

New Poetry by Jason Green: “Winter Haiku,” “Spring Haiku”



HAZE OF DESERT / image by
Amalie Flynn

Winter Haiku

Seventy degree
December morning. God, I'd
love some cold weather.

The north wind brings a
layer of black smoke over
the camp each evening.
Sometimes we cough and
sometimes our eyes get red. We
just keep on breathing.
Who woulda thunk that
years later we'd still be out
here coughing and shit?
Not the congressmen

who fought against the burn pit
bill. America!

Hindu Kush mountains,
snow-capped and rising above
Mazar-i-Sharif.
At any other time,
this would be one of the most
beautiful scenes ever.
Instead, all I can
think about is my hatred
for President Bush.

We cough because we
sleep next to always burning
tires and chemicals.
Years from now we'll drop
like flies and Congress will be
confused as to why.

Desolation is
not even the word I would
use to express this.
Flying over what
used to be Fallujah is
heartbreaking for us.
By "us," I mean those
soldiers who can empathize
with the citizens.
There is no way that
every person down there
doesn't hate us now.

It's like Groundhog Day.
You wake up. You guard your small
piece of Afghan land.
You go to bed. Then

wake-up and do the same damn
thing, every single day.
Never gaining an
inch and never giving back.
Just biding our time.

I like to read books
on Oysters and steak. Then go
eat gray chow hall eggs.

New Year's Day marks the
midway point of our Iraq
deployment. Jesus.

First sunrise brings a
flight to Tallil. I see a
small boy waving up.
I wave down in hopes
that my gesture will keep him
from hating us all.

I got a popcorn
machine for our movie nights.
Now we need butter.
Why dodge mortar fire
all day, then watch films about
war? What is going on?

Spring Haiku

Lengthening days and
darker mornings. More dust storms,
more rockets coming.

We pretend that at
home there was tranquility,

while in our bunkers.

Sand sticks in places
the balmy breeze takes it to
and showers don't help.

I hear the whistle.
Through the haze of desert
sand, their death prayers.

The spring moon lights my
path as a camel spider
hides in my shadow.

Spring rains bring mud so
deep it could suck the boot right
off your fucking foot.

Muddy fields of sand
the rainy season is here
fuck this fucking place.

Watching from the sky
the balloon shows them setting
up a mortar. Shit.
Send out QRF
find out it was a hookah
glad we didn't shoot.

He's planting his fields
while carrying an AK.
Why is he shooting?
I'd be mad at us
too if I was just trying
to work and then this.
Maybe mad enough
to shoot randomly at three

soldiers in a truck.

Miry fields are more
than a nuisance to pissed-off
troops. Synecdoche.

We crossed the spring hills,
in a tiny CIA
plane flown by a dude.
He wore a backwards
baseball cap and wouldn't look
ahead at the "road."
We skirted the heights
of the Hindu Kush, barely
making it over.
This shit ain't fun no
more. I'm ready to leave this
FOB, maybe by car.

We fly higher than
the kites they fly below us.
I'm bored, so I wave.
They don't wave back up
at the infidel. Maybe
it's the big rifle?

Chris died just a week
before Memorial day.
Irony. That's all.

The poppies are in
full bloom and I'm popping pills.
Please help ease my pain.
A hole in my gut,
medics, wet gauze to dry gauze,
I need my morphine.
The shakes, not shitting,

but I'm feeling amazing.
Thank god for poppies.

Maple syrup doesn't make
cardboard pancakes taste any
better. Fuck this place.

Powdered eggs and a
rubberized sausage make up
our Easter breakfast.

Flooded rivers and
muddy fields and all day we
stay wet and angry.