



# Turn To The Earth

Peter Yovu

## Acknowledgements

All poems included were published between 1991 and 2000 in Modern Haiku, Frogpond, Brussels Sprout, Haiku Quarterly or Woodnotes. A few have been modified.



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by  
Peter Yovu



## Preface

Haiku poets, I like to think, take on an incalculably important and difficult task: to be lovingly vigilant over small things and subtle connections; over what is fleeting, easily trodden on, ignored, or missed completely. Intuitively, unreasonably, they know that such attention allows the otherwise hidden world to bloom; that human perception without such devotion, would be in danger of withering, becoming ever more blunt.

A haiku is a sensual object which, as a thing to be experienced takes its place among other sensual objects in the world, requiring no less attention from its reader. It is, however imbued with an inescapable subjectivity. A good haiku, having come through human hands and heart and mind, shows me ways in which a fellow human being is vulnerable to the world, as I am, and I feel a connection, and all the more human for it.

The poems in this collection were written between 1991 and 1999. If you listen carefully to the silences between them, you will no doubt hear echoes of the work of haiku masters past and present. And, I hope, my gratitude.

— Peter Yovu

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heavy with seed  
sunflowers  
turn to earth

darkening sea  
the low note  
of a wine bottle



September moon —  
a water rat trailing  
whiskers of light

airport searchlight  
sweeping  
the cries of geese

sunrise —  
the sea hisses  
in the coals

final camouflage —  
flounder the same color as  
the fisherman's shoes

sundown—  
pumpkins  
on their own

among fallen apples  
the stallion  
stamps his hoof

Indian summer—  
a monarch floats over  
the empty pool

my grandfather asleep—  
wrist hairs touching  
the face of his watch

dusk—  
white tails  
arc the stone wall

coming out of the woods—  
the sound of crickets'  
the empty sky

pine tree  
pulling its shadow  
under the frost

this too  
changed overnight—  
rain into snow

a field of new snow—  
so much joy, so much sorrow  
in walking across

clouds uncover the moon—  
in the snow at my feet  
the wing-print of an owl



waiting room—  
the reflection of my watch  
trembles on the wall

low sun  
my shadow crossing pebbles  
and their shadows



blackout—  
taking off her blouse  
the sparks

crossroads motel—  
all night  
the red pulse

clearing her hair  
from my face—  
daybreak

"guess who?"  
on small hands  
the smell of Crayola

black winter night—  
rocks we throw ping and twang  
clear across the pond

the dentist picks at my teeth—  
the glint of his gold-  
rimmed glasses

dusk  
a snowplow scraping the road  
down to sparks



still spinning—  
the stars and planets above  
the juggler's grave

waving goodbye  
she keeps one hand  
on the unborn

feeding the bonfire  
the blare  
of the evening train



March thaw—  
a cow licks the stone  
coming through

cool morning—  
colors slide  
up and down the spider thread

down the wet street  
the "Rainbow Laundry" van  
leaking gas

out of the rain—  
her clothes, my clothes  
tumbling in the dryer

their love amplified—  
two flies on the mouth  
of a wine bottle

bird in the night—  
what's keeping *you*  
awake?

motel mirror—  
I too am  
just passing through

petals falling from  
a flowering crab . . . the click  
of the barber's shears

they pass  
slanted all the same—  
umbrellas

the mountain path  
winding up  
at a snail

day almost over—  
mayflies follow the river  
down to the sun

standing on a stump—  
land developer  
in green shades

day is done—  
one by one cement trucks  
return to the yard

taking its time  
the fly cleans itself  
on a dead toad

distant siren—  
the whirligig beetles  
dance



rain all morning—  
the privacy  
of minnows



in long grass  
I discover  
your scar

summer moon—  
on the park bench a bald man  
reading Braille

calm sea  
teaching my son  
the dead man's float

the river floor—  
crayfish walking across  
a mosaic of light

## About Peter Yovu ...

Staten Island in the 50's was still a place where a child could come across opossums, pheasant, muskrats and rabbits; could catch fat tadpoles and bullheads in a pond; could watch, from the roof of his Housing Project building, the Verrazano-Narrows bridge rising ever higher...

In Vermont in the late 60's I discovered haiku, as so many did, in the books of R.H.Blyth. For many years, however, I wrote longer poems. I got an MFA in writing and published a chapbook entitled: *Once You Have a Name*. In 1987 Robert Spiess welcomed me among the pages of *Modern Haiku*.

I am a student of the Ridhwan School, a spiritual adventure which requires of its participants that they be mindful (and heartfelt, and bellyful) of inner reality. Along with haiku, making tea for Edie, and working for a mental health agency, it helps keep me sane.



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*"standing on a stump"*  
appeared in *Haiku World*, editor W. Higginson

*"darkening sea"*  
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*"March thaw" and "Indian summer"*  
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*"coming out of the woods"*  
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