



SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021
Winnipeg Free Press

poetry

F8



Poet Harvey Jenkins says the Assiniboine Forest has served as a place of refuge for him during the pandemic.

PHOTOS BY MIKE DEAL / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Five Haiku by Harvey Jenkins

toast and cup-of-soup
five more days before
CERB to arrive

hospital sounds
hearing everything
but the diagnosis

subterranean
I think of cherry blossoms
during my shift

slippery patch of ice
only a crow sees
my glasses fly

home-built ice rink
this time we hold each other
and wobble clock-wise

Harvey Jenkins completed the 800 km Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage in 2010 and published the book Haiku Moments on the Camino: France to Finisterre.



Delshan Anqeel in her home.

Guarding a piece of epidemic by Delshan Anqeel

I lived between two pandemics
War pandemic
Virus pandemic
In the end, we always run to tranquility
It is a matter of survival
A thin hair separates survival from death
The precautionary measures are what bother you
It slows down the world
As for life? The core issue –
It is an epidemic that will last forever

Delshan Anqeel came to Canada from Syria in 2017. She published a collection of poetry in Arabic and is working on another. She recently started writing in English.



Libby Jeffrey in Senior Citizens Park, which looks out over the Red River.

Cousin Told Me by Libby Jeffrey

Cousin told me how
He held his niece once
Under the country night sky
Tents and trailers of family
Nestled between woods of spruce.

Wondering if the moon meant
As it did to him as to her
He stepped away, blocking the sight
By a treetop this late summer night.

Indeed, so she fussed,
Give it back.

*Give me back my country nightlight
Uncle stay here til the dew falls and
Keep us safe teach me the bird calls
Show me how to see how to drink it all in.*

And how she said it
changed his vision.

But from the moon's view
All she really did say
Was one simple fuss
Which Cousin told me
He heard in his way.

Libby Jeffrey is an emerging writer in Treaty 1 Territory, Winnipeg. In 2020, she published her debut Babybytes: Becoming a Mom as the World Locked Down.



Tazi Rodrigues at the junction of Omand's Creek and the Assiniboine River.

spring murmurations by Tazi Rodrigues

we woke up to rain. winter eased
its grip on city, let elms fall into
spring, their canopies relaxing over roads
sewn in all winter long. thunder rang and
rolled down the trees, pooled against mosses,
and we woke up to rain –
its glisten along the edges of the
kitchen table, water dripping from the countertops.
briefly it shone like starlings:
glimmered in the bare morning light that
stuttered into the room, holding us in glow,
moved through the apartment trailing glass.

briefly it shone

& the starlings, nestled in the next-door neighbour's
roof, sung into the rain, dizzied by their
reflections as each drop fell against the windows.
the roads, long congealed by snow and lockdown,
spilled like sap, like thunder song – spilled
into floodplain houses, into us
as we drank coffee at the table. your fingers
detached first, then my knees: we joined the torrent.
we woke up to rain. we woke up to rain.

Tazi Rodrigues is a writer and early-career biologist. Her work has recently appeared in Vallum, CV2, and The Scrivener Review.

Oshki-ziigwan by Özten Shebahkeget

taste dead snow in the wind, howling
away our cold lover

as another year blows in

watch winter's skin go black and green,
the Red River on the run, and shotgun
shells in every color decorate mud

no word for *resilience* in this tongue,
just zhiibendamowin, like the trees
who resume their stretch for sun

and the moon wanes to a toenail
among winter stars, with no *adieu*,
as they bid the forest another see you

Oshki-ziigwan – Early spring
Zhiibendamowin – Patience

Özten Shebahkeget is a member of Northwest Angle 33 First Nation and an MFA candidate at the University of Saskatchewan who lives in Winnipeg.



CONTINUED