

DREAM SEQUENCE

By Patricia Prime

I dreamed I was John Ashbery
giving a present to a colleague
winceyette pyjamas
and a fluffy pink bed jacket

I dreamed I woke at midnight
and went naked into the street
but it was only eight and the footpath was crowded
a man wrapped me in his overcoat and took me home

I dreamed he said "Tell me if I'm disturbing you."
as he slipped inside my door
"You've shattered my dream," I said,
"Welcome to my nightmare."

I dreamed we slept curled together like two spoons
and felt how furiously our hearts were beating,
but when I awoke at dawn
there was only a green birch branch tapping

VISIONARY POETS

“The Mind of Man – My haunt and the main region of my song.”

(Wordsworth, *The Excursion*)

I did love the Romantic poets:
Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats
when I was young but I didn't
know what to do with them . . .
they were like roots deep in the earth
and like so many poets before me
I was attracted by the pretty,
frail wisps growing on the surface,
the dandelions and weeds.

The vision that found its highest praise
in words like 'simple' and 'common.'
The human felicity in the moving line:
“The simple produce of the common day” –
these dandelions are easy to pluck,
so much easier than to get
at than the deep roots.
They seem now like fool's gold.
I must leave their potential to others.

THE RETURN

Gulls circle the ocean bearing the sea-gift
of prophecy. A little girl running passionately
across the sand waves for me to stop.

Her smooth unfinished slope of nose,
the bland planes of lips, cheek and chin,
too undeclared as yet to signal character.

What else can the child do but look
for support from someone she supposes
is older and wiser?

I am startled back to waking
by a face, a voice, a hand, a word –
all so sudden, innocent, immaculate:

the sight of another child in the water
in obvious difficulty. Over the inevitable
tide, a slight attack, a half dozen retreats

until the child is safe in my arms.
In the far distance, look: blades
of sunlight on the turbulent water.

CLIMBING THE CLIFF

The unhinged wing of a butterfly, gold-flecked, lies on the beach.
Noon light focuses on sun-yellow sand in the midsummer heat.
Putting corner to corner, edge to edge, we fold our towels,
and picnic rug. Alone on the beach, just you and I.

Halfway up the flaring brow of rock
the pohutukawa hang by their roots.
A searing pain is felt through the thin soles of sandals.
Something is half-seen further up the bluff –

An old pine's striving branches lifting
a cumbersome and imperfect shape.
A shower of dirt tumbles down the slope -
we are lost at the fingertips, elbows and toes.

Briefly, there's joy in our loneliness,
until the sombre kettledrum of heartbeat
reminds us of age as the ground were on
begins to shift beneath our feet.

THE HAIKU PATHWAY

At the end of the footbridge
a vista opens before us:
a path curves away to the left
following the river.

There is a kauri grove in the distance,
one tree felled in a recent storm, and
the weeping willows graceful branches
sweep the immaculate grass.

The dog bolts ahead of us
searching beneath the planked path
for water rats. Boulders along the path
are inscribed with haiku, some of it ours.

I am a little in awe at the way
people conceived this possibility.
Mingled with the ordinary are the words
of poets: some friends, others known only by name.

so many stones identified
will force many visitors and tourists
to stop, look, read and ponder –
as if asleep, eye precedes ear.

Bio:

Patricia Prime lives in Auckland, New Zealand. She is co-editor of the New Zealand haiku magazine, *Kokako*, reviews/interviews editor of *Haibun Today*, and is a reviewer for *Takahe* and *Atlas Poetica*, and for several Indian magazines. She has interviewed poets and editors for *Takahe* and for the online magazines *Haiku NewZ*, *Simply Haiku*, *Haibun Today* and *Stylus*. She co-edited, with Australian poets, Amelia Fielden and Beverley George, the tanka collection *100 Tanka by 100 Poets* and is currently editing with Dr. Bruce Ross and others, the contemporary world haiku anthology *A Vast Sky*. Patricia writes haiku, tanka, haibun and tanka prose and has published her poetry worldwide. She and fellow-poet Giselle Maya (who lives in France) have been collaborating in their writing for a couple of years and are now working on a collection of their tanka sequences and tanka prose to be published in 2015.