

The Bamboo Hut

Spring

2015



Journal of English Language Tanshi

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

The Bamboo Hut

Spring 2015

Journal of Contemporary Tanshi

© 2015

All rights reserved No part of this journal may be reproduced in  
any form without the permission of the publisher.

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

## **Editorial Note**

Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of The Bamboo Hut featuring the tanshi of about 40 poets from across the globe. In this issue you can read poems covering nature, human emotions, relationships, introspection and observation. Look out too for some responsive tanshi including 2 responsive dodoitsu written by myself and Matsukaze as well as a very thought provoking collaboration between Robert Epstein and Joy McCall.

Matsukaze, who enjoys pushing the boundaries of short form poetry, has also included in this issue a tanka rensaku called “Urban Existence” which is well worth a read.

Thanks to contributors old and new.

Happy reading !!

Steve Wilkinson, editor



TANSHI

*Tanshi*

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Dave Read**

a crow flies  
across the New Year's  
sky  
I remind myself  
I don't believe in omens

embracing  
me a moment  
the river  
now flowing  
downstream

like a coyote  
in the city  
sometimes  
nature creeps  
into my poems

rising  
into the great  
blue sky  
another poem  
about a heron

in the distance  
a motorcycle  
and my dreams  
of life  
on the road

joining  
the stars in death  
he continues  
to keep  
his distance

my father  
in the mirror  
even now  
he likes to  
surprise me

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Caroline Skanne**

a clattering  
of jackdaws takes to  
the sky  
at times I feel overwhelmed  
by the simplest things

we  
buried you  
today  
pure white blossoms  
fill my heart

cloud whispers...  
smudged white on  
blue  
my breath melts  
into your sun

moonbeams  
combed through  
your lashes  
these moments we steal  
away from the world

the robin  
at his usual spot  
I pretend  
you will always be there  
waiting for me too

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Carole Johnston**

walking  
Natagiri Pass  
following  
Basho's footsteps like  
riding Kerouac's train

remembering  
that November sky  
still stunned  
by blueness deep  
in the well of myself

sycamore  
inked white on rust hills  
green pine  
hieroglyphs across bare trees  
as we travel home

snowdrop rosary  
chills my burning fingers  
a crystal dawn  
winter monastery  
moments freeze in time

in that place  
where river meets sky  
deep voices  
sing a blue/green song  
my heart longs to listen

I give her  
a copy of "White Pine"  
by Oliver  
hoping she'll remember  
the person she used to be

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Radka Mindova**

the child's notebook  
here he's eaten a sweet  
here he's cried  
in two empty sheets  
his whole life

**Amoz Tan**

victims cry in fear  
of violent attacks  
laying aside all comforts  
the world responds  
with helping hands

**Shloka Shankar**

brushing  
a spider away  
I shudder  
at the thoughtless  
side of me

I place you  
like an unread book  
on the shelf  
of my heart..  
summer love

reminding  
myself to let go...  
the boulder  
grows heavier  
over the years



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Diana Teneva**

slice of lemon  
in my cup of tea ...  
your words  
not easy  
to be swallowed

snowdrops melting  
on the windowpane  
the stars beyond  
the Milky Way  
whisper your name

a mirror  
in the mirror –  
my younger self  
looking at her future  
eye pouches

**Mal Keeble**

watercolour sky  
endless strokes  
across the canvas  
remembering I gave  
my brushes away

her curled toes  
catch the sun  
the water murkier today  
promises only the pool man  
can keep

paying for  
my therapy session  
I make another  
haircut appointment  
next month

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Michael Seese**

he scribbled his name  
across her paper heart  
in ink  
then realized  
he should have used a pencil

he seeks a new mask  
to replace the one  
which fractured when  
he dared  
to smile

I paint in a heavy color  
and pray  
the walls will bear  
the weight  
better than I

her diamond eyes  
leave another brilliant cut  
in a rough  
yet precious  
heart

she looks at me  
as if I'm transparent  
I wonder if my death  
inside  
is really that apparent

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Maya Lyubenova**

withered leaves  
on the fig tree  
in that faded photo  
I retouch  
grandma's fingers

under the bridge  
a flower wreath  
on dark water  
each petal – a wish  
each blossom – a dream

maple leaf  
in the wind  
like a small hand  
trying to hold  
to the grass

**Izeta Radetinac**

this girl's hair  
a ripe bunch of wheat  
tied by the reaper  
a field without moonlight  
in a sweet smell of the lavender

warbling of the birds  
scatters the fog in the forest  
the sun creeps in  
a shepherd by the brook sing  
the song about river

under our eaves  
the pigeons cooing -  
grandchildren  
run through the house  
such a fruitful spring I have  
and the tree on the glade

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Pat Geyer**

I hear  
the junco song...  
his trill  
in harmony with  
the path of snow

sometimes  
this sickening  
noise...  
a plague  
of grackles

lemon mint  
your scent tells me  
to lift one  
to the breeze...  
a butterfly rides the wind

enticing call  
of the white stag...  
tonight  
we depart  
together

cat tail  
I wish we could talk...  
we can  
even if we only  
scratch the surface

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Traci Siler**

around every corner  
blurred lines  
these fading  
memories  
of who I am

I am only partially conscious  
this thin line between  
pleasure and pain  
where I beg  
for drowning

dreaming poetry  
I wake  
in a  
fever pitch  
summer

photo to poem  
poem to painting  
bleeding all I am  
into the confines  
of canvas

revisiting  
old wounds  
how deep  
these scars  
must have been

burn me  
just around  
the edges  
I need to know  
I'm still alive

bedside table  
littered with  
pharmaceutical landmines  
but I am already  
bleeding out

life long  
love letter  
that line  
he kisses  
in my palm

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Aruna Rao**

spring wind  
curving the fishing line  
and Buson  
the other way

maybe I'm happy  
that we never clicked pictures  
being so transitory  
perhaps makes it more real  
more real

in your longing  
he showed me a field of spices  
to soothe me  
now when you kiss me  
why am I still longing?

you walk  
back and forth, back and forth  
like an hourglass  
becoming yin  
becoming yang

**Brigitte Pellat**

The wall is bare  
for an art gallery  
about to take form—  
on the artworks to come  
a scent of wisteria

My cat in the garage  
lying on the saddlebags  
of my daddy's bike  
a favorite place  
his round eyes look at me

8 o'clock the fog  
swallows up the horizon  
grisaille background  
in white and pink facing me  
a dawning apricot tree

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Ed Bremson**

a sudden storm –  
the ground  
as far as the eye can see  
covered  
with white hail

standing  
in the window looking out  
feeling the cool,  
unspeakably sweet wind  
blowing in

moonlight reflected  
as if by mirrors  
from the broad  
fleshy leaves  
of the prickly-pear

milk-bushes on the plain  
touched by a weird  
almost oppressive beauty  
in the white light  
from the full African moon

**Ramesh Anand**

the sky  
drops into a bright star  
if only  
I could stop  
from dwelling on the past

a flock of parrots  
return into the woods  
after river sunset  
an eagle and I cross  
the mountains

holding toys  
in our hands, we watch ...  
at the bus stop  
father hands the fares  
to mother and walks back home

the days darken  
of winter depression  
if only  
I could stop holding  
onto his empty love

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Payal A Agarwal**

fluffy snowflakes  
drifting down the raven sky  
caressing my wrinkled face  
like a lovers' touch  
all in my dream

breezy Sunday  
standing on the edge of the lake  
feeding white pigeons  
I meet a new me  
in gushing water...

mid afternoon  
sitting on a rusted bench  
hearing cries of seagulls  
and crashing of waves  
I dread meeting her

in the attic  
I spot an old trunk  
full of thirty years junk  
suddenly I glow like pearl  
seeing my wedding gown

**Archana Kapoor Nagpal**

another time  
wrapped in this moonlight  
my ancestral home ...  
childhood memories swing  
in a spider's hammock

these raindrops  
one by one slides down  
the blades of grass ...  
again his hands caress  
through my tresses

chimes  
surrounds the silence  
this Christmas night ...  
next to every bed  
hangs a stocking

from all  
sides of Himalayan valley  
these tinkling bells ...  
how far your thoughts  
travel in my mind



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Maureen Sudlow**

Still morning  
before the sun slides down  
the gum trees  
each trembling leaf  
outlined

sea and sky  
the ancient pathway  
of whale song  
tall ships  
at journey's end

cloud watching  
means lifting my eyes  
above the mundane  
noticing  
the eternal

wood pigeon  
drinking from an old plant pot  
summer drought  
painting the paddocks  
in burnt sienna

bleak day  
on the river  
at the picnic table  
an old man  
eats his sandwiches

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Robyn Cairns**

night owl baby  
when all were asleep  
you were on the beach with  
us--  
chasing the moon  
into the sea

eyelashes  
heavy with rain--  
bare riding legs shiny  
she spun her wheels  
through puddles around town

scent of surf  
through car windows  
our dreams of youth  
where waves  
were wildest

magpie--  
he watches me  
and I watch him  
the wind blows strong  
between us

seventies summers  
rambling rock pools  
with sea anemones and abalone  
we scuttled like crabs  
across wet sand

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Natalia L Rudychev**

mindful of Orpheus  
I keep moving forward  
my heart is enough  
to never lose sight  
of you

waiting  
for the moon  
the sun  
tries on  
new clouds

the thought  
that god  
is godless  
unveils  
love

a flower  
leaps into the sky  
until it scatters  
to become  
another flower

somewhere  
deep in my blue  
whole soul  
there is a rainbow  
waiting for your sun

the water lilies  
fill in for the stars  
in the overcast  
expansion  
of the mirrored skies

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Debbie Strange**

the aroma  
of pungent Persian stars  
transports me  
to a caravanserai  
in the moonlit desert

that night  
a lightning ball bounced  
through the house  
scorching mother's linens  
and a little girl's dreams

how still  
this numinous dawn  
we kneel  
watching a muskrat's breath  
bubbling under thin ice

a hapless boat  
trampled by water kelpies  
all souls lost  
so many widows waiting  
upon every wild shore

spring arrives  
one small droplet  
at a time  
the way everything  
takes root in earth

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Lavana Kray**

the full moon  
just out  
of swaddling cloud -  
a pregnant woman enters  
the calm sea

roll of thunder-  
a dandelion fluff  
leapt in the room  
as if my girl  
were here

old letters  
turned  
into confetti -  
rehashing  
my bio sketch

when the sun sinks low  
the shadow  
of the church steeple  
lengthens in the room -  
chemo ward

crossing  
a cherry blossom lined  
street ...  
I and a few petals  
on a stretcher

automatic mower -  
barley  
poppies  
lark nest  
turned into hay bales

the same man comes  
at the same cafe table  
for days...  
two gulls call  
each other

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Chen ou-Liu**

my poem  
with an overlay  
of opinions  
in winter sunlight  
a half-peeled onion

I yell out,  
"Death, stop following me  
like a stray dog..."  
waking alone  
to first winter light

this anxiety  
about getting published  
lands on me  
with a thud...  
snow falling on snow

the ticking clock  
gets louder and louder...  
awake to see  
an old man in the mirror  
who dreams away his life

this snowy night  
keeps fetching fireflies  
to my third eye...  
writing poetry to keep them  
in the glass jar of my youth

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Tim Gardiner**

a tinge of red  
on the skyline  
the day's embers –  
across the marsh  
lonely lights glow

the hunched over  
Ferris wheel operator  
whistles a tune –  
in winter sleet and snow  
his emptiness returns

watching green  
seagrass ribbons  
caressed by tides –  
we wonder when  
love will drift away

a gaggle of geese  
studs the samphire shore  
of a secluded bay –  
lovers' footprints  
soon filled by the tide

by clay cliffs  
the wind wipes  
a tear from my eye –  
another summer  
gone too soon

an old tree  
lays prostrate  
on the shingle –  
such isolation  
is hard won

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Djurdja Vukelic Rozic**

shiny eyes  
of a one legged fisherman  
on the strand bench  
just looking at the sea  
through the drying nets

daydreaming  
in the scent of sweet Erica  
under the starry sky  
my longing inviting you  
in the murmur of the sea

lone magnolia  
under it scattered petals  
of the red vine  
a couple of turtledoves  
silent on the wire

thundering wheels  
of a night train amidst dreams  
in warmth and peace  
each passenger towards his  
own  
earthly destination

let's not lit the lights  
let the dusk swallow the past  
born among the stars  
let our hut be the Big Dipper  
just tonight, just for a while



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Jane Dougherty**

We stare into a future  
obscured by dark clouds.  
Perhaps beyond is sunlight  
where the gulls fly  
over the unseen edge.

Footsteps in the frost  
glitter in the starlight,  
the only beauty  
in the night  
of your leaving.

Will you stay? I asked  
and the silence fell  
a pebble dropped  
into the endless depths  
of a cold pool.

The sweetest thing  
will always be  
a blackbird singing  
in a rose tree  
and you listening here with me.

I dream a world  
and in the centre I set a rose tree,  
in the tree a blackbird,  
in his throat a song,  
and the song he sings is for you.

I take my sorrows to the sea  
and let the touch  
of the salt breeze  
soothe the furrows  
from my wrinkled heart.

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Lolly Williams**

signs of life  
emerging in a light  
glow of pink  
my hand in yours we watch  
another spring sunrise

cold walls ...  
morning light pushing  
through the cracks  
I learn to fill it all in  
my own reality

tying knots  
around an old wooden fence  
moonflowers  
a summer wind arrives  
to scatter the fireflies

plucky daisies  
still blooming all around  
a country fence  
how long since I've played  
helovesmehelovesmenot?

old pond ...  
the spring breeze pushes  
a water strider  
our small talk barely breaks  
the surface tension

the view  
of the ocean from here  
just for a day  
I let myself become  
a daydream believer

winter chill ...  
the flock of wild geese  
have long departed  
I am haunted by the sound  
of their fluttering wings

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Steve Wilkinson**

quiet morning  
a mist  
spreads slowly  
towards  
mid day

voiceless  
in a faceless crowd  
a lone figure  
merges  
into the canvas

spreading  
rumours  
how little it takes  
to darken  
the sun

dressed  
in his favourite clothes  
he is buried  
with a wedding photo  
in his top pocket

awake  
at 4 a.m  
my body  
tells me  
about fragility

a butterfly's wing  
easily damaged  
not unlike  
my heart  
and yours

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Janet Qually**

family discord  
we spend time together  
mending fences  
the refreshing scent  
of a country breeze

fireflies appear  
on a solstice night  
ancient ruins  
something profound  
awaits discovery

we watch a meteor  
shoot across the sky  
dandelion fluff  
scatters on the night wind  
this fall of beauty

another coin  
down the wishing well  
in the city park  
a special pocket for quarters  
in my favorite purse

raindrops  
refresh the thirsty land  
dewdrops too  
a mother wipes tears  
off the face of her child

tossed blossoms  
from the thrashing limbs  
of magnolia trees  
I retrieve a fragrant petal  
after the storm

a young couple  
holds hands on the bridge  
colorful koi  
enhance the joyousness  
of a day of promise

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Geoff King**

LAMBING STORMS

snowdrops nod  
to winter's grudging  
departure  
with February's  
sleety final fling

sky high larks  
spill sweet melodies  
that rain down  
to claim grassy tufts  
for mates, nests and young

hope emerges  
honeysuckle leaves  
gladden hearts  
then daffodil spears  
bravely pierce the earth

lapwings dive  
their whirling displays  
celebrate  
the season of play  
with their plover's flute

northern folk  
seeing bulbs and birds  
don't judge spring  
til lambing storms when  
the lion of March roars

parchment bark  
shines white in the sun  
crimson twigs  
laden with tight buds  
birch withstands winter

monochrome  
still winter landscape  
cold grey skies  
silhouetted trees  
softened snowy slopes

swan's wings sing  
their voices join in  
such music  
they make in their lives  
not just at the end

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Joy McCall**

LUST

a pale stem  
pushes up through  
winter earth  
one brief flower drops  
white petals on the snow

the woman  
turns in her sleep  
dreaming  
of long dark nights  
and a faint grey dawn

the man  
stands by the door  
and speaks low  
her name and a sound  
of quiet humming

they are dancing  
slowly around the room  
her head rests  
on his shoulder  
she is still asleep

he places  
a hawthorn blossom  
in her hair  
the dark thorn draws blood  
red lust on the pillow

(lust is a shade of dark red)

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Joy McCall**

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC

I have read  
and in night dreams  
I climb  
the creaking, dusty  
attic stairs

the room is cold  
violins without strings  
hang on hooks  
on all the walls  
behind me, the door shuts

some breath  
moves the candle flame  
it goes out  
the scent of dry roses  
clings to my hair

my bare feet  
catch on old silk  
and it tears . . .  
the kimono sash  
wraps around my ankle

I can hear  
a woman crying  
she whispers  
in a language  
I don't understand

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Joy McCall**

SLEEP

he works  
at the rough table  
while she sleeps  
the oil lamp flickers  
the fire burns low

moonlight  
slants across his hands  
he stops  
for a moment  
contemplating

moonlight  
and good paper  
night winds  
the sound of waves  
breaking on stones

she watches him  
for a long moment  
unseen  
then her eyes close  
she smiles, on the edge of sleep



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Sanford Goldstein**

TROUBLES

sometimes  
some kind woman  
on a journal  
has e-mails to cheer  
this often-rejected me

the world,  
has it gone insane  
this year?  
forty killed in Chicago  
on the fourth of July

at the bakery  
again on this Tuesday  
night,  
so few customers  
we buy more than we need

I watch and watch  
these contented Japanese  
babies,  
how lovely they are,  
how worried their mothers

poets  
who find voices in  
flowers, waves,  
what must human voices  
sound like to you?

afraid  
the world's going  
haywire,  
my tanka are written  
from line five to line one

no relief  
from the world's  
ills,  
even the many-colored  
cosmos flowers confused

these hospital figures  
with canes or wheelchairs  
or slouching,  
and me in my dizziness  
among the old old-timers

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Joy McCall**

BARK and MOSS

his fingers  
run over ridges and furrows  
of rough bark  
my hand beside his,  
loving the tree

crouching,  
his feet in pine needles  
and mosses  
the smell of damp earth  
tiny curling moss-fern

and he saw  
on the edge of sight  
a deer  
disturbed by our voices  
there - and then gone

my head  
is filled with images  
visions  
colours, textures, the shapes  
his voice is painting

somewhere  
off in the distance  
a song  
do you think you can tell  
heaven from hell? \*

I think I can . . .  
I have visited  
a kind of hell  
where the losses  
tumbled all over each other

a place  
where weeks and months  
were lost  
and though I searched  
I could not find them

I can trade  
noisy machines  
for tall silent trees  
or knives and needles  
for a close warm body

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

there's a voice  
singing songs I know so well  
there's the quick deer  
and bark, and moss  
and pines, and sky, and love

\* Pink Floyd: Wish you were  
here.





The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Don Wentworth &  
Joy McCall**

ALIVE

into the clearing  
we go, forgetting  
the dense woods  
forgetting the path  
goes either way

up, up, up  
round, round, round  
the swallows  
climbing, diving  
alive, alive!

*soon, lost  
disorientated  
we stop  
try to take our bearings  
write poems instead*

the petals  
of this nameless weed  
the texture  
of this unlined paper  
beckoning shadows

*trying  
to keep writing  
in straight lines  
my words begin circling  
spiralling, spinning*

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

Niagara Falls  
death is not  
the end

*we slip over  
the edge, into love*

in the house  
of morbid thoughts  
a potted tulip

*outside, a field  
of wild clover*

overcast sky  
pulling the plug  
on this July morning

*the grass, the trees  
they keep on breathing*

just when I thought  
I couldn't be more alone  
overcast sky

*clouds for company  
silent, untouchable*

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

a few tears  
and the overcast sky  
darkens

*the gentleness  
of sorrow, holds me*

bird on the wing of a soul in transit  
*one grey feather falls to the earth*

on a park bench  
a stranger shares  
her love of God  
*I take her hand  
and hold it to my cheek*

there  
among the treetops  
the poem's ending  
*the sky calls, the leaves  
tremble and fall*

sun behind clouds  
a stranger not yet open  
to kindness



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

*the slow dawning  
of an Autumn day*

quicker  
than  
quick  
the  
mole  
in  
the  
hole

*slips*

*out*

*into*

*the*

*night*

*a*

*black*

*shadow*

...

Robert Epstein San Francisco, USA

*Joy McCall Norwich, England*

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**So much wine**

on that road  
by the ghost bridge  
where we did  
the wild thing  
I think I saw blackberries

sometimes  
I want the impossible  
especially  
late at night  
when I've had too much sake

Peter Fiore & Joy McCall

the river  
flooding the road  
at today's high tide  
deep water over the bank  
where we lay in spring

in another life  
we'll sit  
in front of the fire  
and read to each other  
and drink wine

so many lives  
so many books  
so much wine  
you begin...  
once upon a time

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**No rush**

how can there be  
one way to Eternity?  
chrysanthemums and rain  
maples, monkeys and robins  
just ask the four winds...

falling leaves  
between Norwich  
and Mahopac  
when will we meet  
again?

the winds  
blow the brown leaves  
from the trees  
the robins pick worms  
where I turn the soil

we age  
ungracefully  
dancing  
through the light, the dark  
moments, hours, years

high up  
in the ghost pines  
nests of brown leaves  
for the squirrels...  
so much for winter

first snow tonight  
I sit by the fire  
no rush  
we will love each other  
in any way we can

a slow death  
the bare branches  
of the trees  
ten years gone  
no flesh on my father's bones

Peter Fiore & Joy McCall

## Sunday Meditation

quiet...  
behind this work desk a few prayers  
spill from moving lips;  
"Adonai thank You."

*quiet Sunday morning  
reading the psalmists words  
Happy the man who walks  
in the path of God*

in a pause of silence,  
listening to a messianic rabbi  
teach  
on prayer from a Jewish perspective

*the quietness of prayer  
a soft and gentle breeze  
causes the branches to sway  
a bird takes flight*

this Shabbat  
watching the return of  
drunk young-men, their antics in celebration  
of a fellow brother's bachelor party

*the contradictory nature  
of nominal Christians  
forgive me for I have sinned  
and will do once more*

fingering grandmother's rosary....  
bare branches beating the house  
in 4/4 time....  
you're still not home

*all the tortured memories  
of blow upon blow raining down  
bruises blossom all year round  
colours of abuse*

at the kitchen table  
wondering, how can a person  
hold all of that poison of abuse inside—  
downpour of cold rain

*looking at the rain soaked streets  
meditating one more time  
on the words of the psalmist  
how truthful his words.*

Matsukaze & Steve Wilkinson (a responsive dodoitsu)

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Five o'clock Train**

tonights setting sun  
the first one I've seen  
since your departure..  
darkness falls

*old gray paint peeling  
on the harbor house--  
reaching for your hand  
before the train pulls off*

into the distance  
you have gone away  
mile by lonely mile  
of blueness

*pale green day dress  
strewn across an unmade bed--  
in nearly an hour  
guests will arrive*

light from the full moon  
wraps around your skin  
we are no closer  
to the truth

The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

*always the wall of the unsaid,  
but often thought  
putting away doubts;  
I continue dressing*

I put on my doubts  
like fine woven cloth  
judge me as I stand  
just one time

*cold..  
it's the 5pm train pulling off  
whatever you have to say is  
swallowed in steam and whistle*

(Responsive dodoitsu : Steve Wilkinson & Matsukaze)



The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

**Orrin PreJean**

he absently plays with my goatee—  
seated side by side near Lake Charles  
the color of chrome

down by Miller's bistro  
an old woman tells me  
of hardships—  
her story told by the rain

winter dawn!  
this morning, washing my face  
i wonder about a dream i had that's quickly fading

head cradled in my lap like a child,  
you breathe deeply  
next to you a Communist newsletter

more melancholy than the bright moon at daybreak  
is stumping my big toe  
on my son's bike

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

### **Matsukaze**

#### Urban Existence (tanka rensaku)

this evening, not feeling like being sweet. the night pierced by various  
lights-this city of silence

\*

picked up, Sato's book of Shikishi's waka-in my reverie smelling the  
delightful body spray I wear

\*

it seems as with all things tonight, I will wrestle with words just to form a  
tanka or two

\*

there will be no nights of wet roofs, wide sleeves, peeled persimmons; or  
love discussions before dawn

\*

feeling the weight of the world, I attend service hoping for ablation of  
whatever sits heavy within me

\*

the waves of Lake Charles, wet my sleeves when i trail my fingers in the  
waters- meandering thoughts are the norm

\*

have only seen his shadow, never his face-near the small ditch, i feel his  
heartlessness in new ways

\*

brought me, a box of assorted chocolates: the scraping of bare branches  
against the upstairs window

\*

comparing this life to a string of beads, how quaint-all courtly elegance  
trashed for this urban existence

\*

over espressos, listening to him tell me about how love-starved he is.  
drifting leaves in this sudden wind

\*

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

taping "Doors are locked, use your key cards please," signs on the doors—  
another computer glitch, I'm so over this

\*

2am, still waiting for the tele-customer service rep, if only this night were  
one of my off days...

\*

unable to stomach any more conversation, runnin' to the nearest restroom—  
finding a vein for the injection...

\*

we, the human race, a species of carnivores—in this coastal city we're no  
different; always feeding on each other.

\*

shopping for dinner, passing a pile of blood red oranges i want a lover who  
will grip me 'round my waist possessively

\*

again, I've seen his shadow, seen mine as well. in the face of this child i see  
how fatherless he really is

\*

...quiet before dawn...always tossing and turning, stretching your long body  
into my sleeping space, into my life

\*

hearing conversation, from the drunk ones—how I envy their freedom still  
typing wishing this phone wouldn't ring

\*

again i waited, waited nearly four hours...passing shadows of cars and  
people—all of them: not you

\*

picking words and phrases from my mind. the mind of a playwright, an  
actor; and each tanka, a scene in a play

\*

from my perch, high in the maple shooting a snow white pheasant—home,  
washing off the day's masks

\*

some mornin's, i grab breasts that aren't there—a shaded hamlet buried in the  
thicket down in my soul

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

in a rare moment of truth, "I simply want to please the Eternal."--such sentiments, have been popping up lately

\*

too many phone numbers, of men, who aren't mine. will never be mine. why do I set myself up for misery?

\*

waiting for these tele-reps to pick up, dashing off a few tanka that comprises this current rensaku

\*

my story, aint full of silks and diamonds-its urban, passable, and sometimes downright raunchy...but its mine

\*

off day: house-air, drenched in sandalwood incense, i; in my boxers, move fluidly through this day with no cares

\*

woke up late. handled my hygiene and decided to watch Strauss's 'Salome.' -gave myself the gift of nothing

\*

reading Princess Shikishi's waka, sadness pervades---damn! I cannot live such a tortured life

\*

strolling the waterfront, this night is full of people hungrily being human--once saw a drama like this, it scared me

\*

another early morning jog--passing several fellas with shirts off--this early coolness settles into my skin nicely

\*

while cooling pasta, listening to Dorothy Moore's 'Special Occasion' can't help but smile remembering you

\*

another morning, watching 'Maude...' this hotel shows sounds of stirring... just what i really need

\*

having a pick-me-up brandy, with a professor of the Old Testament—darkness still blankets the city

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

am I foolish? or even degenerate, for sitting through this meeting; thinking of last weeks weed-high?

\*

decided to board the city bus. heading downtown to Pujo Street...someone smells of bacon and cantaloupe

\*

bathing: I lie back in steamed water listening to Stravinsky's 'Oedipus Rex--' somewhere in me, the ground shudders

\*

lonely morning: driving to work passing an old woman in tatters, pushing a basket of puppys

\*

in one week, composed two sequences of 100 tanka-a fresh pot of coffee, and three danishes for breakfast

\*

how many times does: "God'll getcha for that Walter," bring me to laughing-tears? how I'd wear Maude's clothing today

\*

sleeping light towards morning: the stirrings of my sisters, never fail to pierce this white slumber

\*

from the window, seeing the pre-dawn darkness: thinking: 'damn, id sure like it if autumn would stay

\*

all this talk, about summer bodies and other bodybuilding shit...as spring comes I recall why I despise the heat

\*

waiting, for the married-one to give me a call, a text message or something; another morning lying in bed, alone

\*

flowering hibiscus, in vivid red: lying beneath soft sheets; another dense dawn- self-love is a wonderful option

\*

pouring over, this morning's torah portion-not sure when bus comes, he bustles out of the house with no goodbye

## The Bamboo Hut Spring 2015

cold morning, leaves are damp; the parking-lot nearly empty. I'm beyond  
prepared to head home to bed

\*

"is there some man's bed i could lie down in?" this is the question i ask,  
feeling I'm dressed in a whore's skin

\*

watching them all playing bid whist, another morning; nursing a hang-  
over...in the distance, a phone rings

\*

in semi-darkness, her face seems almost wooden--both of us naked, lying in  
bed our limbs waxen through the cigarette smoke

\*

mistakenly, overhearing us speak about her loss of breasts, my son stares  
hard at her chest

\*

the 'good mornings' of the breakfast attendants, seem flat--then again,  
perhaps its me just ready for this shift to end

