



ORANG-UTAN

**New & Selected Haiku for Older Children
With a Stunning Gallery of International Art**

- Gabriel Rosenstock

ORANG-UTAN
A selection of Haiku

Gabriel Rosenstock

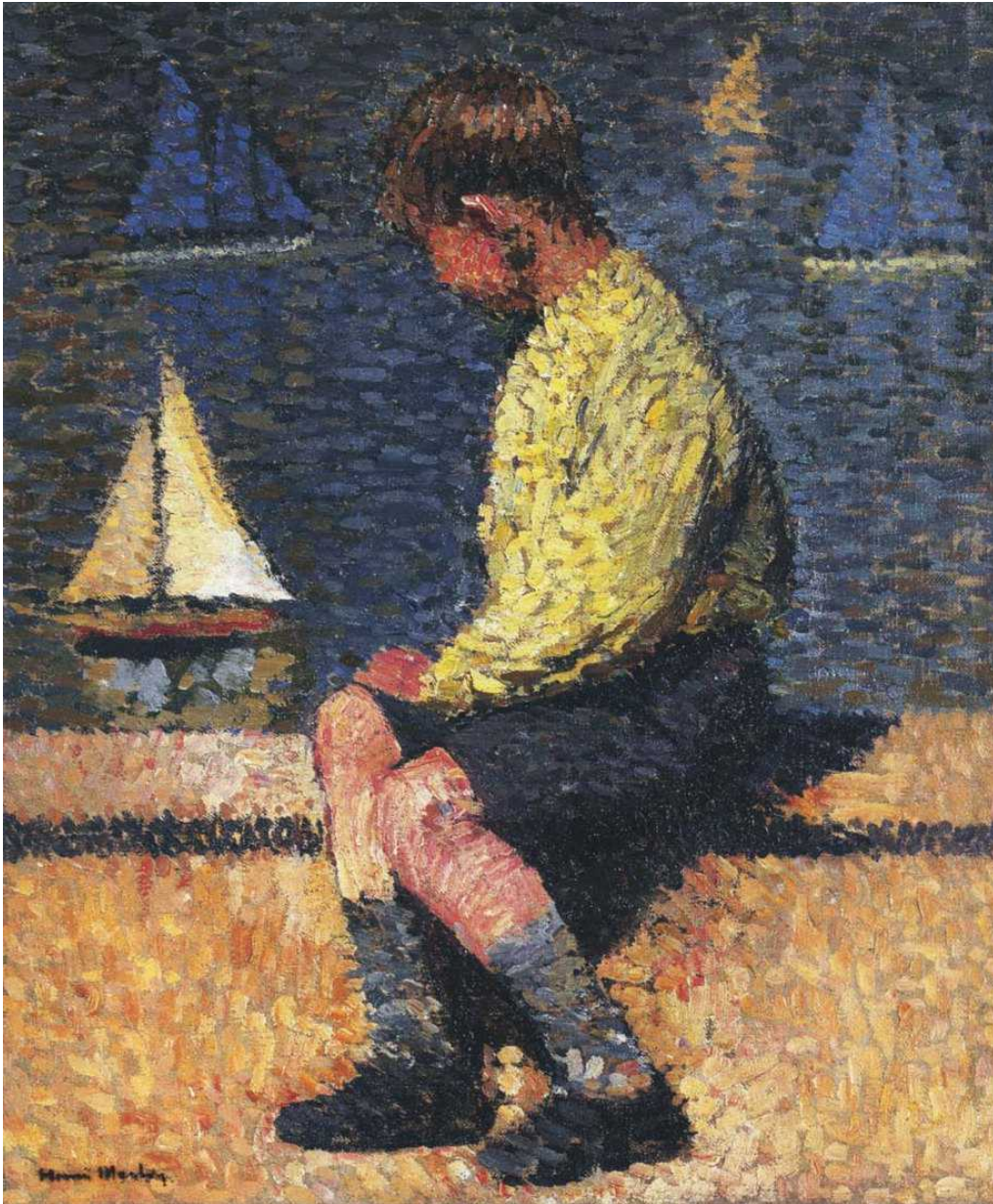
Artwork used in this free book of bilingual haiku and senryū for older children is in the Public Domain. The text is made available under the Creative Commons License.

Senryū look like haiku but are intended as playful squibs. Indeed, haiku were essentially playful compositions until great depth was added to them by such masters as Bashō, Chiyo-ni, Issa, Buson, Shiki and Santōka.

The texts in *Orang-Utan* range from the lyrical to the contemplative, the questioning to the absurd, and are suitable for readers 10 – 14+.

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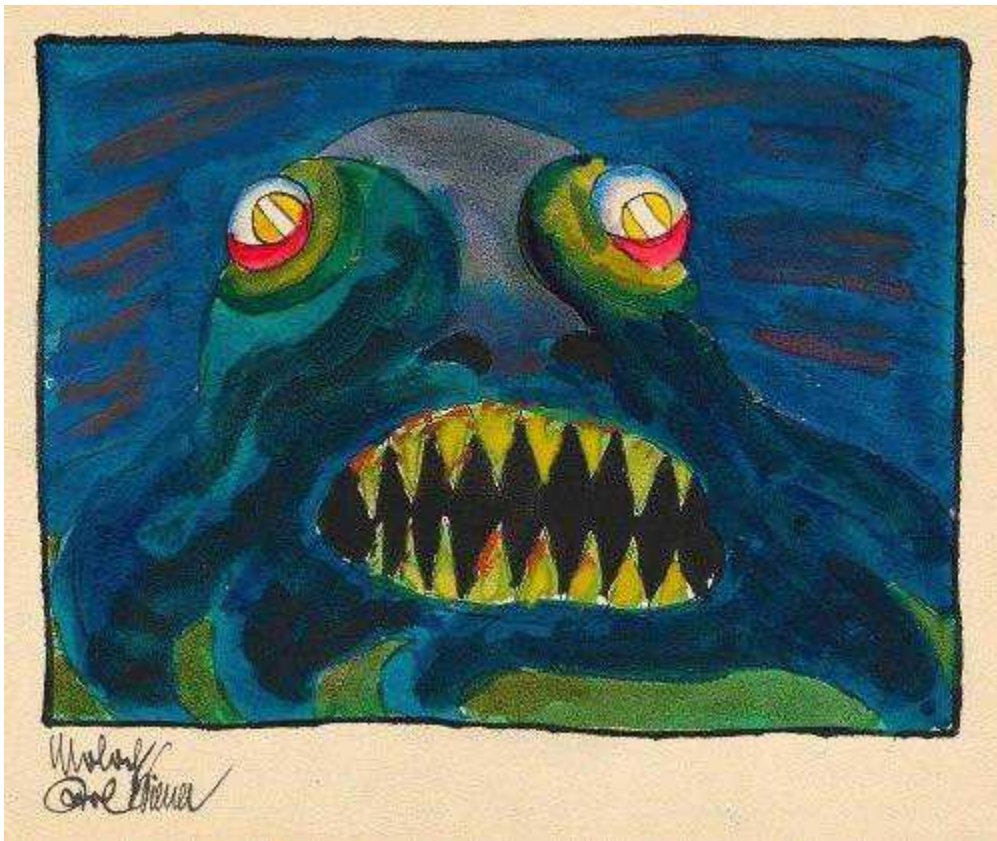
Cover: *Orangoetan* (1914)
Samuel Jessurun de Mesquita (1868 -1944)
Artwork link: <https://artvee.com/dl/orangoetan>



*an seolann siad leo
chuig cuan sábháilte?
aislingí ár n-óige*

do they sail away
to some safe harbour?
dreams of our youth

Image: Henri Martin (An Fhrainc /France)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/henri-martin/a-boy-with-sailboats>



*is iomaí
cruth a bhíonn orthu . . .
púcaí-schmúcaí*

they come
in many shapes and forms . . .
spookie-wookies!

Image: Karl Wiener (An Ostair / Austria)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/104623ab.jpg>



*bhíodh an-ghá aige
le dreas maith codlata . . .
Naomh Iaróm*

he was often in need
of a decent nap . . .
St. Jerome

Image: Jean-Léon Gérôme (An Fhrainc / France)
<https://artvee.com/dl/saint-jerome-7>



*a lachain
ná bígí in bhur suí ansin!
tá doineann air*

ducks
don't just sit there!
a storm is brewing

Image: Alexander Koester (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/701612an.jpg>



*cuimhne iasc órga
cúig shoicind? cúig mhí?
ní cuimhin liom*

the memory span of a goldfish
five seconds? five months?
I forget

Image: Philip de László (An Ungáir & An Bhreatain /Hungary & Britain)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/philip-de-laszlo/the-son-of-the-artist-1917>



*cén fáth a bhfuil tú ag stánadh?
éirigh as . . .
scanróidh tú an ghé*

why are you staring?
stop staring . . .
you will frighten my goose

Image: Nicolae Grigorescu (An Rómáin / *Romania*)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/nicolae-grigorescu/jew-with-geese>



*ár mbuíochas as a bheith
mar atá tú . . .
i d'fhuinneog*

thank you
for being what you are . .
a window

Image: Jan Ciągliński (An Pholainn / *Poland*)
<https://artvee.com/dl/window-of-the-bakhchi-dere-villa-in-yalta-from-the-journey-to-crimea>



*ná bíodh cogadh arís ann!
abair é . . .
abair gach lá é*

no more war!
say it . . .
say it every day

Image: Käthe Kollwitz (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
[https://uploads5.wikiart.org/images/kathe-kollwitz/not_detected_235977.jpg!
Large.jpg](https://uploads5.wikiart.org/images/kathe-kollwitz/not_detected_235977.jpg!Large.jpg)



*grá!
leáfaidh an domhan go léir
i ngrá*

love!
the whole world will dissolve
in love

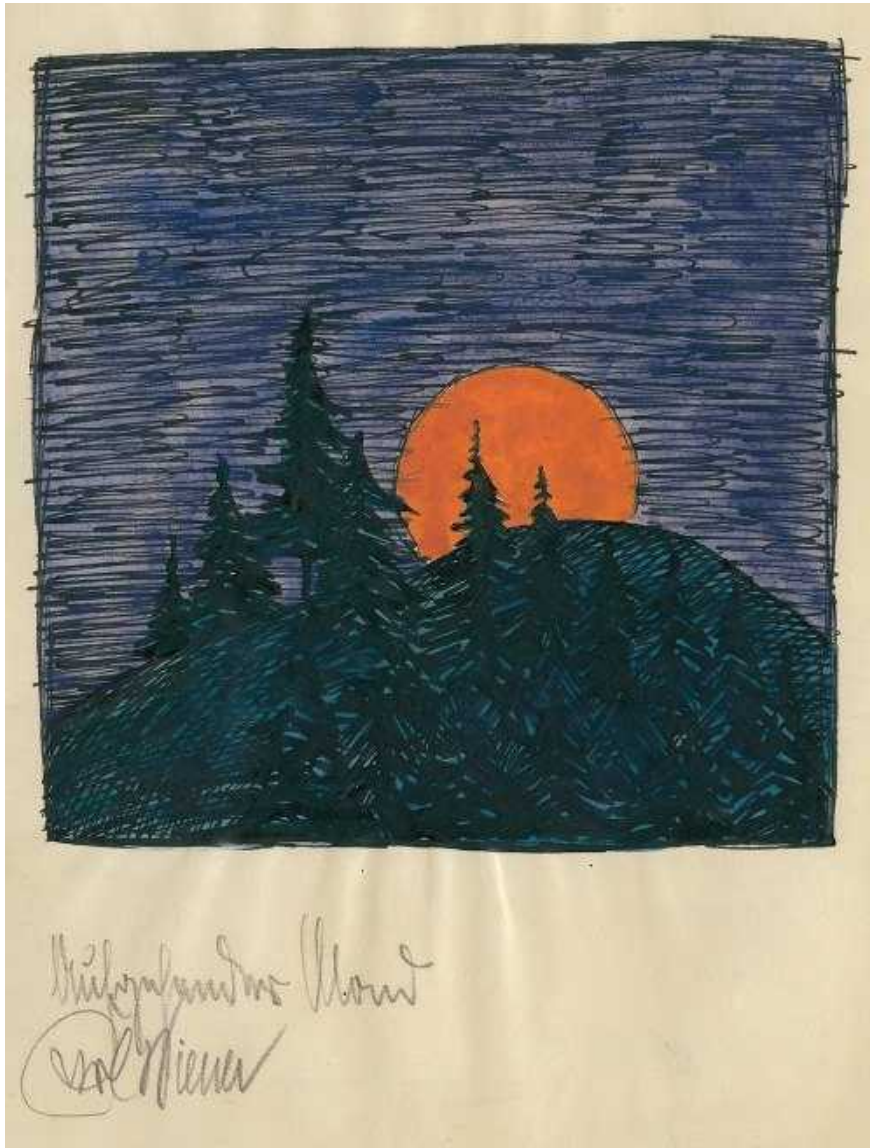
Image: Mikuláš Galanda (An tSlóvaic / *Slovakia*)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/104950ab.jpg>



*imeoidh tú uaim
la éigin, a uainín . . .
ach ní go fóill, ní go fóill*

some day
you'll leave me, little lamb . . .
not yet, not yet

Image: Eugène Joseph Verboeckhoven (An Bheilg/ Belgium)
<https://artvee.com/dl/a-resting-sheep-and-a-lamb>



*i bhfolach arís
laistiar den chnoc is ansa leat?
ré oráiste*

were you hiding
behind your favourite hill again?
orange moon

Image: Karl Wiener (An Ostair / Austria)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/104383ab.jpg>



*an cailín béal dorais . . .
na súile aici ar dhath
plumaí glasa*

the girl next door . . .
her eyes the colour
of green plums

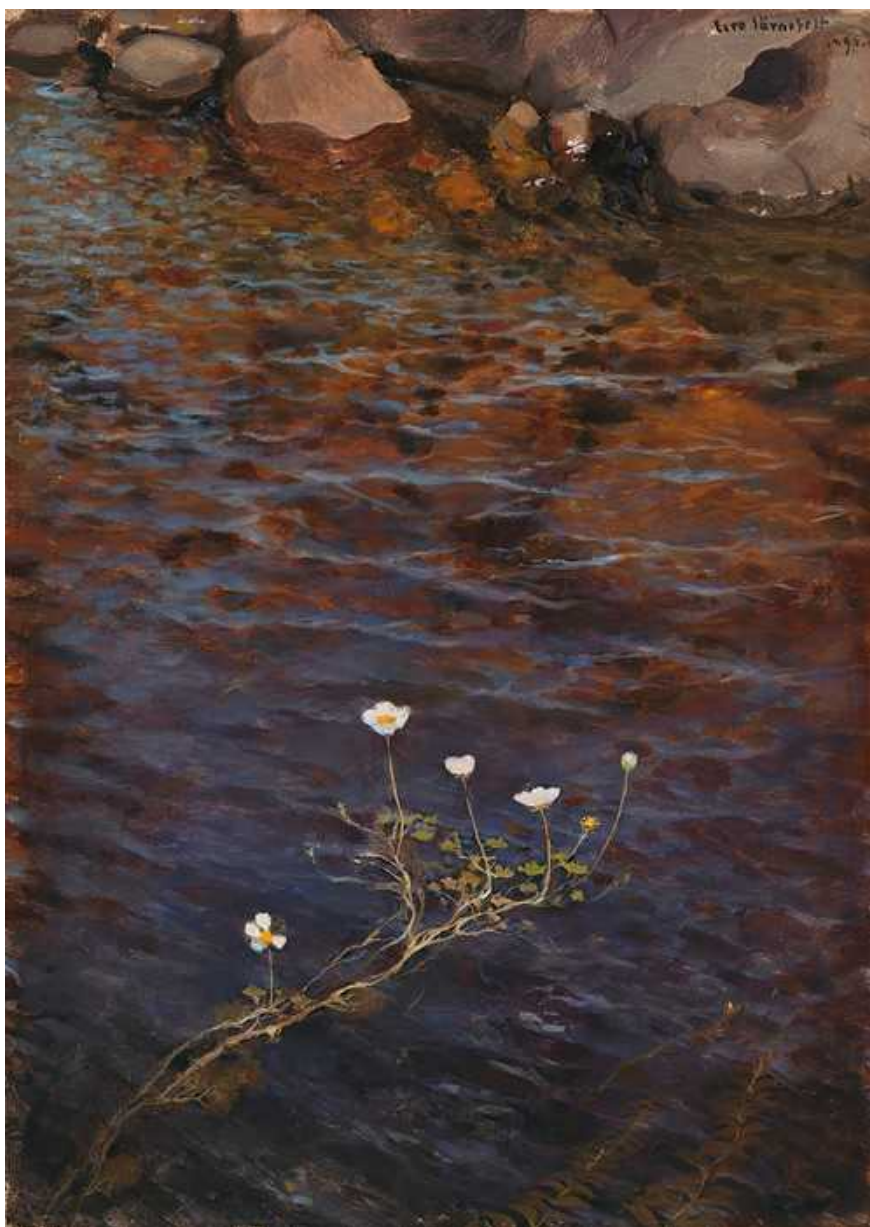
Image: Joseph Decker (An Ghearmáin & SAM / Germany & USA)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/600299sl.jpg>



*tá rud éigin
ag titim amach . . .
tá's ag na rúcaigh é*

something's going on . . .
the rooks know
all about it

Image: Johann Friedrich Naumann (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/704003an.jpg>



*cuma an-uaigneach orthu . . .
cosa préacháin
i linn*

they seem
so terribly alone . . .
crowfeet in a pond

Image: Eero Järnefelt (An Fhionlainn / Finland)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/515971ld.jpg>



*a stail amadáin!
imigh leat is iompaigh d'armúr
ina chéachta*

foolish man!
go and make a plough
of your armour

Image: Edmund Blair Leighton (An Bhreatain/Britain)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/sftb/203452fg.jpg>



*choinníodh sé
an pota fuail faoin bpianó aige . . .
Beethoven*

he kept his chamber pot
under the piano . . .
Beethoven

Image: Franz von Stück (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/224690fg.jpg>



*seans nach gcreideann tú iontu
ach creideann siadsan ionatsa . . .
aingil*

you may not believe in them
but they believe in you . . .
angels

Image: Epifanio Fuentes Vázquez (Meicsiceo / Mexico)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Angels_by_Epifanio_Fuentes_V%C3%A1zquez.jpg



*ní gá ordú a thabhairt dó . . .
níonn an cat
é féin*

without being told
to do so . . .
the cat washes himself

Image: Julie de Graag (An Ollainn / Holland)
<https://artvee.com/dl/zich-wassende-kat>



*a Mhaois! tír ina mbeadh
bainne is mil ina slaoda
do chách?*

Moses! what about a land
of milk and honey
for all?

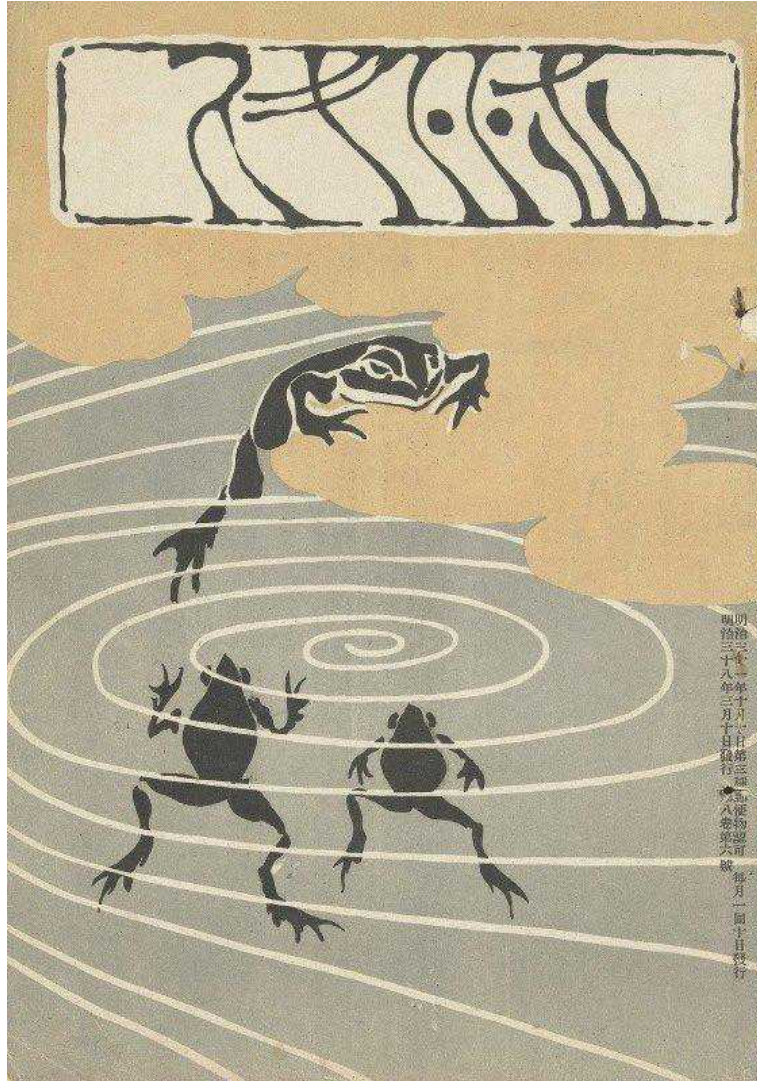
Image: Christian Rohlf (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/308489rg.jpg>



*faolchúinna stiúgtha . . .
ocras ar a gcuid scáthanna
fiú*

hungry wolves . . .
even their shadows
are starving

Image: Harald Sohlberg (An Iorua / Norway)
<https://artvee.com/dl/winter-night-in-the-mountains-study>



*cuilithíní . . .
a bhfoinse á lorg
ag froganna*

*ripples . . .
frogs in search
of their source*

Image: Asai Chū (Japan)
<https://artvee.com/dl/maart-1905-voorkant-van-hototogisu>



*níl a fhios agat cad atá ionam
is úcpic mé:
ulchabhán!*

you don't even know
what I am: I'm an ookpik
an ookpik! an owl!

Image: Ealaín Ionúiteach / Inuit art
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/A_sealskin_Ookpik.jpg



*na Fianna –
ceol na gclog
leo níor bhinn*

the Fianna –
ancient warriors of Ireland –
church bells drove them mad

Image: Ilmari Aalto (An Fhionlainn / Finland)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/101642ab.jpg>



á!
plaic a bhaint as úll . . .
brionglóid na bábóige

ah!
to bite into an apple . . .
a doll's dream

Image: Eugenie Bandell (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://artvee.com/dl/japanese-dolls-with-apples>



*an maith leat súp?
is maith?
knorr laga dia thú!*

do you like soup?
no? no
nor I!

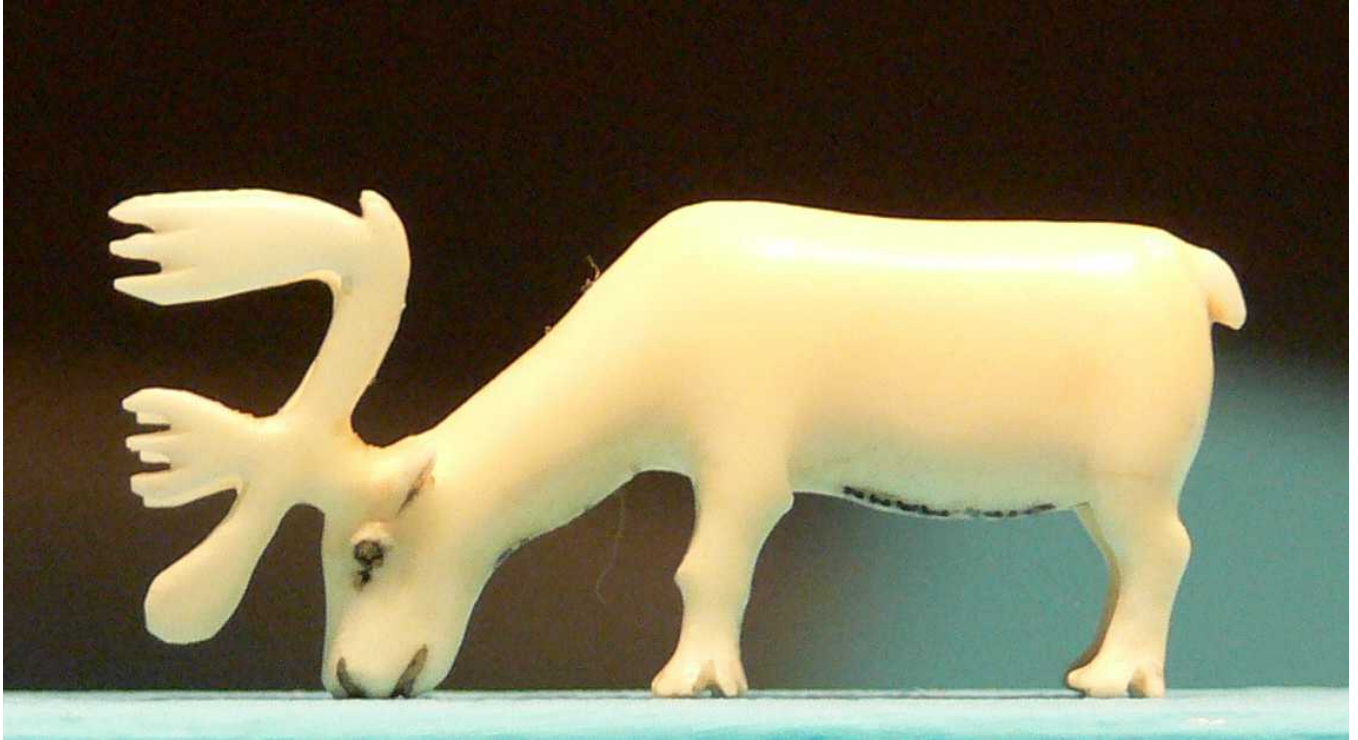
Image: Leonetto Cappiello (Italy)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/11186po.jpg>



*cén fáth a n-imíonn siad?
an bhfillfidh siad go deo?
fáinleoga*

why do they leave?
will they return?
swallows

Image: Eugen von Blaas (An Ostair/ An Iodáil Austria/Italy)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/205321fg.jpg>



*lig dom
led' thoil
ceart go leor?*

just leave me be
OK?
OK?

Image: Ealaín Ionúiteach / Inuit art
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Alaska_Grasendes_Karibu_c1910_Linden-Museum.jpg



*an t-uafás rudaí
ag déanamh scime dhó . . .
cairdinéal*

so many things
on his mind . . .
the cardinal

Image: Charles Edouard Delort (An Fhrainc / France)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/sftb/218731fg.jpg>



*scamallóireacht . . .
in áit an ailgéabair?
más é do thoil é!*

cloud gazing . . .
instead of algebra?
yes, please!

Image: Eero Järnefelt (An Fhionlainn / Finland)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/5159551d.jpg>



*Mugo wa Kibiru, fáidh,
chonaic sé an Nathair Iarainn
ag teacht!*

Mugo wa Kibiru, seer,
he saw the coming
of the Iron Snake!

Image: Klemens Brosch (An Ostair / Austria)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/sftb/602762sl.jpg>



*maidin i nGoa . . .
dúisíonn dreancaidí strae
ar mhadraí strae*

morning in Goa . . .
stray fleas waking up
on stray dogs

Image: Nicolas Toussaint Charlet (France)
<https://artvee.com/dl/head-of-a-dog>



*cat darbh ainm Edgar
ar iarraidh
ón mbliain 1908*

a cat
by the name of Edgar
missing since 1908

Image: Gwen John (Wales)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/gwen-john/the-cat>



*lig dom taisteal leat!
long ag seoladh
trí néalta*

take me on board!
ship sailing
through clouds

Image: Konstantinos Volanakis (An Ghréig / Greece)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/konstantinos-volanakis/ship>



*léi féin lena cuid smaointe
is leis na blátha . . .
cailín na mbláth*

alone with her thoughts
and her flowers . . .
flower seller

Image: Stefan Luchian (An Rómáin / Romania)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/stefan-luchian/florist>



mall
ar nós na scamall . . .
amhráin na sean

movement of clouds
songs of the ancients . . .
slow

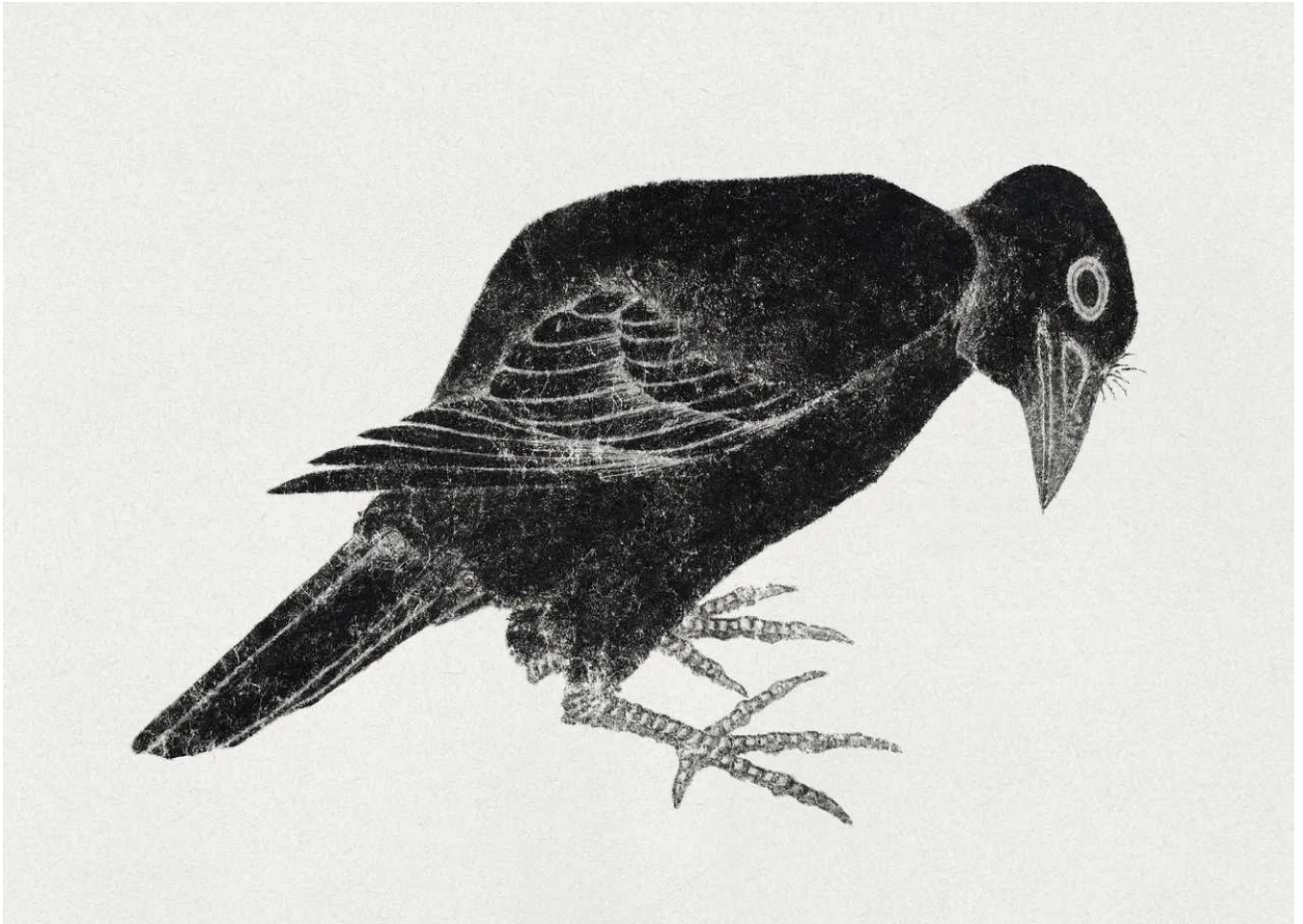
Image: August Malmström (An tSualainn / Sweden)
<https://artvee.com/dl/king-heimer-and-aslog>



*'bhfuil báisteach air?
cá bhfios! ar seisean
níl ionamsa ach raibí*

is it going to rain?
what do I know? he says,
I'm only the rabbi

Image: Isidor Kaufmann (An Ungáir / Hungary)
<https://artvee.com/dl/portrait-of-a-rabbi-with-tallit>



*má thugann sé claonfhéachaint ort
tabhair claonfhéachaint ar ais air –
préachán*

if he looks at you sideways
look sideways back at him –
crow

Image: Katsushika Hokusai (An tSeapáin / Japan)
<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/7660830/image-art-vintage-public-domain>



*tá cuma na holla
ag teacht ar a fhéasóg . . .
an t-aoire maith*

his beard
is turning into fleece . . .
the good shepherd

Image: Tadeusz Makowski (An Pholainn / Poland)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/234472fg.jpg>



*níl sé baileach
chomh maith is a bhíodh . . .
bearbóir ag dul in aois*

not quite the man
he once was . . .
ageing barber

Image: Nikolaos Gyzis (An Ghréig / Greece)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/nikolaos-gyzis/the-barber-1880>



*fásann sé ar chrann
tá a fhios agat . . .
an phiostáis*

they grow on trees
you know . .
pistachios

Image: Hoca Ali Riza (An Tuirc / Turkey)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/hoca-ali-riza/pistachio-trees>



*cad atá
ar an taobh eile den chnoc?
tá tuairim ag an gcamall*

what lies
beyond the next hill?
the camel is guessing

Image: William James Webb (An Bhreatain / Britain)
<https://artvee.com/dl/the-homeward-journey>



*'bhfuil do pharaisiút slán?
ioraí rua! ag caint
ar a n-eireaball*

is your parachute working?
squirrels! always talking
about their tail

Image: Maurice Pillard Verneuil (An Fhrainc / France)
<https://artvee.com/dl/ecureuils>



*rud uaigneach é . . .
an pianó
nach seinntear*

lonely thing . . .
unplayed
piano

Image: José Garnelo (An Spáinn / Spain)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/jose-santiago-garnelo-y-alda/piano>



*caith cleite . . .
ní bheadh a fhios agat
cad a thitfeadh amach*

wear a feather . . .
you never know
what might happen

Image: Franz von Defregger (An Ostair / Austria)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/235038fg.jpg>



rat-a-tat-tat
nach dtagann tuirse riamh air?
mórchnagaire breac

rat-a-tat-tat
does it never get tired?
great spotted woodpecker

Image: Johann Friedrich Naumann (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/704009an.jpg>



*gan aon choinne aige
leis an sneachta . . .
snag breac balbh*

stunned
by so much snow . . .
the magpie has nothing to say

Image: Claude Monet (An Fhrainc / France)
<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/3896191/illustration-image-art-monet>



*is cuma leis
cá bhfuil a thrial . . .
féileacán*

it doesn't care
where it's going . . .
butterfly

Image: Vincent van Gogh (An Ollainn / Holland)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/vincent-van-gogh/poppies-and-butterflies-1890>



*cleitearnach sciathán . . .
dlúthchairde freisin
ní mór dóibh scaradh*

flutter of wings . . .
even the best of friends
must part

Image: Yamamoto Sodō (An tSeapáin / Japan)

<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/7660722/image-art-vintage-golden>



*an nuacht:
an lá inné ag éag
splanc ag dul as*

the news:
yesterday is dying
vanishing spark

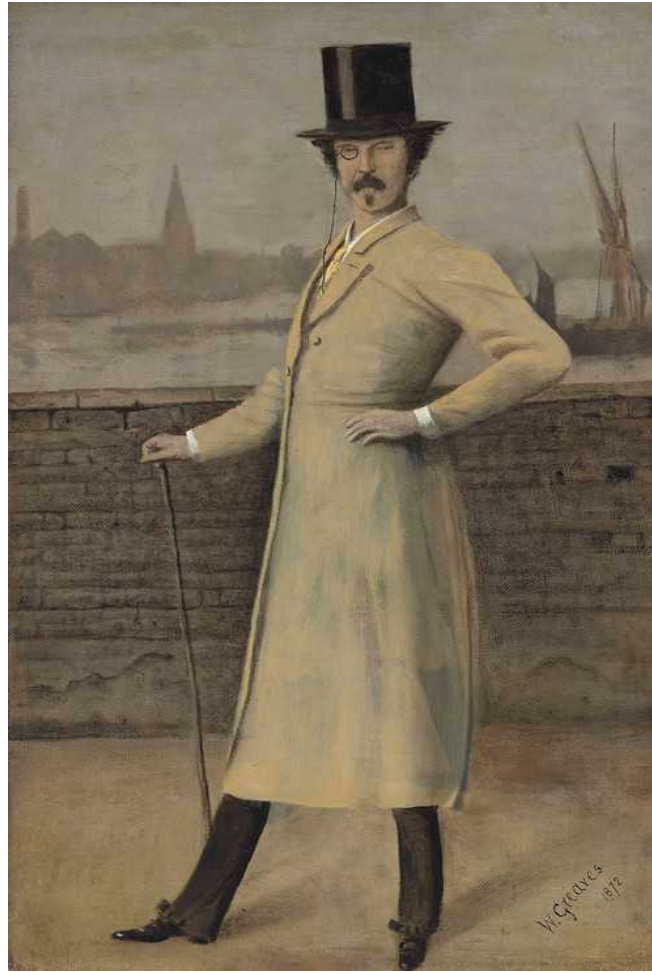
Image: Constantin Artachino (An Rómáin / Romania)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/constantin-artachino/sc-nteia-the-spark-1951>



cara
á lorg . . .
déanfaidh luch an chúis

playmate
wanted . . .
a mouse will do

Image: Henriëtte Ronner-Knip (An Ollainn & An Bheilg / Holland & Belgium
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/701439an.jpg>



*“heileo?
ar lig duine éigin fead?”
arsa James McNeill Whistler*

“hello?
did someone just whistle?”
asks James McNeill Whistler

Image: Walter Greaves (An Bhreatain / Britain)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/217483fg.jpg>



giorria
ag éisteacht leis féin . . .
airdeall

aware of itself
listening to itself . . .
a hare

Image: Hans Hoffman (Germany)
<https://artvee.com/dl/a-hare-in-the-forest>



*Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure
De Turenne-D'aynac –
ainm fada!*

Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure
De Turenne-D'aynac –
long name!

Image: Jacques Louis David (France)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/201431fg.jpg>



*féach thart . . .
cé atá saor?
cé atá i gcarcair?*

look around . . .
who is free?
who is imprisoned?

Image: Lemuel Maynard Wiles (USA)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/704838an.jpg>

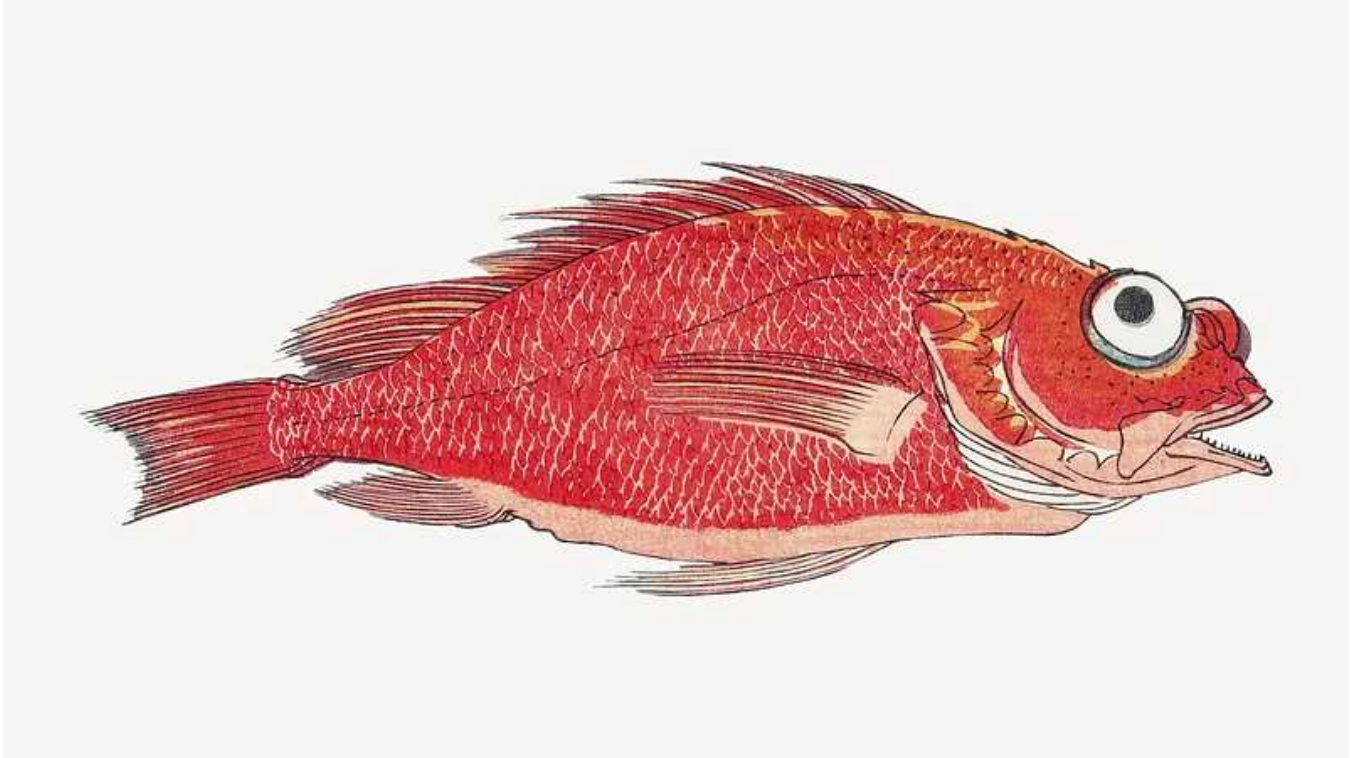


*“bimis inár ndlúthchairde
go deo deo!”
an chéad chara a bhí agam*

“let’s be besties
always! always!”
my first friend

Image: Edouard Manet (France)

<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/2962698/free-illustration-image-painting-food-pears>



*imigh leat
nó anraith searbh a bheidh ionat!
sclamhaire dearg*

go away
or you'll end up as sour soup!
red snapper

Image: Utagawa Hiroshige (Japan)
<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/7648807/png-sticker-art>



*cén ceol
lena bhfuil sé ag éisteacht?
ochtapas ag damhsa*

what music
is it listening to?
dancing octopus

Image: Victor Hugo (France)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/victor-hugo/octopus-with-the-initials-v-h-1866>

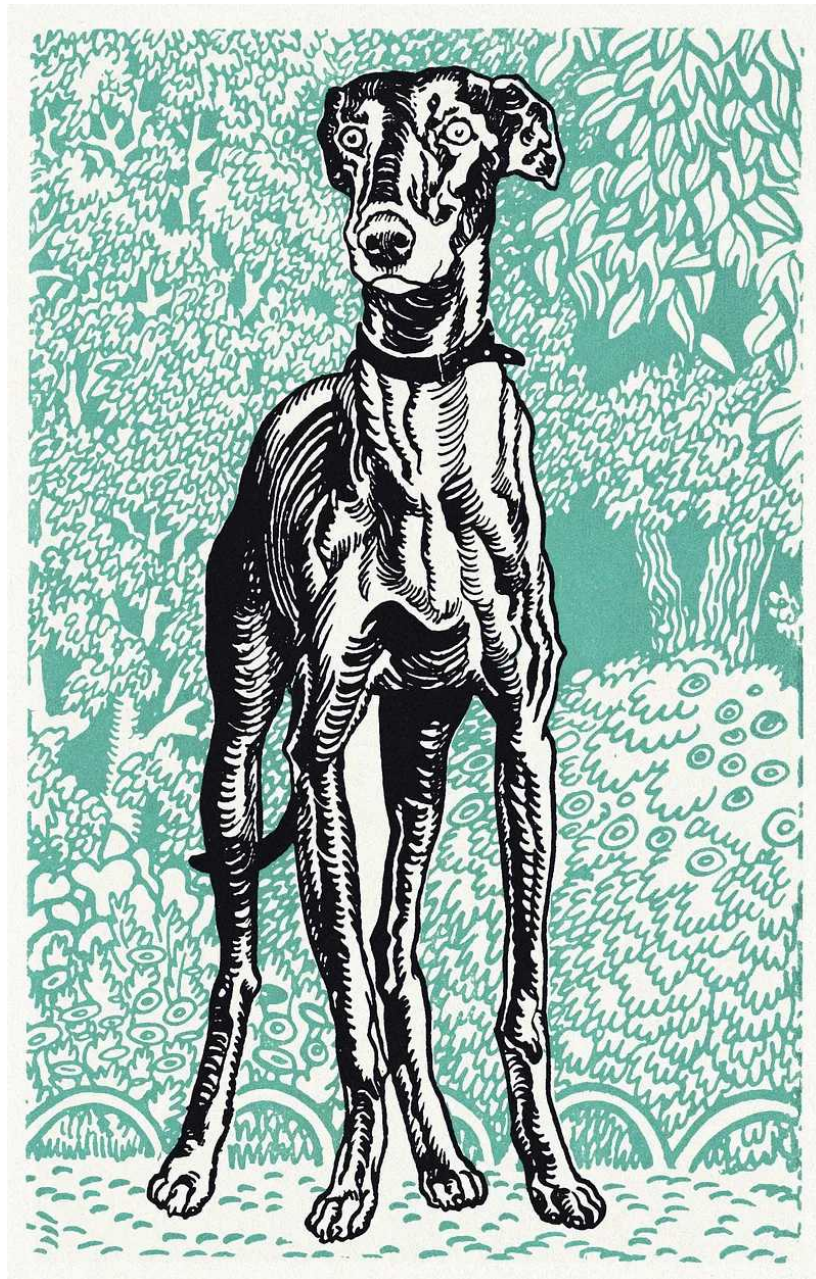


*arsa an frog leis féin –
cad tá cearr le daoine?
cén fáth nach bpreabann siad?*

the frog thinks –
what's wrong with people?
why don't they hop?

Image: Getsuju (Jaan)

<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/7660699/image-art-vintage-public-domain>



*ba thapúla uair é
ná gaoth an Mhárta . . .
cú*

he once outraced
the March wind . . .
greyhound

Image: Moriz Jung (Austria)
<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/2940119>



Mousehole
i gCorn na Breataine –
‘Muzal’ a deirtear!

Mousehole –
a town in Cornwall
pronounced ‘Muzzle’!

Image: Stanhope Forbes (Ireland & Britain)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stanhope_Forbes_-_The_Keigwin_Arms,_Mousehole.jpg



éisc
is aislingigh iad . . .
iad go léir léir

fish
daydreamers . . .
the whole lot of them

Image: Gerrit Willem Dijsselhof (An Ollainn / *Holland*)
<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/3077154/free-illustration-image-oil-painting-vintage-fish>



*piscíní?
cuma shoineanta orthu . . .
ná lig dóibh bob a bhualadh ort*

kittens?
they might look innocent . . .
don't be fooled

Image: Sophie Sperlich (An Ghearmáin / Germany)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/701508an.jpg>



*an ceol a dhéanann bonn
ag titim ar bhonn . . .
ceoltóirí sráide*

the music of a coin
falling on a coin . . .
buskers

Image: Honoré Daumier (France)
[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Daumier_-_Chanteurs_ambulants_\(%27Buskers%27\),_1856-1862.jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Daumier_-_Chanteurs_ambulants_(%27Buskers%27),_1856-1862.jpg)



*seandalbha
ag iarraidh labhairt linn . . .
cé a thuigeann iad?*

old statues
trying to speak to us . . .
who knows what they're saying?

Image: Giulio Aristide Sartorio (Italy)
<https://artvee.com/dl/ruins-tiahuanaco>

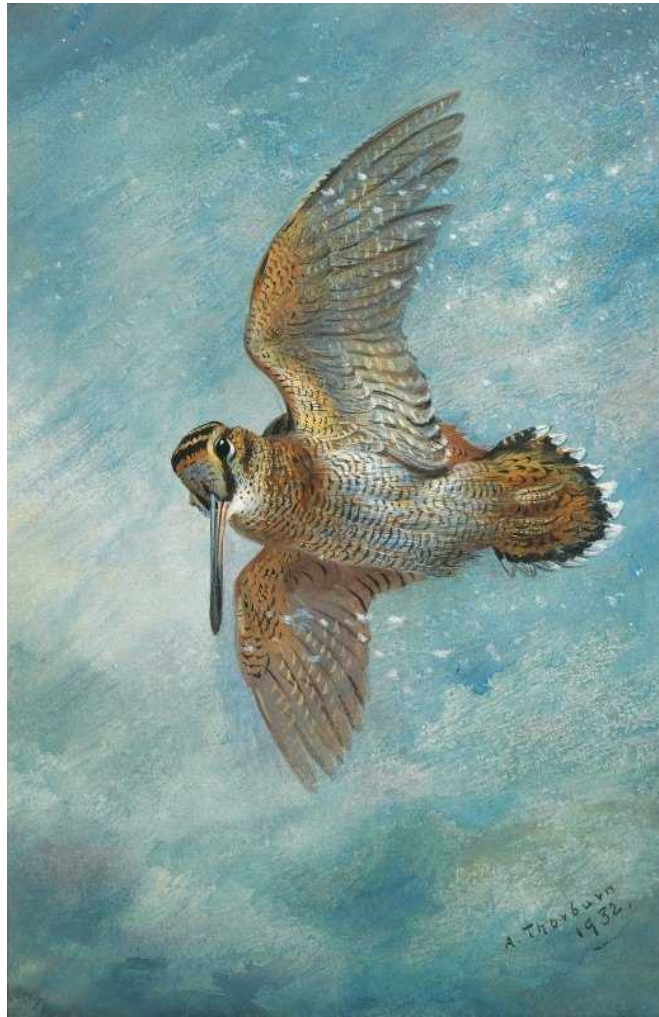


*cruálacht gach áit . . .
an ghealach féin
ag teitheadh chun na hÉigipte*

cruelty everywhere . . .
look! even the moon
is hastening to Egypt

Image: Hocine Ziani (Algeria)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_Fuite_en_Egypte,_par_Ziani,_huile_sur_toile,_2015.jpg



*a chreabhair
coinnigh do ghob dúnta . . .
plúchadh sneachta!*

woodcock
keep your beak shut . . .
it's a blizzard!

Image: Archibald Thorburn (Scotland)
<https://artvee.com/dl/caught-in-a-blizzard-woodcock>



*ceannaigh
d'airnéis Mháisiúnach anois
fad is atá sí i stoc!*

while stocks last . . .
get your Masonic regalia
now!

Raja Ravi Varma (An India / India)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:1905_paintings_by_Raja_Ravi_Varma#/media/File:Raja_Ravi_Varma,_Lord_Ampthill_\(1905\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:1905_paintings_by_Raja_Ravi_Varma#/media/File:Raja_Ravi_Varma,_Lord_Ampthill_(1905).jpg)



*gan soilse
á dtreorú . . .
aimsíonn tonnta an trá*

no lights
to guide them . . .
yet waves find a shore

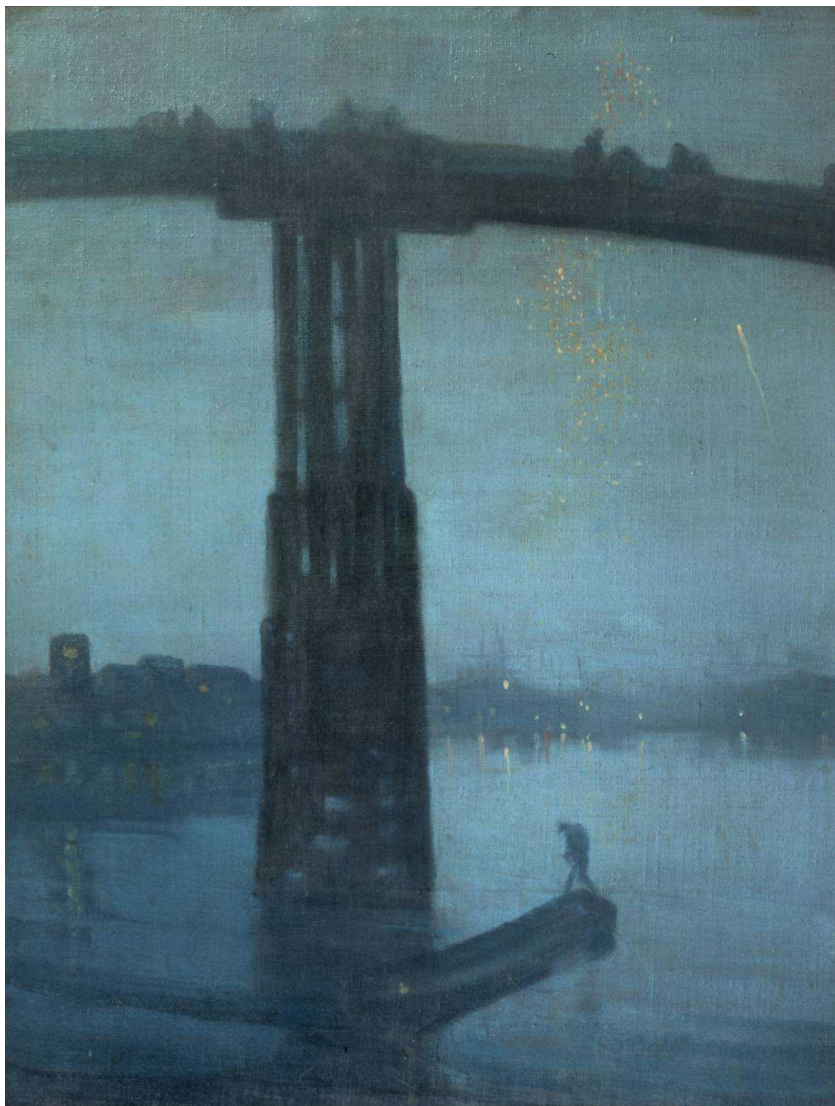
Image: Eugène Jansson (Sweden)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/eugene-jansson/soder-malarstrand-1896#>



*mharaigh Earcail leon . . .
chuirfí i bpríosún
inniu é*

Hercules killed a lion . . .
he'd be arrested for it
today

Image: Paul Goesch (Germany)
<https://artvee.com/dl/herkules-und-der-nemeische-lowe/>



duine éigin
(ní fios cé hé)
ag trasnú Dhroichead Battersea

somebody
(nobody knows who)
crossing Battersea Bridge

Image: James Abbott McNeill Whistler (USA /SAM)

<https://uploads6.wikiart.org/00187/images/james-mcneill-whistler/n01959-10.jpg>



*ceolfhoireann dhofheicthe
á stiúradh aige –
giobún*

conducting
an invisible orchestra –
the gibbon

Image: Hashimoto Kansetsu (Japan)

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f6/HashimotoKansetsu-Gibbons.png/1367px-HashimotoKansetsu-Gibbons.png?20200911142649>



*líon na scáthanna
gan áireamh a ghabh tríd . . .
Páras*

countless shadows
have passed through . . .
Paris

Image: Konstantin Korovin (Russia)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/konstantin-korovin/after-the-rain-paris-1897>



*saoirse na sairdíní
sula gcuirtear iad go léir
i gcannaí*

the freedom
of sardines
before they're all canned

Image: Knud Baade (Norway)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Moonlight_in_paintings#/media/File:'Moonlight'_by_Knud_Baade,_1869,_Bergen_Kunstmuseum.JPG



*cad tá ar eolas aige
nach eol dúinne?
ligeann an préachán scréach*

he knows something
that we don't. . .
screaming crow

Image: Jan Mankes (Holland)

<https://uploads5.wikiart.org/00320/images/jan-mankes/schreeuwende-kraai-rp-p-1921-1935.jpg!HalfHD.jpg>



*lá ceo
cuma thréigthe
ar Nua-Eabhrac*

foggy day
New York
looks deserted

Image: Samin Sammoun (Lebanon & Canada)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_New_York_City#/media/File:Foggy_Day_New_York_by_Samir_Sammoun.jpg



*a lár bhán . . .
tabhair leat sinn
ar scamall bán*

white mare . . .
take us with you
on a white cloud

Image: Winslow Homer (USA)
<https://artvee.com/dl/white-mare/>



*ní fhaca
an t-iasc ag teacht é . . .
cruidín*

the fish
never saw him coming . . .
kingfisher

Image: Ohara Koson (Japan)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/700946an.jpg>



*lá eile
soufflé eile . . .
saol an chócaire*

another day
another soufflé . . .
the life of a cook

Image: Robert Falk (Russia)
<https://arthive.net/res/media/img/oy1200/work/147/7529891@2x.jpg>



titeann an oíche
ar an ngliomadóir . . .
is ar na gliomaigh

night falls
on the lobster fisher . . .
and on the lobsters

Image: Paul Henry (Éire / Ireland)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/paul-henry/the-lobster-fisher-1913>



*cad as ar tháinig siad?
an Spáinn? an Iodáil?
líomóidí i mbabhla*

where did they come from?
Spain? Italy?
lemons in a bowl

Image: Helene Schjerfbeck (Finland)
<https://artvee.com/dl/lemons-in-a-bowl/>



luch bhán
á lorg aige ar feadh a shaoil . . .
cat bán

all its life
in search of a white mouse . . .
white cat

Image: John Frederick Herring Snr (Britain)
<https://artvee.com/dl/a-white-cat>



*cailleadh iad
de bharr píosa éadaigh –
bratach*

they died
all for a piece of cloth –
a flag

Image: John Lavery (Northern Ireland)
<https://artvee.com/dl/the-cemetery-etaples-1919-2>



*cabaireacht bhialainne . . .
gliomach beo á chur
in uisce fiuchaidh*

restaurant chatter . . .
a live lobster placed
in boiling water

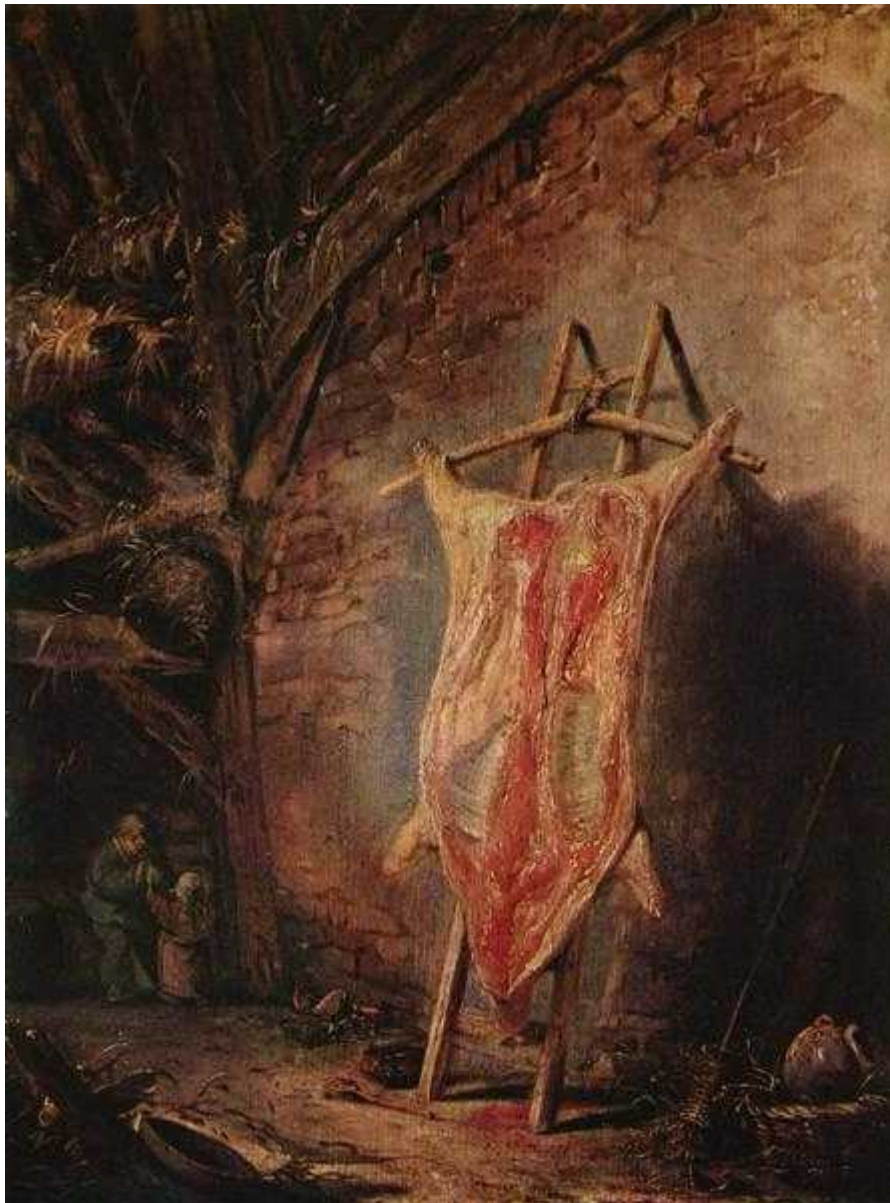
Image: William Orpen (Ireland)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/william-orpen/le-chef-de-l-hotel-chatham-paris-1921>



in Goa
ciallaíonn tu magel moga cho
‘tá grá agam duit!’

in Goa
‘tu magel moga cho’
means, ‘I love you!’

Image: Gabriel von Max (Austria)
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/703560an.jpg>



*muc . . .
ar iarraidh ón mbliain
1645*

pig . . .
missing since
1645

Image: Isaac van Ostade (Holland)
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/isaac-van-ostade/the-cut-pig>



*d'fhéadfaidís teacht ina gcuileoga
cá bhfios . . .
eachtardhomhandaigh*

they could come disguised as flies
you never know . . .
extraterrestrials

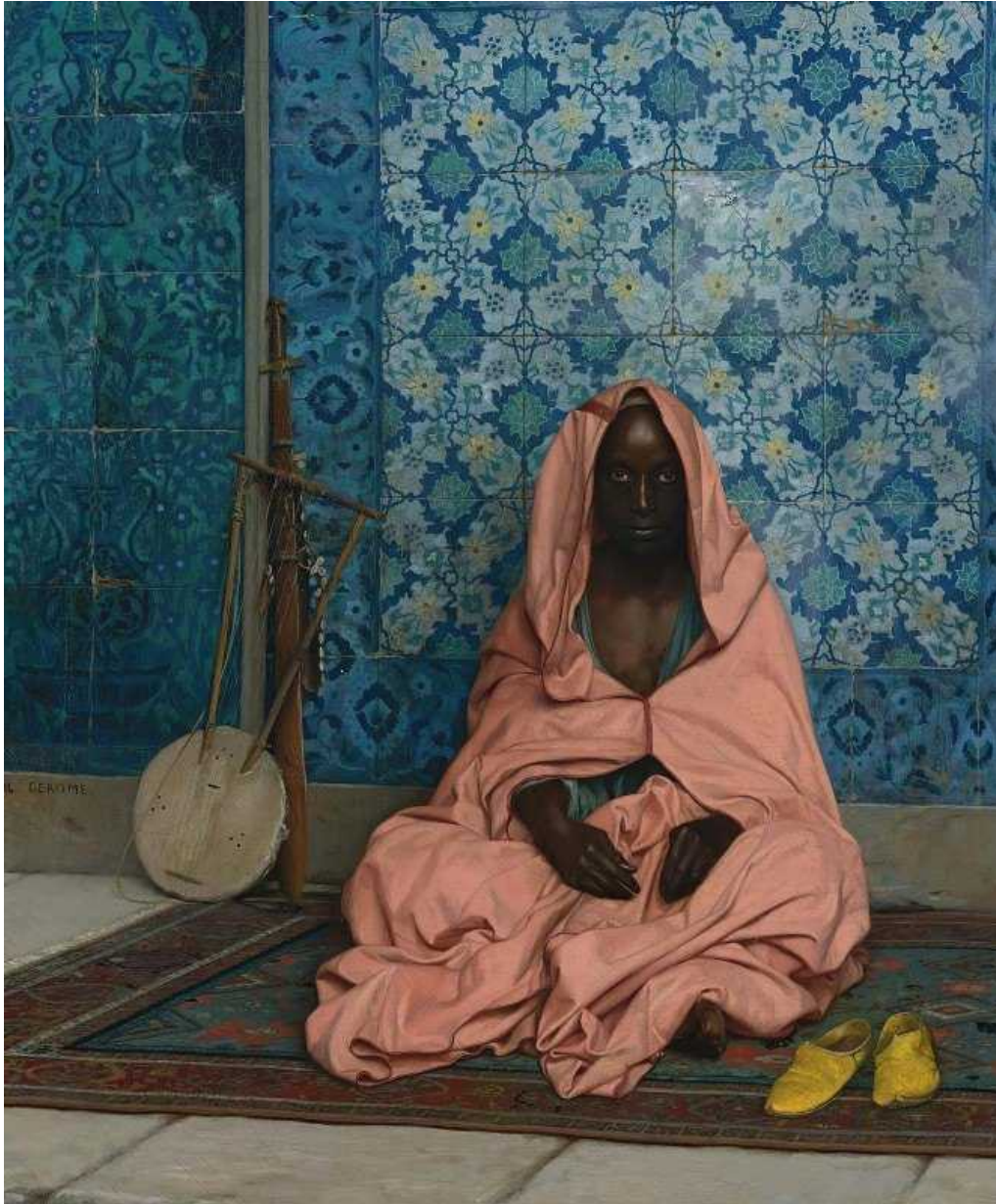
Image: Gustave Van de Woestyne (Belgium)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azuur,_Gustave_Van_de_Woestyne,_1928,_Koninklijk_Museum_voor_Schone_Kunsten_Antwerpen.jpg



is tusa iad
is mise . . .
teifigh

they are you
they are me . . .
refugees

Image: Cyprián Majerník (Slovakia)
<https://artvee.com/dl/refugees-4>



*“ag feitheamh le míle bliain atáim
leis an dán seo!”
file gliondrach*

“a thousand years
I’ve been waiting for this poem!”
a poet’s joy

Image: Jean-Léon Gérôme (France)
<https://artvee.com/dl/le-barde-noir>

Interlude: Haiku for a Rainy Day, Haiku by Issa

Do you like rain? For some it's an annoyance. For others, it's a blessed gift, or a dire necessity. Without rain, there would be no rice harvest in Japan, for instance, where farmers call rain *tensui*, 'water of Heaven'.

In Ireland, we get buckets of rain, coming in from the Atlantic and, so, in the senior language, Irish, we have lots of words for rain: *Báisteach* (or *Báisleach*), often heavy rain; *Bailc*, a downpour; *Brádarnach*, a slight fall; *Braoille*, a heavy shower; the phrase *an braon anuas* is 'rain coming in through the roof'; the phrase *lá breac-fhliuch* means 'a day with occasional showers'; *Clagarnach*, the sound of heavy rain; *Claimhreach gabhair* (literally goat's hair) describes ragged clouds that are bringing rain; *Ceathach* or *caothach*, an adjective meaning showery; *Cith* is a shower and so is *múr* or *smúr*; *Ceathán* a light shower; *Frais-chioth* is another word for a light shower; *Gailbh*, a light shower with wind; *Scrabha*, a passing shower; *Toinn-chith*, a violent shower.

If you see *Corrghogailt* when raking the fire at night – ghostly blue and green figures – you can expect rain the following day; *Draoghnán*, a drizzle; *Raiste*, furious rain, driven by the wind; *Siabh-fhearthainn*, small rain with wind; *Fuarlach báistí*, torrential rain; *Lascadh báistí*, slashing rain

. . . and so on. Some of these words are becoming archaic and seldom used. No doubt, some will become obsolete.

There used to be innumerable sayings about rain, many of them no longer heard in our era of increasing monoculture. If your shadow appears bigger than usual, a sign of rain! When the cat sits with her back to the fire, a sign of rain – or when she washes behind her ears! If the animals go to sleep early, you can bet that rain is on the way. If there's mist on the mirror, if the blackbird changes its song, if a dog bites the grass . . . when a lone curlew cries . . . the list goes on and on. One could write a book about it. And that's exactly what I did. It's called *Irish Weather Wisdom: Signs of Rain* (Appletree Press, 2000).

~

The Japanese haiku master Kobayashi Issa (1763 -1828) – like most haiku poets – welcomed rain. Why not? What would be the point of not welcoming rain . . . or snow, or wind, or sunshine?

All types of weather are welcomed by a haiku master, all kinds of events become part of her/his haiku life. That's the way it is. The way of haiku. The way of grateful acceptance.

Issa often sees the humour in a situation. In the year 1814 he had a lame chicken hobbling around the place. The chicken decides to go for a stroll but as soon as it puts its head outside the door, it is greeted by an icy, wintry shower, poor thing. This is one of the rain haiku found below, humour mixed with compassion.

OK, maybe Issa shows his annoyance with rain now and again but his annoyance feeds into his haiku diary, the record of his own life which is simply a witnessing of the world and of himself.

Of course, he lived before the Industrial Revolution, before the hard rain of climate change would turn everything upside down. Maybe we'll get it right again.

préacháinín
nach cliste mar a sciorr sé . . .
báisteach earraigh

baby crow
how cleverly he has just slipped . . .
Spring rain

báisteach earraigh
an luch is mé féin
ar ár suaimhneas

soft rain . . .
me and the mouse
taking it nice and easy

fearthainn . . .
calóga sneachta tríthi
anois is arís

it's not all rain . . .
here and there
snowflakes flutter

plup-plap
an ghealach i mbraonta báistí . . .
géanna fiáine ag imeacht

drip-drip
moon-filled raindrops . . .
wild geese departing



Issa would have loved this beautiful depiction of an egret in rain by his fellow-countryman Ohara Koson (1877-1945). Let us try to compose an Issa-like haiku, in response to Koson's image:

*díreach anuas a thagann sí
féachann an éigrit ar chlé:
dianfhearhainn*

straight down it comes
and the egret looks to the left . . .
hard rain

Image: Egret in Rain, Ohara Koson
<https://artvee.com/dl/egret-in-rain>

Haiku is not some fly stuck forever in amber, a changeless thing. It can incorporate a limitless amount of references, such as Bob Dylan's 'hard rain' above.

And haiku should come as naturally as rain. If you get into the haiku habit, haiku can be composed spontaneously.

Back now to Issa's rain haiku:

garsún óg
coca beag féir ar a dhroim . . .
báisteach shamhraidh

a little boy
a bundle of hay on his back . . .
summer rain

scairteann scréachán . . .
locháin ar an mbóithrín
ag trá

a shrike calls out . . .
rain puddles along the boreen
drying up

tá an colúr sléibhe
ag gearán arís . . .
báisteach gheimhridh

he's complaining again . . .
mountain pigeon
in winter rain

meirg ar laiste an dorais
dearg dorcha . . .
báisteach gheimhridh

rust on the door latch
a deep red . . .
winter rain

báisteach gheimhridh . . .
an sicín bacach
ag siúl ar éigean

winter rain . . .
the bockety chicken
dragging its leg

scamaill bholgtha . . .
is dubh iad na sléibhte
faoin mbáisteach

billowing clouds . . .
a mountain in rain
black as ink

aer fionnuar . . .
gearrann tintreach
tríd an mbáisteach

cool air . . .
lightning slices
through a shower of rain

an féar báite ag an mbáisteach
gealach sa ghiúis . . .
géanna ag imeacht

rain has drenched the grass
the moon sits in the pine . . .
wild geese leaving

Rain can be a dramatic event, as we see in this painting by John Constable:

Image: John Constable

<https://uploads0.wikiart.org/images/john-constable/seascape-study-with-rain-cloud-1.jpg!Large.jpg>



Great painters such as Constable, and great haijin (haiku masters) such as Issa, awaken us to the drama of rain.

It's such a tragedy! Many people fall asleep as soon as art or poetry is mentioned: one of the purposes of the arts – especially haiku – is to keep us awake to the gifts of life. And rain is one of them. I have heard of rich Arabs flying to Mumbai to witness the great downpour known as the monsoon.

Give yourself a treat! Listen to the choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo singing *Rain, Rain, Beautiful Rain*.

*ligeann grág as
is léimeann san fhéar fliuch . . .
leipreachán an chlaí **

he croaks
then leaps out of his skin . . .
leprechaun of the ditch *

* frog

*fágann an ghaoth
muinchille amháin díom fuar . . .
báisteach fhómhair*

one sleeve
chilled by the wind . . .
autumn rain

*a ghob ar oscailt
ag feitheamh lena mháthair
gearrcach faoin mbáisteach fhómhair*

its beak open
waiting for mother . . .
a nestling in autumn rain

é lán d'imní
trí na braonta fearthainne . . .
féileacán earraigh

anxiously flitting
among raindrops . . .
Spring butterfly

leath i bhfolach
faoi chith fearthainne . . .
bláthanna silíní

shower of rain . . .
cherry blossoms
barely visible

cuireann báisteach um thráthnóna
ag canadh é . . .
dreoilín

evening shower . . .
he bursts into song
little wren

fear bréige
ag breathnú orm . . .
fearthainn fhuar

a scarecrow
looking at me . . .
icy rain

tar isteach
fan liomsa, a sheilide . . .
báisteach gheimhridh tosaithe

come inside
live with me, wee snail . . .
winter rain begins

Issa is renowned for his love of little creatures such as insects and fleas which many of us ignore or shy away from.

OK, here we go again: I'll compose a spontaneous haiku now in that same spirit of Issa, this time in response to an artist from my own part of the world, Norman Garstin, born in Co. Limerick:



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Norman_Garstin_-_It_Raineth_Every_Day_1889.jpg

*chualadar an bháisteach ag teacht –
seangáin is feithidí
i bhfolach*

they heard the rain coming –
ants and insects
in hiding

Try writing spontaneous haiku of your own in response to artwork. Once you've got it down, you can polish it whenever you feel like it. Look at your haiku. Maybe the lines are in the wrong order? Maybe it could be tightened a bit (without choking it).

You can follow the 5-7-5 syllable pattern (17 syllables) or else a haiku of 12 or so syllables. Here's a book that might be helpful:

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Fluttering-their-way-into-my-head-Gabriel-Rosenstock/9781782010883?ref=grid-view&qid=1669998385765&sr=1-1>

A few more rain haiku from Issa:

*báisteach earraigh –
vác-vác na lachan
nár itheadh fós*

spring rain –
quack-quack!
uneaten ducks . . .

*teastaíonn ón sicín bacach
bualadh amach . . . hoips!
bailc gheimhridh*

the bockety chicken
decides to go out . . . oops!
sudden winter shower

*báisteach earraigh
ar dhuilleog bhambú . . .
á lí ag luch*

little pool of Spring rain
on a bamboo leaf . . .
a mouse licks it

i lár na báistí fuaire
dall óg
ag lorg déirce

in the middle
of a ceaseless winter downpour . . .
a young blind beggar

plap!
titeann braon báistí . . .
cuimlíonn buaf a ceann

plop!
a raindrop falls . . .
the toad rubs his head

I'll write one more haiku inspired by Ohara Koson and the sensitive spirit of Issa: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/ohara-koson/snipe-in-rain>



*néalta dubha . . .
diríonn an naoscach
ar fhoínse na báistí*

dark clouds . . .
the snipe points
to the rain's source

If you enjoyed some of Issa inspired rain haiku, you will surely enjoy his snow haiku as well:

<https://onslaughtpress.com/product/snow/>



Iarfhocal / Afterword

Why is this book called *Orang-Utan*? For no other reason than that I like the face of the orang-utan as depicted by Dutch artist Samuel Jessurun de Mesquita.

The animal is quietly minding his own business, grooming himself, and looks friendlier than a lot of people I know. Orang-utan is a Malay word: *orang* means 'a person' and *hutan* means 'a forest'.

One of the countries associated with the orang-utan is Borneo. I was a bit wild as a boy and my mother called me 'The Wild Man from Borneo'. Was I pleased with the name? Yes.

Believe it or not, some haiku masters in Japan say that to write haiku one must be a little wild, a little crazy. Many of them were eccentric. Poets such as Ryokan didn't care about society and its rules. Ryokan wanted what is called in Zen-Buddhism, 'the beginner's mind' and as far as he was concerned, most adults had lost that. He preferred the company of children, and *found* himself (so to speak!), or rediscovered his 'original mind', when playing hide-and-seek with them.

A modern Zen master, Shunryu Suzuki, tells us:

"If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few . . ."

What has this got to do with haiku? Everything! And not just haiku. All the arts benefit greatly from the beginner's mind. Suzuki again:

"This is also the real secret of the arts: always be a beginner . . ."

~

Traditional haiku dealt with keen observations and little adventures over the course of five seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and New Year. They were and still are mainly nature-centred. Modern haiku (gendai haiku) can deal with any subject. The book you are reading now, *Orang-Utan*, has been influenced by classic haiku and gendai haiku alike.

~

Who is our cover artist, Samuel Jessurun de Mesquita? I had never heard of him before coming across his wonderful orang-utan. He was Jewish-Dutch of Portuguese descent. I was shocked to discover that he was one of the millions who perished during the Holocaust. A Sephardic Jew, he was an old man, his health failing, when the Nazis arrived on the morning of the 1st February, 1944, to pack him off to Auschwitz. He and his wife were gassed there. The horror is inconceivable.

Their son, Jaap, was sent to another concentration camp where he, too, was put to death.

Maybe we should step down and put orang-utans in charge of the show. What say you? Actually, a novel by the delightfully named Thomas Love Peacock, *Melincourt* (1817), features Sir Oran Haut Ton, an orang-utan who becomes a candidate for the British Parliament!

~

The Dutch seem to be particularly gifted as draughtsmen and de Mesquita taught some of the best of them, including M. C. Escher, who said in an interview that he visited his beloved master during the hungry winter of 1944:

I wanted to bring them something, apples . . . I entered their house. The windows on the first floor were broken. The neighbours said: "Did you not hear? The de Mesquitas have been taken away."

~

A few of my children's books (which I wrote in Irish) were illustrated by multi-talented Dutchmen who had come to live in Ireland, Piet Sluis (1929 -2008) and Gerrit van Gelderen (1926 -1994).

https://www.litriocht.com/?term=&s=Piet+Sluis&post_type=product&taxonomy=product_cat

A third Dutchman, Leo Bosch, was a naïve artist and one of the funniest men I ever came across. He often had me in stitches, even before he opened his mouth. He was such a clown! I was terribly saddened to see that a leading Irish auctioneer failed to get a higher bid than €40.00 for a work of Leo's called *Churchill and de Gaulle*.

I remember Leo showing me a copy he had made of one of van Gogh's many paintings of sunflowers. 'Better than van Gogh, don't you think?' he said. He had

stopped laughing and I realized that he was, in fact, half-serious!



Samuel Jessurun de Mesquita, in happier times.

Samuel's pet name was Sampie. The photo was taken by his brother Joseph.

(Wikimedia Commons)

Reviews:

"Gabriel Rosenstock is one of the most original, untypical, and inventive writers/thinkers/poets in the world. Within the haiku fraternity, he is unique in the eyes of this reviewer."

- World Haiku Review

Further Reading:

Fluttering their way into my head

an exploration of haiku for young people

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Fluttering-their-way-into-my-head-Gabriel-Rosenstock/9781782010883?ref=grid-view&qid=1670850777356&sr=1-1>

Ducks in Search of the Moon

<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/items/show/1395>

Tea wi the Abbot

Bilingual selection of haiku by John McDonald,

in Scots and Irish

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Tea-wi-the-Abbot-John-McDonald-Gabriel-Rosenstock-Mathew-Staunton/9780993421754>

Snow: the snow haiku of Issa

<https://onslaughtpress.com/product/snow/>

A Sweater for the Tayfel:

Bilingual haiku in response to artwork by Issacher Ber Rybek (Ukraine)

(Buttonhook Press, 2022)

<https://ojalart.com/wp-content/uploads/Rosenstock.6-x-9-inch-15.24-x-22.86-cm.pdf>

Free Poems for Children

<https://freekidsbooks.org/the-confessions-of-henry-hooter-the-third-fun-poems-for-kids/>

Haiku (mainly) for Young Adults

Sioc Maidine / Morning Frost

Bilingual (Irish-English) selection of the haiku of Jack Kerouac:

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Sioc-Maidine-Morning-Frost-Jack-Kerouac/9781851320837?ref=grid-view&qid=1669999936754&sr=1-1>

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmj54hpqMyo&t=239s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZqYJuALx0&t=84s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHweFWNfYM8&t=85s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45kLs3EeDJU&t=27s>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaJUFg1vX_4&t=77s

About the Author

Gabriel Rosenstock in Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, on Thursday, 17 November, 2022 where he adjudicated Duais Bashō and presented awards to prize winners.

Duais Bashō (The Bashō Prize) is a joint venture between IMRAM, the Irish-language literature festival, and Poetry Ireland / Éigse Éireann, the national poetry organisation. This annual competition is open to haiku in Irish or English from schoolchildren on the island of Ireland.



(Photo: Jim Berkeley)



a chríoch?
ná lig dóibh bob a bhualadh ort
níl a leithéid de rud ann

the end?
don't let them fool you
there's no such thing!

Image: John Rea Neill
<https://mdl.artvee.com/ft/909866il.jpg>

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