SOME IRREGULAR HAiku

ANIL
Perth, Australia

These poems have 17 syllables but unapologetically fail the 5-7-5 line pattern for haiku. Let me unapologise. Japanese haiku in English translation also usually fail that test and must even be teased into 17 syllables. To the purist I say: only Japanese haiku, untranslated, are true haiku. A famous Zen haiku and my favourite, in translation has a 5-4-8 pattern (or 5-6-6 if you prefer):

Sitting quietly,
doing nothing,
Spring comes, the grass grows by itself.

Like this one, most of those below are rather sober, some even sombre, nor are they logological, yet all involve some level of double or shifted meaning, if not word puns. I like to give mine titles, preferably punny, which also is not traditional. Need I produce a copy of my poetic license?

AT CAGE—TWO BIRDS
I kept a parrot in a cage:
it kept me
in a concentric cage.

STICKS IN MY MIND
A stand of sticks
beside a frozen lake;
startled, they all fly away.
(personal experience)

STICKS IN THE MUD
Sticks and stones
may break my bones,
or I can use them to build a house with.

ANACHRONISM
A haiku forms
and I write it down,
believing I can capture time.
PRIORITIES
As the bomb dropped
on Nagasaki
I was being taught not to fart.

WAR AND PEACE
Ten thousand ant soldiers
died in the war
and the aardvark did not stir.

STRATEGIC LEISURE
My hobby now is
waiting around
for other folks to change their minds.

ECHO HAIKU (from a dream)
HELP! said the voice
from the side of the hill
when the little voice cried HELP!

“HELP!” IS ON THE WAY