grayness  
give me the desert

The sky is dark  
there are swirls in the clouds  
the air is muggy and mild  
people are sitting  
on their porches, standing out  
in their yards, looking up

Forget that old fear  
of being naked in front  
of an audience  
the new fear  
no laptop, no projector  
for your PowerPoint

~California, USA

## Equivalences

### Charles Tarlton

*He knew the anguish of the marrow  
The agony of the skeleton . . .*

~T. S. Eliot

The traffic's forming up in roughly staggered  
rows, and where the highway curves in a long  
slow arc the view out the windshield takes in the  
oxbow formed by the river's twisting.

Drivers are hunkered over the wheel, grim in  
the morning commute; they are expert in the  
car's technology, their eyes unfocussed and  
opaque. One tattooed carpenter (he could be a  
plumber) in a red GMC pickup, speeds forward  
and honks his horn in irritation. I am, of course,  
there amongst them.

it's old hat to say  
in these ways we are all dead  
who tastes the wet grass  
anymore, or breathes the fog  
or whistles in the morning light?

an older couple  
poke along in the slow lane  
they're going for lunch  
Madame Monet's red kimono  
and some music in the park

it's just something lost  
not of much use anymore  
now there's things to do  
chatter on your phone in line  
a hot spot for Sunday brunch

~Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

## In a Museum

Charles Tarlton

... *the birth of Light in painting* ~Robert Delaunay

A long afternoon spent in the *Wadsworth Atheneum's* Impressionist room and in another reality. Light shatters in fragments coming off the water, catching its skirt in the trees, against skies of tiny pastel brushstrokes, and forces us to interpret, always interpret. Where in other cases —Rembrandt or Constable—you recognize as faces, faces; as fabrics, fabrics; apples, and the perfect clouds. You can't get up too close; painted illusions always dissolve.

the truths of colors  
spray-painted across your eyes  
make you want to dream  
the skies up against the sea  
the wheat in its even rows

here are the highest leaves  
of a giant Elm, penciled  
in, thousands of them  
another one sponge-scumbled  
speckles of greens and yellows

boats in the harbor  
not quite right, too square and clear  
sky obviously brushed  
in streaks of blue impasto  
soft blue wriggled over green

~Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

*Charles Tarlton is a one-time philosophy professor turned poet. He lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, with his wife Ann Knickerbocker, an abstract painter. He has been writing poetry full-time for about eight years and has published poems in journals like Shampoo, Atlas Poetica, contemporary haibun online, Haibun Today, Review Americana, Tipton, Shot Glass, Rattle, Kyso Flash, The Journal (UK), Blackbox Manifold (UK), London Grip, 2River, and Fiction International. Muse-Pie Press nominated his poems, 'Doing Double Duty,' 'Solipsism,' and 'Lustrum' from Shot Glass Journal Issue #6 for the 2013 Pushcart Prize. He is the featured poet in the upcoming Fall issue of KYSO Flash.*

## Cherita

Chris Cole

the small boy

trembling, he blinks up at the man  
cheek stinging in the icy air

he turns away from the rattle of the dice  
already inventing excuses  
his mother will not believe

~Australia

## Chris Cole

leaves fall by the porch  
she watches, then sees no more  
the old man holds her  
memories, through veils of tears  
bittersweet smile, he holds her

~Australia

*Chris Cole lives and works in Canberra, Australia. Possessed of a particular enthusiasm for short form literature, cross-country skiing, and crepes that are cooked just right, he dodges marsupials on his way to work, and spends vast periods of time staring at the sky. He may or may not be far too familiar with 8-bit computer games from the 1980s.*

## Dave Bachelor

summer walk  
I perspire  
trying to  
recall how  
to flirt

# Black Sand

Dave Bachelor

That my aging body may last a bit longer, I'm prescribed a midday nap. Shoes off, beneath a blanket, I find the recurring dream. I had just turned eleven. My older brother, my hero, was expected home from the terrible war. I was kicking a can along a smelly alley in Chicago. It is March 1945.

on a black sand beach  
along with thousands of young men  
my brother fell—  
more than 70 years  
waiting for the reunion

~New Mexico, USA

*Dave Bachelor dwells in a tiny room in Albuquerque with his poems.  
When he is behaved Luisa visits him.*

*Don Miller lives in southern New Mexico, USA. He has been writing tanka since the early 1980s, and he has had his tanka, tanka sequences, tanka prose, and other short-form poems published in various print and online journals over the past decade or so.*

*For Ribbons Tanka Prose Editor Autumn Noelle Hall, tanka holds memory, emotion, people and place. Like her cabin in the Colorado mountains, it is home to husband, daughters, wild birds, waterfalls, an australian shepherd and the deer he trails, bears and mountain lions and their tracks through the snow. But tanka is also a form of reckoning and reconciliation, a way to truly see and make sense of the world. Much like her camera, tanka is Autumn's lens on life.*

*Debbie Strange is a short form poet, photographer, and haiga artist. She is a member of the Writers' Collective of Manitoba and is also affiliated with several haiku and tanka organizations. Her first collection, *Warp and Weft, Tanka Threads*, is available through Keibooks, Createspace and Amazon. You are invited to visit her on Twitter @Debbie\_Strange and at [debbiemstrange.blogspot.ca](http://debbiemstrange.blogspot.ca).*

joggers, lovers  
and limping old men  
walk through the park—  
unimpressed ants  
clean a candy wrapper

in dark waters  
a silver minnow  
by a still log—  
Monday morning  
comes so soon

after the parade,  
speeches over,  
medals bestowed,  
cold wind snaps the rope  
against bare flag pole

locket hanging  
on a rose thorn—  
if I stretch,  
risk a scratch  
I could grab it

boots covered with  
leaves newly fallen  
what shall I do  
now that the doctors  
have given me the news

green park  
circled by an iron fence  
to touch a blossom  
I must have  
a key

~Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

## For Richer, or for Poorer

Don Miller & *Autumn Noelle Hall*

pricing  
my baby girl's  
wedding  
doubling up  
on beta blockers

*who said you can't  
put a price on love?  
appraising  
the per-foot cost of walking  
her down that wedding aisle*

convenience  
versus  
practicality  
measuring  
true love

*one stop shopping  
for flowers and favors  
The Dress  
the American way  
of saying 'I do' to debt*

for profit  
wedding venues  
gift wrapping  
the convenience  
of all inclusive pricing

*what wouldn't we pay  
for happily ever after . . .  
priceless  
Daddy's little girl  
safe on his arm*

~Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA / *Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA*

## her name was cherita

Debbie Strange

the street awakens  
  
another tribe of wanderers  
home, a word long since forgotten

in a shabby black coat  
she claims to be descended  
from a long line of crows

her hands flutter

two migratory birds  
that have gone astray

the world, too harsh  
to be a safe haven  
for accidentals

paper-thin body

this pale skeleton  
of the bird I once knew

those pinioned feathers  
never had a chance to carry her  
too close to the sun

broken-backed prairie

where the wild things are blown  
when their roots are severed

uncaged at last,  
she joins the waiting flock  
that always knew her name

lightning storm

a shadow  
runs for shelter

I still see you,  
sparks flying  
from your fingertips

scimitar moon

never enough light  
to capture your curves

photographs of you,  
the negative spaces  
between us

I am not who I was

with each season  
comes a deeper sorrow

the stones I carry  
so round and blue  
might have been your eyes

~*Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*

## creeping, crawling

Don Wentworth & Joy McCall

Even with insects —  
some can sing,  
some can't.

~Issa, translated by Robert Hass

a caterpillar  
allowing itself to be  
nudged  
onto a fallen leaf  
an afternoon service

*a beetle  
in the hazel hedge  
sunning itself  
the ant brothers attack  
'this is our territory'*

round  
and round and up  
a Rose of Sharon  
the little black ants go  
without, and with, us

*tiny spider  
spinning her web  
on the candlestick  
I'll have no night flame  
for a month or two*

in August  
a pulsating din rises  
and falls  
in sync, piercing, alive —  
cicadas, in ethereal tune

*the pupae  
that were mealworms  
hatching in the sun  
— a flightless winged army  
of darkling beetles*

preying mantis  
on the night screen  
praying  
we, too, bow low  
over our blessings

*startled  
by the sudden leap  
of grasshoppers  
on the field path  
wishing I could high-jump*

o, pill bug  
how you curl and roll  
at a touch—  
the master teaches  
the student burns

~Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA / Norwich,  
England

## taking flight

Don Wentworth & Joy McCall

*black spots  
on the red ladybirds  
I count seven—  
this year's harvest  
will be abundant*

in this meadow  
how the orange monarchs dance  
so differently  
from the blue dragonflies  
to the very same tune

*I light candles  
in the old church  
praying for dead poets  
in the walls the loud buzz  
of mortar bees*

the king of kings  
the Jersey mosquito swaggers  
with a buzz  
loud as a bad memory  
that smarts and lingers

*the swifts have flown  
early back home  
to Africa  
now safely come the hosts  
of light-winged fishflies*

in the city  
fireflies are brighter  
than stars  
under the streetlamp moon  
we howl for what we're worth

*I wish  
I had the courage  
of the butterfly  
breaking the bounds  
of the chrysalis*

beating  
our heads, our hearts,  
against the light  
our arms embracing wings  
of Sister and Brother Moth

*the virgin queens  
emerge from the ant nest  
and take flight  
fast and furious  
'come and get us, boys'*

~Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA / Norwich,  
England

*Don Wentworth is a Pittsburgh-based poet whose work reflects his interest in the revelatory nature of brief, haiku-like moments in everyday life. He is the author of three full length collections: Past All Traps (2011), Yield to the Willow (2014) and With a Deepening Presence (2016). He is the long-time editor of the small press magazine, Lilliput Review.*

*Joy McCall lives in Norwich, England, where she was born, a place with a long dark history. She is growing older but not much wiser.*

*Ed Markowski lives, writes, and paints in America's Great Lakes Region. His book Reunion is due out this Summer from Shoe Music press.*

## Ed Markowski

standing in a virgin forest  
being lashed by a wind-driven mixture  
of rain sleet and snow

my wooden leg  
refuses  
to leave

~Auburn Hills, Michigan, USA

## Eric Lohman

scattering  
untold numbers of woodthrush  
from the trail  
is that really  
progress

a million years  
for photons—born in its core  
to escape a star  
how long for a poem  
to escape the heart

abandoned  
at the crossroads  
a woman's left shoe  
what else fell  
with last night's rain

passing his stretcher  
I wondered how much money  
spent on hospital  
could have kept him in good health  
the year before

comforting a friend  
in the wake of a tragedy  
I realize  
it's the first time all year  
I said I love you

at a time  
when everything is dying  
the wind carries  
messages from a phone booth  
on a hilltop in Japan

~*Georgia, USA*

*Eric A. Lohman is a Christian, husband, father, psychiatric social  
worker, composer, poet, cyclist, co-editor @FreshOutmag, the least  
Republican Republican he knows @ealcsrw.*

## Cherita

Ernesto P. Santiago

sacred and mysterious

the gods smell wine  
the poets, too

of white grapes  
and syrah—my man's mortal words  
working all night

ports of call

letting the 'us' go  
a little extra time

clouds drift . . .  
and if they don't  
they should

blissful breeze breaks

the fading echoes  
of seaside bonfire

over bottles of fix  
the bond of stars and moon—  
a gorging season

sailing by the stars

across the sea from east to west  
the wind blows hard

all that I knew of home  
of the dead—I pass on to myself  
that's all I can

night along the waves

moving with rhythm  
in every gust of wind

this other sea, I swim  
as close to my fear and let  
hope swallow me up

hunger in life

only God understands  
the man in me

from the agony  
of a womb—the first light  
of my journey

winter lust—

a few ants  
by the fire

the sumptuous  
softness of our mismatched  
bed socks

in a bowl of soup

the pulse of mother  
earth, packed

red lentils . . .  
ah, the comfort meals  
of my mourners

~Athens, Greece

*Ernesto P. Santiago says 'He is too small for his ego. He is enough for himself.' He thinks, 'Poetry is a global temperature that will always surprise us.' His poetic thought has been widely published and anthologised, in prints and online. He lives in Athens, Greece, where he continues exploring the poetic myth of his senses, and has recently become interested in the study of haiku and its related forms.*

## Human Dilemma

Frances Black

I have the honour of participating in an aboriginal women's art therapy group. Painting side by side is conducive to sharing stories. My neighbour, a dignified aboriginal elder the same age as me, tells me about her primary schooling in northern NSW. I learn that a fence separated black from white in the playground. Classes were segregated and the curriculum was different.

brooms and soap  
forget the three rs  
these kids  
attain high distinctions  
in demeaning servitude

Like treacle, a deep sense of shame flows over me. I was smugly comfortable in my middle-class, white city school located some hundred miles away, so unaware.

news  
via bird telegraph  
feeds bush-life  
with the reality  
of human indifference

We are the leaders, dazzled by our technological, scientific and artistic success.

survival  
links to tribalism—  
the gods think . . .  
has the time come  
to evolve the species

~Sydney, Australia

*Frances Black has written in many genres over the years. She became aware of Tanka in 2016. She fell in love with the form and has been working under the guidance of her mentor, an experienced Tanka poet. She was published in Eucalypt in 2016. She gains satisfaction expressing ideas in essay form and look forward to doing the same in Tanka prose. She lives in the beautiful Northern Beaches of Sydney.*

## Accidental Engagement

Frances Carleton

scarlet robes  
covering ebony skin  
standing  
naturally yoga posed—  
how could I resist the invite

after a day  
walking in the wilds  
we share  
stories of childhood—  
chasing cats through tall grasses

bright beads  
made by loving mother  
adorn your flesh—  
the mark of a single man  
looking for his bride

drinking  
sparkling water from a glass  
you laugh at me—  
visiting your world  
talking about eating salad

you hand me  
bracelet of green, red and white  
I say 'Asante'\*  
we share a smile and hug—  
my Masai fiancé

*\* Swahili for thank you*

*~Amboseli, Kenya*

## In the mud

Frances Carleton

Under candle light I lay wrapped in soft white towels. I've been pummelled, walked on and massaged, forcing relaxation into my bones, muscles and skin. The air is scented with jasmine, ylang ylang, and coconut.

Piped sound of the ocean softly laps at the shore, inviting me to stay awhile longer as cucumber blinds me and mud dries, drawing impurities from my skin, leaving me feeling fresh and alive.

I walk back to my bed and breakfast along the main street of Pozieres, watching a helicopter filled with tourists buzz across the fields.

bullets fly  
through acrid air  
cleaving—  
eyes fixed on the stars  
his life ends in the mud

Farmers plough memories of the fallen into the ground with the broken wheat.

*~Pozieres, France*

## Cherita

Gavin Austin

spotless bathroom

at the basin she stands  
mouthing the word

her wet, soapy hands  
will never bathe  
her own child

*~Sydney, New South Wales, Australia*

she smiles sadly  
one hand held high  
fingers splayed  
an image  
to stow and keep  
before boarding the plane  
~Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

living  
in a strange  
twilight  
somewhere  
between diagnosis  
and the long dark night

goodbye  
she practices  
saying the word aloud  
in the dark  
she weeps silently  
for her son  
~Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

needle in place  
the old mare lies quietly  
eyelids closing . . .  
pressed to bay hide  
you recall those arenas  
ribbons and rosettes  
~Yarram, Victoria, Australia

a frail sunset  
collapses  
onto rooftops  
familiar arms  
of the veranda armchair  
cradle her wasting body  
~Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

on the corner  
where fate intersects time  
he waits  
hands stuffed in pockets  
one foot tapping  
out his tattoo

surviving  
a life-threatening  
illness  
he auditions  
those he knows  
for the role of friend  
~Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

*Frances Carleton is a Canberra, Australia, based counsellor, Lego minifigure enthusiast and poet. After years of writing only business reports and essays she is now focusing her creativity by writing down the thoughts that cross her mind when out bush walking with her chihuahua. Her poems have appeared in Eucalypt (a Tanka journal), Atlas Poetica: A Journal of World Tanka, and 'Poems to Wear' by Amelia Fielden.*

*Gavin Austin lives in Sydney, Australia, and writes fiction, free verse and Japanese-form poetry. His work has been published in many Australian journals and anthologies, been broadcast on Australian Community Radio, and has been successful in numerous writing competitions. Gavin's writing has also appeared in literary publications in NZ, the USA and the UK. Gavin was the featured poet in the January 2016 edition of cattails. His poetry collection, short and long poetry titled Shadow Play, was published in 2010. He is currently at work on a new collection.*

## Cherita

Geoffrey Winch

her eyes and mine

met in a crowd  
then she was gone

never to meet again  
except in my mind  
where our love story still unfolds

~England

*Geoffrey Winch is a retired highway engineer residing in Felpham on England's South Coast. He is associated with a number of local creative writing groups for whom he leads occasional poetry workshops including haiku and tanka. Widely published in journals and anthologies in the UK, US and online, his latest collection is Alchemy of Vision (Indigo Dreams Publishing, 2014) which focuses on the arts and includes a number of his haiku, tanka and tanka sequences.*

## Cherita

Julie Bloss Kelsey

beneath the Japanese maples

I watch tiny hikers  
kick through leaves

stirring up memories  
of when I could walk  
unaided

~Woodend Sanctuary, Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA

*Julie Bloss Kelsey is a Maryland Master Naturalist and a mother of three. She volunteers her time - and writes poems - at the Audubon Naturalist Society.*

## Cherita

George Mat

first day of summer

a rumble of thunder  
echoes through skies

in a twilight flicker  
i hear the creak  
of a wornout porch

heels tapping

on broken floorboards  
she swirls

a noisy tambourine  
will become  
her lover

drawing hearts in the sand

while I wait  
for the tide to come in

will it take us away  
for a day  
to a place

~Melbourne, Australia

*George Mat is a 39 year old resident of Melbourne, Australia, who enjoys time with family and friends, reading, writing and music. He has a deep love for the ocean and spends much time boating and various water sports, especially in summer. His love of writing began after reading 'A Smile To Remember' by Charles Bukowski. He's never really looked back since, inspired by poets such as e.e cummings, Seamus Heaney, Emily Dickinson, to name a few.*

*Gerrie March is from Whitby, North Yorkshire, moving south as a young teenager. During her working life as a shorthand typist for 23 years, she trained as a Psychic Medium. She has worked in eleven countries and has been as a tutor and Psychic Medium at the College of Psychic Studies, London, for 33 years.*

## Cherita

Gerrie March

april in paris

count basie played it with his band  
please someone write a song

about october in london  
when leaves dance  
in pavement wind

she deserves much respect

that anne boleyn  
they called her a witch

and couldn't pronounce her name  
but without her, the pope would tell us  
what to do from morning til night

writing cherita is addictive

it's worse than smoking  
with smoking my lungs went kaput

that's all right — i have inhalers  
but what happens to my head  
when i can't stop thinking ??

being psychic mediums can be hard

we hear such private stories  
of sorrow and grief —

looking in on peoples' lives  
my friend avril says  
we are just sad curtain twitchers

~Whitby, North Yorkshire, England

## Revelations

Giselle Maya & Patricia Prime

*a white peacock  
cries out and opens  
his fan tail  
the mystery of beings  
who dwell among clouds*

an invitation to see  
a magical new ballet  
The Wizard of Oz  
inspired by an enchanting  
children's tale

*evening watering  
observing from a walnut tree  
the cat's antics  
twilight tristesse gains  
a brief hold on me*

day or night  
light seeps in  
above the curtain  
mysteriously  
illuminating my room

*a long life  
of gratitude for seeing  
this spring—  
you blossom with the lilacs  
growth rings expanding*

a charmed morning  
when it starts to rain  
licks of lightning  
tinselled basalt-grey  
tinged with silvery threads

~France / New Zealand

## Leisurely Glance

Hema Ravi

It's my weekly off. Tired of the monotonous slavery to gadgets and apps, I decide to take a stroll on the patio.

The cars in the neighborhood are all gone, they would all return only by evening. The 'Reserved' and 'Visitor' signs seem to do the talking in the stillness.

wink of an eye  
white trail  
in the sky  
brings back  
lost memories

The worker on the roof is spraying baking soda. His face is masked; he wears gloves on his right hand. This routine maintenance work is to prevent the moss from growing during the damp season. With agility he ascends the sloping roofs to spray the white powder from end to other.

Soon, comes the familiar black towed-on vehicle. With the blow vac, the man blows all the leaves fallen around the large condominium into a pile, gathers them and disposes them into the bin. Meanwhile, the other mows the lawn; soon the grass gets collected in the bag which he disposes, once again, into the trash bin. Job done, the vehicle soon disappears down the lane.

autumn leaves  
buried in the pile  
her desires  
drift beyond  
boundaries

~Chennai, India

*As a Communicative English Trainer, Hema Ravi is known to motivate young learners, particularly women, to successfully balance work/life. Co-author of *Everyday Hindi*, she is a prize winner in the 26th ITO EN Green Tea Haiku Competition, Japan (2015). Her verses have been published in *Annapurna Magazine*, *HSA Anthology*, *Poetic Prism*, *Metaverse Muse*, *Contemporary Literary Review* and a multitude of print and online anthologies. She has been writing short form poems, and free verse since 2001.*

## Jacob Salzer

two strangers  
speaking  
sign language —  
glass breaks  
without a sound

~Olympia, Washington, USA, at the bus stop

she feels for braille  
on my skin  
under bare moonlight  
these wordless nights  
and pouring rain

~Vancouver, Washington, USA

cry if you must  
the rain is falling with you —  
hearing the sound of her laughter  
the sun lifts the sea  
into colored clouds

~Lincoln City, Oregon, USA, at my Aunt Suzy's beach house

thoughts  
have permanently dissolved  
into the quiet depths of the ocean  
lifting each raindrop  
into sunlight

~Lincoln City, Oregon, USA, at my Aunt Suzy's beach house

before I leave  
I wrap you in a warm blanket  
with my bare hands and whisper:  
*let go of all desire  
sleep without fear this night*

~Olympia, Washington, USA

as I grab my keys  
behind the door  
of a vacant room  
the sound of a dog  
barking

~*My apartment in Vancouver, Washington, USA*

slow sunset  
cutting dead limbs  
from the bamboo  
old roots reclaimed  
in a vase of colored stones

~*The back porch of my apartment in Vancouver, Washington, USA*

a steady stream  
of moonlight  
touching our skin  
I gently wrap my arms  
around you

~*Vancouver, Washington, USA*

*Giselle Maya is a poet and painter whose home is Provence. She has lived and studied in Japan, literature and Japanese language at Sophia University in Tokyo and the tea ceremony, Chado, in Kyoto. Presently she is writing, painting and gardening in and near a perched village near Apt. Maya has published 13 handmade books of poetry; two more recent books, Shizuka and Cicada Chant, were printed by Alba Publishing and Red Moon Press. Many well-known journals such as Ribbons, Haibun Today, Lynx, Kokako, Atlas Poetica, Cattails, Skylark, the Tanka Journal have published Giselle Maya's work.*

*Patricia writes poetry, reviews, articles and Japanese forms of poetry. She has self-published several collections of poetry and a book of collaborative tanka sequences and haibun, Shizuka, with French poet, Giselle Maya. Patricia edits Kokako and is reviews/interviews editor of Haibun Today. She writes reviews for Atlas Poetica, Takahe and several Indian journals.*

## Deluge

Janet Lynn Davis

veins of lightning  
flash their warning  
to the earth . . .  
the silent rivers  
that daily course through me

Despite the rain, we have all the hope of safely arriving home this spring afternoon. But then the heavens open wide. Sky soon blends into road, which blends into flash-floodwater. A massive wash of gray, a lengthy line of traffic.

We make the decision to turn around in our tiny vehicle at the last possible opportunity to do so—just before the tall pickup truck ahead of us goes barreling through, water up to its taillights. It appears that a second pickup, from the other direction, could be floating. (We later realize this is where the highway dips and that the stream has risen well above the small bridge.) But halfway into the turn, momentary panic engulfs me: could the way back now be as treacherous as the way we were headed?

~*FM 1774, Waller County, Texas, USA*

*Janet Lynn Davis lives with her husband in a community carved out of the woods not far from Houston, Texas. Her tanka and related forms have appeared in numerous online and print publications over the past several years. She served as the vice president of the Tanka Society of America in 2014 and 2015 and currently is the tanka prose editor at Haibun Today. She also maintains a blog, twigs&stones.*

*Jacob Salzer has been writing poetry since 2006. He is the author of 2 haiku collections: The Sound of Rain and Birds with No Names, and a collection of haibun: Origins. From 2015-2016, he served as the managing editor for a Haiku Nook international anthology: Yanty's Butterfly, dedicated to haiku poet Yanty Tjiam who passed away in 2015. His haiku are featured in Frogpond, Under the Basho, Modern Haiku, Chrysanthemum, A Hundred Gourds and The Heron's Nest. His tanka are published in Atlas Poetica, and A Hundred Gourds. He currently lives in Vancouver, Washington, USA, USA. His poetry blog can be found at <<http://jacobsalzerpoetry.blogspot.com>>.*

## Cherita

Joanna Ashwell

below the castle walls

pausing to kiss  
the new couple full of hope

the smell of rain  
drifts across  
their moment in time

ash in the mouth

folding the words  
over and over

watching the farewell burn  
embers spark  
the end of us

the dead follow us

their voices reappear  
through the gaps

the lost moments  
we play over  
bartering with time

*~United Kingdom*

*Joanna Ashwell was born in County Durham, North East of England.  
Has been writing tanka and haiku for a number of years now. Loves  
the inclusiveness and depth of these deceptively simple looking forms. A  
few words can say so much. Collects rocks and books.*

## Cherita

Joanne Morcom

chinook wind

it seems like spring  
at least for a day

let's go for a walk  
and breathe the fragrant air  
I have some good news

farmer's field

horses on one side  
cows on the other

our differences  
shouldn't matter  
as much as they do

rainfall

I hope that he's soaking wet  
trying to fix a flat tire

hot tears flow  
as if he up and left me  
just yesterday

*~Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

*My bio note is as follows: Joanne Morcom is a writer and social  
worker in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She has published three poetry  
collections and is working on a fourth one.*

## John Hawkhead

equinox sunrise  
over ancient stones  
crows on gold wings  
above our heads  
the tide of time and space

*~Stonehenge, Wiltshire, England*

blood strands  
flecking her catheter pipe  
stone moon  
breaking through clouds  
the vixen's scream

*~Cheltenham General Hospital, Gloucestershire, England*

trapped in the ballroom  
a bright songbird  
on her dress  
the palm of his hand  
reminding her of bruises

*~Everywhere*

there again  
that harvest moon  
a scent of burnt shadow  
suddenly revealed  
in her raised skirt

*~Never-You-Mind, England*

*John Hawkhead is a writer of short form poetry, plays and stories who is widely published around the world. His book of haiku, 'Small Shadows,' is available from Alba Press.*

## Cherita

### John Tehan

invisible but not mute

he speaks  
a forest language

understood  
by small woodland creatures  
that scurry and dart

fifty years my senior

as dark complected  
as I am light

he asks  
that I call him  
boy

the doll hospital

two antique Kewpies  
commiserate side by side

one with an injured eye  
the other  
an above-the-knee amputee

he's Earth Father, Fairy Godfather

to men and boys  
of a certain bent

stepping to music  
however measured  
or far away

bending down

I sweep up  
the broken mirror

shattered image  
in a hundred pieces  
clumsy with age

bare-assed

my life  
in the nude

shedding clothes  
(and inhibitions)  
at the drop of a hat

at Aokigahara

wading into that Sea of Trees  
like thousands before me

then turning back  
back onto the forest path  
relieved it's not my time

blessed with untold graces

her days and years  
were kind to her

gentle, whisper quiet  
she's gone now  
complete

tired as is my due

I take  
to my rocking chair

let the world  
fix itself  
this time

hushed

he lives  
at a loss for words

silence  
surrounding him  
like a shroud

daybreak, first light

his ebony skin  
silhouettes the bed sheets

the ruby in his ear  
a drop of blood  
from a thorn in a crown

he comes

suddenly  
and silently he sighs

well pleased  
with the simplicity  
of his sabbath

at the greengrocer

busy  
checking out the rutabagas

I catch a glimpse of him  
from the corner of my eye  
my imaginary friend

a smart phone and a dumb dog

one on my left  
one on my right

straight ahead a gargoye  
perched on the mantel  
protects our Sunday morning troika

to other men he's Sir

the rugged foreman  
of the construction crew

beneath his well worn jeans  
his delicate white lace panties  
barely contain his manhood

waking from an afternoon nap

surprised by a string  
tied round my finger

what is it (this time)  
I'm forgetting  
to remember

scattered flurries

first snow  
of winter

which of the Eskimos'  
hundred words  
are falling out my window

~Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA

*John Tehan recently moved to a small village on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where he reads some, writes some and ponders this and that. His poetry has appeared in Atlas Poetica, Ribbons, Neon Graffiti and Bright Stars, as well as in several ATPO Special Features. In his spare time, John enjoys nurturing his eternity plant, Zamioculcas zamiifolia, which is happily proving true to its name.*

## Jennifer Hambrick

the boy holds the reins  
the girl sits next to him  
gliding along  
the country road  
in an Amish buggy

after autumn  
rainstorm  
mulching  
the rainbow  
in our front yard

after the divorce  
at the dinette  
in her new condo —  
desperately trying to love  
the life she has

quiet as paper moons  
the poems release  
into the ether  
with the last gasp  
of the computer

~Columbus, Ohio, USA

*Jennifer Hambrick's poetry has been honored with a Pushcart Prize nomination, and her chapbook, Unscathed (NightBallet Press), was nominated for the Ohioana Book Award. She has won numerous awards for her work, which is widely published in journals and anthologies worldwide. A classical musician and public radio broadcaster and web producer, Jennifer Hambrick lives in Columbus, Ohio, USA. Her blog, Inner Voices, is at [jenniferhambrick.com](http://jenniferhambrick.com).*

## killing rabbits

Joy McCall

the old man  
tells me the tales  
of growing up  
at the end  
of the lane

the apple orchard  
the vegetable garden  
the piggery  
the rabbit patch  
the chicken run

he was seven  
when his father took him  
by the hand  
to learn to kill  
the chickens, the rabbits

he said  
the chickens were easy  
he held the heads  
twisted sharply  
and they were dead

the rabbits  
seemed like pets  
he took the log  
and hit the first one  
on the brown head

his father  
had to finish the job  
he could not do  
and said—now  
you kill the next one

the next  
and the next  
and the next  
his father did  
what he could not do

in the end  
he learned  
to hit hard  
make it bloody  
and kill quick

and now  
he sits by the fire  
looking down  
at his trembling hands  
and cries and cries and cries

*~Norwich, England*

## paraplegia

Joy McCall

loss  
grief  
sorrow  
longing  
enduring

*~Norwich, England*

*Author's Note: You got me musing on one word tanka, and  
going a step further, adding one letter each line.*

## Cherita

Joy McCall

the doctor looks sombre

my husband is pacing  
anxious, fretting

I watch them both, and think—  
well, if my time has come  
so be it

*~Norwich, England*

## who is Sylvia?

Joy McCall

we were sitting in the cedar gateway singing,  
when Sylvia dressed in a long brown and dark  
red patterned gown and tight brown boots came  
up from the ground and came to us (drifting, as  
ghosts do) and spoke in such a quiet old-  
fashioned kind of country voice:

*thank you  
on behalf of all the others  
for the songs you sing  
and then she danced a little  
swirling her skirts*

she danced  
across the browning grass  
and went into the earth again—  
and all was still and quiet  
in the graveyard

I don't believe in ghosts . . . do I?

*~Norwich, England*

*Joy McCall lives on the edge of the ancient city of Norwich, England,  
where flint walls and cobbled streets meet green fields and wide skies  
and, eventually, the North Sea. She is thankful for a multitude of  
things.*

## Karen Klassen

he always droned on  
nothing old nothing new  
even his suit yawned  
except for the day his teeth  
smiled and flew out mid sermon

*~British Columbia, Canada*

*Karen Klassen is a poet that lives in Kamloops, BC, Canada.*

## Karla Van Vliet

from the lakeside hill  
the loon's sharp call is a knife  
with its utter need  
cuts night, opens some sorrow  
that has hidden in the reeds

and what if not stunned,  
the caught fish held in talons  
snaps its bright body  
moves through unexpected air  
as if a lone shooting star

when the swift enters  
on flashing wing, dip and flip,  
her chattering song,  
the heart's salve for loneliness,  
wakes possibility

in the darkened sky  
a scattering of stars emerge  
in the field, fireflies  
why do I feel so shattered?  
your hand is not in mine.

as the wind rises  
across the water I hear  
loons, their plaintive calls  
echo, my own morning cry,  
love, have you forsaken me?

*~Vermont, USA*

*Karla Van Vliet is the author of two collections of poems published by  
Shanti Arts. She is an Edna St. Vincent Millay Poetry Prize finalist  
and was nominated for a 2015 Pushcart Prize. Her poems have  
appeared in Poet Lore, Blue Heron Review, The Tishman Review,  
Green Mountains Review, and Painted Bride Quarterly. Van Vliet is a  
co-founder and editor of deLuge Journal, a literary and arts journal.  
She resides in Bristol, Vermont, USA.*

## The Join

Kath Abela Wilson

there's a sharp place  
on the ring that slipped  
onto my finger  
from my mother  
after she left

I made it for her  
silver and gold years ago  
two thin strands  
at the bend to fit  
it snapped

mostly  
only silver waves  
are left now  
where gold has been  
marked by strong impressions

a sharp place  
at the join  
will I have  
what it takes  
to smooth it

*~Santa Barbara and Pasadena, California, USA*

## Kevin Cowdall

I turn on the light  
to the agitated sound  
of a moth beating  
its wings on the window pane  
like a flutter of desire

*~England*

*Kevin Cowdall was born in 1959 in Liverpool, England, where he still lives and works. Kevin developed an interest in writing at an early age and his first published poem appeared, appropriately, in the influential publication, First Time. His collection, Assorted Bric-a-brac, is available from the Kindle Store on Amazon.*

## Cherita

Kath Abela Wilson

joy's grape

it rolled around in my mouth  
as he kissed me

I tasted the words  
wondered which part of me  
would break

*~Staten Island, New York, USA*

counting birds

a peanut on each shoulder  
and more in her outstretched hands

she counts only the blue  
my angel mother  
who left me her wings

*~Santa Barbara, California, USA*

I used to live

by one ocean  
now I live by another

what is distance  
I am thirsty for the sound  
of waves

*~cross-country, New York City to Santa Barbara, California, USA*

my mother

such a long way to come  
for only 95 years

I hold her cold hand as long as I can  
while the flute plumbs  
the depth of sorrow

~*Santa Barbara, California, USA*

I awake before dawn

to find a small glass of wine  
by our bed New Year's eve

why should I remember my wineless dream  
when the cask of night is full  
of reddening sky

~*Pasadena, California, USA*

I walk the blue

peaks of an ancient landscape  
it must be my motherland

does blue deepen as life fades  
she pauses her brush  
deep in the sea

~*China*

the crunch

do birthdays always  
feel like this

a deep breath of evergreen  
mixed with fresh decay  
autumn begins again

~*Yellow Mountain, Huangshan, China*

## Keitha Keyes

on the highway

a warning sign  
SLOW DOWN

does it know  
too  
of our whirlwind affair

his proposal

with a diamond ring  
hard to refuse

now  
I scrub the floors  
and wash his undies

scissors poised

above this photo  
of our holiday —

it could be  
an ideal place  
without you there

~*Sydney, New South Wales, Australia*

*Kath Abela Wilson loves to tell stories in many forms. She started a Facebook writing group, and gives prompts to Cherita Poets on Site, an extension to the Pasadena based Poets on Site. They share inspiration in gardens, galleries, museums, internationally and online. They perform and make books with musicians on the sites of their inspiration.*

*Keitha Keyes lives in Sydney, in a small house decorated with ship models, antique irons and trivets. And a cocker spaniel. Her retirement would be very empty without the lure of writing tanka, haiku, cherita and other poetry.*

## blue lotus

Larry Kimmel

*Matsukaze*

ai li

. . . a woman can corrupt  
a good man in 6 months . . .  
i mean, really . . .  
that needs put up on the chalkboard  
for study

*on Tuesday, wanting very much  
to trust you  
i prune camellias*

through the moon gate  
they come  
butterflies  
that will only  
live for one day

sharing her cotton candy,  
i caution:  
'watch what you tell him'  
the PA system's vast distortion

*awake around early noon  
against Mahler's Symphony  
feeling that some things are ending*

callas  
at her peak  
i find her  
lonelier  
in dior

the bell's long reverberation  
down  
the cobbled passageway —  
conjured into chimeric being  
those days that never were

*in every nook and cranny  
children's things . . .  
immersing myself in Maya Angelou's poetry*

she was no angel  
but she kept this large pair  
of wings under wraps  
for singing lullabies  
and whispering to stillborns

sexting.  
just another example  
of how technology  
brings people together —  
sweet scent of jasmine

*late afternoon sunspill  
in a Super Target parking lot  
contemplating my next tanka*

the corpse had tangled hair  
by the west gate  
one embroidered slipper  
the silhouette of a black crane  
and blue lotus matched her beauty

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA / Dallas, Texas  
USA / London, England

*Larry Kimmel was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He lives quietly  
in the hills of western Massachusetts. His most recent books are 'shards  
and dust' and 'outer edges.' 'this hunger, tissue-thin' is free to read  
online at: <<http://www.winfredpress.com/books/this-hunger-tissue-thin>>.*

*Matsukaze resides in Dallas, TX.  
He writes tanka, sedoka,  
senryu, haiku etc and the like.*

*ai li is a Straits Chinese haiku and tanka poet who lives in London and  
Singapore. She writes about Life, Love and Loss bringing healing and  
prayer to her poems. Besides being the founding editor and publisher of  
still, moving into breath and dew-on-line and the creator of cherita, she  
is an evidential spiritualist medium, an urban photographer, and a  
surrealist collage painter. Find her essence in the quiet of her inner  
rooms at: <[https://www.amazon.com/ai-li/e/B0080X6ROC/  
ref=sr\\_tc\\_2\\_0?qid=1469884842&sr=1-2-ent](https://www.amazon.com/ai-li/e/B0080X6ROC/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1469884842&sr=1-2-ent)>.*

light-borne rain  
*a cherita sequence*

Larry Kimmel & *sheila windsor*

betrayed

a sea of ghostly thumbnails  
laughing . . . laughing . . .

toward what grotesque end  
this outré twist  
of fate

*a church in Rouen*

*we teeter towards  
the tipping point*

*your skin, mine,  
as dusty webs  
intone unfinished psalms*

Monet

the many facades  
with which we navigate our days

finding  
the midnight way  
by touch and faith

*I lead her*

*hush, softly  
back to her room*

*little somnambulist  
where did you journey  
this cool light of dawn?*

old Alexandria

here, the ever scrolling papyrus  
torched ash in the wind

knowledge  
of fragmented knowledge  
— o, Sappho

*journal entry:*

*I refuse to miniaturise  
myself to please*

*as Virginia Woolf's father  
slithers off the bottom  
of my page*

they come & go

from a cocoon of white noise  
I watch without subtitles

sip espresso  
check my e-mail  
sip espresso

*what do you think, Barbie?*

*he wants me  
to meet him after school*

*Barbie smiles,  
rain worms the pane:  
'I suppose, if he's old, you can run'*

headache, flushing,\*

3 quince blossoms in a Waterford vase  
in and out of focus,

runny nose,  
nausea, dizziness,  
rash . . .\*

*\* side effects of Viagra*

*defiant smiles*

*float after float  
Sambas by*

*Rio to Brighton\*  
a ribbon of high camp  
high vis security*

*\* opening of the Olympic Games & 2016 Brighton Pride*

held to my ear

the conch shell carries me far  
to the flat world's edge

if I don't return, love,  
look for me  
@braveunknown

*silver eagle*

*with the Navajo  
turquoise eyes*

*I re-read his haiku\*  
and mine for him, the days  
before he passed*

*for H. Gene Murtha in memoriam*

barely seen,

the sparrow crouching in a niche  
of the stone facade

our precarious  
perch  
in this uncertain world

*I will make you*

*in the likeness  
of my highest self*

*being of snow  
androgynous, our moment  
on the earth*

'you are made

of light, color & sound'  
his opening words

and I was hooked —  
the warmth of the woodstove  
bittersweet at the window

*' . . . I wish in vain*

*that we could sit simply  
in that room again . . . ' \**

*your face in the dying flame  
sometimes smiling, this time sad,  
never aging*

*\*Bob Dylan's 'Dream'*

on a wintry strand

plover tracks from sedge  
to raft to sedge, once more —

errands run,  
my T-Gauge\*  
homeward trek —

*\*T-gauge, smallest commercial model train scale in the world*

*Advent*

*Wallace and Gromit  
paused for tea*

*snowflakes fatten . . .  
here and there on the lawn  
a few begin to stick*

each day,

inch by inch, the Magi close  
on the plastic crèche

‘you’re not wearing  
that outfit to Mass, young lady,  
and that’s final’

*night fills them*

*football boots slung over  
the telegraph cable*

*swaying  
to an imaginary  
serenade for strings*

so much depends

on the pig skin oval missile  
that barrel-rolling arcs

over a grassy parcel  
marked out in lime  
as a gridiron

*up and down, up and down*

*the whirr of Dad’s  
push-mower*

*Sunday-stripes the lawn;  
white enamel tea mug  
bigger than both my hands*

the tinkle of ice in drinks

the chock of croquet balls  
beyond the French doors

tipsy, the dean’s wife  
as always, believing herself  
the coquette

*bark rubbing*

*the heart where  
Mick L’d Angie*

*I wonder  
if it mattered, I wonder  
how long ago*

ain't no use

in all that curiosity, girl —  
by rooster call

the sun  
will paint  
an empty road\*

*\*after Bob Dylan's 'Don't Think Twice It's All Right'*

*'This Is How You Disappear'*

*'... the sequins are stars  
and doves ...'*

*torch I ran after  
through madness, light  
my waiting boat*

*\* 'Orange Sunshine' by Jeremy Reed, at Ledbury, UK*

out of the fog

like a message from invisible ink  
the Eternal Ferryman emerges

nowhere to turn  
nowhere to run  
this is IT

*I open the door*

*of a Jacobean dark  
oak cabinet*

*a desiccated spider  
twirls, in its antique web,  
with the draught*

grandma's attic

so hot the air flows  
redolent of old wood

we cousins psyched to find  
the shrunken head  
of a finagling uncle's tales

*glimpsed beneath*

*dustsheets  
ticking-time grey*

*a finely turned  
rosewood cabriole leg  
mirror to a mouse*

in the apple's cheek,

wee & awry, two glazed panes —  
the fact of reflection

becomes fancy  
and we ask who lives inside  
this pixie cottage?

*two glasses down*

*the third bottle  
of Pinot Noir*

*my face  
in his sapphire eyes  
begins to swim*

on a dark night

making the last turn home  
the green eyeshine by the roadside,

a piercing  
nanosecond of  
unbearable beauty

*at first*

*I thought it a drop  
of dew*

*the earring  
where a body had  
depressed the meadow grass*

the home

that was home  
to me — a leaf

beyond  
the river's  
bend

*'Ratty!'*

*a water vole,  
snouts out spring*

*runs and leaps  
along the path, its tail  
a question mark*

our garden toad

is back after a year's  
sabbatical — 'where did you go?'

you blink one eye,  
pretend to be  
a clump of soil

*whose fingerprints?*

*I hold a fragment  
of 'primitive' clay pot*

*a slice of moon  
or toy boat  
on my upturned palm*

in her letter

full of Parisian nightlife  
I see how it is —

paired butterflies  
over the August pasture  
break my heart

*filigree-framed*

*a wedding photo  
fades to grey*

*lift it lightly  
for the last time  
blow away the dust*

‘doesn’t she look natural?’

no. — the jaw not right,  
the lips too red—no

a certain afternoon,  
wisteria  
and the rocker creaking . . .

*Pierrot on my pillow*

*no way to dry  
his embroidered tear*

*and what  
I really asked for  
was a cuddly teddy bear*

by a country mile

where the rainbow touches down  
the dream’s end

we wake  
to our  
just desserts

*a posh café*

*the little girl  
with a butterfly hair-slide*

*knickerbocker glory  
reaching to the top  
of her head*

at the table next to me

a co-ed  
lets down her hair

her lovely arms  
hot chocolate  
and autumn soon to be

*Dad’s mended coat*

*little stitches  
bridging time*

*to the ramshackle shed  
we sheltered in and spied  
the light-borne rain*

October

I fill the woodbin  
take the chill off evening —

Jack Daniels on the shelf,  
half-full—his tools  
the way he left them

*a thousand smiles*

*where the  
sweet peas were*

*pod of fragrant  
pastel tomorrows . . . more  
than you and I will know*

hitchhiking

now making my way along  
the pre-dawn streets

the sudden aroma  
of baking bread  
a kind of nirvana

*scrubbed pine table*

*Victorian, I guess . . .  
and wonder if you ever*

*in a rare  
moment of precognition  
pictured yourself chic*

Nefertiti

did you strive, in passing, to catch  
your likeness in silver or glass

did you ponder  
your status, were you  
at moments made glad?

*I count*

*iambic pentameter  
in the bath*

*practise my lines  
again and again 'til  
the scaffolding doesn't show*

round as any world

this iridescent bubble  
a mere film of soap & water

shimmers in the sun  
and floats away  
durable as dew

*there he rides*

*smaller, smaller  
over the blue horizon*

*this morning  
he fell from the sky  
into my cereal bowl*

'old woman, old woman

whither so high' . . . I've said  
it before and I'll say it again

all I know of physics  
I learned from  
Wile E. Coyote

*two broken strings*

*on the heirloom  
Welsh harp*

*a spider by firelight  
meticulously  
darns across the gap*

spin straw

into gold . . . or else —  
talk about stress dreams

surprised  
my white hair didn't blond  
overnight

*Ynys Enlli (Island of the Bards)*

*some say that Merlin's  
bones rest here,*

*where Sandpipers call  
and a Grey Seal pup yawns  
gold in the first autumn sun*

ruby lipstick in a monochrome city

she was all muscle  
except for the parts that were soft,

not that I would know —  
still carryin' a torch  
for Stella

*becoming habit*

*this daily meditation,  
this vigil*

*as, one by one,  
the yellow lights of my  
little hillside town come on*

so peaceful

the empty parking lot —  
and the tiny clear lights

on the barren locust,  
right out of faerie  
— who could forget that night?

*Away in a manger . . . ?*

*the door's draught loops  
a silken thread through air*

*beside the fire  
neither speaks, each knows  
there's no-one there*

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA / Bexhill-on-Sea,  
East Sussex, UK

*Larry Kimmel was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He lives quietly in the hills of western Massachusetts. His most recent books are 'shards and dust' and 'outer edges.' 'The Piercing Blue of Sirius: Selected Poems 1968 - 2008' is free to read online at: <[http://larrykimmel.tripod.com/the\\_piercing\\_blue\\_of\\_sirius.htm](http://larrykimmel.tripod.com/the_piercing_blue_of_sirius.htm)>.*

*Sheila Windsor has written poetry, mainly short verse and haikai, as an almost daily practice for over twenty years. Her works are internationally published and awarded and translated into many languages. She is a former founding co-editor of Bones Journal; former editor of The Living Haiku Anthology and currently co-editor of moongarlic e-zine. Books: Totem, Yet To Be Named Free Press 2016, Amazon.co.uk / Amazon.com Blue Smoke: a two voice improvisation 2016, Stark Mountain Press, Lulu.com*

## Larry Kimmel

all night with closed eyes

the ventriloquist's dummy lies  
in its velvet box

for the first time  
the muted many  
dream their voices

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA

## Cherita

Lavana Kray

migration

the scud of birds  
before the wind

amid a swirl of leaves  
I do my plans to leave home  
as I did every year

broken hourglass

the humming table fan  
spreads units of time

and I pretend  
I meet you right now  
falling in love again

soft light

a butterfly shaking off  
old spider webs

in the painting class  
where the students focus  
on a nude

~*Romania*

## Leonard Zawadski

these leaves  
which scatter the ground where we lay,  
like a patch-work of autumn:  
    move gently to  
    the passing breeze.

in accord  
ance with the very laws of Nature,  
the deep-moss grew upon:  
    a stone, sat wild  
    ly amongst the trees.

and as we awoke  
to be beside the sound of falling rain,  
in an otherwise quiet grove:  
    we thought of how  
    the water had become.

we sat motion  
less amongst the snow-capped mountains,  
intent upon our way of breathing:  
    looking into the blue  
    expanse of morning air.

and in this way  
we stood amongst ourselves to breathe,  
a silent gathering of wild-flowers:  
    so intent, and subtly  
    enraptured by the moon.

we sought for  
ourselves within the bright meadow,  
then found a warm patch to:  
    lay down upon  
    and count the stars.

~*Chicago, Illinois, USA*

*Leonard Zawadski currently resides in Chicago, IL. Poetry of his is forthcoming from The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy.*

## Cherita

Lesley Anne Swanson

preparing to write

I pick my cuticles  
squint one eye

on the cliff face  
a hand hold  
just out of reach

~Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, USA

*Lesley Anne Swanson strives to write musically, using words and images that linger, especially when read aloud. Her tanka have been honored with the top awards of both the Japan Tanka Poets' Society and the Tanka Society of America. She resides in Coopersburg, PA, USA.*

## Cherita

Kris Lindbeck

The world darkens

It's hard to know  
whom to trust

Still  
we plant seeds  
in the brown earth

~Boca Raton, Florida, USA

*Kris Lindbeck writes haiku and short poems on Twitter @krislindbeck. She has published in M. Kei's Bright Stars, Skylark Tanka, Bones, & Gnarled Oak, and written an essay on senryu in Simply Haiku.*

## Sleeper in China

Lorne Henry

A four berth sleeper through Northern China.

We'd been warned we may be sharing with either sex.

Considered the 'little old lady' of the group — I don't think so.

Our Chinese guide shared with me along with two young Chinese people who may have been brother and sister.

Two kindly English ladies were quite concerned I was alone with 'all those Chinese.' Hadn't we come to learn about the country and its people?

The aroma of the sweetest plumpiest strawberries I'd ever seen drifted from the centre table. The young girl signalled for me to try them. Ummmm!

With the use of technology we had quite a conversation.

She entered something in Chinese and pushed the button. Showed me the English word.

I answered in English. She pressed the button.

Bingo! The translation.

Surprised by my age I wondered was she sincere.

Our guide explained 'Chinese women of your age 'have had it.' They don't go off on holidays to China.'

pleased  
by my friendship  
our guide  
settles to converse  
as maybe he wouldn't have

~China

*Lorne Henry has been writing haiku since 1992 and tanka from about 1996. She also writes tanka prose. She lives in countryside New South Wales, Australia.*

# Louisa Howerow

the desert sky  
its stars so brilliant  
so numerous  
I'm lost but for a nebula  
Magellan's far off namesake

~Chile

high noon  
on the scrub trail  
a swallowtail  
flutter-feasts on dung  
this, too, is mindfulness

lanterns  
floating down the river  
not enough  
dots of light to reach the sea  
and stop the dying

*Chinese & Japanese custom adopted by Canadian communities.*

old uncle  
sits on the dock  
moonraking  
memories of his childhood  
under a southern sky

past midnight  
a road sign flashes  
Vacancy  
rooster-tailing snow  
we chance a last fling

a cornfield  
with its endless rustling  
and our shouts . . .  
in the cold failing light  
another little boy lost

~Ontario, Canada

the cliff I walk  
sheers off into the sea  
the water, sky  
free from luggers, raucous gulls  
a brief gift of seamless blue

~Cornwall, England

All Soul's Day,  
an old woman kneels  
on the church steps  
to scrub the stones of stains  
only she can see

~Iberia

the pilot  
banks the bush plane—  
below me  
a white vast emptiness  
until the polar bear moves

~James Bay, Canada

*Louisa Howerow's latest tanka have appeared in Eucalypt, Ribbons, Gusts, and Skylark.*

*Mac Miller b.1941 England. Married and has lived in New Zealand since 1966.*

*Elizabeth Howard lives in Arlington, Tennessee. Her tanka have been published in Eucalypt, red lights, Mariposa, Ribbons, Gusts, Atlas Poetica, Skylark, Moonbathing, and other journals.*

## Cherita

Mac Miller

over the bluff

spring thunder  
lost in the mountains

his whistle  
higher now catches  
the wind back

tent canvas

flaps in and out  
with me

while trees  
bow and bend  
kings forest

*~Hamilton, New Zealand*

## Cherita

Elizabeth Howard

she limps along

long black coat  
dragging through thorns

in a burst of wind  
she shapeshifts to a raven  
rises to the bent tree on the crag

*~Arlington, Tennessee, USA*

## Lavender Drops, A Cherita Sequence

Malintha Perera

drenched in the rain

I come searching  
for him

the shrine room  
is dusted  
with starlight

shivering hands

the blossoms I have plucked  
from the mountain paths

my robes had been wide  
as the three realms  
to keep them dry

silent prayer

deep in my pocket  
a scented candle

how deep is the light of desire  
the wax forms a puddle  
closer to the flame

*~Colombo, Sri Lanka*

## Cherita

Malintha Perera

blue incense

the smoke tiptoes  
around the monk

the gong  
is a pebble  
in the grey seas

ivory dawn

this voidness  
of a self

my saree is draped  
on your clothes  
an ancient text

pagoda lights

the crickets flicker  
in tune with the chants

a child draws a moon  
on the sand

twilight drizzle

your mouth  
on my wrist

how delicate  
is my life  
in your hands

*~Colombo, Sri Lanka*

moonless

a little too soft  
with her evening prayers

Buddha's palms  
heavy  
with tangled shadows

temple bells

just then  
a wind passes

some young blossoms  
too break away  
from attachment

## Nonce Cherita

Malintha Perera

on and off rain

teak leaves  
are rain cups

fresh butterflies  
burst about

where to go  
I wonder  
whom to chase

*~Colombo, Sri Lanka*

*Malintha Perera writes haiku and tanka. She is from Colombo, Sri Lanka.*

## Cherita

### Marilyn Humbert

harvest morning

hail on the roof  
hammering wheat beards

father pacing  
to a tattoo of destruction  
shoulders slumped

the morning after

first night lovers  
face off at breakfast

a vegan  
a carnivore  
daylight strangers

~Sydney, NSW, Australia

*Marilyn Humbert lives in the northern suburbs of Sydney, NSW, surrounded by bush. Her pastimes include writing free verse, tanka, and haiku. Her tanka and haiku appears in international and Australian Journals, anthologies and online. Some of her free verse poems have been awarded prizes in competitions and some have been published.*

*Mary Gunn writes haiku, tanka and other forms of poetry. Her writing has appeared in various publications including Shamrock, Presence, A Hundred Gourds, Chrysanthemum, NeverEnding Story / Butterfly Dream, Tanka Journal, cattails, Moonbathing, and Neon Graffiti: An Anthology of Urban Tanka*

## Cherita

### Mary Gunn

bereavement

is more difficult  
to cope with

when friends stay away  
because they don't know  
how to deal with it either

~Dublin, Ireland

## Margaret Van Every

she welcomed me to Mexico  
with a seedling mimosa  
*look, she said, how the leaves  
come toward you  
if you hold out your hand*

Mexican wash  
unabashed on the roof  
dances in the breeze;  
gringos in gated compounds  
cannot air their linen in public

~San Antonio Tlayacapan, Mexico

tourist to guide:  
*aren't you proud to have come  
from the Mayans who built these pyramids?*  
guide's response: *are the Jews proud  
to have built the ones in Egypt?*

~Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico

another day  
before the monitor  
pecking out pages  
of our opus  
posthumous

Isla Negra  
Neruda's seaside grave  
quiet 28 years —  
they dig him up,  
search the bones for poison

~Isla Negra, Chile

*In 2010 Margaret Van Every moved permanently to Ajijic, Mexico, where she sees her life unfold as a constant stream of tanka. Her book, A Pillow Stuffed with Diamonds/ Una almohada relleno con diamantes, (Librophilia 2011) is a bilingual tanka portrait of her adopted village.*

## Cherita

Mark Gordon

I decide to try it

this new form of living  
a breath at a time

then listen  
to the gulls  
over the lake

I am sure

it's a sky  
I've never seen before

brick road of cloud  
or something  
I've built

I walk under pines

gather sunlight  
in my hood

yesterday  
I too was traffic  
on the avenue

~Toronto, Ontario, Canada

*Mark Gordon is a poet and novelist who grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals in Canada and the United States, including Poet Love, Illuminations, RiverSedge, Quiddity, and The Roanoke Review. His poetry has appeared online at VerseWrights.com. He has published three novels, the latest being The Snail's Castle. He lives in Toronto with his wife, Carol, and teaches English to newcomers to Canada and mentors novice teachers.*

## Marshall Bood

making out  
in the elevator  
after walking you home . . .  
autumn leaves  
on wet sidewalk

a flower torn  
from a magazine . . .  
in my mind  
you were with me  
turning the pages

limited space  
of a bachelor suite . . .  
I still pile  
papers  
on the kitchen table

sick of the bus,  
I walk  
up Albert St.  
past the big houses  
dreaming

~Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

*Marshall Bood lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. He is very happy with his new apartment near a grocery store and Wascana Park.*

*Matsukaze is a classical vocalist/actor/poet living in Dallas, TX. He has been writing short verse since early 2006.*

## Cherita

### Matsukaze

sunday morning . . .

against a bit of  
John Coltrane

on the computer  
typing out  
a few cherita

early morning rain

all is quiet  
in the lobby

staring into each drop  
the sudden desire  
to be in bed

midnight.

how often  
have you called me?

how often  
have we shared kisses  
in dark alleys?

*~Dallas, Texas, USA*

## Matsukaze

after-3pm-rainpour seated before this computer  
cranking out a manuscript quickly

watching you watch me in your eyes  
a sudden darkening and something more

bending cosmos flowers—sentinels  
protecting a front door that never admits lovers

declining an afternoon assignation  
Elgar's 'Sea Pictures' is my only companion  
today

when i rest my tired feet  
a homeless woman's eyes the most startling blue

getting dark along the way  
i hear the 5pm train whistle in the distance

i want my love to be like Snickers  
something i savor and hoard away in private

autumn scenery has no boarders  
i still wait expectantly for the cold to arrive

dad's car parked under the car-port  
sparkplugs are needed for me, a man with warm  
hands

these Texas leaves, a pale green color  
with the approach of November little by little  
they turn brown

not since childhood have i felt giddy—  
meeting him behind the apartment office  
building

what is it about promiscuity?  
this afternoon i put on the skin of a whore

come windless invader i am a raw song—  
lighting a cigarette i wait for the inevitable

curled up in a disheveled chair  
this evening another reading of 'The Grapes of  
Wrath'

remnants of wine in my system long into the  
night  
your hand on the small of my back— searing

hoping for a little rain, pattering around the  
house  
every now and then a little aimlessness is needed

autumn's colors stuck on the apartment roofs  
another little girl has been found dead

no phone calls, no house callers . . .  
this town is dry and so is my life

light downpour comes this morning a bit  
nondescript  
i cannot find my underwear or dignity

in your kitchen sipping black coffee  
my skin bathed in sunrise, i feel connected  
somehow

~Dallas, Texas

## Cherita

Michael H. Lester

who knows

better than the robin  
what it feels like

to wake up  
in the morning  
with a red breast

~Los Angeles, California, USA

*Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Michael H. Lester is a CPA  
Attorney practicing business management for the entertainment industry  
in Los Angeles, California. His tanka and haiku have recently been  
accepted for publication in Ribbons and Modern Haiku.*

## nine petals

Matsukaze & Murasame

*flower after flower  
they open, singing  
of cocoa  
of his brown skin  
of triple three*

this Sabbath morning  
what a welcome sight  
one chocolate cosmos  
dense dark red  
and fragrant

*nine petals  
the colour of blood  
spilled, sacred  
a trinity  
a haiku*

sentinels  
in my yard  
i often feel  
their eyes  
on me

*in the wind  
they toss their heads  
dancing  
like the lunatics  
of Bedlam*

~Louisiana, USA / Norwich, England

*Matsukaze resides in Dallas, Texas, USA, a classical vocalist and  
actor, a lover of Japanese poetic forms.*

*Murasame (Joy McCall) lives in her birthplace, Norwich, England,  
growing older and not much wiser.*

## Mike Montreuil

it looks like rain

rain to last the day  
rain to sleep the day away

still we are here  
looking into each others eyes  
remembering sunny skies

in and out of focus

the world stands  
before me, winter coming

was it you that said  
we must live through winter  
to appreciate spring?

she has a wish

to live a simple life  
free of stress and hate

I could take her  
by the hand and live there  
if life wasn't so complicated

little do they know

the past always repeats  
when you least expect it

almost like the time  
you pushed me off  
the dock into the lake

every so often

you glance at me  
from the espresso machine

what am I to think  
of your young smile  
I, your grandfather's age?

*~Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

*Mike Montreuil lives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He may be found  
at a coffee shop near you.*

## Three Angry Tanka: *I am in hate with you*

Mira N. Mataric

Tanka cannot absorb  
my wrath for you my ex-lover  
and love lost at the cost  
of my peace and faith in love  
now hate will replace it all

get out of here out out  
you nasty stain get out  
my memory delete  
my feelings for you deplete  
I am in the mood for war

if love is life and hate death  
what does wrath account for  
with the last breath I'll hate you  
love is not the strongest force  
you'll find out hate is

*~Pasadena, California, USA*

# Five Angry Tanka

Mira N. Mataric

Mira N. Mataric, Serbian-English  
Translator / Мира Н. Матарић, енглеско-  
српски преводац

his love is so dead  
our lovemaking pure routine  
repetition  
not better than an old  
scratched compact disc

његова љубав  
мртва је секс рутинско  
понављање  
није ништа бољи од  
напукле дискете

njegova ljubav  
mrtva je seks rutinsko  
ponavljanje  
nije ništa bolji od  
napukle diskete

before her eyes  
would never leave mine  
now she paints her nails  
while I talk to her  
about our love

пре њене очи  
нису напуштале моје  
лакира нокте  
сада док јој говорим  
о нашој љубави

pre njene oči  
nisu napuštale moje  
lakira nokte  
sada dok joj govorim  
o našoj ljubavi

even her cooking  
doesn't taste sweet like before  
she has changed  
after the wedding  
who is this shrew

ни њено кување  
није ми слатко као пре  
постала је друга  
после венчања  
ко је ова вештица

ni njeno kuvanje  
nije mi slatko kao pre  
postala je druga  
posle venčanja  
ko je ova veštica

angry again  
his teeth showing  
not in a smile  
what did I do wrong  
to my faithful puppy

опет је бесан  
зуби искежени  
не у осмеху  
шта сам то згрешила  
моме верноме псу

opet je besan  
zubi iskeženi  
ne u osmehu  
šta sam to zgrešila  
mome vernome psu

she had her hair cut,  
cut short like a boy  
three weeks  
I did not look at her  
I loved that hair

одсекла косу  
кратко као дечко  
три недеље  
нисам је ни погледао  
волео сам ту косу

odsekla kosu  
kratko kao dečko  
tri nedelje  
nisam je ni pogledao  
voleo sam tu kosu

~Pasadena, California, USA

*Mira N. Mataric has published 40 books (in English and Serbian) of poetry, short stories, memoirs, novels, one anthology and several books of translations. Awarded numerous prestigious international awards, she has 50 years of teaching English, Russian, Creative Writing and Special Education. She promotes haiku, tanka and short poetry emphasizing its effect on prose through precise and concise expression. Mira organizes public poetry readings and workshops.*

*Мирјана (Мира) Н. Матарич је објавила 40 књига (на енглеском и српском) поезије, кратких прича, мемоара, романа, једну антологију и неколико књига превода. Награђена је бројним угледним међународним наградама. Педесет година у настави, предаје енглески, руски, креативно писање и специјалну наставу. Промовише хаику, танка и кратку поезију, наглашавајући да упливишу прозу сажетошћу и прецизношћу. Организује и активно учествује у јавним књижевним вечерима и радионицама.*

## The Grown Ups in Transit

*a cherita sequence*

Miriam Sagan

They flew in separate airplanes

claiming that this was so a crash  
wouldn't leave us orphaned

in airports, my father paced as if caged  
the truth is, my mother  
preferred to fly alone.

At the George Washington Bridge Cross Bronx  
Exchange

my father cut off a VW Bug that stopped and  
spewed out a giant of an enraged man

all my father did was say  
'Kids, lock the doors,  
Now!'

In my father's hidden basement file cabinet

so many folders full of certified feuds  
with the city, the garbage collectors, neighbors

and numerous accident settlements  
for small auto collisions, mostly my mother's,  
paid direct, without insurance.

My father did not believe in Free Will at all—

he felt every action of his was pre-ordained  
and when I argued

he said he could have foreseen—  
based on my character—  
exactly what I would say.

My mother confides that 'They' are controlling  
her brain

I suggest we sit on the screened porch  
in the lovely autumn air near the giant copper  
beech

she wonders if mind control extends to the porch  
I can't tell if this worries her  
or she prefers it.

I do have free will, I tell my dead father

it's dinner time in the locked unit  
and I'm leaving

I kiss my mother's forehead, her dark  
Russian Jewish eyes  
go blank.

My mother says she wants to die.

She says she has smuggled out a note  
will call the police, will run away—

'Where will you go?' I ask.  
She smiles, and says  
'I'll go to Italy.'

~*United States*

*Miriam Sagan's haiku and tanka have been published internationally. This is her first foray into cherita. The author of 30 books, she blogs at Miriam's Well <<http://miriamswell.wordpress.com>>.*

*Neal Whitman is Vice President of the United Haiku and Tanka Society, haiku editor for Pulse: Voices from the Heart of Medicine, and member of the editorial board of Romania's Haiku Revista. In 2016 he was awarded Fine Merit by the Japan Tanka Poets Society and his "Assignment: Cherita in Five Parts" was chosen Attestato di Merito by Amici di Guido Gozzano in Aglie, Italy.*

## Cherita

Neal Whitman

into the river

I cast my net  
North of the future

a Gypsy woman  
tells me I have  
a long life line

~*California, USA*

## Cherita

Oz Hardwick

an empty house

the remembrance of bodies  
decades after love has gone

the shower warms me  
touches me everywhere  
I once touched you

brief fellowships in dark places

incense by the door  
joint held to the fireplace

a ritual of passing  
as close as we'll ever come  
to kissing

motorway night

we talk in fragments  
borrowed from each other

hands brush lightly  
an accident  
changing our lives

forgetting the war

she washes vegetables  
in an enamel bucket

days like these  
aubergine or eggplant?  
is the one question that matters

white sky

muffled radios  
silent footprints

a child's red mittens  
on a frozen fence  
a robin sings

~*England*

*Oz Hardwick is a York-based poet, photographer, music journalist, and occasional musician. His sixth poetry collection, probably called The House of Ghosts and Mirrors, will definitely be published by Valley Press in September 2017. As a viable alternative to poverty, Oz is Professor of English at Leeds Trinity University, and has written extensively on misericords and animal iconography in the Middle Ages under the pseudonym of Paul Hardwick. <[www.ozhardwick.co.uk](http://www.ozhardwick.co.uk)>.*

Cherita

Pat Geyer

tip toe

fully extended  
feet within pointe shoes ()

fragile legs  
wings of a mosquito hawk  
gently whorl

we argue . . .

trying to mend  
our weak points

old threads break  
our patchwork quilt  
needs patches

sometimes

without thinking  
or even feeling

it blows  
in all directions . . .  
north wind

again and again

i go up  
i go over

in a tangle  
i plait loose ends . . .  
this twisted life

March . . .

the temperature  
begins to warm

ground begins to thaw  
noodles wriggle in the Pho  
under the full worm moon

stone Buddha . . .

the water  
inside me listens

in the moon  
there is no moon  
yet i see

black white

and read and  
read and read

and read  
want ads . . .  
still wanting

winter sky

on a dark  
and moonless night

the winter circle  
paints a pattern of bright stars  
to lasso the great hunter

~*New Jersey, USA*

*Pat Geyer lives in East Brunswick, NJ, USA. Her home is surrounded  
by the parks and lakes where she finds her inspiration in Nature.  
Published in several journals, she is an amateur photographer and poet.*

## Cherita

Patricia Prime

another beach day

reflections ebbing away  
becoming shadows

low tide  
shellfish emerge  
while they can

you can climb a ladder

but you can't climb out  
of the poem you're reading

the phrases used  
in ordinary conversation  
are made new

we throw on our clothes

pretend we're birds dazzling  
the world with peacock colours

summer flames  
fanning the air  
with blossom

the bamboo hide

is for bird-watching  
over the swollen lake

disturbing the ducks  
a will-o-the-wisp  
skims the surface

a seahorse

surrendered to sea-drift  
is borne along on the tide

its pale form  
balancing upright  
on the whitecaps

listening to Bach

the unpredictable  
sound of his melody

pours forth  
into the silent hollow  
of my living-room

the land and sky

in moon or daylight  
have grace and grandeur

when a blackbird sings  
in the boughs of the oak  
I want to sing too

just on dark

Venus rises  
above the horizon

amid the tumult  
of the stars and fluorescence  
of the moon

on a clear day

I can see  
a range of hills

today a haze  
covers the distant view  
in silver light

a rose tree

grows by a wall  
where a grave is dug

sheltering  
the bones of a pet cat  
in a shoe box

last night

I dreamed again  
of a long lost love

his smiling eyes  
looking fondly on me  
from ages past

not a breath of air

the beach of coral sand  
shimmers whitely

under a full moon  
where teenagers meet  
for a barbecue

a scrap of paper

scratches the concrete  
as a breeze catches it

it's a letter  
addressed to me  
from overseas

the spiders

stretch their webs  
catching the sunlight

by my feet  
in the dry grass  
ants build a city

the holidays over

children return to school  
with their iPads and iPods

not to the books,  
blackboards and chalks  
of my childhood

far north

delicious oranges  
and tangelos for sale

the roadside vendor's  
'honesty box' contains  
some foreign coins

children screeching

on the monkey bars  
in the suburban park

on a braided leash  
the woman's terrier  
barks and leaps

sieving for gold

a tiny nugget  
gleams in the pan

in the cabin  
we weigh our gold  
on miniature scales

in a farmer's yard

only a flock of sheep  
the farmer out on his rounds

the sound  
of his motor bike  
heard in the distance

over perfumed

the masseuse exudes  
attar of roses

delicately massaging  
skin-on-skin  
back and legs

a wild poppy

pressed between the pages  
of a library book

crushed and wrinkled  
it smells of fields  
from long ago

should I call it love

when I stand stock-still  
in the crowded woods

where I can't  
put a name to one bird  
of the hundreds here?

reclining on the deck

surrounded by the windows  
of peering neighbours

the sun is hot  
moisture on our skin  
it's almost like the beach

a love-bottle bobs on the sea

people swim past  
not noticing it

it will be carried away  
on the next current  
to a distant land

at Paihia Beach

among the gulls  
what to do about a dog

how curious his fight  
and flight as the birds  
dive down on him

chill wind

the Muslim girl's  
hijab tied tightly

beneath her sandal  
the smooth pavement  
glistens with rain

beside the falls

bride and groom  
exchange their vows

appearing  
in the wedding photo  
a double rainbow

*~New Zealand*

*Patricia writes poetry, reviews, articles and Japanese forms of poetry. She has self-published several collections of poetry and a book of collaborative tanka sequences and haibun, Shizuka, with French poet, Giselle Maya. Patricia edits Kokako and is reviews/interviews editor of Haibun Today. She writes reviews for Atlas Poetica, Takahe and several Indian journals.*

## Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Dutch-English Translator

De massa is dom:  
zo'n laag opgeleide, wat  
kan die verwachten  
van een poenige blaaskaak  
met miljarden in de bank?

De wereld in rouw.  
Is dan iemand gestorven?  
Integendeel, iets:  
wijlen de democratie.  
En zijn moordenaar leeft nog.

*The scum is stupid:  
what can the low-skilled expect  
from a bullshitter,  
a yapping bloated windbag  
with billions in the bank?*

*The world in mourning  
Has somebody passed away?  
On the contrary,  
a thing: democracy.  
And its murderer still lives.*

*~Bunnik, The Netherlands*

*Retired philosophy professor and medievalist from Belgium (°1934),  
Bunnik, NL. Research and teaching in GB, USA, Florence IT and  
Utrecht NL. Committee Haiku Kring Nederland (Dutch Haiku Society)  
since 2004. Published Bunnikse haiku's en ander dichtspul, 2012  
(Bunnik Haiku's and Other Poetic Stuff, in Dutch) & Tanka of Place  
— ATLAS POETICA — Tanka's van plaats, 2013 (bilingual).  
Voluntary work in the fields of nature, society, culture and spirituality.  
Humanist, promoting democratic confrontation by dialogue. Nominated  
for the local poetry contest Bunnik about Bunnik 2017.*

## Paul Williamson

warm and greening  
the mountain rests  
as if smiling  
having an itch scratched  
as I walk upon its back

your good idea  
brought you to this thorny slope  
hurting  
you are lifted up  
carried for a while

curl your toes  
dig them into the clay  
from where you grew  
look up at the sky  
how high can we fly

perhaps  
the kangaroos have come  
to watch our young  
the children have gone  
they have taken to the road

echidna  
padding steadily  
along the path  
sharply groomed  
looking for a friend

sunshine  
sends golden glints  
streaming  
workers returning  
to the bee tree

pardon me  
I will step around  
quietly  
blue tongue lizard on the path  
surprised like me

wings stretch  
in a wakeful moment  
fold back  
the tawny frogmouth  
almost tree again

these stormy days  
kangaroos disappear  
moving  
in the forest tangle  
as twitching phantoms

seas warm  
winds blow from the east  
branches sway  
slicing through the harried clouds  
beams of sunlight

fires pass  
but this summer is too dry  
today  
flames flare in tree tops  
close to my sister's home

dusk creeps near  
in clinging autumn rain  
ashen sheoaks  
hang skeletal fronds  
across my tenuous path

~*Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia*

*Paul Williamson lives in Canberra in Australian Capital Territory, Australia and has published numerous poems in the US, Canada, UK, New Zealand and Australia and read them on radio. He has published in Ribbons, Skylark, Gusts, Eucalypt, Neverending Story, One Hundred Poems by 100 Poets (Australia and New Zealand) and in Quadrant, Cordite and other journals and e-zines. He has three collections including Moments from Red Hill (2013).*

*Peter Fiore lives and writes in Mahopac, New York, USA. His poems have been published in Rattle, Atlas Poetica, Bright Stars, A Hundred Gourds, Ribbons, Skylark, and others. In 2009 Peter published text messages, the first volume of American poetry totally devoted to Gogyohka. In 2015, Peter's book of tanka prose, flowers to the torch, was published by Keibooks. And forthcoming in spring 2017, Peter's novella, when angels speak of love, will be published by LMP.*

## Cherita

Peter Fiore

first rain

for weeks  
no tennis for days

and already  
the first leaves  
starting to fall

if this were 50 years ago

we'd throw caution to the wind  
and shoot for the moon

glad it's not though  
buying a new frig  
is enough disruption

what to do?

nipples rising  
pussy wet

Cubs  
tied  
in the ninth

I want an orgasm

for Christmas  
this year Santa

I think I deserve one  
and have been waiting  
a long time

~*United States*

Cherita

Richard St. Clair

soon he will die

he's the victim  
of a failing mind

his failing body too  
has barely enough strength  
to end his own life

bluejays call

grackles  
chant in reply

carollers  
singing in many keys  
at once

retired at last

now all the hours  
I longed for

I fill  
watching the t.v.  
newscasts

creeping old age

my aches and pains  
are like a chorus

singing the blues  
that even pills  
cannot quell

a percocet high

a small gift  
from my dentist

for enduring  
a wisdom tooth pull  
at this advanced age

baseball blues

the promise  
the Red Sox made

but could not honor  
to the fans  
this year

my aging lust

with all the pills  
it's become a laugh

Viagra  
is letting me down  
yes down

the candidate

his sins  
and compulsions

make me feel  
strangely holy  
in my dark mind

living with PTSD

grown accustomed  
to the numbness

can't imagine  
really being in touch  
with my feelings

~Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

*Richard St. Clair (b. 1946 in North Dakota) has been writing tanka for over 15 years, and numerous of his tanka have appeared in Atlas Poetica publications. He is also a writer of haiku and renku, with work published in leading journals. He holds a Ph.D. in music composition from Harvard. A Shin Buddhist by faith, he lives life naturally, writing music and poetry as the muse moves him. His music has been heard on three continents and he has composed over 120 individual works. He resides in Massachusetts, where he has lived for over 50 years.*

## Cherita

Robert Horrobin

Sitting alone.

Thinking about  
his father's service.

He too  
has more past  
than future.

~Orkney, Scotland

*Robert Horrobin is a minor local government functionary. To find him follow the great north road till reaches its end. Then take a boat over the old seaways to an island that's half way to the middle of nowhere.*

## Conversation with the Samurai Pirates of the Murakami Suigun

Ryoh Honda, Japanese-English  
Translator

Murakami Suigun tanka on the left  
Ryoh Honda's tanka on the right

国をおさむ弓を袋に入れおきて 芳阿  
あずまの琴やしらべ伝うる 重好

*kuniwoosamu yumiwohukuroni ireokite  
azumanokotoya shirabetsutauru*

~Houa Shigeyoshi

having put the bow  
that guards our nation  
into its bag  
then the sweet sounds  
of koto of Azuma

for a melody  
emptying everything  
in my mind's bag  
I just wonder who  
plays koto of Azuma

たのしみをきわむる国はたのしもや 独阿  
かりのこの世はとにもかくにも 其阿

*tanoshimiwo kiwamurukuniwa tanomoshiya  
karinokonoyowa tonimokakunimo*

~Dokua Goa

how dependable!  
the nation filled with  
great pleasures  
anyway we are in  
this transient world

to rebalance  
our minds with pleasures  
here is tanka  
a convenient tool  
for this real world

浪風のあれぬまにとて出る舟 純阿  
むら雨くもる遠こちの山 喜阿

*namikazeno arenumanitote izuruhune  
murakumokumoru ochikochinoyama*

~Jun'a Kïa

set sail already  
before the waves and winds  
getting rough  
rain clouds covering  
mountains here and there

うき雲のさだめなきこそことわりや 不明  
風にまかせて浮ける世の中 不明

*ukigumono sadamenakikoso kotowariya  
kazenimakasete ukeruyononaka*

~Anonymous

undoubtedly  
no one knows directions  
of floating clouds  
follow the wind well  
enjoy the life well

through the storm  
a sailor recognizes  
one's destiny  
to discover something  
across his frontiers

do not miss  
a dew of sentiment  
inside clouds  
as tanka shall walk  
alongside of your life

忍ぶ夜の恨みをつきにしらせばや 重  
更に立つ名を今は思わず 盛

*shinobiyono uramiwotsukini sirasebaya  
saranitatsunawo imawaomowazu*

~Shige Mori

let the moon know  
my bitterness and patience  
in lonesome night  
now I do not care  
my rumors again

いづくとも知らぬ波路に日はくれて 不明  
星はしるしとたどる物うき 不明

*izukutomo shiranunamijini hiwakurete  
hoshiwashirushito tadorumonousa*

~Anonymous

the sun has set  
and doesn't show our road  
on the sea waves  
relying only on stars  
is so much onerous

we have done  
enthusiastically  
in that night  
it could be too perfect  
to be repeated again

actively or  
passively playing with  
whimsical waves  
our tanka could scoop  
something onerous

Notes:

天の川苗代水にせきくだせ天降ります神な  
らば神

*amanogawa nawashiromizuni sekikudase amakudarimasu  
kaminarabakami*

let the river  
in the heaven come down  
to rice fields  
our god please descend  
with rain please our god

Priest Noin submitted the tanka to god to pray for rain in 1041, when the Iyo region experienced a heavy drought at the two thousand-year-old (at the time) camphor tree within the grounds of the Oyamatsumi shrine. This is the shrine of the Murakami Suigun, the samurai pirates who dominated the Inland Sea of western Japan, who continuously submitted nearly 30,000 linked poems (renga) for 300 hundred years since the 15th century. They hoped their renga pleased their gods so that the gods would protect them and give them good luck. By doing so, they also believed the right world would come sometimes in the future.

*~Omishima Island, Imabari Japan*

*Ryoh Honda is a tanka lover in Japan. He is enjoying and feels more than happy to share this language-free poetic form with all tanka poets all over the world.*

## Cherita

### Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

on a rural street

only road marker posts  
to guide me in darkness

on the car bonnet  
a flash and a thud  
of a kangaroo

falling off the wagon

the festive season  
firmly at fault

this karma  
like father, like child  
on a much travelled road

at the German hostel

outside my room  
students queue for haircuts

the Italian girl gifts me an apple  
the Korean boy a bookmark  
the others give me two thumbs up

full moon gleams

above the temple roof  
over the bo tree\*

incense lingers, clay lamps wink  
amidst the chanting  
this temporary haven

*\*sacred fig or ficus religiosa*

on the road to Yala\*

the jeep bounces  
on the gravel road

we see no wild elephants  
sloth bears or tigers  
only a flock of waterbirds

*\* a wildlife sanctuary in Sri Lanka*

syringe in hand, the vet asks

'do you want to be here with her?'  
I shake my head

with one last touch  
rushing outside,  
the coward that I am

at the party

a woman corners me  
'have we met?' she asks

the classroom bully  
of my childhood now so small  
i smile and shake my head

years afterwards

on this unused jumper  
strands of fur . . .

at unbidden times  
i catch my breath  
and close my eyes

this little sign

*spoilt dogs live here*  
still looks new

it stays  
near the front door  
years after they've gone

boxing day tsunami

on that beach  
your family strolled

in my nightmares  
that wall of water,  
those thousand cries

after the bomb

i stumble through rubble  
my mind in a tunnel

my ears will stop ringing  
but my eyes . . . those looters  
tearing at earlobes . . .

*~Denistone NSW, Australia*

## Responsive Cherita Sequence

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde & *Marilyn  
Humbert*

roadside temple

the frangipani tree  
covered with filmy dust

yet inside  
cool cement floors  
and an overwhelming stillness

*prayer chanting*

*floats beyond the wall  
ruffling my mind*

*these thoughts  
another time  
another place*

tropical drizzle

clay lamps flicker  
blowing out one by one

this fire in my mind  
only I can  
stamp out

*shadows writhe*

*this dance  
of precise steps*

*my day to day chores  
a hedge maze  
prickles and thorns*

amidst the chaos

finding time  
for these songs

creation, cessation  
and all things in-between  
this cosmic cycle

~Sydney, NSW, Australia

*Marilyn Humbert lives in the northern suburbs of Sydney, NSW, surrounded by bush. Her pastimes include writing free verse, tanka, and haiku. Her tanka and haiku appear in International and Australian Journals, Anthologies and Online. Some of her free verse poems have been awarded prizes in competitions and some have been published.*

*Samantha Sirimanne Hyde was born in Sri Lanka and now lives in Australia. She is grateful to have crossed paths with the exquisite world of haiku, tanka, and other Japanese poetry forms.*

*Sandra Renew writes about the darker sides of love and nature, war and family, as social commentary. She does it for fun.*

## Sandra Renew

sleeping rough  
in the Crowne Plaza garden  
rolled up  
sleeping bag protects his head  
cursing at four black boots

Sunday morning mall  
pink bouffant fairy frock  
she pirouettes,  
busker bows —  
a man in sports coat watching her

city without water  
too many bored young men  
yesterday's *Tidy Town* —  
is there a floral emblem  
for a city in despair?

in this city street  
getting a feel for the place  
cocaine lines  
alcohol, bag snatchers, guns —  
watch through a broken window

wealth  
begs for happiness  
poverty  
holds out a hand for coin . . .  
my city lives on market choice

~Australia

## Sanford Goldstein

I will  
endure to the end  
of my time,  
and still the end remains  
ambiguous

tell me,  
you masters of  
prophecy,  
when will I get  
to my ninety-second year?

off to get  
our car inspected,  
but my friend,  
he leaves the house keys  
in the car at a distant station

I tried  
to walk this morning  
but failed.  
I rest on my couch  
like an exhausted old man

my supper's  
being made at  
the tanka cafe,  
and twenty of these  
tanka too spill on the page

I see  
how the world  
is breaking,  
global warming  
is a sad sad joke

what to do?  
how to go on  
in this dreary world?  
I decide to stay put, stay alone,  
and try to live my life out

how violent  
the morning rain,  
down and down and down,  
the pancakes beside me  
and I wait to pick up my spoon

the birthday  
of my daughter's  
dead husband —  
I send him a card,  
I sent him a check

where  
has the young man  
disappeared?  
he used to come to  
the cafe but no longer

~Japan

*Sanford Goldstein is now 91 years old. He has been writing tanka for more than fifty years. He continues to live in Japan with his friend Kazuaki Wakui.*

## boat of dreams

Sonam Chhoki  
*Geethanjali Rajan*  
Shobhana Kumar

tired of waiting  
for the burst of distant stars  
to colour my dreams  
I turn to the tingling  
sparkle of glass jewels

*will the salt breeze  
carry your laughter  
this evening  
how quickly each wave recedes  
before the next one arrives*

in every turn  
of the kaleidoscope  
a new story —  
all I have to do  
it seems is to seek

leaving behind  
the clamour of another day  
how I long  
to flee with the clouds  
beyond the rim of light

*a sudden burst  
of furious orange  
in the heavens  
I too will ride  
a saddle-free unicorn*

for you  
from the depths  
of the dark expanse  
I thread a bracelet  
with skeins of rainbows

stillness of shore  
after the curlew's call . . .  
I learn  
how silence enchants  
with its own eloquence

*a hermit crab  
inspects an abandoned shell  
on the grainy sand . . .  
the soothing sound of sea  
fills my hull of emptiness*

I build castles  
to quell this yearning  
everyday  
teeters on the hope  
you will come home

who else  
hears this wild ferment  
of the Lyra star  
to take the boat of dreams  
in search of secret firmaments

*in another life  
lacing Akoya pearls  
for you to wear  
I now pretend the tears  
are from dust in my eyes*

a pair of seagulls  
circle the coastline  
are they singing  
a requiem for  
what we once were

~Bhutan / India / India

*Shobhana Kumar has two collections of poetry, The Voices Never Stop and \*Conditions Apply, and has written five books of non-fiction. Her poems have appeared in anthologies and several international journals. She works in the education, communication and social work spaces.*

*Geethanjali Rajan teaches Japanese and English in the city of Chennai, India. She writes prose, opinion pieces, haiku, tanka, haibun and other forms of poetry. Her writing can be found in various international journals online and some in print.*

*Sonam Chhoki is inspired by her father, Sonam Gyamtsho, the architect of Bhutan's non-monastic modern education. Her Japanese form and free verse poetry has been published in international journals and anthologies. She is the current haibun and haiku editor of the UHTS journal, cattails.*

## Spiros Zafiris

the double espresso  
confidence didn't last long  
at the craps table  
my first three points  
all sevens out

no need to play  
cutesy with words  
I'm happy  
simply to see her down the hall  
if she were mine, I would be true

I told her  
I was a gambler  
on medication,  
with an ancient work history —  
and that was that

~Montreal, Canada

*Spiros Zafiris is a Montreal poet who mostly writes tanka and kyoka.*

## Cherita

### Steve Travis

i always understood  
beneath the addictions and  
3AM calls for help

this world  
simply felt  
too big for you

knife to his wrist

he is ready to  
plow a field

where only  
peaceful darkness  
grows

endless night

lost in the darkness  
of the mind

but then a sliver of  
moonlight through the  
broken blind

a new family moves in

ruffling the feathers of the doves  
in the tree next door

there will be no sleep this  
night what with the racket of  
baby birds crying!

seven years gone

every room  
still holds

the shape  
of her  
absence

her heart lies broken

yet she knows  
full well

what can and cannot  
be truly  
broken

gazing into space

he says there are too many  
old ghosts lingering in his life

i wonder about  
a mind where  
so many dead things live

from his window

wisps of woodsmoke  
rise from the neighbor's chimneys

he thinks about  
all his  
abandoned dreams

meditation

sitting with  
closed eyes

feeling the afternoon  
sunlight fill up  
my room

on my bike

staring at  
the nearly frozen river

wanting  
to jump in,  
just to feel alive

~*United States*

*Steve loves the challenge of writing, and how a poem almost writes itself sometimes. He loves when a poem touches him in some way, and when something he writes does the same for someone else. He lives on the east coast of the States. In between working, he writes, reads, exercises, walks in nature, and practices being mindful, specially how it relates to observing the world and writing poetry.*

# Cherita

Tanja Julija Trček

Tanja Julija Trček, Slovenian-English  
Translator

I knew right away something was amiss

the house was holding  
its musty breath

shutters closed, a cobweb in the door  
a glass, a bottle  
shattered on the floor

takoj sem vedela, da je nekaj narobe,

hiša je zadrževala  
svojo zatohlo sapo

polkna zaprta, pajčevine med vrati,  
kozarec, steklenica,  
na tleh razbita

five months today

the world hangs askew  
tea cups slide off the table

roll down the hill, plunge into the sea  
just in time for the little fish  
to enjoy their seaweed tea

pet mesecev danes,

svet visi postrani,  
skodelice zdrsiijo z mize,

trkljajo se po hribu, čof v morje,  
ribice bodo pile čaj iz alg,  
ravno pravi čas

hospital parking lot

I just stand here, in the rain,  
my hair sticking to my face

if only there was a bird,  
just one small brown bird  
chirping and hopping around

parkirišče pred bolnico,

stojim tu, v dežju,  
na obraz se mi lepijo lasje,

da bi le prišla ptica,  
le ena drobna ptičica,  
ki bi pela in skakljala naokrog

tonight I'm the rain

falling  
nourishing you with my softness

watching  
with wet eyes  
how you blossom

ta bolezen

ti ne da videti  
kaj dosti sveta

hrbti se obrnejo, vrata zaloputnejo,  
stopnice prestrme, travniki preširoki  
in na koncu ponikneš v črni luknji

nursing home garden

it's snowing but  
she sits there unperturbed

talking to someone  
I'm not old enough  
to see

<p>             vrt doma ostarelih,                sneži,              a ona mirno sedi                z nekom se pogovarja,              a jaz nisem dovolj stara,              da bi ga videla                watching tv                my little cousin              keeps on chatting                at the sight of bombs falling on Aleppo              she falls quiet,              clutches my hand                  gledava televizijo,                moja mala sestrična              klepeta in klepeta,                ko pa vidi,              padati bombe na Alep,              utihne, mi stisne roko                midnight tea on the terrace                accidentally              a thought of him                this little spoon stirs up              a tornado funnel in my cup,              which gobbles up all the stars                  na terasi čaj ob polnoči,                pomotoma              pomislim nanj,                čajna žlička naredi tornado,              naenkrat zvrtničene,              vse zvezde, na dnu skodelice           </p>	<p>             a thought of him                just a small one,              the size of an ant                yet with all its legs              it clutches at my heart, mercilessly              I smash it with a chocolate bar                misel nanj,                čisto majcena,              kot mravlja,                a se mi z vsemi nogami              oprijema srca, neusmiljeno              jo treščim po glavi s čokolado                more than a decade ago                more than 3650 showers taken              and yet and yet                his smell still clings to my skin,              his fingers, fat and greedy,              still grabbing at my purity                pred več kot desetletjem,                že več kot 3650 prhanj,              a vendar, a vendar,                njegov vonj še vedno na moji koži,              njegovi prsti, debeli in pogoltni,              hlatajo, še vedno, za mojo čistostjo                poetry                not just pretty words,              sighs about love                also a protest,              a fist raised high, a fight won              gracefully, with dignity           </p>
--	--

poezija,

ne le ljubke besede,  
vzdihovanje o ljubezni,

tudi upor,  
vzdignjena pest, bitka dobljena  
elegantno in dostojanstveno

seeing his picture

I get sick  
literally

you think I'm weird?  
have you ever tried being a woman  
pretty, with a pen in her lyrical hand

ob pogledu na njegovo sliko

mi postane slabo,  
dobesedno

se ti zdim čudna?  
si kdaj poskusil biti ženska,  
čedna, z nalivko v svoji lirični dlani?

you say I'm quiet

I say  
you must be deaf

don't you hear the lightning  
striking jagged  
in my head

praviš, da sem tiha,

pravim,  
da moraš biti gluha,

kaj res ne slišiš strel,  
ki cikcakasto udarjajo  
v moji glavi

freezing cold tonight and so dark

I watch a movie set in Nice:  
the sea in front of a *pâtisserie*

suddenly I want a stone cottage  
with blue shutters and a bougainvillea,  
pink and bright in the Mediterranean sun

tako hladno to noč, temno,

gledam film, ki se dogaja v Nici:  
morje pred slaščičarno,

naenkrat si zaželim kamnite hiške  
z modrimi polkni in bugenvilijo  
pod sredozemskim soncem, vso svetlo,  
rožnato

tonight I'm a storm

I'll leave in my wake  
shipwrecks, dead bodies

and a tiny star  
shining  
in the midnight sky

to noč sem vihar,

za seboj bom pustila  
razbitine ladij, mrtvece

in drobno zvezdo  
sijočo  
na polnočnem nebu

someone lives in my chest

usually she's quiet,  
as though she weren't even there

but sometimes she races, pounds restlessly  
trying to tell me  
she's cold and lonely in there

nekdo živi v mojih prsih,

ponavadi je čisto tiho,  
kot da je sploh ne bi bilo,

včasih pa divja in razbija,  
želi mi povedati  
da jo zebe, da je osamljena tam notri

for years and years he had been a poet

but then one day  
he just turned into a poem

and whispered into my ear:  
don't interpret me,  
savour me

dolga leta je bil pesnik,

nekega dne  
pa se je spremenil v pesem

in mi zašepetal na uho:  
ne tolmači me,  
užij me

melting ice caps scare me

i want to yell,  
beg people to live differently

but there isn't anyone,  
anywhere,  
just this old clock ticking

bojim se taljenja polarnega ledu,

vpila bi,  
prosila ljudi, naj živijo drugače,

a nikjer nikogar,  
le ta stara ura  
tik-tak, tik-tak

golden leaves swirl across the piazza

a boy places his fiddle  
into a battered case

he picks up his hat, shakes it,  
smiles at the sound of  
silver coins tinkling

zlato listje se vrtinči  
preko mestnega trga,

deček položi gosli  
v oguljen kovček,

pobere klobuk, ga potrese,  
se nasmehne  
ob žvenketu srebrnih cekinov

between us the flames

he holds up a feather:  
'you shall be kestrel'

the prophecy perched on my ribs  
my heart ever since  
a wild and winged thing

med nama plameni,

pokaže mi pero, reče:  
»sokol selec boš,«

prerokba mi pristane na rebrih,  
vse od takrat moje srce,  
krilato in divje

black tiles

the cold gleam of scissors  
snip!

suddenly in the mirror  
my small white breasts  
at my feet—were these my wings?

črne ploščice,

hladen lesket škarij,  
hrsk!

naenkrat v ogledalu  
moje majhne bele prsi,  
pri nogah — so bila to moja krila?

Fukushima, remember?

stealthily, silently  
the dark thing grows and spreads

it especially likes what is soft  
pink and tender flesh  
like that of your kids, of newly-born lambs

Fukušima, se spomniš?

potuhnjeno, tiho  
temna reč raste, se širi,

še posebej ima rada kar je mehko,  
rožnato, nežno meso,  
kot je tisto tvojih otrok, majčkenih ovc

today is a painting

I am in it  
sitting under the yellow beeches

Klimt's secret muse  
lavishly covered in  
gold-leaf

današnji dan je slika

in jaz na njej, sedeča  
pod rumenimi bukvami

Klimtova skrivna muza,  
razkošno okrašena  
z zlatimi lističi

the door off the hinges

pine needles, leaves  
in the hall

I knock on the window  
a kestrel's cry  
wind in the pine

vrata s tečajev,

borove iglice, listi  
v hodniku,

potrkam na okno,  
krik sokola selca,  
v borovcu šumenje vetra

in the cemetery

hundreds of tiny flames  
flicker restlessly

the carved names  
grow distant  
the poplars tall

na pokopališču

nemirno utripa  
na stotine plamenčkov,

vklesana imena  
postajajo vse bolj oddaljena,  
topoli vse višji

her grave

covered with a layer of  
brown pine needles

and there, a maple leaf  
afire and restless  
in the dusk

njen grob

prekrit s plastjo  
rjavih borovih iglic

in tam, javorjev list,  
rdeče razvnet in nemiren  
v mraku

wake up!

do you hear them,  
the silver bells?

these are weather sprites  
summoning snowflakes  
to the edge of the sky

zbudi se!

jih slišiš,  
srebrne zvončke?

to so vremenske vile,  
ki kličejo snežinke  
na rob neba

there's a door in the sky

only the birds know of it and  
they knock with their beaks

a kindly ancient hand reaches out  
and sprinkles golden seeds  
across the clouds

v nebu so vrata,

le ptice vedo zanje  
in s kljuni trkajo po njih,

prijazna stara roka jih odpre  
in natrese zlatih semen  
po oblakih

tonight i saw her

rising from among the trees  
her hair aflame

an owl with singed wings  
flew past the church spire  
screeching

to noč sem jo videla,

vzdignila se je iznad dreves,  
njeni lasje goreči,

sova z ožganimi krili  
je vrešče letela  
mimo zvonika

snowshoes on the wall

every morning, on this stove  
my grandma cooked kasha

a thick layer of snow on the fir trees  
deerskin gloves on the chopping block  
the clock quietly tick-tock

to noč sem jo videla,

vzdignila se je iznad dreves,  
njeni lasje goreči,

sova z ožganimi krili  
je vrešče letela  
mimo zvonika

*~Golnik, Slovenia*

# Cherita Sequence

Tanja Julija Trček

then I returned home

and he remained by his small lamp  
writing long into the night

hands in his pockets, head bowed  
he walked the streets  
leaves swirling in the wind

potem sem se vrnila domov,

on pa je ostal tam, ob svetilki  
in pisal dolgo v noč

z rokami v žepih in sklonjene glave  
je hodil po ulicah,  
listje se je vrtinčilo v vetru

we met again

he placed a slim volume in my lap  
walked to the window, stood there

did his shoulders heave?  
I don't remember  
it was snowing, the light was grey

ponovno sva se srečala,

v naročje mi je položil drobno knjigo,  
stopil k oknu, stal tam

so mu trepetala ramena?  
ne spomnim se,

i'm the poplar by his grave

bowing deeply  
i touch his heart

lift it to the sky  
a bright  
and restless star

sem topol ob njegovem grobu,

globoko se priklonim  
in se dotaknem njegovega srca,

ga dvignem do neba,  
svetla  
in nemirna zvezda

in the stream of silver moonlight

he descends to me  
on his angel wings

his shimmering blue lips  
a cosmic breeze  
down my belly, to my hips

v srebrnem soju mesečine

se na angelskih krilih  
spusti k meni,

njegove svetlikajoče se modre ustnice,  
kozmični veter  
preko mojega trebuha, okrog bokov

every night he returns to me

leaves his angel wings  
by the bed, on the floor

entwines his heavenly body with mine  
and I become a star, dying  
one kiss at a time

## Thomas Martin

vsako noč se vrne k meni,

pusti angelska krila  
ob postelji, na tleh,

preplete svoje nebeško telo z mojim  
in postanem zvezda, umirajoča  
poljub za poljubom

he takes me inside himself

velvet darkness  
flowing, swirling

green-blue stars  
in the infinite space  
of his celestial hair

vzame me vase,

žametna tema  
teče, se vrtinči,

zeleno-modre zvezde  
v neskončnosti  
njegovega nebeškega srca

~*Golnik, Slovenia*

*Severe illness has sharpened Tanja's vision, so she can now find the tiniest of joys, hiding in the most unexpected of places. She loves sunshine and the sea, as well as everything, which is green and growing wildly. To build worlds made of words, to laugh and love many beings and things is what she enjoys most.*

a column of midges  
climbs the sunbeams  
a fine smoke  
this autumn to find a mate  
or define the light

passing clouds  
sucking on sweet grass  
looking up  
at the cloud angels  
barnstorming so far above

all afternoon  
the blue jay calls  
flies off and lands again  
pushing his lifeless mate  
through the dry grass

~*Portland, Oregon, USA*

silver falls  
my face dripping water  
as a brown snail  
slides along the wet rail  
leaving a silvery track

~*Oregon, USA*

my office  
once for news now a shoe shop  
in the small village  
look deeply at the photos  
my presence virtually gone

thanksgiving  
our latest argument  
to eat in or out  
the blue-shrouded mountains  
hold the sunset so easily

~*Western North Carolina, USA*

## cherita

Thomas Martin

after we parted

I wandered Midsummer Common  
hand in hand with your ghost

I couldn't find any stars  
though I stared  
deeply in the mist

~Cambridge, UK

you are spinning me

round and round  
in your web

you have made me  
your jelly doughnut, a snack  
for your long journey home

~Beaverton, Oregon, USA

*Thomas Martin was raised on a farm in the southeast and now lives with his talented wife, Joyce, in Oregon in the beautiful Pacific Northwest of the USA. He has published haiku, tanka and haibun in many journals both in print and online.*

## Cherita

Sheila Windsor

a thousand smiles

where the  
sweet peas were

Pods of fragrant  
pastel tomorrows . . . more  
than you and I will know

~Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, England

## Tom Sacramona

lucky  
to catch a leaf  
the child  
thought in his heart  
the man starts and stops

stretching  
my legs and mind  
restless  
walking drives away  
the thoughts others think

the purple aster  
holds no malice against me  
though the sun shines  
it touches not one petal  
in the autumn breeze

I made the bed  
and tucked the sheets in  
so tight  
you can't pull them up  
to hide your breasts

my eyes traced  
your harmony and whispered  
of love  
then I gazed down  
at a lady bug

morning  
she is only a single  
red rose  
her resplendent petals blacken—  
nights fall earlier and earnest

~Massachusetts, USA

*Tom Sacramona (b.1992) has worked as an editor and English teacher. The Blackstone River Valley of Massachusetts is his natural habitat. His love-affair with haiku is long rooted, and the flower of his life is Lisa Macciolis.*

*Sheila Windsor has written poetry, mainly short verse and haikai, as an almost daily practice for over twenty years. She is a former founding co-editor of Bones Journal, former editor of The Living Haiku Anthology and currently co-editor of moongarlic e-zine.*

Cherita

Vasile Moldovan

notice:

nothing new  
about crickets . . .

we always  
listen to the same song  
in each autumn

divine music

a lady's fingers  
on the piano

outside  
a lonely cricket  
begins to sing

at the mirror

my father's face  
unrecognizable

only his smile  
remains unchanged  
for a lifetime

face to face

the full moon and  
the blue planet

on one side  
the Sea of Serenity  
on the other the Pacific

graffiti

on the birch bark  
Cupidon's arrow

beneath it  
some professions of love  
scratched with a penknife

rose in fall

its petals scattered  
for a long time

but its thistles  
remained at their places  
unchangeably

native beauty

a lone wild flower  
is opening its petals

just like a girl  
who is smiling  
to her boyfriend

at the mill

a lot of farmers  
waiting for the wind

they have a chat  
about the past harvest and  
the next sowing campaign

~Romania

*Vasile Moldovan was born on 20 June 1949 in a Transylvanian village. He graduated the Faculty of Journalism in Bucharest and published several books of haiku both in Romanian and English, a tanka booklet and a renku book (this one with Magdalena Dale).*

## Cherita

### Tracy Davidson

hall of mirrors

still thinking she looks fat  
in the thin one

my heart breaks  
to see her  
fade away

his umbrella

offers a brief respite  
from the deluge

but all too soon  
the flood  
of angry words resumes

she hears music

scores the notes  
into her skin

when the song ends  
she lays the bloodied razor  
to one side

*~Warwickshire, England*

*Tracy Davidson lives in Warwickshire, England, and writes poetry and flash fiction. Her work has appeared in various publications and anthologies, including: Mslexia, Poet's Market, Modern Haiku, Atlas Poetica, A Hundred Gourds, The Binnacle, The Great Gatsby Anthology, Ekphrastia Gone Wild and In Protest: 150 Poems for Human Rights.*

## Wendy Bourke

old woman buying food  
explains the senior discount —  
she's never had to prove her age . . .  
forty  
she tells me with a toothless grin

on one side — the ocean stops  
at the foot of a continent  
on the other side — the sea is boundless  
same island . . .  
same ocean

*~Vancouver, BC, Canada*

angry voices  
a baby howling . . .  
behind a picket fence  
someone's happily-ever-after  
escapes into the street

*~New Westminster, BC, Canada*

condo fire alarm —  
time to meet neighbors  
at two a.m. in pjs and a ski jacket . . .  
sometimes  
I think about settlers

*~Burnaby, BC, Canada*

I must have spent  
many hours  
breathing in lake scent . . .  
though I have never lived by water  
the fragrance carries me home

lake song and leafy yawns  
sleeping under stars  
and lantern moon . . .  
feeling young  
and forest-ancient

*~Mesachie Lake near Lake Cowichan, Southern  
Vancouver Island, BC, Canada*

*Wendy Bourke lives in metro Vancouver, Canada where she writes, goes  
on long rambling walks gathering photos and inspiration – and hangs  
out with her family (especially her two young grandsons). Her poems  
have been published in several anthologies and journals, such as  
American Tanka, Skylark, Ribbons and Moonbathing*

once upon a cherita\*

ai li

once upon a cherita

those were giddy nights when  
you were created in the late 90s

over the years you have stood tall  
enriching all our lives  
with tales of life, love and loss

ai li

*\* cherita is the malay word for story*

When Kei very kindly asked me to write a non-fiction article for ATPO 27, my first reaction was one of mild panic. I use certain brain muscles to write my Haiku and Tanka where the discipline of holding back and being as minimal as one can is not only essential but completely necessary for keeping the integrity and power of my one to five line poems. To have to elongate these tried and tested muscles would require some kind of compromise which I was not sure I was prepared to do. I have been writing short form poetry for over 20 years or so, and to start waffling on about one of my creations in a learned way (which I tend to leave to the academics) was anathema to me. Besides writing micro-poetry, I also take urban photographs where I am always behind the lens and not in front of it. The same ethos of finding me in my work and not in long essays applied.

However, after a short spell in Innsbruck doing my mediumship and gorging on luscious sachertorte, strudel and amarena ice cream for ze little grey cells, I wondered if I was capable of producing this article on the cherita but in a fun way, thereby invoking the spirit of storytelling. I have always believed that our inner child is also the custodian and archivist of all our stories, both told and yet to be told.

I was born in what was British Malaya. My father's family were Roman Catholics but my mother's side of the family embraced Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Hinduism. Malaya was multi-racial in the true sense of the word. Practically all creeds and religions jostled for place in this pineapple-shaped peninsula, and with these legions of immigrants came stories told and retold by coolies in old godowns dimly lit by swaying Chinese paper lanterns, sari clad women tapping rubber in tiger-infested plantations and white Russian Jews over smuggled vodka in their opulent Art Deco cinemas. I had little choice but to be a poet and writer in later life with my ears still ringing with lost dialects, timeless lullabies and more importantly with the triumphs of the indomitable human spirit.

It was no small wonder that the cherita appeared as manna from heaven. I had been in self-imposed exile for decades in the West and the acute longing for my spiritual home never quite went away. Now it was the words from way back that jostled in my mind wanting to be heard again, bringing all the ghosts of past and present back to life. No article on the cherita can be deemed kosher, in my opinion, without mentioning how much one poet and writer, Larry Kimmel, who also happens to be a dear friend, has made the form his second skin. He, along with many others have written many examples of which I am truly in awe.

I am also deeply indebted to the many poets out there who have written, nurtured the cherita and given it more than nine lives. I mustn't forget too, the vision of all the editors who embraced this then new form and who have published many fine examples of cherita. In those mad and giddy nights in the late 1990s, so many other forms, both linked and otherwise, were created by a number of poets including myself, who wanted new avenues to open up for emerging Haiku and Tanka poets. I posted most of these new forms on *still's* website. These forms, including the cherita, allowed us to experiment and push the boundaries within what was religiously policed. The emergence of these forms gave us all much needed fresh air and the

chance to breathe free of the straightjackets of dogma.

The cherita was also my humble way of paying homage to loved ones, many of whom have passed into spirit, for gifting me with their wonderful tales that littered so much of my childhood with their timeless sense of wonder. At this point though, I am wondering if I have been meandering and going off on a tangent. To ensure that I have not, here a few virgin examples of mine to perhaps help bring us back to what the cherita is all about.

where did love go?

i'm in an empty room  
with no furniture to call my own

a battered suitcase, one fading love letter  
no one left to remind me  
as to who i am

in a nutshell

the storm will not miss us  
and the shutters will not help

i'm therefore running a bath  
with himalayan salt  
with my headphones on

belly dancer

a latter day mata hari  
and her bejewelled costumes

her love of men in uniforms  
taking her far into the desert  
where they shoot her with paintball guns

in a chevrolet

at the old drive-in  
with tumbleweed

you wake up  
in a cold sweat  
and it is 2010

stepping out into autumn

a year older  
another fine line on your face

you find  
a new russet for  
your cheeks and mouth

red lanterns in the west garden

the last butterfly  
bathed in blood hue

no one came home  
after the long war  
and the grasses have grown tall

your will has been read

the silence  
in the solicitor's panelled room

the money has long gone  
along with the exotic eastern gems of old  
and the splendid decaying mansions

at the masked ball

you are pierrette  
to his pierrot

a crescent moon hangs  
in the makeshift stage  
littering tinsel

caravanserai

a stopping point  
under the first evening star

in her djellaba  
with her eyes kohled  
burning frankincense and myrrh

While pausing for some fresh juice, I had a phone call from my sister out east letting me know that we had lost our only brother to a sudden fatal stroke. He died alone in a hospital in Toronto, 3,547 miles away from London where I now live, and 8,991 miles from where we were all born. We were not close as adults but the news stopped me in my tracks.

news of your death

we try to find your ex-wives  
and your two estranged daughters

while you lie uncollected in the mortuary  
we shared the same blood, had similar  
dreams of hope  
i hear my heartbeat in this new darkness

for larry 1943–2016

Writing about the cherita unexpectedly brought about my own sad story to share. It seems fitting to close here as every story should have a beginning and an end. We do not need to go and find stories to write about. They live

within and around us. It is by sharing these stories that we are reminded as to how blessed we are that we are not alone in how we live our lives, how we love, often again and again, and ultimately how we grieve to start the process of healing.

The original guidelines

cherita [1 -- 2 -- 3]  
[pronounced CHAIR-rita]

Cherita is the Malay word for story or tale. A cherita consists of a single stanza of a one-line verse, followed by a two-line verse, and then finishing with a three-line verse. It can be written solo or with up to three partners.

The cherita tells a story. It was created by ai li on 22 June 1997 in memory of her grandparents who were raconteurs extraordinaire. It was also inspired by Larry Kimmel's sensitive recognition of a shorter form contained within the opening three-verse stanza of ai li's LUNENGA, which had been created on the 27 May 1997.

All cherita copyright ai li 2016.

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- Mindlovemiser's Menagerie: BJs Shadorma and Beyond - November 22 2014. <<https://mindlovemiser.wordpress.com/2014/11/22/bjs-shadorma-and-beyond-november-22-2014/>>
- Across the realm of short verse . . . essay by Rita Malhotra, Poet, Mathematician, India. <<http://ritamalhotra-poet-mathematician-india.blogspot.co.uk/2008/07/across-realm-of-short-verseessay.html>>
- one cherita by elizabeth alford in hedgerow #93. <<https://hedgerowpoems.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/hedgerow-93-edited-by-caroline-skane.pdf>>

## The Cherita and the Golden Spiral

Penélope O'Meara

I was struck by the structure of the Cherita form and the sense of growth and unfoldment achieved by the movement from the single line in the first stanza to the closing line in the tercet. I am used to telling students about the effectiveness of the sonnet form, both Petrarchan and Shakespearean with its fourteen lines written in iambic pentameter, employing one of several rhyme schemes and adhering to a tightly structured thematic organization, and a perfect conduit for the maximum expression of love. But I am also struck by the unfolding of human experience possible within the Cherita.

The double triplet achieved by the number of stanzas and the incremental addition of lines gives a contained, understated, concentrated story, yet like a pebble dropped in water, ripples are generated with spreading thoughts about what happened before and after. The growing triplet reminded me of the Fibonacci Sequence, and even without the starting terms of zero and one, their symbolism is held within the this poetic form; in other words, before that opening line has been written down, earlier ideas have come together, gone through the creative filtering process and been consolidated in that first line. I would hesitate to call it an opening line. Yes it is what underpins the following stanzas through foregrounding and possibly foreshadowing of ideas, but that first line has to be a precipitation of a world of thoughts before it is set down on paper. That first line, be it one word or ten, becomes a continuation of experience, and a loaded coil which is released into the following stanzas.

The sequence of one, two and three, and all further numbers of the Fibonacci Sequence, produce through division of two adjacent numbers at a time, the golden ratio, a recurring number found when measuring the outward spiralling galaxies, the apparently circular arrangement of sunflower seeds and the perfect

curve of the nautilus shell. The Fibonacci spiral, or simply the golden spiral, is the visual manifestation of the golden ratio which can be traced in the Mona Lisa and Renaissance paintings.

A study of the adjacent sequence of one, two and three, describes patterns and processes in nature. It is a sequence with power generated from a focussed centre, either seen or unseen, allowing an unfoldment, development and structure which facilitates a richness in art, architecture and music.

The golden spiral captures our imagination. It is a powerful composition tool in portrait painting, drawing and photography. It is a self-contained and unfolding structure which the Cherita embraces in its poetic form of three stanzas, expanding from a collection of thoughts and feelings to articulate a story of human experience.

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Astrology

## Tanka Ocean

Ryoh Honda

*"I love the voice of the sea. It is nice to look at the blue tides and also not bad even they are not seeable. Far away, near here, continuously, not continuously, when the voice of infinity touches my heart, full of anxiety, though it is inexpressible, the sound makes me sad, but it also brings me consolation." — Preface of 'The Voice of the Sea,' Bokusui Wakayama, 1908*

Tanka is myriad-minded as it works as a small mirror to reflect human minds. This poetry form is available to all languages thanks to its flexibility. What defines tanka is just its length, no requirement for rhyme, stress and tone. As a short song mainly for reading nowadays, it has a length of time to take two breaths, which gives tanka its flow. We have some occasions to mention *waka* (和歌) as classical tanka, and the literal meaning of *wa* (和) is 'harmony' or 'harmonize' and that of *ka* (歌) is 'song' or 'sing.' So we notice here tanka is essentially 'harmonizing song.'

In its first appearance in history, tanka became an independent literature genre. In the era of *Man'yōshū*, the first anthology of tanka and other forms edited during the latter half of the seventh century and the eighth century, tanka was a name in contrast to *chōka* (long song, after the Heian period (794–1185) tanka called *waka* (Japanese song), which was in contrast to *kanshi* (Chinese poetry), and then in the latter half of the Meiji period (1868–1912) it was called again as tanka, this time in contrast to *shintaiishi* (new style poetry). And now, not only independently but also internationally, tanka is absolutely tanka. We know there are no language barriers in tanka, as eloquently shown by tanka works in different languages.

As a common tool for the human mind, tanka is expected to be available to all those who need it actually and also potentially. Each tanka can be a dew of emotion, will make a brook gathering the works of a tanka poet, and then become a big river bundling the brooks of the same language tanka. And those rivers flow into the tanka ocean, where all tanka meet together. Poets who enjoy tanka would find something precious there and share its value whose range is as vast as the ocean.

Value Matrix of Tanka Ocean

	<b>T</b> ransparency	<b>A</b> vailability	<b>N</b> ewness	<b>K</b> eenness	<b>A</b> daption
<b>O</b> penness	for everyone for every language	no entry barriers	continuous refreshing	free discussion space	broadminded tool
<b>C</b> ommonness	universal use	voluntary participation	perpetual invitation	mutual respect	acceptance of reality
<b>E</b> quality	no discrimination among languages	fair exchange	equilibrium	age and gender equity	constructive criticism
<b>A</b> ccessibility	no complexity in the form	deep and large historical pool	expanding frontiers	developing themes	shared techniques
<b>N</b> eutrality	simply no bias	built-in stabilizer of emotion	flexible rebalance	spiritual stability	tolerance for change

*Ryoh Honda is a tanka lover in Japan. He is enjoying and feels more than happy to share this language-free poetic form with all tanka poets all over the world.*

## Review: *A Shared Umbrella*

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

*A Shared Umbrella* (2016) Pb 75pp  
 Beverley George & David Terelinck  
 ISBN: 9780994367013  
 \$16 AUD incl. postage in Australia / \$18  
 AUD (or \$20 NZD) to NZ/ \$20 AUD (or  
 \$16 USD) to USA, UK & worldwide.  
 Payment to David & Beverley via PayPal to  
 tanka-oz@yahoo.com.au.

Beverley George and David Terelinck are two of Australia's most notable tanka poets. In their latest collection, *A Shared Umbrella*, they are at their finest. Here we find tanka sequences, interspersed with thirteen rengay. The book contains an Introduction by the fine American poet, Michael Dylan Welch, the responsive journeys, an Afterword, Credits and Biographical Notes. Layout and typesetting is by Matthew George and Cover Art / Illustration is by Tumi K. Steyn. George's verses are in normal type, verses by *Terelinck* are in italics.

The opening sequence is titled 'Harmonies.' It is a three-page poem in which the poets share

the theme and imagery of their native country. Consider these two verses:

*a sickness only  
 the Freemantle Doctor  
 can cure  
 the blue of the lace flower  
 the blue of the ocean . . .*

coast to coast  
 foam fragrant the shoreline . . .  
 I shake free  
 her lacy shawl from tissue,  
 and draw it close around me

The Freemantle Doctor being a cooling afternoon sea breeze which occurs during summer in southwest coastal areas of Western Australia.

'Testing the Strength' is about partnership, illness, loss, love and reconciling with the loss of a loved one:

*your silk scarf  
 soft around my throat . . .  
 our lives apart  
 are complete, but oh!  
 the memory of that kiss*

after your illness  
I tap your too-thin hips  
tears behind the joke  
no need to explain to you  
how it is I feel

Another example of the effect of linking of two voices can be seen in ‘Unseen Breath,’ where the poets write about the ageing process. ‘Love in Many Guises’ connects the poets to their lovers. Here are the last two verses of the poem:

seeping into marrow  
and the complex matter  
beyond hearing  
melodies you weave me  
flow through all I do

*reading aloud*  
*from a book of Tang poems—*  
*I never dreamed*  
*my lover and spouse*  
*. . . would not be one*

‘Converging Worlds’ takes the reader into the Australian landscape. Here we are in the presence of eucalypts, a billy can, summer rain, corrugated roofs and a backyard tap. Another example of the effect of grouping tanka together between two poets so familiar with one another’s work can be seen in ‘Jigsaw,’ which begins:

encrusted palettes,  
strewn on a paint-splotched floor  
under skylights  
a jigsaw of canvasses  
report truths of village life

*how can you*  
*be sure that all you see*  
*is black and white—*  
*the artist’s linocut*  
*shaped by what’s unseen*

The final tanka sequence, ‘Travelling in Tandem’ sums up the poets’ friendship, their trust in each other, the act of writing and the convergence of their paths:

sms & email  
are fine in their own way  
I take up  
the pen you gave to me  
to scribe this poem for you

*who knows where*  
*such thoughts and words will lead—*  
*all the places*  
*we never would have reached*  
*but for the travelling in tandem*

The rengay are limited to six haiku that develop a central theme. As Michael Dylan Welch explains in his Introduction: ‘Yet they are like tanka, too, in that any pair of three-line and two-line verses become a sort of tanka, written by two poets instead of one, harkening back to the tanka-like effect of adjacent verses in renga and renku.’ The first rengay, ‘Sliding into Place,’ for example, begins:

first spring day  
green tea travelling  
spout to cup

*languid drift*  
*of words and wisteria*

In ‘Snapshot’ the verses rebound off each other, in the give and take of collaborative verse, taking care to respond to each other to make a larger whole. Thus, as we see in these two verses:

never able to discard  
that crazy hat you bought me

*rummage sales—*  
*how cheaply we priced*  
*those memories . . .*

‘Imprint’ is dedicated to the fine British poet and editor, Martin Lucas, who sadly passed away in 2014. One of the features of the journal, *Presence*, which Martin edited, was the Seashell Game, which is alluded to in this rengay:

seashell game  
lifting one, then another  
fading imprint

*the memory  
of migrating geese*

‘Cooling Sand’ takes the reader to outback Australia with its images of Uluru (a massive sandstone monolith in the heart of the Northern Territory), campfires, spinifex and the howl of a dingo:

spinifex trembles  
in a capricious wind

*a dingo howls . . .  
the thing I fear  
that might be true*

‘Our Mindful Breath’ engages the reader because of its physicality: two in a bathtub, soap, skin, water, bathroom steam. ‘Noel’ might be placed in the Northern Hemisphere as it contains images of snowflakes, sleigh bells and Santa’s reindeer.

The final rengay, takes the title of the collection, ‘A Shared Umbrella.’ Here friendship is celebrated and each day is a new beginning of collaboration between the poets:

charting a friendship  
that’s never lost its way

*each day a book,  
a cup, a pen you gave me  
cradled in my hand*

The poems in this collection are lyrical, sometimes light-hearted, enjoyable, sometimes sad, but always well-informed. They tell us familiar human stories; they celebrate friendship and the writing life and they encourage like-minded poets to emulate their work and their comradeship. The poets are accomplished writers of tanka and rengay; they have a sharpness of observation and language and there is a sense of intelligence behind what their writing.

## Review: *Colorful Lives: A Coloring, Tanka Poetry Book*

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

*Colorful Lives: A Coloring Tanka Poetry Book*

Genie Nakano

Chin Music Press, Seattle, WA, USA (2016)

<GenieNakano.Com>

Pb, 55 pp. Price: \$12.95 USD

*Colorful Lives* by Genie Nakano is a large format coloring-in book which includes 21 tanka sequences. The collection is illustrated with artwork by Alvin Takamori and photography by Genie and Alvin. In addition to being a writer of tanka, Genie Nakano is a performer, yoga and tanka instructor and an award-winning photographer. Alvin Takamori is a freelance graphic designer, who has designed logos, various forms of print media, and graphics for sports-related apparel.

The collection opens with ‘A New Year.’ The illustration accompanying the tanka is of a lady with butterfly wings, holding aloft a star. Here is the first verse:

a fresh page  
to turn to and write on  
coming soon . . .  
clear the air  
I’m sprouting wings

‘More Gohan’ is quite a different poem. The photograph illustrating the poem is of a madwoman and the tanka written in response to the photo are striking and original. Here is the first verse of the sequence:

the vulgar wife  
doesn’t brush her teeth,  
or comb her tangled hair  
she stays away  
from mirrors

‘Morning News’ focuses on critical aspects of the world around us: scarcity of fish, plastic in the

oceans and the “whale’s belly filled with styrofoam.”

Nakano’s tanka reveal a deep love and knowledge of nature and there are references to rain, bees, gardens, buds and “the trees / we planted many years ago.”

She also has an appreciation for animals and one of the sweetest photos is of her little dog, which accompanies the sequence ‘Bodhi Sattva’:

at night  
our small black dog  
snuggles between us  
lies on his back  
and snores loudly  
  
snip, brush, snip  
around his furry face  
Bodhi loves it all  
tilts his head way back  
crooning to the moon

Bodhi means,  
Buddha in training . . . ,  
they say all good dogs  
go to heaven  
I hope to meet him there

The photograph of the tattered bridge in ‘Straight Ahead’ is evocative of the eerie bridges one might have crossed when tramping:

swaying  
on a tattered bridge  
the other side  
is far away  
I breathe and take a step

‘A Palm Tree bends and Waves’ is illustrated by a bleak picture of a man leaving his partner after an argument. The poem indicates the devastation of the experience.

The poem ‘Purple’ contains a lovely photograph of the poet and her relationship to meditation. It ends with the fine verse:

purple  
majestic mountain tops  
Murasaki  
and her tales of Genji  
royal color of ages

The poet’s beautiful hand is illustrated in ‘The Grass is Soft.’ In ‘Colorful Short Lives,’ she writes of her delight in the sound of waves, a kite flying in the wind, the sunlight and flowers:

sunlight  
is what flowers turn to  
Sensai says  
we are all flowers  
with colorful short lives

‘August Moon’ describes the poet “standing / under an August moon.” She wears a flimsy dress with nothing underneath. The night “perfect for romance / yet I’m here all alone.” The longer sequence ‘Shushhh’ takes place at night, where crickets thrum, trees sigh in the breeze, a purring cat rolls over on its back in light rain and stars twinkle. The poem ends:

shushhhh  
sets all worries out to sea  
as we drift away  
in a blanket filled with  
sweet fulfilling dreams

The final poem, ‘Yin Yang Moon,’ is illustrated by the full moon above the sea and contains this lovely verse:

beaming down  
on my skin a silver moon  
how can needs be fulfilled  
when what is wanted  
is not needed

Enjoyment of these tanka sequences lies as much in the visual qualities of photographs and artwork, as in the aural patterning of the verses. Nakano shows a precise and knowing grasp of both language and visual effects and of the emotions conveyed by tanka. Here, she is playing to her strengths, and shows herself to be a poet of charm and elegance.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Atlas Poetica* will publish short announcements in any language up to 300 words in length on a space available basis. Announcements may be edited for brevity, clarity, grammar, or any other reason. Send announcements in the body of an email to: [AtlasPoetica@gmail.com](mailto:AtlasPoetica@gmail.com)—do not send attachments.

### Winfred Press Announces *Blue Smoke: a two voice improvisation* by Sheila Windsor and Larry Kimmel

Praise for *Blue Smoke*

“I am in awe of how Larry and Sheila have brought their inner storyteller out from the proverbial smoke-filled ancestor’s cave. I may be its parent but these two fine poets have given the cherita endless possibilities in which it can be written and interpreted. *blue smoke* gets into your very being, your soul.”~ai li, haiku and tanka poet

“*Blue Smoke* is no mere sequence of stanzas. It is a gavotte, an elliptical exploration of the nature of reality. Kimmel and Windsor treat us to a dialogue of perception. Though verses alternate, as the work progresses it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish one voice from the other. Distinctions of gender and culture become vanishingly slight—identities less tangible than the blue smoke of the title.” ~John Carley, renku poet and translator

*Blue Smoke: a two voice improvisation* (second edition) by Sheila Windsor and Larry Kimmel

Perfect Bound; 120 pp.; 4.25' x 6.88'; \$6.00 + postage.

Winfred Press  
(Stark Mountain Press imprint)  
374 Wilson Hill Road  
Colrain, MA 01340  
[winfred@crocker.com](mailto:winfred@crocker.com)

## *Cirrus* Published

The 6th issue of the French tanka journal *Cirrus* 6 is now on line . . . 10 full days ahead of schedule! <[http://www.cirrustanka.com/issues/6\\_Cirrus\\_automne\\_2016.pdf](http://www.cirrustanka.com/issues/6_Cirrus_automne_2016.pdf)>

Happy reading!

## Cherita Poets on Site

<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1023743904417735/>>

A new and growing active Facebook writing group, sister to Tanka Poets on Site, hosted by Kath Abela Wilson contact @kathabela on twitter, Kathabela Wilson on FB or [poetsonsite@gmail.com](mailto:poetsonsite@gmail.com) study, sharing, workshop, online, and live meetings in Pasadena, CA.

## A Call For Submissions

*The cherita, your storybook journal*, will be accepting cherita submissions for its June 2017 issue, beginning March 1, 2017.

Please see our submissions page at:

<<http://www.thecherita.com/submissions.html>>

This is the first all-cherita journal!

## TSA Contest

Last year we received over 450 entries for the 2016 Sanford Goldstein International Tanka Contest! There are two changes this year that you should be aware of.

First, the submission window (April 1 - May 31) is a month earlier. Please make a note of it.

Second, we are announcing that the judges for this year’s contest are Janet Lynn Davis and James Chessing.

<<http://www.tankasocietyofamerica.org/tsa-contest/how-to-enter-the-tsa-international-tanka-contest>>.

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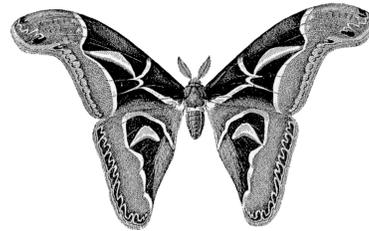
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## Editorial Biographies

M. Kei is the editor of *Atlas Poetica* and was the editor-in-chief of *Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka*. He is a tall ship sailor in real life and has published nautical novels featuring a gay protagonist, *Pirates of the Narrow Seas*. His most recent poetry collection is *January, A Tanka Diary*.

toki is a published poet and editorial assistant for Keibooks. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest US, toki often writes poetry informed by the experience of that region: the labyrinthine confines of the evergreen forests, the infinite vastness of the sea and inclement sky, and the liminal spaces in between. toki's poetry can be found online and in print, with work published in *Atlas Poetica*, *The Bamboo Hut*, and *Poetry Nook*.



Our 'butterfly' is actually an Atlas moth (*Attacus atlas*), the largest butterfly / moth in the world. It comes from the tropical regions of Asia. Image from the 1921 *Les insectes agricoles d'époque*.

## Publications by Keibooks

### Journals

*Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka*

### Anthologies

*Neon Graffiti : Tanka of Urban Life*

*Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology (Vols. 1–7)*

*Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka (Vol. 4)*

*Fire Pearls (Vols. 1–2) : Short Masterpieces of the Heart*

### Collections

*Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka*, by  
Matsukaze (forthcoming)

*October Blues and Other Contemporary Tanka*,  
by Matsukaze

*Warp and Weft, Tanka Threads*, by Debbie Strange

*flowers to the torch : American Tanka Prose*, by peter  
fiore

*fieldgates*, by Joy McCall (forthcoming)

*on the cusp, a year of tanka*, by Joy McCall

*rising mist, fieldstones*, by Joy McCall

*Hedgerows, Tanka Pentaptychs*, by Joy McCall

*circling smoke, scattered bones*, by Joy McCall

*Tanka Left Behind 1968 : Tanka from the Notebooks of  
Sanford Goldstein*, by Sanford Goldstein

*Tanka Left Behind : Tanka from the Notebooks of Sanford  
Goldstein*, by Sanford Goldstein

*This Short Life, Minimalist Tanka*, by Sanford  
Goldstein

## M. Kei's Poetry Collections

*January, A Tanka Diary*

*Slow Motion : The Log of a Chesapeake Bay Skipjack  
tanka and short forms*

*Heron Sea : Short Poems of the Chesapeake Bay  
tanka and short forms*

## M. Kei's Novels

*Pirates of the Narrow Seas 1 : The Sallee Rovers*

*Pirates of the Narrow Seas 2 : Men of Honor*

*Pirates of the Narrow Seas 3 : Iron Men*

*Pirates of the Narrow Seas 4 : Heart of Oak*

*Man in the Crescent Moon : A Pirates of the Narrow  
Seas Adventure*

*The Sea Leopard : A Pirates of the Narrow Seas  
Adventure*

*Fire Dragon*