

The Six Poems Nominated by the Origami Poems Project
(Listed Alphabetically by Title)

Blood Moon

I don't know where the moon will rise tonight,
or exactly when, but the Bridge to Nowhere
is lined with cars as I approach the
edge of a mountain,
and people sitting in lawn chairs or
adjusting flashy cameras on tripods
as a peach sunset trumpets a crescendo
and the sky curls over in a gray blanket
enabling stars to dance across night's stage
while lights lining the ridge of the mesa
sparkle an ancient celebration and

we stand, a united tribe of strangers
breathing night air, and awe and

I don't know how to find my balance
suspended, between science and magic.

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Peg Quinn © 2016

– from her OPP microchap, *Moon Shadows*

I am brief

All night the drone of the highway schooner
scraping black ice off country roads floats
in unsteady light and swirl of snow colliding.
How can weather be scoured away when
a blue mist sulks for hours in the orchard,
lingering over tracks of deer and opossum
that have uncovered icy windfalls?
To survive, one must be aware – coyotes'
glossy breath staggers beneath pines–
their baleful cries echo– rungs of sound
climbing higher and higher. . .
What's missing? A soul's departure
only noticed by one of us.

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Garrett Phelan © 2016

– From his OPP microchap *Standing where I am*

Parting from Wang Wei

(after Meng Haoran)

These quiet days are ending
and now I must leave.

I miss my home's sweet grasses
but will grieve at parting – we've

eased each other's burdens on this road.
True friends are scarce in life.

I should just stay there alone, forever
behind the closed gate.

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Robert Okaji © 2016

– From his OPP microchap, *No Eye But The Moon's*

Sonnet # 4

We've got seven-hundred cans of black beans,
about ten thousand gallons of water,
a Faraday cage for an EMP,
and chickens out back that we can slaughter.
We've got an armory in our basement
and bug out bags hidden on the back porch
together we'll be ready to face it,
when, inevitably, worst comes to worst.
Still, I can't prepare for my greatest fear,
as sure as the economic collapse,
when our love eventually disappears
and we're part of a long forgotten past.

Even though death makes the effort absurd
love means defending what can't be preserved.

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Donald C. Welch III © 2016

– From his OPP microchap, *The Post Atomic Sonnets*

The Blue Earrings

For months I've kept the universe
in a box. It happens.

I get tired of infinity
with its sapphire eyes

staring out at me
from behind mirrors.

But today when I slip on
all that sea, that sky

everything immense
seems a little

lighter, as if nature
isn't so in-your-face

endless after all—
or maybe I've just gotten

used to the idea of
this big wavering life

being so damn brief.

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Lori Lamothe © 2016

– From her OPP microchap *endless after all*

Three Strikes

1.

Petals and Shadows

I didn't see the shadows
until I zoomed in tightly,
brought the lens and eyes down
to the strands of darkness
staining each and every white
petal. One could not be without
the other. Sisters holding hands,
the pure one more prominent,
the earthly one so shy. Hidden
but ready to be discovered.

Let the violin's high note announce
the dance and the cello's mellow
tones carry the tune. Watch the sisters
twirl like black and white dervishes,
twirl until the sky darkens, until
they stagger and fall to the ground
petals beyond their time.

2.

Holding On

The roller coaster car inches up
the steep hill. Our eyes question
blue skies. Hands linked, we anticipate
the terrifying thrill. But as we reached
the apex and viewed the wrenching
drop, our stomachs groaned, our hearts
shook. Then gravity and machinery
shot us down. Took our breath away
as we loosened our grip on the lap bar,
then grasped each other, inseparable
we thought until you and so many
more were no more. Now I cling
to what remains-- out of love
and fear. Hold on tight
until my knuckles turn white.

3.

A Steep Climb

I once scrambled to the top.
Leapt from rock to rock.
Sped over the trail's snags.
Sang jubilantly atop the summit.
Was kin to cloud and sky.

But in time the hill became
a mountain, the path, overgrown,
armed with thorny bushes
that rip the skin and shifting
rocks that steal steadiness.
I hesitate at the trailhead, a dark,
small opening in a tall thicket.
My backpack, crammed
with yesterdays' troubles,
bends my back and desire.
"Perhaps another day,"
I mumble, to the mute boulders.

*Come, sit under the fig tree.
Thoughtless and open, feel the sun's
warmth, hear the wind's wordless song.
Touch the breathing soil beneath you,
See and know the unending sky.
Picture yesterday's grief, tomorrow's
anxiety as a tangle of knots untied.
What is stirring muscle and bone?
What recedes; what comes forth
from the shadows?*

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Bill Sullivan © 2016

– From his OPP microchap, *Three Strikes*