



## Annual Selection 2025 The Pivot and the Paradox

*Selections and comments by Dhugal J. Lindsay*

This year's submissions reveal poets deeply attentive to the world's quiet contradictions — beauty emerging from decay, violence paired with renewal, the ephemeral held against the eternal. Many haiku captured threshold moments: a toppled tree still budding, migrant journeys ending in loss, the precise instant when speech is silenced by a dead leaf. What strikes me most is how poets have learned to hold multiple truths simultaneously without resolving them into easy answers. A ceasefire brings both fireworks and traumatic memory. A mother's gentle voice spelling a beloved name carries pride, protectiveness and cultural navigation all at once. This year I also noticed masterful use of the pivot technique — where a central line or phrase modifies both what comes before and after, creating a hinge that opens the poem in two directions at once. When executed well, this classical technique allows a haiku to contain exponentially more meaning in its brief compass. The best haiku this year don't choose between readings — they expand to contain them all. This is perhaps haiku's greatest gift: the ability to present facts so precisely arranged that readers glimpse not one truth but a constellation of truths, each valid, each illuminating something essential about being human in this particular moment. The poets below have mastered this artisanship, selecting their crows and snowdrops and autumn winds with such care that we can all enter their moments and discover our own insights waiting there.

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**Lyudmila Hristova** (Sofia, Bulgaria)

bird tracks —  
after every sea wave  
a new story

Jan. 1, 2025

Comment: Each wave wipes the sand clean, and the birds return to "write" new patterns. The beach becomes an endless cycle of erasure and inscription, with stories as brief as the interval between waves.

prolonged war  
the third generation of dandelions  
is leaving

June 4, 2025

Comment: Much more artistic than saying three years have passed. The seeds scattering to the wind are like the lives of the lost soldiers.

south wind blowing  
the paper boat is  
so far from home

Aug. 28, 2025

Comment: Found by the poet on the northern edge of some largish body of water like a lake, the fragile paper boat, unable to navigate back and subject to forces beyond its control, suggests displacement and distance. Its vulnerability and helplessness evokes migrants making desperate crossings in precarious vessels — the south wind suggesting the poet is thinking of those from Africa.

after the war —  
frog serenades  
from the trenches

Oct. 3, 2025

Comment: Life goes on! “Frogs serenade” rather than “frog serenades” would improve it since “trenches” is plural.

### Salvatore Tempo (Bron, France)

nobody knows  
but here under this snow  
there are crocuses

Jan. 2, 2025

Comment: Even though we can't see, smell or touch them, still we experience the crocuses through this masterful portrayal. There are so many other things in life that we remain unaware of in the same way.

yesterday's train  
arrived so fast  
for new year's day

Feb. 12, 2025

Comment: The reference to its speed works so well since time always proceeds at a fixed rate.

walking  
with long strides  
while it snows softly

March 6, 2025

Comment: I imagine they are large, slow-falling flakes.

perennials —  
seeing my sisters again  
every spring

March 12, 2025

waiting  
on the station platform  
the rain arrives in its place

March 26, 2025

Comment: The suddenness of the rain is portrayed well.

new fashion  
for spring  
I butter the toast

April 25, 2025

Comment: Buttering toast becomes a metaphor for fashion itself — dressing up the plain and dry as something richer. The spring trends are just new butter on old bread. The mundane breakfast ritual persists, quietly mocking seasonal obsession with novelty.

new snowdrifts  
are melting  
when the train pulls away

May 8, 2025

Comment: “New” niggles as to why the author included it. Perhaps the train stopped long enough for snow to pile up next to each carriage? I can sense another meaning behind the words but can’t cognitively explain it.

melting snowflakes  
in the open mouth  
a gunshot

July 14, 2025

Comment: The first two lines are so tender and take one back to one’s childhood before the last line suddenly places one in grim reality. Although it must be a gunshot heard from far away the last two lines seem to run on and the poem becomes a commentary on mental health and the fragility of life.

garden chair  
only the snow  
sits on it

July 28, 2025

getting past  
barbed wire  
bindweed flowers

Aug. 7, 2025

Comment: “Bindweed” makes this stand out from other haiku in the same pattern about things crossing fences or barbed wire.

young strawberry runners  
let the old ones rest

Aug. 23, 2025

Comment: Young strawberry runners extend and root, taking over the work of the patch, allowing the parent plants to rest. The observation captures natural succession — how strawberry plants propagate through runners that become independent and productive. “Let” is the key word, suggesting not replacement but generous permission, active care. The young don’t displace the old; they relieve them. The human parallel is clear: generational reciprocity, children supporting parents who once sustained them, the cycle of care reversing direction with time.

passionflower stems  
reaching the other shore  
suspension bridge

Sept. 5, 2025

Comment: Both the poet and the passionfruit vines seem to have reached the other shore.

condemned gate  
careless visitors caught  
in the spider’s web

Sept. 17, 2025

Comment: A condemned gate — whether structurally unsafe, historically dark, or simply closed off — has become spider territory. Careless visitors passing through, ignoring warnings or unaware of the gate’s status, find themselves caught in webs spun across the abandoned passage. The gate continues its function of catching or stopping people, though now through nature rather than human decree. What’s been abandoned by people becomes newly occupied and defended.

the migrant’s scarf  
on the beach  
the sea gave it back

Sept. 29, 2025

Comment: The drowning of the migrant suggested obliquely heightens the poignancy.

the sparrow  
in bad shape  
bathes in the holy water font

Oct. 2, 2025

Comment: This scene holds multiple tensions: Is this desecration or deeply sacred? The faithful dip fingers for blessing while this desperate creature immerses its suffering body, perhaps seeking healing or simply finding available water. The sparrow doesn't distinguish holy from ordinary — it just needs water — yet the setting transforms the act. Church as sanctuary for all who suffer, the font offering what comfort it can, whether through faith or simple moisture, to a small life in distress.

bitter plums —  
the road made with the stones  
of the demolished church

Oct. 10, 2025

Comment: The haiku suggests a Christian author looking at a road built by non-Christian conquerors.

malformed  
wild mirabel trees  
but so much fruit

Oct. 17, 2025

Comment: The Mirabelle plum tree cultivar is originally from Turkey but is the most common plum in some regions of France. The plums are small but obviously can be very abundant on a tree. "Wild" following "malformed" suggests that the poet feels a lack of human care has caused the tree to grow crookedly, but the observation in the final line conveys their thoughts on the importance of freedom.

the fisherman leaves  
empty-handed  
the heron, he remains

Nov. 20, 2025

Comment: A fisherman departs without fish while the heron stays at the water's edge. The contrast illuminates their different relationships with patience and place. The human, frustrated by lack of immediate success, leaves. The heron, built for waiting, remains — this is its domain, its livelihood, its nature. "He" personalizes the bird, granting dignity and intention to its persistence. The heron will likely succeed where the fisherman failed, not through superior skill but through belonging and patience that outlasts human frustration. The scene quietly asks: Who is the true fisher?

wisteria and bindweed  
after so many years  
finally intertwined

Dec. 19, 2025

Comment: My thoughts stray to arranged marriages when reading this.

**Alvin B. Cruz** (Manila, Philippines)

wildflower  
living her life  
on her own terms

Jan. 3, 2025

another year ...  
yesterday's rain  
in the wheelbarrow

Jan. 11, 2025

Comment: "Wheelbarrow" is a wonderful end to this New Year haiku! The rain has become just water and is now in something that could be used to move it somewhere else. There are many more layers to this poem than the familiar motif of something from the old year carrying over into the new.

field of dandelions  
letting go  
of her ashes

Jan. 22, 2025

Comment: They scatter like dandelion seeds but also fall to fertilize them, possibly transforming over time into seeds that will fly away freely in the wind.

the longer piece  
of a wishbone  
winter solstice

Jan. 28, 2025

Comment: On the winter solstice the daylight hours are at their shortest and the night its longest. Two people pull at a wishbone with their pinkie fingers and the one left with the longer piece traditionally is said to have their wish come true. Having the days once again become longer is what we all wish for in the middle of winter.

names carved  
on a fruitless tree  
winter deepens

Feb. 7, 2025

Comment: The couple may now be married but childless.

first snow  
adding marshmallows  
in my hot choco

Feb. 21, 2025

autumn wind  
she holds my hand  
tighter

March 5, 2025

Comment: Observations of the human reaction to natural entities as a major theme of haiku became mainstream in Japan from 1939 and is still going strong.

what has been  
will be again ...  
first crocus

March 13, 2025

Comment: Crocus flowers traditionally symbolize rebirth, hope, joy, and new beginnings. The present haiku, though, also carries a hint of foreboding.

cherry blossoms  
how quickly i fell  
for your words

April 26, 2025

Comment: Cherry blossoms fall quickly, and so did the speaker — seduced by words as ephemeral and beautiful as the petals. The question is whether what follows will be as brief.

neither sowing  
nor reaping  
sparrows in the rain

May 19, 2025

Comment: There is a very Zen feel to this haiku.

what the fire  
has spared  
winter sky

May 24, 2025

Comment: Wildfires tend to break out in the dry air of winter. The reference to “sky” evokes the image of a fiery sunset, as if the whole sky is ablaze.

last rites  
for mother ...  
first crocus

Aug. 18, 2025

Comment: It is almost as if she has been reborn as the flower.

grief-stricken  
the artist shades  
a crow

Sept. 9, 2025

Comment: Crows and ravens are certainly not a single shade of black, just as there are many shades to grief.

harvest moon  
this urge to get  
a second opinion

Nov. 21, 2025

Comment: The harvest moon traditionally represents completion, abundance, bringing things to fruition. Yet it triggers doubt — should I seek confirmation before committing? The full moon’s brightness perhaps illuminates uncertainty rather than clarity, or the season of reaping makes decisions feel more consequential, requiring validation before proceeding.

the way  
of all flesh  
windfall apples

Dec. 10, 2025

Comment: “The way of all flesh” — a biblical phrase for death — meets windfall apples rotting on the ground. The irony: “Windfall” usually means good fortune, but here it means only premature fall and decay.

the wishbone  
broken in two  
winter solstice

Dec. 20, 2025

Comment: My Jan. 28 selection by the same author is the better of these two versions concerning the same theme.

**Jeffrey Ferrara** (Massachusetts, USA)

a fallen branch  
tips from the wall  
a loose stone

Jan. 4, 2025

Comment: A fallen branch tips a loose stone from the wall — one fall triggering another. The small chain reaction reveals the wall's precarious state, instability hidden until disturbed.

plain birds  
take more watching  
to see

Feb. 5, 2025

Comment: This statement of fact has us contemplating the difference between watching and seeing.

a little moon  
on the parent limb  
where the branch was cut

March 8, 2025

skating a pond  
where in a few months  
the trout will sip mayflies

March 20, 2025

winter ferry  
a gull  
rides the floe

April 2, 2025

Comment: The author rides the ferry and looks down to see a seagull riding its own "ferry."

a pine bough  
trapped in the snowpack  
springs free

April 23, 2025

Comment: We imagine the bough came loose as the spring thaw softened the snowpack. Like the release of tension from a drawn bow, "springs" works especially well with "bough."

for all of their sound  
not one can be found  
spring peepers!

May 2, 2025

dog in the stars  
the pack calls at night  
to come down and play

May 16, 2025

redshift  
a fox  
travels light

May 27, 2025

Comment: The fox is losing its winter fur and reverting to red. Perhaps it is a vixen and has left its kit alone in the den instead of carrying it in its mouth. The combination of "redshift" with "light" suggests the red fox is moving away rapidly since "redshift" usually refers to the Doppler effect of light becoming redder the faster the object emitting it moves away.

in search of attachment  
a green tendril  
waving in stillness

June 7, 2025

Comment: The first line conjures up the vision of a human looking for companionship, while the rest of the poem converts this into a moment of keen observation.

still connected to the earth  
a toppled tree  
showing buds

June 16, 2025

Comment: What should be dead continues living, growing in a new orientation. The buds represent defiant hope and growth despite catastrophe. The image extends naturally to human experience: staying rooted to what sustains us even when knocked down, continuing to grow despite changed circumstances.

a still trout  
letting the stream  
flow through it

June 25, 2025

Comment: Not just around it. Very Zen!

a toad  
at my doorstep  
facing inward

July 5, 2025

Comment: The author's curiosity is apparent. Does it want to be let in? Why? It is probably just waiting for insects that are attracted to the lights.

an old wicker chair  
the tawny willow  
bends down to touch

July 24, 2025

Comment: The chair is probably made of willow rather than rattan or bamboo.

eyes clouding over  
the snake  
soon to shed

Aug. 8, 2025

Comment: Keenly observed! Not only does this capture the change to a milky color as the snake prepares to shed the skin over its eye, but the English expression also captures how the author imagines the snake must be feeling.

a cool boulder  
left by the glacier  
inside the graveyard

Aug. 20, 2025

Comment: A glacial boulder rests among the graves, deposited ages ago by retreating ice. Its timescale dwarfs the measure of human mortality — the stone arrived millennia before any burial and will remain long after. An ancient witness to fleeting lives, it possesses a coolness linking it to the glacier that brought it and perhaps to the coldness of death surrounding it.

Fourth of July  
incipient pine cones  
sparkling at the tips

Aug. 29, 2025

Comment: "Incipient" describes well the exact stage of growth, with "sparkling" stressing the clean freshness of the new growth while also causing us to think of fireworks.

touched by a breeze  
the forager's basket  
giving back spores

Sept. 8, 2025

Comment: All manner of mushrooms inside, one can imagine.

bottle flies  
bejeweling  
the carcass

Sept. 19, 2025

Comment: "Bejeweling" allows us to appreciate the iridescent beauty that we would otherwise ignore because of our revulsion.

at the end  
of the rainbow  
a salamander

Oct. 8, 2025

Comment: At the rainbow's end, instead of legendary gold, we find a salamander. The subverted expectation works beautifully — the grand myth replaced by a humble creature. Yet the salamander becomes the true treasure: vibrant and living, with its own spectrum of color on its wet skin. Both rainbow and salamander appear after rain, born of moisture and light. The haiku reframes magic, finding wonder not in myth but in what's actually there — small, overlooked, real. The pot of gold transforms into something better: life itself, brilliant and immediate.

contained  
within the maize  
until we're not

Oct. 20, 2025

Comment: The tallness of the corn is captured expertly both by the choice of "maize" (maze) to describe the plants and the sudden release of the third line.

acorns falling plumb  
the squirrels  
carry further

Nov. 3, 2025

reading by touch a few lines from the  
birch ...

Nov. 11, 2025

Comment: A person is running their fingers over birch bark, reading its surface through touch. "Lines" works multiply: the horizontal markings characteristic of birch bark and lines as text/poetry. The tree becomes a book read tactilely, like Braille — knowledge through fingertips rather than sight. "A few lines" suggests catching only fragments, partial understanding. The single-line form of the haiku mirrors this linearity, the continuous reading along the bark's surface. Nature as text, the birch's patterns as language requiring intimate, slow attention to decipher.

a leaf rake leaning against the tree trunk

Dec. 2, 2025

Comment: Just so! This is such a simple scene but there is so much depth behind the words.

**Irina Guliaeva** (Moscow, Russia)

home village  
making plans to leave  
the last leaf

Jan. 6, 2025

Comment: Almost nothing left holding them back. We feel the second line also modifying the third.

this snowfall  
all we have to talk about  
my father and i

Jan. 14, 2025

Comment: The passing of time is imagined in the slow descent of the snowflakes while the cold enhances the distance between father and daughter.

snow clouds  
reweighing my letter  
postal worker

Feb. 6, 2025

Comment: The elements fit so well though cognitively, it is hard to grasp why. These kinds of haiku we never grow tired of!

quarrel  
rushing towards the barbed wire  
snowflakes

Feb. 14, 2025

Comment: Soft vs. hard, reckless and unstoppable.

she wakes up  
from anesthesia  
half-moon

March 14, 2025

Comment: Only half awake, and a portion of her possibly gone after the surgery?

watchman's doze  
someone steals stars  
one by one

July 30, 2025

leaf-fall  
in the hospice window  
a little more sky

Nov. 10, 2025

Comment: We imagine some of the guests passing away but the final line has a positive feel to it and is a concrete observation of nature.

letting  
a moth go  
prison guard

Nov. 18, 2025

Comment: A job is a job and doesn't define a person.

mushrooming  
choosing words carefully  
mother-in-law

Dec. 9, 2025

Comment: While collecting mushrooms together, we imagine both the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law being polite, taking care not to upset the other with a poorly chosen word and become the stereotype. Wild mushrooms go so well with this content due to the fatal mistakes one could have if the wrong mushroom were picked.

**Wieslaw Karlinski** (Namysłów, Poland)

spring full moon  
brightens the meadow  
a flock of sheep

Jan. 7, 2025

Comment: Their white fleeces reflect the moonlight and cause them to stand out.

**Sari Grandstaff** (New York, USA)

the hunter's moon  
and my breath  
on the windshield

Jan. 8, 2025

Comment: In the October cold, the poet's breath has fogged the windshield, but the moon is so bright one certainly doesn't need to hunt for it through the fog on the windshield!

**Cezar Ciobîcă** (Botoșani, Romania)

a big quince  
refusing to fall  
full moon

Jan. 9, 2025

Comment: The implied metaphor works well!

hunger moon  
Orion stuck  
above the zoo

Feb. 10, 2025

Comment: The stars are clear and crisp in October. The hunter constellation expands above all those animals but remains static in the heavens.

snowflakes  
first light after  
cataract surgery

March 1, 2025

Comment: The white cloudiness over the eyes is now clear so the delicate white reflections from the snowflakes can be perceived.

bursting buds ...  
teaching my child about  
the Tooth Fairy

May 1, 2025

Comment: The first line resonates well with those teeth starting to push their way through the child's gums.

tai chi  
pushing away  
the heat wave

Aug. 9, 2025

Comment: Practicing tai chi becomes a way of managing oppressive heat — the slow, deliberate movements and mental focus creating a sense of pushing the discomfort away. The martial art's emphasis on chi (energy) flow and the imagery of "pushing hands" makes the metaphor work: physically engaging with heat as if it were an opponent to be redirected rather than endured.

dog days  
a puppy licking  
the sprinkler

Aug. 30, 2025

chilly days ...  
summer warmth lingering  
in the pumpkin field

Oct. 27, 2025

Comment: Not only does the mass of the giant pumpkins retain heat, but their color also seems to warm the chill.

peach compote  
crammed into a jar  
summer's sun

Dec. 6, 2025

Comment: This is a wonderful metaphor, while the sun is also actually present and shining through the jam.

**Kelly Shaw** (Illinois, USA)

what I saw was thorns  
until one day I passed by  
and saw blackberries

Jan. 10, 2025

by all means let's share  
the summer lake together  
raucous yellow bird

Aug. 15, 2025

Comment: Calling it raucous and yellow for some reason seems to work better than if the writer had recognized it and given the species name.

communities now  
are promoting their darkness  
perseid shower

Oct. 16, 2025

Comment: The double meaning in "darkness" works very well.

**Mirela Brailean** (Iași, Romania)

leafless trees  
patients in the courtyard  
of the oncology clinic

Jan. 13, 2025

Comment: The starkness of the trees matches well with what may be going through the patients' minds. We can imagine the radioactive treatment leading to hair loss, but that suggestion is not overdone.

spring equinox  
the soldier trying on his  
prosthetic leg

April 8, 2025

Comment: The equinox signals change, and this matches well with the soldier having a new prosthetic leg.

under the fruit-filled tree  
the whole family  
gathered

Aug. 6, 2025

Comment: The seed has scattered wide but all return to the harvest.

mid-summer  
the weight of a bee  
full of pollen

Sept. 13, 2025

Comment: The slowness at the height of summer comes across well.

the factory  
for angel feathers  
the Milky Way

Nov. 14, 2025

Comment: The Milky Way reimagined as a celestial factory producing angel feathers — stars as the raw material for divine plumage. The image is whimsical yet apt: the galaxy's luminous band does resemble scattered white feathers, and countless stars suggest industrial-scale production. It transforms astronomy into mythology, making the cosmos both grander (a factory of the sacred) and more intimate (producing something as delicate as feathers).

**Manasa Reddy Chichili** (Telangana, India)

harvest moon  
mice rest  
on the scarecrow

Jan. 15, 2025

Comment: A nice concrete scene where all parts go well together. We think about the right tool for the job by having the bird scarer being ineffective against rodents.

winter twilight  
gloves off  
to catch the ferry boat

March 7, 2025

Comment: Literal and figurative meanings merge: gloves removed for practical necessity (handling coins, gripping rails) and "gloves off" suggesting determination — getting serious about catching the ferry. We imagine cold hands and focused intent with the need to catch the last ferry of the day.

long drive to the beach  
only the moon light  
between the headlights

June 30, 2025

Comment: With no streetlights or other illumination along the road, the oscillation between headlights and the bright moon really draws us into the experience. Perhaps “moon’s light” would be even better, so we would imagine the round moon, like the round headlights, rather than an all-encompassing moonlight.

dragonflies  
among monsoon flowers  
lot of kids

Sept. 26, 2025

Comment: The second line modifies both the first and third lines.

autumn drizzling  
crow on a  
scarecrow

Nov. 26, 2025

Comment: Autumn rain falls on a crow perched atop the scarecrow meant to keep it away. The irony is complete: the deterrent becomes a perch, the frightener ignored. In the drizzle, crow and scarecrow both get wet, both endure the weather, the living bird claiming the fake human as its own territory.

leaving home ...  
autumn leaves  
in my mom’s eyes

Dec. 30, 2025

Comment: The concrete scene of the reflection of red and yellow leaves in her eyes and the implied sadness at an end having drawn close work well.

**Nisha Raviprasad** (Kerala, India)

bubbling brook  
our conversation gradually  
shifts tones

Jan. 16, 2025

Comment: One imagines the sound of the water gradually becoming lower and deeper as the brook turns into a stream and then a river.

**Guliz Mutlu** (Ankara, Turkey)

one step  
at a time  
cosmos

Jan. 17, 2025

Comment: The double meaning of the cosmos flowers and one’s place in the universe works well.

**Srini** (Rishi Valley, India)

white flowers  
turn slightly orange ...  
sunset

Jan. 18, 2025

Comment: With only orange wavelengths available, even pure white can only reflect orange back to our eyes. A true and concrete observation. Possibly using the name of a plant with white flowers would make the haiku deeper if the name conjured up other thoughts as well.

fireworks ...  
a country boy longs  
for stars

Feb. 19, 2025

Comment: Not much is more beautiful than a starry night.

heat lightning  
the distant siren  
of an ambulance

April 22, 2025

long summer ...  
the meanders wait  
for the river

May 17, 2025

Comment: A lack of rain has kept the riverbed exposed. After rain, when the riverbed once again contains a river, the meanders will become so much more visible.

campfire thawing friendships

June 28, 2025

Comment: Relaxing by the campfire has caused the once-friends to again draw close together. Wonderful use of "thaw."

... on firefly off ...

July 18, 2025

the question  
is the answer:  
mountain echo

Dec. 29, 2025

Comment: So often this is true! The mountain echo grounds the thought in physical reality, literally being the case here.

**Stephen A. Peters** (Washington, USA)

therapy session  
letting go one by one  
as the clouds pass by

Jan. 20, 2025

Comment: The worries and concerns on their mind are let go to pass as if they were clouds.

scudding clouds  
the certainty  
of uncertainty

Feb. 20, 2025

Comment: Scudding clouds can move so fast, sometimes even faster than the storm clouds they are often associated with.

winter stars  
the reality of cleaning  
the cat's litter box

March 4, 2025

Comment: "Winter stars" and "cat's litter" resonate even though they seem so different.

spring breeze  
the pep talk to myself  
not as long today

April 11, 2025

Comment: The warmer it becomes, the less of a pep talk will be needed to get going in the morning, I would imagine.

full moon rising  
the gypsy in me  
wants out

May 28, 2025

Comment: The moon is often associated with lunacy or craziness.

the sidewalk cracks  
still the same  
winter deepens

June 10, 2025

Comment: The cracks are no deeper, yet they are still there.

spring sky  
racing my child  
to the ice cream truck

June 27, 2025

shooting star  
the swing in the childhood tree  
no longer there

July 11, 2025

Comment: The juxtaposition of the time it takes for a shooting star to disappear and for the childhood swing to have disappeared is good when combined with the sense of loss for both.

dog days  
even the dogs bark  
silent

Sept. 12, 2025

Comment: It is too hot even to bark.

shooting star  
the blue jeans  
that no longer fit

Oct. 6, 2025

Comment: A sense of loss.

blackberry vines  
some words better  
left unsaid

Nov. 6, 2025

Comment: Follow the “vine” or thread of conversation and it might end up in the thorns.

sparrow bones  
things you don't think about  
when you are young

Nov. 17, 2025

## **Helen Buckingham** (Somerset, UK)

leaves turn  
outside the hospital  
ready to go home

Jan. 21, 2025

Comment: The last line suggests that it is the poet who is being discharged from the hospital, so we receive a positive feeling of change as the leaves turn a beautiful gold, rather than the perception we would have if the poet were leaving the hospital after someone had passed away.

spring dawn  
cock-a-doodle-  
don't

April 12, 2025

Comment: Don't make that noise! I want to sleep still!

dawn chorus  
the complexities  
of youth

June 11, 2025

Comment: Many different birds are singing together.

Pope Francis' funeral  
drowning out  
the birdsong

June 26, 2025

Comment: This is a concrete happening, I am sure, but it could be read in many different ways.

sensing rain  
the vows we rush  
to make

Oct. 22, 2025

Comment: A garden wedding — in rain and shine.

**Marek Printer** (Kielce, Poland)

abandoned house  
a milk bottle  
full of the fog

Jan. 23, 2025

virgin snow  
she confides in me  
for the first time

Feb. 18, 2025

Comment: “Virgin” and “first time” are an obvious match, but the poem is made by the unblemished white field that reflects the new relationship about to be written by this newly found trust.

our old home  
through a crack in the wall  
new year’s dawn

March 11, 2025

Comment: We never enter a New Year without thinking of the past and sometimes yearning for it.

tinkering  
with my son ...  
icicles gone

April 4, 2025

Comment: This a concrete scene, but we can also imagine their relationship may have been strained before, and that it has now thawed out. Because of the use of the word “tinkering,” I can hear icicles hitting each other or falling onto metal. Fixing a bicycle, perhaps?

March morning  
the weight of a sunbeam  
on her old couch

April 29, 2025

Comment: This is not physical weight but rather the weight of remembrance.

Easter sun  
resurrection  
of garden shadows

May 5, 2025

Comment: Every word is needed and fits perfectly. Easter and resurrection, what shadows might these be? “Garden” brings to mind the Garden of Gethsemane or Garden of Eden, and “sun” the Son of God — all while describing a concrete scene.

sunset  
the unexpected warmth  
of a basketball

Sept. 11, 2025

Comment: Here we find a metaphor anchored in a real, concrete scene.

a neighbour’s scythe  
above the fence  
harvest moon

Sept. 24, 2025

Father's Day  
I repair an old  
fishing net

Oct. 1, 2025

Comment: An old fishing net is mended on Father's Day. If the repairer inherited it, the work honors paternal legacy. If the repairer is the father, the image is poignant — doing practical work while the day supposedly celebrates him, continuing quiet labor without fanfare, alone with his tools and their history.

Indian summer  
the pond skater lazily  
crosses the sun

Oct. 24, 2025

migrating geese  
the dog's chain reaches  
only the fence

Nov. 15, 2025

Comment: Perhaps it is straining to go after the geese, but we pine at its lack of freedom.

traffic policeman  
dispersing  
fog

Dec. 16, 2025

Comment: A whole scene introduced in only four words.

**Miera Rao** (California, USA)

power outage  
the room charged with  
unspoken words

Jan. 24, 2025

Comment: Obviously "power" and "charge" echo, but the poem allows us to easily imagine one spouse blaming the other for the outage.

**Giuliana Ravaglia** (Marzabotto, Italy)

wind in the reeds  
desires  
bent by time

Jan. 25, 2025

Comment: The first line and the second two fit together in a cognitive sense, but a small addition to set a concrete scene the reader can truly experience would make this even better.

night frost —  
still searching  
for my father's hand

Feb. 11, 2025

Comment: This is a nice, concrete haiku with good resonance between the kigo (season word) and the rest of the poem.

**Subir Ningthouja** (Manipur, India)

morning mist  
calls me out softly  
All Souls Day

Jan. 27, 2025

Comment: The poet is possibly heading out to visit a cemetery. The mist itself seems to be made of souls.

morning breeze  
cattails shake off  
the night chill

April 1, 2025

Comment: The cattails shake off dewdrops as well, perhaps, and their bobbing in the breeze is almost “cute.”

**Nitu Yumnam** (West Bengal, India / Ajman, United Arab Emirates)

thoughts of you  
come and go  
spring breeze

Jan. 29, 2025

Comment: Just as the breeze comes and goes.

New Year’s morning  
the spider rebegins  
weaving

Feb. 4, 2025

Comment: The web is spun with hopes catch what the New Year may provide.

first light ...  
a foal tests its trembling  
knees

May 15, 2025

Comment: This is a fine haiku as is, but maybe another adjective before “first light” could improve it even more.

carving the fog  
into a path ...  
a pair of antlers

May 31, 2025

bombed sky  
mending the house  
wild grapevine

June 14, 2025

the stir  
when the raindrop meets  
its reflection

July 3, 2025

Comment: This is a concrete scene from nature but at the same time we also wonder if someone in the human world is also being referred to.

anxiety —  
the monsoon bucket  
keeps filling

Aug. 22, 2025

aligned planets  
no one beside me  
to say “look”

Sept. 10, 2025

Comment: No one is “aligned” with them, so to speak.

bombed orchard —  
a single pear  
still ripening

Sept. 23, 2025  
Comment: Life goes on.

in the shade  
of a no-parking board  
stray dog

Sept. 30, 2025  
Comment: It is not technically parking, just sitting or lying.

small hands  
let go of the swing  
early dusk

Oct. 9, 2025  
Comment: This haiku is concrete in its description of the child heading home from the park because it is starting to get dark, but there is also a deeper meaning behind the words.

without you  
every shade of sky  
just blue

Oct. 23, 2025

half moon  
the dark side  
of longing

Nov. 5, 2025

an ant carries  
a seed twice its size  
deepening autumn

Nov. 24, 2025  
Comment: Running out of time, the ants are trying their hardest to stash away enough food to get through winter. There is also a comment on society behind the words.

the pull  
of the dog's leash  
deepening autumn

Dec. 4, 2025  
Comment: There is no stopping the flow of time!

writer's block —  
a bud covered  
in snow

Dec. 26, 2025  
Comment: Through this poem it blossoms.

**Peter J. King** (Churchill, UK)

Coiled like a watchspring  
on the sun-warmed sundial,  
an adder counts hours.

Jan. 30, 2025  
Comment: This is both a concrete scene and humorous.

**Melissa Dennison** (Bradford, England)

creeping fog  
in the valley  
caught in a spider's web

Jan. 31, 2025

Comment: Fog creeping through the valley condenses on a spider's web, making it visible with beaded moisture. The web catches fog as it catches insects — the trap now trapped by what it can't consume, revealed by the very thing it holds.

losing my wife  
piece by piece  
falling leaves

April 19, 2025

Comment: Good resonance between the elements.

evidence of bees  
the bounce of  
a lavender stem

Sept. 6, 2025

Comment: Seeing the unseen!

in the city  
a riot  
of wildflowers

Oct. 7, 2025

Comment: The poem feels dark and ominous during the first two lines, only to be turned on its head.

meeting  
the fox's eye  
the oranges of autumn

Dec. 13, 2025

**Francoise Maurice** (Draguignan, France)

last day of the year  
crossing the wooden bridge  
hand in hand

Feb. 1, 2025

Comment: Crossing the boundary between years and "bridge" are a good match. It works as a haiku because "wooden" gives concreteness, and "hand in hand" also grounds it as a real scene in the real world.

wind and swallows  
as my only company —  
picking blackberries

Oct. 28, 2025

Comment: The poet is picking blackberries in solitude, accompanied only by the wind and swallows. The swallows hunt insects above while the poet gathers berries below — two foragers sharing the late summer abundance. If these are tree swallows, they may also be interested in the blackberries themselves, as that species supplements its insect diet with berries. The scene captures companionable solitude — alone but not lonely, sharing space with the natural world.

**Charlie Smith** (North Carolina, USA)

New Year's Eve  
loud fireworks  
whispered prayers

Feb. 3, 2025

Comment: Both the celebration and the trepidation people feel toward a new year are captured well.

**Archie G. Carlos** (Minnesota, USA)

picket line  
more and more snowflakes  
join the strikers

Feb. 8, 2025

Comment: This is a wonderful turn of phrase to introduce the scene.

tonight's line  
at the homeless shelter  
drifting snow

March 21, 2025

Comment: "Drifting" and "homeless" match well. Describing the line a little might make it even better.

winter blues  
my new pair of jeans  
dyes the wash

April 3, 2025

back in my time zone  
another first day  
of spring

May 3, 2025

Ides of March  
just this rabbit chewing  
a blade of grass

June 13, 2025

Comment: "Blade" makes us think of the dagger Brutus used, while "just" conveys that even though it is a special day, nothing much is happening. A sheep would normally be sacrificed during the Ides but the choice of rabbit is better in the haiku to avoid "tsuki-sugi," or the pieces fitting too well together. Rabbit makes the scene believable rather than contrived.

strawberry fields  
the migrant pickers  
being picked

July 12, 2025

Comment: This is humorous but also conveys a concrete scene.

**Lothar M. Kirsch** (Kall, Germany)

the fog  
is skating  
on thin ice

Feb. 13, 2025

Comment: This is a nice use of the phrase -- concretely describing the fog instead of focusing on its more usual meaning.

some fresh snow  
not surviving  
but the crocus does

April 14, 2025

at the traffic lights  
the fog joins me  
waiting

May 13, 2025

waves roll  
on and off the cliff  
blooming heather

June 6, 2025

Comment: The heather is reminiscent of the froth on the waves.

the old peach tree  
is blooming again  
back from hospital

June 17, 2025

Comment: New life to the old tree resonates well with the third line.

rainstorm  
on men and plants  
all bow

July 7, 2025

the sparrows discover  
the freshly planted peas  
must be god's plan

July 25, 2025

Comment: The lack of an ellipsis after the second line is masterful as it allows one to read simultaneously that the poet but also the sparrows have found that the discovery of the peas was God's plan.

not knowing  
the name of the weeds  
we tear out

Aug. 13, 2025

Comment: A comment on society behind these words.

under the apple tree  
watching the tiny apples  
and you

Aug. 26, 2025

colored leaves  
some are falling  
as the fog lifts

Nov. 7, 2025

Comment: The mixture of fogginess and bright colors and the lifting and falling combine to make this a good haiku.

equinox  
at least day and night  
don't fight

Nov. 22, 2025

Comment: At the equinox, day and night share the sky in near-equal measure, without the fighting so often seen among humans.

**Mara Faccioni** (Milano, Italy)

the leaves have fallen — stars bloom on  
the bare branches

Feb. 15, 2025

Comment: Good juxtaposition.

evening rain — an ancient fado resounds  
on my umbrella

July 29, 2025

Comment: The poet felt that the sound of the rain was that of a fado — singing on a melancholic theme.

**Maciej Falinski** (Zakopane, Poland)

moonlight drips  
onto the earth  
from an icicle

Feb. 17, 2025

Comment: Although the moonlight would still be reflected in the drop of water falling toward the earth, I imagine it might disappear once it actually collided with the earth. I suggest replacing “onto” with “toward” as it would also give more movement to the poem.

**Teiichi Suzuki** (Osaka, Japan)

wearing layers of clothes  
my silhouette becomes  
a stranger

Feb. 22, 2025

**Rosa Maria Di Salvatore** (Catania, Italy)

needle ice ...  
grandma knitting  
a warm sweater

Feb. 24, 2025

Comment: Although it may well have been needle ice that the poet saw, I would suggest replacing with “icicle” since “needle” and “knitting” are an example of “tsuki-sugi” (going too well together). The shape of the icicle is already enough that the reader will see the similarity and acknowledge it without it taking over the poem to its detriment.

painting  
my lips pink ...  
sunrise

March 24, 2025

autumn flowers ...  
caressing my wrinkles  
with a smile

Sept. 15, 2025

Comment: The acceptance is beautiful, like the flowers.

**Christer Hansson** (Lund, Sweden)

wing marks  
on fresh fallen snow  
the hare survived

Feb. 25, 2025

Comment: The marks left by a swooping eagle.

**AJ Johnson** (Virginia, USA)

old hands  
scrape windshield ice  
dawn starlight

Feb. 26, 2025

Comment: The ice crystals and stars resonate, as do the old hands and the texture of scraped ice.

red spider lilies  
the painful things  
we leave unsaid

June 19, 2025

Comment: Their poisonous roots lie beneath the ground and the flowers are common in temple grounds so there is a nuance that someone may have passed away.

**Susan Miller** (Seattle, USA)

Slate gray pewter gray  
gunmetal gray silver gray  
pearl gray winter day

Feb. 27, 2025

Comment: Finding beauty in the greyness of a winter day.

**Ranice Tara** (Uttar Pradesh, India)

winter galaxy  
her precision in peeling  
the tomato

Feb. 28, 2025

Comment: This is a concrete scene where the setting is very modern since there are tomatoes even though it is winter. The word choice of “galaxy” is also modern, as is the attention to precision. Even though there is so much out there in the world, as suggested by the galaxy, still we peel tomatoes, eat and do other mundane things. Why do the tomato and the winter galaxy go together? I can’t put my finger on it but it seems it must be so!

autumn sky  
I eat an almond  
with its skin

May 29, 2025

Comment: The extra bitterness and earthiness in the skin fits well with the autumn sky. In India the almond can symbolize wisdom but also purity, adding more depth behind the words.

**Tomislav Maretic** (Zagreb, Croatia)

raised oar —  
the boat glides through  
the calm autumn sky

March 3, 2025

darkened room  
a pale moonbeam enters  
through the keyhole

Dec. 31, 2025

Comment: This haiku is very dramatic, visually accessible and has some depth through the moonbeam making it through a locked door.

**Simon Hanson** (Launceston, Australia)

icy pond  
still the moon gets in  
lighting the fish

March 10, 2025

Comment: Good observation. It might be interesting to play around with some different fish names to see if it is possible to get even more depth.

**Tejendra Sherchan** (Kathmandu, Nepal)

morphing clouds  
in the twilight sky  
catfishes

March 15, 2025

Comment: The catfish swim in a pond near the poet, who is looking up at the sky, while overhead the clouds take on shapes that resemble them. The plural “catfishes,” rather than “catfish,” subtly suggests that there are at least two different catfish species. That nuance extends to the clouds as well, implying their shapes are diverse.

full moon  
after three nights  
my waned joy

May 26, 2025

Comment: Too much of a good thing and it loses its perceived value.

navigating its way  
with the milky way light  
dung beetle

Sept. 25, 2025

**Eleonore Nickolay** (Vaires sur Marne, France)

winter without snow  
the empty rooms  
of the children

March 17, 2025

Comment: The home seems so cold! “Winter without snow” works so much better than, for example, “snowpiles disappear.”

**Carmela Marino** (Rome, Italy)

funeral procession  
a flock of birds  
in the opposite direction

March 18, 2025

Comment: This is a concrete scene but with depth behind the words. Any animal with wings conjures images of a soul heading to heaven or somewhere else. "Crows" would have been too much and "birds" allows the reader to draw their own conclusions. It would be an interesting exercise to exchange "birds" for other concrete bird names and see what effect it has on the poem.

plum buds  
a newborn baby  
rubs his eyes

April 7, 2025

Comment: The roundness of the buds and the baby's eyes, the juxtaposition of a baby and young buds, and the unfurling of a fist and the unfurling of buds all resonate.

snow in the sun ...  
her last voicemail  
in the phone

May 7, 2025

Comment: Just as with the melting snow, now she is gone too.

autumn butterfly  
his hot kiss  
on my lips

Dec. 5, 2025

Comment: "Autumn" works much better than "spring" given the heat of the kiss. The nuance is also of a love later in life.

**Claire Thom** (Cadiz, Spain)

kettle  
whistling in the kitchen  
my father

March 19, 2025

Comment: The second line modifies both the first and third lines. This technique can often be used to one's advantage when crafting haiku.

to do list  
getting longer and longer  
trailing ivy

June 23, 2025

Comment: The two parts go together well. Just as one ivy leaf leads to another following along the vine, so do items on one's to do list. It would be interesting to investigate whether adding a word before "to" to describe what kind of to do list it is would help readers form a concrete image of where the ivy is located. For example, "school," perhaps?

swifts  
darting about  
the cat's eyes

July 9, 2025

Comment: Both the swifts and the cat's eyes are darting about.

sunlight  
on the kitchen counter  
slices of pumpkin

Nov. 27, 2025

Comment: A metaphor hidden within a concrete scene that introduces how the yellow-orange of pumpkin slices is accentuated by the light wavelengths found in sunlight.

**Daniela Misso** (San Gemini, Italy)

almond blossoms —  
he lifts the shawl  
over her shoulders

March 22, 2025

Comment: Almonds symbolize love and fertility in Western culture. They are one of the first flowers to bloom in spring, so it is still quite cold — hence the shawl being needed.

**Jerome Berglund** (Minnesota / Louisiana / Florida, USA)

morning light  
another crow across the way  
answers back

March 25, 2025

Comment: It is not immediately apparent what “across the way” refers to — a street, perhaps, or a canal? Read on their own, the final two lines instill a feeling of communication between the land of the living and the otherworld. Yet “morning light” softens the exchange, grounding the reader’s mind in the concrete, present scene, and orders them to see the scene “just so” rather than read a deeper meaning into it.

arctic gale  
the hoarse voice  
of the hollering coach

April 5, 2025

Comment: Here we find a metaphor anchored in a real, concrete scene.

opentide  
foot on the  
accelerator

April 24, 2025

Comment: I interpreted “opentide” to refer to the season in which buds open into flowers, in line with the archaic use of “tide” to mean time or period (think Christmastide or eventide). Other readers might imagine the tide flowing in over a wide expanse of mudflat or shallow coastline perhaps. Either way, the juxtaposition of nature with events unfolding at their own steady pace versus the human-induced accelerator touched me. I sense a sense of urgency with regard to climate change on the part of the poet.

mackerel clouds  
licking the flesh  
from a pit

May 6, 2025

Comment: The many tiny concavities in a stone fruit seed tend to hold the flesh onto it. The images of these pits in the pit and the scale-like mackerel clouds in the sky reverberate off each other. The visceral act of licking the last flesh off the stone and the freedom of the clouds are also a good contrast.

summer tanager  
watching the peppers  
color

May 21, 2025

Comment: The males of the summer tanager are strawberry-colored while the females are mustard yellow. The word “peppers” undoubtedly refers to capsicums or bell peppers and both the bird and the poet are watching them turn yellow, orange or red.

jackfruit falls  
watching the battery  
drain

June 9, 2025

Comment: There are not many batteries where you can actually watch their voltage drain. An EV vehicle or a smartphone are perhaps the most likely. Having to guess what the battery belongs to detracts from the immediacy of the haiku and hinders the reader from “entering” the experience, so I would suggest concretely stating what the battery belongs to in the poem. Having said that, since jackfruits are not common enough in the southeastern U.S. to be driving an EV through fields of them, I imagine the poet to be staring at his smartphone. Perhaps the connectivity is so bad out there in the countryside where the jackfruit was found that it is draining the battery rapidly while it tries to connect. The huge jackfruit falling suddenly contrasts with the small phone and the slow but steady drainage of the battery. One wonders if there is also a reference to climate change here behind the words.

bone tired  
and wide awake  
snowdrifts

July 8, 2025

Comment: The whiteness of bone and the snowdrifts resonate well.

scorcher  
the shade is lively  
with discourse

Aug. 1, 2025

Comment: Everyone has gathered in the shade to chat.

as my eyes adjust  
to the darkness make out a  
lizard staring back

Aug. 16, 2025

new moon  
catching a wasp nest  
early

Sept. 1, 2025

**Elisa Theriana** (Bandung, Indonesia)

apple blossom  
always a little girl  
in grandma's eyes

March 27, 2025

Comment: The poet is from Indonesia, where apples are not normally a part of the landscape. I am imagining that the little girl is grown up enough to be living or have been living overseas where apples are more common. Reading a letter from their grandmother they can feel through the words that she still thinks of her as a little girl. Apples seem purer than peaches, for example, in the aspect of both the pure white blossoms and the fruit, so this matches well with the innocent little girl that grandma remembers.

**Nazarena Rampini** (Milan, Italy)

pruning roses  
the heartbeat  
with every cut

March 28, 2025

Comment: In the quiet, the poet can sense her own heartbeat. The red blood resonates with the rose and one can imagine also the sap oozing from each cut.

autumn swallows  
grandma's house  
for sale

Oct. 30, 2025

Comment: Without a caesura at the end of the first line, one could read "swallows" as a verb, which is an interesting secondary reading after the reader correctly infers that the swallows are birds that will migrate to some other land, just as her grandmother has gone to the Pure Land upon passing.

on the tree  
the unpicked apples —  
winter dusk

Dec. 22, 2025

Comment: We are left wondering what will become of these unpicked apples. In winter dusk it seems there is no time left in the year to pick them. But, in nature, shouldn't that be how it is? This is a "just so" moment as a concrete scene, anchoring us in the real world.

**dl mattila** (Virginia, USA)

bitter wind  
emptying the frame  
of your smile

March 29, 2025

Comment: The poet rips the photo with the smiling face out of its frame. The bitter wind suggests that the relationship did not end well.

**Marjolein Rotsteeg** (Hoenderloo, The Netherlands)

hunger moon  
for my supper I steal  
a snowman's nose

March 31, 2025

Comment: The carrot for dinner is introduced in a humorous way. The rounded snow of the snowman and the moon resonate well.

summer solstice  
every day a little more  
daughter than son

Aug. 21, 2025

Comment: Their child is transitioning between genders perhaps and the solstice is also a period of transition.

**Toshio Matsumoto** (Osaka, Japan)

violets  
a narrow path  
to the shell midden

April 9, 2025

Comment: I imagine the slightly purplish inside face of the clams in the midden.

**Maria Concetta** (Sicily, Italy)

winter wind  
songs that come  
from a nursing home

April 10, 2025

Comment: It is as if the wind is singing along.

**Barbara Rybak** (Zawiercie, Poland)

the cry of cranes  
a dry oar at the bottom  
of the lake

April 15, 2025

Comment: Since the oar is dry, so must be the lake bottom. Where has the water gone? Where are the cranes going? There is a sense of loss in both elements.

**Mario Massimo Zontini** (Parma, Italy)

moonless night  
a black cat closes his eyes  
and disappears

April 16, 2025

Comment: The scent of magic!

**Mark Miller** (New South Wales, Australia)

cherry tree buds  
our new neighbour shares  
his prognosis

April 17, 2025

Comment: Cherry blossoms symbolize mortality because of the way they scatter all at once. The neighbor is new, which fits well with the cherry buds, rather than leaves or flowers. The prognosis may not be that the illness is terminal, but the discussion certainly makes us think of mortality and how long there is left until one scatters like cherry petals.

harbour fog  
a gull's cry  
flies through it

July 31, 2025

Comment: The gull is invisible but the gull's cry has flown through the fog to the poet's ears. We imagine the gull to be flying, too.

**Wendy Toth Notarnicola** (New Jersey, USA)

the sky grows brighter  
with every note  
of the blackbird's song

April 18, 2025

Comment: Blackbirds are often the first bird to sing in the dawn, especially in summer. The blackness of the blackbird's feathers contrasts with the lightening of the sky.

**Eva Limbach** (Saarbruecken, Germany)

barbed wire  
the relentlessness  
of frost

April 21, 2025

Comment: The barbs on the wire and the jagged, spiky frost go well together. In this scene we can imagine the relentless frost has not only penetrated the earth and covered the leaves and everything soft and natural but has even covered the barbed wire — an entity forged by humans to keep things away!

**Mariusz Ogryzko** (Białystok, Poland)

homecoming  
in the traffic jam  
wild geese above

April 28, 2025

Comment: The migratory nature of the geese matches well with the person's migration between their current place of residence or work and their "home." When the geese feel the pull of "home," they can just fly to it, while the experience of the human is much more frustrating.

**Gareth Nurden** (Wales, UK)

winter stars  
suddenly a walk  
less lonely

April 30, 2025

Comment: Looking up, the poet realizes the stars are there — have always been there, no matter what. The phrasing of “a walk less lonely” conjures images of “a road less traveled” and this also helps add depth to the poem.

early morning  
mist  
birthing mountains

July 23, 2025

Comment: Slowly the peaks peek out from the mist.

**Rosemarie Schuldes** (Mattsee, Austria)

bursting buds  
taking dresses  
to the tailor’s

May 9, 2025

Comment: I am caused to imagine the mother of a young girl, whose breasts have started to develop, taking her dresses to the tailor to be modified. If they were shoots rather than buds, then the nuance would be more of a growth spurt in height. Either way, it is spring and the start of a new school year where the child has grown during the holidays.

**Tsanka Shishkova** (Sofia, Bulgaria)

cherry petals  
on the bride’s veil  
gentle breeze

May 10, 2025

Comment: This is a refreshing take on cherry petals that doesn’t rely on their symbolism of ephemerality; it rather celebrates their beauty. It is almost as if nature is gently scattering its own confetti on the bride as a blessing.

butterflies  
among spring flowers  
a lot of kids

July 26, 2025

Comment: A well-executed, classic pivot around the second line, which modifies both the first and third lines. The children are flitting this way and that — just like the butterflies.

**Tony Williams** (Scotland, UK)

sweet honey  
the more they make  
the more we take

May 12, 2025

Comment: Hidden behind the interactions between humans and bees lies a comment on the nature of humans other humans. The rhyming turns it into a poem.

the storm  
that took the tree  
that took the wall

May 23, 2025

Comment: Technically brilliant! The recurring phrase “that took” unveils a chain of events with no wasted words. The storm could never take down the wall without the force of the tree it first toppled. The wall must be from the house that Jack built! The raw violence of the storm is conveyed well.

pirouetting  
around his broom  
an autumn breeze

Nov. 12, 2025

Comment: The sweeper may well be dancing but so is the wind. One can just imagine the leaves being caught in a transient wind eddy.

**Dimitri N. Avgerinos** (Damascus, Syria)

spring storm —  
even more restless  
the wild dogs

May 14, 2025

Comment: The spring storm is stirring things up — including the dogs. I can easily imagine trees blowing and gusts of wind. Rather than refer to these roaming dogs as “stray,” the poet uses “wild” because it resonates better with the storm.

**James Roderick Burns** (Edinburgh, UK)

skein of geese  
gathers the last scraps  
of the day

May 20, 2025

Comment: This is a good concrete image, and the linguistic expression is also very well done!

**Oscar Luparia** (Vercelli, Italy)

morning dew —  
in place of the sunny lawn  
a galaxy

May 22, 2025

Comment: This metaphor of replacement draws not only on the visual similarity between the many sparkling dewdrops and the stars but also on the contrast in their vastly different timespans. The brevity of the dew, the many hours of sun on the lawn, and the seeming eternity of the galaxy are all implied through concrete images rather than being spelled out for the reader. Well done!

cloud-covered moon  
now I can go  
to bed

June 21, 2025

Comment: The moon must have been so beautiful!

**Tzetzka Ilieva** (Georgia, USA)

a glass of rosé  
while enjoying the sunset ...  
peach trees in bloom

May 30, 2025

Comment: So much color of slightly different shades.

**Veronika Zora** (Ontario, Canada)

after  
the tsunami ...  
a butterfly

June 2, 2025

Comment: So fragile.

**Goran Gatalica** (Zagreb, Croatia)

a heatwave  
the teens hurl themselves  
off the rocks

June 3, 2025

Comment: This haiku provides a concrete observation of kids diving to swim, but the language is shocking and conveys the severity of the heatwave well.

meteor shower —  
sensing the presence  
of God in the grass

June 12, 2025

Comment: Could this have been due to the photoacoustic effect where very low frequency radio waves from a meteor can cause a low, hissing sound as grass vibrates?

grandpa's fishing net  
draped over the seawall ...  
waking from a nap

June 20, 2025

grandma's apples  
still holding  
the chill of night

July 2, 2025

Comment: The cold retention of the apples was sensed well by the poet. Why attribute the apples to grandma in the poem, rather than any other kind of apple or any other person's apples? Perhaps grandma is an early riser and has gone out into her orchard in the cold morning air to fetch apples for the children's breakfast and this haiku also speaks to the poet's gratitude.

a slave cemetery  
the sea polishing  
their hollow bones

July 19, 2025

Comment: "Hollow" is masterful here.

graduation day —  
the glowing embers  
in my daughter's eyes

Aug. 5, 2025

Comment: The firelight is reflected, but we also imagine there is a burning desire to do something with her new degree.

starlight —  
browsing a shelf  
of history books

Aug. 27, 2025

Comment: The stars were here long before humans made any history.

starry night —  
writing  
about faith

Oct. 4, 2025

Comment: The beauty of the heavens has always caused humans to believe something greater than themselves exists.

autumn deepens —  
my daughter declares  
herself vegetarian

Oct. 13, 2025

Comment: The feeling of knowing and relating to your daughter little by little as she gets older resonates well with the deepening of autumn.

### **Joseph Messina** (Kobe, Japan)

Beneath the wisteria  
Hanging upon  
Her every word

June 5, 2025

Comment: The wisteria blooms are hanging above and beautiful — like her. If the first word in every line was not capitalized then the pivot on “hanging” would work even better.

deserted playground  
swallowed by weeds —  
a bear and her cubs

Dec. 12, 2025

Comment: Nature is reclaiming the land. The mention of cubs also being in the playground, not just the mother bear is good!

### **Hla Yin Mon** (Yangon, Myanmar)

this too shall pass  
smiling under the rubble  
a Buddha statue

June 18, 2025

Comment: The phrase “This too shall pass” can be traced to the works of Persian Sufi poetry and also occurs in Jewish folklore. In this poem it is now juxtaposed with Buddhist tradition as if the statue is telling the poet that the chaos from an earthquake or from a bombing may exist in the present moment, but things will get better. Impermanence (anicca) is an important facet of Buddhism.

**Mihaela Iacob** (Targu Neamt, Romania)

looking for company ...  
the full moon in the window  
of the nursing home

June 24, 2025

Comment: Wandering around the nursing home at night looking for someone to talk to, they see the moon and that company is enough. At first read, it seems that an elderly person in the nursing home is lonely, but then we are led to consider that it may actually be the moon that is looking for company.

**Kari Davidson** (Ohio, USA)

wolf moon  
a glint of silver  
in her hair

July 1, 2025

Comment: The winter moonlight on her grey hair caused it to shine silver. "Wolf" works both from the image of a wolf and the streaks in its fur, but also at a deeper psychological level. Personally, I think of loneliness but also independence, as well as a hint of the dangers and challenges that she must have experienced on the way to becoming this age. Now she approaches the winter of her life but she is still as beautiful as the full January moon and as exotic as a wolf.

sap moon  
a ewe sniffs  
her steaming placenta

July 16, 2025

Comment: A sap moon is the March or April full moon, when sap begins rising in maples and other trees. The ewe has given birth and, while her breath also clouds the air, she is investigating her afterbirth and how it, too, steams in the cool night air. The placenta supplies nutrient-filled fluid (blood) to the lamb so fits perfectly with the "sap" in the name for a spring full moon. We are left wondering what she will do with the placenta. Haiku that keep the reader thinking after the last word are haiku to aspire to.

**Corrado Aiello** (Rimini, Italy)

mossy woods —  
the bellowing of the stag  
moistens the mist

July 4, 2025

Comment: Alliteration heightens the poesy. One can see the stag's white breath in the cool air.

**Farah Ali** (Brighton, UK)

cleaning dust  
from my lenses  
snowdrops

July 10, 2025

Comment: The first signs of spring, perhaps, are these snowdrop flowers pushing their way through the snow or thawing earth. This feeling of a new beginning is also found in the first two lines, where the poet cleans their glasses to look at things freshly. Did the poet clean their lenses to get a better look at the snowdrops or did the cleaning mean the snowdrops can now be seen poking out of the snow?

autumn breeze  
the chicken flock  
changes direction

Nov. 29, 2025

Comment: An autumn gust causes the foraging flock to wheel and turn together. Chickens do respond collectively to wind shifts, so the observation is accurate, but the haiku resonates beyond the farmyard. The breeze becomes any force of change or discomfort, and the flock's unified pivot mirrors how groups — whether birds or people — tend to move en masse when conditions shift. Autumn carries associations of approaching difficulty, and the sudden collective redirection suggests how readily we change course together when things become uncomfortable, without individual consideration of direction. The haiku never states this directly; it simply shows us chickens and wind, letting the parallel emerge.

**Nathan McCoslin** (Texas, USA)

fireflies —  
the church bricks  
still warm

July 15, 2025

Comment: After sunset on a summer evening, the church's brick walls retain the day's heat while fireflies begin their display. The juxtaposition is quietly powerful: the solid permanence of the church holding warmth from the vanished sun while these ephemeral creatures create their brief, living lights in the gathering darkness. "Church" rather than some other kind of building works well here because of "warm" in the third line, stimulating thoughts of fellowship and the image of light in the darkness that comes with the fireflies.

raking leaves  
we recount  
our college years

Nov. 19, 2025

Comment: Perhaps it is best not to rake too deeply — there might be memories best left uncovered. The concrete image is of the camaraderie of two aging friends working together, with the nuance of autumn and fallen leaves reinforcing what "recount" suggests: looking back later life at what has accumulated and what has fallen away.

**Aljosa Vukovic** (Šibenik, Croatia)

earthquake —  
between ruined houses  
a turtle

July 17, 2025

Comment: After an earthquake, a turtle moves through the rubble between destroyed houses. Turtles aren't native to Croatia, so this is likely an escaped pet or zoo animal — whatever confined it has been shattered by the quake. The contrast is sharp: The disaster that ruined human dwellings freed the captive creature. The turtle carries its own portable shelter, unhurried and unbothered, now at liberty to go where it will. The haiku captures this ironic reversal without comment, simply showing us the freed animal moving through human ruins.

**David Jacobs** (London, UK)

cemetery sun  
I bury myself  
in a book

July 21, 2025

Comment: In a sun-warmed cemetery, the poet becomes absorbed in a book. The phrase “bury myself” echoes the literal burials surrounding them, but with an inversion — a retreat into story and imagination within a place of ended stories. The bright sun rules out a gothic scene; instead, it suggests someone seeking solitude, avoiding a difficult moment, or perhaps finding a different kind of presence among the dead. The wordplay has bite: books can serve as both an escape from mortality and a reminder that words outlast the bodies that wrote them.

gravestones  
a man with a dog  
greet a man without

Oct. 15, 2025

Comment: In a cemetery, a man walking his dog greets a man walking alone. The detail “without” suggests this second man once had a dog too, perhaps recently lost, but still takes their habitual walk. He comes to this place of the dead, the companionship still felt even without the physical presence. The greeting becomes a quiet acknowledgment between different stages of loss — one still accompanied, one learning to walk with absence. The gravestones frame the exchange, blurring boundaries between those with and without, and the here and gone.

**Thomas L. Vaultonburg** (Illinois, USA)

standing in sunlight  
to speak my truth, a dead leaf  
blows into my mouth

July 22, 2025

Comment: Standing deliberately in sunlight to make an important declaration, the speaker is literally silenced by a dead leaf blowing into their open mouth. The timing is pointed — just when attempting to voice authentic truth, something dead intrudes. The carefully chosen sunlight suggests clarity and the courage to be seen, but what's lifeless and finished — perhaps representing received ideas, societal expectations, or the weight of the past — literally prevents the words from emerging. The haiku works both as absurd moment and as commentary: how often our attempts at genuine expression are interrupted or silenced by what's already dead but still circulating in the air around us.

**King Edward Eway** (Iloilo, Philippines)

ascending steam  
and descending rain  
savory soup

Aug. 2, 2025

Comment: Steam rises from hot soup while rain descends outside. The haiku captures water in two directions, thereby creating a sense of natural balance and exchange — the water cycle in miniature. There's deep satisfaction in this scene: sheltered indoors with something hot and nourishing while the rain falls. The word "savory" anchors us in the immediate sensory pleasure even as the ascending/descending pattern suggests larger rhythms of nature, indifferent to human experiences. The alliteration with "s" sounds also captures the fluid sounds of the water.

**Rowan Beckett Minor** (Ohio, USA)

summer still  
the webbed fly  
gives up its fight

Aug. 4, 2025

Comment: “Still” is a pivotal word in this haiku. It simultaneously describes the lack of wind, contributing to the oppressive heat, while also suggesting that it is still summer — oh, when will it end! It also suggests the stillness of the fly when it gives up its struggle in the spider’s web. Summer, and everything else, is just too much — too much to struggle against any more.

**Anthony Rabang** (Ilocos Sur, Philippines)

meteor shower  
dreaming of  
a life together

Aug. 11, 2025

Comment: Watching a meteor shower, the poet dreams of a life together with someone. The meteors evoke the tradition of wishing on shooting stars, but they also highlight transience — these streaks of light are brief, burning up as they fall. The juxtaposition questions whether the dream is a wish being made or a recognition of its fragility. The speaker seems to be alone, watching the celestial display while imagining a shared future. The meteors cross the night sky as thoughts of togetherness cross the mind — both beautiful, both uncertain.

**Steliana Cristina Voicu** (Prahova, Romania)

moving back home ...  
the apple tree from my childhood  
now a tree stump

Aug. 12, 2025

Comment: Returning to a childhood home, the poet finds the remembered apple tree is now just a stump. The ellipsis after “moving back home” captures the pause before confronting loss — you can return to a place, but not to the past. The tree that once bore fruit, offered shade, perhaps was climbed or marked the seasons of childhood, has been reduced to a cut surface. The haiku quietly acknowledges what everyone who returns home eventually learns: The places we left continue changing without us, and what we remember may no longer exist except as a memory.

counting stars —  
from a piece of lavender  
a cricket disturbs me

Aug. 19, 2025

Comment: Engaged in counting stars, the poet is disturbed by a cricket chirping from nearby lavender. The haiku engages multiple senses: vision (stars in the night sky), smell (the lavender’s fragrance), and sound (the cricket’s call). The contrast is sharp — cosmic distance versus immediate presence, the vast and eternal versus the small and ephemeral. “Disturbs” suggests this isn’t a welcome interruption; the cricket’s insistent life pulls attention away from contemplation of the infinite. The lavender, associated with calm and sleep, paradoxically harbors the source of disturbance. The haiku holds the tension between our desire to escape into abstraction and the sensory world that keeps calling us back to the immediate and alive. One note: “piece of lavender” feels slightly awkward for a living plant — “clump” might work better, as it’s botanically accurate, creates alliteration with “counting” and “cricket,” and mirrors how stars themselves clump in the sky rather than spreading out evenly.

**Tim Chamberlain** (Tokyo, Japan)

Returning to the same  
lotus leaf  
— a dragonfly.

Aug. 14, 2025

Comment: A dragonfly lands on a lotus leaf, flies off, then returns to the same leaf. The specificity matters — this particular leaf among many. The dash creates suspense: “Returning to the same / lotus leaf / —”

What is returning? In that pause, readers might imagine various possibilities — perhaps even the poet himself returning to some metaphorical lotus, some familiar ground. Then the reveal: a dragonfly.

Dragonflies hunt aerial prey but also mate and lay eggs in water, so the lotus pond serves multiple life functions. The choice of “lotus” rather than “reed” or another aquatic plant is significant — in Japan, the lotus carries Buddhist associations of purity and enlightenment, rising clean from muddy water. A dragonfly returning to the lotus to fulfill basic life drives — hunting, mating, reproduction — grounds the spiritual symbol in biological reality. The sacred and the instinctual occupy the same space.

A white egret  
in the rice field,  
upside down.

Sept. 4, 2025

Comment: Only mentioning the reflection rather than the bird itself catches our interest. The actual egret is not “in” the rice field, I imagine, but rather standing on the bank above it.

**Goda Virginija Bendoraitiene** (Klaipeda, Lithuania)

a clear raindrop  
plops into muddy water —  
loses all its light

Aug. 25, 2025

Comment: A clear raindrop falls into muddy water and instantly loses its transparency. The onomatopoeia “plops” adds sound to the visual moment — we hear the drop hit as we watch clarity disappear into murkiness. The observation is precise: What begins distinct becomes indistinguishable from its surroundings.

**Patrycjusz Pilawski** (Wodzisław, Poland)

weary summer day —  
the scarecrow  
bows its head

Sept. 2, 2025

Comment: On a hot, exhausting late-summer day, even the scarecrow seems to droop, its head bowed. The anthropomorphism works because the scarecrow mirrors the weariness permeating everything — the heavy air, the tired crops, the season nearing its end. What was erected to stand guard now sags under the weight of accumulated summer. The bowed head suggests both exhaustion and perhaps a kind of surrender or humility.

**Stephen C. Curro** (Colorado, USA)

bird song  
petals dance  
in the breeze

Sept. 3, 2025

Comment: Bird song fills the air as petals move in the breeze. The haiku creates an implicit metaphor through shared movement — the notes seem to dance like the petals, the petals seem to move with the melodic pattern of the song in a synaesthetic resonance.

**Johnny Moran** (Dublin, Ireland)

on the seafront  
glass facades of peeling houses  
reflect incoming clouds

Sept. 16, 2025

Comment: On Dublin's seafront, older houses with peeling paint have glass facades reflecting incoming storm clouds. "Facades" works architecturally but also suggests false fronts, superficial coverings — gleaming modern surfaces masking deterioration beneath. The drama is palpable: ominous clouds rolling in from the sea, threatening both literal peeling paint and metaphorical pretense. The glass reflects the approaching danger beautifully while being unable to prevent it. The word choice evokes not just building construction but social facades — surfaces maintained while foundations crumble.

**Anica Marcelic** (Zaprešić, Croatia)

path to the shrine  
a stray dog follows  
the pilgrim line

Sept. 18, 2025

Comment: On a path to a shrine, a stray dog follows the line of pilgrims. The dog joins the procession uninvited — perhaps drawn by curiosity or hoping for food scraps, perhaps simply following movement. Yet in following, it participates in the pilgrimage, faithful in its own way. The rhyme of "shrine" and "line" is rare in haiku but works here, creating sonic order that mirrors the orderly procession and emphasizes the path's purpose and structure. The stray belongs and doesn't belong simultaneously — it is outside the human community yet part of the sacred journey.

**Fatma Zohra Habis** (Algiers, Algeria)

barefoot  
across a summer river  
the language of pebbles

Sept. 20, 2025

Comment: Walking barefoot across a summer river, feeling pebbles shift and press against the soles of the feet. “Language of pebbles” captures how each stone communicates through touch — smooth or rough, stable or rolling, warm from sun or cool from depth. This is bodily knowledge, pre-linguistic understanding that comes through direct contact. The phrase elevates simple sensation to communication, suggesting the pebbles speak if we’re attentive enough to listen through our feet. Summer allows this intimacy, the warm water inviting us to wade slowly, reading the riverbed stone by stone.

**Radka Mindova** (Sliven City, Bulgaria)

fading ripples —  
I am both the pebble and the water  
and the lake itself

Sept. 22, 2025

Comment: Watching ripples fade after throwing a pebble, the speaker experiences a moment where boundaries dissolve — identifying with the pebble, water, and lake simultaneously. This is less traditional imagistic haiku than philosophical observation, a statement of non-dual awareness where observer and observed merge. The fading ripples perhaps trigger this recognition: As the disturbance dissipates, distinctions between actor, medium and container also blur. The progression outward (pebble → water → lake) mirrors expanding consciousness encompassing all elements of the moment.

**Rudi Pfaller** (Remshalden, Germany)

cemetery walk  
under every tree  
my shadow leaves me

Sept. 27, 2025

Comment: Walking through a cemetery, the speaker's shadow disappears each time they pass under a tree's canopy. The physical observation is accurate — shade erases the shadow cast by direct sunlight — but in this setting it becomes weighted with meaning. The shadow, often thought of as a faithful companion or symbol of the soul, repeatedly abandons the speaker. In a place where bodies lie separated from whatever animated them, the loss of one's shadow feels like a rehearsal for final separation. "Every tree" quietly suggests that regardless of path chosen, the outcome remains the same — a meditation on inevitability amid apparent choice.

**Bisshie** (Zurich, Switzerland)

every breath  
brings the mountain peak closer  
snow blossom

Oct. 11, 2025

Comment: Climbing toward a mountain peak, progress is measured in breaths — each one bringing the summit closer. The physical effort is palpable; at altitude every breath becomes conscious, labored, essential. "Snow blossom" likely refers to alpine flowers blooming near snow — edelweiss, alpine forget-me-nots, or similar high-altitude plants. These delicate flowers act as small rewards for the climber's effort, beautiful signs that the peak draws nearer. The haiku captures how we approach distant goals through accumulated moments, breath by breath, with small encouragements marking progress along the way.

**Lorelyn Arevalo** (Camarines Sur, Philippines)

airstrike  
after airstrike  
milky way

Oct. 14, 2025

Comment: Repeated airstrikes under a night sky where the Milky Way stretches overhead. The contrast is stark: relentless human violence below, ancient starlight above. “Airstrike after airstrike” emphasizes the grinding continuation of destruction, while the Milky Way — unchanged, indifferent — witnesses as it has witnessed countless wars across millennia. There may be dark irony here: The Milky Way becomes visible in skies darkened by destroyed infrastructure, war’s devastation enabling this glimpse of cosmic beauty. The haiku holds both realities without reconciling them — horror and beauty occupying the same moment, the same sky.

**Laila Brahmhatt** (New York, USA)

awakening  
to slow drizzle  
missed calls from mother

Oct. 18, 2025

Comment: Waking to slow drizzle — grey, steady, potentially mood-dampening — the poet sees missed calls from mother. The haiku could work in opposing ways: the drizzle and formal “mother” might suggest the calls feel like an unwelcome obligation, persistent as the rain. Or the drizzle creates melancholy that’s lifted by discovering someone cares enough to call repeatedly — the missed connections becoming a reminder of being loved and thought about. Does the rain’s persistence mirror unwanted maternal attention, or does maternal persistence offer comfort against the drizzle’s gloom? The haiku doesn’t resolve this, leaving readers to project their own relationship with parental care onto the scene.

**Giusy Cantone** (L-Imsida, Malta)

blood moon  
life goes on  
without mother

Oct. 21, 2025

Comment: Under a blood moon — a lunar eclipse turning the moon red — life continues without mother. The celestial event seems to mark this threshold: the blood-colored moon echoing the primal blood connection between mother and child, now severed. The lunar cycle itself recalls the menstrual cycle that enables motherhood. “Life goes on” is ambiguous — bitter acknowledgment that the world doesn’t pause for personal grief, stoic acceptance of loss, or perhaps even quiet recognition of liberation. The blood moon witnesses this continuation, its ominous red presiding over the simple, devastating fact: Life without mother persists, regardless.

**Bakhtiyar Amini** (Duesseldorf, Germany)

bonsai  
removing  
unnecessary words

Oct. 25, 2025

Comment: Tending a bonsai tree becomes a metaphor for editing — both require careful pruning to reveal essential form. The haiku itself demonstrates this principle through strict economy: minimal, precise, each word necessary. Yet the omission of the bonsai species is striking — haiku poets typically use such details to add depth and resonance. Pine, maple, juniper — each carries different associations. Was it considered and deliberately cut? The omission raises the central question the haiku poses: How do we decide what is necessary versus unnecessary? The back-and-forth this generates — debating whether the species should be there — may be precisely what makes the haiku strong. It forces readers to experience the editorial dilemma it describes, to weigh what adds depth against what adds clutter.

**Andrei Gradinaru** (Bucharest, Romania)

the autumn wind —  
even the shadows  
begin to rust

Oct. 29, 2025

Comment: In the autumn wind, even the shadows seem to rust. The impossibility of the image is its strength — shadows have no material to corrode, yet autumn's pervasive decay feels so complete that even immaterial darkness takes on rust's brown deterioration. "Even" suggests escalation: if shadows aren't immune, nothing escapes. The rusty colors of fall — browns, oranges, and reds of oxidation — are so dominant they appear to stain darkness itself. The autumn wind carries this transformative quality, making everything, substance and shadow alike, participate in the season's slow corrosion.

**Jefferson Limos** (Tarlac, Philippines)

fog rising  
over the rice field ...  
childhood blanket

Oct. 31, 2025

Comment: Visiting the family home, the poet wakes under their old childhood blanket and looks out at fog rising over the rice field. Both elements are physically present — the familiar blanket and the fog slowly covering the field outside. The pairing works as concrete observation and metaphor: The fog spreads like a blanket over the vulnerable rice, while the actual blanket wraps the poet in childhood comfort.

**Randy Brooks** (Illinois, USA)

autumn trail  
walking a little behind  
my wife

Nov. 1, 2025

Comment: Walking an autumn trail, the poet stays a little behind his wife. The positioning feels deliberate — not side-by-side but following, watching. This small distance could suggest many things: appreciation of her moving through the landscape, allowing her to set the pace, or perhaps a gap within intimacy that autumn’s atmosphere of change and decline quietly underscores. “A little” suggests gentleness — close enough to be together, far enough to see her as separate, beautiful, her own person. The haiku holds ambiguity: Is this tender observation or quiet acknowledgment of distance? Perhaps both coexist on the autumn trail.

October light  
migrating monarchs all over  
the tallest pine

Dec. 1, 2025

Comment: In slanting October light, migrating monarch butterflies cluster all over the tallest pine. The scene captures a specific natural phenomenon — monarchs traveling south stop to rest in massive numbers, choosing prominent trees. The October light is essential: Its golden quality illuminating thousands of orange wings transforms the evergreen pine into something shimmering and alive. “All over” conveys abundance — the entire tall tree becomes a temporary monarch city. The contrast between the enduring pine and ephemeral visitors, between the constant evergreen and butterflies that will be gone by morning, gives the moment poignancy. The light makes visible what’s brief and beautiful.

**Dennys Cambarau** (San Gavino Monreale, Italy)

autumn leaves  
an old cassette  
in the tape player

Nov. 4, 2025

Comment: The pairing of these two elements suggests parallel obsolescence — leaves and cassettes both belonging to the past. The cassette might have been discovered forgotten in the player, a relic gathering dust, or the poet may have deliberately put it there to revisit sounds from younger days. Either way, autumn’s atmosphere of reflection and ending frames the moment. “Leaves” works primarily as a noun, but a second reading reveals the verb — autumn departs, leaving behind this scene of remembrance and obsolete technology, or perhaps it was autumn itself that left the cassette there for the poet to find. The wordplay is subtle, enriching rather than dominating the haiku. The cassette, like the falling leaves, carries time within it, making us attentive to what remains from seasons gone.

mum still waters  
the forget-me-nots  
Alzheimer’s

Nov. 13, 2025

Comment: The irony is devastating — tending flowers named as a plea against forgetting while memory itself disappears. Yet the physical care persists: muscle memory, habit, the deep routine of nurturing even when cognition fails. “Still” suggests she continues despite the disease, one action that remains when so much else is lost.

**Vladislav Hristov** (Plovdiv, Bulgaria)

autumn forest  
layers of the past  
under my feet

Nov. 8, 2025

Comment: Walking through an autumn forest, the poet feels the accumulated leaf litter underfoot — layers from multiple seasons compressed beneath each step. The past becomes tangible, physical: each autumn's contribution settling atop the previous, gradually decomposing into soil. Autumn makes these layers visible and audible in ways other seasons don't. The phrase extends beyond literal leaves — history, memory, all that's accumulated lies beneath our feet as we walk forward. Time stratifies like geology, and we walk atop it.

quiet morning  
the force of a horse's  
nostrils opening

Dec. 8, 2025

Comment: In quiet morning stillness, the powerful flaring of a horse's nostrils becomes remarkable. The contrast drives the haiku — silence makes the physical force of a simple breath noticeable. This isn't galloping or other dramatic action; the strength is visible in rest, in the muscular expansion of nostrils drawing air. The observation requires closeness and attention: watching carefully enough to see vitality expressed in breathing itself. "Force" captures something beyond mere movement — the life power present in even the most basic function, made visible by morning's quiet and the observer's patient attention.

a quince falls ...  
its scent  
lingers on the tree

Dec. 23, 2025

Comment: A quince falls from the tree, yet its fragrance lingers on the branches. Quinces are intensely aromatic — scent is their essence more than appearance. The physical fruit has dropped, but what defined it persists in the air, clinging to the tree that bore it. The ellipsis works better than a dash would here — it suggests the diffuse, nonlinear quality of scent dispersing in puffs rather than the direct trajectory of the falling fruit. The haiku suggests how what's lost continues to occupy space through traces — scent, memory, influence. What departs leaves something of itself behind.

**Aparna Pathak** (Gurugram, India)

the rhythm of the call  
of a scrap dealer  
autumn deepens

Nov. 25, 2025

Comment: The rhythmic call of a scrap dealer echoes through the streets as autumn deepens. In Indian neighborhoods, these vendors walk regular routes calling out for old metal, paper, bottles — what households discard. The call's rhythm becomes part of the seasonal soundscape, marking time like the changing season itself. Autumn is when things fall away, are let go, and here is someone whose livelihood involves collecting what's cast off. The pairing suggests cycles within cycles: the dealer's repeated route and the seasonal turn, both marking time's passage through what's relinquished and what endures.

**Cezar Florescu** (Botoșani, Romania)

autumn rain ...  
I become  
its urn

Nov. 28, 2025

Comment: Standing in autumn rain, the poet experiences becoming its urn — not just a vessel but specifically a container for remains. The word choice is deliberate and dark — urns hold ashes, what's left after death. Here the living body becomes the receptacle for rain, as if the falling water needs a funeral vessel. Autumn's atmosphere of decay deepens this: the season of dying paired with imagery of death and containment.

**Raj K. Bose** (Hawaii, USA)

crumbling school wall  
a Bodhi seedling reaching for  
the bright sunlight!

Dec. 3, 2025

Comment: A Bodhi seedling grows behind a crumbling school wall, now visible because the wall has deteriorated. The decay that might seem tragic actually reveals new life. The pairing is rich: a failing structure of education beside the tree symbolizing Buddha's enlightenment under which he gained wisdom. The physical school decays, perhaps abandoned (roof gone, walls crumbling), while spiritual wisdom in the form of the sacred Bodhi takes root in the same space. The seedling reaches actively toward sunlight, seeking illumination with the same determination seekers pursue truth.

**Richard L Matta** (San Diego, USA)

koi pond —  
no one calls the scarred one  
favorite

Dec. 11, 2025

Comment: In a koi pond, the scarred fish is never chosen as anyone's favorite. Koi are prized for flawless coloration and form — scars diminish value in this aesthetic tradition. The observation could be critical commentary on how we overlook the imperfect, or it might carry personal weight — the poet recognizing their own scars, emotional or physical, in the fish's damaged body. "No one" emphasizes the isolation of being marked by injury, never selected for affection. Whether observing from outside or identifying from within, the haiku draws attention to what's dismissed as flawed, giving notice to what others pass over.

**John Pappas** (Massachusetts, USA)

collecting  
at the cloud's edge  
minnows

Dec. 15, 2025

Comment: Minnows gather at the edge of a cloud's reflection in the water. The scale contrast is striking — tiny fish collecting at the boundary of something vast. The minnows may be gathering where light-field changes help them see prey, but the image extends beyond biology: small beings congregating at the edges of power, importance, or influence. The cloud represents something large and distant; the minnows, small and immediate. Yet they mark where the grand meets the mundane, collecting at a boundary that exists only as reflection — ephemeral, insubstantial, yet significant enough to draw them. The haiku observes both natural behavior and a pattern that mirrors human social dynamics. The choice of “collecting” rather than “gathering” introduces alliteration and thereby heightens the poesy of the haiku.

**Barbara Anna Gaiardoni** (Verona, Italy)

Harvest Moon  
I'm so close  
to saying yes

Dec. 17, 2025

Comment: Under the harvest moon — the full moon of completion and abundance — the speaker hovers at the edge of saying yes to something significant. The moon seems to pull toward affirmation, its fullness suggesting ripeness, the right time to commit. Yet “so close” reveals hesitation: the poet is almost there, but not quite. What requires this yes remains unspecified — a proposal, a decision, a life change — but the harvest moon frames it as a moment of bringing something to fruition, of gathering what's been growing. The haiku captures threshold psychology: the nearness to commitment and the space that remains before crossing.

**Rob McKinnon** (South Australia, Australia)

silent grasshopper  
on the hallway floor —  
sliver of moonlight

Dec. 18, 2025

Comment: A grasshopper sits silently on an indoor hallway floor, caught in a sliver of moonlight. The silence is notable — grasshoppers are known for sound, so this stillness suggests displacement, exhaustion, or approaching death. The insect belongs outside but has found its way in, now illuminated by minimal moonlight. There's visual resonance: The grasshopper itself resembles a sliver — thin, pale, elongated like the narrow beam of light that reveals it. Both are fragile presences in the darkness of the hallway. The moonlight singles out this quiet creature lost in human architecture, the two slivers — insect and light — meeting in a moment of stillness and displacement.

**Marili Deandrea** (Torino, Italy)

this November wind  
laughs at  
my new haircut

Dec. 24, 2025

Comment: Fresh from a haircut, the poet steps into a November wind that immediately dishevels the careful styling. The personification of wind “laughing” captures both the feeling — nature mocking human vanity — and the actual physical sensation of cold gusts tousling hair every which way. November wind is particularly harsh, the cold edge of approaching winter, indifferent to grooming efforts. The haiku is humorous and self-aware: recognizing the absurdity of caring about appearance when nature will undo it instantly. The wind becomes a playful antagonist, and the poet acknowledges defeat with good humor.

**Arvinder Kaur** (Chandigarh, India)

how gently  
mother spells my name  
translucent leaves

Dec. 25, 2025

Comment: A mother gently spells out her son's name — Arvinder — letter by letter, likely to someone unfamiliar with Indian names. The gentleness conveys more than pronunciation; it carries her pride in the name and her son, and a wish for the listener to feel kindness toward him. "Translucent leaves" works on multiple levels: the visual delicacy mirrors the mother's gentle voice, while translucent suggests young leaves, evoking the poet as a baby. Both the careful spelling and the light passing through tender leaves share a quality of revelation — making visible what might otherwise be overlooked, illuminating what deserves attention and care.

**Hifsa Ashraf** (Rawalpindi, Pakistan)

ceasefire —  
the sky blooms  
with fireworks

Dec. 27, 2025

Comment: After a ceasefire, celebratory fireworks fill the sky. The word "blooms" captures the transformation — explosions that once brought destruction now create beauty and joy. The irony is sharp: similar lights and sounds in the sky, opposite meanings. For those who endured bombardment, the celebration may carry complex emotions, but the haiku simply presents the moment — the sky reclaimed, violence replaced by festivity, at least for now.