

H-1

Natalie Serle to Tom Gilroy

Spring grief holds its breath-
a peach asleep in its pit.
Seed disguised as stone.

Should I throw this out?
It's become more hole than shirt.
Probably should, but I won't.

Tangled up in you
An endless "now" curls, reckless.
Rewrite time with me.

Paw prints in the snow
Footnotes left on a blank page
A silent encore

Sun glare texts: "u up?"
I should close my blinds, but then
I'd feel more lonely

What a word, "cahoots"
A mischief invite
RSVP: Yes!

Tree tops (is adding a title a cheat? maybe.)
Back and forth, weightless
The silent slipstreams cadence
A soft becoming

I got you flowers
You look for a vase, I watch
A flushed, wanted awe

"Pleased as punch", you say?
I love owned, homegrown jargon
Linguistic bonne bouche

Should I throw this out?
It's become more hole than shirt.
Probably should. I won't.

What a word, "cahoots"
A team-based mischievous invite
RSVP: Yes!

I got you flowers.
You look for a vase, I watch
with flushed, wanted awe

H-1

Tom Gilroy to Natalie Serle

This is quite a trove!

These are all wonderfully deep poems, and playing 'fast and loose' with nature, as you say (the Japanese word for this is 'kigo,' an acknowledged requirement of haiku) is exactly what enables the haiku writer to find new and most importantly concise tools to capture a moment. Play on!

Since our goal here is the journey into haiku, I'll keep my comments here to the pieces that seem closest to the form. A few of these are wonderful poems on their own (reminiscent of Dickinson, in my opinion) and should be kept in a folder of valuable straight-up short works that don't really function as haiku.

To be brief (is it already too late for that? Haha) a haiku; 1) captures a brief or suspended moment in time (not a memory or idea or construct, but an actual moment, like a snapshot vs a painting), 2) employs observations of sensory experiences of nature, and 3) ideally creates an implicit 'sketch' of the poet's outlook or philosophy within the 'crash' between 1 & 2.

For the purposes of this project between us, I've isolated these poems as closest to arriving at haiku, and I've numbered them for clarity in our convo. I offer up brief observations to push you on your way to haiku, though I remind you they are all wonderful on their own.

1.

Spring grief holds its breath-
a peach asleep in its pit.
Seed disguised as stone.

What is 'the moment' here? Has the peach been just sliced? Picked? Fallen? Think of what other sensory things were going on when the moment happened; juice on your hands, the sound of the cutting board, the TV is on, a podcast, the heat is still on although it's April? There's snow on the ground and you picked the peach yesterday? You bought the peach while your own peaches sit outside in the tree frozen, etc. Where is the 'grief,' specifically? For example, and yes, this is imaginary for now and not observed by you, is it in the podcast? Is it in the realization your own peaches may freeze and therefore be wasted? Etc. Imagine...I guess 'creating' the grief by juxtaposing the various sensory observations.

This just popped in my head, a possibly apocryphal haiku attributed to Hemingway of all people;

"For sale: Baby shoes, never worn."

To me, I 'see' the stoop sale, which are in themselves a great kigo for 'Spring.'
Grief is never mentioned, but I feel it; the death of an infant, and of hope. I can even see the note/sign. If I was having this convo with Ernest, I'd suggest a bit more kigo
hahah....

2.

Should I throw this out?

It's become more hole than shirt.

I should, but I won't.

I love this moment of indecision. I'd note that they type of shirt could function as kigo—for example, a T-shirt or tank-top, which of course implies opening a box or drawer of last summer's clothes for this Spring....

I'd also recommend you replace that third line since it's implicit in the first line. Maybe you try the shirt on?

Is it 'only' the holes that make the shirt borderline? Has your body changed, or thoughts of the person who gave it to the writer, or a graphic on it?

3.

Paw prints in the snow

Footnotes left on a blank page

A silent encore

What other kigo could be happening *in the moment* you notice the paw prints? What exactly is the encore? For example, if you are on the threshold to your house, does your cat see their paw prints from yesterday and assess going out in the snow, reflecting your own decision making (or choice to stay inside)?

4.

Sun glare texts: "u up?"

I should close my blinds, but then

I'd feel more lonely

I like this.

5.

Tree tops (is adding a title a cheat? maybe.)

Back and forth, weightless

The silent slipstreams cadence

A soft becoming

Yes it's cheating. This isn't a haiku but a wonderful and tight nature poem. Adding a title, is, let's face it — adding a line. If something needs more lines than maybe it's telling you it doesn't want to be a haiku, and that's fine. You still wrote something great, you sharpened your observational skills, and you got a deeper understanding of the haiku form. Awesome. I love this moment.

6.

I got you flowers
You look for a vase, I watch
A flushed, wanted awe

I love this moment. Allow me to get a little granular in terms of your practice. What kind of flowers? The specific season and region of this moment can be further specified by this (kigo) choice. Were they wild or from the florist, etc? Can 'look' be more specific (rummage, search, lunge)? What is inspiring the awe? The recipient's determination to find the perfect vase for this specific flower, etc.

Thanks for writing these. To move forward, you could either re-jigger these, simply record new ones as they happen, or both. Or we could continue with questions you have, whatever....The main thing is you're off to an awesome start.