



# Swirling Sakura Haiku Challenge 2023

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# Forward



This “Sakura Haiku Challenge Anthology” contains the over 130 haiku entries that we have received from October 2022 to January 2023, from across Canada and all over the world. We are very happy and humbled to find that “SAKURA” means so much to so many different people of many diverse cultures.

We hope that you enjoy reading the following haiku as much as we have.

Please note that all haiku are displayed in the desired format of their authors. Included also are haiku outside of the typical 3-line form.



# Message from the Consul-General of Japan



When we began this social media campaign, we could not have imagined that we would receive over 130 haiku from around the world, all by poets who love Sakura. We often say Sakura represent the transient nature of life, which is why they are so beautiful. Our Sakura Haiku Challenge, however, made clear that they also symbolize our shared humanity and love for nature. Since the first Sakura were planted in High Park in 1959, a gift to Toronto from the people of Tokyo, Sakura have become a familiar and treasured sight around southern Ontario. I hope they will always remind the people of this province of their fruitful friendship with Japan. Similarly, I hope that Sakura around the world will continue to inspire countless more haiku to be shared among friends.

Sasayama Takuya, Consul General of Japan in Toronto



# Haiku by people from Canada



*Spirits Dance Under a Blue Moon* by Michelle Chermaine Ramos

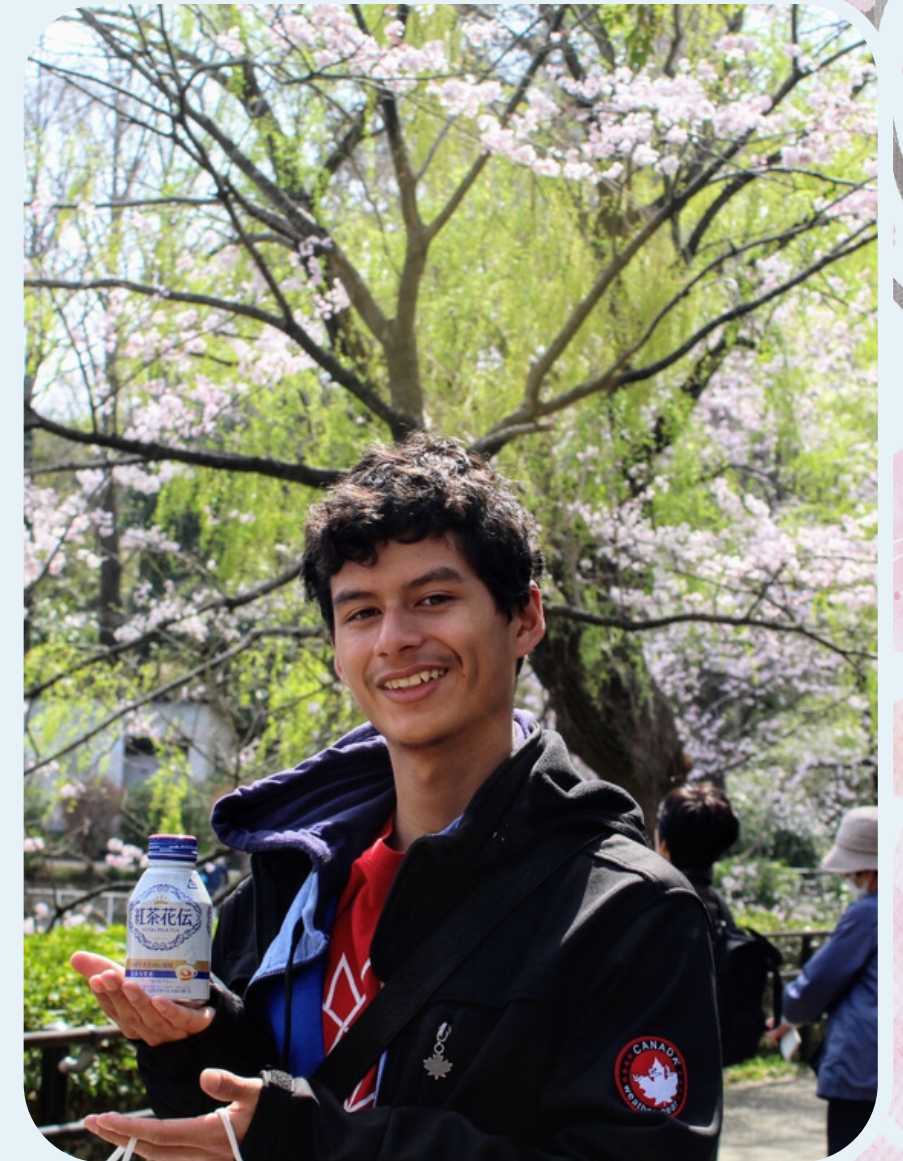
Spirits dance amidst  
airy bubblegum petals.  
Spring moon shines softly

They once were as we.  
Budding blossoms on time's tree.  
Future memories.

-Michelle Chermaine Ramos, Toronto, On



Winter over move on Spring,  
Clouds of Sakura edges fringe high up  
Sketch dreams with infinite mind  
-Yvonne Hekikimi Leung, Toronto, On.



A Royal Milk Tea.  
The branches swirl over me  
As the flowers bloom.  
-Aaron Triguero, Ontario





Rumors are swirling  
Spring flyers cover the city  
Sakura blooming  
-Danielle Hrapoonov, Ontario

Swirling sakura  
Falling on the gentle breeze  
Mono no aware  
--Don Zedde, Alberta

Dancing petals sing  
Sweetness envelopes the soul  
Calm within the storm  
-Nadeem Abdi, Toronto, On

BLIZZARD RUSH BODY  
SILENCE... WHITE BLANKET SNOW  
SMELL, FEEL FRESH PEACEFUL!!!

SOIL CRACKS THIRSTY...  
HEAVENS OPEN PITTER-PATTER, DOWNPOUR  
CHILD DANCE GIGGLE  
-Arlene Pastores, Toronto, On.

Lone Sakura blooms  
among the ever green  
in modest colour

Cherry blossoms  
cover up the world around  
but “ No Parking” sign  
-Kimiko Horne, St. Catherines, On.

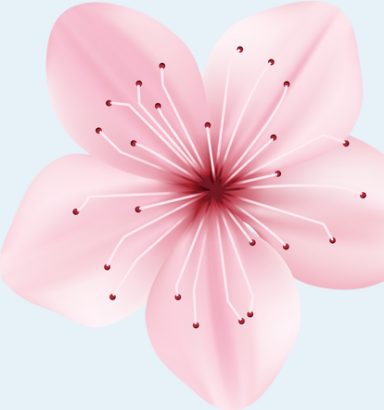
Spring high tide  
waves of cherry blossoms  
crash against the curb  
-Karin Hedetniemi, BrtisiH Columbia

Swirling sakura  
soft pink fluttering lightly  
quietly landing  
-Neigette, Canada

No leaves or flowers.  
Yet sakura speaks  
of springtime  
-AV, Toronto, On.







Cool spring gusts. Cherry buds  
bravely grip branches, Tightly, if  
briefly...  
-D'Arcy Little, Ontario



Fallen pink petals;  
Papa sings Hata Po Po;  
past dreams awaken

Many hands gather;  
Shaping white sticky rice cakes;  
Fans flutter moon dust

-Margaret Yasuko Ishii, -Toronto,  
On



the snow  
that used to be white ...  
spring flurries  
-Debbie Strange, Manitoba





Fragility beliefs shattered;  
confidence scattered like palest  
pink blossoms gone too soon

Happiness everywhere seasons  
come and go, blooms end the self  
remains, intact, strong

-Rana Khan, North York, On



Coffee sun  
drips drops down  
petal pink

Swirling wind  
littered branches  
sturdy seeds

- Philippe Paiement, Sudbury, On



Counting blessings  
cherry blossoms scattered  
high and low

Returning  
sweetness to the world  
spring blossoms

-Luminita Suse, Ottawa, On



Snow melts  
Sakura bloom  
My spirit swirls  
-Catherine Little, Ontario

Fluttering petals  
Lighter than ten-thousand things  
Shatter winter's haze  
-Richard Verlaan, Ontario

The wind is changing  
Trying on a swirling scarf  
Sakura petals  
\_Danielle Hrapoonov, Ontario

Bears' picnic  
sakura petals  
for every dish  
-Wai Mei Wong, Canada

Sakura breeze  
delighted guests  
arrive at the tea party  
-Wai Mei Wong, Canada







Watching bashful buds  
Unfolding shyly to soon  
Become bold blossoms  
-Keri Switzer, Ontario

Swirling Sakura  
Announce the spring by painting  
Our world perfect pink  
-Keri Switzer, Ontario

Gentle pastel hue  
whispers and drifts leisurely  
a petal descends  
-Shannon King, Mississauga, On

Sakura flirts  
an invitation  
to stay  
-Alene Sen, Ontario

Sakuras unfurl  
out from cocoons  
playful angels  
-Alene Sen, Ontario

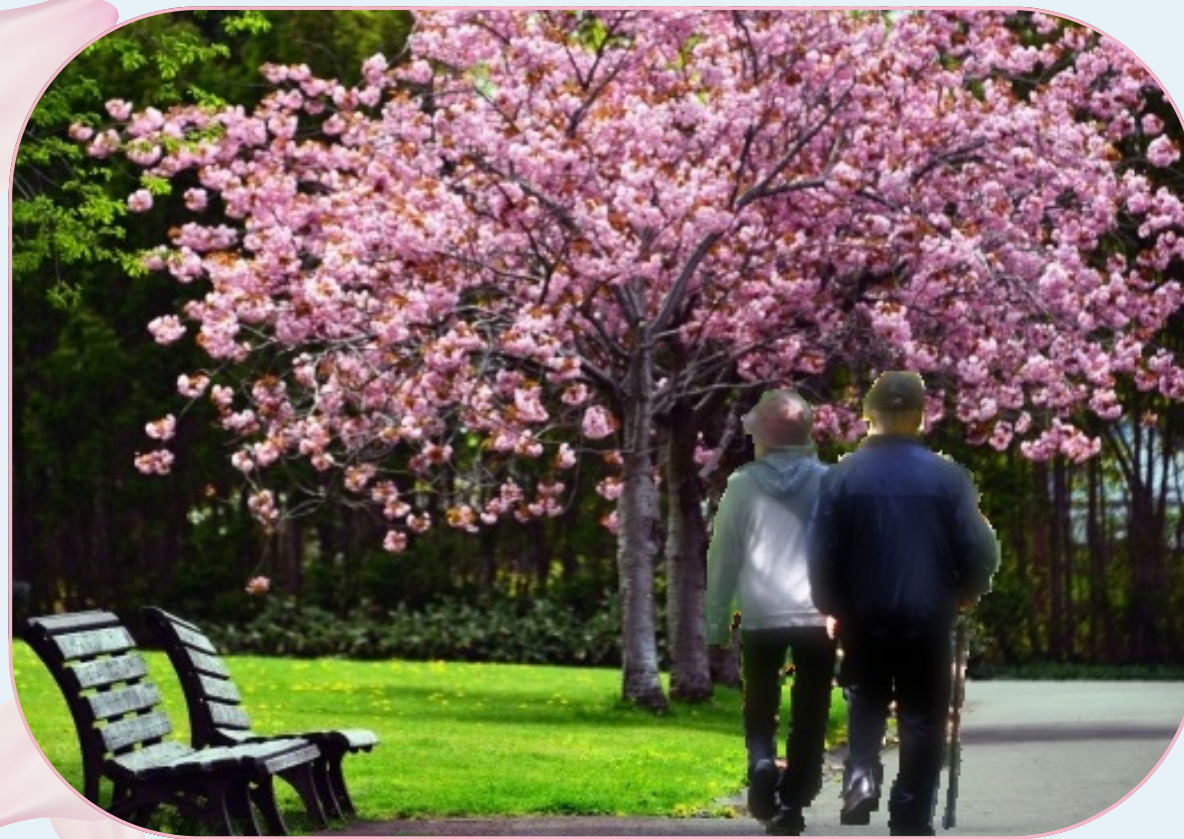
Verdant emerald  
crowned with blushing living clouds,  
the colours soon touch  
-Shannon King, Mississauga, On







Over the stepping  
stones pink petals whirl across  
the purling stream  
-Michael Dudley, Ontario




Walking among Sakura  
Reminded of Spring Time of Life  
Holding Each Other's Hands

Standing amid Sakura  
Reminded of Spring Time of Life  
Holding Each Other's Hands  
- Ryo Tamai, Ontario



S a T supine A couple R  
gazing F at I the E night  
L sakura D  
-Michael Dudley, Ontario





# Haiku by people from Around the World

Windy branches  
killing me softly  
with its petals

Yesterday the buds  
cherry trees blooming  
today her wedding  
-Marie Derley, **Belgium**

Spinning, swirling  
her light dress, petal circles  
spring waltz, such grace

Blossom all around  
young again...warmth of old friends  
handful of childhood  
-Christopher Calvin, **Indonesia**

Swirling sakura  
in his blond hair  
the breath of the wind

An old woman smiles  
under the swirling sakura  
memory of youth  
- François Maurice, **France**

Falling petals  
the pink carpet has withered  
in just a day

Above our silence  
thousand swirling sakura  
and birdsongs  
-Marina Bellini, **Italy**

Budding cherry –  
my pregnant sister  
still bump-less

Hanami -  
baby in my sister's tummy  
sleeping calmly  
-D. V. Rozic, **Croatia**

Under cherry blossoms  
it seems so far away  
Winter

Cherry petals rain  
on the worn uniform  
of a soldier  
-Nazarena Rampini, **Italy**

First kiss  
beneath cherry blossoms  
rushing waters

High frequency  
the wisdom of cherry blossoms  
scent of  
-Erin Castaldi

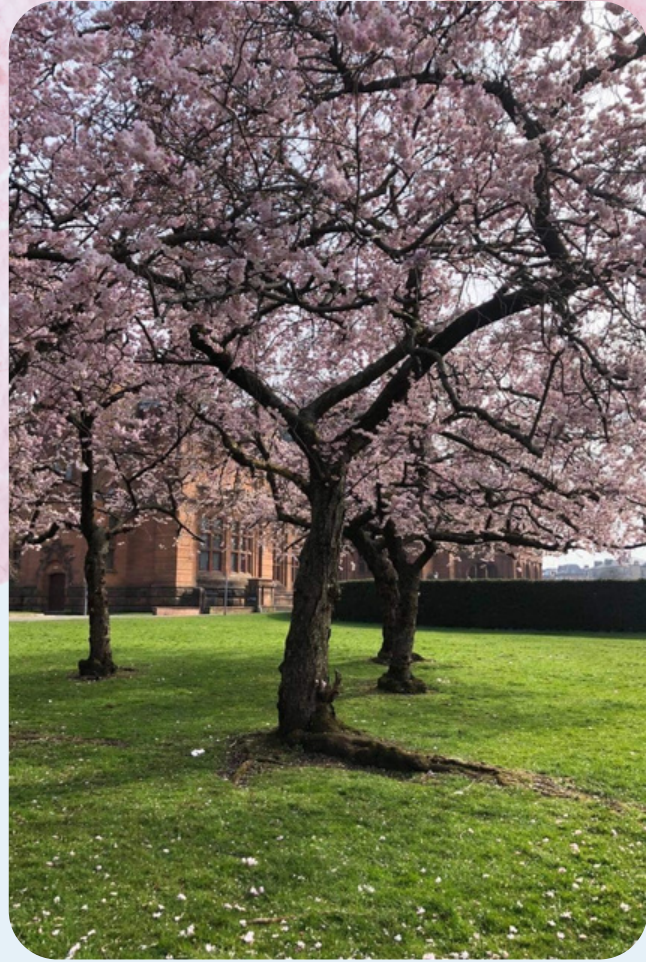
Are you, too,  
giddy in love  
swirling sakura

Hitchhiking  
on the spring breeze  
swirling sakura  
-Vandana Parashar, **India**

Three months without her  
a cherry tree  
with no flower

Her smile  
the scent of cherry blossoms  
flying up to the sky  
-Maria Concetta Conti, **Italy**





Pink frills—  
a cancan  
from the cherry trees!  
-Tony Williams, **Scotland**



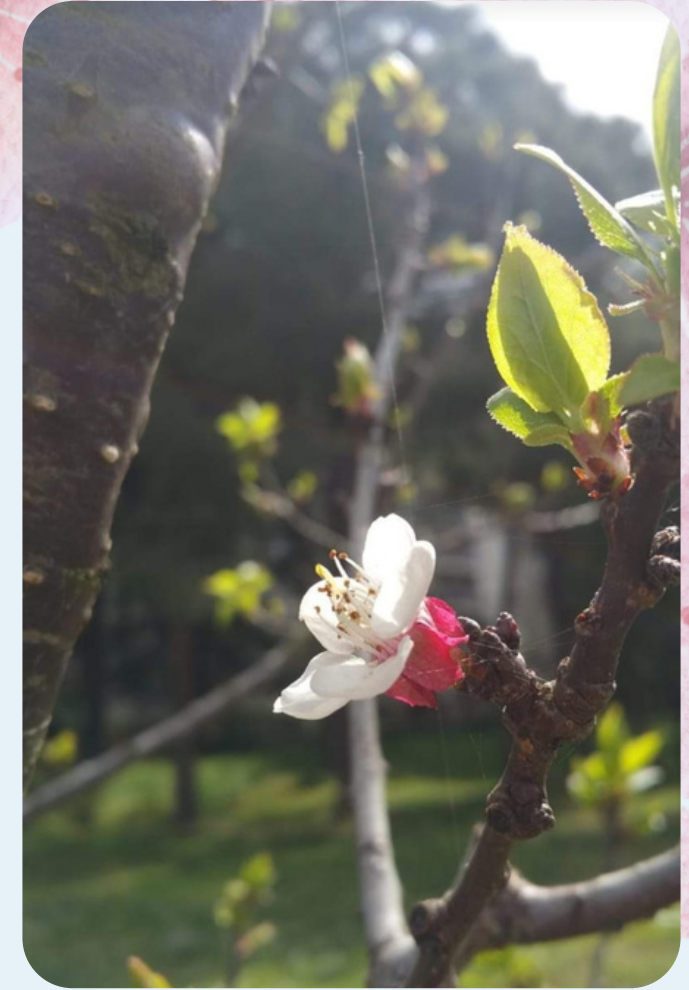
Early morning  
where I left my breath  
the first flower  
-Carmela Marino, **Italy**



On the sidewalk  
my steps evade shadows  
of cherry blossom  
-Mihovila Čeperić, **Croatia**



a cherry petal  
in my hair –  
I'm child again  
-Mihovila Čeperić, **Croatia**



Spring wind  
while flower is falling  
another blooms  
-Carmela Marino, **Italy**





Filling with sunshine  
the warble of a blackbird  
in cherry blossoms

Old moss and lichen  
on gnarly cherry branches  
unblemished blossoms  
- Benjamin Bläsi, **Switzerland**

Cherry blossoms  
concubines dance  
-unattainable Japan

Cherry blossoms  
playful Japan  
-longing in the heart  
-Petar Lukina, **Croatia**

Pink flowers  
winter colors of Japan  
the sun over the cherry

Spring wind  
the Spirit of Sakura  
the life of a Samurai  
-Glorija Lukina, **Croatia**

Short life -  
the petals drifting slowly  
to earth

Wind games -  
child and Cherry blossom flowers  
play catch  
-Danijela Grbelja, **Croatia**

Today's horoscope:  
clear skies and  
pink blossoms

Cherry blossoms  
butterflies lead us  
to a new path  
-Anthony Rabang,  
**The Phillipines**

Loneliness ...  
cherry petals  
over my feet

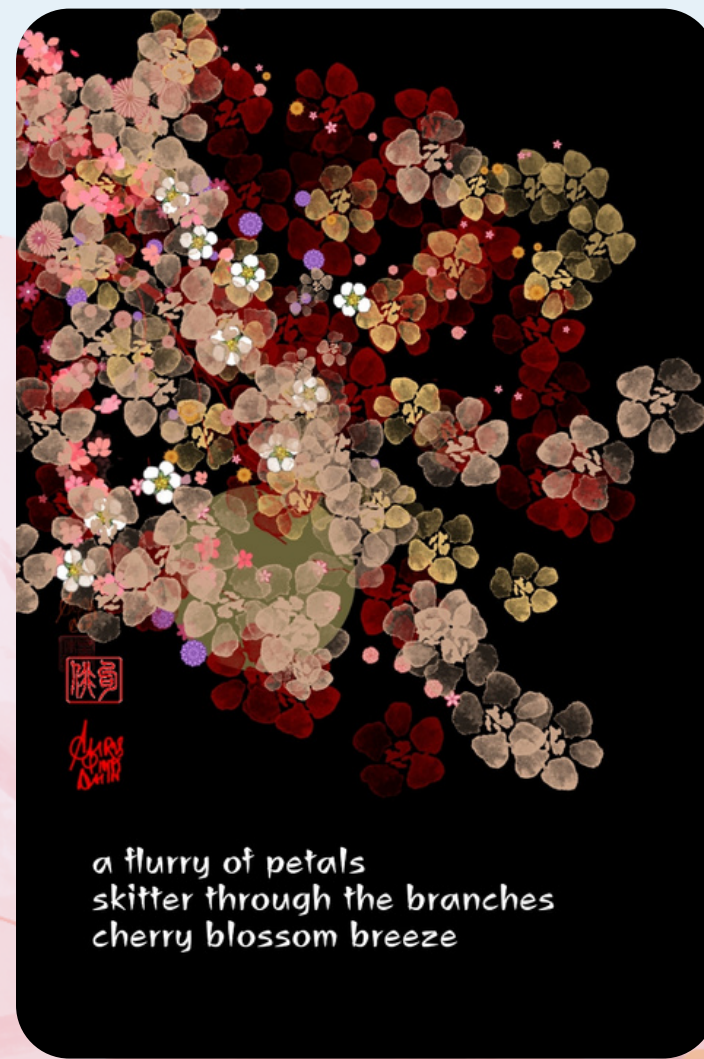
Temple bell  
cherry petals float  
on the sacred river  
-Eufemia Griffo, **Italy**





The smell of war  
in winter's lilac  
cherry petals

Pink flight  
with messages of peace  
haiku love  
-Zdenka Mlinar, **Croatia**



Brisk wind  
a burst of cherry blossoms  
carpet the tatami

A flurry of petals skitter  
through the branches  
cherry blossom breeze  
-Christina Chin, **Malaysia**



brisk wind  
a burst of cherry blossoms  
carpet the tatami

Cherry Blossoms  
arrived with the wind from Japan  
to my home  
-Brigita Lukina, **Croatia**

The Smell of Japan  
family together  
cherry blossoms  
-Brigita Lukina, **Croatia**



Photo: Zmlina



Brigita Lukina 2023.



Brigita Lukina  
2023.



Nursing home  
around the newlyweds  
falling petals swirl  
-Nina Kovacic, **Croatia**

Cherry blossoms -  
in my heartbeat  
another sound

First kiss -  
a cherry blossom tree  
after the storm  
--Mirela Duma, **Romania**

Sakura petals ...  
in her eyes  
swimming riddles

Sakura vortex ...  
all lost roads  
joined into life  
-Ivan Gaćina, **Croatia**

Live in beauty,  
they die from tenderness,  
sakura fabuki.

Gives joy,  
cherry tree in spring,  
passersby.  
-Šime Škribulja, **Croatia**

Giant slalom –  
another win  
in an election

Summer scorch –  
a bread curves with  
an ant line  
-Aljoša Vuković, **Croatia**

Sakura petals  
fluttering to fluffy dogs  
sashaying our way  
-M.Y., **Japan**

Sakura -  
Mount Fuji  
sidelined

It's snowing softly-  
the cherry tree is in bloom  
once again  
-Fratila Genovel Florentin, **Romania**

A gust of wind  
fallen sakura  
have another go  
-Tomislav Sjekloća, **Montenegro**

A cyclone in pink  
she runs through  
the swirl

A pink world  
on an air current  
slip and slide  
-Vera Constantineau

Blizzard ...  
my windscreen covered  
in cherry blossom

Mountain stream  
an endlessly swirling  
cherry petal  
-Taylor Jo Kelly, **United Kingdom**

Swirling sakura  
my daughter telling me  
about her first love

Cherry blossoms  
baby girl in the pram  
lifts her hands  
-Malgorzata Formanowska, **Poland**





Japanese garden ...  
on a cherry petal  
butterfly  
-Adina Iljazović, **Croatia**



A bench  
under the cherry petals  
a couple in embrace  
-Jakov Hasančević, **Croatia**



Pink  
and white cherry petals  
together in the garden  
-Petra Krolo, **Croatia**



Spinning and twirling  
A blizzard of confetti  
The Sakura dance

A tepid spring breeze  
Petals traversing with grace  
A blossoms journey  
-Mikayla Blakey, **Australia**

Blooming colourfully, swirling gracefully,  
Perfuming the air. I am sniffing,  
Itching, sneezing and suffering, again  
-Scott Ting-A-Kee, **Guyana**

The breeze  
petals adorn  
the lake  
-Frane Butković, **Croatia**

Climate change –  
among last leaves  
white cherry buds  
-Ena Delić, **Croatia**

A dance  
under sakura  
unforgettable  
-Lara Richter, **Croatia**

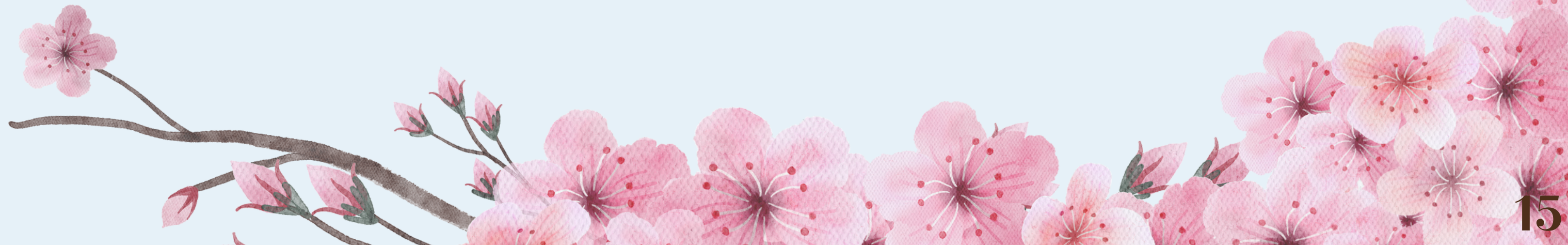
The bees  
buzzing around the petals –  
hapiness  
-Nina Maras, **Croatia**

The breeze  
a morning dance  
of the first petals  
-Gabrijela Arsić, **Croatia**

A wind mallet  
snatching the cherry petals  
untimely  
-Lorena Gruevski, **Croatia**

Sakura  
the blackbird's singing  
louder and louder  
-David Čavrak, **Croatia**

Morning  
the first sunbeams  
among petals  
-Laura Banić, **Croatia**



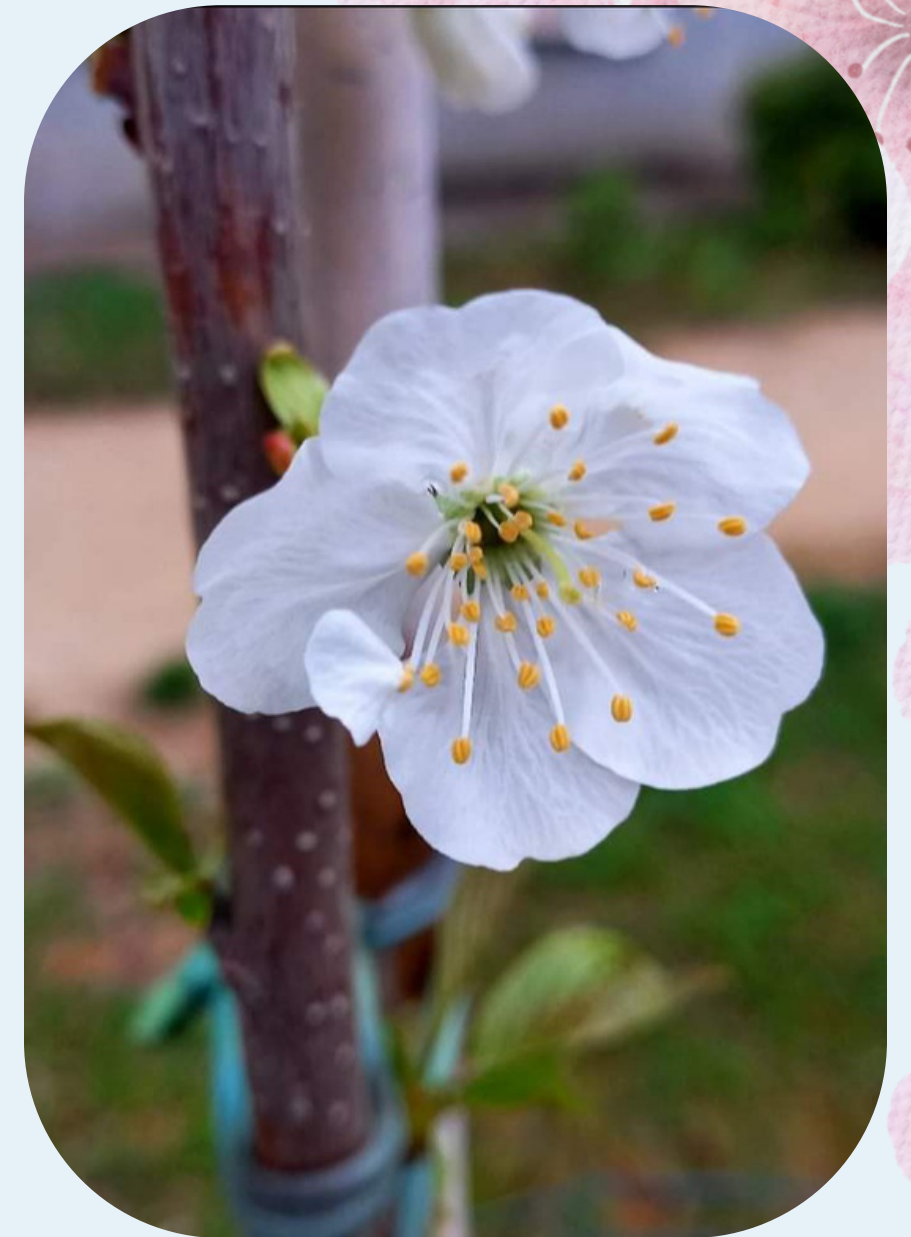




Painting accessories  
sakura  
my inspiration  
-Marija Barač, **Croatia**



The tea house  
the children's laughter swaying  
blossoming boughs  
-Teo Dipić, **Croatia**



Spring morning  
the cherry shoot opening  
its first blossoms  
-Elin Čargonja, **Croatia**



Twin petals  
pirouette a D.N.A.  
helix

Maelstrom  
swallows  
petal boat  
-Jason John Morgan, **New Zealand**

Yozakura—  
from sundown a keyboard warrior  
lights up his heart  
-Ernesto P. Santiago, **Philippines**

Spring whirlwind  
in the eyes of lovers  
cherry blossom

Sakura festival  
spring beauty of the flower  
seduces the sun  
-Gordana Kurtović, **Croatia**

Sticking to my feet  
all these little memories -  
wet cherry blossoms  
-Jonathan Aylett, **United Kingdom**

On the cover  
of the April issue  
swirling sakura

By the rules board  
for hunting wild geese -  
cherry blossoms  
-Alexander Kostov, **Bulgaria**

Sakura swirl  
I pause writing  
a death poem

Swirling sakura  
my thoughts  
change course  
-Ravi Kiran, **India**







from all over  
the ineffable scent  
sakura

From all over  
the ineffable scent  
sakura  
-Mirela Brăilean, **România**

Folk dancers  
dressed in florals kimonos  
swirling sakura  
-Mirela Brăilean, **România**

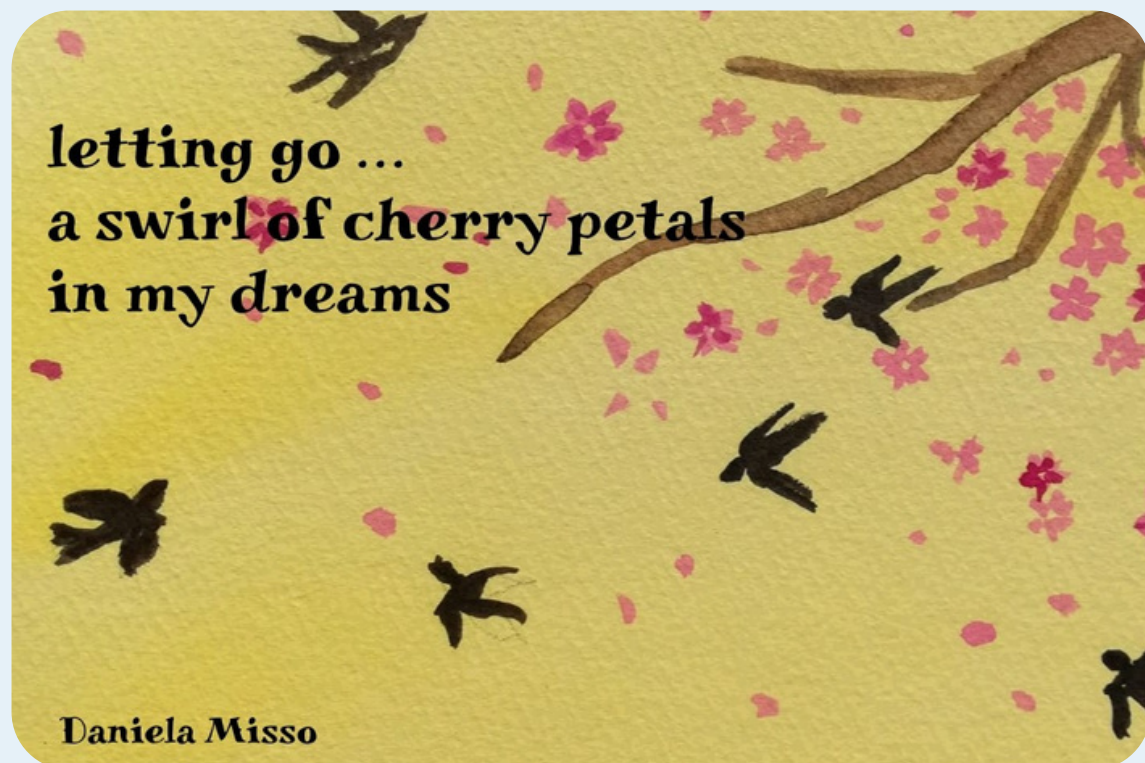


Temple stairs  
prayers tail  
the sakura swirl  
-Daya Bhat, **India**

Sakura moon  
Basho's frog  
Crosses the river  
-Daya Bhat, **India**

Letting go ...  
a swirl of cherry petals  
in my dreams  
-Daniela Misso, **Italy**

Sumi-e  
scented shadows  
of petals  
-Daniela Misso, **Italy**



letting go ...  
a swirl of cherry petals  
in my dreams

Daniela Misso

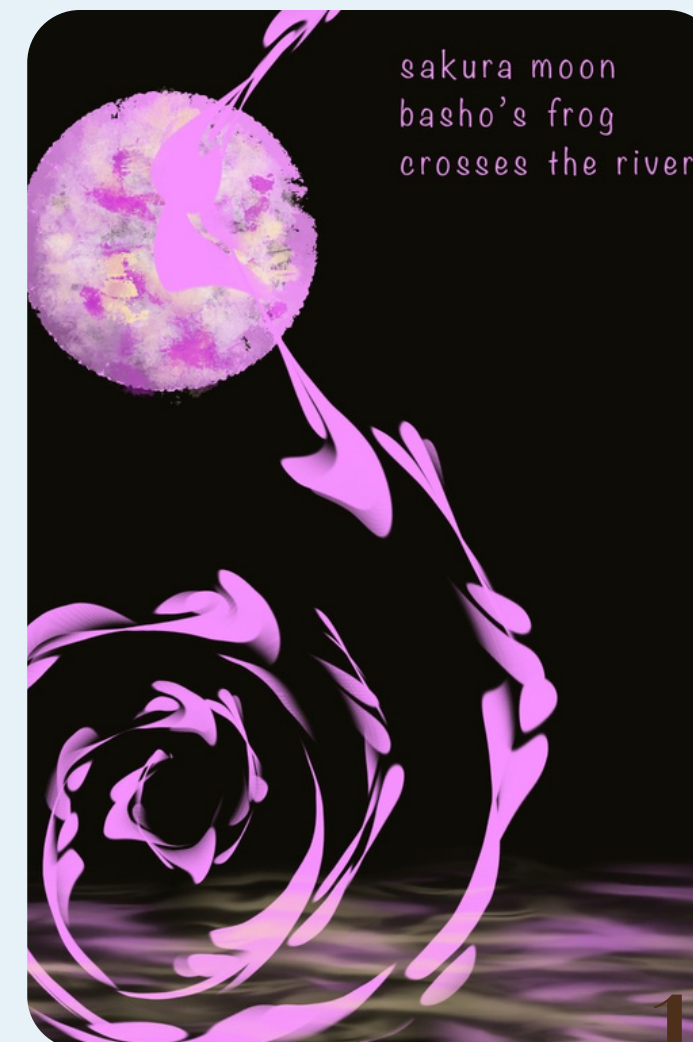


sumi-e  
scented shadows  
of petals

Daniela Misso




temple stairs  
prayers tail  
the sakura swirl



sakura moon  
basho's frog  
crosses the river



The background of the image is a light blue gradient. It is decorated with clusters of pink cherry blossoms and individual petals. One large cluster is in the top right corner, another in the bottom left, and a third in the bottom center. Numerous small, light pink petals are scattered throughout the background, giving the impression of a gentle breeze or falling petals.

We would like to express our sincere  
appreciation to everyone that has  
participated in the Sakura Haiku Challenge,  
and for sharing what “SAKURA” means to  
them through the medium of poetry, art  
and photography.