



Take Five

Issue One

2021

Take Five

the journal of

tanka

gogyohka

and gogyoshi

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Craig Lincoln

Fetch

throw me the ball
I will bring it right back
again and again
I never tire of this game
but you always stop throwing

Susan Burch

twirling my finger
around the phone cord
I get tangled
in the fear
that you'll leave me

the broken zipper
on my coat
now fixed –
how cold it was
without you

baby koala –
my favorite trees
to swing on are gone...
will anything
feel like home again

a layer of clouds
covers the night sky
there are no stars
to wish upon,
no hope you'll return

burying my toes
under the sand
the relief
of finding my fears
unfounded

Roberta Beach Jacobson

the barkeep
tells me the cocktail
is refreshing
and very seductive
so is her perfume

I ponder
prairie grasses dancing
in the wind
as they mimic the sway
of Iowa's caucuses

as a storm nears
we drink in the deep pinks
of the sunset
our expensive wine bottle
unopened and forgotten

Joy McCall

when it's my time to go
I would rather drift
on pine winds
close to the earth I love
heaven can wait

the wind
blowing the grasses
brings to mind
my daughter's words -
'she who bends will never break'

Pippa Phillips

dusk
on your skin
stars
in the water
we leave our clothes on the shore

Hifsa Ashraf

in search
of knowing
who I am
I follow the snail trail
that ends nowhere

behind the folds
of my blue mask
the streams
of some endless tears
form a delta

interweaving
the strings of silence
with moonlight
until this solitude
becomes a symphony

George Schaefer

SUBLIMINAL PRODDING

Subliminal prodding
That would be really cool
get a few words scattered
about a lonely page
and make it look official

MADMAN CUTS ROPE

Madman
cuts the rope
of his servitude
with tongue sharpened
by machete like wit

Zahra Mughis

COVID isolation
turning off
morning alarm
watching the ants
go to work

briefings
on unfinished work
morning mail
another layer
of peanut butter

letting down
her wavy hair
work from home
networking
with autobots

Monk Gabriel

it waxes and wanes,
my balding memory, yet,
when she's been on my mind,
I am always reminded
by my wet sleeves

I don't know which
more breaks my trembling heart,
the passing horrors
of this brutal world . . . or its
brave beauties that yet endure

Lafcadio

finding my voice
in the darkness
of a crowded room
where no one listens
to the sounds of pain

I fell asleep
under the Hazel tree
where I dreamed
of following the river
to where I belong

facing my shadow
in the sunlight--
the queen of wands
holds a sunflower
over the black cat

cat pouncing
on its prey--
old age
begging
for reprieve

she paces
in anger
the lioness
in a cage
too small

Rose Rose

Still Ripening mangoes-
An unforgettable smell of pickles
on grandmother's hand
Besides her cold body
The rawness of her daughter's absence.

At the balcony garden
An eye splits
Into blossom;
Only to know; it too
Goes through a drift.

Michael Morell

zen master
the neighbor's
barking dog
gives me
my new mantra

grandmother's
coffin – is this too
a womb
that carries us from
one life to the next?

meditation
no one tells you
it's not all
about peacefulness –
quivering in silence again

Dave Read

laundry flows over
the top of the basket...
he picks up
his father's
bad habits

our little black dog
who wanted
his freedom
still runs away
in my dreams

he asks me for help
with his chemistry
homework...
the bonds
between fathers and sons

Shir Haberman

visions of blue jays
and cardinals at the
new bird feeder
but I guess
squirrels must eat too

never too old
to jump,
but maybe
too old
to land

Alvin Cruz

Homecoming

returning
to the attic...
boxes
of memories
now empty

Chrysanthemum

lately everyone
knows someone
dying
I am afraid
to open the door

Exodus

exit doors
man, woman, and child
fleeing their land...
lest they turn to salt
no one looked back

Innocence

from a rooftop
to an empty sky
a child mourns
the last journey
of his kite

In an Ozu Film

like the vase
in a quiet room
or the empty
bottle by the sea
I am alone

Marilyn Humbert

a family of ducks
glide about the pond edge
in sunshine
unaware of our lockdown
and Covid death numbers

the moon
obscured by clouds
I search
night for the familiar
our southern cross

my mobile
pings with a message
from Mum...
I smile, unpredictable
her predictive text

Vandana Parashar

heart heavy
with another loss
back in the house
not leaving me alone
a koel's song

calla lilies
in a chipped vase
I too
often find myself
in wrong places

I can fly
but like a kite
the world is now
the size and boundaries
of my children

every night a different moon
outside our window
we too know
each other in parts
and not quite the whole

shrinking for him
ever so slowly
he still can't find
the space
he needs

Xenia Tran

woodland pond
all day its darkness
holds the sun
in her light a siskin's song
flits above the treetops

Voima Oy

Let's move the boxes
down to the basement
We'll clean out the attic
open the windows
live among the trees

In the rain,
umbrellas opening
exiting the subway
black flowers
blooming

She wants a butterfly backpack
and masks to match
in the aisle of school supplies
past the pens and notebooks
people in line for vaccines.

hanging out the laundry
sweeping maple seeds
in the soft morning breeze
two cicada shells
clinging to the yard bag

Carole Johnston

the old monk
Ryukan wrote of
the Way
like the Tao of Jesus
in the beginning, a path

in my book
I color green synapses
sparkling words
inside the brains of poets
a crayon called "mystery"

the poet
bruised by words hidden
beneath
a hundred mattresses like
that princess and the pea

in the trash
forgotten words scribbled
on dreams
found in ancient boxes
we prepare to move

old journal
my words so neat
thoughts so
full of adventure
edge of chaos or bliss

B.A. France

"Transliteration"

she opens
his complete works
on the screen
and is lost in the forest
my Titania

"Contacts"

phone buzzing
unsilenced text messages
a long lost friend
who I chose to lose
long ago

"Travelogue"

the crash
of waves against the sand
on YouTube
limes and rum in her glass
on a pandemic beach

Richa Sharma

two dewdrops
until they mingle
i gauge
the unknown ascent
of these weightless years

lonely cuckoo
who do you call
this busy evening
i too wait with
an empty heart

this silvery night
fever runs on like a train ...
in the wine of nescience
i give in to wayward time
and my story's whim

Cherry A

after you
walked away
a hint
of your perfume
still lingering

giving away
baby frocks
she bought ...
her last visit
to the gynaecologist

reading
his last letter
I unfold
memories
again

Christina Chin

women
come and go
where they gather water
he sneaks looks
at a forbidden love

affair of the heart
while waiting for him
her thick black hair
now
strands of white

cut chillies
in a tiny saucer
soy sauce
slurping noodles
,, slurping

