

The Kumquat Challenge



37 poems by WCC faculty, staff, and students
(current and former) celebrating
National Poetry Month

April 2008

Whatcom Community College Library

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Jay Clark



Introduction

Billow, marvel, enough, maybe, flight, sor-did, glimmer, tart, kumquat, tide—those were last year's words for constructing a poem.

"Kumquat" continues to hang around, a permanent fixture as the title of this annual collection. Reading submissions this year and writing my own poem, I began to see this project, however, as the "Kimono" Challenge.

When you choose a word that means "a loose, floor length, traditional Japanese garment that has wide sleeves, wraps in front, and is fastened with a sash," its versatility is limited. It's undeniably Japanese, a unique piece of clothing, and it usually functions only as a noun. Personally, I had a hard time manipulating "kimono."

I commend the few people who were agile enough to sidestep its strong footprint. In one of the winning poems, "Destination," student Allison Dustin wrote a fine description of the moon: "her creamy face smiles back, wrapped in a kimono of stars." In "Futurescape," a poem written as a class project, I'm not sure what "kimono-colored leaves" look like, but I sure would like to see some.

As you can detect by the amount of space in this introduction, "kimono" has succeeded in commanding too many paragraphs. Let us move on to the other words selected (*sage, divine, spring, freight, traverse, pearl, glimpse, silk, and cream*) and see how various poets have used them in the following pages.

All poems were submitted (without the authors' names) to our judges Donna Rushing and Kate Miller, both published poets and adjunct members of the English department. We thank them for their careful examination of the literary efforts from inspired contestants. We also thank Pam Richardson for suggesting the use of student art work in the anthology. She included *The Kumquat Challenge* words as part of her "Negative Space" assignment. Sally Sheedy gets special thanks for entering and arranging the poems and art work in this booklet.

Linda Lambert,
for the Library Marketing Committee
Ara Taylor, chair; Sally Sheedy, Traci Harpine

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Taylor Treece and fellow students Lori Boland, Kari Galbraith, KC Simonsen, and Allison Dustin submitted one of the group poems.

Richard Thacker, a former WCC staffer in computing resources, greets each day with a “dull wit and a sharp pencil.” Once in a while it’s the other way around.

Dylan Warnberg is a WCC student studying creative writing and video design. A resident of Bellingham for only two years, he’s excited to be living in the heart-beat of the Northwest, and views everyday as a new experience from the food he eats, to the people he meets.

dent on ASWCC Student Council.

Jessica Reidel is an adjunct mathematics instructor and amateur juggler. She shares a house with “two humans, one big dog, two turtles, and eight fish....so far.”

Kate Miller teaches English composition and creative writing at WCC and women’s studies and race and ethnicity at Western Washington University. She is currently working on a cross-genre manuscript called “Inventing Mother,” and is trying to write a poem a day for April’s poetry month.

Ara Taylor teaches creative writing for WCC community education, was the book reviewer for *The Bellingham Herald*, and is in charge of the reserve collection at the WCC Library.

Sally Sheedy is the systems librarian at WCC, the mother of twins, and loves words, music, and dance.

Marty Sloat is a WCC student who plans to transfer to WWU as an English major. When he isn’t working at the library or studying, he watches Disney classics and zombie flicks.

Heather Sluys works in library technical services, “a behind-the-scenes land where all the magic happens.” She is working on her master’s degree in library science through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Kassandra Spurling is a work-study and part-time staff member of the computer resources department, as well as president of the IT Professionals of Tomorrow club, Whatcom’s first and only computer club. She is graduating this spring with an associates’ degree in computer information systems with the Information Security Endorsement.

Norma Stevens is the retired director of WCC’s testing center.

Rebecca Todahl, whose designs and poetry are included in *The Kumquat Challenge*, is a student at WCC currently completing prerequisites for the visual communications program. She loves “the obscure things in art and life” and is “a creator of fine herbal bath and body products.” She likes “The Cure, X, and most other genres of music.”

Destination *by Allison Dustin*

Kumquat Challenge Winner!

the desert quilt spreads out, eruptions of
wooly daisy, big sagebrush and cholla cactus
divine the river and springs hidden underground;

lurching up mountainside switchbacks, the locomotive
steams past, wide eyes aglow in query;
trees whistle by; miles of track traverse the brushing arms

under a tower of branches, an old man,
young with memories, tracks the movement
until the motion lulls him back into dreamlessness.

the freight train thunders on, cutting the still air
like pearly bull horns; the train jumps rhythmically;
now only glimpses are visible behind inky evergreens

pine and cedar fall away for bridges suspended over
silk night water. The conductor pulls into a station,
cinches his jacket tighter and looks to the moon.

her creamy face smiles back, wrapped in a kimono of stars.



Herdi Vazquez

Morning Chores

by *Rob Beishline*

Cup in hand,
I taste the cream
Cutting the bitter bite of coffee.

Left in the little house
Children play out scenes of the divine:
Daughter tries on mother's bra—
A young geisha sneaking the finest silk
Kimono.
Brother screams, "Down pup!"—
A toddler with the ferocity of a samurai.

For me, the gravel path is
An uncertain traverse past the last frost,
A glimpse of spring far off.
The sage on the mound
Is brown around the leaf and
Rotten pearls of snowberries still cling to dry
Branches.

Dad's job is to shift
Freight, mend fences, and
Feed the chickens.

Yearning

by *Barbara Leveque*

Traversing the early spring countryside on a freight
train,
the sage caught a fleeting glimpse of a divine young
woman
wearing a pearl-embroidered, cream silk kimono.
Turning away from the window,
a single tear flowed slowly down his cheek.

Currently she is greatly enjoying her work at the circulation desk in the library.

Jacob Hammer is a student at WCC.

Carol Hogan is a returning adult student and freelance photojournalist. Following a lengthy career in that field, she is completing her undergraduate work at Whatcom and plans to major in journalism at Western Washington University.

Linda Howson is a community education program coordinator, coming to Whatcom in 1990 to administer the EMT program. She does not view herself as a writer but "having said that, I spend much of my time writing community ed class descriptions to lure community members into lifelong learning experiences!"

Carina Kozaczuk is an adjunct instructor in English as a second language.

Jeff Krein is a WCC student and tutors for the ESL program. He hopes to become a history teacher, but in the meantime, you might see him around town playing folk music.

Linda Lambert loves working at the WCC library, especially when it involves projects like *The Kumquat Challenge*.

Barbara Leveque has been a part of the Whatcom Campus community for six years, this is her first foray into writing poetry. She is the WorkFirst director at WCC.

Erik Martinson, a student in Donna Rushing's English 121 class, was the lead writer of the poem "I Traverse a Mountain Face." He was joined by Evan H., Ellen W., McKenzie Ortego, and Eliza Fiedler, who also wrote "Drift."

Members of Pam Richardson's Art 115 Class contributed black-and-white illustrations. They included Jay Clark, Rebecca Todahl, Courtney Chavarria, Lauren Adcox, Heidi Vasquez, Leleitia Urquhart, Lester Johnstone, Isha Jules, and Danny Huth.

Pat Lund works at WCC.

Alex Mech, a high school senior in Running Start, will complete his associate's degree this summer, and transfer to Seattle Pacific University where he plans to major in international affairs. He serves as a vice presi-

Contributors

Dennis Barnes, a graduate of Western Washington University, “discovered the joy of writing while attending WCC.” He follows Erato, the muse of Erotic poetry, and likes writing because “it opens up an opportunity to poetically reflect on the kinds of experiences that have led to my present incarnation as an aging and ribald bard.”

Rob Beishline is an art instructor who loves browsing the new book shelf in the library. Library books have lead him on many misadventures, including wine making, and raising goats.

Dominique Coulet du Gard is presently an adjunct instructor with WCC, Fairhaven and WWU Anthropology Department. In her 'spare' time she loves to read and write poetry and essays, sometimes in English and sometimes in French.

Alison Dustin is a student in her final quarter at WCC. She's a baker at the Colophon Café in Fairhaven. She loves books and cookies.

Rachael Davis is president of Associated Students and will graduate this spring. She has been writing poetry for six years, finding that her favorite poems “make my imagination grow. If the mood strikes, I can write out a poem in ten minutes. Or, I may labor over it for days.” Her favorite authors are William Cullen Bryant, Robert Frost, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Darleen Dixon is currently enrolled in the graphic arts program and plans on graduating this spring. She is also a writing center tutor. She has “sold paintings all over the country, and is looking forward to taking over the world with my Photoshop designs.”

Aubrey-Anna Ebinger is a student at WCC, working toward a career as a dental hygienist. Her interests include quilting, gardening, writing, and learning.

Eliza Fiedler is a student at WCC.

Jaquelynn Gering is a student at WCC.

Wayne Gerner is a former WCC business office employee.

Jenny Green loves children's books, grown-up books, music, animals, and any type of creative expression.

A Glimpse of Bellingham *

by *Dominique Coulet du Gard*

A freight train traverses the horizon.
Above, the air of Spring.
Below, the bay in her shimmering kimono
of pearl, silky grey, and cream.
A divine sage transient announces:
“Welcome to Paradise.”

* *Author's note:* My first month in Bellingham, April 2003, near the Lighthouse Mission on Holly Street, I was marveling at the clear damp air, freight trains, the bay with its ethereal Lummi Island, and the spiritual statement of a passing transient.

Drift

by *Eliza Fiedler*

I glimpse
the freight-line Sage
Oh luck divine!
To watch his face like cream
contort and dip into darkness
as dewed pearls drip from my windows
The Sound still as silk stretched between springs of
windless, starless dusk.
Before he continues traversing
some adjacent county or universe
“Toledo!”
he cries
“Aloha, Kimono!”

Chitoseame**by H.C. Sluys*

Around November 15, the island children
 Gather
 Silk finery surrounds the small girl
 Who traverses childhood
 In a red, a magenta, a cream kimono
 Or one engulfed in spring flowers
 Sage honor will not rob her of
 Delight
 When handed sweet candy
 In a bag of divine turtles and cranes
 She pays her freight later
 But now, now
 She glimpses the Pearl of Great Price.

**Chitoseame means 1000 year candy*

March*by Pat Lund**with apologies to Will*

Shall I compare thee to a glimpse of spring?
 Thou art more blustery and more chill'd;
 Rough winds the darling buds of March traverse
 And the silken sage of summer seems far afield;
 The pearls of crocus freighted with frost shiver
 While divine kimono-colored tulips wither.
 The golden eye of heaven dimm'd illusive as a dream
 While long we wait for warm strawberries and cream.

The Walk*by Rebecca Todahl*

The freight I place somewhere I do not know,
 somewhere I have never been.
 From within the divine you feel like silk,
 as if a pearl were placed in my hand.
 I look at spring, but only a glimpse.
 I dimensionally traverse the paradox to see.
 What I see is sullen girls wearing dreadful pink
 kimonos, laughing.
 Fully aware I light the sage to watch it burn. Cream
 colored
 smoke surrounds me, I choke.
 Unable to remain unseen or unheard I walk.
 I walk to that somewhere I have never been.

Hard Season*by Kate Miller*

All winter I carry this heavy freight,
 bolts of silk opalescent as pearls,
 heartbeats echoing at three am, bright
 kimonos like creamy blossoms, the promise
 of years left, and all that might not be.

Traversing high desert plains, beneath my feet
 the land is barren, dirt and stone where the wind
 has swept away the snow. How I hunger for spring,
 that first glimpse is all that keeps me moving,
 still the scent of sage rises up around me, divine.

*Jay Clark*

When I Traverse the Meadows

by Norma Stevens

When I traverse the meadows of the blooming spring,
And glimpse the silken pearls of morning dew,
I drink the scent of blossoming sage,
Wrapped in a kimono of creamy, sunlit days.
I do not mourn the freight of winter's cold and gloom,
My world's divine, fresh and renewed.

Memo from Pansy the Dog

RE: the New Kittens

by Jessica Reidel

Saw a pointy-eared demon
Not demon freight My squeaky penguin
Called out warning Demons Beware
Sage advice met befuddled ears

Glimpsed another demon
Stealthy kimono possibly grey
Stole my pigs ear
Sprang away

Heard yelling Don't understand
Didn't have paws on table
Would NEVER traverse it
Not even for cream

Praying for Divine deliverance
Longing for time when I was silky one
We walked dropping poop pearls
Caresses belonged to me.

Kumquat Challenge Winner!

Late Last Autumn

by Carina Kozaczuk

Late last autumn I had a dream
Of a young Japanese girl in the spring,
All dressed in silk and rubbed with cream
Her only freight was a golden pearl string

Her deep red smile broke through white skin
Wrapped in a kimono, soft green like sage
If I could glimpse this beauty again
I'd traverse the world through every age.

Oriental Spring

by Wayne Gerner

It was early spring and I smelled the sage
As I read of the East on a magazine page.
I dreamed of a geisha, skin color of pearl.
I had to get there, it meant the world.

I went freight to freight 'til I made the traverse.
Like Marco Polo, I thought I was the first.
There she was in a kimono of silk.
A glimpse of her showed that she was cream, not milk.

I've never had anyone so divine.
Eat your hearts out boys, she's all mine.
Then I awoke, it was all a dream.
I sighed as I ate my peaches and cream.

Grandma's Advice

by Nathan Dodge

It is spring
So once again I've traversed halfway 'cross the continent
Halfway 'cross this town
Halfway down the street
Up the walk
Up the two flights of stairs
To where the divine gospel hour is playing on the radio
Sat at the window
Watched her pour kumquat tea into small green china cups
These are balanced on an old freight trunk
Covered with a cream cloth to hide the antiquity
She sits back straight
Adjusts her pearls and smiles
I get a glimpse of the woman that Grampa fell in love with
She leans forward to impart her sage advice
"If the kimono isn't made of silk, it's shit!"

Reconsidered

by Nathan Dodge

She slides the pearls into the drawer where they belong
He sits on the bed and fiddles with his tie
She exchanges her clothes for a silk kimono
He glimpses out the window before his eyes turn back to the
bathroom
She checks her makeup to make sure it's an even cream
with no splotches
He traverses from bed to door to listen, then returns to bed
She remembers the sage advice her mother imparted for
situations such as these
He waits impatiently for what he considers a divine gift from
god
She enters
He smiles
She frowns
He starts loosening his tie
She says...
He listens

As her gaze fell upon him
the ice began to melt.
A warmth seeped through his body
like nothing he had ever known before.
As the fire spread
he looked up from the patch of grass he had been so thor-
oughly searching for answers,
& their eyes met.

Upon that twist of fate hung the future.
A single word was exchanged...
"Love," he whispered
& it thundered over the earth.
She smiled softly,
barely aware of the motion that meant so much to him.
"Love," she replied,
& destiny was fulfilled.



I Traverse the Divine Spring

by Jacob Hammer

I traverse the divine spring,
time flows like spilt cream and the smell
of sage charges my senses like a freight train.
Just a glimpse though,
like a thread of silk woven into the kimono of life.

Shukumei no Sakura
by *Kassandra Spurling*

The day was perfect.
Cherry blossoms drifted through the air,
caressing her skin as they floated past.
She was a vision to behold,
draped in silks of sage & cream,
pearls in her hair,
her kimono a tribute to spring itself...
& she a glimpse of the divine.

As his eyes fell upon her
he was smitten.
He felt as though he was pulled through the fabric of
time,
traversing the ages in great leaps & bounds,
to come to *this* place, this very *moment*...
with all the universe poised in silence for him,
but he could not speak.

He was frozen,
a statue of flesh.
His breath caught in his throat,
his blood turned to ice in his veins,
every piece of him stopped,
but for his heart.
It pounded furiously in his chest,
faster than a freight train,
as though trying to break free...
For, if the man would not approach her,
this heart surely would.

All was quiet,
as though the whole world held its breath with him.
But then the wind blew,
reality shifted,
& the silence was broken.
The breath that had caught in his throat was released,
& the world turned once more.
Then the impossible happened;
she turned to look at him.

A freight train flattens his night
He tightens his tie
She returns to the bathroom
He shuts the door quietly...and cries.

Danny Huth



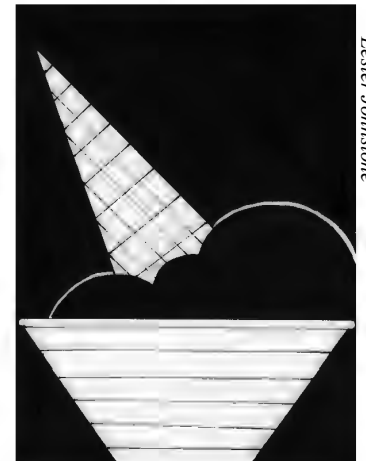
Rebecca Todahl



Rebecca Todahl



Lester Johnstone



Discovery*by Alex Mech*

Catch a glimpse,
 Of a divine kimono,
 Worn by a girl,
 In spring dress,
 She is freighted across,
 The pond by sages,
 Traversing much water,
 She spots a pearl shining,
 Shocked she falls,
 Her robe soaked,
 The silk remains light,
 She dives down deep,
 Brings up the treasure,
 A small, beautiful thing,
 Which matches her garment,
 She sells it for cream,
 How she now regrets,
 Letting it go.

Buddha's Glimpse*by Richard Thacker*

Spring stirs, winter becomes
 unfrozen, sage thoughts
 traverse shallows where
 the pearl begins to irritate.

Sea foam is cream
 to the tea leaf shore
 where a cliff drops
 all pretense of rock.

A loosened kimono tempts
 the trudging divine,
 undulating silk of history
 adding to the freight of his kind.

*Courtney Chavarria***Jus' Two Ol' Country Boys***by Dennis Barnes*

Hot dog! Fred! Take your eyes off that dadburned
 sagebrush!
 Get a glimpse of that thar freight car with a right pretty
 girly
 Hangin' her divine legs off a bale o' hay and she ain't
 even in a rush!
 Golly gee! She's in one a them thar kimonos all silky
 and creamy and pearly.

Makes me wanna traverse right over thar and spring
 on her a big ol' kiss!
 Whoa! That thar fella sittin' next to her don't look
 friendly...wears a sneer!
 Somehow I cain't help thinkin' she might be his and
 that she ain't no "Miss."
 Dang! These ol' country boys best be headed to the
 saloon fer a cold beer!

Controversé

by Darleen Dixon

Tightly woven, the dried, clipped stems of sage
 Burning
 Smoking,
A smudge of wispy smoke and pungent, aromatic whirls of
 sensual earth—
I was alive—every divine inch of my being animate and
 thrumming...
 Awakened
 Aroused
 Aware...
Deliciously aware of each and every nerve ending pulsing
 within me...
More importantly aware of the ones skittering to life beneath
 the silk-over-steel flesh
That tightly stretches across the expanse of my lover's back.
My kimono lays discarded beneath my knees
 Forgotten
 Dismissed
Tossed aside like so much spring, burned to fiery ash in the
 wake of summer.
I burn like that now, glimpsing the passion within his eyes—
 A willing victim crushed under the freight train of my
 own heartbeat.
My hands move leisurely,
 Exploring
 Memorizing
Traversing the landscape of his soul—
My tongue must taste him—
 Flicking
 Laving
Stealing the pearl he offers without even knowing.
I feel myself dilate in readiness for what is to come...
Knowing that the dance we are about to begin will be the
 cream on my cherry.

Celestial Seasons

by Dylan Joel Warnberg

An Awakening to humanity, a delivery of Existent Energy.
A white winter is Ending, pearl blankets melt as ice begins to
 peel.
All Elements are Experiencing change—A traverse all shall
 feel.

An Early morning horizon, a glimpse into what the day holds.
A golden ray rising, providing Essential light for life to grow.
All living beings, gardens, and trees—A transition to an Ex-
 quisite spring.

An Inspiring interval, Emitting capacity for change and
 growth.
A divine destiny Emanating through shades of blue and
 green.
All Existence savoring the celestial cream—A tang, that's
 Eternally serene.

An Occurrence of an Equinox, a supple into the season of
 silk.
A material Expressing a natural hue, a pure scene weaved
 that's felt.
All creations flowing and Enlightened—A time of change has
 been dealt.

An Unearthly point in time, Earth's Kimono is beginning to
 decompose.
A promise land has been Exposed, a place where sage ad-
 aptation is innate
All Evolving should now know—A transfigure phase is Ex-
 panding in 2008.

Journey

by Jenny Green

Give me a pearl of wisdom for my soul's growth,
A spun-silk kimono of light to wear on the path,
A glimpse of golden joy to illumine my steps,
And friends to dance beside me on the way.

Wrap me in a woven web of wonder,
Shine on me bright star-beams full of peace,
Place in my heart the purest form of spirit,
Create in me divinely healing love.

Lift the heavy freight I sometimes carry
Of thoughts too far away from brilliant light.
Replace these with a creamy, shimmering presence
That spirals round myself—a sage, sweet calm.

Help me traverse this star-strewn path of wisdom
With joyful tread and laughter springing forth.
Sing me into realms beyond all knowing,
And pierce this music deep into my heart.

Cream Foam Green

by Dennis Barnes

Golden beach traversed by sudden upspringing undertow
Crest of each wave churning its freight of sand
Glow of sunlight colored crescents
Pearl bubbles of cream foam green
 Strolling along
 She in her silk kimono
 I with a scent of mint sage
Wind sends music flowing through the palms
A glimpse of memory divine.

a girl, a hiker,
glimpsing first love.
She takes her hand
from her jeans pocket
and, against
a backdrop of
sagebrush,
traverses the
east face of her lover's thighs
as if her fingers wore small boots
unused to the terrain of skin.

I like these words
and this girl better.

The Loss of Wisdom

by Rachael Davis

With divine insight into this age,
The young gray-dressed sage,
Searched the lands high and low,
For a glimpse of the Lady of the Snow,
Whose beauty rivaled the spring
The sage traversed along the streams,
The Silk Road and all the lands,
With the pearl prayer strands,
He sought for the Lady with freight,
In hopes retrieve the special medicinal cream
Made from the strands of winter beam,
That make the hem of the kimono she wore.
But alas, the cure was never found,
And in vain the lore was lost,
Alas the great Sage was bound.

Word War

by Linda Lambert

Kumquat Challenge Winner!

I.
Our first meeting
annoyed me.
Six of the ten words
lifting their little chins,
flirting for inclusion
in sweetly torrid poesy.

You know who you are:
commoners in the parlance
of commerce found
on small boxes of perfume,
in home show flyers for spas,
in glossy ads in *Self* or *Cosmo*.

The latter I think.

It is springtime
on page 63.
The word "divine,"
in a feathery font,
arches over a
slender girl,
kimono-clad.
She extends her hand
from its silk folds,
offering a pearl,
cream colored and pure,
poised over the phrase,
"Jewels For You."

II.
The other four words
stare straight ahead
confident of their utility,
knowing that a love poem,
freighted with meaning,
will arise from them.
It will be a poem about

Bride-in-Waiting

by Linda Howson

It was a sight to behold as the young Sapporo bride
got her first glimpse of the train
traversing the remote mountain pass drawing nearer
with each beat of her racing heart.
Her sage colored eyes filled with tears of joy as she
anticipated the divine contents of freight car #5--
A stunning wedding kimono--cream colored silk with
splashes of hand sewn pearls--
She rejoiced knowing that her spring wedding was no
longer just a dream.



Leleitia Urquhart

Vernal Costume

by Jeff Krein

Skies of silk
Gloss over the girl;
Freights of sage-green sea
Traverse below.

As cream from milk,
Shall rise Divine Pearl;
A glimpse of warmth
Escapes her Spring Cloud Kimono.

Group Poems

Traverse a Mountain Face

by Evan H., Erik M., Ellen W., McKenzie Ortego, Eliza Fiedler

I traverse a mountain face
Sheets of silken snow, dotted with black boulders
The sun, like a pearl, divine in all her glory,
echoes the start of spring.
I glimpse a sage, pulling his freight through the snow
His cream colored kimono hides him.



Isha Jules

Futurescape: Tree

by Taylor Treece, Lori Boland, Allison Dustin, Kari Galbraith
and KC Simonsen.

It was a time of kimono-colored leaves –
a divine mixture of luminescence from the sun.

The colors traversing the azure sky –
as night chases the silky fading light,
returning pearly freight to the spring of life.

The noble sage sits ponderously –
glimpsing the future in the creamy, star-filled sky.

Blue Summer Rain

by Dennis Barnes

Hers

Walking but not quite touching

By a cool spring-fed pool

Remembering glimpses

Of reflections of sky and water

Thoughts traversing consciousness

Blue summer rain

Dampening his sandy hair

My cream-colored Kimono

A foreign scarf of silk entwined

With mint sage scent

Mist conceals the freight ship

That transported me from him

Holding hands our lips touched

A gentle brushing of tears from my cheek

Pearl strand wends its way around neck

My love is his forever

Memories divine

Blue Summer Rain
by Dennis Barnes

His
Walking beside a spring-fed pool
Glimpsed reflection
Through sky and water
Traverses my consciousness
Blue summer rain dampens
Silk scarf adorning head and shoulders
Keeping sage scented ebony hair
Flower and light creamy kimono dry
Deep longing bottomless eyes
Burned in my reverie
Misty harbor frames an outline
Freight ship in the fog
Waiting for high tide to take her away
We touch lips our bodies cling
Love confessed
Gift of pearl strand
Memories divine

Kumquat Challenge
by Jaquelynn Gering

That day I awoke and went to my door to catch a glimpse of
spring
Hoping to see the pearls of dew on the bright green blades of
grass
I opened the door expecting to see the morning birds take wing,
But alas! Instead of silky grass, the ground was white with snow!
Shivering, I shut the door, went to arm myself against the white
Then, wrapped in my warm kimono, with slippers on my feet,
I headed out again to see this sight, stranger than many a sight.
Slowly I traversed the yard, smiling sadly at my frozen plants,
The bright new buds, the dusky sage, buried in creamy white
I had planted them the day before, when winter was far away,
Who could have divined the snow would destroy that night?
Far away in the silence I hear the freight train rumble past.
Counting the time, its whistle sings,
Counting the time until spring.

We Should Have Cheerleaders for This Sort of Thing
by *Marty Sloat*

We should have cheerleaders for this sort of thing,
Someone to spell out our names in voices so divine,
Where bodies spring through the air.
Where in only dreams your creamy cheek grazes
mine, and every January shoots its cruel breath in my
face.

Mocking the prospect of this year being different
But different, oh, what a hopeless word
Different offers its murky suggestion, with no
Course of action, nor any pearl of cathartic entropy,
Like every time I stood at the waters edge, but never
dared
To skinny dip out of fear of what crawls in the depths
under a viscous
Olive membrane.

We should have cheerleaders for this sort of thing
A chorus repeated, not a person in the stands is seat-
ed, to
Give me the courage to go, fight, win.
That my mind would be of no consequence because a
heart is
Never defeated.
Because a sage never tastes the fruit of his counsel
because he is always blind,
But I can see myself in the blue of your eyes.
A blue that only the luckiest airplanes ever plummet.

We should have cheerleaders for this sort of thing
The man who is never late, never profligate, never
prostrate.
Who freights his desires in small furtive glimpses,
Who languishes at every silken word of Keats
Knowing a thousand lines can't cradle a lonely heart.

We should have cheerleaders for this sort of thing

Has this preying pearl drumming beneath my flesh
Hooked eternal
This divine?
Can you capture me, Mighty man,
if you are not first caught?

Captive Captain--
Please Tell me--
Where are these Spring Seas taking us?
the kimonos have grown heavy and
sweat is nearing my brow
Tell me-- Captain--
What will Summer's scribes record?
What cream has risen in your Careful Heart?
Drive me wild, Sweet Sailor,
Wild as the Winter Winds
With a little forecasting glimpse!
Tell me of the dawn to come!



Jay Clark

He's a Bit like Chocolate to Me

by Audrey-Anna Ebinger

silk of my soul
brush of heaven
when the grit of life beats upon my fragile skin
a gentleman

indeed!
A gentleman
in deed
How can I but smile at the thought of
you

you are dearer
with each passing day
a treasure
freight that is mine
a smile I claim
dashing
yet pure
again I smile

how do I turn your head?
or have I? already?
how do I steal your heart,
Captain?
Deeper--
I want you deeper
The paths of my heart
now overgrown
yearn for your traverse,
Oh-- Watchman in my night

a stuttering sage
a fumbling fame
you've got me
and you know it
with your not-so-fancy words
and steady heart
in such tumultuous days
why would I ever run
from you?

you've got me
and you know it
but do I have you?

Clapping hands from girls spiritedly adorned
From a rapturous flow of color,
Like a kimono boldly flowing in the wind
Among the tall grass, or the carpet of the work desk
Maybe clapping at the day's end when he traverses the
Doors of the office building and would otherwise greet
a world
That can't remember his name, much less spell it with
enthusiasm.

Four Submissions

by Carol Hogan

I.
Pearl-soft, cream-colored divine
scents of sage traverse my silk kimono.
A glimpse of early spring.
Am I a-freight? Oh no!

II.
The sage glimpses creamy silk kimonos traversing the
clothesline.
She knows their divine pearly nature. Free. Fluttering. Like
freight flags in spring breezes.

III.
Silk, cream and sage kimono. On.
Pearls traversing my neck. On.
Spring waits. Freight waits.
I glimpse my image. Divine.

IV.
Pearls traverse wrinkled neck,
Silk kimono covers arms.
Divine creamy skin? No.
Glimpse of spring chicken. No.
Sage hit by a freight train? Maybe.

Valkyries and Daiquiris

by Sally Sheedy

She is not exactly silk and lace, a bit more practical than that
but also not above dressing up in some fashion.
He wears a snap shirt, jeans, cowboy boots and leather vest,
practically a uniform—well, it is easier to get dressed.
These form first impressions when first they meet.

What will they do together on their blind date?
Traverse the park, listen to blues
then daiquiris from the kiosk at the pier.
In a fortnight, the opera, dinner at the Grand Tier.
Tentatively together they divine each other's nature.

Is that a bit of a drawl you've got there?

Yes, pottery, actually.

You really jumped a freight train?

I learned how to detassel in Fort Wayne.

What was your book about?

By spring they are sharing oysters.
He asks the server where they're from,
gets "What are you, an oysterologist?"
Yes, and I find pearls.
Glimpse the future with this girl;
she regards her connoisseur country-boy scholar.

Summer mornings Devon cream with their scones
and they work the New York Times crossword.
Nary a cross word under the mountain ash.
What's a three-letter word for sash?
Obi, said her sage one
without which your
kimono
falls.

The Empress of Ice Cream

by Ara Taylor

It does not augur well, my love
That all the passes are closed.
Last time I saw you, you were
Playing with pearls, silent
In the dusky gloam.

You were sitting on your porch
An open doorway behind you, through
Which I could see your bed, and
On the cover, a blue silk kimono
Pearling ivory in the bath
Of the moon.

What were you thinking, to treat
Me so coldly? You did not
Even raise your eyes.
No glimpse, no traverse, no
Word spoken softly. My heart
Became freighted with dread.

That was last autumn: now it is
Springtime; my garden is jaded
With green. Plum trees
Are blooming—there are blossoms
On the cherry tree. Bamboo rustles in
The southern wind.

But no word from you.
I hurt. I grow older. What am I
To divine? The sage that I gathered
From outside my window, is
Dry—there is fire
In my blood.