

failed ~~haiku~~

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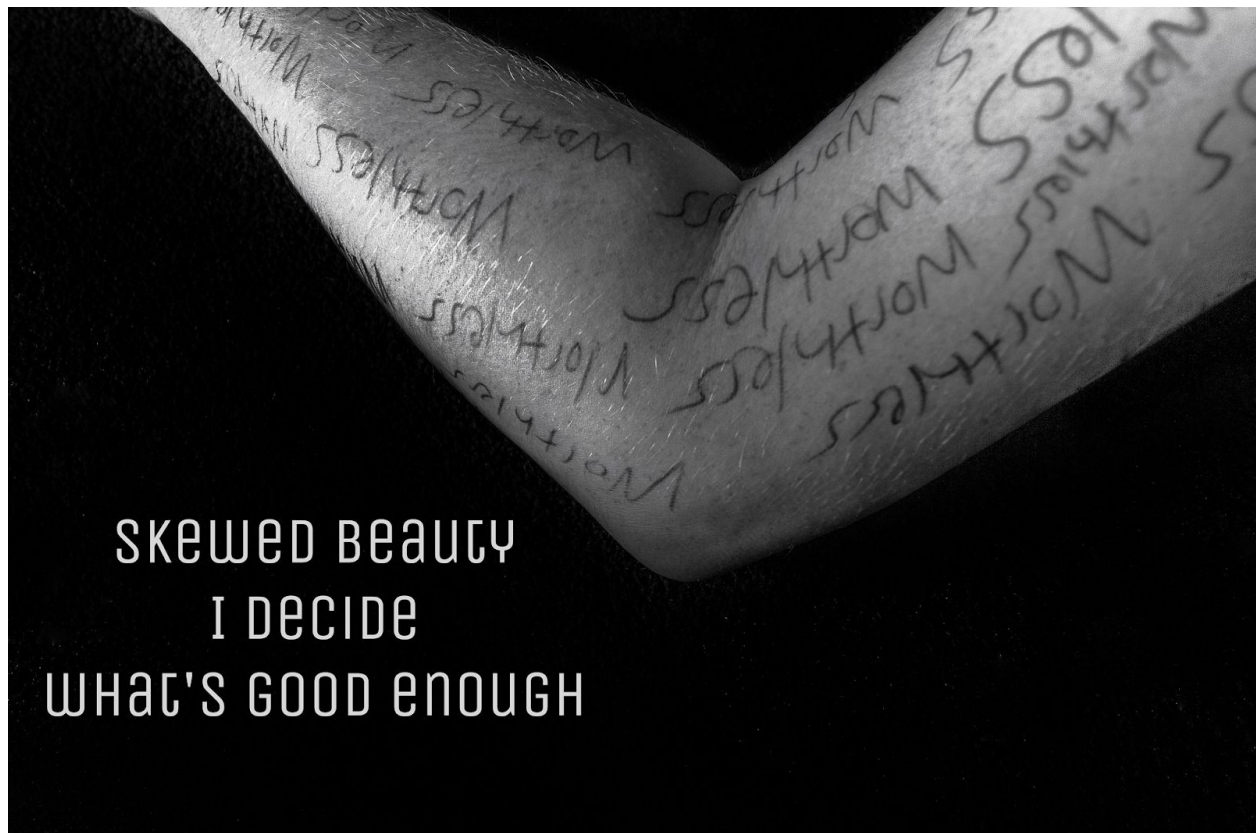
lori a minor

Guest 'Failed' Editor

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SKewed Beauty
I DECIDE
What's GOOD enough

Haiga by Lori A. Minor

My sincerest thanks to everyone who trusted me with your work for this special issue. It was wonderful to get to know all of you better. I hope we can all learn from each other through these incredible experiences you have shared. You guys exceeded my expectations! Again, thank you!!

Best,
Lori A Minor

Lori A Minor is a feminist, mental health advocate, and body positive activist currently living in Norfolk, Virginia. She has received various awards and nominations, including short list for the 2017 Touchstone Award. Her work has been featured in several journals, such as Frogpond, Blithe Spirit, Prune Juice, and Failed Haiku. Lori is the editor of #FemkuMag and Bleached Butterfly, as well as the author of two poetry chapbooks.

Cast List

In order of appearance

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Su Wai Hlaing

Maria Teresa Sisti

Vincenzo Adamo

Ivan Gaćina

Aljoša Vuković

Antonio Mangiameli

Pris Campbell

Elizabeth Crocket and Mark Williams

Pere Risteski

Barbara Tate

Christina Chin

Marilyn Fleming

William Scott Galasso

Hifsa Ashraf

Marilyn Ashbaugh

Tim Gardiner

J. Zimmerman

Bart Greene

Roberta Beach Jacobson

Roger Watson

Srinivas S
Jerome Gagnon
Julie Warther
Agnes Eva Savich
Chen-ou Liu
Mark Forrester
Natalia Kuznetsova
Giddy Nielsen-Sweep
Oscar Luparia
Gautam Nadkarni
Willie R. Bongcaron
Ingrid Baluchi
Ingrid Baluchi and Tammie Baluchi
Richa Sharma
Ron Scully
Anna Cates
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi
Lavana Kray
Paul Beech
Michael Henry Lee
Radostina Dragostinova
Elaine Wilburt
Mark Levy
Kimberly Spring
Maria Concetta Conti
Irina Guliaeva

Claudette Russell
David Oates
Angela Giordano
Colleen M. Farrelly
Rp Verlaine
André Le Mont Wilson
Jim Krotzman
Tracy Davidson
Corine Timmer
Adam Šuligoj
Debbie Strange
Ezio Infantino
Guliz Mutlu
Louise Hopewell
Ian Willey
Veronika Zora Novak
Pitt Buerken
Robert Witmer
Kinshuk Gupta
Helen Buckingham
Stefano d'Andrea
David He Zhuanglang
Angelescu Cristina
Dianne Moritz
Lucia Cardillo
Vandana Parashar

Godhooli Dinesh
Adjei Agyei-Baah
S.Radhamani
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Neha R. Krishna
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Kath Abela Wilson
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Tomislav Sjekloća
Vera Constantineau
Terrie Jacks
Adrian Bouter

Bruce Jewett
Elizabeth McMunn-Tetangco
Bob Moyer
Tsanka Shishkova
Praniti
Margaret Walker
Claire Vogel Camargo
Elizabeth Alford
Kathryn Bold
robyn brooks
mallika chari
Warren Gossett

looking for home
while I am sitting
inside of it

without a word
silently turning cold
my coffee

Su Wai Hlaing

separation -
I find a lost
stocking yesterday

separazione -
ritrovo una calza
perduta ieri

Maria Teresa Sisti

barbed wire
the border of hatred
that separates us

at the funeral
his poems
our prayers

Vincenzo Adamo

mirror broken
by a homeless man . . .
a reflection of reality

voodoo doll . . .
cruel as needles
sharp tongues

Ivan Gaćina

scarcity-
an empty can
just for decoration

Aljoša Vuković

The sky is dark, it's very cold, there are few people on the street, it seems the day does not want to start. The family who spends their nights on the sidewalk in front of the Sorbonne, I heard they are refugees from the Middle East, is still there, looking for a bit of warmth among the cardboards and the blankets.

ice on the ground -
the child and the dog
embrace

ice on the ground -
the girl and the doll
embrace

Antonio Mangiameli

face forward
into the darkness...
the moon and I

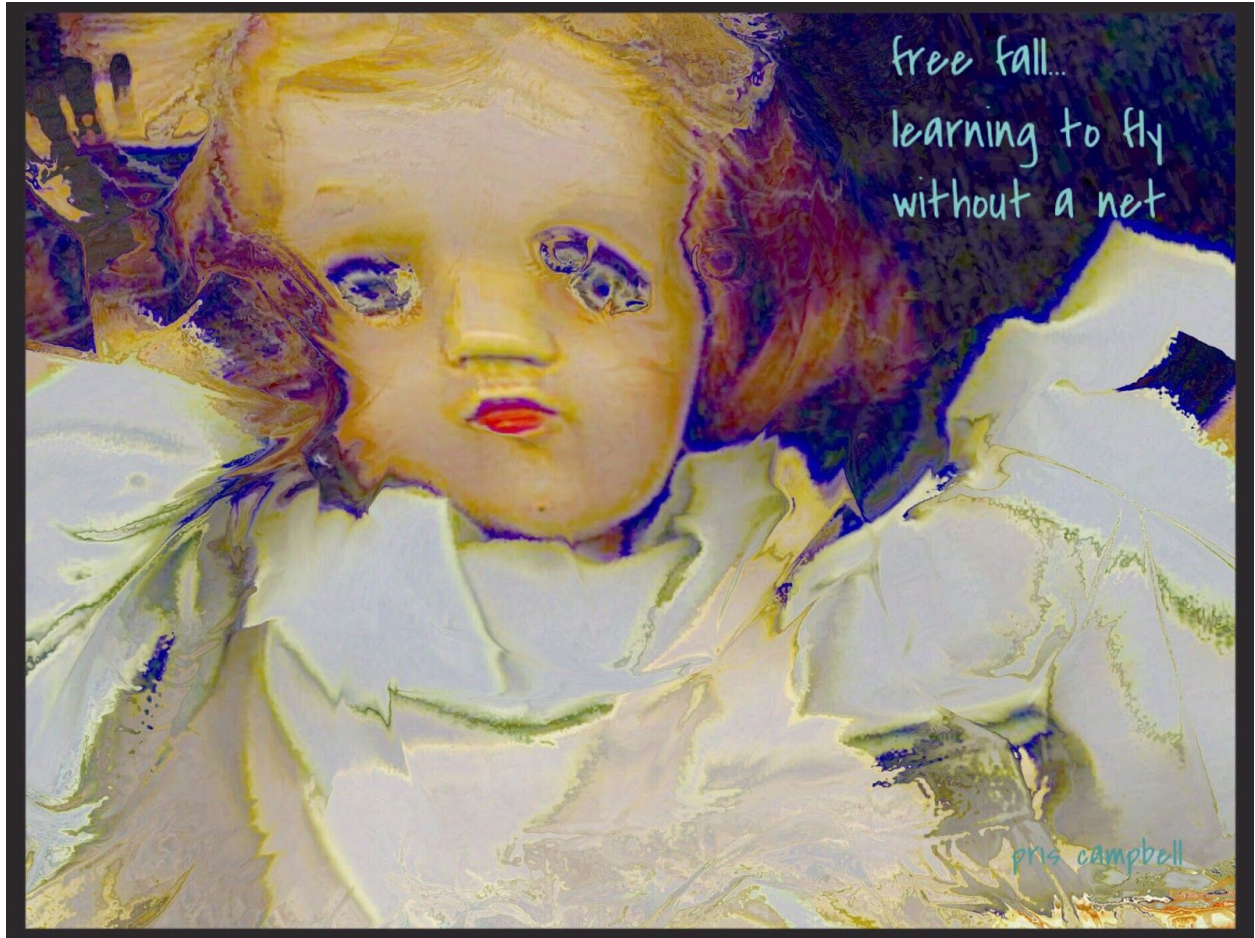
for better or worse—
his desertion still skyjacks
my dreams

blazing candles...
I brace myself for the storm
of more loss



set adrift...
she searches her inner self
for guidance

pris campbell



Pris Campbell



Elizabeth Crocket, senryu
Mark Williams, photo

sun tunnel sun

funeral
in the grave of my grandfather
my grandmother

wedding
before the altar
with depression

before and after the storm sun

Pere Risteski

family reunion
no one notices
when I say goodbye

surprise party
opening the door
to an empty room

cold front
I give him a third
last chance

school photo hiding behind a fake smile

Barbara Tate



rustling willow
the widow's
flute song

Angus
Thom
Brown



Christina Chin

anointing with oil
I count her heartbeats
until they cease

a heap
of rubble stones—
always the same fists

coots gather
at the water's edge—
50th class reunion

red flag
on a mailbox—
the point of no return

Marilyn Fleming
@mflem9811

spray painted
in black and white,
state of the nation

death certificate
even as the ink dries
squabbles

fog lifts
the first full day
of sobriety

border town
neighborhood children play
red light, green light

family heirlooms...
let the games
begin

silent prayer
it all comes down to
a single word

William Scott Galasso

Islamophobia

Islamophobia —
the persona I lost
in the crowd

dark tunnel
she gets frightened
by her own shadow

stigmatization —
his blurred reflection
on the office window

the blast news
she takes a detour
on her way home

subway platform
the shadows accompany
a girl in hijab

outdoor prayer
the snowflakes get stuck
into his beard

raking the autumn leaves me in isolation
the shadows of crows my guilty conscience
cawing ravens we discussed the ancient wisdom
the things I take for granted house crows
floating in the vacuum of self denial
unique perspectives wind me around bipolar depression
wildfire —
the victim's story erupts
a heated discussion
mountain fog
the grudges we hold
over the years

Hifsa Ashraf
@hifsays

Prickly Heat

In the middle of a summer of misery, there appears a way out. At the end of the street is a plumbing supply business with a German Shepherd guard dog named Smoky on a long metal leash. The neighborhood bullies trespass to the back of the building to taunt Smoky who heaves his weight again and again towards the bullies who remain just out of his reach. On one such occasion he turns around and frees himself from the tight neck chain. The bullies scatter screaming: “Smoky is loose! Smoky is loose!” I do not run from Smoky; I confidently walk with him along the emptied sidewalks.

So when I grow weary of the taunts of bullies, I walk to the end of the street and trespass to the back of the building. Smoky licks my face as I pet him. I remove the heavy metal chain that encircles his neck and set us both free.

summer sun
the prickly heat
of childhood

First Love

I meet him through an ad: Renault Dauphine, 1958, \$300, runs.

Renault is robin’s egg blue, compact and boxy. His driving petals are the size of silver dollars. The clutch is a few inches from the brake and the brake a few inches from the gas. Dad disparagingly calls

Renault a toy car. Or course, dad's disapproval ignites my passion for the French Renault and he is soon mine.

first love
a lawnmower engine
under the hood

Marilyn Ashbaugh

DAFOR

Twenty years. I count them on the coppiced limbs of a lime tree by the ford. Taking a field edge path alongside the brook, the treacherous structure you called 'The Bridge on the River Kwai' is crossed, before I head up the shallow hillside. Little seems to have changed in this quiet parish in undulating countryside: the field where I threw the quadrat, the pasture where I estimated the abundance of plants with a simple five word scale.

Dominant: the shade's isolation

Abundant: distant voices in the schoolyard

Frequent: reminders from the breeze

Occasional: glimpses of the church spire

Rare: the accuracy of memory

Returning to the car, I scan the woodland canopy in the distance for the majestic elm which had survived the dutch disease.

not content

in the oak's shade

elm suckers

Strawberry Field

It doesn't mean much to anyone else, but the run to the top of Lawford Dale is what passes for adventure these days. Its summit affords a view over the old plastics factory, partially obscured by the skeletal trunks of waste ground birches. The steps are hazardous enough, frost early to form this evening. A dark alley leads to the start of the ascent.

how I long
for the straight road...
zig zag path

Out of breath, I stop at the summit, bathed in the orange glow of streetlights. The sprint is still on, along the path to the new housing estate, around the reed pond. A couple of lads smoke weed by the wooded dell between the Dale and Cox's Hill. Determined, I begin.

run over...
on the way down
euphoria

Tim Gardiner

Christmas charades
Grandpapa discovers
his inner femme fatale

Confucianism
the kennel club's allegiance
to hierarchy

a chalice of champagne
and she's ready to open
the village fête

after the bombing
drawing again and again
the face of Buddha

backbends
on the sand
revising my life

J. Zimmerman

a glorious arc

Man with aging prostate fondly recalls what he could do as a boy.

a glorious arc
burns a golden hole in the
freshly fallen snow

to the movies

John was my elementary school classmate. His older brother was a reckless driver. One night he crashed and died. I did not know John very well, but my mother insisted that I invite him to the movies. I cringed at the idea, but obeyed her. When I called he consulted his parents and returned to the phone. He did not want to go to the movies.

after sixty years
her insensitivity
still makes his skin crawl

Bart Greene

not how
I remember it -
high school

our todays
not the same as
our long agos

up the career ladder
the Mount Fuji
of my mind

on days I hate my job
I reflect back to the days
women could not work

Roberta Beach Jacobson

visa office queue
going nowhere

making love
with the bedroom door open
empty nest

lowering my umbrella
I avoid
the beggar's gaze

writing my will
I hesitate
over the signature

funeral plans
so many
final choices

Roger Watson

rain-wind...
the tears of those
left behind

first rose
the gardener complains
of hair fall

first love waiting for the sun to rise again

Srinivas S

birds — don't they know
I'm not my father
out for the morning paper?

this bamboo rake and I
have seen better days —
autumn wind

Jerome Gagnon

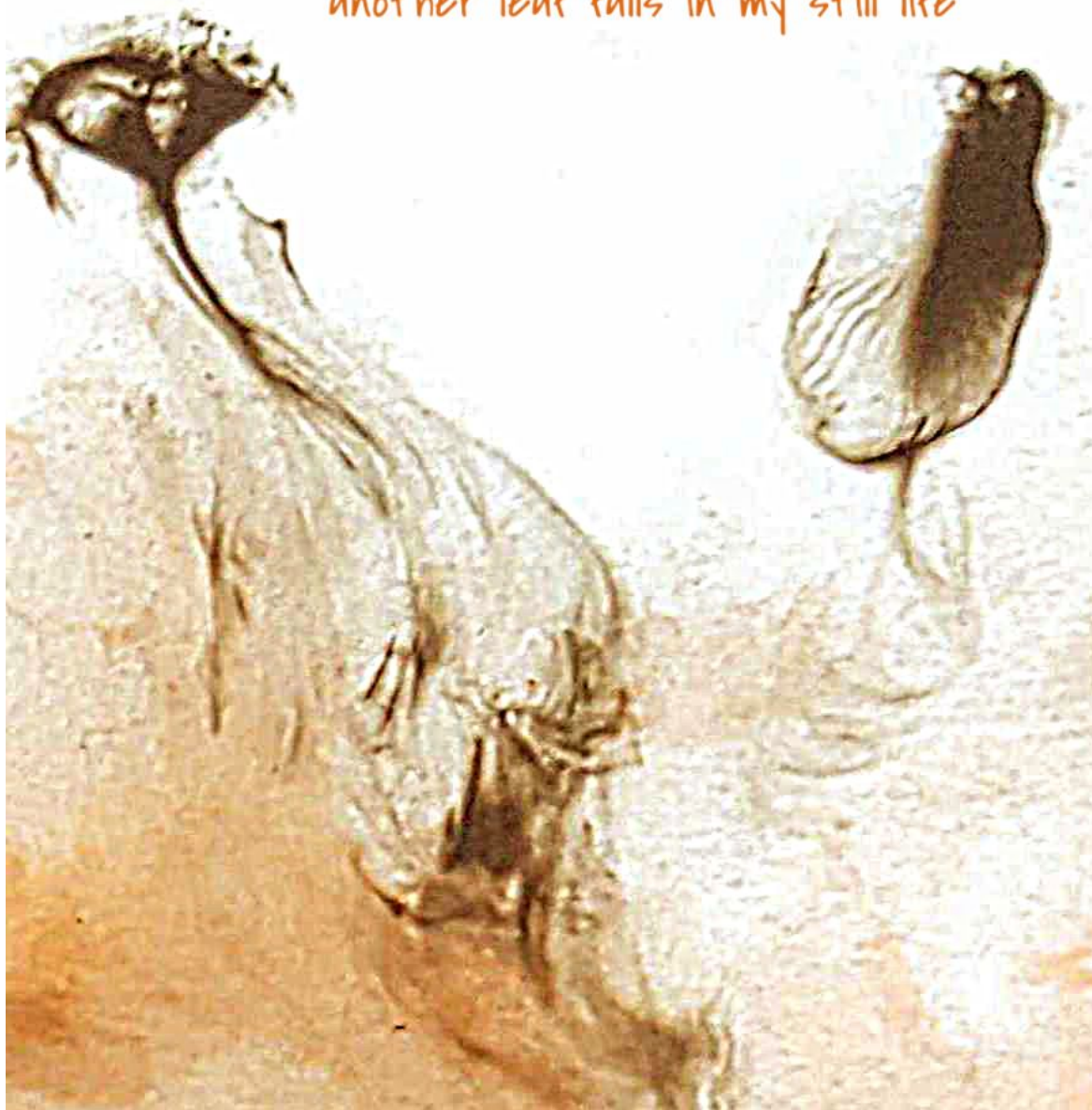
dusk

she sits

with the day lily



another leaf falls in my still life



snowdrops mending a rip in the seam



scent of wildflowers

letting go this notion

of mine

Julie Warther

hazy moon
a self-help book pressed
to my lips

first cry...
I too am born
a mother

today it's you
tomorrow it will be me—
wilting flowers

middle school play
the mad hatter's
voice cracks

Agnes Eva Savich

eviction
nothing left of the poet
but his chapbooks

election dispute
a chameleon
changing its colors

Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way

the smell
of our routine silence
dinner time

it begins and ends
with slamming the door:
divorced talk

divorced ...
bed sheets no longer
retain her scent

Chen-ou Liu

<http://chenouliu.blogspot.ca/>

@ericcoliu and @storyhaikutanka

Turnaround

We rode in silence, surrounded by suitcases and boxes of wrapped presents. The morning had started off with frantic good cheer, preparing to celebrate the holidays with our families in another state. Then came the call from my daughter and fears of a miscarriage.

She and her husband had been trying for years to have a child. Countless consultations. Enormous costs, financial and emotional. Would they start over, try again? We mourned for someone we loved but had never met.

Then came the second call. Her doctor's assurance everything was fine. We shifted in our seats, relaxing muscles we had not realized were clenched.

new year
under my heels
rock salt

Dead End

When I dropped out of college, I found a room to rent in a home owned by a nice young family, on the edge of Annapolis. Ostensibly I was looking for work. In reality, I was living off my refund from the college rather than repaying the bank that had financed my student loan.

I was eighteen years old, a dropout now from both high school and college, unemployed. Though I felt like an alien in this conventional

suburban home, I took a weird comfort in the family's, and the neighborhood's, complacent normalcy. At the end of our cul-de-sac, a mail truck was parked every evening. I found some measure of reassurance in the fact that one of our neighbors delivered mail. It seemed safe, mundane, and stable.

One night I bought a tab of LSD from a friend. I had never even smoked marijuana, but LSD sounded far more interesting. I spent the night walking the streets of Annapolis with giant pupils and an enormous grin. I walked past familiar sights, to see them in this new light, and explored streets that were unfamiliar. I lingered by the harbor, enjoying the music made by the masts of sailboats, rising on the swells of water and clicking against their neighbors.

Returning home in the early morning, I saw the neighbor's mail truck. With a chemically induced bravado, I walked to the end of our street, something I had never before bothered to do, to see the truck up close. I was startled to discover it was not a mail truck at all—it may have been once, but it was an ordinary vehicle now, with a sloppy and fading paint job.

A small dog began to bark in a nearby house. I turned and began walking up the sidewalk to my room.

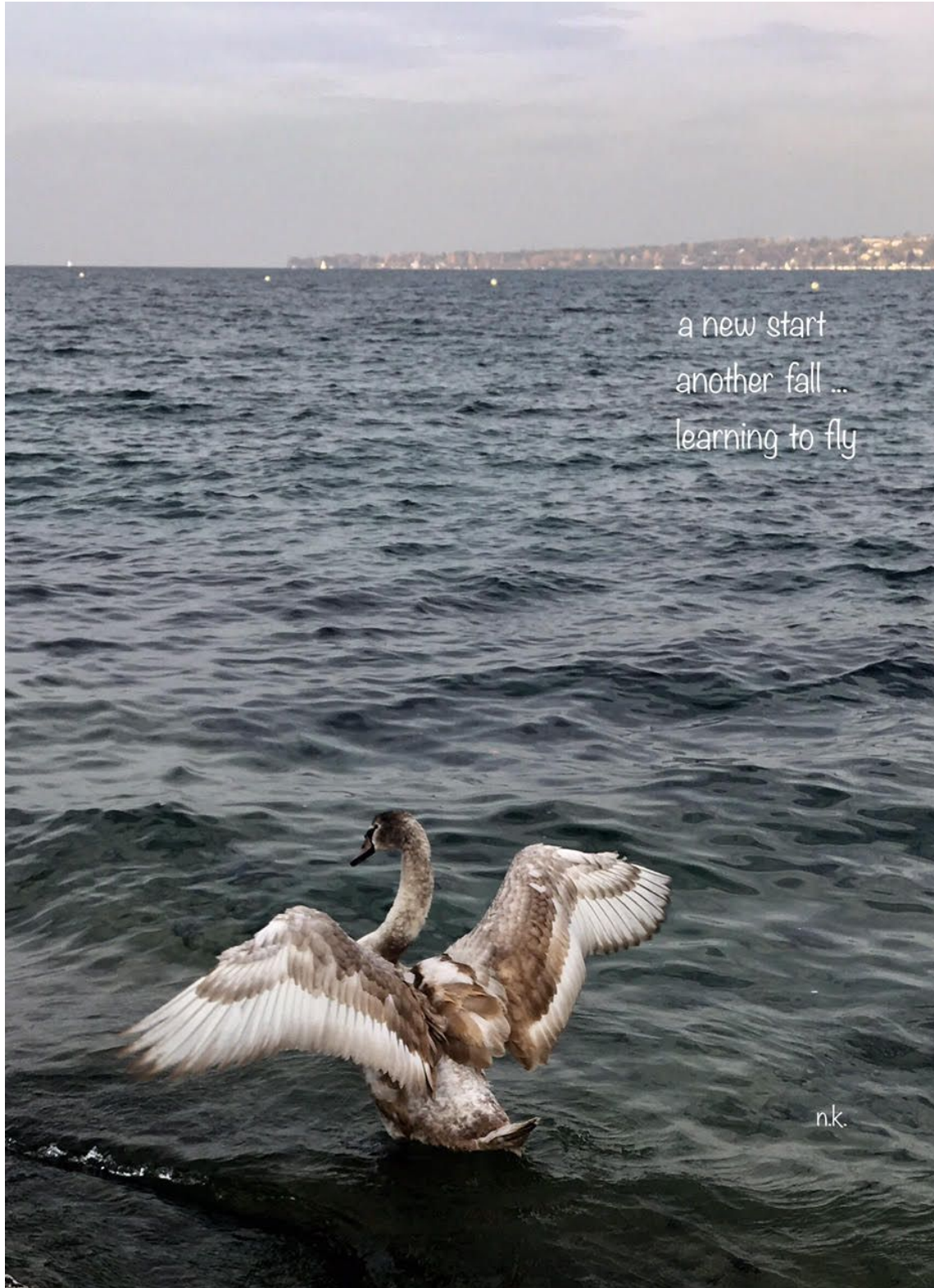
winter geese—
morning snow
turning to rain

Mark Forrester

autumn -
feeling wiser but ...
empty

n.k.





a new start
another fall ...
learning to fly

n.k.

Natalia Kuznetsova



**older now
after travelling the world
I am at peace**

Giddy Nielsen-Sweep

sunshine after rain
I am still learning
what life is

new buds...
what would they tell us
without winter?

spring breeze
it does not matter
who I am

Oscar Luparia

Reining In The Song

I always loved music. Ever since I can remember.

Mom played Marathi songs on the old Murphy radio in the mornings while preparing breakfast for the family. Sis turned on Hindi film songs when she came home from school. So I got more than an earful as a kid. And what goes in must eventually come out.

I remember belting out romantic numbers while taking a shower. But you know how it is with prophets and true artistes. Never appreciated on their own home turf. I still cannot understand what objections Dad could possibly have had with my performance in the bath. He complained bitterly. Especially when I hit the high notes. And he didn't mince words either. Talk about diplomacy and discretion. He even went to the extent of likening my vocal feats to the shrieking of a pig being slaughtered. I couldn't believe my ears. At least Mother didn't complain. But then she always wore cotton earplugs during my performance.

Sis was the least discreet of the lot. She threatened to lace my soup with a lesser known Oriental poison and watch me squirm. She was an avid fan of the Borgia family. Still I viewed every helping of soup thereafter with suspicion.

But of course everyone grows up and eventually becomes worldly wise. And so it was with me. I soon outgrew the Hindi love ballads of my misguided youth and left them far behind.

Now in the sanctity of the shower I only sing devotional songs.
Sis has married and moved out. And Dad and Mom turn off their
hearing aids.

young couple---
striking a flirtatious note
on WhatsApp

Gautam Nadkarni

dusty summer temperature rises in my veins

frozen

among the cold cuts

my pleadings

home at last

a sparrow hopping

on the rails

Willie R. Bongcaron

proud
to be different --
asperger's

unstoppable angst --
questioning why
our changing world

aging
the shame to be seen
by your own reflection

daughter home . . .
a change
in dynamics

our roles reversed –
I hold his hand
crossing the street

Ingrid Baluchi



*spent force . . .
with age
the beauty from within*



senryu, Ingrid Baluchi
photo, Tammie Baluchi

starry night
clearing away
imaginary fears

wrong piano key
discovering life's
new tune

college photo
in awe of the stranger
that is me

self-discovery
all lines of a
pencil portrait

Richa Sharma
@bluelakemoon

backspin dropshot
my son talks trash
how I answer questions

Father's Day
lead weight sinkers knock
in the tackle box

Ron Scully

two boys spitting
on the sidewalk . . .
rite of passage

rental property . . .
my inspection begins
with broken kitchen tiles

forsythia buds—
the secrets we share . . .
or keep

pink dogwood
between two neighbors
one lusty May

tree of life?
the DNA I share
with lichen

strange constellations
in the late spring dusk
how we change with time

HOME ALONE

I, too,
imagine golden birds—
dry September

911 anniversary. This year, the same documentary seems more disturbing. Bodies-on-fire crunch to the sidewalk from heights above. As crowds flee crumbling skyscrapers, an arguably impertinent thought enters my head: Shouldn't women wear sensible shoes?

waning summer
after thunderstorms
how gentle the rainbow

Anna Cates

turning sixty
family doctor attends
with a fresh dose

her daughter's birthday
the maidservant boxes
a hand-me-down toy

butterfly
reminds me of my past
is it vice versa?

zen haiku
this urge to know
the contest result

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi



sand storm -
wrapped in mom's clothes
a smiling baby

Lavana Kray



gulls on the shore -
can't tell my cry apart
from theirs

Lavana Kray



Lavana Kray

THAT'S ALL

sixties gone
my Billy Fury quiff
remains

Midnight, silence, a half-moon riding the river. I slow for the junction
at the top of the hill.

As if from nowhere, a woman lurches into the road. There's
something wrong with her. Very wrong. She's barefoot, wearing a
thin pink dress, near collapse. And her face...

Never in my 22 years have I seen a face so contorted. Her eyes are
desperate in my headlights.

I get out. She's shaking, wailing, pleading for help. And somehow I
get her into the car.

"Have you done something?" I ask, meaning to herself.

"Done something? Done something? I've been beaten, that's all."

Upon arrival at the infirmary, porters help her into a wheelchair.
And for the first time I notice the hideous black bruising to her legs.

"What will people think?" she says. "I've been beaten, that's all...
that's all."

a draughtsman
with T-square poised
horror perceived

I change jobs. Help battered wives professionally. But many years on, retired now, I'm haunted still by that look in her eyes. And her words, those words...

Paul Beech

new moon
no assembly
required

wanderlust
satiating all my
hungry ghosts

high school reunion
my heart right where
she left it

Michael Henry Lee

biopsy..
blood moon
in my window

firefly in the gloom
mom tries to recall
my name

park labyrinth...
all the years
I missed

divorce application
her new recipe for
hot curry soup

mirror..
reconciling myself
with all the demons in front

Radostina Dragostinova

hanging
the hammock—
planning nothing

last wine barrel
Pap filled—
another goodbye

Elaine Wilburt

meditation cushion
abandoned
another kind of emptiness

new day
stitching together
the torn map of stars

Mark Levy

My favorite place to hide as a child was the linen closet... way in the back, buried under extra blankets. No one could see me there. It was my fortress. The screaming and slamming of whatever was handy was muffled by the linen and the walls. I would listen to music on my tape recorder for hours- but not too loud - I didn't want anyone to find me. My fortress couldn't keep me safe from everything though. On bad days there were no walls thick enough, no doors closed tight enough to keep it away. The darkness could seep through anything when it really wanted to get to you. My ma, she was in survival mode a lot, I must've gotten that from her... Block it out, go somewhere else in your mind... pray. Even now there are days I miss my fortress.

childhood
tarnished with
sin

Kimberly Spring

divorce
her mother organizes
the last trip

Maria Concetta Conti

set of the chairs
dad`s one
is still new

coldness of May
your ring moved
to my middle finger

making a choice
mosquito on the fork
of my vein

Irina Guliaeva

divorce settlement
equal shares
of loneliness

young widow
discovers
her real friends

slamming doors
echoes of
my childhood

bereavement group
questions
no one can answer

happy hour
my time
to wine

mirror mirror
on the wall
keep the comments to yourself

Claudette Russell

A Walk

My wife and I are walking our little dog in the neighborhood: hilly, wooded, with no streetlights or sidewalks, but still a popular place for people from elsewhere to come walk and run. It's a beautiful fall day, cool, clear, with a few white puffs in the blue sky and leaves crackling underfoot, that slanted light.

noticing
the one fast-food place
with no black workers

country station on
in this borrowed pickup
black man doesn't nod back

I don't think of it as a white neighborhood – there are many kinds of people here, but in the same way the “integrated” university that's eighty percent white is basically white, our neighborhood is white.

white folks pay
black fitness trainer
makes them sweat

a black southerner
and a white one share
a last name

And a car stops, and a middle-aged black woman in a church dress gets out of the car and says, “My sister said not to ask. She said I'd scare you, but I can't figure out this GPS.” She's trying to deliver a casserole to a family in mourning and we figure out the house is a

couple of streets down the road – I use my phone to show her the map
and we think,

not a toddler
but not much bigger
“hands up don’t shoot”

*You aren’t scary, we aren’t scared, but we are sad, that it’s not weird
that you would feel that, feel the need to explain your business, and feel
out of place in a neighborhood within a few miles of your home, and
that you would worry if one of your children came down this street.*

as she approaches
that look on her face
sun in her eyes?

David Oates

like snakes
I changed my skin-
new adventures

transformation:
life like water
he slips on me

my brain
does not accept interference-
channel change

Angela Giordano

#22aDay

It's a hashtag that's circled the Veteran community lately and even has made it into the news. It's only half the story, though. The tally doesn't include suicide by cop or finding a friend cold with a needle in his arm. It doesn't include drunk driving accidents or a dealer-related drive-by. Do not resuscitates. Barroom brawls. Neglecting a helmet or seatbelt. There are a lot of creative ways to die without the death counting in the tally.

Living is harder. Aside from the well-publicized flashbacks or lost buddies on the battlefield, there's the Facebook posts and late-night texts. Did you hear that X has died? Finding a friend face-down on the living room floor. Ten-month backlogs at the VA hospital. Revolving deployments of family and friends. Even hearing a professor or classmate rail against the military every other week. Living is harder.

out of the rubble,
a lily pokes through—
life winning

Another Acquainted with the Night

The Floridian in me relishes a night walk under the stars, my mind wandering like a lone lizard trying to find a bush for the night. Every walk is different, varying with the when and where of the journey.

Baltimore night walks are chilly; they involve more people and less wildlife. Midnight sighs and cries. The drops pitter and patter, ignoring my sweatshirt and hugging the sidewalk of Preston Gardens Park and the cathedral awnings above jackets lain down for the night.

The watchmen nod to a man cradling a bottle. The lights at Lumbini flicker out as I pass. The city yawns as I stretch, restless after stumbling upon a Hopper-scape diner wafting Kabul's kofta kabobs and carrying me to another time and place, to the names that other time and place etched into my heart.

flickering diner lights
against a gunmetal sky—
killed in action

Colleen M. Farrelly

a stream of curses while grandma weaves miracles
suddenly no one's watching the movie plane turbulence
it lies in wait clocks never tell the truth

lasso tightens no escaping old age

in a book of poems
about death
withered leaves

rainy day
I keep drinking whiskey
between her calls

getting my lies straight
at the unemployment office
half drunk in a suit

midnight
my new sex life since she left binoculars

Rp Verlaine

Dead Butterfly and Sleeping Giant

Mom told me once, twice, a thousand times the story of how my kindergarten teacher had visited our home and interrupted the poet: Mrs Wilson, André's not learning at the same pace as his peers. He's quiet in class and doesn't know his numbers. Maybe it would be best if we held him back a year to repeat kindergarten.

My mother led my teacher to a doorjamb where I had crayoned numbers from one to ten: André knows his numbers. Just because he doesn't write them on paper in class doesn't mean he doesn't know. The boy's a sleeping giant and will learn at his own pace.

My teacher retreated from our home and advanced me to first grade.

As I grew, I groaned whenever Mom told me this story: Mom, I'm not a sleeping giant. I'm now a man of below average height. I want to be normal and not a poet like you, scribbling poems on paper scraps which clutter the house like confetti at a convention.

Like Jonah fleeing the presence of the Lord, I fled home and got a nine-to-five job: I don't want to be a poet like you, Mom.

When she called, she asked: Have you been doing any writing?

—The only writing I do is typing the minutes to the staff meeting.

Undeterred, she wrote: I still say you're a Sleeping Giant. Look out world!

Closing her letter, I thought: Yeah, right.

Years later, Mom wrote again: Expect some changes or a Divine Stir.
We late bloomers usually wake up between 45 and early fifties.

Closing her letter, I thought: Yeah, right.

She then gave me a gift subscription to Poets & Writers and died.

Several months later, at the age of forty-eight, I started writing poetry.

I reopened and reread Mom's letters: How did you know I would start writing after you died? I did not believe your Cassandra-like prophecy until I felt poetry in my heart, lived it in my body, and scribbled it with fingers bloodied from their thrust into your wound.

Mom, you possessed the faith of a butterfly. You laid your egg, well-knowing that you will never live to see your child emerge from his cocoon and fly.

after laying eggs
butterfly quivers and dies
wind blows confetti

André Le Mont Wilson
@awilsonwriter

throwing out the soap water
she says I've washed
my hands of you

to tie his son's tie
the mortician
has the boy lie down

taffy pull
she tells me
we are growing apart

pretty girl flirts incomplete pass

Jim Krotzman

he mistakes
my hot flushes for lust...
I sleep by the fridge

old scars resurface
at the school reunion
bullies still bullies

no response
to the poem I read her...
chapel of rest

finally the fog lifts
three weeks
into sobriety

first period
the screams
in the school swimming pool

Tracy Davidson
@tracydavidson27

the tortoise
carries its home
on its back—
the urge to declutter
and buy a camper van

the moon returns
from the earth's shadow—
finding the courage
to speak up

bursting moon—
I think today
is the day

migrating birds . . .
how subtle
their transition

Corine Timmer


Cancer diagnosis -
mom is livid
with the eurocrats

Adam Šuligoj

winter light i embrace the blues



words/mage(c)DStrange

The background is a dark, textured field filled with a multitude of small, multi-colored triangles in shades of red, green, blue, yellow, and purple. Several bright, vertical streaks of light in rainbow colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) cut through the dark space, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a digital or cosmic landscape.

migration . . .
we wait for our wings
to harden

words/image(C)DStrange



ribbon eel . . .
he always felt outside
himself
before transitioning
into womanhood

words/image(C)DStrange



foggy dew
i can almost see
where i'm going

words/image@DStrange

Debbie Strange
debbiemstrange.blogspot.com
@Debbie_Strange

the effervescence
of the school reunion dinner...
magnesiun idroxiide

l'effervescenza
della cena di classe...
magnesio idrossido

Newton's apple -
the shade of a willow
for a nap

mela di Newton -
l'ombra di un salice
per una siesta

milky way...
scattered on the table
the puzzle pieces

via lattea...
le tessere del puzzle
sparse sul tavolo

Ezio Infantino

autumn whistles
all learned
from the others

empty seashells
the refugee can talk
in many dialects

family secrets
pure water
has no fish

spring cleaning
the bugs
in the new apps

Guliz Mutlu

dog beach
being my own
best friend

letting go of
the small stuff
pine needles

scent of wet grass
at last the courage
to say goodbye

starfish
putting my best
foot forward

learning to smile
at my own reflection
glass ceiling

who am I to
stress about the past
redwood forest

Louise Hopewell

louisehopewellwriter.wordpress.com

willow buds--
my son's first day
at day care

home from work
he changes back
into himself

window seat
I see myself
for the first time

supermarket
she thinks about
the lane not taken

they tore down the school...
is am are was
were be being been

the guest speaker talks
about positive thinking--
his glass half empty

the ties I got Dad
for Father's Day--
in my closet now

chamomile tea
I've been saying it wrong
all these years

autocorrection
father becomes
failure

musty attic
he sets aside
his childish ways

Ian Willey

new moon I celebrate the gypsy in me

ether slowly the wind shapeshifts

soiled sheets shedding my weight in tears

pennies cast
deep into the wishing well
the unreachable ones

Veronika Zora Novak

new start
even the parade pillow
abolished

after the chemo
her well-formed head shape
now visible

fountain bowl
the strayer and the dog
share the water

Pitt Buerken

the world
before the child
grows into our words

a screen door
on rusty hinges
the spring in my step

a pile of shoes
kids at kindergarten
counting their toes

singles bar
storing my rusty hedge clippers
in an overgrown shed

after the game
the taste of victory
in the beer

new moon
a reason for being
late

Robert Witmer

inter religion marriage
mother faints
during the ritual

ailing brother . . .
I wish if we can
switch places

Kinshuk Gupta

thunder moon
hanging on
in there

All Saints'
my familiar returns
through the haze

period
or no
tis spring

moon set
today closer
than ever

Helen Buckingham

sipario di pioggia . . .
le parole che non oso
più pronunciare

curtain of rain . . .
the words I dare not
pronounce anymore

karmico incontro . . .
restavano da regolare
i vecchi conti

karmic rendezvous . . .
there was a pending bill
to pay

Stefano d'Andrea

night rain...
Mum weeps
in her dream

no conversation
between the couple
cold deepens...

playing pingpong
I forget his name...
step-grandson

David He Zhuanglang





Angelescu Cristina

constant cat fights
what I wouldn't give
for a do-over

that donor letter
shoved inside a drawer
never read

panic attack
like a tsunami
of the soul

Dianne Moritz

hysterectomy ...
the mocking sneer
of a scar

isterectomia ...
il ghigno beffardo
di una cicatrice

three little sisters
and a small house...
how much fireflies!

tre sorelline
e una piccola casa ...
quante lucciole!

Lucia Cardillo

seven-year itch
I loosen my grip
on the kite

summer camp
I tell my daughter about
good and bad touch

a geisha
watering a bonzai...
how does it feel
to blossom
naturally

that last piece
of jigsaw puzzle won't fit
do I miss him
or do I miss
being missed

Vandana Parashar

deep meditation
a dragonfly humming
on my nose

moon on sea
nobody in between
peace and me

godhooli Dinesh

second date
I learn to gather my breath
in a gum

night rain
his sex always
gets better

receding hairline
deciding when to let
all go

my second child born
I smile behind
the thought of diapers

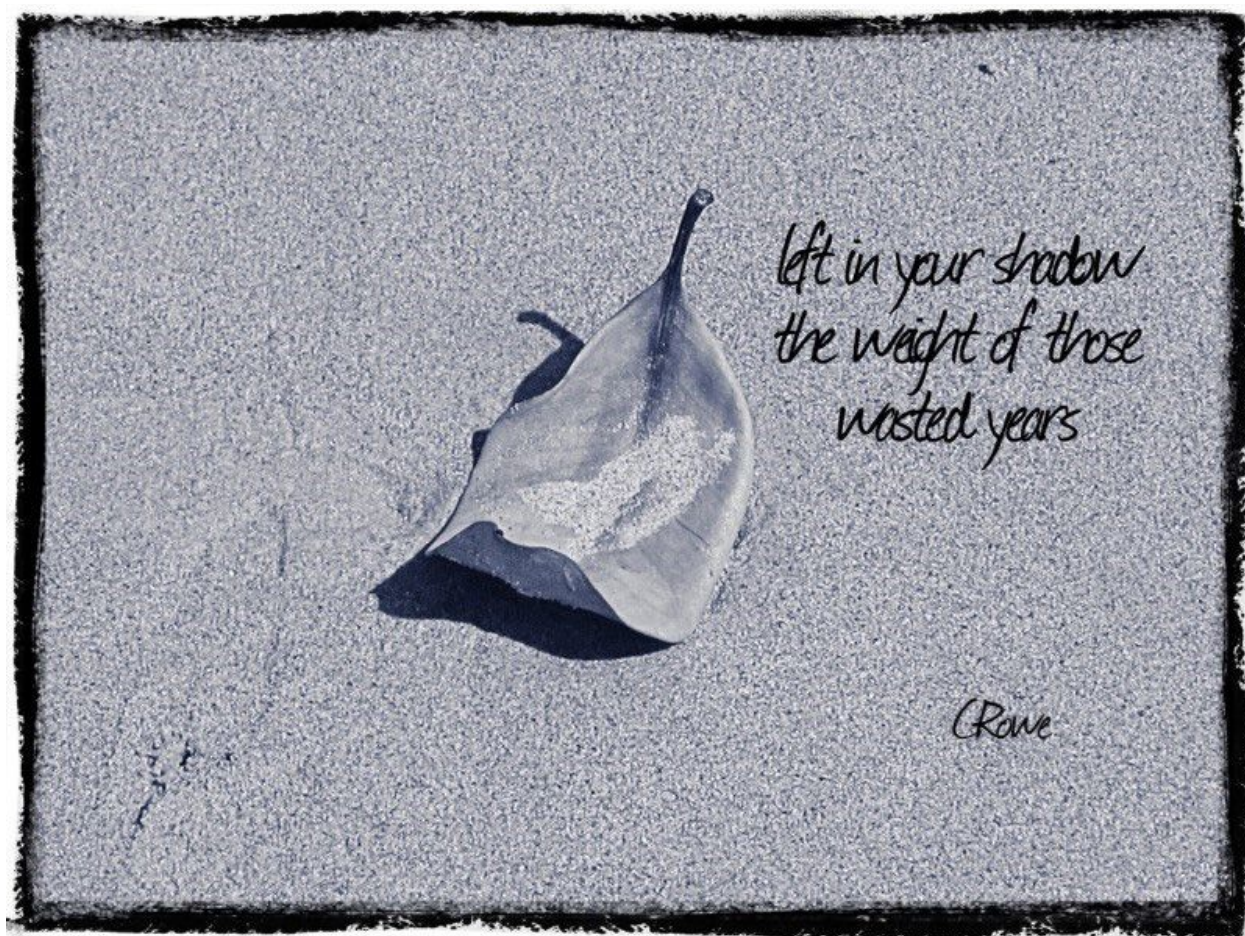
rush hour traffic
the beggar I know
turns a screen wiper

Adjei Agyei-Baah

Court verdict
her wedding ring
tightens

Ph. D. thesis
her incomplete
bio data

S.Radhamani



surfer grandson —
I discover the meaning
of sex wax

funeral cortège
the stark black
of her mascara

Cynthia Rowe

earthshine
my niece announces
that she's a boy

iced tea
an old girlfriend
flips me off

temper tantrum
a few more people
stop to watch

petting zoo
Dad's new squeeze
keeps her distance

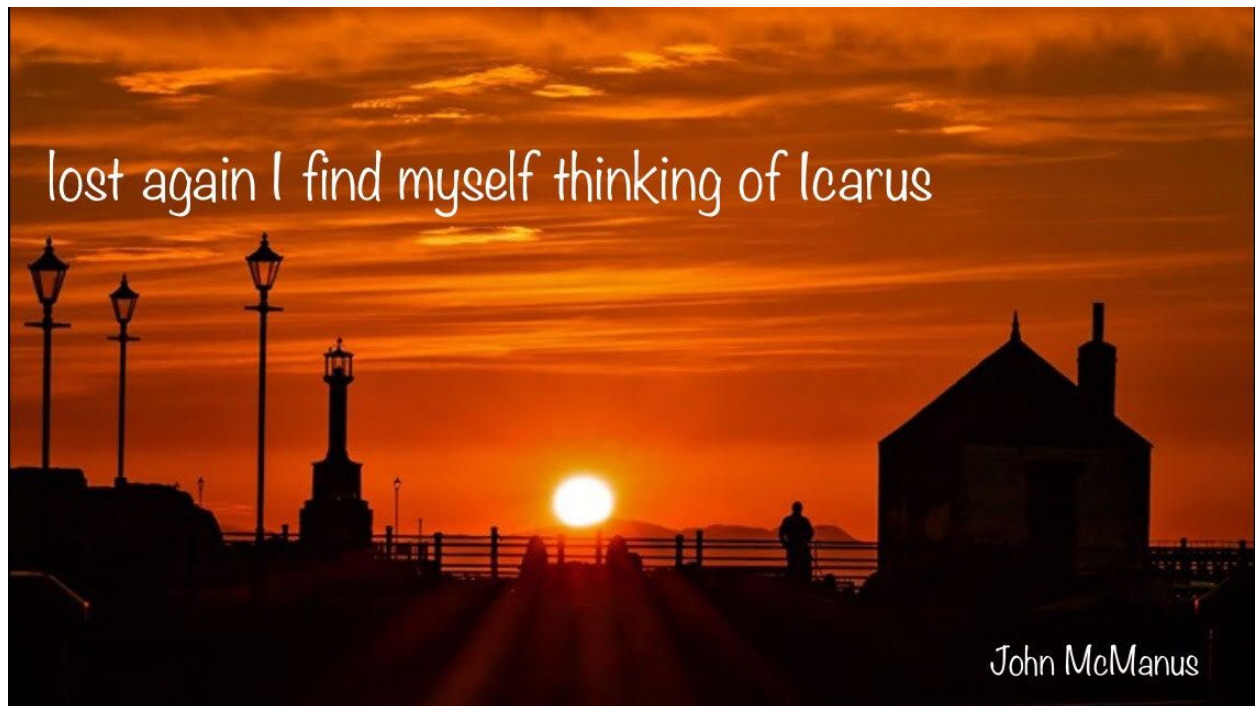
insomnia
the model train whizzes
around its track

chopped onion
on the top of my tongue
the bully's name

ship graveyard
nowhere for me
to bury this grief

birthday cake
the ballerina only
sniffs her slice

wedding anniversary
she drops me off
at the scrapyard



John McManus

just three words
none of them
I love you

redemption
the organist irons out
his mistakes



**sloped slabs of slate
in the shower
blemishes, imperfections**



Mark Gilbert



Vessislava Savova
vessislava.blogspot.com

Traveler

I've taken the highway, that path that leads from here to there, from anywhere to everywhere it seems. Over mountains and valleys, across rivers and streams, I've hitched my way through cities and deserts, from ocean to ocean, back home and away again. I've stood by the road in the pouring rain, cars rolling by with somewhere to go. Each time I look in a rear-view mirror, mile markers passing by, my thoughts drift back to where I started, when time was on my side.

There is always somewhere to go, something on my mind, even if that something is nothing more than venturing into the unknown. I've walked away from pain and into the arms of love, each time the load a little bit larger, the wind a little bit stronger. It seems there is no end in sight; the magic mountains are just out of reach. So, I buy a map at a local gas station, open it up, and to my delight, find it crisscrossed with roads.

a car radio crackles . . .
the soles of my shoes
with a mind of their own

Richard Grahn

my cancer surgery
he's concerned he has
the same symptoms

cancer surgery scar
long enough to scare
a hooligan

grandpa's cancer
no one wants to tell him
he has cancer

biopsy
even the word
sounds menacing

a funeral to attend
he checks his calendar
with a groan

his funeral
he and I used to attend
funerals together

funeral over
now begins the dispute
on who gets what

kind widow to be
four widowers at church
show their interests

near retirement
googling schoolmates
from decades ago

50th class reunion
the girl I had a crush on
wears a wig

John J. Han

Self-Help

psych journal

professional help
the trees hold
all the answers

double clicking

laugh lines
my therapist's answer
to everything

on "issues"

shedding skin
the need to know
even less

Bryan Rickert
Peter Jastermsky

Reflecting

finding God

this
and nothing more –
next breath

after all these years

exhausted
the journey
draws inward

the beggar's hands

washing the mirror
another need
lets go

Bryan Rickert
Peter Jastermsky

thrown in a box
with the other false gods—
my broken fitbit

after zazen
we talk about our
therapists

between clouds
of blooming chamisa
a dharma talk

Sondra J. Byrnes
@SondraJByrnes

life lesson –
green grass rising
through cracked asphalt

first love –
the sun slowly rising
on the cold wall

Carmen Duvalma

pine tree bark
years of experiences
on grandfather's skin

upturned glasses
our incomplete conversation
and all other misunderstandings

no moon
my eyes follow
a stranger's shoe hole

abstract texture
my dream takes the shape
of depression

Neha R. Krishna

on her face
the mask of age
taken off with a smile

birthday
and December 31
getting old twice a year

heavy rain
my vanity
not using an umbrella

Daniel Birnbaum

empty can
the homeless man's
last drop

garage clear out
for the twenty sixth year
I replace dad's rods

Remembrance day
a vet knocking his one leg
adjusts his cap

Robert Kingston

waterfall chasm
a rainbow bridges
the darkness

wind-blown seeds –
the thoughts that
carried me here

after the breakup
I wake to find the broken
iris blossoming

shredding twenty
years of my life
flower moon rising

painting flowers –
inside, a desert
comes alive

a garden
overrun with weeds –
inner critic

Lucy Whitehead
@blueirispoetry

transformations
my unwritten life's story
has no end

one yellow butterfly
paused on my cheek
everything is different

becoming

happenstance
i used to be that
and became this

caterpillar
i held myself
in my own hands

peeling thick bark
the backyard oak's
moss and fur

unknownst
my dress matched
the butterfly

windward

Brought up in my mother's nest I became a bluebird. Not long after, I was the one who crowned the virgin. I even saw the statue's eyes move. But once my dad stepped out of the fairytale chorus he sang in, and stopped being the altar boy he thought he was, even my innocent old world small gentle mother in love, lost her faith. It was not long after, fending for myself that I realized, disappointment being a great teacher, that I was me, and had to build myself. One mate after another then finally a song.

bits of blue sky
and silver threads
my own hero

Kath Abela Wilson

searching for happiness...
in the bookstore's
self-help section

late spring snow
i learn to live
with delusion

feminist march
another twist
in my XY chromosome

Jay Friedenberg

still learning
to say goodbye --
fireflies glow

into the pillow
the wait
for another breath

stinging nettles -
every passing year
I miss you more

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

melting snow
you keep slipping
from my heart

flying birds
I stop googling
my old crush

falling rain
the rhythm and rhyme
of our love-making

hospital stay
bouquet of calla lilies
in my inbox

letting the roach live
compassion
or squeamishness

dirty laundry
my Facebook wall
tired of my rants

Jackie Chou

tattered
almost tearing apart
the cobbler's shoes

spoon-plastering
the rice on the surface
to cover up a theft

Taofeek Ayeyemi

decluttering the wisdom I never had

Vedic chants the pull of my DNA

truth of all that mattered mother's voice

warm tea...

no longer camouflaging
the greys

the answer

to my questions...
whispering wind

long

and short of it...

death a breath away

Madhuri Pillai

self-esteem book
on the bedside table
she compliments the mirror

Tomislav Sjekloća

his pick-up lines
scattered carelessly
unsprouted seed

murmuration
we still move in the world
without you

another birthday
he gives me
the bigger pillbox

robin
lawn
worm

Vera Constantineau
@VeraConstantine

morning pills
a medicinal promise
of tomorrow

the new me
changes fast
did you miss it

empty nest
the clink
of one wine glass

getting up
to do what?
senior moment

Terrie Jacks

poems the seed that rejections are

fatherhood the arrived horizon

no choice a snake sheds its skin

not half the man

I used to be ...

but that was yesterday

Adrian Bouter

origami birds
roosting in Hiroshima
a girl's memorial

sign at the border
silhouette of fleeing
father, mother, child

Bruce Jewett

snow monkeys what their poems mean

regatta

outracing

pain

Elizabeth McMunn-Tetangco

didn't kill me
just made me
bitter

morning news
searching for a way
to tell you

where we said
we would put one for dad
no bench

suddenly
not so alone
super moon

losing you
nothing left to do
but these dishes

shadows fall
across the parking lot
why she left me

Bob Moyer



homecoming...
the lonely ghost of
my childhood

Tsanka Shishkova

Tsanka Shishkova

scattered blossoms...
the ever-changing shape
of my regrets

first love...
the darkening colors
of the rainbow

paper boats...
you tell me
when they'll stop

Praniti

Now and Then

I chose to leave, trading “Southern young lady” for the excitement of places where relatives would not criticize my every move.

I left behind skirts with matching flats and little black cocktail dresses for bell bottom jeans, tops that bared my belly button and flip flops.

take-off...
soaring
to adventure

I entered a world where people thought I talked funny and asked me to count out loud, laughing at how I turned single-syllable words into two.

higher education
the mysteries
of a new latitude

In this world I fell in love, married, raised children, had a career I loved and good friends.

Now, decades later, I long for the unconditional love of that large extended family, the voices that drawl my name and people who hug even if they parted only two hours ago.

home...
still wondering
where I belong

Margaret Walker

seeing photos
of summer hikes with dad
hills I climb alone

learning how
to make friends
from a friend

my poems
the first year
unshared

Claire Vogel Camargo

our song...
i choose a different
brand of coffee

spitting out
the seeds of doubt —
pomegranate

screwdriver
the broken promises
i tried to fix

happy hour
cheaper than my drinks
his solemn promise

Control (Delete)

The X wiggles with the rest of the app thumbnail like a wagging finger, scolding, taunting. But my latest credit bill is heavier in my hand.

life debt
measuring my worth
in videogame gold

Switch

I allow the red bulb to cool slightly before unscrewing it from the lamp stand and replacing it with a standard yellow 38 watt. This item I will not return, but likely never use again either; it is but one of many memories neither of us wants anymore. I stick it in the corner junk drawer instead, filled with dust and mystery wires, where I can forget about it for years.

flipped off
in my darkest hour
christmas lights

Elizabeth Alford

[Facebook.com/ElizabethAlfordPoetry](https://www.facebook.com/ElizabethAlfordPoetry)

cleaning our old silverware
I count
the wasted years

wishing it would last longer --
the in-between
diapers stage

Stuck

I'm sitting in my therapist's office with a box of tissue at my elbow and a clock that counts the minutes of our session displayed prominently on her desk. I'm here because I can't stop ruminating about my husband's death. I keep seeing him, lying in the middle of a country road while a team of paramedics tries in vain to get his heart pumping again.

"Look up," my therapist tells me, and points to the window. "Focus on the present." To demonstrate, she spends three minutes just staring through the blinds at the sky, not saying a word. I gaze at the empty sky too, all the while asking myself how I missed the warning signs; all the while wondering if I could've saved him.

realizing I'm through
with therapy
we talk real estate

A Warning for New Widows

A month after my husband died, my aunt called to offer me advice. "Stay off ladders," she said. She was a widow too, and not long after her husband passed she'd fallen off a ladder while hanging a picture, twisting her ankle.

My aunt understood a thing about grief -- how it can play almost imperceptibly in the background, like a mournful melody, distracting a person from a mundane task. A couple weeks later, I nearly took my thumb off chopping an onion. That's when I realized hers was the best advice for bereavement anyone ever gave me.

for the first time
I try patching drywall --
the hole he left

Kathryn Bold

mourning dove solo -
i caress my belly
and the scar

her wedding ring
in the pawnshop window -
summer drought

blue hour -
tracing her late sister's face
from memory

robyn brooks

teenage

i can now put my feet into
father's shoes

gardening

i learned how to
call a spade a spade

mallika chari

ant hill
how they better humans
by working together

counting stars
the toddler makes it
to three fingers

the spoon
against the soup bowl
her tremors

after the divorce
our home
becomes a house

Warren Gossett

the art of letting go

two months later and our rings have now settled somewhere at the
bottom of the atlantic ocean. i tried distract myself since it happened,
but it turns out what i really needed was to come to terms with it all.

first warm day
the nestling
sprouts her wings

Lori A Minor
Guest 'Failed' Editor
editor@failedhaiku.com

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