

failed ~~haiku~~

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bryan rickert 'Failed' Editor

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Photo by Maxianne Berger

Cast List

In order of appearance
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Roger Watson
Rosa Maria Di Salvatore
Stephanie Zepherelli
Susan Burch
Teiichi Suzuki
Michelle V. Alkerton
Keith Evetts
Nitu Yumnam
Andrew Markowski
Vandana Parashar
Chen Xiaoou
Ann Smith
Patricia Hawkhead
John Hawkhead
Joshua St. Claire
C.X.Turner
Katja Fox
Kristen Lindquist
Brandon Favre
Adele Evershed
Ivan Gaćina
Tracy Davidson
Debbie Strange
Darrell Petska

Debra Lance
Ramund Ro
Randy Brooks
Ravi Kiran
Terri L. French
Roberta Beach Jacobson
Charles Harmon
Ron Scully
Danny Daw
John J. Dunphy
Lavana Kray
Peter Jastermsky/*Bisshie*
Lev Hart
William O'Sullivan
Michael Rehling
John Zheng
Akhila Mohan
Chris Langer
Natalia Kuznetsova
Ram Chandran
Paul Beech
Marilyn Ward
Tim Cremin
Jon Hare
Maureen Kingston
Dr Kathryn Moores
Christina Chin / *M. R. Defibaugh*
M. R. Pelletier
Wai Mei Wong

Chen-ou Liu

**Ruth Holzer
Bruce Jewett
CuJoan Torres
Bonnie J Scherer
Jerome Berglund
Kat Lehmann
Linda Papanicolaou
Neena Singh
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi
Shasta Hatter
Michael Henry Lee
Oscar Luparia
Hifsa Ashraf/Oscar Luparia
Farah Ali
Herb Tate
Christa Pandey
Gil Jackofsky/Mike Jackofsky
Gil Jackofsky
Rick Jackofsky
Susan Farner
Robert Witmer
Ray Caligiuri/*Peter Jastermsky*
Colleen M. Farrelly
John Pappas
Curt Pawlisch
Richa Sharma**

**Rupa Anand
Marilyn Ashbaugh
Jennifer Ryan-Jauregui
Cynthia Anderson
rt Linderman
Cristina Angelescu
Ingrid Baluchi
Eva Joan
Bisshie
Govind Joshi
Marsh Muirhead
Alvin Cruz
Jo McInerney
Pitt Buerken
Françoise Maurice & Keith Evetts
VIDYA SHANKAR
Pris Campbell
Elizabeth Crocket
Caroline Giles Banks
Gillena Cox
John Budan
Mike White
Vladislav Hristov
Sondra J. Byrnes
Tony Williams
Gabriela Popa
Maria Concetta
Srinivash K Nambi
Daya Bhat**

**Arvinder Kaur
Jay Carma Lynn Park
Bakhtiyar Amini
Rae Hight
Tim Gardiner
Debbie Olson
Eavonka Ettinger
Mark Forrester
Prashanth Visweswaran
Aksheeya Suresh
Vijay Prasad
Mary McCormack
Joseph P. Wechselberger
Maxianne Berger
Carmela Marino
Mike Gallagher
Patrick Sweeney
Amrutha V. Prabhu
Rehn Kovacic
Barrie Levine
Tomislav Sjekloća
Ann Sullivan
Jenny Fraser
Michael J. Galko
Mary Arnold
Deborah Burke Henderson
B.A. France
Mark Meyer
Richard Magahiz**

Mark Gilbert
Tazeen Fatma
Friedenberg
Christine Wenk-Harrison
Mihan Han
Sangita Kalarickal
Glenys Ferguson
Maurice Nevile
Jan Stretch
Mona Bedi
petro c. k.
Minal Sarosh
Nina Kovacic
Eufemia Griffo
Bidyut Prabha Gantayat
Erin Castaldi
Allison Douglas-Tourner
Kavya Janani. U
Adelaide B. Shaw
Bryan Cook
Sarah Paris
Christopher Calvin
Joanna Delalande
Ana Drobot
David Oates
Valentina Ranaldi-Adams
Billy Guerriero
Priti Khullar
Lori Kiefer

Deepa Patil
Margarita Drozdoff
Eugeniusz Zacharski
Terrie Jacks
Linda L Ludwig
Bob Lucky
Antonietta Losito
Gayle Worthy
Carol Raisfeld
Stephenie Story
Cynthia Rowe
John J. Han
Tyler McIntosh
Kerry J Heckman
Wilbert Salgado
Hege Anita Jakobsen Lepri
Robert Kingston
Tim Roberts
Irina Guliaeva
Maya Daneva
Lee Strong
Adrian Bouter
Kevin Valentine
Baisali Chatterjee Dutt
Mircea Moldovan
Sébastien Revon
Lakshmi Iyer
Cristina Povero
Sherry Grant

Sherry Grant/ *Zoe Grant*

Henryk Czempiel

Nancy Brady

Tom Clausen/Kris Moon

Jackie Maugh Robinson

Rowan Beckett

P. H. Fischer

Amoolya Kamalnath

Claire Vogel Camargo

Bryan Rickert

shooting pigeons
with his air rifle he kills
the Holy Spirit

Roger Watson

late winter sales . . .
buying a pullover
I don't like

wave after wave . . .
a heart carried away
by the undertow

Rosa Maria Di Salvatore

a creaky duet –
these old bones
and bed springs

Stephanie Zepherelli

Finding the Key

“The desk of King Carlos Alberto of Sardinia has many secret compartments.”

starry sky all the orgasms thinking of you

secret love chrysanthe(mums) the word

I want you
to want me
hunger moon

bluefin tuna -
how do you
not know
what a catch
you are

Susan Burch

a sneezing--
axis of the earth
tilts a little

failing to
become a phoenix
a molted sparrow

Teiichi Suzuki

Hold on

To renew my specialized transit pass I am assessed by an unknown physiotherapist in a converted bowling alley where I must perform various endurance tasks including being timed while walking a required distance using my rollator. I then wait for the city to send me a letter approving or rejecting my pass renewal for another three years.

the long haul
right foot dragging
my pride

Michelle V. Alkerton

of flying pigs

a fleeting vision

election broadcast...

I spoil
a pure white page
love letter

no one else
in the graveyard
this winter morning

as if it were
someone else's father
the obituary

Pancake Day
how to make sense
of the flipping world

Keith Evetts

butterfly stickers
my students begin to
spreads their wings

Nitu Yumnam

overworked
the barista grinds
her teeth

bedtime story
the moon hangs
on every word

laundry day—
she lays out the reasons
for our separation

early morning drive
a stretch of horizon
yawns before me

open mic night—
adding extra pauses
to my poems

Andrew Markowski

pink or blue a part of me a part of you

mixed tape
I thought I knew
enough

blaming me
for his transgressions
loyal wife

twisting knife
she calls him by her
ex's name

Vandana Parashar

lightning the shortness of white night

Chen Xiaou

Slow Reader

I climb the ladder and take Love in the time of Cholera off the top shelf. On the title page is written my name and the year 1993. Now, thirty years later and for the first time, I am savouring the story of Florentino, Fermina and Juvenal.

dying
to see how
Cholera ends

Ann Smith

garden party
champagne glasses fill
with nonsense

Patricia Hawkhead

in the wrong again
laughter echoes round
inside my head

doomed love affair
stealing flowers from a grave
to give to my girl

bedtime story
another fairy tale
from the minister

changing seasons
the clown's drawn on smile
upside down

summer rain
traffic gridlock drips
rainbows

John Hawkhead

business meeting
the heron eats a frog
for breakfast

post-modern art
reality TV plays
on a broken screen

snow blindness
the impossibly white teeth
on the orthodontist's billboard

a hair
in my soup
--just corn silk

Joshua St. Claire

dementia
slowly washing away
the cliffs

mandrake root the witch's image screams

new school—
detaching the labels
you put on me

another year
getting through
closed blinds

C.X.Turner

trembling poppy heads—
the day they lost
their son

stacks of diaries—
holding on
to driftwood

lover's kiss —
lingering
in outer space

never alone —
I keep
my mother tongue

Katja Fox

direct sunlight
the gardener's bra
off through an armhole

running alongside
the drafts of my poem
bird list

morning traffic . . .
too late to save
the roadside turtle

a field of blue lupines . . .
steeling myself
for the confrontation

Alaskan glacier cruise
the tinkle of ice
in our cocktails

taking pot shots
at their punny names—
cannabis shops

speeding up
so I can't pass
B MNDFL

Kristen Lindquist

up in the lab
all of my cells are dead
I just know it

pissing in frogs' ponds
and crushing cherry blossoms
I spit at the moon

Brandon Favre

starling's song
I still hear the echo
of her name

snow day
the lopsided smile
of my son's snowman...

spring equinox
the lingering frost
in the beggar's eyes

unleashing
her inner goth—
black streak butterfly

Adele Evershed

melancholy . . .
my notion of love
the glow of a cigarette

another lockdown . . .
the silence between
raindrops

Ivan Gaćina

family get-together
another charade
I cannot guess

quiet celebration
healed scars
and a one year chip

Tracy Davidson



words / image (C) DStrange

monkey labour the last coconut milk latté

Debbie Strange



Debbie Strange

her walk
the devil
reels in his string

Darrell Petska

for tonight
we ignore the past--
snow-covered stump

Debra Lance

Year of the Rabbit
everywhere multiplying
tip jars

half a prayer
the mantis roams the garden
with a missing limb

Ramund Ro

no matter where
I move, she
keeps me in check

new school bus
same grumpy smile
of the driver

round and round
the Christmas tree lights
her arthritis

field of nodding birds
dip into the earth
for more
oil

new divorcee
their wedding napkins
at the breakfast table

hunting the mosquito
in the bathroom
hunting me

Randy Brooks

for a while her face
a deeper shade of pink
wrong emoji

wild berries
the wrinkled smile
of the seller

Ravi Kiran



Terri L. French



Terri L. French

gone
before dessert
dessert

salmon salmonella

familiar
ring of the dinner bell
home school

unexpected
emptiness of winning
a war

Roberta Beach Jacobson

spam for breakfast
fresh
from the inbox

busted
for reading
1984

traveling salesman
the farmer's not buying
but his daughter is

met her on Facebook
married on Zoom
divorced on Twitter

glad handing
potential voters
super spreader

Christmas card list
I'm only on theirs
because they're on mine

Charles Harmon

up until dawn
recounting the same sheep
one missing

daylight savings
an hour of atonement
unbecoming

plum blossoms
weigh less than silence
more than light

Ron Scully

another day
another dollar
medical debt

hunger pangs
having to eat
my words

cracked mirror
the gaps
in my resume

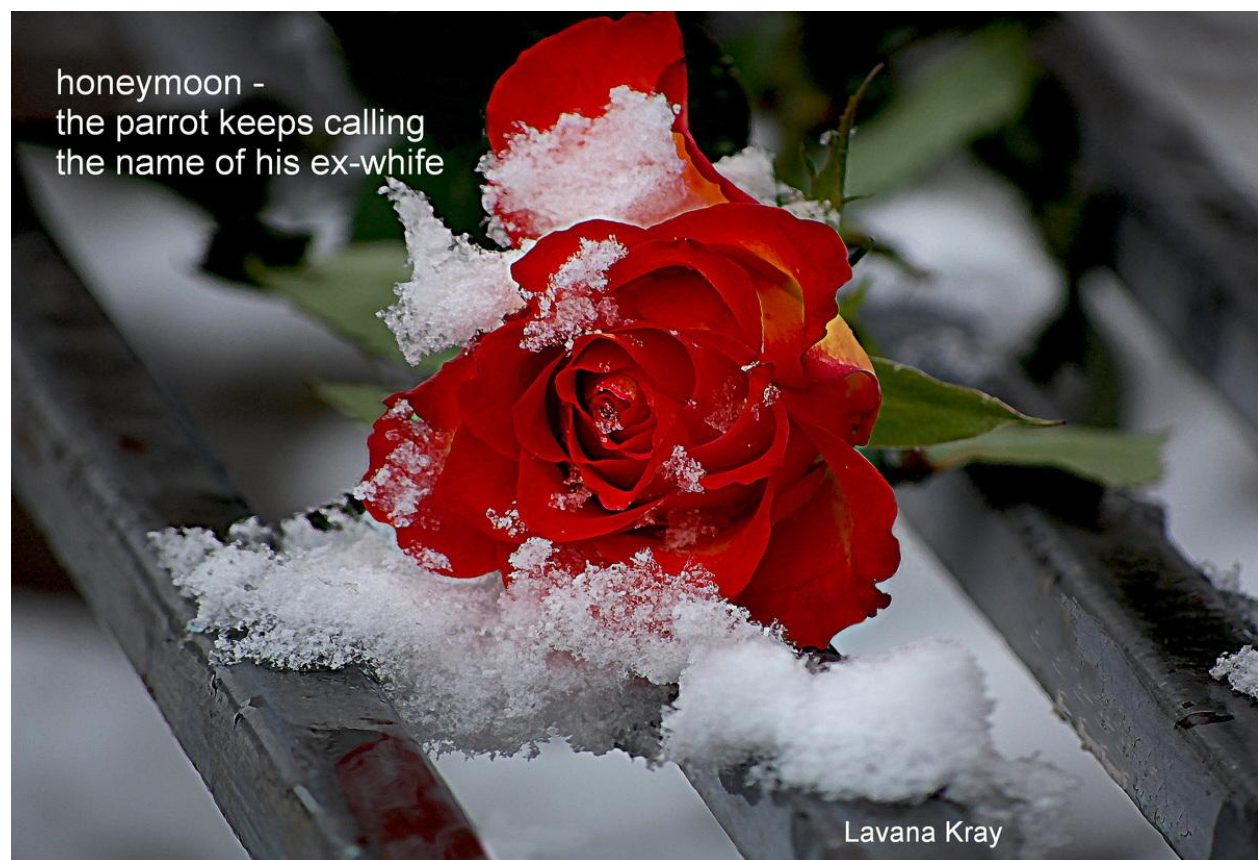
Danny Daw

from under the couch
our cat emerges with
a dust bunny beard

prison garden
convicted murderer beheads
a sunflower

morning after St. Patrick's Day
I resume my Lenten pledge
not to drink

John J. Dunphy



honeymoon -
the parrot keeps calling
the name of his ex-wife

Lavana Kray

Lavana Kray

Tin Roof Rusted

no regrets

*yellow pus
splatters the looking glass
sing me a love song*

the pillow knows

blues in the night
streaks of mascara
tell the truth

i'm lying

*sanguine moon
the second trimester
becomes the third*

Peter Jastermsky/*Bisshie*

beyond good and evil i asked for wonder

pirates and pathfinders the courage to be

Lev Hart

one more layer
on the cast iron skillet . . .
gloaming walk

William O'Sullivan

scented candle *and* incense... chili for lunch

funeral procession naming the blank space in my life...

never ending soiree

every breath is a reason to smile maybe even grin or just
that sly look with a knowing shake of the head just to be is
more than we need or deserve

lightening
the pulse
on the river

adding regrets to the list

only saints have nothing to repent for. i never even applied
for *that* job. making things happen in your life requires
taking risks sometimes. some people thought i took too many.
me. i dunno i never really *saw* the risks until *after* they had
happened.

dog eared
family bible...
missing a page in *revelations*

strictly/hardly

i have a code to live by. someday. maybe soon. maybe never.
i will apply it to my life. until then...

hoping
for the best
i untangle a nightmare

Michael Rehling

Cold Touch

her slight smile
after his humble pie
snow thaw

graying sky
her tone
adds shades

brows pucker
in a frown
crinkled oak leaves

heated spat
icicles drop and crash
on the ground

after a fuss
her hip-sway
a willow in wind

John Zheng

mulberry memories of the malabar

music teacher's crescendo
a riot of laughter
among the students

Akhila Mohan

lunch gossip
she slowly stirs
the pot

illness-
the internet tells me
I'm actually dead

Chris Langer

year of the rabbit ...
parting with the tiger
inside me

Natalia Kuznetsova

end to end encrypted
her glance
at him

Ram Chandran

Scenes from a Modern War

battle-weary starving
the soldiers roast
a stray dog

howitzers boom rockets roar

battle-crazed feral
they butcher and rape
heedless of screams

homes reduced to rubble genocide

harvesting grain
the farmer avoids
a bomb crater
ducks as
fighter-jets screech by

sirens wail funeral bells toll

Paul Beech

the background hum of nothing stirs ennui soup

blackberry wine
past mistakes swirl
in its dregs

Marilyn Ward

the alcohol
in your voice
just saying

thermostat
a fight about anything
becomes about everything

wish Mom were here
tricky coat zipper

Play by Play

Cutting through a neighbor's yard, I catch the scent of empties from his back porch. I can hear men's voices and the play-by-play of a baseball game inside. They are not aware of performing this initiation rite of my passage into male adulthood.

dirt road
the cops know we're here
but leave us alone

Tim Cremin



Tim Cremin

three holes
in the safety protocols
covered with hope

Jon Hare

Paradise

Melt-your-flip-flops hot. I strip the popsicle's white sheath
with my teeth, shove iced mango into my mouth. Molten
memories come dripping out. That starlit winter night. My
arms around your waist. Snowmobile surfing fresh drifts
above the fence line. A landscape without borders.
Uncharted. You switch the motor off, turn to face me. Warm
breath. Hushed hills. A cold, volcanic kiss.

walled garden
our twentieth
high school reunion

Maureen Kingston

don't tell anyone
(secret list of exclusions)
proceed to promise

Dr Kathryn Moores

*preschool play
the kids take turns
being the tree*

amused mums
watch online

Christina Chin / *M. R. Defibaugh*

*field guide
for the birds of North America
every corner bent*

the jeep flees
a threatened bison

Christina Chin / *M. R. Defibaugh*

beneath the stars
— between us
the Pleiades

*jealous of
her body pillow*

Christina Chin / *M. R. Defibaugh*

Afternoon stillness—
now and again
the faucet drips

Moving day—
I never learned
my neighbors names

M. R. Pelletier

travel home
even the air
has changed

Wai Mei Wong

Chinatown stroll
my thoughts flow
in Chinglish

nine-to-five job
TGIF drinks and card games
with high school friends ...
I mutter, *what if this is*
as good as I can get

Still in the Picture

pose for the photo:
me flanked by my pregnant wife
and mother-in-law

My new sister-in-law, Mary, a pink-haired teenager, remarks in a deadpan tone, "The arrangement is wrong. What if my sister and brother-in-law get divorced?" An awkward silence descends upon our two families. "I think it would be better if he stands to the side, in case he needs to be airbrushed out." Everyone laughs drowning out her next question.

Chen-ou Liu

the hands that have touched it gaia tattoo

changing out of my work uniform a moon with no native
name

his last name another invasive plant

cyphering out the constellations first kiss

Joan Torres

winter solstice
celebrating sunshine
in capsule form

mimicking
my grandma's garden —
parrot tulips

Missteps

When we finish our walk, I can tell he has something to say.

We pause at the foot of the driveway and he looks at me as he offers this advice. “Careful who you marry” he says softly.

Already married, I am annoyed because his message seems out of place and it is certainly too late to apply in my situation. Sensing my unease, he clarifies. “Not you, me. She’s never satisfied. No matter what I do, it’s not enough”.

broken wing -
the bird doesn't know the flight
will be his last

Bonnie J Scherer

behind a church
always bodies
buried

now offering
higher wages
being forced to

Jerome Berglund

soaring
with his words
paper butterfly

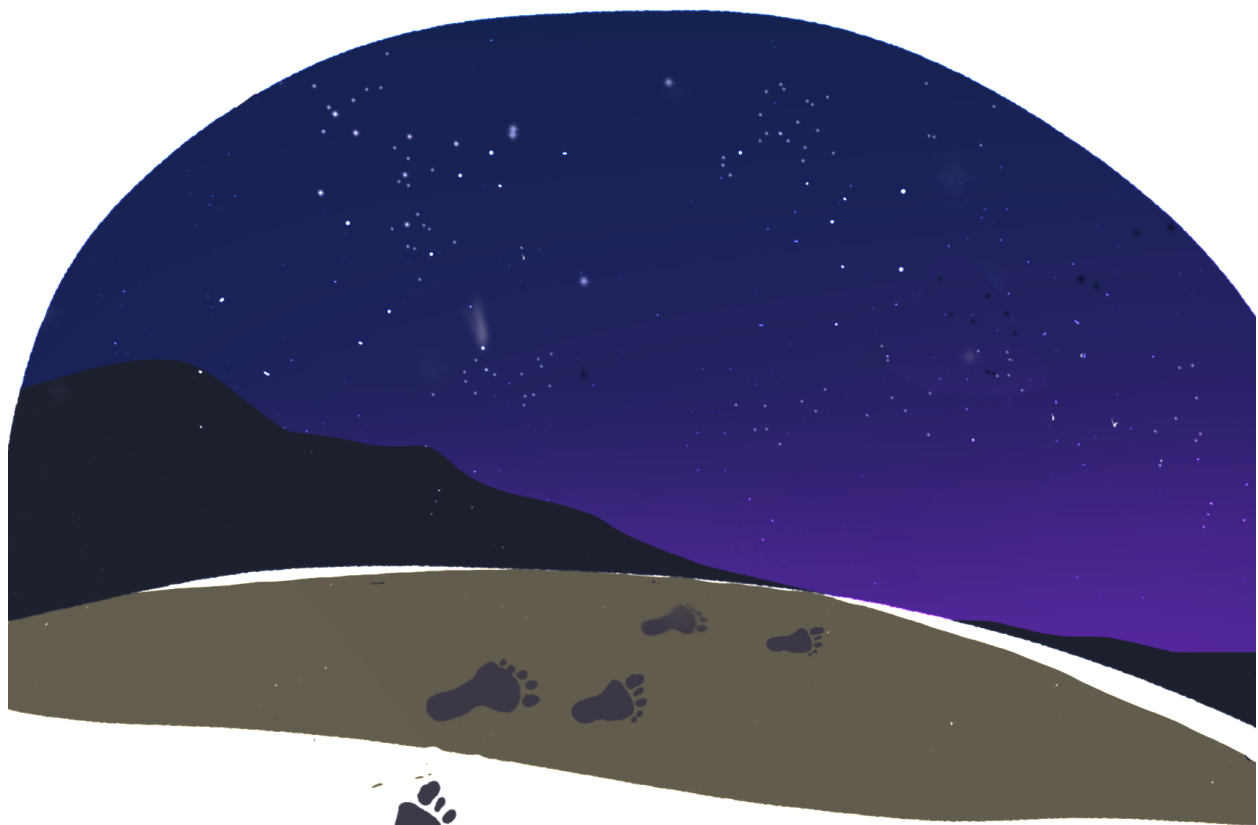
beach meditation
my attention shifts from all
the gull drama

innertuberiverdaughter spinning through her questions

sea change the planet for my children

reading with the cat the lives we have left

Kat Lehmann



will we still be here

when you swing by the next time

comet ZTF?

Lmp

Linda Papanicolaou



Linda Papanicolaou

deepening dusk
the clasp of her hand
at the gate

cusp of sleep
a mosquito buzzes
my good ear

Ho Chi Minh City
almost like home
a vendor calls out

early dawn
he fills the kettle
singing off-key

the bangle seller
slides memories
down her hand

Neena Singh

class reunion
talk of the boring teacher
most entertaining

temple premises
how beautiful the girl
I chose to leave

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

Heritage

In 1968, my first boyfriend, Aron, introduced me to volunteer work; we made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to give out at love-ins and demonstrations. Our lives took separate paths. Now Aron is a Yippie icon known as the Pieman. In his younger days, he smashed pies in the face of politicians and public figures with policies antithetical to the Yippie worldview. More importantly, he is the child of Holocaust camp survivors. Today he contacts me on Facebook to chat about George Santos falsely claiming to be the descendant of Holocaust survivors. Aron is deeply hurt that anyone would claim such a status when it is not true. He tells me several times that Santos has driven a knife into the belly of real Holocaust survivors and "the Generations After." I have not heard that term before and the stark truth of it resonates. Aron asks me to share a meme of Santos getting a pie in the face as Aron is too old and infirm to do the actual deed. In honor of the Generations After I post the meme

your grandson
shares your eyes
your father's eyes

Shasta Hatter

game day
napping through all
the pre-game hoopla

half time
the refs turn
a blind eye

clock management
interest runs out
late in fourth quarter

Michael Henry Lee

abdominal pain...
I think no more
of my backache

conceptual art exhibition
luckily the sign says
"you are here"

Oscar Luparia



words: hifsa ashraf/photo: oscar luparia

passing cloud the weight of his white lies

Senryu: Hifsa Ashraf
Image: Oscar Luparia



Senryu: Hifsa Ashraf
Image: Oscar Luparia

migraine
a gull squawks
to the beat

recovery
practicing my smile
in the mirror

hinomayo blossoms
another reason
to stay alive

Farah Ali

teen and parent
time together
whatever

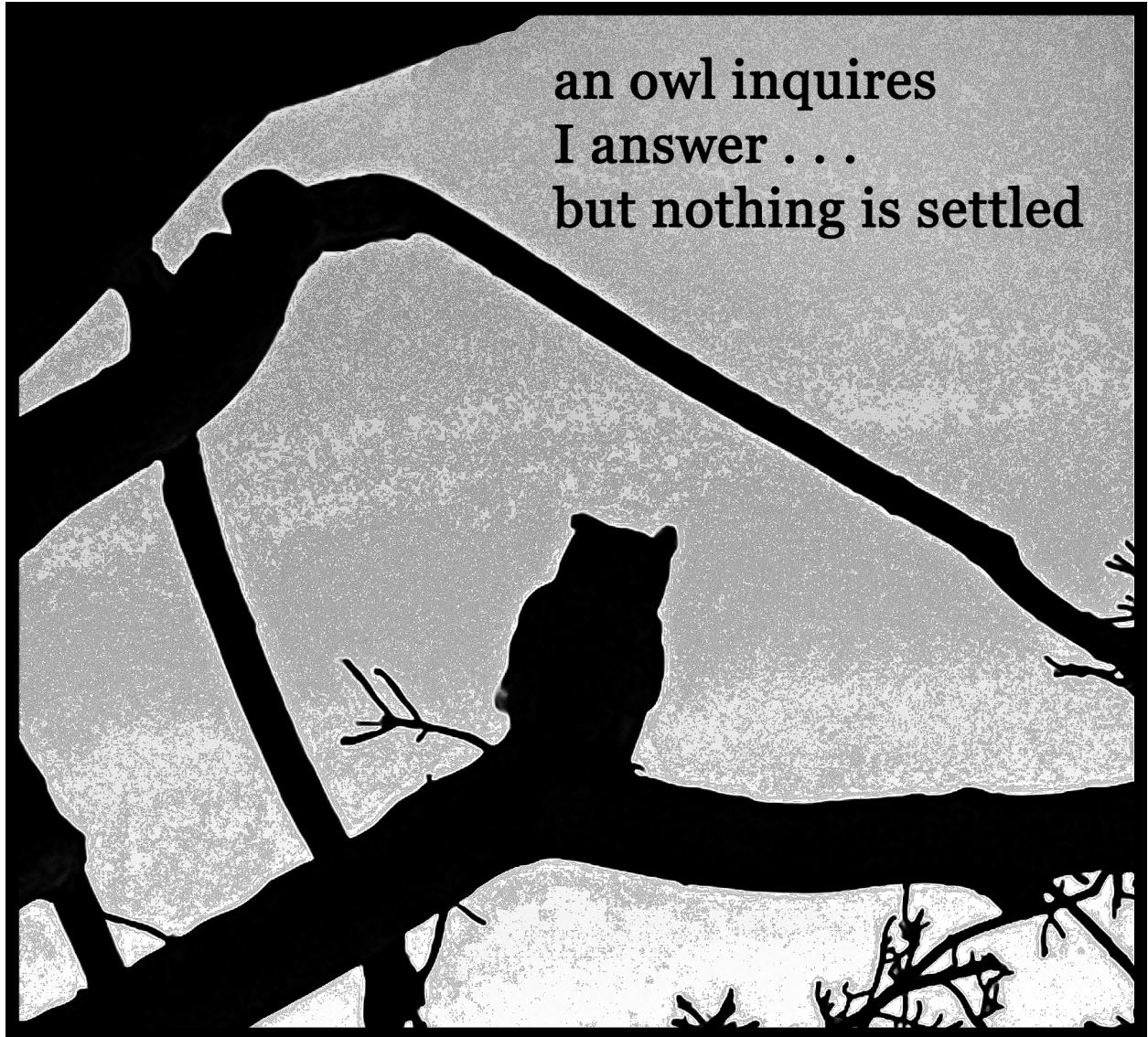
Herb Tate

treasure trove
grandma's lifetime collection
of buttons

fitted sheets
cruella's invention
for arthritic hands

howling wind
weeks of anxiety
before surgery

Christa Pandey



an owl inquires
I answer . . .
but nothing is settled

Poem by Gil Jackofsky
Photo by Mike Jackofsky

july 4, 1984

item:

dr. gilbert jackofsky, a local psychologist who has shrunk to a height of one and one-quarter inches, plunged 26 inches from his office window today to almost certain death. dr. jackofsky, according to family members, had been acting more peculiarly than usual lately. the body has not been recovered to date. local authorities suspect that it may have been carried off by a band of carpenter ants making early preparations for what is expected to be an extremely severe winter on long island. a spokesman for the ants offered no comment beyond a terse: "everybody's gotta eat." there seems to be very little hope for the shrinks survival, although there are some who believe that gilbert, known for his winning ways, may well have recovered and attained a position of authority as an advisor to the queen of the ant colony. the queen, who has never been seen by outsiders, is said to be an eccentric. memorial services will be held at 8 pm tomorrow evening in a discarded marlboro carton at the east end of the mill dam causeway in centerport. immediately following the ceremony, at high tide, the carton will be ignited and set adrift in the harbor. the family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the carpenter ant union local 222, afl-cio.

spraying for ants
pesticide
or genocide?

Gil Jackofsky

one line each
our first threesome
a kinky senryu

trick knee
the magic show
is a flop

pow wow
fancy dancers—
the porta-potty queue

a toddler
eating popcorn
off the ground
gets scolded . . .
by an angry squirrel

Rick Jackofsky

Darwin's survival theory orchids at Aldi

a new haiku
published or not
still my moment

digitizing
family photos
many unknowns

Susan Farner

a torn sheet
for a cape
boy batman falls asleep

a panther
in a tiny cage
the boy's first suit

hide and seek
unable to find her
behind those sad eyes

over the fence
the little leaguer
needs to pee

the moon a mirror on the pond's frog prince

Robert Witmer

Time Out

the memento mori torn valentine half-life whispers

sugar skull a memento mori in bittersweet

salty tears in the mind's eye memento mori

the memento mori reading into a vanitas

on gray skies memento mori blurs white skywriting

all trails become one memento mori

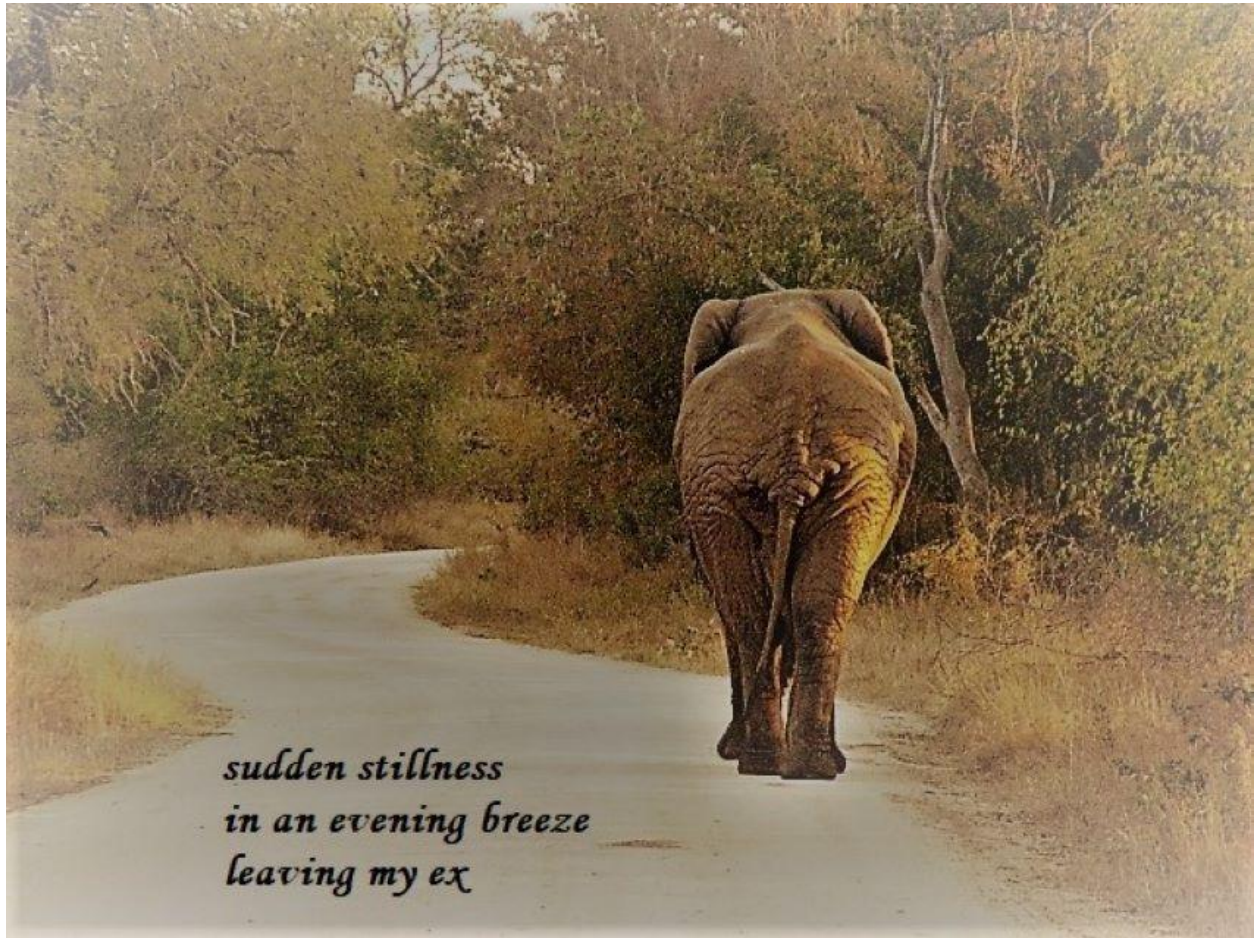
Ray Caligiuri

Peter Jastermsky

*Midnight--
next year, I'll avoid
Prince Charming*



Colleen M. Farrelly



*sudden stillness
in an evening breeze
leaving my ex*

Colleen M. Farrelly

old age home
the sudden urge
to climb a tree

rolling thunder
hidden nail marks
in her palms

John Pappas

swaying Christmas tree—
the holiday manhattans
Dad serves Aunt Martha

faux pas—
asking a future amputee
where things stand

climate change denier
our daughter says she *never*
touches our thermostat

radio lullaby—
nodding off
in the third inning

that day we'd feared
had come at last—
cat vomit through the floor grille

vine-ripened tomatoes—
that minefield we installed
really keeps the deer out

Curt Pawlisch

the cold touch
of his mother's necklace
webbed moon

pouring myself into the body-shaped abyss

Richa Sharma

Mumbai Local —
an elbow
in my breast

metro ride —
that under arm
whiff

Rupa Anand

state of the union
the spin cycle
off balance

wind-whipped sea oats
a steel tooth comb
through the foster's hair

turning
into an alley
cat's strut

Marilyn Ashbaugh

her fingers curl
around a cigarette
first light

Jennifer Ryan-Jauregui

wind advisory
the passing gust
of a promise

false front the same old falling-down house

daily walk
one small step ahead
of osteoporosis

bedtime my feet have another idea

Cynthia Anderson

St. Joseph
cast under a hedge
the unsold house

in the pharmacy picking up a cold

family photo
everyone in it
divorced

entrenched in our ways endless war

fresh duct tape on the old duffel bag another journey

Ruth Holzer

slightest sign—
a bird, a blossom—
hang up my parka

in my memory
chrysanthemums
become snowmelt

Bruce Jewett

more rare
than a postage stamp
the letter itself

the fun-sizes
so seriously
aren't

Curt Linderman

empty nest –
the sound of silence moves
a rocking chair



Cristina Angelescu

Cristina Angelescu

library shelves
the crick in my neck
worth a good book

grandma
short and stocky
potbelly stove

mother's button box
the mystery
of an enameled red star

kindergarten
every tree
a lollipop

Ingrid Baluchi

near you
losing
all my thoughts

Eva Joan

breastfeeding
listening to Moby Dick
baby's first tooth

cold tea
the fly swims round and round
until it doesn't

jäger bombs
and a quick shag in the field
shot gun wedding

Bisshie

a jogger
overtakes the cart puller
evening rain

i head home
not needing more
anymore

Govind Joshi

wood tick
in the middle of my back
no wife

third day hosting in-laws
I remind them
about the poison ivy

Dear John
the forever stamp
a mixed signal

airplane geek
on and on
about his drone

Marsh Muirhead

X ray
my haiku
in midbreath

after the aftershocks my mother's trembling hands

driving
under the influence
Chopin's nocturne

lips i kissed
a while ago, now
playing harmonica

Alvin Cruz

closed captions
speaking of rain
I don't hear

the day after...
finding you still
everywhere

Jo McInerney

Easter time
unsold choco Santas
resurrect as rabbits

godspeed!
most seats on the plane
double-booked

Pitt Buerken

in the long night
when the owl hoots
delivering its last song

I wake to find
a hollow in your pillow

dans la longue nuit
quand la chouette hulule
délivrant sa dernière chanson

je me réveille pour trouver
un creux dans ton oreiller

Françoise Maurice & Keith Evetts

plastic wrappers —
all these footprints
on sand

VIDYA SHANKAR

pollen time
the scraggly oak tree
has me by the throat

secrets told
grandpa curses me
from the grave

Pris Campbell

in the dark
his nurse's voice
meets mine

Elizabeth Crocket

rough drafts
pronouns orbit
the recycling bin

plant-based wings
they who grill
cry foul

Caroline Giles Banks

her sewing challenge -
a rag doll emerges from
flowers and dashes

Gillena Cox

Southwest Chief

Pinot noir and the blurring lights of a blackened Illinois landscape. My mind numbs from the monotony and the soporific clicking over the rails. Yet, I am not able to sleep. Finally, I crash the next day somewhere west of Gallup, New Mexico. But I am suddenly awakened by the jarring and screeching of powerful locomotives sliding to a halt. Peering out a dirty window to a sign that says Winslow, Arizona, I panic, not knowing where I am or how I got here.

evening chill
when dreams
become real
and reality
a dream state

John Budan

the ebb and flow
of whiskey talk
moonfaced oystermen

years since the big bang
the number
to call for a good time

inflation
balloons at the quote unquote
dollar store

Mike White



Vladislav Hristov

just as i feared webmd

thinking out loud--
palmetto fronds flap
in the wind

too much time
in the dental care aisle
grinding my teeth

if i don't
do it right away--
cosmic dust

a cappella--
the refrigerator harmonizes
with my tinnitus

Sondra J. Byrnes

a shell
to my ear...
only tinnitus

hello ceiling
my old friend
back exercises once again

January sales
the mannequins
missing limbs

honesty box
my coin
hits wood

New Year's Eve call—
the care home
in her voice

Tony Williams

nearby Niagara's roar
the quiet
of dew

Gabriela Popa

misty sea
everything I know
about myself

Maria Concetta

a rave
for microbes–
bachelor's pad

a whole life
deemed worthless
doomscrolling

Srinivash K Nambi

mid fifties
the swing between
qualms and calms

Daya Bhat

sickle moon
he kisses
my suicide scar

papa's coat
still on the stand
in lonely hours
my monologue
as if it were him

Arvinder Kaur

substitute mail carrier--
everyone out in the street
exchanging letters

Carma Lynn Park

romantic night
every word
testosteroned

block of condoms
the saleswoman forgets
to give change

Bakhtiyar Amini

August heat
beauty shop rumors
spin with the fan

three introverts
fighting—
silent road trip

Rae Hight

Montserrat

Our coach lurches around the last hairpin bend as it ascends the precipitous road to the monastery. I don't know why we make this pilgrimage; my father's intention is unclear.

Alighting, we walk briskly towards the basilica, scattering pigeons. There's no time to admire the serrated peaks scaled by the funicular railway or green fields far below. Hurriedly we find our seats before the choir's melancholy layers the air.

cliff shelter
the recluse
in us all

Tim Gardiner

pillow talk
snow plow lights
flash the room

the old man's nose picking strawberries

election signs burning bushes burn

hair salon
she asks if I'm okay
with my grays

Debbie Olson

seven deadly sins
pride in your work
doesn't count

Eavonka Ettinger

faded genes
her great-grandson's
arrest record

mixed-use trail
his granddaughter packs
a mermaid

winter squash
hardening my shell
for the holidays

Mark Forrester

reflecting
the emptiness within...
a glass half-full

Prashanth Visweswaran

inner peace
somewhere in the house
my lost phone

Aksheeya Suresh

rocking chair

In the empty room
my wooden self

through her indeterminate areas a dusk slips away

Vijay Prasad

promised me
the world but gave me
heartache

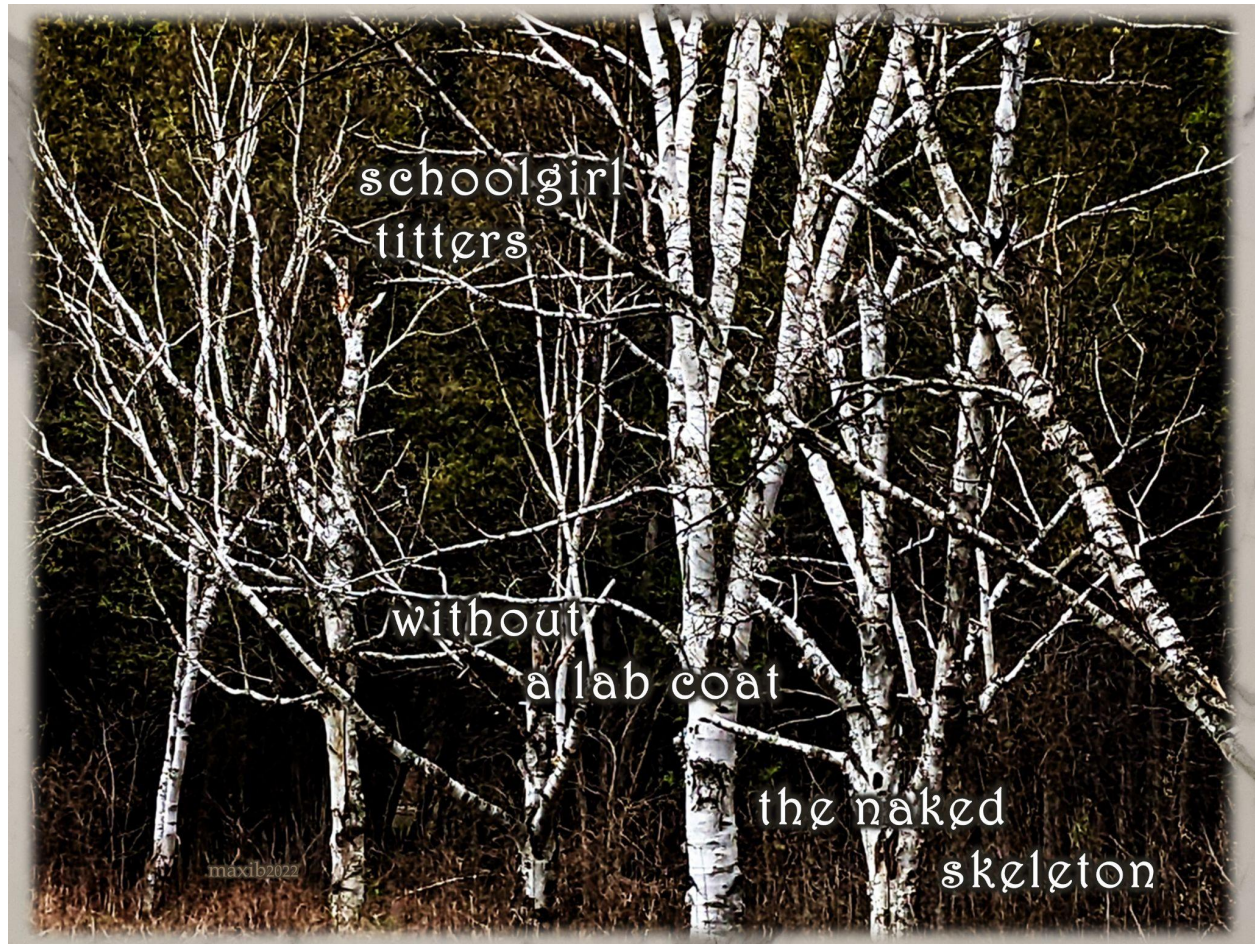
Mary McCormack

first date
finishing the bottle of wine
alone

a greenhouse
full of seedlings ...
her husband's suicide

assisted living
the piano player
has his own agenda

Joseph P. Wechselberger



Maxianne Berger

new year
the polish on my nails
blackened by chemo

Carmela Marino

bowed heads
in the church
daffodils

a painful goodbye
to a very old friend
dentist's chair

a presumption
of immortality
stars

Mike Gallagher

stepping around the marigolds
to rub noses
with a cucumber

sickle moon at dawn
you can read about it
here: (

high stakes testing the third grader's 'Intimations of
Immortality'

hanger bumps on the only Hawaiian shirt I own

Patrick Sweeney

from horizon to horizon

e

n

d

i

n

g

s

of our view

Amrutha V. Prabhu

evening walk
I carry with me nothing
but moonlight

snow on the mountain
such beauty a distance
makes

Rehn Kovacic

summer squall
through the kitchen
spinning salad

first scam
hang-up calls
in third grade

hooking the eye
on the screen door
giving up on you

soaring snowbird
gramma flies
to Boynton Beach

Barrie Levine

hometown
the sound of forgotten
nickname

room cleaning
the spider gets away
with a warning

power outage
we start
whispering

Tomislav Sjekloća

holding the twin
that made it . . .
a vase of purple tulips

Ann Sullivan

pressure putt
his shadow
curls round the hole

busy at work all day the children play

pondering love two birds on a wire

Jenny Fraser

heart of glass ceiling

pre-coffee–
my B-side
personality

wild grapes–
just a hint
of misdemeanor

Michael J. Galko

lovers' leap
a water bottle
left behind

Mary Arnold

a fluttering of wings
in the yew
my lover's whispers

startled
from my reverie...
geese cry over

farmer's market
a basketful of
flattery

Deborah Burke Henderson

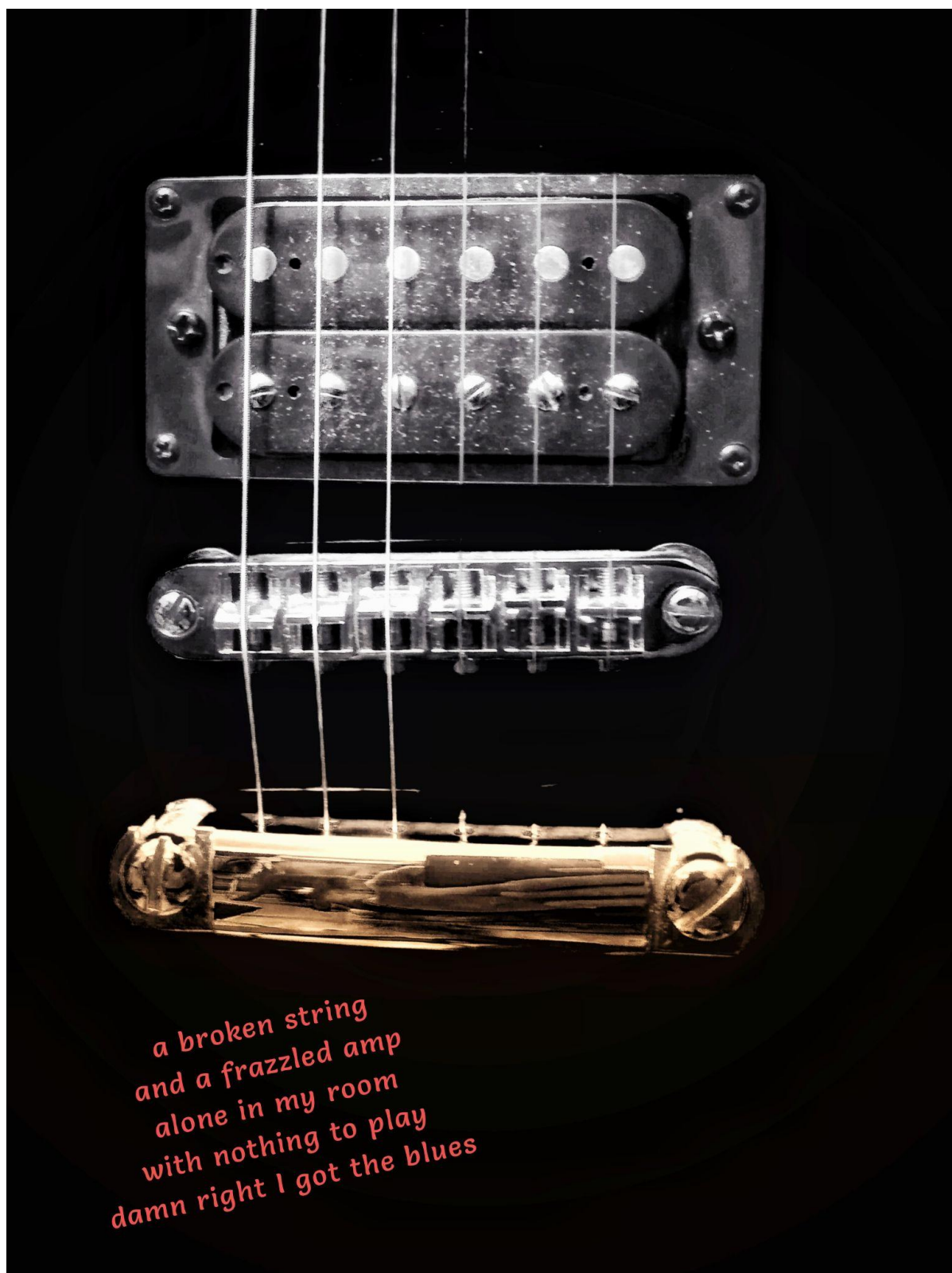
verses of love
poetry written and
thrown away

on the treadmill
eyes wandering toward
the open road

cigar smoke
memories of shared
memories

long drive
to the hospital
empty skies

B.A. France



Mark Meyer

scorecard:
ninth inning triple play
my pencil broke

Richard Magahiz

virtual pilates

virtual pilates fingers crossed

pilates brave new virtual world

pilates the angle of the ipad

pilates voices thru a lens

virtual pilates cracking on the carpet

Mark Gilbert

in bubble wrap my see-through fragility

Tazeen Fatma

soft sand
adjusting our clocks
to island time

first warm day
the pent up roar
of motorcycles

nonlinear dynamics
the conversation
bifurcates

truth decay
nobody really cared
about it anyway

Jay Friedenberg

cloudburst
the birthday party ends
without goodbyes

Christine Wenk-Harrison

regret—
the weight
on my bathroom scale

day off at last
long-awaited tryst
with my book in bed

Mihan Han

Dead End

My Monstera Deliciosa looks sad. The leaves are starting to yellow. I glance at it, note the stressed, drooping foliage. I have to deal with it, I know, but there are so many things to tackle first. My dinner is on the stove and I have reports to finish. I can get to it later.

Some days in, the plant almost screams at me. The leaves have started to curl. I have a look. Again. Thrips. Darn these stubborn bugs. I need to deal with them soon. But first, the sink is full of dishes and my day job peeks through my free time.

The leaves now fall away from the branches. New shoots struggle to survive, and fail. I try to give the plant some care. But it's too late.

Too late.

an unending tunnel
to unbearable darkness
the pills in her palm
masquerades
a shining beacon

Sangita Kalarickal

bush send-off
banksias and bottlebrush
for this bloke's casket

cooling nights
in my gardening shoes
mouse droppings

Glenys Ferguson

crushing
every little empty box —
cancer drugs

passport photo
just how I look
when I arrive

Maurice Neville

she clasps my finger
moments after birth...
we're both crying now

in '72
hot pants and platform shoes...
now seventy-two

conjunction
your planet in my birth sign
as if that mattered

Jan Stretch

cloud moon--
the secrets I hide
from myself

threading a needle
I ponder over the specifics
of our relationship

sunny beach the crunch of castaway plastic

Mona Bedi

pooping
on the clock
working dogs

petro c. k.

closed eyes
yet Buddha sees
all that we don't

starless night
I can't find grandma
anywhere

Minal Sarosh

Black Friday
he gives himself
a five-finger discount

game set match...
spectators rest
their necks

Nina Kovacic

broken dolls
I glue the board walls
of an old box

Eufemia Griffo

Deepavali
sweeper boy picking up
uncracked crackers

Bidyut Prabha Gantayat

elaborate
misunderstanding
birth father

Erin Castaldi

path to the backhouse
every snapping twig --
a Sasquatch

day's end --
conversation dissolves
into waves

Allison Douglas-Tourner

Valentine's Day
a yellow rose
breaks her heart

Kavya Janani. U

breakfast
for the mob
I fill the bird feeder

tripping the light fantastic
high heels
on cobblestones

dull days
proof in the number
of cigarette butts

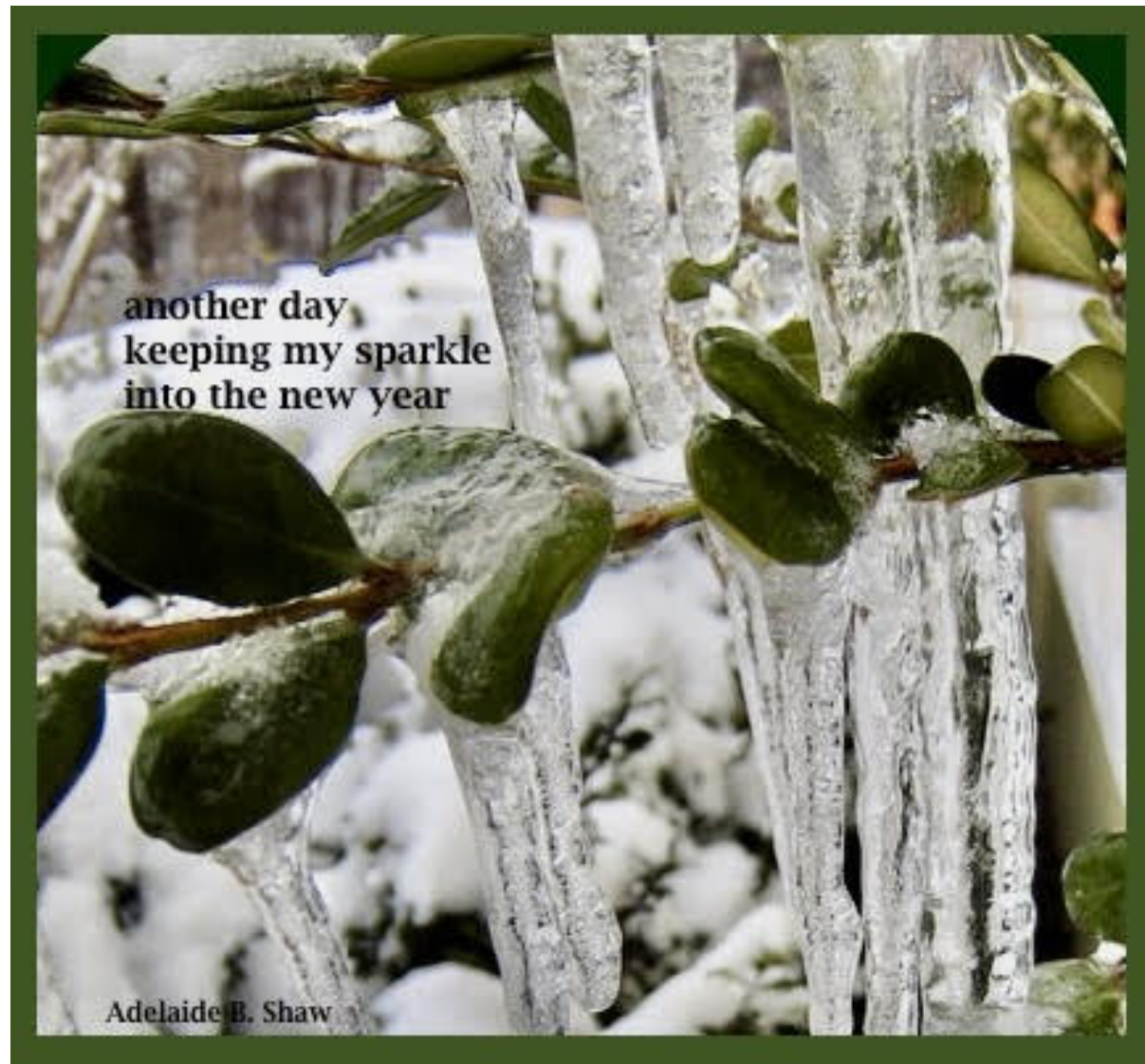
morning fog
vision and brain
in sync

the long wait
to see the doctor—
now, I'm really sick

a pill for all ills
but nothing to ease the pain
of the doctor's bill

with a cane
walking the hopscotch grid
losing to myself

Adelaide B. Shaw



Adelaide B. Shaw

Trade Mission

Bowing slightly, we exchange business cards with both hands, taking time to read them with nods and appreciative words. A Japanese businessman's card is his face, reputation and achievement. Using "both hands" is the ancient way of showing that there are no concealed weapons. Respecting his culture will seal multi-million-dollar contracts for Canadian wooden housing products.

As I lead our trade delegation on Honshu and Hokkaido, my wife walks the customary ten paces behind me, head bowed. She never lets me forget it, but it so impresses our hosts that she's given a chaperone and budget for a fortnight of shopping and eating sushi. Earning respect with my smattering of Japanese phrases, I'm addressed as "Captain Cook-san", perhaps in the misplaced belief that I am a descendant of the great navigator.

Following samurai tradition, we arrange the seating for our negotiations so that my counterpart is seated away from doors and windows, and I take the line of fire of any enemy arrows or assassination attempts. Arriving late is a serious insult, easy to commit when navigating the unnumbered maze of Tokyo streets.

We solemnly pour each other's tea, traditionally proving that no poisons are present.

Business complete, we must celebrate. My counterpart, stern, ram-rod Takakura-san hosts a very traditional feast where he smiles at my wife trying to sit demurely on the floor in a cocktail sheath. For fun, he orders a menu with one obscure and repulsive looking seafood, the gonads of a fish, which, to his chagrin and with much beer, we Canadians all manage to ingest unlike some of his colleagues.

Fully costumed, we're put on a stage to join the Ainu tribal clans of Hokkaido in traditional dances. My skill at the highland fling comes in handy. In return, we rent the Sapporo beer hall and a touring Newfoundland fiddle band to induct our friends as honorary Canadians with a full screeching of lobster kissing, water bucketing

and rum. Twirling smaller-statured Japanese while dancing reels
sends several skidding off across the beer-soaked floor.

A free day and my fisherman's curiosity make the Tsukiji Market a
must see. Three in the morning, gum-booted and waterproofed,
wending through the concentric rings of processing and packaging at
the world's largest fish market to the tuna auction, where bluefins
from Canadian Atlantic waters sell for millions of yen. Amazed by the
skill of cutters using the long maguro bōchō blades, returning next
day and soon giving guided tours to tourists!

I'm beginning to think like a Japanese, without having smelt the
cherry blossoms or bowed to Mount Fuji.

*at Sensō-ji Buddhist temple
wind and thunder guard
the pathway to compassion*

Bryan Cook

7am
a Buddhist monk runs
but misses the bus

lent
the organist leans on
the minor keys

Sarah Paris

slowing swings
I begin to let go
of young age

Christopher Calvin

poem and watercolor: Joanna Delalande

RED TULIPS
OCEAN OF DREAMS
TO CROSS WITH YOU



Joanna Delalande

journey -
the letter from you
my only luggage

snowman...
another friend
I lost

Ana Drobot

perpetual loop
tourists trying to avoid
“the tourists”

dying man
untouched Jell-o
on his tray

story time
the librarian gets hugs
and a snot-ringed skirt

alone at last
wearing nothing
but masks

artillery spotters
in the shell of an apartment
crib against the wall

David Oates

retirement home -
the residents play
kick the bucket

you and me
become us
elopement

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams



soft click
of barber shears
9th inning roar

Photo by Bill S. Guerriero, senryu by Billy Guerriero

Billy Guerriero

motherhood
meatiest chicken piece
in son's plate

family dinner time
hungry or
not

Priti Khullar

newly retired
but still active
the cat and I

portrait gallery
the familiar feeling of
being watched

Lori Kiefer

confirming my place in this world dandelion

Deepa Patil

between sunsets
20,000 breaths
and a cup of tea

billowing sheets
dreams of flight confounded
by clothespins

Margarita Drozdoff

sandcastle in danger
the morning raid
of small destroyers

Eugeniusz Zacharski

mammogram
the technician smiles while
lowering the plate

getting stuck
in a turnstile
morning verse

garden stroll
remembering things
I forgot to forget

broken promises
the misery
learned
in the words
trust me

Terrie Jacks

a missing heart
chocolate smudged mouth
the only clue

Linda L Ludwig

laundromat gossip on the spin cycle

weekend getaway both toothbrushes mine

autumn chill color-coding the emergency phone tree

cheap duck call
the loneliness
of a decoy

Bob Lucky

At Urgent Care

I'm not sure I can describe what happened. My wife and I were sitting outside at a café when a woman passed by with a dog on a leash. A small dog. A little chunky, shorthaired, barking potato. Cute. My wife petted him, but when I tried to, he bared his teeth and started snarling. Do you think I have rabies? Anyway, the woman said to me, he doesn't like hats, so I laughed and reached to take mine off.

puncture wounds the pulse of stars

Bob Lucky

online meetings
kids walking into the shot
and everyone smiles

preparing lunch
I get rid of burnt taste in roast beef
with mayonnaise

for my family
a typical morning routine
the struggle for the bathroom

Antonietta Losito

Hunger

You leave town, gone for good maybe. I dream about you—magical, prescient dreams that leave me both shaken and comforted. I wake, missing you, mourning the loss with increasing intensity. Each day there is one less fork in the silverware drawer. Is a bizarre robber coming in while I sleep? During the day while I'm at work? When I tell people about my petty thief, no one tells me I might need to "see someone." Over time, the forks reappear. Is my subconscious telling me that you might also return?

bittersweet
a single place setting
for pie

Gayle Worthy

a hole has appeared
in the ladies' locker room
police are looking into it

all these years
yet heat spirals at your touch
your mouth, magic

house renovation
magic mushrooms
he hid 25-years-ago

Carol Raisfeld

firelight
reading love letters
for the last time

Stephenie Story

moving in
we sweep away
the autumn leaves

Cynthia Rowe

empty nest
chest of drawers filled
with family photos

the impossibility
of the w sound...
Koreans let it go

no time to shave today
I decide to wear
a mask

a student speaks to me
nah, she speaks
on the phone

John J. Han

Life cereal
the box ends
in dust

knuckles
crack... bleed
wedding band

Tyler McIntosh

lemon yellow beetle
squeezes into the
tiny parking space

old married couple
they finish each other's
crosswords

Kerry J Heckman

rich girl
asks the poor boy
about his wealth
he hands her
a million phrases of love

chica rica
pregunta al chico pobre
por sus riquezas
el pone en sus manos
un millón de frases de amor

Wilbert Salgado

on the ferry
two old ladies knitting
islands together

Hege Anita Jakobsen Lepri



Robert Kingston

morning mist I walk into myself

stirring the world inside her skinny latte

Robert Kingston

twisting in the breeze ...
half a lullaby
missing

Tim Roberts

washing potatoes
in the soviet sink
egyptian sand

alone
at its
height
white
crayon

Irina Guliaeva



Irina Guliaeva

my hand holding yours...
the silence therapy
for palliative care

Requiem Mass...
piles of rotten apples
in the churchyard

Maya Daneva

spring cleaning
love notes to his late wife
that he did not write

replaying her voice
on the answering machine –
Christmas morning

Lee Strong

skin magazine he pulls out a hair

Adrian Bouter

tattered flag
my best friend returns
a stranger

next booth
the preacher's wife shares
news of her affair

rainy day
the dry humor
of the warden

Kevin Valentine

finally
your tiny hand in mine...
the weight of the world

zoom wedding
at least granny
gets to be a part of it

online yoga class...
my inner lotus
still buffering

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

old age
she puts drops in my eyes
of Valentine's Day

crosswalk
everyone reads
about Ras-Putin

Mircea Moldovan

in a rush...
the scent of a woman
left behind

greeting
my ill neighbour's husband
first crocuses

Sébastien Revon

first day of cooking
I sabotage mother-in-law's
rice cooker

sliced pomegranate our inner self intact

Lakshmi Iyer

out of the blue –
a stranger
in my daughter's clothes

Cristina Povero

crimson sky
my favourite lipstick
missing in action

souvenirs
kids fight over
a hug

Sherry Grant

Wet

winter rain
a larger puddle
each day

*a tiny stain
on her pink dress*

rehearsal time
a frog jumps out
of my glass

*sudden hail
dragonflies plop
into the pond*

the new puppy
tips over the wine

*swimming pool
a safety ring
for the kitten*

Sherry Grant/ Zoe Grant

all her dreams
of a trip abroad
refugee camp

Henryk Czempiel

coin toss...
wondering if it's
a haiku or senryu

crushed juniper berries
my last bottle
of gin

Nancy Brady



Photograph: Tom Clausen

Words: Kris Moon

young sons
she keeps the spider phobia
to herself

strings of Blackbirds naming them all Paul

capo
not fretting
the low ones

Jackie Maugh Robinson

grieveating

root rot half my limbs interrupted

defacing an altar they govern my body

(dead)beat dad

slipstream

one more pill

that doesn't work

morning glory

waking up the same

piece of shit

Rowan Beckett

bathroom spider
my wife worries
he's not eating enough

not over it binding saw

late night piss . . .
light from the neighbour's
fridge

P. H. Fischer

the words
in his reply text
just enough...

travel bags...
this dried leaf stuck
in a cobweb

Amoolya Kamalnath

strawberry moon
talk of rogue planets
shifts my orbit

Claire Vogel Camargo

ancient ruins how she found my heart

laundry day
folding an indiscretion
into the sheets

my tongue
on a nine volt
battery–
what it must be like
to kiss you

Bryan Rickert

Bryan Rickert 'Failed' Editor
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