



Lew Watts

Retired to Writing

Born 15 February 1953

Cardiff Wales

Currently resides

Chicago IL

Watts has a feel for the precise and unusual word. It is unlikely we will be able to use “unbecoming” or “overpunctuate” again without feeling a debt. And it is through such precision that certain effects, such as irony, best present themselves. Here we will readily identify a slightly distanced persona coolly mooting the circumstances, be it the sharing of stories, the settling of ice in a glass, or the deepening of snow. But all of this is mere subterfuge—the real story of these poems—of all our poems—is pain. The poet displays a willingness to share his, especially that which has arisen out of disappointment: in relationships (“sickle moon,” “wild juniper”), in the world (“home from war,” “retirement day”), and, most keenly, with himself (“ice settles,” “picking at threads”), without ever losing his faith in his fellow creatures, and hope (“slow descent”).

Credits

slow descent	<i>Financial Times</i> November 19, 2014
home from war	<i>The Heron's Nest</i> XVI.2
his secret closet	<i>Bones</i> 14
sickle moon	<i>Modern Haiku</i> 49.1
Möbius strip	<i>A Hundred Gourds</i> 4.4
ice settles	<i>Modern Haiku</i> 42.2
eighteenth birthday	<i>bottle rockets</i> 32
his old lego set	<i>Modern Haiku</i> 54.2
old photograph	<i>Frogpond</i> 36.2
wild juniper	<i>bottle rockets</i> 34
picking at threads	<i>Frogpond</i> 36.2
retirement day	<i>Modern Haiku</i> 45.2
post-vasectomy	<i>Modern Haiku</i> 48.2
gone to her mother's	<i>Frogpond</i> 40.2
trial separation	<i>Frogpond</i> 40.3

“home from war” was nominated for a 2014 Touchstone Award, and also appeared in *big data: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku* (Red Moon Press, 2015); “post-vasectomy” also appeared in *Four Hundred and Two Snails: 2018 Haiku Society of America Members’ Anthology* (HSA Members’ Anthology, 2018); “trial separation” won an Honorable Mention in the 2017 Harold G. Henderson Haiku Contest (Haiku Society of America).

slow descent—
this sudden urge to share
life stories

home from war
we ease out
the champagne corks

his secret closet unbecoming a man

sickle moon
the old priest whispers
me too

Möbius strip
the topology
of tumble-dried bras

ice settles
in a morning scotch
things fall into place

eighteenth birthday—
our son graduates
to two syllables

his old lego set—
if I swallow
I'll choke

old photograph—
my son asks why my mother
married me

wild juniper
the way she was
after gin

picking at threads
of a worn seam—
still not forgiven

retirement day—
I move spam
to my inbox

post-vasectomy,
this 'primal' urge
to overpunctuate

gone to her mother's . . .
another lemon pit
misses the ashtray

trial separation
another inch of snow
on the gin bottles