

Black Bough Issue 2.5: cosmic haiku

# *Magnificent Desolation*



Co-edited: Elizabeth Kemball & Matthew M.C. Smith

Illustrated by Elizabeth Kemball



# Launchpad...



Welcome to *Black Bough Issue 2:5: Magnificent Desolation*. This is a special haiku mini-issue inspired by the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. This collection follows our galactic-sized poetry Issue no 2, in June 2019.

Our thanks to poet, Luci Virgo, who suggested the title and also has haiku in this edition. It's a pleasure to work with co-editor Elizabeth Kemball. Elizabeth's poetry and illustrations were a highlight of Issue 2 and this edition and she is amazing to work with.

Thanks to all the poets who provided cosmic haiku for our #TopTweetTuesday feature.

*Matthew M.C. Smith*



*Magnificent Desolation* is a culmination of all things cosmic; haikus that travel through space, time and the mind. Thank you to Matthew for being a wonderful co-editor on this project, as always.

A huge thank you to the Black Bough community for sending in such wonderful and varied writing — it's been a pleasure reading your work and we're so excited to share it with the world (and universe).

*Elizabeth Kemball*

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Magnificent Desolation

Magnificent view  
Desolation is beauty  
To the beholders.

Selene

Moon arrivals board  
Lunar module landing soon;  
Have a pleasant stay.

Sea of Tranquillity, 21 July 1969

Tranquillity Base  
total population: 2  
(Eagle has landed)

*Luci Virgo*

Breathe

A world united  
A collective breath is held  
For three far away

Awe

In awe, I marvel  
Glorious ridges and rills  
Each a shade of grey

Anticlimax

Through dusty window  
I see flag of red and gold  
Buzz! Please call NASA!

*Daniel Page*

Foreign exchange

Penny in the sky,  
do we still value you now  
as much as back then?

One giant leap

What an achievement  
to reach, this fiftieth year:  
1,969.

Year of the moon

How long it took us  
to go from nothing, to here,  
the year of the moon.

*Mark Antony Owen*



She leans in gently  
I whisper to her craters  
she knows when to shine

Her face beams bright rays  
conceals delicious corners  
reveals the way home

*Marcelle Newbold*

Twenty Sixty Nine.  
Sun strikes the skull moon's face full.  
Noone gazes back

Footprints in the dust...  
How far we have come! We cried,  
As we let Earth burn

*Polly Oliver*

Wandering aimless  
Meandering the star-scape  
I got here somehow

*Lilia Cosavalente*

By reach of our dreams  
echo of a booming howl\*  
as one on the moon

*Jeffrey Yamaguchi*

Traveling higher  
on a moonbeam highway stretch  
wear your silver boots

Dark slate, this chalk orb  
writing amidst earth dreamers  
"come back to visit"

Arced bright sanctum  
within wink o'er blackened skies  
oh, the silver yen

*Christine Owens*

the whiplash  
his first shooting star  
out of sight

meteor shower  
I run out of wishes  
at its peak

the cosmos  
worlds upon worlds  
of dust motes

space anomaly  
a wormhole opens up  
on this bad trip

*Fractled*

### Newborn

Horizons brought you  
bright into the night's dark arms -  
a new moon rises.

### Eagle

Unfold your black wing,  
you night in feathers - white eye  
shining, not blinking.

### Weather balloon/ moon

Your pale face measures  
from a weightless height, the scars  
of our endeavours.

*Rae Howells*

### Speck

In the universe,  
I am but a speck of dust  
Staring at the stars.

*Paul Kohn*

### Relativity

the high moon's far side  
nearer for its blots and scars  
its imperfection

*Laura Wainwright*

### 1970

Where has the moon gone?  
Our temple bell drowning in  
Spring tides of Autumn

*Ian Richardson*

### Lunar

That still, strange grey sphere  
with so much pinned upon it,  
child's dreams, all those hopes.

*Lee Prosser*



Warmed eyepiece, and there  
she looms - a round gasp, perfect  
as our seeking urge

She rises early  
wearing daybirds for lashes  
shy of the bright sea

New struck, a coin held  
aloft by fingers of cloud  
mirroring the forge

*Ankh Spice*

### Voyagers

Finally beyond,  
our creation carries us  
where we cannot go

### First steps

riding flame skyward  
pioneers searching the void  
dust motes in darkness

*Richard Waring*

strawberry moon sings,  
silvering the green branches--  
nightingale echoes

Moon scatters night-dreams  
flowing over balconies  
lullaby lingers

Summer of unrest—  
peace high-steps through lunar dust,  
earth's glow beckons home

*Merril D Smith*

1.

Full moon  
Palm leaves strum a starry sky  
Oceans dance

2.

Uncle Moon shuffles  
Brown petals stacked on dry soil  
Game night begins

*Ranjabali Chaudhuri*

### Sister's Moon Landing

It was when you said  
it was all a hoax I first  
had doubts about us

our relationship  
treasured mutual respect  
prized it – like moon dust

now you've gone too far  
do you take me for a fool?  
fake news – out-Foxed you!

*Ellie Rees*

#1

Did someone hang it  
like they say? Yellow lantern  
moon, are you for real?

#2

I am not inspired  
by you, moon. You take credit,  
but listen! Frogs sing!

#3

On the other side  
of you, stars go forever  
but you don't leave home.

*Kyla Houbolt*

### Apollo 11 dawn

Apollo's dawn fire  
Horizon pours liquid light  
Rocket tests blazing

### Ghosts

*The Apollo 11 crew remember the Apollo 1 crew*

Exosphere thrust burn  
Tight vigil through violence  
Apollo 1's ghosts

*Matthew M. C. Smith*

### Restless

A zopiclone moon,  
Dry mouth filled with drowsy dreams,  
Weighted bones, cold sheets.

*Elizabeth Kemball*

Apollo 11  
you stole the lover's moon  
heart's soaring landed

*James Young*

Soaring height  
Approaching a shining light  
Still with a mindset of an abstract world

*Benedicta Boamah*



# Black Bough Issue 2.5

## *The poets:*

**Benedicta Boamah** is a skilled emergency nurse who writes poetry during her leisure periods.

**Ranjabali Chaudhuri's** poems have appeared in the *Dime Show Review*, *Black Bough Poetry* and *Re-Side*. She lives in London and tweets from @Ranjabali

**Lilia Cosavalente** is a California-grown writer who enjoys crafting poetry and fiction. Film grad and entertainment industry employee, she loves using words and music to inspire and entertain others. She tweets about writing and anime on her Twitter: @scriptsoprano.

**Fractled**—under the great mentorship of friend, Brendon Kent, and as a member of “The Haiku Nook”, Fractled still dabbles with haiku and its related forms while encountering entities with extreme knowledge of such poetic forms. He currently resides in the USA

**Kyla Houbolt** writes even though she's old enough to know better. Find all her published work here: [https://linktr.ee/luaz\\_poet](https://linktr.ee/luaz_poet) and find her on Twitter @luaz\_poet

**Rae Howells** is a prize-winning poet and journalist. She is widely published and tweets @rachowells

**Elizabeth Kemball** is a writer and artist based in England; her work has previously been featured in *Black Bough*. She is currently an editor and designer for the online zine: *Re-Side*. She is also being mentored by Mari Ellis Dunning. Twitter @lizziekemball, Instagram @e.kemball

**Paul Kohn** writes music, lyrics, poetry, and spoken word. Residing in South Australia, Paul writes as a way of processing, understanding, healing and growing, and shares his work in the hope that it helps others too. Tweets @mikanopy

**Marcelle Newbold** loves poetry as a way of exploring inner ramblings. She addresses the day to day: the unexceptional as precious moments. A member of The Dipping Pool writing group, she lives in Cardiff, where she trained as an architect @marcellenewbold

**Polly Oliver** hails from Cornwall and lives in Swansea. She's been writing poetry on and off for years, mainly reading it at open mic nights across the city and enjoys hearing the work of other local poets and spoken word artists. Her poems have been published on *Spillwords.com* and on her blog “RocksandBones – Poems from the Celtic Fringes”.

**Mark Antony Owen** Mark is subrural  
and syllabic, like his work.  
See @subruria

**Christine Owens** has been creating poetry for over 40 years. She has been published in *A Poet's Picnic* chapbook as well as @WeArtFriends International Poetry Tournament and @blackboughpoems. She can be found on Twitter as @PoetrySkep.



# Black Bough Issue 2.5

## *The poets:*

**Daniel Page** is a writer, poet, historian and teacher from Norfolk. His writing is informed by his love of history, schools and the county of Norfolk. His work has been published online in Black Bough Poetry and Re-Side. The journey continues.

**Lee Prosser** lives in the Welsh village of Llangyndeyrn and has an MA in Creative Writing from Swansea University. He is a previous guest reader for Black Bough Poetry and when not writing poetry enjoys making electronic noises and music. @black\_cabin

**Ellie Rees** gained a PhD in Creative Writing from Swansea University in 2018. In an earlier incarnation she was a teacher of bright young things from all over the world. Now she is teaching herself to become a poet. @ellierees23

**Ian Richardson** has been reading for a long time. He regularly contributes to 'Lies, Dreaming' a spoken word podcast. Ian was presented with the Anstruther Writing Award November 2016. Overall winner in the Scottish Borders Waverley Lines September 2015. Twitter @IanRich10562022

**Matthew M.C. Smith** is a Welsh poet from Swansea. He would like to be a space tourist and write poems in orbit. He tweets @MatthewMCSmith Fb: @MattMCSmith

**Merril D. Smith** is an historian and poet. She's written nonfiction books and had poetry published here and there. She likes the moon. Website and blog at [merrildsmith.com](http://merrildsmith.com), Twitter @merril\_mds, and Instagram at mdsmithnj.

**Ankh Spice** is a sea-obsessed poet from Aotearoa / New Zealand. He shares words (often including haiku) @SeaGoatScreams on Twitter.

**Luci Virgo** lives Down Under, by the Blue Lake. Identifies as female. Is currently making progress on a journey to meet her Self.

**Laura Wainwright** is from Newport, South Wales. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in Black Bough Poetry, Burning House Press, Wales Haiku Journal, Picaroon Poetry, Animal Heart Press and Lucent Dreaming. Twitter: @wainwrightlj

**Richard Waring**— Richard likes to write

He comes from Northern Ireland

His work is quite dark

**Jeffrey Yamaguchi** creates projects with words, photos, and video as art explorations, as well as through his work in the publishing industry. @jeffiyamaguchi | [jeffreyyamaguchi.com](http://jeffreyyamaguchi.com)

**James Young** hails from the Mumbles, Swansea, UK. He does most of his writing in his beach hut at Rotherslade @BaitTheLines pen name - oyoguhito