



HK

Issue 1.2  
February 2019

# HUMAN/KIND

Journal of Topical & Contemporary  
Japanese Short-forms & Art

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# HUMAN/KIND

Journal of Topical and Contemporary  
Japanese Short-forms and Art

Issue 1.2  
February 2019

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Cover Art: *the waiting room*  
by Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

*Special thanks to Mark Gilbert for his assistance with proofreading.*

# In Memory of

## Rachel Sutcliffe

(1977-2019)

We would like to dedicate this issue to Rachel, who we believe would want to be remembered for her contributions to the writing community and the lasting impression she has made on so many of us with her warm nature. She was an inspiration, a kind and supportive spirit, and a prolific writer who exposed the magic of the simplest things through her words. Everyone she knew feels her absence but we think she'd want us to keep her alive by continuing to share her words and our memories of her.

This poem was one Rachel sent to us for this issue and it is a perfect illustration of her mastery of haiku and a reflection of her way of viewing the world as something to be cherished, while she fought her illness for so many years.

a blade of grass  
between my fingers  
father's whistle

We hope everyone will take some time to remember their interactions with Rachel. We invite anyone who would like to share a poem in memory of Rachel, to do so on her author page on the Human/Kind website.

We have also included her poem in the issue where it was originally scheduled to be published, as we'd like everyone to think of her as still among us, encouraging us along, as she always did.

*-Robin Anna Smith*

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\*CONTENT WARNING: In this issue, we have a piece that suggests sexual assault (pg. 8) and another that suggests physical violence (pg. 26). Please take care in reading.





*chiaroscuro*

**Debbie Strange**

## **Losing Faith**

abandoned church

dwindling flock  
the snap  
of another ember

the echoes

signing off  
the words we dare not  
repeat

of unanswered prayers

frozen rain  
the battle  
to make a fist

***-Peter Jastermsky***

## Polling Places

Like so many other counties in Pennsylvania and across the country, we were upgraded to fully electronic machines ten years ago when everyone was saying they were the wave of the future. [NARRATOR: *But they weren't!*] By next year, I'm told, they'll all be replaced again, this time with something that preserves a paper trail. Me, I miss the old punch cards, and that extra bit of interaction with a poll worker when you handed over the completed ballot and she tore off the stub and handed it back to you, because the voter alone must drop the ballot in a box. There was a ceremonial, almost religious feeling to it. But then we *were* in a church. Not the sanctuary, you understand, but the room where they have church suppers. It felt homey, despite the fact that all the poll workers and most of the other voters in line were probably conservative Republicans and I'm on the far left.

polling station  
of the cross  
loving thy enemies

About the same time that we got the new machines, they moved our polling place to the middle school. You walk in and there's someone sitting in the hall playing traffic cop and waving everyone through a door to the right. I smell the once-familiar smells and notice a funny feeling in my stomach.

back to my old school  
but not in a nightmare  
election day

We go as a family group but each votes alone . . . except for my mother, who always has trouble with the machine's weird combination of analog and digital, the action of turning this, clicking that, and looking up there at the screen. A poll worker has to assist her from an arm's length away.

voting machine  
turning the wheel around  
and around

**-Dave Bonta**





*clinging to religion*

**Lori A Minor**

## **Maura J. is Okay**

Humiliations are better swallowed with a bite of buttered bread.

The way of the ancestors reminds; a woman's worth is in her virtue, and her man.  
Last summer, the grandest of weddings; a reception befitting a Greek goddess. This time  
I've taken an older man; settled. He welcomes my two boys under his heart.

Nearly due for the "big push"; number three.  
The 23rd great-grand born to our blood.  
A proud legacy for the elders.

Facebook: "I've got everything I've ever needed right in front of me."

I sit home with four walls, each studded in black mold.  
Poverty, my soup. Car on its last piston. Shut off notices in hand.

kneading bread secrets fold

***-Jan Benson***

Sunday morning  
Horace Silver  
takes me to church

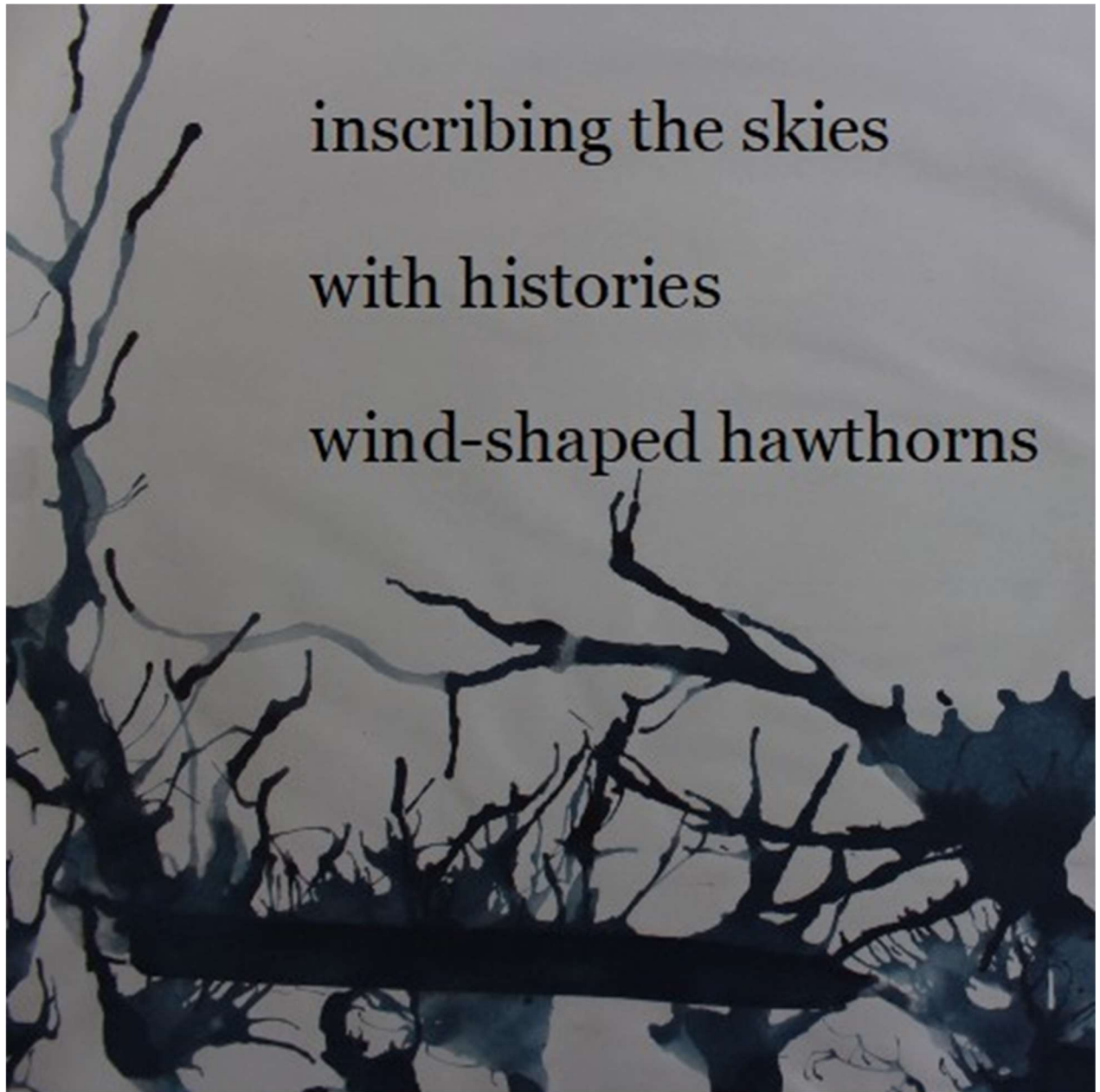
***-Joshua Gage***

winter blues  
the tub faucet leaking  
paradiddles

***-Rich Schilling***

a blade of grass  
between my fingers  
father's whistle

***-Rachel Sutcliffe***



*inscribing the skies*

**Morwen Brosschot**

## Pick-up Truck

Nothing so dizzying as watching the summer sky speed by, on your back, barely cushioned by an old blanket spread on the ridges of your family friend's pick-up truck. Want a ride home? Sure you do. Once you're on your way, rocks ding the chassis below; you count thirteen, fourteen. You are thirteen, fourteen. The thick smell of mown hay, and now wild roses, swirls in as the truck stops. Where? You still don't have to worry; youth makes half the world irrelevant. From the warm truck bed, you catch the quick-stitch of two chickadees flying by, and guess at the hour by the cooling air, the hour beyond when you might have been home. You hear the crunch of the driver's door closing. You don't know where you are yet. Your family friend's big hands settle on the tailgate, prying it open, and his shadow looms over you. You sit bolt upright, the place pinpointed.

apple saplings  
bark stripped  
by browsing goats

*-Kit Pancoast Nagamura*

*starling murmuration the fluidity of our intentions*



*starling murmuration*

**Debbie Strange**



deep winter—  
I join the one-mind  
of a fish tank

***-Carole MacRury***

unkind words  
the sudden tightening  
of mussel shells

***-Lucy Whitehead***

flying geese—  
my fifth stage  
of grieving

***-Ashish Narain***

## Rebecca

I wasn't popular in high school. In a Catholic institution filled with all things blond, tan, ambitious, and religious, I was the weirdo agnostic who dug combat boots and barely saw the light of a grade higher than C. My sole friend—a conservative, prim Brainiac—never viewed me as a misfit, however. I was her dear pal. A sleepover buddy. I was the person who snuck into a vacant girls' locker room at lunch to philosophize life and Tolkien with her, without the background chatter of a blustering cafeteria.

Before we graduated, I made the risky choice to tell her that I was bisexual. I never had a crush on her, I said, but I wanted her to know the real me, whatever that was, before we journeyed our separate ways to college.

A week or two later, she sent me a lengthy hand-written letter, the old-fashioned way: through mail. It was one of the most beautiful, raw, and compassionate things I had ever read, filled with unconditional love and support. I was floored. In my head, I whispered continual gratitude—a thousand silent thank-yous to whoever listened to my internal ramblings that I had, despite my prediction, not lost a friend.

I tucked her letter in my bedroom drawer and vowed to the stars I would respond soon. But I never did. And I never saw or heard from her again.

in the wind  
a thousand apologies  
lost forever

*-Tiffany Shaw-Diaz*



*bird's-eye view*

**Lori A Minor**

## **attend**

At the massage, she asked where she should focus her efforts. My hands, I said. The ones that love, prepare, comfort, implore, do. My liaisons to action are tired, and they ache. As she nurtured them, I felt an unclenching, as if she released a tiny reservoir. I did not wipe the tears, not here in this place where there is no shame in need, no consequence to self-care.

mountain monolith  
convinced  
by a rivulet

***-Kat Lehmann***



pressing  
into your diamond  
scattershot

*-Jan Benson*

bulbous apples i stretch out my skeleton with leaf fall

*-Chris Dominiczak*

between dusk and dawn my therapist's suggestions

*-Tia Haynes*

unfolded map—  
a woman sitting alone

*-Réka Nyitrai*



bearing a name  
that isn't  
popular  
she strokes her brow as I do  
when lost in thought

*(For Dusana)*

***-Chris Dominiczak***



*Alone in Catania*

**Alexis Rotella**

white lies . . .  
places I missed  
the sunscreen

***-Julie Warther***

falling leaves  
he starts with  
“I never told you . . .”

***-Tia Haynes***

morning moon . . .  
I miss the absent part  
of your memory

***-David He***



*cloudy sunrise*

**Babs McGrory**

## **Sometimes, just sometimes . . .**

I need an arm coming out of my head  
like an arcade game catching soft toys.

It's the smell of fish and chips; there's a need  
to buy them, and hold a parcel of greasy things;  
and drink orange Fanta.

The streets are lined with paper  
with tomorrow morning's news,  
and you aren't going to be okay.

Sometimes, just sometimes you need  
to believe,

a morning is worth getting up for,  
with its headache and coffee.

As I tongue a mouth ulcer,  
and the water stays hot as I shower,  
there's still some fresh clothes,

and yesterday's shirt,  
plus a twenty dollar note  
stuffed in a pocket.

love letters on blue paper  
I count to seven  
too scared to get to eight  
or nine, or ten  
as I have to come out

***-Alan Summers***



*gaze*

**Matthew Yates**



## **There's nothing there ...**

The night plays tricks with my head. I forget if I'm asleep or not. Despite the potential for fright and horror, most confusion can be diffused with logic. Plants, animals, landscapes, or people, don't generally appear in your bedroom without warning. Depending on one's state of trepidation, such appearances needn't chill you to the very core. For me, they tend to function as puzzles, demanding solution. On rare occasions the visitations can be accompanied by paralysis, like a classic incubus or succubus encounter. The experience needn't be terrifying, but it can be quite disorienting.

touch me without touching me show me you're real

*-David J Kelly*

the bed is stripped and the sheets are washed. whilst they  
dry, the pillows are in the washing machine.

there is fresh bedding in the hallway cupboard,  
so i make up a new bed, almost.

the pillows now rest against the radiator.  
i turn them over every half hour.

2 new pillows arrived last week, but are reserved  
above the wardrobe, in expectancy of her arrival.

morning fog  
we talk of lilacs not yet  
in bloom

**reserved in expectancy**

**Chris Dominiczak**

freezing fog my self-effacing side

***-Olivier Schopfer***

brisk wind  
the evergreen yields  
to a protest sign

***-Agnes Eva Savich***

finally writing the rain feeling superior

***-Rich Schilling***

©lone

**Olivier Schopfer**

## **sharp suit**

this guy walks along the street grinning and talking to himself with fire in his eyes and wires coming out of his ears in the old days we would have burned him at the stake before lunchtime

crackling flesh  
the sound  
of rushing water

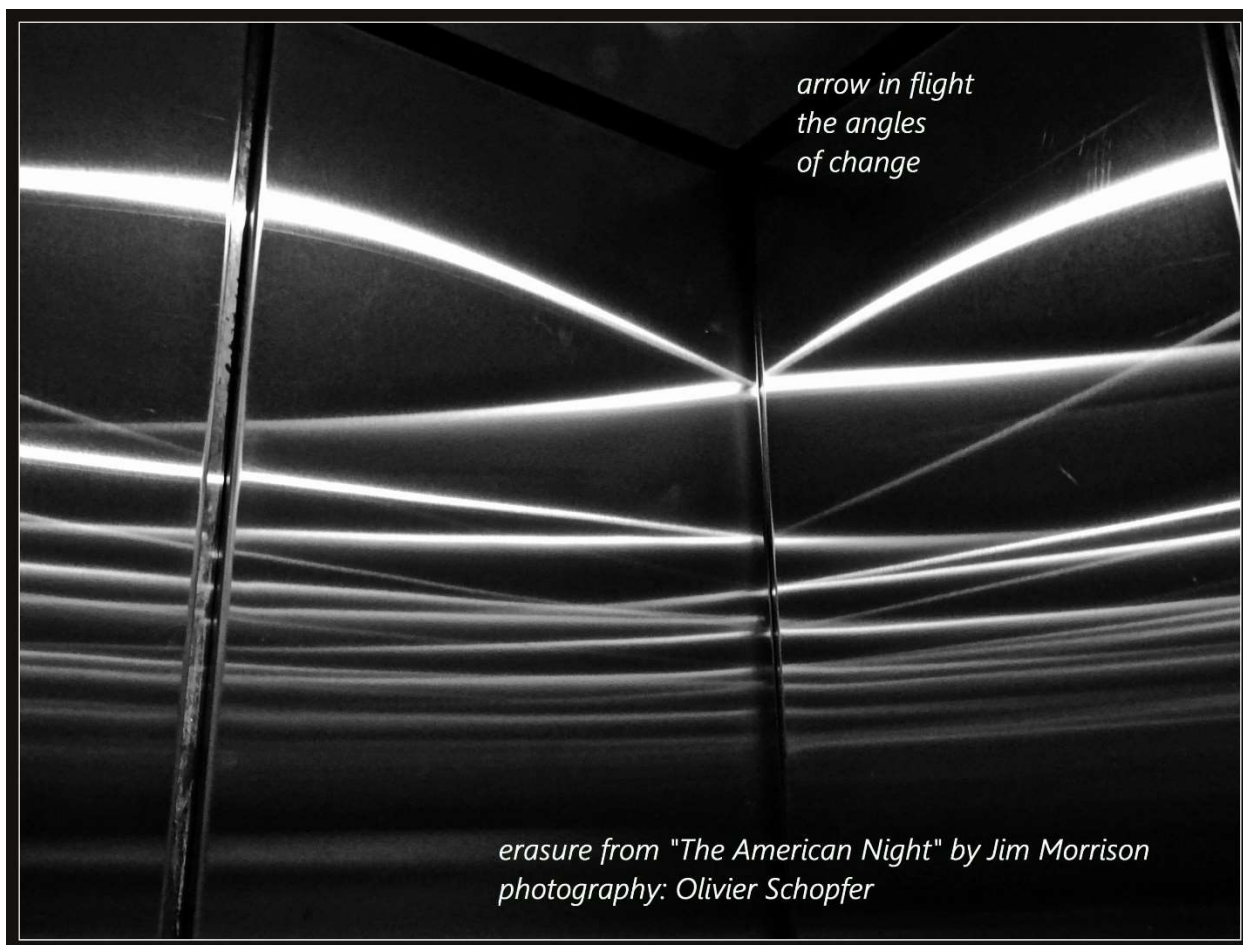
in the old days we would have pushed him under the wheels of an Uber

everyone wins  
my reflection  
in his shiny shoes

in the old days we would have thrown him off the top of a tower block and filmed it and put it on YouTube one camera at the top one at the bottom

young century  
new wrinkles  
new laugh lines

***-Mark Gilbert***



*arrow in flight  
the angles  
of change*

*erasure from "The American Night" by Jim Morrison  
photography: Olivier Schopfer*

*arrow in flight*

**Olivier Schopfer**



## Checkmate

Ever since I read about Bobby Fisher's global fame and untold wealth, I had always dreamt of playing chess at the World Championship.

I could imagine myself ordering the organizers to arrange for pink spotlights. Not for the aesthetics but primarily because my complexion comes out beautifully on colour television. And of course, one wants to look one's best.

I would have dozens of frames made for my glasses to go with my extensive wardrobe of shirts. I spent sleepless nights deciding between a lemon-yellow shirt with a chocolate brown tie and a pale pink chemise with a maroon coloured cravat. These things are of material importance to the Grandmaster. Insofar as shoes were concerned, I found myself in a dilemma. Calf leather shoes looked swell but what of the brand? I vacillated between Jimmy Choo's and Tod's.

The suit had to be tailor made in Savile Row, naturally. Complete with a matching pocket square. As for the cologne, I would settle for nothing less than the Paco Rabanne Million. Even if it cost as much. After all, money was no problem at all while playing the Championship. Sponsors would pour it in by the buckets. Rather large buckets, too. My mind made up, I felt positively elated.

There remained only one minor point to be attended to. I still had to learn how to play the game.

Truckers' Union—  
feeling quite awkward  
in a tuxedo

*-Gautam Nadkarni*

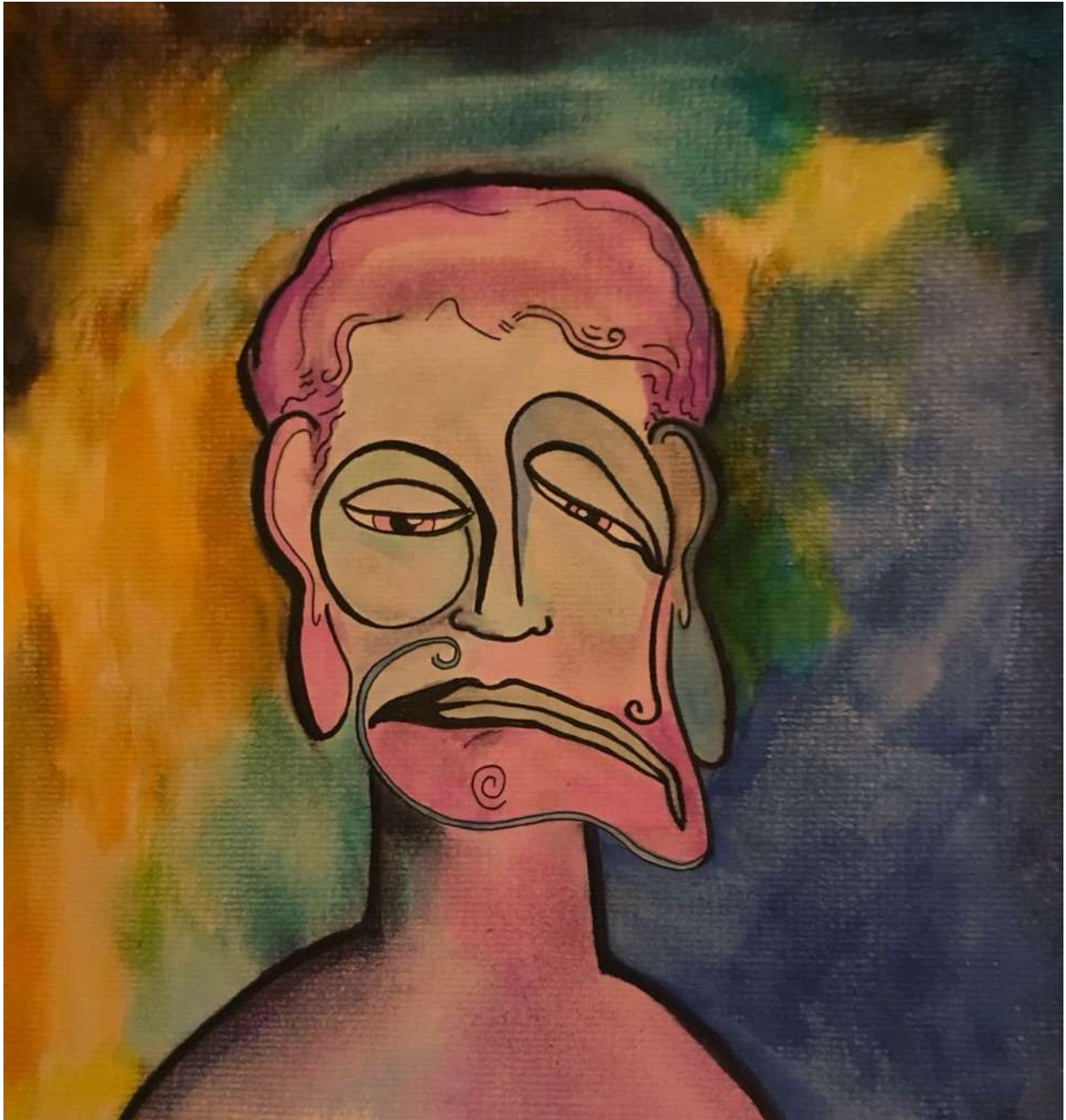
## A Play for Keeps

CAST: BA & OT

OT: Were we here yesterday?  
BA: [Pressing finger to forehead.] It seems so.  
OT: Be is the beginning of seems.  
BA: So it seems. [Pause.] But how is that so?  
OT: In the beginning?  
BA: There were the heavens and the earth.  
OT: God is being; the other splits at the seams.  
BA: I remember.  
OT: [Excited] As if this is yesterday!  
BA: Have you said your yes today?  
OT: [Mournfully] Noterday.  
BA: You seem always to be negative.  
OT: I have an attraction.  
BA: So what is it to be?  
OT: Here? Now?  
BA: Yes.  
OT: Being created the heavens and the earth.  
BA: None of this is real, then.  
OT: Or now.  
BA: Not since yesterday.  
OT: So nothing exists?  
BA: Only in seeming so.  
OT: Created *ex nihilo*?  
BA: It is only you or I who say so.  
OT: What of the others?  
BA: Just ourselves.  
OT: And our non-self in common.  
BA: I wonder what tomorrow will bring.  
OT: More or less this, I suppose.  
[*They sit down and look up at the absence of day.*]

out of the  
indistinguishable  
our shadows

**-Hansha Teki**



*nausea*

**Matthew Yates**

# Biographies

**Jan Benson** is a Pushcart Prize-nominated haiku poet living in Texas. She is as comfortable writing about physics or pagan rituals, as social issues and quilting. Jan's haiku are anthologized in world-leading haiku journals and magazines. Benson is a member of The World Haiku Association, and Poetry Society of Texas. Profiles at The Haiku Foundation "Poet Registry" and "The Living Haiku Anthology." Twitter: @janbentx.

**Dave Bonta** <http://davebonta.com> divides his time between the mountains of central Pennsylvania, where he grew up, and London, UK, where his partner lives. He's the author of the poetry collection *Ice Mountain* (Phoenicia Publishing, 2016) and his videopoems have been screened at film festivals around the world.

**Morwen Brosschot** lives in Wales, enjoys all things creative, and is fascinated with the combination of artwork and words. Morwen writes mostly in Welsh.

**Chris Dominiczak** recently exhibited with AiR (Artists in Recovery) in Newcastle upon Tyne. He won the first UHTS Rosenberry Literary award for Haiku and has been published in several journals—writing short poems, haiku and related forms. When he is not writing, he's taking photographs, cutting trees, or subject to his daughter's demands. Facebook: Chris Dominiczak, Instagram: @backabeyont, [www.artistsinrecovery.co.uk](http://www.artistsinrecovery.co.uk).

**Joshua Gage** is an ornery curmudgeon from Cleveland, Ohio. He is a graduate of the Low Residency MFA Program in Creative Writing at Naropa University. He has a penchant for Pendleton shirts and any poem strong enough to yank the breath out of his lungs.

**Mark Gilbert** writes poetry and prose and his recent work can be found in *Haibun Today*, *Presence* and *Failed Haiku*. Occasionally his poems are displayed on the streets of Washington DC or Nottingham, UK.

**Tia Haynes** is an Ohio-based poet whose work has appeared in *The Heron's Nest*, *Frogpond*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Prune Juice*, among others. She works full time at home with her two daughters, Moopy and Phoebe. More of her work at [www.adaliahaiku.com](http://www.adaliahaiku.com).

**David He** (China) has been working as an advanced English teacher for 36 years in a high school. So far, he has had twenty short English stories published in anthologies. He has had haiku and tanka published in *Acorn*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Presence*, *Bottle Rockets*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frozen Butterfly*, *Tanka of America*, *Skylark*, *Ribbons*, *Cattails*, and others.

**Peter Jastermsky** writes Japanese short-form works. He was inspired to try his hand at writing haiku after reading the work of Nick Virgilio. Peter's writing has appeared in many fine journals, including *Failed Haiku*, *Haibun Today*, *The Cherita*, and *Sonic Boom*. Peter and his family now live in the high desert of Southern California, where he works as a Licensed Counselor.

**David J Kelly** (Dublin, Ireland) Despite a scientific training, David has a fascination with words and the music of language. He enjoys writing Japanese short forms and has been published in a number of print and online journals. His first collection *Hammerscale from the Thrush's Anvil* – Alba was published in November 2016.

**Kat Lehmann** is the author of *Small Stones from the River* and *Moon Full of Moons*, which are about finding happiness after loss. In her *Ripples of Kindness* project, Kat leaves her books in public spaces worldwide. Kat is a mom and wife with a Ph.D. in biochemistry. Twitter/Instagram: @SongsOfKat.

**Carole MacRury** resides in a unique peninsula and border town that inspires her work. She is the author of *In the Company of Crows: Haiku and Tanka Between the Tides* (Black Cat Press, 2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, 2018) and *The Tang of Nasturtiums*, an award-winning e-chapbook (Snapshot Press 2012).

**Babs McGrory**: Determined poet, enthusiastic shutterbug, budding eco-warrior, manic-depressive, carbon-based idea machine. Twitter: @VowelMouthPoet / Ig: b.inkstuff / Ig: Just Delmarvalous / fb: TREAD Delmarva. In my spare time, I also cover & uncover a lot of crap at an alter-ego bi-polar blog: LitterboxRiotBlog.wordpress.com. I think I'm 184 in cat years.

**Lori A Minor** is a feminist and mental health advocate who dabbles in visual and literary arts. She is the editor of the new e-zine *#FemkuMag* and co-editor of *Scryptic Magazine*. Lori has just released her second book *inkblots revealing my story to the therapist*.

**Gautam Nadkarni**, 63, lives in Mumbai, India. Having entered the haiku realm in 2007 he has since written and published haiku, senryu, and tanka extensively. Shying away from haibun all this while, due to cold feet, he attempted his first haibun in November 2017. He now has nearly 50 published haibun to his credit.

**Kit Pancoast Nagamura** has co-hosted NHK World's HAIKU MASTERS for three years. Her awards include Prizes of Excellence in the Ito-en Oi Ocha International Contest and the Setouchi-Matsuyama Photo/Haiku contest, as well as Honorable Mentions three years running in the Tokutomi Haiku Contest sponsored by the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society.

**Ashish Narain** is an Economist by profession and a haiku poet by choice. His work has been published in online journals like *Sonic Boom*, *Otata*, *Bones*, *Prune Juice*, *Modern Haiku*

and *Frogpond*. He lives with his wife and two sons in Manila, Philippines; and has almost got them to agree his poems make sense.

**Réka Nyitrai** lives in Bucharest, Romania. She was born in Transylvania, a land that she truly considers magic. She studied communication and political marketing. She always felt attracted to poetry, especially to short forms, however she only started writing haiku since 2018, early spring. She writes haiku, tanka and cherita. Her work has been published in *Under the Basho*, *Failed Haiku*, *#FemkuMag*, *Otata*, and *The Asahi Shimbun*.

**Marianne Paul** is a Canadian poet, novelist and, recently, an amateur bookbinder. She has won the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival haiku contest and the inaugural Jane Reichhold Memorial Haiga Competition. Marianne posts her words and art on Instagram @ms.haiku, Twitter @mariannpaul and on her websites: [www.mariannepaul.com](http://www.mariannepaul.com) and [www.literarykayak.com](http://www.literarykayak.com).

**Alexis Rotella** is a visual storyteller, wordsmith and licensed Acupuncturist in Arnold, Maryland.

**Agnes Eva Savich** was born in Poland, grew up in Chicago, and has lived in Texas for 15 years. She's recently been published in *Modern Haiku*, *Acorn*, *Frogpond*, and *The Heron's Nest*, among others.

**Rich Schilling** lives in Webster Groves, Missouri with his wife and three kids. He has been published in *Mayfly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Is/let*, *Akitsu Quarterly* and numerous other journals.

**Olivier Schopfer** lives in Geneva, Switzerland. He likes to capture the moment in haiku and photography. His work has appeared in anthologies, and numerous online and print journals. In 2018, Scars Publications released his first poetry chapbook, *In the Mirror: Concrete Haiku*.

**Tiffany Shaw-Diaz** is an award-winning poet and artist living in Centerville, Ohio. To learn more about her, please visit: [www.tiffanyshawdiaz.com](http://www.tiffanyshawdiaz.com). She can be found on Facebook (@tsdartist) and Instagram (@tiffanyshawdiaz).

**Debbie Strange** is an internationally published short form poet, haiga artist and photographer, whose creative passions bring her closer to the world and to herself. She maintains a publication and awards archive at [debbiemstrange.blogspot.com](http://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com), which also includes hundreds of haiga, and reviews of her books. Please visit her on Twitter @Debbie\_Strange.

**Alan Summers** was born in London and now lives in the South West of England. He likes dogs and cats, and birds, and Christmas. Alan is co-founder of Call of the Page, with Karen Hoy, and teaches haiku and related genres. Website: [www.callofthepage.org](http://www.callofthepage.org).

**Rachel Sutcliffe** suffered from serious immune disorders for over 18 years, throughout that time writing was her therapy, it kept her from going insane! She was an active member of the British Haiku Society and was published in various journals including *Prune Juice*, *The Heron's Nest*, and *Presence*. Her website can be found at: [projectwords11.wordpress.com](http://projectwords11.wordpress.com).

**Hansha Teki:** unearthed from the kauri gum fields of New Zealand a few years after the end of WWII, he survives to this day as a geographical, societal and poetic fringe dweller.

**Julie Warther** serves as Midwest Regional Coordinator for the Haiku Society of America ([www.hsa-haiku.org](http://www.hsa-haiku.org)), is an associate editor at The Heron's Nest ([www.theheronsnest.com](http://www.theheronsnest.com)) and was instrumental in establishing The Forest Haiku Walk in Millersburg, Ohio ([www.innathoneyrun.com/open-air-art-museum/haiku-walk](http://www.innathoneyrun.com/open-air-art-museum/haiku-walk)) and the Seasons of Haiku Trail at The Holden Arboretum in Kirtland, Ohio ([www.holdenarb.org/seasons-of-haiku-interpretive-trail](http://www.holdenarb.org/seasons-of-haiku-interpretive-trail)).

**Lucy Whitehead** (Essex, UK) Lucy's haiku have been published in numerous international journals including *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Cattails*, *Frogpond*, *hedgerow*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Otata*, *tinywords* and *Under the Basho*, and appear in two anthologies. She came 1st place in the Australian Haiku Society Spring 2018 Haiga Kukai (seasonal section) and 4th place in the 2018 Indian Kukai. Her Twitter handle is @blueirispoetry.

**Matthew Yates** is an artist & poet from Kentucky. His work can be found in *Barren Magazine*, *Rhythm & Bones Lit*, *Memoir Mixtapes*, *awkward mermaid lit*, & *Epigraph Magazine*. He currently resides in Indiana.