

"Savour these chocolates one by one, each a skilfully crafted miniature."

- Ken Jones, Co-editor  
*Contemporary Haibun*

"*Double Rainbow* is exactly as you would imagine—a wonder to behold. Two simple reasons for this: the haiku/senryu spirit is brimming and neither poet is a slave to form. Each versified experience is so vividly conveyed as to become our own: their light on our rain."

- Stephen Henry Gill (^Tito^),  
Heel Stone of the Hailstone  
Haiku Circle, Kansai

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Double Rainbow

Maeve O'Sullivan • Kim Richardson

# Double Rainbow

haiku poetry  
by

Maeve O'Sullivan  
Kim Richardson

*Alba*

Double  
Rainbow

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This book is dedicated to Iris,  
Greek goddess of the rainbow,  
and to *An Chailleach Bhéara*,  
the Most Ancient One.

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**Maeve O'Sullivan  
Kim Richardson**

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*Review* websites, in which several of these pieces  
first appeared.

The authors would also like to thank Jim Norton  
for his valuable suggestions on the manuscript, and  
Sue Booth-Forbes of Anam Cara Writers' Retreat,  
Eyeries, Béara, where this collaboration was born.

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## Preface

In the autumn of 2000, two poets, one a published writer of haiku, the other a novice to the form, met by chance at a writers' retreat on the Béra Peninsula in West Cork, Ireland. They took a walk to nearby Pallas Strand beach in the rain and both of them tried to photograph a spectacular double rainbow. One of the poets cursed the very wind that had brought that rainbow into being, and this elicited a haiku from the other. That moment started a process that evolved, after many conversations in cyberspace and 'real' space across the Irish Sea, into this book.

The collection presents 92 haiku and senryu, many of them written over the past five years, shaped into thirteen themed sections in which the work of both poets appears together. An index of first lines offers the reader the opportunity to see whose work is whose.

Haiku emerge from the chance encounter of two—often commonplace—elements. Through the poem, these two elements combine to create a third: an element that transcends its component parts and, at its best, allows the reader to glimpse a little something of what is behind appearances.

We hope that *Double Rainbow*, as the collection has been entitled, creates some element that is beyond its component parts, mingling the voices of the two poets to give voice to something that has not so much come from them as through them.

Maeve O'Sullivan & Kim Richardson

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## Introduction

I am delighted to have this opportunity to welcome the publication of *Double Rainbow*, and to commend Maeve O'Sullivan and Kim Richardson for the considerable achievement which their joint collection of haiku represents.

Here, in this slightest of poetic forms, one finds humour, keen observation, pathos and refreshment of spirit in abundance.

If all poetry lives the tension between the lyrical and commonplace, haiku is most at home in the latter. Quite ordinary things, seen anew, have about them something mysteriously moving. Great scientists and mystics alike concur: that there is anything at all is cause for wonder. For Master Basho, wondrous enough mud on a melon, the coolness of a wall to nap against. O'Sullivan gives us *mortgage down-payment / outside / snails on the wet stone steps*, Richardson *fuschia bushes / drenched / in bees*. Quintessential haiku both, along this spectrum.

Readers familiar only with the dictionary definition of haiku may be disappointed that few poems in this collection conform to the supposed 5-7-5 syllable requirement. Suffice to say that sparseness of expression, if the image resonates, is a better measure of haiku spirit. Incompleteness leaves space for the reader to enter these fine haiku and make of them our own. Happy task.

Jim Norton

---

double rainbow  
trying to photograph it  
he curses the wind

---

by the stone circle  
chuffed at the sound  
of raven's wings

water bottle opened  
sings in the wind  
I drink deeper

stopping the whistle  
with my fingers  
let the North wind  
play *An Ghaoth Aneas*\*  
(\*The South Wind)

opening  
in this stone circle  
gorse flowers

two crows flying  
close to the water  
four crows

beside the path  
bruised rowanberries  
a raven's crop

EARTH

---

fuchsia bushes  
drenched  
in bees

rose garden  
in the rain, scent  
of wet earth

watching the sunset  
the pub landlord  
pulls down the blinds

EARTH

---

rose garden  
with no blooms  
now the closing bell

circle of stones  
I arrive in haste  
leave slowly

at the Chalice Well  
emptying water bottles  
filling them again

To Music

---

perched on the block  
of fiddler's resin  
cherry tomato

drumming to a slip jig  
the cigarette ash  
moving closer to his lip

at a music festival  
in the old hop pickers' field  
girls stiltwalking

To Music

---

strumming bouzouki  
with his right hand  
—how blue the veins

the fiddler's wife  
watching his fingers  
knits him a scarf

suddenly a flute  
next door  
longing

WOOD

---

in a house full of women  
my cat hunts  
I chop wood

felling the willow  
branches drive into the ground  
new shoots

horse chestnut tree  
my friend translates it slowly  
'crann chnó chapail'

WOOD

---

picking a leaf  
off the inscription  
he reads  
'the autumnal earth'

on my lap, the cat  
in the tree's branches  
full moon

just over the border  
forest clearing  
full of loosestrife

sunshine  
filtering through  
the heart-shaped bower

swifts flying  
above the vineyard  
fireworks

moonless night  
beside the path, glow-worms  
the Milky Way

at night, the garden  
blossoms on the pear tree  
—I look at the stars

I am surprised  
to see, through a telescope  
that Venus has horns

pointing out the Pole Star  
to friends at night  
with a small torch

December night  
stacked inside the gift shop  
boxes labelled 'Peace'

Christmas tablecloth  
shaken out in the doorway  
snow on the threshold

flakes of snow tumbling  
out of a grey sky  
—one magpie

vapour trails  
in the winter sky  
lines in my palm

three children on skis  
climbing the hill  
behind them, herring bones

in the garden  
under an old climbing frame  
—forget-me-nots

FATHERS (MO'S)

---

father gardening  
seen from an upstairs window  
—bald patch

his box of tricks  
brought in from the garage  
to fix my case

my new dress swirling  
across the ballroom dance floor  
waltzing with father

FATHERS (MO'S)

---

late night taxi rank  
a row developing  
—I grip father's arm

below the cardiograph  
on the bedside locker  
a completed crossword

cracking a *crème brûlée*  
he calmly discusses  
will and trust

outdoors  
shrouding my father's lemon tree  
against the winter

through a closed window  
that small chandelier  
still lit

in front of his portrait  
incense smoke  
dried leaves

day of the funeral  
waning crescent  
just before sunrise

Christmas present  
from my late father  
next year's diary

pruning our father's vines  
without thinking  
just the way he taught us

leaping up  
to open the window  
—not finding it

she carries it from room to room  
—the candle, lit  
for her sick niece

moon full  
house empty  
you, me and Rumi

our teacher speaks  
of illumination  
the candle flickers

'TATTOOS. PIERCINGS.'  
seeing this sign I remember  
Easter starts tomorrow

discussing empowerment—  
outside the window  
a seagull soars

ON THE WEIR (MO'S)

---

September night  
I shake out the damp sheet  
a swan drifting

autumn leaves falling  
slowly onto the river  
frost on the island

winter fog  
over the river  
moving

ON THE WEIR (MO'S)

---

full moon's reflection  
dispersed in the flow  
stillness

through the raindrops  
through the rainbow  
the other side

icy wind  
geese moving slowly  
spring tide

ON THE WEIR (MO'S)

---

summer hailstorm  
on the window-ledge  
an earwig escapes

swallows  
glancing the river surface  
midsummer

torrential downpour  
startling me and the ducks  
—slow thunderclap

ON THE EDGE

---

beggar in morning sunlight  
bricked-up doorway

three-wheeled motorbike—  
lashed behind the single seat  
a pair of crutches

beggar-woman in the market  
crying out,  
her gold teeth

on the pavement  
a man with no hands  
begging

pink bracelet  
left behind—  
the sparkle of her laughter

through a plate glass window  
the child looks up to see  
a shark swimming

I start to cry  
he reaches for the tissue box  
—empty

airport security  
a woman frisks me  
undoing your hug

TV at the dentist's  
Saddam wrenched from his plinth  
tooth finally out

sweeping with his white stick  
the man checks his stride  
at the museum gate

he climbs off the stage  
walks blindly among us—  
missionary touch

a congregation  
of lapsed Irish Catholics  
singing for Jesus

approaching Limerick  
baby's bibs on a washing line  
gravestones...

Kilcatherine church  
a woman pushing a pram  
past the graveyard

after the funeral  
the soap actress tells me  
her character's dead

STONE

---

on my knees  
in the stone hearth, making fire  
with my breath

two geologists  
trying to identify  
café tabletop

mortgage down-payment  
outside  
snails on the wet stone steps

WATER

---

sandbags by the back door  
milk in the jug  
overflowing...

two Moroccans  
on the Spanish coast  
gazing out to sea

a single sailboat  
disappearing  
into Dalkey Sound

WATER (MO'S)

---

neon fish swimming  
oblivious  
as I cast my vote

fitting me  
better than I expected—  
my mother's swimsuit

tap water falling  
a sinkful of ice  
melting into itself

WATER (MO'S)

---

spring shower  
in the back yard  
a trio of snails  
neighbours arguing

he tilts the umbrella back  
now I can see  
the waterfall

estuary walk  
ebbing tide  
our footprints deeper

---

eyes down  
on O'Connell Street—  
double rainbow

---

a congregation (MO'S) – *Riposte* March 2000  
 a single sailboat (MO'S)  
 after the funeral (MO'S) – *World Haiku Review*  
 website www.worldhaikureview.org; Selected for  
 inclusion in *Top 10 Senryu for 2004*  
 airport security (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 approaching Limerick (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 13,  
 February 2003  
 at a music festival (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/4,  
 December 2001  
 at night, the garden (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/2,  
 June 2001  
 at the Chalice Well (KR)  
 autumn leaves falling (MO'S) – *Haiku Spirit* Issue 18,  
 December 1999  
 beggar in morning sunlight (KR)  
 beggar-woman in the market (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 11/3, September 2001  
 below the cardiograph (MO'S)  
 beside the path (KR)  
 by the stone circle (KR)  
 Christmas present (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 Christmas tablecloth (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/1,  
 March 2001  
 circle of stones (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 10/4,  
 December 2000  
 cracking a *crème brûlée* (MO'S)  
 day of the funeral (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002

December night (KR)  
 discussing empowerment (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 15/1, March 2005  
 double rainbow (MO'S)  
 drumming to a slip jig (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 13/3, September 2003  
 estuary walk (MO'S)  
 eyes down (MO'S)  
 father gardening (MO'S)  
 felling the willow (KR)  
 fitting me (MO'S) – *Haiku Spirit* Issue 15, October  
 1998; Anthologised in *Jumping the Bus Queue*  
 (Older Women's Network, 2000) and *The New*  
*Haiku* (Snapshot Press, 2002)  
 flakes of snow tumbling (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/2,  
 June 2001  
 fuchsia bushes (KR)  
 full moon's reflection (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 8,  
 July 2000  
 he climbs off the stage (MO'S) – *Riposte* March 2000  
 he tilts the umbrella back (MO'S)  
 his box of tricks (MO'S) – *Stinging Fly* Issue 4,  
 Autumn/Winter 1998  
 horse chestnut tree (MO'S)  
 I am surprised (KR)  
 I start to cry (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 icy wind (MO'S)  
 in a house full of women (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 10/4, December 2000; *The Event Guide*,  
 Dublin, December 2000

in front of his portrait (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 in the garden (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/3,  
 September 2001  
 just over the border (MO'S)  
 Kilcatherine church (KR)  
 late night taxi rank (MO'S)  
 leaping up (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 13/1,  
 March 2003  
 moon full (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/3,  
 September 2002  
 moonless night (KR)  
 mortgage down-payment (MO'S)  
 my new dress swirling (MO'S)  
 neon fish swimming (MO'S) – *Haiku Spirit* Issue 14,  
 June 1998  
 on my knees (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/2, June 2001  
 on my lap, the cat (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/1,  
 March 2001  
 on the pavement (KR)  
 opening (KR)  
 our teacher speaks (KR)  
 outdoors (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2, June 2002  
 perched on the block (MO'S)  
 picking a leaf (KR) – Haiku Ireland website  
[www.haikuireland.org](http://www.haikuireland.org)  
 pink bracelet (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 pointing out the Pole Star (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 11/3, September 2001  
 pruning our father's vines (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*

Issue 12/2, June 2002  
 rose garden / with no blooms (MO'S) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 15/1, March 2005  
 rose garden / in the rain, scent (KR)  
 sandbags by the back door (MO'S)  
 September night (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn*\* Issue 8,  
 July 2000; *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/4, December 2002  
 she carries it from room to room (MO'S)  
 spring shower (MO'S) – *Stinging Fly* Issue 4,  
 Autumn/Winter 1998.  
 stopping the whistle (KR)  
 strumming bouzouki (MO'S)  
 suddenly a flute (KR)  
 summer hailstorm (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 8,  
 July 2000  
 sunshine (MO'S)  
 swallows (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 8, July 2000  
 sweeping with his white stick (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 11/2, June 2001  
 swifts flying (KR)  
 tap water falling (MO'S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 2,  
 October 1998  
 'TATTOOS. PIERCINGS' (KR)  
 the fiddler's wife (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 10/4,  
 December 2000; Museum of Haiku Literature  
 Award in *Blithe Spirit* Issue 11/1, March 2001  
 three children on skis (KR)  
 three-wheeled motorbike (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 11/1, March 2001  
 through a closed window (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 12/2, June 2002

through a plate glass window (KR) – *Blithe Spirit*  
 Issue 11/3, September 2001  
 through the raindrops (MO’S) – *Haiku Spirit* Issue 17,  
 August 1999; *Electric Acorn* Issue 8, July 2000  
 torrential downpour (MO’S) – *Electric Acorn* Issue 8,  
 July 2000  
 TV at the dentist's (KR)  
 two crows flying (KR)  
 two geologists (MO’S) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 two Moroccans (KR)  
 vapour trails (KR)  
 watching the sunset (KR) – *Blithe Spirit* Issue 12/2,  
 June 2002  
 water bottle opened (KR)  
 winter fog (MO’S) - *Haiku Spirit* Issue 16, March  
 1999; *Electric Acorn* Issue 8, July 2000

\**Electric Acorn* is the quarterly online journal of the  
 Dublin Writers' Workshop.

Note: Some of the previously published haiku have  
 been edited since first publication.

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MAEVE O’SULLIVAN

Dubliner Maeve O'Sullivan was born in 1963 and lives  
 between the river Liffey and the train line to the south-  
 west. Maeve has been writing seriously since 1995 and  
 enjoys penning both haiku and 'regular' poetry. Several  
 of her poems, and over one hundred haiku, have been  
 published in various journals and e-zines including  
*Blithe Spirit*, *Haiku Spirit*, the *World Haiku Review*,  
*Stinging Fly*, *Women's Work* and *Electric Acorn*, the online  
 journal of the Dublin Writers' Workshop. Maeve is a  
 former winner of the Listowel Writers' Week poetry  
 competition for a single poem. She conducts haiku  
 workshops with adults and children and has given a  
 number of public readings. *Double Rainbow* is Maeve's  
 first publication.

KIM RICHARDSON

Born in Surrey, England, in 1951, Kim has been  
 writing for years. However, apart from the appearance of  
 some poems in *Icarus* at Trinity College, Dublin, in the  
 70s, he submitted nothing until the late 90s when a lone  
 poem was published by *Poetry Review* in London.

Introduced to haiku by 'Tito' on a long walk in 1980,  
 Kim read Basho's *Narrow Road to the Deep North* with  
 pleasure, but never considered writing haiku till a chance  
 visit to Anam Cara Writers' Retreat in 2000. Since then  
 many haiku, and some haibun, have found publication.

A member of the Redthread Haiku Sangha, Kim  
 believes that the state of perception necessary for haiku  
 to emerge is also part of the meditative practice at the  
 heart of the spiritual path.

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## WEBSITES

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**Anam Cara Writers' Retreat:**

<http://www.anamcararetreat.com/>

**The British Haiku Society:**

<http://www.britishhaikusociety.org/>

***Contemporary Haibun Online:***

<http://haibun.net/>

***Electric Acorn:***

<http://acorn.dublinwriters.org/>

***Haiku Ireland:***

<http://haikuireland.org/>

***Haiku Spirit:***

<http://haikuspirt.org/>

***Red Thread Haiku Sangha:***

<http://www.redthreadhaiku.org/>

***Snapshot Press\*:***

<http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/>

***World Haiku Review:***

<http://www.worldhaikureview.org.>

\*This collection, in an earlier edited form, was  
Commended in the Snapshot Press Haiku  
Collection Competition, 2004.