

Fleeting Songs,  
Eternal

Japanese Spirit;  
English Words

不  
變  
淡  
詩

William Altoft

I am a writer from (and very often on) the city of Bristol. I write prose, poetry, and poetrose. Along with shorter poetry, I have written longer works, including *The Ballad Of Stokes Croft* & my first novella *The Floating Harbour*.

This collection was first published in 2023. All the poems found here were originally published on my personal WordPress, along with all my writing, and are still available there:

<https://williamaltoft.blog/>



## Songs Of Prologue

### Same Pond

Same pond –  
ripples subside.

### The Empty Space

On painted lines –  
th'abstract, open, expanse.  
Inf'nut, 'n long passed on, 'n unobtainable.

### Writing Is A Visual Art

Papyrus painted o'er 'n o'er;  
sinews sending song-spilt ink.  
Have you, yet, learnt to dance?

## Songs Of Morning

### Let Linger Onward

The scent,  
its summer scene of hours passed,  
pressed upon the soul –  
in muscle marked; the skin,  
remem'bring, daydreams...

### Leaves Of Mind

Haze, holding unreality,  
forms, then, a mem'ry – false – :  
she leaves to find her own way.  
Th'river's crossed; the  
mount'nous paths hear boot-steps.

### Dawn

...  
you...  
But now we're sep'rate.  
You left to teach  
outside the capital.

### A Tanka To The Rainful Night

Wood 'n metal merged –  
the scaffold gathers th'reigning night.  
The air,  
through the open window,  
dances morning.

## Pit Stop

Guitar glints gilt African,  
gleaming hammer-on sunshine!  
Th'rayd'yo risen – aytay-em.

## Th'Morning Shade 'N Sun

Marching marching marching on/  
off to work to school to write.  
Rolling traction tyres tread  
th'morning shade 'n sun.

## Sounds At 8.30am

taptaptaptap taptaptap  
[The sound of scissors cutting.]  
squee squee squee squee squee ppuuhhh [Silence.]  
Prepping for the class.

## 9.03am

Twitch, tail-feather...  
In tiny talons take the reeds  
'n build a house o'er mine.

## Tanka #?

Sitting 'neath the fury  
of a fire eight minutes passed -  
pyeew pyeeew pyw (in my left ear); puhahihuh puhahih (in my right).  
vwik vwiiik vwii vwiiiik; prrrprrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr  
twee tweeeee tw tweeee; prrrprrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

## Sky Lines

Through the sky's  
slip-streaming currents –  
a plane; a swallow.

## Sketch

Tree –  
'midst grass;  
'neath sky.

## Elegy For A Lost Cascade

Unanchored  
'midst the mid-spring wind,  
aubrieta fails.  
Beneath trespassing paws –  
light-lilac petals.

### Sketch (Again; Another)

Flower –  
with leaves;  
w'thin grass.

### Bird By Chimney Towers

Pied crow...  
Is your treasure hoarded there,  
within the shaped-clay, obsolete?  
You leave as the  
ocean gull approaches.

### Sketch (A Further; Third)

Flow'r o' lines  
writ' ink-blue o'er  
unpetalled, blank papyrus.  
Scribbled soil,  
untouched by water.

### Signs Of Someone

In th'wake of a mind at rest –  
robins,  
suddenly ubiquitous.

### Sketch (Fourth Coming)

In blue-ink  
bled 'cross faded lines –  
a water flower.  
Its stem becomes the rushful,  
restless stream...

### Penblossom

In the soil  
of the blank, lined page –  
penblossom flowers.

### Sketch (Once More)

Ink-flow'r  
in the pagely ground –  
across from you I'm writing.  
Grow, gradual scribbles;  
shaded petals.

### A Rainy-Bus-Day Senryu

In these three lines?  
The time that passed  
as I composed them.

## An Alliterative Thought

Look at that sullen,  
solitary slide, stone-surrounded.  
Fenced in iron;  
its prim'ry colours  
faded.

## Reflecting On The Recent Present

An alley, open.  
Through glass: the tiles, in rain-swept sick;  
soft tissue-leaves, disintegrating.

## A Morning's Musing

Infinite bassline – bass repeats,  
with ending flourish varied.  
Those in queue talk movies.  
B'hind tessellated counter:  
New Cut Coffee.

## Songs Of Bristol

### The Bridge Across The Avon Gorge

A chasm split by  
glacier, astride the river

that turns its tide in  
great height and great depth between,

the woods awash with  
green, on the south and the west,

without abridgment  
to the village of Clifton.

T'was a contest held  
that drew out the mind-design:

towers of the Nile  
Valley, sphinx suspending stone.

Artist-engineer:  
Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Stops 'n starts 'n stops;  
towers built of unwashed stone

stood alone - the gorge  
beneath them, Avon between -

only connected  
by a single iron stretch,

along which one could  
travel o'er in a basket.

Since Queen Square riots  
interrupted first, the bridge

from woods to Clifton  
had struggled t'ward completion.

At last, b'yond halfway  
through the nineteenth century,

though ne'er adorned by  
guard'yuns of Ancient Egypt,

nor washed and painted  
as the pillars of Karnak,

opened and crossed was  
the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Now backed by hot air balloons.

### Tobacco Fact'ry Tanka

Within her hands –  
the lunar lantern,  
fingertip-fixed; floating.  
Backlit by the bones of industriality,  
she drapes her gaze; her cov'ring falls...

### Three Tanka, Then A Whole Haiku

Lean, anchor, low  
your oxidated grappling beam;  
sunken chain-link laid,  
its mass upon  
the Great Western dockyard.

Bind your barreled  
wood, you rings of  
rustsome iron; reaching...  
Contents kept.  
The grain is mismatched 'cross the breaks.

*kkcoo coooo?*  
kkcalling 'dustrial dove,  
'long undulating urban stone  
it steps 'n stops 'n, flut'ring, flies,  
to perch 'top tattered post.

Sun, searing;  
th' ocean atmosphere refracts.  
Gull glides o'er river's surface.

## Shriek; Undulation

### I

Do you hear –  
without; within –  
the seagull calling?

### II

Where else but on  
the etchless stone,  
'breast Cabot's cobbled corner,  
would course my thoughts?  
Without; within – gull calling.

### III

Avon, Iternu  
(Frome ignored!):  
rivers that, cities, built.  
The Theban peak – red-mount;  
the glacial gorge.

### IV

Do you see –  
within; without –  
the Aten falling?

## Three Lines At Cabot Corner

End of May...  
Sun sweeps; pandemic breeze.  
Life alights 'pon wooden benches.

## Four Poems For Me; For You

I

Mallard marks my  
morning's myanderings;  
moorhen munches moss.  
My mind's metred.  
Muse mirrors.

In the couplet-epilogue,  
I let go th'alliteration.

II

The cranes cry  
to the cov'ring cloud;  
I'm cold, as I sit writing.

III

Semi;  
-colon,  
dash, 'n Oxford Commas  
take their final stand 'n  
list their grand achievements.

IV

*hahuh*

!nice 'n earlee

BPAARK

?yeah. Pendswotheeofferiz

soe lighk

mmm

!yeh

*pupupkikikikikuh*

*kuhkuhkuhkik*

...UM...

PUHRK?!

"Just a coffee shop, or like?" In incompleted query's his reluctance.

## Travels With A Flex-Grip Pen

fffflutterrrrr

pluuusshhhhh TONK

One fades out; the other lands before me.

Small steps – so many;

long strides – so few.

The passing by of generations.

Ferry me

upriver,

Matilda of Bristol.

What kept

these few green leaves

'mongst winter's branches?

["Whimper."]

Police digitally dredge the harbour.

Ominous of tragedy...

"Fiff

tee

siiiiiiix?!"

## As The Rowing Teams Row By

And now their wake moves me,

the sloshing of the water loud.

Rosy-fingered dawn; established morning.

## Unlimited

Muse – unlimited;

unbound – in th'breaking,

captured tide...

Paddling swan in feathers;

the trees in leafless rest.

ふたりがすわります。

さんになはかどをとります。

## A Seagull Sees Me Writing

Back on black-  
rail, resting 'gainst the  
barrier's gull-side,  
looking over at  
four sleeping giants.

Rush, ruffling wind.  
Peak 'n fall, fraught Frome-fed Avon.

## Today: Ten Tanka

I

Tower peaks;  
quartet sleeps;  
the gull's braced, as am I –  
the lock-gate, leading southward,  
bridges o'er.

II

Rice-husk holds  
my coffee. Folding up:  
the inkless page.  
I perch like Giovanni  
'pon his lumber.

III

With nary a wake  
it works its way  
on through the floating harbour –  
a manned-kayak.  
Gulls disperse.

IV

In shelt'ring porchway-  
entrance to the Arnolfini,  
I  
re-place myself.  
The gull gives up its bracing.

V

Windbreaker は  
むらさきです upon  
the one half of the pair a-walking.  
Shaggy dog:  
your fringe 'n beard match mine.

VI

Elegance...  
It strolled on by.  
Colour...  
It just walked past.  
People-watching; people, watching me.

VII

Tanka by the banks-a,  
with my notebook near its end –  
a sunsome Sunday 'neath the harbour sky.  
I probably look homeless  
to these fam'lies...

VIII

As I adore alliteration,  
I must muster up  
(Assonance, too!)  
three tanka more.  
Well, now two.

IX

I watched the leaves  
go sailing by,  
as the noon killed off  
the morning.  
(It just turned 12pm.)

X

The water level stays  
e'er as it is, e'en as the rest  
of us do rise 'n fall  
while floating  
on the Avon...

At The Entrance Of The Afternoon

*12.01pm*

This winter wind,  
wispful in its wistsome wonder,  
wears its wawtry cloak.  
Flame stands in its ungentle passing;  
maps back-lit by unnatchrul light.

Serene...  
Steps upon a floating city;  
gaze upon the world you've entered.

A Scene, Translated

A rooster-tail  
at winter's end –  
my hair in lockdown-length.  
In loops of Latin phrase,  
a standard's placed.

Breeze breaks in laughter  
loosed; **kuhlainkkinkcnk**  
sothairyugoe!  
*hahihihihuh* hyeh-uh?!  
[I pull upon my rooster-tail.]

In tanka – twonowthree –  
the fourfour phoniclash of raydyoes  
phlash forth, fused with  
snippetalk as strands of  
now (to me; t'you – then...).

A scene translated  
by me, with my hair tied-up.  
(Cabot Corner; 22/03/21; 4.14 午後)

### Beside The Trees, Deciduous

The sun upon  
the bench upon  
the cobbled corner;  
clouds cling – fast –  
to the southernmost horizon.

There's a bracing, blue-bright layer  
'fore the ocean – black.

*Bonus couplet, in half-rhyme:*

Too much Skyrim;  
not enough writing.

### Heatwaved Harbour

The searsome sun seethes  
heathaze, hamm'ring hard  
the scorch-scarred cobble.  
Artificial canopy.  
No breeze...

### A Tanka For The Pigeons Having Sex

Violet plumage preened –  
perched pigeon plays  
his puff-chest charm.  
sssssswwOOP In seagull's sailing path,  
they flutter.

### A Tanka On The Corner Of The Harbourside

Moss-green: a ring  
around old cobble, lifted  
on th'crest of rising roots.  
Were't not for my brief perception,  
t'would be tempestuous.

### World's End

Swan – swept along.  
Momentum marks the half-hid hull.  
Day-drinker ponders; rises;  
leaves the poem.  
The dang'rous water – deep – buffets the quay.  
  
At this spot, this world's end –  
th'muse's inexhaustible.

### Weston-Super-Mare

On th'edge of the edge –  
train-journeying alone  
bereft the panic,  
shattering the feedback-loop!  
A western-town atop the sea.

## Poem 'Pon A Photo Page

Beneath the buzzards  
and the sudden sun –  
a couple wed near Bristol.  
Rings, tears, 'n speeches...  
A wond'rous day!

### Queen Square Haiku

Haiku:  
like the blues –  
easy; impossible.

Where is he now,  
cy'cling around?  
Moving metal-music.

TUMP  
pprrr... pprrrr....  
tap

Imagine  
comprehending  
how far away the sun is...

How do you  
spell  
the smell of the bark of a tree?

Th'only rule  
(really) is: it simply has  
to feel like one.

The un-sovereign ant  
explores my t-shirt landscape.  
A whistle through the airwaves.

Haiku.  
Only haiku.  
Lots of haiku.

The wind is  
alive  
and I can't write it.

?  
, :  
.

Poe eh tree.  
Pough e treigh.  
Poh ea trea.

Stewpid  
bludee  
langwij!

### Tanka Taken From A Tree-Trunk

Sun-silhouette;  
the slanted cone that  
crowns – orange – his head.  
King Will'yum walks, in wettened-sand,  
his horse – still now 'n nowhere.

Leaf-litter lay –  
in sea-green grass the marsh-march moves...

### Again Against A Tree Here In Queen Square

Alone, a lamppost  
lit by sun; Bath-stone  
borders, basks, 'n beckons.  
Trooping past: a generation.  
Moving fast: th'future finds its steady way...

## King William Tanka

The sentence structure  
streams about my meandering mind...  
Heat radiates from fires;  
heat bleeds from th'radiator.  
The high-backed bench wears copper relics.

## Fire & Starlight

Far-reaching fire,  
its glare on green-grass;  
gravel.  
A centre-piece surrounded.  
Echo, chaos...

My eyes close o'er, lens-shielded.  
Beside myself, flame-fury flaring; calm.

## Three Senryu & A Sentence

Hurling to the edge.  
(Accept the lack of limit.)  
Rushing to the climb.

Scale beyond the ground.  
(Accept limited control.)  
Fall facing forward.

Be 'tween two unknowns.  
(Take responsibility.)  
*Known's* the illusion.

Go back – when the sun lets through the ancient, scorching starlight – and sit among the fury on the marsh.

## Society Café Tanka

Chatter: less.  
There are no clinking ceramic cups.  
Th'breeze breaks unbound through th'open doorway.  
Nevertheless...  
I write a poem in a café.

## On The Scene Without This Café

Th'breeze brokers  
a rough 'n cooler clime.  
Parallel, the rails run elseward.

## Tanka Number Who-Knows-What

Heat, highly risen!  
Energetic wisps weave; wander!  
Microcosmic climbing clouds  
cling fast 'n entropy.  
Ling'ring life, nevertheless...

## Wreflected

I see myself  
beyond the pane,  
o'er where leaf-litter lies.  
I write; I drink; I'm passed through  
by Brist-ohl-yuns.

## I Saw The Girl-Child, Standing

At Pero's Bridge,  
where th'cobbles turn to metal  
(mist-surrounded),  
a blaze-blue spirit, wonder-rapt,  
her hair the sunfire, stands.

She runs ahead;  
beside me –  
her hands about her heart.

## Asking/Begging

A gift a-given.  
Another now...  
As with those others, I'll not help you.  
I'll toss you words  
you'll never read.

## A Thought, Through Pen, On Paper

Still horses  
'pon a Merry-Go-Round.  
Their bridled porcelain –  
on poles of gold  
they slumber.

## Hawking Written Wares

*11.12am*

Eye-catching... YesNo!  
Avoidant gaze.  
The footfall flux meanders.  
Atop the auld laid slabs,  
my display stands.

*1.52pm*

No sales!  
Some chats.  
Eight minutes more...

## To Close Out A Letter

And now I sit  
on the top step of the right-hand side  
(looking o'er toward the cranes),  
whilst the cascade is quiet, still -  
there is no water flowing downward.

Will you dance upon the wooden-slatted platform?  
Will you recreate the waterfalling river in your eyes?

## The Pit At St. James'

Found at St. James fayre:  
*le miscellaneous*. Now?  
Characterless pit.

## It Lay, Off'ring Still

On Turbo Island:  
tattered sofas; cold, grey ash.

Home for those in want,  
threatened by development.

It passed its time, from  
Easter Island heads and grass

to bare patch of ground,  
likely to be claimed and paved.

It lay, off'ring still  
a home for those who're homeless.

Leave it, please, for those in want.

## "You're Not Gonna Help Me?"

Don't you  
look them in the eyes when  
you refuse to give them money?

## Hai(tea-)ku

African tea-leaf.  
Hungarian tea-maker.  
English tea-drinker.

## Oh, To Be Back At The Canteen

A searing sit in sunglasses,  
beneath the fist of progress –  
I've not been here in fucking ages!  
New art; trends entrenched.  
Populous pints 'n people being.

## Coffee & Pineapple Juice

Walked up to Stokes Croft  
in the blist'ring sun, blaze-burning –  
I've left some leaflets 'n some booklets.  
*White wins*  
*by checkmate!*

## From The Table Backed By Octaves In Their Slumber

They move  
to watch the people;  
the city spreads its sprawl.  
Schrödinger's poetry  
lay waiting.

## Some Senryu & Zome Zappai

A tiger shark  
and beluga whale –  
pillar illustrations.

Effortless and  
effortful:  
belonging.

Alliteration  
always  
'as a place.

Hyaenas at the  
long, booked table!  
There're peacocks at the bar.

I'm abandoned by  
the bickering. Left to write  
my waka – nope, they're back.

Hokay, Here're Haikai

Haiku

*Rules followed:*

- *On nature*
- *3 lines*
- ~~5/7/5~~

Torrential tumult to  
th'Earth – fall...  
A contained plant indoors.

Senryu

*Rules followed:*

- *On human nature*
- *3 lines*
- ~~5/7/5~~

A chattering of consciousness:  
Spanish, left; English, right.  
Todo nunca se dice...

Zappai

*Rules followed:*

- *On neither nature nor human nature*
- *3 lines*
- ~~5/7/5~~

Checked –  
all colour; none.  
Surround the pharaoh!

### A Canteen Tanka & A Comment

A day releasing  
paper copies; a day purchasing  
drinks.  
Writing about sharing writing;  
t-shirt 'n the covers of this notebook: pink.

Oh, that rhymes.

### Summer Waned

In summer sunlight,  
Autumn gestated/beckoned.

Ears out, nostrils flared:  
a dog took in the café.

Upon its linked-leash,  
it was held and led away.

Summer waned; Autumn beckoned.

## Writing Workers

Separately working swift –  
one pony-tailed; one ear-hooped –  
with bread 'n fruit 'n coffee.  
Bristol bakery.

## Zappai For A Person Passing

A red hat (wool) upon  
a passing moment; light a-righted  
'long the optic nerve.

## Across A Crossroads

Lapis sprayed  
upon a protest wall –  
half-covered call to action.  
A dragon's hide;  
two work to clean the gutter.

## Zappai In 'N On Stokes Croft

This is where  
I wrote  
"I Saw Three Leaves".

The road's  
become community –  
creation.

A ballad  
for the place –  
it's not released yet.

A dragon,  
drenched in its own blue fire.  
Grassroots republic.

(Release on Instagram today;  
on WordPress after  
the others in the queue.)

### W'thin Outdoor Café Cold

Down street-strand alleyway,  
walking – fluorescent green 'n navy –;  
gone now, in the space of  
sentences 'n leaf-litter  
o'er blowing...

A chain pushed/pulled; again,  
the cold wind lifts these leaves  
of grass. Avast a moment –  
warmth waits in the  
gustless silence...

On four paws  
padding passed's  
the inkless line.

### Wand'ring With My Ink-Blue Thoughts

#### *Hill*

Lead lagging,  
a gallop-bound below;  
cranes perched to pierce the skyline.  
のののはなはむらさきです,  
their purple petals pollinated.

In train-sound waves  
the birdsong lingers...

### *Café*

Sun o'er café canvas –  
glancing glide; a cascade's grace –  
whilst whittling th'air  
with sweep-storm waves:  
chirp-chatter, cheerful.

Breeze – cool the sweat-soaked tees!  
The mind remakes the refused chatter...

### *Bus*

The breeze of movement:  
dying.  
The heat's held on our lips.  
The Roman road to Gloucester  
goes on, arch-led.

Eyes only, brow-accomp'nied.  
In staggered solitude, we travel...

## Songs Of York

### Amidst Amongst Around The North York Moors

I

Upon Rawcliffe –  
a new town,  
its valley verdant; steam-trained.  
In the steep hoofsteps of cows,  
tread trav'lers.

The blank-verse chimes  
time night.  
Switch – dark. Hold – whisper.

II

The flies find lighted windows –  
polished tow'r.  
The scone cliffs crumble.  
On cake 'n coffee fuel,  
we coast to Ravenscar...

Beware the bull!  
The cow! The calf!  
See the seals supine!

III

A greasy spoon –  
red brick; green paint; raw screech  
of th'babe hushushed.  
A breadbeanketchup mush  
on plate on tray.

Imminent...  
"Another round!" She'll cry.  
Th'quiet prior t'storm.

#### IV

Ana Cross –  
a bird of prey,  
at hov'ring height, doth herald.  
The ironworks, b'yond moorrise,  
echo th'wind.

Moss-matted bridge – streamriverstone.  
Impeer'yul Rome lost...  
Purple heather.

#### An Encounter

On an evening wander's  
lake-reed trail –  
a roe deer.

#### Time-Begotten

Like a mixed-metaphor  
bound with scattered simile –  
the hist'ry-layered city.

#### Merchant's Hall Tanka

Stratford-esque  
(or is Stratford York-like?)  
stands the Merchant Hall.  
Brick bears beams bear rooftiles.  
Th'chimney towers.

## A Postcard From York Minster

### *To Mum*

O'er Minster's tiles of polished stone,  
we walked. The stained-glass panes,  
that stretched to reach the heavens, shone.  
As tourists flocked – in groups; alone –  
the choir sang again...

### *To Dad & Jane*

"Now to communion.  
Please approach and use  
the hand sanitiser..."  
– Modern Service At York Minster

A light for Nana –  
pride of place.  
A candle b'side the nave.

American family –  
no way out!  
Wrong exit.  
Over the sound of God,  
a busker sings John Denver.

## At Shambles' End

Alyss, Ros, 'n Molly shift,  
a-shambling through the queue,  
waiting to peruse the Potterporium.  
The old ladies in t'church  
made me a coffee.

## An Old York Sunset's Scene-Song

The Knavesmire mired –  
flood-sodden field!  
New wetland frozen fast.  
As th'sunfire lights the trees aflame,  
th'people glide 'cross the frozen water.

## Songs Of Ireland

### Canalway Walking

Crystal-clear canalway  
cascades leaflitter-locks –  
round 'bout route to Portobello.  
IPA of euros many (Only half-pint, too!);  
full-pint o' water wobuhling.

### A Tanka 'Pon Visiting The Joyce Centre

Wond'rous words  
with their meansigns wed  
where Liffyanna rivers through –  
choice Joyce-isms  
at the hid-'way Dublin townhouse.

### Our Aft'noon/Eve In Haiku

Stacked-stones mossify,  
fadesome inscriptions borne.  
Ice-stream air; monastic village.

Roots rise;  
water falls;  
Autumn leaves.

Ducks duck their beak-led heads,  
here where  
the lake's submerged this bench.

Me: Ravioli (Must've been tinned!).  
You: Zipzapped ready-meal.  
Us: Hotel dinner.

Phone light frames  
where walking-boots will tread.  
A bat in sound-search flight.

Ghosts of other solar systems...  
Your flick'ring fire?  
The banshee's cry.

## Songs Of Wales

### A Tunnel Leading Westward

On the rubble-rock  
of the fort-wall's crumbling,  
portside, pond'rous form –  
urban doves, flocking  
'bout the railroad bridge.

### At The Old Electric Shop

Tat-tattercorn 'n upside down;  
flaked colour, coarse; heads carven,  
the bridle-bound bear down –  
the crow in the cage cawcackles,  
watching me flail from o'er my shoulder.

### Adventure Tanka

With th'kayaks clear,  
long out of view,  
the canoes coalesce...  
The boiling blackcurrant's sipped; thrown.  
Lake water laps the breeze-blown rushes.

### At Cricc'yeth Coast

Wadewashing out  
in sea-salt-sandy steps  
'cross Cymru's coast.  
Cricc'yeth, w'thin crumblewalls  
(moss-laden), stands.

## A Welsh Christmas

Sand, wind-whipped;  
waves, wind-wrath shaped;  
shorn sea o'er th'westward reach –  
three wetsuit-wearers, dog, and I.  
Nadolig Llawen!

## Songs Of Written Language

[Without End]

Writing Writing Writing Writing Writing

End-less

[Without End]

Exponential

"Write us a poem – you're the poem man!"

Demanding, my mind made it clear...

... : ?

Ophelia drowns in a river...

I wonder:

was it her within my mind?

### A Tanka On The Superiority Of Tanka

Tanka

>

haiku.

That's right.

You heard me.

### A Tanka On The Sonnet

Verbose in

rhyme 'n rhythm –

regulated; regular.

Heart-beating on, allusory...

Sound, songette!

## Poems From Café Living Room

### *Three Lines On Having Pooed*

Like a petal,  
detached from its flowering stem,  
I float with empty bowels.

### *I Look Over, 'Cross The Street*

A red-tiled roof  
meets dampened-other;  
above, the moss-mould colonises.

### *And Each Sep'rate, Dying Ember*

Ah, distinctly I remember,  
t'was the post-noon of November,  
as the sky – its blanket grey – hid space 'n time,  
  
that I let my muscle-mem'ry  
spill through ink to 'lease 'n let free  
that with which my firing neurons sowed my mind.

### *Unto The End Of This Here Notebook*

These pages three,  
in their loose 'n blank-lined state,  
are, together, a haiku.  
This tanka, in its love for them,  
destroys their pure expression.

The thread that binds their imag'ry  
unravels...

The page was blank; is writ';  
lies undiscovered...

## Composed Whilst Pupil Writes

*"A leaf falling."*

The mossied bark breaks;  
the buds that bloomed in springtime  
detach, tumbuhling.  
Soon, the cold winter's white  
will coat the forest.

*"Hmm like, maybe, a fountain in a park?"*

Flowering fount –  
your bursts of H2O  
bloom cold!  
On stone, the copper pennies  
settle.

*"A cat staring out the window?"*

The pointed ears that scan;  
a tail-twitch metronome.  
At the windowsill, she watches.

*"One with 1-2-3-4-5 for the syllables!"*

Fruit,  
packaged –  
plastic bags.  
A shocking waste...  
Bananas; apples.

## Just One More Alphabet

In kanji, kept  
on cards – the key  
to eddied pools of meaning.  
Neurons recall – give chase – to readings;  
in muscle-mem'ry, ink-strokes settle.

## Two Tanka & A Single Word

### *Egypt & Industry*

A third on home...  
No break – instead, I'll build  
two at once.  
Cities in parallel, blended;  
the nearer past and ancient times.

### *Paradise*

Wait, around your fire,  
a year or so for dedication.  
Paradise...  
Birthed 'mongst books on 46th street;  
elaborated on near C'lumbus Circle

### *Ideas!*

Ideas!

## Long Division

Inching closer,  
sentence by sentence.  
The decimal,  
its percent-parts,  
rounds upwards...

## Perhaps

Poems have slowed...  
Perhaps that's natural.  
A phase that ends; a phase begins.  
Novellas writ.  
Verse collected.

## Pointless Whimsy

Oops...  
I'm writing  
in a reading café!

## To Keep From Writing

### *A Tanka To Keep From Writing Nothing*

Why's the page  
a page still blank?  
Fill up.  
Take the ink from the (FlexGrip) pen;  
articulate the uncontrollable.

### *A Haiku (?) To Keep From Writing Onething*

A flame 'n electric lights.  
The futile furnace in the distance 'n the past.  
No contest.

## A Tanka On My Mild Frustration At Piles Of Books & Ideas Waiting

To write; to read –  
I could dedicate more time...  
But:  
I need my mind to wander;  
for time to pass.

## Begging

Researched publishers again...  
But I'm in two minds –  
go my own unlikely way alone,  
or grovel on to the subjectivity  
of the gatekeepers?

## Undiscovered

Smaller poems?  
Fewer now –  
I write for longer projects.  
A catalogue of hundreds,  
undiscovered...

## Songs Of Imagined Parenthood

### A Solitary Sedoka

D'you know how many  
children I have seen you in?  
For how long I've spoken t'you?

*Through the written word  
I've already replied; I  
can read our time together.*

### A Song From Mem'ry Deep

What  
songs have I sung  
to you?  
(I hope you run out  
of space...)

; ? : . or, A Sedoka On The Explaining Of The Concept & Feeling Of Love To A Young  
Child

And how would you, then,  
explain to a child just what  
love is; just what it means?

*I'd say: It's when  
you're more excited for  
another's birthday than your own.*

## From One Notebook To Another

And what,  
my child of time approaching,  
e'er shall I write next?  
Turns out that it was this;  
that it was You.

## Songs Of Love & Romance

### For The Lady In The Dulcet-Hued Bandana

Kaleidoscopic script of searching  
shapes in muted green... The wisps of  
orange marshal light amidst the blue.  
Pink jumper;  
light laugh 'n lovely smile.

### A Series Of Sedoka

#### *From The Sandi Coast Of The New World*

Hung upon a string's  
the lion's tooth that I found:  
a necklace I made for you.

One of a diff'ring  
two – with you, from fire pit,  
I walked 'neath the Southern Cross.

#### *From The Royal Mount Of The Northern Territories*

Dark 'n curled hair.  
Intense, in text, in person.  
Meet me by Victor'ya Falls.

You've become settled,  
fully integrated in  
the mem'ries of another.

#### *From An Old Norse Farm By A Clear, Bright Lake*

Four-hand piano  
playing under thatched roof  
to Zimbabwean sunlight.

Lunarful midnight:  
swimming through the cold water.  
From friend to more to stranger...

*From The Pure Land Of The Southern East & A Ford By The Willow Trees*

Along the Irwell  
(I taught you th'art of fencing.)  
we walked from town to city.

Along the Irwell  
(You left another for me.)  
we walked from city to town.

*From A Steep Hill By A Watery Meadow*

I felt as though you  
were... inevitable.  
That feeling's passed from my mind.

"At last! At last!" At  
least (at last) t'was seen through: you  
were not inevitable.

*From The Port & Passage By The White Sea's Coast*

A brace of years; a  
bond battled for - strive-strengthened.  
Your impact sitting deeply.

In winter formed and  
in winter ended. A bond  
devastatingly caring.

*She Is*

Never you. No...  
But I told you – f'that I'm glad.  
She is wonderful for you.

Leave

Another for you?  
A thought that's not completed...  
Leave those deep, green Balkan eyes.

!

With whom; where; how soon; when....  
the moment:  
"So it's you, then!"

## Songs Of Miscellany

### Eleven

The day, it becomes  
morning's noon-time end;  
the time hits twelve; the time turns past.  
I fold my notebook – closed;  
I start another...

*A way a lone a last a loved a long the*

Forfeit the final pages!

*riverrun,*

### Twirling Doodles

Two twirling doodles dancing,  
their ink-blue lives  
well-lived.

### Accidental Senryu; Deliberate Tanka

As soon as I write  
*This is the present moment.*  
it becomes untrue.  
(Should I make this a tanka?  
Or leave it as three lines?)

*Bonus extra sentence:*

Write, and the words will come.

## Entropy In Motion

Black depths burn  
vapour to a spiral dance –  
the steam; the surface.  
My coffee cools,  
as does the void.

## A Tanka On The Surface Of My Coffee

The foam,  
its cavern-gorge –  
still-rippled; still –  
in spreadhaze hue,  
marks the tide-line, traced.

Upon the writer's block  
the ink-blue bleeds...

後?

Phone has passed  
away again –  
I perform great feats  
of balanced-contortion  
with th'charger cable.

For now, though,  
I don't know what the time is...

## To See The World Through Quartz 'N Ash

A caravan of cars 'n vans  
a-wheel o'er paint-marked road.  
The triad canopy contain their thoughts.

## A Mem'ry Shared Between Us

To be squatting, posed  
about a fire – talk! sing! –  
in contemplation...

*Bug- 'n bird-calls in the middle distance.*

You are human.

## Stories

Crouched around a fire,  
articulating stories –  
what is more human?

## Settled

Settled,  
with their language,  
by the water –  
beings who know themselves  
through song.

## The Cross, The Star, & The Crescent Moon

Three men (dark-eyed)  
at th'fire's edge;  
the Morning Star ablaze –  
In the end,  
God tore the world asunder.

## On An Evening

Soul search...  
A moment clear.  
Standing in the stairwell – stupid.  
Check your phone,  
fool!  
  
Wasteful wastrel...  
Rise tomorrow.

## Lost Japan

Poles 'n pylons;  
boards abound,  
billing thr'out the spirit realm...  
Is it true it's you who  
wait along the mountain paths?

## A Tanka As The Bells Appeal

picking at my cuticle  
fucking STOP doing that  
for fuck's sake  
please  
my whole fucking hand hurts

## Emergency Notebook Tanka

Sat in arrivals,  
awaiting Loz 'n Hannah –  
Storm Eunice.  
I want to smuggle them  
some choc'lut...

## WhatsApp Waka

Park grass picnic;  
river surface sailing.  
A week ends and begins.

## Upon The Floodplains Of The Nile

Swenett calls: *Return*  
*'long the life-endowing waters!*  
Crocodiles hold union on the marsh.  
Deep-em'rald, azure-laced;  
teak, torn by oxblood wisps.  
Two paths curve t'ward an empty cradle.

A Brief Three-Line Poem Touching On The Possible Co-Regency Of The Potentially Now Delusional & Therefore Increasingly Unfit Akh-En-Aten & The Probably Unsettlingly Powerful Nafereti-Iti, With Her Given The Public Persona Of A Male Co-King & Future Sole King Due To Lingering Societal PTSD Over The Earlier Hat-Shep-Sut Incident

Sumenk-Ka-Ra:  
as this she shall be known!  
A man to take the crown.

## Issfet Adorned

Sibling serpent, umbilical born,  
waits in th'western mountains –  
th'evil gaze.

## Invigilation

In silence,  
softly seared with sounds  
of pencil 'pon the page –  
mock SATs.  
"Wenzlunch?" "Doughnassk meethat."

Playnoise,  
in soundful shockwaves...  
The Year 3s are on break.

## Teaching From The Living Room

A deep 'n dusty red.  
Ghostly echoes of a yearnsome yellow.  
The dull 'n darkened green.  
Across the roadside – down; up; down –  
the bushes and the trees grow, silent.

## Café Back Garden

I s'pose I ought  
tuh not mind that  
I'm trapped at home again.  
I have the plague,  
but also cump'nee.

## Knew Knee Knews

Leg locked in  
linear array of straps 'n clips;  
the staggered-stain of iodine  
still orange on my foot 'n thigh.  
I'm braced for a new knee, tracking central...

## A Tanka On The US Capitol

Armoured, armed, 'n fury-laden –  
virulent cause inciteful  
in white./In black?  
Insightful issue voiced –  
face armed 'n armoured fury.

## A Tanka For A Wedding Card

Sunfire on frost –  
between the bales  
she walks t'ward him.  
Branches bend about them.  
High Green wed.

## Songs Of Evening; Of Night

### Milk Stout

Stout standing can,  
mapped o'er with Bristol.  
The eve matures to eve'ning...

### A Scrap Of Notes-Gone-By

*Sunday, Sunday,  
not this Sunday,  
but next Sunday*  
In one ear 'n out the other –  
he walked behind me as he said it.

The Inn On The Green, Bristol.  
11th August 2018.  
9.30-something pm.

### A Second Scrap Of Notes-Gone-By

The present never wavers  
on its path  
into the past.  
(Damn, looks like there's a quiz about to start...  
that'll be distracting.)

The Inn On The Green, Bristol.  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2018.  
8.11pm.

## River-Light Deepens; Lingers

River runs;  
light lingers;  
dusk deepens.  
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, and –  
a fleet of dancing stars.

## Waxing Fragrant

Lit flame o'er lake  
of candle-wax, a-waxing  
fragrant – breathe  
the lavenderic blossom,  
burning bright.

## Firetide Beside

Lapping at the scorched-stump –  
a blazing firetide, entropic!  
Flamelight infuses the electric.  
The flop-eared hound shiftsettles  
as we are.

## From Sleep

Concert calling 'cross  
the city late-lit, soundful night –  
the soundwaves wash 'n wake, moon-bidden.  
From entropying tea, I gather sleep.  
From sleep, I gain the risen sun.

## Time Travel

These late-night, windswept  
words and their ink-blue  
synapse-forms?  
Time travel –  
wild 'n insecure.

## At Night

The tangled, tanka pages  
of Akiko placed aside;  
a notebook, now, nestled beside my pillow.  
I sketch the grass below  
the knotted trunk.

10.34pm

The naked wind alights  
upon my skin upon her skin;  
of tepid tea my tongue  
remembers.  
I write these words to end a tanka.

In a brace of extra lines –  
my hand, around her finger.

## Without My Notebook

Inhale.  
*Hoots of owl-song*  
*on gusts of mature night.*  
Wait for words...  
An exhalation.

## Bath Senryu

She couldn't sleep;  
I held her.  
In the distance, wood pigeons.

## A Tanka From A Scrap Of Sonnet

In darkness,  
here I sit awaiting th'spring  
that travels 'long  
the bleak late-winter's wake  
toward this falt'ring death.

## Lunar Lines

Jealous of the life the earth held –  
precious, bright, 'n moving – the moon took small pleasure  
when the world was frozen still.

## A New Year Beckons

Onward,  
pen 'n mind!  
2021...

## A Storm At Midnight

Coherent wind –  
speak harshly 'gainst our walls,  
wearing your look of sweeping anger.

I fall asleep...

## A Tanka After Midnight

In lines abstract –  
of ink; of thought –  
I breathe her tangled hair.  
To auld lang syne:  
the first day of the year.

## Shumba Famba

In dreams,  
Zimbabwe-bound –  
my unwrit mind.  
Heathaze-dewmorn biography –  
my trainers trace the paw-pad tracks...

Verdant-vivid  
is the tall grass,  
tail-tufts twitching o'er.  
Tanaka turns; Thulani mirrors –  
chase.

00.36am

Rain on pattered pane;  
the wind weaves,  
wattuhling with layered cold.  
A flash of lush-green light blinks,  
bridging space...

## Songs Of Epilogue

### Waters, Whatever

Poems part stagnant  
waters, whatever the width,  
closing behind you.

### Signing Off

'Round coffee stains –  
the lines,  
in dormancy.

### Kanagawa

A final brace of  
blank papyrus sheets,  
their lines stretch finite.  
Ink-blue inevitability –  
crashing wave.