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
hound 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 faoiseáin
ar bharr an tséipéil fholaí
ag breathnú ar an lá

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

thíos anseo
canaid don doircheacht
na miolta 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

gasses 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
sniffs 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
goose 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 spancelled
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 Morrisey-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 candelas 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 feartainne
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
dereper
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

striped 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