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## Three Poems by Gary Lai

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### **The Four Seasons in Edmonton in Haikus**

the quiet pavement  
snowed on on Halloween's day  
the start of winter

on the fresh white snow  
imprinted little deer hooves  
tracks just go one way

the soggy top soil  
the thin ice once broken through  
reveals a strong stench

the day is longer  
at ten o'clock the sky's bright  
the air is clear, too

the air is cooler  
the sun readjusts its trail  
the daylight I need

## **Being Inspired by Nature**

Benzene's structure occurred to Kekulé,  
a dream about a snake nibbling its tail.  
Belgians should have got to it first,  
seeing puppies chasing their tails.  
But then the ring is no double helix.

Einstein rode on a beam of light:  
would time accelerate, stand still, slow down?  
Medieval monks wrote on angels standing  
on heads of pins; maybe there are more imaginative ways of  
thinking about the world.

Not all create with the utility of the engineer  
who took a cue from the tiny hooks in nature  
and made Velcro.  
But this is not the norm.

Progress of man is qualified by the  
imageries with which he crafts  
theories and tools.

### **A Lament about OPEC**

The beast, with its tentacles  
dripping with black goo,  
controls how much we fly,  
when we drive, how many  
plastic rubber ducks sit on the shelves  
at Walmart.

The more we try to wean ourselves  
off of Arabian petroleum  
the more we crave it; that is  
the Persian Gulf dilemma.

Not that the straight-faced men in Vienna  
would let us have it any other way.  
Ask Putin and the Bushes,  
the beast plays no favorites.  
Friend or foe, it only answers to  
the iron law of economics.

**Gary Lai**, a former resident of Vancouver and Edmonton, is currently based in Hong Kong. He is an alumnus of USC, University of British Columbia Allard School of Law, Columbia University, and the University of Hong Kong.