

## An origami crane on the bridge of Osaka Castle

She greeted me with a smile  
young, dressed like a student  
definitely Japanese.  
I was older, a Western tourist  
suspicious of being scammed.

We met on a bridge at Osaka castle.  
For peace, she said.  
In her hand, an offering,  
a purple origami crane  
exquisitely crafted.

I shook my head  
tried to walk past her  
my goal, to cross the moat  
tick off another famous site.

She was undeterred.  
No price, she said,  
a gift for visiting Japan.  
The crane sat  
wings neatly folded  
in the palm of her hand.

For free? I asked.  
For peace, she said.  
It felt churlish to refuse.  
I bowed, smiled,  
accepted the token.

She moved on, another crane  
for another tourist.  
Senbazuru tradition suggests  
folding a thousand cranes  
grants a person's wish.

Returned home, I created art  
threaded the crane on fishing line  
together with a clear glass prism  
for sunlight rainbows.

Now the crane hangs in my window  
a memory, a longing  
a hope for peace.  
One of a thousand?

—Sharon J. Clark

