

Haiku Journey

By Kimberly Blaeser

i. Spring

the tips of each pine
the spikes of telephone poles
hold gathering crows

may's errant mustard
spreads wild across paved road
look both ways

roadside treble cleft
feeding gopher, paws to mouth
cheeks puffed with music

yesterday's spring wind
ruffling the grey tips of fur
rabbit dandelion

ii. Summer

turkey vulture feeds
mechanical as a red oil rig
head rocks down up down

stiff-legged dog rises
goes grumbling after squirrel
old ears still flap

snowy egret—curves,
lines, sculpted against pond blue;
white clouds against sky

banded headed bird
this ballerina killdeer
dance on point my heart

iii. Fall

leaf wind cold through coat
wails over hills, through barren trees
empty garbage cans dance

damp September night
lone farmer, lighted tractor
drive memory's worn path

sky black with migration
flocks settle on barren trees

leaf birds, travel songs

october moon cast
over corn, lighted fields
crinkled sheaves of white

iv. Winter

ground painted in frost
thirsty morning sun drinks white
leaves rust golds return

winter bare branches
hold tattered cups of summer
empty nests trail twigs

lace edges of ice
manna against darkened sky
words turn with weather

now one to seven
deer or haiku syllables
weave through winter trees

Northern follows jig
body flashes with strike, dive:
broken line floats up.

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Poet, critic, essayist, and fiction writer Kimberly Blaeser was raised on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota by parents of Anishinaabe and German descent. She is a member of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe. Blaeser worked as a journalist before earning her PhD at the University of Notre Dame. In 1991, as a professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Blaeser co-founded the multicultural writers' organization Word Warriors. She lives with her family in rural Wisconsin. In 2017 she was named Poet Laureate of the state of Wisconsin. Blaeser's poems offer intimate glimpses into the lives of her subjects through loose, conversational portraits of Native American life and culture.

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