

Light and Life Images and Verse

Adventures in Creation



Michael Sankey

Gimme Five Creations

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<https://michaelsankey.com/gimme-five-creations/>

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Preface

This is the first book in a series of books celebrating a selection of images from the Gimme Five collection that have been matched with Haiku verse. Haiku, if you are not familiar, is a traditional Japanese three-line poem of 17 syllables, following a 5-7-5 syllable structure. They are designed to capture a brief, vivid moment in time, as are the images. This style of verse is usually characterized by unrhymed, concise language, aiming to evoke emotion or insight rather than tell a long story.

A longer description for each work may be found nearer the end of the book.

This style of image and verse was chosen to help evoke an enhanced mental picture and to help heighten the sensory or emotional response to each image, but a response that should not distract the reader/viewer from the image itself. Rather, the image and the verse should complement each other and, once paused upon, be appreciated in the moment.

This first book in the series deals with images of plants, animals and landscapes. These images are quite eclectic in nature and celebrate, in many cases, a slightly different way of seeing the world around us. The sub-title of this volume 'Adventures in Creation', gives you some indication as to the main intent of this book, one that looks at creation from many different perspectives. Firstly, there is the creation of the image, then the creation of the verse to accompany the image and bring them together, in other words, adventures in the creative act. But it also celebrates the creation that is being represented by these images and verse, that is, adventures into the creations of man, nature or God (I'm not an atheist). In all these, this book looks to share the adventure undergone in creating this work.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks and undying devotion go to Kim, my partner/wife, who has supported my efforts in producing this book, particularly with her editorial advice and clear vision of what may or may not be good for inclusion.

"In order to be effective messengers of hope, we must begin by trusting our inner voice, an inner intuition that speaks into the vast wastelands of our time. This process requires training our imagination to see beyond tribal norms, to see the vista of the wider pastures of culture."

— Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (2025)

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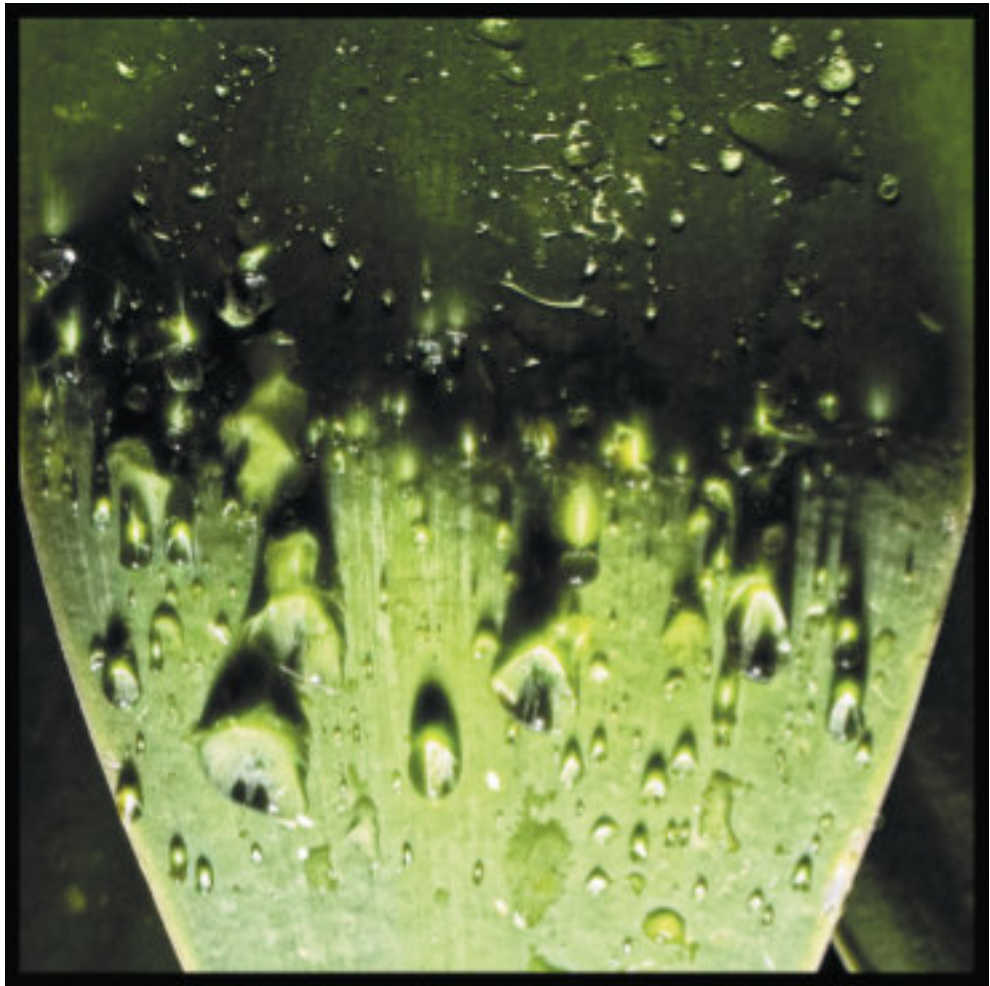
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1. Dancing shadows

Refreshing rain falls

light plays from one direction

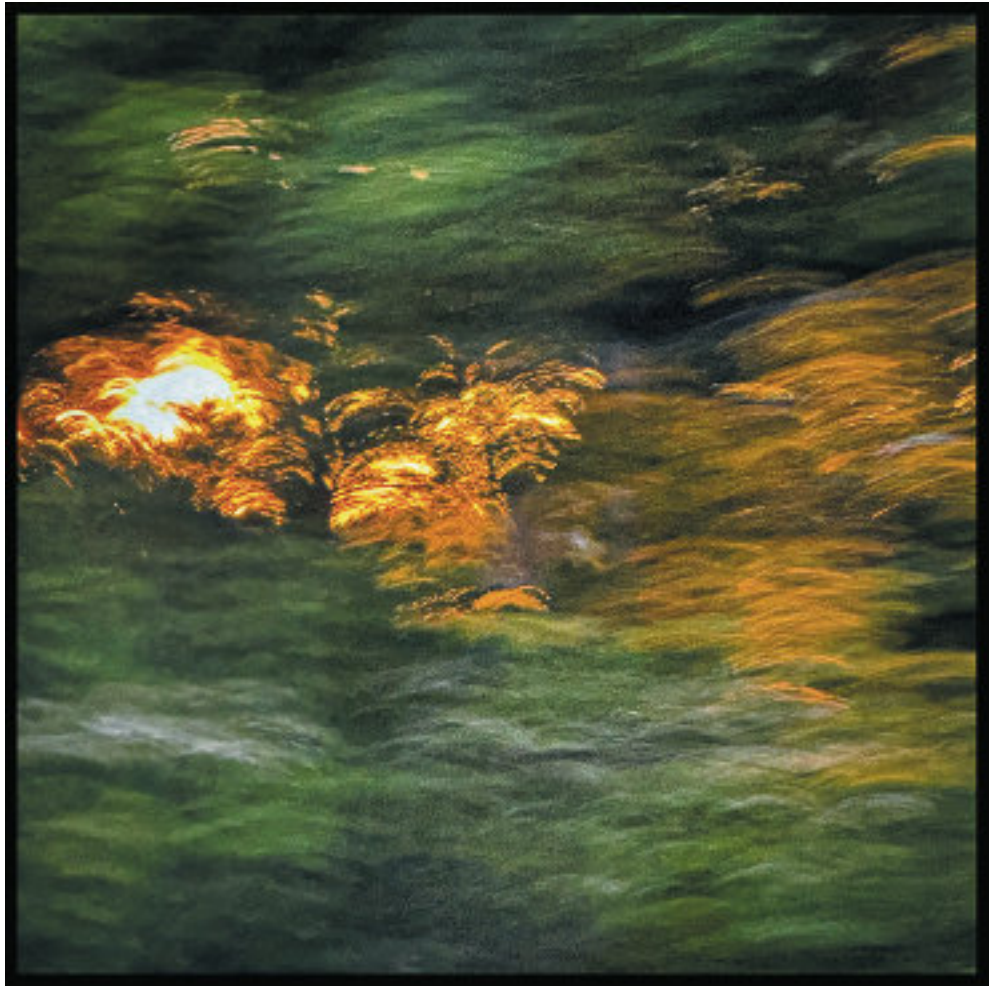
dancing shadows form.



Foxtail Agave, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.

2. Pace of life

Life moves so quickly
there is beauty to be seen
colours and movement.



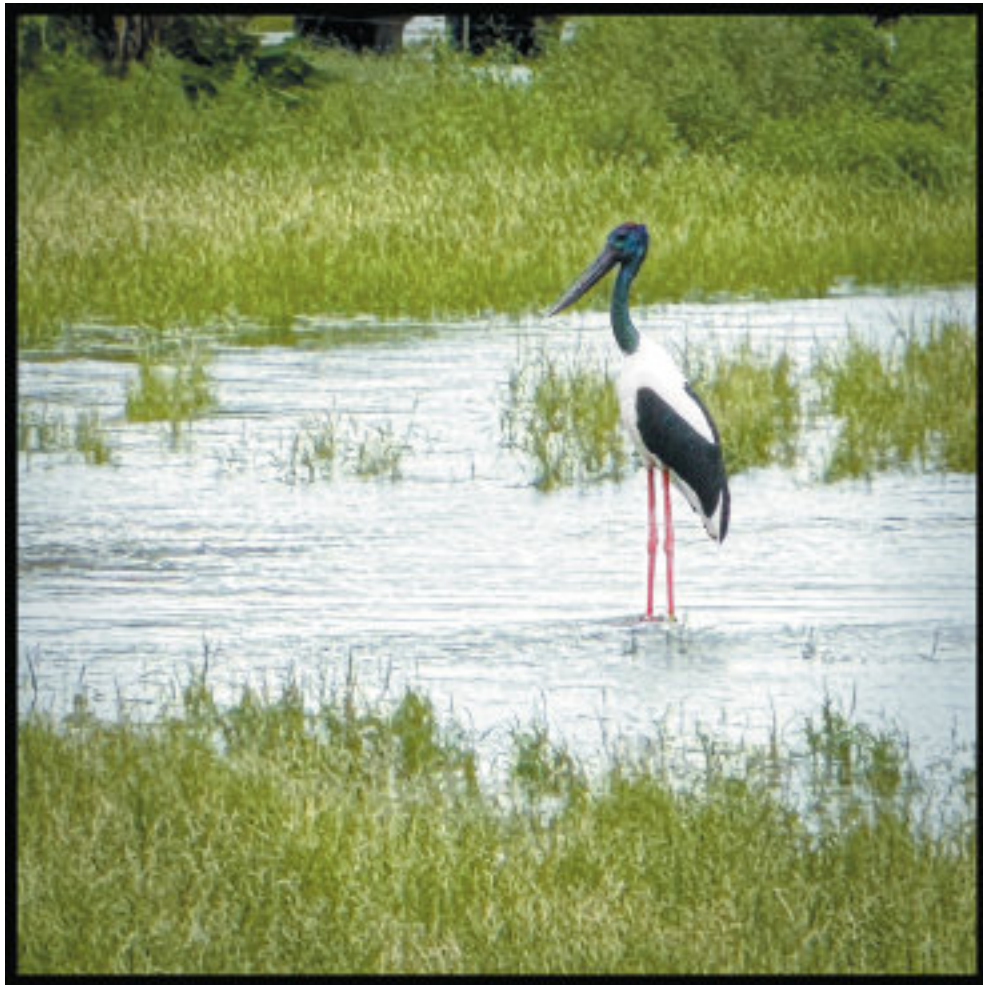
Spring Valley, Minnesota, USA

3. Patience is the key

Old mate Jabiru

anticipating feed time

plentiful supply.



Knuckey Lagoon, Northern Territory, Australia

4. Little Limpets

Cute little limpets
waiting for the tide to rise
to be free again.



Mooloolaba Beach, Queensland, Australia

5. Opening up

Life's unfolding dream
holds hope and vitality
rolling forth in us.



Wentworth Falls, New South Wales, Australia

6. Through fields of green

Dance through fields of green
weaving through the challenges
joy in victory.



Dallas World Aquarium, Dallas, USA

7. Silver fern

Light in the darkness
falls on fern, absorbing life
stretching forth in hope.



Katoomba, New South Wales, Australia

8. Now you see me

When visiting me
be very careful to see
that you spot me first.



Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, Australia

9. Cast your shadow long

You are so unique
cast a positive shadow
empowering others.



Mooloolaba, Queensland, Australia

10. Lift your gaze

Don't miss the magic
Tetradactyl high above
lift your gaze higher.



Science Museum of Minnesota, Saint Paul, USA

11. The heart of a matter

At the close of day
standing on the sands of time
worn but established.



Mooloolaba, Queensland, Australia

12. Greatness comes in many forms

Large or small who cares?

meaningful to a maker

designed by love.



Cairns, Queensland, Australia

13. Love in different places

Spring forth love and life
grow ever strong over time
deep down in the soul.



Katoomba, New South Wales, Australia

14. For all to see

Big red elephant
for travellers' enjoyment
or to wonder why.



Hatton Vale, Queensland, Australia

15. Paying attention to fun

Is it fun time yet
for creatures great and small?
Yes, let it begin.



Taronga Park Zoo, Mosman, New South Wales, Australia

16. As if from nowhere

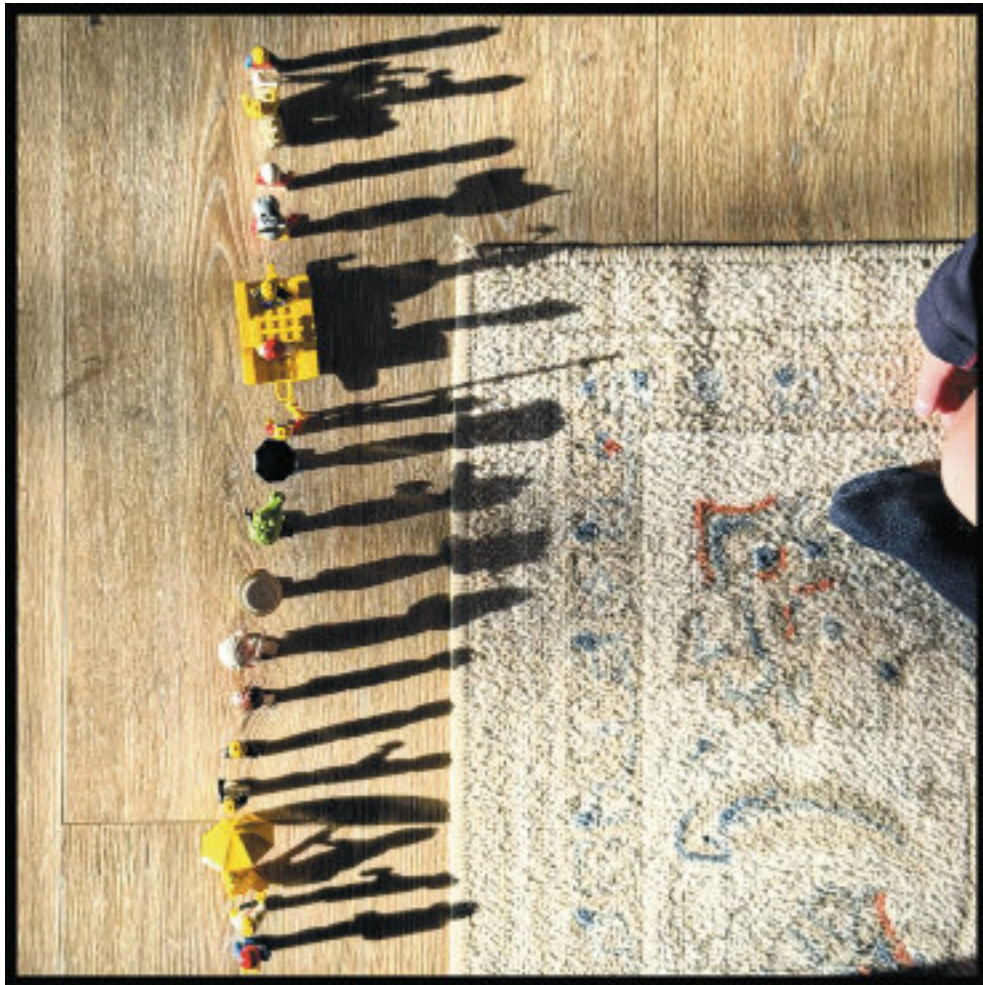
Look, dry wood can sprout
new life from what seemed long gone
not chance, but design.



Ravensbourne National Park, Ravensbourne, Queensland, Australia

17. Marching on

Through life we march on
taking it all in our stride
while others watch on.



Highfields, Queensland, Australia

18. Opposing views

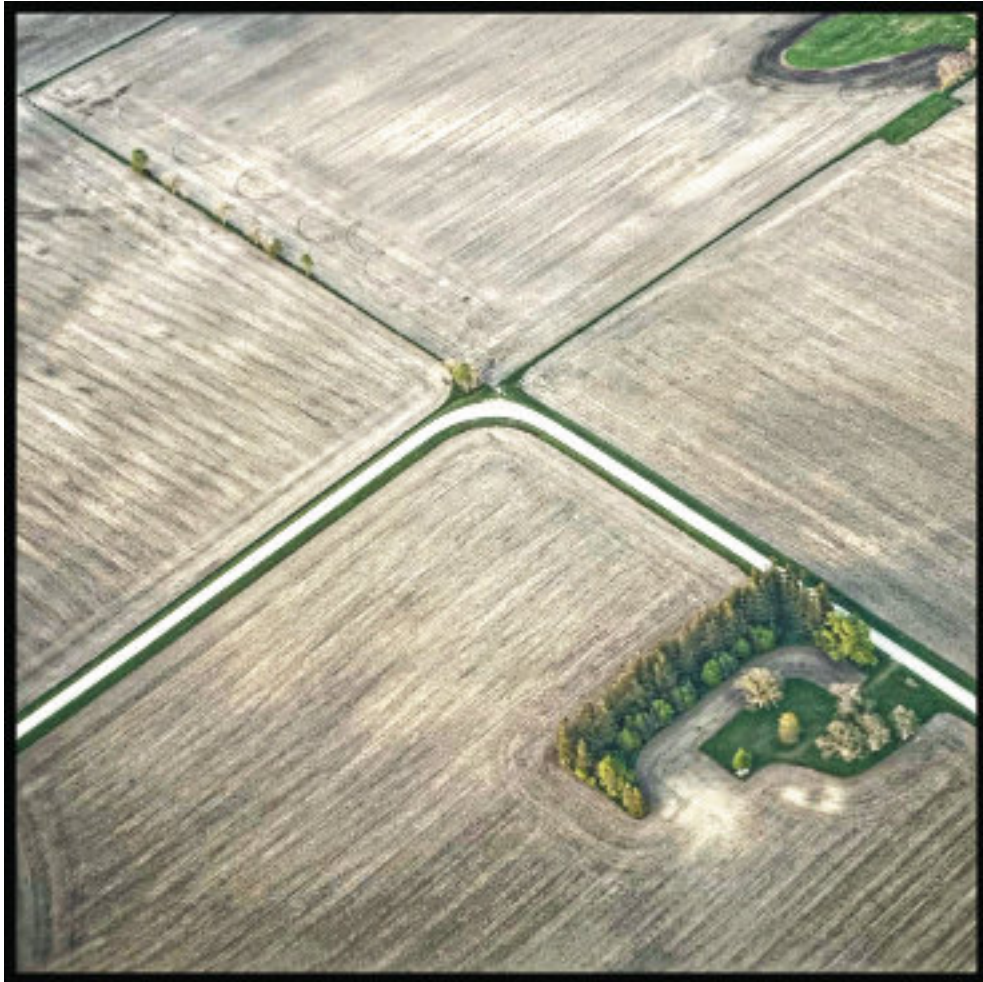
Patterned in splendour
giraffes so pretty pass by
naturally proud.



Taronga Park Zoo, Mosman, New South Wales, Australia

19. Changing direction

When the road you're on
really does not feel quite right
change your direction.



Chatfield, Minnesota, USA

20. Hide no more

Do you want to hide
feeling so blue deep inside?
Life has a purpose.



Katherine, Northern Territory, Australia

21. Eel in the sky

Mythology speaks
of the great eel in the sky
look down and not up.



Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mount Coot-tha, Queensland, Australia

22. Family comes first

The family that
grows together, loves always
for a future sure.



Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, Australia

23. Let's face it

Waterfowl look on
co-existence is the trick
modernity primed.



Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

24. Simplyfun

A phoofer to some
to others a Dandelion
to all simply fun.



Toowoomba, Queensland,Australia

25. City home

In its Southbank home
this water dragon's playground
not out in the bush.



South Bank, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

26. Hope through discovery

Built on mountain high
by convict force long ago
now beauty its prize.



Glenbrook, New South Wales, Australia

27. You can't hide

Peek-a-boo to you

Mr Cricket, I see those feet
on pool fence hiding.



Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, Australia

28. From the deep

Emerging with hope
these stamen bold spread forth to
share their love o'er.



Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

29. Plato's cave

Seeing strange shadows
on prison wall dimly lit
it plays with your mind.



Highfields, Queensland, Australia

30. Breathe

What fun to see, this
swimming Elephantidae
with periscope high.



Taronga Park Zoo, Mossman, New South Wales, Australia

31. Fond farewells

Fun days on the beach
collecting stray cuttlebones
things that intrigue us.



Bowan, Queensland, Australia

32. From the heart

Oh what symmetry

Banksia tree spreading joy

to all who see you.



Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, Australia

33. Feels so good

Loving lorikeets

party time for happy souls

colours to brighten.



Kearney's Spring, Queensland, Australia

34. Moving on

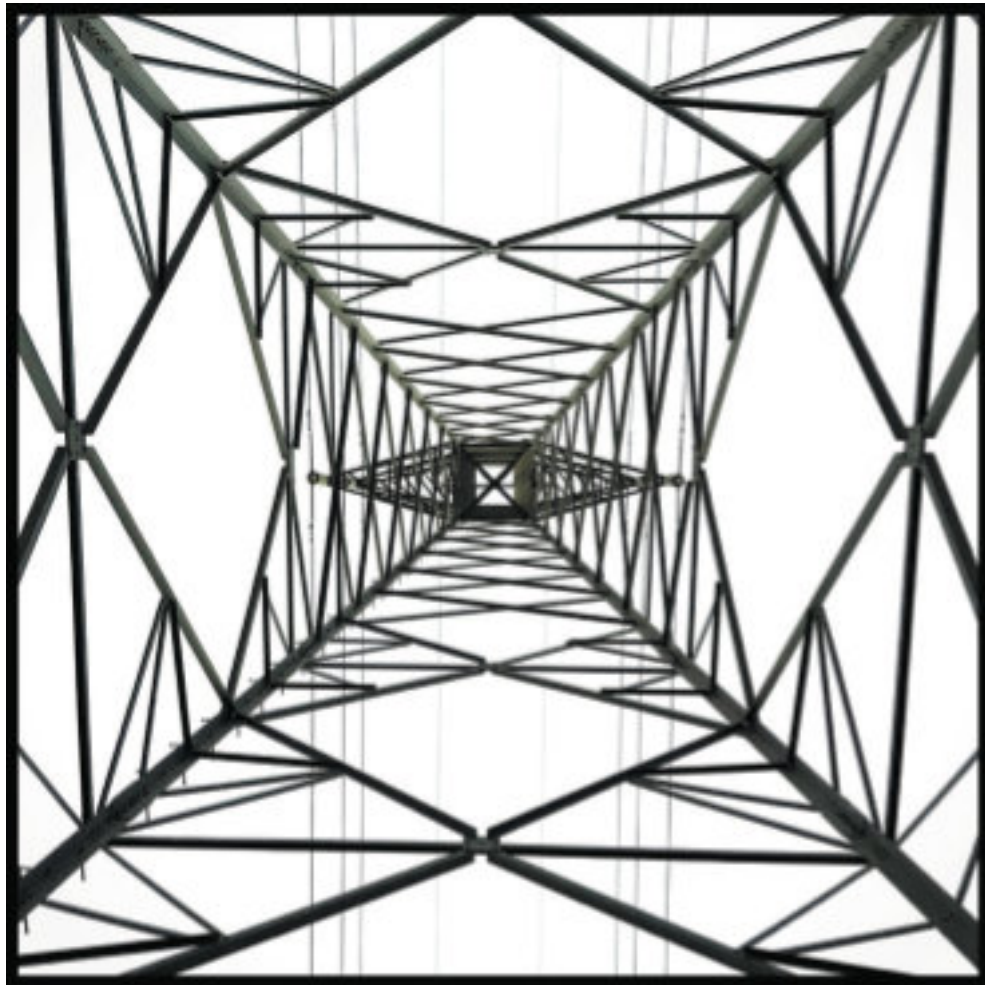
Is it time to say
I am done with past concerns
time for a fresh start.



Kleinton, Queensland, Australia

35. Linked together

Like a sentinel
linked with others across lands
we do not stand alone.



Wishart, Queensland, Australia

36. Colours of light and life

What mind could conceive
such beauty all around us
in flight enthral us.



Katoomba, New South Wales, Australia

Intentionally blank

About these Images

Image 1. Dancing shadows (Page 4)

A Foxtail Agave (*Agave attenuata*) plant from in our backyard. It loves to hold onto little droplets of water after a rain shower or a good hosing, as it did on this night. The light from my torch created wonderful shadows on the surface of the plant through the water. Interestingly, though now very common, these plants are not native to Australia; in fact, they originate from Jalisco in Central Mexico.⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

Image 2. Pace of life (Page 6)

As the sun sets, light splashes on the car where gaps appear in the trees, revealing the glorious sunset on the other side. The speed of the car and the transitory explosions of light provide the perfect metaphor for the pace of life and the glimpses of hope we get as we travel along life's road. However, we will soon emerge from the woods, and then all will be revealed as the warm light encompasses us at the close of day.

Image 3. Patience is the key (Page 8)

This black-necked stork, colloquially known as a Jabiru, or as the local Indigenous people prefer to call it, Garrinji or Ganji, is waiting for a feed to swim past during the wet season at Knuckey Lagoon, just outside Darwin. I often saw them there while driving to work. They are Australia's only native stork.⁽³⁾

Image 4. Little Limpets (Page 10)

These Limpets (shellfish or type of marine snail) were clinging to the rocks at Mooloolaba in Southeast Queensland, patiently (presumably), waiting for the tide to come back in. When it does, they will detach from the rocks and sashay around using a powerful muscular foot, grazing on microscopic algae with their rough, ribbon-like tongue, called a radula.⁽⁴⁾

Image 5. Opening up (Page 12)

The new shoot of a Tree Fern unrolling, deep in the forest at Ravensbourne National Park in Queensland. They thrive in the moist, shaded microclimates created by the park's tall rainforest canopy and trickling streams (as do leeches, by the way), as they grow alongside ancient Bunya and Piccabeen Palms. These are some of the last remnants of the vast subtropical rainforests that once blanketed the Great Dividing Range.⁽⁵⁾

Image 6. Through fields of green (Page 14)

We had to travel all the way to the Dallas World Aquarium to see a seahorse display from southern Australia (not that this was the reason for our visit), LOL! This one is a juvenile pot-bellied seahorse. Typically, they are found in the south-west Pacific around Australia and New Zealand, where they inhabit harbours and sheltered coastal bays and hide among algae and seagrass. They have a long-snouted head, eyes that can move independently of each other, and a prehensile tail.⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾

Image 7. Silverfern (Page 16)

This silvery fern (not to be confused with the New Zealand Silver Fern) is a local Australian native from the Polypodiaceae family, and is known as a Kangaroo Fern. It is a creeping fern that is epiphytic (grows on another plant), thriving on tree trunks, rock crevices, and damp, mossy logs throughout the gullies and rainforests in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Protected by a huge tree canopy, these beautiful ferns appear silverish when the light is reflected off them in the dark undergrowth.⁽⁸⁾

Image 8. Now you see me (Page 18)

This sizeable saltwater crocodile was swimming along next to our boat during our visit to Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory. It was spotted in the Yellow Water (Ngurrungurrudjba) Billabong, which is part of the East Alligator River. This area is home to an estimated 1,000 saltwater crocodiles. These massive apex predators are often seen sunning themselves along the muddy banks of the river, or effortlessly gliding through the water.⁽⁹⁾

Image 9. Hold it high (Page 20)

When standing on the rocks at Mooloolaba Beach, the sun was rising for the day and cast my shadow long across the rocks and sand. In doing so, my shadow changed shape depending on the different surfaces on which it fell. It made me think that we cast your shadow wherever we are, and we don't even have to wait for the sun to come up, but that we can't necessarily control how our shadow will fall or be received. Whatever happens, if you hold your head up high, your shadow will be cast longer.

Image 10. Lift your gaze (Page 22)

As you enter the Science Museum of Minnesota, if you happen to look up, you will immediately see the skeletal remains (or reproduction), of a life-size Quetzalcoatlus. This is the largest flying reptile ever discovered, with a wingspan of over 10 metres. But if you don't look up, you will miss it. Therefore, it pays to look up, or lift your gaze, to see new wonders.⁽¹⁰⁾

Image 11. The heart of a matter (Page 24)

At dusk on the beach at Mooloolaba in Queensland, this well-worn rock was just sitting there asking to be photographed (I distinctly remember it saying so ;-). This image was aided by the warm sky in the background that was reflecting the afterglow of the sunset. How many waves have broken over this rock, how often has it been rolled over, and over to make it what it is today? Who knows, but in doing this, all its rough edges have worn off and it now sits proud of who it is, ready to face the world.

Image 12. For all to see (Page 26)

The Big Red Elephant is a quirky piece of roadside folk art at Hatton Vale in Queensland. Built by Toowoomba-based artist Sally Gebbert in the late 1990s, it was originally commissioned to promote the Jumbo Shopping Centre. The original shopping precinct failed, as have a number of successive businesses, but the Big Red Elephant endures for travellers to marvel at, or just ask, 'why'?⁽¹¹⁾

Image 13. Greatness comes in many forms (Page 28)

This Green Tree Ant (*Oecophylla smaragdina*) and some of its friends were foraging in and around a public rubbish bin on the foreshore in Cairns. It was just taking a wee break from its busy schedule to have a drink after a recent shower of rain. While they don't sting, as such, they can deliver a sharp little bite and spray formic acid at you, which can be quite uncomfortable. The unlucky ants can end up in a bottle of gin, though. Which does happen to taste particularly nice, with a drop of tonic.⁽¹²⁾

Image 14. Love in different places (Page 30)

Again, in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, this Soft Tree Fern has juvenile shoots that are often described as looking like love hearts. Anything that reminds us and brings us back to the notion of love is a good thing, particularly in a world so full of distrust. It is good to be reminded of this in whatever way we can be.⁽¹³⁾

Image 15. Paying attention to fun (Page 32)

In most zoos around the country, and indeed internationally, you will find these fun-loving little creatures called Meerkats that belong to the mongoose family. With their highly animated personalities, tight-knit family dynamics and curious energy, they are a delight to observe and may even be able to teach us a thing or two about life, as apparently we share many traits with them.⁽¹⁴⁾

Image 16. As if from nowhere (Page 34)

Out of the side of a very mature Camphor Laurel tree, with the rest of its main foliage metres high above, this new shoot pops out from what would otherwise be considered mature bark. It was fascinating to me that after what would have to be 30–40 years, that at this moment in time, it chose to make its entrance into the world, as if from nowhere. From a technical perspective these are called Epicormic Shoots, that grow from hidden buds underneath the tree bark that were kept inactive by hormones from the upper branches.⁽¹⁵⁾

Image 17. Marching on (Page 36)

Inspired by the recent spate of images taken by drones flying high above different creatures or landmarks at sunset, casting long shadows across the landscape (a nadir shot), I was taken by this scene of our granddaughter playing with Lego early one morning. She had lined up a whole range of figures as they marched in a straight line across our floor.

Image 18. Opposing views (Page 38)

These two beautiful giraffes pass each other at Sydney Zoo. The zoo has five giraffes, which rotate through the enclosure. They have quite distinct patterns, with every giraffe being different in looks and temperament. Interestingly, as we were told, despite their incredible length, giraffes have the exact same number of neck vertebrae as humans (seven).⁽¹⁶⁾

Image 19. Changing direction (Page 40)

Flying into Rochester, Minnesota. It's May and the cornfields lay fallow but had been made ready for planting the next crop. Winter has passed and the days are starting to warm, but the farmers are waiting patiently for the soil temperatures to reach a consistent 10°C (50°F) at a 5 cm (2 inch) depth before planting, as planting in cold, damp soil can cause seeds to rot or stunt early growth.⁽¹⁷⁾

Image 20. Hide no more (Page 42)

We stayed in Katherine overnight on our way back to Queensland from Darwin. It was an experience, that is for sure. Apart from our car being broken into overnight and some cash being stolen, there were not very many people wondering around on the streets during the day, but there were certainly many shopping trolleys abandoned all over the place. So people must have been there at some point in the day or night.

Image 21. Eel in the sky (Page 44)

The main lake and lagoon system at the Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens in Brisbane is home to both the native short-finned (*Anguilla australis*) and long-finned (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) eels. These large, curious creatures can grow up to a meter long and I spotted this particular one surfacing just near the edge of the lake. The clouds reflected in the water made it appear even more mysterious.⁽¹⁸⁾

Image 22. Family comes first (Page 46)

In Brisbane from late February to late May, after it has rained for a few straight days the mushrooms of all different varieties spring forth all over the place. This family was spotted along the banks of the Bulimba Creek, having a picnic. The genealogical roots of this family could go back up to a couple of decades. For apparently, the spores of mushrooms in a given area can last anywhere from 6 months to over 20 years.⁽¹⁹⁾

Image 23. Let's face it (Page 48)

These native Eurasian Coots are now a common sight on the Yarra River in the Melbourne CBD, particularly around the boatsheds. They have inhabited the lower Yarra since long before European settlement. However, when I was a young lad growing up in Melbourne (equipped only with my Kodak Instamatic), they were not so common. It is only since the city ran some rewilding projects, where they installed floating wetland habitats near the river's edge and in this rowing precinct, that the local population has significantly adapted to this urbanized stretch of the river.⁽²⁰⁾

Image 24. Simply fun (Page 50)

Down by West Creek in Toowoomba, there are plenty of places for Dandelions to bloom, even when all around them life goes on at a pace. The dandelion 'poofer' or 'phoofer' (though botanically it is called a pappus) is the plant's white, fluffy seed head. It gets this nickname because of the gentle 'poof' sound and action required to blow the seeds into the wind. They are simply fun, no matter what age you are. For all love to 'phoofer'.⁽²¹⁾

Image 25. City home (Page 52)

The Eastern Water Dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii*) is a highly visible resident along the South Bank parklands in Brisbane, particularly during the warmer months. These large, semi-aquatic lizards are frequently seen sunbathing on rocks, near the artificial beach, and in the rainforest walks. They have adapted to human activity and are highly intelligent, occasionally displaying unique behaviours to defend territory, like head-bobbing and arm-waving, especially during the mating season.⁽²²⁾

Image 26. Hope through discovery (Page 54)

The Lennox Bridge in the Blue Mountains, is a wonderful find, it is the oldest stone arch bridge on the Australian mainland and designed by master stonemason David Lennox. It's a single-span bridge built in local stone in 1833 using unskilled convict labour, that took them about a year. No longer on the main road, the bridge used to carry all the traffic to western New South Wales from Sydney until 1926.
(23)

Image 27. You can't hide (Page 56)

This large grasshopper (*Valanga irregularis*) was playing hide-and-seek with me in our backyard in Brisbane. Normally a solitary species, every time I moved, it did too, trying not to be seen. This type of grasshopper (though hard to see here) is the largest in Australia, growing up to 90mm long, and it is mostly found in the Australian tropics and subtropics.
(24)

Image 28. From the deep (Page 58)

The Jersey Lily is a widely cultivated ornamental plant, naturalised in many countries, and has a showy, funnel-shaped flower. It is originally from South Africa and thrives across Mediterranean style climates. Interestingly, even though it is quite beautiful, it is regarded as an environmental weed in the southern states of Australia. Shame that.
(25)

Image 29. Plato's cave (Page 60)

Plato's Cave is a famous philosophical metaphor from Book VII of *The Republic*. It describes prisoners who are being held in a dark cave mistaking the strange shadows being projected on the wall from the firelight behind them as being representations of reality. The story goes on to illustrate the journey of one prisoner who escapes to discover the 'true', illuminated world of reality and the duty, or obligation he then feels to educate others.
(26)

Image 30. Breathe (Page 62)

This Asian Elephant is using its long trunk like a snorkel, extending it just above the water's surface when fully submerged, allowing it to continue to inhale and exhale while staying completely relaxed. It has a unique lung structure to counteract the effects of water pressure, where its lung is fused directly to its chest wall and diaphragm. This helps prevent the blood vessels in the lungs from suffering a pulmonary edema while fully submerged.
(27)

Image31. Fond farewells (Page 64)

As kids we loved to collect what we called Cuttlefish on the beach. Of course they were not the fish itself, but we didn't let the truth get in the way of a good story, they are cuttlebones. These cuttlebones were found on the beach at Horseshoe Bay in Bowen, in Northern Queensland. There were heaps of them, so, I deduced that this was clearly where cuttlefish come to end their days and thus I set up this memorial for them.

Image 32. From the heart (Page 66)

Banksias come in many shapes and sizes, with around 170 different varieties. Some are symmetrical, like this one, others not. Renowned for their unique flower (candles) and serrated foliage, they play a vital ecological role by sustaining nectar-feeding birds, mammals, and insects. The candle is not just one flower, but a dense spike packed with hundreds (sometimes thousands) of tiny tubular flowers. The vast diversity of the genus means there is a Banksia suited to almost any landscape, from rainforests to coastal dunes.⁽²⁸⁾

Image 33. Feels so good (Page 68)

Rainbow Lorikeets are a vibrant, highly social parrots found across Australia in rainforests, woodlands, and suburban backyards. They thrive in urban environments and are famous for their brilliant rainbow plumage, raucous screeching, and specialized brush-tipped tongues used to harvest nectar and pollen from native flowering trees, like eucalypts and grevilleas. Like other parrots they are monogamous and often travel in fast-moving pairs or in massive communal flocks. We often see them hanging upside down in our Bottle Brush, seemingly drunk from eating too much nectar.⁽²⁹⁾

Image 34. Moving on (Page 70)

Many Australian eucalypts, also called Gum Trees, annually shed their bark (called decortication) as the trunk expands rapidly during the warmer months. Instead of falling all at once, the old bark peels away in long ribbons, plates, or flakes to reveal a fresh, vividly coloured new layer beneath. This isn't just for aesthetics; it is a vital survival mechanism for the tree, as part of a natural hygiene routine, ridding the trunk of parasitic insects, fungi, mosses, and harmful pathogens. The inner bark can even photosynthesize, providing extra food and energy for the tree's growth.⁽³⁰⁾

Image 35. Linked together (Page 72)

Like sentinels they stand stretching across the landscape, strung with high voltage wires, bringing power to people's homes and businesses. These structures are part of the Australian National Electricity Market (NEM), one of the world's longest interconnected power systems, stretching over 40,000 km across the east and south of the continent, connecting Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia. These tall steel lattice structures stand between 45 - 70 meters high, and support heavy cables to maintain a safe clearance from the ground. Why? Because the cables are bare metal (often aluminium-steel composites) that use the surrounding open air and significant spacing as insulation.⁽³¹⁾

Image 36. Colours of light and love (Page 74)

This female Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is slightly smaller than its male counterpart and feature visibly thicker, darker black veins running through its orange wings. In her 2 to 5 week lifespan, she will lay between 300 - 1,100 eggs exclusively on milkweed plants. Once mature, she will mate and begin her hunt for the perfect host plant. She uses sensors on her legs to taste the leaves to verify if it is milkweed and then she will lay just one egg per leaf.⁽³²⁾

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At the time of publication all web links noted were working, but if for some reason they do not please use 'The Wayback Machine' which is an initiative of the Internet Archive, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts. Accessed this at <http://web.archive.org>

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Book Summary. This is the first book in a series of books celebrating a selection of images from the Gimme Five collection that have been matched with Haiku verse. Haiku, if you are not familiar, is a traditional Japanese three-line poem of 17 syllables, following a 5-7-5 syllable structure. They are designed to capture a brief, vivid moment in time, as are the images. This style of verse is usually characterized by unrhymed, concise language, aiming to evoke emotion or insight rather than tell a long story.

Author Bio. Dr Michael Sankey is the Creative Director of Gimme Five Creations, an arts based creative business designed to generate positive books, wearables and wall art. Previously, Michael was a senior university academic who has worked at five universities in Australia over some 35 years and is still an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Society at Charles Darwin University. He is highly published author in the academic field with 5 monographs or stand-alone works, 77 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, and 192 conference, keynote and unsolicited invited presentations. Michael's first career was as a professional photographer and he has exhibited his work in many galleries. For more about Michael see: michaelsankey.com/about/

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