

THE HERON'S NEST — VOLUME 17 (2015)



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FEATURED POEMS

her death date
I pause the river
in my cupped hands

Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

*

the carving knife
out of its sheath
winter darkness

Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, Iowa

*

whistle
what's left
of a train

Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

HERON'S NEST AWARD

her death date
 I pause the river
 in my cupped hands

Carolyn Hall
 San Francisco, California

A family member, close friend, former mentor? The poet doesn't declare the relationship, instead allowing our intuition to inform us. Neither do we know how many anniversaries have passed since the death of this person for whom I believe the writer greatly cared. No matter how recently or long ago it occurred, it is clear that the loss continues to deeply affect the poet. What better place than a river for guardians of nature, haiku poets who seek out nature everywhere, to come for meditation and reflection, for contemplating forces over which we have no control? Anne Frank expressed the notion beautifully:

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. As long as this exists...I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.¹

Though there is no reference to a higher power or any religion in Carolyn Hall's riveting haiku, its undeniable spirituality resonates as clearly as a tolling bell. In ancient times, a running river was often used as a metaphor for life, a stream or force constantly moving onward, and so it is today. Many people whose lives and livelihoods are bound to a moving, ever changing body of water see life itself as a river. This poet collects a bit of the river in her cupped hands. Maybe, like Siddhartha, she is learning from the river, finding her own enlightenment.² Or does she "pause" the river wishing she could pause her life, even stop time and its consequences? Perhaps, but I also sense that cupping the water, lifting it from its source, holding it, is in some way a ceremony, a memorial to the person for whom she mourns. A simple

¹ Frank, Anne: *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Doubleday & Co. (English version), New York, New York, 1952.

² Hesse, Hermann: *Siddhartha*, New Directions, New York, New York, 1951.

rite that may help the poet feel in spirit, for a while, the presence of someone she held dear.

Ferris Gilli
March 2015

POEMS

clear stream
the one stepping-stone
under water...

Adrian Bouter
Gouda, the Netherlands

*

no details
about the procedure
quiet rain

Glenn G. Coats
Prospect, Virginia

*

in whichever
direction the call
to prayer

Joseph Salvatore Aversano
Ankara, Turkey

*

lake mist
the smudged reflections
of pines

André Surridge
New Zealand

*

spring haze
a forsythia's
clarity

Ann K. Schwader

Westminster, Colorado

*

rainy road trip
the wiper's metronome
state to state

Lenard D. Moore
Raleigh, North Carolina

*

Manzanar —
a butterfly's wing
beneath the millstone

Steve Hodge
White Lake, Michigan

*

blue hour
a door opens
to my past

Gregory Longenecker
Pasadena, California

*

goldfinch
shaking off
the night

Ben Moeller-Gaa
St. Louis, Missouri

*

spring morning
I wake
the butterfly

Emmanuel Jessie Kalusian
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

*

sunlight on water
vowels
in the syllables of birds

Robert Witmer
Tokyo, Japan

*

scent of wind
a lizard steps out
of its old skin

G.R. LeBlanc
Dieppe, New Brunswick
Canada

*

fish market:
the smell of old sails
on his coat

Oana Aurora Boazu
Galati City, Romania

*

leaving their echoes ringing
woodpeckers debugging
boards in the barn

Wally Swist
Amherst, Massachusetts

*

the splash...
our anchor

splitting stars

Joanna Ashwell
County Durham, United Kingdom

*

sea cave
the thoughts I keep
inviting back

Meik Blöttenberger
Hanover, Pennsylvania

*

incoming tide
the lullabies my mother
learned from her mother

Meik Blöttenberger
Hanover, Pennsylvania

*

from the ocean
to her moat
a bucket mostly spilled

Michael Dylan Welch
Sammamish, Washington

*

those evenings
when ripeness is just reaching
the pits of plums

Burnell Lippy
Danville, Vermont

*

young osprey

how to land softly
with a trout

Bill Cooper
Richmond, Virginia

*

clanging cymbals—
the rooster joins
the worship

Yesha Shah
Surat, Gujarat
India

*

a frayed rope
hanging from a tree limb
midday heat

Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

*

sandstorm the shaggy hump of a camel

Bob Lucky
Jubail, Saudi Arabia

*

fire watch
the first pulses
of the pager

Ron C. Moss
Leslie Vale, Tasmania
Australia

*

at dusk
a sailboat practices
coming about

john martone
Charleston, Illinois

*

contract negotiations —
the summer we spent
in trees

Sandra Simpson
Tauranga, New Zealand

*

fossil shells
inside a crumbling rock —
long summer rain

Polona Oblak
Ljubljana, Slovenia

*

evening breeze
ruffling thoughts of her
echoes of the erhu

Chen-ou Liu
Ajax, Ontario
Canada

*

still hummingbird...
as if summer
is forever

Tyrone McDonald
Brooklyn, New York

*

evening swallows...
the last green of summer
rolled up in bales

Robert Gilliland
Austin, Texas

*

the depth of the lake
still in question—
autumn chill

Angela Terry
Lake Forest Park, Washington

*

first autumn evening
at my daughter's grave
our shadows

Lenard D. Moore
Raleigh, North Carolina

*

closing my eyes
to find it
cricket's song

Billy Antonio
Laoac, Pangasinan
Philippines

*

sphagnum moss
the secret to
where fog lives

Andrea Eldridge

Claremont, California

*

Lunar eclipse
a silverfish
inside the ephemeris

Alexis Rotella
Annapolis, Maryland

*

behind me
the years
fading sunflowers

Dietmar Tauchner
Puchberg, Austria

*

a cool mist rises
from the old horse's back—
the last tourist leaves

Erling Friis-Baastad
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada

*

tree stump
an ant scurries across
three wars

John J. Dunphy
Alton, Illinois

*

ship's log
the marginalia
tinged with salt

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, Maryland

*

blood moon...
once again I check
my baby's pulse

Cezar-Florin Ciobîcă
Botoșani, Romania

*

in the deep hollows
yellow leaves
linger

Bonnie Stepenoff
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

*

Tarp-covered yacht
the longer shadows
of a fake owl

Deborah P Kolodji
Temple City, California

*

the sea
with the final say
widow's walk

June Rose Dowis
Shreveport, Louisiana

*

the burn scar fading diablo wind

Cherie Hunter Day
Cupertino, California

*

in the curves
of an alto sax
Amazing Grace

Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

*

thinking about how
language is made —
the cold crow's carrr

pjm
San Jose, California

*

leaf raking
the swish-swish
of corduroy

Carolyn Coit Dancy
Pittsford, New York

*

Mars landing —
the crunch of dry leaves
to her doorstep

Carl Seguiban
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada

*

only one small
Darth Vader

I start on the Milky Ways

Ellen Compton
Washington, District of Columbia

*

morning chill a little gust of inkling

Michael Henry Lee
Saint Augustine, Florida

*

first snow
a stranger at
my parents' grave

Jörgen Johansson
Lidköping, Sweden

*

wrapped in headlines
once a year our angel
comes out of hiding

Peter Newton
Winchendon, Massachusetts

*

holiday cleanup
putting the last spoon
to rest

Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, Iowa

*

just for a moment
sun
on the cut flowers

Yu Chang
Schenectady, New York

*

here for me
on a winter night
the kitchen chair

Dan Schwerin
Greendale, Wisconsin

*

a bat
slips into a crack
Orion rising

Autumn Moon
Tucson, Arizona

*

blizzard
the last toothpick tops
the tower

Roberta Beary
Bethesda, Maryland

*

midwinter sun the dunnock's threadbare song

Claire Everett
Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

fox tracks . . .
who was I before
I was tamed?

Annette Makino
Arcata, California

*

contrails
above brown hills
places I've never been

Johnnie Johnson Hafernik
San Francisco, California

*

above the clamor
of starlings
...star stream

Kristen Deming
Bethesda, Maryland

*

old pond ice
stirred by spring wind
osprey feathers

Matthew Caretti
Mercersburg, Pennsylvania

*

morning drizzle
the crescent of dry pavement
beneath the pinecone

James Chessing
San Ramon, California

*

waxing moon
first star flowers

unfurl

Gary Colombo De Piazzì
Carramar, Western Australia
Australia

*

Walpurgisnacht
a nuthatch enters
the scots pine

Alan Summers
Bradford on Avon
Wiltshire, England

*

new neighbors
dandelion seeds
flying over my fence

Maria Kowal-Tomczak
Opole, Poland

*

May birdsong
hidden among
last year's cattails

Tamra J. Higgins
Jeffersonville, Vermont

*

shimmering heat...
the satin bowerbird
tends his blue décor

Lorin Ford
Melbourne, Australia

*

overnight showers –
a stray dog sipping
the sunshine

Arvinder Kaur
Chandigarh, India

*

the long throat
of a pitcher plant
song of a lost bee

Dave Russo
Cary, North Carolina

*

dozy afternoon...
the bangle-seller's call
the length of an alley

Sanjukta Asopa
Karnataka, India

*

first of summer
the seductive label
of a new wine

Roland Packer
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada

*

starry night the stag once more in velvet

Claire Everett
Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

little black dress —
I squeeze her lipstick
into my cummerbund

Lew Watts
Santa Fe, New Mexico

*

happy hour outdoors
the complimentary
sunset

Ross Plovnick
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

*

waterfront café
incoming tide through planks
beneath our feet

Patricia Prime
Auckland, New Zealand

*

gathering the night
around itself
whippoorwill

Mary Frederick Ahearn
Pottstown, Pennsylvania

*

stargazing
my fingers
grasping sand

Christopher Patchel
Chicago, Illinois

*

buzzing neon—
the way he talks
about New York

Julie Bloss Kelsey
Germantown, Maryland

*

withered fields—
the pulsing of
a lone glow worm

Samar Ghose
Perth, Western Australia
Australia

*

God of Abraham
...walking rain
into the sunflowers

Michael McClintock
Clovis, California

*

stillness...
the sound of dusk
washing ashore

Paresh Tiwari
Hyderabad, India

*

driftwood
the knothole catches
a drop of rain

Susan Constable
NanOOSE Bay, British Columbia

Canada

*

loggerheads
lace trails tatted
in the sand

Barbara Tate
Winchester, Tennessee

*

overgrown pasture
we follow a deer trail
to the apple tree

Connie Donleycott
Bremerton, Washington

*

bare soles
on cold blacktop
jackal moon

Bill Deegan
Mahwah, New Jersey

*

glow of light
from the hilltop hut —
shooting star

Ramesh Anand
Bangalore, India

*

fairground music
a yellow-legged gull
rides the wind

John McManus
Carlisle, Cumbria
England

*

ferry gift shop—
all the tourist mugs
gently clinking

Michael Dylan Welch
Sammamish, Washington

*

short summer
a swim suit
frozen to the porch rail

Marsh Muirhead
Bemidji, Minnesota

*

girdled maple
autumn already
in its leaves

Hilary Tann
Schuylerville, New York

*

mountain fog
a gathering fugue
of wind and pine

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, Maryland

*

no need
to leave the comfort zone

harvest moon

Dietmar Tauchner
Puchberg, Austria

*

leaves rustling
there goes that
crick in my knee

Johana West
Pittsburg, California

*

early autumn
tasseled grasses
dust the air

Adelaide B. Shaw
Millbrook, New York

*

forced retirement —
the creases in his pants
fade away

Susan Burch
Hagerstown, Maryland

*

late September
a sudden rain
rushes the dusk

Ernest Wit
Warsaw, Poland

*

a modest headstone

the teacher who marked me
present

LeRoy Gorman
Napanee, Ontario

*

one by one
the fog releases
streetlights

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy
Birmingham, United Kingdom

*

autumn dusk
purple daisies
wrapping up

John Zheng
Itta Bena, Mississippi

*

my dream voyage in a walnut shell boat

Michele Root-Bernstein
East Lansing, Michigan

*

foot of the mountain
holding the stone
holding its story

David McKee
Madison, Wisconsin

*

a glimmer
on the sharpened ulu

hunter's moon

Lynn Edge
Tivoli, Texas

*

crows cawing...
we add a little bourbon
to the pecan pie

Ashley Rodman
Champaign, Illinois

*

Thanksgiving
more stuffing pokes out
of the sofa

Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

*

one more doctor
enters the room
autumn snow

Marcus Larsson
Växjö, Sweden

*

crab spider
a frost moon dangles
out of reach

Debbie Strange
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

*

December dawn
the white birch is the first
to catch its light

Kirsty Karkow
Waldoboro, Maine

*

Longest winter night.
The owl didn't return
to the nest.

Ali Znaidi
Redeyef, Gafsa
Tunisia

*

Silent Night —
a distorted world
on the busker's sax

Carl Seguiban
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada

*

the pot drips
what's in it
Christmas morning

Dan Schwerin
Greendale, Wisconsin

*

hospital room —
the potted plant
drops its leaves

Jerry Foshee

Rio Rancho, New Mexico

*

snuffed out candles
the lingering scent
of her life

Ernest Wit
Warsaw, Poland

*

a barn owl banks
over golden meadow grass
the morning star

John Barlow
Ormskirk, England

*

falling snow
the dark curve
of a red fox's tail

Jo Balistreri
Genesee Depot, Wisconsin

*

cold sun
the roller-shutter dawn
of factory workers

Edward Beach
Bristol, United Kingdom

*

heart of winter
a sunbeam on the mat
below the letterbox

David J Kelly
Dublin, Ireland

*

garden Buddha
the subtle blue sound
of snowflakes

Rob Dingman
Herkimer, New York

*

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I learn
by unfolding

Elmedin Kadric
Helsingborg,

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FEATURED POEMS

darkness

I lock

myself in

Francine Banwarth

Dubuque, Iowa

*

Ash Wednesday

the hollow between

her collar bones

Deb Baker

Concord, New Hampshire

*

morning light

the cucumbers have claimed

new territory

Ian Willey

Takamatsu, Kagawa

Japan

HERON'S NEST AWARD

darkness
I lock
myself in

Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, Iowa

Not much to go on in this compact gem that drew a strong top rating among Nest editors. But multiple readings immediately occur to me.

Perhaps the most obvious is that nighttime feels like the most dangerous time, especially but not exclusively, in urban areas. I lock myself into my house or apartment and triple bolt the door until the sun comes up again and I can see there is nothing to fear (whether that is the truth or not).

My next reading relates to the interior darkness of myself and others. It is not, after all, that someone or something specific is being locked out but that the self is locked in. The cause for such precaution is unspecified, nebulous, and as general as the unknown. The tragedy is that there is not only danger "out there" but also much of what makes life joyful.

I can imagine a silent article at the beginning of this poem:

(the) darkness
I lock
myself in

In other words, the darkness that I myself produce and trap myself within. It's a darkness consisting of limitations I impose upon myself out of fear. And not a fear that comes to me from wholly exterior factors. Nothing is as fearsome as an alienated imagination.

Today we imagine things that were unheard of in our youth. Here are some words and phrases that only came into existence in recent years: "home invasion," "domestic terrorist," "military drone," "dirty bomb," "identity theft," "cyber-attack." These and many others of their kind come to mind and stick there like jingles or pop songs. There has always been a thin line between journalism and advertising. One might wonder if that line has not finally worn away. If sex sells, fear is a close second.

But there are plenty of ancient doubts that have the power to cover our eyes and block out the sun. Am I good enough? Am I stupid, ugly, fat? Where will I get the rent? Who will love someone like me? Will I encounter powerful strangers who will hate me because of my _____?

What's to be done? How can a person deal with this every day?

While final and comprehensive answers to these questions may be out of reach, poetry provides a provisional answer. A poet can reduce her fears to a few chosen words (five!) and give them a more reasonable and proportional dimension in the calming presence of other poems.

— John Stevenson
June 2015

POEMS

it begins...
a galaxy of dust motes
in the projector's beam

James Chessing
San Ramon, California

*

the dinosaur museum
I have to be there
for the grandchildren

LeRoy Gorman
Napanee, Ontario
Canada

*

torrential rains—
urchins cheer their paper boats
into the gutter

Angelee Deodhar
Chandigarh, India

*

eclipse
our wedding rings
one inside the other

Urszula Wielanowska
Kielce, Poland

*

home alone
I enter the crawl space
of a younger self

Robert Epstein
El Cerrito, California

*

clear sky
a bouncy castle
inflating

Stephen Toft
Lancaster, United Kingdom

*

barefoot
the bride wrings seawater
out of her train

Alison Woolpert
Santa Cruz, California

*

boatside ripples
in the summer sunset
minnows rising

Gwenn Gurnack
Boston, Massachusetts

*

out-going tide
the little portion
a shell retains

Jonathan McKeown
Sydney, New South Wales
Australia

*

under closed curtains end-of-day light

Aalix Roake
Hamilton, New Zealand

*

as if this sky
weren't sky enough
indigo bunting

Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

*

the sky
on a morning lake...
that perfect lotus

Kala Ramesh
Pune, India

*

moorland path
the sun mining
foxglove scent

Paul Chambers
Newport, Wales

*

today's forecast:
cloudy with a chance
of jalapenos

Robert Epstein
El Cerrito, California

*

sundown...
swallowing the oyster
juice and all

Michael McClintock
Clovis, California

*

a wing
in each world
the stingray breaks the surface

Peter Newton
Winchendon, Massachusetts

*

chigger bites
my finger traces
the wilderness map

Annette Makino
Arcata, California

*

at the cemetery
by moonlight...talking
with shadows

Tomislav Maretić
Zagreb, Croatia

*

walking at night
my imagination
follows me home

Adelaide B. Shaw
Millbrook, New York

*

water-tower shadow
extending

a small town's loneliness

Burnell Lippy
Danville, Vermont

*

harvest moon rising...
the smell
of his new Jaguar

Chen-ou Liu
Ajax, Ontario
Canada

*

after rain
the yellow of gorse
the black of slate

John Rowlands
Tremadog, Cymru/Wales

*

small town—
the only light
is red

George Dorsty
Yorktown, Virginia

*

returning home
after living abroad—
the smell of thyme

Freddy Ben-Arroyo
Haifa, Israel

*

old barn
the scent of jerseys
and bailer twine

Anna Cates
Wilmington, Ohio

*

first chill
I wonder about
yesterday's bee

Marion Clarke
Warrenpoint, Northern Ireland

*

my creaking joints cicadas

Anna Maris
Tomelilla, Sweden

*

Traded
for persimmons —
acupuncture

Alexis Rotella
Arnold, Maryland

*

a harrier, low
over the silver-blues
of the evening marshes

John Barlow
Ormskirk, England

*

harbour quay

the sound of a tugboat
wrapped in fog

Susan Constable
NanOOSE Bay, British Columbia
Canada

*

fog in the redwoods
the jazz station cuts out
near the summit

Cherie Hunter Day
Cupertino, California

*

under the red leaves
the rungs of the fish ladder
silvered by salmon

Lisa Timpf
Mulmur, Ontario
Canada

*

tattered basketball net
clinging to a rusted rim...
my childhood home

Kyle D. Craig
Indianapolis, Indiana

*

doubts so clear first flurry

Tyrone McDonald
Brooklyn, New York

*

single mother
rocking her baby
rocking herself

Jack Barry
Chesterfield, Massachusetts

*

cathedral at night
an electron circles
the nucleus

Dietmar Tauchner
Puchberg, Austria

*

Vivaldi my doodles

Christopher Patchel
Chicago, Illinois

*

gibbous moon
my ear on the curve
of her belly

Angelee Deodhar
Chandigarh, India

*

button jar
all he knows
of grandma

Roberta Beary
Bethesda, Maryland

*

learning to weave

one breath between us
the long night

Brent Goodman
Rhineland, Wisconsin

*

winter solstice
one egg short
of a pudding

Ashley Rodman
Champaign, Illinois

*

a quart of oil
for the journey
Christmas Eve

Jeanne Cook
South Bend, Indiana

*

North woods
a fir deep in each
constellation

Burnell Lippy
Danville, Vermont

*

winter concert
the way the mallets strike
the xylophone

Lenard D. Moore
Raleigh, North Carolina

*

orange marmalade —
the last time mother
knew my name

Melissa Watkins Starr
Portsmouth, Virginia

*

midnight
nobody's name
to whisper

Stephen Toft
Lancaster, United Kingdom

*

my grandpa's house...
so many love stories
walled in here

Diana Teneva
Haskovo, Bulgaria

*

quiet night...
the cookie jar's marble lid
opening

Lee Giesecke
Annandale, Virginia

*

Venus overhead
wolf tracks crisscross
in the snow

Angela Leuck
Hatley, Quebec
Canada

*

the thumbprint
of Tollund Man...
deep winter

Claire Everett
Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

another winter –
the welcome mat
worn thin

Ruth Holzer
Herndon, Virginia

*

winter zoo
a gorilla turns
its back to the crowd

Meik Blöttenberger
Hanover, Pennsylvania

*

swirling wind
the salty tongue
of my snow boot

Bill Cooper
Richmond, Virginia

*

winter's last rain
the scent of skunk
in my eyes

Jeff Hoagland

Hopewell, New Jersey

*

the sound
of meltwater
wood frogs

Jeff Hoagland

Hopewell, New Jersey

*

open cage
the breast feather left behind
flutters

Garry Eaton

Port Moody, British Columbia
Canada

*

spring equinox
scraping off the shovel
with the hoe

Robert Gilliland

Austin, Texas

*

frosted furrows
an old mare's whinny
silvers the air

Claire Everett

Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

painted bunting
its shadow

still black

Michael Feinstein
Vashon, Washington

*

clouds fringed with rain...
the pony's pregnant belly
brushes sweet clover

Chad Lee Robinson
Pierre, South Dakota

*

her fairy tale
in first person
spring rain

Elmedin Kadric
Helsingborg, Sweden

*

turbulent stream
the water moves
the ripples stay

Anne Kim
League City, Texas

*

egg moon
the Emu's contours
engraved in stone

Lorin Ford
Melbourne, Australia

*

with each hop

of the waterline crow
a lifting of teal

John Barlow
Ormskirk, England

*

cut flowers —
a child asks
if they bleed

Carl Seguiban
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada

*

spring butterfly
the little boy's shadow
first to reach it

th. vandergrau
Norrköping, Sweden

*

a paper cross
for the dead butterfly
takes flight

Tash Adams
Perth, Australia

*

ragged jonquils
the old cemetery
with her baby's grave

Frances Jones
Bend, Oregon

*

redwings return
the smell of grass
in the rain

Mary Frederick Ahearn
Pottstown, Pennsylvania

*

Mother's Day
one of the orchids
reblooming

Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

*

solstice rain
the day begins and ends
with juncos

Joyce Clement
Bristol, Connecticut

*

a wren's small talk
after the clamour of corellas

Lyn Williams
Mount Barker, South Australia

*

weeding the garden—
at what age did I learn
to walk between the rows?

Travis Poling
Richmond, Indiana

*

the search
for pop bottles
a long afternoon

James D. Fuson
New Haven, Minnesota

*

solitude
the night deepens
with every firefly

Jayashree Maniyil
Melbourne, Australia

*

summer storm
circus elephants lean
into the thunder

Ron C. Moss
Leslie Vale, Tasmania
Australia

*

low tide
barnacles armored
against the air

Lauren McBride
Houston, Texas

*

sunrise
a generation of fruit
flies

David Boyer
Stamford, Connecticut

*

wild artichoke the whole world dipped in butter

Kath Abela Wilson
Pasadena, California

*

purple lilly-pillys
the garden hose drips
into twilight

Lorin Ford
Melbourne, Australia

*

summer storm
a clothespin bag bobs
on the line

Rob Dingman
Herkimer, New York

*

low tide seaweed —
wigeon and bufflehead
dine separately

Jim Swift
Sidney, British Columbia
Canada

*

hospice...
she asks me to bring back
a shell from the sea

Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, Iowa

*

the scent of fruit
past ripening...
dusk light

Michele L. Harvey
Hamilton, New York

*

Perseid shower
the scent of tamarack
on the campfire

Debbie Strange
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

*

dying moon
the arc of a bush moth
into the light

Ron C. Moss
Leslie Vale, Tasmania
Australia

*

August heat —
cracked dirt in the shape
of a puddle

Anna Cates
Wilmington, Ohio

*

blistered thumb
the corn a little sweeter
this year

Bob Lucky
Jubail, Saudi Arabia

*

Venus rising...
I linger a little longer
in the hot tub

Lew Watts
Santa Fe, New Mexico

*

lake sunset
a blackbird's call
wobbles the cattails

Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

*

supermoon —
my son changes into
pajamas with a cape

Chad Lee Robinson
Pierre, South Dakota

*

ancient temple —
the guide's voice lost
amid selfie clicks

Yesha Shah
Surat, India

*

demolished houses —
a cricket's song
somewhere

Rita Odeh
Nazareth, Israel

*

moon in the pines
I lather what's left
of the soap

Glenn G. Coats
Prospect, Virginia

*

swinging bridge
raindrops hang
on the tips of ferns

Barbara Snow
Eugene, Oregon

*

evening fog
antlers ghosting through
the coulee

Debbie Strange
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

*

sunset...
debating Rothko's
use of red

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, Maryland

*

taking down

the lost cat flyers
first frost

Hannah Mahoney
Cambridge, Massachusetts

*

wild horse muster
steaming flanks
in a biting frost

Elaine Riddell
Hamilton, Waikato
New Zealand

*

night wind
a freight train's horn
blows through my dream

Barb Behrendt
Cambridge, Minnesota

*

November morning—
the barn's shadow meets
the frost line in the meadow

Wally Swist
Amherst, Massachusetts

*

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on the pink flamingo

Bill Deegan
Mahwah, New Jersey

*

rising breath...
Gran reaches for branches
with snow-laden cones

David He
Gansu Province, China

*

ice storm
bishop takes knight
by candlelight

Marsh Muirhead
Bemidji, Minnesota

*

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the darkness
of the wind

Bill Kenney
Whitestone, New York

*

cold dawn
the old Ford turns over
once

Jose del Valle
Rockville, Rhode Island

*

Christmas eve —
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in the feeder

Stephen Amor
Fremont, Ohio

*

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after the piña colada
dreaming in color

Charlotte Digregorio
Winnetka, Illinois

*

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daytime hoots
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Peg McAulay Byrd
Madison, New Jersey

*

winter stars
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in an empty church

Robert Witmer
Tokyo, Japan

*

winter night—
too cold to hold
the star chart

Tony Burfield
Lyons, Colorado

*

icicles
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from the street lamp

Brad Bennett
Arlington, Massachusetts

*

a sheet of ice
clings to a black alder's limb...
the unpaired mallards

Polona Oblak
Ljubljana, Slovenia

*

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frozen in place

Hilary Tann
Schuylerville, New York

*

plum blossoms
making the most
of a new religion

Duro Jaiye
Hirakata, Japan

*

drizzling rain
my reflection
in the hearse

Paul Chambers
Newport, Wales

*

daybreak...
a farmer taps the goose's head
on the way to the barn

K. Ramesh
Chennai, India

*

with a pink crayon
she points the way –
cherry petals

Edward Beach
Bristol, United Kingdom

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the river
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Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

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FEATURED POEMS

he casts his line into the first peal of thunder

Matthew Caretti

Mercersburg, Pennsylvania

*

Mother's Day –

lilacs fill

the void

Michele L. Harvey

Hamilton, New York

*

graveyard shift

the leftover radish

tumbles in the lunchbox

Elmedin Kadric

Helsinborg, Sweden

HERON'S NEST AWARD

he casts his line into the first peal of thunder

Matthew Caretti
Mercersburg, Pennsylvania

Several possible readings, and an effective use of cutting, make this one-line haiku stand out.

In the first reading, the haiku actually interrupts itself: the "first peal of thunder" cuts in without warning, erasing from the text whatever it is the man was actually casting his line into. We can imagine that the man's fishing trip has been similarly interrupted, and that the storm will end what might have been a quiet day on the river (or lake, or ocean) with the same abruptness that the word "thunder" ends the haiku.

Alternately, it could be that our fisherman is not surprised by the oncoming storm. In this case, his casting his line "into the first peal of thunder" is intentional, an act of defiance against nature. Such a devil-may-care attitude is just as appealing as the abrupt surprise of reading one.

In both readings, the sound of the "peal" functions as a cut, adding imagined space into the poem as we hear both the silence that precedes the thunder and the rumble as it slowly fades away again. Quite a neat technical trick.

— Stewart C Baker
September 2015

POEMS

unpicked apples
now & then
a thump in the fog

LeRoy Gorman
Napanee, Ontario
Canada

*

a walk with father
the stream slowing down
near the mouth

Ernest Wit
Warsaw, Poland

*

Sunday afternoon
the soft sanity
of old blue jeans

Joy Reed MacVane
Town of Long Island, Maine

*

sidewalk drawings
our old beagle sniffs
the moon and stars

Ashley Rodman
Champaign, Illinois

*

laundry at night
the empty sleeves
of the wind

Robert Witmer
Tokyo, Japan

*

black moon
a midnight train
at full throttle

Ron C. Moss
Leslie Vale, Tasmania
Australia

*

lingering moon...
the bleats of one valley
answered by the next

Claire Everett
Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

water tower
from a train— learning half
the town's name

Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

*

getting up
on the wrong side
fall equinox

Christopher Patchel
Chicago, Illinois

*

a stranger

in the town where I grew up
freshening wind

Sandra Simpson
Tauranga, New Zealand

*

tasting our way
through the dry reds
autumn rain

Ben Moeller-Gaa
St. Louis, Missouri

*

sleeper car
the leitmotif
of whistle stops

Roberta Beary
Bethesda, Maryland

*

dusk
light hinged on
the last gate paling

Michael Henry Lee
Saint Augustine, Florida

*

heavy sky
a column of mill smoke
supports the clouds

Barbara Snow
Eugene, Oregon

*

still not home
north star
an anchor in darkness

Joanna Ashwell
County Durham, United Kingdom

*

graveyard path
frost
in the footprints

Maya Lyubenova
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

*

remembrance day
a toddler crying
for her fallen flag

Quendryth Young
Alstonville, New South Wales
Australia

*

this orange
touched by so many hands
I eat with gratitude

Jacob Salzer
Vancouver, Washington

*

home alone—
she talks to the baby
in her womb

Kashinath Karmakar
Durgapur, India

*

winter solitude —
the cat carefully folds his paws
under his chest

pjm
San Jose, California

*

morning after
all the balloons
down from the ceiling

Alexander B. Joy
Amherst, Massachusetts

*

watching from wherever he is put china clown

Edward Beach
Bristol, United Kingdom

*

meeting gone astray
I put myself
in airplane mode

J. Brian Robertson
Berlin, Germany

*

deep winter
the important parts
underlined

Patrick Sweeney
Misawashi, Aomori-ken
Japan

*

Act II...
I eat the last
of the nuts

David Jacobs
London, England

*

polenta
crackles in bacon grease
swirl of light snow

Jeanne Cook
South Bend, Indiana

*

cold rain
a basket of socks
I'll never darn

Jennifer Sutherland
Glen Waverley, Victoria
Australia

*

first warm day
 a robin works
 the infield

h. gene murtha
Wildwood, New Jersey

*

spring equinox
an egret one
with the marsh

Robyn Hood Black

Beaufort, South Carolina

*

early spring
wrapped in morning mist
a leaping trout

Padma Thampatty
Wexford, Pennsylvania

*

plum blossoms,
to make a long story
short

Johnny Baranski
Vancouver, Washington

*

spring dream...
slipping my wings
into a work shirt

Michael McClintock
Clovis, California

*

holding twilight into dusk . . .
the ends of maple branches
heavy with buds

Wally Swist
Amherst, Massachusetts

*

with each call
faint ripples
surround the frog

Simon Hanson
Allendale, South Australia

*

Earth Day
the pecking order
of chickens

Alice Frampton
Seabeck, Washington

*

first warm day
grandpa has found
his pet rock

Yu Chang
Schenectady, New York

*

planting lavender —
the black velvet g-string
in the bottom of my drawer

Angela Leuck
Hatley, Quebec
Canada

*

lifting mist
the field workers
in red bandanas

Michael McClintock
Clovis, California

*

migrating finches
the blur

of a pinwheel

Don Miller

Las Cruces, New Mexico

*

short nap
the friction of shadows
in the spring garden

Zinovy Vayman

Boston, Massachusetts

*

just after
the priests' chants —
cuckoo song

Kanchan Chatterjee

Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

India

*

mango rain
the tea table stretches
the card game

Kanavu Nila

Bangalore, India

*

hill farms leaning towards
their last
lilac

Burnell Lippy

Danville, Vermont

*

dried-up daffodils
wads of writer's block
in the waste basket

RaNae Merrill
New York, New York

*

new graveyard
a lawnmower man pauses
to choose the path

Alexey Andreev
Moscow, Russia

*

quarreling crows
the fat bellies
of pasture ponies

Lynne Steel
Hillsboro Beach, Florida

*

poplar silk
wind lifts the mane
of the chestnut stallion

John Barlow
Ormskirk, England

*

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the neighbour's cat
begins its caterwaul

Mark Miller
Shoalhaven Heads, New South Wales
Australia

*

Vedic chants
children's voices rise above
the scolding squirrel's

Angelee Deodhar
Chandigarh, India

*

Tea by the window
steam and our words pass
through the screen

Carol Purington
Colrain, Massachusetts

*

if trees could be landlords

Eve Luckring
Los Angeles, California

*

limiting its search
to just this planet
white butterfly

Barbara Snow
Eugene, Oregon

*

at the edge
of night and day
the dove's call

Robert Gilliland
Austin, Texas

*

redwood grove
the light that reaches us
upon waking

Cherie Hunter Day
Cupertino, California

*

still morning
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of the porch swing

Lauren Krauze
New York, New York

*

Juno beach
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of sand

John Barlow
Ormskirk, England

*

school's out
the doors of empty lockers
bang in the wind

Victor Ortiz
San Pedro, California

*

graduation—
the clouds gather too
patch by patch

Lenard D. Moore
Raleigh, North Carolina

*

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for tadpoles

Debbie Strange
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

*

fading sunset
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over the river

Lorin Ford
Melbourne, Australia

*

garbage day —
blindsided
by morning honeysuckle

Tanya McDonald
Woodinville, Washington

*

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in my face
the gnat

Elizabeth Steinglass
Washington, District of Columbia

*

creosote
glistening on telephone poles
midday heat

Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

*

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with beebuzz

Michele Root-Bernstein
East Lansing, Michigan

*

African summer
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in the dusty plains

Rakotomahefa Diamondra.
Tana, Madagascar

*

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home

David McCann
Watertown, Massachusetts

*

sea of dry grass
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Ernest Wit
Warsaw, Poland

*

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Robert Epstein
El Cerrito, California

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to settle

Sandra Simpson
Tauranga, New Zealand

*

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John McManus
Carlisle, Cumbria
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*

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Tom Drescher
Rossland, British Columbia
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Jeff Hoagland
Hopewell, New Jersey

*

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Sreelatha Nair
Chennai, Tamil Nadu
India

*

diving
into the color of water
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Carole Slesnick
Bellingham, Washington

*

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Adrian Bouter
Gouda, the Netherlands

*

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in the next room

Joy Reed MacVane
Town of Long Island, Maine

*

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beneath the bonsai tree
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Nicholas Klacsanzky
Kyiv, Kyivski Oblast
Ukraine

*

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Carol Ann Palomba
Wanaque, New Jersey

*

drainage ditch
the luxury
of skunk cabbage

Hilary Tann
Schuylerville, New York

*

long summer —
the river bared
to the bottom

Djurdja Vukelic Rozic
Ivanic Grad, Croatia

*

where no one knows me water chestnut

Martin Paetsch
Hong Kong

*

cloud cover
the vendor places each peach
sunny side up

Marilyn Appl Walker
Madison, Georgia

*

muted neighs —
the country fair scent
of corn dogs

Anna Cates
Wilmington, Ohio

*

grazing doe...
her brief glance
at the freeway

Ken Olson
Yakima Washington

*

alone on the water
I hang on to what's left
of the light

Glenn G. Coats
Prospect, Virginia

*

twilight
lolloping rabbit tails
whiten the quiet

Jan Dobb
Canberra, Australia

*

crickets and porch...
everything is more
than together

Adrian Bouter
Gouda, the Netherlands

*

undone
by another
sunset

N.E. Taylor
Los Angeles, California

*

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a shooting star
becomes the night

Maria Tomczak
Opole, Poland

*

star filled sky
through a crack in the shed
raccoon eyes

Kyle D. Craig
Indianapolis, Indiana

*

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on the rocks

Jim Swift
Sidney, British Columbia
Canada

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Marietta McGregor
Canberra, Australia

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Bill Cooper
Richmond, Virginia

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Theresa A. Cancro
Wilmington, Delaware

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J. Zimmerman
Santa Cruz, California

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John Wisdom
Sarasota, Florida

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Roberta Beary
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Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

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Yvette Nicole Kolodji
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Sanjuktaa Asopa
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Alan Summers
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Tomislav Maretic
Zagreb, Croatia

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Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

*

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on her saree

Arvinder Kaur
Chandigarh, India

*

there are times
when we are graced
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Alan Summers
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire
England

*

church service
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Madhuri Pillai
Melbourne, Australia

*

long journey...
I open the bus's curtain
to a starlit sky

K. Ramesh
Chennai, India

*

the howling wind...
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with ice

Brad Bennett
Arlington, Massachusetts

*

a ladder
leans into the loft
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Susan Constable
Parksville, British Columbia
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*

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Tom Tico
San Francisco, California

*

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Agnes Eva Savich
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Champaign, Illinois

*

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Cynthia Rowe
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Peter Newton
Winchendon, Massachusetts

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Howard Levy
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St Leonards, New South Wales

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Rozic, Djurdja Vukelic

Salzer, Jacob

Savich, Agnes Eva

Simpson, Sandra

Slesnick, Carole

Snow, Barbara

Steel, Lynne

Steinglass, Elizabeth

Strange, Debbie

Summers, Alan

Sutherland, Jennifer

Sweeney, Patrick

Swift, Jim

Swist, Wally

Tann, Hilary

Taylor, N.E.

Thampatty, Padma

Tico, Tom

Tomczak, Maria

Vayman, Zinovy

Walker, Marilyn Appl

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Zimmerman, J.

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FEATURED POEMS

crows until the world is silhouettes

Polona Oblak
Ljubljana, Slovenia

*

the rice song
mother sang to me...
first spring rain

Chen-ou Liu
Ajax, Ontario,
Canada

*

his attempts
at brewing tea...
morning sickness

Yesha Shah
Surat, India

HERON'S NEST AWARD

crows until the world is silhouettes

Polona Oblak
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Crows are not nocturnal birds and they typically roost in the company of other crows. As they settle and jostle for branch space, they are boisterous. Crows are noisy.

The mention of crows characteristically evokes images of a flock of large, black birds, wing feathers spread in flight, or the classic outline of the perched birds. That is, until just the moment they merge with the darkness this poet experiences. She is suddenly aware that all is part of the same darkness. Wonderment is revealed in the split second when black joins black. I find sad beauty in this. One can imagine leaves, trees, fence posts, cattle, buildings — all in silhouette as faint light lingers in the sky. When the scene darkens, it also becomes quieter. Among the usual night voices, is that a cricket I hear? Or calling birds of the night such as whippoorwills? Bats may silently flicker in and out of view against the sky — and they are dark as well. The faintly back-lit outlines of perched crows disappear into the whole landscape — the world.

This haiku is written in one line. A sentence fragment, it doesn't read quite as smoothly as would a complete sentence, yet it has a pleasing musicality. The first word, not being paired with a verb as in a sentence, creates a soft pause in our perception of the poem. The rest of the verse flows, but it flows slowly, matching twilight's progression. The sound of "world" is stretched. "Silhouette" is a borrowed word from French, and is deceptive when read or spoken. If it were not set in the plural, the double "t" with "e"

would be pronounced with a clipped sound, a defined stop in French. However, when it is spoken in English, the plural "s" softens the "tt" sound.

Master Basho wrote a famous haiku about a crow and branch as night settles in. I found at least 16 published translations of his haiku. All of them have the word "autumn" as well as "branch." Other wording varies widely, but all indicate "crow" and some mention of the end of day turning to night. Did Oblak have this poem in mind, was the haiku intended as an homage? The season of autumn is not specified in Polona's verse. Neither are "branch" nor "sound." Yet, because of the nature of crows and this classic Japanese haiku, I am led to these impressions. Are the trees bare where these crows are perched? The light fades, the cacophony as well...and winter is coming.

— Paul MacNeil
December 2015

POEMS

the darkness
shrinking into me
...sunrise

Nishant Mehrotra
Surat, Gujarat
India

*

moment of silence
a quarter twist
of the crow's head

Ken Olson
Yakima Washington

*

sidewalk mica
memories a little brighter
in winter light

Kath Abela Wilson
Pasadena, California

*

old hymns –
posts and beams
intertwined

Hilary Tann
Schuylerville, New York

*

bookstore café
finding my voice
in the babel

Michele Root-Bernstein
East Lansing, Michigan

*

a jukebox nickel—
mom's lipstick on a crushed
cigarette

Melissa Watkins Starr
Portsmouth, Virginia

*

a thistle's tip
 crumbles easily
 winter cemetery

paul m.
Bristol, Rhode Island

*

whispering
in the red fox's ear
snowflake

Beverly Acuff Momoi
Mountain View, California

*

sub-zero
the soft chatter
of ice-clad branches

Dottie Piet
Tulsa, Oklahoma

*

long garlic germ
between my fingers
end of winter

Zoran Doderovic
Novi Sad, Serbia

*

each maple
at its own pace
lengthening days

Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

*

first crocus
last Christmas napkin
under my mug of tea

Anna Eklund-Cheong
Croissy-sur-Seine, Les Yvelines
France

*

from puddle
 to puddle...
street lamps

Malintha Perera
Colombo, Sri Lanka

*

falling plum blossoms...
the nightingale now singing
for another tree

Steliana Cristina Voicu
Ploiesti, Romania

*

crabapple stump

every sucker
in bloom

Ann K. Schwader
Westminster, Colorado

*

a bud
with no bumblebee —
the sleeping infant

Aparna Pathak
Gurgaon, Haryana
India

*

spring girls
the boys rear
their bikes

Ola Lindberg
Ystad, Sweden

*

tardy bus
a bee landing on
my painted nail

Gergana Yaninska
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

*

spring sun
the shadow of a petal
on a petal

Sreelatha Nair
Chennai, India

*

etched in pollen the smallest word of God

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, Maryland

*

The final hymn
pushing through open windows
fragrance of lilacs

Carol Purington
Colrain, Massachusetts

*

father's whistle in a blade of grass

Jo Balistreri
Genesee Depot, Wisconsin

*

water music
an otter
slips in

Ellen Compton
Washington, District of Columbia

*

beyond the gate
with white paint peeling
the summer sea

Mimi Ahern
San Jose, California

*

shimmer
what herring make
of ocean and sunlight

Alan S. Bridges
Littleton, Massachusetts

*

fragments of a dream
the rattle of stones
in a receding wave

Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

*

tide pool
the searchable world
we live in

Peter Newton
Winchendon, Massachusetts

*

the war keeps ending elderberries

Martin Paetsch
Hong Kong

*

in a rush to reach stillness whitewater

Chad Lee Robinson
Pierre, South Dakota

*

redwood silence from a different century

Cherie Hunter Day
Cupertino, California

*

parade's end

a trombone
outside the portaloo

Hilary Tann
Schuylerville, New York

*

a screen door's bang
flies on a melon
lift and settle

Daniel Liebert
Maplewood, Missouri

*

insomnia surrounded by the one mosquito

Lorin Ford
Melbourne, Australia

*

among the switch cane...
starry night

Kayla Daley
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

*

graveyard shift
a shark-tank cleaner slipping
into chain mail

J. Zimmerman
Santa Cruz, California

*

roadside
books
in a fish tank

Owen Bullock
Katikati, New Zealand

*

four-way stop
everyone yields
to the tumbleweed

Joe McKeon
Strongsville, Ohio

*

paddleboat
the in-laws
switch sides

Roberta Beary
Bethesda, Maryland

*

jet boat
a river cut
white

Jenny Fraser
Hamilton, Waikato
New Zealand

*

mossy wall
the fear that father
put in me

Suhit Kelkar
Mumbai, India

*

fading light

Sunday boats
thread the inlet

Lynne Steel
Hillsboro Beach, Florida

*

estuarine marsh
a gharial glides over
its own footprints

Ajaya Mahala
Pune, India

*

wheeling gulls...
the crooked path
to the shipwreck

Michael McClintock
Clovis, California

*

the answer is yes no yes breaking waves

Robert Epstein
El Cerrito, California

*

river bus
somebody always
waves back

Alexey Andreev
Moscow, Russia

*

distant hill
a swallowtail butterfly

obscures the view

Tim Gardiner
Manningtree, Essex
England

*

ripening wheat
the broodmare's belly
ripples

Claire Everett
Northallerton, North Yorkshire
England

*

prayer flags
the coming and going
of El Niño

Cherie Hunter Day
Cupertino, California

*

high tide
the heron's easy balance
on the last rock

Joanne R. Fritz
West Chester, Pennsylvania

*

summer afternoon
the faint breeze
of my baby's breath

Debra Fox
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

*

alone by the river
the one flat stone
that feels right

Glenn G. Coats
Prospect, Virginia

*

mallard ducklings—
from the riverbank
a scent of fennel

Stephen Kusch
Oakland, California

*

blink of an eye
the distance between
a finch and my cat

Dan Curtis
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada

*

crossing the line
between maybe and yes
double rainbow

Angela Terry
Lake Forest Park, Washington

*

beachside bench
my breath slowing
to the waves' rhythm

Nathalie Buckland
Nimbin, Australia

*

rain riffled garden
rimmed with marigolds
her storybook lion

Joyce Clement
Bristol, Connecticut

*

filled with Cezanne's
shadows and light
a fresh-picked pear

Angela Terry
Lake Forest Park, Washington

*

mango juice between my fingers the setting sun

Susan Constable
Parksville, British Columbia
Canada

*

scent of lemongrass...
her finger traces
the Milky Way

K. Ramesh
Chennai, India

*

full moon
the pontoon shifting
with the tide

Gavin Austin
Sydney, Australia

*

midnight
the sunflowers
still facing west

Edward Cody Huddleston
Baxley, Georgia

*

Onawa Lake
a selfie
with the stars

Yu Chang
Schenectady, New York

*

holding still
hoping to see what's here
when I'm not

Elizabeth Steinglass
Washington, District of Columbia

*

in its own time porcupine

Jeff Stillman
Norwich, New York

*

family secrets
a moss-covered stonewall
in the deep woods

Carolyn Coit Dancy
Pittsford, New York

*

seashell collection
Gran whispers the name
of the child she lost

John McManus
Carlisle, Cumbria
England

*

brown mimosa pod
a secret
yet to be shared

Carlos Colón
Shreveport, Louisiana

*

power outage
a snail shell
in the letterbox

Tash Adams
Perth, Western Australia
Australia

*

end of summer
teaching kids to count
from lightning to thunder

Alexey Andreev
Moscow, Russia

*

star shower
the same wish over
and over again

Michael Henry Lee

St. Augustine, Florida

*

old temple...
the deity wrapped
in spider silk

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy
Birmingham, United Kingdom

*

leaving by train
for the last time
raindrops on the Oder

Jon Hare
East Greenwich, Rhode Island

*

ducks on the river
the green air
dizzy with dragonflies

Robert Witmer
Tokyo, Japan

*

ripe apple
warm to the touch—
summer's end

Bonnie Stepenoff
Chesterfield, Missouri

*

hemlock lean
portioning
an evening

Burnell Lippy
Danville, Vermont

*

night crickets
the rescue dog
unleashed

Roberta Beary
Bethesda, Maryland

*

rock shelter
a shepherd's song
sings back to him

Barnabas Ikeoluwa Adeleke
Okuku, Osun State
Nigeria

*

dense fog —
the light of a lighthouse
fading in the sea

Julia Guzmán
Córdoba, Argentina

*

movement of stars
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Ron C. Moss
Leslie Vale, Tasmania
Australia

*

northerly wind

the runes of gulls' footprints
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Ernest Wit
Warsaw, Poland

*

night shift
the passage of the moon
from window to window

Bill Kenney
Whitestone, New York

*

long rain—
lost in thought
I grow older

Nicholas Klacsanzky
Kyiv, Kyivski Oblast
Ukraine

*

tenth year commuting—
still I spot a weathered house
in the distant field

Lenard D. Moore
Raleigh, North Carolina

*

Indian summer
festival flags
limp on their lines

Christopher Herold
Port Townsend, Washington

*

the ruddy legs
of the practice squad
fall rain

Barry George
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*

the bowed bench
of the picnic table
autumn leaves

Mary Stevens
Hurley, New York

*

after the fox
twice blighted
tomatoes

Rose Ades
United Kingdom

*

all that's left
of the evening
pumpkin soup

Helen Buckingham
Bristol, Avon
United Kingdom

*

twilight dusk...
the course of starlings
into stars

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, Maryland

*

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of garbage can wheels

Robert Forsythe
Annandale, Virginia

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Poe
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M. Shayne Bell
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chill morning
the apple-tree magpie
fluffs its chest

Leonie Bingham
Katoomba, New South Wales
Australia

*

the softness
of a gunshot
opening day fog

LeRoy Gorman
Napanee, Ontario
Canada

*

constant rain —
I can smell
the grey of my horse

Aalix Roake
Hamilton, New Zealand

*

grey afternoon
the amber eyes
of nobody's cat

Sandi Pray
Robbinsville, North Carolina

*

silent night
carolers wrapped
by their own fog

Michele L. Harvey
Hamilton, New York

*

evening shadows
she grows tired
of snow angels

Elmedin Kadric
Helsingborg, Sweden

*

how my signature
trails off
funeral guestbook

Edward Cody Huddleston
Baxley, Georgia

*

tea
all the time
it takes

Sondra J. Byrnes
Santa Fe, New Mexico

*

sleepless night
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on the touchscreen

Ben Moeller-Gaa
St. Louis, Missouri

*

not one dog
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...deep winter

Keith Woodruff
Akron, Ohio

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up a mountain pass —
speckled snow

CW Carlson
Olathe, Kansas

*

caribou block the road
my husky sings
an ice-age song

Erling Friis-Baastad
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada

*

the bright edge

of a falling axe...
low winter sun

Jo McInerney
Boolarra, Australia

*

quiet day...
I add nothing to
the ramen pack

Gregory Longenecker
Pasadena, California

*

sculpture park
every raven
a critic

Ann K. Schwader
Westminster, Colorado

*

the night rain—
another dream
I don't remember

Gary Schroeder
Franktown, Colorado

*

winter grass
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of walking in the rain

James Chessing
San Ramon, California

*

fields still dark...
the farmer warms his hands
on a cow's flank

Chad Lee Robinson
Pierre, South Dakota

*

a whinny in the pasture spring fog

Carolyn Coit Dancy
Pittsford, New York

*

spring morning
the basket of clean socks
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Connie Donleycott
Bremerton, Washington

*

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in the foreground

John Rowlands
Tremadog, Cymru/Wales

*

an eastern breeze
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Brent Partridge
Orinda, California

*

broad daylight

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Deb Koen
Rochester, New York

*

dragon kite
the boy rides a dive
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Simon Hanson
Allendale, Australia

*

pregnant daughter
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Mary Weiler
Austin, Texas

*

white wisteria —
honeybees
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Sandra Simpson
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*

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2015 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

OVERVIEW

For Poems Published in *The Heron's Nest* Volume 17 (2015)

Eighty-three readers of *The Heron's Nest* have provided us with their selections of the best poems we published during 2015. We published 487 poems in Volume 17. Of these, 316 received at least one reader nomination. Ten points were awarded for a first place nomination, nine for second, and so on.

GRAND PRIZE: HAIKU OF THE YEAR

(22 nominations, totaling 163 points)

her death date
I pause the river
in my cupped hands

—Carolyn Hall (March issue)

FIRST RUNNER UP

(15 nominations, totaling 113 points)

darkness
I lock
myself in

—Francine Banwarth (June issue)

SECOND RUNNER UP

(11 nominations, totaling 81 points)

redwood silence from a different century

—Cherie Hunter Day (December issue)

THIRD RUNNER UP

(10 nominations, totaling 62 points)

crows until the world is silhouettes

—Polona Oblak (December issue)

OTHER POPULAR HAIKU

61 points: "it begins..." — James Chessing — June

61 points: "origami bird" — Elmedin Kadric — March

59 points: "first snow" — Jörgen Johansson — March

55 points: "the carving knife" — Francine Banwarth — March

54 points: "the warmth" — Alan Summers — September

53 points: "tree stump" — John J. Dunphy — March

53 points: "in a rush to reach stillness" — Chad Lee Robinson — December

42 points: "he casts his line" — Matthew Caretti — September

41 points: "hospice..." — Francine Banwarth — June

41 points: "a second one last look" — Bill Deegan — September

41 points: "evening swallows..." — Robert Gilliland — March

40 points: "spring dream..." — Michael McClintock — September

39 points: "if trees" — Eve Luckring — September

39 points: "prayer circle" — Sandra Simpson — September

38 points: "one by one" — Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy — March

38 points: "the bright edge" — Jo McInerney — December

GRAND PRIZE: POET OF THE YEAR

Francine Banwarth (32 nominations, naming 4 of 4 poems published in Volume 17 = 237 points)

FIRST RUNNER-UP

Carolyn Hall: (31 nominations, naming 3 of 5 poems published = 209 points)

SECOND RUNNER-UP

Cherie Hunter Day: (14 nominations, naming 3 of 5 poems published = 95 points)

THIRD RUNNER-UP

Alan S. Bridges: (19 nominations, naming 6 of 6 poems published = 87 points)

OTHER POPULAR POETS

Michael McClintock (5 of 5 poems, totaling 81 points)

Susan Constable (4 of 4 poems, totaling 79 points)

Elmedin Kadric (3 of 4 poems, totaling 76 points)

Christopher Herold (4 of 6 poems, totaling 72 points)

James Chessing (2 of 3 poems, totaling 70 points)

Robert Gilliland (3 of 3 poems, totaling 69 points)

Chad Lee Robinson (4 of 4 poems, totaling 69 points)

Robert Epstein (4 of 4 poems, totaling 68 points)

Peter Newton (3 of 4 poems, totaling 68 points)

Polona Oblak (1 of 2 poems, totaling 62 points)

Alan Summers (2 of 3 poems, totaling 60 points)

Jörgen Johansson (1 of 1 poem, totaling 59 points)

Dietmar Tauchner (4 of 4 poems, totaling 59 points)

THE THIRD ANNUAL PEGGY WILLIS LYLES HAIKU AWARDS (2015)

When I was asked to judge the 2015 Peggy Willis Lyles Haiku Awards my heart became a singing bird (credit for the image to Christina Georgina Rossetti, another three-named poet). My heart sang not only because of my deep friendship with Peggy whose legacy lives on in these awards, but also because her haiku collection, *To Hear the Rain*, is never far from me. I have been keeping it close in my summer writing nook — the screened-in porch — as my judge's comments go from heart and brain to pen and paper.

In the classic film *Roman Holiday* Audrey Hepburn's character is asked during a press conference: "Which of the cities visited did [you] enjoy the most?" She is prompted to answer, "Each in its own way was unforgettable." So too were the submissions gleaned by *The Heron's Nest* editors. But just as Audrey Hepburn's character amends her reply by stating, "By all means, Rome. I will cherish my visit here..." so too do I cherish my choices of the top three award winners and five honorable mentions. These eight haiku are my "Rome" and now are lodged inside me, a gift for which I am grateful to the *The Heron's Nest* poets' community.

Although I had the opportunity to learn the names of the poets who wrote the winning haiku, I chose not to do so. I felt the names would distract me as I wrote my judge's comments. These winning haiku stand on their own. I am happy to be able to share them with you, a fitting legacy of the poet for whom these awards are named.

— Roberta Beary

Editor: This year's contest drew 1,868 entries, from 441 poets. Our thanks to all who entered and to Roberta Beary!

FIRST PLACE

spring equinox
 a change in the melody
 of melting ice

Adelaide B. Shaw
 Millbrook, NY

The musicality of this haiku is what tipped it above all other submissions. The leitmotif of melting ice is an image that engages all five senses. Read these 10 words aloud and you are there with the poet, a witness to the changing of the season. The darkness is gone and though some remnants remain, winter will give way to spring. Contrast the hard sound of the word "equinox" in line one with the softness of "melting ice" in line three. Each word the poet chose has meaning, none is superfluous. I returned again and again to this haiku as I read through all submissions. It became a favorite of mine, one heard on an endless loop. What sets this poem apart from the other two winners is its all-embracing quality of both the natural world and the human world. But ultimately it is a poem that speaks to hope, rebirth and resilience.

SECOND PLACE

wren song-
 the width
 of now

eth McFarland
 Karlsruhe, Germany

What can haiku do for us as readers? One answer is to take us to a place outside ourselves and at the same time keep us in view ... no easy task. Yet one at which the writer of this haiku excels. How is this possible in such a brief poem? The abstract concept of now is accessible to the reader through the poet's skillful word choice. In these six syllables, a cadence flows from word to word. At the end of this journey the reader is transported to a place that is both vibrant and profound. The juxtaposition of

time eternal with the active everyday voice of a wren's song takes me deep inside the haiku moment, and lifts this haiku above the remaining winner and Honorable Mentions.

THIRD PLACE

ultrasound scan
I rearrange
my dreams

Sonam Chhoki
Thimphu, Bhutan

Third place goes to another haiku of just six words. This haiku's topic is a big one, life and death. The poem asks the question of what can be done to thwart the modern technological absolute of the ultrasound's verdict. The answer lies in another absolute, which each of us possesses: free will. "I rearrange / my dreams" is a playful concept, a welcome outcome of the poet's musings on mortality, and a fine example of the healing power of haiku.

HONORABLE MENTIONS (UNRANKED)

dandelion down to the bare necessities

Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, IA

A one-line haiku done well stays with the reader long after the concrete picture of the form is gone. In reading over this submission I thought of Disney's Jungle Book song and my own history as abject gardener and single parent. But these images vanished and another, more permanent image took their place. A single dandelion, simple and beautiful. This haiku took me outside the poem. Sometimes it is a good place to be.

winter solitude
my chess move marked
return to sender

James Chessing
San Ramon, CA

It is a truth universally acknowledged that for a haiku to work well the poet should show and not tell. After multiple readings, the exact meaning of this haiku slips through my fingers. But there is no denying the uniqueness of the image, "a chess move marked return to sender." In the end that image causes me to return to this haiku and listen closely as it speaks of the nature of solitude.

huckleberries
picking through
my boyhood

Dan Curtis
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada

What is omitted can be the breaking, or as in this case, the making of a good haiku. Each time I read this haiku aloud, I visualize the name of the novel *Huckleberry Finn*. For me the missing yet present phrase supplies a strong undercurrent to what appears at first to be a simple poem. What is unspoken adds an overall depth to all three lines, resulting in a quality haiku.

spring harvest
fresh rocks from
the potato field

Charles Doebler
Bellefonte, PA

This haiku successfully evokes images from Ireland's history, echoes of colonialism, and the plight of today's small farmer. Yet there is nothing overpowering about this haiku, which speaks to one's place in the natural world. It is at its core a moment of discovery in which, to borrow from Yeats, "a terrible beauty is born."

ocean wind
salt
for the busker's cup

LeRoy Gorman
Napane, Ontario
Canada

Sometimes a haiku works because it is just right. I feel the ocean wind, taste the salt, and sense the dismay of the one hoping for spare change. And then I add to the mix what I bring as reader. For me it is a childhood memory of an ocean boardwalk. Keep moving, my father says. But I find myself still looking back. For this gift, I thank the writer of this choice haiku.

2015 ILLUSTRATION CONTEST WINNERS

We are pleased to announce that these images have been selected, from nearly 300 submissions, to be featured in *The Heron's Nest*, Volume 17 (2015). The Volume 17 print edition will be issued in April 2016. Advance orders will be accepted from December 2015 through March 2016.



Cover — Carole MacRury



Back Cover — Sarah Clark Melone



Overview — Heike Stehr

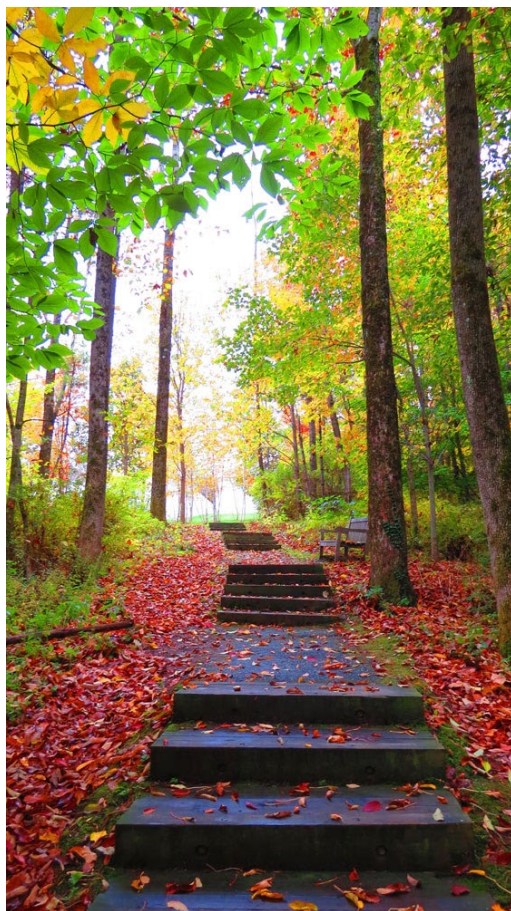
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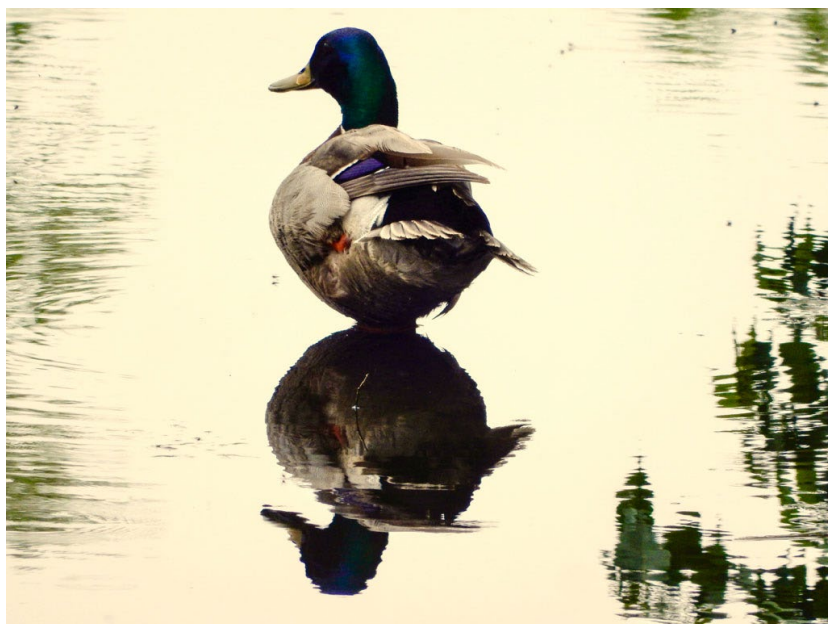
Spring — John Rowlands



Summer — Tom Clausen



Autumn — Marcyn Clements



Winter — Connie Gildersleeve



Readers' Choices — Mohsen Farsani

Congratulations to these artists and our deep thanks to all who sent us their work. We wish we could have used much more of it.

ABOUT *THE HERON'S NEST*

*where tradition and innovation meet ...
and complement each other*

PHILOSOPHY

The Heron's Nest, founded in 1999, is a quarterly online journal. A new edition is published during the first week of March, June, September, and December. We publish multiple pages of fine haiku in each issue, plus three Editors' Choice Haiku; one of which is presented with the Heron's Nest Award, and receives special commentary. The Heron's Nest also appears in a single annual paper edition anthology each April.

It is our intention to present haiku in which the outward form of each poem has been determined by two important elements. The primary element is the poetic experience, faithfully and uniquely evoked in words. The second element helps to shape the first; it is the poet's knowledge and respect for traditional haiku values. When well balanced these elements result in work that is distinctively and unmistakably haiku. "Poetic experiences" are those that inspire us to express ourselves creatively with words. "Haiku values" are the traditional underpinnings, both Japanese and Western, by which haiku sensibility has evolved into what it is today, and which will continue to shape haiku traditions in the future. There are many ideals equated with each of the various haiku forms. No one poem can embody all, or even a majority of these ideals. Each of us must decide for ourselves what is important in the writing and appreciating of haiku. To help you decide whether or not to submit your work, we'd like you to know the qualities we regard as important to haiku. Thank you for coming to The Heron's Nest. We hope you enjoy what you find, and share what you have.

STAFF

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TECHNICAL NOTE

This volume is a 2026 reproduction of an issue from 2015 and may contain errors of transcription or typography. For current information about the journal and staff, and more recent issues, please visit us at <https://theheronsnest.com>.