

failed ~~haiku~~ invitation-only

A Journal of English Senryu

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For this issue, I chose some of the 'interesting' poems from Issue 104. Now I don't believe in 'the best of the best', and there were plenty of excellent poems to select from. These just made me think, or just connected with me. In any case, they are well crafted by some fine poets.

Also, this month two videos have been posted that give some hints, and encouragement for those who submit Haiga or Haibun. I hope you take them to heart and test my willingness to join you in your experiments. I know you already know of Kelly's openness to your work, but I figured Haiga and Haibun might need a little more in terms of letting you know what I am looking for from our submissions.

[HAIGA VIDEO](#)

[HAIBUN VIDEO](#)

Mike

Cast List

In order of appearance
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Colleen M. Farrelly
Mark Hendrickson
Kagan Clark
Peter Jastermsky
Patricia Daharsh
Nalini Shetty
Ramund Ro
Vandana Parashar
George Skane
Joanna Ashwell

bony fingers
a bare oak branch grasps
the harvest moon

Colleen M. Farrelly

This is a wonderful example of attributing human characteristics to nature and the celestial. Yet, this type of mosaic is indeed what we see when we look for the moon in a forest. I see my bony fingers raised to my forehead as I gaze at the moon, and the oak tree does the same. I have two companions in the night air as the beautiful moon in yellow and orange is viewed through the trees. It is a moment, I believe, where the poet has become a part of the tableau. This is a moment many of us share with nature.

hummingbirds
please, not another poem
about them

Mark Hendrickson

Oh, the frustrations of being a poet. Those hummingbirds keep coming and you are continuously inspired to write yet another poem about them. And I am glad the poet listened to his heart. These little pockets of energy create a rich and fast pace of colliding images to be explored. Poets should always obey their instincts and I am glad this poem proves that point.

fabric aisle —
I'm reminded
of grandma

Kagan Clark

This is a simple and direct image. Whatever you do as a poet don't make the mistake of devaluing the simple and direct. When I was just a kid J. C. Penny had stores that sold nothing but fabric and sewing materials. Many of my prized clothes as I grew up were made by my grandmother who just loved to sew. We had the best clothes they just were missing the 'tag' inside. I spent a good long time with this one just remembering the joy of shopping with Grandma, and then going for an ice cream sundae afterward. I thank the poet for giving that memory to me one more time.

pul ling aw ay it s par tly yo ur fau lt li ne

Peter Jastermsky

The reader has some work to do here. But that is what poetry buffs do naturally anyway. When cracks occur in a relationship placing blame becomes the most played hand for both parties. Here the poet has given us a visual and it works well for me. It draws a strong picture of the emotions involved. The 'faultline' at the end is interesting and powerful in showing that whatever has occurred has longer implications and the possibility that the relations is in danger of cataclysmic collapse.

the bitter taste
of being right
. . . table for one

Patricia Daharsh

Every change that occurs in our life has consequences. Being 'right' is overrated in a relationship, take it from one who knows, and in this poem, the poet has given us a first-hand lesson in the cost. It is a small loss, eating alone, but emblematic of the larger loss of companionship. Sometimes life teaches us that right/wrong is a sensitive balancing act and often as any chess player can tell you it is better to go for the 'draw'. You have to pay a price when you are wrong, but sadly, when you are right as well. Choose carefully what role you play.

work-life balance
a tightrope
over quicksand

Nalini Shetty

Walking a tightrope is hard enough, but over 'quicksand'??? Often it is simply overwhelming to stay balanced and it appears the poet is bringing to us a situation that seems just a half step short of impossible. But the reader will want to wish them luck and prayers as they juggle their weight of work and life and hopefully avoid the quicksand. All of us have times such as this and if for some reason it does not work out, choose 'life'. Poor and happy is my preference, if the choice has to be made.

human years
discovering the grumpy cat
is my age

Ramund Ro

I am a cat lover, that most folks know (but dogs too), and cats are very close to humans in their ranges of emotions. 'Grumpy' is something we are very familiar with and our little fur buddies are equally attuned to the moods of the day. It is very reassuring to know they age with the same ups and downs that their owners do. My cat is hungry now and giving me the stare, so I will end it right here...

friends since childhood
now nursing home roommates
hum of the clock

George Skane

There are at least two ways to read this senryu. First, you can feel a certain sadness in the fact that all that seems between them now is the hum of a clock. How lonely that would be, but thanks to the skillful use of poetry here we have a possibly deeper and more plausible response. They are lifelong friends now in a nursing home together and that close relationship affords them the courage to be silent and know that after a lifetime together nothing has been left unsaid.

back from the therapist's office sharpening knives

Vandana Parashar

Oh to be as clever as a cleaver! After dishing yourself to a third party no matter what the issue, the knives often need to come out.

Sometimes dealing with our demons from the past means bringing them into the present and in that case preparing your weapons for a fight may well be warranted. There is a pronounced yin/yang to therapy, but it offers much hope for many that makes the introduction of knives an exercise in sharpening only...

a shared pillow
more cat
than space

Joanna Ashwell

A cat's 'space' in your world is, well, larger than your world! Our cats have free run of our world. That includes beds, pillows, toilets, bathtubs, baskets, cardboard boxes, and whatever else is lying around. So it seems as if the poet would wish to leave the allocation of pillow space to the cat. In this poem, that has been recorded and indeed the shortest way to avoid a fight is to surrender!!!

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