

Prune Juice



*A Journal of Senryu, Kyoka,
Haibun and Haiga*

Issue 20 • November 2016

PRUNE JUICE

Journal of Senryu, Kyoka, Haibun & Haiga

Issue 20, November, 2016

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Prune Juice Journal of Senryu, Kyoka, Haibun & Haiga is a digital journal occurring tri-annually, dedicated to publishing and promoting modern English senryu, kyoka, haibun & haiga. It is edited by Steve Hodge. Please send all submissions and correspondence to:

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Announcing the Winners of
THE JANE REICHOLD MEMORIAL
HAIGA COMPETITION

Winner, Traditional Haiga:

Capotă Daniela Lăcrămioara

Winner, Photographic Haiga:

Chase Gagnon

Winner, Mixed Media Haiga:

Marianne Paul

Judges' Commentary

Jane Reichhold Memorial Haiga Competition, November 2016

During the month or so that we immersed ourselves in competition entries, we found ourselves referring to certain aesthetic criteria having to do with the quality of the text, the quality of the imagery, and the merits of the link and shift between the two.

In a contest meant for senryu, we necessarily looked to the text for an emphasis on human affairs and/or human constructs of mind and imagination. Many fine entries clearly haiku in verbal imagery or impact had necessarily to be overlooked. In addition, we expected the senryu to exhibit excellence in form, technique and presentation—and perhaps something of its traditional humorous or ironic style, though this was not a deal-breaker.

We looked as well for excellence in the imagery. This included consideration of the artistic control of materials used; their appropriateness vis-à-vis pictorial content; and the visual integration of poem and signature (size, hue, placement) within the composition as a whole.

In considering the relationship of text to image, we looked for elements that created the sense that they belonged together. According to the haiga master Ion Codrescu, there are traditionally three ways of relating word and image:

1. an illustrative connection, i.e. the image describes what the text says;
2. an interpretive connection; i.e. the picture illustrates the content of the text, but also takes us somewhat beyond the text; and
3. an associative linkage, with significant leap between text and image, i.e. avoiding illustration, the image adds new, metaphoric meaning to the text.

These criteria evolved for us along with the judging process. In round 1, each judge chose five or so entries submitted in each category. In round 2, we noted which entries received two or three votes and placed these on our shortlist. We also allowed ourselves to add a couple of personal favorites if so desired. Finally, in round 3, we sorted out winners and honorable mentions, disqualifying some entries and reconsidering others for a variety of aesthetic reasons, as indicated above. Entries which received a unanimous thumbs-up in each category were deemed our winners. We left the honorable mentions unranked.

Judging via email, across three continents, has its challenges, including wait times while someone hundreds and thousands of miles away takes a night's rest. But it also has its rewards, chief among them exploring haikai principles and haiga particulars with esteemed companions. Kris Kondo said it best when she noted: "It was a great honor for me to be chosen to be on this team of judges. It has been a journey well worth taking."

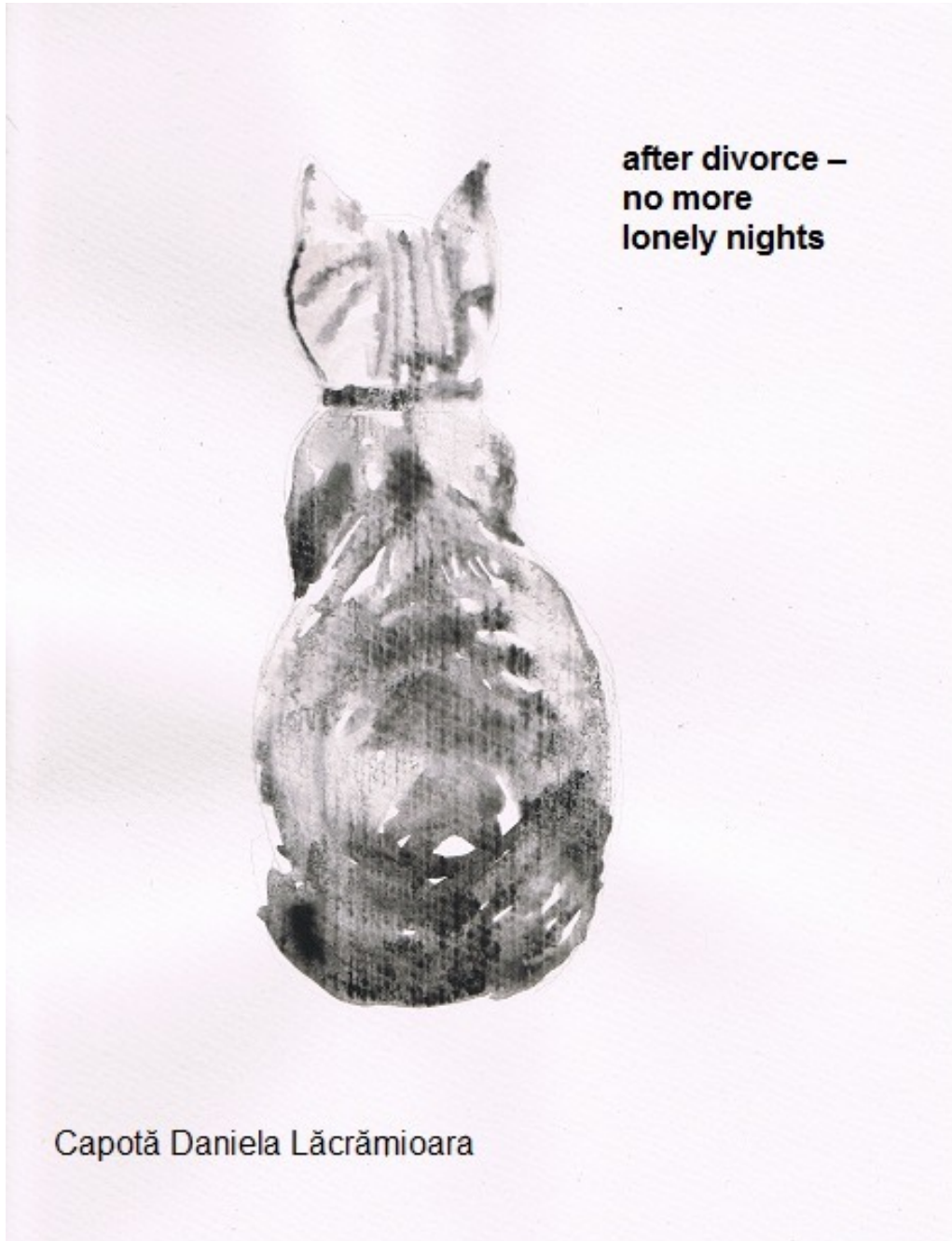
Kris Kondo

Ron Moss

Michele Root-Bernstein

Capotă Daniela Lăcrămioara, Romania

Winner, Traditional Haiga



Kris: In all haiga I was looking for an edginess to the poem and a resonance which continues to deepen. The placement of the words, both verse and signature, should be part of the entire composition with special attention to size, placement, colour, and hue. The signature should never be intrusive. It was unfortunate to see grammar mistakes and an ad for an app that disqualified otherwise elegant haiga. In traditional haiga I looked particularly for an emphasis on the use of space and non-space and a certain simplicity. I also hoped to see the use of hand written verses and a signature hanko or chop that are absolutely integral to the entire composition.

This entry hit home. The cat is lovingly and simply rendered in its space, with its back to us which echoes the poem's message of turning one's back on a loveless marriage. The cat itself insuring warmth and company. I would have like to see hand written words and signature, with perhaps a vermilion hanko strategically placed to make the space resonate more.

Ron: I was looking for something handmade using traditional materials with a senryu that had classical linking, that shifted in an interesting way. Quality and use of white space was of primary importance. The artwork and words must have space to breathe and inter-relate in some way.

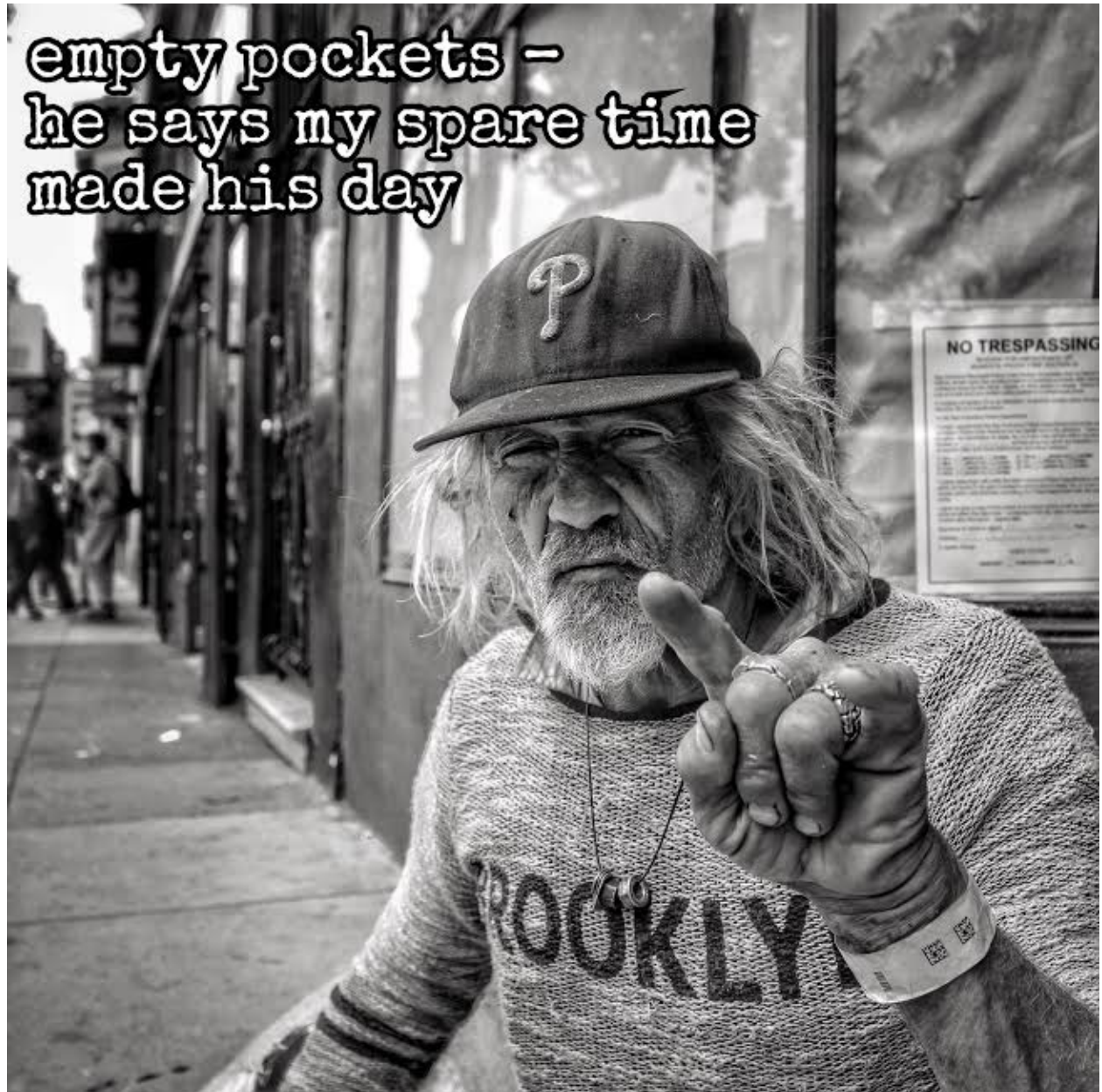
In this case the winner has made excellent use of white space and a clever view of the well-painted cat. This unusual view links well with the senryu's theme of loneliness and a divorce by having the cat's back to the viewer. A worthy winner with powerful image and words.

Michele: In the traditional category I looked for human handiwork above all, though many entries acknowledged some digital tinkering and nearly all used PhotoShop or Paintbrush Pro for the poems and signatures.

I found myself drawn to this haiga by its quiet simplicity and clear aesthetic values. Text, image, and the linkage between the two are beautifully controlled in the service of insight. The senryu maximizes that insight by reserving its conceptual surprise for the last line. The image

enlarges the poem's range with its choice of content—a cat—and the angle of representation—the cat's back. The leap between text and image, from loneliness to independence, invites the reader/viewer to contemplate in somewhat ironic vein the emotional valences of bond formation.

Chase Gagnon, USA
Winner, Photographic Haiga



Kris: In addition to edginess, resonance, and integral placement of verse and signature looked for in traditional haiga, I felt that photographic haiga should have excellent & original photos.

This stark in your face black and white photograph also demanded my attention immediately. The empathy that flows from the words softens the suffering that I first felt from the photograph. The font choice and size adds to the overall composition and message. It is a strong social statement made in a very intimate way.

Ron: What was needed was a well-executed photograph with good contrast and composition with a senryu that didn't just illustrate the image but that both elements would be stronger for being together. With the winning composition the street photography style in B&W works very well with the strong character of the man. The senryu grew on me with successive views, as I found more interesting and heartfelt connections with a very well captured image.

Michele: Among the many photographic entries submitted to this contest, I looked for haiga that offered more than a simple snapshot of a scene. I looked for something in angle, lighting, and focus that spoke of deliberate composition, of the photographer-artist as the shaper of recorded experience—visually, of course, but also verbally.

Everything about this winning poem-picture works to bridge the distance between them and us, stranger and friend, street and community. The image is hard-nosed, even hostile (witness the “no trespassing” sign over the old man’s shoulder). Or so it would seem. The senryu tells us otherwise by deftly spinning the hard-luck hustling we might expect from the old man— “Hey, mister. Spare me a dime?” —into an act of mutual generosity. Together, text and image insist on empathy and human connection. They call our attention to the empty pockets of people and places that blight our cities and our society. This is socially relevant art of the best sort, with a touch of the playfulness that adds grace.

Marianne Paul, Canada
Winner, Mixed Media Haiga



Kris: Mixed media should be fascinating and original, as well as pictorially composed. This one delighted me with its light and playful colours, image, and repetition of the small circles. I also love the font for the words and the way they flow along adding to the entire composition. Then punch come the words. The picture is light and innocent, the words heavy with the weight of millennia of real stonings and being stoned with words.

Ron: This category could be an open book for the artist and poet to try different approaches in the artwork's media and mix up the presentation of the words. In this case we have a strong senryu making a bold and topical comment, and the text has been presented in a way which looks like part of the artwork. There are wonderful colors in this delightful drawing and the contrasts between the softness of the child and the hardness of the stones are beautifully done. This is complete composition of image and words that is worthy of first place

Michele: In the mixed media category I looked for deliberate, artistic composition, plus a mixing of media types, whether that involved traditional collage techniques or, as in the case of our winner and honorable mentions, the reworking of original photographs with computer art programs and digital effects.

This winning haiga plays effectively with telling contrasts and associations: the novelty of its mixed media presentation plays off against the traditional signature chop; the youthful innocence of pictorial content and treatment balances the poem's mature social critique. A child must learn not to throw stones. Why can't adults? Ultimately, the weight of the poem in combination with the lightness of the picture makes for a very modern haiga in touch with the subtle irony or *karumi* at the heart of senryu aesthetics.

About the Judges

Kris Kondo who signs her work "kris moon," artist, poet, teacher, mom, gramama, etc. went to Japan by ship in 1972. She has been creating haiga since her early days there. Her Haiga can be seen on Facebook, on many Japanese poetry pages, as well as her artist's page kris moon.

Ron C. Moss is a visual artist and poet from Tasmania. His haiku and related genres have won many international prizes and he has been published in numerous journals and anthologies. His award winning first haiku collection is: [*The Bone Carver, Snapshot Press*](#). Ron is well known for his haiga paintings, illustration and design.

Michele Root-Bernstein lives in East Lansing, Michigan. She has been writing haiku for over ten years. Selections of her work appear in *A New Resonance 6*, *Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku* (Red Moon Press, 2009), *Scent of the Past...Imperfect* (Two Autumns Press, 2016), and on three rocks along a haiku walk in Millersburg, Ohio. Michele has recently turned to other haikai arts, including haibun and haiga. You can see some of her picturepoems here; <http://www.haikuhut.com/MicheleRoot-BernsteinHaiga.pdf>. From 2012 through 2015, she served as associate editor of the Haiku Society of America's journal, *Frogpond*. Currently, she leads the Evergreen Haiku Study Group hosted monthly by the Center for Poetry, Michigan State University.

Congratulations to the the following runners up; Terry Gilroy, Duro Jaiye, David J. Kelly, Mary Kendall, Mike Keville, Avaya Mahala, Marco Pilotto, Alexis Rotella, Stevie Strange and Mary White.

Editor's Note for Prune Juice Issue 20

When Michael Rehling approached me with his idea of a haiga competition in memory of Jane Reichhold when we met at the Cradle of American Haiku in Mineral Point, Wisconsin in August, I immediately agreed. Jane had passed away just days earlier and a memorial competition seemed a fitting tribute to the celebrated poet, editor, translator, educator and mentor to so many. We agreed to promote the competition and announce the winners in our senryu journals, *Failed Haiku* and *Prune Juice*.

Michael and I are grateful for all of the excellent submissions we received for the competition and regret that space does not permit us to feature more of them in our journals. Kris, Ron and Michele generously dedicated countless hours judging the competition and Michael's organizational skills were nothing short of amazing throughout the process. While I read the dozens of emails to and from Michael and the judges with great interest as the process unfolded, I have to admit that I stayed mostly out of the way and deserve credit only for helping to promote the competition. Nonetheless, I'm proud to have played even a small role in this important and excellent endeavor.

Prune Juice readers have come to expect to see the latest work being done by some of the most talented poets and artists in the senryu world today, and this issue continues that tradition. However, we're also very excited to make history in this issue - literally - with Bradford Milfer's essay about how he came to uncover the long rumored lost haiku of Walt Whitman. While Whitman doesn't seem to have completely understood the conventions of haiku form - or chose to depart from them - he clearly meant for the poem we've published in this issue to be a haiku, as it contains a juxtaposition, a cut and a seasonal reference. Historians and scholars will be studying Whitman's haiku and Professor Milfer's essay for generations to come and Prune Juice is honored to be the first to publish this historic work.

Lastly, we hope to publish an extensive special feature in our March 2017 issue dedicated to the growing genre of Sci-fi Ku. In this feature, we're looking to showcase anything science-fiction - senryu, haiku, kyoka, tanka, longer form poems, haibun, haiga, essays, short fiction, artwork or anything else sci-fi related - including previously published work. So don your tinfoil fez, set your phasers to *create* and dare to go boldly where no poet has gone before! The submission period for the March issue is December 1, 2016 to February 15, 2017.

Enjoy!

Steve Hodge

White Lake, Michigan

Tash Adams, Australia

his death notice everything in its proper place

helicopter parent
an extra fold to remove
the point of the paper plane

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

bursting at his seams
he told us
to tighten our belts

mismatched height
the priest skips
you may kiss the bride

secondhand clothe
this stain that still
speaks to me

bursting at the seams
he tells us to tighten our belts
for the years to come

Elizabeth Alford, USA

autumn moon
he tells me I'm beautiful
in that photo

morning smoke
the robin's song sweeter
than mine

packed subway
I grip the strap
like the lover
I never wanted
to let go of

Midnight Call

Bad news is forthcoming. The heat between us is palpable and the humidity, tropical; but we've been apart too long already and this place is hardly paradise. Adding more brush to the fire, I inhale and exhale my own smoke signals, knowing no one will see them in the darkness, clinging to the hope that someday, somehow, someone will rescue me from this desert island.

*if only —
the mirage I thought
was real*

Ramesh Anand, India

playing for laughs
my child and the child
in my father

gym mirrors
the trainer lost in his
lost hair

Debbi Antebi, Turkey

visiting home
the daughter I find
in Mom's eyes

business lunch
I try to impress the man
with spinach in his teeth

30 candles
celebrating the age
he would've been

Marilyn Ashbaugh, USA

orchard walk
we gather more ticks
than apples

fly
rests on the fly swatter
my move

Don Baird, USA

a ketchup bottle
without fries

under her belly
my thoughts of freedom
and other things

breathing in
the guy next to me
breathing out

winter blues
the yellow in the snow
turned red

Jo Balistreri, USA

his home
of thirty years sold...
he plants marigolds

pails tied at the waist
--our tongues
cherry red

delphinium shoots nudging the soil baby's first kick

Johnny Baranski, USA

big league debut
the rookie practices
his autographs

costume ball
Fred Astaire with
two left feet

heat wave
iced coffee and cold pizza
for breakfast

Zen for Dummies
a book of
empty pages

bottom line
the circus manager's
balancing act

winter solitude
Sports Illustrated
swimsuit issue

Roberta Beary, USA

after dinner
my skinny sister regurgitates
childhood slights

meth head
he too
was breast-fed

still not speaking—
beet greens simmer
the dented pot

Make Yourself at Home

My brother-in-law says there's a secret to making a man happy. Which he tells me for my own benefit. It's simple. Don't give orders. Got it. So when I see the new boyfriend's huge toenail clippings doing the dead man's float in my toilet bowl, I have to think for a minute. I want to tell him, *don't ever do that again*. But I don't. Instead I opt for, *I think you forgot to flush*. It works. But I don't tell my brother-in-law. He's already got a fat head.

relationship talk
the overwhelming
citrus candle

Marina Bellini, Italy

where the gym
has failed - I hope
in green tea

arrived at the station
I have learned everything
of her son and her dog

Freddy Ben-Arroyo, Israel

a long stretch of beach -
I walk briskly among the young
shedding old years

Mississippi
too long for a haiku –
River PO

humming with the coffee grinder bright morning

johannes s. h. bjerg, Denmark

Mum's Girls

"chocolate chip cookies?"
mum offers the best
to her imaginary guests

something ought to be done
tomatoes are really
too round

"here comes the little birdie"
I playfeed her
like she playfed me

water and glass
sight not hands
goes through them

a slow slow dance
dad helps mum
from one chair to another

how can you make it listen
the leg
without ears?

sorting clothes, sorting hats
the girls her brain creates
are cold

“I think they're Eastern European
they don't
have much”

at the end of his tether
dad sees right through
my invisible siblings

ink in water
the solidity
of self

Reassurance

A mosquito bite.

“Well, we're part of the food chain too”

“At least I'll be passing on some of me”

stars impossible Braille

Myth

“Did you know that ducks were once hats?”

“Hats?”

“Yea, in an old South American Indian tribe, or something like it. They worshipped it. *'When one time ends and another begins a mighty white duck will come from across the ocean. It will swallow the old sun and give birth to a new in an egg of gold'*, and something about a mighty hero that would come and break the egg to let it out. Ducks became sacred and were used as hats. Out of humility and worship. Stuffed of course, or made from reeds and clay”.

“Weird”

“Indeed”

“Never knew a duck who could swallow the sun”

“Have you known many ducks?”

“No, not really. I have eaten a few. Does that count? I mean, it's quite an intimate action, eating someone”

“Quite intimate”

“I didn't catch their names, though”

poor as a church-rat

my shadow leaves

to cling to a cat

Danny Blackwell, UK

first outing of the year —
“everyone's looking for tits”
says the straight-faced birdwatcher

Meik Blöttenberger, USA

Labor Day
extra taxes taken
from my bonus

adult swim
the lifeguard focuses
on her homework

Norfolk
a destroyer
rusting in peace

Ed Bremson, USA

old man
gazing at the Harley
for sale at the mall

dermatologist
slice by slice takes a little
off the top

Alan S. Bridges, USA

fellow commuter
watching her slowly
transition

prefer not to answer lives matter

Easter eggs gathering children

accordion music sucking me in

Susan Burch, USA

trying to curb
my bad habits in front of
my daughter –
I give a Vulcan salute
instead of the finger

why was I
the last to know?
her suicide attempt
thwarted by a stranger
on an iphone app

acid reflux –
everything I ate
to forget you
bites me
in the ass-ophagus

free slurpee day
at 7-11
what's left
of my favorite flavor
stick-ing stick-ing to my shoes

looking at
all the women except me
at the bar -
my boyfriend's attention
to even the tiniest details

home early from work
I hear my son singing
in the shower
Lady Gaga's "Poker Face"
he claimed not to like...

Sondra J. Byrnes, USA

closer to the end
than the beginning—
half moon

tick tick of cicadas all the time there is

stray thoughts
i sleep on both sides
of the bed

walking meditation in the foothills
we each stumble over the same stone

when the vacuum cleaner stops his chewing

we don't talk
as if we're married
filtered light

Lesson from the tundra

Teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in Northern Canada, I also live in the school. No electricity or plumbing; but, a wood stove and a pump organ on which I play “God save the Queen”.

A young student asks me if I want a toaster. How would I use a toaster without electricity, I’m thinking, but I say ‘yes’. The next day he arrives with a large tomato can cut down to a few inches high with holes in the bottom. Across the opening he has strung wires in a crisscross pattern. Bread rests on the wires and the can sits on the wood stove. Best toast I’ve ever had.

catching up with my past—dappled light

Night & Day

In Bangkok, I work out at a gym in a small office park...on the way to the gym, business people are just leaving for home. Outdoor cafes are being set up—coals glow in the braziers and the air is scented with cooked eels. After dark, beautiful young women in evening gowns are lined up—a number on each woman’s shoulder. Drunk men swarm the street.

*looking
for a part of me
unused*

Anna Cates, USA

autumn rain . . .
the old lady talks
to her wallpaper

dating site
my garden
full of toads

Bill Cooper, USA

straw hats in a row
Amish men discuss
opioids

Tina Crenshaw, USA

bedtime prayers
she names her favorite
cartoon characters

sacred now
my t-shirt with the old
New York skyline

John J. Dunphy, USA

blood moon
my neighbor's hounds
tree a coon

elderly couple
the wife now remembers
for both of them

meth house
staring from its barred window
a teddy bear

crackling in the fireplace –
the invitation to
my ex's wedding

sidewalk
a votive candle burns
on the blood stain

Terri L. French, USA

presidential debate
I can't decide between
popcorn or xanax

clean slate
chalking it up
to lessons learned

that one gray cloud
little white pills
poured into her palm

relaxing on the patio this fly on my toe

Dysfunction Junction what's my function?

I look down at my phone and see her name. The mental coin toss comes up heads so this time I answer. "Hello." "Hey, are you busy?" "Not really, what's up?" "I just wanted to talk to you about mom." Of course she does. It's the only reason she ever calls me, otherwise I get a string of texts interspersed with emoji that refer to me as "Felicia." My mother and sister push each other's buttons. I imagine these buttons are big and red and make a loud obnoxious buzzing sound when pushed. I don't know why they can't hear them. If I could I'd rip the batteries out of them and stomp them into the ground.

*at my age
still stepping over them—
sidewalk cracks*

I am the go-between. The sounding board. The referee. The peacemaker. It is my lot in life, or at least in this family, between these two women. It is a thankless role and one I do not relish. What roll of the dice or spin of the wheel brought me to this? It is a game, one that I could walk away from. But then, who would be there to pick up all those pieces?

*Monopoly game
again I am
the wheelbarrow*

In Her Likeness

"Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!" --Mrs. Malaprop

"He smoked like a fish," I say. There is a pause, then several chuckles from our dinner companions. "Honey, I believe you meant to say 'drinks like a fish,'" says my husband, "or perhaps, smokes like a chimney."

*protein tangles —
a what-not box full
of knotted necklaces*

"Did you know she plays for the Philharmonica?" asks my mother. I stifle a snicker, imagining an orchestra composed entirely of harmonica players.

*a partial rainbow
in the sky —
PET scan*

"Would you like a slice of Suzuki bread?" I tell grandma I prefer Kawasaki bread. She just smiles.

*weeding the garden
gaps growing
between the synapses*

Jay Friedenberg, USA

she tells me
only what I want to hear
ebb tide

Chase Gagnon, USA

dusty lampshade
her ex's condoms
in the bedside drawer

plastic flowers
when you said our love
would never die

Father's Day
the man I raised
myself to be

Scorching

There isn't much in western Nebraska. It's almost if the people here have all been raptured, leaving behind only stalks of corn and small wooden chapels that cower under the mountainous clouds of middle-America. The only thing that really stands out is the constant sound of bugs splattering across the windshield at 110 MPH. It's like they're all brainwashed, buzzing out mindlessly from the fields to the highway just to wait for death. Willingly and without dignity. I imagine myself as their reaper, their light to the other side, their angel of death blazing through the corridors of eternity in a white Toyota Prius. I feel holier and holier with every satisfying splat and every lifeless minute passed on this asphalt road to nowhere.

That is until reality slaps the divinity from my soul with a sign that says "last gas for 100 miles – next exit" So I pull off at the station and remove their sun-baked bodies with a squeegee, buy a pack of smokes, then continue on my way. Straight out of these god-forsaken fields.

midday sun
a fieldmouse picking
at a vulture's carcass





Jennifer Hambrick, USA

church –
forty-minute sermon
on simplicity

Election Day –
only the jack o’lantern
still smiling

church parking lot sign –
parking for St. Michael
all others towed

big date –
she dresses up
to be undressed

From the Closet of the Mind

When we brought her home from the hospital, I stayed at her house for a while to make sure she'd be okay.

As her illness progressed, she started moving things around in her house, and our conversations grew both sadder and funnier.

"Where's your hair dryer?" I asked my first morning there.

"In the bathroom, where it's always been," she replied.

"No, it isn't."

"Then maybe it's in the coat closet."

"Why would it be in the coat closet?" I asked.

"Well, the typewriter's in there."

*dried leaves in autumn wind ...
the play of thoughts
untethered*

Devin Harrison, Canada

trombonist crossing over from classical to jazz sliding scale

Nick Hoffman, Ireland

the waitress
points the way to the toilet
with a coffeepot

exhaust fumes:
on the back of a bus
the politician's face

checking the spelling
I look up 'cuneiform'
on my tablet

the drive home . . .
in her small voice
grandma's "s" word

play date
snow white helps batman
onto a swing

finally allowed
up on the kitchen counter:
the cat's boxed ashes

David J. Kelly, Ireland

blistering heat
a stream of consciousness
slows to a trickle

cleansing breath
I fill the air with
inner demons



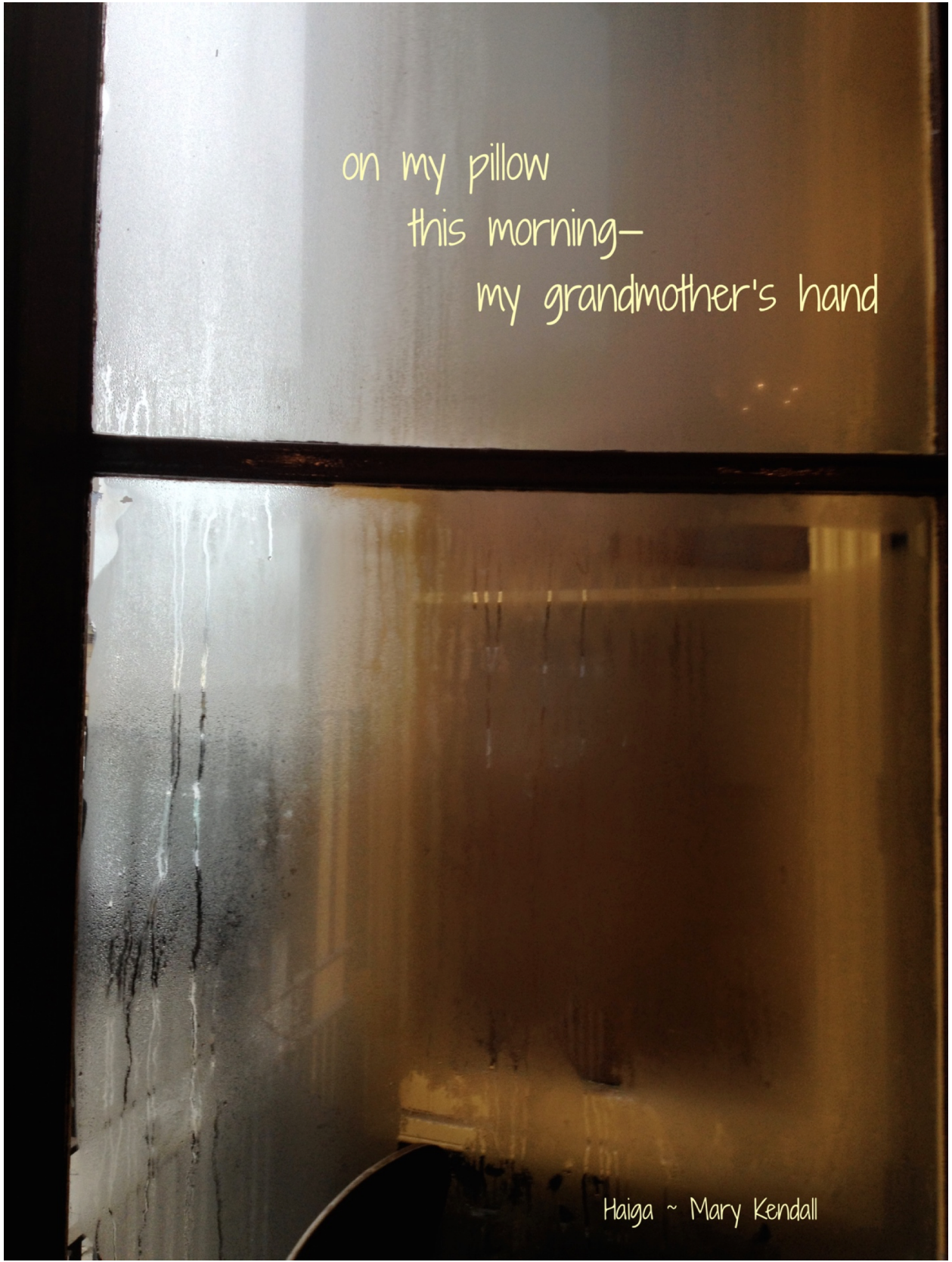
Mary Kendall, USA

childhood home –
acorns sprout
in the ashes

calligraphy practice...
trying hard to make
a point

Reiki session...
feeling so
out of touch

violin lesson—
right away I begin
to fret

An open book is shown. The left page has a haiku written in yellow cursive. The right page features a faint, sepia-toned illustration of a person in a room, possibly a bedroom, with a bed and a window. The book's binding is visible in the center.

on my pillow
this morning—
my grandmother's hand

Haiga ~ Mary Kendall

Mohammad Azim Khan, Pakistan

broken home
the child slips out
of the crack

first date
not really
my cup of tea

Deborah P Kolodji, USA

gate faces
the domino effect
of delayed planes

delayed flight
a business traveler's
shiny shoes

moving data
your toothbrush
in my bathroom

nuclear test flash
the quiet in our car
as we cross the desert

overhead bin bags under my eyes

Jim Krotzman, USA

hitchhiking
out of my town
out of myself

on the mantel
the contents
of his life

illicit affair
she sees her car for sale
in the classifieds

marriage
the concrete
never stops curing

Michael Henry Lee, USA

happy hour
everyone doing
their damndest

twilight time
the invisible man
removes his hat

storm watch
the cat get's an extra
helping of kibble

chi gong
an hour glass settles
one grain at a time

Pretzel Logic

ok so guns keep us safe from the "bad guys" and there's safety in numbers right, therefore the more guns we have the safer we'll be and not just the old 1,2,5, or 6 shot models they're museum pieces, now we require rapid fire, high capacity, armor piercing, cyanide dipped, hollow point, havoc wrecking, mayhem producing tools of death it's our right as Americans to kill one another and we'll be damned to have that right compromised by the slightest inconvenience regardless of whether someone has four way conversations with themselves or are on a no fly list for suspicion of terrorist activities if you restrict them you restrict us, never mind the young mother killed by her own toddler in Walmart or the father who carelessly neutralized his son at the firing range or a little girl who inadvertently capped her marksman instructor, we at war with ourselves and in war there will be casualties, above all remember it's not guns that kill people it's people with guns

*waning crescent
on razor's edge
till further notice*

Phyllis Lee, USA

sleepless. . .
following the train's
decrescendo

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

a blonde
on the street corner
my eyes jaywalking

Bob Lucky, Saudi Arabia

custody battle
the agenda a series
of bullet points

refrigerator magnets
all the places
I'm attracted to

borscht again –
the old man
starts to see red

rainbow –
we split up
to find the gold

I Call My Mother

to talk about her cancer. She's upbeat. When she talks about the surgery to remove part of her colon, you would think she's preparing to give birth, that the tumor is an embryo. "Of course," she adds, "what if I don't have the surgery? What would happen?" And I want to say so many things, to state the obvious, to make light of it, to pretend I didn't hear, to abort the conversation.

fireflies
turning it on
and off

Hannah Mahoney, USA

seeing him off
on his deployment
morning moon

medical history
the terminated pregnancy
gets counted

pulling weeds
the mastectomy
scheduled

hardware store argument
searching
for a male-to-female adapter

car argument
a sign flashes
SEEK ALTERNATE ROUTES

first bike ride
Dad, she yells,
Let go!

The Lost Haiku of Walt Whitman

by Bradford Milfer

I first heard the rumors that Walt Whitman had written a collection of haiku shortly after I became associate professor of poetry at Camden College in New Jersey in 1989. The story went that Whitman had been introduced to haiku when he met a Japanese longshoreman named Showa Ueno during Whitman's three-month stint working as a newspaper reporter at the newly-created *New Orleans Crescent* in 1848. Though Whitman was said to have been fascinated with the haiku form – and particularly with the poems of haiku poet Kobayashi Issa – evidence indicated that he did not write any haiku himself until at least 1861; thirteen years after having met Ueno in New Orleans.

Whitman scholars have been researching reports that a collection of his haiku were discussed when a second edition of his Civil War poems, *Drum Taps* (1865), was being edited. Whitman travelled to Washington, D.C. in December 1862 after having learned that his brother, George Washington Whitman, had been wounded in the Battle of Fredericksburg. Whitman was relieved to find his brother with only a minor injury in a Union Army camp in Falmouth, Virginia but his experiences while searching a number of Union Army hospitals while trying to locate his brother had a major impact on the forty-three-year old poet, who spent the rest of the war as a volunteer in Union military hospitals. The lost Whitman haiku – the first of which appears for the first time on the following page – contain references to the war, indicating that they could not have been written prior to 1861.

I received an envelope at my office at Camden College in May, 2016. The envelope contained no return address but included a Boston postmark. Inside, I found a note written in a woman's handwriting stating that the author's mother had recently passed away and had requested that I receive the enclosed envelope upon her death. The author's mother had apparently been acquainted with me when we attended college together in

New England more than forty years earlier. The letter was unsigned and contained no return address.

When I opened the unmarked second envelope and saw its contents, I was shocked! On my desk before me lay seventeen pages of poetry written in the unmistakable handwriting of Walt Whitman! Along the top of the first page, the poet had written, "Haiku for the Sequel to Drum Taps."

Without further ado, here is the first part of nine haiku by Walt Whitman:

Haiku No. 1
The Sound of Ares

*A country pond, the frog becomes the sound of the well,
The sound of a mother as she calls out to her son,
The sound of her boy weeping on the battlefield,
The sound of artillery in the distance, closer,
Ever closer.*

*The sound of the bugle, the pounding of hooves,
The cries of the horses, the wounded, the dying.*

*O! the sound of the generals drowned out by thunder,
The thunder of rage, the thunder of war!
The thunder of Valkyrie flying ever o'er,
The thunder of the ancients, the thunder of light,
The thunder of honor, the thunder of might!*

*Of swords on shields, of arrows in flesh,
Of cries for mercy, of pleadings for death!*

*O! the weeping in hospitals, the cries of 'no more!'
The murmurs of nurses, the curses of war,*

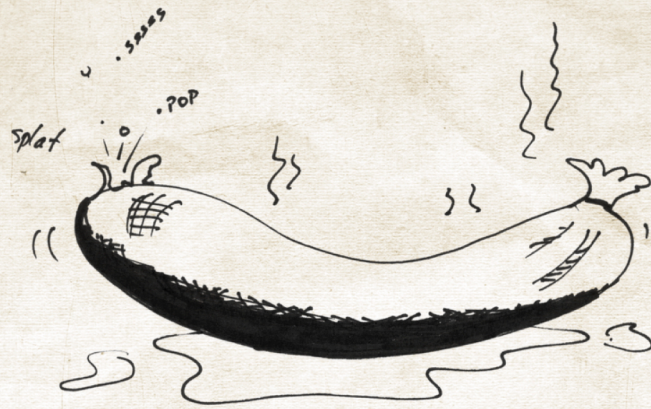
*The reading of letters, the pull of the saw,
The boy crying ‘mother,’ the blood running raw,
The sound of the leg as it falls to the floor —*

a snowflake

End of Part 1 of 12 of ‘Haiku No. 1’ by Walt Whitman

Bradford Milfer is the Dean of the School of Poetry at Camden College and the author of seven books of poetry, including, “Pull My Finger, Quick!” and “The Beloved Knock-Knock Jokes of Franz Kafka.”

Ron C. Moss, Tasmania, Australia



election bbq
the fattest sausage
burts its skin

Ron C. Moss





family bible ...
the smell of old glue
in the family tree

Ron C. Moss





lost bikini ...
a pair of jellyfish
in the wave curl

Ron C. Moss

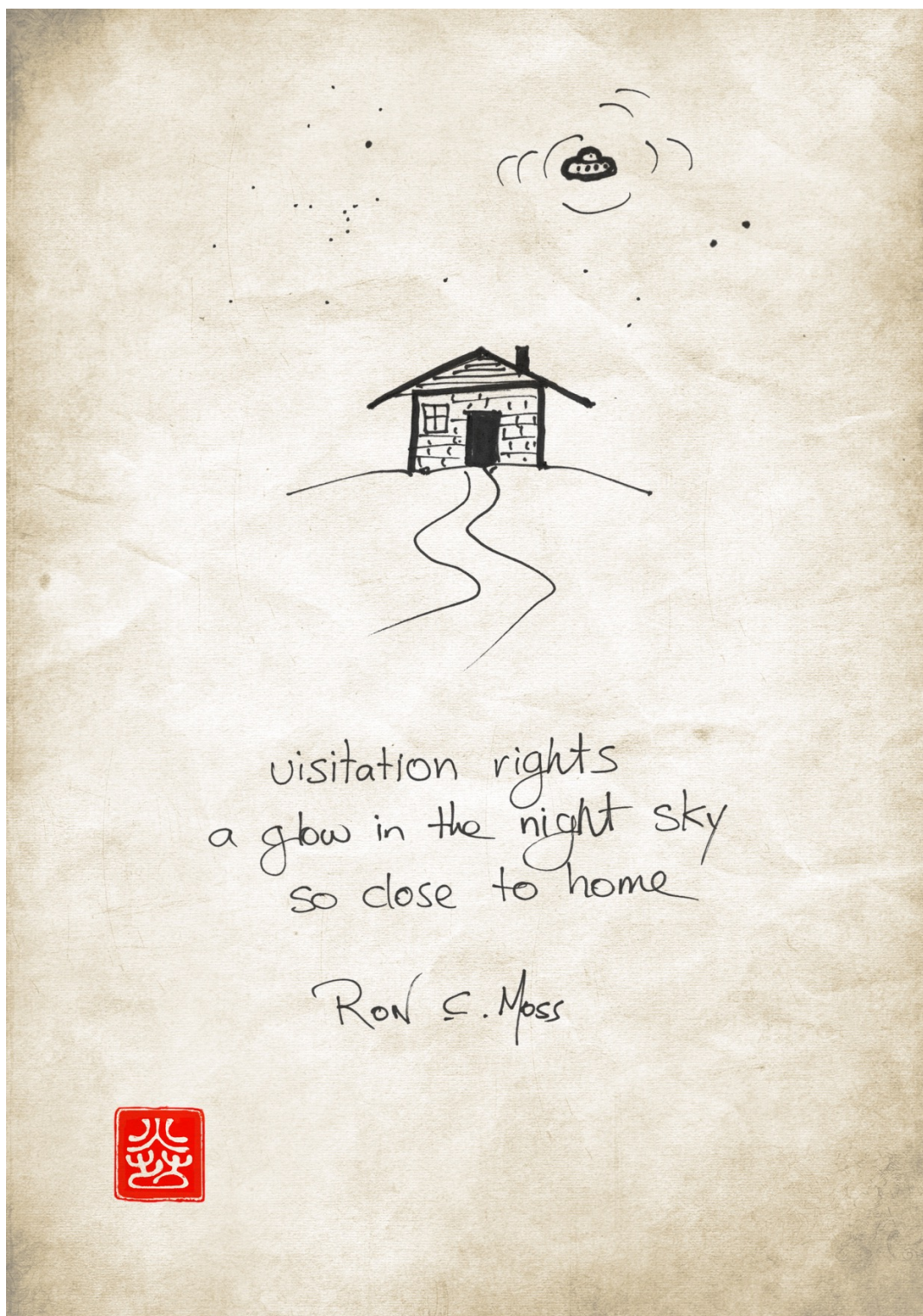




overnight sleeper
our foreplay the length
of the coast

Ron C. Moss





Follow the link below to watch Ron C. Moss's video of this haiga sequence, complete with his voice and drumming by Ron:
<https://vimeo.com/188128490>

Peter Newton, USA

Halloween
finally the kids
get to be themselves

fortune cookies
I buy a box
out of curiosity

Nika, Canada



*afterward
beside father's grave
I fold his funeral flag*

*remembering that summer day
he and I played catch*

- Nika



*communion served
the priest locks himself
in his room*

- Nika

Celestine Nudanu, Ghana

Stars

Something about the night made me daring. Perhaps it was the breeze, perfumed with scents of jasmine drifting from his garden next door. Or the stars sparkling in the velvet sky; one moment a few exploded in fireworks, blazing. One moment they fizzled into oblivion. I willed him to leave his world, if only for the moment, and be part of mine.

Minutes later he was behind me on the lawn. My reluctant priest!

*shooting stars
he finds his future
in my arms*

Ken Olson, USA

post endoscopy
the nurse gives me
a thumbs up

Carol Ann Palomba, USA

the bedroom door closing arguments

twilight
waiting for an old dog
to find his way home

afterward
brushing your eyelash
off my chest

Minh-Triết PHAM, France

meadow —
taking the bull by the horns
and my beloved by surprise

Dave Read, Canada

silent night
we watch the stars from
separate rooms

discount bin
a merchant greets
my wallet

sleepover
she squeezes her
daughter's bear

evening mist
he cracks
another beer

sunset
the darkening of
my thoughts

Michael Rehling, USA

every breath
a new twist to an old tune
harmonica man

a crooked way to truth
watching
a key being cut

without intending to
the funhouse mirror
finds your smile

taking it apart
putting it back together
my feelings for you

suicide note
nothing leaves me faster
than you do

Bryan Rickert, USA

reunion –
the lobby full
of regrets

train station –
the homeless man's
track marks

pouring a drink –
the realization
of why she left

I hold the hand
that can't hold back –
first stroke

Country Club –
the arrogant strut
of a mallard

Get Well balloon –
I finally learn
to let go

J. Brian Robertson, Canada

filling your voicemail
my need
to hear myself out

Alexis Rotella, USA

he asks for
more pork chop
uninvited guest

line by line
the roofers
sing a renga
pound it in
with hammers

wife away
my neighbor's hug
has a hard on

Trumpty Dumpty

the king's horses
will pay
for the wall

Alexis Rotella



Olivier Schopfer, Switzerland

no date
on the back of the photo
your version of the story

waking up
to the sound of rain...
my very full bladder

up and down escalators
the depth
of a stranger's eyes

the waiter warns you
that the plate is hot
you cannot help but touch

Christina Sng, Singapore

it finally happened
my mother's face
when I look in the mirror

eggshells
counting down
to my due date

summer morning
my little girl teaches the cat
how to open the screen door

Debbie Strange, Canada

in the tracks
of a dog I wish were mine
snow sparkles

your scent
as strong now as then
rosemary

dark mourning
my cousin's name
on the news

a broken hook
the faded ribbons
of her apron

Rachel Sutcliffe, UK

snow filled dawn
I listen to the song
of silence

shattered light
the life
I once lived

autumn mist
beneath a rain drenched coffin
the pallbearer's tears

winter light
the fading warmth
of your hand

riding the storm
the life I've built
from ruins

so many words
yet saying nothing
we fall silent

George Swede, Canada

fishing...
throwing back endangered
metaphors

park playground
teens uttering rubbish
toddlers recycling

the smells at low tide
an urge to confess
to something

cruise ship social
the umpteenth revision
of my life story

dry riverbed
the son who thought
he had found his way

Paresh Tiwari, India

Portrait

Wielding the blunt charcoal pencil like a magician's wand, he drums up a tune on the mahogany table. And it seems oddly familiar. Like something from an age when things were different. When you could meet a demon down a narrow alley or swig a few drinks with angels tired of carrying leaden wings on their backs.

'It's all about perspective.' He says looking at her, 'and I just can't decide what you should be on this canvas.'

'What do you want me to be?'

'Well I want you to be a saint and a whore all at once. I want you to be the dark I lose myself in and the light at the edge of shadows. I want you to be the wind and the mountain. But most of all . . . I want you to be me.'

jigsaw moon
the way her body
spoons his

Metamorphosis

Today, I met Issa at the foothills of Mt. Fuji, egging a not-so-interested snail to scale the peak.

I want to stop for a while, speak to him and point out the futility of his venture. I wish to tell him that snails do not climb mountains. Then think the better of it. If nothing else, he might get a verse out of it.

A few hours later, as the setting sun tumbles through pine-cones and birdsong, the unlikely friends are still rooted at the same place. But the snail has now embraced the wrinkles of the poet, its eyes shine with a pale blue intensity, and the grizzled old man has grown a spiral halo around his receding hairline.

*stone Buddha
a butterfly rises with
its shadow*

No man's land

Clouds. Thick woolly clouds. Clouds so dark that only the pale glow of my watch assures me that it still is midday. In the distance, a fork of lightning appears followed by the crack of thunder.

Dad had once taught me how to measure the distance of a storm. 'Count your breaths between the lightning and the roar' he had said.

thumbing

the well worn barrel . . .

her frayed photograph

A shell from across the border lands a few yards away from the bunker and I count twelve breaths before pulling the trigger into the thin mountain air.

Julie Warther, USA

introductions
we exchange
verbs

revolving door . . .
the kiss that takes them
twice around

after the exam —
a paper gown gently folded
into a swan

dollar store
adopting the family
in the frame

dawn
finding what I forgot
I was looking for

conclusions drawn drapes

Ian Willey, Japan

wellness check result
the doctor begins
with "Well..."

a friend going through rough times
he drixes
his minks

live debate
someone didn't chip in
for the next round

checkout line
a woman in stretch pants
reaches her limit

Novocain daze
a dolphin drifting
through deep space

pen and paper at last —
what was I
thinking?



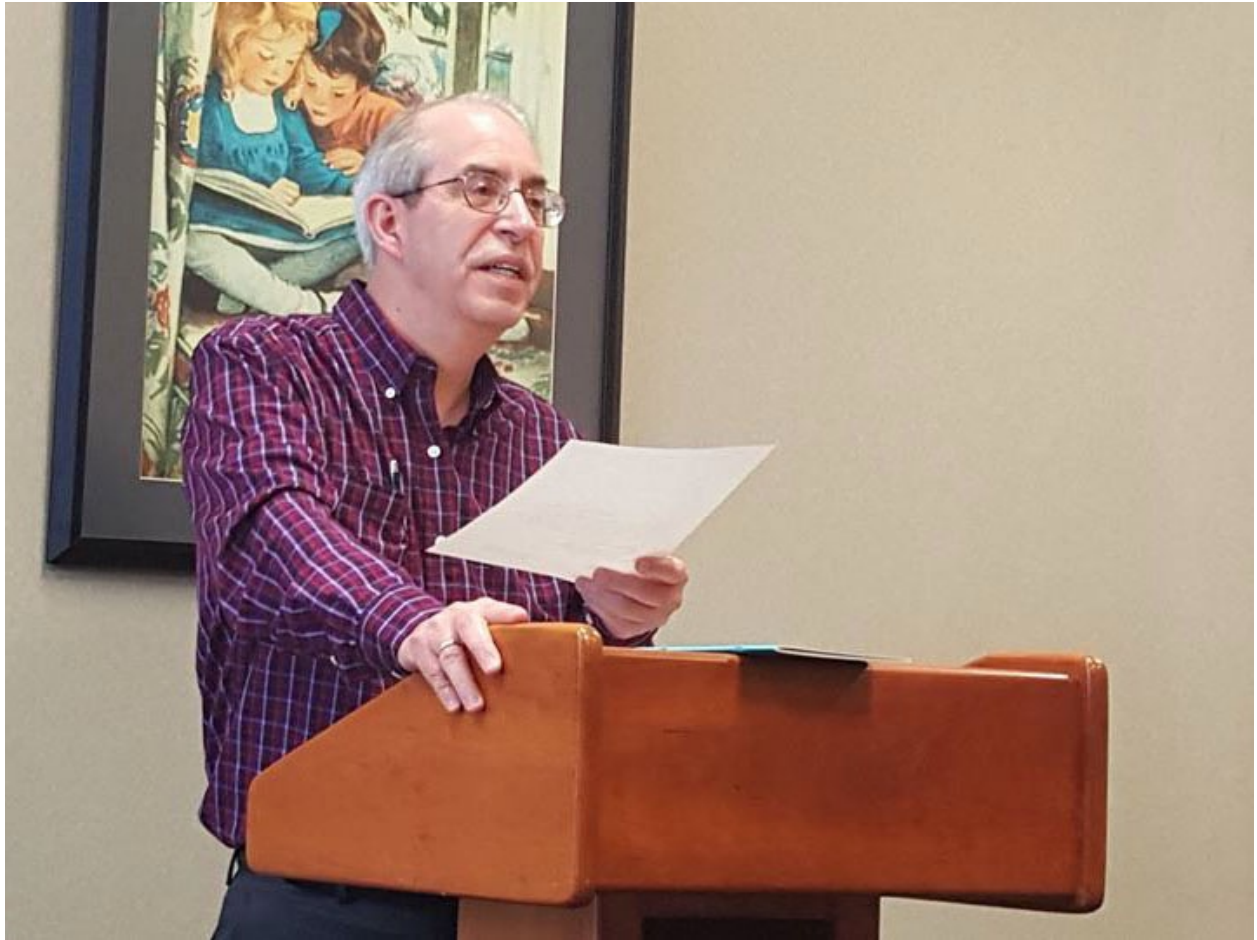
Prune Juice hopes to publish an extensive special feature in our March 2017 issue dedicated to the growing genre of Sci-fi Ku. In this feature, we're looking to showcase anything science-fiction - senryu, haiku, kyoka, tanka, longer form poems, haibun, haiga, essays, short fiction, artwork or anything else sci-fi related - including previously published work.

So don your tinfoil fez, set your phasers to *create* and dare to go boldly where no poet has gone before!

The submission period for the March issue is December 1, 2016 to February 15, 2017.

Resistance is futile!

Thanks to Alan Summers for his generous loan of the above graphic.



Carlos Colón

1953 - 2016

speaking to us
the empty chair
at the poetry reading

senryu by Carlos Colón
Sunday at Four VIII.3 (2001)