

Poetry Series

jan oskar hansen
- poems -

Publication Date:

2007

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

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2 Tanka Poems

Tanka

I couldn't find the street
Where my lover used to live
A morass of houses
Anyway it doesn't matter
Hopeless, bringing back the past

Tanka

The festive street
Now that bars and clubs have shut
Looks disillusioned
But is a dark hunting ground
Where a rats, caught by cats, shrieks

jan oskar hansen

4 Seasonal Haiku

Haiku

Snows only purpose?
To make my garden look good
Four months a year

Haiku

Shadows and light
In an unseemly embrace
Foolish April Dance

Haiku

In the middy heat
Mules seeks shady carob trees
Man seeks the beach.

Haiku

Morning sadness
Rain trickles down the window
Grey October sky.

jan oskar hansen

A Baker's Dozen

The Baker's Dozen

The baker, in our village, a man who loved his craft, collaborated with the enemy in the war of 1940-45, as it was the only way he could get fine flour and other stuff to bake his delicious cakes and white bread. Our baker was a pleasant, brown eyed, a short rotund man who always had boiled sweet in his pocket for the children when he went for his afternoon walk.

His wife was more of an administrative type, dressed in black, starched blouse and ankle long skirt, and in her blue eyes ice floes drifted; chased children, beggars and dogs with her broom, but had been seen feeding birds, bread crumbs on cold winter days.

During daylight the enemy and Nazi officials came and bought the baker's enticing products; in nights or early mornings those who could afford it, but didn't like to be seen associating with a traitor, came and bought fresh bread, aromatic Danish pastry and chocolate éclairs.

When the war ended, as wars must, the baker was sent to jail as a collaborator, but he didn't sit there long I suspect - but cannot prove this- that his night visitors, mostly lawyers, doctors and business men spoke well of him into the right authorities. It is odd to think during all this upheaval few, if any, knew that it was his wife who wore an iron cross under her blouse.

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A Birthday Party

Birthday

In the doorway of
a restaurant
music plays behind me,
dancers move to
a Finnish tango.

Glitter on the ceiling,
happy faces,
a few drinks more and
wrong words uttered,
steel blades glint in
the knuckled hands of my
dysfunctional relatives.

jan oskar hansen

A Day At The Opera

A day at the Opera.

It was winter when I came home, had been in Spain for twenty years; cold and snow and I wore sandals; asked mother for woolen socks, she wouldn't give me any since I didn't lived here anymore. My sister who was there too, agreed. Having no home I went to the cinema to see Casablanca, got lost and walked in a maze of empty streets where everyone sat indoors watching TV, I could tell by the flickering blue light on curtains. When I finally got there, it was an opera house, and premiere, plenty of horse drawn carriage outside where the famous were being photographed and interviewed by a sycophantic, yet resentful press that hoped the horses would bolt. " I'm an opera lover" I said and sang an aria from Madam Butterfly, still they wouldn't let me in, the sandals you see. So I walked back home, only it wasn't there anymore, but made into a parking lot; served me right for being away too long

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A Day In June

He sat on the milk ramp waiting for the noon bus
taking him to the village, to pick up a pair of shoes
from the cobbler. It was a hot day in June, he got
drowsy, had been up since five milking the cows;
fell asleep didn't wake up before the bus returned;
it was then after three.

He had been dreaming of the sea, wanted to be
captain, one day, even though he was near sighted.
"I'll go to the tomorrow, " his mother said, gave him
a glass of milk, and two big slices of bread with
blueberry jam on; later, as shadows deepened, he
ran to the outer field to get the cows home

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A Day Nothing Happened

A Day When Nothing Happened.

A perfectly quiet day is coming to an end no breeze rustles amongst green leaf that have got a shimmer on from the pale sun. The almond trees that have been allocated the best place in the sun have sprung flowers pink and white, I can sense their boastful jubilation, and why not? After being spindly and ugly for months they deserve applause and, yes, a bit of envy from the less successful ones.

Rabbits on green run under stones I see more of them now than my old dog lived, she was forever chasing rabbits, even in her sleep. From my vantage point I can see the sun go down behind, not the first sea but the seventh one, as this day is so clear that I can see forever, but there are no clouds on the sky for it to paint pink, but there is no need today.

And then it is night and dogs will bark from one village to the next, perhaps they lament the burden of living in the shadow of man, or they just like to gossip and have a good laugh on our behalf. Should they stop barking one night I will wake up and fear for my life

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A Day Of Reckoning

A Day of Reckoning

Forenoon, it had been raining during the night
the wizened winter landscape was now green
and amongst olive trees long legged sheep grazed;
their pastor and, on occasions, executioner, sat on
a boulder casting dreams into the future; man and
beast, rustic peace, pity I hadn't a camera.

On my way to the village to buy the papers, a sheep
had been run over by a truck, with its stomach burst
open and its content glinting in the sun, it was still
alive. Ah, you dumb animal abandoned by everyone
and it looked at me without any hope of deliverance,
so I reversed my car and ran over its head.

As the skull was crushed its eyes popped out, landed
on the middle of the road that now had eyes to see
with, the shock of this made it shudder long rents in
the asphalt wench black tears trickled. Quickly
I threw the eyes into the thicket which was instantly
transformed into a field of tinkling blue bells.

From nowhere a road gang of small, denim clad men
with big hats appeared, they where badly paid lived
on road kills. Expertly strew soft sand on blood, filled
cracks with healing asphalt, and off they drove with
their dinner. Empty road it had no knowledge of what
had just occurred, it was up to me to remember.

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A January Day

January Day.

This winter day I can see the ocean shine from
the coast of Portugal to the Saragossa Sea; and
in the shimmer, I dare not breath lest the spell
is broken, I see Ireland too.

The Atlantic is a beast let it slumber and enjoy
the stillness, at least till my ship reaches
Port of Spain where the sea is azure and scars,
made by rusty tank-ships, heal in seconds.

I'll cast my anchor there, in a bay ringed by
palm trees, but not stay too long; I will not like
to miss the blossoming of the almond trees, in
my hidden valley, near the village of Benafim.

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A Jewish Family Remembered

Mother left the orphanage at fifteen to go into service, as a maid, with the family Rabinowitch, who were in the garment business. They had two sons, who both went to live in the USA; a wise choice as it turned out. Nothing much for mother to do so she spent her time reading books from the family's extensive library, and the kind couple let her. Two years later, when mother had read all the books, the lady of the house suggested mother should find other employment as she wasn't cut out to be a maid. Mother she cried when learning that both had perished in a death camp, somewhere Germany; a senseless death of two beautiful people. Their kindness changed mother's life, made her horizon wider; and what she had learned she thought me; yes, she too was beautiful

jan oskar hansen

A Lover Remembered

An Old Lover Remembered.

On my walks, in the part of town that is neglected, where streetlamps are so few that they can't link light, I met my old lover; she has a kiosk, sells fried chicken and fries, soft drinks and cigarettes, since there are no other outlets for these kind of things the poor and homeless, come here for a bit to eat and socialize on the pavement outside her business Years hadn't been kind, her beautiful lips that could do tricks were now a pale scar across her ashen face, with dried up spittle, the colour of meerschaum- only seen in secret coves- in the corners of her mouth, short cut hair and her Atlantic green eyes had lost their lustre. No, time had not been kind to us, if I kissed her now and she saw my toothless gums, she would recoil in horror. Our sexual exploit remembered is a poorer diet than her broilers.

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A Memory

A Memory

She had a sybaritic body,
but years has piled
unwanted, flabby flesh
on her bones.

Elderly now and bad on
her feet, her body doesn't
stir an old man's
into heroic deeds.

When we make love,
It isn't often, I close my
eyes and remember her
seductive body of yesteryear

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A Name

How abstract time is,
yet it ages me...
and her.
Wonder what she looks
like now?

Her name,
my dearest love,
is the only one
I remember now.
loves since, were
only an attempt
to recapture
the lost.

When moon
is full
I wonder
why this,
your hold on
my affection.
never eases

Today I wrote
your name
on a mound
of sand
when it struck
my feeble mind
that you must
be dead,
since I wrote
your name on
a mound that
looked like
a filled in grave.

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A Painting

A Painting

I have a painting of a young pilot leaning against
his bi-plane smoking a cigarette, you can see,
from his natural confidence, he must have been
born rich and benefited from a first class education

Strange, but yore was a more equal time, the sons
the rich also died on foreign battle field, they did
so as a matter of honour; now they pull threads of
gold and keep their brood safely at home.

It is a beautiful painting it oozes peace, a green
field near a river that has tall trees that endlessly
look at themselves in slow running water, and
I wonder: did the young man survive his war?

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A Poet's Morning

I like to sleep late, almost till eight, my skeptical
duvet doesn't like to blow its cover, so I pass
my time making up anagrams of famous names,
only I can't spell and end up with words that make
no sense; I have tried for years to be a novelist but
after a page of reluctant words, I end up going back
to bed. It is said gorillas are bright because they are
able to fold a few leaves together and make a bed,
big deal, the sparrows on my roof make intricate
nests of feather, tiny twigs and digested worms,
and they get babies that try to push each other out;
nature is murder, mayhem and desperate survival.
So perhaps we should be more understanding; when
a flaming bush sets fire to a forest.

jan oskar hansen

A Quiet Smoke

A Quiet Smoke

The train stopped at a small station on a bleak plateau,
I stepped on to the terminus to smoke a cigarette which
I deeply inhaled and enjoyed; so intensely I didn't see
the train leaving. I ran but my feet wouldn't move,
at the back of the last carriage my doctor stood, "help,
my feet won't move, I shouted." "It's your own fault,
The doctor said, "For eating so much chocolate."
At the kiosk- inside the station house- I asked the lady,
selling newspaper, if she could help, but she needed
the number of the train and whether I traveled first class
or not. I didn't know what number train, but said 112,
and yes, first class, thinking that would help. Since I was
dressed, like an Eskimo, from head to toe in sealskin,
and it was seal hunting season in Canada, people gave
me dark looks and when "Guardian" readers folded their
papers into truncheons I fled, got into a car that was just
standing there, down the road in the hope of
getting on the train at the next station, but made a wrong
turn and ended up inside a kaleidoscope, where doctors
and people, who like plastic tables, dare not enter.

jan oskar hansen

A Road Well Traveled

A Road Well Traveled

I've been driving on this stretch of road so often that I'm on nodding terms with telephone poles, bushes, houses, trees and reeking tractors.

The road has been widened a bit, tarted up too, layers of tarmac and white markings, but under it is the same old potholed dirt track.

jan oskar hansen

A Seafarers Life

So, how does it go? Ship ahoy sailor boy? I was going to write from my life at sea, of salt water and romance in tropical nights, but I can only remember, the old seafarers, who had no other home than the temporary shelter a cabin on a ship gave.

Ashore they stayed in boarding houses walked up and down streets, the sporadic service of a prostitute, sitting in bars till money got short, in a way they were old lags, institutionalized, fearful of double-crossing people, wearing shark smiles

Life had sailed them by, only with a deck under their feet did they feel at home. There was a deep sadness about them, a greatcoat of loneliness only love could penetrate, but where they walked and lived there was none to be had.

So tell me old boy was it in Le Havre or in Singapore that you met a girl you can't get out of your mind, the one who smiled in a way, making you feel special. Do tell us, dear boy, and let's pretend she was more than just another slag in a bar.

jan oskar hansen

A Summer Season Ends

The sea is cooler to day than yesterday,
the sand is damp underfoot, in the bay
dolphins swim about, finding breakfast
I suppose; fresh fish everyday.

Terns swoop don't want me here, now
that bathers, have gone back to work,
their allotted days of relative freedom
has been absorbed by sand of time.

Holiday photos: "we're there last year, "
but for now I'll take my last swim of
the seasons, shiver a bit, yet feel good
when coming back ashore

jan oskar hansen

A Surgical Procedure

The surgeon has been to my hospital bed, explaining the procedure, a small elegant man with quick hand movements and a shock of wavy hair; yet none of the nurses surrounding him looked impressed, perhaps they knew something I didn't, a thought that gave me a perverse delight. Perhaps he wore a wig too?

I was reading poetry, when they gave me a blue pill, continued to read, but when I awoke twelve hours had gone, the surgeon, in his Armani suit, looked down, smiled satisfied and left. I hated him. It worried me that the hours away had been dreamless and had I not awoken I would not know I ever lived.

Faces from the hall of un-famous people, so modest they had only appeared briefly in their death notices, arose; made it clear there is no heaven, it's childish illusion best done away with; except for my old dog, she follows me around, even in old dreams dreamt before she was born. Her brown eyes, beg me not to leave without her; together and unafraid we shall walk into the borderless land of nonexistence

jan oskar hansen

A Terrorist Confesses

A Guantanamo prisoner confesses. What was he thinking off letting them wearing him down after four years of isolation and interrogation; now he will be a resentful loser...unforgiven. Had he confessed at once, played along told them what they wanted to know, he would be the winner, sit in the prison yard getting sun in his face. Truth! I hear you mutter, this has nothing to do with that, it's about a court case that needs to be concluded, documented, eagle stamped, and signed; a copy for everyone, the convict too. It's a game, play it right and you'll survive, sleep in a clean bed, watch TV, and play ping pong with the other inmates.

jan oskar hansen

A Voyage

The ship was loaded we were going to an island in the Saragossa that cannot be seen by radar as it is always surrounded by a miasma of sadness, here daybreak is only a five second glimmer in an endless night and only expert navigators are able to find this island...

Our cargo consisted of discarded dreams the islanders had lived so long in peace that they had lost the ability to think of esoteric things, their word expanse was of seaweed and monster cods; but they needed this diversion if not they would sink into apathy and die

When the ship blew its siren for the third time and the gangway was lifted, I was hiding behind a warehouse that was full of dreams destined for another island, I wouldn't like to be a part of this, giving people second hand dreams when the could consisting of clichés and spent phrases.

I could have lived with this mild betrayal if it hadn't been for the rule that no crew member were allowed to dream or read or sing, but be, as often long time sailors are, men who have lost their ability to remember that once their were children and not blinded by endless tediousness.

Worst of all, perhaps, it was said that ships going there were crewed by the world weary, men who are shadows of themselves who drowned when crossing the vastest expands, too far away from a priests soothing words were love had lost its meaning and the last thought was of a whore in Santiago.

jan oskar hansen

A Widow And A Priest

A Widow and a Priest.

It was six in the morning I was on the roof terrace smoking an illicit cigarette when the ambulance came gliding into the hamlet, stopped outside Antonio's house and carried him out on a stretcher, his wife came along too; Antonio saw me and feebly waved. In the forenoon his wife was a widow and she cried. The house was suddenly full of relative, most of them women. Funereal at five that day, the widow had been astute enough to have everything arranged beforehand, his body was now in the church...waiting

At the graveside the priest said the usual thing, shook hands with the widow and walked home alone, feeling friendless, he didn't think of the funereal, had seen so many dead faces ravaged by age or sickness, immune he had become, not so when young laying awake at night thinking about it horror struck; he had served here for years now waiting for a new call or an advance within the hierarchy, feeling forsaken by the Vatican, hadn't he written learned articles about the philosophy faiths and received a thank you note from the cardinal? Nothing more he could do, couldn't very well ask god. At home his housekeeper served him a roast chicken and cellar cold red-wine; he sighed, tucked in, death always made him hungry.

Female relatives stayed with the bereaved for a week, men are curiously absent on these occasions, then they went back to their own worries, the widow began her new life by going to the hairdresser

jan oskar hansen

Abstract Reasoning

How many years left do I have to drive around on
my little motorbike? Should I write my will?
sit down, and contemplate metaphysical matters,
or use my vast inexperience to tell people how to live
their life...be a sage? I think not. Girls look beautiful
today, only a few months ago they looked frumpy in
thick winter coats, they must have been on a diet,
long legs and erect nipples, October man seeing
a May girl and that's no good, I mean to look back
that way it only brings cold northwesterly wind,
sneezing sadness and sore on lips. I'm an old dog
chasing a smart sports car, how deflating it would
be if it stopped. "Anything I can do for you sir."
I've forgotten my watch can you tell me the time? "

jan oskar hansen

After The Meeting

At the AA meeting, my dog, I had taken her with me as support. She looked around and went over to a tall elegant man with a wave of white hair and refined air (I've none) and sat there looking up to him adorningly. On the way home I told her to sit in the back, this confused her as she usually curls up in the seat beside me. There was an awkward silence; her ears were up, knew something was wrong: "So you think I'm bald; let me tell you this; that man is a doctor and kill people when he's drunk and perform heart surgery " I said, not addressing the dog directly and said no more, as I sounded ridiculous. Back home I drank vodka, with cola light and ice, the dog had to sleep in outside, on the terrace.

jan oskar hansen

Alienation

Alienation

I had invited friends to a café where the desert begins and you can see the blinking lights of Spain at night. The food took long time coming, but there was wine served in pitchers, didn't think the wine was any good so I went to the main bar to get bottled wine; they had none. But I got two one litre jugs of cold wine, (cheap wine should always be served iced it is tasteless then.) When I came back my friends had eaten, nothing left for me, they where in an vivacious mood drank my chilled wine sang, laughed and talking loudly.

I walked to the kitchen, a big tent in the back, asked for food, but they only had meatballs left, I don't like meatballs. My friend had now gone into the wasteland walking to Spain, it was dawn before they came back, they had had a great time. I was now so hungry that I went back to the tent and asked for the meatballs, but they had given them to abandoned dogs that live around here. Drove my friends to the bus stop it was just about to leave and it struck me that they had not spoken to me once, which made me think I had entertained strangers.

jan oskar hansen

Amsterdam

When I walked ashore in Amsterdam, with my leather suitcase, no less, bought in a shop in Hanover street, Liverpool, it was raining; fine, persistent, precipitation, (isn't that a nice word,) the sort that dampens even the high spirited, at a party, and makes him go to sleep in a corner.

I had been cook on a ship that was perpetually sailing under a rain cloud; docked at every port in Europe, even in Stockholm where they sell the world's worst beer, it's not even cold: Do not for a minute think you're going to enjoy yourself while drinking an alcoholic beverage

Tired and wet I booked into a BB hotel, found a quiet bar drank cold beer and saw rain stop. When I followed the barmaid home, but not in, streets where dry and I enjoyed my solitude.

jan oskar hansen

An Indian Kiss

Ravana, the Indian princess, who lives in a palace just outside Bombay, has invited me to her sumptuous home; alas, I can not go, years ago, when in New Delhi, I kissed a sweet flower lady on both cheeks and was chased around the city by a mob who threw sticks and stones, had to wear a false beard for weeks and just made it across the border to Moslem Pakistan. A court order to arrest me, promptly, for lewd behaviour still stand, so I guess my princess will have to come see me at my modest cottage, if she wants a kiss on her rosy cheeks; not at the airport though, No! Goodness, Gracious Me!

jan oskar hansen

An Old Fool

At fifty two he looked remarkable young; that, he told everyone who asked, was because he had never been in love and spared debilitating heartache...silly remark. So he fell brutally in love with a woman half his age, never knew that love making could be that wonderful, but than he experience, in this matter, was limited to massage parlours. He bought her costly sweets and frilly knickers, diamonds too, she was his queen a slight tiff, he couldn't sleep called her in the middle of the night and begged forgiveness.

Then suddenly her door was shut, he knocked and rang, stood outside her house all night, in the rain, but she had fallen in love with someone else; yes, it was October. He thought of castles in the sky, blankets on the ground, yes Willy Nelson understood his woos. Went to bed and stayed there till spring came and a neighbour gave him a puppy dog. Bad on his feet, gout, showing his age, yet he walks for miles with his mute. If asked if he would have wished not to have fallen in love; he will, I think, shake his head, look soulful, and walk on

jan oskar hansen

An Olive Branch

An Olive Branch

A very old olive tree, owned by a Palestinian,
so aged that it might have given shade to
the carpenter Joseph when he was resting under
its shade a hot august lunch time and contemplating
his sons' future was bulldozed this morning.
No big deal you may say and I agree, everything
must come to an end, even olive trees, only
the perennial was got rid of because the Israeli
army's snipers needed a clear view to the village
where people who didn't like their regime lived

jan oskar hansen

Animal Sentimentality

Animal Sentimentality

If I told an elephant it was the biggest land animal in the world, would it trumpet this good news around and be bigheaded, or be envious the elegant giraffe, for its lovely eyes, long neck and splendid view?

On the pristine sandy beach, near the Nordic town, a rare, long legged bird landed, it was so beautiful that it was shot next day for its feathers, the paper that reported the crime had black borders that day.

An elephant isn't cute, walks arduously, cranky eyes, once saw an elephant foot, used as an umbrella stand, bought its owner was on holiday in Africa, this made me so gloomy that I peed into the foot before leaving.

I should have said something at once, hit him and left in a righteous huff, but had also brought bottles of whisky; yes, I do have soft heart for animals, bit booze is dear in Sweden; mind, I never visited him again.

jan oskar hansen

Another Dawn

Another Dawn

Restless night, Agent Orange, plums of fire
and burning bushes, silent dawn a flock of
tired birds flew past looking for trees, to sit
and rest a little before flying up north.

The field of almond trees, planted long ago,
without the precision of economy, was now
a battlefield of death, men with chainsaws
walked around looking for signs of life.

A scream of agony flew upwards from
pained soul, exploded into a kaleidoscopic
cacophony, fading against a sky clouded
by white sorrow and spent wrath.

Why cannot things stay the same? A face in
a crowd, everything I loved going, going
gone, the ever changing world, now sky blue
warming sun; afar, a dog barks.

They are planting orange trees in my field
insipid fruit machines, citrus twice a year;
for cash crops my trees had been slain; on
combat zone there is no mercy.

jan oskar hansen

Autumn Leaf

Autumn Leaf.

The fall leaves dance weren't celebrating life,
but utter despair, they whirled around in
the plaza like furious dervishes, faster and
faster till they ended up, exhausted, in a heap
in the corner, near the bin, for empty bottles.

A thunder rumble, warning of rain to come,
gutters will be rivers and leaves rafts, steering
around boulders down foamy waterfalls and
into the sewers, where the outcast rat lives and
witness our gaseous effluence.

Turning into mulch, mixed with human waste;
perfect nourishment free of chemicals, perhaps
a gardeners dream? A golden oak leaf survived,
the tumult, though, drifted to the Saragossa Sea
where it became a king amongst the seaweed.

jan oskar hansen

Awaqkening

Saw her every day at the outskirts of the town
when delivering newspapers,
she was tall, dark, intense eyes, walking
hand in hand with her daughter,
who, at fifteen, was pale imitation of her mother

From Romania, people said, the president there
had shot her husband dead, and thrown him
down a borehole, ban her from returning, maybe
she and her daughter were spies.

Dreamed of the woman... often, we did things
that made me blush when daylight came,
I was sure she was a witch...those eyes. you see,
so deep! So foreign! So sexy!

One day she flashed me a knowing smile,
I blushed and fell off my bike, she knew!
My shame was total;
yet, to my despair she appeared in my
dreams again, the hussy

Suddenly April and they had vanished,
flown away like malevolent, swarthy, ghosts
that had no business being here, in a Nordic spring;
and my femme fatal faded from my...
disgraceful dreams

Replaced by the girl in the cake shop she was
safely local, wore braces on her teeth, and
sometimes gave me an extra coco macron,
our relationship was strictly chaste

jan oskar hansen

Beer Makers

The old brewery, ochre and dead windows,
appeared as a benignly if neglected castle
in afternoon's radiance.

Inside it reeked of a boozier early
in the morning; butts on floors and the echo
of drunken voices.

Sun raked, black letters on top of the building
proudly proclaimed: "Portugal's best Beer."
That was long ago before mass tourism,
EU, Carlsberg Lager and Newcastle Brown.

On the top floor, where offices used to be,
five starved cats sat and waited for yesterday,
they were the offspring of fat cats which,
had lived high on brewers and spilt ale.

Hopeless dreamers, licking matted fur,
lost in melancholy; hepatic eyes of yesterday.

jan oskar hansen

Beirut 2007-30 Bc

Beirut 2007...30 BC.

As seen by an old Arab.

I saw in Beirut in 1958 when
Arabic princesses walked in the street
of peace in all their finery,
free of the restricting veil,
but with a train of
burka dressed, chattering servants
behind them

I still remember their dark,
mysterious eyes, mind in those days
all women
were mysterious to me and
the Mediterranean, infant blue, looked
on with benign disinterest

Now in May and far away
from Beirut, I see there is trouble once again,
rocket hits buildings flying concrete
and the sound of machine gun fire.
So what's new?

Not much, since you have
the impunity to ask,
the Mediterranean has seen it all before
only now it's eyes are milky blue,
and she's too old to be whore:
for the trouble maker who returned,
to these shores;

those clever alchemists who
turn words into fools' gold, and let you
believe that they are chosen by
an abstract god, to bring harmony.

This time they can not be exiled they have
found a strong ally which they eat up from the inside

till they can declared masters of the world
by irrational Christians; and we will suffer their
revenge till their greed and capacity for double dealing
begin to kill one another,
and we shall be free and we will re-remember our
our glorious past.

jan oskar hansen

Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto

You looked so impossible beautiful and your voice was so erudite, words danced on your sensuous lips, never had there been a prime minister as you; alas, there were there were accusations of corruption and you hastily fled your beloved country, I choose, perhaps wrongly, not to believe your accusers and you faded from view. When turmoil enveloped your country again, you were back seeking power and I knew you're doomed. I saw you standing up in the jeep carrying you out of the park were you had spoken to your supporters, still striking, in a matronly ways, but your smile dazzled and, once again, I believed you could be the saviour of your troubled country. An explosion, Mayhem, billows of death surrounded you and you were gone forever

jan oskar hansen

Book Burning

I was going to throw away unsold collections
of poetry when there was a knock on my door,
it was the Mongolian ambassador, he wanted
my books, said they were splendidly brilliant,
and looked forward seeing more of my work

No, I'll start over again. I was going to throw
away my unsold collections of poetry, when
a thought knocked, why not put them in the shed
set them alight when there is snow in the air, and
see glowing cinders shine amongst stars. .

jan oskar hansen

Breath

The Breath.

Easily in and out you breathe, with lungs
unsullied by cigarette smoke, siesta nap
a lazy Sunday on afternoon when flowers
wilt and sky is recklessly nude

Breathtaking, the silence, if you should
stop; I would fall down a chasm of pale
rainbows, stillborn moons, rusty stars
where words of love are unheard of.

Inhale and exhale my dear, snore too if
you must, but don't leave me alone in
city parks where old men sit spit and tell
passersby how old they are.

jan oskar hansen

Brides

Brides.

Silk worms spewed me a suit fit for a king
Wore it at a wedding where I coveted
Another man's bride

The worms came, ate my fine suit, they
Had found me unworthy; naked walked
through the park of autumnal leaves.

By daybreak I sat on a stone by the sea
And didn't hear the cockerel crew, a mermaid
Beckoned for me to join her.

We swam to an island not marked by maps
In the bay I saw my old schooner called May,
De-rigged now and unable to sail

Cured of my vanity, worms spewed me
Another fine suit; by not looking back I walked
On water to a wedding in Paris.

jan oskar hansen

Cheese And Hunger

Cheese and Hunger

175 types of cheese, the new supermarket boasted,
confused I bought the same old Gauda I can't stay
there spending a whole day just for a bit of cheese.
I like milk in my coffee bought a litre, only to see
when coming home, that it was banana flavoured.
So many choices, the food industry is obscene and
consumers are zombies to let them play with food
that way. Banana flavoured long -life milk laced
with vitamins would be fine for the poor children of
Burma; the cruelly incompetent generals there ought
to be propped up against a pagoda wall and shot.
Since Britain and USA are so keen on interfering in
eastern affairs, why don't they invade could it be
because Burma has no oil and is too close to China?

jan oskar hansen

Child Of War

Child of War.

I was four when bombs fell and exploded with a cool bang, burning houses free heat on a January night.
When the enemy soldiers came, big men laughing intoxicated by victory, so different from those pale man at the factory and, yes I became enthralled and without looking back joined the invaders as a mascot; blue eyes and blond hair and teeth as white as Italian marble. Yes, the warriors loved me the child of war; an army tailor sewed me a golden uniform. I was there riding, alongside the commandant, saluting the troops who indulgently smiled. What they did not know any talk of sedition from them I reported to my leader, but in the end they knew and they feared me greatly...War is in my blood, and I'm not even British, peace didn't bode me well it made me tired I slept for forty five years and luckily for me the Iraqi war came along, in itself nothing much, but it is the ember that will set the world afire and once more we will have world war. Sweet blood and heavenly light let me be consumed by your fire, let me see the earth burn and let me once more sit on a steed and lead men of iron into oblivion

jan oskar hansen

Come Dancing

The red fox and the black swan stylishly
Danced on the ice of the tarn to the sound
Lively Mexican music that has violence
And promise of sudden death deep within
Its speedy notes of hard played guitars.

A crescendo the finest spray of crimson
In winter air; the swan, with poise, bowed
Its long neck and the elegant fox did ditto
In the stillness that followed trees shivered
Snow of their branches in utter dismay.

jan oskar hansen

Confession

Confession.

Winter storm 1974, a supply vessel gets motor stop near the sandy shores of Denmark where spindrift makes it hard to see it is like being snow blind. We are together on the bridge with life jackets on, the skipper, a religious man asks us to sing a psalm we reluctantly do. Gripped by the moment the first officer shouts: "Forgive me God for I have sinned." We are spared the rest, as the old chief gets the engine started again and the magic of the moment evaporates leaving behind embarrassment as we head for the open sea which is the best place to be in a storm, if not safely anchored in a bay. That evening there was laughter in the mess-hall, I knew why, as so does the first officer who, for the rest of the voyage, eats in my galley, and tries to be as unobserved as it is possible to be on a small ship.

jan oskar hansen

Decapitated

On a tropical Paradise's jetty I stood arguing with a tall man
who carried a rusty machete, said he didn't like my blandness,
a sudden slicing move and my head parted from its body.
He lifted my head up by the hair, a dramatic, black actor,
a Hamlet, but I spat him in his face, as a last act of defiance,
shocked he threw my head into the warm, emerald sea, and as
my human life came to an end I saw a shiny dolphin

Reborn as a dolphin, happy and free, but oddly though,
I remembered my former human life, yet bore no ill feeling
against my killer; who, life is strange, I met one day when he
was out swimming near the jetty, the man liked dolphins,
I let him feel my smooth skin and we played till we're far
from shore, where the sea is cools, is deep and dark blue.

He saw the dark, grey fins first, tiger sharks, and cried out,
turned, tried to swim ashore, a scream rippled the calm sea,
and echoed for miles as I swam away to find my family of
bottle nosed dolphins, in this weird new world of mine.

jan oskar hansen

Diet Business

Diet Business

Chocolate that slims, on bar substitute a snack
between meals, and it will not make you fat.
Ninety calories a bar; the wrapper has a silhouette
of a slim person stretching upwards... to heaven?

And she is slim as an angel, for seraphs it is easy
they don't eat, never hungry, no need for food
which must make their days with only harp music?
to break the tedium of gossiping about the boss.

Snacked five times to day it hasn't made me thin
my greed is for all to see. From my window I can
see into a café people there drink cold beer, they
are not fat so beer is a dieters dream... lots of it.

jan oskar hansen

Disenchanted

Disheartened

The chocolate river is dry and the German
tourists have gone home and last years cherries
hang unpicked as do almond nuts that are also
full of worms and green grass isn't sweet.
The sun is a yellow ring on a blue pale sky,
disillusioned as a 30 watt bulb in a room
with faded wallpaper, at a run down hotel which
calls itself Bellevue; last stop before sleeping
rough. Nothing is more abject than an out of
season tourist town, sleepless shopkeeper and
bored waiters, even the flowers in the park are
grey; and except for a couple of retired seagulls,
birds have flown to Africa and will not return
before spring rain falls.

jan oskar hansen

Dogs In Wars

The big, white dog cowered in the shadows unseen by soldiers marching by, there had been fighting and many corpses lay rotting in streets, hungry dog had been eating, first reluctantly, then with abandonment, forgotten was ancient taboo about eating human flesh...

Soldiers, who could kill their enemies brutally and without mercy, had an irrational fear against dogs that ate humans. The white dog knew this, any dog seen eating man could never again be mans best friend

When the war was over it would try to be adopted by a nice family with small children it could look after; but for now the dog was hungry it had to finish eating an arm that appeared to have belonged to a soldier who had been keen on weightlifting before joining the army and be blown to bits by a wayside bomb.

jan oskar hansen

Double Tanka

Double Tanka

If, say... Christ returns
Bearded and in white burnoose
Will he be seized?
And sent to Guantanamo
If he looks like Bin Laden

Water tortured
Made confess odious crimes
He is innocent of
Or just say; "not again dad"
And magically disappear.

jan oskar hansen

Edward Hopper, Painting

Edward Hopper Painting

Badly lit street, through a partly steamed up
café window I can see an Edward Hopper
man dressed in a brown suit and hat which
he keeps on, while eating fries and drinking
black coffee, trying to slow down time.

Wears his underwear too long, doesn't
change beddings for months, his depressing
rooms are unaired and smell of loneliness;
middle aged and divorced he just exists, and
has a loser's look of unspoken despair.

jan oskar hansen

Empty Jerry Cans

There had been a war; there is always a war someplace, both the opposing armies ran out of petrol, so they used animals that could carry supply and weapon on their backs, donkeys, mules and horses were preferred, they are more pliant and used to slavery.

Also reindeers were tried, but with limited success, could only be used in the north, in the Middle East they keeled over by heat exhaustion and the Zebras were impossible to tame they refused to be a casualty of a war they had nothing to do with them.

Now that the war was over, surviving leaders pledged: No More Wars, horses, mules and donkeys had finally seen the light, from now on they were only selling their services for the best hay available; a 35 hours working week and a good hosing down and rub after work.

Since many of them had perished, there was a worldwide understanding of their plight, they got what they wanted.

When the Zebras complained that the grass on Savannah was cut and exported as food for the new elite, there was little pity, however, if they promised to behave more like horses, some fodder might be available.

jan oskar hansen

Encounter

Profound tiredness I'm sinking into myself
body gone, weightless now but my mind
sees that sea and sky are one, the aimless
cosmic cloud is a redundant god that has
been alone so long it will see no one.

Mother Teresa tried to talk to It, but failed;
she was very tired when she died. There is
stillness here where there is no night or day
and a forever fading cumulous;

I have great fear, will not sleep before dawn
is here, delivering me another day.

jan oskar hansen

Epigram

Epigram

An airline pilot who gets into trouble when flying
Must try to land safely, or he will be dead; if he's
Victorious he'll be celebrated and given a medal
For saving his own life

jan oskar hansen

Evening Mood On A Tankship

Evening Mood (onboard a tankship))

The crew has had their evening meal
now they smoke and play cards in
the mess hall, the cook and his helper
have more work to do, their day is long.

The bright light in the galley keeps
the night at bay, the cook stands in
the doorway, a mug of coffee in hand
and smoking a small cigar;

He has to go down to the store room
take out the food needed for tomorrow;
the sea is calm, the sea breeze a caress,
and he's glad to be far from shore.

jan oskar hansen

Filial Affection

Filial Affection

I can hear her whimper in the night, I must get up
put my frogman suit on and go to her, she sits in
a cove dressed only in a sea weed jumper, there are
holes in her fishnet stocking; yes, you are right my
little daughter is a mermaid

It was July day long time ago when I met her mum,
the dolphin, a hopeless affair doomed to failure, but
did we try! The baby stayed in my swimming pool,
while her mother swam to the coast of Greenland
and feeding off the shrimps there

When my tiny girl became a teenager she went back
to her mother and they both swam to Greenland; and
I thought I should never see her again. Tired she sits
and waits for me. I must join her, in her world, now
that I sold my house with the swimming pool.

jan oskar hansen

Flag Day

Flag Days

In the village people are not keen of waving their national flag about (Portuguese) it's regarded as rude boasting. An American, who once lived here, hoisted the Stars & Stripes every morning and, at times, tied yellow ribbons on almond trees.

Politely we didn't mention this banner madness it was as it never happen; then he suddenly died no one took the flag down till it was in tatters and blew off in a winter storm; as for yellow ribbons the almond tree bears beautiful flowers in spring.

jan oskar hansen

Four Senryus

Senryu

Theft alarms
Keep neighbours awake
When you're in Spain

Senryu

When a sunny wall
Shines luminously clear
Shadows live in fear.

Senryu

The precipitation
That falls on fields of love
Is a blessed gift

Senryu

In dour winter light
Cars parked near a clinic
Looks fatally ill

jan oskar hansen

French Lessons

French Lessons

The baguette on kitchen table, is
still warm and emits an aroma of
a Parisian boulangerie.

I put a bottle of red wine beside
it, a piece of moist Roquefort too,
and said: O, la, la.

jan oskar hansen

Generations Past

Generations Past.

When I get up in summer nights air in the rooms of my old cottage are dense with souls of those who lived here before. As I stir the air they move away they don't see me but feel a presence that they think of as a passing ghost.

Young souls are fearful but are told that ghost means no harm to anyone and that is perhaps true. Sometime I hear murmurs, voices of sorrow but also of pleasure, it is life lived which unseen, relive itself endlessly.

In autumns when the rooms get cold, in a home made of stones, I light the fire the souls settle in the wall behind the hearth and the cottage grows silent as we wait for a new spring.

jan oskar hansen

Gratuitous Violence

Gratuitous Violence

A vast plateau somewhere in the middle a lone oak,
perhaps a lone survivor of a time when this highland
was a gigantic forest. It wasn't a nice, tall tree, no not
at all, it was nobly, stubby and bent by age, yet it was
there and today it was giving shade to a man who was
crossing the plateau on foot, this for the simple reason
that he couldn't afford to buy a horse nor a mule. From
the horizon, shimmering at first, riders, cow hands who
spent weeks in the saddle looking for lost cattle, which
must be one of the most boring jobs man has to endure,
and seeing the lone man they decided he was a thief and
hung him on the old tree. And as life seeped out of his
struggling body, the dance of death relieved their ennui;
then they rode on, they were not men of deep thoughts.
When night fell they made a fire, ate beans, drank coffee,
farted loudly, laughed and went soundly to sleep

jan oskar hansen

Green Hills Of Home

Vast grassland rolling hills and a river that has trout
that taste of mud, and one only fry and eat when
hungry. Only one tree here, it's petrified and white
as a skeleton left out in the rain, (it was an apple tree)
yet this place used to be a forest, in the days when
a horse was no bigger than a poodle, but we don't
how big a poodle was; maybe the size of a mastodon,
in that case horses were of the same size then as now.

There are more animals here, white fleeced sheep
occupying hilltops, safer that way. There are people
too, but they live underground there has been
a war on and survivors suffer from trench syndrome;
they do come out at night and tend to their animals.
There is something sad about a landscape without
cottages, chimney smoke, a smithy's anvil clank and
the hiss of a horse shoe dipped in cooling in water

jan oskar hansen

Haiku

We are yellow straws
sigh in an Indian summer
wait for cooling fall.

The electric fan
scornfully circulate warm air
throws it in my face.

Today's oppressive heat
will be a winter day's dream
of a summer past.

September breeze... warm
has thin layers of coldness
in unseen vapour.

Grumpy old river
the mountain cools the lake
sending a chilly note.

jan oskar hansen

Haiku 2 And Tanka

Haiku

On October street
Pale leaves on silver birches
Fall slowly at dusk

The heat of August
Carries a hue of sadness
Of coming decay

Tanka

Suicide bombers
Lack understanding of
Their total demise
Think they are to live forever
In the mind of the awed

jan oskar hansen

Hangover Sonnet

Hangover Sonnet

Lucifer came, brought chocolate and sweet
Drambuie. My bedroom reeks of self inflicted
pain and my uncritical dog licks vomit off
the bathroom floor. I sang opera last night till
neighbours knocked on ceilings and walls,
threatened to call the police; silly fools, they
have to get up in the morning for boring work.
No beer, the dog needs a pee, but how do I get
out unseen? Endless regrets, humiliation and
shaky hands, can't even roll my own cigarettes
anymore; this really has to stop diet coke and
well living, starting tomorrow. As for now,
hadn't it been for the poor dog's needs I would
not have gone out for a cold pint of lager.

jan oskar hansen

Her Song

On the shores of Bengal there is a place where they slaughter ships, tearing them up, almost by hand, into scraps of iron, you will have no knowledge of that once they rode the many seas and where home for lonely men who referred to the ship as "she"; was glad to be onboard after a stormy night ashore. Who, when finally leaving her, were moist eyed and silent for once.

On the shores of Bengal stories go untold, bits of iron in a heap nothing much to get sentimental about; except there was a ship named "Grace" she plied the coast of America central, and was resident of Costa Rica, but alas she was sold to unfeeling Canadians; I jumped ship then and shamefully left her to fend for herself amongst heathen on the icy, desolate coast of Labrador.

jan oskar hansen

Heroes

Heroes?

The sky is azure
Except for easterly dust clouds
Bombed out dwellings?
Delightful whiffs of poppies
Fields of the sweetest fantasy

Guarded by blue caps
The biggest harvest for years
Drug lords are rich
Armour plated four wheels
But they will never be safe

Afghanistan
A place for those who like wars
An Eden for contract killers
The Taliban will be victors
When smoke rises above Kabul

So, how safe am I?
Sitting in the spring sun
In my backyard
Getting a deep rich man's tan
Is it cordite I can smell?

jan oskar hansen

Hesitation

Hesitation

How heavy is this lake, I ask myself, it
tastes of blandness, tepid too; dust on
its surface, like the glass of water -on
the kitchen table -that should have been
drunk with the forgotten pill...and now,
nine month later, I will not go into that.

I swim to the middle of the lake where
a stone sticks out of the water, had I been
in a dingy, a hazy day, I could have hit
the mini reef. Did she forget to take that
pill? Tired arms, a swift breeze cools
the water, too cold now to drown oneself.

jan oskar hansen

Holiday In Virginia

Walking along a country lane in Langley carrying a bazooka a marshal stopped and offered me a lift, but since it was a nice day in May, I preferred to saunter along. But I got tired, left my short range tubular anti-tank weapon, on the verge of the road and went into a trucker's café, ate a burger and swallowed a six pack of Budweiser, lifted up my shirt to see if the cans rippled athletically on my belly, no such luck; the waitress took offence I was told to leave. A thief had nicked my tubular thing, with so many agents around, wearing sunglasses, and pocket radars, stealing ought to be impossible. I didn't report the theft though, too many forms to fill in; bought a Derringer instead, easier to carry.

jan oskar hansen

Homestead

The Homestead

The door used to be sky blue, my father painted it
so because mother loved that colour; mind now it's
cracked, weather bitten and pale as dead wood.
The door to the cabin, where I was born, used to be
Big and imposing it took years before I could reach
its handle, now I had to bend down to touch it.

My derelict legacy, not been here for years; as I
opened the door, air bothered the silence, a storm
of memories spun dust about, closed my eyes, had
a dizzy spell, and opened shutters to let daylight in.
I came here because I'm old and need something
that makes sense on my voyage across the oceans.

jan oskar hansen

How Safe Is Your Child

How Safe Is Your Child?

Mums and dads have been demonstrating outside the city's park, they want the lake filled in and trees chopped down since a boy fell from a tree into the lake, broke a leg and nearly drowned.

There is a chopper overhead taking picture of the lake, dangerous trees, boulders and bushes along a tall wall where pedophiles can lurk, see the evening news; later talks by experts: "How safe is your child? "

It has now been decided that the lake can be walled in, branches of tree cut so no child can reach them, the bushes chopped down and light installed, no hiding place, and yes, the boulders rolled into the lake.

Still the mums and dads are not happy, it's ok for the kids to climb trees as long as they are made of rubber and there is foam carpet under each one, the lake draws ducks, that draws rats, breadcrumbs and pestilence.

The park was fenced in, off limit to anyone under twenty one, then it was privatized restaurants, tennis courts, dance, furtive sex in the bushes, and wet T. shirt contests, while children are safely at home watching TV.

jan oskar hansen

I Nearly Met A Poet Once

I nearly met a poet once.

No I can't swim, there are no swimming pools
where I live and the coast is so far away.
I'm watching a program about a Portuguese
poet, she came from a rich family, had homes
dotted about the landscape, she loved the sea and
wrote many poems about the oceans

I used to work on the seas, on ships, as a cook,
I write about the seas too, but from a different
perspective and they, my poems are naturally
less romantic; about seeking beauty where love
is a commodity, seeing pain in eyes of those who
must wear a smile while being degraded.

She wrote about Greece her language and Gods,
I wrote about Athens, whore houses, booze and
eternal shame, but I do know of the odd moment
when eyes met in a bar understanding each others
quest for truth and beauty and knew I would win
through, one day.

jan oskar hansen

Idyll

Idyll.

A tiny lamb bleats in my neighbour's back garden,
(there often is a lamb bleating in their yard) it is fed
from a bottle carried around and treated as a baby
and let it run in and out of the house and taken for
a walk by their daughter and as the lamb nibbles
on straw by the road side and the girl prettily smile
city folks stop and take pictures.

Then the bleating stops, always on a Sunday, from
the back yard an aroma arises, roast lamb on a spit
lovingly turned, to an even brown, by the daughter
of the house. Guests arrive there is wine and much
laughter, and hungry I open a tin of soy meat balls.
Soon, depending on the season, another lamb will
bleat and be given a happy infancy.

jan oskar hansen

If They Could Talk

If They Could Talk.

The walls in the bedroom were once creamy reflecting the former occupants middle class pretensions, now they were just winter grey and sad as only walls can be that have had their favourite pictures removed and placed on walls unknown, in a new home in some out of town housing estate.

Not only the bedroom but every wall, ceiling and floor of this two story house were bare, it only housed a ghosts that was adapt at stealing copy pens, it was standing there by the curtain less window in the living room (what irony) contemplating if it should move into the office block across the road only they didn't use pens there anymore.

People wrote words on a screen and sent them into a void or to people who deleted them before reading what had been written. Morning now, the common soul of every plank in the house and waited for executioners, in overalls, to come end the old order of things and build a shiny new city centre, with rings roads, supermarkets and a grand opera house.

jan oskar hansen

In Fame And Illness

Saw him at the supermarket, had seen him before when he was a child, he bought two litre bottles of plonk, told him to buy a better quality wine, he didn't listen to me. I shared a table with him and a painter in the park, they sat there drinking didn't offer me any. The artist, disturbed by our silence got up and began painting a tree, red trunk, black leaves and something yellow in between, I thought of the Belgian flag, had been there once, a winter, dark place, windy, many canals, but the beer was good. The artist, now famous, sold his tree moved away and said deep things to magazines about art and politics. My childhood friend died; cancer it was said, but it could have been the wine.

jan oskar hansen

Inconsequent Calamity

Inconsequent Calamity.

Men in suits carrying cardboard boxes out of a bankrupt finance house, it isn't money they carry out but private belongings, picture of wife and kids and executive toys, so what do I care? In the basement where there are no gleaming windows and walls are cement grey, damp and unadorned, the janitor sits, he lives from one pay check to the next, won't be paid this week though;

maybe he should join the navy and see the world, but at sixty five it isn't a wise thing to do. But he has, unlike the suits upstairs, been unemployed before, he can, if he must, sweep the streets of New York. The TV's glare and sympathy is not on him, the world of middle class men worries about their own future not the janitor's or his son who is on his third tour of duty in Iraq.

jan oskar hansen

Indian Poem

Indian Poem

As I waited the first cold morning of
the year awoke, streams of sunlight
came over the ridge;

so it began again, and as we cling to
our entities and hold on to our life, we
must surely hear the unsaid;

spoken by a saddest of hearts: we are
mere mortals, new days will arise and
fall long after we have gone;

and from my old school's window
a child will see the blue mountain and
wish he could see its other side.

jan oskar hansen

Indisposed Gardener

Indisposed Gardener

Today I want to write a poem it's spring you see,
and green weed with blue flowers along the house.
I'm reluctant to remove them they have been
around longer than me and will continue long after
I've gone; when I die my little gesture of kindness
towards fingerless dog and despised weed will not
be forgotten, if asked what I have done in my life to
look back upon, I will mention this, if the man is not
impressed I will tell him it the unseen kindness that
counts, the big bravado things only bring satisfaction
to the beaming do-gooders who, for all we know,
may go home and be malicious to his wife if dinner
isn't ready on time and shame her by peeing out of
the window when drunk. The blue flowers only last
a week then they'll wilt and my backache... gone.

jan oskar hansen

Inheritance

Got a letter today, my half sister's
Meager possessions have been divided,
I'm now the owner of a step-ladder,
Two illustrated books and an atlas, but
I have to pick them up within a fortnight
As her flat is being cleaned and re-let.

No, I never met my sister, father had
Many children, his adultery dismayed
Mother. A step ladder, two illustrated
Books and an atlas, nothing much to
Construct a lasting memory of; I only
Hope her life wasn't lived in vain.

jan oskar hansen

Intermezzo

Night in the city, streetlamps too far apart, shadows
between them hinder contact. A cat, is it black,
crosses the street and disappear into a yard,
it's seen by a sewer rat that waits for thrown away
food to eat outside the burger bar. A lackluster
breeze blows waste paper about, then stops rolls
itself into a ball and goes to sleep under the span of
a bridge. Two hours sleep, and it will be a morning
breeze. The cat, is it black, has fooled the long tailed,
it only to feigned disappearance to lure the rodent
into the open; short struggle, a shudder oscillate
between shadow and light, come to rest as a sight;
motherless rats will be food for bigger ones now, as
night continues its travel towards a new day.

jan oskar hansen

Iris

The Iris

In my garden I saw the biggest rainbow ever seen
and it had a shadow too, I bathed in its glare, and
was the original multi coloured raincoat man.
Dug with my bare hands to find the crock of gold,
a big diamond found gave it to my distant brother
for safe keeping, while I dug but found no more.
My brother fled to Rotterdam where he sold my gem
to men with beards and black suites, where it was
cut into pieces, each one worth the price of a statelet.
My brother lives in Swiss, he hate me because I'm
his bad consciences talks bad about me and send me
letters that oozes of bitter resentment. I don't care
now that I live inside kaleidoscope, and wear a multi
coloured raincoat, I need not precious stones.

jan oskar hansen

La Barcaccia

La Barcaccia

"The fountain of the Boat"

A boy, of twelve, cups his hand and drink water from the fountain near the Spanish steps, while watching the traffic that seems anarchistic and cars park with total disregard to fellow users of roads; he is twelve, dreams of owning a Vespa scooter when fifteen, but for now he has an old bike, not many boys, his age, have got one.

It is seven thirty in the evening, a mild April day 1961, the day is over, Bellini is still open and so is Vanity Fair, selling expensive dresses and lingerie's; but Roland's the Jeweler has shut shop, by the spring people sit and are sociable, as most Romans are the hum and harmonies of their voices make it good to be human

The fountain was designed by Pietro Bernini 1627 and represent a sinking boat that sank here after a flooding. And it was washed up at this spot. The boy doesn't know that, it doesn't matter, it had been a fine day when all was well in Rome and no one spoke of carbon foot prints in the sky and other silly things

jan oskar hansen

Let There Be Light

Let There Be Light.

The mad scientist spoke of black light,
to night, however, the darkness is
velvety sable, and reflects moonlight
in an enchanting way; erases unwanted
contours, and unfavorable details; good
for you skin too and puts gloss in your
hair, and that's a bonus when you are
sixty-four.

jan oskar hansen

Liverpool Days

Wavertree road used to have a café there called "Tasty Toaster, " business was good till the formidable M.T. came to power and low paid worker, my main costumers, got the sack, and told to go on bikes they couldn't afford to buy in the first place.

Above the shop lived a lady teacher, she drank, at ten in the evening, as I closed and cleaned up, I could hear her sing, when filling her bathtub with water.

One night, it was raining; she must have had a stroke or something, the water kept running, rotten floor she and the bathtub ended up in my café.

Under the door the water ran and down the street, since it was raining few has noticed. Called the police when I got there, the landlord came, insisted that I had to pay. I threaten to sue him; he called me a Polish shit and blamed me for the holocaust I called him a Jewish shit and blamed him for Palestine. I finally collected my insurance money and retired from the catering business

jan oskar hansen

Look Back In Sadness

Look back in Sadness.
(Written as Tanka)

Bundle of photos
Face down in a cigar box
Family and friends
From a time that is a dream
Fading into eternity

Mostly black & white
How young my parents looked
Now I'm the oldest
Siblings faded fast away
As I sailed many seas

Non returnable
Past's gate is firmly padlocked
Wait in no mans land
Know there is no remedy
The past really is a dream.

jan oskar hansen

Love Story

The woman who couldn't
get warm tore the wood
paneling off her walls,
bright was the fire, but she
was still chilled to the bones.
Tore up floor boards,
she did, and terrified mice
silly, a lively fire, but her
heart was arctic.
In desperation she lit a bonfire,
made of oak furniture,
in her living room,
delicious flames,
but she was a lump of ice;
only thawed when
fireman Peterson came
and kissed her blue lips warm

jan oskar hansen

Love's A Bamboo Raft

Puerto Lemon, Costa Rica, how can I forget!
Warm sand I was building a raft when she
walked by, and was the first esoteric woman
I have ever seen she floated through air.
The one I was building the raft for, (she had
sent me a letter of regrets,) my plan was to
sail across the ocean, a new Kon Tiki man,
ask her to reconsider; but now - on the spot-
I forgot her name.

Maria, my new desire, and the object of my
lovelorn devotion, took me by the hand, led
me to her diffident house on long stilts
Dawn in Costa Rica, isn't a lingering affair
lasting till noon, instant sun warming green
bananas. My raft had drifted out to sea, it's
only cargo, a six pack of lukewarm beer, yet
I hoped a thirsty fisherman would find them
before the sea got frisky.

jan oskar hansen

Luciano Pavarotti

The twilight sun is white looks as torch with a faulty battery; the late summer heat is passionless and tired, the sun scares the old people a bad sign, they will say. Pavarotti died at dawn, cancer they say, his heart was too gregarious for a coronary. To day my brother has been dead for forty years, he liked to go fishing in his boat, took me along when not out with his many mates. It is good to wake up at dawn and be handed a clean sheet of white paper to write on and with a pen dipped in the ink of memories. Alzheimer is a terrible illness it erases all what makes us human. I will write no more, but go into the next room and listen to Pavarotti, I will have to go to his birthplace Medina, Italy, one day.

jan oskar hansen

Lulo And A Roman Holiday

Roman Holiday

In Rome I sat on the Spanish Steps, a hot day
in august 1961, in front of me a fountain
Fontana Di Trevi, its water looked cool and
inviting and I idly wondered if old Bernini,
the great artist, had had a hand in designing
this one too. I didn't really want to sit there,
but one is supposed to when in Rome, beside,
the pope had gone on his holiday. It would
have be better to find cool bar and drink cold
beer; come to think of it beer wasn't as cold
back then as it is now, and ice in once drink,
was still a novelty. Must have fallen asleep,
when awoke I was alone and in my upturned
cloth-cap coins gleamed in ancient moonlight.

jan oskar hansen

Many Senryu

Senryu

Notes fell from the sky
Sank to the bottom of a lake;
Made water music

Senryu

I had to haste home
But left my eyes on a stone
To enjoy, sundown

Senryu

In the square's corner
A fallen woman danced
With dust and leaves

Senryu

A denuded phellem
Suffers in noble silence
Birds do not titter.

jan oskar hansen

Many Senryu And Their Offspring

Senryu

Notes fell from the sky
Sank to the bottom of a lake;
Made water music

Senryu

I had to haste home
But left my eyes on a stone
To enjoy, sundown

Senryu

In the square's corner
A fallen woman danced
With dust and leaves

Senryu

A denuded phellem
Suffers in noble silence
Birds do not titter.

jan oskar hansen

Marilyn Monroe

Marilyn Monroe Remembered.

Through Erno Laszlo's windows, on the Fifth Avenue
New York, I saw her; bold I was in those days walked
straight in asked her to marry me. She smiled thought,
I was too young and, anyway, she was getting married
to a writer, forgotten his name now, but he was quite
famous back then. A flunky came over, asked Marilyn
if I was bothering her, not at all, she said, gave me kiss
that covered the whole of my face. Blindly fell out of
out of the shop, people smiled. Ambled past Laszlo's,
the other day, they had a picture of her looking out, now
that I'm so much older than her, she looked unbearable
young and incredible beautiful

jan oskar hansen

Martyrs

A bullet in his head, dumped in a ditch
the poor misguided youngster who came to
Afghanistan to christianize the Taliban.

Those who came with him on this journey
sit in a mud hut and await their turn, if they
are freed prayers have been answered.

God is great, the executed are martyrs
in the service of his magnitude and thus
the great illusion marches on.

I still would like to know who they are,
those who sent the young ones on this insane
mission; I think they are guilty of murder.

jan oskar hansen

Midday Sun

The fierce midday sun rules the street, shadows are packed, many layers thick, in arcades and doorways, a dense, a dark mass of abstraction waiting for the sun to move westerly; and as it does shadows become less opaque and begin occupying the street's eastside, slowly at first, but with resolve to defeat, yet again, the sun. A cat comes out from a yard, yawns and surveys its domain, a cur barks, a door opens; dog chases moggy, which runs and hides under a parked car. As evening approaches, light and shadows mingle becomes one, there is peace on earth, a bell tinkle, a mild breeze respire as angels cross the sky and all is well... for now

jan oskar hansen

Miracles

Miracles

The church, in my town, is the only
building made of stones, the rest are
made of perishable timber

The statue of Jesus by the alter, is of
a blond, young man dressed in gold,
as are his mates, angles on the walls.

Once I found a coin on the church's
floor I had gone in since it was cold
outside and I had little money.

I closed my eyes, asked God what to
do, pocket or collection box? There
was, I tell you, only a solemn silence

Put the coin in my pocket, together
with fluff and loose change, I had
enough for a big glass of foamy beer.

jan oskar hansen

Monday Blues

Monday Blues.

It's snowing, wet flakes thawing quickly, it is too late in the year for snow, and the almond tree petals are much prettier to look at... A thin layer of snow on top of the wall, I make a snowball and throw it into the siesta sleepy street.

A critic compared me with writers I haven't heard of, except J. Conrad; I plainly didn't measure up to the great of yore; The Pole was an aristocrat, people, even republicans, like to point that out, as it should make any the difference.

Snow has thawed now, what we need is rain and plenty of it, the stream looks as a badly kept road, full of potholes, it hasn't been like that for ninety years, global warming is blamed. What did they blame it on in the year of 1916?

The human mind is strange, it often records and store useless things, the postman brought me a fan letter today, someone, like my work well enough to send me a letter, I've forgotten his words now, but I do remember every word of the review.

jan oskar hansen

Moody Blue

Moody Blue

She rang said she was coming with the late train,
Since it was her birthday I had thought she would
Come early so we could go to a restaurant for
A meal and drink some good wine

The train arrived just before midnight, I was hungry
And tired of waiting, she was tired too, I had
Brought flowers, she thought they were nice and
Put them in the backseat of the car.

We drove home, both feeling wounded; at home
she made an omelet, I had a drink; later we watched
a TV show in aggrieved stillness. Next day we had
a big row and that cleared the air

jan oskar hansen

More And More Haiku

Haiku

Summer sunlight
Filtered through green leaves
Made old moss golden

Saying

Chase the rainbow
Not for its illusory gold
But its beauty

Senryu

The carob tree's shade,
Soft as a dusky mistress
A tropical night

jan oskar hansen

Morning And The Mythical

Morning and the Mythical.

On the hazy field a white stallion, with steam rising from its back, was grazing and I thought of the lady who used to ride naked through the night. The horse seeing me cycling slowly on the village sandy lane came to the fence neighed softly and looked endearing.

I stopped spoke to it till it began grazing, but when I tried to leave it neighed again didn't want to be alone. A man was letting sheep, on to the field, eighty-five damp wooly backs, (counted them and nearly fell asleep,) I could leave now my presence was no longer needed.

jan oskar hansen

Morning In Manila

Tropical morning, it had rained in
the night and streets looked bright,
soon it will be very hot and a throng
of busy people would be milling about
trying to make a dollar and there wasn't
enough of the stuff to go around.

I had spent the night in an air- condition
hotel room, my normal home was a small
cabin on an old tramp ship that should
have been sold for scrap years ago, but she
was chartered by a Japanese company
for another two years

The girl who had shared my bed lived in
a shanty town, for her too this was a novelty;
she had wanted me to have breakfast with her,
my god! Did she think was the captain?
I'm the cook, had to be onboard and cater for
a sullen crew, if lucky I would finish work
about seven at night.

A grocer's, across the road, had opened,
walked over and had a cold beer,
it filled me with hope, thought of having
another one, desisted, drank a pedestrian coke
instead while waiting for a taxi, wishing
the world would stand still, if just for
one lousy a day.

jan oskar hansen

Musical

Musical

Long time ago when Liverpool harbour side looked like a Lawry painting, and not as now, posh homes for the well to do, my ship docked and I was given a half day off work. In a narrow street I found a shop selling used musical instruments and I saw my dream, a saxophone costing ten quid. I ran back onboard asked the captain for a loan, luckily he was in a good mood; but when I came back to the shop my dream was gone. Later, when day ended and night began, outside a jazz club- they wouldn't let me in because they said I was too young, I heard someone playing beautiful music on my saxophone

jan oskar hansen

My Bride

She had such a pretty smile, green,
clear eyes... honesty personified;
she was to be my bride. I had been
down to the divine stream picking
costly stones to make a necklace,
just for her, when returning, she sat
in the park, near the spring of youth,
whispering words of adoration into
the ears of another man, her clear,
green eyes were full of truth and love.
I gave the rivulet back its precious
gift; walked for years, through many
lands, and never once returned to see
what had become of my bride.

jan oskar hansen

Negligence

Negligence

My neighbour doesn't till the land anymore he has sold it to developers, thought he had got rid of his animals, I was shocked and dismayed when he led a mule out of the stable where it had stood, in the dark, for two years

Standing there in the courtyard it was clear that it had lost interest in life, the winter sun that shone into its eyes met no reflection, blind and dumb it could hardly stand on unshorn hooves.

There was a long silence no one looked at the beast till the truck came to take it away, up the plank it walked offered no resistance, a will so utterly broken that it could never be repaired

I looked at my neighbour in the hope of seeing regrets or shame in his face, there were none, and it struck me that if humanity has no compassion for all life what change have we got to find deliverance?

jan oskar hansen

New Europe

New Europe

The white face of Europe is slowly fading away, middleclass couples have few children; there are exiting careers to follow in the world of business, media and the glitzy entertainment industry. Shake their heads, in united dismay, when reading about a poor woman, from a sink estate, unmarried and with seven healthy, white children; they reward her with contempt and without shame let her live in disgraceful poverty. There was a time, not so long ago, when women like that got a medal and was called mother of a grateful nation.

When the same couples are mid forties and successful they miss children and import some,3,4 or 5, preferable healthy ones from Asia or Chad in Africa, shower them with riches and a good education. Should we worry? No, not at all, they will grow up and be as, say, French, middleclass and tedious as their surrogate parents. Famous film stars, that before had a tame leopard as accessory, now travel with a multi racial orphanage on tow; and there is nothing to add to that, they are children rescued from poverty...we must rejoice.

Europe now has a new face, a smoother, darker skinned one, on holiday it can sit longer in the sun without getting burned. There are, however, a minority of people set against this they want a pure white race talk about European culture, without ever having read a book other than pamphlets of hate; losers with minds blinded by fear of the future and with hearts that know not of love, fight desperately against a tide of humanity that will drown them, and their loathsome racism, till there is no trace left of them to tell us they ever existed.

jan oskar hansen

New Haiku

This we didn't know of:
The power a white pearl has
To transform a cornea

Blank is you face...when
Thinking of its lost beauty.
Submerged by sadness

jan oskar hansen

New Road

I cast my net in the dark, goosed pimped river,
caught a handful of fish finger, the fingerless,
could no longer defend or feed themselves fell
prey to predatory birds.

A lively salmon, however, wriggled free from
an eagle's claws and landed in the blue grass
near me, felt sorry for its plight and hand fed
it worms, dung beetles and dead flies...

Salmon and new potatoes, the river sighed
went underground its bed was cleared of stones
and frogs, used as a short cut by those who are
always late for work in the morning

jan oskar hansen

Night Walker

Night waits for me to come, walk in its
deep shadow, to admire the way it
accentuate streetlight, makes neon signs
shine on damp asphalt, shuts out noises
and subdues the sirens of an ambulance;

cloaks me in security, unseen by prying
eyes, and the echo of lonely footsteps is
another dreamer. Yet, for all this, night
too pales when meeting dawn that takes
me on a ride through an irresistible day.

.

jan oskar hansen

Nirvana And So On

Nirvana and all that.

Since I don't believe in heaven or the place stokers go too- called hell- include me in your dreams when I go, so I can dwell in your memories, till you too join the non returnable. And since we both are tired of being reborn, remember the time on the African savannah when I was the proud lion king and you an elegant lioness I used called "baby, " or was it the other way around? I can't quite remember. We're warthogs once, but let's not dwell on that it made you so sad not being able to have bath; we can then fly to Nirvana and find everlasting peace in blessed oblivion. Failing that we can always go to Iceland, it is said to be the most peaceful place on earth; but I can't help wondering if, this treeless island is not too dreary for us?

jan oskar hansen

No Return

Sea-shell tells of hard life's ocean
calming when reaching Nirvana's
pristine strand.

Nuns in a rowing boat smile, terns
float on silent air, no tempest can
reach this shore.

Sun is bland, leave passion behind
when wading ashore, here where
no one whispers of hidden delight

Scintillating sun upon sea, music
reaches my ears...too late now,
god sits on a stone... motionless.

jan oskar hansen

Occupation Of Norway 1940-1945

Early April when they came, snow still on
the ground, green uniforms, the enemy buying
cakes in bakeries, people still shocked,
soldiers offer children chocolate

Uneasy truce, it isn't going to last, even though
the enemy is baby faced. Shots in the night on
of them is ambushed, sent home in a body bag;
civilian men are rounded up, some are executed.

It's going to get worse, hunger and darkness,
but the people know the scores, they have got
invaders and odious traitors to deal with, and
refuse to be vanquished: Occupiers Go Home!

jan oskar hansen

Ocean Blue

When I awoke it was Sunday morning and the seashore
had disappeared, lie in the grass by a stream that has its
nascent where winter shawls cover the blue mountain.

A white owl, ogled me as tiny snakes slithered across my
belly, dived into the streams coolness, which hurt since it
was only two feet deep.

Bleeding from a head wound, but having got rid of
the serpents, I hung my clothes to dry on an oak's
inviting branch.

Sat on a boulder as morning sun warmed my nudeness,
when the maid who milks morning dew walked by,
she paused and asked: ' Are you a satyr? '

"No dear, I'm a sailor rejected by the sea'. She gave me
roses' dew to drink, intoxicated I embraced her ephemeral
body and was free of the ocean's pull.

jan oskar hansen

October

October

Woke up with a start, the night was cold
a dream had disturbed my peace;
a black hole in the ground loose soil from
its edges kept falling into its endlessness.

Got up looked out of the window into a street
of pale light, my breath fogged up the glass
I saw a distorted image of my youth;
"How old you are, " it mocked.

I pressed my head against the glass, tried
to make friend with my tormentor; and
behind stillness I heard the hum of
the long sea rippling on nirvana's strand

jan oskar hansen

October Mood

Clouds are breaking up now and leisurely sailing north, on the sky a gigantic proud rainbow that makes the mistake of mirroring itself on a shiny cloud and promptly loses its soul to the image, hazes into a blur of pale colour and dissipates. You can see the thieving rainbow is a fake it's the wrong way around and when I tells it so it hastily hides behind the mountain range trying to look pretty for people on the other side of it. A dead turtle on the road thrown out of a fast car by someone fed up of having a pet that only ate lettuce and lived wordlessly under the sink.

As enormous clouds drift northward, I wonder if fish see icebergs as we see clouds. "Look, at that amazing, " cloud! " A poetic cod says. "It's only chunk of ice, " the practical cod says, it's a big fish, has a degree in marine biology. The poet cod doesn't answer, rapt it doesn't see the net and gets hopelessly stuck in verbs, commas, full stops and archaic words only found in the Oxford thesaurus. The big fish swims, on but looks up and sees cobalt light, as coming from the inside of an iceberg, it finds that "quite interesting" but refuses to use words like lovely... and worst of all beautiful.

jan oskar hansen

Offspring Of Sediton

Offspring of Sediton

In narrow streets between factories that had never been adorned by paint, as out of grey walls they came silent children of a different and darker world.

Don't speak to them my brother said they are foreigners and enemies of the country, a by product of a lost army and treasonous women who are forever outcasts.

Where the street widened to a square, near The clear blue, unpolluted sea, there was sunlight and the unspeakable children slunk back into damp walls and not seen again.

jan oskar hansen

On A Day Like This

Parked in a side-street, decided to walk into the town centre to buy my newspaper; legs ached, so very tired, and since it was July I wore shorts, my legs looked fine calf-muscles still strong; had I been a woman I would have said: "look at that man hasn't he a pair of sex legs, a masculine Marlene Dietrich." Perhaps not, but as I was thinking of her and Ernest Hemingway, they had loved each other, but never got around to do anything about it, I had walked out of the town wandering along a lane, made of sea sand and crushed shells, till I came to a crossing and at the left of it there was an enormous carob tree and under it heavy low hanging branches I found shade. Breeze filtered through the fleshy leaves making it cool; I leaned on its solid trunk and felt at ease with the world.

I was running up a very steep hill, light footed as an onyx, the breeze...me, the act of running was a joy. At the top I could see the glittering sea and to meet my love I raced down hill faster than a stone could fall, and on the flatland waved to farmers tilling their soil; and without pausing, at the beach, I dived into the sea and began swimming till all land disappeared.

I was at one with nature, around me circled happy dolphins, but suddenly, flecks of dark shadows appeared on the surface of the sea and it was cold despite the warm sun, I was utterly alone, my arms were thin and belonging to someone very old; as I throw my head back as not to drown my head hit the trunk of the tree, I looked out the sun had just gone down, but was still sending streaks of gold and orange across the sky. Back in town I thought of the lovely story of Adam & Eve, a pity that we'll never know the name of the person, who wrote it; at a grocer's I bought an apple and went looking for my car

jan oskar hansen

Once, A Summer

Once, a Summer.

It was a special Nordic summer, its night was short when walking home to change and go to work, no one about so early, but a cat going home after a night of murderous pursuits, there it will drink a saucer of cream, curl up on a sofa and its owner would never know what a vicious killer she had in her house.

I was in love, the taste of her still clung to my hungry lips, it was the best of times to be in love and after work I would see her again and again; she was so lovely this morning, and in her brown eyes I read nothing but true love-: "Come back soon darling, " she had whispered by the door, before gently closing it.

She wasn't there that evening: "gone to another town to work, " a neighbour said, "with a man in an Oldsmobile car, " (and in her brown eyes I read nothing but true love.) The night misted hasting towards autumn, trees shed green leaves, and as cooling rain drizzled my short summer of innocence was over.

jan oskar hansen

Only When It Rains

When it rains I remember Liverpool, which isn't fair, 'cos it was a sunny day that the police dragged a drunk out of the Mercy.

On the dock he was laid, the sun sunning a dead face... too late. I didn't see it made any difference, his face a shade of blue.

They cremated him that took an awful long time, a water-logged tree trunk creates a lot of smoke; I was the only mourner.

No, it isn't fair to remember Liverpool only when it rains, once I did see the sun through a smoke stained pub window.

....And it wasn't the city's fault that I stayed so long that when leaving I didn't care whether it was raining or not.

No, I'm being very unfair, 'cos the sun does shine, if above a murky sky; so I really must stop blaming Liverpool for my misery.

jan oskar hansen

Portuguese Spring

A Portuguese Spring

Once again the almond petals snow their
silky abundance on the pebbled road in
the village, and the Nordic princess who
lives in a castle near a lake that houses
an old pike that has been here so long it
can tell tales of times, before the princess
came and made winters mild; when
the lake froze over and folks wore wooly
snakes as scarves around scrawny necks,
against the bitter child- dries her tears and
smiles again and remembers a childhood
up north where the snow was so pure that
god's footsteps were seen by the devoted,
for the rest the silence hummed a lullaby

jan oskar hansen

Prince Oskar

I sat in a smallish café, near the harbour, when two flunkies came in followed by the queen of Denmark, who headed straight for the loo; the pair in suits was guarding the door. When her majesty came back out she saw me and came over; I kissed her hand it smelt of the soap for the masses, but when mingling with her expensive perfume, gave it a brief exclusive air.

We had coffee and spoke of the old days, but a whisper had blown through the street, people had become aware of her presence, time for her to leave. When I had read my papers and asked for the bill, the manager wouldn't hear of it, "a friend of the queen it was a great privilege to have me." I didn't tell him I'm Denmark's best kept secret, a product of her father's youthful indiscretion.

jan oskar hansen

Rain And Sea

The light from the window is quite clear today,
but the garden I see is a memory of what it
used to be thirty years ago; for all I know, I'm
almost blind, they may have cemented it over
and painted it green, Styrofoam trees and plastic
flowers, and there is no need for a gardener.

Do I hear raindrops falling? Is it getting darker?
Or is it rats scratching to get at my inert flesh.
I have been dreaming of rain for thirty years, a
tropical deluge foaming on the sea, flashing lights,
thunder; each man frozen in a frame, no thoughts
everyone only absorbed by the eye of the storm.

When the storm passed the deck was cool to walk
on, a new clarity of thoughts, before routine sat in.
When we reach shore, I will leave this ship and
climb a mountain, to see and experience everything
anew. I've waited for rain and the eye of the storm
to come and make me whole and young again.

jan oskar hansen

Reflection In A Window

Reflection in a Window

From my window I can see morning haze, amongst olive trees, I also see the outline of grazing sheep. Metallic birdsong disturbs peace, not from outside, but from my Chinese wall clock, must be eight, it isn't reliable, wonder if birds really sing like that in China? I have seen this morning scene many times, always think of it as biblical; shows how influenced I'm by Christianity. If I were a Moslem, what I see, the haze, trees and sheep will be the same; I would, perhaps, think of Allah and how glad I'm to have an unshakable creed. I was a Lutheran and think back on times when I believed in god with blasé certainty. Shells fall, I'm glad to be free of religious chains and monolithic beliefs.

jan oskar hansen

Revenge

The big fat Plymouth sat on the window sill watched the farmer, who had had a stroke, lie helpless in his bed. The fowl jumped down crossed the floor jumped up on the man's chest watched him some more then pecked and ate his left eye. A noise, in the house, the bird took fright and jumped back out, ran crossed the yard and into the hen house where it clucked and laid four eggs. When the farmer got better and was able to walk again, he found the Plymouth and in revenge bit its head clean off; this caused another, this time fatal, stroke and no knew why the dead farmer had a bird's head in his mouth.

jan oskar hansen

Review Of My Latest Book 'Homecoming'

JAN OSKAR HANSEN

HOMEcomings...Prose, Poetry, Senryu

By a Norwegian sailor - stunning, candid reflections of a life on sea and land.

Published by ,2007, ISBN 978-81-8253-121-5, First Edition,140 pages, paperback, \$15,00.

HOMEcomings is the third one of a triptych of poems: End Of A Voyage, Homeward Bound, Homecoming.

Hansen takes us on an unforgettable journey through his life as a high seas roller. An adventure of brilliant insights. His love, respect and understanding of both nature and humanity with all its foibles. He shocks us into another world with humour and pathos. All masterfully written in prose, poetry and senryu of literary significance.

Jan Oskar Hansen makes us his shipmate and companion on a journey of a lifetime where we experience through his writing, each powerful, immediate, enlightening observations. His fresh individuality leads us to worlds of wonder, delights us in earthy pleasures with a philosophical twist. We become part of the tapestry he has woven of his multifaceted experiences.

We feel his emotions and passion for the written word as he witnesses many cultures, learns new languages and grows his imagination which is at once 'dazzling', thought provoking, candid, richly spiced with intimacy, dream, reality and vast visual vistas of profound awareness of nature in all its vitality.

In conclusion, here is an example of what you will find in HOMEcomings, Jan Oskar Hansen's most recent brilliant achievement.

THE OLD TART

She's an old tramp ship now, can't afford to hire proper crew,
only harbour dregs, to take her to the next port. For some of us she's home we
try to keep her afloat a lick of paint here and there when it can be bought cheap
or stolen from a warehouse, that's getting hard now that all cargo are shipped by
containers, locked and sealed. She was riding yellow swells, off Hock van

Holland, when news come she's to be sold as scrap iron the dregs are glad to be ashore bellies full of rum king. For us who loved the old lady it's sad day, for us she will be the last ship, we know well that we don't fit the new merchant navy regime, roll on roll off no time for poker and a little whisky.

SENRYU

The angry ocean
Left its irate foam behind
In secret coves

LOVES LAMENT

In the morning breeze I can hear you voice
softly calling my name
in the haze I can see
the contours of you face

In the meadow's stream
I hear you laughter and
the water in the well is as clear as your tears
the day you said farewell

All in nature reminds me of you,
transient our love, like the flowering almond tree;
beauty never lasts and it was yesteryear.

HAPPY ENDING?

Love is overrated
The cynical sardonically say
But it keeps us sane

Literary review (2008) by Barbara Elizabeth Mercer, Author, Poet, Visual Artist (Canada) based upon 'Homecoming', published by ,2007, ISBN978-81-8253-121-15 First Edition,140 Pages, CAN\$15.00

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His poems appear in many anthologies. Collections 'Letters from Portugal' (bewrite books) Bristol, 'La Strada' Lapwing Publishers) , Belfast, 'End of Voyage' (WFP New York) , 'Marilyn Monroe Remembered' Erbacce Press, Liverpool, 'The Fairground' Ranch, India (out of print now) .

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jan oskar hansen

Riches

Riches

Dark clouds hang over the valley this morning,
there will be rain ok; I also hope there will be
a rainbow too, I have a silver spade ready and
leather boots as well.

Last time I found a nugget of gold, where a multi
coloured arch got stuck in the ground, my brother
stole it, he lives in Bahamas now, pays no taxes
and have seven servants

He wasn't happy so they sent him to Betty Ford's
clinic where they teach him to accept his guilt and
stop beating himself up because of a trifling
culpability, attack of remorse can happen to us all;

forget your sin, sobriety is bliss, god forgives and
speaks English. Should I be rich today I will not tell
anyone, but keep my money under the mattress, live
like a pauper and enjoy my solitary treasure.

jan oskar hansen

Rural God

God and his donkey came walking into
the village in the forenoon,
he was selling lemons, big juicy yellow
ones, I bought two

"Say, lemon man, " I said,
(wasn't going to blow his disguise)
"wouldn't you make more money
selling your lemons in a town? "

"Nope, people there have lost touch with
the land, they don't know what
lemon looks like, but there's
a man there, you might have seen him,
he's got a limp, who sells artificial lemon juice,
he has taken all my costumers,
it's only the old people in the village
who buy my lemons now.
Here have another one... it's free."

jan oskar hansen

Saviour?

The church bells tolled heavily
in the middle of the night,
then slower and slower till a metallic
whisper and silence.
And the wind blew along
the vestry alone.
The padre's elderly housekeeper
gave birth to a bloody mess of a child,
a son of sin,
the padre killed them both,
with his bare hands,
then hung himself,
in the belfry, till he too was still as
the carillons
But Satan came
blew life back into the child and mother
and took them back to Hades

jan oskar hansen

Senryu Food For Thoughts

Senryu (Food for Thought)

The moral base
For consuming human flesh
Is a green answer

Senryu

Is cannibalism
The practical green way
To save our planet?

Senryu

Let the old feel useful
Make them into hamburgers
And feed for cattle.

Senryu

Everybody can,
Not just Italians,
Be made into salami

jan oskar hansen

Senryu 3

Senryu

Freedom is costly
Those who swap for security
Will long for yesterday.

jan oskar hansen

Senryu And Tanka

Senryu

Can haiku stop wars?
Yes, but only if written
On a projectile

Tanka

Those who wedge wars
Are not prone to read poetry
Those who read verses
Often die on the frontline
Or are shamed in prison

jan oskar hansen

Senryu I Think

Senryu

Euphonic stillness
Liquid pearls on an oar blade
In a summer fiord

Senryu

Pleasing to the ear
Clicks of mother's knitting pins
On cold winter nights

Senryu

Melancholy is
Layers of large snow flakes
On the window sill

jan oskar hansen

Senryu Or Something

Senryu

October's dawn
Sorrowful as a bedroom
Reeking of booze

Senryu

Dark hotel room
Lit up by blinking neon light
Paid sex and silence

Senryu

Echo of Terns' shrieks
Empty row-boat in a fjord
Spooked is silence

jan oskar hansen

September Travel

September Travel

I've packed my suitcase ready to go to Norway in September, extra jumpers, wooly socks and two bottles of whisky; well, I'm only staying there for four days, but there might be a war breaking out.

Booze is very expensive in Norway so I can't go into bars, but sit in a tiny hotel room drink good whisky from a glass in the bathroom, the one used to brush ones teeth in the morning.

I will be walking around in streets where no one knows me, there will be rain and I have no umbrella, and I will end up in one of those expensive bars, just standing there drinking and talking to no one.

I have unpacked my suitcase, and opened one of the bottles and sit in my favourite chair drinking a drop, I will not be going back to Norway this year, the dog is old and can't be left alone in a kennel,

jan oskar hansen

Settling Scores

Settling of Scores

My house had been empty for a long time no one came here and that suited me fine I've got everything I need, by looking out of the windows I can see life passing by. Then it all changed a youngish couple moved in, totally ignoring me, after all I'm the owner of this house, but what could I do, I'm ancient and no one listens to us old people any longer unless we are royalty or presidents As my irritation grew I took to screaming, till the woman said; "Did you hear that Fred? "What? " "That voice, like someone is trying to speak to us. "Nonsense, " the taciturn Fred said. In the night pictures took to falling on the floor, Fred blamed it on tiny earthquakes. I got angry and threw objects hard across the room when they were out... and they blamed their little dog, which was my secret friend. But the night when I stroked Linda's hair till she woke up screaming telling her husband that she wouldn't stay in this house a minute more, I had won. No one lives here now save for me, locals say the home is haunted, suits me fine. There are children outside they are here to feel deliciously scared by knocking on my door, it amuses me think how shocked they will be if I, one day, opened up and said Hi!

jan oskar hansen

Sex And The Older Man

Sex and the older man

As an illness settles in my body, things I took
for granted have now disappeared, say, like
a proper morning erection.
Slack and shriveled I have to sit down to pee,
less I soil the front of my trousers.
Sex for the aged is up (pardon the pun) and
running, many aged have sex trice a week,
I read in the paper. Old men bragging, ask their
wives, who will giggle, say their men are
dreaming. Sex isn't that important a celibate
once said, (how would he know?) yet, I agree
on the scale, of interesting things to do I rate
sex only at nine and a half... the tenth used to
be a smoke after it is done.

jan oskar hansen

Shangri La

Tibet used to be a quaint place, full of monks and poor people who didn't often washed their faces. Intrepid westerners liked the place, thought it was a Paradise, even though no one stayed too long. Then the Chinese came and, as occupiers often, do destroyed works of art, the Lama, and his staff, fled to India. Now modernity has arrived, there is less poverty, roads have been built and it has been said that there are dancehalls and painted ladies in Lhasa. Life is better now, chiefly for the poor, yet people will, it's been said, endure the hardship of freedom and yak butter in their morning tea for a taste of independence. Westerners will be back and write books about this authentic Shangri La.

jan oskar hansen

Shaving Cream

Shaving Cream

On the day that yet another car bomb exploded in Baghdad, I forgot to buy shaving cream and had to go back to the shop, there is weariness about bad news from Iraq. I also forgot to buy a litre of milk and a goat cheese.

Four thousand US troops killed, which, after five years of war, as an amazing small number; but then, this is a war where civilians get to do the hundred thousand or near a million dead, no one knows or cares, but it might end up as being as great a crime as the holocaust:

Was it five or six million Jews who perished? This is a number that concerns deniers greatly, who are of the opinion that only about 200 Jews died, regrettably of typhus, on a train journey between Poland and Russia.

What we do know, is that the holocaust was worst criminal act known to man; it is therefore an eternal shame that Israel uses this tragedy to silence us when they continue to unlawfully take more of Palestinian land

It is much easier to take up Tibet's cause, isn't strange that the riots it happens know as the Olympic in Beijing looms? Forget Iraq and the Gaza strip, where our hands are bloodied; this new cause will make us feel morally superior

jan oskar hansen

Slaves

Wish I were an owner of a couple of slaves,
they can do the work in the house and paint
outside as well; I have to feed them, of course,
rancid butter and stale bread; they can sleep
on a mat in the garage, and if they get a cold
I'll be kind and give them an aspirin.

I have a wife, who does of the housework,
but she isn't reliable, often I have to do my
own ironing and washing up after dinner;
to get something done I have to kiss cuddle
and flatter her, my god she even wants me
to make love to once a week!

With poverty around there will be many,
hungry enough to work as slaves, perhaps
they are people who show initiative don't
hang around, hands in pockets, demanding
handouts from the state, or beg outside
supermarkets and at the railway station.

jan oskar hansen

Sleepless In Portugal

Late night television, a group of middleclass people discussing art and its funding, they are so very polite but only listen to their own voices; people, who make a living writing about poetry which sells better than writing it; nevertheless they are my only company this long night, one of the men tries to control the erection he gets when looking at the nice woman in red dress.

I have turned the sound down no need to hear what they are say, gentlefolk but I do wish there had been a scruffy artist there as well, to livening the proceeding up, but often artistic people are not nice they have no patience, not really in a group of bright people who have gone to university, have a degree in something or other, and work in the talking industry.

Commercial break, I turn the sound back up, a smooth talking man has a cure all pill, tells us the medical industry tries to ignore his wonder drug because it will make it redundant. Artful mendacity there is an absence of shame; his sidekick, a woman, who wears so much make-up, feign to interview him. Soon it will be morning, and the talking and pretence on the TV will be forgotten.

jan oskar hansen

Soldier Hero

Soldier Hero

They are so proud of their son, the war hero,
and now they were given the highest accolade,
a soldier can receive, from a grateful nation.
In the great hall they met generals who said
it was an honour to meet the parents of a hero,
they had brought up a fine son, (a post mortem
medals are gentle plaster on the ulcer of grief.)
Music and pink flowers, chocolate cake and
tea; the nation's president shed blameless and
manly tears, his lachrymose display for us to
admire; pity the hero wasn't there. Time to go
as low paid cleaners came, ate the remains of
the cake, drank lukewarm tea, and idly spoke
about the weather and the high prices of gas.

jan oskar hansen

St Valentine's Day

St. Valentine's Day

A well groomed couple walks in front of me,
he wears a club blazer, mid thirty graying hair.
She's twenty something and for her wrinkles
is a fun word and she has long blond hair that
clearly loves her. She slips her hand into his,
he looks around, I wonder why?
Later, in a café, she leans over and kisses him,
he looks around again, plays it cool.

What's wrong with the man is he total fool,
doesn't he know when loves comes around he
has to grab it with both hands; or could it be
that he is married and fear that someone who
knows his wife will tell. In that case there
will be tears and recriminations; wonder what
lies he has told her? She'll call him a love rat
and speak nastily about him for years.

jan oskar hansen

Still Life

Still Life

He sat in a rowboat, in the deep fiord, with
a bottle of vodka, a flask of tea, bacon butty
and an apple. A mild spring day and he was
fishing mackerel; many he hooked too, soon
the boat was quite full of blue, silvery bodies
writhing and painfully dying.

Tea and vodka he drank munched the butty,
ate the apple; lit a cigarette inhaled deeply
and enjoyed his solitude.

Bodily functions never stop, he stood up to
have a pee, slipped on his catch and fell into
the sea; heavy boots he soon sank down to
where the sea is dark and unforgiving; rain
fell on an empty bottle of booze, apple core,
thermos flask and fish that had lost their glow.

jan oskar hansen

Sunday Reflections 1

Sunday Reflections 1

I'm back but there are no fanfares, tanned by years
in a warmer clime I look as... I feel, foreign.

But all this fade I'm back in the streets of 1948
black and white the only colour was the green grass
of spring, it was a time when everyone looked old
at twenty five and interviewed by the local paper for
reaching the grand old age of sixty five.

Too bleak for words, nothing here but silenced
screams, the smell of poverty, that clings to the skin,
and empty bottles of booze. I'll unload my memories
here on the pavement leave them for others to find;
bleached bones, no, I cannot free myself the shackles
too strong, but I can trim it at the ages and make it
pretty by adding a sun and a lamb on a hill.

jan oskar hansen

Sunday Reflections 2

Sunday Reflections 2

Having turned my back to the home town I followed the coast road, till it veered left and I lost sight of the sea and drove into a 1950th rural landscape where horses still pulled the plough.

Stopped across from the small farm where I had worked as child labourer, healthy life, milking cows at six in the morning, but I wished they would have let me be a child a little longer.

Remembering the child was as watching a Bergman movie, long shots of a flat landscape, little dialogue, a white church against a rain dark sky, a pitiless god and preachers of doom.

On my way back to the airport I stopped by the sea, it was so beautiful that day, and I cried for the lost child, but I was now free to write my own and better version of my childhood and in time believe it to be true.

jan oskar hansen

Tanka (Rejection)

Thanks for your poems,
Sorry, we cannot use them
Wish you luck elsewhere,
Even though we strongly doubt it
No one can be that crazy

jan oskar hansen

Tanka For You

Tanka.

Time is a vacuum
Through its enormity we walk
On paths unseen,
Yet each one is made for us
And leads to where sky meets sea.

jan oskar hansen

Tanka Franka

Tanka

Ingrid Betancourt

Got the French Legion of honour,
Well deserved indeed.
Will captives of Guantanamo
One day get a medal too?

jan oskar hansen

Tanka Oh

Tanka

Madeline, the lost child
Her disappearance ain't in vain
Her parents are paid
Millions of dollars to tell
How much they love her dearly.

jan oskar hansen

Tansplant

Dear heart do not knock so rapid on heavens
door; seventeen years old, you wanted to go
dancing, the spring night called your name

Be patient, my lovely, be kind to an old man
who carries you in his chest, he understands
your desire as you know of his deep despair.

The day will come when you both are free,
and, unburdened by physicality, be of the same
age; fall in love as, indeed, is our right.

Enchanted dance in never ending May nights,
when stars are near as blossoms on apple trees;
and we both believe in love and perpetuity

jan oskar hansen

Terminal As Love

Terminal as Love

It was the time, when the rhododendron in my garden was small - now it is a big tree knocks on the kitchen window- when wind blows, that I loved her. Jubilant times, my prime, I could fly yet crashed, I realized she didn't love me alone but had another lover, her whispered words of affection became obscene clichés. Fatally offended, love died as fall leaves blew on an empty asphalt road. Time healed nothing only drew a curtain of distance between us and left me with a heart weakened by melancholy. Her arrow of love made me a cynical; I shall never love anyone as much as I loved her, again.

jan oskar hansen

The Acting Profession

The Acting Profession

The scene was set I was to walk into the lobby ask the man behind the desk if so and so was at the hotel, I was then to look around studying the faces of the other guests, which would make the viewers think I'm a detective or an assassin with a slight limp. We waited Roger Moore, the star of the movie, he was late, and then it was lunch, hamburgers and cold beer. The star came in the afternoon and everyone applauded.

It was decided that my role wasn't needed, they handed me a newspaper and I was now one of hotel the guests. The shooting took about an hour, they paid me in cash and I took the bus back to town. At a traffic light on red, I looked down, saw Roger, sit in the back of a chauffeur driven Jaguar, a polite man, he looked up, I think he remembered me, and waved

jan oskar hansen

The Ambition

The upmarket restaurant has big windows, I sit on my scooter and look in, it's full of elderly well-to-does, those whose only ambition in life was to make money- and they were right! Sun tanned, Spick & Span, they are going to live long, perhaps forever, or till Mount Everest sinks into the Indian Ocean.

They eat steak and salad; I munch on a sandwich bought, in a supermarket, it's my fault, ambitions led me astray, into the wilderness, followed a light "Hall of Fame, " but the nearer I got the further the light moved away, till it was a teasing flicker on the night sky; both beautiful and unobtainable

My lodestar, will it ever guide me out of wasteland and show me where the gold is? An old man stops, admire my scooter, its blue with racing stripes on, tells me he wishes he could do as me, but he hasn't been on a bike for years and its too late now to try; he looks so sad that I murmur soothing words.

jan oskar hansen

The Blue River

The Blue River (new version)
Arabic/Andalusia poem
Al-RUSAFI (1179)

The translucent water
In the rapidly running
River, looks as pearls
On a necklace.

At noon, in shadows
Of big trees, it takes
The colour of rust, and
Is a liquid mirror

Then it changes tunic
Blue again, as a warrior
Resting in the shadow
Of his banner

jan oskar hansen

The Blues

It had taken forty years to find back to the house where I was born, a two storey timber framed home, smaller than I remembered it to be; painted now it looked rather smug and middleclass, bet the owners are lawyers with pale children.

Although the windows were the same, the house didn't recognize nor like me, staring at me with glassy contempt; "So, friend, a lick of paint and educated owners and you think you're posh, it's the people who lived here I miss, not you, I know every rotten plank you're made of it only takes a can of petrol and you are history."

Harsh words it needed to be said, my memories of a happy childhood is self invented, the reality was of poverty and indignity; I hastily left, don't belong here - never did. Nostalgia! Who needs it?

jan oskar hansen

The Cleaner

The Cleaner

My cleaner is here, she's from Angola has many children and is abandoned by her husband; she is very efficient cleans very well, but she smell and I often wish she would remember to scrub herself.

I sit on the terrace it's covered so it doesn't matter if it rains, and I feel wretched and middle class and wonder if I'm a despicable racist for thinking this way she's a good mother and work very hard.

She knocks tells me she's ready to go, I pay, open the front door, smile and say: "till next time then." scold myself for not being more friendly; perhaps I ought; let her go and hire one I don't feel sorry for.

jan oskar hansen

The Coastline Of Memories

The coast of Memories

Late summer, it lasted well into September, when I walked along the pebbled beach in the bay, and saw my uncle and aunt sat on an air-mattress soaking up the last of the summer light as the sea gently slapped around their feet. I walked passed them slowly in the hope they would turn around, see me and give me coins for ice cream; they didn't and I was too shy to say halloo.

My aunt looked more or less like my mother, uncle though had big shoulders and muscular arms, something to tell the boys in the street, but since he drove the town's beer truck, I had to invent a story; he had been a boxer in Chicago, but had to come home 'cause his mother was sick, if not he would have been the heavy weight champion of the world now.

Mother says that I mustn't be alone so much, but I'm here to look at the shiny pebbles just under the surface of the sea, I used to take them home but they lost their lustre when dry. I also like to listen to the sea, it sighs mostly as being fed up of being so old and alone; often it whispers stories I repeat when going home. I can't bring the boys here they will only be noisy and throw pebbles about.

jan oskar hansen

The Dancers

The Dancers

Went to a dancing competition, but little did
I know it was naked dancing by grotesque
old people, the audience, all young, laughed
violently, great fun this, till their faces
became a mask of horror, when realizing they
were looking at their own future.

Someone pointed a finger at me and shouted
"he is old." and hundred hands began pushing
me to the dance floor and tearing off my suit,
but I was able to jump out of an open window
where I landed in a stream five fathom deep, of
tears that had forgotten why they had cried,
and crocodile tears shed at gravesides;

I drank it all went back to the window spewed
it over the shameless old people who had let go
of their dignity in pursuit of eternal youth, and
fled into the woods. Torchlight, barking dogs
and angry voices: Get him, he isn't a democrat
wants to stop us having innocent fun, would
have been a good nazi, string him up."

Pale sunrise, still- life- forest- a deer grazes
in the clearing, suddenly it jumps in the air,
a red rose is born on its chest, and as a single
rifle shot echoes amongst trees, a day begins.

jan oskar hansen

The Dead And The Young

Blustery day in Virginia snowflakes flew
about, still not enough to make a snowman,
when a deluded student began a killing spree.
Great confusion over-weight and over-armed
police officers took up position behind open
car doors and bushes, till the shooting stopped
and the gunboy had killed himself, famous in
his own mind, and taken 30 youth with him to
the land of sorrowful memories.31 graves dug
in soil unwilling and unprepared to give space
for young adults filled with longings of love not
yet experienced. Now I wait for the movie with
brave and slim police officers dodging a madman's
bullets as they storm the citadel.

jan oskar hansen

The Death Of A President B

The first elected president after seventy years of dictatorship, was a big man, with a flushed whisky face and a bully too, knew who to get to the top, but when there he was incompetent spent much time getting drunk. So the nomenclatura took charge, created an oligarchy who robbed the Soviet state and her people; that many oligarchs are Jewish is purely incidental, if anyone keeps mentioning their origins, I will not hesitate to call him/her a sour Anti -Semite. They are disloyal Russians who grabbed what they could before fleeing abroad with their loot. Nationhood is a commodity that can be purchased and betrayed at the dropp of a shekel.

jan oskar hansen

The Diggers

The Diggers

In a museum, on the Isle of Man, there was displayed a Viking's tooth and it was brown, not from smoking mind, the tobacco plant hadn't been imported to Europe yet, but from not having brushed his teeth when a child. There was little else left of the Viking that's why I ask: how did the archeologists know that this tooth had belonged to a Viking? He could have been a crofter who secretly smoked dry oak leaves, because it kept colds away. He could also have been a sheep rustler- which is far less romantic than being a horse thief- and knifed to death by irate farmhands.

Archeologists are a strange lot, give them a rusty nail and they construct a cathedral, or some other godly house; should you find a piece of a wine cup, they will tell tall tales orgies, fig leaves and Roman canapés, but they can't find the wrist watch I lost in the year of 1985, in Chester- England- where Roman soldiers used to bivouac drink wine and eat fried dormice while cursing the Cesar who had sent them to this rain cold, ungodly country where the people are so white they look like green ghosts in moonlight. So you see there is no doubts about it, archeologists are poets with shovels.

jan oskar hansen

The Distance Traveled

At last, I had made it, after traveling through many lands and seen the infant moon, I was here in my street, it was empty; curtain-less windows, no one inside, the wind of time blew and autumn leaves, hard as metal, scratched names on asphalt.

When I looked up faces, in windows came into view, only to wane when leaves erased their names; and tiny twisters, only a mere handful of dust, twirled dismally around my feet.

Tried to leave, but was lamed by my past and had to see it through. I was in a house looking down, but also in the street looking up, a leaf scratched my name in asphalt, closed my eyes didn't want to see it erased. The wind suddenly ceased as a mummified scream came to rest in the dust. Free!

Turned saw my vale, green and as familiar as the donkey in the shade of the carob tree; my past was finally laid to rest.

jan oskar hansen

The Doubt

The Doubt

Snow fell between us, more and more,
I couldn't see you, blizzard in my hearts;
when the weather cleared the landscape
was white with hares and fox tracks.
This mass of snow didn't know where to
dig and I had no snow-spade. Waited till
April when snow thawed and hares had
been hunted to extinction and fox fur
adorned and gave warm comfort to old
ladies. You looked fine, just as before,
but there was a hole in your head, and
now they think I have had a hand in your
demise.... Preposterous!

jan oskar hansen

The Educated

The Educated.

Salient and Iconic are academic brothers,
appear often in a
"Literary Supplement Magazine, "
lately they have been investigating
whether the wife of a famous writer
had syphilis or not.

Drew no firm conclusion,
only innuendos, which is a pity
if not very scholarly.
Wouldn't it be erudite, when at
a dinner party, to say: "
Did you know that Henrietta died of VD? "

jan oskar hansen

The Fading

I sit here in the corner, facing the door- like
a fat little spider- watching the coming and
going, and wait for someone to open the door,
enter, and tell a tale I can make a meal of,
cause I have not a life of my own. My view
is a dusty back yard with a pale almond tree
I've wrung every dropp of corniness off; lost
all leaves, not that I care, it has done its duty,
chop it down, it's full of ants, bees will not
touch it; a tit will rather die, in the claws of
a hawk, then been seen sitting on one of its
skeletal twigs. Invisible ink, between lines,
tell a story of waiting, lust for love and fear
when someone really knocks on that door.

jan oskar hansen

The Fame Game

The Fame Game

The princess sat on a bench looking pretty,
behind her Taj Mahal, and a big rat that sat,
on the perfect lawn, quietly observing her
with what looks like deep concern;

there were many rats in her life hungry for
crumbs of her fame, but they were satisfied,
cornered her for more and in a dark tunnel,
without an exit

Mangled bodies and steel and the smell of
petrol, the rats scuttled off, down sewers they
came from, waiting for the next prey to come
and play the game of fame.

jan oskar hansen

The Field Cook

The battle had been bloody, they had been told to hold the hilltop at all cost, but now as it was lunch the fighting ceased and the defenders' cook rang his bell food's ready come, get it.

He had made lunch for 500 soldiers, but only 400 turned up, he could afford to give them bigger portions not skimp and save as he often had to do, they would be grateful for that

The cook had been a sergeant for a week now and he wondered if the cook on the enemy side was a sergeant too, it would have been nice to meet him and talk about catering under fire.

Tonight, when the field had been cleared of dead bodies, he was going to cook a pot roast with mashed potatoes and peas. As his major said: "soldiers can't fight on an empty belly."

jan oskar hansen

The Fifties

The Fifties.

Sleet, snow, cold and dark before noon, Hitler
is living at a ranch in Argentina; that wasn't fair,
only five years after the war, him snug, us cold.
And in travel books I read about Africa, white
men, in tropical hats, and naked natives, some
of them came to conquer, other to win souls for
a "Christian God." No one asked the locals what
they thought; neither did I, they were black and
naked, for heavens sake! But they were not cold
in their Kraal, and if they were bitten, it was by
wild animals, not by icy wind. Big news, in our
dreary lives, Joseph Stalin died, mother said he
had rescued the working man, others said he was
a swine; whatever! I was still cold and it rained.

jan oskar hansen

The Fingerprinted

The Fingerprinted.

On the highway stretching forever, beset by
dumped cars and weed that cracks up asphalt,
a gypsy family with their tough little horses
meanders slowly through a road that is a sad
testament to a civilization that lost its way.
War of resources, everyone lost, has ruined
the economy and social cohesion, the people
lack the will to start again after the fat years.
Begging, theft and robbery are the norm, and
as usual the itinerants are blamed by people
who still cling to their bankrupt dwellings.
For travelers this means nothing, they were
poor before, and feel no triumph. Nomads in
the landscape of shimmering time.

jan oskar hansen

The Future Is A Dream

The Future Is a Dream

I was driving on a broken, potholed road, in a devastated landscape, no houses only a bit of wall here and there, earlier I had driven through a fading memory of a village and when I looked back it was gone.

The road stopped by a vast plain that ended where two big sand dunes protected it from the sea, they were building a new city here; and there were shacks for the workers who could not afford to live in the houses they constructed.

I didn't see the men I didn't see anyone at all, stillness was empty as it had no memory of a past, it disturbed me that all was present-time and that nothing had taken place before; I was overcome by a great fear and warm tears blinded me.

A woman came, soft bosomed, she held me close, stroked my hair and whispered quiet words till my terror ceased; when I could see again blank sheets hung from the sky waiting for someone to write the story of how it began.

In the living room, coloured lights, around a plastic tree had been blinking all night, its gaudiness, was so very human, but I switched on all lights, touched walls, they were made of solid stones; and my fingers caressed every unevenness.

Sore ankles, on decks of iron I had walked endlessly across the seas; I lied down on the floor head resting on the edge of the sofa looking up I could see dawn shine a new desire through the skylight; yes it was good to be home from sea

jan oskar hansen

The Good Sleep

The Good Sleep

She was late coming home from work, wanted to rest a bit before dinner, at nine I ate in the kitchen, didn't like to wake her yet she was so tired.

I had a drink and watched telly till eleven, then worried, the silence in the bedroom ominous, what would I do if she had slipped into the deepest sleep of all?

I knocked softly on the bedroom's door; "Are you ok darling? " No answer. I switched on the light came nearer to the bed, her face was smooth and free of worries, a smile on her Marilyn Monroe lips, and she was breathing easily. Relieved I grumpily woke her and asked if she wasn't going to eat anything.

jan oskar hansen

The Gorge

The Gorge

In the deep gorge, near the river that died five years ago and is a pale scar running from inland mountains and down to the coast, unheard words of lovers come here to die; "I love you, "" Come back to me" "I can't live without you" whisper in the breeze for no ones ears but the intrepid that comes here to conquer his own fear of love. It is easy to get lost here trees are unfriendly, bark have thorns and branches snap when you try to climb up to see where you are, and wild beasts follow wait for you to succumb, fall asleep so they can come eat your brain and leave you confused and rescuers will say: "Poor man he's got Alzheimer." The stillness hears fearful screams, the unheard's last effort before sinking into silence

jan oskar hansen

The Gypsy Woman

When I left the supermarket she sat in the shade
under the balustrades her skeletal hand cupped
and outstretched, too tired for words; usually
I gave her the change I had in my pocket, but
that day I had none. She kept sitting there to
nightfall, till the supermarket closed; chilly night
even, though it was May. In the morning they
found her dead, leaning against the edifice of
plenty and no one knew her name; feather light
her corps, had it been a windy day, it might have
blown away. Roma, this cursed race doomed to
wander across foreign fields and often hanged.
Sing a sad song for me Gypsy, tell me why they
hate you so and why you can't return to El Rocio

jan oskar hansen

The Heat Before The Storm

The Heat Before The Rain.

The blue bird that flew over the houses had wings that cast shadows in the olive grove, the docile mule bolted kicked over the bucket of water, I had carried from the well, it jumped over a stone fence. Didn't make it fell broke a leg. I called my neighbour he likes to kill things, something unresolved, I gather, from his sad childhood.

All that blood a small river trickled and sank into parched ground, where autumnal flowers sprung up and hid the dead body in an orgy of colours, that got brighter and brighter when feasting on decay till they exploded into a shower of rainbows which attracted dark clouds, and it rained; huge drops- bigger then a crocodile's- tears.

Next day the mule grazed as before, docile as nothing had happened, but under an olive tree I found a knife with dry blood on, and my neighbour was yonder trimming almond trees that now have brown leaves and are full of nuts.

jan oskar hansen

The Hostage

The Hostage.

A man, in a small town in Texas,
robbed a bank; then stuck a gun
into his mouth and took himself
hostage. Outside, when asked to
free the hostage he took the gun
out to answer and was shot dead
by the sheriff

jan oskar hansen

The Intinerant

The Itinerant

When I came to the supermarket the guard was outside telling the begging gypsies by its door to move away, they did move but not far they sensed his kindness and would soon be back; a younger guard is needed to get them off the premises, one who hasn't suffered any hardship and is, by nature, a bit dim. There used to be e skeletal woman amongst them, she's dead now, a bit of human fluff that blew in the wind, I suppose she laughed and smiled once, when a child, but then she had a baby herself when still a girl, the newborn was taken away and she became distant, her eyes seeing a future that had nothing to offer. I used to buy her a fried chicken and chips; she ate it all and was thankful for that. Perhaps the kind, but ineffective guard thinks it is good for us to see that poverty is not eradicated.

jan oskar hansen

The Invader

The Invader

August night, air condition off no electricity, dying in my own "sweat, " a word I wasn't going to use again. A sudden gush of hot air makes the curtain move, in a surprised way like an English castle ghost caught unaware in the armory. The gush is full of crematorium ashes, cling to my face won't come off; I'm tired have no strength, when I finally get to the bathroom, my face is clean, ash has gone through my skin followed the blood stream to my heart and brain. I know share my body with someone else; a soul that didn't want to leave, but demanded more time. There have been subtle changes I have a hankering for tea, no milk and two lumps of sugar, I leave the loo lid down and keep bathroom clean. The feminine side of me keeps my coarse ego at bay; I do not sweat anymore but transpire.

jan oskar hansen

The Italian Butterfly

The Butterfly

In Livorno, Italy, a place few tourists care
to visit, they spoke of the American girl;
I saw her once, she was tall and walked as
not quite there; in the evening her shadow
climbed up and over houses and the citizens
were saddened by her cosmic loneliness

It was a September afternoon, when light
has a sepia sheen, a butterfly came and sat
on the rim of my beer glass, must have
been tired, it fell into the brew, I picked it
out with a match stick, her soggy wings
I had damaged with my clumsy fingers.

When dry it could no longer fly, sat there
as living fluff; shivering in its colossal
solitude; I could not bring it any comfort.
A sigh walked by, the American girl's
shadow climbed up walls, a zephyr blew
when I looked down the butterfly was gone

jan oskar hansen

The Jogger

The Jogger

They said he had invented jogging and he was quite addicted to his invention, ran every afternoon longer and longer distances; till he dropped dead.

"He had congenital heart disease and would have died anyway, " the defenders of jogging said.

Sure but that's not the point he could have died when copulating, angling, having a splendid meal with wine or congenial drink with friends in the bar, and not prancing about in shorts on a cold road alone a chilly autumnal evening.

jan oskar hansen

The Lost

I was young home from the sea, my friends
have a working week, some were already
married, so I walked alone around the town,
looked into shop windows, which was rather
dull and ended up in a bar had an early beer,
and met people who were just drifting along;
they showed me kindness, I knew why, but
it's hard to be home from the sea and no one
to talk to. The friends I knew had, as they,
say moved on. The glory of quest, the world
I knew was slipping away, the days when we
were single have gone and I'm the loser, me,
the sailor of the seven seas, pays for beer by
those who sit and laugh in morning bars.

jan oskar hansen

The Middleclass Assassin

The plump man who walked away from the burning car
Used in a failed attempt to blow up an airport, didn't set
Himself, on fire; and luckily the police didn't kill him,
We will be able to hear his explanation in court.

The man is a medical doctor, how naïve I have been
Thought this profession was a matter of higher calling,
A wish to help people in need; yet this doctor behaved
As a car mechanic would, at a car wrecking derby

So much hate, the man is a Sunni Arab, very religious
They tell us; we, the west, occupied and destroyed his
Country, yet his behaviour was utterly despicable, as
Indeed ours, for having brought anarchy to his country.

jan oskar hansen

The Mind's Landscape

Collector of dry roses, that's what you are,
in the mirror of tricks, your smile is of derision.
Seeker of the barren land where black goats
eat thorny roses.

Laughed they did when slewed the soil refused
to drink their life... a pool of darkening ruby
on yellow straws and angry glares of troll's
blue eye.

Dweller, go back into your cave, contorted
you're in the mirror of life, rimfrost on green grass
you're breath's an angst ridden screams of fear
as life passes you by.

jan oskar hansen

The Misfits

The Misfits.

Snow, powdered glass thawed became slush and
dejected rain fell, bored children sat in sheds hitting
the smaller ones over the head with wooden spoons.
No snowman with coal eyes and carrot nose was
made that year as dirty paws on clean kitchen floors
became a top issue; the ministry of health exiled dogs
and, mysteriously, also ducks, from suburban homes.
Then it was summer, a dry one, yellow lawns, dead
frogs, and dust on rubber plants.

Olga, the mother, took to drink kept her bottle of gin
under the sink, sobbed every day into her dry rubber
plant, it thrived and sprouted gum. Her neglected man
looked as a tramp till a mermaid took pity taught him
to swim, when they make love it takes time cause he
has to surface every so often. The mermaid doesn't
mind at last she has found a man who's not in a hurry
to watch sport on the TV. Of Olga's two children one
became a diver and the other, an alcoholic petty thief.

jan oskar hansen

The New Weapon

Taser him, taser everyone out there
who looks different from the norm
or answer back. Taser, them to they
wet themselves and taste dirt.

Taser all those who looks aggressive
and has an opinion unlike yours,
we, the men in blue, are in charge;
a taser leaves no mark

jan oskar hansen

The Night

My wine glass is full of moonlight, drank it
and I floated dreamily, on a carpet of night air.
Couldn't resist the moon's pull, saw my home
bathed in a spectral light, both beautiful and mortal.

Flowers in the garden were deadly pale, olive
trees wore silver capes of unrelieved sorrow
This nocturnal landscape isn't to my liking, put
me down, red, green and golden are my colours

But I did glimpse, behind the tall mountain,
night's ultimate sacrifice, giving birth to dawn

jan oskar hansen

The Politic Of The Ridiculuse

Dear teacher, from Liverpool, going to work in Sudan and
let the children at your school call a teddy bear Muhammad.
Didn't you know you're dealing with bigots scouring texts
to find an excuse to say that Europe has insulted them again?

You are amongst people, who are three centuries behind us,
and in no hurry catching up. Odin is the name of my cat, and
that's also the name of Iceland's god, I better be careful when
going to Reykjavik on my holiday next year.

jan oskar hansen

The Power

Flower Power

When I die, my body shall not be ashes and
strewn upon the sea, it's polluted enough as it is.
No, dig it six foot deep under my almond tree,
let it absorb my flesh.

If it turns out that have I a soul too, I bequeath
it to the tree as well, it will then be more careful
in whose path it strews pink & white flowers on
cold winters days

jan oskar hansen

The Roman Soldier

The Roman Soldier

It was late evening, when walking along the walls of the ancient city of Chester, I saw him, the old centurion, he stood alone dreaming of retirement, the land and slaves he had been promised when he joined the army. He and his kind was hated here, in his own beloved land the almond tree stood in ornate regalia wishing spring welcome by strewing a carpet of flowers on its path.

He didn't see the two terrorists sneak up on him, when he did it was too late, and slowed by age he was knifed repeatedly. I think they must have sensed my presence, looking my way they stopped, jumped over the parapet and vanished. I held the centurion's hands, he opened his brown eyes, a brave little smile, and said: "Guess I shan't see the flowering of the almond tree this year."

jan oskar hansen

The Room

The Room

The room on the attic had a bed, a commode, bare floorboards on which dust danced as on command, light came from a loft window.

The murmur I had stopped, the room waited for my next move, I looked around nothing here to bother about and closed the door.

My uncle lived here, he only left his room and came down for his meals, when he didn't vanish for weeks "The Drink, mother said.

One day he didn't return, after a year mother went to the police and reported him missing, after that no one mentioned him again.

I only remembered him now that I was selling the house and looked around for something of worth to take with me.

I opened the door again, and dust danced, on the commode a small book, poetry written by himself, odd no one had told me that.

A man, had written of the wonders he had seen, landscape and seascape coloured by his mind, the forgotten had sprung back to life.

I sat on his bed and read, till daylight faded and it was night, looked out of the window and saw what he had seen, the beauty and his loneliness.

The room was silent now it didn't need to sing, or whisper its sorrow. I had heard his song and will carry his voice into the future.

jan oskar hansen

The Ruin

The Ruin

The ruin, in the woods, has been a ruin for
so long that it is no more than a heap of moss
covered stones; always damp it smells of
poverty, a place where those who were able
to, fled before they sank into apathy and died
of hopelessness and homemade booze.

Perhaps some of the fleers fled to New York
and their grandchildren, now runs a deli,
Portuguese delicacies that in the old days were
poor man's food, paint the old country in
pastel colours and makes it wetly romantic;
poverty of yore has a patina of old gold.

jan oskar hansen

The Ruled

The Ruled

I big bird appeared on the sky it was hungry and ate
the day, all around us the murky, a mist that swirled
around moist and cold. We feared the worst and asked
how can we live when there is no day nor night?
Awesome silence, we had no screen to look at no one
told us what to do and when, now the churches were
full of people seeking freedom from thoughts.

Bishops and priests grew hopeful, dressed in finery,
this was the time of the clerics, masters now they
made many morally intolerant rules that were hard to
follow. Till a shiny day appeared on the horizon and
the bird disappeared. Scientists rule Ok, vicars are
butt of jokes; yet deep within us there is a doubt
the day eating bird may exist, just bidding its time...

jan oskar hansen

The Sage

The Sage

Oran, Algeria I stood on deck as the ship docked,
on the pier an old man, tall and thin, dressed in
what appeared to be pajamas kept looking straight
at me. So penetrating was his eyes that I had to look
into the sea. I knew he was a holy man a guru, but
why was he looking at me? Was he trying to send
me a message; when I dared to look up and at him
he had vanished and I felt a sense of deep loss, had
I held out my hands met his eyes unafraid, he would
have given me his wisdom, but for my fear I spent
years in the wasteland before finding my own bitter
insight: In the sand of time all footsteps are erased,
but the hum of the seas tell me of a deep harmony,
I need not fear the tomorrow.

jan oskar hansen

The Sea

The Sea

Silent sea dark and deep, on your surface I skimmed
for years, feared you too sleepless nights, mountainous
waves when my only defence was luck; romantically
thought that you had secrets to divulge when hearing
whispers in the tropical night. Now I know it isn't so
and that makes life sadder than it ought to be, endlessly
wet you are Saragossa weed, fog and terrifying sharks;
like everything else, you suffer from advanced pollution
but when I hear the melancholic fog horn sing, late in
the night, I wish I were skimming your surface again.

jan oskar hansen

The Secret

Walked passed the field, where eight sheep
grazed, on my way to woods- I was awed by
this timeless scene, this rustic idyll;

the sheep looked at me with total disinterest,
and that was ok, I wasn't talking to them;
not without mint sauce.

In the tarn, deep in the woods, I swam with
an inland mermaid, later we sat on a rock,
she, she was bronzed and looked famous.

On my way, back from the tryst, the sheep
were gone, only a pair of mules; blood
glinted on verdant grass and drooling lips

The mules looked at me as to say: "Well,
so we are all depraved, we eat raw sheep
and you sleep with a fish."

jan oskar hansen

The Seeker

This flowing idea of pure love
not our squalid affairs that end
in recrimination, mutual hatred,
damned lies and jealousy;

to be grain, water and yeast,
nourishing food, to unlimited
give unconditional love, clear
as the mountain's stream;

if I could have a crumb of that
vision it would cleanse, what
has been a luckless love life,
and I will gladly die tomorrow.

jan oskar hansen

The Sloop

The Sloop

In the bay a single-mast sailing vessel, a sloop, rigged fore and aft, was anchored near the shore, I swam over and was met by a couple in their forties who had spent time and money doing the old ship up. The idea was to sail along the coast delivering cargo, cheaper than by trucks and her hold was quite roomy. I didn't tell them that most cargo now was in containers and that a sloop needed her deck clear of clutter. They wanted one more crew member, kindly offered me a job, knew they didn't mean it; I had gladdened them by admiring their ship. "Too old to climb the rigs, " I said, but offered to cook, they smiled at that. Restless night I was the captain of a sloop bound for Buenos Aires, the great city looked just as I remembered last time I was there... in 1964.

jan oskar hansen

The Spirit

By the roadside I found a bottle with a Jinni inside,
picked up the bottle took it home, next day the Jinni
knocked and said: "let me out, I've been eating beans
and need fresh air." Looked ill he did, face green and
sweaty, so I uncorked the bottle, only slightly to let
bad air out, but the stink was so awful that I fell back
and lost the cork. Jinni was out and laughing.

"I'll grant you three wishes" he said, I know you're
short of money." "No, I don't want your wishes, they
only come true, and then what do I do? " Instantly
knew I had said the right thing, without human greed
the Jinni can't function, defeated it slinked back into
the bottle, but I'm not a teacher, put the bottle, near
a bus-stop, for someone else find it and learn a lesson

jan oskar hansen

The Struggle

The Struggle

I have struggled for decades not to sink into
the morass of years, had been holding on to
a branch of the tree of learning, but when
asleep I lost the grip and now see the underside
of its leaves, they are pale and tells me that
learning gives yearning and ambitions for
a wider horizon, but without education, a title
that tells us who we are, we will continue work
as garage hands, or peel potatoes in a café.
It's easy to let go slip into old age, to forget
and to be forgotten by the world

jan oskar hansen

The Suit

The Suit.

I had bought a suit at the sale it was striped and according to the mirror in the hall I looked smart, as a successful business man. At the newsagent's the girl smiled and said my suit was lovely, but as I turned to go out I sensed mockery in her grin, and her suppressed laughter followed me down the street till I turned a corner. Stopped at a big shop window looked hard and honestly at myself and was shocked. I saw an elephant trying to look as a zebra, worse, a doorman, at a seedy hotel; a failed mobster who now procures girls for the guests.

Passersby were staring at me, some with a smile, others with contempt, it was now I noticed the window displayed sexy lingerie. Horrified, so they thought I was a pervert, pained I took off my glasses and since faces were now indistinct it didn't matter so much what they thought, but I sensed their hissing giggle. Found solitude in a park on a bench amongst green bushes, falling leaves and birdsong I read my paper in peace. Coming home my wife asked me where I had been, since my suit was covered in bird droppings

jan oskar hansen

The Tax Payer

The Tax Payer

The old lady, so small she almost disappears in the tall spring grass, is 104 today. Quick on her feet this early morning she's letting the goats out of the barn, in her youth wolves roamed, now there are people in vans trying to steal a goat or two. Never married, looked after her parents who lived long, and the few suitable men around here where of the lazy drinking types, so there are no children to send her flowers and wish her well, the goats don't care as long as she's there to let them in at night. Her face has the colour of the brown rich soil around here, where potatoes grow big and are suitable for baking; her blue eyes are hazy by age and hold eternities peace; she never asked for anything and now she has got it all. At a tax office in The town an inspector looks up from his screen and says: "There Is a lady in the valley, she 104 today and has never paid any tax."

jan oskar hansen

The Thing

The Thing

In my home town they were closing down the old library, going digital, giving away leather bound book. I parked by the door got as many beautiful old books as I could carry, but I had parked in a no parking and the police had dismantled my car, an officer guarding the pieces said if I paid the police would come and reassemble the car,

I agreed, but it began raining, they couldn't come before it stopped, staggered back to the library with my book, but it had shut its doors for the day. And did it rain, the books, now a dough of damp leather and wet paper gave birth to a ugly, slimy thing that tried to crawl back into the library leaving a trail of useless words and pompous poetry behind.

jan oskar hansen

The Thingy

The Thing

In my home town they were closing down the old library, going digital, giving away leather bound book. I parked by its door got as many beautiful old books as I could carry, alas, I had parked in a no parking zone the police had dismantled my car, an officer guarding the pieces said if I paid the police would come back and reassemble the car,

I agreed, but it began raining, they couldn't come before it stopped, staggered back to the library with my book, but it had shut its doors for the day. And did it rain, the books, now a dough of damp leather and wet paper gave birth to a ugly, slimy thing that crawled back to the library leaving asexual spores of dense, computerized words behind.

jan oskar hansen

The Thrifty

Moonlight in the park of passion, they sat reading each others bank statement, in her lap a posy of flowers he had taken from a day fresh grave and as owls in an old tree hooted, serenading them; inhaling the melancholic sent of stolen flowers she said:

"We can't get married yet, my love." "I know dear, we have to wait till your parents' die, since you are looking after them, as I do mine, we just have to be patient and wait, what they leave will be ours."

He fumbled in his pocket and gave her a penny a child had lost outside a tuck-shop, a token of his love for her, although she had a handbag, so full of lost coins, that it needed an extra shoulder strap and a reinforced bottom. The moon kept on shining for the thrifty pair where they sat, on a green bench of love, whispering slowly, exciting numbers to one another: "million five hundred thousand dollars and much, much more, " as orgasmic lust frugally swelled in their loins

jan oskar hansen

The Transitory

The Transitory

I swam across a field,
an ocean of chlorophyll
time stopped,
so did I; looked back, lost faith
and sank into greenness
that took my breath away.
Fear helped me up to the surface
and I swam to the lane,
dried myself on thistles that
burned my skin dry,
sat under an olive tree,
waited for my youth to join me;
it didn't make it
and I lamented the passing
of eternity.

jan oskar hansen

The Tree

The Tree

I'm the lone tree you see on top of a hill, you
can't avoid seeing me when you are scanning
the horizon. Yet many claim not to have seen me,
like I should be an anonymous tree in the forest;

I have no defense against the cold wind of change,
but my trunk is solid my leaves still green, a hawk
has its nest in my crown and in a hollow in my
trunk a red fox smile to no one in particular.

I have time wait for the wind to blows itself into
a zephyr that whispers soft words of appreciation,
preferable on a day when the air is so clear that
you can see forever and fly should you wish to.

jan oskar hansen

The Visitor

The Visitor

There is a midnight caller in our village, blue
light do a shimmy on the ceiling in my room,
mercifully the ambulance didn't use its siren;
a group of women murmur near my door.

Dogs, our nocturnal sentinels, nervously whine
know something serious is up, hushed voices and
soft slam of doors as they carry old Manuel out
on a stretcher, his face is bluish pale.

Uneasy silence I take a heart pill, switch on TV,
something about six pack abs, young people
worrying about and are obsessed by their health
and how they look. When I awake it is morning

The TV flickers a mass of white and black dots.
Manuel didn't make it, funeral at five, this heat.
I go back to bed, don't want to face this day yet;
as I dream, the scent of flowers overwhelms me

jan oskar hansen

The Waiter

A man with no teeth served me breakfast
he began to smile, but thought better of
it, his lips disappeared into his mouth;
his eyelids fluttered though, as blinking
away tears. had lost his teeth when out
diving in the lake, near the hotel, silt had
made it impossible to find his dentures
Now he had to work double shift to save
up and pay for a new set; he could have
sold his car to pay for them, but to be seen
on a bus, now at forty, people would think
he was a loser. Just you wait, smirking
guests with perfect dentures, soon he'll be
able to dazzle you with his mighty grin.

jan oskar hansen

The Waiting

The Waiting

I ought to write a novel, if I only could come up
With a beginning that doesn't sound like Reader's
Digest. "It was a blustery October day when..."

Once upon a time I wrote verses, laid my soul bare
Ready to be trampled on; I wrestled with my
Conscience and tried no to cry.

On the poetry carpet that shines so bright, most of
The sheen is crows silver, narcissism and cynical
Manipulation of peoples' emotion

Poetry is a childish occupation, an endless game,
Diligent poets are like a dog with a ball that never
Tires of the same old game

I ought to write a novel which is longer than
Eighteen meager lines, something romantic or sexy
I just need an opening line.

There is no such thing as a writer's block, only
Writers with little to say and that is ok, silence
And reflections never did hurt anyone

jan oskar hansen

The Wedding

The Wedding

I'm going to a wedding in June; in the part of
Brussels where even street cleaners speaks
French, all be it, with a working class accent.

The bride and groom have lived together for
twenty years and have adult children, their parents
will look ancient walking down the aisle.

Their children, both at university, are slightly
embarrassed they had hoped, as had the groom
for a modest registrar office affair.

But the bride wants her day, a wedding as big
as the one her younger sister had ten years
ago in the splendid city of Paris; so there.

I'm not a party animal, if sober I'm ill at ease,
if I drink I talk a lot till peoples' eyes glaze
over, or I fall asleep on the nearest couch.

I have promised to be on my best behaviour
these means diet coke on ice and try not to
look at my wrist watch every five minutes.

jan oskar hansen

The Witness

Doorbell rang, a police officer was selling tickets for some do, forgotten what, he wore a smile, but was also armed, so I bought a ticket. I admired his gun, told me he practiced every day and was a crack shot. "Can you hit the tomcat that crosses the road? " (The cat belonged to the nasty woman in the house opposite mine?) "No problem, " drew his gun, shot once and the cat rolled in the dust.

The woman came out she had a shotgun, aimed it at the officer who ran to his car calling for back ups, she missed and went back into the house. Five minutes later 24 patrol car drove up, sirens and screeching tires arrived first; every car drove over the cat till there was but some loose fur flying in the wind and 48 shooters were pointing at the woman's front door; local TV was also present, this was a scoop.

"Come out lady, we know you are in there, you have tried to kill one of our officers." "He shot my cat, she said." "We can see no cat in the road, there is a bit of a tail here but that can belong to a raccoon, or we'll throw a stun grenade through the window, your hair will be a mess and we know you have been to the hairdresser for a perm this morning, a grenade" will mess it all up again"

The lady came out, saw me in the doorway and said:

"He is my witness, he saw it all." 48 blue uniforms and 48 guns glared at me, I shook my head, in denial, made a shrug, the woman is mad, and closed the door. The judge was lenient, the lady is middleclass, her husband wear a suit and works in a bank; he let her off with a caution, smiled and gave her tiny a kitten, and everyone, in courthouse day, cried and applauded.

jan oskar hansen

The Reason

The bells you hear, when busy voices briefly ceases,
are made of brass and polished, at dawn, by the spittle
of seven deeply religious monks in the far away Tibet;
where they use yak butter in their morning tea.

When first light strikes the bells there is an explosion
of the colours, blue and green, that lives inside the sun,
without these tones the seas would have been dull as
a rain puddle, outside Gare de Lyon, a fall afternoon.

jan oskar hansen

Third Age

Driving home from the cinema I saw
mans future in as sea mist, inevitable;
the approaching age of abandonment.

Face lift? Seventy going fifty, the inner
clock ticks regardless, there is no escape
in the mist no one hears you anymore.

Quiet voices, you see them, only if you
care to look, on park benches, in café's
and at bus stops, looking into their past.

jan oskar hansen

To Anticipate

To Anticipate

Do not expect anything and you will not
Be disappointed. What a dreadful advice
To give anyone who likes a party.

No listen up, expect a lot and work hard
To let it happens and if it doesn't, don't
You come crying on my shoulders;

It is life you see and we are leaves on
Mother tree, we can dream but in the end
We fall and get trampled in the mud;

And since you are a leaf amongst millions
Of other you can still expect to be a golden
One destined to be oak leaf on a uniform.

jan oskar hansen

To Be A Stead

To be a Stead.

On the pampas of Argentine I rode when surprised
by a blizzard, to survive I killed my horse split its
stomach open and crept inside, this saved my life
But when the blizzard stopped and I got out of my
shelter I looked for my rider and galloped home to
the ranch and ran around in the coral with the other
Horses that seemed surprised to see me.

Eventually I was lassoed and brought into a room
where I group of concerned friends tried to persuade
me that I was not a horse but just like them. Yes, in
a way they were right, I had noticed that they other
ran on four legs, I accepted my shortcomings and
stopped eating steppe grass; but I sold my ranch and
became a long distance runner.

jan oskar hansen

To Walk The Walk

To Walk the Walk

On iron decks I have walked across
the Atlantic, and forever the drone
of the ship's heart, beats in my ears
reminding me of our mortality.

Sleepless nights when the engine
ceased in port of calls

It used to be so very different
walked on solid planks to Mandalay
where fly-fish waked, flapping sails,
roaring silence and worried mariners
when rounding Cape Horn.

Memories go untold.

Fake pearls and crows' silver I collected,
behind me a wake of loneliness

jan oskar hansen

Tommy Steele And Parkgate

Parkgate, on the Wirral, I remember well, one could see Wales, in the haze, across the bay, sheep and closed-down factories. Cute fishing boats with brown sails used to dock here selling fresh shrimps, but the tide left one day and didn't come back; they can dredge, no point though, there aren't any shrimps left in the sea. I saw this man dressed in yellow leaning against a red Jaguar, looked prosperous, perhaps he was the lord mayor of Hardcastle? There is a name that keeps entering my mind, who is Tommy Steele, didn't he used to be a singer?

Two ice-cream parlours Parkgate had, a line of people outside one them the other was empty; me, a defender of lost causes, walked into the deserted one, asked for two scoops of strawberry ice-cream, too late, bile had destroyed him and the ice was rock hard, a scoop fell off and rolled on the floor, picking up fluff and dust. There was a retirement home as well, asked for a place, but as usual I was too late, the man in with the jaguar lives there now, I live very far away and see Parkgate in a mist of erratic memories; so who is Tommy Steele?

jan oskar hansen

Tomorrows World

Tomorrows World

So the world is a changing greed has failed,
Now we shall all work unselfishly for, and
Together heal the world, make financial rules
Based on trust, honesty and real democracy.

We will suffer together and prosper together,
But as usual the majority will suffer while
The minority will prosper, and when time is
Right greed will be back on the agenda.

This of course may sound pessimistic, but it
Is human nature, the will to survive; if there
Are no games to play, no wars to fight
Humans will simply sink into apathy and die

jan oskar hansen

Tourism

Decisive tourist
Chancellor Adolph Hitler
Visits Paris

The final tourist
President George Bush
Visits Baghdad

jan oskar hansen

Triptych

Summer with my mother.

I t was the best summer I ever had or can remember,
mother and I had cycled to the beach, that is,
I was riding pillion. It was a hot day mother, a strong
swimmer swam, to the small islet nearby, it wasn't
far, I sat on her back, like a little monkey people said
and laughed. Later we ate sandwiches she had made
before we left and tepid tea from the thermos flask.

She gave me coppers and sent me to buy ice-cream
it was a long way off and going back the ice-cream
melted. I ate mine of mother's there was only a wet
cone left. I must have fallen asleep. Mother woke me
said it was time to cycle home, I was very happy that
evening that when my sister called me a mother's boy
I didn't mind but said I knew who her boyfriend was.

Before going to bed I told mother that I would never
leave her; she gave me a hug, and that was great, she
wasn't much into hugging people. Then she had to go
back to work, putting sardines into tins and smelling
of fish when she tired came home.

Mother and the Singer

I first heard Edith Piaf on the radio in 1954,
her songs were translated into Norwegian
and mother used to sing them when peeling
potatoes or frying fish cakes.

Today I came across Edit Piaf, on the net,
singing her heart out, I thought she looked
like my mother, and I hadn't been thinking
of her for a long time, small, old fashion
and ungainly, but with a big heart.

So there I sat riding pillion on a great voice

back to a time that had glimmer of gold in
songs and in books to relieve days of fear,
and the insanity of poverty

Mother's Last Day.

When I came to the nursing home mother
fretted she wanted me to drive her down
to the bay she wanted to see the sea again.
I was getting wintry but the nurse brought
some extra blankets and of we drove.

It was a blustery day and sea in the bay was
white topped, she sat there for a long time
saying nothing, then she spoke of her father,
who had been a master of a schooner and
sailed all the way to USA and Argentina.

Going back we stopped at a café ate Danish
pastry and drank hot chocolate, she also
smoked a forbidden cigarette. At the home,
she didn't want anything to eat, had been
to a café with her son.

I sat with her till she fell asleep, they rang
early in the morning, she was the last link,
with the past, snow covered flowers on her
coffin, her time had run out, from now on
I had to walk the rest of the way alone

jan oskar hansen

Tv

Television

My sister's was the first in our street to buy TV,
an ugly, shiny mahogany box in the corner, and
since it was early afternoon and no program on,
stood there blinking as having dust in its eye.

Monday, film night on TV, the whole family
was there and neighbours too. Curtains drawn,
even though it was summer and still daylight, we
sat in darkness, in silence caused by our awe.

A Bergman movie, early TV in Norway tended
to take itself serious. I remember the whiteness
of the screen and how it reflected on the faces of
an enchanted audience.

Glistening cars in the rain, where her house once
stood there is now a parking lot; I'm the only one
alive, but every face, that evening, is etched on my
mind. Glass clear in black & white

jan oskar hansen

Twin Towers

A Weather Forecast

It is slowly raining in New York City today, big
drops lazy fall, roll along 42nd street pick up dust,
collide with other drops and become dirty water
that runs down a sewer hole with vertical bars.

Hudson River runs full too, much rain upland,
and New Jersey, where Tony lives, got a drenching
too, Mr. Soprano slouches in his pajamas feels
ancient at 47, and worries about the future

In the City, where the absence of the Twin Towers
is still seen, the Central Park need a good soaking;
a big rat put its snout through the vertical bars,
looks up at the mournful sky and sighs.

jan oskar hansen

Us Soldiers

US Soldiers.

Full of propaganda and democratic zeal
the US soldiers came to Iraq; five years
later they now know there is no "Mission
Accomplished." The soldiers have grown
up and no longer believe in this war, they
now call useless, mockingly laugh when
politicians speak of winning.

Good, working-class kids, manipulated
and lied to, from small towns and rural
communities, they are true Americans
who love their country, I salute them and
hope their leaders will think well before
asking them to fight, bleed and die for yet
another useless war.

jan oskar hansen

Vanishing Summer Light

Vanishing summer light

August is coming to end twilight
wraps itself around the olive grove
earlier than a few days before and
after five, sun sinks into the sea with
an almost unseemly haste.

The evening breeze is still mild but
carries pockets of cooling air like
a lover who is preparing to leave,
only waiting for the right time and
I sense the beginning of unsolvable
melancholic loss.

The village's lane is dark, yet moon
is full, but doesn't reach into my
heart that aches for the past, those
days in May when the future was
moving to never ending summers.

So, farewell then fly with the wind
Be gone! I will, as always, walk on
hidden tracks and in the shadow of
a carob tree sense your presence and
ask for one more summer.

jan oskar hansen

Vanishing World

Steamed up window, with my finger I paint
a landscape, mountain forest and a lake; the peak
cries into the lake which becomes a vast ocean,
where trees, having been made into wooden rafts,
floats. Midmorning, there is only an outline left
of the crest, this will happen to Himalaya, too,
it will be a grassland on a plateau, where horses
gallop, flying mane and all, since man won't be
there to domesticate, and make them drag bunk-
beds and kitchen stoves around the pampas.

The rest of the world will have sunk into a big
sea that is so perfectly still that it spends all its
time mirroring the blue sky thinking it's seeing
itself and is so deeply in love with the image,
that doesn't notice the man in a rowing boat,
he's one time forgot, he has married a big fish
which he thinks is a mermaid, every so often he
puts his hand in the sea and strokes the fish's
belly: "without you, " he murmurs "I would truly
be alone."

jan oskar hansen

Wanka

Tanka

I know so little
And would like to learn much more
But not the whole thing
How tedious it would be
A world void of mystery

jan oskar hansen

War Hero

A War Hero

The big gull stood on its realm, ocean cleaned rocks
of the outer sea, snowy white chest, blue/grey wings
that spanned big as an osprey's, yellow beak and
clear green eyes, but when a hint of red anger in them
gleamed other gulls flew clear.

When the ocean is irate and breaks over rocks it
take abode in a coastal town where it is well know
and famous, for once it shat on Adolf Hitler's hat as
he strode from his yacht and a band of Quislings,
played Austrian oompah music

Domestic Nazis went to the shoals, tried to blow
them up, but sea was white topped, their boat
sprung a leak and they had to be rescued by local
fishermen, who were told not to speak of this affair;
an impossible request... of course.

The seagull became a symbol of resistance and
also showed how banal dictatorship can be, when
it puts a prize on a gull's head, and hunts it with
flying machines. Vanity is silly as pride and fools
silver, fishermen and war heroes know that.

jan oskar hansen

War Weary

When I think of war I think of Falluja, massive
firepower total obliteration till silence descends
and one can hear blood dripping from the cross.

No heroes here only scarred and scared soldiers
who will take this horror home and remember it;
and for whom the war will go on in nightmares.

Falluja, here a miasma of fear obscure the ruined
dwellings workers are rebuilding, but how do we
repair a heart that has seen too much blood shed?

jan oskar hansen

Wedding Party

(Wedding Party)

Sailing down night Seine
Champagne brut and goose liver
The Eiffel Tower
Dressed in bright coloured charms
Looked like a demi monde

When the barge banked
I gave Seine the bird's liver
Peed in the river
Studied the sliver of moon
Dreaming of ice cold lager

Paris's night streets
September mild and at ease
Bars and bistros shut
The worthless slept in doorways
And I thought of Edit Piaf

jan oskar hansen

What Difference A Car Makes

Where antique moonlight is swathed around
ancient olive trees, she sat, the haunted old
woman, so gripped by a vast melancholy that
dogs howled when she came near.

She had been so proud and beautiful, but not,
perhaps, attractive enough; never took the bus to
town, only private cars would do, gave herself
for ride in shiny black Mercedes.

The cruelty of old age, it's been ten years now
since anyone gave her a lift, a Honda van, and
when she refused to kiss the overall clad driver,
he had told her to get out

These regrets burdening her sad heart, it was her
mother who had said she was too good for yokel.
Chilly night, she was so tired; her last ride, days
later, was in a shiny black Mercedes.

jan oskar hansen

Wildlife Pleasure

Tonight they serve giraffe neck, at the long table in the restaurant, for fifty invited guests, left over will be given to the poor who have brought tin plates and metal spoons they bang together to get attention and to make music.

They chatter about last week's big meal when a grilled gorilla was served at the round table, with small oblong potatoes, rich gravy and French wines but only for the chosen fifty.

Those outside were offered wine labels of empty bottles to take home and decorate their walls. Hippo stuffed with lions heart will be next week's menu, for afters monkey brains sweetened with sherry Amontillado.

jan oskar hansen

Window Facing Backyard 1

Widow Facing Backyard.1

I keep plastic flowers on the window sill,
they are spray painted in vivid colours;
I take them in once week and rinse them
under the tap; this morning they had tiny
snow flakes on, looked pretty and lit up
a room that only sees sunlight in June.

My lady friend thought them vulgar, ashamed
of my bad taste I let them fall down into
the dark yard and we went out for dinner.
Silent and angry I left early, walked home
picked up the flowers, rinsed them under
the tap and put them back on sill.

jan oskar hansen

Winner And Loser

Winner & Loser

Cycling along a pathway in a stony, dry bush landscape I saw a hawk lose its kill, a sparrow, the unfortunate fell in front of me, alive but badly wounded. While the hawk sat on a tree, an almond tree that had no business growing here and it showed no one had tended to this domestic plant years.

This bit of violence was none of my concern I shouldn't have picked it up the sparrow, but now that I felt its nervous little heart beating in my palm and its blood dripping on my hand, it was hard to let go. I put nature's victim on a big boulder, sat still on my bike till the hawk swooped and reclaimed its quarry

jan oskar hansen

Winter Night

When I opened the cabin's door, night and frost
entered, the darkness, night brought, was disposed
of by switching on a light, the cold, frost brought,
lingered a bit, didn't leave before the wood stove
got red hot and threatened to explode

Ice roses on windows sparkled moon was full and
on the lake trolls and hulders (female trolls) skated
watched over by tall, stern spruces, dressed in white
on this rare occasion, they didn't know a road was
being built and they were next years Yule trees.

A distant drone, a planeload of old men going south
seeking warm sun, sand, tepid sea, and young flesh,
they didn't know that just under them virginal beauty
waited. Who struck that match on arctic star? A fiery
rent, snow fell off evergreens; then stillness reigned

jan oskar hansen

Winter Voyage

A Voyage to Caribbean

Europe was in the grip of winter,
ice on deck, frost smoke hung above
the sea clouds low and full of snow;
sun had been absent for weeks.

Bound for Jamaica, past the Azores
weather changed, warmer and the sun
shone on green sea and the great sea
current was on our side.

The crew, in good mood, the cook sits
on a capstan strumming his beat-up
guitar, old salts used to tropical climes,
Jamaica is home from home

jan oskar hansen

Yesteryear's Summer

Rusty, padlocked gate, trees in the big garden need trimming, on a swing, two rusty chains, it lacks a seat. Autumn and there are apples unpicked on the ground, fine rain has fallen, drops drips from trees and glint on tall grass. Soon winter storms will come rattle the gate and the derelict house-unlit- will have to shoulder nature's irate violence.

If you close your eyes and listen, can you not hear laughter and see a child sitting on the swing? Ice-tea and lemonade anyone? July 1956, no one knew this was their last, a family was about to be overtaken by life; ruin and scandals, "got what they deserved, " the hateful said. The child, on the swing disappears in the mist rolling in from the sea..

jan oskar hansen