

# Four Haibun For You

By Dave Olson

... being a haiku (written by one person or another)  
followed by a wee bit of prose, finished with another haiku

Room close dark

dark, listening - white noise

and windchimes

From my perch, survey the still life before me - a didgeridoo leaning against a worm wood bookcase, 4 thick shelves made from free form curly maple looking like slabs of bacon, books stacked horizontally for easy reading of titles on spines: Ulysses, Siddhartha, Tolstoy, Salinger, Dr. Seuss, a stack about Everest, old Edmund Hillary grinning under shaggy beard and leather edged goggles. BhagavadGita, with dead, bald smiling, reincarnated onto the dust leaf resting, leaning next to Don Quixote, heavy in four volumes with hand-cut pages, raised ink, tissue protects the engravings. A collection (complete) of TinTin the intrepid reporter (Belgian I think), his dog Snowy and ornery ole Cap'n Haddock. More adventure than John McPhee, him traipsing from Alaska to Bangladesh - lonely freighter pulling out of dark harbors, a thousand iron feet long tended by six - maybe eight scattered souls. A Russian Matryoshka doll endless stream of smaller beings, a lighter from Belikin - the state brewery of Belize, a metal Sierra Club cup, engraved with highest peak in Nevada and a date so long ago that I look at a photo to remember me, head in clouds, wearing a sweater I forgot I ever wore. Picture is snowy, the tin cup stained with heat, left holding coins from here and there, a yo-yo, and buttons fallen off of trousers.

Room collecting stories

To tell you

Some other time

Clear drops  
on muddled windows  
muddled thoughts

Saskatoon, snow drifts over wheat fields, kids skating in toques, playing shiny hockey until mom calls them to eat St. Jacob's soup and thick heels of sourdough bread. "I got this yeast starter when your pa and I married," she says to no child in particular.

Driving home, the road straight in snow chasm, walls pushed high by plows. Wipers scrapping, Am radio crackles minor league hockey scores, exclaiming local boys traveling by bus all night to play in Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Fort St. William, John, Albert or James, Moosejaw, 100 Mile House or Moncton, New Brunswick for the Memorial Cup. Acclaimed for dedication, perseverance, valor; intangibles - heart, character - playing in rinks named for politicians, soldiers and towns.

Rolling east  
O'er muddled roads  
Crunching towards remembrance

Delicious dreams

I mumble in my sleep

no memory

Fever - coming on stronger now. Gaining now for three days, delirious fits and sleepless tossing, frantic at random hours. Mind you, body never shivers, mind flashes burning pictures of moments. Some I remember might be called a dream but for the anguish. Too real for a nightmare, the pain, the fever, the malaise gains vigor with each grating snapshot. The unfamiliar seeps with fear, I don't know how it will end. Each episode so far ends with me waking called waking only in that my eyes crack enough to register light or dark.

I twist, fall back into the soaked feather bed drifting, one moment racing a wooden car down bumpy hill, children holler in cub scout knickers, proud with badges, another moment running hard, leaping onto pillars fleeing a unknown enemy or maybe moving towards one, leaping higher columns tumble into oblivion, my feet slip, slide falling, falling next floating in a long abandoned warlord's damp stronghold dungeon, somewhere atop Teutonic hill slope, the moon shows the shackles through window slits.

Warm and next a campfire warming feet and drinking from a flask as I mumble fading eyes see nothing but white robes walking by from time to time.

Memories sequestered

Releasing now

As tea steam

Last one out  
close the door  
to my heart

The Janitor hums, sweeping the last of the hallway flotsam into a dust pan, tipping into the trash barrel with wheels, apparatus to hold spray bottles holding fading solutions, rags, extra trash bags and brooms. Checks the double glass doors leading outside to the courtyard where people eat lunch and flirt on sunny days. Dark now, crispy leaves skate along benches, colliding with ashtrays and disappearing in to stairwells. Beyond the wooded area, late delivery truck downshifts, aching the sigh of a man lonely for a hundred years. Shuffling the hall, turning off each light in turn, flickering while closing each door. Supplies into closet, change smock for jacket and scarf. Squinting into the tiny mirror attached to the towel rack, he smooths hair and puts on a driving cap with half ear flaps folded up and walks outside. In the shadow, someone somewhat familiar waits for him.

Leaning figure  
Gracious in silhouette, leaning  
Against grey primer fender

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P.O. Box 7612  
Olympia, WA 98507

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