failed haiku

A Journal of English Senryu Volume 6, Issue 62

bryan rickert 'Failed' Editor www.failedhaiku.com @SenryuJournal on Twitter Facebook Page



Cast List

In order of appearance (all work copyrighted by the authors)

D. T. Arcieri Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo Michael Hough/Christina Chin Teiichi Suzuki Diana Webb Lavana Kray Mirela Brăilean Charlie Knowlton Neena Singh **Roger Watson** Ron C. Moss & Tia Haynes **Ingrid Baluchi Pris Campbell** Tim Gardiner **Dave Read Marilyn Fleming Nancy Shires Roberta Beach Jacobson Debbie Strange** Lori Becherer **Jamie Wimberly**

Pat Hull

Susan Bonk Plumridge Wilda Morris William Cullen Jr **Olivier Schopfer Antonietta Losito** Oscar Luparia John Hawkhead **Pat Davis** Rosa Maria Di Salvatore **Benedict Grant Bee Jay** Michael Murdoch Vincenzo Adamo Cristina Angelescu **Marilyn Ward** Ilari Pass Mark Bowler David Käwika Eyre Luisa Santor Chen-ou Liu Aljoša Vuković Michael Henry Lee Wilbert Salgado Pere Risteski Kamrun Nahar **Jenny Fraser** Cherri Sutphin **Dennys Cambarau**

Gabriela Popa Bojana Stojcic **Steve Black Charlotte Mandel** Ben Gaa **Mary McCormack** Vishnu Kapoor **Robert Witmer** Wiesław Karliński **Maxianne Berger Ron Moss Christina Chin** Gautam Nadkarni Réka Nyitrai **Ronald Scully Christina Martin Denise Fontaine** Myron Lysenko Gabriela Popa Kala Ramesh **Mary McCormack Bojana Stojcic Robert Witmer** Radostina Dragostinova **Charlotte Mandel Michael Rehling Charles Harmon** Željko Vojković **Nikolay Grankin**

Maria Concetta Conti Sandra Šamec/Franjo Ordanić Jackie Maugh Robinson

E. L. Blizzard

Laurie Greer

Elizabeth Crocket

Lakshmi Iyer

Robert Epstein

Richard Matta

Richard Mavis

Christa Pandey

Louise Hopewell

Adjei Agyei-Baah

Jack Galmitz

Maya Daneva

Kelly Sauvage Angel

B.A. France

Nicholas Klacsanzky

Anna Cates

Ronald K. Craig

Barrie Levine

Natalia Kuznetsova

Daniela Misso

Joanna Ashwell

Robbie Porter

Cynthia Anderson

Colleen M. Farrelly

Anna Cates

Carmela Marino

David Gale Peter Jastermsky Paul Beech Maureen Weldon Diana Webb Isaac Ofori-Okyere **Cynthia Rowe** R. SURESH BABU **Arvinder Kaur Tracy Davidson** Marilyn Ashbaugh **Robert Davey** Francis W. Alexander Tomislav Maretić Rick Jackofsky Giuliana Ravaglia Valentina Ranaldi-Adams Vandana Parashar Alice Wanderer Elisa Allo Shasta Hatter Srinivasa Rao Sambangi **Janice Munro** Susan Farner **Tom Blessing Bruce Jewett**

Hazel Hall

Joshua Gage

John J. Dunphy

Arvinder Kaur

Elmedin Kadric

Nadejda Kostadinova

David Zhuanglang

Jay Friedenberg

Pitt Büerken

Wonja Brucker

Vijay Prasad

Risë E. Daniels

Johnnie Johnson Hafernik

Helen Ogden

Madhuri Pillai

Lucia Cardillo

Surashree Joshi

Nick Hoffman

Mike Gallagher

Eufemia Griffo

Tim Cremin

Agus Maulana Sunjaya

Simon Wilson

Joanna Delalande

Mark Forrester

Irina Guliaeva

Eugeniusz Zacharski

Carol Raisfeld

Terrie Jacks

Lorraine A. Padden

George Schaefer

Terri L. French

Claire Vogel Camargo

Douglas J. Lanzo

John S Green

Nisha Raviprasad

Milan Rajkumar

Benno Schmidt

Kevin Valentine

Sushama Kapur

Michael Baeyens

Dorothy Burrows

Lucia Fontana

Ivan Gaćina

Ann Schechter

Elaine Wilburt

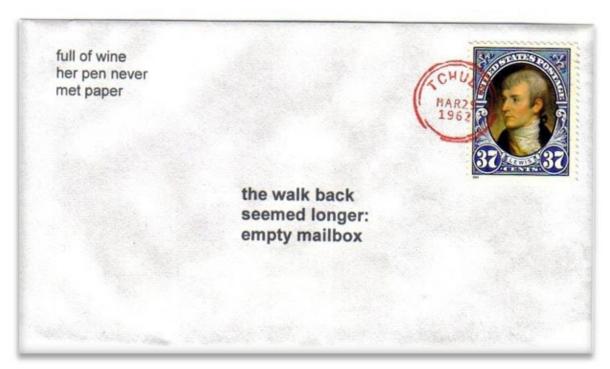
Bob Moyer

Christine Wenk-Harrison

Lori A Minor

Rp Verlaine

Jill Lange



D.T. Arcieri

D. T. Arcieri http://www.dtarcieri.com/

woollen knot at the yarn's end faint whispers

a lost path beyond the clouds bread crumbles

Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo https://ventodelgiorno.wordpress.com



Squirrel memory...

I used to go out running with my Brittany Spaniel, Kody. She absolutely hated squirrels and would kill them at any opportunity. Since we used to run long, we had a lot of episodes with squirrels, including some that were comical.

One thing I noticed was that squirrels know which tree they can climb, and which they cannot. This is likely due to scent markers left by other squirrels. I've seen at least two squirrels that lost their lives because they were more afraid to climb the NEAREST tree than they were of my dog.

One time, Kody chased a squirrel up a tree, and it ran out on a limb and took a flying leap for a different tree... ... It failed to make it, and fell splat into the road from a height of 6 to 7 meters. Kody was absolutely astounded, the look on her face was priceless. The squirrel managed to get up and run off, fast enough to escape, and maybe she

didn't chase it resolutely, for reasons of her own. Maybe she was amused, as I was.

high upon roosting trees agitated crows ~ kraa

Michael Hough, Photo and prose Christina Chin, poem

old overcoat-empty shell of my father in a closet

Meteor shower -on her muffler scent of stars

natural vaccine without side effect-masks and washing hands

in whiteout masked beauty into snowwoman

Teiichi Suzuki

Making the Best

A different mask for each day of the week with the names embroidered and eye makeup to complement each one. She's trying to make it fun for the oldies in her care. But Beryl is wearing Tuesday's when it's Thursday and Joan is wearing Monday's when it's Friday and Elizabeth is wearing Saturday every day. So Chaos reigns.

handwashing tomorrow's soap today

Choices

What should he write in the Valentine to the girl he met last week at the Fine Fleckle School of Ballroom and Latin. A sonnet? A limerick? Something akin to the Song of Songs? A tad more steamy? He scribbles. He rips . Consults weighty tomes.

no words needed just the fragrant whisper of a single rose

Diana Webb



Lavana Kray

waiting room at every open door my closed fists

barbed wire with the last bird my released soul

short truce in a riddled helmet lit candles

Mirela Brăilean

my clothes dryer... cleaning out its belly button

hands spread apart... the fisherman tells his story of a missed putt

my junk drawer... a 75 ford pinto keeps it from closing

Charlie Knowlton

restive night swinging here and there my monkey mind

old diary revives a lost friend... fading birdsong

hard day's night my tabby cat purrs a purrfect lullaby

haiku editing a babbler enters the conversation

Neena Singh

Twelfth Night Jesus, Mary and Joseph in bubble wrap

winter hawthorne festooned with bags of dog poo

the days shortening along with my temper

Roger Watson WIKI

Jingle Bells

a masked man with his parked reindeers at the five and dime

hand sanitizer next to the chimney

all the elves go about their work at a social distance

every rooftop checking his list and temperature twice

"jingle bells, jingle bells vaccine shots all the way"

Mrs. Claus adds a little extra rum to the eggnog

Ron C. Moss & Tia Haynes

new calendar leaving the first few months blank

lockdown the pleasure of punching back dough

football stadium the impeccable conduct of cardboard cut-outs

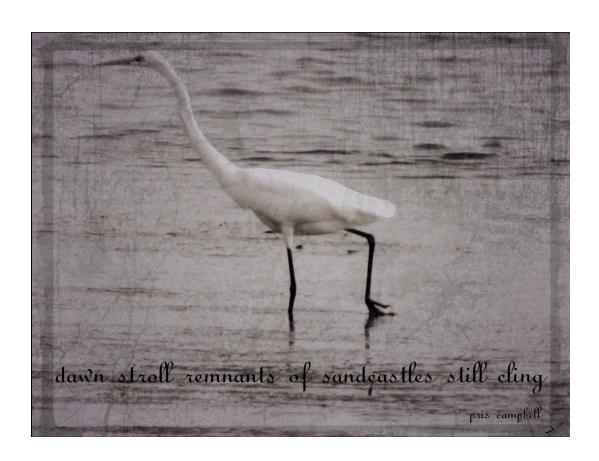
stir crazy firm hands around my off-kilter clay pot

Ingrid Baluchi

my wildflower days... he unfurls inside of me

lost in your touch...
outside, the wilting lilies
sway alone

first lover skillful hands transform my awkward body another grave my life witnesses fading



Pris Campbell

five a.m. staring at shadows staring at me

mind the gap between childhood and middle age

drifting clouds father and son hard to separate

castle skeleton old book in hand a page turner

Tim Gardiner

compost heap...
I wipe
my toddler's face

the bristling of my back hair... werewolf moon

online church... thoughts of God in the cloud

moonlit tide... the rise and fall of her breasts

first date... learning to drive on ice

bear market... I growl at my broker the shortstop spits tobacco... April rain

Dave Read davereadpoetry.blogspot.ca

patchwork quilt stitches lengthen in fading light

I fold him up in the murphy bed end of spring break

the angelic voice of a boy castrato

Marilyn Fleming

binoculars i hope neighbors know i'm birdwatching

for Lent i give up trying

parchment the state of having too little to drink

pick your own just one more strawberry one more . . . one . . . more . . .

smitten by every plant they're selling spring garden center

Nancy Shires

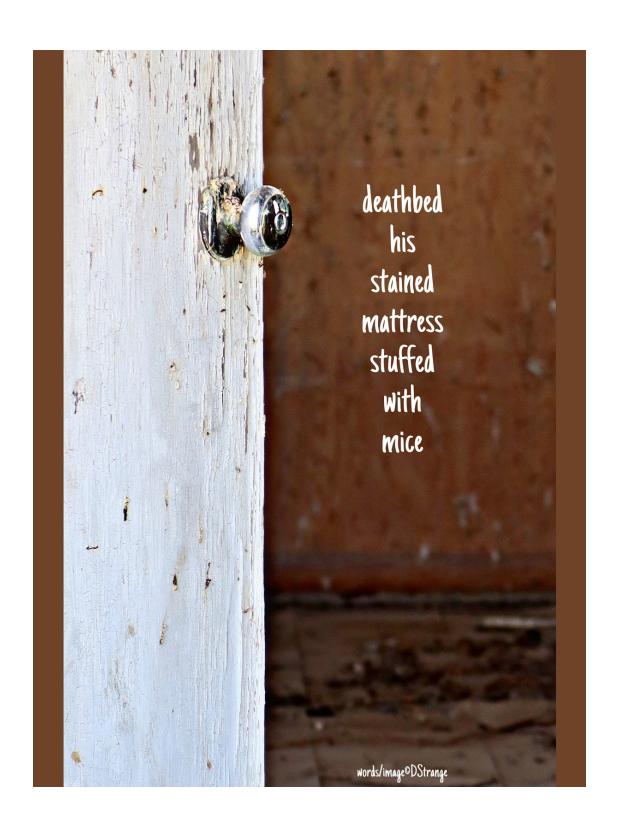
winter soup all the carrots missing

parade of wrinkled uniforms playing Sousa march

dark forest empty shoes pursue me

octothorpes by the pound

Roberta Beach Jacobson



Debbie Strange

one-subject notebook and still nothing

sleep disorder the dream journal gathers dust

this page INTENTIONALLY left blank

Lori Becherer

all we've ever known -twigs in a jar

no road signs turning right at the blooming lilac

Jamie Wimberly

My mom showed her fits Of rage by throwing expired Magazines at God

Pat Hull

eyeglasses suddenly the nightmare clears

air hug the unexpected meeting of friends in the woods

Susan Bonk Plumridge

geese graze in the outfield no game today

Wilda Morris

daylight savings the insomniac's clock an hour behind

zoom happy hour everyone out of work drinking at noon

popular ring tone mimicked by a mocking bird Apple's gone wild

William Cullen Jr

reminisenses

bad breakup he wants his favorite tee shirt back

the fledging pigeon I saved poops on me

Sunday mass holy water replaced by hydroalcoholic gel

Christmas tree his son likes it so much he says he wants to marry it

(for Stephen Toft)

morning quiz there is no x in espresso

Olivier Schopfer

I tell I'm 60 to look wonderful for my 50

in my fifties
I got talent to laugh and pee
at the same time

Covid time nobody cares to find Waldo

Antonietta Losito

insomnia... the leaky shower reminds me I'm getting old

Oscar Luparia

describing snow our geography teacher his dandruff

holy men bringing forth the anointed punishment stones

pandemic numbers going up the price of marble

archipelagos no one talks about the marks along his arms

John Hawkhead

daily briefing the pretense of control

mom on her phone the tug tug tug on her leg

third lockdown one more entry to the definition of myself

father and son only cowlicks in sync

Pat Davis

a doll and a little bedroom... the child I was

video call... watching the first tooth of my little niece

Rosa Maria Di Salvatore

apprenticeship teaching the new dog old tricks

the time you take at the mirror morning worship

yellow patch...
i advise the kids against
snow cakes

Benedict Grant

COVID CURFEW

colourful masks my neighbour brings a new date home

midnight moon a champagne cork comes over the fence

vodka on the porch I blow a smoke ring to the moon

her drifting laugh and the clink of flutes perfume through the conifer

hole in the fence they're ballroom dancing under the clothesline

my neighbour kissing those lipstick lips mosquito on my neck

last smoke
I remember how my wife
used to smile at me

sirens sculling the drink the floor falling at me

brushing my teeth a spider crawls out of the plughole

bed blankets black out

Bee Jay

you only live once depending on religion (results may vary)

I did something dumb burned the candle at both ends can't put it down now

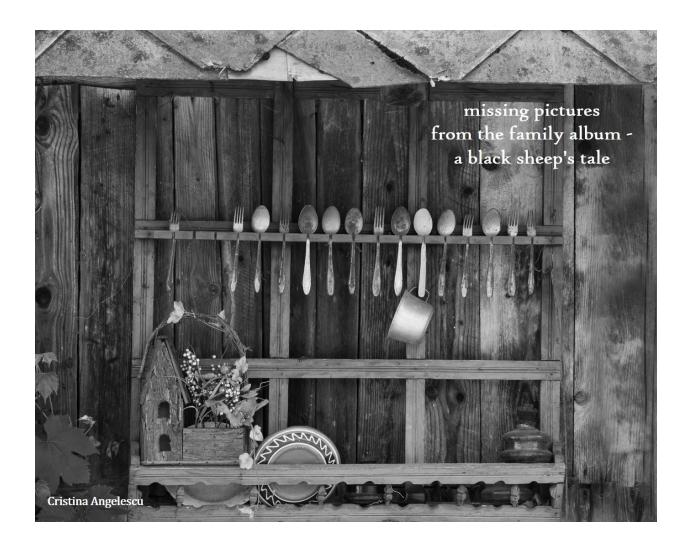
Michael Murdoch

magnetic resonance there is no light at the end of the tunnel

falling asleep... counting fingers of a millipede

Vincenzo Adamo





Cristina Angelescu

after the wake the soft tick of Grandpa's watch

half melon the last visit to the oncologist

whiskey train the rush of the blurring

mother the happiness in sepia i never knew

Marilyn Ward
Twitter <u>@deer ward</u>

midnight sun pomegranate the shape of blood

Ilari Pass

ten years in lovethese embers

hearing you invite reluctant friends to dinner; cat sick on the lawn

ogling curves and anglesfont choice

Mark Bowler

hands full of leaves– staying in touch

wintering is getting on with it

turning wave turning stars to whiteness

covid days...... scratching the travel itch and staying put

David Käwika Eyre

.

rumbling winter the north wind running with bikers

stuck at home working out spring haiku

restless paths on each side the footsteps of your silence

Luisa Santor

snowonsnow ... all the shared driveway my neighbor's

Perfect Strangers
echoing through the hallway
quarantine motel

second lockdown the robo-dog shadows me from room to room

a cloud of shower steam ... my wife hot and hotter in my hands

to flatten
the curve of my pot belly
I keep running ...
in my daydream one more sprint
to a virus-free world

shelter in place ...
my wife wipes religiously
down to trash bags
to disinfect them
and my dirty secrets

A Not-So-Fake Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Although its form is that of a short poetic autobiography, it is not one. With the exception of public figures, any resemblance to actual events or locales or real persons, is coincidental.

one crow croaking to another on a white house roof my name is Rudy and I am a Trumpholic

Chen-ou Liu

Twitter: @ericcoliu and @storyhaikutanka

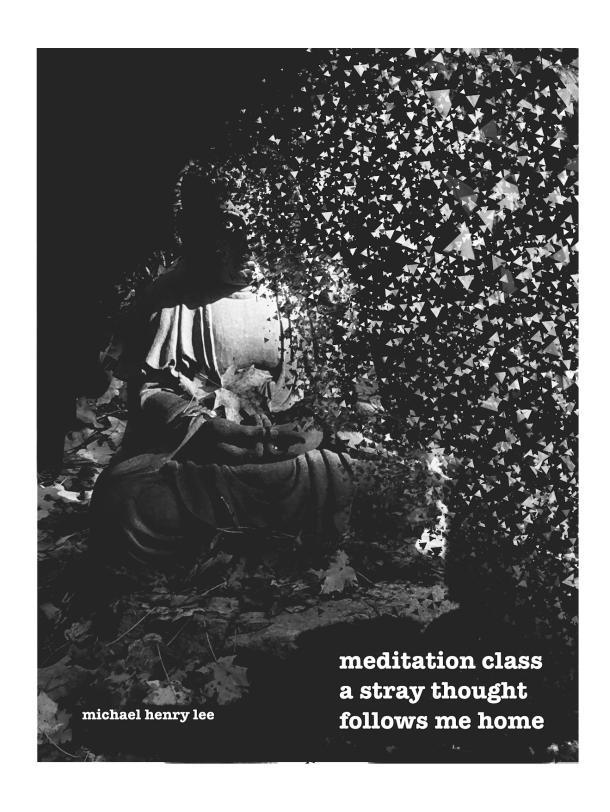
fractionsthe only son doesn't understand the concept of sharing

Aljoša Vuković

double cloud bow knowing this too shall pass

apart from me... cicada shell

just as i am April foo



Michael Henry Lee

Iter criminis a teacher observes the pupil of his eyes

Iter criminis el maestro observa a la niña de sus ojos

Rain on the roof new leaks around the patches

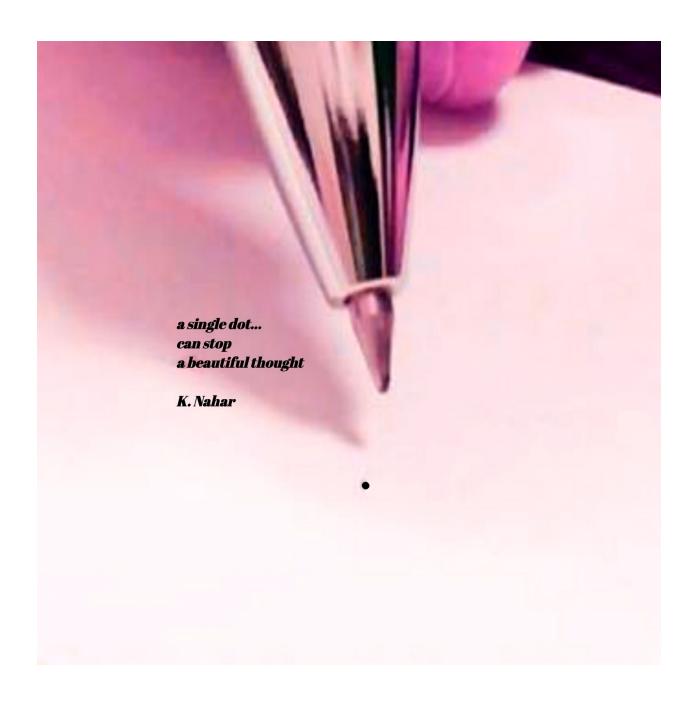
Lluvia sobre el tejado nuevos chorros alrededor de los parches

Wilbert Salgado

snowy morning the side effects from the cognac

the mezzo-soprano of the owl young moon

Pere Risteski



Kamrun Nahar

caught licking my lips the gaze of a stranger

babes asleep in a pushchair running mum

Jenny Fraser

a chance to breath again vaccination

New Year new beginnings new pant size

common ground sandcastles and snowmen melt away

Cherri Sutphin

faded photos my mind brings me back to another winter

Dennys Cambarau



Gabriela Popa

a huge lobbying campaign to persuade the government to watch from a distance

Bojana Stojcic

final preparations for the rapture would i care for her dog and bible

there is a season for everything then you die clock-watching at the haiku seminar

'call of duty'
the war beyond the wall
'shut up and die'
shouts his elderly mother
from her serenity garden

street evangelists on a break the big question subway or mcdonalds

Steve Black

out of bed still asleep within

pandemic days how long since I touched another person

Charlotte Mandel

parking lot the folding and unfolding of strollers

the scent of her perfume. . . memory foam mattress

old bar stools we talk of new love

halloween unmasking the ghost of my marriage

her green hair now blue pandemic zoom

after 20 years the old lover new again

Ben Gaa www.Ben-Gaa.com a single flute lifted to my lips tipsy on champagne

dragon scales on the spoon a coating of vinaigret

Mary McCormack

storm alert removing from verandah the chiming bell

grandpa's walker never could think of using it one day

statues not toppled doing it differently pigeons

Vishnu Kapoor

unhinged keep the nut and we're screwed

peering through my reflection the tailor's dummy with a flower in his lapel

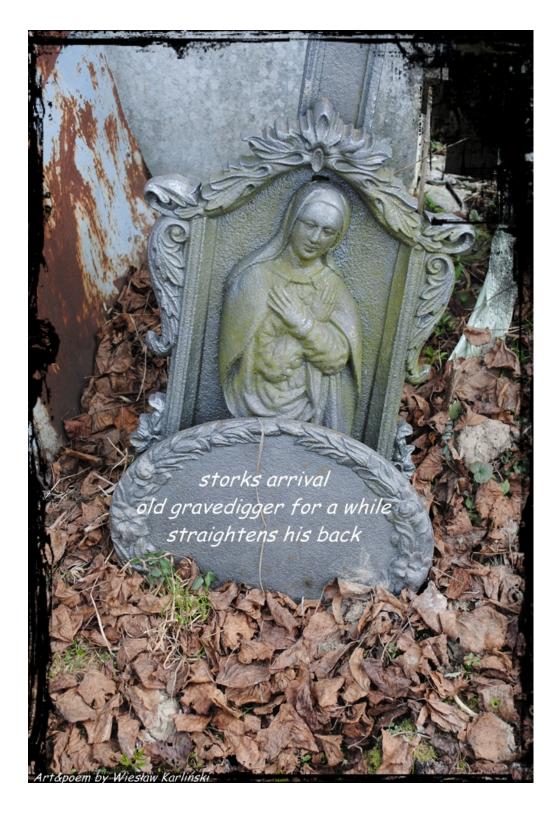
whiskey sour notes through a dented sax

empty fishbowl by the door the stray cat she adores

fifty years together she asks under the mistletoe where were you tomorrow

the gringo's sombrero a spaghetti western dubbed in Japanese

Robert Witmer



Wiesław Karliński

Dog Days

Even Vesuvius is melting, and no daredevil bungee jumper has volunteered to sacrifice himself.

There's no relief whatsoever from this oven of existence. Even the frying pan is melting.

The incendiary blowtorches claim they're neither involved nor responsible. Flaming rhetoric, they say. Merely hot air. All the while, their very speech balloons are melting.

More. Such a thermogenic spew of ignorance and ingnoration surely intensifies climate change. Solar cells and wind turbines have nowhere to hide. Even they are melting.

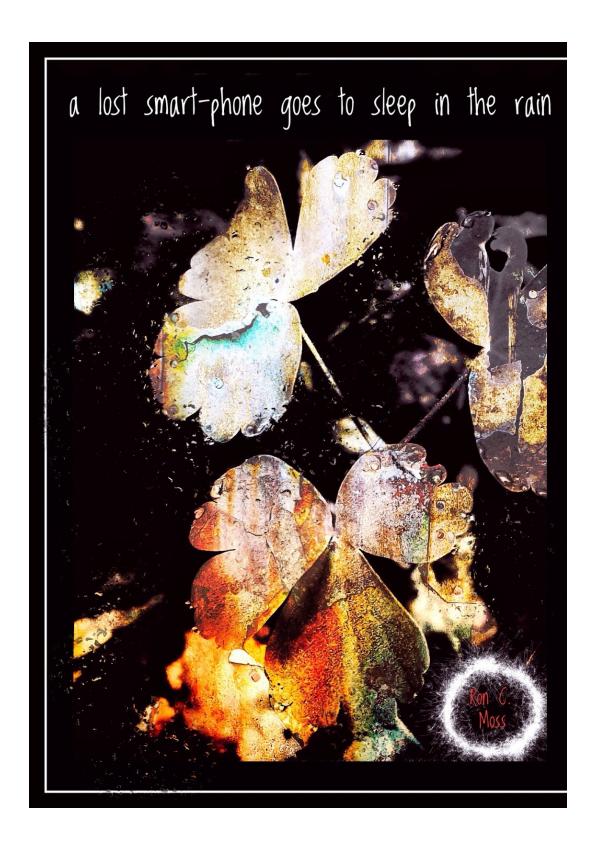
Ha! say the blowtorches from their coal-powered, energy-sucking, air-conditioned mansions. What change?

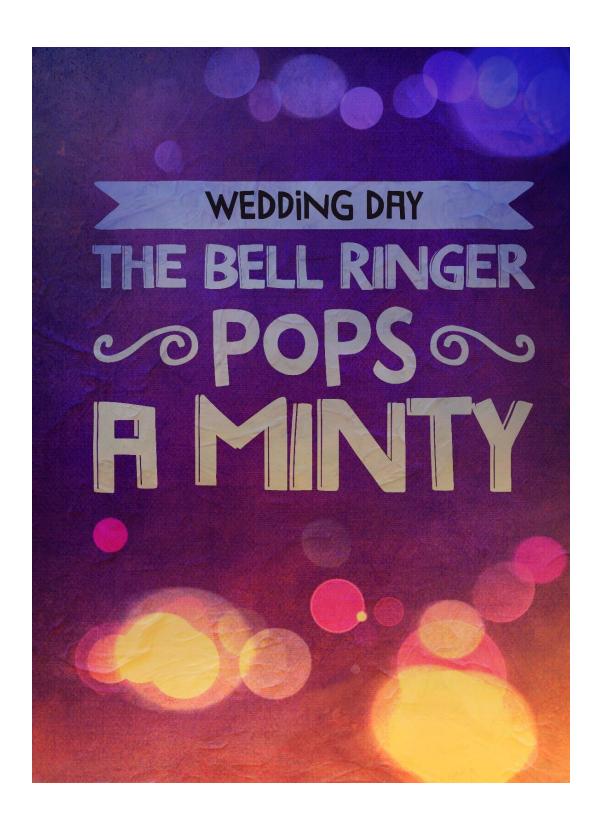
My anxieties are boiling over.

Hell! Even Hell is melting.

ceiling fan way above the poet's head spinning metaphors

Maxianne Berger





Ron Moss

warm hands on bare shoulders the pull of love moon

closed for wedding extravaganzas the gargantuan downtown restaurants strangely quiet

Christina Chin

Turning On The Juice

When my friend Dinesh invited me over to his place for drinks on his sixtieth birthday I was in two minds. Of course, I wanted to wish him.on this special occasion but I had strong reservations about drinking alcoholic beverages. So I sent him a politely worded message declining the invite. Pat came his reply that he knew all about my abstinence and he had therefore arranged soft drinks for me. Well, put that way how could I refuse. So on the appointed day at the appointed time I rang the doorbell at the entrance to the palatial mansion that he called home and was met at the door by Dinesh himself, all wreathed in smiles.

Some of his other guests had already arrived and were apparently into their second or third drink judging from the banter and the raised tones. Dinu led me to the makeshift bar and I ordered a glass of chilled orange juice. Pretty soon I was parking my butt on a soft yielding settee and making myself comfortable.

The orange juice was delicious, the company congenial and the ambience luxurious. It was when I was on my third orange juice and explaining to a novice the intricacies of the stock market and how to make a killing that I noticed my friend's facial features blurring. When I mentioned this the friend suggested a good ophthalmologist and even recommended some eye drops. Another thing I noticed was an irresistible urge on my part to burst into laughter and slap my thighs. Even when nobody was joking. I felt so much at home in these surroundings that I soon raised my feet and tucked them beneath me on the settee. Which turned out alright because many of the others had removed their jackets and loosened their neckties.

playing the marketstill worried sick over how to spend a billion

Gautam Nadkarni

Vases

not in use a flower vase starts to sing

all over bumblebees vibrate an invisible garden

Réka Nyitrai

the ballerina inside the young nun vows to break out

brother envy
I walk in his long shadow
better his break wind

Ronald Scully

last light the way i stretch to catch it

Christina Martin

third trimester dreaming of cigarettes

the hustle of the holidays brown bananas

Denise Fontaine

motorway tunnel no zen undertones in these lines

long road trip in every paddock the same sheep

covid test a fly trapped inside the car

book launch cicadas cheer every poet

Myron Lysenko



Gabriela Popa

the old man's wrinkles turn into smiles

her plait in step with her hips a string of jasmine

Kala Ramesh

a single flute lifted to my lips tipsy on champagne

dragon scales on the spoon a coating of vinaigrette

Mary McCormack

a huge lobbying campaign to persuade the government to watch from a distance

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empty fishbowl by the door the stray cat she adores

fifty years together she asks under the mistletoe where were you tomorrow

the gringo's sombrero a spaghetti western dubbed in Japanese

Robert Witmer

foggy morning I fill the invisible with jazz

sea pebbles smooth and equal the non-uttered words

her marital life.. the Sisyphus myth on the night-table

too much to leave too much if I stay . . . winter sunset

Radostina Dragostinova

out of bed still asleep within

pandemic days how long since I touched another person

Charlotte Mandel

the familiar fluorescence of the bp station a seagull on the pump

absent friends casualties of an absent war

new phone old friends

old bergman films 'death' as a character

sharing the truth with a chickadee it was not received well

making sense of why we live and die

i dont think about consequences. i just try to experience them fully.

the steep price of the truth my ungraceful sidewalk landing

Michael Rehling

unfiltered truth he switches from Marlboro to Lucky Strikes

playing the blame game afraid to look in the mirror

around the room for 80 days lockdown

Charles Harmon

I love plants especially hops in beer

Željko Vojković

Election Day the stripes of bare earth to the snowman

jubilee the round mom's cakes

the depth of my thoughts her neckline

raisin in a milk porridge my grandson's questions

Nikolay Grankin

red zone how many breaths in the clouds between my world and yours a gravestone

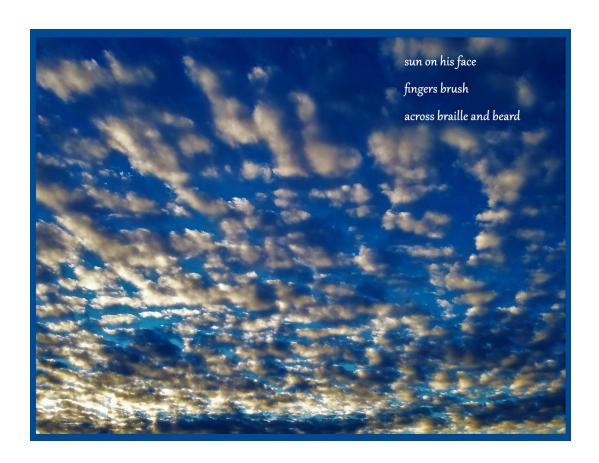
Maria Concetta Conti

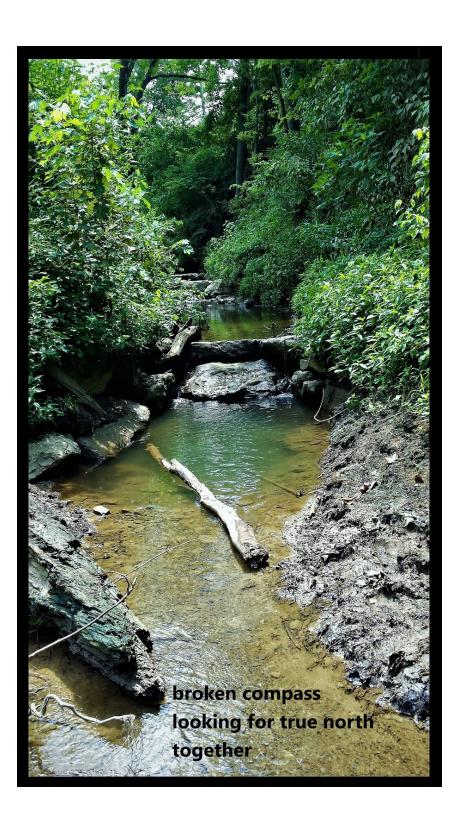


Photo by: Sandra Šamec Haiku by: Franjo Ordanić a real shot in the arm new precedent

lockdown—
from stories of open windows
an ave chorus

Jackie Maugh Robinson







E. L. Blizzard

no mask calling him an idiot to his face

finding a warm pocket lucky penny

BC so distant the time before covid

Laurie Greer



Elizabeth Crocket

ochh! the bumps inside and outside autorickshaw ride

visa-less globe trotting my philately

horoscope vs. h o r r o r scope divorce notice

Lakshmi Iyer

New Year's Eve the 31st and 1st add up to nothing

finding his half-brother decades later the same bloviating

the strength it takes to shelter in place Year of the Ox

Robert Epstein

not a maple tree a sweet gum tree my bare feet indicate

winter campfire marshmallows melt shoe soles smoke

the while it takes for this landed bee to leave my hand

Richard Matta

Christmas season means the wreath stays up till spring

these new grey hairs I can see No good reason

Richard Mavis

rare inch of snow an avalanche of photos on Facebook

eggplant abundance finally night frost

Christa Pandey

waiting for the story to unfold 2021 diary

in death as in life budget funeral

old diary does the rose remember each petal it drops?

writing dad's eulogy squally Sunday

Louise Hopewell

Butcher's Shop

butcher's backyard the tremble in the goat's bleat

the butcher rubs one knife against another the spark in his face

butcher's table the child pats the pig's snout

butcher's dog watching the other dogs fight over a bone

bone and marrow the butcher wins back his flirting customers

Adjei Agyei-Baah

talking to myself as if I were someone else

Jack Galmitz

pandemic record never before we received so much snow

funeral procession the heart attack of the hearse driver

Maya Daneva

what of the PoetTM—
too precious to touch
the wither of leaves

strategically speaking the eyes of a gnome

horizon line we emerge from the blazes into the blue

photobombing my unexpected pregnancy

wildflowers I consider plucking one of my own

coming undone a ball of entwine

Kelly Sauvage Angel

heart rate rises reading the angry email again

rugged individualist ...graveside

how to build your nest the squirrel welcomes you to his TED talk

B.A. France

ancient temple the private parts knocked off from gods

mall santa passing presents passing gas

kale pizza I can only be so healthy

logging town a leftover toothpick on the dining table

confessional grille the priest and I meet eyes

thunder—
groaning as I get myself
out of bed

Nicholas Klacsanzky

SMALL GATHERINGS

Summer 2020. Life is not without its risks. Why not "break bread" with a friend? I drive out to his Victorian farmhouse-turned-antiques-workshop and park behind his big white van . . .

Romanesque arches beside the cupboard Decameron dinner debate

I squint in disbelief at the expiration date on a jar of spaghetti sauce. "Twenty thirteen?" I ask. He just laughs...

old time charm rock salt churning orange sherbet sky

CIRCUS

big top wa!king the wire in c!own feet

an oversized mouth choking on shoe !aces yak woman

sticking his neck out po!itica!!y— giraffe vs. !ion tamer . . .

High up in the stands, stashed in shadow, unnoticed by the crowds, the arch fiend, Satan, hunches on the bleacher, still as thin ice. Hints of brimstone halo him, his snakeskin boots freshly oiled and glistening, his anal rash on fire . . .

popcorn spills the train rolls on into quiet places

2021 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

I decide to use less plastic. I discover online Himalayan Jasmine brown rice in a burlap bag for \$12.99. A burlap bag? My mind reels. I hastily order four pounds. The rice arrives covered in plastic bubble wrap. fast food scents . . . Waldo still lost among the beasties

Anna Cates

endangered species our footprints on their necks

football the stadium noise of cardboard cutouts

late night odor of skunk questioning his alibi

navigating a lover's moods rip current

searching for the food pantry college campus

Ronald K. Craig

summer vacation in grandma's backyard cousins and fireflies

the neighbor's husband leaves for work . . . she lights up

guardrail wreath replaced each year . . . until now

sunlit garden the Buddha's shadow never at rest

Barrie Levine



insomnia... the old skeletons whispering in the cupboard

Natalia Kuznetsova

my desire to fly chicken wings

Daniela Misso

a smaller pillow my dog finds the larger share

crumb trail shafts of moon on the dog's tail

Joanna Ashwell

Gallipoli

On 12 July 1915 granddad and his pals got out of their trenches and walked toward the enemy. Their objective was to take the third line of trenches; they actually captured two without much incident.

They pressed on, but never did reach the third line. It didn't exist, and was a cartographer's mistake.

The men were now too far forward. Machine gun fire cut down a third of the battalion as they tried to crawl back.

no disturbance can be where doves soar and dive

Robbie Porter

fishing for a conversation the bait not taken

second thoughts the wobble of a spinning top

breakfast table the dream that got away

Cynthia Anderson

New Year's kiss-the screen freezes

snowy drive-backsliding on resolutions

Post-Game Analysis

We're kneeling on a cracked seat, facing the back of the bus. You're leaning into the next row, and I'm halfway to the aisle, backwards cap askance as I hold my side laughing. Our starting center tells another joke. The bus hits a pothole, and we bounce off the seat back like a missed free throw.

lurching to a stop someone mentions the miss at the buzzer

Colleen M. Farrelly

the icy wheels of the bag lady's cart rush hour

small town boredom counting the freckles on a pinto bean . . .

Anna Cates

praying to a god that I don't see water and snow

mist drops I can't hold back a memory

pumpkin seed the desire to be a mother again

Carmela Marino

after the cross-cutting shredder still the eyes still the lips

more than a hundred days... at morning bootcamp passing the medicine ball

night drive I follow the lines in the road to nowhere

playing doctors and nurses you dare me to kiss a bandaged face

David Gale

new gravesites the clarity of demise cracked heels trouble we can't run from in thanks stretching the haves to two hands

softening melons the way of effusive

busy bag dipping into new adventures

Peter Jastermsky

decoding the cipher of life he downs another dram

river dawn his song on her lips

CW9

I'm a marked man. Have received death threats, been held at knife-point. We're all marked men or women here. The Incident Book would make a best seller.

The year is '83 and CW9 is the toughest patch in the city. Drugs, prostitution, muggings, murder. Few could cope with it. But we are those few. Hand-picked for our skills, our nerve. An elite squad, you could say. "The 9-ers."

Another report. Another coffee. I'm late away, always late away.

Check the outside camera for shadows in shadow. Check I'm buttoned tight, nothing for thugs to snatch hold of. Then out, and straight to the car.

Passing the cemetery I check my mirrors. Just in case...

schoolboy japes my daughters beg a story

Paul Beech

The Attic

On freezing cold mornings Dad would wake me holding yesterday's newspaper across a small black-leaded fireplace in what was once the maid's bedroom.

That'll do it, he'd say. Don't be late.

across the road the blacksmith hammers a horseshoe

Maureen Weldon

Chirpy

Passport expired it's stay home time this year perhaps forever. crumb to crumb trajectories of house sparrows

Diana Webb

the butcher whets his knife flies go nowhere

shoe for Christmas mama measures my foot with broom stick

Isaac Ofori-Okyere

football injury the champ on YouTube cooking onions

our first night apart comforted by blocks of cheap chocolate

school bus a dropped pumpkin seed heads for the door

son's aquarium a goldfish lays eggs on the fake grapevine

casbah dreams the flowing robes of a sandal-clad horseman

Cynthia Rowe www.cynthiarowe.com.au

aftermath of war the sky and stars make our rooftops

R. SURESH BABU

bubbles in the breeze... a girl offers me rainbows for ten rupees

memory boxthe side of mother I never knew

fresh grave a woodpecker knocks on the tombstone

first date the crooked nose of my online crush

Arvinder Kaur

our independence day six months early Bye-Don / Biden

steamy night his passion trapped in a mosquito net

after the vote long lines at the gun store

Tracy Davidson

capitol steps the election of chaos

hoof-churned mud democracy in a pork barrel



Marilyn Ashbaugh

pregnancy epidemic my daughter closes her Facebook account

smartphone too easy to tao the wrong ke6

tinnitussssssssssssssssssssssss

Robert Davey

Sunday School Lesson

When I moved to this apartment, I found out Mrs. Mildred stays here also. I'd last seen her about five years ago. Her bubbling personality flowed over me. She was still spunky and exuding lots of energy in her older age. I remember that as a kid, she was my Sunday School teacher. She always included a "turn the other cheek" in her lessons. I usually barked and babbled in response that I had to fight the bullies, or they would keep picking on me.

Years later, when I went off to college, I found out that her son had been killed in Vietnam. He was a medic. I read the town's newspaper article and saw where she forgave the Viet Cong soldier who killed her son. This made me understand that she practiced what she preached. Last week I finally called her on the phone. She doesn't get around much. But she still had that spunk in her voice.

rubbing the cat's head after she stabs me with a claw – afternoon feed

Francis W. Alexander

a girl passing by in front of the boys – nuthatch's whistle

a spoiled mouse – prosciutto ham in the trap

o, house borer, insomniac's friend, where are you tonight?

a pleasant journey – in the hot bus next to a lady with a fan

the drunken coachman lets his horse take him home

Tomislav Maretić

flies buzzing around a dead elephant conspiracy theories

the groundhog emerges from a pothole an urban legend

Rick Jackofsky

mandala my certainties scattered in the wind

Giuliana Ravaglia

a missed call from the dark-eyed lady junco bird

rite of passage for the senior class retirement day

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

family photograph the slight tilt of her head towards mother

clumsy cook the dog knows before anyone else

Vandana Parashar

biannual breast check the artist puts the model in a hard-to-hold pose

a woman whistling in the kitchen her sharpened knife

Beak to Beak the avid foreplay of spotted doves

Alice Wanderer

you're still alive? new conversions with old friends

Elisa Allo

song of ice cream children dance six feet apart along this shared road

Shasta Hatter

bonsai tree my child's new claim on her height

maternity ward stone buddha smiles at a crying woman

leaving nothing untouched we both part bath soap and I

strawberry moon the way he says I'm hot

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

new year's party the disco ball glows with corona spikes

Janice Munro

a cricket chirps In my dream dead battery

vintage vinyl millennial's Christmas list

Susan Farner

parking lot mass beside their car a couple kissing

the lake calm I wonder who looks back

bitter tea how perfect for this winter morning

bringing in the New Year cats in love

Izmir, Turkey

Tom Blessing

two wives, two homes three cats now six double vision

Bruce Jewett

empty pen transfusion needed for the muse

in the hands of the puppeteer . . . shadow cabinet

Hazel Hall

mothballs the priest's condolences

before the move all the books I have yet to buy

the white seam of her suntanned hips *Prelude to a Kiss*

she slips me her tongue blistering sax solo

empty refrigerator the delicious crackle of a new '78

Joshua Gage

parked in a windowless garage behind his megachurch the preacher's new Lamborghini

resale shop on the faceless mannequin's head a MAGA cap

John J. Dunphy

SubMiSSion

Minimalism

Arvinder Kaur

first news of her death poem

Halloween death larger than life

how the engine won't turn over our conversation

Elmedin Kadric

www.elmedinkadric.com

rainy afternoon at last the cat curls up in my slipper

tapping rain counting the syllables of a haiku

creeping shadows my bear skin needing a hug

Nadejda Kostadinova

golden rays cross calm waters . . . she shoves me in

lifting her mask: she blows out the candle before his portrait

tea cups fill and empty with friendship

David Zhuanglang

new bar the Southern Comfort of strangers

Valentine's Day card shopping the infinite permutations of "I love you"

sparkling snow deep in my pocket I fiddle a ring

Jay Friedenberg

one fifty distance the pickpocket applies for government aid

shower bath after soaping only goosebumps

Pitt Büerken

young at heart I keep forgetting senior discounts

perennials buried under snow family issues

bittersweet reconciliation dandelion wine

Wonja Brucker

after me the tree nameless

i walk into the empty purity duskfall

signature i depart from the page

Vijay Prasad

traffic jam... my to-do list shortens

abandoned car...
in the wind-swept snow
his fading footsteps

Risë E. Daniels

https://www.lonheronart.com

fine dining on a brocade tablecloth daddy long legs

hours later nothing has changed cold feet

Johnnie Johnson Hafernik

election results my flag now right side up

fetal position longing to return to a simpler time

folded neatly in the driveway yesterday's bad news

soggy paper yesterday's news becomes a blurr

my husband makes dinner what wine to serve with waffles?

back to school our government gets a failing grade counting what we've lost out of fingers out of toes

second lockdown the sound of another shoe dropping

today's horoscope: travel and attend gatherings the stars misaligned

Helen Ogden

drunk on his own madness

the wilting grief

he rams the car

of yesterday's mourners

against the wall

daisies droop in a jam jar

letting go to forge ahead the lure of a dream

weaving in and out of day dreams sun flecked breeze

Madhuri Pillai

ginger tea ... a sky of icy stars unsweetened

tè allo zenzero ... un cielo di stelle gelide senza zucchero

Lucia Cardillo

new glasses... he still doesn't see my side

psych ward... chairs for visitors who never come

Surashree Joshi

can't help crying on the inside... spilled latte

home schooling her math lesson divides us again

lockdown
I open the window
to release a moth

a long documentary about King Tut's tomb... still in lockdown...

Nick Hoffman

sculptor fingers caressing the space between

Mike Gallagher

(https://www.facebook.com/mikejgallagher/)

death anniversary
those black clouds again
behind the window
in memory of Rachel Sutcliffe

first day of work a flight of butterflies in my belly

abandoned house the ivy leaves wrap even the moon



Eufemia Griffo

https://ilfiumescorreancora.wordpress.com/

insurrection Bernie's mittens taking over

pit stop hot dogs sweating on the roller grill

Monday morning shaving the clown face in the mirror

Memoir

It was a crazy night that went on all night. I managed to make it home safely. Not sure how.

daybreak Nana's rosary beads hanging out the window

Tim Cremin

extra chili to my betutu ... mother's reprimand

(betutu is Indonesian-Balinese dish of steamed or roasted chicken or duck)

setting sun through the hospital window mother's gaze

I thought I know her well ... poison ivy

Agus Maulana Sunjaya

husbands and wives side by side forever — faded flowers

Hidden Worlds

He wears a grey gaberdine and rides a bicycle from church to church. In his head he composes poems about sex and tombs. On YouTube he flickers in black and white, like a newsreel from the 1950s. Smiles are clearly still on ration.

Larkin used more bad language than you normally expect from a librarian. This becomes understandable when you find that he started his day with half a bottle of sherry.

monochrome photo my parents younger than me 1963

Simon Wilson



Joanna Delalande

A New Normal

It is November of 2000. We all are watching the news. Disputed ballots in Florida. Late night comedians joke about hanging chads. Bush and Gore are headed to the Supreme Court. We will wait for weeks to learn the name of our next President.

I tell a student, "You will never see another election like this one." She nods.

deep winter lengthening shadows across the parking lot

Mark Forrester

the best organizer has gathered all the relatives his death

family laughter shaking on the table meat jelly

Irina Guliaeva

gloomy morning in the dumpster a tramp's fetus silhouette

Eugeniusz Zacharski

Grandpa's diagnosis mentally alert selectively forgetful

on a whim flying to London for an English muffin

repair hotline we screw anything can you hold?

the doctor
said she may be
colorblind
a diagnosis that came
completely out of the purple

last night
his dream was filled
with wild oats
early this morning
its shredded wheat

Carol Raisfeld

my mind left on a corner unclaimed

dancing in the night bathroom trip

downsizing one dish at a time oops!

enrolling
on many vaccine lists
my arm
aches
in anticipation

Terrie Jacks

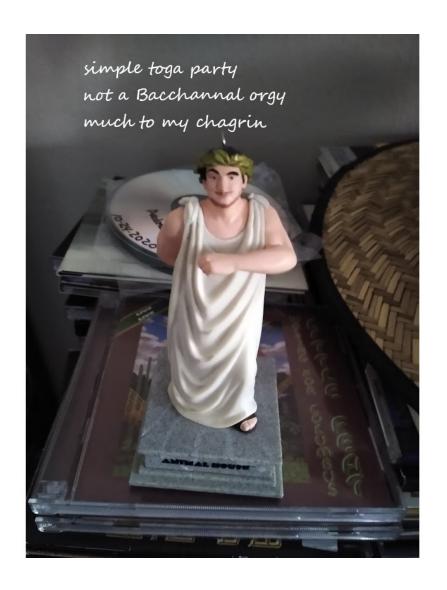
ice show intermission zamboni pas de deux

recycled journal pages my old new origami crane

rolling up the landscape snowman performance art

winter deepens I throw in another potato

Lorraine A. Padden



George Schaefer

grandmother's hands sugar snap peas in a stoneware bowl

sweetgrass... a memory slips between the synapses

flattened grass where they left their love

Clothing Optional - a solo rengay

quarantine I dress up my Bitmoji

a mask to match each pair of socks

pandemic which earrings go with these pajamas

shutdown another pair of slippers from Amazon

a sweatshirt gets the sniff test

COVID 19 it doesn't deserve a bra

Moderation Forum

I was doing fine until someone brought out the pickleback shots. Next thing I knew I came to in an Uber with my husband passed out and drooling on my shoulder. We got to the house but I had forgotten my purse at the party, so I got my husband inside and had the Uber driver take me back. Well, I must have drank more and blacked out again because I woke up in another Uber (with my purse) but the driver

was really creepy so I made him let me out. I had no idea where I was. I stumbled up to these people's house and rang their door bell. A man answered the door and I asked him to call my husband. Problem was I couldn't remember his number. The man called me another Uber and I finally made it home.

my martini spilt on the keyboard alcohol abuse

Terri L. French

pink glitter sunrise the weight of dark paintings on the walls

the problem with decisions each requires a decision

Claire Vogel Camargo

quarantined single more conversations with pets than with people

kids play Fortnite Pandemic strikes kids play Fortnite squared

Douglas J. Lanzo

Best-Laid Plans

The friendly man, who is always working the cash register, signals for me to enter the vaccination room. He stumbles with his keys, but finally opens it, and asks me to sit down. As he closes the door, he pokes his head back in and states, "roll your sleeve up." A few minutes later, there is a jostle at the door—a jingle of keys—a couple more bumps before the door opens—admitting the short, thin pharmacist. She stops—staring at me. "Your sleeve is not rolled up!"

I pull it up to my shoulder. "Is that okay?"
She hesitates, "We must save time. He was supposed to tell you to roll your sleeve up to save time."
"He did. How high do you want it?" She points higher, and mumbles, "You should have had it up already."

wedding rehearsal the three-year old ring bearer crawls under a pew

John S Green

slow dip of the sun first chemo slipping into my veins

Nisha Raviprasad

her smile beneath the mask . . . and the bruises

Milan Rajkumar

video chat the fly on my screen on your nose

Benno Schmidt

nursery room the oppressive silence of an empty crib

teacher's lounge grading one another on a curve





Kevin Valentine

hovering dragonfly ... a missed heartbeat at her tattoo

Sushama Kapur

weekly sessions we get to know the waiting room playlist

after everyone's left home town

Michael Baeyens



Dorothy Burrows

fibonacci i'm sorry i'm not predictable

Lucia Fontana

funeral . . . his mother-in-law looks at her wristwatch

my sin in a thousand copies . . . a broken mirror

Ivan Gaćina

in my space gear drifting toward unknown encounters CPAP sleeper

adulting today laundry love making

Ann Schechter

s w cross words r r c d

bedtime... wishing his big sister badnight

Lent last Madonna and Child on an envelope

Elaine Wilburt

voice message bad transcription makes him sound like a poet

lost

in

her space

mixed feelings the graduate degree in a cheap frame

the further I go the thicker it gets hard to read book

exuding from piles around the store the must of books

a line of cars absorbs the children school's out

Bob Moyer

year of the ox we celebrate as vegetarians

snooze button
3 x 5 =
alarm clock math

choice of red, white or pink with sparkles poinsettia sale

Christine Wenk-Harrison

Bad Company

Being the ugly duckling who transforms into a beautiful swan will make you want to fuck anyone who'll fuck you.

virgin moon my first time snorting pills

uprooting the racism family tree

my dark circles growing fuller moon

American healthcare another doctor sick of my whining

inauguration day we finally sweep the dead fly

Lori A Minor

as a kid I watched
"I dream of Jeanie"
where I first learned
of the good things that come
in a bottle

smiles like a new Mona Lisa each new drink

drunk girl on the train says the train is moving faster than her thoughts

Rp Verlaine

who will ever forget the last time we heard "Y M C A"

Jill Lange

Dummy's Day Out

shopping day my wife notices a resemblance between me and the store dummy

with only
the cameras watching
I check
the mannequin for
anatomical correctness

my wife pays
with the credit card
I take a cue
from the dummy and
stand there in silenced

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