

*the*  
*Quills*



ISSUE 8

June, 2021

# the Quills

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**June, 2021**

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## Editor's Note

*"To make a quill pen, you first had to catch your bird."-Anonymous*

Two things happen at the door: entry or exit. And because someone faces the door doesn't mean he's entering. While the one who backs the door may not be exiting. Life is so enigmatic. Above all, what is important is accomplishment in all that we do.

With this, I welcome you into the world of issue 8 of our Journal with so much delight. A lot of brilliant works await you and there's nothing as delicious as good read and a cup of coffee, or whatever you prefer digest words with.

Quickly, the journal has been compartmentalized into six sections and beautifully so. This would not only ease the reading process; it would also foster the identification of forms.

We extend our gratitude to Deborah Ajilore for her photos that we use as sectional photos, and Shitta Faruq for his photos that are used as cover arts. All these wouldn't have been useful without the works of our contributors from all over the world. We appreciate you all and thank you for thinking about us.

Kudos to the Editorial Crew, without them, this project wouldn't be this beautiful. It's a privilege working with *dem* brilliant folks.

What next?

Read. Enjoy. Appraise. Digest.

*Taofeek 'Aswagaawy' Ayeyemi*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

# *Haiku & Tanka*



*[... including haiga (haiku+art), haibun (haiku+prose), renga (linked haiku verses) and their tanka versions]*

# The Road

*Kassen renga*

D – Djurdja Vukelić Rožić

N – Nina Kovačić

V – Miroslav Vurdelja

M – Mihovila Čeperić Biljan

S – Silva Trstenjak

prašne sandale -  
poljskim putom pogledi  
i miris krava

dusty sandals -  
the scent and the cow's gazes  
on a country road D

bjelina ivančica  
klizi znojnim prstima

whiteness of ox-eye-daisies  
slides down my sweaty fingers M

zadnje sjedalo  
okružen igračkama  
glasno se smije

on the back seat  
laughing loudly among  
his favourite toys N

zvono s kapelice  
ubrza bakin korak

a bell from the chapel  
quickens the crone's steps S

srpasti mjesec  
sova hukom ispraća  
guske u klinu

the crescent moon  
an owl hooting sends off  
a wedge of geese V

na jezercu uz prugu  
bijelo pero i lišće

on a small lake by the rail  
a white feather and some leaves D

iz berbe gljiva ...  
prozor drvene kuće  
krat perinom

mushroom harvesting ...  
window of a hut crammed with  
a down comforter D

uspomena vjenčanja  
u srcu licitara

in the gingerbread heart  
a memory from the wedding M

odlazak u grad  
djed sprema za unuka  
staklenku meda

going to the town  
old man packs a jar with honey  
to his grandson N

sunce obasjava gumb  
prišiven dugom vlasi

the sun shines at a button  
sown by a long hair S

motel kraj mosta harmonikaš razvlači vulgarnu pjesmu	a motel by the bridge an accordion player lingers a vulgar song	V
krčmar s crnom brčinom sluša putničku priču	the innkeeper with black moustache listens to the fare's story	D
ugašen fenjer mjesečina rasipa tragove krplji	extinguished lantern the moonlight scattering the trails of snowshoes	M
kroz izmaglicu daha saone prate vranca	through the mist of breath sledges follow a black horse	N
topla kuhinja djevojčica mijesi svoj komadić tijesta	a warm kitchen little girl kneads her own piece of dough	S
pileća kost na podu kupea noćnog vlaka	a chicken bone on the floor of the night train	V
tramvajem na Trg seljanka s košarom punom đurđica	tram to the main square - a peasant woman with basket full of lilies-of-the valley	D
podsmjesi školaraca za blatnjavim bucama	scorning pupils' smiles follow his muddy boots	M
proljetna kiša povjetarac podiže suknje na uglu	spring rain the breeze raising skirts at the corner	M
krenimo uskom stazom u radosnoj koloni	let's go down the path in a merry queue	N
sušenje rublja zapetljani rukavi siročadi	laundry on the line entangled sleeves of the orphans	S
niz starih razglednica s istim rukopisom	several old picture cards with the same manuscript	V

na slici mama i fontana Buckingham – ruže u cvatu	on a photo my mother and the Buckingham Fountain – roses in full bloom	D
karta za kupalište još čuva zrnca pijeska	an old wellness ticket with several grains of sand	M
nagla oseka dječarac vraća moru pregršt ribica	sudden low tide a toddler carries some fish back to the sea	N
usnama dotaknem rub tvoje čaše s vinom	my lips touching the edge of your wine glass	S
otisak rûža zamišljen biciklira strmom ulicom	the lipstick print he cycles up a steep street wistfully	V
među maslinicima starac i rimska cesta	among olive orchards an old man and a Roman road	D
rastrte mreže burin zakotrljao i žetveni sjaj	spread out nets the burin rolls the shine of the harvest moon	M
prazne ljuske kestena krckaju pod cipelom	empty maroon shells crack under my shoe	N
sivilo jutra ritam kapi prekida škripa kotača	a grayish morning a squeak of the wheels stops the rhythm of drops	N
kroz duge trepavice titraj Velikih kola	my long eyelashes twinkling of the Big Dipper	S
šetnja Gradecom nažigač plinskih lampa bez uniforme	walk at Gradec* the lantern lighter without his uniform	V
na klupi uz Matoša odmara stari turist	an old tourist on a bench by the Matoš's statue	** D



botanički vrt uresna trešnja na rođendanskoj torti	Botanical Garden an ornamental cherry adorns a birthday cake	M
otprhnuše sjenice krošnja je rascvjetana.	the tits whisk the treetop in bloom.	N

\* Zagreb Uptown

\*\* Statue of Croatian writer and poet Antun Gustav Matoš, by sculptor Ivan Kožarić

---

**da Vukelić Rožić**, (1956, Croatia). Graduated from the Faculty of Economics, Zagreb. The principal editor of haiku magazine IRIS. A writer and a haiku poetess, she writes in Croatian, Kajkavian and English and has published 26 books. She authored Croatian haiku anthologies *An Unmown Sky 1 & 2* (2011 and 2018). She lives in Ivanić-Grad.

**Mihovila Čeperić-Biljan** (1968, Senj, Croatia), teacher at the Vežica Grammar School, Rijeka where she founded a haiku and haiga contests for schoolchildren, edits its annual. On the editorial staff of IRIS magazine, she publishes poetry in Croatian and Chakavian dialect. Her pupils have won contests for haiku and haiga in Croatia and Japan. She lives in Rijeka.

**Nina Kovačić (née Ružička)** was born in Pula and lives in Zagreb, Croatia. She has a degree in Physics. She writes poetry and haiku and has released two books of haiku “A Spring Tea” and “The Murmur of Waves”. She is a member of the Croatian Cultural Association and serves on the editorial Board of IRIS Haiku Journal.

**Silva Trstenjak** (1967, Ptuj, Slovenia), Croatian haiku poet. Has a degree from the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, Slovenia. She publishes haiku in Croatian, Kajkavian, Slovene, and English. Awarded author she judged several contests, publishes haiku and haiga. She lives in Štrigova, Croatia.

**Miroslav Vurdelja** writes haiku, poetry and prose. He is a member of the Croatian Cultural Association and the Editorial Board of IRIS Haiku Journal.

## Time's Mirage

John Hawkhead (England)

*Hijra Ashraf (Pakistan)*

white skies  
a pebble in my palm  
grows cool

*fading footprints  
through spins of winter fog*

time's spirals  
the hands of the clock  
become a blur

*reflection  
of my random beliefs  
water mirage*

cast stone  
ripples through the statue

*zero gravity  
I disown  
my shadows*

## **The Wandering Moon**

John Hawkhead (England)

*Hifsa Asbraf (Pakistan)*

floating  
a pale hand opens  
in the darkness

*evening prayer  
dust settles in the bowl*

twilight birdsong  
constellations expand  
in the miso

*visibility  
of my anonymity  
flickering light*

candle moments  
moving about the eaves

*midnight dream  
the far side  
of the moon*

## Memory Echoes

John Hawkhead (England)

*Hifsa Ashraf (Pakistan)*

another day  
moving through the city  
wind song

*through orange clouds  
echoing migratory birds*

shifting light  
a change in resonance  
from tilting stones

*back home late  
his sweaty palms  
on the door handle*

creaked floorboard  
the grain of a secret

*door ajar  
I let go  
of his memory*

---

**John Hawkhead** is a writer and visual artist whose work has been published all over the world. His book 'Small Shadows' is from Alba Publishing. He is twitter [@HawkheadJohn](#)

**Hifsa Ashraf** is an award-winning poet, author, editor, and social activist. Please visit her blog to view her published work. [hifsays.blogspot.com](#). She is on Twitter: [@hifsays](#)

## Love in the Air

*Sherry Grant (NZ/Taiwan)*

new lover  
late night reading  
each day

ants march  
through the juicy page  
I reach for glasses

fun chase  
through the page  
lost for words

love in the air  
looking around  
for a fly swat

love scenes  
from old movies  
end of a rainbow

pausing  
to catch a breath  
winter gale

return  
of the dark side  
moonless night



## Hunger

Mark Farrar (USA/UK)

*Sherry Grant (NZ/Taiwan)*

karst landscape  
taking my mind off  
fried baby crabs

*the howl of  
wolf moon*

cormorant  
reflection in its eyes  
deep dive

*a rocking boat  
too many  
memories*

silver scales  
ghosts in the water

*home again...  
wild dreams  
at season's end*

## By The Tree

John Thompson (California)  
*Sherry Grant (NZ)*

backs against the oak  
the day laborers rest  
out of the sun

*a squirrel scurries away  
with half an acorn*

cardboard plea  
her child's hungry eyes  
outside the supermarket

*brand new comics  
in plastic wrapping  
my smashed piggy bank*

rising floodwaters carry  
another nest downstream

*lingering heat  
young fledglings too  
grow restless*

---

**Sherry Grant**, Taiwan-born NZ concert pianist and cellist, started writing poetry in June 2020. Her short form poetry is widely published and translated in journals and anthologies. Sherry is the author of 'Bat Girl' (co-authored with 6-year-old Zoe Grant) and the inventor of the 'nonaku' form. Sherry is the International Communities Outreach Officer at the NZPS and she presented a rengay workshop at the 2021 HSA virtual conference. She can be read at [www.artsinfinitypress.com/rengay](http://www.artsinfinitypress.com/rengay), contacted @SherryGMusic on Twitter or emailed via [sherrygrantpoetry@@gmail.com](mailto:sherrygrantpoetry@@gmail.com)

**Mark Farrar**, originally from the UK but now lives in USA, is a former IT professional turned writer. His creative writing includes haiku (see <https://17Onji.com/>) and microfiction, which he has been producing since 2016.

**John Thompson** has been writing haiku for 40 years and rengay for 30 years. He is retired and lives in Sonoma, California where he enjoys all sorts of nature-based activities including hiking, gardening, paddleboarding and wine tasting.

## Boarder Crisis

Tia Haynes (USA)  
Bryan Rickert (USA)

a praying mantis  
waits on a leaf  
how easily  
we separated  
mother and child

*late day sun  
on the harvested fields  
long shadows  
of migrant women  
gleaning with the birds*

alone  
on the playground  
the child  
who cannot speak  
English

*complaining  
that the price of fruit  
is too high  
the woman with no  
dirt under her nails*

nowhere to go  
in the desert  
Federales  
wait for their chance  
to shoot

*first frost  
along the highway  
the encampment  
looks for a new place  
to call home*

## Walks of Life

Peter Jastermsky USA

*Bryan Rickert USA*

July doldrums    the ruts that hold us

*work commute    the daily grind of cicadas*

asphalt oasis    rubbing against the shoulder

*street corner sax    the same blues as yesterday*

trash day    a fistful of freebies

*sunset smog    our empty fortune cookies*

---

**Bryan Rickert** is the Haiku Society of America Midwest Regional Coordinator and has been published in a number of fine journals and anthologies. His book *Fish Kite* is available through Cyberwit Publishing. He is the editor at *The Living Senryu Anthology* and the new Co-Editor of *Failed Haiku Journal of Senryu*.

**Peter Jastermsky** is an award-winning haikai poet. A Best of the Net and Dwarf Stars nominee, his writing has been widely published. Peter's books include *Steel Cut Moon* (Cholla Needles Press, 2018), *No Velcro Here* (Yavanika Press, 2019), *Failed States* (Bones Library, 2020), and *The Silence We Came For* (Yavanika Press, 2020).

**Tia Haynes** is an American haikai poet whose chapbook, *Leftover Ribbon*, shortlisted for the 2019 Touchstone Distinguished Book Awards (available on Amazon). In January of 2021, she will taking over as the editor of *Prune Juice: a journal of senryu, kyoka, haibun, & haiga*.

## Solitary Hopes

Hemapriya Chellappan (India)

*Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)*

surviving  
the end of honeymoon  
spent jasmine

*harmattan raking*  
*a sudden wind tosses the leaves*

*the waft*  
*of a blown off candle —*  
*colder breeze*

birds entering clouds  
why not

waiting room  
a ceiling fan slices  
the silence

*a fallen moth*  
*climbs the window*

*moonlit chat*  
*a housefly on a breadcrumb*  
*on the armchair*

summer cactus  
even the wind hesitates

mountain shadow  
riding the wind  
the first firefly

*the skylark's tweet*  
*amidst meteor shower*



## A Puddle of Rainbow

Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)

*Hemapriya Chellappan (India)*

nightingale's tweets

*checking his oxygen  
every two hours  
intermittent rain*

the wrinkle of smiles

whiteout  
the distant fume  
of a school bus

on a boy's face

*still in bloom  
the grey molds  
on yesterday's bread*

## Return Ticket

Hemapriya Chellappan (India)

*Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)*

writing letters

*old pond  
the pieces of my face  
in the splatter*

to burn them

I become  
the voice of midnight  
black drongo

the last lap of winter

*brewing tea  
granny's craft  
takes shape*

---

**Hemapriya Chellappan** is an engineer turned haiku poet who resides in Pune, India. She took to Japanese short forms in the summer of 2019. Her work has previously appeared in *The Heron's Nest*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Hedgerow*, *Acorn*, *The Cicada's Cry*, *Prune Juice* among others. When she isn't daydreaming she writes jokes, sketches landscapes, hums old songs and makes excellent tea.

---

**Taofeek Ayeyemi** fondly called Aswagaawy is a Nigerian lawyer, writer and author of *Tongueless Secrets* (Ethel Press, 2021) and *aubade at night or serenade in the morning* (Flowersong Press, TBD 2021). His works are featured or forthcoming in *Lucent Dreaming*, *Feral*, *winnow*, *Up-the-Staircase Quarterly*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *the Quills*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Cattails*, *Seashores*, *Presence*, *The Mamba* and elsewhere. He won the 2021 Loft Books Flash Fiction Competition, honorable mention prizes in the 2020 Stephen A. Dibiase Poetry Prize, 2020 Akita International Haiku Contest, 2020 Fujisan Taisho Tanka Contest, among others. He tweets @Aswagaawy

## Road to Kilifi

*Roy Duffield (Spain)*

out of thin air  
the blue blanketed rider—  
Lesotho shepherd

predator and prey  
sip side-by-side—  
full moon

by the light  
of unlit candle —  
*The Fall*

red-eyed dove  
woo hoo! red-eyed dove  
who knew?

Kilifi Bay—  
dog paddling around us paints  
the Milky Way

---

**Roy Duffield** has performed at the annual Beat Poetry Festival in Barcelona and was a winner of the Robert Allen Micropoem Contest, 2021. In the last year, his poetry has appeared in over 50 publications, including *The Mamba*, *Heliosparrow*, *Akitsu*, *Failed Haiku* and *Jalada Africa*. Roy only writes when angry, when something in the world needs to change (he writes often and is unlikely to be able to stop anytime soon).

## Blended

*Roberta Beach Jacobson (USA)*

how it began  
a shared cup  
of tea

tea  
and yak butter . . .  
mountain breeze

pressed  
bricks of tea  
fire-toasted

oolong  
the black crows  
of tea

when in Rome  
IV o'clock  
teatime

---

*Roberta Beach Jacobson* is an American poet who prefers Darjeeling. No sugar. No lemon. No milk. He can be contacted via email: [givebackgiveback@yahoo.com](mailto:givebackgiveback@yahoo.com). Or on Twitter: [@beach\\_haiku](https://twitter.com/beach_haiku)

## Eighty-two Springs

*Lakshmi Iyer (India)*

creaky sounds  
of father's tool-box  
the coffee alarm

dad's soldering  
in every small repair ...  
the Midas touch

evening tea  
in father's radio room  
villagers' buzz

the spark plug  
in father's fastest finger  
mental math

homemade kite ...  
MIT alumnus celebrations  
in the golden sky

father rolls out  
chapattis on our hands  
tiny full moon

the perfect decibel  
in father's whistling  
a cuckoo's coo

father's jokes crackle  
in-between my wheezing  
a long night

father's name  
in the death certificate  
I C U soon

---

*Lakshmi Iyer* stays in “God's own country,” Kerala, India. Her haiku works have appeared in The Haiku Foundation, Haiku at Bristol Museum, and Golden Triangle, the Anthology of Indian Haiku in English Language, Under the Basho2020, Tanka Origins, The Bamboo Hut, The Cicada's Cry, drifting-sands-haibun, Cold Moon Journal, Poetry Pea Journal of Haiku and Senryu, Blōō Outlier Journal 2020, the First Yugen International Haiku Contest 2021 Romania and 24th Mainichi Contest 2021.



## CLOUD N-high-NE

*Wiesław Karliński (Poland)*

spring breeze  
in the jet bridge  
stray ladybird

gentle breeze  
across my face  
birch twig

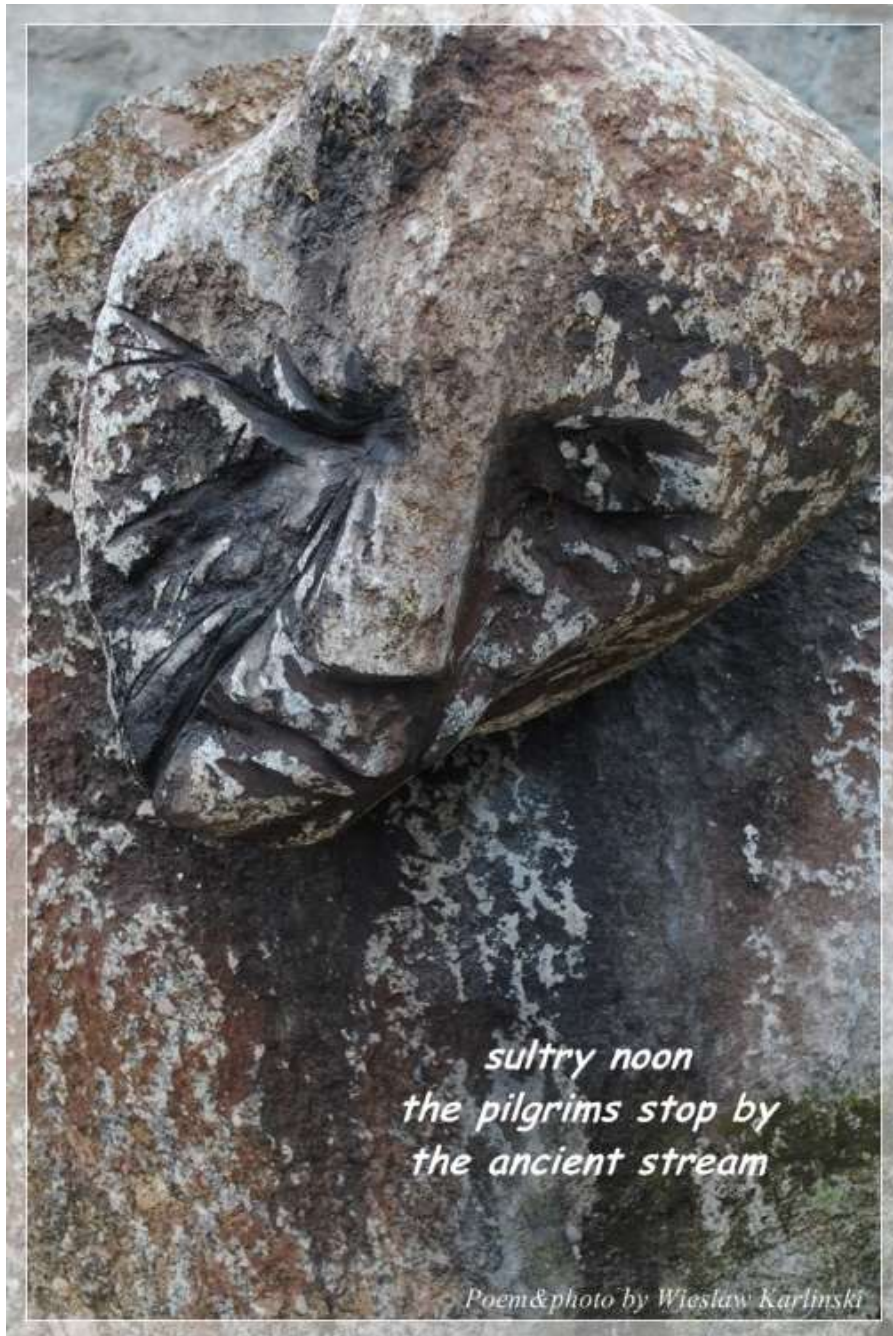
wild geese  
lost his way in the sky  
rising storm

nightingale nest  
my firm gaze  
at the unsteady fledgling

bowing trees  
at a rural bus stop  
huddling sparrows

New year shopping  
the kid tries to play football  
with a mannequin

new neighbors  
on the staircase  
turmeric scent



*sultry noon  
the pilgrims stop by  
the ancient stream*

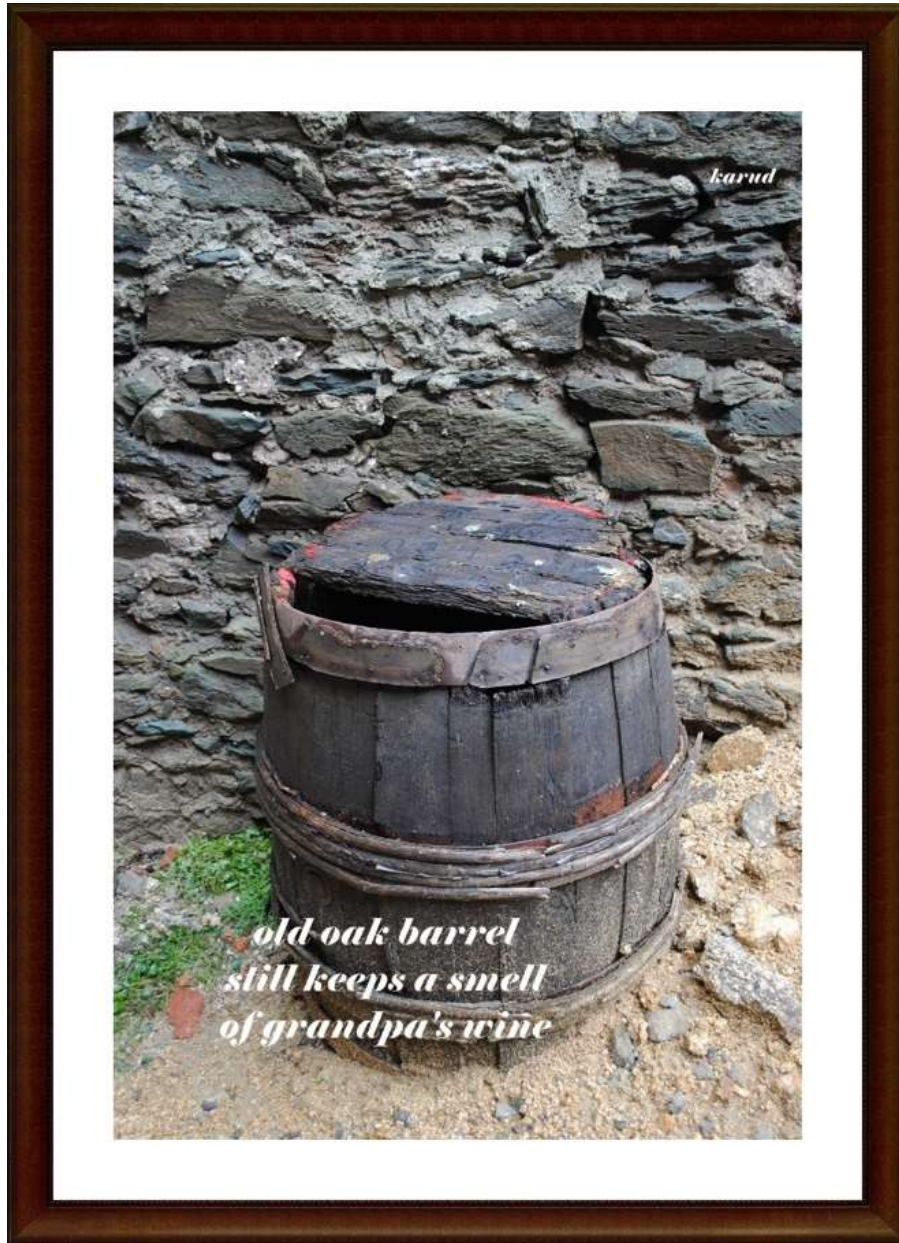
*Poem&photo by Wieslaw Karlinski*



*wieslaw k*

*just after harvest  
in stifling barn  
sparrows twitter*



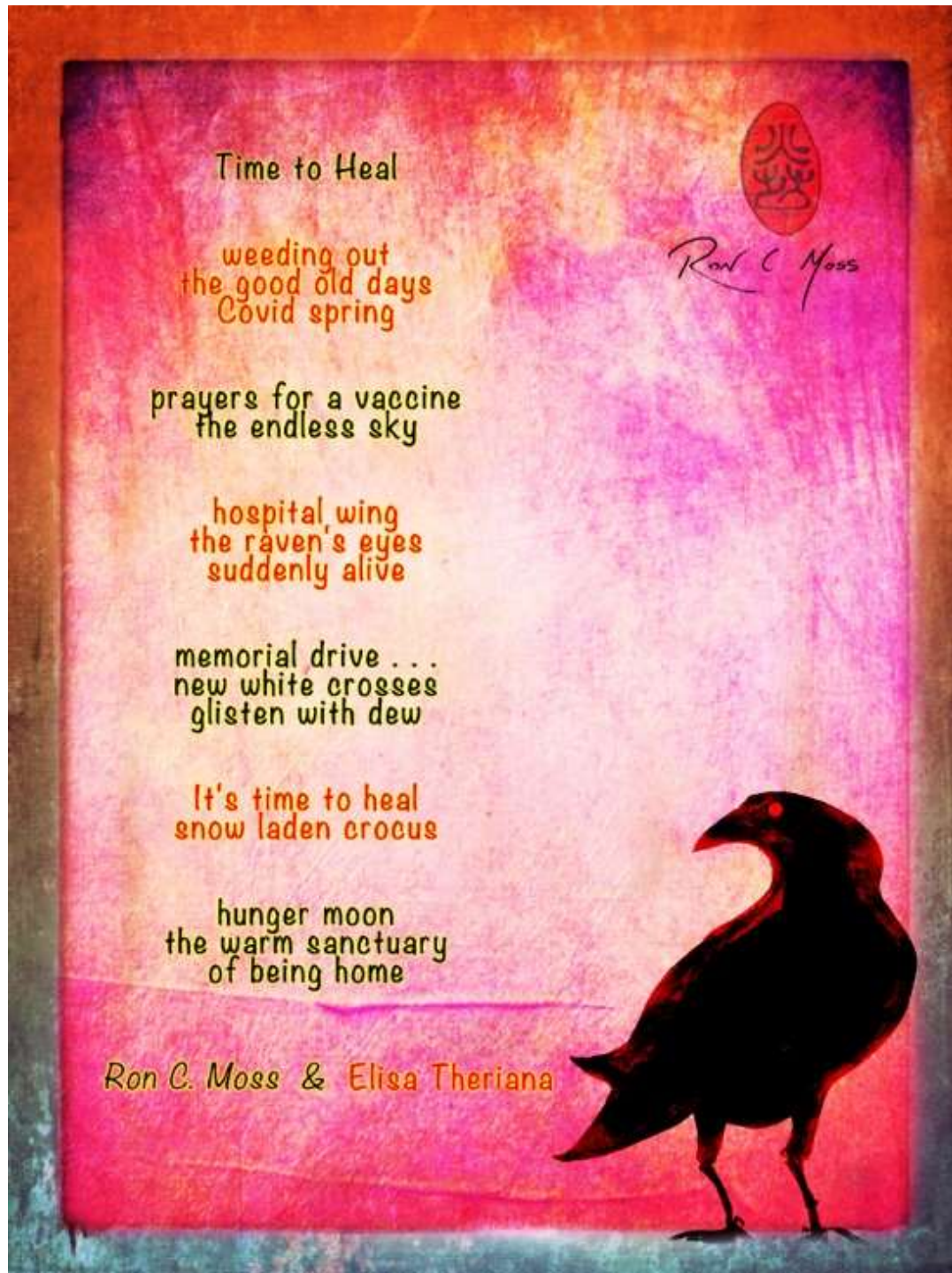


*Wiesław Karliński* alias Wilhelm Karud – teacher, traveller, tourist journalist, haiku poet. Lives in Namyslow, Poland. He has degree in Russian language and literature in Opole University. Since 2009 his awarded haiku and haiga have been published worldwide in books, journals and online, and translated into many languages. He was selected to The European Top 100 most creative haiku poets. One of founders of Polish Haiku Society. Much of his inspirations comes from travels in Polish, Scandinavian and Balkan provinces. He wrote more than 300 articles connected with tourist and kulinary attractions were published in Polish popular journals.

# Time to Heal

Ron C. Moss (*Australia*)

Elisa Theriana (*Indonesia*)





## Year of the Ox

Ron C. Moss (*Australia*)

Elisa Theriana (*Indonesia*)



Artwork by Ron C. Moss

### Year of the Ox

*whip crack!  
oxen drag a plough  
under the indigo skies*

*even the flies buzz praise  
for the farmer's best friend*

*outback muster  
the Jackaroo catches  
a water buffalo*

*here and there  
red flags for trouble  
at the bull fight*

*children dash through  
the old bull's paddock*

*sprinkled with prayers  
each day we sow  
the year of ox*

Elisa Theriana & Ron C. Moss

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**Ron C. Moss** is a Tasmanian poet and artist whose haiku and short form poetry has appeared in leading journals and anthologies across the world. His award-winning poems have been featured many times and translated into several languages. Ron's interest in Asian philosophy has also influenced his art practice, through abstract watercolour, Sumi-e (ink paintings), and Zenga (Zen inspired painting). He also uses the more modern tools of photography and digital-art making. His study of these disciplines has allowed him to create, words to paintings, and paintings to words - achieving a highly contemplative expression of creativity and joy.

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**Elisa Theriana**, a computer programmer from Bandung, Indonesia. Currently working from home. In between her hectic schedule, she loves to take photographs and writing haiku.

## JOURNEY BACK

Rosa Maria Di Salvatore (*Italy*)

Coming back to see the house where I spent my happy childhood, I feel sweet sensations in my heart. In the light breeze there is a taste of days gone by... there is the sweetness of happy moments, of silvery voices, of cheerful laughter.

moss scent  
in the morning air...  
sweet memories

---

*Rosa Maria Di Salvatore*, born in Catania (Italy) where she lives, has a degree in foreign languages and literatures and has been a teacher of English literature in the secondary schools. When she retired, having more free time, she has had the opportunity to express her emotions and sensations and she has begun her poetic activity. She loves writing haiku, tanka, haibun and other forms of poetry both in Italian and English. Her poetries, published in several literary magazines and anthologies, have let her to collect a lot of flattering awards. e.mail: [rosamaria.d@virgilio.it](mailto:rosamaria.d@virgilio.it)

## The Flower

*kamrun Nabar (Bangladesh)*

Last year, one of my favorite earrings had been lost. A metal flower with pink stone. A small gift from a precious person. I always loved to wear it on special days. I thought it was good luck for me. Few memories cannot be erased from the mind. They never leave you. Memories will knock the door again and again. Today when I opened up my jewelry box, I saw single piece of that earring.

an old diary  
of shabby golden pages —  
cherry blossoms



## Nightmare

*kamrun Nahar (Bangladesh)*

Every day on the way back home from office, I cross a teenager on the footbridge with his torn clothes and dusty face while I hurry home. As a young lady in this cosmopolitan city, passing the footbridge gives the feel of someone running up behind to snatch my little pride from me. Each time I pass here, I would sweat and feel disheartened but when I remember the face of the poor teen that sleeps night after night alone at the footbridge with dogs and stray cats; I feel sad, for my ingratitude.

hunter's moon . . .  
the baby cat fighting  
its own shadow

---

*kamrun Nahar* worked as a creative writer. She is a published Haiku writer. Her Haiku is published under UTB journal, Cafe haiku journal, Failed haiku journal, Cold moon journal. In 2020 one of her poems was published in an international anthology "pandemic poetry 2020".

## Thorns and Roses

*Adesina Oluwasegun (Nigeria)*

I raise my head away from my pharmacognosy textbook, rest my back on the white plastic chair, and put my right hand on my jaw to support my gaze into the past by way of deep thinking. I begin to sink into the ocean of memories of students who were Iroko trees but have fallen, and have had their roots uprooted from the faculty of pharmacy soil. Fear sends a signal to my brain and I respond with a deep sigh, loud enough to wake a sleeping child. After a few seconds, my friend and coursemate, Saheed, breaks the news of the 120 pharmacy students to be inducted next month into the profession.

after the storm . . .  
a boy smiles pointing  
at the rainbow

---

*Adesina Oluwasegun*, a 200 level Pharmacy Student of OAU, is a haïjin whose haiku and senryu works have appeared in different haiku journals such as The Mamba, Heron's Nest, the Quills, Stardust Haiku, Under the Basho, Wales Haiku Journal, Failed Haiku and elsewhere. His haiku won the honourable mention prize in the 2020 Akita International Haiku Contest. He is a lover of football and Chelsea fan.

## Frolic

*Rachel Rabo Magaji (Nigeria)*

my mother's body is a cathedral of larceny. every day i see the carvings on her skin – like a toddler's scribble – give way to her beauty & become an agony for peering eyes. *how do you keep loving this fire that never cease to burn you, mama?* i asked. she smiled grim, the white in her teeth glistened against the yellow sun & burned into my memory the bliss of her love and care. her expression as empty as the lines of a blank cheque permeates my dreams at night. *"girl, may you not walk into such partner in life,"* she said. as i peer intently into her eyes for more, she follows my eyes & plays her fingers on the tip of her cloth like a pianist orchestrating a concert, and whispers; *"my pot only endures the heat just so my food may cook rightly."*

hunters moon . . .  
a baby cat licks  
my finger

---

***Rachel Rabo Magaji*** also known as dr'rae who resides in Kaduna State, Nigeria is a poet, Digital Marketer, and Environmentalist. Her works have appeared in Akitsu Quarterly, Wales Haiku Journal, Haiku Universe, Frogpond, Hedgerow, and elsewhere Connect with her @dr\_raeee

## It was hard to say

Michael Hough (USA) *prose and image*

Christina Chin (Malaysia) *haiku*

In my dream you were lithe and lively and made small sounds of joy with me.  
I said, "I need a hug," and you melted into me like honey melts into my tea.  
We held each other so close it was hard to say where my life began  
and yours led away.

It was such a gift... I am still shivering from it as I sit on a cold stone bench  
this morning, with my dog at my feet... waiting for the winter sun.

*stolen kiss  
on a crowded street  
firecrackers*



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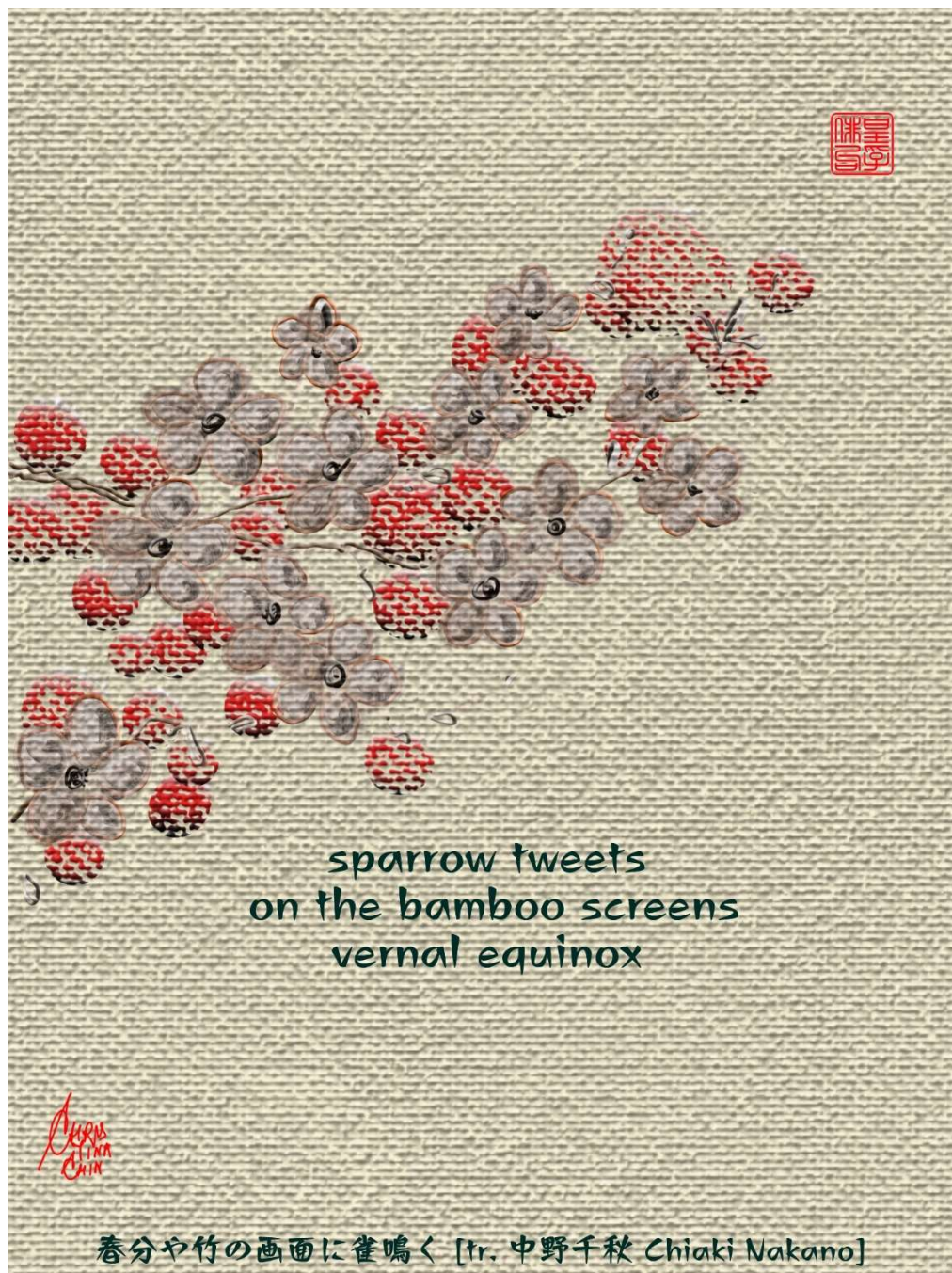
**Michael Hough** was born in 1948. He began writing poems and songs at the age of 8 and continued to study his craft his whole life. His favored poetic styles are song lyrics, sonnets, blank verse, free verse, Haiku, Senryu, Tanka, and narrative poems.

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**Christina Chin** from Malaysia is a painter and haiku poet. She is 1st prize winner of the 34th Annual Cherry Blossom Sakura Festival 2020 Haiku Contest; 1st prize winner in the 8th Setouchi Matsuyama 2019 Photo-haiku Contest; and won two City Soka Saitama's 2020 haiku prizes. She is published in journals and anthologies including Japan's haiku monthly magazine, Haikukai (俳句界). Email: [christinachin99@gmail.com](mailto:christinachin99@gmail.com)



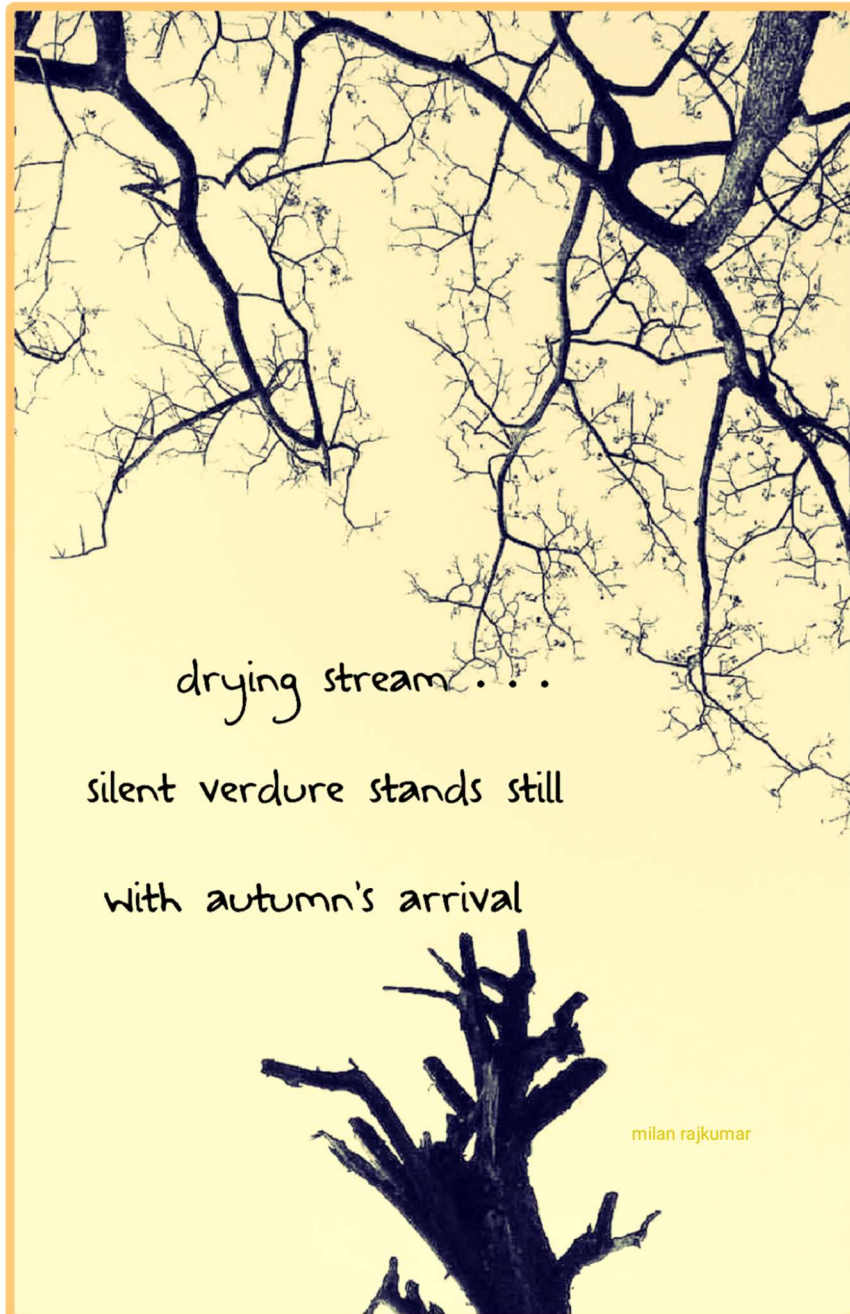






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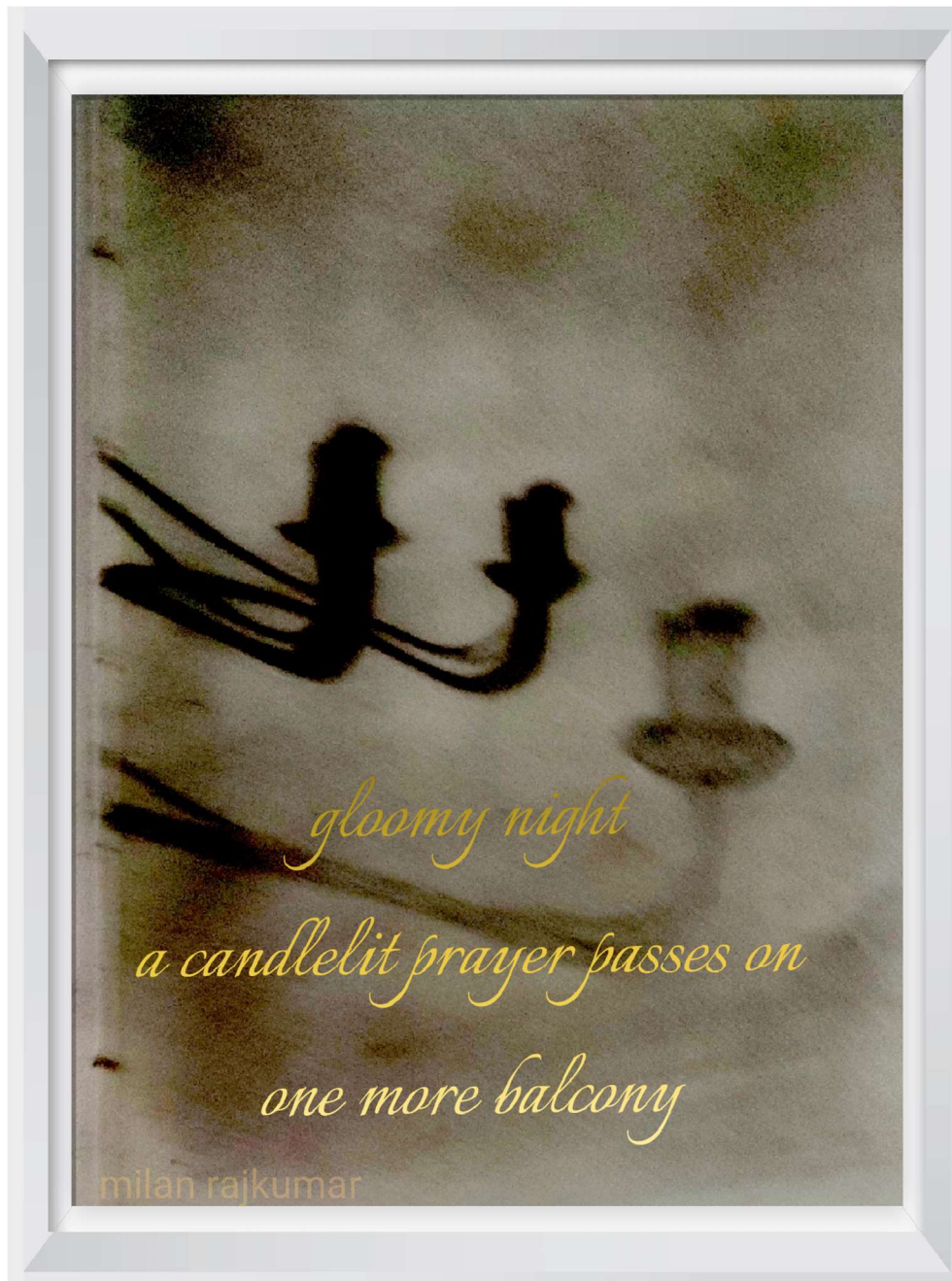








*Milan Rajkumar (India)*



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**Milan Rajkumar** is a Secondary school teacher who teaches fixed and flexible exchange rates while writing haiku. He lives in Imphal, Manipur, a far corner of the north eastern India. Genetically an asian by look and food, he speaks a tibeto-burman language known as 'meiteilon' or manipuri . Writing is his passion since childhood. Nowadays he writes haikai poems every day and night. email: [rajkumar.milan@gmail.com](mailto:rajkumar.milan@gmail.com)

# *Free Verse*



## On Pablo Neruda by Fran Fernández Arce

          north  
lightning           territory  
amid                   day and  
                          thorns  
shadow of           the Spaniard  
                          wounded  
          earth  
          form           my           fatherland, a           silence  
long line  
          foam  
          fills           with           kisses  
                          its fingers  
          like a           hardened  
          grave  
          Spaniard           one day  
          the           old sky           could  
          ris           e

---

*Fran Fernández Arce* is a Chilean poet currently living in Suffolk, England. Her work has been published in Pollux, Querencia, and Feral Poetry among others. She writes mostly about art, language, and the weather outside her window and can be found talking about other people's works as @dylanblue3. She can be contacted at [francisca.fernandez@ug.uchile.cl](mailto:francisca.fernandez@ug.uchile.cl)



BOLOERE SEIBIDOR (Nigeria)

## this is how you knew you're a stutterer

*after Jeremy Karn*

a prayer, maybe two, for all the times his palms fell, like  
an eagle from a mountaintop, to find repose on the terrains of your  
body. the scars remain still; an exclamation mark above your jawline,  
drawn by his razor-sharp nails, saying: *warning! already damaged.*  
or perhaps, screaming for help; from the night you remember  
woven with his alcohol breath, the living room tiled with broken  
shards of beer bottles. the cities in your body are *momento mori* // places  
you would not even visit lest you are transformed into the ashes  
of your past. often, remembrance is a burden deepened by  
the untimeliness of the task. a neighbourly stranger wonders why purple  
is your favourite colour of eyeshadow // you want to explain that it is not  
make-up, but his gaze, forever grafted in your memory, is like a  
bunsen burner, your throat, a beaker, vapourizing words & leaving  
a cold wetness in its stead. today, you stare at his grave, aloof, unmoved.

    this is how you know you're a stutterer:

each time you want to say that you forgive him, the word *forgive*  
rolls off your tongue, capsizes in the air      & breaks into a thousand pieces.

---

*Boloere Seibidor* is an African poet & writer with works on numerous magazines/journals. She won the Glassdoor Poetically Written Prose Contest 2020; and a honourable mention in the 2019 Kreative Diadem Flash Fiction Contest. She tweets @boloere\_sod

JAMIU AHMED (*Nigeria*)

## A MILLION WAYS TO DIE WITHOUT FUNERAL

(*For Lekki massacre victims*)

unarmed arms wave the national flags into the sky,  
thousands of voices; echo the national anthem  
into the air like a radar, sending waves into the vacuum.  
the earth vibrates to their freedom ululation  
from stillborn dreams aborted prematurely.

vroom; engine roars from armoured chrome-wheels,  
armed men vent volcanic steam at placard bearers  
— as lead-cannon-balls penetrate silky bodies,  
like the sharp & incisive stroke of a cobra fang.  
arms flail in the wind as bodies groan in throes of dying.  
a once cheering ground becomes death's toll gate.

let's say a country is a wolf chewing its cub,  
or an infanticide mother fox killing her children.  
here, there are a million ways to die without a funeral:

1. is to wear your father's golden slave chains.
2. is to dare look into the eyes of an enslaving sun.
3. is to ask to stop being killed by a black panther.
4. is to talk against the drover of a cattle colony...

so when you die; the next day, the news will break  
like the pieces of your body, with people trying  
to identify you with blood smeared on the road.

---

**JAMIU AHMED** is a Lagos based Nigerian Writer and Blogger. He has several works featured on digital literary platforms. His writings have also performed well in competitions organised by Poets in Nigeria (PIN) and Word Rhymes and Rhythm. He can be reached through: Email: [jamiuahmed809@gmail.com](mailto:jamiuahmed809@gmail.com). Twitter: @Adewale809

EKTA RANA (India)

## Down into My Fear

Standing in a deserted hall,  
Mouth shut and mind numb,  
I heard the walls vibrating into words:  
*'some debacle is to come'*.

I moved towards the murmuring walls  
that yet ignored me and flattened their cracks  
into a printer of letters.  
Soul pinched me;

I dragged my body towards an  
exit through the dark, but  
was held by the weight of confusion.  
Again, the walls murmured: *"listen, it is near"*.

I stared at every entry and exit of the hall,  
The only light at their end are raging fire.  
I sit, drowned in the pool of my sweat  
The walls weighing me down into my fear.

---

*Ekta Rana* is working as an Assistant Professor of English in Jaipur National University, Jaipur, India. She has completed her doctoral research from Jaipur. She was awarded the prestigious I2OR National Eminent Young Researcher Award 2020 by the International Institute of Organised Research and the International Preeminent Young Researcher Award 2020 by Green Thinkerz and Western Sydney University.

GABRIEL AWUAH MAINOO (Ghana)

## Found Song

*/...Bob Marley's One Love fades at the ball/*

This dying chord begins another/  
A song that choked a boy in the gullet  
in a carnage somewhere the heart of a metropolis/

To this boy home is an allergy  
anytime — he runs away from his shadow  
his father's face / a dreamer lost in himself/

Man's hell is no place for a home  
neither his mother's womb be an asylum/  
In such dark ambience / each tiny pore becomes another hell

beneath his mother's feverish body lurks the roast /  
Between fire & smoke is this boy & his dreams/  
He's a dumb rap-star

searching for his voice in a fog of gunpowder/  
Each day; lyrics that survive in his head are  
dead songs on his lips/

His favorite; the song of the hawk  
who returned the long lost chicken quill/  
Dube bring me the cello

with its body as war's torso & intestines as strings  
strumming with my daggered-thumb  
I slay the stigma of strife/

To sing of harmony; / I sing Africa / I sing America  
I sing Eurasia / I sing my soul / harmony I sing/  
Bob Marley's One Love continues:

*'let's get together and feel all right...'*

---

Gabriel Awuah Mainoo, special prize winner of Soka Matsubara international Haiku contest, winner of Forty Under 40 Awards for Authorship and Creative Writing and semifinalist in the Jack Grape International Poetry Prize, is the author of "Travellers Gather Dust and Lust", "Chicken Wings at the Altar", "60 Aces of Haiku" and "Lyrical Textiles" forthcoming. His works have appeared in Cicada's cry, Fireflies' Light, Aha Magazine, Kalahari Review, Wales haiku Journal, The Mamba, Ghana Writes Journal, Nthanda review and elsewhere. Mainoo is a tennis player in the morning, a student in the afternoon and writer in the evening. He is a Master of Fine Arts candidate at Manchester Metropolitan University.



CARLOS MIJARES POYER (*Venezuela*)

## RAIN

It rains in blues and greens  
and the morning is everything  
the gutless sound, the turmoil  
like a clock's innards winding  
grain as lachrymose diamonds.

The heart, a fruit, visualized and taken, away  
to the fathoms and catacombs of nature which speaks on t.v.  
stepping to me, in this unquiet realm of luminosity now digitalized  
as recipes to chew your tongues like love in stupor unwound.

Where do thoughts cajole and beguile like giant table puzzles  
on your dinner table? Cajole everything  
and jokes tell us a new story, "show and tell" of children smiling  
of a man, a boy disguised as an urban pirate swirling skateboard to the heights,  
this uncertain world plagiarized all by parrots on the screen  
replenished of esoteric instruments, *dyslalia* as erotic moans from the bushes  
driving passion across a good sea,

find the sun crumbling into its own self as philosophy in the mind of the homeless  
under your tears, cry until death's pity suffrage for your soul  
and eyes fixed in the snow, in that snow  
that falls.

The tears peril as rain.  
Only as rain at twilight.

---

**Carlos Mijares Poyer**, is an international author born in Caracas, Venezuela, journalist, translator and marketer. He studied all of his education in the U.S. at Pine Crest School and English major at Guilford College. He studied Marketing in ISUM Marketing College. Since 2015 he has published in numerous on-line literary websites in the U.S., Ireland, Venezuela, Mexico and Argentina. Main contributor to the Ultimas Noticias Cultural Supplement in Venezuela in different journalistic and literary genres.

LASZLO ARANYI (*Hungary*)

## The Outsider

The evening of staggering drunks, he is after hand-dog,  
weasel faced streetwalkers.

Whom he points his carved stick at,

or whom he stigmatises with his finger on the bare skin,  
they will not be disgusted ever again by the touch of his rigor mortis,  
but in the following days,  
horrendous lepracy like blutch will cover the entire body it will rot,  
though the thinned bones,  
skull the size of a birds head will be handed over untouched by the  
furnace of the incinerator.

Wherever he appears - in a black mask, wrapped in a shabby  
cloak; children disappear without a trace.

The outsider is the satyr of abandoned playgrounds "all he needs  
now is a scythe in his hands"  
now next to the graveyard he carves mysterious  
figures in the sacred decay of parched mud.

Flower heads, heavy as stone, are tied up with rusty wire,  
its heads still touching the earth; yellow, ropy leafs scattered on  
the soaked earth, trampled pathway like varicose veins.  
Abandoned playgrounds famished satyr,  
following through the unusal strength of the light of the moon,  
he is after the staggering drunks, weasel faced streetwalkers.

The deep green waters peart surface,  
soon the islands drift together: patches of mould  
fluoresces its green color,  
soon to become scale like core, solid filthy - green samara.  
A mysterious print, in the drying up mud of the graveyard.

*(this poem was originally written in Hungary by László Aranyi and translated into English by Johanna Semsei)*

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Laszlo Aranyi (Frater Azmon) poet, anarchist, occultist from Hungary. Earlier books: (szellem) válaszok, A Nap és Holderók egyensúlya. New: Kiterített rókabőr. English poems published: Quail Bell Magazine, Lumin Journal, Moonchild Magazine, Scum Gentry Magazine, Pussy Magic, The Zen Space, Crêpe & Penn, Briars Lit, Acclamation Point, Truly U, Sage Cigarettes Magazine, Lots of Light Literary Foundation, Honey Mag, Theta Wave, Re-side, Cape Magazine, Neuro Logical, The Daily Drunk Mag, Unpublishable Zine, Melbourne Culture Corner, Beir Bua Journal, Crown & Pen, Dead Fern Press and elsewhere. Known spiritualist mediums, art and explores the relationship between magic.

OBED BENYIN-MENSAH (*Ghana*)

| WASH ME |

If I could see  
Your mind in thoughts  
While I remain restrained,  
By being human.  
Your word written from ages  
Lies before me,  
—blinded by life woes  
Its melodies sound chaotic.

As I listen through this,  
Your voice —still and small  
On and on, wanes thin  
Through my misery of a life.  
Hearing and reading,  
My failure has overcome  
Your very mind I seek  
Wash me white with your thoughts.  
This life swallows me  
In the mud of misery.

---

*Dr. Benyin-Mensah Obed*, is a Ghana based writer medical doctor who graduated from the School of Medical Sciences, KNUST in 2017. He draws inspiration from the realities of life to write pieces across different genres, though he expresses profound interest in poetry. He is currently enrolled in the Ghana Writers Marathon as a poet and was recently featured in the African Haiku Networks' 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Mamba Journal. email: [benyinoled@gmail.com](mailto:benyinoled@gmail.com). Twitter handle @\_T\_spice

nyashadzashe chikumbu (Zimbabwe)

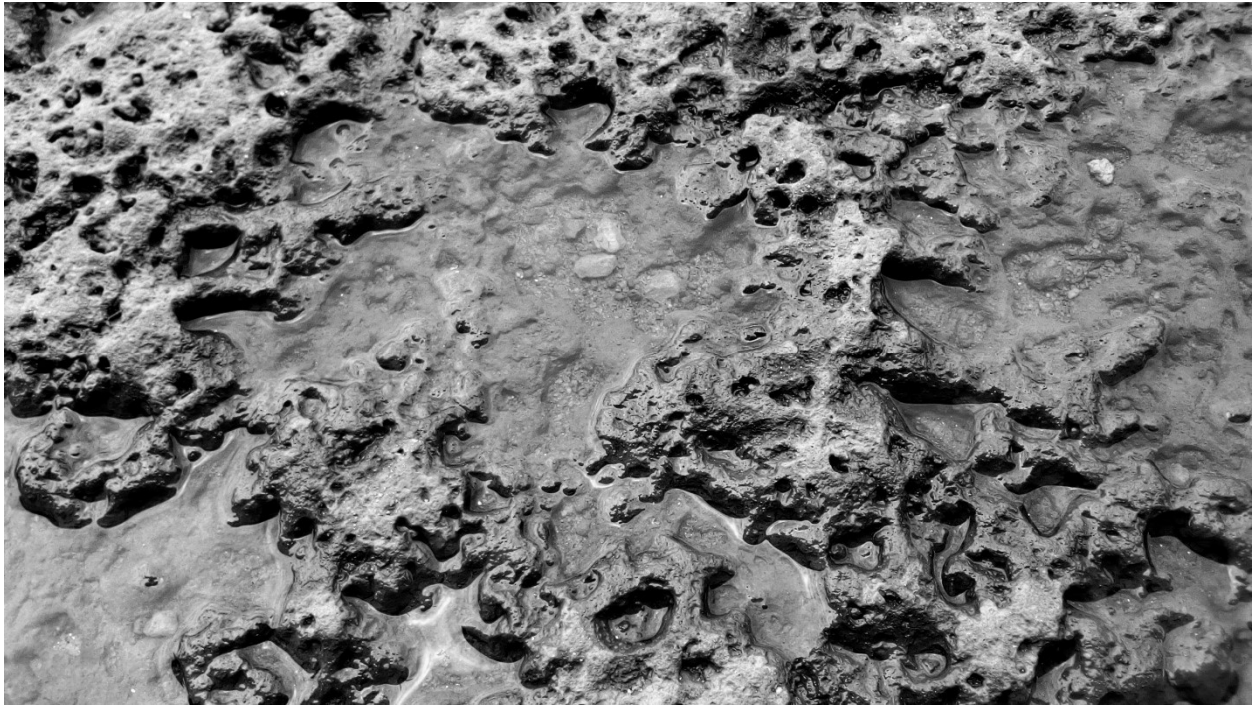
## to my ancestors

mothers of my mothers  
fathers of my fathers  
i come with an offering  
your drink i've pored to the ground  
may you accept me and drink your fill  
they say it tastes like milk and honey  
forgive me  
i can't can't stand the traditional stuff  
it's not so hygienic  
that thing of brewing it in the open for seven days  
the old women don't even wash their hands plus  
it gives me a terrible hangover  
drink this instead you'll like the aftertaste like honey  
here  
have some sweets  
i've got strawberries too if you like

---

nyashadzashe chikumbu also known as chikata chinamavara he's ancestral family names is a poet, and educator. he's work is inspired by the aesthetics and richness of everyday language and how language landscapes are rich wells of commonality. he's a former advisor of the african writers development trust, he sat on the panel of judges for the 2018 african writers award.

# *Senryu & Kyoka*



*[...including senryu art, senryu prose, linked senryu or sequence, and their kyoka versions]*

## NUPTIAL BLISS

*Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)*

first love  
slicing an onion  
i cut my finger

first date  
reshaping her dimples  
to the poem i read

wedding  
the bride's vow  
for better for better

the rose petals  
pinkier  
in the sun's ray

day moon  
she takes the wine  
i sip the coffee

office files  
on the dining table  
Workers Day

## BECOMING STARS

*Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)*

first dinner  
hands across our heads  
we dodge the cork

periwinkle dish  
the first taster rolls up  
her sleeves

cold breeze  
she stirs the moonlight  
into the pepper soup

bitterleaf dish  
stirring the bitterness  
of my past love life

whispered toasts  
a silly ringtone breaks  
the silence

becoming stars  
a community of fireflies  
lit the lounge

## Shooting the Shot

*Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)*

WAITING. The header of her WhatsApp chatroom reads 'online.' I hit the send button upon pasting of the lovers' text. The text delivery icon turns blue. WAITING. A few moments later, it reads 'typing....' WAITING. A moment later, no message drops, only the widget above the chatroom showing her 'last seen.' WAITING. A few moments later, it reads 'typing....' WAITING. A little longer moment, no message drops still. WAITING. The header of the chatroom again reads her 'last seen.' WAITING.

fondling  
the love-shaped edge  
of a broken shell  
a nostalgia into past  
fair and unfair affairs

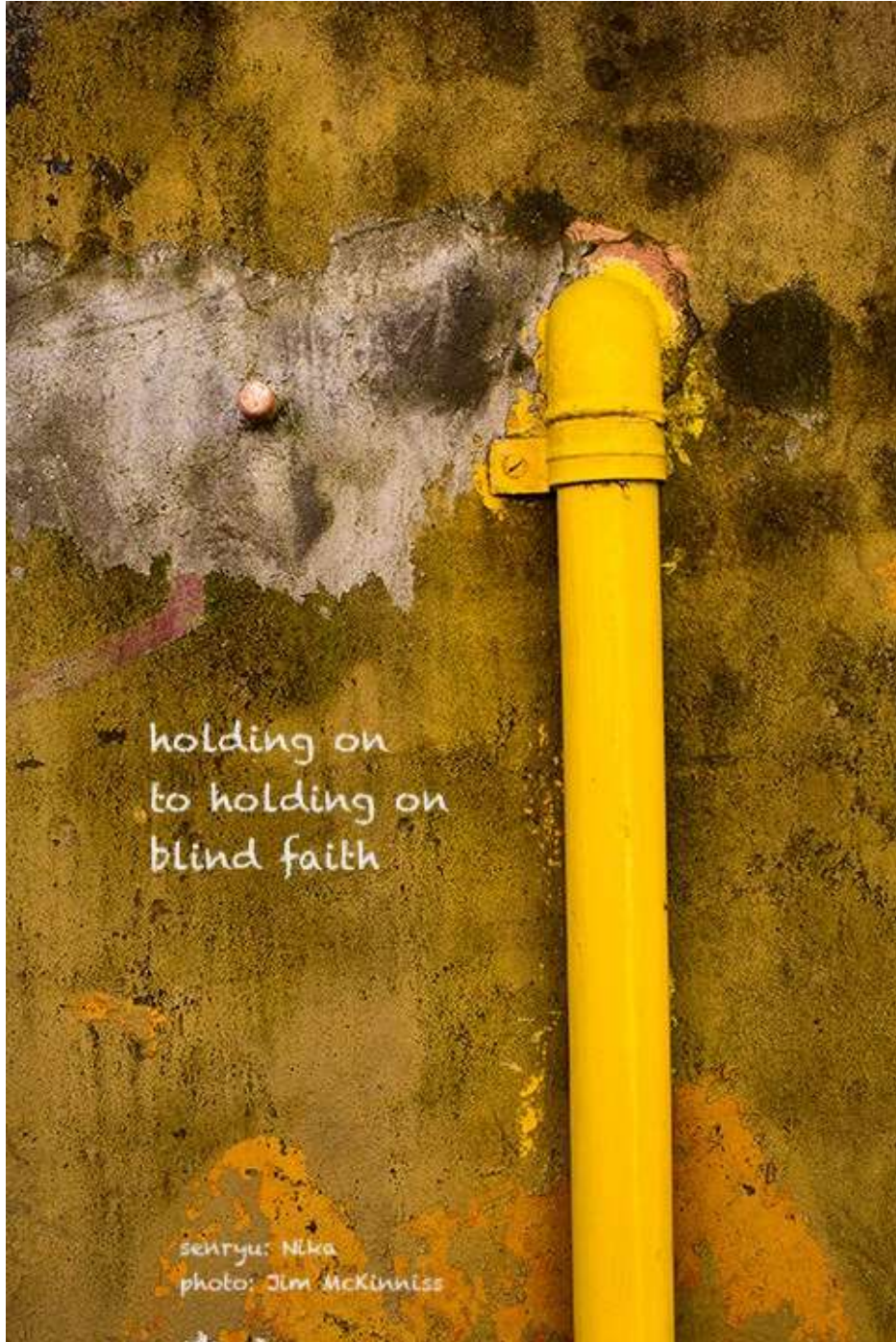
WAITING.

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**Taofeek Ayeyemi** fondly called Aswagaawy is a Nigerian lawyer, writer and author of *Tongueless Secrets* (Ethel Press, 2021) and *aubade at night or serenade in the morning* (Flowersong Press, TBD 2021). His works are featured or forthcoming in *Lucent Dreaming*, *Feral*, *winnow*, *Up-the-Staircase Quarterly*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, the *QuillS*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Cattails*, *Seashores*, *Presence*, *The Mamba* and elsewhere. He won the 2021 Loft Books Flash Fiction Competition, honorable mention prizes in the 2020 Stephen A. Dibiase Poetry Prize, 2020 Akita International Haiku Contest, 2020 Fujisan Taisho Tanka Contest, among others. He tweets @Aswagaawy



*Nika (Canada)*  
*Jim McKinniss (USA)*



*Nika (Canada)*  
*Jim McKinniss (USA)*





*Nika (Canada)*  
*Jim McKinniss (USA)*



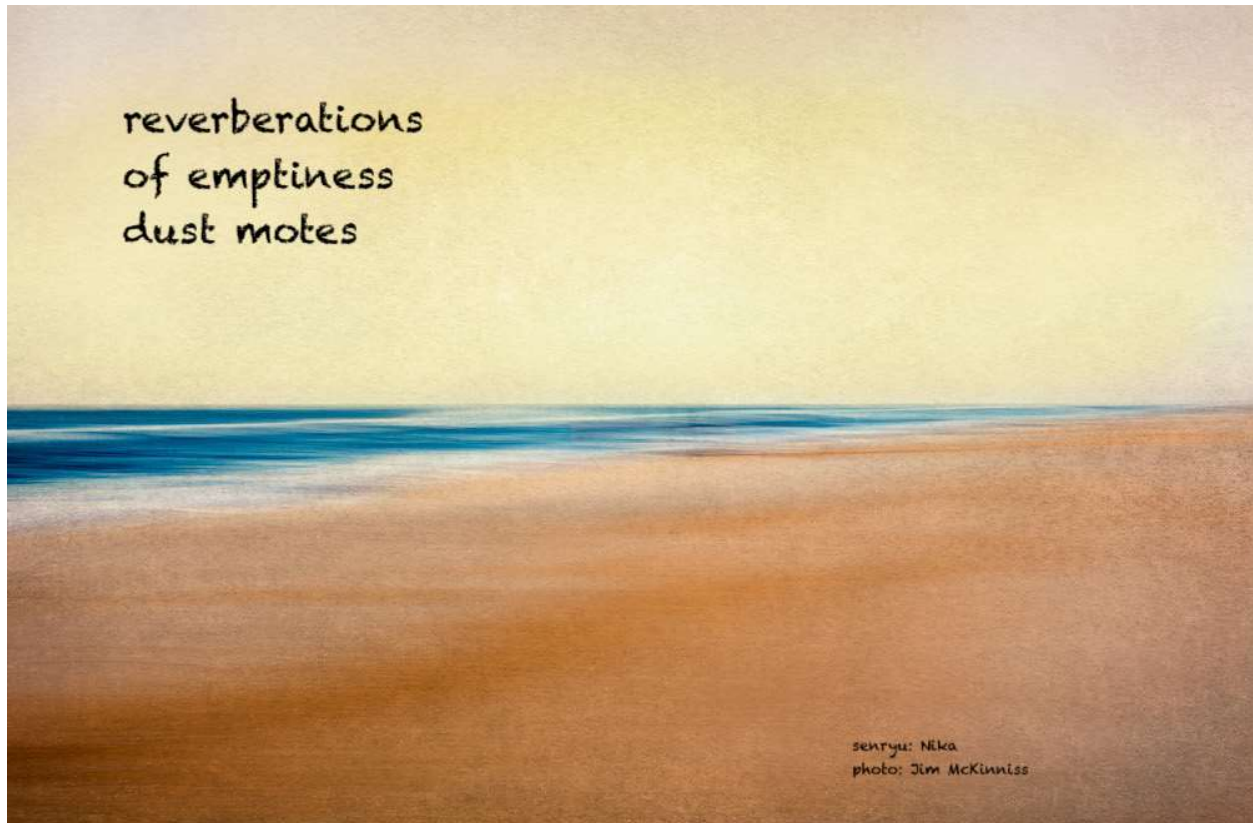
*Nika (Canada)*

*Jim McKinniss (USA)*

memories . . .  
the time it takes  
to bury the dead

senryu: Nika  
photo: Jim McKinniss

*Nika* (Canada)  
*Jim McKinniss* (USA)



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**Jim McKinniss** <http://www.jimmckinnissphotography.com> is a retired mathematician and software engineer. He has an eclectic interest in image making. His current and past photographic projects include the Badlands in South Dakota, the homeless of Los Angeles, cemeteries in Italy and the Mask Festival in Venice. Jim lives in Orcutt, California, USA.

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**Nika** is the pen name of retired educator Jim Force. Jim has been writing haiku and related works since the early 1990s. He enjoys working collaboratively with other poets and photographers. His current project is exchanging haiku art postcards with other haiku poets. Jim's work has been widely published around the world. He lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

## The Unsound System

*Gautam Nadkarni (India)*

When I was five I accompanied mother to a department store in downtown Flora Fountain. There was a massive end of season sale and my mother was all in a tizzy over it. I knew what to expect, of course. After she had studied practically every product in the shop and made a million inquiries about them without buying any, she made her way to the garments department. In the kids' section, she carefully examined the shirts on display and selected two for me. Ghastly ones, I can tell you! I was astonished to find that she actually got one more absolutely free.

Next, we visited the crockery section where again Mom picked up half a dozen China dinner plates and got six complimentary stainless steel tablespoons with them. I was amazed at how the store seemed to be giving away stuff like Santa Claus. However, Yuletide was still a long, long way off.

dinner time...  
once again Grandpa tells us  
all about his piles

Back at the residence, I eyed my shrieking infant brother with great disfavour. Obviously, Mom and Dad had picked me and my two older siblings at the department store at heavily discounted rates and got my kid brother at no extra cost. Practically a freebie. And look at what she got for her money! A squalling brat who treated everyone who picked him up as a loo. What's more, she couldn't even go back and exchange him for something better. Like a large box of Swiss chocolates, for instance. So the next time the department store announced an exchange offer on their music systems, I prevailed on mother to take full advantage of it and promptly trade in bro for a nice new stereo system. Much gentler on the ears, I assured her. But all I received by way of thanks for my advice was a bawling out.

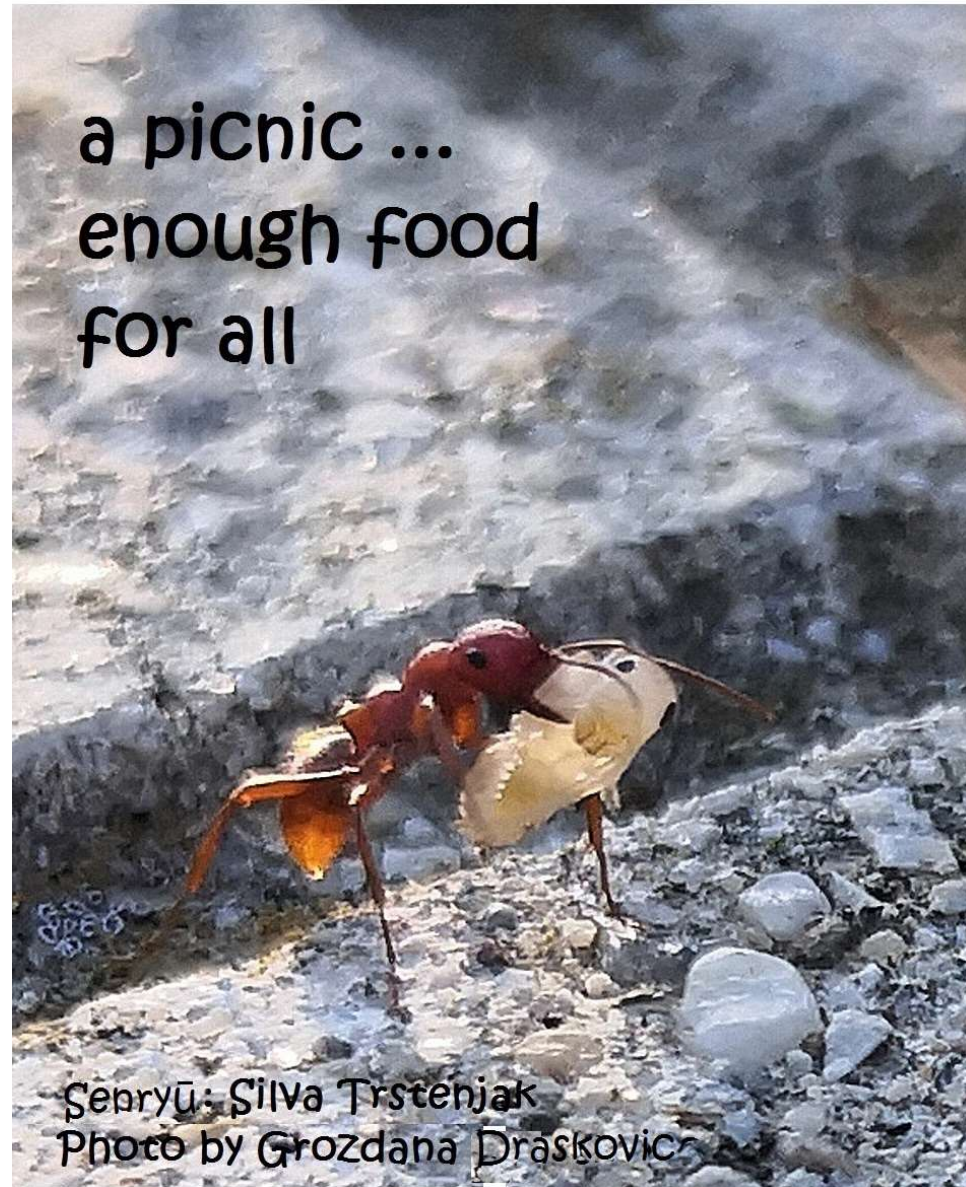
screaming infant---  
still searching in vain for  
the volume control

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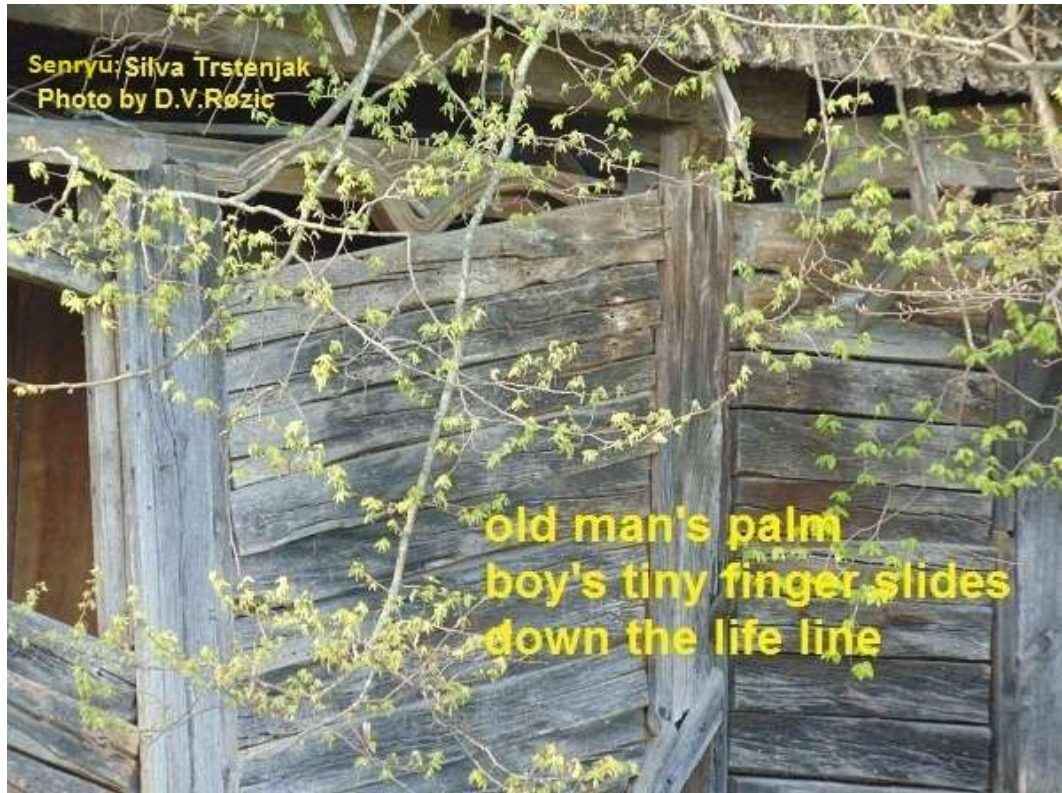
*Gautam Nadkarni*, from Mumbai, India, finds gratification in writing haibun as well as in drawing haiga, both with a senryu twist. Writing and publishing haikai poetry since 2007, he tried his hand at haibun and haiga only in late 2017 and promptly fell in love with both. He subsequently won the first prize in the Jane Reichhold Memorial Haiga Contest in 2017 and again, the third prize in 2019. He is currently senryu editor of Cattails Journal.



*Silva Trstenjak* (Croatia)



*Silva Trstenjak* (Croatia)

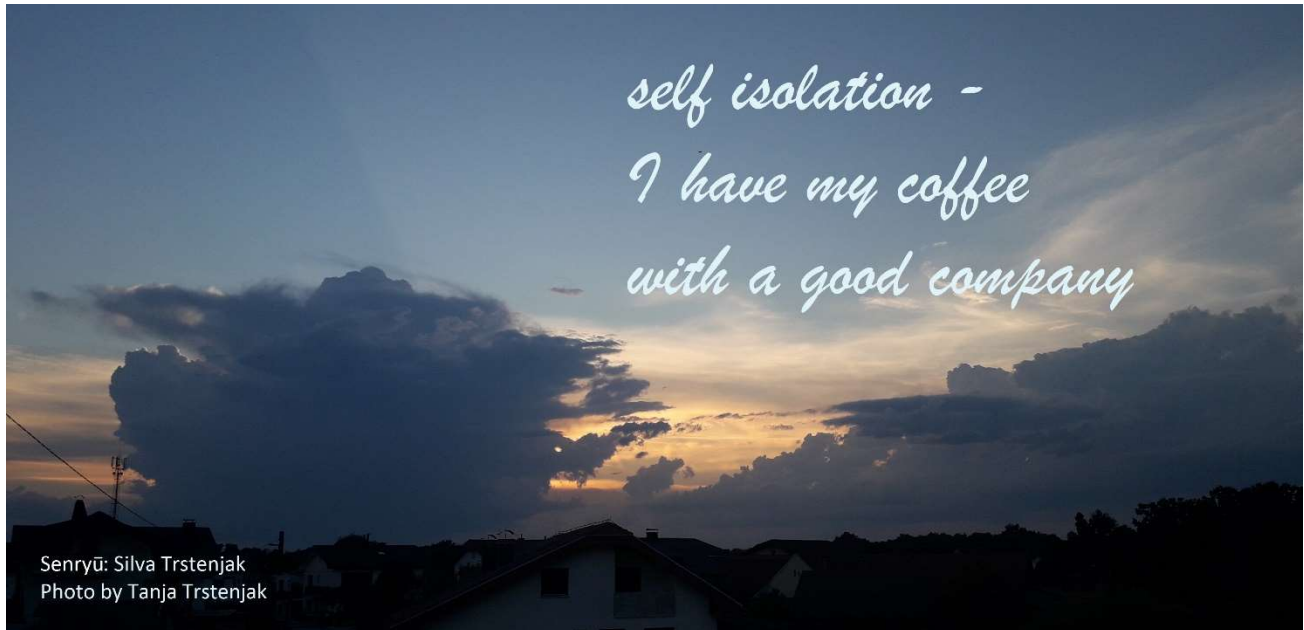


Senryū: Silva Trstenjak  
Photo by D.V. Rožić

old man's palm  
boy's tiny finger slides  
down the life line

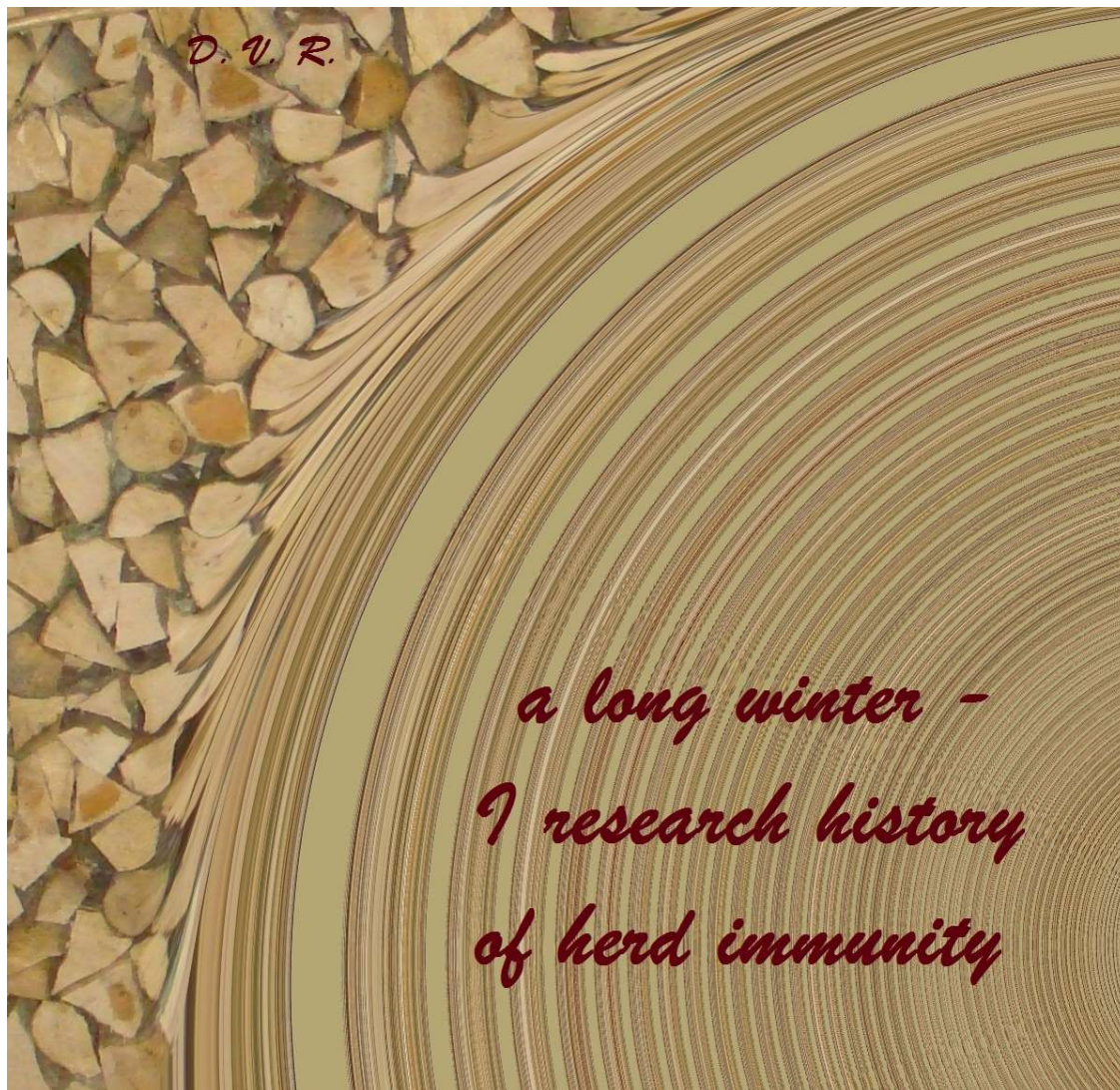


*Silva Trstenjak* (Croatia)

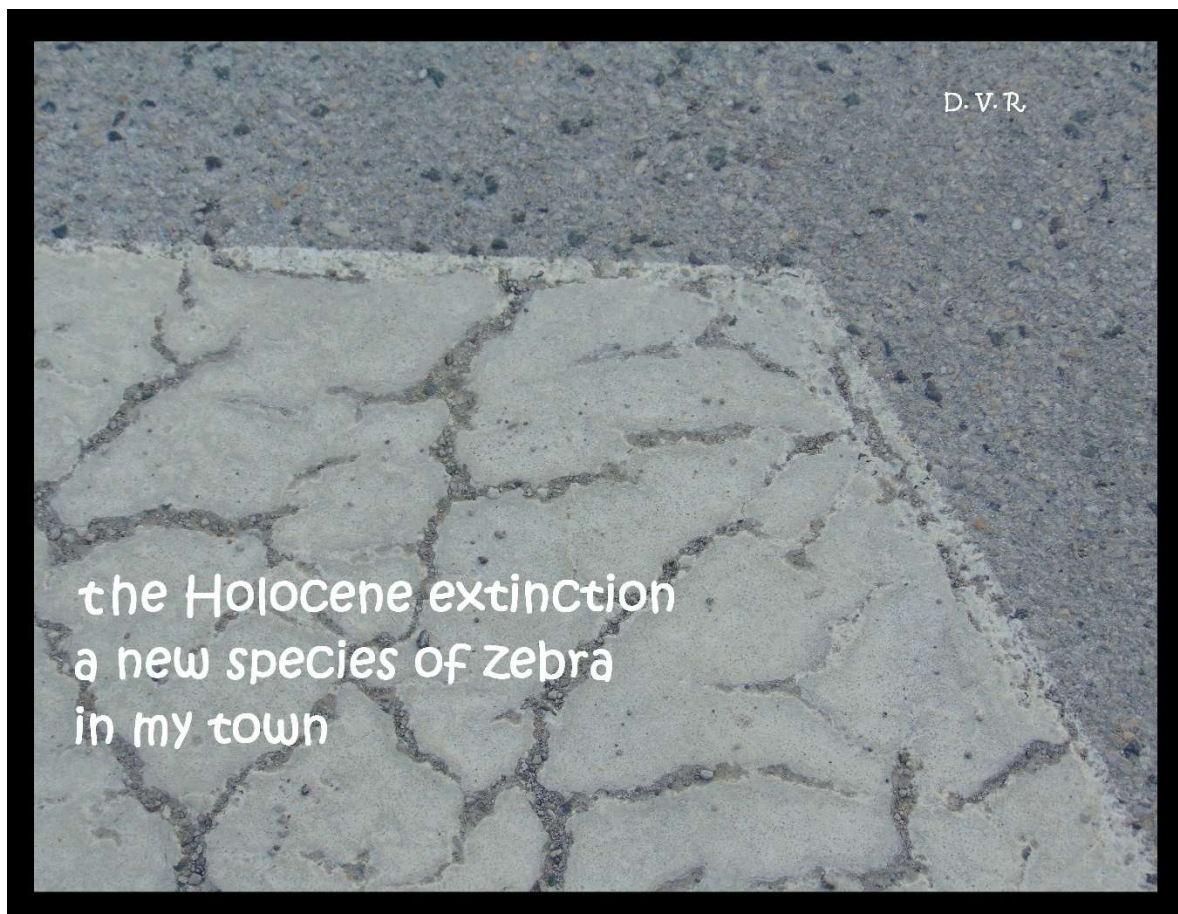


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***Silva Trstenjak*** (1967, Ptuj, Slovenia), Croatian haiku poet. Has a degree from the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, Slovenia. She publishes haiku in Croatian, Kajkavian, Slovene, and English. Awarded author she judged several contests, publishes haiku and haiga. She lives in Štrigova, Croatia.





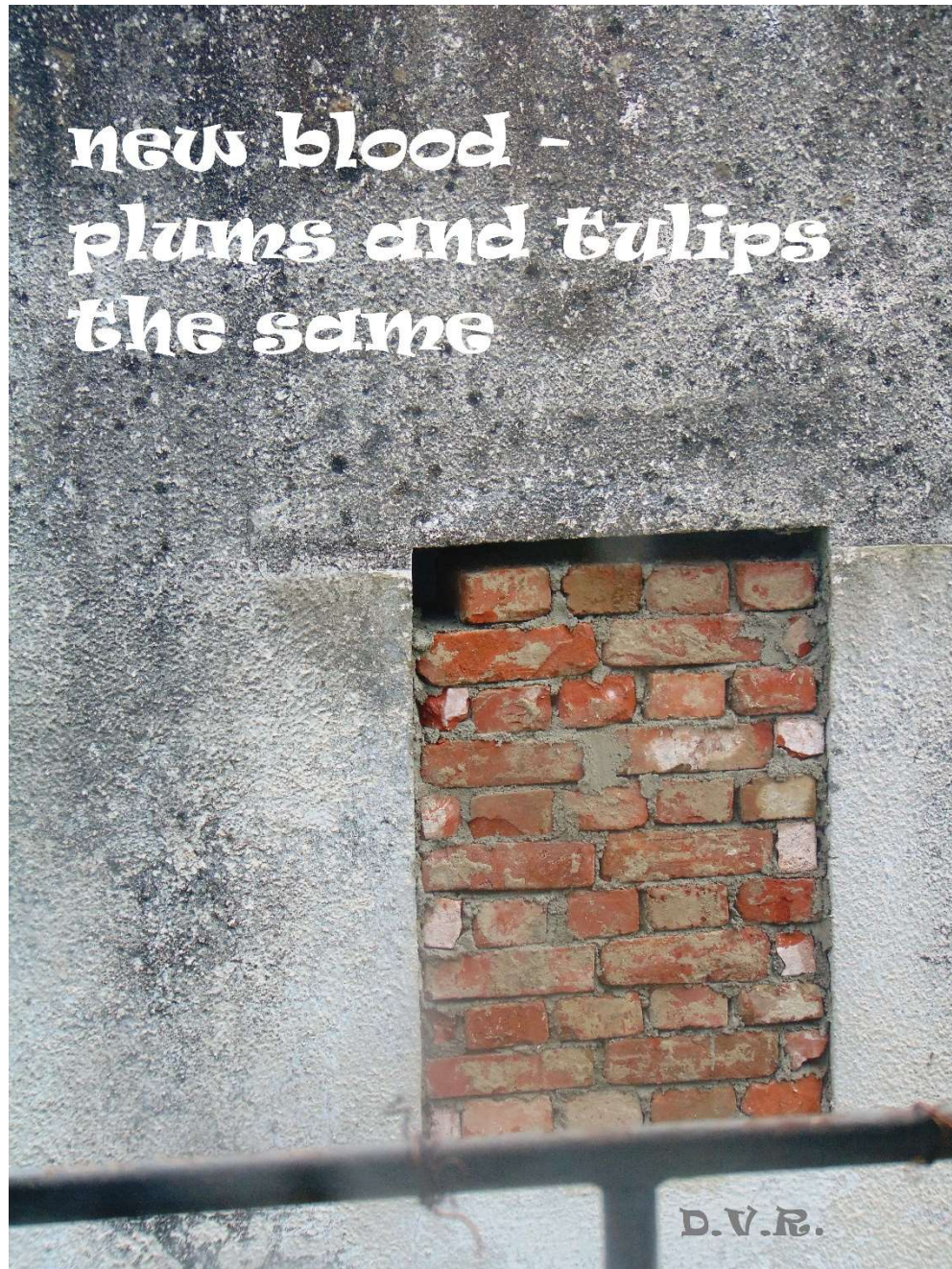


the Holocene extinction  
a new species of zebra  
in my town

D.V.R.



*Djurdja Vukelic Rozic* (Croatia)



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*Djurdja Vukelic Rozic* (1956, Croatia) is a writer and translator, the principal editor of haiku magazine IRIS ([www.tri-rijeke-haiku.hr](http://www.tri-rijeke-haiku.hr)). She publishes short stories, humorous sketches, haiku, tanka and haiga in Croatian, Kajkavian and English. Retired, she graduated from the Faculty of Economy, Zagreb.

# *Essay*





# HAIKU: A DEEP DIG INTO ITS AESTHETICS

Taofeek Ayeyemi (Nigeria)

In any haiku discourse, the rules that are often emphasized (and rightly so) are the kireji, kigo and so on. While understanding these are important skeletons of haiku, it doesn't end there. There are other qualities that, by adding flesh to it, makes haiku what it is.

While concluding my essay titled "Haiku: An Introduction," I stated the following:

*"Some other technicalities and aesthetics, which are basic qualities and beauty of haiku, are written on stone and any verse lacking these qualities cannot be considered haiku. They are what differentiate a haiku from senryu and tercet. Some of these aesthetics are 'the recreation of events in a fleeting moment, the position of two images, the quality of being read in a breath or with just a single pause, the significance of 'aba' or surprise moment, the rules of objectivity, simplicity and sincerity, among others.'"*

These underlined qualities shall be discussed by way of exegesis for the purpose of clarity.

## ***i. [the recreation of events in a fleeting moment]***

Haiku shares a 'fleeting moment' captured by the author, very snappily and urgent. It connects two images so swiftly that the reader gets the crux of the moment been shared. Elaine Andre Sensei once said: *"Haiku is often presented as a moment of awareness or personal experience in the now. Yet our experience is not born entirely of the present moment, but tempered by contextual layers of personal and collective human history."*

Flowing from the above, we deduce the urgency needed in writing haiku, and that establishes the principle of "here and now." That is, it is written as if it's happening at that point in time. That's why haiku are written in present tense.

## ***ii. [the position of two images]***

Structurally put, haiku has two parts: the fragment and the phrase. The shorter part of the work is the fragment while the longer part is the phrase. The fragment almost always shows the season or settings at a particular point in time, while the phrase is the event intended to be shown. It can be vice versa and we can also say that the fragment complements the phrase. The two parts of haiku are punctuated by the cut (kire).



Also, it is worthy of note that the fragment is usually the first line, however, it can be the third line in some situations. Below is an example where the fragment comes in the first line:

termites . . .  
bringing the fence  
to its knees

*Adjei Agyei-Baah, The Mamba, Issue 3*

And below is another example where the fragment comes as the third line:

neighbours  
rushing to their clothes . . .  
sudden rain

*Taofeek Ayeyemi, Frogpond, Volume 42.2, 2019*

Thus, haiku is the creation of two images (one in the fragment, the other in the phrase) connected by a cutting. This is because it is the kireji that establishes the connection between them whether there is a contrast or a continuity. In other words, by position, we mean the juxtaposition or superposition of the two images; which either links or establishes a shift between both images.

### ***iii. [the quality of being read in a breath or with just a single pause]***

When it's taking too long to finish reading a haiku, then it is in a bad taste. Haiku should be so brief and urgent so much that it is readable in a breath. And that's why it is regarded as a "wordless poem" by Dr Eric Amman. The shorter, the better. Furthermore, the late Robert Spiess, a long-time editor of Modern Haiku, in his "Speculations" said, "*Another reason for the brevity of haiku is that the more words the more distance, the more silence the more proximity.*" The 5-7-5 of haiku means there are 17 syllables. Thus generally, English haiku should not exceed the 17 syllabic count and it is best written lesser; there are haiku of 8 syllables. In the end, the syllabic count is needless, just ensure it is as brief as possible.

### ***iv. [the significance of aha or surprise moment]***

In writing haiku, you don't just write everything you see or think you should write. Haiku shares a significant event, and this is called the "aha moment." By this we mean

you are sharing something rare, or something ordinary that is rarely noticed, thereby making it extraordinary; something vital about a scene, that wowed and surprised you. You don't just write about a bird that's flying, that's not a new thing. But you can show us the mud that descends as the bird ascends, as in the below haiku:

egrets' flight . . .  
mud returning  
into mud

*Taofeek Ayeyemi, Akitsu Quarterly, Summer 2020*

If you just write everything or anything, you will end up writing a "so-what haiku." The rain falls and people are running, so what? Isn't it what a reasonable man should do? Instead of just writing that, did someone bends to pick his cap. Did someone hold her dangling breast as it is in the below verse:

sudden rain . . .  
a girl cups her breast  
in flight

*Adjei Agyei-Baah, Frogpond, Vol. 41:3, 2018*

#### ***v. [the rules of objectivity, simplicity and sincerity, among others]***

##### ***a. Objectivity (Kyakukansei)***

*"In philosophy, objectivity is the concept of truth independent from individual subjectivity (bias caused by one's perception, emotions, or imagination). A proposition is considered to have objective truth when its truth conditions are met without bias caused by a sentient subject." —Wikipedia*

Objectivity in haiku means to write in a photographic manner, showing exactly what you see, rather than describing it and explaining what and how you feel about it. That is, don't tell us what you feel, only show us what you see. Then, readers intuit their feeling and meaning independently. Like *Barnabas Adeleke* will say, "*Haiku is a snapshot of event, not a selfie with the event.*"

In other words, objectivity means to separate facts from feelings. I've once written a fine verse but only wrote what I felt without producing fact for readers to self-intuit. It reads:

the rainwater  
unfit for use . . .  
dusty roof

Here, I've already judged the water. Instead of showing what I saw, I tell what I feel about the water. So while revising it, I have the below:

a second look  
at the rainwater . . .  
dusty roof

This poem will command emotional participation of the readers who will ask why is the personae taking a second look at the water? Is there anything therein? And behold, the dusty roof; what's the relationship. Oh, the roof upon which the rain is falling is dust-laden, and has got the dust deposited into the bucket arranged under the eaves to collect rainwater.

#### b. Simplicity or Lightness (*Karumi*)

Simplicity or Lightness means that you have to write the verse as simple as possible. Don't add any wit or poesy. Haiku is written in simple language. By tradition, it is said to be a discipline and not a poetry, as such poetic devices are needless. In fact, the lightness extends to understating some words because of their sensitivity. Such as writing chest instead of breast, emptying my bowel instead of defecating, and so on.

The lightness aesthetics helps in achieving the crux of the rule of objectivity: to achieve reader's participation. *Haruo Shirane* said something on this: "In contrast to the "heavy" poem, which is conceptual or leaves little room for alternative interpretations, the poetics of lightness leaves a space for the reader to become an imaginative participant." And that's what Elaine Andrei meant when she said: "*By avoiding intellectual or emotional gloss, the reader is invited to participate through what is left unsaid.*"

Micheal Dylan Welch says in his essay "Laughing with Karumi:

"Toward the end of his poetic career, Bashō advocated karumi, or "lightness," in his haiku. His work went through many stages throughout his life, but his aesthetic ideals culminated in karumi. I've come to interpret this aesthetic principle as a way of treating one's subject lightly, to not manhandle it, as if one's poem were like catching a soap bubble without popping it. Apparently, though, some readers are insufficiently sensitive to appreciate such deliberate lightness, or don't know how to look for it."

While explaining how Bashō revised poems to avoid heaviness (*omomi*) and to give them lightness, and notes how he criticized some poems for having too much heaviness through allegory and symbolism, *Haruo Shirane* says this: “Like so many of Bashō’s critical terms, *karumi* defies easy definition. In its most general form, as a salient characteristic of Japanese art from cooking to painting, “lightness” is a minimalist aesthetic, stressing simplicity and leanness. For Bashō, it meant a return to everyday subject matter and diction, a deliberate avoidance of abstraction and poetic posturing, and relaxed, rhythmical, seemingly artless expression”

In his essay “*Karumi: Matsuo Bashō’s Ultimate Poetical Value, Or was it?*,” Susumi Takiguchi resolves that “By way of conclusion, I would propose that *karumi*, a preoccupation of Bashō’s final years, was an extremely important vehicle by which he tried to merge the refined, traditional poetic style of aristocratic vein with the new, humorous and light-hearted style of the common herd, using ordinary words and everyday subjects, thus perpetuating the creation of the *Shofu*, which would be an entirely new Japanese poetic expression.”

### c. Sincerity (*Makoto*)

While objectivity means a writer should avoid emotional input, sincerity means he should avoid intellectual input. It means to be real. While growing, we are fond of two Chinese actors; Jackie Chan and Jet Li. But my father will watch Jackie Chan's movies with us because he is always real, unlike Jet Li whose movies are heavy with film tricks. Thus, be a Jackie Chan with your haiku, not a Jet Li.

Robert Spiess succinctly put it when he wrote "Many haiku of quality combine unexpectedness with inevitability — that “shock of mild surprise” (Blyth), followed immediately by the felt-significance of “Of course, that’s just as it is.” The just-as-it-is-ness in a haiku is the end product of *makoto*. As a haiku poet, you're a photographer, you snap things and not to later subject it to editing. Sincerity means you have to be truthful. Show us how you see it and what exactly you see.

In haiku, a bird doesn't lift the world, you don't see the future in a pond, a cat doesn't write a letter. Anywhere such wit is employed, then it's a mainstream free verse poem; not a haiku, never a haiku. Don't say fear eats me up, fear is inanimate. The sky cannot roar, it's not a lion; be sincere to simply write thunderstorm.

Below is a haiku at its first draft:

at a gunshot  
hundred bats unperch –  
foggy night

When I realized it fails the "truth" aesthetic, I revised it. The lie here is the modifier "hundred." It's impossible for me to have counted the bats, even if as a matter of fact they're more than a hundred. So I edited as follows:

foggy night . . .  
a swamp of bats unperch  
at a gunshot

*Taofeek Ayeyemi, The Mamba, Issue 7 (2019)*

#### ***vi. [.....others]***

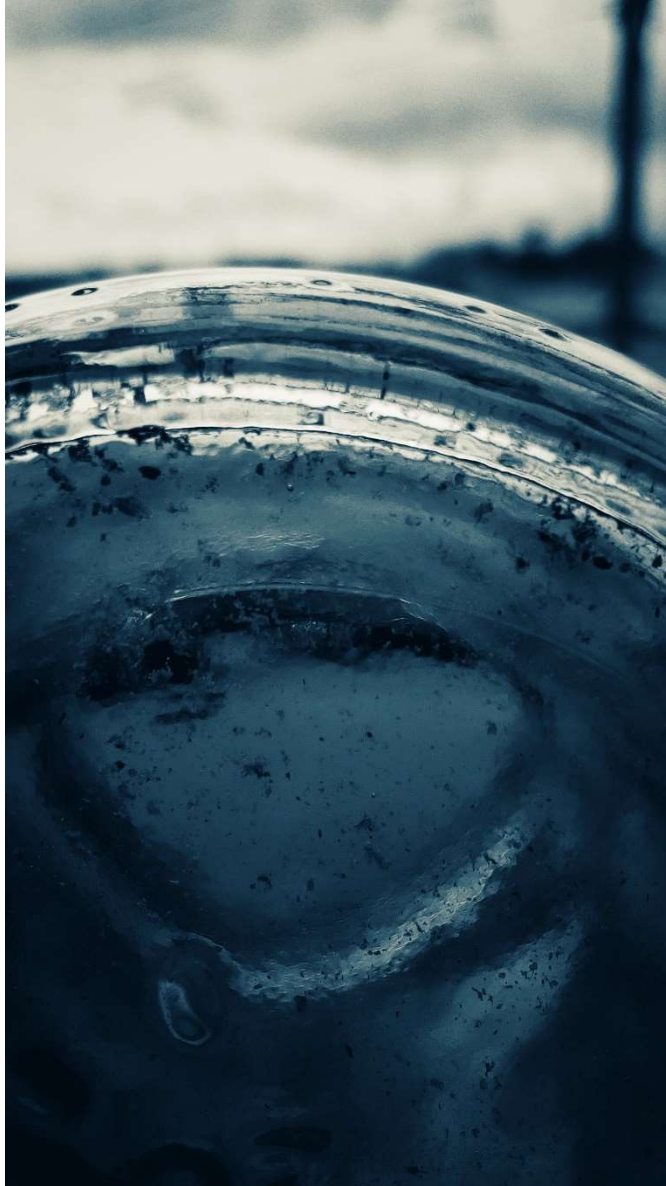
If the above qualities are observed, the beauties [others] of haiku will manifest. In the analysis of a good haiku, one or more of (and not limited to) these principles or concepts will be found: subtlety (*hosomi*), emotional participation (*kokoro ni kaku*), unification of setting and emotions (*keijō itchi*), sense of loneliness and desolation (*wabi*), roughness (*kōko*) continuity and deepness (*yūgen*), a strong communion with the whole creation (*mono no aware*), and sketches of nature (*shasei*).

By way of conclusion, a good haiku should be written almost halfly so that the readers deduce and intuit the remaining half, so that readers will have a moment of reflection.

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**Taofeek Ayeyemi** fondly called Aswagaawy is a Nigerian lawyer, writer and author of *Tongueless Secrets* (Ethel Press, 2021) and *aubade at night or serenade in the morning* (Flowersong Press, TBD 2021). His works are featured or forthcoming in *Lucent Dreaming*, *Feral*, *winnow*, *Up-the-Staircase Quarterly*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *the QuillS*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Cattails*, *Seashores*, *Presence*, *The Mamba* and elsewhere. He won the 2021 Loft Books Flash Fiction Competition, honorable mention prizes in the 2020 Stephen A. Dibiase Poetry Prize, 2020 Akita International Haiku Contest, 2020 Fujisan Taisho Tanka Contest, among others. He tweets @Aswagaawy

# *Review & Interview*





## **Degrees of Acquaintance** by *Glenn G. Coats* (Snapshot Press, 2019)

[[http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks/Degrees\\_of\\_Acquaintance.pdf](http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks/Degrees_of_Acquaintance.pdf)]

### ***Reviewed by Taofeek Ayeyemi***

A good haibun will always take readers back to Basho's "The Narrow Road to the Interior" and a good haiku reminds one of his "Old pond;" and that's exactly what Coats' works did to me due to his keen attention to details and vivid description of events, even though his haiku seem to model after Shiki and, sometimes, Buson. In "Right of Way," he almost relive the transitory and observatory spirit of the Bashō's "Oku no Hosomichi:"

“Directions take me down a winding road, past stands of pine, open fields, small farmhouses with smoke curling from chimneys. I park on a lane as instructed, open the gate, then drive through a pasture, stop and open a second gate that leads down to a cottage.”

The first haibun of the collection introduces the poet as one who has secrets, gist and events flying to him where he sits observing a number of other concerns. And he prefers to remain a bystander rather than being a meddlesome interloper:

“Cars are parked half on the drive, half off. Garage lights stay on all night long and it must cost them a fortune. Wife starts to prune the holly bushes then stops, leaves the bucket and gloves on the lawn. Someone should take that dog away from them. Never gets a walk, coat looks like wild brush. I’d offer to take him around the block but these days—I mind my own business.

rain on the inn  
gossip settles  
in the corners

In the title haibun, "Degree of Acquaintances," we see a barber who probably has the shop passed down to her by her mother who had cut for the poet for a relatively long time. It's the long-term patronage that established such level of familiarity:

“She understands me well enough to say, “You don’t seem like yourself today. Is something wrong?” She asks about my son who is seeing a girl who is younger than he is. “Could you bring him in for a haircut? I’d like to see what he looks like.”

A number of haibun in this collection addresses the poet's cordial relationship with one person or another, thereby rising to the occasion of the book title. I find the atmosphere of acquaintance painted in "Wild Onions" more resonating. Towards the end, we read:

“Wade and his two sisters eat a whole loaf of bread for breakfast. His mom smiles each time she flips another slice of French toast. Says I need fattening up.

At night, I sleep on the top bunk. Windows are wide open. Wade’s sisters flash by the doorway, laughing in the middle of the night, not wearing a stitch. No one says, “You girls get dressed now, we’ve got company.” No one says anything. It doesn’t really matter—not all that much.

fireflies  
the blur of fingerprints  
on a mason jar

The haiku above easily passes as my favorite in the collection for its simple yet vibrant composition. The poet invites the reader's sense of seeing to the luminous sight of a group of fireflies, thereby nourishing a poetic feeling of ecstasy. Described as nocturnal beetles common in warm regions, fireflies are kigo for summer. The fingerprints on the jar shows constant usage – is it a jar for storing butter which the kids have eaten from for their toast mentioned in the prose? Another reasonable question is to ask if the fireflies are in the jar, their lights thereby revealing the fingerprints on the jar from the inside. As a quality of good haiku, this verse invokes reader's participation.

In furtherance, it has been said that haiku is a snapshot of event and not a selfie with it, a haijin is therefore expected to distant himself from the body of his verse as much as possible. The verse below from the title haibun employs such quality:

nine days of rain  
ground too soft  
to walk on

We intuit from this verse's prose that the poet is on the move to and from the barber's shop, but in the verse, instead of saying "the ground too soft for me to walk on," he removes himself from the scene and captures the image rightly. Such beauty can also be found in the following monoku from "Creatures of Habit:"

the ebb and flow of it river dusk

From “Answers” which is the closing haibun, we find a work that takes us to an event towards year's end narrating the activities of a couple during the period vis-a-vis their intimacy:

Tonight, the water troughs are frozen solid. I stab at them with a screwdriver and try to make holes wide enough for a cow's muzzle. My wife boils pots of water that I carry up to the fields and pour over the ice. “Cows will weaken if they have to eat snow,” she says.

Tomorrow, I will push troughs together and move the cows into one pasture. Heat from an island of them might keep the water from freezing. “Time to call it quits,” I hear my wife call. When I look back at the porch light—no one is there.

winter wind  
pines shake off  
the dead

Striking the balance between brevity and muchness, the prose in this collection are not too lengthy nor insufficient – none but one stretches beyond a page, and are accompanied by unflinching verses that, in a corroborative spirit, recreate events in the now moment with vivid and unpadding images.

It's not surprising to have such stellar work from Coats who is an experienced and established haibun poet, editor of the defunct Haibun Today and has appeared in a number of prestigious journals. Coats is the author of *Snow on the Lake* (2013, Pineola Publishing, Prospect VA), *Beyond the Muted Trees* (2014, Pineola Publishing, Prospect VA), *waking and dream* (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) and *Furrows of Snow* (2019, Turtle light Press, Arlington VA) which won the 2019 TLP Haiku Chapbook Competition.

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**Taofeek Ayeyemi** fondly called Aswagaawy is a Nigerian lawyer, writer and author of *Tongueless Secrets* (Ethel Press, 2021) and *aubade at night or serenade in the morning* (Flowersong Press, TBD 2021). His works are featured or forthcoming in *Lucent Dreaming*, *Feral*, *winnow*, *Up-the-Staircase Quarterly*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *the Quills*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Cattails*, *Seashores*, *Presence*, *The Mamba* and elsewhere. He won the 2021 Loft Books Flash Fiction Competition, honorable mention prizes in the 2020 Stephen A. Dibiase Poetry Prize, 2020 Akita International Haiku Contest, 2020 Fujisan Taisho Tanka Contest, among others. He tweets @Aswagaawy

## **The Hole in My Haiku** by *Susan Beth Furst* (Paper Whistle Press, 2020)

[[paperwhistlepress.com/shop/ols/products/the-hole-in-my-haiku](http://paperwhistlepress.com/shop/ols/products/the-hole-in-my-haiku)]

***Reviewed by Hemapriya Chellappan***

Although I have been reading Susan Furst's wonderful haiku for a while, this is my first time reading one of her children's books and it grabbed my attention immediately because of its subject: The Holocaust. From the prologue which features an anecdote involving the author and her mother-in-law, you sure can tell this book is going to be fascinating. This beautiful book is written from a child's perspective about human condition during a war and the poetic response to one of the startling and horrible events in history.

For such a dark theme, the illustrations by this super talented artist, Jiliane Vilches, wonderfully captures the mood of the poet herself and that of the characters in the story in a new light.

As a child I have always been fascinated by oppression stories, but not in a morbid way – it is much more complex than that. I have always wondered and wanted to understand why a human being is cruel to another human being and what makes them commit such indescribable atrocities. Obviously, that left a deep mark in me. I feel at young age one should be taught the stories of resilience and valor, as it is a strong reminder to learn from the past and to respect those who are able to bounce back and be examples for the rest of the world. In that respect, Susan begins with a haiku about cherry blossom, which itself is a symbol of hope and transience.

clouds  
I fly through the holes  
cherry blossoms

As you can see, Samuel's escape from the harsh reality is through haiku which he learns from his loving grandfather, he uses a hole (figuratively speaking a hole in their lives) to enter his imagination and fly across the clouds and immerse in cherry blossoms. This is particularly painful as it can suggest any innocent child in the shoes of Samuel, who survived the WWII and the holocaust. Readers may succumb in sorrow at this point, but I would like to think Samuel survived and become a grandfather himself to tell his story to his grandchildren which is evident from the following haiku:

barbed-wire  
I touch the branches  
of the cherry tree

This haiku is a great end to the book that allows for considerable reflection on survival, human condition and mortality. A hopeful read, and a most important one as it teaches to treasure what we have.

I also like the additional holocaust haiku written by a few haiku poets...

Especially this one by Alan Summers:

pink bullets  
an armadillo ricochets  
off the blossom

I can easily picture this haiku and it tugs at my heartstrings the fragile innocence of it all against the glaring backdrop of war. What a strong emotion this evokes!

When I read the following haiku by Robert Epstein, I could not help myself but feel the fear, pain, and suffering that the Jews had to endure during this cursed time.

how mother and daughter  
stuck together long after  
the Holocaust

Under normal circumstances, the mother and daughter sticking together for long would have been sweet but set in that historical time makes it even more grueling and painful. While they were in concentration camps this mother and daughter duo would have cried their Japanese napkin to pulp, starved and buried their dreams. This depressing scene and the raw emotions are captured by Chrissi Villa's artful haiku as follows:

a mouse snatches  
the last breadcrumbs  
starless night

Last but not the least this haiku by Herb Furst is so deep and intense, that I honestly have no words for it.

ghetto train leaving Lodz  
one hundred and twenty miles...

While it is easy to breeze through the pages of the book, it is utterly difficult to hear the wails of grief, pain and anger whispering through the pages and the words standing as a testimony to the strength of mankind and faith in the humanity itself.

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**Susan Beth Furst** is an award winning poet, author and storyteller. She combined her love of haiku poetry and children's picture books to create the first haiku storybook: *The Amazing Glass House*. Susan loves history, fairytales and hopeful endings. She believes that with God all things are possible.

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**Hemapriya Chellappan** is an engineer turned haiku poet who resides in Pune, India. She took to Japanese short forms in the summer of 2019. Her work has previously appeared in *The Heron's Nest*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Hedgerow*, *Acorn*, *The Cicada's Cry*, *Prune Juice* among others. When she isn't daydreaming she writes jokes, sketches landscapes, hums old songs and makes excellent tea.

## **THINK OF WHAT YOUR WORK CAN DO FOR THE WORLD: AN INTERVIEW SESSION WITH TIMI SANNI by Shitta Faruq**

Timi Sanni is a writer, editor, and Muslim literature advocate. He is the Founder of The Muslim Write Initiative and Founding Editor of Iman Collective. An NF2W poetry and fiction scholar, his work appears or is forthcoming in Olongo Africa, Palette Poetry, Down River Road, Drinking Gourd Magazine, The Temz Review, X-R-A-Y Literary, and elsewhere. He is a reader for CRAFT literary and Liminal Transit Review and an editor at Kalopsia Literary, The Quills and Upwrite Magazine. He is the winner of the SprinNG Poetry Contest and Fitrah Review Short Story Prize 2020. He was also nominated for the 2020 Young Writers and Creatives Award. Find him on twitter @timisanni

**To begin with, we will like to know some things about you; your background, growing up, why and how you became a writer and how long?**

I was born in Epe, Lagos and I was very quiet and introverted as a child. I don't really know how I came to love books or writing, but I guess that with staying indoors mostly while my siblings went out to play, it's not a mystery how I turned to books for companionship. I delved into books, lots of them –even the ones I didn't understand much at the time.

I was fascinated with the different lives and worlds in stories I read. I discovered as a child what words could do and so I began to write. I was about seven years old when I started writing and my parents being open and recognizing the passion I had for words, let me. They even encouraged me by buying me books, pens and writing booklets. I have been writing since then.

**What writing style do you find easy to pull out, how do you work and what inspires your work?**

I'm not really sure I know or can put a name to what writing style I employ in my writing, but I have found that my truest style is something close to my voice. And voice here, I'll define as the natural way a person expresses their thoughts. It is naturally to take nuances from works you read and especially love but I think, it comes easier if the style is not wholly borrowed, in a way, but redefined or introduced into one's. I don't have any profound writing ritual. Sometimes, an inspiration hits and I quickly write it down. Other times, I sit down and tell myself to work.

**How many works have you written so far, where have your works been published, your published books and contests won?**

I can't say exactly how many works I've written so far, or even published online. I have been published as my bio states in Palette Poetry, X-R-A-Y Literary, The Temz Review and more. I won the SprinNG Poetry Contest, the Fitrah Review Short Story Prize 2020 and recently was Third-place winner of the Stephen A DiBiase Poetry Prize. I haven't published any book yet. I am currently working on my novel and a chapbook.



**How do you relax? What do you like to read in your free time and how do you find or make time to write?**

I take a cool bath, watch movies, drink some coffee, or take a walk. Sometimes, it's really hard to find time to write, especially if you're a student. But I think it helps to set a schedule. Either have a target of word count or number of poems to write in a given period or set out some time during, say your weekend to do your writing.

**What are the basic themes you muse on and what project(s) are you working on at the present?**

I am mostly inspired by the themes of justice, love, life, the human relationship with God and the concept of Godhood. As I said earlier, I'm working on a novel – a Muslim fiction novel set in Nigeria, and also a chapbook of poems that explores different relationships with God.

**Who are your favorite authors and what led to the favoritism?**

I have so many favorite authors that I can't name all of them here, but over the top of my head, I'll mention Ilya Kaminsky, Rashaq Malik Gbolahan, Adedayo Agarau, Kwame Dawes, Taylor Byas, IS Jones, Gabriella Bates, Kaveh Akbar... That's for poetry. For prose, I'll say JK Rowling, Rotimi Babatunde, Makena Onjerika, Nnedi Okorafor... I am not sure. I love these authors for different reasons but of these I will say resonance, style and innovation. I'm drawn to works that

reach deep into human feelings and also works that breaks conventional barriers.

**What is the hardest thing about writing and what are the challenges you've faced as a writer vis-à-vis your achievement?**

Hardest thing about writing. I'm tempted to say "everything" (smiles) For me, it changes. Sometimes it's writing the first draft. There is this good advice to first write the "shitty first draft" but sometimes, I lose myself in the story or encounter a block and the process of writing gets so gruesome. Other times, it's editing. There are times when I edit a work so many times I lose count. I know the work needs to get somewhere and I'm gradually shaping it to be, but I also can't get it off my mind – the doubt that the work will be what I want to be.

vis-a-vis my achievements, I'll say "rejection" because it is a challenge. But as cliché as it sounds, perseverance gets us through it. We keep on trying, submitting and we'll realize our goal.

**Aside from being a writer, what other career would you settle for?**

Artist. Teacher. Scientist

**What are your ambitions for your writing career, and generally where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?**

My ambitions for my writing career are pretty huge. I hope to publish books, build libraries, start foundations to support writers (young writers

especially) and artists... In five years' time, I see myself giving even more back to the community

**What advice would you give to aspiring writers, emerging writers and the established writers at large?**

"It's a process. Don't be too caught up in the hustle culture. We are all going to grow. Take it easy. Breathe. Live. Think of what your work (your words) can do for the world. Think beyond self. Think of what you want to change in the world."

**How can readers discover more about you and read more of your work?**

Readers can read my work via my linktree ([linktr.ee/timisanni](https://linktr.ee/timisanni))

**Thank you very much for your time!**

It's my pleasure. It's a real honour to be here tonight

### About the Interviewer

*Shitta Faruq Adémólá* is a young Muslim Poet, Phone Photographer and Fiction Writer From Nigeria. He is the author of a forthcoming microchap "All I Know Is I Am Going To Be Beautiful One Day" (Ghost City Press, 2021), and a chapbook "Night Club With Dogs" (INKspired, 2021). His works have appeared or are forthcoming in Jalada Africa, Dream Glow, Serotonin, FERAL, Third Estate Art, Rigorous Magazine, Icefloe Press, and elsewhere. He is the winner of the Fitrah review poetry prize, 2021; a joint winner in the Shuzia PenProtest Contest, 2020; a joint winner in the Shuzia redemption poetry contest 2021, and a joint winner in PIN 10-DAY Poetry challenge (November 2020). He is a Poetry editor at Litround, and tweets @shittafaruqade1.

## **PROCESS IS KEY, NO SHORT CUT TO BEING GOOD WITH THE CRAFT: AN INTERVIEW SESSION WITH JIDE BADMUS** *by Shitta Faruq*

*Jide Badmus is inspired by beauty and destruction; he believes that things in ruins were once beautiful. He is the author of There is a Storm in my Head, Scripture, Paper Planes in the Rain, and Paradox of Little Fires; curator and editor of Vowels Under Duress; Coffee; Today, I Choose Joy and; How to Fall in Love anthologies. Badmus writes from Lagos, Nigeria.*

**To begin with, we will like to know some things about you; your background, growing up, why and how you became a writer and how long?**

I'm first of 4 children, 2 boys, 2 girls. Born and bred in Ilorin, Kwara state. Dad was a Town planner, and lecturer, now retiree. Mum was a secondary school geography teacher, then principal, now retired. I studied electrical engineering at the university of ilorin. I'm a practicing engineer

I started writing as a boy. I would draw comics and write stories in 2A exercise books and share with my parents and siblings. But i started writing poetry in my second year of university. 2001. I wrote two poems and misplaced them. Found them exactly a year after (because i dated them), read them and never looked back from then

I'm sure you are waiting for one big and deep reason why i write. There is none. I write because i discovered i have a way with words. I play with language. I try to tell stories

**So, what writing style do you find easy to pull out, how do you work and what inspires your work?**

I love brevity. I love the concept of duality. Duality as in a coin. As in perspective. As in bias, what you see may not be absolute. Everything inspires me. But like my bio says, beauty inspires me. Destruction too. I usually imagine how ruins were once beautiful. I write mostly in my head, over a stretch of time. I write in transit because i travel a lot. So when in flight or when in a bus or a cab, it's an opportunity to put some poems together.

**How many works have you written so far, where have your works been published, your published books and contests won?**

I doubt if I've won any contest. I rarely put in for contests. I have 4 books of poetry: There is a Storm in my Head (2017), Scripture (2018), Paper Planes in the Rain (with Pamilerin Jacob, 2019) and Paradox of Little Fires (2021). I have curated several anthologies too: Vowels Under Duress; Coffee; Today, I Choose Joy; and How to Fall in Love.

**Great! How do you relax? What do you like to read in your free time and how do you find or make time to write?**

I watch movies. I love psychological mysteries and action movies. I watch soccer. I love good food and wine. Like i said earlier, i use my journeys to write. I am also an early riser. After my prayers, i meditate and put some lines together before the world wakes. I'm a Man Utd fan too.

**What are the basic themes you muse on and what project(s) are you working on at the present?**

My main themes focus on sensuality and healing. I am working on another chapbook with Alozor Michael. I am also working on a Poetry EP with Elizabeth Akunyili, to be released August 31<sup>st</sup>. The EP is titled BODY; we will be exploring everything about the body. The abuse, the failings and healing process, sexuality and sensuality. Mark your calendar. EP is Extended Play, it's a music term. We are working on audio, recited poems with music.

**Who are your favorite authors and what led to the favoritism?**

Niyi Osundare, Amu Nnadi, Michael Faudet and Rudy Fransisco. I've been fascinated by Uche Nduka for the past year too. Niyi, for me, is the king of metaphors. His simplicity and clarity is what i admire. His fascination with nature. Amu Nnadi, who i call father, is a love poet. His works take me to realms i can't explain. Rudy is good with dualism. He also brings out deep

messages from mundane themes. Faudet is an erotic poet i admire. I read many others, but these guys are my highlight.

**What is the hardest thing about writing and what are the challenges you've faced as a writer vis-à-vis your achievement?**

Consistency is the hardest. You can't write one great piece once. Each new poem has to beat the last. Finding your voice can also be hard. As a growing writer, if you sound different from the known names and styles, you are easily dismissed. I think, what can be difficult too, is balancing reading and writing. You must be a reader to write well. But each task has its own space. When i read i don't write, i only take notes. Because it is easy to just "remix" what you are reading (smiles). You will just find yourself sounding like what you're reading.

**Aside from being a writer, what other career would you settle for?**

I'm an electrical engr. But i am intrigued by war and wild life photography.

**What are your ambitions for your writing career, and generally where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?**

The path I've been paving is one that brings more recognition to poetry and poets. So, more anthologies. More Masterclasses. Publishing house. Awards and recognition

**What advice would you give to aspiring writers, emerging writers and the established writers at large?**

Keep writing. Keep studying. Keep finding those opportunities. Don't forget, process is key. No shortcut to being good with the craft. You learn, you grow. Be consistent. Be visible. Find a community

**Thank you sir. How can readers discover more about you and read more of your work?**

jidebadmus.com (my website) and I am @bardmus on Twitter

**Thank you for your time sir. I'm grateful.**

Thanks Faruq. Thanks for having me

### About the Interviewer

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# *Visual Arts*





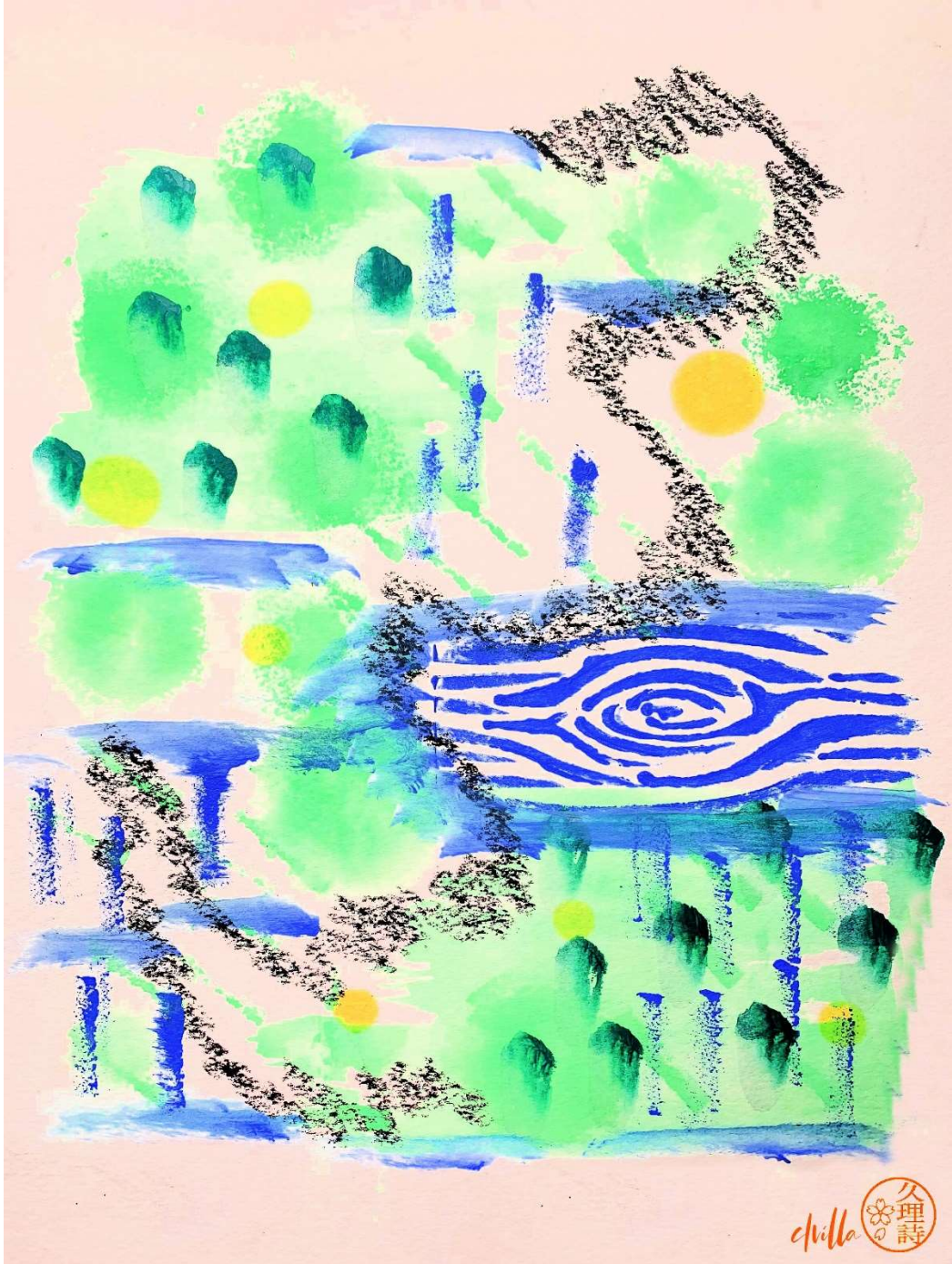
Christine "Chrissi" Villa (USA)



**If You Believe**



*Christine "Chrissi" Villa (USA)*



**If You Let It Flow**  
*Christine "Chrissi" Villa (USA)*



Christine "Chrissi" Villa (USA)

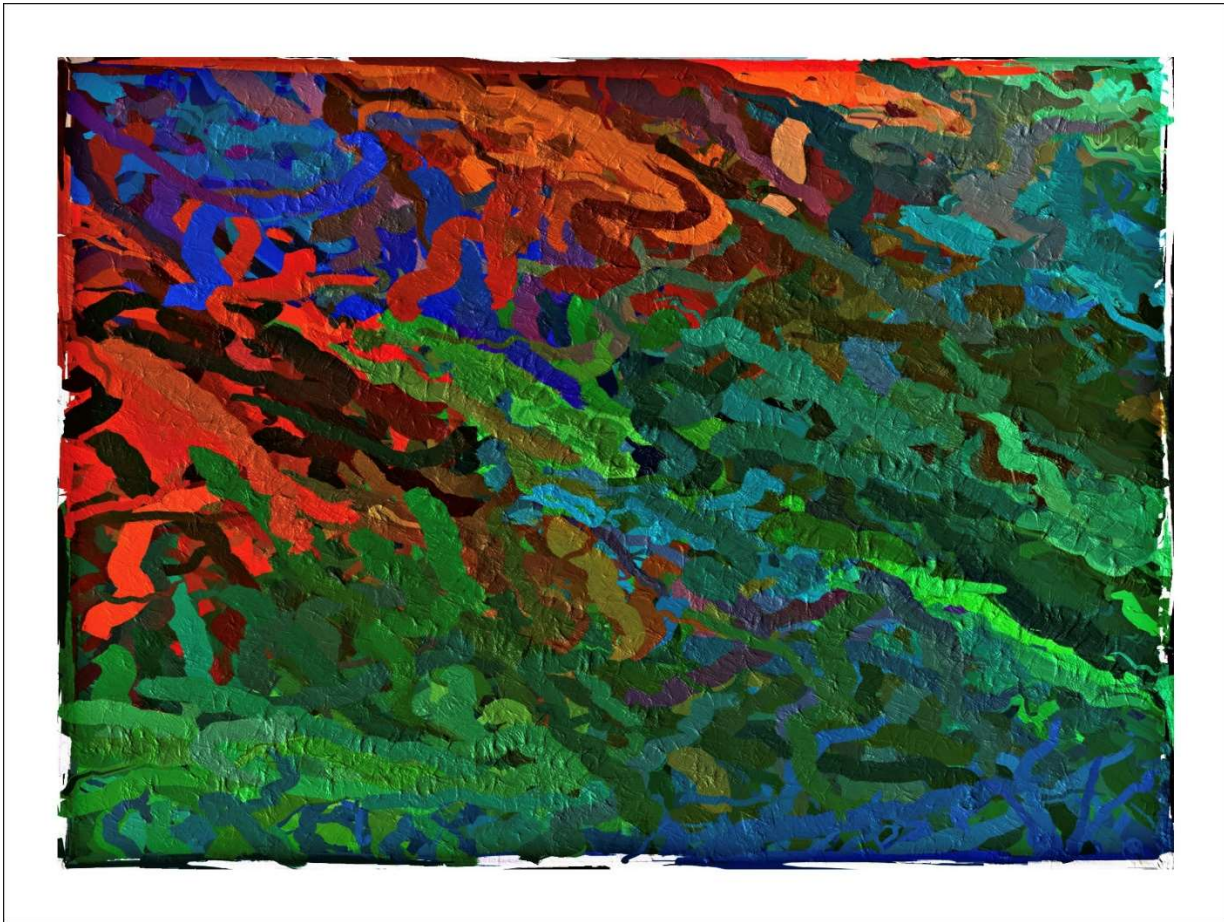


## If You Plant a Seed

*Christine "Chrissi" L. Villa* is an award-winning tanka and haiku poet published in respected online and print journals. Her collection of Japanese short-form poetry is entitled *The Bluebird's Cry*. She is the founding editor of *Frameless Sky* and of *Velvet Dusk Publishing*. This year she stepped down as editor of *Ribbons* to focus on her own writing and publishing business. She is also a children's book writer, speaker, and artist who dabbles in painting, doodling, and photography. [www.christinevilla.com](http://www.christinevilla.com)



*Debbie Strange (Canada)*



**Impasto Meandering #1**

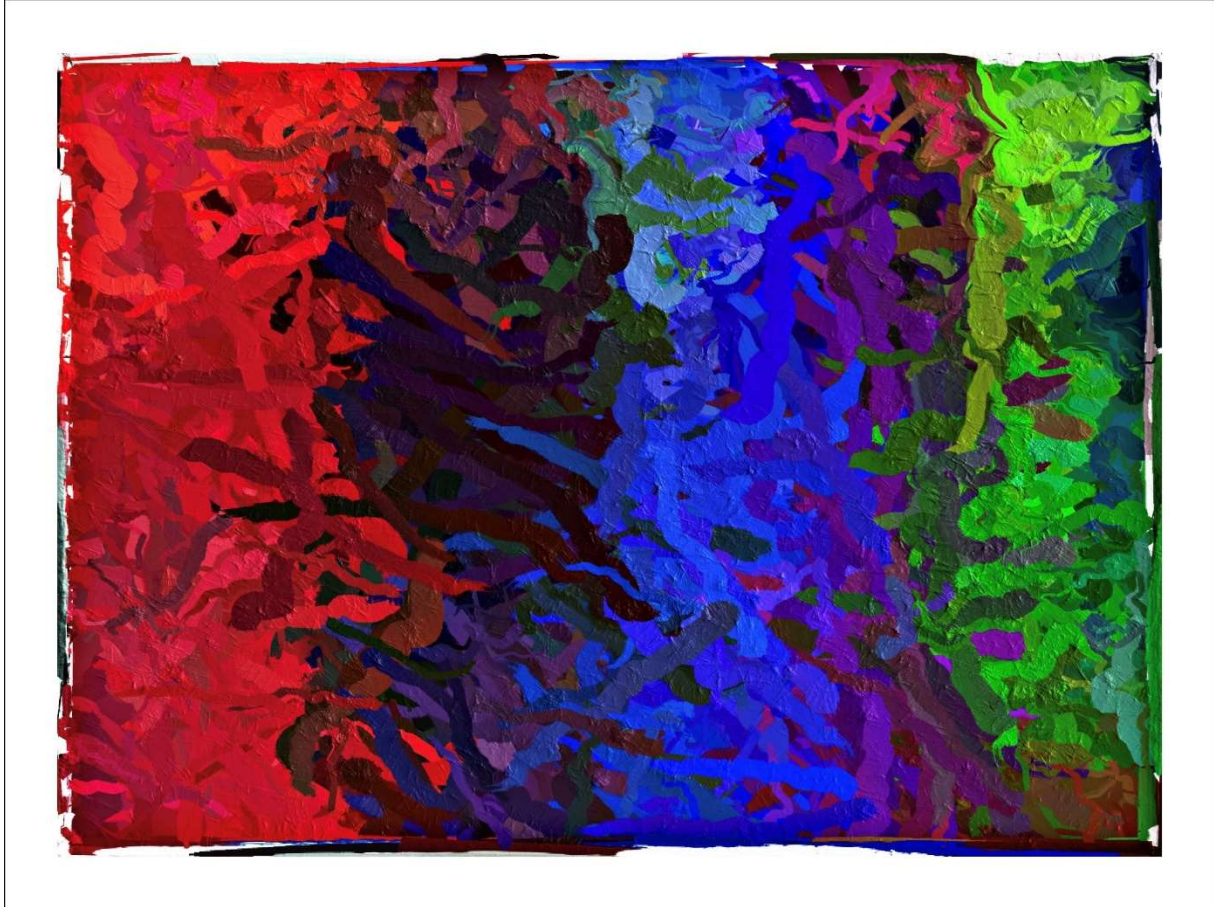
*Debbie Strange (Canada)*



**Impasto Meandering #2**



*Debbie Strange (Canada)*



### **Impasto Meandering #3**

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*Debbie Strange* is a Canadian short-form poet, artist, and photographer whose work has been widely published internationally. She is grateful to have recently received top honours in the 10th Setouchi-Matsuyama Photo-Haiku Contest, as well as the 2020 Snapshot Press Book Award. You are invited to explore an archive of her work at <https://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com> and to follow her on Twitter @Debbie\_Strange.





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*.....bridging bounds between bards*