Reflections of Catalonia: A Tanka Sequence

a street poet
tells me he bleeds in ink
Is that why
dark red lines are visible
in the Balearic Sea?

summer is humid
but tempered by breezes
straddling
two seas and two continents
Catalan melancholy

ring out the hours
doleful brass bells clanging
dusk falls late
Do you dare climb by ladder
to the church tower roof?

his chorizo stew
is not just a recipe
our chef tells us –
it is geography and history
simmering in the iron pan

rubble of voices
glasses clink and plates clatter
finally it's midnight
a circle is formed, hands held
hands slapping: Sardana!

when the town clock
chimed on the hour
at no time
did a feeling strike me –
Now why now this delayed grief?

– Neal Whitman*

* *Dr. Neal Whitman, professor emeritus, University of Utah School of Medicine, upon retirement took up the writing of poetry and was a second place winner in the 24th World Congress of Poets. Address: Dr. Neal Whitman, 814 Todd Lane, Pacific Grove, CA 93950, USA. Email: neal@whitmanassociates.org.*