

sanguinella



haiku by

HELEN BUCKINGHAM

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for Louise

by the same author

water on the moon (Original Plus Press, 2010)

mirrormoon (Original Plus Press, 2010)

christmas city: a haiku sequence (Othername Press, 2010)

Turning Fifty, co-written with Angela Leuck (Angela Leuck, 2010)

Little Purple Universes, co-written with Angela Leuck (Angela Leuck, 2011)

Armadillo Basket (Waterloo Press, 2011)

sanguinella

station dust
dust to dust

Bath Spa
he lets the carriage know
all his ducks are in a row

medusa haunts the escalator mirror

vacation over an industrial-scale cobweb

tangledreaminginofmy
summerhammock

sanctuary —
a pigeon rocks
the coconut half

sanguinella sunrise pouring over sores

hiring deckchairs—
still young enough
to feel too young

return vacation . . . chainsaws across the water

roadkill still predatory the gull's eye

morning rush hour
an empty hearse
pins me to the kerb

living statue
his umbrella
flips

dawn chorus
ancient riffs
on shuffle

beer garden
the bulldog chases
its long-docked tail

campaign balloons tying knots in my sleep

crows skype as the bull flies

campaign flyer
dotted
with blossom

day moon the cuckoo's cuckoo

recycling night each star old news

maypolar

snap election—
back on their high
piñatas

an owl hoots
. . . the night plays dead

pink dusk
a cherry petal hovers
over the cowpat

birthday tulips
always the one
head bowed

Twelfth Night
crows bauble
the boughs

green city
cardboard
in the rain

sunrise
framed
in frost

hearts that pass
dying on ice

anonymous arterial . . . humanity-sprayed walls

black ice
blue light
spinning

first footer
a cold blast punches me
on the shoulder

complete
as we are
waning moon

icy track
stumbling on
the business end

winter beach
hut after hut
frosted white

wishing bone
on broken
a

white noise
santa's landfill

Midnight Mass
we settle in
for the duration

snow
its own
cathedral

Nativity
the screech owl
on cue

Geminid night—
another good one
dies

Black Friday
driving home
the snow globe

shop
hard
sky

midnight call
his car
a pumpkin

I pause
mid-gargle
red sunset

all that's left
of the evening
pumpkin soup

hunter's moon darting through the forest pines

riddle with gunshot no game

killing fields the god whisperer

eye
of the
storm
blood
shot

two minute silence
the black centre
of the poppy

another race lost in the eyes of a greyhound

a blister pack of stars her fingers grown stiff

chestnut moon
the eldest resident
lights up

diamond planet we come bearing beans

returning home
a builder's crane
gives me the finger

blue moon
the busker
rips it up

high art
one kid
draws a gun

still life class
she pours her heart
into the skeleton

nil by mouth
rush hour traffic
sizzling in the rain

dawn frost
a blood-streaked
bowl

sleep loss
the stars begin
to signal

light bulbs fizz and swing as I ride another hot flush

autumn rain
I beg my mum
to haunt me

the tension around my tension tension

full moon
fewer leaves
between us

day's end raking over rain

fall evening
thinning out
the calendar

autumn equinox
the truck driver clicks his tongue
at a passing dray

survivors pull their weight in apples

cathedral bells
when will I know
I'm born

deaf kids sign across the divide

moorland prison
an eagle circles
the hollow

returned to battle
forced to fight his corner
in the Benefits queue

summer's end
the whirr of a helicopter
unit

dawn
the fighter jet
clears its throat

survivors queue to escape the intermission

open-air theatre
lightning splits
the crowd

not to be on the safe side

late summer
fresh poppies
on the verge

Perseid shower
unable to puncture
his grief

air museum
the fighter pilot
checks a tear

too many buttons not to be pressed

20th
Century
Reflux

news the war to end all wars rolling

catching my breath
on the stairwell
full moon

office smokers
share the one
umbrella

field event
grazing cattle
turn their backs

emergency space walk . . .
I brace myself
to leave the house

today's
eternity
turmeric

breast lump
I scrabble around
for my whitest bra

sheep sheep security light

mouse
the sound
is enough

starless night
the stench of my own
withdrawal

I tear my hair out to whale song

results limbo
call receptionist a
gain sweet

withdrawal weekend pacing the sunshine

another day
unbathed
this internet affair

locking my door
on the inside
a snail

between drugs the gun in my head

rush hour haze
the traffic warden swats away
a cherry petal

windows down
. . . petals
streamed live

winter's end
out of left field
a yellow frisbee

Sunrise
in Beige
SSRI

borderline comfort the doctor's habit

thick note script
[antediluvian +]

linden shadows
watching people watching
the blind man

pain swipes in through the bare boned trees

chronic fatigue
the g-force pulling
at this mask

buck passing through clichéd teeth

the over
and over
of over

window vacation
sealess gulls

the week of her funeral
a moth brushes my cheek
goodnight

a passing swallow
ticks the sky
Test Positive

midsummer
her dandelion clock
unwinds

sunrise
clouds
ripen

weighing dad sparrow-light the needle flies west

evening sun
helping my dad
tend the cosmos

summer rain
the red earth
reddens

mint moths each to our own pot

Father's Day
the pyracantha
cuts me back

windsock in flight the trigeminal nerve kicks off

lunch alfresco
my companion
skirted in lichen

prying a snail
from the hall curtain
halfway house

kissing gate
—I liberate
the stile

single to the terminus

clearing out
vinyl-lunged
45

arterial road
blocked
with snow

the morning after:
rose petals
litter the stairwell

on waking snakes turn to rain

foxes
under a full moon
so much for love

mini-tornado the barn owl goes awol

The Angel of the North—
he adjusts
his wing mirror

charlie
in every crease
he rolls his last note

sodden solstice
we wait for each other
to rediscover fire

day breaks spinning plaster grapes

full moon
beyond
good and evil

absinthe night fireflies dance the quadrille

peak day
no return

Eastertide
no myth in the way
the waves follow the moon

mouth open at the rainbow's stump

papier maché masks
loom from the walls
neurology department

daybreak
blackdog
pixelating

all that I am contained within this itch

hunger moon—
the life class gathers
around her goose flesh

a feather drifts
into a cobweb
duvet day

house calls
Strangelove
in the afternoon

sunday morning
Warhol's fright wig
hanging on my wall

crane fly
in the mirror
a Busby Berkeley still

kitchen island
a cricket, tiny
on the surface

single bedsit
watching *Casablanca*
over a hill of beans

summer's end
the receptionist's
butterfly nail

they search for my cervix
orchids on the ceiling

canal bank
a mother-to-be
begs for change

towpath
a kid spits
at her own reflection

railway track
nettles raise
the voltage

fumbling for a firefly in the fog

petting moon
the universe
beyond

one small step
sharing our love
of the moon

first kiss static bouncing off the stars

seaside
soaking up
the decibels

high season —
Mickey Mouse
topples the stiltwalker

sun low
chins rested
on the losing oars

over the hill rock stars serenade their salmon

searching
for a monster . . .
three speedboats

summer a neon scent of citrus

away from it all—
we dodge the cockerel
over morning coffee

teenage escape
wrist
over skate

inching
onto the frozen lake
spring moon

dawn chorus
the owl
bows out

new phase
she sponges blood
from her thigh

exam morning
the rorschach test
between her legs

between sleep and sleep a tiny leaded window

a slug grins back at me from the Chubb lock

department of the interior stacking cells

tenth grade pulsating temple

school bell rings
a paper bat slips
through the sash windows

sharing clouds of equations beyond us

l adders

legend
beneath the statue
DO NOT CLIMB

growth spurt—
from nowhere
buds

the dewilded leading the dewilded

request stop
without asking
the driver gives me a song

hordes of men in bowler hats board the morning ghost train

festive cystitis
pine needles
drip

pearly gates
grinning down
on the gritted

a tangerine
lodged in the toe
Christmas smells

a black way past bible

at twelve
I wake dad
to tell him I'm dead

barbed wire
spirals
along the church wall

death moon
all I need
to know

abandoned high chair
the sign reads
Take Me

at seven we are replicants

Sunday's child
teaching a kitten
to genuflect

first love
red-lipped
beneath the mulberry

Sunday anglers
hunched
in readiness

dad returns
armed with toy koalas
and a boomerang charm

60s snapshot
analogue children
bob for apples

kids play inches from this cold earth

graveyard shadows playing tag

birthday girl
raises her umbrella
to pee

snow
too cold
for playing angels

home
by the light
of the loadstar

white coats flap my life flashes before

meningitis baby
sleeps in a windmill
spins like a catherine wheel

a lone swan heads towards a trick of the light

ice
on the sundial
spring on hold

full moon
caesarean
smooth

talking of clouds filled with equations she checks her pad

ribbit
ibid.

acknowledgments

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awards

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author's note

Fifty-eight years since the seed was planted, *sanguinella* provides a scrump back through the often bloody orchard that constitutes my life until now, from the rural pickings gathered over recent years in the bonsai city of Wells, to the tangled branches of a childhood spent battling various forms of blight in a mulberry-stained corner of South London.

“Helen Buckingham has carved her own niche in the realm of contemporary English-language haiku. She seamlessly blends the personal with the political, giving us "replicants," hard-hitting images that deeply strike a chord. She is indeed far from being "on the safe side." Buckingham's collection is a must-have for ardent lovers of Japanese short-forms.”

—Shloka Shankar
Founding Editor, *Sonic Boom*



“In the very small hours our greatest need is one we often meet head on just by ourselves. In this haiku collection you will see the author measure up, in her trials, tribulations, and also triumphs. If you want an incantation to invoke, that measures up against the ills of the world visited upon you, this is the book: When the blue hour makes or breaks the witching hour and you find you made it through.”

—Alan Summers
President, United Haiku and Tanka Society
Co-founder, *Call of the Page*

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