

failed ~~haiku~~

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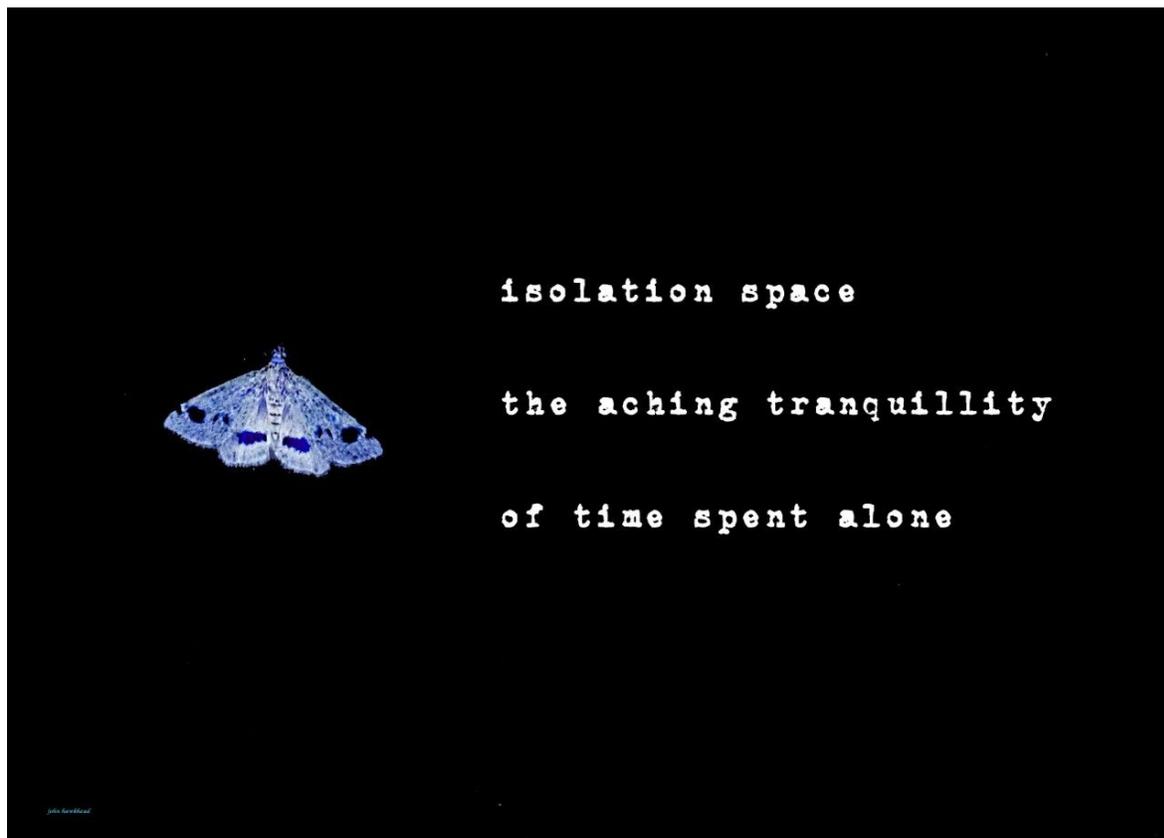
kelly savage angel

Guest 'Failed' Editor

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Cast List

In order of appearance

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Lucia Cardillo
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Tanya McDonald
Tanya McDonald/*Lew Watts*
Lew Watts/*Tanya McDonald*
Lori A Minor
Jill Lange
Antoinette Cheung
John J. Han
Keiko Izawa
Aaron Barry

kneeling down
to tie his shoes
my son blesses me

party over...
the dent of someone's butt
on my bonnet

night sky
our argument over
a distant light

the maidservant's clothes,
extra baggy to turn off
the master's eyes

Adjei Agyei-Baah

war news
I shuffle through
a thousand fallen leaves

daughter's first date
I contemplate where
to stash the body

after she leaves
burping
the Tupperware

Independence Day
waiting for my wife
to give me directions

backlit
just the right amount
of shear in her dress

Bryan Rickert

The Other Cocktail

When I was a lad of thirteen I spent my leisure hours reading or drawing. And when I wasn't reading and drawing, I was drawing and reading. This had Mother worried. Mothers are like that. As she saw it nothing could be more distasteful than reading books and creating art. Tchah! Such a wanton waste of time.

"You should be out with friends, playing games and chatting," she said to me one day. "Go out into the world and socialize," she bade me.

All my objections were dismissed as petty excuses for evading the issue. So with a sigh I pulled on my tees and blue jeans, shod myself in sneakers and went around the block to the residence of my childhood chum Dinesh. The mater beamed as she watched me coming all over as the dutiful son.

Back home in the evening, just in time for a dinner of baked beans in tomato sauce and toast, I was feeling mighty rejuvenated and on top of the world. When I mentioned this to Mom she said in delight, "There you are! Didn't I tell you you'd feel better."

Then as an afterthought she felt it necessary to ask, "Well, what exactly did you do at Dinesh's place?"

"Oh, we socialized and chatted just as you suggested. And when we ran out of things to socialize and chat about good old Dinu and I sat in his living room and read books and drew pictures. He has the most amazing collection of books, did you know! And the finest drawing paper I've seen. He gets it from his sister who's an artist."

Mama beamed once again and said, "At least that's far, far better than what you've been doing at home."

Yes, Mom, I said.

cocktail party...
still wondering who the host is
after the third drink

Hard To Swallow

I got up this morning feeling very uneasy. I couldn't for the life of me make out what was wrong. When I mentioned this to my older brother he furrowed his brow.

"It could be hypertension," he said with a frown. I told him that that was under control. I was taking a pink and white tablet for my blood pressure.

After pondering on this for several moments he suggested that it could be an allergy. A reaction to something I ate, perhaps. I told him I was taking a small red pill for allergies.

"Ho!" he then exclaimed, rather like Santa Claus. "Then it's sure to be something to do with the liver." But I didn't drink, I pointed out to him. And nor did I smoke, I added, to pre-empt any diagnosis on his part regarding my lungs or throat or nose. But bro is a tough egg and not so easily beaten.

There was only one thing left, he said, in a voice of doom. I had to be suffering from bleeding Duodenal ulcers. I was shocked. I knew it had to be something dreadful. I begged his pardon and asked him to spell out the words. Pretty silly it would look if I couldn't spell my ailment right.

Finally, full of trepidation, I visited the dispensary of our family physician. As he examined me I waited for my worst fears to be confirmed. I even mopped the brow with my handkerchief from time to time. Then as I got off the examination table I looked fearfully at the good doctor.

"My dear fellow," he said solicitously. "Nothing to worry about. You are suffering from acute constipation, that's all. Be sure to take a spoonful of laxative before going to bed tonight."

Back home I nursed the severest doubts about the GP's diagnosis. Bro too was positive that mere constipation was not the answer. He was convinced that it had something to do with the gallbladder or pancreas. Possibly even the colon. I had to look them up in the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

I am now in the lengthy process of contacting a specialist. A highly qualified senior consultant. Maybe even a surgeon with an FRCS.

After all it is always better to get a second opinion. Even if it's constipation.

medical camp...
the beggar quite worried
about obesity

CHARITY BANQUET...
THE SOCIALITE PAUSES MID-SPEECH
TO BURP



Gautam Nadkarni

ceNsOrship

summer weeding
I get rid of your exes
on Facebook

Susan Burch

rain on the funeral -
only my grandfather's shoes
shining to the end

Mirela Brăilean

first rain -
the parched earth
quenched its thirst

concrete jungle -
my eyes searching
for a speck of green

mumbai rains.....
the little girl wished
that the raindrops were candies

sketchbook in hand
she painted the moon
on a no moon day

long, hot day
the gift of his labour -
calloused hands

Maithili Khamkar

revealing the truth cycling shorts

back in our booth
in the old restaurant
a love song

late summer night
the wait between send
and reply

Ben Gaa

spilling shadows!
my grand kids play
peekaboo

elevator door
a moth flutters
my breath

bored
I'm tempted to go
to a fortune-teller -
the joy I get in
pooh-poohing predictions

“What Are You Saying?”

You might be thinking I'm sleep-deprived?
And that is causing these hallucinations?

*Now what are you saying,
have you gone off your head?*

I knew you would say that!
Am I clairvoyant?
Ha! Looks like that!
I'm beginning to know what
I am suffering from – synesthesia
An undiagnosed case of synesthesia
I can feel it in my bones.
Call it a woman's intuition.

Synesthesia
Sy nes the sia
Ha! it's turning pink.

But what is this new word?

Let me tell you,
my mind is sane
and I'm not mentally ill.
No, I'm not.

But, that strange and curious crossing of the senses
which causes me to hear colours, smell sounds, or even
perceive words and numbers in different hues, textures and shapes.

Don't stare at me like that.

I Googled! I know.
It's very rare ...
but I'm not mentally ill, believe me.

after sundown
even shadows desert me
as loneliness hems me in ...
his words are clouds
smelling of distant thunder

Kala Ramesh

at the sea bottom
an old shipwreck rusting
away
the little galley
full of seafood

fish counter
three carp look at me
wide-eyed

pandemic times
so many haiku written
a lot of crap, too

sundays it rests
my suck-robot only cleans
monday to saturday

Pitt Buerken

rose hips
how they curve the sunset
as she walks away

pointing out
the flaws in my argument
her chipped nail-varnish

John Hawkhead

le ragnatele d'oro di una lettera mai spedita

the golden cobwebs of a never sent letter

*strappando le erbacce sull'uscio per entrare nello
specchio*

reaping off the weeds on the door to enter the mirror

il suono di due mani di una mano di nessuna mano

the sound of two hands of one hand of no hand

Stefano d'Andrea

day job
the saxophone stays
in its case

something
we used to believe in
porch swings

windy day
grandpa's hat arrives
before grandpa

Tom Bierovic

tea leaves
she reads my fortune
then takes it

snapdragon
the sharpness
of my mother's tongue

Tracy Davidson

The pavement flower
Bows to the shoes passing by
Blind to its beauty

My tenant pigeon
Taps the window, Half blind with
Urban battle scars

Akshat Khare

trying to discern
this phase of my life
—daytime moon

low-lying stratus—
suppressing
the urge to cry

after the rain—
partly cloudy
with scattered frogs

still searching
for the meaning of life...
cauliflower sky

Julie Bloss Kelsey

Inexcusable...

I crested the hill as the fog cleared and I saw the village of Ine in the valley. The lifting fog revealed the vague outlines of Tokyo Bay and the Sea of Japan. The village, with its stilted houses, funaya, was beginning its day. The men were readying their bekabune's, boats, for the day while the women were trying to corral scurrying children and attempting to fetch water and collect firewood. Men were two to a boat, one navigating and one preparing the nets for the day's catch. Others organizing their fluttering cormorants for the days fishing on the Nagara River. As I approached this village I wanted to feel its motion and absorb its ambiance. My impression is that it was neat and organized. Each person moved with confidence as if they were on a mission to which they were committed. I was welcomed warmly, given food and shown a small hut where I could rest and avoid the intense midday sun. The smells of the village were typical of any seaside location, the smell of the sea with a hint of boiled or browned rice. The sounds of women chattering, laughing children playing, dogs barking and occasional farm animal, all combining to be a song of peace and tranquility.

The pace quickened at the end of the day when the boats returned with their catch. The bounty was varied depending on the boat. Some had oysters, clams, abalone, while others had snapper, grouper, squid or shrimp. Others were collectors of seaweed for cooking or wrapping.

Some of the catch was cooked and some was taken to market to serve those that didn't fish. Nothing was bought or sold, all was traded or bartered. No one was left uncared for. I was fed a wonderful supper and then regaled with numerous stories of adventure on the high seas. As I lay in my hut thinking back on the day, I was struck by a

feeling of well being. Life at its basic level was simple. That's the way it should be.

angry sea large waves
fishermen still cast their nets
a dense fog obscures

Anthony V Villanti Jr

Did I drink so much
last night? I ask my father's
face, in the mirror.

Paying my respects.
Talk is strained,
but not the tea.

Marc Evans

holiday romance
a new SIM-card
on the old phone

long argument
I have ordered a chicken
she has ordered an egg

Bakhtiyar Amini

a moth finds
my old sex pistols t-shirt
not to her liking

Rp Verlaine

(t)reading 20,000 leagues

sushi bar

fishing for compliments
of the house

city zoo

a toddler tugs
at his leash

Elizabeth Alford

smear'd lipstick I blame the popsicle



sweat soaked sheets
the flowers are dying
screams the dream hippie

pris campbell

Pris Campbell

unaware
of our troubles
. . . day moon

bridge of sighs
every padlock
a promise

Ingrid Baluchi

Gleams

Early autumn. Bright and fine but chilly. I've lost my shawl and search for it in places where it may have slipped as the winter solstice draws ever closer.

sofa back dust
a sticker sheet
of stars

Diana Webb

Ancestry.com
says she has wildflower
DNA

tombstones
hear more confessions
than priests

Dan Campbell

exit ramp
our conversation
shifting gears

weighing his words
the breeze
between them

March wind
piercing
each tooth

Mark Forrester

Love means
always saying you're sorry . . .
the price of diamonds

Marion Alice Poirier

high-rise window
contemplating
the meaning of life

Ronald K. Craig

glistening spider web
I try again
to thread a needle

starless night
all that I'd wished
I could be

Maureen Virchau

paring knife
a neighbor's infidelity
cuts both ways

William Scott Galasso

A Stitch In Nine

"You're a fair-weather friend!" Instead of a clever comeback, he serves me a samosa smothered in piping hot sambhar.

"Ah, she got me there," he turns to my husband, who is also served. His stall is our favourite at the monthly market--we missed him during our last visit--the heavy downpour lent to a mellow atmosphere, with mostly locals. It is likely he speaks more Punjabi, than I do Tamil.

"Don't feel bad," my husband quips--the only native English speaker, "she sometimes gets her sayings mixed..." We have a good laugh with don't brush it in and cutting it thin, among my several blunders.

sharing
a Universal Language
Namaste

Kanjini Devi

beetle in a matchbox
the man in the red shirt
twiddles his wedding ring

Radostina Dragostinova

after a mild winter
mushrooms sprouting
from the woodpile



Rick Jackofsky

morning sun
her smile a bucketful
of cherries

hometown visit
my childhood etched
on a footbridge

Willie R. Bongcaron

floral sundial
one splash of bird poop
now two, three ...

a white lie
to cover another
early snowfall

Chen-ou Liu

keloid scars
the love my father
left behind

crop circles a scarecrow at the square root of Pi

Veronika Zora Novak

in the grass
where last week were daffodils:
dogshit

wrecking ball
begins its swing—
day-drinking

his terminal cough
waking me every morning
for 35 years...

Roy Duffield

too hot to handle
infinity
on the Scoville scale

Mardi Gras
most popular mask this year
N95

Charles Harmon

the treehouse
I built as a boy--
so many bent nails

memory foam
last night's dreams
already gone

Brad Bennett

lunchtime —
two bites out of the poem
and he's full

semi-pervious
that would be
my psyche

blind date —
scoring points
with please & thank you

Robert Epstein

failed search for
my haiku moment
this senryu

bank robber
blends into street
with satchel and mask

Douglas J. Lanzo

grass moon
the dispensary delivers
my greener lawn

planning his memorial
the sugar dissolves
in her tea

dripping faucet
over and over and over
his opinion

Lorraine A. Padden

city park
a leashed dog waits outside
the portapotty

John J. Dunphy

triangle vertices
a name for each
young romance

passing clouds
I fail to recall
my first crush

Cherry A

clouds cover
the tip of the mountain
little white lie

gossip
at dawn the sparrows
have much to say

his shadow enters
the room before he does
family secrets

Rehn Kovacic

a picture is worth
a thousand words
 how many pixels?

my day hike
 rolling hills feel like
MouNTaINs

Paul Geiger

wherever you go
there you are
cicada shells

reclaimed wood--
retracing the rough edges
where my initials were

Gregory Wright

grief a tsunami
dragged beyond the shores of hope
we just keep swimming

faint conversations
occurring behind closed doors
dad packs a suitcase

barefoot summers spent
drinking from a rubber hose
seventies children

Jenn Ryan-Jauregui

mirror
my dog unaware
of his charm

grey hairs
my son's advice
on marital life

family portrait
like me mother also
had long hair

inner world
a door
within a door

Richa Sharma

OOBE 1964

So there we were each lunchtime, in the site cabin. The whole gang. Overalls open, eating our greasy butties, sipping Billycan tea and playing poker for small stakes. At one end of the long table sat a lad with skinned knuckles: me. At the far end, Frank, dealing like a pro.

I was from a northern town. Pulled out of grammar school to move with my family. Then plonked, protesting, into an apprenticeship I didn't want. I wasn't made for bashing chisels with a lump hammer.

But I had a poker face to beat them all, even Frank. And on this occasion, having raised him a shilling, I won with nowt but a pair of sevens.

Suddenly I was hovering beneath the ceiling, watching with amusement as my young self below gathered in his winnings – a princely couple of quid.

strobe lights...
spinning a leggy lass
through the sweaty throng

Paul Beech

CT scan...
what if
what if not

dawn chorus...
granny chants
in silence

R.Suresh Babu

Closeby

Everytime I listen to the sounds of the autorickshaw, I hurriedly look outside. The neighbours seem to manoeuvre their vehicles every other day. I pause to wonder the reason for her delay. I realise it's time I call her. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. The postman delivers a parcel. I open it with fear! My pulse for a second stops.....

A newspaper cutting with her name printed on the front page. At last, she wins the battle.

morning drizzle ...
a tiny rainbow
peeps in

Lakshmi Iyer

vanity mirror
silently refutes
her modesty

janitor's closet--
the pinup girl
on a private beach

two young men stand
beyond the limit
of their frisbee skill

manila folder--some kinda business in there

Michael J. Galko

after a funeral
no one wants
her pet turtle

a busy house
her poetry journal
in the toilet

wilted violets
her dream of Paris
is still alive

Sunday mass
the absent prayers of
the present

Maya Daneva

Single White Female
seeks Fireman with Arson Heart.
No bullshit. No smoke.

This is a secret:
the wallflower loves the wall.
Stone is familiar

Deborah Edler Brown

old travel diary
reflecting on
how far I've come

working from home
outside my window
low hanging fruit

home yoga
saluting
the lava lamp

all the wrinkles
in the yellowed paper
my teenage diary

Louise Hopewell

cameo brooch
the curvature
of an unknown smile

perfumed notes
the unfurling
of soul music

new veneer
i defy my age
with purple hair

Marilyn Ward

traffic jam
the smell of cow dung
from somewhere

all souls' day
an empty can of beer
on the friend's grave

Zoran Doderovic

gaps in the creases
of her birth certificate —
mother's denial

sexting
I place his message
in my jeans' back pocket

Cynthia Rowe

too hot
for anything
but regret

twitch in my eye—
deciding to do things
differently

Cynthia Anderson

Dolphin girl

Dolphin girl playing in heavy waves...
like a minoan bull dancer she back flips in the curl.
Seeing a wave rise and tower threateningly over her
she dives through gracefully
emerging behind it, watching for the next wave
and ignoring the hapless boogie-boarders
who are buried in churning surf, slammed into the bottom.
Their boards pop out of the water without them.
She swims with no fins, no surf board, just a fine strong stroke
seeming the embodiment of enthusiasm and experience
and perfectly at home in the sea.

I am standing on the beach with my mother, watching with
my sister and her husband. We pass the binoculars back and forth
amazed and delighted by this girl's strength and daring.
My sister and I have just come in from snorkeling the bay beyond the surf.
The waves are so tall and menacing today
my sense of wonder is sharpened by the relief I feel at being back on land.
Even with fins on my feet I felt overwhelmed and frightened
by the power of the surge
I could feel it under me as we tried to guess
when to swim back through it
to safety on the shore.
I remember thinking, "*Now! Here we go...
I believe we're in between the big ones...*"
*...If I guess wrong this thing could batter us bloody and
roll us through the sharp coral...*"

Standing dry now on the beach,
having guessed correctly and swum very fast
I can still feel the pull of the waves as I watch this fearless girl.
She merrily dives through one wave, then swims *back stroke* across the
crest of the next,
then in the trough she stands up!
Feet on the sand bar, hands on her hips
saucily looking for the next roller, which looms over her like

a house collapsing.

Choosing her moment perfectly, she stands on her hands,
disappearing in the foam and showing her heels
as the wave subsides around her.

I put the binoculars down and clapped my hands for joy,
happy that the waves which had spooked me so could be
mastered by a smiling girl with such ease and grace.
I was sorry I looked away then, because the next wave
shucked her out of her bikini
and she showed fine grace emerging from that one
holding on to just the strings.

We all agreed
she was much better off
without it.

morning roar
an undercurrent
drags a sinking bikini

Michael Hough, prose/*Christina Chin, haiku*

Feminist Talk

And after the long discussion on womens' rights, feminism, allyship and overthrowing patriarchy, my husband coughs politely, and looks at me. After taking in my sparkling eyes, dimpled chin and flushed cheeks, he stretches his arms, and asks me to wash his boxers to get rid of last night's whiskey stains.

prolonged argument...
finally occupying
my own side of the bed

Ishaan Singh Sarna

the monotonous clicking across the ping-pong table

Barrie Levine

forest moss
getting through
a rocky patch

benediction
the lemon slices
in the butterfly house

Tim Murphy

phony lines
our conversation passes
through pigeon feet

busking for change
a glove frozen in snow
gives me the finger

Robert Witmer

recession runs in the stripper's stocking

ghosts

what I can still see

on her Facebook page

Thomas Tilton

fifty ways to win
and ten thousand ways to lose
slot machine beckons

kissed a thousand frogs
never found princesses
but got pretty high.

turning down the sheets the wind at dusk

Robert Beveridge

Failed Poem

opening
a can of worms
first line

staring
at the blinking cursor

recycling
clichéd phrases
fruit preserves

mashed peaches
counting syllables
that aren't there

forcing the verse
into a sequence

bad jam
crumpling it all up
in my hand

Resilience

hepatitis B
her ruddy skin
turning yellow

darkness
befell my young heart

sophomore year
mom not conscious
to see my A grades

gray hospital room
studying for exams
at her bedside

shivering roses
her final days

holding her hand
as she took her last breath
fallen petals

Jackie Chou

muffled voices
MRI sound and rhythm
shake the bones

as I eat hash browns she talks of cockroaches

for a good time . . .
flies crowd
the public commode

Richard Tice

toe jam...
best not
preserve

Benedict Grant

gloomy morning
the tea kettle's sound
different today

view to the garden
she's growing a bit faster
than the tree she climbs

Benno Schmidt

a draught
from the kitchen door
roast duck

brown envelope
a tight knot forming
in his stomach

cursing
a match fumbled
in fear

the flop-flop
of her slippers
a comfort now

Mike Gallagher

cat by a window
stretches all the way
to the savanna

my toddler laughs
over an orange moon
air full of forest

my wife, the river
smoothing, shaping
a single boulder

Bruce Jewett

bass guitar
rhythm to hang
the lyrics on

Susan Bonk Plumridge

lockdown lifted ...
all good intentions
melt away

myriad reasons
to quit and reboot life ...
the white feather

Natalia Kuznetsova

a fly in a cobweb
I used to believe
in second chances

ophthalmologist
lifeline in my palm
getting clearer

Agus Maulana Sunjaya

clear
water
you
swim for the rock
with
frog legs

David Gale

plump pumpkins . . .
this pent-up pandemic
gossip

bullet holes
In the null hypothesis
falling leaves

Marilyn Ashbaugh

simple gesture
the smile in the eyes
of a stranger

sunrise service...
breakfast
at the shelter

Absence

My grandparents' house, always full of sound. Children playing, pots on the stove, butter being churned, conversation and song. In the deep of night, the snoring of the hound, someone rocking a baby.

Over 75 years together. Both gone within a year.

empty house
the clock
no longer ticking

Margaret Walker

asking for answers...
a monkey from the branch
to my shoulder

in your kiss
a salty coldness ...
winter sea

Daniela Misso

giving her a ride
on my handlebars
small talk

Irish brogue
playing a version of myself
at the bar

Tim Cremin

The Climb

I used to climb onto the kitchen counter over the sink to reach the cabinet where my parents kept the matzohs. There was something I craved about them, like most children crave sweets. My parents never mentioned any significance, and had no special attachment to them. I still think of my slippery success and delicious buttery moments that had a special crunch.

Now on the highest shelf over our kitchen counter sixty years and 3000 miles away, is a small silver urn, all that is left of my beautiful mother. Next to it I set offerings--her choice delights. A bowl of potato chips and ice cream, medjoul dates, more pistachios than a person can eat.

how we find our bliss
almost out of reach
just in time

Kath Abela Wilson

this collapsing planet –
steady stars are watching us,
speaking not a word

settling my mind –
taking breath, giving it back,
letting the sun sink

Mike Wilson

The Independent Girl

general cleaning
one by one throwing away
leaves

That day she took to the garbage her beloved sneakers. She had been wearing them for a year without taking off since she has moved from mum.

Actually, they still looked almost brand new, but one day (and she didn't notice when) two deep crackles have appeared synchronously on the both of soles. However, she kept wearing them for some time ignoring stubbornly this disadvantage till she almost fell down on the supermarket steps. Then she bought a new pair. Frankly speaking, she had been saving for something more interesting. What exactly? She really had no idea yet. But more interesting.

She put the old sneakers next to the container, where somebody had already left an old-fashioned Soviet chair with a broken back. Mum never put worn clothes and shoes into a container, so somebody could take them.

Half an hour later, as she was lugging a heavy pile of old newspapers and magazines, she thought she wouldn't see the sneakers there. She was sure someone had already taken them.

«Well, it shows quality of life in the country», - she sighted bitterly in advance. The street was rather busy. Someone must have taken them as soon as she left. «Terrible, terrible! » – she exclaimed to herself in sorrow. – «To take things from the garb...»

She interrupted herself. The sneakers were still there. She stopped and blinked several times in a row.

independent life
the leaf is trying to fly up
for the first seconds

W for Woman

life isn` t that tragic
the glued side of the pad
to the panties

My German teacher wrote W making it a bit round. It looked like a pussy with two big lips. She said it was a very difficult letter.

pushing through
the hole in the hedge
ovulation

Irina Guliaeva

sheer nylons
he confesses his childhood
crush on my mom

whistling
in the men's toilet
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

wildflower seeks haiku
for brief encounter
and possibly more

Norman Silver

the silence of summer--
under the rustling of the leaves
the old poplar

the scent of childhood--
at the edge of the village
red wildflowers

Claudia Maria Tulpac

hurricane winds strengthen
then weaken
the storm with my name

coffee beans whir
my husband's phone call
grinds to a halt

Christine Wenk-Harrison

in a forest of dreams all the things my mother said yes to
red red spider lilies exploring my sexuality
memories of not being embraced —night drizzle
in need of something ... i lose myself in the sound of rain
smoking a joint what can i juxtapose that image with

Orrin Tyrell

one way . . .
facing another arrow
at the store

pandemic
the viral load
of conspiracy

I knew
it would end one day —
the old water heater

Janice Munro

those who eat fried okra and those who don't

c
h
u
r
c
h
p
i
c
n
i
c

happy hour the white noise of a mosquito fogger

weekend stubble the dullness of the lawnmower blade

lockdown
having to dig deeper
for belly button lint

Bob Lucky

deep into
my paperback
I try to swipe left

pencil skirt
with every sway
she leaves her mark

damsel fly
trapped in the skylight
glass ceiling

the change
from stilettos to Birkenstocks
mid-life crisis

in the kigo list
nowhere to be found
unicorn

Peggy Hale Bilbro

alone tonight
i recognize his footsteps—
a raccoon on the roof

morning wisdom—
all summer watering
that weed

when i thought
there was nothing more to say—
slaphappy aspens

Sondra J. Byrnes

the stone
a bottomless
sound

Petru J Viljoen

the virus
a wolf moon's
yellow paw

god in a world
of empty churches—
broken sparrow

Réka Nyitrai

park picnic . . .
wiping the tears
of a lost child

thunder and lightning--
the couple upstairs adrift
inside another storm

lost love . . .

a part of us

forever missing



Kevin Valentine

Kevin Valentine

Kaffeeklatsch he fiddles with his new gold ring

evening meditation:
the lurcher practices
his downward dog

Maeve O'Sullivan

grandma crocheting
asked if she was finished
took the hook
from the tangled yarn
"I'm a frayed knot"

Carol Raisfeld

cup of coffee
jumpstarts a brand new day
full of false promise

George Schaefer

a lone voice
not waving but drowning
surging tide

improvising ourselves into being

forever in the shade
of pine trees...
father reading to me

Jo Balistreri

fences wind the wind

hearth fire
wine feeds
the longing

Adrian Bouter

home from war
trying to care
about the light bill

David Oates

old quilt
the embroidered wings
of a butterfly

moon glow
I write I love you
in a folded paper

scattered leaves
what's left
along the path

wave after wave
she whispers an old secret
to the sea

Eufemia Griffo

so be it

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the wood of your cradle, and the shell of your coffin.

—from Prayer of the Woods

My husband tries to convince me that the entire country will become our backyard. “And we won’t have to mow it,” he adds. Thus begins our retirement and our life (at least temporarily) as full-time RVers. Three months later, while drinking my morning coffee at the small dinette table, I get the news about the virus. Travel restrictions are put into place and our backyard becomes considerably smaller. We are stuck at a campground in northern California for fifty-six days during one shutdown. Hunkering down amongst the redwoods, however, does not constitute a hardship.

new religion

I arch my neck

to pray

Pulling the Shots

I married triple-mocha-extra-hot-no-whip. At least that is what I knew him by when I worked as a barista. Ask any barista and they can tell you what their customers drink, but not their names. But, as baristas go, my memory was sub-par. I had a cheat sheet. But this wasn't a list of every customer's drink, but only those guys whose drinks I wanted to remember. Wink-wink-nod-nod. There was Blue eyes/dimples—double espresso, bald/tight buns—tall vanilla latte, and short/long-hair—triple-mocha-extra-hot-no-whip.

One evening while sipping wine and scouring a popular online dating site—cuz that's what introverted divorcées do—I spotted short/long-haired guy. “Triple-mocha-extra-hot-no-whip, what are you doing on (said popular online dating site)?” “My favorite barista, what are you doing on (you get the picture)?” Anyway, we wound up going out (the juicy details will be left for another time) and the rest is ourstory. I no longer work as a barista and he's still short with long hair (though grayer), but now, thank God, he only takes his coffee with a little cream.

the art of love
a perfect heart floats
in the caffè crema

Terri L. French

Straight to Hell

Sunday drive
Siri says go straight
to hell

*skipping church
the toll we'll pay*

red neon lips
on the truck stop
novelty store

*Death Valley
every turn
wrong*

dry heat
the topcoat blisters

*moving violations
I adjust the mirror
to peer down her shirt*

Terri L. French
Bryan Rickert

writer's block
the long space
between thin blue lines

basement apartment
a wolfspider
in my bed

cattails
rustling in the wind
the sound of her sigh

bobbing lure
the fishing pole jerks
the old man awake

grandpa's smile -
crooked teeth and wrinkles
on the pumpkin's face

Jay Friedenber

covid manners -
the reality of our distance
out in the open

blue eyes
doing all the talking -
three layered mask

arvinder kaur

downsizing
in the geology department -
a job on the rocks

orchestra auditions-
a violinist waits
to face the music

Neev Mistry

fireflies
fill the crossroad...
indecision

Blessed Ayeyame

Piazza Navona* ...
traces of autumn
in my selfie

Piazza Navona ... tracce d'autunno / nel mio selfie
**Roma*

morning fog ...
feeling alone in the world
for a moment

nebbia mattutina ... per un attimo sentirsi / soli al
mondo

orange lilies ...
I try to make myself happy
also today

gigli arancioni ... cerco di farmi felice / anche oggi

Lucia Cardillo

octopus in the market her subtle lie

cicada cries her cleavage deepens the night

late afternoon i kick a ball back to a childhood

our thomas

bird of the chamber humming one ruby of my heart

fatty degeneration of the psalm

the dead
of winter
in separate chairs

autumn equinox
the first hint of yellow
in my teeth

Lee Gurga

in my bed a spider on the ceiling

no holds barred trees teach the wind to wrestle

winter rain

watering the flowers

on her umbrella

Philip Waff Whitley

here it is
that stone never left unturned
stepped right on it

Ron Scully

drowning
in the harsh silence...
the snap of beans

trust me
my feelings for you are real...
trumpet creeper

Kayla Drouilhet

different bath drain same voices

Jim Roberts

dead pixel
a hole
in his undershirt

crystalized honey
a screenshot
as he ends the call

Tanya McDonald

The Wild Side

cloudless sky
her secondhand puddle boots
rubber duckie yellow

*rediscovering the thrill
of wellie wanging*

Docs laced
with rainbow ribbons
first Pride

*new chest waders
still invisible
to her book club*

breaking in
thigh-high stilettos

*pastel blue
granddad's brothel creepers
still in the box*

Tanya McDonald
Lew Watts

1st and Goal

heavy petting
next to the fairway
a bit of rough

*not noticing his stubble
until he gets to second base*

maiden over
relieved to change ends
on a sticky wicket

*he gasps
her sister's name—
red card*

ejected
a slow shake of the helmet

*facing relegation
he tries for her sweet spot—
slap shot*

Lew Watts

Tanya McDonald

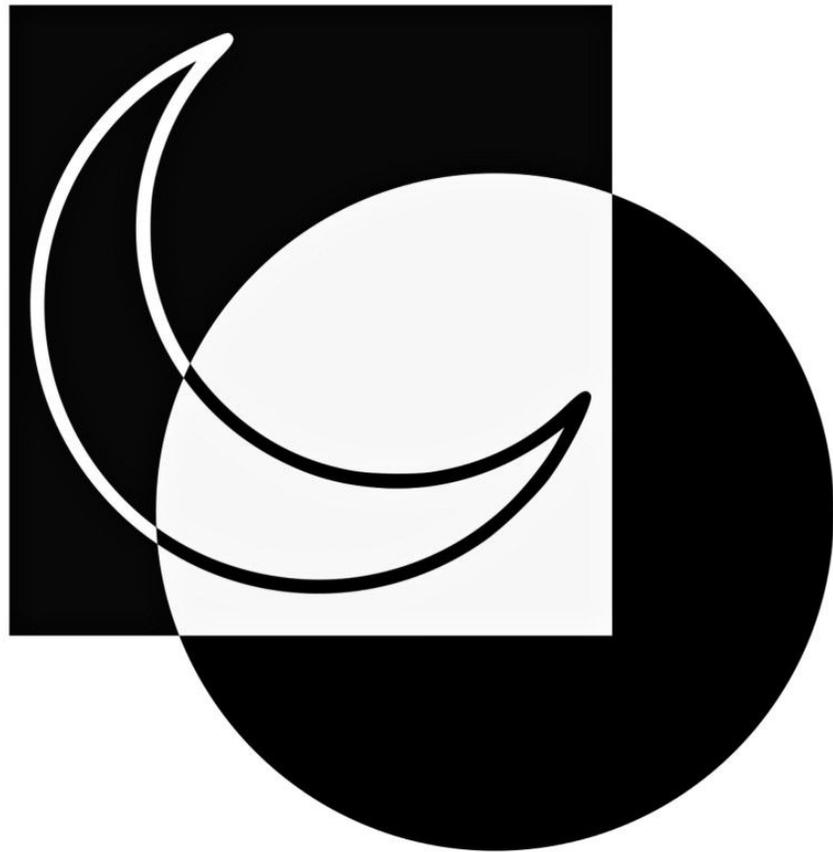
ghost flower my deadbeat dad

day moon

she prays away

my gay

my sex life just another oxford comma



Lori A Minor

Lori A Minor

late for zazen
I sit on the porch . . .
acorns falling

Jill Lange

new school year
the writing still visible
in the bathroom stall

punctuating
Hamlet's soliloquy –
the crunch of kettle corn

first date
his scent
from a magazine sample

Antoinette Cheung

pandemic thinking—
united we fall
divided we stand

a postal truck
goes without stopping...
sudden loneliness

social distancing
a neighbor's cat pretends
not to know me

John J. Han

vegan restaurant...
on the kitchen calendar
a piglet grins

too high to reach...
the basho's collection book
on the shelf

Keiko Izawa

swear jar
too old
for this shit

champagne sunset
boy if i wasn't
in debt

date night:
her drama
my headache

where the fuck
were you last night
day moon

Aaron Barry

Kelly Sauvage Angel
Guest 'Failed' Editor
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