

Poetry Series

Chenou Liu
- poems -

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Chenou Liu()

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Chen-ou Liu was a college teacher, essayist, editor, and two-time winner of the national Best Book Review Radio Program Award. In 2002, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Ajax, a suburb of Toronto. There, he continues to struggle with a life in transition and translation. Featured in *New Resonance 7: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku*, and listed as one of the top ten haiku poets for 2011 (*Simply Haiku*, 9: 3,4, Autumn/Winter 2011) , Chen-ou Liu is the author of five books, including *Following the Moon to the Maple Land* (First Prize Winner of the 2011 Haiku Pix Chapbook Contest) and *A Life in Transition and Translation* (Honorable Mention, 2014 Turtle Light Press Biennial Haiku Chapbook Contest) . His tanka and haiku have been honored with 103 awards, including Certificate of Merit by the Tankagendai Corp, 7th International Tanka Festival Competition, 2012, Tanka First and Third Places in the 2011 San Francisco International Competition, Grand Prix in the 2010 Kloster Ivanic Haiku Contest, and First Prize Winner in the 2010 Haiku International Association Haiku Contest. Read more of his poems at [Poetry in the Moment](#),

"One Year After" Tanka

one year
after the Trump victory
young women
screaming "sadtastical"
into the gray sky

Chenou Liu

A Bittersweet Year Of Travel, A Haiku Sequence

Calgary Stampede
her harsh words pile up
along my spine

Antwerp fortress
a raven's caw darkens
the autumn sky

its shadow
overlaps with mine
Minerva Statue

Newstead Abbey
under the starless sky
echoes of an old tale

listening to the sunshine
through the windows
Sagrada Familia

Manneken Pis
between tree-lined streets
winter drizzle

'Bruges in Spring'
a chair and I, a tourist
in the empty room

insects trilling
Musical Instrument Museum
in spring sunlight

summer in Brussels
Famous Beer Inspector
on their T-shirts

CN Tower
penetrating the moon
under and alone

Chenou Liu

A Book Of Poetry Yet To Be Published

A Tanka Prose

A man shaped like a Henry Moore sculpture lies at the foot of the Toronto skyline. Red and black slashes cut the sky above him. 'A Meeting Place of Minds' is printed in small letters at the top of the book. My Chinese signature scrawls across a water-stained map of Taiwan at the bottom.

the muse screams
but waves of nostalgia
are much louder...
the blank page's stare
intimidating me

Note: The origin of the name 'Toronto' comes from the Huron word toran-ten, which literally means meeting place.

Chenou Liu

A Chinese Street Singer

A Haibun

I stroll down Spadina Avenue, passing by a Chinese street singer. Slowly, I move out of earshot. I come across curious tourists, mingle with bargain hunters, and am grabbed by smiling vendors. But the song chases after me, manifesting itself as my lips move in reflex.

store window...
afraid of this
reflected face

Chenou Liu

A Day At The Festival: A Haiku Sequence

two Chinese dressed
in Lederhosen and Dirndls
Munich's blue sky

Italians sing
Bavarian drinking songs
a German girl's smile

Oktoberfest
a sea of human heads
inside the beer tent

House of Horrors
hand in hand an old couple
giggling

slanted sunlight
in my gingerbread heart
her bite mark

a roller coaster
against the sunset sky
Sayonara

note:

Oktoberfest is a 16-day festival held annually in Munich, Germany, which kicks off today. Last year, this world-famous event attracted just short of 7 million party-goers worldwide.

Chenou Liu

A Day In Her Shadowy Life For The New Pope

A Tanka Prose for the New Pope

Earlier this morning, hundreds of thousands flooded St. Peter's Square, forming crescent-moon crowds around giant video screens. Basking in an emotional send-off at his final general audience, the pope stressed, 'Loving the church also means having the courage to take difficult and anguished choices, ...'

With an emotionless look on her pale face, Mary stared at the TV screen in her rented attic room. As a white cloud of doves ascends into the sky and circles the square, cries of 'Viva il Papa!' burst from the crowds.

'did you weep
when I was abused? '
she asks
with trembling hands...
wooden Jesus on the wall

Notes:

1 'Viva il Papa!' means 'Long live the Pope! '

2 According to the New Testament, Jesus cried three times, and 'Jesus wept' is the shortest verse. It is found in John's narrative of the death of Lazarus, a follower of Jesus.

Chenou Liu

A Dead Man Writing

A Tanka Prose

for Ernest Hemingway who claimed that

The important thing for a writer is to tell a good story...

The best ones are liars.

at daybreak

Death has a boot

on my neck

the first line for him

I'm a slave to words

Who is really interested in reading your poetry? A smirk on his face.

I have nothing important to write, I say, All I can do is sit down at the computer and bleed. If no one reads it, you, Death, will be my reviewer.

Chenou Liu

A Dedication To You, The Reader

A Haibun

"It is your interest in my haiku that has enabled this slim volume to continue its journey into the promised land of old souls. The NeverEnding Story of imagination carries us further..."

The hunter's moon cracking in the attic window. And water stains on his unfinished manuscript, the one not for the faint of heart or for those who are loyal subjects of the totalitarian shasei regime.

"On the Road" leans
against "Essential Haiku"
his cold breath

Note: For those who are new immigrants or seasonal workers, the shasei regime (euphemistically) means the objective realist regime.

Author's Note: A Dedication To You, The Reader is a sequel to Winter Thoughts (for Mary Oliver) , whose opening haiku and prose paragraph are as follows:

rejection slip
a sunflower bending
to the wind

I often get editorial advice like this:

'You will notice that we veer away from authorial comment, abstract language, and the imposition of human qualities on the natural world. Instead, we choose haiku that achieve resonance through the juxtaposition of disparate images, credibly present in the same place at the same time.'

Read its full text at

A Drunken Poem

loneliness
grabs me
by the balls
my mind
begins to tremble
a poem
is thrown out
of my shadow

Honorable Mention, 2013 Ultra Short Poem Competition
held by The Ontario Poetry Society

Chenou Liu

A Gendai Haiku About War

rewriting haiku...
the third Sino-Japanese war
erupts in my room

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About A Deceased Friend

a deceased friend
taps me on the shoulder -
plum blossoms falling

Grand Prize: Poem of the Year (2011)

Note: {The Heron's Nest 'published 510 poems during 2011. Three hundred nine of them received votes. Here are the poems selected and rated most highly.'

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About A Drunk Poet On New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve
a drunk poet face-to-face
with the moon

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About A Monarch Butterfly

a monarch
fluttering its wings
I smell their shape

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Afghanistan's First Female Rapper

Kabul at twilight
Soosan Firooz's first rap song
lingers on

note: With her rap song, Suhrab Sirat, Soosan Firooz is making history as Afghanistan's first female rapper. Listen to Her song,

The opening lines are as follows:

Hear my stories and hear
Hear my sorrows, my sadness
Hear the story of my displacement and homelessness
We were lost, we were lost, lost around the world
War drove me out of my homeland
We were frozen, they wore us coffins

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Anne Frank House

last pencil marks
on the wall
Anne Frank House at dusk

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About 'Berlin 1961'

'Berlin 1961' -
walls within walls
within walls?

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Dark Thoughts

dark thoughts
clawing at my mind -
New Year's snow

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Double Love Suicide

a black butterfly
circles the new gravestone...
double love suicide

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Dueling

autumn twilight...
dueling with my shadow
once again

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Education

the teacher asks me
to write 'I will not...' ten times
plum petals drifting

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Eu Election

for British Voters

EU election:
three goldfish on the floor
gasping for air

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Gaza

Gaza at dawn
the shriek of a bullet
tearing the wind

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About God

wrapping my head
around her word of God
the smell of snowflakes

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Heated Haiku Debate

heated haiku debate...
I peek through the gap
in his argument

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About John F. Kennedy

JFK in Dallas:
gunshots shattered an old man's
only memory

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Laughing Buddha

New Year's morning
a Laughing Buddha
among the debris

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Mt. Fuji

morning birdsong...
I practice pronouncing
'Fujisan'

Special Recognition, 2012 Fujisan Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About My Cheek

Cherry petals
on my cheek
I turn the other

Sakura Award, 2013 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About New Immigrants

new immigrant...
face-to-face
with falling snow

Published in World Haiku Review, April 2012
Second Place, Shintai Haiku

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About One Man's Moon

for Cid Corman, Translator of 'One Man's Moon: Poems by Basho & Other Japanese Poets'

the scent of sunlight...
tattered edges
of 'One Man's Moon'

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Prince Harry's Naked Army

Harry's Naked Army!
counting summer stars
through my window

Note: my haiku was written in response to the following headline:

Harry's naked Army! Facebook group supporting prince's nude antics now has 32,000 fans

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Scooping The Moon

from Lake Ontario

I scoop the Taiwan moon

distant sirens

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Shifting Shadows

New Year's Eve
at the bus stop
shifting shadows

Chinese Translation by Chen-ou Liu

???
?????
?????

Romanian Translation by Eduard Tara

Ajun de An Nou
în statie
umbre iritate

Second Sharpening The Green Pencil Anthology, 2013

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Book Of Job

a get-well card
between the pages of 'Job'
winter light

Note: The Book of Job is one of the Writings (Ketuvim) of the Hebrew Bible, and the first poetic book in the Christian Old Testament. Addressing the theme of God's justice in the face of human suffering—or more simply, 'Why do the righteous suffer?'—it is a rich theological work, setting out a variety of perspectives... excerpted from the Wikipedia Entry, 'Book of Job'

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Cold Moon

the cold moon...
I want to touch her
into words

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Frog Pond

frog pond at twilight
a thought tugged at the corner
of my mind

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Iron Lady

who claimed that '... there is no such thing as society... There are individual men and women, and there are families'

'Iron Lady Dead! '
raindrops in a homeless man's
paper coffee cup

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Moon Festival

Moon Festival
sharing imported mooncakes
with my old dog

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Neverending Story

drunk on reading
'The Neverending Story'
shapes of this spring night

Note: The Neverending Story (German: Die unendliche Geschichte) is a German fantasy novel by Michael Ende, first published in 1979. The standard English translation, by Ralph Manheim, was first published in 1983. The novel was later adapted into several films. - an excerpt from the Wikipedia entry, 'The Neverending Story.'

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About The Weight Of A Shadow

frog pond...
the weight of a shadow
on the lotus leaf

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Touching

the cold moon...
I want to touch her
into words

Italian Translation

luna invernale...
cercando di toccarla
con le parole

French Translation by Eric Schulthess

Lune d'hiver
Je cherche à la toucher
Avec des mots

Selected Haiku, 2013 International Matsuo Basho Award Contest
Anthologized in AKISAME: The International Matsuo Basho Award Anthology
(published by The Italian Haiku Association, IHA)

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Trayvon Martin Day

Trayvon Martin Day
a white girl shares her popsicle
with a black boy

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Van Gogh's Ear

sickle moon
rubber copies of Van Gogh's ear
scattered on the ground

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Writing Haiku

writing haiku...
his fingers
numb with counting

Chenou Liu

A Haiku About Yellow Brick Road

yellow brick road
a faint echo
of horses' hooves

Title Poem, 2013 Haiku Canada Members' Anthology.

Chenou Liu

A Haiku For Ai Weiwei, China's Most Influential Artist

'What the hell is art? '

Ai WeiWei

in the cooking pot

Chenou Liu

A Haiku For My Muse

if not for my muse
snowflakes are snowflakes
are snowflakes

Chenou Liu

A Haiku Of Longing

cherry petals
falling on cherry petals...
I dust your photo

Sakura Award
2010 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

A Haiku Written For International Women's Day

sunlit Women's Day...
pink-haired mother and daughter
sing Peace Now! with hands

Chenou Liu

A Home Away From Home

where the sky
meets the winter desert...
refugee tents

Arzu walks out of the tent to meet her friends, waiting in line with hundreds of others for water distribution. A wisp of cloud drifts by. It reminds her of the camp teacher's departing words, 'Those puffy, sheep-like clouds you're looking at come from Syria. You will all return home one day, I promise.'

Honorable Mention, 2015 United Haiku and Tanka Society Samurai Haibun Contest

Chenou Liu

A Home Away From Home, A Haibun

where the sky
meets the winter desert...
refugee tents

Arzu walks out of the tent to meet her friends, waiting in line with hundreds of others for water distribution. A wisp of cloud drifts by. It reminds her of the camp teacher's departing words, 'Those puffy, sheep-like clouds you're looking at come from Syria. You will all return home one day, I promise.'

Honorable Mention, 2015 United Haiku and Tanka Society Samurai Haibun Contest

Chenou Liu

A House Divided In El Paso, Texas

A Senryu Set

high noon heat
a Trump fan talks himself
into a rage

debate replay
her Mexican parrot
cursing Donald Trump

Chenou Liu

A Kid And White Man Tanka

a kid trying
to kick sea foam back
where it came from
I remember the first time
a white man yelled at me

Runner-Up, Tanka Section, 2016 British Haiku Society Awards

Judge's Commentary: This bold and thought-provoking tanka is uncomfortable without being confrontational. It provides food for thought, in a world where it is much needed. In particular, the third line 'where it came from' is fascinating. This sentence alone, can be seen to sum up the tanka, and splendidly so. Racism is not something all of us encounter; it is multifaceted, and often hidden. Yet the poet succeeds in bringing the issue to the surface, using simple straightforward images, such as 'a white man yelled at me' and 'to kick sea foam back'. The sea in its vastness, in this context, can be seen to represent those things we cannot fully grasp or understand, something that perhaps makes us feel small, afraid even. The use of 'kick' implies aggression. Add to it, the simple recollection of an event that happened in the past - 'I remember the first time' - but is still playing on the person's mind... Like sea foam reaching the shore, so does a memory resurface here, prompted by the simple act of a child? This is a great example of how tanka can be used to explore personal experience in a wider cultural and political context, without losing its lyricism or reflective nature. In such, it has at its core, the power to instigate change.

Chenou Liu

A Kyoka About Being Born-Again

crawling out
from under dead bodies
of my poetry
this Easter Sunday
I become a born-again poet

Chenou Liu

A Kyoka About Sexting

the last straw
in the you-pull-I-pull
relationship
with my sexting partner:
cobra tattoo on her arm

Chenou Liu

A Life In Four Seasons

A Haiku Sequence

I write her
one poem every day
spring dewdrops

a butterfly
tattooed on her buttock
summer heat

autumn dawn
before the mirror I count
gray hairs

snow on snow
thoughts of her emerge
one at a time

Chenou Liu

A Lonely Business

A Tanka Prose

I've pursued my poem throughout the night. The soft patter of rain tapping on the window. I gaze upon the ellipses at the end of the poem; they speak of falling into spaces untold, unknown, and strike me with their longing...

in the sky
a scribble of swallows -
as if
writing keeps me
away from myself

Chenou Liu

A Man And A Woman

'You are my only' ...
he vows to her, and then
from the corner of his eye
glances at a blonde
sitting across from them

'I regret marrying' ...
she screams at him, and then
from the back of her mind
a voice is echoing,
'You are my only' ...

Chenou Liu

A Man Who Read Basho

A Haibun

he dies
under the staircase
an old dog

He often came to the library shortly before it opened and wouldn't leave until the chief librarian kicked him out. He spent most of his time leafing through old encyclopedias and vintage copies of *The Paris Review*. He wasn't much of a talker, but occasionally he did the monologous talk-to-the-audience speech on what he had read or thought about.

The week before he died, he stopped me on the way out and surprised me by saying, "I've enjoyed reading some of your haiku and quotation tweets. My favorite is 'to write haiku is to create an imaginary pond with real frogs in it.'" He then slipped a piece of crumpled paper into my hand and left.

lotus pond...
all that remains
of frog song

Chenou Liu

A Memorial Haiku For George MCGovern

this is a time
not for death, but for life
his words linger on...

Note: View the extended excerpts of the 2005 documentary, *One Bright Shining Moment: The Forgotten Summer of George McGovern*,

Chenou Liu

A Memorial Haiku For Maurice Sendak

last rays of the sun...
dog-eared Where the Wild Things Are
spread out on my desk

Note: Maurice Sendak, widely considered the most important children's book artist of the 20th century, died at the age of 83 yesterday. His genre-breaking and career-making book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, was published in 1963, the year I was born.

Chenou Liu

A Neverending Story

A Tanka Prose

in dreams
her hand touches
my body...
warm one day
stone cold the next

Every time I sketch a sex scene in a poem, my ex sits on my conscience as if she is tugging at my elbow and yelling, 'Stop.'

Chenou Liu

A New Beginning, And Yet ...

A Haibun

first sunrise ...
to wear or not to wear
my father's face

On the night before I left for Canada, Father said to me in a matter-of-fact tone, 'The most valuable thing I've given you is your life. From now on, it solely belongs to you, and you're on your own journey. My final words to you are that the life of your own should be spent this way: when looking back at it, you'll not have regrets of any wasted time or the failure to accomplish something significant.'

deepening twilight ...
once again I read
Basho's death poem

Note: Historically speaking, Basho didn't write the formal death poem on his deathbed, but the following haiku, being his last poem recorded, is generally viewed as his poem of farewell.

sick on my journey,
only my dreams will wander
these desolate moors

Chenou Liu

A Night Of Dreams Haiku

a night of dreams
her tangled black hair
covers my face

Chenou Liu

A Part, Yet Apart

A Tanka Prose

"The letter 'l' is pronounced with a large flap of the tongue. In contrast, the best way to pronounce 'r' is to move your tongue as little as possible when making the sound, ' my eager ESL tutor tells me from across the table. After several attempts at 'alive and arrive, ' 'flee and free.' and 'blight and bright, ' I recognize a helpless look on her face. She is twenty years younger than I with dyed blonde hair. Then, in a low voice, she says, 'Sometimes, I'm jealous of you. You speak and act like you know who you are. Hovering between two worlds, I feel pressured to be loyal to the old one while living in the new, approved of on either side of my hyphenated identity: Chinese-Canadian.'

she murmurs,
'I'm homesick at home...'
I respond
in halting English
'the past is my home'

Chenou Liu

A Pool Of Sky Haiku

moving day...
cherry petals floating
on a pool of sky

Honorable Mention, 2015 Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

A River Of Memories

A Haibun for Norman Maclean and Ralph Wood

a snake slithers
into tall grass -
year's end

Life is flowing on like a river. Sometimes with murmurs, bending this way or that. It is swift, oftentimes voiceless yet continuous. Every year at the time when the New Year is in and the old out, a burning desire emerges from my heart and pushes me to re-live those moments of being.

a wrinkled face -
waning blue moon
in the river

In and through my remembrance of things past, all of them are eventually merging into one remembered moment. The river of my life runs through it, 'a river that is always cutting and curving, now hurrying, then eddying, sometimes draining into dry channels, but still carrying its load of soil and rocks.'

Chenou Liu

A River Of Words

I drink the silence
of the crescent moon
in a river of words

Chenou Liu

A Room Of His Own

A Haibun

In the poems we reveal ourselves. In prose others. - Phyllis Webb,
Notebook,1969-1973

cold moonlight
books of poetry
stacked floor to ceiling

Hearing of my housemate's suicide was like being stabbed in the back with a sharp knife, and yet I barely knew him. Only his work and the scratching sounds of pencil on paper that came from his room. 'His noisy silence (in an emphatic tone) hangs over us like a long, dark cloud, ' one of my other housemates once said to me.

drafts of old poems
on the water-stained wall
a starry sky

One week before his death, I was standing on the edge of the table hanging a clock, when he passed through the living room. He suddenly turned to me, saying, 'I have this insatiable urge to commit pencil to paper. It soothes my soul.' He went back to his room and continued to spin poems out of the gathering darkness.

Chenou Liu

A Set Of Tanka For Emily Dickinson

clad in lily-white
she sweeps into each room
and out again....
the woman in my vision
remains a winter dream

loneliness...
the thing with feathers
perches on my heartstrings
singing 'there is no there there'
throughout this snowy night

Chenou Liu

A Short Poem About My White Night

gusting winds lift up
a corner of the night
chilled, I surrender
to the inky sky

Chenou Liu

A Sting To The Heart

A Tanka Set

the Pacific
between my hometown and me...
after the rain
a rainbow appears
arching a passageway

twelfth year
to see maple leaves
change color...
memories fill my body
like flesh and blood

Chenou Liu

A Stranger In A Land Of Strangers

A Tanka Prose

a bitter wind
after the inauguration
the white fence
between my neighbor and me
three feet higher

I peep through gaps in the fence
and see... what do I see?

A dream house made up of words
and a neon sign on its roof,
flashing 'Americans First.'

I can't live in this promised land anymore.
The land is polluted by drunken words.
And the milk is sour, the honey tasteless.

Chenou Liu

A Tale Of Two Laredos

A Haibun

The fireman from Nuevo Laredo looks at the body, muttering, "This is the 600th body I've pulled out of the Rio Grande." There is noisy silence between the two of us as I turn and see a long line of trucks crossing into Texas. We continue to make our way downriver and, upon turning a bend, I see a boy and his dog caught in branches at the river's edge.

one howl, then many ...
the imprint of an eagle
on the winter sky

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About An Endless Stream Of Thens

the 4th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

'to me, time is
an endless stream of thens'
I turn away
from this new Canadian
to avoid his gaze

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Anna Karenina

to be her age
again, surrounded
by that blue mist
my tanka acts like
Anna Karenina

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Chinese New Year

The 10th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

alone
on Chinese New Year
I raise my glass
to invite the bright moon
... a party of three

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences,') , Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing is first English language tanka sequence about diasporic experiences. In the sequence, I adopt an intersectional approach to exploring a wide range of issues related to immigration, English learning, racialized identity, racism, job seeking, colonization, acculturation,...etc. You can read the whole sequence,

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About English Wordmines

like a coolie
laboring in English wordmines
for seven years...
the scars in his mind
the hole in his heart

for ??? (Chen-ou Liu's Chinese name) who has lost his Chinese soul

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Formosa (Beautiful Island)

In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it 'Ilha Formosa, ' which means "Beautiful Island."

all of a sudden...
my vision blurring
and the words
in 'From Far Formosa'
lifting off the page

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Haiku Writing

a frog jumps
in my haiku draft
ripples
to the page's edge
and beyond

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Illness

after surgery
both of us said nothing...
her red bra
in the corner of my mind
begins to change color

2nd Place, the 60th Annual Contest 2012
held by Pennsylvania Poetry Society

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Immigrants

the 6th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

red question mark
added to the title
of my last essay,
We Are All Immigrants:
The Past as a Foreign Country

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Inner Emigré For Seamus Heaney

the 5th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

inner émigré
rolling off my tongue...
the professor's
right eye flickers
in a long shadow

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

The Irish writer Seamus Heaney, who won the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature, died today at the age of 74.

'inner émigré' in the tanka comes from his work

Below is an excerpt from George Morgan's interview with Seamus Heaney:

— You once wrote of yourself as an “inner émigré, ” a term that has been bandied about a lot since then. Do you still think of yourself in this way?

8As far as possible, you try to remain a mystery to yourself. Living in Ireland, not being an exile, living in Ireland as a social creature, as a familiar citizen, I think there is a great danger that one’s social persona might overwhelm one’s daimon — if you’ll permit me such a grand term... And so what one is always trying to do is displace oneself to another place or space. In my case, I’ve been very lucky to have had a cottage in Wicklow where I am literally displaced from my usual Dublin surroundings and indeed Wicklow is where I first thought of myself as being an inner émigré. Since 1988, thanks to the great kindness of Ann Saddlemyer, I’ve been able to own the cottage and to think of it as my “place of writing.” When I said “inner émigré, ” I meant to suggest a state of poetic stand-off, as it were, a state where you have slipped out of your usual social persona and have entered more creatively and fluently into your inner being. I think it is necessary to shed, at least to some extent, the social profile that you maintain elsewhere. “Inner émigré” once had a specific meaning, of course, in the 1920s and 30s in Soviet Russia. It referred to someone who had not actually gone into

exile but who lived at home disaffected from the system. Well, to some extent that was true of myself. Certainly, in relation to Northern Ireland.

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Job Hunting

the Maple Leaf
flapping in summer heat
no Canadian experience
no job... no job
no Canadian experience

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Minimum Wage

snowflakes drifting
on this Good Friday night
men and women
chanting, 'minimum wage,
maximum outrage! '

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Minimum Wage Workers

'life is best
understood backwards'
he whispers...
side by side two engineers
working at Tim Hortons

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Mohawk Youth

a Mohawk youth
and an old Canadian
shout at each other...
'we're here because we're here
if you must have a reason'

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Obama And Chávez

(for Allen Ginsberg)

leaning closer
Obama touches Chávez's
lips with his...
swaying in the sunset
the Queer Film Fest poster

Note: L5 refers to The Anarchist Queer Film Fest held at The Cineforum

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Racism

their coarse voices
Wow! Chinaman s-peak-s En-gli-sh
amplified
by a room of silence
... my Bruce Lee kick in the air

Note: Bruce Lee (27 November 1940 - 20 July 1973) was a Chinese American and Hong Kong actor, and founder of the Jeet Kune Do (The Way of the Intercepting Fist) martial arts movement. He is highly-regarded and most-loved by his movie fans and martial art followers, viewed by many martial art commentators as 'inarguably' the greatest martial arts star of his generation.

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Revision

This evening
I took a comma out
of the poem
summer stars reflected
on the lake of my mind

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Shanghai Residents

Goethe and Schiller
stand in the cobblestone square
Shanghai residents
come and go daily
without casting glances

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About So-Called Clichéd Imagery

A ship perched
atop forest branches...
I glimpse
the face of the Muse
in clichéd imagery

Note: The opening lines refer to the iconic image in Werner Herzog's one of most acclaimed films, *Fitzcarraldo*.

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About So-Called 'News'

not so-called news
another Chinese jumps
off the roof...
on the nightstand, his dog-eared
'Lament for a Nation'

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About The '3/5 Compromise'

written for Black History Month, which is celebrated in North America in February

Emory President praised
the three-fifths compromise...
on the backs
of a row of black students
This is 5/5 outrageous

Note: 'The 1787 three-fifths compromise allowed each slave to be counted as three-fifths of a person in determining how much Congressional power the Southern states would have.'

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About The Many-Mouthed Bird

nostalgia
is a many-mouthed bird
all winter long
singing, Please let me haunt
as scent on your pillow

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About The Muse And Me

clichés in my poem
audible but muted...
a new round
of midnight peace talks
between the Muse and me

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About The Poet

The poet is a man
who can string a few words
seamlessly
these words pass through my fingers
through my heart and mind

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About The Word, Jew

line upon line
page after page
the word
Jew
six million times

for Phil Chernofsky, author of *And Every Single One Was Someone*

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Time

casting no glances
at me
Time is a hectic traveller -
I've greyed
inside out

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Toronto

They claim
Toronto means 'meeting place'
in Huron...
'foreign credential' tastes good
on the know-it-all's tongue

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Two Solitudes

'in Search of Lost Time'
'a la recherche du temps perdu'
new Canadian,
old Quebecer... two solitudes
in the Toronto sunlight

Chenou Liu

A Tanka About Writing

once again
I rip my paper
to pieces -
on a moonlit night
the words dancing in my mind

Chenou Liu

A Tanka For Basho And Heidegger

slanted moonlight
on 'The Essential Basho'...
the ancients follow
behind us in our thinking
and yet they come to meet us

Chenou Liu

A Tanka For Michael Brown's Funeral

a baseball cap
on his gold-and-black coffin...
a silent cry
from the blood-stained ground
'no justice, no peace'

Chenou Liu

A Tanka For Mormon Founder Joseph Smith

Written in response to the official disclosure: The Mormon founder Joseph Smith had up to 40 wives, some already married and one only 14 years old.

in twilight
Joseph Smith and Emma
holding hands
on Temple Square, I stand firm
with my drunken shadow

Chenou Liu

A Tanka Written For The Iraq War's 10th Anniversary

Iraqi children
glued to a small TV:
he stands firmly
under a banner which reads
'Mission Accomplished'

Note: 4,488 soldiers died in the Iraq War, and there is no official record of violent civilian deaths following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Chenou Liu

A Transplanted Life

A Haibun

Since I opened the pages of 'Being and Time, ' his words, 'Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is, ' have lingered in the back of my mind for a week, like a silent check on my immigration dream: being a poet who can write in an adopted tongue and find his own way by moonlight.

At twilight, while walking on a wooden path around Lake Ontario, I hear the sound of the grass growing beneath my feet, and the air is filled with the scent of wild flowers. Just a stone's throw away, two seagulls take flight for the lake.

dewdrops on a leaf
the notes of an erhu
come from afar

Chenou Liu

A Walking Shadow

A Tanka Prose

stage lights on...
my copy of 'Macbeth'
battered
and its cover spotted
as if by white molds

I start reciting in a hoarse voice, 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow...' In the back of my mind, I wonder if there is another tomorrow for a gentile like me in this promised land.

Chenou Liu

A World Of One Color Tanka

white neighbors
who shout 'no more immigrants'
and I now live
in a world of one color:
snow falling on snow

Chenou Liu

A Year Gone With The Wind (Tanka Sequence)

I gaze
with my shadow
at the spring moon
that used to perch
on our shared dream

I dust
our photos taken years ago
wondering
if there's a Gobi Desert
in a corner of her heart

drinking alone
under an autumn sky
in my glass
I see her moon face
of three loves ago

snowing outside
I sit at a window
drinking coffee
the old self walks into
the summer of '67

Chenou Liu

A Year Of Solitude, A Haiku Sequence

to leave or to stay...
the light and dark
of a spring wind

childhood summer...
learning the language
of butterflies

ninth autumn...
facing the Pacific
I undress my thoughts

a winter sunset
over the Rocky Mountains
I am not myself

New Year's Eve
after the fireworks
a moonlit cobweb

Chenou Liu

Aa Meeting Senryu (Comic Haiku)

AA meeting
the stony silence
after 'I used to be...'

Chenou Liu

Abortion Clinic Tanka

alone outside
the abortion clinic...
a teenager
stretches her hand to catch
falling rose petals

Chenou Liu

Absence Haiku

the shape
of her absence
new moon

Honorable Mention, 18th Annual Mainichi Haiku Contest (2014)

Chenou Liu

Absent Presence, A Haiku Set

wings of a crow
beating winter stars...
her last breath

my first talk
with God...
stratus clouds

Chenou Liu

Adter 9/11 Tanka

'after 9/11
I had to shave off
my long beard...'
the new temp tells me
with a stained-teeth smile

Chenou Liu

Aegean Shore Haiku

Aegean shore...
soaked teddy bear
and dead child

Chenou Liu

Affair Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'you have affair
written all over your face...'
taste of spring rain

Chenou Liu

After Breakup Sex Senryu (Comic Haiku)

after breakup sex...
moonlight fills her side
of the bed

Chenou Liu

After Election Senryu (Comic Haiku)

after election
Grandpa rearranges the rocks
in his Zen garden

Chenou Liu

After Love Haiku

after love
a long silence...
then our laughter

Chenou Liu

After September 11 Tanka

inspired by the 9/11 Memorial Fountain

at the footprint
of each tower that once stood
vast emptiness
(loss and grief) surrounded
by four walls of water

Chenou Liu

After The Election Haiku

red-hot sex aftertheelectionallisforgotten

Chenou Liu

Aftermath

A Tanka Prose

in Notre Dame Square
a blindfolded young man
with a sign:
'I am a Muslim,
hug me if you trust me'

An awkward laughter embracing the square. A lineup starts to form before this bearded man. In the shafts of sunlight, particles are dancing and twinkling like tiny stars. To me, this world of wars today rearranges itself into a poem in the human form.

Chenou Liu

Aftermath (A Tanka Set)

first confession
after the election:
Father, I've sinned;
I did not choose
the lesser of two evils

the sugary bust
of Donald Trump
was stolen...
a Mexican migrant
smiling to himself

Chenou Liu

Aftermath For Muslims

A Tanka Prose

in Notre Dame Square
a blindfolded young man
with a sign:
'I am a Muslim,
hug me if you trust me'

An awkward laughter embracing the square. A lineup starts to form before this bearded man. In the shafts of sunlight, particles are dancing and twinkling like tiny stars. To me, this world of wars today rearranges itself into a poem in the human form.

Chenou Liu

After-Party Haiku

after-party
we blow out candles
to hear the stars

Chenou Liu

'Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry" Tanka

in the cold air
'Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry" poster
hangs unmoving
maple trees overshadow
the Chinese Consulate

Chenou Liu

Alienation

A Haibun

At daybreak, I wake up from a recurring dream: I ride the Mongolian horse through snowy fields deeper into the unknown world of one color.

a bowl of congee
next to a cup of coffee...
exile and after

Can I find out now what A thought of me? Why did L stand before I, blocking the sky on Canada Day? And what did E want to be added to? At last...will my being mean anything for N or for the rest of the word?

Chenou Liu

All Hallows' Eve Haiku

a shadow
looming over me
All Hallows' Eve

Chenou Liu

All Of Yesterday Inside Me?

A Haiku Set

this starless night...
the same room, the same face
in the attic window

'same old, same old...'
maple leaves turning
red and gold

Chenou Liu

Alley Dog Tanka

an alley dog
stops barking at midnight...
the silence
of my winter dream
becoming darker

Chenou Liu

Alone With My Thoughts Haiku

alone with my thoughts -
an owl drifts moth-like
over the field

Chenou Liu

Alternative Fact For Trumplanders

A poem should be equal to:

Not true.

- Archibald MacLeish, 'Ars Poetica'

RealNews headline:

the Twitter war

to end all wars

'I approve this message' appears in bold letters at the lower right hand corner of the ad. Under the provision is the icon of a new red baseball cap emblazoned with the words 'Make America Great Today.'

Chenou Liu

Alternative Facts Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a neon sign
on the White House roof:
Alternative Facts

Chenou Liu

Always The Moon

written for the Chinese Mid-Autumn Moon Festival

empty driveway
and maple leaves...
harvest moon rising

the harvest moon
lends me a shadow...
party of three

Chenou Liu

Always The Moon: A Haiku Sequence

half moon rising
our heart with initials
on the tree stump

moonlit attic
just the two of us
my dog and I

the full moon
if only my ex
were here

old moon
silence stays
in my attic

Chenou Liu

American Dream Haiku

American dream
in each shop window
a different moon

Honorable Mention
Betty Drevniok Award Competition 2012
(held by Haiku Canada)

Chenou Liu

American Dream Senryu (Comic Haiku)

jigsaw puzzle:
group-home kids piece together
"American Dream"

Note: American Dream is FX Schmid's award-winning 750-piece jigsaw puzzle.

Chenou Liu

An Attic Poet

In exile, this black daylight, can I knock on a wall of silence to make the sound of protest?

in my throat
words just well up...
shrill of cicadas

Will the sky hold my thoughts? Looking out the window, I see a paper bag floating in the wind.

Chenou Liu

An Unofficial Story

A Haibun for Oskar

ink-black:

smoke trails a life
from the north tower

Another sleepless night. Winter moonlight on the empty side of her bed. From the bedside table, she picks up 'A Place of Remembrance: The Official Photo Book of 9/11.' She stares at the book for a moment. The tears roll down her face as she rips out some of the pages. With a sigh, she puts the torn-out pages in reverse order. When she flips through them, dozens of people are flying through the windows back into the building.

Chenou Liu

And The Spring Will Come

A Haibun

He can write in English, states the dog-eared Chinese-English dictionary on the coffee-stained desk. A German Shepherd lives with him, says the attic wall with an old map of Taiwan on it. But he can't stand Canadian food, observes a line of jars of salted bamboo shoots. Except food, everything looks OK, they say in unison.

the stillness
of this morning
...tenth winter

Chenou Liu

Anger Management Senryu (Comic Haiku)

hitting the couch
with a tennis racket
anger management

Chenou Liu

Angered Souls Tanka

in Hiroshima
I wake to the cry
of cicadas...
under the grass
what's left of angered souls

Chenou Liu

Angst Tanka

everything I wrote
brought me to the bottom
of a wine bottle...
in the last dropp from his glass
I catch a glimpse of myself

Anthologized in AHA: The Anthology

Chenou Liu

Another Pnin

A Haibun for Vladimir Nabokov

I hate hearing myself speaking English. My voice sounds inhuman... mechanical. In the strain of translating a Chinese word into its English equivalent, the spontaneity and natural quality of my speech are lost. I feel that I'm falling out of the tightly knit fabric of emotional vocabulary into a hole-filled net of linguistic signifiers.

April snow...
not a word passes over
my tongue

Chenou Liu

Another Supermoon Haiku

after a fight...
the two of us gazing
at the supermoon

Chenou Liu

Another Year

A Haiku Sequence

hometown memories...
spring water
against my legs

something old
that is always new
summer stars

autumn sunset
on a yellow brick road
I go skyward

a fleeting dream
in winter moonlight
notes of an erhu

my dog and I
in a patch of sunlight
New Year's morning

Frogpond,36: 2, Spring/Summer 2013

Fear of Dancing, Red Moon Anthology of English Language Haiku 2013

Chenou Liu

Another Year, A Haibun

sourdough smell of age
the cold rain pattering
against motel windows

'Oh, I'm so happy with you! ' She says in a seemingly joyful yet familiar tone,
burying her face against my chest.

The intercourse seems to be shorter than last time, but I don't really mind. Just
get it done. Afterwards, I find no trace of loss or displeasure.

I sit in bed smoking, saying nothing, waiting out our time together.

few words on parting
bare branches laced together
against the dark sky

Chenou Liu

Another Year, A Haiku Sequence

The scent of plums
in a hazy moon night
writing haiku

summer breeze...
thinking of my ex's eyes
the color of the sea

off-key notes...
a maple leaf drifts in
through the window

whiskey stains
on 'One Man's Moon'
winter solstice
(for Cid Corman)

Chenou Liu

Ant Hill Haiku

a
 n t
 h i l l
onanunmarkedgrave

Chenou Liu

Any Difference?

A Haibun

leaves falling
one begging bowl
and a dog

on Progress Avenue at noon men and women in suits walk at a quick pace thus
the indifference to the homeless John Doe can't remember the human faces
moving past thus the indifference toward humanity and yet...

Chenou Liu

Anything New Under The Spring Sun?

a tanka sequence for the author of Ecclesiastes

I upstairs writing
my dog downstairs sleeping
silence
separates the worlds
between us

finally
I scratch an all-day itch
into a few words...
back-breaking wet snow
continues piling up

cliches in my poem
audible but muted...
a new round
of midnight peace talks
between the Muse and me

left behind
by Calliope, the thief
of my heart and mind:
winter moonlight
on a scribbled line

the Muse asks,
Is a grain of poetry
enough
to season our day?
sand slipping through my fingers

another day
starts with cliched imagery
the Muse is gone
but her eyes that stared at me
remain in my glass of wine

wishing
I could bottle these feelings
for Calliope...
a few more words nibble
the edges of my night

this starless night
the Muse at loggerheads
with my shadow...
at daybreak, the first line
rage against the day

my muse listens
to the hum and strike
of my words...
that same old look
on her Tudor court face

these clichéd words
hauled out of their mansion
herded onto buses
crammed into the camp
 it's a dream, and yet...

first spring day...
distant sirens sharpen
the silence
shared by my old dog,
Calliope and me

book launch over
the Muse holding a scythe
walks me home...
this dream I have
on the first night of spring

I'm pregnant
with the 13th tanka...
in twilight
my muse's ghost up the road
and around the bend

Apart Together Haiku

long walk home
the drunk shadow and me
apart together

Chenou Liu

April Fool's Night Senryu (Comic Haiku)

one thousand and one
likes on my Facebook page
April Fool's Night

Chenou Liu

April Is The Cruellest Month

A Haiku Set

steaming wulong tea...
a collage
of memories

thoughts of home
one after another
April snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Army Of The Dead Haiku

Halloween dusk
the army of the dead
...and a barking dog

Chenou Liu

Arrow Of Words Tanka

this cloudless night
flirts with loneliness...
no wine left,
I shoot down the moon
with an arrow of words

Chenou Liu

At The Gun-Mouth Of Time

Being here. Sitting at my desk. I see the maple tree in the front yard. It has lost all of its leaves, simply relinquishing the riches of the season without any grief; it lets go and goes deep into its roots for sleep and renewal for the upcoming year.

the sun setting
last photo of my youth
amid morning-glories

Sometimes I wonder if it is possible to reinvent one's self in middle age. Can I control resentment and regrets, master a new language, and express my thoughts and emotions fully in a borrowed tongue? If I can't, I will gradually lose who I was, become uncertain - insecure about who I am and what I am going to do for the rest of my life.

first snowfall...
my borrowed tongue
searching for words

Does anything in nature despair besides man? Does a wounded animal with one foot caught in a trap despair? Or it is just too busy trying to survive, closed in on itself to a kind of still, intense, and seemingly endless waiting.

a lone star
in the moonless sky -
one howl, then many

Zen masters proclaim that is it possible to live a life moment by moment, taking notice of the change in each instant.

flake after flake
falls atop one another...
day's end

Chenou Liu

Attic Haiku

attic window -
a few moonlit shadows
come and go

Croatian translation

tavanski prozor -
nekoliko sjena obasjanih mjesecinom
dolazi i odlazi

2nd Prize, 2011 Klostar Ivanic Haiku Contest (in English)

Chenou Liu

Attic Tanka

dreams banished
from the clear blue sky
I count
the number of birthday cakes
eaten in the attic

Honorable Mention, 2010 Think Tanka Contest

Chenou Liu

Attic Window Tanka

old boxed set
of Marcel Proust
on the bed
my memory of Taipei
framed by an attic window

Chenou Liu

Autumn Dusk Haiku

autumn dusk...
I stir my coffee
anticlockwise

Japanese Translation by Hidenori Hiruta

?????...
?—?—?????
?????????

First Prize Winner, 12th HIA Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Autumn Haiku

autumn dusk
red leaves fall
into a poem

Chenou Liu

Autumn Haiku Sequence

'dust to dust'...
a grasshopper clutching
a lump of earth

crickets chirping...
thoughts like the touch
of a baby's hand

monarchs leaving...
in the attic window
my dog and I

alone with my thoughts...
wing to wing
two red dragonflies

3rd Prize, Haiku Sequence, Diogen Autumn Haiku Contest 2013

Chenou Liu

Autumn Mist Gendai Haiku

olddogandiautumnmist

Finalist

Inaugural Janice M Bostok International Haiku Award

Chenou Liu

Autumn Mist Haiku

autumn mist
a Bach fugue played
on the saw

Croatian Translation

jesenja magla
Bachova fuga svirana
na pili

Judge's Choice Haiku, 2012 Diogen Autumn Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Autumn Moon Tanka

the same moon
Li Po drank to
the same autumn
Tu Fu wrote of -
I alone change

Chenou Liu

Autumn Rain Haiku

autumn rain...
counting my footsteps
on the long trip home

Chenou Liu

Autumn Thoughts

A Haibun for Mary Oliver

rejection slip
a sunflower bending
to the wind

I often get editorial advice like this:

'You will notice that we veer away from authorial comment, abstract language, and the imposition of human qualities on the natural world. Instead, we choose haiku that achieve resonance through the juxtaposition of disparate images, credibly present in the same place at the same time.'

Slanting sunlight through the attic window on my coffee-stained desk. Reading Basho's death poem, I can't help but wonder: if he were alive and submitted his poem under a different name, would he have been published at all?

'Essential Basho...'
my name will be written
in water or marble

Note: Historically speaking, Basho didn't write the formal death poem on his deathbed, but the following haiku, being his last poem recorded, is generally viewed as his poem of farewell.

sick on my journey,
only my dreams will wander
these desolate moors

Chenou Liu

Autumn Twilight Haiku

autumn twilight
an old dog sits by the grave
overgrown with ivy

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'flower(s) / bouquet' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 2, March/April 2011

Chenou Liu

Awkward Silence Tanka

three words
then an awkward silence
between us...
the woodpecker's knock
echoing through the trees

Chenou Liu

Bald Eagle Gendai Haiku

the wrinkled sea
under an bald eagle
crabwalks

Chenou Liu

Ball Of Fire Haiku

harvest moon
a ball of fire rolling
over the shanties

Chenou Liu

Barbed Wire Haiku

winter raindrops
along a strand of barbed wire -
visiting day

Selected Haiku, 2014 Sharpening the Green Pencil Haiku Contest

Romanian Translation by Cristina Oprea

picuri de iarna
pe un fir de sârma ghimpata -
zi de vizita

Chenou Liu

Bare Hands Tanka

sleepless winter night...
smashing the attic window
with my bare hands
I pick up
scattered pieces of myself

Chenou Liu

Barkeep And Old Man Haiku

barkeep and old man:
the sound of pouring beer
fills their night

Chenou Liu

Barking Dog Tanka

a dog barking..
winter moonlight
penetrates
my attic room
then my loneliness

Chenou Liu

Barred-Blue Light Haiku

barred-blue light
his thoughts intruding
on each other

Chenou Liu

Barrenness Tanka

buried earth
a silver carpet -
maples and I
gaze at the barrenness
we see in each other

Selected Tanka for Gusts, #9

Chenou Liu

Basement Haiku Noir

a slant of sunlight
on my basement window sill
the dead fly

Note:

Here is an excerpt from my Lynx interview with Jane Reichhold

Jane Reichhold: Recently you were working with 'darker themes' in your haiku. Why did you want to do this? And how did it work out for you? Do we need to enlarge the subject matter used in the Japanese genres?

Chen-ou Liu: I've been writing a series of haiku noir on darker themes, such as sudden death, suicide, psychiatric illness, violence, homelessness, alienation, estrangement, racism, rape, ...etc. I've had first-hand or second-hand experiences of dealing with most of them (note: a haiku noir is a narrative haiku, i.e. a cinematically dark flash non/fiction in verse) .

I am most influenced by Takuboku's conception of 'poems to eat.' He defined them as 'poems written without putting any distance from actual life, ...and they are not delicacies, or dainty dishes, but food indispensable for us in our daily meal.'

In terms of dealing with one's dark moments, the difference between poets and other people is that poets can convey their feelings through poetry. As Graham Greene stresses, 'writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those, who do not write, compose, or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear, which is inherent in [that] human condition.'

Every time when I put my tangled feelings, stress, or anxiety on paper, I feel relief in the moment. Especially when writing about dark moments, I connect them to the feelings of the past and of the present, and in doing so, it enables me to discover the wholeness of things and the connectedness of human experience. This view of writing about dark moments as a way of healing is well explored in Louise DeSalvo's *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our stories Transforms Our Lives*. My review of this book can be accessed at

As for enlarging the subject matter used in English language haiku, I think there is an urgent need to do so. most English language haiku are based on a narrower

definition of haiku. Professor Haruo Shirane discusses this in his famous essay, titled 'Beyond the Haiku Moment: Basho, Buson and Modern Haiku Myths: ' 'English-language anthologies of haiku are overwhelmingly set in country or natural settings even though ninety percent of the haiku poets actually live in urban environments. This would seem to discourage haiku poets from writing serious poetry on the immediate urban environment or broader social issues.'

His essay reminds me of Shiki's, titled 'Haiku on Excrement, ' about discovering - or rediscovering - beauty in excrement. In the essay, Shiki demonstrates that the old masters had great capabilities of producing beauty out of ugly material, 'citing 41 poems (most of them haiku) on feces,18 on urine,4 on farts,24 on toilets, and 21 on loincloths.' In the concluding section, he makes clear that he is not particularly fond of writing haiku on excrement; but he mainly uses this topic as an example to show how the poet can explore a wide range of themes (Makoto Ueda, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*, pp.29-30)

I identify with Shiki's approach to writing haiku. Most of darker themes in my recent haiku are, directly and indirectly, related to urban life issues that are experienced by all of us and covered by media on a daily basis. For me, they are legitimate subject matters for haiku writing....

Read the full text at,

Chenou Liu

Bastille Day Haiku

written in response to Donald Trump's France trip and for the brave French people

no Trump zone
on Bastille Day
a lone crow

Chenou Liu

Beach Bonfire Haiku

beach bonfire...
nothing left between
the moon and me

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'Beach' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,5: 3, May / June 2010

Chenou Liu

Bedroom Noises Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Easter morning
a boy mimics Mom and Dad's
bedroom noises

Chenou Liu

Beginning And End

A Haiku Sequence

first date
under a budding cherry tree
we stand still

my hand
skims her soft curves
summer moon

pieces of her note
zigzag to the doorway
lone cry of a crow

another dawn
cherry tree branches laced
with snowdrops

Chenou Liu

Beginning Of The End, A Haiku Sequence

'I love you'
on the tip of my tongue
spring drizzle

fleeting summer dream
between the spoken
and unspoken

my first taste
of make-up sex
crimson leaves

thundersnow
rumbling in the distance
her parting words

Chenou Liu

Beginning Of The End? A Haiku Sequence

winter light
I send my ex the link
to List of Winners

first snowflakes...
the pillow still smells
of my ex

New Year's Eve
the hazy curtain
between my worlds

Chenou Liu

Beginning Writer's Workshop

A Tanka Prose

Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.

-Pablo Picasso

The workshop is held at a Toronto branch library. The instructor discusses the four key elements of a story: setting, conflict, climax, and resolution. Half jokingly, he says out loud, "That's almost an acronym: sucker." He continues to draw our attention to all sorts of incisive acronyms derived from his words of wisdom on writing, and concludes the class with a warning: beware of clichés.

Many of us are impressed by his humorous teaching style, his straight-to-the-point communication skills, and most importantly, his passion for helping us to build successful writing careers. Over the sound of many hands clapping, a loud voice comes from the back of the room: "The writer is a cliché-sucker who spills out a string of little gems." All of a sudden, a silence descends over the room as if bats has just flown out of a cave in a big, snaking cloud.

two roads diverge
in the gathering dusk
I stop and wait...
his final words
echoing in my heart

Chenou Liu

Being-In-The-World

A Tanka Prose

"What is human life?" I once asked my philosophy professor. I didn't get a satisfactory answer then, and don't have one even now.

day by day
I get up, eat, read, write
and sleep -
my mind grows grayer
with each night's dream

It is commonly believed that human life is like a blade of grass that sprouts in early spring, grows green and strong in summer, and then, as time slips by, withers in late autumn, and finally dies out in winter.

I stare
at the sun steadily
seeing Death
wave to me
I wave back and start writing

Chenou Liu

Berlin Wall Haiku

twenty-five years after...
he murmurs, 'the same full moon
over the Berlin wall? '

Chenou Liu

Between High-Rises Tanka

slipping
through the alley
between high-rises...
I wash my loneliness
with moonlight

Chenou Liu

Between Light And Dark Haiku

the door slams shut...
my world
between light and dark

Chenou Liu

Between Mouthfuls Haiku

thanksgiving dinner
between mouthfuls
pin-drop silence

Chenou Liu

Between Sunshine And Shade Haiku

a dragonfly pauses
between sunshine and shade
'to stay or to go'

Chenou Liu

Between The Spoken And Unspoken

A tanka Set for lesbian lovers

they cursed and burned
Anne Lister and Ann Walker
in effigy
XXX on her copy
of The Well of Loneliness

a thin layer of dust
on her bookshelf
The Diaries of Anne Lister
leans against Emma
in the pale moonlight

Note: Anne Lister's diaries lay hidden at Shibden hall and were only fully decoded
150 years later

Chenou Liu

Beyond Reach Tanka

an ocean
and a continent
between us
but even in dreams
you're beyond my reach

Chenou Liu

Bible Study Haiku

bible study...
the ceiling fan cuts into
our silence

Chenou Liu

Bird And Mouse Tanka

like a bat
trying to be both bird and mouse
I waver
Eric one moment
Chen-ou the next

Chenou Liu

Birdsong Tanka

one bird song
after another...
alone
in the waters of spring
thoughts of her flow away

Croatian translation

pjesm a jedne ptice
nakon druge
sam
u proljetnim vodama
misli o njoj oticu

First Prize, Spring Tanka 2013 held by Diogen Magazine

Chenou Liu

Birth Of A Poem

a plastic bag
whirled by the wind
struggling in mid-air -
my poem is born at the sight

Chenou Liu

Birthday Night Tanka

birthday night...
lying in bed with my dog
on one side
autumn moonlight
on the other

Chenou Liu

Bit By Bit Haiku

Milky Way...

bit by bit I put myself
out of my mind

Chenou Liu

Bite Mark Tanka

her bite mark
still on my shoulder
this cold morning
the shape
of unspoken words

Chenou Liu

Biting Cold Senryu (Comic Haiku)

biting cold

I swallow all those words
said to my wife

Chenou Liu

Black Birds Haiku

A broken vee
of black birds...
blossoming fruit tree

Chenou Liu

Black Butterfly Haiku

a black butterfly
tarnishes the pink rosebud
silent skies

Editor's Choice Haiku
Haiku Pix Review, #2, Spring 2011

Chenou Liu

Black Cat Haiku

the black cat she left
runs back and forth in my room -
a whirl of snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Black Coffee Haiku

tenth New Year
Chinese fried dough
... and black coffee

Chenou Liu

Black Drapes Tanka

loneliness
envelopes my room
like black drapes...
one by one I burn
love letters she sent me

Chenou Liu

Black Hole

April snowflakes
a black hole
in my universe

Chenou Liu

Black Kid And White Cop Tanka

sirens piercing
this winter night
a black kid
in the shadow
of a white cop

Chenou Liu

Black Rope And Red Slippers Tanka

a black rope
hanging from the oak tree
swings back and forth
in the winter wind...
red slippers on the ground

Chenou Liu

Black Rope Tanka

a black rope
hangs from our childhood tree
the sound in her chest
lonelier
than a winter gust

Honorable Mention, 2012 San Francisco International Competition:

Judge's Comment:

This is a somber tanka. There is a rope, but not just any rope which could have hung a tire swing, but a black rope with its connotations of death and the implication of a tragic event. The choice of winter gust adds to the chilling effect of the poem. Of the chosen tanka this is the only one in which the poet writes about someone else. The poet is an observer. our childhood tree tells me that the poet knows the story of the rope, knows the woman, and also knows the sound that is lonelier than a winter gust. Perhaps, the poet feels the same when looking at this tree.

Chenou Liu

Black Swan Haiku

a black swan
my whisky glass emptied
into the moon

Honorable Mention, 14th HIA Haiku Contest

(

Sponsored by Haiku International Association

Supported by Nihon Keizai Shimbun, The Japan Times

Chenou Liu

Black Witch Moth Haiku

a black witch moth
on the crime scene tape
autumn nightfall

Chenou Liu

Black Women And Summer Dream Tanka

written on the day before the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

on the rooftop
a line of black women
frantically
waving their hands...
a summer dream turns white

Chenou Liu

Blackboard Of The Mind Tanka

no matter
what Father just said...
his right hand
keeps erasing the words
on the blackboard of his mind

Chenou Liu

Blade Of Grass Haiku

spring dewdrops
cling to a blade of grass -
Iraqi children

Chenou Liu

Blades Of Grass Haiku

tangled
in blades of grass
spring breeze

Chenou Liu

Blank Face Senryu (Comic Haiku)

blank face
still clutches remote control -
bolts of lightning

Chenou Liu

Blank Stare Haiku

her blank stare...
the blinking of an airplane
in the night sky

Chenou Liu

Blazing Sun Tanka

the dog runs
in circles chasing its tail
under a blazing sun
the shadow and I look
into each other's eyes

Chenou Liu

Blind Date Haiku

blind date:
her long hair cascading
into the spring night

Editor's Choice Haiku, Sketchbook,7: 2, March/April 2012

Karina Klesko's Comment:

Blind date in my world has two interpretations. If the date was blind, the long hair against the darkness of the sky gives the expanse and message of no limitations in its juxtaposition.

If it is a first date on a spring night, the long black hair cascading into the darkness gives the feeling of unknown expectations. Here the kigo is used as a message of the bud of a relationship, letting down the hair is letting down inhibitions.

Chenou Liu

Blizzard Haiku

blizzard on the way
my immigrant past
withering

First Place (Shintai) , World Haiku Review, March 2013

Editor's Comment: Serious topic rendered in a "natural" and dispassionate manner, speaking volumes about the author's chequered life.

Chenou Liu

Blizzard Of Forgetfulness Tanka

living alone
in the blizzard
of forgetfulness ...
snowflakes obscure the world
outside the nursing home

Chenou Liu

Blonde Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a blonde
on the street corner
my eyes jaywalking

Chenou Liu

Blood Moon Gendai Haiku

'Basho, do you know
what a haiku smell like? '
the blood moon

Chenou Liu

Blood-Red Earth Haiku

blood-red earth
pattering on his coffin
winter rain

Haiku of Merit, Vanguard Haiku
World Haiku Review, December 2012

Chenou Liu

Blood-Stained Sketch Haiku

for the artists who fight for freedom of expression

blood-stained sketch:
a pencil in the beak
of a dove

Chenou Liu

Bloodstained Wall Haiku Noir

bloodstained wall
a smell of wine and perfume
lingering

Chenou Liu

Bloody Head Haiku For Malala Yousafzai

At 11, Malala Yousafzai took on the Taliban by championing female education; at 13, she has blogged for the BBC, drawing the world's attention to the plight and cause of the people of Swat Valley. Yesterday, the Taliban answered this 14-year-old girl's courage with bullets, shooting her in the head and neck.

Swat Valley
under the blazing sun
Malala's bloody head

Note: Swat Valley means the land of waterfalls, an administrative district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan.

Chenou Liu

Blooming Forget-Me-Nots Haiku

blooming
on both sides of the fence:
forget-me-nots

Chenou Liu

Blooming Poppy Haiku

poppies bloom
among the rows of crosses
a fleeting cloud

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October,2011

Chenou Liu

Blouse Senryu (Comic Haiku)

back from the washroom
her blouse buttoned lower:
blind date

Chenou Liu

Blowin' In The Wind Haiku For Bob Dylan

'blowin' in the wind...'
Iraq veterans wrapped
in silence

Chenou Liu

Blue Haze Tanka

the blue haze
that is Toronto
lies before me
in the distance:
a new home, and yet...

Chenou Liu

Blue Monarch And Newborn Haiku

a blue monarch
covered in morning dew...
the newborn

Chenou Liu

'Blue, White And Red' Tanka

Eiffel Tower

shining blue, white and red...

on the bus

the girls with headscarves

crowded in the rear section

Chenou Liu

Blue-Eyed Boys Haiku

crickets chirping...
a group of blue-eyed boys tease
'Speakee Engrishee'

Chenou Liu

'Blueline And Red Thread' Tanka

I protest
with my mouth taped:
don't stain my poems
'Blueline and Red Thread'
with your snow-white kiss

Note: The poem above is the title tanka from the first collection of sociopolitical tanka, 'Blueline and Red Thread, ' and it's dedicated to Krzysztof Kieslowski, film director of 'The Three Colors Trilogy' (the collective title of three films, 'Blue, ' 'White, ' and 'Red, ' loosely based on one of the three political ideals in the motto of the French Republic: liberty, equality, fraternity)

Chenou Liu

Blue-Winged Warblers Tanka

click by click

I send out my resume

this breezy morning

blue-winged warblers

tweeting about spring

Chenou Liu

Body Bag Haiku

nightfall in Nice
a pink doll beside
the body bag

Chenou Liu

Bomb Shelter Haiku

beneath all the cement
of a Jewish bomb shelter
drops of Arab blood

Chenou Liu

Bone Collecting Haiku

the click click
of bone collecting
winter dusk

Chenou Liu

Bony Hand Tanka

sleepless
in a shelter bed...
his bony hand
grabs at the last thread
of winter moonlight

Chenou Liu

Book Of Memories Tanka

autumn gust
unfolds my book of memories
heart-written
in blank verse...
silent, still, the moon

Chenou Liu

Bookmarking A Moment Haiku

winter mist ...
bookmarking a moment
with this haiku

Haiku Special,3rd Japan-Russia Haiku Contest 2014

Chenou Liu

Border Bridge Haiku

distant sirens
over the border bridge
a blood moon

Shortlist, 2015 Touchstone Award for Individual Poems

Chenou Liu

Border Crossing Tanka

raining nights
in bloody 1846...
a Mexican yells out
'we didn't cross the border
the border crossed us'

Chenou Liu

Border Fence Senryu (Comic Haiku)

two sides
to every argument -
border fence

Chenou Liu

Border Fence Tanka

a mother's hands
reach out to her children
through the bars
of a fence that divides
Mexico from Arizona

Chenou Liu

Border Haiku

written in response to the 'Made-in-America' Immigration Crisis

El Paso twilight
a body straddles
the white border line

Note: El Paso, Texas stands on the Rio Grande (Río Bravo del Norte, the fifth longest river of North America) , across the border from Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Chenou Liu

Bordern Fence Haiku

forget-me-nots
along the border fence
refugee children

Chenou Liu

Borrowed Tongue Haiku

wordless
in my borrowed tongue
plum blossoms

The Heron's Nest, December 2010
Popular Poems of the Year (2010)
The Heron's Nest Readers Choice Award, Volume XII,2010

Note:

I'm voted one of Popular Poets of the Year (2 of 4 poems received votes totaling 56 points)

Chenou Liu

Boston Marathon Tanka

in Boston sunlight
his racing bib inscribed
with the names
of men and women
killed in the bombing

Chenou Liu

Both Sides Of The Fence Haiku

blooming
on both sides of the fence:
forget-me-nots

Chenou Liu

Both Sides Of The Same Coin

A Haiku Set

a gang of ravens
on the power line
'very fake news'

White House news
a scythe of lightning
in the winter sky

Chenou Liu

Box Of Crayons Haiku

a box of crayons
in shaded sunlight
cherry blossoms

Honorable Mention, 2016 Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

Boxing Day Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Boxing Day night
the guards fish a boy out of
a donation box

Chenou Liu

Braids Of Black Smoke Haiku

braids of black smoke
tied and untied
by the winter wind

Chenou Liu

'Bread And Roses' Haiku

factory girls
crammed shoulder to shoulder
'Bread and Roses...'

Note:

Note: The phrase "Bread and Roses" originated in a speech given by Rose Schneiderman, and a line in that speech – "The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too" – inspired the title of the poem, 'Bread and Roses, ' by James Oppenheim, which was published in The American Magazine in December 1911. "Bread and Roses" was set to music by Mimi Fariña in the 1970s, and it has become an anthem for labor rights, and especially for the rights of working women.

Bread and Roses by James Oppenheim

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and roses! Bread and roses! "

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for — but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler — ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses! Bread and roses!

Song Lyrics

As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!

As we go marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses.

As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient call for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.

As we go marching, marching, we bring the greater days,
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses, bread and roses.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; bread and roses, bread and roses.

Chenou Liu

Breakfast Together

A Tanka Prose

eating donuts ...
suddenly, she asks me
how to fill
the empty spaces
that her husband left behind

One hundred days ago, he was alive and well, constantly telling me, "Take your eyes off the computer screen. Get up and do some exercise." I responded, "I love doing brain exercise with words and imagery."

He turned thirty last month; enviably young to me. But now, I feel criminally old.

Chenou Liu

Breaking Down Tanka

my car breaks down
in the middle of nowhere
the moon
leads the way
toward the morning sun

Chenou Liu

Breaking News

A Haibun

"white house leaks"
onecrowafteranother
in the Halloween dusk

When the streets fall under a blanket of darkness, the army of the walking dead begins their march. On a street corner, a pitbull bares its teeth, growling. A high-pitched scream penetrates the night...

Chenou Liu

Breakup Kiss Haiku

breakup kiss...
the line between sky
and winter sea

Chenou Liu

Breakup Senryu (Comic Haiku)

breakup talk:
she starts every sentence
with 'I want...'

Chenou Liu

Breakup Sex Tanka

first cloudless sky
after our breakup sex
I would have said
(or should have said)
those three words to her

Chenou Liu

Breakup Talk Haiku

breakup talk
a raven's cry cutting
across our silence

Chenou Liu

Breast Binder Tanka

the diary
under a floorboard
in his room
the broken mirror reflects
her breast binder

LGBT Tanka, Atlas Poetica, 2012

Chenou Liu

Breath

A Haibun

slanted sunlight
through the window
reading death poems

My father doesn't talk about death because he cares more about leaving behind a good reputation. My mother is skilled at evading death-talk because she is afraid of severing the ties with her loved ones. My older brother doesn't care about death because he thinks he is strong enough to face all challenges head on and head strong. My younger brother doesn't mention death at all because he is busy enjoying life, here and now. I often think about death

first sunrise...
pulling out a patch
of gray hair

Chenou Liu

Breathing The Silence Haiku

long way home...
breathing the silence
between us

Chenou Liu

Broken Bones Monostich

moonbeams hit the waves a sea of broken bones

Chenou Liu

Brownie, You'Re Doing A Heck Of A Job

debris scattered
here and there
an old man playing blues

It is not just the levees that break... the smell breaks away... from the skin when a boy is pulled out of the waters. The waters that come and stand... still with the bodies of black people, of my people... she says, her voice breaking.

a green doghouse
with FEMA on its roof
lower ninth ward at dusk

Note: The title comes from George Bush's comment on Katrina relief work done by Michael DeWayne Brown, coordinator of the federal efforts in New Orleans and Gulf Coast.

Chenou Liu

Bruised Apples And Blood Stain Tanka

the smell
of bruised apples
simmering
in the summer heat...
a blood stain on her shirt

Chenou Liu

Budding Lotus Haiku

budding lotus
when did I become
who I am

Chenou Liu

Bullfrog Senryu

bullfrog chorus...
I practice saying
I love you

Third Prize,2011 Senryu Contest

Chenou Liu

Bull's Horns Haiku

a bull's horns
sharpened by the winter wind
high school dropout

Chenou Liu

Bully Tanka

'sissy, sissy! '
the taunts clinging like
his sweaty T-shirt
he and his shadow
limp toward home

Chenou Liu

Burial Haiku

rain-soaked petals
a burial
of her stillborn baby

Chenou Liu

Burial Plots Tanka

nostalgic for things
that haven't happened yet...
at twilight
my dog and I stand beside
two new burial plots

Chenou Liu

Buried Earth Tanka

buried earth
a silver carpet -
maples and I
gaze at the barrenness
we see in each other

Selected Tanka, Gusts,9, Spring/Summer 2009

Chenou Liu

Butcher Knife Tanka

raindrops
rolling together
on the surface
of a butcher knife...
the glitter in her eye

Chenou Liu

Butterflies Haiku

butterflies
wing over cherry petals -
shadows embracing

Editor's First Choice Haiku
Blue Berry Haiku,1, June 2010

Editor's Comment:

MPH: We love this haiku for so many reasons. First, we admire the use of "wing" as a verb, since the actual butterfly wing, a noun, and its shape are essential to the themes and imagery of the poem: the shape of the wing and its shadow and of the petal and its shadow are shown by the poet to be so similar, akin, as the shadows meet under the cherry tree in a sweet embrace. And, in the same way that the shadows match and embrace, so, too, the letters and sounds of the poem do in an aural and visual alliteration.

The relationship between things and their shadows becomes an interchangeable simile for letters and their sounds: the r's and s's in all three lines, and the ing's and long o's in lines two and three. Of course, the theme of the essential oneness of all things is another layer in the poem, the plant and insect here shown by the poet as one in that fleeting moment in which their identities cannot be separated, in that moment when the two merge on the broad face of Spring's renewed earth.

Chenou Liu

Butterflies Mating Haiku

butterflies mating
on the basement window ledge...
alone with my thoughts

Chenou Liu

Butterfly Dream Haiku

winter dawn
a butterfly wakes up
in my dream

one of selected haiku

Simply Haiku's 'TOP TEN LIST' of the World's Finest Living English language
Haiku Poets for the Year 2011 (Simply Haiku,9: 3,4, Autumn/Winter 2011)

Chenou Liu

Butterfly Dream Tanka

awakened
from my butterfly dream
snowflakes
lighten
into dawn

Chenou Liu

Butterfly Kite Haiku

above the attic
where the boy died
a butterfly kite

Serbian Translation

iznad tavana
gdje umro je djecak
zmaj- leptir

Honorable Mention, 2014 Diogen Spring Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Butterfly's Dream Gendai Haiku

the beginning
of all beginnings
a butterfly's dream

Chenou Liu

Butterfly's Dream Haiku

Alone at dawn
amid cherry blossoms
a butterfly's dream

Sakura Award,2013 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational

Note: the contest results can be accessed at [http:](http://)

Chenou Liu

Buzz Of Love Tanka

'I love you
but can't be with you...'
in a stand
of leafless sourwood trees
I still hear the buzz of love

Chenou Liu

Buzzing Mosquitoes Haiku

his gravelly voice,
'all your feet flat on the floor...'
mosquitoes buzzing

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'bugs / insects' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 4, July / August 2011

Chenou Liu

By Moonlight I Write Into The Darkness

a haibun with gendai haiku

I remember that her face took on a softness in the glow of the moonlight through our bedroom window. From the bedside table, she picked up a pen and a Post-it note, and wrote down her last one-liner:

midnight moon shedding light on the scars of our past

This one was stuck in a rainbow totem of Post-it notes above our bed, and, like its creator, never failed to surprise me. Of her one-liners, the most memorable was written on a "real dark night of the soul, three o'clock in the morning, " as F. Scott Fitzgerald emphasized in *The Crack-Up*.

a mass of piled-up shadows not knowing the sound of snow

The incident took place about three years ago. After a week of mental fencing with me, she slammed the door as she rushed out into the falling snow. She wandered through that night like a stray cat for several hours before she returned by the back door. Looking out the window into the barren landscape of our daily lives, she wrote down her "not knowing" monostich on the kitchen table.

Today marks the second year of her absence. Winter moonlight slips in through the bedroom window, reaching the empty side of the bed. I touch it and feel a chill. I sit up in bed and turn my head to the wall, looking at her Post-it notes.

Tower of Babel where the lines end her absence becomes

Chenou Liu

Cage Tanka

a hamster
scurries
on a wheel...
at day's end
still in the cage

Chenou Liu

Caged Eagle Tanka

the caged eagle
just those few cubic feet
of freedom...
I see in its eyes
a skyful of my dreams

Chenou Liu

Caged Wings Haiku

summer heat
the eagle flapping
its caged wings

Japanese translation by Hidenori Hiruta

????????????????

Chenou Liu

Calendar Nude Tanka

alone again
in the sun-baked attic -
calendar nude
giving me the hottest smile
I can only dream about

Chenou Liu

California Dreamin' Tanka

California Dreamin'
in his head
over and over...
a migrant wipes tables
in McDonald's

Chenou Liu

Calligraphy Haiku

thinking of mom...
the calligraphy
of snow geese

Third Place, 2015 Griffin-Farlow Haiku Award

Chenou Liu

Campfire And Moon Tanka

a camper
bends over the fire
to warm herself...
the moon growing
fuller and rounder

Chenou Liu

Campfire Haiku

spring campfire
the smoke curls around
Father and me

Chenou Liu

Canada 150

A Haiku Sequence

false dawn
a demonstration teepee
on Parliament Hill

ice cream clouds
'O Canada! Our home...'
in many tongues

rainbow fireworks
refugees in the shadow
of the Peace Tower

Chenou Liu

Canada Day

A Tanka Sequence

the tenth year
since I moved to Canada...
my thought trails
a drifting maple leaf
that catches the sunlight

on the screen
I AM superimposed
over a maple leaf...
rainbow flowers
blooming in the night sky

Chenou Liu

Canada Day Haiku

Canada Day fireworks...
the silence envelops me
and my shadow

Chenou Liu

Canada Day Tanka

July first fireworks...
is there one among those stars
that guides my life
through this unknown
land of the maple leaf

Chenou Liu

Canadian Dream

a haiku sequence for Sam Roberts who once said, 'I went out on the street today, the Canadian Dream was as far away as it's ever been...'

'I used to be...'
at the corners of his mouth
saliva stains

job hunting...
shadows of a maple
across the dew

'this promised land...'
each of his last words
drips with anger

Note: Sam Roberts is a Juno Award-winning Canadian rock singer-songwriter, whose 2001 debut release, *The Inhuman Condition*, became one of the bestselling independent releases in Canadian music history.

Chenou Liu

Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner Senryu (Comic Haiku)

thanksgiving dinner
my ex sits in the back
of my mind

Chenou Liu

Cancer Center Tanka

early morning
outside the cancer center
a young man
takes another drag
on his cigarette

Chenou Liu

Candle Haiku

candlelit study
three shadows chase each other
around the wall

Editor's Choice Haiku
Sketchbook,6: 6, Nov./Dec.2011 'candle(s) ' Haiku Thread

Editor's Comment:

Candles can be a source of entertainment as exemplified by the [haiku above].

Chenou Liu

Candlelight Haiku

alone by candlelight
thinking of that spring we met
and another spring...

Chenou Liu

Cassius Clay Turned Muhammad Ali

A Tanka Prose

In Rome, 1960, 'Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light. What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming? ...' was sung through the summer breeze for the black boxer. But, the Olympic gold medal couldn't buy him a cup of morning coffee and a hamburger in a downtown restaurant in Louisville, Kentucky.

he watched the river
dragging the ribbon down,
red, white, and blue...
his steady bombardment
of left jabs at the air

Chenou Liu

Cat-And-Mouse Game Senryu (Comic Haiku)

cat-and-mouse game:
a drunken poet
and his muse

Chenou Liu

Cathedral Music Haiku For Nobel Prize Winner Alice Munro

Cathedral music
in an autumn afternoon
the air grows thin

Note: Below is excerpted from Mark Levene's 'It Was About Vanishing: A Glimpse of Alice Munro's Stories,' Alice Munro edited by Harold Bloom, Infobase Publishing, 2009, p.96.

The apparent alternation between fantasy and fact is among the many brilliant elements of 'The Albanian Virgin.' Within this movement is the counterpoint between the insistent clues that connect the two romances - the priest's moustache and crucifix, the same details connected with Gjurdhi, Charlotte, and Claire in the present - and the narrative's unresolved, open-ended multiplicity. Whether the couples are actually the same is inconsequential, since, despite another severed head, the danger again is in our 'frayed... almost lost' connections, where 'views and streets deny knowledge of us, the air grows thin' (127) . In story, in fact, or in both connections can be made to seem endless. When Claire, providing a parallel story to that of Lottar, the Albanian virgin, invokes Munro's version of entropy, that 'it was about vanishing' (126) , she immediately imagines ' a destiny, ' a brief narrative of life with Nelson, her former lover, only, it seems, to discover him at her bookstore. 'For this really was Nelson, come to claim me. Or at least to accost me, and see what would happen' (127) . What happens is recorded as a sort of experiential haiku, notes towards parallel lives - 'We have been very happy. I have often felt completely alone' (128) - which serve as ellipses to the lush, cinematographic details of Lottar's rescue by the Franciscan and the limitless extension of their story: ' She called him and called him, and when the boat came into the harbor at Trieste he was waiting on the dock' (128)

Chenou Liu

Cemetery Haiku

cherry blossom rain...
the richest man
in the cemetery

Chenou Liu

Chain-Smoking Tanka

a spot
on her right lung -
he chain-smokes
for the rest of the day
in front of the TV

Chenou Liu

Chalk And Time Tanka

in twilight
my childhood classroom...
the blackboard
holds the lingering scent
of chalk and time

Chenou Liu

Chalk Rainbow Haiku

the end
of a chalk rainbow -
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

Chanting Monk Haiku

mountaintop at dawn
a monk and spring breeze
chanting 'World Peace'

Chenou Liu

Cherry Blossom Haiku

cherry blossoms
the moon and I face
each other

Chenou Liu

Cherry Blossom Rain Haiku

cherry blossom rain
laughter
chasing laughter

Runner-Up, Third International Cherry Blossom Haiku Contest Awards

Bulgarian Translation by Zornitza Harizanova and Vessislava Savova

???? ?? ?????? ????
?????? ????
????

Chenou Liu

Cherry Petal Haiku

one cherry petal
falling upon another...
a new 'old dream'

Chenou Liu

Cherry Song Tanka

will you gaze
upon the falling petals
of my words-
in this spring breeze
the notes of a cherry song

Ribbons,5: 2, Summer 2009

Chenou Liu

Chestnut Moon Haiku

Pacific shore...

I speak to the chestnut moon
in my mother tongue

Honorable Mention, Kitakyushu International Moon Haiku Contest

forthcoming in *Maple Moon*, an anthology
edited by the contest organizers at Seinan-jo Gakuin University.

Chenou Liu

Child Is Father Of The Man

A Haibun

winter twilight...
Father stands firm
in diapers

He can't remember what he had for dinner but can still hear 'The Spring Rain Will Come Again.' It was playing when Sarah Rose danced topless on the bar at Janus in his freshman year of high school. Now, he mumbles to himself, 'Carpe, carpe diem, seize the day, my boy...'

Chenou Liu

Child Refugee Haiku

the first taste
of alphabet cereal...
a child refugee

Chenou Liu

Child Refugee's Face Haiku

for Justin Trudeau's 'Sunny ways' Speech

speech sunlight
through maple leaves...
child refugee's face

Chenou Liu

Childhood Pictures Haiku

a drift of petals...
I edit childhood pictures
with Photoshop

Croatian Translation by Diogen Editorial Team

zapuh latica...
u Photoshopu uređujem
fotografije iz djetinjstva

Featured in 'Our Overseas Haiku Poets, ' Diogen, September 2012

Chenou Liu

Childhood Treehouse Haiku

childhood treehouse
where the summer moon
used to be

Chenou Liu

Child's Shadow Haiku

winter twilight
crossing the border
a child's shadow

4th Prize, 2016 New Zealand Poetry Society Haiku Competition

Judge's Comment: 'winter twilight' is very much in the zeitgeist, the spirit of the time. The poem is literally, and metaphorically, dark. We are reminded of the plight of refugees fleeing a war zone, of a child slipping past the border guards on his/her mission for freedom. The poet has intentionally specified a child, drawing on the vulnerability of innocent young lives affected by the bombing of their homes by super powers, collateral damage in the hostilities that we read about in the media, that we see on the nightly television news. The poet specifies 'crossing the border'. This haiku brings an immediacy to the realities of world conflict and if one more child is free we should, by inference, celebrate this. A thoughtful haiku.

Chenou Liu

Chinatown Corner Haiku

Chinatown corner
an erhuist bows
to birdsong

Chenou Liu

Chinese Lantern Festival

Water Snake Lantern zigzags
through Ketagalan Boulevard...
end of Chinese New Year

Chenou Liu

Chinese Pine Tanka

standing alone
under our Chinese pine
I remember you...
its trunk forks out
and roots into the ground

Editor's Choice Tanka
Haiku Pix Review, #2, Spring 2011

Chenou Liu

Chinese Silver Coin Tanka

Chinese silver coin
you handed me
as I left for Canada
lost to the sky -
the mid-autumn moon

Note: The Mid-Autumn Festival, also called the Chinese Moon Festival, is one of the most important annual festivals for the Chinese people. It takes place on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month and it's a day for family reunion.

Chenou Liu

Chinese Whisper Tanka

after the divorce
I run into my first love
on a misty night
like kids we play
'Chinese Whisper'

Chenou Liu

Chinese Word For Home Tanka

eating a Big Mac...
alone in the attic
I ponder
the Chinese word for home:
a pig under the roof

Chenou Liu

Chinese Word Tanka

night deepening...
family, home, and house
embodied
in one Chinese word, Jia,
murmured in my attic room

Chenou Liu

'Chinglish' Tanka

emasculated
by her 'ABC, follow me'
the first time
he shouts out
the F-words in Chinglish

Chenou Liu

Chocolate Heart Haiku

'I love you...'
she bites half the chocolate heart
I brought her

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'heart(s) ' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 1, January / February 2011

Editor's comment:

Chen-ou Liu's haiku is symbolic of true love. Sharing of the heart, the life force.
He takes only half as it takes two parts to complete them as one.

Chenou Liu

Chocolates Senryu

To buy or not to buy
one more box of chocolates...
Bruges in summer twilight

Chenou Liu

Christmas Eve Haiku

Christmas Eve
my old dog and I
in the tv light

Chenou Liu

Christmas Eve Haiku For Pope Francis

In his Christmas message, Pope Francis warned against 'a lust for power, hypocritical double lives and the lack of spiritual empathy among some men of God.'

'Repent, Ye Sinners! '
winter rain sweeping
the church steps

Chenou Liu

Christmas Haiku

Christmas snow
'can angels dance
on a pinhead? '

Honourable Mention, Shintai Haiku Selection
World Haiku Review, January 2011

Chenou Liu

Christmas Parade Tanka

a map of Taiwan
stained with water marks
hangs on my attic wall -
'Silent Night' floats
from the Christmas parade

Chenou Liu

Chronicle Of A Death Unfolds

A Haiku Sequence

half moon rising...
each day she slips
further away

hospital window
the light of the dying day
on her face

cancer ward
at the end of the hallway
blinking EXIT

winter moonlight
on the indented pillow -
her hospice room

the way
she tapped my shoulder...
pattering rain

Chenou Liu

Church Bell And Temple Gong Haiku

a church bell
echoes a temple gong...
first day of spring

Chenou Liu

Church Graveyard Haiku

church graveyard
a cloud of crows hovering
over a stone angel

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October 31,2011

Chenou Liu

City Apart Haiku

spring rain
on me, maybe on her
a city apart

Chenou Liu

Cliff Edge Haiku

cliff edge...
the sound of waiting
for nothing

Highly Commended, 2016 New Zealand Poetry Society Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

Cliff's Edge Haiku

at the cliff's edge
I wait
for the cold moon

Chenou Liu

Cloak Of Silence Haiku

among mourners
this cloak of silence
between crows

Chenou Liu

Closet Senryu (Comic Haiku)

gay couple
in their closet
a skeleton

Chenou Liu

Cloud Of Butterflies Tanka

my dog and I
engulfed in a cloud
of butterflies -
my first love once told me
each of their names

Chenou Liu

Cloud Of Ravens Haiku

distant gunshots
a cloud of ravens
darkens the day

Chenou Liu

Cn Tower Tanka

the CN Tower
illuminated in orange
under its shadow
two homeless men
lean against each other

Note:

The CN Tower glowed the iconic NDP orange to honor the party's former federal leader Jack Layton from sunset Saturday (Aug.27th,2011) to sunrise Sunday. Layton's first book is entitled Homelessness: The Making and Unmaking of a Crisis.

Chenou Liu

Cobra Tattoo Senryu (Comic Haiku)

blind date
cobra tattoo rising
from her cleavage

Chenou Liu

Cobweb Haiku

New Year's Eve
after the fireworks
a moonlit cobweb

Chenou Liu

Coffin Senryu (Comic Haiku)

mourners weeping,
yet a picture smiles
above the coffin

Chenou Liu

Cold Moon And Attic Room Haiku

book by book
the cold moon enters
my attic room

Chenou Liu

Cold Moon Haiku

This cold moon... one and all
faces of cherry blossom viewers

Chenou Liu

Colgate Smile Senryu

he bares his teeth
in the TV debate
her Colgate smile

Chenou Liu

Collateral Damage

A Haibun for Susan Sontag, author of *Regarding the Pain of Others*

white poppy
pinned to her son's first suit
Remembrance Day

Inside the top drawer of her husband's wooden desk, there is an old photo album. It starts with pictures of toy trucks, toy soldiers, toy tanks, and other delights of boys from the neighborhood playing in the sunlight. It ends with the picture of a new military cemetery with a row of white crosses in winter mist.

Note: First introduced by British pacifists in 1926, the white poppy is used as a symbol of peace and worn as an alternative to (or complement to) the red poppy for Remembrance Day.

Chenou Liu

Color Of Loneliness Tanka

she asks me
what is the color
of loneliness...
in the woman before me
I see a girl veiled in black

Chenou Liu

Colorblind Racism Tanka

colorblindness
heats up debate on racism
we used to be friends
he gives me the finger
I push it toward the moon

Chenou Liu

Colored Koi Tanka

colored koi
in the aquarium
on my screen...
living in the attic
my dream grows pale

Chenou Liu

Colorful Words Haiku

snow drifting...
all her colorful words
about love

Chenou Liu

Colors Of Ash Tanka

autumn sun
veiled in the colors of ash
our silence
bears the weight of a tombstone
...then a butterfly

Chenou Liu

Colors Of Loneliness

A Haiku Sequence

a corridor that runs
off into infinity
'Mom! I'm coming home'

Moon Festival...
the attic and I share
a day of rest

running away
from myself and my shadow
the smell of formalin

grief knocks
the wind out of me
drifting snowflakes

New Year's dinner for one
I pick up the chopsticks
and yet ... and yet ...

Notes:

1 The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival in the West, is a popular harvest festival celebrated by the Chinese people, and it is held on the 15th day of the 8th month in the Chinese calendar, during a full moon.

2'formalin: a clear solution of formaldehyde in water. A 37% solution is used for fixing and preserving biologic specimens for pathologic and histologic examination.'

Chenou Liu

Confederate Flag Tanka

written in response to the Charleston Church shooting

gunshots
bloodstained the peace
of a black church...
the Confederate flag high
above the state house dome

Chenou Liu

Confession Booth Senryu

a priest alone
in the confession booth
year's end

Chenou Liu

Confession Of A Photography Addict

A Haibun written on Father's Day

Mary invites me over to her place for an interview. She has her strands dyed every color of the rainbow, and looks much younger than she is. On the wall facing the window, she tacks up a giant photo of herself, composed of many smaller pictures. After taking a sip of iced tea, she start talking in an unusually deep, husky voice, 'I've spent ten years on a shrink's couch, but I still hear him through the wall whispering to me. Every day when I get up and look in the bedroom mirror, I see that man staring back at me. I want him carved off my face...'

Father's Day

blanked out on her calendar

morning chill

Chenou Liu

Confessions Of A Justified Trump Fan

A Senryu Sequence

The political is personal and the personal is sexual - David Wilkinson

my liberal wife
on top of me
year in, year out

I stick
to the missionary position
Trump victory

breakup sex
we try more new
positions

after divorce
masturbation makes me
great again

Chenou Liu

Confucius Said, At Forty I Had No More Doubts

A Haibun for ???

Every day and night, I ask myself what if? Whether things might have been different or better. If anything more could have come of it. But I died four days before my 40th birthday, on a moonless night.

distant sirens...
across the winter sky
a shooting star

Chenou Liu

Contours Of Chinese Longing Tanka

in English

I try to delineate

the contours

of my Chinese longing...

this misty winter morning

Chenou Liu

Convention Floor Tanka

written in response to Hillary Clinton's presidential nomination

shards of glass
on the convention floor
a black woman
cleaning up the mess
for the minimum wage

Chenou Liu

Cookie-Cutter Houses Tanka

cookie-cutter
houses laid end to end...
a dragon
circling in my mind
finds no place to rest

Chenou Liu

Cornered Dog Haiku

those eyes
of a cornered dog...
merging with mine

Chenou Liu

Cornfields Of Night Tanka

on the way
to the place I share
with migrants...
loneliness covered with steel
moving through cornfields of night

Chenou Liu

Corridor Haiku

a corridor that runs
off into infinity
'Mom! I'm coming home'

Chenou Liu

Countryside Church Haiku

countryside church
an old clock measuring
the silence

Chenou Liu

Covering The Middle East

A Haiku Set for Edward Said, author of 'Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World'

the flurry of white
between minarets
a scream cut short

'If it bleeds, it leads'
scrawled on a reporter's note
pinpoint bombings

Chenou Liu

Crashing Waves And Wheelchaired Man Haiku

wavecrashingintowave wheelchaired man

Chenou Liu

Cricket Songs And Shadows Tanka

night by night
the cricket songs
grow weaker
no one comes to see me
except the shadows

Chenou Liu

Crime Scene Tape Haiku

flapping crime scene tape...
the winter sun
sheds its last light

Chenou Liu

Crisscross Of Wrinkles Haiku

winter moonlight
on the migrant's face
crisscross of wrinkles

Chenou Liu

Crow Answering Crow Senryu (Comic Haiku)

crow answering crow -
Donald Trump squabbles
with Fox News

Chenou Liu

Crow Haiku

a crow's cry...
I whisper to the moon
in my mother tongue

Commended in the Haiku Section of the New Zealand Poetry Society's 2011
International Poetry Competition; anthologized in *Ice Diver*

Chenou Liu

Crow's Cry Haiku

a crow's cry
flies into darkness...
alone with myself

Chenou Liu

Crumpled Balls Of Poetry Tanka

the garbage bin
overflows with crumpled balls
of poetry...
looking out the window
I see winter stars blinking

Chenou Liu

Crunch Of Snow Haiku

laid off...
the crunch of snow
underfoot

Chenou Liu

Crust Of Bread Tanka

sparrows pecking
at a crust of bread
on the sidewalk
an old man and his dog
cocooned together

Chenou Liu

Curl Of Winter Sunset Tanka

the curl
of winter sunset
in a lily...
her eyes speak the language
I'm ready to learn

Chenou Liu

Curves Of Womanhood Tanka

I traced the curves
of her womanhood
with my fingers....
that night and nights after
blurring together

Chenou Liu

Dagger In My Mind

A Tanka Set

sleepless again...
I turn in bed waiting
for the moonlight
to fill the emptiness
on her side of the bed

the dent
in the pillow I bought her
still visible...
it has been three months since
she was sent to the psych ward

Chenou Liu

Dagger Of Night Monostich

between sleeps the dagger of night stabs into fleshy secrets

Chenou Liu

Daily Outfits Tanka

after making love
we fumble
into our daily outfits...
knowing the day
longer than the night

Chenou Liu

Dappled Sunlight Haiku

baby's soft spot
rising and falling
dappled sunlight

Chenou Liu

Darkening The Sky Haiku

first day of winter...
a raven enters my mind
darkening the sky

Chenou Liu

Darkening Thought Haiku

morning coffee
darkened with the thought
of getting old

Chenou Liu

Darkening Winter Sky Haiku

a crow's cry...
the winter sky darkens
into the prairie

Chenou Liu

Darkness Haiku

awake
listening to the darkness
last night's moon

Chenou Liu

Darkness Tanka

putting the corpse
of loneliness around my neck
I jump
into the darkness
of a spring day

Back Cover Tanka
Ribbons,6: 3, Fall 2010

Note:

The following is the review of my poem written by Ribbons editor Dave Bacharach (Ribbons, p.1)

'In 1798, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge co-published a ground breaking collection of poems they called *Lyrical Ballads*, and thereby ushered in the Romantic movement in English literature. Among the poems in their volume, the longest and most important that Coleridge contributed was 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.' In his a-b-c-b narrative masterpiece, Coleridge writes of a sailor who, for no apparent reason, shoots and kills the albatross that has been following his ship. His wanton act results in a curse upon the ship and its crew, plunging it into disaster and suffering. His cremates tie the dead albatross around his neck as punishment and in the vain hope that it might somehow alleviate their agonies. After the entire crew dies, and only the guilty Mariner is left, he survives only to be condemned to wander the earth forever, seeking out others to whom he must tell his tale.

In a vivid flash of five lines, Liu's poem brings the famous Coleridge work immediately to mind. In the tanka, the concrete is replaced with the abstract, but it is an abstraction given power and life by use of the corpse metaphor. Loneliness, is an abstraction given power and life by use of the corpse metaphor. Loneliness, especially intense loneliness, often does feel like a form of death in life, and Liu's opening lines prepare the reader for the last two. Spring, typically associated with rebirth, sunlight, and joy, here takes on the opposite qualities with the simple alliterative combination of 'darkness' and 'spring day.' The persona doesn't step into this ominous day, but jumps, as if jumping off a ledge into an unknown and dangerous abyss.

The simple structure of this tanka, in which two pairs of disturbing lines are separated by the minimal noun/verb phrase, defies analysis. There is no complex assonance, no ornate symmetry or repetitive tones; the poem seems to draw its power from the barest presentation of image and action. However, once read, it is not easy to forget, so searing it.

Has Liu read the Coleridge poem? Perhaps, perhaps not. Art dips into the universal consciousness of the human mind. It is no surprise, then, if two poets separated by two centuries dip in and come back with remarkably similar images.

Chenou Liu

Day And Night

secrets breathed
punctuate
the blackness of day

gathered in the dark
many poems on a page
made from the scalp
of a lonely night

Chenou Liu

Day And Night Written On Canadian Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day:
a stray dog and I
avert our eyes

footsteps echo
outside the closed church...
Thanksgiving night

Chenou Liu

Day And Night, A Tanka Sequence

for new immigrants

flying above
the light and murmur
of Formosa
the airplane carries
my immigrant dream

Toronto settles
into a nocturnal rhythm...
face to face
in the attic room
with my Chinese self

Note: In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it 'Ilha Formosa, ' which means "Beautiful Island."

Chenou Liu

Day Moon And Black Coffee Tanka

I look
from my tanka draft
at the day moon...
a cup of black coffee
becomes another

Chenou Liu

Day Moon Haiku

in my sleep
a crow croaks Kaddish
... winter day moon

(for Harvey Shapiro)

Note: Harvey Shapiro (January 27,1924 - January 7,2013) was an American poet and former editor of The New York Times, who suggested that Martin Luther King should write his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Chenou Liu

Day Of The Dead Tanka

Day of the Dead...
an old monk
striking his gong
in the moonlit cold
of midnight

Chenou Liu

Daydream Haiku

winter wind
gusting through my daydream
the taste of black coffee

Serbian Translation by Durda Vukelic Rozic

zimski vjetar
puše kroz moje sanjarenje
okus crne kave

Third Prize, 2013 Diogen Winter Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Daydream Senryu (Comic Haiku)

one year after
my ex half covered
in my daydream

Chenou Liu

De Wallen At Twilight

A Haiku Sequence

'Old Sichuan Cuisine'
between window brothels
I eat alone

from one window brothel
to another...
a street dog and I

surrounded by girls
in the window brothels...
me and the Oude Kerk

Notes

1 De Wallen is the largest and best known red-light district in Amsterdam and a major tourist attraction.

2 Sichuan cuisine is known for its spicy, tongue-numbing dishes.

3 Note: Founded in 1213, the Oude Kerk ('old church') is Amsterdam's oldest building and oldest parish church.

Chenou Liu

Dead Frog Haiku

moonlit pond...
the sound of water brings
news of a dead frog
(for Onishi Yasuyo)

Honourable Mention (Shintai) , World Haiku Review, March 2013

Chenou Liu

Dead Man Thinking

A Tanka Prose for the author of 'The Pleasure of the Text'

After Roland Barthes declared the death of the author, two poems, lined up side by side, look suspiciously over their shoulders at each other.

this cold night- - - - - in spring breeze
shakes me by the collar- - the painter captures
I avoid their gaze- - - - -a migrant's smile
when they shout, - - - - - under a banner that reads,
no more immigrants! - - - -diversity is our strength

Chenou Liu

Deadly Silence Tanka

spider hammocks
suspended in dried corn stalks...
the deadly silence
between migrant workers
on the way to work

Chenou Liu

Deafening Silence Tanka

the croak of a frog
then the answering call
of others...
between the two of us
deafening silence

Chenou Liu

Dear John Letter Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a paper cut
from her dear john letter
Friday the 13th

Chenou Liu

Dear John Letter Tanka

The 7th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

the Dear John letter
morphs into a plane
this cold night
my shadow and I
ride the tandem bike home

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, ') , Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing is first English language tanka sequence about diasporic experiences. In the sequence, I adopt an intersectional approach to exploring a wide range of issues related to immigration, English learning, racialized identity, racism, job seeking, colonization, acculturation,...etc. You can read the whole sequence,

Chenou Liu

Death As The Reviewer Tanka

Death peers
over my shoulder
taunting me
how can I stop her
from editing my poems?

Chenou Liu

Death Tanka

in the depth
of a winter night
I peer
into the mirror:
Death with half-closed eyes

Chenou Liu

Defacing The Moon Monostich

tears from my mind deface the autumn moon

Chenou Liu

Departing Train Haiku

a departing train
between you and me
autumn moon waning

Chenou Liu

Departing Words Tanka

the sharp edge
of her departing words...
my head hangs
on the crescent moon's tip
in our childhood river

Chenou Liu

Deportation Tanka

first night
of deportation...
a child
looking at the grass
covered with frost

Chenou Liu

Desire Tanka

first winter light...
the snake of my desire
for the past
lies coiled around
the base of my spine

Chenou Liu

Devoid Of Stars Tanka For Leonard Cohen

sleepless...
under the midnight sky
devoid of stars
in my borrowed tongue
I sing 'Hallelujah'

Chenou Liu

Dewdrop Holding The Sun Haiku

New Year

a dewdrop holding
the morning sun

Chenou Liu

Dirty Harry Haiku

a cockroach crawling
across 'Dirty Harry'
behind the girls...more girls

Chenou Liu

Distant Howl Haiku

distant howl
under the thread
of a winter moon

Chenou Liu

Distant Howl Tanka

distant howl ...
in what remains of this spring night
I hear
the echo of footsteps
inside my mind

Chenou Liu

Distant Howls Haiku

foreclosure sign
clanging in the wind...
distant howls

Chenou Liu

Divorce Court And Shadows Haiku

leaving the divorce court...
our shadows touch

Chenou Liu

Divorce Court Haiku

divorce court...
the little boy stares
at the ceiling fan

Chenou Liu

Divorce Haiku

'I want a divorce...'
the snap, snap, snap
of bean pods

Chenou Liu

Divorce Senryu (Comic Haiku)

divorce talk
putting one more sugar cube
in my coffee

Chenou Liu

Divorce Story Senryu (Comic Haiku)

family reunion:
passing a divorce story
from cousin to cousin

Chenou Liu

Divorce Talk Senryu (Comic Haiku)

divorce talk
each sip of tea more bitter
than the last

Chenou Liu

Divorce Tanka

finally
divorce papers arrive
at the door -
she folds my spring sky
in half

Chenou Liu

Divorced Man Tanka

a mouth
opening, closing
salivating -
my recollection
of a divorced man

American Tanka, 18, 2009

Chenou Liu

Dog And Snowflakes Haiku

my dog chasing around snowflakes chasing around me

Chenou Liu

Dog Carcass Haiku Noir

autumn sunset
stray dog carcass
cut in two

Note: A haiku noir is a narrative haiku, i.e. a cinematically dark flash non/fiction in verse

Chenou Liu

Dog Haiku

alone with my dog
under the morning sun
cherry blossoms

Chenou Liu

Dog Inside My Heart Haiku

nine autumns past
the dog inside my heart stops
barking at the moon

Chenou Liu

Doll House Haiku

winter drizzle ...
a doll house
at the curb

Chenou Liu

Dollhouse And Foreclosure Haiku

a dollhouse
in the bay window...
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

Dollhouse Haiku

dollhouse
at the thrift store window
a cold moon

Chenou Liu

Domino Haiku

'Greek Euro Exit? '
my nephew pushing down
the first domino

Chenou Liu

Don Juan Spirit Tanka

I scan my heart
for that Don Juan spirit...
a woman in red
dancing by moonlight
to a flamenco guitar

Chenou Liu

Donald Trump Cutout Senryu (Comic Haiku)

climate march
the pink-haired girl face to face
with a Trump cutout

Chenou Liu

'Donald Trump Toppled' Senryu (Comic Haiku)

false dawn

'Donald Trump Toppled'
on RealNews

Chenou Liu

'Don'T Speak' Haiku For Mo Yan,2012 Nobel Prize Winner

Mo Yan (Don't Speak) writes
in moonlight carved from sorghum
it's true, and yet...

Chenou Liu

Double Rainbow Haiku

last day of school
a double rainbow arches
above our silence

6th place, 'Rainbow' Kukai Contest
Sketchbook,6: 3, May/June 2011

Chenou Liu

Downsizing Haiku

downsizing...
a winter star and I
in the puddle

Chenou Liu

Dragon Dream Monostich

under the sun a dragon dream chasing after my dog and me

Chenou Liu

Dragon Kite Tanka

a dragon kite
stretching towards the sun
by the string
my nephew holds
the sky and his dream

Serbian Translation

zmaj
isteze se prema suncu
uzicom
moj necak drzi
njegov san i nebo

Honorable Mention, 2014 Diogen Spring Tanka Contest

Chenou Liu

Dragonfly's Wings Haiku

emerald flicker
of a dragonfly's wings
first day of school

Highly Commended, 2015 Iris Haiku Contest

Croatian Translation

smaragdno treperenje
krila vilina konjica
prvi dan škole

Chenou Liu

Dream And Darkness Tanka

drifting in a dream
turned into a bird
flying over the Pacific -
I open my eyes
upon darkness again

Chenou Liu

Dream And Reality Tanka

after the divorce
her side of the bed taken
by winter moonlight...
alone at a border fence
between dream and reality

Chenou Liu

Dreamcatcher Haiku

dreamcatcher...
with both hands my baby grasps
the spring sunlight

Chenou Liu

Dreamer Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a dreamer:
out of his bed,
out of himself

Chenou Liu

Drifting Owl Haiku

alone with my thoughts -
an owl drifts moth-like
over the field

Chenou Liu

Drifting Thoughts Haiku

snow flurries
on the way home, my thoughts drift
in Chinese

Chenou Liu

Drifts Of Fog Haiku

drifts of fog...
first job interview
in one year

Chenou Liu

Dripping Faucet Haiku

the faucet dripping...
my ex three time zones
ahead of me

Chenou Liu

Dripping Sound Tanka

long hours
after winter solstice
finding my lines
in the dripping sound
of a roof icicle

Chenou Liu

Drizzle Haiku

spring drizzle...
light falls from her hair
to her chest

Chenou Liu

Drone Strike Haiku

drone strike debate...
a girl declares 'Peace is the Way'
in sign language

Chenou Liu

Drunk Haiku

sultry night
a dog licking the face
of a drunk

Chenou Liu

Drunk On Writing Tanka

drunk on writing...
I compose one tanka
after another
until the swan sings
on the lake of my mind

Chenou Liu

Drunk Shadow Tanka

first sunny day
after this long winter
the deafening silence
between me
and my drunk shadow

Chenou Liu

Drunkard Tanka

a drunkard
swearing in the alley
at midnight
I turn up the volume
of my summer dream

Chenou Liu

Drunken Shadow Tanka

together
the two of us
and yet
each alone at dawn...
drunken shadow and I

Chenou Liu

Dual Survival Tanka

on the far side
of the couch from her
in silence
I watch the finale
of Dual Survival

Chenou Liu

Ducks Haiku

Ducks dabbling
in the waters of spring
my old dog and I

Chenou Liu

Dump Site Tanka

Roma boys
rummage through the dump site
for scrap metal
riverside fireworks
light the summer sky

Runner-UP, British Haiku Society Tanka Anthology Competition, 2014

Chenou Liu

'Dust To Dust' Haiku

dust to dust...
pampas grass whispering
to pampas grass

Haiku of Merit, Vanguard Haiku
Published in World Haiku Review, December 2012

Chenou Liu

Dusty Pile Haiku

shaft of attic light...
in a dusty pile
poems to my first love

Chenou Liu

Earth Hour Haiku

Earth Hour Party:
my niece begins to lose
count of the stars

Chenou Liu

East Meets West, A Haiku Sequence

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, ... Rudyard Kipling, opening line of 'The Ballad of East and West, ' 1889

a flurry of white
against the sunset sky
the smell of blood

gunshots from afar -
on the wall of a mosque
'Go home' spray-painted

Chenou Liu

Easter Sunlight Haiku

Easter sunlight
streaming through the window
her breath on my neck

Chenou Liu

Easter Tanka

her pale face
and a ragged Barbie's...
framed by the window
of a group home
in Easter sunlight

Chenou Liu

Eastwooding Senryu

pointing a finger...
I yell at my shadow
on an empty chair

(for Clint Eastwood)

Chenou Liu

Edge Of A Dream Tanka

suddenly awake
to see a sharp sickle
hanging low
in the winter sky...
I grasp the edge of my dream

Favorite Tanka, Siloh Tanka Contest

Chenou Liu

Edge Of A Long Silence Tanka

the edge
of a long silence
between us -
two swans on the lake
flapping their wings

Chenou Liu

Edge Of Night Tanka

I stand
at the edge of night
looking in
and out at the space
between winter stars

Chenou Liu

Election Night Senryu (Comic Haiku)

election night
a scream from the other side
of the fence

Chenou Liu

Elliptical Thoughts Haiku

elliptical thoughts
of what could have happened...
winter drizzle

Chenou Liu

Elusive Smile Tanka

the priest proclaims
all creatures are naked
in God's eyes...
an elusive smile
on his daughter's crimson lips

Chenou Liu

Elvis Presley Haiku

starless sky
a candlelight vigil
at Graceland

Chenou Liu

Empty Flower Vase Tanka

one after another
the days come
... and bring nothing
on our dinner table
an empty flower vase

Chenou Liu

Encyclopedia Of Grievances Tanka

his note weighed down
with an encyclopedia
of grievances...
'pop, pop, pop' from the warehouse
shatters this sultry night

Chenou Liu

End Of A Dream Haiku

first winter light
the darkness at the end
of my dream

Chenou Liu

End Of Life Tanka

waiting
for the end of life
in a prison cell...
a pool of sunlight
on the dirt floor

Chenou Liu

Engagement Party Senryu (Comic Haiku)

engagement party
I stand in the shadow
of her father

Chenou Liu

English Accent Tanka

my young friend
now speaks English
without an accent...
the wulong tea I drink
tasting so bitter

Chenou Liu

English Poem And Chinese Mind Tanka

plum petals
falling upon plum petals...
I squeeze
another English poem
out of my Chinese mind

Chenou Liu

'Enjoy The Now' Haiku

I scribble 'Enjoy the Now'
on a piece of paper
winter sunlight

Chenou Liu

Escort's Eyes Tanka

she whispers,
'I'm good at intimacy
with strangers...'
I see the light go out
in the escort's eyes

Chenou Liu

Eskimo Words Haiku

how many Eskimo
words for snow?
the shape of memory

Chenou Liu

Etched In Shadow Haiku

the skyline
etched in shadow
a refugee

Chenou Liu

Evangelism Tanka

Amazing Grace
drowning in traffic noise...
bright sky silhouettes
the evangelist's profile
before the ship's mast

Chenou Liu

Every Poem An Epitaph

a pair of corresponsive tanka written in response to Albert Camus's remark:

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide - 'An Absurd Reasoning'

published poet,
a shaman or just a shame...
unemployed
I crawl into a hole
and wait for the last breath

'destroy, destroy, ...'
hums my unconscious -
the God of Job
refuses to hear the hum
while killing my ten poems

Chenou Liu

Eviction Tanka

one day
after the eviction
a whitewashed room
and four nail holes
in the wall, in my heart

Chenou Liu

Exile

A Tanka prose

I left Formosa
for the land of maple leaves -
fingerprints
on my forehead
the same moon

At long last, her letter arrives. It's filled with unbroken longing, passion, and finally concludes with those three beautiful words that are what they were, postmarked 7/7/2012, ten years after I left for Canada.

Between us is a continent, an ocean, and our shared memories that are fading with time. I cannot remember how many nights we gazed at each other under a bright moon. During the first year in Canada, I often woke up in a cold sweat from the dream of her veiled in white and waiting in a dark forest.

single bed
in a moonlit attic
crowded with books ...
everything I need
yet nothing I want

Note: Formosa, which means 'beautiful island' in Portuguese, is the former name of Taiwan.

Chenou Liu

Exile And Silence Haiku

exiled

I fall into silence...

migrating geese

Chenou Liu

Exile Haiku

ten years in exile...
even Lake Ontario holds
a wedge of snow geese

Croatian Translation

deset godina progonstva...
cak i jezero Ontario drzi
klin snjeznih gusaka

Chenou Liu

Exile Tanka

autumn twilight
I stand against the wall...
one inch lonelier
than when I first became
a poet in exile

Chenou Liu

Exiled

A Haibun

Often, I yearn for things not lost; I go to sleep in Taipei, but wake up at midnight in Ajax. Like a black widow, loneliness wraps itself around my mind, spins a cocoon, and then squeezes until it stops moving.

early morning stillness...
my heart wandering about
as in a haze

Chenou Liu

Eye Tanka

the door
opens and closes
every eye
escapes
into floor numbers

Chenou Liu

Eyeballing Tanka

eyeballing
that side of me...
I punish myself
by reading poems
through the eyes of others

Chenou Liu

Eyebrow Moon Haiku

eyebrow moon
the way she utters
those three words

Chenou Liu

Eyeless Mask Tanka

alone again
with the Dear John letter
in my hand...
over my face the winter night
knits an eyeless mask

Chenou Liu

Face Half Revealed Haiku

blind date
her face half revealed
in moonlight

Chenou Liu

Face Of A Sniper Haiku

moonlight
on the face
of a sniper

Chenou Liu

Factory Closure Haiku

'factory closed'
the rustle
of dry leaves

Chenou Liu

Faint Smell Haiku

Drip, drip, drip of the tap...
the faint smell
of a motel room

Chenou Liu

Faint Smell Tanka

'I'm a poet! '
announced at New Year's dinner...
a faint smell
of disapproval
lingering in the room

Chenou Liu

Fake News Ad Senryu (Comic Haiku)

fake news ad
the lingering smell
of my holey socks

Chenou Liu

Fallen Twigs Tanka

when was love
our transitive verb
turned into your common noun?
the garden path
is strewn with fallen twigs

Chenou Liu

Falling Blossoms Haiku

falling blossoms...
her last laugh
in my laughter

Chenou Liu

Falling Snow Tanka

English teacher said
Just wipe 'I used to be....'
out of your mind
walking home alone
face-to-face with falling snow

Chenou Liu

False Dawn Haiku

false dawn...
I listen to the world
unfurl

Chenou Liu

False Wall Tanka

a love letter
found in the false wall
of her basement...
a dull ache
in my groin area

Chenou Liu

Family Day Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Family Day
a glimpse of my ex-wife
in the shop window

Chenou Liu

Father And Daughter Tanka

Father cries out
'but...you're just a girl'
my sister stands
with her legs apart
urinating

Chenou Liu

Faucet Dripping Haiku

the faucet dripping...
my loneliness comes
inside her

Chenou Liu

Feast Of The Dead Tanka

distant thunder
at the Feast of the Dead
a chill wind sighs
through the pampas grass
on an unnamed grave

Chenou Liu

Feather To Feather Haiku

mandarin ducks
feather to feather...
autumn sunset

Chenou Liu

Fence Tanka

for years now
I have known you -
chance glimpses
through gaps in the fence
in the backyard

Ribbons,5: 1, Spring 2009

Chenou Liu

Ferguson Police Haiku

Ferguson at twilight
'Walking While Black'
painted in black and white

Note: 'Walking While Black, ' WWB, is a phrase that describes African-Americans'
demoralizing harassment by the police in Ferguson

Chenou Liu

Ferguson Protest Tanka

for Protesters in Ferguson, Missouri

Ferguson in twilight...
a black boy walks in a line
with 30
other men and women
chanting, 'no justice, no peace'

Chenou Liu

Ferguson, A Day To Remember

for Frances Henry & Carol Tator, authors of 'The Colour of Democracy'

sirens blazing...
'Black Lives Matter'
scribbled in red

the silence between
a line of white police
and rows of black protesters

'I have a dream...'
a zigzagging line
of blood

Chenou Liu

'Fields Of Gold' Haiku For Sting

old man and scarecrow...
'Fields of Gold' lingering
in the wind

Chenou Liu

Fifth Corner Of The Sky Tanka

home sweet home
in the promised land:
this attic room
ten-square with a fifth
corner of the sky

Chenou Liu

Fifty Years Later, A Haiku Sequence About The March On Washington

The Global March
on Washington
a fleeting dream, and yet...

'I have a dream...'
hooded black teens sing
with their hands

paper butterfly
from her small brown hand
summer dream

Chenou Liu

Fight Haiku

after a fight...
winter moonlight on her side
of the bed

Chenou Liu

Finger Cutting Tanka

I cut off
my goddamn finger
to numb
my goddamn pain
snow falling on snow...

Chenou Liu

Fingerprinting Stars Tanka

first winter night
side by side we lie
on the floor
her hand fingerprinting
the stars on my chest

Chenou Liu

Fingertip Haiku

at the fingertip
of a child refugee...
cherry blossoms

Sakura Award,2017 VCBF Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

Finger-Writing Tanka

she finger-writes
those three words on my chest...
the sting
of the promise
my ex failed to keep

Chenou Liu

Finger-Writing Those Three Words Tanka

she finger-writes
those three words on my chest...
the sting
of the promise
my ex failed to keep

Chenou Liu

Fireplace And Dog Haiku

first snowy night
writing paper, my dog
and the fireplace

Chenou Liu

First 100 Days For Donald Trump

A Haiku Set

false dawn
on Donald Trump's face
a meaty grin

gathering dusk
1361 days
to go

Chenou Liu

First Cuba Visit Haiku

for Cuban exiles living in the USA

first Cuba visit
grandpa's cigar smoke
drifting up and up...

Chenou Liu

First Homecoming Haiku

first homecoming...
the silence lengthened
tree by tree

Chenou Liu

First Light Haiku

first light
a strand of her hair
between my lips

Chenou Liu

First Light Of Winter Haiku

a cobweb catches
the first light of winter
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

First Night Haiku

first night in Toronto
the sound of falling snow

Chenou Liu

First Real Interview Tanka

my first real
interview since I graduated
three years ago
one sparrow zigzagging
between office towers

Chenou Liu

First Snowflakes Tanka

a crescent moon
in the attic window
at three a.m.
my tanka drifting
with first snowflakes

Chenou Liu

First Sunrise Haiku

first sunrise
the silver strand
in my hair

Chenou Liu

First Touch Of 'love'

A Haibun

When they arrived at Wasaga Beach, surprisingly only a few people were there.

They strolled along the white sand shore, soaking in the sight of the emerald-green water. Then, they saw a pair of seabirds glide over the water.

She broke the silence, whispering, "Have you ever been with a girl before?"

"Not ... not exactly," he stammered.

She smiled up at him, 'When you watch me through your telescope, do you do it to yourself? "

He felt embarrassed and lowered his voice as he answered, "I used to... a long time ago."

She leaned against him, murmuring, "You know when a woman wants a man, she gets all wet inside."

Suddenly, she grabbed his right hand, placed it on her left leg, and slid his hand further and further up. When she began to moan, he shuddered, breathing more and more heavily...

He clutched her thigh and caught his breath; then he released his grip. "Already? " She smiled

a lone star
on the tip of a crescent moon
that summer in our eyes

Chenou Liu

First Year In The Maple Land

A Tanka Sequence

'it's flight not fright,
you're flawed not a fraud...'
the teacher
tries to put a zipper
on my Chinese mouth

'I used to be...'
cut off in the middle
by her last look
stabbing me
into silence

I walk jumbled ground
above the bones
of Gold Mountain men...
searching for the pieces
of a broken dream

winter rain
speckles attic windows
the ghostly past
knocking on the door
of my immigrant mind

Note: After gold was found in the Sierra Nevada in 1848, thousands upon thousands of Chinese began to travel to the West in search of gold and riches. Gold Mountain, the Chinese version of the Promised Land, is historically used broadly to refer to western regions of North America.

Chenou Liu

Fist Fights Tanka

fist fights erupt
like bush fires on the street
below my window -
fired today, I fling f-bombs
at my shadow on the wall

Chenou Liu

Flag-Draped Coffin Haiku

she walks alone
behind the flag-draped coffin
a summer cloud

Chenou Liu

Flames Of Color Tanka

no more loon calls
as the sun sets in flames
of color
alone by the lake
of my aging mind

Chenou Liu

Flaming Heart Tanka

snow falling
all the way home
yet the tongue
of my flaming heart for her
licks my face for hours

Chenou Liu

Flea Haiku

midsummer night
home alone with my dog
picking fleas

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'bugs / insects' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 4, July / August 2011

Chenou Liu

Flipping Burgers Tanka

for temporary foreign workers in Canada

ten hours
of flipping burgers...
the bright side
of the harvest moon
obscured

Chenou Liu

Flipping Hamburgers Tanka

after ten hours
of flipping hamburgers
bone-tired
I see bare branches
crisscross the dawn sky

Chenou Liu

Floating Thoughts Haiku

Winter dawn...
tea-soaked madeleines crumble
into floating thoughts

Chenou Liu

Floating World Haiku

floating world...
this childhood river
of summer stars

Chenou Liu

Floating Worlds Haiku

on maple leaves
glittering raindrops gather -
floating worlds

Editor's First Choice Haiku
Berry Blue Haiku, #1, June 2010

Editor's Comment

GL: We were all enchanted by the imagery of this haiku. The idea of mini floating worlds sent our imaginations soaring. Upon reading it, I visualize the calm moment after rain has subsided, with sunshine reflecting off raindrops which have gathered on leaves.

At first I imagined this as a summer haiku, with the leaves still in the trees, but the floating worlds could also be interpreted to mean the leaves are falling gently to the ground, or perhaps the raindrops are gathering on the newly-fallen leaves. Autumn colors also add vibrancy to the image. An outstanding haiku.'

Chenou Liu

Flock Of Geese Haiku

my shadow and I...
two geese behind the flock
flying south

Chenou Liu

Flood Of Light Haiku

black coffee and a book...
a flood of light
through my attic window

Chenou Liu

Flower Heart Tanka

autumn night...
I bait a crescent moon
with my mind
angling in silence
for her flower heart

Chenou Liu

Flutter Of Lashes Haiku

first day of spring
a flutter of lashes
and her slow smile

Chenou Liu

Fly Haiku

I hear a fly buzz
when reading Two Solitudes...
summer twilight

Note:

The term, 'two solitudes, ' refer to a lack of will for communication between Anglophone and Francophone people in Canada. It was popularized by Hugh MacLennan's 1945 novel of the same name, and it was mentioned once throughout the novel:

Two solitudes in the infinite waste of loneliness under the sun

Chenou Liu

Folded Fingers Haiku

hazy moonlight
folded under my fingers
hometown memories

Chenou Liu

Following The Moon To The Maple Land

for my first Canada Day, July 1,2003

Name: Chen-ou Liu (phonic) :

Country of Birth: R.O.C.;

(Cross out R.O.C. and fill in Taiwan) 1

Place of Birth; Date of Birth; Sex;

simply more technocratic questions

the Immigration Officer needs to pin down my borders.

He is always looking for shortcuts,

more interested in the roadside signposts

than in the landscape that has made me.

The line he wants me confined to

is an analytically recognizable category:

immigrant. My history is meticulously stamped.

Now, you're legally a landed immigrant.

Take a copy of A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada.

from Lake Ontario

I scoop the Taiwan moon

distant sirens

Contemporary Haibun 10: 2, July 2014

Chenou Liu

Food Chain Haiku

grasshopper guts
the belly of a cicada -
sparrow crouching behind

Chenou Liu

Footprints In The Sand Haiku

summer's end
my footprints in the sand
a little deeper

Chenou Liu

Footsteps Haiku

New Year's beach stroll...
walking in the footsteps
of my child

Chenou Liu

For Sale Sign Haiku

For Sale sign
on a cemetery plot
winter wind

Chenou Liu

Foreclosed Home Tanka

in the depths
of a winter night
the mailbox
of a foreclosed home
click-clack, click-clacks...

Chenou Liu

Foreclosed House Haiku

a foreclosed house
with the open door
autumn mist

Croatian Translation

otvorena vrata
zatvorene kuće
jesenja magla

Judge's Choice Haiku, 2012 Diogen Autumn Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Foreclosure Sign Haiku

green birdhouse
empty of seed...
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

Foreclosure Sign Tanka

foreclosure sign
staked into the lawn...
under the eaves
a spider web laced
with morning raindrops

Chenou Liu

Foreign Moon Tanka

The second tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

Mom once said
foreign moon bigger
than ours...
the harvest moon hangs high
between Pacific shores

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences,' Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing is first English language tanka sequence about diasporic experiences. In the sequence, I adopt an intersectional approach to exploring a wide range of issues related to immigration, English learning, racialized identity, racism, job seeking, colonization, acculturation,...etc.

Chenou Liu

Foreign Silence Tanka

a lone crow
on the telephone cable...
between us
a continent, an ocean
of foreign silence

Chenou Liu

Foreign Tongue Tanka

black coffee
and Chinese fried dough..
in my mouth
a foreign tongue
licking these lips

Chenou Liu

Forget- Me-Nots Haiku

forget- me-nots...
the first blooms in her garden
with a For Sale sign

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'flower(s) / bouquet' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 2, March/April 2011

Chenou Liu

Forget-Me-Nots Haiku

a river behind the graveyard forget-me-nots

Chenou Liu

Fragrance Haiku

cherry blossom rain
her fragrance lingers
in my mind

Chenou Liu

Framed Butterflies Haiku

end of summer
framed butterflies
on the wall

Chenou Liu

Free Pussy Riot Haiku

two female bodies...
'Free Pussy Riot'
scrawled in blood

Note: my haiku was inspired by the saddening news in Russia

Chenou Liu

Free Speech Rally Tanka

rear-end collision
near the Free Speech Rally...
sunburned silence
between an anti-Trumper,
a Trump fan and his pitbull

Chenou Liu

French-Kiss Tanka

under the tree
two teenagers french-kiss...
idle on the porch
I faint with longing
to enter her backdoor

Chenou Liu

Frog And Moon Haiku

into
the
full
moon
a
dark-spotted
frog

Chenou Liu

Frog Haiku

moonlit pond...
a frog penetrates
itself

One of selected haiku

Simply Haiku's 'TOP TEN LIST' of the World's Finest Living English language
Haiku Poets for the Year 2011 (Simply Haiku,9: 3,4, Autumn/Winter 2011)

Chenou Liu

Frog Haiku For Basho

reciting haiku...
the rippling surface
of an old pond

Chenou Liu

Frog Pond Haiku

frog pond...
I jump over
the spring sun

published in the Pond Life Thread of Sketchbook,7: 2, March/April 2012
Editor's Choice Haiku

Chenou Liu

Frog Song Haiku

for Basho

alone by the pond

frog song

lost in frog song

??? (Prize-Winning Haiku)

Fifth Japan-Russia Haiku Contest,2016

Akita - The Land of Poetry,8, October 2016

Japanese Translation by Hidenori Hiruta, Founder of Akita

???????

???????????

Chenou Liu

From Beginning To End

A Senryu Set

warm beer
on a sultry night
his talk of love

just divorced
his whiskey glass brimming
with winter stars

Chenou Liu

From Star To Star Haiku

moonlit pond...
a frog jumps
from star to star

Chenou Liu

Fuji Apple Tanka

Fuji apple
in afternoon sunlight
on my plate
a bite is
a bite is a bite

Chenou Liu

Funeral Procession Haiku

at the head
of the funeral procession
a sundog

Chenou Liu

Funny Accent Tanka

everyone I meet
speaks with a funny accent...
in dreams
I return to my hometown
an ocean away

Chenou Liu

G20 Summit Haiku

figures in gray clay
stagger through streets of Hamburg
G20 summit

Chenou Liu

Gala Dinner Senryu (Comic Haiku)

gala dinner
the new mayor talks
of the have-nots

Editor's Choice Senryu, Cattails, April 2017

Senryu Editor's Comment: The poem first gives the setting, a gala dinner, presumably to celebrate the new mayor's appointment. Against this setting the mayor talks about the have-nots even as he quaffs champagne and stuffs his mouth with caviar. The irony of the situation makes one boil with indignation and smile at the same time. The poet has phrased the poem extremely well, painting the picture and leaving it to the reader to judge or conclude as he/she will, without in any way being judgemental himself.

Chenou Liu

Gambling Addict Haiku

holding his baby
up to the winter sky
gambling addict

Chenou Liu

Garden Fence Haiku

both sides
of the garden fence
forget-me-nots

Runner Up, 2017 Golden Haiku Contest

Note: My haiku will be displayed in a flowerbed in Golden Triangle.

Chenou Liu

Gaze Of Silence Tanka

he leaps away
from the gaze of silence
over the edge of a cliff
and into a place,
less pinned down to tell the truth

Chenou Liu

Gaze Of Time Tanka

we file by
under the gaze
of Time
immigrants
from a country called the Past

Chenou Liu

Gaze Tanka

the 13th tanka in the sequence about diasporic experiences

'Mr. Lou
your foreign credentials not...'
pinned by his gaze
I am an immigrant
with black slanted eyes

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

Chenou Liu

George Zimmerman Trial Haiku

no sound in the black and white
Rodney King beating video

Chenou Liu

Ghost Language Tanka

snow on snow...
loneliness, a ghost language,
spoken wordlessly
to my drunken shadow
on the attic wall

Chenou Liu

Ghostly Past Tanka

plum blossoms
scattered here and there
in the ruins
of burned memories
my ghostly past

Chenou Liu

Ghostly Voices Haiku

For-sale sign swaying
the mansion garden resounds
with ghostly voices

Chenou Liu

Ghosts Haiku

a fast
from sunrise to moonrise
ghosts of my past

Chenou Liu

Ghosts Of The Past Tanka

ghosts of the past
hammering on the door
of my heart
I lock myself
in the attic room

Chenou Liu

Giant Red Lips Tanka

giant red lips
perched on a billboard
high atop
a beauty clinic...
this cold Easter Sunday

Chenou Liu

Glance Haiku

which kigo to use?

I glance at the day moon
gazing at me

Chenou Liu

Glass Room Tanka

seeking shelter
from a world that crowds me
I build
a glass room of my own
made of tanka

Chenou Liu

Glass Wall Gendai Haiku

a glass wall between the muse and me smell of darkness

Chenou Liu

Global Warming Senryu (Comic Haiku)

no white Christmas...

'Global Warming For Dummies'

at 50% off

Chenou Liu

Go Back To Where You Came From Tanka

a white man
yelling at me, 'go back
to where you came from'
another summer
hotter than the last

Chenou Liu

Go Trump Graffiti Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Go Trump graffiti
a stray dog
marking his spot

Chenou Liu

'God' Choice Tanka

a couple fussing
over which tea is which...
I tell myself,
I made a God choice
not to get married

Chenou Liu

God's Will Tanka

a homeless man
leans against the sidewall
of a church...
the priest and his elders
argue about God's will

Chenou Liu

Golden Arches Tanka

Golden Arches
dot the Beijing skyline -
a man whispering
Jesus Love You to passersby
with Happy Meal boxes

Chenou Liu

Gold-Plated Casket Senryu

he lies
in a gold-plated casket...
just my size

Editor's Choice Senryu
Haiku Pix Review, #1,2011

Chenou Liu

Gold-Plated Casket Senryu (Comic Haiku)

he lies
in a gold-plated casket ...
just my size

Chenou Liu

Gondola Tanka

slowly but surely
Venice is sinking...
the gondola
I build for you in a dream
will sail through endless skies

Chenou Liu

Good Friday Tanka

Good Friday night...
a teenage girl in red
lies motionless
on the sidewalk
facing the starlit sky

Chenou Liu

'Good Morning, Vietnam' Tanka For Robin Williams

awake alone
with 'Good Morning, Vietnam'
echoing in my mind
the ghost I keep
under the pillow

Chenou Liu

Goodbye Note Haiku

her goodbye note ...
I scoop the moon
from the lake

Chenou Liu

Good-Luck Stone Haiku

first sunrise
a thin layer of dust
on my good-luck stone

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'Precious Stones' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,7: 1, January/February 2012

Editor's comment:

Seneca said, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." The users of these stones might have believed otherwise about the preparation required.

Chenou Liu

Goodwill Window Sale Haiku

Goodwill Window Sale
homeless man's reflection
and mine

Chenou Liu

Grain Of Sand Haiku

a grain of sand
and then another...
autumn twilight

Chenou Liu

Grandfather In Winter Twilight Tanka

one chair empty,
the other creaking
back and forth...
my grandfather
in winter twilight

Chenou Liu

Grandma's Needles Haiku

the clicking
of grandma's needles...
first snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Grassy Fields Haiku

grassy fields...
nothing stands between me
and the sun

Portuguese Translation by Henrique Pimenta

verdinho o campo
nadinha entre mim
e o sol

Serbian Translation by Saša Vazic

travnata polja...
nicega između mene
i sunca

Third Choice, Best of Issue
Haiku Reality, #5

Editors' Comments:

Both an'ya and I [Jasminka Nadaškic-?ordevic] agreed on this haiku by Chen-ou Liu for our Third Favorite. Here is one simple picture, everybody can imagine, or remember, or feel it. This is one great moment when man, as the only one in the world, can feel only nature around him and inside. — Jaca & an'ya.

Chenou Liu

Gravestone Haiku

'Carpe Diem'
on his gravestone
winter light

Editor's First Choice, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October,2011

Editor's Comment:

The brevity of this 4 4 3 constructed haiku is a fitting format for the sentiments expressed in the opening line 'Carpe Diem'—seize the day. Indeed, life is fleeting and those who tarry will soon be left behind to perish—for life is temporary, limited to a short span compared to the environment in which it is lived, both here on earth and in the wider reaches of the ever expanding universe, in the galaxies beyond which we have only started to explore. The expression, 'carpe diem', seize the day, was originally expressed by Horace in the Odes 1.11.

The Odes (Latin Carmina) are a collection in four books of Latin lyric poems by Horace. The Horatian ode format and style has been emulated since by other poets. Books 1 to 3 were published in 23 BC. According to the journal *Quadrant*, they were 'unparalleled by any collection of lyric poetry produced before or after in Latin literature....The Odes have been considered traditionally by English-speaking scholars as purely literary works. Recent evidence by a Horatian scholar suggests they were intended as performance art, a Latin re-interpretation of Greek lyric song.

I.11, *Tu ne quaesieris*, is a short rebuke to a woman worrying about the future; it closes with the famous line *carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero* (pluck the day, trusting tomorrow as little as possible) .

Chen-ou Liu has effectively made a literary connection to the ancient world—a connection echoed and re-echoed in various literary forms across the ages. This echo encourages humans to enjoy life before it is too late: 'Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May from To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time. It resounds as an invocation on transience and a meditation on death. It brings to mind the film / literary character John Keating portrayed by Robin Williams in the film *Dead Poets Society* (1989) who says, 'Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary.' The classical phrase has risen to the stature of an

epithet—carpe diem—and it immediately evokes many literary references. For example, think of Steve Martin who also employs the phrase in the 1987 film *Roxanne* (a modern retelling of the 1897 verse play *Cyrano de Bergerac*, written by French author Edmond Rostand) . 'Carpe diem' has become a modern day epithet.

In Chen-ou Liu's haiku, the middle line—'on his gravestone' acts as a pivot; it effectively connects the third line-'winter light' to the first line. The seasonal shortness of winter days emphasizes the need to take charge of life—seize the day—for life is short compared to the ages and ages of history available for us to read.

Although the latin poets did not not directly compose haiku, I am unable to resist the temptation to reconstruct this closing verse in their language as a Found Poem:

carpe diem
gaudeamus igitur
momento mori

*seize the day / let us rejoice / remember that you are mortal

Long ago, I silently, and sometimes verbally, questioned why I was expected / required to read the ancients in their own largely dead languages...and now I know...

Chenou Liu

Gravestone Tanka

first tanka written from the perspective of a deceased person

a ghost, I stand
behind this new gravestone
engraved with my name...
a boy reciting my poem
'apart, and yet a part'

Chenou Liu

Graveyard Haiku

a river behind the graveyard forget-me-nots

Chenou Liu

Graveyard Visit Haiku

graveyard visit...
our shadows widened
by silence

Chenou Liu

Gray Hair Haiku

first sunrise...
I pull out a small patch
of gray hair

Chenou Liu

Gray Wall Tanka

first chilly night
after the inauguration
in my dream
a gray wall between USA
and Canada

Chenou Liu

Great Wall Of Talk Tanka

her voice
rises high above
all others
finding a crack
in the great wall of talk

Chenou Liu

Greyhound Gendai Haiku

a Greyhound chasing the butterfly dream my shadow

Chenou Liu

Grief Haiku

grief knocks
the wind out of me
drifting snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Gunfire Haiku

July 4th fireworks...
ducking the gunfire
in his head

Chenou Liu

Gunshots & Petals Haiku

distant gunshots...
sunflower petals fold
into night

Chenou Liu

Gunshots And Shooting Star Haiku

between gunshots a shooting star

Chenou Liu

Gunshots Haiku

gunshots from afar -
on the wall of a mosque
'Go home' spray-painted

Chenou Liu

Haiku About Immigration

[North] American literature has always been immigrant.

- Salman Rushdie

the Kodak smile
of a new immigrant
first snowflakes

misty Canada Day
three immigrant children
build a sandcastle

Chenou Liu

Haiku Sequence: You Must Stay Drunk On Writing, So Reality Cannot Destroy You

writing haiku...
the cock crows
as if possessed

the vacuum humming
I revise
a spring haiku

color of the sky
like a cat dead for weeks
my summer haiku

a pause
between haiku
half-moon

writing haiku...
autumn sunlight breaks
through a wall of gray

winter solstice
a haiku lost and found
in my dream

the porridge
on my coffee-stained desk
rewriting haiku
(for Jack Kerouac)

Chenou Liu

Halo Of Haze Tanka

all alone
with the promise she made
when I worked abroad...
a halo of haze
dims the winter moon

Chenou Liu

Hamster Tanka

a hamster
scurries
on a wheel -
at day's end
still in the cage

Chenou Liu

Handful Of Winter Sunlight Haiku

child refugee
a handful
of winter sunlight

Chenou Liu

'Hands Up, Don'T Shoot' Haiku For Michael Brown

for Michael Brown and Ferguson Missouri protesters

men and women chanting
'hands up, don't shoot'
the courthouse at dusk

Chenou Liu

Happy Families Are All Alike

A Tanka Sequence

she and I
sit across the table
in the morning
bearing the silence
of another new year

separated
and yet living quietly
under the same roof
we used to share
a ripe pomegranate

she can't stand me
even in a photo
bits and pieces
of our honeymoon
drifting into the dark

Chenou Liu

Happy Meal Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Chinese New Year
eating a Happy Meal
at McDonald's

Chenou Liu

Hard Labor

A Haibun

Sunlight slants through the window in bars of gold, collecting in a pool around my feet. Shrouded in her own darkness, my muse moans and screams. At her side, I keep yelling, 'Push baby, push...' The final few words have clung to the walls of her womb for hours.

last remnants
of afternoon light...
half-finished poem

Chenou Liu

Harlem Blues Haiku

Harlem blues
a saxophone note
lengthens the night

Chenou Liu

Harvest Moon And Immigrant Dream Tanka

at the top
of the ferris wheel
alone
with a harvest moon
and my immigrant dream

Chenou Liu

Harvest Moon Haiku

drinking alone...
I scoop the harvest moon
from the river

Chenou Liu

Harvest Moon Tanka

Ten years gone...
is the harvest moon
in the Ajax sky
the same moon
hanging over Taipei?

Chenou Liu

Harvest Of Sorrow Tanka

walking home
from the last night shift...
I hold a copy
of my first chapbook
like the harvest of sorrow

Chenou Liu

Haunting Ghost

a tanka sequence for Peter De Vries who claims that 'Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.'

in the attic
nostalgia is growing old
to keep
or not to keep her
the big question

upon knowing
I am going to send her
to a rest home
nostalgia stops talking
and starts a hunger strike

I shoot
nostalgia dead
my muse
condemned to the void
between the lines

this white night
an apparition
of nostalgia
corkscrews
my attic ceiling

Chenou Liu

Hazy Day Moon Haiku

hazy day moon...
waking with the weight
of memory

Chenou Liu

Hazy Moon Haiku

'do you love me'
wakes me from sleep...
hazy moon

Chenou Liu

Hazy Moonlight Haiku

hazy moonlight
through the bare branches
'Goldberg Variations'

Haiku of Merit, Neo Classical Haiku Section
World Haiku Review, August 2012

Chenou Liu

Hazy Skyline Tanka

a hazy skyline
filled with palm trees
towering over
dirt yards with broken fences...
the smile fixed on her face

Chenou Liu

Head Upside-Down Gendai Haiku

writing haiku
my head upside-down
upon a cloud

Chenou Liu

Headstone Haiku

winter twilight...
the shadow of a headstone
mingles with mine

Chenou Liu

Headstones Haiku

a bald eagle...
row upon row of headstones
on the grassy hill

Chenou Liu

Hearse Haiku

a long line of cars
behind the hearse
migrating snow geese

Chenou Liu

Heart-Shaped Box Tanka

a young couple
in a patch of moonlight
sharing chocolate
from a heart-shaped box...
alone with my shadow

Chenou Liu

Heart-Shaped Leaves Haiku

three words uttered...
a shifting shadow
on heart-shaped leaves

Chenou Liu

Heat Haiku

summer heat
on a black car hood
'White Power'

Chenou Liu

Heat Haiku About Lisbon

Lisbon heat
a trolley shivers
up and down the hill

Alfama heat
old flats congested
with migrants

Note: During my June trip to Portugal, the temperature there could reach as high as 40 °c. The Alfama is the oldest district of Lisbon, spreading on the slope between the São Jorge Castle and the Tejo river. It remains one of the most photogenic neighborhoods in all of Europe.

Chenou Liu

Heavy Silence Haiku

snow on snow
the silence between us
growing heavier

Chenou Liu

Her Side Of The Bed Haiku

one year gone
on her side of the bed
winter moonlight

Chenou Liu

Hill-Top Moon Haiku

the length
of our silence...
hill-top moon

Chenou Liu

Hint Of Green Tanka

her blue eyes
with a hint of green...
between the sky
and the tall-grass prairie
I stand alone

Chenou Liu

Hips Senryu (Comic Haiku)

her hips
sway our debate on sex
summer heat

Chenou Liu

Hiroshima Haiku

Hiroshima Peace Park...
as if A-bomb victims
were a dream

Chenou Liu

Hoarding Words Tanka

hoarding words
in the attic
of my mind...
'dinner is ready'
before she left for good

Chenou Liu

Hockey Tanka About Racism

the silence
between his hockey stories...
a banana
thrown on the ice
to trip a black player

Chenou Liu

Holding The World Haiku

holding the world
in my whiskey glass
summer stars

Chenou Liu

Holes In The Pond Haiku

one by one
frogs make holes in the pond...
starry night

Chenou Liu

Home Shore Tanka

in the dream
my home shore eroded
by time's waves...
what's left of myself
unrecognizable

Chenou Liu

Homeland Haiku

Moon Festival...
pointing my shadow
towards the homeland

Chenou Liu

Homeless Girl Haiku

a homeless girl leaves
her footprints in my words
October snow

Chenou Liu

Homeless Man Tanka

sleepless again
a homeless man counts the stars
in the winter sky...
a number is never
just a number

Chenou Liu

Homeless Man's Shadow Haiku

winter moon
a homeless man's shadow
slips into the church

Chenou Liu

Hometown Memories Haiku

hometown memories...
a spider mending a hole
in the attic wall

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'bugs/insects' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 4, July / August 2011

Editor's Comment:

Chen-ou, I am beginning to appreciate your haiku about your home place. Our house had several attics off the upper rooms and we as children climbed under the rafters scooting along behind the walls from one to the other.

Chenou Liu

Honeymoon Photo Tanka

she gave me
every reason under the stars
except the real one...
her smile frozen forever
in our honeymoon photo

Chenou Liu

Honking Geese Haiku

geese honking...

I left home
to find home

Chenou Liu

Hooded Black Teenager Tanka

a hooded
black teenager hops
on the street car
a Muslim girl and I
stand beside him

Chenou Liu

Hoodie Haiku

under the Florida sun
Martin Luther King Jr.
in a hoodie

Chenou Liu

Hospice Garden Haiku

rose branches
weighed down with snow...
hospice garden

Chenou Liu

Hospital Window Haiku

hospital window
the morning drifts along
with snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Hourglass And Diamonds Tanka

exchanging poems
we sparkle with love
at dawn
the hourglass
fills with tiny diamonds

Chenou Liu

Housewarming Party Senryu (Comic Haiku)

housewarming party
the new neighbor's dog
sniffs my dog

Chenou Liu

Human, All Too Human: A Kyoka Sequence

long, narrow
aisle to the altar
the guests
stand on both sides thinking
they married the wrong people

the morning
greeting has long gone
he ponders
buying that magic blue pill
maybe ten minutes longer

first time
in the Bra Lounge
she wonders
if these fancy bras are those
his interns wear

back from
the housewarming party
they argue
about whose house is bigger
whose children look smart

children's rooms
filled with autumn moonlight
the old couple
sit silently
staring at the TV screen

slow walk
to the church cemetery
the mourners
wear long faces
speaking ill of the deceased

Chenou Liu

Hungry

(A Tanka Prose)

When I first tasted her kiss, it was like spring water coming from the green slopes of a hill. For six years, her succulent words quenched my thirst. Now, the spring of our life starts to run dry.

she tells a lie
to conceal another
at the banquet
I stack oyster shells
one inside the other

Chenou Liu

Hungry Ghosts Tanka

new immigrant
to the land of hungry ghosts
of the Muse
I write love tanka
in crimson red

Chenou Liu

Hunter's Silence Haiku

noonday heat a wild boar charging into the hunter's silence

Chenou Liu

'I And Thou' Haiku

amid the debris
a dog-eared copy
of 'I and Thou'

Chenou Liu

I Become The One Who Forgets His Dream Song

A Haibun for John Berryman

solstice...
counting snowflakes
on the window

There are two voices fighting for the control of my mind. One says, "Just keep writing, " and I ask, "writing for whom? " The other whispers in the dark, "for the dead whom you did love."

first light...
my copy of The Middle Way
dog-eared

I start to spin the poems of darkness out of falling snow.

Chenou Liu

'I Can'T Breathe' Tanka

a sea of blue uniforms
under the New York sun
a black man
holding up a placard
that reads 'I can't breathe'

Chenou Liu

'I Can't Breathe' Tanka For Eric Garner

blindfolded Justice
holding her scales and sword
in the square
row upon row of black men
chanting 'I can't breathe'

Chenou Liu

I Dream Therefore I Am

a tanka set for all would-be/depressed poets

their fingers grasp
toward me for a handshake
or a touch...
the poster 'A Poet's View' sways
in my midsummer dream

'I have a dream'
lingering in my mind:
men and women
stand in vigil at TV shops
watching my funeral

Chenou Liu

I Must Stay Drunk On Writing So Reality Cannot Destroy Me

Alone in the darkness of this May Day morning, I can hear the droning of my muse's air-raid sirens. Waiting for the next explosion of words drives me crazy like a moth flying into the summer fire.

word-bombs
slash the alleyways
of my mind...
the feel of a black tip
moving across the page

Chenou Liu

I Remember

A Haibun

those days when we were like sheep herded into church by missionaries and told to keep our heads down, backs straight, and hands folded.

'Our Father in heaven, ...Give us this day our daily bread... deliver us from evil.'

Christmas Eve -
I turn my back on Jesus
to face the moon

Chenou Liu

I Remember (A Haibun)

those days when we were like sheep herded into church by missionaries and told to keep our heads down, backs straight, and hands folded.

'Our Father in heaven, ...Give us this day our daily bread... deliver us from evil.'

Christmas Eve -

I turn my back on Jesus

to face the moon

Chenou Liu

I See For Emily Dickinson

A Tanka Prose

Under the Dickinson bust an index card on which 'Remember, poetry...' is scribbled in red ink. Notebook in hand, back straight, mind alert, I start reading her last manuscript, 'Behind /Beyond the Attic Wall.'

the year
dying in the night
I alone
lean out the window
into the dark

Chenou Liu

I See Through A Glass Darkly

A Haibun

like a newlywed standing by her wooden mailbox,
like a hungry spider lurking in its dewy net,
like a spring seed breathing under heavy snow,
with fixed attention I've been looking
at the end of the winding road
where He is supposed to emerge

winter twilight
between the pages of Job
a wooden cross

Chenou Liu

'I Think' Haiku

I think; therefore I am
in the middle of a blizzard

Chenou Liu

'I Used To Be' Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'I used to be...'
a half smile at the corners
of her lips

Chenou Liu

Icarus' Dream Tanka

entranced
by Icarus' dream
I stand
flapping my arms
at the roof's edge

Chenou Liu

Icy Road Tanka

the road covered
in a thin film of ice...
a teenager
raises her middle finger
to the evening sky

Chenou Liu

If Haiku

shooting stars...
if I had a child
of my own

Chenou Liu

If On A Winter's Day A Drunkard

A Haiku Set

the morning sun
breaks into pieces...
shards of glass

pebbles of light
on the winter waves...
only my shadow

Chenou Liu

If On An Autumn's Night A Sojourner

A Haiku Sequence written on the night of the Chinese Moon Festival

walking aimlessly
Taipei moonlight
in Ajax streets

a home
away from home
harvest moon

moon viewing
a long shadow
beside me

tenth autumn...
tonight's moon not like
the one back home

Chenou Liu

If Winter Comes, Can Spring Be Far Behind?

A Haiku Sequence

winter moonlight
on my pillow
a strand of her hair

butterflies mating
in a dream
the need to touch my ex

thread by thread
I untangle thoughts of her ...
April snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Ilha Formosa? , A Haibun For Japanese Earthquake And Tsunami Victims

Sendai earthquake...
the darkness pierced
only by flashlights

At night, I toss and turn, worrying about the long-term health risks for Japan and its neighbors. My homeland, Taiwan, is one of the closest.

Fukushima at dawn -
one vending machine
still glowing

I remember during the late 1990s at the height of the anti-nuclear movement in Taiwan, someone handed me a flyer on the street. It listed important instructions on how to survive a nuclear disaster. The last one on the list said: 'When driving away in the rescue convoy, please remember to look back, because that will be your last sight of Taipei.'

radioactive scare
this a world of dew
and yet...

Notes:

1 In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it 'Ilha Formosa, ' which means "Beautiful Island." Taipei is its capital.

2 This poem is a revision of Ilha Formosa? , which was first published in Sketchbook,6: 3, May/June 2011

Chenou Liu

Illegible Haiku

winter mist...
the poem I wrote for you
illegible now

Chenou Liu

'Im-Mi-Grant ' Haiku

im-mi-grant...
the way English tastes
on my tongue

2nd Prize,7th Kokako Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

Immigrant Dream Tanka

from afar
the sound of fireworks
on Canada Day
folding, unfolding
my immigrant dream

Chenou Liu

Immigrant Life Tanka

an airplane
crossing the winter sky...
my immigrant life
cleaved
into before and after

Chenou Liu

Immigration Haiku

nine autumns...
I point to the harvest moon
the new home

Chenou Liu

Immigration Tanka

English teacher said
Just wipe 'I used to be....'
out of your mind
walking home alone
face-to-face with falling snow

Chenou Liu

Impeachment Tanka

'Impeachment...'
where the word ends,
the Tower of Babel
emerges
in a land of the lost

Chenou Liu

In His Own Write

A Tanka Prose

the mind
is schizophrenic
but the heart
has its own reason:
apoemisnotjustapoem

In a class room where there is pin-drop silence, I tell a small group of high school students, 'Where there is art, there is no madness. My mentor writes freely and will fight against the dictatorship of words if words hold his thoughts captive.'

on his deathbed
my mentor says, I've three lives:
one in dreams,
another during the day
and the last in my poems

Chenou Liu

Independence Day Haiku

another
flag-draped coffin
Independence Day

Chenou Liu

Ink Dark Night Tanka

this ink dark night...
nostalgia and loneliness
circle me
two predators waiting
for my weak moment

Chenou Liu

Ink-Dark Sky Tanka

releasing
fireflies from the jar
of my words...
what do they look like
under her ink-dark sky?

Chenou Liu

Inmate Haiku

running his hand
through morning sunlight...
the inmate

Chenou Liu

Insomnia Tanka

insomnia...
this sultry night
all for me
and my shadow
on the attic wall

Chenou Liu

Into Me Tanka

'you're not tuned
into me anymore...'
I take her hand
as the traffic noise
filters over us

Chenou Liu

Invictus, A Haiku Set For Nelson Mandela

'Madiba's gone'...
a young Mandela raised
his right fist

embers glowing...
Mandela's stories color
children's faces

Notes:

1 Nelson Mandela met with the captain of the Springboks rugby team, François Pienaar, implying that a Springboks victory in the 1995 World Cup would unite and inspire the nation. Mandela also shared with him, a British poem, titled 'Invictus' ('undefeated' or 'unconquered') that had inspired him during his time in prison.

2 In South Africa, Nelson Mandela is often referred to by his Xhosa clan name, Madiba, or as Tata ('Father') , and viewed as 'the father of the nation.'

Chenou Liu

It's All The Election's Fault

A Senryu Sequence

her middle finger
before the election
blue pills intact

election day
he holds his nose
to vote

breakup sex
after the election
ten minutes shorter

Chenou Liu

Jagged Moon Haiku

jagged moon
in every window...
prison riot

Chenou Liu

Jaguar Haiku

harvest moon rising...
the smell
of his new Jaguar

Chenou Liu

Jar Of Words Tanka

releasing
fireflies from the jar
of my words...
what do they look like
under her ink-dark sky?

Chenou Liu

Jazz Music Haiku

twilit Route Irish...
loud Jazz music
from the tanks

Chenou Liu

Jesuischarlie (French For I Am Charlie)

Haiku

under
the
Paris
sky
blood
stains
in
the
shadow
of
a
minaret

Chenou Liu

Jesus And Time Tanka

in the chapel
I pray to Jesus
hour after hour
finally tired of me
Time leaves me alone

Chenou Liu

Jesus' Gaze Tanka

inside the church
the congregation praying
under Jesus' gaze
two Romani women
in the trash-littered square

Chenou Liu

Jigsaw Puzzle Tanka

the pieces
of his jigsaw puzzle
litter the floor...
winter moonlight slipping
through the hospice window

Tanka First Place, 2015 San Francisco International Competition, Haiku, Senryu and Tanka

Judge's Comment by Margaret Chula: A poignant scene, beautifully rendered without overstatement or sentimentality. Beginning with the first line ("the pieces"), this tanka is about separation. A jigsaw puzzle serves as the perfect metaphor for how we organize things in our minds to have them make sense. But, for this man, deterioration has set in, both physical and mental. Things don't fit together anymore. The verb "litter" is an excellent choice to illustrate how pieces are scattered like trash with no organization or purpose. Both the puzzle and the man have come apart. The brilliance of this tanka is that the reader does not know that it takes place in a hospice until the final line. In the first three lines, we can easily imagine a child scattering puzzle pieces on the floor—eliciting an entirely different emotional response. Strong verbs with multiple meanings add an emotional resonance. "Slipping" can be interpreted as "slipping away, " which is what happens in hospice. And yet there is hope here, too, with the moonlight suggesting a moment of lucidity.

Chenou Liu

Job Hunting Haiku

job hunting...
a yellow leaf drifts
from branch to branch

Editor's First Choice Haiku, "fall trees" haiku thread
Sketchbook,5: 5, September/October 2010

Chenou Liu

Journey Through The Land Of Melting Clocks

A Haiku Sequence

anything new
under the Barcelona sun
Casa Milà

a line of tapas
where does her love begin
and my desire end?

the full moon
at La Sagrada Família
unfinished me

Occupy Madrid
returning
to my mother tongue

Seville Cathedral
above a sea of heads
chirping swallow

Dante in Thought
is it possible to take
refuge in poetry

Dalí painting
on my water-stained wall
hometown memories

Chenou Liu

Journeys, A Haiku Sequence

for the country of my birth

Sintra at dawn
a carriage horse
clip-clop, clip-clops...

Lisbon heat
taxis rattle and screech
through cobbled lanes

Belem in twilight
her sailor song tinged
with love and regret

'Ilha Formosa...'
sailors and I cry out
in a fleeting dream

Note: In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it 'Ilha Formosa, ' which means "Beautiful Island.")

Chenou Liu

July 4th Fireworks Haiku

fireworks on mute
the silence envelops me
and my old dog

Chenou Liu

Just A Day

A Haibun

November sky
framed by the basement window
thoughts of home

The ceiling still water stained. A pile of poetry books on the desk. None with my name on it. Yet my life harms no one - no wife... no pets.

Today, on my forty eighth birthday, no one calls.

Chenou Liu

Just So Stories? : A Gendai Haiku Sequence

For Roland Barthes

the Muse's rapid-fire delivery of lines pregnant silence

the Muse lies on the floor my haiku dripping with blood

my haiku caged in 5-7-5 syllables scars on editor's mind

readers' heads stuck together my haiku is the cat that walks by himself

a wordless poem between the critic and me glass wall

the Muse addresses young poets via video stream: 'Death of the Author'

Chenou Liu

Killing The Buddha Haiku

written in response to Linji Yixuan's koan: If you meet the Buddha, kill him!

killing the Buddha
in a midsummer dream -
a rash on my hand

Chenou Liu

Knife And Fork Haiku

For my parents who only use Chinese chopsticks

dinner alone

I pick up the knife and fork

and yet... and yet...

Chenou Liu

Knife-Sharp Words Haiku

first crescent moon
her knife-sharp words make
a poet of me

Chenou Liu

L Word Tanka

the smell
of her tangled hair
across my pillow...
I fingerprint the L word
on her forehead

Chenou Liu

Ladder To The Moon Tanka For Georgia O'keeffe

a child of O'Keeffe
I've made words my ladder
to the moon -
critics cannot stop
cracking their knuckles

Chenou Liu

Laid-Off Worker Tanka

more leaves
on the muddy ground
than on the tree...
a laid-off worker turns
to look at the factory gate

Chenou Liu

Land Of Opportunity

A Tanka Prose

headline news:

'U. of T. Too Asian? '

on my way

to another interview

maple leaves swirling

I stop at traffic lights, and see a Filipino nanny pushing a baby carriage. A second woman, walking in the opposite direction, pushes an old man in a wheelchair who is staring into space.

'Move, Chinaman. Get out of my way, ' a native English speaker yells at me.

Note: U. of T. stands for University of Toronto.

Chenou Liu

Land Of Snow White Tanka

the first tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

a new immigrant
in the land of Snow White
I practice
A, B, C... by talking
to the bathroom mirror

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

Chenou Liu

Landing Paper Tanka

the first night
after my landing paper
is date-stamped
my tongue trips
on my own name

Chenou Liu

Lantern Boat Haiku

Starless night
a lantern boat sailing
out to sea

2012 Haiku Society of America Members' Anthology

Editor's Comment:

Such a fine poem, Chen-ou. I admire the direct language and economy of image—stark and deeply lonely, and yet, filled with hope for a good haul.

Chenou Liu

Last Cherry Petals Haiku

last cherry petals
drift to the ground
I miss myself

Chenou Liu

Last Shift Senryu (Comic Haiku)

last shift done
leading the way home
my shadow

Chenou Liu

Last Week's News Haiku

street corner at dusk...
a middle-aged man wrapped
in last week's news

Chenou Liu

Last Words Tanka

night after night
her last words ripple
through my mind...
in the winter sky
the hazy day moon

Chenou Liu

Layoff Haiku

laid off...
the silence
of wind chimes

Chenou Liu

Leafy Path Tanka

my dog nudges me
down the leafy path
where you and I
used to take long walks
after making love

Chenou Liu

Leaning Tower Of Pisa Tanka

taking photos of her
pushing the Leaning Tower
of Pisa
those three words
slip out of my mouth

Chenou Liu

Leap Of Faith

a solo somonka for Søren Kierkegaard

among shadows
in this attic room
I hear
years of lonely nights
stacked against my mind

the waves
lapping against my feet...
am I afraid
to say a final farewell
to this sunny world

Chenou Liu

Leap Of Faith?

A Tanka Prose

After a morning walk, I stand in the front yard, looking at the bare maple tree. It relinquishes the riches of the season without grief, going deep into its roots for sleep and renewal for the new year.

the smell of cold air
in my attic room:
a desk, a chair
and a single bed
with piles of resumes

Chenou Liu

Leap Second Haiku

leap second -
my shadow becomes
longer

Note: At the earliest moment in the morning, a team of scientists at the Paris Observatory added a leap second 'to make up for a gradual slowdown in the Earth's rotation.'

Chenou Liu

Length Of The Night Haiku

holding
winter moonlight in my hand
length of the night

Chenou Liu

Less Alone Senryu (Comic Haiku)

watching an old man
talk to the willow tree...
I feel less alone

Chenou Liu

Less Traveled Path Haiku

cherry blossoms
I choose the path
less traveled

Honorable Mention, 2017 VCBF Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

Letting Out Silence Haiku

Moon Festival ...
I open the window
letting out silence

Chenou Liu

Life And Death

A Haiku Set

hospice verandah...
a girl opens her mouth
to spring rain

her black hair
veils our praying hands...
hospice church at dusk

Chenou Liu

Life In The Shadowland

A Haibun

'Eric, I'm afraid... I'll never see my child... or know my child... as a man.' His voice is scarcely above a whisper.

'Silent Night' from afar...
a faint moan
escapes his lips

A slanted ray of sunlight falls on the family bible by his bedside. Between the pages of Job, there is a photo of him standing on the Lech path. I remember his dimpled smile as he said, 'I love the clear air in the Alps where I can air my often-tortured brain.'

Chenou Liu

Light And Dark Haiku

the door slams shut...
my world
between light and dark

Chenou Liu

Light And Murmur Tanka

flying above
the light and murmur
of Formosa
the airplane carries
my immigrant dream

Chenou Liu

Light And Shadow Haiku

play of light and shadow
on 'The Way of Haiku'
lingering scent

Chenou Liu

Light Of Loss Tanka

this neon night
before my emigration
the streets
become luminous
with the light of loss

Chenou Liu

Lightning Gendai Haiku

lightning is the moon's silence thunder its gibbering tongue

Chenou Liu

Like A Shooting Star

A Haiku Sequence

distant laughter
his hospital window
frames the harvest moon

sunlight through icicles
his dimpled smile
stops our talk of cancer

out of the church
a white coffin
between bird calls

Chenou Liu

Lingerie Haiku

flood of moonlight...
the drip, drip, drip
of her lingerie

Chenou Liu

Lingerie Senryu (Comic Haiku)

eve of deadline
drawn back into bed
by her lingerie

Chenou Liu

Lingering Scent Haiku

'cherry blossom'
in my borrowed tongue
lingering scent

Sakura Award, 2016 Haiku Invitational

Chenou Liu

Lingering Scent Tanka

I bury my face
in the curve
of her breasts
the lingering scent
after spring rain

Chenou Liu

Lingering Smell Tanka

the lingering smell
of loneliness...
my night punctuated
by the sounds of ice
cracking against glass

Chenou Liu

Little House On The Prairie

A Haiku Sequence

I stand alone
under the prairie sky
chewing on thoughts

ripple after ripple
of grass shadows
the scent of spring

tall grasses
bend to the moon's faint light
wending my way home

Chenou Liu

Live To Write Tanka

her words linger,
'writing does not put food
on the table...'
another winter
colder than the last

Chenou Liu

Loneliness And Old Rat Tanka

the crescent moon
hangs low over my attic
loneliness
nibbles away at my hours
an old rat with a cheese

Chenou Liu

Loneliness Haiku

the faucet dripping...
my loneliness comes
inside her

Chenou Liu

Loneliness Singing Tanka For Elvis Presley

loneliness
persists in its singing -
with a net of words
I catch the night,
nail it to the ceiling

Chenou Liu

Lonely Face Tanka

a year ago
or yesterday we parted
staring
in the mirror
I see her lonely face

Chenou Liu

Lonely Hearts Tanka

finally
the lovemaking next door
subsides...
outside my motel window
Lonely Hearts flashing red

Chenou Liu

Long Memory Tanka

(simmering away)

this

long memory

of my ex

(simmering away)

Chenou Liu

Long Sigh Tanka

I recite love poems
that are etched in my heart...
she gives a long sigh,
'they're full of adjectives
lacking action verbs'

Chenou Liu

Long Snaking Line Haiku

New Year's morning
a long snaking line
up Everest

Chenou Liu

Long Walk Home Senryu (Comic Haiku)

laid off
the long walk home
with my shadow

Chenou Liu

Long Way Home Haiku

long way home...
measuring this winter night
lamppost by lamppost

Chenou Liu

Long Way Home Tanka

first snowfall
on our long way home
any words would be
less cold than this silence
between us

Chenou Liu

Long Winter Night Tanka

twilight ushers in
a long winter night...
one by one
thoughts of my hometown
unfolding

Chenou Liu

Longing Haiku

snowed in...
(this longing
deep inside)

Honorable Mention, 2015 World Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

Longing Tanka For Basho

she cuts
a muskmelon in half...
I write
rewrite, and revise
my haiku on longing

Chenou Liu

Look Of Silence Tanka

a bottle gone
before my pain fades
into blessed numbness...
on this midwinter night
the look of silence

Chenou Liu

Looking In/Out Tanka

the upbeat
Happy New Year music
bounces off the tiles
one face looks in the window
while the other looks out

Chenou Liu

Lost Dog Poster Tanka

a boy alone
by the hospice window
at twilight
the lost dog poster
flapping in the cold air

Chenou Liu

Lotus Leaf Haiku

a dried lotus leaf
in Tibetan Book of the Dead...
winter dusk

Third Place, 2010 World Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

Lotus Leaf Tanka

spring dewdrops
float on a lotus leaf...
the reality
that I will surely die,
that I already have

Chenou Liu

Lotus Pond Haiku

lotus pond...
a bloated frog
belly up

Chenou Liu

Love Affair Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'I had an affair...'
she keeps fixing the holes
in my sock

Chenou Liu

Love Affair Tanka

love affair:
the rest of the world waits
in the dark
and we entwine our bodies,
half awake, half forgetful...

Chenou Liu

Love Haiku

red dot on her head...
My Heart Will Go On lingers
in predawn dark

Chenou Liu

Love Letters Tanka

love letters
I never sent her...
one by one
they morph into lilies
this Easter morning

Chenou Liu

Love Oil Sci-Fi Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Pence's midnight scream
Trump's love oil skypipelined
to Kremlin towers

Chenou Liu

Love Poem For No One Haiku

budding blossoms...
a love poem for no one
in particular

Chenou Liu

Lovers' Lane Haiku Noir

lovers' lane
a baby crying
in the garbage

Chenou Liu

Lover's Quarrel Senryu (Comic Haiku)

lover's quarrel...
she stoops down to draw
a line in the sand

Chenou Liu

Lovers' Quarrel Senryu (Comic Haiku)

lovers' quarrel...
her black cat and my pitbull
eyeball to eyeball

Chenou Liu

Low-Hanging Moon Tanka

my home
is a low-hanging moon
tonight
as I become older
than my father

Chenou Liu

Lullaby Haiku

midnight bus shelter
the lullaby
of spring rain

Chenou Liu

Lullaby Tanka

like a lullaby
crickets chirping from afar
take me home
in my autumn dream
the smell of mooncakes

2nd Prize, Tanka, Diogen Autumn Haiku Contest 2013

Chenou Liu

Make America Great Again Tanka

at sunset
a street dog cocks its leg
under the sign
reading, 'Vote for Donald Trump,
Make America Great Again! '

Chenou Liu

Make Or Break

A Haibun

We each sink into our own thoughts. I sit at one end, she at the other end of the table we assembled many years ago. Like our life, the table is now scratched and worn. A siren wails in the distance. I look up and see a lone winter star blinking through the window. It's past midnight, and the question between us remains unanswered.

divorce talk
our dog sits quietly
with her back to me

Chenou Liu

Malala Day Tanka For Malala Yousafzai Who Stood Up For Education And Against The Taliban

'Malala Day
is not my day' thundered
across the room...
a girl opens her new book
under the Swat Valley sun

Note: excerpted from Malala Yousafzai's speech at the United Nations

Dear brothers and sisters, do remember one thing. Malala day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. There are hundreds of Human rights activists and social workers who are not only speaking for human rights, but who are struggling to achieve their goals of education, peace and equality. Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them.

So here I stand... one girl among many.

I speak – not for myself, but for all girls and boys.

I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.

Those who have fought for their rights:

Their right to live in peace.

Their right to be treated with dignity.

Their right to equality of opportunity.

Their right to be educated.

Chenou Liu

Man Of Few Words Senryu (Comic Haiku)

arguing over costs...
a man of few words
in the coffin

Chenou Liu

Mangy Dog Tanka

a mangy dog
hit by a stone
howls at the sky -
alone
I do likewise

Chenou Liu

Mantle Haiku

niece-and-nephew photos
cluster on the mantle
alone with my books

Chenou Liu

Map And Gps Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a fork in the road...
she opens the map
while I read GPS

Senryu Third Place, 2014 Haiku Poets of Northern California Haiku, Senryu, and
Tanka Contest

Chenou Liu

Maple Land Tanka

South Asians and I
seated around a piece
of plane wreckage
in the Maple Land... waking
to the smell of turkey

Chenou Liu

Marble Fireplace Tanka

marble fireplace
full of burning logs
painted
on my attic wall...
alone with my Muse

Chenou Liu

Market Haiku

the market in twilight
fish scales and a bruised apple
on the ground

Chenou Liu

Marlboro Lighter Tanka

he storms out
of the cancer center
into cold air
the click, click, click
of a Marlboro lighter

Chenou Liu

Marriage Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'I'm married ...'
ice cubes shifting
in her glass

Chenou Liu

Mastectomy Bra Haiku

first glimpse
of her mastectomy bra
winter rose

Runner-Up, 2015 Fifth Vladimir Devidé Haiku Award

Chenou Liu

Mating Flies Senryu (Comic Haiku)

attic room:
two mating flies
and me

Chenou Liu

Mayan Doomsday Haiku

snowy morning,
December 21...
reciting Basho

(for Mayan Doomsday believers)

Chenou Liu

Mayan Doomsday Myth (For Non/Believers)

Doomsday Eve:
I start counting last
autumn stars

snowy morning,
December 21...
reciting Basho

the day after...
a roof icicle holding
the morning sun

(note: Dec.20 is the last day of Autumn)

Chenou Liu

Meat Factory Tanka

on the way
to the meat factory
where I work,
bare maple trees...
beyond them, bare maple trees

Chenou Liu

Memorial Wall Haiku

winter twilight
on the memorial wall
an elder's shadow

Chenou Liu

Memory Haiku

back to where I live...
hometown memories drifting
with cherry petals

Chenou Liu

Merry Christmas, A Canadian Version

A Haiku Set

'Silent Night'...

the blink

of a star

Boxing Day morning...

two dogs rest in the shadow

of a church

Chenou Liu

Merry Christmas,2013 Stone-Cold Edition

a row of trees coated
with a layer of ice
'Silent Night' from afar

our 'Me-rry Chri-st-ma-s'
punctuated
by ice pellets

Chenou Liu

Message Board Tanka

'M,40,
poet, seeks a partner...'
rusty staples
in the message board
tilted toward the window

Chenou Liu

Mid-Aged Life Tanka

mid-aged life,
a roll of paper towels:
the closer
it gets to the end
the more quickly it goes

Chenou Liu

Mid-Autumn Tanka

mid-autumn night...
the wind whispers to me
Chinese words
that offer me a home
in the shape of a moon

Tanka First Place, 2011 San Francisco International Competition Haiku, Senryu, Tanka, and Rengay sponsored by the Haiku Poets of Northern California
Published in Mariposa
Anthologized in Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka, 4, 2012

Judge's Comment

The originality of the images coupled with the evocative sense of 'stranger in a strange land' merited a 1st Place award. The first two lines appear to lead to a traditional path. The third line is the turning point that brings this tanka to the next level. The fourth and fifth lines complete the journey. After reading this tanka I found myself looking at the moon with new eyes and listening to the language of the wind.

Chenou Liu

Middle Finger And Cold Moon Haiku

at the tip
of his middle finger
a cold moon

Chenou Liu

Middle Finger Haiku

For Ai Weiwei, author of Study of Perspective

sunlight on the photo:
his middle finger
against Tiananmen Square

Chenou Liu

Middle Finger Senryu (Comic Haiku)

midnight argument
giving me the middle finger
she blocks out two stars

Chenou Liu

Middle Finger Tanka

her middle finger
marks the silence between us...
I remember
she grabbed my leg years ago
as if clinging to a lifeboat

Chenou Liu

Midnight Barking Haiku

midnight barking -
I turn up the volume
of my thoughts

Chenou Liu

Migrant And Geese Tanka

the setting sun
floods potato fields
with crimson
a migrant looks up
at geese flying south

Chenou Liu

Migrant Dream Tanka

for Langston Hughes

steep terrain
and long rows of grape vines...
my migrant dream
dries up like a raisin
in the summer sunlight

Chenou Liu

Migrant Haiku

sunlight through the window...
'Happy New Year'
on the migrant's tongue

Chenou Liu

Migrant Worker Tanka

the mayor
tells a migrant worker
to shove off...
wet snow
like the spit on his face

Chenou Liu

Migrant Workers Tanka

at twilight
banners for the harvest
tossing like waves...
migrant workers that stay
migrant workers that go

Chenou Liu

Migrant's Dream Haiku

July Fourth fireworks...
a migrant's dream intercepted
by the NSA

Chenou Liu

Migrant's Face Haiku

the look
on a migrant's wrinkled face...
contrail sky

Chenou Liu

Migrant's Hands And Feet Haiku

the migrant looks
at his hands and feet...
cries of geese

Chenou Liu

Migrants Tanka

two migrants
from countries
an ocean apart...
speaking with cracked hands
that shape this wintry night

Chenou Liu

Migrant's Voice Haiku

harvest moon rising....
a tremble
in the migrant's voice

Second Place,10th Kloštar Ivanic Haiku Contest,2013

Judge's Comment

The year wears on, maybe he is a migrant farm worker, far from his home country. He is working late, the harvest moon rises, huge and yellow over the horizon. Filled with nostalgia, he thinks of his homeland, his family, his life there, as he talks to fellow migrants he holds back tears, but his voice wavers.

Chenou Liu

Migrating Geese Haiku

Alone in Ajax
a flock of geese flying
in a v shape

Chenou Liu

Migration Tanka

with eyes closed
rugged hands holding a Bible
against his chest
the migrant prays to God
in his adopted tongue

Chenou Liu

Mind And Moon Haiku

moon mirrors mind mirrors moon

Chenou Liu

Mind-Demons Tanka

midnight moon...
a war veteran
stabbing and slashing
his mind-demons
onto the canvas

Chenou Liu

Mirror Tanka

her toothbrush
in my medicine chest
declares residency...
gazing at the mirror
a face hard to recognize

Tanka Third Place, 2011 San Francisco International Competition Haiku, Senryu, Tanka, and Rengay sponsored by the Haiku Poets of Northern California
Published in Mariposa

Judge's Comment

The apparently effortless humor of the poet adds lightness to this tanka and makes it stand out from other submissions. But there is something more: a conflict present in the last two lines. This tanka led me toward another reading of Salad Anniversary by Machi Tawara. For this I thank the poet.

Chenou Liu

Missing Girl Poster Haiku

maple leaves drifting...
a missing girl poster peels
from the gray street-wall

Chenou Liu

Missing Myself Haiku

last cherry petals
drift to the ground
I miss myself

Chenou Liu

Mist Haiku

autumn mist
out of sight
out of myself

Croatian Translation

jesenja magla
izvan vidokruga
izvan sebe

Chenou Liu

Mistress Senryu (Comic Haiku)

recession...
the care giver he hired
doubles as a mistress

Chenou Liu

Mixed Veggies Haiku

hometown memories...
a bag of mixed veggies
defrosting

Editor's Second Choice Haiku, 'vegetable(s) ' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 3, May/June 2011

Editor's Comment:

I love the essence of this. Wabi. All the memories frozen in the past, suddenly right there in the present. A family reunion or class reunion, mixed with all sorts of people catching up on their lives. Constantly, we are able to bring the past into the present, but never the other way around. Yet in revisiting a place, people, family a little touch of the past is always right there with us. Once fields of farmers and fresh veggies, were cleaned, precooked and defrosted to save, time—the word time, past, present, saving time are all food for thought. Sorry for the pun!

Chenou Liu

Mobile Light Vigil Tanka For Hong Kong's Occupy Central Pro-Democracy Protestors

as if
stars were spread thick
across the Hong Kong sky:
a mobile light vigil
in the Central District

Chenou Liu

Mockingbird Haiku

a trial is not
a morality play....
killing a mockingbird

Chenou Liu

Monarch Butterfly Haiku

a monarch
folds into silence...
budding petals

Second Place, 2014 World Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

Monarch Haiku

last day of summer
the warmth of a monarch
still in my cupped hands

Chenou Liu

Monotone Tanka

on the first date
I repeat 'I'm a poet'
in a monotone...
time slowly stretches out
turning to rubber

Chenou Liu

Monotony Of Longing Tanka

standing alone
by the Pacific shore...
the monotony
of longing for homeland
reaches the horizon

Chenou Liu

Moon And Wine Haiku

half full, half empty...
my glass
and the moon

Chenou Liu

Moon Festival Haiku

Moon Festival
alone, I whisper to myself
in my mother tongue

Chenou Liu

Moon Tanka For Li Po

gazing up
at the moon over Ajax
I realize
it's bigger than
the one Li Po wrote of

Simply Haiku,7: 3, Autumn 2009

Note: Li Bai (705 – 762) , also known as Li Po, was a Chinese poet acclaimed from his own day to the present as a genius and romantic figure who took traditional poetic forms to new heights. He and his friend Du Fu (712–770) were the two most prominent figures in the flourishing of Chinese poetry in the mid-Tang Dynasty that is often called the 'Golden Age of China'... excerpted from the Wikipedia entry, 'Li Bai'

Chenou Liu

Mooncake Tanka

like pastry dough
the fingers of my mind
work through
hometown memories -
lingering scent of mooncakes

Chenou Liu

Moonless Night Haiku

moonless night
one buzzing fly and I
in the attic

Chenou Liu

Moonlight Dripping Haiku

my dog and I
under the eaves
moonlight dripping

Chenou Liu

Moonlit River Tanka For Seamus Heaney

Father recited
Li Po's Quiet Night Thought...
I listen
to Heaney's river
in the trees

Note:

For Bernard and Jane McCabe

The riverbed, dried-up, half-full of leaves.

Us, listening to a river in the trees.

Seamus Heaney, 'The Haw Lantern' (1987)

Chenou Liu

Moonlit Sea Haiku

Their faces with soot
a moonlit sea of bone
hitting bone

Chinese Translation by Chen-ou Liu

?????????
??????????
???????

Romanian Translation by Eduard Tara

fetele lor cu funingine
o mare sub clar de luna
lovind os deos

Chenou Liu

Moonlit Shadow Haiku

that night we made love...
a moonlit shadow wrapping
around my wine glass

Chenou Liu

More Space Tanka

she said
she needed more space
I gave her
3000 miles of it...
the Pacific expands daily

Chenou Liu

More Than Ever, This Land Of 'Freedom Of Expression' Written In Response To The New Issue Of Charlie Hebdo

If you don't stand for something you will fall for anything. Malcolm X

Men and women, the young and old, line up in the early-morning darkness at a newsstand, waiting to buy the first issue of Charlie Hebdo since the terrorist attacks. On its new cover, the bearded Prophet sheds a single tear and holds up a sign saying, "I am Charlie." Above the cartoon on a green background is the headline, "All is forgiven."

side by side

#Muslim and #JeSuisCharlie

on my screen

Never Forget scrawled in red

on a Paris mosque

Chenou Liu

Morning Birdsongs Haiku

the silence
between morning birdsongs
newborn's eyes

Chenou Liu

Morning Breeze Tanka

the morning breeze
turns maple leaves to song...
alone at my desk
I hear how Mother's words
'come home' have aged

Chenou Liu

Morning Chill Haiku

my dog and I
in the shadow of pines
morning chill

Chenou Liu

Morning Yawn Haiku

my morning yawn -
the dog licking the sun
from his tail

Chenou Liu

Morse Code Tanka

the cooing
of a dove by my window -
I try to decipher
the Morse code sent from you
an ocean away

Chenou Liu

Mother Tongue Haiku

Pacific shore...
a tidal wave speaking
my mother tongue

Chenou Liu

Mother Tongue Tanka

bare maple tree
standing on the front lawn...
with no one around
I speak to it
in my mother tongue

2011 'Best of the Best' Poetry Award (Tanka Category)
selected by the Founding Editor of Lyrical Passion Poetry E-Zine

Chenou Liu

Mother's Apron Tanka

snowflakes
falling upon snowflakes...
upon my face -
the smell of steamed buns
on mother's apron

Chenou Liu

Mother's Hand Haiku

yellow ball of yarn
in my mother's hand
harvest moon

Honorable Mention, 2016 International Autumn Moon Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Mother's Lullaby Haiku

faraway whistle
of the night train...
mother's lullaby

Chenou Liu

Mouth Tanka

for Samuel Beckett

speaking before
native English speakers
I am
the mouth in 'Not I'
opening and closing

Chenou Liu

Mr. Right Tanka

"don't call me
you're not my Mr. Right..."
from the phone
the sound of her knife
hitting the cutting board

Chenou Liu

Murder Of Crows And War Tanka

a murder of crows
darkens
the morning sky...
not a word
about the war

Chenou Liu

Murder Of Crows Tanka

banging my head
against the wall of loneliness
the silence
like a murder of crows
descends on this winter night

Chenou Liu

Muse Haiku

lust crackles
in the dry winter air
my muse and I

Chenou Liu

Muse Tanka

under the blanket
of an autumn night
the muse and I
do nothing
but chase each other

published in Haiku Pix Review, #1
reviewed in Haijinx, IV: 1, March 2011

Chenou Liu

Muse's Dream Gendai Haiku

I eavesdrop
on the Muse's dream
while writing haiku

Chenou Liu

Muse's Mind Tanka

I can't stand
the thought of all those I's
in poetry
I undress the muse's mind
with words, wine, and moonlight

Chenou Liu

Muskmelon Haiku For Basho

writing haiku...
muskmelon juice drips
from the knife

(for Basho)

Chenou Liu

Muslim Ban Haiku

a lone eagle
imprinted on the sky
'Muslim Ban'

Chenou Liu

My Best Friend

A Tanka Prose

I have only two photos of him, and I put them in the bottom drawer of the Boulder Creek desk, his generous gift for my first award-winning poem. One is his prom night photo with a yellowing hue. It shows a late teen who looks like a grown up, clean-shaven and assertive (his father's favorite expression) . The other is one of the last photos we took together. It has burnt edges and shows a middle-aged man with patches of grey hair, disheveled and confused.

after the fire
he struggled with ghosts
in the dark
this tug-of-war now ends
with a silver bullet

Chenou Liu

My Bird Of Youth Has Left

A Tanka Prose

French dramatist Victor Hugo once said that forty is the old age of youth. I wholeheartedly agree with his words. After passing the age of forty, I have become more anxious about growing old. I used to be the black cloud; now, I'm turning gray. Time slips away, hair whitens, hands age, veins emerge, and wrinkles stamp the brows. The back begins to ache, teeth become loose, and the voice gets hoarse, a charming quality to some and the roughness of age to others. Furthermore, the body grows dry and liable to fracture, and one day it will no longer respond.

looking out
bare maple branches
in the breeze -
mortally wounded
waving goodbye

Chenou Liu

My Captain Tanka For Robin Williams

shoe prints
on a classroom desk
echoing
in my mind
'oh captain, my captain'

Chenou Liu

My Dream Is A Private Myth

A Haibun

The sound of gunshots wakens me on this May Day, my twelfth since emigrating to Canada. I look out the window and see a yellow bird falling from the sky. It flaps then glides, flaps then glides as it descends. Is this a sign that the rest of my life will be spent immobile in this promised land for a chosen people? Suddenly, a twinge in my heart.

'to stay or not to stay...'
maple leaves shimmering
in the breeze

Chenou Liu

My First Canada Day

A Haibun

Sitting in my ESL teacher's living room with its wall-to-wall Persian rugs, I am enveloped by family stories and jokes. Although half the time I can only guess what's going on, I put a smile on my face and keep saying Yes, No, and I see in the right places. All of a sudden, a shriek breaks our laughter. My teacher's sons rush to the door. Slowly, we file out of the house toward the manicured front yard.

rainbow flowers
blooming in the night sky
my immigrant dream

Chenou Liu

My Millennial Life

A Senryu Sequence

ten to eight
I hop from one job
to another

couch surfing
my circle of friends
grows smaller

wingsuit flying
my dream world becomes
larger and larger

my view
on work-life balance
tilted downward

Chenou Liu

My Only Sunshine In The Winter Of Discontent

A haibun written in the spirit of senryu

How can I live without Donald Trump, the host of the most popular reality show on TV?

fake news is

fake news is fake news...

white house briefing

Chenou Liu

Naked Mannequin Senryu (Comic Haiku)

I feel
something aroused
naked mannequin

Chenou Liu

Name Change Tanka

on his mailbox
my friend's name, Ganguli
changed to Gang(uli) reen
in this new suburb
snow falling on snow

Note: Ganguli is an Indian family name of a Bengali Brahmin caste.

Chenou Liu

Nativity Star Haiku

teenage boys stare
at the nativity star...
pop, pop, pop of gunshots

Chenou Liu

Nature's Call Senryu (Comic Haiku)

nature's call
a teenager points the way
with his selfie stick

Chenou Liu

Neighbor's Wife Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Valentine's Day alone
the neighbor's wife runs naked
through my mind

Chenou Liu

Neither Here, Nor There Haiku

'neither here, nor there...'
a brown paper bag whipped
by the wind

Chenou Liu

Neverending Story Tanka

black coffee
and 'NeverEnding Story'...
Christmas sunlight
spilling in
like a waterfall

Chenou Liu

Nevermore

A Haibun

'I should have killed all these clichés when I had the chance, ' I yell out in the dream. Sunlight slipping through the attic window onto the empty side of my bed.

On a maple branch
The raven settles -
Good Friday morning

Chenou Liu

New Immigrants

A Haibun

After the last shift, they come in a babble of tongues, battling over the Canadian winter, work-related issues, and politics - both from the local district and back home. Their talk begins in Mandarin, merges with Cantonese, often migrates into accented English, and then returns to their native tongue. Most of the talk is repeated, amplified, and sometimes changed a little for a new co-worker or particular occasion. The only pause is at the mention of broken dreams.

chopsticks clicking
in Gold Mountain Diner
the smell of home

Chenou Liu

New Intern Tanka

midnight moon
in the motel window...
I hold my breath
and the door
for the new intern

Chenou Liu

New Life In Trumpland (Senryu Sequence)

'Go Trump' graffiti
a stray dog
marking his spot

'trumping Trump'
my Mexican parrot
lifts up its voice

election night
a scream from the other side
of the fence

Trump victory
the sky bursting
with crows

post-election blues
my sister dressed in black
from head to toe

Thanksgiving dinner
Trump hats and Clinton stickers
left on the doormat

misty night
red states, blue states
strongertogether

first false dawn
'Donald Trump Toppled'
on RealNews

bald eagle's cry
cut off
Inauguration Day

a neon sign
on the White House roof:
'Alternative Facts'

Chenou Liu

New Resume Tanka

winter sunlight
breaking through gray clouds...
I decide
to retouch the photo
in my new resume

Chenou Liu

New Scar Haiku

new scar on her neck
his eyes cut my question
into small talk

Chenou Liu

New Year Haiku Set

the new year begins
with the same rising sun...
me in the mirror

New Year's morning dew...
old age happened to me
yesterday

Chenou Liu

New Year Of The Goat Haiku

Today marks the beginning of Chinese New Year of the Goat

black coffee
on New Year's morning
spangles of sunlight

Chenou Liu

New Year Tanka About Neverending Story

first sunrise...
my midlife drained of all
but hunger
for these magic words,
'NeverEnding Story'

Chenou Liu

New Year's Dream Haiku

the pumpkin carriage
in her New Year's dream
shafts of sunlight

Chenou Liu

New Year's Eve Haiku

a rusty cannon
with its muzzle toward doves
...New Year's Eve

Chenou Liu

New Year's Resolution Senryu (Comic Haiku)

New Year's resolution
the look I get
from my wife

Chenou Liu

New Year's Snowy Silence Tanka

I sit alone
on New Year's morning
the parrot
articulating
the snowy silence

Chenou Liu

New Year's Twilight Haiku

many what if's
in our first heart-to-heart
New Year's twilight

Chenou Liu

Newborn Haiku

the stare
of a newborn...
starry night

Chenou Liu

News Of Death Haiku

for Jane Reichhold

news of Jane's death
bits of my summer night
 breaking off

Chenou Liu

News Of War Haiku

filling the hour
between news of war
snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Newtown Haiku

Newtown at dusk
a boy and a girl
cover their mouths

Chenou Liu

Night Guard's Shadow Tanka

staring
at the night guard's
shadow
the cliff inside his head
crumbles more each day

Chenou Liu

Night Haiku

alone
walking the house all night -
moon festival

Chenou Liu

Night Of Fireworks Tanka

barbecue smoke
curls around the window...
watching TV
I've a precooked meal
on this night of fireworks

Chenou Liu

Night Off Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a night off
the hooker plays with herself
in her sleep

Chenou Liu

Night Shift Haiku

long way home
from night shift
I drag my shadow

Chenou Liu

Night Shift Senryu (Comic Haiku)

back home
from the night shift
shadows and me

Chenou Liu

Night Shift Tanka

coming home
from the night shift...
a blanket
of snowy loneliness
covers my shadow and me

Chenou Liu

Nightingale Song Haiku

nightingale song flowing down the river thoughts of my ex

Chenou Liu

Nightmare Haiku

Basho's dream weighs
like a nightmare on my brain
Easter sunlight

Chenou Liu

Nine Autumns Tanka

My tanka below just won a Certificate of Merit by the Tankagendai Corp, the 7th International Tanka Festival Competition, 2012, a contest that is held every three years by The Japan Tanka Poets' Society with a membership of about 5000.

The awards are divided into four categories: Certificate of Merit (by a sponsor's name) , Excellent Tanka, Fine Tanka, and Encouraging Tanka. The texts of winning tanka in the last two categories are not included in the contest results report.

Here is an excerpt from the report:

“There were 589 entries from all over the world for the above mentioned Tanka Competition. The judges are Jane Reich hold (U. S. A.) , Beverley George (Australia) , Yasuhiro Kawamura (Japan) , and Aya Yuhki (Japan) .

The results are as follows: “

Certificate of Merit by the Tankagendai Corp.

nine autumns past
first trip to my homeland...
now in Taipei
drinking alone in moonlight
I still long for Taipei

by Chen-ou Liu (Canada)

Chenou Liu

No Language Is Neutral

A Tanka Set

high noon sunlight
beats down on this rooming house...
the migrant
with a gap-toothed smile
says, I'm learning English

the tongues
of a maple tree
are bare...
my loss of home
speaks in Chinglish

Chenou Liu

No Lights On Tanka

no lights on
in his mother's new house...
the clip-clop
of his Wild Horse skateboard
fading into the night

Chenou Liu

'No Means No' Haiku

'no means no...'
I count winter stars
in the window

Chenou Liu

'No Means No' Tanka

The duct tape
inscribed with 'No Means No'
over her mouth...
the courthouse
and its long shadow

Chenou Liu

No There There Tanka

for Gertrude Stein

Lake Ontario
cupped in my hands
a Taiwan moon...
her words linger in my heart
'there is no there there'

Chenou Liu

Nocturnal Rhythm Tanka

Toronto settles
into a nocturnal rhythm...
face to face
in the attic room
with my Chinese self

Chenou Liu

Noise Senryu (Comic Haiku)

divorce talk
I breathe in
the noise

Chenou Liu

Noisy Silence Haiku

snow on footprints
after the funeral
noisy silence

Chenou Liu

Noonday Heat Senryu

noonday heat
a white man staring at me
me staring back

Chenou Liu

Nose Print Tanka

she speaks
of winter sunlight breaking
through the trees...
her son's nose print
on the hospice window

Chenou Liu

Nose Prints

nose prints
on the store window
fruit sundaes

Chenou Liu

Nostalgia Haiku

thick moss
coats the roof of my house
foggy memories

Honorable Mention, the 2012 Jane Reichhold International Haiku Contest.

Chenou Liu

Nostalgia Monostich

salmon wedge the Pacific between mother and me

Chenou Liu

Nostalgia Tanka

hazy winter morning...
nostalgia like the girl
next door
with a great body
who looks innocent

Chenou Liu

Not My Cup Of Tea Senryu (Comic Haiku)

speed dating she murmurs 'not my cup of tea'

Chenou Liu

Not My President

A Haiku Set

bald eagle's cry
cut off
Inauguration Day

neon sign
on the Trump Tower roof:
Kremlin employee

Chenou Liu

Not My President (A Tanka Prose)

In my dream, after the explosion of his twitter bomb, the fireball rises rapidly like a hot-air balloon into the sky, forms a mushroom cloud, and later the first black rain falls...

on the sidewalk
outside Trump Tower
I p-i-s-s
and feel in my bones
old man winter

Chenou Liu

Nothing New Under The Sun

A Tanka Sequence

alone
on this rainy night
the muse
is my sounding board
for ideas and gossip

two colored truths
in the predawn sky:
one for the muse
the other for me
and my drunken shadow

clichés open
a prismatic window
on my soul
(another cliché, I know) ...
killing time with my muse

Chenou Liu

Nothing New Under The Sun For John Lennon

A Haibun

A long line of Calliopes clad in lily-white, waiting in the hallway. Each is enveloped in the darkness of her own, screaming. Drops of sweat stream down my forehead, falling past my eyes onto the floor. I yell, 'Push, baby, push....' The last word holding on to the inside of my muse's womb for hours.

'Imagine...'
a twinge
in my heart

Chenou Liu

Now And Then, Here And There

A Haiku Set

feeling the warmth
of our farewell handshake
first snowflakes

the sea
surging between us
a cold moon

Chenou Liu

Nowhere Tanka

two butterflies
zigzag through a curtain
of willow...
once again our love affair
leads to nowhere

Chenou Liu

Nursing Home Tanka

a waning moon
at the nursing home
she shows me
the red shoe box stuffed
with cards from her son

Chenou Liu

Obama Cafe Haiku

Obama Cafe
bathed in autumn twilight
one more cup, and yet...

Note: The Obama Cafe, a tiny coffee shop, is located at 1226 Danforth Ave,
Toronto

Chenou Liu

Obituarist Senryu (Comic Haiku)

stage casting
an obituarist steps
into a coffin

Chenou Liu

Ocean-Wide Silence Tanka

The 8th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

My English words
Nothing's wrong, I'm fine
Slip into
Our phone conversation...
Mother's ocean-wide silence

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

Chenou Liu

Office Gossip Senryu (Comic Haiku)

bus stop at dusk
we catch up
on office gossip

Chenou Liu

'Oh, Bama Thought Police' Sci-Fi Haiku

In Memory of the Pre-Deaths of Edward Snowdens

one cry, then silence:

'Oh, Bama Thought Police tattoo

Precrime on his genes'

Chenou Liu

Oktoberfest Haiku

a line of waitresses
dancing on the table
smell of the Oktoberfest

Chenou Liu

Old Boxed Set Tanka

old boxed set
of Marcel Proust
on the bed...
my memory of Taipei
framed by an attic window

Chenou Liu

Old Clock Ticking Haiku

my night punctuated
by hometown memories ...
old clock ticking

Chenou Liu

Old Dog And Its Shadow Haiku

spring sunlight
my old dog jumping
out of its shadow

Chenou Liu

Old Frog Haiku

Lily pond...
an old frog and I
stare at each other

Chenou Liu

Old Lighthouse Haiku

old lighthouse...
I feel
something erect

Chenou Liu

Old Man And Scarecrow Haiku

distant sirens...
an old man and the scarecrow
in a barren field

Chenou Liu

Old Man And Stray Dog Haiku

old man's winter night
a stray dog
walking its shadow

Chenou Liu

Old Man And The Sea Tanka

his left sleeve
flapping
in the winter wind
the old man talks
to himself and the sea

Chenou Liu

Old Man In The Wind Haiku

old man in the wind...
a clothesline blue shirt
hugging itself

Chenou Liu

Old Photos Of The Future

A Tanka Prose

At dusk I sit in front of my computer reflecting upon the bright, promising smiles of my childhood, youth, and early thirties. I scan them one by one.

in the photos
we have ceased to be
the same...
I am his outcome
he, my memory

The setting sun sinks slowly on my glasses, and in the deep of the computer screen a gloomy and bemused face is mirrored.

Chenou Liu

Old Wall Clock Haiku

winter twilight
the 'tick, tock, tick, tock'
of my old wall clock

Chenou Liu

Old White Man And Snow Moon Tanka

an old white man
yells at me, 'go back
where you came from...'
I point my finger
to a snow moon

Chenou Liu

Old Wound

A Tanka Prose

standing still
on the opposite shores
of the Pacific
in a dream...
youthful Mother and aging me

When I was young, homesickness was a long cable line:
me on one end, Mother on the other.
When I grew up, homesickness was a three-sheet letter:
an hour's labor, written and folded with care.
But later on, homesickness was reduced to \$3 plus tax:
a seasonal greeting card.
Now, homesickness is a surging sea:
me in this Promised Land, Mother on a crowded island.

drifting in a dream
turned into a bird
flying over the Pacific -
I open my eyes
upon darkness again

Chenou Liu

Old Year Out, New Year In: A Haiku Set

New Year's Eve

his paper coffee cup

collects first snowflakes

home alone

a roof icicle holds

first morning sun

Chenou Liu

Older Than My Father Tanka

my home
is a low-hanging moon
tonight
as I become older
than my father

Chenou Liu

On The Road Tanka

long holiday
I keep my eyes on the road
she measures
the distance between us
by the number of rest stops

Chenou Liu

One Eye On The Road

A Poet's Vacation Message(A Hainun)

Dear Mr. Reeder:

In the back of my mind echo his words, 'Every day is a journey, and the journey itself home.'

Later tonight, I'll embark on a journey through the land of melting clocks, and, hopefully, I'll be back in shape on July 4th. If I get lost in the labyrinth of colors, please come find me somewhere outside the lines of my thought.

a spring dream:
one by one, rhinos
turn into poets

Best wishes,

Chen-ou Liu

May 11,2012

Chenou Liu

One Is Too Many

A Haibun

When the fire dies out, she rises, picks up her torn wedding dress from the floor and puts it on inside out. She turns and meets his indifferent gaze. For a moment, silence darkens the room. Finally, she runs out through the back door.

village well at dawn...
the bride penetrating
a winter sky

Chenou Liu

One Month After Inauguration

A Haiku Sequence

'last night in Sweden'
the meaty grin
on a Trump fan's face

my dog and I
watching one another
snow on snow

I sink deeper
into the silence...
'very fake news'

Chenou Liu

One Page Of Neruda Tanka

one page of Neruda
after another...
my cramped attic
dissolving
into a twilight sky

Chenou Liu

One-Armed Veteran Tanka

one-armed veteran
silhouetted
against the winter sky
a raven's cries
sharpen the silence

Chenou Liu

Onecrowafteranother Haiku (For Halloween)

on a power line
onecrowafteranother
Halloween night

Chenou Liu

One-Legged Heron And Tai Chi Master Haiku

one-legged heron
covered in morning dew
a tai chi master

Chenou Liu

One-Line Dream Haiku

I think therefore I am entering a butterfly's dream

3rd Prize, 18th Kusamakura International Haiku Competition

Chenou Liu

One-Poem Ago Monostich

the space between winter stars my love one-poem ago

Chenou Liu

Onion Haiku

peeling an onion
to love
or to be loved?

Chenou Liu

Only Light Haiku

winter solstice...
the flicker of TV
the only light

Chenou Liu

Opposite Ends Of A Hallway Tanka

standing still
at the opposite ends
of a hallway
in my dream...
youthful mother and aging me

Chenou Liu

Orgasmic Cry Tanka

an orgasmic cry
penetrating the thin wall...
I stare idly
at winter stars
through my motel window

Chenou Liu

Orgy Of Confessions Tanka

one whisky
after another...
I collapse
into an orgy of confessions
with my shadow

Chenou Liu

Other 9/11s

A haiku sequence for Susan Sontag, author of *Regarding the Pain of Others*, who claimed that

'The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is.'

first September Eleventh
in the sky and on Chilean streets
blood, fire and smoke

stardust...
spiraling numbers etched
into the cenotaph

a veiled woman
touches the names
September Eleventh

Note: Today marks the 40th anniversary of the U.S.-backed military coup in Chile that ousted democratically-elected Salvador Allende in 1973 and led to a 17-year repressive dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet.

Updated, September 12,2013

As the United States marked the 12th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Chile commemorated what is known as the first 9/11 — the September 11,1973 — the U.S.-backed coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende. In a ceremony at the presidential palace where her father was killed, Allende's daughter, Chilean Senator Isabel Allende, said 'truth and justice' is the only path to healing from the coup's lingering damage.

Isabel Allende: 'Only truth and justice will allow us to come back together as a country. And the ethical values and the values that never again break the democracy, never again have a coup, never to break constitutional order again,

never again to hunt someone down because of their beliefs, never again torture or state terrorism.'

-excerpted from Democracy Now!

Chenou Liu

Our Dreams

A Haibun for my father and his generation who gave up their dreams to pursue the National Dream for the Chinese people

Six decades ago, there was a civil war in China. The ruling Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, was defeated by the Chinese Communists. Chairman Chiang Kai-shek retreated with his troops to Taiwan, where he hoped to regroup quickly and retake mainland China. My father was a first lieutenant in Chiang's military troops, and, like the majority of mainland Chinese in Taiwan, shared with him this same illusion.

When I started grade four, my father decided I was old enough to learn the good soldier's essential lesson: obey orders and don't ask questions. But I didn't want to be a soldier. They looked dumb to me.

One day, my father tried several times to teach me how to salute, but I couldn't get my hand straight enough. He ordered me to stand in front of the portrait of our ancestors. He shouted at me, "Stand straight and still until our ancestors are satisfied and smile; or else you must apologize to them for failing to follow through on my words: to salute properly. Then you can go."

I stood for hours, but they wouldn't smile at or for me. Finally, I couldn't bear it any longer and fainted. Later, when I woke up, I saw my father's eyes brimming with tears.

into the Taiwan Strait
Father rides on my shoulders
midsummer dream

Chenou Liu

Our Unfinished Story

A Haiku Sequence

winter mist
she shares her tale
of first love

red wine
from my mouth to hers ...
blooming iris

summer moonlight
on her breast
fingering my name

dry leaves rattling...
awkward silence
between me and her

Chenou Liu

Our World Gets Smaller (A Haibun)

on the night of the U.S. Supreme Court's travel ban ruling

the tip
of his pointing finger -
crescent moon

Chenou Liu

Overlay Of Opinions Tanka

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

Chenou Liu

Owl's Hooting Haiku

an owl's hooting...
the rise and fall of voices
from a lumber camp

Chenou Liu

Pacific Ocean Gendai Haiku

salmon wedge
the Pacific Ocean
between mother and me

Chenou Liu

Pacific Shore Haiku

Pacific shore...
my poem is folded
into a boat

Honorable Mention, the Winter Moon Awards for Haiku 2010
Featured on Per Diem of The Haiku Foundation website

Judge's Comment:

What will the poet do next? Leave the poem to the sea to be collected by a wave? I'm invited to wonder. To decide for myself.

Chenou Liu

Paper Anniversary Senryu (Comic Haiku)

paper anniversary
my wife's kiss
on the post-it

Chenou Liu

Paper Bird Monostich

folded paper morphs into a bird and flies away

Chenou Liu

Paper Boat Tanka

Version I:

a paper boat
made from early drafts
of my poem
sails down the river...
moonlit memories

version II:

a paper boat
made from early drafts
of my poem
sails down the river
of moonlit memories

Version III:

a paper boat
made from early drafts
of my poem
sails down the river...
of moonlit memories

note: there are three different river images portrayed in these versions due to their structural differences

Chenou Liu

Paper-Thin Wall Tanka

all that noise
through the paper-thin wall
in my motel room
I start counting
summer stars in the window

Chenou Liu

Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow

A Haiku Set

last morning walk...
our dogs
both silent too

summer stars
between the two of us
the Pacific

Chenou Liu

Passion

A Haibun for Billy Collins

half a haiku
the morning
already ancient

I wake from my nap screaming. In the dream, my half-naked poem is nailed to the cross, surrounded by a cheering crowd. A critic begins beating it with a hose, trying to torture a confession of its meaning from it. My poem cries out in anguish.

midnight moon
the only thing moving
my right hand

Chenou Liu

Past And Present Tanka

this sultry night
I juggle past with present...
CN Tower
and Taipei 101
fusing into one phallus

Chenou Liu

Patchy Fog Haiku

Father slipping
through the cracks in words...
patchy fog

Chenou Liu

'Peace And Love' Tanka For Neil Young

'Peace and Love'
in the retirement home
sung loudly
by a white man
to a black woman

Chenou Liu

'Peace On Earth' Haiku For U2

'Peace on Earth...'
brings me out of a dream
morning glories

Chenou Liu

Pear Haiku

peeling my pear
in a thin, unbroken spiral...
hometown memories

Editor's First Choice Haiku, fruit haiku thread
Sketchbook,5: 4, July/August 2010

Chenou Liu

Permanent Resident Card Tanka

April snowflakes
rearrange hometown memories
in the lineup
I wait for a brand new
permanent resident card

Chenou Liu

Personal Space Senryu (Comic Haiku)

she keeps talking
about personal space
speed dating

Chenou Liu

Picket Line Tanka

at twilight
the wind scattering leaves
everywhere
outside the factory gate
workers on the picket line

Chenou Liu

Piece By Piece Tanka

I'm scared
I'm scared of myself...
at daybreak
piece by piece I try
to put myself together

Chenou Liu

Pieces Of Winter Moon Tanka

finally
her promised letter arrives
from afar -
in my bedroom mirror
the pieces of winter moon

Chenou Liu

Pigtail Ribbon Haiku

her pigtail ribbon
pulled in the schoolyard...
taste of winter rain

Chenou Liu

Pillow Haiku

thoughts of Taiwan...
I place mom's homemade pillow
towards the moon

Finalist, the 2010 Paper Wasp Jack Stamm Haiku Competition
Published in Paper Wasp, 17: 2, June 2011
And anthologized in Moonrise and Bare Hills

Chenou Liu

Pin-Drop Silence Haiku

the I shifts from line to line pin-drop silence

Chenou Liu

Pin-Drop Silence Tanka

'I used to be...'

from an immigrant's mouth

stretches his story -

the pin-drop silence

fills an ESL classroom

(Note: ESL stands for English as a Second Language)

Gusts,16, Fall/Winter 2012

Appraisal by Keitha Keyes:

This tanka really spoke to me as it reminded me of when I taught ESL to adults.

I used to be...

This is one of the saddest things you hear immigrants or refugees say. Their identity is often based in the past, left behind in their country of origin....

Sometimes when students start to share personal details it is like the opening of a flood gate of thoughts and emotions. The use of the verb stretches is very apt here....

The other students listen in silence. There is no need for a teacher to impose silence on the class. They listen out of respect for their classmate. Perhaps they have had a similar experience. The silence is absolute, captured by the poet...

At the end of the tanka we are left in our dreaming room. What was his story? What is his future? ...

The language in this tanka is simple and concise.

The punctuation when it is used is very effective.

The ellipsis at the end of the first line suggests that the student pauses before he tells his story. It also invites the reader to focus on the student. The em dash at the end of the third line shifts the perspective from the speaker to the rest of the class.

Chenou Liu

Pine Breeze Haiku

what's left undrawn...
the sound of the pine breeze
in his ink painting

Chenou Liu

Pine Shadow Haiku

my dog and I
in the pine shadow
a road zigzags

Chenou Liu

Pink Flamingos Tanka

moaning sounds
through the motel wall -
I stare
at pink flamingos
on the stained wallpaper

Chenou Liu

Pink Slice Of Dawn Haiku

a pink slice
of dawn on my bed
birthday alone

Chenou Liu

Pink Slip Senryu (Comic Haiku)

pink slip
my last name
misspelled

Chenou Liu

Pink Slips Haiku

the crunch
of dried maple leaves...
pink slips

Chenou Liu

Pinned Butterfly Haiku

pinned butterfly...
needle marks
on the girl's left arm

Chenou Liu

Pinot Noir Tanka

'Oh, you write
in English...'
his 'oh'
tasting like pinot noir
left open overnight

Chenou Liu

Pleasantville Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Pleasantville
atop each wall
shards of glass

Chenou Liu

Plum Blossom Haiku

plum blossoms...
I shake off all thoughts
of returning home

Published in Acorn, #28, Spring 2012
Editor's Choice Haiku

Chenou Liu

Plum Haiku

plum blossoms...
I shake off all thoughts
of returning home

First published in *Acorn*, #28, Spring 2012
Editor's Choice Haiku

Chenou Liu

Poetics Of Re-Homing

A Haibun

where are you from?
maple leaves drifting
here and there

Where is my home? Taipei, the capital of Republic of China (aka Taiwan) , with its towering glass office buildings, where I was born and raised, the place I used to complain about? Or County of Mount Dragon in Hunan province, People's Republic of China, a small town surrounded by waterfalls, mountains, and valleys, my father's home that I've never set foot in?

Taiwan's moon
caught in Lake Ontario...
geese gone south

Or is my home Ajax, Ontario, a bedroom suburb of row upon row of indistinguishable bungalows and front gardens in the richest province of Canada? Here I have a piece of property and continue to struggle with a life in transition and translation.

treading on
my white neighbor's shadow -
'illegal alien'

Where then is my home?

Editor's Choice Haibun
Simply Haiku, Vol 9: 2, Summer 2011

Chenou Liu

Pointing Finger Haiku

the cold moon...
I bend
his pointing finger

Romanian Translation by Corneliu Traian Atanasiu

luna rece...
îi cuprind
aratătorul

Anthologized in *Sharpening The Green Pencil* 2012

Chenou Liu

Police Sirens Haiku

walking home alone...
the sound of police sirens
darkens the night

Chenou Liu

Political Kyoka

back from shopping...
the reflection in the glass
of my car
a Chinese guy
with a dark hoodie

Chenou Liu

Politicians Senryu (Comic Haiku)

politicians
blah blah blah...
snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Pool Of Blood Tanka

a pool of blood
on the Toronto street...
in his hand
a golden pocket watch
set to Beijing time

Chenou Liu

Pool Of Gold Haiku

one pool of gold
after another -
summer sunset

Chenou Liu

'Pop! Pop! Pop! ' Haiku

his hot breath
and the red glow of the beach
'Pop! Pop! Pop! '

(for Albert Camus)

Chenou Liu

Post Election Senryu (Comic Haiku)

post election
the king-size bed
for me alone

Chenou Liu

Post-Election Blues Senryu (Comic Haiku)

post-election blues
my sister dressed in black
from head to toe

Chenou Liu

Pot Haiku

'Is it pot? '
the crack in her voice
under a bare tree

Chenou Liu

Pow-Wow Haiku

midsummer night
shadows of my past gather
for pow-wows

Chenou Liu

Pow-Wow Tanka

3 am

I wake to a thump

in the attic

where ghosts of the past

hold their pow-wow

Chenou Liu

Prairie Haiku

prairie...
between heaven and earth
an eagle

Chenou Liu

Pregnant Silence Haiku

two lines on the test
a pregnant silence
fills our bedroom

Chenou Liu

Pride Parade Senryu (Comic Haiku)

pride parade
my ex kissing another
man or woman?

Chenou Liu

Prison Yard Haiku

feeling the sun
on his wrinkled face...
prison yard

Chenou Liu

Prom Dress Haiku

a prom dress
in my wife's closet
winter moon

Chenou Liu

Promised Land And Foreign Moon Tanka

Father once said,
'the foreign moon seems rounder
than the one at home...'
alone in this promised land
I bite into a mooncake

Note: Mooncake is the most popular and important food eaten during the Chinese Moon Festival, a harvest festival also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival,

Chenou Liu

Promised Land Tanka

a wedge of geese
held by Lake Ontario...
living alone
in this promised land, I wonder
if I ever left home

Chenou Liu

Protesters Tanka

office workers
fill the wall of windows
down below
the protesters sit
with arms linked, voices hoarse

Chenou Liu

Pussy Riot Haiku

dark Moscow sky
one by one twitter shout-outs
to @FreePussyRiot

Chenou Liu

Quarrel Senryu (Comic Haiku)

after a quarrel
our old dog sleeps
between us

Chenou Liu

Questions Of Why And What If Tanka

before a petal
falls on this breezy day
ask me
no more questions
of why and what if

Chenou Liu

Racism Haiku

for Abraham Joshua Heschel who proclaims that Racism is man's gravest threat to man.

'those slanted eyes'
in the room silence
like thunder

racism talk
what does white
smell like?

Note: The phrase, 'slanted eyes, ' is a racist slur that refers to a person of Asian descent, especially of Chinese descent.

Chenou Liu

Rail Tracks Haiku

the rail tracks
toward a harvest moon
thoughts of home

Chenou Liu

Rain Clouds Haiku

silence between us...
rain clouds
rising over the sea

Chenou Liu

Rain Haiku

moonlit branches...
glazed with autumn rain
droplets of me

Croatian translation

grancice na mjesecini...
uglacane jesenjom kišom
kapljice mene

Commendation, 2011 Klostar Ivanic Haiku Contest (in English)

Chenou Liu

Rainbow Tanka

our laughter flows
from one street block
to another...
mother's garden hose
spouting a rainbow

Chenou Liu

Rainbow's End Haiku

old man and his dog
at the rainbow's end
a burning farm

Chenou Liu

Raindrops Haiku

raindrops tap dancing thoughts of my ex

Chenou Liu

Rapid-Fire Angry Words Tanka

spittle gathers
in the corners of his mouth...
a rapid-fire
angry words about his ex
who died three years ago

Chenou Liu

Rashomon Gate Haiku

'Rashomon Gate'
on my attic wall
shifting shadows

Note: The poster can be accessed at

Chenou Liu

Rashomon Haiku

I love you...
that hazy moon
in Rashomon

Honorable Mention, the 14th Mainichi Haiku Contest (2010)

Chenou Liu

Raven Haiku

a raven
hops on one foot
crack of thunder

Chenou Liu

Raven's Cry Haiku

mist trailing
over the autumn fields...
a raven's cry

Chenou Liu

Rawness Of Skin Haiku

ebbing tide
the rawness of skin
against skin

Chenou Liu

Razor's Edge Gendai Haiku

the Word walking on a razor's edge

Chenou Liu

Razor-Sharp Words Tanka

'a desk, suit, and tie
are precisely the things
you need now...'
his razor-sharp words cut
the smugness from my face

Chenou Liu

Reality Haiku For Robin Williams

misty morning
'Reality, what a concept! '
scrawled on the window

Chenou Liu

Reality Prison Tanka

with bed sheets
made of midsummer dreams
I scale down the wall
of reality prison...
one poem after another

Chenou Liu

Realnews Senryu (Comic Haiku)

White House press briefing:
Donald Trump in a bathrobe
watching RealNews

Chenou Liu

Recession Haiku

glass breaking underfoot...
empty stores
dot the main street

Chenou Liu

Red And Blue States Haiku

first day of winter...
morning fog binds together
red and blue states

Chenou Liu

Red Banner Tanka

the red banner reads
'Poetry for the New Era'
she recites a poem
in a broken voice
dressed in mourning

Chenou Liu

Red Bathrobe Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'I hit the jackpot! '
my wife's red bathrobe
falling open

Chenou Liu

Red Butterfly Haiku

red butterfly...
her name slips off my tongue
in a whisper

Chenou Liu

Red Cardinal Tanka

a red cardinal
between heaven and earth
the grassy fields
of my desire for her
roll on under the sun

Chenou Liu

Red Dragonfly Haiku For Issa

rewriting haiku...
a red dragonfly lands
on my windowsill

Chenou Liu

Red High Heels Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the click
of her red high heels...
divorce court

Chenou Liu

Red Light District Tanka

in De Wallen
the summer sunset sky
through a brothel window...
one woman looks out
another looks in

Chenou Liu

Red Light Senryu (Comic Haiku)

red light -
a hearse driver
smiling at me

Chenou Liu

Red Light Tanka

the red light
flashing in the cold air...
I am caught
in the rush-hour traffic
of his anti-Muslim talk

Chenou Liu

Red Spider Lilies Haiku

red spider lilies
blooming along the fence -
foreclosed house

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'flower(s) / bouquet' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 2, March/April 2011

Chenou Liu

Red-Eye Flight Tanka

the blinking
of her red-eye flight
bound for Japan...
I recall a silver sheen
on our summer lake

Chenou Liu

Red-Faced Rage Tanka

his red-faced rage
toward the stumbling shadow
on the wall
one howl, then many
from junkyard dogs

Chenou Liu

Red-Haired Girl And Chocolate Tanka

a red-haired girl
sticking out her tongue...
summer drizzle
and a small square
of Swiss chocolate

Chenou Liu

Red-Hot Sext Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a red-hot sext
from my ex-wife
April First

Chenou Liu

Red-Lipped Mouth Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the meaty grin
of her red-lipped mouth
my divorce lawyer

Chenou Liu

Refugee Camp Haiku

paper boats
sailing through a puddle
in the refugee camp

Chenou Liu

Refugees And Blood Moon Tanka

the fog rolling
over the border town...
refugees
walk along train tracks
toward a blood moon

Chenou Liu

Re-Homing

A Tanka Prose for Li Bai

'go back
to where you came from...'
slowly, I push
his middle finger
to a vagabond moon

drinking alone
under the autumn moon
for a moment
I speak to it
in my mother tongue

Where is my home? Is it Taipei, capital of the Republic of China, aka Taiwan, a modern metropolis with Japanese colonial lanes, busy shopping streets and towering glass office buildings, that place where I was born and raised, that place I often complained about and wanted to flee?

Where is my home? Is it the County of Mount Dragon in Hunan Province of the People's Republic of China, my father's hometown with its rushing waterfalls and misty mountain peaks, a place I've never set foot in?

Where is my home? Is it Ajax, Ontario, a bedroom suburb of row upon row of single-family detached houses in the richest province of Canada? Here I own a front lawn, a backyard, and struggle with a life in transition and translation...

Chenou Liu

Reincarnation

spring desire
soured
with aging moonlight

summer growth
an impulse
too green, too short

autumn longing
blooming
in sunset glow

winter harvest
loneliness
too white, too long

seasons come, seasons go
still I wait
for... spring desire

Chenou Liu

Rejection Slip Haiku

rejection slip
a sunflower bending
to the wind

Chenou Liu

Remembrance Day Haiku

Remembrance Day speech..
young girls stretch a banner
that reads 'Peace Is the Way'

Chenou Liu

Resolution List Senryu (Comic Haiku)

first sunrise
my resolution list longer
than last year's

Chenou Liu

Resume Tanka

the 11th tanka in the sequence about diasporic experiences

this attic reeks
of smoke, sweat, and beer...
I write
a resume in a language
my father can't read

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, '

Chenou Liu

Retirement Tanka

first day
after retirement
the brush
is dipped deeper
in Chinese ink

Tanka Honorable Mention

2016 San Francisco International Competition for Haiku, Senryu, Tanka and Rengay

Chenou Liu

Returned Resume Haiku

returned resume
one coffee ring
joins another

Chenou Liu

Retweeting Haiku

Morning birdsong...
I retweet my poem
once again

Chenou Liu

Revolver Haiku

the sun glints on his revolver a falling leaf

Chenou Liu

Rhinos Gendai Haiku

my haiku cooked rare by the critic rhinos stand

Chenou Liu

Rhythmic Humming Sound Tanka

alone at night
reading 'Cybersex for Dummies'
in my bed...
the ceiling fan makes
a rhythmic humming sound

Chenou Liu

Rice Haiku

waking to
the scent of jasmine rice...
a dream?

Croatian Translation:

budim se
uz miris jasminovog pirinca...
je li to samo san?

Editor's Favorite Haiku, *Haiku Reality*, 8: 15, Winter 2011
Per Diem Haiku

Chenou Liu

Rice Song Haiku

the rice song
mother sang to me...
first spring rain

Chenou Liu

Rich And Not Rich Haiku

cherry blossom rain ...
those who are rich in this world
and those who are not

Chenou Liu

Rioting Glory Tanka

foreclosure
and for sale signs
like scarecrows...
wildflowers bloom
in rioting glory

Chenou Liu

Ripple After Ripple Haiku

red-tailed hawk
ripple after ripple
of grass shadows

Chenou Liu

Rippling Pond Haiku For Basho

rippling pond...
what's left
of his words

Chenou Liu

Rising Tone Senryu (Comic Haiku)

'oh, you're a poet...'
her rising tone
in the last syllable

Editor's Choice Senryu, Cattails,3,2014

Comment by Senryu Editor, Mike Rehling

Every poet has been there, it happens a lot. If you say you are an accountant, or a gas station attendant there is immediate understanding of your role in our complex society. It just happens, but if you toss out the poet card you can never quite tell how it will be received. The other folks don't have an easy way to relate to us poets. This one nailed it with the tone of the woman being unmistakable in her confusion as to how to react.

Chenou Liu

River Of Words

I drink the silence
of the crescent moon
in a river of words

Chenou Liu

Road Haiku

fork in the road...
standing still to hear
the leaves

Honorable Mention, the Winter Moon Awards for Haiku 2010

Judge's Comment:

I could make this symbolic: what do the trees tell me, which direction should I take; but I choose to imagine myself standing at the fork, closing my eyes, just listening to the sound of leaves before I move on. I like that the poem is larger than itself.

Chenou Liu

Roadkill Haiku

the smell
of summer heat...
roadkill

Chenou Liu

Robin's Song Haiku

home from hospital...
a robin's song
and nothing else

Honorable Mention, 2016 Betty Drevniok Award

Judge's Comment: ... with its stunning pathos and freshness of feeling there was no doubt this was the haiku that I felt deserved prize recognition.

Chenou Liu

Roof Icicle Haiku

thoughts of home
drip from a roof icicle
Chinese New Year

Chenou Liu

Roof Icicles Tanka

The 9th tanka in the sequence, Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing

roof icicles
hold the first morning sun
present
becoming past
becoming future

Note: Based on the principles of progression and association employed in Japanese court poetry (for more information, see 'To the Lighthouse: Principles of Progression and Association in Tanka Sequences, ') , Politics/Poetics of Re-Homing is first English language tanka sequence about diasporic experiences. In the sequence, I adopt an intersectional approach to exploring a wide range of issues related to immigration, English learning, racialized identity, racism, job seeking, colonization, acculturation,...etc. You can read the whole sequence,

Chenou Liu

Room Of Mirrors Haiku

winter light
in a room of mirrors
my dog and I

Chenou Liu

Rooming House Tanka

the shining moon
that used to perch
on my childhood dreams
now hovers over
a rooming house

Third Place, 2009 San Francisco International Competition Haiku, Senryu, Tanka,
and Rengay

Published in Mariposa, #22.

Chenou Liu

Roshi's Silence Senryu (Comic Haiku)

zen workshop
the sting
of a roshi's silence

Chenou Liu

Routine Crises

A Tanka prose

I key in the headline 'Dozens dead after boat capsizes.' Phones ring, and laptops chatter with stories from around the world. Adrenaline pumps through my body like a tidal wave.

fading tracks
on an Aegean shore
at twilight
which of them belong to those
who drowned in cold water

I glance at the oversized clock on the rear wall of the newsroom. Its hands march closer and closer toward the deadline. And the refugee story waits to be replaced...with the latest news from the front lines of yet another war-torn country.

Chenou Liu

Rows Of Crosses Haiku

rows of crosses
in winter mist
the shape of silence

Chenou Liu

Ruffling Thoughts Haiku

evening breeze
ruffling thoughts of her
echoes of the erhu

Chenou Liu

Running Argument Senryu (Comic Haiku)

April First
running argument
with his shadow

Chenou Liu

Rushing River Haiku

single married single again a rushing river

Chenou Liu

Rusty Cross Gendai Haiku

giant rusty cross in winter light my nipples erect

Chenou Liu

Sailing Into The Moon Haiku

a paper boat
sailing into the moon...
migrants on the shore

Back Cover Haiku, Sailing into the Moon: Haiku Canada Members' Anthology
2016

Chenou Liu

Same Wavelength Haiku

My dog and I
on the same wavelength
cherry blossoms

Chenou Liu

Scalpel Of Words Tanka

as night deepens
dark secrets emerge
and gnaw at my heart
I cut it open
with the scalpel of words

Chenou Liu

Scarecrow's Shadow Haiku

winter twilight...
the scarecrow's shadow
blends with mine

6th Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum English Haiku Contest
Selected Haiku Submissions Collection, July 2014

Chenou Liu

Scars Of The Past Monostich

midnight moon shedding light on the scars of my past

Chenou Liu

Scent Haiku

the scent of her hair
footsteps echo
down the hospice hall

Chenou Liu

Scent Tanka

bathed in sunshine
outside a laundry store
in Ajax, I smell
the scent of clothes
on wash lines in Taipei

Chenou Liu

Schizophrenic Tanka

the silence
becoming darker
and darker...
a schizophrenic
and his long shadow

Chenou Liu

Scream Tanka

the drunk
on top of his wife
as she screams
then becomes silent...
snow falling on snow

Chenou Liu

Screams Of No Tanka

'Yes Means Yes, '
the campaign heating up-
three winters ago
her screams of 'No! '
muffled by a fleshy hand

Chenou Liu

Scribble Of Swallows Haiku

writing haiku...
in the sky
a scribble of swallows

Chenou Liu

Sea Haiku

low tide...
can I pick up anything
she left behind

Published in World Haiku Review, April 2012
Honourable Mention, Vanguard Haiku

Chenou Liu

Sea Haiku For North African Migrants

their silent faces...
a summer sea
of skull knocking skull

Note: In the space of a week, at least 750 migrants are feared to have died crossing the Mediterranean Sea... excerpted from 'Mapping Mediterranean Migration, ' BBC News

The carnage on our borders will only grow without a radical shift from an iniquitous and failed system... excerpted from 'Europe's sea of death for migrants is a result of war and escalating inequality, ' The Guardian

Chenou Liu

Sea Journey Tanka For Syrian Refugees

sea journey
from home lost to home unknown...
alone at dawn
a Syrian man silhouetted
against the winter sky

Chenou Liu

Seagull Calligraphy Haiku

thoughts of home
seagull calligraphy
on the beach

Chenou Liu

Seashell Haiku

an empty seashell...
the mid-autumn moon
above the Pacific

Finalist, the 2010 Paper Wasp Jack Stamm Haiku Competition
Published in Paper Wasp, 17: 2, June 2011
And anthologized in Moonrise and Bare Hills

Chenou Liu

Selected Short Poem: Broken Bones Monostich

moonbeams hit the waves a sea of broken bones

Chenou Liu

Self Image Haiku

I peel my image
from the bedroom mirror
New Year's Eve

Chenou Liu

Separation Wall Haiku

behind hill after hill
of olive trees
the separation wall

Chenou Liu

Seven Ways Of Reading A For Sale/Foreclosure Sign

A Haiku Sequence

foreclosure sign
in its shadow
a dollhouse

a fenced-in lot
next to the schoolyard
for sale sign swaying

foreclosure sign
the cries
of snow geese

first day of winter
a broken for sale sign
banging in the wind

Thanksgiving night
snowflakes covering
foreclosure sign

Christmas wreath
lifting in the wind
for sale sign

windows streaked
with bird droppings
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

Sex Worker Haiku

between street lamps
a sex worker
and my shadow

Chenou Liu

Sex Worker's Reflection Tanka

cold wind
from passing trailer trucks -
the sex worker
looks at her reflection
in a roadside puddle

Chenou Liu

Sexuality Debate Senryu (Comic Haiku)

her hips
sway our debate on sex
summer heat

Chenou Liu

Shades Of Pink Haiku

the clouds
in shades of pink
shift workers

Chenou Liu

Shadow & Raven Haiku

this cold night
I face my shadow ...
a raven's call

Chenou Liu

Shadow And Dream Tanka

after harvest
a temp says, 'there's a first time
for everything...'
I sleep under the stars
with my shadow and dream

Chenou Liu

Shadow Haiku

running away
from myself and my shadow
the smell of formalin

Chenou Liu

Shadow Haiku Noir

the shadow
divided into two
sirens wail

Note:

Here is an excerpt from my Lynx interview with Jane Reichhold

Jane Reichhold: Recently you were working with 'darker themes' in your haiku. Why did you want to do this? And how did it work out for you? Do we need to enlarge the subject matter used in the Japanese genres?

Chen-ou Liu: I've been writing a series of haiku noir on darker themes, such as sudden death, suicide, psychiatric illness, violence, homelessness, alienation, estrangement, racism, rape, ...etc. I've had first-hand or second-hand experiences of dealing with most of them (note: a haiku noir is a narrative haiku, i.e. a cinematically dark flash non/fiction in verse) .

I am most influenced by Takuboku's conception of 'poems to eat.' He defined them as 'poems written without putting any distance from actual life, ...and they are not delicacies, or dainty dishes, but food indispensable for us in our daily meal.'

In terms of dealing with one's dark moments, the difference between poets and other people is that poets can convey their feelings through poetry. As Graham Greene stresses, 'writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those, who do not write, compose, or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear, which is inherent in [that] human condition.'

Every time when I put my tangled feelings, stress, or anxiety on paper, I feel relief in the moment. Especially when writing about dark moments, I connect them to the feelings of the past and of the present, and in doing so, it enables me to discover the wholeness of things and the connectedness of human experience. This view of writing about dark moments as a way of healing is well explored in Louise DeSalvo's *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our stories Transforms Our Lives*. My review of this book can be accessed at

As for enlarging the subject matter used in English language haiku, I think there

is an urgent need to do so. most English language haiku are based on a narrower definition of haiku. Professor Haruo Shirane discusses this in his famous essay, titled 'Beyond the Haiku Moment: Basho, Buson and Modern Haiku Myths: ' 'English-language anthologies of haiku are overwhelmingly set in country or natural settings even though ninety percent of the haiku poets actually live in urban environments. This would seem to discourage haiku poets from writing serious poetry on the immediate urban environment or broader social issues.'

His essay reminds me of Shiki's, titled 'Haiku on Excrement, ' about discovering - or rediscovering - beauty in excrement. In the essay, Shiki demonstrates that the old masters had great capabilities of producing beauty out of ugly material, 'citing 41 poems (most of them haiku) on feces,18 on urine,4 on farts,24 on toilets, and 21 on loincloths.' In the concluding section, he makes clear that he is not particularly fond of writing haiku on excrement; but he mainly uses this topic as an example to show how the poet can explore a wide range of themes (Makoto Ueda, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*, pp.29-30)

I identify with Shiki's approach to writing haiku. Most of darker themes in my recent haiku are, directly and indirectly, related to urban life issues that are experienced by all of us and covered by media on a daily basis. For me, they are legitimate subject matters for haiku writing....

Read the full text at,

Chenou Liu

Shadow Kicking Haiku

kicking
at my shadow...
April snow

Chenou Liu

Shadow On The Wall Haiku

shadow on the wall...
as if writing keeps myself
away from myself

Chenou Liu

Shadows

A Haibun

Pallbearers carry her small casket through the back door and into the garden,
through a field of tall grass and into the cemetery.

'dust to dust ...'
an eagle's shadow
circles us

Chenou Liu

Shadows And Red Flowers Tanka

accidentally
stepping on the shadows
of a couple
I buy red flowers for myself
on this windy day

Chenou Liu

Shadows Haiku

shadows
in and out of the room
my old dog

Chenou Liu

Shadows Haiku For Paul Simon

'Rhythm of the Saints'...
dancing naked with shadows
in my attic

Chenou Liu

Shadowy Peace Tanka

there are (no)"tapes"
of our conversations...
in shadowy peace
I go out and take a leak
as a crow stares at me

Chenou Liu

Shape Haiku

the shape
of my ex's silence
snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Shape Of Silence Haiku

rows of crosses
in winter mist
the shape of silence

Chenou Liu

Shards Of Glass Tanka

winter sun
in shards of glass
once again
my soon-to-be-ex breaks
my car and my heart

Chenou Liu

Shards Of Memory Tanka

from his pale mouth
'you're overqualified
like a hammer...'
my broken immigrant dream
and shards of memory

Chenou Liu

Shards Of My Past Tanka

I cough and roll
from one side of the bed
to the other
under my body
the shards of a past

Chenou Liu

Shelter Bed Tanka

sleepless
in a shelter bed...
his bony hand
grabs at the last thread
of winter moonlight

Chenou Liu

Shift Work Haiku

drift of a leaf...
the end
of my shift work

Chenou Liu

Shifting Shadows Haiku

'will you marry me? '
shifting shadows
veil her face

Chenou Liu

Shining Pigtail Haiku

the sway
of her shining pigtail...
first day of school

Chenou Liu

Ship Of My Past Tanka

alone...

the ship of my past

sinking slowly

on this winter night

a lifeboat in patchy fog

Chenou Liu

Shiva Tanka

Delhi at twilight -
rickshaws weaving
in and out
as SUVs slowly pass
the statue of Shiva

Chenou Liu

'Shot In The Back' Haiku

There are literally two Americas. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

a flurry of white...
a black man shot in the back
as he runs

Chenou Liu

Shoveling Snow Tanka

meditating
while shoveling my driveway -
snow is just snow
yet sometimes not snow
but in the end snow

Chenou Liu

Shroud Of Words Tanka

this winter mist..
like Penelope I weave
and unweave
a shroud of words
to ward off loneliness

Chenou Liu

Sickle Moon Tanka

suddenly awake
to see a sharp sickle
hanging low
in the winter sky...
I grasp the edge of my dream

Favorite Tanka, Siloh Tanka Contest

Judge's Comment:

my favorite lines from the poems entered, in no particular order:
I grasp the edge of my dream Chen-ou Liu (Canada)

Chenou Liu

Silence After Making Love Tanka

the silence
after making love
cigarette smoke
slowly drifts
to the motel ceiling

Chenou Liu

Silence And Shadow Tanka

a wine glass
of the winter sky...
silence
and my shadow
wait side by side

Chenou Liu

Silence Haiku

long way home...
windshield wipers clear
the silence between us

Chenou Liu

Silence Tanka

last day of spring
a pair of butterflies
fluttering
in and out of the silence
that stretches between us

Chenou Liu

Silent Night Haiku

Silent Night
drifting in from the neighbors -
I relearn Chinese

Chenou Liu

Silent Night Tanka

'Silent Night'
drifts over from the neighbors
alone in the attic
I write, 'Dear Mom,
I'm doing fine...'

Chenou Liu

'Silent Night, Holy Night' Tanka

the TV beams
one war after another
into my room...
'silent night, holy night'
drifting through my mind

Chenou Liu

Simmering Heat Senryu (Comic Haiku)

simmering heat...
the look on the face
of my girlfriend's son

Chenou Liu

Single-Edged Sword Gendai Haiku

the critic cutting my haiku with his single-edged sword
(for Eric Liu, haiku editor of The NeverEnding Story)

Chenou Liu

Sip Of Tea Haiku

a sip of tea...
listening to winter
sunlight

Chenou Liu

Siren Haiku

sirens blaring...
plum branches hold the shape
of my night

Chenou Liu

Siren Singing Tanka

I hear
the siren singing
'Home, Sweet Home...'
a part of me
jumps off the cliff

Chenou Liu

Skinheads Tanka

face to face
with a group of skinheads
in broad daylight
we raise our middle fingers...
me and my shadow

Chenou Liu

Skylark Singing Tanka

as I approach
half of her stiffens
and half melts away -
every now and then
I hear a skylark singing

Magnapoets,4, July 2009

Chenou Liu

Slabs Of Winter Moonlight Tanka

on our last night
she says in a low voice,
'I'm engaged...'
I trip over the slabs
of winter moonlight

Chenou Liu

Slant Of Moonlight Tanka

'Do you love me?
I love everyone
and no one...'
her last words like dust motes
hang in a slant of moonlight

Chenou Liu

'Slanted Eyes' Tanka

behind my back
they whisper 'slanted eyes...'
in a dream
I unzip my skin,
put on another

Highly Commended, 5th Kokako Tanka Competition (2014)

Chenou Liu

Sleepless Night Senryu (Comic Haiku)

sleepless night
counting how many lies
Donald Trump has told

Chenou Liu

Slot Machine Tanka

a shooting star
across the pub windows...
coins clatter
into the tray
of a slot machine

Chenou Liu

Slow Spiral Haiku

the slow spiral
of a cherry petal...
what I'll never say

Chenou Liu

Small Cage Tanka

alone again
with my drunken shadow...
singing like a skylark
in the small cage
of this promised land

Chenou Liu

Small Patch Of Canada Tanka

a shingled house
this small patch of Canada
to which I lay claim -
in a corner of my mind
'Ilha Formosa' echoes

Note: In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it 'Ilha Formosa, ' which means "Beautiful Island."

Chenou Liu

Small Talk Haiku

small talk
with my white neighbor
summer heat

Chenou Liu

Smell Of Azure Sky Haiku

wild blueberries
the smell
of azure sky

Chenou Liu

Smell Of The Night Tanka

drawn to
the smell of the night
I go out
and lie down naked...
inch by inch enveloped in its scent

Chenou Liu

Smell Of Winter Rain Haiku

whiskey glass brimming
with a moonless sky
the smell of winter rain

Chenou Liu

Smoke Rings Haiku

obituaries...
winter moon drifting
in smoke rings

Chenou Liu

Smokey Mountain Haiku

Smokey Mountain at dawn
a winding line of children
picks through the garbage

Note: Smokey Mountain is a 'towering heap of trash billowing smoke in Manila.'

Chenou Liu

Snarl And Rumble Haiku

winter solstice
the snarl and rumble
of traffic

Chenou Liu

Snow Light Tanka

the scratching
of my pen
on paper...
a day is lengthened
by snow light

Chenou Liu

Snow On Snow Haiku

snow on snow...
my shadow and I
alone together

Chenou Liu

Snow Tanka

his comment ends
with 'thin images and thick words'
one snowflake
after another and another
on this October morning

Chenou Liu

Snow-Covered Nursing Home Tanka

his bedside table
stacked with Chinese magazines...
at twilight
a snow-covered nursing home
on the Toronto Islands

Chenou Liu

Snowflake Haiku For Whitney Houston

snowflakes drifting...
I dust I Look to You
once again

Chenou Liu

Snowflake Monostich

before, after and inside me snowflakes drifting

Or

before, after
and inside me...
snowflakes drifting

For more information about this structural issue, see [To the Lighthouse: To Be or Not to Be a One-line Haiku?](#) , which can be accessed at

Chenou Liu

Snowflakes And Stars Tanka

the space
between falling snowflakes
the black
between fading stars
I can't see what I see

Chenou Liu

Snowflakes Haiku

snowflakes
falling upon snowflakes
upon snowflakes...

Chenou Liu

Snowlight Haiku

home alone
listening
to snowlight

Chenou Liu

Snowlight Tanka

snow light...
a worn page
of Neruda
for the winter
in my heart

Chenou Liu

Snowman's Face Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the look
on my snowman's face
snow on snow

Chenou Liu

Snowstorm Haiku For Seamus Heaney, Poet Of The Silent Things

Toronto snowstorm...
writing haiku to escape
the fear of silence

Chenou Liu

Snowy Dawn Haiku

snowy dawn...
bits of yesterday
cling to today

Third Place

inaugural Janice M Bostok International Haiku Award

Judges' Comments (by Jim Kacian and Cynthia Rowe)

This ties the natural world with the human - we drag the dream world into the day with us, for a bit, even as our waking obscures that other "real" world we inhabit. At the same time, snow covers what we knew of the outside, but we recognizes it's still there, beneath the covering, evidenced by its shapes

Chenou Liu

Snowy Days Tanka

the doctor said,
'one day at a time ...'
these snowy days
blend and blur
into each other

Chenou Liu

Snowy Light Tanka

snowy light
through my attic window
I'm beautifully
achingly
... alone

Chenou Liu

Snowy Loneliness Tanka

the tenth winter...
my attic room filled
with a bed,
a desk, rows of books
and snowy loneliness

Chenou Liu

Snowy Morning Tanka

another cup
of wulong tea
made in my hometown...
the first snowy morning
since I settled abroad

Chenou Liu

Snowy Silence Haiku

snow on snow...
listening to the silence
between us

Chenou Liu

Snowy Silence Tanka

side by side walking
in the world of one color
I see her
hunting for words to break
this snowy silence

Chenou Liu

Solar Eclipse Haiku

the air
thick with whispers...
solar eclipse

Chenou Liu

Something New Under The Sun

A Gendai Haiku Sequence

'Houston,
we have lift-off...'
the night moaning

'Rated R - '
the orgasm
of sudden rain

my snow angel
dripping with hormones...
scent of spring

Chenou Liu

Soon-To-Be-Ex Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the last sex
with my soon-to-be-ex...
three minutes shorter

Chenou Liu

Sound And Sight

the night protests
with one long crow's cry
moonlight's big tongue drags
along the attic floor

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Chopsticks Tanka

closed in
on herself once again...
dinnertime filled
with the sound of chopsticks
and April snowflakes

Joint First Prize

(Certificate of Merit Conferred by Contest Judge, Maxianne Berger)
8th International Tanka Festival, 2016

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Dripping Water

after love
our bodies resume
their boundaries...
the sound of dripping water
becomes louder and louder

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Loneliness Tanka

a red leaf
zigzagging
to the ground...
the sound
of loneliness

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Silence Haiku

the sound of silence...
my dog and I
the falling snowflakes

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Silence Tanka

bombarded
by the sound of silence
I look out the window
at a white paper bag
trapped in a wind vortex

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Snow Haiku

her laugh echoes
through the empty house
the sound of snow

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Snow Tanka

distressed
in the wake of a dream
I hear
time passing
in the sound of snow

Modern English Tanka,3: 3, Spring 2009

Chenou Liu

Sound Of The Wind

A Haibun

I remember the day I left for Canada.

My parents were virtually silent. My older brother and his wife told me to take good care of myself, and my nephew kept begging me to buy toys for him. I waved goodbye to them as I walked toward the Airport Departure Entrance. My parents didn't wave back.

nine autumns past...
my parents and I speak
different tongues

Chenou Liu

Sound Of Water Dripping Haiku

winter solstice
the sound of water dripping
becomes darker

Chenou Liu

Sounds Of Dawn Haiku

sounds of dawn...
watching the world unfurl
from shadow

Selected Haiku

2017 Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum English Haiku Contest

Chenou Liu

Soybean Milk & Chinese Fried Dough Tanka

that morning
we shared soybean milk
and Chinese fried dough...
facing the attic window
tonight, I drink wu-long tea

Chenou Liu

Sparkling Eyes Haiku

starry night
in ten thousand pixels
her sparkling eyes

Chenou Liu

Sparrows Visual Haiku

sparrows on the powerline

autumn dusk

Chenou Liu

Speed Dating Senryu (Comic Haiku)

speed dating
she takes slow sips
of lemon juice

Chenou Liu

Spicy Chicken Senryu

spicy chicken ...
this impulse to ask
if she's married

Published in *Modern Haiku*, 43: 1, Feb., 2012
Editor's Choice Senryu

Chenou Liu

Spider Web Haiku

moonlit spider web
in a corner of my room
map of Venice

Chenou Liu

Spider's Web Haiku

a spider's web
glistens with morning dew
mom's pearl necklace

Chenou Liu

Spotlight Tanka

my little brother
stands at full attention
for the first time
these left wing poems
in the spotlight

Chenou Liu

Spring Day Haiku

my nephew
doesn't let me hold his hand
first day of spring

Finalist, the 2010 Paper Wasp Jack Stamm Haiku Competition
published in Paper Wasp, 17: 2, June 2011
Anthologized in Moonrise and Bare Hills

Chenou Liu

Spring Drizzle Haiku

spring drizzle...
one memory wet
by another

Croatian Translation by Diogen Editorial Team

proljetni pljusak...
pokislo sjećanje
za sjećanjem

Featured in 'Our Overseas Haiku Poets, ' Diogen, September 2012

Chenou Liu

Spring Drizzle Tanka

the smell
of a spring drizzle...
that place, that time
that woman in black
with warm breasts

Chenou Liu

Spring Haiku

cherry blossoms
dancing in the wind
her past, our future...

Chenou Liu

Spring Morning Air Tanka

she says,
the spring morning air
is throbbing
with promise...
of what? I murmur

Chenou Liu

Spring Night Haiku

blind date:
her long hair cascading
into the spring night

Chenou Liu

Spring-Roll Stand Tanka

standing still
three First Nations children
in twilight
my spring-roll stand
at the Taste of Greece Fest

Chenou Liu

Spring's End Tanka

last day of spring
a pair of butterflies
fluttering
in and out of the silence
that stretches between us

Selected by Romance Under A Waning Moon
painting by Ohara Koso (1877 -1945)

Chenou Liu

Stained Glass Butterfly Haiku

Version I

Jesus shouted, 'Eli Eli lama sabachthani? ' which is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? '

It is finished...
a stained glass butterfly
circles in my mind

Version II

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

It is finished...
a stained glass butterfly
circles in my mind

Note: L1 refers to Jesus' last words on the cross.

Chenou Liu

Stained Glass Windows Tanka

sunlight
through stained glass windows...
the clank
of cash registers
louder and louder

Chenou Liu

Stand-Up Kyoka (Comic Tanka)

alone
in my attic
I perform stand-up
for a sea of stars
rain returns its ovation

Chenou Liu

Stargazing Haiku

her bike
leans against mine...
stargazing

Chenou Liu

Starless Night Haiku

alone
this starless night
tasting black

Chenou Liu

Starless Night Haiku For Whitney Houston

starless night...
I Will Always Love You
on the radio

Chenou Liu

Starless Night Tanka

our last talk
full of might haves, could haves,
should haves...
snowflakes drifting
on this starless night

Chenou Liu

Starless Sky And Goblet Tanka

once again
she doesn't show up
my goblet
brimming
with a starless sky

Chenou Liu

Starlight Tanka

her last question
'how can you make a life
out of mere words'
reverberates in the dark...
starlight once in her eyes

Chenou Liu

Starlit Sky Tanka

Good Friday night...
a teenage girl in red
lies motionless
on the sidewalk
facing the starlit sky

Chenou Liu

Starry Night Haiku

one by one
fireflies escape my glass jar...
starry night

Editor's First Choice Haiku, 'bugs / insects' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 4, July / August 2011

Editor's Comment:

For the themed 'insect / bug Haiku Thread Sketchbook poets submitted an unprecedented 273 poems; picking a single haiku as choice has been difficult... However, after narrowing the field down to ten I have reached a decision. My number one choice was submitted by Chen-ou Liu,

The narrator in this ku, possibly a child, has been collecting fireflies in a glass jar. What child has not participated in this activity on an early, twilight summer eve? Such an activity permits a close up inspection of these mysterious, luminescent creatures—an up close experience of the microcosm. Later, the narrator releases the fireflies, and one by one they escape their 'glass' confinement returning to the larger world. They become indistinguishable in the clear night sky as as their tiny, glowing lights become intermixed with the canvas of the night sky filled with stars. The transformation of views is dramatic—moving from a microcosmic view to a macrocosmic view. It is this shift of view point that captures my attention. The child like act of capturing fireflies as specimens for display in a glass jar is commonplace, but allowing them to escape and mingle as points of light against the large canvas of a sky on a starry night leads one to speculate on the larger questions about life. What is life? Is there life in the vast and mostly unexplored, distant universe? Are the life forms of the 'firefly', a 'human', and a distant 'star' related? What is the origin of life? These are large questions—all of which invade my mind upon reading Chen-ou Liu's interesting haiku?

Some readers may object to the selection of this haiku as a Choice example. Both 'firefly' and 'starry night' are commonly listed kigos—haijin purists will hastily point out that only one kigo should be used. Yet, the vastness of the questions that arise in my mind from reading Chen-ou Liu's haiku lead me to persist in this choice.

Author's note:

John's comments are informative and insightful, and I'm particularly impressed by this well thought-out comment: "The transformation of views is dramatic—moving from a microcosmic view to a macrocosmic view. It is this shift of view point that captures my attention."

As for his concluding comment, my response to so-called haijin purists' complaint is simple: there is no abiding kigo tradition adopted and followed by the English language haiku community, and in the Japanese haiku, two kigo are allowed to use (one of them is treated as a dominant one) .

Chenou Liu

Starry Night Tanka

Starry Night
hangs on my attic wall:
with eyes that saw
the drunken darkness
he painted me in blues and grays

Chenou Liu

Starry Pond Haiku

starry pond
the pulsing throat
of a frog

Chenou Liu

Stars And Stripes Haiku

stars and stripes...
a one-armed veteran
in silhouette

Chenou Liu

Stars And Stripes Tanka

the train whistle
echoing in the distance
the Stars and Stripes
flapping in the wind ...
the lost look in her eyes

Chenou Liu

Star-Struck Darkness Tanka

at the sight
of a crescent moon
in star-struck darkness —
the moth eyebrows
of my beloved

Modern English Tanka,3: 4,2009

Chenou Liu

Statue Of Liberty Haiku

the migrant's long sigh...
Statue of Liberty
in twilight

Chenou Liu

Stay Drunk On Writing

A Haiku Sequence

writing haiku...
the cock crows
as if possessed

the vacuum humming
I revise
a spring haiku

color of the sky
like a cat dead for weeks
my summer haiku

a pause
between haiku
half-moon

writing haiku...
autumn sunlight breaks
through a wall of gray

winter solstice
a haiku lost and found
in my dream

the porridge
on my coffee-stained desk
rewriting haiku
(for Jack Kerouac)

Chenou Liu

Steady Fall Of Snow Haiku

steady fall of snow
the silence between me
and my old dog

Chenou Liu

Stillness Haiku

a crow's cry...
the village stillness
deepens

Chenou Liu

Stone Angel Haiku

a gravesite at dusk...
he speaks to the stone angel
in his mother tongue

Chenou Liu

Stone Buddha Haiku

aftermath...
an eagle circling
the stone Buddha

Chenou Liu

Stone Buddha Tanka

windswept pines
against the coming night
I sit zazen
like a stone Buddha
with shifting shadows

Chenou Liu

Stone Of Words Tanka

nostalgia
reflected on the lake
of my mind ...
I erase it
with a stone of words

Chenou Liu

Stony Silence Tanka

thunderheads
crawl across the sky
stony silence
between young black men
and rows of police officers

Chenou Liu

Storefront Haiku

ten storefronts for sale -
Neighborhood Watch sign dangling
by a piece of wire

Chenou Liu

Storm Clouds Tanka

a man and his dogs
stand by the gated entrance:
Niggerhead
under a coat of white paint
as storm clouds approach

Note: Niggerhead is the name of a secluded West Texas hunting camp.

Chenou Liu

Story Haiku

his story traced back layer upon layer peeling an onion

(for Günter Grass)

Chenou Liu

Stranger Tanka

waking
next to a stranger
with no clothes on...
the afternoon sun
deepens the silence

Chenou Liu

Stranger's Smell Haiku

wolf moon
a stranger's smell
on her body

Chenou Liu

Stray Dog And I Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a stray dog and I
eye one another
Valentine's night

Chenou Liu

Stray Dog Haiku

autumn chill
a stray dog sits
on my shadow

Chenou Liu

Street Dog Haiku

winter sun
in the eyes of a street dog
migrant worker

Chenou Liu

Street Dogs Haiku

winter solstice
a street dog
outbarks the rest

Chenou Liu

Stretching Silence Tanka

last day of spring
a pair of butterflies
fluttering
in and out of the silence
that stretches between us

Chenou Liu

Stretchmarks Haiku

the river
swollen with spring...
her stretchmarks

Chenou Liu

Strongertogether Haiku

misty night
red states, blue states
strongertogether

Chenou Liu

Strongertogether Senryu (Comic Haiku)

bumpertobumperstrongertogether

Chenou Liu

Sudden News Tanka

sudden news
of her breast cancer...
I add
one more lump of sugar
to my morning coffee

Chenou Liu

Sudden Stab Haiku

winter drizzle...
a sudden stab
of homesickness

Chenou Liu

Suicide Vest Of Emotions Senryu (Comic Haiku)

divorce talk
she wears a suicide vest
of emotions

Chenou Liu

Sultry Dusk Tanka

sultry dusk...
the nape of her neck
draws me in
as a streetlamp
beckons to the moth

Third Place, 2012 Love Tanka Contest

Chenou Liu

Sultry Night Haiku

sultry night
our lips just shy
of touching

Chenou Liu

Sultry Night Tanka

my roommate
used to sing himself to sleep
with Chinese songs...
on this sultry night
his 'O Canada' thunders

Chenou Liu

Sultry Voice Tanka

a crescent moon
in the Tagus River
her sultry voice
wailing out a song
tinged with passion and regret

Chenou Liu

Summer Cottage Senryu (Comic Haiku)

summer cottage
after killing the last fly
I am alone

Chenou Liu

Summer Haiku

that midsummer night...
the cold moon
fills my whiskey glass

Chenou Liu

Summer Heat Haiku

summer heat
a line of ants moving
across Das Kapital

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'bugs / insects' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 4, July / August 2011

Chenou Liu

Summer Rain Haiku

'love me or not'
intermittent
summer rain

Chenou Liu

Summer Rain Tanka

summer rain
bounces off the pavement
the street fills
with dancing children
and honking

Chenou Liu

Summer Sky And Water-Stained Ceiling Tanka

that summer sky
filled with our childhood dreams...
I sleep alone
under the water-stained ceiling
of a rooming house

Chenou Liu

Summer Stars And Whisper Tanka

summer stars
hang nearly within reach
her parting words
whisper through the grass
that pillows our heads

Chenou Liu

Summer Stars Tanka

walking out
in the middle of the lecture
on astrology
we saw summer stars
in each other's eyes

First published in Lynx, XXVI: 3, October 2011

Anthologized in Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka,4,2012

Chenou Liu

Summer's End Haiku

summer's end
a line of seashells
on the windowsill

Chenou Liu

Sunburned Silence Haiku

sunburned silence
between the black teen
and the white cop

Chenou Liu

Sunday Afternoon

A haibun for Benny

... millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

? Susan Ertz

drizzle on the roof...
he wonders how
to kill time

A gray screen suddenly pops into the scene of a dark alleyway as muffled footsteps approach a door. The door is left slightly open. The shaky, hand-held camcorder captures a cat that is let out of the house. Pan to a teenage boy standing nearby and pan back to the cat. A hand-held gun appears in the frame and is pressed toward the cat's forehead. Zoom-in. The gun is fired; the cat falls to the ground. The camcorder closely follows the cat's convulsing body.

Chenou Liu

Sunlit Canvas Haiku

sunlit canvas:
he unfolds a rabbit
from the spring sky

Chenou Liu

Sunlit Grave Site Haiku

I sit alone
at her sunlit grave site
two white butterflies

Editor's Choice, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October 2011

Chenou Liu

Supermoon Haiku

my old dog
gazing at the supermoon
I fall asleep

Chenou Liu

Supersonic Skydive Haiku

supersonic skydive -
a red leaf
touching the ground

Note: Today, extreme athlete Felix Baumgartner landed safely after a 38-km leap to Earth in bid to break sound barrier.

Chenou Liu

Surge Of Pain Tanka

a placard that reads
"take my hand not my life";
in the moonlight
hand on her belly
she feels a surge of pain

Chenou Liu

Surge Of The Wind Haiku

surge of the wind...
talk of war fading
into silence

Chenou Liu

Survivor Senryu (Comic Haiku)

watching 'Survivor'...
they all wear Che Guevara
T-shirts

Chenou Liu

Suspended Between Life And Death

A Haibun

On my way to work at the meat factory, a dewy green leaf is shaken loose and blown away from a maple tree. It floats along the sidewalk. Suddenly, a wind whips it about and sends it soaring skyward. Then, the wind stops and the leaf falls to the ground.

evening chill...
pressing the razor
against my skin

Chenou Liu

Suspended In Mid-Air Tanka

to stay or leave
the question I've pondered
for almost a year...
one yellow leaf
suspended in mid-air

Chenou Liu

Sweet Dream Or Beautiful Nightmare Tanka

'a sweet dream
or a beautiful nightmare? '
the echoes
of her lullaby
linger through the night

Chenou Liu

Swimwear Sale Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the look
on my plus-size wife's face
Swimwear Sale

Chenou Liu

Swirling Bats Haiku

bats swirling
across the prairie -
ink-stained desk

Published in the 3LIGHTS,1, Winter 2010

New Resonance 7: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku

Featured on Per Diem of The Haiku Foundation website (June 5,2012)

Chenou Liu

Tai Chi Apprentice Haiku

alone in twilight
the tai chi apprentice
breaks the wind

Chenou Liu

Tail Wagging The Dog Tanka

the neighbor
who seldom returns my greetings
chit-chats
with a stranger
while the dogs wag their tails

Chenou Liu

Tailored Suit Senryu (Comic Haiku)

buying a tailored suit -
the same old style
his mother chose for him

Chenou Liu

Talent Show Senryu (Comic Haiku)

talent show
my grandpa plays
air guitar

Chenou Liu

Tales Of The City Tour

A Haiku Sequence

a boy crossing
the line where the Berlin Wall
stood for decades

the end
of Checkpoint Charlie -
Golden Arches

first time tourists
under a canopy of cranes
Berliner Dom

alone,
spinning a postcard rack...
old Berliner

Chenou Liu

Talk Of Love Haiku

talk of love
the changing shades
of moonlight

Chenou Liu

Talk Of War Haiku

beads of sunlight
along a blade of grass...
this talk of war

Chenou Liu

Talk Of War Tanka

row after row
of brick houses blanketed
by winter fog...
the howling of street dogs
punctuates our talk of war

Chenou Liu

Tangled Hair Haiku

this spring night
her hair is tangled
thoughts of him

Chenou Liu

Tangled Thoughts Haiku

tangled thoughts...
a spider's web
laced with dew

Chenou Liu

Tangled Thoughts Of Home Haiku

the calligraphy
of bare maple branches
tangled thoughts of home

Chenou Liu

Tank Man Haiku

an empty chair
at the Nobel ceremony...
thoughts of Tank Man

Haiku of Merit, Vanguard Haiku Section
World Haiku Review, January 2011

note: The Tank Man is the nickname given by the international media of an young man who stood in front of a column of Chinese tanks on the morning of June 5,1989.

Chenou Liu

Taste Of A Dream Haiku

the taste of a dream
on a child refugee's tongue
maple syrup

Back Cover Poem, Haiku Canada Review,10: 1, February 2016

Chenou Liu

'Taste Of Moonlight' Haiku

I stretch out
in bed alone
the taste of moonlight

Haiku of Merit, Vanguard Haiku
World Haiku Review, December 2012

Chenou Liu

Taste Of Wild Strawberries Haiku

on my tongue
the taste of wild strawberries
the look in her eyes

Chenou Liu

Tasting The Winter Sky Tanka

a blue-eyed boy
pokes his head out
the school bus window
yelling at me, 'Chink...'
I taste the winter sky

Chenou Liu

Teardrop Tattoo Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a teardrop tattoo
under her right eye
blind date

Chenou Liu

Temp Job Haiku

last leaves
cling to a maple tree...
another temp job

Chenou Liu

Ten Thousand Stars Haiku

from the screen
to ten thousand stars...
power outage

Chenou Liu

Ten Years After

A Haibun

Bathed in winter sunlight, Father sits on the front porch stairs. A wooden cane between his knees, hand over hand, resting on the handle.

white streaks
in my hair and beard
first homecoming

I ask Father, 'How have you been these years? ' I immediately regret my stupid question. Without answering, Father looks deep into my eyes... a smile emerges at the corners of his mouth.

Chenou Liu

Tender And Rough Tanka

your hands
like autumn wind
that caresses me -
tender one day
rough the next

Chenou Liu

Tendrils Of Morning Glory Haiku

after our divorce
tendrils of morning glory
cling to the tree bark

Chenou Liu

Tenth Year Of Exile Haiku

sea-worn pebble
in my hand
tenth year of exile

Chenou Liu

The (Lost) Love Song Of Eric Liu

A Tanka Sequence

she whispers,
'what does a poet do? '
running her fingers
through my chest hair...
I moan, 'makes love to the world'

the moon
soaking with wet light
our tangled clothes
on the sand...
one star, then many

she left me
for a woman in red
at the beach
I hear mermaids
singing each to each

Chenou Liu

The (Mostly) True Story Of My School Days

A Haibun

It was the first day of school, and I waited by the community gate, keeping an eye out for any sign of the school bus' arrival. My mother held my hand so tightly that I felt as if I were chained to a lamppost.

"Mom, what time is it? When will the school bus come? Will Uncle Bus Driver forget to pick me up? Mother, did you tell the school ...," my mother interrupted my rambling and looked me in the eye, saying, "Son, you need to be patient. Just wait for the bus. I contacted the school a month ago and made sure that they would pick you up once school starts. Don't you want to spend more time with me now?"

"Yes, I want to be with you. But, Mom, I just don't want to miss my first day of school. Hsing-hsing always tells me that there is a lot of fun stuff in the school. I like to play...," "Honk! Honk!" Upon hearing the arrival of the school bus, I was so eager and ready to shake off the grip of my mother's hand and rush inside.

a box of crayons
in the pool of sunlight
a circle of kids

When I got back home that afternoon, I could barely stop talking about my day. My mother kept nodding her head with a smile as I regaled her with my stories.

The next morning, my mother woke me and said, "It's time for school." I looked at her in a cheerful mood and asked, "Mother, does it happen again?" Pausing for a moment with tears welling up in the edges of her eyes, my mother replied, "Yes, you'll have another happy day in school."

Chenou Liu

The Answer Is Blowin' In The Wind

for young students who have activated Hong Kong's largest-scale civil disobedience campaign ever to defend democracy and fight for universal and equal suffrage

the riot police
tighten in a ring
of shields and masks
around sit-in protesters -
a flurry of doves

a wall of students
linked arm-in-arm...
'Occupy Central
with Love and Peace'
swaying in moonlight

Note: Hong Kong's main financial district is known as Central.

Chenou Liu

The Attic And I Haiku

watching
winter fog roll in...
the attic and I

Chenou Liu

The Back Of A Turtle Haiku

the globe balanced
on the back of a turtle
Earth Day

Chenou Liu

The Beginning Of The End

summer lake
she and I ankle-deep
in stars

the door slammed shut
moonlight sliding
down the icicles

Chenou Liu

The Beginning Of The End

A Haiku Set

summer lake
she and I ankle-deep
in stars

the door slammed shut
moonlight sliding
down the icicles

Chenou Liu

The Buzz Of Love Tanka

'I love you
but can't be with you...'
in a stand
of leafless sourwood trees
I still hear the buzz of love

Chenou Liu

The Confessional Tanka

spring sunlight
flooding the church hall...
the sobs
once from the confessional
still echo in my heart

Chenou Liu

The Cruellest Month

occupied
with the blank space
when words fail...
on my attic window
April rain pattering

It was a writing class held at a Toronto branch library. The teacher discussed the four key elements of a story: setting, conflict, climax, and resolution. Half jokingly, he said out loud, 'That's almost an acronym: sucker.' He drew our attention to all sorts of sharp acronyms derived from his words of wisdom, and ended the class with a warning: be aware of clichés.

A loud voice from the back of the room, 'the writer is a cliché-sucker who spills out a string of little gems.' Silence descended over the room as if bats had just flown out of a cave in a big, snaking cloud. And the rain started to pour...

Chenou Liu

The Dagger In My Mind

A Haibun

Dear Mr. Reeder:

What was there before your birth? What will be there after your death? And who is it, at this very moment, that is reading? Living in the world of one color, can I have December roses to perfume my attic room?

sprawling darkness not knowing the sound of snow

Chenou Liu

The Dagger Of My Mind

A Tanka Set

sleepless again...
I turn in bed waiting
for the moonlight
to fill the emptiness
on her side of the bed

the dent
in the pillow I bought her
still visible...
it has been three months since
she was sent to the psych ward

Chenou Liu

The Death Of The Author

A Tanka Sequence for Roland Barthes

after opening
the envelop stuffed with my poems
I take out my heart
wash it clean
and start writing again

surrounded
by a swarm of buzzing words
I squash them
in the rhythm of
short, long, short, long, long

I keep
stacking blocks of stanza
suddenly
the poem collapses in silence
I am buried alive

under the gaze
of Calliope's love
my next poem
is about to take flight
but Heaven's window is shut

I skip
a stone of words
across the lake
of another time
another place

Chenou Liu

The Echoes

A Tanka Sequence

waking alone
from the talk with the girl
I met
in childhood dreams
church bells echo from afar

chants
of the ninety-nine percent
echo from afar -
counting winter stars
in my attic window

'being a poet
how do you put food
on the table? '
her words echo from afar
breaking this moonlit night

Chenou Liu

The Eternal Stranger?

A Haiku Set

fireworks show
the migrant speaks of the home
he left behind

'no more migrants! '
not a breath
of summer breeze

Chenou Liu

The First American I Ever Knew

A Tanka Prose

On his side of the wall, black Jesus hangs from the cross in a painting, and next to him, Malcolm X points his finger in a photo. I am curious as to why my roommate, Malik, placed these two pictures side by side, but I don't know him well enough to ask such a personal question. This is the first time I've ever studied abroad, and also the first time I've ever lived with a non-Chinese person. I have little clue what personal boundaries are, but Malik and I have gotten along (albeit for only three weeks so far) .

I first broke the ice and got to know him when I prepared a Chinese dinner for the two of us the second Sunday after I moved in. He gave me face by finishing the last grain of rice in his bowl and sucking out the last shred of chicken from the wing flapper on his plate. The next morning as he left to attend a student union meeting, he looked me in the eye and said, 'I want to thank you again for your heartwarming dinner. The chicken dish reminded me of the Chinese takeout my father brought me after his last shift. I saw him in my dreams last night for the first time since he died unexpectedly.'

'racism kills, kill racism'
my roommate
chanting in his sleep...
a transient light
before sunrise

Chenou Liu

The Gaze

A Tanka Prose

In the black-and-white photo, the 16-year-old girl stands in the shade of an old apple tree; her arms folded casually while leaning against its trunk. Black hair in twin braids trail over her shoulders; her head turned slightly toward my house. Her lips parted and playful.

the edges
of her dear john letter
blackening...
'I like the way you look
at me, ' she once said

Chenou Liu

The Inconvenient Indian

A Haibun for Thomas King

Three limo-loads of corporate lawyers and accountants are heading to the airport... a Haida elder stands at the ocean's edge with the cedars at his back and the azure sky on his shoulders.

Easter morning
First Nations youth dance and chant
Idle No More...

Note: 'Idle No More' is an ongoing protest movement originating among the Aboriginal/First Nations peoples in Canada.

Chenou Liu

The Journey Itself Is Home

A Tanka Prose for Matsuo Basho

I carry the dead weight
of cliched poetry
on the road
to the Interior
cherry blossoms drifting

Like the shadow in the morning, the workshop lecturer's comment lingers in my mind, 'There are two kinds of traveler-poets: those who look at the map and those who look in the mirror. The first are embarking on their journey, and the latter are returning home.'

Chenou Liu

The Journey Itself Is My Home

A Tanka Prose

The last time I visited my parents in Taipei, I strolled through Da An, an affluent leafy residential district known for its prominent universities and small publishing houses. I spent half an hour in its winding alleyways and couldn't find the bookstore I had frequented for 20 years. At first, I felt a surge of panic and, moments later, a stabbing pain in my body. The Taipei I had known was gone.

on the wall
an old map of Taipei -
I look outside,
tiers of color lighting up
the Toronto night sky

Note: Taipei is the city of my birth, the capital of Taiwan (formerly known as the Republic of China)

Chenou Liu

The Land I Left Behind Tanka

alone again
on the Pacific shore...
winter moonlight
forming a narrow path
to the land I left behind

Chenou Liu

The Last Gaze

A Haibun

Slanting through the attic window, a ray of sunlight touches my coffee-stained desk.

I look out at the maple branches swaying in the breeze. From nowhere, I feel the stab of a memory - you waving me goodbye.

mid-autumn moon...
the sound of the wind
colder

Chenou Liu

The Little Death

A Haibun

midsummer night
googling
my ex-girlfriend

The moment I'm inside her, my new partner cries out, 'Viens à moi, chéri! Viens à moi! Ah, tu es arrivé! ' The ceiling fan makes a rhythmic hum while spinning at full speed.

we sleep back to back
a shooting star
across the window

Note: 'home, baby! home, baby! Yes, you've come home! '

Chenou Liu

The Marrow Of Bones Tanka

at her door
the stepfather banging banging ...
years later
sounds of the night remain
in the marrow of her bones

Chenou Liu

The Myth Of Sisyphus

A Tanka Prose

people awake
work, eat, and sleep...
the Mondays of present
follow the rhythm
of the Sundays in past

Blank years in and out. This is daily life. And then the sudden moment of being: the stab of memories, the sting of longings, the slaughter of time. There is no screaming tragedy in ordinary life.

Chenou Liu

The Nature Of Poetic Truth

A Haiku Sequence

'oh, so, you're a poet'
the aftertaste
of her words

'where is your Howl? '
this odor
of impending death

drifting snowflakes...
'your poem, a bit of this
and a bit of that'

Chenou Liu

The Neverending Story Between Calliope And Me

A Tanka Sequence for Michael Ende

first light touching
the empty side of my bed...
on my headstone
A poet's life is lived
in the shadow of the Muse

my neighbor's cat
chasing a big mouse
across the room
I wait for bread crumbs
from the Muse's table

this humid day
the Muse dressed in a burqa
comes toward me
the sounds in my head
roar and fight like monsters

at high noon
my critic and the Muse
man-womaning...
I turn to Orlando,
the book my ex loves most

this summer night
my Muse's sexual rage
thundering
through many pages...
I write about loneliness

my ex and Muse
brimming over with love
for each other...
awake, autumn sunlight
on my coffee-stained desk

the Muse comes
as a mournful solace
despite passing
of the final deadline
I write rage against the light

nothing new
stuttering off the tongue
of my old Muse...
I look out the window
at leaves swirling in midair

my dying Muse
her whole life runs through my mind...
on the way home
I see nothing but
snowflakes and shadows

Chenou Liu

The Neverending Story, A Haiku Sequence

Winter mist
I tell my soon-to-be-ex
I hate myself too

divorce pending
I edit my Facebook profile
once again

New Year's morning
on the answering machine
my ex's voice

Chenou Liu

The Pain From An Old Wound

A Tanka Sequence

moonstruck
Nostalgia gains momentum
leapfrogging
from Taiwan to Toronto
I'm its colonial subject

my dog
seems to know the length
of its leash
I have no clue
how to measure Nostalgia

'go back
to where you came from'
Nostalgia screams...
one kick after another
I see Bruce Lee in the mirror

Note: Bruce Lee (27 November 1940 - 20 July 1973) was a Chinese American actor, and he is highly regarded by many commentators and fans as the most influential martial artist of modern times.

Chenou Liu

The Past Is A Foreign Country

A Haiku Sequence

hometown memories
wrapped in shared privacy
the old dog and I

now in Taipei
and dreaming of Taipei...
first hometown visit

a spider web
in winter sunlight
threads of memory

Chenou Liu

The Portrait Of An Attic Poet

A Tanka Sequence

I yell out
'I'll stay drunk on writing'
her silent tongue
like a scissor
cutting my words to shreds

rain pelting
the windows of this rooming house
I hear voices
rising towards the ceiling
jostling for survival

my mind complains
'it's hard to live by words alone'
tongues of fire
lick the flesh
and stay for a while

I conduct
the Fifth Symphony
inside my head
the doctor sees nothing
but a poet's failed dream

a wolf
howling at the cold moon
alone
face to face
with my own demons

after wishing
on a shooting star
all that remains
of my attic room
a shadow on the wall

The Question Unanswered

A Haibun

slanted sunlight
in the Meditation Hall
a drift of dust

'Every question you answer, ' I say timidly, 'leads to another question.' The air conditioner continues its rhythmic humming.

'And do you have another question? ' the master asks. For the first time, I notice that there is a small twist to his mouth.

Chenou Liu

The Racial Politics Of Yin And Yang

A Haiku Set

chill in the air
two blue-eyed boys with toy guns
shadowing a black girl

a blonde clutches her purse
when walking past three black youths
sultry night

Chenou Liu

The Road Less Traveled

A Tanka Prose for Basho

In 1693, parting from his favorite disciple Kyoroku, Basho said, "Didn't the retired Emperor Go-Toba say of Saigyō's poetry that it contained truth tinged with sorrow? Take strength from his words and follow unswervingly the narrow thread of the Way of poetry."

a sliver of moon...
I cling to the thin line
of labor
to capture loneliness
in love poetry

Note: Emperor Go-Toba (1180-1239) was perhaps the best poet among Japan's sovereigns. For more information, see Yoshiko Kurata Dykstra, *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*. Volume 1, p.351.

Chenou Liu

The Same Moon Between Mother And Me

A Haiku Sequence

these hands
once reached for mother's breast...
holding a gun

Pacific shore...
waves swishing through the sand
and mom's lullaby

mother squeezing
the side of my belly
first hometown visit

Chenou Liu

'The Same Moon' Tanka

English Original:

the same moon
Li Po drank to
the same autumn
Tu Fu wrote of—
I alone change

French Translation by Mike Montreuil

la même lune
dont Li Po s'abreuvait
le même automne
que décrivait Tu Fu—
moi seul je change

first published in *Gusts*, # 10

showcased in New Special Feature: Canadian Tanka Poets in French and English
and in *Salamander Cove*

Chenou Liu

The Same Old Story

A Tanka Sequence

first sunlight
after Valentine's Day
her heart
beating against mine
in a cheap motel room

her departing words
'each star has its own journey'
linger with me...
the mouth of darkness swallows
our summer stars and her

in twilight
rustling maple leaves
have a voice
that answers the storm
I murmur, 'what am I? '

returned mail
from my ex-girlfriend
piles up...
flakes of thought drifting
in a world of one color

New Year's cleanup...
finding her wadded-up bra
under the bed
at last I breathe in
the smell of her betrayal

Chenou Liu

The Sign

A Tanka Prose

I watched her
getting smaller and smaller
all winter...
spring comes early, she walks
into the Garden alone

A thread of moonlight through the window. My dog-eared Bible on the coffee-stained desk.

Another sleepless night. Did Jesus die with a cry in despair, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' Or did he expire with a look on his face that shows his serene confidence, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit?'

I remember the first time she walked into my attic room, seeing the walls lined with bookcases for biblical reference books. She turned to me and said, 'My little Thomas, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.' At every word, her cheek dimpled into a smile.

her bony hand
grasped helplessly at the air...
the wooden cross
she gave me for my birthday
casts a long shadow

Chenou Liu

The Spring Sun Also Rises, A Tanka Sequence

Her soft, wet body
leans into mine
her legs, her thighs
move against me...
time and rain fall on

standing hand in hand
before our 3-bedroom house
now, we own
two Acuras
...and a golden retriever

autumn gust
blowing off my heart
her last words
You're like an onion;
the more layers I peel...

the distance
between sun and moon...
the apparition
of my ex-wife's face
in the rush hour crowd

in the mirror
Father's face and mine
overlapping
on New Year's morning
I take an ice-cold shower

Chenou Liu

The Sunflower Girl

A Tanka Prose

She burst into my room, "I want to taste this summer petal by petal as if it were my last." I cannot remember the color of her dress as she stood with sunlight pouring through the window and looked as if she were on fire.

snowflakes drift
this Easter Sunday...
the space
between her dates
cut into black stone

Chenou Liu

The Tempest In My Mind

A Tanka Sequence

loneliness
comes to sit beside my bed...
the third night
filled with the monotone
of winter rain

at 3 a.m.
many-mouthed loneliness
talks out loud -
speechless, I'm face-to-face
with my shadow on the wall

Chenou Liu

The Way Home Haiku

thoughts unspooling
with summer moonlight
the way home

Chenou Liu

The Weight Of The L Word

A Tanka Sequence

winter gust
beating at the petals
of time
that swirl around us...
this starless night we meet

caught in her gaze
I plant in my mind
a hope
that will flourish...
this budding of spring words

she winks at me
'is love about the body-smell
relationship? '
I start to unlearn
the language of sex

she whispered
'I am in love and love
what vanished...'
my thoughts of her floating
in the dark sea of night

Chenou Liu

The Winter Of My Discontent

A Haiku Sequence

unemployed...
I graze on a meadow
of winter clouds

'Now Hiring'
flaps in the winter wind...
last rays of sunlight

long way to work...
the winter sun devours
my shadow

Chenou Liu

The World Of One Color Tanka

side by side walking
in the world of one color
I see her
hunting for words to break
this snowy silence

Chenou Liu

The Years Of Living Consciously

A Tanka Sequence

baking
in the summer heat
I wonder
how to pronounce
my new name, Chen-ou Liu

no more migrants
chanted in Bible-belt rhythm...
I tell him,
I am Taiwanese,
a 'legal alien'

maple leaves
gleam and darken
on the tree
should I stay
or should I go?

a red light
flashing at the crossroad...
I've been living
too long for a single dream
echoes in the winter air

Chenou Liu

The Young Mother Who Doesn't Speak

A Haiku Sequence

a waning moon
in the window -
ventilator whooshing

a white butterfly
flitting through the stillness...
church grave yard

faint pencil marks
on the wall -
her dead child's room

Chenou Liu

Therapy Session Haiku

therapy session:
winter rain on the window
deepens the silence

Chenou Liu

There Is A Homeless Man

in the middle of the main street
there is a homeless man
in the middle of the main street
there is a homeless man

counting the promises
politicians have broken
one star... then many

Chenou Liu

There Is No There There

In the dream, I finally return to my hometown, and cry out to the streets, 'Where are you, my friends? ' In winter moonlight, a faint echo answers, 'Where are you? '

'Home, Sweet Home'
on the clock radio
the brilliance
of frost flowers
blooming on my window

Chenou Liu

Thin Blue Light Tanka

awake
in the thin blue light
of morning
I say to myself
she's gone forever

Chenou Liu

Thin Line Between

A Haibun

shouting from the rooftop
'who knew what when...'
October snowflakes

'The truth is that we are born alone and die alone' he pants, trying to catch his breath while walking down the stairs. 'I don't believe in God, and there is no guiding hand on my shoulder that will remain with me. What I have in between life and death is one battle after another that I want to win.'

When we reach the ground floor, he has a heart attack and dies shortly upon arriving at the hospital. It's a death without goodbyes from family and friends. It's just a day before his 50th birthday, a time, based on Confucius' teachings, to think about and follow the will of Heaven.

slanted sunlight
I turn to the first page
of Ecclesiastes

Note: ... And there is nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1: 9

Chenou Liu

Thin Wall Tanka

nonstop
thumping and moaning...
the thin wall
between my row house
and the ghosts next door

Chenou Liu

Thin White Trail Tanka

her plane
left a thin white trail
in the blue sky...
autumn winds carry
the colors that stay with me

Chenou Liu

Thinking Of Li Po Under A Moonlit Night

for Li Po (also known as Li Bai,701-762) who is known for his poem, 'Drinking Alone by Moonlight' and called the God of Poetry, but who only called himself the god of wine.

Bending my mind,
I dig all my English words
out of a moonlit night -
a Chinese coolie laboring
in a foreign mine.

Gazing at the moon,
I think of Li Po
and drink a full cup...
This winter has come
to me and me alone.

Chenou Liu

Thirteen Crows Haiku

thirteen crows
on a telephone wire
garden wedding

Chenou Liu

Those Three Words Haiku

those three words
then silence...
a gap in the clouds

Chenou Liu

Those Three Words Tanka

in the attic
I find a letter
from my ex...
the way her red lips moved
when saying those three word

Chenou Liu

Thoughts Of Home Haiku

deeper and deeper
into my thoughts of home
winter solstice

Chenou Liu

Thread Of Winter Light Tanka

locked up for years
in the damp basement
of her heart...
now, I wake to see
a thread of winter light

Chenou Liu

Threads Of Spring Sunlight Haiku

baby babbling...
his hands grab at the threads
of spring sunlight

Chenou Liu

Three White Crows Tanka

at twilight
three white crows on the wire...
his words linger,
'Don't get all P.C. on me.
It's tribal, not racist'

Chenou Liu

Throaty Chant Haiku

a throaty chant
in Chinese
here and now, and yet

Chenou Liu

Thrush Answering Thrush Haiku

lost in a shuffle
of second-hand music books...
thrush answering thrush

Chenou Liu

Tiananmen Square Tanka

eating
a McDonald's Happy Meal
in Tiananmen Square
so many students
were killed

Chenou Liu

Time Tanka

unemployed
I take revenge
upon my deadly enemy
I chop Time
into moments

Simply Haiku,7: 3, Autumn 2009

Chenou Liu

Timelessness Tanka

this starless night...
I dwell in a time zone
of loneliness
without a before,
an after or a when

Chenou Liu

Tinge Of Green Haiku

tenth year in exile...
tinge of green on the maple
in my front yard

Chenou Liu

Tired Face Tanka

a drunk cursing
at the midnight moon
my tired face
in the mirror
of a slot-machine

Chenou Liu

Tithing Senryu (Comic Haiku)

bible study on tithing
I try to find a crack
in the wall of silence

Chenou Liu

To-Do List Senryu (Comic Haiku)

sex with wife...
his water-stained
to-do list

Chenou Liu

Tollbooth Clerk Haiku

sunlit

Valentine's morning

tollbooth clerk's face

Chenou Liu

Tomb Of The Unknown Soldier Haiku

shadow on the Tomb
of the Unknown Soldier
Remembrance Day

Chenou Liu

Tomorrow, When Will You Appear? (Tanka Sequence)

as silent and firm
as the rocks
I pine for you...
the sun sets
but not my shadow

in the glow of sunset
the shadow and I
are companions:
I dream of his life
he longs for my heartbeat

raising the wine cup
you used to drink
I entice the moon
for her, with my shadow,
will make a party of three

Chenou Liu

Tongues Of Fire Tanka

startled pigeons
fill the sunset sky...
thoughts of her
darting across my mind
like tongues of fire

Chenou Liu

Too Full Too Empty Haiku

book-crammed apartment too full too empty

Chenou Liu

Tourist Attraction Senryu (Comic Haiku)

tourist attraction
the beggar's cup fills
with sunlight

Chenou Liu

Tousled Hair Tanka

love seeds
my winter dream...
this memory
of her tousled hair
shares my double bed

Chenou Liu

Toys For Guns Drive Haiku

toys for guns drive
'pop, pop, pop...' filling the sky
with blood-splattered doves

Chenou Liu

Tragedy Of Silence: A Haiku Sequence

Newtown morning
twenty black ribbons tied
around a bare tree

'what happened, happened...'
pit bulls bark
at the sickle moon

gun control debate
'Pop! Pop! Pop...' breaking
the noises

Chenou Liu

Train Whistle Tanka

out of the mist
the sound of a train whistle...
I clutch Aunt
with one hand, my other
holds Mother's old photo

Chenou Liu

Trayvon Martin Day Haiku

Trayvon Martin Day
Justice and Peace painted
in black and white

Chenou Liu

Tree Root Tanka

a tree root
lifts the edge of a sidewalk
near my house...
'no more immigrants'
chanted behind my back

Chenou Liu

Trial Separation Haiku

trial separation...
summer moonlight broken
by the blinds

Chenou Liu

Trial Separation Senryu (Comic Haiku)

trial separation
I decide to sleep
on her side of the bed

Chenou Liu

True Color Tanka

stuck in a pot
lilies keep the same color
for years
but I've greyed
inside out

Chenou Liu

Trump Fan And The Parrot Tanka

repeatedly
talking, talking
over each other...
a Trump fan
and the parrot

Chenou Liu

Trump Fans Vs Anti-Trumpers Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Trumpfanstrafficjamanti-Trumpers

Chenou Liu

Trump Hats And Clinton Stickers Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Thanksgiving dinner
Trump hats and Clinton stickers
left on the doormat

Chenou Liu

Trump Tower Tanka

a gray wall
of barricades
around Trump Tower
a Mexican migrant
arching his brows

Chenou Liu

Trump Towers Sci-Fi Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the Pacific Coast
dotted with Trump Towers
the smell of winter

Chenou Liu

Trump Victory Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Trump victory
the sky bursting
with crows

Chenou Liu

Tug Of War Tanka

three months
after a tug of war
with my ex
my bald head sprouting
soft new hair

Chenou Liu

Turtle's Shell Haiku

the life
I leave behind...
a turtle's shell

Chenou Liu

Tv Debate Senryu

TV debate
his mouth sometimes has
an ugly twist

Chenou Liu

Twilight Haiku

does it matter
what's on my mind?
alone in twilight

Chenou Liu

Twilight Shadow Tanka

twilight shadow...
my voice lost in the cries
of wild geese
flying against the wind
in a gray sky

Chenou Liu

Twilight Silence Tanka

twilight silence
stretching between them...
on the tombstone
'a sunbeam lent to us
too briefly'

Chenou Liu

Twilit Sky Haiku

twilit sky
the sound of a bat
gets darker

Chenou Liu

Twin Towers Tanka

twin towers
flamed in the azure sky...
for years now
my American friend afraid
of riding elevators

Chenou Liu

Twinge Of Sadness Tanka

a giant Maple Leaf
in the ceremony
I answer
to my English name
with a twinge of sadness

Chenou Liu

Twinge Of Sadness Tanka For Naturalized Canadians

a giant Maple Leaf
in the ceremony
I answer
to my English name
with a twinge of sadness

Chenou Liu

Twitter Bombs Sci-Fi Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Donald Trump toppled;
Twitter bombs stockpiled
in the Situation Room

Chenou Liu

Two States Of Mind

A Tanka Sequence

walking out
of family court
at high noon
the sound of the wind
is strangely cold

one hundred days
rain or shine
I drive my shadow
around the lake
on a tandem bike

alone
on a snowy night
the heat
of my ex's skin
warms my dream

one year ago today
she demanded a divorce...
many misspellings
slipped my notice
in these old love letters

spring sunset fades
through my attic window ...
remembering
the scent
of our lovemaking

the blank page
stares at me all night
bit by bit
I photoshop my ex
off my mind

in dreams

my ex on top of me -
for a whole day
in Palestine
no one gets shot

Chenou Liu

Two White Butterflies Haiku

I sit alone
at her sunlit grave site
two white butterflies

Editor's Choice, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October 2011

Chenou Liu

Unarticulated

A Haibun for Nadia

'We talked a lot, but he seldom listened: then I would get angry.' A faint smell of whiskey on her breath.

She continues to talk openly about her life. The sun's rays come through the cafe window on the side of her face. I notice a tiny bruise below her left eye.

'During the last months of our life together, we whipped each other; We thought we were talking - but, we whipped each other on our mouths; one word, one crack of the whip after the other.'

She pauses for a moment, then says in a matter-of-fact tone, 'Now, I like old men, but they sometimes talk a little too much.'

in the middle
of an awkward silence...
robinsong

Chenou Liu

Under The Gaze Of Time

A Haibun

New Year's Eve
the waning crescent and I
left alone

I have spent the day doing the shopping, making meals, cleaning, reading, and writing up to this moment. While going about the daily routine, days can slip away. That is the true king of terrors. With the end of the year in sight, I try to make sense of what I was, and of who I am now.

As I reflect on the past year, it seems I've achieved little beyond existing and I've charged through life in a kind of panic. Yet I'm haunted, still, by the conviction that everything is either preordained or accidental.

first dawn
singing 'Let It Be'
to the attic wall

I walk
down the yellow brick road
morning mist ahead

Chenou Liu

Under The Sun

New Year's drink
our yellow streams cross
each other's

'Son, now you're a man, ' Father says coldly. Something strange...something I
can't articulate in his eyes. A gaze I will carry with me always.

the moon floats
from one glass
to another...

Haibun Winner, 2012 Great Big Little Poems Contest

Chenou Liu

Undressing English Tanka

sitting across
from my blonde tutor
with a dimpled smile
I undress English
layer by layer

Chenou Liu

Unemployment Senryu

unemployed...
I see the world
through the attic skylight

Chenou Liu

Unemployment Tanka

unemployed
I stay drunk on writing
love poetry
maple leaves falling
upon maple leaves...

Chenou Liu

Unknown Birds Tanka

two unknown birds
coupling and uncoupling
on the path
through the spring sky...
shadow and I stand still

Chenou Liu

Unmarked Graves Haiku

an owl crying...
the winter fog rolls
over unmarked graves

Chenou Liu

Unrested Mind Tanka

walled in a room:
a clutter of books
a coffee-stained desk
stacks of returned mail
a mind unrested

Modern English Tanka,3: 4,2009

Chenou Liu

Unseen Men Tanka

the sky
whitewashed by the sun
a young woman
yelling at unseen men
grabs at the air

Chenou Liu

Urge Haiku

this urge
to know her name ...
wildflower

Chenou Liu

Vacant House Haiku

a latch clicks
on the vacant house...
winter solstice

Chenou Liu

Vagrant Tanka

our eyes meet
through the fast food window ...
does this vagrant
see in me an immigrant
homeless in the promised land?

German Translation by Chrysanthemum Editor

unsere Augen treffen sich
durchs Schnellimbissfenster...
ob dieser Vagabund
in mir einen Einwanderer sieht
heimatlos im gelobten Land

Chenou Liu

Valentine's Eve Haiku

Valentine's Eve
I am in the shadow
of a sex worker

Chenou Liu

Valentine's Eve, Friday The 13th

To me, love itself is but a memory. A heartbroken man is not just someone who has lost his love; he is someone who can't find another, who no longer knows what real love means. A heartbroken man re-invents love with what's left of it each time.

after sending her
one poem after another
I win a key
and a glass shelf
in her medicine cabinet

Chenou Liu

Valentine's Night Haiku

a sex worker
in the barred-blue streetlight
Valentine's night

Chenou Liu

Valentine's Night Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Valentine's night
her father's pitbull and I
eyeball to eyeball

Chenou Liu

Veggie Dumplings Haiku

veggie dumplings...
I wrap myself
in her scent

Editor's Choice Haiku, the 'vegetable(s) ' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,7: 4, July/August 2012

Chenou Liu

Viagra Billboard Haiku

in the shade
of a Viagra billboard
an old couple

Chenou Liu

Viagra Coupon Code Senryu (Comic Haiku)

first good news for months
via Hotmail
Viagra coupon code

Chenou Liu

Victoria's Secret Senryu (Comic Haiku)

new pair of glasses
window shopping
at Victoria's Secret

Chenou Liu

Vincent's Ghost Tanka

A sickle moon
at the attic window...
layer by layer
Vincent's ghost peels
the crust from my night

Chenou Liu

Vine-Covered Window Haiku

vine-covered window...
I wrestle with the thought
of going back home

Chenou Liu

Visual Snow Haiku

his word gentile
stuck in my throat
snow on snow

Note: you can see its visual form at [□](#)

Chenou Liu

Viva Fidel Tanka

'Viva Fidel'
fading into the dark
a cloud
of cigar smoke
engulfs an old Cuban

Chenou Liu

Waiting For A Sign, A Haiku Sequence

an erection
I wake up with
Jesus on the wall

the youth pastor talks
of a geography of heart
the cross and shadows

'Jesus Heals...'
a fleck of sunlight
striking his face

a falling red leaf...
'Jesus loves you'
the weight of his words

Chenou Liu

Waiting For Spring

A Haiku Sequence

butterflies flit
from garden to garden -
walking my shadow

swatting flies...
alone in the attic
on this summer day

standing in
the way of the autumn wind...
my old dog and me

whiskey stains
on One Man's Moon
... winter dawn

Chenou Liu

Walk Of Fame Tanka

the night deepening...
topped with razor wire
a gray wall
surrounds Donald Trump's Star
on the Walk of Fame

Note: Donald Trump, in 2007, was honored by receiving the 2,327th Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. His Star was for his role as the producer in NBC's The Apprentice.

Chenou Liu

Wall Of Bricks And Silence Tanka

she and I
living together,
apart...
between what was and what is
the wall of bricks and silence

Chenou Liu

Wall Of Pillows Haiku

half moon rising...
Berlin Wall of pillows
between us

Chenou Liu

Wall Of Silence Tanka

their voices
hurled against the darkness
and thrown back
by the wall of silence...
migrants in a trailer truck

Chenou Liu

Walmart Smile Senryu (Comic Haiku)

snowed in
face to face with her
walmart smile

Chenou Liu

Waning Winter Moon Haiku

waning winter moon
the smell of lovemaking
lingers

Chenou Liu

War And Long Shadow Haiku

war cemetery...
a long shadow
limping behind him

Chenou Liu

War And Peace Tanka

winter sunlight
reaches the frayed cover
of 'War and Peace'...
the white neighbor erects
a fence between our houses

Chenou Liu

War Cemetery Haiku

another new grave
in winter mist
war cemetery

Chenou Liu

War Cenotaph Haiku

the space
between etched names...
war cenotaph

Chenou Liu

War Haiku

Gaza at dusk
a long scream
cut off

Chenou Liu

War News Haiku

filling the hour
between news of war
snowflakes

Chenou Liu

War On Terror Gendai Haiku

two drones fly into the Tower of Babel - war on terror

Chenou Liu

War Veteran Tanka

the wall clock
chimes, chimes, then stops...
in dim light
the Iraq War veteran's mouth
turns into an O shape

Chenou Liu

Warmth Of Bodies Tanka

a monarch
trailing another
in the backyard
the warmth of our bodies
flushes against each other

Chenou Liu

Warmth Of Your Breath Tanka

I wake slowly
to the warmth of your breath
on my neck...
our bedroom mirror
catching the sunlight

Chenou Liu

Waves Haiku

alone again...
the waves lapping blue
at the shore

Chenou Liu

'We Are All Michael Brown' Tanka

the row upon row
of armored police
in broad daylight
black teenagers chanting
'We Are All Michael Brown'

Chenou Liu

We Shall Overcome Someday...For Ferguson Protesters

A Tanka Sequence

the flurry of white
between church steeples
in Ferguson
a line of police
clad in battle fatigues

the cops dart in
cleaving the crowd in two -
a black woman
yells in her husky voice
'Don't be afraid! Stand your ground'

Ferguson at dusk...
his bony hands in the air
a black man
standing his ground
as police fire tear gas

Chenou Liu

Wedding Haiku

thirteen crows
on a telephone wire
garden wedding

Published in Editor's Choice 'wedding / bride' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,7: 3, May/June 2012

John Daleiden's Comment:

The line three fragment sets the wedding in a garden; the line one and two phrase provides the perspective of 'thirteen crows / on a telephone wire'. This descriptive phrase may be an intentional literary reference to Wallace Stevens' haiku like poem, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird'. Or is it an accidental association of this reader? ...And why the number 'thirteen'...and why 'crows'? As a number 13 has the ambiguous quality of being considered both lucky and unlucky considering the belief and interpretation rendered. Equally mystifying is the presence of 'crows' in the scene. 'Crows' have been used as images to convey a multitude of meanings, often conflicting. Perhaps that is the very point—just as 'thirteen' and 'crows' are enigmatic so too is a wedding enigmatic.

Bernard Gieske's Comment:

Chen-ou Liu reminds us that the future promised may not turn out as expected. This haiku, though, seems a bit stronger than just a reminder with 13 crows present. No bride and groom would want to proceed under these circumstances, but love is a very strong influence, often overcoming all odds. This wedding takes place in a garden and, at first, I misread it as 'garden weeding', a garden being invaded by weeds. Here the newlyweds are reminded that they cannot expect their marriage to be problem free. There will be weeds in the garden and these will need to be dealt with, hopefully, with that 'tender touch' of the previous haiku.

Chenou Liu

Wedding Night Haiku

wedding night
the winter moonlight
on their beds

Haiku of Merit, Vanguard Haiku
World Haiku Review, December 2012

Chenou Liu

Wedding Pictures Haiku

photoshopping
my wedding pictures
winter solstice

Published in Editor's Choice 'wedding / bride' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,7: 3, May/June 2012

John Daleiden's Comment:

..and finally, after all is said and done, perhaps years down the road someone is still tinkering with that same wedding.

Chenou Liu

Wedding Plate Tanka

the shards
of our wedding plate
after the fight
I start to know
the sharper pieces of her

Chenou Liu

Weight And Length Of Death Tanka

measuring
the weight and length
of death
I count my poems
written and read

Chenou Liu

Weight Of Each Burden Tanka

not seeing
we pass by each other
then disappear —
snow traces the weight
of each burden

Modern English Tanka,3: 3, Spring 2009

Chenou Liu

Weight Of Home Haiku

low-hanging moon...
the weight of home
in my thoughts

Chenou Liu

Weight Of Memories Tanka

like a monk
I wander in the land
of promise...
strapped to my back
the weight of memories

Chenou Liu

Welcome Mat Haiku

winter sunlight
on the welcome mat ...
foreclosure sign

Chenou Liu

Wet Dream Haiku

awake
from a wet dream
winter rain

Chenou Liu

Wetlands Of Mist Haiku

the road disappearing
into wetlands of mist ...
I keep going

Chenou Liu

What Remains?

A Haibun

She left me twice in those six months. First, to end three years of mental fencing. Second, when she took her life.

alone
at the edge...
river mist

Chenou Liu

What She Did/What I Said, A Haiku Sequence

'I am not
into you anymore'
the night we made love

crescent moon
the way her words
sound like a slap

divorce court
her shadow
cuts mine

lone winter star
counting the lies
she has told

slowly crawling
on top of me
my ex in the dream

Chenou Liu

What Stays And What Remains?

A Haibun

Alone in the attic. On the desk, her farewell note stained with coffee.

"What matters isn't the fact of dying or when you die. It's what you're doing at that precise moment - I'm ready to be loved."

winter drizzle...
my smoke rings
drifting

Chenou Liu

What's Past Is Prologue

A Haibun

Sitting alone by the window, I look out at the maple branches swaying in the breeze. Out of nowhere, I feel the stab of a memory - she waving me goodbye at the airport. I hold on to that memory, the universe hanging on the branches.

spring sunlight
breaking between branches
the sound of my voice

Chenou Liu

What's In A Name? Written In Response To The Scottish Referendum

Jean-Martin Aussant, founder of the left-wing sovereigntist Option Nationale party...waking up Friday morning with his children in Edinburgh.

'Scotland is really beautiful, papa! ' they remarked.

He corrected them: 'We are in the United Kingdom.'

- 'Quebec sovereigntists take lessons from failed Scottish referendum, ' Toronto Star

listening to the words

'Independence Referendum'

that have aged

since my last trip home... half moon

over the Taiwan Strait

Living on Ilha Formosa, we are haunted by a war of names,
fighting for the Republic of China/Taiwan.

We Chinese, we Taiwanese, will never end our civil war -
a bloody bloodless civil bore.

No Kamikazes crashing, no Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. murdered.
To Uncle Sam and Brother Momotaro, we are the good soldiers.
Lacking the ghosts of history, we are haunted by names.

Note: In 1544, a Portuguese ship sighted the main island of Taiwan and named it
'Ilha Formosa, ' which means 'Beautiful Island.'

Chenou Liu

Whiskey Breath Senryu (Comic Haiku)

whiskey breath
from the newcomer's mouth
AA meeting

Chenou Liu

Whiskey Breath Tanka

her whiskey breath
poured over me the story
of her first love...
sober now, face to face
with my shadow

Chenou Liu

Whiskey Haiku

this noisy silence...
my half-full whiskey glass
now half-empty

Chenou Liu

Whisky Glass Haiku

crowded
in my whisky glass
autumn stars

third prize in the Haiku Section of the New Zealand Poetry Society's 2011 International Poetry Competition; anthologized in *Ice Diver*

Judge's Report (Judge: Joanna Preston)

A lovely classical haiku, entirely bound into the image and the moment. Key here is the play of the images, and the shift of focus. Crowded - a human scale, combining a certain amount of confinement with an awareness of (occupied) space. Glass - small, intimate, vulnerable. And then autumn stars - opening out into the vast expanse of the night sky. You can feel the person looking into their glass, then raising their gaze upwards. Feel the whirling sensation of the alcohol matching the giddiness of the depths of space. The colour of the whisky and the golden hues of autumn, and the way stars seem brighter and more numerous than than at any other time of year. Are the stars also ice cubes in the whisky? The light reflecting from the glass as it is raised? Or from the liquid itself? It's pure moment, and a very accomplished 'ahhh'.

Chenou Liu

Whisky Haiku

her face
in my whisky
the moon floats

Grand Prix, The Klostar Ivanic Haiku Contest (In English 2010)

Croatian translation by Marinko Spanovic

njeno lice
u mom viskiju
plovi mjesec

English Translation of the judge's comment:

I would like to put down some thoughts about the haiku which I gave the Grand Prix. This haiku is very formative and dimensional; one can build the WHOLE WORLD upon it. One can read it and listen to it from all sides and experience it in countless ways without using up any of the TRUE BEAUTY AND LOVE...

- Marinko Spanovic

Chenou Liu

Whisky Truth Tanka

I say firmly,
'It's not you, it's me...'
the mixed smells
of manly lie
and whisky truth

Chenou Liu

Whisper Of Home Tanka

Chinese New Year
on the TV screen...
I whisper of home
in a voice
now foreign to me

Chenou Liu

Whisper Tanka

Chinese New Year
on the TV screen...
I whisper of home
in a voice
now foreign to me

Chenou Liu

Whispers In The Wind

A Haibun

budding lotus
in dappled sunlight
her laughter

We meet on a campus footpath after class. I'm eager to share today's lesson with her.

A Zen master and his disciple walk by a maple tree. The disciple notices its branches swaying gracefully in the wind, and asks, 'Master, is it the branches that are moving, or the wind?' The master replies, 'What is moving is neither the branches nor the wind, it is your heart and mind.'

She turns toward me, her lips curved into a soft smile.

Philosopher's Walk
a squirrel in the path
looking to and fro

Chenou Liu

White Butterflies Haiku

I sit alone
at her sunlit grave site
two white butterflies

Editor's Choice, 'Cemetery' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,6: 5, September / October 2011

Chenou Liu

White Church And Raven Tanka

a white church
overgrown with ivy...
a raven
darts in and out of
the shadow of the cross

Chenou Liu

White Church Haiku

confessions graffitied
on the wall of a white church
Easter sunlight

Haiku of Merit, (Shintai) , World Haiku Review, March 2013

Chenou Liu

White Crow Haiku

alone
at winter dusk ...
a white crow

Chenou Liu

White Doves And Dog Haiku

two white doves
flying wing-to-wing
my dog and I

Chenou Liu

White Flight/Fright Tanka

ESL class at dusk:

'white flight'

from my Chinese mouth

to her Canadian ears

'white fright'

Chenou Liu

White Hammer And Black Nail Tanka

to a white hammer
everything looks
like a black nail
in the summer heat
police batons swinging

Chenou Liu

White House Inc. Senryu (Comic Haiku)

White House Inc.
Trump and Putin's bust
smile at each other

Chenou Liu

White House Leaks!

A Haibun written in the spirit of Senryu

Any resemblance to current events or actual locales, or to living persons, is not coincidental.

in the bush
faking it

Chenou Liu

White House Press Briefing Senryu (Comic Haiku)

white house press briefing
my parrot yelling out,
'fake news, very fake news...'

Chenou Liu

White Lie Senryu (Comic Haiku)

her smile
framed in a white lie
wedding photo

Chenou Liu

White Mist Tanka

December
the cruelest month
white mist
looms over me slowly
gets denser daily

Chenou Liu

White Night

I hurl nostalgia
into a corner of my heart
feeling the weight of a night

First published in *Four and Twenty*, 4: 1, January 2011
Nominated for the 2011 Pushcart Prize

Chenou Liu

White Picket Fence Senryu (Comic Haiku)

the divide
between us
white picket fence

Chenou Liu

White Quilt Haiku

peeling off layered loneliness I weave a white quilt

Chenou Liu

Whiteness Haiku

'you, slanted eyes...'
the whiteness
of a cold moon

Chenou Liu

Who Is My Neighbor

A Tanka Set

in sunlight
reading Robert Frost...
a high fence
going up between me
and my white neighbor

'white flight, white fright...'
my Chinese roommate
practices 'l' and 'r'
before the window
as the moonlight slips in

Chenou Liu

Why Believe You Can Write Verse In English?

A Tanka Prose

I paint
a daisy on the wall
and sign it
with my Romanized name...
morning mist rising

To write verse in English is not like growing ideograms inside your heart, reaping the sentences matured by the muse of desire, taking your clothes off with words, exposing yourself in the rhythm of the stanzas so that you can hold your passport and cross the borders of linguistic solitudes, emigrating from the ideographic to the alphabetic.

English still remains an unmastered means of deciphering the musings of your heart and mind, it is constantly intruded upon and twisted by inflections from the old language. Often, you are not able to connect emotions to words, to feel the weight of their syllables. Without emotional vocabulary, everything becomes elusion, confusion. The fear of things you needn't be afraid of.

Even when you can find the right words to reflect your feelings, you are not skilled at weaving these into sentences. They simply become isolated cries clinging desperately to your heart. Even when you can find a way to weave words together into an artistic whole, the poem often fails to conform to the texture mandated by poetry editors. Why believe you can write verse in English, whose music is not natural to you? 1

I skip
a stone of words
across the lake
of another time
another place

Note: The concluding sentence is taken from the last two lines of "An Exchange," a poem written by Nan Wu, the poet who is the protagonist of *A Free Life*, Ha Jin's fifth novel.

Widower Haiku

Easter morning
the whiskey breath
of a widower

Chenou Liu

Wild Strawberries Haiku

ruby glow
of wild strawberries...
Valentine's Day

Chenou Liu

Wild Strawberries Tanka

the juice
flows between my teeth
with the memory
of wild strawberries
we picked together

Chenou Liu

Will The Winter Of Discontent Come?

A Haiku Set

candlelit pumpkin
on my neighbor's porch...
For Sale sign

all that remains
of autumn:
pumpkin shards

Chenou Liu

Willpower Tanka

a senate claims
women can block rape sperm
with willpower!
throughout the night, I hear
walnuts hitting the ground

Chenou Liu

Windblown White Dress Tanka For Marilyn Monroe

at high noon I see
a woman pulling down
her windblown white dress...
Marilyn Monroe's smile
held my young self each night

Chenou Liu

Winding Corridor Tanka

pacing back and forth
in the winding corridor
of the mind
on this winter solstice
my dream searches for EXIT

Chenou Liu

Wine Glass Haiku

writing haiku...
my wine glass fills
with sunlight

Chenou Liu

Wing To Wing Haiku

wing to wing
a pair of white swans...
those three words

Chenou Liu

Winter Dream Haiku

cliff inside my head
the darkness at the end
of a winter dream

Chenou Liu

Winter Dream Tanka

suddenly awake
to see a sharp sickle
hanging low
in the winter sky...
I grasp the edge of my dream

Favorite Tanka, Siloh Tanka Contest

Judge's comment:

my favorite lines from the poems entered, in no particular order:

I grasp the edge of my dream Chen-ou Liu (Canada)

Chenou Liu

Winter Fog Haiku

winter fog...
the dripping faucet
my sole companion

Chenou Liu

Winter Haiku For Pete Seeger

'If I Had a Hammer'
on the car radio
shards of winter light

Chenou Liu

Winter Land Tanka

an immigrant
living on the winter land
of nostalgia:
the past is my home
although it's lost

Chenou Liu

Winter Light Haiku

a get-well card
between the pages of Job
winter light

Note: Below is excerpted from the Wikipedia entry, The Book of Job:

The Book of Job (/ˈdʒɒb/; Hebrew: יְהוֹבָב Iyov) is... the first poetic book in the Christian Old Testament. Addressing the theme of God's justice in the face of human suffering - or more simply, 'Why do the righteous suffer?' - it is a rich theological work, setting out a variety of perspectives.

Chenou Liu

Winter Mist Haiku

winter mist
another bowl
of veggie soup

Editor's Choice Haiku, 'Vegetable(s) ' Haiku Thread
Sketchbook,7: 4, July/August 2012

Chenou Liu

Winter Moon Haiku

roadside puddle
a street dog
licks the winter moon

First Honorable Mention, Anita Sadler Weiss Memorial Haiku Awards (2011)
Published in *The Dragonfly*

Judge's Comment:

This haiku meets what I call the mirror test. Hold this poem up to an imaginary mirror. The images are clear and compact. Moreover, the poet takes up the challenge of employing a traditional haiku image, the moon reflected in a smaller image of water, and makes it new. No easy task. In three short lines the haiku offers the reader a slice of squalor touched by beauty.

Chenou Liu

Winter Moonlight Haiku

holding
winter moonlight in my hand
length of the night

One of selected haiku

Simply Haiku's 'TOP TEN LIST' of the World's Finest Living English language
Haiku Poets for the Year 2011 (Simply Haiku,9: 3,4, Autumn/Winter 2011)

Chenou Liu

Winter Rain & Barking Dog Tanka

winter rain
on and off, on and off...
thoughts of home
interrupted
by a barking dog

Chenou Liu

Winter Rain Haiku

winter rain
I fall asleep
holding myself

Chenou Liu

Winter Rain Tanka

one drop
after another
the winter rain
falls on our faces...
my mouth on hers

Polish Translation by Karol Rosiak

kropla
za kropla
zimowy deszcz
pada na nasze twarze...
caluje jej usta

Chenou Liu

Winter Shadow

foot by foot
the winter shadow
reaches a body

Chenou Liu

Winter Solstice Haiku

winter solstice...
two monarchs flutter
out of my dream

Chenou Liu

Winter Stars Haiku

the darkness
between winter stars...
relapse

Chenou Liu

Winter Twilight Haiku

winter twilight
an old man and his dog
share the shadow

Chenou Liu

Withered Grasses Haiku

moonlight
on withered grasses
the night whiter

Chenou Liu

Without A Sound Haiku

in twilight
cherry petals fall
without a sound

Chenou Liu

Without The Middle

A Tanka Sequence

dewdrops
on a blade of grass
at twilight
this lingering fear,
'I want a divorce'

surge of the wind...
her voice hardens
into its rigid strength,
'I love you, Eric,
but I can't stand you anymore'

all those nights
her moist smile nuzzled
the nape of my neck...
now in the dim light
one wedding pillow left

a white trail
left in the winter sky
by her plane -
I still wait for the turn
and wave of her hand

Third Prize, Haiku Canada Tanka Story Contest,2016

Judge's Comment by Angela Leuck (Haiku Canada Review,10: 1, February 2016, p.47) : The story is enhanced by effective and contrasting imagery: the poet refers to delicate, transitory phenomenon like 'dewdrops' and a plane's 'white trail, ' while the wife's steely determination to leave is indicated by the use of strong words like 'blade, ' 'hardens' and 'rigid strength.' The poet also evokes endings through reference to the day's end: 'twilight' and 'dim light.'

Chenou Liu

Woman In Black Tanka

I look sideways
at a woman in black
mentally
undressing her...
she undresses me back

Chenou Liu

Womanhood Haiku

the moan of a dove
I trace the curves
of her womanhood

Chenou Liu

Womb Haiku

my ear
against her womb...
almost spring

Chenou Liu

Women Of Many Faces, A Haiku Sequence

Her bruised face...
folding
an origami swan

trace of blood
the woman
breaks into syllables

Nirbhaya's ashes
scattered in the Ganges River
the scent of sunrise
(Note: The gang rape victim in India was identified only by the Hindi word for fearless, 'Nirbhaya')

remembering
the jiggle of her right breast...
Pink Parade

Wailing Wall at twilight
black-hatted men face to face
with young women

the women shouting
'no uterus no opinion! '
hazy half moon

'girly chatter...'
thorns on the stalk
of a budding rose

Chenou Liu

Wooden Jesus Haiku

Christmas Eve ...
a wooden Jesus
and its shadow

Chenou Liu

Woodpecker Haiku

A slim woodpecker
scurries about in the bush...
no haiku for days

5th Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum English Haiku Collection

Chenou Liu

Word-Bodies Tanka

'useless poetry'
echoes in the back of my mind:
I float downstream
on a moonlit river
full of word-bodies

Chenou Liu

Workshop Senryu (Comic Haiku)

senryu workshop
I sucker-punch critics
in my head

Chenou Liu

World Of One Color Haiku

(after Basho)

a migrant's first winter
in a world of one color
the sound of wind

Chenou Liu

Wrist Scars Haiku

snow geese
cross the gray sky -
her wrist scars

Chenou Liu

Year In And Year Out

a haiku set inspired by an angel at SickKids

a pigtailed girl
outside the cancer center
morning glories

her nose print
on the hospice window...
a patch of sunlight

Chenou Liu

Year In, Year Out: A Haiku Sequence

New Year's morning
on The Metamorphosis
slanted sunlight

April rains
I touch the face
in The Scream

summer stargazing
they do the cha cha cha
in my whisky glass

Georgian Bay
sipping the Taiwan moon
from my cupped hands

snow on snow
is my life a dream
within a dream

Chenou Liu

Year Of The Snake Haiku

Chinese New Year's Eve...
staring at the mirror
long before

tenth New Year
Chinese fried dough
... and black coffee

Chenou Liu

Years Of Silence

A Haibun

a new moon -
mother's letter heavy
with voices from the past

In the bottom drawer of the desk, there is my childhood photo with tanned brown edges. I am five or six years old, clinging to mother's left leg. She leans towards the front door with two suitcases in hand. I don't remember who took the photo. I don't want to remember.

Chenou Liu

Yelling Senryu (Comic Haiku)

a drunk yelling
at his wife yelling
at their kids

Chenou Liu

Yellow Leaf Tanka

'go back
to where you came from...'
a yellow leaf
tossing and turning
with each gust of wind

Chenou Liu

Yellow Ribbons Haiku

for the spiritual followers of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Chinese revolutionary and founding father of the Republic of China, who said, 'The revolution is not yet successful, the comrades still need to strive for the future.'

a sea of waving hands
with yellow ribbons
Hong Kong's skyline at dawn

Chenou Liu

Yellow Stream Haiku

alone by the pond
my yellow stream goes farther
to touch the moon

published in the Pond Life Thread of Sketchbook,7: 2, March/April 2012
Editor's Choice Haiku

Editor's Comment:

This was another night time activity but not of the expected kind. In my early days, "pollution" was not part of our vocabulary, and, I am sorry to say, we were culprits of the same; however, our imaginations were not quite this active.

Chenou Liu

Yellow Stream Tanka

I pee slowly
fingers like knotted roots
on the fly
it's thirty years today
my yellow stream crossed Father's

Chenou Liu

Yesterday's Dream And Today's Mist Tanka

for naturalized Canadians

before the ceremony
I stand in front of the mirror ...
my Chinese self
here in yesterday's dream
gone in today's mist

Chenou Liu

Yet Again

A Haiku Set

black neighborhood
patrol cars rattling
clouds of dust

noonday silence...
rows and rows of policemen,
hooded youth

Chenou Liu

Yin And Yang Of Changing Seasons

A Haiku Set

smell of winter
puddles rainbowed
with oil

children's laughter
drifting on the breeze
taste of spring

Chenou Liu

Young Widow Tanka

the burden
of this early spring...
tangled strands
of a young widow's hair
fall over her shoulders

Chenou Liu

Young Woman In Black Tanka

at twilight
fishing boats coming
and going...
a young woman in black
on the edge of the pier

Chenou Liu

Youthful Desire Tanka

beads of sweat
roll between her breasts -
I remember the smell
of my youthful desire
on our wedding night

Chenou Liu

Youthful Dream Haiku

the cold moon...
I recycle a dream
from my youth

Haiku of Merit (Neo Classical) , World Haiku Review, March 2013

Chenou Liu

Youthful Mother Haiku

the full moon
from hometown memories
youthful Mother

Chenou Liu

Zazen Haiku

zazen...
the air conditioner
hums

Chenou Liu

Zazen Tanka

nostalgia
comes on little cat feet
sitting beside me
it practices zazen
like a stone Buddha

Chenou Liu

Zen Garden Senryu (Comic Haiku)

on the way
to the Zen garden
dog dung

Chenou Liu

Zen Haiku

zazen...
I'm blinded
by a ray of light

Chenou Liu

Zen Senryu (Comic Haiku)

Zen garden pond...
the smell of a dead frog
lingering

Chenou Liu

Zen Workshop Senryu (Comic Haiku)

zen workshop
the roshi answers a question
with a question

Chenou Liu

Zigzag Flight Haiku

the zigzag flight
of a red butterfly ...
thoughts of my ex

Chenou Liu

Zig-Zag Flight Haiku

autumn twilight
zig-zag flight of a heron
from the marsh

Chenou Liu