

# IRISH HAIKU

Selected by Anatoly KUDRYAVITSKY



Michael Andrew

leaves falling—  
old man  
tunes his mandolin

spring dawn  
mistle thrush's song  
muffled by diesel engine

stirred from my slumber—  
pine marten  
stealing apples

Natalie Arkins

frosty tips of grass  
crows' tails  
lifted to the sky

golden afternoon  
awaiting  
blackthorns' adornment

Tony Bailie

rain on the window  
an unfurling snail plucked  
from its thrush-cracked shell

cloud streaks  
scarring the sky  
hounded wind howls

frogspawn  
in a sun-dried pond—  
speckled mud

### Pat Boran

nowhere left to hide  
a lone crab scuttles between  
islands of stillness

the first drops of rain  
striking the limestone shelter  
colour again

evening approaching  
curlews stilt-walk  
on their reflections

### Buachallán Buí

seasann faoileáin  
ar bharr an tséipéil fholamh  
ag breathnú ar an lá

(a gull  
atop the empty church  
watching the day go by)

thíos anseo  
canaid don doircheacht  
na míolta móra

(down below  
singing to the darkness,  
great whales)

ar dhromchla na mara,  
eitlíonn ealaí  
os cionn scamall

(on the sea surface,  
swans flying  
above the clouds)

(Translated from the Irish by the author)

Patrick Gerard Burke

child by a tree  
all the bells  
on one branch

pre-dawn  
light wind  
shushes through trees

autumn wind  
in the lee of the oak  
its shadow in leaves

Jim Burke

kingfisher  
gathering the mid-day sun  
on its wet feathers

David Burleigh

trapped inside a pot  
at the bottom of the sea  
the octopus dreams

the door flung back—  
snow falling on the garden  
in soft gray light

a thousand-page book  
I will surely never read—  
the first narcissus

Sharon Burrell

lichen  
a thousand lines  
in the rock face

cemetery—  
after rain, honeyed smell  
of upturned earth

summer breeze—  
the load of  
heavy-limbed poplars

Paddy Bushe

St. Patrick's Day—  
not knowing any better,  
lambs dance a set

the low autumn sun  
crimsoning the mountain—  
rutting stags roar

gainéid ag tumadh  
ó ghoirme go goirme  
chun bualadh leo féin

(gannets  
diving from blue to blue  
to meet themselves)  
(English translation: Gabriel Rosenstock)

Juanita Casey

Burning leaves . . .  
the face once again  
feels summer

The pickers  
have left one plum . . .  
Hey, wind

Four crows on four posts  
across a field of mustard—  
a chord for summoning foxes

Patrick Chapman

cherry blossom fire  
kissing the garden  
to sleep

debutante flowers—  
red and white skirts hitched up,  
waiting for a bee

summer flowers die—  
distilled into a droplet,  
aphrodisiac

Marion Clarke

turning tide . . .  
a barnacle waits  
on a limpet

first rays  
buds and mist  
unfurling

low winter sun  
warming up a row  
of chimney pots

Michael Coady

ravens from the heights  
throw shapes\* above the belfry—  
deep-croak rituals  
(Throw shapes: dance (Hiberno-Engl.))

Marie Coveney

crows on a bare branch—  
ink-laden  
brushstrokes

Kara Craig

All Souls Day—  
night sky alive with  
white flares

an old spade  
washed to the shore  
picked up again

descending snowflakes  
the battlefield  
white again

Tony Curtis

under the old boat  
shoals of silent fish passing—  
silver in the night

the Liffey's old song  
singing softly below me  
in a muddy voice

a blackbird's sweet song  
lost in the wilderness of hills—  
prayer for the dead

Norman Darlington

neighbour's field  
newborn lambs playing  
in their last spring

grasses rustling—  
a mountain wind  
reaches for the sea

after the rain:  
the river  
its weight

Patrick Deeley

heron holds still  
a beard of minnows sways  
under his chin

dead thrush on the doorstep  
the cat's way  
to my heart

leather-winged bat  
spinning darkness  
on darkness

Noel Duffy

autumn day  
the toaster humming  
to nothing

honeycomb  
honey and darkness stored  
for the long winter

Ann Egan

wild iris flowers  
yellow stars fill  
a black ditch

pale seedlings curl  
beneath the oak's spread—  
mother and child play

Gilles Fabre

always first to bloom—  
this cherry tree  
in the graveyard

everywhere,  
even in my pocket,  
this morning's spring wind

pub's round toilet window  
just big enough—  
summer full moon

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

a rotting tree stump  
in the middle of the woods  
mushrooms with new life

Michael Gallagher

rainy day  
not even the postman tempts  
the dog outdoors

sudden shower  
the bog stitched with  
silver lamé

gentle June breeze  
maple leaves  
clatter

Michael Hartnett

In a green spring field  
a brown pony stands asleep  
shod with daffodils

Francis Harvey

sleeping, I think of  
Errigal and Mount Fuji . . .  
the shape of my dreams

snow, and the old man  
listens to the rafters creak—  
the weight of winter

the best of the day:  
sweet nothing exchanged between  
a blackbird and me

Seamus Heaney

Dangerous pavements . . .  
But this year I face the ice  
with my father's stick

Patrick Kavanagh

Corn-crake  
a cry in the wilderness  
of meadow

Peter Keane

in the morning light  
the mesembryanthemum  
opens to the sun

dispossessed swallows  
rebuilding their little lives  
in another barn

Rita Kelly

bowed heads heavy  
after daffodils  
spelling the spring

curtains part  
main act  
moon in the window

dead winter  
smooth sanded curves  
before laburnum

Noel King

derelict convent—  
black and white little bird  
on the windowsill

house deserted—  
rhubarb stumps  
in the back garden

between the rain clouds,  
yellow furze  
atop the hill

Matt Kirkham

hard to make out . . .  
lambs  
against frosted fields

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

ventilator off—  
the sound of dragonfly  
wing beats

inside the empty shell, snail's dreams

mosquito  
in Baltic amber—  
its frozen flight

Stuart Lane

trees bare against sky—  
the old boar in his pen  
snuffs the fresh snow

ancient earthworks—  
a raven echoes vanished  
war cries

Leo Lavery

sewing cobwebs  
in its corner—  
the old Singer

I shut the history book  
and the shooting  
stops

the cuckoo  
savouring  
its one blue note

Jessie Lendennie

late August stillness  
long I gaze at the pear tree  
one hand on the gate

Mark Lonergan

late Autumn  
a lone elm leaf  
hanging on

dark wintry sky  
geese wedge their way  
into the wind

torrential rain  
umbrellas mushroom  
in the park

Sean Lysaght

Main Street  
the bright water dances  
in a wheelbarrow

Aine MacAodha

out of nowhere  
a bee  
hungry for summer

cracks in the pavement  
ants pulling  
a fly

spiders' patterns  
on conifers . . .  
wearing a fine shawl

Séan Mac Mathúna

spring lake—  
a lone bird  
whistles for the dawn

writing table  
I watch a spoon  
gather the dawn

after the storm  
fog off the sea  
curling into snail shells

Clare McCotter

stooping on the edge  
of autumn  
purple river grass

May meadow at dusk—  
red fox spangled  
to a frolicking shadow

enfolding  
the fallen foxglove  
a slug's soft dream

Clare McDonnell

bandaged in ivy,  
last winter's  
broken tree

dandelion suns  
turned moons—  
the wind halves and quarters them

cotoneaster  
where an orchestra of bees  
tunes up for summer

Joe McFadden

"Over mountains  
mountains"—  
first snow

east wind—  
over silent fields  
October moon

Beth McFarland

I remember  
what I thought I'd forgotten—  
the plum tree blossoms

songbirds returning . . .  
the tunes my father  
would whistle

finally  
the old man's apples  
left for the birds

Walter Daniel McGuire

autumn breeze  
spider's web  
convex . . . concave . . .

mid-summer sky  
even the jet trails  
bloom

Sean McWilliams

at twilight  
daffodils colour  
the blackbird's song

in spring  
the cry of a cuckoo—  
someone else's dream

outgoing tide—  
every pebble  
in its place

Giovanni Malito

lone horse  
contemplating the sky—  
the still pond

after the rain  
a sudden burst of sun  
and crows

low tide  
the driftwood  
rests

Michael Massey

scattered sheep  
in an early morning field—  
boulders in the mist

talking it out  
again  
with my absent wife

Maire Morrissey-Cummins

dark November  
even the gorse bush  
has the lights on

icy morning—  
on the doormat a snail leaves  
a gift of silver

winter noon—  
under fallen tree twigs  
a mist uncurls

Joan Newmann

dead pheasant  
spread for flight—  
maggots celebrate

song in the heather  
rising wind in the ribs of  
an old piano

Kate Newmann

damp meadowsweet—  
horses in mist  
up to their oxters

caught in the branches  
of a dead oak tree,  
autumn

Colette Nic Aodha

puffs of black smoke  
waft to the left and right—  
fog engraves winter

James Norton

the window open—  
moonlight fills the room  
with moths' shadows

behind the north wall  
the frost lies all day:  
dogwoods redden

light almost gone:  
through a swarm of midges  
first star

Seán O'Connor

hot sun after rain  
wet statue of the Virgin  
slightly steams

through my socks  
and his old socks—  
the feel of borrowed boots

steaming  
after a bath  
snow in the back yard

Terry O'Connor

autumn mist  
in the beggar's hand—  
his empty stare

the calm before . . .  
this old fishing boat  
anchored to the moon

spring snow . . .  
through the broken windows  
of her childhood

Vincent O'Connor

a flash of moon  
her long hair  
almost grey

on the lapping shore  
four moons  
rising

cloudburst—  
swiftly scattering  
starlings

Hugh O'Donnell

dawn  
six starlings on the roof  
preparing to jump

rainbow—  
seven flavours  
of rain

rainstorm—  
roof leaks  
water music

Siofra O'Donovan

water rushing  
through the paddy fields  
morning soup

picking blackberries  
I catch the pale sun  
in my silver bowl

moon in the sky  
over the thick forest—  
cry of a pipal bird

Dennis O'Driscoll

the blackness of  
the cemetery blackbird,  
its song an octave lower

crab-apple windfalls  
at the cemetery wall  
no one collects for jelly

between pre-natal  
and mortuary  
the research unit

Padraig Ó Horgain

through leafless trees  
the crescent moon—  
a blackbird shatters silence

bunch of weeds  
in a famine graveyard—  
evening mist settles

occluded moon  
in the northern sky  
owl hoots

Mary O’Keeffe

autumn odyssey  
a ladybird enters the  
swallows’ nest

November sunset  
a galaxy of crows  
quench the twilight

distant lamp-post  
a star descends onto  
the tallest tree

Tom O’Malley

after rain: on my  
cabbage leaves’ dry stream beds,  
drops of quicksilver

October’s breath—  
a powder blue mist on sloes  
takes my fingerprint

the windy creaking  
of this ivy-hooded sceach—  
winter’s key-note

(Sceach: a whitethorn bush (Hiberno-Engl.))

Cathal Ó Searcaigh

my grandfather’s scythe  
rusting in the barn  
harvest twilight

an ember or two glow  
in the old man's ash bucket  
winter morning sun

the invalid boy—  
he stares at his brother  
plucking a rose

Kate O'Shea

Easter parade—  
friend from Ukraine  
wears a black beret

low summer sky—  
in the gooseberry bush  
cats' eyes

lighted candles fade—  
beyond the window,  
flowers and people

Maeve O'Sullivan

September sunrise  
seagulls strolling  
across the empty pitch

summer hailstorm  
on the window-ledge  
an earwig escapes

winter fog  
over the river  
moving with it

Ciarán Parkes

high cry of cygnets  
floating backwards  
on fast water

after rain  
the sound of birds  
tuning in

blackbird  
holding the winter sun  
in its beak

Thomas Powell

above the contour  
of ebbing snow  
two red kites

cool of the moon  
a snail's shape  
crosses the patio

sun-touched gully . . .  
the wool and bones  
of a passing winter

Isabelle Prondzynski

fog in the city—  
now I cannot see  
those I do not know

starlit sky—  
light clouds drifting from  
this year . . . to this . . .

grey day again—  
the blue grape hyacinth  
grows grey too

Maureen Purcell

bush trees in bloom  
flying fox sucks  
the nectar

cicadas  
singing for a mate  
soon to die

Justin Quinn

cotoneasters in winter:  
unleaved they show  
skeletons of sole

Mark Roper

a squashed crow's wing  
lifts and waves  
in the wake of a passing car

at my front door  
nothing between me  
and the full moon

Gabriel Rosenstock

foiche lá fearthainne  
a glóirín  
múcht

(a wasp on a wet day  
her little voice  
smothered)

barr a dhá chluas  
in airde: cadhóit  
ag éisteacht lena shinsir

(ears cocked  
coyote listening  
to his ancestors)

there must be light  
where they came from—  
chestnut blossoms

Adam Rudden

queue outside the book shop—  
footprints line up  
snow's typography

John W. Sexton

morning sun  
field too small  
for the horse's shadow

daffodils rot  
in the vase  
their shadows bloom

first snow  
the garden Buddha  
deeper

John Sheahan

fingernail clippings  
on a black marble worktop—  
the New Moon

reflected in windy water  
man in the moon  
wrinkled with age

bare branches—  
balanced on a spider's web,  
the fallen leaf

Eileen Sheehan

home village  
nowhere to visit  
but the graveyard

pauper's graveyard  
only the long grasses  
have names

hard frost—  
on the maple branch  
moon sits it out

Breid Sibley

woodland  
chorus ascends  
to greet sunrise

patchwork sunrise  
through the leafless trees—  
red cardinals

swan song  
the lake holds  
the sound

Bee Smith

striated stone  
a footpath fossil record  
walking on ocean floor

teasing elderberries  
from their heavy heads  
jelly pan babies

spider lace window  
of the holiday hut . . .  
end of season

### Martin Vaughan

too wet for birdsong—  
canary yellow beet leaves  
glisten in the rain

mountain fog—  
bleached sheep skull  
on snow

abandoned harbour—  
an old fishing net  
still catching rubbish

### Aisling White

twilight hour—  
an amber glow of  
crickets' calls

fishing boat at dusk—  
gulls' cries  
swirling the mast

bog grasses in the evening—  
a seagull  
absorbs the light