

Cuyahoga  
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By Kelly Hambly

SEVEN OF SEICHE

I can't stop saying the word *seiche*.  
It looks like saytch but sounds like saysh  
like the *shhh hush* of distant night traffic.

Lake Erie seiched earlier this summer,  
waves merged as great apexes and nodes  
pushing the water far beyond one shore  
as if its bowl had tilted and then slowly  
over seven hours, like ocean tide, turned.

My life seiche was a seven-year itch,  
a disturbance of the skin like mosquito bites  
a surface tension, a constant irritation  
of unmet needs creating waves that caused  
my marriage container to tilt and spill us out.

Seven minutes in heaven, two bodies  
nervous in the laundry room while  
the rest of the party sits in a circle  
counting on a Micky Mouse Swatch  
with a damp yellow jelly wrist band.

*Seven Times the Sun* a Waldorf book  
of seasonal prayers and rituals  
for families unsure of how tides work  
and seven is an optimal prime number  
that can't be expressed as the product  
of two smaller natural numbers.

Is a wife, a husband, natural – is a family,  
in the end, only that which stays together.

Seven times the habits of highly effective people  
seven days in the week, colors in the rainbow  
notes on the diatonic scale, continents, chakras.

The average human mind retains, at most,  
seven things at once, but how many phone  
numbers do any of us really know by heart.

The series 697-8737 can't spin seven digits  
through time to ring that hard-wired line,  
attached to my mother's yellow kitchen wall  
and warn me of the tides I must learn to ride.

Seven stages of grief, spots on Ladybug's wings  
seven neck bones in more mammals than not,  
and celestial bodies visible to our naked eye.

I'm scanning the day's surface for wave patterns  
that push against me as I move through his town  
feel my container, my bowl, tilting, tilting, tilting.

If I'm in the cold water when the seiche begins  
and watch the tide recede from some other shore

I wonder if it will be by chance or by design.