

Fireflies' Light

A Magazine of Short Poems

Issue 27
March 2023



Missouri Baptist University
Department of English

Fireflies' Light

A Magazine of Short Poems

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Fireflies' Light is an online magazine that showcases short poems, essays on poetry and poetics, and book reviews. It is published twice a year by the Department of English at Missouri Baptist University, One College Park Dr., St. Louis, MO 63141. Interested students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the Department may submit manuscripts to john.han@mobap.edu. We consider up to ten poems (including collaborative ones), up to two essays on poetry and poetics (150-1,000 words), and up to two book reviews (500-1,000 words) during a reading period. Write "FL - your name" in the subject line (example: "FL - Erin Smith"). Paste your poems, book reviews, and essays into the body of an email. Submit haiga and other artworks as email attachments. Along with your work, we need a 100-word author bio written in third person and in complete sentences. (No sentence fragments or listing, please.) Begin the bio with your name. Below are the reading periods and target publication dates:

Reading Period	Target Publication Date
March	April 15
September	October 15

Submissions received outside the reading periods will be neither acknowledged nor considered. Short poetic forms include, but are not limited to, haiku, senryu, tanka, kyoka, sedoka, sijo, somonka, haibun, gembun, lanterne, ABC, cinqku, cinquain, couplet, Etheree, fibonacci (fib), free verse, limerick, lune, octet, quatrain, and triolet. A poem should follow the rules for the chosen form, and the author must identify the form used in the poem parenthetically after the title.

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The fireflies' light.
How easily it goes on
How easily it goes out again.
—*Chine-jo* (late 17th century) [Trans. Kenneth Rexroth]

*

though wrapped in
tissue paper...
a firefly's light
—*Kobayashi Issa* (1763-1828) [Trans. David G. Lanoue]

*

what on the other shore
tugs at its heart so?
in the evening dusk
over the Mogami River
a lone firefly
—*Mokichi Saitō* (1882–1953) [Trans. Makoto Ueda]

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Haiku

Ben Gaa

sleepless night
something paused
the cricket song

saying goodbye. . .
ducks fade into
lake fog

distant traffic
the stillness
of my hotel room

Randy Brooks

a walk to the park
Basho tucked under
my arm

today's haiku
a muddy watermelon
from the garden

snow all morning
high heels leave a trail
of exclamation points

Jay Friedenberg

sedimentary rock
the Pliocene and Miocene
only inches apart

body count
a field filled
with blood tulips

Thomas Smith

roasting chestnuts
holding hands
and remembering

Pitt Buerken

first willow catkins
yellow jackets refuel
for a new season

Bryan Rickert

tweaking it
with each refrain
mockingbird

autumn rain
the mud dauber's nest
returns to mud

mid-season thaw
geese call out
their landing

autumn mist
the disembodied voices
of crows

treetops at sunset
the bushiness of
squirrel tails

Keith Evetts

Easter Sunday
pigeons wait for crumbs
by the cathedral

a look back
down the zigzag path
spring mist

stopping
to catch my breath
winter jasmine

Joseph P. Wechselberger

inside a battered mailbox
wrapped in vines
a robin's nest

Valentine's Day
the gas station minimart
sold out of roses

starry night
the lullaby
of crickets

Tsanka Shishkova

rainbow
in the dripping icicles
midday sun

snowing
I lure a little doe
with acorns

Chen-ou Liu

letting go ...
the last maple leaves drift
into dawnlight

blossom rain ...
the widow's frayed curtains
part slightly

*

A Man of Few Words

(A haiku sequence for my father who was born in mainland China, lived most of his adult life in Taiwan, died and was buried there)

a lone star
Father's dreamworld becomes
his hospice window

the slanted beam
of a winter sun ...
Father's last smile

morning chill
a part of me lowered
with Father's coffin

sleepless again
I hear Father crying out
Mama, I'm coming home

this dream loop:
Father rides on my shoulders
into the Taiwan Strait

Father waving his hand
just before I wake up ...
this false dawn

Lori Becherer

the iridescence
of a rose bud
Japanese beetles

clouds darken
the slight sway
of a willow frond

blustery day
a sudden downpour
of crabtree blossoms

Cliffs of Moher
even there
dandelions

Sherry Grant

rock pool
trapped in her
hazel eyes

岩池
淪陷於她
淡褐色眼睛

Hazel Hall

backdrop

(A parallel haiku)

rumbling drums
candles lit
from heavenly heights
a mantra chanted
so little time
for safe passage

B.A. France

moonrise
continuously
out of grasp

Joshua St. Claire

cirrostratus moon
a spotlight
behind the scrim

the Christmas Star
by the front walk
a December dandelion

solfège
the dawn chorus wakes
the sun

Bisshie

heat haze
where the tarmac
meets the sky

Edward Cody Huddleston

memory
how earth shapes water
shapes earth

unknown bulb
digging into
the future

funeral bouquets
arranging our
memories

Gary Hotham

quiet watch
a century surrounds
the war memorial

Kevin Browne

an unmowed path
purple wood violets
cradle the dew

night shift
snails leave
a trail of slime

winter morning
a doe licks
at the back porch

B. L. Bruce

conversations
with the silk moth
bright moon

my mother's house
jasmine blossoms
unfolding in the rain

sound of water
the mountain stream's
poetry

Ram Chandran

ebbing sea fog
the fishermen return home
with the rising sun

wildflowers too need watering...
granny's logic

Hemapriya Chellappan

we need to talk winter rain

warm spring day
the giant millipede's slow descent
into the crack

spring mountain air thick with wing beats

John Zheng

Momentary Stay

yard mowing
a patch of daisies
left for bees

...

raking at dusk
dispatching seeds
of a dandelion

...

harvest time
a flock of songbirds
pecking the stubble field

...

backroad after rain
driving slowly to avoid
hitting dragonflies head-on

...

evening walk
yesterday's night heron
no longer seen

...

autumn stars
crickets chirping
good luck

Thirteen Views of Birding

1
alarm at dawn
the roof dish jackhammered
by a woodpecker

2
the robin's cheer-up call
a merry-go-around
in the sleep

3
graying dusk
starlings swirling and gyrating
over stubble fields

4
moonrise
on the back of a black cow
a great egret

5
central park
looking up at a crow
chasing a barn owl

6
in the metronome
of a mourning dove's coo
lap walking

7
rest area
the cheerful song
of a mockingbird

8
daybreak
a black-capped chickadee's
chatter bushes out

9
sunrise
a cardinal's mating call
glimmers through trees

10
spring wind
swallows swooping
here and there

11
autumn rain
a cuckoo reads its
musical notation

12
a reed warbler's
(whistle over waving reeds)
dream song

13
twilight
red wingtips of a blackbird
quiver and shimmer

Maya Daneva

no new gossip
the birds leave
my backyard feeder

wide open spatterdock...
the scent of the sunset
in the half-dried swamp

summer at Lake Tahoe
the shades of green
in grandma's eyes

C.X. Turner

reflections...
the watery mirror
of my past

Mason Arledge

single star
the bright glow
of loneliness

Gembun

Pitt Buerken

power blackout

the novelist

fears

for his file

Tan Renga

Uchechukwu Onyedikam / Christina Chin

*The Blessed Virgin
lays her newborn
in the manger
cold
and dark*

*a bright light
before dawn
the third day
—jailbreak
at the Garden Tomb*

Christina Chin / M. R. Defibaugh

first days of winter
freezing in a hospital
waiting room
we offer the old lady
our thermos flask

Arxan winter
a bubbling spring flows
under the volcano
old lava formations
shrouded in snow

in warm
anorak jackets
the couple naps
on a small couch
late winter rain

Haibun

Marilyn Humbert

Midnight

Deep in the eucalypt forest beside a billabong we find a moonbeam bridge. It's the place where wind sighs in the canopy above tall trunks and stalks rustle in the understory. An owl's hoot startles, unknown wings flap. Kangaroo shadows shift and still as the mob grazes closer and closer to the water. The tar-black sky is alive with watchful eyes.

tick tock...
the time between
film frames

Rengay

Sherry Grant / Zoe Grant

Growing Up

oak branches
time to wave
goodbye

*a shower
of pine cones*

silver birch
the hidden part
marked by fire

*spruce or aspen
which will the builder
fall for?*

a circle of kauri
still standing

*growing up
pohutukawa
over great-grandma's grave*

(Translated into Chinese by Sherry Grant)

成長歷程

連軌詩

作者：火の鳥(紐西蘭) + 陳紫瑄(紐西蘭)

中文翻譯：火の鳥

橡樹枝

是該揮手告別

的時候了

一大堆松果

如陣雨般滑落

白樺樹

被火灼傷隱藏

起來的地方

雲杉亦或白楊

不知道建商會

選哪一種？

一圈貝殼衫

仍然屹立

成長歷程

曾祖母墳上的

紐西蘭聖誕樹

Hassane Zemmouri / *Sherry Grant*

Breaking News

bombed city news
around the supper table
dishes untouched

*the rag doll
left behind*

sound of missiles
a man feeding
homeless dogs

*sudden alarm
this is not
a dream*

evacuation
unfinished puzzle

*starlight
the point of
no return*

(Translated into French by Hassane Zemmouri)

Nouvelles Récentes

nouvelles de la ville bombardée
autour de la table du super
les plats intacts

*la poupée de chiffon
abandonnée*

bruit de missiles
un homme nourrit
des chiens sans abri

*alarme soudaine
ce n'est pas
un rêve*

évacuation
casse-tête inachevé

*lumière des étoiles
le point
de non-retour*

(Translated into Chinese by Sherry Grant)

新聞快報

連軌詩

作者：哈珊·簡莫力（阿爾及利亞）+ 火の鳥（紐西蘭）

中文翻譯：火の鳥

都市轟炸消息

晚飯桌上的餐筷

一點沒碰

遺落的

布娃娃

火箭聲響

有個男人替流浪犬

剝碎麵包

防空警報

這不是在

做夢

緊急疏散

沒完成的拼圖

星光爍爍

踏上了

不歸路

Wilda Morris / Barbara Eaton

Alas!

broken leg
from falling on ice
my winter's tale

*to a nunnery, go!
my new nursing home*

to be or not to be
at peace
a constant struggle

*by the pricking of my thumbs
something wicked this way comes
the nurse with a needle*

short days seem so long
winter of my discontent

*sister, content you in my discontent?
there is Covid
in every corner*

Split Sequences

Keith Evetts / *Françoise Maurice*

Fractals

surely

*in biting dawn
an owl's complaint:
will the days grow longer*

sans doute

*dans l'aube mordante
la plainte d'un hibou:
les jours vont-ils rallonger*

not by chance

*time stretches
between the stars
green comet*

pas par hasard

*le temps s'est étiré
entre les étoiles
comète verte*

Van Gogh

*the future saved
in a quiet smile
blue irises*

Van Gogh

*le futur sauvé
dans un silencieux sourire
iris bleus*

Senryu

Ben Gaa

flight delay
counting the ways
people pass time

Jay Friedenber

a meeting
of red and blue army ants—
identity politics

Big Data
my computer
staring back

Susan Burch

new baby
how I turned
invisible

Tsanka Shishkova

rock dancer...
under the blonde curls
gray hair

Sherry Grant

movie night
his snore reaches
the climax

電影夜
他的鼾聲
達到高潮

live jazz
till a string
snaps

現場爵士樂
直到有根弦
斷了為止

C.X. Turner

potpourri stuffing—
I squash the memories
into a cushion

low mist
blurring all my edges—
warm tea

Roberta Beach Jacobson

staining
jam-resistant paper
grape jelly

slapping on an adverb . . . unnecessarily

late afternoon sag of shoulders

Joseph P. Wechselberger

rainy night
the off-key chords
of a saxophone practice

Chen-ou Liu

lovers' quarrel
the back-and-forth flow
of monologues

Terrie Jacks

lost in thought a deep abyss

Eve Castle

dry cold winter
i climb over myself
to get out of bed

David Oates

kidding himself
the brown dye's effect
on white hair

Tanka

B.A. France

full moon
shadows cast
across
our
past

Susan Burch

this depression
taking its toll...
all the days
I hide away,
a burrowing owl

swallows
flying in circles
the dips
in and out of
this so-called love

Terrie Jacks

summer wedding
in the gazebo
attending
to the flowers
hummingbirds

Joanna Ashwell

moon ink
on my fingertips
a liquid sky
pulling the oars
to centre

mountain view
within the valley
our silence
no words enough
for sorrow

Tanka Prose

Susan Burch

As Far as the Eye Can See

Art used to be a world-class photographer, so when he said I had the prettiest eyes he'd ever seen, that was saying something. Of course, he was a 90-something nursing home resident with mild Alzheimer's, and I was a 44-year-old receptionist working there, so odds are he had me confused with someone else. Still, when he said he loved me one day, I believed him. I saw it in his eyes & I felt it when he said it. My husband thought I was crazy of course, but what if I wasn't?

the almond shape
of the Helix Nebula—
what if eyes
really are
gateways to the soul

John J. Han

The Shepherd of the Hills

Missouri is known as the Show-Me State and the Cave State, both of which make sense. Early Missourians did not believe anything without evidence, and approximately 7,500 caves exist in the state. One could also call Missouri the Shepherd of the Hills State. Many place names come from—or seem to come from—the title of Harold Bell Wright's 1907 novel, *The Shepherd of the Hills*. In addition to the Shepherd of the Hills Adventure Park and the Shepherd of Hills State Park in Branson, one can find other places named after the novel. They include Shepherd of Hills Living (Branson), Shepherd of Hills Episcopal Church (Branson), Shepherd Hills Cutlery (Lebanon), and Shepherd Hills Cemetery (Barnhart). On my way home from Arkansas, I once turned northwest from Searcy to take pictures of Shepherd of Hills Living and Shepherd of Hills Episcopal Church, as well as some additional photos from the top of the Inspiration Tower. The detour added six hours to my itinerary and caused a close call on a winding road in the Heber Springs area. Pushing 70, I know it's time to tamp down my desire of seeing more literary sites, but I also need something that adds spice to my life.

unable to escape
a corn maze
the bustling sound
of the cornstalks presages
Stephen King's sickle

Visiting Maramec Spring Park

Maramec Spring Park is worth visiting for those who love the Ozarks. Located 8.6 miles southeast of St. James, Missouri, it pumps 100-million gallons of fresh water every day. The hatchery produces more than 100,000 rainbow trout every year, attracting numerous anglers. The uncaught fish drift to the Meramec River nearby. The spring branch is knee-deep, so one can often see fish floating to the direction aquatic plants show. Those who don't fish can hike the hills, where an overlook provides a scenic view of the Salem Plateau. The park is open year-round, but the best time to visit is the summer, when the forest is lush and cold spring water soothes weary feet.

weeds undulating
in the river...
a rice-planting song
colorful in my
expat dream

Kyoka

Neal Whitman

two little boys
duel with broken branches
by Samurai code—
maybe more like guidelines
than by regulations

Keitha Keyes

always a race
to get the washing in
before it rains
or the birds use it
for target practice

Susan Burch

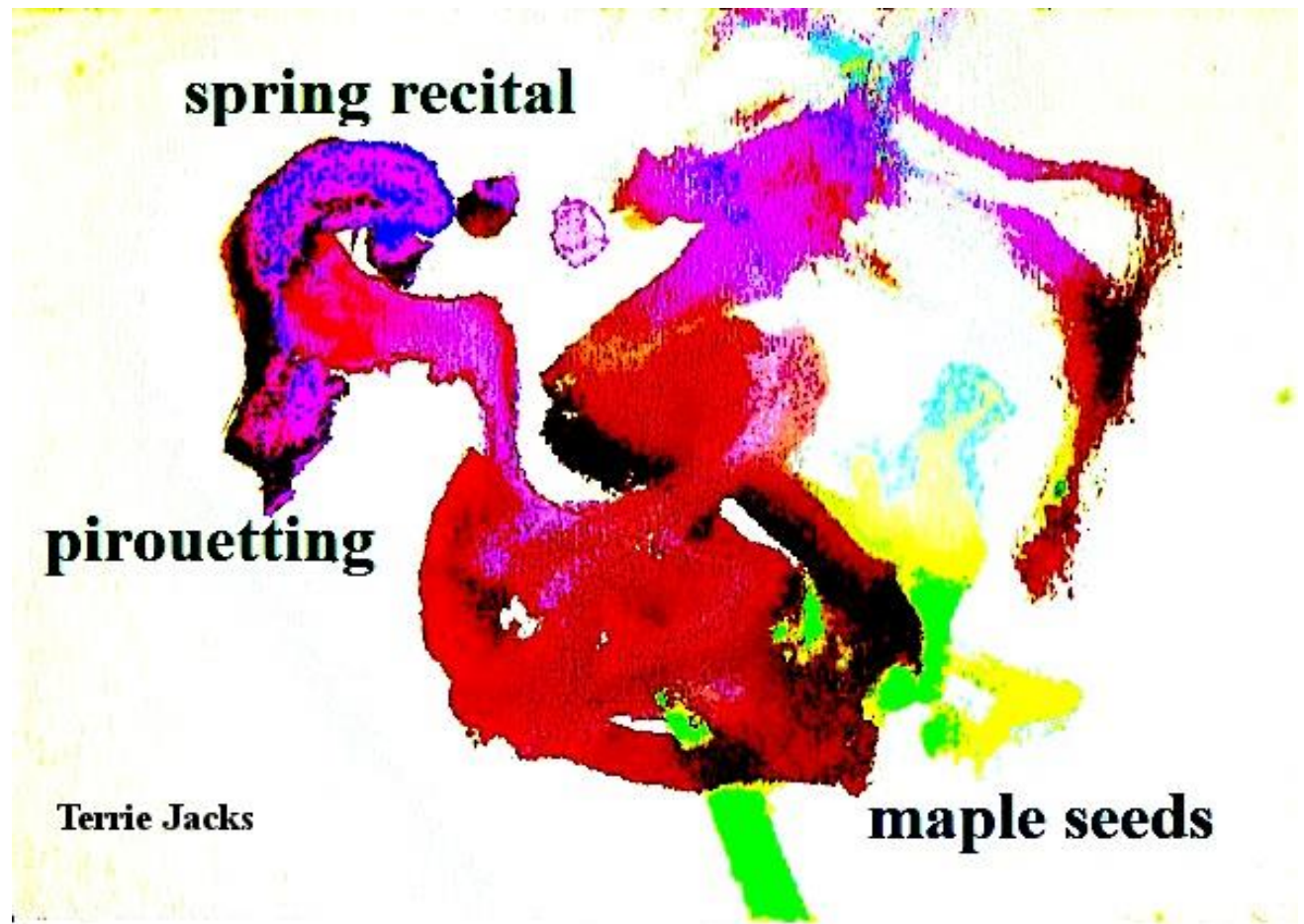
Gumby—
bending over
backwards
I still can't
make you happy

Haiga

C.X. Turner



Terrie Jacks



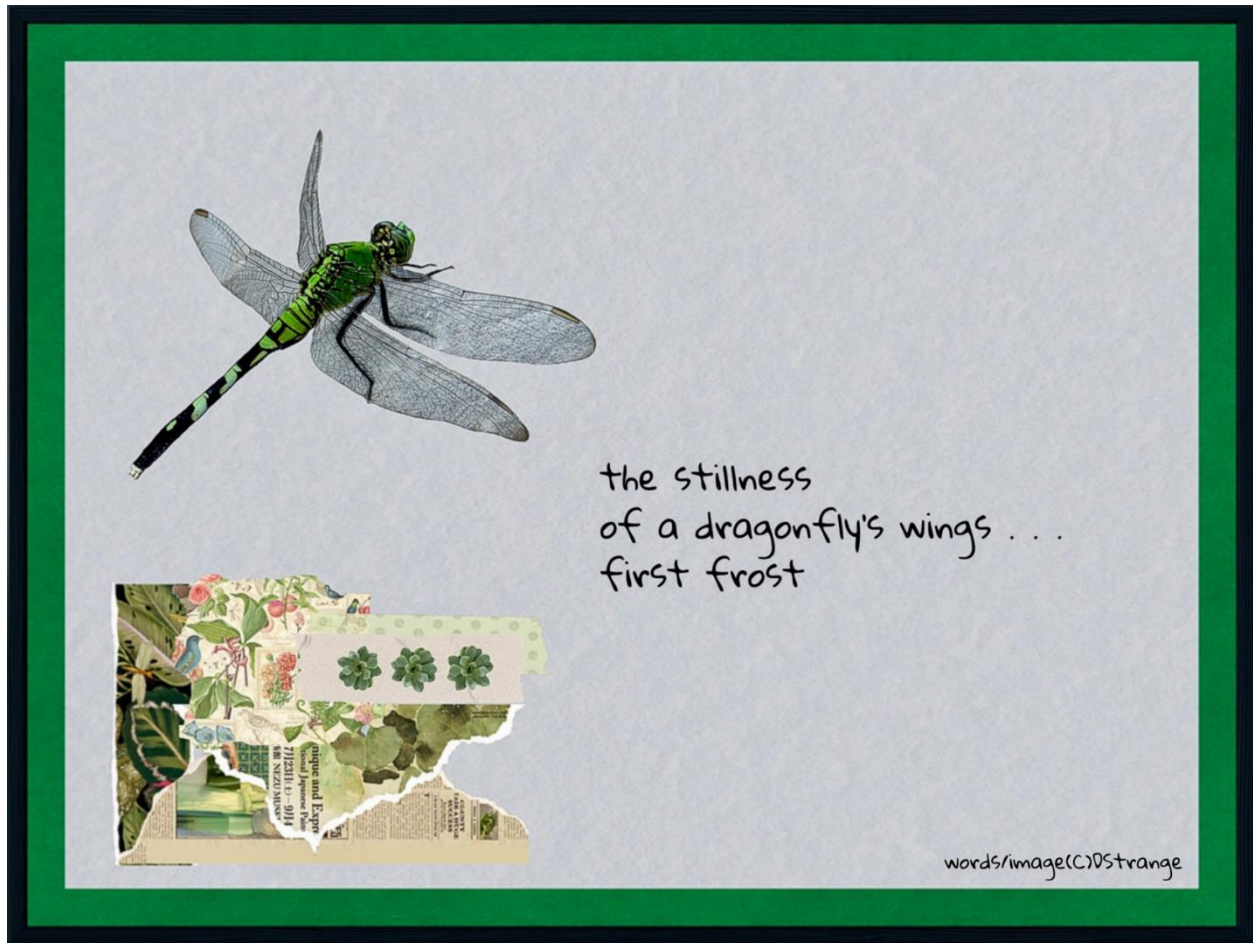
spring recital

pirouetting

Terrie Jacks

maple seeds

Debbie Strange





leaf decay
deep shadows lit
by ladybugs



words/image(C)DStrange



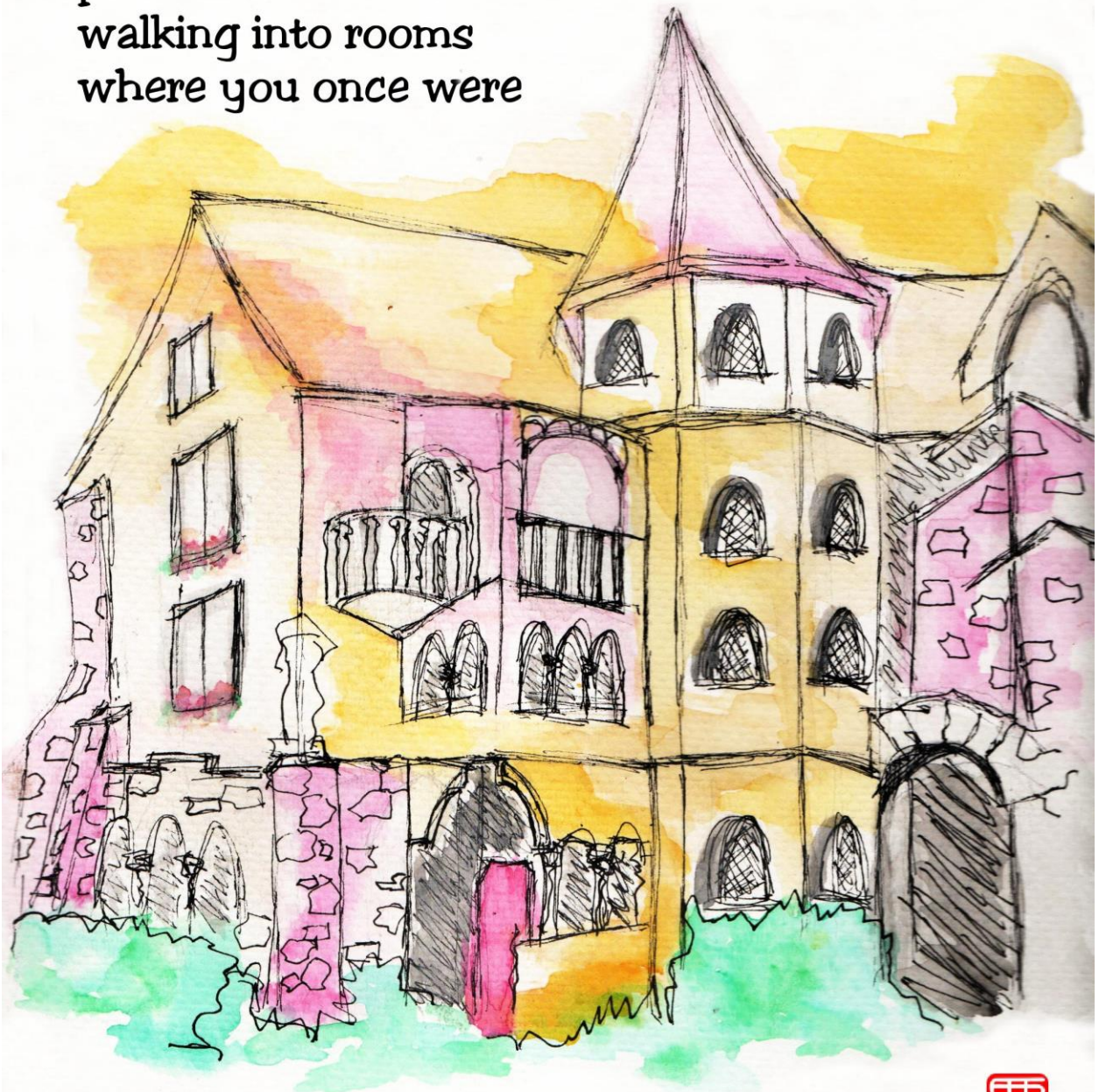
we once played
in this tangled garden,
enchanted
by the quiet fireworks
of bergamot and butterflies



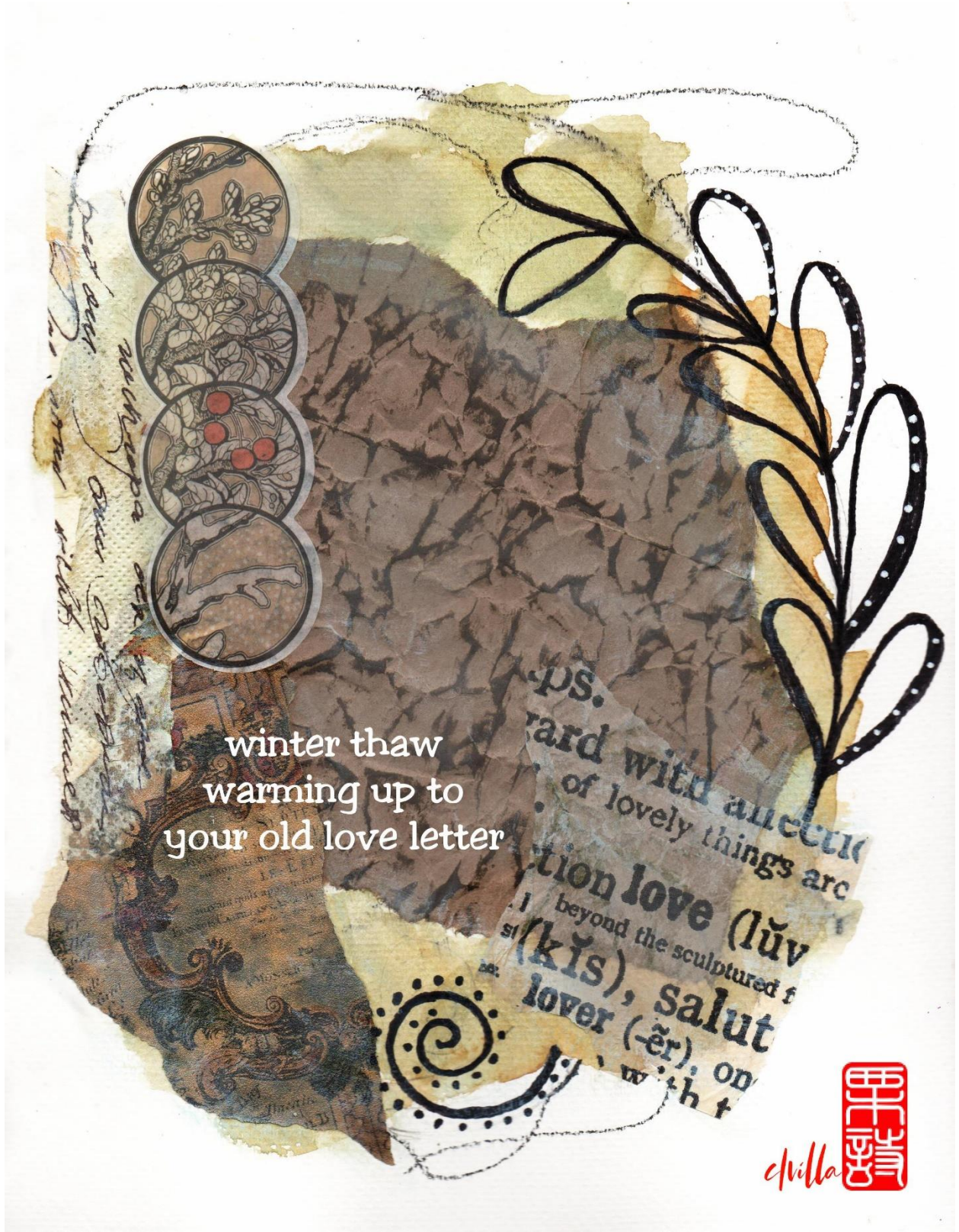
words/image(C)DStrange

Christine L. Villa

postcard
walking into rooms
where you once were



cvilla 

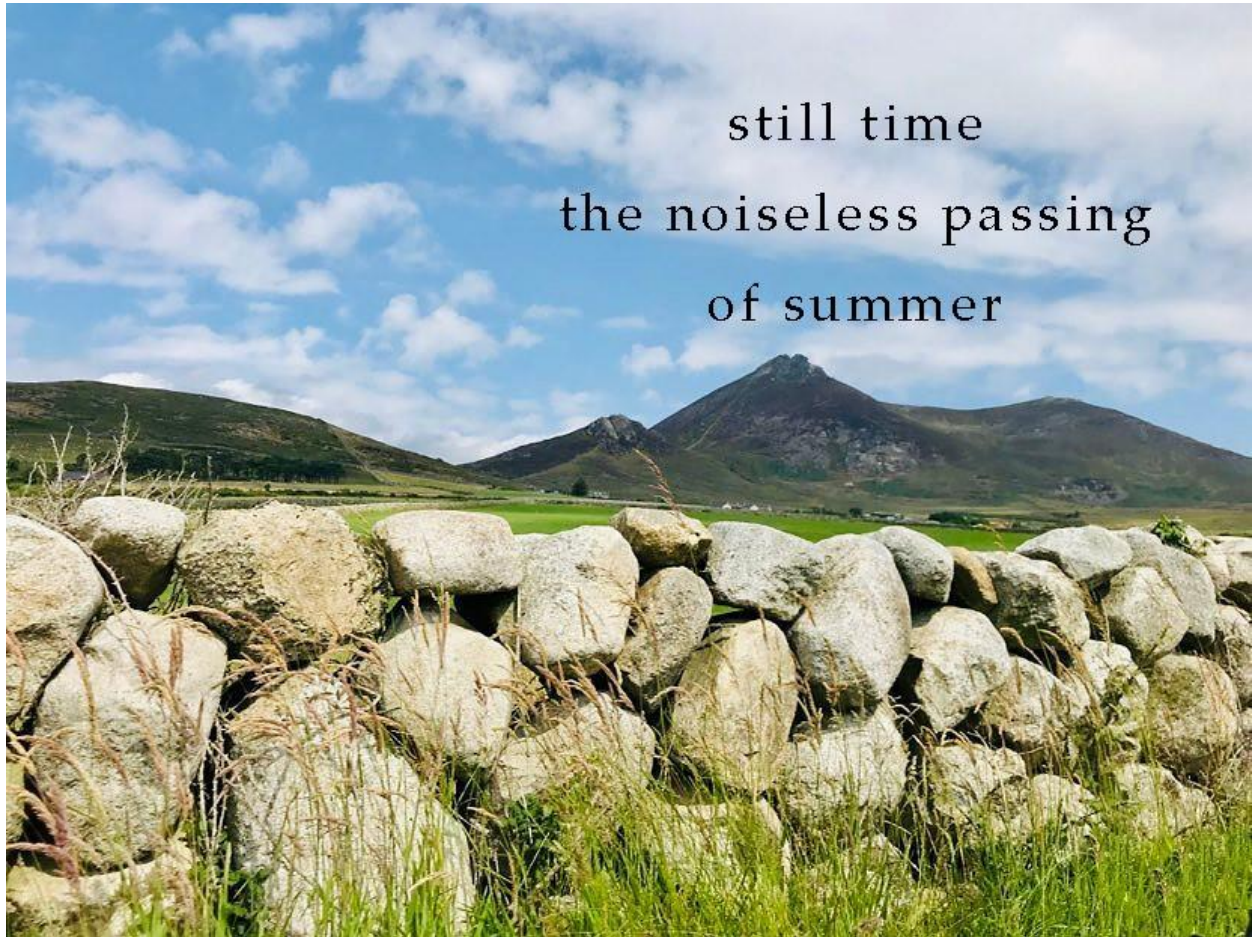


winter thaw
warming up to
your old love letter

ps. ...ard with an affect
of lovely things are ...
tion love (lŭv ...
beyond the sculptured f ...
(kĭs), salut ...
lover (-ĕr), on ...
with t

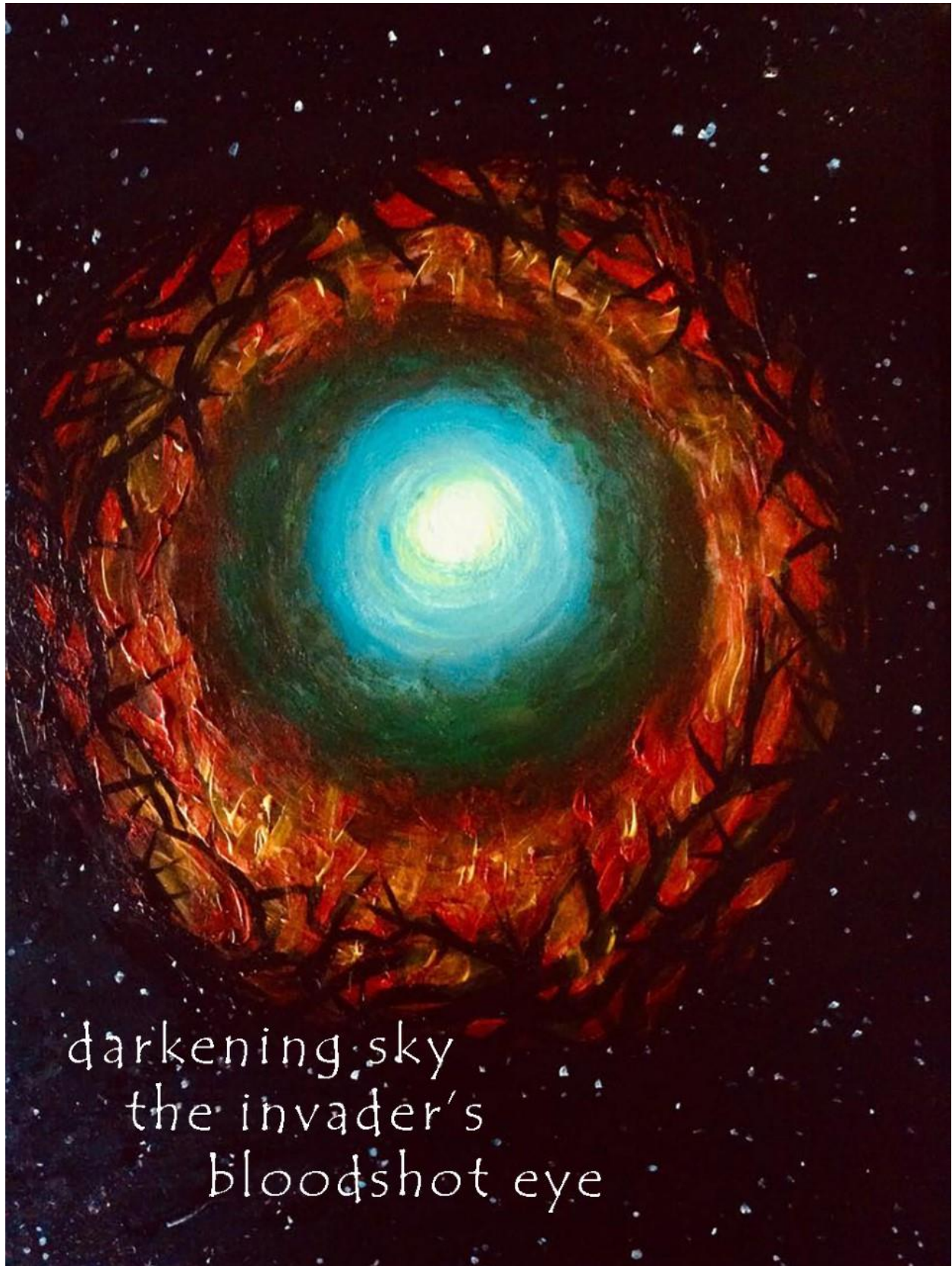
village 田村

Marion Clarke and Keith Evetts





veiled moon
the kittens
that never were



darkening sky
the invader's
bloodshot eye

wild plum...

tomorrow is

some other day



Marion
and Keith

Richa Sharma



Lanterne

Neal Whitman

off
and on
the lighthouse
cycloptic beam
blinks

Free Verse

Rupa Anand



Todd Sukany

Clearing Fog on a Snowy Evening

After watching a couple old men—
resting on their Pulitzer prizes—
talk about poetry on YouTube,

I look forward to being ancient
enough to salt both sides
of the street.

Terrie Jacks

only a whisper

a breeze
ever so imperceptible
quivers some leaves
on the end
of tree branches nearby
the movement
be it
ever so slight
for not even
a whisper is made
only the eyes hear it

s-l-o-w

m-o-t-i-o-n

a -

day -

in -

the -

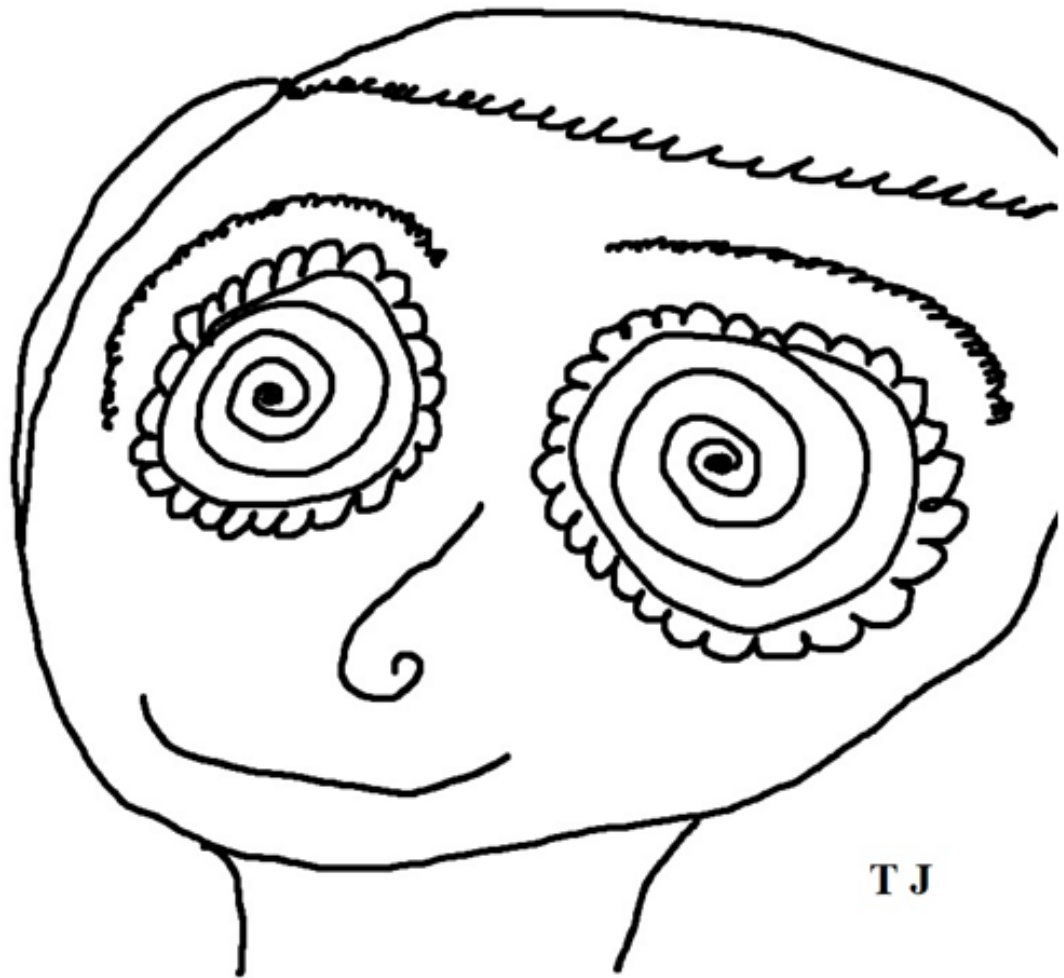
life -

of -

a -

snail





T J

Whoa, Baby!

**I'm caught
under your spell
enchanted by your smile
my eyes are spinning in my head
awestruck**

Terrie Jacks

Richard Evanoff

I am nothing
but a wad of mud,
a statue of clay
come miraculously to life,
given a few brief moments
to stand up and walk,
to look at and ponder
the mud from which
it was fashioned,
the mud
to which it returns.

Out of mud will only come mud.
Mud will come. Mud only.

*

Rivers flow
into the desert.
Grass grows
out of the sand.

The wind blows life
back into
these dry broken bones.

Mason Arledge

Ancient Library

Archives of mistakes
can bind a person
otherwise free
ignite internal grief
structural damage
because of too much intimacy
with the past

*

Asleep & Alive

human fatigue:
process of disbelief
in the truth.
human vigor:
belief in the
preposterous.

*

Spider Lily

monsters tremble
at the sword's arc
the pariah warrior
ember in his eyes
burns evil to
its final filament
reconciling peace
in a forgotten land

Cinquain

Neal Whitman

Mother of Mankind

locusts
have descended
upon East Africa
Is this The Book of Exodus
reprised?

Etheree

Rupa Anand

The Unseen

if
we are
just earnest
we will notice
there is a lot of
the unseen in the seen
a great expanse of background
beneath the images of Life
numerous dances in the dancer
musical ragas in the singer and
galaxies of stars in a starless sky
reams of paper present within ink
countless thoughts appearing in words
compassion in the thoughtful
deceit in the wicked
presence in absence
just try to see
the unseen
every
day

Limericks

Thomas Smith

There once was a gent from O'Beher,
Quite bald, in the barber's chair.
The bill eighty dollars
You then heard him holler,
I didn't know that you charged by the hair!

*

The road at night dark I admit it
A deer jumped by and I hit it
Injured but alert
Our car hobbled off hurt
I hope the deer is insured, and I'll bill it.

Couplet Poetry

Todd Sukany

Shadow Ban

Forgive the spouting of nonsense:
Can I "shadow ban" my own conscience?

Found Poetry

Todd Sukany

“...and to work with your own hands...”

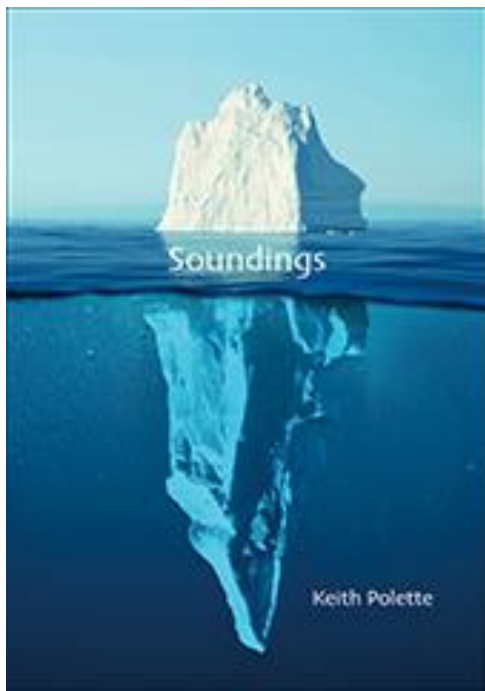
—I Thessalonians 4:11

Enjoy the freedom—
hands-free driving with Super
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Book Reviews

Polette, Keith. *Soundings: Haibun*. Uxbridge, UK: Alba Publishing, 2023. ISBN: 9781912773541. 58 pages, \$15.00.

Reviewed by C. Clark Triplett



On the cover of Keith Polette's unique collection of haibun, *Soundings*, the viewer can see an image of an iceberg with the usually hidden underwater portion clearly revealed. As is expected, what is typically hidden is much larger and deeper than what is evident on the surface. This gravid image reflects the subject matter of the diverse poetic imaginations contained in this compact volume. The narratives are filled with rich metaphorical language that takes the interested reader down paths of multiple realities, sometimes bizarre and strange flights of fantasy, and delightful literary and artistic allusions. At times there are deeply sensual and descriptive images of nature and at other

times probing self-reflections and personal confessions. Perhaps, most importantly, these diverse explorations provide an opportunity for the reader to discover new images of reality and novel ways of seeing the world.

A sounding is usually understood as a way of taking readings of the depth of a body of water, or it can mean information gathered as a preliminary step before deciding on a course of action. In this work, Polette takes readings of many dimensions of life, including the ordinary, the personal, nature, some works of art, the fantastic, and even the bizarre. At times his language is confessional or self-reflective, sometimes descriptive and realistic, and at other times he may launch into a baffling flight of fancy or mystery without explanation. The language in some haibun are beautiful beyond description like "Turner's colors" and other times strange and even grotesque like his discussion of Kafka's giant, crawly insect in *Metamorphosis*. In "The Land of No Sleep," for instance, it is not clear whether we are in a story or in a dream as the narrative slips back and forth from reality to fantasy as it seems like the reader is participating in an ancient mythical story:

You wash up on a stone-studded shore like a latter-day
Odysseus. Lying on your back, your breath still heaving
from struggle with the sea, you notice the sky is absent of
stars. As you stagger to your feet, you are scooped up by a
band of horsemen, thrown into a rough cart, and taken to an
encampment on the edge of a dark forest. Before you speak
a wolf's head is hastily tattooed onto your back. (42)

Later on in this story, in a sleepless place where old people do not die and there are huts made of bones, "you are asked to tell a story, a long one about lost love. As you start speaking, so your eyes take on the glow of embers, and your body becomes a raft on a river that has no end" (42). Here the reader is asked to wrestle with the relationship between reality and imagination, between wakefulness and dreaming, and develop new stories about love and loss. Maybe there is hope for meaning even in difficult times.

In other haibun, such as “Dispersions,” Polette uses imaginative images and descriptions of nature to express deep rivers of emotion. He alludes to Casper David Friedrich’s “Monastery Graveyard in the Snow,” a nineteenth-century romantic painting that demonstrates an extraordinary ability to reproduce the natural world while at the same time giving it a mystical religious aura. This underlying mystery of Friedrich’s painting is reflected in the first haiku:

deep chill..
searching for the warmth
of Turner’s colors (20)

Unlike Friedrich’s black and white copies, J. M. W. Turner paintings are filled with expressive pigments, particularly yellows, sienna, and other warm colors. For example, the viewer finds something magical and other-worldly in Turner’s “Slave Ship” which depicts a beautiful sunset over a treacherous, stormy sea. There are powerful contradictions in the picture with the subtle yellows and sienna of the sunset and the barbarity of slavers throwing the dead and dying overboard. Turner’s facility to innovate and bring new dimensions and perspective on fictive space are enlightening and, at times, even transformational. These visual images become the backdrop of the author’s experience in the Wyoming foothills in which he freed a fox from a wire trap and then the childhood memory of an intense feeling of grief over the loss of a father of a family in the neighborhood. Although this is not a member of his own family, he feels himself ensnared by something way beyond his ability to understand and control. There seem to be deep rivers of existential anxiety as well as grief that remind him of his own smallness and how impotent and insipid one can feel in many of life’s circumstances. The haiku at the end sums it up well:

cold rain
drumming the tin roof..
the smallness of my needs (20)

Although *Soundings* is a collection of 44 haibun, which Polette explains very succinctly in the “Afterword,” the narratives provide an

opportunity for experimenting with various literary techniques. It seems clear that he uses many of the techniques and characteristics of *lo real maravilloso* or magic(al) realism. This seems evident particularly since he alludes to several authors who are best known for this genre such as Jorge Luis Borges and Federico Garcia Lorca. Even his reference to Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is a nod to the intermixing of strange realities that place readers in unfamiliar territory, necessitating a realignment of vision or perception. There is also often an absence of explanation and an illogic with strange events and bizarre images occurring as if they were a normal part of reality. As is the case with magical realism, it places the reader in an "in-between" space where the world is viewed from an odd angle. This is a particularly useful device for criticism when the conventions of society become so "black and white" that anything new, different, or marginal is lost. Like the monsters in "Channels," where Dracula, Frankenstein's creature, the Wolfman, the Mummy, and Godzilla have become so binary, this is what happens to the "black and white mind, one that eschews the light and dwells in the darkness of dangerous places, one that exists in an either-or world, one where—especially the red of spit blood—is only imagined" (17). Although most of these monsters are no longer scary, the Wolfman continued to cause alarm because he lurked in familiar places, "prowling the same kind of woods that I knew so well" or "the basement of my boyhood home" (17). These places are the most frightening because they are most likely projections of the writer's own fears or unconscious relocation of the chronic angers of the house. These are examples of Freud's *unheimlich* (uncanny) in which the familiar becomes strange and frightening or the opposite in which the strange becomes familiar. The things that are most frightening are the one's closest to home:

dark dreams...
 things with fangs lurking
 beneath the bed (17)

Interestingly, the modern, colorful, flat-screen monsters are much more frightening. They include zombies, space aliens, and psychopathic killers: "[T]hey make the monsters of my youth more than entirely

quaint; they make them look like things you would find in a petty zoo” (18). Is this because they are more vivid and gory or because they are “suburban Franksteins”? (18)

A good example of Polette’s more-than-interesting use of language in which he offers “readers new ways of seeing, rich with surprises” (Back Cover) is in the haibun “Rock On.” Here he plays with the words “igneous rock,” which reminds him of Ignatius Loyola, who, along with Peter Faber and Francis Xavier, founded the Society of Jesus. This particular igneous or Ignatius “hard-hammered intellectual rigor into the pursuit of divinity” (9). This sedimentary rock is many things metaphorically. The “couch potato of the rock family” because it breaks down so slowly over a long period of time. This metaphorical rock is also like several literary characters like Ishmael “waiting to be plucked from the sea after his disastrous voyage” or like Gregor Samsa in Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, who turns into some kind of bug with a hard exoskeleton who “spent the rest of short life trying to regain a rock-hard existence, only to realize, too late, that his life was constantly changing” like the great stone of Sisyphus (9). Ultimately, he simply turned “stone-still” like Lot’s wife. Language can make all kinds of associations and create all kinds of possible worlds. Even in this short haibun, this ordinary rock has many meanings and multiple characterizations. Like Kafka’s work, the story opens up many ways of seeing. Language can create and form multiple realities and explore how introducing nonlinear, imaginative, and strange change the relationship between incidents, characters, and settings that produce something extra ordinary. Sometimes the writer must find subversive ways to decenter the reader’s world so that the usual plot lines and relation between events are disrupted and can no longer be explained in the usual way. In his discussion of Kafka, Polette uses the grotesque to subvert the balanced and harmony of accepted textual categories. The peculiar, odd, absurd, bizarre, macabre, depraved, even degenerate may sometimes be necessary to disrupt and open up spaces of conflicting possibilities. (See Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and his World* [1965. Translated by Helene Iswolsky, Indiana University Press, 1984], p. 230.)

This idea of opening up new worlds of possibility by revealing the magical in the most ordinary or the everyday is articulated in

“Saturnalia.” The author quotes David Keplinger: “*Saturn is the most beautiful place and its rings are composed of shards of what will happen*” (36; italics in original). Keplinger is a well-known contemporary American poet, who in his most recent collection of poems, *The World to Come*, writes about a possible future while honoring the past. In his prose poetry, he imagines a world that will either bring arrival or exile, intimacy or distance, possible worlds or impossible worlds. In his haibun, Polette does a play on the word *rings* in Keplinger’s poem and launches into a discussion about the Doppler-shifted ringtones on his phone that are “composed of the sounds of future events” (36). Each sound—Apex, Beacon, Circuit, Night Owl, Sencha, and Classic—triggers imaginative images or experiences such as “the sound of being reborn in the body of a trout” or the sound of “a newly discovered Coltrane tune, tenor notes blossoming from grooved vinyl like a weeping willow on the edge of a graveyard” (36). There is a layering of elements and doubling up of images that translate into strange, in-between spaces where the reader might find hidden meanings and new possibilities. The poet seems to describe many impossible, even implausible activities in a realistic tone. There is a stretching of reality to offer new pathways of understanding. In order to catch on, the reader has to suspend pre-existing or conventional structures, plotlines, timelines, or scientific explanations. Mystery or even the bizarre is introduced to bring about a heightened awareness of connections that easily get lost in the “black and white” world. In some cases, these strange and imaginative narratives are used as alternative political perspectives to established or socially dominant knowledge bases.

Several of the haibun in this collection might be described as self-reflective or even confessional. The poet clearly challenges his own perceptions of reality and the need to adjust his field of vision. Sometimes this comes about by reading other poets “who’ve been trying to revise my story ... they’re not satisfied with me living in ‘once upon a time,’ in *illo tempore*, so they wrench me out of the primeval forest of myself...” (11). So, sometimes the writer becomes so lost or devoured by his own story it may lead to a kind of listlessness, emptiness, or lack of awareness of the broader world. But it is not necessary to rewrite my struggling story into your own story. As long

as there is self-reflection or self-awareness, an understanding that I am in the belly of the beast and need to be there for a while to change, then it is possible “to let my teeth grow long and sharp, to perfect my growl, and where, finally, I become reborn as the ‘great mother,’ the one coming your way” (11). Struggling, waiting, and even suffering is part of the process as long as there is an awareness of the need to do so.

At other times, self-challenge is more like the alignment of ink cartridges in a printer when a failure to align is “like a dubbed foreign film where words and mouths are out of sync” (15):

crooked teeth
needing the grip of braces—
cold barbed wire (15)

Such images trigger a thought about the author’s own misalignments when nothing seems to work right and writing seems to be a futile effort: “The odd ache between what I am and what I imagine myself to be, a rowboat frozen shallow water” (15). Sometimes such self-reflections can be quite brutal for the struggling artist. There is no easy answer and it is certainly not helpful to give one, but the intentional writer finds a way to keep the wheels grinding to eventually discover the deeper wells of creativity in order to “slake the thirst of thing burning behind my eyes” (15).

Despite the number of unique and surreal narratives that challenge the reader’s grasp of the normal and real, there are still a number of simple, beautifully descriptive depictions of nature. Even here Polette is a master of metaphor. In “Road Trip,” he is exquisitely visual in his portrait of a flock of Sandhill Cranes who have settled in the wetlands of Albuquerque, “[g]arbed in gray, as though they were in perpetual middle-age, they mill through felled fields of corn, their bright thin heads poking the ground; when they pop up, flashed with scarlet, they could be flames on gunmetal wicks” (13). The literary painting is refined further when he details the flight of these elegant creatures:

Sometimes one will open its wings wide and pump hard into flight, a ball of fog lifting into the cloudy sky, riding and

unhurried circuit until others follow. After having mapped the circumference of many invisible spirals, they return to the flock and make a slow descent like great flakes of ash from a distant volcano" (13).

In these descriptive verses, the writer seems to capture the pulse and rhythms of nature and give voice to something that is magical just by paying attention.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of Polette's writing in this and other collections is his ability to take something ordinary and banal in human experience and find something witty, interesting, and surprising so that "the mundane becomes art" (Back Cover). Take, for example, an ordinary box of Kleenex on the table. Who would think to contemplate the history of this particular box of Kleenex as it gets down to its last tissue? "It is hard to say how many sneezes were stopped, noses wiped, and coughs caught, but soon, that little cardboard bunker dispensing bits of relief will be as empty as a foreclosed home" (19). Dripping noses are like dripping faucets:

cold season—
the kitchen faucet dripping
all night long (19)

Ordinary little things remind us of bigger things that are just as persistent like the dam built over the new lake that has a leak that nobody seems to be able to fix including "the experts we brought in just shake their heads and tell us there is no cure" (19). There is something quite humorous about both cases, but it is also something irresolvable like a philosophical aporia. So even something as ordinary as a box of Kleenex can be as significant as the creative and imaginative minds wish to make it.

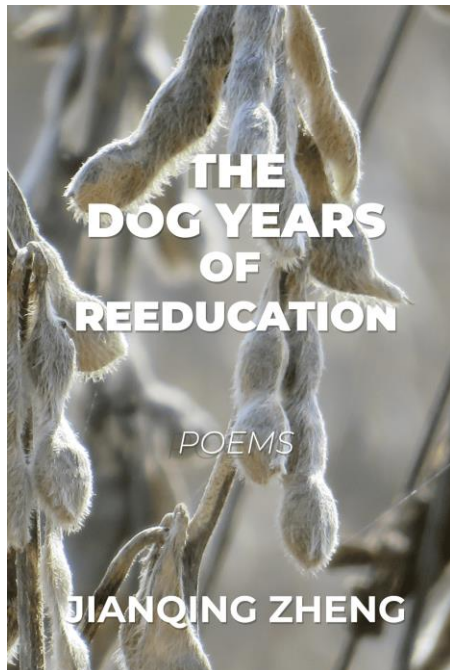
Although Polette's *Soundings* was not easy to read, it was certainly worth the effort to struggle with the often disconcerting mixture of real and unreal, normal and alternative, and multiple layers of meaning. At the same time it was fun checking out and tracking down the numerous artistic, literary and musical allusions that added to the complexity of the work. Included in the references were such

literary figures as Franz Kafka, Jorge Louis Borges, Federico Garcia Lorca, and David Keplinger and artists such as Salvador Dali, Vincent Van Gogh, Isoda Koryūsai, Marc Chagall, Pieter Bruegel, Casper David Freidrich, and J. M. W. Turner. Even more diverse were the allusions to noted musicians, including Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, Frédéric Chopin, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and Eric Clapton. This was a re-education as well as a lot of filling in blank spaces in my memory. It is always interesting to see how a writer weaves in the work of other artists as part of the interpretive process. Since at least some of the artists are considered avant-garde in their field, it is important to see how these innovations and new aesthetic boundaries are used in poetry and fiction whether in some radical sense or simply to provide some alternative viewpoints to challenge the reader.

Soundings is a book that provides rich rewards for those who are primarily interested in the music of poetic prose or the fleeting haiku moment that brings a unique connection with nature and/or other aspects of lived experienced. For others, who wish to look deeper into multiple realities and alternative frames of reference that challenge the reader's view of the world, it may very well be worth the risk. There are many artistic and literary rewards in this book for those who take the time to read it.

Zheng, Jianqing. *The Dog Years of Reeducation: Poems*. Lake Dallas, TX: Madville Publishing, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-956440-39-3 (paperback). \$19.95.

Reviewed by C. Clark Triplett



In his collection of haibun, free verse, haiku, and poems of other types, Jianqing Zheng (alias John Zheng) tells the story of his experience of being required to move to the countryside in high school to learn from the poor peasant as part of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution. These verses are a reflection on the years of "rustication," which turn out to be a time of great hardship, but also a time of nostalgia and vivid memories of unforgettable co-workers and rich interactions with nature. These are poignant memories of harsh privations, but also moments of revelation about the self, as is evident in the poem below:

At this moment
You stand by the furrow

and let petrichor
enter your body

and soul—
a way to accept

a way of life
a way to balance

the way of self
through hard times (26)

Initially, most accepted the reeducation process “with deep conviction” unaware of the eventual emotional and physical impact upon the participants in the program. As time went on, what began as enthusiastic endorsement became a reluctant drudgery. As life in the village settled in, the numbing boredom of the countryside often became overwhelming. Zheng recalls, “At night, our life is as flat as our farm work, tasteless as rice and pickled turnips we eat each day. No books to read, no chess to play, no dreams to make” (4). The work is backbreaking and dreary. Cotton picking, for instance, “is as drab / as reciting Chairman Mao’s / red book” (8). As the work and suffering becomes more overwhelming, the workers are reminded of who is responsible for such privations.

There is some relief in the playfulness and humor of workmates who share the same plight. Pigsy, Yi, Horse, Pearl, Wang, Hu, and Kim are a few of his fellow sufferers. Even during times of great discomfort, they can laugh about their circumstances:

The sun is peeping.
through a persimmon tree.

“Wow! What a big persimmon!”
Pigsy shouts loud. Pearl
Jeers at him, “You like it? Go pick it.
It’ll roast you into a Peking duck.”

Horse sniffs, "That delicious?"
I think he'll be a baked potato!"
Everyone chucks, "Yeah, a baked potato."

We roll up our pants and step
Into the puddles to feed leeches. (5)

The subject of hunger is discussed often throughout this collection of poems. It is not because there is no food at all, but because the food is so disgusting and at time uneatable. Even after a hard day's work and empty stomachs, it is difficult to swallow what is provided:

Chopsticks stir in bowls to pick out tiny rocks; white rice and brined turnips are as tasteless as day. A greenbottle fly humming like a drunkard wheels down on Pigsy's rice. Horse chuckles, eyes gloating, "Pigsy, you get a bowl of maggots. Do they taste good?" "Don't fart buddy! You want to try some?" Pigsy shouts like vomit and casts rice over Horse. Everyone bursts out laughing: maggots wriggling on Horse's face. (6)

With all the toil and heat, food always seems to be on the minds of the workers, but even when food is available there is no money to even buy a bowl of *re gan mian*. Everything is a reminder of food:

Are you hungry? If you are,
stop and graze by the creek.
I'll try the sunset.
I don't even have ten *fens*
to buy a bowl of *re gan mian*
in a roadside eatery.
The setting sun on the horizon
Is like a piece of ham
my stomach keeps rumbling for. (17)

Despite such a desperate way of life, there is still an appreciation for the beauty of nature and the life that surrounds them. The fullness

of nature becomes a nightly antipode to the tedium and fatigue of the day:

After bathing in the pond,
I wrap myself in a towel
and trot back to my den.

Night ripples its gray
over the sky's last pink.

A flock of sparrows bursts
from the threshing floor. (23)

The descriptions of nature are vivid and colorful in contrast with the lackluster and uninspiring burdens of reeducation. Zheng creates unforgettable images that seem deeply etched in his memory even though they were experienced so long ago:

Now on the wind,
thousands of gray horses
roll away the fevered air.

Green peppers, eggplants,
Bok choy and pole beans
pallet the beds in sparkles.

Under a broken cart,
a few white ducks
preen their feathers.

Along the creek,
Willows glaze with raindrops
like strings of crystals.

A croak stirs the quiet,
another one,
then a chorus of frogs.

I sit on the threshold
dabbing tobacco and dusk
into the cupped paper. (25)

Learning to live with reeducation is a difficult adjustment because it is lost time away from family and creative work, but there are lessons to be learned about “the way” (*Tao*). This ancient duality reminds the poet of important balances in the universe.

There is a certain kind of acceptance at least of what is happening at the time and a willingness “to wear the coat” regardless of how uncomfortable it is until something changes, which in time certainly did:

When the Cultural Revolution spread like fire
The Red Guards from all over the country

crowded in Tiananmen Square to see
Chairman Mao, the reddest sun in their hearts,

rising on the tower. In tears, they shouted
a long, long life to him. On September 9, 1976,

the red sun sank for good. That afternoon,
we were picking cotton when a farmer

came over announcing, “Mao died.”
His voice was a cool autumn breeze. (40)

The cool autumn breeze was a contrast to the heat of the “reddest sun” of the revolution. Even though there was intense enthusiasm at the beginning, after a number of years of experiencing the reality, the glitter has faded. Even though the revolution has wound down, it is clear that the connection with the land has changed the workers. It has somehow seeped into the marrow of the bones of those who have worked the land and plowed the fields:

Day by day we wait to see
seeds sprout into a fuzzy green

and grow for a good harvest.
We have never felt

The land has grown us as well—
our hands calloused,

skin browned, minds furrowed,
and tongues localized.

We longer look like a group
of urban youths

or sound like strangers
distanced by the peasants,

we have plowed our bodies
and sowed us as cottonseeds. (44)

In the process of labor, they have come closer and closer to the peasant way of life, but there is still a deep longing to go back to town to meet old friends and loved ones. Even though there is a swaying between country and city, there is a desperation to connect with heart friends:

caged days
a strong wish to hear
a magpie (47)

Pictures from home are “like sunshine on the iced / pond of my heart” (46). Yet, when it is finally time to leave there are deep feelings of sadness from workmates:

Looking into Hu's eyes
black as bullet holes and desperate

as if with claustrophobia
I crook a faint smile
my mouth twitching without words.
Last night he cried over wine
At my farewell party. A handshake,
I throw myself into drizzle. (55)

Leaving has been a desire for so long, but goodbyes are still quite painful: “It’s sad our geographies divide” (56). Because of these deep feelings, the memories of this period of time are both deep and persistent like “a chunk / of rock” (59). Even after fifty years, the tune of a flutist can trigger memories of that time:

The flutist, like a spirit,
Is playing center stage. A tune

of remoteness brings back
my reeducation years— [...] (59)

The clear and poignant images are both close and far away and even though there are memories that are painful, some of these meager experiences have also brought moments of hope:

If all this
Never was a part of reeducation, I could
never relate grains to drops of sweat and
never imagine the oil lamp as the light of hope. (62)

This moving poetic story of a time of great personal struggle imprinted lasting memories that deeply shaped the author’s whole life. Even though some of the poems are painful to read, the collection as a whole is filled with beautiful images of nature and the world around that moves and inspires the reader.

There are also a number of particularly unforgettable and timeless verses in this work. They are both memorable and enduring. They portray a complex struggle of the human soul. The poetry is

imaginative and compelling, and readers will find reading this work therapeutic and inspirational.

Jacks, Terrie. *Tooting Our Horn*. Photos by Karen Zelle. Self-published, 2022. No page numbers.

Reviewed by Todd Sukany



Tooting Our Horn
Verses: Terrie Jacks Photos: Karen Zelle

Clichés abound concerning the marriage of pictures and words. They include “A picture is worth a thousand words” and “A picture is a poem without words.” Jacks and Zelle have merged words and pictures into an entertaining book of haiga. Haiga creates a fresh look at the everyday world. Jacks and Zelle’s volume does not disappoint. Each artist offers a shot (photo) and a shout (verse) detailed enough to invite the reader to sit back and enjoy the views and accompanying music.

As stated in the book blurb, “Some [haiga] are whimsical [and] breathtaking. They are [...] for enjoyment.” The authors gently carry the reader into nature but also allow space to engage the reader’s involvement. The delightful themes of these two composers include music, meditation, bovine congregations, and sunflower countryside.

The vast majority of Zelle’s photos are of nature, offered without the interruption of humans. She captures the visual vibrancy of ordinary scenes. However, one photo plays on the humor overtured by flower names. Purples. Pinks. Greens. Ground cover. Brass? Yes, a brass instrument with bright red felt pads, holding its own with

creation. Jacks expands the vision with a mere eight words. She peaks the imagination through her auditory experience:

amid the bluebells
a trumpet flower
woodland symphony

Water represents peace and relaxation to many. Observing the forest canopy, no matter the season, casting itself onto the surface of a pond brings a sense of tranquility and contemplation. The woodland image may be sharp, bringing little distinction between itself and visual echo, or as Zelle captures, a slight breeze may move the image, expressing a slight tremor of excitement. Bows become alive, clouds move in cleared spaces, serenity activates the mind, and a healthy meandering results. Jacks offers this insight:

reflections
sweet memories
shimmer in the water

Who has not seen black Angus cattle, ears numbered with plastic tags, noses wet in a fall pasture? A seemingly ordinary rural sight—five steers huddling close for protection, warmth, sharing of sustenance? A commonplace stage transforms before our eyes through the power of wit and haiga:

church elders
morning sermon provokes
scowls

Against a melon-colored backdrop, Zelle's camera flash illuminates a sole sunflower. Its crisp detail draws the eye toward the yellow pedals and the centered, orange-black, speckled seedbed. Upon further examination, the eye is lifted to inspect another detail, a nondescript insect apparently coming in for an early evening rest or snack. Jacks's verse expands the scene, asking the reader to consider another form of warmth and nutrition:

sundown
a sunflower seeks
a goodnight kiss

Throughout *Tooting Our Horn*, Zelle's photography is filled with dimension and thoughtful composition, highlighting the inherent beauty of nature. Jacks's responses are filled with earthy depth and occasional comedy, promoting the elegance of rumination. However, the pages are far from idiosyncratic. The haiga in *Tooting Our Horn* could easily become daily nuggets of beauty and wisdom digitally revolving on a photo-frame slideshow or computer screensaver. One can hope the pair will continue to explore the union of form and function.

Brief Guide to Short Poetic Forms

Acrostic: A poem in which the first letter of each line forms a word or phrase when read vertically. A fine example is Edgar Allan Poe's "Elizabeth" (c. 1829), a 16-line poem written for his cousin Elizabeth Rebecca Herring. The first letters of the respective lines are E, L, I, Z, A, B, E, T, H, R, E, B, E C, C, and A.

Centó: An original poem comprising lines borrowed from the works of other authors. After arranging the lines in a coherent way, the poet identifies the source of each line. The centó is somewhat different from *found poetry*, which also uses outside texts.

Cheriga: A cherita combined with a simple visual art.

Cherita: A six-line narrative poem that usually consists of a single line, a couplet, and a tercet (3 lines). A cherita terbalik (inverted cherita) takes the form of 3-2-1, 2-1-3, 1-3-2, 2-3-1, or 3-1-2 lines. The cherita is an unrhymed, freestyle form and, similar to the tanka, is not titled.

Cinqku: A 17-syllable poem that has five lines of 2-3-4-6-2 syllables, respectively.

Cinquain: An unrhymed, five-line poetic poem that has a 2-4-6-8-2 syllable count. Some poets use iambic feet (an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one) in a cinquain. A related form is the **didactic cinquain**, which aims mainly to teach schoolchildren parts of speech. Below is the structure:

Line 1: a one-word noun (the subject of the poem)

Line 2: two adjectives that describe Line 1

Line 3: a three-word verbal phrase that further describes Line 1

Line 4: a four-word phrase that shows a feeling toward Line 1

Line 5: a one-word noun synonymous with or relate to Line 1.

The word *cinquain* is pronounced *sing-kayne*.

Couplet: A two-line poem that has an end rhyme scheme and usually has the same meter for both lines.

Didactic cinquain: See **Cinquain**.

Ekphrastic poetry: Poetry inspired by visual art. Ekphrastic poems began in classical times as a tool for describing artwork. Ekphrastic poetry as written today is not merely a verbal representation of a visual art. Rather, it is a critical, subjective response to it. Regardless of the artist's supposed intention, poets may come up with their own understanding of a work of visual art based on their life experiences, perspectives on life, and preoccupations. As in reader response literary criticism, ekphrastic poetry approaches the same work from different but equally valid angles.

Epitaph: An epigrammatic poem commemorating or epitomizing a dead person and short enough to fit a headstone. Epitaphs can be either serious or humorous. Humorous epitaphs, which are available as Google images, include "I Told You I Was Sick" and "Here Lies Clyde / His Life Was Full / Until He Tried to Milk a Bull." Some poets and writers compose their own epitaphs prior to their deaths. The word *epitaph* comes from the Greek word *epitaphios* (ἐπιτάφιος, "funeral oration").

Etheree: The Etheree consists of ten unrhymed lines of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 syllables. Etheree can also be reversed and written 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. It is attributed to an American poet, Etheree Taylor Armstrong of Arkansas. The Etheree is a highly flexible poetry form and lends itself to the writer's creativity. An Etheree should focus on one idea or subject. **Double Etheree** is two Etherees that make up one poem; the syllable count is 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1.

Fibonacci (or Fib): A math-based poem that follows the Fibonacci sequence (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, etc.); most fib poems today are written in six lines

of 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8 syllables each. It can also be written in reverse order: 8, 5, 3, 2, 1, and 1.

Found poetry: A type of poetry that creates something new and meaningful out of borrowed texts. Unlike the cento, it does not list the sources used.

Free verse: A poem written without meter or an external rhyme. Many free verse poems, however, use internal rhymes and other rhythmic devices.

Gembun: A poetic form created by ai li in 1997. The gembun (pronounced *gem boon*) consists of either a one-word first line or anything up to one sentence, to be capped by a haiku of up to four lines. A gembun poem must include an element of suggestion in the opening sentence, in the haiku, or both.

Haiku: A Japanese poetic form from the 17th century, the haiku portrays the beauty and wonders of nature and human emotions as reflected in nature. It used to be written in a 5-7-5 syllable structure, but nowadays, it generally consists of three short lines in which the poet uses up to 17 syllables altogether. The plural of *haiku* is *haiku*, not *haikus*.

Haiga: A haiku combined with a simple visual art (traditionally brush painting but currently any type of painting, drawing, or photography). A photo haiga is sometimes called a **photoku**.

Haibun (“haiku writings”): A form that combines prose and haiku. Instead of being a mere summary of the prose, the haiku must be fresh and insightful enough to stand alone as a poem. Among the best-known haibun writers is Matsuo Basho (1644-94), who wrote the travelogue *Oku no Hosomichi* (*Narrow Road to the Interior*).

Joseph’s Star: An eight-line poem consists of 1-3-5-7-7-5-3-1 syllables each and is generally center-aligned. It can have either a single stanza or a set of stanzas.

Jueju (Chinese quatrain): A Chinese poetic type that flourished in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), it was used by the literati not only in China but also those in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam for thousands of years. A jueju poem consists of couplets, each of which has either five characters (wujue) or seven characters (qijue).

Kyoka ("mad poem") is to tanka what senryu is to haiku. Kyoka is identical to tanka in form but is comic and parodic in tone. Contemporary tanka and kyoka are written in free style, without exceeding 31 syllables altogether.

Lanterne (also spelled *lanturne*): A five-line poem that uses 1-2-3-4-1 syllables in five respective lines. Rhyming is optional, and a title may or may not be used in a lanterne.

Limerick: A nonsense poem based on wordplay. It usually consists of five lines and has the end rhyme scheme of *a-a-b-b-a*. The first line typically includes a person and a place name. Some limericks have the syllabic pattern of 8-8-5-5-8. Other patterns include 8-8-6-6-8 and 9-9-6-6-9. An 8-8-6-6-8 limerick follows the stress pattern of

da DUM da da DUM da da DUM
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM
da DUM da da DUM
da DUM da da DUM
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM.

The first line usually serves as the title of a limerick.

Loop poem: A four-line, titled poem in which the last word of the first line becomes the first word of line two, the last word of line 2 becomes the first word of line 3, and the last word of line 3 becomes the first word of line 4. The rhyme scheme is *a-b-c-b*. A loop poem can have either a single stanza or a set of stanzas, and there are no restrictions on the number of syllables for each line.

Lune: An American-style haiku that has three lines of 5-3-5 syllables, respectively.

Nonet: A titled poem consisting of nine lines of 9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 syllables, respectively. Rhyming is optional.

Photoku: See Haiga.

Pirouette: A 10-line poem without meter or rhyme. In addition to having six syllables in each line, lines 5 and 6 have the same words and, combined, constitute a turnaround.

Quatrain: A four-line stanza or complete poem that rhymes. There are more than a dozen possible rhyme schemes, including *a-b-a-c* and *a-b-c-b*. A quatrain usually has a regular rhythm to the lines. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a well-known ballad quatrain. The second stanza of the poem reads,

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

Here, the rhyme scheme is *a-b-c-b*, and iambic tetrameter (an 8-syllable line) alternates with iambic trimer (a six-syllable line).

Rengay: A six-verse sequence of collaborative poems in which three-line and two-line haiku alternate. Composed by two or more poets, a rengay has a controlling theme.

Rondeau: A medieval French poetic form that consists of a rhyming quintet (a five-line stanza), quatrain (a four-line stanza), and sestet (a six-line stanza). Altogether, a rondeau poem has 15 lines, each of which contains 8-10 syllables. The rhyme scheme is AABBA AABR AABBAR. ("R" represents the refrain.) The plural form of *rondeau* is *rondeaux*.

Sedoka: An ancient Japanese poetic form that consists of two three-line *katauta* (5-7-7, 5-7-7 syllables, respectively). The two sets of the 5-7-7 *katauta* constitute a conversation in Japanese sedoka. (The 5-7-5 *katauta* constitutes the first three lines of a traditional tanka.) The *Manyoshu* (“Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves”), an anthology compiled around 759, includes 62 sedoka poems.

Senryu: A three-line unrhymed Japanese poetic form structurally similar to the haiku but dealing satirically and humorously with human foibles. It arose as part of Edo (Tokyo) culture in the eighteenth century.

Septolet: A seven-line, 14-word poem that consists of three lines, a line break, and four lines.

Shape poem: A poem in which the lines are arranged in a way that represents the subject of the poem. It is also called visual poem or concrete poem.

Sijo: A vernacular Korean poetic form whose basic structure requires approximately forty-five Korean characters (syllabic blocks) arranged in three unrhymed lines. Similar to contemporary haiku and other Japanese-style short-form poems, Korean sijo are now written in free style.

Sonnet: A 14-line poem with a variable rhyme scheme originating in Italy and brought to England by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, in the 16th century. Traditionally, the sonnet (a “little song”) reflects upon a single sentiment, with a clarification or “turn” of thought (*volta*) in its concluding lines.

The Petrarchan (Italian) sonnet, perfected by the Italian poet Petrarch, divides the 14 lines into two sections: an eight-line stanza (octave) rhyming ABBAABBA, and a six-line stanza (sestet) rhyming CDCDCD or CDEEDE. John Milton’s “When I Consider How my Light Is Spent” and Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “How Do I Love Thee” employ this form.

The Shakespearean (English) Sonnet: A sonnet with 14 lines consisting of three quatrains and a couplet, with a rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. George Herbert's "Love (II)," Claude McKay's "America," and Molly Peacock's "Altruism" are Shakespearean sonnets.

Most sonnets are about love and romance, and the tone of a sonnet can be either serious or humorous.

The Split Sequence: A twelve-line linked haiku form, plus title, written solo or collaboratively. A sequence is started by the poet splitting the 3-line haiku into 3 separate lines. Next, the poet writes a haiku for each line – first, second, and third, making it a 1-3-1-3-1-3 format. If it is a collaborative sequence, each poet alternates in writing the haiku. This form was invented by Peter Jastermsky in 2017. (Definition by Christine L. Villa, 5 March 2022)

Tan Renga ("short linked verse"): A collaborative tanka written by two poets. Typically, one poet composes three lines, and the other poet adds two lines. A **solo tan renga**, written by a single poet, leaves a blank line space between the first three lines and the two capping lines to distinguish the poem from a tanka.

Tanka: An aristocratic poetic form from ancient Japan, it is popular in both Japan and the English-speaking world. The traditional tanka consists of five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, respectively; most common themes of traditional tanka are love (especially unrequited love) and nature. Most contemporary English-language tanka poets tend to use five short lines of various syllable counts without exceeding 31 syllables altogether.

Tanka art: Illustrated tanka. It is akin to a haiga except that it generally has five short lines.

Tanka prose: A form that combines prose and tanka. Instead of being a mere summary of the prose, the tanka must be fresh and insightful enough to stand alone as a poem.

Triptych: A poem of three stanzas, the second of which tends to be longer than stanzas 1 and 3. In visual art, a triptych (“three-fold”) means a three-sectioned painting or carving. Similar to the three panels that constitute a thematic whole, the three stanzas in a triptych poem should work together to create a theme.

—J.J.H.

Notes on Contributors

Rupa Anand is a spiritual seeker and started writing free verse in 2008. She has a BA (Hons) in English Literature from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. Her work has been published in Indian spiritual journals and international publications. Her writing reflects her deep connection with nature. She says, "I hope my poems will put you in touch with the beauty and calm of the natural world—and show the interconnectedness of life." A cancer survivor, Rupa lives in New Delhi, India, with her husband, daughter, and numerous cats.

Mason Arledge earned his B.S. in English with a writing concentration and a writing certificate from Missouri Baptist University, where he graduated with highest honors. Along the way, he won awards for his work in academia, creative writing, and editing. He has published blogs, articles, spoken word, poetry, and short stories, and he has served as an editor for *Flash!*, *The Right Words*, *Intégrité*, *Cantos*, and *Fireflies' Light*. He teaches English and is currently pursuing publication for his novels. He loves dogs, is allergic to cats, likes blackberries, despises banana-flavored candy, films weddings, plays the piano, and admires brilliant stories.

Joanna Ashwell is a writer from the northeast of England. Her collection of haiku, *Between Moonlight*, was published by Hub Editions in 2006. She is affiliated with various writing associations such as the British Haiku Society, the American Haiku Society, and Tanka societies. She was nominated for a Touchstone haiku award in 2021 and won the British Haiku Society Award in 2021. She enjoys reading and writing haiku, tanka, cherita, and other related forms.

Lori Becherer is an artist, poet, and life-long resident of southern Illinois and is inspired by the simple beauty of rural America. She is a member of the Haiku Society of America, the Heartland Women's Writers Guild, and the Mississippi Mud Daubers haiku group. Her haiku has been published in numerous English-language haiku journals,

including *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Acorn*, *bottle rockets*, *cattails*, *Prune Juice*, and *Presence*. Lori is employed as a medical coding analyst with BJC Healthcare.

Bisshie is the pen name for Patricia McGuire, who lives in Zürich, Switzerland. She is managing editor of *The Haiku Pea Podcast* and *Poetry Pea journal*. You can find them on poetrypea.com and Poetry Pea YouTube channel. Her work has appeared in *Autumn Moon Journal*, *Frogpond*, *Bones*, *Presence*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Sonic Boom*, *Failed Haiku*, *Prune Juice*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Fireflies' Light*, *Cantos*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Modern Haiku*, and *The Poetry Pea Journal*. She was shortlisted for The Haiku Foundation Individual Poems Award 2021 and is a Pushcart-nominated poet.

Dr. Randy Brooks is Professor of English Emeritus at Millikin University where he teaches courses on haiku. He and his wife, Shirley Brooks, are publishers of Brooks Books and co-editors of *Mayfly* haiku magazine. His most recent books include *Walking the Fence: Selected Tanka* and *The Art of Reading and Writing Haiku: A Reader Response Approach*.

Kevin Browne is a writer and amateur photographer living in Wisconsin. He draws most of his inspiration for writing from walking in natural environments. His work has appeared in *The Heron's Nest*, *Frogpond*, *Presence*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, and other publications.

B. L. Bruce is an award-winning poet and two-time Pushcart Prize nominee living and writing along California's Central Coast. Her work has appeared most recently in *The Remnant Archive*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, *Le Merle*, *Visitant*, *Blood Moon*, *Feral*, and *The Lakeshore Review*, with haiku in the American Haiku Society's *Frogpond*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *hedgerow*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Plum Tree Tavern*, *Cold Moon Journal*, and others. Bruce is the author of four books, *The Weight of Snow*, *28 Days of Solitude*, *The Starling's Song*, and *Measures*, and is the editor-in-chief of the nature-centric literary magazine *Humana Obscura*.

Pitt Buerken is retired and lives with his wife in Münster, the City of the Westphalian Peace (1648). He writes short stories and poems, especially haiku/senryu, tanka/kyoka, haibun, and tanka prose. His recent works also include cherita and gembun. In addition to numerous publications in international journals, he has published two haiku/senryu books. He enjoys biking with his wife in the countryside.

Susan Burch is a writer of short Japanese forms. She is the current Vice President of the Tanka Society of America and writes mostly from the comfort of her couch. When not writing, she likes to read, do jigsaw puzzles, watch TV, and listen to music. She loves coca cola ices and bird-watching. If you ask her, she will send you her terrible pictures of the birds that come to her yard. Frequent visitors are crows, blue jays, mockingbirds, robins, finches, sparrows, hummingbirds, and woodpeckers. Occasionally she sees hawks, wrens, bluebirds, nuthatches, chickadees, cardinals, robins, grackles, cowbirds, starlings, and tufted titmice.

Eve Castle lives in Dallas, Texas, and writes poetry and short stories. She started writing short form poetry in 2012 while caring for her dying mother. Eve is a member of Gabe's Poets, a Dallas-based poetry writing group. She hopes to become a full-time poet in 2023 after a three-decade career in administrative management in higher education. Her publishing credits include *Barbaric Yawp*, *Bright Stars: An Organic Tanka Anthology*, *The Poetry Pea Journal of Haiku and Senryu*, and online at *Wales Haiku Journal*, *The Ghazal Page*, *Literary Juice*, *Gravel Magazine*, and others.

Ram Chandran is a corporate lawyer by profession. He has been writing English poetry since his college days and Japanese short-form poetry since 2020. His English language haiku and other Japanese short-form poems have been widely published internationally in print and digital Journals. ramlawyer75@gmail.com.

Hemapriya Chellappan is a haiku poet and a freelance illustrator who resides in Pune, India. She took to Japanese literary short forms in the

summer of 2019. Ever since, her works have been published in various international print journals and e-magazines. When she isn't daydreaming, she writes jokes, sketches landscapes, hums old songs, and makes an excellent tea.

Christina Chin is a haiku poet and painter from Kuching, Malaysia. She is the 1st place winner in the 34th Annual Cherry Blossom Sakura Festival 2020 Haiku Contest. Her photo-haiku won a Grand Prix Award in the 8th Setouchi Matsuyama International Contest in 2019. She is published in the multilingual *Haiku Anthology* and the International Spring and Summer *Saijiki*. Christina is also published in *Haikukai*, one of Japan's biggest monthly haiku magazines. Her poems appear in many journals, including *AHS*, *Frogpond*, the *Red Moon Anthology*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, the *Asahi Shimbun*, *ESUJ-Haiku*, *The Zen Space*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Failed Haiku*, and *cattails*. She maintains an ongoing scheduled blog of featured and published haiku at <https://haikuzyg.blogspot.com/>.

Marion Clarke, winner of the *Financial Times* "Haiku Poet in the City," is from Warrenpoint, Northern Ireland. Her short form poetry appears regularly in international journals and is included in the first two collections of haiku from the island of Ireland. Clarke's local landscape inspires her visual art and photography, which she uses to create haiga and shahai. Her photo haiku was featured on NHK World-Japan's *Haiku Masters*, winning "Master of the Month" in 2018. In 2022, she was Grand Prize winner in the Setouchi-Matsuyama Photo Haiku Competition.

Maya Daneva is from Canada. She is a Computer Science scholar in a Dutch university. Her work has appeared in *Frogpond*, *Canada Haiku Review*, *Tinywords*, *Failed Haiku*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Presence*, *Hedgerow*, and the *Asahi Haikuist Network*.

M. R. Defibaugh is a Virginia-based poet and haiku enthusiast. He has degrees in mathematical sciences (BA, University of Illinois at Springfield) and operations management (MS, University of Arkansas). Defibaugh's latest chapbook, *the cuckoo always mid-song: haiku &*

haiga (2021), was done in collaboration with artist Penney L. Mellen and is available from Barnes & Noble Press. His work has appeared in numerous journals, including *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *Failed Haiku*, *Stardust Haiku*, and *Trash Panda*.

Barbara L. Eaton has taught at Joliet Junior College, College of DuPage, and Morton College. A member of the Illinois State Poetry Society, the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, and the Academy of American Poets, Barbara has facilitated the Lisle Chapter of ISPS. She edited a collection, *Sacred Rivers*, for poets Carolyn Sibr and Marvin R. Young. Barbara publishes in literary journals, and performs her poetry at local venues such as libraries, nursing homes, and coffeehouses. Barbara chaired the contest for Poets & Patrons of Chicago for many years. Her book of poems, *Long-Distance Romance*, is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Richard Evanoff has lived most of his adult life in Japan and been active in literary circles in Tokyo. Previously he was editor of the literary journal *Printed Matter* and founding editor of *Edge*. Currently, he is coordinator of The Open Mic held monthly in Tokyo and an active participant in the Tokyo Writers Workshop. His poems have appeared in *Psychopoetica*, *Tin Wreath*, *Wormwood Review*, and other publications. He teaches international communication at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo and has numerous publications in the fields of intercultural and environmental ethics.

Keith Evetts has published papers in scientific periodicals and long-form poetry in *The Oxford Magazine* and elsewhere. His haiku and related forms have appeared in many leading journals. In 2022, five of his poems were nominated for Touchstone awards and one for a Pushcart prize, and poems were selected for the *Red Moon Anthologies of Haiku and of Haibun*, as well as for the anthology *Haiku 2023* published by Modern Haiku. Listed in the top 100 European haikuists, he hosts the haiku commentary feature re:Virals at The Haiku Foundation. Married, with five children, a grey parrot, and a sense of humor.

B.A. France is a writer and poet who works in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. His work has been published in numerous journals including *Modern Haiku*, *cattails*, and *Akitsu Quarterly*. His chapbook *Season's End*, a small collection of tanka and haibun, was published by Alabaster Leaves, an imprint of Kelsay Books.

Jay Friedenberg is a former President of the Haiku Society of America and served for two years as Associate Editor of the organization's journal *Frogpond*. He is a regular attendee and presenter at the New York Metro HSA organization. He is also a member of the Spring Street Haiku Group that meets monthly in New York City. Jay has had his poetry accepted in numerous U.S. and international journals and has published several book collections of his work. He has won multiple U.S. and International haiku contests.

Ben Gaa is your friendly neighborhood haiku poet and host of *Haiku Talk* on YouTube. He's the author of two full-length collections of haiku & senryu, *One Breath* (Spartan Press 2020) and the Touchstone Award-winning *Wishbones* (Folded Word 2018), as well as three chapbooks, the Pushcart nominated *Wasp Shadows* (Folded Word 2014), *Blowing on a Hot Soup Spoon* (Poor Metaphor Design 2014), and *Fiddle in the Floorboards* (Yavanika Press 2018). With over 1,000 haiku and senryu published in journals and anthologies around the globe, he enjoys both giving and attending poetry readings, conducting haiku workshops, and being a part of the literary conversation. Learn more about Ben at www.Ben-Gaa.com.

Sherry Grant is a Taiwanese-born New Zealand classical concert pianist, cellist, poet, author, translator, and festival organizer. Since 2021 she and her youngest daughter Zoe have been promoting short form poetry by co-editing several journals, presenting at haiku conferences, and organizing poetry workshops. As a musician, Sherry plays online concerts regularly and in her recent North American concert tour she also shared her poems during recitals. Sherry is a well published haiku/cherita/rengay poet. Her rengay written with Alan Peat (UK) won the first prize at the 2021 Otoroshi Rengay Contest. Sherry also enjoys writing longer rhymed poems and plans to publish several

poetry books and chapbooks in the near future, including 300 love poems written for her favorite composer Alexander Scriabin, in three volumes. Visit www.linktr.ee/sherrygrant for updates.

Zoe Grant, a well-published nine-year-old haiku poet from New Zealand, is the co-author and illustrator of *Bat Girl*, written in 2020 when she was six years old. Her haiku won the first prize at the 2021 NZPS International Haiku Competition (School/Junior), and she is the co-editor of *Chalk on the Walk Haiku*, *Chalk on the Walk Monoku*, *Haiku Zoo Journal*, and *Raining Rengay*. Zoe enjoys drawing, singing, ballet, and writing poetry. She co-hosts the International Rengay Gatherings with her mother Sherry Grant twice a year. This daughter-mother duo plans to go on concert tours to share their poetry and music with the world. Zoe shared 250 short-form poems by 250 poets at the three-day online International Scriabin 150 Festival in November 2022. She plans to do poetry podcasts in the near future. Follow Zoe's projects at www.linktr.ee/zoe.grant.

Hazel Hall is a widely published Australian poet and musicologist. Her work ranges from Japanese short forms to free verse, prose poetry, and hybrids. Hazel's recent collections are *Eggshell Sky*, with calligraphers Angela and Parkinsons artists (Bytes and Colours, 2017); *Step by Step*, with tai chi master Angie Egan (Picaro Poets, 2019); *Moonlight Over the Siding*, with Parkinsons artist Robert Tingey (Interactive Press, 2019); *Severed Web*, with Australian artist Deborah Faeyrglenn (Picaro Poets, 2020); a verse drama *Please Add Your Signature and Date it Here* (Litoria Press, 2021); and *Breathe in, Breathe Out* (Picaro Poets, 2023).

John J. Han (Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln) is Professor of English and Creative Writing and Associate Dean of the School of Humanities and Theology at Missouri Baptist University. He is the author, editor, co-editor, or translator of 33 books, the latest of which is *Harold Bell Wright's Ozarks: Photos with Notes* (Cyberwit, 2023). Among his upcoming books are *Certainty and Ambiguity: Essays on the Moral Imagination of Mystery Fiction* (with C. Clark Triplett and Matthew Bardowell; Bloomsbury Academic) and *To the Hills and*

Hollows: Haibun and Tanka Prose (Cyberwit). Han has also published more than 2,300 poems in periodicals and anthologies, such as *Cave Region Review* (featured poet of the year 2012), *Failed Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *Simply Haiku* (chosen as the world's sixth-finest English-language haiku poet for 2011), and *Valley Voices* (Pushcart-nominated).

Gary Hotham was recently named the 2022-2023 Honorary Curator of the American Haiku Archives at California State University Sacramento. He started writing and publishing haiku in 1966, and since then his haiku have appeared in many journals and anthologies. In 1976, his first chapbook collection appeared, and over 20 chapbooks and larger collections of haiku have appeared. He is currently serving as the 1st VP of the Haiku Society of America.

Edward Cody Huddleston was born in New Jersey, raised in Georgia, and now occupies various liminal spaces. He's thought to be either a deepfake or a radio DJ, but he's definitely a haiku poet. His haiku have won and placed for numerous awards and his debut collection, *Wildflowers in a Vase*, is available now from Red Moon Press. You can find him on Twitter @echuddleston.

Marilyn Humbert lives in Sydney NSW Australia. Her tanka and haiku appear in international and Australian journals, anthologies and online. Her free verse poems have been awarded prizes in competitions, published online, in anthologies and journals, most recently in *FemAsia Magazine* (January 2023) and *Burrow* (February 2023).

Terrie Jacks graduated from the University of Missouri with a B. S. In Education. She has lived in several different states and spent several years in England. Her poems have been published in *Cantos*, *Fireflies' Light*, *The Oasis Journal*, *Spare Mule*, *Grist*, *Cattails*, *Failed Haiku*, *Tanka Origins*, and *Galaxy of Verse*. Some of her stories have appeared in *The Right Words* and *Flash*. For several years, she illustrated Korean folktales retold by John Han that were published in the *Korean-American Journal* and later in the book *Spousal Competition and Other*

Tales from Korea (2021), by Han. She continues to write and illustrate poems and has upon occasion entered them in local art exhibits.

Roberta Beach Jacobson is drawn to the magic of words—poetry, puzzles, song lyrics, short fiction, stand-up comedy. Her work has appeared in more than 80 anthologies published on four continents. She works as the Fleakeeper at *Five Fleas (Itchy Poetry)* and lives with her husband and three cats in Indianola, Iowa.

Keitha Keyes lives in Sydney, Australia, surrounded by antique irons and ship models. She enjoys writing tanka, kyoka, haiku, senryu, cherita, and related genres. Her work is published in many journals and anthologies in Australia and overseas.

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.

Françoise Maurice lives in Draguignan in Provence, France. She participated in the coordination of the book *“Je pense à toi”* (Pippa, 2021). Present in several Francophone and Anglo-Saxon anthologies, she won the second prize in the 23rd international Mainichi competition in March 2020, and the first prize in the 10th Jocelyne-Villeneuve competition in May 2021. For the past two years, she has been listed as one of the 100 most creative European poets writing in English. In 2022, she published *“Bruissements d’ailes”* (Via Domitia).

Wilda Morris, Workshop Chair of Poets and Patrons of Chicago and a past President of the Illinois State Poetry Society, has published numerous in anthologies, webzines, and print publications, including *Brass Bell*, *Haiku Canada*, and *Modern Haiku*. She has won awards for formal and free verse and haiku. Wilda has published two books of poetry, *Szechwan Shrimp and Fortune Cookies: Poems from a Chinese Restaurant* (RWG Press) and *Pequod Poems: Gamming with*

Moby-Dick (Kelsay Books). Her third book, *At Goat Hollow and other Poems*, is scheduled for publication this spring. Her poetry blog at wildamorris.blogspot.com features a monthly poetry contest.

David Oates is the host and producer of *Wordland*, a radio program of stories, comedy, and poetry, and the former host of *Great Apes* (comedy), both on WUGA FM. He emcees Athens Word of Mouth poetry open mic. His books are *Night of the Potato* (fiction and poetry), *Shifting with My Sandwich Hand*, and *Drunken Robins* (the latter two, haiku and senryu). His stories and poems have been published in many media. He loves introducing people to all the aspects of haikai literature not taught in elementary school. For grins, he does comedy open mics.

Uchechukwu Onyedikam is a Nigerian creative artist based in Lagos, Nigeria. His poems have appeared in *Amsterdam Quarterly*, *Brittle Paper*, *Poetic Africa*, *Hood Communists*, and print anthologies. He and Christina Chin, a Malaysian poet, collaborated on a collection of tan renga, titled *Pouring Light on the Hills*.

Bryan Rickert, the current President of the Haiku Society of America, has been published in many fine journals and anthologies. He is the Co-Editor of *Failed Haiku: A Journal of English Senryu* and edits *The Living Senryu Anthology*. Bryan has two books available: *Fish Kite* (Cyberwit) and *Dust and Stone*, co-written with Peter Jastermsky (Velvet Dusk Publishing).

Joshua St. Claire works as a financial executive for a large non-profit rural Pennsylvania, USA. His haiku have been published in journals in North America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania. His work in Japanese forms has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. His poetry was included in the 2022 *Dwarf Stars Anthology*, and he is the winner of the 2022 Gerald Brady Memorial Senryu Award.

Richa Sharma resides near New Delhi, India, and loves reading and writing poetry in her leisure time. She is a nature lover, an avid sky watcher, and a dreamer. She has been writing Japanese short-form

poetry for about two years. Her work has appeared in numerous journals, such as *Bones*, *Failed Haiku*, *Better Than Starbucks*, the *Asahi Haikuist Network*, and *Prune Juice*.

Tsanka Shishkova has a Ph.D. in Computer Science. She has published haiku, senryu, cherita, and haiga in *ESUJ-H English Haiku*, *Time Haiku*, *The Asahi Shimbun*, *THF*, *The Mainichi*, *Failed Haiku*, *HaikUniverse*, *NHK - Haiku Master*, *Stardust Haiku*, *The Mamba Journal*, *Under the Basho*, *Urban Fantasist*, *Wild Lilacs*, *Wild Plum*, *World Haiku Association*, *Haiku in Action*, *Daily Haiga*, et al. She was selected to the Euro Top 100 Most Creative Haiku Authors in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. Shishkova is a member of the Bulgarian Haiku Union.

Thomas Smith is a physician and educator who has published in several genres. His *The Search For King: A Fable* was published in December 2022 and is available through Amazon. His work has appeared in *Fireflies' Light* and *Frogpond*. He and his family currently live in Austin, Texas.

Debbie Strange (Canada) is a chronically ill short-form poet, haiga artist, and photographer whose creative passions connect her more closely to the world, to others, and to herself. Thousands of Debbie's poems and artworks have been published in leading journals, worldwide. Her most recent book, *The Language of Loss: Haiku & Tanka Conversations* (Sable Books, 2020) was the winner of Haiku Canada's 2022 Marianne Bluger Chapbook Award. She maintains a publications and awards archive at <https://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com/>, and you are welcome to follow her on Twitter @Debbie_Strange and on Instagram @debbiemstrange.

Todd Sukany, a Pushcart nominee, lives in Pleasant Hope, Missouri, with his wife of over 40 years. His work has appeared in *Ancient Paths*, *Cantos: A Literary and Arts Journal*, *Cave Region Review*, *The Christian Century*, *Intégrité: A Faith and Learning Journal*, and *The Ekphrastic Review*. Sukany co-authored a book of poetry, *The First Book of Mirrors*, with Raymond Kirk. A native of Michigan and recently retired, Sukany stays busy running, playing music, loving three children, their

spouses, six grandchildren, and caring for three rescue dogs, and two feral cats.

C. Clark Triplett is Emeritus Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of Psychology at Missouri Baptist University. He served as co-editor (with John Han) of *The Final Crossing: Death and Dying in Literature* (Peter Lang, 2015), a co-editor (with John Han and Ashley Anthony) of *Worlds Gone Awry: Essays on Dystopian Fiction* (McFarland, 2018), and a co-editor (with John Han and Matthew Bardowell) of *Certainty and Ambiguity: Essays on the Moral Imagination of Mystery Fiction* (forthcoming from Bloomsbury Academic). Triplett's poems have appeared in *Cantos*, *Fireflies' Light*, and the *Asahi Haikuist Network*. He earned a B.A. from Southwest Baptist University, an M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary, an M.S.Ed. from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University.

C.X. Turner (she/her) is a registered social work manager, living and working in the UK. Her poetry is mainly focused on writing short-form poems, on a daily basis, and she has been published widely, including recent and upcoming publication in *Modern Haiku*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Hedgerow*, *Drifting Sands*, *Ribbons*, *Kingfisher*, *Bones*, and *Otoroshi* journals. She enjoys working collaboratively with other poets and on solo projects, currently has haiku on the streets of Washington D.C. as part of the Golden Triangle contest and is part of the *Wales Haiku Journal* team. She was three times Touchstone-nominated in 2022 and is currently working on a book of short poems and enjoying exploring different art mediums in her haiga. Connect with her on Twitter @lover__poetic and/or Instagram @love.rpoetic.

Christine L. Villa is an all-around creative explorer. She is a children's book author, haiku and tanka poet, publisher, speaker, photographer, mixed media artist, and crafter. Her books, poems, photos, and artwork have won awards and recognition. Her collection of Japanese short-form poetry is entitled *The Bluebird's Cry*. She is the founding editor of *Frameless Sky* (a bi-annual poetry video journal) and its imprint Velvet Dusk Publishing. She is also the former editor of *Ribbons*, the official

publication of Tanka Society of America. Visit her at www.christinevilla.com.

Joseph P. Wechselberger lives in Browns Mills, NJ, USA, and has been retired since March 2007. A member of the Haiku Society of America, he began writing haiku/senryu in 2018. His work has been Touchstone nominated in 2021 and 2022 and has appeared in 36 haiku journals, such as *Acorn*, *whiptail*, *seashores*, *Presence*, *Hedgerow*, *Prune Juice*, *Failed Haiku*, *Frogpond*, and *Akitsu Quarterly*, as well as *United Haiku* and *Tanka Society Songbirds Online Anthology 2022*, *Haiku 2022*, *jar of rain: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2020*, *skipping stones: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2022*, and other anthologies.

Neal Whitman lives in Pacific Grove, California, with his wife, Elaine. They both find inspiration when they walk together along Monterey Bay. Neal is an award-winning member of the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, the Ina Coolbrith Circle, and the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, where Neal is a dōjin. Neal's general and Japanese form poems have been published in journals and anthologies around the world, and he much values email correspondence with poets near and far.

Karen Zelle has discovered photography during the pandemic and is having fun exploring the parks and nature with a camera in hand.

Hassane Zemmouri was born Algiers, Algeria, in 1991. He is a haijin and writes children's stories. He started writing haiku in September 2017; since 2019, he has been writing haiku in Arabic, English, and French. He also writes tanka and haibun. He started creating haiga in 2020, and in November 2021, he started writing rengay with Sherry Grant. Some of his works are published in the 5th and 6th anthologies of *Haiku Column*, French and English haiku anthologies, *The Mamba*, *Seashores*, *Scarlet Dragonfly*, *Daily Haiga*, and *Our Best Haiga*.

John Zheng is the author of *A Way of Looking* (Silverfish Review P, 2021). He has published 18 photo essays in journals including *Arkansas*

Review, Intégrité, Mississippi Folklife, The Right Words, and The Southern Quarterly. His books published in 2023 are *The Dog Years of Reeducation: Poems* (Madville Publishing) and *Conversations with Jerry W. Ward Jr.* (University Press of Mississippi).

