

Quietude



prose and poetry

Dan Hardison

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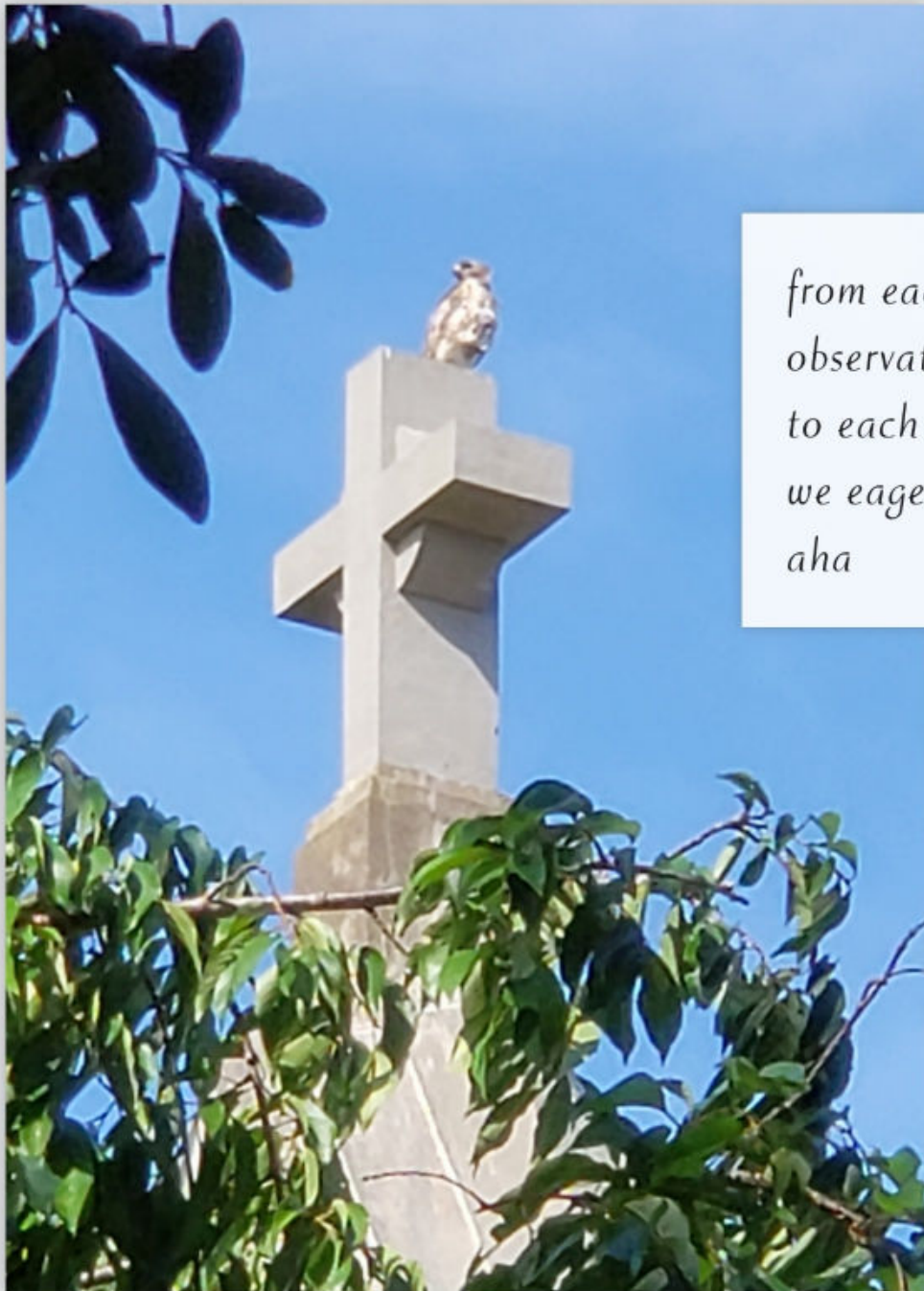
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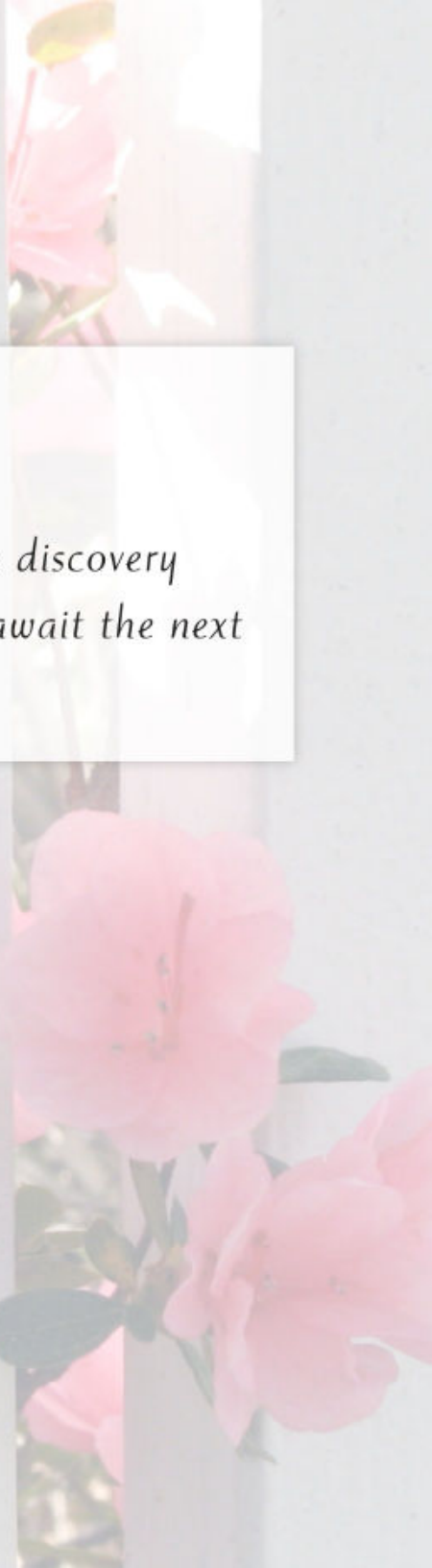
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*from each
observation
to each new discovery
we eagerly await the next
aha*





*night falls away
as shadows dance in the light -
day awakens*

Ancestry

The old photograph shows my grandmother and grandfather, now long departed, sitting on their front porch. One of my grandmother's favorite flowers, a rain lily, can be seen beside them. Today a descendant of my grandmother's rain lily sits outside my front door.

holding the warmth
of memories and love . . .
tattered quilt

Family photo





*catching the light
and holding it within -
summer flowers*



*winter -
the crackling fire
says it all*



*tire swing -
every year the limb
bends lower*

This Woman

She was born in 1886, married at 18, and had her first child a year later. Her sixth child only lived 10 months. The seventh child was born one month after her fifth child died. At the age of 46 and the height of the Great Depression, she entered a hospital for the insane. It is there she would die 36 years later.

falling
into nothingness . . .
autumn leaves

During her time in the hospital, her surviving children would visit on Sundays. They grew to adults and had families of their own. To their children and grandchildren, they spoke fondly of their mother but said little about how or why she came to be in a hospital for the insane. Things might have been different today for this woman.

prayer flags
dancing in the wind . . .
birch bark



Family photo

Miss Lizzie

She lived near the middle of town in a broken-down house, isolated and alone. A six-foot fence of chicken wire kept strangers at bay. Covered windows kept out light and prying eyes. The yard was overgrown and no one knew if the tombstones in the front yard were memorials or actual gravesite markers.

People knew her only as Miss Lizzie and could not remember how long she had lived there or anything else about her. It was rare to get a glimpse of her, so she was regarded as eccentric and mysterious.

They now know she was 98 years old after she was found dead lying just inside the front door. So is this what happens when you outlive family and friends, and no one notices when you die?

windows growing dark
with shadows stretching longer . . .
disappearing light

Winter in July

It was during the last game of the fall soccer season that we met a fourteen-year-old girl named Sarah watching her friends play. Talking with Sarah off and on, we learned that she did not play sports – a bit clumsy, she loved music and was taking piano lessons, and her family was going to Disney World in a couple of weeks. She was pretty and bright, but also bubbly and polite.

sparkling in the light
like gems of russet and gold . . .
frost covered leaves

While walking to the parking lot after the game, we learned that Sarah had an inoperable brain tumor. She had perhaps six-months to live. After that day, we occasionally heard updates on Sarah as her health declined. On July 2, Sarah died. I only met her the one time, yet the sorrow was great.

the last dream
interrupted on waking . . .
clouds drifting

In a poem by George W. Jones, he speaks of how our lives mirror the seasons. “Spring time is birth time, / the time of quickening / summer is the time of growth, / of fullness / autumn sees maturity, / ripeness, and passing / and winter is death.” His focus is on those of “venerable age” who have reached their winter years. So, what of those whose winter comes too soon?

day fades to darkness
through a rainbow of colors . . .
a prayer without words

Acknowledgements

Everything changed in the mid 1970's when I picked up Jim Metcalf's small book of poetry "In Some Quiet Place." This eventually led to Japanese short-form poetry - haiku, tanka, and haibun. As a photographer and artist, I was especially drawn to the Japanese haiga - a combination of image and poem where one compliments the other. This collection of work draws on my early writing while using photographs.

The work included here has appeared in print and online journals, and anthologies, some in slightly different form. My thanks to the editors for seeing value in my work. These include *Contemporary Haibun Online*, *Cattails*, *Daily Haiga*, and *Frogpond*, plus past journals *Simply Haiku*, *Haigaonline*, *South by Southeast*, *Magnapoets*, *Sketchbook*, and *moonset*.