

Haiku

Rezzurrection Day.

Second Coming? No, Second

Life, a new starting.

Friendship Haiku

Today I made friends

With Thinkerer Melville but

He doesn't know yet

friendsongbird

bird on a wire, friends

on a list - but I wonder,

whose song is sweeter?

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In memory of someone I never knew

Someone died last week

And was buried in SL,

Inside a pine box

(apparently there was a funeral synchronised between RL and SL - the SL funeral lasted three hours and several people came to speak on behalf of the deceased, using Voice; I didn't know the person in either world, so I hope they forgive my slightly macabre sense of humour).

no haiku

this week I didn't

have time to write a haiku

am I forgiven?

oh I have just seen

"no haiku" is a haiku

what should I do now?

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Would I Lie To You, or fib ?

I'm
not one
for gossip -
so you can tell me
all your deepest thoughts and secrets :
I won't tell a soul,
not even
"you know
who"

Formaldehyde

(written spontaneously in response to a challenge at the Writers' Circle!)

autumn oranges :
citrus fruit kept alive too long
with formaldehyde

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Haikoween

Vampires and pumpkins,
apples and zombies - do you
eat.... or run or both ?

Trick or Treat night for
the homeowner : the trick is,
do not be at home.

Some Christians call it
an insult to God, but He
is out with the kids.

Is it always Hall-
oween in Second Life? The
clue is the word "masks"

The Unkindest Cat Of All

This is actually a true story, from my own experience, but in this form it was entered into a 'short but true story' competition, i.e. under 200 words. (It didn't win...)

"Mum - come in here. The cat's acting peculiar".

Brodie was still only a kitten. In the Christmas kitchen, Mum had hung next year's appointments calendar on the back door, with already a few entries for January. Brodie was staring up at it, transfixed, tail swishing rhythmically. Five whole minutes, and his eyes hadn't moved from it.

Brodie had always looked on Mum as his own mother. He rode on her back, clinging with his claws. He'd nudge her impatiently when she was on the phone, and watched her eat. All visitors had to be approved from the safety of Mum's lap, which was his bed and watchtower.

I heard Mum's footsteps in the passage. "Yes, dear, what is it?"

Brodie turned, blinked at her, suddenly launched himself vertically, batted the calendar with one paw, and fled the room.

Laughing, Mum wandered over to the calendar, and peered at the spot where Brodie's paw had landed. She stood still, and her laughter died away. I swear she had gone a little pale.

"Mum?"

"Come and look."

I walked across. Her finger was trembling against January 19th. The four word entry read:

"Cat to be spayed"

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Winter's Tail

bare-chested trees and balding lawns
wrinkled leaves and dormouse gone
the final apple clings on tight
we mourn the passing of the light
(the world lies sleeping)
on ice, in blue, without a song,
the night of winter lasts too long

cats at fires and us in our beds
the hedgehog cold and stiff (not dead)
sunsets flame and wide high skies
the whip of wind and stoats in white
(the world lies dreaming)
on ice, in blue, without a song,
the night of winter lasts too long

oh tell me summer is not too far?
tell me the dance is soon to start
from blue to green is a vernal kiss
yet all around is hid in mists
(the world lies dying)
on ice, in blue, without a song,
the night of winter lasts too long

Losing The Plot

To Perfidia Bookbinder, Saturday mornings meant the mall, fashion boutiques, and a brasserie lunch with her friends. But here she was at her desk. Every six months, regular as clockwork, round it came : Slush Pile Saturday. Her lip curled. God, these pathetic no-hopers who couldn't write, couldn't spell, couldn't get published in a million years. Why couldn't she have been given the latest Jake Rawlings mystery to read, "Harry Krishna and the Philosopher of Doom"? But as a junior sub-editor, she knew she hadn't any hope of that, so she swallowed her irritation and picked the first manuscript from the pile.

Her heart leapt with joy. *It was single spaced.* She grabbed a big brown envelope from the large supply by her right hand and dropped the manuscript inside with a deep sigh of satisfaction. On a piece of A4 she scribbled a quick note.

Dear Ms Wotsit

Thank you so much for giving me a chance to read your manuscript. Clearly you are a writer with great potential. Sadly this publishing house is not taking on any new single-spaced writers at present.

Yours etc

[Completely Illegible]

pp Managing Editor,

Prêt-a-Manger Publishing Ltd

She added a note to the typist, *'Please triple space this reply'*, rubbed her hands together, giggled to herself and picked the second manuscript from the pile. She read the title page and her happy mood evaporated. "BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND INTERGALACTIC WAR BETWEEN THE FEDERATION TRIREMES AND THE DRAGONLORDS OF K'TOTH, Fully Annotated with Historical Background Material including Full Glossaries of the Three Main Languages : Interglish, K'tothskrit, and Elvish. First Episode." And the last, thought Perfidia, as another brown envelope landed decisively in her out tray.

A coffee stain on the third manuscript precipitated another rejection, the fourth proudly featured an exotic but largely unreadable font, the fifth appeared to be written in Typonese, and as she prepared to read the sixth, the sun disappeared behind a cloud. The pile of brown envelopes grew ever higher. Perfidia began to enjoy her day. She picked the seventh manuscript off the pile, and read the title as she put her legs up on the desk and tipped her chair backwards. Number seven used an approved font, and even as she noticed that there were no typos or coffee stains, a ray of sun picked out the flowers on the windowsill. Perfidia frowned slightly, and the frown grew deeper as she read the title : "Losing The Plot". 'Hah', she thought. ' How do you lose what you probably don't have to begin with?'

A fly landed on the first sentence, and the action of brushing it away brought her eyes into contact with the actual text. Reluctantly, she began to read. Two sentences in, she sat bolt upright, and her chair fell forward, bringing her knee into sharp and painful contact with the desk. Swearing, she hobbled round the office, wincing with pain, then sat down and picked up the manuscript again. Perhaps she was hallucinating. Or maybe she'd dozed off. Yes, that was it. She'd fallen asleep for a second and dreamed she was reading. Warily, she scanned the text once more, and her eyes opened wide. No dream, then. She read it once, then she read it twice more, just in case she had imagined it. But it stayed infuriatingly the same each time. Shaken, Perfidia started again from the beginning...

"Lydia Anderson, a junior sub-editor at Pulp Fiction Limited, was bored. She loathed the Saturdays she wasted reading through the dreaded slush pile. It irritated her, it ruined her day, it gave her a headache, it made her wish she was anywhere but at her desk. By lunchtime, she'd lost the plot completely." Oh, contrived!, thought Perfidia, righteous indignation bumping her out of her initial shock. No title should be so carelessly thrown away. *Everyone* knew that. Scornfully, she carried on reading. Until halfway down Page Five, "the carriage clock on the mantelpiece behind Lydia's desk yawned, spread its wings, and lazily flew off out the window, scattering a few split seconds onto the desk as it gained altitude."

Perfidia rubbed her eyes, then sighed a world-weary sigh. For God's sake! Did the world really need another Alice in Wonderland? All the same, she felt the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. There *was* a carriage clock on the shelf behind her desk, and she fought the temptation to turn round and look. Ridiculous! She shivered slightly and resumed the task of getting through the manuscript. All was well until Page Thirteen when "a fish, swimming towards the bank of the stream nearest to Lydia's desk leapt from the water after a mayfly, and its splash-landing soaked her foot and the surrounding carpet. This was too much. Lydia put the book down, removed her shoe, and wandered over to the photocopier. She lifted the cover, and read off 'A3', 'A4' and 'A5' on the glass. Looking at the sole of her shoe, she saw that she was a 5, so she placed the shoe on the mark, lowered the cover, and pressed the green button. A dry shoe emerged from the lower tray and she put it on before walking back, jumping over the stream, and resuming her seat and her boredom behind the desk."

If there was one thing Perfidia admired, it was a writer who could get under the skin of a character. And if there was one thing she hated, it was a writer who could get under *her* skin. But despite her irritation, she could not stop reading. Her fingers shook as she turned the pages, and she cast nervous little glances around the office every now and then, as if she feared it would dissolve into madness if she didn't hold it together herself. And on Page Thirty-five, "a playful breeze decided to get playful with Lydia. Stealing through the open window, it caressed the bare skin of her calves and fluttered the hem of her dress. Lydia looked up, absently wondering if she should close the window. At that moment, the breeze grew bolder, and Lydia gasped as a sudden gust tore at the dress."

Perfidia's fingers wandered absently to the zip fastener at her hip to check that it was fully fastened, then reassured but trembling, turned the page and continued. "Lydia looked down, and saw that the lowest button had come undone. As her fingers made to do it up, a miniature whirlwind tore up the front, ripped open all the buttons, flung her dress off and left her sitting, terrified and sobbing, in her underwear."

While Perfidia read this paragraph, the office cat, who up until then had been sleeping happily underneath the photocopier, woke up and stretched happily. Spotting Perfidia's bare legs underneath the desk, the cat strolled silently towards the desk and rubbed itself against her shins at the precise moment when Lydia was reduced to her skimpies. Perfidia shrieked. She dropped the manuscript, ran to the coat stand, grabbed her coat and fled from the office.

* * * * *

The Inland Revenue was a haven of tedium, predictability, and a total absence of excitement. At her new desk, Perfidia pulled a self-assessment tax return from the top of the large pile in her in-tray. Pinned to the front was a hand-written note.

'Dear Sir' (it presumed), 'I cannot send my remittance for tax for the last year for the following reasons. (1) My business partner of twenty years was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and on a particularly hot day last July, went to the bank, withdrew £20,000 from the company account, and then disappeared. The police have so far been unable to trace him. (2) Because of this, I had a nervous breakdown, my wife left me, and I now have to pay the fees for my son's public school which formerly she paid and now insists that I pay as part of the alimony. (3) A rogue trader at my investment bank gambled recklessly on the futures market, the bank went belly-up and took all my savings with it'.

Perfidia snorted. She found her red rubber stamp and printed the words 'DEFERMENT REJECTED - INVESTIGATION REQUIRED' on the form. She placed the whole lot inside a big brown envelope and dropped it into her out tray. Lighting a cigarette, she paused briefly and had another look at the note. 'You've got to admire the cheek', she thought. 'This merits a personal letter.'

"Dear Mr Thing

"I read the note attached to your tax return. In fact I read it several times, and I am filled with deep admiration. Clearly your talents are wasted in - " [Perfidia opened the file and gave it a cursory glance] - " supplying lunch services in The City. A new career, I feel sure, awaits you in creative fiction, and I can speak from personal experience in these matters.

"However, before that happy day dawns, Her Majesty's Customs and Excise Department requires your prompt attention to your tax liabilities .

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“Sincerely

“Perfidia Bookbinder (Miss).”

Perfidia smiled, and dreamed of the grey A-line skirt she would buy on Saturday's trip to the mall.

Anonymous Pastiche

While walking around Cookie recently, I happened upon a discarded manuscript, which I rescued and then slyly read. The contents appear to be a detective short story, set in the virtual world Second Life. I have not edited it, and the story in question, which apparently sets out to be a pastiche of a locally well-known writer, follows. (The story itself is untitled.)

It was one of those days in Second Life, and my mood was not the best, as I strolled my sexywalk (*the best! use this one!*)(No Modify) along a partly rezzed Fifth Avenue. Perhaps it was the weather - the skies as grey as a newly logged avatar on Orientation Island... Oh, who am I trying to fool! The skies in Second Life are NEVER grey, but perhaps sometimes - reflecting an inner sense of disquiet - are slightly less cerulean than usual, the wind noise more intrusive, the clicky-clacky typing more teeth-edgingly irritating.

Or maybe it was the 500 items missing from my inventory for the past week or so, including the new skin I had planned to wear to the party that evening? But even that probably wasn't it. After all, we adore a new skin and look forward so much to wearing it, but there inevitably comes a day when we realise sadly that skins only look good when we zoom in on someone's face.. briefly. (Let's be honest, it takes less than 10 seconds to see just how UN-Johnny Depp-like or George Clooney-like that misnamed, over-optimistic, self-deluded avatar really is). As we zoom out, we realise that beyond about 2 metres even the most photorealistic skin has become a fairly unremarkable amorphous blob with few identifying features - not great for a girl's confidence, I can tell you. Which is perhaps why I always go for dark eyeshadow and bright red lippy - they at least can be made out from further away, something I check and re-check with my camera several times a session. Not that I'm vain, you understand, but a girl needs to know she still looks good, even when the draw distance has been lowered.

My mood was not enhanced by the knowledge I was on my way to see Desparation Rowe, Second Life's premier private eye (or so it said on the business card I waited 5 patient minutes to rezz). Though I should make it clear, it wasn't Desparation Rowe himself that gave me pause for thought - he was clearly, from the expression on his face in his profile picture, a man who had strong faith in his own powers of attraction and I was quite willing to put this to the test - rather, it was the matter I had to bring to his professional expertise.

As I tripped up the stairs to his top floor office I suddenly realised my clacky shoe animation had lost its sound. Deciding that Desparation Rowe was definitely the kind of a guy that would need to hear the sound of a lady's stiletto heels approaching, I started repeatedly typing a semicolon into chat in a regular rhythm, hoping to generate some kind of click sound. It was a poor substitute but I hoped it would suffice.

Inside his office, I had a strange feeling of déjà vue : this handsome and most definitely hunky detective, with his keen eyes and generous mouth, 2-day stubble and lean build, was - yes, I have to confess it - a most attractive man, but he was also oddly familiar in a way I simply couldn't pin down. And far more attractive than his profile picture... in fact, not much like it at all. His opening words didn't help my state of mind either.

"You're here again."

"Again? Have we met before?"

His smile was the smile of a tiger not long eaten - fierce but relaxed.

"How can you ask a question like that?"

He waved me towards a swivel chair that faced a large desk, empty apart from an anglepoise lamp, a heavy glass paperweight shaped like the Venus De Milo, and a cigarette lighter. I made to sit, but not before I had typed WORN in my inventory - checking for the 5th time that day that I was wearing the proper underwear, in fact ANY underwear. If he had a Sharon "Basic Instinct" Stone animation in that chair, I wasn't going to be caught out. Luckily all was safe and I found myself sitting reasonably demurely with my hands clasped behind my head. He smiled again, as if he had read my thoughts, or maybe his smile animation was just more random than the "teeth every 10 seconds" you see so often in Second Life.

"Now, what can I do for you, Miss ... er ... oh hell, I won't pretend I need to ask your name."

Well of course he didn't, he could read it from over my head. Nevertheless, though confused by his enigmatic remarks, I blushed to tell him my story, he must hear this kind of thing all day long. I couldn't pretend that mine was anything more new or interesting either, but I had nerved myself for this moment, so I plucked up my courage and hoped he would be kind and patient. And professional.

"It's my partner."

I looked at him for cues, or for a betraying smile, but he looked at me unmoving. I hoped he was listening attentively and not simply about to crash, so I ploughed on.

"I think he has an awlt that is having an affair with someone else."

"Ah, the trouble with awlts, eh?"

He grinned an expensive grin that must have been custom scripted. His next move was so shockingly unexpected that I couldn't believe it was happening until it was over ... he walked around the desk, leant his face towards mine, and suddenly kissed me full on the mouth, a long, hard, passionate kiss that took my breath away and made my head reel. I jumped up, confused and disoriented. Unable to look him in the face, I walked, almost ran, from the office, forgetting totally the reason why I was there, and not even noticing the silent steps that my still-obstinately non-clicking heels were making on the lino.

The next day, after a near-sleepless night, the events of the previous day going round and round in my head, I just *happened* to be walking down the same street at around the same time. My head was still spinning, but I had a warmth in places I had no right to be warm, not least the pit of my stomach. To and fro and I walked, in a route that took me past the outer ground floor door of the building where his office was. And back again. Six times I must have wandered that path, memory of a kiss still making my heart flutter, my mind as outraged by his impertinent approach and uninvited intimacy, as my lower half was betraying me by keeping alive the glowing heat it had kindled in me. I wanted, I so wanted, to go back up there and begin again. This time, though, with any number of ideas as to where it might lead.

Then I saw him. Coming down the street towards the office building. I had paused to remove a tiny pebble from the toe of my shoe and when I looked up, he was there staring right back at me, a cigarette between his lips and a newspaper under his arm. I realised I was standing right outside the building entrance, virtually blocking his way. There was something not quite right about him however, though I was so panicky that I did not at first see what it was.

Hardly knowing what I was saying, I blurted out something that sounded rather meaningless, though I'm sure it included the words "yesterday" and "incident" and "your office". He looked at me through narrowing eyes and I suddenly became aware what was wrong : today, unlike in his office the day before, he was looking EXACTLY like his profile pic - in fact, nothing at all like the man from the day before. I checked his name tag - yes, Desparation Rowe, no doubt about it.

"Say again?" he almost snarled, tempering the gruff response with an awareness that he was talking to someone who would certainly have qualified as a "dame" in his Marlowexicon. I tried to tell him again, and after two stammered sentences he curtly interrupted me.

"So that's your game, is it?" and this time he really did snarl. "Well honey, let me tell you this, you better have snapshots, chat logs and a Linden present when you next see me. I wasn't even in my office yesterday, AND I can prove it. So your ruse is over before it has begun, you understand me?"

I backed away from him, apologising and blushing uncontrollably. He really was NOT the man in the office, or at least, he was not wearing the same avatar. And if he was convinced that chat logs and Lindens would exonerate him, then he was

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either the supreme bluffer, a world poker champion by right, or else it really had been someone else.

I now had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach as a horrible, gnawing suspicion began to grow. I hurried home as fast as my stilettos and dignity would allow and raced for my computer. I clicked on the alias of my Second Life folder and tapped my fingers impatiently (lighting yet another cigarette) while the original was found and loaded on my screen. I scanned down the directory with rapidly blurring eyes, wondering for the hundredth time why I bothered to create so many awlts when so few of them ended up with any kind of a SLife.

And there it was. A folder. A name. Such a small thing. A single letter. My habit of correct spelling - ingrained and totally unconscious - had betrayed me. No wonder the man in the office had been so familiar, so attractive to me. My own awlt, Desperation Rowe...

© Anon 2008

Encounter

The station at Sully-sur-Liege was not well served by stopping trains. At 7:15 am on 4th September 1943, the presence of two people on the eastbound platform was unusual enough to attract the interest of M. Délouge, the stationmaster.

Standing at opposite ends of the platform, the two - a man and a woman - were separated by almost 100 metres of snow-covered stone. In the grey dawn light, it appeared to M. Délouge that they were separated by more than physical distance. Each stood looking down the track in opposite directions, away from each other. Perhaps they were lovers who had quarrelled. Or maybe they were strangers who had arranged to meet but were now unsure. M. Délouge smiled at his own imaginings. They were just two people waiting for a train. Of course they did not choose to stand together. Who could you be sure of, in these dreadful times?

At that moment, the man turned and looked straight at the office window. M. Délouge instinctively ducked out of view. When he peered from behind the curtain a few seconds later, he saw that the man was slowly walking down the platform. M. Délouge wiped his brow and hastily turned back to his accounts, spread out on the table behind him, beneath the room's only light bulb. The man might be Gestapo, it was best to mind his own business.

But, a station-master's curiosity was stronger than his Vichy caution. He went back again, and stood at the opposite side of the window, where the curtain was heavier and concealed his pale and sweating face. He was just in time to see the woman approaching. She must have begun to walk down at the same time as the man from his end. Perhaps, after all, they were quarreling lovers, and now about to make up? The curtain twitched. The woman was holding something, he couldn't see properly. Suddenly, his view was obscured by the back view of the man, who had now reached the same point on the platform. There was no meeting, no conversation. Not even a look, as far he could see. The man bent down. The woman appeared in view once more. There was nothing in her hand. She walked on. The man straightened, his hand went to his pocket. M. Délouge couldn't see clearly, but he thought it looked like something yellowish, a piece of paper most likely. The man walked away.

The accounts needed to be done. They were wanted urgently by his superiors, who lived with the constant fear of Nazi reprisals. After ten minutes, his bell rang. He picked up the phone, whirled the handle, listened for a moment, and nodded. Five minutes later, in a cloud of steam and grinding metal and the smell of oil and smoke, the train slid to a halt. No-one alighted. One woman boarded, that was all. M. Délouge waved his flag and blew his whistle. When the train was a black square receding into the dawn sunlight, he turned and looked back down the platform. There was no-one there.

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* * * * *

Resistance goes on. Jews are smuggled through Europe towards safe countries, their instructions for the next stage of their journey always appearing as if from thin air. Espionage continues, secrets passed by casual encounters in the middle of nowhere. Ordinary daily life goes on - wagers are made, groceries bought, scores settled, lovers separated and reunited.

Telegraph wires and railway tracks are always found together. Lines of communication, fluid, infinite. A terminus is never really an end, but a small railway station in the middle of wartime France with two lines in and two lines out and few trains stopping - could, perhaps, be a terminus.

To Parker Jannick, on Oreo Day

The last Oreo

Is offered to us all by

The last Southern Belle

An Ode to Waffle

(for international waffle day)

You have seventeen

syllables, so be succinct

and do not waffle

© Tidd Kidd

pectin poem

(for peanut butter and jelly day)

jelly and haiku

have one thing in common - they

both need time to set

no haikwork house-u

(for No Housework Day)

I do no housework -

I only cook, bake, wash, clean,

sort, iron, tidy

eraser haiku

(for Rubber Eraser Day)

rubber erasers,

are the work of the devil -

why do they crumble?

© Tidd Kidd

Jellybean Haiku

(for jellybean Day)

Poems for the mouth,

Sweet.. chewy.. 5 syllables :

"Jellybean haiku"

Zipper poem

(for zipper day)

I have

no zip

verse, I'm

afraid I

completely

forgot

-

so

so-

rry

© Tidd Kidd

Last train to Liverpool Street

Let me take you down
Cos I'm going to
Liverpool Street
All on steel wheels
And here's my journey's company...

Eyes meet eyes then flick away
"I mind my business (yours is yours)
And if we meet outside this cage
We'll each be human, but for now
I'm sorry I looked"

And Nowhere Man sits listening
To nothing in his head. And Rita
Lovely in her dawn but wilted now
Cares not for meters nor for rhyme.
She's not a girl who misses much.

The pretty nurse feels in her bag
Wearing the face that she keeps
In a watch on her chest, and tries
To forget the hands that press
And buzz, by night by day, until
She feels that she's in a play, but -
She isn't, anyway

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At Piccadilly Circus

We're joined by Mr Kite

Make-up smeared, dog tired, but yet

"ANOTHER SHOW **TONIGHT**"

(It folds inside a fortnight -

The Hendersons will not be there

The Hendersons were never there

The theatre's ghosts sleep on)

Father McKenzie looks round his face

(White collar man white collar job)

At all the lonely people

He wonders where they all come from

But he doesn't really care,

Wiping his hands as he walks

from grave responsibility,

His love lies, sleeping, and lord -

me too -

I'm only sleeping

This ain't no magical tour,

Living is better with eyes closed

The outside world goes whistling by

Hot noisy wind dark smell black night

And it's getting hard to be

Someone. Anyone.

Nothing really matters

"End of the rainbow, ye say?"

I nodded. The little old man (he was VERY little) rubbed his hands together and called out. "Sean - come in here a moment?"

Another, younger, even smaller man (his son?), came into the shop wiping his hands on a linen cloth (whitish with a thick blue stripe towards each end).

"Yes, da?"

"We got any rainbow ends in stock?"

"No, da."

"We got any coming in?"

"No, da. Not until a week next Rainstorm."

The old man looked at me with eyes that almost certainly twinkled behind his bottle-bottom glasses. "Well, there ye have it miss. None in."

I shook my head slightly, trying to clear it of a fuzziness that had overcome me since I walked into this dark little, old little, strange little shop.

"But it MUST be here. I followed it. The end is right here."

"Followed it, ye say?"

"Yes! It's right here. Come outside, I'll show you."

The two men looked at each other then turned together in unison to look at me, unblinking. The older man spoke.

"Aha", he said. I waited for further enlightenment, but none came.

"You won't come? Let me show you, I will prove to you both what I'm talking about. The rainbow ends right over this shop."

"And leave the shop empty? Unguarded?"

I looked around at acres of nothing. Shelves piled high with nothing. Cupboards, floor, counter, all overflowing with absolutely nothing.

"But there's nothing here!"

The old man roared with laughter and raised one hand triumphantly.

"EXACTLY", he cried, "Nothing. We have nothing to steal."

"So", I ventured, "if you have nothing to steal, what are you worried about?"

The old man looked at me as if I were some kind of idiot child he had to humour.

"Do ye value your possessions?"

"Yes, of course", I replied.

"Well so do we", the old man coughed slightly. "And we have learned to be happy with nothing."

"That's wonderful", I offered, "but it means that you have nothing for anyone to take."

"Exactly", the old man repeated. I must have looked as puzzled as I felt, for he touched my arm lightly. "People could steal nothing from us."

I shook my head again, but it would not clear. I began to feel a little dizzy. "So - ?" I ventured.

The old man returned to humour-the-idiot-child mode. "Look", he said, "Suppose we do as you say - all go outside - then when we came back inside we could find that someone had sneaked into our shop and filled it up while we were gone."

"Filled it up? That's unlikely! Anyway, would it be such a bad thing?!"

The old man shook his head pityingly. "Of course it would. We would have lost nothing. We would have gained something and so we would have lost nothing. And we are happy with nothing."

He stared at me, and repeated very slowly, "we are happy with nothing."

He must have seen something in my eyes, some deep brief flash of recognition, for he took my arm and gently steered me out of the shop. "Good luck wit' yer quest", he said before turning back inside.

The rain had stopped and the sun was shining. The rainbow had glided and was gone. Flowers shone at me everywhere I looked. A mild breeze played music on my face. I felt lighter, happier, than I had a few minutes earlier. I wandered in the direction of home, enjoying the scents and the sounds and the sights all around me.

At home, I fed the cat. He looked up at me and grinned. We both knew something valuable : he in his cat way knew it always, but I had only learned it today. Something so simple...

There is nothing at the end of a rainbow. Just the end of the rainbow. And that is everything.

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Eco-dwarves

written for Leprechaun Day

The little people
nag us ceaselessly, until
we've all become green

no sox

written for No Socks Day

1.

"No socks please" ... (Er, no,
I'm not going to say it -
Just) : "We're sollibate"

2.

The rule is -
Sandalled feet must turn to ice,
Socks are not allowed

© Tidd Kidd

Frog Ioku

frogs : slippy
 slimy

 hops - but
hidden also the

 ever
first haiku !

(The first ever haiku was coined by a Buddhist monk on a hot sunny lazy day, and he wrote a haiku about a frog that made a single jump and disturbed both the surface of the pond and the silence of the day).

Tidd: Name that Tune

[This story was inspired by a famous rock song and there are clues to it in the story.]

He: The rain just would not stop, nor would my mind. The preacher man said 'the peace of God that passes all understanding'. That piece of God passed me by. I was waiting for the First Coming, been waiting all my life.

She: I'm going to explode. That's what it feels like, anyhow. Stretched and poised - waiting, waiting, waiting. Long heavy, weighty waiting. He's got to come soon, or I will die, or I will lose it. Please, come soon, put me out of my misery. (I shouldn't feel like this. Nature is supposed to equip me. So why the fuck do I feel like this?) Oh Jack, hurry up. Bring it to me now. I can't manage unless you do this one thing for me. I haven't asked for the world. Have I?

He: I was driving on autopilot, and the wind was trying its hardest to push water into my eyes. (Takes more than rain-hell to make me cry.) Syn-amphetamin-aptic activity rocked my poor old brain. Images from the day. Those bloody adverts. Ok, yeah, good money maybe, but... "Mantra for Men. Because You Are." For Christ's sake! I swerved to hit an unsuspecting hedgehog, then

"Out the corner of my eye,
Four horsemen riding by - "

She: Shit, he's still not back. And now the dog's giving me hell. What's the matter with you, mangey little fuck? Lost your toy? Crawl back into your basket, there's a good little sacrificial beast. There's more important things in life than a yellow rubber bone full of wet toothmarks. You lost it, don't look at me with your big wide puppy dog eyes. Go find something small and warm with blood in, to sink your teeth into and shake to death.

He: It was getting wetter and I was driving faster. Past the dark park at high speed. I saw a toad, on the road. I listened for the "skwitch" as my wheels hit, but the wind was too loud and the rain wouldn't stop for bloodlust. I drove on, and I heard someone laughing high and screechy like a madman.

"Out the corner of my eye,
Four horsemen riding by,
A Blade Runner night sky - "

She: Jack, it's only Charlie. He's not hard to find. Please please hurry. It's on the way and it's been hurting for

and I don't know what to do. Charlie Cocaine will help, he always helps. (But be careful Jack. Did I tell you? I love you. Did I? I do, Jack, I do. But right now, I love Charlie more, I need Charlie, and you're going to find him and bring him back here.) Please Jack - you must understand. Our life together, it will go on. But for now... Charlie? Please...

He: I should have taken a break, gone away somewhere, taken her with me, even in her condition. It's too late now.

Tool 8. The stress is too much. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. A mad bad dull boy, ha ha ha. Stress.

All hope and no parts. Audition, audition, audition. THIS ISN'T AN ACT. IT'S FOR REAL YOU STUPID BASTARD. No more ads. I can't stand it no more. And now this. This.. errand. Got to get back, got to be there when.. Foot on the pedal, up the speed. Down the rain, along the road, over the limit, under the ground.

"Out the corner of my eye,
Four horsemen riding by,
A Blade Runner night sky,
And the next rhyme is 'die' "

She: Water outside, water inside. Broken. He's coming. He's here. Jack, where are you, man? Where Charlie? I hurt. I want to stop hurting. Charlie, Charlie, sing me a song, a sweet sweet song. He can't arrive like this. Thrown into life, in this house, in this rain, in the wind. It's not how I planned, not how I thought it would be.

He: When the tree arrived in my chest, I was doing ninety-five. I remembered nothing and there's nothing now, to remember. It's blank, white, nothing. It's not raining here. I still don't understand. I'm not in a play. I'll never see my child. That hurts, real bad. There's no Second Coming, and I missed the first.

She: Jack, look, he's smiling! (I didn't need Charlie after all, they gave me his Sister instead. His Sister is much nicer. Yes, even better than Charlie.) It's your smile. You came back after all. The dog likes him. I let him play, it's good for him, and the dog won't get hurt. Hold out your hand to me, let me feel you. Let me know you're in the room, in the house, in the world. Somewhere. You never

understood, did you? I so want to make you understand now. My memories are sweet, they'll never die. They hold everything together. The whole world.

He: I never did go to Paris. Not while I was... But I'm there now. There's a grave, and I spend a lot of time there. With Him. We talk about Charlie. And his Sister, and Horse, and Bud. He lets me talk about you too, and the little one - I told him I missed the coming. Yesterday he said it's not The End, today he says People are Strange. It's music. It's all in there. I have to sit and wait sometimes, so many people want to talk to him. He thinks he's the Messiah, and who's to say he's not? He know horsemen riding by, the birth. And the rain. The endless rain.

The Yellow Rose of Zion

There is no rose of less vertu, than a yellow star to prick a Jew

Have we not paid the price already -
The yellow badge of Man's Semitic fears?
On Hungarian streets, OUR streets,
That awful rose, the ransom down the years

We wore it when we climbed aboard the trains
Its shadow still sicked upon our naked forms
When they stole our clothes, our hopes, our lives.

How could it happen that some of us survived?
A road of skeletons accompanied by ghosts
And we who barely live, already lost.
The way from Auschwitz to Jerusalem
Is paved with starving lines. We stagger

To a new land, birthed in pain and fire,
A zealots' fight, a self-respecting war,
Proper soldier boys with minds outraged,
Emotions too strong for youths their age;

Young men who would give their souls, and more
Fevered in hate, hostile, who missed "our" War.
No time for weak and number'd survivors

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"WE are Zion. Are you, too, to be inheritors?"

With hearts of fire and cruel yellow stars
They cremate us again, we the ovens' scars.

"You didn't fight? You went as sheep to slaughter?
"You're a shame to Zion - you should have fought,
"Like those who sacrificed themselves in Warsaw,
"Who loathing shame did show the world our soul."

We mute, weary, and robbed of past
The rough beast's hour come around at last
With practised meekness pin a star to our chest.

"You dare to call yourself a Jew?" (There is no rose of less vertu).

[I wrote this very recently, after discovering with horror that many of the survivors of the Holocaust were treated with embarrassment, shame, even hostility, by some of the Zionist settlers in the early days of modern Israel. Some even - like those rescued by Dr. Kastner in Hungary and put on a special train - were forced to wear yellow stars just as they were in the Ghettos.]

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Ice cream haiku

Mount Fuji is a
cone - now, how do I link up
that fact with ice cream ?

This topic makes me
think - I pause, reflect - wait!
I think I've got it licked

If Parker reads her
poems aloud, I will melt
along with my ice cream

(written for Creative Ice Cream Flavours Day)

Teddku

Today I went down
to the woods to look for my
very own picnic

Alas for dyslexics.
Not Tidd but Tedd - I became
a picnic for bears

(written for Teddy Bear Picnic Day)

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Mooku

Here in this meadow
I live high, and low - the sound
Of unbridled joy

You can lead a cow
To water, but you cannot
Milk until it's time

The Cow And Calf : rocks
in Yorkshire - they move not, and
Neither do they moo

I love humans, so
I shall say this only once -
Watch where you're stepping

Atom Heart Mother -
Thank you Pink Floyd for making
Me an immortal

I eat, I shit and
I give milk - and in return
They steal my babies

(written for Cow Appreciation Day)

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Chowku kishiku

If I worked like a dog
I'd spend my time sniffing
Other people's bottoms

and malodorous
curlicues I'd leave behind
for folks to step in

and after all that
I'd have just enough bounce left
to run round and round

persuading you that
a nondescript stick is all
I ever wanted.

Yet for some reason,
If you add all those things up
They amount to love.

(Written for Work Like a Dog Day)

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Hamku

I wanted to write

I can't be bothered

but lying here peacefully

(written for Hammock Day)