

ATLAS POETICA

A Journal of World Tanka

Number 25

M. Kei, editor
toki, editorial Assistant

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A Journal of World Tanka

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 We do not publish haiku, except as incidental to a tanka collage or other mixed form work.

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

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

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are published on an occasional basis.

In response to ‘Wet and Dry : Lucille Nixon, Georgia O’Keefe, and Masaoka Shiki on Shasei’ by M. Kei, published in *Atlas Poetica* 14 [Spring 2014], now online at <http://atlaspoetica.org/?page_id=705>.

“Wet and Dry” is a good conclusion of the main facts and aspects of “dry” writing. It contains many basic and important points. But it should also be mentioned Shiki’s *shasei* concept of “dry” writing was not the only reaction to the waka in crisis. Ancient waka poets were writing about landscapes they only knew from paintings, using phrases with certain meanings, or words that evoked certain associations. In that way the waka must have seemed artificial and antiquated in comparison to contemporary Western poetry. In 1894 Yosano Hiroshi, known as Tekkan, published a strongly worded article encouraging the reform of traditional Japanese waka. In the following years he popularized a masculine, romantic, and sometimes nationalistic tanka style.

Shiki as well as Tekkan opened the tanka for all topics of common life. For me both styles make a sketch from life and are realistic but in different ways. Shiki’s poems tend to be more objective like an observation of his environment. When I read his tanka in translation (*Songs from a Bamboo Village*) they did not really move me. There are many good ones but few great, some seem too haiku like. The masculine and romantic style of Tekkan and his disciples is more an expression of the author’s true interior. Although Yosano Akiko sometimes gets too mysterious and enigmatic, I prefer the wet writing. For me a certain tension between the author’s interior and outer world is essential for tanka.

As you mentioned, we can never write really objectively. Objectivity in poetry is an illusion. The un-objectivity even starts with what we decide to write about. Imagine a walk on the beach and all the things you can find there:

sailboats, people having fun, footsteps in the sand, sandcastles being washed away by the waves, clamshells, wind, and sea gulls. All these things are objectively there but we subjectively decide to write about the one or two that move us.

However the understanding of “wet” and “dry” is essential. But for Western tanka I would not use such terms as *shasei*, *miyabi*, *aware*, and *yūgen*. I try to avoid Japanese terms whenever I talk about Western tanka as there is a difference between modern Japanese tanka and the Western interpretation of tanka. We have languages being very different from Japanese and also a different cultural background. We have to find our own way to adapt the tanka to our own culture.

Tony Boehle
Germany

International Tanka

Atlas Poetica is a journal of world tanka, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the pages of this issue. Poets from eighteen countries—plus another planet—contribute tanka poetry of place and diverse viewpoints.

We are lucky to have translation to/from French, German, Dutch, Slovenian, Romanian, Japanese, and Sinhalese in this issue. Although we have presented European languages and Japanese before, Sinhalese is a new and notable addition. Malintha Perera of Sri Lanka makes her tanka debut in our pages with a generous selection of sequences and individual tanka. Readers will enjoy a new and romantic voice in tanka.

The international focus is especially obvious in the non-fiction section where Maxianne Berger discusses the challenges and intricacies of a tri-lingual tanka translation project. Getting the Japanese and non-language symbols to appear correctly in the article required collaboration, but the result is worth it.

The tradition of translation and education is kept up by Ryoh Honda. He provides translation from and responses to the work of Bokusui, a contemporary of Shiki. This might be the first time Bokusui's work has appeared in English translation. It is a real pity how few of the modern tanka poets have been translated, so we are pleased to publish it. In addition, Honda includes translations of ryuka, the form that is sometimes called the "Okinawan tanka."

Honda drives the challenge of translation even further with "The lovely silence of peace" [*the lovely silence of peace*]. Using pictograms in place of letters, his paean to peace is a Wilsonian sequence in which ryuka and tanka alternate. Although he never specifically mentions religion in the sequence, the use of religious symbols throughout the poem gives us to understand that he is not talking about a generic peace, but is making a heartfelt plea for religious peace and tolerance around the world.

Calligrams are not common in tanka, but this issue, Peter Fiore gives us a calligramic tanka

prose. Usually tanka are presented flush left (as is preferred in this journal), but Fiore's creative use of space creates an impact that plain formatting would not. Often I find that formatting is a gimmick to create structure within an otherwise weak poem, but that is not the case here. Rendered on its own, Fiore's tanka would retain its structure. If that's so, then what is the point of doing it in the first place? Our interview with *Moongarlic* e-zine by Larry Kimmel addresses the subject of calligrams, so I'll leave it for the curious to read the article. If you're still in doubt, take a look at BOOM, which appears in Maxianne Berger's article. Experimentation with visual expression is an integral part of modern poetry, and tanka is no exception.

A number of collaborative pieces appear in this issue as poets take advantage of electronic media to facilitate communication, but still other collaborations are made by sitting down face to face in the pub, or perhaps over the breakfast table. Collaboration extends even further; readers of *Atlas Poetica* have often been inspired to creative efforts of their own. Tony Boehle writes a letter to the editor about 'Wet and Dry : Lucille Nixon, Georgia O'Keefe, and Masaoka Shiki on Shasei' in response to an article that first appeared in the journal and now online; and Charles Tarlton composes ekphrastic tanka prose in response to Anselm Kiefer's *Velimir Chlebnikov*.

One of my personal measures of the excellence of a tanka is this: does it inspire me to create something of my own? I hope that the latest issue of ATPO will inspire you.

~K~

M. Kei

Editor, Atlas Poetica

Grand Erg Oriental (Eastern Sand Sea) in Algeria.

Cover Image courtesy of Earth Observatory, NASA.
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/ISSArt/Images/10124_lrg.jpg>

Detective

Alexis Rotella

The young bank manager, as soon as I utter the words “elder abuse,” is on the case. He’s tracking down the two tellers that might have remembered my blind aunt with the walker, even though it was a month since the money was drawn, he’s questioning them, do they remember who was with her, what they looked liked. He’s comparing her signature to the one on the latest checks. His trainee, just arrived from Ann Arbor, says he too knows the horrors of dementia. He has a grandmother who just turned ninety and mean who was waiting for Publishers Clearing House to bring her roses and a ten million dollar check.

I look at these two young men, probably in their early thirties, and my faith in the human race is restored. When I thank the bank manager and tell him he’s a good detective, he says “thank you” and means it.

Watching a movie
in real life
one in which
I do not
play the lead

~United States

Alexis is a poet and digital artist who practices acupuncture in Arnold, Maryland.

Genie Nakano has an MFA in Dance from UCLA. She performs, choreographs dance and teaches Gentle Yoga, Meditation, and Tanoshii Tanka at the Japanese Cultural Center in Gardena, CA. She was a journalist for the Gardena Valley Newspaper before she discovered tanka and haibun and was hooked.

Amelia Fielden published 6 volumes of original English tanka, including Light On Water (2010). She has collaborated with Kathy Kituai, and Saeko Ogi, to produce 4 collections of responsive tanka, including the bilingual Word Flowers (2011). Amelia has also published 17 books of Japanese poetry in translation.

Pouring Out Tears

Genie Nakano & Amelia Fielden

phone conversation
on a spring afternoon
we listen
to my backyard wind-chimes,
a stranger and I

*he does not know
who I am, only that
the music
played by the orchestra
is pleasing us both*

let’s go
alchemistic, turn
dark corners
dig through trash cans
searching for gold

*silver threads
in his golden plume
of a tail—
the least of my concerns
when I’m paying the vet’s bill*

his brown eyes
see right through me
as he sniffs
out all my love,
this little rescue dog

*“rescue yourself”
urge friends and family
while forty years
of loving partnership
smash on dementia’s shore*

if I lose my memory
walk me through
our home,
pick up all the laughter,
pour out all the tears

~United States / Australia

Honey Music

Andrew Howe & Marilyn Humbert

lashed backs
pile malachite dust . . .
in darkness
a never ending quota
of green healing treasure

*they arrived
in silver torch-ships
pleading friendship—
the slave's mask slips
and he gasps for clean air*

washed hands
conduct honey music—
scars remember
a sunset promise
shattered by the break-of-day

*shards of sun
blinds our eyes—
self-determination
trampled
beneath shuffling jackboots*

pyre tears
crisscross children's faces
rising
a phoenix chorus
paint images of freedom

~*Malachite dust mines planet Algea*

Andrew Howe is an Australian naval officer who lives in NSW. His interests include military history, geology, and reading and writing tanka. His tanka have been published in Atlas Poetica, Bright Stars, Ribbons, The Tanka Journal, The Bamboo Hut and others.

Marilyn Humbert lives in the Northern suburbs of Sydney, NSW, surrounded by bush. Her pastimes include writing free verse, tanka, haiku and related genre. Her tanka and haiku can be found in Australian and overseas journals and anthologies. Some of her free verse poems have been published and awarded prizes in competitions. She is the leader of the Bottlebrush tanka group and a member of Tanka Huddle and Bowerbird.

shadows

Andy McCall & Joy McCall

*she goes out
into the cold night
watching the pale moon
he stays home,
waiting, waiting*

shadows fall
on the silent ground
footsteps
echo in the dark—
who walks with us?

*ancestors
the blacksmiths
coming to the forge
to make nails and axes
for the Lord of the Manor*

sounds
of metal on metal
crafted
by a gifted hand
it takes shape

*hammers
ringing on the anvil
the heavy horse
stands waiting
restless, shifting*

the horse is shod
he ploughs the fields
from dawn till dusk
the furrows lie
deep and true

~*Norwich, England*

Andy McCall

a bad crash
between a prison van
and a cement truck
the police are searching
for four hardened criminals

~Norwich, England

Andy and Joy McCall live in Norwich, England, where they were both born, in an area called Broadland because of the many 'broads'—tiny lakes which resulted from prehistoric digging of peat for homes and fires.

Norwich (rhymes with porridge) is a small ancient city with a dark history. It has two cathedrals, a castle, 365 pubs and 52 churches, some in ruins. It sits near the top of UK lists for drink and drugs and crime and poverty and school truancy, and tattoo parlours. It also is the UNESCO City of Literature because of the number of libraries and book shops, and published authors and poets.

Stonehenge

Autumn Noelle Hall

Can we ever help **the impressions** we are making, those intangibles, like the holocrine secretions **where our hands once touched** canvas, their oils darkening a painting over time? For all care taken, **this monolith** of manners and pleasantries, there lies beneath a hidden truth, **pulling us back once more**; half buried, it remains wholly immovable: Love returns us **to where we were left for lost** so that we might find our way home.

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

Autumn Noelle Hall

again, he shows me
the character of wind . . . *
I am a bug
sheltering in the cave
of his patience

**the kanji for wind depicts an insect radical within a cave*

steel-cabled straps
wire mesh and zipper locks
RFID block—
who knew this much paranoia
could fit into one purse?

quipping
that no one ever died from
reading fiction
tell that to the folks
who read the bible, she says

the sign says
invisible dog fence
I know better
but I continue to look
for the invisible dog

no need to share
his-n-hers closets
his-n-hers sinks
no wonder they ended up
in his-n-hers houses

no gift
for the brother who has
everything
I offer him
apologies

cut off the news
yet the world still intrudes
little horrors
caught in the mousetrap
what's left of a leg

smarter
about fascism
these days
high tech bread and circuses
iphones in every pocket

magpie-picked
the raw red scab of it
truth
we are all mad-dash squirrels
on the asphalt of this world

~Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, USA

For Autumn Noelle Hall, tanka holds memory, emotion, people and places. Like her cabin in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, it is home to husband, daughters, wild birds, waterfalls, an Australian shepherd and the deer he trails, bears and mountain lions and their tracks through the snow. But tanka is also a form of reckoning, a way to truly see and attempt to make sense of the world. Tanka is Autumn's lens on life.

Barry Dempster lives in Ontario, Canada. He is the author of fifteen collections of poetry, two volumes of short stories, two novels, and a children's book.

Joy McCall lives in Norfolk, a place full of ghosts. She is trying to find her way through the later suffering that comes with paraplegia. Poetry and love are the only answers she has found, so far.

the knot

Barry Dempster & Joy McCall

I feel less afraid than I used to.
In fact some days I can feel the knot being
slipped, almost a great relief.

*sometimes
there's a low voice
the priest
beginning the prayers
while the reaper waits*

Oh, there are still moments when I fear that
the pain will insist on sticking around until the
very last minute, but so be even that.

There is no real choice, just two directions
leading to the same place.

I flip a coin and find that I suddenly know
the answer while the coin is mid-air.

*never sure
if heads or tails
is the best
darkness or light
dead or alive*

The trick, of course, is not then letting the
conscious mind argue you out of it.

All we really want is to freeze the moment
and never let it go.

Truth is, it's gone before we've even thought
it.

*always
trying to grasp
the elusive dream
—it's too quick
for my slow hands*

Dear friend. I feel sure that we'll ultimately
end up in the same place.

It will be so good to finally get to hug you.

*smiling—
seeing two pale spirits
moving to hug
going right through
and out the other side*

*how many bits
of each other will catch
and cling
and stay, stuck inside
as we wander on?*

~Canada / Norwich, England

Bob Lucky

one bar
of chocolate
left —
the question of love
unspoken

one hip
replacement
leads
to another
dance

staring hard
into the mirror —
Monday mornings
I think there should be
something more to life

Valentine's Day
the bitter chocolate truffles
half off —
always the question
of how much is too much

mosquitoes
gather in the dusk
the buzz
of long-tail boats
ferrying people home

dividing
the nuts into two piles
afternoon lull
the waitress talks
to a sleeping cat

pit smoke
from the BBQ joint —
the conversation
turns from brisket
to cataract surgery

the FBI
rejects my wife's
fingerprints —
I keep telling her
she's not the woman I married

racism
isn't black and white
I try to explain
to a group of students
why I can't say *nigger*

daily photo
of the baby
on Facebook —
Philip Larkin and Freud
would have fun with this

in the south
along a highway
church after church
trying to sell me
a plot in paradise

~Jubail, Saudi Arabia

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

Off the Beaten Path

C. W. Carlson

birds gather on wires
before flying south
my phone does not ring
dad's tractor stands idle
over a newly plowed field

~*West Kansas, USA*

a young lady spoke
in broken English
enchanted
her gestures were more effective
than my gibberish

~*Annery, France*

we drank wine
and ate escargot for the first time
rustic Swiss charm
my wife's dress was the color
of the turquoise river, Aare

~*Thun, Switzerland*

a lamplighter fires
the corner gaslight
neon shop signs flicker
my terrace was ablaze
in throbbing red light

~*Lourmarin, France*

a quaint village
has vine-covered rock houses
fairytale charm
a horse-drawn cart clattered
on cobbles in front of the patisseries

~*Lourmarin, France*

flower-lined canals of Annery
is the "Little Venice" of France
what else
patisseries, cheese, good wine
and a loving woman

~*Annery, France*

lyrics, drenched in blue,
drift through the palm tree
a lover lost sea *fado*
crusty old fishermen
check seaworthiness of their boats

~*Portuguese coastal village, Portugal*

black ships drift across
sun-drenched eyelids
far at sea
no sight of an albatross
or smell of a port

~*Florida, USA*

flying and crawling critters
were eating my sandwich
camping with dad
flashlights were on
to ward off the demons

~*West Texas, USA*

Beached boats lie on their sides
waiting for incoming tide
fishermen repair caulking
the market special
was squid pizza

~*Portuguese coastal village, Portugal*

rods of lights
jab pellucid pools
cottonwood canopy
her beauty was concealed
by oversized sunglasses

~West Texas, USA

fishermen mend nets
in the evening breeze
gossamer voices
a bouquet from the sea
enters my room

~Portuguese coastal village, Portugal

Out to Sea

C. W. Carlson

a black schooner drifts
across sun-drenched eyelids
just off the Isle of Capri
flying fish skirr
over my sloshing ketch

a white albatross
glided into the sun
high noon
a black albatross hovered
on my eyelids

I hear my heart's palpitation
in the planked hull
lost at sea
a ship drifts across
sun soaked eyelids

~Olathe, Kansas, USA

Mr. Carlson is a retired aerospace engineer. He resides in Olathe, Kansas, where he has been trying his hand at many forms of poetry. Currently, he is using tanka, first in traditional style to variations of the classical tanka.

Die Lehre Vom Krieg or Tre Odi Navali (1)

Anselm Kiefer's *Velimir Chlebnikov* at
MassMoCA (2015)

Charles D. Tarlton

What is Anselm Kiefer's "*Velimir Chlebnikov*?"

It is not the planets' fault that we do not hear them. The wheel of births is in no way at fault because our hearing cannot distinguish the sound it makes, the metallic whoosh of its vanes. — Chlebnikov (2)

1

You walk into this separate, confining space where thirty paintings hang on two walls; each painting is different from the others to a degree, but similar as well, like individual swells and the waves in the sea at sea. Long broken lines of sea-froth, the tumbling surf, residue of strong winds, salt-seas the color of red clay, muck spread with a trowel. And in darkness from the depths, the sinking boats, (still lifes) drift up and down.

jagged imagery
of wild, frothy, salted seas
are boiling over
drunken boats, rust, sea bottoms
made from straw and mud pies

2

Each painting, first alone and then in combination with the rest, stands like a cut-facet on a precious stone, The *Velimir Chlebnikov*, is not crystal, but rather lead and dust, mud and clay, black and white paint spread barely differently on the thirty adjoining canvases. They make a thing you take in all at once and only then discern the details. As it is before the statue of a famous General on his horse in battle, how the eye lingers on a horse's hoof or the General's boots

as parts of some truculent civic statue in a park
—so each picture is an element.

now the seas are red
and in one terrible moment
the sky turns yellow
but every rough scraping conspires
to make an oceanography

standing close to any
of these canvases, the eye's fingers
scratch each impasto ridge
periphery'd parts and whole
both walls emerge a single work

3

You can see the whole thing made up entirely
of shards and segments. All around you, up and
down, from floor to ceiling and even going on
behind you. You can walk into it. "But each
painting is different," someone says, and I say
only in the way each blue jay is from some other
in a flock or one maple leaf from all the rest.

Night nests in dark souls
at the bottom of the sea
scatters shouts of 'Burn!' (3)
here misshapen submarines
diving, sunk, or surfacing

we see collected
in the refuse of oceans
like suspended curses
the Russian's rebellious poetry
slathered, lamellate and scratched

sink into the room
feel the carousels of art
rotate around you
towers slowly dissolving
in a music of pure waste

Reflections on Anselm Kiefer's "*Velimir
Chlebnikov*"

*But no description can give any idea of the
strangeness, splendor, and, really, the sublimity, of the
sight. Its great size—for it must have been from two to
three miles in circumference, and several hundred feet in
height—its slow motion, as its base rose and sank in the
water, and its high points nodded against the clouds; the
dashing of the waves upon it, which, breaking high with
foam, lined its base with a white crust; and the thundering
sound of the cracking of the mass, and the breaking and
tumbling down of huge pieces; together with its nearness
and approach, which added a slight element of fear—all
combined to give to it the character of true sublimity.*

—Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the
Mast*

1

You sense immediately that you are not in the
conventional gallery situation. Of course, you
could stroll around, pause before and scrutinize
each individual painting, except that you cannot
see the same detail in those higher up as in those
at eye level. Trying later to recall them separately,
you accept that they are all as alike as broken
conch shells on a beach.

language playing tricks
holds up the fingers of its hand
notice how unique
but equally the same as
any other clenched fist

your gaze mixes them
fastens on the general type
oceans do not rest
as the eye races from one
wave to another so alike

conceive a film
of the tossing seas, each frame
barely different
but creating the illusion
of heaving swells, frothy surf

The paintings, each so big and heavy, so thick with an impasto like Portland cement and gravel shoveled on, you know none were ever meant to decorate a mantel. The paintings are roughly six feet by ten feet, arranged in three rows of five each, one just above the other. There is little or no space between them, like bricks in a wall.

count scattered stones
where once walls ran under the trees
it was all fields once
cleared and plowed for the planting
but the wheat and corn have gone

what happened to you?
were you shipwrecked in the straits?
and all this rubble
piled up, spread on, and chipped away
—how heavily it weighs

I was practicing
trying to get it everything right
making, failing, then
going at it again, and again
why would he stop at thirty?

The overall effect of these two walls is less a matter of specific frothy waves, submarines and minesweepers, this stick or that twig, the gloves and wires, or scrawled messages, than it is a sense of being surrounded, submerged, swamped by the sheer immensity. How one might feel (or fear) drowning.

it is symmetrical
unless there are more somewhere
in his gray foundries
all the same, five by three by two
adds up to more than thirty

wandering within
tall structures of sheeted glass
imagining how
articulated and hinged things
might actually function

they call to crisscross
Sunday puzzles all filled in
word upon word aloud
in each and every direction
circling above the gravestones

The waves, the submarines, the seas and skies of black and orange repeat themselves, with the inarticulate variation natural to the quickly scanning eye. Making it a blur! Thirty paintings constitute a single whole where each requires the others in an endless dialectic of mutual reference and definition.

fading memory
lets the eye move to and fro
or upwards and down
runs each canvas with the other
seen, and as soon forgotten

what in a sculpture
makes the plastic image
reach out to you
inviting you to walk around
check it from every angle?

what defines painting
in its flatness? Here we see
up and down, front and back
and cannot take it all in
from the single point of view

Further Remarks on Anselm Kiefer's "*Velimir Chlebnikov*"

But we should also not forget the difference between what first motivated me and the work that is the result.

—Anselm Kiefer, in an interview.

First Try

In these paintings the waves are like rows of cut corn stalks left all winter in the snow, or maybe like ruined and abandoned vineyards. A field turned duly by the plow and left under the snow, certainly out of mind. Or at a stretch, it

could signify the rows of barbed wire from trench warfare both sides of the Somme or, later, in the camps.

are we to assume
he just started where he was
“I had no initial plan” (4)
and thrashed about, tossing paint
throwing handfuls of dry dust?

it was something dead?
what more than our memory
“we come from the sea” (5)
makes painted and impasto waters
float a leaden ship in them?

the seas come in rows
we say —waves —forgetting how light
and sound, gravity
vibrates, they say it undulates
(*unda*) waves, in its waviness

Second Effort

He obliterates the difference between painting and sculpture. On each canvas the rough compass rose of a relief map of paint (poured and brushed on), plastered-on mud and clay, laid on thick to look (in its white ruffled-ness) like a flat statue of the froth on waves at sea or breaking on the shore. The waves piling in, like lines of verse, the scrapings, mountings of boats and books, lead and dirt, thick in three dimensions, bolted to the frame from behind. Cracked and peeling, aged in a hot sun, soaked in the rain. Monumental means big, of course, but also tribute and gravestone.

first, you smear it on
standing triumphantly back
hose down the thrown dust!
sluiced in layers of meaning
wiggling this, that, and the other

nothing is ever
“the sculpture it was meant to be” (6)
pour something here, dust
it there, leave your intentions
so far behind. Who knows now?

see him stand calmly by
as they wheel giant canvases
out in front of him
he directs a shoveling here
wetted gypsum (CaSO_4) there

Final Go

Since you cannot have everything, pick random bits and pieces, then, shards and splinters, form them to intention. Something upside down, a sculpture in a hole in France, filled with cement, something you cannot see but only imagine until it is pulled up from its womb of dirt. A cracked surface, like the skin of an old lady, roughly and deliberately peeled back; a dried lake bed on the desert floor, baked in the sun; old roadways, and layers of paint and plaster aged in the weather, scaled and scabbed.

theories of art
“describe our ignorance” (7)
their questions trembling
surround the complexities
staking a good deal on faith

stand before panels
armed with your expectations
of what art should be
puzzled by the randomness
an orange swell, a glove stuck on

you’re afraid the words
scrawled above the horizon
might hold the secret
but they are mute, in German
“*sieg an den Dardenellen*” (8)

~*MassMoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, USA*

Notes

- (1) This image can be viewed online at: <<http://brent-ridge.blogspot.com/2014/06/mass-moca-may-2014.html>>. The whole of the exhibit can be viewed at: <<http://www.hallartfoundation.org/exhibition/anselm-kiefer/artworks/slideshow>>.
- (2) Chlebnikov, *Collected Works*.
- (3) *Ibid*.

- (4) Anselm Kiefer, remarks from the film, *Over Your Cities
Grass Will Grow*.
 (5) Ibid.
 (6) Ibid.
 (7) Ibid.
 (8) Transcribed from handwriting on paintings in Anselm
 Kiefer's *Velimir Chlebnikov*.

*Charles D. Tarlton is a retired university professor who writes tanka
 prose in Northampton, Massachusetts. He is interested in the long tanka
 prose and in efforts to bring tanka prose into mainstream Anglo-
 American poetry. He finds the ekphrastic use of tanka prose especially
 interesting, particularly for the different leverages provided by the prose
 and the verse.*

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

Chen-ou Liu

the wall clock
 chimes, chimes, then stops . . .
 in dim light
 the Iraq War veteran's mouth
 turns into an O shape

~*New York, USA*

his lawyer
 dissects her story
 and memories . . .
 outside the courthouse
 women chanting, *no means no*

the sky
 whitewashed by the sun
 a young woman
 yelling at unseen men
 grabs at the air

two migrants
 from countries
 an ocean apart . . .
 speaking with cracked hands
 that shape this wintry night

~*Toronto, Canada*

*I love you
 but can't be with you . . .
 in a stand
 of leafless sourwood trees
 I still hear the buzz of love*

~*Taipei, Taiwan*

my roommate
 used to sing himself to sleep
 with Chinese songs . . .
 on this sultry night
 his *O Canada* thunders

first snowy night . . .
 nostalgia
 waiting for me
 at the bottom
 of my beer pitcher

a black rope
 hanging from the oak tree
 swings back and forth
 in the winter wind . . .
 red slippers on the ground

the red light
 flashing in the cold air . . .
 I am caught
 in the rush-hour traffic
 of his anti-Muslim talk

~*Ajax, Ontario, Canada*

California Dreamin'
 in his head
 over and over . . .
 a migrant wipes tables
 in McDonald's

~*Los Angeles, USA*

Debbie Johnson

in the moonlight
black shadows appear
'neath the oak
the meaning of darkness is
a matter of our perception

dry wind blows
picking up desert sand
darkness hovers
as depression
blocks the light

a line of black ants march
across the kitchen counter
soldiers
headed towards the
mess hall

~United States

Debbie Johnson lives in Nevada, Iowa, USA, with her beagle. She is a writer, poet, and disability advocate. She has published three books, The Disability Experience, The Disability Experience II, and Debbie's Friends, a book for children about disabilities. She is disabled herself and writes as both therapy and enjoyment. Her poetry and prose have been published in numerous journals and anthologies. Tanka is her favorite form to write.

Debbie Strange

a bird gone quiet
in the tender hollow
of your throat
I miss you more than words
can say *I miss you*

~Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

basking seals
on the breakwater
steam rises
from our sleek bodies
into otherness

~Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

an ant
pushing the universe
up this hill
in a water droplet
I find my inner strength

~Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba, Canada

prairie dawn
an exaltation of larks
on barbed wire
ancestral blood ping-pong
along the gravel road home

~Rosetown, Saskatchewan, 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, is available through Keibooks, Createspace and Amazon. You are invited to visit her on Twitter @Debbie_Strange and at <debbiemstrange.blogspot.ca>.

Dimitrij Škrk

Đ. V. Rožić, Slovenian-English
Translator

ptice na žicah
preganja hladna jesen.
Podi jih na jug.
Čutim njih bolečino
in spomin gnezda v srcu.

*birds on wires
chased by cold autumn
southward
I can feel their pain
and a memory of the nest*

odsev dreves
v vodnem ogledalu
trije lokvanji;
odsev tvojega obraza
iz večnega spomina

*the lake
in a gleam of the trees
three water lilies
a reflection of your face
from my lasting memory*

lepo veduto
spokojno prazne gmajne
zmoti krik vrane
obuditev spomina
na tisti otroški Kras

*a nice panorama
of a peaceful pasture disturbed by
a cawing crow
reviving the memory of
the Kras of my childhood*

na grobu veni
ob prevrnjeni vazi
še šop krizantem;
davno je že ovenel
spomin na pokojnika

*near an upturned vase
drooping on the old tomb
the chrysanthemums
memory of the decedent
withered a long time ago*

veter odnaša
jesenska ogrinjala
s skeletov dreves;
gola opominjajo
na praznino življenja

*wind takes away
the cloaks of autumn from
the trees' skeletons
bare they warn us about
future prospects of life*

v praznino neba
zarisano obzorje —
črta ločnica
za večna potovanja
med svetlobo in temo

*the horizon is drawn
in the emptiness of the sky—
a line of separation
for the eternal journeys
between light and dark*

~Slovenia

*Dimitrij Škrk was born before 65 years in Slovenia, where he lives.
Poetry he started to write two years ago, after retiring. A very special
relationship has been developed between him and the short Japanese
forms of poetry. He takes part at international contests and has received
a number of awards and commendations, his verses published in several
languages in quite a number of countries.*

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

Still

Don Miller

I remember
a fog of anaesthesia
from a year ago
this slow unpacking
of Christmas memories

at the neighbor's
for a holiday celebration
everyone talking
in the kitchen
I listen to the fire

Christmas Eve
as luminarias burn
the warmth
of friends
gathering

the party
at friends house
on New Year's
they throw darts
while I stoke the fire

after the parties
unwrapping
the warmth
of her heart
still

~Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA

*for Judy & Richard, Kristen & Alex, Laurie & Wayne, and of course
my wife Lisa*

With Each Grain of Sand

Don Miller

it is quicker
to count by decades
to ninety
after that
one year at a time

planning
for the pilgrimage to Japan
my children say
drop us off in Hawaii
and go it alone

hiking here
in this arroyo
I fret
the sand will run out
before I make my trek

~Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA

for Sanford Goldstein

*Don Miller has been writing tanka since the early 1980s. His tanka
has been published in numerous print and on-line journals.*

coming to our senses

Don Wentworth & Joy McCall

listening closely
I don't like my own voice —
in Afghanistan
the Taliban banned
the homing pigeon

*it didn't matter
the ferrets were singing
so loud
there was no point
in conversation*

dark water
splits a dank rock
a light breeze
seduces the pine
a lone cicada waits

~United States / England

Don Wentworth is a Pittsburgh-based poet whose work reflects his interest in the revelatory nature of brief, haiku-like moments in everyday life. His poetry has appeared in Modern Haiku, bottle rockets, bear creek haiku, Pittsburgh Poetry Review and Rolling Stone, as well as a number of anthologies. His first full-length collection, Past All Traps, was published in 2011 by Six Gallery Press and was shortlisted for the Haiku Foundation's 2011 'Touchstone Distinguished Books Award.' His poem "hiding" was selected as one of "100 Notable Haiku" of 2013 by Modern Haiku Press. A second full-length book, Yield to the Willow, is now available from Six Gallery Press. Two new books, from Low Ghost and Six Gallery Press respectively, are forthcoming. For the last 26 years, he has edited the small press magazine, Lilliput Review.

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

Doug Norris

in these woods
hunters wearing orange
just because
it's the only color
they don't shoot at

frozen morning
my chemotherapy
drip by drip
the sugar maple
filling the sap bucket

their carts
angled to block
two shoppers
arguing over
one avocado

he says
he owns this place
his land
his worms in the garden
his clouds overhead

even before
the mourning dove
eyes wide open —
the rumble of a plane
departing in darkness

~Barrington, Rhode Island, USA

Doug Norris teaches ESL to adult immigrants in Rhode Island and writes freelance for a variety of publications on topics such as the arts, history, food, education and travel. He has also been published in small journals, including American Tanka, Frogpond, Contemporary Haibun Online, Haibun Today, Daily Haiga and Shamrock. His passions include fresh air, local beer and oysters.

Elizabeth Howard

feverish in the noon sun,
I see the prairie schooner
we robbed and burned
billowing across the desert,
the old dame come for vengeance

March gale —
a shindig of crazy feet
clip-clopping on the roof,
lost souls shrieking
in the crumbling chimney

a thin carpet
cannot cover the blood
spilled in the old attic —
it rises up each midnight
demanding justice

the river is calm
unlike that night of fear
it was muddy and swollen
gorged with uprooted trees . . .
and neither of us could walk on water

she reads omens in the fog . . .
the day bringing joy or pain,
but what of the straggly wisp
that wanders hither and yon
rising higher and higher?

at the peal of midnight
rain pauses
and the moon appears
a faint scepter
like the grim reaper's scythe

at his wake
everyone comments
on the sleet beating the window . . .
no one mourns
no one mentions his deeds

in local news
the boy who daydreamed in class
guilty of murder —
what if . . . the day I chastised him
and he rose up, glowering

moonlit dusk —
night crosses the road
and steps into the trees
where the red-fanged beast lurks
waiting and watching

vigilante justice —
a fetid mist rises
from the hollow tree
infamous
for its hanging limb

your alibis
once so simple and naive
have skyrocketed
no longer black and white
but star-spangled

~*United States*

*Elizabeth Howard lives in Tennessee. Her tanka have been published in
American Tanka, Lynx, Eucalypt, red lights, Mariposa, Ribbons,
Gusts, and other journals.*

August 5, 1962

Genie Nakano

“Marilyn Monroe died today.” Martha’s voice is shaking on the phone. She’s my best friend and Marilyn was her idol.

Martha patterned her voice, her walk everything after the starlet. At age thirteen Martha captures the eyes and hearts of grown men. With green eyes, flaming auburn hair, and alabaster skin, Martha is stacked. She wants to be just like Marilyn and I want to be just like Martha.

My best friend and I, we love to wear each other’s clothes. Once a week, we go to school being each other. Her tight skirts and sweaters hang on me. But I’m beginning to get the walk.

Martha has so many boyfriends—we lose track of our friendship. When she dyes that beautiful auburn hair black, I wonder why? Then she disappears.

A soft knock on my door . . . Martha walks in with twin baby boys. One named after Johnny one named after Randy. I remembered them all.

the kitten
cries for milk
no one hears it
moonlight spills
across a kitchen floor

~United States

Genie Nakano has an MFA in Dance from UCLA. She performs, choreographs dance and teaches Gentle Yoga, Meditation, and Tanoshii Tanka at the Japanese Cultural Center in Gardena, CA. She was a journalist for the Gardena Valley Newspaper before she discovered tanka and haibun and was hooked.

Circumference

Gerry Jacobson

safe and warm
inside the circle
sheltered
from the world outside
its grime . . . its greyness

I measure out my life in circles that form, that intersect, that come and go, then disappear. Circles of dancers, hearts interlocked with songs of praise, with slow movement. Our silence afterwards. Coming to stillness.

circumference
of a circle equals
 $2\pi r$
equals the length
of eleven dancers holding hands

Circles of bushwalkers anticipate the morning, wondering. The satisfaction of lunchtime. We sit on bare granite, our backs to a burnt tree, eating sardines with a twig. The tiredness of evening.

joining arms
around the *angophora*
our hearts beat
against its trunk—
together

Campfire circles where smoke swirls, eyes water. Snatches of conversation and song, a wandering minstrel I. Circles of singers. Choirs earnestly learning notes. Folk sessions with bearded bards, and ballads of the ancestors. Yogis chanting the mantras.

om vibrates
swells and grows
and fades
to the everlasting
hum of the universe

six scribblers
scribbling around
an oak table—
the scrape of their pens
the patter of rain

a candle burns
in the dark heart
of our sharing
outside there's sunshine
and squawking cockatoos

~Canberra, Australia

They came before dawn
With guns fastened to their chests
They took you away
I want you back home alive
Before this sun goes behind the hills

moose hunting
four man-boys
killing time
in the trailer
waiting for dawn

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he asks
if we are interested
he can arrange it
she'll do anything
he asks

That's enough for me. Standing, I stick the barrel of the 30-30 right into Al's crotch and, in a poor imitation of John Wayne:

"Listen, pilgrim. 'taint seemly a galoot like you should be bad-mouthin' the little lady. You best apologize for calling her them names, or I'm gonna have to blow yer nuts clean off."

Al pales, the trailer suddenly quiet. "Hey, man, that's not funny! Sorry, okay? I didn't mean nothing."

"That there's more like it, pardner." I pull the rifle from his crotch and, with a John Wayne flourish, crank the lever. A 30-30 bullet is ejected across the little trailer!

My turn to go white. My knees go weak, and I have to sit down. I am really shaken. Not just because I am mistaken about emptying the rifle. Much more terrifying is the knowledge at the core of my being:

had Al
not apologized
I know
I would have
pulled the trigger

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

A Horse Named Buttermilk

Ignatius Fay

My daughters have never seen a milkman, let alone one with a horse and wagon. Just another of my stories from the old days. The wagon never stops; the horse knows the route and maintains a slow, steady pace. The milkman, Champ, works both sides of the street, back and forth to the wagon.

morning sounds
creaking wagon
clipping hooves
clinking glass bottles
in a metal basket

Housewives leave empties on the porch. Inside the neck of one is a list of today's requests—two whole milk, one chocolate milk, one orange juice. Another holds the payment, in coins. Champ makes the switch, heads back to the wagon.

The bottles, stoppered by cardboard pull-tabs, are cold, sweating in the warm morning air.

under the cap
a thin layer of yellow
milk fat
bottles must be shaken
before opening

My daughters are grossed out. Fat in any form, especially in milk, is taboo.

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Oldest Profession

Ignatius Fay

An early casualty of long-term illness or disability is sex drive. And the absence of sex in the relationship almost invariably results in the absence of the healthy partner in pretty short order. This is certainly true of my marriage.

near death
focused on fighting
the illness
reduces me to
asexuality

In and out of the hospital repeatedly, when I am home I can barely move around or feed myself. All urges have died. After a brief period of stoicism, my wife begins to sleep around, then she moves out.

For several years, we communicate only on issues involving the kids. Over this time, I gradually become stabilized, and after twelve years, a bit of an urge resurfaces—enough to incite the occasional foray into masturbation. I share this fact with my daughter, who is ecstatic. Unexpectedly, she informs her mother, my ex-wife. This afternoon I get a call.

knowing
my financial straits
she wants
to pay for the services
of a prostitute

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Ignatius Fay

we bury
the beached whale to be stripped
naturally
then dig up the bones
to bleach in the sun

he knows—
by the time we catch
the rooster
the meat is
too tough to eat

treadmill
walking my ass off
going nowhere
she says she needs
a change of pace

mind in neutral
in lowering dusk
I sit
hating to waste time
but unable to choose

roller coaster
not my cup of tea
but
damned if I'll let
my ten-year-old ride alone

graveside
our old argument
resurrected
is Dad in heaven
or simply worm food

cottage
in the north woods
idyllic
save for the presence
of other family members

standing
in the bathroom
at the toilet
trying not to think
about urinating

a do-nothing
all his adult life
now useful
his ashes put to work
in the garden

she is told
the second is her last
kidney transplant
she chooses more drink
and death in six months

the urn
set on a bookshelf
for now
her dirty clothes
still in the hamper

birthdays
perfect examples of
relativity
for body and mind
time has different rates

only photo
of my favorite aunt
the nun
a thumbtack hole
in her forehead

~Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Ignatius is a retired invertebrate paleontologist who writes haiku, tanka, haibun and tanka prose. His poems have appeared in many respected online/print journals. He is the current editor of the HSA NEWS, the e-bulletin of the Haiku Society of America. Ignatius resides in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

Janet Butler

evening walk
the hot-iron scent
of clothes drying
the after shower freshness
of new beginnings

clouds mist
early morning streets
shifting doors
that invite me in
and close silently behind me

a red light halts
the foot flow of students
poised, intrepid
about to enter the forbidden forest
of UC Berkeley campus

the afternoon
invites me out
I walk quiet streets
scented with spring
your memory company enough

a summer afternoon
and I'm sixteen again
I sit poolside
the happy frisson of freedom in the air
Van Gogh nights in my dreams

~United States

Janet Butler divides her passions between watercolors and poetry. This last year she has focused on the Tanka form, and has had 40 or so Tanka published in about a dozen journals that specialize in the form. One of her Tanka was an Editor's Choice in Cattails, and her most recent Tanka publication is in Spent Blossoms, published by the Tanka Society of America. A poem was awarded 1st place, Honorable Mention, in the current BAPC's (Bay Area Poets Coalition) annual poetry contest, open to poets throughout the U.S. She lives in Alameda with Fulmi-dog, whom she brought with her from Italy, where she lived for 20 years.

Joanna Ashwell

take my wish
northerly wind
further away
into the slip-stream
of a ship-wrecked tide

your promises die
the remnants
echo in rooms
colour the walls
pointing the finger

a hidden stream
beneath the canopy
where only winds go
back and forth
to distant shores

north star
night companion
the silence
the dark
binding us

spinning a yarn
the north wind
tracks across valleys
leaving cold and doubt
nestling in cloud

trapped notes
in a conch shell
mermaid lament
left by the tide
filled with farewell

scanning the horizon
foam-backed waves
tumble against rocks
shadows dive
beneath us, around us

powder-keg nights
a storm arrives
crashing around
spark-lit windows
flash in our homes

fireside whispers
drift among us
a company of sorts
us and stars
dusk till dawn

~County Durham, England

*Joanna Ashwell, from County Durham, North East of England,
member of the British Haiku Society, haiku collection published by Hub
Editions – ‘Between Moonlight’; published in Presence, Blithe Spirit,
Haibun Online, Heron’s Nest, Moonbathing and others.*

Jordan Beane

if I die soon
don’t bury me
in the ground
throw me in a deep
water-filled ditch

~Norwich, England

*Jordan lives in Norwich, England, tending Joy McCall’s garden and
loving his small son, staying up all night and otherwise wasting time.*

*Jonathan Vos Post is: co-author with Ray Bradbury; co-author with
Richard Feynman, Nobel Laureate physicist; co-editor with David Brin
and Arthur C. Clarke; co-broadcaster with Isaac Asimov quoted by
name in Robert Heinlein’s “Expanded Universe”; Winner of 1987
Rhysling Award for Best Science Fiction Poem of Year; Published in
Nebula Awards Anthology #23, 1989; Semifinalist for 1996 Nebula
Award; Part-time Professor (at 5 colleges and universities) His Tanka
have appeared in venues such as in M. Kei, Editor, All the Shells : The
Tanka Society of America’s Member Anthology for 2014.*

Tanka Sonnet

Jonathan Vos Post

“How often does a bush
become a bear?”
Depends. Got to have a bush.
This doesn’t work in Antarctica,
and some idea of how a bear pretends.

to get something you’ve never got
you’ve got to do something you’ve never done
the wind blows cold and hot
for nothing new under the sun
maybe things aren’t as bad as you thought

Who you gonna believe?
Me or your lyin’ eyes?
There’s nothing to fear
except William Shakespeare

~United States

Easter Sunday

Joy McCall

Easter Sunday
and the church bells ring
every hour, all night
and in between, the drunks
stagger home, singing

. . . then there are the police and ambulance
sirens—it may be Easter but it’s still business as
usual in clubland on Saturday night in Norwich,
Norfolk.

~Norwich, England

Joy McCall

spider silk
hanging from the roof
abandoned
like Bob Dylan’s questions
blowing in the wind

a dark spider
on the open window
January night
I sleep in the cold room
under extra blankets

small spiderling
on my bathroom tile
staying, like me
indoors, out of the wind
and blowing snow

spiders
all over the house
waiting for spring
and the silent call
to begin weaving

the cat
unhappy in the hall
has to wait
for the spider to find
refuge under the couch

small spider
coming down on its thread
from my ceiling
I close my eyes
and wait

do I imagine
those light feet
running on my face?
I hold my breath
and lie very still

she is dead
the dark Sufi girl
she had no time to say
from Allah I come
to Allah I return

all day long
fighter planes rumbling
overhead
I grieve for the dead
men, women, children

struggling
with great pain
I hear
the salvation army band
passing, playing silent night

storm winds take
the last of the leaves
while I sleep
the winter cherry
still covered in pink blossom

the young man
trims half the hedge
leaves the cutters
lying on the ground
and goes away to die

the abuser
is long dead and buried
it settles me
to think of him, cold
white bones in the ground

it is dusk
as I read his words
I'm sitting
on that grey edge
where day falls into night

I stay up
long after midnight
wrapped in quilts by the fire
reading his ryuka,
lost in Weaponess

buying
next year's cards
in the Christmas sales
shaking my fist
at the dark fates

blue jay feather
river otter bone
side by side
we are bones
we are flight

he reminds me
there is more to life
than worry and fear
I go to the river
and watch the falling rain

a good friend comes
bearing dark red sloe gin
and the tale
of the parallel universe
and the peppercorn

~Norwich, England

Word Tanka

Joy McCall

rubble
flint stones
bricks
wild
violets

~Norwich, England

spaces

Joy McCall

I ache to be
where the heather grows
on highland moors
where the grouse run
and great eagles fly

I long to sit
with my back against
a tall-standing stone
and hear the wind
howling over the hill

it's that time of year
when mountains call
and snow melts
and all the rivers
run full and wild

this old city
is noisy and dirty
its streets crawl
with poverty, crime
and grime

I dream of great spaces
Canada, America,
Scotland . . .
then I settle, watching a spider
climbing the red brick wall

~Norwich, England

*Joy McCall lives in Norfolk, a place full of ghosts. She is trying to find
her way through the later suffering that comes with paraplegia. Poetry
and love are the only answers she has found, so far.*

*Kate Franks is Joy's daughter who lives in Alberta, Canada. She is a
teacher of young adolescents, and celebrates the power of books and
movies to transport us to other worlds.*

Wandering Down the Lane

Joy McCall

torn scraps
of old brown paper
litter the floor
of the church ruins—
who was here?

I never know what I'm going to find when I
go along the lane to the 11th century ruin in the
graveyard of the 13th century still-used church;
sometimes condoms and needles, sometimes
bottles (the ancient pub is also in the church
graveyard, and used to be the priest's ale store); I
haven't found a body . . . yet. I go to say my
solitary prayers in the ruins. Sometimes I light a
candle in the open church.

~Norwich, England

winter break

Joy McCall & Kate Franks

*she texts
from the busy city
'indulgence'
a homebaked pastie
in the Norfolk sunshine*

the Tinker's pack
jangles and clinks
announces a passing
the visit too short
but the souvenirs well chosen

~Norwich, England / Calgary, Canada

turn, turn, turn

Joy McCall

there is pain
and suffering
and more loss
my heart is troubled
my mind is weary

I would ask
the native shaman
what to do
but he is dead
his voice is silent

I lay in my bed
looking at ancient scrolls
on the wall
what are they
telling me?

the deer scroll
with its bare trees
and fallen leaves
sings to me — *rest,*
the earth will sustain you

the other scroll
a rocky point at land's end
a gnarled pine
and the white crane waiting
to carry my soul

outside my window
the tree, falling leaves
russet and saffron
a gentle rain
a small green frog

then love speaks to me —
do not choose too fast
and the Preacher says
to everything
*there is a season **

~Norwich, England

**Ecclesiastes*

Joy McCall

for Jake

suddenly
I long to walk
upright
to look at people
face to face

there is a good man
who kneels when we talk
long-haired
death-metal man
zombie-slayer

it takes love
to know that I
feel low down
and to come down
to my level

he makes me dream
of moving, of walking
of dancing
over the hills
and far away

~Norwich, England

For Brian Zimmer

Joy McCall

Guy Fawkes' week
fireworks and bonfires
on every corner
the parks filled
with noisy crowds

we watch
from the prison hill
the old heath
bright with kids laughing
running with sparklers

prisoners
on day release
cooking hotdogs
free to all—it is
a brief freedom

the dark sky
over the old city
heavy with smoke
lit like daylight
with flashes and stars

inside me
a deep sadness
a year to the day
since he shut
that cupboard door

I miss him
his madness, his words
his friendship
all that lovely light
gone out

~Norwich, England

Kat Lehmann

an enormity
beyond comprehension
the Sun
and, larger, love
breaking the scale

canoe of a moon
sails the black sea . . .
stars like distant lighthouses
guiding the way
to unknown lands

falling up
into love
I grasp a wisp of white
like a new equilibrium
with the boundless sky

how should we give
what wasn't received—
even a nebula
creates suns
from old stardust

one porch light
shining among the billions
the neighbors
spend the night
circling a distant star

~Connecticut, USA

Kat Lehmann (Connecticut, USA) is a poet and a scientist who enjoys exploring the grandiose captured within the minute. Her tanka and haiku have appeared in 15 print and online journals since 2015. Her full length poetry book, Moon Full of Moons (2015), describes the personal transformation of finding happiness after sadness. Visit her on twitter (@SongsOfKat).

Joy McCall lives in her birthplace, Norwich, a city with a dark ancient history. Her life is a seesaw of joy and pain, loss and learning, darkness and great light.

Not Yet

Kath Abela Wilson

The nights before a journey there comes a “haunting” by journeys past. They gather and present themselves as a sequence, to be continued. Three journals on a red table. One is empty about to be filled, 2016, another, the trip to Asia. Before it, 2014, colorfully painted with Mt Fuji. And 2011 opens to a garden lake in Suzhou.

nothing better
the wide open space of sky
fills with words
on a painted page
where time opens

pressed flowers
how our memories
are kept
open so long
in white envelopes

pupa
in a blue cocoon
I sleep
in the forest of my mind
with butterflies and bears

like sunset
two trees posing
before nightfall
sunset’s glow of pink and gold
already in our arms

can one bare branch
point to the cause of morning
this light
sets me straight on the path
to somewhere

sometimes the trees
cover their trunks with leaves
green wedding
I choose such a modest
vintage gown

peeling bark
what is hidden inside
makes the fire
our quiet walk together
extraordinary

so long ago
little purple flower
without name
now still . . . you are my song
to the morning

my steps in the climb
feel ponderous
too fast too fast
I call out
as life rushes by

I’d like
to have another chance
if there is one
I’ll choose to be passion vine
or wisteria

~United States

Another spring

Kath Abela Wilson

There was another Spring. My mother left the world of winter. Even in California the world was white, ten days before her 95th birthday. The mountain peaks that loomed crystal over the city, white. And the nurses, doctors all white, their paleness was distant. I came to bring colors and wore a dancing dress and flowers every time. She stopped amidst her great last troubles, looked into my eyes and said “we have such great times together” then a week later she was gone.

Tonight I called her friend who shared her room there . . . the day after her friend’s 95th birthday. When she realized who I was, (“remember”, I said, “I danced in your room”) what did she say?

I danced we laughed
The Blue Danube
that you love
I can’t say it enough . . . she said
“We had such great times together”

~United States

Kath Abela Wilson is traveling from home in Pasadena, CA, during May and June with her husband, Rick Wilson, a mathematician and flute player. She will listen poetically to math lectures and he will accompany her in readings of tanka in China and Japan.

Larry Kimmel

coming from
a long-lived family,
I’ve expectations — still,
I left the soil
and I’ve drunk city water . . .

what did she think I was? —
a mannequin
on which she could
hang
any fancied persona

a surround of cotton silence,
the woods stuffed with fog —
waking
to the sizzle of bacon,
the fragrance of earth-dark coffee

topless in jeans
she moves about the kitchen —
beyond the window
a tree of yellow apples
bright in the late November fog

I-91, a bright chill day,
singing along with the radio
!

a hawk’s tan reach sweeps
the windshield

one hundred eggs
ten tadpoles
one frog —
one stone at the peak
of the pyramid

tree cathedral
& me . . .
church
of
one

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA

entropy, a tanka pentaptych

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

the night is for the young
and for the solitaires
and I've been both –
soon, I'll step into the midnight forest,
become owl

*I am branch
bearing that light
featherweight
its great eyes watching . . .
I am the sap, rising*

a terror of biology
shrouded in feathers
I feed on offerings
left at the side of the road
—hawk, I am

*I am grass
where the prey hides
trembling
stirring the green blades . . .
I am the sap, rising*

entropy gripped me
in its fearful talon
dropped me
in an arid place
I am the hunter, dying

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA / Norwich, England

Tanka Pairs

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

ale and exhausts

*making supper
for a bunch of bikers—easy,
they have no taste
except in ale
and exhaust systems*

laughing . . .
seriously though
I miss the days
of Horsa and Hengest—
rev-rev rumble-rumble

shadow

voices close at hand—
hiding the lit cigarette
in the curl of my palm
as a boat slips
through the black of night

*heavy footsteps
on the cobbled street
the clink of a chain
I slip into the shadow
of a doorway*

gristle and sinew

these aches and pains,
the gristle and sinew
of a disjointed life
coming together
too late too late

*body and soul
drawing apart
wondering
of the two,
which is me?*

we write

hieroglyphs, cruciform,
ideograms, *this* alphabet
on and on
on tablets of clay, on papyrus
or parchment, on paper or screens

alpha
to omega
sparks, beginnings
to our own dark endings
we write, we write

two hermits

my soul longs
to be a hermit
in a mountain hut
sitting by the fire
living on saké and moonlight

day's end.
leaning back I sigh & see
behind closed eyes
the old porch swing
—hermitage enough

ripples

we are fools
no matter how wise
we seem to be
look at stars and grass
and seabeds

don't forget the trees
the great trees too huge
to hug, who've seen
generations passing
like ripples on a stream

broken

bread crumbs
stuck in the keys
of the old laptop
how many words can he make
without a,s,o,f,g?

doing the math
he loses his train of thought—
broken
he can't even write his name
L rry or hers, J y

brief

in two hours time
the Mayfly
takes wing,
mates & dies . . .
a mere haiku of a life

the small brown moth
on my window
every night
called by the lamplight
where I sit writing

giving

back to back,
two pigeons on a balustrade
watching the river—
gift dilemma solved!
bookends

braiding cord
through the holed stone
adding a bell—
the witches' amulet
for my friend's front door

~Colrain, Massachusetts USA / Norwich, England

the dog and the doorknob

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

—*stumbling across a still in our travels through the dark woods, we get completely drunk and sleep there for a day or two and find ourselves somewhere completely different; somewhere like . . . Tokyo, or Amherst, or Norwich.*

“I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.”—T. S. Eliot

I might as well
be a dog confronted
by a doorknob
your recluse in the hills
of western Massachusetts

*the clash of the titans—
I lie defeated
in the mud
a mumbling hermit
on the anglian isle*

okay
let's cut to the chase
the forest adventure
with the wild man
of stark mountain

*there's nothing
as nice when it's cold
as wild mushroom soup
made by the mad wench
of the boggy fens*

just an old ridge runner
from upper Appalachia
sending his love
in a bottle of hootch
in the woods, making moonshine

*daft hedgewitch
in the bottom of a ditch
seeking
bearded ridgerunner
with operating still*

I got evicted
from my bottom
of a ditch
the phantom
of the Moon Hill

*shaking
the webs from my hair
picking thistles
from my skirts, stumbling
down the cobbled streets*

laughing ghost
on the shipwrecked galleon
we'll get there
when we get there
Barnacle Bill says goodnight

~Colrain, Massachusetts, USA / Norwich, England

Joy McCall lives in her birthplace, Norwich, a city with a dark ancient history. Her life is a seesaw of joy and pain, loss and learning, darkness and great light.

Larry Kimmel was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. His most recent books are “shards and dust” and “outer edges.” He lives quietly in the hills of western Massachusetts.

Lavana Kray

Lavana Kray, Romanian-English
Translator

înapoi
în podul casei din copilărie . . .
și măsuța
se sprijină
tot într-un picior

*back
in the attic of my youth . . .
the loo-table too
has only one leg
to stand on*

mă vindec
de fotofobie...
o molie
lărgeste gaura
în perdea

*getting healed
from photophobia . . .
a mite
enlarging the hole
in the curtain*

mâneci moi,
de zăpadă,
flutură-n fereastră . . .
aștept pe o targă
să trec prin raze X

*large
puffed sleeves of snow
fluttering by the window . . .
waiting on a stretcher
to be X-rayed*

strigătele
unei refugiate
înroșind zăpada . . .
noi, înapoi la rutina
de zi cu zi

*the screams
of a refugee woman encrimson
the untimely snow . . .
we get back
into the swing of things*

refugiați
stând la frontieră . . .
privirea unei fetițe
trece prin gard
cu o buburuză

*crowd of refugees
stuck for days by the frontier . . .
the look of a girl
going through the fence
with a lady bug*

o pată albă
își ia zborul de pe gard . . .
rația de pâine
a copilului pribeag
s-a terminat

*a white spot
spreads its wings and takes off
from the border fence . . .
small hands just finished
the bread ration*

croazieră —
turiști făcând fotografii
unui copil
care-mpinge o roabă
cu lemne aduse la mal

*cruise—
tourists taking photographs
with a child
who pushes his wheelbarrow
full of washed ashore wood*

*lalele negre
împrăștiate de furtună—
în coșul florăresei
doar mâinile ei
atinse de vitiligo*

*black tulips
swept away by the storm—
in the basket of the florist
nothing but her hands
affected by vitiligo*

*mama-mi zâmbește
când revin acasă . . .
ce păcat
că nu mai știe
cine sunt*

*mom flashes her smile
any time I go back home . . .
what a pity
she doesn't know
who I am*

*igienizarea pădurii—
am găsit o floarea
în rădăcinată
într-o cască de soldat
pe care-o iau acasă*

*forest cleaning;
I came over a wild flower
deeply rooted
in a military cap
that I take home*

~Romania

Lavana Kray is from Iasi, Romania. She is passionate about writing and photography. The nature and the events of her life are topics of inspiration. She won several awards, including WHA Master Haiga Artist (2015). Her work has been published in: Haiku Canada, The Mainichi, Ginyu, Daily Haiga, Haiga on line, Frogpond, Tanka Society of America, Eucalypt, Acorn, Ardea, Ribbons and others. She was been chosen for Haiku Euro Top 100-edition 2015. This is her blog: <http://photohaikuforyou.blogspot.ro>

Liam Wilkinson lives in North Yorkshire, England. He is the editor of Englyn Journal of Four Line Poems. His debut collection Seeing Double: Tanka Pairs is forthcoming from Skylark Press.

Joy McCall lives in Norwich, England. Her life is wide and full and often difficult. M. Kei has published several of her collections of tanka. She is grateful for many things.

winter wind

Liam Wilkinson & Joy McCall

*another January
another year
should I learn
a new language
or an old silence?*

*reading poems
aloud in the dark
is that my own voice
or some ancient other
whispering in my head?*

*serpentine song
of the whistling
winter wind
I try to trap each melody
in the mouth of my book*

~United Kingdom/ Norwich, England

Undiagnosed

Lorne Henry

I felt like dancing.

First time I could walk properly after 14 months.

I'd tripped over a pouf I'd forgotten to move back, racing to the computer with a sheet of paper in my hands.

No help from the doctor. I had to request an ultrasound.

He phoned the technician to ask, "an ultrasound wouldn't really show much in an ankle would it?"

The expression on his face showed me he had been told.

I had my ultrasound and the machine beeped exactly where I'd said there was pain. Still no help from him.

so few
family doctors
in the country
most have retired
prescriptions the easy answer

I went to a podiatrist to have orthotics fitted in my new Minnie Mouse boots.

Then to the acupuncturist. My big toe stiff and the next two curled under—the doctor had said, "Can't do anything about that—must be hereditary."

One needle and my big toe bent once more—the others uncurled.

Then a sock I'd seen advertised. Difficult to put on but such relief. I kept it on for a couple of nights and days.

Swelling gone.

Still unable to walk far I saw a sign, 'sports injuries'.

I'd always wondered how footballers who had strained ligaments were back on the field in no time.

Why was I still suffering after a year.

That Swedish massage was blindingly painful but I could rotate my ankle for the first time.

Instructed to keep rotating it—I did. A few days later I felt a 'thunk' at the swollen part.

I could walk properly again.

I leave for China in three weeks. Need to exercise and get fit again. So long sitting I've put on weight.

My dog helps me. At last I can walk him down along the drive and back. I drive to the beach where he has a marvelous time and I walk!

a long walk
along the beach
hard wet sand
carries my dog's paw prints
he chases returning waves

my faithful dog
doesn't know
I'll leave him
for three weeks
I'll pack late

~Australia

Lorne Henry has been writing haiku since 1992 and tanka from about 1996. She has been dabbling in Haibun and tanka prose. She lives in the countryside of New South Wales, Australia.

Louisa Howerow

berry stains
on fingers, lips
the sweetness
of his kiss-me line returns
each sun-burned summer

the wind
carries your song
downriver
there was a time when nets
caught more than shadows

our creek
carrying away dead leaves
and grasses. . .
while I bow to spring
the flowering bloodroot

night scrawls
wrestle with the dead
if only
moonlit words could slip
into my room as easily

spring frost
magnolias denuded. . .
somewhere
star blossoms perfume
another woman's dream

haze
blurs the midday sun —
you spin
stories thread by thread
so fine they'd ensnare seraphs

her skirt
fluttering at her ankles
a demi-turn
and the number of steps
between us increases

nothing but
placid cows, a pasture
nothing but
a guidebook to tell me
this was once a battlefield

a spring wind
unpinning her hair
he rushes
to change his story
a four-leaf clover in hand

tourists
click photos in the shadow
of a gibbet
even the rats once came
to execution square

~Ontario, Canada

Louisa Howerow's tanka is forthcoming in A Hundred Gourds and Eucalypt.

Luminita Suse is the author of the tanka collection A Thousand Fireflies, Editions des petits nuages, 2011. Her poetry appeared in Moonbathing: A Journal of Women's Tanka, Gusts, Atlas Poetica, Magnapoets, Red Lights, Ribbons, A Hundred Gourds, Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka 2010-2011, Prune Juice, Notes from the Gean, Kokako, World Haiku Review, Skylark, and others. She got honourable mentions in the The 7th International Tanka Festival Competition, 2012, organized by Japan Tanka Poets' Society and Under the Basho, International Haiku Contest, 2014.

Magdalena Dale lives in Bucharest, Romania. She is a member of the Romanian Society of Haiku and of the Romanian Writers' Society. She has published in several magazines in her country and abroad. She was coeditor along with other seven tanka colleagues from other countries of Take Five - tanka anthology, volume three, 2010 and volume 4, 2011, editor-in chief M. Kei USA. She wrote two tanka book, a renga book together with the poet Vasile Moldovan and she made the first Romanian tanka anthology.

Harmonies of Shamisen / Armonii de şamisen

Luminita Suse (LS) / *Magdalena Dale*
(MD)

why is this snail
climbing the bonsai?
by midnight the top
powdered with gold
from Coma Berenices

LS

unde încearcă
s-ajungă melcul acesta?
la miezul nopții
vârful bonsaiului pudrat
cu aur din coama Berenicei

*the rain
washes off the slime . . .
in its flow
time erases
our footprints*

MD

*un melc pe-o frunză
lasă o linie fină
ploaia o spală
în curgerea lui timpul
șterge urmele noastre*

Mount Fuji
reflected in countless
dewdrops
sipped meticulously
by Issa's snail

LS

muntele Fuji
oglindit în nenumărate
picături de rouă
sorbite meticulos
de melcul lui Issa

*this full moon
on the bottom
of the tea cup—
a tireless traveler
looking for its soul mate*

MD

*în ultimul strop
pe fundul căni de ceai
văd luna plină—
neobosit călător
ce-și caută perechea*

*a geisha's dance
to shamisen harmonies
tells a story
about the world of willows
when they were green*

MD

*dansul gheișei
pe armonii de şamisen
spune povestea
lumii sălcilor
atunci când erau verzi*

early morning
a loud concert of chirps
in budding trees
the cords of her koto
ready to accompany

LS

dis de dimineață
concert de ciripit
în copaci înmuguriți
corzile koto-ului ei
gata să acompanieze

falling apples
unsettle the Osawa pond
deep onto the relics
of tanka once recited
in Heian temples

LS

Iazul Osawa
tulburat de mere ce cad
adânc până la tanka
recitată cândva de poeți
în templele erei Heian

*a wisp of wind
and the cherry petals
touch the ground
after one thousand years
Takizakura still blooms*

MD

*o adiere
și petalele de cireș
ating pământul
de peste o mie de ani
Takizakura înflorește*

sleepless night
a geisha pulls fireflies
out of her blue heart
a thousand so far
and still counting

LS

noapte albă
gheișă numără licuricii
din inima sa albastră
o mie până acum
și nu a terminat

*pink flowers
painted on her kimono
hide an epistle
a silk poem
that was never uttered*

MD

*florile roz
pictate pe chimono
ascund un răvaș...
poemul de mătase
ce născând n-a fost rostit*

*hidden to the eye
a stone in the garden
has a secret . . .
a longing without words
and without hope*

MD

*ascunsă privirii
o piatră din grădină
are o taină
un dor fără cuvinte
și fără de speranță*

a lot done
much more left to do
in my garden
luckily, the birds
do not seek perfection

LS

multe terminate
multe rămase de făcut
în grădina mea
ce noroc, păsările
nu caută perfecțiunea

*the butterfly
resting on a flower
for a moment—
a grain of sand
in the hourglass*

MD

*fluturile
s-a oprit pe o floare
pentru o clipă
un grăunte de nisip
în clepsidra timpului*

young girls
sold into slavery . . .
acid rains
leave purple stains
on budding lotuses

LS

copile
vândute drept sclave . . .
ploi acide
lasă pete vinete
pe lotuși înmuguriți

*green tea
in old porcelain cups—
a bygone era
when life was a poem
awaiting to be written*

MD

*ceaiul verde
în vechi cești de porțelan
vremuri apuse
când viața era un poem
ce-aștepta să fie scris*

the sunflower yukata
neatly pressed
and folded with care—
a beaming smile
in my winter closet

LS

yukata imprimată
cu floarea soarelui
împăturită cu grijă—
un zâmbet strălucitor
între haine de iarnă

gingko walk
by the waterfall
the plum blossoms
are all sailing
toward summer

LS

plimbare ginko
de-a lungul cascadei
florile de prun
navighează toate
către vară

*all around me
trees in full boom
in vain
the same Mont Fuji
distant and cool*

MD

*peste tot în jur
pomii au înflorit
dar în zadar
îndepărtat și rece
același munte Fuji*

all maikos
expected to repay
the debt to the okiya
damsel flies will be
trapped in pitcher plants

LS

maiko datare la okiya
pentru educația primită—
multe libelule
vor fi prinse în plante
carnivore

*the line of cranes
printed on the kimono
seems to take flight . . .
the geisha's fan
hides her eyes*

MD

*șirul de cocori
desenat pe chimono
parcă-și ia zborul
evantaiul gheișei
ascunde privirea*

~Canada / Romania

For poet biographies, see page 42.

No Mind / නොමනස

Malintha Perera / මලින්තා පෙරේරා

Malintha Perera, English-Sinhalese Translator
මලින්තා පෙරේරා □ ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල පරිවර්තක

all I wanted to do
was just to wipe off the dust
but we end up staring
at each other
Buddha and I

මට කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය වූයේ
හුදෙක් දූවිලි පිසීමට පමණි
නමුත් අපි අවසන් වූයේ
චිකිතේකා දෙස බලමිනි
බුදුන් සහ මම

butterfly
after butterfly
I don't want to delay
this breath that belongs
to many beings

සමනලයෙක්
සමනලයෙක් පසුපස
මෙය ප්‍රමාද කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය නැත
මගේ හුස්ම පොදු අයිති වන්නේ
සියලු සත්වයන්ට පමණි

how do we know
when spring speaks
we have forgotten
the colours
of pastels

අපි කෙලෙසද දන්නේ
වසන්තය නිමා වන විට
අපට අමතක වී ඇත
සෞම්‍ය
වර්ණ

so many
flowers
passing through
our hands only know
the dust

බොහෝ මල්
අතින් අතට
ගමන් කරද්දී
අප දන්නේ
දූවිලි ගැන පමණි

even
with all the oceans
it's a wonder
how the lines on my palms
never fade

සියලුම
සාගර ඇතත්
එය පුදුමයකි
මගේ දෑත් මත රේඛා
තවම බොඳ වී නැත

in this life
I will never know
Buddha's words
wild blossoms
more wild blossoms

මෙම ජීවිතයේදී
මම කිසි දිනක නොදනි
බුදු වදන්
කැළෑ මල්
බොහෝ කැළෑ මල්

~Sri Lanka / ශ්‍රී ලංකා

Our Moon / අපේම සඳ

Malintha Perera / මලින්තා පෙරේරා

Malintha Perera, English-Sinhalese Translator
මලින්තා පෙරේරා □ ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල පරිවර්තක

why do you think
we have met along this path
so many lanterns
need to be hung
and then that too will end

ඇයි ඔබ සිතන්නේ
මේ මග අප හමු වුවා කියා
බොහෝ පහන් කූඩු
සැරසීමට ඇත
එසුව විය ද නිමා වේ

the path
is never an excuse
for us to meet
I touch Buddha's feet
flat against the earth

මේ මග
කිසි දිනක නිදහසට කරුණක් නොවේ
අපට හමුවීම සඳහා
පොළව මත පැතලිව ඇති
බුදුන්ගේ පාද මම ස්පර්ශ කරමි

it's easier to talk
of Dharma, we never
run out of words —
so shall it be, this birth
through blossoms

විය පහසුය
කථා කිරීමට මෙම දහම
අපට කිසිදිනක වචන ප්‍රමාණවත් නොවේ
විය විසේමයි □ මෙම ඉපදීම
මල් අතරින්

“Dharma should be your life”
he tells me
I tell him “it is”
and light an extra incense
at the altar

“දහම ඔබේ ජීවිතය විය යුතුයි”
ඔහු මට පවසයි
“විය විසේමයි” මම පිළිතුරු දෙන්නේ
අතිරේක සුවඳ කුරක්
සුපාසනය මත දල්වමිනි

the night
is dripping with a blueness
of the moon
incense and you
are so very linked

රාත්‍රිය
සඳ විලිය
නිල් පාටට උතුරයි
හඳුන්කුරු සහ ඔබ
ඉතාමත්ම සම්පයි

It is with care
I tie the flags
onto the Bodhi tree
and then you tell
my wild hair is pretty

ඉතා පරිස්සම්ව
මම කොඩි වැල් වලින්
බෝධිය සරසන විට
ඔබ මට පවසයි
මගේ දිග හැරුණු වරලස පියකරු බව

~Sri Lanka / ශ්‍රී ලංකා

Blue Jasmine / නිල්වන් පිටිව මල්

Malintha Perera / මලින්තා පෙරේරා

Malintha Perera, English-Sinhalese Translator
මලින්තා පෙරේරා □ ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල පරිවර්තක

the scent of moonlight
has no end
my nails have taken
some
of your skin

සඳු එළියේ සුවඳ
නිමක් නැත
මගේ නිය අඟ
ඔබ
අත

that graze
over my ear
so many pieces
of cherry petals
on my skin

ඔබේ මුව
මගේ කණ සෙමින් සපර්ශ කරන විට
බොහෝ වේරු මල් පෙත් කැබලි
ඔබ වෙත
වැටේ

seeing how dark
is my skin against yours
how can I look
at the same
mirror again

අපි එකිනෙකාගේ වර්ණ
කැඩපත පෙන්වද්දී
කෙසේද මම නැවත
එය දෙස
බලන්නේ

and at last
when I'm traveling
over stars and off orbits
those eyes
they never leave me

අවසන් වරට
මම තරු හා
ගමන් කරන විට
ඔබේ දෑස්
මගෙන් වෙනතකට යොමු නොවේ

is this enough
the spray of fragrance
of the moon
on your palms
I want more

මෙය මෙතරම්ද
සඳේ
සුවඳ
ඔබේ දෑත් මත
මෙය මට ප්‍රමාණවත් නොවේ

~Sri Lanka / ශ්‍රී ලංකා

A Tray Full of Offerings / තැටියක් පුරා පඬුරු

Malintha Perera / මලින්තා පෙරේරා

Malintha Perera, English-Sinhalese Translator
මලින්තා පෙරේරා □ ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල පරිවර්තක

this ritual
of lighting oil lamps
Buddha knows
the brush of flags
in the wind

මෙම පිළිවෙත
පොල්තෙල් පහන් දැල්වීම
බුදුන් දැනී
කොඩිවැල් කෙලෙස සුළගේ
සැපෙනවාද කියා

wild blossoms
how tame
are you
in a bowl
for him

කැළෑ මල
කොතරම් හීලෑද
ඔබ
බඳුනක් මත
ඔහු වෙනුවෙන්

for you maybe
the world is endless
is that why you smile in half
seeing
the many incense smoke

සමහර විට ඔබට
ලෝකය නිමක් නැත
ඒ නිසාද ඔබ මුව අඟිත්
සීනා සෙන්නේ
සුවඳ දුම් දෙස බලමින්

it never stops
the Bodhi tree
is so silent
my mind wants the wind
to move and move

චිය නතර කළ නොහැක
මෙම බෝධිය
නිහඬිය
මගේ මනස කැමති
සුළග සෙලවෙන දෙස බැලීමටය

Sal blossom
how pale
can you get
seeing
him again

සල්මල
කොපමණ
සුදු මැලි වෙයිද ඔබ
ඔහු නැවත
දුටු විට

again and again
the sound
of chipmunks
I bathe the Buddha
with incense smoke

නැවත නැවතත්
ලේනුන්ගේ
හඬ
මම බුදුන්ව
සුවඳ දුමින් නාවමි

keeping
its chin at his stone feet
a shoe flower
dares
me

තබමින්
නිකට ඔබගේ දෙපතුල් මත
වඳ මලක්
මට
ඇරයුම් කරයි

~Sri Lanka / ශ්‍රී ලංකා

Malintha Perera

මලින්තා පෙරේරා

Malintha Perera, English-Sinhalese Translator
මලින්තා පෙරේරා □ ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල පරිවර්තක

taking
over the weeds
I place
my heel
on your shoulder

ගනිමින්
කැළෑ පැළෑටි
දෝතට
මගේ විලුඹ
ඔබගේ උරහිස මත

this cannot last
I know, I am crazy
to be so happy
for a moment I smile sideways
at ignorance

මෙය අවසන් විය යුතුය
මම දනිමි
මෙම සතුට මුලාවකි
මොහොතකට මම මුට අගින්
සිනාසෙන්නේ මායාව දෙස බලමිනි

the way
this moonlight
pulls at my hair
I lay down its desire
to be around your face

සඳු විලිය
මගේ හිසකෙස් මත
සැපෙන විලාසය
ඒ ලොංගතුකම මම තබන්නේ
ඔබේ මුහුණ අවටය

how the stars
sink back
to the bottom of the sky
I hardly ever ask you
to stroke me like this

තරු
අහසේ ගිලෙන දෙස
මම කලාතුරකිනි
ඔබගෙන් අසන්නේ
මෙලෙස මට සමීප වන ලෙස

the wind takes turns
to draw ripples on the lake
and here I am
cradling your head
you tell me I'm still

සුළඟ
විල මත
රැලි යොමු කරද්දී
මා ඔබේ හිස දෝතට ගෙන සිටියදී
ඔබ මට නොසැලෙන ලෙස පවසයි

the mountain mist
is a translucent veil
over lilac blossoms
staying away from me
will make things worse

කඳු මීදුම
නිල් මල් මත
විනිවිද වැස්මක් ලෙසින
මගෙන් ඈත් වී සිටීම
පිලියමක් නොවේ

the taste of spring
comes as moisture
little beads on my lips
the dew has more sense
then again it doesn't know you

වසන්තයේ රස
තෙතමනයකි
මගේ තොල් මත □ පබළු ලෙස
පිනි බිඳු චිතරම් බොළඳ නැත
නමුත් ඔවුන් ඔබව නොදනී

even the roughest leaves
are smooth against the mist
tell me why
my hair refuses
to leave your arms

රළු කොළ පවා
මිදුමට
සුමටය
පවසන්න ඈයි මගේ වරලස
ඔබේ දෑත්වලින් මිදෙන්න අකමැති කියා

it's not worth it
to scrape off the moss
out of the stones
give me your hand
see how smooth my skin is

විය නොවිටී
මෙම පාසි ගල්වලින්
ඉවත් කිරීමට තරම්
ඔබේ දෑත් මට දිගු කරන්න
මගේ ගත කොපමණ සුමටද

the young spring
is draping her hair
with buds
your tattoo
where has it not brushed me

තරුණ වසන්තය
ඈගේ වරලස බිඳිනු ඇත
අංකුර සමග
ඔබේ සම මත ඇඳි රූ රටා
කොහෙද මා ඔවුන් හමු වී නැත්තේ

under cover
among the bees
we strain together
only one flower
is open

මී මැස්සන්ට
සොරා
අපි එක් වෙද්දී
එකම එක මලක් පමණක්
පිපී ඇත

it was easy
to turn my lips
towards the raindrops
the way we fed each other
that moonlight

විය පහසු විය
මගේ තොල්
දිය බිඳ දෙසට සැරී
සඳු විලියේ අපි එකිනෙකාට
යොමු වූ ආකාරය මතකයට නැගේ

don't you yearn
to pull the night
on top of us
and be with the fireflies
I do

ඔබ ආශා නැද්ද
රාත්‍රිය
අපව වෙලා ගත් පසු
කණාමැදිරියේ සමග
ගැවසීමට

how can it be
that we go in and out
of each other
even without touching
how can it be

විය කෙසේ විය හැකිද
අපගේ
එක්වීම
වැළඳ ගැනීමකින් තොරව
කෙසේද විය විය හැක්කේ

for so many days
I have missed
jasmine
it's no use this pillow
is full of moonlight

ඉතා කලකින්
පිවිච මල්
මම දැක නැත
මෙය සැපයක් නොවේ
මගේ යහන සඳු විලියෙන් පිරී ඇත

a Frangipani
behind an ear
I ask
the pond
to be still

අරලිය මලක්
මා කණ අග පැළඳගෙන
පොකුණ
නොසැලී
සිටින්න

gone to bed early
do you know
I make up stars
peonies are open pebbles
and that's when you come in

පළමුව නින්දට ගිය විට
ඔබ දන්නවාද
මම තරු සාදන විදිය
පියනි මල් හරියට දිග හැරුණු ගල් කැට වගෙයි
විවිටයි ඔබ පැමිණෙන්නේ

I hint and whisper
you say
calling out to you
jasmine is making a crown
for the moon

ඔබ මම හෙමිනිට
ඉඟි කරන
බව කියයි
පිවිව මල් සඳට
ඔටුන්නක් සාදයි

kneeling
in front of the bed
I look at my vows
keeping their heads
on my pillow

දනින් වැටී
ඇඳ යනන ඉදිරිපිට
මම බලන්නේ
මගේම පොරොන්දු
වැතිර සිටින දෙස

speaking to the petals
my nose is full of pollen
how much more
do you need
I'm only human

මල් පෙති වලට
කරා කරන්නේ
මාගේ නාස් අග පරාග වලින් පුරවමින්
තව කොපමණද
මගේ මනුස්සකම පෙන්නීමට

so many
specks of dust
the incense has left
and when it's half moon
I cry

බොහෝ දුටිලි
සුචඳ දුම්
බොඳ වී ඇත
අර්ධ චන්ද්‍රයා වූ විට
මා හඬා වැටේ

rain
please don't stop
this falling
I think I know him
when you are on the leaves

වැස්ස
නොනවතින්න
මෙම සැලීම
මම ඔහුව හඳුනන්නේ
ඔබ ශාඛ පත්‍ර මත සිටින විටයි

from morning
to morning
cherry blossoms
the roughness of your hands
never bruises me

උදෑසන සිට
උදෑසන දක්වා
වේර මල්
ඔබේ දෑත් රළු වූවත්
මා රිදවන්නේ නැත

the time will come
to put the clouds
back in the sky
have you no heart
kissing the crest on my sole

කාලය පැමිණෙයි
වලාකුළු
නැවත අහසේ තැබීමට
ඔබට කෙසේද සිතෙන්නේ
මගේ විලඹ සිප ගැනීමට

moon over stars
I clinch a jasmine
for my hair
and my hands are ringless
just for now

සඳ තරු වසා ඇත
පිච්ච මල
මගේ වරලසට
මුදු නැති දෑතින්
මම ගනිමි

you tell me again
about white daisies
stripping at night
how perfect your hand
on my thigh

ඔබ නැවතත් මට පවසන්නේ
සුදු මල්
නිරුවත් වන සැටියි
කොපමණ සැබෑද
ඔබේ දෑත මා මත තිබෙන සැටි

why are we here
under the divided moon
pinning up flowers
you say everything to me
with your hands

ඇයි අප මෙසේ
බෙදුනු සඳ යට
මල් ගොතන්නේ
ඔබේ දෑත් මට
සියල්ල පවසයි

buttercups
in buttercups
my toes blush
against
your stubble

මල්
වර්ණවත් මල්
මගේ පාදවල ඇඟිලි තුඩ
ඔබේ හිකට මත
ලැජ්ජාවට පත් වේ

never enough
this taste of fresh grass
on my clothes
grasshoppers would cry
if they see how you remove them

හිමාවක් නැත
මේ රසට නැවුම් තණකොළ වල
මගේ සච්ච මත
තණකොළ පෙත්තන් තැවෙනු ඇත
ඔවුන් අප දුටු වුවොත්

falling
falling
this rain
sees us
falling

කඩා හැලේ
කඩා හැලේ
මේ වැස්ස
අපගේ සැලීම
දැක දැක

~Sri Lanka / ශ්‍රී ලංකා

Malintha Perera is an established poet whose work is featured in numerous journals. She writes haiku, tanka, micropoetry as well as longer poems that are mainly centered on Zen Buddhism. Her first published haiku book, An Unswept Path (2015) is a collection of monastery haiku. She resides in Sri Lanka with her family.

පිළිගත් කිවිඳියක් වන මලින්තා පෙරේරාගේ මූලික කාව්‍යකරණය සෙන් මුදු දහම පදනම් කරගෙන හයිකුට ටන්කාට කෙටි සහ දිගු කාව්‍ය නිර්මාණ කරණයේ යෙදින්නියකි. ඇගේ මේ කාව්‍යයන් ප්‍රසිද්ධ සඟරා වල පල වී ඇත. ඇගේ ප්‍රථම ප්‍රකාශනයට පත් කරන ලද හයිකු ග්‍රන්ථය හයිකු ආරණ්‍ය වටා ගෙතුනු කවි පෙලකි. ඇය සහ ඇගේ පවුල ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පදිංචි කරුවන්ය.

Tan Renga

Marcus Liljedahl & *Anna Maris*

starry night
if these branches could speak
summer cicadas
at the break of dawn
two more initials in the bark

weekend in Paris
a sidewalk chalk Monet
melts in the rain
in a nearby cinema
we watch black and white films

summer rain
slowly trickling down a drain
the dust of labour
lingering on the palate
a gust of freshly tarred boats

harvest moon
reading too much
into your words
in the gaps between verses
a secret garden in bloom

lingering silence
i stare at the tea leaves
for an answer
through that dense mat of cloud
the light ping of an email

rain
breaks the silence
between us
a bark boat setting sails
in the flow of a drain pipe

victory day
the flaking paint
of a red star
wild flowers enter
through a bolted door

rising sun
on the lake two swans
dance again
distant wind chimes
your touch ripples my dream

all in black
the angel of death
spreads her wings
the cracks and scratches
of my old hard rock vinyl

orion's belt
i think of my ancestors
watching the same stars
deep in our hearts
that ever-changing story

~Sweden

Marcus Liljedahl has been working as an opera singer at The Gothenburg Opera since 1998. His poetry has appeared in Modern Haiku, Frogpond, The Heron's Nest, Bones, Under The Basho, Bottle Rockets, and others. One of his haiku has been selected for inclusion in the new anthology, Haiku 2015, edited by Lee Gurga & Scott Metz.

Anna Maris is a haiku poet. Her work appears in over 20 anthologies, three of which are published by Red Moon Press, as well as in most international haiku journals. In Sweden she is published by Miders Förlag. She has an MA in Journalism Studies from the University of Westminster, and has worked as a journalist in Sweden, Russia and the UK. <<http://annamaris.wordpress.com>>.

Marshall Bood

a mattress leaning
against the dumpster . . .
people choosing
homelessness
over bedbugs

I toss
my worry beads
in with the tightly
sealed
garbage bags

released from prison
to the psych
he searches
night tables
for loose change

frustrated pigeons
settle
for the elm tree . . .
outsider status
can be so embarrassing

~Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

*Marshall Bood lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. He has tanka
forthcoming in More Grows in a Crooked Row: Tanka Conversations
(Inkling Press) on the theme of mental illness/homelessness.*

Simmering Stew a ryuka rensaku

Matsukaze

sanshin or no sanshin?
reading Liam's ryuka
another Wednesday night
in some one else's thoughts

enjoying Nilla wafers —
the blue of this blanket
vivid to my eyes
sudden memories are pungent

once again
thumbing through music by Bach
dad will return home
sometime Friday evening

these free form ryuka
may not be the taste of purists
but damn it!
someone will recognize the musicality

on the futon
an open bible . . .
images and thoughts from the Jewish Scriptures
feed this weary soul another day

getting up from bed
bare feet touch the floor
a jolt!
damn it's cold

frail hemlock and
a mass of belladonna
around my back door . . .
is this a message of some kind?

a sudden wailing arises
someone needing an ambulance—
stirring more cane sugar
into this dark tea

even in the daytime
she is surrounded by prayer and
religious icons—
smell of simmering stew

while showering i think of days
when poets memorized waka
from the old anthologies . . .
do we still do that?

i have not forgotten my esteem for Goldstein
neither my love of Takuboku or Mokichi . . .
these were the naturalist poets
of Shiki's ilk

home alone this evening
going through the hallways of my mind
searching for scenarios
to pour into ryuka

small things i'm not used to
have grave meanings—
another glass of Coke
another night alone

staring at my shelf full of books
my eyes settle on my tanka mentor's book
i wonder if later i could publish
a diary of ryuka?

"i loved the words and they loved me back . . ."
making ryuka
i do not count syllables
i follow the words

the scent of ivory clinging to the walls,
another long day
spent in the local library . . .
he wants me to stop by

looking once more at my shelf,
full of books
i feel a sudden pull
to read Kafka

in the deep south
here in the place called the 'Bible Belt'
superstition and magic
mixed with church

i know nothing about cherry blossoms,
tatami, sanshin, mount fuji; or damp sleeves—
finally stripping off my clothes
i bathe in semidarkness

reading Hawthorne's unpublished letters
every few minutes i see
his dark hands
reaching for the tea cakes

to escape the pressure of iniquity
i wander among the lines of poetry
night after night i say i'll stop
when leaving that married man's bed

writer's block for several days—
for those days
it seems that senryu
was the better expression

since engaging in short verse poetry
i have found it difficult
to write longer pieces . . .
i'm made for these short verses

with each passing year
the memory of my father grows dimmer and
dimmer
i wasn't raised by the man
i'm not sure how he looks

i, who haven't many memories
of my own father,
am often scared
of having my own children

spent the evening at a local jazz club
parts of me have fallen for
a handsome Muslim bassist
with flashing black eyes

on a cold wet night
the Muslim lover and i
walk down some forgotten boulevard
discussing everything and nothing

studying a few things
it's the cologne scent
of a Jewish medical doctor
two seats from me

in my city
there are many quiet, discreet, smiling
black woman who leave
an impression on me

Johnny's back home from war
leaving his oh-so-white-wife
for a curvy black woman
down on Ryan St.

the hotel where i work
is surrounded by a sea of death
two graveyards
and a smattering of life somewhere

i stand at the window
the blur of traffic on the I-10
the only bit of life
several feet away from me

the blinking lights of this Dallas city
are luminous in the distance —
how many men
crave other men?

after a long evening at work
arriving home finally
to peel myself out of
my teal-colored bra

a good time to me
is settling back at home in silence
reading a stack of essays
on the historical Yeshua/Jesus

rushing downtown to meet you
a sudden rainpour —
i wonder if you'll invite me home with you
tonight i feel lonely

i wait in the corridor
listening to her soaring soprano
the aria from Bach's 'Jauchzet Frohlocket'
i carry in my thoughts all day

dinner . . .
over a glass of Riesling
some Handel Oratorio, or is it a Vivaldi suite?
doesn't matter, you're my focus anyways

it has been days
since i've called my mother
my phone service is currently suspended . . .
i need a new service provider

the rain stopped
i find myself thrilled
that the storm left behind winter winds
and a chill i can warm up against

in winter times
a terraced field lies wasted—
a new moon peers
from a darkened sky

~Louisiana, United States

*Matsukaze
resides in Louisiana USA
a classical vocalist and actor
composer of tanka, ryuka,
and senryu*

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

Matsukaze & Murasame

this morning darkness grainy and touched
with a bit of melancholy—I'm typing senryu

*happy-sad-happy you know how it goes
I'm living on an old seesaw tipping up, tipping down*

speaking to the aged wife we talk of tomorrows
and wonder how much time is left to us

*trying to seize what moments there are
my good friend, do you know what lies around the bend?*

there is a lady-poet in the UK who crossed my
mind
every now and then . . . a bit of a smile on my
lips

*waking each morning with a prayer
for the brown poet, the singer of songs*

yesterday is a dream—tomorrow is an illusion
i continue to stuff my face with miso soup

*grating dark chocolate on vanilla ice cream
I grieve for small drowning children*

this bouquet of tube roses i hold to my chest
a fresh autumn chill seeps into my skin

*the young postman smells of violets
—the widow at the house next door*

seven years here i've settled—I who in Lake
Charles
make music while thinking of waka

*listening to a dark kind of music
tanka and death metal on the damp Norwich air*

~Louisiana, USA / Norwich, England

Street Justice

Marilyn Humbert & Frances Carleton

*among
the coral blooms
a moray eel . . .
another predator
from life's shadows*

hiding
in the bushes
I'm judging—
is the life she leads
worthy of more time

*his gavel
pounds the bench—
I am falling
a featherless chick
from the nest*

alone and cold
my feet firmly planted
ankle deep
the cement feels heavy—
this day would always come

*my breath
bubbles with fish
mingling
with breakers
crashing on the shore*

~Ballina, NSW, Australia

Marilyn Humbert lives in the Northern suburbs of Sydney. She is an enthusiastic writer of poetry. Some of her free verse poems have been published and won prizes in competitions. Marilyn's tanka, haiku appear in Australian and overseas journals and anthologies and online. She is the leader of the Bottlebrush tanka group in Sydney.

Frances Carleton lives with her dogs, cat and rabbit, just outside Canberra. She is an avid reader and poet but has only recently started sharing her work to others. Frances works as a sexual health counsellor and as such a much of her work leans towards the non-traditional.

Chemistry

Marilyn Morgan

It was louder than a bomb. Going off inside my head and I knew what I needed to do. My cell was on the table.

The flowers were still there, outside my window crumpled together on the ground. Just where I'd tossed them a few days ago. He'd been so pleased, all puffed up. Smiling as if he'd finally landed his spaceship. The flowers, dyed to exude deep pinks, sexy yellows, and vibrant maroons but furiously fake and now their colors running into the dusting of snow that'd fallen during the night.

Artificial, altered, doctored to create just right.

It's called chemistry.

I picked up the cell and began my text message.

~United States

Marilyn Morgan

the flowers
you gave to me
wilting
on the ground
where I'd tossed them

hiding out
like
when we were kids
smoking
behind the barn

from time to time
truth slips in . . .
better to watch
the moon rise
through the tangled branches

take my hand
open wide the window
April
and the magnolias
are blooming

grandkids . . .
their little noses
pressed against the slider
waiting
for the deer to come

my son
collects masks
hangs them on his walls
does he dream
a different life?

sometimes
even the dream
feels good
your warm arms
holding me tight

never dreamed
it'd be like this . . .
alone
playing music
cooking dinner for one

~United States

*Marilyn Morgan is a retired English teacher. She lives and writes in
New Hartford, New York, USA. Her poems have been published in
"Atlas Poetica," "Bright Stars," "Ribbons," "A Hundred Gourds,"
"American Tanka," and others.*

Nathan Street

come friend and look
through the amber lens
drink them
the half truths
in faded golden hues

glimpse the vision
in blurry sunlit rush
know then
fantasy
ephemeral, eternal

harsh desert strain
craft for me
a sandstone warrior
let him
possess nothing

with the mute breath
of a stillborn infant
here he is
shapeless horror
clock thief

you obsess
gentle prophet
rest now
warm
in my arms

~Norwich, Norfolk, England

*Nathan lives in Norwich, Norfolk, where he volunteers for a local
conservation group and works as a beach lifeguard.*

Patricia Prime

one can gaze
out through the French doors
for just so long
it's only the light that changes
as it moves from hill to valley

there is joy
simply in the writing
of words on a page
although they do not
deliver us from what we are

a seaside café
the terraced hills behind
rainbow-bright
facades and cubist houses
that might fall into the sea

there are two sets
of voices in my head
those of my homeland
and those of my adopted country,
almost the same, but not quite

all across the valley
light melts the clusters
of sunset clouds
dark clouds on the ridge
before night settles in

a city coast
each summer crowded
with cars, radios,
towels patching the sand
people lying vacant, sun-browned

most of my life gone
in learning what? that ends
don't meet—
it seems there's nothing for it
but to continue to the end

full tide at the bay
six inches of clear water
in the rock pools
where children poke their fingers
into the sea anemones

named after Bouncey
a famous girl boxer
the new kitten
stands on her back legs
punching a ball on a string

the life left to her
still holds a thought or two
maybe happy, maybe sad,
as she watches the sun
grow more remote and pale

darkness falls
only the lighthouse
with its shining glass
catches the last luminous
rays from the horizon

lost love is like a bird
settling in the trees
in the twilight
all that is left is the moon
and the endless night

~New Zealand

Cherita

Patricia Prime

petrichor

the aroma
of summer rain

riding our bikes
beside the harbor wall
the pounding waves

the dawn picks up

a benison sun
pinioned by clouds

changing shed
a group of youngsters
in football gear

twilight

dusk darkens
on our evening stroll

scuttled
in a sublet garden
a bird's tiny bones

the Red Arrows

snaking through
the sunlit skies

streaming
red, white and blue
plumes of smoke

~*New Zealand*

Ryuka

Patricia Prime

my attention gets more intense
till every detail resonates
in the rich chamber of my heart
poems coming like birds

some children laugh at anything
it doesn't matter what, so long
as they feel themselves laugh loudly
at the most inane jokes

I lay the table as always:
blue and white dishes, crystal glasses,
candles, the wine, the braided bread,
to offer visitors

~*New Zealand*

Patricia Prime is the co-editor of Kokako, review / interviews editor of Haibun Today, reviewer & interviewer for Takahe, a reviewer for Atlas Poetica, Meverse Muse, The World Almanac of Poetry (Mongolia). She recently published Shizuka with French poet Giselle Maya.

Paul Mercken

Paul Mercken, Dutch-English-French
Translator

Paul Mercken, Vertaler Nederlands-Engels-
Frans

Paul Mercken, Traducteur Néerlandais-
Anglais-Français

op de boerderij — on the farm — à la ferme

zachtjes schommel ik
in het wiegje van de maan —
een nachtegaal zingt
van al de boeken die ik las
verslaat geen dat der natuur

*softly I am rocking
in the cradle of the moon —
a nightingale sings
of all the books that I've read
none beats the one of nature*

*doucement je balance
dans le berceau de la lune —
un rossignol chante
aucun des livres que j'ai lu
bat celui de la nature*

op de tafel — on the table — sur la table

brood op de tafel
en een dak boven mijn hoofd —
dat is voldoende
ik houd van des nachtegaals lied
en van een glas beaujolais

*bread on the table
and a roof above my head —
that is sufficient
I love the nightingale's song
and a glass of beaujolais*

*du pain sur la table
un toit au-dessus de ma tête —
cela me suffit
j'aime le chant du rossignol
et un verre de beaujolais*

op de boerderij — on the farm — à la ferme

op de boerderij
kippen, varkens en schapen —
ze maken lawaai
de velden rondom zijn geel
gouden rijkdom van raapzaad

*on the farm you find
chicken, pigs and many sheep —
quite a lot of noise
the fields around are yellow
golden richness of rapeseed*

*à la ferme on trouve
des poules, cochons et moutons —
tant de bruit ils font
les champs autour couleur jaune
richesse dorée de navette*

in het kamp — in the camp — dans le camp

in het tentenkamp
duizenden vluchtelingen —
tekort aan voedsel
men betuigt zijn bezorgdheid
maar is bang voor de kosten

*in the encampment
thousands of fugitives stay —
there is lack of food
people express their concern
but are afraid of the costs*

*dans le campement
des milliers de réfugiés —
il manque des vivres
les gens se font du souci
mais craignent les dépenses*

in een plas— in a pool— dans une flaque

in een plas water
een heleboel dikkopjes—
straks enkele kikkers
van veel honderden bloesems
worden maar een paar kersen

*a pool of water
with a great many tadpoles—
ere long a few frogs
from a thousand blossoms
grow a couple of cherries*

*dans une flaque d'eau
un grand nombre de têtards—
bientôt peu de grenouilles
des centaines de fleurs donnent
un petit nombre de cerises*

in boeken— in books— dans des livres

wijsheid overleeft
in boeken en op google—
denken ze vooruit?
we reizen in een trein met
de rug naar de machine

*wisdom can survive
in books and on google—
do they think forward?
we are traveling in a train
with our back to the machine*

*la sagesse survit
dans des livres et google—
pensent ils en avant?
nous voyageons dans un train
notre dos vers la machine*

op mijn fiets— on my bicycle— sur ma bicyclette

als ik naar Zeist fiets
begeleidt mij rechts de maan
links mijn schaduw
als ik terug naar huis keer
is het precies andersom

*cycling towards Zeist
the moon follows me to the right
my shadow to the left
when I return to my home
the opposite is the case*

*à vélo vers Zeist
la lune m'accompagne à droite
mon ombre à gauche
mais lorsque je retourne
c'est le contraire qui se passe*

~Netherlands

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

*Paul Smith lives in Worcester, England. Alongside poetry he enjoys
photography, simple ink paintings, building cigar box guitars and
playing old time blues.*

*Joy McCall came back to her birthplace of Norwich, England, after
living two decades in the States and Canada. She takes comfort from
dark chocolate and warm saké and poetry and love.*

alive

Paul Smith & Joy McCall

with fire
or ink
she said
write me
alive

*sparks
arcing
across
the grey night
connected*

~Worcester, England / Norwich, England

Free Jazz

Peter Fiore

a **blare** of trumpets on the Grand Concourse

A flute answers from Central Park

the piano player on Wall Street begins to comp

the bass stalks Brooklyn

and the drummer

**S
H
A
T
T
E
R
I
N
G**

glass all over the city . . .

~New York, New York, USA

Like It Never Happened

Peter Fiore

“Is this going to be our best year or our last?”

There was no answer.

Later she said, “I’m going to find a man this year.”

A sharp sliver of moon like a scythe.

“Think I’m getting too fucking old for this anyway.”

footprints
in last nite’s
snow
mine
and the cat’s

past white farms
and steaming pastures
we raced the train
on bright summer mornings
in a rusted ’41 Plymouth

war and separation
dilated pupils
faces dissolve into death masks
wanted
medicine for a nightmare

endless greed and lies
uncertainties abound
once again
drunken kings
throw money on the table

where no light returns
or darkness gathers
a burning but no flame
vacant memories
only traces of a dream

use old photos
as bookmarkers
my father always smiling
 mom so devoted
why didn't I feel such love?

so still and cold
snow and deep shadows
a far off train hoots and shunts
maybe I'm riding that same train
to nowhere

~United States

Standbys

Peter Fiore

Sometimes I wonder why I stay up nights
writing poems that we should meet in these
gardens, here in Babylon, this city of cheap thrills
and quick money, so far from everything we
know.

You look over your shoulder as you walk off.
Eternally longing for a myth bold as love. I put
the car in gear and drive off carrying the smell of
your hair in my clothes.

Because it's as if we don't exist outside the
intervals of contact. Which finally are all that
matter. As if we evaporate in absence and all we
are left with are the questions about to be formed
and a longing for the ends of the earth. Those
places without past or future where we could live
day by day, by day.

~United States

Potsa Lotsa

Peter Fiore

Nonno's wake was the main event that fall,
relatives came from as far away as Genoa. When
Aunt Sarah walked in with her beautiful
daughter Barbara, she was using a cane to steady
herself.

She looked over at Nonno laid out in his blue
serge suit and a rosary wrapped around his
wrinkled hands and said, "The party everybody
comes to . . ."

All in black Aunt Francis sat with Nonna.
They were first cousins who both married first
cousins at a double wedding.

"I can see your heart is in pain," she said,
pointing a bony finger in my face. "You miss your
boys and your wife, don't you?"

because I left you with someone
who hadn't seen you smile or sing
we speak to each other tonight
 dying philodendron
with the voice of a thousand sorrows

~United States

A Room At The Club

Peter Fiore

He eats breakfast on the Terrace overlooking
the grass courts. Then it's a hit with his buddies
out in the sunlight. Sliding into shots, smashing
overheads and chopping back serves.

In the afternoons he writes or swims or reads.
He accomplishes nothing. Everybody likes him.
Except his ex-wives, the people who've loved him.
They see the shadow of deceit, the goat's feet and
the flaming sword hanging above the head of the
man in white.

I work all day—till way after dusk—and
then rush home to you, not knowing where you'll
be.

~United States

Peter Fiore

the city fills every corner
with shouts and slamming doors
a man in a white suit
limps across the square
where hobos drink cheap wine

as if it were the seasons
sunny days starry nights
when angels speak of love
even the sounds shine . . .
Fenway in the rain

spring snow
makes the weeping willows
look like
old ladies
washing their hair

through bare branches
a bleak swirling sky
no sign of spring
dream lover
wake me soon

disregarding fame and fortune
right and wrong
the other world—
come tonight
our bed is filled with poems

all the old ones
almost all dead
I sit in front of the fire
and watch cities
collapsing in the ashes

eyes of the heart
scream their love
here I'm waiting
for snow
and your arms around me

more than ever
I just want to sit in the light
of the backyard and listen
to the conversation of birds
and drift on the wind

I feel myself vanishing
into the backyard
like the few remaining crickets
ringing out their last love
this warm November

~United States

Peter Fiore lives and writes in Mahopac, New York, USA. His poems have been published in "American Poetry Review," "Rattle," "Atlas Poetica," "Bright Stars," "A Hundred Gourds," "Ribbons," and others. In 2009, Peter published "text messages," the first volume of poetry totally devoted to Gogyohka. In May 2015, Peter's book of tanka prose, "flowers to the torch," was published by Keibooks.

Rebecca Drouilhet, a U.S. poet, is a retired registered nurse whose haiku and tanka have been widely published in many print journals and e-zines. She has co-authored a book of haiku with her husband Robert Michael Drouilhet titled Lighting a Path. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, playing word games and spending time with her large family in Picayune, Mississippi

Rebecca Drouilhet

the secrets of blood
told in the language of seed . . .
a new future
in each generation,
the past in every blossom

the newborn
in our world . . .
first bath,
first diaper, first suit of clothes
and the whispers of ancestors

the glass reflects
the flash of a bird
in flight . . .
how quickly the future
dissolves into my past

~United States

Radhey Shiam

whom do you worship
in this magnificent temple
God is not here
God is helping the farmer
ploughing his farm at noon

white dress
white lily
white paper
she writes
black words

when will you sit
in my cosy lap
O Pussycat?
it is
freezing cold

why do I
cling to my high ideals
after worship
flowers offered to the deity
are dumped into the dust bin

the tree stands
under which we met
decades ago
still I breathe in
your fragrance of love

the war of words
between
the husband and the wife
shows no
signs of abating

the old man
on morning walk
snow flakes
on his fur cap
winter's gift

the reputed preacher
shows us the way
leading to the heaven
but needs a car driver
to drive him home

temple courtyard
full of devotees
I search for
my girlfriend
but I see her mother

the priest speaks
on the virtues of speaking
on the back pew
two ladies
abuse each other

times come
when I think over
my past good days
just a cow
chewing the cud

the evening star
moving down to the sea
looks at me for help
helplessly I watch
its approaching end

the lone cat
with pilgrims
on the holy hill
does it dream
of the heaven

sparrows fly past
without chirping
she enters my room
and slips away
without a word

she stands
like a statue
beside my hut
on the moon night
worth watching

often
the lonely lady
speaks to her cat
and feels
a sort of comfort

strolling on the lawn
an aged lady looks back
if her cat is there
and following her also
the poor cat has died since long

on the train
reading the red light
I find a tanka
by my wife
I'm surprised

soon after grazing
cows come to the river bank
and drink fresh water
loads on heads ladies wade
through the cows' reflections

on the Ganges' bank
I bow to the Sun
but find not words
to pray and
for what to pray

sitting on a pillar
of a roofless fort
a vulture watches me
still moving
not yet dead

no mountain
not sky, no sun
a foggy curtain
two lights appear
on the road

Rooke's High School
no more I find
the Union Jack
but still I hear
God save the King

non-stop Ramayan reading
at night
the family fallen asleep
only the hired readers
left to complete the job

ponds gather
rain water
drop by drop
can I gather goodness
bit by bit

my aged wife is
my Queen Victoria
having ruled over me
for over six decades
she loves only me

on the roof
constant splatter of rain
under the roof
shower of harsh words
my raging hot wife

morning drizzle
I read a book
a poor sparrow
sitting in my room
waits for the clear sky

my daughter
draws
a cat on paper
and colours it
crimson red

memories
surface every
now and then
like leaping sailors
in the river

morning silence
I meditate
a rat gnaws
pages
of the scripture

my wife finds
a love song
under my pillow
I dare not face
her questioning eyes

lotuses
on the dining table
I need
bread and butter
I am hungry

live lamp offering
to goddess Mahakali
on the way back home
the drunk devotee stumbles
even on the empty road

~India

Radhey Shyam was born on 14th January, 1922, in a reputable vegetarian Hindu family, in Bareilly Cantonment, UP India. He inherited love for literature and social service from his parents. Pen and brush continued to enrich his treasure of works, his works in Hindi, Urdu, and English appear in print and online at National and International level. 'Song of Life' and 'The Book of Life' are two publications. He died 18th April 2015.

in the bathroom

Rod Thompson & Lynda Monahan

strands of your hair
curled across my comb
sunrise caught
in the arch
of a squirrels tail

*my french milled soap
apple scented body butter
cinnabar perfume
his nail clippers
toothbrush and comb*

one last time
neck-tie cinched in place
deep breath
face the mirror
give him the speech

*perched
on the toilet seat
door locked
contemplating if now
is the right time to tell him*

three generations
stepped from the day's rush
into this tub
an iron relic
on lion claw feet

~Canada

Lynda Monahan lives in the pines just outside of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. Her third poetry collection, Verge, was recently released with Guernica Editions. Her tanka has been previously published in Atlas Poetica and other tanka publications.

Rod Thompson lives near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. He has been a fan of tanka for some time and has had several published. Recently retired, he enjoys spending more time writing, including collaborations with other writers.

Traveling with Bokusui*

Ryoh Honda

Ryoh Honda, Japanese-English Translator

Bokusui's tanka on the left, Honda's tanka on the right

けふもまたこころの鉦をうち鳴らしうち鳴
らしつつあくがれて行く

*kyoumomata kokoronokanewo uchinarashi
uchinarashitsutsu akugareteyuku*

today again
I go with a gong
in my mind
ringing and ringing
I go with longing

with new eyes
and new tongue to taste
everything looks
brilliantly fresh
on the road for me

海見ても雲あふぎてもあはれわがおもひは
かへる同じ樹蔭に

*umimitemo kumoagitemo awarewaga omoiwaeru
onajikokageni*

looking at the sea
looking up the clouds but
feel nothing
my heart always comes
back to the same bower

sometimes I
remember the person who
gave and was given
everything till we have
completely nothing

ただ恋ひしうらみいかりは影も無し暮れて
旅籠の欄に倚るとき

*tadakoishi uramiikariwa kagemonashi kuretehatagono
ranniyorutoki*

missing you
the grudge and anger
all gone now
night falls I lean over
the parapet at the inn

hope to forget
have actually forgotten
shadows have gone
now you are nothing
but the shining light

幾山河越えさり行かば寂しさの終てなむ国
ぞ今日も旅ゆく

*ikuyamakawa koesariyukaba sabishisano hatenankunizo
kyoumotabiyuku*

how many mountains
and rivers should I pass
to reach the place
where there's no loneliness

mother's mother
grand mother's mother
great grand mother
travelling in their wombs
or in the blue mountains

うつろなる胸にうつりていたづらにまた消
えゆきし山河のかず

*utsuronaru muneniutsurite itazurani matakieyukisi
yamakawanokazu*

the number of
mountains and rivers
disappearing
erratically after
reflecting in my heart

how many times
should I rewrite the routes
for my journey
in the coming future
but was never bored

旅ゆけば瞳瘦るかゆきずりの女みながら
美からぬは無し

*tabiyukeba hitomiyasuruka yukizurino onagominagara
yokaranuwanashi*

does traveling
makes my eyes poorer?
all women who
happened to pass by are
beautiful without exception

always the route
for my destination
looks sunny
the more I travel
the more my mind clearer

海哀し山またかなし酔ひ痴れし恋のひとみ
にあめつちもなし

*umikanashi yamamatakanashi yoishireshi koinohitomini
ametsuchimonashi*

the sea is sad
so the mountains too
there are no
sky and earth in the eyes
intoxicated with love

just feel it's easy
to transcend the time
and the space
if I exist with you
just here and now

白鳥は哀しからずや空の青海のあをにも染
まずただよふ

*shiratoriwa kanashikarazuya soranoao uminoanonimo
somazutadayou*

a white bird
sorrowful or not so
floating without
being dyed with the blue
of the sky and sea

exposed more
getting much purer
stained again
and again and again
thus I am here now

わが胸ゆ海のところにわが胸に海のころ
ゆあはれ糸鳴る

*wagamuneyu uminokokoroni wagamuneni uminokokoroyu
awareitonaru*

from my mind
to the ocean's heart
to my mind
from the ocean's heart
oh the strings make sounds

waveless sea
no clouds in the sky
the resonance
of heaven and ocean
privileged to hear

花も葉も光りしめらひわれの上に笑みかた
むける山ざくら花

*hanamohamo hikarishimerai warenoueni emikatumkeru
yamazakurabana*

smiles upon me
from cherry blossoms
in mountain
all petals and leaves
full of moist light

whether swimming
or standing I'm not sure
in full bloom
mountain cherry tree
under the galaxy

~Tokyo, Japan

* *Bokusui Wakayama (1885–1928), tanka giant who loved drinking
saké and travelling*

夏くれのすきてつゆのたまむすふ
庭のなてしこのはなのきよらさ
*natsigurinusijiti tsiyunutamamusibu
niwanunadishikunu hananuchurasa*

beauty of dianthus
in the garden of my house
summer rain left dewdrops
on their petals

Anonymous

blossoms of rain drops
fall on summer petals
flowers on the flowers
as dew's glistening

Conversation with Summer Songs of *Kokin Ryukashu**

Ryoh Honda

Ryoh Honda, Japanese-English Translator

Kokin Ryukashu ryuka on the left
Ryoh Honda's ryuka on the right

蝉のはころもにはなのほひうつち
ゆくはるのなこり伽よすらに

*shiminuhagurumuni hananuniwiutsichi
ikuharununaguri tujiyusirani*

the flower fragrances
into cicada-wing-rob
consoling myself as
spring is leaving

Kamimura Uwekata

hair infused with scents
of flowers and blossoms
only because of you
the summer shines

ねやに入れわらへすたみほれしちゆて
にや又あかつきのとりも鳴さ

*niyaniirivarabi sidamiburishichuti
nyamataakatsichinu tuinnachusa*

come in bed room darling
enjoying the cool of night
we know it's not bad but
cock will crow soon

Toutei Higa

except you I do not
except me you do not
need anyone at all
the peak of summer

さやかてるつきになかれ舟うけて
すまてのかれらぬ那覇のみなと

*sayakatirutsichini nagaribuniukiti
simatinukariranu nafanuminatu*

boats at Naha harbor
in the clear moon light
never imagined to
go out from here

Garetsu Matsuda

the moon light so clear
makes the world very simple
peaceful night of Naha
calm sleep of whale

てかやうおしつれて野に出て百合の
はなのほひそてにうつち遊は

dikayoushitsiriti nuniñjitiyurinu
hananuniwisudini utsichiasiba

let's go out and play
transferring the smell of
lilies on green grounds
to our sleeves

Mustuki Takara

a beak into the air
and arms of an anchor
spreading towards the sky
a lily bloomed

すたすたとふちゆるわかなつの風や
いつもわかそてにやとて呉らな

sidasidatufuchuru wakanatsinukajiya
itsinwagasudini yadurikwirana

the breeze of young summer
so cool and so joyful
kindly stay forever
inside my sleeves

Anonymous

the early summer breeze
stay inside my heart
keep cool and I will never
be lost again

わかなつかなれは野辺のもゝくさの
押かせになひくいろのきよらさ

wakanatsiganariba nubinumumukusanu
usukajininabiku irunuchurasa

millions of green grasses
swaying in mild winds
of early young summer
more than beautiful

Anonymous

with millions of flowers
brought by young summer
comfortably I'm being
washed by winds

ふみてらち呉たるむかしおへちやしゆさ
夜半にとひわたるにはの螢

fumitirachikwitaru nkashiubijashusa
yuwanitubiwtaru niwanufutaru

fireflies come to visit
my garden in the night and
reminds me that they once
lighted my books

Anonymous

moon falls over mountains
then fireflies appear and
newly illuminate
my garden and me

つきもいりさかてふける夜のそらに
こゝろあてゝらす庭のほたる

tsichinirisagati fukiruyunusurani
kukuruatitirasu niwanufutaru

moon leaving for west
my heart getting dismal
but fireflies in my garden
brighten my heart

Anonymous

invisible line of life
connecting unknown things
fireflies generously
light up some parts

見れはうれしさや世かほよの稲の
うちなひちなひちなひちきよらさ

*miribaurishisaya yugafuyununninu
uchinabichinabichi nabichijurasa*

what a beautiful view
look rich years of rice
are bowing and bowing
joyful harvest

Anonymous

ears of rice have ripened
bending before the breeze
showing us how to be
humble and rich

* *Collection of Ryuka of Ancient and Modern Times.*
Originally edited in mid-19th century, *Kokin
Ryukashu* is the first collection of ryuka edited to
read traditional ryuka songs, not to sing. The
collection contains 1,700 works, split into six
parts for spring, summer, autumn, winter, love,
nakafu (versions mixed with waka) and
miscellaneous.

~Tokyo, Japan

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

the lovely silence of peace

Ryoh Honda

irregularly for
love but regularly for
cherry blossoms
hope admirers miss
regret and wait again

blue colors and winds
in the heaven sublimated
into petals of iris
the holy flutterer

it is nothing
but an avalanche of
soft feathers
though that's generally
called a pony

the locked shadows are
thrown out and disappear
while a bud of rose is
loosening to bloom

showing how
a galaxy formed
one twoten
hundred petals of
chrysantheums open

north winds have died down
then snow falls ceaselessly
as if it goes back to heaven
just like memories

~Tokyo, Japan

Transliteration next page.

the lovely silence of peace

Ryoh Honda

irregularly for love
but regularly for
cherry blossoms
hope admires miss
regret and wait again

blue colors and winds
in the heaven sublimated
into petals of iris
the holy flutter

it is nothing
but an avalanche of
soft feathers
though that's generally
called a peony

the locked shadows are
thrown out and disappear
while a bud of rose is
loosening to bloom

showing how
a galaxy formed
one two ten
hundred petals of
chrysanthemums open

north winds have died down
the snow falls ceaselessly
as if it goes back to heaven
just like memories

~Tokyo, Japan

S.M. Kozubek

the incoming squall
shakes our boat . . .
from their shipwreck beds
whispering spirits below
beckon us

through the birches
the moon shimmers
on nestled whitetails
the speckled shadows
of summer silence

as the rain cascades
on our canary oilskins
our boat dips and rises
toward the fall's rainbow
at the edge of the earth

with the borrowed blue suit
for our niece's wedding
I remain in Her Grace's favor
fanning the dying
marriage embers

I follow shadows
in the empty rooms
how strange
after all our years
my nights without you

as the sun quiets
our kayaks drift
near mangroves
where egrets gurgle
to their nestlings

sunset
at the dock
his dog waits
the fishing pole
still by the door

nightfall
I look up
and fade
in the light of
the heavens

the rush of her hair
dangles on me
the rain cascades
upon the mist
maid of sorrows

beyond the firelight
a heavy snowfall . . .
under the blanket
her jasmine skin
enfolds me

in the blizzard
under wet cardboard
and cold stone
the children nestle
wolf moon

on our bed
where you lay
last summer
still with me
the spell of lilacs

the house doors
hang off hinges . . .
in the tall weeds
fixed on a blank sky
the doll's brown eyes

where she and I lay
those sultry days
our impressions fade . . .
sand driven
to the dark sea

when I leave
gather my dust
sprinkle it
on song and
laughter

evening walk in the mist
I greet a neighbor
and feeling a tic
my eye winces
she winks back

reluctant to go
when acorns knock
on my roof
autumn appears
as an uninvited guest

leaving the road
and paychecks behind
I wander the shore
collecting sand dollars
is enough reward

reading history
and genealogy charts . . .
waves
lift the sea's life
to shore

~Sarasota, Florida, USA

*After retiring from practicing law, S. M. Kozubek spends more time now
writing poetry, flash fiction and other works. His poems have appeared
in ICON, Journal of Modern Poetry, Frogpond, A Hundred Gourds,
Prune Juice, bottle rockets, Skylark and other publications.*

winter on a tropical island

Shereen Lee

and so the promise
of snow retains its static
glow. a fantasy
like no other: longed for at
midday, in the undertones
of a January sun —

~*Taipei, Taiwan*

robert frost's woods

Shereen Lee

at least, now there is
always the night to escort
me. the lovely and
deep darkness which I, too, found:
an ocean whispering sleep
to my eyelids at long last.

~*Taipei, Taiwan*

Shereen Lee

what it must feel like
to travel faster than the
speed of light! with more
energy than substance, with
the feeling of something new

hold your breath just a
little longer. let the wave
of quivering silence break
across a sleepy moon and
revel in waiting, dancing . . .

suddenly alone,
after a storm of music
has rained on your limbs,
sticky remnants of the sound
echoing with trembling ears . . .

~*Taipei, Taiwan*

Shereen Lee is a high school student currently residing in Taipei, Taiwan, although her mind often lives in the clouds. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in Alexandria Quarterly, The Window, Expression Magazine, and other journals.

Steve Black

morning call
to prayer
i reach out
for my medication
i guess it's too late

another false dawn
she busies herself with ritual
on hands and knees
she scrubs at the dirt
you cannot see

taunted
by the tv
my cameo performance
caught
in a small scene

play fight
to the death
always
the referee calls time
from the kitchen

with no one
looking
i write
my name
in the prayer book

late call on the last train
the commuter apologises
to the wife
his girlfriend sitting
at a respectful distance

the man from the council
with suitable protection
harvests rotten fruit
dog shit and human remains
along the avenue of winter trees

bitch fight
he minds
his boyfriend's
purse
and glasses

at the wedding reception
her mother
still dancing
to the ex-husband's
favourite tune

cold comfort
on the kitchen floor
the dog scoffs
at my left over
feelings

to the bitter end
the hearse passes
her house of fifty years
the for sale sign
in the ground before her

with time dragging
he turns on himself
in the bedroom mirror
finely balanced
in his wife's shoes

as the crow flies
it takes the police helicopter
seconds to reach the other side
for those of us left behind
a lifetime

the tv is dead
and i killed it
it has been 3 days
and i wish i hadn't done it
tv is everything

the inconvenience short-lived
my fellow passengers relieved
the bridge between this world
and the next
re-opened to other traffic

breaking
down
on the motorway
i cannot
go back there

a light
in the darkness
raising the dead
the police diver
works the old gravel pit

my mother's cards
on the side table
more or less
the same
as last year

the man
in the corner
of the bar
talking to himself
on behalf of the rest

past midnight
the point of no return
the glass already
half-empty
day of the dead

taking a smoke
in the midnight garden
the police helicopter
hovers overhead
finally—the spotlight

she looks up
from the street
her lover lingering
on each draw
of the cigarette

the self-help books
she left behind
gathering dust
beneath
the new plasma tv

the man who fell
from grace
lying low in the top floor flat
revelation in red
scrawled across the door

i take the knife
to the tattoo
this mark she left upon me
love drips
through my fingers

i picture
the quiet life
snow forming
on the old refrigerator
in the front yard

my daughter's
makeover
i give myself
a second look
in the vanity mirror

~Reading, UK

Steve Black—A relatively recent convert to Japanese inspired verse living in the Thames Valley (UK). Other shortcomings may be found at Ink, Sweat and Tears, Sonic Boom, Gogyoshi Monthly, the Bamboo Hut Tanka Journal and the Skylark Tanka Journal.

After the Bombings

Teresa Mei Chuc

after the bombings
each time villagers rebuild
graceful thatched houses
reconstruct heart with bamboo
weave palm fronds for gentle roof

The setting of this tanka is Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It is based on a true story of a Buddhist village in a Vietnam countryside that was bombed multiple times. To keep their hope and hearts alive and strong, the villagers would rebuild their homes each time after a bombing.

~Vietnam

Teresa Mei Chuc, author of two full-length collections of poetry, Red Thread (Fithian Press, 2012) and Keeper of the Winds (FootHills Publishing, 2014), was born in Saigon, Vietnam, and immigrated to the U.S. under political asylum with her mother and brother shortly after the Vietnam War while her father remained in a Vietcong "reeducation" camp for nine years. Her poetry appears in journals such as CONSEQUENCE Magazine, EarthSpeak Magazine, Hawai'i Pacific Review, Kyoto Journal, The Prose-Poem Project, The National Poetry Review, Rattle, Whitefish Review, Verse Daily and in anthologies such as New Poets of the American West (Many Voices Press, 2010), With Our Eyes Wide Open: Poems of the New American Century (West End Press, 2014), and Mo' Joe (Beatlick Press, 2014). Teresa's poetry is forthcoming in the anthology, Inheriting the War: Poetry and Prose by Descendants of Vietnam Veterans and Refugees. Her new chapbook of poetry is How One Loses Notes and Sounds (Word Palace Press, 2016). Teresa is a graduate of the Masters in Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, and teaches literature and writing at a public high school in Los Angeles.

Tony Boehle

ein Fremder bleib' ich
ganz gleich, wohin ich geh —
den Wind
in den Weizenfeldern
nenn' ich meine Hymne

*a stranger I remain
no matter where I go —
the wind
in the wheat fields
I call my anthem*

ein stumpfes Rasiermesser
ist alles, was mein toter Vater
mir hinterließ —
sein Gesicht
spiegelt sich darin

*a blunt razor
is all my dead father
left for me —
his face
reflecting in it*

ein Mottenschatten,
der über weiße Wände
kreist —
ganz gleich, wie ich mein Leben leb'
es ist vergebens

*a moth's shadow
is circling on
white walls —
no matter how I live my life
it is in vain*

mein dunkles Zimmer
durchgeschüttelt von einer Tram
die vorüberfährt
genau Moment als ich
Matsukaze lese

*my dark apartment
is shaken by a tram
passing by
right in the moment
I read Matsukaze*

tief in mir
ist ein Ödland
gepeitscht von Stürmen —
keine Saat
wird jemals dort gedeihen

*deep inside me
there is a wasteland
battered by storms —
no seed
will ever bear fruit there*

~Germany

Tony Boehle was born in 1983 and started writing tanka in 2012. He is editor of Germany's first tanka journal „31“. His tanka were published in several national and international magazines & anthologies. He lives and works as chemist in Chemnitz, Germany.

Tony Boehle wurde 1983 geboren und begann 2012 Tanka zu schreiben. Er ist Herausgeber des ersten deutschen Tanka-Journals „31“. Seine Tanka wurden bereits in verschiedenen nationalen und internationalen Magazinen und Anthologien veröffentlicht. Er lebt und arbeitet als Chemiker in Chemnitz.

Yiwei Huang, China Pharmaceutical University, Nanjing, teaches computer science. He has published tanka sequences, translations and articles with Kath Abela Wilson in Atlas Poetica and Eye of the Telescope. Huang met Kath Abela and Rick Wilson in Nanjing and hosted them on a tour of Nanjing, and Yellow Mountain. Since then he has visited them in the US once, for the WilsonFest celebrating Rick's mathematics in 2012. This tanka was written during a cab ride with Kath Abela and Rick, hosted by Shanghai mathematicians, to the Shanghai Art Museum, May 2016.

Yiwei Huang

traffic and the rain
what brings us to the museum
Chinese hospitality
still alive
in this political world

~Shanghai, China

Tanka River and *Utayomi*

Ryoh Honda

Ryoh Honda, Japanese-English Translator

Each tanka is something like a dewdrop, but as a whole tanka formed an ocean in its long history. Many rivers, visibly and invisibly, continue to flow into the ocean. One of the rivers, *Sakuya*, a tanka journal, suffered deep sadness last year when its founder and editor, Yayoiko Maki (Sayuri Morimoto) passed away on May 19, 2015, aged 83. As a leading tanka poet, she published fourteen tanka books, two critiques, and several anthologies.

かにかくにわれはうたよみこの旗のへし折
れるまで詠ひつづける

anyway like this
I am an *utayomi**
will continue
to make tanka until
this flag is destroyed

From *What would you do?* published in 2002.

**utayomi*: tanka poet. *uta* means song and is another name of tanka (*tan*=short, *ka*=song), and *yomi* means singer of *uta*.

Her passion for tanka and messages will be never forgotten. In *Sakuya* vol. 43, the memorial edition of Yayoiko Maki, the essays dedicated to her mention her favorite sayings to her pupils,

You just need to tell your “own idea”. Stop to think “tanka needs to express such feelings” or “it would be more like tanka if you could say like this”. ‘It must be definitely 31 sound units’ is not correct. It’s fine if the mind (of 31 sound units) is held in the the 5 phrases.

Tanka has no rules. It’s ok not necessarily to be 5-7-5-7-7 but should have its soul. You are good as you are.

北窓を閉めんとしつづいつも見る遠くはあ
れど強く青き灯

when I’m about to
close the north window
I always look
a blue strong light
though it is far away

おまへの掌はなれぬやうに握りしめ星ぎし
ぎしの空を翔びたい

I want to fly
in the sky full of stars
grabbing your palm
tightly so that we
cannot be apart

From *Before and after the dream*, her last tanka book published in 2016.

明日思ふとりとめもなく明日を思ふいつ終
活をせむとも思ふ

thinking tomorrow
not particularly
thinking of tomorrow
thinking when I shall
prepare for my end

From *Sakuya* vol. 42, one of her last published tanka.

While her last works showed how she was going to complete her tanka life, her editorial notes in *Sakuya* vol. 42 indicated her intrinsic sense of value how tanka should be,

Flowers must biologically fall for the next flowers but I want flowers to bloom forever. So am I wrong? It's better for flowers to be always blooming, I believe.

Taira Morimoto, her son, who is also a talented tanka poet, says in the memorial edition,

In short, wherever they are and whatever they are doing, those who want to make tanka will make tanka . . . Yayoiko Maki also did not think tanka as poetry work was not necessarily important, but the action to make tanka was important. Souls of tanka poets who faced tanka in an earnest manner will live eternally as long as the tanka format exist. And my mother Sayuri Morimoto who I loved most passed away but the tanka poet Yayoiko Maki is alive as far as I go with tanka. That's it.

His tanka sequence appears in the very last of the journal under the title 'Never look back.'

クッキーの踏み潰されて晒されてわれを滅
ぼすも救うも歌

a cookie is
crushed and exposed
it is tanka
that can demolish and
also save my life

歌を選ぶ? 冗談じゃないちはやぶる歌より
人は選ばれるもの

choosing *uta*?
no kidding please
the fact is that
the divine *uta* will
choose who to sing

歌は力、ひともとの意志、もしひとが風に
紛るる塵だとしても

uta is the force
and a piece of will
even if the person
were a dust particle
lost in wild winds

In April 2016, the new representative and editor of *Sakuya*, Taira Morimoto launched its vol. 44. Thus the tanka river ceaselessly flows into its ocean.

息を吸いまた息を吐きそのうちに白い雲が
流れていった

breathing in and
again breathing out
during the time
white clouds
have flown away

Taira Morimoto

~Tokyo, Japan

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

Meandering Through Tanka in Three Languages (1)

Maxianne Berger

In early July, 2015, I received an email from Kozue Uzawa, the editor of Tanka Canada's *Gusts*. The previous fall, after a tanka festival in Lyon, France, she'd been asked indirectly by Patrick Simon to provide English translations for a planned trilingual anthology of modern and contemporary Japanese tanka. Patrick Simon is the publisher of *Les Éditions du tanka francophone* and also the editor of the *Revue du tanka francophone* (*Rtf*) which he founded in 2007. As I write, the 27th issue is forthcoming. Simon (2) wanted the anthology to be tri-lingual for purposes of marketing. (3) Above, I say "indirectly" because Simon speaks no English, and so asked the anthology project's Japanese-to-French translator, Ikuo Ishida, to do the honours. Uzawa requested a second translator, Yasuko Ito Watt, to be part of her team. In spite of the challenges, Uzawa saw both an opportunity to translate more tanka and a ready publisher—we all know how difficult it is to find publishers. The launch date was set firmly for October 1025, during another tanka festival, in Martigues, France. (4)

I was already familiar with this anthology, having pre-purchased some copies to help support the project, and now Uzawa was asking me if I would check the English. I should point out here that Uzawa and Watt, both retired academics, have been recognized for their Japanese-to-English translations. In 2007, Uzawa and co-translator Amelia Fielden received the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature awarded by the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University for their anthology *Ferris Wheel: 101 Modern and Contemporary Tanka* (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 2006). Watt and her co-translator Edith Sarra were awarded the 2013–14 William F. Sibley Memorial Translation Prize for their translation of Takuya Tanaka's *3.11 Rinji hinanjo*

(2011), *3/11: Temporary Shelter* (2011; PDF) (5). Uzawa and Watt had worked previously with native speakers, and I was more than happy to become involved.

I knew that both translators wanted the English versions of the tanka to stay as close as possible to the Japanese originals rather than to be reinterpreted as tanka in English. My responsibility towards the text involved straightforward copy-editing: grammar, spelling, usage, and hunting down received English terms for historic events and names of organizations.

What I'm setting out to do here is not an objective review (as part of the team, I wouldn't presume to), but rather a meandering presentation of the work through the prism of some issues, considerations, and discussions that informed the final product. These will be interspersed with thoughts about the nature of tanka as it travels between languages and cultures.

The Book Itself

The anthology has a full roster of players involved in its conception and production.

Anthologie de tanka japonais modernes ; 近現代短歌アンソロジー ; An Anthology of Modern Japanese Tanka. Editorial direction, Michio Ohno and Ikuo Ishida; tanka selection, Takuya Tanaka, Mikiko Yokoyama, Bōyō Okuda, Hidenori Fujishima, Yoritsuna Sasaki, Yurie Yasuda; French translation, Ikuo Ishida, Brigitte Pellat, Nicolas Grenier; English translation, Kozue Uzawa, Yasuko Ito Watt, Maxianne Berger. Preface, Yukitsuna Sasaki. Introduction and notes, Michio Ohno. Laval, Canada, & Marseilles, France: Éditions du tanka francophone, 2015. ISBN 978-2-923829-20-3. Soft cover, 316 pp. 20€ or 26\$ CAN. Can be purchased via the publisher's web site through Paypal.

Missing from this list are the names of the ninety-nine poets whose work is represented, one poem each, distributed equally among three sections, "Life," "Nature" and "Society." Within

sections, the tanka are printed in the chronological order of publication date. Each section has thirty-three poems, and each tanka is given two facing pages. On the right-hand page the poem is presented in Japanese—kanji/hiragana/katakana, and rōmaji—as well as in French and English. The poet's name appears beneath the tanka along with the bibliographic information and the name of the person on the selection team who chose the poem. On the left-hand page there is a brief explanatory blurb in French and English. There was a seemingly last-minute decision not to include the Japanese versions of these blurbs, written by the person who selected the tanka and used by both French and English translators. Because the poems are numbered, when I refer to a specific tanka, instead of page number information I'll indicate the poem number—e.g. “tanka 92”—because it also indirectly indicates the *AMJT* section where it appears.

Tanka selection

Yukitsuna Sasaki's Preface arrived very late in the production period. Possibly to save time, I was asked by Ikuo Ishida, one of the Japanese editors and the main French translator, to compose an English version indirectly from his French translation. Sasaki is editor of the *Kokoro no hana* [Heart of the Flower] tanka journal and was named to the prestigious Japan Art Academy in 2008. Sasaki points out that “[s]ome important tanka poets are missing” and that his choices “would be quite different. Given the nature of an anthology, that is to be expected” (*AMJT*, p. 9). I very soon received a request to translate an addition to editor Michio Ohno's statement in the Afterword: that the selection team was composed of “somewhat younger tanka poets who ranged in age from their twenties through their fifties” (*AMJT*, p. 313). Previously, although all names are listed on the copyright page, Ohno himself made no specific mention of these younger poets in his statement, and I interpret this addition to be either a justification or a disclaimer. As to Sasaki's comment about his choices being “quite different,” the anthology is

also a departure from others of Japanese tanka translated into English. (6)

The *AMJT* is different from Makoto Ueda's *Modern Japanese Tanka: An anthology* (Columbia UP, 1996); from Uzawa and Amelia Fielden's *Ferris Wheel: 101 Modern and Contemporary Tanka*, previously mentioned; and Leza Lowitz, Miyuki Aoyama, and Akemi Tomioka's *A Long Rainy Season: Haiku & Tanka* (Stone Bridge Press, 1994). Ueda presents 400 tanka by twenty of Japan's “most renowned poets” for their “major contributions” (Ueda's *MJT*, back cover). Uzawa, over the years, jotted down “poems that moved me[.]” tanka she wanted to share with “the English-speaking world” (*Ferris* p. xi). For the 101 tanka, her notebook yielded one to five poems by fifty-five different poets. Lowitz *et al* have gathered tanka (and haiku) by eight women “to represent the current situation in Japanese women's poetry today” (Lowitz, p. 26).

Based on the tanka in the *AMJT*, it seems that what Ohno and his selection team aimed for was a broad overview of modern and contemporary tanka that would present not only voices that are important historically, but also voices that represent trends in Japanese tanka, and new voices not yet proven by time. There is a deliberate presentation of more ‘political’ poems alongside ones that are more traditional in their chosen topic. The tanka also reveal a variety of aesthetic approaches. There is, of course, overlap in poets anthologized—six of Lowitz *et al*'s poets are in the current anthology, as are fifteen of Ueda's and thirty-two of Uzawa's—but with so many more poets, this new anthology brings previously unknown voices to the attention of French—and English-speaking readers.

Poets we find in more than one anthology include the two Yosanos [Tekkan & Akiko—ed.], Fumi Saitō, and Machi Tawara in the “Life” section; Shiki Masaoka and Mokichi Saitō in “Nature”; and in “Society,” Shūji Terayama and Motoko Michiura. Many of the tanka chosen echo not only what we often see of poets in translation, but also what we see in our own poetry. This first is in “Life.”

only once
did I have true love
nandina berries
know
about it

—Hōdai Yamazaki (1914–1985) (7)

The following example is in “Nature.”

gazing at it
intensely, I feel sad
and conclude
the moon is
totally naked

—Shion Mizuhara (1959–) (8)

This tanka by Motoko Michiura, in the section called “Society,” is one we already know for its presence in *A Long Rainy Season*.

the smell of
tear gas still remains
in my black hair
I wash it, comb it
and go to see you

—Motoko Michiura (1947–) (9)

There and Here, Then and Now

We’ll never know which poets Yukitsuna Sasaki would have included, or which ones he would have excluded. There are poems that to my “Western” ear have little affective resonance—however they provide insight into what a Japanese tanka reader finds worthy, and this in itself makes these poems interesting and perhaps deserving of closer examination. There are also poems, from the near past, that have new resonances because of changes in cultural values and realities.

with umbrellas
a group of wives waiting
at the station
in the evening, light snow
might envelop them

—Nobuo Ōno (1914–1984) (10)

This 1954 scene of domesticity, today, invites thoughts about gender roles, without ascribing any intentions to the poet. We know that the present is different—in our world. Managing to transcend its time, like any good tanka, it sets a reader’s mind to thinking.

An obvious reason that some tanka might speak less to non-Japanese readers is that despite our knowledge of Japanese aesthetics, we don’t necessarily inhabit descriptions of nature with similar emotions. This next tanka, also from the 1950s, hails a new season and recalls the meaning of Japan itself, as Land of the Rising Sun.

spring—
morning sun born here
receiving it
mountains, rivers, grass
and trees all shining

—Nobutsuna Sasaki (1872–1963) (11)

Yes, there is joy in springtime, but does our (can our) western culture appreciate that joy, from pure description, in the same way? As we read this poem today, we must remember that Sasaki’s tanka is from over 60 years ago. It warrants its place within history. In translations of more recent tanka, I still see descriptions, but something more is added. The most recently published tanka in the anthology’s “Nature” section is from a book published in 2000.

quiet ocean
some voice becomes
audible—
the voice of a whale
calling its child

—Sadaka Morioka (1916–2009) (12)

According to the explanatory blurb, which also draws attention to the personification, *wata-no-hara* means “ocean” in classical Japanese. The choice of the classical term establishes the whale’s presence through times past till now, and the personification can be seen as a political

statement—because hunting whales is a controversial topic.

In the West we might be affected by the actual experience of a beautiful landscape, in real life, but feel less enthralled by a verbal rendition of the same vista, however nicely wrought. This difference in sensibilities, I suspect, continues to distinguish our tanka from tanka in Japan. When serving on selection committee for *Rtf*, and now as co-editor of *Cirrus*, I have declined lovely descriptions of nature—because that is all they were. Is this something I should reconsider? The differences between what Japanese readers know and feel, and what their French-speaking and English-speaking counterparts do not, invites a look at some other textual aspects that might differentiate these reading audiences.

The Editor's Introduction

Michio Ohno's introduction in Japanese, "Past, Present, and Future of Tanka," takes up nearly a dozen pages in the book, and despite this brevity, he manages to convey much of tanka's essential aspects. He covers tanka characteristics, provides a quick history through to the nineteenth century, and then looks at developments in tanka during the modern and contemporary periods, from *shasei* (写生 sketch from life) through the avant-garde (前衛 [*zen'ei*]) period following World War II, and then the advent of light verse (ライト・ヴァース [*raito vāsu*]) popularized by Machi Tawara. It is in his section about the future of tanka that Ohno considers its internationalization. Well placed, in the conclusion, his discussion about *kokoro* and *kotoba*, that is, content and expression, reminds readers of their importance, still, in tanka.

Because half was translated by Uzawa and half by Watt, one of my responsibilities was to ensure that the same terminology appear throughout. Not surprisingly, the most important discussion involved the Japanese term "音節" [*onsetsu*], "syllable." Ohno's very first sentence includes the concept. "Tanka," he says in Uzawa's translation, "is a Japanese poem that uses phrases of 5 and 7 Japanese syllables, combining them into a 5-7-5-7-7 sequence." (p.

39). For Ohno's "*onsetsu*," Uzawa had chosen "Japanese syllables," and Watt, "sound units." In the French translation, Ikuo Ishida uses "*son*" [sound], thus avoiding the issue of syllables. (13) In the discussion, Uzawa expressed concern about what readers would understand. Ohno's essay provides no explanation, and one was needed—one that would ensure readability throughout the essay by avoiding clunky noun-phrases such as "Japanese syllables" and "sound units."

Translators who need to engage with the text have a powerful tool: the translator's note. In the above passage, where the phrase "Japanese syllables" first appears, using a footnote, Uzawa refers readers to her explanation of "Japanese syllables." She closes the note with the statement that "[t]hrough this essay, 'syllable' means 'Japanese syllable'" (note 1, p. 39).

There is no similar explanation in the French version. I can only surmise that the need for one didn't occur to the team. Certainly the publisher, Simon, is devoted to syllables. Already a staunch seventeen-French-syllable haiku poet when he came to tanka in the mid-noughties, he took up where French tanka pioneers (14) Jehanne Grandjean and Hisayoshi Nagashima left off when they ceased publishing their *Revue du tanka international* in 1972. In a recent article, (15) Simon defends the use of 31 syllables, this in response to a statement by Uzawa in *Gusts* 21 about the length of tanka in French. (16) Simon's argument mainly considers differences between French and English, seemingly ignoring the fact that the focus on brevity is encouraged by Japanese poets. (17) He also cites a 1992 statement by Michael D. Picone, that "lexical creativity in compliance with the syntax of a sentence will better conform to language's genius" (18) [my emphasis]. This statement would reject the Japanese use of fragments in French tanka. 31 syllables allows for perfect grammar and complete sentences.

Interestingly, in the French translations, although not punctuated, nearly all the tanka in the anthology are set into complete sentences. Many of the English translations are as well. This begs the question, given fewer words in Japanese

for 31 *onsetsu*: have fragments been necessary in Japanese throughout *waka* and *tanka* history because full grammar doesn't fit? Japanese poetics incorporates these fragments. In English, even with a similar number of denotative elements, we usually have room for syntactic markers. So we might also ask, what rhetorical benefits might we gain, in English, if we tried more fragments?

The Japanese point of view concerning overly long *tanka* is somewhat borne out towards the end of Ohno's introduction when he covers "Tanka Written in Foreign Languages." He states unequivocally, "I do not think it is necessary to be bound by the 5-7-5-7-7 count for Japanese syllables." He recognizes that there is often too much information in other languages, such as English, but unless the Japanese translations of these poems are composed in 5-7-5-7-7, that is, unless the poems are pared down, they won't be considered *tanka*. In order to present the excluded information, he suggests using a *kotobagaki*, that is, a foreword. (19)

Explanatory Blurbs

The left-hand page opposite each *tanka* includes explanatory blurbs in French and English, with the original Japanese omitted. In many cases, the added information truly enhances our understanding.

how cruel —
on a child's
palm
one pale red tablet
of potassium iodide

—Yoshiko Takagi (1972–) (20)

The post-Fukushima explanation in the blurb is that "potassium iodide tablets are taken to protect from internal radiation of the thyroid." Another face of nuclear power is nuclear war, and although not nuclear, there is an explanation of the first phrase—"muzan-ya-na, (how cruel)" —an allusion to Basho's haiku, "how cruel/ under the helmet/ a grasshopper[.]"

Specific historic events referred to in the blurb also provide context—Tiananmen Square, the Great East Japan Earthquake. There are also historical references we are unlikely to recognize. A *tanka* by Hiroshi Sakaguchi (1946–) uses the term *sōkatsu*, "self-re-examination." Members of the Japanese Red Army, we are told, carried out "horrific lynchings" among themselves "under the name of 'self-reexamination.'" (21) There are enough of these interesting bits of information in the blurbs that one wonders about the editorial decision not to provide them to Japanese readers.

Some blurbs provide details about a *tanka*'s geographic setting—Mt. Miwa, the Mogami River, the Suwa Lake. And biographic information can also inform our understanding. For example concerning Akiko Yosano we are told that the *tanka* (number 4) "is an elegy by Akiko when she lost her husband[.]"

Some blurbs refer to flora or fauna depicted in the *tanka*—peony, a deciduous shrub, (22) or *umaoi*, a katydid. (23) Whether simply mentioned or given taxonomic descriptions, the presence of these terms in the blurb presents an interesting option for the English and French versions. In translating the blurb, the original Japanese term can be retained, and the translated explanation placed in parentheses. Then, the translated *tanka* can use the Japanese word. For example, the explanation of the *tanka* by Bunmei Tsuchiya (1890–1990) (24) presents the flower. "*Azumaichige* (anemone raddeana) is a perennial that belongs to the buttercup family and has little white flowers in early spring." So line 4 of the *tanka* begins, "the *azumaichige* flowers[.]" In the French version of the same *tanka*, the flowers are "les anémones de la forêt*" —forest anemones—and an asterisk leads to the note immediately below: "anémones *raddeana*." This use of terms in another language is an aspect of "local colour." It can add atmosphere to a poem, and texture to the phrasing. In English, there is also "the *susuki* field" (25) rather than "a field of pampas grass." And in French, *shōryō batta* (26) becomes "une sauterelle « shōryō »"—that is, a "*shōryō*" grasshopper. The English of the same *tanka* begins with "a longheaded locust[.]" Options

present choices for translators and seemingly different poems for readers.

Translation Issues and Language Differences

Mike Montreuil, who like me is fluent in both French and English, made the comment that the anthology is like two different books. In fact, any two translations of a single poem can be quite different. One need think no further than Basho in Hiroaki Sato's *One Hundred Frogs* (1995). (27) Translation differences in French and English versions of tanka were much more pronounced in decades past when there were added words in both versions in order to meet a 5-7-5-7-7-syllable translation. In this anthology that is not the case. But some differences do exist: in the order of elements (staging); in the use of pronouns; in the interpretation of semantic elements; and in how these elements are related to one another (syntax).

The French and English versions of the tanka by Motoko Michiura, previously cited, show differences in staging—how the elements are ordered. The English version begins with “the smell of / tear gas[.]” The French version, roughly translated, sets the information in a different order: “after having washed and combed / my hair which had kept / the odour of / tear gas / I go to see you.” (28) The position of tear gas, in the English version, complies with what appears in the Japanese original where phrases 1 and 2, *gasu-dan no/ nioi nokoreru*, are about the persisting smell of tear gas. In Japanese and English, “tear gas,” metonymy for “political demonstration,” takes precedence. In French, personal grooming is given the spot. Surprisingly, in French there is only “hair” (*kami*) and not “black hair” (*kurokami*). The classical importance of “black hair” is in the blurb—in English but not in French. I don't consider the choice in French to be in any way related to what is perceived as important by French-speaking people, but rather a choice of the translators. (29)

The Shion Mizuhara tanka, previously cited, is interpreted differently in the two languages. Loosely translated, the French version reads, “the moon which I am examining / thoroughly / is appealing and sad / because I have discovered /

that it is completely naked[.]” (30) So in the French version, it is the moon that is sad, whereas in the English version, it is the persona—“gazing at it / intensely, I feel sad[.]” In English, the emphasis of the Japanese particle *koso*, “for sure,” is marked by italics—*the moon is / totally naked*. In the French version there is no emphasis at all, however there is an additional qualifier for the moon, “*attirante*,” which means “attractive” or “appealing.” I have participated in many group translation activities over the years, and here as well, I see in all of these differences no more than what two independent translators would produce from the same source text, and not a cultural difference between French and English.

Even without considering two different languages, as poets we should keep in mind that there are any number of different ways to express the same basic ideas, and conversely, that words and phrases can have different meanings. A tanka by *Jirō Katō* (1959–) (31) started with, “God has arms?” My mind's eye immediately saw Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*. Since the tanka deals with the first atom bomb, on Hiroshima, although “arms” is completely correct, the word was changed to “weapons.” Where polysemy is one of the qualities of good tanka, ambiguities, however, can also be confusing. When we write, we know what we mean, and don't always notice that something is ambiguous. In the Katō tanka a misreading of “arms” would soon be evident, but would already have spoiled the impact.

Society: the Anthology's Third Section

As if there were an unwritten rule about decorum in tanka, about not depicting anything that might offend or horrify the reader, much of our own tanka seems tame when set beside the tanka in this final section of the book. It is why, to me, “Society,” is so interesting. Up to now, despite having read many contemporary tanka in translation, I hadn't seen ones as engaged with human interaction in all its grit. Both Motoko Michiura's demonstration and Hiroshi Sakaguchi's self-reexamination” are in that section. There are tanka about environmental

disasters, about war and bombs, about killings and execution.

by pulling
I snuggled to him
then stabbed—
without uttering a thing
he collapsed

—Shūji Miya (1912–1986) (32)

Miya, known for his realism, wrote about his own war experience. The style of this next tanka, published some 40 years later, shows a marked contrast. It is from the time of the Gulf War.

at the edge
of the world if you think
you are bored
take out your ‘earplugs’
▼▼▼▼▼ BOMB !

—Hiroyuki Ogihara (1962–) (33)

Not mentioned in the *AMJT*, Hiroyuki Ogihara was a poet of the New Wave (ニューウェーブ [*nyū~uebu*]). The first draft translation permits the English phrases to assume their lines naturally: “at the edge of the world / if you think you are bored / take out / the earplugs / ▼▼▼▼▼ BOMB !”

The tanka became a topic of discussion among the two translation teams because of the earplugs: in the poem, are people being advised to get out their earplugs from wherever they’ve stored them in order to protect their hearing, or to remove the earplugs from their ears. On this side of the Atlantic, we were given no context to know. However “earplugs” within their scare quotes are like the blinders people use to avoid seeing what displeases them. The phrasing as published—“take out your ‘earplugs’”—can be interpreted as “take notice of what’s happening! listen!”

The blurb about this tanka mentions “other poems” that follow it, poems which also contain the “▼▼▼▼▼” symbols instead of words. As published in the anthology, there is no

explanation for those “other poems.” I might not have bothered looking into this any further except that, during the translation phase, I

世界の縁にゐる退屈を思ふなら「耳栓」を取れ！
▼
▼
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！

received an email from Watt (4/08/2015). She asked about “日本空爆 1991” [*Nihon kūbaku 1991*], the Japanese phrase in quotation marks in the original bibliographic reference. Loosely it translates to “air bombing of Japan in 1991.” I was to find out how the event is usually known in English.

Of course I was unable to find any historic mention—not surprising in that Japan did not engage in combat during the Gulf War (here the first, against Iraq) because of its constitutional

pacifism. Eventually I searched for the Japanese phrase itself. It led right back to the tanka, or rather, to information about the *rensaku* titled “*Nihon kūbaku* 1991” from which the anthologized poem is the eighth of fifteen. A year before Ogihara’s book was published, the *rensaku* appeared in the journal 地表 (*Chihyō* [Surface]). (34)

There is an unsigned, in-depth discussion in Japanese about this *rensaku* on *Daiei* [poetry] blog. (35) I think that a full translation of this sequence would be quite interesting. Although not strictly what we might call a calligram, the dropping bomb symbols, ▼▼▼▼▼, in ever increasing numbers, fill in for individual sound units, with the word “BOMB”—in English—concluding the final eight tanka. And the vertical alignment, in so many parallel lines, is, well, striking.

In the end, the title of the *rensaku* is omitted from the anthology, and it is never stated that this tanka is from a *rensaku*. This is unfortunate because any reader wanting more information would have to search as I did, but without the title.

Perhaps one of the reasons we find a greater prevalence in Japanese tanka of such topics—war, killing, bombs, execution, lynching—than we do in our own, is that in Japan tanka is a form, not a genre. Because of that, any topic can be contained within a 5-7-5-7-7 *onsetsu* poem. There has been a comprehensive study of war in haiku. (36) Are there enough tanka written in English about societal upheavals to warrant a similar study?

Multiplying Languages: Challenges and Benefits

Multiple languages also means multiple teams. When one waits for the other, there would be a domino effect. As such, there was a delay in getting the translations going because the tanka selection process in Japan took longer than expected. The launch date was set firmly for Friday, October 9, at the *Festival international de tanka*, in Martigues, France. Both groups of translators were affected by the time constraints. Once translations were available, there were two weeks to go over the 99 tanka, the explanatory

blurbs that came with them, the brief note about the poet, and the 3500-word introductory essay. This left another month for the editors to assemble the different pieces, with time for tinkering and proofing.

Despite our really not having enough time, in reading through the final product I see only the occasional awkwardness. For example there is a surreal tanka by Kunio Tsukamoto (1920–2005) in which a “song writer/ of revolutions” causes the piano he is leaning on to turn “into/ liquid[.]” (37) On a next go, the person would be a “writer of songs / of revolution.” In that same tanka, the French translator has used the verb “*se fendre*” instead of “*fondre*” for 液化 (*ekika*). Probably a transcription error, instead of conveying “liquification,” the French version has the piano bursting. Similarly, “in the enemy’s camp” of a war tanka by Naoki Watanabe (1908–1939), (38) they discover “an English reader / covered with mud[.]” The French version has the book found in “the goat”—*la bouc* (also a gender error)—rather than in mud—*la boue*. However these details needing correction represent just a handful of tanka.

Multiple language teams implies communicating with each other in multiple languages. And perhaps exacerbated by those same time constraints, anything “off” in the book could also be the product of “broken telephone.” In the proofreading stage, for example, Uzawa had to get back to Ishida who in turn got back to Patrick Simon, the publisher, who sees to digital typesetting himself. The message would have gone from English to Japanese to French, and when it concerns “English,” the final person to use the information doesn’t speak a word of it. Given that his attention was divided because of other books set for the same launch, as well as details for the tanka festival of which he was the main organizer, the resulting anthology, a yeoman’s feat, came out quite nicely.

Not all anthologies of tanka in translation include original versions. Even when we don’t read or understand, I feel that the presence of the Japanese version, the source language, serves as a visual reminder that what we do read, in the target language, has been filtered. As to more

than one target language, I think the idea is brilliant. There is certainly room on the standard-size book page of this anthology for all the versions, and this without appearing crowded. Beyond reaching another market for the book *qua* physical object, a multi-language anthology also expands “markets” for tanka itself.

Loan words, once they are adopted within a language, become subject to semantic shifts that will differ from those in the original language. “Tanka” in English has been moving towards its own position, albeit one fairly inclusive to go by M. Kei’s 2014 comprehensive analysis, “The Problem of Tanka : Definition and Differentiation.” (39) Going our own way need not mean paying no attention to what has happened and is happening to tanka in Japan. *An Anthology of Modern Japanese Tanka* includes many aspects that were new to me, ones that fascinate me enough to want to look more closely. Michio Ohno’s Introduction provides a useful overview of *waka* and tanka in Japan over the last 1300 years, with special focus on the past hundred plus. The range of topics and variety of rhetorical approaches in tanka are worthy of study. What can we learn? What can we borrow? Or, if not “borrow” unreservedly, then explore?

I wouldn’t question
the mind of a person who
shoots birds—
I’m also soiled
by April snow

—Shūichi Sakai (1958–)(40)

I feel privileged to have been a small part of this book’s production.

Maxianne Berger
January 2016

Citations

- 1) I am grateful to Kozue Uzawa and Yasuko Ito Watt, whose comments and replies to my questions helped round out this article.

- 2) I am on a first-name basis with several of the *dramatis personae* I refer to though here I use family names throughout. Japanese names are presented in Western order.
- 3) Within a month of the launch, the book went into second printing, and over a hundred had been purchased in Japan. (Patrick Simon, email, [26/11/2015]).
- 4) The publisher was preparing a triple launch, including a second anthology of contemporary tanka in French. I hope to look at this in a future issue of ATPO.
- 5) PDFs of text, introduction and afterword can be accessed here: <<http://ceas.uchicago.edu/page/william-f-sibley-memorial-translation-prize-winners>>
- 6) In the Preface, Sasaki mentions he edited an anthology for translation into German. (p. 9). It is “*Gäbe es keine Kirschblüten*”: *Tanka aus 1300 Jahren* [“If there were no cherry blossoms”: tanka of 1300 years], Reclam, 2009.
- 7) Tanka 17, selected from *Kōrogi* [Cricket] 1980.
- 8) Tanka 62, selected from *Bianca* [Bianca] 1989.
- 9) Tanka 82, selected from *Muen no jojō* [Lyricism in isolation] 1980.
- 10) Tanka 10, selected from *Kōshun-kan zasshō* [Kōshun-kan miscellaneous tanka], 1954.
- 11) Tanka 47, selected from *Yama to mizu to* [Mountains, waters], 1952. The poet was the founder of the *Kokoro no hana* journal, and the grandfather of Yukitsuna Sasaki, its current editor, and the poet who wrote the *AMJT*’s Preface.
- 12) Tanka 66, selected from *Geshi* [Summer solstice], 2000.
- 13) The French translation team included Brigitte Pellat and Nicolas Grenier. Their involvement paralleled mine. For expediency, I shall refer to the senior translator only.
- 14) Tanka first appeared in French in the late nineteenth century. See Janick Belleau’s comprehensive article, “[d]u tanka traduit, écrit, publié en français : survol 1871–2013” (ATPO 17 [2014] pp. 66–76; English translation pp. 77–88).
- 15) Patrick Simon, “Tanka en langue française et tanka en langue anglaise : A propos d’un article dans *Gust*” [sic], *Rtf* 26 (2015) pp.29–32.
- 16) “from the editor” *Gusts* 21 (2015) p. 1.
- 17) Until 2014, Simon’s *Rtf* was the sole venue devoted to tanka in French. Mike Montreuil introduced the electronic journal *Cirrus : tankas de nos jours* to provide an alternative more focused on essence and brevity.
- 18) (My translation) Picone, cited by Simon, p. 31.
- 19) *AMJT*, *passim*, p. 48. Unfortunately I wasn’t on my toes, and so let pass “forward.”
- 20) Tanka 98, selected from *Sei-u-ki* [Green rain] 2012.

- 21) Tanka 89, selected from *Sakaguchi Hiroshi kakō* [Hiroshi Sakaguchi's tanka manuscript], 1993. The bio note further adds that Sakaguchi is on death row (p. 296).
- 22) Tanka 42, by Rigen Kinoshita (1886–1925), selected from *Ichiro* [Straight way], 1924.
- 23) Tanka 41, by Takashi Nagatsuka (1879–1915), selected from *Nagatsuka Takashi kashū* [Tanka collection of Takashi Nagatsuka], 1917.
- 24) Tanka 45, selected from *Yamashita-mizu* [Water at the foot of the mountain], 1948.
- 25) Tanka 87, by JungJa Lee (1947–), selected from *Nagunetaryon* [A wanderer's song], 1991.
- 26) Tanka 56, by Kimihiko Takano (1941–).
- 27) Readers interested in translation differences might also enjoy Eliot Weinberger's *19 Ways of Looking at Wang Wei* (1987).
- 28) « après avoir lavé et peigné / mes cheveux qui gardaient / l'odeur de gaz / lacrymogène / je vais te voir ».
- 29) A translation can only be a reinterpretation. The version in Lowitz *et al* (*op. cit.*, p. 100) ends with “to see him”—3rd person—although *kimi*, “you,” is in the original.
- 30) « la lune que j'examine / minutieusement / est attirante et triste / car j'ai découvert / qu'elle est entièrement nue ».
- 31) Tanka 85, selected from *Sanī saido appu* [Sunny-side up], 1987.
- 32) Tanka 72, selected from *Sansei-shō* [Shanxi Province], 1949.
- 33) Tanka 88, selected from *Arumajiron* [Arumajiron], 1992 [*jiron* are comments about current events].
- 34) 地表 (*Chihyō*) 29:4 (May 1991) pp. 6–7.
- 35) *Daiei* [poetry] blog entry for 21/09/2012: <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/0323_2006/d/20120921>. Within the discussion there is a scanned image of the complete sequence as it first appeared as well as a description of textual differences between the original *rensaku* in *Chihyō* and the version the following year in the poet's book, *Arumajiron*. The site administrator (*kanrinin*), Narushi Nakamura (中村成志), is possibly the author of the piece. As of 2016 this blog's activities have moved to Facebook.
- 36) Paul Miller, “Haiku and War,” *Big Data*, Jim Kacian *et al*, eds, Red Moon, 2015. pp.149–198.
- 37) Tanka 73, selected from *Suisō monogatori* [A story of water burial] 1951.
- 38) Tanka 69, selected from *Watanabe Naoki kashū* [Tanka collection of Naoki Watanabe] 1940.
- 39) See: <<http://atlaspoetica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Problem-of-Tanka-Web-PDF.pdf>>.
- 40) Tanka 93, selected from *Supirichuaru* [Spiritual] 1996.

Why Moongarlic?

An interview with Moongarlic
<<http://www.moongarlic.org/>>

Larry Kimmel

There has been a burgeoning of multi-media haikai and related short form poetry publications in the past decade. *Moongarlic*, an online journal published by Yet To Be Named Free Press, edited by Sheila Windsor and Brendan Slater, stands out among these new venues as unique in conception, reasons, and stated purpose, as reflected in this quote taken from its website:

Moongarlic is an E-zine for short verse, art, word sculptures, photographs, propaganda, for the unwanted, the crazy, the lonely, the good, the bad, the psycho-tropically challenged, the loaded, the clean, the dirty, the hair washers, the head shavers, the fakers, the shakers, the laminated takers . . .

When I first thought to interview *Moongarlic*, one question kept coming to mind. Why *Moongarlic*? A question which seemed to contain all of the Five Ws of journalism, such as “why that name,” “why did the editors decide to take on such an ambitious project,” “what was the need they saw for a mixed short form magazine at this time,” “what was their mission,” “why the flip-book format,” and more? In fact, the whole idea of this interview stems from, and seems to be contained in, this one question. So, why don't we begin there:

LK: Why *Moongarlic*? Why that name?

MG: Before I was a short-verse E-zine I was thinking about becoming a tanka anthology. I was browsing a copy of *Atlas Poetica*, I think it was issue 17, and came across a circular tanka by Brendan Slater. I will write it out as a straight line for simplicity's sake: “garlic and peppercorns the night sweats the weight loss the swollen moon”. I was drawn to the natural end which was “moon”

and the beginning being “garlic”. I mulled it over for a day or two, but I had fallen head over heels in love with the juxtaposition of moon and garlic and decided to remove the space and from then on introduce myself as “moongarlic”. I felt that this name was not suitable for a tanka anthology and decided to become a short-verse poetry E-zine instead, and I am about to appear as my 7th incarnation.

LK: I wonder if this decision to become a short form journal, rather than a tanka only journal, has influenced the tenor of your voice. Have you any thoughts on that?

MG: Yes, finding my name: “moongarlic” determined that I would not be a tanka journal and not being a tanka journal led to my becoming an E-zine. Choosing to call myself an ‘E-zine’ confirmed that I had begun to see my emerging identity: an eclectic, slightly edgy publication unconstrained by label or definition. I approached Brendan first, for permission to take my name from his tanka and found that he had a publishing ‘string’ to his ‘bow’. That was most serendipitous, I thought, as he would be able to edit and publish me. It was all very exciting. He and I spent some time designing the cover for the *moongarlic* I was becoming, more palpably by the day. Next I approached Sheila to be my co-editor. She and Brendan were friends and seemed to me to be ideally suited to working together: sufficiently different to create a balance and kindred spirited enough to not be falling out all the time. Sheila was excited and accepted straight away. Then there were three of us excited. We’re open to anything and everything a slender zine can accommodate. We look for excellence. We wait for the something indefinable that resonates and will fit harmoniously into the issue under construction.

LK: How does it feel to appear in public in the format of a ‘flip-book.’ Did you think long and hard about that? Or did you just know?

MG: Oh no, I didn’t think about it at all. I felt that with everything “sticking” to the

internet, whether you like it or not, it would be a much better format for longevity. I would love to be perfectly bound and handled like so many of my contemporaries, but for the moment I think electronic is the way to go. I make the flip-book format more accessible from the website but I also can be downloaded from the website as a standard PDF file, so people can save it onto their devices and read on or offline. There is scope for a “Best Of”, but that smacks a little of the “Now” Music Compilations. However, a limited edition paperback issue, say 50 copies, not related to the biannual publications, just the announcement of a submission period and maybe themed could be interesting.

LK: Well, I certainly enjoy the flip-book format. Have you had much feedback about that, or other matters concerning yourself, positive or negative, that you would like to comment on?

MG: A few readers have made positive comments about the flip-book format. The sound of the page turning makes me smile, inwardly.

LK: Yes, the sound of the turning page is a fun touch. As an “eclectic, slightly edgy publication unconstrained by label or definition,” I am particularly interested in any thoughts you may have about the current trend in or toward micro or short form poetry. Is there, in fact, such a trend or movement afoot, and how has haiku and social media played a part in this? In other words, in your experience as an E-zine, whether through submissions or, perhaps, checking yourself out against your contemporaries, what have you noticed?

MG: I just tend to let everything pass by me, Larry, like clouds, ever morphing and changing even as one begins to assign a form or status to them. I do try to avoid comparison: that path invariably leads to inflated ego or a sense of inferiority and both lead to anxiety. My humans and I like to simply do our own thing. If others are drawn to join us, as contributors and/or readers, that is affirming and enables us to continue. Each issue of me is a creation formed

from the creative offerings of others. That our super-talented contributors trust us with their works is a huge responsibility and privilege.

LK: Among the many salient features that make up your pages, the art work and photographs deserve comment as much as the poems. What are your feelings about the photos and art work? Why have you included them?

MG: I like to have images in each issue because I'm quite easily bored and averse to even a whiff of homogeneity. For me, they expand upon and open up intriguing linking possibilities: linking word pieces is fun, bringing in visuals more fun. I like to think of each issue as a river: the words are the water, the images are rocks, stepping stones perhaps. I suppose that the word sculptures might be fish, or river plants waving about, suggesting abstract shapes and forms, dancing in the water's sway. Recalling an earlier question as to why I manifest as an e-zine in flip-book form I see being able to have colour images on my pages as another benefit of internet publication: as I expect most people know, the cost of colour images in a printed publication is prohibitive.

LK: One thing that particularly struck me in your welcome statement, quoted above, was the mention of "propaganda." I am really intrigued to know what you mean by "propaganda." Could you enlighten me?

MG: Well, I googled "propaganda" and this was the first definition: "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view." This wasn't always so, I mean propaganda was not always a negative thing, it was simply information with a bias intended to get a serious and honest message across to the public. As we now live in a 24 hour rolling news which is biased and misleading in nature I have no problems with redressing the balance. Of course, my editors decide what goes in but I wouldn't accept hate speech or anything that at all resembled the mainstream propaganda we have thrust upon us every day. The other

thing to remember about propaganda is like it or not it is an art form. To convey information in a concise and clear way, without resorting to subliminal messages, that sticks in the memory is not an easy task. I asked my editors whether they could think of an example of propaganda in ku (or micro) form and Sheila offered one of hers: "abattoir / slices of moon / on the floor." Some might call this propaganda. I suppose that it may be seen that way, but then, every statement, observation and expression proclaims the poet's or artist's thoughts and feelings to varying degree.

LK: That is certainly educational. I had not been aware of propaganda's early beginnings. Thank you. Enjoyable as our time together is proving, Moongarlic, I find I've covered the major questions I had in mind to ask you, but before we conclude, there is one other thing I'd like to know a bit more about, and that is "word sculptures," which you have referred to as "suggesting abstract shapes and forms, dancing in the water's sway" of each issues' river. Do you have anything you'd care to add to that?

MG: Regarding word sculptures or *poésie concrète*, I think it is a form that has not yet been taken seriously enough. I still think a lot of people see it as 'gimmicky', when it actually adds an extra dimension to a poem, which can contradict or strengthen the words. Probably the most satisfying concrete poem would be one whose meaning is not immediately apparent, I mean the use of the concrete form isn't obvious, and could possibly be taken in a number of ways. This is just an extension of the belief that once a poem is written and let go, it no longer belongs to the poet, it belongs to the reader.

LK: I can whole-heartedly agree with you, that once the poem leaves the poet's hand, it takes on a life of its own, and with it much the same risks as any other progeny. One last thought: You mentioned, earlier, the potential of, "a limited edition paperback issue." I'd just like to go on record, here, as saying that this is something that I hope will happen in the future. Much as I am all for online publication, there are

times when it is nice to have something of weight to hold in the hand. What do you say, likely or not?

MG: I am tempted by the prospect of a physical incarnation but I can't say for sure until I arrive at that part of the river.

LK: Fair enough. Allow me to thank you for taking time to chat with us, me and your readers. We are all, I am sure, looking forward to your 7th incarnation. This has been a most pleasant interlude.

MG: Thank you very much for inviting me. It's been a new experience for me and a lot of fun.

Larry Kimmel was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He lives quietly in the hills of western Massachusetts. His most recent books are "shards and dust" and "outer edges." "The Piercing Blue of Sirius: Selected Poems 1968–2008" is free to read online at: http://larrykimmel.tripod.com/the_piercing_blue_of_sirius.htm

A Gift to be Grateful For, a review of *on the cusp—a year of tanka* by Joy McCall

Reviewed by Lynda Monahan

On the Cusp—a year of tanka
Joy McCall
Keibooks, 2016
Pb 124 pp.
ISBN 978-1519371928 (Print)
Available in print and Kindle.

Joy McCall's newest collection of tanka poems, *on the cusp—a year of tanka*, does what the best tanka is meant to do, touch something in the reader, make us see something in a new way, open us to some new understanding. It is Joy McCall's intention that these tanka poems be read like notes in a diary, one for each day of the year. Each tanka conveys an event of some special significance, an insight or memory or

observation for each day of every month. There is the way the past wends its way through these poems, a feeling of timelessness, there is a slowing down and paying attention. The 'small songs' in *on the cusp—a year of tanka* sings to us, blending the subtle harmonies of daily life. We are drawn into the music of her poems:

I felt the soft paws
of sleep, padding
on my forehead
my eyes closed
dreams came rushing in

There is a great heart at work in these poems,
a clear eyed honesty, unafraid of dark places:

is my own pain
any different
than that borne
by the hunted hare,
the cornered fox?

Joy McCall's *on the cusp—a year of tanka* is a vital addition to the world of tanka poetry and a collection to be read for its singular beauty and honesty. Tanka are meant to be given as gifts. With this latest collection, Joy McCall has given us a gift to be grateful for.

Lynda Monahan
Author of *what my body knows* and *verge*

Review: *outer edges: a collection of tanka* by Larry Kimmel

Reviewed by Patricia Prime

outer edges: a collection of tanka
Larry Kimmel
Stark Mountain Press, Colrain, MA, 2015
RRP: \$5.49
Pb 34 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-9864328-0-4

Larry Kimmel is one of the foremost poets writing tanka and related forms. His previous volume of tanka, *this hunger, tissue-thin*, was published a decade ago and a prose poem, *The Johnstown Flood*, was published in 2007. The introduction by Linda Jeannette Ward and the back cover blurbs by M. Kei and Claire Everett, all of whom are recognised tanka poets and editors, are complimentary in their praise of Kimmel's work.

Everywhere in the collection the light is bright and form and construction are tight, worked and grammatically correct. This has the effect of the promise of what is to come. In this sense, I entered the land of *outer edges* and had the distinct feeling that here is a poet at the top of his writing.

There are many tanka in this book that I really enjoyed. Kimmel comes into his own in the more personal poems where there is room for ellipsis and humour, such as we see in the opening tanka:

on my back
on a bed
in a bed & breakfast—
my dime destiny
mapped on a cracked ceiling

Kimmel's strengths lie in his wit and imagination that opens up new worlds, in pacing that sometimes works so well that the rhythms he achieves are like the flow of a river:

in the streetlight
the red of her paisley dress purples
as do her lips—
lips that are saying
something that makes me blue

The drive of the narrative in the tanka carries me at speed through the various vistas that Kimmel creates. Here he is at the checkout:

at the checkout
reading all
the tabloid headlines—
the curse
of literacy

And here he is in the grape arbor:

inside the grape arbor,
shadowed patterns where her blouse
lies open—
the purple fruit
wants tasted

And I go all the way with him because he is an assured and confident writer, one who seems to capture the very urgency and pace of life.

In the following tanka:

no one left
to tell again the family stories,
the farm stories,
and how the great poet came to sit
in the chair I sit in now

Kimmel creates another narrative, this time in a form that allows for longer lines, the weight of the poem depending on the massed togetherness of the words rather than the spaces between them. There's the lovely line, "to tell again the family stories". This implies that the search for a voice is long and hard: the existence of the source is not in doubt, but now it has gone forever, and cannot be accessed.

Kimmel is the master of the opening line: here are a few examples—

"to sculpt a destiny", "a jukebox femme", "the mannequin's skirt flaps open", "by lantern light" and "always fascinated by". This is a poet who is not afraid of cutting out all the unnecessary words, who works bravely with language and who uses restraint to accentuate the power of emotion that his poems deliver.

My favourite tanka are the ones that don't tell me everything but leave me wondering and searching for something long after the words have gone. This includes Kimmel's sensitive poem:

that we can live on finer
& finer energy fields—
sure, why not?
if you can believe this world
you can believe any world

outer edges is completed with two short sequences: “waking to the fact of morning” and “monologues with tome-tombed men”. In the first sequence, the poet is seen waking up, reaching for a pen with which to record a haiku, brewing coffee and noticing the sunlight as it crosscuts the kitchen. The sequence ends with this tanka:

coffee mug in hand
the routine of bee & clover
—yes!
“all’s right with the world”
—and now the news

“monologues with tome-tombed men” combines literary allusions: Browning, Langland, Emerson, Han Shan and Issa, with direct speech. The sequence is divided into four sections. Section 2 and 3 have three parts, 1, 4 and 5 a single verse and a postscript:

not surprising, is it? that more
and more, as each old friend ends
his or her grave march,
I hold endless monologues
with tome-tombed men

The sequences are remarkable for their dignity, their beauty and their strength of words. What underpins the two sequences is not a commonplace ‘accessibility’, but a dignified restraint, the lines balanced and controlled, the vision never in question.

In *outer edges* Kimmel ‘plays’ his tanka as a musician plays an instrument: with a crisp, authoritative, confident touch that never leaves the reader in doubt whether intoning images of self, women, nature, family or history—even the everyday life raised to eternal truth. His is tanka at its best, expertly tuned to the deeply personal, in which every word contributes to the melodic, harmonic and contrapuntal whole. Tanka that satisfies ear, mind and heart.

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.

Cirrus : tankas de nos jours

Cirrus : tankas de nos jours est une revue électronique de tankas contemporains de la francophonie et tankas d’autres cultures en traduction. La période de soumission pour *Cirrus 6* sera du 1 au 31 août 2016. Inspirez-vous en lisant la revue : [<cirrustanka.com>](http://cirrustanka.com)

Three Things to Know about TSA in 2016

1. Welcome to new members! And, thank you to returning members for your renewals. Remember to renew for 2016 if you have not done so as yet!

2. Good news! Beginning with the upcoming 2016 anthology, our annual members’ anthology will be included with TSA membership, at no extra cost (you won’t have to order the book separately). Watch for further news about when and where to submit.

3. *Ribbons* now welcomes tanka prose submissions. For details, see the new “Tanka Prose” section of our submission guidelines at <http://www.tankasocietyofamerica.org/ribbons/ribbons-submission-guidelines>. Welcome to Autumn Noelle Hall, who will serve as our new *Ribbons* tanka prose editor.

The winter 2016 issue of *Ribbons* will be mailed to you very soon, and the deadline for the spring/summer issue is April 30.

tell them
she is enjoying the view
of the moon
a pink gossamer robe
barely covering her body

Yosano Akiko (1878 – 1942)

Best regards,

Marilyn Hazelton, President
Ken Slaughter, Vice President

31 German Tanka Journal Established

31 is a quaternary (February, May, August, and November) German online tanka journal. Submissions are free and open to everyone. The goal of **31** is to support and encourage excellence in German-language tanka. Submissions of international writers in English or German are also welcome.

<<http://einunddreissig.net/>>

New Officers Elected for the Tanka Society of America

Hello and greetings!

Beginning this month, there has been a change in officers for the Tanka Society. Marilyn Hazelton is our new President, following Margaret Chula in that position. Ken Slaughter is our new Vice President, as Janet Davis moves on to other endeavors.

We would like to thank Margaret and Janet for their time, talent, good sense, and generosity of service over these last years. We are in their debt as we build on the foundation they have helped set in place.

Marilyn and Ken join with fellow TSA officers Kathabela Wilson (Secretary), James Won (Treasurer), David Rice (Ribbons Journal Editor)

and Michael Dylan Welch (Webmaster) in wishing all our members a very creative New Year!

on the dawn-reddened sky
they are spreading out,
the singing cranes,
a thousand of the cranes,
and each voice a distinct voice

Taeko Takaori

Best regards,
Marilyn Hazelton, President
Ken Slaughter, Vice President

What Light There Is Haiku, Senryu, and Tanka of Sylvia Forges-Ryan with Haiga by Ion Codrescu

Sylvia Forges-Ryan, former editor of *Frogpond*, has not published a volume since her award-winning *Take a Deep Breath* a decade ago. Instead, she has been shaping the threads of her writing—haiku, senryu, and tanka—into the cohesive whole that is *What Light There Is*, a deep and artistic meditation on love, loneliness, aging, and the pieces of the quotidian we hold on to that bind them, and us, together. Add to this Ion Codrescu's deft and sensitive haiga and you have one of the most telling experiences to be found between two covers.

Upset over news
of refugees fleeing
war and poverty
I myself create one more,
wiping away the spider's web

ISBN: 978-1-936848-58-4

Pages: 104

Size: 4.25" x 6.5 inches

Binding: perfect softbound

Price: \$17.00

Important Tanka Resources Now Available Online

The five “New Wave Tanka Anthologies” and the Tanka Teachers Guide now are available online in PDF format, free to read and to download, at Denis M. Garrison’s poetry blog. Go to <<https://denisgarrison.wordpress.com/books-journals/read-my-books/>> to find them all.

Included are the four edited by Garrison and Michael McClintock: *The Five Hole Flute: Modern English Tanka in Sequences and Sets*; *The Dreaming Room: Modern English Tanka in Collage and Montage Sets*; *Landfall: Poetry of Place in Modern English Tanka* (which led to the founding of *Atlas Poetica*); and *Streetlights: Poetry of Urban Life in Modern English Tanka*. The fifth anthology included is *Ash Moon Anthology: Poems on Aging in Modern English Tanka*, edited by Alexis Rotella and Denis M. Garrison.

Additionally, the *Tanka Teachers Guide*, the seminal guidance for teaching tanka poetry and writing compiled and published by Garrison and the Tanka Society of America, is there—free to read, copy, print, and use under a Creative Commons license. While you are on Garrison’s blog, check out the “Read our Journals” page at <<https://denisgarrison.wordpress.com/books-journals/read-our-journals/>> for many full issues of several journals.

Those Special Days Published

There is something very satisfying in the pairing of poetry and images to create a new piece of work with more depth than either form achieves on its own. And it is even more rewarding when two friends and poets collaborate in this manner to bring projects such as *Those Special Days* into being. It was a joy to work with Beverley George again in this way. Our perpetual tanka and photographic calendar can be used to record anniversaries, birthdays and other meaningful dates. Each month has a

photograph and a tanka that we hope people will find enjoyment and meaning in. As well we have recorded the date of birth of a famous poet and photographer each month. We hope people may enjoy researching and learning a little more about these people and their influences on the world of poetry and photography. Copies of *Those Special Days* are still available from Beverley or David for \$22 which includes postage and handling. Payment can be made via PayPal to David at his email of tanka_oz@yahoo.com.

‘I’ll Be Home: 25 Tanka on the Theme of Your True Home’ Published

Atlas Poetica is please to announce its latest special feature, ‘I’ll Be Home: 25 Tanka on the Theme of Your True Home,’ edited by Liam Wilkinson. In this feature, twenty-five poets open their hearts to explore what makes them feel they are truly at home, in Australia, France, the United Kingdom, or other countries, whether they are there in fact, memory, or dream. Lantern light, lichens, spoons, and gateways are just a few of the symbols that bring poets to their true home.

In his introduction, editor Liam Wilkinson writes, “Nowhere is the right place, and when I get there I’ll be home” so writes the poet David Budbill in his poem ‘Home’ [. . .] All of us have a sense of home, perhaps even a place we refer to as our true home. But, as the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh says, your true home is “something you can touch and live in every moment.” Join the poets of *Atlas Poetica* as they invite you to join them in their true homes.

Visit <http://atlaspoetica.org/?page_id=1560> to read for free.

Totem by Sheila Windsor Published

Dear Friends,

I am very proud to announce the publication of *Totem* by Sheila Windsor.

This is Sheila Windsor's first solo collection of poems and ink paintings, drawn from over twenty years of almost daily practice. She began writing mainstream poetry, with publication and award success (in independent small press journals and anthologies), met haiku in English circa two decades ago, fell in love with the succinct form and has subsequently focused almost exclusively on haikai—the collective term for haiku, renku, haibun, tanka and haiga: the Japanese forms. Some works here are previously published, some are decorated and some are new—at the time of publication she holds over forty-five international literary awards, all but two for haikai. Windsor's poetry is published around the globe and translated into an array of languages from Gaelic to French, Polish to Persian to Japanese. She is a working artist with group and solo exhibitions and publication credits to her name; a founding co-editor of *Bones Journal*, presently on the editorial team at *The Living Haiku Anthology* and co-editor of *Moongarlic E-zine*.

Introductions: Jeremy Reed, Nobuyuki Yuasa, Chris Drake, ai li, Larry Kimmel

\$12.00 / £8.00

Kind Regards,

Brendan Slater, co-editor @ Yet To Be Named Free Press and *Moongarlic E-zine*.

Haibun Today (March 2016) is now online

The spring quarterly issue of *Haibun Today* is now online for your reading pleasure at <<http://haibuntoday.com>>.

This new issue features essays by Jeff Streeby and Ray Rasmussen as well as book reviews by Tish Davis, Michael McClintock, Dru Philippou and Alexis Rotella.

Contributors include Jenny Ward Angyal, Lynette Arden, Chris Bays, Amanda Bell, Johannes S. H. Bjerg, Michelle Brock, Donna Buck, Matthew Caretti, Andrea Cecon, Sonam Chhoki, Glenn G. Coats, Kyle Craig, Tish Davis, Susan Diridoni, Claire Everett, Seánan Forbes, Terri L. French, Tim Gardiner, Mel Goldberg, Joann Grisetti, Autumn N. Hall, Ruth Holzer, Marilyn Humbert, Gerry Jacobson, Roger Jones, Keitha Keyes, Gary LeBel, Jean LeBlanc, Iris Lee, Chen-ou Liu, Dorothy Mahoney, Giselle Maya, Michael McClintock, Sharon Lask Munson, Mary Myers, Lee Nash, Peter Newton, Doug Norris, Gabriel Patterson, Stella Pierides, Dru Philippou, Kala Ramesh, Ray Rasmussen, Alexis Rotella, Lucas Stensland, Jeff Streeby, George Swede, Charles D. Tarlton, Frank J. Tassone, Patricia Tompkins, Diana Webb and Harriot West.

Writers are now invited to submit haibun, tanka prose and articles for consideration in the June 2016 issue of *Haibun Today*. Writers of haibun, in particular, should note the new reading periods that now apply to that section of the journal. They will find the pertinent deadlines by consulting our Submission Guidelines at *Haibun Today*.

Educational Use Notice

Keibooks of Perryville, Maryland, USA, publisher of the journal, *Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka*, is dedicated to tanka education in schools and colleges, at every level. It is our intention and our policy to facilitate the use of *Atlas Poetica* and related materials to the maximum extent feasible by educators at every level of school and university studies.

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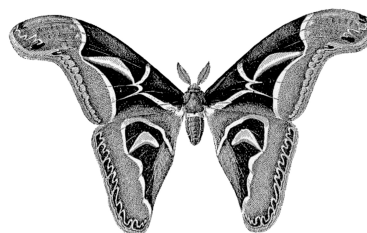
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Editorial Biographies

M. Kei is the editor of *Atlas Poetica* and was the editor-in-chief of *Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka*. He is a tall ship sailor in real life and has published nautical novels featuring a gay protagonist, *Pirates of the Narrow Seas*. His most recent publication is *January, A Tanka Diary*.

toki is a published poet and editorial assistant for Keibooks. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest US, toki often writes poetry informed by the experience of that region: the labyrinthine confines of the evergreen forests, the infinite vastness of the sea and inclement sky, and the liminal spaces in between. toki's poetry can be found online and in print, with work published in *Atlas Poetica*, *The Bamboo Hut*, and *Poetry Nook*.



Our 'butterfly' is actually an Atlas moth (*Attacus atlas*), the largest butterfly / moth in the world. It comes from the tropical regions of Asia. Image from the 1921 *Les insectes agricoles d'époque*.

Errata

In ATPO 24 Tish Davis' 'T Street Performers' was erroneously titled. The correct title is 'Street Performers.'

Publications by Keibooks

Journals

Atlas Poetica : A Journal of World Tanka

Collections

October Blues and Other Contemporary Tanka, by
Matsukaze (forthcoming Summer 2016)

Warp and Weft, Tanka Threads, by Debbie Strange

flowers to the torch : American Tanka Prose, by peter
fiore

fieldgates, by Joy McCall
(forthcoming Autumn 2016)

on the cusp, a year of tanka, by Joy McCall

rising mist, fieldstones, by Joy McCall

Hedgerows, Tanka Pentaptychs, by Joy McCall

circling smoke, scattered bones, by Joy McCall

*Tanka Left Behind 1968 : Tanka from the Notebooks of
Sanford Goldstein*, by Sanford Goldstein

*Tanka Left Behind : Tanka from the Notebooks of Sanford
Goldstein*, by Sanford Goldstein

This Short Life, Minimalist Tanka, by Sanford
Goldstein

Anthologies Edited by M. Kei

Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology (Vols. 1–7)

Take Five : Best Contemporary Tanka (Vols. 1–4)

Fire Pearls 2 : Short Masterpieces of Love and Passion

*All the Shells : 2014 The Tanka Society of America
Members' Anthology*

M. Kei's Poetry Collections

January, A Tanka Diary

Slow Motion : The Log of a Chesapeake Bay Skipjack
tanka and short forms

Heron Sea : Short Poems of the Chesapeake Bay
tanka and short forms

M. Kei's Novels

Pirates of the Narrow Seas 1 : The Sallee Rovers

Pirates of the Narrow Seas 2 : Men of Honor

Pirates of the Narrow Seas 3 : Iron Men

Pirates of the Narrow Seas 4 : Heart of Oak

*Man in the Crescent Moon : A Pirates of the Narrow
Seas Adventure*

*The Sea Leopard : A Pirates of the Narrow Seas
Adventure*

Fire Dragon