



THE BAMBOO HUT

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 1

EDITED BY STEVE WILKINSON

The Bamboo Hut Volume1 Number 3

The Bamboo Hut

Volume 2

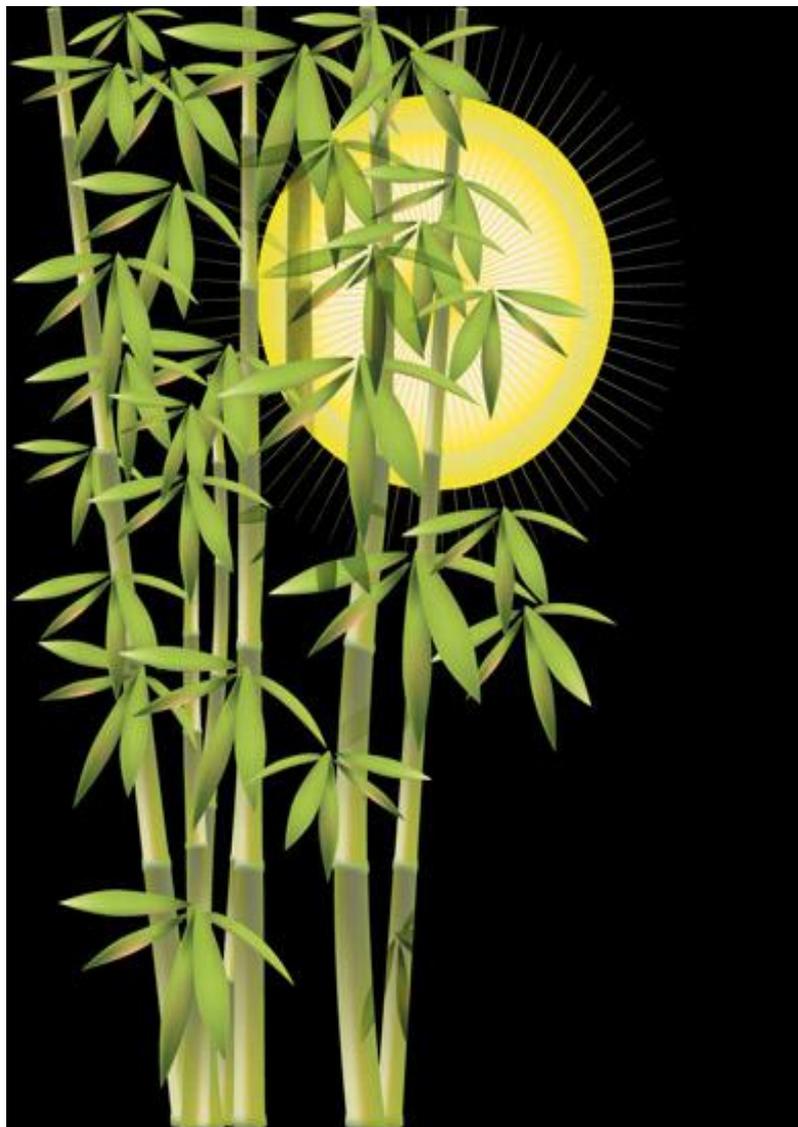
Number 1

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Editorial Note

What do I look for in tanka? There are many ideas about what is tanka and what is not. Some people demand all tanka to conform to their particular viewpoint and loudly and scathingly condemn anything that dares to fall short of their self imposed mark.

However if a reader unfamiliar with tanka were to read the Manyoshu and then perhaps something from Yosano Akiko , Ishigawa Takuboku and Sanford Goldstein they would see a marked difference in form , structure and architecture and yet these works all fall under the tanka umbrella.

So what is tanka ?

A simple definition would be nice but as I see it tanka is an ever evolving poetic form,especially in the English language.

Tanka may include a preface,subject and refrain or be a simple spilling of five lines. It may contain a pivot or it may not.

Does it have to be all show and no tell or is it all right to tell just a little or in fact to tell all ?

In the end as beauty is in the eye of the beholder so tanka is the heart of the reader and writer.

I prefer to keep an open view as to how I define tanka and my selection of poems will continue to reflect this.

In view of this I have decided to adopt the word “tanshi” which means small poems as I feel it best describes my feelings regarding tanka.

My own personal concept of tanshi is that it covers all short poems from 1 line in length up to 5 lines. Some may disagree and that is fine,opinions are simply opinions. I am not trying to change anyones concept of tanka or short form poetry I just feel that the term “tanshi” best reflects my own personal preference.

That being said I hope you enjoy the many and varied poems in this issue,poems that I call tanshi.

Steve Wilkinson, editor

The Bamboo Hut
Volume 2 Issue 1

a hasty retreat
from the spring rain
and gargoyle's grasp
safe inside the church
I light a candle

Andrea Eldridge

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piles
of dry oak leaves
on her grave --
his crystal tears sweep
away all his dreams

on a diet
she kills her cravings,
painting her nails
a luscious, viscous
chocolate brown

this morning
whiff of jasmine
in my room --
amid my silence
his last words still echo

within
a hand-me-down shirt
I wonder
at a thrift shop,
all what I must be inheriting

sparkly snow
over the hilltop
monastery--
wind chimes echo
in silence of godly love

he aligned his fork
on his finished plate
before the ship sank -
his manners more ingrained
than survival instincts.

Archana Kapoor Nagpal

the nouveau city
opens like a 3D fairy tale book
and by night
folds into 2-line axes
of an infinite dream

the blue sun
passes through the distended
womb of sea
like the refracted memory
of our once-summer love

Rochelle Potkar

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his words
astringent acrid
& caustic
like stinging nettles
stabbing her heart

dead of night
& still in pain
after my last surgery
an echo of prayers
enclose me

plucking
blue lotus petals
one by one
i lie down in a bed
of cloudless sky

Pamela A. Babusci

a tidal wave
of doubt & a tidal wave
of mistrust
who is this insecure woman
in the bedroom mirror?

tormented woman
walking into the waters
of despair
i remember you drowning
full clothed & forsaken

In Memory of: Virginia Woolf

abortion clinic
immaculate snowflakes
falling
falling in the barrenness
of motherhood

“mama mama”
her last words
as he drowns her
in the lake
his sister’s doll

finding her
on the sex offender map
the neighbor
I used to think
was pretty

I remember when
Kennedy was shot
the country mourned
but no one cared
that you left me

Susan Burch

lying in bed
your arms curled around me
musing the future...
never once did we wonder
if you’d forget me too

mother tells me
they’re hereditary -
these thick thighs
another hand-me-down
for the middle child

after receiving
power of attorney
he sells her house-
boasting that the nursing home
is very nice

tapping my foot
in the waiting room
before surgery –
ready to never be called
Dumbo again

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snowflakes drifting
from the October sky
my shadow and I
stuck in a conversation
that is going nowhere

waking alone
to the first sunrise ...
nostalgia
like the walking dead
comes back to haunt me

torrents of rain
cascading down the street
inside the booth
she holds me hostage
with one glance of her eyes

maple trees
dripping in icicles...
we sing along
at the top of our lungs
to "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"

this cold night
I reach deep inside
loneliness
and pull out
my heart of stone

April first, at dawn ...
the internet has written
my lonely faces
across the cloudless sky
in invisible ink

she nails
a list of Mom's sayings
to her bedroom door...
watches the fall
of another snowflakes

morning glories
cluster around the well ...
each breath I take
now weighted
with my mortality

on the screen
a sari-clad girl drenched
in spring rain
while calling out Apu ...
grandma's toothless smile

Chen-ou Liu

wooden Jesus
twenty meters tall
erected
in the bare cornfields...
father and son with their dog

if only
I could tell this bulbul
and it could speak
what words would it use
to sing of your perfidy?

Auschwitz –
in a ceiling to floor glass case
the mound
of dolls, combs, shaving bowls
sting like Mandelstam's Wasps*

office car park -
he leans into his cell phone
fingers jabbing the air
from my rain-streaked window
I imagine the expletives

* In the works of the Russian Jewish poet,
Mandelstam (1891-1938) the Wasp represents the
secret police of the Stalinist state. Mandelstam
uses the punning effect of Osa (wasp in Russian)
to evoke Osip or Joseph Stalin.

and all the while
birds undulate in endless
blue May sky
what are they saying? I ask
from my hospital window

Sonam Chhoki

end of May -
like a belated present
winter leaves at last
the thawed river echoing
with green croaks of frogs

freshly-ploughed fields
stretch in motionless brown
under grey skies
as if the artist has stripped
light from the canvas of day

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herring skiffs
battle the waves
at winter's end
what's left for him
to pull from the sea

grief sculpture
a mother cradles nothing
in empty arms
I wonder what happened
where is her child?

after our first date
he escorts me home –
a long ride
in awkward silence
to the end of the line

april wind
dogwood winter chill
I write a poem
to remember how it whips
against my face

slipping the skin
off another peach
how easily
a familiar word
escapes me

when I meet
myself on the road
look into
my own old eyes
will I find the shadow?

the old clock
divides each night
into seconds
my heart keeping pace
with the echo of dreams

Carole Johnston

my navigator
throws our map
into the air ...
tumbleweeds travelling
at the whim of the wind

Susan Constable

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tell me,
muse of my tanka world,
how to go gently,
no, I do not want to roar,
the end closer and closer

forgive
my brusque way
of walking,
the cane I hold
is not a weapon

today
I piled wood
on wood,
the old iron stove
must be on strike

Friday
and my friend suggests
the tanka cafe,
there, again I open my notebook,
again the tanka flow

I do not know
what's happened to
my sturdy legs,
formerly how strong my stride,
now a weak leaner on this cane

at the bakery
we select and select
and sit down to eat,
how few its customers,
we eat more than we want

will it be soon?
will it be in a year
or so?
right now I don't care,
let it be, let it be

I have watched
so many of these contented
Japanese babies,
how lovely their faces,
how cared for by their mothers

one
is not adopted
at eighty-eight,
I still continue to make
my own bare lunch

Sanford Goldstein

time to eat
and I almost put my pen
down,
I finish the line
and pick up my chopsticks

sunshiny day
a flicker's laughter trails
from tree to tree
all of it felt
in your email to me

the multitude
of violets in the lawn
take note of that
for it outweighs reason
and makes this house a home

cemetery walk
the slow perambulation
of wishes and thoughts
of what we'll do
when it's our turn

don't talk to me
of lifestyle, fame or wealth
but autumn leaves
fall where they may
to me this is everything

pre-dawn light
my mother in the kitchen
sits alone
with herself, spinning
gin-soaked dreams

Wild Daylilies

what is it
you ask, that I want...
as if
you could conjure
white butterflies from snow

no longer
does he look back
when we part...
color drains from maple leaves
with the slightest touch of frost

wild daylilies
set the river bank ablaze...
forty years since
does he also remember
that first kiss

widow-maker
the name the doctor gives
his heart attack...
nearly imperceptible
his wife's smile beside him

quiet passages
in our conversation
a place to pause
and contemplate
what you mean to me

Michele Harvey

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

4 a.m. –
a slow passing train
tugs its cargo
through the dreams
of ten thousand sleepers

waking in a strange room
I ask for my husband
only to be told
he had died
six years ago

new driver's license:
my hair in the photo
gone silver –
so many miles
farther down the road

spring evening
sitting on deckchair
drinking cold beer
I look through my
school report cards

static days,
unchanging days –
sun blaze off the sidewalk;
that red-white twist
of the barber pole

Monday morning
despite the lashing rain
I get my children
ready for school
with their father's snore echoing in background

the woods are cold,
the trees are colder,
as are the stones;
I take my voice
and throw it at the sky

browsing in supermarket
I bumped my old school friend-
past decades vanished
like a mist
over a cup of coffee

the name I forgot
flits in and out
of my aging mind,
a bird through a window;
I wait and wait

Payal A Agarwal

Roger Jones

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

peach juice-
running down my chin
bittersweet
all these summer moments
slipping away from me

scent of chamomile
wafting through the window
evening light
I am suddenly drenched
from moon bathing

a red admiral
kissing all the coneflowers
on each pass
he is such a ladies man
working every room

Barbara Kaufmann

the fragrance of sage
permeates the garden
in moonlight
I search for wisdom
even among the weeds

thunder moon -
drifting
across the sky
I dream of a flyway
to the silent stars

gathering
blackberries and day lilies
as a five year old
this passion for wild things
still lives in me

day star
the source of all
I hunger
for your light
on me

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

february afternoon:
a bowl full
of rain
crusted with
dirty ice

road signs
and cracked asphalt . . .
familiar things,
yet I see
the face of Ozymandias

yesterday
these sheets
were fresh,
tonight they stink
of unavoidable illness

old loves
given to
the library
to make room
for new loves

the endless gurgles
of illness,
then the welcome thump
of the door admitting
my dear daughter

arthritic morning
staggering
to the bathroom
feeling the winter
in my bones

the gentle swaying
of the land once I am
back ashore,
yearning to return
to the bounding sea

Leap Day—
I give it to the boat,
wind,
winter,
and dreams

a day off
in winter
 catching up
 on my favorite
 cartoons

M.Kei

crystal blue
the winter sky
and me,
almost willing
to go to work

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he bonfire's scent
remembering the night
of our wedding
how little we really knew
about marriage

in these dreams
climbing the dusty stairs
to another dimension
I wrote you
a post card

spring night
one song
a pause
an echo
... first frogs

my fingers
scratch the surface
of a pungent tangerine
the tart scent
against my tongue

another cookie
I can't eat
another cookie
maybe
just one

driving through
the agricultural reserve
longing to caress
every magical blossom
of spring

the gap
widening
between flower and ground ...
watching my dreams
pull further away

as news of war
leaves me helpless ...
she hands me
construction paper
and stickers

freezing fog --
tentative steps
across black ice
watching our relationship
slip further away

Julie Bloss Kelsey

fall
my favorite time of year
when trees reveal
their true colors
oh, the singing!

arrogance

inhaling
the brightness
of a new day
*my spirit
begins to sing*

*it's the
song of the soil,
of the land
all this
we take for granted*

as if
we are alone
such arrogance
*the stars laugh
at man's ego*

*high above us
and far below,
the spirits dance
in the corners
of vastness*

and we
who rely on tides
are blind
to the beauty
of the soul

Eamonn O'Neill, Ireland

Joy McCall, England

Still Travelling

When I began
this tanka journey
the road
that I would follow
was hidden in the mist

slowly
with the passing
of clouds
faces began to appear
with the slowness of whiskey

smooth
and with subtlety
I slid
along this road
catching wisdom

I stored them all
these poetic words
in a chamber
so far below thought
deeper than the grave

Now the road
is clear but not quite
straight
faces became names
names clothed with humanity.

Steve Wilkinson (pentaptych)

Song

the song
the dark one sings
in my sleep
a hymn of worship
to the pale woman

she smiles
sitting on the hill
by the ruins
watching him
as he climbs

the faint
sound of his singing
reaches her
his low voice stopping
now and then, for breath

there's a stream
and a small copse
between them,
and centuries
and age-old stories

still
the thin aching threads
pull at them
ancient voices, other songs
on the bright air

pentptych by Joy McCall

Blues

English oaks
ponderosa pines
the wind
always blowing
through these trees

beloved,
do you hear the leaves
calling all night
whispering
in their own strange tongue?

listen my love
and tell me
what they say
those tall pines, caught
by the mountain wind

I cannot speak
the language
of my oaks
I know they are in love
with the wind and the rain

I hear them
singing work songs
with deep voices
to the summer storm,
low, slow blues to the river

pentptych by Joy McCall

the underground

*hunkered down
in the storm cellar
under a blanket,
we hold each other
until the evil passes*

the screaming
of the demons
above our heads
the rustling of the rats
below the floor

*so many rooms
and passageways
with names:
“crossroads”, “lane ends”,
in largest letters “fear”*

don't open
the door to that one
listen –
growling and snarling
gnawing, keening

*disquieting
this hot, chest-high door
deserted
by its guardian crone
somewhere shrieking madly*

Brian Zimmer

Joy McCall

time passes

never
do I look
into sand,
stones, sprigs,
not in my world

*the pale sand
in the hourglass
runs slow
let us stay, waiting
until it runs through*

no witches
or ghosts
or old ruins,
no, I've never been
to Norwich.

*I have not seen
your Japanese home
nor the cafe
yet every week I read
the tanka you write there*

why does
nothing from sea or land
or deserts
flood my eighty-eight
year - old - mind ?

*your soul
is filled with poems
and songs
your mind, with cares
for the floating world*

Sanford Goldstein

Joy McCall

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Wild geese
lost among the stars
but not their scream...
the joy of departure
or greetings of farewell?

stranded again
inside my room a bee
I remember
the natives' smiles
across vistas

Nothing new
about crickets...
we listen to
always the same songs
autumn after autumn

across a lawn
the breeze crosses
empty benches
an indigo sky now
full of clouds whispers

Not a living soul
in the abandoned courtyard
only a dog. In chains...
waiting for his owner
he barks at the full moon

a wall is
raised between me
and the east sky
no shape of the thoughts
I kept to myself

Vasile Moldovan

Neelam Dadhwal

I carry my life
like a stone
in a tattered pocket,
yet I have a weaving song,
a healing tone inside me

above sorrow's tree
a flutter of wings
in the rain clouds...
we live our lives
in an oasis of language

Bashō and his friends
gaze at the moon
threading
the sky with rules
for their linked poem

Sergio Ortiz

he sponges
the grit of loneliness
from my skin—
dabs the salt water
of self-esteem on my body

a triumph of light—
the sun soared into view
rejoicing
in its own splendor, the mask
of darkness fell

it's clear
as a veil of light
I knew
I had felt the freshness
of dawn

this board
of curly maple –
a map
of the last age of my life
in its wandering grain

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

the red-tailed hawk
screeches at the predator
invading its territory--
I paddle for the first time
this isolated stretch of marsh

the train passes
through my hometown
without stopping--
I finally put the past
behind me

the cashier
calls the next-in-line
sweetheart too--
and all along I thought
I was special

Marianne Paul

teaching
a very old dog
new tricks--
I force myself to text
thumbs-only

I search
through Google pages
looking for proof
you existed outside
my memory

slow simmer
eventually the soup
boils--
five years after her betrayal
this intense anger

spring sun
tinting sepia the leaves
of the red maple--
already my thoughts
turn to autumn

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

I curse
the unexpected rain
forgetting
the sprinkler
left on in the yard

even in
slow motion
his life's
highlights
played out quickly

a wallet full of
club card points -
I count
the riches
I haven't yet redeemed

Dave Read

she drove with
her top down
and every passing
motorist
peeking in her window

pleased with her
dandelion bouquet
and the work
he saved her
cleaning up the yard

most comfortable with
small audiences
the mirror
receives the best
rendition of my speech

trying to sell
my stolen poems
he found them too dark
even for
the black market

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

trailing the flames
of a sinking sun
heron wings
remind me
to be brave

if time
marches on
why can't I
manage even
to crawl forward?

when our river
swallows the moon
I need you
to follow me
there and back

in the thick air
of the bar
nightshade perfume
I drink it in...
one final swoon

this storm
echoes
within me
traces
of who I was

awash at sea
too much blue
above
below
within me

cold night
a world lost
in darkness,
you bring me
ripples of stars

major keys...
we smile at how
life should be;
minor keys paint the hues
of reality

like so many
times before
I write
myself
a way out

Michael Seese

in the silence
of my soul
I am
touched
by wings

Caroline Skanne

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

forbidden to leave
until her plate was empty
she learned
to binge and purge
her hungry life away

New Year's eve...
the bitter aftertaste
of his
unspoken words
crawl under my skin

you made me
a heart with your hands
blood-stained
all my rough edges
sanded smooth

another
season passes me by...
the echo
of his voice still
piercing my heart

we replay
our lowest notes
over and over
these blues wailing
through harmonica bones

shades of grey
paint thunderstorm clouds...
is it folly
to think that this
too shall pass?

the ring
of your heart's bell
grief echoing
through this canyon
calling me to prayer

Shloka Shankar

after the storm
you gathered shreds
of the garden
my bleeding heart
in the small of your hand

shearing back
the forget-me-nots
we planted
beside the sun dial
time and I stand still

Debbie Strange

baby's window
open to the garden
the whiff
of the green
mangoes

Her voice
lost in the city crowd
and still
she strums her chords
safe inside herself

winter wedding --
the birdfeeder
knocks on the window
with all
seeds gone

happiness and sadness
come together
the mother
standing alone
at the school gate

corner cafe --
far from familiar faces
soundproof rooms . . .
i enjoy every sip
of the traffic noise

how long
will the innocent die?
beneath a veil
of ancient hatred
who remembers the spark?

Tad Wojnicki

Through summer meadows
I walk trying to reclaim the past
behind the trees
the slowly setting sun
brings a new purple to my life

Steve Wilkinson

The Bamboo Hut Volume 2 Issue 1

at sunset
the day gives up
its secrets
in a swirl
of starlings

your fingerprint
in the sky
I trace the clouds
with my eye
all the places you've touched

the wind
came at dawn
with cooler news
but too late to save
a broken night's sleep

I keep him waiting
since he asked
how long ago
did we step out of time
in this peculiar way

bird --
find another windowsill
to celebrate sunrise
my head is still spinning
from last night

bronze egret
wings spread
in my terracotta mind
even without excavation
how it flies

Yoni Hammer-Kossov

two small bronze deer
from the Han dynasty
antlers intact
how delicate
our restoration

in the glass case
of my mind
tattered scraps
of an old brocade fall
into a tapestry

at the edge of the nest
mourning dove
we pose
while time opens
and takes wing

Kathabela Wilson

Busker

the man
with the giant hoop
gives it
a hypnotic spin
guaranteed a crowd

he follows
winning it over
it whispers
confiding to him
impossible steps

he's inside!
without warning
stretched
the circumference
hub of a wheel

emboldened
he submits to feats
childhood
could only imagine
when the toy was ours

O conjurer
you reveal something
long forgotten:
the first game all play
is "follow the leader"

The Poet-Doctor

at the podium
fronting a cadaver
he smiles
about to entertain us
with the glib and grim

a warning:
he shall quickly regale
with tales
of unleavened bread
cooling on the table

but first
from stage right
the mortician
summoned by a name
no one can remember

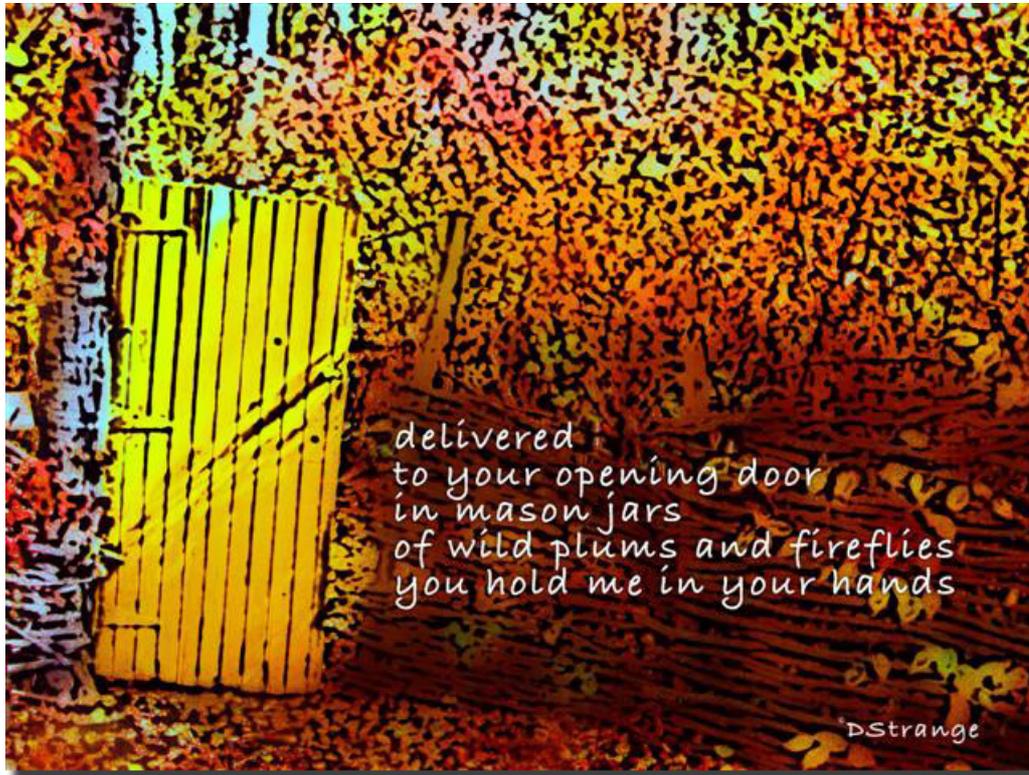
the death-man
beholds the cadaver
the doctor-poet
gently passes her
into custody

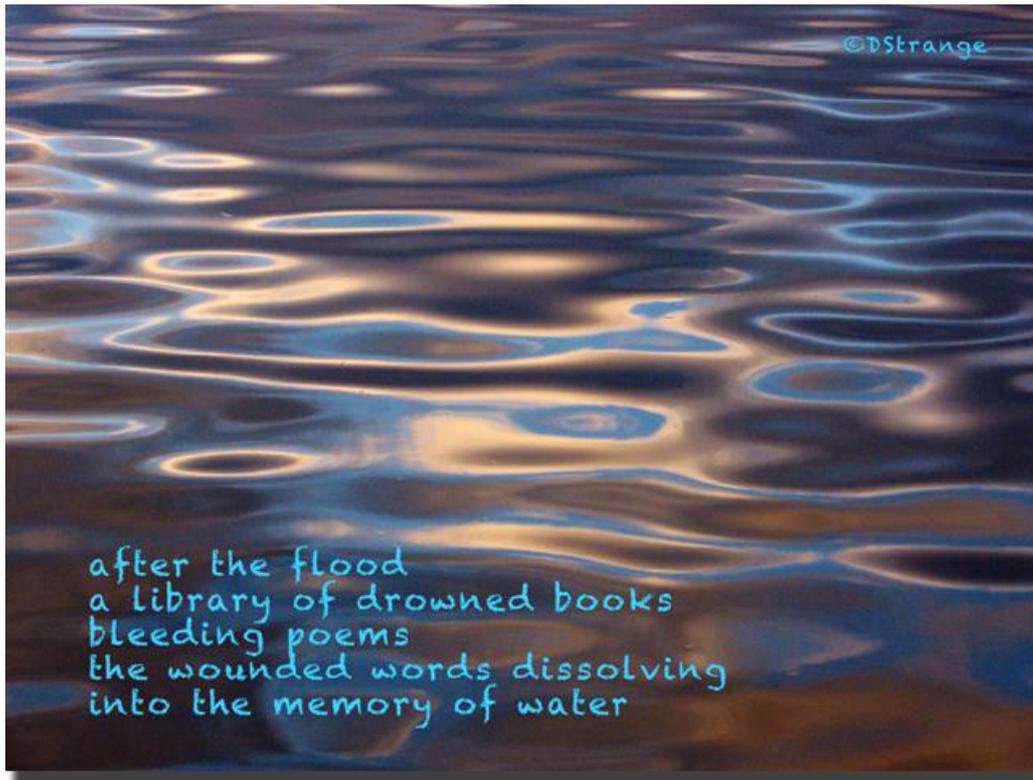
lingering long
his eyes follow her
nakedness
a bride to be dressed
he will miss the reception

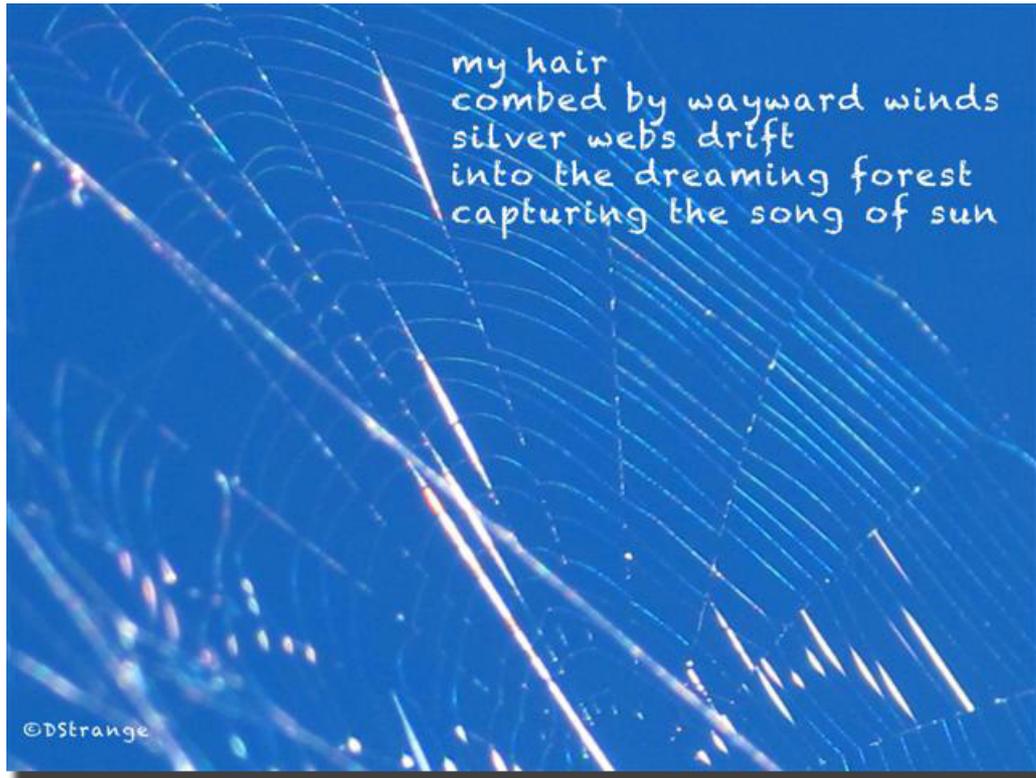
(for Keith Byler, D.O.)

Brian Zimmer

Tanshi Art

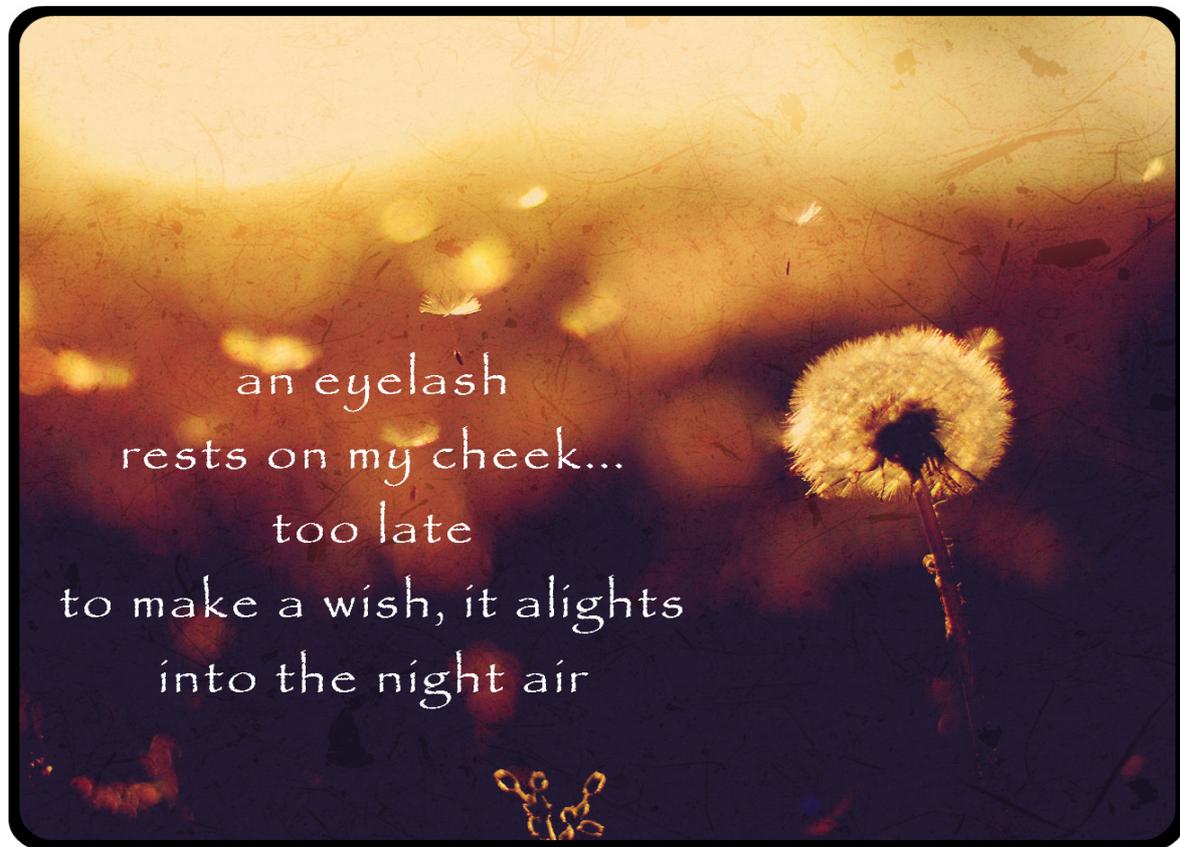






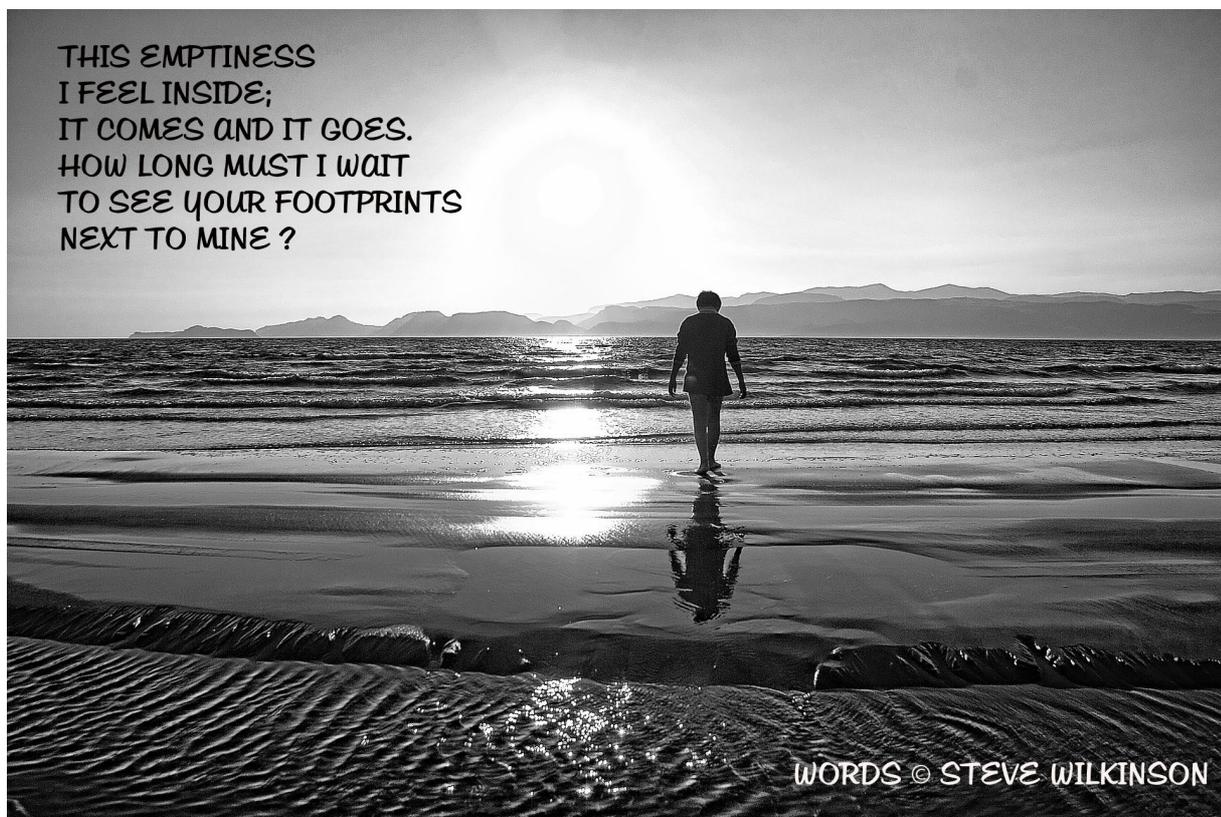
my hair
combed by wayward winds
silver webs drift
into the dreaming forest
capturing the song of sun

©DStrange



an eyelash
rests on my cheek...
too late
to make a wish, it alights
into the night air

Shloka Shankar

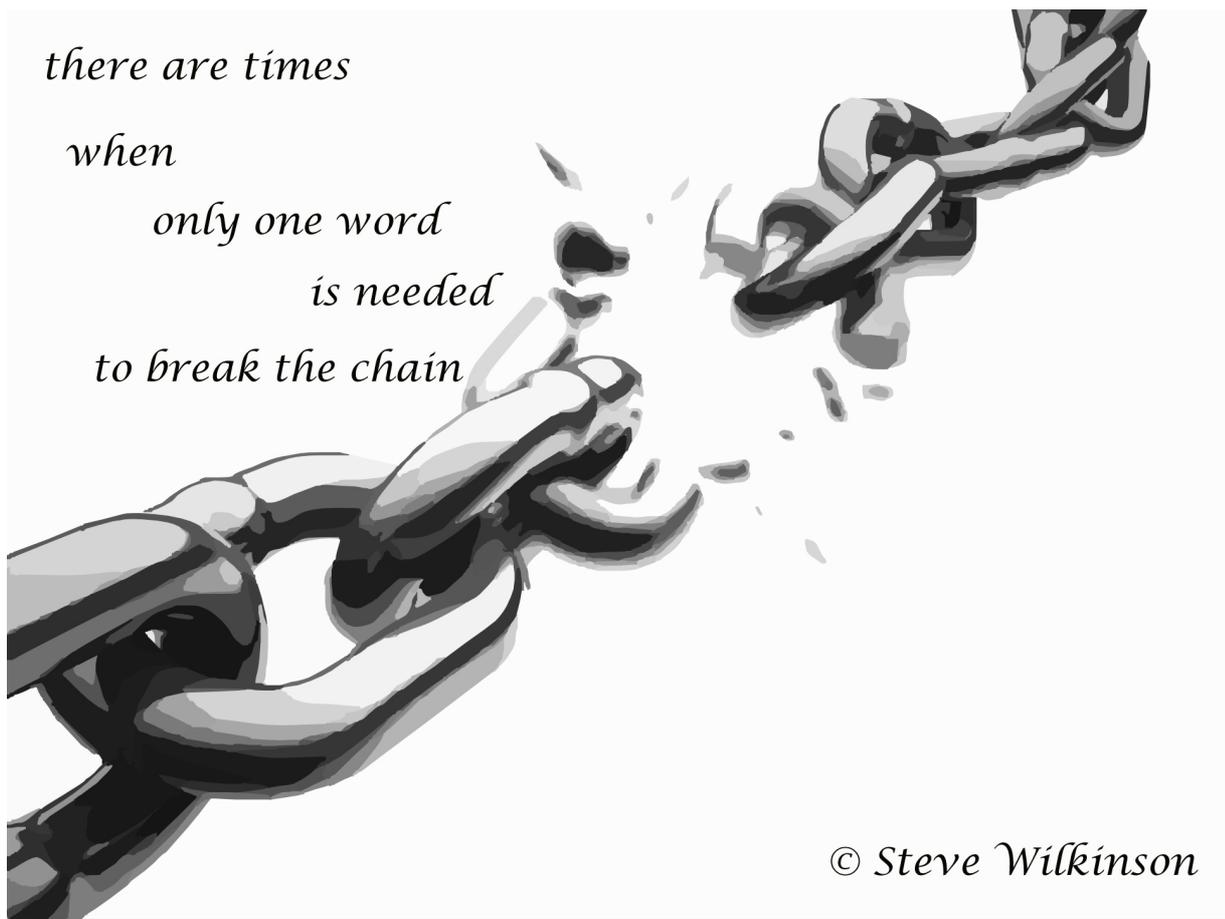


there are times

when

*only one word
is needed*

to break the chain



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*brick by brick
the world we built
fades
into the emptiness -
alzheimers*



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