

engine coughed and died. Scrabbling for her purse she opened the catch with the undamaged side of her mouth and spilled its contents onto her lap. The little miracles of unemotion were not there. She screamed at last. It began as a grunt, gradually building to a wail, tearing her throat, locking her jaws open, strangling in its intensity, cutting her breath until ending in a fresh flow of blood.

She listened to the sound of waves, her body swaying in rhythm. The overheated engine warmed her as she breathed the smell of petrol and blood. She had no difficulty in slowing the staccato of thoughts. One hand raised to touch her lips, to smooth the flow of blood across one cheek in a soothing, stroking gesture. There was no real choice. A night bird called, answered by its mate as she walked slowly down the beach, holding the comforting dark around her. Toes dug into sand and she occasionally paused to lift a handful of grains to rub between her fingers. Breathing was an indulgence. The throbbing pain throughout her body did not exist in her mind.

The first wave broke across her legs drawing a gasp at its icy touch. The second hit harder, the third slammed into her stomach to force a harsh cry. Salt stung her wounds. As she began to swim the coldness numbed.

## ROBERT RANDALL

### HAIKU

A Tuscan harvest :  
Olives and new born vipers  
fall from twisted trees.

Bunches of violets  
floating in a vase, could drown  
in their heavy scent.

Hot native spices  
simmering in earthen pots,  
curry the cool air.