



Before I Forget Them

Jamie Wimberly

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Collection of Haiku Poetry by Jamie Wimberly



Redheaded Publishing

Before I Forget Them

Edited by John Stevenson, Artwork by Jamie Wimberly

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*To Cindy and the children
(Sofia, Benjamin and Grace)
who inspire me to write poetry.*

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Foreword

English-language haiku poets are most likely, at times, to take either Bashō or Issa as a model. For Jamie Wimberly, however, the more apt comparison must be to Buson. Readers are likely to read and interpret the poems of both poets in the context of their visual artistry. It is truly to be said of Jamie Wimberly that his painting vivifies his poems and it is clear that both partake of a shared palette.

The emphasis on red, black and white is a statement but not one that lends itself to a manifesto. The open quality of his poems and paintings declines to submit to any sense of flatness or pat finality.

The comparison to Buson has its limitations because this book is so much a product of an American and a twenty-first century sensibility. We pull things loose from the great past and wider world. We present them in conceptual frames that would not have been possible in their origins. This is true of our modern adaptations of haiku and in contemporary representational painting. Both are in motion within this work. And the work is unsettling. This feels right and true. It feels like life.

John Stevenson
Managing Editor, The Heron's Nest

winter eve
she is reminded to use
her inside voice



early snow
someone left the
gate open

toss and turn full moon

winter
the place between
you and me

icicle
from a frozen
middle finger

clasp
of pursed lips
holding secrets

slow twist
of the wine screw
she wants to talk

each sparrow
each sorrow
a flock forms

whiskey inside
stacks of wood outside
to feed the blaze

the old dance
fox and his vixen
new fallen snow

their romance
the length of a
marlboro red

winter
drawing from
negative space

snow-laden branches
touching the roots
family tree

sable paint brush
back in the box
my father's casket

January ice chips in a dry martini

dimming light she laughs with the dead

pencil down
he continues to draw
within himself

plane's descent
a stranger decides
to share

San Francisco
the tilt of our
conversation

schnapps—
the winter night
on her breath

clicking tongue
of the bitter taste
a toadie

between writing checks a poem

slow twist
of the wine screw
she wants to talk

in small print...
the wind has rights
to the plum blossoms



first of April
wrinkled and
nearly blind

breathless
headlong and running—
April showers

moving day
his baseball mitt
found unused

mirroring of dog and leash in puddles

pink blouse
in the house lights
Springsteen show

lightning
erasing for a second
the shadows

fingers
through luminescence
the aching sea



this old movie—
flickers of lightning
at four in the morning

changing a snake becomes a snake

peacock stare
seems so unnatural
Burt Reynolds too

summer solstice
the first helping of
peach cobbler

flutter
of a butterfly's wings
our glory days

wind held
sea foam around the smell
of what was

first bloom
of a pink rose—
it's a girl!

low tide
my daughter goes out
in a crop top

sidewalk steam
after the passing storm
she's still angry

tremble
of his worn hands
distant thunder

the canting
of the folded iris
her secret

wisteria
her fingers entwined
with his/hers

edge of a water lily
floating by
mother's smile

mockingbird—
easier to tell you
myself

gathering dusk
the blush of summer
across her cheeks

September
the empty pail being
pulled out to sea

upside down
the spinning bike wheel
going nowhere

those years
in a whiskey bottle
thrown into the sea

little steps
the ballerina dances
in her heart



foggy morning
Simon and Garfunkel
somewhere

as we age—
ants carry away
pieces of apple

gathering dusk
the blush of summer
across her cheeks

first fallen leaves
a red backpack
floating down the street

hot tea
cooling in the saucer
fall afternoon

her longing—
moon smooth and
polished white

blowing smoke
into the autumn haze
one with nature

talk of the affair—
deer step gingerly through
thorn bushes

pinch-faced
a lobsterman
turns seaward

early frost
the sharpened teeth
of a jack-o-lantern

tail feathers—
the uneven rouge of
Grandma's lipstick

empty—
under the pile of
golden leaves

near the end—
raking the loose leaves
into a pile

late
goldenrod
first snow

charcoal
thickening on paper
the twilight

swaying cradle
the last commuter train
leaves Manhattan

hook
of the song that caught
her attention


blood red sky—
the crow calls for
the fox



Jamie Wimberly

is a poet and painter.

Jamie's work has appeared in numerous poetry publications and haiku journals. He has collaborated with Casey Stein and other filmmakers to produce "poem videos," including a series of short movies featuring poems in this collection. In addition to poetry, Jamie's artwork has been widely recognized, including a nomination for the Whitney Biennial.

A field of tall, golden-brown grasses under a dark, reddish-purple sky. The grasses are dense and appear to be blowing in the wind, creating a textured, layered effect. The sky is a deep, dark red or maroon color, providing a strong contrast to the lighter grasses.

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