

# failed ~~haiku~~

*A Journal of English Senryu*  
*Volume 7, Issue 81*

**bryan rickert** 'Failed' Editor

[www.failedhaiku.com](http://www.failedhaiku.com)

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*Haiga by:*  
*Debbie Strange*

Just a word about ‘things, if you don’t mind.

When it became clear to me that I could no longer guarantee my ability to continue editing Failed Haiku as I had for these many years I solicited some help. Bryan Rickert, and then Kelly Moyer came on board and Failed Haiku was assured of continuing. Kelly is now off to establish a new journal with her hubby Bob Moyer, and that really thrills me. I can’t wait to submit to their new effort. Kelly also encouraged and agreed to edit a collection of my haibun which will be out in the coming months, and I can’t thank her enough. She is a peach!

Bryan will continue *with my help in the background* while he learns the technical side of Failed Haiku and he will rely on some of you to support him as ‘guest editors’. Please make this easier by sending ALL inquiries regarding Failed Haiku to [editor@failedhaiku.com](mailto:editor@failedhaiku.com). Keeping all communications in one place makes his job a lot easier. He is now in charge of every aspect of Failed Haiku going forward and will have access to all the tools to keep it going into the future. I can’t wait to see how it develops under his editorship. The keys to the kingdom are his from here on out.

I will be working only on the Failed Haiku ‘video’ side of this project and you can reach me at [mikerehling@haikuhut.com](mailto:mikerehling@haikuhut.com) going forward.

I have several health issues, but at this point, NONE of them are terminal I assure you just a function of my aggressive approach to my youth catching up with me. My headaches returned with a jolt a few weeks ago, and I must keep myself in my little home in the woods where all my support systems are intact. Please do not worry about me. I just need to have a very flexible schedule so that I don't disappoint with any sudden absences by staying in the woods with my chipmunks and birdy buddies. Abbey and I are enjoying our life and we love each other and all of you my haiku friends. *By the way, if any of you do make it to the North Woods of Michigan you are welcome at our home.* The invitation is open to you all! I am also available on Zoom if anyone wishes and always happy to chat or talk about haiku.

Check out [www.haikuhut.com](http://www.haikuhut.com) if you want to be part of the 'HaikuHut Talks' that I am planning. That will be my creative outlet in the world of haiku going forward. I hope you will join me there...

*seeking clarity  
i walk  
out into the fog*

Peace

Mike Rehling

# Cast List

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

**Penny Lowery**  
**Kavya Janan**  
**Maria Malferrari**  
**Hazel Hall**  
**Richard L. Matta**  
**Teiichi Suzuki**  
**John Hawkhead**  
**Helen Buckingham**  
**Reid Hepworth**  
**Françoise Maurice**  
**Deborah Karl-Brandt**  
**Thomas Chockley**  
**Stephen A. Allen**  
**Herb Tate**  
**Linda Papanicolaou**  
**Robert Lowes**  
**Debbie Strange**  
**Kala Ramesh**  
**Bonnie J Scherer**  
**Ronald Scully**  
**Rosa Maria Di Salvatore**

**John J. Dunphy**  
**Kristen Lindquist**  
**Roberta Beach Jacobson**  
**Oscar Luparia**  
**Rick Jackofsky**  
**Robert Epstein**  
**William O'Sullivan**  
**Amrutha Prabhu**  
**Eleonore Nickolay**  
**Vandana Parashar**  
**Arvinder Kaur**  
**Mona Bedi**  
**Joanna Ashwell**  
**Caroline Giles Banks**  
**Jerome Berglund**  
**Maya Daneva**  
**John Budan**  
**Nika**  
**Joseph P. Wechselberger**  
**Melanie Alberts**  
**Ruth Holzer**  
**Johnnie Johnson Hafernik**  
**Linda L. Ludwig**  
**Mary Arnold**  
**Louise Hopewell**  
**Neera Kashyap**

**Sondra J. Byrnes**  
**Kat Lehmann**  
**Chen Xiaoou**  
**Diapayan Nair**  
**Susan Burch**  
**Terri L. French**  
**Vibha Malhotra**  
**Lavana Kray**  
**Daya Bhat**  
**Eva Joan**  
**Tracy Davidson**  
**Ronald Degler**  
**Allyson Whipple**  
**Chen-ou Liu**  
**Ram Chandran**  
**Gautam Nadkarni**  
**Pitt Buerken**  
**Vincenzo Adamo**  
**Ulrike Narwani**  
**Marilyn Ashbaugh**  
**Barrie Levine**  
**Mark Gilbert**  
**Robert Witmer**  
**Daniel Birnbaum**  
**John Rowlands**  
**Richard Jordan**

**Keith Evetts**  
**Cynthia Anderson**  
**Ryland Shengzhi Li**  
**Noel King**  
**Richard Magahiz**  
**David Eyre**  
**M. R. Defibaugh**  
**Nicholas Klacsanzky**  
**Aishwarya Vedula**  
**Susan Farner**  
**Tuyet Van Do**  
**Pris Campbell**  
**Neena Singh**  
**Doris Lynch**  
**Lorraine A Padden**  
**petro c. k.**  
**Michael Henry Lee**  
**Natalia Kuznetsova**  
**Pippa Phillips**  
**Robert Erlandson**  
**Nitu Yumnam**  
**Richa Sharma**  
**Margherita Petriccione**  
**Anna Cates**  
**Colleen M. Farrelly**  
**Ingrid Baluchi**  
**Adrian Bouter**  
**Mark Forrester**

**Eugeniusz Zacharski**  
**Minal Sarosh**  
**Ravi Kiran**  
**Marilyn Ward**  
**Mark Meyer**  
**Shasta Hatter**  
**Vijay Prasad**  
**Mariel Herbert**  
**Nina Kovačić**  
**Laurie Greer**  
**Ronald K. Craig**  
**Kerry J Heckman**  
**dan smith**  
**Gil Jackofsky**  
**Christina Chin**  
**Ash Evan Lippert**  
**David He Zhuanglang**  
**Paul Beech**  
**Cynthia Rowe**  
**Sarah E. Metzler**  
**John Pappas**  
**Richard Tice**  
**John Zheng**  
**Eufemia Griffo**  
**Michael J. Galko**  
**Nick Hoffman**  
**Franjo Ordanic**  
**Rp Verlaine**  
**Mike Fainzilber**



**Bruce Jewett  
Julian Heylinck  
Michael Rehling  
Lori Becherer  
Tim Roberts  
Sangita Kalarickal  
Bruce H. Feingold  
Christine Wenk-Harrison  
Govind Joshi  
Tim Cremin  
Jacob Blumner  
Brad Bennett  
M.R. Pelletier  
William Scott Galasso  
Jay Friedenbergr  
Eva Limbach  
Vladislav Hristov  
Katja Fox  
Curt Pawlisch  
Tony Williams  
Mike Gallagher  
Raymond A. French  
Valentina Ranaldi-Adams  
Gavin Austin  
Ann Schechter  
Lakshmi Iyer  
Sharon Martina  
Maeve O'Sullivan  
Mandy Macdonald**

**Mark Teaford  
Irina Guliaeva  
Joshua St. Claire  
Adelaide B. Shaw  
Chidambar Navalgund  
Maria Concetta Conti  
Charles Harmon  
Bidyut Prabha Gantayat  
Deborah Burke Henderson  
John J. Han  
Luminita Suse  
Bryan D. Cook  
Wilda Morris  
Barbara Strang  
Nancy Brady  
Tom Staudt  
Vidhi Ashar  
Keiko Izawa  
Lori Kiefer  
Krzysztof Kokot  
Wonja Brucker  
Vera Constantineau  
John S Green  
Tomislav Sjekloća  
Kim Klugh  
Stefanie Bucifal  
Susan Beth Furst  
Jill Lange  
Terrie Jacks**

**Kevin Valentine**  
**Geoff Pope**  
**David Oates**  
**Ruchita Madhok**  
**Matt Snyder**  
**Bryan Rickert**

I slept with your watch  
under my pillow last night  
a tiny heartbeat

**Penny Lowery**

shape-shifting clouds  
ten missed calls  
from my boss

open theater  
I can't take my eyes off  
the full moon

**Kavya Janan**

stormy sea-  
a love  
never declared

**Maria Malferrari**

leftovers piled  
on the pizza crust—  
mozzarella moon

**Hazel Hall**

scrabble date  
my four letter suggestion...  
her two letters

**Richard L. Matta**



awaken  
from the dream without the dream--  
insomnia

**Teiichi Suzuki**

dragonfly wings  
riffing through reeds  
a life curls away

**John Hawkhead**

a butterfly flaps its wings :: penalty missed

**Helen Buckingham**

all the homes  
she barely lived in  
foster child

### **Disconnected**

“Stop being so damned positive”, she yells into the phone. I don’t want to hear it. Where is God, I ask you? Where the hell is he?”  
I hold the phone away from me, close my eyes and try to focus on my breath. We’ve been doing this dance for so long that I can’t bear it any more.

butter knife  
thin slice of red  
on her wrist

**Reid Hepworth**

resurrected -  
a fireman's siren  
disperses my dream

**Françoise Maurice**

new trousers ...  
the expansion of the  
Universe

adding the baby's name  
to her birthday calendar  
childless woman

**Deborah Karl-Brandt**

*After You've Gone*  
blues in eight bars  
the first week

flight manual:  
minimum thread count  
of magic carpets

**Thomas Chockley**

summer evening  
a kiss just as long  
as needed

**Stephen A. Allen**

**@stephen\_a\_allen**

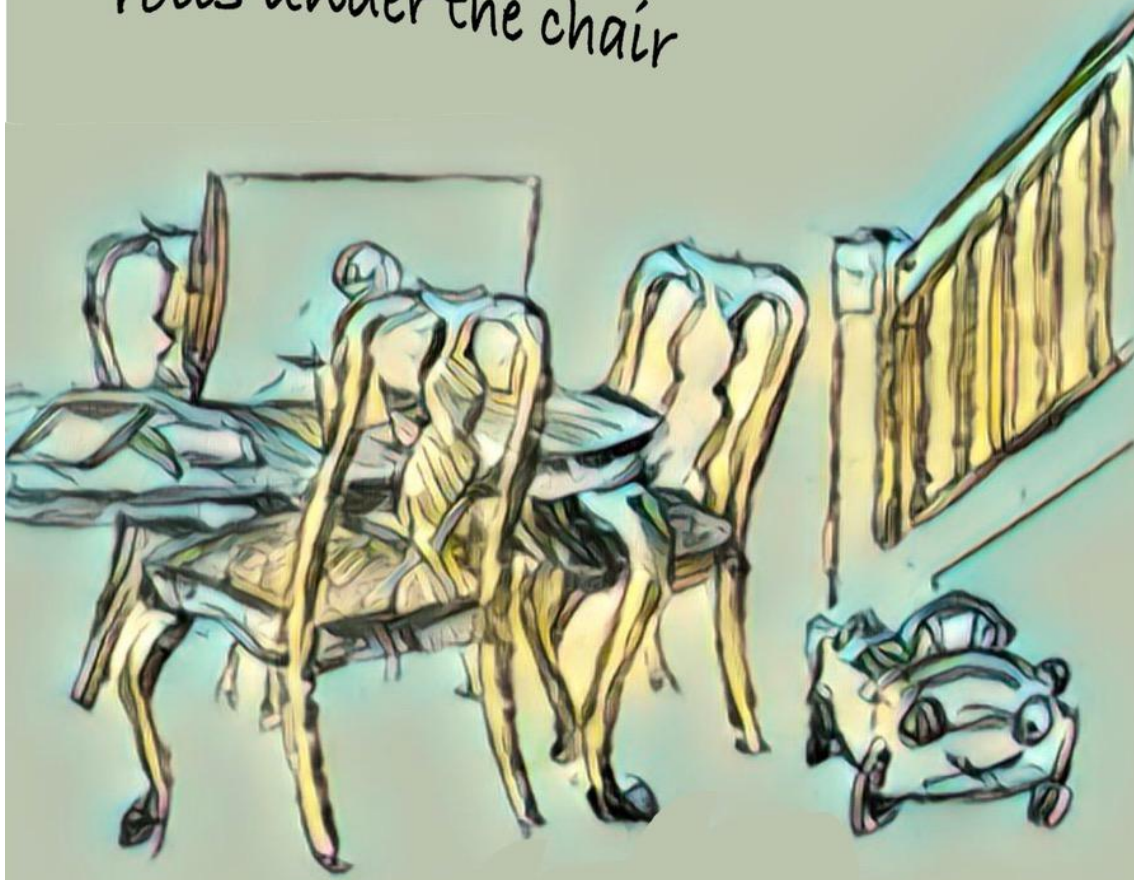


class reunion  
old school ties returning  
for the funeral

**Herb Tate**

**@HerbTate5**

Morning zoom  
a pacifier  
rolls under the chair



Lmp

**Linda Papanicolaou**

color footage  
of World War Two—  
so they saw red

**Robert Lowes**

[robertlowes.com](http://robertlowes.com)



**Debbie Strange**

[debbiemstrange.blogspot.com](http://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com)

@Debbie\_Strange

sitting like a Maharaja  
the singer on his debut  
a nervous wreck

getting a word in edgewise  
i'  
m  
flat  
te  
red

**Kala Ramesh**

aging  
looks good on cheese...  
I just crumble

**Bonnie J Scherer**

his fortune teller  
nobody in the family  
expected her

**Ronald Scully**

misunderstanding . . .  
the complicit silence  
of the moon

**Rosa Maria Di Salvatore**



his brother's baptism  
child pokes his fingers  
into the water  
looking for  
the Original Sin

May Day  
my neighbors' Virgin statue  
hosed clean

**John J. Dunphy**

letting my thoughts go there runaway truck ramp

mid-life crisis . . .

throwing out  
my box of mix tapes

**Kristen Lindquist**

shrinkflation  
fewer words  
in our senryu

**Roberta Beach Jacobson**  
@beach\_haiku

end of August  
the car park for commuters  
almost full again

**Oscar Luparia**

freight train  
graffiti scrolling by  
a tattooed lady

**Rick Jackofsky**

birthday balloons  
not all of us  
upward bound

quiet again  
even though the cops  
never came

**Robert Epstein**

dutch door  
the half of me  
I used to show

rubbing lotion  
into my mother's arms  
lullaby

**William O'Sullivan**

kid at heart  
among grownups  
a lotus bloom

**Amrutha Prabhu**



Namibia  
his smile on the selfie  
with a stuffed lion

**Eleonore Nickolay**

affairs  
he likes the breeze  
until it becomes wind

whiskey sun  
why does your name  
feel like sin

**Vandana Parashar**

girls' day out  
the thrill of smoking  
pretend cigarettes

pieces of rubble  
on my palm  
a home that was

**Arvinder Kaur**

deep winter  
all my inheritance  
in the urn

**Mona Bedi**

in silence  
reaching our  
comfort barrier

**Joanna Ashwell**

Ma's cookbook  
enough splatters  
for stew

**Caroline Giles Banks**

mouth writes a bad check carolina reaper

**Jerome Berglund**

blind date  
the cracked skin  
of this fig

**Maya Daneva**



pit bull  
before lunging  
*he don't bite*

**John Budan**

shaking hands  
with the fingerless man  
his steady gaze

**Nika**

circling the globe a curious child's fingers

**Joseph P. Wechselberger**

sunrise—

my tongue a streak of violet

between your thighs

**Melanie Alberts**

adopt-a-pet fair--  
I suddenly need  
a worn-out greyhound

legalization--  
lamenting the demise  
of the nickel bag

**Ruth Holzer**

five-acre lot  
the new yard man mows around  
bluebonnets

**Johnnie Johnson Hafernik**

*a red rose,  
so much more  
than a dozen*



**Linda L. Ludwig**

menage a trois  
the tangle of you and me  
and her shadow

**Mary Arnold**



sugardaddies.com  
another expensive  
dentist visit

**Louise Hopewell**

signpost:

Pilgrim's path

painful ascent

**Neera Kashyap**

queen anne's lace  
under a toothless windmill--  
his meth eyes

**Sondra J. Byrnes**

drunk on the sun  
a sway of wildflowers  
in her voice

entering second childhood the crunch of old leaves

**Kat Lehmann**

street walkers  
burst out running  
a sudden pour

**Chen Xiaou**

weekend special –  
dad mistimes  
his omelette flip

**Diapayan Nair**

doggy bone  
your insult  
gnaws on me

booger  
you pick  
another fight

**Susan Burch**

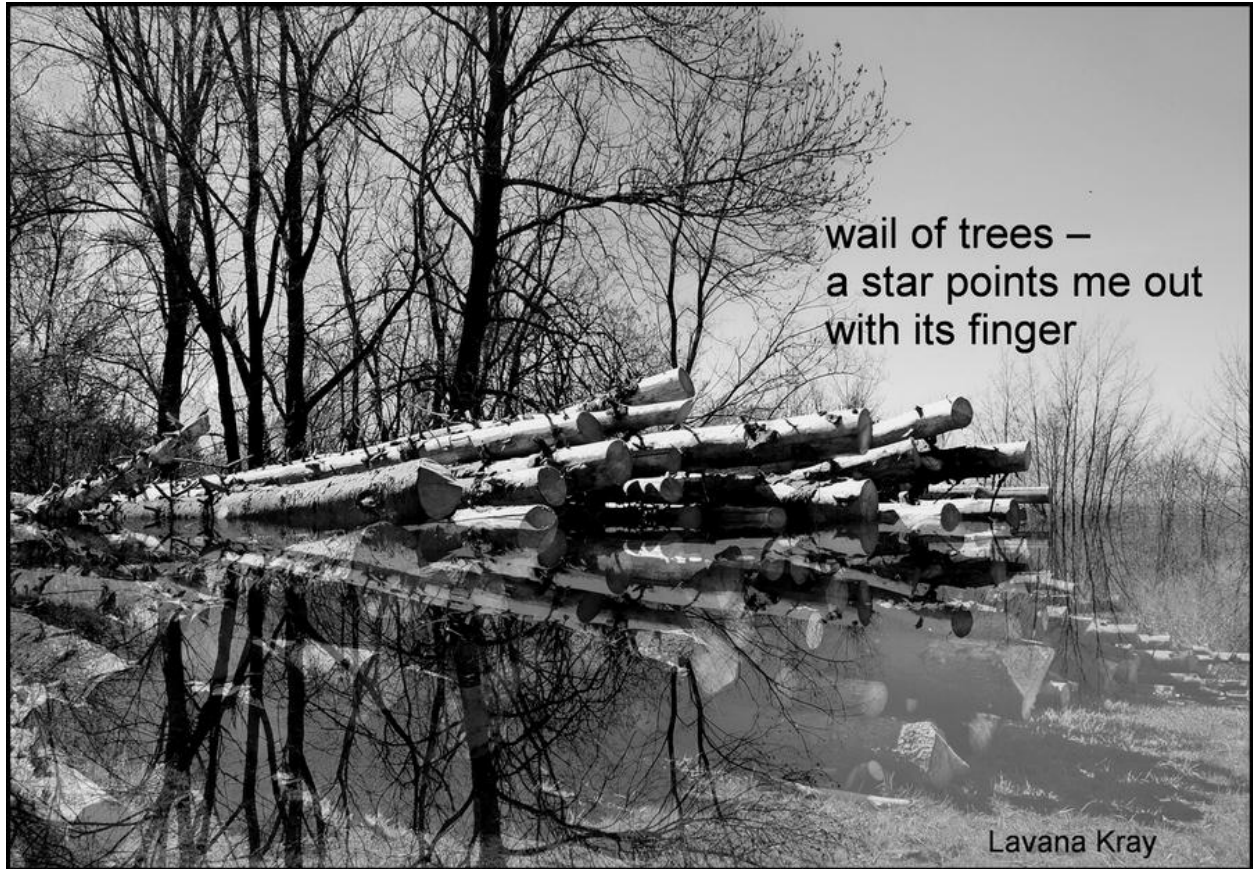
relapse—  
shadow boxing his  
inner demons

**Terri L. French**



embers—  
the kohl beneath his eyes  
unsmudged

**Vibha Malhotra**



wail of trees –  
a star points me out  
with its finger

Lavana Kray

**Lavana Kray**

ellipsis  
our comfort zone  
in the shared geography

**Daya Bhat**

a black-headed gull  
takes the words out of my mouth -  
little rascal!

**Eva Joan**

finding the hypotenuse  
too much trouble...  
love triangle

**Tracy Davidson**

moonless night  
I turn the telescope  
to my inner self

**Ronald Degler**

Sunday morning  
gospel but not the gospel  
crossword but no cross

**Allyson Whipple**

a ginko walk  
the frog pond surface  
full of crumpled balls

**Chen-ou Liu**

<https://neverendingstoryhaikutanka.blogspot.com/>  
<http://chenouliu.blogspot.com>



always  
losing arguments-  
the magnanimous me

**Ram Chandran**

war veteran ...  
displaying his medals  
with the stumps of his arms

**Gautam Nadkarni**

extreme hot summer  
a catalog hits by mail  
- for winter clothing

**Pitt Buerken**

miscarriage  
the only image to cry on  
the ultrasound

**Vincenzo Adamo**

my bamboo flute  
now silent still ...  
the wind

**Ulrike Narwani**

an ancestral ghost lingering war

**Marilyn Ashbaugh**

before condos  
and gated communities  
Connecticut Avenue

**Barrie Levine**

rickety pier  
the smell of candy floss  
saturates twilight

**Mark Gilbert**



a turn for the worst  
the brat  
at the German barbecue

pencil stub  
wrinkled fingers pinch  
another penny

**Robert Witmer**

wonderful life  
no more hair on my head  
no more teeth on my comb

**Daniel Birnbaum**



**JOHN ROWLANDS**

bruised peach  
leaking on a rabbit's foot—  
the child's see-through backpack

**Richard Jordan**

TWO  
birthday cards from  
the Alzheimer's Society

**Keith Evetts**

dragon's breath  
his homemade chili  
too much for me

**Cynthia Anderson**

cutting the line  
at the border  
carpenter ants

**Ryland Shengzhi Li**

Ladies Day

– a thunderclap threatens  
the pretty frocks

**Noel King**



tossed out  
with the suds  
a bow of pearly light

**Richard Magahiz**

how she swings  
back her arms  
before her dive

her cleavage  
hangs it all out  
booby trap

**David Eyre**

marbled moonlight  
the statue covered  
in graffitied truths

**M. R. Defibaugh**  
IG: @mrdefibaugh

as advertised  
on the blank billboard . . .  
sewer steam

**Nicholas Klacsanzky**

the wavelength of fortune aurora borealis

**Aishwarya Vedula**

his newspaper arrives  
the old man  
can start another day

**Susan Farner**

morning commute  
sound of nail clippings  
fills the carriage

**Tuyet Van Do**

discarded photos —  
the many ways Nam  
tore us apart

body tensed  
it doesn't take a fist  
to make it abuse

**Pris Campbell**



home-painting—  
our debate colours  
the shade card

homecoming...  
son's first grey  
in my comb

**Neena Singh**

skittering leaves we move the argument inside

**Doris Lynch**

low lying fog the damp pregnancy test

**Lorraine A Padden**

driftwood—  
asking again  
where I come from

**petro c. k.**

cloud shadows-----  
--- next to nothing---  
--- comes over me

tai chi  
sidestepping the next  
confrontation

**Michael Henry Lee**

aliens ...  
wondering what planet  
my ex comes from

**Natalia Kuznetsova**

Adam's rib the gender of the insult

**Pippa Phillips**

my sanctuary  
through the squeaky door  
of the outhouse

**Robert Erlandson**



faded photos --  
we think of adjectives to  
describe our feelings

**Nitu Yumnam**

divorce  
i exercise the terrible  
freedom

**Richa Sharma**

serac ...  
a little less strength  
every day

**Margherita Petriccione**

small town concert  
the major and a meth addict  
dancing

**Anna Cates**

on her plate  
a lone cauliflower  
anorexia

**Colleen M. Farrelly**

vernissage . . .  
the abstract artist reveals  
yet another bottle

**Ingrid Baluchi**

working late  
baby...  
I can explain it

**Adrian Bouter**

film school:  
freshmen storyboarding  
their origin myths

**Mark Forrester**



a light  
at the end of the tunnel...  
CT scan

**Eugeniusz Zacharski**

tree rings  
over her wrinkles a layer  
of makeup

**Minal Sarosh**

limping ahead  
this yearning to take  
a U-turn

**Ravi Kiran**

4th birthday  
my sister's Barbie doll  
gets a new haircut

**Marilyn Ward**

we see eye to eye  
through Santōka's glasses...  
the housefly and i

**Mark Meyer**

a hangover  
stills my pen  
no haiku today

**Shasta Hatter**

my extra-being falls with a thud

**Vijay Prasad**

thrift store  
another chipped pair  
of praying hands

**Mariel Herbert**

[marielherbert.wordpress.com](http://marielherbert.wordpress.com)



sport betting  
the new COVID variant  
versus the heat wave

sportska prognoza  
novi Covid soj protiv  
toplinskog vala

**Nina Kovačić**

chimney swift  
our ground time here  
is brief

**Laurie Greer**

ponytail running free  
the day  
before school

**Ronald K. Craig**

little girl  
crouching in the mud  
bigfoot tracks

**Kerry J Heckman**

another lonely Sunday-  
my neighbor  
singing All of Me

**dan smith**

## **Albany, New York - 1934**

My grandfather, AKA “Papa,” was born in 1860. He wore an old-fashioned straw hat, bow tie, pinstriped suit, and carried a walking stick in the days when people still dressed up on Sunday. His bushy mustache almost, but not quite, hid his smile. We took long walks in the park; we sat on a bench in warm spring sunshine; I never tired of hearing his stories of long ago.

my grandfather with his father  
just home from war—  
watch Lincoln’s death train slowly pass

**Gil Jackofsky**

panic at the parking lot  
unable to open my car door  
...wrong car

**Christina Chin**

burying the past  
my discarded dreams  
become flowers

**Ash Evan Lippert**



at nightfall  
I open my window  
to the stars

**David He Zhuanglang**

spreadsheets...  
I lace my coffee  
with cognac

**Paul Beech**

pinched credit card  
his daughter stocks up  
on Krispy Kreme

**Cynthia Rowe**

men at work  
breaking down barricades  
gay pride parade

**Sarah E. Metzler**

eel grass  
I keep  
her secrets

**John Pappas**

June wedding—  
our daughter  
four years old in the photo

**Richard Tice**

revolving door  
the come and go  
of masked faces

**John Zheng**

faded stamp  
an unsent letter  
from the battlefield

**Eufemia Griffo**



conference room  
summer elms sway  
in the smartscreen

**Michael J. Galko**

transitioning too . . .  
I forget  
to call her "he"

**Nick Hoffman**

empty fish hooks-  
frozen mackerel filet  
served with the story

**Franjo Ordanic**

sure, no strings attached  
shows you how even bondage  
gets complicated

**Rp Verlaine**

old horse  
out to pasture  
rockers crumble in the sun  
as colts gallop by  
on the flickering screen

**Mike Fainzilber**

out of the tunnel  
a rushing flood of light  
face by face

**Bruce Jewett**

hole in the heart  
the wind  
whistling through

**Julian Heylinck**

spy movie  
learning to trust  
no one

### **running from yesterday**

i ask myself does the past still exist. in a hazy way i guess it does. but have you ever really thought something happened and then found out or better yet 'realized' that it didnt. yeah that has happened to me too. the brain is a tricky place to navigate sometimes. we imagine or dream something and it jus 'seems' so true we believe it. the great philosopher martin buber said it for me "does anyone still believe in belief". the answer is that we all do but occasionally smarten up enough in the end to stumble toward a more correct version of reality.

*sunrise or sunset the debate over the vacation photo*

**Michael Rehling**



playground spaceship  
the earliest aliens  
turn sixty

horizontal line  
through a 'to-do' item  
the ease of ink

**Lori Becherer**

dandelion clock -  
her kiss sweetened  
by the breeze

**Tim Roberts**

curls uncurl  
under a hot iron  
sunflower field

**Sangita Kalarickal**

five mile hike at least ten miles of worry

**Bruce H. Feingold**

trying to coil  
a kinked garden hose...  
his expectations

**Christine Wenk-Harrison**

Irrigation day -  
A child awaits  
boat in hand.

**Govind Joshi**

she tears up  
another friend  
pregnant

**Tim Cremin**

river overpass  
fishing for a new place  
to sleep

**Jacob Blumner**



spin class  
getting somewhere  
going nowhere

Civil Rights museum  
the manikins still  
refuse to serve

**Brad Bennett**

My mind—  
a radio  
with a wandering dial

**M.R. Pelletier**

peace offering...  
between thumb and finger  
sweet nectarine

**William Scott Galasso**

woodland dispute  
we agree to bury  
our hatchets

**Jay Friedenber**

winter sky  
holding on tightly  
to a raven's shadow

**Eva Limbach**

aging  
she blazes a new trail  
in her hair

**Vladislav Hristov**

folding paper notes -  
the sound of  
happiness

**Katja Fox**

my grandson  
with the bedtime giggles—  
goodnight moon

**Curt Pawlisch**



pigeon  
no matter how expensive  
your house or car

a midsummer's  
ice cream...  
almost Shakespearean

**Tony Williams**

a whoop of joy  
granddaughter's first feel  
of grass underfoot

**Mike Gallagher**

Alligator Park  
the gaping mouth  
of a little boy

**Raymond A. French**

90-degree angle  
a mathematician  
is always right

Halley's Comet  
you are worth  
the wait

**Valentina Ranaldi-Adams**

school playground  
...time  
fills my footprints

**Gavin Austin**

merchandise  
no one wants to know  
how adoption feels

the attorney says  
my birth name  
personhood

**Ann Schechter**

monologue :  
mother's restless voice echo  
in the empty vessels

**Lakshmi Iyer**

window seat  
settling into  
my own cloud

**Sharon Martina**



labyrinth on grass:  
my friend says it's okay  
to walk outside the lines

**Maeve O'Sullivan**

elderly uncles  
prickly as saguaro  
I run the gauntlet

**Mandy Macdonald**

revisiting issues...  
scaling the barbed wire  
too slowly

**Mark Teafor**

divorce process  
smoke they exhale  
flying in the same direction

**Irina Guliaeva**

scratcher  
a penny reveals  
a hidden world

**Joshua St. Claire**

distressed furniture  
high prices  
for what children do

**Adelaide B. Shaw**

predictive text  
a poem writes  
itself out

**Chidambar Navalgund**

a few drinks  
finding the secret  
of immortality

**Maria Concetta Conti**



foreign language institute  
our new instructor  
a real martian

**Charles Harmon**

gazel concert-  
the guilty comfort  
of a wintery night

**Bidyut Prabha Gantayat**

opening day  
the crack of a bat  
takes me back

**Deborah Burke Henderson**

happy and sorry—  
the car ahead of me  
gets pulled over

**John J. Han**

nude beach  
a crab hides  
in a sandcastle

**Luminita Suse**

## **DAYMARE**

The dental surgery admits six at a time, socially distanced and face-masked. There's a two-page questionnaire to return when finished. Where to sit? A long mahogany table fills the center length of the room, surrounded by empty chairs.

Instinctively taking the head chair, I'm transported back to my government boardroom, in charge once again. As my management team files into their seats, I strategize on how I will get my own way, weighing the votes I can count on and those who are potential nay-sayers. What bonuses would win them over?

I make bonhomie as my hidden agenda moves towards a successful conclusion. Holding the power of the pen, the official minutes and decisions can always be adjusted to support the Minister's agenda.

Heads turn slowly to face me, some with pitying eyes, some with anger. "What an arrogant prick;" "Such fakery and deceit;" "How can he live with himself?"

Feeling guilty. This is not who I really am.

"Excuse me, sir!" I jolt back to reality.

"Have you finished filling out that form, or do you need help?"

"Help, probably, but why do you need all this information, what's your agenda?"

a junkyard dog  
dreams of old bones  
twilight years

**Bryan D. Cook**

on the swing  
flying  
back to first grade

**Wilda Morris**

downsizing one huge pumpkin in her garden

**Barbara Strang**



forget-me-nots...  
she greets  
a homeless man

**Nancy Brady**

smoke alarm tester  
he's so hot  
I beep

**Tom Staudt**

paper lanterns  
how long is  
forever

**Vidhi Ashar**

eruption warning...  
in an evacuating boy's hand  
butterfly net

**Keiko Izawa**

moonlit field  
I unzip  
the stars

**Lori Kiefer**

t r u e c  
u b l n e -  
stewardess with grace  
gives the whisky

**Krzysztof Kokot**

no warranty  
no return policy  
motherhood

**Wonja Brucker**

seventy  
we still assume  
our positions

**Vera Constantineau**



county fair  
powdered sugar sprinkled  
on my flip-flops

**John S Green**

cicada dusk  
the weariness  
in grandpa's voice

autumn rain  
it's not you  
it's me

**Tomislav Sjekloća**

porch swing  
the back and forth  
of their discussion

**Kim Klugh**

driftwood you never belonged

**Stefanie Bucifal**

French film  
we kiss  
in black and white

**Susan Beth Furst**

moored offshore  
hidden in fog . . .  
and yet their voices

**Jill Lange**

human desire a web of intrigue

**Terrie Jacks**

as if the earth  
was to lose the moon  
missing child

**Kevin Valentine**



floodwalls —  
when there aren't any  
words left to say

**Geoff Pope**

hospital bed  
eighty-year-olds  
spooning

male friend  
never said he loved him  
till funeral speech

**David Oates**

in the nursery  
a teacher planting gardens  
for life

**Ruchita Madhok**

flash of green  
on the running trail  
dog poop bag

**Matt Snyder**

tackle box  
fishing around  
for the flask

sharing it  
with her dealer  
meth head moon

**Bryan Rickert**

**bryan rickert** 'Failed' Editor  
[editor@failedhaiku.com](mailto:editor@failedhaiku.com)  
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