

ATLAS
POETICA
A Journal of World Tanka

Number 30

M. Kei, editor

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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 We do not publish haiku, except as incidental to a tanka collage or other mixed form work.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.

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The Many Ways of Tanka

In this issue of *Atlas Poetica* we feature contributions from seventy-six contributors representing nineteen countries. Translations from Japanese, Slovenian, and Dutch, give us a view of the difficulties of translation and how a poem might say something very different in its new language than in its original.

Ryoh Honda introduces us to the 'extended tanka' which he uses to translate English sanjuichi (31-syllable tanka) into Japanese. Because English syllables carry much more meaning than Japanese, literal translations into Japanese are too bulky. Honda has devised a method that maintains the units of 5 and 7 sound units used in Japanese tanka, but extends the lines to make a full translation of the English.

In an experiment with tanka prose, Autumn Noelle Hall and Ryoh Honda have independently sent tanka prose with their tanka embedded in their prose lines. The longer lines form the prose, and the bold words form the tanka embedded with them. Each reading is coherent in itself, but the tanka and the prose interplay with one another more tightly than the standard form in which prose and tanka are separated from each other by line breaks.

In a related form, Susan King and Diana Webb give us a tanka chain in which the last word in a tanka becomes the first word in the next tanka. These repeated words form the links and shifts that thread their tanka sequence together as a coherent whole.

Bill Alpert pushes repetition to its limits with his sequence that repeats four lines of tanka while changing only the final line. The repeated lines gives emphasis and rhythm that builds to the climatic ending. It almost causes us to overlook that the sequence is a pentptych of five verses, and if we take the last line of each tanka in the sequence, we can build a new tanka that serves as the envoy, or coda, of the whole.

Gerry Jacobson plays with links and collaboration through ekphrastic tanka in his sequence. Ekphrasis is a difficult medium; it requires a writer to rise above mere description. It's especially difficult in the short space of a

tanka to give the reader, who may not be familiar with the artwork, a sense of what it looks like while offering up an original interpretation and still providing dreaming room for both the painting and the reader.

We continue to receive large quantities of cherita from Poland, Canada, the United States, Australia, Ireland, and other countries. This form invented by ai li has proven to have a staying power that will see it entrenched along side the cinquain as an enduring poetic form. True to its storytelling origin, many cherita read like the world's shortest flash fiction. They combine the evocative power of tanka with the narrative of a personal story, like the vignettes we glimpse as we sit in a cafe and watch the world go by. Fans of the form are reminded that the journal *cherita* has been founded and welcomes their submissions. Hopefully other venues will open to cherita as well.

Ryoh Honda continues his work translating poems to and from the Japanese, and gives us another informative article in which he combines tanka with sonnets and ghazals, creating a hybrid fusion of Eastern and Western forms. Hiroko Falkenstein shares an article on why she counts syllables and writes sanjuichi form tanka, along with a handy chart of other Japanese forms that originated with counting sound units. Don Miller shares his thoughts on lineation in tanka in *Fahrenheit Two-O-Four* while Patricia Prime reviews three tanka books for us from three very different poets.

We conclude with announcements to keep you apprised of developments in Tanka Town.

~K~

M. Kei
Editor, Atlas Poetica

China.

Cover Image courtesy of Earth Observatory, NASA.
<http://eoimages.gsfc.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords/19000/19584/china_tmo_2008029_lrg.jpg>

on the edge of silence

ai li

i practice
slow breathing
i am nude
in front of the mirror
i am no one

by evening
i am sad
one eyebrow drawn
my mouth sore
from kissing sandpaper

untethered
by the memories of us
you walk free
i am in mid-air with the hangman
and he is deaf to my pleas

the attic room
closed up now
the window lock
repaired
after the fall

monday morning
the bed unmade
i'm in the cornfield
calling in
my dead cats

a lock of hair
in your hand
the scissors
returned
to the embalmer

the sound of weeping
dead leaves
at my feet
isn't this place
empty?

another summer of rain
wet deck chairs
the afternoon indoors
writing notes of apology
to the dead

my name is on
this fallen headstone
paired with lichen
is this why only the crows
can see me ?

your old clothes
their scent now mine
until i start the wash
that would remind me
of your drowning

a box of bones
join a room
with tall shelves
full of other bones
the air is restless here

in the dead
of winter
i am dancing
on
a wedding cake

~London, England

tanka l'extreme orient

ai li

sun moon lake
i was there 48 years ago
when the general & madame chiang
were in residence next door
that week china's history came close

sun moon lake, yuchi, taiwan, april 1968

behind the lacquer screen
i change into
my dragon robe
the bridal headdress
mirroring other ghost brides

inner sanctum
i burn my name
in the iron censer
the sweet scent of jasmine
out of nowhere

every time i cry
i rain on
your embroidered handkerchief
and keep
its coloured threads alive

on the temple steps
one autumn leaf
the colour
it gives
to old stone

lotus pond
a kingfisher
in
my camera
was here

evening rain
i'm steaming rice
for the pickled vegetables
i will be eating
with my own teeth

i am no one
in life's mandala
just sand
that will quietly
blow away

~London, England

dark thoughts

ai li

protruding nails
on the footbridge
someone did not want
the storyteller
to arrive

call to prayer
finishing
the last bun
a currant
stuck in my teeth

still doing
your shopping
for you
a year
after your death

on the other side
of the door
is autumn
and
fool's gold

my lonely afternoon
made lonelier
by the low drone
of a small airplane
shadowing new graves

one night
i felt winter
become the rain
knocking
on my window

talk
of separating
my lacklustre pearls
scattering
on our kitchen floor

waterlilies
my roots too
in moving water
when i'm
with you

i am writing through
an electric storm
i am safe
but your words
hurt me

eating
in a lonely place
even
the roaches
have company

aging
with the
clock hands
in a shop
selling time

you are supposed to be
part of the remedy
but your eyes
wander into alleyways
of illicit encounters

frost
i turn to you
for a cuddle
the silhouette
of your absence

~London, England

cherita

ai li

i waited and waited
for a friend
around the corner

who died on the way
to meet me
30 years ago

first light

when it comes
i will fold grief away

like a blanket
to be unfolded
again tonight

your hairline

is looking sad
this year

you decide to stay in
become reclusive
and eat for six

a kind of hush here

cancer clinic
she looks at

the photograph
of her
three young sons

i won't join

my loved ones yet
but on nights

such as these
i hear their laughter
and my soul aches

things

left behind
memento mori

the rustle
of black tissue
everywhere

old blue eyes

the Sinatra
record sleeve

i let
this wet night
sing

~London, England

ai li is a Straits Chinese short form poet from London and Singapore who writes about Life, Love and Loss bringing healing and prayer to her poems. The creator of cherita, co-editor and publisher of the cherita journal, founding editor and publisher of still, moving into breath and dew-on-line, she is also 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

Cherita

Alexis Rotella

From the pier

an old man
in yukata

angles for catfish
his own whiskers
long thin wires

I can feel him

reading my poems
from another hemisphere

the wings
of my kimono
open to the stars

Too high up

the ladder can't reach
the persimmons

I might as well
wish for
the Harvest Moon

Green gage plums

softer in
the wooden bowl

will my old aunt
become kinder
as she nears Heaven's Gate

Eating sticky rice

our relationship
impossible to define

not exactly friends
a lifetime away
from kisses on the lips

It takes a few weeks

for the widow
to start wearing red

so weary being a cardinal
draped in boring
mousy brown

Years since we met

not even this
pale pink dress

made of finest silk
can cover the way
my body has aged

Unpacking my suitcase

in an old hotel
in Montmartre

a black and white spider
climbs the curtain
its egg sac a pearl

~United States

Alexis Rotella is the author of Lip Prints (a tanka collection, MET Press, 2007), Alexis has published dozens of books relating to Japanese forms in English. Her latest haiku collection Between Waves was published in 2005 by Red Moon Press. She is the current judge for the Ito-en Haiku Grand Prize Contest. Rotella is also a digital artist and a practitioner of Classical Acupuncture in Arnold, Maryland.

Sunday at Lake Ginninderra

Amelia Fielden

so little movement
in the silent sparkling lake
this morning
no ball-mad ginger poodle
is plunging through the ripples

no wild splashing
no wavelets in her wake —
a black swan appears
leading six cygnets in peace
from shore to empty shore

there's a body
by the reeds, a flat grey fish —
instinctively
I mouth the command "leave it"
to a dog who isn't here

the heft and fire
of that aquatic creature,
light ashes now
settled in a ginger jar
at the lakeside home we shared

~Canberra, Australia

Amelia Fielden is an Australian. She is a professional translator of Japanese literature, of which 17 books have been published. The most recent is 'For Instance, Sweetheart,' an anthology of tanka and essays by wife and husband poets Kawano Yuko and Nagata Kazuhiro. Amelia is also an enthusiastic writer of tanka in English. Her 7th collection 'These Purple Years' is forthcoming.

Autumn Noelle Hall

twenty-one
black sesame seeds rimming
her martini glass
the daughter who loved dragons
orders dragonfruit liqueur

~Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

no way to text
my stressed out friend
an Om . . .
settling for an iKoan:
Where's the Buddha emoji?

shelter beds full
women take strange men up
on promises
of showers and sheets
a chance to sleep off the streets

the home fire burns
but my daughter's a no-show . . .
a lump of coal
in my throat
as I empty her stocking

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

no thanks to crime shows . . .
standing at my parents' graves
it occurs
I couldn't ID them
by their dental records

~Davenport, Iowa, USA

Invasive Potential

Autumn Noelle Hall

clever weed
skulking amidst the stems
leafing
beneath the leaves
of your betters

by touch alone
I suss out your succulence
the blood
in your xylem
flows colder than theirs

a price to be paid
for bell flower promises
all that is good
leached from the soil
into gluttonous green

my gentle pull
a patient betrayal
as roots yield
the campanula and I
both lose, in the end

off with her head
the capital burden
of royal ease
here in my garden
playing at Queen

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

Tate Tetonwan*

Autumn Noelle Hall

remember us between meadowlark song, between prairie teeth sharp as bayonets
murmur voices in the wind in a language I do not speak but somehow understand
as I walk to the overlook to photograph the green grass path descending into white-hot hell
where the Lakota walked for five long days towards cannon-fired cold-heart calvary death;
so they walk in me ghosts chanting *kiksuye** as I chant back *I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry . . .*

~Badlands National Park, South Dakota, USA

* *Lakota for wind (tate), dwellers of the prairie (tetonwan) and remember/be conscious of (kiksuye)*

Autumn Noelle Hall watches the world from a small cedar cabin on the slopes of Pikes Peak, while attempting to make sense of life's senselessness through poetry. She is grateful to the Sun for rising each day, to her husband and Aussie for keeping her company, and to all those who so generously read and publish her work. She sincerely hopes it is possible to save the Earth one tanka prose piece at a time.

man overboard

Bill Alpert

“man overboard”
I heard the sailor
cold wind blows
lightning cleaves the sky
whale songs in the deep

“man overboard”
I heard the sailor
cold wind blows
lightning cleaves the sky
sharks rise from below

“man overboard”
I heard the sailor
cold wind blows
lightning cleaves the sky
black fins slice the water

“man overboard”
I heard the sailor
cold wind blows
lightning cleaves the sky
great whites taste the blood

“man overboard”
I heard the sailor
cold wind blows
lightning cleaves the sky
I sink below the waves

~Norwich, England

The Promise

Bill Alpert

“The promise,” at least as a child, was that if
you brush your teeth every day somehow
everything will be all right.

brushing my teeth
skulls on catacomb shelves
vacant jaws
grinning in the gloom
life's empty promise

~Norwich, England

Pain

Bill Albert

ancient oak tree
lightning-scarred trunk
branches sag
folded-winged vultures
awaiting roadkill dream

ancient me
dystrophied body
arms, hands, legs
knife cuts and fire burns
Cronus eats his son*

roadside crows
dead jackrabbit feast
blooded claws
desert highway sings
bleak ribbon of death

soft flesh bleeds
stench of mortality
sweet decay
the body says "enough"
the soul says "hang tough"

ancient oak tree
blowing in the wind
no answer, friend
vulture wings unfold
black clouds at sunset

~Norwich, England

**Goya's Saturn (aka Cronus) Devouring His Son*

our own space

Bill Albert & Joy McCall

it is difficult
to find my own space
with care workers
buzzing around me
like I was the queen bee

*solitude
comes at a price
the house is dusty
the dishes undone
the bed unmade*

hollyhocks grow tall
staked with wooden posts
ride the wind
reaching to the sun
bees caress the blooms

*I am still
in the wildest storms
unmoved
by the highest waves
only my hopes climb*

days play out
marching to drums
not my own
searching for dream time
between the drumbeats

~Norwich, England

crip wabi-sabi

Bill Albert & Joy McCall

a broken pot
my crippled body speaks
the beauty of rust
faded colours
the dusty beggar smiles

*green snake tattoo
curls around the stump
pitted with scars
hammered silver rings
on one crooked hand*

life's scarred journey
black storm clouds gather
rain hammers
rainbows arc gracefully
sky rings with silver

*out at sea
in a worn old boat
called 'Misfortune'
wave-tossed, rocking, tipping
I steer towards the bay*

"man overboard"
I heard the sailor

*I'm pulled by the tide
towards the shore and the ruin
of the dark lighthouse*

~Norwich, England

Bill Albert is wheelchair user and novelist. He grew up in California and has lived in Norwich in the UK for almost 50 years. He has had the great privilege of learning from and working with the inspirational Joy McCall, a fellow Norwich-based wheelchair user.

Joy McCall lives in her birthplace, old Norwich in Norfolk, England. Her mind is full of ghosts and poetry.

C.W. Carlson

scrap
barnacles
clean start
life is too
short

ghost crabs
hide under driftwood
beach art
seashells hang
in overhead seines

brass diver helmet
chonk and abalone shells
beach shop
cedar shingle roof
walls too

~Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA

moon is floating
among lily pads
under
transparent
dragonfly wings

screen door bangs
storm is near
one two three
lightning
six miles away

dogs think
we are god
cats known better
what do birds
think

make mine
a small piece
oh, what to hell
the diet
can resume tomorrow

rods of light
poke at the brook
minnows dart about
trout are fat
like me

snow fell
on the funeral
melted
cold gravestones
still wore white hats

her hand
touched mind
trembling
passion
overtook me

~Olathe, Kansas, USA

C. W. Carlson is a retired aero-space engineer with some spare time to try his hand at poetry and the other side of his brain. He has many poems published in all forms including tanka and haiku both in classical and modern forms. Most of his writings come from vacations and personal experiences in his 69 years.

Carol Raisfeld

berries
twisting in the wind
quivering
after the storm, remain
round, luscious and red

Dad chuckled
at the funny cards I sent
on all his birthdays . . .
at the wake, he takes
the last one with him

each day
I miss the love notes
his surprises
the bouquets signed
always and forever

exploring
the landscape
of my life . . .
at its center, this light
from a distant sun

feeling
the pull of full moons
and changing tides
like magnets from long ago
I am stardust

frozen in flight
a sculpture of birds
by the bay . . .
a flock of starlings circle
the outstretched wings

the fresh air
of who we choose to love
and who we are . . .
don't ask, don't tell
in the dustbin of history

grieving
in a tent of darkness
alone . . .
yet a setting sun
a rising moon

last night
the snow came softly
waiting in the yard . . .
at dawn a neon cardinal
brilliant in the blue cedar

meeting you
are my memories
of spring . . .
when the wood thrush
sang just for us

my mother
summering in Tuscany
at eighteen
not yet aware of the effect
she had on men passing by

plovers cry out
their shadows rising
in waves . . .
each pulse on fire
I call your name

together
beneath a canopy of dusk
whispered love . . .
I find home in a handclasp
needing no more than you

~Atlantic Beach, New York, USA

Cherita

Carol Raisfeld

fans whirl overhead

hypnotized by the heat
and charming whispers

I wish to hurl myself
across the room
to his incandescent smile

frizzy henna curls

bright rouge circles
on ancient cheeks

at the hotel dining room
she points a bony finger
winking at the waiter

halyards tapping

in a flow of air
across the sails

as dawn unfolds
thoughts of you
when we were us

she walks with gusto

the way her mother
taught her

swinging arms and hips
her head held high
inexplicably delightful

~Atlantic Beach, New York, USA

Kyoka

Carol Raisfeld

her house robbed
all that was left was soap
deodorant and towels . . .
police still looking
for the dirty thieves

awards ceremony
filling her old clingy dress
with new cleavage
the ecstatic stars hugs
her golden globes

Grandma staring
through the window
in the snow . . .
if it gets any worse
I'll have to let her in

my life
finally coming into focus
I think to myself—
the last thing I'll need
is a burial plot

on his own
finally out and about
new to nightlife . . .
the termite asks,
“where is the bar tender?”

~Atlantic Beach, New York, USA

Carol Raisfeld lives in Atlantic Beach, New York, US. Her poetry, art and photography appear worldwide in print, online journals and anthologies. Website: www.Haikubuds.com, Twitter: @carol_red.

Chen-ou Liu

fireworks show . . .
all the migrants (except me)
on the rooftop
think they are on the way
to somewhere brighter

alone
at the edge
I plunge
into a river
of stars

a man's heart
transplanted into her chest . . .
alone at twilight
she listens
to his/her heartbeat

living alone . . .
an old migrant's bungalow
casts shades of gray
onto black-and-white photos
of his hometown

silent,
her eyes tell it all . . .
our world
shrinks to the size
of this waiting room

~Ajax, Ontario, Canada

Day of the Dead . . .
an old monk
striking his gong
in the moonlit cold
of midnight

~Taipei, Taiwan

Between Love and Desire

Chen-ou Liu

sparkles
of winter sunlight
on and off
the sexual desire
for my wife

I open the window
to last night's winter moon . . .
hoping to cover
the silence between us
she throws a party

feeling alone
with a moonlit chill . . .
even the silence
in my attic room
has its own voice

shards of glass
from the wedding photo . . .
my mind clogged
with broken memories
and pieces of her

lengthening
shadow on the hallway
to the morgue . . .
I wake up sweating
on the bedroom floor

in the dream I listen
to my wife counting
love me, love me not
love me, love me not . . .
to the last petal

satisfying myself
by fondling
the idea of love
I start to moan
in a summer dream

I attend
my first singles party
since the break-up . . .
watching the snow, I sink
into my ghostly past

a green flashing
at summer sunset
those three words
she doesn't utter
before my departure

~Ajax, Ontario, Canada

The Same Old Story?

Chen-ou Liu

for ten years
we've shared a bed
now each night
we sleep back-to-back
without touching

newly divorced
I stare
at the moonlight
on the empty side
of my bed

~Ajax, Ontario, Canada

Lolita in a World of My Own
for Vladimir Nabokov

Chen-ou Liu

we turn
to each other
in a wet kiss
the scent
of her tousled hair

liquid moonlight
splashing her face
the small o
of her crimson mouth
as I unzip her jeans

she wears her panties
with a man's eye in mind
her young body
contains a life story
as much as her brain

the conversation
of our sweaty bodies
she asks me
what remains of this
behind-closed-doors relationship

~Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Chen-ou Liu lives in Ajax, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of five books, including Following the Moon to the Maple Land (First Prize, 2011 Haiku Pix Chapbook Contest) and A Life in Transition and Translation (Honorable Mention, 2014 Turtle Light Press Biennial Haiku Chapbook Competition). His tanka and haiku have been honored with many awards.

Charles Harmon

aerobics students
driving around parking lot
twenty-five minutes
looking for parking spaces
close to the gym entrance . . .

~Los Angeles, California, USA

Charles Harmon, science teacher, lives and works in Los Angeles, California, USA, and enjoys cooking for his wife and three children. Charles has spent more than five years overseas in over sixty countries traveling, trawailing, learning, living

Polly's Playpen

Polly Hill (1907–2007)

Christy Burbidge

Note paper with smudged script, soggy with dew, and battered by years of painstaking record-keeping, pinned down by a tan chipped coffee mug. Almost two thousand species from seed, many of which one wouldn't think could survive in such a climate. The rhododendron that took twenty-nine years to bloom could have weathered the jaunt from Tokyo to Delaware. It could have withstood watching its husband battle polio. And it was a late bloomer, as was I.

burgundy snail
small plum shell
torso overflowing
can only move
forward

~Martha's Vinenyard, Massachusetts, USA

Grist For the Mill

Lillian Hellman (1905–1984)

Christy Burbidge

Drawn to Mill House for the water, not the writing. Saltwater that saturates the vermilion on a dinghy, but leaves periwinkles in a permanent state of thirst. Freshwater that tempts the American Oystercatcher, but overtime, leaves the average beachgoer habituated and even a little numb.

The water can wash away accusations of communism, which may or may not be true. It can rub away discrepancies in my three autobiographies, that may or may not be there. Not least of all, it can dampen the memories of Mill House. *Toys in the Attic*, *The Children's Hour* . . . Are all child's play compared to what the water can do.

When the water loses its punch, I'll sell the place. Mill House with the typewriter and the tower, and impressions of him. All gone. And I'll build another down that road that's fitting to Malibu. The water is crisper there, anyway.

breathe deeply
in and out
as chilled waves
ebb and flow
time fades both

~Martha's Vinyard, Massachusetts, USA

Christy Burbidge writes primarily flash fiction, haibun, and tanka prose. She has been published in First Literary Review-East, Haibun Today, and Chrysanthemum. She also has a forthcoming publication in the 2017 Ribbons anthology.

Cherita

Dave Read

plucking raspberries

on the route home
from school

my first
girlfriend's
sticky kiss

garbage trucks

rattle down
the street

prompting
an angry
rebuttal of crows

she became

the last of her
generation

survived by
the memories
of everyone she loved

taking the long

route into
work

I find myself
seeking
the end of the day

~Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Dave Read

floating
in yesterday's
rain . . .
a billion years
of starlight

the light of a new star
in the night sky—
how she laughed
when she said we had
nothing but time

water trickles
lower in the stream
they drink
what they can
with cupped hands

~Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Dave Read is a Canadian poet living in Calgary. He primarily writes short poems with an emphasis on the Japanese genres of haiku, senryu, tanka, and haibun. He was a recipient of the 2016 Touchstone Individual Poem Award for haiku, as granted by The Haiku Foundation. His work has been published in many journals (including Atlas Poetica, hedgerow, Akitsu Quarterly and Acorn), and anthologies (including dust devils: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku, 2016).

At Shalun Beach

Dean Brink

at low tide
scooters line pine dunes
while elderly

hats tied at chins
stoop for snails in tide pools

clouds burn off
one by one in speedos
prancing with cells

from clump and dip of pines
men flash friendly smiles

playing tag
for makeup crew and camera
no longer children

posing on bended knee
the groom watching the dunes

streaks of sunlight
over rocks and waves
a perfect backdrop

I wade through waves
as if alone on the beach

relieving myself
before a cluster of pines
together in shadows

a lookout from the bank
a view of the darkening sea

behind me
on the trail by chance
more breaking twigs

then deafening cries of cicadas
I follow as far as I see

~*Taiwan*

Dean Brink

Dean Brink, Japanese-English
Translator

In both hands a mass-
produced globe made in China
my daughter asks “so
we live on that piece of tape
floating on the ocean?”

量産の地球儀を持ち吾子曰く「海に浮かぶ
る張り紙に住み」

In a dream the day
we crossed paths on our long walks
alone after work
together we drew the curtains
against the nosey neighbors

歩道にて通りがかりの君の夢その夜の俺が
窓掛に引き

~*Taiwan*

Dean Anthony Brink is associate professor of comparative literature at National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan. He is a member of the Taiwan Tanka Association (Taiwan Kadan) and recently completed a documentary about the group: Horizons of the Rising Sun: Postcolonial Nostalgia and Politics in the Taiwan Tanka Association Today (2017). His poetry has appeared in journals including Atlas Poetica, Exquisite Corpse, Going Down Swinging, Cordite Poetry Review, New Writing, Nimrod, and Portland Review (online), and a book, Japanese Poetry and Its Publics: From Colonial Taiwan to Fukushima (Routledge 2018)

Luminosity

Debbie Strange

cloudberries
float above moss stars . . .
amber beacons
in forest shadows
call us to taste the light

the shimmer
of diamonds on snow
and water . . .
sometimes we take
small gifts for granted

mudlarks . . .
everything we buried
as children
surfaces at last
into the light of day

in her eyes
deep wells of pain . . .
and yet,
glimmers of light
at the bottom

~*Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*

Debbie Strange (Winnipeg, Canada) 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 was published by Keibooks in 2015. You are invited to visit her on Twitter @Debbie_Strange and at <<http://www.debbiemstrange.blogspot.ca>>.

Dimitrij Škrk

D. V. Rožić, Translator

falling star
disappears in the summer night
the dark of horizon
deep in her eyes glisten
outlines of her wishes

~*Slovenska Bistrica, Slovenia*

Dimitrij Škrk was born before 66 years in Slovenia, where he lives. Poetry he started to write two years ago, after retiring. A very special relationship has been developed between him and the short Japanese forms of poetry. He takes part at international contests and has received a number of awards and commendations, his verses published in several languages in quite a number of countries.

Djurdja Vukelić Rožić was born in 1956 in Croatia where she lives. She is a writer and translator, editor of IRIS haiku magazine. (Free download, www.tri-rijeka-haiku.hr)

Growing Pangs

Don Miller

Rebecca and Philip were home for Christmas,
but now they are back in Phoenix. Next time
Rebecca is home she will be married. We still
have Simon here, though soon enough . . .

they leave
one at a time
after the holidays
the growing silence
of this emptying house

~*Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA*

Plenty of Heat; Plenty of Sand

Don Miller

but, it is the repeated rush of a surf rolling up the
beach, then receding into itself as the next wave
curls over and breaks thinning out as bubbly
foam on the sand I am missing sitting here
outside the Phoenix condo

a mourning dove
in the blue hour
rising
from off the balcony
five lonely notes

~*Phoenix, Arizona, USA*

Don Miller lives in southern New Mexico, USA. He has been writing tanka since the early 1980s, and has had his tanka, tanka sequences, tanka prose, and other short-form poetry published on a somewhat regular basis in various print and online journals since the early 2000s.

Emilie Moorhouse

a little nose
touches the lilac
covered in rain droplets
his rosy cheeks
glisten

~*Montreal Botanical Garden, Montreal, Canada*

Emilie Moorhouse is a writer and environmentalist currently living in Vancouver, British Columbia. She has been published in the Globe and Mail, and the Toronto Star. She is a SSHRC funded graduate student in the creative writing program at UBC, specializing in television writing.

Dottie Piet

deep cave chamber
ancient humanoid bones
unearthed
to live their second life
in a museum

~Homo naledi specimens from South Africa

one last cast
into the darkening pool
just enough time
to return home
and cut the grass

stein's
cubist word collages
delight my
my aging brain
my brain light

would you believe
that she's well over ninety
vintage beemer
what fun we have
together

~Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

Dottie Piet is a retired art teacher who lives in Tulsa, OK. A number of her haiku poems have been published in print and online journals. She enjoys reading and painting with watercolors and acrylics.

Elizabeth Bodien

far from home
we watch river sparrows
fly under the wind
the sight stirs a longing
for our birds back home

~Lumberville, Pennsylvania, USA

no sound this morning
hawks, catbirds, or us
air too hot and close
no one wants to move
except the cicadas

all my big plans
for homemade tomato sauce
from this garden
a fat hornworm
devours my dreams

a huge spider web
between ground and willow
shimmers in sunlight
a great work in progress
till a cowbird flies through it

~Kempton, Pennsylvania, USA

Elizabeth Bodien, Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, USA, holds degrees in anthropology, consciousness studies, religion, and poetry. She has worked as a teacher in Japan, organic farmer in Oregon, childbirth instructor in West Africa, and anthropology professor. Her poems have appeared in red lights, Frogpond, GUSTS, Ribbons, American Tanka, bottle rockets, and Modern English Tanka among other publications in the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and India. Her newest collection Blood, Metal, Fiber, Rock, is forthcoming early 2018.

Elizabeth Spencer Spragins

hand-carved wooden beads
spill over knotted fingers—
the luster of pearls
on drops of molten beeswax
as votive candles flicker

~*San Miguel Mission, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA*

*The Chapel at San Miguel has been in continual use since its
restoration in 1694.*

three beaks open wide
at the fluttering of wings—
a plain wooden bowl
veined with memories of drought
cradles dusty walnut shells

~*Omaha, Nebraska, USA*

fingers of sunlight
stroke the wrinkled highland hills
as shadows lengthen
a Border Collie chases
melancholy from my heart

~*Glen Coe, Scotland*

an abandoned barn
beside the dusty paddock—
paw prints of a cat
circle chipped ceramic bowls
left on sagging wooden steps

~*Danville, Virginia, USA*

*Elizabeth Spencer Spragins is a poet and editor who taught in
community colleges for more than a decade. Her tanka and bardic verse
in the Celtic style have been published in England, Scotland, Canada,
Indonesia, and the United States. Recent work has appeared in Skylark,
Halcyon Days, and Peacock Journal. Shades and Shadows, a collection
of her bardic poetry, is scheduled for publication by Quarterday Press in
fall 2017. She lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA.*

Man's Quest for Immortality

Frances Black

A mythical potion granting the drinker
eternal disease-free life has been sought through
the ages in many countries.

dreaming
of immortality
alchemists
passionately sought
the elixir of life

many met death
as they trustingly
tasted and inhaled
their creations
of noxious substances

The twentieth century brought new
approaches to the same vexed search. Stunned by
the vision of their own mortality unsuspecting
baby-boomers paid vast sums of money to try
and outwit their cancers.

in their quest
to delay death
baby-boomers
gobble poison
like hungry rabbits

The emphasis is on length of life.

quantity
takes precedence
over quality
when modern medicine
runs the show

The other part of human existence is getting
dying and death right. Modern medicine has
achieved the means to implement euthanasia.
However, human distrust and religious belief
clouds the issue and prevents its implementation.

mirrored by
our twisted DNA
altruism
sits snugly
with narcissism

~*Sydney Australia*

Frances Black

a vine
embraces
the old gum tree
like good and bad
in you and me

baby-boomers
travel here and there
much like
butterflies flitting
from tree to tree

~*Australia*

Frances Black is a new convert to tanka, which she is enjoying immensely. She lives by the water on Sydney's Northern Beaches. The other genres she enjoys are essay writing, memoir writing, and producing picture book stories for her grandson.

Geoffrey Winch

too much traffic
speeding
past our home
always the same drivers
just bigger cars, bigger noise

their roof their walls
doors windows table and chairs
their food music books
their hearth and fire
at last our bed our desire

rock-pools
exposed
by the ebbing tide
children and seagulls
congregate, investigate

~*Felpham, UK*

old clock faces:
this auction lot
biding its time
without hands
keys or motivation

~*Washington, UK*

Cherita

Geoffrey Winch

she reads her poem

as if making love
to her audience

as she reaches
her envoi I believe
she's reading to only me

can't get her

out of my head
as I get into my car

as I drive myself home
go indoors and get into bed
still her show goes on and on

~*United Kingdom*

*Geoffrey Winch, a retired highway engineer, resides on England's south coast. He is associated with several local creative writing groups for whom he leads occasional poetry workshops. His most recent collections are *Alchemy of Vision (Indigo Dreams, 2014)* – focusing on the visual, performing and literary arts – and *West Abutment Mirror Images (Original Plus, 2017)* marking his twenty-fifth successive year of being published in small press poetry magazines mainly in the UK, US and online.*

1917

Gerry Jacobson

who now remembers
those short shattered lives
the maimed, the blinded
of Messines
and Bullecourt

October
white Australia's blackest month
Passchaendale
six thousand eight hundred
poor fellows karked it

countless rows
of white crosses
in the silence
their songs live on
for a hundred years

'Known unto God' . . .
body parts spattered
exploded
or did that boy drown
in bottomless mud?

the bugle
sounds the Last Post —
oh weep
for the useless folly
of that Great War, and lesser

a wide street
of war memorials
Anzac Parade
with plenty of space
for wars yet to come

~*Australia*

Paint Is Flesh

Gerry Jacobson

flesh is paint
and paint is flesh
segmented, flowing
thick with buttocks
and legs, and bits and pieces¹

bathing
but viewed from behind
she hangs suspended
in Bonnard's pale
and watery blue-green light²

why tied to a tree?
pre-Raphaelite lady
with long red hair . . .
an armoured knight
cuts the rope with his sword³

naked girl
white by a window
talks to a black cat
gazing out beyond
the rooftops of Paris⁴

Matisse's draped nude
opens her gown
offers
her pink body
for the viewer's pleasure⁵

Picasso's dream . . .
two curved bodies
merging
into Marie-Therese . . .
hands like wings of a dove⁶

his naked Job
emaciated, bony
contemplates
the broken crucifix . . .
France, 1944⁷

her model
reclines his curly head
on a red quilt . . .
his circumcised penis
curls in a sneer⁸

~Australia

Notes

From the exhibition "Nude from the Tate" at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2017.

¹Cecily Brown, *Trouble in Paradise*, 1979. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

²Pierre Bonnard, *The Bathing Woman, Seen From The Back*, 1919. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

³John Everett Millais, *The Knight Errant*, 1870. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

⁴C. R. W. Nevinson, 1926. *A Studio in Montparnesse*. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

⁵Henri Matisse, *Draped Nude*, 1936. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

⁶Pablo Picasso, *Nude Woman in a Red Armchair*, 1932. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

⁷Francis Gruber, *Job*, 1944. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

⁸Sylvia Sleigh, *Paul Rosano Reclining*, 1974. Oil paint on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.

Gerry Jacobson lives in Yarralumla, a Canberra suburb. He has been writing tanka for ten years now, enjoys the challenge of tanka sequences and tanka prose, and loves that the genre enables him to write experiences, memories, and feelings. He dotes on four grandchildren and visits them in Sydney and in Stockholm. Is he perhaps writing for them?

A Tribute to the Aboriginal People of Australia

Giddy Nielsen-Sweep

dark night

white paint
black male bodies

stamping, chanting
clapping
corroboree

in deep caves

ancient stories
on walls

of battles, triumphs
the hunt
hand signatures

in galleries

paintings
of red, yellow ochre

in patterned dots
about the desert
Uluru

storytelling

around a fire
legends

of the dreamtime
Gondwana land
Rainbow Serpent

campfire

a spear
for the hunt

women cooking
then a gunyah
to sleep in

curls of smoke

from leaping flames
buried food

from the ashes
a feast is prepared
meeting of elders

for the children

aboriginal women
record history

in paintings
that tell tribal stories
Alice Springs, Red Centre

resonant humming

black man holds
a long tube on his foot

rests it on one arm
slapping in rhythm
didgeridoo

cameras slung

tourists
climb the rock

a line of camels
trek through red dust
of the desert

~Australia

Notes

Corroboree, an Australian Aboriginal dance ceremony which may take the form of a sacred ritual or an informal gathering.

Uluru, officially gazetted as "Uluru / Ayers Rock", it is a large sandstone rock formation in the southern part of the Northern Territory in central Australia.

Gondwana, in paleogeography, Gondwana, also Gondwanaland, is the name given to an ancient supercontinent.

Rainbow Serpent or Rainbow Snake is a common deity, often a creator god, in the mythology and art of Aboriginal Australia.

Gunyah, a humpy or gunyah was a small, temporary shelter made from bark and tree branches, traditionally used by Australian Aboriginals, with a standing tree usually used as the main support.

Red Centre, this enchanting place is more than just vast desert and a pile of rocks, it is an incredible thriving eco system that is spiritually entwined into the ancient indigenous culture of the Aboriginal people.

didgeridoo, possibly the world's oldest musical wind instrument, made from limbs and tree trunks hollowed out by termites.

Australian feral camels are populations consisting of mostly dromedaries, imported into Australia from British India and Afghanistan during the 19th century for transport and construction.

Giddy Nielsen-Sweep was first introduced to Japanese poetry in 2010, and soon developed a love for these skillful tiny poems. Thanks to Kathabela Wilson, this hobby led to the discovery of Ai Li's beautiful Cherita poems, so this Malaysian style has added to her repertoire. Giddy and her husband, now retired, live in Petrie, near Brisbane, Australia. A Registered nurse, Giddy loved her job in the care and management of well babies, and only retired due to advancing MS. Though totally disabled now, she still manages to write, assisted by her devoted husband and full time carer, Peter. Giddy intends to continue writing as long as her health allows.

The Nearing

Ignatius Fay

repeated
ambulance trips to
the E. R.
convinced she's dying
of cancer

irony
convinced she has
lung cancer
she demands tests
that reveal the brain tumor

long-time smoker
with stage four cancer
so sad
the one thing I can't give her
sympathy

facing
the reality of
the diagnosis
getting her affairs
in order

diagnosis
she realizes
she won't have time
to do any of the things
she'd planned and put off

dying
of lung cancer
a smoker
she apologizes
for disappointing me

she has
perhaps six months
stage four
my first response
is to curse

probable
metastasis demands
more tests
her mind failing
faster than her body

at the rate
cancer is eroding
her mind
visit today; tomorrow
she may not know me

things
I want to tell her
too late
much of her mind
consumed by cancer

me
and my mortality
face to face
my youngest sister's
terminal diagnosis

her cancer—
whether or not from smoking
matters not
what we should
or could have done

daily walk
home without noticing
time passing
thoughts full
of my dying sister

advanced
stage IV lung cancer
chemo
the dosage itself
may kill her

visiting
my sister
at the hospice
I am mistaken for
one of the patients

reached
the final stage
acceptance
now referring to the hospice
as home

the sound
of her not saying
anything
but silence
please

solving
word puzzles with my sister
cancer ward
how often she forgets
what we're doing

signs
declaring the hospital
smoke-free
around the entrance
cigarette butts

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Let There Be Noise

Ignatius Fay

I am having an EKG in the lab at the hospital. As is usual, the patient areas are separated only by hanging curtains. A young girl, about two years old, is brought into the area next to mine, with her young parents, for blood tests. She is all smiles, the cutest little thing. In just a few moments, a high-pitched scream erupts from her side of the curtain. The way she is wailing, I could be convinced they are skinning her alive.

I say to my nurse, 'Not a happy camper.' Her reply is disheartening.

I prefer
when the little ones
scream
the ones who don't
are really very ill

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Ignatius Fay, a disabled invertebrate paleontologist, writes haiku, tanka, haibun and tanka prose. His poems have appeared in many respected online/print journals. Breccia (2012) is a collection of these forms, a collaboration with Irene Golas. He is the current editor of the Haiku Society of America Bulletin, and resides in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

Why I Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

Jackie Chou

roommate wakes me
from my slumber
roaches on the walls
beautiful creatures
to lovers' eyes

I ignore
the boom-boom sound
above the ceiling
knowing
I'm no holier

Manager wonders
why I never complain
his face
occupies my mind
my life

~California, USA

Jackie Chou studied Creative Writing at USC. She attends writing workshops and has been published in Altadena Poetry Review, LummoX, Poetry Superhighway, amonancies magazine, Culture Cult magazine, Dryland, Angel City Review, Silver Birch Press, and others. She was named one of Top Ten San Gabriel Valley Poets in 2016 by Spectrum publications.

Jacob Salzer

in the wake
of father's absence
a vacancy of light
in my mother's
eyes

~Mother's House, Woodland, Washington, USA

foggy windows . . .
waves crash
against the shore
between each breath
we take

*~Aunt Suzy and Uncle Jim's House, Lincoln City,
Oregon, USA*

waves
ceaselessly crash
against the shore
I walk beside you
without a sound

~Oregon Beach, Lincoln City, Oregon, USA

the weight
of father's empty luggage
in my old bedroom
receipts from China drift
in the wind

~Dad's House, Vancouver, Washington, USA

arriving
two hours early
to a haiku meeting
the look on
the receptionist's face

~Haiku Meeting, Portland, Oregon, USA

muffled
behind her closed
bedroom door
my sister Lindsey
singing

~Parent's Old House, Vancouver, Washington, USA

mist
through the forest
I carefully eat
a bowl
of steamed broccoli

~My Apartment, Vancouver, Washington, USA

clouds drift
into factory smoke
above
the Columbia River
she leaves a trail of stars

~Interstate 5 highway, Portland, Oregon, USA

walking alone
why do I keep looking
at the moon?
the cold night fills
with unheard voices

~City Park, Vancouver, Washington, USA

Jacob Salzer grew up in the Pacific Northwest. In 2015-2016, he served as the Managing Editor for an international haiku anthology: Yanty's Butterfly. He has also written and published 4 other poetry books: The Sound of Rain: Haiku Poetry, Birds With No Names: Haiku Poetry, The Last Days of Winter, and Advaya: Poems 2006-2014. His haiku are featured in Frogpond, Modern Haiku, Under the Basho, Chrysanthemum, A Hundred Gourds, and The Heron's Nest. His longer poems are featured in VerseWrights, and Phoenix. He is currently managing another international haiku anthology, and writing a collection of haiku, and tanka. He lives in Vancouver, Washington, USA.

Joanna Ashwell

winter approaches
with her ivory cape
the soft eiderdown
silence upon silence
where no wind blows

the winter season arrives
where dark skies stretch
horizon bound of
cloud upon cloud
packed with storms

there's a storm coming
I feel the pressure
a tension in the air
the intensity
as elements unravel

beneath moonlit ice
mystery hides
the narwhal's tusk glimpsed
silver strands fluorescing
the unicorn of the sea

some nights
my heart beats
so loudly
there's a pause
where gravity recalibrates

~*England*

Joanna Ashwell from the North East of England. Enjoys reading and writing haiku, tanka and other related forms. Poems have been published in Eucalypt, Skylark, Bliethe Spirit and others.

John Gonzalez is an Anarchist/Pacifist. He has great faith in Carl Rogers' Humanistic Approach—a theory that has helped him to help improve the lives of the patients/friends he met during the last 30 or so years working as a qualified nurse and social worker.

John Gonzalez

sometimes
all that's needed is silence:
I listen to her fears
she listens to my thinking—
who will take the first step?

snow falling—
we run into our garden
like children:
peels of laughter almost bring
a smile to the snowman's face

memories
too far to recall—
the window
waits for the light
held back by trees' shadows

wilderness
as far as the eye can see
and further—
she ahead of me as always
recalling what tugs at her heart?

the day
I had in mind to say *sorry*
she beat me to it—
we throw bread into the pond
betting on which duck will arrive first

she calls
from friend
to better-half, to lover, to father—
which one am I today?
in the garden one bird sings

~*England*

John Hawkhead

cloud puffs
edging her halo
in the wishing well
droplets fall away
into eternity

~England

John Hawkhead is a writer and illustrator from the South West of England. He has been published all over the world and his latest book of haiku/senryu 'Small Shadows' is from Alba Publishing. Twitter @HawkheadJohn.

John S. Gilbertson

Ryoan-ji Garden —
tourist rush past the Buddha
resting in the woods,
contemplating the movement,
wondering what has happened.

~South Carolina, USA

John S. Gilbertson lives in Greenville, SC, has traveled extensively in Japan, and written extensively over the last thirty years. A book poetry has been published: Two Ends of a Loose String

Men at Work and Play *a cherita sequence*

John Tehan

the old curiosity shop

one man's junk
is another's needful thing

what
goes around
comes around

Mr. Singh has come to visit

he comes now and then
when his needs build up

he doesn't stay long
a quick release, relief
and he's gone . . . until next time

a gentlemen's agreement

I was 21, white and pale
he was 75, black as ebony

he and I had an arrangement
I spanked his ass . . . hard
and he paid me . . . well

urban aboriginals

a special breed
a breed apart

men
who dance
to a different drummer

brutal : gentle

in
mutual thrall

we dance
the only dance
we know

~Upper East Side, Manhattan, New York City, New York, USA

After many years in New York City, John Tehan now lives in 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. John's poem, "Remnant," was recently awarded First Prize in the 2017 Katharine Lee Bates Poetry Festival.

Joy McCall

the surgeon
arrives on his bicycle
in heavy rain
dripping, he begins
to repair my thumbs

on the pavement
moving tree shadows
set me to wondering
will people see my shadow
dancing when I'm gone?

I spend my days
spinning like a spider
catching flies
and feather-down
and bits of leaf

autumn
comes oddly early
red berries
ripe hazelnuts
my heart, singing

the seasons
seem to be in a muddle
winter berries are ripe
new acorns are growing
violets are in flower

bluetits clinging
under the leaves
hunting spiderlings
*some things must die
for others to live*

my heart
skipping beats
out of synch
the lift cables
broken

his bed-time prayer
not for the neighbourhood
nor for the world
but for our friend's
little dying cat

~Norwich, England

Ryuka

Joy McCall

my friend blind, dumb and paralysed
I spent twenty-four hours praying
in the empty church when he died—
please, let him find peace now

I will hang this thing on the thorn
and the birds will come and take it
piece by piece till nothing is left
and then I will find peace

sometimes it takes a disaster
for people to speak of their love
he told it yesterday, running
from the eye of the storm

the storm that came here was nothing
like those hurricanes across the sea
but the rain banged at the windows
the wind howled like a banshee

we sit talking of poetry
pathways and the passage of time
while the spider mends her torn web
and more storm clouds gather

pondering, musing on deep things
life and death and good and evil
and God . . . I settle in the end
on quiet mystery

~Norwich, England

it is well with my soul *

Joy McCall

On my oak burial 'stone' is carved a hare,
and the words from the poem 'Hold fast to
dreams' by Langston Hughes, which has been my
life's mantra.

(The place of my burial plot is in ancient
woodlands where only oak headstones are
allowed.)

Now, so many of my dreams have faltered
that I think maybe I need a new mantra; for life
can be a broken-winged bird that cannot fly; and
life sometimes *is* a barren field, frozen with snow;
and holding fast to dreams can hurt and get in
the way of living.

so then I took the hurting things
and the torn scrap of inked paper
and pinned them on Boudicca's hill **
with a sharp hemlock stick

a black rook came and took the things
and flew, carrying them away
and the rain crumpled the paper
and the ink ran, blurring

the stick stayed there through two full moons
slowly rotting like the old dreams
and then it fell, hidden by dirt
among the soil and stones

when I came back to the hillside
where the wild queen fought and was lost
the dead dreams and the hurting things
were nowhere to be found

the wind was blowing through the pines
it was the time of the new moon
I held out my hands to the night
and it sang a new song

I don't know how these things work, spells or
prayers or mantras or hymns.

for Grunge

I only know that whatever I bring and offer
to the earth or the sky, is taken and exchanged for
some kind of peace.

~Norwich, England

**from the hymn of the same title*

***Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni tribe in East Anglia, died
fighting the Roman invaders in AD 62.*

weary

Joy McCall

weary

at the end
of a long day
I speak the word
over and over

it goes far back
to ancient Britons
tired of hunting
and gathering
sighing — *wōrig*

and in the dark times
English peasants
tottering
crumbling, breaking,
just plain *wōrian*

in middle times
rich lords and ladies
paid no mind
as their servants cried
wērien, we are wērien

these days
my mind is *weary*
my stilled body too,
yet my soul is singing
and look — how it dances!

~Norwich, England

the copper mirror

Joy McCall

never look
into copper-shine
to see your face
or comb your hair
the dead are trapped in there

long dead miners
with pickaxes
and shovels
filthy faces
and stony hearts

the graveyards
are full of them
white finger bones
wrapped round shaving mugs
and ale tankards

too late, the creeks
are running with the dust
the rocks are split
there is no gladness
left in these hills

do not look
into the mirror
there are ghosts
screaming and cursing
leaking copper and blood

~Norwich, England

what I need to say

Joy McCall

I listen
to the falcon chicks
screeching
as they flap their wings
and take flight

I watch
the silver minnows
circling the pool
moving into the current
flashing downstream

I see
the darkling beetles
emerging, running
from under the rocks
leaving the wormshell behind

I wake at night
when the fox cub yaps
chasing the mice
around the garden
and down the lane

good people
come to my door
and walk in
they call, and smile
and bring gladness

and then . . .
in a brief silent space
my heart breaks
tears start to fall—
I want to walk

~Norwich, England

Joy McCall is a paraplegic amputee who keeps thinking she has come to terms with her losses. Now and then she finds out that walking is what defines us as human beings on this earth.

Cherita

Judi Diggs

oh, sparrow

you are not diminished
come spring

for flowers
in all their glory
cannot fly or sing

hot summer nights

I'd climb
thru my bedroom window

peaceful & cool
on the roof top
as the neighbors slept

the boy longs

for the freedom
of manhood

the man longs
for the freedom
of his youth

she gently placed

a robin egg
in my little hands

it broke
I cried
she laughed

~Pennsylvania, USA

Judi Diggs

isolated
far from lonely
just sand, grass
a few seashells
it was perfect

baby bird
outside my window
we both
stretched our necks
to take a peck

old maple tree
plays with the children
spinning off
tiny helicopters
and ballerinas

Aquarius
tips her pitcher
toward the earth
pouring star flowers
into the woodlands

running home
with cheerful eyes
her little red umbrella
blooms
across the meadow

hearing him
tell stories of our past
I wonder
what else he remembers
differently

little bird
taking a puddle bath
in the woods
splashes sunshine
every which way

merciful and kind
a passing cloud
in the azure sky
allows me to rest
in its softness

snow white petals
falling falling
beauty
knows no season
it just is

~*Pennsylvania, USA*

Judi Diggs is interracially married, with one son . . . and a vegetarian. She attended Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh and received her degree with the A.R.R.T. Her fondness for math is what prompted Judi to begin writing haiku. From there a passion for language art grew into more versatile forms of expression to include tanka and cherita. Nature has always been Judi's sanctuary, often reflected in her poetry.

Animusic*

Kath Abela Wilson

she
is animusic
her vista
sings
into the future

cobbled streets
a soft percussion
underfoot
on the way
to the congress

Tomar
plays
the flute of the river
a channel sings
the soft windway

a heron waits daily
by the waterfall
white statuesque
while dark fish swim circles
around in dark waters

in roundness
she waits for herself
until the body
becomes music and the eye
feeds it with stars

fingers
touch invisible keys
in the organ loft
made of sky she presses
the bellows of time

expanding days
with mindscape
as if humans finally step
over barriers
beyond thought

now dissolved
by ideals
new space
is made
by vision

time tamed
by music
it bows
to her imagination
this extra hour

pink of dawn
comes earlier to mind
night banished
it clears the mind
animating

breath of the spirit
her waking dream
power enlivening
breakthrough she
builds

a new instrument
like an organ
but more
made of the hidden pulse
of many dreams

multidimensional masterpiece
animusic
a tree in my ear
she collects the sap of leaves
before they fall

~Portugal

** Animusic was performed in Porto, Portugal, Animusic2017, accompanied by Rick Wilson on shakuhachi at an organological conference (the study of musical instruments). It is inspired and dedicated to the organizer Patricia Lopez Bastos.*

Kath Abela Wilson

old post office in China
now museum
postman uniform display
only jackets . . . my husband says
do you think they wore pants

big sign
on our long walk
in an old Chinese garden
beer snacks
tired feet bum rest

passport control
stand behind the yellow line
big foot outline I see
my husband's big toe
slightly out of place

I never change . . .
dad's home from work
looks at the bread
grins and says
an elephant opened it

a dainty childhood
except for my reputation
the only little girl
who could impersonate
Jimmy Durante

he was a grouch
I admit I enjoyed
the zoo when the emu
beaked out and bit the button
off his back pocket

Father Tapia
walks into class smoke first
teaching theology
laughability he says
makes humans human

welcome basket
from tropical Taiwan
tiny stickers read
kiwi from France
apples from New Zealand

four year old grandson
wants to trick or treat
halloween
he hides under the bed
scared of his own costume

mom gave me little girl rag curls
now she's 95
spruuuung!
I pull out my flower pin curls
her bellowing laughs

where shall we meet
out of silent desire
I say it aloud
Santa Fe, where I was born
when I was twenty-five

how many moons
have I missed
this busy world
someday I'll swallow it
whole

ripening figs
this upside down summer
it takes this long
to absorb that my body
is made of you

~Pasadena, California, USA

In My Bones

Kath Abela Wilson & *Matsukaze*

dripping with dusk
cacophony
of tree frogs
we eat samosas
and voice-over the news

*moving busily
around this old house
your active presence
slicing through
sandalwood scent*

out of the corner
of my eye
a lizard
you look at me quietly
and I remake the bed

*persona non grata . . .
a smoldering easterly
arrives
at the same time
your pickup does*

this will be
a long hot journey
without opening
I toss the envelope
in my suitcase

*another morning
at the job
the coolness of autumn
makes itself known
seeping into my bones*

~Pasadena, California, USA / Dallas, Texas,
USA

*Kath Abela Wilson of Pasadena, CA, travels to conferences worldwide
with her mathematician, historical flute player husband, writing and
performing her poetry with him as they go.*

*Matsukaze is a stage actor and classical vocalist living in Dallas, TX.
He writes Japanese short form poetry.*

Kristyn Blessing

this year's green
fades into brown
neither of us remember
the recipe
for red

~Menomonie, Wisconsin, USA

sunshine
Lake Superior wind
unzip
zip
our jackets

~Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan, USA

waves toss up cement slabs
reminding us
what it can do
with all the things
we have done

~the shores of Lake Superior, Michigan, USA

leaving the spiderwort
for all the colors
of asteracea
this family
of stars

~Red Cedar Trail, Wisconsin, USA

*Kristyn Blessing writes tanka, haiku, and short poetry. She teaches
English as a Second Language and Composition at the University of
Wisconsin-Stout. She has had poetry published in various places
including Modern English Tanka, American Tanka, and Failed Haiku.*

Lavana Kray

My friends
who used to come by daily
have suddenly left me . . .
I'm scribbling one more thought
on my foot's plaster cast

Roses
and vinyl records . . .
from the snowy soul
a snake of smoke rises
to heavens

Black clouds
took everything away—
the sap of flowers
left in a book is a sign
that you've been here

The rocking chair
creaking louder
than the door . . .
there is no other ghost here
but myself

Finally,
something is going on
in the desert . . .
the prints of your steps
filled with tadpoles

I tied
my dreams in trees,
forgot about the hunters . . .
the light inside my birds
drenched all away

~Iasi, Romania

Lavana Kray is from Iasi, Romania. She is passionate about writing and photography. Nature and the events of her life provide ideas and inspiration for writing. She has won several awards, including WHA Master Haiga Artist 2015. Her work has been published in many print and online journals, including Haiku Canada Review, Haiku Masters, The Maimichi, Ginyu, Daily Haiga, Haiga Online, Ribbons, Atlas Poetica, etc. She was chosen for Haiku Euro Top 100, 2016. This is her blog: <http://photohaikuforyou.blogspot.ro>.

comfort *a ryuka triptych*

Liam Wilkinson & Joy McCall

these days I let the spiders be
and find comfort in their fine webs
in my solitude, a music . . .
the soft octaves of legs

*from the mealworm's alter ego
the darkling beetle works its way
a trickster, hiding in the dark
far from the light of day*

against the bulb, a ghost-white moth
blown in on a midsummer breeze
fanned by the fuss of its pale wings
I find my sleep with ease

~North Yorkshire, England / Norfolk, England

Liam Wilkinson lives in North Yorkshire. He has served as editor of 3Lights, Prune Juice, Modern Haiga and Englyn. His tanka collection, Seeing Double: Tanka Pairs, was published by Skylark Publishing in Spring 2016.

After decades of living in the States and Canada, Joy McCall came back to her birthplace, Norwich, England, a city with a dark ancient history. Her life is a seesaw of joy and pain, loss and learning, darkness and great light.

Lorne Henry

reminiscent
of fields of rape and mustard
paddocks gold
with fireweed after drought
wattles bloom along roadsides

while the landlord
is touring the world
on my rent
I check the dam for lilies
only rootless leaves float

he gave me
a pink pumpkin
perfect size
there'll be no waste
I save the seeds

the swallow
attacks a butcherbird
then chases off
a rival male swallow
alphabetizing through the air

a hot morning
eucalyptus oil rises
from the forest
turning trees to grey
better than bushfire smoke

so naïve
I wore my wine velvet
dressing gown
just to listen each week
to his radio programme

horses in blankets
after a few chilly nights
now the day is hot
there's no-one to relieve them
as the temperature climbs

gradually
the dog's hair disappears
from the mat
birds are beginning
to line their nests again

~Australia

The Art Prize

Lorne Henry

beautiful buttocks
of a girl in the bath
the local art show
more male models this year
even one ironing

she sees herself
in a 'naked and nude'
painting
oh yes that's me
she blushes

local art prize
we wander by each painting
the director
could not bear to look for long
at the old man in white sheets

~Australia

Queen's Dowry

Lorne Henry

Exploring again. A train ride north of Prague. I wander around the old town. Uphill and down following wherever the cobblestones lead me. I'd love a cup of coffee. I see some young people coming out of a building that looks promising.

Coffee in there? Brings forth laughter. *We'll show you where.*

We enter a narrow doorway I would have passed by. Up some narrow winding stone steps to a small room large enough for one round table.

People are drinking coffee and laughing.

A waiter leads us up another curved stairway to an empty table. We squeeze in behind the chairs and take our places. The waiter disappears down and around another set of steps.

This convivial coffee house is a number of linked old cellars. Introductions all round. They're surprised to know I'm from Australia. We discover a shared interest in music. Not so surprising in this country. One young man invites me to a Christmas concert he'll be conducting

empty streets
cellars that once kept
foodstuffs cool
now warmed by good company
are the households deserted

~New South Wales, Australia

Lorne Henry has been writing haiku since 1992 and tanka from the early 2000s. She also writes tanka prose and haibun. Lorne now lives in the countryside of New South Wales Australia.

Lynda Monahan spends her summers on the shores of Waskesiu Lake in Prince Albert National Park in northern Saskatchewan, Canada. She is author of three poetry collections and teaches creative writing.

September Song

Lynda Monahan

The lake
is spun silver
sun softened
by a veil of smoke
from the northern fires

cabin owners
closing up for the winter
on the little streets
blowing out water lines
shuttering the windows

the beaches
are free of summer tourists
only shorebirds scuttling
and the shops are full
of end of season sales

a slowing down time
gone now the hectic
hot days of July
children with their sticky grips
on candy store treats

gone too
the speedboats
churning up the water
the flail of swimmers
in bright bathing suits

alone I wander
the deserted shore
come across
a summer remnant
a little yellow shovel in the sand

northern lights
ripple and roll across
the night sky
as bull elk bugle and wolves
sing down the moon

~Canada

M. Kei

mother tarantula
exercises her nurturing instinct:
she feeds
a dead bug to
the plastic Venus flytrap

the life
of a butterfly
28 days
the life of a pilot
on the Western Front

we kept silent
during worship while
the cicadas
sang their praises
to summer glory

bright green
as if it were recently born,
a leaf insect
takes up residence
in the breezeway

last night's rain
standing in a puddle
in a dirt road,
the only traffic
a few leaves and a waterskater

I want to be
a snail who carries
his house on his back,
or a sailor with
his duffel on his shoulder

the spider fastens
her gossamer strands
to the window screen,
late sun lights it up
like a string of liquid fire

he names
his pet spider
"Charles Dickens"
because he has
great expectations

she's laid back
for a predatory creature
the tarantula
permits petting
and other familiarities

listening to
the 'Carol of the Bells'
while the spider
weaves a new web
for his burrow

busy
at his work,
a spider
a few nights before
Christmas Eve

I haven't the heart
to put him out
into the winter,
so a small white spider
settles onto my ceiling

the slug
crossing the street
is rescued
by a man who loves
the unlovable

she's a small thing
her quarter-inch long body
meandering across
my desktop as if
the world held no terror

looking up
this tiny denizen
of my desk,
I find her, the delicately named
"bowl and doily spider"

peaceful
co-existence:
the spider
in her corner,
I in mine

poor spider
only a small brown leaf
caught
in the web you spun
in hopes of supper

the slug creeps
along the garden path
unaware
that the world
finds him ugly

~Maryland, USA

M. Kei is a tall ship sailor and award-winning poet who lives on Maryland's Eastern shore. He is the editor of Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka and the anthology, Neon Graffiti : Tanka Poetry of Urban Life. His most recent collection of poetry is January, A Tanka Diary. He is also the author of a gay Asian-themed fantasy novel, Fire Dragon. He can be followed on Twitter @kujakupoe, or visit AtlasPoetica.org

Margaret Van Every

first day on the job
the nurse comforts
a dying stranger—
turns out she knows him well
his chart reads Gabriel García Márquez

~Mexico City, Mexico

here lies a woman
who always spoke the truth—
an undervalued virtue
to loved ones
who'd rather never known

~Marin County, California, USA

across a crowded room
the gay pianist
croons "Some Enchanted Evening"
staring intently my way—
I know even then

~Ajijic, Mexico

Margaret Van Every lives in Jalisco, Mexico, where she writes fiction, essays, and poetry (traditional western forms as well as Japanese short forms). She has two volumes of tanka: A Pillow Stuffed with Diamonds (bilingual), 2010, and holding hands with a stranger (2014). She is a founding member of the Not Yet Dead Poets Society.

extra clean: a tanka sequence

Marie C. Lecrivain

Marie C. Lecrivain

extra clean
one quarter short
for the
wished for
wash cycle

threadbare jeans
faded concert tee
I'm dressed
to the fives
in laundry day best

I spy
across the floor
a trail of drier sheets
one lawsuit
waiting to happen

WHAM melodies
on the radio
my lost youth syncs
in time to
the rinse cycle

buzzer sounds
I open the drier
an extra quarter
falls into
my open hand

~Los Angeles, California, USA

I gave you
every last word
in the end
your absence
was a true friend to me

a fern grows
beneath long shadows
of rhubarb
I'm trapped between
real and fake news

~California, USA

Marie C. Lecrivain is the editor of poetic diversity: the litzine of Los Angeles, an ordained priestess in the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (the ecclesiastical arm of Ordo Templi Orientis), and writer-in-residence at her apartment. She writes to keep herself alive, and because, in her imagination, it's the best way to assure that she always gets the last word.

Threads

Marilyn Humbert, Samantha
Sirimanne Hyde and Jan Foster

side by side
we recall times past—
shadows
among gnarled eucalypts
by a muddy river mh

Stillness

The forest monastery lies on a remote hill. Tiny huts partially furrowed onto a rocky ridge serve as living quarters. Unable to sleep, I step outside to take in the pre-dawn glow and listen to cicada sounds. Soon my bare feet feel cold and damp with dew.

stilling the mind . . .
taking small steps
on rough earth
despite the quietude
this yearning for home ssh

Encounter

Parking my car at the entrance to the walking track, I shrug on my backpack and set off. The role of ranger in this section of the National Park is a satisfying one and I relish the daily challenges that come with the job. Mentally absorbed in reviewing today's tasks, I am completely unprepared for the sight ahead. All coherent thought ceases as my primal self surfaces—fight or flight? Before I can move, the creature dismisses me as irrelevant and vanishes into the undergrowth.

for an instant
we stare at each other
. . . this huge black feline
everyone says
doesn't exist jf

Lost

I never should have left the sign-posted road. So much for my adventure on *the road less travelled*, one pothole after another. Steep banks either side edged with berry-red boxthorns, like the track leading to my grandfather's farm. I can see the stand of peppercorn trees. How strange to end up here or is it somewhere else? Wind groans through gaps in the trunks of neglect and abandonment. A lantern light flickers.

over the threshold
my feet leave prints
in layers of dust
from a time long past
piles of mouldy leaves mh

Learning

'Look,' says my guide, pointing with her digging stick, 'this one can only germinate after burning.'

I can see traces of green where new shoots are bursting from blackened stumps. Her tribe has lived on this land for centuries beyond counting, the lessons for survival handed down by the elders to each new generation. Back at camp, I record my notes, pondering what I have learned. Tomorrow I fly out to a conference overseas on land management techniques.

wisdom
now transmitted
digitally
the gulf widens
between past and future jf

Going backwards

After a year away, I return to Sri Lanka that October to find that it has plunged into a full-scale civil war. Our homeland in which we had lived in harmony for generations has changed, people now uneasy and distrustful of one

another. Overnight, we're conscious of each other's family names which reveal our ethnicities. Our Tamil neighbour whose valuables we safeguarded during riots avoids us as they wait for their refugee visas to Australia.

you and I
playing hopscotch
just the other day
in a blink of an eye
these invisible walls ssh

Moving on

Since the trial, everything has changed. Although absolved of guilt by the courts, my professional reputation is now forever stamped with a question mark. Tomorrow I go to take up a job offer overseas, a chance to make a fresh start in a different field. I walk alone along my favourite stretch of shoreline one last time, aware of a growing sense of all I leave behind.

breaking wavelets
wash away my imprint
as I walk
erasing all traces of me
. . . this feeling of weightlessness jf

The Fountain

My search for the river's source takes me high above sea level. It is here an icy trickle from snow melt, sneaks with cunning through crevices finding the path of least resistance. Among stunted alpine trees, soft mosses and lichen I find a bubbling spring. What if it's not just another soak but that fountain from another age. Not a fountain of youth or wisdom but of origin.

in seclusion
among high peaks
I listen
to the sound
of snowflakes falling mh

Alternative Realities

Journeying home after years abroad, I find it difficult to settle. Around me, the cabin lights dimmed, other passengers are sleeping, some reading or working on laptops, while the airliner purrs on through an inky night sky. Beneath us lies a sea of clouds while above is the immensity of space. We are suspended between worlds. Reality is our immediate surroundings which will change once we land. I ponder a Zen koan on the question of being.

adrift
between worlds
my life
a puzzle waiting
to be reassembled jf

That Influence

Most school holidays, we visit our grandmother who lives in a faraway town called Ratnapura which translates to 'City of Gems.' Her home is a magical place on a dell. In the evenings I'm told to pick and arrange flowers onto woven wicker trays to offer at the home's shrine. Later, we sit on reed mats and chant ancient poems of devotion. Soon my siblings giggle and sneak out of the room leaving me with grandma to continue on for another hour. Despite my discomfort, I cannot fail her.

fragrant dusk
under her watchful eye
arraying blooms . . .
many decades later
still her faint sway ssh

Hope

After the funeral, following my younger sister's untimely death, I return to the city apartment we shared, wondering how to go on living here without her vibrant presence. She was never still, always with some new art project

underway or planned, filling my life with her luminous personality. As I open the door and step reluctantly into the silent room, I feel the touch of something not of this world. She is still here, will always be, in her artworks on our walls.

opaline glow
of the sunrise you painted
. . . the sound of colour
filling my empty places,
softening my sadness jf

Acceptance

There's a little person at my student hostel door. He tells me that his name is Kim and that he is a friend of another Kim who is known to me. He has heard that I cut hair and asks if I could oblige. I let him in and we chat while I snip off his long wiry mane. I'm not trained at this but I have some hair cutting accessories. He's Korean, I'm Sri Lankan and we talk about China's one-child policy in our faltering German. Afterwards, he bows and gifts me a bookmark with an embossed dragon.

breathing fire
a mythical creature
of gilded glory
. . . those days of yore
when life was simpler ssh

Older Now

My grandson is almost 6 years old, and in his first year at school. This young fellow used to listen to stories of moon-man and the lost City of Atlantis, the legends of our forefathers. Now he has a faraway look when I tell my tales and I know he would rather be playing with his mates.

blue eyes
sparkle with mischief
my grandson
no longer wants
to hold my hand mh

Regret

Ours had been a very close bond that grew from our school days. Then you suddenly changed and turned your back on me. At that time I didn't understand enough about things like mental anguish. So when I migrated away, I didn't try to reach out to you to say goodbye. A few years later, I received the news that you had passed away in questionable circumstances.

that winter
I'm mostly numb
from loss
in dreams I see your spirit
drift through gloaming clouds ssh

knitting
past and future threads
together . . .
we learn our place
on the wheel of life mh

~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.

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.

Jan Foster, a former English teacher, lives with her husband in Geelong, Australia. Her tanka, tanka prose, haiku, haibun and responsive sequences have been published in journals in Japan, USA, New Zealand, Britain, Canada and Australia, as well as online. She is the founder of the Bottlebrush Tanka Group (Sydney) and the Breathstream Tanka Group (Geelong). Her favourite things, apart from writing with her responsive sequence partners, are her grandchildren, a good book to read, a cryptic crossword to conquer and a samurai Sudoku to solve.

Marilyn Morgan

gymnastics . . .
on the birdfeeder
squirrels
pole vaulting
 scampering along the balance beam

along the canal
naked willows
priming
 to show off
 their new golden locks

a fire in the sky
sunrise . . .
 deer forage for food
 snow
 up to their bellies

the sun
slips through the clouds
rubs along the shore
 warms the rocks
 where dragonflies mate

~United States

Conversion

Marilyn Morgan

Years ago it was the site of a convent. A weathered old stone structure, circular with wide expansive lawns like the photos you see in books of old castles and mansions. Nuns hidden in black habits, oversized white starched collars, and long trailing veils hustled about the pathways to and from devotion.

Today, it's a brand new distillery, making fine whiskey, gin, and vodka.

Tourists, driving Mercedes or Lexus, pull into the parking lot. Gardeners scurry about pruning shrubs and mulching abundant flowering gardens.

The tasting room where once stood long wooden tables and hard benches now boasts plush sofas and chairs. Bottle after bottle of distilled spirits line the walls.

You look around . . . hear the bells ring, see the habited ghosts sipping their bourbon and hear gales of laughter.

~United States

Once . . . Through A Portal . . .

Marilyn Morgan

It was a watercolor dream. Shades of blues and greens, light and dark cloud-like abstracts spilling over the paper. Stark, distinct jagged black lines rising out of the landscape and shooting off over the edges. At first glance you might think the artist imagined mountains emerging from a dark blue-green abyss and falling back into valleys below.

morning
and I awoke
thinking of you
so many miles
away

~United States

Marilyn Morgan is a retired English teacher. Marilyn's poetry has appeared in ATLAS POETICA, BRIGHT STARS, SKYLARK, RIBBONS, A HUNDRED GOURDS and others. Her prose has been published in EDGE, MOTIF, MINERVA RISING, THRICE FICTION and others. Marilyn lives in New Hartford, New York, USA.

Originally trained in science, Mark Gilbert is based in Nottinghamshire in the UK and has been writing tanka for over 10 years. Examples of his work may be found in the journals Skylark, Gogyoshi Monthly and Neon Graffiti: Tanka Poetry of Urban Life. Mark spent some of his childhood in the US and this continues to influence him and his writing. Indeed, he discovered Japanese flavoured poetry through the works of Jack Kerouac.

Mark Gilbert

how foolish we are
not to live
in the hawthorn hedge
instead
we hide behind walls of stone

Spider-man
promoting pizza
in the rain
maybe one day
he will get to go home

~Nottingham, UK

cars & beer
cars & beer
if I had a father
I could talk
about cars & beer

~Kent, UK, approximately 1979

b u b b l e s rising
only to explode
at the surface
my complementary Cava*
still fogbound

~Heathrow Airport, London, UK

* Cava is a sparkling wine, Spanish in origin

when
she
used
to be a man
there was nothing

~Nottingham, UK

Marshall Bood

rain pours down
on the pride parade . . .
rainbow outfits covered,
umbrellas
 march!

the traffic
at a distance
over the bridge . . .
at a distance
the traffic

Thursday night shopping
Salsa on the Plaza and
a saxophone busker . . .
a skateboard rolls by
with the clouds

~Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

the widowed farmer
plays endless games
of Solitaire
overlooking
the valley's fields

my Dad took me on hikes
up the valley . . .
at the top
we found shelter
behind stones

~Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, Canada

*Marshall Bood lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. His poetry
has recently appeared in Scryptic, bottle rockets, Atlas Poetica and
Failed Haiku.*

*Maryalicia Post is a journalist and travel writer. She was awarded the
Gerard Manley Hopkins prize for her long poem 'After You', published
by Souvenir Press, UK. Her short form poetry has appeared in Ribbons,
Moonbathing and the Cherita. She lives in Dublin.*

Maryalicia Post

after the breakup

she became my dog
I feed her, walk her, love her

she sleeps by the door
waiting for his footsteps
a canine Madame Butterfly

between stumbling

on the broken pavement
and hitting the ground

I had time for a thought:
sometimes you've no choice
but to fall

say yes to life

the hairdresser
advised her client

who sighed, nodded
had she really wanted
pink hair?

do leaves leave-taking

cling on to the branch
just long enough to say

it's me
not you
before they fall?

~Dublin, Ireland

into a white sleep

Matsukaze & Murasame

approach of autumn —
burning
more sage
in my bedroom
full of noon sun

*a votive candle
in the old church
hawthorn berries
on the holy fire
wishing you well*

having
gone to bed
rather late —
within my dreams
praying for you

*I hear you
chanting in the wood
unto the hills
and even the pines
are shuckling **

sound of an old ship
through rain
skipping 'neath
cool sheets
into a white sleep

~Dallas, Texas, USA / Norwich, England

**shuckling— from the Yiddish word meaning “to shake,” is the ritual swaying of worshippers during Jewish prayers, usually forward and back but also from side to side. This practice can be traced back to at least the 8th century, and possibly as far back as Talmudic time, according to Wikipedia.*

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

Murasame lives in her birthplace, old Norwich in Norfolk, England. She too grows old and her mind is full of ghosts and poetry.

now?

Matthew M. Cariello & Joy McCall

fiftieth birthday
half moon
on the horizon
I hoist a bucket
to my shoulder

*leaning my back
against the old tree
at dusk
a lone cuckoo
still calling*

the dragonfly lands
on the same leaf
is this what
you mean by
now?

*fearless, fearsome
this little thing
ancient, spineless
I wish my vision
was so wide, so high*

on the night
of first fireflies we just
sit and watch
my secret name
whispers in the road

~Bexley, Ohio, USA / Norwich, England

Matthew M. Cariello was born and raised in New Jersey. So deal with it.

Joy McCall lives in her birthplace, old Norwich in Norfolk, England. Her mind is full of ghosts and poetry.

Matthew Caretti

crickets chirp
at the late day sun
a paprika patch
where some I
used to be

tussar moth
drying in the sun
silk robes
while the monk walks
naked into the stream

dappled light
of noonday pines
a cricket jumps
through it all
this odd memory

attic window
twilight spiders
bundle the sky
into grey
into me

shared gifts
skipping over
the chocolates
a nun hands me
chrysanthemum tea

tranquility
the great sea
rising
on the moon
of my heart

~Malawi

Michael Dylan Welch

her hands wrapped
around the jade cup
of steaming green tea —
she lifts it to her lips
and they part

just a few
cherry blossoms
staring to fall
it's as if
you're not here

a glow in your cheeks
tells me what I want to know . . .
you reach for me
in the crowded airport
for my heart

~Sammamish, Washington, USA

Michael Dylan Welch published one of the first English-language tanka anthologies in 1994, Footsteps in the Fog, and founded the Tanka Society of America in 2000. His haiku, tanka, longer poetry, essays, and reviews have appeared in hundreds of journals and anthologies in at least 22 languages. His latest book is Seven Suns / Seven Moons (NeoPoiesis Press), with Tanya McDonald. Michael lives in Sammamish, Washington, and his website is www.graceguts.com.

Influenced in equal parts by his study of German language and literature, by the Beat writers, by his travels, and by his Zen monastic training, Matthew Caretti's work has appeared in numerous journals, as well as several anthologies. After leaving the Seo-un Hermitage near Yangsan, Korea, in 2016, Matthew made a pilgrimage through India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar before returning to Africa, where he served with the Peace Corps from 2003-2005. He remains on that continent, serving as principal at Amitofo Care Centre, an orphanage and school of five hundred children, in Mapanga, Malawi.

Cherita

Michael H. Lester

off spectrum

the color
of her eyes

an otherworldly vision
in white lace
and angel's wings

guns blazing

she blasts through
the saloon door

and shoots everyone
wearing a mustache—
except the bartender

his grizzly skin

and intractable stubble
chafe against her delicate parts

but like all the old miners
left over from the gold rush
he's got a few nuggets left

in a sober moment

on a somber day
awakened from a troubled slumber

he finds the bottles
that bring him comfort
have been taken far away

they clamber up the hill

over jagged rock
and stinging nettle

clutching leaky tin buckets
for what purpose I do not know
this Jack and this Jill

that lavish affair

where we first met
both at our absolute best

each thinking to ourselves
surely
we could have done better

after a terrible tiff

with the dog groomer
and her heavy-handed ways

the schnauzer
puts its sad face on
and mopes around for days

so cocksure

the handsome rich boy
with his golden tan

in a burgundy cardigan
at the helm
of his father's yacht

she knows

he watches her undress
from across the way

but she doesn't
close
the curtains

they all gasp

when the lawyer
reads the will

except the mistress
who comes dressed to the nines
just to see their faces

those brittle bones

that click and clank
with each unsteady step

wrapped in a cloak
of wrinkled skin
we soon will lay to rest

she happens upon a magical place

where fairies flit
along golden rocks

and water tumbles
like milk and honey
over terraces of velvet and silk

desperate to forget

the exquisite pain
and agonizing pleasure

he inflicts with his fingers
she shuts the lid on the box
where she keeps his severed hands

she revels

in his faithfulness
and piety

he sits by the fireplace
watches her every move
and wags his tail

in one blissful moment

the warmth of his body
wrapped around hers

she imagines
he will be there
in the morning

a pack of wild dogs

mangy and hungry
slinks down the alleyway

they come upon
a homeless man
and sit with him awhile

the three of them

inseparable since high school
celebrate their 50th anniversary

the conversation
focusing largely
on colonoscopies

~Los Angeles, California, USA

When the Rains Came

Michael H. Lester

The first camping trip together promises a romantic getaway for these young lovers. Detroit is a dirty, grimy city covered in various shades of gray with broken windows and grotesque graffiti-covered plywood boldly advertising its terminal infirmities. It boasts two six-month-long seasons: summer and winter, both testing the extremes of human tolerance.

they stroll hand-in-hand
over gum-covered sidewalks
and broken glass . . .
clumps of grass attempt escape
through cracks in the concrete

But oases exist within spitting distance for those who are brave enough to leave their inner-city tenements and navigate their way through the city's mean streets to Ann Arbor, home to the University of Michigan; across the bridge or through the tunnel to Windsor, Ontario, Canada; or to the resort town of Traverse City.

They shop for camping supplies at the local Kmart on a limited budget— she works part-time as a clerk at Wayne State University for minimum wage, and he works as a bartender at

the local college hangout. In order to stretch a dollar, they zip together two plush sleeping bags and take them to the checkout counter as if they were one, along with a bare-bones, two-person tent. The clerk does not notice the doubled-up sleeping bags.

they survive
from paycheck to paycheck
and on food stamps . . .
that age when they think
all they need is each other

They arrive at Ann Arbor just before nightfall and find a camping spot in the woods. As they attempt to set up the tent in the dark— discovering it has no bottom— a storm comes and collapses it in the mud. Summarily dispelled of the notion they would have a romantic night under the stars, they pack up their gear and head for town where they find hot pizza and a warm hotel room.

Despite the camping trip debacle, they soon marry.

The tent, not the sleeping bags, turns out to be the metaphor for their marriage.

~Los Angeles, California, USA

Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

Michael H. Lester

After four long years as a low-ranking Chinese linguist in the U.S. Air Force, he tries to readjust to civilian life. For his first official act as a civilian, he stuffs his military uniform into a trashcan, slips on his wild, flowery, corduroy pants and clashing flowery, silk shirt, and dons

blue sunglasses. He looks ridiculous. At the airport, even his mother does not recognize him. The 60s have passed him by.

wearied eyes
search for a new beacon . . .
where
have all
the flowers gone?

His mother and her second husband, George, drive him home from the airport to San Diego where he reunites with his brothers and sisters, all refugees from Detroit. She presents him with a car she bought for him as a homecoming gift — a Chrysler Sunbeam. It's a lemon that eventually dies midstream, but it's the thought that counts.

On his first night out, his brother leads a group of friends down a steep embankment to a beach to drink cheap wine, smoke marijuana, and make sand candles*. The wine, the weed, and the blissful realization of his long-desired freedom hit him all at once. He runs full steam, spread-eagled, headlong into the surf and keeps running, deeper, and deeper, until his brother pulls him out, narrowly averting disaster.

a new beginning
awaits somewhere . . .
he chases
the tail end of something
lost with his dog tags

His brother helps him up the cliff to the waiting cream-colored Sunbeam. Two hours of Thunderbird wine and four years of service to his country spill out of his twisted lips in a demonic burgundy stream, writing the rest of his life in undecipherable code on the rear passenger door of the lemon that can't quite take him home.

~Los Angeles, California, USA

* *Sand candles were popular among hippies in the 1960s. To make a sand candle, dig a hole in the sand, pour in melted wax, add a wick and any decorations you like (e.g., seashells), and wait until it hardens.*

Cherita

Michael H. Lester & Autumn Noelle Hall

the shovel head

*not much use
without a handle*

the prison psychiatrist
digs deeper
into my past

waiting for the test results

he fiddles
with a ball of string

*theory
entangled with practice
in quantum physics class*

mountain casual

*birdseed sprouts
in place of a lawn*

she takes an outdoor shower
while I relieve myself
in the sunflowers

anything goes

*trotting out his best Cole Porter
at the absinthe bar*

women swoon
but he saves his best lines
for the transgender guy in black

cheeky monkey

*unwraps a stick of Juicy Fruit
baring his gums*

twenty years in this stinking cage
and still no one offers him
a cigarette

midnight—twelve discordant chimes

and a most unsettling smirk
on the cuckoo bird

*looking rather natty
in those black fishnets
let's do the Time Warp again*

iKoan:

*where's the Buddha emoji?
the Sanskrit emotic-Om?*

I leave my smart phone at home
and read the tattooed lady
in yoga class

~Los Angeles, California, USA / *Green Mountain,
Colorado, USA*

*Michael H. Lester is a CPA and attorney practicing business
management for the entertainment industry in Los Angeles, California.
His haiku, tanka, cherita, haibun, and tanka prose have appeared in
numerous journals. Michael received an honorable mention in TSA's
2017 Sanford Goldstein Tanka Contest, is the author of a book of
poetry, Notes from a Commode – Volume I, and is a co-founder of the
cherita: your storybook journal.*

*Autumn Noelle Hall watches the world from a small cedar cabin on the
slopes of Pikes Peak while attempting to make sense of life's
senselessness through her writing. She is grateful to the sun for rising
each day, to her husband and Aussie for keeping her company, and to all
those who so generously read and publish her work. She sincerely hopes
it is possible to save the Earth one poem at a time.*

war without peace

Michael D. Mann

I was born in rural Georgia in a shotgun shack. Got its name because the police used their guns to flush anyone out of the house. The 12-gauge round penetrated the building—in one wall and out the other side of the house. When I was seven, my parents sold me to Old Man Johnson who brewed the best moonshine in three states. I never thought my sale was a problem because both of my parents were mean drunks. Besides that, I was the lookout for deliveries. We always left at night, and if car lights appeared behind us, the driver floored the gas pedal. My job was to tell if the headlights fell back, stayed the same, or got closer. If they fell back, it was okay; and we slowed down. If not, it was revenuers, and we roared down the real Thunder Road. During this time, I fell in love.

commanded by blood
written in violence and pain
clothed in knives and lies
I left, you chose to stay
Do you ever think of me?

The draft sent me to Vietnam, and I embraced killing; was good at it. Every dead enemy soldier was one less trying to kill me. The glimmers of the dead are never far.

this
wall of silence
a casualty of war
that only ghosts
pass through

but today
in the ocean
I ride waves
as seagulls
watch

When it feels like there is water to squeeze out of the air, flashbacks are relentless. I sit in the mud with my back to a banyan tree. The rain drowns out all other sounds; unable to hear Charlie the tang of fear is strong.

monsoons,
the sun shines now
my shadow hurries home dry
a happy surprise

I see a dog doing his business in my yard, and I am on ambush and practice the art of stillness. When necessary, I defecate in my pants. The black welkin rings with machine-gun fire and men dying.

the full moon . . . a stage light
on shadows and delusions
and
the ghost of my cat
against my leg

I love nature but not around other people. I flinch when a twig snaps or the woods grow silent.

midnight
owls call
moonlight and the birds
my travel companions

Sometimes, in bright sunlight, I'm free and at peace, but not often.

waves
taste my footprints
then devour them
I cease to exist
with each step

but, alone
on my dock
the clamor
of dark memories
recede

~North Carolina, USA

Michael D. Mann was born on the wrong side of the tracks where the police were the enemy. Drafted and spit out in Vietnam, he embraced killing, not for his country, but to survive. Wounded twice and sent home, a mercenary group contacted him. On his way to Europe to join them, he met a woman, fell in love, married, sired a son, and did not die as an assassin. The ghosts still haunt him. He apologizes up front for his tanka prose submission is written in the subjective case.

Mira N. Mataric has a Ph.D., two master degrees, more than 40 books published bilingually and international presence in anthologies and periodicals. Recipient of international awards for over 50 years of spreading education and building cultural bridges. She still teaches creative writing, translates literature and actively participates in writers gatherings internationally.

Love Diptych

Mira N. Mataric

First Love

It is not crimson red
but light pink or blue
of Picasso's paintings

snow, early violets, insecure hope
making you feel like
singing in the shower.

Last Love

Although not passionately red

it is reassuringly warm
like the autumn sun

or a tired river
finally
reaching the sea.

~United States

Cherita

Mira N. Mataric

an ant carries a load heavier than itself

a lion like a poet walks
through the desert alone

just a man you
dare not
look into my eyes

Mira N. Mataric

on my knees before you
I have nothing to give you
a poem of mine
and even they do not
successfully rhyme

centipedes are feared
they resemble hair combs
we don't fear graveyards
although they are filled
with abundant tombs

a woman never
forgives the man who betrays
her dreams
the force of vengeance
equals her love

falling in love
falling asleep
falling apart
if you are smart
don't fall at all.

~United States

Neal Whitman

short-term renter
next door to our bungalow
is adamant
she will leave the garden
better than she found it

circumstances
may dictate a short-term lease —
may I suggest
even in poor conditions
a garden of pansies?

~Todd Lane, Pacific Grove, California, USA

in the sky
one single cloud
cast
plastering the bay
alabaster white

~Monterey Bay, Pacific Grove, California, USA

the door
opens and closes
hinged
allows the hospital room
to breathe in and out

~Hospice, Monterey, California, USA

thyme will not flower
until the weather gets warm . . .
the weather
will not get warm
till it is time to flower

~Garland Park, Carmel Valley, California, USA

Rinpoche
nicknamed “Weepy Lama”
handed
each of us a ripe orange . . .
wash cloths, too

*~Manjushri Dharma Center, Pacific Grove, California,
USA*

people of Nairi
call it Tabuhara Pass
in Tabuhara
it is called Nairi Pass —
does my left foot know its right?

~Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, California, USA

Neal Whitman and his wife, Elaine, live in a cottage-home in Pacific Grove on California's Monterey Peninsula. This coastal paradise and also the people who share it inspire Neal's poetry and Elaine's photography. Neal is Vice President of the United Haiku and Tanka Society and is the haiku editor for Pulse: Voices from the Heart of Medicine.

Patricia Prime

beach wedding
distinctly seen
the spiral of shells
catching my eye
the fantail's shadow

inshore cliff
surrounded by a picket fence
sailor's grave
a plaque marks
a ship's disaster

at Muriwai
hovering on the wind
gannets
before they plunge
from the sea stacks

scaly with age
numerous stems
of wild plum
that black line a flock
of migrating birds

before the mirror
sometimes it seems
me and my image
are different visions
of the same figure

after work
my granddaughter
arrives for dinner
her day spent sewing
costumes for the ballet

the twin girls
play on their iPhones
faces lit up
as they contact friends
to play games with them

in unison
five geese fly north
necks outstretched
they are high, going
higher in a thermal lift

fixed in my mind
the sight of a yew tree
in a churchyard
its green hands shadowing
the granite stones

the slightest breeze
causes the sparrows
asleep
in my letter box
to fan their wings and fly

two sisters
ride their bikes
along the pathway
over-sized jackets and hats
make them anonymous

the willow leaves
glitter under the sunlight
like the comb
my mother used to wear
in her long, scented hair

along the base
of the dunes, we find a place
where footprints,
paw prints and claw prints
have moved away

~New Zealand

Cherita

Patricia Prime

the blue sea murmurs

at the moon's pull
as the tide ebbs away

revealing
on the packed sand
a dead seahorse

the brush stroke sky

deepens to a shade
of salmon pink

where space
goes on forever
into infinity

the moon leaves

its patterned light
of yellow gold

amongst the waves
as we walk the jetty
out to sea

the apple trees

hung with summer fruit
shimmer in the sunlight

grey-white pigeons
dart between the branches
sating their hunger

your slow warm words

blur again
as if in a breeze

as the inlet
of memory
flexes and fills

a woman

walking towards us
on the footpath

laughs at us two
seventy-year olds
whispering like lovers

my childhood

a calligraphy
of war planes in the sky

the sound
of air-raid sirens —
'shelter' or 'all clear'

the tone of a clarinet

with an old reed
pliable as smoke

its sad notes
tender as a girl's voice
echoing round the room

~New Zealand

At the Auckland Art Gallery

Patricia Prime

because I learned
about the beautiful
from artists:
the nature of clouds and water —
other things dovetail in my mind

How close can we get? A yellow band marks the perimeter over which we cannot cross. A woman beside me steps closer to Monet's huge canvas, "Water Lilies", which takes up the whole wall. It's a painting which Monet must have stood in front of over a hundred years ago. Her eyes move from left to right, up and down. She stretches a finger as if to touch the canvas. Her fingers dance around the colours: mauve, pink, yellow, lilac, blue, green. Surreptitiously, she takes pad and pencil from her satchel and makes a quick sketch. Outside the gallery café there is an actual pond with real water lilies, but the artist wasn't seeking reality, rather he was expressing his vision of what the scene meant to him.

the whole slow
turning of the seasons
soft touch of spring
in the oak's unfurling leaves,
the lapping of water in the pond

~New Zealand

Hotel Room

Patricia Prime

O what sadness unaware that it is sadness!
What despair that doesn't know it is despair! A
business woman, her unpacked suitcase on the
floor, sits on a bed half dressed, in red underwear,
her hair impeccable, she has a piece of paper in
her hand, probably with a name on it. A book of
poetry nearby. Who are you? Nobody will ask.
She doesn't know either.

gust of spring breeze
the next page turns over
in her book
a poem about love
meets her eye

~New Zealand

Mist

Patricia Prime

Today seventy tongues hide in the forest.
Their voices hanging beyond the mist.

Seventy long banners mingling red, yellow,
blue and white feathers. Here the nuthatch blows
his horn leading a thin procession of white wind
through the black trees.

morning coolness
breathing the scent
of pine and rata
along the forest trail
I lose myself in thought

~New Zealand

Adventures

Patricia Prime

Framed, but kept in the desk drawer, proof
that I once fitted in the crook of his arm. Proof
too that he gave me his smile and the wave of his
hand as he left for Germany. He stands tall and
proud beside the gate in our English garden, that
corner of a December sky, his soldier's hat
slightly askew. I'm a year old.

Now, I'm older than he was when he died,
but I have the memory of being hoisted to his
shoulder to see the Changing of the Guard, the
Queen and Prince Philip celebrating their
wedding day above the crowds on the balcony of
Buckingham Palace. Later, we walked around
Trafalgar Square, sat atop the back of a stone
lion, feeding the pigeons, our faces cold. The
wind scooping clouds into a pile, *stratocumulus*, he
said, but they looked like clouds to me.

Lyons Corner House
sharing maple syrup pancakes —
driving home
smog blurs the city
lights strung everywhere

~England

Patricia Prime is co-editor of Kokako, reviews/interviews editor of Haibun Today and a reviewer for Atlas Poetica, Takahe, and other journals. Besides reviewing, writing poetry and articles, she writes traditional verse, renga, linked verse, tanka prose, haibun, cherita and limericks. Patricia also writes collaborative verse and renga with a variety of poets. She is on the panel of judges of contests for the traditional poetry magazines MetVerse Muse, Poets international (India) and the USA tanka journal Gusts. She is on the editorial panel of GIWEC (India) and other Indian journals and has had her poetry published in several issues of the Mongolian journal World Poetry Almanac. She has edited, with poets Beverley George and Amelia Fielden a collection of New Zealand and Australian tanka poets, the collection 100 Tanka by 100 Poets, and has edited, with Dr. Bruce Ross, the World Haiku Anthology: A Vast Sky. Patricia has also published, with French poet, Giselle Maya, a collection of collaborative haibun and tanka sequences, called Shizuku.

How to translate a wordplay?

Paul Mercken

It's considered a truism that wordplays cannot be translated. However, I made a tanka based on a wordplay:

'Tongeren: Schimmel
in de gevangenis', schrijft
't Belang van Limburg—
nu vraag ik me toch af: zou
Sinterklaas erop zitten?

The Dutch word *schimmel* can either mean a grey (horse), the traditional mount of Saint Nicholas on the European continent, or mould, mildew. So, in the Dutch version I wonder whether the Saint is mounting it. In English, the word mould can also refer to a matrix, so I play on that and realise that the English version is better, since it is more topical.

Tongeren is a town in the Flemish province of Limburg, Belgium. The Belang van Limburg is the provincial daily newspaper.

Tongeren: 'Mould in
the penitentiary,' writes
the provincial sheet—
I wonder: would that be
a mould for an iron file?

~*Bunnik, Netherlands*

Paul Mercken

Door een kind geleid
bestijgt de meester het pad—
bovengekomen
verzamelt hij bladeren
en ligt neer om te slapen.

Guided by a child
the master ascends the path—
arrived at the top
he gathers a bunch of leaves
and lies down on them to sleep.

~*Bunnik, Netherlands*

Belgian retired philosophy professor and medievalist (°1934), Bunnik, NL. Research and teaching in GB, USA, Florence, IT and Utrecht, NL. Committee Haiku Kring Nederland (Dutch Haiku Society) 2004-2017. 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: nature, society, culture and spirituality. Humanist, promoting democratic confrontation by dialogue. Nominated: poetry contest Bunnik about Bunnik, 2017.

Paweł Markiewicz

park with trees bushes
fallen leaves are being raked
squirrel and chestnuts
yellowed leaf in poet's book
fall-adoration

frozen pond three wolves
the thick fog is floating
comet is flying
mouse in the underground home
i will admire the midnight

forest stream heather
leaves cover the boleti
frogs in the chilled stream
parasol honey mushrooms
beauty of fly agaric

frozen pond three wolves
the thick fog is floating
my comet is yours
i am bewitching the mice
without fear of the future

~Poland

Cherita

Paweł Markiewicz

park full of different trees and bushes

the fallen leaves
a leaf is falling and wind is lifting it

old man is raking up leaves
young man is burning leaves
I am placing the leaf into Hoerderlin's book

~Poland

Choka

Paweł Markiewicz

frozen heart-shaped pond
its crushed ice in the middle

the place of drinking
fresh water for wolf

another wolf
is howling into full moon

third wolf is lying
in snow and watching comet

in the midnight sky
mouse — underground corridors

fog is floating
fog can lighten your thinking
the moon can brighten the mind

~Poland

Paweł Markiewicz was born 1983 in Siemiatycze (Poland). He studied both law and German studies in Poland. He is a poet who writes in german, polish and english. He likes the most marvelous poetry. His more than 30 poems have been published in Germany. Paweł has a field spaniel. He lives in Bielsk Podlaski (Poland).

Peter Fiore

would that I could
make the impossible possible —
bring you coffee
every morning
for the rest of your life

Wildflowers

Uncle Carlito went back to Sicily every
October for the Quail hunting, but everybody
knew he had another wife in Messina, Aunt
Linda let slip one Sunday at dinner. Neither
Jimmy or I said anything.

That's all I know of the story.

But it's stayed with me all these years, almost
like a destination, though I've never had any
desire to go to Messina.

you leave me no choice
but to storm the citadel
 give me a break
come look at the forsythia
the cherry blossoms before they're gone

Gardening in White Trousers

Walked the labyrinth till I was dizzy.
At 75 over coffee still dreaming of the perfect
pussy.
Then I hear Omura say, *they're all perfect.*
He was right of course.
Still the next step uncertain.

what a mess
the bed this morning
you'd think
we had sex —
we didn't

~United States

Peter Jastermsky

with great care
the arm is placed down
finding its groove
a voice whispers
“let's get lost —”

rows of tile roofs
deadening
in their sameness
where orange groves
gave this place its name

six layers
deep
the children's
heights
under wallpaper

the curse
of the familiar
every fifteen minutes
the bell tower
unheard

nocturnal diamonds
eyes glowing
in lantern light
the field fills now
with deer

the small boy balks
at eating
his father's food
pleading in vain
for that apple

~Irvine, California, USA

Peter Fiore lives and writes in Mahopac, New York, USA. His poems have been published in Atlas Poetica, Bright Stars, American Poetry Review, Rattle, Ribbons, Skylark, A Hundred Gourds, and others. In 2009, Peter published text messages, a book of tanka poetry and in 2015, Peter's book of tanka prose, flowers to the torch, was published by Keibooks. In the spring of 2017, Peter's first novella, when angels speak of love, was published by Loose Moose Press.

Peter Jastermsky writes Japanese short-form poetry and his work has appeared in journals such as Failed Haiku, Haibun Today, The Cherita, KYSO Flash, among many others. Peter lives with his family in Irvine, California, USA, where he works as a Licensed Counselor.

I Sing Raunchy Elegies

Richard St. Clair

tired
of posing
for years
as a good
buddhist

i'm tormented
daily
by visions
of raunchy
abuse

i confess
my sins
to the void
to any
who will listen

the flat screen
TV
hosts
DVDs of staged
lovemaking

now I'm 71
my lust
has waned
but not
my imagination

rebellious
against my
dharma teacher
his theory
of humbleness

the cat
is out of
the bag
nothing to emulate
this my secret life

age
knows no bounds
i don't relish
the thought of hell
where i was headed

here i am
a victim
of maternal incest
she saved me
from HIV

groundswell
of gratitude
that the buddha
singled me out for
release from craving

i thank
wind water and earth
for sustaining me
all this time
this corrupt being

my life
a series
of disasters
barely surviving
burning alive

my victory
sharing
my lost life
with a loving
knowing partner

i welcome nobody
into my
private lair
of self-
satisfaction

what scars
have done
to corrupt me
to bend me
to rescue me

i think
of a new life
beyond the stars
when my sins
turn to dust

i delight
in hearing
about others' victories
like my life
of woes and fears

will it end
only when my
life ends
please tell me
when

it's called
PTSD
another word for it
is uninvited
terror

visions
of sensuality
plague
in my aging
mindstream

the forbidden
the unattainable
the degenerate
all these
i yearn for

the traumas
have given me
a lifetime
of horny
grief

a diary
written
on the cloudless sky
my life was
others' property

sadness
is a mild word
grief
barely does it
justice

now i sing
my own elegy
days of passion
waning
into oblivion

the world turns
around desire
my world
turns around it
and the dharma

where
will humanity go
its passions
are devouring
my life — all life

saved
yes saved
from my evil nature
saved for eternity
amidst this craving

raunchy elegies
sometimes are
all i can sing
to assuage
my aching self

what bliss lies
beyond
this world
this life
of damnable attachment

anger
wells up
that i must endure
these last years
of smoldering desire

closure
will come at last
when i'm born awake
in Amida's realm
of cosmic love

~*United States*

Richard St. Clair (b. 1946) is a Boston-based Shin Buddhist and lifelong lover of poetry. He enjoys writing tanka and haiku and other short poetic forms. Shin Buddhism teaches about salvation of the evil person through Amida Buddha's all-embracing cosmic love. Richard has been a Buddhist for over 20 years and has written poetry extensively about his encounter with the Buddha-Dharma. His tanka have been published by Atlas Poetica for several years along with other Atlas Poetica related publications.

Roman Lyakhovetsky

a pomegranate
wide open on the plate—
so rare are moments
when my inner self bursts
out of my mortal shell

walking drunk
between the raindrops
and every puddle
seems like the one where i
will finally catch the moon

that's how I long
to be remembered—
a flash in the fog
as my breath revives a fire
on this winter night

only sometimes
but her eyes do glow
the same
as the corner of the sky
where lightnings are born

~*Jerusalem, Israel*

Originally from Russia, Roman now lives in Israel. He has a Ph.D. in Cell Biology and does his best to combine science and poetry in his life. His haiku and tanka have appeared in Modern Haiku, Frogpond, Heron's Nest, Scifaikuest and A Hundred Gourds among other journals.

Utatabi—traveling songs

Ryoh Honda

Ryoh Honda, Japanese-English Translator

I Humulus lupulus, *sonnet tanka*

*BUT THY ETERNAL **summer shall NOT FADE,**
not lose possession OF THAT FAIR THOU OW’ST;
NOR SHALL DEATH BRAG THOU WANDER’ST **in his shade,**
WHEN **in eternal lines** TO TIME THOU GROW’ST
so long AS MEN CAN BREATHE FOR EYES CAN SEE,
so long LIVES THIS, AND THIS GIVES LIFE TO THEE.*

From Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnet 18’

is this also a poetry translation? from Oregon
it came and was transplanted into Musashino’s home
a little later to a bit different direction
another sprout of hop but following its form
how promising a child of hydra over the wall
climbing hop vines are playing with winds
for a cutting take a hop shoot a tiny ball
of water on the section between my fingers
gushing out from the garden ground the green shower
of hops is falling to the heaven as cascade
now my hops one after another start to flower
new constellations are just being made
the summer breeze ferments the fragrance of my hops
the soundless wind bells now I brew with hopes

これも詩の翻訳ならめオレゴンの苗を武蔵の土に移しつ
やや遅れ異なる方へ定型に倣ひて次の芽を出すホップ
依るもののなければ風と戯れる九頭龍の子やポップ頼もし
継苗にせむとポップの蔓を切るせり上がるみづは玉を成したり
地面から迸り出てやまざるを空へ空へとホップの瀑布
目に追ふは生まれつつある星座の尾毛花次からつぎへとひらく
音色なき風鈴たわわわがエール醸さむよ夏の風に熟るる香

II Hakusan — White Mountain, *tanka ghazal*

to the summit of the White Mountain, take this way
to its field of alpine flowers, take this way

cutting the cake of the air just born with my body
in the early morning mountain, take this way

let the light of the perpetual snow near the summit
absorb my eyes, July! take this way

from the sea the wave of blue lines of mountains
coming here to the heaven, take this way

snow blocks blue, so many the flowers of black lilies
I shall forget myself then take this way

the ridge or Ryoh, trying to punch a hole in the azure
over there I will take this way

白山の頂へこの道行かむお花畑へこの道行かむ
身もて割る晨の山の生まれたての空気のケーキこの道行かむ
七月の雪溪に目は奪はれて吸はるるままにこの道行かむ
振り向けば青山波はうなばらゆつづきて天へこの道行かむ
黒百合の群れの向かうに碧き雪われを忘れてこの道行かむ
蒼穹に点を穿てる稜またはリッジの先へこの道行かむ

III Two *tanka* of James Kirkup with their Japanese translation in the form of augmented *tanka*,* and Die Lian Hua** as an ode in reply.

Two Definitions of *Tanka*

The opening of
a paper fan — the rustle
of leaves in the wind —
a fountain of words, the voice
singing — and the fan closing.

Tanka shapes itself
like a fresh egg — it starts from
the point of the shell,
filling it with the white of words,
and the song's yolk — to the rounded end.

James Kirkup, *A Book of Tanka*, University Of Salzburg, 1996

紙の扇を kaminotobirawo
ひらきゆく 風のなかなる hirakiyuku kazenonakanaru
葉つばのさやぎ happanosayagi
ことのはの 泉に湧きて kotonohano izuminiwakite
うたふ声 そして閉ぢゆく utaukoe sositetojiyuku

短歌のかたち tankanokatachi
新玉子殻の先より shintamago karanosakiyori
広がり始め hirogarihajime
満たしゆく 白身の言葉 mitashiyuku sirominokotoba
黄身の歌 円き終はりへ kiminouta marukiowarie

Die Lian Hua

(蝶恋花, Butterflies love flowers)

The wind is calling—ride on it,
find the seed of song,
raise well and then bloom it—
again, in the tanka format,
it is fixed. thus the wind has dropped.

Find them on the road, or in the spot,
though they might be soundless.
songs on songs! abundant!
oh, flowers to wrap up our planet!
oh, songs to wrap up our planet!

われを誘ふ 風に乗り
歌種みつけ
育て 花咲かするに
またひとつ 歌のかたちに
定まれば 風の止みたり

線ゑがく旅 点の旅
聞こえぬとても
歌に 歌重ぬなり
この星に 花満たすべし
この星に 歌満たすべし

~Japan

- * augmented tanka : 7, 5+7, 7, 5+7, 5+7 Japanese sound units for the translation of classic English tanka that has 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 English syllables. My trial of translation to keep the meanings of original works without losing tanka's asymmetrical rhythm.
- ** Die Lian Hua (蝶恋花) : the form of Chinese Ci (词) poetry, one of the court musical form of Tang dynasty (618-907). This rhymed form has two sets of thirty letters in Chinese. 'Die Lian Hua' literally means butterflies (蝶) love (恋) flowers (花).

Ryoh Honda is a tanka poet in Japan.

Close Call

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

It's my first experience of winter. I love the stark whiteness around me but I find it difficult to trudge through the layers of thick snow to get to school. Alone, I walk across the pedestrian crossing and move on to the median strip carrying my small bag of books. I'm five years old.

in one day
losing my beanie
and a mitten —
a car brushes past me
I escape by a whisker

~St Louis, Missouri, USA

Connections

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

We stroll around Galle Face Green, a strip of narrow land between one of the main roads in Colombo and the Indian Ocean.

Our family comes here now and then just to watch the sunsets. We perch on the parapet wall, all six of us like a row of myna birds on a wire. Spicy chickpeas served in newspaper cones are shared around.

My eyes are always firmly on the kites dotting the tangerine skies. I like their vibrancy, their fragility.

dusk alights
through florid skies
over howling waves
those childhood bonds
not what they used to be

~Colombo, Sri Lanka

Erosion

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

After attending the memorial service for a one-time dear school friend who had felt that life was too much to bear, I start the ten minute walk back to the seaside hotel where I'm staying. My mind is all over the place as I retrace our friendship which had ended when I reacted to some curt words that she'd uttered in haste.

Soon the pewter skies open up to heavy monsoon rains and I'm drenched by the time I reach my accommodation.

this alcove beach
of my childhood
lies eroded,
I worry about
what I've become

~*Mt Lavinia, Sri Lanka*

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.

Stephen Toft

the empty
notepad on your
bedside table
collecting
the moonlight

~*Lancaster, UK*

midday heat—
gravediggers
resting
in the cool
of the earth

~*Oystermouth Cemetery, Swansea, UK*

between
the blue of the sky
and the blue
of the sea my lover
floats like a cloud

~*Rhodes, Greece*

Stephen Toft is a poet and homelessness worker who lives in Lancaster, UK, with his girlfriend and their children. His first collection "the kissing bridge" was published by Red Moon Press in 2008 and in December 2016 Scars Publications released his chapbook "naming a storm: haiku and tanka."

Pinpricks of Light : A Tanka Chain

Susan King & Diana Webb

her gentle half smile
as I pass on the stairs
knowing
I was loved
warts and all

*all a gleam
sunflower petals
tiny snails
each one has come
from the dust of stars*

stars that are constant
as night follows day
we search
in the darkness
for pinpricks of light

*light years away
we seem
from truth
yet every morning
comes the dawn*

dawn at last
and the solace
of Bach
a purring cat
and a mug of tea

*tea and cake
baked by my daughter
with help from her son
a measure of blessings
ingredients of joy*

joy is still joy
that flares but briefly
and fades away
pyracantha berries
in the last of the sun

*sun sand and sea
bright across the canvas
children seeking treasures
one shiny shell, smooth stone
to clasp and carry home*

“home sweet home”
memories of a sampler
gracing gran’s best room
and I too at peace now
in a space to call my own

*own up
which of you spoke?
but who dares claim
a voice which sends vibrations
into sacred silence*

silence
as the maestro
baton held high
prepares to weave
the stuff of dreams

*dreams are spaces
where all kinds of props
and backdrops land
thrown out from long ago
a place to play*

~United Kingdom

Susan King and Diana Webb both live in the UK. They enjoy doing collaborative tanka sequences with different challenges. In this sequence the last word of the preceding tanka is also the first word of the next.

Taura Scott

in their twilight
she didn't
delude herself
that there would be
a one-knee proposal

trapped
in a fractured jar
an hourglass belly
remnants of your
venomous words

i only wanted
you to rock
my world
instead
you threw them

forever silenced
your meow
the empty bowl
i can't bring myself
to put away

i believe
if I could do
this one thing
without a flaw
you'd come back to me

~Pasadena, California, USA

Taura Scott reads and writes tanka at her Pasadena home in sunny California. Her work can be found in Atlas Poetica, Ribbons, red lights, Moonbathing and other publications. She is a long time member of Poets on Site and the Caltech Red Door poets.

Indian Run Falls

Tish Davis

Layers of light gravel now line the footpath that runs along the edge of the ravine. Two lines of sturdy cording are stretched between strategically placed posts where warnings are warranted. The pristine waters of Indian Run tumble over the falls, filling and refilling the basin, oblivious to the changing season.

where there was once
a Wyandot village;
into the ravine
without hiking boots
the leaves of autumn

~Dublin, Ohio, USA

Tish Davis lives in Concord, Ohio, USA. Her work has appeared in numerous journals including Modern Haibun and Tanka Prose, Atlas Poetica, Haibun Today, red lights, Modern Haiku, Frogpond, Presence, bottle rockets, Contemporary Haibun Online, and Simply Haiku.

Thomas Martin

amazing grace
how sweet the sound of his toys
dropping in the toy box
not to worry he'll drag them out
quicker than I can trip over them

a mud wasp
lands on a dirty window
a barn owl stirs
and brings us back to twilight
beyond the barn's darkness

the red foxes
trotting along the dusty trails
on our farm
now are motionless carvings
in upper middle class homes

trying
to count the roses
she gave me
forget the number
as I count

why do I
watch you-tube much of the time
when you're gone
looking up I watch the river
and the graceful wood ducks

~Beaverton, Oregon, USA

Thomas Martin lives with his talented wife, Joyce, in Beaverton, Oregon, in the Pacific NW of the USA. He has published haiku, senryu and haibun and western poetry and short stories in many quality journals.

Vijay Joshi

playing
hide and seek
among a cloud-filled lake
shifting silhouettes of
jellyfish

easterly winds
repotting my
immigrant sapling
a house is hauled
to its new location

Alpine slopes
an avalanche of
grief entrains my descent
into the valley of
her memories

drip . . . drip . . . drip
icicles disappear
early spring
the frozen river
begins to stir

screeching
tires pierce
morning silence
pervades the house
a day after her funeral

~New Jersey, USA

Vijay Joshi is a published poet. The first book titled "Reflective Musings" is a collection of contemporary poems. The second book titled "Kaleidoscope of poems" is a collection of haibun, tanka and haiku poems. His haibun and haiku are published in Haibun Today and in Chrysanthemum.

Ζωή Νικολοπούλου / Zoe
Nikolopoulou

Σκιά, μην χαθείς
Ωκεανός μαύρος νους
Άστρα, κρυφτείε
Αλμύρα, σκέπασέ τον
Πνίξε την ανάμνηση

Darkness, do not part
Gloom the ocean of my mind
Stars, do not shine bright
Bitter water, veil his life
Suffocate my memory.

~Athens, Greece

Η Ζωή Νικολοπούλου ζει στην Αθήνα όπου συνεχίζει το διδακτορικό της στις Καλές Τέχνες, μετά τις σπουδές στην Αγγλική Φιλολογία και το μεταπτυχιακό της στην Πληροφορική. Είναι μεταφράστρια και ποιήτρια. Έχουν εκδοθεί έντεκα βιβλία της που περιλαμβάνουν πρωτότυπη και μεταφρασμένη ποίηση. Το αληθινό της πάθος είναι η ιστιοπλοΐα.

Zoe Nikolopoulou lives in Athens and studies for a Ph.D. in Fine Arts. She holds a bachelor's degree in Literature and a master's degree in Computer Science. She is a poet and translator. Her eleven published books include original and translated poetry. Her true passion is sailing.

5-7-5-7-7

Hiroko Falkenstein

I often hear comments from members of the American Tanka Society, who don't quite understand Japanese culture when they read my Tanka in English.

“Why do you insist on syllabic count?”

“If you omit few words, it will flow smoother and better.”

“I don't see the importance in constraining words in 57577 structure.”

“I'm a minimalist, the less the better.”

While I appreciate what they are saying and they can continue the way they like, I want them to understand me in return.

To the one born and raised in Japan, writing Tanka is a cultural activity. It is considered a type of game — fun and challenging. In the past, when challenged by American Tanka poets to explain this, I couldn't articulate my thoughts well in English. I believe I can better do this now.

Took, cook, hook, book, shook — examples of rhyming in English — can be fun. The Japanese play with syllable counts. There are 575 (haiku¹, senryu²), 57577 (tanka³, kyoka⁴), 57775 or 7775 (dodoitu⁵), 5757577 nagauta⁶), 577577 (sedouka⁷), 575777 (butsu-soku-seki-katai⁸) to name a few. We enjoy their respective counts, rules, and different rhythms. To comply with the various constraints, we sometimes contemplate for hours, days and even weeks.

Despite being beautifully written in 3 or 5 lines, Haiku written in 234 or any number syllable patterns are not, to my mind, true to the traditional structures. (Moreover, in the case of Haiku, the poem must contain *kigo*, a reference to or symbol of a season, i.e. new shoot (spring), cicada (summer), persimmon (fall), snow (winter). Otherwise they are (俳句調) haiku-rhythm poems.

Likewise, to me, most American Tankas written in any syllable counts are “free-form”

poems—many of which I love—but they do not conform to the true structure. If you want to call free form ‘Tanka,’ that’s fine with me, but please understand my rigidity.

Shakespearean sonnets have a specific form and rules. Without them, they are poems by another name. When a poem’s particular rhythm is out of sync, to one accustomed to the form, the experience can be jarring. For this reason, I feel it is important for me to continue making Tanka—my way.

Last, but not least, my argument is only for when I am making Tanka or Haiku in English. Translating Japanese poems into other languages is quite another matter.

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| #1 Haiku | 575 | Include season indicator |
| #2 Senryu | 575 | Satire, humor |
| #3 Tanka Or Waka | 57577 | Observation of nature, philosophy, emotion, diary and anything in general |
| #4 Kyoka | 57577 | Mainly humor, sarcasm, satire |
| #5 Dodoitsu | 7775 57775 | Entertainers perform this with samisen (three string instrument). The subject is often about male/female love affair. Using spoken words. |
| #6 Nagauta (long song) | 575757 – end with 7 | I would say, this is ‘story telling’ poem. It can go on and on with 5757575757 telling story . . . and end with 7. |
| #7 Sedouka (Q & A) | 577 – 577 | One makes a poem asking question with 577 and another reply with 577 |
| #8 Butsusokuseki- katai 佛足石歌体 (Pertaining to Buddhism) | 575777 | No example found, but I’d imagine this would be philosophical, moral oriented poem. |

Fahrenheit Two-O-Four, Or Lineation in Tanka

Don Miller

all the banging of cooking pots boiling over
on the stove

tempers simmering
on the cooktop
evening stew

caught in the middle
of two cold shoulders
fending for himself
mom and dad
arguing in silence

~Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA

*Note: 204 °F is the approximate boiling point of water at
~4,000 ft. altitude*

I didn’t set out to write a 1-liner or 3-liner with my 5-liners, it just sorta happened. For me it is how the words, lines and breathing combined to mingle together best. Sometimes I like this random spilling without adhering to a specific structure. In the first tanka I like the run-on-ness of it as a 1-liner,

all the banging of cooking pots boiling over
on the stove

better than if I had written it in my usual
choppy, minimalistic structure,

all the banging
of cooking
pots
boiling over
on the stove

Writing it this way in 5 lines gives more emphasis to “pots” than I really want to give. I

much prefer to blur “pots” within the run-on of
“. . . banging of cooking pots boiling over. . .”

With the 3-liner it is just the opposite; I prefer
the 3 lines,

tempers simmering
on the cooktop
evening stew

over 1 line,

tempers simmering on the cooktop evening
stew

or even 5 lines,

tempers
simmering
on the cooktop
evening
stew

The 3 lines gives this poem just enough
mixing to let the images mingle, whereas the 5-
liner appears as that bowl filled with dry
ingredients just prior to stirring them all together,
and presented in a 1-line structure gives it an
over-stirred, tuff (tough) texture. How’s that for
‘organic’ cooking, err I mean writing!

Review: *things of the edges* by Joy McCall

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

things of the edges
Joy McCall
Amazon.com (2017)
Pb 39 pp
ISBN: 9781544235349

Joy McCall has a deep understanding of the
tanka tradition and in her latest collection *things of
the edges* her poems are written in a series of
concise and accurate sketches. With few
exceptions, her tanka are worked in traditional
form which inspire tightness and discipline.
While they give the poet the freedom to develop
her narrative structures, they also allow her to
crystallize her thoughts into memorable poems
which have polish and finesse, as we see in her
title poem:

things of the edges
that hide in the dark grey shadows
things sensed but not seen
the feeling someone is near
that slight turning in the heart

The careful structure of the individual tanka
is mirrored in the architecture of the collection
which contains one tanka per page with plenty of
white space giving the reader plenty of room in
which to think about the poems.

Although at first glance, McCall’s language is
simple and clear, the reader is confronted with a
world where values and meaning are important:

oak, weathered and smoothed
by the heavy touch of many hands
heavy temple bells
ringing, swinging on red threads
candlewax on the table

Though her work is consistently well-crafted
and true to experience, the final lines quoted here
show how it can also be illuminated by flashes of

inspiration that get to the heart of the situation she is describing. However, McCall can also deal convincingly with difficult personal issues. In the following tanka she writes about her own final resting place:

I must have a bell
something small and very old
in my plain coffin
when they lay me in the ground—
that sound, and eternal winds

Many of the tanka deal with memories, nature, people and place. This is of course territory which has been covered many times before, yet McCall ensures that by and large the reader's attention is held, as in the following tanka where she remembers the past and the things she could once do, but can do no longer:

I sit, tears falling
remembering things I did
that I do no more
a small white butterfly lands
by my foot . . . frail wings open

An unpretentious and honest writer, McCall's overriding concern is to write about what she has felt and understood. At her best, she achieves an impressive universality:

these are strange moments
at the turning of seasons
when time slips sideways
out of our sight and we sense
the change and sit, still, waiting

McCall has great sensitivity, alongside well-chosen language and form, with strong rhythms and sounds. She has the courage to mingle thoughts and feelings about her own life with the beauty of nature and her vocabulary and format always serve the best interest of the tanka. Her rhythms are exceptional as she weaves her magic with words that encapsulate her themes as they glide across the page. The topics are those of a poet alive to her surroundings and they have the assurance of her maturity to accept herself and her world as they are.

Review: *Light on My Heart : Four Tanka Sequences* by Richard St. Clair

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

Light on My Heart : Four Tanka Sequences

Richard St. Clair

Chapbook 36pp (2017)

Inquiries to the author at
<shinO2143@AOL.com>

Richard St. Clair is an accomplished tanka and haiku poet and a recognised composer of modern classical music. He is a leading composer of music employing Buddhist texts. The four tanka sequences in *Light on My Heart* are entitled 'Insights and Outsights', 'Seasonings,' 'On the Job,' and 'Light on My Heart.'

Light on My Heart showcases Richard St. Clair's ability to give our world a metaphysical meaning, which he achieves with memorable lyricism and an attention to questions of identity and time, silence and isolation. The collection has an extraordinary range, from anxiety to unexpected musings on death, the seasons and polyphonic juxtapositions, as if the poems have been intricately woven.

The tanka in the first section, 'Insights and Outsights,' bring a contemporary feel to the form that encapsulates the qualities of loneliness, poignancy and simplicity that give the reader a sense of the poet's depth of thought, as we see in this verse:

through the fog
o'er the fetid pond
the will-o'-the-
wisp seems to be
calling me

Many of the tanka can be measured by the subtle changes of mood as the poet recalls the feelings of hope fear, anxiety and the way in which the first day of frost evokes such feelings:

in the chill
of the first day of
frost body memories
returning nameless
unidentifiable

The sense of unease and lost connection with friends is profoundly evoked in this questioning tanka:

how few my friends
will I outlive them
and die alone? Will
they be near me
when I pass over?

Tanka need this human element and in the following poem we see the poet questioning the foolishness of ‘going nowhere’:

in my mind
going nowhere
nothing special to
do but call the
buddha’s name

‘Seasonings’ concentrates on the passing of the year, as we see in

heavy spring rain—
hanging
from the porch
ceiling wind chimes
clogged with cobwebs

St. Clair recalls his ailing grandmother in this verse:

creeping alzheimer’s—
grandma’s creaking
rocking chair
bisecting the eerie
solitude

Whereas the tanka: ‘caught in the / mirror her / silhouette and / the last rays / of the reddening sun’ has a direct, concrete imagery infused with life. Generally, the tanka are

unsentimental and yet successfully catch the moment when the poet felt something, not necessarily a pivotal moment, but a feeling none the less. This simplicity is easy to respond to.

In the next section, ‘On the Job,’ the author relates his job working in an office:

quiet office the
only sound the
water cooler
and the hissing
in my ears

It is the intimacy coupled with simplicity that can be inspirational. He recalls talking about old movies with a co-worker, rather than listening to his superiors and the need for coffee to wake him from his reverie:

coffee waking me
from psychopharm
stupor just what I
need to get through
the workday

But he asks himself the question: ‘What good is it all / the work I do when / the world keeps / trending toward / escalating disaster?’ In another tanka he writes of the boredom of work:

boredom set in
the day I knew I
would retire—
now I go
through
the motions

And questions what he can do to improve ‘this failing world’:

let me think of
ways to help this
failing world—if
science is failing
what can I do?

Tanka is the art of juxtaposition and in the first tanka of the last section, ‘Light on My Heart,’ the impermanence of the world reminds

the poet that, he too, will 'someday be gone.' The human link in the second half of the poem recalls an image in another poem:

just one more bridge to
cross over from this life of
dissatisfaction to the
promised land of bliss

To me, this is a successful use of the motif, employing the image of the bridge as a crossing point to the promised land.

St. Clair's book, although steeped in a remembrance of the past, never gives in to self-pity. Through contrasting images (heat and cold, night and day, the seen and unseen, science and humanity), each poem moves through opposites which symbolically measure the poet's journey toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and his place in it. *Light on My Heart* relies on the humanity of its author to evoke the emotions of everyman:

i breathe in and
out what a gift this
day, this breath,
this life

The final poem takes the opportunity to reflect on life and its blessings:

Amida's light from
eternity shining on this
heart of finitude giving
thanks giving praise

Reading a collection such as this, we begin to gain a sense of the poet, whose feelings are understood and understated.

Review: *wind and rain* by ai li

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

wind and rain (poems for inner rooms Book 20)
by ai li (2017)
Available at Amazon's Kindle Store.

ai li's journals written as haiku and tanka and her three new books on haiku, tanka and cherita are available on Amazon's Kindle Store. This collection features 90 of ai li's previously unpublished tanka and is her first book of exclusively tanka. These are poems of five lines about ai li's journey into life, love and loss exploring her memories at a deep level.

ai li's poems have been published in the UK, USA and Japan. She is the creator of the cherita and of other linked forms. She is the current editor and publisher of the online journal *cherita: your storybook journal*, the founding editor and publisher of *still, moving into breath* and *dew-online*.

The tanka in *wind and rain* are a masterpiece, echoing the Japanese masters, yet with ai li's own originality, themes and deep thoughts:

when i finally
hear a nightingale
i will be ready
to leave with you
ferryman

The classic elements of tanka: love, loss, nature, calmness and death are here:

daybreak
my empty bed
i'm in the summerhouse
asleep on a cane chair
holding onto your photograph

As with her previous collections, we're treated to a depth of images, resonant with beauty and clarity. Her tanka are often minimalist:

in snow
it is hard
to leave
no trace
of my presence

Thought several are of lengthier lines:

her beauty
was mine once
before the mirror clouded
and your love strayed
into my oblivion

Reading ai li's tanka is a rewarding experience. They transverse the deep waters of life, love, longing, relationships and recollection, through allusion and exploration. The 90 tanka of light and delight, of sadness and thoughtfulness, crossing through this volume, together with their beautiful images, are sure to charm the reader with their quality, variety and originality. These are tanka that lift us with their natural ease and flow.

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 — do not send attachments.

Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka by Matsukaze Published by Keibooks

Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka is the second tanka poetry book by Matsukaze, a

young, gifted, African American tanka poet. It serves as a companion to his previous book, *October Blues*. The two books are complementary, with *October Blues* focussing primarily on women and the female voice, and *Black Genji* focussing primarily on men and the masculine voice. Matsukaze is the rare writer who can do justice to both men and women.

One of tanka's boldest experimenters, Matsukaze is well-grounded in the classics. *Genji*, the 11th century novel by Murasaki Shikibu, provides the name of the collection, and with it, an awareness of the erotic delights and psychological conflicts of illicit relationships and the longing for acceptance of the socially marginalized. An inability to fit himself into expectations whether in life or in literature underlies his constant experiments in lineation, itself informed by his deep reading of avant garde and contemporary tanka poets working in Japanese and English.

when i'm with you my ears are attuned to
the sound of mandolins in your thighs

always the same dream
a blue tree
moving in me
inch by inch
burning, burning, burning

on the table a vase of bluebells—
in the kitchen a breakfast of
silence and regret

the one
i lust for
is home with wife
and children
i'm at work filing papers

brought me a box of assorted chocolates: the
scraping of bare branches against the upstairs
window

“Matsukaze's Tanka poems are like small, treasured love notes to the world, hailing his and all human existence. He is a writer of depth,

meaning, gravity and gravitas, who truly has something to say. His words celebrate the implicit importance of moments and the necessity of contemplation. And isn't that the reason True Writers and the Art of writing exists?"—L. M. Ross, novelist, author of *The Long Blue Moan*, *The Moanin' After*, and *Like Litter in the Wind*

"Tanka is the vehicle Matsukaze seems to use to learn more about his own true nature. It's what helps him mine the treasure that lies deep inside his own inlet to the Collective Unconscious where he casts his net into the life stories of others. He lies in their uncomfortable beds, poets and players, some of whom have been gone for centuries. In doing so, he taps into the symbolism of flowers and colors of the spectrum to convey emotions that are unable to be expressed in words."—Alexis Rotella, digital artist, author, *Between Waves* (Red Moon Press)

Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka

by Matsukaze

with an afterword by M. Kei

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Perryville, MD 21903 USA

<AtlasPoetica.org>

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Tanka Netz Discontinued

Dear M. Kei,

I have to inform you that, after twelve years of promoting German tanka, my website <http://www.tankanetz.de> is discontinued and will not be relaunched. All content is archived at archive.org and will be available for readers at this URL:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20170702163057/http://www.tankanetz.de/>>

I love tanka and will continue to contribute to its development if possible.

Best wishes,

Ingrid Kunschke

Call for Submissions: Science Fiction Tanka and Kyoka

The Special Features section of Atlas Poetica is seeking submissions for a collection of 25 Science Fiction Tanka and Kyoka to be co-edited by Julie Bloss Kelsey and Susan Burch. This collection will be published on the website.

For this collection, we want to see your sci-fi tanka and kyoka. Never written any before? Describe a scene aboard a space station. Share your aunt's whispered descriptions of her alien abduction. Tell us about your trip with the kids through the wormhole amusement park. Warn us about the tan and fushia sucker-mutants living just beyond the reaches of our solar system. Deadline: Nov 30, 2017.

Guidelines: <http://atlaspoetica.org/?p=1761>

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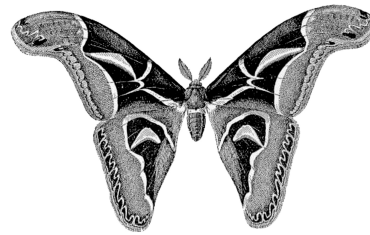
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Editorial Biography

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*.



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

Anthologies

Neon Graffiti : Tanka of Urban Life

Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology (Vols. 1–7)

Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka (Vol. 4)

Five Pearls (Vols. 1–2) : Short Masterpieces of the Heart

Tanka Collections

Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka,
by Matsukaze

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

on the cusp encore, a year of tanka, by Joy McCall
fieldgates, tanka sequences, by Joy McCall
on the cusp, a year of tanka, by Joy McCall
rising mist, fieldstones, by Joy McCall
hedgerows, tanka pentptychs, 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

Journals

Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka

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