

## Seventy Summers

Let's be as spreading cherry trees  
Whose blossoms stand for peace.  
We'll shower flowers freely, say  
Goodbye to killing, please.

Our Portsmouth is a lovely place.  
It's good we've taken pledge  
To join with townships 'cross the world  
For war is the razors edge.

For my children are your children  
And my friends, your friends.  
Our mothers who are all mothers  
Call for this fight to end.

If I were in Japan, I'd  
Study poems in Japanese, in  
Forms like Waka, Renga, Kanshi.  
I'd write in all of these.

(Here is a tanka:  
'We gather here now  
to trade guilt and evil for  
kindly compassion.  
We rekindle agreements,  
look deeply in chastened eyes')

Say you're sorry like you mean it;  
Find no need to drop a bomb.  
There's a peaceful day, I've seen it,  
I can feel it coming on.

For my people are your people  
And my friends your friends,  
Our fathers are all fathers  
And this tragic time must end.

Say NO to the mushroom clouds.  
Say NO MORE to wholesale death.  
Let's agree that's not allowed  
And concentrate on breath.

(Life's priceless strands of breath  
A baby's fragrant first breath  
An elders rasping last breath  
Our own repeating breath.)

For my children are your children  
With all the languages we speak.  
Our mothers and all mothers,  
Pray 'peaceful tomorrows' please  
Without cease.....

Kate Leigh  
10<sup>th</sup> Poet Laureate of Portsmouth