

5-1-2010

Haiku

Doris Yanger

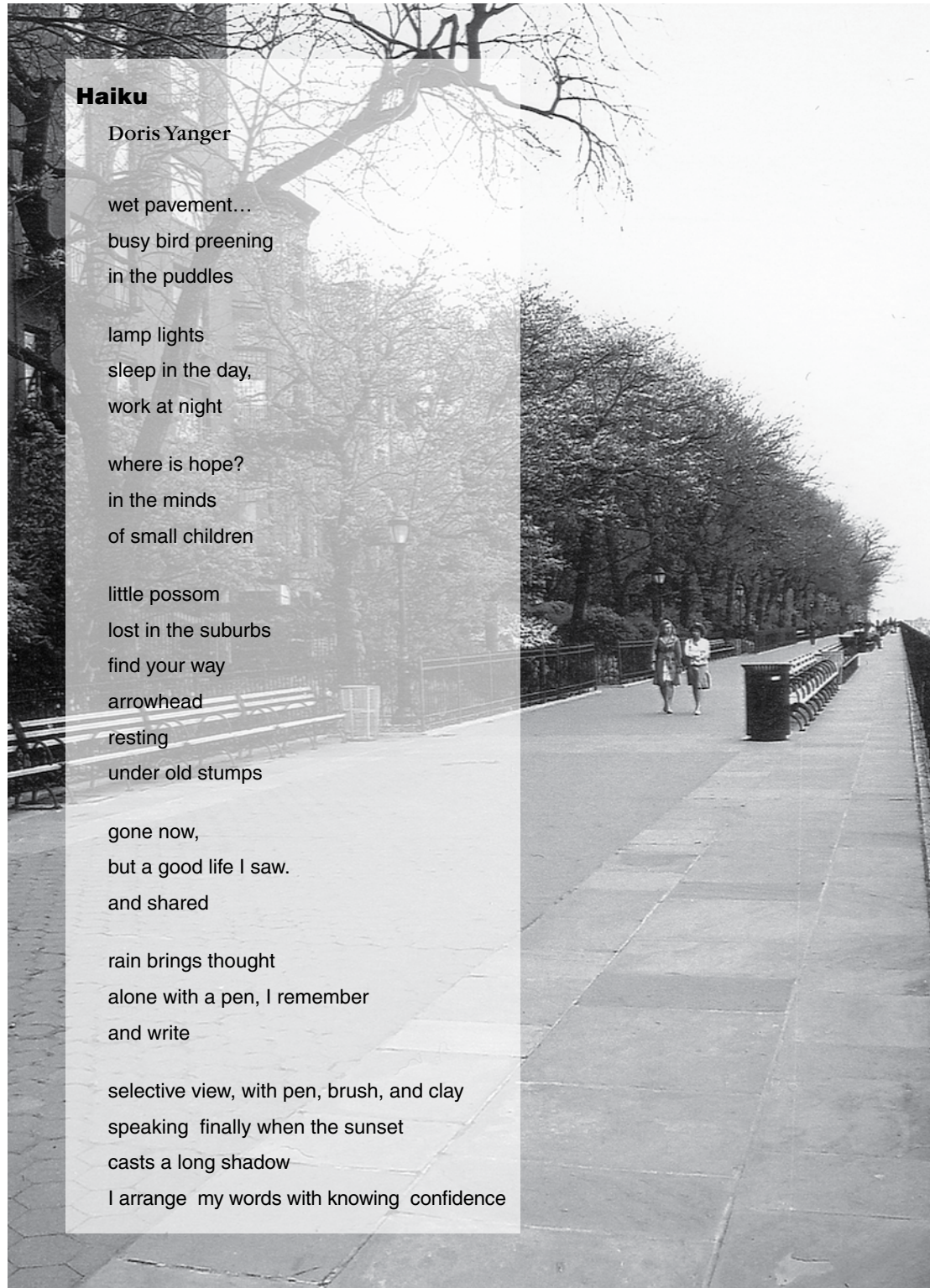
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Haiku

Doris Yanger

wet pavement...
busy bird preening
in the puddles

lamp lights
sleep in the day,
work at night

where is hope?
in the minds
of small children

little possum
lost in the suburbs
find your way
arrowhead
resting
under old stumps

gone now,
but a good life I saw.
and shared

rain brings thought
alone with a pen, I remember
and write

selective view, with pen, brush, and clay
speaking finally when the sunset
casts a long shadow
I arrange my words with knowing confidence

A Stroll Brian K. Williams

Encounters with Türkçe

Jules Sears

I was in the midst of the “in love” stage of our relationship, when I first heard Erdal, my boyfriend at the time, speak Turkish. It was a Saturday morning. Erdal told me he needed to call his parents, who live in Istanbul. I found it strange when he closed the door to his bedroom, leaving me alone in the hall. Like a dog that has separation anxiety, I wanted nothing more than to be in that room with him. But I could not scratch and paw at the door, whining to be let in. Instead, I put my ear against the door, straining to catch the meaning of his words.

The dark and heavy language mystified me. It sounded like a foreign tongue spoken backwards. Turkish had no relationship to any language I had heard; it is not even from the same family tree, the Indo-European language group, as English.

I crumpled up in the hallway and started to cry. I believed that the man I loved had been cut away from me by a voice I didn't recognize. I felt there would always be a part of him that I could not access because it belonged to a world I would never comprehend.

Over a year later, I took my first trip to Turkey to meet Erdal's mother, Belgi, and father, Kâzım, and his grandmother. He wanted them to get to know me and to see how I felt about his family and home country before proposing to me. We flew into Istanbul, an ancient, yet very modern city—one of the most populous in the world. I learned as we took a bridge crossing the Bosphorus Strait that Istanbul straddles Europe and Asia. Once we were on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, we drove a circuitous route to Suadiye, a fashionable neighborhood. His parents' flat on the top floor of an apartment building looked out on the Sea of Marmara. Here I met Erdal's grandmother, whom I attempted to greet in the manner appropriate for a respected elder—kissing her hand and touching her hand to my forehead—only I accidentally put her hand to her forehead, causing me some embarrassment.