

The Mainichi



Annual Selection 2020 Contemplation

Selections and comments by Dhugal J. Lindsay

The past year has offered many chances for contemplation. Many of us have found ourselves at home a lot, rather than at work. For those with young families this could mean not a lot of “me” time and that things are busier and more chaotic than usual, but for many people this has meant more time to themselves. There were more poems submitted in this last year that were based on memories or even imagination than during a usual year, understandably, because of the inability to go out into the greater world and experience things. I was quite surprised not to see more haiku on spiders and cockroaches, to tell the truth! For those of us with gardens, let us spend more time in them, and as master Basho said, “Learn of the bamboo from the bamboo.”

The following haiku, selected for the year of 2020, are grouped by author and sorted according to the publication date, with comments appended. Thank you to all our readers for your contributions.

Raj Bose (Hawai'i, USA)

new year morning
grandpa winds his clocks
wearing new pacemaker

Jan. 1, 2020

Comment: A good haiku but the third line might fit too well with the first two. It is definitely more positive though than having the third line being “his pacemaker ticking.”

Veronika Zora Novak (Ontario, Canada)

tracks of the wolf rewritten ... winter deepens	miscarriage ... cherry blossoms hung heavy with snow
Jan. 2, 2020 Comment: Although not concretely stated, we can easily imagine that the wolf's tracks are in the snow and that it has been re-walking the same path as it looks for prey.	March 11, 2020 Comment: Superb! The haiku doesn't say too much and appeals both emotionally and cognitively to the reader.
preening the edge of twilight ... black swan	decayed bones the mountain's shadow holds its breath
June 26, 2020 Comment: One can only really see the movement of the swan, rather than its physical form because of the darkness. The outline of the swan's black feathers before the darkening surrounds is expertly referred to as "the edge of twilight."	Dec. 19, 2020 Comment: Both the physical scale and the time scale are impressive. The timelessness of the mountain, the mortality of the dead animal and the shortness of a breath, even if it is held, are combined expertly. I can't cognitively grasp what "shadow" refers to but it comes back to haunt me as I read and reread the poem.

Agus Maulana Sunjaya (Banten, Indonesia)

a black butterfly on the red poppy condolence letter	falling leaves into the river, too moon beam
Jan. 3, 2020 Comment: Red poppies make us think of war and a black butterfly the soul of the departed.	Feb. 19, 2020 Comment: Both the leaves and the moonbeam enter the river, with the moon illuminating the leaves. The transparency of the water might be better conveyed by referring to a stream or brook, rather than a river, but the stillness of the water is more apparent through use of the word “river” and we can tell it is transparent water because of the reference to a moon “beam.”
winter dusk mother’s rocking chair holds only shadow	dandelion seeds my backyard garden rearranges itself
March 4, 2020 Comment: The poet’s mother must have recently passed away. Good pathos.	May 19, 2020 Comment: Not only is the physical movement of seeds blowing across the garden apparent, but we can also imagine that when the next blooming season comes around there will be dandelions in new places.
summer begins in my palm a yellow butterfly	grandma’s stories from dusk till dawn fireflies
July 14, 2020 Comment: The pivot around “in my palm,” to modify both the first and third lines simultaneously, is well done.	Aug. 31, 2020 Comment: The meandering flight of the fireflies and the meandering way grandma tells stories enhance the poem. It presents a concrete image but at the same time delivers a metaphor, with her story being a firefly.

departing geese ... the warmth of your kiss lingers	the scent of overripe persimmon dusk light
Oct. 29, 2020 Comment: "Departing" fits a little too well, perhaps. It may be better use "a wedge of geese" or something slightly more removed from "lingers," rather than handing the poem to the reader on a plate.	Nov. 14, 2020 Comment: Bringing the sense of smell here rather than relying only on the visual worked well. We can imagine the persimmon is like the setting sun without that being stated per se, and the shadowed dusk enhances the scent.

Rosa Maria Di Salvatore (Catania, Italy)

still his name in my address book ... falling leaves	morning prayers ... the first snowflakes on the windowsill
Jan. 4, 2020 Comment: The sense of things being over is accentuated by the "falling leaves," which also make us think of the many pages in the book.	Feb. 10, 2020 Comment: "First snowflakes" causes us to think deeply about what the prayers are about, perhaps due to the ephemerality of the flakes and whether they will pile up or simply melt.

moonlight ... colors disappear under the snow	my wrinkles deeper and deeper ... snowmelt
March 12, 2020 Comment: The whiteness of the snow is so much whiter under the moonlight. Also, the bluish tinge of moonlight and the lack of vivid colors in low light situations meshes well with the red and yellow leaves being buried under the snow and therefore their colors disappearing from view.	March 19, 2020 Comment: The passing of time is accentuated with "snowmelt," while the erosion caused by the flowing water is also alluded to with "wrinkles."

summer solstice ... my skirt shorter and shorter	strawberries ... mum's kisses on my cheeks
June 22, 2020 Comment: The longest period of daylight is on the summer solstice, after which the days get shorter. Temperatures continue to rise though, so the shorter the skirt, the cooler it must be.	June 30, 2020 Comment: Both a concrete scene and a metaphor at the same time.

how transparent is the water of the brook ... dragonfly wings	gooseberry moon ... the transparency of the river water
Sept. 11, 2020 Comment: We think of the transparency of the wings as well.	Oct. 27, 2020 Comment: Moonlight penetrating the water accentuates its transparency while the added image of a gooseberry and its translucence also fits well. I am not aware of a certain month where the moon is referred to as the gooseberry moon, though perhaps it could be July, when gooseberries are ripe? Usually water is less clear during the summer months, so I preferred to read this haiku assuming that the kigo refers to the visual qualities of the moon itself, rather than to place the haiku in a certain time of year.

crickets ... a boy and a girl dancing pizzica	sharp bend ... the sky changes color in an instant
Nov. 26, 2020 Comment: The pizzica is a kind of tarantella dance, a genre of dancing named after the wolf spider, and is danced by couples. "Crickets" places the dancing outside, probably at night, with the boy and girl alone, rather than in a group accompanied by music, since the songs of the crickets are audible. One imagines the mating dance of crickets as well.	Dec. 9, 2020 Comment: The car rounds the bend and faces directly into the sunset, perhaps, or there could be a rainstorm ahead. "Changes color" could be replaced by "turns tangerine" or some other concrete color but because the author did not do this we can imagine it was on purpose and when we re-read the haiku under that assumption, we are then caused to think of the human condition and the fickleness of those who change opinions at the drop of a hat.

shelling beans ... hailstorm
Dec. 24, 2020 Comment: The bean shells hitting the floor inside and the hailstones hitting the ground outside.

Guliz Mutlu (Ankara, Turkey)

milky way blinking eyes with grandma	handful of oats for the horse morning star
Jan. 6, 2020 Comment: A precious moment is captured, but we also think of the time when grandma's eyes will get cataracts.	Feb. 7, 2020 Comment: Oats and stars connect on some level.

downpour a part of us not running	rainbow — all the heroes are young
Feb. 15, 2020 Comment: Though running to escape being wet through and through, some part of the psyche wants to enjoy getting wet.	March 16, 2020 Comment: I am reminded of master Shuson Kato's haiku "thou too Brutus? / even now winter rainbows / fade easily from view."

eying the sun old crow on snow	as long as a baby breath shooting star
April 7, 2020 Comment: Old and black crow on new and white snow. The first line brings movement and a concrete image to the poem.	May 22, 2020 Comment: The ephemeralness of both is heightened by the co-occurrence in the poem.

two squirrels chasing each other equinox	I forget the rest egrets
June 8, 2020 Comment: It's late September and the squirrels are perhaps fighting over who gets an acorn for their larder since September is not usually mating season for squirrels.	July 17, 2020 Comment: The poet's attention is suddenly captured by seeing a flock of egrets and they forget everything else. The wordsmithing here is very well done and my subconsciousness adds an "r" before "egrets" after the first reading.

one leg to stand on scarecrow	cicada's cry I don't want to hear naked truth
Aug. 28, 2020 Comment: The phrase "no leg to stand on" is alluded to, as is the phrase "to knock down a scarecrow" or a "straw man," while providing a concrete image. Perhaps adding where the scarecrow is situated would give an even more concrete image as well as give more depth to the poem through another allusion?	Sept. 14, 2020 Comment: The shrill voice of the cicada seems to peel back all subterfuge and falsehoods. I also think of the cicada nymph's shell, left empty on a branch somewhere.

hush husks after harvest	grandma tousling my hair autumn wind
Sept. 29, 2020 Comment: The alliteration of the “h” sound works well here.	Oct. 5, 2020 Comment: The pivot around the middle line could be made stronger by adding “the” to the third line.

the harvest no one else left-handed	autumn leaves mum taking me by the hand
Oct. 20, 2020 Comment: Everyone with their sickles or other tools out at once allows the author to make the discovery. A good concrete image as well as an insight into the human psyche.	Nov. 17, 2020 Comment: “Leaves” is read as a noun on the first reading and then as a verb as well on the second. Resonance between “leaves” and “hand” as well as a sense of time passing and ephemerality through the autumn leaves.

trading yellow pages for wooden clothespins autumn leaves	I cannot silence rumors autumn wind
Nov. 25, 2020 Comment: There is good resonance with the detachability of the clothespins and the easily detached autumn leaves, and with yellow pages and the color of autumn leaves. After several readings, “trading” is understood to mean that the author went from study inside to going outside to hang up the washing, perhaps. But “trading” implies that the pages are swapped out for clothespins so I spent a long time imagining the pages in an address book being torn out and hung up on strings in a study. Perhaps a more suitable word could be found?	Dec. 5, 2020 Comment: The autumn wind carries with it a feeling of inevitability and desolation.

before we forget
each other
swallows return

Dec. 25, 2020

Comment: Long-distance love and a sense of passing time are conveyed well.

Yoko Imakado (Saitama, Japan)

red and yellow leaves
on my cat's
burial mound

Jan. 7, 2020

Comment: A single concrete image, but one where the psyche is stimulated by the link between the cycle of the seasons and ephemerality of leaves with the lives of our loved ones.

Irina Guliaeva (Moscow, Russia)

hospital yard
making dry leaves fly
sparrows

Jan. 8, 2020

Comment: The images of people dying conjured by the "dry leaves fly" and "hospital" is made lighter by the cute little sparrows being the ones responsible for it.

heron
drawing out my bootless foot
from the deep snow

Feb. 27, 2020

Comment: The author was probably leaning forward and stationary for some time trying to take a photo of the heron and the weight on the forward foot caused the boot to get stuck. The parallels with the way a heron moves are easily seen.

my heart taken away woodpecker	unoiled swing in the park birds chirping
March 26, 2020 Comment: Recent lost love hardens us but the woodpecker's sounds of relentlessly hammering its beak into the wood seem to be getting through.	April 30, 2020 Comment: So many haiku rely on visual images so it is nice to play with sound sometimes. The creaking of the chains would probably not be imagined without inclusion of the word "unoiled" though maybe "rusty" might seem a little less contrived? Such choices are hard to make because it depends on one's audience as to how well-trained they are in interpreting haiku.

traffic lights in the foliage red apple	perseids on the mosquito net raindrops
July 27, 2020 Comment: Did the poet mistake an apple for a traffic light for an instant? I don't think the authorities would let such a dangerous situation occur so instead the poet must have been stopped at a traffic light and looked around in the foliage long enough to spy an apple.	Oct. 7, 2020 Comment: The light caught and reflected in the suspended raindrops reminds one of stars or other such heavenly bodies. Any movement of the mosquito net causes them to fall — just like the meteors. If it were raining, the sky would be overcast and the Perseids not visible, so it may be better to swap out "raindrops" for "the dew." This would also heighten the feeling of ephemerality.

family ties between their headstones spider web	change from the ticket machine golden leaves
Oct. 21, 2020 Comment: Wonderful! My mind races, wondering which headstones are joined by webs and if this reflects the relationships between the people while they were alive.	Nov. 10, 2020 Comment: The distance between the poem's elements is perfect! We can imagine the change out of the machine to be visually similar in some way to the leaves, but this realization does not get in the way of experiencing the beauty of the golden leaves and the feeling of wanting to travel around by train to see them.

Julia Guzman (Cordoba, Argentina)

starry night — the song of crickets filling the air	corona lockdown — a flock of geese walking along the avenue
Jan. 9, 2020 Comment: Here we see resonance between vision and sound! Each cricket song is like a star in the night.	July 10, 2020 Comment: A concrete scene that we can imagine actually happen, with the humor of the geese ignoring the lockdown. The niggling of bird flu at the back of one's mind also contributes to the poem.

Carmela Marino (Rome, Italy)

green ivy ... mum's steps get slower	rainbow my mother's voice on the phone
Jan. 10, 2020 Comment: "Mum's steps get slower" must be interpreted to be happening in the present, because this is a haiku, so the poet's mother has just started to walk more slowly and this must be in response to something. Looking to the first line of the poem to illuminate the cause suggests that they are in front of an old building, maybe a church or a mausoleum. Because the final two lines also suggest the mother's steps are growing slower in general due to age, we can probably assume that the ivy is not growing on a wall ... A little more concreteness as to the place could improve this poem, though the tangled ivy resonates well with the restraints on movement that come due to old age.	June 29, 2020 Comment: The rainbow and its ephemerality cause the poet to think of their mother's age and also heighten the lonesomeness of being apart.

cicadas
I clean the headstone
of my grandma

Sept. 10, 2020

Comment: The long years underground as a nymph and short time in the sun as an adult bring poignancy to the cicada's song, and its shrillness seems to pierce the veil between our world and the next. "Stone" also alludes to Basho's haiku on the cicadas' cries seeping into the very rocks.

Mark Miller (New South Wales, Australia)

elevator girl
rising from her strapless top
a snake tattoo

Jan. 11, 2020

Comment: "Rising" is used expertly! The kigo, or seasonal word, is "strapless top" (summer).

Easter sunrise
by the dry woodpile
a snake's skin

April 13, 2020

Comment: A concrete image that we can imagine actually happening is the cornerstone to good haiku, as we see here. The dryness of the wood and the snakeskin appeals to our senses, while "Easter" appeals to our cognition/psyche as we imagine the rebirth of Christ and the rebirth of the snake in a new skin. That the serpent symbolizes Lucifer also adds layers of depth to the poem.

Deborah P Kolodji (California, USA)

bougainvillea
arguments between
those I love

Jan. 13, 2020

Comment: The tangled nature of the bougainvillea resonates well with the final two lines. "Church bougainvillea" would constrain the contents of the arguments too much in the reader's mind, but some concrete place needs to be added to make the poem more accessible and place the scene in the real world.

Toshio Matsumoto (Osaka, Japan)

a traffic accident
the first snowflake falls on
the policeman's notebook

Jan. 14, 2020

Comment: The ephemerality of the snowflake suggests that someone died in the accident, or at least came close.

a mosquito on her cheek
What move shall I take?
a state of Emergency

Aug. 27, 2020

Comment: This "state of emergency" is that imposed by the government due to coronavirus, advising everyone to maintain social distance. The play on not knowing what to do in the "emergency" is well done! I hope she didn't get a slap!

Again
Fighting with my wife
Swallow chicks in the nest

Oct. 22, 2020

Comment: Every year the poet must fight with his wife about getting rid of the nests because the swallows defecate everywhere, while helping the babies grow into adults, just like with the couple's own children.

Igor Bali (Kutina, Croatia)

winter equinox in the field scarecrow lost its arm	last night's snow — on the cedar tree branches milky way
Jan. 15, 2020 Comment: The winter day with the shortest period of sunlight should be referred to as the “winter solstice,” rather than equinox. In a poem we assume the mistake was done on purpose to highlight a sense of things not being right, perhaps an allusion to climate change. Scarecrows would normally be taken into barns after the harvest to protect them from the elements before use again in the following year. Perhaps the harvest was delayed or there is snow to protect the scarecrow. “Lost its arm” implies a battle — perhaps the same one we humans need to fight against the changing climate.	March 7, 2020 Comment: The dash here seems like it should be at the end of the second line to separate the two elements of the poem. Instead, it is not the snow on the branches, but rather the milky way itself that has fallen from the sky and now lies piled up on the cedar branches. Since the milky way would not be visible in the morning after the snow has fallen we can be certain that this is the correct meaning, especially since the milky way would not have been visible if it were snowing. Several readings later, we reexperience the poem without the dash, with it once again being night and the milky way is now visible in the sky, as well as us seeing the snow that remains on the cedar branches.

April fool's day my old school shoe full of flowers
May 1, 2020 Comment: The ridiculousness of a shoe being full of flowers goes well with “April fool's day.”

Antonio Sacco (Campania, Italy)

chestnuts fall — a time ago in this place were bombs	pandemic — a snail remains in its shell
Jan. 16, 2020 Comment: The falling chestnuts caused the author to think of the falling bombs. How much more peaceful it is now.	June 11, 2020 Comment: Is this a case of “stay at home” orders for the snail as well?

snakeskin —
out of the wardrobe
old clothes

Dec. 10, 2020

Comment: The snake has shed its old skin, perhaps it is time for the author to buy new clothes as well since the wardrobe must be very unused if a snake is living in it!

Teiichi Suzuki (Osaka, Japan)

the way home
from the wake of my friend —
winter star

Jan. 17, 2020

Comment: We recall the haiku of master Shuson Kato:

amanogawa / dotou no gotoshi / hito no shi e

(tonight the milky way / churning like the surf
I trudge towards the funeral)

The selected haiku highlights the lonesomeness experienced by the poet rather than the turmoil, while the winter star suggests a direction to be taken.

first snow —
in the dentist's office
tropical fish

Feb. 3, 2020

Comment: The otherworldliness of a dentist's office fits the poem much better than a doctor's office or anywhere else.

year-end cleaning —
something in myself
disappears

Feb. 24, 2020

Comment: The cleaning is both physical and psychological at the same time.

the deep sleep —
icicles become
thick, thicker

March 5, 2020

Comment: "The deep sleep" refers mostly to the season when all plants and animals slow down and/or hibernate, waiting for spring, due to the inclusion of "the." We can also imagine that while the poet is asleep, the icicles grow thicker.

ivy withers almost with a window left behind	a rhythm born in the morning sky — first butterfly
March 18, 2020 Comment: The warmth and light from the window has kept some of the ivy alive, without it withering in the winter cold. Perhaps a comma should be added after “withers” and again after “almost.”	April 9, 2020 Comment: The beating of the butterfly’s wings produces a rhythm – the first rhythm of the year in the morning sky.

clusters of blue how deep the sky is — pruning pine trees	May Day — stay home to fight corona virus
May 21, 2020 Comment: The blueness of the sky, as well as its deepness, is accentuated by being framed by the green of the pine needles.	June 1, 2020 Comment: May Day is also known as International Workers’ Day, and in Japan labor unions instigate the “spring fight” every year for higher wages. Things were different in 2020.

quarantined spring — take out from the barn rusted scythe	a long wait for virus testing — passing spring
July 3, 2020 Comment: Normally the author would be too busy for gardening. The “scythe” makes us think of the Grim Reaper.	July 8, 2020 Comment: The sense of running out of time is conveyed well and I thought of my age.

stay home — a barber cutting hydrangeas	strawberry moon picked and quarantined in the pond
Aug. 6, 2020 Comment: Even on “holiday” the barber keeps cutting.	Aug. 23, 2020 Comment: The reflection of the moon makes it seem as if the moon has been picked from the sky, and the banks of the pond cut it off from everything else as if it were in quarantine.

heated Hiroshima — a cup of water someone asks	grave visit — watering headstone as if washing dad's back
Sept. 4, 2020 Comment: "Hiroshima heatwave" or "sultry Hiroshima" would be more natural, and the order of the second and third lines might be better if changed. Alternatively, "someone asks" could be replaced by "please."	Oct. 17, 2020 Comment: Japanese people wash or clean the headstone of the family tomb by pouring water on it with a ladle or bucket. Here the author does it as if they are taking a bath with their father.

bit by bit sinking in the blue sherbet silver spoon	blue moon — the night sea grows deeper
Nov. 12, 2020 Comment: The warmth of one's hand is absorbed by the spoon, causing it to become warmer than the ice sherbet and melt it, thereby sinking. The blue of the sherbet and the silver of the spoon also somehow go together better than if the sherbet were red or yellow.	Dec. 26, 2020 Comment: A "bluish moon" would refer to when the moon seems blue due to smoke or ash in the air, while a "blue moon" usually refers to the full moon when it occurs twice in a single month. That the sea might seem deeper when the moon is full is a feeling I can understand, but the necessity for this full moon to be an "extra" moon in a month does not seem readily apparent. Instead, I choose to interpret that the moon itself seems bluer, because of the presence of the night sea, in a chicken-and-egg type of phenomenon.

Lothar M. Kirsch (Kall, Germany)

Dew drops On the monastery bell Perfect zazen	Gnarled branches The winter sun warms Only one side
Jan. 18, 2020 Comment: It is almost as if the dew drops are also sitting in perfect zazen at the Zen temple.	March 10, 2020 Comment: Keen observation made more poignant by the branches being gnarled.

<p>Winter jasmine Last night's hoarfrost Left some tears</p>	<p>Magnolia blossoms On the ground A hearse passing</p>
<p>April 1, 2020 Comment: The frost has melted and the resulting drops of water still hang from the jasmine as if they were tears.</p>	<p>May 28, 2020 Comment: The middle line modifies both the first and last. On the first reading we imagine the magnolia blossoms as we look up at the branches, then, reading the second line, we imagine them to have fallen to the ground. Finally, as we read the third line, we realize that the blossoms may still be on the tree, and that the thing on the ground is actually a hearse. The fallen blossoms and hearse resonate, as do the white magnolia blossoms still on the branches, like candles or even like souls.</p>

<p>Every time Running into the surf A new self</p>	<p>Dew drops On the autumn leaf Dad's photographs</p>
<p>Sept. 25, 2020 Comment: The poet is reborn each time they enter the ocean and emerge from it.</p>	<p>Nov. 13, 2020 Comment: The author's father's hobby must have been photography, since they are "Dad's photographs" rather than "photos of Dad." Although we imagine the actual leaf with dew on it as we read through the first two lines, we then realize that perhaps in some of the photographs are some of dew drops on an autumn leaf. We also feel the ephemerality of life and realize that the father has passed away through the inclusion of dew and autumn leaves in the poem.</p>

<p>Leaves falling down Mushrooms popping up And the cat hunts</p>
<p>Dec. 4, 2020 Comment: Through the changing seasons one thing never changes — to be a cat is to hunt!</p>

Goran Gatalica (Zagreb, Croatia)

winter solitude — in the wren's nest twilight deepens	forgiveness — snow becomes brighter in front of my house
Jan. 20, 2020 Comment: The wren's nest is abandoned as the chicks have grown and flown away by winter. The author is also alone, in solitude, and feels the twilight deepening as if it were happening within themselves as well.	Feb. 8, 2020 Comment: It is not readily apparent whether the author is returning from confession at a church and is outside their house or whether their wife has forgiven them for something and they are inside the house. An extra word or two in the first line would give a more concrete image, though the resonance between brighter snow and forgiveness is valid either way.
night loneliness — a line of hoofprints in the snow	spring wind — my grandma has bought a new comb
March 9, 2020 Comment: Without anyone else to talk to, the author is instead looking out the window at night. He sees not a horse, but just the hoofprints it has left behind, and this accentuates the lonesomeness.	March 24, 2020 Comment: The spring wind has tousled grandma's hair and she pulls out a comb, which the author recognizes as being new. Spring is the season when we feel like trying something new.

early spring stillness — a gardener warms the sleepy stone lion	Memorial Day — children inhale the starlight from the paper cranes
<p>April 8, 2020</p> <p>Comment: It is hard to imagine a gardener sharing their body warmth with the stone lion so we assume that they are cutting foliage so that shadows no longer lie across it and the sunlight will warm it.</p>	<p>May 25, 2020</p> <p>Comment: Memorial Day in the U.S. is the last Monday of May and honors those who have died in service. Paper cranes became famous as a symbol of peace through Sadako Sasaki's folding of 1,000 of them before dying of leukemia from exposure to radiation from the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. One imagines the children are in Hiroshima on Memorial Day, with the starlight being constant and immutable, far from the worries of men. Inhaling starlight is romantic poetic license. I wonder whether "from the" could not be exchanged with something else as it seems logically too much of a jump for it to have been reflected from the cranes.</p>

starless night — the first pheasants nestle in the grass	searing heat — the spotted dove drinks water without raising its head
<p>June 12, 2020</p> <p>Comment: "first pheasants" has pleasant alliteration but I was not sure exactly what it referred to. In archaic English the verb "nestle" used to mean "to nest" so this suggests that these pheasants the poet is watching are the first pheasants to nest this year. Perhaps they feel comfortable enough to do so because of the concealing darkness of the starless night.</p>	<p>July 23, 2020</p> <p>Comment: The poet was expecting the dove to look up when they approached it. However, the heat is so great that the dove needs its water, even if it is exposed to danger.</p>

years of farming — my father smooths a comb through his thinning hair
<p>Dec. 23, 2020</p> <p>Comment: We find both humor and poignancy in the same haiku.</p>

Maria Laura Valente (Cesena, Italy)

defusing every word I write I smell snow	traffic jam — the silent overtaking of a butterfly
Jan. 21, 2020 Comment: The poet is angry and is writing a letter, being careful to be polite while doing so.	July 21, 2020 Comment: Stuck in traffic and watching the butterfly flying by unaffected.

Oscar Luparia (Vercelli, Italy)

leaves on the ground — the battery of my watch ran out	from flower to flower the work of a bee — Labour Day
Jan. 22, 2020 Comment: The passing of time is felt through “leaves on the ground.”	June 2, 2020 Comment: “Labour Day” is only for humans.

one way tickets — spring rain in the river from sky to sea	song of a cricket ... the moon and my bedroom connected
July 4, 2020 Comment: It is as if the rain also has a one-way ticket to the sea.	Sept. 28, 2020 Comment: The sound of the cricket somehow makes the poet feel the moon is connected to their bedroom. Is the connection just through the song or is there some other path between the two?

Eleonore Nickolay (Vaires sur Marne, France)

terminal stage her lengthening shadow in the park
Jan. 23, 2020 Comment: We assume that “terminal stage” means she is in the last stages of cancer. The lengthening shadow resonates at many levels. As a shadow lengthens, the proportions also change, suggesting changes wrought within the body by cancerous cells. Also, the lengthening gets faster and faster as time progresses, until the shadow disappears — just as with cancer. We are also drawn to think about her legacy from the reference to her shadow.

Rosemarie Schuldes (Mattsee, Austria)

shower of sleet weak handshakes fleeting	crickets chirping we keep our secrets within the pergola
Jan. 24, 2020 Comment: Everyone is in a rush to get somewhere less cold and wet.	Dec. 11, 2020 Comment: The cricket chirping perhaps seems to mask the whispering of secrets.

Margherita Petriccione (Latina, Italy)

green tomatoes. two lovers holding hands	June rain — the zucchini leaves are dancing
Jan. 25, 2020 Comment: One imagines the tomatoes on the same vine. The lovers must still be in the first stages of love.	July 1, 2020 Comment: As the raindrops hit them, the leaves jump up and down as if they were dancing. For some reason “zucchini” seems to belong here, rather than “tomato” or “cucumber.”

spying on the cat’s return — lockdown	nunnery wall — some dandelion seed in a spider web
July 16, 2020 Comment: Why does the cat get to leave the house when I can’t?!	Aug. 7, 2020 Comment: Is this an allusion to the nuns also being caught? Or perhaps there is a “web” protecting them from “seeds”?

lavender scent — clear geometry of Cassiopeia
Sept. 30, 2020 Comment: There is good resonance between the sound and vision elements.

Vincenzo Adamo (Trapani, Italy)

the name disappeared — my daughter's headstone under the snow	Snowflakes — the hole in the umbrella healed
Jan. 27, 2020 Comment: The snow has piled up enough to cover the name on the headstone. Perhaps enough time has passed now for the father to move on after the loss of his daughter.	Feb. 28, 2020 Comment: Enough snow has piled on the umbrella that no single flake can fall through the hole any more.
the snow melts — for the whole winter the flowers on the wrong grave	trickling a snowflake dies — the temple bell rings
March 2, 2020 Comment: Even throughout the winter they came to lay flowers on the grave, but now find that they were laying them on the wrong grave. Does it really matter, though? It is the act of laying flowers in remembrance that matters more than where they are placed.	March 17, 2020 Comment: A snowflake melts into water and at that moment the temple bell rings to remind us of our insignificance in infinity.
abandoned boots — the spider furnishes the new home	last snow — grandmother loses the thread of the speech
April 20, 2020 Comment: Rather than "a" new home or "its" new home, this spider is furnishing "the" new home, implying that it is spinning its webs not only on the boots, but also all over the rest of the new house.	May 2, 2020 Comment: Passing time and the burial of snow under more snow fits well with the final two lines of the poem.

the spider furnishes the snow boots — deserted city	drizzle — the caterpillar crosses a headstone
May 11, 2020 Comment: The snow has melted and all the skiers and snowboarders are gone from this town that is only alive during the winter. A spider is spinning its web on the now unused snow boots.	June 13, 2020 Comment: The speed of the caterpillar crossing the headstone fits well with “drizzle.” “Caterpillar” suggests that there may be a metamorphosis, such as when a soul leaves its mortal body.

White clouds — soap bubbles on the rubble	autumn loneliness — spaced the mannequins in shop windows
Aug. 8, 2020 Comment: I fail to grasp the image of someone washing rubble so I read this haiku as “above to rubble” rather than “on the rubble.” With this reading there is resonance with the floating clouds above and the floating bubbles closer to the ground, rather than having suds sitting motionless on the rubble. The rhyme is also done well.	Oct. 24, 2020 Comment: Even the mannequins have been spaced at the new norm of social distancing, and this accentuates the lonesomeness felt in autumn.

nursing home — a rose petal falls then another
Dec. 8, 2020 Comment: If it were leaves doing the falling, then we would be left only with despair.

Cezar Florescu (Botosani, Romania)

dusk clusters of grapes casting scented shadows	quarantined ... only the moonbeams enter my room
Jan. 28, 2020 Comment: Vision and sound combine.	April 24, 2020 Comment: Nature cannot be shut out.

Independence Day my boy refuses to wear the safety harness	the pull of that scar dog days
Aug. 3, 2020 Comment: The many facets of independence!	Sept. 19, 2020 Comment: Heat and humidity make one's scars feel more uncomfortable. "pull" and "dog" work well.

strewn leaves browsing through old photos	lockdown the old rugby coach watching the pile of clouds
Dec. 7, 2020 Comment: The likeness of leaves and photos.	Dec. 29, 2020 Comment: The clouds are free to move as they will. A rugby coach is always watching the movements of the players and directing them but there is no practice during lockdown so he watches the clouds powerlessly.

Robert Henry Poulin (Florida, USA)

gun salute — ashes reverberate to life in the urn	Bird On a branch flies Last leaf decides
Jan. 29, 2020 Comment: The deceased was probably a soldier.	Feb. 25, 2020 Comment: And it decides to fall.

Kanchan Chatterjee (Jharkhand, India)

amidst the chants a stone Buddha and a flitting butterfly	morning mist ... a monk with jingling bell goes in
Jan. 30, 2020 Comment: Permanence and impermanence are contrasted.	Oct. 1, 2020 Comment: Sound and vision combined well with the added twist of a monk looking for enlightenment with everything worldly hidden in mist.

a bull cart creaks past the window ... Harvest Moon
Nov. 5, 2020 Comment: Illuminated by the huge full moon as it passes, and it could not be any other moon. There is no replacing it with “hunter’s moon” or “worm moon” or “strawberry moon,” for example.

Ramona Linke (Beesenstedt, Germany)

foggy morning
a little boy kicks pebbles
on the way to school

Jan. 31, 2020

Comment: The sound of the pebbles bouncing in the fog is easily imagined.

Vasile Moldovan (Bucharest, Romania)

Christmas night —
the moon and stars
in each house

Feb. 1, 2020

Comment: From the windows of every house can the moon and stars be seen. Equality for all.

Tommy Ichimiya (Ibaraki, Japan)

wipe all windows
to welcome first sunlight
of this year

Feb. 4, 2020

Comment: The wan sunlight penetrates through the newly cleaned windows on the first day of the year.

lots of regrets
frozen snow remains
here and there in shade

March 3, 2020

Comment: Patches of snow that have not yet thawed scatter the landscape, just as regrets scatter the landscape of one's life when looking back.

it starts to snow wandering son returns on day of his grandmom's death	spring rain granddaughter's gentle voice over the phone
April 4, 2020 Comment: One imagines that perhaps the son was closer to his grandmother than his parents. I can't help remembering master Shuson Kato's haiku: furu yuki ga / oyako ni koto o / motarashinu (with the falling snow / conversation starts between / a father and his son	April 23, 2020 Comment: The gentleness of spring rain and its slightly melodic properties are brought out well.

cool marble wall of confession room mid-summer	wish to visit land of late parents autumnal clouds
Sept. 2, 2020 Comment: Forehead up against the wall while fretting over a confession, the author feels its coolness.	Nov. 19, 2020 Comment: "I wandered lonely as a cloud." Clouds stimulate wanderlust and in autumn they also instill nostalgia.

Nazarena Rampini (Pogliano Milanese, Italy)

snowfall ticking of the clock louder	Spring cleaning under the roof a new nest
Feb. 5, 2020 Comment: The snowfall muffles all sounds outside but this amplifies the noises in the room.	April 16, 2020 Comment: I imagine that the author did not clear away the nest but rather left it be.

retirement — new seeds for my garden	the swallows leave — smoke of wood still green
May 20, 2020 Comment: The beginning of a new chapter in life warrants new seeds in the garden.	Nov. 23, 2020 Comment: Green wood produces more smoke, which floats into the sky after the swallows. “green” also suggests that the poet was contemplating not yet being quite ready for something that had already happened, like the sudden leaving of the swallows.

Lyudmila Hristova (Sofia, Bulgaria)

thick snow in the morning no sign of my zen garden	the stray cat’s footprints grow bigger melting snow
Feb. 6, 2020 Comment: The Zen garden is made of stones and rocks so where a swaying branch might shake off the snow in the wind, the snow stays in place in the Zen garden. The disappearance of the garden to be replaced by blank snow also fits well with “Zen.”	May 4, 2020 Comment: Keen observation.

lockdown vaulting over the fence a blooming lilac bush	cart track burs got stuck even to the donkey’s shadow
July 29, 2020 Comment: Only human activities are constrained by lockdowns.	Dec. 12, 2020 Comment: This is figurative, of course, but a very powerful way to suggest the huge number of burs.

Beate Conrad (Hildesheim, Germany)

checking again the bulletproof vest — rain turns to ice	motorbike — in its rear mirror a piece of spring sky
Feb. 11, 2020 Comment: I imagine a stakeout that is about to transform into forced entry to apprehend a criminal. The last line accentuates the feeling in the police officer's heart when put in that situation.	June 5, 2020 Comment: Rather than seeing the entire landscape, which is more easily seen from a motorbike than from a car, in this haiku we see only a small cutout of the sky. It feels like the bike is heading into a tunnel or somewhere with lots of tall buildings since the sky is only presented as being in the mirror.

Marina Bellini (Mantua, Italy)

white frost even weeds are flowers now
Feb. 12, 2020 Comment: Weeds are just weeds in the spring when there are many other beautiful flowers around, but when there is frost, then every flower is welcome, no matter how lowly.

Billy Antonio (Pangasinan, Philippines)

empty track leaves racing to the finish line	a sudden wind tousles my hair ... Father's Day
Feb. 13, 2020 Comment: The empty running track in the chilly autumn wind is easily visualized.	July 2, 2020 Comment: The wind tousles his hair just as his father used to do.

Eva Limbach (Saarbruecken, Germany)

freezing rain ... the new red shoes fit like wax	livestream concert the song thrush whistles an encore
Feb. 14, 2020 Comment: Such a tight fit! I wonder whether something else could replace “freezing rain.” Usually rain shoes are a loose rather than a tight fit so the shoes here seem a little out of place.	June 25, 2020 Comment: While sitting in the garden and listening to a concert, even the birds have been enjoying the music and want to join in.

lingering autumn the whisky in my glass cask strength
Dec. 21, 2020 Comment: We envisage the strong amber color of the whisky and the lingering aftertaste of a highland malt!

Benedetta Cardone (Massa, Italy)

frozen dew — the moon sinks to the ground	spring breeze passing through the crowd — I rest
Feb. 17, 2020 Comment: The glistening silver of the frozen dew is reflected in the moonlight.	May 15, 2020 Comment: Both the spring wind and the poet have passed through the crowd but only the poet rests afterwards.

Allan Estrella (Caloocan City, Philippines)

Year's final leaf fell
on top of a picket fence,
waiting for the wind.

Feb. 18, 2020

Comment: Until the final leaf falls all the way to the ground, the poet cannot consider that everything is over.

Eugeniusz Zacharski (Radom, Poland)

winter holidays
spiders slide
in the bathtub

Feb. 20, 2020

Comment: Stuck inside with not much else to do during the winter holidays, the child starts playing with spiders.

Karoline Borelli (Genova, Italy)

falling stars
my father's climb
on the mainmast

Feb. 21, 2020

Comment: A quite romantic scene with the father's silhouette against the stars. Let us hope he does not fall as well!

Stephen A. Peters (Washington, USA)

another version
of the same revision
blackberry vines

Feb. 22, 2020

Comment: Tangled and with thorns! Anyone who has ever published a book can probably relate well with this.

Albert Schlaht (Montana, USA)

midday sun —
losing its height to his axe
an ancient pine

Feb. 26, 2020

Comment: Personally, I have never seen anyone top a tree with an axe, only a saw, but “midday sun” and “ancient” imply that the tree will survive and will not be cut down entirely.

Wiesław Karliński (Namyslow, Poland)

snowy bushes
step by step more white
haiku walk

Feb. 29, 2020

Comment: Walking in the snow, the bushes gradually get more snow as the poet walks deeper and deeper into the woods.

Vladislav Hristov (Plovdiv, Bulgaria)

winter morning I crack walnuts for the tomtits	all blackbirds in the cherry tree we bury grandpa
March 6, 2020 Comment: The tomtit is a New Zealand bird, but in this usage it probably refers to the Eurasian blue tit. As they do not migrate they are a good companion on a lonely winter morning.	April 17, 2020 Comment: If “the” had been inserted between “all” and “blackbirds” then the nuance would be that every single blackbird was in the cherry tree. In this version the nuance is that all of the birds in the cherry tree are blackbirds and there are no other bird species present. This resonates well with the state of mind of those burying their grandfather.

lunch break a magpie steals the master’s pencil
Aug. 5, 2020 Comment: If the “master” were a master painter then they might get angry but I believe this master is a Zen master so the master would smile.

Jeffrey Ferrara (Massachusetts, USA)

spring clouds the concrete flecks my boots	clam flats a man in the distance flies off
March 13, 2020 Comment: The author was mixing concrete and tiny splashes landed on their boots. The impermanence of clouds, near permanence of concrete, and the transformation of clouds to rain and liquid concrete to solid all come together.	March 25, 2020 Comment: One of the men in the distance out collecting clams was actually a bird.

spring snow makes for Buddha a cap	spring river times itself with a stick
April 6, 2020 Comment: The stone Buddha has a snowy cap with the jovial feel of spring.	May 7, 2020 Comment: One can easily visualize the stick being swept along by the river's water.

sculpture garden a dandelion drifting through	fallen hatchling the color of my palm
May 18, 2020 Comment: Here the ephemeral is contrasted with the more permanent.	June 15, 2020 Comment: The baby bird is pinkish as it is scooped up by the poet.

ribbed canoe ducking under the chrysalis	squirrels in the cemetery bury nuts
July 13, 2020 Comment: A concrete image with parallels between the structure of a chrysalis and a canoe with cloth wrapped around the inner ribs.	July 22, 2020 Comment: "Bury" is great. The contrast between life and death works well here.

casting for trout the back of my hand brown and pebbled	old warbler trestle bridge opens slowly
Aug. 11, 2020 Comment: Both the body patterns of the trout and the imagined pebbled bottom of the brook are superimposed on the look of the poet's aging hand.	Sept. 16, 202 Comment: It is almost as if the warbler were telling all around that the bridge was starting to open.

under mine a mollusk moves its foot	pine needles — piecing together the tracks
Sept. 23, 2020 Comment: The alliteration in “mollusk” was chosen rather than the concreteness of “clam,” but it is obvious that this mollusk can only be a clam.	Oct. 2, 2020 Comment: Alliteration for both “p” and “t” with a concrete image, easily grasped.

the cool moss returning my footprints	the cloud of monarchs voting by mail
Oct. 19, 2020 Comment: The moss is compressed when stepped on but slowly expands back to its original form.	Nov. 2, 2020 Comment: The butterflies are just as if they were letters.

autumn moon house on stilts measures tide	first colors of fall — ladybugs dot a south-facing wall
Nov. 30, 2020 Comment: The moon is full and reflected beneath the house on stilts as the tide comes in.	Dec. 2, 2020 Comment: Good use of rhyme where it does not seem contrived. The ladybugs are trying to stay as warm as possible on the wall upon which the sun is shining.

dumping dry pots the earth keeps its shape
Dec. 16, 2020 Comment: Probably dead roots help the soil to retain the shape of the pots. Keen observation.

Maria Teresa Sisti (Massa Carrara, Italy)

first snowflakes — the leg in plaster above the pillow	coughs — dandelion seeds scattered here and there
March 14, 2020 Comment: Everything is so white!	May 29, 2020 Comment: This is a metaphor, perhaps, but one can also imagine seeds scattering because of a cough.

Roberta Beach Jacobson (Iowa, USA)

vacationing in my spring hat the spider
March 20, 2020 Comment: A humorous twist when we get to the last line.

Marie-Louise Montignot (Saulxures, France)

first brimstone butterfly apparently without a flight plan	thanks to the open window common cranes
March 21, 2020 Comment: The yellow butterfly flitting here and there seems like indecision to a human.	April 29, 2020 Comment: If the window were not open then the poet may never have noticed the cranes. What luck!

Bakhtiyar Amini (Duesseldorf, Germany)

flock of crows the field by the house changes color	night catch in the fishing net — full moon
March 23, 2020 Comment: As the crows land, the field turns black.	April 25, 2020 Comment: The reflected moon looks like it will be caught along with the fish, with their scales glistening in the moonlight.

bird's footprints washed away by rain clear sky	waning moon walking by herself a pregnant woman
May 27, 2020 Comment: Nothing remains of the birds, not even their footprints, as they migrate.	Oct. 14, 2020 Comment: The cycle of birth and death is suggested in the waning of the moon.

crisp autumn day I take my shadow for a walk
Oct. 31, 2020 Comment: The shadow also seems crisp.

Jianqing Zheng (Mississippi, USA)

missing mom spring rain seeps into her daylily beds
March 27, 2020 Comment: Mother has passed away but life goes on.

Elisa Allo (Zug, Switzerland)

first buds —
counting white hair
on the brush

March 28, 2020

Comment: As the poet gets older, new life is born.

Ashoka Weerakkody (Colombo, Sri Lanka)

chilly night ...
spice shop neon reddens
the fog

March 30, 2020

Comment: The image is clear enough that the play on chili vs. chilly is not too much.

Dennys Cambarau (Sardinia, Italy)

new masks
on overused faces
the carnival

March 31, 2020

Comment: Life working in a carnival is hard and takes its toll.

Richa Sharma (Ghaziabad, India)

end of winter
the pigeon's weight
on a bare branch

April 2, 2020

Comment: The branch bends as it is weighed down by the pigeon. Is the branch suppler because the sap has returned?

Tom Bierovic (Florida, USA)

melting icicle
a cat plays tag
with each drip

April 3, 2020

Comment: We all know how a cat will jump at anything, and this provides a good concrete image.

Giuliana Ravaglia (Bologna, Italy)

last trip:
a butterfly
in my room

April 10, 2020

Comment: "Last trip" may refer to the poet's last visit to their childhood home and the butterfly reminded them that they also had changed.

Helen Buckingham (Somerset, UK)

Easter morning fox cubs scuffle over a thrush egg	lockdown lifted by larksong
April 11, 2020 Comment: The pale blue egg of a thrush seems almost as if it has been painted — like an Easter egg.	Aug. 20, 2020 Comment: Nice alliteration.

full moon a coracle ferrying the leaf-fall
Nov. 16, 2020 Comment: The roundness of the moon and the coracle fit well, while the moon and leaf-fall cause us to think of the cycle of life.

Ken Sawitri (Central Java, Indonesia)

just before my thought ... the thumping sound of a bat on the glass window	jasmine buds ... I close the door before my thought knocks
April 14, 2020 Comment: We wonder what that thought would have been.	June 17, 2020 Comment: The opening of buds contrasted with the closing of the mind to thoughts, as if meditating.

Serhiy Shpychenko (Kyiv, Ukraine)

family ties — old ivy encircles the house walls	fallen star ... small sharp stone inside a sandal
April 15, 2020 Comment: The ivy vines are all tangled up together and it is hard to see exactly how with all the leaves in the way. So much like family ties!	Aug. 18, 2020 Comment: Wonderful! The celestial becomes the mundane.

summer downpour eggs are fried in a pan
Sept. 7, 2020 Comment: The sounds of frying eggs and summer rain hissing on the hot tin roof. Strong rain is a good excuse to stay inside and perhaps have a more leisurely breakfast than usual!

David Milovanovic (Lapovo, Serbia)

Milky Way — fishing boats set sail in silence	rush hour — fish in the store window stare at people
April 18, 2020 Comment: In contrast to Basho's haiku on the sea of Sado, here the sea is calm and the Milky Way is both above and reflected on the water.	July 28, 2020 Comment: The fish are staring with their forever-open eyes in the opposite of window shopping.

summer night —
a sprinkler putting out
the stars

Sept. 5, 2020

Comment: The stars are momentarily lost as the water spray conceals them. Good poetic license.

Corrado Aiello (Naples, Italy)

tulips ...
this scent inside
their stems

April 21, 2020

Comment: Normally one smells the flowers but here the stem has snapped and the poet can smell the sap inside the stem.

Violeta Urda (Bucharest, Romania)

dusting off
the family album —
spring wind

April 22, 2020

Comment: It is almost as if the wind had done the dusting. Spring brings a sense of happiness.

a scarecrow
in the gourd patch —
elections day

Nov. 3, 2020

Comment: What to make of a scarecrow ... looking like a man but not really being one. What to make of a politician going into an election. How much is true?

dandelion seeds
crossing the border —
refugee camps

Nov. 18, 2020

Comment: The seeds can move freely though the people cannot.

Monica Federico (Dunshaughlin, Ireland)

Self-isolation —
on the dwarf apple-tree
first buds

April 27, 2020

Comment: A bonsai, perhaps, isolated in a little pot?

Night frost —
an old grudge
dissolved in the dream

May 26, 2020

Comment: Water turns solid to become frost, while a grudge loses its form when worked through in a dream.

Dance of a firefly —
the imperceptible movement
of the stars

Aug. 19, 2020

Comment: Fireflies and stars are often combined in haiku but the addition of concrete movement differences here makes this haiku great.

Autumn sun —
little girl playing
with her shadow

Nov. 7, 2020

Comment: “Autumn” gives a feeling of melancholy and lonesomeness, as if the girl has no other friends so is playing with her shadow instead.

Tempo Salvatore (Bron, France)

divorce between ivy and wisteria her heart swings	the warblers shake the cherry blossom for the newlyweds
April 28, 2020 Comment: The couple must be together in a garden and the poet is having second thoughts about the divorce. Her heart swings like the plants in the breeze.	July 6, 2020 Comment: The blossoms fall on the newlyweds as if they were pieces of confetti.
summer rain the child persists to throw an orange into the sky	moonless night more and more of age spots
Aug. 10, 2020 Comment: Sometimes children do things we cannot understand as adults, but the poet here feels the child has discovered a truth, so tries to introduce it to us through this poem.	Sept. 17, 2020 Comment: I think of the spots and patches on the face of the full moon, even though the sky is moonless.
on the bed alone in his coma in the vase a tulip opens	screams of white geese — moonlight floods the sea
Oct. 10, 2020 Comment: There is no movement except for the slow opening of the tulip. Perhaps he, too, will open up again one day.	Dec. 18, 2020 Comment: I cannot help but be reminded of master Basho's haiku about the cries of ducks becoming faintly white as the sea darkens.

Cezar-Florin Ciobika (Botosani, Romania)

early thaw I suddenly hum our favourite song	in quarantine a blossomed cherry twig knocks on my window
May 5, 2020 Comment: The melting snow frees the mind also to remember fond memories and the song flows forth.	May 16, 2020 Comment: The wind knocks the branch up against the window — the only visitor knocking during lockdown.

rush hour on the rear-view mirror a ladybug	stepping stones crossing alone the Milky Way
July 11, 2020 Comment: Who would have thought a ladybug would be perched on the rear-view mirror! If the traffic had been moving, the poet would have been more focused on the cars behind.	Dec. 22, 2020 Comment: The night sky is reflected. Perhaps on the night of the Tanabata star festival?

Malgorzata Formanowska (Wroclaw, Poland)

first day of spring my husband's first day of chemotherapy
May 6, 2020 Comment: Positiveness brought into the poem by the "first day of spring."

Brailean Mirela (Iasi, Romania)

petals in the wind — all my holiday plans postponed	buds of peonies — time for breastfeeding her newborn baby
May 8, 2020 Comment: The plans are scattered like petals, in the season of cherry blossoms.	June 6, 2020 Comment: The feeling of a beginning combined with the hardness/softness of a peony bud when it is squeezed fits well.

waiting room — a shooting star at the window	the wind through bellflowers — autumn quiet
Sept. 22, 2020 Comment: We notice a contrast between the different passages of time. If the “waiting room” were in a hospital then the “shooting star” would imply premature death might be on the cards. In this haiku it is better that this be left to the imagination.	Oct. 23, 2020 Comment: It seems mundane to point out that bellflowers do not make sounds like bells. “autumn” saves the poem though.

deep autumn — a snail trace on the wall	after Halloween — some crows enlarging the pumpkin’s smile
Nov. 4, 2020 Comment: The melancholy of late autumn is captured well.	Dec. 1, 2020 Comment: A nice concrete scene.

first day of school — with no distancing in between the falling leaves
Dec. 15, 2020 Comment: We are caused to think of what might happen if we don’t social distance through “falling leaves.”

Maria Concetta Conti (Catania, Italy)

Mother's Day in the shoes last year's stone	july afternoon looking at a cloud he passes away
May 9, 2020 Comment: My mind wanders around as to why this needs to be "Mother's Day" before I realize that the mother's family must be taking her out for dinner and they haven't done so since last year. Mothers need to deal with so many little stones in their shoes.	July 7, 2020 Comment: It must have been such a peaceful death.

Fatima Atash Sokhan (Tehran, Iran)

My birthplace ... every season just path of migrating birds
May 12, 2020 Comment: The town is never a destination nor the point of embarkation for the migrating birds. It seems there is nothing special about it but there is always something special about everywhere and everyone — in this case it was the poet's place of birth.

Aparna Pathak (Haryana, India)

last embers
futile efforts
to break the silence

May 13, 2020

Comment: One of the couple tries a few times to start a conversation, but passion and perhaps even love has already flown.

Rudi Pfaller (Remshalden, Germany)

reading love letters
easily
under full moon

May 14, 2020

Comment: The moon is so bright that, lying in bed, the light doesn't need to be turned on to read the love letters.

lonesome walk
as I talk to a cricket
it falls silent

Dec. 14, 2020

Comment: The lonesomeness is enhanced even further.

Michael Henry Lee (Florida, USA)

waving
from across the yard
daffodils

May 23, 2020

Comment: A neighbor is keeping good social distance but it seems as if the daffodils are waving too.

dandelion wine
going wherever
the wind blows

Aug. 29, 2020

Comment: Just as the dandelion seeds are carried on the wind, so too is the life of the poet. The "alternative" wine suggests the non-conformity of the poet's life choices.

Sheila K. Barksdale (Gotherington, U.K.)

self-isolating between the waves
bearded coconut

May 30, 2020

Comment: The poet is keeping to themselves down at the beach but it seems like the coconut has grown a COVID beard and is also self-isolating.

Roger Watson (Hull, U.K.)

an oblivious bee
zig-zagging
between headstones

June 3, 2020

Comment: Perhaps the poet is at a funeral and is watching how the bee isn't concerned about all the humans nearby.

Helga Stania (Ettiswil, Switzerland)

lapwings
arriving
the bog brighter

June 4, 2020

Comment: Crested plovers flock to the bog and their colors brighten it, as they do also the poet's mood.

swallows migrate
the boy caresses
his rabbit

Nov. 9, 2020

Comment: Watching life leave causes the boy to unconsciously feel more longing for the life that remains.

Minami Ichimiya (Ibaraki, Japan)

first butterfly of the year crosses pleasantly sickroom window	weed garden leave flowered shepherd's-purse as it is
June 9, 2020 Comment: "Pleasantly" is not a word one normally associates with sickrooms, but the first butterfly makes it so.	July 9, 2020 Comment: Perhaps "weed" could be replaced with something else, since shepherd's purse is already considered a weed? For example, "retiree's"?

convey my greetings to little grandson flying-away firefly	green maple leaves grandson and granddad walk hand in hand
Aug. 14, 2020 Comment: The pathos of the grandfather not being able to see their grandson in person, due to COVID no doubt, is heightened by the ephemerality of a departing firefly.	Oct. 6, 2020 Comment: "Maple leaves" and "hand" work well, while "green" gives a positive feel of looking to the future. A much better choice than red or yellow would have been.

car crushes mantis on road deep blue sky
Nov. 27, 2020 Comment: The sky seems deeper and bluer after the loss of life.

Elena Zouain (Remiremont, France)

waiting for his return —
the last irregular flight
of wild geese

June 10, 2020

Comment: Not knowing when he will come back is conveyed well by referring to the geese.

Kari Davidson (Ohio USA)

my handwriting
is exactly like my father's ...
chatter of barn swallows

June 16, 2020

Comment: There is resonance between the senses of vision and sound.

Lavana Kray (Iasi, Romania)

canceled flights —
locusts have invaded
the airfield

June 18, 2020

Comment: "Invaded" stresses the huge number of locusts now there.

Zoran Doderovic (Novi Sad, Serbia)

window frame the view disappears leaf by leaf
June 19, 2020 Comment: As spring progresses, more and more leaves crowd the window frame.

K. Ramesh (Chennai, India)

work from home ... the silence between calls of cuckoos	talking into the night ... the gecko responds again
June 20, 2020 Comment: "Calls of cuckoos" rather than the calls of some other kind of bird cause us also to imagine the passage of time through their association with clocks.	Aug. 13, 2020 Comment: The quietness of a tropical night is conveyed well with the description of the sounds that penetrate it.

Mary Hind (Victoria, Australia)

at the beach a flock of sparrows — not distancing
June 23, 2020 Comment: Without COVID no one would ever notice exactly how far apart various animals remain when congregated together.

Clifford Rames (New Jersey, USA)

self-isolation studying the ins and outs of ant colonies	hawk shadow — its late afternoon drift through my mourning
June 24, 2020 Comment: Perhaps the author is keeping an ant farm as a way to pass the time? “Ins and outs” makes one imagine the entrance and exit holes in an ant mound as well.	Aug. 17, 2020 Comment: An expert play on words with “mourning” that doesn’t come across as too contrived because the rest of the haiku is concrete and observant.

cooling off the cows with little left to offer the river slips past
Sept. 3, 2020 Comment: It is as if the river feels guilty that it can give no more.

Priscilla H. Lignori (New York, USA)

on quarantine days we retell old fairy tales deer in the village	Sunday worship cicada break into song throughout the village
June 27, 2020 Comment: Without people walking around or driving in the village, the deer have come down to roam the streets. Perhaps they were also like that in the old days when the fairy tales were first formed?	Sept. 15, 2020 Comment: It isn’t just the churchgoers who are singing.

Arvinder Kaur (Chandigarh, India)

the gentle swing
of a poppy —
hopping bees

July 15, 2020

Comment: As the bees land or take off, the poppy swings in response.

Lucia Cardillo (Foggia, Italy)

clouds pass
without becoming rain ...
quarantine

July 18, 2020

Comment: Rain would join the clouds to the ground in streams of water but the clouds remain separate as if they, too, were quarantined.

Tomislav Maretic (Zagreb, Croatia)

summer night
a hedgehog walks along
the pub terrace

July 20, 2020

Comment: The author is sitting outside having a beer and relaxing. The presence of the hedgehog makes me think of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" so the summer night takes on magical qualities.

Manoj Sharma (Kathmandu, Nepal)

after dinner
a new hunger ...
stargazing

July 24, 2020

Comment: A hunger for other places?
Knowledge?

Joanne van Helvoort (Beerta, The Netherlands)

waving
till the train is out of sight —
summer grasses

July 25, 2020

Comment: The summer grasses wave as well as
the poet.

Melissa J White (New Mexico, USA)

quarantined like me
hyacinth blossoms peek out
from a turquoise pot

July 30, 2020

Comment: Before being quarantined we
probably would never stop to think and
empathize with pot plants!

Clark Strand (New York, USA)

Temple exhibit: will no one touch the demon even to dust him?	A pile of shadows on the ground: summer leaves rehearsing their exits
July 31, 2020 Comment: Superstition wins.	Aug. 25, 2020 Comment: The shadows of the leaves on the ground remind the author that soon the leaves themselves will lie there.

Unable to speak unless spoken to — wind chimes on the veranda	There was this bubble who was sure the waterfall was just a rumor
Sept. 8, 2020 Comment: “Not speaking until spoken to” might allow the poet themselves to be part of the poem rather than having the first part of the poem seeming only to describe the second part.	Sept. 26, 2020 Comment: Quite unconventional, but successfully conveying the image of the waterfall, while simultaneously causing the reader to think about “fake news.”

The grasshopper god lives in a lower heaven — about ten feet up
Dec. 30, 2020 Comment: The grasshoppers are all trying to jump or fly as if to reach heaven but none go higher than a couple of meters.

Dinesh Shihantha De Silva (Nugegoda, Sri Lanka)

spring epidemic ...
the next door lady spreads
another rumour

Aug. 1, 2020

Comment: Rumors spread like viruses.

Gary Hotham (Maryland, USA)

making up
the missing stars
fireflies

Aug. 4, 2020

Comment: A cloudy night, perhaps?

Christine Horner (California, USA)

canyon trail —
my sweat and the mule's
run together

Aug. 12, 2020

Comment: The heat is keenly felt and we also think of the erosion caused by the running water that formed the canyon.

Mario Massimo Zontini (Parma, Italy)

cemetery —
an old man bothered
by mosquitoes

Aug. 15, 2020

Comment: The man, perhaps even the poet, is probably visiting the grave of his deceased wife. There is nothing like blood-sucking mosquitoes to remind a person that they are still alive!

dining al fresco —
the song of cicadas overlaps
the ladies' chattering

Aug. 26, 2020

Comment: The poet is soaking in all the sounds in a relaxed and detached way.

in Summer dusk
pair of mallards return home —
me too, alone

Sept. 9, 2020

Comment: "In summer dusk / a pair." A good imperfect rhyme at end of the second and third lines.

Aljosa Vukovic (Sibenik, Croatia)

summer equinox
a snake crosses
left right

Aug. 21, 2020

Comment: The equinoxes are in spring and autumn, while summer and winter each have a solstice. Replacing "equinox" with "solstice" would also give another s-sound like the hissing of a snake. Solstice and crossing go well together.

Srinivas (Chennai, India)

even the Sun
skinny-dips in the lake —
heat wave

Aug. 22, 2020

Comment: Nice humor.

David Jacob (London, U.K.)

the cemetery
all to myself
warm summer rain

Aug. 24, 2020

Comment: Just sitting in the rain makes one feel so alive.

Clelia Ifrim (Bucharest, Romania)

An ash sparrow drinks
water from my palm —
Hiroshima Day

Sept. 1, 2020

Comment: “Ash sparrow” does not seem to be the official common name of any bird, so “ash” must be an adjective describing the sparrow’s color. Haiku about Hiroshima often include references to wanting to drink water, but the description of the sparrow’s color as “ash” adds enough novelty to make the haiku work well.

Taofeek Ayeyemi (Rivers State, Nigeria)

weaverbirds
splashing by a burst tap ...
sultry noon

Sept. 12, 2020

Comment: Even the birds need a break from the heat.

Daniela Misso (Terni, Italy)

my wheelchair
passing through the grass ...
crickets jump

Sept. 18, 2020

Comment: The steady horizontal movement of the poet's body, the rotation of the wheelchair wheels, and the sudden jumping of the crickets combine well.

autumn lake —
a pebble
stops the clouds

Dec. 3, 2020

Comment: The reflected clouds break up when a pebble is thrown in.

winter deepens —
the long sound
of the duduk

Dec. 31, 2020

Comment: Sounds can often instill feelings — in this case loneliness.

Hemapriya Chellappan (Maharashtra, India)

gathering dusk fragrance of woodsmoke clings to her saree	a butterfly in the drongo's beak autumn deepens
Sept. 21, 2020 Comment: Smoke and dusk resonate visually, while the fragrance makes one imagine gathering wood using a saree as well.	Oct. 12, 2020 Comment: Death deepens the melancholy of autumn.

Rp Verlaine (New York, USA)

thunderstorm feeling more alone with the cat hiding
Sept. 24, 2020 Comment: Even a nonhuman companion can help us deal with trepidation.

Antonio Mangiameli (Lentini, Italy)

the acrid scent of withered flowers — falling stars
Oct. 3, 2020 Comment: Vision and sound are combined well here.

Semih Ozmeric (Istanbul, Turkey)

on a summer night
mosquitoes, stars and raindrops
mixing with each other

Oct. 8, 2020

Comment: A vortex of summer, with the three entities in the second line resonating well with each other.

DI Mattila (Virginia, USA)

less and less
of the woodpile
north wind

Oct. 9, 2020

Comment: What an elegant way to remark how cold it is!

Dan Iulian (Bucharest, Romania)

leaves in the wind —
postponing again
leaving home

Oct. 13, 2020

Comment: A good contrast between leaving and staying.

Eva Su (Jakarta, Indonesia)

full moon
a moment
my words just pour out

Oct. 15, 2020

Comment: The moon causes us to do things we wouldn't do normally.

John Lanyon (Chipping Norton, U.K.)

[{"locked down"}]
the barley rising
the birds singing louder and louder.

Oct. 16, 2020

Comment: Very good use of punctuation.

The first autumn leaves
drifting into the bookshop
before closing-time.

Oct. 30, 2020

Comment: The leaves remind one of the pages of books. The temporal relationship between the passing of the seasons and the time of the day is also used well.

Lisa Anne Johnson (Michigan, USA)

cigarette evening —
the fireflies relinquish
the sky to the stars

Oct. 26, 2020

Comment: The glowing tip of the cigarette is easily imagined. A good concrete image can be formed in the reader's mind, even though it is not spelled out.

Sanjuktaa Asopa (Belgaum, India)

garden party —
the nasturtiums compete
with the ladies

Oct. 28, 2020

Comment: I can imagine well the brightly colored sarees of the ladies and the oranges and yellows of the flowers.

Ronald D Drynan Sr (Texas, USA)

Autumn
Trees clean their closets
Upon my lawn

Nov. 6, 2020

Comment: One imagines clothes strewn all over the place during closet cleaning. The leaves are also scattered around in a quite haphazard way.

Andrew Riutta (Michigan, USA)

Veteran's Day
the shrapnel in Grandpa's back
amongst tulip bulbs

Nov. 11, 2020

Comment: Tulips are growing on his grave. Very poignant!

Stephen J. DeGuire (California, USA)

a cricket's
echo heard only
by crickets

Nov. 20, 2020

Comment: There is not a single person around.

Oana Boazu (Galati, Romania)

old people's village —
even the chrysanthemum
slightly bent

Nov. 21, 2020

Comment: In Japan, chrysanthemums
symbolize longevity and, when white,
mourning.

Claudia Codau (Paris, France)

moonless night —
the quince tree more fruitful
than ever

Nov. 24, 2020

Comment: Eyes are drawn to the quince tonight,
rather than the moon.

Kelly Shaw (Illinois, USA)

in a noisy world
many reasons to be blue
a field of violets

Nov. 28, 2020

Comment: While concentrating on the flowers,
we can also access the poet's sadness at the way
of the world.

Adam Wahlfeldt (Stockholm, Sweden)

day after sermon
slowly darkening
the rose petals

Dec. 17, 2020

Comment: At the sermon the rose was at its
brightest. Possibly it is the same with the
churchgoers.

Simonetta Sarchi (Milan, Italy)

Lockdown
The infinite universe
in a rose

Dec. 28, 2020

Comment: There is much time for
contemplation during a lockdown.