

failed ~~haiku~~

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mike rehling

'Failed' Editor

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Curiosity Killed the Cat

We are sitting on the couch. He is contemplating dinner. I am contemplating life.

Him: So what's for dinner?

Me: If money is the root cause of all evil then why do we go after it?

Him:

Him: I'll order some pizza.

movie night
in a far away galaxy
a star explodes

Hemapriya Chellappan

Cast List

In order of appearance

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Christina Chin

Teiichi Suzuki

Bryan Rickert

Cynthia Rowe

Bruce Jewett

Aju Mukhopadhyay

Ingrid Baluchi

Neera Kashyap

Gautam Nadkarni

Jack Galmitz

Gary Ford

Alicia Hilton

Marion Alice Poirier

Ray Rasmussen

Prathami

Ingrid Bruck

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

Willie R. Bongcaron

Bob Lucky

Arvinder Kaur

John Hawkhead

Debbie Strange
Lew Watts
Rose
Veronika Zora Novak
Nancy Shires
Christa Pandey
Gail Oare
Hifsa Ashraf
Roberta Beary
Gil Jackofsky
Chris Bullock
Richard Tice
Bruce England
Michael Baeyens
Paul Beech
Taofeek Ayeyem
Bart Greene
Simon Wilson
Wendy Toth Notarnicola
Daniela Misso
Mark Meyer
Kristen Lindquist
Kat Lehmann
Pitt Buerken
Rick Jackofsky
Ed Bremson

Colleen M. Farrelly
John J. Dunphy
Richa Sharma
Benno Schmidt
Maxianne Berger
John J. Han
B.A. France
Carol Raisfeld
K. Ramesh
Gillena Cox
Barbara Kaufmann
Peter Adair
Joanna Ashwell
Hazel Hall
Marilyn Ashbaugh
Vandana Parashar
Elizabeth Crocket
Jackie Maugh Robinson
Isabella Kramer
Milan Rajkumar
Tsanka Shishkova
Mark Gilbert
Mike Gallagher
Lucia Fontana
Tracy Davidson
Susan Farner

Andrew Riutta
Réka Nyitrai
Guliz Mutlu
Elaine Wilburt
Pippa Phillips
Madhuri Pillai
Ezio Infantino
Kath Abela Wilson
Terrie Jacks
JT McClellan
Jibril Dauda Muhammad
Natalia Kuznetsova
Chen-ou Liu
Maeve O'S
David J Kelly
Nadejda Kostadinova
Susan Beth Furst
Neha Talreja
Manoj Nair
Irina Guliaeva
Francis W. Alexander
Darrell Petska
Jill Lange
Lori A Minor
David Oates
JasonRFurtak

Claire Vogel Camargo

Tanya McDonald

Gary S. Rosin

Salil Chaturvedi

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Christine L. Villa

Treefort

Spent last night on a treehouse away from the city deep in the woods enjoying nature and the occasional familiar hoots and screeches, I slept right through and got up early this morning, flung open the windows to the cool crisp morning air. The cats done their business were grooming themselves outdoors, all except one.

the black cat
guarding a scorpion
last night's catch

Christina Chin

farewell

My sister passed away May 10 at the old people's home. The chief mourner, my nephew, informed me by the phone that he decided to hold his mother's funeral by only his family without a notice nor attendants at a funeral hall because of the situation of staying home.

As I could not attend it, it was sorrow farewell.

triaging--
gardeners cut roses
relentlessly

Teiichi Suzuki

Weighing In

“I hate this scale, or maybe I just hate myself.”

long winter
the extra layers
of guilt

Bryan Rickert

Rainy Day Stretch

The wall dryer is high, too high. I can reach inside the drum, just. The installer never thought to consider my diminished inches. So I fish with my fingertips for lace knickers, tangled in a spent dance with his footy socks.

star jasmine –
reaching for blooms
he never sees

Cynthia Rowe

www.cynthiarowe.com.au

A quarrelsome creature, glares at me when I try
petting her. Aeons of trying to patch things up in
India, northern China, Milwaukee

no doubt the cat
a wife from a past life
still mad at me

Bruce Jewett

The Untouchable

Everyone of us was cautious as everyone else in other houses and countries; who knew where the arrow of corona lay in wait to bite any moment! Everything was hush-hush; silently going out silently coming in; masked, spectacted, body covered unlike before; as if a spy spying on each other.

a life away from life
relationship gets cracked
intimacy fades

When he was virus-positive he was taken out, we were isolated in the neighbourhood. Everyone looked at our dwelling we looked from corners of our window holes. All sides sealed. Fear was lurking back from all corners. It was a situation created deliberately as a way to precaution. Men and women were separated from men and women. Suspicion and scientific superstition reigned.

Are we sure that all the steps that are taken at each stage are accurate?

a dead body
was laying on the road untouched,
corona-virus ridden.

Aju Mukhopadhyay

Turning tables

The headmaster repeatedly demands an answer to his math question. It's probably simple but the more insistent he is, the more I seize up. All I see is Father standing over me.

"I don't know, Daddy," I blurt out to class hilarity.

dirty linen . . .
the relief
of a secret out

Ingrid Baluchi

ECOSYSTEMS

She walks through a sunlit forest followed by a boy with glasses. Recently widowed, she is attending a forest retreat. She settles under a tree and breathes deeply. Her eyes close. The boy looks up. He starts up the tree trunk, hits his head, hangs by a branch, then clambers to it.

leaf rain –
tears shimmer through
broken glasses

Neera Kashyap

Say When

I'll say one thing about my pal Satish. He mixes the best cocktails this side of...whatever. His invitations therefore are not to be dismissed. Accordingly on receiving it I tooled over to his mansion one day.

Oddly enough the furniture and decor at his place looked markedly different from last time. The architecture too. Oh, well. These wealthy blokes have money to burn. Anyway I focused on getting sloshed. Until I was rudely shaken awake at dawn.

Satish phoned me next day to ask me why the devil I hadn't turned up last evening.

Harbour Bar...
the way the barkeep smirks
serving me orange juice

Gautam Nadkarni

In the luncheonette

Someone left a stained napkin
An ink scribbled poem
I couldn't make out what it said
But I think it went something like this

I was lost
Beneath the wings
Of the rising birds

Jack Galmitz

Untold Story

In a marina while walking the dock, photographing the boats, I notice her standing on her deck: blond dreadlocks, flip-flops, cut-offs, halter top and deeply tanned skin. She makes eye contact, nods, asks, “Want to come aboard for a toke?”

thinning fog
a lady bug
lights on my sleeve

Gary Ford

WE WORSHIP AT YOUR WATERY THRONE

Tentacles grasped diver's spear slashed neoprene
kraken's slithery embrace popped ribcage chum
leaked from chest fleshy treasure summoned sharks
eels rays clownfish supplicants praised almighty octo
goddess of watery world no greater communion than
sharing stretchy ligaments twangy tendons
hammerhead chomped femur stacking bones throne
testament heralding apocalyptic upheaval.

decarbonization
purging the seas
of humanity

Alicia Hilton

The View

I stand by the window watching the surf pound the
stone wall and wait
for his daily visit to the beach.

A bent figure appears at the rail of the bridge with his
service dog. He gazes at the
waves for a short time until the sky turns dark.

a mariner
wedded to the sea...
thunder clap

Marion Alice Poirier

Rocinante

After tortured covid months, I've named my new camper after Don Quixote's steed. Canoe on top, I'm off to challenge, not windmills, but Algonquin's calm waters; not dragons, but rainbow trout; and not searching for damsels in need help, instead . . .

a damsel fly
cast far out
Splash!

Ray Rasmussen

<http://raysweb.net>

The Rabbit Habit

Certain people have a natural tendency to sting themselves with words that help in destroying their own business of going about life. They just need to go to therapy as soon as possible, because if they don't I'm scared that they'll fall asleep too quick and die.

simple habit
brush your teeth
in bitter sorrow

Prathami

Spring Pastels

Light flickers strike early weeds, rampant grass.
Bluebell, trillium, trout lily, Dutchman's britches,
cohosh, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Virginia bluebells bloom.
Flowers gather sunshine before the sky canopy closes.
Birdsongs stretch daylight, frog calls saturate night.
Heat builds by midmorning, the creek gravid with
rain.

 sunset
 snagging treetop
colored eggs

Ingrid Bruck

In The Church

Father is a non-practicing Catholic.

alpha
he is in the church
on my communion day

I am a non-practicing Catholic.

omega
I am in the church
on his funeral day

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

The Hole of the Donut

Life offers us joys and heartaches, triumphs and defeats.

And no matter where we are, it is always satisfying to focus on our accomplishments.

As they say, count our blessings.
Look at the donut and not at its hole.

blackhole
the energy it takes
to resist

Willie R. Bongcaron

Sleeping with Samuel Beckett

midnight
a flickering street light
casts its shadow

At last the darkness outside and the darkness inside
have met, old acquaintances out of touch so long they
don't recognize each other, too afraid to look in the
mirror. Perhaps it's too late. It's always late. But here
we are.

no matter
where I look
stars I can't see

Bob Lucky

Secret

Convinced the stones were withholding a secret, he took a sledgehammer and tried to beat it out of them, to make them sing. He pressed an ear to the ground, but there was nothing but silence – and the crunch of gravel when he walked away.

starlight
darkness falls
between the cracks

Bob Lucky

Legacies

A cobblestone street leads to my school. Come summer and there are stories of my friends visiting their native places. I have never heard about any such place. Our parents just talk about gory details of massacres. Everyone gives evasive answers. My older siblings tell me; we are the children of storms. We belong to silence.

bedtime stories –
caressing the flowers
on mother's quilt

Arvinder Kaur

Birthday Money

*She was at that junction between child and adult,
where soft toys were on their slow journey out of her bedroom.
So, for this birthday, her presents were wedged inside cards;
cheques or cash to spend on her increasing independence,
her accelerating path into the ravenous world:*

*fourteenth birthday
she puts gift money aside
for breast enhancements*

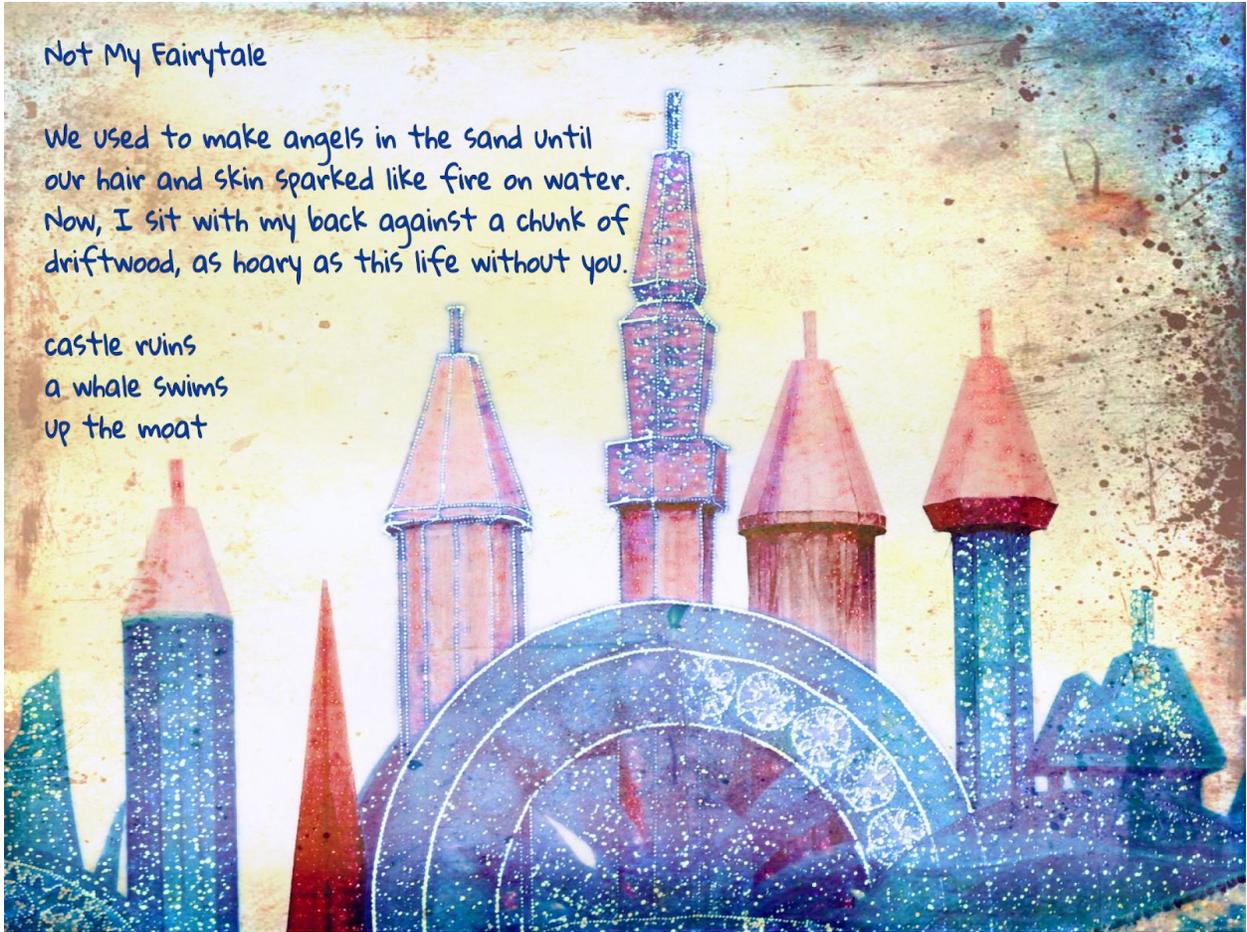


John Hawkhead

Not My Fairytale

We used to make angels in the sand until
our hair and skin sparked like fire on water.
Now, I sit with my back against a chunk of
driftwood, as hoary as this life without you.

castle ruins
a whale swims
up the moat



Debbie Strange

[@Debbie Strange](https://www.instagram.com/DebbieStrange)

debbiemstrange.blogspot.com

In the Blood

The passive aggressiveness started on our honeymoon. Later, like her mother, she perfected the art of putting the knife in, then turning it. By the time of the divorce she was going for the jugular.

first BBQ . . .
her brother shows me
how a deer dies

Lew Watts

I preen clouds from sky flocks of rearing sheep,
Dreams bleat could be heard across the pasture,
By the time, dawn scissor day, they all will enter the
moon to singe moon-lit images in eyes, her eyes,

Sleepless night—
Stars glim
To check on me.

Rose

Ricochet

Such a fool I was not to pursue him. His warm touch, down-to-earth nature. The brightness in his eyes that always left me mesmerized. I felt inadequate, inferior, unworthy of good love. I was fighting demons I did not understand, so how could he possibly?

So, to protect him, I walked away.

skipping stones . . .
ripples return to
my feet

Veronika Zora Novak

College Teaches Her Something

Freshmen learn research by rooting out their family trees. One place they always dig are newspapers on microfilm. Flick the light on the old machine, crank the squeaky handle past ads for corsets, cattle, tonic for catarrh. Come upon a mention of a parent's parents.

at last she meets
her grandparents
murder-suicide

Nancy Shires

But This

The bedroom is dark at 5 a.m. when she starts walking on top of me. I roll away. She leaves for a few minutes, then starts meowing in the hall, by the bed, under the bed. No, I say firmly. Back on the bed, she pats my face. She'd do worse if I shut her out of the room. I grumble and get up to let her out.

in the east
such a wave of
coquina pink

Nancy Shires

Joyous Harvest

This year the fig broke out in splendid leaves, fit for a cover-up. Then came the fruits, promising a bumper crop. We salivated with anticipation.

last ripened fig
squirrels' peace offering
after the raid

Christa Pandey

Calculating

According to the almanac, the sun will be up today for 11 hours and 43 minutes, the moon for 9 hours and 53 minutes. That leaves 2 hours and 24 minutes of time with neither sun nor moon shadows.

a black cat
trips the motion detector's
burned out bulb

Gail Oare

Nostalgia

There is no one across the street on that night when I was strolling on a sidewalk; an endless chain of thoughts about him follows me everywhere. It is not that easy to go beyond the silence within and outside without shutting the doors of the past behind.

cul-de-sac
I trip over
my shadow

Hifsa Ashraf

My Twin Travels Backward in Time & Space

1st Time Saying The Dead Girl's Name

1st overdose 1st rehab 1st 12 step

1st drunk drive 1st fatality 1st suspended sentence

1st pregnancy 1st elopement 1st miscarriage

1st drink 1st drug 1st dropout

hospice sunlamp

words spill

sideways

Roberta Beary

<https://twitter.com/shortpoemz>

Grandmother's house in 1934 - railroad flat - a train of rooms, each following the other. Faint smells: apples and furniture polish. Suddenly my four-year-old self confronts an apparition: Uncle George in full regalia - boots, spurs, and brass. Troop B of the New York 121st cavalry has been called out to "break a strike." I didn't know what that meant.

having lived ninety years
I have
different heroes now

Gil Jackofsky

POLITICS TO A T

“Yes,” I say, “I only use tea bags with British black tea. “British tea,” she says thoughtfully, looking at the box, with its pictures of sheep grazing in green dales. “I don’t remember seeing any tea plantations when I visited Yorkshire.”

tea bag full of history
Gandhi savours
salt from the sea

Chris Bullock

Exasperated, My Daughter Gave Me a Gift Card to Get One

The accordion fold that contains the guidelines opens outward. Thankfully, there are lots of drawings. In the end I have to use the help line, and the woman's voice—young, I think—is very patient and pleasant. I am very patient, too.

first smartphone
the instruction card
with pictures of seniors

Richard Tice

Barefoot

Once, visiting my mother's parents in South Dakota, we went to a state park with my aunt's family. Later, mother removed a sliver from my right foot. Next morning I had an infection. A doctor treated me for blood poisoning, wrapping a bandage up to my lower calf. Mother took a photo of me sitting on the stoop outside my grandmother's kitchen. I wore shorts and a shirt, and my left foot was shoeless.

Old photos
remind me how much
I went barefoot

Bruce England

A clear night on the cliffs of Dover. Lights are moving along the French coastline near Calais. I wonder what the Celts believed when they saw fires on the far side. Did they remember that their ancestors walked out of the old continent's heart together, watched over by the same gods?

sea strait
across the water
across time

Michael Baeyens

MATCHMAKING

With her Hepburn look and my Elvis quiff, we might have made a couple. So our mums hoped anyway. Trouble was, the fancying...there was none! Which didn't stop us having a blast that one time I went round.

Bopping out of sync, we laughed like crazy. And pitied our matchmaker mums.

sweet peas...
long years on
the scent of desperation

Paul Beech

Blow Softener

I don't take my coffee black, or raw; even the ones labelled as decaffeinated make me feel drained still. If I continue that for a week, I become lean and weak. But thanks to milk for coming to my aid. Even my girlfriend who doesn't like coffee generally would take a few sip from my creamed coffee.

sacrifices
the burden we carry
for addiction

Taofeek Ayeyem

*I know a wonderfully winsome woman
who is married to a funeral director.*

don't flirt with women
whose husbands can easily
dispose of bodies

Bart Greene

On Southwold Pier

The mural of George Orwell, and the backdrop of
newspeak quotes, is unusual for a pier. In the tearoom
a woman with a cut glass accent is rude to the waiter.
Her daughter's eyes fill with apology.
Life deals the hand, but it is our choice how we play
the cards.

Covid came
they fled to their holiday homes
crimethinkful

Simon Wilson

Awakening

My friend calls after midnight to tell me her teenage son has died. Though extremely close as children, we've drifted apart as adults and haven't seen each other in 20 years. I never knew her son, yet I lie awake, realizing that I've let his entire life pass me by.

sleepless night
the last star fades
in the morning sky

Wendy Toth Notarnicola

After a couple of days staying at home, I decide to take a short walk here in my village. The way to the Hill (il Colle) is a lovely path full of olive trees that leads to an ancient spring. It's a beautiful day, the air is fresh and there is a gentle breeze coming from the mountain.

early morning light -
the shade of many trees
refresh my thoughts

Daniela Misso

arpeggio

He was my closest friend, from our frenzied college days in the 60's through our 50 years-mellowed-in-oak times. Oh, we had our uppers and downers, epiphanies and bummers, but our lifelong bond, right up to his death, was our mutual love of guitars and the blues.

phantom fingers...
I pick up one of his riffs
in my sleep

Mark Meyer

Numerology

A friend tells me that on a drive through his neighborhood yesterday he saw ducklings, goslings, cygnets, and wild turkey poults. I tease him that he got the grand slam of baby wildfowl.

four
my lucky number
before the divorce

Kristen Lindquist

Relief Sculpture

My mind flutters in dreams of precise geometries, a lulling intoxication of ease. Maybe I can refine my inner serenity until I, too, am polished. But how can a house be quieted when its rooms are brimming with beasts?

smoothing the dark diary I edit my own braille

Kat Lehmann

Class reunion

Sixty years ago we graduated from high school. Today there are still 16 out of 17, but if you compare the number of hairs, the losses are dramatic.

old men
the bald heads shining
in the sun

Pitt Buerken

Busy Bees

As I sit beneath a two-hundred-year-old oak, admiring a lily that will bloom for just one day, birds and time go flying by, but some things never change. I wonder if these stately trees merely suffer the gossip of buzzing bees, or do they savor the trending topics and flavors of the day.

busybodies
spreading gossip
they call it news

Rick Jackofsky
www.rickjackofsky.com

Privacy Policy

I've basically surrendered to medical science at this point. After two CAT scans in the past two weeks, trying to clarify that tumor, nothing is really hidden anymore; the curtains thrown back; all my walls penetrated; all my secrets revealed.

naked
on the cold, indifferent slab of time
trembling

Ed Bremson

From the Deep

It's a sweltering afternoon sailing through South Florida's lulling swells and shimmering skies. The latest beats bathe the deck, as well-wishers sip cocktails and laugh. A seagull swoops across the deck, absconding with spilt birthday shrimp. She stares off the starboard side, sighing and shrugging off his offer.

a hug of tentacles
tugging to the deep—
grief

Colleen M. Farrelly

Pioneer festivals typically depict long-ago practices such as making cornshuck dolls and firing flintlock muskets. I attended one last year, however, that managed to make this Baby Boomer feel really old.

blackboard
a costumed reenactor demonstrates
cursive writing

John J. Dunphy

A few years ago in August, I visited a mountain town where my fiancé was posted. For our date, I put on a lucky necklace of colored stones bought from a Tibetan market. Amidst the pines, crimson dusk rekindled a promise.

steadfast moon
the familiar cadence
of his footsteps

Richa Sharma
[@bluelakemoon](#)

Storm outside

When a heavy storm comes, I worry about the house and the yard. As soon as the wind gets stronger, I pick up my guitar and start playing a slow tune. Often the song soothes the wind pressing against the window pane.

storm outside
in the breaks of my silent song
the wind

Benno Schmidt

And They Talk, Too

My books are in piles, double-shelved, or both. I suspect this laissez-faire approach has led them to believe they can move around on their own. Maybe they socialize. I think some of them might even, [blush], have threesomes. But catch them together, and they act all innocent.



Maxianne Berger

Light on Water (Ginninderra Press, 2010), Amelia Fielden
Antimatter (Broken Jaw Press, 2003), Hugh Hazelton
In the Next Galaxy (Copper Canyon Press, 2002), Ruth Stone

The Neighbours Are Talking (Bondi Studios, 2011), Mike Montreuil
One Hundred Frogs (Inklings Editions, Weatherhill Inc., 1995), Hiroaki Sato
In the Mist (The Haunted Press, 2010), Kimiko Horne

Maxianne Berger

The Year 2020

Sometimes we look back in time, praising an era of peace and tranquility. Such nostalgia is harmless but groundless. There were some worry-free days, but sadness and misery have dominated human history. Life is tough—it always has been.

corn tassels
flaxen hair caressed
by the wind

John J. Han

Blank Stares

A hunting magazine shows a proud dad and son who pose behind the deer they killed. They wear a broad smile. In the morning, the deer did not know that it would be his last day.

releasing a fish
the quick movement
of its tail

John J. Han

sitting quietly in the darkness of a shaded window,
the day slips past, moment by moment. coffee cold on
the table and unopened books scattered around. air
rushes out of the vents with constancy, the
meandering stream of thoughts unconsciously flowing
alongside...

running in the sand
waves roll and crash
... unseen smile

B.A. France

A Place in Time

We sit on the porch each day in the fragrance of lilacs, reminiscing. Memories of Aunt Edna spilling her cologne into the heater. A scent like no other filled the house all winter and most of the summer and is still with me today. And when Uncle Al passed, at the funeral we heard whispering, "Red Sox 4, Yankees 2". Makes me chuckle even now.

just married
our first gift to ourselves
two rocking chairs

Carol Raisfeld

[@carol red](#)

The Bully

In this village, apart from crows, you see a lot of drongos. A medium-sized black bird with a forked tail. This bird is a bully: it goes around chasing others, and is not shy of humans. Sometimes, I wonder what David Attenborough would have said as he walked through a paddy field, on a summer evening, and came across this bird.

country road...
improvising on a call,
a drongo on the pole

K. Ramesh

Leggo blocks I believe, are designed to fit the fantasy of every idealist I am sure.

If it cannot fit, it's not meant to be. No surprises, no challenges, no adventure, no revolution. Just the plain and simple square knot into the correct square hole.

And in this compelling game of bonding, grandparents and grandchildren loose themselves, regardless of weather or time of day. I reflect on pre covid days. I miss my granddaughter. A video call is just not the same thing as a visit.

floral patterns
on billowing drapes -
a crawling ant

Gillena Cox

In Clover

The design on the fern fronds gets me wondering
about how it all began. Who, or what, set the world
into motion? A young bunny hops out of the herb
garden. There must be a billion white flowers in my
lawn.

milky way
all the questions
no one can answer

Barbara Kaufmann

Long Distance

My name calls across the the street's wilderness –
thrice. Months since I've heard a soul. Unmask. No
man hug. Step back. His beard grows patriarchal; the
buddleia shrinks to dusty manna. I nod at his word
bites. My voice hums in my ears. Murmuring
footsteps threaten. His goodbye drifts across the Dead
Sea.

ears blocked with wax
mumble of morning news
soon forgotten

Peter Adair

[@slipperypawords](https://twitter.com/slipperypawords)

Journeys

Are we there yet? How much longer will it take? Can we stop for a break? I'm thirsty, hungry. The woes of childhood when the car journey to anywhere seemed to take forever. I spy with my little eye...

endings

England to Scotland

the magic of wheels

Joanna Ashwell

Safe Haven

“He’s ours till they get it together.” Our friend holds him as a father would. The child is silent now, high on serotonin, mouth attached to a half-filled feeding bottle. One tiny hand clasps a bear that might have been rescued from trash, grey and limp as an old sock.

family court
a couple’s ecstasy
turns to shards

Hazel Hall

The Dunes

Barefoot, we haul ourselves up drifts of sand. Our exposed soles burn so badly that we pee through our bathing suits for some relief. From the highest cliff we run as fast as we can to the cold waters of Lake Michigan. When our lips turn blue we do it all over again.

season's end
I walk sand castles
built in a dream

Marilyn Ashbaugh

Curtain Call

It's the first day of autumn, the loveliest season of the year. Soon, the leaves will change colour and fall; and each tree will be different from all the others.

We, unlike trees, like to believe that we choose our fate; that we can decide when to belong and when to let go. But, don't we too surrender to the forces of the nature when the time comes?

rounding off
the edges of river rocks--
life

Vandana Parashar

The Sting

I don't really remember him. But what I do remember, is how he made me feel.

blooming garden
a bee flies
to the next flower

Elizabeth Crocket

<http://www.Elizabethcrocket.com>

Haight

The far horizon blazed electric orange. Thousands of iron butterflies slammed through the shadows. Ragnar tossed on a cannabis mattress and hummed “In A Gadda Da Vida” in his sleep. As the dusk thickened to oblivion, the oncoming horizon smoldered.

laying quill aside
she picks up her mom’s love beads
too young for Woodstock

Jackie Maugh Robinson

fervent

I stretch my arms until my fingertips reach the edges
of the thunderstorm **

the hot kiss
of gods after midnight

Isabella Kramer

haiku-veredit.blogspot.com

Green Prison

What am I doing in a place full of artificially crooked ,
wire hooked , gnarled plants of different shapes and
sizes . Is this the place where plants take shelter with
a given name ' nursery ' .

old bodhi tree
stands like a statue –
on a platter

Milan Rajkumar

It's A Small World

Everyone was in a hurry fleeing from the coming storm. Far from the hotel, I took shelter in the nearest cafe overlooking the sea. On the video wall Disneyland electrical parade dream lights and music. "Hi! Do you remember? You and me..." "OMG!" - my flatmate from the college years.

I still believe
in our crazy dance in the rain
so long ago

Tsanka Shishkova

queueing for food
friendly banter
from a distance

The first guy in the queue emerges clutching a newspaper. (And the second).

Mark Gilbert

Tailspin

I attempted to rescue a small bird which was writhing in the middle of Dromada Road today. As I poked my stick gingerly in its direction, it split. Suddenly, I realised that it was a couple of canoodling coal tits. My appointment with the cataract specialist is next week.

blackthorn
pointing out the rules
of disengagement

Mike Gallagher

*****the space inside*****

once Issa wrote a poem that i've taken as a medicine
to bring with me for a while.
it says "never forget we walk on hell gazing at
flowers"

beyond
good and bad
hemp blossoms

Lucia Fontana

blog: chanokeburi.it

CCTV

The human cries, shivers in the late night air. I record her movements, those unsteady footsteps across the roof, the way she hovers at the edge, then steps back, body falling in on itself. She's drunk. Depressed. Even a machine can see it. Why can't she?

mourning fog
the stranger
they scrape off the sidewalk

Tracy Davidson

Twitter: [@tracydavidson27](https://twitter.com/tracydavidson27)

Pre-K-saurus

He is four and a half but should be five. Pre-K starts today and he is ready to see his teacher and friends, to play and learn. BUT—he must wear a mask, refrain from hugging anyone and sit in isolation.

STILL—Pre-K-saurus will evolve and survive the apocalypse.

August
the end
the beginning

Susan Farner

Dusk

He killed himself---mostly because he wanted to see
what else was out there.

the Milky Way---
a piece of driftwood
caught in the reeds

Mud and Beer

Sometimes, I think the stains on my old mattress tell
the stories more sharply than any fucking poem. The
one that looks like a bearded god was the result of a
good time that somehow went haywire.

crushed crabapples---
his pockets heavy
with the wind

Andrew Riutta

Lullaby

Nowadays, for us who live in the twenty-first century, motorcycles are what sparrows were for the ancients — they carry the soul of our beloved ones to the heights of the sky.

lullaby, another birdsong picked clean

Réka Nyitrai

Twitter: [@nyitraireka1](https://twitter.com/nyitraireka1)

Why?

Because, someone is gazing at my eyes, smiling, covering his face with the book, only showing his eyes and he is gazing at me, again, showing his face, smiling. Whatever it takes, I won't take one to one classes again.

years later
friends call me
illiterate

Guliz Mutlu

Introductions

“If he does it one more time, I’m gonna leave him,” my grandmother said before the nurse called her back.

My fiancé, who had only just met her, turned to me, asking, “How long have they been married?”

“55 years.”

wedding rings—
every day making his toast
without butter

Elaine Wilburt

Erosion

Knee-deep, a limb of salt-cracked wood drifts closer,
then retreats. I untangle an anklet of kelp, limned
with a bloody bloom—a red tide year. My hand a
leaky cup. The sucking tide doesn't want me to go.

In once fish-filled waters
my hand comes up empty.

Pippa Phillips

In Conclusion

Resplendent, I thought to myself as I watch the
celestial orb sink in
colours of gold and ochre. Lost in the dying silence of
the day the
sudden impatient bark brings me back into focus.
Turning, I see the
dog watching me. Ah yes! It's her dinner time.

all day
this song
in my mind...
I belt it out
In soprano

Madhuri Pillai

The Adige River and the State Road meander between imposing cliffs and still unripe vineyards.

There are no parking areas .

For enjoying the landscape I slow down my car.

From a distance a SUV arrives at great speed.

passing in the curve -

a child greets me

from the window

Ezio Infantino

Sheltered

Dizzy from walking these days, one room to another, on the second floor, I imagine the first. Where is the front door? I am back in my original house. My parents' bedroom, a home from school haven. Tea, toast and a little carved monk. Where is the dining room? Seven spinning gold circles with red cherry centers. Our family, this Sunday morning breakfast. From below a mumble of conversation and scent of fresh crumbcake. I climb out of soft covers and into the hallway, out onto the narrow ledge over the stairs. Listening for a long time day darkens. No one has noticed.

our minds
the shape of a house
we've never left

Kath Abela Wilson

Senior Moment

In the car on the dash's screen I noticed a message, Listening. Listening? I was the only one in the car. Who was listening? Big Brother? Concerned, I stopped to investigate. It changed to, Thanks for listening to some radio station. The volume was down. I turned off the radio.

silence
the ringing in my ears
fills the room

Terrie Jacks

The crunch of footsteps, passing catus, upon a trail of pebbles and sand. On our regular morning walk,

desert jack rabbit
watching dog
undiscovered...

Of course those packs of visiting coyotes nightly, have honed it's skills in the desert beyond a domesticated hunting dog.

JT McClellan

Teamwork

After coding my path of the project, I gave my colleague access to the updated code. 'Test the salient features before you commit your code to the master repository, ' I remind him. 'A single semicolon could ruin your day'. Improved efficiency and productivity are one of the importance of working in a team because it allows the workload to shared. I shut down my laptop, slide it into my backpack as I pad towards the door.

in each step
the weight of air
carried along

Jibril Dauda Muhammad

DAYDREAMING IN THE FALL

As years go by you become more idle. At some point you realize you shouldn't plan your future and instead you start revisiting the past trying to edit it. Silly, indeed.

Your mind knows it's futile and had you done this or that differently it might have turned worse. There are always thorns unseen.

But still... your imagination gets carried away.

Moreover, it is in many ways an enjoyable pastime.

"What is done cannot be undone" maxim is too trivial and boring.

And anyway, I am bored ... as years go by.

lost in daydreams
in the maze of splendor ...
rose garden

Natalia Kuznetsova

Real News About Fake News

Any resemblance to current events or actual locales,
or to living persons, is not coincidental.

election night
I too lose this pissing contest
with my shadow

Chen-ou Liu

Poetry in the Moment:

<http://chenouliu.blogspot.com>

Twitter: [@ericcoliu](#) and [@storyhaikutanka](#)

The Present

A friend of mine had an uncle who suffered with a troubled mind. He had been a brilliant student of architecture, before his first breakdown. One year, at Christmas, he gifted his sister-in-law with some chocolates.

missing from the tops
of all the Walnut Whips –
nuts

Maeve O'S

Twitter: [@writefromwithin](https://twitter.com/writefromwithin)

It's not what you think

The sun won't rise. It never does. The earth will turn to reveal it. The moon won't grow and shrink throughout the month. It moves in and out of shadow. The stars won't come out tonight. They're always there. While I am a fragment of a pixel on the prodigious pages of evolution, some people will always be special.

spellbound —
you find it so easy
breaking the laws of physics

David J Kelly
[@motto sakura](#)

Silver lining

She had a boyfriend, that used to come to collect her with his big motorbike. He wore a black leather jacket and long dark hair. Every time he came, all exited I snooped to the window to watch them. Unconsciously I started seeing through man and woman relationships.

child's world
learning to pronounce
a male name

Nadejda Kostadinova

2020

We leave the city and move to the Shenandoah Valley, land of churches, Walmarts, and the world's only recreation of Shakespeare's Blackfriars Theatre. We catch the seven o'clock performance, stop at the local dairy bar, and drive back home in our shiny new Silverado, to the sound of crickets, and stars we've never seen before...

cognitive dissonance
any other time
an improbable fiction

Susan Beth Furst

Isolation

It has been two months since my mum is stuck in a different state- a thousand kms away. Without her, the clanking of utensils and the whirring of the washing machine are never the same. The taste and aroma of my lentil soup is never a match to hers. They say everything happens for a good reason... I'm still trying to find one.

my eyes
now fit for them--
mom's glasses

Neha Talreja

Just a thought

Poetry knows no language, no caste or creed. It falls upon you, creeps inside you and just stays there whether you like it or not....That makes it a lot like love.... doesn't it?

3 am
the juggle between
hyphen and ellipses

Neha Talreja

Do you like caramel or cheese? Caramel I reply,
shuffling my feet. I like cheese. Our first date. In
college. We had booked corner seats for the movie.

mixed popcorn-
in the darkness of the movie hall
I pray for caramel.

Manoj Nair

Taking it out

- Vacation, eh?

- No, just...

It`s my neighbour upstairs.

- Moving?

- Nope, I am simply...

It`s my neighbour downstairs.

- A new boyfriend?

- No... yes... but I`m just going...

It`s my neighbor to the left.

holiday time

taking granddad`s torn suitcase

to the garbage

Irina Guliaeva

From Big City to Small Town

I head towards the business section of Homewood. As the spring breeze taps my face, I see children playing and salesmen hawking their wares. Tomorrow, I'll be in Ohio for the summer.

Sagittarius –
spinning old records
on Grandma's Victrola

The screams of children fill the air as I walk through the Southside.

Francis W. Alexander

Forbidden Haiku: A Boomer's Diary

New Year - reading published works for my first and the coffee shop's last time. Sadly, I turn my homeless cousin away – winter night.

Virgo –
the shock of hearing that
Professor Hall has passed

More news that the pandemic is still strong – melting snow. Receiving a second eviction notice – spring thunder.

Francis W. Alexander

No more the spring-fed creek of childhood. Grass grows in its winding bed and tree roots jut like scuffed knees. Ghosts of brook trout and bullfrogs stir at my step as tough-shelled beetles scuttle clear. Even the wind struggles to know my wrinkled face.

summery mirage
field mouse takes a dip
in waves of grass

Darrell Petska

conservancies.wordpress.com

On this short flight from Vancouver to San Francisco,
I'm amazed that customs allowed my carryon
Chinatown lunch. It's just after liftoff, nearing sunset,
and I'm sipping a complimentary glass of Champagne!

our flight attendant smiles
'please remember
to refrain from smoking
on this flight . . . and
for the rest of your life'

Jill Lange

Stoned to Death

And when I mention my depression, I'm told that
happiness is a choice.

all my pills the morning aster

Lori A Minor

Social Constructs

How did we reach a point in society where Justin Bieber looks like America's creepy old uncle?

pandemic—
we wait for a drop
in the housing market

Lori A Minor

Focus

A local restaurant advertises “JB BBQ and Such--more than just barbecue; hamburgers hotdogs, chicken sandwiches, chicken fingers, wings, onion rings and fries.” I’m thinking y’all are not focused. I’d have been happier if I saw a sign “Just Barbecue, damn it!”
Hardees has fries.

romantic gesture
he pressure-washes “I love you”
on the driveway

David Oates

[@witnwords](#)

[davidoatesathensga.com](#)

South

At a gift shop, I pick up a book that claims it will teach me about the South. It says y'all is the second person singular. I put it back on the shelf.

my Georgia son
visits Chicago
“It’s snowing!”

David Oates

[@witnwords](#)

[davidoatesathensga.com](#)

I spent today sharing with the goats;
they are captivated by the way that
my every utterance speaks fondly
of you.

the goats
feeding on
--my joy

Goats have a way of doing that;
making me feel as if my lovesick
ramblings are reason enough to
pause the farm.

JasonRFurtak
[@jasonrfurtak](https://twitter.com/jasonrfurtak)

In my hand, a small black and white photo of a young couple standing on a rocky hilltop. She holding her hair with one hand, he standing, hip cocked, both smiling into the camera. A quick honeymoon before he went back to work. I wish I had known them then.

rarely ruffled
by the terrain of life
my parents

Claire Vogel Camargo

Stranger Than Fiction

Keys, wallet, phone, hand sanitizer, mask. Shopping list ordered according to store layout, veggies first, toilet paper last. The wiped-down cart an ark: two cabbages, two slabs of salmon, two bottles of gin.

checkstand headlines
no sign
of Elvis

Tanya McDonald

Washing the Banana

For all I know, it could be covered in COVID. So,
before peeling, I drizzle it with dish soap, wrap my
hand around its slippery girth, and lather it for the
length of the alphabet song.

summer heat
the blush
of a sun-ripe peach

Tanya McDonald

\$10.66 FISH TACOS

At a taqueria, I order an El Rey taco, guacamole, and tea. The total comes to \$10.66. A year and a place bubble up from high-school history. In 1066, the Normans conquered England. The Normans, not the Spanish. The night before the Battle of Hastings, El Rey did not visit each campfire.

no fish tacos
at the Battle of Hastings
a feast for ravens

Gary S. Rosin

Long distance

A cousin phones in. It's been a while since we spoke last. After some perfunctory chit-chat I begin to wonder why he has called. I ask about his children. They're fine, growing up fast. Long pause. 'You know, I don't know how to explain the world to them anymore.'

new wetness—
a kitten licks
rainwater

Salil Chaturvedi

What Remains, Stays

The heat in December was unbearable. The remains of a mighty dynasty, crumbled and choked by the silent jungle. A little boy runs up and offers to sell us a book on the history of Angkor Wat for \$20. I offer him a dollar and he accepts with glee, scampering off like a squirrel on hot stones. Gypped! Our laughter echoes inside the dark temple. I imagine I hear ancient invocations. Time, inexorable, relentless....

crumbling gods
our prayers falling
on stone ears

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

OLD FLAME

In the middle of a record-breaking heat, I woke up in
the middle of the night with a booming thunder.
Lightning streaks were so close to the ground. I
thought it was the end of the world.

wildfires
your voice on the other line
after all these years

Christine L. Villa

leaving the present behind

when a relationship is over for the love of god dont
drag it around like an old doll whose button eyes have
fallen off. when you reach that point just let the next
moment happen. and a divorce is actually 'final' not
when a judge says it but when you say it.

my dogeared trophy
a scratchy stones album
from the sixties

Mike Rehling
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