

ATLAS
POETICA
A Journal of World Tanka

Number 32

M. Kei, editor
Grunge, editorial assistant

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Atlas Poetica
A Journal of World Tanka

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 We do not publish haiku, except as incidental to a tanka collage or other mixed form work.

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

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

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Kyoka

Here we are at our tenth anniversary. It was ten years ago, Spring, 2008, that we brought out the first issue of *Atlas Poetica*. Publishing twice a year, over the course of time we expanded to three times a year, and now roughly four times a year on an organic schedule. We increased in size, but have made only modest price increases—with approximately a thousand tanka or more per issue, along with articles, reviews, and announcements, *Atlas Poetica* provides a deep and broad view of modern tanka literature.

In keeping with that spirit, in the current issue we focus on kyoka, tanka's lesser-known cousin. Kyoka has the same form as tanka in Japanese, but its content is very different. Kyoka delights in wordplay, humor, satire, whimsy, and parody; historically, it took up subjects deemed too vulgar for tanka. It treated serious subjects lightly, and light subjects seriously, creating humor by the juxtaposition of the unexpected mood and subject. As the old *waka* underwent reform and transformation during the Meiji Era to become tanka, subject matter and treatment also opened up. When the outlet provided by kyoka was no longer needed, it nearly went extinct.

If anything is possible in tanka, why bother with kyoka? One of the virtues of kyoka is to loosen up poets and readers who may be too stuck on the idea that tanka *should, must, or ought* to be something in particular, something that puts limits on the form and excludes certain subjects, authors, and moods. By having the freedom to label something 'kyoka' instead of 'tanka,' we give permission to ourselves and others to experiment, innovate, and have fun. Serious subjects—cancer, scattering ashes, and broken hearts—are abundant in tanka, but we can't be sad or serious all the time. Poetry is playful as well as eloquent, but all too often Very Serious Adults forget that our happiness does not depend exclusively on our ability to work; it also depends on our ability to play. Since we are poets, we play with words.

Charles Harmon, a newcomer to our pages, offers a humorous take on King Arthur that will be immediately understood by fans of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Americans will be equally amused by Grunge's combining of two well-known pop culture references: Smokey the Bear and the many Hollywood movies that feature a "chosen one" as hero. Harmon utilizes the classic kyoka technique of refusing to take an ancient tradition seriously, while Grunge treats the subject with mock seriousness. Both are parodies, not just of the subject matter, but of tanka itself.

Michael H. Lester, who is editor of our Rhyming Kyoka special feature to appear shortly on the website, offers us a sequence of rhymed kyoka. Kyoka, with its humorous, even scatological subject matter, is very near to the native English limerick. Each is a five line poem made up of two short lines and three long lines. By adding rhyme to his kyoka, Lester skates very near to limerick, and yet, the resulting poems are most definitely kyoka and not limericks.

Not all is kyoka. We offer, as usual, a wide variety of tanka, tanka prose, tanka sequences, cherita, reviews, non-fiction articles, and announcements. Tanka in translation includes German and Dutch, while in non-fiction remarks, Alexis Rotella offers her thoughts on kyoka and Paweł Markiewicz illustrates how the storytelling cherita can create and transmogrify fairy tales.

An added feature in this issue are several letters to the editor with their well-wishes for our tenth anniversary.

~K~

M. Kei
Editor, Atlas Poetica

Sunlight on the Amazon River, Brazil.

Cover courtesy of the Earth Observatory, NASA.
<http://eoimages.gsfc.nasa.gov/images/imagerecords/9000/9072/ISS017-E-13856_brg.jpg>

Letters to the Editor

Dear K,

Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of *Atlas Poetica* and the issuance of ATPO 31. I have just ordered my copy from Amazon and will have it in hand on February 2. I am honored and very much appreciate that you have chosen to include my tanka in the release announcement along with my poet friend and mentor, Autumn Noelle Hall, and the other fine poets.

At her suggestion, and in furtherance of my very enjoyable collaboration with her, I have included Autumn's congratulatory and thank you email along with mine.

As I mentioned to you previously, you have been very instrumental in boosting my confidence in my writing and in my growth as a poet.

With gratitude,

Michael
USA

Dear K,

Congratulations and Happy 10th! I think that's the tin or aluminum anniversary, traditionally . . . but I've ordered a copy of 31 instead! Stepping down after my own brief 2-year editing stint, I have to say I am truly impressed by your stamina! But beyond that, I am amazed that you have continued to produce such an innovative, high quality journal for 10 years without so much as a pause for breath.

Atlas Poetica is always my number one recommend to tanka poets; it has become my go-to resource for understanding what is happening at the forefront of English language tanka. I am proud to have had work included throughout much of that decade; and I am grateful for the

tanka education you have given me through your constant inclusion of fresh, honest, edgy contributor work and well-researched, clearly written articles. You have afforded me both the courage and the opportunity to experiment and push my own work, which in turn has been instrumental in my growth as a poet.

Thank you so much for the great honor of including my tanka front-and-center in the ATPO 31 release announcement! It is my privilege to be a part of your beautiful "big, big journal!"

Always in awe,

Autumn
USA

A decade of a mighty fine publication—congratulations, Kei!

And thank you for publishing some of my work over the years . . . _/|_

With kind regards,

Bill Waters
USA

Dear Kei,

I write to bring attention to one single poem which I wish I had written. It's the tanka I have tried all my life to write, and could not. It's a tanka which could just as easily be an old waka from the pens of Ryokan or Shiki or Saigyō or Teika. It's the poem that cuts through the ages from then to now, in five small lines, while still honouring the tradition of tanka. It's the right shape and number of syllables, and it sings the way tanka should. It holds pretty well all of the

Japanese aesthetics from the *wabi-sabi*'s fading beauty to the *yūgen* that inspires the Noh plays, to the simplicity of the *iki*. It holds the heartbreak of *miyabi*.

I imagine that some western tanka poets may disagree about the wonder of this little poem. I know that some feel that we in the west should be moving away from the old ways of waka towards a new kind of tanka. I can only write for myself when I say that if we are going to borrow another country's traditional ways with poetry that go back so many centuries, then we should honour the shape and form of them. I don't always write in those traditional ways. I wish I did. I have struggled for decades with trying to marry the old and the new, the East and the West, and I have failed.

But this poet, pretty new to the tanka world, has done it, and made it look easy :

I weep not
for my tired, aging body
I weep because
I can no longer hear
the wood thrush sing

Can't you hear that singing from some
hermit hut in the Japanese hills?
Take a bow, Michael Lester.

Joy McCall
Norwich, England

Dear M. Kei,

I thoroughly enjoyed issue 31. I was particularly moved by Bill Albert's *set adrift*, and *L'Estranger*. As well, I am a big fan of both Matsukaze and Brendon Slater and always enjoy reading their work.

Sincerely,
Tigz De Palma
Balearic Islands, Spain

Dear Editor,

First and foremost, I trust that you are keeping well and enjoying your sailing! I am almost lost for words. How do I thank you sincerely for yet again granting me the joy and privilege of having my Tanka published in such an outstanding publication?

By-the-way, I only started writing Tanka in December 2017. When I counted how many you have accepted for publication in ATPO 32 I almost fell off my chair—thank you once again.

I bought a copy of *Side by Side*—a magnificent publication—two great writers that compliment each other beautifully!

Wishing, Light, Love and Peace.

John Gonzalez
Ipswich, England

Dear Mr. Kei,

I am so excited to receive your email!

Thank you for kindly accepting all the poems/prose. It's a privilege to be published in Atlas Poetica!

Regards,
Barun Saha
India

ai li

you say sorry
with your eyes
i see that now
25 years on
but it is too late

folding a paper boat
for the rose petals
i collected
it goes west for you
and i go east

rushing to be home
to be in your bedroom
shooting star
after shooting star
from your window

i am sitting again
on the porch
with the windfall
how many years has it been
since we left?

i find
my dancing shoes
our old ballroom
closed
for years

i had something
to say to you
but you started
taking off your shirt
the words can wait

finding a room
for the night
we
are louder
than the rain

you take off
my bra with great care
then go on
to
tear hymen

a new romance
you call me up
on
a bad line
and start crying

she is smiling
into the camera
as you break
her little finger
behind her back

a night of stars
i'm up on the roof
holding up
a piece of sky
with my dreams

i wish you love . . .
that old song
me
on a bench
looking out to sea

i take my hat
and gloves
for a walk
and let them
warm me

you said
we would grow old together
sitting on the back porch
you were moss to my lichen
the empty years bleed

blind date
we're meeting
under artificial light
i will
look older

my nipples
were sore
after you left
teeth marks
staking out your claim

eternity
i don't need to be loved
for that length of time
a minute or two
would be heaven

you don't touch me anymore
even when the ground is white
comes a robin
and i feel his little feet
on my snow

passing each other
at the blue hour
your eyes hungry
mine
are blind

we are tethered
only our souls
are free to wander
through meadowsweet
whispering *stay*

the quietness of love
sitting under
a new moon
our auras
touching

~Singapore and London, England

homesick cherita and tanka

ai li

another war looms

mother on a train
home with my brother

the station platform
empty now
in old age

i walk
into space
i no longer own
not even
the echoes

finishing my greens

at childhood's dining table
i look back now and miss

the formica of comfort days
mother's voice
strong in the kitchen

on
a still night
some lullaby
coming from
a faraway place

fast losing track

of my early life but for
the black and white photographs

that arrested youth
in
its moment of glory

swaying palms
my sarong
a rhapsody
of tropical colour
frangipani in my hair

in this hall of sorrows

someone is not crying
anymore

she lights joss
and incense
drowns her

there are clouds
in your afternoon
of reading old love letters
that darken
with the dusk

ancestor worship

i'm in the hall
of memories

with my lone voice
inviting them
to come home

where the house was
tall weeds and grass
the ghost
of a songbird
i cannot hear

the garden gate

i remembered
is missing

so is
the wall calendar
of eternal springs

the keys handed over
hydrangeas in full bloom
a summer made
for love
before the war

~Singapore and London, England

cherita light

ai li

caring for you was easy

caring for myself
was left to the angels

whose wings
i felt cradling me
through storms

she earned her right to shine wrote Summers

55 years on
no one has come close

to her aura
of white light
and warmth

for Marilyn

so much

left to do
life to live

a lighthouse
to switch on
from her wheelchair

teaching

the blind children
to dance

suddenly the dark
is rich
with possibilities

~Singapore and London, England

ai li is a Straits Chinese short form poet from London and Singapore who writes about Life, Love and Loss bringing healing and prayer to her poems. The creator of cherita, editor and publisher of the cherita, founding editor and publisher of still, moving into breath and dew-on-line, she is also an evidential spiritualist medium, an urban photographer, and a surrealist collage painter. Find her essence in the quiet of her inner rooms at: https://www.amazon.com/ai-li/e/B0080X6ROC/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1469884842&sr=1-2-ent

At the Bus Terminal

Alexander Jankiewicz

I'm on my way to work when I see an old beggar sitting on the sidewalk with a sign: "PLEASE HELP." I drop some loose change into the empty coffee can placed at his feet. We make eye contact. I say good morning and notice the big tear in the army jacket he's wearing.

I think about him the remainder of the day —wondering who he is and the story he's left behind. I picture him as a forgotten war hero no one cares about. I wonder how he got to where he is.

I see the old man again the next morning just as a man in a suit carrying a briefcase is running past him. I watch as loose change falls out of the man's pocket. He stops and turns around but then continues running. The old man stands up to collect the fallen coins. When I reach him, I say good morning. He replies, "Yes, sir," and gives me a salute. I put a bill into the can. He then says, "They're singing for me, you know." I have no idea what he means. A few steps later, I notice the loud cooing of pigeons. I turn around and find the old man still looking at me. He nods his head up and down enthusiastically and offers a big smile.

picking up
where others leave off
dreams
lost on a path
waiting to be found

~Superior, Wisconsin, USA

Alex is an ESL instructor currently residing in Wisconsin.

Kyoka

Alexis Rotella

She finally
lands a sugar daddy
squeezing the Charmin
the highlight
of her days

He splurges on
a Central Park carriage horse
that drops
them off
at a fleabag hotel

Easter lunch
how many more times
will the naval cadet
ma'am me
to death?

Even if I tried
I couldn't make this up—
a girl
named Olive
green with envy

The store clerk
that shirt-changed me
I throw his
Canadian nickel
into the wishing well

A box of pastry
wrapped tightly
in white cotton string
they'll never know
it's blood pudding

First date
all he has to offer
a rickety
elevator ride
to the stars

The cat
who stole
my aunt's tongue
I offer it
a sardine

Morbidly obese
a man devours
all the coconut shrimp
a heart attack
sitting on his shoulder

He shows up
in coat and tails
his plumage
ruffles my feathers
in the cocktail lounge

~Maryland, USA

Alexis Rotella

He asks
if I like soul brothers
and I tell him
it depends
on the soul

The bank teller
who has known us
for decades
sends her regards
to our nonexistent kids

Raspberry thumb-print cookies
in the pastry case
I feel like Gretel
waiting for the witch
to curse me forever fat

The love bites
she left on your neck
and I at the door
offering pork chops
stuffed with pistachios

Black Friday
40 percent off
the tuxedo
I'll wear alone
under the stars

Wedding cake ceiling
sheer curtains blow
into the spacious room
where I wait for a man
who forgets

Five and Dime
the sound of an ambulance
from brother's mouth
the toy my mother
can't afford

Before Thanksgiving
we stock up
on chocolates
forgetting there are fewer
this year to impress

Cicadas
their screams
reach all the way
to the 49th floor
of the old age complex

Empty cicada shells
the old walk
the same morning path
no one knowing
the other's names

Oh no
here he comes
the neighbor
with his dreadful
homemade fudge

I Love Lucy
how long
has it been
since I laid
an egg?

New Year's Eve
instead of lighting
my cigarette
he sets my hair
on fire

Obligatory visit
we sit without speaking
her house cold
I don't bother
to take off my coat

My diamond earring flies
across the room
so much for making
an impression on these
proper Japanese

Her way
of playing Scrooge
she deliberately
doesn't send
the annual poinsettia

I cover a painting
of a fish
on a platter
the rinpoche will be here
for dinner

Unable to start
their car
the Shinto priest's wife
in fish-net stockings
crosses the wires

The old Tibetan couple
up at 3:30
chanting prayers
long before
the butter tea

By day
he stocks shelves
at the liquor store
the monk
in plaid Bermudas

I tuck in my dolls
tell them
not to be afraid
dad's fist
through the window

Morning fog
the silhouettes
of cargo ships
waiting to be led
into harbor

Sound of barking dogs
in the south
of Japan
like the ones
from my hometown

First day of the year
I greet
a new patient
my sweater
inside out

Always there
inside my mouth
a name
I dare not
speak

No geisha tonight
on the streets of Gion
just the on again
off again
firefly lights

I sit inside
the walls of a whale
and wait
to be rescued
from this stinkbug house

~United States

Cherita

Alexis Rotella

Spring in Chestnut Hill

the houses sumptuous
in their flower gardens

rare strains of day-lilies planted
over a century ago
by the gardeners of millionaires

To the island of the dead

a morning of fog
and the boats heaped with gladioli

mourners
in their long black coats
all huddle together

Cliff town

the houses piled
on top of each other

like sugar cubes
the white so jarring
we squint

Her bruises

the color
of eggplant

silk stockings
on a doorknob
the sky starched blue

Someone fixed the garden lock

and left on the stoop
a paisley bundle

with a few oranges
and grapes
the color of smoke

Husband's cancer diagnosis

on a tarnished
silver platter

I toss pomegranate seeds
for the robins
who never come

Six perfect pears

each wrapped
in green holiday tissue

from a relative
who never writes
or thinks to call

A fellow practitioner

for Christmas
she sends me

a bottle
of herbals
date expired

~United States

Narcissist Relative

Alexis Rotella

The phone rings all day, people who offer well wishes when I could really use a sandwich. My aunt says she realizes we're going through a sad time then as an afterthought mentions the visitor, not a physical visitor but perhaps her dead husband who followed her up the stairs before she went to bed. In one of her usual temper tantrums, she says,

"You can call me crazy like everyone else, but I know what I saw. I just thought I'd bring it up."

Before she slams down the phone as is her custom, I assure her I'm listening, simply listening.

My husband could die tomorrow and it would still be all about her, how a caregiver is late or how the soup isn't quite warm enough.

I tell the robo caller
to go directly
to hell
and to stay there
a million years

~United States

Alexis Rotella's latest books, BETWEEN WAVES and THE COLOR BLUE (Red Moon Press, 2017) are available from the author akrotella@gmail.com.

Anne Anthony has been published in Postcards Poems and Prose Magazine, Blue Heron Review, The North Carolina Literary Review, Brilliant Flash Fiction, Dead Mule School for Southern Literature, Poetry South, and elsewhere. She holds a Masters in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. She lives and writes full-time in North Carolina. Visit her author website at <http://anneanthony.weebly.com>.

Anne Anthony

hours by her bedside
dim light shadows her pale cheek
breath slow and labored
await birth and await death
inhale, exhale passing through

~Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

Autumn Noelle Hall

as 2017
like all black buzzing things
lands at last
rubbing greedy hooked hands
I swat it into oblivion

four years wed
we forego the time-honored "fruit"
toasting instead
in rugged mountain plaids
our "flannel anniversary"

nothing holds
their swimming hole open
this winter—
for the first in a decade
—not a quack in the ice

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

cherita

Autumn Noelle Hall

after Earth

dispersed the fatal toxin
to cleanse Herself of man

Caledonian Crows
lay down their hooked tools
and began to speak again

winter leftovers

pungent juniper
goes down easier

once the deer
have eaten all
our stale tortillas

hands around

a bent-neck bottle
of Armagnac . . .

were I an ortolan
I might have drowned
in this aroma

Hamadryads

once imprisoned in trees
begging for release

the knots and grain
of their faces in the fire
contort . . . then ease

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

Found tanka excerpted from
*The World of the Ten Thousand
Things* by Charles Wright

Autumn Noelle Hall

Wright's poem titles appear beneath each tanka.

Death
never entered his poems
but rowed
with its hair down
laughing up at the sky

Portrait of the Artist with Li Po

the subject
of all poems
is the clock
the tiny untouchable hands
that fold across our chests

Portrait of the Artist with Hart Crane

little boat slipping
across one element
toward the horizon
whose lips know but stay sealed
under the heaven of the moon

Laguna Dantesca

strange
what the past brings back . . .
parents, for instance
how ardently they loom
— so unimpeachable

Driving through Tennessee

transfiguration
will start like this, I think:
breathless
quick blade through the trees
red falling from my hands

October

the talk turned
to whiskey and everyone
dusted his best lie off
selling whatever he could —
it was all so American

Lonesome Pine Special

the moonlight
sitting inside my head
like knives . . .
the cold like a drug
I knew I'd settle down with

in sleep I stepped out
onto the smooth rock cape
of the cliff
my left hand, then my right, stopped
by the breathing side of a bear

~Two Stories

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

FYI—there are No Fireflies on Pikes Peak

Autumn Noelle Hall

watch as I don
your blush-colored kimono
rose-colored glasses
and wet a pink inkstone to write
about cherry blossoms:

how they fall
like the wee wrinkled heads
of starved Yemeni babes
from aid workers' hands
cherry blossoms

like the snow
not falling in Colorado
this winter
the transience of water
cherry blossoms

bullet blooms petaling
on the chests of protestors
Honduran voters
outvoted by cokesters
cherry blossoms

the “treatment”
Doc Nassar gave his gymnasts
for decades
their finger-parted labia
cherry blossoms

Eric Garner
Erica Garner — Black Lives
that Mattered . . .
so choked up *I can't breathe*
cherry blossoms

Parkland, Florida
seventeen more students
shredded
into semi-automatic news
cherry blossoms

poignance, elegance
and beauty could be construed
as Fake News—
ways to evade bitter truths
cherry blossoms

so I ask you
Gatekeepers, Standard Bearers—
are you *mono no aware* or no
that the very voices you let go
are cherry blossoms?

Climate Change may edit out
Prunus serrulata, too
and you
what will you write of then?
. . . cherry blossoms?

~*Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA*

No Child is an Island

Autumn Noelle Hall

dip your brush
in rising seas and sepia
still, you will not
wash away my name—
I am Seychelles

my coral skirts, shin-length
though waters reach my waist,
carry away
the wicker from verandas
that once fronted beaches

here,
I saved this chair
for you—
sit down beside me
hold your breath

I am Tegua,
child-wide eyes about to brim,
first, said the UN,
among the refugees
of Climate Change—

they gave me
these strange shoes, scuffed and buttoned
walk with me—
wave, before it is too late
for the Torres Straits

I am Abaiang,
my entire village—
Tebunginako—
submerged beneath the surge
relocated—dislocated

I fold
my little hands like this now
my prayers
for Kiribati swallowed up
like whiskered fish

look how
no angel sits
on that
blue-borne wisp
of cloud

I am Palau. Carteret.
like slow tsunami swells
salt water threatens
to poison drinking wells,
un-furrow farmland plaids

break bread fruit trees
and living reefs alike
one cannot dine
on leg-o-mutton sleeves —
please, I am hungry

call me Tuvalu
my once-cerulean skies
dark, insidious
as terrorism taking hold —
even cemeteries swamped

Micronesia, we —
just far-away specks, and yet,
can you resurrect
our island ways . . .? when we've drowned
speak our names — yours may be the same

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

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

Thine Art in Heaven (Hallowed be Thy Fame)

conversational kyoka prose

Autumn Noelle Hall & Don Miller

My poet friend suggests I check out the Humanity Star webpage; “Interesting concept,” he says. So I read the lot — even the FAQs — and hey, now I have a few . . . What permissions, if any, were necessary to hang an art satellite in space, and who gave them? How much fuel was used to launch that thing into orbit, and what is its energy equivalent — in terms of, say, 60 watt LED bulbs — here on earth? Whose private rocket hauled that payload, and what was the bottom line? And finally, is artist/entrepreneur Peter Beck by any chance a drinking buddy of Elon Musk . . .?*

*“Baby,
You can drive my car — Yes
I’m gonna be a star . . .” **
flashing back in morse code:
blink blink, blink blink — nyaaa*

Obviously, I am less-than-thrilled on a number of different levels: 1) “Humanity” is again being defined in terms of its uber-cool technology and can-do-therefore-will-do attitude, 2) The moon — which has played this exact unifying role for Earthkind for . . . EVER — is apparently no longer considered enough of an enticement to coax people into looking up, 3) We now have yet another blinky satellite thingy orbiting around in the sky — as though the other gazillion (all of which can be similarly tracked and observed) weren’t enough to say Kilroy — oops, I mean Humanity — was here, 4) Space trash — yeah, even if it’s just teeny tiny particulates that survive an atmospheric burn, 5) Once more, we’re collectively aiming upward and onward, rather than towards solutions which might actually make living here on Earth feasible . . .

I am also beyond a little concerned that the next launch will be McDonald’s hanging a giant flashing set of golden arches in the sky. To be followed by a comet-like Nike swoosh, perhaps a constellation-shaped ad or two for

the Army, etc. It has not escaped me that the US has long refused to sign onto any treaty that might prohibit it from profiteering at will in space . . .

Still, I suppose as art installations go, the Humanity Star scores a "First."

*every mirror
of its geodesic face
reflecting
mankind's boundless hubris—
Narcissus, we have lift off*

I have read enough writings of hers to know these concerns she FAQ-writes about. I too had an initial thought on cost and where that money could better serve humanity; but curiosity is getting the better of me as I consider what effect, if any, light glinting off this tiny dome spinning overhead might have . . .

*reliving the 70s
night fever, night fever ***
a strobe-like affect
shooting off in all directions
from this disco star*

Though it is hardly large enough (when hung in space) to actually see ourselves back on earth, I search for a deeper meaning, shivering at the thought of what the angular images—of the scarification of North Dakota fracking fields, or the open pit coal mines of southern Indiana/Illinois and northern Kentucky, or the clear-cutting of the Amazon rainforest—might look like reflecting back at us from those polished panels . . .

*geometric optics
orbiting this sphere
fragmenting
surreal
abstractions*

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA & Las Cruces, New Mexico USA

** [http://www.thehumanitystar.com]*

*** Songwriters: John Lennon / Paul McCartney
Drive My Car lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC*

**** Night Fever © Universal Music Group/RSO Records
composed by Barry Gibb/Maurice Gibb/Robin Gibb*

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

Don Miller lives in the Chihuahuan Desert of Southern New Mexico, USA. He has been writing tanka since the early 80's, and has had his tanka, tanka sequences, tanka prose and other short-form poetry published on a somewhat regular basis in various print and online journals since the early 2000s.

31 Winters

Barun Saha

It was the last time of the year when the month in the calendar had to be changed.

I woke up at 08:17 AM. The window glasses looked dull; the wide wings of wild winter appeared to have shadowed everything on this earth. Unfortunately, it never snows at my home. I wonder how it would have felt when the first snowflake of the season glided along my cheek. Or when a snowflake quietly got itself in between our palms when we held hands together . . . the warmth melting the snowflake, the warmth melting me. Only if there was some snow . . . only if there was *that* someone!

company of dusk
I put on the gray sweater
for a lonely walk
along the roads scattered with
icicles of frozen dreams

The small bed in the small room always patiently waits for me whenever I go out. In the table beside, the kingdom of spiders is having its golden era. Some papers lie scattered around. I think they are now too brittle to touch; some lines of unfinished poems; an unsent letter or two. But away from all these chaos, at one corner of the table, lies my precious. Something that I still have since my teenage days.

two princes dancing
in the snow covered garden
inside the snow globe
a glimpse of utopia
beneath a protective shield

~Durgapur, West Bengal, India

Barun Saha

shaking and swollen
our busy lips hummed the song
of closeted love
stories that'll remain preserved
beneath the soft sheets of snow

yesterday we walked
by the barren river bank
an emerald ring
proposed by childhood sweetheart
dreams of a house with garden

delicate tendrils
climbing up the window pane
busy Saturday—
telescopes looking for signs
of the growing universe

his first day at school
riding with dad in the car
flaming maple leaves
waiting along the old road
jumped and waved excitedly

~Commemorating my twin nephews' first day at school

your warm breath grazing
upon my shivering hands . . .
the empty train coach
teleported us afar
among the stars through wormholes

standing at great heights
Adonis flexing muscles
underwear billboard—
traffic snarls from fantasies
of teenagers and adults

as if all are dead
in their small village houses
Sunday afternoon —
a crow's caw by the still pond
cannot cool down the sun's rage

Love Story bookmarked
with wedding invitation . . .
the weeping willow
relatively less sombre
than my frozen reflection

mortal senses charged
with instant electric sparks
lips pressed against lips
two lovesick spirits drink from
the misty pool of passions

origami crane
flew away in October
with the sedge of cranes
Sadako's terminal wish
still evades our earthly souls

~Kharagpur, West Bengal, India

Barun Saha is a researcher and poet from Durgapur, India. He primarily writes tanka and haiku. He is the author of Sivapner Kheya, a book of Bengali poems: <https://goo.gl/Z6dh6n>, and co-author of a textbook on Opportunistic Mobile Networks. Visit <https://goo.gl/cnTY5y> for his poems and <http://barunsaha.me> for more information about Barun.

I have no place

a wife-carer's lament

Bill Albert

I have no place
your curtain of pain
always drawn
for the world to see
mine hidden inside

I have no place
your crippled body
bent, broken
screams out in colour
mine crumbles quietly

I have no place
you take the foreground
majestically
vibrant your battle
mine dull, mundane

~Norwich, UK

Bill Albert is a novelist, poet and disability rights activist. He was born in New York, grew up in California and has spent the last 50+ years in the UK.

Science Fiction Kyoka

Carol Raisfeld

at the hospice
the watch tattooed
on her wrist
begins the countdown
to her last hours

at the morgue
Zombies being drained
still gurgle
talking about last night's
harrowing ambulance ride

at the organ recital
on bulbous planet Organa
lights dim . . .
grandma still talks about
her transplanted stomachs

swirling
from the fourth dimension
a mystical vortex . . .
unsuspecting newlyweds
vanish in the triangle

chatting in neon
where spark is king
they touch toes . . .
exploding red passion
morphs into psychedelia

mom braids her hair
before we put her back
in the jar
until next week's visit
to the electric exorcism

~Atlantic Beach, New York USA

Kyoka

Carol Raisfeld

asked about
her sleeping habits
she demurred
only to say she sleeps in
Chanel No. 5 and nothing more

at the party
a sprig of mistletoe
in her cleavage . . .
a smile to melt the winter
he stayed the night

the magic
of an ordinary day . . .
fly on a fly
"yes, I love you
more than shit"

moving out
mattresses all packed
in the truck . . .
through the house, fleas
wait for new the tenants

my uncle
the contortionist
on his honeymoon
finally, he winds up
meeting his end

wedding day
she waxes the tops
of her toes
her mother's mustache
newly bleached

~Atlantic Beach, New York USA

Carol Raisfeld

a city asleep
in the rain, rivulets
find their way . . .
eyes closed, I stroke
the curve of your back

and still
I see your smiling face
in winter dreams—
my summer friend
do you miss me?

as children
gravitating to moonlight
you and I . . .
together, we were magic,
we were golden

not knowing
her child's mind changed
forever
she shows the nurse
where he touched her

we sit
on the porch
reminiscing
you telling the stories
I've heard before

you and I
were more than you and I
it was we . . .
how do I see the world now
through my own eyes

~*Atlantic Beach, New York USA*

Cherita

Carol Raisfeld

the cat

rolling over and over
all paws and tail

coming to rest
he stretches, curling
into a square of sun

new mother-in-law

with rouged earlobes
mile-long eyelashes

dressed all in white
pretending to be innocent,
she said about fun: *have it!*

romance

together we spoke it
perfectly for years

a language we lived
with infinite depth
in rarefied air

seagulls still fishing

the afternoon wind
whips crisp and clean

behind
the dune grass
you hold me

waking slowly

businessmen pick
at the hotel's buffet

reading grim headlines
the strong coffee doing
its intravenous work

we promised

each other the best lives
always and forever

now in pockets of stillness
I daydream of memories —
the way we loved

the weight

of his voice
heavy with love

the sound
of his smile singing
hallelujah, hallelujah

~Atlantic Beach, New York USA

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

Kyoka

Charles Harmon

pay doctor's bill?
or pay electric bill?
hmmmm . . .
Edison can shut off power
doctor can't shut off blood

a mile wide
an inch deep
knowledge
a shallow dark pool
reflecting endless sky

reached out my hand
to Lady of the Lake
got my sword back
now if I can just find
my horse

cat and dog people
opposite personalities
how do they differ?
dog lovers have a ruff life
cat lovers' lives are purrfect

time comes to leave
plant me in the garden
facing brilliant sunshine
perhaps I will return
as a shade tree

~Los Angeles, California, USA

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

Dave Baldwin

snowfall
the boy who became my father
kissed her cheek—
what did my face look like
before that happened

stepping through
the pines of Cambria
I hear the noise
of unseen waves
the murmur of family gossip

the blacktop road
comes to an end here
at the edge
of the wilderness
I am not afraid

she is the wind
she cares for nothing
I am the grass
I cannot move
without her

brute beasts return
to the clear-running creek
now bone dry
my hands remember
the pressure of her breasts

in my world
even the shadow has a shadow
I look for a place
to lie down
between words in a sentence

tethered to the sun
Venus is brighter than usual
and so are you tonight
on the arm
of a rich man

we are on our knees
in the garden
I am weeding, you are planting
honey bees
move pause move pause

clicking Send—
she is the last
of my parents' generation
gone are the trees
I used to climb

tonight
by the lemon tree
our first kiss
I ride home
on a horse of oxygen

the river
always leaves its source
yet it never leaves
the tangled fishhooks
of loves false and true

the baby is dead . . .
while he stares
into the street
she feels her breasts
filling with milk

deep grasses choke
the broad path
we used to walk
our past is lost
in a seamless field of green

~*United States*

Dave Baldwin recently retired from the Walt Disney Company (Disney Technology) in Seattle after a 40-year career as a technical writer and editor. He grew up in southern California, earned a B.A. in history and an M.A. in English, and taught composition courses at several community colleges in the Seattle area. Dave lives in Lake Stevens, Washington.

Dave Read

as I reach
to touch your
hip—
tiny feet echo
in the hall

under a hood
with buds in my ear
I slip through
a crowd of other
people's shadows

trekking through
the mountain
mist—
how quickly we reach
the peaks of our lives

“perhaps
if you learned to give
a little more”—
the advice I decide
to keep to myself

stuffing old
clothes into bags—
my children
grow into
helping folks out

another star
dead at sixty-seven—
my talent
for numbers
and unforgiving facts

the space in my room
starts to grow tight
every day
I find myself
closer to death

breathing in
sharp, shallow breaths—
my ribs
just another
cage to escape

panic attacks
as the elevator drops—
I touch
the next button
and look for the stairs

meeting a friend
this brisk winter day—
I order
a tea and
a table outside

a billion stars
this warm summer night
I count
my blessings in
each passing breath

a housefly trapped
between window and blinds
the expanse
of the skyline
bumping its head

owning the little
space that is mine
I squeeze
my eyes tight on
the afternoon train

slipping away
from the office for lunch—
the nerves
of a sparrow
returning to flight

unboarding the airplane
before it departs
I descend
the thin air
of the tarmac

too weak
to fight
anymore
I scratch
the window frost

with all
of space to float
through
the astronaut's
small suit

weeds sprout
around the yard
a cabbage
butterfly
flutters in my gut

~Canada

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

Not With You Looking

Don Miller

t w o a.m.
circling the fireplace
stopping each time
at the front door
I ask *gotta go out now*

sniffing
a hundred spots
each time
only taking
this long to pee

squatting
off the trail
behind a bush
the modesty
of my dog

~New Mexico, USA

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

shadows call to me

Debbie Strange

I walk
into the break of day
accompanied
by sparrow-song
and your shadow

slanted light
caresses the ruins
at eventide
shadows call to me,
but I do not answer

~Manitoba, Canada

the dark side

Debbie Strange

a portent
of dangerous times
anvil clouds
press the setting sun
under water

rainbow flares
of nacreous clouds
we are
easily seduced
by the dark side of beauty

~Manitoba, Canada

the surest way

Debbie Strange

water reeds
trail from the *paddles*
of a bull moose
it is moments like this
that make me whole

pawprints
of spirit bears lead me
to water
following a river
is the surest way home

~British Columbia, Canada

nothing

Debbie Strange

farm auction . . .
we have nothing
left to lose
except these thistles
rooted in our hearts

rumours echoed
through the streets
of our town
nothing to do but run
and we are running, still

~Saskatchewan, Canada

Debbie Strange

ladies who lunch . . .
two white-tailed deer
daintily sample
the fresh salad bar
in my garden cafe

~Manitoba, Canada

you who were
made of brilliance
thank you
for the *theory*
of *everything*

for Stephen Hawking

~Manitoba, Canada

Debbie Strange (Winnipeg, Canada) is a short form poet, photographer, and haiga artist. She is a member of the Writers' Collective of Manitoba and is also affiliated with several haiku and tanka organizations. Her first collection, Warp and Weft: Tanka Threads was published by Keibooks in 2015, and the sequel, Three-Part Harmony: Tanka Verses is forthcoming. Please visit her publication archive at <http://www.debbiestrange.blogspot.ca>.

Cherita

Elizabeth Howard

April hillside

groundhog pups
feasting on daffodils

on the hilltop
a giant groundhog
gnashes his teeth

basket of socks

mother
riffles through them

no two alike
she sets the basket
back on the shelf

mallard ducks

waddle down the greensward
consoling each other

next year they will build the nest
on a patch of ground
too small for the mower

pirate ship stranded

a scar-faced man
tangled in rope

the tattered parrot
slumped on his perch
crying "mercy, mercy"

a hole in the yard

not the rabbit hole
Alice tumbled into

but a wonderland indeed
a gopher tunnel
filled with prize tulip bulbs

meadowlark song

caroling amidst daisies
and Queen Anne's lace

circling a field of grain,
just beyond
tips of deer velvet

thistledown

sails
butterfly-like

settles
in the grass
biding its time

a burst of wind

the hummingbird grasps
a blueberry bush

the wind blasts him off
a tiny rocket
shooting up and up

~*Tennessee, USA*

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

Kyoka

Grunge

learning i'm
the chosen one
because only i
can prevent
forest fires

Found kyoka, original by Matt Oswald, <https://i.pining.com/originals/d9/16/6b/d9166b91a86ed294226488123571f08d.jpg>

small part of me
saddened by the fact
i've never used
'stop drop and roll'
as much as i thought i would

kid stealing cigarettes
from the vending machine
to smoke in the alley
just another excuse
to play with matches

trying to brand
expletives on his arm
with a hot fork
but I think it looks
more like a smiley

insect lover:
the roaches
in his house
don't scurry
from the lights

"fuck the police!"
the punk yells
as he steals
a bluejay feather
off the ground

identifying
my future husband
when he stoops to help
a cockroach
stuck on its back

~*Florida, USA*

Grunge is a gay Indo-American, who specializes in urban tanka. He currently lives in South Florida with a collection of pet arthropods, an ancient cat, and a pudgy leopard gecko.

Kyoka

Geoffrey Winch

Glastonbury
two-thousand-and-eighteen:
last town in England
still living the life
of the Sixties

~*Glastonbury, England*

don't hide your candles
under your bushel
keep them handy
along with your matches
ready for the next power crash

~*England*

should *you* take a journey
two decades long
I'll stay at home
and weave myself a new life
out of many lovers

~*faux Ithaca*

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

Where No Sound Leaks Out

Janet Brof

My mother was a well-known piano teacher in Brooklyn. As her daughter, it was assumed I would play at each of her June concerts that would fill the dining and the living room and hallway with parents and relatives. She gave lessons in our dining room where there were two baby grand pianos. My bedroom, where I had my own upright piano, was located down the hall from the dining room beside the bathroom.

Sometimes, in the midst of her teaching, my mother, on her way to the bathroom, would pass by my door and listen. When she would hear only a few desultory notes, she would crack open the door quickly, peek in and discover a Nancy Drew Mystery on the music stand.

“I'd like to break every bone in your body,” she would hiss.

There are times now, I awake to those words and feel a bit undone. Other times, I may wander off and place my hands on my computer as I did today when I typed:

caressable keys
that allow me to speak
and to dream
where no sound leaks out
but my own heartbeat

~*New York, USA*

*My poems have appeared in *The New York Quarterly*, *Aphra*, *Lancet*, *The Literary Review*, *Midstream*, *Modern Haiku*, *Ribbons*, among other journals. Translations of mine have appeared in *Mundus Artium*, *Bomb* and the *New England Quarterly*. I am co-editor of *Doors and Mirrors: An Anthology of Spanish-American Fiction and Poetry, 1920-70*. I am an educational therapist in New York City.*

Jeffrey Woodward

you offer
in your slight but
silken palm
the scarlet delicacy
of an apple

the card players
forearms on the table
eyes fixed on their hands
hats tilted slightly
pipes at an angle

you lean
into the dough
you knead
your pale eyes, pale lips
expressionless

one narrow window
with its grim coat of dust
to filter out the day
that's the place I called my home
that's the life for which I paid

someone says, *let's stay*
someone says, *let's go*
the night is black and
jaggedly cold but
there's light from the snow

I'm immured tonight
in my arid study with
divers brittle books
and every text I lift
exhales its share of dust

L.A. is still
intact and opulent
by night and day
with the several deadly sins
that we indulged therein

it was a meadow
before it was parceled as
a city lot
and now that it is vacant
the flowering weeds return

my father called me
clearly again from the yard
and at his door then
I turned back to see only
the bright day in a dream

a sober façade
of shuttered storefronts,
no villager about,
and twitching in and out
of a streetlight, a bat

though my father's friends
and neighbors who are not dead
long ago moved on,
the river that ran then runs now
through the shambles of our town

your full lips
darkened too
by the deep
red stain of
the pomegranate

downhill
through the dry and waist-high
grass of summer
to the blue saucer
of a sunken lake

in the strange town
where I've come to live
no one visits
a shadow now and then
of a bird of passage

nothing but
one headlight
on this road
that twists and
turns all night

the dune's sand
kicks up
the marram grass
tosses about
the wind and lightning nears

the beautiful dew
oblivious to time
nevertheless
through the patient spider's web
with the bright morning passes

let the man
who wants a lawn spotless
curse it daily
this dandelion I love
April's emblem of the sun

Easter Sunday
somehow brighter and
more buoyant for
this gallivanting
white butterfly

Ile d'Orleans
lies in the St. Lawrence
jade-like before me
cradle of Nouvelle-France
and of my mother's family

salt cod with ackees
and sweet plantain fried of course
with dumplings on the side
you cook this breakfast your mother once
graciously served me in Jamaica

a mirror like
a pane of glass
cracked
O world inverted
O jagged world

this morning's shower
has washed the sidewalk clean
of the hopscotch chalk
where not many days ago
a sick child watched others play

~Michigan, USA

Jeffrey Woodward founded and formerly edited the journals Haibun Today and Modern Haibun & Tanka Prose. He served in 2010 and again in 2011 as adjudicator for the British Haiku Society's Haiku Awards. His selected poems, under the title In Passing, were published in 2007 and he edited The Tanka Prose Anthology in 2008. In 2013, collections of his haibun and tanka writings were issued under the respective titles Evening in the Plaza and Another Garden.

whistling in the dark

Jenny Ward Angyal

a meeting
of the Flat Earth Society
in my state capital —
looney birds roosting
in the Land of Trump

from the throne
of a naked emperor
torrents of words
like day-blind bats
twitter across the sky

on the radio
the usual blather
about causes
of gun violence —
a wren burbles in the frost

worshippers
kneel in a river
of blood,
lifting clasped hands
to the god of guns

bereft of words
I kneel and listen:
lullabies
in falling snow
the silent sparrows

emptiness —
the discarded bottle
in my hand
sings at every step
the wind's low note

deer entrails
at the meadow's edge —
I divine
the will of the gods
in a chickadee's whistle

~North Carolina, USA

thoughts & prayers

Jenny Ward Angyal

seventeen more
black armbands
on a nation's soul —
yet the guns stand erect
as the coffins go down

NRA
blazoned across his back —
I look
for the blood
on his hands

on foolscap,
I write letters
to my Senator —
thirty pieces of silver
jingle in his pocket

~Florida & North Carolina, USA

Jenny Ward Angyal grew up in Connecticut, where she wrote her first poem at the age of five. She now lives with her husband on a small, organic farm on the top of a hill in North Carolina, surrounded by meadowlands, sky and the madcap songs of mockingbirds. She writes tanka in whatever time she can spare from

Jim Doss

her secret wealth—
not in a bank account
or the rings on her fingers,
but in a smile,
the welcoming glow of her eyes

the snow on my head—
I feel like a mountain
that just keeps rising
higher and higher
as the continents shift around me

bachelor
for the weekend—
which of these books
will I take
for my mistress?

ankle shattered restraining him,
foot pointing the way of gravity—
should I be happy
after my son blows a 2.6
the police release him to his mother?

poetry saves no one—
it can't take the gun from his hand,
the pill from his tongue,
the bottle from his lips
except in my imagination

wish it was this easy—
I the oyster
and he the irritating
grain of sand
my love slowly turns into a pearl

claimed he climbed Everest—
the old pub-crawler
whose glass of cider trembled in hand
and whose veiny red cheeks
glowed like blood-leached snow

sycamore
half in rags,
half in radiance—
what can you teach me
about my own life?

the inn of no sorrow—
I plan to vacation there
for two weeks in the future,
no children, no wife, no travails—
basking in the bliss of total denial

which doctor
has the miracle?
they each look the same
in their lab coats
and all-knowing smiles

a plastic yellow mask
of her head and shoulders—
its uniform
pattern of bullet holes
to let the radiation through

artificial intelligence—
the autocorrect
keeps autocorrecting
my typos
with typos

my father's grave
with its Marine Corps insignia—
why visit now
while he is still
alive inside of me

the artistic life
with its beggar's cup extended—
sometimes even applause
don't make up
for those missing nickels and dimes

street lamps
cast their cones of light
into future and past
one step and you're there
surrounded by an enormous darkness

my mistakes
numerous as the birds in the sky—
yet this one fat pigeon
sitting on the window ledge
peering into my office day after day

snowflake under the microscope
fading fractal
algorithm like human DNA
that no machine can clone
not even Mother Nature

radio news
of today's suicide bombing—
background noise
to the hum of bumblebees hopping
from blossom to blossom

paint swatches
a checkerboard
of colors
across the walls—
which will be kinged first?

of all the poems
in the world
you had to walk into mine
here's looking at you kid
again and again and again

~United States

ten feet from the highway
a tiny home made of Arizona sod
just inside the reservation—
feel that cool breeze
each time a refrigerated truck rumbles by

*~Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Reservation, Arizona,
USA*

here
where George Wallace
was shot
my car
leaks its last drops of oil

~Laurel Shopping Center, Maryland, USA

here
where Jefferson
wrote the Declaration
two men in the alley
shooting up

~Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

here
where Lee
surrendered to Grant
my ancestors' faded headstones
shadowing fields they once plowed

~Appomattox, Virginia, USA

*Jim Doss lives with his wife and three children in Sykesville,
Maryland, and earns his living as a software engineer. He has
previously published two books of poems: Learning to Talk Again, and
What Remains. In partnership with Werner Schmitt, he also published
a book of German translations entitled The Last Gold of Expired
Stars: The Complete Poems of Georg Trakl 1908 - 1914. In his spare
time, he is an editor for the Loch Raven Review.*

Joanna Ashwell

beneath our feet
winter snowflakes
the slow melt
of fallen stars
spins our hearts

this familiar place
where hills undulate
and valleys dip
rivers wind and whisper
back to waterfalls of belonging

star-lit treetops
winter's glint
across a luminary sky
where waves of whispers
drift lightly into dusk

~*United Kingdom*

Joanna Ashwell lives in the North East of England where cold weather is expected and hiding places are common. Enjoys reading haiku, tanka, cherita and other related forms. Published in International Tanka, Atlas Poetica, Skylark and others.

John Gonzalez

I say, *learn how to
abandon pains:*
she undresses
beautifully—her clothes fall
and I say, *that is a start*

Lolita says . . .
this man could be your father—
the child looks at me
with stars and questions in his eyes,
crucifying, the very thought of a no

more at home in the dark
when Lolita's startled
she closes the door
to keep light at bay:
outside there's a host of stars

for her
red and white roses—
sad Lolita
gives half back
as a thank-you gift

tonight
a sky full of stars—
her blue eyes
fixed on the map . . .
a road leading to somewhere

competing
to reach the sky first
I take a few more drugs—
Lolita waving from on high
out of reach and vanishing

alone
her precious dog and me —
I say her name
and his ears pop up . . .
I see her face in his transparent eyes

she asks,
*who said: give sorrow words
and pains will ease?*
her view of the dark sea
she calls a painting that is fading

red apples
bright under moonlight
now dear Lolita
the fruit you pick for me
will surely taste sweeter

in our woods
I pick flowers for her —
things we need to address . . .
sooner of later
she will look in my direction

Lolita
loves picnics by the waterfall
she loses herself in sounds
but her pains, sorrows and regrets
do not flow down the river

the book
she intended to read
inscribed to me —
unable to understand her
I resort to poetry

~Ipswich, England

All of John Gonzalez's Tanka that so far have been published in several issues of Atlas Poetica will be included in John's first Tanka collection which is due for publication sometime in 2018. The book titled 'Living on the Edge' is a sequence collection — Tanka about a dear friend, a very gifted and intelligent young lady who committed suicide. John lives in Ipswich, England. His long poems, haiku and tanka, have featured in numerous journals.

John S. Gilbertson

The hem keeps moving
as curtain wiggles to top;
a living creature
with the breath of ongoing
from the air conditioner.

~Greenville, South Carolina, USA

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

ashes & bones

Joy McCall & Jenny Ward Angyal

'valens, valens'
*they cry — courage, valour
to the martyr's bones
lying scattered and lost
among Wednesday's ashes*

ashes grey
and heart's-blood red —
the scorch
of dragon's breath
lighting a thousand candles

~Norwich, England / North Carolina, USA

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

Jenny Ward Angyal grew up in Connecticut, where she wrote her first poem at the age of five. She now lives with her husband on a small, organic farm on the top of a hill in North Carolina, surrounded by meadowlands, sky and the madcap songs of mockingbirds. She writes tanka in whatever time she can spare.

faithful

Joy McCall

I have worked in many places as a nurse and remember so many patients with admiration and often amazement and great respect for the human spirit.

At this time of year I think of an old lady called Mrs Dorothy Downes. She was a Methodist, and despite all kinds of hardships, she never lost faith in her God.

When I knew her, she was ninety, her husband long dead. She had four children who visited her every week. A happy family.

During the next three years, one by one, her children died. First, her daughter, of cancer. Then her youngest son, of a sudden stroke.

Then another son in a car crash; he lived a month on life support, then died.

It was at this time of year that we would have a big Christmas dinner for the old folks and their families.

Mrs Downs was sombre, but glad that she would have her oldest, precious first-born son Derek with her.

The evening before the party, I got a call to say Derek had had a heart attack and passed away.

I went to her room and I sat and told her. It was one of the saddest moments of my life.

the old one
sat alone and sad
her faith was shaken
and she prayed
please God, take me, too

She spent that Christmas alone in her room, and every day afterwards. We brought her food and drink and helped her to bath and bed.

I would give her
toast and tea
and a hug
she took all three
with a sad grace

she would look at me
and quote some verse
from her Bible
as she always did
but she never smiled

She lived another year after that, going through the days, trying to keep the faith.

I'm guessing that she was glad when her quiet end came.

When I saw her in the coffin, the undertaker had put a smile on her face, as they usually do.

I asked him
to take it away
*let her go
honestly
to her God*

I'm hoping that the last thing she heard when her life ended was her God, saying—*well done, thou good and faithful servant.*

~Norwich, England

letting go

Joy McCall

for Jack

I went to the motorbike shop in Suffolk. I finally had the heart to take in the ancient Honda 400 Four which I have not ridden since the crash.

the old bike
like me, has been sitting
too long
it's time to say goodbye
to the bike, at least

The old mechanic will get it up and running
and someone will have the joy of riding it. He
falls in love with the bike at first glance, which is
not surprising, she's a small beauty.

we sit
in admiration
drinking coffee
talking journeys
and engines and rides

The old guy is always sad. I haven't seen him
smile in years. His only son, so mentally ill, killed
his own mother a decade ago, in their home. The
son is locked away forever. The old man still lives
in the house where his beloved wife died.

he tells me:
her soul is there
I cannot leave her
alone in that home
we made together

he looks at the bike:
I will not sell it
I will make it good
it will stand in my workshop
shining like new

I leave behind the bike, the memories, going
home wheelchair-bound; somehow feeling I have
been given some kind of blessing from the old
man, from the bike, from life.

~Suffolk, England

for Sophie*

Joy McCall

new year's night
music and fireworks . . .
and far out at sea
a young girl
is drifting on the tide

a storm is brewing
the wind whips up the waves
the moon is full
the ships are at anchor
in Yarmouth harbour

the rowdy sailors
are drinking to the new year
in the old pub
there's life and hope
on the dry land

the sea
is vast, deep and cold
the girl is so small
and is this
what she wanted?

it's not right
for one so young
to be in the sea
let the tide take her to shore . . .
let her mother cover her face

Even the local crooks and their kids are out every
day searching the shore for any signs of Sophie,
but so far — nothing.

~Norwich, England

*Joy McCall encountered tanka decades ago as a child, met the form
again at an Alan Watts talk in Canada, also attended by Sanford
Goldstein; and met it again in the books of the master who became her
friend.*

Tanka Pairs

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

on the front porch

no rocking
the afternoon away
on the front porch
with my dog
sleeping beside me

*old age
just gets more and more
busy
oh those old futile dreams
when we were young*

drenched, scented

unable to sleep
I listen to all the old tunes
of my youth
by dawn, drenched in nostalgia,
I am the saddest man in the world

*all day in my head
the songs of the highlands
of my childhood—
the scent of heather
and wild mountain thyme*

a trellis, a well

what use
all these years of poetry?
a trellis, perhaps, giving
my life a structure
on which to cling, to grow

*the spring that feeds
the well where I drink
is full of words
bubbling, rising
up to the light*

hungry

Just Desserts
the grand opening
I was there and sorry
that I'd only one
stomach to give

*hospital food
no wonder
so many patients
don't get out of there
alive*

shhh

the foraging squirrel
finds a morsel
if I could move my jaw
that fast
I could say so much

*my mother
rabbitting on
stops to say—
talk is silver
silence is golden*

here I sit

here I sit
broken hearted
came to write
but can't get started
snowflakes by the window

*it's cold
and it's wet
I've done
nothing yet
nothing but daydream*

~Colrain, Massachusetts USA / Norwich, England

Cherita

Larry Kimmel

granite

the
spacious

sound
of
nothing

o, to watch

her cross the river's
pebbly stones again

again
to hear
her naked laugh

marigolds

a cat on the porch
fingers crossed

and tic-tacs
to freshen
the breath

working the grill

you should have seen his face
when the cops walked in

drugs
and underage videos
in an upstairs room

on a balcony

with a green bench
and an icon above it,

an old man smoking—
a fig
of his former self

a rose horizon

camp coffee
scones hot from the griddle

from an autumn branch
a hawk
idly regards us

what seemed a plant

swimming across the pond
really fast

was a muskrat
with a mouthful
of grass

all winter day

the tawny owl clutches
the apple bough

its feathers
ruffed
by wind

~Colrain, Massachusetts USA

Larry Kimmel lives quietly in the hills of western Massachusetts. His most recent books are "shards and dust," "outer edges" and "thunder and apple blossoms."

Joy McCall suffers but her soul is full of love and dreams and poetry.

Early Singapore

Lorne Henry

A stopover in Singapore on my way to Scotland in 1981.

A huge warehouse-type building full of tax-free electrical goods. Men cluster around large loudspeaker systems comparing brands, costs and finer details that mean little to me. I'm amused at their competitiveness just as in specialist shops in Australia.

I wander along a shaded street savouring lychees and buy a small jackfruit for later.

The aroma of that famous peanut dish being cooked and sold at little tables sets my mouth watering. An excuse to sit for a while.

Walking for what seems like hours, my sandals for the heat have raised blisters along every strap line.

Then I discover an outdoor stall selling fruit juices. The most thirst quenching I have ever tasted a mix of lime and coconut juice. Ahhh!

I hike up the long hill to the old Victoria Hotel, eat some of the delicious jackfruit, wrap the rest then sleep —

The stench of the jackfruit in the morning is overwhelming. The maid who comes to change the bedding turns her nose up at it.

Out again next day I abandon my sandals for sandals.

All too soon I leave for Scotland.

a smiling old man
bicycling to the airport
sweeps his hands
past blooming bougainvilleas
so proud of his new city

~Singapore

Kyoka

M. Kei

man-eating sofa —
he only keeps
the old thing
so he can say
he owns a leather sofa

the dangers
of dating a smart girl:
she beats him
at chess three times
in a row

Timmynocky
the sailor cat
returns to the ship
on the arm of
a beautiful blonde

rivers of tanka
flow through my hands
as I sit editing,
driftwood from the farthest shores
cast upon my desk

shore leave —
new tattoos, t-shirts,
and earrings,
plus a miscellaneous collection
of hangovers

a hawk named 'Mort'
catches a pair of shrews
in carnal congress
and so, *la petite morte*
becomes *le grand Mort*

the ship's cat
is sulking—
somebody put
a jingle bell
on his collar

~Chesapeake Bay, USA

Kei is a tall ship sailor and award-winning poet who lives on Maryland's Eastern shore. He is the editor of Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka and the anthology, Neon Graffiti : Tanka Poetry of Urban Life. His most recent collection of poetry is January, A Tanka Diary. He is also the author of the award-winning gay Age of Sail adventure novels, Pirates of the Narrow Seas (blogspot.narrowseas.com). He can be followed on Twitter @kujakupoet, or visit AtlasPoetica.org

Lorne Henry has been writing haiku since 1992 in Czechoslovakia now Czech Republic. She started writing tanka about 2005 after a workshop given by Beverley George. She also writes haibun and tanka prose.

Tanka for Sydney

Margaret Owen Ruckert

a mid-blue sea
on a mid-week morning
in Sydney . . .
I'm holidaying at home
I find myself telling friends

Sydney Opera House
with its sails of good weather
floats alone
on a sea of ideas
buffeted by the critics

a sculpted meringue
on a blueberry sea —
nothing's more
quintessentially luxe
than *going to the opera*

inspired by nature
the shapes of shells and wings
Sydney Opera House
rises out of the water
like giant shark's teeth

soaring shells
lift our eyes to the heights
of opera's acclaim
forgetting the drama . . .
the depths of humanity

shell is a 'grace' word
bearer of exquisite shapes
the soft mollusc
in a house with sharp edges
and death scenes

at Circular Quay
giant stalks of lilies
a native flower
wither in the heat
alongside today's tourists

from my hotel room
I focus on water views
in the far distance
missing the single row
of heritage in the Rocks

take a walk
along the waterfront
of old Sydney
find sandstone buildings
alive with new heart

at beach-side wharves
eco-tourists file ashore
with cameras . . .
they take nothing but sea-air
and leave footprints in photos

clear sky, fine harbour
a ferry filled with laughter
eyes looking ahead
I think of all the journeys
that end where I begin

he's wearing blue
to out-blue Port Jackson
contemplates the waves
at almost eighteen months
his face — wise as a sage

ferry ride —
such a buoyant feeling
of losing our cares
but we can lose them on land
— the city floats on water

the sun
tinges threatening clouds
with new trust
in today's progress . . .
take another step

on the waterway
the horizon is a place
of silent trust
in a benevolent world . . .
how space enhances thought

~Sydney, Australia

*Margaret Owen Ruckert M. Ed. (Sydney, Australia) writes of food and society in *You Deserve Dessert and Musefood*, an IP Poetry Book of the Year. She is widely published, her tanka appearing in international journals and travel photo-books. Margaret coordinates a local Café Poets group and presents creative writing workshops.*

Cherita

Maryalicia Post

alone in Paris

grieving for you
a blue butterfly

flies behind me
c'est bizarre
a woman says

day over

nothing done
a coin I wish I'd spent

falls away
through
the grating

~Dublin, Ireland

*Maryalicia Post is a journalist and travel writer based in Dublin Ireland. Her award-winning poem, *After You*, was published by Souvenir Press UK. Her tanka and cherita have regularly appeared in online and print journals. Other work has been published by Ogham Stone and Poetry Quarterly.*

Matt Cariello

she says we can
walk but not talk
I watch my daughter
watch distant
contrails unfold

again my mother
forgets that the irises
have bloomed
we sit and watch
the mountains at dusk

at the meadow's edge
my childhood
in three deep breaths
cricket, wild carrot,
waning moon

redbud on bare
branches
the blackbird cries
the blackbird cries
my life's craft

among new lilies
my daughter waters
the stone Buddha
a blank puddle
at his feet

~Ohio, USA

Matt Cariello currently lives in Bexley, Ohio, where he works in the English Department at The Ohio State University. His poems and haiku have appeared in Poet Lore, Artful Dodge, The Evening Street Review, Frogpond, Heron's Nest, Daily Haiku, White Lotus, Acorn, Riverbed, Bottle Rockets, Simply Haiku and Modern Haiku.

Rhyming Kyoka

Michael H. Lester

the garish madam
in her tawdry cape and gown
looks more the part
of a circus clown
than a paragon of fashion

smitten by the wiles
of a melancholy witch
he clings
to the desperate hope
he'll find the courage to resist

a bit
of morning doldrums
brings me down a peg
luckily, the window's locked
I cannot reach the ledge

a wicked wind
sweeps in from the east
pelting cheek and chin
driving off the gendarme
to imbibe in whiskey and gin

unapologetically
in gruff and somber tone
the judge
pronounces sentence
on the burglar and his crone

such poise
the little ballerina
displays
with her missing front teeth
and penetrating gaze

~Los Angeles, California, USA

Rhyming Kyoka Sequence

Michael H. Lester

the little cowpoke
rides her steed with perfect
style and grace
over the brush and tumbleweed
with every hair in place

the jaded sheriff
with Stetson in hand
patrols the old saloon
full of cowboys and fancy whores
who holler to beat the band

on his vest
a silver badge
a six gun on his hip
his eyes a pair of narrow slits
his spurs a bloody mess

Lily White
the local madam
keeps her girls in line
except the ones ain't broken yet
that'll come in time

a crimson sunset
paints the desert
twenty shades of red
the little cowpoke riding home
just in time for bed

*~Somewhere in the Painted Desert or Old Tucson,
Arizona, 19th Century, USA*

The Lovesick Sailor

Michael H. Lester

For those many months in a tiny bunk on rough and choppy seas, the sailor finds relief and solace in the space between his knees. When the merchant ship drops its anchors on the shores of Shinjuku, he dons his finest navy blues and puts a spit shine on his shoes. With his pockets full of dollars and his mind on ale and brew, he heads to town with a rickshaw boy to do what men must do.

the lovesick sailor
engages the services
of a geisha
he is not disappointed
when she shows him her waka

~Japan

Sitting in his office in Los Angeles, California, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, his mind wandering all over the world — Taiwan, Norwich, London, Van Nuys Criminal Courts Building, and an elementary school auditorium in Culver City — Michael H. Lester writes of fantasies, fears, and foibles, experimenting with the kyoka form

Weather Uncertain, Conditions Unknown

Neal Whitman & Amelia Fielden

'Lighthouses are endlessly suggestive signifiers of both human isolation and our ultimate connectedness to each other' — Virginia Woolf

*to save ships
and all who sail in them
lighthouses
at the world's danger points . . .
what is there warning us now*

I was reading a group of poems by Eugenio Montale, *Finisterre*.

A-ha! I fathom these have something to do with the end of land . . . land's end!

I search the internet and find that, on the Galicia coast in northwest Spain, Faro de Cabo, Finisterre, is the most westerly lighthouse on the European continent.

My wife and I once stayed in the lighthouse keeper's cottage at the Point Arena Lighthouse on California's Mendocino coast, and we were told it sits on a spit of land that is the closest point of the Lower 48 to Hawaii . . . thus, our most westerly lighthouse.

Next, I wondered about the most easterly lighthouse in the U.S. and learned that it is the West Quoddy Head Light in Lubec, Maine.

It turns out that the greatest distance between any two mainland points within the contiguous 48 states is 2,892 miles : Point Arena to West Quoddy Head!

And it is another 2,814 miles from West Quoddy Head Light to Faro de Cabo Finisterre.

We ponder : what if those three lighthouses could send out a warning to Planet Earth :

DANGER PROCEED WITH CAUTION

What if those three lighthouses could coordinate a morse code signal?

Point Arena Lighthouse . . . at 6.00 pm
Pacific Standard Time

West Quoddy Light Head . . . at 9.01 pm
Eastern Standard Time

Faro de Cabo Finisterre . . . at 3.02 am
Central European Time

Imagine a continuous loop of repetitive lighthouse flashes until day breaks on the west coast of Spain.

SOS repeated over and over

Imagine the message live-streamed on the internet that Earth is in danger.

Proceed with caution.

*into the dark
sweep after sweep of light-beams
illuminates
the perils of our shores,
of our complacency*

~Finisterre, Spain; Lubec, Maine; Point Arena, California

Neal Whitman lives in Pacific Grove, California, with his wife Elaine, practically in the shadow of Point Pinos Lighthouse where Neal finds inspiration for his poetry and Elaine for her photography. Neal is Vice President of the United Haiku and Tanka Society, haiku editor for Pulse : Voices from the Heart of Medicine, and editorial board member of Haiku Revista in Romania.

Amelia Fielden is an Australian who is a professional translator of Japanese literature and a keen writer of tanka poetry in English.

*descendant
of lighthouse keepers
poet by choice
at Cape Byron I explore
our most easterly lighthouse**

**Cape Byron Lighthouse stands on a promontory at the eastern most point of eastern Australia*

Patricia Prime

reclining in the sun
surrounded by the windows
of neighbour's houses
it's almost like the beach
with the sun hot on my face

Hockney painted
the ideal water
his blue waves
reaching out to me
from the gallery wall

his vinyl collection
has been compiled since
he was a teenager
now it's stored in a shed
in my overgrown garden

yesterday the cat
caught a tui and brought
it into the house
we placed it in a box
to recover before letting it go

we catch the ferry
in a fit of spontaneity
packing a picnic basket
with lettuce, tomatoes, radishes,
date scones and a flask of tea

at the 80s party
disco, costumes, food,
dancing and wine . . .
on the floor, I'm surrounded
by youngsters and obscure music

blossoms swirl
into the atrium drifting
between visitors—
Rodin's "The Kiss"
in a room of its own

a long shadow
quarters the foreground
where a man
leans in a doorway
listening to the slap of rain

two women
in the bay window
of a small café
their faces half-hidden
by a vase of pink roses

we climb the cliff
point to where we've been
how small they are
our footprints left
down there in damp sand

I linger
by the roadside leaves
inhabiting
the halfway between
path and soft mush

there is a moment
before the storm hits
and the wind is silent
the clouds back-lit
as still as in a photograph

descending
the mountain road
after a long drive
we find a waterfront village
with its whitewashed church

daffodils ranked
on slopes of mown grass
bright in spring sunshine
a group of children
trying to count them

weeds, wildflowers,
slugs, snails and sparrows
all ordinary
in the suburban garden
at the height of summer

when the house cat
climbed the plum tree
but couldn't get down
the boy climbed a ladder
to rescue it and take it home

my mother used
to measure the bathwater
to the inch—
from the youngest to the eldest
we bathed every Saturday

the bit of pavement
where the dog was killed
near the crossing
I take a photograph
of nothing, to remind me

on Sunday mornings
we ran to the shop for bread
fingers tearing
at the golden, bouncy crust
long before we arrived home

~Auckland, New Zealand

The Booming Sea

Patricia Prime

The house stands on a hill, a deck overlooks the valley, and from the living-room there is a panoramic view of the ocean. Hours have been spent in this bright space where the note of a red velvet chaise-longue bursts among the oak of doors and panelling. So alive its colours—the black half-Persian cat, silver candlesticks, a stream of vivid paintings on the wall, dark green curtains, glass-fronted bookcases—set alight by the clarity of the crimson couch.

It's difficult not to feel happy in a place saturated with colour and light: days spent walking the hills, watching fishing boats approach the harbour bar, finding a lane that leads nowhere and sleeping on the curious, tactile sofa.

tea steeping—
a loved poetry book
open on the table
Milton's *Paradise Lost*
leafed over many times

Between the booming sea of the distance and occasional crickets, this silence in which questions rest, stresses dissipate, worries laugh. It's the silence of life, deep and wonderful.

coding poems
holding them gently
in my hands
listening to their
whispered words

~*Auckland, New Zealand*

Beijing Bookshop

Patricia Prime

under the spell
of dancers in the square
waltzing to old tunes
we become wallflowers
watching from the wings

In Beijing, we ask our guide to take us to a bookshop where we can buy Chinese poetry books. I buy two books in English for a few yuan: *The Poems of Li Ho* and Al Qing's *Selected Poems*. Most of the books I can't read: the Chinese language sings its secrets beyond my eyes and ears. I trace the shape of words, listen to the guide as he reads poems I can't understand, woven with a fine thread, painted with a sable brush, carved in marble. I sound the words ineffectively, but their beauty remains with me.

in the marketplace
far into the evening
tiny birds in cages
sing their songs
of freedom to the stars

~*China*

Cherita

Patricia Prime

afternoon release

the last class
freed from sentences

schoolchildren
dawdle out along
the verges

before home

the night descends
to rhyme the way

across the road
inland gulls
like envoys

dust-caked lane

the riddle
of the creek bed

dragonflies and reeds
the sharp taste
of an apple

cathedral quiet

high in the canopy
a single note

a tui
calls to its mate
in the distance

ghost moon

the colours of night
before the dawn

in my room
spirit notes
sharp as air

at dusk

a swan takes off
from the lagoon

the first of a pair
flying over bulrushes
into the sky

what I find

encased in glass
are bones and feathers

the strange bird
in the museum
is a moa

rough concrete

the netball court
full of teenage girls

their uniforms
multicoloured
legs in motion

a boy

stands on the edge
of the wharf

his sudden jump
spiraling
into water

sultry lips pouting

long hair flicking
the waitress poses

menu in hand
as she takes our order
silently

guitar riff

no-one can guess
the song he plays

the busker
a young boy of twelve
outside the mall

the swan

takes off from the lagoon
at dusk

the first of a pair
each wingbeat
broad and deep

there are no answers

in the mirror
no blueprint

of the girl
I once was
in another lifetime

it is nothing

the winter overcoat
can help

the collar
rubbing my neck
like sandpaper

a ragged scarecrow

stands in a puddled field
staring into the clouds

arms open
he welcomes the birds
into his coat

the road is so long

the heat stifling
light blinding

on a highway
with no signposts
to mark the way

under the trees
hundreds of rain fingers
tap against the ground
clouds billow
as sheet lightning
rends the summer sky

a couple of humans
dirty with the work
of living on the streets
sleeping rough
scratching a living
from rubbish bins

two brothers
kick stones down the steps
in the city park
oversized jackets
and short trousers
but no shoes

~Auckland, New Zealand

Patricia Prime writes poetry, reviews, articles and Japanese forms of poetry. She has self-published several collections of poetry and a book of collaborative tanka sequences and haibun, Shizuka, with French poet, Giselle Maya. Patricia co-edits Kokako and is reviews/interviews editor of Haibun Today, on the editorial staff of Gusts, and is a reviewer for Atlas Poetica, Takahe, Metaverse Muse and Poets International.

Een duister moment in de geschiedenis van Houten

Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Vertaler Nederlands-Engels

Albertus baron van Harinxma thoe Slooten (Beetsterzwaag, 4 mei 1872–Amsterdam, 17 september 1940) was een Nederlands jurist die betrokken was bij een duister moment in de geschiedenis van de gemeente Houten.

Hij werd geboren als zoon van Binnert Philip baron van Harinxma thoe Slooten, die advocaat en kantonrechter was vooraleer hij in 1871 lid werd van de Provinciale Staten van Friesland en van 1878 tot 1909 Com-missaris van de Koning(in) van Friesland was.

Zijn oudere broer Pieter ging hun vader achterna en werd in 1909 Commissaris van de Koningin van Friesland; zelf had hij een 37-jarige carrière bij het Openbaar Ministerie (OM).

Na zijn studie aan de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden werd hij in 1902 benoemd tot ambtenaar bij het OM in Leeuwarden. Zeven jaar later ontving hij zijn benoeming tot substituut-officier van justitie; eerst in Winschoten en een jaar later in Amsterdam. In 1921 volgde zijn benoeming tot advocaat-generaal bij het gerechtshof te Amsterdam.

Toen S. J. M. van Geuns, de procureur-generaal van dat gerechtshof, in 1934 op 70-jarige leeftijd met pensioen ging, volgde Van Harinxma thoe Slooten hem in augustus van dat jaar op.

Als je gaat graven
dan vind je altijd wel iets
al zijn het maden
of archeologisch spul—
je hoopt toch steeds op een schat.

In 1935 kreeg hij van de Gestapo het verzoek om naar Nederland gevluchte Duitse communisten die niet naar Duitsland terug-

gestuurd konden worden, niet langer vrij te laten, omdat ze zich dan in andere landen zouden kunnen gaan vestigen. Hier-op schreef hij een brief aan de minister van justitie, waarna in maart van dat jaar Fort Honswijk bij Culemborg als detentie-kamp werd ingericht en kort daarop in gebruik werd ge-no-men. In december 1939 ging hij met pensioen, waarna hij nog geen jaar later op 68-jarige leeftijd overleed.

Fort Honswijk is een fort van de Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (NWH) en ligt bij de buurtschap Honswijk in Tull en 't Waal (Gemeente Houten) aan de noordoever van de Lek.

In 1841 begon men met de bouw van een torenfort op de Noorderlekdijk ten westen van Honswijk. De toren telde drie verdiepingen met op het dak een open batterij. Hiermee werd voorkomen dat een vijand over de Lek of over de dijk in het geïnuundeerde gebied naar het westen kon oprukken. In 1848 was het fort gereed.

In de jaren tachtig van de 19e eeuw werd het fort ingrijpend gewijzigd. De komst van de brisantgranaat en betere en zwaardere kanonnen maakte het bakstenen fort kwetsbaar. De bovenste verdieping werd afgebroken en aan de oostzijde van de toren werd een contrescarpgalerij gebouwd, voorzien van aanaarding. Deze renovatie werd tussen 1878 en 1881 uitgevoerd.

Het fort was in de mobilisatie tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog bezet. De bezetting liet later een Reünistenkruis Fort Honswijk 1914–1934 met een afbeelding van het fort vervaardigen. Op het fort konden zo'n 550 tot 650 man worden gehuisvest. Er stonden 34 kanonnen opgesteld op de aarden wallen. Daarnaast waren er tien mitrailleurs en veertien draagbare mortieren.

't Duister verleden
van Houten opgegraven:
het detentiekamp
Fort Honswijk niet vergeten,
moet geleerd worden op school.

In 1939 werd Fort Honswijk enige tijd gebruikt als detentiekamp. Het was het eerste detentiekamp van Nederland. Het ontstond

nadat Konstantin von Neurath, Hitlers Rijksminister van Buitenlandse Zaken, aan Harinxma thoe Slooten, die maar al te graag het machtige buurland ter wille was. Voor korte tijd, weliswaar, want binnen het jaar werd het kamp gesloten. Niet alleen verdrong een andere Nederlandse ondeugd die van de gewilligheid tegenover Nazi-Duitsland, c.q. de angst voor het communisme: de spreekwoordelijke Hollandse zuinigheid. Maar het fortje bleek alleen maar 'gespuis' te herbergen; de andere vogels waren al wijselijk gevlogen, dat is ondergedoken.

Tijdens de mobilisatie van 1939/1940 waren er Nederlandse soldaten gevestigd. Op 14 mei 1940 werd Fort Honswijk zonder slag of stoot ingenomen door het Duitse leger. Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog werden er in Fort Honswijk NSB-ers en de Drie van Breda opgesloten. Zo kwam boontje om zijn loontje.

Het fort is jarenlang gebruikt door Defensie. In september 2016 werd bekend dat de gemeente Houten het monumentale fort koopt voor 1 euro van het Rijk. Voor de restauratie stelt de Provincie Utrecht een subsidie van ongeveer 800.000 euro ter beschikking en de gemeente Houten is bereid er maximaal 0,5 miljoen euro in te steken.

Probeer niet langer
onsmakelijke delen
der geschiedenis
te verbergen — bespreek ze
en voorkom zo herhaling.

~Bunnik, Nederland

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A Dark Moment in the History of Houten

Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Dutch-English Translator

Albertus baron Van Harinxma thoe Slooten (Beetsterzwaag, May 4, 1872–Amsterdam, September 17, 1940) was a Dutch jurist involved in a dark moment of the history of Houten.

He born as the son of Binnert Philip baron Van Harinxma thoe Slooten, who was a lawyer and a cantonal judge before he became in 1871 a member of the States-Provincial of Friesland, and was Governor of Friesland from 1878 to 1989.

His elder brother Pieter followed their father up and became in 1909 Governor of Friesland; he himself pursued a career of 37 years as Public Prosecutor.

After his study at the State University Leyden, he was appointed at the Public Prosecutor's office in Leeuwarden in 1902. 17 years later he received his appointment as Substitute Public Prosecutor; first in Winschoten and a year later in Amsterdam.

When in 1934 S. J. M. van Geuns, the Public Prosecutor of that court retired at the age of 70, Van Harinxma thoe Slooten followed him up in August of the year later.

When you start digging
you will always find something
if only worms, or
archaeological stuff—
yet you hope it's a treasure.

In 1935 the Gestapo requested him not to leave any longer the communists who could not be sent back to Germany free, because they then could escape to other countries. Thereupon he wrote to the minister of justice a letter, after which in March of that year Fort Honswijk was put in order and shortly later put in use, after

which he died not yet a year later at the age of 68.

Fort Honswijk is a fort of the New Dutch Water Line (Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie—NHW) and is situated in the township Honswijk in Tull en 't Waal (Commune Houten) on the North bank of the Lek.

They started building the tower fortification on the North bank of the river the Lek, West of Honswijk. The tower had three floors with on the roof an open battery. This would prevent an enemy to advance toward the West over the Lek or over the dike into the inundated area. In 1858 the fort was ready.

In the eighties of the 19th century the fort was thoroughly altered. The arrival of the brisance grenade and better and heavier cannons made the brick stone fort vulnerable. The top floor was demolished and the East side of the tower received a counterscarp gallery. These renovations occurred between 1878 and 1881.

The fort was occupied during the mobilisation of World War, the Kingdom of the Netherlands staying neutral. The occupation ordered later to construct a Reunion Cross Fort Honswijk 1914–1918 with a picture of the fort. About 550 to 650 men could be lodged in the fort. 34 cannons were lined up on the earthen wall. Next there were ten machine guns and fourteen portable mortars.

Do never forget
the detention camp called Fort
Honswijk in the town
Of Houten—its dark past should
be dug up and taught at school.

In 1935 Fort Honswijk was used for a short while as a detention camp. It was the first detention camp in the Netherlands. It was organised after the Netherlands had agreed with the Gestapo to exchange intelligence about communist activities of certain persons. It was intended “to prevent German communists, homosexuals, criminals and other riffraff (vagrants) to escape from the Netherlands to other countries,” from a letter by Konstantin von Neurath, Hitler's Reichsminister of Foreign

Affairs to Harinxma thoe Slooten, who hastened to please the country's mighty neighbour. Only for a short while, for within a year the camp was closed. Not only defeated another Dutch vice than that of wanting to placate Nazi-Germany or of fear of communism: the proverbial Dutch parsimony. At the closing it appeared that the little fortification only sheltered 'riffraff'; the other birds had already flown away, i.e. gone into hiding.

During the mobilisation of 1939/1940 Dutch soldiers occupied it. On May 14, 1949, Fort Honswijk was taken by the German army without a shot being fired. After the Second World War collaborators and the Three of Breda, famous German war criminals, were imprisoned in Fort Honswijk. Thus chickens came home to roost.

The fort has been used by the Ministry of Defence for years. In September 2016 it was announced that the commune of Houten would buy the monumental fortification from the State for 1 euro. The Province of Utrecht puts at their disposal a grant of about 800.000 euro and the commune of Houten is prepared to bring in a maximum of half a million euro.

Decide not to hide
the bitter tasting portions
of our history—
by discussing their impact
we prevent repetition.

~Bunnik, *The Netherlands*

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Antieke Wijsbegeerte

Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Vertaler Nederlands-Engels

Heb je ooit gehoord
Van de Zeven Wijzen uit
De Griekse Oudheid?
Hun namen staan geschreven
In Plato's Protagoras

Allen zesde eeuw
Van onze jaarrekening
Enkelen wijsgeer
Anderen zijn wetmakers
Of fameuze staatslieden

De wijsgeer genaamd
Thales van Milete was
Een wiskundige
Zowel als een astronoom
Devies: γνώθι σεαυτόν

Dat is: ken jezelf—
Staat op de voorgevel van
Delphi's Orakel
Aristoteles schreef dat Thales
De eerste filosoof was

Anaximander
Volgde, een naturalist
Vóórwetenschapper
Uitvinder van het begrip
'De wetten van de natuur'

Zocht naar de oorzaak
(ἀρχή): τὸ ἄπειρον of
Het Onbepaalde
Anaximenes, zijn vriend
En leerling, noemde het Lucht

De Milesërs:
Stoffelijke monisten:
Wat zou de oerstof
Wel zijn? Anaximenes:
Kosmos breidt uit en krimpt in

Pythagoras woonde
In Elea, uitvinder
Van de Vrijmetselarij
Met π als geheim teken
Een irrationeel getal

Xenophanes van
Colophon: voor paarden zijn
De Goden wellicht paarden
Kritische scepsis — Denken:
Onbewogen beweger

Heraclitus zei
 $\Pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \acute{\rho}\epsilon\iota$ — relativist:
Je kan niet tweemaal
In één stroom stappen, omdat
Hij voortdurend verandert

Parmenides: een
Monist pure sang, onderwees
“De weg die niet is”
En “de weg die is”:
 $\Delta\acute{o}\zeta\alpha$ en $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ [Of: Opinie versus Waarheid]

Anaxagoras
Haalde de wijsbegeerte
Uit Anatolië
Naar de stadsstaat Athene —
Dank zij de god Apollo

Empedocles van
Sicilië bedacht de
Vier elementen
En Liefde en Haat als hun
Kosmische arbeidskrachten

Zeno, stichter van
De Dialectiek en de
School van Elea
Verzon zijn paradoxen
Bijvoorbeeld die van de pijl

Protagoras was
Een agnost en een sofist,
Een leraar te huur —
“De mens, de maat van alles”
Werd een vriend van Pericles

Gorgias pochte
Steeds beide zijden
Te kunnen verdedigen
Deze sofist bood zich aan
Als een reizende leraar

Socrates met zijn
Ironie vroedvrouw voor der
Wijsheids geboorte —
Vader van vele scholen
Schreef hij zelf geen sikkepit

Verliefd op jongens
Niet hun lichaam maar hun ziel
Bracht wijsbegeerte
Terug op aarde — hij stierf
Slachtoffer uit eigen wil

Leucippus, verder
Onbekend, hielp atomen
Kennen, ontdekt door
‘Lachende’ Democritus
Die allicht honderd jaar werd

Wereldreiziger
Uit Abdera als eerder
Ook Protagoras
Wilde de natuur kennen
Niet stil kunnende zitten

Beschouwend iemand
Plaatste rede boven de
Zintuigen: alleen
De ruimte en atomen —
Een mechanische kosmos

Het genie Plato
Stichtte de Academie —
Zag twee werelden
Geen denker kan om hem heen
Zeer geliefd bij de leken

Begon met licht spul
Socratische Dialoog
Eindigde erg zwaar —
Prachtige beelden: de lijn
Grot, zon, de vijf lichamen

Aristoteles, zijn
Beste leerling en censor
Was een bioloog
“Amicus Plato, magis
Amica est veritas”

Een eudaimonist:
De deugd ligt in het midden
Tussen uitersten
Vader hofdokter —
Onderwees Alexander

Diogenes, de
Cynieker, slaaf, gevraagd naar
Zijn vak: “meesterschap!”
Alexander: “Wat kan ik
Voor je doen?” — “Uit mijn licht gaan!”

Maatschappelijke
Kritieker uit Sinope,
Zocht hij met zijn lamp
‘Een mens’ — leven als een hond
Was zijn hoogste ideaal

Alexanders dood:
Start van het Hellenisme —
De culturen van
Hellas, Rome en Azië
Heerlijk samengesmolten

Noch in denken noch
In doen besliste Pyrrho
Want hij stelde steeds
Zijn beslissingen uit: het
ἀταραξία-geluk

Sextus, bijgenaamd
Empiricus, bracht deze
Lering naar Rome
Andere scholen namen
Snel die ‘vredigheid’ over

Citiums Zeno
Meed de gevoelens, valse
Oordelen, leefde
Simpel — Stoïcijnen zijn
Flegmaticke Boeddhisten

Toch namen ze deel
Aan de maatschappij, gaven
Vaak ethisch advies
Je vindt ze in elke klas
Seneca was senator

Epictetus was
Een ex-slaaf, terwijl Marcus
Aurelius een
Keizer was — in die Gouden
Eeuw was alles mogelijk

Plato’s opvolgers
Losten, nu Oost bij West kwam,
Zijn spagaat op: de
Gordiaanse Knoop gekleefd —
Plotinus zwaaide het zwaard

Het Ene bracht de
Hele werkelijkheid voort
In een stortvloed van
Emanaties, die van een
Metafysische aard zijn

Plotinus haatte
Zijn lichaam en de zinnen
Daarom vermeed hij
Aardse genoegens zowel
Als ’t noemen van zijn ID

’t Christendom nam zijn
visie van een Hogere
Spirituele
Wereld over — en zijn school
Duurde tot 600

Maar Hypatia,
Een wiskundige, werd door
Christenen vermoord —
Na haar dood volgde er een
Millennium duisternis.

Epicurus' preek:
Het genot als levensdoel
Genot van de geest,
De oude 'gemoedsrust', en
Lucretius schreef 't gedicht

Wat te denken en
Te doen na zoveel wijsheid?
Kijk naar Cicero
Top-orator van Rome:
Sceptieker en eclecticisch.

~*Bunnik, Nederland*

Ancient Philosophy

Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Dutch-English Translator

Have you ever heard
Of the seven wise men of
Greek Antiquity?
Their names were recorded by
Plato in *Protagoras*

All sixth century
Before our Christian Era:
Some philosophers
Others were lawmakers
Or else famous statesmen

The philosopher
Thales of Miletus was
Mathematician
As well as astronomer
Device: γνῶθι σεαυτόν

That is: know thyself—
Written on the facade of
Delphi's oracle
Aristotle names Thales
As the first philosopher

Anaximander
Came next, naturalistic
Proto-scientist
Inventor of the concept
Known as 'the laws of nature'

Sought the origin
(ἀρχή): τὸ ἄπειρον or
The Indefinite
Anaximenes, his friend
And disciple, called it air

All three Milesians
They were material monists:
What is the ground stuff?
Anaximenes: change is
To expend and condensate

Pythagoras lived
In Elea, inventor
Of Freemasonry
With π as a secret sign
An irrational number

Xenophanes from
Colophon: horses would draw
The gods as horses
Critical skepticism:
Thought as an Unmoved Mover

Heraclitus said
πάντα ῥεῖ — relativist:
You cannot step twice
In the same river, because
It is changing constantly

Parmenides, the
Absolute monist, taught "the
Way which is" versus
"The way which is not": opposed
Δόξα and ἀλήθεια

Anaxagoras
Introduced philosophy
From Anatolia
In the city of Athens —
Thanks to the god Apollo

Empedocles from
Sicily discovered the
Four elements and
Love and Hate as the reigning
Cosmological forces

Zeno, founder of
Dialectic, was of the
Eleatic School —
Known for his paradoxes
Such as that of the arrow

Protagoras, an
Agnostic and a sophist,
Teacher for hire —
“Man the measure of all things”
Became friend of Pericles

Gorgias claimed that
He could defend both sides of
Whatever question
This sophist was for hire as
An itinerant teacher

Socrates with his
Irony a midwife for
The birth of wisdom —
The father of many schools
Did not write a single thing

He was a lover of boys
Not their bodies but their souls
Brought philosophy
Back to earth — died victim of
His own conviction

Leucippus, further
Unknown, perfected atomism
That was invented
By ‘laughing’ Democritus
Who reached the age of hundred

This world traveller
Was born in Abdera just
Like Protagoras
He could not sit still, pondered
How to understand nature

A contemplative,
He opposed sense impressions
To reason: there is
Only space and the atoms
A mechanistic cosmos

Genial Plato
Founded the Academy —
Two worlds philosopher
No thinker gets around him —
Favourite among laymen

Started with light stuff:
The Socratic Dialogues —
Ended ponderous
Splendid images: the line,
The cave, the sun, five solids

Aristotle, his
Best pupil and fierce critic —
A biologist
“*Amicus Plato, magis
Amica est veritas*”

A eudemonist:
Moral virtue a middle
Between two extremes
Father royal physicist —
Taught Alexander the Great

Diogenes, the
Cynic, enslaved, asked for his
Skills, said: “mastership!”
Alexander: “What I’ll do
For you?” — “Keep out of my light!”

A social critic
He lived in a jar and with
A lamp sought ‘a man’
Born in Sinope he found
The ideal life a dog’s

Alexander's death
Marked the start of Hellenism —
The cultures of Greece,
Rome and Asia blended
Into a marvelous mix

Pyrrho could not make
Decisions be they in thought
Or in action, forever
Postponing them, thus reaching
Happy ἀταραξία

Sextus, whose nickname
Was Empiricus, brought this
Doctrine into Rome
Soon this notion 'peace of mind'
Was shared by the other schools

Citium's Zeno
Mistrusted the emotions
Thought them false judgments
Hence Stoics lived simply like
Imperturbable Buddhists

Yet they took part
In public life, advised people,
Educating them
They're found in all classes
Seneca was senator

Epictetus was
A former slave, and Marcus
Aurelius Rome's
Emperor — in that Golden Age
Everything was possible

Plato's followers
Struggled with his two-worlds view
Time to cut this Gordian Knot
Now that East was meeting West
Plotinus wielded the sword

Reality as
A whole derives from the One
In a cascade of
Emanations of a
Metaphysical nature

Plotinus' mistrust
Of the body and senses
Made him reject all
Earthly pleasures and even
Mentioning his name and age

This otherworldly
Spirituality was
Taken over by
Christianity — his school
Flourished until 600

Still, the scientific
Hypatia was murdered
By a Christian crowd —
Upon her death followed
A thousand years of darkness

Epicurus preached
Pleasure as the aim of life
Pleasure of the mind
The old tranquillity, and
Lucretius wrote the poem

What can one think and
Do after all this wisdom?
Look at Cicero
Rome's best orator became
A skeptic and eclectic

~*Bunnik, Netherlands*

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Voluntary work in the fields of nature, society, culture and spirituality.
Humanist, promoting democratic confrontation by dialog. Vegan.*

Cherita Fairy Tale

Paweł Markiewicz

a fairy — a ruler of a magic time
is driving through a poem-land
called Utah

in which dreams
are being created
with an angelic comet

the fairy likes her and my poetry
she is following ways
— covered by phoenix with a stardust

dreaming while the driving
about beyond-spirits
the marvelous builder of temples over clouds

the fairy is going past houses of philosophers
and dwellings from gingerbread
belonged to a crowd of witches once

she is greeting farmers — worker at harvests
she is touching branches
of a weeping willow

the fairy is drinking a dew
she is reaching a first goal
a country inn in Apollo's village in Utah

she is giving to a landlady her pieces
of paper with poems
her most beautiful paintings

the landlady is exchanging

these poems and paintings
for the magnificent gold

lively and marvelous fairy
is drinking wine — the Greek nectar
bragging with a star fulfillment

the landlady is warning the fairy

about dangerous robbers
and cunning beggars on ways and paths

she is telling her:
If I were You
I would pay attention to them

the fairy is embarking on an adventure
and a further journey
into the land of the fairy

first she is meeting a beggar
who is equipped
with a gun

the fairy is giving the beggar her diamond
so that he leaves her free
she is meeting a second man

but she thinks
that he is a evil robber
he is basically a poor beggar

the beggar is asking for a small cap as an alms

the fairy is giving him the whole gold
which she has

the beggar was a wizard and gave her
the power to control the weather and
the ability to create golden rainbows in the sky

the fairy is becoming a ruler of the golden
rainbow

and longing of a wind
she is totally enchanted

so that she is painting a romantic picture
and is creating a gorgeous poem
— the poem from eternity

the poem from the eternity is a song

of a time of wanderlust
the fairy is going to use

the power on her fairy-land soon
in the fairy-land of milk and honey
then the fairy is meeting the wisest dwarf

in the fairy-land of milk and honey

the dwarf is old friend of the fairy
the dwarf is teaching the fairy to write

both the most beautiful
and the most amazing
poems of the world

the magnificent poems about nature and
philosophy

are being written
by the fairy now

the dwarf said:
*she was very good schoolgirl
with regard to the learning of the poems*

the fairy admires eagles in the air

then a wolf from a primeval forest
meets the fairy next to a silvan glade

*the wolf asks her: What poem is the most wonderful in
this world?*

the fairy answers: *the poem, created in each morning
with morning-sun-dreams and lights of a magic from
morning stars*

the wolf and the fairy are eating blueberries

for a magic decoction
not far from a hut

they are saying, *The empty hut of the deceased
witch is amazing*. Both are bewitched
the forest is great admirable grandiose glorious
baronial

~Poland

On Fairy Tales

Paweł Markiewicz

It has therefore been proved by me that the cherita can create a fairy tale. There is also the possibility to divide a whole fairy tale into cherita (reverse process).

Assumption: We have a poem. We create from this poem a big fairy tale by way of invention. Then we divide the fairy tale into a lot of cherita. The individual cherita is also the beginning of new fairy tales. We create a lot of fairy tales.

Rule: The process going from one big fairy tale to many of the fairy tales leads through poetry (through cherita).

Erfüllung

Paweł Markiewicz

Paweł Markiewicz, Deutsch-Englisch
Übersetzer

Ich entschlummerte

*und mein Gefühl von
engelhafter Schwermut starb*

*I beginne wieder
Ich bin erweckt
fürs ewige Feenleben*

entwaldete Einöde

*war in meinem Land
und im Herz von mir*

*Frieden ruht
in mir jetzt voll
von magischen Lichtern*

~Poland

Fullfilment

Paweł Markiewicz

Paweł Markiewicz, German-English
Translator

I fell asleep

and my feeling of
angelic melancholia died

I start again
I am awakened
to eternal fairy life

deforested desolation

was in my country
and in the heart of mine

peace is resting
in me now full
of magic lights

~Poland

Zwei Hirtentanka. Die Freundenstanka

Paweł Markiewicz

Paweł Markiewicz, Deutsch-Englisch
Übersetzer

das Hirtengedicht im Dorf
Zaubereien des Wunders
ich mag die Sehnsuchtsflügel
die meine Welt voll schmücken
mit der Hirtenphantasie

ich hab Hirtenlieder gern
tausend Worte des Zaubers
deine Flügel in dem Herz
es lebe Hirtenfrieden
voller Zauberträumerei

~Poland

Paweł Markiewicz wurde 1983 in Siemiatycze (Polen) geboren. Er wohnt in Bielsk Podlaski. Er studierte Jura und Deutsch in Polen. Er ist der Autor, der die kurze Lyrik mag, nämlich: Cheritas sowie Tankas. Er veröffentlichte seine Gedichte in 6 Staaten.

Two shepherds' tanka. The peaceful tanka

Paweł Markiewicz

Paweł Markiewicz, German-English
Translator

the shepherd's poem in the village
Magic of the miracle
I like the longing wings
which decorate my world fully
with the shepherd's imagination

I like songs of the shepherd
a thousand words of magic
your wings in the heart
long live shepherd's peace
full of magic-dreaming

~Poland

Paweł Markiewicz was born 1983 in Siemiatycze (Poland). He lives in Bielsk Podlaski. He studied laws and German in Poland. He is the author who likes short poetry, to wit: cheritas as well as tanka. He published his poems in 6 countries.

Making the Rounds : A Ring of Tanka

Dr. Randy M. Brooks

lobster faced,
the boy from the beach tips
another beer
blond in a bikini
from the balcony

blond in a bikini
from the balcony
a sudden chill
beneath the clouds
goosebumps rising

a sudden chill
beneath the clouds
goosebumps rising
raindrops brushed off
his motorcycle seat

raindrops brushed off
his motorcycle seat
something alive
in the pampas grass
blue moon rising

something alive
in the pampas grass
blue moon rising
cat's paw over
grandma's pink slip

cat's paw over
grandma's pink slip
my straw
sucking air in the ice
of the coke glass

my straw
sucking air in the ice
of the coke glass
a tendril of curls
across the waitress' eyes

a tendril of curls
across the waitress' eyes
signing the divorce papers
he adds
a smiley face

signing
the divorce papers
he adds a smiley face
a friendly stray
from door to door

a friendly stray
from door to door
persimmons
across the sidewalk
the orange pulp

persimmons
across the sidewalk
the orange pulp
behind the revival tent
a flask of whiskey

behind the revival tent
a flask of whiskey
policeman's flashlight reveals
the startled faces
of moon lovers

policeman's flashlight
reveals the startled faces
of moon lovers
one by one
the cars leave the hilltop

one by one
the cars leave the hilltop
scratching the stubble
on my cheek
she wouldn't kiss

scratching the stubble
on my cheek
she wouldn't kiss
zoo monkeys grooming
big daddy

zoo monkeys grooming
big daddy
a baby spits
the cherry blossoms
in his stroller

a baby spits
the cherry blossoms
in his stroller
bare-bellied teens
giggling, her first period

bare-bellied teens giggling,
her first period
click of high heels
black velvet skirt . . .
a yellow cab stops

click of high heels
black velvet skirt . . .
a yellow cab stops
the barb of jealousy
in her congratulations

the barb of jealousy
in her congratulations
returned to
the childhood town
the school gone

returned to
the childhood town
the school gone
wiping sweat
from his brow, again

wiping sweat
from his brow, again
old windmill spinning,
spinning with only
half the fans

old windmill spinning,
spinning with only
half the fans
coyote watches
from the scrub pines

coyote watches
from the scrub pines
the buffalo wallow
a dust so fine
so smooth

the buffalo wallow
a dust so fine
so smooth
touching it
the new girl's crimped hair

touching it
the new girl's crimped hair
farm boys
each with a foxtail
after the church potluck

farm boys
each with a foxtail
after the church potluck
rooster tail of dust
behind the hot rod

rooster tail of dust
behind the hot rod
she calls him back
wait!
the moonrise

she calls him back
wait!
the moonrise
a prayer
kneeling by her bunk

a prayer
kneeling by her bunk
here's Johnny on tv
Mom and Dad
so quiet

here's Johnny on tv
Mom and Dad
so quiet
orange peel pieces
in the popcorn bowl

orange peel pieces
in the popcorn bowl
news from the war
so many names
we'll never know

news from the war
so many names
we'll never know
one ear pierced
she clinches her teeth

one ear pierced
she clinches her teeth
Spring dance
the lace around her neck
cherry blossoms

Spring dance
the lace around her neck
cherry blossoms
door held open
following the perfume

door held open
following the perfume
lobster face,
the boy from the beach
tips another beer

~United States

Ray Spitzengerger

wagon under tree
faded red with muddy sides
now empty, wheel-less
long ago, two Texas tots
harnessed their daddy for rides

~Houston, Texas, USA

Richard Grahn

fussbudgetting
in the basement
your candor
won't clean up
this mess

~In the basement, Chicago, Illinois, USA

you're remembered in dreams
and remembered in prayers
i also see you
in a whiff of coffee and
the scent of new-fallen snow

~At the coffee shop, Chicago, Illinois, USA

when i close my eyes
you're standing there
naked
with a pear
in your hand

~In front of the refrigerator, Fall River, Wisconsin, USA

Dr. Randy M. Brooks is the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of English at Millikin University. He teaches courses on the global haiku and tanka at Millikin. He and his wife, Shirley Brooks, are co-editors and publishers of Brooks Books, and edit Mayfly haiku magazine.

Ray Spitzengerger is a freelance writer who has published in numerous publications, including FOOD FOR THOUGHT (haiku), POETRY QUARTERLY (tanka), THE PAWN REVIEW (poem), THE RED RIVER REVIEW (poems), TRY MAGAZINE (poems), and others. He is a retired college English teacher. He lives near Houston, Texas, U.S.A., with his beautiful wife Peggy and spoiled cat Gatsby. He is 83 years old.

Richard Grahn is an American poet/writer, sculptor, and photographer living in Chicago, Illinois. His interests include various Japanese styles e.g. Haiku, Tanka, and Haibun. He is also engaged in collaborative poetry in forms such as Terzanelle, Choka and Free Verse. He holds an Associate Degree in Fine Arts from Butte Community College in Oroville, California with additional studies at California State University, Chico.

Darkness

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

at midnight
gum trees whisper
ancient wisdom,
our ancestral spirits
move through the land

almsgiving . . .
we leave out a meal
for hungry ghosts
at midnight the sound
of a shattering plate

hazy sky
soon after midnight
moonflowers —
fireworks in the city
bring in the new year

~Australia

Samantha Sirimanne Hyde

sacred chanting
drifts across the garden
at the funeral
all the things
I could have said to you

mothball moon . . .
this ageing body
falling apart
fretting about the day
I can't manage the stairs

stripping
the wallpaper of my mind
trying to change . . .
the ivy on the garage wall
now taking over the roof

~Australia

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

Sanford Goldstein

first day
of deep snow
on the streets,
my cane, sturdy as it is,
can lose control

trying to do
my income taxes
and I fault,
no idea have I
that I can soon finish

I send off poems
believing them to be
good,
I am in the pit of despond,
I am a soon-goner

beware
the Ides of March
Caesar was told,
he laughed
and died, face full of smiles

will I live
another year
or two?
one year will be
enough for ancient me

found
a tanka of mine
in a published book—
is it the luck
of the Irish?

alone
and more alone
I linger
in my do-nothing
world

forlorn
these winter
days,
at least I have
my new shiny boots

at my new
tanka café
this cold evening,
I wear
my new shiny boots

~Shibata-shi, Japan

Sanford Goldstein is now 92 years old. He has been writing tanka for more than fifty years. He continues to live in Japan with his friend Kazuaki Wakui.

Kyoka

Steve Black

early autumn
past their prime
low hanging fruit
i burn my balls
in the bath water

out of my depth
in bohemia
stared down
by one of tracey emin's
vaginas

the man from fukishima
who stayed with the dogs
long after the wave
doesn't get lonely
not like he did when people were around

stroke of midnight
shoeless in the gutter
crying her heart out
her fat friend wiping away the tears
as she awaits her hackney carriage

he killed his mother
she always told him so
he left her in bits
on sundays at church
on a wednesday at the charity shop

caught on cctv
being unkind to animals
in mitigation before sentencing
her mother's legacy
she left it all to the cat

i admit it i begged
she said kiss my arse
so i did
but it was no fun
not like it used to be

the bridge to the other side
temporarily closed
to other traffic
3 jumpers already
this month

the lights
of the speeding ambulance
reflected in the cup half-empty
i google a guess
as to what is likely to kill me

i'm throwing paper balls
into the waste paper bin
if i get the next one in
i'll be the undisputed
champion of the world

the fantasy
now reality
she left him
for the girl
next door

she took
the psychopath test
on my behalf
and passed
with flying colours

~Reading, Berkshire, UK

Steve Black

the isolation block
where i'm told
god cannot see you
and even if he could
could do nothing about it

the ferrari
from the hill
floating down the street
the houses
long repossessed

he could take
a photograph
but never give one
anonymous
even before he left

slipping away
in the handover
between day and night
her daughter on voicemail
a weekend city break away

the light shines
on the picture of our cindy
a small town stigmata
no matter her ex's denial
had cigarette burns to prove it

the dog
long dead
the warning
enter at you own risk
still standing

over time
the swastika
on the old skinhead's forehead
folding into
bird's wings

post-match
car park conference
a father rages
at his son
as his father did before him

the anonymous
valentine's day card
he receives
every year from his sister
the care workers think it's lovely

ritual sunday
i take to my bath
my sin washed away
in water i hope
with no memory

my room
with a view
my neighbour's junkyard
stealing my sun
twenty-four seven

the charity collector
in the doorway
her guide dog
watching
the world go by

too little
too late
handcuffed
to a prison officer
at the graveside

~Reading, Berkshire, UK

Steve Black lives in the Thames Valley (UK). Big fan of Japanese and Korean film. Married with 2 children. Proficient cyclist.

Tamara K. Walker

unlabeled plants
and untranslated indigenous words
a lizard's tail
disappears
under a metal sculpture

*~Santa Fe Botanical Garden, Santa Fe, New Mexico,
USA*

the child
playfully headbutting
her mother in line —
leaning on a stone pillar
I pray for energy

~Boettcher Concert Hall, Denver, Colorado, USA

biting into
wrinkled plums
still somehow unripe
I crave the soft, tart edge
of the unattainable

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

so many (t)issues
littered under our windshield
that pollinated summer
crabapple trees
finally in bloom

~Columbine Hills, Littleton, Colorado, USA

the pulsing silences
that crickets will soon fill
in late August
I breathe your absence
in every squall of wind

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

watching the sunrise
through gossamer netting
around my bed —
a minuscule spider
gathers silk before rest

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

on deserted bleachers
in the park at night
a metal stain
appears for a moment
in the shape of an angel

~Columbine Hills Park, Littleton, Colorado, USA

curtains raising
automatically
to disclose the lake —
I am a leaf
praying for benevolent winds

~Columbine Library, Littleton, Colorado, USA

among glowing
self-checkout machines
at the public library —
accepting the little dystopias
I once checked out here

~Columbine Library, Littleton, Colorado, USA

exiting
the totaled car
like a hermit crab
reluctantly emerging
into a whirling world

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

Cherita

Tamara K. Walker

doing cartwheels

on a cracked sidewalk
to NO OUTLET

somewhere, a globe
of orange yarn
tumbles downhill

~Columbine Hills, Littleton, Colorado, USA

mosquito repellent

stinging the evening air
with a sour haze

within these invisible
currents
I am the one you seek

~Columbine Hills Park, Littleton, Colorado, USA

accent

on the third syllable
of your name

branches of dry leaves
fall on my head
en route to visit you

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

Blank Conversation

Tamara K. Walker

“please hold
for the next available representative”
in this elongated moment
I am a salmon
swimming upstream

already hearing
a strained sigh
in the music on hold
I descend deeper
into my exoskeleton

language of fear
floating from my mouth
to empty air —
the nitrogen
of apathy

~Littleton, Colorado, USA

*Tamara K. Walker resides in Colorado and writes short fiction, often of a surreal, irreal, magical realist, experimental or otherwise unusual flavor, and poetry, often in originally East Asian forms. Her tanka have appeared or are forthcoming in Ribbons, Eucalypt, Moonbathing: a journal of women's tanka, LYNX, A Hundred Gourds, Star*Line and Scifaikuest, among others.*

Tanja Trček

Clair Charpentier, English-French
Translator / Traducteur anglais-
français

on a small table
a teacup a biscuit
and a pair of hands
holding each other
in silence

*sur la petite table
une tasse de thé un biscuit
et deux mains
qui se serrent
en silence*

snow crystals
on sunlit feathers—
a robin in a jacket
made entirely
of tiny rainbows

*des cristaux de neige
sur les plumes au soleil—
un moineau dans un costume
cousu de minuscules
arcs-en-ciel*

the sound of
a calligraphy brush on paper
the aroma of green tea
and snow-capped mountains
tinged with the pink of dawn

*le bruit
d'un pinceau de calligraphie sur le papier
l'arôme du thé vert
et les montagnes enneigées
teintées du rose de l'aube*

drip drop
the music of the melting snow
dripping into my sleep
watering my dreams
of spring

*goutte-à-goutte
le chant de la neige fondante
qui dégouline dans mon sommeil
arrose mes rêves
de printemps*

a chia seed on my fingertip
its minuscule brown cheeks
so precious and pretty
i wish i could live
without eating

*une graine de chia
au bout de mon doigt
ses minuscules joues brunes
si précieuses et jolies
J'aimerais pouvoir vivre
sans en manger*

my feverish lips
burning and dry—
i find a pool
of cool moonlight
on his belly

*mes lèvres fiévreuses
brûlantes et sèches—
je retrouve la fraîcheur
d'une mare de clair de lune
sur son ventre*

in snowy cottages
children press their little noses
against the windowpanes
their large solemn eyes
gazing at the stars

*dans les chalets sous la neige
les enfants pressent leur petit nez
contre les larges vitres
leurs grands yeux sérieux
contemplant les étoiles*

~Golnik, Slovenia

Once an all-around athlete, Tanja is now mostly bedbound. She often finds the enormity of her illness overwhelming and seeks refuge in small things, the very favorite among them being tanka. Seemingly small poems, but with the power to give meaning to one's life, maybe to even save lives.

Clair Charpentier lives in Aubagne, France.

Cherita

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

find me

in the space
between breaths

between this world
and the one
you cannot see

he's mentally undressing you

mother said
about uncle

she then finished her dinner
as if we just talked
about the weather

6th grade math

I wasn't interested
in the curriculum

but I was even less interested
in the boy
violating my thigh

selfish

the other women
would label me

when I would tell them
about my decision
to remain child-free

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

stillness

I watch the stars
on this cold night

long ago
I knew each one
by their true name

I close my eyes

and then open
the one inside

flashes of light
lead my way
through darkness

ah, that grin

the same
as the moon

when you have
a secret
you'll never tell

after the divorce

naked became
mother's normal

so desperate for attention
she demanded it
from her children

~Dayton, Ohio, USA

the first
rumble of thunder
sleepless
I count mistakes
instead of sheep

how twilight
blankets trees
ashamed
I cover
my aging body

to one, I am meek
to another, aggressive
my hands
are cut and tired
from holding your mirror

falling into
this night
this dream
his ghost
yells in my ear

shorter
my Christmas list
with each passing year
how many leaves
are left to fall?

paint
thrown on canvas
again he searches
for an online
hook-up

~Dayton, Ohio, USA

bitter wind
at the American border
the guard eyes me
like I am a dog
who has misbehaved

~*Ambassador International Bridge, United States &
Canada*

*Tiffany Shaw-Diaz is an award-winning poet who has been featured
in Modern Haiku, Frogpond, Acorn, Presence, and many other
publications. She is the founder and director of The Co-op Poetry Lab.
To read more of her work visit: afterpinkhaiku.blogspot.com*

*Tigz De Palma writes Japanese style short-form poetry mostly from the
Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea, and has recently enjoyed
publication in many of her favorite poetry journals. When not writing,
she is working on the revival of an ancient farmstead, or creating digital
art.*

Strip

Tigz De Palma

therapy
sessions on skype
afterwards
i want to fuck
or cry or both

both of us
riding the ferry
seasick
i don't show him
my heart swells

drinking
a cold-pressed juice
wondering
how many of our friends
watch porn

two hours
talking last night
still i wake up
alone with thoughts
of losing you

strip
he likes it more dirty
sometimes
i like it smooth
but do it for him

i miss the distant
sound of night trains and coyote
house music drowns
the winds and seas
in me

throwing
everything back in his face
word by word
i question
my tolerance for joy

~*Balearic Islands, Spain*

Sedoka

Thomas Martin

old white men
gathered around a leader
making decisions
remember
my brother and I playing with
any kids who happened by

~*television, Portland, Oregon, USA*

Thomas Martin

we each walked
a rail to the country store
back then
we parted ways long ago
and have hardly spoken since

~country railway Liberty, North Carolina, USA

grandmother
always cooked on a wood stove
remember those smells
she always chose
the ripest fruits to can

among the drying stalks
the dogs and I
looking for arrowheads (artifacts)
almost evening now
I spot the crescent moon

too close to mother's farm
the barbed wire fencing strung
around the wood
so mad I threaten lawsuits
my anger follows the sun down

~our farm Liberty, North Carolina, USA

pine silence
wind brushes the sky softly
dusk
I close my eyes again
and know those stars are in me

~Bend Park, Oregon, USA

staring
into a fire but no poem
comes
then realize one always comes
when I am truly empty

sunny winter day
I watch the crows on the lawn
shiny black wings
I stare into the light
see myself shining everywhere

~park, Portland, Oregon, USA

black Friday
so long have detested you
traffic and shoppers
fighting over a cheap purse . . .
lost car in the parking lot

~mall, Portland, Oregon, USA

the old house
a sharecropper's cabin
from long ago
a place now of cobwebs
and wasps and broken glass

~farm near Liberty, North Carolina, USA

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

Tracy Davidson lives near Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, England, and enjoys writing poetry and flash fiction. Her work has appeared in various publications and anthologies, including: Poet's Market, Mslexia, Atlas Poetica, Writing Magazine, Modern Haiku, The Binnacle, A Hundred Gourds, Shooter, Journey to Crone, The Great Gatsby Anthology, WAR and In Protest: 150 Poems for Human Rights.

Tracy Davidson

crescent moon
you make up constellations
for me
the bathtub and loofah
a dog with no tail

summer haze
I wave at my shadow
but . . .
my shadow
doesn't wave back

his face crumples
at my too blunt reply
to his proposal
perhaps "not on your nelly"
could have been worded better

earthquake
the head falls off
my beer
like a French nobleman
guillotined

Cinderella
took everything
but her pair of glass slippers
and my broken heart
some happy ever after

he bears my children
in return I promise
not to bite
his head off
when his rearing days are done

~Warwickshire, UK

Kyoka

Vijay Joshi

flirting
with the cherry buds
southern winds
frolic with a wet bra
on the terrace clothesline

honeybee
kisses a peony
the wind
gets buzzzzzzzy
gossiping

raindrops
penetrate our bedroom window
and stream down
my spine
to the slippery slope of lust

Venus
helplessly
watches
a fly romp
on her bare breasts

~New Jersey, USA

Vijay Joshi is a published poet, having published "Reflective Musings," a collection of contemporary poems and "Kaleidoscope of poems," a collection of haibun, tanka poems. Haibun Today, Chrysanthemum, and Contemporary Haibun, have published his poems.

Finding Delight in the Flaws of the World

Alexis Rotella

M. Kei informs me I am one of the few poets who write *kyōka*. I don't know why that is. I have written *senryū* for decades and have no problem informing others of the way I see the world with all its warts and carbuncles. Perhaps because nothing in my house growing up was white-washed. People actually poked fun at everything. My father said the guy I dated looked like a groundhog. That the man my aunt married was a big baby. The person I decided to marry was a mama's boy. I was the queen of Sheba and if I smiled my face would crack, according to my mother. "You never smile," a friend of mine told me. Ha ha, that's what she thinks. Behind this calm exterior, I am the fourth Stooze, laughing my ass off. You can just imagine what I think of most of my Republican neighbors but would never say to their faces, but I can spill it all out in *kyōka*, on the pages of *Atlas Poetica*, where I am not shunned, but a welcome guest at M. Kei's round table.

I pretty much yawn when I read most *tanka*. I mean, why so serious, folks? I'm not afraid to be labeled crass or outspoken. I grew up in a working class home (when my father worked) but most people who meet me, either online or in person, think I come from an upper class family. I know how to behave in public but the truth is, *kyōka* is my true poetic tongue. I love to slapstick with people who have a sense of humor. The wilder the sense of humor, the crazier the wit, the more attracted I am.

If anyone tries to put a gag on my mouth, I cross them off my list. I'm not here to please, and I'm not here to tear *tanka* to shreds, although sometimes *tanka* journals go unread for months. *Senryū*, *kyōka*—sock it to me. Like dark chocolate caramels, I never get enough.

The Music of Ryūka

Liam Wilkinson

For me, *ryūka* is all about music. The form began as a song to be sung with *sanshin* (as you know, having sent me the gift of a beautiful *sanshin*!) and many would call *ryūka* the traditional Okinawan folk song. Indeed, when I discovered *ryūka*, I was looking for a way of writing a kind of "folk poetry" and was, at the time, reading a lot of traditional British folk songs via the collections of Williams, Sharp and Lloyd.

Whilst *tanka* has moved away somewhat from its musical beginnings, I think *ryūka* depends upon it. And so following a rhythm or counting syllables is a way of keeping *ryūka* where it should be. And there is such an enchanting sound to *ryūka* when you pay attention to the count and the rhythm.

No one knows what our future holds.
The relentless passage of time
flows onward like old man river
to his date with the sea.

~Steve Wilkinson

I wake to half-empty bookshelves
and a heavy box on its way
to the corner charity shop—
fifty pennies per book

~Joy McCall

Both of the above *ryūka* are, for me, poems of sound. The eye places the poem in the ear, where it lives. Steve's poem rolls and folds like a current. Joy's poem rattles and jangles. And both are held tightly by their captivating rhythms. Indeed, no instrument or notation is needed—these poems are spoken music.

When I write *ryūka*, I often divide the verse into two—the top two lines set the scene and the bottom two provide the meaning or emotion.

Two lines for the eye, two lines for the heart, four lines for the ear.

My eyes will not let go of sleep
They claw at tufts of wondrous dreams
And I must walk these city streets
Wearing just an outline

~Liam Wilkinson

This poem would be a totally different piece of writing had I not confined myself to the 8-8-8-6 pattern. Of course, the syllable pattern of traditional Okinawan ryuka is quite different to our English patterns, but I think the 8-8-8-6 has an almost spiritual effect. It's got an organic feel to it, a natural rhythm.

With regard to content, I don't think ryuka has to be about nature or love—they should, however, be lyrical. They should call upon our emotions and our surroundings. They should be songs from the heart.

And so—for me, anyway—if I were to depart from the music, the syllable count, the rhythm and the two parts of ryuka, I'd feel that I were writing a totally different form.

Review: *sweetgrass and thyme* by Joy McCall

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

sweetgrass and thyme
Joy McCall
Skylark Publishing. (2017)
Pb. 53pp.
ISBN: 9781979043137
£7.59 from Amazon

The foreword to Joy McCall's *sweetgrass and thyme* is by the founder and editor of *Skylark*, Claire Everett, which ends with these lines: "If I were to choose, the shape of a thing, it would be

a poem by her hand." The concentration when capturing the ephemeral and holding it tenderly on the page for the reader to appreciate is central to McCall's tanka, as her opening tanka typifies:

so few the words
in the weight of days
one bright flower
among tall trees
peace, dropping slow*

* W. B. Yeats

The five-line tanka are positioned in the centre of each page, surrounded by white space which gives the poems room to breathe. The opening section "lamplight in my eyes" begins with the following tanka:

Han-shan watches
as I light the candle
and say
the resting prayer
for my kinfolk

Each tanka McCall writes is like a short prayer. There is no punctuation, nothing holding the poem down on the page. The sure touch of the poet as she lights the candle is deft and graceful; it is itself like the prayer she offers to her family. McCall uses this effect again in a poem where her fingers rest on the various objects in her room:

I wander
around the room
my fingers resting
on brass and copper
stone, wood and velvet

The following section, "in the long grass" concentrates on nature: spring water, rain, a field, grass and a squirrel. Does McCall suggest in these tanka that we are always in the shadow of a stronger power, and can find in nature some recompense for the ills of life? In the following tanka, for instance, she writes:

for so long
I carried burdens
in my cart
now it sits empty
home to spiders and moss

Here, she recalls the burdens she has carried with her for a long time and which have been swept away by her faith and perseverance. It is easy to read these tanka with their power to inspire students of the form, and to move readers to admire the simplicity, yet the beauty and strength of the poet's writing.

The section, "my own song," opens with the lovely images of the dove and the owl:

does the dove
watching the dusk owl,
long to hoot?
can I not be content
with my own song?

As readers of McCall's beautiful poems, we can assuredly say that she should be content with her wonderful work. The countryside and its traditions are central to her writing. For instance, she recalls in this section the flute, the lyre, old graves, hymns, a gathered tribe and a witch, who murmurs a blessing:

the grey witch
waves her bent hands
muttering —
ease and settle,
all troubles and woes

"let us go now" is a pleasure to read with its opening tanka's reference to a Yeats' poem:

my heart
has many rooms
and over one doorway
is written '*Let us go now*
to Innisfree'*

* *W. B. Yeats*

McCall's effort to memorise, recall, and reanimate her experiences is extraordinary. She is a poet of the ear, the eye and the heart. Her writing is as musical and layered, enjoyable after several readings. Her work is satisfying, offering created, thoughtful tanka that enlarge the reader's knowledge, and commend the poetic practice of tanka writing.

In the concluding section, "the shape of a thing," McCall writes about the near-fatal motorcycle crash she suffered, which left her with a disability, but also the way in which she copes with what life has given her:

reclaiming
the word *cripple*
for myself
I feel at home
in my flesh and bones

The final tanka brings the reader full circle, as the poet recalls that

the poem, circling
winding through my days
has no end
and no beginning
no alpha, no omega

sweetgrass and thyme builds a story from a life rather than a story of a life. The book avoids the emotionalism that nostalgia can bring, while still creating a sense of intimacy and compassion for the poet. McCall achieves in her writing a modest complexity, one that should not be undervalued or overlooked. The book makes a worthy contribution to anyone's list of tanka books.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

autumn deepens Edition 9 of the cherita

2018 is the Year of the Dog in the Chinese Zodiac. Here is my February card for you to welcome in the Year of The Dog on 16 February 2018:

<http://www.ojolie.com/cards/pickup/d99ce97f5e95569>

This edition of *the cherita* showcases 77 fine cherita from poets who hail from UK, USA, Australia, Singapore, India, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Lithuania, Sri Lanka, Poland and Croatia. Four cherita terbalik or inverted cherita are featured along with two collaborative cherita.

Larry Kimmel very kindly reminded me recently that many moons ago in an email to him, I coined the name for the inverted cherita, using the Malay word *terbalik*, which means reversal or upside down. I can't thank him enough for recalling that old email of mine.

The cherita terbalik [pronounced chair-rita tur-bar-lake] can be written with stanzas of [3-2-1], [2-1-3], [1-3-2],[2-3-1] and [3-1-2] and with up to 3 partners. I hope you will all try this either solo or with your writing friends and submit your best efforts to me. This edition features the 3-2-1 format. The 2-1-3 format will be featured in a forthcoming edition of *the cherita*.

So far, the response to the print and ebooks have been more encouraging than I had hoped for. Thank you all for your continuing support.

All the best of this new year to you,

ai li

editor, *the cherita*
www.thecherita.com

'25 Science Fiction Tanka and Kyoka,' Published by ATPO

Short-form science fiction poetry is largely uncharted space. Even in the universe of short poems, science fiction haiku — known as scifaiku — have received more attention than science fiction tanka. Therefore, *Atlas Poetica* is pleased to announce its latest special feature, focussing on speculative fiction tanka and kyoka. Edited by Julie Bloss Kelsey and Susan Burch, it brings twenty-five short poems, one each by twenty-five poets, to print for your reading enjoyment.

Sample Poems

Mel Goldberg

I move toward
new galaxies
shedding old words
like pieces of clothing
that I no longer need

Randy Brooks

folds of skin
open
a whale's eye
I have no names
for these constellations

J. Bergmann

fifty years later
revisiting our honeymoon
on Enceladus
the exploded fragments
of her ice sled still glitter

Visit http://atlaspoetica.org/?page_id=136
to read '25 Science Fiction Tanka and Kyoka' for
free.

Contributors:

Mel Goldberg, Patricia Prime, Marilyn
Humbert, Lisa Timpf, Michael H. Lester, Joy
McCall, Randy Brooks, Patricia Larash, Carol
Raisfeld, Norman Darlington, mavidson, F. J.
Bergmann, Samantha Sirimanne Hyde, Aalix
Roake, Joanne Morcom, Autumn Noelle Hall,
Joe Witt, Charles Harmon, Joshua Gage, D. A.
Xiaolin Spires, Marietta McGregor, Jennifer
Hambrick, Lorne Henry, Elizabeth Moura,
LeRoy Gorman

About *Atlas Poetica's* Special Features:

Atlas Poetica is an international tanka
journal that publishes tanka literature in many
languages. The 'Special Features' are open to
Guest Editors to address a variety of topics in
tanka literature today. Anyone interested in being
a Guest Editor for a Special Feature at the Atlas
Poetica website will find guidelines at [http://
atlaspoetica.org/?page_id=136](http://atlaspoetica.org/?page_id=136) Special
Features, below the Atlas moth that is the
symbol of the journal.

Those interested in being a Guest Editor
should read the Special Features to familiarize
themselves with the scope and format of the
project. Atlas Poetica's Special Features are
published on an irregular schedule.

Keibooks Announces *Side by Side, tanka pairs* by Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

Joy McCall and Larry Kimmel's tanka
collection, *Side by Side*, brings together two lives,
two places, two poets' voices who give us two
ways of seeing. Side by side and yet the poems
flow one into the other, creating a beautiful
confluence, like the place where two rivers meet.
A confluence from which something important
emerges — a merging of poetic vision that blends
musical clarity and a lush use of language.

— Lynda Monahan, author of *a slow dance in
the flames, what my body knows, and verge*

in the still
of the midnight koi pond,
the shadow wing
of a luna moth
brushes the moon

the ghost fish
rises to the bait
swallows
a handful of stars
and the edge of the moon

I suggest you read these fine poems slowly, a
sip at a time the way you would a fine whiskey.
Notice how the voices of the poets blend, become
one until the reader pays no attention at all to
whether the "author" of a particular tanka is
Kimmel or McCall, two poets whose paths must
have crossed decades ago when they both lived in
Amherst, Massachusetts. Tanka brought them
together a few years ago when they were a lot
older and a little wiser, both of them tempered by
life. This collection is the result. Enjoy.

—Tom Sexton, former Poet Laureate of
Alaska; author of *I think Again of Those Ancient
Chinese Poets*, and *For the Sake of the Light*, and *A
Ladder of Crane*.

In *Side by Side*, Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall invite the reader into their shared poetic world of crumbling gravestones and bison on cave walls, pagans and feral poets, fireflies and dark ravens. And that's just mentioning a few of the many riveting scenes and encounters found within these pages. *Side by Side* is strewn with gems, offering beautifully crafted responsive tanka pairs by two of the most exciting voices of the form. A privilege, not to mention pleasure, to read!

—Caroline Skanne, editor of *hedgerow : a journal of small poems*

Side by Side, tanka pairs

by Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

Keibooks, 2018

ISBN-13: 978-1979097635 (pp 119)

ISBN-10: 1979097631

Also available for Kindle.

\$13.00 USD (print) or \$5.00 USD (Kindle)

Available at many online retailers or through your local bookstore.

Songs of the Winter Sea by an`ya Set to Music by Richard St. Clair

Richard St. Clair, poet and composer and frequent contributor to Keibooks, has recently set 11 of an`ya's tanka to music for soprano and piano accompaniment, entitled "Songs of the Winter Sea." The music of each song is lovingly tailored to fit the varied and striking images of an`ya's poems. This music can be heard on YouTube at the following address:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8i04DYR9XWM&feature=youtu.be>>

Click on "more" to read and follow along with the words.

Call for Submissions: *Stacking Stones*, short tanka sequences

Submission address: Keibooks at gmail dot com — include subject line "Stacking Stones sub : [your name]"

Keibooks will publish an anthology of short tanka sequences ranging in length from 2-13 tanka, or equivalent, edited by M. Kei. Wilsonian sequences that mix tanka with other forms, including tanka prose, are acceptable, as long as at least 50% of the content is tanka. Collaborative works by multiple authors are acceptable.

Tanka have been composed in sequences since the earliest day. Certain sequences, such as the 100 poem sequence, or the 1000 poem sequence, are well known. In English, numerous variations of short tanka sequences are published in most journals. Of these, the tanka pentptych, made up of five tanka in sequence, is probably the best known, but tanka pairs, triptychs, and other lengths are published as well. Occasionally, sequences in the form of circles, crosses, or other shapes are published, but these are rare. All kinds of tanka sequences, including tan renga, are welcome.

POETS: Poets are invited to submit up to 40 new or socially published poems. 'Socially published' works include poems that have appeared on Twitter or other social media, a personal blog site, or similar location. Poems which have appeared in edited websites, journals, anthologies, or other curated media are ineligible. Poems that have been socially published must be accompanied by a note explaining their previous appearance.

Note: '40' refers to the number of tanka or equivalent. In other words, a submission can be made up of multiple short sequences, with the maximum total verses being 40. A paragraph of prose counts as a 'verse' for purposes of counting.

Submitting to the anthology certifies that the submitter is the holder of the copyright or the authorized representative of the copyright holder. In the case of multiple authors, the submitters must include a statement that they are the authorized representative of the collaborators. That representative will be responsible for communicating with their writing partners about all relevant matters.

BIOGRAPHY: Include a short biography written in the third person as well as the country of the sequence, or your home country, whichever is relevant. Submissions that lack biographies may be rejected.

FORM: We are seeking tanka, waka, kyoka, gogyoshi/gogyohka, and related forms. Generally speaking, each tanka in a sequence must be able to stand on its own, and is our preferred form, but we will consider sequences that use tanka as a stanza within a longer poem.

STYLE: We are open to all creative styles that make effective use of the tanka form and present material that engages the human heart. We especially value contributions from poets that show freshness and creativity, but we welcome poets that have mastered classical forms as well. Strong language and topics are acceptable, but works that are hateful, pornographic, or just plain vile will not be published.

TRANSLATION: All poems must be submitted in English, but we will consider poems written in other languages if an English translation is provided. Correspondence for the anthology will be in English. All translators must be identified and the poet certifies that they have the translator's permission to publish if selected. Translators will receive a byline.

PAYMENT: We regret that the only payment for inclusion in this anthology is publication.

RIGHTS: We require one-time world rights, including print, ebook, audiobook, or any other means by which the anthology as a whole can be

published, and the right to publish any poem as part of the publicity material or promotion for the anthology. All other rights remain with the author. No simultaneous submissions. We require exclusive rights from the time submitted until 90 days after publication, after which you are free to submit elsewhere. If your poem appears in print in our anthology for the first time and is subsequently reprinted elsewhere, we request an acknowledgment for subsequent publications.

MANUSCRIPTS: Email submissions only. Please use a large, plain font. No unsolicited attachments. If your submission requires a non-Latin alphabet, please send the English translation and let us know what other language(s) are available. All submissions must be sent as plain text in the body of the email. If the item requires special formatting, please include an explanation. If we are interested, we will request an attachment and give directions for how we would like to receive it.

No snail mail submissions are accepted. All submissions, including email, must include legal name, pen name (if any), postal address, telephone number, email address, and alternative email address (if you have one). Please set your spam filters/permission levels to allow our response. If we cannot contact you, your poems will be rejected.

DEADLINE May 31, 2018

PUBLICATION: Summer, 2018

RESPONSE TIME: Rejections will generally be within 4-8 weeks. Acceptances may take longer.

We **STRONGLY** recommend joining Keibooks-Announce at: GoogleGroups.com to receive updates about the project. You can also check the blog on our website.

25 Rhyming Kyoka: Call for Submissions

The Special Features section of the *Atlas Poetica* web site is seeking submissions for a collection of '25 Rhyming Kyoka' to be edited by Michael H. Lester. This collection will be published on the AtlasPoetica.org website.

Email address for submissions: mhlester45 (at) gmail (dot) com with the subject line: 25 Rhyming Kyoka.

Rather than try to explain how kyoka differs from tanka, I refer you to M. Kei's blog post on June 6, 2006, at: <http://kujakupoet.blogspot.com/2006/06/kyoka_06.html> for an illuminating discussion.

Feel free to experiment. I will be looking for well-written kyoka that contain rhymes or slant (almost) rhymes that do not call attention to themselves, but rather seem natural and unforced. The kyoka may be humorous or serious, light or dark, and may contain any subject matter that meets the general submission guidelines, which you should read thoroughly.

Here is a chance to express yourself freely—to untether yourself from the *mannered tanka* form and let your creativity take you to places you may have heretofore feared to tread.

Submissions: Poets are invited to send up to ten poems each, but only one poem may be chosen from each poet, in keeping with the theme and format of previous 25 poem Special Features on the *Atlas Poetica* website. We seek original poems; however, we will also consider kyoka previously published on personal social media accounts, as long as the poet provides publication information. We are not accepting tanka prose, or poetry that has been published in journals, books, or other collaborative websites prior to being submitted to the 25 Rhyming Kyoka Special Feature.

As indicated above, the general *Atlas Poetica* guidelines apply; therefore, poets must be age 16 or older. Poems should be contained in the body of an email. Please query before sending attachments. To see the full list of guidelines, as well as Special Features from the past, go to the main web page.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting to 25 Rhyming Kyoka is May 31, 2018. The planned publication date is summer 2018. Special Features are published on an irregular schedule.

I look forward to your submissions!

Best wishes,
Michael

Cirrus 9 Published

Dear fella and fellow tanka poets, anthologists and editors,

We are pleased to announce that the 9th issue of *Cirrus, tankas de nos jours* has been posted. Although most of you don't speak French, we hope you can enjoy the visuals as much as do our contributors.

http://www.cirrustanka.com/issues/9_Cirrus_printemps_2018.pdf

Wishing you all many happy tomorrows,
Maxianne
for the *Cirrus* team

maxib50@yahoo.ca

Educational Use Notice

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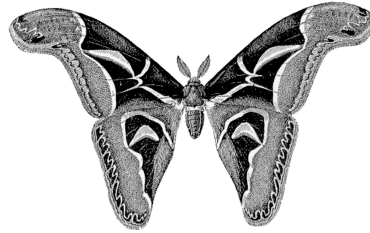
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Atlas Poetica
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Perryville, MD 21903
AtlasPoetica.org

Editorial Biography

M. Kei is the editor of *Atlas Poetica* and was the editor-in-chief of *Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka*. He is a tall ship sailor in real life and has published nautical novels featuring a gay protagonist, *Pirates of the Narrow Seas*. His most recent poetry collection is *January, A Tanka Diary*.



Our 'butterfly' is actually an Atlas moth (*Attacus atlas*), the largest butterfly / moth in the world. It comes from the tropical regions of Asia. Image from the 1921 *Les insectes agricoles d'époque*.

Publications by Keibooks

New

Side by Side, tanka pairs, Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

Forthcoming

Stacking Stones, short tanka sequences
[summer 2018]

Anthologies

Neon Graffiti : Tanka of Urban Life

Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology (Vols. 1–7)

Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka (Vol. 4)

Five Pearls (Vols. 1–2) : Short Masterpieces of the Heart

Tanka Collections

Black Genji and Other Contemporary Tanka,
by Matsukaze

October Blues and Other Contemporary Tanka,
by Matsukaze

Warp and Weft, Tanka Threads, by Debbie Strange

flowers to the torch : American Tanka Prose, by peter fiore

Tanka Left Behind 1968 : Tanka from the Notebooks of Sanford Goldstein, by Sanford Goldstein
Tanka Left Behind : Tanka from the Notebooks of Sanford Goldstein, by Sanford Goldstein
This Short Life, Minimalist Tanka, by Sanford Goldstein

Tanka Collections by Joy McCall

on the cusp encore, a year of tanka, by Joy McCall
fieldgates, tanka sequences, by Joy McCall
on the cusp, a year of tanka, by Joy McCall
rising mist, fieldstones, by Joy McCall
hedgerows, tanka pentptychs, by Joy McCall
circling smoke, scattered bones, by Joy McCall

Journals

Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka

Poetry Collections by M. Kei

January, A Tanka Diary

Slow Motion : The Log of a Chesapeake Bay Skipjack
tanka and short forms

Heron Sea : Short Poems of the Chesapeake Bay
tanka and short forms

Novels by M. Kei

Pirates of the Narrow Seas 1 : The Sallee Rovers
Pirates of the Narrow Seas 2 : Men of Honor
Pirates of the Narrow Seas 3 : Iron Men
Pirates of the Narrow Seas 4 : Heart of Oak

Man in the Crescent Moon : A Pirates of the Narrow Seas Adventure

The Sea Leopard : A Pirates of the Narrow Seas Adventure

Fire Dragon