

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Terry Wolverton: "Haikus for Los Angeles" & "Off Vine"

Terry Wolverton · Wednesday, February 13th, 2013

Terry Wolverton is author of ten books of fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry. She has also edited fourteen literary anthologies. She is the founder of Writers At Work, a creative writing center in Los Angeles, where she teaches fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry.

Thirteen Seasons: Haikus for Los Angeles

For Andrew, who believes we have no seasons

1. Winter

We don't know how to
drive in rain, gaze boggles at
glow of green green hills.

2. Eighty Degrees of Winter

Poppies awaken
early from their naps; flip-flops
in February.

3. Oscar night

Red carpet blankets
the whole city. Fame, like fire,
makes its own weather.

4. Signs of spring

At the reservoir
herons return to nest in
eucalyptus trees.

5. Allergy season

Pollens spiral through
engorged cavities. You snort
spring like an addict.

6. Jacaranda season

Miracles erupt
on residential byways:
Purpled, petal'd skies.

7. June Gloom

Fog descends on June;
each morning stalled, bubble-wrapped

till late afternoon.

8. Summer

Marine haze lingers,
never quite burns off; white sun
veiled behind white sky.

9. Smog season

Wherever you look
is brown—hills, sky. Why trust air
if you can't see it?

10. Late Summer

Twilight comes early,
amber hour of day, palm trees
dark against gold sky.

11. Santa Anas

Desert comes to town
on the hot breath of winds. Palm
leaves crack, fly, crash down.

12. Burn Season

Fire leaps the freeway.
Ash dusts the windshield, sunsets
rage purple and orange.

13. Holiday Season

The white cat comes in
at night now, curls close to your
sleeping, flannelled form.

Off Vine

Its attic burned clear through
a blackened shell
atop that yellow house
where only weeks before
I'd dined with Kim,
just recently returned to writing poetry.
Her eyes sparked over wine,
cantos crackled from her lips.
I could hear the sizzle of her skin
as something re-ignited in her,
some fuel blazing for herself
after years of shining light on others.
"I can't stop," she told me,
"The words erupt like fever;
I can't stop singing to the page.
It's all I want to do all day.
Makes me want to neglect my clients,
forget a life bound in tidy paragraphs."
Now the walls that witnessed us
are scorched, crumbling; the table

where we sat splintered; wineglass
shattered; tablecloth is ash.

Kim is writing poetry
and the sirens echo the night long.

We are proud to premiere these poems in Cultural Weekly.

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