

Dreams From Yesterday:
A Collection of Mega-Haikus

Instructions: Each “mega-haiku” poem is composed of 17 haikus. Read each haiku fully and then proceed from left to right. Once you are finished, check the final page for each poem’s corresponding reference haiku. Each syllable in the reference haiku corresponds to an individual haiku in the “mega-haiku”. On repeat readings it may be rewarding to read the poem in a different way, reading straight across or straight down the page.

Earthdust

Home is fields of wheat
Swaying under clouds of rain
At summer's end

It gathers in clouds
Like some swarm of locusts that
Will devour our dreams

All storms are the same:
Hurricane, haboob, typhoon
A fiery heart rages

Outside it howls and
Inside the shutters shake, even
The candles sputter

Soon the dark clouds move
Passing slowly towards a
Sparkling green sunrise

The shadow is but
A blot on an endless page
Of water and sky

In its wake is light
From the moon, the sun, the stars
From home left behind

The cloud shatter apart
Bits of our home feed red fishes
Amidst new sunbeams

It could have never
Touched the corn outside our house
We say it didn't

Much has passed, staining
The ancient pages of the earth
With new watermarks

Much is now passing
Rocks fall slowly into waves
Sinking into time

Much will not come,
Possibility fades in -
To cold nowhere

The sea is filled with
Shipwrecks and old, lost loves whose
Bones sink far too deep

The bones of my house
Are buried but visible,
Hid by Mom and Dad

But not all tears weep
Ghosts laugh, their bones cackle at
Life's irony

Trees shake with sea's
Unsuppressed mirth, hurricanes
Are just deep chuckles

The tree missed the roof
My mother's mouth crinkles
As the sky smiles

Richmond

Driving the M1
Houses are slowly replaced
With tall purple hills

Away from London
The land still defines people,
A shepherd of old

Ways of living that
Those south of the river do
Not remember well

Coal dug from too deep
Shafts unearthing treasure from
The days of Danelaw

My mother grew up
Here, my grandmother too, deep
In these heather hills

I wanted it to
Be home too, the little house
With but one bathroom

Yet until they left
For a wedding in Florence
It remained a dream

First, I cried rivers
The shops: walls, The square: prison.
Grandma my jailer

Soon I found that old
Crumbling tower and suits
Of green satin steel

When my parents came
I was already a knight
And here was my home

Driving down M1
To where steel towered over
Flattened, buried hills

Outside my window
The Atlantic looked like moors
Waiting for return

The moon was out in
Chicago when my Richmond
Fled into the rain

I remember when
They put her in the ground, my
Uncle grew ancient

Lights on the high street
Seemed to dim, buildings sagged with
Piles of frozen rain

It is hard to love
A place that holds memories
Of the dead and gone

Snow flurries softly
It has been five years too long
Since we left Richmond

You

It comes like a great
Hurricane on a levee
Of unasked feeling

Your name blends into
The word her, just her, all the
Others don't matter

But I'm not him, he
Dances in the night under
Light of distant stars

Never isn't never.
A bridge too far cannot be
Far enough for you

I'll build a castle
You'll raise a fortress complete
With a portrait hall

I get to watch as
The miracle of your life
Rises around me

When you soar I soar
Rising on the back of wings
Yours-if you let me

Minutes pass and pass
I said I would leave but hours
Are seconds with you

The sun is setting
The orange streaking through the
Life you maybe want

But maybes are like
Rickety rope bridges that
Span rushing waters

Maybes are endings just
Disguised as wizards that will
Begin our endings

Maybe is freedom
Maybe is soaring some steep
Cliff. Maybe is you

And I'm hungry for
Adventures sailing whatever
Seas the winds take us

And I want to swim
In those warm seas but I know
They're still cold to you

It's safer to dream
than dwell on the dangerous
possibility

Wanting to drown in
Feelings even that cannot
Be what is best but

When you smile my heart
Cannot help but tap out a
Beat of you, you, you

Voidborn

Home is golden sun
Glowing on calm seas and on
Green forest canopy

We drift on stellar
Winds, pushing, pulling, tugging
Us away. Towards

Nothing, just nothing
The everything that spans
Space between all things

It is from nothing
That we spring, collected dirt
From thousands of stars

The same canvas builds,
Ships, for there are millions
Of faces to launch them

Green faces caught in
Cloud and sunburst, turning slow
Through a vast blackness

We turn too, at the
Speed of twelve radians per
Second. Or 1 G.

What we chase twinkles
On the inside of cabins
Reflected laughter

We are on a quest
This is just the journey, it
Cannot be our joy

Any end is far
To cross the universe, one
Must first cross himself

Points distant merge to
Single pinpricks of unfilled
Possibility

Dreams have more power
Remaining unreachable
A thing that will be

In these cold hallways
I look into their eyes, to
See that I am wrong

That sparks ignite in
Between their subtle glances
That life carries on

We walk on blankets
Of stars, pushing away soft
Embraces for they

Are not the planet
We are meant to love, that they
Decided not to

Home is where we say
The heart belongs. Home can be
Here. Between the stars

An Old Jewish Man, From Brooklyn

I often can't look
At the homeless, helpless, yet
What separates us?

Luck? One missed paycheck?
From where I stand in the crowd.
Those gaps seem to close.

He brought us here, blind
To the color of our skin,
Or our bank accounts.

How do you not see?
Outside of our small bubble:
America festers.

He (we) can change that.
Tame the profit leech. Fight for
Decent lives for all.

Highly ironic
For seventy-eight to be
The most progressive.

But that's bigoted.
Just as Jew doesn't mean greedy.
Old doesn't mean selfish.

Here under cold winds,
Greeting teachers and plumbers
All doubt melts away.

I have work to do.
As a rich white man, it has
Been easy for me.

Easy to ignore
The tarnish and the rust when
It is not your door.

I can't sleep, working
For banks, knowing homeless sleep
On Wall Street sidewalks.

Glass towers rise. Yet
Why do those that built them not
Sit by the table?

This is not about
Live TV and who sits in
The oval office.

This is not about
Just replacing Donald Trump.
It's about justice.

Will you fight for the
Downtrodden, the dispossessed?
He has his whole life.

It's not enough to
Go back to Obama. It's
Time for something more.

Twenty-thousand raise
"Bernie" in their hands. I know
America is fine.

November Snow

Autumn smells of runs:
Yellow leaves in fading sun
Crackle beneath me.

Running is a bit
Like falling forward, crashing
Through mixed joy and pain.

Yet when running stops,
I am falling also, to
Orbit some dark sun.

The months in padded boots,
Passed slower than syrup through
A needle's eye

Yet now, how I would
Wind back the snow into rain,
And live all again.

Even on the buses
Stewing in my own tension
Are bright moments found

How can time form
Hallowed ground? Not in places, but
Turnings of seasons.

I put them there, those
Bones: broken and whole, sown
With care and reaped

Everytime my feet sink,
With metal teeth into loam
Turned a thousand times.

I remember when
There was green grass to be run
Red leaves in the wind.

I remember when
I linked arms with ghosts, hollered
At the noonday sun.

I remember when
Mud caked both friend and foe, faces
Blurred in the distance.

Ice dances in floodlights
Freezing memories in mud,
As we return home.

Next year, we used to say
But I am out of next years:
Snow buried the last.

Closed doors stretch back far
Into memory. Ahead
No less lie open

But this door closed too
Soon. I long still to hear crowds
Under gold-grey sun.

What will seasons be,
When fall is not cross country?
Where will I be then?

Be Here Now

When I see your eyes;
Obscured by vapor clouds of
Worry, Memory.

Evaporated
Yesterdays and tomorrows
Somehow fit in here.

We talk to ourselves:
If it wasn't in our heads
They'd call us crazy.

And outside the months
Since we met fall away, like
They had never been.

But when, while life and
Psets flashed by, did I say
What I should, to you?

To be the best, it
Seems like you have to start now.
Should have already.

Twenty-Two? The Zuck
Had founded Facebook by now,
Newton? Calculus.

When is there time for
Life, when our minds are filled with
Should have and should do?

And if we don't? Waste.
No looking at still waters.
Just doing, making.

Love? There is no time?
What crap! We steer the rivers.
Memento Mori.

Remember what this
Is for. Our time together.
This is your life too.

We breathe in and think
"I am thankful to have you."
I breathe out. On you.

Put away your thoughts.
Chain your dreams for the moment.
Be here now. With me.

Three months until I
Leave for Baltimore. Three months
With those that I love.

We could run side by
Side, in the spring rains, or
Just sit. Talk. Play cards.

I don't care, as long
As it is with you. Just please,
Put away your phone.

Seasons run forward,
Can you live them now? No.
Be here then. With me.

Reference Haikus

Earthdust

Earthdust, Windblown over
Seas shining with forgotten
Sorrow and Laughter

Richmond

Deep in Yorkshire dales
Under castle on high hill
Sleeps my old Richmond

You

No pronoun can make
Me feel wanted or alone
More than thoughts of you

Voidborn

Stardust, voidborn Sail
Between lights of distant stars
Searching. Wandering. Lost.

An Old Jewish Man, from Brooklyn

Why does he still fight,
Old Jewish man from Brooklyn?
Not for him. For Us.

November Snow

Leaves fall like soft rain,
On ground sown with memories.
Snows will come too soon.

Be Here Now

Lost in thought, life streams
Faster than rivers. Stop. Breathe.
No time like right now.