



FIVE POEMS

BY

TOHM BAKELAS

WHY I LIKE THEM: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...*

Tohm Bakelas strikes me as someone who doesn't like wasting time but cannot be rushed. He writes what I would call 'thumbnail' poetry. Snapshots of words and phrases as picture, flashing vivid glances; richly conceived, sparsely carved slices of life. His verses are terse, drawing distinct reflections while in the moment. What I believe is referred to as Artistic Attention Deficit.

He's enigmatic, esoteric, existential. And who doesn't love a good anacoluthon? ...see if you can spot it.

Five Stars

•

“social worker’s lament”

drunk chasing herons,
i pause to reflect—old friends,
open roads, less thoughts

“coldblooded prophets”

speeding home i pass a turtle
holding the universe
inside its shell

“distracted by everything”

an egret glides overhead—
my watch is at home,
i wish for autumn

“they know no laws”

sparrows refuse adhering
to red traffic signals
they keep flying

“gravity sucks”

black ivory wings
beat through a cloudy blue sky—
i am just a man

THE POET SPEAKS: *I guess I should start by saying these haikus, or poems, or senryus, or gembuns, or whatever the fuck you want to call them, were all written at traffic lights throughout New Jersey. Well, that's sort of true, four out of five of them were while "social worker's lament" was written while drunk in my friend's backyard after trying to pet a heron and watching it fly away. A lot of presses, journals, anthologies hate haikus that are titled. Well, how the fuck are you going to tell them apart from one another? I find that adding the title adds an extra kick to the old beanbag. And besides, we only live life once. Let's go through it laughing, shall we?*

AUTHOR BIO: Tohm Bakelas is a social worker in a psychiatric hospital. He was born in New Jersey, resides there, and will die there. His poems have been printed widely in journals, zines, and online publications all over the world. He has authored twenty-five chapbooks and several collections of poetry, including *Cleaning the Gutters of Hell* (Zeitgeist Press, 2023). As editor of Between Shadows Press, he's curated two editions of the notorious journal, "Haikus, Nearkus, Fauxkus, Fuckyou." <https://tohmbakelaspoetry.wordpress.com>