

The Bamboo Hut

The Bamboo Hut

VOL 1.....Number 2

On-line journal of contemporary English language tanka



January 2014

The Bamboo Hut

The Bamboo Hut

Journal of contemporary English language tanka

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2

Edited by Steve Wilkinson

© Steve Wilkinson 2013

No part of this journal may be reproduced in any format without the direct consent of the publisher.

The Bamboo Hut

Editorial

Welcome to this, the second issue of The Bamboo Hut.

The word “inspiration” has as its root meaning “to breathe into, to inhale, to breathe”. It is the spark that lights up the writer for without inspiration the page would, I believe, remain blank. From where do we find inspiration? What in this life “breathes” into us that certain something that moves us to pick up pen and paper and give voice to that “breath”? There are many and varied answers to those questions. Debbie Strange offers us this insight as to where she draws her inspiration from :

“My writing is mainly informed by experiences in both my emotional world and the natural world. Words are my solace and salvation. I'm inspired by the very shape of words, their cadence, meaning and power. I breathe words, write words and sing words. In return, they bless me, heal me and save me.”

For me the key word here is “experiences”. It is our experiences in life that shape our thoughts and mould our actions. For the writer these experiences touch something inside of us that creates the spark of creativity moving us to crystalize our emotions into the form of words.

Some time ago whilst out walking I noticed an old man sitting on a park bench. At his feet was his old dog, also taking a brief respite.

Something about the scene triggered a sense of sadness and loss within me. The subsequent tanka that was born from the scene and my response to it was this :

Sunday morning
the old man on the park bench
hugs his old dog
these days these weekend walks
are shared by only two

Had this man once been married? I don't know.

Did he and his wife share this walk together in times past? Again I don't know.

It was my internal feelings about the scene in front of me that prompted the writing.

On another walk, this time by the coast, I was lost in thought thinking about decisions I had made in the past. As I watched wave after wave move up the beach I was struck by the thought that whatever decisions I had made in the past were now unchangeable. I could no more change the past than Canute could stop the tide. The resulting tanka from this experience was :

by the waters edge
I sit deep in thought
watching
a wave roll in
a wave roll out

The Bamboo Hut

One wet Saturday afternoon I was in town and stopped for a coffee to read a book I had just borrowed from the library. Sitting alone I was drawn to the various people coming and going. This simple act of people watching sparked my imagination to write the following tanka sequence.

Coffee shop
I watch the people
come and go
an elderly woman
sits alone and drinks tea

Almost June
people enter the cafe
for tea and coffee
wearing hats and scarves
I wait for coffee and summer

Sipping my latte
a large one
I read Basho, Buson and Issa
I wonder what they would write
in this coffee shop in town

Three old men
drink tea and eat scones
they laugh
discussing old times
how quickly time goes by

My latte finished
I prepare to leave
so many tanka
left unwritten
on this wet morning

The Bamboo Hut

Observation is also key to writing tanka. After picking my wife up from work we arrived home to see my neighbour across the street weeding her garden. Nothing strange in that. It was, however, ten o'clock at night and her gardening tool was somewhat unconventional.

A strange sight to see
my Vietnamese neighbour
at this time of day
chopping down garden weeds
under the moon with a cleaver

The experiences that we ourselves go through and those that others go through, be they friend or stranger, can all bring to birth tanka. At times it can be a form of self-therapy. An opportunity to express our sorrows and helplessness at the world around us. After reading a sad news item I was moved to write this :

So much pain
in this world of tears
a knife blade
drawn across fragile souls
scarring the flesh with injustice

Regardless of how we interpret the world around us, our observation and experiences in life can give rise to some quality writing. I hope this issue of The Bamboo Hut reflects these sentiments.

The Bamboo Hut

Tanka

in Japan
hikikomori:
the withdrawn -
paralysed in spirit
as I am in body

Joy McCall

wildflower meadows
daydreams of summers young
bare feet dance
through daisy days
beneath a freckled sun

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

on our journey
to the mountains
we talk of spring
all this snow
that fell in silence

John Byrne

The Bamboo Hut

I peer over
the top of *Poetry Handbook*
at a cold moon ...
the muse and I live
alone together for years

Chen Ou Liu

an hour's length
in our noisy city starts
with sadness
and leaves in its wake
this empty page

Sergio Ortiz

she keeps watch
over skinny-dipping daughters
holding towels
and laughing at three moons
shining on the cloudless lake

Debbie Strange

The Bamboo Hut

they say a
poet is born
not made
but they were not there
in the darkness at seven

M Kei

I am enfolded
in whorls of gleaming tissues
pulsing
with the fervid dreams
of my parents

Sonam Choki

old Basque shepherders
drank homemade wine from botas
shirt and face stained red
she came into my terrace
wearing only a nightshirt

CW Carlson

The Bamboo Hut

time traveler
on the road with Basho
watching stars spin
fireflies disappearing
I fill my brush with ink

Carole Johnson

behind the wall
of tried and tested lines
lie riots of doubt
subtle shifts of shade
the sky's uncertain hue

Clive Oseman

twilight extends
over the cherry blossoms
romantic painting
under the soothing shadow
rekindles warmth of sublime love

Pravat Kumar Prad

The Bamboo Hut

The void
a black hole
eternity
are as easy to imagine
as life without you

Jane Dougherty

morning fog
the longing of the heart
lights the furnace
rekindling and keeping warm
this almost forgotten love

Willie Bongcaron

all around the elms
yellow daffodils
blue morning glories
and on crimson rose hips
a touch of frost

Ed Bremson

The Bamboo Hut

somehow he doubts
whether or not the cameo
on my breast
bears the profile he carved
or the self I chiseled

Alegria Imperial

on bikes
along river Rhine
my father
and me drinking
my first shandy

Ralf Broker

tracing (as he once traced
the curves of her body) her calligraphy—
nimble fingers avoiding
wet ink
in places where tears have fallen

toki

The Bamboo Hut

summer gone
a crowd of Susans
against the fence ...
dark eyes still smiling
in their come-hither way

Janet Lynn Davis

inside
those blackened blooms
lies her heart
holding on tightly
to Love's dying ashes

Susan Burch

feather grass
and red geraniums
I remember
the candles
at her funeral

Tricia Knoll

The Bamboo Hut

my ornamental pear
bends in the breeze
I seek shelter
beneath a gnarled oak
with nothing grand to be

Andrea Deitrich

snuggled against me
safe in her mother's arms
worlds away
from a country where bombs fall
on another mother's babies

Alexis Lantgen

devouring twilight
slipping about the blady grass
a pregnant vixen
the girl who turned me
to trampled petals

Violette Rose-Jones

The Bamboo Hut

the wings of birds and
butterflies flutter as if
in a blurred dream
 the small fairy world
 in my own back yard

Andrea Eldridge

visit at grandma's
steamy smell of fresh fruit
delights for wintertime
preserved peaches
red and black cherries

Ruth Zuckschwerdt

Blowing in the wind
words of tenderness and love
coming from the heart
whispering tales of wonder
for my cherished Valentine

Keith A. Simmonds

The Bamboo Hut

maple sap
boiled down
an amber nectar
the taste of you
still on my lips

Devin Harrison

as if guitars,
these spider threads
quiver
in cool riffs...
they pull me into song

Pat Geyer

old cargos from
Italy came to be loaded
cranes turning over
them red dust everywhere
you were holding my hand

J.Pierre Garcia Aznar

The Bamboo Hut

only in my dreams
does her memory
come alive—
a dead lotus unwrapped
by the wind

Chase Fire

nearly full
the moon rises early
in a spirited mood
coyotes expose their throats
and howl

Stephanie Brennan

swinging so high
I glimpsed another world
over the treetops . . .
what was big
now grown smaller

Carole Harrison

The Bamboo Hut

the secret life of plants
what if pulling the petals
from a flower
is as hurtful as pulling
the wings from a fly

Marianne Paul

further and
further away
the ocean and I...
I dab the lips
of sorrow

Brinda Buljore

unearthing stones
from the moss--
my choked passage
to a place
that never was

Sondra Byrness

The Bamboo Hut

stars reveal
themselves one at a time
her words
sun-kissed rain drops cradled
in the bosom of a lotus

Veronika Zora Novak

Italy thinks
it's found the sitter
for the Mona Lisa
beatific smiles
all round

Helen Buckingham

on my bed
having pondered mortality
now accepting everything
is just for today
I marvel at the speed of clouds

Eamonn O'Neill

The Bamboo Hut

a large fat spider
gyrating on her web
leaps to where my feet are planted-
running to my car
I slam the door

Nancy Wells

in hollows of rocks
the hoopoe's heavy flight . . .
her favourite song
on the late night radio
hits me with the weight of grief

Sonam Chhoki

a park
is never empty
though it may seem to be –
something's always living there
if only memories

Ed Bremson

The Bamboo Hut

prelude
from next door's rooster
before
the cock-a-doodle fugue
that Bach never wrote

Hazel Hall

Setting aside Bukowski
I hit the track
where I wash
my losses away
with several bottles of beer.

David Read

still there
in the old trunk
your half knit sweater
how cold these winters
without you

Arvinder Kaur

The Bamboo Hut

awakening
to fog
we sit
in the heart of it
trying to summon the sun

Valerie Rosenfeld

in
childhood dreams
I opened the door to the stars
reluctantly
I slowly closed it again

gennepher

in that space between
rest and sleep my mind does all.
scales mountains, finds peace
cures hunger, writes a novel
despite my body's protests

Michael Seese

The Bamboo Hut

all the things
you didn't want to
talk about . . .
now I'm left with
crumpled leaves

Christine L. Villa

childhood lost
in the middle of somewhere
jigsaw pieces strewn
amid galaxies
never to be found

Grace Beam

Chinese lantern
drifting away after
the wedding -
four days later, the tinder-dry
recycling plant still burns

Joy McCall

The Bamboo Hut

light spills
into the garden
butterfly dawn
the honeysuckle hedge
drips with birdsong

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

walking through
the dark forest
wondering
will the bluebells
increase this year

John Byrne

a long line
of people waiting outside
a pension office
snakes along slowly ...
swirl of maple leaves

Chen Ou Liu

The Bamboo Hut

I'm the tree
trembling after the mist
has lifted . . .
working on the language
of my silence

Sergio Ortiz

she calls us in
we press our noses
against wet glass
as tumbleweeds turn cartwheels
in the yellow bruise of sky

Debbie Strange

a line drive
straight up the middle
and he steals home
is it any wonder
men love sports?

M Kei

The Bamboo Hut

I breathe
to her heartbeat
hear snatches of things :
her hiccup, his endearment
their sighs

Sonam Chhoki

three-masked schooner
waits for high tide to cross reef
full moon rising
her body gripped in moonlight
captured my heart and desire

CW Carlson

this road on the map
thin grey line to nowhere
I'm fasting on dust
Colorado Mountain lost
wide open 'big sky mind'

Carole Johnson

The Bamboo Hut

becoming
stronger by the day
living entities
just little lies he planted
in the mind of friends

Clive Oseman

autumn of life
rests on the leaned bench
flowers in the garden
console me with colours of hope
and warmth of divine fragrance

Pravat Kumar Pradhy

I built a castle once
of dreams and bright feathers
a house for my heart.
The wind scattered the feathers
but you scattered all my dreams

Jane Dougherty

The Bamboo Hut

loneliness
once the full moon brightens
the naked sky
your joys and heartaches
buried in musty letters

Willie Bongcaron

the scent
of bean flowers –
the whispering
of elm trees
in the night breeze

Ed Bremson

my cat's pricked ears
tells me I miss an apology
a word to learn
where sighs break silences
into shards of water

Alegria Imperial

The Bamboo Hut

this face
in the mirror
signed by time
be still, my heart, I try to listen to
the man with the child in his eyes

Ralf Broker

"Your eyes," he said,
"are beautiful,"
and I thanked him.
Then he asked,
"What color are they?"

toki

researching
river cruises...
the notion
that for seven days
we could float away

Janet Lynn Davis

The Bamboo Hut

the morning after
a night of fireworks
he emerges
from my shower
a stranger

Susan Burch

On the desk
my turquoise bracelet
from Wyoming
a younger woman
at the trading post

Tricia Knoll

asters in her hair
wearing a hint of blush-
September strolls in. . .
crooning melancholy strains
she bids adieu to summer.

Andrea Deitrich

The Bamboo Hut

pale morning light
trickles through the window
as I hold her
soft face against my neck
let me live in this moment

Alexis Lantgen

in summer sunlight
sitting on a park bench
we speak of her death
winter waving around us
lingering in dead grass heads

Violette Rose-Jones

in farm kitchen
side of pork and calf
high up on dark crossbeam
fish like trout and salmon
dangle in the dark

Ruth Zuckschwerdt

The Bamboo Hut

She loved to relate
the many soap operas
and the comedies
but when our names she forgot
our worse fears became so real

Keith A. Simmonds

dust shrouds
ivy crumbles the stonework
this house
contains intolerance
and some wasted ghosts

Devin Harrison

this moon
with no color
still blue...
we share a Midnight
Liaison over ice

Pat Geyer

The Bamboo Hut

she will put hers
on my neck —sweet firm fingers
my heart burning
in the same shade of blood
we'll close the door behind us

J.Pierre GARCIA AZNAR

watching the sunset
with a friend
who's become more...
again, the fear
of settling down

Chase Fire

this emptiness
every time I see you
I mistake it
for something it is not
guilt or love

Stephanie Brennan

The Bamboo Hut

a passion of heels
in lust with life
stamping
on death -- I wait
for permission to breath

Carole Harrison

do you feel it yet-
the subtle shift in season
winter at the edge
of autumn: old age at the
edge of your waning years

Marianne Paul

pulling away
from the curse
that runs in the muds
of conscious blood
I discard my old skin

Brinda Buljore

The Bamboo Hut

I could swear each time I pass
that city square you sketched
its shadows have grown longer
darker even
since the day of your death

Helen Buckingham

at zazen
he lets out
a long sigh--
is he reading
my non-thoughts?

Sondra Byrness

to blackened ash
glowing embers fade
rain-drenched
is the birdsong that drips
from the tree

Veronika Zora Novak

The Bamboo Hut

behind bars
of sunlight and shadow
tendrils twine
in a wallpaper prison
my blinds snap open

Jenny Ward Angyal

less and less
the morning chorus
clouds grow darker
death comes suddenly
and forever

Eamonn O'Neill

a garbage truck
parked on the road-
I breathe in
I breathe out
releasing what no longer fits

Nancy Wells

The Bamboo Hut

Perseid showers
for the first time in years
on a cloudless night . . .
I am seized by a caprice
of new hope

Sonam Chhoki

after the storm
on the ground around the tree
children
picking apples
from puddles

Ed Bremson

no need
to buy chocolates
for me -
you've always been
my sweet addiction

Hazel Hall

The Bamboo Hut

Sandwiched between
her pimento skirt
his mustard tie
I wait in
line for lunch.

David Read

innocent
a fawn darts into
the wilderness...
i am lost
in the lanes of life

Arvinder Kaur

so bent on getting
others to rescue me
as if they could
wanting to be saved
almost ruined me

Valerie Rosenfeld

The Bamboo Hut

libraries of sand
poured
from the hands of the child
with
sea-green eyes

gennepher

the scents of summer:
flowers in bloom
fresh-cut grass
a warm afternoon shower
wet kids' clothes

Michael Seese

not knowing
if my heart will ever
stop hurting . . .
the train passes me by
one more time

Christine L. Villa

The Bamboo Hut

childhood a blank
pieces of life
glued together
hiding the gaps
in memory

Grace Beam

summer solstice
and the druids dance
at ancient sites -
the sun hides behind clouds,
night brings frost on the grass

Joy McCall

thunder bolt
white butterflies
emerge from the maple
crossing the path
of the wind

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

The Bamboo Hut

above this meadow
a skylark sings
enfolding the sky
we stroll hand in hand
through blue asphodels

John Byrne

you're a dreamer
without your own dream
said my father ...
I was forced to wear pink
for wetting the bed

Chen Ou Liu

she lies trembling
breast-bare
as he dissects the diagnosis
three daughter moths
flutter in fear's white blaze

Debbie Strange

The Bamboo Hut

there's a
four letter word
for how I
feel about you,
and it isn't l-o-v-e

M Kei

stained
only with her blood
I am
as yet free
of all other stains

Sonam Chhoki

children gathered shells
left by storm debris last night
mother of pearl shells
she wore three-strand pearl necklace
tailored low cut evening gown

CW Carlson

The Bamboo Hut

loafing in the green
on a hill with Walt Whitman
knee high in shimmer
ladybugs and grasshoppers
all of us singing the sun

Carole Johnson

so early
first snow settles
near the temple
only yesterday
the colours of summer

Clive Oseman

crowded with
doubts and disbelieves
he masks
the beauty of light and
boundary of the endless sky

Pravat Kumar Pradhy

The Bamboo Hut

Waves roll ceaselessly
drowning memories
in kelp-tangled depths
but the glassy sea
is still the colour of his eyes.

Jane Dougherty

dark clouds
the wet, empty bench
devoid of love
gone is the promise of youth
and the warmth of your embrace

Willie Bongcaron

in the grass
at first light
gossamer and dew –
and in the trees
nightingales singing

Ed Bremson

The Bamboo Hut

so neat
the ridged roofs
shielding lives
as if in boxes like seeds
the heart can grow

Alegria Imperial

rustling rye
all these thoughts come
to an end
in and out between
blue moon shadows

Ralf Broker

I dreamt
we were wed, but I didn't
love you.
Did you love me? I'd ask
if you weren't dead.

Toki

The Bamboo Hut

she asks me the name
of her flowering shrubs,
my mother
who in greener days
was a garden wizard

Janet Lynn Davis

yesterday
my son mowed the grass
for the first time
our yard
has crop circles

Susan Burch

the damp smell
after carpet cleaning
lonely empty
rooms wondering
why bring things back

Tricia Knoll

The Bamboo Hut

we took mason jars
poking small holes in their lids
and going out
into long summer nights as
childhood flickered around us

Andrea Deitrich

a chill
in the evening air
in the drizzle
of things she left behind
strewn across my bed

Violette Rose-Jones

tropical summer
weaving its whispering breeze
deep in my spirit
I find the path to wholeness
In the symphony of love

Keith A. Simmonds

The Bamboo Hut

the red maple
I prayed to fly
into its branches
the first leg in my
ongoing flights of fancy

Devin Harrison

radiant sun
glows through his antlers
this white stag...
lighting a path through difficulty
we take a leap of faith

Pat Geyer

moonlight
sparkling on new snow
my godson smiles
as I read him
ancient poetry

Chase Fire

The Bamboo Hut

always
we've done it that way
a tattered excuse
that passes for
laziness

Stephanie Brennan

when did the parent
become the child
riding blindly on denial
I never chose the carer's cap
- karma, karma, chameleon
Carole Harrison

even behind
the closed curtain
the shamrock
opens
to the morning

Marianne Paul

The Bamboo Hut

torn wings
and with a scathed tongue
I mutter the meaning
of sweetness
over and over

Brinda Buljore

two mermaids on a rock
overlooking the sea
discussing what we'll be
when we've finally outgrown
the sailors' squeeze

Helen Buckingham

sprawling grapevine
coils back
around itself--
i unwind
a bach partita

Sondra Byrness

The Bamboo Hut

swallowed
whole by the moon's
pallor
by the river, this heartache
I cannot drown

Veronika Zora Novak

orb webs
suspended
between power lines . . .
dreamlets evaporate
in the morning sun

Jenny Ward Angyal

offering my poem
to the pond
are my words too heavy
a floating moon
smiles

Eamonn O'Neill

The Bamboo Hut

he sun
greet the day-
earth's ritual
awakens
the song in me

Nancy Wells

out on a walk
I point out flowers and birds --
she nods politely
we live in Shangrila
she lives mostly in Facebook

Sonam Chhoki

in the sky tonight
the Space Station flashing
brighter than Venus
reminds me how good it feels
to be so close to home

Ed Bremson

The Bamboo Hut

sapphire ring
dropped on a stroll
now lost
to my lover's eyes
and a bower bird's hoard

Hazel Hall

In a day
wrinkled with anxiety
the only thing
I ironed out
was my pants.

David Read

birds
fly home together--
still moist
on my hand
your farewell kiss

Arvinder Kaur

The Bamboo Hut

morning thunder
my poor kitty hides
under the bed
her fears based on ignorance
just like mine

Valerie Rosenfeld

today being Saturday
discipline
meditation
I sit on my garden swing
and simply swing

gennepher

she shapes her past
as the sculptor does marble
chipping away
imperfections
until only beauty remains

Michael Seese

The Bamboo Hut

as you drift away
I cherish the sweeping light
of our memories . . .
the darkness of the night
brightens all the stars

Christine L. Villa

the warm smell
of capsicum and mint
on the sheets -
while I sleep, my skin
feeds on spices and roots

Joy McCall

under the light
of my reading lamp
a new world
words weave
overlapping lives

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

The Bamboo Hut

one by one
teardrops stream down
her face
in the moon
in the icicle

Chen Ou Liu

she hides
the family photographs
in memory's drawer
at our next visit
we find ourselves missing

Debbie Strange

waterman's autumn
greasing the mast
before the races;
clatter of mast hoops
the ringing of halyards

M Kei

The Bamboo Hut

how the eye
longs for a patch of blue
along the fence
chicory scattered like stars
up and down the roadside

Carole Johnson

known
to have everything
except her love
all roads closed
in a snowstorm

Clive Oseman

Regrets hang unsaid
brimming bright in downcast eyes.
He reaches out and
touches only empty space
and in his mouth not words, tears

Jane Dougherty

The Bamboo Hut

war of words
the four corners of the room
too small for two
the air is so hot
and the night... so long

Willie Bongcaron

toward moonset
water splashing
in a pool
near a grove
of evergreen trees

Ed Bremson

yellow flower
and green grass
beside blue water....
in the sun's warmth
a cricket rests

toki

The Bamboo Hut

milestone birthday—
in a *Thinker* pose
on the couch
he whiles away the time
with classical music

Janet Lynn Davis

at the end
of our first date
a kiss
that stripped the field
of dandelion wishes

Susan Burch

wet hair
dripping on my nipples
the waves
of warbling birds
and scolding crows

Tricia Knoll

The Bamboo Hut

last message
texted to her spouse -
“dying to get home”
near the car's wreckage -
the blood-stained shattered phone

Andrea Deitrich

every day I fall in love
with some pretty stranger--
an old tattoo
suddenly dripping
fresh blood

Violette Rose-Jones

a warm teardrop falls
upon the eulogy sheet
as emotions flood
to the surface of my soul
the citadel tumbles down

Keith A. Simmonds

The Bamboo Hut

the last kiss
at the airport
all I think about
during the ascent
is betrayal

Devin Harrison

land with no rain
this drought-afflicted place...
where prickly pears
pierce my senses with
mem'ries of sweet tasting love

Pat Geyer

on my midnight walk
I toss a stone into the creek
this universe
that doesn't know I exist
quivers

Chase Fire

The Bamboo Hut

late afternoon
the way the sun strikes
just the right chord
on the lime green leaves
to hear their song

Stephanie Brennan

afternoon haze
sunbeams on dream catchers--
where are they now
the people we once were
when morning wove its web

Carole Harrison

little one:
each incarnation of you
is held in my body
i carry you with me
In every cell

Marianne Paul

The Bamboo Hut

the details in
the leaves of Spring
magnify my sighs
pessimism
in dawn's light

Brinda Buljore

expanding space
between thoughts--
focus narrows
to a spot
on the zendo wall

Sondra Byrness

reborn in a dead
mourning dove's song
willow tresses,
a yellow rose and tears
flow in broken moonlight

Veronika Zora Novak

The Bamboo Hut

swallows
steer by the stars
returning home
all the detour signs
my life has followed

Jenny Ward Angyal

this wild morning
as leaves scatter
from trembling trees
in flight
a distinctly red umbrella

Eamonn O'Neill

my mind
filled with strangers
trapped in scripts-
lost again in clutter
I wonder who I am

Nancy Wells

The Bamboo Hut

two young Tibetans
take the Lotus position
doused in petrol
set themselves alight
in their occupied home

Sonam Chhoki

the bomb did not explode –
no one was killed –
wouldn't it be great
if all headlines
read this way?

Ed Bremson

birds outside
sip water from twigs
I call
the nursing staff
for a larger straw

Hazel Hall

The Bamboo Hut

They arranged the album
careful to exclude
snaps of his anger
stills of her
rigid insistence.

David Read

red nasturtium
that bloom every year
on my fence--
the memory of the child
I never had

Arvinder Kaur

under the eye
of the September sun
the earth changes
bit by bit into
a meditation hall

Valerie Rosenfeld

The Bamboo Hut

old abandoned church
wind howling
through the windows
echoes
of sorrow

gennepher

the woods are haunted.
not by spirits
not by souls
but by the wind
as it searches for a resting place

Michael Seese

days after
the memorial . . .
I find comfort
watering his plants
for the first time

Christine L. Villa

The Bamboo Hut

gathering
all my lost dreams
together -
they don't even cover
the bottom of the pit

Joy McCall

summer sunrise
gilds the sea
a stirring breeze
shifts through the maple
birdsong trickles the dawn

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

slanted sunlight on
The Persistence of Memory
the wall clock
ticks toward tomorrow
my heart chained to the past

Chen Ou Liu

The Bamboo Hut

mother's ashes
blanket the bones of her first-born
beneath the lilac
the sister
that I never knew

Debbie Strange

gold star mother
every week
my sister lights
another candle
for her son

M Kei

tonight is not
the night for flowers
and moon gazing
tonight poems filled
with broken hearts and fear

Carole Johnson

The Bamboo Hut

autumn
announces its arrival
with a flourish
tapping a pencil
to the rhythm of our song

Clive Oseman

The smell of wild thyme
crushed underfoot scents the air
and old memories
of lost love cast long shadows
on the cobbles of the quay.

Jane Dougherty

moonless sky
the scent of jasmine
colors the night
tossing whispers of love
straight to your heart

Willie Bongcaron

The Bamboo Hut

Outside the bank,
left alone in the car,
fear, confusion, wonder in her eyes:
a tiny,
white-haired, leather-skinned woman.

Toki

December sky
sifts through the charred forest-
over the phone
my brother and I
resurrect our ghosts

Janet Lynn Davis

just off the phone
tears in my eyes
knowing I love him
more
than he loves me

Susan Burch

The Bamboo Hut

one tiny star shines
as darkness covers the land~
room in the manger
for the Prince of salvation
to redeem a world of pain

Keith A Simmonds

my neighbour
who always drops in
a garage sale man
filling my mind
with his clutter

Devin Harrison

walking her home
as dusk settles in
our shadows
melt into this world
as we gaze at other galaxies

Chase Fire

The Bamboo Hut

among the redwoods
I find solitude
Until the fog tiptoes in
And the great trees
quench their thirst

Stephanie Brennan

reaching that age
where you keep things
not because
they look good
but because they still work

Marianne Paul

heartwood
splintered by storms
once more
I brush blind fingers
across the dome of sky

Jenny Ward Angyal

The Bamboo Hut

unafraid of death
the stillness
of evening leaves
in Aries
the moon , waxing gibbous

Eamonn O'Neill

learning
more and more
to do without her
I fold mother's memory
into my heart

Sonam Chhoki

She keeps
her headphones on
preferring music
to the sound
of his apology.

David Read

The Bamboo Hut

the road
just sat there
it didn't take her anywhere
she
had to do the walking

gennepher

sunlight dance
on the bedroom wall . . .
how my heart flutters
with the way you say
good morning

Christine L Villa

no desire
to be reborn as hawk
or eagle -
let me be a small brown bird
busy picking at seeds

Joy McCall

The Bamboo Hut

dawn light
spills over the mountain
orange tips
of butterfly wings
shimmer

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

a giant cross
against the sunset sky
on the hill...
an old man and his dog wait
at the fork in a road

Chen Ou Liu

after the crash
four white coffins
a branch
of the family tree
missing

Debbie Strange

The Bamboo Hut

old pond
in the photograph
a boy
and his dad jump in
cicadas singing

Carole Johnson

from the beach
impossible to fathom
an oceans depth
the surging tides
of a lovers desire

Clive Oseman

such is life
some cloves of garlic and
a little pepper,
dash of salt, onions, ginger,
sometimes sour or sometimes sweet

Willie Bongcaron

The Bamboo Hut

Family reunion—
so many people I've never met
and never will,
for I sit alone beside the water
until the gathering ends.

toki

wondering
who my father is—
echoing through these woods
the voice of an owl
I'll never see

Chase Fire

knees to chin
on a bike too small
I pedal
toward crossroads
shrouded in mist

Jenny Ward Angyal

The Bamboo Hut

midnight's
church bell
a mournful toll
beneath the reservoir
the drowned village

gennepher

today
my bleeding fingers
caress
the broken strings
of my late sister's guitar

Debbie Strange

The Bamboo Hut

A pentaptych tanka

Dark River

in my own brown way
mixed with soil and years
i huddle down in earth
holding you like
an angry dark river

hold hard
the ground is shaking
it is not solid
I would not be sad
to be washed away downstream

in my way
i am moving sediment
oh, how my skin
shall appear cinnamon
in these red lights

my river
overflows the banks
nutmeg and cloves
lie scattered
on the flattened grass

in a
scattered rain
i hear the lapping
of this murky river
in my soul

Matsukaze and Joy McCall

The Bamboo Hut

From the Poets View

Saeko Ogi is a Japanese tanka poet who now resides in Australia. Along with Amelia Fielden she has published two books of bilingual responsive tanka namely Words Flower (Interactive Press, Brisbane) and Weaver Birds (Ginninderra Press).

Saeko kindly agreed to answer a few questions about her tanka writing for this issue. In her responses I feel you will find something that you can carry forward into your own writing experience.

These are the questions I put to Saeko.

1. How long have you been writing tanka and what drew you to this form of poetry?
2. From where do you draw your inspiration for writing tanka?
3. Which tanka poet do you think has had the most influence on you and why?
4. How often do you write tanka? Every day?
5. Which books would you recommend to aspiring tanka poets?
6. What advice would you offer to those just beginning to write tanka?
7. How would you describe the process you go through when writing tanka.

I was born in Tokyo and lived there until I moved here to Canberra in 1972. I attempted to write tanka in my teens, as encouraged by an enthusiastic school teacher, and I suppose that many people experience this very short-lived kind of creativity – I stopped it too after a little while.

As soon as I arrived here I found myself writing haiku and tanka in a notebook, whenever I was feeling lonely, finding new flowers, listening to strange new birds, having some physical pains, or just looking at my daughter. I could not give any particular reason why I started writing, but it came to me very naturally, as did keeping my diary. Probably I just wanted to share my feeling with somebody, actually with another myself. At the beginning I had no intention of showing them to others at all.

In the 1980s three of my haiku were chosen by a noted haiku poet in the Asahi Newspaper, one of the leading nationwide newspapers in Japan. Newspapers have weekly haiku and tanka sections. However, soon I started to find it difficult to choose a seasonal term for my haiku; even my thick reference book did not help me very much; the seasonal terms in my book are not really appropriate for the Australian climate, the signs of seasonal changes and the very subtle differences in nature. The reference is significant as long as you are in Japan. The usage of seasonal terms is compulsory in writing haiku in Japan. And soon I came to concentrate on writing only tanka and in 1999 I finally had an opportunity to show my tanka to Mr Shizuya Inomata, a Nara poet, when he came to visit Canberra. He invited me to send my works to his tanka group, which had a tanka journal published quarterly.

I read tanka collections by many different poets; I read, in particular, commentary books by noted poets on selected tanka of classical, such as Man'yōshū, Kokinshū, or modern poets. Thanks to the rich collection of Japanese books at the National Library of Australia in Canberra, I regularly read books there. I also learn about English tanka these days.

The Bamboo Hut

Walking along the streets, in parks or along the lake is when I find the most stimuli for my tanka. I also often find myself to be inspired while reading tanka by other poets. I do not have any specifically favourite poets. I enjoy being influenced by the works by many

different poets, not only by some particular ones. I would recommend to beginners as well to read widely modern poets as well as the classical ones.

As I belong to the Araragi-ha Tanka Group in Tsu, Japan, I regularly send 15 tanka a month and besides that a set of 30 tanka once a year. As I contribute my tanka to other anthologies as well, I would probably write more than 40 tanka every month. At the moment I am contemplating writing English tanka as well.

When I write a tanka, I will read it back next day and think carefully of any possibility of choosing a better word, of changing the word order, or eliminating any over-explanatory or descriptive expressions. The next day you will be surprised yourself why you did not discover the better way the day before!

The Bamboo Hut

Poet Biographies

Joy McCall

Joy has been writing tanka, and other kinds of poetry, for 50 years. She lived mostly in Canada and the States but has now returned to her place of birth, Norwich, England. She thinks that tanka is an addiction.

John Byrne

Would you please consider some tanka for your next issue or subsequent issue My name is John Byrne from Co. Wicklow in Ireland , I'm 65 years old and have been writing Japanese short form poetry for a number of years.

Chen ou-Liu

Chen-ou Liu is the author of four books, including Following the Moon to the Maple Land (First Prize Winner of the 2011 Haiku Pix Chapbook Contest). His tanka and haiku have been honored with many awards.

Sergio Ortiz

My poems have been published in: Atlas Poetica, LYNX, The Driftwood Review, Words-Myth, Notes From the Gean, and other journals and anthologies. My chapbook, At the Tail End of Dusk (2009), was published by Flutter Press.

Debbie Strange

I'm a member of the Writers' Collective of Manitoba. My writing has been published in print: The Collective Consciousness, Contemporary Verse 2, Pentimes, The Winnipeg Free Press, and online: VerseWrights, kernels, Notes from the Gean, The Bamboo Hut. Publications are forthcoming from Leaf Press and Skylark.

The Bamboo Hut

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

Máire is living in Greystones, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. She is early retired and has found joy in poetry and art. She frequently gets lost in words or paint. She has been published with Every Day Poets, Wordlegs, The First Cut, A New Ulster, Open Road Review, Your Daily Poem, Bray Arts, The Galway Review, Verseland, Notes from the Gean, A Hundred Gourds, Lynx, Sketchbook, The Never Ending Story, Chrysanthemum and many online and print magazines worldwide. She is a member of Haiku Ireland. She was listed in the top 100 European Haiku writers for 2012.

M Kei

M. Kei, tall ship sailor, poet, and author
Pirates of the Narrow Seas (fiction) <NarrowSeas.blogspot.com> to read for free
Slow Motion : The Log of a Chesapeake Bay Skipjack (poetry) -- Suggested Reading,
Chesapeake Bay Project

"I suffer from a disease of the heart that can only be cured by the sea."

Sonam Choki

Born and raised in the kingdom of Bhutan I find the Japanese short form poetry resonates with my Tibetan Buddhist upbringing. I'm inspired by my father, Sonam Gyamtsho, the architect of Bhutan's non-monastic modern education. My poetry has been published in journals in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, UK and US.

CW Carlson

I am CW Carlson, a retired aero-space engineer living in Olathe, Kansas. I have been traveling and writing poetry for over 20 years. I have several published poets. I just recently took up writing Tanka and am submitting 10 traditional format for consideration in your fine journal. I have also written 20 Tanka in the 3|5|3|5|5 format but haven't submitted anywhere as yet.

Carole Johnston

Obsessed with Japanese short form poetry, I write haiku and tanka every day and have published in a variety of online and print journals. I live in a hermitage of flowers behind a gate in Lexington, Kentucky.

The Bamboo Hut

Clive Oseman

Clive Oseman is a British poet born in Birmingham, now living and working in Swindon. He has been published in several journals around the world.

Pravat Kumar Pradhy

Scientist and Poet. His haiku, tanka and haibun have appeared in The World Haiku Review, Lynx, Four and Twenty, The Notes from the Gean, Atlas Poetica, Simply Haiku, Red lights, Ribbons, The Heron's Nest, Shamrock, A Hundred Gourds, Magnapoets, Bottle Rockets, Mu International, Frogpond, Lilliput Review etc. Recently his tanka have been anthologized in Fire Pearls 2.

Jane Dougherty

I write fiction, fantasy and historical fantasy, but also short stories and poems, of which these are the first I have submitted for publication. My roots are very deep, but I have always lived far from home. An attachment to the natural world helps put the melancholy in perspective and give it focus.

Mr. Willie R. Bongcaron

A haijin by choice, this poem writer dabbles in short poetry forms, specially haiku and tanka. He believes that short poetry forms may look simple and trite but are actually the hardest to compose. Back in Manila, he works with the mass rail transit where he is enriched by a thousand experiences brought by serving the riding public.

Alegria Imperial

Quite new to Japanese short poetry form, Alegria Imperial, nonetheless, has garnered a few awards in haiku (Commended, Traditional category, The Haiku Foundation's 2012 Haiku Now Competition and honorable mention, 2007 Vancouver Cherry Blossoms Festival Haiku Invitational) and tanka (Excellent, 7th International Tanka Festival Competition 2012) as well as published works in international journals such as Daily Haiku, The Heron's Nest, LYNX, Notes from the Gean, A Hundred Gourds, Prune Juice, and Bones for haiku, senryu, haiga and haibun, and Eucalypt, LYNX and GUSTS for tanka. Formerly a journalist and media person for art and culture in Manila Philippines, she now lives in Vancouver, Canada.

Ed Bremson

Ed Bremson is an award winning haiku poet. He has been publishing poetry for 45 years. He is active in the Facebook poetry community and lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Ralf Broker

Ralf Bröker was born in Ochtrup, Germany, in 1968. He has worked as a journalist in Frankfurt am Main and Dortmund. With his family, he returned to the Münsterland and supports cooperatives as a pr-consultant. His first poetic work was published in 1986. He started reading haiku, tanka and haibun in 2007 and began writing them in 2008. Ralf is a member of the [German Haiku-Society](#). His work has appeared in German and English language haiku journals including *Sommergras*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Sketchbook*, *Asahi Haikuist Network* and *The Mainichi Daily News*. Ralf's eBook "Seine Blätter" was published in *Haiku heute*. He is the editor for *Haiku from German Tongues*, *Kukai 2010*, *VerSuch - das projekt gendai haiku* and a Facebook-group called *haiku-like*.

Toki

toki is a writer of fiction, poetry, and occasional nonfiction, as well as an amateur photographer, with works appearing online and in print. toki likes listening to the music of the spheres, pondering the interstices of the universe and taking long walks in liminal spaces. For more information, visit tokidokizenzen.wordpress.com."

Janet Lynn Davis

Janet Lynn Davis lives in a rustic community in Texas (USA). Her tanka and other poems have appeared in numerous online and print venues over the past several years. Some of her work can be found at her blog, [twigs&stones](#).

Susan Burch

Susan Burch resides in Hagerstown, MD with her husband, stepson, and daughter. She enjoys reading, writing, and puzzles of all kinds. She loves wearing bandannas, hats, and obnoxious bright pink sunglasses.

The Bamboo Hut

Tricia Knoll

Tricia Knoll is a Portland, Oregon poet -- who also writes haiku and tanka. Her work appears in journals for each genre -- recently

Windfall, VoiceCatcher, About Place, Literary Mama, A Hundred Gourds, Kernels, Poetry Haiku and in anthologies for both poetry and haiku. She tries to write a haiku or tanka daily.

Andrea Dietrich

Andrea Dietrich resides in Utah with her spouse. An ESL teacher for 30 years now, she has been writing poetry since 2000 and been published in various magazines and anthologies. She was a poetry editor at one time for the SP Quill and was a judge for several years of contests at Shadowpoetry.com, where she also published eight chapbooks, mainly in her main style, lyrical and traditional forms of poetry.

A. L. Lantgen

A. L. Lantgen is a writer and musician who lives in Dallas, TX. She teaches violin and viola, as well as writing poetry and a blog (thewiseserpent.blogspot.com). She is currently working on her first novel.

Violette Rose-Jones

Violette Rose-Jones is a student at Southern Cross University. She is married and has delightful teenage son. She was converted to the ways of tanka via the influence of the incomparable Margaret Chula and is now seriously hooked.

Ruth Zuckschwerdt

I started to write Haiku and Haibun a while ago and I am fond of Japanese poetry.
A while ago I also began writing Tanka and I know I still need a lot of practice.
Although my first language is German (I live in Switzerland) I love to write in English.

Keith A Simmonds

I am a lover of all types of poetry and have been writing haiku seriously since 2004. Some of my works appear in Mainichi Daily News, Ambrosia, Simply Haiku, Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum Haiku, Concours de haiku au Sénégal, World Kigo...

The Bamboo Hut

Devin Harrison

I have published poetry and short stories in numerous periodicals throughout the US and Canada. These magazines include: Malahat Review, Contemporary Verse Two, Grain, Event, The Amethyst Review, Kansas Quarterly, South Dakota Review, Passages North, and others.

Pat Geyer

Nature lover who enjoys the arts of photography and poetry.

Jean Pierre Garcia Aznar

I am a French poetry writer, born in Spain. I just published, this running June, a book of tanka, TELLURIES. (<http://www.revue-tanka-francophone.com/editions/extraits/extraits-alhama-garcia-2013.html>)

Chase Fire

My name is Chase Gagnon, but I publish under Chase Fire. I have had my tanka and haiku published in just about all of the leading short form journals. I am an 18 year old student from the Detroit area, and I'll be starting college next Fall.

Stephanie Brennan.

I live in northern California in the land of redwoods and fog. I have been writing fiction for a long time, but only recently tried my hand at poetry. I find I like it, and now can't stop. I post some of it at <http://restraintunfettered.wordpress.com>

Carole Harrison

lives on the south coast of NSW, Australia, where she combines photography, walking and poetry. Her addiction to Spanish caminos fits well with attempts to live in the moment with short form poetry.

Marianne Paul

Marianne Paul is a Canadian poet and novelist. Her poetry book, Above and Below the Waterline, is published by BookLand Press, with a book of haiku forthcoming in 2014.

Helen Buckingham

lives in Bristol, England. She began writing tanka a decade or so ago, having already turned her hand to haiku. In 2011 she had a collection of tanka published alongside (and produced by) Angela Leuck, titled "Little Purple Universes". Buckingham's most recent work is a solo collection comprising a mix of western and Japanese forms, titled "Armadillo Basket" (Waterloo Press, UK, 2012).

Sondra J. Byrnes

Sondra J. Byrnes is a retired law/business professor. She discovered tanka only a few years ago and has since been published in Tuck, Prune Juice, World Haiku Review, Notes from the Gean, among others. Byrnes lives in South Bend, Indiana--until winter comes.

Veronika Zora Novak

Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, I have been studying and writing tanka and haiku for two years. As an amateur, I dabble in photography and enjoy creating haiga as well. Formally, I was educated at George Brown College in the field of Medical Office Administration, having graduated in 1999 with honours.

Jenny Ward Angyal

lives with her husband and one Abyssinian cat on a small organic farm in Gibsonville, NC, USA. She has written poetry since the age of five and tanka since 2008. Her tanka and other poems have appeared in various print and online journals and may also be found at her blog, [*The Grass Minstrel*](#).

Eamonn O'Neill

is retired and living in Ireland . He has travelled widely , both in Europe and America . Early in 2013 while recovering from surgery he was introduced to the diverse forms of ancient Japanese poetry .

Hazel Hall

is a musicologist and Australian Poetry cafe poet in residence at Biginelli Espresso, School of Music, Australian National University. She is founder and convenor of the School of Music Poets. Her tanka has been published in Australian and overseas journals.

The Bamboo Hut

Nancy Wells

Nancy Wells, a member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective, is a visual artist as well as a poet, and lives near the Delaware River in Pennsylvania. Her poetry appears in the books “Poetree”, “Leaving the Empty Room”, River Rocks Anthology”, and “Moonbathing”, as well as her own chapbooks “Oh to Be a Dandelion”, “Wild Weeds”, and “One Sassy Blossom”. She has created a number of dimensional one of a kind artist books combining visuals with words.

Dave Read

is a Canadian poet living in Calgary, Alberta. He augments his literary ambitions with mediocre, but enthusiastic, athletic pursuits. You can find his tanka and micropoetry on Twitter @AsSlimAsImBeing.

Arvinder Kaur

was born in Punjab where she also received her initial education. She studied English Literature in Chandigarh. Since 1980, she has been teaching in different colleges in Punjab and Chandigarh. She is currently working as Associate Professor in Literature and Media Studies at the Post Graduate Government College for Girls, Chandigarh. She has authored a book of writing skills and has a book of translation to her credit. In 2013 she has published a book of her haiku in Punjabi.

Valerie Rosenfeld

lives in upstate New York and works as a psychotherapist. She is grateful to those whose company she is lucky to share on her journey. She is also grateful to tanka itself, that helps her say what seems ineffable.

Gennepher

I am gennepher and have been writing haiku for 4 years, only recently started writing tanka. I live in North Wales in the United Kingdom. For me the adventures on the journey of life are important, not the final destination

Michael Seese

has published four books, and has had numerous short stories and poems appear in anthologies and magazines. Other than that, he spends his spare time rassin' with three young'uns. Visit www.MichaelSeese.com to laugh with him or at him.

The Bamboo Hut

Christine L. Villa

is a children's writer, photographer, jewelry maker among other things. She is currently writing a self-help poetry book about grief entitled "Catching the Light."

Andrea Eldridge

I fly internationally for American Airlines. While I travel a lot and usually write from the pilot's perspective directly from the cockpit, there are often times when I am reminded that I am most enchanted simply by being at home in Southern California. This tanka submission, for which I am so grateful Bamboo Hut has chosen to publish, was one of those times. It is, indeed, a small world however you choose to view it.

Brinda Buljore

Writing is the source for tapping in the skills of knowing the mind's agenda on a moment to moment basis, depicting moods and emotions that we can never learn but feel and express in words, whether understandable or not. My aim is to be present with them without analysing nor allowing the mediocre take over. This is sitting with myself and befriending the nature of the mind and keeping peace as the only objective.

The Bamboo Hut