

Cherie Hunter Day A Color for Leaving



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Act 1988

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these poems previously appeared:

American Tanka, Haibun Today, Mariposa, red lights, Ribbons, Tangled Hair, The Tanka

Society of America Newsletter, and Tanka Splendor 2005 (AHA Books, 2005).

A Color for Leaving



winter birds
beneath the sunken branches
of arborvitae
I huddle in a snowdrift
that smells faintly of cedar

no repair for the fallen camellia weighted with rain an apology too late only complicates my life nineteen months
of unemployment
still too early
to tell whether the cactus
will bloom again

bottled water stored in the trunk of my car cool at night warm during the day this is how I fluctuate our new kettle
warbles when the tea water
comes to a boil
those tiny increments
of knowing someone

hot night
with the sheet around my head
a mosquito
still finds the blood
closest to the surface

clear night, owl night
through the tissue of darkness
an exchange
their grip of honed surfaces
my sinew and bone

even this
late in the season
seeds sprout
the first tiny leaves
almost always in pairs

I slip into a bookstore to the travel section then the science fiction aisle perfecting my getaway in every kingdom there is something worth defending my son piles buckets of sand against the evening tide spiraling
a winged seed makes its way
to the ground
the strange beauty
of my own crooked path

a summer morning among tall meadow grass savannah sparrows divulge their hidden nests tell me a secret like that sheen on the backs
of swallows diving
in a cloudless sky
I want to neglect this work
and reinvent myself

three time zones away
we unwrap our belongings
and begin again
from window to bare window
this wide circle of moths

a brown moth folded on the windowsill an expiration date on my cereal box—as if I need reminders

butterflies alight
and easily blend in
by folding their wings
the flashes of blue reserved
for leaving

the pilot light
igniting a blue flame
under the teapot
an unencumbered sky
at the end of autumn

I amend my list of reminders to my son the winter waves pounding an intrusion of basalt after months
of deflecting sunlight
I now angle
the mini blinds so the sun
can enter this rented room

Award Credits

"butterflies alight" Honorable Mention, Haiku Poets of Northern California San Francisco International Tanka Contest 2005

"even this"

First Place, Haiku Poets of Northern California San Francisco International Tanka Contest 2006

"in every kingdom" Tanka Splendor Award 2005 "nineteen months"

Honorable Mention, Tanka Society of America International Tanka Contest 2006

"our new kettle"

Commended, Tanka Café Members' Choice, Ribbons 1:2, 2005

"spiraling"

First Place, Tanka Society of America International Tanka Contest 2007

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